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Monday, 17 December 2018

Union Minister discusses tourism cooperation with Hong Kong, Macau



Union Minister U Ohn Maung attends Hong Kong International Tourism Conference in Hong Kong on 12 December . PHOTO: MNA

THE Union Minister for Hotels and Tourism, U Ohn Maung, attended the Hong Kong International Tourism Conference at the Hong Kong Convention in the Hong Kong Special Administration Region on 12 December and held talks with the Secretary for the Social Affairs and Culture of Macau on 15 December.

At the conference, the Union Minister discussed the regional and international tourism sector and its engagement with the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macau-Greater Bay Area, especially bilateral contacts between

countries along the Belt and Road, visa relaxation, and extension of flights.

The Union Minister also met with Mr. Zhu Shanzhong, the Chief Executive Officer of the World Tourism Organization, and Mr. Song Hai Yan, a professor at the Polytechnic University of Hong Kong, and discussed assistance for conducting courses on the human resource development of Myanmar.

He held talks with Mrs. Carrie Lam, the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong SAG, on promoting bilateral cooperation

for the development of the hotels and tourism business on 11 December at the Hong Kong Convention Center. He also discussed bilateral cooperation in the tourism sector with the Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development of Hong Kong, Mr. Edward Yau.

In a meeting with Mr. Alexis Tam Chong Veng, the Secretary for the Social Affairs and Culture of Macau on 15 December, at the JW Marriott Hotel in Macau, the Union Minister discussed the display of paintings by Myanmar artists at the contemporary arts show, continued cooperation

for tourism development of Myanmar, Myanmar's participation at the Global Tourism and Economic Forum to be held in Macau, and opening of tourism courses in cooperation with tourism schools of Macau.

The Union Minister also met with members of the Hong Kong-Macau-Myanmar Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Myanmar association in Macau. He also visited the Dancing Water show, the Macau Tower, and the Hong Kong-Macau Bridge. — MNA ■

(Translated by TMT)

Cyclone Phethai to cross India

ACCORDING to observations at 6.30 pm yesterday by the weather bureau in Nay Pyi Taw, Cyclone Phethai, now located over the Southwest Bay and adjoining West central Bay of Bengal, has moved North-Northwest and is centered about 205 miles East-Southeast of Chennai (India), (260) miles Southeast of Machilipatnam and 280 miles North-Northeast of Triconmalee Sri Lanka. It is not moving towards the Myanmar coast. The present stage of the cyclone is coded yellow, said the Meteorology and Hydrology Department.

The weather bureau of India forecast that Cyclone Phethai may make landfall around Andhra Pradesh in India on Monday night.

General caution

Due to the cyclone, rain or thundershowers are likely to be scattered and fairly widespread in Upper Sagaing Region, Kachin, Northern Shan and Chin States, isolated in the Lower Sagaing and Mandalay Regions, (Southern and Eastern) Shan and Rakhine States within the next (48) hours beginning tonight.

Squalls with moderate to rough seas are likely along Myanmar's coasts. Surface wind speeds in squalls may reach (30-35) m.p.h.

Advisory

People should be aware of the dangers for trawlers, vessels and ships off and along Myanmar's Coasts. — GNLM ■

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Union Minister inspects equipment for border development in Meikhtila



Union Minister Lt-Gen Ye Aung inspects the storage of vehicles and mechanical equipment for border region development work at the development supervision office in Meikhtila District yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

UNION Minister for Border Affairs Lt-Gen Ye Aung inspected the storage of vehicles and mechanical equipment for border region development work at the development supervision office in Meikhtila District yesterday.

The officer in-charge of the Meikhtila District development supervision office reported on

the storage condition of vehicles and mechanical equipment to be used in development works for border regions and human resources, as well as to be used in emergency works caused by natural disasters.

Upon hearing the report, Union Minister Lt-Gen Ye Aung stressed the need to prepare for

maintaining the vehicles and ensure that the mechanical equipment is quickly utilized in emergency situations, and to consider the work needed in fire prevention. Afterwards, the durability of the vehicles and mechanical equipment were tested and inspected. —MNA ■ (Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)

Former MRTV staff honoured



MRTV Director-General U Myint Htwe presents cash to retired MRTV staff. **PHOTO: HLA MOE**

MYANMA Radio and TV's former staff, aged 80 and above, were presented gifts and cash at Studio A of MRTV in Yangon yesterday.

At the ceremony sponsored by the MRTV's Former Staff Association, its patron, MRTV Director-General U Myint Htwe, delivered the welcoming mes-

sage and the chairman of the association, U Myint Aung, gave a speech.

Afterwards, the patron and the chair presented gifts and cash to 33 former staffers, aged 80 and above. They also presented an award to U Thein Aung, a former MRTV employee, for winning the Motion Picture Academy Award for sound editing in a 2016 film.

Retired Director-General U Kyi Lwin and senior former staff, U Tin Maung (Ko Po Aye-Myanma Radio), expressed words of thanks. Founded in 2012, the association presented gifts to 22 senior former employees in 2012 and 26 senior ex-staffers in 2016. —Ohama Thant ■ (Translated by TMT)

Appointment of Ambassador agreed on

The Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has agreed to the appointment of Mr. Saurabh Kumar as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of India to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

Mr. Saurabh Kumar was born on 1 January 1966. He holds degree of Bachelor of Technology from the Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur. He joined the Foreign Service of India in 1989 and served at the Indian Consulate General in Hong Kong and the Indian Missions in Indonesia, Fiji, China and Italy in various capacities. He has also served as Joint Secretary at the Counter Terrorism and National Security Council Secretariat from 2012 to 2015. He is currently serving as Ambassador of India to Iran since August 2015. He is married and has two daughters. —MNA ■

Thanlyin hosts workshop on new village programs

The 2018 Myanmar Saemaul Leaders' Workshop was held at the Cooperative University in Thanlyin in the south of Yangon on 15 December. The workshop was organized in collaboration with the Korea Saemaul Undong Training Center (KSMU).

The Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, and Irrigation and the Director-General of the Cooperatives Department, U Kyaw Ngwe, gave a speech at the workshop.

Professor Dr. Yi Yi Win explained the goal of the workshop entitled 'Myanmar Saemaul Leader's Workshop'. During the workshop, repre-

sentatives from five villages gave powerpoint presentations about their activities before a panel of judges, including Dr. Yi Yi Win, the deputy rector of the university, and Mr. Kim JinTaek, the SMU coordinator.

The judges selected winners based on the maximizing the effectiveness of their programs, their constructive influence on surrounding villages, the sustainability and gender equality of their programs, the application of environmental conservation methods, and the progress of the activities. Four villages were awarded prizes at the workshop. —MNA ■ (Translated by TMT)



The 2018 Myanmar Saemaul Leaders' Workshop held in Thanlyin Township yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

YACL, YIA complete specialized training courses

Almost 50 young employees at Yangon Aerodrome Company Limited (YACL), the operator of Yangon International Airport (YIA), completed specialized training courses this year as part

of the company's commitment to developing new leadership for Myanmar's civil aviation industry.

YACL said it had enrolled 23 young staff members and two government officials from the De-

partment of Civil Aviation in the Airports Council International's Global Safety Network (GSN) Diploma Programme, which focuses on airport operations, safety and compliance. The participants

— who work in Apron Management, Control of Works, Wildlife Management, Terminal Management, Safety Oversight, Control of Standards, and safety and security at YIA — were shortlisted

based on English proficiency, recommendations from department leaders and demonstrated willingness to be involved in the growth of the aviation business in Myanmar.—GNLM ■

State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's speech

Let us strive collectively for the emergence of a just and free nation — a nation which will guarantee equal rights and equality, a nation which practices a pure ideology.

(Excerpt from the speech by State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi on the 2nd Anniversary of NLD Government on 1 April 2018)



Phan Khon game, a Myanmar traditional game. PHOTO: KYI MYO THET

Over 100,000 people in Ayeyawady get citizenship verification cards in four months

UNION MINISTER for Labour, Immigration and Population U Thein Swe attended a ceremony to issue the national citizenship verification cards to local people in Pathein yesterday and disclosed the government's plan to issue smart cards to the people in the future.

Speaking at the ceremony, Union Minister U Thein Swe said the ministry is making different approaches to the case and reviewing the various aspects of issuing the smart cards to the people as the task is huge. Internal migrant people are

facing challenges from the social, economic and educational disparities as they do not have household certificates, said the Union Minister, adding that to overcome those challenges, the ministry has relaxed rules for issuing the national citizenship cards.

"Today, the internal migrant people can apply the national citizenship verification cards at local offices where they are living currently and they don't need to go back to their original places to get the cards," said Union Minister U Thein Swe.



Union Minister U Thein Swe meeting with the local people at the ceremony to issue citizenship verification cards in Pathein, Ayeyawady Region. PHOTO: MNA

Under the new project namely Thitsar Project started on May 1, 2016, officials of the ministry has issued the cards to people by carrying out field trips to wards and villagers.

Working on the Project, the ministry has issued national citizenship verification cards to 100,903 people from 15 August to 11 December, 2018, in Ayeyawady Region including

20,382 people aged 18 and above, 8,162 who changed the old with new ones, 18,334 who lost their cards.— MNA ■

(Translated by Kyaw Zin Lin)

Kyin competition held at Rakhine State Day in Sittway



Two Rakhine men participate in traditional Kyin wrestling contest in Sittway, Rakhine State. PHOTO: TIN SOE

"KYIN, a wrestling-like sports, is an age-old tradition and the soul of the Rakhine people," said a regional cabinet member at the opening of the Kyin competition, held to mark the 44th Anniversary Rakhine State Day in Sittway. Kyin, whose name comes

from the word Kya-Hlin (quick tiger), referring to the quickness and cleverness of a tiger in catching a prey, is the most important sports contest during the anniversary festival. "Kyin competition should be held annually with the aim

of arousing awareness by cherishing and preserving the traditional heritage, especially among youths, added U Kyaw Win, the Minister for Agriculture, Livestock, Forestry and Mining of Rakhine State.

Every town in the state should hold Kyin competitions in celebrating Rakhine State Day, as it symbolizes unity and strength", he said, adding, "If the Day was held in conjunction with traditional festivals and sports meets, and included Kyin in all towns of the state, it will become more alive and attractive."

Officials formally opened the competition at Wingaba ground in Sittway, capital of Rakhine State, followed by a demonstration of Kyin in the style of a chorus dance to the accompaniment of traditional music.

"In previous years we opened the competition with dance and songs, but this year with Kyin performances," said U Soe Paing, chair of the subcommittee for

holding the competition.

This year's competition will present over 100 first and second prizes, which are called mong (gong). "The secret of winning a Kyin competition is not strength, but hard training, cleverness and skill," said former Kyin wrestlers who retired from the sport because of old age or due to their health.

The main tactics of Kyin is attack and defence. It's a dual contest, and the one who falls to the ground is the loser. Over 300 persons are taking part in the first division contest, and about 40 will participate in the championship matches. Prizes will be given to winners on 18 December. — Mawsi, Ko Min ■ *(Translated by TMT)*



Young Rakhine men perform a Kyin dance before the Kyin traditional wrestling event. PHOTO: TIN SOE

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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.



13th Flower Festival at the National Kandawgyi Lake in Pyin Oo Lwin was crowded with visitors one day after opening yesterday despite showers. The festival started on 15 December, 2018.

PHOTO: MAUNG YIN KYAY

Property expo to be held on 21-23 December in Yangon

THE Myanmar Biggest Property Expo will be held from December 21 to 23 at Tatmadaw exhibition hall in Yangon, according to the event organiser.

This will be the tenth time iMyanmarHouse.com, an online property trading website, has organised the similar events in commercial hub Yangon since 2015.

The exhibition will be supported mainly by Emerald Bay and Golden City Co. Its official banking partners will include

KBZ Bank and Yoma Bank, AYA Bank and CB Bank.

During the three-day event, over 50 construction companies will display more than 10,000 flats, condominium apartments and detached houses in Yangon, Mandalay, Pathin and Taunggyi as well as in Bangkok of Thailand. The property displayed through the expo will be available at a price ranging from K20 million to over Ks2 billion.

In addition, the expo will cover educative seminars

where knowledge about matters relating to the current economy and real estate, and necessary information for house hunters to apply for a home loan.

U Nay Min Thu, managing director of the iMyanmarHouse.com, said that arrangements are being made to help house seekers apply for a home loan during the exhibition.—GNLM

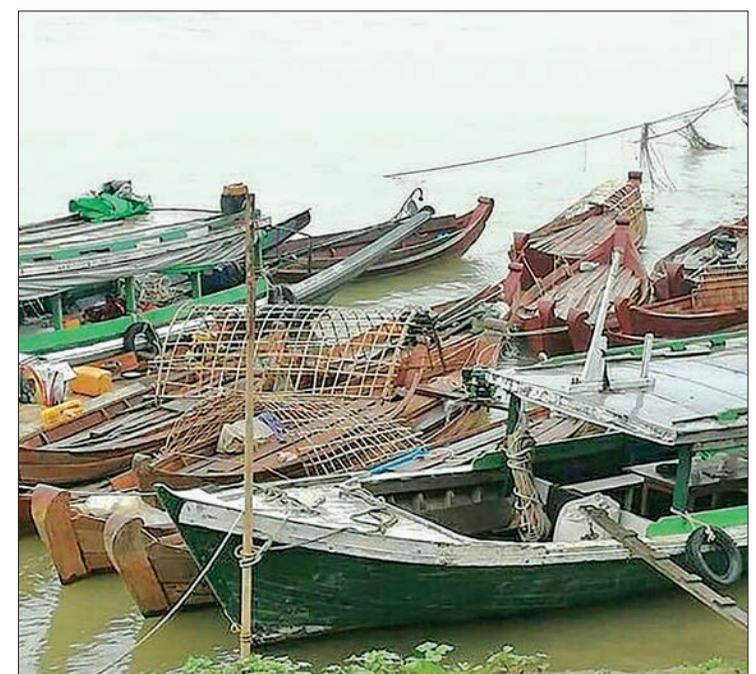
(Translated by Khaing Thanda Lwin)

16 boats laden with teak seized at Singu's Kukkopin jetty

OFFICIALS seized 16 boats laden with teak logs at the Kukkopin jetty in Singu Township, Mandalay Region, early on Sunday morning.

Around 1 a.m. on 16 December, a combined team comprising officials from the police, forest, and the township administrative office, found 16 boats at the jetty during a regular operation along the Ayeyawady River. The owners of the boats could not be located.

The team seized the boats and confiscated the timber, and moved them to the township's Forest Department, which has been working to combat illegal logging and smuggling in the region. Forest officials are continuing their investigations in the case to find those who were trying to illegally transport the teak, which is a prohibited forest product.—Win Maung (Singu) ■ (Translated by Khaing Thanda Lwin)

Sixteen boats laden with teak logs at the Kukkopin jetty in Singu Township, Mandalay Region were seized yesterday. **PHOTO: WIN MAUNG (SINGU)**

National Blood Centre needs more donors with Type B blood

THE National Blood Centre is looking for donors with Type B blood as the centre provided more units of the blood type to public hospitals for transfusions this month and is, therefore, facing a shortage.

To meet the current needs of hospitals, the centre has invited volunteers with Type B blood to step forward and donate blood.

Between January and November, the centre received donations of different types of blood from a total of 88,592 people, including Buddhist monks. It distributed 155,539 units of blood to public hospitals this year.

The National Blood Centre is located at the corner of the Bogyoke Aung San Road and the Shwedagon Pagoda Road in Latha Township, downtown Yangon. The centre mainly supports public hospitals, including the Yangon General Hospital, a major public hospital in Yangon. The centre frequently organizes blood donation camps to collect blood.

According to medical professionals, all healthy individuals between the ages of 18 to 60 can donate blood. Blood transfusions can help save lives of people, especially in emergencies.—Khaing Htoo ■ (Translated by Khaing Thanda Lwin)

MFVP pushes opening of more fruit export channels

THE Myanmar Fruit, Flower, and Vegetable Producers and Exporters Association (MFVP) suggested three measures to expand the watermelon market and control market prices at the 22nd regular meeting of Vice President 1 and entrepreneurs.

The suggestions were put forward by MFVP vice president U Myint Sein at the meeting held recently at the UMFCCI office.

“Watermelon and muskmelons are currently exported to Yunnan province only through the Shweli (Ruili) gate. As a result, there is a current mismatch between supply and demand. At times, excessive supply during harvest brings down prices. The Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO) market survey has pointed out that the difference between profit and loss can be 39 per cent within a week,” said U Myint Sein.

“It will be better if fruits such as watermelons, muskmelons, mangoes, and pomelo are allowed



A farmer watering the plants at her farm in a village. PHOTO: GNLM

to be exported through other Sino-Myanmar gates, rather than just Shweli,” he said.

He called for opening up

more export channels through ships, flights, and cross-border gates. He also requested that a warehouse be set up to store

fruits to increase their shelf life as that might help regulate prices.

Myanmar exports agro products and a number of fruits

to China. China’s food safety inspection mechanism, the General Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection, and Quarantine (AQSIQ), has allowed imports of Myanmar’s mangosteen, rambutan, lychee, watermelon, and muskmelon. China allows imports of watermelons, muskmelons, and mangoes through the Shweli gate.

China accounts for 95 per cent of Myanmar’s fruit exports. Watermelon tops the list of fruits exported to China, followed by mango and muskmelon.

This year, the melon season started with good prices. The monsoon harvest of melons is usually lower compared with winter. A watermelon and muskmelon farm owner, who grows about 100 acres in winter, works fewer farmlands in the monsoon season, just enough to sustain the livelihood of workers. The winter season begins in late October.—Htet Myat ■ (Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Consumer goods import decreases 5% since October

MYANMAR’S import of consumer goods totalled US\$634 million between 1 October and 7 December this year, decreasing by \$34 million or five per cent, as against the same period last year, the Ministry of Commerce reported.

The current figures included \$11.4 million worth of consumer goods imported by the public sector, while the private importers bought the same amounting to \$623 million in total. When compared with this time last year, the public sector’s imports of consumer products this year increased slightly by \$1.028 million, however, the private sector’s imports of the same decreased by \$35.119 million.

At this time last financial year, the country’s imports of consumer products covered \$10.351 million by the public sector and \$658 million by the private sector, totalling \$668.5 million. Over the first 68 days of the current 2018-2019 financial year, Myanmar imported other three major groups of products, consisting of \$1.123 billion worth of capital goods, \$1.256 billion worth of manufactured goods and \$419 million worth of CMP products.

Myanmar’s imports include a wide variety of personal goods, construction materials, luxury products, chemicals, clothing and accessories, agricultural machin-

ery, raw materials, household goods, food items and electronic devices. According to the Commerce Ministry’s trade report, the country’s import of consumer products exceeded \$2.6 billion during the mini-budget period between April and September this year.

The imports of consumer goods were \$1.245 billion in the 2011-2012 FY, \$1.4 billion in the 2012-2013 FY, \$2.3 billion in the 2013-2014 FY, \$2.9 billion in the 2014-2015 FY, \$3.5 billion in the 2015-2016 FY, over \$4 billion in the 2016-2017 FY and \$4.403 billion in the 2017-2018 FY.—Swe Nyein (Translated by Khaing Thanda Lwin)

Exports of animal products up \$104 mln in current FY

MYANMAR’S exports of animal products between 1 October and 7 November stood at US\$113.86 million, rising sharply from less than \$10 million for the same period last year.

With trade of livestock permitted in late 2017, cattle exports are expected to rise. Myanmar has exported 200,000 cattle, worth

\$260 million, since the permission for export of live cattle was granted a year ago. The exported cattle are above 5 years and were shipped with vaccination certificates, health certificates, and farming registration certificates. According to the 2018 cattle census, there are a total of 11.5 million cattle in the country. The

government is also exploring new markets for export of cattle. An increase in the value of exports of animal products can help reduce the trade deficit. Myanmar primarily exports agricultural products, animal products, minerals, forest products, and finished industrial goods.—Ko Htet ■ (Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Trade deficit narrows to \$765 mln in first two months of current FY

OVER the last two months of the current fiscal year, Myanmar has cut trade deficit to US\$765.8 million from \$936 million in the same period last year.

Between 1 October and 7 December, Myanmar’s external trade increased to \$6.1 billion from \$5.76 billion in the same period last year. In the 2018-2019 fiscal, the country’s exports have been estimated at \$2.67 billion and imports are pegged at \$3.43 billion.

Myanmar exports agricultural products, animal products, minerals, forest products, and finished industrial goods, while it imports capital goods, raw industrial materials, including CMP goods, and consumer goods.

The country’s export sector relies largely on agriculture and manufacturing. Export earnings from CMP (cutting, mak-

ing, and packaging) garment businesses are rising, while reliance on exports of natural resources such as natural gas and jade is lessening.

The government is trying to reduce the trade deficit by screening imports of luxury items and boosting exports. According to data from the Ministry of Commerce, trade via the sea route brought in \$4.52 billion, while border trade fetched \$1.59 billion in the current fiscal year. Myanmar’s trade deficit stood at \$1.3 billion in last six-month mini-budget period, \$5.5 billion in the 2016-2017 FY, \$5.4 billion in the 2015-2016 FY, \$4.9 billion in the 2014-2015 FY, \$2.5 billion in the 2013-2014 FY, \$91.9 million in the 2012-2013 FY, according to statistics released by the Central Statistical Organization (CSO).—Mon Mon ■ (Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Trade Mark

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China, Thailand pledge to deepen cooperation

LUANG PRABANG — China and Thailand on Sunday pledged to deepen bilateral cooperation and move forward the construction of the China-Thailand railway.

The pledges were made as Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi met with Thai Foreign Minister Don Pramudwinai at the sidelines of the 4th Lancang-Mekong Cooperation (LMC) foreign ministers' meeting.

Wang said the China-Thailand ties are enjoying sound development, with frequent high-level exchanges and close cooperation in various fields, bringing tangible benefits to peoples of the two countries.

China is willing to work with Thailand to enhance com-

munication, do proper planning for deepened cooperation, speed up the construction of China-Thailand railway in a bid to achieve early connection of China-Laos-Thailand railway, and actively explore third-party cooperation, he said.

China would support Thailand's work as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) rotating chair and steadily move forward the consultation on the Code of Conduct (COC) in the South China Sea with ASEAN members, said Wang.

China would also push for the early conclusion of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) negotiations, speed up East Asian economic integration, and jointly guard against unilateralism

and trade protectionism, Wang added.

For his part, Don said Thailand would work with China to maintain high-level exchanges, deepen trade and economic cooperation, actively move forward the construction of Thailand-China railway, and explore different kinds of third-party cooperation under the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative.

As ASEAN's rotating chair in 2019, Thailand would play a constructive role in promoting the development of ASEAN and ASEAN-China relations, said Don. Thailand is committed to concluding RCEP negotiations within its term of chairmanship, and would work towards regional peace, stability, prosperity and development. — Xinhua

Matriculation Exam Schedule

THE 2019 matriculation examination will be held in March 2019 according to this schedule.

Schedule for 2019 Matriculation Examination

Date	Time	Subjects
(1)	(2)	(3)
6-3-2019 Wednesday	From 9 am to 12 noon.	Myanmar
7-3-2019 Thursday	From 9 am to 12 noon.	English
8-3-2019 Friday	From 9 am to 12 noon.	Mathematics
9-3-2019 Saturday	From 9 am to 12 noon.	Optional Myanmar
11-3-2019 Monday	From 9 am to 12 noon.	Chemistry
12-3-2019 Tuesday	From 9 am to 12 noon.	Physics
13-3-2019 Wednesday	From 9 am to 12 noon.	Biology/ Economics
14-3-2019 Thursday	From 9 am to 12 noon.	Geography
15-3-2019 Friday	From 9 am to 12 noon.	History

Cambodia seizes record 3-tonne haul of African ivory

PHNOM PENH (Cambodia) — Cambodia seized more than 3.2 tonnes of elephant tusks hidden in a storage container sent from Mozambique, a customs official said Sunday, marking the country's largest ivory bust.

The discovery Thursday of 1,026 tusks at the Phnom Penh Autonomous Port followed a tip from the US embassy, the official said, and highlights Cambodia's emergence as a key regional transit point for the multibillion dollar trade in illicit wildlife.

"The elephant tusks were hidden among marble in a container that was abandoned," Sun Chhay, director of the Customs and Excise Office at the port, told AFP.

He said the ivory was sent from the southern African nation of Mozambique and arrived at the port last year.

The unidentified owner of the shipment did not arrive to pick up the cargo.

Pictures of the massive haul showed long rows of confiscated tusks spread out on the ground at the port.

Sun Chhay said he did not know whether the shipment was destined for markets in other countries.

Demand from China and Vietnam has fuelled the growth of illegal wildlife trafficking via Cambodia.



Pictures of the massive haul showed long rows of confiscated tusks spread out on the ground at the port.
PHOTO: AFP

Weak law enforcement and corruption attract wildlife smugglers, especially at a time when neighbouring Thailand is cracking down on the banned trade.

Ivory is prized for its beauty while the market in traditional medicine has led to the smuggling of rhino horn and pangolin

scales.

Cambodia has a miniscule elephant population but its emergence as a new trafficking hub has resulted in several headline-grabbing busts over the past five years.

The largest before this week occurred in 2014, when Cambodian customs seized

about three tonnes of ivory hidden in a container of beans at the southwestern port of Sihanoukville.

Last year, Cambodia also seized nearly a tonne of ivory hidden in hollowed-out logs discovered inside an abandoned container, owned by a company based in Mozambique.—AFP ■

4 confirmed dead in medical helicopter crash in Portugal

LISBON — Four people have been confirmed dead in an air accident involving a medical emergency helicopter in northern Portugal late Saturday, the Portuguese Lusa News Agency said on Sunday.

The National Institute of Medical Emergency said in a statement early Sunday that the helicopter went missing and was later found crashed in Valongo, near Porto, the second largest city in Portugal, killing all four on board.

The victims were two pilots, a doctor and a nurse.

The accident took place when the helicopter was on its way back to its base near Braganca after transporting a seriously ill patient to a hospital in Porto on Saturday in very bad weather conditions.

The cause of the accident has yet to be investigated.—Xinhua ■

Qatar to invest \$20 bn in US energy sector: minister

DOHA (Qatar) — Energy-rich Qatar, under blockade by its Gulf neighbours, said on Sunday it plans to invest more than \$20 billion in the US energy sector over the next five years.

Saad al-Kaabi, minister of state for energy affairs and CEO of Qatar Petroleum, told a conference in Doha the Gulf state is looking to invest in US oil and gas sectors as well as unconventional resources.

“North of \$20 billion will be invested over the next five years in the United States in different projects,” Kaabi told the Doha Forum.

He said Qatar’s main target was to revive the multi-billion dollar Golden Pass LNG (liquefied natural gas) terminal in Texas.

“We are contemplating moving (the project) forward with our partners,” said Kaabi, adding that a final decision on the matter would be taken shortly.



Qatar to invest \$20 bn in US energy sector. PHOTO: AFP

bi, adding that a final decision on the matter would be taken shortly.

Qatar Petroleum owns 70 percent of the project, with ExxonMobil and ConocoPhillips

splitting the rest.

Kaabi said Qatar’s LNG production would rise by 16

million tonnes annually, with an aim of reaching 110 million tonnes a year in five years.

Qatar Petroleum on Sunday signed a deal with Italy’s Eni to acquire 35 percent in three offshore oil blocks in Mexico in the second major Qatari investment in the North American country this year.

The deal is to develop production at the three fields to around 90,000 barrels per day of oil in 2021.

Qatar announced earlier this month that it was withdrawing from the Saudi-dominated OPEC oil cartel, a decision Kaabi said was not “political”.

Saudi Arabia, along with Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates, severed diplomatic ties with Qatar in 2017, accusing it of supporting terrorism and fostering close ties with their regional rival Iran — charges Doha denies.— AFP ■

Explosion injures 42 in northern Japan: police

TOKYO — An explosion at a restaurant in northern Japan injured 42 people late Sunday, police said, with the blast reportedly causing surrounding buildings to collapse.

Fires broke out following the incident in the northern city of Sapporo, Kyodo news agency said, and images from the scene showed large flames and plumes of smoke rising in the night air.

A police official for the Hokkaido region told AFP “there are 42 injuries” but no one was killed.

They are still investigating the cause which “would take some time”.

National broadcaster NHK said the flames were extinguished several hours after the fire broke out, with police and fire department officers still at



Firefighters carry on rescue works after an explosion at a restaurant in Sapporo, in the northern Hokkaido prefecture on December 16, 2018. Dozens have been injured and no casualties have been reported. PHOTO: AFP

the site. Earlier police warned of secondary explosions, according to Kyodo, which described

buildings collapsing following the incident around 8.30 pm (1130 GMT).—AFP ■

7 dead in southwest China mining accident

BEIJING (China) — Seven miners were killed and three others injured in an accident at a coal mine in southwestern China, state media reported.

The accident occurred around 6.00pm (1000 GMT) Saturday after the connecting segment of a mining skip broke, causing it to plummet down the mine shaft, the official Xinhua news agency said.

The three injured miners were rushed to hospital following the accident, which took place in southwestern Chongqing municipality.

The cause of the incident is still under investigation.

Deadly mining accidents are common in China, where the industry has a poor safety record, despite efforts to improve coal production conditions and crack down on illegal mines.

In October, 21 miners died in eastern Shandong province after pressure inside a mine caused rocks to fracture and break, blocking the tunnel and trapping the workers. Only one miner was rescued alive.

In December 2016, explosions in two separate coal mines in the Inner Mongolia region and in northeastern Heilongjiang province killed at least 59 people. According to China’s National Coal Mine Safety Administration, the country saw 375 coal mining related deaths in 2017, down 28.7 percent year-on-year.

However, despite improvements, “the situation of coal mine safety production is still grim,” said the bureau in a statement following a coal mine safety conference in January.—AFP ■

6.1-magnitude earthquake rocks Indonesia’s Papua

JAKARTA (Indonesia) — A 6.1-magnitude earthquake hit Papua, in eastern Indonesia Sunday, US seismologists said, but no tsunami warning was issued.

The quake was about 158 kilometres (98 miles) south-southwest of the prov-

ince’s capital Jayapura at 6:42 pm (0942 GMT), at a depth of 61 kilometres, according to the US Geological Survey.

The quake was felt in Jayapura, but residents didn’t panic, a military spokesman said.

“I felt it at home,” Papua’s military spokesman in Jayapura Dax Sianturi said.

Officials are still assessing the impact of the quake, but there were no immediate reports of casualties.

Indonesia experiences fre-

quent seismic and volcanic activity due to its position on the Pacific “Ring of Fire”, where tectonic plates collide.

Last September, a 7.5-magnitude quake and a subsequent tsunami in Palu on Sulawesi island killed more than 2,200

with a thousand more declared missing.

On boxing day December 26, 2004, a 9.1-magnitude earthquake struck Aceh province, causing a tsunami and killing more than 170,000 in Indonesia.—AFP ■

Ensure transparency, responsibility, and accountability in solving farmland issues

WHILE the Union Government is committed to solving the issue of confiscated farmland in accordance with the law, there have been some weaknesses in the review and assessment of complaints and delays in return of confiscated land to the original owners.

The authorities need to conduct a proper review of confiscated land for the good of the nation and the public, and follow legal procedures without delay. Only then can the confiscated farmland be swiftly returned to the rightful owners.

In some cases, the government has released the land, but it has been transferred to the farmers. In some cases, land ownership disputes and squatters have caused delays, even though the ministries concerned have released the farmland.

Necessary action must be taken against those who are hindering or obstructing the review, release, and return of land by the relevant committees and the utilisation of the land by the rightful owners.

State and regional governments must not interpret the policies set by the Union Government in any way they want to.

We must not be smug and arrogant with the titles, salaries, and powers granted to us to do our jobs. The future generation will judge whether we have done our duties properly. So let us perform them well.

Chief ministers, who are the chairmen of the Nay Pyi Taw and state and region committees, need to push for greater progress

on the issue.

The district, township, ward, and village-tract committees have been given the duty and responsibility to study and understand the policies and procedures set by the government and must work accordingly.

All should follow the laid out policies and conduct work accordingly. Squatters must be dealt with in accordance with the law and farmers must have their farmland returned to them or given proper compensation, which cannot be taken away from them.

It is very important for judgments in farmland matters to be true and correct. Departmental organizations tasked with giving reports to the state need to ensure that their data and information are correct.

The Union Government is striving towards becoming a clean government with good administration. Hence, we need to determine in advance whether public servants are willing to accept responsibility and take accountability. Those involved in solving the issue of confiscated farmland are obliged to work transparently and cooperate with other agencies.

“The most important factor is that leprosy patients and their families are never discriminated against, are included in the community, and treated as human beings”

Dr. Tin Shwe, Deputy Director (Retired)

Roundtable discussions to mark the National Conference on Combating Leprosy held.

MRTV aired a live program on the “Roundtable Discussions on Myanmar National Conference on Combating Leprosy” in which Dr. Tin Shwe, Deputy Director (Retired), Department of Health of the Ministry of Health; Dr. Kyaw Nyunt Sein, Deputy Director-General, DOH of MH; Dr. Chan Tun Aung, Leprosy Elimination Project Manager and Deputy Director of Public Health of the Ministry of Health and Sports have participated in the program.

By Nandar Winn and
Mee Mee Phyo
PHOTO BY HLA MOE

(CONTINUED FROM YES-
TERDAY)

Moderator: Kindly explain about the strategies.

Dr. Kyaw Nyunt Sein: I would like to explain in five talking points. The first point is the commitment, the ownership, and the partnership. The second point is about MDT service, which seeks approach for full recovery, and monitoring task. Another point is to change the poor image of the leprosy patient into decent life, and also to prevent them from becoming disabled person. A total of five points in these strategies are laid down.

With a view to achieve the commitment, the partnership and the ownership, we carried out advocacy of anti-leprosy at different levels in regions, states, districts, townships and villages. As this malady could occur at every community, we covered to all walks of life, including the armed forces. We also provide detailed information including the fact that the treatment is free of charge.

We need the assistance of the media to elevate image of the committee and raising awareness in connection with the reflection of leprosy patients.

Since 1999, we moved ahead in two stages in the whole country. We conducted seminars, made field trips, provide better MDT service to the leprosy patients, empowering health care workers especially midwives to shoulder special activity in the Leprosy Elimination Campaign.

During the time of our predecessors, they worked on Special Action Projects for the Elimination of Leprosy (SAPEL), and that during our time, we are working on Improving Geographical Coverage (IGC), both of the approach is the same.

It is believed that the leprosy infection is widely occurred in

upper Myanmar, but according to the survey the leprosy issues are occurring in the Regions and the States. We have been extending MDT service to every corner of the country, where our midwives are very much instrumental in the forefront as they are very active and agreeable in treating the patients.

The international organizations called our nurses and midwives as “Red Angel”.

We continuously monitored and analyzed the situation of leprosy at different villages, and put on records. We found the hyper endemic areas in four regions and one state involving (99) townships and we grouped the villages together and marked then as category (1) and category (2). We identified whether the village is risk prone village or it is infection eliminated village.

We introduced and looped in the celebrities namely Academy winning actress May Thinzar Oo and Academy winning actress Thet Mon Myint in the campaign through videos, in addition to pamphlets and newspapers using the media as a tool including MRTV and MWD.

Regarding the prevention and rehabilitation programs, we worked along with the American Leprosy Mission, which is termed as International Federation of Anti-Leprosy Associations (ILEP). The JICA and the ILEP are lending hands to us, and that all the tasks are based on the strategies.

We are also working on the elimination campaign with advanced vision such as that of using the Geographical Information System (GIS) in finding the leprosy patients. The outcomes and results of the research have been integrated in the plan for better implementation.

Moderator: Kindly explain the results and the reason of success.

Dr. Kyaw Nyunt Sein: In 1999, we started the LEC as national level in the whole of the country, and that one week of program in the region and one week



in the state. During the two weeks period, we could pull in (15,000) new patients. We continued the district LEC, and that the Mandalay region happened to be prone area where we expected more patients. Eventually, we could register nearly (30,000) new patients in a single year, which happened to be the hidden patients that we had uncovered.

We continued in the same pattern in the following year.

According to the old records of 1990, there was (276) leprosy patients out of (10,000) population, and that in 2003, it dropped to (0.8) per cent. We were able to pull down the percentage to the lowest level.

Moderator: In what year that you could announce the successful elimination.

Dr. Kyaw Nyunt Sein: We called it the third Global Allowance of Leprosy in our country; it involved the world partner countries namely WHO, Sasakawa Memorial Health Foundation, ALM, Novartis Foundation, and we conducted a seminar at the Sedona Hotel on 6 February 2003. On that particular day, we were

able to announce the elimination.

The driving force for that success was the political commitment which was supported by the people, responsible authorities and the partners.

In our awareness raising program, the media had assisted us. When we were making research work, the Yangon Institute of Medicine, the Department of Medical Science, the Yangon Arts and Science University (Psychology Department) assisted in our tasks. The work was related with the psychology issues, and that motley assortment of ideas made us successful.

We had streamlined the task of integration in 1978 at a time when we had only (902) number of leprosy elimination staff, and that we had to cover (68,000) villages with (330) townships. Therefore, we had to integrate basic health workers in the country for the campaign.

Our success came from our strong team where we devoted heart and soul in the task and also we organized and inspired other people. The ability and strength of our leprosy elimination staff members played a major role in

the campaign. Myanmar gained success earlier than our neighboring countries.

Moderator: Please tell us the current situation on leprosy.

Dr. Chan Tun Aung, Leprosy Elimination Project Manager and Deputy Director of Public Health of the Ministry of Health and Sports: On 6 February 2003, we were able to announce the elimination of leprosy during the time of Dr. U Kyaw Nyunt Sein, which means less than (1) per cent of registered patient in (10,000) population.

In other words, the issue of leprosy patient could be eliminated from the public problem. It is not necessarily mean the total elimination.

It could be interpreted that the blazing and burning fire had been extinguished into small glimmer of fire. In fact, the rate of infection remains as new patients of (2,500) to (3,000) are coming out each year. Among them, (10) to (15) per cent are the patients with visible physical defect, and (5) per cent are kids, and it is therefore, the issue could be termed as continuing infection.

Moderator: Kindly explain the current work program.

Dr. Chan Tun Aung: We would keep on searching the patients and treat them with MDT treatment free of charge. Another work program was in focusing at (60) village health units in finding out patients for (3) consecutive years in 2015, 2016 and 2017. Moreover, we could manage in preventing the patients from becoming disabled condition.

In addition, we carried out a research program by proving protective drugs to the family members of the households in NyaungU District, Myingyan District and Thayawaddy District. We also carried out Leprosy Mapping Project to understand and analyzed the distribution of patients.

We have many ongoing research programs combined with better management along with Technical Advisory Group (TAG), involving experts and retired personnel for the elimination campaign.

Coordinator: Kindly explain about the National Leprosy Conference which was held on 12 and 13 December 2018.

Dr. Chan Tun Aung: We have conducted the conference with three objectives. The first objective is to obtain the political commitment from the government departments and the organizations. The second objective is to have total non-discrimination of the leprosy patients. The third objective is to make all inclusive in the drive for leprosy elimination.

The patients, the family members, the community, the Ministry of Health and Sports, the Ministry of Information, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, the relevant ministries, the UN Agencies, WHO, the ILEP, the American Leprosy Mission, the Novartis Foundation, the local NGOs, and the partner organizations are being called in to participate in the campaign.

We are able to organize this conference due to the cooperation among the donor organizations such as the Nippon Foundation, the Sasakawa Memorial Health Foundation, and the mother ministry namely the Ministry of Health and Sports.

Moderator: Please tell us the expected results from the National Leprosy Conference.

Dr. Chan Tun Aung: The first expected result is to combine and unit the commitment of the authorities and our active participation. The second expected result is to go ahead with the non-discrimination attitude and not to sideline the patients.

The third expected result is to have the proper understanding among the public on the malady of this infectious disease and to call upon all people to actively participate in the elimination campaign.

Moderator: Kindly explain your additional view in this program.

Dr. Tin Shwe: I would like to share two to three points. The first point is that we now have arrived at the stage that leprosy issue is no more a problem of public health matter.

We would like to inform the

correct news to the people that the leprosy disease is not entirely eradicated in our country.

The second point that I would like to submit is the fact that we are striving for a Leprosy Free World including Myanmar. However, no one could definitely say when we would achieve that status.

The most important factor is that leprosy patients and their families are never discriminated against, are included in the community, and treated as human beings.

Dr. Kyaw Nyunt Sein: We are referring the term as the family members in which the relatives are also included. People thought that the real leprosy patient may have physical deformity and defect, but in ground reality, the irregular and defective patch on the shoulder or on the buttock is the sign of leprosy.

The leprosy infection could be treated with drugs and could come out fully recovered as normal. However, some are of the wrong view that once a leprosy patient is always a leprosy patient. With this attitude among some people, the patient remains to be in the shadow, and never mingle among the community.

When we could push aside the discrimination, only then the remaining glimmer of fire spark might be totally extinguished. The problem may still remain, if the discrimination persisted.

The discrimination may bring supplementary problems such as that of social, education, economic and other matters.

The leprosy patient may have defective physical formation, but the brain function is normal, and could pursue education to become a valuable productive citizen, who could support his family members and serve the country one way or another.

When the discrimination has enveloped the situation, the good opportunity might be lost causing negative impact to the patient, the family members and the nation.

Translated by UMT (Ahlon)

Trade war: Signs of progress in US-China talks

WASHINGTON (United States)—Though markets are on edge and the arrest of a top Chinese executive threatened to spark a crisis, there are signs the US-China trade war can be resolved without further collateral damage to the global economy.

The whole world is watching the talks between Washington and Beijing, hoping a 90-day tariff truce will hold and the sides can end a dispute that threatens hundreds of billions of dollars in trade. In recent days the small signs of progress, and perhaps more importantly the absence of new threats from President Donald Trump, have cheered investors worldwide, reversing some of the bloodletting that erased all of 2018 gains on Wall Street.

And the arrest in Canada of a senior Huawei executive amid US charges the company violated sanctions on Iran raised fears the renewed tensions could disrupt the talks—but so far this does not seem to have happened. “What is clear is that both President Trump and the Chinese are trying to separate the issues,” said Edward Alden, a trade expert at the Council on Foreign Relations.

In fact, Beijing on Friday announced that starting on 1 January it would suspend the additional pu-



US Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer, right, will lead the talks with China. PHOTO: AFP

nitive tariffs on US autos imposed in retaliation for Trump's tariffs on China, cutting them to 15 per cent from 40 per cent.

And the talks last week produced reports the country would restart purchases of soybeans from American farmers and ease investment rules for US companies. “China wants to make a big and very comprehensive deal. It could happen, and rather

soon!” Trump tweeted on Friday, applauding the decision on car tariffs. The ceasefire began after Trump met with Chinese leader Xi Jinping in Buenos Aires on 1 December and agreed to hold off on further tariffs or retaliation at least until 1 March. That means Trump will hold off on plans to more than double import taxes on \$200 billion in Chinese goods at the start of the year and will

also refrain from imposing tariffs on the remaining \$246 billion in Chinese products the United States imports each year.

90-day outcome

Trade experts and observers agree the timeframe will not allow for a comprehensive trade pact between the world's two biggest economies. Instead they say they hope to see a deal to roll back the

tariffs and continue negotiations on the Chinese policies that have long been irritants to relations with Washington: forced transfer or theft of American technology, restrictive investment rules and industrial subsidies.

“You can't solve every problem with China in 90 days, but progress could be made institutionalizing” changes to Beijing's policies, Jake Colvin, vice president of the National Foreign Trade Council, told AFP. But he cautioned that both sides “need to figure out a path to a win-win outcome. They both need to be able to say they gained something.”

US Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer is leading the negotiating team, which includes Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin and White House trade advisor Peter Navarro. “The basic problem here is that the United States and China don't trust each other,” Alden told AFP. “The best hope is a partial deal that addresses some of the US concerns and then the negotiations to continue while the progress is closely monitored.” Navarro, an anti-China firebrand, last week warned that US negotiators would hold “tough” with China, and said the key would be to “trust but verify.” — AFP ■

Hyundai sets sales price of Kona Electric for US market

NEW YORK—Hyundai Motor Company has announced starting price of all-electric compact utility vehicle (CUV) Kona Electric on Friday for the US market. Consumers could pay no more than 30,000 US dollars for the crossover CUV after reduction of around 7,500 US dollars of tax credit, according to a release by Hyundai Motor America on Friday. As Hyundai's first compact electric crossover for the US market, Kona Electric has as much as 415 km of range for each charge and would be shipped to the US market in the beginning of 2019 from its manufacturing base in Ulsan, South Korea.

Hyundai Motor has received awards from Australia, the United Kingdom and Spain regarding Kona Electric, according to media reports. The affordability of Kona Electric makes it attractive but production capacity of the electric vehicle is seen limited to around 4,000 each month now. —Xinhua ■

Made in Viet Nam: Vingroup launches first smartphones

HANOI (Viet Nam)—Viet Nam's largest private conglomerate Vingroup unveiled its first made-in-Viet Nam mobile phones on Friday in the fast-growing country where it will face tough competition from tech giants like Samsung, Oppo and Apple.

The company, run by Viet Nam's richest man, has built its core business in the real estate and retail sectors but has branched out to include car manufacturing, gene decoding and now mobile phones. The company's mobile phone subsidiary, Vinsmart, launched four phone models on Friday, priced between \$120 and \$280. “(We are) aiming to bring to our clients the opportunity to experience high-quality, made-in-Viet Nam products,” Nguyen Viet Quang, deputy chairman of Vingroup, said at the launch event in Ho Chi Minh City.

The company said its factory in the port city of Hai Phong has the capacity to produce five million phones per year and could expand to smart TVs and smart homes. Vingroup acquired a 51 per cent stake in Spanish con-

sumer electronics maker BQ earlier this year, which will help with product development.

On Friday Vinsmart announced a patent licensing agreement with US chipmaker Qualcomm for mobile phone terminals. Vinsmart will face tough

competition in fast-growing Viet Nam where middle-class consumers with burgeoning budgets are buying Samsung and Apple phones. Several smaller Vietnamese firms already make their own mobile phones, but none have taken off in the country where

about a third of the country's 93 million people are smartphone users. Samsung held 37 per cent of the market in the second quarter of this year, while Oppo had 22 per cent and Apple had about five per cent, according to Counterpoint analysis firm. — AFP ■



Vingroup's mobile phone subsidiary VinSmart's Chief Executive Officer Tran Minh Trung presents the “Active 1+” smartphone. PHOTO: AFP

Fake news vs fact in online battle for truth

PARIS (Franch)—Since US President Donald Trump weaponised the term “fake news” during the 2016 presidential election campaign, the phrase has gone viral. Increasingly it is used by politicians around the world to denounce or dismiss news reports that do not fit their version of the truth. But as news outlets defend their work, false information is saturating the political debate worldwide and undermining an already weak level of trust in the media and institutions. The term has come to mean anything from a mistake to a parody or a deliberate misinterpretation of facts. At the same time, misinformation online is increasingly visible in attempts to manipulate elections.

Misinformation

The build-up to Trump’s 2016 victory, for example, saw numerous examples of hoaxes and false news stories: from Hillary Clinton’s alleged links to a child sex ring to a false report the Pope had endorsed Trump.

Misinformation had “a significant impact” on voting decisions, according to Ohio State University researchers, who questioned voters. But it was impossible to prove that false information swung the election for Trump.

As president, Trump still denounces any information that displeases him as “fake news”. Experts say his aides, meanwhile, have offered a mixture of truth and distortions, sometimes described as “alternative facts”.

“Lies and fabrication even seem to bolster one’s reputation and political prowess among their core supporters,” said John Huxford of Illinois State University, who researches false information.

Some studies even suggest that, as partisanship has risen, more people are willing to believe falsehoods. One 2017 survey, for example, showed 51 per cent of Republicans still believed that Barack Obama was born in Kenya, despite the hoax having been debunked.



Facebook boss Mark Zuckerberg was grilled at the US Congress after the Cambridge Analytica scandal that saw mass data breaches. **PHOTO: AFP**

Eroding trust

In 2018, the average level of trust in the news, across 37 countries, remained relatively stable at 44 per cent, according to a poll by YouGov for the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism.

But false information spread by authority figures has not helped matters.

In Ukraine, for example, authorities staged the death of Rus-

sian journalist Arkady Babchenko at the end of May, to foil a real plot to assassinate him.

Reports of the fake death made in good faith by mainstream media were “a godsend for paranoid people and conspiracy theorists,” said Christophe Deloire, secretary general of media rights watchdog Reporters Without Borders.

Trust in traditional media

remains higher than for social networks, according to the YouGov poll. Only 23 per cent of those polled said they trusted the news they found on social media.

But a study released by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in March found that false news spreads more rapidly on Twitter than real news does. — AFP ■

France’s ‘yellow vest’ protests lose momentum on decisive weekend

PARIS (France)—Groups of defiant “yellow vest” demonstrators faced off with tens of thousands of police around France on Saturday, but the protest movement appeared to have lost momentum on a fifth and decisive weekend. President Emmanuel Macron, facing the biggest crisis of his presidency, announced a series of concessions on Monday to defuse the explosive “yellow vest” crisis, which swelled up from rural and small-town France last month.

The package of tax and minimum wage measures for low-income workers, coupled with bitter winter weather this weekend, appeared to have helped bring calm to the country after more than a month of clashes and disruption. France was also hit by a fresh deadly terror attack on Tuesday night when a gunman opened fire at a Christmas market in Strasbourg, leaving four dead and leading the government to urge people to stay at home to spare the stretched security forces. Interior Minister Christophe Castaner said on Saturday that eight people had now died in incidents linked to the demonstrations, and called on protesters to halt their blockades across the country. “Everyone’s safety has to become the rule again,” he said in a tweet.

“Dialogue now needs to unite all those who want to transform France.” Richard Ferrand, the head of the National Assem-



A protestor wearing a yellow vest (gilet jaune) holds a French flag in front of the Arc de Triomphe and police vehicles, during a demonstration against rising costs of living they blame on high taxes in Paris on 15 December, 2018. **PHOTO: AFP**

bly, welcomed the “necessary” weakening of the rallies, adding that “there had been a massive response to their demands”. An estimated 66,000 people took to the streets across France, according to figures from the interior ministry early Saturday evening, half the level of a week ago. But Macron’s approval rating has also fallen: dropping to 23 per cent according to a poll published by *Le Journal du Dimanche* newspaper on Sunday, down two points from November. It marks a sharp decline from his 62 per cent rating following his election in May last year.

‘Movement won’t end’

“It’s a bit of a failure because the state is stopping us from being able to demonstrate properly,” Marie, a 35-year-old domestic helper and protester, told AFP of the declining numbers in Paris. Another protester in the southeastern city of Lyon, Francis Nicolas, 49, told AFP: “It’s a bit disappointing. We expected there to be more people, but the movement won’t end.” In Paris, the more than 8,000 police on duty easily outnumbered the 2,200 protesters counted by local authorities in the early afternoon. — AFP ■

US-led coalition says it destroyed IS site in Syrian mosque

WASHINGTON (United States)—US-led coalition forces destroyed an Islamic State group command centre inside a mosque in the Syrian border town of Hajin on Saturday, the US military said.

The statement comes as Kurdish-led forces mop up the final remnants of IS jihadists in Hajin, the largest settlement in what is the last pocket of territory controlled by the jihadists.

More than 16 “heavily armed” IS fighters were at the “command and control node” at the mosque when it was destroyed by a “precision strike,” a statement from the Combined Joint Task Force read. The jihadists, who were all killed in the strike, were using the mosque to “command attacks against Coalition partners,” it said. The IS group “continues to use protected structures to launch attacks against our Coalition partners with complete disregard for the infrastructure and innocent human lives,” the statement added.

Fighters with the Syrian Democratic Forces secured Hajin after weeks of heavy fighting on Friday, the Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said. The town is located in eastern Syria about 30 kilometres (18 miles) from the border with Iraq. — AFP ■

US returns historic bells to Philippine town after 117 years

BALANGIGA (Philippines)—The United States on Saturday formally returned three church bells to the central Philippine town of Balangiga in Eastern Samar province at a handover ceremony witnessed by President Rodrigo Duterte.

“The homecoming of these artifacts is truly a milestone in the shared and meaningful history of the United States and the Philippines, and heralds a new and more vibrant chapter in our bilateral relations,” Duterte said in a speech at the ceremony held at the town plaza filled with local residents. The Balangiga Bells are a relic of a particularly bloody incident in the Philippine town of the same name during the Philippine-American War (1899-1902).

On 28 September, 1901, the bells were tolled to signal the start of a surprise attack by townsfolk on the US Army’s 9th Infantry Regiment occupying the town. Forty-eight servicemen were killed in the ambush, leading to a retaliation by US forces that killed several thousand Filipinos. The Army subsequently took the three church bells as war trophies.

The demand for the return of the bells has been in the works since the 1950s. But it was Duterte’s assertion during his 2017 State of the Nation Address that eventually led to noticeable progress in the negotiations. “President Duterte made a forceful and passionate call for the bells to return to Balangiga. We heard. We listened. And we recognized that returning the bells to the Philippines was quite simply the right thing to do,” John Law, deputy chief of mission of the US Embassy in Manila, said at the handover ceremony. Local resident Felicitas Amarille, 54, told Kyodo News she cannot express how happy she is now that the bells are back after 117 years. —Kyodo News ■

Sri Lanka reinstates ousted prime minister: official

COLOMBO (Sri Lanka)—Sri Lanka’s sacked prime minister Ranil Wickremesinghe was reinstated on Sunday, his party said, ending a 51-day crisis that had paralysed the island nation and pushed it towards debt default.

The 69-year-old leader was sworn in by President Maithripala Sirisena, who sacked him on 26 October and triggered a power struggle that brought the country’s government to a standstill. Wickremesinghe had refused to step aside since being sacked by in late October and replaced by former leader Mahinda Rajapakse. Sri Lanka had drifted without a functioning government for nearly two months as the rival factions jostled for power in parliament and the courts. Sirisena had vowed to



Sri Lanka’s Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe (C) speaks to supporters at the prime minister’s official residence in Colombo on 16 December, 2018. **PHOT: AFP**

never reappoint Wickremesinghe—who he publicly castigated in speeches in recent weeks—as prime minister under his watch. The acrimony between the two was underscored Sunday when Sirisena barred journalists from attending the swearing-in ceremony

—leaving it to Wickremesinghe’s legislators to announce the appointment.

“We thank the citizens of the country who fought the illegal seizure of power and ensured that democracy was restored,” his United National Party of Sri Lanka posted on Twitter.

Sirisena’s appointee Rajapakse was unable to govern, failing many times to muster a majority in parliament. He was defeated six times on the floor of the legislature before being forced to step down on Saturday.

Sirisena suffered a

huge setback when the highest court in the country ruled last week that he acted outside the constitution when he sacked parliament in early November.

The court also confirmed Friday that Rajapakse and his purported cabinet could not exercise the powers of the office they held. A spokesman for Wickremesinghe said he was expected to form a cabinet in the coming days, with priority given to the 2019 budget, without which foreign debt servicing may not be possible.

Sri Lanka had been braced for a government shutdown as parliament failed to approve spending for 2019, and ratings agencies downgraded the country’s credit rating amid fears of a sovereign debt default.—AFP ■

CLAIM’S DAY NOTICE

M.V MCC HALONG VOY. NO. (1831/1832)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V MCC HALONG VOY. NO. (1831/1832) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 17-12-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T.T/M.I.P where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

**SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S MCC TRANSPORT (S’PORT)
PTE LTD**

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM’S DAY NOTICE

M.V XETHA BHUM VOY. NO. (1112W)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V XETHA BHUM VOY. NO. (1112W) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 17-12-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.P/M.I.T.T where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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**SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S REGIONAL CONTAINER
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Notice for Change of Pesticide Distributor

DuPont Company (Singapore) Pte Ltd., which is situated at No. 21, Biopolis Road, # 06-01, Nucleus, South Tower, Singapore 138507 and established in accordance with the laws of Singapore, has received the Provisional Registration for Use for the following product which is permitted for registration by the Pesticide Registration Board, Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

No.	Trademark Name	Chemicals Contained	Registration No.
1	DuPont™ Zorvec® Encantia® 330 SE	Famoxadone 28.8% + Oxathiapiprolin 2.88% w/w SE	P2018-3337

To distribute the abovementioned products officially in the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, DuPont Company (Singapore) Pte Ltd. appoints Aventine Limited, which is situated at No. 126(A), Kabaraye Pagoda Road, Bahan Township, Yangon and established in accordance with the laws of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar as the distribution representative, in place of Myanmar Arysta LifeScience Co., Ltd which is the currently appointed distribution representative. DuPont Company (Singapore) Pte Ltd notifies that if anyone would like to object, they may object with valid proofs within (14) days from the date of this notice. If no objection was made within the stipulated period, we will proceed to completion in accordance with the stipulations of the Pesticide Registration Board.

As per appointment and instruction by
DuPont Company (Singapore) Pte Ltd
Daw Khin Leinmar Ban Aye
LL.B (Advocate) (No. 10992)
Level 8A, Union Financial Centre, Botahtaung Township, Yangon
Tel: +951-8610348

Announcement of Transferring Distributor For Registered Pesticides

Distribution of the following Pesticides registered by Viet Trung Pesticide Joint Stock Company is transferring from Myanmar Kaung Hman Group Co.,Ltd to 1-2-1 Public Co., Ltd. Any objection regarding this transfer can notify at Joint. Secretary, Pesticide Registration Board, Plant Protection Division, west Gyogone, Insein within two weeks.

No	Trade Name	Active Ingredient	Registration	Registration No
1.	V.T Xim 25 WP	Acetamidrid 20% + Lambda-Cyhalothrin 5% WP	Provisional	P 2016-3134
2.	V.T Tap 95 SP	Cartap Hydrochloride 95% SP	Provisional	P 2016-3135
3.	V.T Bat 77 WP	Copper Hydroxide 77% WP	Provisional	P 2016-3141
4.	V.T Laung 32 WP	Bensulfuron-Methyl 4% + Quinlorac 28% WP	Provisional	P 2017-3938

Myanmar Kaung Hman Group Co.,Ltd
829A, Thumngalar St, 7 Ward, South Okkalapa Township, Yangon Myanmar
Tel : 09-784313530, 09-797997362, Email: Kanmyint999@gmail.com

Marathon UN climate talks near final straight

KATOWICE (Poland)—Nations appeared on Saturday to be on the cusp of a deal to implement the Paris climate goals, after all-night negotiations to hammer out a plan aimed at limiting global temperature rises.

“I think we have a landing zone. It is a compromise,” Gebru Jember Endalew, chair of

the Least Developed Countries negotiating group at the COP24 climate summit, told AFP.

Delegates from nearly 200 nations have been locked in marathon talks in Poland designed to produce a common rule book to put the pledges they made in the landmark 2015 Paris climate accord into practice.

This means all countries, rich and poor alike, must agree to action that will cap global temperature rises to “well below” two degrees Celsius (3.6 degrees Fahrenheit) and stave off the worst effects of planetary warming.

The talks have been beset by a host of disagreements, with

different configurations of developed and developing nations straddling both sides of the divide.

Developing nations want more clarity from richer ones over how the future climate fight will be funded and have been pushing for so-called “loss and damage” measures.

This would see richer countries giving money now to help deal with the effects of climate change many vulnerable states are already experiencing.

“It is a bit difficult to compromise when there are 190-plus countries,” said Endalew. “I am still collecting feedback from the coordinators.” —AFP

Fighting climate change in the shadow of Mount Everest

NEPAL—Formed in the shadow of Mount Everest, the turquoise depths of Nepal’s Imja glacial lake would be a breathtaking miracle of nature to behold—were they not a portent of catastrophic floods.

Scientists warn that as climate change causes Himalayan glaciers to melt at an alarming rate, lakes like Imja could swell further and eventually collapse, triggering a terrifying deluge in Nepal, an impoverished nation at the mercy of a warming planet.

Those tasked with staving off disaster fear a ‘glacial lake outburst flood’—sending torrents of water, mud and rock hurtling downstream—could reach as far as Nepal’s densely populated southern plains, wiping out roads, vital energy projects and entire villages in its path. “The risk is getting bigger,” said Arun Bhakta Shrestha, a climate scientist from the Kathmandu-based International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development. “These valleys are getting more populated, and infrastructure is developing rapidly.” Hundreds of these



Scientists warn that as Himalayan glaciers melt, lakes like Imja could swell further and eventually collapse. **PHOTO: AFP**

lakes have appeared out of nowhere in the Himalayas in recent decades. A 2014 survey found one quarter of Nepal’s glaciers shrunk between 1977 and 2010, leaving behind 1,466 lakes.

Twenty-one have been identified as potentially dangerous and Nepal is racing to stay a step ahead of disaster, as global warming reshapes its mountain geography. “As a small country, there is little we can do to stop what is happening to our glaciers,” said Rishi Ram Sharma, the director general at Nepal’s department of hydrology and meteorology. “But we have to do what we can do to adapt and protect our people.”

Living in fear

Nepal’s fastest-growing lake, Imja once posed little threat to the villagers of Surke, a picturesque hamlet perched high in the Everest region. In the early 1980s, the small lake at the foot of the Imja glacier at 5,010 metres (16,437 feet) was unremarkable. But by 2014, it had more than tripled in size, contained only by a natural wall of debris, known as a moraine, which experts warned might not hold back the waters much longer. A year later, when a massive earthquake struck Nepal, villagers in Surke assumed Imja had collapsed and would soon bury them all.—AFP ■

SPECIFIC PROCUREMENT NOTICE PROCUREMENT OF WORKS

REPUBLIC OF THE UNION OF MYANMAR
DEPARTMENT OF HIGHWAYS UNDER THE MINISTRY OF
CONSTRUCTION
FLERP – FLOODING AND LANDSLIDE EMERGENCY RECOVERY
PROJECT
Credit No.:5889-MM

Contract Title: **THANDWE-GWA ROAD WORKS – RAHKHINE STATE**
Reference No. : NCB C1-MOC-W01 (LOT 5)

The Republic of the Union of Myanmar has received financing from the International Development Association (IDA) toward the cost of the Flooding and Landslide Emergency Recovery Project (FLERP). The Department of Highways (DOH) under the Ministry of Construction, in its role as Implementing Agency of Component 1 of the FLERP, intends to apply part of the proceeds toward payments under the contract for the procurement of Road Works and DOH now invites sealed bid from eligible bidders for the following road work along the Thandwe-Gwa Road in the Rakhine State:

C1-MOC-W01-LOT 5: SUPPLY AND INSTALLATION OF SAFETY STEEL GUARD RAILS

The works are scheduled to start on 1 February 2019 with an estimated maximum duration of 150 days.

Bids will be evaluated, taking into account discounts offered. The contract will be awarded to the lowest evaluated Bidder meeting the required qualification criteria for lot. Bidding will be conducted through the National Competitive Bidding procedures as specified in “the World Bank’s Guidelines for Procurement of Goods, Works and Non-Consulting Services under IBRD Loans and IDA Credits & Grants by World Bank Borrowers dated January 2011 and revised in July 2014” (the Procurement Guidelines), and is open to all eligible bidders as defined in the Procurement Guidelines. In addition, please refer to paragraphs 1.6 and 1.7 setting forth the World Bank’s policy on conflict of interest.

Interested eligible bidders may obtain further information within office hour and a complete set of electronic bidding documents in English Language may be obtained free of charge by interested eligible bidders by simple e-mail request to the address below, starting from 21 December 2018. Alternatively, a complete set of printed bidding documents in English Language may be obtained by interested eligible bidders upon submission of a written application to the address below and upon payment of a nonrefundable fee of 30,000.00 MMK. The method of payment will be cash payment or cashier’s check directly at the address mentioned below where the set of bidding documents can be collected. No printed documents will be sent.

Interested Bidders that obtained the bidding documents will be invited to attend a Pre-Bid Conference on Tuesday 8 January 2018 at address mentioned below. Bid must be delivered to the address below on or before Friday 18 January 2019, 12:00 noon local time. Electronic bidding will not be permitted. Late bid will be rejected. Bid will be publicly opened in the presence of the bidders’ designated representatives and anyone who choose to attend at the address below on Friday 18 January 2018, 1:00 pm local time.

All bids must be accompanied by a Bid Security or a Cash Deposit with a reputable Bank in Myanmar, licensed by and under the supervision of the Central Bank of Myanmar for this activity.

The address referred to above is:

Department of Highways
Attn: U Khin Zaw, Project Director, FERP; Daw Ei Ei Myo, Procurement Director, FLERP
Office No. (11), Nay Pyi Taw, Republic Union of the Republic of Myanmar
Tel: +95(67)407658, +95(9)2450600, +95(9)5070469
e-mail: flerp.moc@gmail.com

MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS

MYANMA RAILWAYS

Extension of Tender Closing Date

Myanma Railways Extends the Tender Closing Date as follows:

Sr No	Tender No	Description	Initial Closing Date & Time	Extension Closing Date & Time
1	16/MR/INDIA(E) 2017-2018	Track Recording Car EM 80 And Small Track Maintenance Machineries	19.12.2018 (14:30) Hr	23.1.2019 (14:30) Hr

Managing Director, Myanma Railways
Ministry of Transport and Communications, Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar

More difficult to be an actress in Hollywood: Kurt Russell

LONDON—Kurt Russell has slammed Hollywood for making it 'more difficult' for female actors to do well in comparison to their male counterparts.

The 67-year-old movie icon hit out at Hollywood for its 'historical' mistreatment of women, reported Contactmusic.

"Historically we can look at the product that comes out of Hollywood and for the most part it is more difficult playing in that world as an actress than it is an actor. But that is probably going to change too," Russell told BW magazine.

The "Hateful Eight" star also praised female actors, including his partner Goldie Hawn, for defying entertainment industry's rules on ageing.

'(Goldie's) energy is incredible, she still looks great, she is in great shape and she is interested in things other than primarily what is going on in this town but every once in a while she ducks her head in and has some fun.—PTI ■



Kurt Russell and his long-time partner Goldie Hawn (l). PHOTO: AFP

FREDERIC J. BROWN / AFP

Muhammad Ali was on the short list to play Superman in 1978 film

LOS ANGELES—Boxing legend Muhammad Ali and veteran actors Al Pacino and Dustin Hoffman were on the short list to play Superman in the 1978 film, producer Ilya Salkind has said.

According to the Hollywood Reporter, Salkind made the revelation on the commentary track in the newest edition of the film which was recently released to coincide with its 40th anniversary.

"One of the conditions with DC Comics was I had to make a list of actors to play Superman that they had to approve.

"I had a made a list that was absolutely hilarious because they had approved people like Cassius Clay then, they had approved Al Pacino, they had approved Dustin Hoffman. They had approved them, they could play Superman," Salkind said.

Christopher Reeve played the iconic DC superhero, but

Ali and Superman teamed up in the comics to defeat an alien invasion of Earth.

The comics titled "Superman vs Muhammad Ali" also released in 1978.

Salkind shared the casting process was "complex" and confusing at times.

"One side, they were extraordinarily protective (of the character's image) and on the other side, they weren't so aware of reality because as much as Dustin Hoffman is a fantastic actor, I don't think he would have been a great Superman. Perhaps he could have been."

Hoffman was also considered for the role of Lex Luthor.

"We met with Dustin at Cannes... We had dinner with Dustin to play Lex Luthor, which would have been pretty exciting. But it didn't work out," Salkind said. The role went to Gene Hackman.—PTI ■

Dead stag installed at former US base in South Korea

PAJU (South Korea)—A stuffed deer stands in a former US ammunition store just outside the Demilitarized Zone that divides the two Koreas, tree branches spreading up from its antlers towards the roof.

The work was installed this year at Camp Greaves, a former US army facility within the buffer zone that runs alongside the DMZ that has been converted into an arts centre and tourist attraction.

South Korean artist Kim Myeongbeom listens to "the whispers of objects and their intimate conversations", a plaque explains, looking to juxtapose both man-made and natural objects and representations of life and death.

American forces moved out of Camp Greaves in 2004, in one of the first steps of a wide-ranging plan to relocate many of the US units stationed in South Korea to Camp Humphreys, south of the capital Seoul.

The transfers have now largely been completed, leav-

ing a host of former bases in the hands of South Korean local authorities.

The most prominent is the Yongsan base in the centre of Seoul, which is set to become a public park.

At Camp Greaves, north of Seoul, Gyeonggi province is attempting to cash in on the steady stream of DMZ tourism nearby.

The armouries-turned-art spaces are just one of its attractions—the former officers' mess has been converted into a youth hostel.

The hugely popular 2016 South Korean television drama "Descendants of the Sun" was partly filmed at the site, and it offers fans the chance to take selfies in front of key scenes' backdrops.

"From just over there you can see a North Korean flag and also the South Korean flag," Southern tourist Kim Dong-in told AFP.

"It makes me realise how close North and South Korea are and hope for unification."—AFP ■

Colombian crime movie wins top award at Havana's 40th film festival

HAVANA (Cuba)—The Colombian crime film "Pajaros de Verano" has won the prized Coral Award at the 40th edition of the popular Havana Film Festival.

The festival, which in its heyday in the 1980s drew a half-million moviegoers but of late has struggled with reduced budgets, continues through Sunday, but prizes were awarded Friday night. The winning Colombian film—titled "Birds of Passage" in English—was directed by Ciro

Guerra and Cristina Gallego.

Starring Carmina Martinez, Natalia Reyes and Jose Acosta, it has been selected to represent Colombia at next February's Academy Awards ceremony in Hollywood. "Birds of Passage" tells the story of the rise and fall of an indigenous Colombian family caught up in the risky bonanza of marijuana trafficking to the United States, which threatens the family's culture, traditions and very lives. Most of the other

top prizes in Havana went to Mexican, Uruguayan, Peruvian and Argentine films. The best-director award went to Carlos Reygadas for "Nuestro Tiempo" ("Our Time"), while Carlos Sorin won for best screenwriting with "Joel."

Ilse Salas got the nod for best female performance for "Las niñas bien" ("The Good Girls"), a Mexican film, while the best-male award went to Lorenzo Ferro for "El Angel" from Argentina.—AFP ■



Cast members of 'Pajaros de Verano' (Birds of passage) Colombian directors Ciro Guerra (2l) and Cristina Gallego (3l), Colombian actresses Natalia Reyes (2l) and Carmina Martinez (2l) and actors Jhon Narvaez, Jose Acosta and Jose Vicente Cotes arrive on 11 May, 2018. PHOTO: AFP

FSB lab to examine samples taken from hole in Soyuz MS-09 spacecraft's hull

MOSCOW—The samples from a hole and the meteorite shield in the Soyuz MS-09 spacecraft will be transferred on 20 December to the laboratory of the Federal Security Service (FSB) for analysis, a source in the security agencies told TASS on 13 December.

“On 20 December, after the Soyuz MS-09 returns to Earth, the container with the material evidence will be transferred to the FSB laboratory for a chemical analysis,” the source said.

The Russian space industry “has no laboratories with the sufficient competences and technical equipment for carrying out such examinations,” the source said.

The task of the lab experts

is “to determine whether the samples contain sealant or glue different from that used by cosmonauts on 30 August to patch the hole,” the source said.

Russia’s State Space Corporation Roscosmos declined to comment on the information provided by the source.

Roscosmos Chief Dmitry Rogozin told TASS on Wednesday that the container with the samples and a part of the meteorite shield gathered by the Russian cosmonauts during their spacewalk will be transferred upon the spacecraft’s return to Earth on 20 December to “the competent agencies.”

Russian cosmonauts Oleg



The samples from a hole and the meteorite shield in the Soyuz MS-09 spacecraft will be transferred on 20 December to the laboratory of the Federal Security Service for analysis, a source said. **PHOTO: TASS**

Kononenko and Sergei Prokopyev made a spacewalk overnight to 12 December to inspect the hole in the Soyuz spacecraft’s casing. They unsealed the thermal insulation layer and the meteorite shield, inspected and photographed the hole and also scraped off samples from

the hole’s surface.

Soyuz hull damage

On 30 August, a drop in air pressure was registered on the ISS. The crew examined the compartments and add-on modules one by one to identify a two-millimeter hole in the hull

of the Soyuz MS-09 spacecraft attached to the orbital outpost. In the evening of the same day it was patched up with several layers of epoxy resin. Pressure returned to normal. On 31 August the crew reinforced the patch with another layer of sealant.—Tass ■

Egypt unearths tomb of ancient high priest



A picture taken on 14 July, 2018 shows a general view of the Saqqara necropolis south of Cairo where Egyptian antiquities officials say a new tomb belonging to a high priest and dating back more than 4,400 years. **PHOTO: AFP**

CAIRO (Egypt)—Egyptian archaeologists have discovered the tomb of a priest dating back more than 4,400 years in the pyramid complex of Saqqara south of the capital Cairo, authorities said on Saturday. “Today we are announcing the last discovery of the year 2018, it’s a new discovery, it’s a private tomb,” Antiquities Minister Khaled el-Enany told an audience of invited guests including reporters.

“It is exceptionally well preserved, coloured, with sculpture inside. It belongs to a high official priest... (and) is more than 4,400 years old,” he said. The tomb belongs to “Wahtye”, a high priest who served during the fifth dynasty reign of King Neferirkare, the antiquities ministry said. His tomb is decorated with scenes showing the royal priest alongside his mother, wife and other members

of his family, the ministry said in a statement. It also contains more than a dozen niches and 24 colourful statues of the cleric and members of his family, it said. In November archeology officials announced the discovery in Saqqara of seven sarcophagi, some dating back more than 6,000 years, during excavation work started in April by the same archaeological mission. Three of those tombs contained mummified cats and scarabs. The Saqqara necropolis south of Cairo is home to the famous Djoser pyramid, a more than 4,600-year-old construction which dominates the site and was Egypt’s first stone monument.

The tomb, built by the master architect Imhotep for the Pharaoh Djoser, stood 62 metres (203 feet) tall originally and is considered the oldest building in the world built entirely of stone.—AFP ■

Shenzhen, China’s reform pioneer, leads tech revolution

SHENZHEN (China)—The southern city of Shenzhen is the symbol of the transformative reforms launched by China 40 years ago: former fishing villages that morphed into a global manufacturing hub.

Today Shenzhen is again at the heart of a new policy aimed at turning China into a hi-tech innovator and shed its reputation as an assembly line for foreign companies or—worse—an imitator.

Modern skyscrapers housing corporations and ambitious start-ups tower over the mega-city of 13 million people—among them is Wu Yebin, 35, who runs his own tech firm from his 35th floor office.

His own story mirrors those of countless others who have risen from modest backgrounds following the reforms spearheaded by late paramount leader Deng Xiaoping, which the Communist Party ratified on 18 December, 1978. The son of poor farmers, Wu arrived in the city in 2005 and over the years he assembled devices similar to Apple’s iPad or MacBook, joining Shenzhen’s army of people making “shanzhai”—creative knock-offs of foreign electronics affordable for local population. “Germany, the United States, Japan, South Korea... All developed countries have done

this to develop their manufacturing industry,” Wu said. “You have to do that to gain experience.”

While this economic model used to be “very popular, it is no longer viable today,” he said. He now leads his own electronics firm, MeegoPad, which boasts an annual turnover of \$28 million making products such as miniature PCs. “We are now very attached to intellectual property and patents,” Wu said.

‘Made in China 2025’

Shenzhen, which lived off fishing and rice paddies, became a testing ground for Deng’s reforms when it was designated as the country’s first Special Economic Zone in 1980.

It grew into a massive manufacturing centre, with factories churning out gadgets, computers and phones for foreign firms, which today include Apple and Samsung.

Today China’s own global corporations, such as telecom company Huawei and internet giant Tencent, have made Shenzhen their headquarters and the city of tens of thousands of factories is dubbed the “Silicon Valley of Hardware”.

The metropolis is now seeking to reinvent itself as the home

of Chinese innovation, in line with Beijing’s “Made in China 2025” plan to dominate key hi-tech industries such as robotics, electric vehicles and artificial intelligence.

“China is becoming a world leader in this field,” Wu said. “Shenzhen is turning into a meeting point for creative engineers from around the world.” Now talent from abroad is flocking to Shenzhen.

Meng Jie, who is French and in his 30s, left California’s Silicon Valley in 2017 to create Maybe, a company that makes smart speakers that help people learn Mandarin.

“Silicon Valley is still way ahead in artificial intelligence. But you can find the electronic or mechanical component you need three times faster in Shenzhen,” Meng said.

“It’s like going from a road to a motorway,” he said.

Pointing to the skyscrapers outside his office, he said: “People see Silicon Valley as the tech Mecca. They underestimate Shenzhen a lot because they don’t know what’s happening here.”

“This place was just sand and water 20 years ago. In 10 years, Shenzhen will be a very important world city. It will be the capital of innovation,” he said.—AFP ■

Dave Leduc defends MLWC belt, fight with Tun Tun Min ends in draw

DAVE Leduc, the defending champion of the Myanmar Lethwei World Championship (MLWC), managed to hold on to his title at the Air KBZ Grand Final Championship at the Thein Phyu Lethwei Stadium in Yangon yesterday.

Leduc's bareknuckle-boxing match with former world champion Tun Tun Min ended in a draw. The match proved to be an exciting one with Myanmar lethwei fans cheering both fighters.

Tun Tun Min, who had been suffering from a knee problem and had taken a long break after his last fight, did not get much chance to showcase his form at yesterday's fight.

In the first round, Dave Leduc dominated with the use of his elbow and well-timed kicks. Tun Tun Min was floored twice in the first round, but he managed to avoid getting knocked out.

In the second round, both fighters put up a calculated fight.

In a thrilling third round, Tun Tun Min upped his challenge with continuous punches and knee attacks, but Dave Leduc stood firm.

Dave Leduc once again dominated the fourth round, with some errors from Tun Tun Min. In the final round, Tun Tun Min was again floored, but he managed to stand up, and the match ended in a draw.—Lynn Thit (Tgi) ■



Tun Tun Min (blue) lands a punch on Dave Leduc (red) in Air KBZ Grand Final Championship at the Thein Phyu Stadium in Yangon yesterday. PHOTO:MLWC

ASEAN University Games: Myanmar wins four gold, one bronze medals in karate

MYANMAR secured four gold medals and one bronze medal in karate at the 19th ASEAN University Games held at the Wanna Theikdi Stadium in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

In the Kata competition of karate, the Myanmar men's team won a gold medal after

defeating the Thailand team. The Myanmar women's Kata team grabbed the gold medal after trouncing the Malaysian team.

In the women's individual Kata competition, Myanmar's Thazin Aye won the gold medal, a player from Thailand

secured the silver medal, and a player from Malaysia took the bronze medal.

In the men's individual Kata competition, Myanmar's Hein Min Khant took the gold medal. Malaysia won the silver medal and Indonesia secured the bronze medal at the competition.

In the women's individual Kumite (above 61kg weight category) competition, Myanmar and Thailand shared the bronze medal. Indonesia secured the gold medal and Malaysia won the silver medal at the competition.

In the men's individual Kumite (above 75kg weight category),

Malaysia got the gold medal, Thailand secured the silver medal, and Indonesia won the bronze medal.

The second round of karate competitions will be held today (17 December).—Shine Htet Zaw ■ (Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)



Myanmar women's Kata team performing in yesterday's Karate's Kata competition in the 19th ASEAN University Games in Nay Pyi Taw. PHOTO: SOE NYUNT

19th ASEAN University Games 2018						
10th - 19th DECEMBER, 2018, MYANMAR						
Date / Time- 16.12.2018 (17:00)						
Rank	Country	SEA Nations	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
1	THA	Thailand	50	46	32	128
2	INA	Indonesia	40	26	24	90
3	MAS	Malaysia	27	41	40	108
4	MYA	Myanmar	19	19	20	58
5	VIE	Vietnam	13	5	5	23
6	SGP	Singapore	5	10	16	31
7	LAO	Laos	4	7	8	19
8	CAM	Cambodia	2	4	4	10
9	TLS	Timor Leste	2			2
10	PHI	Philippine	1			1
11	BRU	Brunei				
Total			163	158	149	470