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Monday, 18 March 2019

Vice President U Henry Van Thio visits Shwesettaw Wildlife Sanctuary

VICE President U Henry Van Thio visited the Shwesettaw Wildlife Sanctuary, the Man Creek Elephant Camp, a coffee technology development farm (Natyaygan), and a farm for high-quality cattle breeds in Magway Region on 16 March, and looked into their requirements.

In the briefing hall of the Shwesettaw Wildlife Sanctuary, the Vice President heard a report on biodiversity and establishment of protected areas, the status of forest reserves under the care of the Environment and Wildlife Protection Department, a brief history of the sanctuary and its goal, the salient points of a sanctuary, the conservation of flora and fauna, and benefit to public.

The Vice President led a coordination meeting with the relevant departments for the electrification of the sanctuary, and observed the breeding of star tortoise.

The Shwesettaw sanctuary was established with the aim of protecting and conserving the golden deer (*Cervus eldithamin*), an endemic species of Myanmar, raising public awareness on protecting and conserving flora and fauna, preserving the catchment areas of the Mann and Mone creeks, carrying out scientific research, and promoting regional development through ecotourism.

Spread across Minbu,



Vice President U Henry Van Thio feeds the elephant at Man Creek Elephant Camp yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

Pwintphyu, Ngaphe, and Setoktara townships in Minbu District, Magway Region, the sanctuary has been working to protect and conserve rare species such as golden deer and star tortoise, which are found only in Myanmar, and various

species of native birds.

A critically endangered species endemic to the dry zone forests of Myanmar, star tortoises are considered among the most beautiful tortoise species in the world. They are the pride of Myanmar and cannot

be found anywhere else on the globe. The Forest Department, the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), and the Turtle Survival Alliance (TSA) have been conducting cage-breeding of star tortoises, and releasing them in protected forests.

The Shwesettaw Wildlife Sanctuary is among the 43 conservation areas set up in Myanmar for protecting and preserving the country's ecosystem and biodiversity.

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Union Minister Lt-Gen Kyaw Swe attends CND in Vienna

UNION Minister for Home Affairs Lt-Gen Kyaw Swe and delegation attended the Sixty-second session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) and Ministerial Segment held at Vienna International Centre in Vienna, Austria, from 14 to 22 March.

At the conference, the Union Minister said that Myanmar was combating the narcotic drugs as a national task. The country saw greater effectiveness in the sector of controlling and curbing narcotic drugs thanks to the ardent efforts after the opening of a complaint acceptance session at the President's Office, he said, and added that the joint anti-drug campaign at the Golden Triangle Region where the borders of Myanmar, Laos and Thailand meet was gaining progress. Myanmar could significantly reduce opium cultivation when compared with

the previous years, he noted, inviting international cooperation in curbing the trafficking of chemicals and equipment used in manufacturing stimulant tables. He promised that Myanmar would join hands with the international community.

The Union Minister and delegation also attended preliminary meeting held on 13 March and the Ministerial Segment held on 14 and 15 March. The Union Minister held separate talks with Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) Mr Yury Fedotov and Chairman of the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) Mr Viroj Sumyai. Moreover, Ambassador U San Lwin of the Permanent Office of Myanmar is attending the follow-up meeting held between 18 and 22 March, MNA ■



Union Minister Lt-Gen Kyaw Swe (left) attends the Sixty-second session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs at Vienna International Centre in Vienna, Austria. PHOTO: MNA

AA turns to attacking civilian targets



The civilian boat is attacked and set on fire by AA on Kaladan River on 16 March. PHOTO: MNA

ON 16 March 2019, at around 10 am, MV-Yadana Win 7, a civilian boat, was attacked and set on fire by AA. It was carrying construction materials of vital importance to the development work undergoing in Rakhine State, ie. the construction of Paletwa Bridge project across Kaladan River.

The vessel left Yangon on 10 March and was making its way to Paletwa, via Sittwe and Kyauktaw when it was attacked.

The boat was shot at with small arms, and after the crew were taken onshore, the vessel was set on fire.

The vessel was captained by U Aung Kyaw Thu and a crew of ten, all civilians.

The vessel was carrying 256.085 tons of steel frames, 24.96 tons of frame base, 0.35 tons of paint, 4.835 tons of high tension bolts, bridge construction materials worth about 1.072 billion kyats.

The vessel was unarmed and was not carrying any security personnel. The AA deliberately chose to target a civilian boat carrying construction materials meant for the development of Rakhine. There has been a widespread condemnation by the public of the terrorist act by AA in burning and destroying a civilian vessel transporting materials meant for the development of Rakhine State. —MNA ■

Yangon Book Street attracts book lovers

BOOKWORMS thronged the Yangon Book Street that was livening with literary talks, book launching and let's solve the literary puzzle programs yesterday.

The seventh week of the Yangon Book Street hosted the introduction of the book "Aye-ayawady" compiled by Thakin Mya Than and published by Pyone Sarpay at 11 am; the talks on "the Fear Factor" by writer Chit Oo Nyo at 2 pm and "Live begins at 60" by writer Dr Myint Than (Nyaunglaybin) at 3 pm; and let's solve the literary puzzle presented by model Moe Myint Thazin, in which popular books published by Thiha Yadana printing house were presented to winners.

Prominent writers, Shwegu May Hnin, Maung Thway Thit, U Thura Zaw shared literary

knowledge with other literati and booklovers.

"Novelist Chit Oo Nyo even praised his meeting with the people as a historic moment of the literature. The novelist explained us about the people of a certain place where they in the habit of obeying orders only under authoritative power or intimidation. A lot of people attended the literary talks. The number of attendees increased after two in the afternoon," said Ko Thiha of Mingalataung Nyunt Township, Yangon.

The Ministry of Information, with the assistance of Yangon Region Government and Yangon City Development Committee, has been organizing the Yangon Book Street every weekend in the open season since 2017.—Thant Sin Win ■ (Translated by TMT)



Booklovers visit Yangon Book Street on Thein Pyu Street. PHOTO: THANT SIN WIN

Vice President U Henry Van Thio visits Shwesettaw ...

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It is home to 14 kinds of mammals, 146 species of birds, 43 species of amphibians, 39 species of butterfly, 22 species of freshwater fish, 89 tree species, three orchid species, and 26 kinds of herbal plants.

Later in the visit, the Vice President and his entourage visited the Mann Shwesttawyar Pagoda, and donated cash to the Pagoda's board of trustees.

At the Man Creek Elephant Camp, the Vice President heard a report from officials about ecotourism based on elephant conservation, visions for the camp, its history, salient points, elephant population, services, and income- and profit-sharing arrangement.

After hearing the report, the Vice President said according to the list, Myanmar has about 3,000 State-owned elephants and about 2,500 private-owned elephants. He said he was pleased to see ecotourism based on elephant conservation achieving a certain level of success. He then advised systematic planning to ensure better elephant care for the sustainability of mammals owned by the state and private players. He also toured the camp and fed elephants.

The Forest Department has opened 20 elephant conserva-

tion-based ecotourism camps to promote green economy.

The goals of the camps include developing ecotourism, generating job opportunities for mahouts and locals, improving community-based tourism, increasing understanding of the natural habitat, behavior, and diet of the world's largest land mammals, raising public awareness on flora and fauna conservation programs based on appreciation of the country's natural beauty, and adding to national income through the green economy.

In the afternoon, the Vice President and his entourage headed to a coffee technology development farm (Natyaygan) in Ngaphe Township, Magway Region, and heard reports on its salient points, production, and exports.

The Vice President spoke of the need to extend the cultivation of coffee strains that have a demand in the international market. He also had a look at raw coffee, coffee samples, and flourishing coffee plantations. During his meeting with locals, he heard their requirements and directed relevant officials on fulfilling them.

Located on a 40.85-acre plot, the farm is growing hybrid Arabica coffee strains. It is distributing coffee saplings in areas



Vice President U Henry Van Thio visits the coffee technology development farm (Natyaygan) yesterday. PHOTO: MNA

to the west of Magway Region and the east of Rakhine State, and conducting mobile courses in those areas.

Later, the Vice President inspected a pedigree cattle farm belonging to the Good Brothers Company at Yaypyae Village, Myothit Township. The company's owner, U Ha Oo, and officials presented a report on the output

and export of dairy products.

The Vice President also took a tour of the farm. He said geographically, the country is lying in the midst of giant markets, and urged departments, entrepreneurs, and local farmers to join hands to extend cattle farming to promote exports and socio-economic development.

Vice President U Henry Van

Thio was accompanied by Chief Minister of Magway Region Dr. Aung Moe Nyo, Deputy Ministers Maj-Gen Myint Nwe and Dr. Ye Myint Swe, regional cabinet members, MPs, and departmental personnel. They arrived back in Nay Pyi Taw in the evening. — MNA ■

(Translated by TMT)

Union Minister calls on faculties in Putao for improving proficiency

Dr. Myo Thein Gyi, the Union Minister for Education, held a meeting with department heads and faculties of the Putao Government Technical Institute (GTI) and Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET)

high school in Putao, Kachin State, yesterday.

U Maung Maung Than, Principal of Putao's GTI and TVET high school, first explained the organizational structure of the schools, the

schools' workforce, the teaching and learning processes, and the short-term trainings offered.

Next was a speech from the Union Minister. He said the Ministry of Education is implementing the National Education Stra-

tegic Plan (NESP) 2016-2021 to carry out educational reforms in the country. The technical and vocational education sector is driven by three strategies and TVET trainings will be made accessible to all, said the Union Minister.

He said trainings had to be expanded into courses that suit the needs of the relevant regions; those conducted on normal time periods and those aimed at imparting skills in a shorter timeframe. He said courses must teach skills that are suited to the needs of the region. The skills suited for the area include repairing and maintenance for automobiles, agricultural equipment, and for turbines that will be commonly used to generate electricity from the many creeks in the area. Other skills to include are masonry, construction skills, hospitality and tourism servicing, and teacher training, said

the Union Minister.

He said teachers need to be experienced in the practical training of the subject they are teaching. The teachers need to be proficient first so that the students will become skilled, and they need better proficiency in English and ICT skills. Teachers need to constantly attend workshops or training to keep refining their skills, said the Union Minister. He pointed out that administrative staff also need to have high levels of competency.

Next, Deputy Director-General Dr. Nay Myo Tun of the Department of Technical, Vocational Education and Training replied to questions raised by the attendees. He said they will respond in accordance with the Union Minister's guidelines. The Union Minister later toured around the workshop and classrooms of the school. — District IPRD

(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)



Union Minister Dr. Myo Thein Gyi meets with department heads and faculties of the Putao Government Technical Institute (GTI) and Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) high school in Putao, Kachin State, yesterday. PHOTO: MNA

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Gem Emporium continues seventh day

THE 56th Gem Emporium continued its seventh day at the Mani Yadana Jade Hall in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

Jade lot numbers 2401 to 3600 were put up for sale through an open tender system, out of which 738 jade lots were sold for Euro 101.472 million.

Jade lot numbers 1201 to 2400 were also put up for sale the day before and sold 858 lots for Euro 78.825 million.

This brings the total number of jade lots sold so far to 2,691 and amounts to Euro 226.802 million.

The emporium will continue to 20 March and will display jade lot numbers 3601 to 4800 on 18 March, numbers 4801 to 6000 on 19 March, and numbers 6001 to 6973 on 20 March.

The emporium received a visit from the Union Minister for Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation, U Oh Win, and Deputy Min-



Traders put tender submission forms into the boxes at yesterday's gem emporium in Nay Pyi Taw.

PHOTO: HTEIN NAN NAW

ister Dr. Ye Myint Swe in the afternoon.

2,912 overseas gem mer-

chants and 1,649 domestic gem merchants have registered for the gem emporium and many

visited yesterday.—Aye Aye Thant ■ (Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

Over 40 people smuggled in first two months of this year, primarily sent to China for forced marriage

By Nyein Nyein

MORE than 40 human trafficking cases have been reported in the first two months of this year, with the majority of victims sent to China for forced marriage, according to the Myanmar Anti-Human Trafficking Police Force.

In January and February, 41 cases of human trafficking involving 140 suspects and 59 victims were investigated. Among the victims, there were 8 children — two boys and six girls.

"With 31 cases of forced marriages reported from China, the country is emerging as a significant destination for trafficked persons.

Five cases of exploitation of Myanmar workers were reported in Thailand, China, and the domestic labour market, while one case of illegal surrogacy to China was registered," according to data from the Anti-Human Trafficking Police Force.

Among the regions and states, Shan State witnessed 11 cases of human trafficking, fol-

lowed by Yangon with 9 cases. A total of eighth trafficking cases were registered in Mandalay Region, five in Kachin State, three each in Mon and Kayin states, and one each in Nay Pyi Taw and Taninthayi Region in January and February.

In 2018, more than 206 cases of human trafficking involving 598 suspects and 317 victims were reported.

Among the victims, there were 25 children, two boys and 23 girls.

Political instability, inequality in development, and the growing gap between the rich and the poor are contributing to human trafficking, according to the police.

"Besides, some rural people are cheated as they lack access to the legal channels for seeking work abroad. Lack of economic opportunities in the victims' hometowns is the fundamental cause for trafficking," anti-trafficking police said.

The scope of human traffickers has been growing day by day, owing to advanced technology network platforms and

low capital, said experts.

The Myanmar government has established a anti-trafficking liaison office in two neighbouring countries, Thailand and China. Myanmar is actively participating in collective efforts to combat human-trafficking in six countries in the Mekong region and ASEAN countries.

According to the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Law, traffickers of women and children face a minimum imprisonment of 10 years and a maximum sentence of life. If three people run a trafficking operation together, they can be sentenced to a minimum 20 years in jail or a maximum life imprisonment, along with a fine.

Those involved in trafficking and those charged with conspiracy also face heavy punishment. Any property or wealth acquired through trafficking can be seized, according to the law.

The Myanmar Anti-human Trafficking Report 2016 states that of the seven types of human-trafficking cases reported in the country: 69.7 per cent

involve forced marriage, 13.6 per cent forced prostitution, 10 per cent forced labour, 4.8 per cent forced child trafficking, 1.4 per cent forced slavery, 0.3 per cent forced adoption, and 0.2 per cent forced sexual exploitation.

According to a report on cross-border trafficking in persons, 80 per cent of vulnerable victims are sent to China, 10 per cent to Thailand, 6 per cent to Malaysia, and 4 per cent are trafficked within Myanmar.

Eighty-five per cent of the victims are women, including young girls, and child trafficking accounts for 4.38 per cent of victims, the report stated.

To control and prevent the rise in human trafficking, both public as well as private sector institutions — the government, non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations, and the general public — need to cooperate with anti-trafficking actors during ongoing operations in the fight against human trafficking, said police. ■

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Trade with South Korea up 30% in January

TRADE between Myanmar and the Republic of Korea this January topped US\$82.8 million, registering an increase in value by \$19.148 million or 30 per cent from last January, according to the Ministry of Commerce's latest monthly trade report.

Myanmar's exports regularly outdid its imports in bilateral trade with South Korea. Between October and January this year, Myanmar's export to South Korea was worth \$43.3 million, while its import from the East Asian country reached nearly \$40 million.

This year saw an increase in both export and import value between the two countries. In comparison with last January, the current bilateral export rose by \$16.936 million or 64

per, whereas the bilateral imports increased slightly by over \$2.5 million or 6 per cent. Last January, Myanmar-ROK trade totalled \$63.7 million, including \$26.4 million in exports and \$37.3 million in imports.

Myanmar's exports to South Korea include agricultural products, including cashew nuts, mangoes, rice, beans and pulses, and other miscellaneous products, importing cosmetics, foodstuff, electronic equipment, textiles, mobile devices and other commodities.

According to the ministry's yearly trade statistics, trade between the two countries in the FY2017-2018 was almost \$798 million in total, down by \$76 million, as against the previous 2016-2017 FY's total of \$866



A farmer use the harvester to harvest green gram in Thone Gwa Township, Yangon Region.
PHOTO: KO KYAW

million.

Trade between the two countries reached its peak of \$1.57 billion in the 2013-2014 FY. It decreased to \$862 million in the 2014-2015 FY and \$656 mil-

lion in 2015-2016 FY.

According to a report of the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration, South Korea's new investments in Myanmar this financial year

reached \$13.4 million from two projects. Its investment during the 2018 mini-budget period was \$77 million.—Shwe Khine ■

(Translated by Khaing Thanda Lwin)

Sino-Myanmar bilateral trade worth US\$3.7 bln in four months Oct-Jan

THE value of Myanmar's trade with China in the first four months (Oct-Jan) of current fiscal year 2018-2019 totalled US\$3.74 billion, including \$1.6 billion worth of exports and \$2.13 billion for import, according to data released by the Ministry of Commerce.

Meanwhile, Myanmar's regional trade with ASEAN countries showed the highest growth, closely followed by its bilateral trade with China. The value of bilateral trade with China was \$6 billion in the past mini-budget period, \$11.78 billion in the 2017-2018 fiscal year and \$10.8 billion in the 2016-2017 FY respectively.

Rice, various types of peas, sesame seeds, corn, fruits and

vegetables, dried tea leaves, fishery products, rubber, minerals and animal products are exported to China, whereas machinery, plastic raw materials, consumer products and electronic tools flow into Myanmar.

During the Oct-Jan period, 42 projects from China were approved by Myanmar Investment Commission and the related investment committees of regions and states. China brought capital of \$124.86 million into the country including expansion of investments by the existing enterprises, according to statistics provided by the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration.—GNLM ■ *(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)*



Sein Ta Lone mangoes are displayed at the 105-mile trade centre in Muse. **PHOTO: THANT ZIN @ MUSE**

Myanmar's imports of consumer goods decline 6% in current FY

MYANMAR imported US\$1.457 billion worth of consumer products from 1 October to 8 March in the 2018-2019 fiscal year, decreasing by \$95 million or 6.14 per cent, from the corresponding period last 2017-2018 FY, the Ministry of Commerce reported.

The total imports of consumer products included \$20.616 billion by the public sector and \$1.436 billion by the private sector. This FY saw a continuous decline in the imports of consumer products by both sectors when compared with the same period last FY.

At this time during the last FY, Myanmar's import of consumer goods stood at \$1.552 billion, with \$43.86 million by the public sector and \$1.508 billion by the private sector.

During the 2018 mini-budget period (April-September), the country's imports of consumer products exceeded \$2.6 billion.

According to the ministry's yearly report, 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.

As of 8 March, Myanmar also imported three other groups of products, including \$2.514 billion worth of capital goods, \$2.867 billion of manufactured goods and \$967 million worth of CMP raw materials. Apart from the CMP raw materials, the import of other commodities declined by over \$620million in the current FY.—Shwe Khine ■

(Translated by Khaing Thanda Lwin)

Import surpasses export in Myanmar's trade with Singapore

THE value of Myanmar's import outperformed export in bilateral trade with Singapore in the first four months (Oct, 2018-Jan, 2019) of current fiscal year, according to data of the Ministry of Commerce.

Singapore is the second largest trading partner of Myanmar in the region, after Thailand.

Myanmar's export to Singapore was worth US\$82 million only while import was valued \$1 billion, totaling \$328

million.

Myanmar exports agricultural products, footwear, textile and clothing, minerals and animal products, to Singapore while its imports are plastic, fuel oil, capital goods, intermediate goods, consumer products, metals and chemicals.

Myanmar's bilateral trade with Singapore was registered at \$1.99 million in past mini-budget period, \$3.83 billion in 2017-2018 fiscal year and

\$2.96 billion in 2016-2017 FY.

Singapore listed 12 enterprise brought into \$943 million in Oct-Jan period, according to data released by the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration.

Additionally, Singapore stood first on the list of countries with largest FDI inflow in Thilawa Special Economic Zone, followed by Japan and Thailand.—Ko Khant ■

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Union Minister Dr Pe Myint inspects Putao District, Machanbaw Tsp IPRD Office

UNION Minister for Information Dr Pe Myint, who was in Putao, Kachin State, inspected the Putao District and Machanbaw Township Information and Public Relations Department offices yesterday.

Accompanied by Director-General of IPRD U Ye Naing, Union Minister Dr Pe Myint visited Machanbaw Township IPRD Office/Library, and observed the library functions, a mini museum and preparations for wallpaper display. He spoke of the need to carry out effective services for sharing information and knowledge with the locals.

In the evening, the Union Minister arrived at the Putao District IPRD Office/Library, and inspected the library and children's reading corner, a mini museum and preparations for wallpaper display.

As IPRD and donors presented over 4,200 books to Putao District at the Children's Literary Festival held in Putao, the Union Minister stressed the need to distribute the books to Putao, Machnabaw, Nogmon, Sunprabum, Khaunglanphu and Pannandin towns in the district through coordination with local administrators.—Putao District IPRD ■



Union Minister Dr. Pe Myint observes utensils of Kachin ethnic people at Machanbaw IPRD office's museum yesterday. **PHOTO: LIN HAN ZAY**

Smart Art Gallery to open in Mandalay's Yatanar Mall this month

ARTISTS from Mandalay will open Smart Art Gallery in Mandalay's Yatanar Mall, a gems and jewellery shopping mall located in Chanayethazan Township, to boost the region's smokeless industry. This is part of efforts by the region's Directorate of Hotels and Tourism to develop the tourism sector in the region, in collaboration with the Myanmar Souvenir Entrepreneurs Association. The new art gallery will be officially opened on 24 March. It will be open from 9 a.m. to 10 p.m. every day. Well-known Myanmar traditional arts and craftworks

will be available at the new gallery, said U San Yu, the assistant director of the region's Hotels and Tourism Department, at the press conference on 17 March.

At the press conference, Artist U Zaw Win (woodcarving) said: "This is a win-win situation for all participants, including local artists. Plans are under way to introduce quality works through this gallery in the future." The artworks will be priced between K100,000 and K150,000, based on their size, according to the organizer.—Aung Phyo Kyaw ■ (Translated by Khaing Thanda Lwin)

Efforts to extend electricity access from 44% to 50% by year-end

THE Ministry of Electricity and Energy said it plans to increase electricity access to 50 per cent households from 44 per cent earlier, and is working to achieve this target by the end of this year.

"In 2016, just 34 per cent of households in the country had access to electricity. The figure increased to 44 per cent over the next three consecutive years. Efforts are being made by the ministry to meet its electrification target of 50 per cent by late 2019

and 75 per cent by 2025," said U Win Khaing, the Union Minister for Electricity and Energy, in his opening remarks at a ceremony to launch an electrification project in Meiktila Township, Mandalay Region, on 17 March.

Currently, the authorities are implementing a project to install 146 miles of power lines near Kankaung Village in Meiktila.—Chan Tha (Meiktila) ■

(Translated by Khaing Thanda Lwin)

Over 50 participate in Japanese-sponsored Animation Workshop

OVER 50 youths participated in the fourth Animation Workshop sponsored by Japan Foundation, with the assistance of the Ministry of Information, at the Film Development Centre in Bahan Township, Yangon from 13 to 17 March.

At the workshop, which saw the number of trainees larger than any of its predecessors,

three Japanese instructors gave lessons in three sections. Toshika Suwada taught animation of traditional stories; Ikuko Iwasuki, stop motion animation and self-creation; and Mirai Mizue and Dr San San Oo, creation of artistic and colourful animation for children.

Creations of the trainees – Stop Motion (Sunflower),

Animation Cutout (Traditional story) and Abstract Animation (Ani Meditation) – were shown at the final day of the workshop.

Managing Director Daw May Lin of Huion Myanmar (DigitLand) presented a gift to Ma Zuu Htaik, who took part in the workshop for three years in a row.—Than Zin Win ■



Youths pose for a group photo at the fourth Animation Workshop in Yangon. **PHOTO: YE HTUT**

High crude oil price drives up domestic oil price

AS global crude oil price surged to multi-month highs, domestic fuel oil price reached the highest in three months, along with Kyat gaining against the US dollar in currency market, according to local oil market.

On 16 March, fuel oil was priced at K780 for Octane 92 per liter, K870 for Octane 95, K965 for diesel and K975 for premium diesel in internal market. On 1 January, domestic fuel oil touched a low of K695 for Octane 92, K760

for Octane 95, K870 for diesel and K875 for premium diesel.

In June last year, domestic oil price was on the rise with increase in global crude oil price and the Kyat weakening against US dollar. On 10 October 2018, oil

prices stood at K1,065 for Octane 92, K1,115 for Octane 95, K1,085 for diesel and K1,105 for premium diesel. Ninety per cent of fuel oil is imported from abroad while 10 per cent is locally produced.

Myanmar imports fuel oil pri-

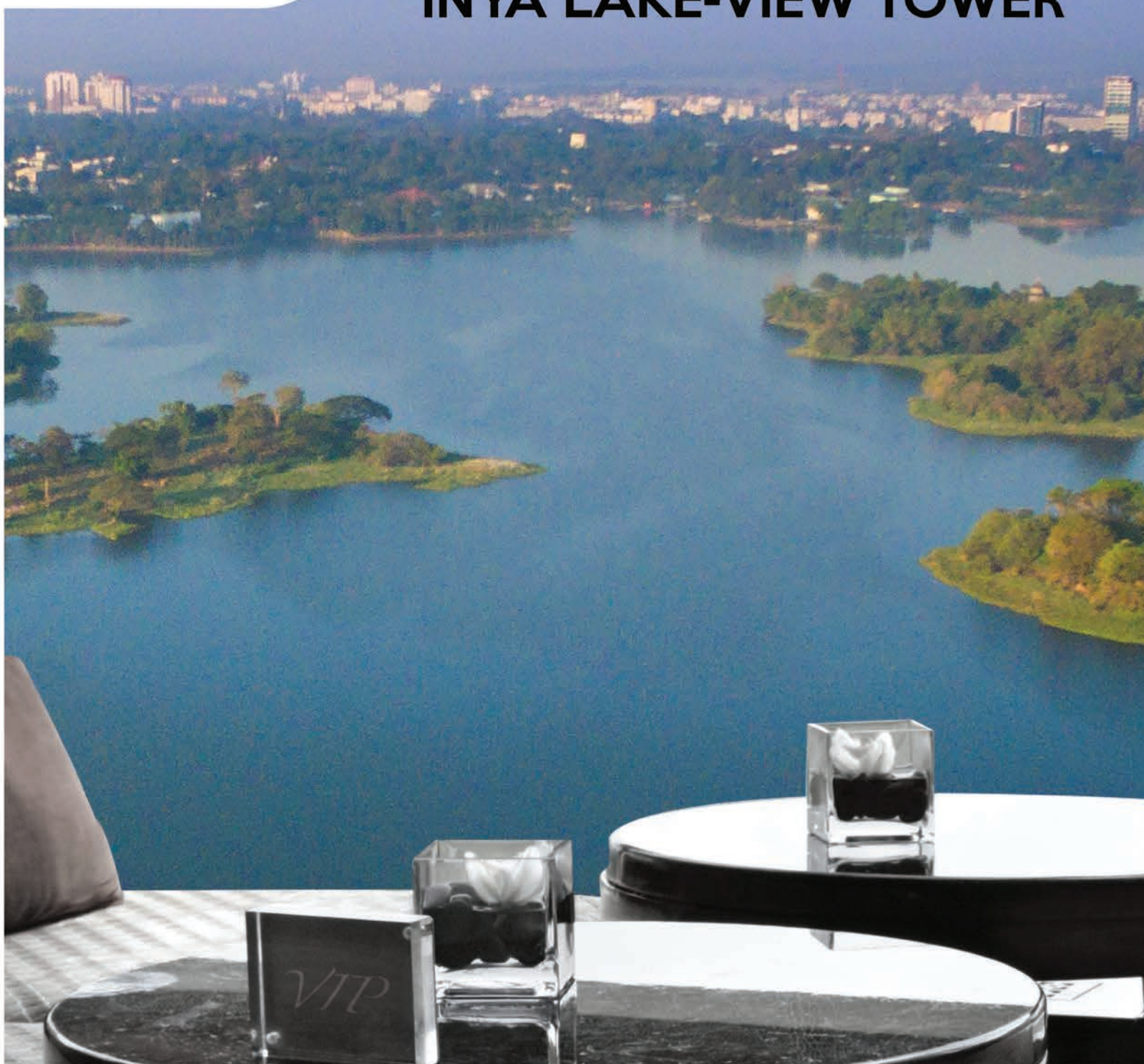
marily through Singapore, with monthly export of 200,000 tons of gasoline and 400,000 tons of diesels. There are 2,000 fuel stations and 50 oil importer companies in Myanmar.—GNLM ■ (Translated by Ei Myat Mon)



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Seek out investment opportunities in Chin State

WITH its unique geographical location, Myanmar is in a position to serve as a bridge between India and China, besides acting as Beijing's link to the ASEAN. This makes Myanmar a strategically important country and provides several opportunities for economic growth. For Chin State, which borders India, there are obvious market opportunities.

In addition to allowing it to take part in direct and transit trade through the Mekong-India economic corridor, Myanmar's strategic location will support the development of industrial zones and special economic zones along the corridor.

Investment opportunities in Chin State vary from huge projects to SMEs engaged in agriculture, livestock breeding, community-based tourism, hydropower, basic infrastructure development works, and traditional weaving, among others.

There are good prospects for the development of community-based tourism businesses and the agricultural sector as the agri products of Chin State are free of chemicals.

Chin State lies on the strategic economic corridor between India and Myanmar, and as bilateral trade increases, there will be better and more concrete opportunities.

The Private Sector Development Framework was drawn up to bridge the gap between the views of the participants and reality, understand the difficulties faced by businesspersons, and to draw a road map.

The Union Government is making arrangements to upgrade the framework to help businesses overcome challenges.

The upgrade will involve five areas: improving the legal and procedural environment, and access to financing, supporting and increasing trade and investment, establishing basic human resources, and redefining the State's role in the trade and service sectors. The economic environment of all the states and regions will be improved as part of a wide-ranging reform.

Seek out new opportunities in Chin State.

Private investments can help resolve the challenges of poverty and inequality, and create a better social environment.



River catfish farming for national economic progress

BY MG THIN PYANT / (PHOTO: ZWE MAHNN)



Workers harvest river catfish at a fish farm in Pantanaw.



Freshwater catfish is seen at a fish farm.

GLOBAL Earth Agro & Aqua Industry Public Company Limited is building a fish farm and factories on 900 acres of flooded area on Shwelaung road, Pantanaw Township, Ayeyawady Region. The whole area of the flooded area is over 3000 acres and it is 135 kilometers from Yangon. Heavy machines are at work under the morning sun. Confidently, the multiple fish farm will be the pioneer of the model farming zones that will earn lots of foreign currency not only for the country, but also for the Ayeyawady Region. One day it will become the springboard for national economic growth.

Fish ponds located near Shwelaung River can breed quality fish because of the easier inflow and outflow of water at the farm. Vietnam is gaining markets as it breeds fish in the pond located along the banks of the Mekong river. Vietnam is witnessing rapid progress of agriculture and breeding industry, and earning much foreign currency from river catfish farming. Likewise, the fish breeding ponds near Shwelaung which is linked with Ayeyawady River will one day become a farming zone with, cold storages, reprocessing factories, large breeding ponds and electricity. It will also be helpful for river catfish breeding. Prospects are bright that it will generate job opportunities and income for locals.

Apart from producing 150,000 tons of fish per year, efforts are being made to dig fish ponds and erect feedstuff factories, cold storage, packing factories and fish processing factories.

The multiple fish farming project will concentrate on river catfish and prawns. Instead of using the traditional method, river catfish will be bred in deeper and narrow ponds. Of the marketable aqua-products including prawns, tilapia, snake fish and other species, river catfish is the most cost-effective product as all its parts are useful in one way or another. But the quality of fish sometimes depends on geological conditions.

Global Earth Agro & Aqua Industry Public Company Limited is breeding small, medium and large river catfish in its ponds. As the tropical fish has high demand in developed countries of the northern sphere, it is an opportunity for the country's fish industry. Hard work and unity will overcome all challenges we are facing in the technical sector.

The Ministry of Agriculture,

Livestock and Irrigation has adopted the goals, work programs and policies in accordance with its visions. We are working towards the flourishing of a sustainable farming industry that will ensure national food security and nutrition, improve the rural socio-economy and help develop the national economy. The five-year strategic plan includes agriculture sector, livestock sector and rural development and cooperatives sector. Of them fish breeding has the highest potentials for rapid development. But Processing & Value Added sector must be included for the progress of the farm-related industries. According to the survey, farms need to send their products directly to the market. In fact, the production-to-market theory is in accord with the ministry's policy. The ministry is also paving the way for inclusive participation in the fish farming industry.



Export quality cat fish processed at a seafood cold storage factory.

Food security and nutrition are important. As fish farming needs capital, inclusive efforts will realize the goals. Fish farmers should study the techniques disseminated by the ministry as the adoption of modern techniques will develop the industry. But we must aware of their impacts on the bio security. As the whole flooded area has an area of over 3000 acres, it is a bright opportunity for both the local and foreign investors. Truly, the fish farming zone will be attractive for foreign countries, particularly the neighbours.

Fisheries have two parts - catching and breeding. The nation needs to introduce modern techniques, as it faced technical weakness for its reliance on traditional methods. So we need to export more finished goods to increase income, rather than relying on raw material exports. The fish farming zone will fulfill domestic demand

in addition to exports.

"We have all the geographical advantages; all we need is the technology, feed, factories, transport network and a reliable market. We are making efforts for all to adopt Good Aquaculture Practices," said Director General of Fisheries Department U Khin Maung Maung.

Vietnam is now exporting its fish products to US, EU, Japan and China, earning a large amount of US dollars every year. The fish industry serves as the springboard for rapid develop the Vietnamese economy. Myanmar should follow Vietnam's steps. "The main task of the Myanmar Fishery Federation is to develop the aqua industry. When we studied fish farms of the some ASEAN countries and China, we came to realize that we were following the wrong method; and that river cat fish and prawns have the biggest global market. So we set up a public company. In Vietnam they normally cultivate rice on seven acres and breed fresh water prawns on the remaining three areas of a 10-acre plot of land. So we need to introduce new ways like them. We must gather our internal strength while inviting investments from abroad. The Fisheries Department needs to supply fish and prawn fingerlings," said Vice-President of the Federation Dr Toe Nanda Tin.

As the investment may be high, inclusive efforts of all stakeholders including the Union Government is required.

Although the country encouraged fish farming throughout the past successive periods, there were weakness in capital and de-

partmental cooperation. As the relevant ministries have already made relaxations to the most possible degree, all stakeholders should join hands with the Union Government to enter a new era of fish farming. From the fish farming industry, we must add other related sectors such as food processing, finished-good production through cooperative efforts.

Foundation laying of the factories of the project on Shwelaung road, Pantanaw Township, Ayeyawady Region, will complete before the arrival of monsoons in the last week of March. Foreign investors are studying the project. The mega project needs lots of investments. It can also be a living laboratory for students of Yangon University. Students can witness the whole process from producing fingerlings to packing finished products and transporting to markets. Moreover it can also generate jobs for the graduates.

The project will conduct all the stages from hatching to producing at a single place. Of the investment amount of USD 200 million, the company invests 40 percent and the remaining 60 percent will come from loans. The project started in 2017. The chair of the company who is also the president of the federation has studied river cat fish breeding in other countries. The Global Earth Agro & Aqua Industry Public Company Ltd wishes to cooperate with local fish farmers, and hopes that interested investors will pour money into the project. Soon, multiple fish farming zone will appear in Pantanaw Township, near Yangon.

(Translated by TMT)

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Myanmar Daily Weather Report
(Issued at 7:00 pm Sunday 17th March, 2019)

BAY INFERENCE: Weather is generally fair over the North Bay and a few cloud to partly cloudy over the Andaman Sea and elsewhere in the Bay of Bengal.

FORECAST VALID UNTIL AFTERNOON OF THE 18th March, 2019: Rain or thundershowers will be isolated in Upper Sagaing and Taninthayi Regions, Kachin and Chin States. Degree of certainty is (80%). Weather will be partly cloudy in Lower Sagaing, Mandalay and Magway Regions, Shan, Kayin and Mon States and generally fair in the remaining Regions and States.

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

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Rain or thundershowers will be isolated to scattered in Sagaing, Mandalay and Taninthayi Regions, Kachin, Northern Shan and Chin States.

FORECAST FOR NAYPYITAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 18th March, 2019: Generally fair weather.

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 18th March, 2019: Generally fair weather.

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 18th March, 2019: Generally fair weather.

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Venezuelan opposition leader and self-proclaimed interim president Juan Guaidó (C) told supporters in Valencia that he plans a national mobilization to culminate with a march on the presidential palace. PHOTO: AFP

Venezuela's Guaidó starts domestic tour to stir support

VALENCIA (Venezuela)—Venezuela's self-proclaimed interim leader Juan Guaidó began a tour of his country on Saturday aimed at sparking a citizen's movement to pry President Nicolás Maduro from power. As Guaidó, 35, kicked off his "operation freedom" in the northern city of Valencia, the pro-Maduro military staged the latest in a series of exercises.

The drill focused on defending hydroelectric infrastructure from attack—a reaction to a week-long national blackout that Maduro blamed on US "sabotage" but experts said was more likely the result of years of neglect. Guaidó, the head of the opposition-ruled National Assembly whose claim to be caretaker president is recognized by the US, Canada and much of Latin America and Europe, vowed he would "very soon" take up office in Miraflores, the presidential palace.

He has been pushing for nearly two months against Maduro after declaring himself acting president during street rallies by tens of thousands, following

Maduro's swearing-in for a second term despite elections widely dismissed as a sham. "We are going to reclaim what belongs to the people," Guaidó told thousands of supporters on Saturday. Maduro, he said, "believes that a thieving gang or a palace makes him president. It's only the support of our people that makes someone president of a nation and he doesn't have that. And not much longer will he be in that palace."

Guaidó offered no timeline for the mobilization across Venezuela, which he said will culminate with a march on the presidential palace in Caracas.

"I'm ready to head over to Miraflores right now, wherever my future president Juan Guaidó asks me to go," said one of his supporters, Milagros Lima, 50, a lawyer. She told AFP that her "whole family" are among the millions who have fled the country's dire shortages of food and medicine. "If it weren't for them, we'd be starving to death," she said. Accompanying Guaidó on his tour are opposition law-

makers tasked with creating citizen assemblies—"freedom cells"—across the country. The opposition said that, by Saturday, around 50 had already been set up in half of Venezuela's 23 states.

"Whatever happens, we must be united, mobilized in the streets," Guaidó said, adding that he has not ruled out asking the National Assembly to activate a constitutional clause allowing foreign military intervention—though such a move "depended on others."

US ratchets up sanctions

That was taken as a reference to US military action, which US President Donald Trump has repeatedly refused to rule out, even though there is no sign such an operation is being mounted and US allies in Latin America oppose the idea. On Saturday, pro-Maduro demonstrators gathered in front of Trump's White House in Washington to protest any US-led intervention in Venezuela, while anti-Maduro protesters held their own rally nearby.—AFP ■

Paris luxury stores looted, burned in 'yellow vest' riots

PARIS (France)—Rioters looted and torched shops and businesses on the famed Champs-Élysées avenue in Paris on Saturday, on the 18th weekend of French "yellow vest" protests, characterised by a sharp increase in violence after weeks of dwindling turnout.

President Emmanuel Macron cut short a skiing trip in the Pyrenees to return to Paris for a crisis meeting, as hooded protesters went on the rampage in Paris, leaving a trail of destruction in the touristic heart of the city.

He vowed to take "strong decisions" to prevent further violence, following the emergency talks held at the interior ministry late Saturday. "There are people today who try by all means... to damage the Republic by breaking, by destroying things at the risk of killing someone," Macron said. "All those who were there were complicit in" the havoc spread across the Champs-Élysées, he added. The police appeared overrun as protesters swarmed the Champs-Élysées, vandalising and later setting fire to Fouquet's brasserie, a favourite hangout of the rich and famous for the past century—as well as luxury handbag store Longchamp, a bank, another restaurant and several news stands. The rioters also looted several clothing stores and set fire to barricades in scenes reminiscent of the worst yellow-vest riots

in Paris in December. "Like the vast majority of French people, I feel very angry today," tweeted French Prime Minister Édouard Philippe, who visited the scene. "Today's actions are not the work of protesters, but of looters, arsonists and criminals. No cause justifies this violence," he added. In a statement, the national police denounced the "mindless violence, cowardly attacks" and stressed their determination to guarantee public order against "provocateurs and vandals".

Bank blaze

Saturday's turnout was seen as a test of the ongoing strength of the movement, which began in November over fuel tax hikes and quickly ballooned into a rebellion against Macron's policies, seen by the protesters as geared towards the rich. In recent weeks, the protests have dwindled in size. But the interior ministry estimated the turnout in Paris Saturday at 10,000, out of around 32,300 nationwide. That is a fraction of the 282,000 people they said took part in the inaugural demonstrations across France on 17 November, but more than the previous weekend. Saturday's protests were markedly more violent than in recent weeks. Police said close to 240 people were arrested, while prosecutors said more than 100 had been taken into custody.—AFP ■



The scenes of violence were reminiscent of the worst "yellow vest" riots in Paris in December. PHOTO: AFP

Ethiopia crash investigation needs 'considerable' time: minister

ADDIS ABABA (Ethiopia)—Identifying the cause of the deadly Ethiopian Airlines crash that killed 157 people and caused the worldwide grounding of a brand-new Boeing aircraft model will take "considerable time," an Ethiopian government minister said Saturday. The crash of Flight ET 302 minutes into its flight to Nairobi on 10 March killed all onboard and caused the worldwide grounding of the Boeing 737 MAX 8 aircraft model involved in the disaster.

"The investigation of such magnitude requires a careful analysis and consid-

erable time to come up with something concrete," transport minister Dagmawit Moges told a press conference. Witnesses said the plane nose-dived into remote farmland southeast of the Ethiopian capital Addis Ababa, reducing the plane to small pieces of debris buried deep in the earth. The victims came from 35 countries. Dagmawit said it would take up to six months to identify remains, and family members were being encouraged to submit DNA samples in Addis Ababa or at Ethiopian Airlines offices overseas. Death

certificates would be issued in two weeks, she added. The black boxes from the Ethiopian craft were sent to France's BEA air safety agency this week to determine the cause of the accident. The data from one of them, the cockpit voice recorder, has already been extracted and handed over to Ethiopian authorities, the BEA said Saturday. "The work continues" to obtain the data from the flight data recorder, which was badly damaged in the crash, it added.

A relative of one of the crash victims who asked not to be named expressed frus-

tration with the wait for remains.

The person said that under the victim's Jewish faith, no funeral could be held until his remains were returned, and the six-month delay was distressing for his family. "They are in immense pressure and remorse as it is, without waiting half a year," the relative added. The crash of Ethiopian Airlines Flight 302 was the second deadly incidence for the 737 MAX 8 following the October crash of an Indonesian Lion Air jet that killed all 189 passengers and crew.—AFP ■

Trump calls for 'Space Force', nations talk space peace

GENEVA (Switzerland)—On the surface, this looks like a terrible moment for the world's major military powers to negotiate a deal on preventing an arms race in space. Last month, UN chief Antonio Guterres warned that the global disarmament architecture was "collapsing," citing various diplomatic failures, including Washington's decision to scrap a crucial nuclear weapons treaty with Russia. Meanwhile, the Pentagon has drafted plans for a new "Space Force" on orders from President Donald Trump who has declared space a "war-fighting domain".

Despite those headwinds, experts from 25 countries—including China, Russia and the US—open a 10-day meeting in Geneva Monday aiming to lay the groundwork for a treaty to keep space peaceful. Even against the grim diplomatic backdrop, experts say there may be reasons for optimism. "I hope I am not just indulging in wishful thinking here but I do see some positive initiatives against this rather dark background," said Paul Meyer, Canada's former disarmament ambassador and an expert on space security at The Simons Foundation in Vancouver.

Hardware v action

The closed-door Geneva talks involve a UN panel called a Group of Governmental Experts (GGE). Chaired by Brazilian ambassador Guilherme de Aguiar Patriota to the UN Conference



Russian Mission Control Centre outside Moscow. Russia along with experts from more than 20 other countries meet Monday in Geneva to see if they can thrash out an agreement to prevent the militarization of space. PHOTO: AFP

on Disarmament, the space GGE works on consensus and will only issue a report if all parties agree on its content. Diplomatic efforts to forge a space treaty have been deadlocked for more than a decade. A main problem, experts said, is that China and Russia have insisted on preventing certain devices from being deployed in space. This has been a non-starter for the West which has instead favoured language that emphasises "behaviour" or "actions" in outer space that could be restricted.

Patriota told reporters the level of dialogue at the first GGE meeting in August was "several notches" better than in the past,

with China and Russia indicating an openness to new ideas. At next week's second and final meeting, the GGE will try to agree on a list of "elements" that could form a treaty, he said. "We are making a big step here," he added.

Why hope?

Patriota noted that one factor possibly motivating states to move forward is the notion of "vulnerability" in space. Notwithstanding the rhetoric of a leader like Trump who boasts of ever-expanding defence budgets, military professionals understand that overwhelming dominance is not enough to protect a nation's space assets, experts said. "Asymmetrical capabilities are

big," Jessica West, project manager of the 2018 Space Security Index report, told AFP.

"It is very difficult for any action to defend their assets in space alone," she added. Meyer, also the ex-head of the intelligence bureau at Canada's foreign ministry, told AFP that another factor creating diplomatic momentum is that space "is no longer just a rich man's club". Dozens of countries including developing nations now operate satellites and that list will only grow, he said. Space technology—whether related to reconnaissance, mapping or navigation—has also become an integral part of both military and civilian everyday life. —AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

Slovak govt critic to face ruling party candidate in presidential run-off: poll body

BRATISLAVA (Slovakia)—Vocal government critic Zuzana Caputova clinched pole position in round one of Slovakia's presidential election, paving her way to a run-off against ruling party candidate Maros Sefcovic on 30 March, near full results showed Sunday. Environmental lawyer Caputova secured 40.53 percent of votes cast after 98.7 percent of votes were counted, while European Commission vice-president Sefcovic garnered 18.66, the Slovak Statistics Office said. —AFP ■

Mexico journalist slain, 3rd this year

MEXICO CITY (Mexico)—A Mexican journalist shot dead at his home has become the third newsman killed so far this year in Mexico, authorities said on Saturday. The killing of Santiago Barroso adds to a toll of more than 100 media workers murdered in the country over the last seven years, coinciding with a wave of violent crime driven by powerful drug cartels and fueled by political corruption. "I regret the cowardly attack in which journalist Santiago Barroso was killed," said Santos Gonzalez, mayor of San Luis Rio Colorado, the town where the journalist lived, in Sonora state which borders the United States. —AFP ■

Serbia opposition supporters invade state-run TV

BELGRADE (Serbia)—Opponents of Serb President Aleksandar Vucic broke into the state-run RTS television building on Saturday, demanding to address the population, in images aired live. There have been weekly opposition protests since December against what they describe as Vucic's slide towards autocratic rule, while accusing RTS of pandering to the ruling party and demanding more airtime for opposing views. Among the dozens who invaded RTS on Saturday were opposition figures including former Belgrade mayor Dragan Djilas and Bosko Obradovic, leader of the right-wing Dveri party. —AFP ■

New Zealand wants answers from tech giants after mosque attack livestream

WELLINGTON (New Zealand)—New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern on Sunday said

she would be looking for answers from Facebook and other social media firms about how an attack



A police officer secures the area in front of the Masjid al Noor mosque after a shooting in Christchurch on 15 March 2019. PHOTO: AFP

that killed 50 mosque-goers was livestreamed on their platforms.

Saying there were "further questions to be answered" by the tech giants, Ardern said Facebook chief operating officer Sheryl Sandberg had been in contact and "acknowledged what has occurred here in New Zealand".

A horrific video shot by the gunmen who carried out the mosque massacre was livestreamed on Facebook before being removed by the company.

But the stream, lasting 17 minutes, was shared repeatedly on YouTube and Twitter, and internet platforms were scrambling to remove videos being reposted of

the gruesome scenes. "We did as much as we could to remove, or seek to have removed, some of the footage that was being circulated in the aftermath of this terrorist attack," Ardern said. "But ultimately it has been up to those platforms to facilitate their removal." "I do think that there are further questions to be answered." In a statement on Sunday, Mia Garlick of Facebook New Zealand vowed to "work around the clock to remove violating content".

"In the first 24 hours we removed 1.5 million videos of the attack globally, of which over 1.2 million were blocked at upload," the company said. —AFP ■

Philippines set to leave ICC over drug war inquiry



File photo shows Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte gives a speech at the Malacanang palace in Manila on 22 February 2019. **PHOTO: AFP**

MANILA (Philippines)—The Philippines is poised to officially quit the International Criminal Court-ICC on Sunday, though the beleaguered tribunal has pledged to pursue its examination of possible crimes in the government's deadly drug war.

Manila's withdrawal is to become final a year after it told the United Nations that it was quitting the world's only permanent war crimes tribunal, the second nation to do so. "The Secretary-General... informed all concerned states that the withdrawal will take effect for the Philippines on 17 March," UN spokesperson Eri Kaneko told AFP. The departure of the Philippines follows the court being hit in recent years by high-profile acquittals and moves by several nations to drop out. Manila moved to quit after the body launched a preliminary examination in 2018 of President

Rodrigo Duterte's drug crackdown that has killed thousands and drawn international censure. Duterte's drug war is his signature policy initiative and he defends it fiercely, especially from international critics like Western leaders and institutions which he says don't care about his country.

However, court officials have said the preliminary probe launched by ICC prosecutor Fatou Bensouda in February 2018 into possible crimes against humanity in the drug war would continue. Under the court's rules, any matter under consideration before a nation leaves the court is still under its jurisdiction.

String of setbacks

Duterte has made it clear his government will not cooperate with the ICC in any way. "The court "can never acquire juris-

diction over my person. Not in a million years," he said in a speech on Wednesday. The examination, which is one step before a full-blown probe, zeroes in on allegations the government has been involved in illegal killings as part of the crackdown Duterte launched in mid-2016. Police say they have killed 5,176 users or pushers who resisted arrest, but rights groups say the actual number of dead is at least triple that number. Critics have alleged the crackdown amounts to a war on the poor that feeds an undercurrent of impunity and lawlessness in the nation of 106 million. The Philippines' move to exit follows a string of setbacks for the ICC, including the January acquittal of former Ivory Coast leader Laurent Gbagbo and the June 2018 not guilty verdict for former DR Congo vice-president Jean-Pierre Bemba. —AFP ■

At least 42 dead in floods in Indonesia's Papua

JAYAPURA (Indonesia) — At least 42 people have been killed by flash floods in Indonesia's eastern Papua province, an official said Sunday, as rescuers raced to find more victims of the disaster. The floods in Sentani, near the provincial capital of Jayapura, were triggered by torrential rain and subsequent landslides on Saturday, and also left 21 people injured. Dozens of homes were damaged by floodwaters, national disaster agency spokesman Sutopo Purwo Nugroho said. "The number of casualties and impact of the disaster will likely increase as search and rescue teams are still trying to reach other affected areas," he added.

"The floods were likely caused by a landslide." The waters had receded but officials were still trying to evacuate people. Video footage from the scene showed rescuers administering oxygen to a victim who appeared trapped beneath a fallen tree.

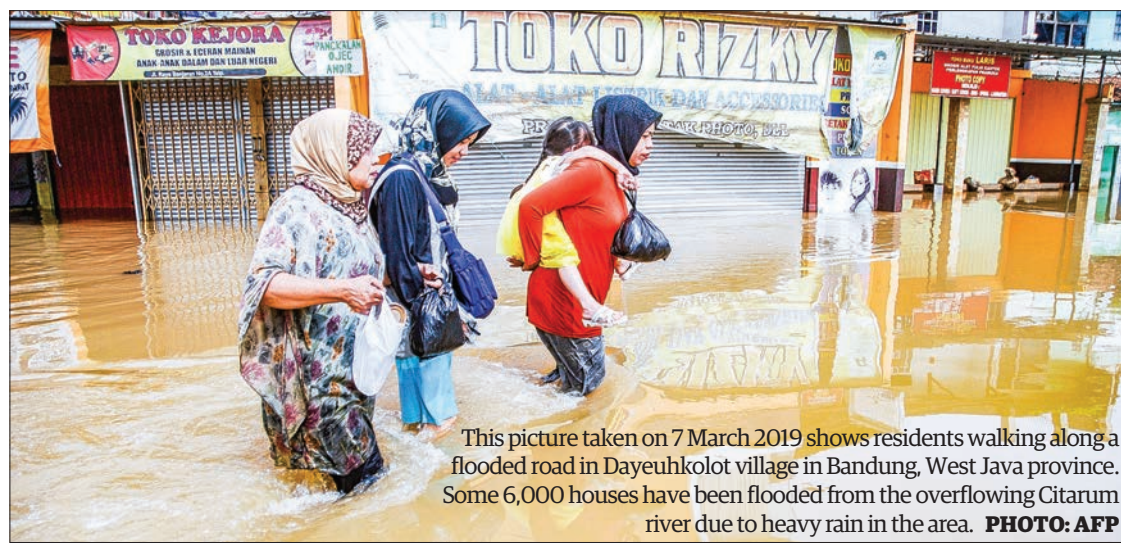
Uprooted trees and other debris were strewn across muddy roads, while at Jayapura's small airport a propeller plane lay partly crushed on a runway. Papua shares a border with independent Papua New Guinea on an island just north of Australia. Flooding is not uncommon in Indonesia, especially during the rainy season which runs from October to April.

In January, floods and land-

slides killed at least 70 people on Sulawesi island, while earlier this month hundreds in West Java province were forced to evacuate when torrential rains triggered severe flooding. The Southeast Asian archipelago of some 17,000 islands is one of the most disaster-prone nations on Earth, straddling the Pacific Ring of Fire, where tectonic plates collide.

Earthquakes and volcanic

eruptions are common. In December, the western part of Java island was slammed by a deadly volcano-triggered tsunami that killed about 400 people. Also last year, the city of Palu in Sulawesi was rocked by a quake-tsunami disaster that killed thousands, while hundreds of others died in a series of quakes that hit the holiday island of Lombok, next to Bali. —AFP ■



This picture taken on 7 March 2019 shows residents walking along a flooded road in Dayeuhkolot village in Bandung, West Java province. Some 6,000 houses have been flooded from the overflowing Citarum river due to heavy rain in the area. **PHOTO: AFP**

China keeps 'education' centres for prostitutes

BEIJING (China)—When Chinese legislators recommended the abolition of "education" detention centres where prostitutes and clients can be held without charge for two years, activists hoped the facilities' days were numbered. They will have to wait longer. The rubber-stamp National People's Congress (NPC) passed only one new law when it ended its annual session on Friday —and it had to do with opening up foreign investment.

Under the nearly three-decade-old sys-

tem, police have unilateral power to detain sex workers and their clients for up to two years in "shelter and education" centres. Critics say the centres have little to do with education. "There may be resistance inside the regime against abolition, perhaps by the police, as this would take away some of its arbitrary detention powers," said Wang Yaqui, a researcher at Human Rights Watch.

In 2013, testimonies of ex-detainees collected by Asia Catalyst—an organisation that

defends the health of marginalised groups in the region—revealed the harsh living conditions in the centres. These included ill-treatment, forced labour, and the obligation to pay for subsistence and forced medical examinations at prohibitive prices. "All this is a matter of money, the talk of rehabilitation or ideological education is hollow, it is just a way of extorting money on behalf of the state and the police", one of the women told the group. —AFP ■

Canadian, Chinese, US investors discuss new economy, innovation in Toronto

TORONTO—More than 500 participants, including investors, entrepreneurs and scholars, gathered in Toronto on Saturday for a two-day summit on innovation and the new economy.

The China-US-Canada New Economic Innovation Meeting is aimed at bringing together the players for discussions on the latest international industrial and innovation trends.

During the two-day event, a number of roundtables will be held.

It is expected to focus on the most promising startups as well as the different areas where startups are growing, said Wang Wanli, an investor from San Francisco, United States. Wang said he is looking forward to discussions on integration of big data intelligence and finance.

The event is hosted jointly by the University of Toronto, Chinese Business Industry Association (CBIA) and the North America Developing Leaders Entrepreneur Association (NADLEA). —Xinhua ■

Paris climate rally draws 45,000 people: media estimate

PARIS (France)—Around 45,000 climate campaigners marched in Paris Saturday to condemn what they called the French government's "inaction" on climate change, according to a media estimate. Organisers of the march through the centre of the city, which coincided with "yellow vests" riots in the west, estimated that 107,000 people took part while the police put the figure at 36,000. Organisers said more than 350,000 people turned out to march in 220 towns and cities across France. "Macron, you're screwed: the pandas are in the street," said one placard at the Paris demonstration, addressing French President Emmanuel Macron.

"We are here to demonstrate against the inaction on climate change... and against the multi-billionaires in their ivory towers," 18-year-old drama student Pierre-Loup Meriaux told AFP. Many of those present were



Youth hold banners reading 'I have a green dream' and 'for money they would kill earth and sea' during a demonstration against climate change on 15 March 2019 in Paris. PHOTO: AFP

young people, some of whom had already marched the previous day in a youth protest for climate change action.

On Friday, tens of thousands of young people took part in the Paris edition of the global student climate demonstration inspired by 16-year-old Swedish campaigner Greta Thunberg. They were joining marches in cities across the world Friday, as hundreds of thousands of young people skipped school to join the protests.—AFP ■

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Millions hit in Manila's 'worst' water shortage



Residents of Addition Hills in Madaluyong City, Manila, queue to receive water distributed on water tank truck and fire trucks on 15 March 2019. PHOTO: AFP

MANILA (Philippines)—Manila has been hit by its worst water shortage in years, leaving bucket-bearing families to wait hours to fill up from tanker trucks and some hospitals to turn away less urgent cases.

Taps are dry from four to 20 hours per day in the homes of about half of the Philippine capital's rough-

ly 12 million people due to rolling outages driven by a dearth of rain and inadequate infrastructure.

"I have learned to take a bath using only seven pitchers of water," Ricardo Bergado told AFP as he lined up with his buckets. "I even save the bath water to flush our toilet." The shortages started hitting

late last week, with some areas in eastern Manila seeing the supplies of water into their homes being completely cut off.

However, Manila Water Company, one of the capital's two suppliers, said it will now use rolling cut offs spread across the city to share the pain more evenly. Jerry cans

and buckets were flying off store shelves and landing in lines where families were spending hours waiting for deliveries by truck.

"Instead of doing important things, our time is consumed now by making sure we have enough water," Bergado, a 57-year-old audio-technician told AFP.

At least five public hospitals in the capital have started getting supplemental supplies from water tankers, as shortages had led at least one to limit admissions. "This is the worst (water shortage) we have experienced. It almost happened last year but we were saved by heavy rains brought by storms," Dittie Galang, Manila Water communications manager, told AFP. The disruption could last until July when monsoon rains are typically in full swing and would replenish regional reservoirs, one of which is at a two-decade low.—AFP ■

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V MCC SEOUL VOY. NO. (910S/911N)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V MCC SEOUL VOY. NO. (910S/911N) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 18-03-2019 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T.T/M.I.P where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

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

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

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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.

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Netflix has taken the lead in streaming to expand into 190 markets but is now facing some deep-pocketed rivals including Apple and Disney. **PHOTO: AFP**

Streaming wars heat up as rivals queue up to challenge Netflix

WASHINGTON (United States)—Some of the biggest names in media and tech are gearing up to move into streaming, in what could be a major challenge to market leader Netflix.

Apple is expected to make its move with an announcement March 25 on its media plans, with a war chest estimated at some \$1 billion and partners including stars like Jennifer Aniston and director J.J. Abrams involved in content. Walt Disney Co. has announced its new streaming service Disney+ will launch this year, as will another from WarnerMedia, the newly acquired media-entertainment division of AT&T. The new entrants, with more expected, could launch a formidable challenge to Netflix, which has some 140 million paid subscribers in 190 markets, and to other services such as Amazon and Hulu.

"It's really going to change the industry," said Alan Wolk, co-founder of the consulting firm TVREV who follows the sector. Wolk said he sees seven or eight powerful players in streaming which will lead to "huge competition for new shows and hit shows." These rivals are coming into the segment which has been transformed by the spectacular growth of Netflix and a growing movement by consumers to on-demand television delivered over internet platforms.

In the US alone, an estimated six million consumers have dropped pay TV bundles since 2012, while on-demand services such as Netflix, Hulu and Amazon have been surging, according to Leichtman Research. But just as Netflix has disrupted traditional "linear" television, rivals are now moving to disrupt Netflix.

Feeling pain

Netflix is likely to feel pain, not only from the new rivals, but also from the loss of content from the big libraries of Disney and Time Warner. These Hollywood firms "have big libraries, so the cost of their content is much lower than it will be for Netflix, which has to pay for all its content," said Laura Martin, analyst with the research firm Needham & Co. "Netflix will lose subscribers to these new entrants," Martin said. AT&T's WarnerMedia will launch its service later this year that combines the content from its premium HBO channel (known for "Game of Thrones") and the vast Time Warner library of films and shows.

Disney's service will have its films and TV shows, along with the library it is acquiring from Rupert Murdoch's 21st Century Fox, a deal closing in the coming days. That includes the "Star Wars" and Marvel superhero franchises and ABC television content.

JP Morgan analyst Alexia Quadrani predicts Disney will eventually scale up to become as big as Netflix, or even bigger by signing up 45 million US subscribers and 115 million internationally.

Quadrani cited Disney's "unmatched brand recognition, extensive premium content, and unparalleled ecosystem to market the service."

The analyst said Disney benefits from its global ecosystem that develops good customer relationships from its theme parks, hotels, cruises, and consumer products.

Wolk agreed that Disney "is in a good spot" because of its strong brand and content but predicted that consumers may be overwhelmed by the growing options. "I think there will be a lot of churn," Wolk said. "People will subscribe to one service to watch one show, and then it becomes easy to cancel and take another." —AFP ■

With streaming move, Google eyes future of gaming

SAN FRANCISCO (United States)—Google is looking to transform internet-age game play, with an expected launch of a streaming service which uses the tech giant's power in the internet cloud. Expected on Tuesday is the debut of a ramped-up version of a cloud gaming platform Google tested recently in partnership with Ubisoft.

A video clip teasing a keynote presentation at an annual Game Developers Conference in San Francisco invites people to "Gather around as we unveil Google's vision for the future of gaming." The clip cycles through an accelerating collage of scenes one might find in video games, but says nothing about what Google will announce at the event, which

will be live-streamed at YouTube.

Google collaborated with French video game colossus Ubisoft to use the hit "Assassin's Creed" franchise to test "Project Stream" technology for hosting the kind of quick, seamless play powered by in-home consoles as an online service. A select number of people in the US were able to play "Assassin's Creed Odyssey" streamed to Chrome browsers on desktop or laptop computers. A recently uncovered patent that Google filed for a video game controller hinted that the tech firm might be planning to release its own console and controller to go along with a streaming service.

'xCloud' on horizon

Video games are following

television and music into the cloud, with console-quality play on its way to being a streaming service as easy to access as Netflix or Spotify. Computing power in data centers and devices from televisions to smartphones has surged and streaming technology has advanced, providing tools to break blockbuster titles from confines of consoles or personal computers. Google, whose YouTube video service operates an eSports platform for viewing game competitions, will be entering a sector with other powerful competitors including Sony and Microsoft.

Microsoft chief executive Satya Nadella said late last year that a keenly anticipated "xCloud" streaming service was in "early days." —AFP ■

Puerto Rican star iLe confronts rape culture with defiant new song



Puerto Rican singer iLe said news of the sexual assault and murder of a Puerto Rican woman inspired her to pen the vulnerable "Temes," which unravels the emotional aftermath of a rape. **PHOTO: AFP**

NEW YORK (United States)—A rising Puerto Rican star who struck a chord with a song lambasting US oppression of her homeland is back with a provocative track tackling rape culture and society's machismo.

The singer iLe (pronounced EEE-Lay)—whose career kicked off as a singer for her brothers' renowned reggaeton rap band Calle 13—imbues the traditional Latin bolero style that's often reserved for romance yet with dark, poignant lyrics, calling attention to sensitive issues she says society prefers to ignore.

Speaking in New York ahead of her performance at the festival "Migrations: The Making of America"—put on by the acclaimed Carnegie Hall—the edgy balladeer said news of the sexual assault and murder of a Puerto Rican woman inspired her to pen the vulnerable "Temes,"

which unravels the emotional aftermath of a rape. It's "a song trying to portray so many things that we go through as women that are very unfortunate," iLe, real name Ileana Cabra, told AFP of the song, whose title translates in English to "You're Afraid." "It's a struggle that I can't believe that we're still going through—but it's important to talk about," she said. "My best way of speaking about it is through music." The 29-year-old singer who began performing with her superstar brothers as a teenager has since stepped into her own, winning a Grammy for her debut solo album "Ilevitable" that saw her riff on Latin standards.

Now she's repurposing her old-school sultry voice to take on contemporary affairs, first with 2018's "Odio" ("Hate"), which unpacks the colonial relationship between the US and Puerto

Rico, and now with the striking "Temes."

The disturbing-yet-dream-like video for the song opens with the shoes of a man leaving a room as a woman, played by iLe, slowly composes herself, pulling up her underwear and removing ropes from her neck and wrists to reveal raw wounds.

'A little change'

As of 2012 Puerto Rico—a Caribbean island US territory—had the highest per capita rate in the world of women over 14 killed by intimate partners, according to an American Civil Liberties Union study, with 107 women murdered from 2007 to 2011. And in the aftermath of Hurricane Maria—which in 2017 ripped through the island home to approximately three million people—the problem has only worsened, advocates say, though a lack of telecommunications and bookkeeping infrastructure has made quantifying the problem difficult.

"I always think that these type of situations, like rape and killings—it's something that could happen to me as well," iLe said of her inspiration for "Temes." "If you pull out all the air I breathe/And my voice is leaving you without sound/If you believe that I can't survive without you/Why do you fear me?" she sings in her native Spanish.

By the end of the video the woman stands back up, adjusts her sea green dress and boldly leaves the warehouse-esque scene of the crime. —AFP ■

Chilean scientists improve precision to scale distance to closest galaxy

SANTIAGO—A team of scientists has managed to make the measuring of the distance to the closest neighboring galaxy, the Large Magellanic Cloud (LMC), more precise after 16 years of research.

According to Chile's Millennium Institute of Astrophysics (MAS), the team has determined the uncertainty to scale distance from the LMC within 1 per cent, significant progress from 2.2 per cent precision determined in 2013.

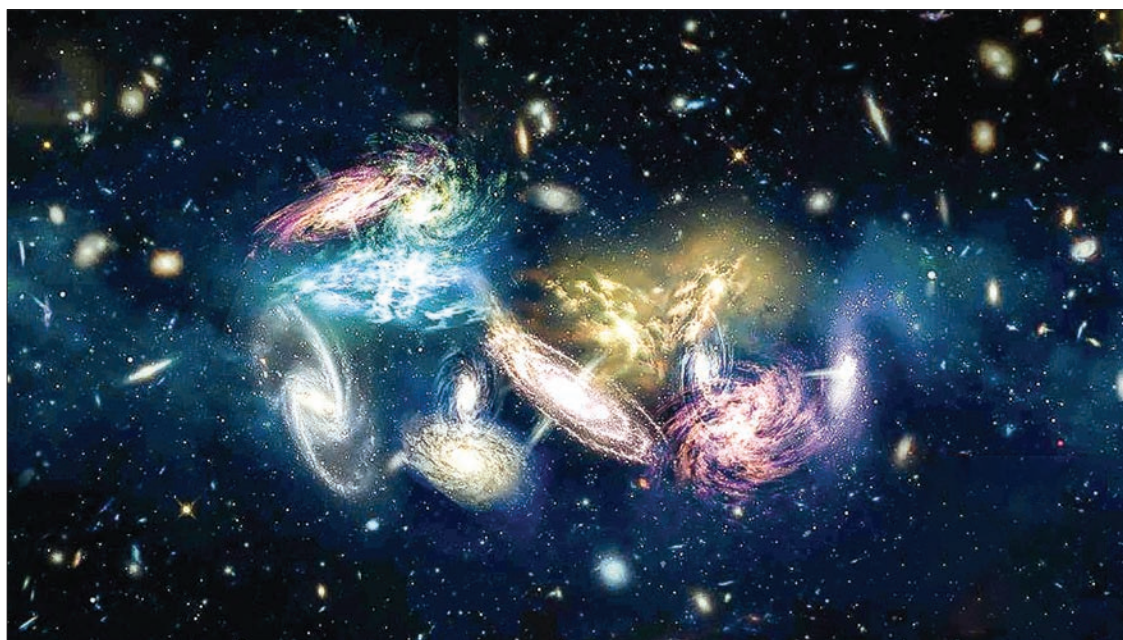
Supported by MAS, the research is part of the Chilean Center for Excellence in Astrophysics and Associated Technologies' (CATA) Araucaria Project, which is partly led by Dr. Wolf-

gang Gieren from the Astronomy Department of the University of Concepcion (UDC) in Chile.

The mission of the Araucaria Project is to improve the calibration of the cosmic distance scale in the local universe.

"The Large Magellanic Cloud is the galaxy with which the scale of distances to all the galaxies in the universe is calibrated. It's the first time in the history of astronomy that the distance to a galaxy has been able to be measured with such precision," MAS said in a press release.

The discovery was published Thursday in *Nature*, one of the world's most recognizable science magazines. The scientif-



Artist impression of the 14 galaxies detected by ALMA as they appear in the very early, very distant universe. PHOTO: XINHUA

ic group consists of 22 academics from Chile, Poland, France, the United States, and Germany.

"The improvement of this precision to 1 per cent is a gigantic step towards improving our comprehension of the expansion

of the universe and of the dark energy phenomenon, which is one of the greatest contemporary enigmas in astrophysics," said Gieren, who is also co-author of the publication in *Nature*.

To improve the precision, re-

searchers extended the sample set of binary star systems from the Large Magellanic Cloud from eight to 20, with the help of a new calibration technique and the use of telescopes in Chile and South Africa.—Xinhua ■



Roscosmos head Dmitry Rogozin. PHOTO: TASS

New research module Nauka for ISS to undergo pre-flight tests—Roscosmos chief

MOSCOW—A new multifunctional laboratory module Nauka (Science), which is expected to be launched to the International Space Station in 2020, will be transported from Moscow's Khrunichev space research center to the RSC Energia for pre-flight tests in August, Dmitry Rogozin, chief of the Russian space agency Roscosmos, wrote on his official Twitter account on Saturday. "The multifunctional laboratory module Nauka will leave the workshops of Khrunichev center this August and will be taken to RSC Energia [the Korolev Rocket and Space Corporation] to undergo pre-flight tests," Rogozin wrote. The decision was made at a meeting with chief designers, he added. "The work on the multifunctional laboratory module has been put back on track," he said.

Development of the Nauka module began back in 1995. It was

initially planned to be launched to the ISS as a Zarya substitute. The launch was repeatedly suspended. In December 2013, the module was sent back to the Khrunichev research center due to a problem in the engine system. The Khrunichev Center and RSC Energia have teamed up to work on the module. Earlier, Rogozin said that the launch of the module was scheduled for summer of 2020.

The Nauka module has a launch weight of over 20 tonnes and can accommodate up to 3 tonnes of scientific equipment. The module is designed to provide a docking port for Soyuz and Progress spacecraft, ensure the pumping of fuel from Progress spacecraft's fuel tanks to the ISS and take care of the station's roll control with the help of engines. The module is also expected to generate oxygen for six people and regenerate water from urine.—Tass ■

UN calls for bold actions to meet biodiversity targets

NAIROBI—The United Nations on Thursday called on its member countries to make bold actions to meet the targets of a globally-agreed strategic plan for biodiversity by 2020.

"We need to inspire action for biodiversity and contribute to enhancing the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020," said UN deputy Secretary-General Amina J. Mohammed.

At a side event of the ongoing fourth session of UN Environment Assembly in Nairobi, Mohammed called on countries

to meet biodiversity targets as part of sustainable development goals to exploit the potential of nature-based solutions in the management of biodiversity.

She also urged countries to support the design of "an ambitious post-2020 global biodiversity framework for adoption at COP 15 (the 15th session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity)."

The Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, including the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, was agreed by the global community in 2010 in Nagoya, Aichi Prefec-

ture of Japan.

The commitments reached in Nagoya are the best, but more actions are needed, said Inger Andersen, incoming executive director of United Nations Environment Programme.

Andersen also called on countries to increase funding and political goodwill to meet the agreed targets within a set guideline.

"We need science-based solutions to the set targets through the strengthening of indigenous and traditional people," she added.—Xinhua ■

IN Picture

The best way to predict the future... is to invent it: Alan Kay



Product marketing manager Drew Blackard speaks on stage during a new product launch event in San Francisco, California on 20 February 2019. PHOTO: AFP

U Zaw Zaw elected ASEAN Football Federation vice president

U Zaw Zaw, the chairman of the Myanmar Football Federation, was elected as the vice president of the ASEAN Football Federation yesterday at the 26th AFF Congress in Siem Reap, Cambodia.

During the meeting, AFF members elected U Zaw Zaw to the post of vice president for a term of five years. He will hold the post till 2023.

U Zaw Zaw will share his new responsibility with two more vice presidents - Dato' Haji Hamidin B. Haji Mohd Amin and Dato' Sri Francisco Kalbuadi Lay from Malaysia.

U Zaw Zaw has been the

chairman of the Myanmar Football Federation since 2005. He has also served as an Executive Committee Member of the Asian Football Confederation (AFC).

He is now promoting all-round football development in Myanmar and ASEAN regions.

Meanwhile, Major General Khiev Sameth from Cambodia officially took over as the AFF President at the regional body's Congress yesterday, according to the AFF website.

The AFF Congress was also attended by the CEO of the MFF, U Bhone Naing Zaw, and General-Secretary U Ko Ko Thein.—Lynn Thit (Tgi) ■



Chairman of the Myanmar Football Federation, U Zaw Zaw (far right) pose for a group photo at 26th AFF Congress in Siem Reap, Cambodia yesterday. PHOTO: MFF

Lethwei Nation Fight to be held in Yangon

A Myanmar traditional lethwei (Burmese bare-knuckle boxing) contest titled 'Lethwei Nation Fight' will be held on 31 March at the Theinphyu Traditional Lethwei Stadium in Yangon, according to the Myanmar Lethwei Page.

The lethwei contest has been organized with the aim of preserving Myanmar Lethwei and to promote the martial art among youngsters.

The event will be held under the supervision of the Ministry of Health and Sports and the Myanmar Traditional Lethwei Federation.

The contest will feature eight main fights of five rounds. The fights will be broadcast live on the Canal Plus Channel.

A special fight at the contest will pit Myanmar's Tun Tun Min against Thailand's Htaani Litt.

The other matches will feature Myanmar fighters: Byat Ga vs Kayin Lay, Saw Mhu Htaw Gay vs Wiyaw Htara, Kywel Gyi vs Shwe Win, Doe Lay vs Si Thu Aung, Salai Chan Myae Ko vs Ye Thwe Aung, Kyarr Ba Hein vs Ko Ko Aung, and Kyel Sin Htun vs An Bwar.—Lynn Thit (Tgi) ■

Ranieri's Champions League ambitions dented by SPAL

ROME (Italy)—Claudio Ranieri's Roma fell to a shock 2-1 defeat at struggling SPAL on Saturday, missing a golden opportunity to close the gap on Champions League rivals Inter Milan and AC Milan.

Milan are third, one point ahead of Inter, with Roma in fifth three points back in the battle for elite European football next season, ahead of Sunday's Milan derby.

Ranieri had won his first match after taking over from sacked Eusebio Di Francesco—2-1 against Empoli—but his side fell to their relegation-threatened hosts, leaving Roma's season in the balance

after their Champions League elimination at the hands of Porto and 3-0 beating by city rivals Lazio.

"I expected more. Our opponents were a team and we weren't," said Ranieri of Roma, who also lost the reverse fixture 2-0 in October.

"There's a plan in place if Roma get into the Champions League," he warned his players. "If we don't, quite a few of these guys could change clubs.

"We lost to a team who earn less than us, who are more humble than us, more determined than us, who are up to their necks in it, and they showed all that today."—AFP ■

Spence overpowers Garcia to retain IBF welterweight title

DALLAS (United States)—Errol Spence Jr. solidified his status as one of the best pound-for-pound fighters in the world with 12-round masterclass performance over challenger Mikey Garcia on Saturday.

The 29-year-old Spence easily beat Garcia by a unanimous decision to retain his International Boxing Federation title in a welterweight homecoming bout in front of 47,500 fans.

Spence dominated Garcia throughout with a stinging jab and a barrage of combinations and his hometown crowd at the

AT&T Stadium in Dallas, Texas cheered wildly as he used his size and reach advantage to put on a boxing clinic.

"My motivation was fighting in front of my hometown crowd," Spence said. "This is where I started it from a pup. From the amateurs all the way up.

"This is my core fan base. I felt good and I wanted to put on a great performance."

The fight was hyped as a showdown of two unbeaten boxers but it didn't turn out that way with one judge scoring it 120-107 for Spence. The other two had it

120-108 and 120-108.

Garcia never landed more than 10 punches in a single round. Spence landed 375 total punches to just 75 for Garcia, who was fighting for the first time as a welterweight after moving up two divisions.

Spence has been avoided by most of the top fighters in the division but this victory appears to have set up a future showdown with Filipino Manny Pacquiao.

Pacquiao appeared in the ring after the final bell and said he was willing to face the much younger Spence.

"I am looking at the winner of this fight. Spence wants to fight me," said Pacquiao. "I am hoping to be back here, soon."

Spence said he also wants to fight Pacquiao. "He is a legend of the sport. It would be my honour to fight him next."

Spence improved to 25-0 but failed to get the knockout he wanted against Garcia in his third defence as his KO streak was stopped at 11 fights. This is just the fourth time in his career that the former 2012 US Olympian didn't knock out his opponent.

"People said I couldn't box," said Spence. "You saw it today. I can box, I can move my head. I can do it if I want to."

Garcia, who was trying to win a title in his fifth different weight class, dropped to 39-1 with 30 KOs. "He is the truth. He is for real. He came out with a game plan, kept his distance. I couldn't make adjustments," Garcia said.—AFP ■



Errol Spence of the USA. PHOTO: AFP