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President U Htin Kyaw and wife Daw Su Su Lwin being welcomed back at the Yangon International airport by officials. **PHOTO: MNA**

President U Htin Kyaw and First Lady return from Japan

PRESIDENT U Htin Kyaw, the First Lady and party after attending the High Ranking Meeting of Universal Health Coverage Forum 2017 held in Tokyo, Japan on 14 December departed from Japan on 17 December by All Nippon Airways.

The President, the First Lady and party were seen off at the Narita Airport in Tokyo by Japanese Ambassador to Myanmar Mr. Tateshi Higuchi, Myanmar Ambassador to Japan U Thu Rain Thant Zin, Myanmar Military Attaché

Brig-Gen Saw Minn, officials and families of the Myanmar Embassy and Myanmar Military Attaché's Office.

The Myanmar delegation led by the President and the First Lady returned to Yangon yesterday evening. They were

welcomed by Yangon Chief Minister U Phyo Minn Thein, officials of the Japanese Embassy in Myanmar and officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs at the Yangon International Airport.—Myanmar News Agency ■

Field survey for Maungdaw restoration

PAWKI Taung Village, Mingyi Village, Myawaddy Village and Thit Tone Nar Kwasone Village in Rakhine State all held an event to promote restoration of their villages.

Attending the Pawki Taung Village first were Dr. Ket Aung, Chief Minister of Kachin State, U Nyi Pu, Chief Minister of Rakhine State, ministers of respective states and donors.

Attending the event at Mingyi village were Dr. Myint Naing, Chief Minister of Sagaing Region who greeted the villagers warmly. The new village will be established close to the Kamaung Seik-Taungpyo road and will contain 45 houses.

Attending the event at Myawaddy Village were Dr. Lin Htut, Chief Minister of Shan State and Dr. Aung Moe Nyo, Chief Minister of Magway Region. The villagers performed traditional songs for the officials and were given cash certificates.

The village will include housing for Mro, Khami, Dainet and Chin ethnic people.

Lastly, U Zaw Myint Maung, Chief Minister of Mandalay Region and U Salai Lian Luai, Chief Minister of Chin State, attended the events at Thit Tone Nar Kwasone Village. The village will contain houses for Mro ethnic people.—Zay Yar, Myint Maung ■



BEST BANK IN MYANMAR

Awarded by FinanceAsia 2017

Bilateral talks centred on inviting over Japanese Investment

The following is the Press Release on President U Htin Kyaw's visit to Japan

1. At the invitation of His Excellency Prime Minister Mr. Shinzo Abe of Japan, President of the Republic of Union of Myanmar U Htin Kyaw and wife Daw Su Su Lwin visited Japan to pay an official visit and to attend the Universal Health Coverage High Level Forum 2017 in Tokyo on 12th December 2017 and arrived back in Yangon on 17th December 2017.

2. The Myanmar delegation headed by the President left from Yangon International Airport on 12th December 2017 at 2210 hrs by All Nippon Airways (ANA) and arrived at Tokyo Narita Airport on 13th December at 0630 hrs.

3. During their stay in Tokyo, the President and wife met the staff members of the Myanmar Embassy and Office of the Military, Naval and Air Attaches' at the Imperial Hotel on evening of 13th December and discussed about the welfare including health care and education of the family members.

4. On 14th December, President U Htin Kyaw attended the Universal Health Coverage High Level Forum 2017
- which was held at Tokyo Prince Hotel, and delivered a keynote speech together with H.E. Mr. Shinzo ABE, Prime Minister of Japan; H.E. Mr. António Guterres, Secretary General of the United Nations; and H.E. Mr. Maky Sall, President of Senegal.

5. In the evening, the President was accorded a ceremonial welcome by the Prime Minister of Japan at the Prime Minister's Office. At 18:15 hrs, the President and the Prime Minister of Japan held a bilateral meeting during which the two leaders cordially discussed and exchanged view on strengthening bilateral relations and cooperation, particularly inviting more Japanese investment to Myanmar, Japan's continued support to Myanmar in building a fully democratic nation, peace process, assisting Myanmar's efforts for the development of Rakhine State, human resource development, the implementation of the development of health, particularly building of a cardiology and neurology specialized hospital in
- Yangon, providing required medical equipments, training specialists and technicians, also building a general hospital in Dawei, transportation and electricity sectors, Yangon City development under (800) billion yen joint assistance programme by the Government of Japan and private sector, promotion of cultural cooperation, and cooperation in connectivity under the Indo-Pacific Strategy and peace and stability of the region.

6. Afterwards, the two leaders held a joint press conference and briefed the press on the highlights of the discussion during the talks. After the joint press conference, the President and wife attended the welcoming dinner hosted by Prime Minister Mr. ABE and wife at the Prime Minister's office.

7. On 15th December, President U Htin Kyaw and wife left for Osaka by Shinkansen (High Speed Bullet Train) and proceeded to Osaka University to meet with professors and students of Myanmar Department, School of Foreign Studies. In the evening, the
- President and wife attended the dinner hosted by the Governor of Kyoto Prefecture, the Mayor of Kyoto City and the Chairman of Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Kyoto at the Kyoto State Guest House.

8. During the visit, President U Htin Kyaw and wife also paid homage to Kamakura Great Buddha in Tokyo, visited historic Golden Pavilion (Kinkaku-ji Temple) monument in Kyoto prefecture and Lake Hakone and observed Mt. Fuji in Kanagawa prefecture. On the evening of 16th December, the President and wife attended the dinner hosted by Mr. Yohei Sasakawa, Special Envoy of the Government of Japan for National Reconciliation in Myanmar and Chairman of Nippon Foundation.

9. The President and wife left Japan on 17th December 2017 at 11:00 hrs by All Nippon Airways (ANA) and arrived back in Yangon at 16:30 hrs.
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs,
17 December 2017



Merchants inspecting jade lots at Myanma Jade and Gems Emporium PHOTO: MNA

813 jade lots sold at 2017 Mid-Year Myanma Jade and Gems Emporium

THE sixth day of the 2017 Mid-Year Myanma Jade and Gems Emporium was held yesterday morning at Mani Yandana Jade Hall in Nay Pyi Taw, attracting local and international gem merchants. 813 jade lots out of 2,300 with a base-price of 1000 euros and above were sold to local and foreign gem merchants.

The 813 jade lots were sold under an open tender system and fetched a total of about 50.019 million in euros. Thus, a total sold out amounts for the

32 gem lots are 0.766 million in euros and total sold out amounts for the 1812 jade lots are 87.806 million in euros until now. A total of 4,416 local and foreign gem merchants attended the fourth day of the emporium.

They were seen viewing the displayed gem and jade lots and submitting their tenders into the tender boxes.

The 2017 Mid-Year Myanma Jade and Gems Emporium continues till 21 December. On 18 December, jade lot Nos. 2301 to

3450 will be sold. On 18 December jade lot Nos. 2301 to 3450, on 19 December jade lot Nos. 3451 to 4600, on 20 December jade lot Nos. 4601 to 5750 and on 21 December jade lot Nos. 5751 to 6685 will be sold under open tender system.

The 2017 Mid-Year Myanma Jade and Gems Emporium exhibited a total of 6,685 lots with two division in basic price; above 4000 euro and above 1000 euro under an open tender system.— Myanmar News Agency ■

2018 Matriculation Exam Timetable released

THE Ministry of Education released the following timetable for matriculation exam for 2017-2018 academic year that will be hosted in March, 2018 on 18 December.

THE Ministry of Education released the following timetable for matriculation exam for 2017-2018 academic year

Date	Time	Subjects
(1)	(2)	(3)
7.3.2018 Wednesday	From 9am to 12am	Myanmar
8.3.2018 Thursday	From 9am to 12am	English
9.3.2018 Friday	From 9am to 12am	Mathematics
12.3.2018 Monday	From 9am to 12am	Chemistry, Myanmar (optional)
13.3.2018 Tuesday	From 9am to 12am	Physics
14.3.2018 Wednesday	From 9am to 12am	Biology, Economic
15.3.2018 Thursday	From 9am to 12am	Geology
16.3.2018 Friday	From 9am to 12am	History

Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker attends Pre Christmas Celebration

A Pre-Christmas Celebration and dinner was organized by the Nay Pyi Taw Christian Council yesterday evening in Pyinmana Township. The event was attended by Speaker of Amyotha Hluttaw Mahn Win Khine Than and wife Daw Nant Kyin Kyi.

Other attendants of the ceremony were reverends of Nay Pyi Taw's christian sects, Deputy Speaker of Pyithu Hluttaw U Ti Kun Myat and wife, Deputy Speaker of Amyotha Hluttaw U Aye Thar Aung and wife, Union Minister for Religious Affairs and Culture Thura

U Aung Ko and other invited guests.

Sayar Thein Htun Linn began the evening prayers and Reverend Dr. Tin Maung Aye delivered the opening speech for Christmas celebrations. Afterwards, Union Minister Thura U Aung Ko delivered a speech.

This was then followed by various attendants giving speeches on the Nativity.

Afterwards, Sayar Hat pi Than Lwin from the Anglican Church read verses from the Bible about the Nativity.

—Myanmar News Agency ■



Attendees to the Pre-Christmas Celebration pose for documentary photo. **PHOTO: MNA**

100 Myanmar books comes out in early 2018



Union Minister Dr Pe Myint (Centre) holds talks with the laterati at the meeting on 17 December. **PHOTO: MNA**

THE first sequence of a compilation of novels of the 100 Myanmar books comes out in early 2018, according to a meeting held in Yangon yesterday morning.

It was the fifth meeting in connection with the publication of the 100 Myanmar books in which literati formulated the 100 Myanmar books program and Union Minister for Information Dr Pe Myint facilitated the work of compiling fine literature

of both artistic and knowledge fields for the first sequence. The format, theme font, size and lists of books for the series had already been approved at the meetings participated by the Information Ministry, the relevant action committees and the literati. Sequences of poem compilation will follow the compilations of novels as the 100 Myanmar books will appear in two sequences per year.

The meeting at Printing

and Publishing Department also discussed republishing of the volumes of Myanmar encyclopedia.

In his response to the progress of work presented by PPE officials and literati, the Union minister looked into the sector-wise requirements for the soonest publication of error-free revised volumes involving the up-to-date facts especially on the regions and states.

—Myanmar News Agency ■

Special Representative visits Myanmar to strengthen its cooperation with UN

SPECIAL Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict Ms. Pramila Patten visited Myanmar from 14-12-2017 to 17-12-2017.

During her visit to Nay Pyi Taw on 14-12-2017 and 15-12-2017, she paid a courtesy call on the State Counsellor and met with the Union Minister for Home Affairs, the Union Minister for Union Government Office, the Union Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, the Inspector-General of Myanmar Armed Forces, the President of Women's Affairs Federation, separately.

In Yangon on 16-12-2017, she met with the Chairman and members of Myanmar National Human Rights Commission, and U Tun Myat, former UN Assistant Secretary-General and member of the Advisory Board of the Committee for Implementation of the Recommendations on Rakhine State. She also met with the UN Country Team, members of the

Diplomatic Corps and representatives of the International Non-governmental Organizations, separately.

During her meetings with the State Counsellor and the Union Ministers, they discussed wide range of matters inter alias providing technical assistance on promotion and protection of women's rights, providing psychological support to affected people in conflict, providing capacity training on protection of women.

The Special Representative stated that she visited Myanmar not for conducting investigations into the alleged acts of sexual violence in conflict but for finding ways and means to provide technical assistance and capacity building training and to strengthen cooperation between the United Nations and Myanmar in these areas.

The Special Representative left Yangon by air in the morning of 17 December 2017.—MOFA ■

China donates USD 0.5m for peace process

THE People's Republic of China donated USD 500,000 to National Reconciliation and Peace Center yesterday afternoon in Nay Pyi Taw.

Speaking at the ceremony at the center, Mr. Sun Guoxiang, Special Envoy of Asian Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China said, "China supports Myanmar's peace process and will provide up to USD 3 million for it. The country will donate USD 1 million next year. Although the amount is not large, the donation

reflects China's goodwill towards Myanmar as the two are friendly countries. China will provide more assistance for Myanmar."

Mr. Sun presented the cash donation to Vice-Chair of the Center and Chair of the Peace Commission Dr Tin Myo Win who in return handed over the certificate of honour. Dr Tin Myo Win said, "Peace is what the entire Myanmar wants. We are trying our best to end the problem that started in 1948. The President, the State Counsellor and the

Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services pointed out peace as the core part of the country. China's assignment of a friend of Myanmar as the special envoy is an encouraging sign for the peace process. China's donation for peace is a symbol of friendship. The Government, the Parliament, the Tatmadaw and all the ethnic groups want peace. Myanmar hopes more peace aid from China. Also present were Deputy Minister U Khin Maung Tin, Director-General U Zaw Htay



Mr. Sun presents the cash donation to Vice-Chair of the Center and Chair of the Peace Commission Dr Tin Myo Win. **PHOTO: MNA**

and officials and officials of Asian Affairs Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China. —Myanmar News Agency ■

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edited.

Rubber export at border gates in November increases against October

MORE than 8,540 tons of rubber was exported to foreign countries in November through land points of entry, with estimated value of US\$9.9 million. The export volume is up by 3,373 tons compared to October.

Meanwhile, sea route showed a decline of 809 tons compared to last month. Over 1,063 tons of rubber with estimated value of US\$1.507 million was exported in November whereas October's rubber export was 1,872 tons.

Rubber export earned over \$104 million as of 24th November in current Fiscal Year, according to the Commerce Ministry.

More than 90 per cent of rubber production goes to export market. The vast majority of Myanmar's rubber goes to China through cross-border trade gates and it is also exported to Malaysia, Singapore, Japan, Indonesia, Korea, Tai-



Workers work in rubber factory at Namtit in north east Myanmar. PHOTO: REUTERS

wan and India. Myanmar's rubber export accounts for only 1.6 per cent of export in global market. Ribbed Smoked Sheet

Rubber (RSS1, RSS2, RSS3, RSS4, RSS5), Myanmar Standard Rubber (MSR3L, MSR10, MSR2, MSR50), Synthetic

Rubber, Technically Specified Rubber (TSR) and Crepe Rubber were exported to foreign countries. —Ko Khant ■



Freshwater fish are seen in local market. PHOTO: PHOE KHWAR

Bangladesh increases imports of freshwater fish from Sittway border

BANGLADESH increased its import of marine products from Myanmar via Sittway border trade camp in last November, according to border authorities.

From 25 November and 1 December of this year, Myanmar exported a wide variety of freshwater fish weighing 105 tonnes to the People's Republic of Bangladesh, earning US\$0.099 million. The current figures show an increase of 45 tonnes against the previous week's export of 60 tonnes.

In addition, the country also exported \$0.124 million worth of low-quality Emahta rice and

plum jam weighing 347 tonnes to the neighbour within the aforesaid week. Ginger, peanuts, mung bean, dried plums, garlic, rice, saltwater prawn and fish, bamboo, blankets, candy, plum jam and footwear are included on the list of main export items at Myanmar-Bangladesh borders.

Myanmar's international trade through sea routes accounted for 80 per cent of the total, and the rest was conducted via border gates. The country conducts its border trade with neighbouring countries via 16 land border gates. —Shwe Khine ■

Urea Fertilizer planned to sell under tender system

UREA Fertilizer, produced by Myaungtakar Fertilizer Producing Plant in Yangon Region and Kangyidaik Fertilizer Producing Plant in Ayeyawady Region, are being planned to sell by putting out tender, according to yesterday's report of Myawady Daily.

About 5,000 tons of urea

fertilizer each produced by these two plants within a month will sell under tender system.

Between 22 December, 2017 and 5th January, 2018, tender form is available at offices of Myanmar Petroleum Chemical Enterprise in Yangon and Nay Pyi Taw. —GNLM ■

Myanmar's agriculturalist and horticulturalist group to join the 5 Assam International Agri-Horti Show 2018 in India

A group of Myanmar's agriculturalist and horticulturalist will participate in the 5 Assam International Agri-Horti Show 2018 which will be held in Guwahati, India from 5th to 8th January, according to yesterday's report of Myawady Daily.

We intend to link up with international entrepreneurs through this show. We also hopes to grasp good opportu-

nities, said U Tun Aung, local agriculturalists to Myawady Daily.

This show will feature agro food products, growing methods, agriculture machinery and fertilizer utilized in agriculture.

About 20 agro experts from Myanmar will join the 5 Assam International Agri-Horti Show 2018. —GNLM ■

Myanmar-Middle East trade tops \$257 million in current FY

EXTERNAL trade between Myanmar and Middle Eastern countries reached US\$257 million as of this October, according to the latest statistical report of the Ministry of Commerce.

Between April and October of this year, the trans-continental region imported \$79 million worth of commodities from Myanmar while its exports to the ASEAN member state totalled \$177 million.

Fishery products and agriculture commodities such as beans, pulses, and rice top on the list of Myanmar's exports items to the Middle East market.

During the six consecutive years, the trade be-

tween the two countries hit a record high of more than \$400 million in 2016-2017 financial year.

The ministry's statistics show that the Myanmar-Middle East trade was \$381.351 million in FY2015-2016, \$373.353 million in FY2014-2015, \$267.306 million in FY2013-2014, \$267.297 million in FY2012-2013 and \$300.679 million in FY2011-2012.

Since April, the trade between Myanmar and American countries was \$741 million, trade with European Union exceeded \$1.3 billion and with ASEAN members amounted to \$6.573 billion, according to the ministry.—
Khine Khant ■

Antivenom to place on export market in early 2018

May Thet Hnin

ANTI snake-venom immunoglobulin produced by the state-owned Myanmar Pharmaceutical Factory is planned to export to Laos and Cambodia in February or March next year, said U Ko Ko Aung, the managing director of MPF.

"Previously, our production did not satisfy even local demand. And now it exceeded self-sufficiency and is planned to place on export market", he added.

"However, there has limit for our antivenom in export as it may be effective for snake-bite victims in some countries but not in some. This is why we explore markets in the neighbouring countries and India and Thailand themselves are exporting their antivenom. We

will export our antivenom to Cambodia and Laos which do not produce antivenom yet. However, there has market competition against other antivenom exporting countries", he continued.

According to a research of the Ministry of Health and Sport, 80,000 vials of anti-venom are needed for local consumption MPF currently produce around 100,000 vials of anti-venom a year. About 50,000 vials of anti-venom for snake bites are slated for export.

MPF produced only 16,000 vials of anti-venom in 2012. Starting from 2015, production reached 80,000 vials of anti-venom. MPF increased its production to 100,000 vials in 2016.

Antivenom is manufactured by harvesting the immunoglobins from horse blood and Myan-

mar had lack of horse population for producing anti-venom serum and substandard technology.

At present, antivenom producing plant has established with estimated capital of US\$30 million, with the help of technical assistance from Australia and Brazil which reduces the mortality of horse, explained by U Ko Ko Aung.

In 2012, around 400 horses died during the manufacturing process of anti-venom due to callous treatment. Thanks to proper treatment, only 86 horses resulted in death last year. Therefore, it already sorted out the problems of shortage of horses in antivenom production.

There are 287 products manufactured by MPF Insein and Kyaukse, including tablets, capsules, vials, etc. ■

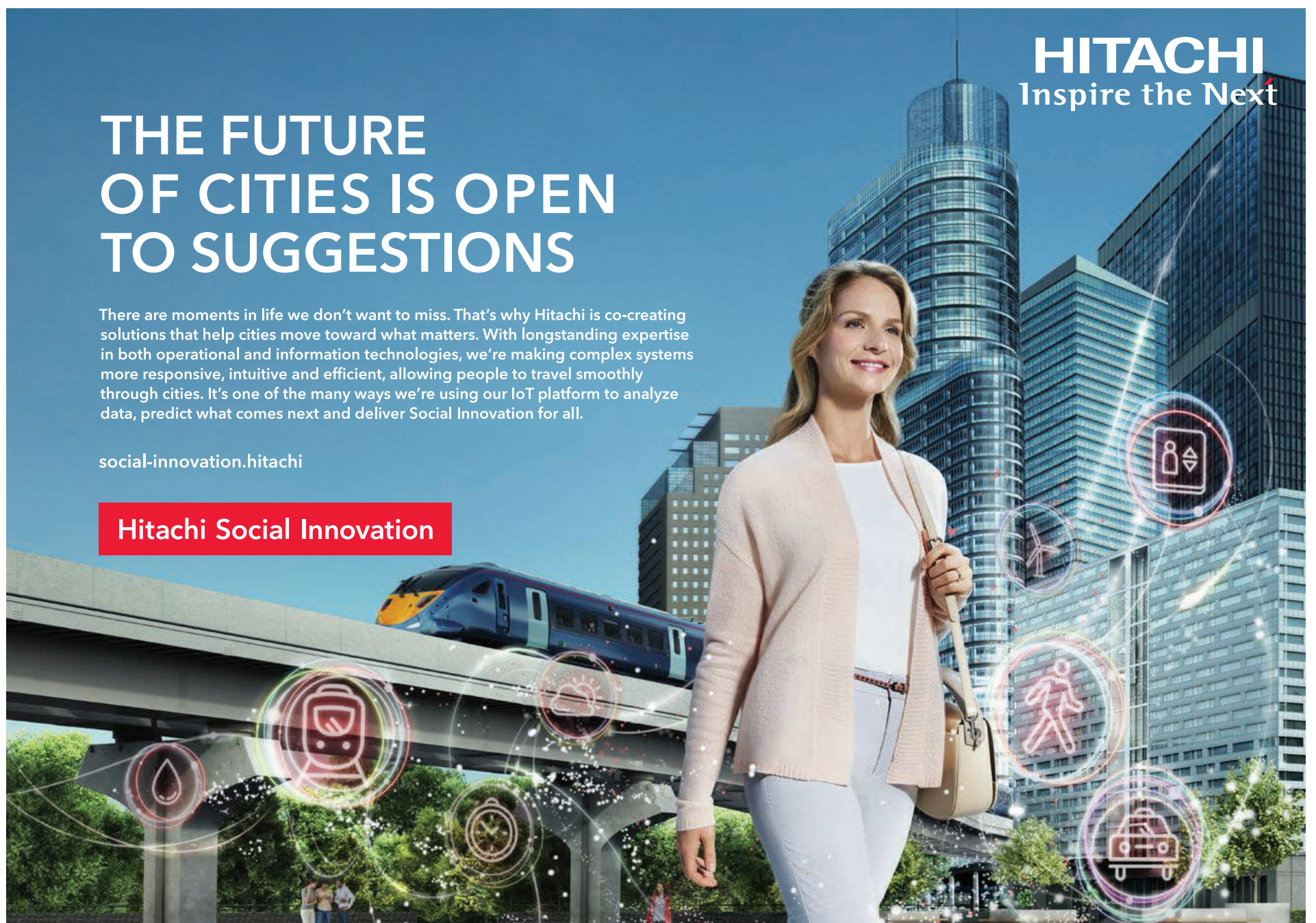
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Myanmar's largest corporations lend support to save wild elephants

TWO of the largest conglomerates in Myanmar – Kanbawza (KBZ) Group of Companies and Shwe Taung Group – have joined hands with VOICES FOR MOMOS, supporting the nationwide campaign to end the sale of elephant and other illegal wildlife products in Myanmar.

KBZ Group is amplifying the VOICES FOR MOMOS public education efforts through an integrated print, digital and outdoor advertising campaign that kicks off today at the Kyaiktiyo Pagoda (Golden Rock) in Mon State, with public service messages printed on the newly launched cable cars shuttling visitors to one of the country's most popular pilgrimage sites.

The region surrounding Golden Rock has been identified as one of the hotspots for illegal wildlife trading in Myanmar. By bringing the campaign closer to the area, KBZ Group and VOICES FOR MOMOS aim to directly reach illegal wildlife traders whilst educating the general public and discouraging local and foreign tourists from buying these products.

"KBZ Group believes all corporations should take a leading role and develop forward looking practices that take care of our

planet and all living creatures. Working hand in hand with communities and different sectors, companies can set their business goals and integrate environmental considerations which help bring a positive impact to the planet. Mainstreaming best environmental practice and innovating new ones can help enable an environmentally sustainable economy," said Daw Nang Lang Kham, Executive Director of KBZ Group.

The KBZ Group is giving VOICES FOR MOMOS access to its wealth of communications assets including advertising spots across digital and broadcast channels, billboards and other out-of-home media.

Leveraging the strength and reach of KBZ Bank, it is also using their network of over 1000 ATMs and branches across the country to disseminate information about the elephant poaching crisis.

Meanwhile, Shwe Taung Group is hosting a series of VOICES FOR MOMOS events at two of their retail properties, Junction Square and Junction City. The campaign video and other materials will also be shown at the mall cinemas over the coming weeks.



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

Shwe Taung Group is one of Myanmar's leading corporations with a diversified portfolio of business interests. Shwe Taung Real Estate has an established track record of delivering quality real estate projects in Myanmar. It has developed more than 50 projects over 800 acres of land in Myanmar, including the Crystal Tower, Crystal Residences, Junction Square, Union Business Centre, Union Financial Centre, and Junction City.

"Sustainability is at the core of Shwe Taung's strategy. We actively engage in practices that

meet the wider social, environmental and economic needs of our society. Environmental conservation is at the heart of these initiatives and protecting our iconic elephants is of paramount importance. We are delighted to extend our support to VOICES FOR MOMOS," said Dr Sandar Htun, Chief Executive Officer of Shwe Taung Real Estate.

Dr Christy Williams, Country Director, WWF-Myanmar said, "Just as it takes a village to raise a child, it takes the whole community to end the sale of elephant and other illegal wild-

life products in Myanmar. Today, we're delighted to announce that two of the largest corporations in Myanmar have raised their powerful voices to save Myanmar's momos." VOICES FOR MOMOS is a campaign launched in response to the Myanmar elephant poaching and skinning crisis with the aim of encouraging individuals and organizations across all sectors to use their voice to call for the end of illegal wildlife sales in Myanmar. More information about campaign and how to join can be found at www.voicesformomos.org.—GNLM ■

Sisters killed in auto accident

TWO sisters were killed the spot in a traffic accident happened on Saturday evening on the road between Mandalay and Monywa towns, according to a police report.

Travelling Monywa from Mandalay, a Parado car be-

ing driven by Than Soe Naing crashed into a big tree beside Monywa-Mandalay Road between mile posts No. 68/5 and 68/6 because the driver lost control of his car. The collision killed the two sisters—Daw Khin Hla Yee and Daw Tin Hla—who are

retired teachers from Yangon while the two others, including a monk, sustained injuries.

Police have filed criminal charges against the driver for careless driving under Sections 304 (a), 337 and 338 of the Penal Code.—MW T (Monywa) ■

Beekeepers prepare to produce honey this blooming season

EFFORTS are being made by local beekeepers to commercially produce honey in the current blooming season, said U Aung Kyaw Oo, secretary of Sagaing Region Beekeepers Association.

The flowering season is drawing near in Gangaw Township in Sagaing Region, with the growers saying that beans, pulses, and sunflowers cultivated along the bank of Myittha River are expected to bloom very soon. Those beekeepers across the region and nearby areas have already moved to those plantations in Gangaw since the second week of this month in an effort to carry out honey production.

For the time being, beekeep-

ers are trying to develop their beehives and increase the number of bees before pollination.

Many international buyers are already paying attention to domestically produced organic honey, which has good potential to sell in the international market.

Currently, China, Germany and Japan mostly import Myanmar honey produced in Sagaing Region through local honey trading companies.

Myanmar exported 2,400 tonnes of honey, mostly to China, Thailand, Japan and Canada in 2016-2017 fiscal year, earning more than US\$43.4 million.—Win Oo (Zeyataing) ■

Police arrest knife-wielding robbers within one day



Zin Ko Ko Oo and Zaw Win Htut. PHOTO: MYO KYAW GYI (IPRD)

DISTRICT police arrested young men involved in an armed robbery happened in Pyay Township in Bago Region within one day, according to a police report.

The case occurred on Thursday early morning on Pyay-Paukaung Road.

Zaw Phyo and Aung Naing Thu, the victims of the case said: "Travelling to Paukaung, we firstly noticed a motorbike carrying two or three young men with knife who followed us at around 1 a.m. We then were cut with knives by the group of men at mile post No. 2/7 near Konyoe Village and they robbed our motorbike and Ks300,000."

Headed by Police Captain Myint Aye from Pyay District Police Force, police arrested Zin Ko Ko Oo, 19, and Zaw Win Htut, 23, in Aunglan Township after they found a cache of knife used in the case, stolen motorbike and cash from them.—Myo Kyaw Gyi (IPRD) ■



Strength of the nation lies within

By Zeya/Myint Maung
Photo: Nay Win Tun

The GNLM presents the interviews with the chief ministers of regions and states who are delivering humanitarian aids and conducting rehabilitation programs in Maungdaw region, Rakhine State.

Mandalay Region Chief Minister U Zaw Myint Maung

The State Counsellor summoned the chief ministers and gave instructions to partake in humanitarian aid and rehabilitation programs for ethnic peoples in Rakhine State. So we raised funds for the programs. Mandalay Region will build 60 homes complete with a school, a clinic and water and electricity supply systems. We got nearly one billion kyats as donations. This housing project will cost K 700 million. We are using internal strength in the ethnic rehabilitation programs. We come here and make every arrangement in person and look into the requirements with our own eyes. We want to show that the strength of the nation lies within. That is the essence. Rehabilitation is a continuous task. Sagaing Region Chief Minister Dr Myint Naing

We could collect a donation of K 350 million from townships and companies. We will build 45 homes at Mingyiwa village. We have already transferred the projected expenditure to the bank.



U Zaw Myint Maung.



Dr Myint Naing.



Dr Aung Moe Nyo



Dr Khet Aung.



Salai Lian Luai.



Dr Lin Htut.



U Nyi Pu.

The remaining balance will be used in other necessary areas. As we are indivisible we will give necessary assistance for our ethnics.

Magway Region Chief Minister Dr Aung Moe Nyo

Twenty-five townships, particularly the companies in Magway Region donated nearly K 60 million for the people of Rakhine State. When added with funds al-

lotted by the region government, the total amount reached K 190 million. We are going to build a two-storey school. Here transport is very poor. We will help to the most possible in the future also. Kachin State Chief Minister Dr Khet Aung

People in Kachin with the Union spirit and humanitarian spirit made donations to their best of the ability for their kith

and kin in Rakhin State. We have the initial plan to build 20, homes. We received over K 280 million from companies and the public. We will continue to render assistance under the program of Kachin State and with public participation.

Chin State Chief Minister Salai Lian Luai

Chin State will provide assistance for the education sec-

tor. Under our plan we will build schools. It is my first visit to Rakhine State which in my view is more beautiful than Chin State in some places, especially the sea beaches.

Shan State Chief Minister Dr Lin Htut

With full Union spirit, I come here as the representative of Shan State. I hope that our help will create job opportunities and ensures social improvement of the people of Rakhine State, and it is our goal. We will build homes with the funds provided by the regional people, businesses and government.

Rakhine State Chief Minister U Nyi Pu

I am thankful to see chief ministers visiting our land to help us. Their assistance is much beneficial for the local ethnic peoples as it will develop the social standard in the long run. Their visit and help also serves as the morale booster for the local ethnics. ■

Doctors provide free treatment in Rakhine State

A team comprising 12 dental and oral surgeons provided free medical treatment in Maungdaw Township, Rakhine State yesterday morning.

The team formed with members and officials of the Ministry of Health and Sports, Rakhine State Health Department, Myanmar Dental and Oral Medical Council after teaching proper tooth-brushing at Kaingyi village distributed toothbrushes and packages of toothpaste free of charge. They also provided free health care services for dental and oral patients at the village which has nearly 50 households.

“Precaution is better than cure. The root cause of the vari-

ous types of dental and oral disorders is the unsystematic tooth brushing. Some even never brush their teeth and totally lack health knowledge. Everybody needs the habit of brushing the teeth daily,” explained Secretary Dr Myo Thant of the Council. The team also treated oral and dental patients at Marrawady basic education middle school.

At the clinic of No 2 border guard force at 4th mile, the team gave health awareness talks and provided toothbrushes and toothpastes free of charge to about 70 families. On 16 December, it carried out knowledge dissemination and medical treatments at Dapyuchaung village in Buth-



Volunteering Doctors greeting children in Rakhine State. PHOTO: NAY WIN TUN

etaung Township.

In addition to dental and oral services, the team also treated to children with cleft

palate. The doctors performed surgical operation on ten cleft palate patients. The cause of the disease is the strong medi-

cines a pregnant mother takes during the first three months of her pregnancy and malnutrition. —Myint Maung/Zeya ■

Water needed for everyone

“ONE can go without food for seven days but cannot go without water for one day,” as the Myanmar saying goes. It is meant to underscore the fact that food and water is very important for us. In fact, it is harmful for us not to drink clean drinking water as well.

With the increasing population and gradual deterioration of our natural environment, we are, presently, facing the problem of not having enough potable drinking water all over the world. Other challenges of climate change and natural disasters have also had a great impact on the supply of clean water.

Thus, concerted efforts are being made with great momentum for availability of clean drinking water and protection from natural disasters, all over the world. Very recently, to be exact, on December 11 and 12, the 3rd Asia-Pacific Water Summit was held in Yangon, where experts and leaders from regional countries shared knowledge and experiences to find practical solutions for acquiring adequate clean water.

Every nation is required to specifically make efforts for implementation of solving water issues such as acquisition of adequate water supply, valuation of water, protection from floods and storms, conservation of water resources effectively and systematic management of all our actions concerning water.

Asia-Pacific Water Summits have been held regularly. During the ten year period starting from the year-2007 when the 1st Asia-Pacific Water Summit was held, remarkable developments were achieved.

For Myanmar, though being situated among the over-populated countries, it can be said that there may not be great problems for drinking water. The volume of consumable water resources is 880.6 cubic kilometers in Myanmar, 105 cubic kilometers in Bangladesh, 1260.54 cubic kilometers in India and 2879.4 cubic kilometers in China respectively. According to the proportion of the country's area and population, our country does not have to worry that much about water.

Whatever it is, it will be the best for us to make preparations for the sake of our country. Every nation is required to specifically make efforts for implementation of solving water issues such as acquisition of adequate water supply, valuation of water, protection from floods and storms, conservation of water resources effectively and systematic management of all our actions concerning water. If we have done the above things, we need not worry too much about our increasing population. ■

By Maung Maung Kyaw

STYLE of traditional costume of today's Lisu females must be said to be that preceding dressing style of today's belles. On seeing them from afar, they look like dressing a somewhat loose gown. From-waist-to-under-knee-long pajamas are sewn in vertical folds like European-style gowns. Home-woven clothing is dyed black or blue. On the fringe of the pajamas are sometimes dyed black or blue or sometimes woven with blue or black strips. Jackets they wear are long sleeved and buttoned down the front. Some well-to-do people have their clothes sewn with black and blue color mixed cloth. Fine and beautiful dressing style of Lisu girls is one of their attractions.

Over their coats, they wrap rings of flat enamel coins around their necks. On heads they wear a kind of hat with colored enamel beads fringed with miniature bells. Some girls wear big round ear rings.

Their traditional costumes make them look like strong-bodied pretty maids. Depending upon marital status, costumes are not designated in separation.

As for Lisu males, they put on pants and clothes like overcoats. Over them, they wear long and large kinds of another clothing again. Over waists, they wear a belt or something. They wear blackish turbans or leather hats.

What Lisu males usually carry are 4-ft-long sword put in a sheath, a cross bow and a bamboo case for holding arrows with them wherever they go.

The most important weapon for Lisu nationals is a cross bow used in hunting and defending themselves from dangers. It is not easy for an ordinary man to cock a cross bow. They can shoot a poison-coated arrow at an enemy from a 30-feet-far place.

They always wrap their lower parts of their legs with cloth. Ancient Lisu nationals never used to wear footwear. In the past, they were in the habit of worshipping gods.

At the time when Morse missionaries arrived at Puta-O



Lisu girls playing traditional musical instrument. PHOTO: THE MIRROR

just prior to the Second World War, they converted into Christianity.

Had a Lisu lad been fond of a Lisu maid, firstly he had to send a middle-man to the maid's parents for betrothal. Provided that the maid's side agreed to accept the engagement, the lad's side must pay dowry as much as they can, to the maid's parents.

Before marriage, the lad has to pay the dowry beforehand, to ensure the wedlock, at the time when the betrothal ceremony is held. If relatives sometimes get married, dowry is no longer needed.

When married, the bride surrounded by women on the bridegroom's side is brought to the groom's residence.

The day after the wedding ceremony, friends and relatives are invited to be entertained with a feast.

A few days later, the newly wedded couple has to entertain guests again at the dwelling place of the bride's parents. Therefore, a wedding ceremony

of Lisu nationals can be said to cost a lot. The bride is required to live in her spouse's house till the time when the first-born child is delivered at her husband's living abode.

Only after then, they have to live separately, not under the same roofs with parents from both sides. Only if, previously, parents agreed with the marriage, could the couple manage to be married, whereas now youths can get married if they love with each other.

There never used to divorce after wedlock.

In former time, there was a custom of wonder among some Lisu nationals living in the Basin of Thanlwin River [formerly called Salween]. After the wedding ceremony, the bride and her parents had to go up to a hideout on mountains to conceal themselves from the sight of the groom.

The groom must look for the bride and when found they have to spend for a night till the next morning on the mountain. Among the Lisu/Lishaw fam-

ilies residing Kengtung area, there is a custom of eloping with a lover, out of parent's control, spending for one or two days there.

Later on, they can manage to get married. In fact, they have no habits of eloping with a lover, belonging to the good-natured race.

Lisu people drink their traditional liquor made from rice, which is called, "Khaung-Yay."

The couples have the custom of sipping liquor from a cup together, between males, or females or male and female as a sign of showing close friendship, accordingly the custom is called 'Event of Drinking Love.' Yet, in later days the custom vanished according to the prohibition of missionaries.

One of the characteristics of Lisu is that they play a kind of stringed instrument such as mandolin.

It is called "Kyi-Phwe," in Lisu language. Similarly, they play other musical instruments called "Moung," which is played by biting with mouths, a long flute called "Kyway-Hlee," and a short flute called, "Htu-Li." While playing these musical instruments, females and males dance face to face with each other, in queue. To the accompaniment of changing music, their dancing patterns change together with changing steps.

This dance is called in Lisu, "Che-Ngo-Che." In every occasion many Lisu nationals meet, they usually dance their traditional dance while playing "Kyi-Phwe." Such a scene always gives us a happy feeling. ■

Translated by
Khin Maung Oo



Three Lisu women wear traditional dress.

Without Regional Collaboration, Southeast Asia Will Struggle in the Fourth Industrial Revolution

TO successfully deal with the profound challenges of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, member states of the Association of South-east Asian Nations (ASEAN) need to improve their collaboration. This is the conclusion of a new joint report launched today by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the World Economic Forum.

The report, ASEAN 4.0: What Does the Fourth Industrial Revolution Mean for Regional Economic Integration?, analyses how emerging technologies will reshape Southeast Asia, and identifies actions for ASEAN leaders to prepare for the deep transformations that lie ahead. The report acknowledges the many existing national strategies for the Fourth Industrial Revolution, such as Thailand 4.0 or Singapore's Smart Nation initiative. But it argues that ASEAN must think at the regional level, not the national level.

The treatment of cross-border data flows, for example, is one of the pressing issues highlighted by the report. As data currently are prevented from flowing seamlessly across borders, new technologies such as telemedicine or the internet of things will be limited in their potential.

The report offers seven recommendations for ASEAN leaders to prepare their institutions for the coming challenges associated with the Fourth Industrial Revolution:

1. The ASEAN Secretariat has to become a "platform organization" that allows for the integration of input from multistakeholder groups of experts.
2. The secretariat should delegate more activities to affiliated functional bodies.
3. Long-term blueprints should be replaced with 3-year rolling plans. Considering the speed of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, most forecasts will quickly be outdated. ASEAN must be agile and allow for course correction.
4. Ask the people: Democratize and decentralize policy formulation. This will make the ASEAN policy-making process more inclusive, and make ASEAN an organization truly owned and managed by the people for their benefit.
5. Establish pan-ASEAN test beds for new approaches to regulation as a way to nurture multi-country experiments in shaping new technologies.
6. Hire staff capable of running a platform model effectively. The staff must be well versed in managing the new Fourth Industrial Revolution tools and have a strong record in this regard.
7. Adopt a new funding model to provide more funding for the ASEAN Secretariat's operation.

"Today, the technologies of the Fourth Industrial Revolution appear to be contributing to rising inequality around the world. But this need not be the case," said ADB Vice-President Stephen Groff. "With prudent fiscal management and appropriate policy, opportunities for lifelong learning and incentives for skills training can be created. And this is especially true for ASEAN. ADB considers the potential impact of Fourth Industrial Revolution technologies on jobs in ASEAN a critical area for exploration to support inclusive growth in years ahead."

"The Fourth Industrial Revolution is unfolding at tremendous speed. Indeed, the pace of change is accelerating. All over the world, governments are struggling to keep up," said Justin Wood, Head of Asia Pacific and Member of the Executive Committee at the World Economic Forum. "The traditional ways of shaping policy, writing regulations and setting standards are too slow, too top-down and too backward-looking. What is needed is an approach that is much faster, more agile, more experimental, and more iterative."

"While there is a lot to celebrate on the 50th anniversary of ASEAN, we mustn't rest on past achievements," said Nazir Razak, Chairman, CIMB Group Holdings, Malaysia, and Chair of the ASEAN Regional Strategy Group (RSO). "This revolution will transform everything, from economic structures to social systems. Many aspects of our lives will improve. But there will also be many worrying challenges, such as how automation and artificial intelligence are replacing jobs. We have to understand these issues and have appropriate policies to address them."—ADB■

Kayin new year ceremony held in Minhla

THE sixth time holding of the 80th Kayin new year ceremony was launched at the Sports Stadium of BEHS (Minhla), Mihla township, Thaya Waddy District, Bago Region yesterday evening.

Firstly, departmental officials from Bago Regional Government Departments opened the ceremony by cutting the ribbon.

A total of 6000 people

including Kayin, Chin, Mon, Kaya, Pa-o Ethnic and regional people along with departmental officials attended the ceremony.

At night the ceremony was ongoing with the booths exhibiting Kayin traditions and their traditional goods and also booths representing Peace can be seen with setting of fireworks in the event.—Pauk Sa (Minhla) ■



Sixth time of the 80th Kayin new year ceremony held in Minhla Township, Bago Region Region on 17 December. **PHOTO: PAUK SA (MINHLA)**



Ethnic Kayin performers entertaining at their New Year Celebration in Insein Township on 17 December. **PHOTO: ZAW GYI**

Ethnic Kayins celebrate New Year

Zaw Gyi

ETHNIC Kayin people celebrated their New Year with traditional dances and songs in Insein, a satellite town in the north of Yangon yesterday evening.

Kayin New Year Celebrations Central Committee (Greater Yangon) Chairman Mahn Shwe Pyi Aye declared the celebrations open.

The New Year celebrations also served as the showcase of

Kayin culture as it exhibited an array of boots displaying folk art, souvenirs and other utensils of Kayin people. The event drew a large crowd as its included sports activities, games, funfairs, shops and restaurants.

The second day event will see ethnic Kayins saluting the State Flag and the Kayin Flag and talks in commemoration of the New Year at 6 am, followed by sports activities, games, and funfairs till noon.

In the evening at Myanmar Convention Centre there will be traditional dances of various categories, performances of the Attachment of the Clouds violin group, modern Kayin songs, poem recitations and children's programs.

Prize presentation will be held on 19 December the final day of the celebrations. The New Year originates from the collective harvesting festivals held by the Kayin ancestors. ■

Myanmar Scout delegation arrives back

TWELVE Myanmar Scout representatives headed by U A Kyaw, U Tin Maung Latt, Daw Myint Sein and Daw Thit Oo who participated at the 1st Solar Scouts Jamboree festival arrived back Myanmar yesterday evening and was welcomed by Myanmar Scout Chief Organizer U Aye Kyaing, senior scouts and youth scouts.

The 1st Solar Scouts Jamboree festival was supervised by National Scout Organization of Thailand and was held marking the birthday of Thailand King's daughter at Vajiravudh Camp from 11 to 15 December.

Present were Mr. Kongnut Phai Boon, in charge of Scouts Jamboree festival, Thailand scout organizations and over 15,000 youth scouts from Thailand, Myanmar, Pakistan, Viet Nam, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Indonesia and Bhutan.

In the event, the scout delegations were divided into three groups titling Solar for Life, Solar for health and Solar for Environment and held discussions, and took part in the performances, singing and games.

At the ceremony, the national flags of Thailand, Myanmar,

Pakistan, Viet Nam, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Indonesia and Bhutan were raised, with national anthems of respective countries and the Scout Oaths.

Asia-Pacific Regional Scout Committee Director Mr. Kongnut

Phai Boon also delivered speeches and appreciated Myanmar Scout delegation headed by Dr Tin Nyo for having good disciplines, alertness, communication skills and teamwork.

Myanmar scout represent-

atives, together with scout representatives from other seven countries attended the birthday party of the Thailand King's daughter held at a temple near the Jamboree camp.

Back home, the Myanmar

Scout delegation will stage public activities and share the knowledge and experience they gained at the 1st Solar Scouts Jamboree festival for creating a better world through energy saving. —Myanmar Scout Association ■



Myanmar Scout representatives attended 1st Solar Scouts Jamboree festival are seen, together with international scout representatives. **PHOTO: MYANMAR SCOUT ASSOCIATION**

Trump allies say Mueller unlawfully obtained thousands of emails

WASHINGTON — An organisation established for US President Donald Trump's transition to the White House said on Saturday the special counsel investigating allegations of Russian meddling in the 2016 election had obtained tens of thousands of emails unlawfully.

Kory Langhofer, counsel to the transition team known as Trump for America, Inc. (TFA), wrote a letter to congressional committees to say Special Counsel Robert Mueller's team had improperly received the emails from the General Services Administration (GSA), a government agency.

Career staff members at the agency "unlawfully produced TFA's private materials, including privileged communications, to the Special Counsel's Office," according to the letter, a copy of which was seen by Reuters. It said the materials included "tens of thousands of emails."

Trump's transition team used facilities of the GSA, which helps manage the US government bureaucracy, in the period between the Republican's November presidential election victory and his inauguration in January.

The Trump team's accusation adds to the growing friction between the president's supporters and Mueller's office as it investigates whether Russia interfered in the election and if Trump or anyone on his team colluded with Moscow.

Asked for comment, White House spokeswoman Sarah



FBI Director Robert Mueller testifies at a Senate Intelligence Committee hearing on Capitol Hill in Washington, DC, US on 16 February 2011. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

Sanders said: "We continue to cooperate fully with the special counsel and expect this process to wrap up soon."

The special counsel's office waved off the transition team's complaint.

"When we have obtained emails in the course of our ongoing criminal investigation, we have secured either the account owner's consent or appropriate criminal process," said Peter Carr, spokesman for the special counsel's office.

The GSA did not respond immediately to a request for comment.

Democrats say there is a wide-ranging effort by the president's allies on Capitol Hill and in some media outlets to discredit Mueller's investigation.

Trump himself has loudly declared Mueller's effort a waste of time. "There is absolutely no collusion. That has been proven,"

Trump told reporters on Friday.

Russia denies interfering in the election. On Friday, Representative Adam Schiff, the top Democrat on the House of Representatives Intelligence Committee, said he fears the committee's Republican majority intends to close its investigation of the topic prematurely. Some Republicans have argued that Mueller is biased against Trump and should be fired.

Langhofer's letter was sent to the US Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Government Affairs, and the US House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

It asked for Congress to act immediately "to protect future presidential transitions from having their private records misappropriated by government agencies, particularly in the context of sensitive investigations intersecting with

political motives."

The letter said Mueller's office obtained the emails despite the fact that it was aware the GSA did not own or control the records. It said the special counsel's office has "extensively used the materials in question, including portions that are susceptible to claims of privilege" without notifying the Trump for America team.

On the transition team were a number of aides who were later caught up in Mueller's investigation, such as former national security adviser Michael Flynn.

Flynn pleaded guilty this month to lying to the FBI about his contacts with Russia.

Langhofer, the Trump transition team lawyer, wrote in his letter that the GSA's transfer of materials was discovered on 12 and 13 December.

The FBI had requested the materials from GSA staff on 23 August, asking for copies of the emails, laptops, cell phones and other materials associated with nine members of the Trump transition team responsible for national security and policy matters, the letter said.

The FBI requested the materials of four additional senior members of the Trump transition team on 30 August, it said.

Langhofer argued that, while such transition teams are involved in executive functions, they are considered private, non-profit organisations whose records are private and not subject to presidential records laws.— Reuters ■

WORLD BRIEFS

Australia arrests man accused of trying to sell missile parts for North Korea

MELBOURNE — Australian police said on Sunday they had arrested a man accused of working on the black market to sell missile components and coal on behalf of North Korea, the first charges ever brought in Australia over the sale of weapons of mass destruction.

The man had been charged with two counts under an act preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, police said, and with another four under legislation enforcing United Nations and Australian sanctions against North Korea.

—Reuters ■

Eight killed, 44 injured in Pakistan's church attack

ISLAMABAD — At least eight people were killed and 44 others injured in a suicide attack at a church in Pakistan's southwest provincial capital of Quetta on Sunday, hospital sources told Xinhua.

Waseem Baig, spokesperson for a civic hospital, told Xinhua through telephone that eight people were killed and 44 others injured in the suicidal blast in Quetta. Local reports said that the death toll may further rise as nine were in critical conditions, and that about 10 to 15 kg of explosives were used in the attack.

—Xinhua ■

More than two dozen feared killed in central Philippines landslide

MANILA — Rescuers are looking for up to 27 people believed to be buried alive in a landslide in an island province in central Philippines, police and news reports said on Sunday.

The landslide triggered by heavy rains buried a row of houses of some five families in Biliran province at the height of the tropical storm Kai-Tak that barrelled into the Philippines on Saturday.

Quoting police officer Lilibeth Morillo of the Biliran Provincial Police, GMA News Online said three bodies have so far been retrieved from the devastating landslide.— Xinhua ■

Foreign minister warns UK cannot become 'vassal state' of EU

EDINBURGH — Britain must strike a strong trade deal with the European Union after Brexit and avoid becoming a subordinate state of the bloc, foreign minister and leading Brexiteer Boris Johnson has told the Sunday Times newspaper.

Failure to ditch EU law would make the United Kingdom a "vassal state," Johnson said in an interview to be published on Sunday. The govern-

ment must aim to "maximize the benefits of Brexit" by getting divergence from the bloc's rules so that it could do "proper free trade deals" with other countries.

Prime Minister Theresa May this week secured an agreement with the EU to move Brexit talks on to trade and a transition pact. But she must now unite her deeply divided cabinet over what trade deal

Britain actually wants.

Separately, in a measure of the difficulty May will face in bringing her side together, finance minister Philip Hammond caused a stir amongst some Brexit supporters because he said that after Britain formally leaves the EU in March 2019, it will seek to replicate the current status quo in a transition period.

Former work and pensions

minister Ian Duncan Smith criticized Hammond, as did other leading Brexit supporters, for making a statement which he said was "not government policy".

Johnson told the Sunday Times he would advance the case for a "liberal Brexit" in a new intervention in the debate this week in which he would play up the advantages of leaving the EU.— Reuters ■

Thousands flee as wildfire 'beast' grows to California's third-largest

VENTURA, (Calif.) — A raging California wildfire powered by fierce winds grew into the third-largest in state history on Saturday as forced evacuations turned neighbourhoods into ghost towns and ash fell in some areas like heavy snow.

High winds and dry conditions were expected to remain through the weekend to power the so-called Thomas Fire in Southern California. It has destroyed more than 1,000 structures and threatened 18,000 more since erupting on 4 December, including homes in the wealthy enclave of Montecito just outside the coastal city of Santa Barbara.

"It is a beast," Santa Barbara County Fire Department Division Chief Martin Johnson told a news conference.

"But we will kill it," he said.

Nearly 8,500 personnel using nearly 1,000 engines and 32 helicopters were battling the blaze, which was 40 per cent contained on Saturday evening. It has become the seventh-most destruc-

tive in state history, officials said.

A new evacuation order was issued for parts of Santa Barbara County on Saturday as high winds whipped the fire through bone-dry terrain.

In Montecito, smoke billowing from nearby canyons and pushed by the high winds choked the air, hindering aircraft from dropping flame retardant, the Governor's Office of Emergency Services said.

The wildfire forced many schools to close for days, shut roads and drove hundreds of thousands from their homes. It was also responsible for poor air quality throughout Southern California.

An evacuation order for the city of Ventura, which was hit hard in the first days of the fire, was lifted on Saturday morning.

"Our backyard, it's like a rain of ash. I don't even want to step back there," said Janet Harrington, 56, an artist and writer who grew up and lives in Ventura.

Her son Ryan said: "I can



Firefighters provide structure protection at the historic San Ysidro Ranch as flames from the Thomas Fire, now the third-largest on record, rage in the distance in Montecito, California, US, on 16 December 2017. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

count 10 people who lost their homes. My best friend from high school, his mom's house burned down."

The total cost of fighting the fire had come to more than \$110 million by Saturday evening, as flames blazing over steep hills lit up the night skies.

The 13 days of shifting winds

and evacuations have taken their toll on a weary population.

Paul Pineda, who lives in Fillmore, about 55 miles (90 km) northwest of Los Angeles and on the eastern flank of the fire, said he will flee if the blaze gets too close.

"It's pretty crazy. Went to sleep last night about midnight

and then woke up to the roar of this fire coming through about 3 am" Pineda said. This year has been unprecedented for California in terms of structures lost and the size of the wildfires, officials said. Five of 20 most destructive fires in recorded history ravaged the state in 2017, according to Cal Fire. —Reuters ■

Mudslide in southern Chile kills five, at least 15 missing

SANTIAGO — A mudslide on Saturday tore through a small village in southern Chile near a popular national park, leaving five people dead and at least 15 missing after a night of torrential downpours, authorities said.

A video taken from a helicopter by Chilean police showed a vast swath of the remote town of Villa Santa Lucia, near Chaiten in coastal Patagonia, buried beneath the mud as the landslide ploughed its way down a flooded river valley.

Four Chileans and a male tourist whose name and nationality have not been disclosed were died in the mudslide, authorities said.

Rescue workers were continuing to search through the debris for at least 15 people.

The mudslide also destroyed a school and several homes and roadways as well as a voting centre ahead of Chile's presidential election on Sunday.

President Michelle Bachelet declared the area a disaster zone.

"I have ordered rescue workers to put all the necessary

resources toward protecting the people of Villa Santa Lucia," she said on social media.

More than 4.5 inches (11.4 cm) of rain fell in 24 hours, the country's Interior Ministry

said, but weather conditions were expected to improve later in the day.

Villa Santa Lucia borders Chile's Corcovado National Park, a popular tourist region

of volcanoes, fjords and vast forests.

The nearby Chaiten volcano erupted in 2008, forcing the evacuation of thousands of residents.—Reuters ■



Damage done by a landslide is seen in Villa Santa Lucia, Los Lagos, Chile, on 16 December, 2017 in this picture obtained from social media. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

Argentina fires head of navy over submarine tragedy

BUENOS AIRES — Argentina fired the head of its navy a month after a submarine disappeared in the South Atlantic with 44 crew members onboard, a government spokesman said on Saturday.

Letting go of Navy Admiral Marcelo Eduardo Hipólito Srur was the first known disciplinary action taken by President Mauricio Macri's administration since contact was lost with the ARA San Juan on 15 November.

"It was decided to remove him," a government spokesman said. Families of the crew members criticized Macri's government for not clearly communicating with them and for abandoning rescue efforts. The navy said on 27 November that water that entered the submarine's snorkel caused its battery to short-circuit before it went missing. The navy had previously said international organizations detected a noise that could have been the submarine's implosion the same day contact was lost. —Reuters ■

US, Russian, Japanese crew blasts off for space station

BAIKONUR (Kazakhstan) — A trio of US and Japanese astronauts and a Russian cosmonaut blasted off from Kazakhstan on Sunday for a two-day trip to the International Space Station, a NASA TV broadcast showed. Commander Anton Shkaplerov of Roscosmos and flight engineers Norishige Kanai of Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency and Scott Tingle of NASA lifted off from the Baikonur Cosmodrome at 1:21 pm local time (0721 GMT/0221 EST).

The crew will gradually approach the station, which orbits

about 250 miles (400 km) above Earth, for two days before docking. Shkaplerov, Kanai and Tingle will join Alexander Misurkin of Roscosmos and Mark Vande Hei and Joe Acaba of NASA, who have been aboard the orbital outpost since September.

Onboard cameras showed crew members making thumbs-up gestures after the blast-off. Also visible was a stuffed dog toy chosen by Shkaplerov's daughter to be the spacecraft's zero-gravity indicator. Soyuz was safely in orbit about 10 minutes after the launch.—Reuters ■



Members of the International Space Station expedition 54/55, Roscosmos cosmonaut Anton Shkaplerov (C), NASA astronaut Scott Tingle (R) and Norishige Kanai (L) of the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) during the send-off ceremony after checking their space suits before the launch of the Soyuz MS-07 spacecraft at the Baikonur cosmodrome, in Kazakhstan, on 17 December 2017. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

Second C919 jet makes maiden test flight



The second plane of China's homegrown large passenger plane, the C919, takes off from Pudong International Airport in Shanghai, east China, on 17 December 2017. The second plane of the C919 made its first test flight in Shanghai on Sunday. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

SHANGHAI — A second prototype of China's large passenger jet C919 completed its maiden flight in Shanghai Sunday, which was marked as a step closer to China becoming a global aviation powerhouse.

The domestic jet took off shortly after 10:30 am in Shanghai Pudong International Airport and the flight lasted

around 2 hours. It tested the performance of the C919 major systems and equipment, such as taking-off and landing, navigation and communication, speed acceleration and deceleration.

The first C919 made its maiden flight in May. It conducted its first intercity test flight in November.

The Commercial Aircraft

Corporation of China plans to produce six aircraft for flight testing.

More than 1,000 tests will be carried out.

With a standard range of 4,075 kilometers, the C919 jet is comparable to the updated Airbus 320 and Boeing's new generation 737.—Xinhua ■

China unveils 2017-2021 winter clean heating plan: media

BEIJING — China announced on Sunday a five-year plan to convert northern Chinese cities to clean heating during the winter through 2021, state media reported, amid a deepening heating crisis.

An unprecedented government campaign to switch millions of households and thousands of businesses from coal to natural gas in northern China this winter has backfired.

Severe natural gas shortages have sent prices soaring nationwide, hitting businesses and residents across China's industrial heartland.

The plan was jointly announced by 10 government agencies, including the state

planning National Development and Reform Commission and the National Energy Administration, the online edition of Securities Times quoted the China Energy News as saying.

The plan covers 2017 through 2021.

The government has made "concrete arrangements" regarding geothermal heating, biomass heating, solar heating, gas heating, electric heating, industrial waste heating, clean coal-fired central heating, the Securities Times said. By 2019, half of northern China would have converted to clean heating, reducing bulk coal burning by 74 million tonnes, it said.—Reuters ■

Three dead after M6.5 quake hits Indonesia's Java Island

JAKARTA — A strong earthquake hit Indonesia's main island of Java just before midnight Friday, killing three people and sparking fears of a tsunami, officials said Saturday.

The US Geological Survey said the quake's epicenter was less than a kilometer outside the town of Cipatujah on the southern coast of West Java, and was measured at a depth of 91.9 kilometers.

The quake occurred at 11:47 pm local time, with tremors felt across the island including the capital Jakarta located on the northern coast of West Java about 300 km from the epicenter.

The country's meteorological, climatology and geophysics agency issued a warning for large waves along the coast, but the alert was lifted at 2:27 am after no tsunami was reported.—Kyodo News ■

Hollywood actor Dustin Hoffman accused of exposing himself to a minor

LOS ANGELES — More accusations! Legendary actor Dustin Hoffman is again in the spotlight after three women spoke to US magazine Variety about his sexual misconduct, including exposing himself to a 16-year-old in a hotel room.

Hoffman's attorney Mark A. Neubauer called the accusations against the actor "defamatory falsehoods". Hoffman himself hasn't made comments.

According to the report, Cori Thomas was a high-school classmate of Hoffman's daughter Karina when she met the actor in Manhattan, New York in 1980. When Thomas was waiting for her parents to pick her up, she was left in the hotel room with the actor alone.

Hoffman allegedly came out of the hotel bathroom with a towel wrapped around him and then dropped it and stood naked. He later put on a robe and sat on the bed and asked her to massage his feet, which she did. She then took the chance to

leave when her mother called her from downstairs.

Melissa Kester said the Oscar-winner groped her and conducted unwanted sexual conduct with her while recording audio for the 1987 film "Ishtar".

A third woman who didn't reveal her name told Variety that Hoffman also sexually assaulted her in a station wagon while working on "Ishtar". But she had a subsequent sexual encounter with him, which she didn't know how to define.

Earlier, three women stepped forward to accuse the Hollywood actor of sexual harassment which they said happened decades ago. The first was author Anna Graham Hunter, who alleged Hoffman of groping her and making inappropriate comments when she was a 17-year-old intern on the set of the 1985 TV movie of Death of a Salesman. Hoffman had previously denied abusing Hunter.—Xinhua ■

Queen of traditional songs celebrates 75th Birthday



PHOTO: THIHA KO KO (MANDALAY)

Mar Mar Aye or the Queen of Myanmar folk songs celebrated her 75th anniversary birthday on the stage she sang together with many of the famous vocalists in Mandalay.

Her 75th birthday under the title "Diamond Jubilee Music Concert" was held on Saturday evening at National Theatre in the city well-known for its preservation and love for the traditions and culture. The event was opened with the melodies of

Mandalay Myoma Music Troupe and Sai Tint Lwin Traditional Orchestra troupe. Then, Mar Mar Aye (Daw mar Mar Aye) presented gifts to four elderly musicians as a token of love and respect. Authors U Kyaw Yin Myint and Sue Nget gave birthday wishes and talks in honour of the Queen.

Then, Daw Mar Mar Aye, together with Mandalay Thein Zaw, Academy Yan Aung, Academy Cho Pyone, Academy Htun Aeindra Bo, Htay Htay Myint,

Yi Yi Khin, Nan Win and group, Mg Thein Win, Than Htun Lay, Shwe Yi Thein Tan and the scholars of Daw Mar Mar Aye from Singapore and American, Wine La Min Aung, May Thet Htar Swe, Dr Hla Bu, Min Aung Khaing, Zayan Ma, Ye Nanda, Naung Ye Htut, Thae Nu Wah, Me Me Chaung, Babra and other performers entertained with the songs in honors. Several channels also broadcast live the event. — Thiha Ko Ko (Mandalay) ■

Italian conductor wins Maestro Solti conducting competition in Hungary

PECS, (Hungary) — Italian conductor Leonardo Sini won the first place of the Maestro Solti International Conducting Competition, held here on Saturday, before Azis Sadikovic from Austria and Nimrod David Pfeffer from Israel, whereas the audience's prize went to Hungarian Peter Dobszay.

The world-class concert hall, Kodaly Center in Pecs where the finalists have conducted the Pannon Philharmonic Orchestra, hosted the final.

Leonardo Sini began his musical studies at the Conservatory of Music "L. Canepa" in Sassari. In 2013 he gained his Masters degree in trumpet at the Royal Academy of Music in London where he also commenced his studies in conducting with Sian Edwards.

Leonardo has received important prizes in several international music competitions and performed with numerous ensembles. He is the founder and Principal Conductor of the Armonia Chamber Orchestra with whom he performed in different concerts in London and



Italian conductor Leonardo Sini (R) receives the first prize of the Maestro Solti International Conducting Competition in Pecs, southwest Hungary, on 16 December 2017. Azis Sadikovic from Austria and Nimrod David Pfeffer from Israel won the second and third prizes. Audience's prize went to Hungarian Peter Dobszay. The Maestro Solti International Conducting Competition is named after Sir George Solti, conductor, pianist and music director who represents the highest standards of performing art. PHOTO: XINHUA

in Italy.

The Austrian conductor Azis Sadikovic is the winner of the 1st prize and the Caixa-General special prize at the Concurso Jovens Maestros 2013 and the

winner of the 3rd prize and the bronze baton at the renowned Fitelberg International Conducting Competition 2012.

Israeli-born conductor Nimrod David Pfeffer serves as

assistant conductor at The Metropolitan Opera in New York City, and as music director of the Lyrical Opera Company of Guatemala. At The Lyric Opera Company of Guatemala, which he Co-Found-

ed in 2016, he commissioned and performed nationally televised original productions of Rigoletto and L'Elisir d'Amore.

Born in 1990, Peter Dobszay is considered the most versatile musician today at the Hungarian music scene. He makes concert tours worldwide.

A total of 186 conductors from 40 countries of the world — from China through Russia to America — applied for the competition organized by Filharmonia Hungary. After the pre-selection, forty of them entered the semifinal.

The 35,000-euro prize has awarded by a prestigious international jury for the best conductors.

The Maestro Solti International Conducting Competition is named after Sir George Solti conductor, pianist and music director who represents the highest standards of performing art.

Sir Solti has earned imperishable merits in growing popularity of exquisite Hungarian composers such as Bela Bartok, Zoltan Kodaly, Erno Dohnanyi and Leo Weiner.—Xinhua ■

First Tibetan Cultural Exhibition in Shwedagon Pagoda

A photo exhibition showcasing Tibetan culture was opened in the northern ward of Shwedagon Pagoda yesterday.

Attending the opening ceremony of the exhibition were Yangon Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein, Chinese Ambassador to Myanmar Mr. Hong Liang, members of Chinese goodwill ambassadors to Myanmar and other invited guests.

Mr. Zhang Yun, head of the Research Department for Tibetan Culture, said the purpose of the exhibition was to allow Myanmar citizens to view the culture of Tibet which is seldom visited by Myanmar tourists.

The exhibition will last from

17 to 18 December, from 6am till 10pm. The exhibition contains a hundred pictures showcasing the religious side, society, natural beauty, economy and culture of Tibet.

U Sein Win Aung, Chairman of Myanmar-China Goodwill Association, said that Tibet occupies 200 kilometers of the China's border to Myanmar. He said this is why it is important to promote the culture of Tibet for future relationships.

Tibetans are one of the ethnics of China and Tibet is one of five self-administrative regions in China. Tibet has a population of 2.6 million people.

—Aye Min Thu ■



Yangon Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein observes the Tibet Cultural Exhibition at Shwedagon Pagoda. **PHOTO: ZARNI MAUNG**

Pyay holds 98th donation ceremony on 18 December



in
Picture

Pyay the second largest city in Bago Region held its 98th anniversary of donating rice and other provisions to members of the Sangha at a decorated pavilion on Sartaiktan Street, Hsawndaw Ward, on 17 December 2017. **PHOTO: MAUNG SHEW WIN (PYAY)**

Dynamic Photo Art exhibition aims to explore skills of unknown photographers

YANGON Gallery will host a collective art exhibition entitled "Dynamic Photo Art Exhibition" in the third week of this month, with a focus on showcasing photographs of Myanmar's beautiful landscapes and festivals, according to a report of the Myawady Daily's Sunday edition.

This will be the fourth time

the Dynamic Digital Photography Training School has organised this kind of event with an intention to explore artistic skills of unknown photographers through the group the group show.

The event is scheduled to open to the public from 23 to 15 December, planning to feature roughly 114 works by 68 trainee

photographers.

All work will be on sale at Ks200,000 each at the gallery, with the organiser planning to donate 50 per cent of the net proceeds to conflict-affected people in Rakhine State.

Yangon Gallery is located within the compound of People's Park near the Planetarium Museum on Alone Road.—GNLM ■

Old and new batch of outstanding students celebrate

The reunion dinner for Outstanding students from batch 1964 and the awarding ceremony for 2017's outstanding students was held on 16 December. The event was held in Medical University (1) on Pyay Road.

Dr. Aung Zaw Myo, chairman of the 1964 batch, delivered the opening speech.

Afterwards, Dr. Aung Thu, Union Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation, and Yangon Region Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein gave congratulatory speeches.

This was followed by the award presentation ceremony for 2017's outstanding students from Yangon Region.

Afterwards, various donors conferred donations to the 1964 batch with U Nyo Myint, Senior Managing Director of KBZ Group of Companies, donating Ks50 million on behalf of the

company, Aung Myin Thu Co. donating Ks2.5 million, Dr. Tin Htun Oo, the Managing Director of Multimedia Group, donating Ks2 million, Dr. Aye Aye from Lashio's outstanding student batch donating Ks1 million, Dr. Kyu Kyu from Lashio's batch donating Ks300,000, and Lt-Gen (retired) Myint Soe and wife Daw Khin Mya Oo (a senior outstanding student) donating Ks200,000.

Later, various donors also donated to an education fund for the outstanding students with Daw Myat Myat Ohn Khin (Retired Union Minister), Union Minister Dr. Aung Thu and Dr. Hla Thein Aye from '72 batch donating Ks800,000. The donations were received by the Chairperson and Speaker of the 1964 batch and they in turn conferred certificates to the donors.

—GNLM ■



U Nyo Myint, Senior Managing Director of KBZ Co. and wife gives donations to Dr. Tin Myo Win on behalf of KBZ Co. **PHOTO: SUPPLIED**

Myanmar football star Kyaw Ko Ko likely to transfer to Chiang Rai United

MYANMAR football star Kyaw Ko Ko, a striker of Yangon United will likely to transfer to Thailand League 1 team Chiang Rai United, according to the websites of the Myanmar National League.

"If the transfer will be sure, his transfer will be a good opportunity for Kyaw Ko Ko. This is a good consequence for not only Kyaw Ko Ko, but for the Myanmar national team. The Thai leagues are very good in tactics and strategies and stress powerful playing. After about two years of playing in this kind of league, Kyaw Ko Ko will become a marvelous player, with better skills and stamina. He then will contribute more benefit to the Myanmar national football team. I would like to say congratulations to him for hearing like that," said Myo Thet Naing, a Myanmar football fan.

Agreements are undergoing between Yangon United FC and Chiang Rai United for the trans-



Myanmar football star Kyaw Ko Ko, a striker of Yangon United seen at an international match. **PHOTO: SUPPLIED**

fer, said an official from Yangon United. Chiang Rai United Football Club is a Thai professional

football club based in Chiang Rai Province, a city located in the very northern part of Thailand.

The club was founded in 2009 and currently plays in Thai League 1.—Kyaw Zin Lin ■

Ronaldo free kick gives Real another world title

ABU DHABI—Cristiano Ronaldo scored with a free kick which went through the defensive wall to break Gremio's brave resistance and give Real Madrid a 1-0 victory over the South American champions in the Club World Cup final on Saturday.

Ronaldo's 53rd-minute strike gave Real their second world title in a row, the third in the last four seasons, and ended Gremio's hopes of pulling off what would have been a huge upset. The European champions, enjoying the backing of most neutrals at the Zayed Sports City Stadium, dominated as expected, with 20 shots on goal to Gremio's one, but the much more limited Brazilians still made their lives uncomfortable.—Reuters ■

JCB Football Clinic and friendly tournament launched in Yangon

WITH the joint cooperation of Myanmar Football Federation (MFF), Myanmar National League (MNL) and JCB Co.Ltd, a football clinic was launched yesterday morning and its friendly tournament was held in the evening at the artificial turf ground of MFF in Yangon, Myanmar.

The event was intended for identifying, nurturing and training the next generation of youth footballers in Myanmar along with improving their physical and mental development.

A total of sixteen teams divided into two groups competed in the friendly tournament and the two most scorers Group (G) and Group (B) met in the final.

The Group (B) won the championship of the friendly tournament by beating the Group (G) with 2-0 result while Group C secured the third place by beating the Group (E) with the penalty in the third place



Kids seen at the JCB football clinic at the artificial turf ground of MFF in Yangon, Myanmar yesterday. **PHOTO: MFF**

fight match.

A total of 80 kids, who were interested in football, along with football coaches and officials

from JCB, MFF and MNL participated in the event.

JCB is an originally Japan Credit Bureau, a credit card

company based in Tokyo, Japan provided support in Myanmar's football development for youth.—Kyaw Zin Lin ■

Napoli back on top after Inter lose unbeaten record

MILAN — Inter Milan suffered an unexpected first league defeat of the season on Saturday, going down 3-1 at home to midtable Udinese, and were knocked off the top of Serie A by Napoli after they won by the same score at Torino.

In the day's other game, AS Roma missed a second-half penalty but still beat Cagliari 1-0 with a stoppage-time goal by Federico Fazio, awarded after a consultation with the video assistant referee (VAR).

VAR was also used at the San Siro to award a second-half penalty to Udinese which Rodrigo De Paul converted in what proved to be the turning point as Inter were finally beaten in their 17th game of the campaign. The referee initially signalled a goal kick but changed his mind and gave handball against Davide Santon after consulting the VAR.—Reuters ■