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THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

Vol. V, No. 267, 3rd Waxing of Pyatho 1380 ME | www.globalnewlightofmyanmar.com | Tuesday, 8 January 2019

Coord meeting on international relations, national security held at Presidential Palace

Tatmadaw's ceasefire, Rakhine State & border security issues discussed



President U Win Myint, State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and Vice Presidents, Speakers of Hluttaws, Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services and Union ministers attend the coordination meeting on international relations, national security and Rakhine State and border security issues at the Presidential Palace in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

PRESIDENT U Win Myint chaired a coordination meeting on Myanmar's international relations and national security which was held at the Presidential Palace in Nay Pyi Taw from 2 pm to 4:30 pm yesterday.

The President and attendees discussed in detail matters pertaining to international relations, national security, an analysis of the situation after the Tatmadaw made its ceasefire announcement, and on the topic of Rakhine State and border security matters.

President U Win Myint, State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, Vice Presidents U Myint Swe and U Henry Van Thio, Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U T Khun Myat, Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than, Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Soe Win, Union Minister for Home Affairs Lt-Gen Kyaw Swe, Union Minister for Defence Lt-Gen Sein Win, Union Minister for Border Affairs Lt-Gen Ye Aung, Union Minister for Office of the State Counsellor U Kyaw Tint Swe, Union Minister for the Office of the Union Government U Min Thu, Union Minister for Investment and Foreign Economic Relations U Thaung Tun, Union Minister for International Cooperation U Kyaw Tin, Union Peace Commission Chairman Dr. Tin Myo Win, and Chief of Military Security Affairs Lt-Gen Soe Htut attended the meeting.

— MNA ■

(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

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SEA PLM Test Administrators, School Coordinators training workshop opened



Union Minister Dr. Myo Thein Gyi addresses the opening ceremony of South-East Asia Primary Learning Metrics for Test Administrators and School Coordinators Training Workshop in Nay Pyi Taw. **PHOTO: MNA**

AN opening ceremony of South-East Asia Primary Learning Metrics (SEA-PLM) training workshop for Test Administrators and School Coordinators was held at Grand Ballroom of Mingala Thiri Hotel, Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning.

In his address to the event, Union Minister for Education Dr. Myo Thein Gyi said the day's event is the opening ceremony of a course where Test Administrators and School Coordinators who'll be responsible to conduct research on primary level teaching and learning in Southeast Asia region. The research to be conducted is evaluating Grade-5 level students in ASEAN region with a set norm. A meaningful teaching and learning results will be achieved by submitting a report on the research findings to the policy makers.

During 2019 SEA-PLM Main Survey will be conducted in seven ASEAN countries and Myanmar is the first country where the survey will be conducted. Once every four years regular assessment and evaluation in areas of writing, reading, mathematics and being a good human being will be conducted. An international level education assessment norm will be utilized with financial support provided by SEAMEO (Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization) and UNIFEF-EAPRO (United Nations Children Fund East Asia and Pacific Regional Office) and technical support provided by Australian Council for Education Research (ACER). Uniqueness of this study and assessment is the inclusion of being a good human being.

This is the first time in the world where writing ability is being studied and assessed and it is the outcome of the close cooperation among SEAMEO member countries. Capacity building courses will be conducted for representatives from relevant governments and ministries with an aim to include it in the education system of the member countries.

SEA-PLM Main Survey will be conducted on 202 schools with 5,853 students selected from basic education schools, monastic schools and private schools in states and regions. In addition 5,853 parents, 441 Grade 5 teachers and 202 head masters/mistresses will be answering assessment questionnaires. All are urged to cooperate in unity towards a successful SEA-PLM Main Survey so that a quality education can be implemented said the Union Minister.

Next, UNICEF Office Deputy Resident Representative Mr. Paul Edwards delivered a message of greeting and the ceremony continues as per the course schedule.

The event was attended by Union Minister for Education Dr. Myo Thein Gyi, Deputy Minister U Win Maw Tun, UNICEF Deputy Resident Representative Mr. Paul Edwards, Education Section Chief Mitsue Uemura, Research Fellow Dr. Jacqueline Cheng from Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER), directors general from ministry of education, state/region heads of education, head masters/mistresses who'll be School Coordinators, teachers who'll be Test Administrator, SEA-PLM steering committee members, technical support group members, officials and invited guests.

The three-day training workshop will be held from 7 to 9 January and 202 School Coordinators and 282 Test Administrator, are attending the course. — MNA

(Translated by Zw Min)

President's Office continues announcement of illegal drug arrests, seizures acting on tip-offs

THE Office of the President issued Press Release No. 1/2019 yesterday, publicly announcing the Ministry of Home Affairs' arrests and seizures in the fight against illicit drug trafficking up till 5 January.

The ministry made the arrests, acting on information, sent to the Drug Activity Special Complaint Department of the Office of the President as of 5 January.

The full text of the press release will be reported in the 9 January issue of The Global New Light of Myanmar.—GNLM

Chairperson, member of Independent Commission of Enquiry arrive in Yangon



Independent Enquiry Commission chair arrives in Yangon. **PHOTO: MNA**

AMBASSADOR Rosario Manalo, Chairperson of the Independent Commission of Enquiry, Former Deputy Foreign Minister of the Philippines and former chair and current Representative of the Philippines to CEDAW, and Ambassador Mr. Kenzo Oshima, member of the commission, Former Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator and Former Permanent Representative of Japan to the United Nations, arrived separately, for the fifth time, in Yangon by air yesterday.

The Independent Commission of Enquiry Chairperson was welcomed on arrival at the Yangon International Airport by U Zaw Tun Oo, Deputy Director-General of the Protocol Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and officials. The Independent Commission of Enquiry was established as part of Myanmar's national initiative to address reconciliation, peace, stability and development in Rakhine State. — MNA *(Translated by Win Ko Ko Aung)*

Union Minister Dr. Win Myat Aye attends coord meeting on implementing recommendation of 10-point Trafficking in Person Report 2018

COORDINATION meeting on the 10-point recommendation of Trafficking in Person Report 2018 by the US Department of State was held yesterday afternoon in the meeting hall of the Ministry's office in Nay Pyi Taw, and Union Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Dr. Win Myat Aye attended the meeting.

During the meeting, Union Minister Dr. Win Myat Aye said that Myanmar is striving to combat human trafficking, and which was placed back in many tiers in the human trafficking. The US Department of State has released an annual report and placed the countries onto the tiers based on the Human Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000.

It was of great importance to create employment opportunities for the youths and human trafficking was linked with social protection, economic development and peace process, he said. Thus it was needed to conduct vocational training schools while creating job opportunities in the country. Moreover it was seen that there could arise many possibilities of human traffickings at the relief camps in the conflict areas. Therefore effective performance can be made through the cooperation of the relevant ministries, UN organizations and CSOs. Following this, the attendees took part in the discussion in order to release the report of the implementation and on-going processes with the cooperation of relevant ministries. — MNA

(Translated by Win KoKoAung)



State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi meets with Ambassador of Peru to Myanmar Mr. Fernando Quiros Campos at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

State Counsellor receives Mr. Fernando Quiros Campos, Ambassador of Peru

DAW Aung San Suu Kyi, State Counsellor of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, received the Peruvian Ambassador Mr. Fernando Quiros Campos, at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Nay Pyi Taw at 11:30 a.m. yesterday.

Matters pertaining to the promotion of Myanmar-Peru bilateral relations, enhancing people to people exchange and cooperation in various sectors, including sports, agriculture, tourism, combating illicit drug trafficking and investment were cordially discussed. — MNA ■

Deputy Minister U Khin Maung Tin encourages families of victims killed in AA attacks, visits wounded police

A UNION Government delegation led by Deputy Minister from the Office of the State Counsellor, U Khin Maung Tin, are in Buthidaung Township to inspect the police outposts simultaneously attacked by AA terrorist insurgents.

The Deputy Minister also visited the police wounded in the attacks and gave them words of encouragement and necessary social support and assistance.

The Deputy Minister and group flew to Sittway on 6 January and conducted a review meeting at the State Government Office's meeting hall concerning the coordinated attacks on the border police outposts in Buthidaung Township.

Yesterday morning, the Deputy Minister and entourage arrived in Maungtaw by Tatmadaw helicopters. The Deputy Minister first encouraged wounded police personnel receiving treatment at the Maungtaw People's Hospital and provided cash support from the Union Government and the Union Minister for Home Affairs.

Next, the Deputy Minister attended the cash support ceremony in Maungtaw District General Administration Department for police personnel killed in action and wounded in the attacks on the police outposts and presented cash support to officials.

Following this, Myanmar Police Force Chief of Police Lt-Gen Aung Win Oo conferred cash support provided by the Union Minister for Home Affairs, Lt-Gen Kyaw Swe. Police Brig-Gen Myint Toe of No. 1 Border Police Force Command Office spoke words of appreciation in return.

Afterwards, Police Brig-Gen Myint Toe met with media personnel to explain about the attacks on police outposts in Buthidaung Township and replied to their questions. The Deputy Minister and entourage then went by Tatmadaw helicopters to Khahtihla and Gokepi police outposts, two of the four outposts attacked. They inspected damages and losses caused, and met and encouraged police personnel stationed there. They also provided material support and assistance.

Later in the afternoon, the Deputy Minister went to the office of No. 3 Border Guard Police Force to meet with family members of police personnel killed in the attack and to console their bereavements.

This trip was organized by the Union Government to review the incident, to prevent such incidents from recurring, and to provide social assistances to police personnel killed-in-action and wounded, as well as to the police personnel and civil servants serving in the region and the local people.

The delegation led by the Deputy Minister consisted of Rakhine State Minister for Security and Border Affairs Col. Phone Tint, Permanent Secretary U Zaw Than Thin from the Ministry of Office of the Union Government, Myanmar Police Force's Chief of Police Lt-Gen Aung Win Oo, Permanent Secretary U Myo Myint Maung from the Ministry of Information, Director General U Ko Ko Naing from the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, officials from the State government including Permanent Secretary U Nyi Nyi Win, and officials from the Myanmar Police Force. News media personnel from DVB, VOA, RFA, Mizzima, The Irrawaddy, and private news agencies accompanied the Union Government delegation on their trip. —MNA ■

(Translated by Zaw Min)



Deputy Minister U Khin Maung Tin consoles families of police personnel who were killed in action during the attacks on police outposts by AA terrorist insurgents. **PHOTO: MNA**



News media personnel interview the police officer at Khahtihla police outpost, one of the police outposts attacked by AA terrorist insurgents. **PHOTO: MNA**



Deputy Minister U Khin Maung Tin consoles the wounded police personnel in Maungtaw People's Hospital. **PHOTO: MNA**

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Printed and published at the **Global New Light of Myanmar Printing Factory** at No.150, Nga Htat Kyee Pagoda Road, Bahan Township, Yangon, by the **Global New Light of Myanmar Daily** under Printing Permit No. 00510 and Publishing Permit No. 00629.

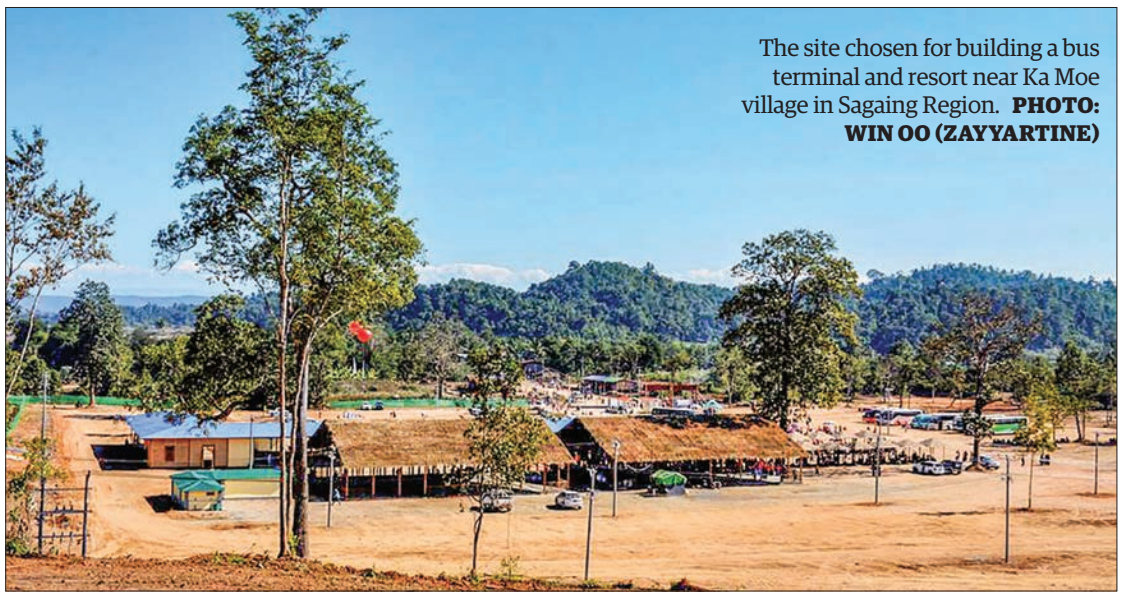
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Due to limitation of space we are only able to publish **"Letter to the Editor"** that do not exceed 500 words. Should you submit a text longer than 500 words please be aware that your letter will be edited.



The site chosen for building a bus terminal and resort near Ka Moe village in Sagaing Region. **PHOTO: WIN OO (ZAYYARTINE)**

Zalon Taung Ka Moe bus terminal, resort to be completed within two years

WORK on the Zalon Taung Ka Moe bus terminal and resort, which is being constructed near the Ka Moe Village in Bamauk Township of Sagaing Region, will be completed within two years, said U Aung Thuya, a consultant with the Terrain Group Co. Ltd.

"We planned to construct the bus terminal and resort within 24 months. We had a soft opening first because the monsoon is heavy in the region with only a few working days. Currently, vehicles can park at the bus terminal. Travellers can also relax at the resort. In 2018, only 26 per cent of the project was completed," he said.

"As most pilgrims coming here are from low income groups, we will give priority to the construction of shelters, toilets, and the night market. Thereafter, we will also build hotels and motels catering to the elite crowd," said U Aung Thuya.

The project, which is being implemented on a 30-acre plot of land, will include a park, a parking area that can accommodate over 200 cars, public toilets, shelters, a night market, hotels, motels, a clinic, security and emergency rescue services, and a fire station. The project will be completed by the end of 2019.—Win Oo (Zayyartine)

(Translated by Hay Mar)

Fake K10,000 notes seized in Maungtaw

MAUNGTAW Township police arrested a man attempting to remit fake banknotes at a local KBZ Bank branch at 2:30 pm yesterday.

The man, identified as Zaw Lin Htet, 31, from Alae Village in West Myoma Ward, arrived at the bank to remit K40 million, all in K10,000 banknotes. The branch's manager, Daw Cho Mi Mi Khin, notified police after 401 of the banknotes were found to be fake.

A case has been opened under the Central Bank of Myanmar Law. —Thet Lwin Soe (Maungtaw District IPRD)

(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

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1st nursing care trainees from Myanmar arrive in Japan

SAPPORO — The first nursing care workers from Myanmar to participate in Japan's foreign trainee program arrived at a Hokkaido airport on Monday amid expectations that the Southeast Asian country will provide much-needed workers.

The training program for foreigners started in 1993 with the aim of transferring various skills to developing countries. But it has also helped supply workers to Japan as the country struggles with labor shortages amid an aging population and falling birthrate.

The three workers from Myanmar, all women in their 20s, will spend three years gaining experience at Sapporo-based Sakura Community Service Co., according to an official at the firm's affiliate in Yangon.

They flew from Yangon and after a layover in Thailand arrived at New Chitose Airport, where heavy snow over the weekend had left roughly 2,000 people stranded.

"I chose Japan because I like Japanese culture. But I'm worried about the cold weather," Wut Yee Phyo told reporters on Sunday before boarding a plane in Yangon.



Photo shows the first nursing care workers from Myanmar who will participate in Japan's foreign trainee program, pictured before their departure from Yangon on 6 January 2019. **PHOTO: KYODO NEWS**

The 23-year-old, making her first trip abroad, also said she will try "not to make mistakes resulting from cultural differences between Myanmar and Japan."

Zin Zin Moe, 28, said she has no worries as she was trained thoroughly. "I wanted to be a caregiver and help the elderly because I didn't get the chance to look after my father (who died)," she said.

Japan opened up its nursing care sector to foreign trainees in November 2017.

Besides the trainee program, Japan has accepted people from Indonesia, the Philippines and Viet Nam to work in nursing facilities under bilateral free trade agreements.

They can continue to work in Japan if they pass a national exam for certified caregivers. Under the bilateral programs, the first of which began with Indonesia in fiscal 2008, around 4,300 people have come to Japan. But only 719 individuals had passed the exam by fiscal 2017 as it requires a high level of Japanese language proficiency.

Some critics say workers coming to Japan from Myanmar may have a difficult time adjusting given that the country has a life expectancy of 67 years compared to Japan's 84 years, and many have never cared for a person who cannot use the toilet by themselves, for example.

The first foreign trainees in the nursing care field were two Chinese women, who arrived in Japan in July last year. The two, both with caregiving experience in Dalian, were accepted at welfare facilities in Miyazaki prefecture, southwestern Japan.

As Japan continues to grapple with a severe labor shortage, the government has decided to introduce a new visa system from April that would broaden the entry of foreign workers, including blue-collar workers.

Japan has so far basically granted working visas only to people with professional knowledge and high skills such as doctors, lawyers and teachers. But many foreigners work under the technical intern status, and foreign students are also allowed to work part-time.—Kyodo News

Fruit merchant bodies seek access to Chinese avocado market



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

MYANMAR fruit merchants associations have asked for a legal export channel to China for avocados at the 17th Sino-Myanmar border trade expo held in Muse, and permission for export of the fruit is likely to be granted, said merchants at the Muse 105th mile trade zone.

Currently, avocado is not on the list of Myanmar fruits that are permitted by China's food safety inspection mechanism, the General Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine (AQSIQ), for entry into the country.

While Myanmar avocados have entered China in the past, their exports were illegal. Therefore, the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, and Irrigation (MOALI) and the Ministry of Commerce have been conducting negotiations with China to allow avocado exports.

Myanmar exports agro products and a variety of fruits to China. Mangosteens, rambutan, lychee, watermelons, and muskmelons grown in Myanmar have received the AQSIQ's certificate and are therefore, eligible for export to China. China imports watermelons, muskmelon, and mangoes through the Shweli (Ruili) gate, while it allows entry of mangosteens and lychee through the Sino-Myanmar trade channels.

The MOALI is also negotiating with the AQSIQ to get market access for pomelo, lemon, and tissue culture banana grown in the country.

Avocado is cultivated on about 20,000 acres in Myanmar, with over 10,000 tons of the fruit produced annually. Avocado is primarily grown in Hopong, Pinlaung, Ywangan, Kalaw, and Nyaungshwe of Shan State, PyinOoLwin of Mandalay Region, and Chin State.

At present, it is shipped to Thailand, Cambodia, Viet Nam, China, and Hong Kong. While demand for the fruit in external markets is good, Myanmar avocado has been unable to meet the import criteria in some countries. —GNLM

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Animal products exports up $153.65 mln in current fiscal year

THE exports of animal products in the first three months of the 2018-2019 fiscal year rose sharply to US$166.38 million from just $12 million in the corresponding period of the previous financial year, according to data from the Commerce Ministry.

Myanmar allowed livestock trade in late 2017, and cattle exports are expected to rise. Since permission was granted a year ago, Myanmar has earned $260 million from export of over 200,000 head of cattle. The country is also exploring new markets for sale of cattle.

Cattle older than five years have been exported, with the required vaccination certificates, health certificates, and farming registration certificates.

The 2018 cattle census has put the population of cattle in Myanmar at 11.5 million.

The increase in the value of exports of the animal products group will help reduce trade deficit.

Myanmar exports agricultural products, animal products, minerals, forest products, finished industrial goods, and other marketable products.—Ko Htet

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Exports soar to $3.6 bln in October-December

MYANMAR'S exports between 1 October and 28 December touched a high of US$3.61 billion, an increase of nearly $400 million from the same period in the previous fiscal year, according to data released by the Ministry of Commerce.

The country's exports in the corresponding period of the 2017-2018FY totalled $3.21 billion. Of the seven export groups, shipments of agriculture, livestock, fishery, and finished industrial goods showed an increase, while those of minerals, forest, and other products declined.

The value of exports totalled $716.59 million for agro products, $166.387 million for livestock, $221.59 million for fishery products, $292.65 million for minerals, $46.89 million for forest products, $1.97 billion for manufactured goods, and $194.79 million for other goods.

Myanmar's export sector relies more on agriculture and manufacturing. While export earnings from CMP (cut-make-pack) garment businesses are rising, the country's reliance on natural resources such as natural gas and jade is lessening.

Myanmar exports goods via the sea and border gates. In the current fiscal, the country's maritime exports increased by $418.89 million compared with the corresponding period of the previous fiscal to touch $2.14 billion. The value of exports at the border gates slipped to $1.46 billion.

The Ministry of Commerce is focusing on promoting exports to reduce the trade deficit."Since 2011, the ministry has adhered to its reform policy. In addition, a series of reforms have been introduced to liberalize and open the market for policy development and to foster a more viable trade environment," said the Permanent Secretary at the Myanmar Global Investment Forum 2018, which was held on 12 September, 2018, at MICC-II in Nay Pyi Taw. — Ko Khant

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)



- Market Place (6.5 Mile)
- Market Place (Damasidi Road)
- Market Place (Junction City)
- City Mart (Yankin)
- City Mart (China Town)
- City Mart (Myay Ni Gone)
- City Mart (FMI)
- City Mart (Junction Square)
- City Mart (Junction Maw Tin)
- City Mart (Sule Square)
- City Mart (Star City - Thanlyin)
- City Mart (Waizayandar)
- City Mart (Hledan)
- City Mart (Myanmar Plaza)
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Negotiations underway to open Kyin San Kyawt border gate



Union Minister Dr. Than Myint delivers the speech at the coordination meeting with officials from the People's Republic of China yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

DR. THAN MYINT, the Union Minister for Commerce, attended a coordination meeting with officials from the People's Republic of China at his ministry yesterday, where they discussed opening the Kyin San Kyawt border gate in order to facilitate smoother trade between Myanmar and China.

During the meeting, the Union Minister said officially designating Kyin San Kyawt as a regular border gate will alleviate the congested traffic between the countries during the watermelon and musk melon season. He said the congested traffic is negatively affecting both growers in Myanmar and merchants in Yunnan Province.

Deputy Minister for Commerce U Aung Htoo then explained about opening Kyin San Kyawt border gate (Mahnma – Nwan Yin) and trade between Myanmar and China.

Ms. Li Xiaoyan, Minister Counsellor from the China Embassy to Myanmar, also explained about China's efforts to officially open the aforementioned border gate and their plans to decrease the traffic congestion in the border trade area, including increasing cargo inspection time and appointing more inspection staff.

Next, the commercial attaché of China said they will coordinate on increasing border gates between the two countries and swiftly opening Kyin San Kyawt border gate.

Afterwards, departmental officials from the ministries of foreign affairs and defence gave explanations on their respective tasks. —MNA

(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

Volume 1, 2, 3 of 100 Myanmar classics series available at bookshops

THE first three volumes of the 100 Myanmar classics series is currently published by the Sarpay Beikman, and the literature house is preparing to publish the remaining volumes.

The Sarpay Beikman, under the Printing and Publishing Department of the Ministry of Information, has been compiling the best works of Myanmar literature with the aim of making them available for posterity, so people can enjoy academic and aesthetic literature, to cherish and understand the value of Myanmar literary works, and to enable foreign researchers to study Myanmar's characteristics, way of life, way of thinking, culture, customs, traditions, language and literature.

The Volume 1 features "Maung Yin Maung Ma Mae Ma (1904) " written by James Hla Kyaw, "Chin-paung-ywet-thae-maung-hmai (1904)" by U Gyi and "Chit-yoe-ah-hman (1907)" by Ma Aye Khin.

The Volume 2 features "Shwe-pyi-soe (1914)" by U Latt, "Yadanarbon (1917)" by Shwe U Daung and "Eternal loving kindness or BA Maung Ba Lwin (1920)" by BA Maung Ba Than.

The Volume 3 features "Nay-yi-yi (1920)" by P Moe Hnin, "Ta-nan-pyaw Yin-thway-taw (1920)" by U Latt and "Hmar-taw-pon (1921)" by Thakhin Kodaw Hmaing.

The volumes come out with foreword by Maung Khin Min (Danubyu) and with introductions by U Aye Cho (Master of Arts), Yarpyai U Soe Nyunt and U Myint Swe (Myint Swe Oo). Each volume is available for K12,000 and for sales agents at 15 discount rate at book shops, branch shops of Sarpay Beikman in Nay Pyi Taw, Yangon and Mandalay.—MNA

Man shot dead by unidentified man in Indaw

A MAN was found dead in a village in Katha village-tract in Indaw Township, Sagaing Region, at 8:45 am yesterday.

Soe Naing Oo (a) Phoe Lone was shot and stabbed by an unidentified man who used to visit his house.

The victim was found dead with three gunshot wounds and two stabs and one cut on his neck at No. 183, on Windamiya Road, Aungmyeata Ward, Indaw Township.

The gunman also took away a gold chain, a gold ring and two mobile phones from the victim, according to the local police.

Authorities discovered a 0.7 inches long knife and three bullets from a home-made gun at the scene of the crime.

A case has been opened in accordance with the law by the local police.—MNA *(Translated by JT)*

Anti-Corruption Commission Chairman receives Chief of Party PRLM

U AUNG KYI, the Chairman of the Anti-Corruption Commission, received Mr.Robert La Mont, Chief of Party from USAID Promoting Rule of Law in Myanmar (PRLM), at the office of the Anti-Corruption Commission in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning.

During the meeting, U Aung Kyi discussed matters regarding the work process that would be conducted in accordance with 2019 Action Plan, the process of taking Corruption Perception Survey, and setting up branch offices of Anti-corruption Commission in Yangon and Mandalay. Mr. Robert La Mont also discussed the matters concerning office equipment needed for the commission, technological assistance and conducting survey procedures.

Also present at the meeting were Secretary of Anti-Corruption Commission U San Win, commission members Daw Myat Myat Soe, Daw Lei Lei Thwin and officials.— MNA

(Translated by Win Ko Ko Aung)



Anti-Corruption Commission Chairman U Aung Kyi meets with Mr.Robert La Mont, Chief of Party from USAID Promoting Rule of Law in Myanmar, in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

Deputy Information Minister receives civil society organizations facilitating Myanmar Digital Rights Forum

THE Deputy Minister for Information, U Aung Hla Tun, received officials from the civil society organizations responsible for organizing the 3rd Myanmar Digital Rights Forum at the Ministry of Information yesterday. The CSOs include Myanmar Centre for Responsible Business, Phandeeyar, Myanmar ICT for Development Organization, and Free Expression Myanmar.

During the meeting, they cordially discussed MoI's participation in the 3rd Myanmar Digital Rights Forum, which will be held from 18 to 19 January. —MNA

(Translated by Myat Thandar Aung)



Deputy Minister U Aung Hla Tun holds talks with members of the civil society organizations yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

Depression likely to move towards Myanmar, coded orange stage

According to the observations at 6:30 pm MST yesterday, the Depression over Southeast Bay and adjoining East central Bay of Bengal remained practically stationary and is centred at about (110)miles Southwest of Coco Island, (235) miles Southwest of Hainggyikyun (Myanmar) and (80)miles Northwest of Port Blair (India).

It is likely to move towards Myanmar coast, the present stage of the Depression is coded orange stage. It is likely to move North-Northeastwards and weaken into a low pressure area during next 12 hours, according to the Meteorology and Hydrology Department.

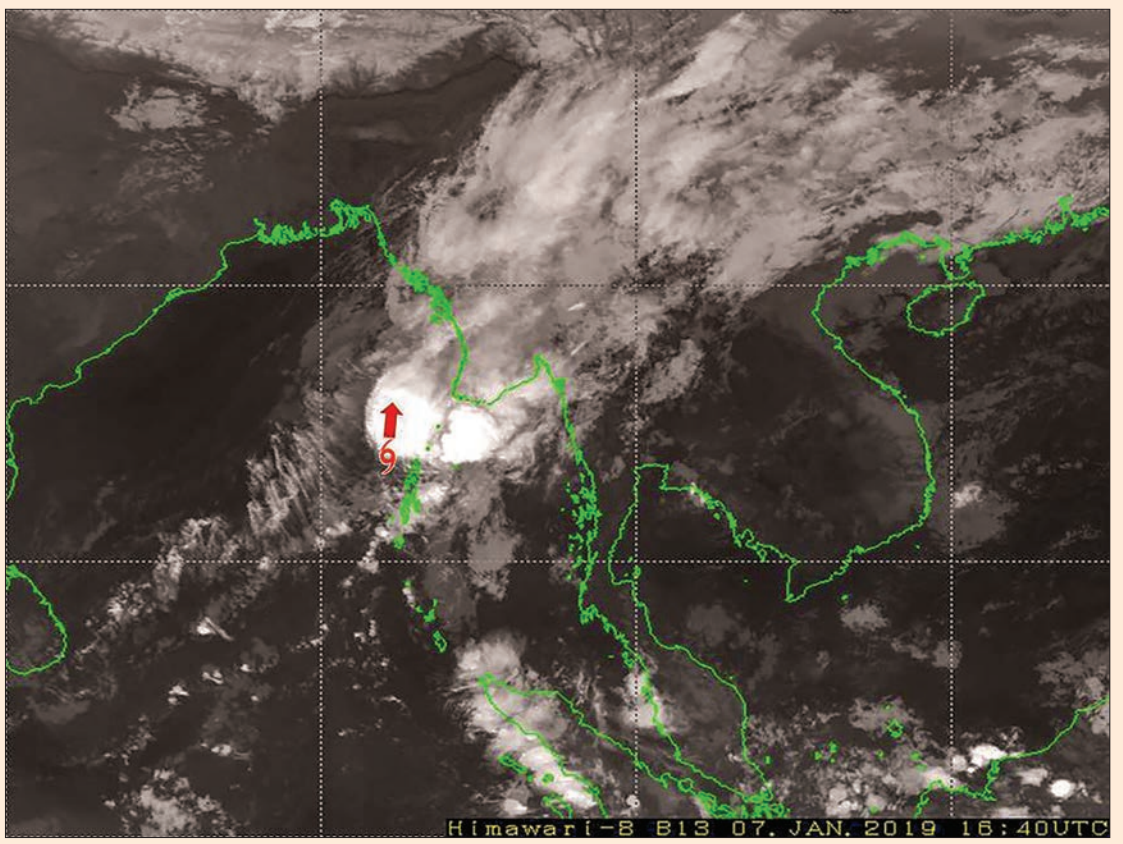
Position of Depression, center pressure and wind

Depression is located at Latitude (12.8) degree North and Longitude (92.0) degree East, centre pressure is (1002) hPa and maximum wind speed near the center is (35) miles per hour at (18:30) hrs MST yesterday.

General caution

Due to the Depression rain or thundershowers will be fairly widespread to widespreds in Nay Pyi Taw, Mandalay, Magway, Bago, Yangon and Ayeyarwady regions, Shan and Rakhine states, isolated to scattered in Taninthayi Region, Kayah, Kayin and Mon states and with isolated heavy falls in some areas within next (48) hours commencing tonight.

Occasional Squalls with rough seas will be experienced Deltaic, off and along Rakhine Coasts. Surface wind speed in squalls may reach (40)mph. Wave height will be about (8-10) feet in Deltaic, off and along Rakhine Coasts.



Under the influence of strong wind and untimely rainfall may occur during this time. Advisory for Domestic flight, trawlers, vessels and ships are advised especially to notice in condition of the depression.—GNLM

Automatic train operation test conducted on Tokyo's Yamanote loop line

TOKYO — Japan is stepping up efforts to expand automatic train operations to cope with a possible shortage of drivers amid its declining population, with East Japan Railway Co. conducting its latest self-driving test on Tokyo's Yamanote loop line on Monday.

In a trial run unveiled to the media for the first time, an 11-car train circled the 34.5-kilometer loop line twice -- the first without any delay, and the second requiring some adjustments by the driver because the train could not stop at the designated point.



An East Japan Railway Co. driver is pictured during a test run conducted on Tokyo's Yamanote loop line in the early hours of 7 January 2019 to check its self-driving system. **PHOTO: KYODO NEWS**

"We are basically doing fine. We'll analyze the result and seek to put the technology in practice as soon as possible," Yuichiro Tokunaga, a JR East official in charge of the issue, said, referring to the third such self-driving test in recent weeks on the Yamanote Line, one of the busiest commuter lines in the metropolitan area.

For Monday's test, JR East used the Yamanote Line's latest E235 series train, equipped with an automatic operation device being developed by the company.

The train started moving after the driver simply pushed a button and departed from Osaki Station in Shinagawa Ward shortly after 1:50 am. It then repeated acceleration and deceleration on its own until it reached the speeds that had initially been set.

The first circuit was completed in line with the usual time schedule, while the second lap was carried out on the assumption that a delay had occurred and that the train had to run 10 seconds faster than the timetable for the intervals between each station.

On the second lap, the train came to a halt slightly off the stopping point at Gotanda Station. It started running but stopped before arriving at the next station, Meguro, leading the driver to move the train to the proper stopping point.

JR East said it chose the Yamanote Line for the trial believing it to be easier to ensure safety as many of its stations are equipped with safety doors on platforms to prevent people falling onto the tracks. There is also only one railway crossing on the Yamanote Line.—Kyodo News

Malaysia to get new king on 24 Jan

KUALA LUMPUR — Malaysia's traditional Malay rulers decided Monday to meet on 24 January to choose a successor to King Muhammad V, who shocked the nation over the weekend by abdicating after only two years on the throne.

The sultans, meeting at the palace in Kuala Lumpur, also fixed 31 January for the swearing in ceremony of the new king, according to the Office of the Keeper of the Rulers' Seal.

Malaysia has a unique system of constitutional monarchy giving each of the hereditary rulers of nine of the country's 13 states a chance to be king for five years in rotation.

Sultan Muhammad V, 49, stunned the nation on Sunday by becoming the first king ever to abdicate, with no official reason given by the palace.

This prompted speculation that it was over his marriage to 25-year-old model Oksana Voevodina, a former Miss Moscow beauty pageant winner who converted to Islam before their wedding in the Russian capital last November.

Their lavish wedding made the news in various tabloids abroad, but not so much at home where the palace remained mum about it and local media coverage was scant, out of deference accorded to royalty.

However, photos of the Russian model in various sultry poses have since been widely posted on social media, raising eyebrows in the conservative Muslim community where the king is the custodian of the religion.

Sultan Muhammad V, from Kelantan state, was elected to replace the late Sultan Abdul Halim Mu'adzam Shah, from Kedah State, in December 2016 after his five-year term on the throne expired.

By rotation, the next in line would be Sultan Ahmad Shah, but the 88-year-old ruler of Pahang state is reportedly gravely ill and did not attend Monday's meeting.

The next in line would be Sultan Ibrahim of Johor state.

Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad, who in his first turn as premier between 1981 and 2003 had curbed the monarchy's power through various amendments to the Constitution, has verbally jousted publicly with the Johor royal house on several occasions.—Kyodo News

We must participate in developmental processes with a global perspective

THE Earth is our home. It provides us with the means to live. We must, therefore, strive for the perpetuation of peace and equality and equitable distribution of wealth so the Earth can continue to provide us with benefits necessary for our existence.

Peace is currently the first priority across the world. We must bring about peace first so we can achieve equality and then work to ensure wealth is enjoyed by all people. Peace, equality, and equitable distribution of wealth are essential components of global sustainable development.

If every country can achieve peace and equality, then cooperation for achieving equitable distribution of wealth will increase, and this, in turn, will benefit not only the concerned country, but the entire world. People from around the world are gradually coming to realize this fact. Myanmar must also become more involved in the global push for sustainable development.

> On the road to peace, we must nurture mutual understanding and offer assistance to each other, as we are all like passengers on one boat moving towards the same objective.

Currently in the modern world, intolerance is on the rise and trust is declining. But, many countries with internal conflicts are waking up to the benefits of peace. Recent talks in Yemen have opened up opportunities for peace in the region. Ethiopia and Eritrea have put aside years of conflict and signed an agreement in Riyadh, which will lead to better opportunities in the region. A peace agreement has revitalized chances for peace in Sudan. These underdeveloped countries now have a chance at achieving wealth in the future.

Myanmar must take note of these developments. People living in ethnic regions must to be able to move freely, find peaceful and beneficial employment, be able to participate in the regional development processes, and enjoy economic opportunities. The citizens of this country have been yearning for these things for over 70 years.

The entire world is beginning to accept that peace cannot be achieved by force. The different factions in Myanmar, too, have agreed to work hand-in-hand for peace. On the road to peace, we must nurture mutual understanding and offer assistance to each other, as we are all like passengers on one boat moving towards the same objective.

We must be cautious of the fact that if we do not share the same views on the end-goal of the peace process, then we may move further from the dream we have long cherished. We must head towards our common aim of a democratic federal union and eradicate causes of civil unrest. We must cultivate understanding, trust, and the ability to negotiate and compromise.

At a time when all the countries of the world are working for global peace, Myanmar must do away with use of armed force to resolve internal issues, if it does not want to be left behind. We urge everyone not to just think about their own area or community, but to adopt a global perspective that can help us as we join the effort towards world peace.

Sayar Gyi U Pe Maung Tin and Sayar Zaw Gyi can be said to be outstanding teachers who displayed great benevolence and sacrifice, and pursued hobbies with interest; and, our nation has many such teachers:

Dr. Than Oo, Director-General (Retired)

Roundtable discussions on Educational Reforms

By Nandar Win and Win Maw
PHOTO BY WIN WIN



(CONTINUED FROM YESTERDAY)

The Myanma Radio and Television broadcast a program in collaboration with the Department of Alternative Education (Non-formal Education and Lifelong Learning) on the role of teachers and additional recruitment of male teachers. The panelists are Dr. Than Oo, Director-General (Retired), Basic Education Department, Ministry of Education; U Ko Lay Win, Director-General (Duty), Basic Education Department, Ministry of Education; Dr. Aung Aung Min, Deputy Director-General, Higher Education Department, Ministry of Education; Dr. Win Aung and U Tun Hla, Members of National Educational Policy Commission; U Soe Tun Tun Naing, Principal, Basic Education Middle School number (9), Insein Township, Yangon Region; U Lin Lin Htaik, Senior Assistant Teacher, Basic Education High School number (4), Thingangyun Township, Yangon Region; Maung Arhman Htet, Fifth Year Student, Yangon University of Education.

Dr. Win Aung: In pragmatic approach, there are two ways that I could think about. The first approach and rule is to select and train the person before letting him in joining the teaching profession. The second method is to find ways and means to keep and maintain in the teaching profession.

Talking about the first approach, we need to change some existing regulations and persuade the male teachers by prescribing the minimum standard and norm of qualification at the entry point into University of Education and Educational Colleges. With minimum standard of rule, we could attract the male teachers.

Aim and objective

The second approach is related with the schools located at the border areas and remote locality, where the male teachers must be chosen among the persons of local residents from the same areas.

In many countries, the students who intend to join the University of Education and Educational Colleges are subsidized with educational aids or scholarships, and therefore, we should do the same incentive for male teachers in our country.

Nowadays in many countries, the recruitment of male teachers is carried out by the ministry of education through the marketing model similar to business enterprises. Meeting with the students at the matriculation classes of various schools, and persuades them in joining the University of Education or Educational Colleges for diploma, degree or post graduate course.

This is the pragmatic approach to be considered in recruiting male teachers. The second way is to keep and maintain the male teachers in the loop of teaching profession. We need to find ways and means seriously in keeping the male teachers in schools with the supervision of the Basic Education Department.

Generally speaking, it could be said that the number of female teachers is rising. In 2005-2006, we had submitted an educational report of Myanmar to UNESCO, and found that female teachers represented (86) per cent in the primary schools, and now it accounted for (83) per cent.

It reflected that the number and percentage of male teachers is in the upswing. Another factor is to find ways and means to attract the male teachers by observing them closely on yearly basis, and find the solution to keep them in the ring.

Supervision and directive

The second factor is on the ways and means that many countries adopted, which is observing closely to the male teachers. The solution is in assigning the superior person and senior teacher to take care, support and assist the new male teachers at the school. Such approach and supervision is in progress being implemented by the Ministry of Education in cooperation with the World Bank, it is generally with the aim and intention to cover all the male and female teachers.

If the approach could be concentrated mainly with focus over the male teachers in the watch and support system, it would be much beneficial. In short, the most important factor is to make reform as have repeatedly discussed, on the prescription of minimum standard and norm for the male teachers. This should be included in the reform without fail so as to attract and persuade the male teachers, and also keep them in the educational sphere.

Moderator: Please tell us the strategy in attracting the teachers.

Dr. Aung Aung Min: There are two approaches in pre-service training such as the Pre-Service Primary Teachers Training (PPTT) and the Diploma In Teacher Education (DTEd) accommodating both male teachers and female teachers without discrimination in the selection.

However, when the number of male applications is less, then we have to fill up with female applications. In the selection, we offer first priority to the males of local residents hailing from the area.

The second salient point is educational stipend, and at the moment we are providing MMK thirty thousands to each student along with the permission for stay at the hostel. Therefore, when a student passed the Matriculation Examination, he could joined the Educational College or the University of Education enjoying MMK thirty thousands in addition to stay at the hostel, and the job is waiting for him.

Priority for local male residents

Job opportunities are not certain after graduation from the arts and science universities and even the civil medical universities have no job guarantees after schooling.

However, educational colleges have full guarantees for jobs and stipends during educational stints. In our pre-service training, we could persuade and win over them by providing more amount of stipend, and offering priority to local residents of the area.

With the aim and objective as enticement to remain in the locality during their teaching career, we negotiate and cooperate with the local governments and other local self-administered divisions and self-administered zones by offering concessions to the proposed students.

Some students are local residents, born there and raised there and passed the Matriculation Examinations there. Unfortunately, they could not catch up the marks required. When the local authorities made official request to accept the students, then we are making concession five to ten per cent in accepting the local residents.

When they joined the teaching profession, we have main difficulty in providing appropriate and adequate salary to the teachers, and we could not accommodate them with housing.

We learned that (85) per cent of the whole budget of the Ministry of Education is incurred for the main salary of the teachers and educational expenses. The remaining (15) per cent of budget is meant for construction and other miscellaneous expenses.

Since (85) per cent of the budget is covered only for salary, there is no separate budget allocation for housing for the teachers. Therefore, the teachers themselves have to rely of their own for accommodations.

The salary of the teachers is not enough and therefore, the household head find it difficult to live a decent life, and when the predicament is too deep, the male teacher quit the job of teaching.

If the current difficult situation could be reversed and made improvement by providing housing facilities, especially in Yangon, then we would be able to recruit more male teachers.

Such adequate facilities should be considered by the Basic Education Department and the Higher Education Department. As the drafting of the Teacher Competency Standard Framework (TCSF) had already completed, the teachers are expected to receive adequate salary and decent position in the future, and therefore, more male teachers are expected to join the teaching career.

> Job prospects are uncertain for graduates of arts and science universities, and even civil medical universities offer no job guarantees to students who complete courses.

Moderator: We heard that when the share of male students is not adequate, then the female students are filled in. Are there any option and other way out just to fill in with the males?

Dr. Aung Aung Min: We could do that. It was due to the fact that we are just considering on the basis of the township in the selection. If we consider to the extent of the whole country, we can recruit more male students.

When we need males students for arts major for Yangon Region, we could get them ether from Ayeyawaddy Region or from Bago Region. We have (25) educational colleges in the whole of the country, and we allowed them to attend at any college.

Focal implementation

We have to think about the quota system being allocated originally to the regions, and that it is not to reduce their initial benefits by transferring part of quota to other region.

For example, if a student from Ayeyawaddy Region is being filled up in Yangon Region, he might want to go back to his local area Ayeyawaddy Region after two to three years. When we called the applications, we need to mention that one must be in a position to attend at any of the educational colleges, and also binding them to have the ability in working as Primary Assistant Teacher for three to five years term at any school in the country.

Moderator: Please tell us on the current situation on the scarcity of male teachers, and its possible solution.

Dr. Than Oo: I am of the view that we have plan and also decided in providing quality education and also life-long learning education. It is quite simple as the quality education could only be provided by the quality teachers, and therefore, we are required in gathering quality teachers by all means. We must go for it with seriousness, and by disseminating the message with full cause.

Disseminating awareness

I have been in the teaching profession for many years and would remain in this domain for the rest of my life. We need to organize and loop in the teachers with benevolence and hobby.

At this juncture, our people from education domain must make field visits to the basic education schools, and then raise awareness and understanding about the esteemed, noble and valuable life of teachers whom we revered in the top echelon of social and cultural sphere.

All these prominence, valued and treasured qualities of the teachers are to be imparted to the students at the basic education schools and the universities. In recruiting and gathering the new teachers with hobby and kindness, this sort of activity is needed.

Best Example

If someone asked me what is my most noble aspiration, then I would say that I do not want to be a director-general but to shoulder task as a Professor. I am now (91) years old and still teaching, and would like to stay that way until I die.

I am desirous to spread this as the best example to other teachers. The teachers serving at different levels must be extended with opportunities to be happy in their professions. We will convey the plan to the Public Service Commission (The Union Civil Service Board). Sayar Gyi U Pe Maung Tin and Sayar Zaw Gyi can be said to be outstanding teachers who displayed great benevolence and sacrifice, and pursued hobbies with interest; and, our nation has many such teachers: Dr. Than Oo, Director-General (Retired). We need to pass this information to the teachers so that they may emulate and follow as good professionals.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

Translated by UMT (Ahlon)



The People's Bank of China's decision to cut the amount of cash lenders must keep in reserve followed a string of weak economic data. **PHOTO: AFP**

Asia markets track Wall St higher as US-China trade talks begin

HONG KONG (China) — Asian markets rallied on Monday after a blockbuster performance on Wall Street as US jobs data beat forecasts and the head of the Federal Reserve hinted at a slower pace of interest rate hikes.

China's move to make it easier for banks to lend also provided support to equities, while investors keep an eye on Beijing as negotiators begin talks to end a trade war between the world's top two economies.

Dealers started the week on the front foot following a surge on Wall Street Friday that came after figures showed more than 300,000 US jobs were created in December, tempering recent concerns about growth.

Later that day, Fed boss Jerome Powell said the bank had no "pre-set" plan for raising borrowing costs and was keeping a close watch on financial developments.

"We're listening... sensitively to the message that markets are sending and we'll be taking those downside risks into account as we make policy going forward," he told a gathering of economists.

The news was music to the ears of traders, who have been fretting that the Fed would press on with its rate hike cycle, making it more expensive to borrow for investment. The comments saw the Dow pile on more than three percent while the Nasdaq was more than four per cent higher.

They also overshadowed the budget gridlock on Capitol Hill that has shut down the US government, with Donald Trump warning it could go on for years if he is not given funding to build a wall on the Mexican border.

And the gains filtered through to Asia, where Tokyo's Nikkei ended 2.4 per cent higher, while Sydney gained 1.1 per cent and Seoul jumped 1.3 per cent.

Taipei surged more than two per cent and Manila was up 1.5 per cent with Jakarta 0.7 per cent up.

Risk on 'stable footing'

Hong Kong added 0.8 per cent and Shanghai finished 0.7 per cent higher, with buying also boosted by news that the People's Bank of China had cut the amount of cash banks must keep in reserve.

The move aims to free up funds for lending in a bid to grease the economy's wheels following a string of weak data that has raised questions about the outlook.

There was also some optimism as Chinese and US officials kicked off talks to find a solution to the trade war that has seen the two sides impose tariffs in hundreds of billions of dollars worth of goods.

The row was a key factor behind the big losses on global markets last year and any move to bring it to an end will be cheered on trading floors.

Trump on Friday raised hopes for an agreement, saying: "I think we will make a deal with China."

Stephen Innes, head of Asia-Pacific trade at OANDA, said: "Risk sentiment is trading agreeably on the back of Chair Powell's dovish lean and the Chinese (rate) cut reviving the notion of returning global stimulus, which is being viewed risk positive and supportive of global equity markets."

He added that the US jobs report eased worries about the economy and "to top the day off there's rising hopes that progress could be made in trade talks" between Washington and Beijing.

In early European trade London, Paris and Frankfurt all rose 0.4 per cent.

The upbeat mood gave a lift to high-yielding currencies, with South Korea's won and the Indonesian rupiah soaring against the dollar, while there were also healthy gains for Australia's dollar. Oil was also benefitting, with both contracts up more than one per cent thanks to the wave of positive headlines.

But while there was a sense of hope, analysts remain cagey about the coming months.

"I do think going forward you are probably not likely to see that type of move where equities sell off 20 per cent in the space of six weeks, but generally volatility will be higher than what you saw in 2017 and the first half of 2018," Raymond Lee, managing director and portfolio manager at Kapstream Capital, told Bloomberg TV.

Key figures around 0820 GMT

Tokyo - Nikkei 225: UP 2.4 per cent at 20,038.97 (close)

Hong Kong - Hang Seng: UP 0.8 per cent at 25,835.70 (close)

Shanghai - Composite: UP 0.7 per cent at 2,533.09 (close)

London - FTSE 100: UP 0.4 per cent at 6,867.27

Dollar/yen: DOWN at 108.13 yen from 108.44 yen at 2200 GMT Friday

Euro/dollar: UP at $1.1435 from $1.1398

Pound/dollar: UP at $1.2737 from $1.2730

Oil - West Texas Intermediate: UP 84 cents at $48.90 per barrel

Oil - Brent Crude: UP 62 cents at $57.68 per barrel

New York - Dow: UP 3.3 per cent at 23,433.16 (close)— AFP ■

Japan starts $9 departure tax for travellers

TOKYO (Japan) — Japan on Monday started levying a 1,000 yen ($9.22) departure tax on each person leaving the country, a measure aimed at raising funds to further boost tourism.

The International Tourist Tax will cover everyone regardless of nationality — from business people to holidaymakers older than two years of age — and will be tacked on to the price of a airline ticket.

The government wants to use an estimated 50 billion yen ($460 million) it will generate in additional tax revenue to improve tourism infrastructure, such as making airport immigration processes faster and encouraging visitors to explore areas beyond traditionally popular destinations such as Tokyo and Kyoto.

Japan has been aggressively courting international tourists as a new pillar of economic growth. More than 30 million foreigners are estimated to have visited Japan in 2018, a new record, thanks to a steady flow of tourists from Asia — particularly China, South Korea and Taiwan. The nation aims to boost visitor figures to 40 million by 2020, when Tokyo hosts the Olympic Games.— AFP ■

Tesla to break ground on Shanghai plant as trade war lingers

SHANGHAI (China) — Tesla boss Elon Musk said the electric car-maker would break ground on Monday on a Shanghai factory that will allow it to sell to Chinese consumers and avoid tariffs from the China-US trade war.

The firm in July unveiled plans for what is Musk's biggest overseas move yet, saying the factory's eventual annual production of 500,000 vehicles would dramatically increase its output and allow more direct access to the world's biggest electric-vehicle (EV) market.

"Looking forward to breaking ground on the @Tesla Shanghai Gigafactory today!" Musk said on his official Twitter account.

"Aiming to finish initial construction this summer, start Model 3 production end of year & reach high-volume production next year."

Chinese media reports said Musk would be in Shanghai to break ground on the plant, which Bloomberg News has reported could cost $5 billion. A Tesla spokeswoman told AFP she was not authorised to confirm Musk's attendance or provide other details until later Monday, after the ceremony. Tesla's Shanghai venture comes as US companies face pressure from Donald Trump to keep manufacturing jobs at home, and as Beijing and Washington persist with a trade spat that has seen both sides levy tariffs on hundreds of billions of dollars of products. Analysts have said production in China would allow Tesla to avoid such tariffs, which already have caused a spike in the price of the cars that Tesla now imports to the Chinese market.

But since Tesla announced plans for the factory on land outside Shanghai's urban core, the outlook for China's consumer market has turned worrisome.

Apple sparked global alarm over the prospects for the world's second-largest economy last week when it cut its revenue forecast citing slowing demand in China and the trade war.

Domestic and foreign automakers have been racing to grab a share of the EV sector, which is expected to continue to grow rapidly as the Chinese government pushes cleaner technologies, partly to help combat chronic air pollution. The Shanghai factory will be Tesla's first production line outside the United States.

China typically requires foreign automakers to set up joint ventures with domestic firms when establishing manufacturing plants, which entails the sharing of profits and technology with local partners. But Tesla has said its Shanghai plant will be "wholly-owned" by the company.— AFP ■

'Vast areas of impunity' for people trafficking: UN report

VIENNA (Austria) — A UN report has warned that "vast areas of impunity" remain globally for people traffickers, with victims subjected to crimes ranging from sexual exploitation to organ removal.

Despite a recent trend towards more people trafficking convictions in many African and Middle Eastern countries, the report from the UN Office and Drugs and Crime (UNODC) pointed out that "the total numbers in these areas remain very low".

"There appears to be hardly any risk for traffickers to face justice," it said.

The report said 100 cases of organ removal had been reported over the period 2014-17, mostly in the Middle East and North Africa, with cases also reported in Europe and Central and South America.

It cites research saying that in some cases there is evidence of traffickers colluding "with medical professionals, relying on corrupt and fraudulent practices". Perpetrators of this form of trafficking take advantage of "severe levels of vulnerability", the UNODC says, for example people in refugee camps who are recruited "with false promises of receiving payments and/or transport to safer locations".

However, trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation was by far the most common form found in the data compiled by the report, accounting for 59 per cent of victims detected in 2016.



Iraqi Nobel laureate Nadia Murad (pictured December 2018) was the victim of human trafficking for sexual exploitation, but trafficking is also used to "finance activities" or increase workforces. **PHOTO: AFP**

The UNODC underlined the role of groups involved in various armed conflicts in using human trafficking "to finance activities or increase their workforce", as well as for sexual slavery.

It highlighted the case of the thousands of girls and women from the Yazidi minority enslaved by the so-called Islamic State group in Iraq. One of them, Nadia Murad, was one of the winners of the Nobel Peace Prize last year in recognition of her activism on behalf of other victims.

The UNODC said the overwhelming number of detected victims of trafficking globally were female, with just under half being adult women. A further 23 per cent being girls and the report warns that their share of the total is increasing. After sexual exploitation, the next most common reason for trafficking was forced labour, accounting for a third of victims covered by the data and especially prevalent in sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East.

A number of other patterns are also mentioned, such as trafficking for forced marriage, more commonly detected in South East Asia. The total number of victims reported to the UNODC in 2016 stood at just under 25,000, an increase of more than 10,000 since 2011, with increases "more pronounced in the Americas and in Asia". However, the report cautions that the increase may be down to more efficient identification of victims, rather than an increase in the numbers of people being trafficked.

While Europe and the Middle East attract many victims from other parts of the world, the authors found that the majority of victims are detected in their countries of citizenship.— AFP ■

Trump says US, N Korea 'negotiating' on location for next Kim summit

WASHINGTON (United States) — US President Donald Trump said on Sunday negotiations are underway on the location of his next summit with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, while remaining evasive on its timing.

Trump, who held a historic summit with Kim in Singapore in June, said earlier in the week he had received a "great letter" from the North Korean leader but declined to reveal its contents.

"We are negotiating a location," he told reporters before boarding a helicopter for the presidential retreat at Camp David, Maryland, where he said he would be discussing a trade deal with China.

"It will be announced probably in the not too distant future," he said of a summit with Kim. "They do want to meet and we want to meet and we'll see what happens."

"With North Korea, we have a very good dialogue," Trump added, saying he had "indirectly spoken" with Kim.

The latest letter from Kim came after the North Korean leader warned in a New Year's speech that Pyongyang may change its approach to nuclear talks if Washington persists with sanctions.

Trump said on Sunday the sanctions remain "in full force and effect" and would do so until the United States saw "very positive" results.

At the first summit between the longtime adversaries in June, Trump and Kim agreed to work toward the Korean peninsula's denuclearization but with little apparent agreement on what that means.

The United States has been pressing for North Korea to get rid of its nuclear weapons before any easing of economic pressure.

Kim, whose family has ruled North Korea with an iron fist for 70 years, wants immediate economic benefits and a formal end to the 1950-53 Korean War.

Trump has cast his first summit with Kim as a major diplomatic victory, and on Sunday repeated his claim that there would be war in Asia had they not sat down to talk.

"Anyone else but me, you would have been at war right now ... You right now would have been at a nice big fat war in Asia with North Korea if I hadn't been elected president."

But progress has stalled since the Singapore summit with the two sides disagreeing over the meaning of their vaguely-worded declaration, and the pace of US-North Korean negotiations has slowed, with meetings and visits cancelled at short notice.

Culminating in late 2017, the North has carried out six atomic blasts and launched rockets capable of reaching the entire US mainland, but has now carried out no such tests for more than a year. — AFP ■

Britain's battle over Brexit resumes ahead of big vote

LONDON (United Kingdom) — Britain's battle over Brexit resumes Monday when parliament returns from its Christmas break to debate and — most likely — defeat Prime Minister Theresa May's unpopular EU divorce deal.

The stakes could hardly be higher as the clock ticks down to the moment the world's fifth-biggest economy splits from it main trading partner on 29 March.

May and the other 27 EU leaders agreed on a draft in November designed to keep the process as orderly and undamaging as possible. It took nearly two years to negotiate and has managed to upset just about everyone in British politics. May survived her party's resulting no-confidence motion but was forced to abort a December vote on the pact after admitting it would lose by a "significant margin". There are few signs that much has changed since.

May returned empty handed from a subsequent EU summit she had hoped could address the concerns of her disgruntled Northern Irish coalition partners.

Vote to go ahead

Brexit-backing MPs in her Conservative party are still in revolt while opposition Labour leaders are angling for new elections.

May insisted on Sunday that the vote will go ahead as planned on or around 15 January. The formal debate kicks off in parliament on Wednesday. But she also warned the deal's defeat would put Britain "in unchartered territory (in which) I don't think anybody can say exactly what will happen".

London has been swirling with rumours about how exactly May intends to avoid Britain crashing out of the bloc without any trade or other arrangements in place. One idea mentioned by advisers involves the government simply re-introducing more or less the same version of the draft over and over again. "If we have to have the vote 30 times, we will," a Downing Street source told BuzzFeed News. May refused to rule out the possibility of a second or third vote in parliament when pressed about it in a BBC interview on Sunday. Other reports said she intends to invite her party's most vocal opponents over for private drinks on Monday and Wednesday.

The arm twisting will be accompanied by a new government campaign designed to prepare Britons for the full impact of a disruptive no-deal scenario.

One test on Monday will see up to 150 trucks sent down a highway to the Channel port of Dover to determine how the authorities deal with gridlock.

Dover handles most of Britain's trade with Europe and is expected to get quickly plugged up if no customs arrangements are made. But Conservative MP Jacob Rees-Mogg said reports that he and other EU sceptics could be persuaded by May's arguments about a calamitous no-deal Brexit were "wishful thinking".

Most Conservatives either "think that these fears are exaggerated or that (it) is a price worth paying for leaving the shackles of the European Union," he wrote in the Sunday Express.— AFP ■

China, US begin vice ministerial-level talks over trade dispute

BEIJING — China and the United States started vice ministerial-level talks in Beijing on Monday, with their ongoing trade dispute having rattled global stock markets and blurred the outlook for the world economy.

The governments of the world's two biggest economies are expected to talk for two days through Tuesday about how to strengthen the protection of intellectual property rights and boost China's imports of US products, sources close to the matter said.

It is the first time Beijing and Washington have had direct dialogue on trade since Chinese President Xi Jinping and US President Donald Trump held a meeting on 1 December in Buenos Aires.

At their summit, Xi and Trump made an agreement that the United States and China will hold off on imposing further tariffs on each other's imports and try to complete talks on technology and intellectual property rights issues within 90 days. The Trump administration warned at the time that "if at the end of this period of time, the parties are unable to reach an agreement, the 10 per cent tariffs will be raised to 25 per cent," indicating that a failure to finish negotiations will rekindle trade strains. A delegation led by Deputy US Trade Representative Jeff Gerrish, who is the deputy chief of the Office of the US Trade Representative, visited the Chinese Commerce Ministry on Monday morning.

With trade tensions between the two powers escalating, stock prices have faced downward pressure across the globe and fears have grown that weakness in the Chinese and US economies could deal a heavy blow to the world economy. Beijing and Washington hope the latest talks will pave the way for a ministerial-level meeting that Robert Lighthizer, head of the Office of the USTR, and Chinese Vice Premier Liu He, Xi's economic adviser, will attend, the sources said. —Kyodo News ■



File photo taken in November 2017 shows US President Donald Trump (r) and Chinese President Xi Jinping at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing. **PHOTO: KYODO NEWS**

India's ruling party forms committees to prepare for parliamentary polls

NEW DELHI — In the run up to the parliamentary elections, India's ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has set up 17 committees to look after campaign, publicity, formulating the manifesto and other issues.

The party's senior leader and the country's Home Minister Rajnath Singh has been appointed as head of the "Manifesto Committee," while Finance Minister Arun Jaitley will be one of the members of the committee besides heading the "Publicity Committee" for the parliamentary polls, most likely to be held in April or May this year.

The 20-person committee is tasked with preparing the party's manifesto, a statement issued by the party said.

Transport and Shipping Minister Nitin Gadkari will head a 17-member committee to reach out to social and volunteer organizations while External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj will preside over a group that will produce literature for the polls, added the statement. —Xinhua ■

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lmm@kcyangon.com

Dated **8th January 2019**

Thousands stung in Australian jellyfish 'invasion'

SYDNEY (Australia) — Highly venomous jellyfish have stung more than three thousand people on Australia's northeastern shores in just a few days, authorities said on Monday, forcing the closure of several beaches.

The massive influx of Portuguese man o' war jellyfish, whose stings are notoriously painful, has been described as an "invasion" by local media in the state of Queensland.



Bluebottle stings are a frequent occurrence in Australia Bluebottle stings are a frequent occurrence in Australia. **PHOTO: AFP**

Coastguard association Surf Life Saving said a "whopping" 3,595 people had suffered painful burns after encounters with the creatures, also known as bluebottles for their transparent bluish appearance.

At least four major beaches remained closed as the organization warned that even more jellyfish were on their way.

"A wall of bluebottles is approaching #Rainbow beach. Lifesavers are closing the beach. Please stay out of the water," read one of several warnings from Surf Life Saving.

Bluebottle stings are a frequent occurrence and it is not uncommon to hear howls of pain from changing rooms along Australia's eastern beaches during the southern hemisphere's summer. But the sheer number of people stung in the last few days has surprised authorities. There are usually around 10,000 cases of bluebottle stings each year on the east coast of Australia, according to the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners. The extraordinary number of stings in the last few days has occurred as strong onshore winds have come in from the north-east, bringing the creatures into contact with swimmers.

The doctors' group describes the symptoms of a sting as an "immediate sharp pain and acute inflammatory skin reaction".

"The intense skin pain can last from minutes to many hours... The sting can also cause systemic signs such as nausea, vomiting and general feeling of malaise." Treatment includes rinsing the wound with water at 45 degrees Celsius or using icepacks. —AFP ■

Strong 6.6-magnitude quake hits off Indonesia

JAKARTA (Indonesia) — A strong 6.6-magnitude earthquake struck off the Indonesian coast early Monday, sending residents running out of their homes, but no tsunami warning was issued.

The quake hit at a depth of 60 kilometres (40 miles) under the Molucca Sea, some 175 kilometres north northwest of the city of Ternate, according to the USGS. There were no immediate reports of damage or casualties and Indonesia's geophysics agency did not issue a tsunami alert.

"We felt the quake and some people got out of their house but there was no real panic. There is no damage in my area," said a man from Ternate called Budi, who like many Indonesians goes by one name. Bani Nasution, a man who was in the city of Manado when the quake struck, told AFP: "I ran out of my house and so did other people here, but we've all returned to our houses now." A series of aftershocks also rocked the area. Indonesia is still reeling from a deadly tsunami at the end of December triggered by an erupting volcano in the middle of the Sunda Strait between Java and Sumatra islands that killed more than 400 people.

The vast Southeast Asian archipelago is one of the most disaster-hit nations on Earth due to its position straddling the so-called Pacific Ring of Fire, where tectonic plates collide. The tsunami was Indonesia's third major natural disaster in six months, following a series of powerful earthquakes on the island of Lombok in July and August and a quake-tsunami in September that killed around 2,200 people in Palu on Sulawesi island, with thousands more missing and presumed dead.—AFP

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

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CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

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Dated **8th January 2019** lmm@kcyangon.com

‘Bohemian Rhapsody’ rocks Golden Globes with surprise coda

LOS ANGELES (United States) — “Bohemian Rhapsody” pulled a major upset at the close of the Golden Globes on Sunday, taking home the final two top prizes to put itself into the Oscars conversation along with “Green Book” and “Roma.”

On a night of wins for movies representing minorities, two awards favourites about white people — Dick Cheney biopic “Vice” and musical romance “A Star is Born” — all but struck out, with each picking up just one trophy in the run-up to the all-important Oscars on 24 February.

“Bohemian Rhapsody” — which charts the rise of British rock group Queen — picked up best actor for Rami Malek, who plays legendary frontman Freddie Mercury. It also bagged the biggest movie award of the night — best drama. “I am beyond moved. My heart is pounding out of my chest right now,” said Malek, whose list of people to thank included the Queen singer, who died in 1991.

“Thank you to Freddie Mercury for giving me the joy of a lifetime. I love you, you beautiful man. This is for and because of you, gorgeous.” The two trophies were the final prizes in a ceremony that had been expected to be a consecration for “A Star is Born” — starring Lady Gaga and Bradley Cooper in the age-old Hollywood fable of an ailing performer and his muse — which went into the night with five nods.



Best Actor in a Motion Picture – Drama for “Bohemian Rhapsody” winner Rami Malek poses with Graham King (2nd r), Brian May (3rd l) and Mike Myers (r) in the press room during the 76th annual Golden Globe Awards on 6 January, 2019, at the Beverly Hilton hotel in Beverly Hills, California. **PHOTO: AFP**

“Star” had to content itself with a statuette for best song, which went to Gaga and writing partner Mark Ronson, while Christian Bale — who plays Cheney — picked up the solo gong for “Vice.”

Civil rights dramedy “Green Book” was the numerical winner — if not the prestige player — picking up awards for best comedy movie, best supporting actor Mahershala Ali and best screenplay. The boozy gala at the Beverly Hilton also recognized Alfonso Cuaron’s “Roma,” a cinematic ode to his childhood in 1970s Mexico City, with best director and foreign film honours, while seven movies bagged one statuette each.

“Cinema at its best builds bridges to other cultures,” Cuaron told the audience. “We need to understand how much we have in common.”

Less edgy

Under an azure southern California sky, Tinseltown’s A-listers worked the red carpet with last year’s gender politics still very much in mind.

Many wore “Time’s Up” bracelets in a nod to the movement for sexual equality in the workplace that grabbed the headlines 12 months ago as the industry faced a reckoning about rampant harassment and abuse.

Hosting the Globes were comedian Andy Samberg and actress Sandra Oh, who made history as the first Asian woman to have presented a major awards show while also taking home her second Globe for “Killing Eve.” As the only awards show where alcohol is served, the evening is usually more colorful than showbiz’s other big nights.

But the presenters set the tone for a less edgy affair than in previous years with a relatively tame opening that gave more time to complimenting the nominees than assailing them with “roast”-style jokes.

Samberg paid tribute to the diversity among the slate of films up for awards, singling out “If Beale Street Could Talk,” whose star Regina King took home best supporting actress honors, as well as “Black Panther” and “Crazy Rich Asians,” which went home empty-handed.

“And they are not just here tonight because they resonated with audiences Hollywood often ignores,” he said. “They are here because they told stories that resonated with everyone. And that is truly a beautiful thing.”

King vowed that, for the next two years, she would only produce projects that employ 50 per cent women, exclaiming: “Time’s Up times two!” “And I just challenge anyone out there — anyone out there who is in a position of power, not just in our industry, in all industries — I challenge you to challenge yourselves and stand with us in solidarity and do the same,” she said.—AFP ■

Masked warriors: Indonesia fighters wield whips in traditional duels

SURABAYA (Indonesia) — Dressed in bright colours and lunging at each other with long, looping whips, martial arts fighters in Indonesia were cheered by spectators as they dueled during a traditional festival on Sunday.

A martial art practised by the Manggarai people from southern Indonesia, Caci bouts typically involve two men wearing masks while wielding shields and whips made out of rattan.

A fighter wins by hitting his opponent in the face or the head.

The duels are full of symbolism — the leather-handled whips represent masculinity and the sky, while the round shields stand for femininity, the womb and the earth.

The festival — which took place in Subaya, Indonesia’s second largest city — aims to preserve and promote Caci and the Manggarai culture, the organizer said.

It is held so “the tradition won’t be eroded by time and the modern life”, said organizer Tarius, who like many Indonesians goes by one name. In ancient times, the fighters — in the Manggarai peoples’ province of East Nusa Tenggara province — were men from different villages who competed against each other to celebrate the harvest season. —AFP ■

2018 was just the beginning: Emma Watson on Time’s Up anniversary

LONDON — Emma Watson has said that she feels optimistic about a “fairer future” for women courtesy the Time’s Up campaign.

On the first anniversary of the campaign, the actor took to Instagram on Saturday to express gratitude towards people who have been a part of the revolution.

“From my sisters in the film industry to the activists and campaigners around the world who have supported us, I’ve been so inspired by the way people have reached out to each other, shared experiences and advice, and organised together as part of this movement for change.

“Gender equality can only become a reality if we harness the transformative power of solidarity across professions and across borders,” Watson wrote.

The “Harry Potter” alum said there is still a long way to go but “the achievements so far make me optimistic for a fairer future”. “2018 was just the beginning,” she said.

A vocal feminist, Watson, in an another post urged the masses to be a part of Time’s Up UK chapter that launched the Justice and Equality Fund (JEF), which is the UK’s version of the Legal Defence Fund. The JEF aims to support women who have experienced harassment and abuse, improve accountability, and prevent future abuses from occurring.

“I hope that more people will be inspired by the #TIMESUP anniversary to give at home here in the UK, so the Justice and Equality Fund can reach even more under-resourced organisations and campaign groups in 2019,” the actor wrote.—PTI ■



Emma Watson. **PHOTO: PTI**

Roscosmos expects official explanations from NASA as to return visit of Russian delegation

MOSCOW — Roscosmos is waiting for official explanations from NASA as to the return visit of a Russian delegation to the US, the state corporation said in a statement on Saturday.

Roscosmos expects official explanations regarding the return visit "in accordance with the earlier received invitation," it said.

The corporation said "work on the negotiating position of the state corporation on cooperation of the sides on the International Space Station programme and other space programmes has not been suspended as of yet".

Earlier, Russia's state-run space corporation said it had not received an official notification from NASA that the visit of its chief Dmitry Rogozin to the United States was postponed.

NASA said in a statement on Friday that it had informed the Russian side Rogozin's visit to the United States had to be postponed. Also, the agency said no new date for the visit had been set yet.

NASA's spokeswoman Megan Powers said on Wednesday NASA was pushing ahead with preparations for Rogozin's visit to the United States despite criticism in Washington. Earlier, a number of US officials and legislators opposed plans for Rogozin's visit to the United States. NASA Administrator Jim Bridenstine told TASS in an interview last October he would like Rogozin to speak at Rice University (Houston, Texas) during his visit to the United States.

He also declared that the Trump Administration had made a decision to pause sanctions against Rogozin, thus enabling the head of the Russian space agency to pay a visit to the United States at NASA's invitation. Rogozin has been under US sanctions since 2014 over the situation in Ukraine.



Roscosmos. **PHOTO: TASS**

NASA Administrator Jim Bridenstine visited Russia in October 2018. In particular, he delivered a lecture at Moscow State University and said relationship between Russia and the US in space was strong. —Tass ■

China opens first national selenium R&D centre

WUHAN — China's first national selenium research and development (R&D) centre opened on Sunday in Wuhan, capital of Central China's Hubei Province.

The centre aims to beef up selenium research, standardize the selenium industrial system, upgrade the sector, and offer technical support for selenium-related companies, said Cheng Shuiyuan, director of the centre at a press conference.

The centre began as a project in September 2018, approved by the country's Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs.

Selenium is an important micronutrient to boost human immune system and reduce the effects of cardiovascular diseases, according to the press conference.

China has a huge demand for selenium-enriched agricultural products because 72 per cent of the country's arable land lacks the element.

Hubei's Enshi Tujia and Miao Autonomous Prefecture, however, has rich selenium deposit.—Xinhua ■

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Study links green tea with increased risk of type two diabetes

BEIJING — A recent international study found that drinking green tea was associated with an increased risk of type 2 diabetes in Chinese adults.

A total of 119,373 participants from the Shanghai Women's Health Study (SWHS) and Shanghai Men's Health Study (SMHS) were included in the study. The SWHS and SMHS are two large population-based studies initiated in 1996. Data from the studies have been used to investigate genetic and other biomarkers as well as lifestyle risk factors for cancers and other chronic diseases. In the new study, none of the participants had diabetes when they were enrolled. Details of tea drinking, including types and amounts, were collected in the survey.

Researchers from China's Fudan University, Vanderbilt University in the United States and other research institutions reported that both female and male participants in the study have an increased risk of type 2 diabetes if they drink more green tea.

They noted that this positive and dose-response association between green tea intake and risk of type 2 diabetes did not vary by obesity or smoking. The findings have been reported on the *International Journal of Epidemiology*. The researchers called for further studies on the mechanisms underlying the association, suggesting that pesticide residue in tea leaves could play a possible role.

Green tea is a popular beverage consumed worldwide. In recent years, it has gained popularity as a health drink. But researchers have had inconsistent findings on the association between green tea drinking and risk of type 2 diabetes.

A Japanese study published on the *Annals of Internal Medicine* in 2006 said habitual green tea drinkers who drank at least six cups per day had a 33 per cent lower risk for type 2 diabetes than those who drank one cup or less per week.

A study in the Republic of Korea published on the journal of BioFactors in 2007 said people with diabetes should drink less green tea as animal studies showed that high green tea intake may increase blood sugar levels in diabetic rats.—Xinhua ■

Rapid driverless vehicle rollout projected in Australia by 2020

CANBERRA — Five car manufacturers would have level three and four autonomous vehicles available by 2020, rising to 14 by 2022, the Australian National Transport Commission (NTC) said on Monday, warning lawmakers must prepare for an autonomous vehicle boom.

In a submission to the parliamentary infrastructure and transport committee, the NTC said that there could be between 740,000 and 1.7 million autonomous vehicles on Australian roads by 2020 and 9.5 million by 2030.

Michael McCormack, Australia's Deputy Prime Minister (PM), said that the government was working with industry groups to prepare for the rapid rollout.



PHOTO: XINHUA

"I want to ensure these new technologies are deployed in a manner which improves safety, productivity, accessibility and liveability for Australians in both urban and regional areas," he told News Corp Australia on Monday.

Level three autonomous vehicles are vehicles that can drive themselves but require a driver capable of taking control at all times while level four vehicles can perform all driving functions autonomously with the option of driver control.

Level five vehicles will be fully automated at all times.

The NTC's projections were disputed by the Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries (FCAI), which said that level four vehicles would not be available in Australia for 10 years.

"A small number of vehicles with level four or five systems may be introduced before 2030," it said in its submission.

"However, it is expected that these will be either niche products and/or (operated) in limited numbers as part of a closed fleet."

The Australian Automobile Association (AAA) took a similar position to the FCAI, warning against rushing through regulations for autonomous vehicles.—Xinhua ■

Bayern Munich hand Ribery "heavy fine" for Tweetstorm

BERLIN (Germany) — Bayern Munich will impose "a heavy fine" on Franck Ribery for his obscenity laced outburst on social media, the club's sporting director Hasan Salihamidzic said on Sunday.

The French striker put a string of angry posts on Twitter and Instagram on Saturday aimed at those who had criticised him for eating a gold-coated steak.

"I had a long talk with Franck and I let him know that we would impose a heavy fine on him and he accepted it," Salihamidzic told journalists in Qatar, where the club is on a training camp.

"He used words that we, FC Bayern, cannot accept and that Franck does not have the right to use, as a role-model and player of FC Bayern", added Salihamidzic.

On Thursday, the 35-year-old Bayern Munich player posted a video on social media showing him in a steak house owned by celebrity Turkish restauranteur Salt Bae and rubbing his hands before tucking into a huge chop coated in gold.

That ostentatious luxury, and the reported cost of the meal, drew ferocious criticism before Ribery — who earns an estimated eight million euros a year with the German champions — hit back on Saturday.

"Let's start with the envious, the angry, surely born because of a broken condom," read the first of the posts on Ribery's Twitter account. "F*ck your mothers, your grandmothers and your whole family tree," wrote Ribery in the first of three irate posts, having taken care to sanitise the French word "n*quez".

Salihamidzic made clear that Ribery did not pay the bill himself because he had been invited to the restaurant. He also acknowledged that the player had been responding to a flurry of insults.

"Franck has been slandered and insulted," said Salihamidzic. "And not only Franck, but his pregnant wife, his child and his mother, who is currently in hospital for an operation. Franck wanted to defend himself and defend his family. He has the right to do that. I support him in that, but unfortunately he totally lost control."

German media and social media users had called on the reigning Bundesliga champions to punish the striker, who is out of contract at the end of the season.

"Bosses must suspend Ribery," urged German tabloid Bild.

The paper referred to comments by Karl-Heinz Rummenigge, the club's chief executive, who, in October responded to media criticism by quoting the German Constitution that "the dignity of the human being is intangible".

"He is right, but it would not hurt if he explained it to his employee Franck Ribery," said Bild.

Bayern and Rummenigge have also been on the defensive recently after criticism from some of the club's own fans over the decision to return to Qatar for winter training.—AFP ■



FC Bayern Munich's French midfielder Franck Ribery takes part with other teammates in a training session during their winter training camp at the Aspire Academy for Sports Excellence in the Qatari capital Doha on 5 January, 2019. **PHOTO: AFP**

Real Madrid confirm Brahim Diaz transfer from Manchester City

MADRID (Spain) — Real Madrid have signed Brahim Diaz from Manchester City, the European champions confirmed on Sunday.

Diaz, a 19-year-old winger, has agreed a contract for six and a half years with Real and will undergo a medical on Monday, before being officially unveiled at the Santiago Bernabeu.

A Real Madrid statement read: "Real Madrid and Manchester City have agreed to the transfer of the player Brahim Diaz, who will be linked to the club for the remainder of the season and the next six, until 30 June, 2025."

Diaz's deal at Manchester City was set to expire in June. Madrid have reportedly agreed to pay 17 million euros up front, with a further seven million euros due depending on performance.

He moved to the Premier League from Malaga in 2013 but has struggled to establish himself in City's first team.

He will join a talented group of young Spanish players at Madrid, which already includes Marco Asensio, Dani Ceballos, Marcos Llorente, Alvaro Odriozola and Sergio Reguilon.

Real sit fifth in La Liga after they were beaten 2-0 by Real Sociedad on Sunday.—AFP ■



Leicester City's English midfielder Hamza Choudhury (right) slides in to tackle Manchester City's Spanish-born midfielder Brahim Diaz (centre) during the English League Cup quarter-final football match on 18 December, 2018. **PHOTO: AFP**

Guardiola looks to De Bruyne for title boost

MANCHESTER (United Kingdom) — Pep Guardiola has backed a fit-again Kevin De Bruyne to give Manchester City an extra edge as they look to defend their Premier League title from an assault from leaders Liverpool.

The Belgium playmaker marked his latest return from injury with a commanding display as City hammered second-tier Rotherham 7-0 in the third round of the FA Cup at the Etihad Stadium on Sunday.

De Bruyne, 27, was key as City hit 100 points last season but has twice been sidelined with knee problems so far this season as Liverpool have stolen ahead of Guardiola's side in the title race.

"I said many times how important Kevin is for us. Without him, last season would maybe not have been possible," insisted the City manager after Sunday's Cup stroll.

"So far we have done incredible in terms of results, but we have an opponent (Liverpool) that has done better. "But they are an opponent that has done better than us without him."

De Bruyne missed City's previous two games due to a muscle injury, including the 2-1 win over Liverpool on Thursday that saw City close to within four points of Jurgen Klopp's table-toppers.

And Guardiola believes a City side with De Bruyne can overhaul that gap.

"Now he is back he will be fresh in the mind and the legs, and is going to help give us extra creativity in the last third, in the fight. Today he was our captain and he showed us why."

City overwhelmed Championship club Rotherham, with Raheem Sterling, Phil Foden and a Semi Ajayi own goal putting them 3-0 up at half-time before Gabriel Jesus, Riyad Mahrez, Nicolas Otamendi and Leroy Sane all scored after the break.

"We took (it) seriously. We do what we have to do to become a great, great club," said Guardiola.

"The great clubs don't choose competitions, don't choose games. Every game you have to do your job and we did amazingly again."—AFP ■