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Union Minister for International Cooperation U Kyaw Tin (Second from Left) poses for photo in ASEAN way with foreign ministers of ASEAN countries at the ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Retreat in Chiang Mai, Thailand. **PHOTO: MNA**

Union Minister U Kyaw Tin attends ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Retreat

THE Myanmar delegation led by Union Minister for International Cooperation U Kyaw Tin arrived back this evening after attending ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Retreat, which was held on 17-18 January 2018 in Chiang Mai, Thailand.

The Union Minister attended the Working Dinner hosted by Foreign Minister of Thailand Mr. Don Pramudwinai on 17th January and ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Retreat held on 18th January.

At the Retreat, the Ministers exchanged views on

ASEAN reaffirmed its support for Myanmar's efforts to bring peace, stability and equitable development in Rakhine State

Thailand's initiatives under the theme of "Advancing Partnership for Sustainability", priorities of Thailand's ASEAN Chairmanship including its proposals on launching of ASEAN Centres, Complementarities

between the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 and the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, matters related to ASEAN Community Building and the preparations for the upcoming 34th ASEAN Summit.

The Ministers also exchanged views on ASEAN's external relations and regional and international issues of common interest and concern.

At the Working Dinner, the Union Minister briefed the ASEAN Foreign Ministers in an informal setting on the recent developments in Rakhine State and had a fruitful discussion with the ASEAN Foreign Ministers on ways and means to enhance cooperation between Myanmar and ASEAN in facilitating the repatriation process.

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See limited impact of EU tariffs on Indica rice export: traders

THE European Commission's reinstatement of import tariffs on Indica rice will have limited impact on Myanmar rice exports as only a small volume of the rice variety is shipped to the EU, said U Aung Than Oo, the Chairman of the Myanmar Rice Traders Association.

"We exported about 400,000 tonnes of rice to EU last year. Of the total rice exported, about 40,000 tonnes was of the Indica variety. Therefore, EU's restoring of tariffs on Indica rice will not have a huge impact on Myanmar rice exports," said U Aung Than Oo.

"However, it is expected that buyers may make use of the situation and offer a lower price for Myanmar rice. If we work together, we can overcome this possible challenge," he said.

Dr. Soe Tun, Member of the Central Executive Committee of the Myanmar Rice Federation, has urged companies which export Indica rice to explore new markets.

Myanmar currently benefits from the EU's Generalized Scheme of Preferences (GSP).

The European Union's tariffs against Cambodia and Myanmar came after an EU investigation in March 2018, requested by the Italian government the previous month.

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Union Minister inspects river bank erosion prevention, waterway improvement works in Magway Region

UNION MINISTER for Transport and Communications U Thant Sin Maung went to Magway Region Yesagyo Township Balaba emergency river bank erosion prevention office in the second week of January where Directorate of Water Resources and Improvement of River Systems Deputy Director General U Win Naing and Region Head explained about river bank erosion prevention works in Magway

Region Yesagyo Township Balaba Village and Dhamma Yanthi Pagoda, dredging, construction of diversion weir and river bank erosion prevention works conducted with Region and World Bank funds.

Next the Union Minister inspected the river bank erosion prevention and river bank maintenance works conducted in fiscal year 2016-2017 and fiscal year 2017-2018 in Pakokku Township

Kyunnyogyi Village.

On 13 January the Union Minister left Salay Town by boat and officials explained about waterway improvement and river bank erosion preventive works conducted yearly that were improvement of Salay-Pha Kan Nge waterway and river bank erosion preventive work; improvement of Htinmalun Village waterway in Salay Town and river bank erosion preventive work;

Pwintbyu Township Than Kaing Village river bank erosion preventive work and Minbu (Saku) Township Nabe Ban Village river bank erosion preventive work and Magway Region minister U Tin Nwe Oo provided additional explanations. Union Minister U Thant Sin Maung responded to the explanations and said that as the waterways in the Region had many incidences of bank erosions and direct preventive

works against river bank erosion is very costly, annual waterway maintenance and construction of weirs must be conducted based on waterways development master plan to ensure that the waterways are of the required width and then inspected the year wise construction works and dredging works to improve waterways and prevent river bank erosion. — Maung Min Naing ■ (Translated by Zaw Min)

Ministry of Education honors literary award winning staff

THE Ministry of Education held a ceremony honoring former and active MoE staff who have received Lifelong National Literary Award, National Literary Awards, and Sarpay Beikman Manuscript Awards at the Diamond Jubilee Hall yesterday. Union Minister for Education Dr. Myo Thein Gyi delivered a speech and conferred honorary awards at the ceremony.

The Union Minister first explained that the Union government annually confers national awards to literature that pushes national literary development and brings ethnic culture and tradition to light. He said MoE staff are able to garner the literary awards every year. He expressed his delight that MoE staff attained one Lifelong National Literary Award, two National Literary Awards, and seven Sarpay Beikman Manuscript Awards for 2017. He said the ministry will put these achievements on record.

The Union Minister requested the scholars and professionals



Union Minister Dr. Myo Thein Gyi delivers the speech at the event to honour the National Literary Award winning staff in Yangon. **PHOTO: MNA**

of the education sector to continue using their skills and the power of the pen to write motivational aesthetic literature and enriching educational pieces that will instill good discipline, cooperation, integration, rationality, and knowledge into the younger generation, who will in turn drive forward the development of My-

anmar and ethnic literature.

Following this, the Union Minister conferred honorary awards on the national award recipients. Sayagyi U Tun Yi (Tun Yi, Archaeologist), a Lifelong National Literary Award winner, thanked the Union Minister on behalf of all the recipients. Everyone then took a

documentary photograph together. Later in the afternoon, the Union Minister attended the 2018 Basic Education Myanmar Literature Skill Contest (Central Level) at the Diamond Jubilee Hall. He delivered a speech and conferred awards to the winners.

At the high school level, 11th

Grader Ma Su Myat Hnin from D Wai Lian private school in Magway Region won first place, 11th Grader Ma Hmway Thet Win from B.E.H.S 2 Monywa in Sagaing Region won second place, and 11th Grader Ma Ni Ni Hlaing from B.E.H.S – Tabut in Myeik, Taninthayi Region won third place. At the middle school level, 7th Grader Ma Khin Khin Kyaw from B.E.H.S branch B.E.M.S 12 in Mingalardon Tsp, Yangon Region won first place, 9th Grader Eaint Hmue Khin from B.E.H.S 16 in Chanayetharzan Tsp, Mandalay Region won second place, and 9th Grader Ma Chit Thae Ei from B.E.H.S Myoma in Namhsan Tsp, Shan State (South) won third place.

Following this, Sayagyi Dr. Khin Aye, member of the Myanmar Language Commission, evaluated the answers of the student contestants. One of the students who won an award spoke words of thanks and then took a documentary photograph together. —MNA ■ (Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

Union Minister Dr. Win Myat Aye receives Chargé d' Affaires a.i of Royal Thai Embassy to Myanmar

UNION Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Dr. Win Myat Aye received Chargé d' Affaires of the Royal Thai Embassy Mr. Narong Boonsatheanwong, in the Maykhalar Hall at the Union Minister's office yesterday morning.

During the meeting, they cordially discussed matters on the Thai Government's assistance to promote socio-economic development in Myanmar; opening two learning centers in Rakhine State, studying postgraduate study and On-the-job training programmes for the government employees at the Universities

in Thailand, implementation of the recommendations on Rakhine State, process of UEHRD's Private-Public-Partnership, repatriation process, implementation of cash for work programme, working partners with Myanmar to know more about Rakhine affairs amid Thailand's ASEAN Chairmanship in 2019, cooperation in disaster management, repatriation process that was jointly conducted by the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management (AHA Centre) and the Ministry of SWRR.—MNA (Translated by Win Ko Ko Aung)



Union Minister Dr. Win Myat Aye holds talks with Chargé d' Affaires of the Royal Thai Embassy Mr. Narong Boonsatheanwong in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

Union Minister Lt-Gen Ye Aung receives ethnic excursion group

UNION MINISTER for Border Affairs Lt-Gen Ye Aung received the visiting ethnic excursion group at his ministry in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

AT the invitation of the Chairman of the Work Committee for Implementation of Development of Border Areas and National Races, and Union Minister for Border Affairs Lt-Gen Ye Aung, a 150-member excursion group comprising 30 each from the Kokang Self-Administered Zone, Kayah State, Kayin State, Rakhine State and Chin State has been visiting Nay Pyi Taw since Tuesday.

In his opening speech, Union Minister Lt-Gen Ye Aung said that the Ministry of Border Affairs has made an invitation for the ethnic people who reside in the remote border area to observe the development of the country so that they could use the experience gaining from the excursion programme with a view to promoting their regional development.

With the aim of enhancing friendship and understanding among the ethnic people, the



Union Minister for Border Affairs Lt-Gen Ye Aung poses for the documentary photo together with ethnic excursion group in front of the Ministry of Border Affairs in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

Ministry of Border Affairs has arranged the excursion programme. Based on the diversity, efforts should be made to foster the development of the country.

The Ministry of Border Affairs has set up short term and long term plans to promote the socio-economic lives of the

people while striving to achieve peace and stability in the border area. The Union Government has put an emphasis on the peace process. Thus people who lived in the border area should strive for taking part in the peace process. As we all are aware of it, drug use and production are on

the rise and which can lead to challenges in our country. All the youths were urged to steer clear of drugs and it is needed to eliminate the use of drug as a national duty. In addition to this, continuous efforts are needed in order to serve the interest of the country as dutiful citizens.

Afterwards, an ethnic national from the excursion group gave a short speech to express respects and thanks on behalf of the group, and members of the excursion group performed their traditional dances and music. — MNA ■ (Translated by Win Ko Ko Aung)

MoH seeks private health sector's data to draw strategy

UNION MINISTER for Health and Sports Dr. Myint Htwe addressed the Central Group on Private Health Works meeting 1/2019 at the Ministry of Health and Sports, yesterday, urging the private hospitals to send correct data regularly to the ministry to make correct decision for health care strategy.

“The ministry was implementing the national health project and only when the data and information were complete and correct could the ministry

make correct decisions, establish strategies and conduct works and thus private health works should provide news and information to the ministry,” said Dr. Myint Htwe.

He also urged the private hospitals to join the private hospitals association and the effectiveness and experiences of the three hospital management courses conducted in 2018 are required to be reviewed and evaluated.

He continued to say that

health care services for the people were being conducted by the government and that the private sector and this Central Group played a vital role in systematic development of private health care services.

Much emphasis will be placed towards systematically conducting and following up on the suggestions and discussions of the Central Group members. As of 31 December 2018 there are 239 private hospitals, 720 specialist clinics, 217 diagnostic labora-

tories, 137 X-ray diagnostic clinics, 47 delivery rooms or birthing places, 5,462 general clinics that were granted licenses to provide private health care services.

The quality, safety, reliability of x-ray and diagnostic laboratories must be reviewed and evaluated regularly. Private health care services operating without licenses were being closed down.

As of August 2018 the ministry conducted training courses for personnel from 43 private hospitals to use the District Health Information System 2 (DHIS 2) electronic management support system on providing news and information and the ministry was making arrangements to continue the training to the remaining private hospitals in 2019.

Discussions and coordination were being conducted with private hospitals to include the list of cancer patients taking treatment in private hospitals in the cancer patient registration system conducted by Non-Communicable Diseases Department.

If private hospitals provided the number of patients and the

treatments provided, the ministry would know the country-wide treatments required and know and decide on the required health care works.

A meeting or discussion with private hospitals association members and relevant experts should be held for the systematic development of private hospitals and to provide full quality health care to the people.

Members of Central Group on Private Health Works were urged to openly discuss and provide necessary suggestions, said the Union Minister.

Next, Department of Medical Services Deputy Director General Dr. Thida Hla discussed about general matters related to private health care works.

The meeting was attended by directors-general and officials of the governmental departments concerned, Myanmar Medical Council Chairman; Myanmar Medical Association Chairman; Myanmar Nurse and Midwife Council; Central Group on Private Health Works members and officials. — MNA ■

(Translated by Zaw Min)



Union Minister Dr. Myint Htwe at the Central Group on Private Health Works meeting 1/2019 in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

Governor of Central Bank of Myanmar receives ROK Ambassador to Myanmar



CBM Governor U Kyaw Kyaw Maung meets with ROK Ambassador Mr. Lee Sang-hwa yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

GOVERNOR of the Central Bank of Myanmar U Kyaw Kyaw Maung received Mr. Lee Sang-hwa, Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to Myanmar, yesterday, at the Kantkaw Hall of the Cen-

tral Bank of Myanmar in Nay Pyi Taw.

During the meeting, they discussed matters on promotion of bilateral relations between Myanmar and ROK, development

and cooperation of business enterprises and banking sectors, and creating more investment opportunities for the Korean investors in Myanmar. —MNA ■ (Translated by Win Ko Ko Aung)

UN Special Envoy arrives in Nay Pyi Taw

Mrs. Christine Schraner Burgener, UN Special Envoy on Myanmar, landed in Nay Pyi Taw at 7:30 pm yesterday. She was welcomed by offi-

cials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs at Nay Pyi Taw International Airport.—MNA ■ (Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)



UN Secretary General's Special Envoy on Myanmar Mrs. Christine Schraner Burgener arrives in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

Ethnic youth excursion group continues fourth day tour of Nay Pyi Taw



Ethnic youth excursion group visit Tatmadaw Myawaddy (MWD) Television station in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

AN ethnic youth excursion group in Nay Pyi Taw under the invitation and under arrangement of Ministry of Border Affairs went on fourth day tour of Nay Pyi Taw yesterday and visited Ministry of Health and Sports Wunna Theikdi Sports Stadium observing sports type wise trainings conducted.

They also observed documentary photos records of international sports at a sports exhibition and officials from the sports stadium conducted them

around the stadium.

Next the group went to Tatmadaw Myawaddy (MWD) Television Broadcasting Unit where an official greeted them, and artistes entertained them with songs and dances. They were then shown the history of MWD Television by a video projector.

The visiting ethnic youth excursion group members in return provided entertainment with ethnic national traditional dances under the traditional

culture exchange program and then exchanged commemorative flags.

An official in return presented books and magazines published by MWD Publishing to a representative of the excursion group. Afterwards the excursion group studied the production, editing and broadcasting of news in MWD Television.

Later in the afternoon the excursion group visited the National Museum. —MNA ■ (Translated by Zaw Min)

Rakhine State Investment Fair to be held magnificently in Ngapali Beach, Thandwe

By Zaw Gyi

WITH an aim toward increasing investment opportunities in Rakhine State and to connect local businesses with potential foreign investors, a Rakhine State Investment Fair will be held magnificently in Ngapali Beach, Thandwe, said Ko Nyana Soe, Senior Research Executive of Myanmar Survey Research (MSR).

Ko Nyana Soe said, "Uniform development among all states and regions is one of the 12-point in the National Economic Policy established by the incumbent government. Foreign investment is an integral part that will equally and uniformly develop among all states and regions. At the time being FDIs (Foreign Direct Investments)

are only flowing into Yangon and Mandalay, so we're conducting investment fairs in other states and regions to better attract FDI."

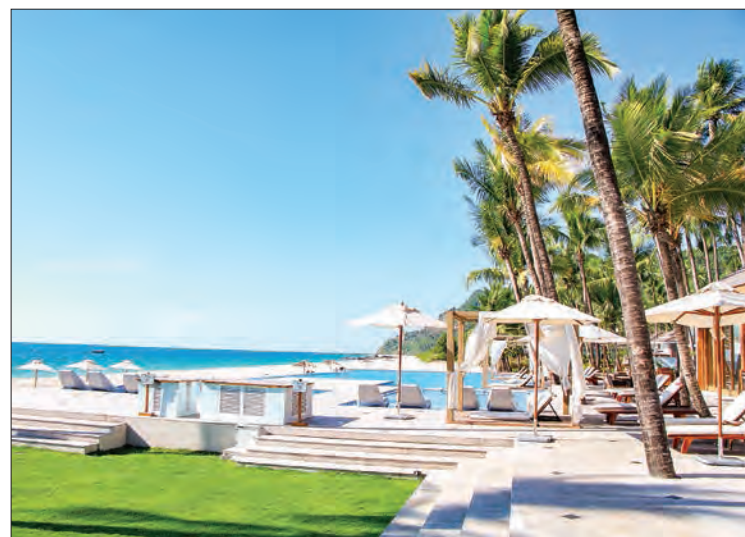
As part of this initiative, the Rakhine State Investment Fair will be held in Ngapali Beach, Thandwe Township, Rakhine State for three days from 21 to 23 February.

The investment fair will be led by the Rakhine State government with support from Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO), Myanmar Survey Research Co., Ltd. (MSR) and other companies.

First day programmes include Rakhine traditional dances, entertainment programs and a get together banquet. On the second day, in addition to open-

ing of sector wise exhibits, there will be investment discussions by business persons and officials, signing of memoranda of understanding (MoUs), and sector wise discussions between local and visiting business persons. On the third day, there will be visits to investment sites in Ngapali beach, cold storages, aquatic businesses and aquatic export production sites in Thandwe Town.

"The main thing is to show local and foreign investors the type of businesses conducted in the vicinity of Ngapali Beach in Rakhine. We want investments to come in. There are only a few foreign investments in states and regions so even if only one or two foreign investments comes in, it'll create a lot of job opportunities. Then there'll be development in



Ngapali Beach in Thandwe. **PHOTO: MSR**

the region and it'll play a role for the country's development," said Ko Nyana Soe. MSR conducted surveys on investment in Rakhine State from November to December 2018 in order to hold

this investment fair. The main survey was on business opportunities in Rakhine State and a report on the findings will be published at the investment fair. ■ (Translated by Zaw Min)

Leading Committee to Support Increasing Union Tax Collection holds coord meeting

UNION Minister for Planning and Finance U Soe Win attended and addresses a Leading Committee to Support Increasing Union Tax Collection coordination meeting held at Ministry of Planning and Finance meeting hall in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

The meeting was attended by Deputy Minister for Planning and Finance U Maung Maung Win, ministers for planning and finance from Nay Pyi Taw Coun-

cil, states and regions, director general and officials from Internal Revenue Department and discussed region wise tax support groups to expand tax base in order to increase tax collection, ensure that all tax payers pay tax and coordination works required to implement the works and duties of the state/region groups on increasing tax collection it is learnt.—MNA ■

(Translated by Zaw Min)



Union Minister U Soe Win delivers the speech at the Union Tax Collection coordination meeting in Nay Pyi Taw. PHOTO: MNA

Musicians perform at Myanmar-Japan Concert 2019 in Yangon



The Myanmar National Symphony Orchestra and Japanese musicians perform live during the Myanmar-Japan Concert at the National Theatre in Yangon. PHOTO: PE ZAW

MYANMAR National Symphony Orchestra and a band of Japanese musicians led by Mr. Yunosoke Yamamoto (Conductor & Composer) entertained a full house with their performances at the 'Myanmar National Symphony Orchestra with Japan Concert 2019' held at the National Theatre in Yangon yesterday.

Attending the concert were Yangon Region Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein, Regional Advocate General Daw Khin Myo Kyi, Yangon Mayor U Maung Maung Soe, Regional Minister for Rakhine Ethnic Affairs U Zaw Aye Maung, MRTV Director-General U Myint Htwe, Director-General Daw Kay Thi Soe of the Strategic Studies and Training Department under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japanese Ambassador Mr. Ichiro Maruyama and embassy staff, other foreign

ambassadors, officials and invited guests.

This is the 5th concert held with collaboration between MRTV, the Japanese Embassy in Myanmar, and The Japan Foundation.

Mr. Yunosoke Yamamoto said they had to practice for a year before performing at the concert. He said, "We have different instruments and music styles, and our differing culture and languages created minor complications. But music has the ability to unite everything, so we turned out fine. I believe our two countries' relations will be even stronger after holding such a musical and cultural exchange."

The ensemble consisted of 60 musicians from the national orchestra, 4 from the national orchestra, 4 from the national orchestra, 15 Japanese western musicians, 4 Japanese tradi-

tional musicians, and 45 vocalists from music alliance and Insein music band. They performed western classics, cartoon plays and soundtracks, and Myanmar musicals including 'Na Pan San', 'Shwe Bo Thanakha' and 'Mahn Taung Yeikho'.

Ko Chit Oo, a Sanchaung Tsp resident, said, "It's not everyday you get to see a musical ensemble. There was a uniqueness to it from combining western music with Myanmar melodies. I believe it will strengthen bilateral relations and bring international attention to Myanmar's music."

This year's music festival is held to commemorate the opening of the new the Japan Foundation office in Nat Mauk Lane 1, Bahan Township on 24 January, and the Mekong-Japan Exchange Year 2019.—Zaw Gyi ■ (Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

Innwa Bank Kyaukpadaung branch opens in commemoration of 72nd Union Day

INNWA Bank Ltd. Kyaukpadaung branch was opened on the morning of 17 January in a ceremony held at the bank branch compound to commemorate the 72nd anniversary of Union Day. Officials cut a ceremonial ribbon and Central Command Commander Maj-Gen Kyaw Swa Lin pressed a button to open the bank branch and then inspected the bank branch with the guests.

The Innwa Bank Ltd.

Kyaukpadaung branch is the 57th branch of the bank and is situated at Mandalay Region, Kyaukpadaung Town, Zay Kwet Thit Ward, No. 443. In addition to providing local remittance services, Innwa Bank Ltd. provides 9 percent interest on deposits, and depending upon the deposit time, offers up to 10 percent for fixed deposits. It also provides loans for start-up business persons it is learnt.—MNA ■

(Translated by Zaw Min)

Myanmar International Trade Centre to be opened in Yangon

THE Myanmar International Trade Centre will be opened in March this year in Yangon for promoting traditional handicrafts market. The announcement came at the anniversary meeting of the Myanmar Arts and Crafts Association-MACA at the Republic of the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry yesterday. "To make the trading of Myanmar handicrafts smooth and to find the market for our products, we will open the trade centre soon corner of the Merchant Street and Bo Suan Pet Street," said U Aung Soe, Director-General of the Myanmar

Trade Promotion Organization under the Ministry of Commerce. "A centre will be included in the three-storey building to tackle challenges being faced by traders for trading and export. This centre will be the main centre for export promotion," he added. Kachin traditional textiles, hand woven clothes, handicrafts made with bamboo, Pyu era beads, woodcarvings, bronze arts, stones, textiles, purses, slippers, materials made with waste and crochets were displayed at the exhibition at the UMFCI yesterday.—Aye Min Thu, Zarnee Maung ■ (Translated by JT)



PHOTO: AYE MIN THU



Union Minister U Soe Win meets with Tax Minister of Denmark Mr. Karsten Styrbæk Lauritzen in Nay Pyi Taw. **PHOTO: MNA**

Union Minister U Soe Win receives Tax Minister of Denmark

UNION MINISTER for Planning and Finance, U Soe Win, received a delegation led by Mr. Karsten Styrbæk Lauritzen, Tax Minister of Denmark, at his ministry in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. During the meeting, they cordially discussed efforts to sign a Double Tax Agreement (DTA) between Myanmar and Denmark, and other financial and economical affairs. —MNA (Translated by Zaw Htet Oo) ■

Opening ceremony for Process & Product Show 2019 kicks off in Yangon

An opening ceremony for Process & Product Show 2019, organized by the Myanmar Engineering Society (MES) – Young Engineers Committee, was held at the office of the Myanmar Engineering Society (MES), Yangon University's Hlaing Campus yesterday afternoon.

First, Yangon Region minister for Electricity, Industry and Transportation Daw Nilar Kyaw, Myanmar Engineering Society Chairman U Nyan Tun Oo, Chairman U Aung Myint, Former President Dr. Sein Myint and Chairman of the organizing committee U Lin opened the ceremony with a ribbon-cutting.

Yangon Region minister Daw Nilar Kyaw and officials

from the MES walked round and looked at the booth displays.

Then a paper reading session, in commemoration of anniversary of the MES, was held at the Function Hall of the MES, where Chairman of the MES U Aung Myint addressed an opening speech, and engineers, external experts and new generation engineering students presented the paper reading session on environmental conservation, water resource and energy. The Process & Product Show 2019 will be held for three days, from 18-20 January, and the award giving ceremony would be held on the third day of the show. —MNA (Translated by Win Ko Ko Aung) ■



Yangon Region minister for Electricity, Industry and Transportation Daw Nilar Kyaw and officials look around booths at the opening ceremony for Process & Product Show 2019. **PHOTO: MNA**

Union Minister U Kyaw Tin attends ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Retreat

FROM PAGE-1

In his briefing, the Union Minister U Kyaw Tin informed the Meeting of the recent agreement on the Terms of Reference (TOR) of Needs Assessment to Support Repatriation Process in Rakhine during the visit of the Secretary-General of ASEAN to Myanmar as a follow up to the decision at the 33rd ASEAN Summit. He also apprised the meeting of the work plan of the preliminary and comprehensive needs assessment to be conducted by the AHA Needs Assessment Team according to the TOR. Furthermore, the Union Minister also discussed with ASEAN Foreign Ministers on the AHA Centre's capacity building programme on disaster management and repatriation process, as well as on the possible areas of cooperation in the

repatriation, resettlement and development in the Rakhine State. He also updated on the efforts of preparations made by Myanmar for return of displaced persons in accordance with the bilateral agreements between Myanmar and Bangladesh, progress of the implementation on the MoU between Myanmar, the UNHCR and UNDP and ongoing work of the Independent Commission of Enquiry to address the issue of accountability.

In the Press Statement issued by the ASEAN Chair, the ASEAN Foreign Ministers expressed their agreement on the importance of ASEAN's role and welcomed the endorsement of the TOR of the Needs Assessment Team during the visit of the ASEAN Secretary-General to Myanmar. The ASEAN Ministers also expressed their continued support for Myan-

mar's humanitarian relief programme, agreed to increase the cooperation for sustainable and equitable development in Rakhine State, welcomed Myanmar's commitment to ensure safety and security for all communities in Rakhine State as effectively as possible, and reaffirmed ASEAN's support for Myanmar's efforts to bring peace, stability, the rule of law, to promote harmony and reconciliation among the various communities.

The ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Retreat was held for the first time during ASEAN Chairmanship of Thailand in 2019 under the theme "Advancing Partnership for Sustainability". Thailand will assume the ASEAN Chairmanship from 1st January to 31st December 2019. — Ministry of International Co-operation ■

Tatmdaw True News Information Team holds press conference in Nay Pyi Taw

THE Tatmadaw True News Information Team held a press conference at the Defence Services Museum in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday afternoon.

At the press conference, Maj-Gen Tun Tun Nyi, Vice Chairperson of the team explained about counter insurgency conducted by the Tatmadaw against AA insurgent group and Maj-Gen Soe Naing Oo, Chairperson of the True News Information Team, briefed on the peace making issues.

At the end of the briefing the responsible officials replied to the questions raised by media personnel. — MNA (Translated by Kyaw Zin Lin) ■



Maj-Gen Soe Naing Oo, Maj-Gen Tun Tun Nyi and another officer from the Tatmadaw True News Information Team give the press conference to the media in Nay Pyi Taw. **PHOTO: MNA**

See limited impact of EU tariffs on Indica rice export: traders

FROM PAGE-1

The goal of the tariffs is to protect EU-based producers from a surge in imports. The duties will amount to €175 (US\$200) per metric ton in the first year, €150 a ton in the second year, and €125 in the third.

Italy has claimed that imports of Indica rice from Cambodia and Myanmar have increased substantially, and that their re-

spective EU market shares of Indica rice grew from 13 per cent to 21 per cent and from zero per cent to 5 per cent over the last five years.

"The impact from the tariffs on Indica rice will not affect the total market of our rice. But to find a new market, the private sector and the government must work together," said U Nay Lin Zin, the Joint Secretary of the Myanmar Rice Federation.

EU is currently Myanmar's sixth-largest trading partner. Bilateral trade between the two partners equalled €2.09 billion in 2017. The EU imported goods worth €1.55 million from Myanmar and exported goods worth almost €539 million to the frontier market. EU imports from Myanmar chiefly comprise agricultural products and garments. — Nyein Nyein ■ (Translated by Kyaw Zin Lin)

Myanmar plans smart city in Thilawa SEZ

By Aye Yamon

THE Thilawa Special Economic Zone Management Committee said it plans to invite foreign developers to set up a smart city in the Thilawa SEZ.

Japan has proposed drafting a master plan for the project, and the plan is expected to be finished within this year. The proposal came up during a workshop on Implementation of SEZs, organized jointly by the Myanmar Trade Promotion Department and the International Growth Center. The workshop was held on 17 January at Yangon's Park Royal Hotel.

Dr. Shwe Hein, the secretary of the Thilawa SEZ Management Committee, said the master plan will include implementation of a smart city project in the zone's commercial areas, where the committee will build stores, schools and other necessary facilities. "The reason for implementing the project is to improve the zone. It is expected to be a good place for people live as it is located near the port," he said.

"Currently, Zone-B is being implemented in the Thilawa SEZ in three phases. Since the establishment of Zone-A in 2016, the SEZ has received a lot of investment. Thus, Japan proposed drafting a master plan for 2,400



Thilawa Special Economic Zone. PHOTO: KYAW KYAW

hectares in December, 2018," he said. In addition, the committee will develop logistics centers and commercial centers in Zone-C and Zone-D in the future. The Thilawa SEZ is divided into two zones—free zone and promotion zone. The free zone mainly focuses on export-oriented manufacturing.

Dr. Shwe Hein said there are plans to develop the SEZ, including implementation of a logistics area and improvement of ports with Japan's ODA loans. The zone implementation is being undertaken by the Myanmar government in collaboration with the Japanese government and the private sector through a pri-

vate-public partnership (PPP). To implement the smart city, foreign developers will be invited because it will involve large investments, he said.

For the time being, improvement of ports is being carried out with the help of Japan's ODA loans. "Port Nos. 25 and 26 will be upgraded with the use of Japanese technology starting this March. A four-lane road is also being built along the circular road through the Thilawa SEZ to allow for export of commodities to Southeast Asian nations, such as Thailand, Viet Nam, Laos, and Cambodia," he added.

The Thilawa SEZ has so far attracted a total of 103 investors

from 18 countries, including over 40 export-oriented companies. Products from the remaining manufacturing companies usually cater to the domestic market.

U Oo Han, the Deputy Director-General of the Myanmar Trade Promotion Organization, said that SEZs help the country attract foreign direct investments. "The SEZs will play an important role in developing the country's socio-economic status and network between local businesses and the world. They will enable technology transfer for the manufacturing sector and local businesses, and also help raise investments. Collaborative efforts will be made to develop

more successful special economic zones in Myanmar," he said.

The Thilawa SEZ is equipped with a One-Stop Service Center (OSSC) that offers a wide range of services to investors. The OSSC comprises members of 11 government departments, including the Customs Department, the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration, the Internal Revenue Department, the Labour Department, and the Department of Immigration and National Registration.

"It is a little early to implement the smart city project. We need to wait for some time. Coordinated efforts are being made to implement a city project near Yangon simultaneously with the development of the Thilawa SEZ," said Dr. Nyan Thit Hlaing, the director of Myanmar Thilawa SEZ Holdings Public Co. Ltd.

The government is currently developing the Thilawa Garden City in partnership with Thilawa SEZ Holdings Public Co. and Thilawa Property Development. The project covers staff housing, shop houses, banks, Japan's Super Hotel, a supermarket, and a shopping mall. The inflow of local and foreign investments into the Thilawa SEZ has reached US\$1.5 billion so far. The zone has helped create over 15,000 jobs. ■ (Translated by Khaing Thanda Lwin)

Over 500 companies re-registering daily on MyCO

By Nyein Nyein

EVERY day, over 500 existing companies are re-registering on online registry system MyCO, said U Myo Min, the Director of the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA).

Starting 1 August, all new and existing companies in Myanmar are required to register or re-register themselves either on the Myanmar Companies Online (MyCO) system or at the offices of the DICA.

At present, more than 45,000 existing companies and 9,300 new companies have registered and re-registered on the online registry.

Over 60,000 companies were previously registered in Myanmar and those companies which fail to re-register

on MyCO by 31 January will be delisted. "Sure, all previously registered companies will not re-register. Some companies may fail to contact us, some businesses will be dissolved, and some will downsize. Therefore, the number of registered companies will surely decline," said U Aung Naing Oo, the Director-General of the DICA.

Over 10,000 corporates are yet to re-register and those who fail to do so before the deadline will pay a fee to get their names restored to the list, according to the DICA.

"Those companies which fail to re-register within the set period will be struck off the list. Those who want to restore their corporate status will have to shell out a fee," said U Aung Naing Oo.

As per Chapter III of the

notification (66/2018) issued by the Ministry of Planning and Finance on 23 July 2018, if an existing company fails to re-register on the electronic registry system within the deadline, the registrar may strike its name off the register and publish a notice in the Gazette. Once the notice is published, the company will be dissolved, while the liability of the directors and the members of the company shall continue to be enforced. Under Section (d) of Chapter III, a registrar may restore an existing company or corporate body which has failed to re-register, if it provides sufficient cause before its name is struck off the register. Such companies will be restored after they shell out a fee, which will be prescribed by the Union Minister. ■ (Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Manufacturing sector exports up \$257.7 mln in Q1

EXPORTS of finished industrial goods in the October-January quarter of the 2018-2019 fiscal year totalled US\$1.97 billion, a significant increase of over \$257.7 million compared with the corresponding period of the previous FY, according to data from the Ministry of Commerce.

In the first quarter of the 2017-2018FY, the export figure stood at \$1.71 billion. Myanmar's manufacturing sector is largely concentrated in garments and textiles on the Cut-Make-Pack basis, which contribute to the country's GDP to a certain extent. CMP has emerged as a promising industry in the export sector. The export value of CMP was only \$850 million in the 2015-2016 fiscal year, but earnings tripled within two years to touch \$2.5 billion in the 2017-2018 FY, according to the Myanmar Global Investment Forum 2018 held on 12 September. In the last mini-budget period (April-September), exports of

clothes made under the CMP system were valued at \$2.27 billion, nearly double the value recorded in the corresponding period of the previous year. Myanmar's inexpensive labour market has been attracting garment producers to invest in the country, and there have been instances of conflict between garment factory employers and workers on labour issues, said a market observer. There are currently over 400 garment factories in Myanmar, employing over 300,000 workers. Japan is the largest market for apparel produced in Myanmar, followed by the European Union. Local entrepreneurs have expressed concern over the EU possibly revoking the Generalized Scheme of Preference as that can also hurt the manufacturing industry. The manufacturing sector is likely to maintain the top position in attracting FDIs during the current FY.—GNLM ■ (Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

We will establish a Democratic Federal Union

THE ethnic races of Myanmar have been living together in the country for thousands of years. Our honest and innocent ethnic brethren have passed through thick and thin together and have a history of coming together to repel foreign oppressors.

Since the struggle for independence, we have been striving for equal rights. However, due to great distances separating the people from the highlands and the flatlands, unrest in the border and mountainous areas, and because of misunderstandings and mistrust carried over from past generations, equal rights sought by ethnic nationals have not been fully realized.

This is why the Union government is striving for uniform development across all the states and regions, with no discrimination between the highlands and the flatlands. It is prioritizing the inherent rights of our ethnic brethren, and is

especially working to end decades of bitter resentment between them due to unrest. The way to overcome these difficulties and achieve positive results is establishing a Democratic Federal Union.

It is the most suitable system for our country, and for citizens to live in harmony. The system will ensure equality, fairness, and impartiality for everyone.

In his speech on Kayah State Day on 16 January, President U Win Myint said: “We have made a firm resolution to make our country a democratic federal Union. In a democratic nation, every citizen is entitled to equality, fairness, and impartiality. Since our Union is composed of ethnic national brothers and sisters, we cannot call ourselves a Union if it is not inclusive of them. This is why I boldly say we will establish our country as a democratic federal Union.”

All ethnic nationals in Myanmar desire a democratic federal Union. It is the most suitable system for our country, and for citizens to live in harmony. The system will ensure equality, fairness, and impartiality for everyone. We must build mutual trust and peace among the people to achieve this goal.

Even now, the government, the Tatmadaw, ethnic nationals, and concerned organizations are discussing the fundamental principles for the democratic transition at the Union Peace Conference – 21st Century Panglong. All ethnic nationals must participate in the peace talks to make them successful. We need to be wary of actions and words that may destroy the bridges and check the achievements we have made so far in our goal towards establishing a Democratic Federal Union.

We urge everyone to cooperate with us in our shared goal, while upholding the values of non-disintegration of the Union, non-disintegration of national solidarity, and perpetuation of sovereignty, based on freedom, equality, and justice.

Pyatho [January] the month of terrestrial display and activities

By Maha Saddhamma
Jotika Dhaja,
Sithu Dr. Khin Maung Nyunt

MYANMAR month Pyatho [January], the 10th month of Myanmar Lunar Calendar of 12 months, is the peak of Myanmar cold season winter [Heyman]. The north-east wind passing snowcapped regions is bringing extremely cold, causing water freeze in high lands and on lofty mountains.

It is quite an appropriate time to hold such a strenuous display and games of equestrian Tourney (မြင်းခင်းတော်နှင့်အဲဟောင်းလုံရေပြိုင်ပွဲ). Myanmar traditional Land forces composed of four regiments — Elephantry, Cavalry, Chariotry, and Infantry. Yearly tournament of these regiments was held on the grounds in front of the Golden Palace, within the walled and moated Palace city.

The three main objectives of this great event were (1). to display (2). to award and (3). to recruit. Myanmar Land forces were displayed not only in the month of Pyatho, but also on the occasion of the State visit of Head of State / Government or foreign envoy.

It was on that occasion that men of outstanding achievement in military service and skill were awarded by Their Majesties with cash, promotion, title, land and fief. Non-service men from the public also participated in the tourneys and the outstandings were recruited into the regiments.

This displays and tourneys were fully recorded, in chronicles, history, poems and pictures on white parabites [folding papers]. The 37 Luta Songs composed by minister Maha Dhamma Thingyan of King Bagyidaw [1819-1887, Sagaing Min] was well known. In his 37 Lutas Verses and 37 songs,



MahaDhammaThingyan described vividly 37 different modes of horsemanship, 37 different ways of playing with lances. They were also recorded in pictures on white parabites (ပုရပိုက်ဖြူ) white folding papers. For easy memorization he also rhymed them in Than Bauk [သံခေါက်] couplets.

Among the weapons of Myanmar land forces in the past, swords, spears, lances, bows, arrows, muskets, lance throwing required extraordinary strength and skill. Long hanale spear “Lunces” are called in Myanmar “Eh-Maung” (အဲဟောင်းလုံ). At the tourneys, equestrian competitors at different speeds of their stallions had to throw, each his allotment of 20 lances, one by one at the target marked on the Boards. Circles were marked on the boards.

It the lance hit either the centre or within the circles, he won the

game. So this tourney is also called in Myanmar Set KwinPyitPwe [စက်ကွင်းပွဲစဉ်].

Next extraordinary tourney was long special sword called ယိမ်းနွဲ့ခဲ [yein nwe dah]. It was made of special metal by special swords smith very thin and pliant. It was worn like a belt around the user’s waist.

At high speed of his stallion, the equestrian pulled out his ye-inwe dah and cut a long line of banana trees or long necked water pots, which all remained still and stable. Only when they were pushed, they fell down, longnecks of water pots came down. But water in the pots was untouched.

There were also chariot fightings, combats on elephant or horseback, archery, gulee (Polo) *IvD, the equestrian game, wrestling, running, jumping acrobatics all kinds of manly activities and physical shows. This display tourney could take nearly a month.

On the final day. Their Majesties in State appeared in public in the special gold pavillion to honour the outstanding winners. The King himself was in military uniform of his rank. In addition to the award of cash, promotion, title, Land and fief, Thazin or KwaNyo flower was given as a token of the flower of the month. These flowers were brought to Their Majesties on gold stand trays by beautiful selected young court ladies.

That glorious and splendid scene was vividly recorded in writing and paintings by foreign visitors and envoys. Based upon these records one song composer of national fame, a native of Mandalay Myo Ma Nyein (မြို့မငြိမ်း) composed a hit song Myin Khin Taw [မြင်းခင်းတော်] Display of Myanmar Land Fares and Equestrian Tourney. The following is that song in Burmese and a loose English translation by the writer.

မြင်းခင်းတော်
၁။ ရွှေနှင်းပွင့်လှ၊ ဝေဟီ
မြောက်လေဆော်သွေး
အေးတုံလရာသီ၊
သမယအခါစီ

ပြာသို့၊ ချဉ်း၊ ညှာဝံ
စိမ်းလှလန်း၊ ရွှေနန်းတော်တွင်း
လှိုင်း၊ မူဟာပလီ၊ သူဇာဒေဝီ
တော်ဝင်ပန်းသို့ လှမ်းမလို့
ပြင်ရှာပြီ၊
ဈာဘာဆံကလေးချ၊ အရွယ်ညီ
ရွှေကြွင်းနီ၊ သေ့သဖန်း
အဆောင်ဆောင်တွေစီ
သံပြိုင်
လာချေပြီ၊ ပျိုတို့မောင်လဲ၊ သူလဲ
ဝါဝင်သည်
လာချေပြီ၊ မှန်မှန်မည်းမည်း၊ လူသူ
မသိတကွ၊
နှင်းခဲပြာဝေရီ
မင်းညီမင်းသား၊ မူးမတ်သားများ
ယောက်ျားအာဇာနည်၊ နန်းရည်၊
လက်နံရည်
မြင်းကလဲ၊ မြင်းရောမာနီ၊ ခဲပတ်
တော်ရွှေချည်ရွှေချည်
မောက်တို၊ မောက်ရှည်၊ ဟလီ
ကွေးနဲ့

အဲဟောင်းလုံရေ၊ ပြိုင်ကြသည်
မြန်မာတစ်ခုစုချေပြီ
ခွာသံချင်းယှက်၊ ဂေါက်ဂက်၊
ဂေါက်ဂက်
ဘယ်ညာသံပြိုင်ချီ၊
၂။ မရှိစည်မောင်း၊ ချိန်ချိန်သောင်း၊
ကောင်ကင်တိုင်ဟီ၊ တံပိုးသံ၊ ရော
သံညီစည်
ဝဲလက်ယာမင်းခန်းတော်စုံညီ၊
တော်ကြီးဘုရား၊ နှစ်ပါးထွက်ကာ
စံပယ်တော်မူလေပြီ
မြင်းခင်းသဘင် ဆင်ယင်တော်မူ
လေပြီ
စန္ဒြားတားယှက်၊ ဝဲလက်လှံပျံချီ၊
သိကြားတန်ဆောင်တိုင်၊ အဲဟောင်း
တံခွန်မြိုင်မြိုင် ဝေဝေစီ
သံပြိုင်---လာချေပြီ---ဘယ်ညာ
မြိုင်မြိုင်ချီ၊
၃။ ပန်းခွာညီ၊ ပန်းခွာညီညာ
စိမ်းလှလန်း၊ နွဲ့မူဟာပလီ
နန်းတွင်းသူဇာဒေဝီ၊ မေ့တရီ၊ နဲ့၊
ကတိကရီဆင်ကာညီ
လူဘဲလား၊ နတ်တဖူးအညီ၊
တင်ယောင်၊ မြိုင်ယောင်သည်
မြင်းခင်းသဘင် ဆင်တော်မူလေပြီ
သံပြိုင်---လာချေပြီ--- ဘယ်ညာ
မြိုင်မြိုင်ချီ။

... native of Mandalay Myo Ma Nyein (မြို့မငြိမ်း) composed a hit song Myin Khin Taw [မြင်းခင်းတော်] ...

Loose translation by the writer
Stanza 1.

Silvery snow screen spreads the northerly breeze brings cold season
it is the month of Pyatho
Green fresh KhwaNyo (clematis crabiana) flower of the Pyatho month
In the Golden Palace are Dainty beautiful young court ladies with the uniform coiffeurs of hair style
“Byabazin” beautiful like Thuzardevi about to get hold of royal flowers.
So busy in all buildings of the Golden Palace.

Chorus: They’re coming. Our sweet heart beaus are among them. They’re coming in the dim light of the snow misty morning princes, junior and Senior Ministers, Soldiers, all male members of the court. They all are strong in brain and brawn. Their steeds are brown and strong. Gold and silver belts around the waist With short and long helmets, and balikway gold and silver covers on their shoulders They contest in lance-throwing competitions They are setting Myanmar standard flag. Listen! The galloping sounds of their horses gok-gat, goh-gat. Left right: left right uniformly.

Stanza 2
The sounds of Mayoe drums and gongs reach high in the sky. Trumpets and horns blowing to-gather The entire royal displays on both left and right sides are complete. Their Majesties make public appearance Now begins the Equestrian Tourney. One technique of lance throwing called “Sundayar set” with both left and right hands creates the scene of the lance flying in the air. Thigyar Tazaung during Flags, standards, etc. are moving in the breeze in tune with the martial music of the royal band.

Chorus
Stanza 3
The flower Khwa Nyo, green and fresh The young court ladies beautiful like Thuzadevi Daintily, modestly and gracefully adorn Khwa Nyo flowers on their hair knots. Are they humans or are they angles? So, the Equestion Display and Tourney are held.

Chorus
This song was sung by Gita Kyi Aye and recorded on disk. ■

Myanmar Gazette

Heads of service organizations confirmed

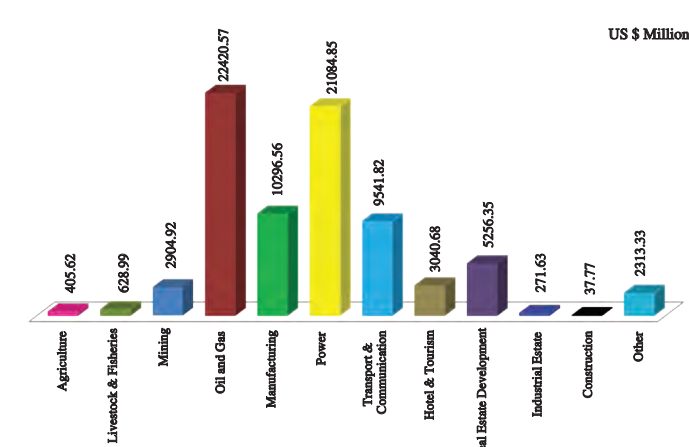
The President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has confirmed the following persons as heads of service organizations shown against each of their names on the expiry of one-year probationary period.

Name	Appointment
(1) Daw May Toe Win	Director-General Foreign Exchange Management Department Central Bank of Myanmar
(2) Daw Tin Moe Moe	Director-General Monetary Policy Affairs and Financial Institutions Regulation Department Central Bank of Myanmar

72nd Anniversary (2019) Union Day National Objectives

1. All ethnic nationals to work with collective strength for non-disintegration of the Union, non-disintegration of national unity, perpetuation of national sovereignty; and to work for preservation and protection of the above.
2. To strive for the emergence of a Constitution that is in alignment and harmony with the Democratic Federal Union.
3. To strive for the success of the Union Peace Conference – 21st Century Panlong and thence till the success of the internal peace process.
4. All union nationals to cooperate and work in “Unity and Harmony” for rule of law and for the people to be secure and free from danger.
5. All union citizens to be able to enjoy good education and adequate health care protection.

Foreign Investment By Sector (Cumulative total as of November 30, 2018)



Source: Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA)
Information Unit: Central Statistical Organization

Myanmar Daily Weather Report

(Issued at 7:00 pm Friday 18 January, 2019)

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

FORECAST VALID UNTIL AFTERNOON OF THE 19th January, 2019: Rain will be isolated in Taninthayi Region and Shan State. Degree of certainty is (80%). Weather will be partly cloudy in Kachin, Kayah, Kayin and Mon States and generally fair in the remaining Regions and States.

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

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Generally fair in the whole country.

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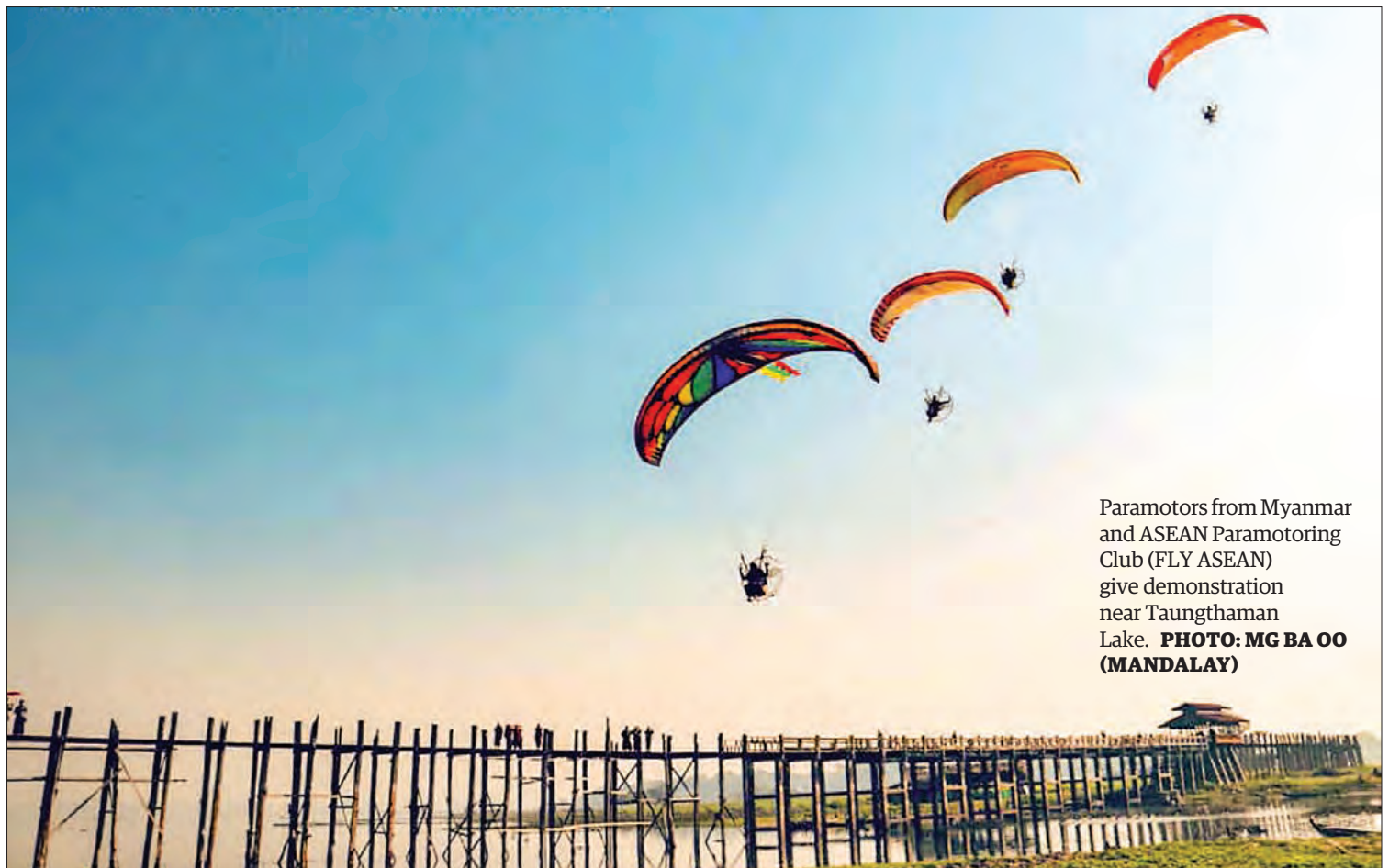
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Due to limitation of space we are only able to publish "Letter to the Editor" that do not exceed 500 words. Should you submit a text longer than 500 words please be aware that your letter will be edited.

Paramotors from Myanmar and ASEAN Paramotoring Club (FLY ASEAN) give demonstration near Taungthaman Lake. **PHOTO: MG BA OO (MANDALAY)**

Myanmar, ASEAN paragliders fly over Taungthaman Lake, Amarapura Township in Mandalay

MYANMAR Parachute Federation central executive committee member U Kyaw Soe Aung said our organization and Thailand based ASEAN Paramotoring Club (FLY ASEAN) jointly organized a friendship paramotoring demonstration in the vicinity of Taungthaman Lake and Amarapura Township, Mandalay Region yesterday morning.

The demonstration was conducted by four paramotoring experts from ASEAN Paramotoring Club (FLY ASEAN) and four paramotoring experts from Myanmar. The paramotoring ex-

perts took-off from Shanlaykyun Village, flew along the Ayeyawady River, vicinity of Taungthaman Lake and Amarapura Township and landed back in Shanlaykyun Village.

"ASEAN Paramotoring Club contacted officials from Myanmar Parachute Federation and arranged this demonstration as a friendship program. It was conducted to share expertise and experience and to build friendship among sports personnel of ASEAN countries and to observe the natural beauty of Myanmar from the sky. As this demonstration

simultaneously show the world the natural beauty of Myanmar, it will be beneficial for the travel sector. We started test flights in the vicinity of Taungthaman Lake since 17 January," said U Kyaw Soe Aung.

After the demonstration flights the demonstration team presented aviation support materials, education and sports materials to Shanlaykyun Village school headmistress Daw Thet Thet. The demonstration team will fly to PyinOoLwin, Saytalone Village on 19 January and from Nawngkhio sports ground

to Nawngpane Village on 20 January again and at schools in Saytalone and Nawngpane villages the demonstration team will present some education materials and model planes.

The day's friendship paramotoring demonstration was conducted with the permission of the relevant region government and the flight paths were underneath an altitude of 3,000 ft. in order not to be of any obstruction or hazards to airplane routes.—Min Htat Aung (Mann Sub-Printing House) ■

(Translated by Zaw Min)

Myanmar's external trade exceeds \$9bln in current FY

MYANMAR'S external trade has reached US\$9.155 billion in the 2018-2019 Financial Year, with trade deficit registered at \$1.03 billion, according to the Ministry of Commerce's weekly report issued this Friday.

The trade value as of 11 January has shown an increase of \$184 million compared with the corresponding period of

the previous FY, when trade totalled \$8.971 billion, with exports valued at \$3.778 billion and imports worth \$5.193 billion. For the same period, the trade deficit stood at \$1.414 billion.

Compared with the 2017-2018 FY, the value of exports has increased by \$284 million to \$4.062 billion in the current fiscal year. The value of imports has

declined by \$100 million to \$5.092 billion due to a drop in maritime imports. Myanmar trades with international partners mainly through sea ports. The current trade figure includes \$6.792 billion earned via non-border trade and \$2.362 billion through border trade. This year, border exports of domestic products declined by nearly \$80 million from the same

period of the previous year.

Myanmar chiefly imports capital goods, semi-finished goods, consumer products, and CMP, and exports agricultural, marine, animal, forest and minerals products, manufactured goods, and other miscellaneous commodities.—Swe Nyein ■

(Translated by Khaing Thanda Lwin)

Authorities destroy 75 acres of opium fields in Shan State

THE authorities destroyed 75 acres of opium fields in Hopong, Hsihseng, Kalaw, and Mongpyin townships of Shan State on 17 January.

A combined team comprising members of the township po-

lice destroyed 26 acres of opium fields located 2.5 miles southeast of Panon Village in Hsihseng Township, 36 acres in Phatyanle Village of Hopong Township, 7.5 acres in Myaungchawk Village of Kalaw Township, and 5.5 acres in

Naungkwe Village of Mongpyin Township.

The operation was part of the government's efforts to stem opium production in the country. The police, administrative officials, concerned officials, and

the people are working together to put an end to opium cultivation in Myanmar. The combined team will continue its campaign in opium poppy-growing areas.—GNLM ■ (Translated by Khaing Thanda Lwin)

Trump grounds House speaker, scraps Davos trip amid shutdown

WASHINGTON (United States)—US President Donald Trump forced the cancellation Thursday of a trip to Afghanistan by his Democratic opponent Nancy Pelosi, and scrapped administration officials' travel to the Davos forum as a government shutdown plunged Washington deeper into deadlock. The mess in the US capital already verged on the surreal as Congress feuds with the White House over how to end an impasse now in its fourth week, with thousands of federal workers left unpaid. But now it is also getting increasingly personal between the two main antagonists.

In a letter laced with sarcasm, Trump told House Speaker Pelosi: "I am sorry to inform you that your trip to Brussels, Egypt, and Afghanistan has been postponed. We will reschedule this seven-day excursion when the Shutdown is over." "I am sure you would agree that postponing this public relations event is appropriate," he wrote. And in a move that appeared aimed at heading off Democratic criticism about non-essential administration travel during the shutdown, the White House announced the cancellation of a trip to the World



In an attempt to pressure Congress, US President Donald Trump has refused to authorize funding for swaths of the government, leaving some 800,000 federal employees and many more government contractors without pay for nearly a month. **PHOTO: AFP**

Economic Forum by Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin and others "out of consideration for the 800,000 great American workers not receiving pay." Pelosi and her delegation had planned a non-publicized trip to Afghanistan—an active war zone—and were due to travel aboard a US Air Force plane. Her office said Egypt was not on the itinerary. According to a congressional aide,

several lawmakers were already loaded onto buses preparing to leave the US Capitol Thursday when Trump pulled the plug. Rubbing it in, Trump said that Pelosi could still book her own non-government flights.

"Obviously, if you would like to make your journey by flying commercial, that would certainly be your prerogative," he wrote.

The cancellation followed Pelosi's suggestion that Trump postpone his 29 January State of the Union address to Congress, or do it from the White House instead. Although she cited the shutdown's effect on security, she appeared to want to deny the president one of his chief annual moments in the limelight. —AFP ■

UK PM May refuses to rule out 'no-deal' Brexit

LONDON (United Kingdom)—British Prime Minister Theresa May scrambled to put together a new Brexit strategy after MPs rejected her EU divorce deal, and insisted she could not rule out a potentially damaging "no-deal" split. The world's fifth-largest economy is in political turmoil and grasping for solutions that could smooth its planned departure from the bloc after 46 years just 10 weeks from now.

Governments across Europe are triggering plans designed to avoid logjams at ports and airports when trade barriers go up should London fail to find a Plan B. The government held individual talks with MPs from rival parties after narrowly surviving a confidence vote brought on by the crushing defeat over her old deal with Brussels on Tuesday. But Jeremy Corbyn, the leader of the main opposition Labour party, called the talks a "stunt" and refused to meet May until she ruled out the possibility of Britain crashing out without any future arrangements in place. In

a written response to him Thursday, the prime minister said it was "impossible" for her to rule out no deal without stopping the process altogether. "It is not within the government's power to rule out no deal," she wrote.

May will present her new approach to the House of Commons on Monday. MPs will then have a chance to submit amendments before a full debate on 29 January—exactly two months before Brexit date. Downing Street on Thursday said May would miss next week's annual World Economic Forum meeting in Davos, which she was scheduled to attend, to focus on Brexit negotiations. Meanwhile, leading Brexit campaigner Nigel Farage urged Leave campaigners to prepare for the event of a second referendum as Britain's deadlock continues. "I don't want it anymore than you do but I am saying to you we have to face reality," he told a Leave Means Leave rally in London on Thursday night. "Don't think the other side aren't organised. Don't think the other

side aren't prepared. Don't think they haven't raised the money. Don't think they haven't got the teams in place. They have."

Terms and conditions

Opposition MPs are pressing May to abandon the main principles that have guided her Brexit strategy for the past two years. Corbyn insisted she must "ditch the red lines" that keep Britain from forging closer trade relations with Europe after Brexit. He specifically mentioned maintaining a customs union with the EU that some businesses favour but May rejects because it limits Britain's ability to strike its own trade deals. "Theresa May has to ditch the red lines and get serious about proposals for the future," the Labour leader told supporters in the southeastern town of Hastings. Corbyn has previously accused May of trying to force MPs to back her plan by running down the clock until it is the only alternative to no deal.

British media reported that Corbyn was also asking party

members not to engage with May's ministers as they hold separate lower-level talks across party lines. He warned that Labour intended to hold another confidence vote "if necessary" as part of his bid for a general election that he says would resolve the impasse.

'Ball in May's court'

May's meetings late Wednesday with the pro-EU Liberal Democrat party and the Scottish and Welsh nationalist parties also yielded fresh demands. The Scottish National Party (SNP) is trying to rule out "no-deal" and secure a second referendum for which Brexit would need to be delayed. "For any discussion between your government and the SNP to be meaningful, these options must be on the table," its parliamentary leader Ian Blackford said in a letter to May released after their meeting. The Liberal Democrats are specifically seeking a referendum that includes the option of scrapping Brexit and keeping the UK in the EU. —AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

US officials to ask Ecuador embassy staff about Assange visitors

LONDON (United Kingdom)—US investigators will on Friday begin to question diplomatic staff who were stationed at the Ecuadorian embassy in London during WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange's years-long stay about his visitors, according to the whistleblower group. It follows international subpoenas from the US Department of Justice, which is probing a report that President Donald Trump's disgraced former 2016 campaign chairman Paul Manafort held secret talks there with Assange, Wikileaks said. —AFP ■

Tesla recalls more than 14,000 cars in China over Takata airbags

SHANGHAI (China)—Electric-vehicle maker Tesla will recall 14,123 cars in China over airbags that contained a part made by now-defunct Japanese manufacturer Takata, the Chinese market regulator announced on Friday.

The US giant has already announced the recall of some Model S vehicles as part of a global industry-wide rooting out of parts made by Takata, which went bust in 2017 after its airbags were blamed for a number of deaths. —AFP ■

WADA say 'successfully retrieved' doping data from Moscow lab

PARIS (France)—WADA said Thursday that they have "successfully retrieved" data from the Moscow laboratory at the heart of Russia's state-sponsored doping scandal which involved more than 1,000 athletes and 30 sports. The world anti-doping agency had demanded the data be handed over to complete its probe into the 2011-2015 scandal which saw Russia's athletics team barred from the 2016 Rio Olympics and exiled from the 2018 Winter Olympics. "This is a major breakthrough for clean sport," said WADA President Craig Reedie. In September, WADA conditionally lifted a ban on the Russian Anti-Doping Agency (RUSADA), paving the way for its reinstatement. —AFP ■

Top N Korean in Washington to prepare new Trump summit

WASHINGTON (United States) — A top North Korean general was paying a rare visit Friday to Washington, where he is expected to meet President Donald Trump to finalize a new summit aimed at denuclearization and easing decades of hostility.

Kim Yong Chol, a right-hand man to leader Kim Jong Un, is the first North Korean dignitary in nearly two decades known to have spent the night in the US capital, little more than a year after Trump was threatening to wipe the totalitarian state off the map.

Under light snow, Kim and his entourage were seen exiting a motorcade and without comment entering a fashionable hotel in the lively Dupont Circle neighborhood, where he is expected to meet Friday with Secretary of State Mike Pompeo.

An American source, who could not be identified as the schedule has not been announced, said Pompeo would invite Kim to an early lunch before the two likely head together to the White House, a short drive away.

Neither side has publicly announced the visit, with the United States treading cautiously after Kim Yong Chol abruptly canceled his last planned talks with Pompeo which were set for early November in New York.

But Trump has voiced optimism after receiving what he called a warm New Year's letter from Kim Jong Un and has opined that the two leaders are "in love." Trump has repeatedly voiced eagerness to see Kim Jong Un again after their landmark June summit in Singapore, the first meeting ever between sitting leaders from the two countries that never formally ended the 1950-53 Korean War.

Tensions began to abate a year ago with the encouragement of South Korea's dovish government. Trump has repeatedly hailed his diplomacy as a triumph, recently saying there would have been "a nice big fat war in Asia" if it were not for him.

He has said to expect an announcement soon about the second summit, with diplomats seeing Viet Nam and Thailand

as possible venues.

For Trump, the made-for-television summitry with the young and elusive North Korean leader also offers a welcome respite from the steady negative headlines at home. Special counsel Robert Mueller is probing whether Trump's presidential campaign colluded with Russia, and his insistence that Congress fund a wall on the Mexican border has shuttered the US government for nearly a month.

What does 'denuclearization' mean?

For Kim, the stakes are more existential as he seeks guarantees of the survival of his regime.

Kim, backed by ally China as well as South Korea, is also hoping for an easing of international sanctions, but the United States insists on maintaining maximum pressure until Pyongyang moves forward on giving up its nuclear weapons. In Singapore, Kim promised his "unwavering commitment to complete denuclearization of the Korean peninsula."

But the two sides appear to



This combination of file pictures shows US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Vice Chairman of North Korea's ruling Workers' Party Central Committee Kim Yong Chol. **PHOTO: AFP**

have different ideas on how to define that, with the United States expecting North Korea to give up nuclear weapons assembled over decades of work and Pyongyang more broadly seeking an end to what it sees as US threats.

"I think there is somewhat of a general consensus of what denuclearization means. I think there is obviously still disagreement on how to get there — whether denuclearization is the end of the process or the process itself," said Jenny Town, managing editor of the 38 North web journal on North Korea policy at the Stimson Center.

"Realistically, they can talk about it all they want to, they can define the end goal, but if

you don't have a common understanding of how to get there, you're not going to reach that common goal," she said.

She noted that Americans have traditionally preferred to hash out the details of agreements before big summits, while the type of leader-driven diplomacy favored by Trump is more common in Asia. "People have been very skeptical of this top-down approach, but we won't know unless we try it," she said.

Pompeo in a recent interview voiced hope at reaching a deal with North Korea that would "create a much better, safer America" but cautioned that it was unlikely to be finished during the next summit. —AFP ■

Russia, Serbia sign major deals in energy, infrastructure

MOSCOW — Russia and Serbia signed a package of agreements on bilateral cooperation during Russian President Vladimir Putin's visit to the Serbian capital of Belgrade, the Kremlin said Thursday.

"We signed a large number of agreements in various spheres of public life. Our trade is increasing from year

to year, and our economic relations are getting better and better," Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic said at a joint press conference with Putin following their talks, according to a Kremlin transcript.

In particular, the two sides reached agreements on the construction of a gas pipeline with more gas storage facilities

and on the construction of a power station aimed at realizing full gasification of Serbia.

Putin and Vucic also talked about infrastructure cooperation, especially in the field of railways, and major agreements and memorandums have been signed on the current maintenance of railways.

—Xinhua ■

Two policemen injured in bomb blast in southern Thailand

BANGKOK — Two policemen were wounded severely after a bomb exploded Friday morning in NongChik district of southernmost Thai province of Pattani when they were escorting a group of school teachers.

According to local media Khaosod, local police got reported about the explosion at about 7:55 am local time, the two policemen are now being treated in Pattani

Hospital. Authorities do not know yet who placed the bomb, an improvised explosive device, there, but believe it aimed to create chaos in the province. Pattani, along with Yala and Narathiwat, are the three southernmost provinces that were haunted by gun attacks and bombings launched by separatist insurgents. More than 7,000 people have been killed since 2004. —Xinhua ■

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V MAERSK WIESBADEN VOY. NO. (902/903)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V MAERSK WIESBADEN VOY. NO. (902/903) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 21-01-2019 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T.T/M.I.P where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

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

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V ALS SUMIRE VOY. NO. (1004 W/E)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V ALS SUMIRE VOY. NO. (1004 W/E) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 20-01-2019 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.P/M.I.T.T where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S OCEAN NETWORK EXPRESS
(S'PORE) PTE LTD

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V BLPL TRUST VOY. NO. ()

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V BLPL TRUST VOY. NO. () are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 20-01-2019 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of A.I.P.T where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S BLPL SHIPPING LINE

Phone No: 2301185

Bulgaria activists win case to save UNESCO-listed forest

SOFIA (Bulgaria) — Environmentalists in Bulgaria scored a victory Wednesday in a long-running court battle to prevent enlargement of a ski resort in the Pirin mountains, a UNESCO World Heritage site.

In a ruling that cannot be appealed, Bulgaria's supreme administrative court overturned controversial changes made by the government in December 2017 to the management plan for Pirin National Park.

The changes opened up 48 per cent of the park's 40,000 hectares (almost 100,000 acres) of majestic pine forests to potential construction of new ski

runs and lifts in the Bansko ski resort — Bulgaria's biggest. The court based its ruling on sections from a law on protected areas that "allow only maintenance, not the building of new sports facilities in the national parks". It also cited a series of other Bulgarian laws and rulings by the EU Court of Justice that oblige the environment ministry to subject its management plans of the park to environmental impact assessments, which the court found it had not done.

"This is an important victory for us, even if we know that investors will continue their attempts to

build (in Pirin)," Konstantin Ivanov from the Bulgarian office of conservation group WWF told AFP.

"The court ruling clearly states that no new construction is allowed and that every management plan for the park must have an environmental impact assessment," he added, expressing his hope that the decision would serve as a precedent to prevent future attempts to build in Pirin.

The "For the Nature" coalition of 23 environmentalist organisations also welcomed the ruling, posting on its Facebook page: "Victory for Pirin! Let's celebrate!"

The coalition urged people to gather in front of the government headquarters in the capital Sofia on Wednesday evening to demand the resignation of environment minister Nencho Dimov.

Local residents in Bansko have largely favoured expansion as the resort is the largest employer in the region.

Recently Luxembourg skiing legend Marc Girardelli said he was the owner of the Bansko resort, although some MPs and environmentalists expressed doubts given the resort's opaque ownership structure.—AFP ■

Expression of Interest ('EOI') and/or the Request for Proposal ('RFP') for Foreign Insurance Entities

Announcement No. 1/2019 of the Ministry of Planning and Finance, 'Insurance Market Liberalization for Foreign Entities in Myanmar' dated January 2, 2019 has been published in newspapers and uploaded in webpage www.frd.gov.mm. In accord with the announcement, the Expression of Interest ('EOI') and/or the Request for Proposal ('RFP') in order to transact insurance business in Myanmar by interested local and foreign insurers can be downloaded from the webpage www.frd.gov.mm of the Financial Regulatory Department.

Financial Regulatory Department

Ministry of Planning and Finance

Phone : 067 3410152 , 067 3410564

Email : ins@frd.gov.mm

Webpage : www.frd.gov.mm

Green groups question big industry's plastic clean-up plan

PARIS (France) — Environmental groups on Thursday poured cold water over a much-trumpeted initiative by some of the world's biggest petrochemical firms to help end plastic refuse.

The Alliance to End Plastic Waste — comprised of big energy, petrochemical and plastic manufacturing firms — said it would donate \$1 billion (880 million euros) to "minimise and manage plastic waste and promote solutions for used plastics".

But green experts were sceptical as to the intentions of firms such as Procter & Gamble, Chevron and ExxonMobil, and

voiced doubt over the effectiveness of the alliance's clean-up plan.

"This is a desperate attempt from corporate polluters to maintain the

status quo on plastics," said Graham Forbes, global plastics project leader at Greenpeace.

"In 2018, people all over the world spoke up

and rejected the single-use plastics that companies like Procter & Gamble churn out on a daily basis.

"Instead of answering that call, P&G preferred to double down on a failed approach with fossil fuel giants like Exxon, Shell, Dow and Total that fuel destructive climate change," Forbes added.

A Greenpeace report last year named Procter & Gamble as one of the biggest plastic polluters.

Around eight million tonnes of plastic are thrown into the sea every year, according to the Earth Day advocacy group — equivalent of a rubbish truck-load every minute.—AFP ■



Around eight million tonnes of plastic are thrown into the sea every year. PHOTO: AFP

Transferred Trade Name for Registration Pesticides
Trade name of below pesticides produced by Zagro Chemical Sdn Bhd, and imported by Zagro Myanmar Limited, will have been transferred as follows. So, if there are any protest, please protest to this address: Co-Secretary, Pesticide Registration Board, Plant Protection Division, Gyogone (West), Insein during (14) days from this announcement.

No.	Old Trade Name	New Trade Name	Active Ingredients	Reg Type	Reg. No
1	Bravo 20 WP	ZATHRON 20 WP	Imidacloprid 20% w/w WP	Provisional	2013-1854

ZAGRO MYANMAR LIMITED
TEL : 95-2-100-021. E-mail : zmyanmar@zagro.com

Request for Expression of Interest

Consulting Services for the Agricultural Development Unit (ADU)
Contract Ref: AFD-02

The Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has received a financing from the French Development Agency (AFD) for the Irrigated Agriculture Inclusive Development Project (IAIDP), and intends to use part of the funds thereof for payments under the following contract package: Consulting Services for the Agricultural Development Unit (ADU).

The Consultant services of the Agricultural Development Unit (ADU) will be responsible for providing technical assistance to the Department of Agriculture (DOA) at the Union, regional, district and township levels.

The consultancy service is divided into two (2) stages. The 1st stage is the preparation of the "Agricultural Support Assessment and Delivery Strategy" and preparation of 5 Front line centers (FCs)' construction. Stage 1 will be under a lump sum type of contract with an implementation period of 8 months.

Stage 2 services will commence after successful completion of Stage 1 and will be implemented under a time-based contract with implementation period 60 months.

The ADU Consultant will preferably be a consortium that may involve a combination of consulting firms, international and/or local NGOs, and possibly are search organization.

For more detailed information, any interested firm can refer to the Terms of Reference, which may be obtained upon request to iaidp.mm@gmail.com.

Expressions of Interest must be submitted to the address below no later than 20th February 2019 at 16:30 (Myanmar Standard Time).

Hard Copy:
To,
U Tint Lwin
Director (Procurement Branch)
Irrigation & Water Utilization Management Department
Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock & Irrigation
Office No.43, Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar.

Soft Copy to:
tlwin4.irr@gmail.com and
CC to: iaidp.mm@gmail.com, zarkyaw@gmail.com,
ukhinzaw1984@gmail.com

Note: Consultant Selection Committee reserves the right to reject any delay submission of EOI after deadline.

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V ISEACO GENESIS VOY. NO. (008 N/S)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V ISEACO GENESIS VOY. NO. (008 N/S) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 20-01-2019 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of H.P.T where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY

AGENT FOR: M/S NEW GOLDEN SEA LINES

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V GSS YANGON VOY. NO. (1096 S/N)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V GSS YANGON VOY. NO. (1096 S/N) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 20-01-2019 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of H.P.T where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY

AGENT FOR: M/S NEW GOLDEN SEA SHIPPING

Phone No: 2301185

After 600 years, night watchman still keeps vigil over Lausanne

LAUSANNE (Switzerland)—Every evening, the night watchman clammers to the top of the Lausanne cathedral bell tower and gets to work: he shouts out the time each hour, keeping a six-century-old tradition alive. The night watchman, one of the last in Europe, no longer alerts this Swiss city to fires, but he does help residents to keep track of the time. “This is the watchman! The bell has tolled 10. The bell has tolled 10.” On a cold night in December, Marco Carrara, who takes on the job on the permanent watchman’s days off, repeats the message hourly, only changing the number of chimes that have rung. Cupping his hands around his mouth, he allows his voice to carry across the rooftops, just as his predecessors have done every evening since 1405. All year round, from 10:00 pm to 2:00 am, the night watchman, wearing a big black hat and carrying a lantern, steps out to the bell tower railing to serve as a living clock for the people of this picturesque city on the shores of Lake Geneva.

Changing times

The night watchman used to play a far more vital role. Back when fire constituted a permanent threat to medieval towns and cities built in wood, he was an essential part of a network of watchmen, most of whom patrolled the streets. From his perch, the cathedral watchman was tasked with sounding the alarm at the first whiff of smoke.



Marco Carrara, a replacement watchman, holds a lantern as he looks out from the Lausanne Cathedral bell tower, on 17 December 2018 in Lausanne. Every evening, the night watchman clammers to the top of the Lausanne cathedral bell tower and gets to work: he shouts out the time each hour, keeping a six-century-old tradition alive. The night watchman, one of the last in Europe, no longer alerts this Swiss city to fires, but he does help the residents to keep track of the time. **PHOTO: AFP**

Across Europe, there were “thousands, if not tens of thousands” of watchmen protecting urban spaces from fire, said Renato Haeusler, who holds the permanent watchman position in Lausanne. But as technology advanced, the once ubiquitous position became largely obsolete and the watchmen all but disappeared across the continent.

Today, Lausanne is one of just seven European towns or cities to have maintained the tradition of a year-round watchman, alongside Annaberg, Celle and Noerdingen in Germany, Ripon in Britain, Krakow in Poland and Ystad in Sweden. In Lausanne, the watchman used to be entrusted with manually ringing the bell on the hour, but in 1950, the task

fell to automation.

‘Making history come alive’

Haeusler acknowledged to AFP that his position no longer served a true practical purpose. But “the city is very attached to maintaining this tradition,” stressed the 60-year-old, who served as replacement watchman for 14 years before taking on the permanent position in 2002. David Payot, a member of Lausanne’s municipal council, agreed. “This is a way of making history come alive,” he told AFP. In the early 1960s, an announcement that the night watchman’s hours would be reduced—he used to call out the time from 9:00 pm until dawn—was interpreted by many as a precursor to scrapping the post altogether. The city was flooded with letters demanding that

it maintain the job, Payot said. Haeusler meanwhile says he likes the “out-of-sync” nature of his work—a profession serving little purpose at a time when today’s reality demands that everything be “profitable and efficient.”

‘Nobility’

Haeusler climbs the 153 worn stone steps to the top of the bell tower to announce the time about four evenings a week, for a salary he says is “well below” the going rate for nighttime work.

But he has a second job too, lighting events and soirees in the region using wax candles. He sometimes spends his hours as a watchman dipping a wick into hot wax to make the candles. —AFP ■

UK’s Prince Philip ‘shocked and shaken’ after car crash

LONDON (United Kingdom)—Queen Elizabeth II’s 97-year-old husband Prince Philip was “very shocked and shaken” after being involved in a car accident that left his Land Rover flipped on its side, a witness reportedly said.

The duke emerged unharmed but two people in another car were injured in the crash that occurred Thursday when the duke was driving near the Sandringham Estate, according to police and Buckingham Palace. Norfolk Police said two women—the driver and passenger of a Kia—required hospital treatment but were later discharged. It would not confirm reports that a baby was also in the car.

The BBC reported that Prince Philip’s vehicle turned on its side after pulling out of a Sandringham driveway onto a main road and colliding with the Kia. Witness Roy Warne, 75, told *The Sun* newspaper that the Prince was pulled from the wreckage “conscious” but “very shocked and shaken”. “I saw the car flip,” he said, adding that he rushed to help free the driver before he “suddenly realised it was Prince Philip”. An image from the accident scene published by a local radio station showed two cars by the side of the road, one on its side with a smashed windscreen and another a few yards away in bushes. “The Duke of Edinburgh was involved in a road traffic accident with another vehicle this afternoon,” the palace said in a statement. —AFP ■

Brothers in arms: S Korea debates military service exemptions

NONSAN (South Korea) —Despite generating almost \$4 billion a year for the South Korean economy, the seven floppy-haired members of K-pop boyband BTS will still have to perform nearly two years of mind-numbing military service. But the likes of Tottenham Hotspur striker Son Heung-min and award-winning pianist Cho Seong-jin are entitled to exemptions, prompting calls for an overhaul of the controversial pass system. The bulk of South Korea’s 599,000-strong military—who face off against Pyongyang’s 1.28 million Korean People’s Army—are conscripts, with all able-bodied men obliged to serve for 21 months. They are forbidden access to mobile phones, have to fulfil endless

hours of tedious sentry duties—often in remote locations—and are largely confined to their bases, opening the possibility of exploitation and abuse by more senior soldiers.

“I think three out of 10 conscripted men on average struggle very much in every day military life, mainly because it couldn’t be more different from their civilian life,” said Kang Sung-min, a 25-year-old college student, who performed his service in the military police. But not everyone is required to submit to the ordeal. Olympic medallists—of any colour—and gold-winners at the quadrennial Asian Games are automatically exempted, along with artists who come first or second



K-pop sensation BTS were credited with attracting one out of every 13 foreign tourists to South Korea in 2017. **PHOTO: AFP**

in 27 listed global contests, such as Cho, who won the Hamamatsu International Piano Competition. The highest-profile recent

beneficiary is Spurs’ Son, who broke down in tears of joy when the Taeguk Warriors defeated Japan 2-1 after extra time in Sep-

tember’s Asian Games football final to spare him a potentially career-threatening stint in the military. —AFP ■

More asteroids strike Earth since age of dinosaurs: study

TAMPA (United States) — Between two and three times as many asteroids have struck the Earth and the Moon since the age of the dinosaurs, when one massive space rock collision wiped them out forever, researchers said Thursday.

The mounting pace began around 290 million years ago, and likely coincides with some kind of large cosmic smashup in the main asteroid belt between the orbits of Mars and Jupiter, researchers reported in the US journal Science.

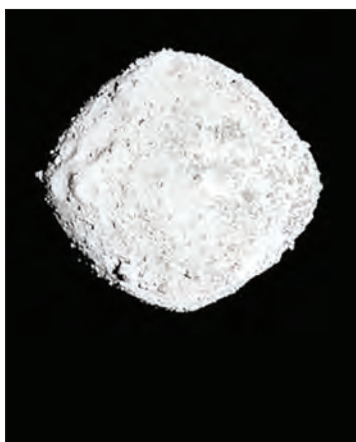
The result was space debris, some of which made its way to the Earth and the Moon, leading to a rate of asteroid impacts 2.6 times higher than it was prior to 290 million years ago.

“These impacts send a shower of space rocks to the Earth, which will likely reach a peak and then decay with time,” co-author Tom Gernon, associate professor in Earth science at the University of Southampton, told AFP.

The study did not draw any direct lines between the ramp up in asteroid strikes and major life-changing events in Earth’s ancient past.

These include the Permian extinction some 252 million years ago, when up to 90 per cent of life on Earth was wiped out for mysterious reasons.

A massive asteroid is largely blamed for the demise of the dinosaurs, which came into ex-



The mounting pace of asteroids that have struck the Earth began around 290 million years ago, and likely coincides with some kind of large cosmic smashup in the main asteroid belt between the orbits of Mars and Jupiter. **PHOTO: AFP**

istence about 245 million years ago and disappeared 65 million years ago.

“The question is whether the predicted change in asteroid impacts can be directly linked to events that occurred long ago on Earth,” said co-author Rebecca Ghent, an associate professor at the University of Toronto’s Department of Earth Sciences.

“Though the forces driving these events are complicated and may include other geologic causes, such as large volcanic eruptions, combined with biological factors, asteroid impacts have surely played a role in this ongoing saga.”

Cause for concern?

More research is also needed to figure out how the pace of

asteroid impacts has changed over the past 290 million years or so.

So should people be concerned?

“Not at all,” Gernon said, noting that asteroid impacts are random events.

Furthermore, the US space agency NASA continuously tracks potentially hazardous objects—known as Near Earth Objects (NEOs) greater than 30–50 meters (yards) wide, he said.

Scientists have long been intrigued by asteroid strikes, and have tried to study the rate of impacts on Earth with limited success.

That’s because erosion on Earth causes some craters to disappear.

But the Moon is hit by asteroids about as often as the Earth, and shares a “similar bombardment history,” said co-author William Bottke, an asteroid expert at the Southwest Research Institute.

Scientists have gained a better understanding of the processes that shaped the Moon since NASA’s Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter started circling it a decade ago.

LRO’s instruments allowed scientists to decipher the ages of various craters, and compare them to what was known about asteroids strikes on Earth.

“The Moon is like a time capsule, helping us understand the Earth,” said Bottke. — AFP ■



Astronomers have long believed that Saturn’s rings were perhaps formed by collisions between the moons of Saturn or by a comet that shattered in close proximity to the planet. **PHOTO: AFP**

Saturn’s rings are younger than the planet itself

WASHINGTON (United States) — Saturn’s rings are younger than scientists thought and appeared within the last 10 to 100 million years, according to research published Thursday based on findings from NASA’s Cassini spacecraft.

The sixth planet from the Sun formed about 4.5 billion years ago, along with the rest of the planets in our solar system, and spent the bulk of its existence without the characteristic rings it is known for today.

Astronomers have long believed the rings could be young, and perhaps formed by collisions between the moons of Saturn or by a comet that shattered in close proximity to the planet.

Some of these answers have come into sharper focus because of Cassini, an unmanned US-European probe that launched in 1997 and ended in 2017 with a planned death plunge into Saturn’s surface. At the end of its

mission, Cassini made 22 orbits, circling between Saturn and its rings, getting closer to them than any spacecraft in history.

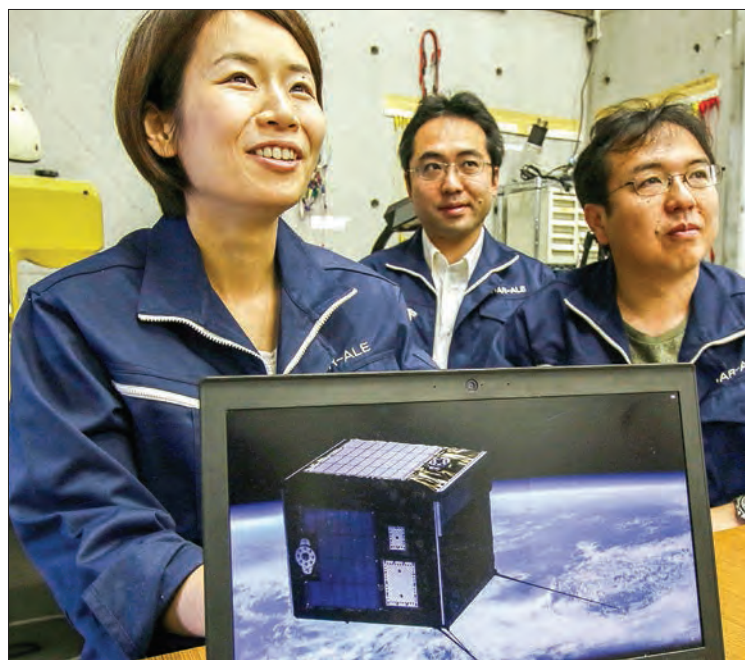
By studying how the flight path of Cassini was deflected by the gravity of the rings, scientists were able to deduce the rings’ mass and approximate age.

“Only by getting so close to Saturn in Cassini’s final orbits were we able to gather the measurements to make the new discoveries,” said lead author Luciano Iess of Sapienza University of Rome. Understanding the rings’ age and mass is “a fundamental goal of its mission,” he added.

A lesser mass indicates younger rings because as they age, the rings would attract more debris and grow heavier.

The rings are made up of 99 per cent ice. The study did not delve into the question of where the rings came from, but supported theories such as a comet or moon collision.— AFP ■

Japan satellite blasts into space to deliver artificial meteors



Lena Okajima, CEO of a space technology venture ALE is hoping to deliver shooting stars on demand and choreograph the cosmos. **PHOTO: AFP**

TOKYO (Japan) — A rocket carrying a satellite on a mission to deliver the world’s first artificial meteor shower blasted into space on Friday, Japanese scientists said.

A start-up based in Tokyo developed the micro-satellite for the celestial show over Hiroshima early next year as the initial experiment for what it calls a “shooting stars on demand” service.

The satellite is to release tiny balls that glow brightly as they hurtle through the atmosphere, simulating a meteor shower.

It hitched a ride on the small-size Epsilon-4 rocket that was launched from the Uchinoura space centre by the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA)

on Friday morning. The rocket carried a total of seven ultra-small satellites that will demonstrate various “innovative” technologies, JAXA spokesman Nobuyoshi Fujimoto told AFP.

By early afternoon, JAXA confirmed all seven satellites had successfully been launched into orbit. “I was too moved for words,” Lena Okajima, president of the company behind the artificial meteor showers, told the Jiji Press agency.

“I feel like now the hard work is ahead.”

The company ALE Co. Ltd plans to deliver its first out-of-this-world show over Hiroshima in the spring of 2020.

The satellite launched Friday carries 400 tiny balls whose chem-

ical formula is a closely-guarded secret. That should be enough for 20-30 events, as one shower will involve up to 20 stars, according to the company.

ALE’s satellite, released 500 kilometres (310 miles) above the Earth, will gradually descend to 400 kilometres over the coming year as it orbits the Earth.

Worldwide meteor shower shows

The company plans to launch a second satellite on a private-sector rocket in mid-2019.

ALE says it is targeting “the whole world” with its products and plans to build a stockpile of shooting stars in space that can be delivered across the world. — AFP ■

ONE Championship announces world title bouts in Japan

ONE CHAMPIONSHIP recently announced three world title bouts scheduled under ONE: A NEW ERA at the Ryogoku Kokugikan in Tokyo, Japan, on 31 March.

The three matches include a face-off between two-division World Champion Aung La N Sang and Japan's Ken Hasegawa. Aung La 'The Burmese Python' N Sang will defend his ONE Middleweight World title at the match.

In the lightweight class, ONE Lightweight World Champion Eduard 'Landslide' Folayang, of the Philippines will defend his title against Shinya Aoki of Japan.

In the women's world title class, Xiong 'The Panda' Jing Nan of China will defend her ONE Women's Strawweight World title against Singapore's 'Unstoppable' Angela Lee.

The reigning ONE Middleweight and Light Heavyweight World Champion Aung La N Sang is counted as the most iconic sports star from Myanmar. His dramatic first encounter with Ken Hasegawa in June 2018 is



considered the "Greatest Bout In ONE Championship History" and was also adjudged the Bout Of The Year at the 2018 Global Martial Arts Awards. The five-round match ended on a thrilling note, with Aung La snatching victory in the final moments of the heated battle.

Aung La N Sang and Hasegawa will meet once again at ONE:

A NEW ERA in a highly-anticipated rematch that is sure to produce fireworks. Tickets for ONE: A NEW ERA will be available online at <https://ticket.line.me/sp/ONEChampionship>, Kyodo Tokyo, Ticket Pia, Lawson Ticket, and E-plus from 27 January, according to a press release from ONE championship.—Lynn Thit (Tgi) ■

MFF looks to raise football standard with improved coaching

THE Myanmar Football Federation (MFF) is working to improve the level of coaching to raise the standard of the sport in Myanmar, said a source with the MFF yesterday.

The MFF is collaborating with the Asian Football Federation (AFF) with the aim of grooming well-qualified coach-

es for football teams in Myanmar, said the source. One of the priorities of the MFF includes qualifications of the coaches, and advanced coaching courses are now being handled by the Associated General Secretary of the MFF, U Tin Myint Aung, said the source. From this year, the MFF will launch AFF (A) and AFF

(B) courses, instead of AFC (C) level courses, as a step-by-step method to improve coaching. The AFF (Pro) level courses will start from 2022, said the source. The main aim is to improve football coaching in Myanmar, along with ensuring Myanmar football trainers possess strong coaching skills.—Lynn Thit (Tgi) ■

Australia rugby league star Inglis to retire

SYDNEY (Australia)—Australian league star Greg Inglis will retire from representative rugby at the end of 2019 and from the national competition the following year, the one time Kangaroos skipper said Friday. The 32-year-old's shock announcement came just days after he was handed an 18-month good behaviour bond for a drink-driving incident last year that saw him stripped of the Australian captaincy.

"It's purely my decision and something I have been thinking about for the last two-and-a-half months," Inglis told members of his club, the South Sydney Rabbitohs, via a video message. "At the end of 2020 I'll be hanging up the boots. I'll be giving up the game but I'll be staying around this club for a

long time after I retire." Inglis was stripped of his Kangaroos captaincy and suspended for two games in October after being caught drink-driving just hours after he was appointed to the role. The South Sydney star had been drinking at a hotel after attending an indigenous sports carnival and said he mistakenly felt he was under the limit and able to drive the next day. A New South Wales court on Monday handed Inglis a suspended sentence, with the judge noting his remorse, public apology and community work. "For the next two years I'll be giving everything I can to this great club. 2019 will be my last rep season, therefore I'll be solely concentrating on the mighty South Sydney Rabbitohs," he added.—AFP ■

Chelsea, Spurs search for striking solutions as Man Utd crank up pressure

LONDON (United Kingdom)—Chelsea and Arsenal clash in the Premier League this weekend, with both managers looking nervously over their shoulders at a charging Manchester United as Tottenham adjust to life without the injured Harry Kane. Arsenal have lost three of their past six Premier League matches to fall six points behind Chelsea in the race for a top-four finish. Unai Emery's side are now level on points with sixth-placed Manchester United, who have won all five league matches under the temporary leadership of Ole Gunnar Solskjaer. Elsewhere, Manchester City travel to manager-less Huddersfield while Premier League leaders Liverpool host Crystal Palace. AFP Sport picks out some of the main talking points ahead of the weekend fixtures in the Premier League. Can Emery stop Arsenal slide? Unai Emery led his side on a 22-game unbeaten run between August and December as Arsenal mounted a strong challenge for a return to the Champions League. But the feel-good factor has vanished at the Emirates and United now trail fifth-placed Arsenal only on goal difference.

Mesut Ozil, the club's biggest earner, is being frozen out and there are reports that head of recruitment Sven Mislintat could be on his way out of the club. Former Arsenal midfielder Emmanuel Petit said Emery needs to completely rebuild the squad and fears the mood could quickly change against the manager, describing the game as a "must-win". "This team is not good enough to fight



Arsenal manager Unai Emery (left) and Chelsea boss Maurizio Sarri are preparing to go head to head in the Premier League. **PHOTO: AFP**

for the title," he told the Daily Mirror. "This team is strong enough to fight for third or fourth place and that's it. They've been like that for years and years. You don't have to be a magician to understand that. "I was thinking, 'OK, you sacked Arsene Wenger for good reasons'. But then I was expecting a revolution at the club. But it's not happened." Will Higuain solve Chelsea goal drought?

Chelsea hope to have Gonzalo Higuain signed up in time to feature at the Emirates, but will the Argentine solve the Blues' striking woes? Former Arsenal favourite Olivier Giroud and Atletico Madrid bound Alvaro Morata have scored a paltry six Premier League goals between them this season, with Eden Hazard leading the way on 10. Higuain, 31, has struggled at AC Milan this season, on loan from Juventus, with just eight goals in all competitions—prompting doubts over whether he is the man to make the difference. But Higuain enjoyed his most prolific season under Sarri at Napoli in 2015/16, prompting a 90 million euro move to Juventus. Sarri will hope Higuain's arrival will not only guarantee goals, but improve Hazard's mood by allowing the Belgian to return to his favoured berth wide on the left.

Kane injury gives Pochettino striking headache

Tottenham manager Mauricio Pochettino has lost talisman Harry Kane until March and is also without forward Son Heung-min for a crucial part of the season. Kane's injury and Son's participation in the Asian Cup leave Pochettino short of options up front. Spanish striker Fernando Llorente is likely to come into the side for Sunday's match against Fulham, with Lucas Moura another option, even though he is returning from a thigh injury himself.—AFP ■