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Union Government confers religious titles, donates provisions to Members of the Sangha

A CEREMONY to confer religious titles and donation of rice for the year 2019 was held yesterday afternoon at the Sasana Maha Beikman in Uppatasanti Pagoda compound, Nay Pyi Taw.

The ceremony was attended by President U Win Myint and First Lady Daw Cho Cho, and State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi who presented the religious titles, donated rice and offerings.

First, the ceremony to confer religious titles was held and singer Sandar Lin of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture, Department of Fine Arts sang a song honoring the ceremony accompanied by a Myanmar harp.

Next, President Win Myint, First Lady Daw Cho Cho, State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and guests took the Five Precepts from the State Sangha Maha Nayaka Chairman Abhidhaja Maharattha Guru Abhidhaja Agga Maha Saddhamma Jotika Bhamo Sayadaw Dr. Bhaddanta Kumarabhivamsa.

Afterwards, Sayadaw Bhaddanta Sanddhaka of the Dakkhinayama Monastery in Sittway delivered a sermon and Union Minister for Religious Affairs and Culture Thura U Aung Ko supplicated religious affairs.

Religious titles were then conferred and President U Win Myint presented the Abhidhaja Maharattha Guru title and related accessories to Sayadaw Bhaddanta Sanddhaka of the Dakhinayama Monastery in Sittway and Sayadaw Bhaddanta Kavidarsara of the Dhamma Linkara Monastery in Thazi Township.

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President U Win Myint, First Lady Daw Cho Cho, State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and guests receive the Five Precepts from the State Sangha Maha Nayaka Chairman Abhidhaja Maharattha Guru Abhidhaja Agga Maha Saddhamma Jotika Bhamo Sayadaw Dr. Bhaddanta Kumarabhivamsa. **PHOTO: MNA**

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President U Win Myint presents Abhidhaja Maharattha Guru title to Sayadaw Bhaddanta Sanddhaka of the Dakhinayama Monastery in Sittway. **PHOTO: MNA**

State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi presents Abhidhaja Maharattha Guru title to Sayadaw Bhaddanta Dhamma Nanda of Sagaing Monastery in Yangon. **PHOTO: MNA**

Union Government confers religious titles, donates provisions …

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State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi conferred the Abhidhaja Maharattha Guru title and accessories on Sayadaw Bhaddanta Dhamma Nanda of Sagaing Monastery in Thingangyun Township, Yangon Region, Sayadaw Bhaddanta Thumingalar Bhivamsa of Moethauk Monastery in Nyaungshwe Township, Shan State, and Sayadaw Bhaddanta Siddhiya of the Ponnya Neinmitayama Shwethuwun Monastery in Thingangyun Township, Yangon Region.

Vice President U Myint Swe conferred Abhidhaja Agga Maha Saddhamma Jotika title and accessories on Ven. Noi Sangvalo from Lao and Sayadaw of Bhaddanta Kovida of the Yadana Manaung Monastery in Twantay Township, Yangon Region.

Vice President U Henry Van Thio conferred Abhidhaja Agga Maha Saddhamma Jotika title and accessories on Sayadaw Bhaddanta Vijaya of the Satu Bonmika Maggin Monastery in Aungmyaythazan Township and Sayadaw Bhaddanta Tejaniya of the Kemar Thiwon Monastery in Pyinmana Township.

Afterwards, Speaker of the Amyotha Hluttaw Mahn Win Khaing Than conferred Abhidhaja Agga Maha Saddhamma Jotika title and accessories, and Chief Justice of the Union U Htun Htun Oo, Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, Chairman of the State Constitutional Tribunal U Myo Nyunt and Chairman of the Union Election Commission U Hla Thein conferred the Agga Maha Panditta titles and accessories on the title recipient Sayadaws.

Afterwards, Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Comnader-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Soe Win, Deputy Speaker of the Pyithu Hluttaw U Tun Tun Hein, Deputy Speaker of the Amyotha Hluttaw U Aye Tha Aung, Union ministers, Union Attorney-General, Union Auditor General, the Chairman of Union Civil Service Board, the Chairman of Nay Pyi Taw Council, the Governor of the Central Bank of Myanmar, the Chairman of Myanmar Human Rights Commission, the Chief of General Staff (Army, Navy and Air), the Commander of Nay Pyi Taw Command and deputy ministers conferred the Agga Maha Pandita; Agga Maha Gantha Vacaka Pandita, Maha Gandtha Vacaka Pandita, Maha Dhamma Kathika Bahujana Hitadhara, Dhamma Kathika Bahujana Hitadhara, Abhidaja Agga Maha Saddhamma Jotika, Agga Maha Saddhamma Jotika Dhaja, Maha Saddhamma Jotika Dhaja, Saddhamma Jotika Dhaja, Agga Maha Kammatthana Cariya, Maha Kammatthana Cariya and Kammatthana Cariya titles and accessories on the local and foreign recipient Sayadaws.

Afterwards, First Lady Daw Cho Cho conferred the Agga Maha Gantha Vacaka Pandita title and accessories on Nun Sayagyi Daw Hteri of the Khemayama Nunnery in Bahan Township; Maha Gantha Vacaka Pandita title and accessories on Nun Sayagyi Daw Guna Wadi of Zeya Theingi Nunnery in Sagaing and Maha Saddhamma Jotika Dhaja title and accessories to Nun Sayagyi Daw Dhamma Theingi of the Dhamma Wari Nunnery in Insein Township.

Afterwards, Daw Khin Thet Htay, wife of Vice President U Myint Swe, Dr. Shwe Hlwan, wife of Vice President U Henry Van Thio, Nant Kyin Kyi, wife of Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker, Daw Kyu Kyu Hla, wife of the Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services and Daw Htay Yi, wife of State Constitutional Tribunal Chairman, conferred Maha Saddhamma Jotikadhaja, Maha Kamathana Cariya, Gantha Vacaka Pandita and Saddhamma Jotikadhaja titles and accessories to local and foreign nuns.

Afterwards, President U Win Myint conferred the Agga Maha Thiri Sudhamma Mani Jotadara title and accessories on three persons namely U Nanda of Mogok, U Tin Sein (a) U Ni Ni of Mayangon and U Kyaw Win of Sangyoung and Thiri Thudhamma Mani Jotadhara on two persons namely U Thein Han of Bahan and U Wai Lwin of Taunggyi.

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Vice President U Myint Swe presents Abhidhaja Agga Maha Saddhamma Jotika title to Sayadaw of Bhaddanta Kovida of the Yadana Manaung Monastery in Twantay Township, Yangon Region. **PHOTO: MNA**

Vice President U Henry Van Thio presents Abhidhaja Agga Maha Saddhamma Jotika title to Sayadaw Bhaddanta Vijaya of the Satu Bonmika Maggin Monastery in Aungmyaythazan Township, Mandalay Region. **PHOTO: MNA**

President U Win Myint and First Lady Daw Cho Cho donate offertory to a Sayadaw at the ceremony to donate provision to the Members of the Sangha. **PHOTO: MNA**

State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi donates robe to a Sayadaw at the ceremony to donate provision to the Members of the Sangha. **PHOTO: MNA**

Speaker of the Amyotha Hluttaw Mahn Win Khaing Than presents Abhidhaja Agga Maha Saddhamma Jotika title to Sayadaw Bhaddanta Sobana. **PHOTO: MNA**

Chief Justice of the Union U Htun Htun Oo presents Agga Maha Panditta title to Sayadaw Bhaddanta Thuriya. **PHOTO: MNA**

FROM PAGE-2

Afterwards, Vice President U Myint Swe conferred the Thiri Sudhamma Mani Jotadhara title and accessories on U Hla Htay of Mayangon, U Li Kyein Chan (a) U Hlyo Ar Pauk of Laukkai and U Myo Set of Mayangon; Thiha Sudhamma Mani Jotadhara title and accessories to U Chit Khaing of Dagon Myothit (North), and U Khin Win of Mawlamyine.

Vice President U Henry Van Thio conferred the Thiha Sudhamma Mani Jotadhara title and accessories on U Aung Than Sein of Kyimyindaing, U Kyaw Htay of Hline, U Myo Nyung of Pabedan, U Kyaw Zeya of Pobbathiri and U Hla Myint of Thakayta.

Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U T Khun Myat, Speaker of Amyotha Hluttaw Mahn Win Khaing Than, Union Chief Justice U Htun Htun Oo and Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing conferred Thiha Sudhamma Mani Jotadhara and Shudhamma Mani Jotadhara titles and accessories to recipient persons.

Afterwards, State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi conferred the Agga Maha Thiri Sudhamma Theingi title and accessories on Dr. Thin Thin of Mayangon, Daw San San Nwe of Kamayut, Daw Khaing Khaing Oo of Hline Township, Daw Nan Thet Su Hlaing Tun of Taunggyi and the Thiri Sudhamma Theingi title on Daw San San Wai (a) Daw San Wai of Chanaye Thazan Township and First Lady Daw Cho Cho conferred the title Thiri Sudhamma Theingi title and accessories to Kholon Lishaw ethnic woman Daw Win Myint of Thingangyun Township, Daw Myint Myint Than of Maha Aungmyay Township and Daw Htay Htay Aung of Chanayethazan, Daw Hla Yin Win and Daw Wai Wai Mon of Kamayut Township.

Afterwards, Daw Khin Thet Htay, wife of Vice President U Myint Swe, conferred the title Thiri Sudhamma Theingi and accessories on Naw Phaw Phaw of Myawady, Daw Marlar Myint of Bahan, Daw Moe Seint Seint Lin of Mayangon, Daw Thet Thet Naing of Kamayut and Daw Ei Thandar Bo of Bahan.

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Chairman of the Constitutional Tribunal of the Union U Myo Nyunt presents Agga Maha Panditta title to Sayadaw Bhaddanta Vinaya. **PHOTO: MNA**

Union Government confers religious titles, donates provisions …

Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing presents Agga Maha Panditta title to Sayadaw Bhaddanta Thawmasara. **PHOTO: MNA**

Chairman of the Union Election Commission U Hla Thein presents Agga Maha Panditta title to Sayadaw Bhaddanta Panditta. **PHOTO: MNA**

Vice Senior General Soe Win presents Agga Maha Panditta title to Sayadaw Bhaddanta Vimala. **PHOTO: MNA**

Pyithu Hluttaw Deputy Speaker U Tun Tun Hein presents Agga Maha Panditta title to Sayadaw Bhaddanta Kontala. **PHOTO: MNA**

FROM PAGE-3

Dr. Shwe Hlwan, wife of Vice President U Henry Van Thio, conferred Thiri Sudhamma Theingi title and accessories on Daw Zay Zin Latt of Mayangon and Daw Theingi Lin of Bahan and Thiha Sudhamma Theingi title and accessories to Daw Nyunt Nyunt of South Okkalapa Township, Daw Hla Kyi (a) Daw Yi Myint of Pabedan Township and Daw Nwe Nwe of Shwebo.

Afterwards, Daw Yin May, wife of Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U T Khun Myat, Nant Kyin Kyi, wife of Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than, Daw Kyu Kyu Hla, wife of Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, Daw Htay Yi, wife of State Constitutional Tribunal U Myo Nyunt, Daw Aye Thida, wife of Chairman of Union Election Commission U Hla Thein, Daw Than Than Nwe, wife of Vice-Senior General Soe Win, Dr. Sein Sein Thein, wife of Pyithu Hluttaw Deputy Speaker U Tun Tun Hein and Daw Thein Yin Chay, wife of Amyotha Hluttaw Deputy Speaker U Aye Tha Aung conferred the Thiha Sudhamma Theingi title and Sudhamma Theingi title and related accessories to recipient women.

Following the presentation, the congregation led by President U Win Myint and First Lady Daw Cho Cho, and State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi listened a sermon delivered by Sayadaw Bhaddanta Sandima of Thanlyin Minkyaung Monastery and shared merit for the donations. In the evening a ceremony to donate rice and provisions was held and President U Win Myint and First Lady Daw Cho Cho, State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi together with heads, staff and families from the Office of the President, Office of the Sate Counsellor, Office of the Union Government, Hluttaw, Union Supreme Court, Office of the Tatmadaw Commander-in-Chief, Office of the Union Constitutional Tribunal, Office of the Union Election Commission, Union ministries, Union Attorney General's Office, Union Auditor General's Office, Union Civil Service Board Office, the Central Bank of Myanmar and the Nay Pyi Taw Council, religious title recipient persons, followers of religious title winner Sayadaws, religious and social organizations from townships in Nay Pyi Taw Council area, companies and donors donated rice and offertories to religious title winner Sayadaws and nuns at the entrance to the Uppatasanti Pagoda and along the circuit road.

Amyotha Hluttaw Deputy Speaker U Aye Tha Aung presents Agga Maha Suddhamma Jotika title to Sayadaw Bhaddanta Ahaseinna. **PHOTO: MNA**

A total of 254 Sayadaws, 14 nuns, 35 men and 58 women were conferred with religious titles in the ceremony. — MNA

Union Government confers religious titles, donates provisions to Members of the Sangha

Vice President U Myint Swe and wife donate offertory to a Sayadaw. **PHOTO: MNA**

Vice President U Henry Van Thio and wife donate offertory to a Sayadaw. **PHOTO: MNA**

Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U T Khun Myat and wife donate offertory to a Sayadaw .
PHOTO: MNA

Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than and wife donate offertory to a Sayadaw.
PHOTO: MNA

Chief Justice of the Union U Htun Htun Oo donates offertory to a Sayadaw. **PHOTO: MNA**

Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and wife donate offertory to a Sayadaw. **PHOTO: MNA**

Buddha Pujaniya Tabaung Festival celebrated at pagodas around Yangon

PAGODAS in Yangon such as the Shwedagon, the Sule, the Botahtaung and the Shwe Phone Pwint were packed with pilgrims celebrating the Buddha Pujaniya Festival on the Full Moon of Tabaung yesterday.

Thousands of devotees thronged the Shwedagon Pagoda to celebrate the Buddha Pujaniya Tabaung Festival of the pagoda yesterday morning.

At the merit-sharing ceremony of the Tabaung festival, Yangon Region Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein and wife, members of the pagoda's board of trustees, religious associations and donors took nine precepts from the State Ovadacariya Shwedagon Pagoda Ovadacariya Kyaikpi Sayadaw Abhidhaja Maha Rattha Guru Abhidhaja Agga Maha Saddhamajotika Agga Maha Pandita Bhaddanta Gunaysana and donated offertories to members of Sangha.

A water libation ceremony for the donations made was then conducted in the presence of the member of the State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee and the Shwedagon Pagoda Ovadacariya Agga Maha Ganthdavacaka Pandita Agga Maha Saddhammajotikadhaja Dwi Pitakadhara Pali Paragu Bhaddanta Nagita.

Then Yangon Region Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein and wife, members of the pagoda's board of trustees and donors offered a day meal to the Sayadaws at the Yaung Taw Pwint Pavilion (Tazaung) of the Shwedagon pagoda.

Likewise, many famous pagodas in Yangon and other places were crowded with devotees and pilgrims on the Full Moon of Tabaung, it was learnt. — Ko Ko Zaw ■ *(Translated by Win Ko Ko Aung)*

Yangon Region Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein and wife and board of trustees receive the Nine Precepts from the State Ovadacariya Shwedagon Pagoda Ovadacariya Kyaikpi Sayadaw. **PHOTO : ZAW MIN LATT**

Pyu-era ancient Buddha statue found in Pyay, Bago Region.
PHOTO: SUPPLIED

Pyu-era Buddha sculpture unearthed in Thaegon

A SCULPTURE of the Buddha, which was unearthed in Thaegon Village, Pyay District, Bago Region, on 19 March has been confirmed by experts from the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture as belonging to the Pyu era (200BC-AD900).

The sculpture, which is 6 inches tall and 4 inches in circumference, was found by U Shein, 57, of Kayingon Village, from a pile of soil, dug by a backhoe, at a road construction site.

The ancient sculpture will be handed over to the department, and U Shein will be given a cash reward. ■

(Translated by Kyaw Zin Lin)

56th Myanma Gems Emporium concludes

THE 56th Myanma Gems Emporium organized by Myanma Gems Emporium Central Committee concluded at Mani Yadana Jade Hall in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. The Emporium lasted for 10 days, during which 5,263 jade lots worth Euro 474.14 million, 69 gems lots worth Euro 1.02 million and 269 pearl lots worth Euro 1.52 million were sold to merchants.

Out of 6,973 jade lots, 5,263 lots; out of 500 gems lots, 69 lots; and out of 274 pearl lots, 269 lots were sold in the Emporium.

The Emporium and gems shops in the hall were crowded with local and foreign gems merchants.

At news conference held after the emporium, Myanma Gems Emporium Central Committee, Management Work Committee Chairman U Than ZawOo, Vice Chairman U NaingZawOo, Jade enterprise work committee Secretary U KyawOoLwin, Gems Enterprise Committee Secretary U Hla Aung and Myanma Gems and Jewellery Entrepreneurs Association Secretary U Thaung Tun gave information about selling and buying made during the event and answered questions raised by local and foreign media.

The previous emporiums were used to be held in the months of June, July, October and November. Gems merchants from China usually buy a lot of raw jade. Chinese New Year fell in February, so this time, the emporium was held in March. 2911 foreign gems merchants including one from Australia, two from United States of America, six from India, 23 from Thailand and 2879 from China and 1646 local merchants joined the emporium, said General Manager of Myanma Gems Enterprise U Than ZawOo. This emporium was successful because of the prises bought by merchants, he added.

General selling conditions of gems shops in the hall were not very much favourablecompared with aforegoing emporiums. Gems and jewellery should be sold with Myanmar currency to people and public servants who live in Nay Pyi Taw. Diplomats and foreigners who were attending meetings in Myanmar should be allowed for a visit to emporium, said U Ye Ni, owner of Hu Khaingjewellery shop.

During the last emporium, although 5,259 jade lots worth Euro 423.11 million were sold, merchants made a down payment of Euro 331.90 million for 4,260 jade lots and a total of 69 gems lots worth Euro 1.38 million and 341 pearl lots worth Euro 2.60 million were sold. – MNA

(Translated by TTN)

Gems merchants checking quality of gems and jewelleries at the gems shops in the hall of 56th Myanma Gems Emporium in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

Buddhists observe Tabaung full moon day in Nay Pyi Taw

ON the full moon of Tabuaung yesterday, pagodas across the country were crowded with devotees.

A ceremony to consecrat and to offer robes to the Buddha Images were held at the Uppatasanti Pagoda in Nay Pyi Taw, where devotees and pilgrims performed their meritorious deeds to mark the full moon day of Tabaung.

While the Uppatasanti Pagoda was packed with visitors, other pagodas in the Nay Pyi Taw Coucil Area also saw an influx of people who performed meritorious deeds.

In the late afternoon, Buddhist devotees and pilgrims took part in the nine thousand lights festival at the Uppatasanti Pagoda, Nay Pyi Taw Council Area and recited religious verses.

Buddhist devotees and pilgrims celebrated the annual pagoda festival on the full moon of Tabaung at the Yan Aung Myin Shwe Lat Hla Pagoda, the Datusaya Pagoda, the Sansara Nyein Aye Pagoda, the Koe Khan Gyi Pagoda, the Maha That Kya YanThi Standing Image and the Thatta Thattaha Maha Bodhi Pagoda in Nay Pyi Taw Council Area. — MNA ■

(Translated by Win Ko Ko Aung)

Devotees visiting the Uppatasanti Pagoda in Nay Pyi Taw on fullmoon day of Tabaung. **PHOTO: MNA**

11th Buddha consecration ceremony of Uppatasanti Pagoda held in Nay Pyi Taw

People from religious associations celebrate the 11th Buddha consecration and lotus robe offering ceremony at the Uppatasanti Pagoda in Nay Pyi Taw. **PHOTO: MNA**

A CEREMONY to mark the 11th Buddha consecration and lotus robe offering was held at the cave of the Uppatasanti Pagoda, Nay Pyi Taw, yesterday.

Before the ceremony commenced, Union Minister for Religious Affairs and Culture Thura U Aung Ko, Union Attorney General U Tun Tun Oo, Chairman of Nay Pyi Taw Council Dr. Myo Aung, Nay Pyi Taw Command Commander Maj-Gen. Myint Maw, Deputy Minister U Kyi Min, members of Nay Pyi Taw Council and their wives, departmental heads and officials offered lotus robes, alms, fruits, flowers and water to the jade Buddha images at the pagoda.

The monks led by Chairman of State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee Sayadaw Abhidhaja Dr. Bhaddanta Kumarabivamsa consecrated to the Buddha images. Then the congregation took the Nine Precepts from the Bhamo Sayadaw and listened to the recitation of the Metta Sutta.

Next, Union Minister, Union Attorney General, Chairman of Nay Pyi Taw Council, Nay Pyi Taw Command Commander and officials donated offertories to the Sayadaw and the Sanghas, listened to the sermon delivered by Thanlyin Minn Kyaung Sayadaw Agga Maha Panditha Aggamaha Saddhamajotikadaja Bhaddanta Sandhima Bivamsa and then shared the merits gained and concluded the ceremony.

In the late afternoon, Buddhist devotees and pilgrims took part in the Nine Thousand Lights Festival at the Uppatasanti Pagoda, Nay Pyi Taw Council Area, it was learnt. — MNA

(Translated by Win Ko Ko Aung)

Four-lane asphalt roads open between Mandalay-Nawnghkio, Myitnge-Pyin Oo Lwin

NEWLY constructed four-lane asphalt roads were inaugurated on the Mandalay-PyinOoLwin-Nawnghkio and Myitnge-Htonebo-PyinOoLwin route on 19 March. The ceremony to open the asphalt roads was held at Mile Post 19, and was attended by Mandalay Region Chief Minister.

The asphalt roads will connect with ASEAN roads, and they will help promote trade. Mandalay is a trading and logistics hub in Upper Myanmar, and it is strategically located with a dry port, international airports, and jetties.

"The two new roads are main roads which will be connected to ASEAN road sections. Connectivity plays a primary role in regional development, and Mandalay has economic connectivity. Mandalay has more opportunities than other regions, and the roads will ensure smooth trade flow and help improve tourism," said Mandalay Region Chief Minister.

The four-lane asphalt roads were constructed by Oriental Highway under the BOT system (Build-Operate-Transfer). The roads are 48 feet wide. A total of K19 billion was spent on constructing the nine-mile long Myitnge-Htonebo section, while the 45-mile long Mandalay-PyinOoLwin section was built at a cost of K85 billion.—Aung Thant Khine *(Translated by La Wonn)*

The opening ceremony of new four-lane asphalt roads between Mandalay, PyinOoLwin, Nawnghkio and Myitnge is held on 19th March. **PHOTO: AUNG THANT KHINE**

What we can learn from national strategies

DRAFTING and implementing strategies is not new to Myanmar.

There was the AFPFL (Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League) nationalist strategy to ensure each citizen had one house, one car, and a fixed salary. People would often hear about the first four-year strategy, second four-year strategy, and other short- and long-term strategies during the Burma Socialist Programme Party's rule.

Then there were the industrial agriculture strategy, grains, sunflower, lentil, and other crop-based strategies. We also had a deep paddy-field strategy, rubber strategy, and a strategy to plant castor beans and harness fuel from them. There were resource strategies that kept bringing something new with successive editions. And, there were economic strategies paired with claims to take over the world.

We saw the success achieved by the designers, implementers, and administrators of the different levels of strategies, and while we did not know these people up close, the public faced continued losses. The national strategies concerning copper, dams, and forestry — all ended in tears and anger.

> We believe that national development strategies will only be successful, if they actually benefit the people and get their complete support and trust.

Not only did the projects fail, the grand announcements of their benefits on the covers of newspapers began to fade as time passed, without bringing any results. It was more disappointing to see the projects vanish, without a shred of responsibility assigned to anyone. The public had to use its imagination to figure out how these strategies planted by authoritarian rulers fared in the end. Meanwhile, the rulers saw no need to take notice of how the people involved in these strategies filled their pockets, nor how much taxpayer money was lost.

But, the people will never forget. Even after many years, people see castor beans growing here and there and remember who were allotted the land and who grew wealthier. The majority of the people bear no ill-will, but they will never forget. Whenever we see headlines containing the word 'strategy', we remember the harsh lessons learnt from the corrupt people who grew rich by taking money out of the people's pockets.

The common tropes around national strategies include giving excessive hope and making promises, making unfounded boasts, turning a deaf ear to the voice of the people, and being content with the parlor tricks of businesspeople, discarding the advice of experts and professionals in favor of letting businesspeople take the lead, and giving no clear indication of whether the strategies are of national or economic interest.

Strategies concerned with national development must be drafted and implemented by political leaders. They must listen to the advice and suggestions of experts from across the country, and evaluate the impact of the strategies on the people's lives. The true representatives of the people must make decisions on which strategies to implement and how.

The duties of modern political leaders, who are genuinely representing the public, are great. We believe that national development strategies will only be successful, if they actually benefit the people and get their complete support and trust.

■■■

Roundtable discussion on upgrading the capabilities of teachers

> "If we look at the world's precedence, we can see that teachers are of supreme importance upon enacting any change in the educational sector"
>
> Dr Win Aung

MRTV broadcast an education roundtable talk on upgrading the capabilities of teachers. The roundtable includes discussion from National Education Policy Commission Member Dr. Win Aung, Yangon University of Education Rector Dr. Aye Aye Myint, Department of Higher Education Deputy Director General Dr. May San Yi, Department of Education Research Planning and Training Deputy Director General Dr. Zaw Latt Htun, Technical and Vocational Education nd Training Department Director Dr. Pyae Kyaw Thu and Department of Basic Education Director U Toe Win.

Facilitator: First of all, tell us about your work in educational development in Myanmar.

Dr. Win Aung: We are all aware that roaring change in Myanmar's education system is supported and pushed by the government. If we look at the world's precedence, we can see that teachers are of supreme importance upon enacting any change in the educational sector. Hence, most countries in the world accept that teachers are the core and is putting their emphasis on training and developing the skillsets of the teachers. Following such footsteps, as a nation, Myanmar plans to emphasize and pay attention to the teachers and their skill development as outlined in the National Education Strategic Plan 2016-21.

Executing the plan

To summarize, there are two parts. The first part is to give the teachers preliminary training to equip them with the tools they will need later before they enter the workforce. The second part is that the teachers will need to learn more materials once they graduated from such preliminary training courses. The Ministry of Education is currently working on continuously building the skillsets and training the teachers as they continue to be in the workforce in the form of teacher training courses.

These preliminary training courses are given as University of Education, Education Colleges, Diploma Courses and other certified training course. In the same way, the University for the Development of the National Races of the Union have courses on nurturing teachers and help fulfill the national requirements of teachers. This is the preliminary stage before the teachers enter the workforce. Regarding the teachers that are already in the system working, their development training can be categorized into four types.

The first type is when teachers are moving from teaching one stage to another. It is vital that during that change, teachers are equipped with the skills and qualities to be able to teach the upgraded stage. For example, a primary school teacher wants to teach middle school. Or a middle school teacher wants to be a high school teacher. In both cases, they need training to be able to teach the other grade. For this, the Ministry of Education is holding courses on primary school correspondence, middle school correspondence and vocational diploma correspondence.

Secondly, in changing the Myanmar's education system, there are cases where the entire nation's teachers have to be trained as a whole. For instance, the nation is currently working for a new education system from kindergarten to 12th grade as per the Myanmar National Education Law. In bringing this system to life, the teachers of the entire country have to be familiar and be training to teach this newly implemented curriculum. In this industry, this type of preparation for the teachers is immensely important.

Cooperating with partners

The third type are not lectured across the entire country but are separate innovative techniques that are being tried in specific district of selected schools. For these courses, they are not given for capability building across the whole country but are specifically designed for target schools and teachers. The Education Ministry has cooperated with multiple partners on several instances for this type of training.

The last type of program isn't necessarily training but is to send highly qualified and experienced teachers to schools where they would observe the resident teacher's practical teaching skills and give them feedback for improvements. This type of program is praised highly internationally and is given great credit. Myanmar also have such kind of programs, in collaboration with international partners like the World Bank, to send highly qualified and experienced teachers to tour the schools and provide close and tailor feedback to help the schools. This program has already begun to take shape.

> The teachers are not restricted to just knowing the curriculum; they should also have the knowledge and skills along with practicum.

Facilitator: Can you let us know about the plans to increase the capabilities of teachers through the University of Education?

Dr. Aye Aye Myint: Along with our university and the University of Education, there is also the University of Education in Sagaing and the University for the Development of the National Races of the Union that trains future high school teachers. I am speaking on behalf of them. Our school provides a five-year B.Ed. to train for the teachers that will enter the Pre-service training as Dr. Win Aung explained earlier.

As explained early, for these teachers to fulfill their requirements at work and professional development, we have to constantly be working towards adding to their skillsets. This is why In-service trainings are being held regularly. Right now, the schools have the usual B.Ed. course, Pre-services courses and courses aimed for the teachers in the workforce, known as a Refresher course. There are courses like in-service training and also Human Resource Development which works towards individual development. So, we have the regular classes and the HRD classes for the teacher's development and training.

First of all, our school equips students to be high school teachers with the five-year B.Ed. The Education degree and the five-year training are all being offered here. For the curriculum, it is just like what Dr. Win Aung mentioned before. The teacher's competencies and skills are all developed before they enter the show. Hence, the courses are designed to include attitude value and professional development skills to prepare future school teachers.

For In-service training, when these teachers get to their respective work environments, for their professional development, primary school teachers want to work towards teaching middle school, middle school teachers want to teach high school, primary school principals, teachers and middle school teachers want to obtain the B.Ed. certificate. They want to develop their skills and for such, it is two years distant learning for a B.Ed.

First year and second year classes are also being held. For that, first year is 1500, second year is 1500 and a total of 3000 hours for the in-service training to improve the skills of teachers.

In training for the B.Ed., we teach them the academics for science and chemistry along with the pedagogy to teach such subjects. The teachers are not restricted to just knowing the curriculum; they should also have the knowledge and skills along with practicum. Lastly, there will be professional development training to build up the future teacher's professional skills.

Hence, the five-year course isn't just teaching the curriculum. We are preparing the future teacher with academic management activities so they can nurture an all-round development in others. We have debate competition and impromptu talks to improve their Burmese and English cognitive skills and sometimes even essay competitions. We also have an arts and literature club along with Myanmar Literature and English clubs. Others activities include organizing roundtables amongst themselves during big holidays like Martyr's Day, Union Day and Independence Day. They also invite the professors to hold seminars. Such activities provide an all-round academic enrich activities that improves the future teacher's cognitive skills, creative and critical thinking which are very useful in the 21st century. Another thing is that teachers are a type of social workers in the society that will provide great benefits to the community. Schools develop such people to benefit the Myanmar society as a whole. As such, social enrichment activity designs are also included in the professor's curriculum and practice.

There are the scouts, UTC and other red cross societies that head blood drives. During a natural disaster such as floods, they go organize and volunteer themselves to help out. We encourage them all to go on field trips in addition to academics. What I want to say is that classroom education and classroom learning are not the only activities anymore. We want the future teachers to be familiar with out of the classroom -and even cloud education- as well.

To train an all-round teach, the University of Education B.Ed. is the way. After the course, they are responsible for their professional development. For that comes the Master's degree for specialization and taking on the next level of education. This is a regular class. You can also opt for a qualification class known as the M. EdQ if you do not qualify for the Masters. In order to have qualified teachers, we have the M.Ed. along with other higher education courses to nurture future professors and experts in education.

Facilitator: It is also important to train the skills and abilities of the professors who are training the teachers for professional development. Can you explain to us the capacity building programme to enhance the skills of the professors?

Dr. Aye Aye Myint: You are correct. It is important to increase the skill sets and competencies of the Teacher Educators who are training the future teachers. Hence, we have been constantly working on our capacity building efforts. First is to attend the seminars, training sessions and workshops held by us and the ministry of education. There are also discursion tables you can attend and programs to enhance your skillsets. For example, let's look at myself. I am an instructional leader as the rector of the University of Education. There is currently a National Institute for High Education under NEPC for leader management. Myself, along with my colleagues ranging from instructional professors to management committee members have attended such courses on leadership, management instructional leadership and administrative function. There are also other higher education facilities such as the University of Medicine, Technology University, TVET departments who sometimes need TOT Training that I have to go lecture and share my knowledge. By lecturing, I further develop my pedagogy and have it up to date. Hence, by sharing our knowledge, us, as teacher educators develop our own capacity building.

To be continued

(Translated by Mya Myat Thwe)

■■■

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Myanmar Daily Weather Report

(Issued on Tuesday 20 March 2019)

SUMMARY OF OBSERVATIONS RECORDED AT 09:30 hrs MST: During the past (24)hours, rain or thundershowers have been widespread in Kachin State, scattered in Upper Sagaing Region and Chin State, isolated in Mandalay Region and Northern Shan State, weather has been generally fair in Magway, Yangon and Ayeyawady regions, Rakhine State and partly cloudy in the remaining regions and states. Day temperatures were (2°C) above March normal temperature in Taninthayi Region and (2°C) below March normal temperature in Kachin State and about March normal temperature in the remaining regions and states. The significant day temperatures were (42°C) in Chauk, (40°C) each in Magway, Aunglan, Taungdwingyi, Tounggoo, Pyu, Gyobingauk and Bawlakhe. The noteworthy amount of rainfall recorded were Mogaung (0.91)inch, Monyin (0.47)inch, Myitkyina (0.43)inch and Homalin (0.31)inch.

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

FORECAST VALID UNTIL AFTERNOON OF 21 March 2019: Rain or thundershowers will be fairly widespread in Kachin State, scattered in Upper Sagaing Region and Chin State and isolated in Northern Shan State. Degree of certainty is (80%). Weather will be partly cloudy 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: Continuation of isolated rain or thundershowers in Kachin State.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 21 March 2019: Partly cloudy.

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 21 March 2019: Partly cloudy.

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 21 March 2019: Partly cloudy.

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Officials, public agree to reach final decision for Loikaw's Bogyoke Aung San statue before April

GOVERNMENT officials, Hluttaw representatives, political parties and activists discussed on handling the statue of Bogyoke Aung San, erected in a park in Loikaw, at a meeting held in Keinnara Loikaw Hotel, Loikaw, Kayah State, yesterday.

The first part of the meeting in the morning was started with explanations from the Kayah State Government, followed by group explanations and discussions.

The meeting resumed at 1pm and decided on two agreements while recording two proposals submitted by the state government and the Karreni State Youth Boycott Committee each. The first agreement was to conduct discussions and negotiations through peaceful means and reach a solution that both sides agree on. The second agreement is to assess the four submitted proposals and hold a quadripartite meeting before the end of April this year where a final decision will be made.

After the meeting, U Nyi Nyi Min, secretary of the state government, and Khun Thomas, a spokesperson for the youth committee, answered to the media's questions.

The meeting was attended by Kayah State Chief Minister U L Phaung Sho, State Minister for Security and Border Affairs Col. Myint Wai, State Minister for Planning and Finance U Maw Maw, Secretary to the State Government U Nyi Nyi Min, Director-General U Zaw Htay of the Ministry of the State Counsellor's Office and two other members, U Kyaw Lin Oo, a member of the supporting team to Peace Commission, U Win Aung and four other members of the committee that implemented the statue of Bogyoke Aung San, Khu Kyuu Phe Kay and six other members of the Karenni boycott committee, Khu Nyay Yel and three other members of the Karreni National Progressive Party, witnesses Pyithu Hluttaw MP Dr. Daw Khin Sithu and State Hluttaw MP U Khu The Yal, and four negotiators. —Loikaw Thar *(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)*

The first meeting for the Loikaw's Bogyoke Aung San statue held in Loikaw, Kayah State. **PHOTO: LOIKAW THAR**

People participate in the Rakhine traditional sand pagoda festival held in Ngapali beach. **PHOTO: SUPPLIED**

Rakhine traditional sand pagoda festival held in Sittway, Ngapali

THE Shite-Thaunghmyaut, or traditional sand pagoda festival of the Rakhine, was held at Sittway's urban Point and Ngapali Beach on the Full Moon of Tabaung yesterday.

The festival was chiefly organized by Tharki Mandine Rakhine Culture Association and the public in Sittway, and by Dwayawady Ashinkutala and Dwayawady Youths in Ngapali, Thandwe Township. The Rakhine people build sand stupas on the Full Moon of Tabaung as a form of reverence to the 84,000 Dhammakkhandha (Dhamma teachings) of the Buddha. The tradition was a way to invoke abundance of crops, safety from various kinds of danger, good weather, and peace and prosperity on the country. People young and old can be seen building sand replicas of prominent Rakhine pagodas and stupas and then making various offerings to them. The Shite-Thaungmyaut festival was first held in Sittway in 2005 and yesterday marked the third time the festival was held in Thandwe, Ngapali Beach.—Tun Tun IPRD ■*(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)*

Rakhine State Disaster Management Department provides aid to IDPs in Ponnagyun Township

THE Rakhine State branch of the Department of Disaster Management, under the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, donated food and aid to IDPs in Ponnagyun Township yesterday.

The team led by department head U Kyaw Lwin provided 135 male longyis, 135 female longyis, 270 blankets, 270 t-shirts, 135 plastic mattresses, and K5,238,000 to purchase a month's worth of rice rations to the people seeking shelter from conflicts.

The IDPs in Ponnagyun Township include 64 people from 17 households in Sinthi Peinne Taw Village, 257 people from 60 households in Kwyel Lan Chaung Village, 96 people from 20 households in Letwemyan Village, 62 people from 14 households in Nga Pyauk Se Village, 38 people from 7 households in Yothayote Village, and 65 people from 17 households in Bekoe Village. —Tin Tun (IPRD)■

(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

Disaster Management Department staff hand over cash assistance to IDPs in Ponnagyun Township. **PHOTO: TIN TUN (IPRD)**

Traditional medicine factory opens in Mandalay

A traditional medicine factory was inaugurated at 8 a.m. on 19 March in Ohbo ward, Aungmyethazan Township, Mandalay Region. The factory has been set up under the Ministry of Health and Sports.

Union Minister for Health and Sports Dr. Myint Htwe, Mandalay City Mayor Dr. Ye Lwin, Traditional Medicine Department Director-General Dr. Moe Swe opened the ceremony by cutting ribbons. Afterwards, the Union Minister and other guests inspected the warehouse, and observed the purification, production, and packaging processes in the compound of the factory.

In his opening remarks, Dr, Myint Htwe called for producing traditional medicines that meet international standards and providing public healthcare. Then, Dr. Ye Lwin and Dr. Moe Swe expressed their gratitude for the construction of the factory.

The Mandalay traditional medicine factory was constructed in the 2012-2013 fiscal year, with a budget of K3.65 billion allocated for construction and K1.02 billion for equipment, totaling K4.67 billion.—Mg Pyi Thu (Mandalay)■

(Translated by La Wonn)

Yangon gold association pushes for CBM approval of import-export, collateral-based banking

By Nyein Nyein

THE Yangon Region Gold Entrepreneurs Association has forwarded four requests to the Gems and Gold Market Implementation Committee, which include seeking approval from the Central Bank of Myanmar for gold import-export, said U Myo Myint, the chair of the association.

The association submitted its requests to the committee on 19 March, during a meeting at the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation in Nay Pyi Taw.

Besides approval from CBM for gold trade, the association has also asked that banks in Yangon be allowed to adopt the Safe Keeping Receipt (SKR) system for purchase or sale of pure gold, and using it as collateral.

"International banks use the SKR system, under which assets are kept in the bank and in turn, the bank as the issuer of the SKR is the legally responsible custodian. It is a collateral-based banking instrument and provides alternative financing. Myanmar has not adopted this system and we have asked that SKR be permitted," said U Myo Myint.

The association has also asked for a temporary exemption on the 2-per cent withholding tax on gold exports, and licence for gold trading via a mobile application. The licence needs to be granted by the Department of Mines under the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation. The software for the online gold trading platform has been developed, but the licence is yet to be granted, according to the gold association.

The Gems and Gold Market Implementation Committee was formed on 28 December, 2017. On 21 February, the committee was reformed to include some departments and civil society organizations.

The committee aims to enable gold and jewellery trading at the same place, draft Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for implementation processes, recommend suitable places for gold and jewellery markets in Yangon, Nay Pyi Taw, and Mandalay, ensure transparency and smooth imports and exports, in compliance with the existing laws, by laws, and rules of the related ministries, and establish the necessary working committees.

The committee will also assess quality assurance of gold and jewellery, and lay down parameters for quality by formulating SOPs. ■

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

FDI inflow exceeds US$1.7 bln in five months

OVER US$1.7 billion of foreign direct investments were pulled into the country between 1 October, 2018 and 28 February, 2019 of the current fiscal year, according to data of the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA).

During five-month period, a total of 109 foreign enterprises were received permits and endorsements, bringing in capital of over $1.7 billion, including expansion of capital and investments in Thilawa Special Economic Zone.

Singapore is the largest investor in Myanmar, with initial investment of over $1 billion during Oct-Feb period, followed by China.

Myanmar Investment Commission (MIC) targets to receive $5.8 billion of foreign investments in the current fiscal year.

According to the Myanmar Investment Law, region and state investment committees are authorised to grant endorsements of an investment proposal with a capital of not more than $5 million (K6,000 million), with an aim to facilitate the verification process of investment projects.

Some projects are no longer need MIC approval while some businesses that are strategic to the government require an MIC permit. Also, those businesses that have large capital investments exceeding $5 million and possible impact on the environment and local community need to pass DICA proposal assessment team. Under the Myanmar Investment Law, investors will be given tax exemptions from three to seven years as an incentive depending on the development status of the regions and states.—GNLM ■ *(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)*

Thailand-Myanmar border trade doubles from rising export at Hteekhee gate

THE value of border trade between Myanmar and neighbouring Thailand surged to US$1.58 billion as of 8 March in the current fiscal year, which rose from $740.78 million in the corresponding period of last FY, according to data released by the Ministry of Commerce.

Between 1 October 2018 and 8 March 2019, Myanmar's export to Thailand was worth $1.15 billion while import was estimated at $432 million.

Of the seven border trade points between Myanmar and Thailand, Tachilek, Myawady and Myeik gates witnessed a small decrease in trade in the current financial year, whereas trade at the Hteekhee border gate picked up dramatically, boosting the total trade figure.

Normally, the Myawady gate sees the largest trade among the Myanmar-Thailand checkpoints. This year, trade at the Hteekhee gate rose tremendously, raising the total Myanmar-Thailand border trade value.

The value of trade stood at $31.46 million at Tachilek, $947 million at Hteekhee, $376.46 million at Myawady, $108 million at Myeik, $108.64 million at Kawthoung, $1.08 million at Maese, and $10.59 million at Mawtaung.

Myanmar primarily exports fishery products such as crab, fish, and shrimp, as well as onions, sesame, dry tea leaves, coconut, and turmeric to Thailand. It imports capital goods such as machinery, raw industrial goods such as cement and fertilizers, consumer goods such as cosmetics, and food products.—GNLM ■ *(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)*

Manufacturing sector attracts 79 foreign enterprises in current fiscal

THE manufacturing sector absorbed foreign direct investments worth US$520.7 million through 79 projects in past five months (Oct-Feb) of current financial year, according to statistics provided by the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA).

Between 1 October and 28 February, FDI of $1.7 billion including expansion of capital were brought into the country. Myanmar Investment Commission (MIC) and the respective investment committees of the states and regions allowed 109 enterprises to invest in the country.

The agriculture sector attracted four foreign investment with a capital of $14 million. Livestock and Fisheries sector witnessed seven foreign investment projects worth $33.9 million.

File photo shows aerial view of Yangon's real estate development. **PHOTO : PHOE KHWAR**

Two projects worth $93 million invested in power sector. Similarly, two foreign projects pulled in capital of $680.56 million into transport and communication sector.

The real estate sector also received investments worth $54 million from one project.

The hotels and tourism sector attained FDI of $6.34 million from two foreign investment project. Industrial estate sector also attracted one project worth $48.45 million. Over $239 million of FDIs were pumped into other services.

MIC targets to attain $5.8 billion of FDIs for next fiscal year 2018-2019, according to the DICA.

FDI registered at $1.76 billion in the past mini-budget period, $5.7 billion in FY 2017-2018, $6.6 billion in FY 2016-2017 and $9.4 billion in FY 2015-2016 respectively.—GNLM ■

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

HKTDC Hong Kong Houseware Fair Opens in April

HONG KONG — Asia's leading HKTDC Hong Kong Houseware Fair is welcoming its 34th edition in the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre from 20-23 April 2019. Some 2,200 global exhibitors will showcase a wide range of high-quality household items to global buyers. In 2018, over 29,500 buyers from 112 countries and regions visited the fair.

WGSN to Curate the Latest Houseware Trends

HKTDC is partnering with WGSN, a well-known trend forecasting agency, to curate the trend concept display areas, unveiling the Spring/Summer 2020 houseware trends with a variety of houseware and interior design products on display. In order to create an easy-to-navigate setting and provide a superior sourcing experience, the Houseware Fair will continue to feature products under four main themes that represent a harmony of "L.I.F.E", namely "Lifestyle", "Interior", "Feast" and "Enrich".

Zones under "Lifestyle" includes "Hall of Elegance", "World of Fine Dining", "World of Fine Decor" and "Green Living".

"Interior" is comprised of the debut zone "Candles and Scents"and other zones including "Interior Decor", "Festive Decor","Best of ASEAN", and "Group Pavilions". Exquisite decorations which are indispensable for visionary interior design can be found here.

"Feast" features "Tableware", "Wine Tools & Accessories","Kitchenware & Gadgets" and "Home Appliances" zones. A wide spectrum of refined cooking and dining tools will be showcased.

"Enrich" is where the "World of Pet Supplies", "Homepedia","Baby Products", "Bath, Beauty & Healthcare", "Home Cleaning & Laundry", "Storage Solutions", "Outdoor & Gardening", "Furniture", "Trade Services" and "Startup" can be found.

An array of seminars, networking events, product demo and launch pad sessions will be arranged during the fair to facilitate business matching and networking. Held concurrently in the same venue, the HKTDC Hong Kong International Home Textiles and Furnishings Fair will take buyers into the blossoming world of fine textiles.—AFP ■

Asia's leading houseware fair. **PHOTO: BUSINESS WIRE AFP**

Ghosn leaves his lawyer's office in Tokyo on 12 March, 2019. **PHOTO: KYODO NEWS**

Trial of ex-Nissan boss Ghosn to start possibly in Sept.: lawyers

TOKYO — The trial of former Nissan Motor Co. Chairman Carlos Ghosn over his alleged underreporting of remuneration could start in September, his lawyers said Wednesday.

The 65-year-old Ghosn, who was released on bail March 6 after 108 days in detention since his initial arrest in November, is facing two charges -- one of violating the financial instruments law by underreporting remuneration and another for aggravated breach of trust in relation to the alleged transfer of private investment losses to Nissan.

In the financial law violation case, Ghosn, his close aide Greg Kelly and Nissan have all been indicted for the alleged underreporting of Ghosn's remuneration by a total of around 9.1 billion yen ($82 million) in the company's securities reports submitted to Japanese regulators over the eight years through March last year.

The potential time frame for the trial's start was suggested by the Tokyo District Court during talks involving prosecutors and defense lawyers the same day.

The court also designated May 23 as the start of the pretrial process for narrowing down points of dispute in the case only involving Ghosn over alleged aggravated breach of trust, according to the lawyers.

Ghosn allegedly transferred personal losses of 1.85 billion yen from derivatives contracts to Nissan during the 2008 global financial crisis and had the automaker pay $14.7 million to a Saudi businessman who extended credit to him. "We will swiftly work (toward the start of the trial),"

Shin Kukimoto, deputy public prosecutor at the Tokyo District Public Prosecutors Office, said at a regular press conference.

Ghosn, who was credited with saving Nissan when it was teetering on the brink of bankruptcy in the late 1990s, was ousted from the chairman's post shortly after Tokyo prosecutors arrested him on 19 November.

The 62-year-old Kelly, arrested along with Ghosn in November and released on bail the following month, was also dismissed from the post of representative director. The two, who remain as Nissan directors, have denied the allegations. Nissan has admitted to the charge.—Kyodo News ■

Credo Bank to Deliver Digital Transformation via CR2

DUBLIN — Credo Bank, one of Georgia's top emerging banks has selected CR2's banking platform to power its ambitious digital banking expansion strategy.

CR2's BankWorld platform will enable Credo Bank to introduce a suite of digital products and services via internet and mobile channels into the Georgian market, and significantly help the bank target and reach corporate customers for the first time.

The decision to enhance its portfolio and service delivery channels is the latest step in Credo Bank's growth and development strategy. By choosing CR2, Credo Bank will be able to begin a digital transformation journey that creates a wide range of customer-centric capabilities suitable for deployment on any device.—AFP ■

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Distribution and registration processes of below pesticides produced by Zagro Singapore Pte.,Ltd. will have been transferred from MAGNATE GROUP CO.,LTD. to Zagro Myanmar Ltd.So,if there are any protest, please protest to this address: Co-Secratary, Pesticides Registration Board, Plant Protection Division,Gyogone(West), Insein during (14)days from this announcement.

No.	Trade Name	Active Ingredients	Reg Type	Reg;No.
1	Cymozag 5 WP	Cymoxanil 5% WP	Provisional	2015-2767

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Distribution and registration processes of pesticides produced by BEIJING MULTIGRASS FORMULATION CO.,LTD CHINA are transfering from CLOSE FRIEND CO.,LTD to BAIGREEN CROP SCIENCE COMPANY LIMITED. Any objection regarding to this transfer can notify at Myanmar Pesticide Registration Board for the following pesticides within (14) days.

No.	Trade Name	Active Ingredient	REG. No	Registration Type
1	OVERLORD 20 WG	DINOTEFURAN20%WG	P 2018-4332	Provisional
2	POWER UP 20 TB	GIBBERELLIC ACID 20% TB	P 2018-4325	Provisional
3	ROCKET 25 WDG	THIAMETHOXAM 25% WDG	P 2018-4316	Provisional
4	SUPER BOOM 40 SP	GIBBERELLIC ACID 40% SP	P 2018-4324	Provisional
5	AMAZING 250 SC	AZOXYSTROBIN 250 G/L SC	P 2018-4389	Provisional

No.865/A,Thiri Zayar Road, 7th Ward, South Okkalapa Township, Yangon, Myanmar.

Japan's Prince Fumihito, Princess Kiko to visit Europe in late June

TOKYO — Japanese Prince Fumihito, the younger son of Emperor Akihito, and his wife Princess Kiko are planning an official trip to Poland and Finland for about 10 days in late June as Japan marks the centenary of diplomatic ties with the countries, the Imperial Household Agency said Wednesday.

If it goes ahead, it will be the first overseas trip by members of the imperial family after the abdication of Emperor Akihito on April 30, according to the agency. Crown Prince Naruhito will succeed him as emperor the following day.

Prince Fumihito will become first in line to the throne after the forthcoming imperial succession, but the couple will be traveling on a commercial plane, instead of using a government jet, it said.

Due to security reasons, a government plane has been used for many years when the emperor or the crown prince travels abroad.

On the trip to Poland and Finland, the agency is making arrangements for the couple to attend ceremonies and make courtesy calls to the presidents of the two countries.

Their elder daughter, Princess Mako, is slated to visit Peru and Bolivia in mid-July to mark 120 years since Japanese immigration to the South American countries began. It will be her fifth official visit abroad.

Their couple's younger daughter, Princess Kako, who will graduate from university this spring, could visit Austria and Hungary as Japan celebrates the 150th anniversary of diplomatic relations with the two countries, an official at the agency said. —AFP ■

Japanese Prince Fumihito, the younger son of Emperor Akihito, and his wife Princess Kiko are planning an official trip to Poland and Finland for about 10 days in late June.
PHOTO: KYODO

Young Russians seek health, highs in ice swimming

MOSCOW — Diving into a long hole cut in the ice, Viktoria Tsuranova swims a few strokes and flashes a smile at the photographer capturing the moment for her Instagram account.

She is one of a new generation of Russian "Walruses" — hardy swimmers who plunge into frozen rivers and lakes all through the winter.

They swear it wards off not just colds but also cellulite, as well as giving them a rush of euphoria.

Ice swimming in Russia has long been associated with older, usually Speedo-clad men.

But Tsuranova and other members of Moscow's "Walruses of the Capital" club are giving it a fashionable new image.

Natalya Seraya, the founder and chief of Moscow's ice swimming club 'Walruses of the Capital', dives into a strip of water cut in the ice by the bank of the Moscow River on February 3, 2019. **PHOTO: AFP**

"A sporty way of life is right on trend now," says Nikolai, drinking rosehip tea with honey in a grey onesie.

He has just taken a dip in the L-shaped strip of water cut by the bank of the Moskva River, in the relatively balmy air temperature of minus two degrees C (28 degrees F).—AFP ■

Portugal's bullfighting culture woos kids to boost its audience

LISBON — Portugal's bullfighting tradition is on its knees, having seen attendance fall nearly by half in the past decade. Now the stalwarts of the centuries-old practice are reaching out to children, hoping to turn them into future fans, to the dismay of animal rights advocates.

Blood was conspicuously absent at a recent "Bullfighting Day" at the neo-Arabic Campo Pequeno arena in Lisbon, Portugal's premier bullfighting venue. It was a family affair, with children enjoying arena-shaped bouncy castles and demonstrations by apprentices of their bullfighting skills, stopping short of sticking the animals with lances called banderillas.

The event drew criticism from animal rights group Basta, which denounced the "exposure of children to the violence of bullfighting" as contravening a 2014 opinion by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. Pedro Antunes, 34, a bank employee who brought his five-year-old son Tiago to the event, saw things differently. "I don't go to a bullfight very often but I wanted my son to see what it was like. As the programme didn't include anything violent, I thought this would be a good occasion to do so," Antunes told AFP.

For Paulo Pessoa de Carvalho, president of Portugal's bullfighting federation ProToiro, the event was intended "to restore the tie between the bull and Portuguese culture — and increase our audience."—AFP ■

Changing Distributor for Registered Pesticides

Distribution of pesticide registered by Shandong Weifang Rainbow Chemical Co., Ltd is changing from Close Friend Co.,Ltd to RAINBOW AGROSCIENCES CO., LTD.Any objection regarding to this transfer can notify at Co-Secretary, Pesticide Registration Board,Plant Protection Division, West Gyogone, Insein within 2 weeks.

Sr.No	Trade Name	Active Ingredient	Registration No.	Registration Type
1	Ricequick 50 WP	Pyrazosulfuron Ethyl 3% + Quinclorac 47%	P2018-4154	Pro. Registration

RAINBOW AGROSCIENCES CO., LTD
Building (C), Room No. (402), Level-4, Dagon Center (1),
Bargayar Road, Sanchaung Township, Yangon, Myanmar
Phone : 09456060160, 09456060180

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE
M.V PACAO VOY.NO. (047N/S)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V PACAO VOY. NO. (047N/S) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 21-03-2019 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of MIP 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.

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Notice for Change of registration distributors

Notice is hereby given that the official registration distributor has been changed for the following pesticides distributed by Myanma Pesticides Industry Co; Ltd. to Myanma Awba Group Co; Ltd.

No.	Trade name	Active Ingredient	Registration Type	Registration Number	Registration distributors	
					Old	New
1	Metolachlor TG 97%	Metolachlor TG 97%	Provisional	P2018-4472	Myanma Pesticide Industry Co; Ltd.	Myanma Awba Group Co; Ltd.

Myanma Awba Group Co., Ltd. invites objections to Co-secretary. Pesticide Registration Board, Plant Protection Division, West Gyogone, Insein Township, Yangon from all parties within a period of fourteen (14) days form the publication of this notice. If no objections are received within the period prescribed, parties mentioned above shall proceed will the completion of formalities recorded with the Pesticide Registration Board.

Myanma Awba Group Co.,Ltd.No.95-A, Kyaik Wine Pagoda Road, 8th Mile, Mayangone Township, Yangon.

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'Safe' fruits, vegetables to be sold every weekend in Yangon: MFVP

By Aye Yamone

FRUITS and vegetables that have been grown using Good Agricultural Practices (GAP), and which have been certified as organic, will be on sale every weekend from 23 March at Myaypadetha Kyun, Yangon, said U Soe Than Min Din, the chairman of the Myanmar Fruit, Flower, and Vegetable Producer and Exporter Association (MFVP).

Organic produce will be sold between 7 a.m. and noon, every Saturday and Sunday, at the Myaypadaythar Kyun Nursery in Kandawgyi Park.

"From 23 March, we will sell safe food from safe farms. This kind of special sale was started in 2015. The sale was held on Saturdays for two or three years consecutively. However, the sale was not very successful last year. So, we have found new ways and means to resume such events," he added.

The organic sale will take place at 34 shops, with the permission of the Agriculture Department.

At the sale, vegetables and fruits produced in 17 agricultural farms, which have received letters of recommendation from the Agriculture Department, will be up for purchase.

"This sale event is aimed at promoting growers who cultivate organic vegetables and fruits, pursue GAP, and hold organic certificates. We opened these special shops to allay customers' concerns over food safety," said U Soe Than Min Din.

"Shopkeepers participating in the sale event must have letters of recommendation, and be willing to undergo inspection. If the authorities find a shop cheating consumers, they will ban the shop permanently," he said.

The growers of 15 crops that will be up for sale have already received GAP certificates, and those of 7 crops have been issued organic certificates by the MFVP, he added.

(Translated by Hay Mar)

WCS hosts awareness drives to protect Myanmar wildlife

TO protect wild animals from facing extinction, a series of awareness-raising activities have been conducted in Myanmar by the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), an international non-governmental organization that helps save wildlife and their habitats worldwide.

"The country is seeing a decline in the numbers of wild animals year after year. This is linked to an increase in illegal killing, hunting, and capturing of wild animals for sale. It is estimated that some species of wildlife are likely facing extinction due to unlawful wildlife trading," according to the WCS.

U Aung Kyaw, a member of WCS Myanmar, said the Mandalay-Muse route is the busiest, handling about 50 per cent of the total border trade.

"This is a legal border trading point, but there may be instances of illegal trade here. Lawbreakers are using this route to transport pangolins, snakes, turtles, and other wild animals.

This is why efforts have been made by WCS officials to create links between government departments to crack down on smuggling of wild animals along the Mandalay-Muse route," he said.

In Myanmar, illegal wildlife trade is mostly seen in the Mongla area in Eastern Shan State, the Kyeikhtio area in Mon State, and the Muse route.

At present, Myanmar needs to work to protect animals from becoming endangered or extinct, he said.

As part of efforts to save wildlife, officials from the Forest Department and relevant government departments, police, and WCS members gathered at a workshop on 18-19 March in Muse, where they discussed the relationship between illegal animal trade and traditional medicine, the development of the turtle rescue center, and existing laws against illegal wildlife trade.—Van Ro Thang ■

(Translated by Khaing Thanda Lwin)

Pilgrims throng Shwe Saryan Pagoda

LIKE every year, the Shwe Saryan Pagoda festival is packed with pilgrims this year. The Dokhtawady River, which runs beside it, is also thronged with boaters and revellers.

"We usually have small vessels ferrying pilgrims during the pagoda festival every year. We take the pilgrims to the pagoda, which is located on the other side of the river. The boat fare is K500 per person. If pilgrims charter a boat, they have to pay K5,000 for a single trip and K10,000 for a round trip. Over 50 small motor vessels are providing the ferry service. During the pagoda festival, the Dokhtawady River is crowded with travellers taking a joy ride on boats and revellers playing in the water," said a small boat operator from Mithwaybote village.

"We went to the pagoda festival on motorbikes. The festival was crowded with pilgrims. We had to pay K1,000 per person for a return trip. At the festival, we played with water, throwing it on one another," said a visitor from Mandalay.

Small boats ferrying pilgrims during the Shwe Saryan pagoda festival **PHOTO: THAN ZAW MIN (IPRD)**

The Shwe Saryan Pagoda festival is usually celebrated between February and March. Myanmar's religious festival dates are determined according to an ancient lunar calendar.

The Shwe Saryan Pagoda was built by Queen Saw Mon Hla, a consort of King Anawrahta. It is located in Shwe Saryan village, about 45 minutes by road from Mandalay. Visitors can travel to the village and the pagoda in their own private vehicles.

Local people sell Shan traditional cuisine and local products at the pagoda.—Than Zaw Min (IPRD) ■ *(Translated by Hay Mar)*

WHO calls for strong int'l governance on human genome editing

GENEVA — The World Health Organization (WHO) on Tuesday called for a strong international governance framework on developing global standards for governance and oversight of human genome editing.

After two days' meeting in Geneva, the WHO's new advisory committee on human genome editing reviewed the current state of science and technology in this field, and agreed on core principles of transparency, inclusivity and responsibility.

It's irresponsible at this time for anyone to proceed with clinical applications of human germline genome editing, according to the committee.

It also urged a central registry on human genome editing research in order to create an open and transparent database of ongoing work, and has asked the WHO to immediately begin working to establish such a registry.

"Gene editing holds incredible promise for health, but it also poses some risks, both ethically and medically," said WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, adding that the WHO is "bringing together some of the world's leading experts to provide guidance on this complex issue."

Meanwhile, the WHO committee has invited all those conducting human genome editing research to open discussions with the committee in order to better understand the technical environment and current governance arrangements, and help ensure that their work meets current scientific and ethical best practice.

"The committee will develop essential tools and guidance for all those working on this new technology to ensure maximum benefit and minimal risk to human health," said WHO Chief Scientist Soumya Swaminathan.

For the next two years, the WHO committee is expected to hold a series of in-person meetings and online consultations with a wide range of stakeholders, with an aim to provide recommendations for a comprehensive governance framework on human genome editing.

Such a framework should be scalable, sustainable and appropriate for use at the international, regional, national and local levels, the WHO said. —Xinhua ■

A member of staff handles samples at the gene bank. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

Long-term exposure to carbon dioxide reduces grain quality: study

BEIJING — Researchers have disclosed that long-term exposure to carbon dioxide could enhance grain yield but reduce grain quality in wheat.

A research group from Northeast Institute of Geography and Agroecology of Chinese Academy of Sciences cooperated with overseas researchers to investigate grain yield and quality in wheat.

The wheat experienced one generation which grew in elevated carbon dioxide concentration and was harvested in 2014 and four generations which were harvested in 2017.

Researchers found that the grain yield was enhanced by carbon dioxide concentration, while the exposure to carbon dioxide concentration over four generations caused a larger reduction in grain nitrogen, kalium, calcium, protein, and total amino acid concentrations, according to their study published in the journal Environmental and Experimental Botany.

The results indicated that the exposure to carbon dioxide concentration in multiple generations could enhance grain yield but exacerbate grain quality reduction in wheat. The short-term plant response to carbon dioxide concentration could not estimate the long-term response of wheat crops to a future carbon dioxide enriched environment, said the study.—Xinhua ■

The asteroid Bennu, photographed in December 2018 by the NASA probe OSIRIS-REx, which aims to collect a sample next year. **PHOTO: AFP**

NASA says taking sample from asteroid harder than expected

WASHINGTON — After two years crossing the solar system, the NASA space probe Osiris-Rex arrived last December near the asteroid Bennu to complete its mission of collecting a sample — but touching the rock will prove much harder than scientists had expected.

The Osiris-Rex team said Tuesday that the surface of the asteroid, which measures 490 meters (1,600 feet) in diameter, was covered in stones and boulders. They had expected it to be smoother and easier for the probe to touch.

"We go back to the drawing board and start thinking again," Dante Lauretta, the head of the mission, told a press conference. The team's observations also appeared in the Nature journal on Tuesday.

The probe was designed to head for a flat area with a radius of 25 meters, but the images beamed back since December showed that there is no area that big which is free of boulders.

As a result, the team will have to aim more tightly.

"Now we're going to try to hit the center of the bullseye," said project manager Richard Burns.

Since December, the probe has been using its instruments to map Bennu from a close distance, currently three miles.

The asteroid, which orbits the sun, is 85 million kilometers (52 million miles) from the Earth. The goal is touch the surface with a robotic arm for just five seconds in July 2020, retrieving a sample of between 60 grams and two kilograms (two ounces to 4.4 pounds) of regolith, which means relatively small particles such as gravel or sand, since the machine can only suck up particles measuring less than two centimetres.

The samples will be stowed in the probe, which will return to Earth in 2023.

Bennu is technically known as "rubble-pile asteroid", that is, it is made up of pieces of debris that had broken off larger celestial bodies and come together under the effect of gravity.

It has more than 200 boulders larger than 10 meters in diameter, and some stretching up to 30 metres, according to researchers writing in Nature Astronomy. It has a number of craters between 10 and over 150 meters in length.

"It is not trivial to deliver a spacecraft with meter scale resolution to the surface of an asteroid in the microgravity environment," said Lauretta, who nevertheless said he was "confident" that the team would rise to the challenge.

Another surprise Bennu had been withholding was that it emits particles which fall back to the surface like rain. That should not however endanger the probe, the team said. —AFP ■

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Myanmar plays well against Chinese Taipei: Myo Min Tun

Myanmar national football team head coach Myo Min Tun. **PHOTO : MFF**

MYO Min Tun, the head coach of the national football team, said team Myanmar fought hard against Chinese Taipei, in decline over the years with the FIFA ranking, in the match on Tuesday which ended in a 0-0 draw.

We would have won had we converted our goal chances in the second half, he said.

"But in football, anything can happen till the final whistle. I really appreciate every effort made by my team. Actually, my boys are good individually, but weak in some aspects of team work. If they have more understanding, the team will climb higher and higher. All in all, I liked the performance of all my boys. Now, we are focusing on the international friendly match against Indonesia," he said.

After the match, Lousi Lancaster, the head coach of the Chinese Taipei national football team, said his team had to do their best to check Myanmar's attacks.

Myanmar played better in the second half, showing spontaneous domination, he added.

The coach praised the team over the style of play, and said the team possesses many all-round players. He said he liked team Myanmar's Player No. 9, and added the match proved to be quite entertaining for fans.

Myanmar will next play another international FIFA friendly match against Indonesia on 25 March.—Lynn Thit (Tgi) ■

Tickets available online for AFC U-23 Championship Qualifiers

TICKETS for the AFC U-23 Championship Qualifiers, to be held from 22 to 26 March at the Thuwunna Stadium in Yangon, are now available online, according to the Myanmar Football Federation.

For the convenience of fans, tickets are being sold via the messenger service on the MFF Facebook page, said a source.

Those who wish to buy tickets need to send an inquiry on the messenger service, following which they will be given step-by-step instructions about purchasing tickets.

Payments can be made via MPU and GNG. The tickets are priced at K3,000 for grand stand and K1,000 for ordinary stand, the MFF stated in a press release.

The Myanmar U-23 football team will face Timor Leste, Macau, and Asian football powerhouse, Japan, in the AFC U-23 Championship Qualifiers.

Myanmar will play against Timor Leste on 22 March, Macau on 24 March, and Japan on 26 March. All team Myanmar matches will be played at 6 p.m. local standard time at the Thuwunna Stadium in Yangon.

All Myanmar matches will be broadcast live on the MRTV and MRTV Sport channels, and will be live streamed on My Sports' Facebook Page, according to the MFF.—Lynn Thit (Tgi) ■

France issues arrest warrants for two Russian ex-athletics officials: sources

PARIS — France has issued arrest warrants for two former senior Russian athletics officials in an investigation into a doping cover-up, sources told AFP on Tuesday.

The two men targeted are ValentinBalakhnichev, the former head of Russian athletics who was also treasurer of the International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF), and Alexei Melnikov, a former Russian national team coach. In the same probe, French investigating magistrates issued a warrant in 2017 for Papa MassataDiack, son of former IAAF president LamineDiack. LamineDiack was charged at the time with taking millions of dollars to cover up failed Russian doping tests along with two other IAAF officials. His son, a marketing consultant widely known as PMD, has been on Interpol's most wanted list since December 2015 but is sheltering in Dakar as the Senegalese government refuses to extradite him to France.Diack senior was in charge of world athletics from 1999 until he was arrested in France in 2015.

French investigating magistrates charged him for a second time in June last year, accusing him of allowing his son to "appropriate IAAF receipts from sponsors" including Samsung, Chinese TV channel CCTV, Chinese energy firm Sinopec, Russian bank VTB and the Abu Dhabi Corporation, according to information about the hearing received by AFP. France has undertaken the investigation because it believes some of the funds were laundered in France.

The IAAF suspended Russia in November 2015 after the eruption of a vast state-sponsored doping scandal.Russia was allowed back into the Olympic fold a year ago but the IAAF continues to ban Russian athletes from competing under their own flag.Speaking to Russian media, Balakhnichev said he considered the French arrest warrant to be baseless."I'm not in the know. I just don't know how to react to it," Balakhnichev told TASS agency. He said Russian investigators who had probed the case had not accused him of any wrongdoing.—AFP ■

Tokyo unveils 'cherry blossom' Olympic torch

TOKYO — Organisers of the Tokyo 2020 Olympics on Wednesday unveiled a cherry-blossom shaped torch for the Games as the city prepares for the famed flower season to begin in coming days.

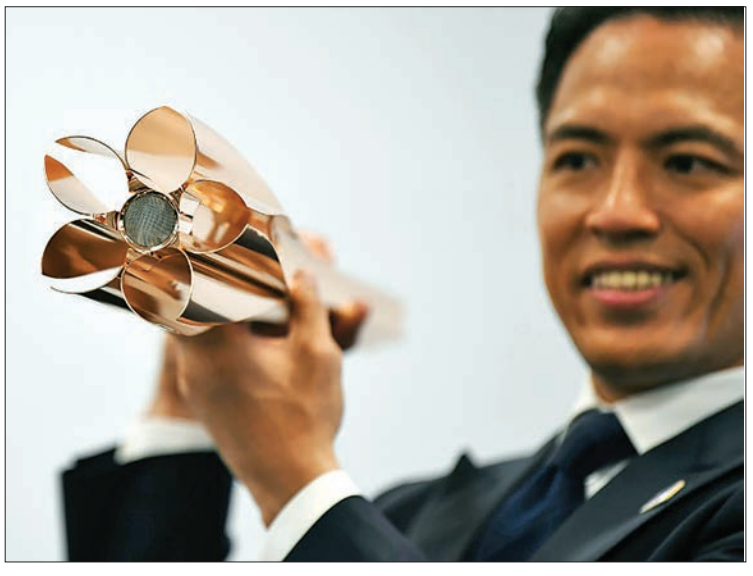
The top part of the torch is shaped in the traditional emblem of the sakura, or cherry blossom using the same cutting-edge technology as in production of Japan's bullet trains, the organisers said.

The shiny rose-gold torch, which is 71 centimetres (28 inches) long and weighs 1.2 kilograms (2 pounds 10 ounces), uses aluminium construction waste from temporary housing built for victims of the 2011 quake and tsunami.

"Cherry blossoms drawn by kids in the disaster-hit area (in Fukushima)... inspired me," designer Tokujin Yoshioka, whose works are known internationally, told reporters.

Fukushima was chosen as the starting point for the Olympic torch relay.

The passing of the flame is scheduled to start on March 26,



The top part of the Olympic torch is shaped in the traditional emblem of the sakura, or cherry blossom. **PHOTO: AFP**

2020, and the torch will head south to the sub-tropical island of Okinawa — the starting point for the 1964 Tokyo Games relay — before returning north and arriving in the Japanese capital on 10 July .

The designer added the torch is designed to ensure the flame will not go out even during the typhoon season.

The March 2011 tsunami, triggered by a massive undersea quake, killed around 18,000 people and swamped the Fukushima nuclear plant, sending its reactors into meltdown and leading to the world's worst nuclear disaster since Chernobyl. More than 50,000 people have not returned to their home towns.

Japan has dubbed the 2020 Games the "Reconstruction Olympics" and wants to showcase recovery in regions devastated by the disaster.—AFP ■