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THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

Vol. VI, No. 106, 1st Waxing of Wagaung 1381 ME | www.globalnewlightofmyanmar.com | Thursday, 1 August 2019

State Counsellor, Japanese FM hold joint press conference

STATE COUNSELLOR Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and Japanese Foreign Minister Mr Taro Kono met at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Nay Pyi Taw on Wednesday morning.

During the joint press conference after the meeting, Mr Taro Kono said that he was pleased to visit Myanmar for the third time as foreign minister, and reaffirmed that Japan would continue providing assistance to support the State Counsellor and the Myanmar government in the economic, social and other sectors.

He also added that as a historic and partner country, Japan would provide assistance to Myanmar as she was encountering tough challenges, and said that peace and stability were essential for building a democratic state.

Mr Taro Kono also said that Japan would also support peace-making efforts in Myanmar with very firm determination. He added that in today's meeting very productive discussion and exchange of views had been held with respect to the situation in Rakhine State.

He said he valued the efforts made by the Myanmar government to bring back the displaced persons from Bangladesh. He hoped that the Myanmar government would accelerate its implementation efforts including the work of the ICOE – Independent Commission of Enquiry.

State Counsellor and Foreign Minister Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and Japanese Minister of Foreign Affairs Mr Taro Kono hold a joint press conference at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Nay Pyi Taw on 31 July. **PHOTO: MNA**

Myanmar and Japan football teams would be facing each other in the second round of the 2022 World Cup Asian qualifying in the same group, and would be playing a match in Yangon in September.

In conclusion, he expressed his expectation for stronger ties of friendship between Myanmar and Japan through relations at a multi-dimensional level.

State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi first expressed her appreciation to host the Japanese Foreign Minister, as she believed his visit reflected the friendly relations between the two countries.

She also acknowledged the continuous and steadfast assistance provided by Japan in the ongoing peace efforts of the Myanmar government.

The State Counsellor added she believed and understood Japan's willingness to help Myanmar in solving the Rakhine issue that has grabbed global attention.

She also reiterated that the problem of the displaced persons was a bilateral issue between the two countries, but Myanmar appreciated Japanese kind offer to help in solving this problem.

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi also said that it was the goal of the Myanmar government to work for the safety, stability, progress and development of all citizens; to this end the Myanmar government has been striving for improvement in all fields such as social, economic and political. She expressed her deep appreciation for the assistance being provided by friends in Japan to help her in her efforts.

The State Counsellor said that she was eagerly waiting to watch the Myanmar-Japan football match that was about to take place in the near future as it could help strengthen the friendly relations between the two countries. No matter what the outcome of the football match might be, she believed that it would further strengthen the friendly and close relations between the two countries.

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Pyithu Hluttaw

Pyithu Hluttaw's sixth day meeting discusses proposals, bill

By Mawsi and Hmwe Kyu Zin; Photo : Hteik Kyi

THE Second Pyithu Hluttaw organized the sixth day meeting of thirteenth regular session on Wednesday.

Before the queries of MPs, the Speaker announced the Pyithu Hluttaw accepted the request of MP Daw Cho Cho from Ottwin constituency to quit Banking and Financial Development Committee. The Speaker also updated the numbers, the names, the leading person and tasks in the formation of the Advisory Group on Parliamentary Capacity-building.

Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U T Khun Myat. **PHOTO: MNA**

Movie Theatres

U Oo Hla Saw, MP from MraukU constituency, asked about the possible construction of movie theatres in Sittway Township, Rakhine State.

U Aung Hla Tun, Deputy Minister for Information, said that a total of four movie theatres were nationalized on 1 July 1969 by the order of Information Ministry under the Revolutionary Council; these were later privatized with agreements and without agreements to operate these facilities for other commercial purposes instead of movie industry; among these five facilities, 'Myoma' theatre was under the management of Ministry of Information, and the new owner U Tun Maung used it as a movie theatre till 2013. And that the ministry notified him to rerun the movie theatre. Moreover, the ministry issued notifications on 18 February 2015 to all the owners of movie theatres across the country to adhere to agreements included in the purchasing contract to use the facilities for movie shows. The lower floor of 'Myoma' theatre is being used for a restaurant, and the upper floor is being prepared for movie shows, but the date has not been specified until now.

The deputy minister also said some movie theatres in Rakhine State were privatized with the agreements to continue this business. As the new owners failed to meet the agreements, they have been remined to stick to the promises.

According to the order on 10 April 2018, a total of 121 movie theaters under the management of ministry and are liable for showing movies were transferred to Nay Pyi Taw Council, the governments of states and regions, while the documents of five movie theatres in Rakhine State were also handed over to its government for close and effective management.

The deputy minister concluded that the government has no plan yet to construct more movie theatres in Rakhine State, but the any proposal to do this business will be decided by the State government.

U Myint Lwin, MP of Twantay constituency, asked to show educative short films and slogans before starting a movie at the theatres across the country.

The deputy minster replied that as the Motion Picture Enterprise has no digital version for the educative short films and slogans yet, these cannot be screened at the movie theatres until now. Instead, captions and logs are being used for some educative progrmmes, for example, No Smoking and No Alcohol campaigns.

He also said the educative short films and campaigns could be shown before saluting the National Flag, and posters can be displayed for easy visibility in line with the policies and instructions of relevant departments.

Plan for storage of reserved electricity

U Nay Myo Htet, MP of Kyauktada constituency, asked to adopt plan for generating more electricity for reservation.

Dr Tun Naing, Deputy Minister for Electricity and Energy, explained that the generation of electricity must be increased by 10 to 20 per cent for reserved power that can be classified as spinning reserve and cold reserve.

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Amyotha Hluttaw

Amyotha Hluttaw approves further review of Import Control Bill

THE sixth-day meeting of the 13th regular session of the Second Amyotha Hluttaw was held at the Hluttaw building yesterday.

MPs raise question on education matters

First, Daw Nwe Nwe Aung, MP for Mon State constituency 2, raised a question on whether there were plans to upgrade B.E.M.S. branch school in Phar Auk village, Mawlamyine Township, from its branch status during the 2019-2020 academic year.

Union Education Minister Dr Myo Thein Gyi replied that the school did not meet the criteria for an upgrade as it had only 199 students when the required number is 240 and is only 1 mile away from the nearest middle school when an upgrade requires it to be over 2 miles away.

Next, U Aung Myo, MP for Sagaing Region constituency 2, raised a question on whether emergency repairs for the basic primary school in May Gon village, Padauk Gaung village-tract, Shwebo Township, will be approved soon.

Dr Myo Thein Gyi replied that K23.868 million for the school's repairs were already allocated on 18 June, 2019.

Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than. **PHOTO : HTIKE HTIKE**

After that, U Myo Win, MP for Mon State constituency 8, raised a question on whether the Ministry of Education has plans to enact a nationwide policy for calculating the construction costs for school dormitories.

The Union Education Minister replied that they already distribute detailed drawings for basic education schools, offices, staff residences, libraries, laboratories, fencing and restrooms free of charge. He said they carry out these tasks under an all-encompassing standard guideline.

Following that, U Khin Maung Latt, MP for Rakhine State constituency 3, raised a question on how many AGTI/GTC schools operating on foreign funding were open in Myanmar and whether there were plans to open one in Rakhine State.

Dr Myo Thein Gyi replied that they have opened course on motorcycle maintenance, one-horsepower engine maintenance, electrical wiring, sewing and basic computer skills in collaboration between Sittway's Government Technical High School and GIZ.

He said they have cooperated with ILO to conduct short-term mobile training courses in Maungtaw and Buthidaung townships. He said the Union Government will consider proposals from international organizations to open a school in the region.

MPs debate Import Control Bill

The Hluttaw then debated the Import Control Bill. U Maung Maung Ohn, MP for Ayeyawady Region constituency 5, said there must be tax reduction and contract leniency to support domestic production, national social security and domestic export. He said raising tax on certain products and reducing tax on exports can effectively decrease reliance on imports.

U Kyaw Toke, MP for Mandalay Region constituency 7, suggested that a representative from the Union Attorney-General Office should be included in the Import Control Committee as it is important to have a legal expert to ensure coherence with international laws. He also suggested including a representative of domestic commodity producers and international merchants each.

The bill was further debated by Tatmadaw representative Major Ye Tint Aung, MP Dr Pyae Phyo of Ayeyawady Region constituency 7, and MP U Soe Thein of Taninthayi Region constituency 10.

The Speaker announced that the Amyotha Hluttaw Bill Committee will review the bill further.

MPs debate motion urging women empowerment in rural areas

The assembly next discussed a motion tabled by Dr Tin Tin Win, MP for Bago Region constituency 5, urging the Union Government to create a positive and supportive environment that raises the living standards and business feasibility of women in rural areas, and to reduce their likelihood to find work abroad through adverse conditions.

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State Counsellor, Japanese FM hold joint press conference

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At this time when Myanmar was passing through a difficult period, she believed that the Japanese people who have passed through similar difficult times would have compassion and understanding for the Myanmar people. She concluded by saying that she sent warm greetings and good wishes to the Japanese people from this press conference.

In answering queries from the media, the State Counsellor clarified the fruitful results of the Thilawa Special Economic Zone in Yangon as well as other special economic zone being implemented in other states/regions; she also answered questions regarding the situation in the Rakhine state.

She said the Myanmar-Japan mega joint project was a very successful project. Since the majority of the companies in this project were Japanese companies, she said it was possible to forecast what kind of fruitful results could be obtained from such kind of bilateral cooperation. It had stimulated other states and regions to set up such special zones.

Meanwhile, the country was implementing only the Kyaukpyu and Dawei economic zones. She said work was initiated with these two economic zones and that not much progress had been made.

She also said the transportation infrastructure would be developed in Dawei first with Japanese assistance, and she was hopeful that similar success could be achieved in other states and regions also. She wanted them to implement such projects.

The State Counsellor remarked that the most tangible result of the Thilawa SEZ was the increase in job opportunities. The Myanmar people wanted job opportunities. She believed that Myanmar people were capable of creating their own destinies and working for their own development once they have jobs.

She said she was very encouraged by the success and progress of the Thilawa SEZ. She said it was important for the Myanmar people to have jobs opportunities as well as jobs with dignity. She concluded her answers to the media, with saying thanks to the Japanese companies in Thilawa SEZ.

Finally, Japanese Foreign Minister Mr Taro Kono said that in his discussions with the State Counsellor, he had commented on the extremely dire conditions of refugee camps on Bangladeshi side, and that he had urged the Myanmar government to take more strenuous efforts to bring back the displaced persons from Bangladesh. He added that the Japanese government would encourage and urge as much as possible.

He said he has also urged and stressed to the Myanmar government that it was important to conduct the Independent Commission of Enquiry in a transparent and credible manner.

Furthermore, he and informed the State Counsellor that yesterday it had been learnt that the Bangladesh government had already given approval for the ICOE to conduct investigations on the Bangladesh side.

The Japanese Foreign Minister concluded his answers with the promise to continue solving these problems by joining hands with the Myanmar government.—MNA

(Translated by Aung Khin)

State Counsellor and Union Minister for Foreign Affairs Daw Aung San Suu Kyi holding a joint press conference with Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan Mr Taro Kono on 31 July 2019. **PHOTO: MNA**

State Counsellor receives Japan's Foreign Minister in Nay Pyi Taw

MR TARO KONO, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan, paid a one day visit to Myanmar on 31 July 2019.

During his visit, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, State Counsellor and Union Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar received Mr. Taro KONO, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan, at11:00 hrs on 31 July 2019 at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Nay Pyi Taw.

During the meeting, they discussed matters of mutual interest and the commitment by Japan to assist infacilitating Myanmar's democratization process, tackling the challenges faced by the Myanmar government regarding the Rakhine issue and expediting Myanmar's national reconciliation and peace process through the good offices of Mr Yohei Sasakawa, Special Envoy of the Government of Japan for National Reconciliation in Myanmar and Chairman of the Nippon Foundation.

Following the meeting, the State Counsellor and the Japanese Foreign Minister held a joint press conference at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Then U Kyaw Tint Swe, Union Minster for the Office of the State Counsellor,hosted a luncheon to the delegation led by Mr Taro KONO, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan, at the Hilton Hotel.—MNA ■

Union Minster for the Office of the State Counsellor U Kyaw Tint Swe hosts a luncheon in honour of the delegation led by Mr Taro Kono, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan, yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi shakes hands with Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan Mr. Taro Kono yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

Mekong-Lancang cooperation projects under 2nd Cooperation Special Fund launched

Union Minister Dr Aung Thu explores an exhibit to display about projects during the ceremony held in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

THE ceremony to launch new projects to be implemented in Myanmar under the second the Mekong-Lancang cooperation Special Fund was held in the meeting hall of the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

In his opening remarks at the ceremony, Union Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation Dr Aung Thu said that the Mekong-Lancang Cooperation projects would be conducted with the aim of reducing the development gap, assisting the establishment of the ASEAN community, achieving the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals adopted by the UN, boosting the cooperation among the developing countries in addition to enhancing socio-economic development of the people in the rural area and prosperity of the farmers.

Then Ambassador of the People's Rof China Mr Chen Hai explained about work plans for Mekong-Lancang Cooperation projects between the governments' of Myanmar and China. Deputy Director-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Daw Marlar Than Htike explained about the diplomatic relationship with PRC.

Then Director-General of the Agriculture Department Dr. Ye Tint Tun explained about the implementation of five projects under the Mekong-Lancang Cooperation Special Fund (the first phase.

Next, Director-General of the Department of Planning U Kyaw Swe Lin explained about twelve projects under second phase of the Mekong-Lancang Cooperation Special Fund.

Afterwards, Union Projects Minister Dr Aung Thu presented commemorative gifts to the Ambassador of the People's Republic of China at the event. Following the ceremony, the union minister and invited guests observed the displays for schemes arranged by the departments.

The Mekong-Lancang Cooperation is a type of cooperation mechanism among five Mekong-Lancang countries comprised of Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam together with China and which aimed at promoting cooperation in the areas of political, security, economic and social development. The Mekong-Lancang Cooperation Special Fund of 300 million US dollars was established by the China with a view to carrying out the development schemes, and the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation is conducting the agriculture and poverty reduction schemes as a focal ministry.

As the Mekong-Lancang Cooperation fund (the second batch), a total of 23 proposals had been made to implement in the sectors of agriculture, livestock and rural development projects, and 12 proposed schemes had been selected to be carried out. The departments under the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation will be implemented five priority areas, namely; connectivity, production capacity cooperation, cross-border economic cooperation, water resources, and agriculture and poverty reduction. —MNA ■

(Translated by Win Ko Ko Aung)

Myanmar Investment Commission approves investment proposal which will create over 3,000 job opportunities

Chairman of MIC U Thaung Tun attends the Myanmar Investment Commission meeting. **PHOTO: MNA**

THE Myanmar Investment Commission (MIC) meeting (12 / 2019) was convened at the meeting room of the MIC on the morning of 30 July 2019 in Yangon. U Thaung Tun, Chairman of the MIC, Dr Than Myint, Vice Chairman and (8) members attended the meeting.

The meeting approved nine projects in the livestock and fisheries, manufacturing, hotel and realestate sectors. The amount of USD 101.172 million and Kyat 110,703.800 million have been approved for those projects, which will create 3,029 job opportunities for Myanmar citizens.

A total of 1,752 foreign enterprises in 12 sectors from 49 countries were permitted, with the total pledge amount of US$ 80,892.061 million from 1988 to the end of June 2019. Among them, the three leading countries who invested were Singapore, People's Republic of China, and Thailand.

The largest sector of investment has been Oil & Gas sector. It accounted for 27.72%, follow by the Power sector, which accounted for 26.18%. The third largest sector was manufacturing, which accounted for 13.82% of the total permitted amount of foreign investment. —MNA ■

Deputy Attorney-General U Win Myint receives Asia-Pacific National Human Rights Commission expert

DEPUTY Attorney-General U Win Myint received Ms Mohottalalage Thanuja Dayadari Navartne, the expert of Asia-Pacific National Human Rights Commission, yesterday at his office in Nay Pyi Taw.

During the meeting, they discussed matters related to Union-Attorney General Office's works on legislation, amendment to the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission Law, tasks in six goals of the Consultation Draft of the Strategic Plan 2020-2024 of the Commission, and cooperation with the commission in promotion and protection of human rights.— MNA ■ *(Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)*

Deputy Attorney-General U Win Myint meets Asia-Pacific National Human Rights Commission expert Ms. Mohottalalage Thanuja Dayadari Navartne. **PHOTO: MNA**

Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker receives Serbian Ambassador

Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U T Khun Myat meets with Serbian Ambassador Mr Miodrag Nikolin in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

SPEAKER of the PyithuHluttaw U T KhunMyatreceivedMrMiodragNikolin, the Serbian Ambassador to Myanmar,at his office in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

During the meeting, they cordially discussed matters relatingto promoting friendly relations betweentheparliaments and peoples of the two countries, and attending the 141st Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) in Belgrade, Serbia.

Also present at the meeting wereDeputy PyithuHluttaw Speaker U TunTun Hein and officials from the PyithuHluttaw Office.— MNA

(Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)

H & T Ministry launches www.tourisminmyanmar.com.mm to facilitate vibrant tourism in emerging ASEAN Nation

THE Ministry of Hotels and Tourism (MOHT) yesterday launched a new portal www.tourisminmyanmar.com.mm as part of its efforts to reach travellers seeking a unique Asian experience. As tourism is an important economic feature with its activities contribute significantly to any country's development goals, generating income and employment for its people, and is the first stop in foreign currently exchanges, the ministry has taken every effort to ensure travellers are well equipped about the Myanmar Experience.

As the Ministry in charge of all tourism efforts, it is our responsibility to ensure we are doing our very best to promote all that the country has to offer to potential visitors. Myanmar was visited by 3.55 million international travellers last year, which was a 3.15% increase compared to 3.44 million arrivals in 2017.

Once concrete step towards promotion Myanmar as a tourist destination is through the newly launched www.tourisminmyanmar.com.mm. The portal is a wealth of information and promotes Myanmar as an emerging tourist destination offering diverse experiences of abundant resources, culture and natural heritage, genuine hospitality and spiritual values. More importantly, we are spreading the message that Myanmar is safe and secure for travel. The portal will be part of a digital ecosystem that will promote Myanmar's tourism activities and create interest in would be travellers from all parts of the world.

Our higher yielding makers of Western Europe and North American will be reached through this portal and the coordinated social media campaigns we are running. The site will also be able to reach our close by markets within the Asean countries that continue to show growth with a different range of products especially in the short breaks area.

The portal is just one of many digital activities being planned and executed by the Ministry, which include supporting all stakeholders – from hotels to guides and tour operators through directory listings on the site as well as advertising opportunities. The MOHT trusts that this support will be reciprocated through the use and promotion of the portal by the stakeholders to their clientele and within the industry itself.

With the portal officially launched the Ministry is well on track in creating and spearheading tourist growth in the country not just in the short-term but in the years and decades to come.—Ministry of Hotels and Tourism

THE REPUBLIC OF THE UNION OF MYANMAR
MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND FINANCE
ANNOUNCEMENT NO (3 /2019)
15th Waning of Waso, 1381 ME
(31 July 2019)

Announcement of successful applicants for life insurance business in Myanmar to be operated by a joint venture between a Myanmar insurer and a foreign insurer ("Life Insurance JV ")

1. Following the issuance of Request for Proposal to form Life Insurance JV, the Ministry of Planning and Finance ("MoPF") has completed the RFP evaluation process for the submitted Proposals and would like to announce that the following Applicants and Foreign JV Partners (in alphabetical order) have met the assessment criteria and appointed as Successful Applicants for the formation of Life Insurance JVs in Myanmar:-

(a) Capital Life Insurance Limited and Taiyo Life Insurance Company Limited;
(b) Citizen Business Insurance Public Limited and Thai Life Insurance Public Company Limited; and
(c) Grand Guardian Life Insurance Company Limited and Nippon Life Insurance Company.

2. The Successful Applicants will have to comply with all conditions precedent stipulated by the MoPF in the respective appointment letters and take all necessary measures to ensure functional operation from the date of commencement of the Life Insurance JV business. Upon fulfillment of the stipulated conditions precedent, the MoPF will grant the Successful Applicants final approval for the Life Insurance JV.

THE REPUBLIC OF THE UNION OF MYANMAR
MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND FINANCE
ANNOUNCEMENT NO (4 /2019)
15th Waning of Waso, 1381 ME
(31 July 2019)

Announcement of successful applicants for non-life insurance business in Myanmar to be operated by a joint venture between a Myanmar insurer and a foreign insurer ("Non-Life Insurance JV ")

1. Following the issuance of Request for Proposal to form a Non-Life Insurance JV, the Ministry of Planning and Finance ("MoPF") has completed the RFP evaluation process for the submitted Proposals and would like to announce that the following Applicants and Foreign JV Partners (in alphabetical order) have met the assessment criteria and have been appointed as Successful Applicants for the formation of Non-Life Insurance JVs in Myanmar:-

(a) AYA Myanmar General Insurance Company Limited and Sompo Japan Nipponkoa Insurance Inc.;
(b) Grand Guardian General Insurance Company Limited and Tokio Marine and Nichido Fire Insurance Company Limited; and
(c) IKBZ Insurance Company Limited and Mitsui Sumitomo Insurance Company Limited.

2. The Successful Applicants will have to comply with all conditions precedent stipulated by the MoPF in the respective appointment letters and take all necessary measures to ensure functional operation from the date of commencement of the Non-Life Insurance JV business. Upon fulfillment of the stipulated conditions precedent, the MoPF will grant the Successful Applicants final approval for the Non-Life Insurance JV.

Myanmar objects the comments by Malaysian Leader

U MYINT THU, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, received Mr Zahairi Baharim, Ambassador of Malaysia to Myanmar, at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 31 July 2019 at 3:00 pm.

Permanent Secretary expressed his dismay and objected to the comments recently made by Malaysian Prime Minister that displaced persons should be treated as nationals or be given a chance to form their own state and that genocide is happening in the country.

Permanent Secretary further stated that such allegations are not supportive to the ongoing efforts of Myanmar Government and ASEAN in finding a sustainable solution for peace, development and social harmony in Rakhine State. It was also against the ASEAN's cardinal principles of non-interference in the internal affairs and respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of ASEAN Member States.

The Malaysian Ambassador was also informed that Myanmar categorically rejects allegation on genocide in Myanmar, which is not constructive and in breach of the principles enshrined in the ASEAN Charter.—MNA ■

Permanent Secretary of Ministry of Foreign Affairs, High level Myanmar Delegation meet with representatives of displaced persons at Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh

A HIGH level Myanmar delegation led by U Myint Thu, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and ASEAN ERAT Team comprised of officials from the ASEAN Secretariat and the AHA Centre, paid an official visit to Bangladesh from 27 to 29 July 2019.

Myanmar delegation and ASEAN ERAT Team left Dhaka for Cox's Bazar by air on 27 July 2019 and met with some 50 displaced persons from various camps at the Office of Camp No 4, Cox's Bazar.

Those present at the meeting were U Lwin Oo, Myanmar Ambassador to the Republic of Bangladesh, Mr Md Delwar Hossain, Director-General, South Asia Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Bangladesh, Mr Manjural Karim Khan Chowdhury, Ambassador of Bangladesh to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, Mr Md Abul Kalam, Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commissioner and responsible officials.

U Myint Thu, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, briefs the displaced persons on the repatriation process. **PHOTO: MNA**

Permanent Secretary briefed the displaced persons on the preparations for the repatriation, including the construction of buildings, repatriation process at the Reception Centres and Transit Centre, prevalence of law and order, access to education and health, citizenship in line with the 1982 Citizenship Law, benefits of NVC Card, creation of job opportunities, and social cohesion among various communities, among others. ASEAN ERAT Team members also explained on the outcomes of the Preliminary Needs Assessment (PNA) conducted in Northern Rakhine State and possible areas of cooperation between Myanmar and ASEAN to support the repatriation process.

Permanent Secretary also handed over Factsheets on repatriation process, prepared in Myanmar and English languages, to Mr Md Abul Kalam, Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commissioner for distribution among the prospective returnees in the camps. Furthermore, he circulated among the displaced persons who were present at the meeting.

In the evening, Myanmar Repatriation Task Force held a meeting with Bangladesh counterparts in order to address the difficulties and challenges in the verification process of displaced persons, particularly the need to comply with the agreed verification form.

On 28 July 2019, Myanmar delegation and ASEAN ERAT Team revisited the Office of Camp No 4 and met again with the displaced persons from various camps in Cox's Bazar. They discussed issues focusing on the continued dialogue and engagement between the Myanmar delegation and ASEAN ERAT Team with the prospective returnees, citizenship, and the prevalence of peace and stability upon their return.

Permanent Secretary explicitly explained that 1982 Citizenship Law also contains the eligibility of naturalized citizenship, and the decision to return should be made by their own volition without fear or favour.

Myanmar delegation and ASEAN ERAT Team then visited the Front Office of Camp No. 4, where they met with the representatives of the United Nations Agencies, including UNHCR, WHO, WFP, IOM, UNDP and ICRC. They briefed the United Nations representatives on the outcome of the visit to Cox's Bazar, cooperation between Myanmar and ASEAN in the repatriation process, and Myanmar's continued cooperation with UNDP and UNHCR in line with the Memorandum of Understanding, including the implementation of Quick Impact Projects in Northern Rakhine State.

Permanent Secretary and ASEAN ERAT Team explained on the queries raised by the United Nations representatives, specifically on the citizenship in line with the Citizenship Law, the National Camp Closure Strategy, access to education and health and activities to promote social cohesion among various communities.

Subsequently, Myanmar Delegation and ASEAN ERAT Team received the representatives from Hindu and Christian communities, who were currently residing in Cox's Bazar. Permanent Secretary explained on the cooperation with Bangladesh authorities for the return of Hindu communities. District Commissioner of Maungtaw District, Rakhine State Government, U Soe Aung and Executive Member of the Interfaith Dialogue Group, U Ragu Ne Myint also explained on the preparations for the Hindu communities in Northern Rakhine State.

On 29 July 2019, Myanmar delegation and ASEAN ERAT Team met with Mr Kamrul Ahsan, Acting Foreign Secretary and Bangladesh delegation at the Meghna Guest House, Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Dhaka. Bangladesh delegation comprised of Mr Mahbub Uz Zaman, Secretary for Asia and Pacific, Mr Md Delwar Hossain, Director-General of South Asia region, and Mr Manjurul Karim Khan Chowdhury, Ambassador of Bangladesh to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Permanent Secretary briefed the meeting on the discussion with the representatives of the displaced persons at the Camp No 4, Cox's Bazar on 27 and 28 July 2019 as well as meetings with the representatives from the United Nations Agencies based in Cox's Bazar and representatives from Hindu and Christian communities. Furthermore, Permanent Secretary reminded the need to follow the bilateral arrangement on repatriation between the two countries, and highlighted on the preparations made by Myanmar Government and the readiness to receive the verified displaced persons.

Mr Arnel Capili, Deputy Executive Director, AHA Centre and Mr Ky-Anh Nguyen, Director, Socio-Cultural Community Department, ASEAN Secretariat also explained on the mandate given by the ASEAN Leaders and the terms of reference of the ASEAN ERAT Team to conduct the Preliminary Needs Assessment in Northern Rakhine State in March 2019, and the Comprehensive Needs Assessment to be conducted by ASEAN ERAT Team, and the ASEAN's continued support to the repatriation process.

At the end of the meeting, Acting Foreign Secretary of Bangladesh handed over the verification forms of 25,047 people to Myanmar delegation. Myanmar delegation requested the immediate delivery of colour photographs that is necessary for the systematic and effective verification.

To fulfill the bilateral agreement signed on 23 November 2017, the Myanmar side had put in place the necessary logistic and other facilities to be able to receive the verified returnees since 23 January 2018.

High-level Myanmar delegation led by Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs arrived back to Myanmar on 30 July 2019.—MNA ■

Pyithu Hluttaw's sixth day meeting discusses proposals, bill

FROM PAGE-2

Myanmar can produce about 3,600 MW annually. The country's power demand is increasing at a rate of 13 per cent every year. The ministry has targeted to generate annual production of 5,646 MW in 2021-20122 fiscal year, and expected to store reserved power up to 14 per cent between 2019-2020 and 2025-2026.

Construction of sports facilities

U Tin Aye, MP from Matman constituency, asked about constructions of facilities for sports activities in Matman Township, Shan State.

Dr Myint Htwe, Union Minister for Health and Sports, replied to the quries.

Construction of national grids

U Thaung Aye, MP of Pyawbwe Township, asked about construction of one 33/11 KVA 3 MVA power distribution station and 12-mile long 11KV power line to supply electricity for people in 30 villages in northern part of Pyawbwe Township.

Daw Cho Cho, MP of Ottwin constituency, asked about electricity supply from national grids through affordable rate to the villages with self-reliant basis.

U Thet Naing Oo, MP from Yebyu constituency, asked about the development of LNG power supply project (Kanpauk) for power distribution in southern Myanmar.

The queries were replied by Dr Tun Naing, the Deputy Minister for Electricity and Energy.

The Pyithu Hluttaw then submitted proposals and passed the Bill for the Fourth Amendment to Union Judiciary Law unanimously.

Measures against tobacco consumption

U Khin Cho, Mp from Hlaingbwe constituency, urged the government to make effective measures against tobacco consumption.

U Saw Tun Mya Aung, Papun constituency, suggested tobacco consumption should be prohibited by law as it is a tradition of ancestors, and it must be banned at schools and university campus, as well as in public areas of railway and bus stations. As a whole, he supported the proposal.

U Thein Tan, MP of Hlegu constituncy, said that tobacco consumption in Southeast Asia amounted to 89 per cent of global consumption, while Myanmar, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Thailand and Sri Lanka stand atop in the list of tobacco consumption rate. Among them, over 12 billion of cheroot and cigarettes are being consumed in Myanmar annually. He also advised to make no-smoking campaigns, and to raise overall taxes on tobacco products.

Moreover, Sedoktara constituency MP U Kyaw Aung Lwin, Loikaw Constituency MP Dr Khin Sithu, Kawhmu constituency MP U Kyaw Swe Win, Chauk constituency MP U Bo Gyi, Dala constituency MP Dr Sein Mya Aye, Htigyaing Constituency MP U Maung Maung and PyinOoLwin constituency MP Dr U Aung Khin made discussions.

Dr Myint Htwe, Union Minister for Health and Sports agreed the proposal along with the discussions, and the Hluttaw approved it.—MNA ■

(Translated by Aung Khin)

Amyotha Hluttaw approves further review of Import Control Bill

FROM PAGE-2

U Win Zaw, MP for Kachin State constituency 7, said that even countries with stable market economies and private sector development face huge hurdles in creating enough jobs for all of their capable citizens. He said the main challenges for the unemployed is unfamiliarity with technology, business policies and economic knowledge.

Daw Shwe Shwe Sein Latt, MP for Bago Region constituency 3, said policies need to correspond with practical situations and urged inclusion of gender affairs. She seconded the need for quality vocational and craftwork training for women in rural areas.

The motion was further debated by MP U Aye Min Han of Mon State constituency 1, MP Daw Nan Moe Moe Htwe of Kayin State constituency 4, and MP U Aung Kyi Nyunt of Magway Region constituency 4.

U Hla Kyaw, Deputy Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation suggested that the motion be put on record. He said they have already been conducting vocational trainings to reduce the number of rural residents seeking jobs abroad.

He said they have been implementing the emerald green projects to promote employment opportunities and businesses. He said they hold MSME exhibitions and fairs to uncover new markets and that the various Union ministries are adhering to the third pillar of the sustainable development plan.

The Speaker called for the deliberation of the assembly, received a majority of votes in favour and announced the motion has been approved by the Hluttaw.

The seventh-day meeting of the Second Amyotha Hluttaw's 13th regular session will commence on 2 August. —Lu Kyaw (MNA) ■

(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

Myawaddy Bank Ltd opens its 65th branch in Thayet, Magway Region

AN opening ceremony for the Myawaddy Bank Limited (Thayet branch) was held yesterday morning at the bank branch compound in Thayet Town, Magway Region. The ceremony was attended by Central Command Deputy Commander Brig-Gen Aung Khin Zaw and party, departmental heads, officials from the Myawaddy Banks Ltd, and other invited guests.

First, Central Command Deputy Commander Brig-Gen Aung Khin Zaw, Tactical Operations Commander Col Kyaw Sein Tun, Thayet Station Commander Col Htay Myint, Thayet District Acting Administrator U Kyaw Kyaw Maung and Myawaddy Bank Ltd, Managing Director U Yu Lwin cut the ceremonial ribbons.

Then, the Central Command Deputy Commander pressed a button to unveil the Myawaddy Bank Ltd, (Thayet branch) signboard, sprinkled scented water on the inscription of the bank and inspected the bank branch together with guests in attendance.

The Myawaddy Bank Limited (Thayet branch) is the 65th bank branch and situated at Plot No 2, corner of the Trader and the Annyeint roads, Zay Ward, Thayet Town, Magway Region.

The bank was opened with the aim of fostering socio-economic development of Thayet Town, Magway Region.

The services offered by the bank are current account, saving account, fixed account, deposit account, scholarship bank account, ATM, bank loans, insurance, remittance, mobile banking and online banking. —MNA ■

(Translated by Win Ko Ko Aung)

Central Command Deputy Commander Brig-Gen Aung Khin Zaw and officials cut ceremonial ribbon to open the new branch of Myawaddy Bank Limited in Thayet, Magway Region yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

1 AUGUST 2019
THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

Ensure the rights of every child

THE future of a nation rests on how far its children gain access to early education and the extent to which they get to exercise their rights. Therefore, it is our duty to preserve and protect the inherent dignity of children, at all costs.

The rights of children include providing them physical and spiritual care, irrespective of skin colour, gender, religion, and race.

It is society's moral responsibility to provide them education and protection from abuse and discrimination.

Adults must not think that it is up to the law to guarantee children their rights and give them protection. We all have a moral responsibility to prevent major exploitation of children. Observance of unwritten rules makes for a civilized society.

Children need to be made aware of their rights, and our society must reflect on how it treats our children. We must be pragmatic as we work according to our motto: "The country's future is in the hands of our children". And, we must not simply pay lip-service to it.

> We must be pragmatic as we work according to our motto: "The country's future is in the hands of our children". And, we must not simply pay lip-service to it.

Myanmar has been party to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child since 1991 and has enacted The Child's Rights Law accordingly.

The amended Child's Rights Law, enacted recently, encourages the authorities concerned to ensure that philanthropic shelters and temporary shelters meet certain set standards.

Children require security in addition to progress in their overall development. The states and regions have the legal authority to carry out child development and security tasks. There is a significantly large population of children who cannot attend preschool, and this is a priority area on which we can work together.

The Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement has expanded the number of preschools from 99 in 2016 to 128 this year. To ensure the security of children, licenses have been made mandatory for private day-care centres.

On our part, we need to find ways to ensure that children lodged in prisons retain their rights, increase efforts to prevent and raise awareness on the rising incidence of child sexual abuse, and disseminate the new law across the nation, right up to the level of subnational Hluttaws.

As our country struggles for political stability and economic improvement, it is facing challenges in improving the remaining sectors. There are also hindrances which are delaying the country's advancement, and the Union Government is putting all its energy into securing the basic needs of the people, including livelihood and the rule of law.

Hence, the whole society has an obligation to enforce the Child's Rights Law and other laws which guarantee rights to children.

Coffee Growers in Myanmar Receive a Fair Deal

UNIC Yangon and UNODC

MOE Ohn cannot stop grinning as she picks the ruby-red coffee beans of the bushes in Shan State. The future after all, seems much brighter. Moe Ohn, who is from Htant Hpa Yar village in Hopong township, belongs to a cooperative: Green Gold. Thanks to the hard work of farmers like Moe Ohn, yesterday, Green Gold learned that they had been awarded Fairtrade Certification – the first coffee cooperative in Myanmar to do so.

Green Gold was founded in 2015 with the support of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the governments of Finland, Germany and Switzerland. Green Gold is located in Southern Shan state, a region known for conflict and being one of the highest producers of opium in the world. Green Gold is made of almost 1000 small-scale farmers who used to grow opium. They come from both the Shan and Pao ethnic groups, who have historically been in conflict with one another. Today though, these farmers, including Moe Ohn, are working together to grow high quality arabica coffee beans.

This coffee is going places, literally. The coffee Moe Ohn and her fellow farmers have picked, was served at the Parliament in France this March. Green Gold has partnered with Malongo, a French coffee company to sell the coffee in Europe.

For Moe Ohn and her family, Fairtrade certification guarantees they receive a fair price for their coffee. The farmers also receive an additional premium which can be used as direct investment for social benefits (schools, roads, health centers, etc.) in their communities. This premium can also be invested for the strengthening of the cooperative itself or to improve the productive conditions.

All the farmers have the same responsibilities, same decision power and the same number of votes. All members must know what the aim of the cooperative is and know basic principles of Fairtrade standards. They are involved in all steps of the production, since cooperatives must provide services to its members, including processing facilities, technical assistance and help to sell the final product. The empowerment of members and reaching financial autonomy of the cooperative is key.

Moe Ohn, and other women in the cooperative like Moe Du, Nang Htwe and Nang Lon, directly benefit from Fairtrade certification. Under Fairtrade conditions, women are empowered and there is progress towards gender equity in all the levels of the organization and on the farms. Their children will not be subject to work in the fields; after all, Fairtrade encourages the protection of the children and prohibits child labour. Fairtrade promotes the teamwork with human values as such solidarity, responsibility and the compliance of the norms among others. Environmental and health issues are reduced because there is an increase in knowledge and awareness about the proper management of chemicals in the plantations.

Ma Moe Ohn picks her coffee. **SOURCE: G. DUN, UNODC**

> "We in UNODC are thrilled that Green Gold has received the certification and recognize the importance of working with farmers to develop sustainable livelihood alternatives to opium poppy cultivation", says Troels Vester, Country Manager of UNODC Myanmar.

"We in UNODC are thrilled that Green Gold has received the certification and recognize the importance of working with farmers to develop sustainable livelihood alternatives to opium poppy cultivation", says Troels Vester, Country Manager of UNODC Myanmar. In addition to supporting the cooperative to achieve the Fairtrade conditions required for certification, UNODC has also supported the farmers to obtain of land ownership certificates including women's access to land ownership, and forestry education. Opium farming caused severe deforestation in Shan State, so UNODC has worked to educate farmers on sustainable forest management and reforesting 700 hectares of valuable forest species.

For the coffee aficionado, Fairtrade provides an assurance that the coffee that is consumed is ethical and traceable. All coffee is sourced from the cooperative's members and the quality is guaranteed. Fairtrade certification promote organic agriculture, agroforestry systems and they prohibit dangerous pesticides and GMO products.

For the farmers in the Shan State, they now have an alternative to growing opium, a produce that had given Shan State a bad name. Fairtrade helps to meet a number of the Sustainable Development Goals, including Goal 1: No Poverty, Goal 5: Gender Equality, Goal 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth, Goal 12 Responsible Consumption and Production, and Goal 16 Peace Justice and Strong Institutions. For producers as well as consumers, contributing to Fairtrade is a badge of honour. The small-scale farmers benefit from trading and farming practices that they have not experienced before. For the consumer, it is a responsible way of helping to contribute to more sustainable livelihoods and a cleaner environment. Waking up to smell Myanmar coffee now has a deeper meaning and an uplifting aroma. The coffee that Moe Ohn produces is ready to take on the world by storm.

Khun Chit Tin, Quality Manager of Green Gold, inspects the coffee before shipment. **SOURCE: J. PEREZ, UNODC**

Representatives to the 2018 General Assembly Gather at the Green Gold Warehouse in Taunggyi. **SOURCE: J. PEREZ, UNODC**

Myanmar Daily Weather Report

(Issued at 7:00 pm Wednesday 31st July, 2019)

BAY INFERENCE: Monsoon is strong over the Andaman Sea and South Bay and moderate elsewhere in Bay of Bengal.

FORECAST VALID UNTIL NOON OF THE 1st July, 2019: Rain or thundershowers will be scattered in Magway Region and Northern Shan State, fairly widespread in Nay Pyi Taw, Lower Sagaing and Mandalay Regions and Kayah State and widespread in the remaining Regions and States with isolated heavyfalls in Sagaing, Mandalay, Yangon and Ayeyawady Regions, Kachin, Kayin and Mon States. Degree of certainty is (100%).

STATE OF THE SEA: Squalls with moderate to rough seas are likely at times Gulf of Mottama, Deltaic, off and along Mon-Taninthayi Coasts. Surface wind speed in squalls may reach (35)m.p.h. Sea will be moderate elsewhere in Myanmar waters. Wave height will be about (8 – 10) feet in Gulf of Mottama, Deltaic, off and along Mon-Taninthayi Coasts and about (6-8) feet in off and along Rakhine coasts.

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Increase of rain in Bago, Yangon, Ayeyarwady and Taninthayi Regions, Rakhine, Kayin and Mon States.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 1st July, 2019: Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 1st July, 2019: One or two rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 1st July, 2019: Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

Invitation to young writers for Sunday Special

The Global New Light of Myanmar is accepting submissions of poetry, opinion, articles, essays and short stories from young people for its weekly Sunday Next Generation Platform. Interested candidates can send their work to the **Global New Light of Myanmar** at No. 150, Nga Htat Kyee Pagoda Road, Bahan Township, Yangon, in person, or by email to **ce@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com** with the following information: **(1)** Sector you wish to be included in (poetry, opinion, etc.), **(2)** Own name and (if different) your penname, **(3)** Your level of education, **(4)** Name of your School/College/University, **(5)** A written note of declaration that the submitted piece is your original work and has not been submitted to any other news or magazine publishing houses, **(6)** A color photo of the submitter, **(7)** Copy of your NRC card, **(8)** Contact information (email address, mobile number, etc.).— **Editorial Department, The Global New Light of Myanmar**

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

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

Magway hospital to provide free treatment to Hepatitis C patients

THE Magway general hospital will open a Hepatitis C virus (HCV) treatment center in August, the 10th such center in Myanmar, to provide free treatment to patients suffering from HCV, said Dr Khin Sandar Aung, the manager of the National Hepatitis Control Programme.

HCV treatment centers have been opened at Yangon, Mandalay, and Nay Pyi Taw general hospitals since 2017, while similar centers were set up in Myitkyina and Mawlamyine hospitals in 2018.

"The Magway general hospital is planning to set up a new treatment center. We are going to provide training to staff. Some of the medicines and laboratory equipment have already been sent to the Magway general hospital. We expect to provide free treatment to 200 to 250 patients initially," said Dr Khin Sandar Aung at a ceremony to mark World Hepatitis Day, held on 30 July at the Nan Htike Thu hotel in Magway.

A ceremony to mark World Hepatitis Day at the Nan Htike Thu Hotel in Magway on 30 July. **PHOTO: ZAYYATU (MAGWAY)**

The World Health Organization (WHO) has designated hepatitis as a public health issue and is aiming to eliminate it by 2030. Myanmar is cooperating with WHO in combating hepatitis. The Ministry of Health and Sports is planning to conduct a survey on HCV incidence in Myanmar in 2019-2020.

"Magway has got a chance to provide free HCV treatment under a WHO project. Therefore, patients with HCV will receive free medical care at the Magway general hospital," said Prof Dr Thin Thin Nwe, Medical Department, Magway University of Medicine.

According to a 2015 survey, 6.7 per cent of Myanmar's population had contracted Hepatitis B and 2.7 per cent had Hepatitis C. Although there is no preventive medicine for Hepatitis B, we can provide treatment to eliminate hepatitis, said an official at the World Hepatitis Day ceremony.—Zayyatu (Magway)

(Translated by Hay Mar)

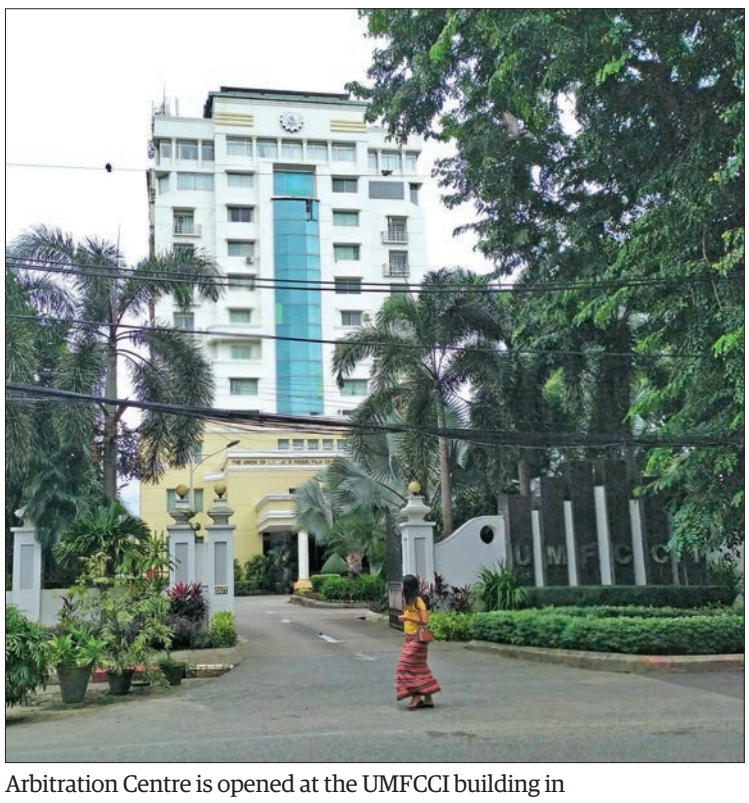
Myanmar to open arbitration centre for resolving commercial disputes

By Aye Yamone

THE Myanmar Arbitration Centre (MAC) will be opened on 3 August at the Republic of the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry to resolve commercial disputes among Myanmar entrepreneurs, according to the UMFCCI.

The Commercial Disputes Coordination and Mediation Work Committee of the UMFCCI has been trying to set up an arbitration centre since 2017. The MAC has been registered as a company with the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration, and the permission to form the centre was granted on 11 March, 2019.

"Our company is not a normal one like other companies. Ordinary companies need capital investment. When we established the MAC, we didn't have to put up any capital investment. We only have to implement the MAC with the company's guarantee," said Dr Maung Maung Thein, a consultant with the UMFCCI, at a media conference held on 31 July at the MAC at UMFCCI, Yangon.



Arbitration Centre is opened at the UMFCCI building in Yangon. **PHOTO: SUPPLIED**

Although it has been set up to look into commercial disputes, the arbitration centre will have the authority to issue punishments, he said. Once the MAC is opened, disputes need not be taken to the court of law, thus helping people save money and time, he added.

Currently, a training course is being conducted for 42 experts, who will be responsible for hearing commercial disputes brought to the MAC. The arbitrators will have to remain free from corruption, said Dr Maung Maung Thein.

"The MAC will be opened on 3 August. Clients will be able to hire any arbitrator from MAC, for a fee. But, arbitrators from MAC will work for profit. The centre can launch operations next month. We haven't decided on the charges yet," he added.

The center will allow clients involved in disputes to negotiate under their preferred law and procedures, he added.

"We will not negotiate labor issues because there are already judges for hearing disputes between employers and employees. The MAC will also not negotiate in government investment matters," said U Hnin Oo, the Managing Director of the MAC.

The Commercial Disputes Coordination and Mediation Work Committee was formed in 2016. There were over 80 commercial disputes between 2016 and 2018.

The Arbitration Law, enacted on the basis of the India Law of 1944, was revoked, and the Determination of Arbitration Law was enacted with 58 sections on 5 January, 2016.

In 2018, the Supreme Court announced an order related to the Determination of Arbitration Law.

(Translated by Hay Mar)

Exports soar to $13.37 bln

MYANMAR'S exports touched a high of US$13.37 billion between 1 October, 2018 and 19 July, 2019 in the current fiscal, according to data provided by the Ministry of Commerce.

The figure showed an increase of $992 million compared with the corresponding period of the previous FY, when income from exports stood at $12.37 billion. Of the seven export groups, shipments of agriculture, livestock, fishery, and finished industrial goods showed an increase, while those of minerals, forest, and other products declined.

Export values were registered at $2.7 billion for agro products, $320 million for livestock, $627 million for fishery products, $1.26 billion for minerals, $138 million for forest products, $7.6 billion for manufactured goods, and $673.9 million for other goods.

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

The Ministry of Commerce is focusing on export promotion in order to reduce the trade deficit, and it has adhered to its reforms policy since 2011.

In addition, a series of reforms aimed at liberalization and transparency have been introduced, through policy development, to improve the trade environment, the Permanent Secretary had said at the Myanmar Global Investment Forum 2018, held on 12 September, 2018 at MICCII in Nay Pyi Taw. — GNLM ■
(Translated by EMM)

Coconut handicrafts displayed at the market. **PHOTO: ZAYYATU (MAGWAY)**

Demand for coconut handicrafts high, but production low

ALTHOUGH handicrafts produced from coconut shells enjoy a strong demand in the market, the number of artisans engaged in the craft is too low to cater to the demand, said U Htay Aung, who owns a 'Shwelatyar' coconut shell handicraft business.

"Coconut handicraft businesses can create job opportunities, but artisans can seldom be found even in Ayeyawady and Taninthayi regions, where coconut trees are found and yields are high. Handicrafts from dried coconut are first created by artisans from Magway Region. They are then sent to markets in Myathalun and Shwesettaw pagodas," he said.

"Both locals and foreigners like to buy the products. We would like to invite young people interested in observing this art because there are few artisans involved in coconut handicraft production, in spite of the high demand in the market," he added.

"Since 2011, we have been producing monkey, elephant, and bird toys from dried coconut shells. Later, we added 30 products, including handbags, combs, buttons, stationery products, cups, flower pots, and others to the list.

The prices range from K3,000 to K10,000, depending on the products," said Daw Kyu Kyu Khine from a 'Shwelatyar' dried coconut handicraft business.

"To produce coconut toys, fresh coconuts need to be dried for a month and half, and artisans can produce two toys per day. We need more machines to improve productivity," according to artisans engaged in the sector. —Zayyatu (Magway) ■
(Translated by La Wonn)

Annual inflation reaches highest in June at 8.08%

THE annual rate of inflation in Myanmar, based on the Consumer Price Index, was the highest in June at 8.08 per cent, according to a report released recently by the Central Statistical Organization, under the Ministry of Planning and Finance.

The inflation rate was up 0.26 per cent compared to May, when it was registered at 7.82 per cent.

Compared with May, the Myanmar Kyat gained against the US dollar in June, leading to a drop in fuel oil prices.

Barring the telecommunications, non-food, tobacco, and beverages groups, there was a remarkable increase in CPI in the food, household goods and maintenance, transportation, other commodities, clothing, health, education services, recreation, and culture groups.

The average inflation rate rose gradually from 5.02 per cent in July, 2018, to touch its highest level in June this year.

In the past 12 months, the year-on-year inflation rate was the highest in May at 9.57 per cent, while core inflation, which strips out volatile food and energy prices, was 6.34 per cent.

In June, Magway Region recorded the highest inflation rate of 12.31 per cent, followed by Mon State at 10.14 per cent, and Mandalay City at 9.99 per cent. The year-on-year inflation rate fluctuated with a maximum rate of 14.33 per cent in Magway Region and a minimum rate of 3.76 per cent in Kachin State.

Earlier, the inflation rate was calculated based on a 2006 survey. The base year was later changed to 2012. The Central Statistical Organization conducted a Household Income and Expenditure Survey in 82 townships in November, 2012. To reduce the inflation rate, the concerned authorities have been making efforts on the basis of policies on finance, currency, trade, and foreign currency control, in keeping with the second five-year National Development plan.— Htet Myat ■ *(Translated by EMM)*

CB Bank launches CGI-backed loans to finance SMEs

TO provide financial assistance to small and medium-sized enterprises and fish farmers to help them expand their businesses, the Co-operative Bank launched new loan facilities, under the Credit Guarantee Insurance scheme, on Tuesday at the Myanmar Fisheries Federation office.

The CB Bank is offering five kinds of loans to SMEs and fish farmers: SME Term Loan, SME Working Capital Loan, SME-Credit Guarantee Insurance Loan (SME CGI Loan), SME Business Expansion Loan, and SME Long Term Investment Loan.

The bank is offering medium-term loans of 1 to 3 years as well as long-term loans to SMEs. Small enterprises are eligible to apply for up to a maximum of K100 million in loans, while medium-sized enterprises can access loans of up to K650 million.

SMEs engaged in manufacturing, labor-based projects, retail and wholesale, services, and other businesses are eligible for the JICA SME two-step loans. However, farmers who have access to loans provided by the Myanma Agricultural Development Bank, real estate agents, finance and insurance businessmen, precious metal dealers, and those operating liquor shops and entertainment and amusement businesses, and manufacturers of arms and ammunition cannot avail the loan facility, according to a press statement issued by the Myanma Economic Bank last year.

In the 2015-2016 fiscal year, 11 businessmen took out JICA two-step loans worth K4.8 million through SMIDB. JICA approved K36.7 billion in loans to 175 entrepreneurs in the 2016-2017FY, and K16 billion in the 2017-2018FY.

Some businessmen have complained about the tight verification process followed by financial institutions offering loans.

There are more than 67,000 registered SMEs in the country, but there are many businesses which have failed to register themselves, according to the SME Development Department.

The SMEs constitute 90 per cent of Myanmar's businesses, but most of them are facing barriers and challenges in terms of access to capital, technology, and markets.—Than Htike/ Ko Htet ■ *(Translated by E'i Myat Mon)*

Application announcement for skilled workers to Japan

1. Skilled workers from Myanmar can now apply for the new residence status of specified skilled worker from 14 industry fields and job categories to engage in Japan, in accordance with the Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC) between Myanmar and Japan.

The specified industry fields are as follow:

a) Care worker
b) Building cleaning management
c) Machine parts and tooling industries
d) Industrial machinery industry
e) Electric, Electronics and Information industries
f) Construction industry
g) Ship Building and ship machinery industry
h) Auto mobile repair and maintenance
i) Aviation industry
j) Accommodation industry
k) Agriculture
l) Fishery and aquaculture
m) Manufacture of food and beverages
n) Food service industry

2. The applicant must:
a. Pass the required skill standards and Japanese language level tests.
b. Finished level 2 technical internship programme (having completed three years as a technical intern).
3. According to MoC, skilled workers can stay in Japan for up to5 years. Of all 14 specified industry fields, skilled workers of accommodation industry will be accepted first. The test will be held by Japan in October 2019.
4. Standards for international job agencies that would send workers to Japan has been agreed by the two countries, and according to international job agency licenses registered at Department of Labour, the agencies are required to meet the standards.
5. Licensed agencies must take permission to send workers by submitting demand letters to the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population.
6. Only licensed agencies which have permission to send workers are allowed to operate. If found to be sending workers without permission from the ministry, such organization will be charged under the 1999 Overseas Employment Law.
7. The detailed list of licensed agencies will be posted on the ministry's website.
8. For further inquiry, contact Labour Exchange office , Ph -067-430186, 430442, 430183 or E-mail to dolmigration@gmail.com .

Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population
(Unofficial Translation)

Farmers take horticulture course at Mann Oil Field in Minbu Township

Farmers get the two-day course at Mann Oil Field in Minbu Township, Magway Region.
PHOTO: MNA

COMMUNITY FARMERS took a two-day horticulture course at the Mann Oil Field on Monday and Tuesday.

MPRL E&P, the partnership company of Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise, and East-West Seed, the company giving assistance related to vegetable seeds with the help of Netherlands government, jointly conducted the course at Mann Oil Field in Minbu Township, Magway Region.

The aims of the course are to support local farmers to apply modern farming methods in growing tomato and chilli and to expand the markets.

During the training, the head trainer of the course of East-West Seed practically demonstrated methods of seed selection, preventing vegetables pests and diseases, preparing agricultural soil boundary lines, seedling maintenance, plastic mulch, watering and irrigation to improve local organic farming production.

The two-day course on the development of tomato and chilli farming with new methods was attended by 41 local farmers.

The trainers then selected four farmers those who are interested in the new farming methods and will provide them close guiding for sample cultivations that can be studied by other farmers.

MPRL E&P is conducting many vocational classes for the local people at Mann Oil Field during 2019-2020 Fiscal Year. During July, the company gave instant food production course for women, SME management course for alumni of vocational classes and vegeculture and horticulture course for local farmers, and there were a total of 76 trainees. — MNA

(Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)

Airbus A220-300 passenger aircraft makes its debut in Myanmar

Airbus A220-300 arrives at the Yangon International Airport for the demonstration tour of the Asia-Pacific region.
PHOTO : SUPPLIED

THE Airbus A220-300 passenger airliner has arrived in Yangon, Myanmar, as part of its two-week demonstration tour of the Asia-Pacific region.

The aircraft on display at Yangon International Airport is an Airbus flight test aircraft, featuring a brand new and comfortable cabin layout of 143 seats in a single class passenger cabin.

Yesterday, airline executives and members of the media witnessed its leading-edge capabilities and high levels of passenger comfort during a special one-hour demonstration flight. Airbus representatives also highlighted the aircraft's capabilities during dedicated presentations.

The A220-300 is operated successfully yesterday in the Asia-Pacific region by Korean Air on both domestic and international services. Air Vanuatu ordered four A220s, comprising two A220-100s and two A220-300s, in February 2019.

The A220 is part of Airbus' modern and comprehensive aircraft family, which covers the market ranging from 100 to more than 400 seats. In the single-aisle category, this comprises the A220 and the A320 Family (which includes the A320neo, the best-selling aircraft in aviation history). In the widebody family, Airbus manufactures the A330 Family (including the latest A330neo) and the long range leader A350 XWB Family.

In the region's single-aisle market Airbus has over 60% market share, with more than 3,000 aircraft in service with 80 airlines, and over 1,500 on order for future delivery.

In Myanmar, Airbus has a presence in the airline market with Myanmar Airways International which operates a fleet of A319 aircraft on its services out of Yangon. —GNLM

ASEAN foreign ministers begin talks, with S China Sea on agenda

BANGKOK — Foreign ministers of 10 Southeast Asian countries began their annual meeting in Bangkok on Wednesday, with the Korean Peninsula and disputed South China Sea at the top of the agenda.

Tensions remain high in the South China Sea, where some members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations have overlapping claims with China, with a Chinese anti-ship ballistic missile test in the sea coming to light recently.

Foreign ministers from member states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations meet in Bangkok on 31 July, 2019. **PHOTO: KYODO NEWS**

In his speech at the opening ceremony of the foreign ministers' meeting, Thai Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha called on ASEAN members to deepen internal collaboration and be open to cooperation with non-ASEAN countries.

Foreign Minister Don Pramudwinai, who chaired the meeting, stressed the importance of unity and cooperation among ASEAN members. More cooperation is needed "in time of great challenges" because "we all are stakeholders," he said.

The United States and North Korea have yet to resume stalled talks on the latter's denuclearization even though their leaders have agreed to resume them.

In a joint communique to be issued after the meeting, the ministers will urge the parties concerned to resume dialogue and continue the denuclearization process on the peninsula, according to a draft of the statement seen earlier.

According to the draft, the ministers will underscore the importance of ASEAN-led platforms, such as the ASEAN Regional Forum — 27-member regional security talks that include North Korea — to promote the dialogue. The forum will be held in Bangkok on Friday.

Regarding the South China Sea, the ministers will take note of concerns from some members over land reclamation and activities in the areas that could undermine the regional stability, according to the draft. China, which claims sovereignty over almost the entire South China Sea, has reclaimed a number of disputed reefs and built airstrips and other military facilities there over the past few years. ASEAN and China have been negotiating a code of conduct for the disputed sea to manage tensions in the waters.

The ministers are expected to welcome an effort to complete the first reading of a "single draft negotiation text" of the code within this year.

ASEAN foreign ministers are scheduled to hold talks with their dialogue partners, including Japan and the United States, on Thursday.

ASEAN groups Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam. —Kyodo News ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

ASEAN fact-finding mission to visit E Timor 4-6 September over membership

BANGKOK – The 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations will send a fact-finding mission to East Timor from 4 to 6 September to assess whether the young nation is ready to take on full-fledged membership, ASEAN diplomats said.

Indonesian Permanent Representative to ASEAN Ade Padmo Sarwono told Kyodo News late Tuesday the mission will be "a high-level one consisting of senior officials from all ASEAN member countries, as well as permanent representatives to ASEAN."

He spoke on the sidelines of the annual five-day ASEAN Ministerial Meeting that runs until Saturday.

Such a high-level fact-finding mission will be the first of its kind since East Timor's application for membership in 2011 when Indonesia was chairing ASEAN.

"We will really now begin assessing, analyzing, fact-finding," another ASEAN diplomat, who refused to be named, said in an interview with a small group of reporters recently. –Kyodo News ■

Japan, US, S Korea to hold foreign ministerial talks on Friday

BANGKOK — Japan, the United States and South Korea plan to hold a foreign ministerial meeting Friday in Bangkok, with Washington likely to play a mediating role in an effort to defuse tensions between the two key US allies, sources familiar with Tokyo-Seoul ties said Wednesday.

US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo may urge Japanese Foreign Minister Taro Kono and South Korean Foreign Minister Kang Kyung Wha to exercise self-restraint in taking actions that would further deteriorate ties between the Asian countries, which have fallen to their lowest point in decades over wartime history and trade policy issues, the sources said.

It remains unclear whether US mediation efforts will affect Japan's planned Cabinet decision on Friday to remove South Korea from its list of countries allowed under preferential arrangements to buy products that could be diverted for military use.

Undated file photo shows US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo. **PHOTO: KYODO NEWS**

There are no indications that Japan will change its position. On Wednesday, trade minister Hiroshige Seko told reporters that Japan will carry out necessary procedures as planned. Separately, Kono and Kang will hold a bilateral meeting Thursday on the sidelines of Association of Southeast Asian Nations-related foreign ministerial meetings in the Thai capital, according to South Korean Foreign Ministry officials.—Kyodo News ■

Philippines approves plan to build new Manila airport

MANILA — The Philippines on Wednesday approved a plan to build a new airport near Manila, in a bid to ease congestion with the capital's existing airport operating at full capacity.

Philippine conglomerate San Miguel will build the airport in Bulakan town, north of Manila Bay, that will feature four parallel runways and serve 100-200 million passengers a year, a government statement said.

"This new international airport is important in helping ease the congestion of the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (in Manila)," Transportation Secretary Arthur Tugade said in the statement. San Miguel, which was the only company to bid for the project, will have to break ground on the $14 billion project before the end of the year and open for business no later than 2025, the statement said.

The company has said it plans to run the airport, which would be the biggest infrastructure project under President Rodrigo Duterte's government, after obtaining a government concession. —AFP ■

INVITATION TO OPEN TENDER

Sealed tenders are invited by Department of Medical Services, Ministry of Health and Sports for the supply of Medical Equipments in the (2018-2019) Budget year.

Tender documents are available during office hours at the Procurement and Supplying Division, Department of Medical Services office No (4). Ministry of Health and Sports Commencing from (26-7-2019).

Sealed bids are to be submitted to the office, not later than (21-8-2019), 12:00 Noon, after which no bid will be accepted. No telegraph/telex proposal will be accepted.

For detail information please contact the Phone No.067-3411510, 067-3411544, Procurement and Supply Division Office, Department of Medical Services, Ministry of Health and Sports.

Procurement and Supply Division
Department of Medical Services
Ministry of Health and Sports

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CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V LIMCO MARU

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V LIMCO MARU VOY. NO. (0719) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 1-8-2019 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of A.I.P.T-3 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.

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Grand Mercure Yangon Golden Empire Hotel celebrates one year anniversary

GRAND Mercure Yangon Golden Empire Hotel in Yangon celebrated the one year anniversary on 26th July, with a special dinner party with guests and media personnel.

"We, Grand Mercure Yangon Golden Empire turned a one year anniversary after overcoming the challenges.

We takes pride in hosting the International Billards and Snooker World Championship last year. Besides, We celebrated the Christmas New Year Celebration and pool party last year," said Mr Carlo Cruz, Director of Sales and Marketing.

He expressed thanks to the employees of the Grand Mercure Yangon Golden Empire for their efforts joining hands with the hotel to face the challengers last year.

At the ceremony, the hotel announced its promotion programmes and special programmes for those who will make staycation in August.
—GNLM

PHOTO: SUPPLIED

Maduro honors Americans evicted from Venezuelan embassy in US

CARACAS — President Nicolas Maduro on Tuesday honored American protesters who had occupied the country's embassy in Washington for weeks in support of the beleaguered leader before being evicted by US authorities.

Venezuela broke off relations with Washington after President Donald Trump said he recognized opposition politician Juan Guaido as acting president — one of around 50 countries to acknowledge the 36-year-old as leader of the crisis-hit nation.

A number of left-wing and pacifist activists protesting Guaido's bid to remove Maduro from power occupied the Venezuelan embassy in Washington in April, aiming to block the entry of his delegation to the embassy, before US police evicted them the following month. On Tuesday, Maduro awarded the American squatters a replica of the sword used by Venezuela's founding father Simon Bolivar.

"I want to give it to you as a show of deep gratitude," he said.

The Venezuelan government had condemned the eviction of the activists and accused the US government of violating international law.

For more than a month, an unclear number of Americans belonging to a group calling itself the Embassy Protection Collective lived in the diplomatic mission, with the consent of the Maduro government. A group of Venezuelan residents of Washington meanwhile camped outside the building to protest against the squatters and prevent any supplies from being delivered to them inside.—AFP ■

Maduro awarded the American squatters a replica of the sword used by Venezuela's founding father Simon Bolivar. **PHOTO: AFP**

Pakistan evacuates Chinese nationals as firing in Kashmir kills three

MUZAFFARABAD (Pakistan) — Pakistani officials evacuated more than 50 Chinese nationals working near the Kashmir frontier, authorities said Wednesday, after skirmishes with India killed at least three people and injured dozens.

The Chinese were working on a dam being constructed in Pakistani Kashmir along the confluence of the Neelum and Jhelum rivers when firing pushed authorities to move the workers late Tuesday, according to a senior local administration official Badar Munir. Another local official Raja Shahid Mahmood said the decision was made after Indian security forces fired a volley of "indiscriminate fire that killed three people including a woman and a child and wounded 31 others during the last 24 hours".

Mahmood said local mosques have also called on residents to refrain from unnecessary movements which would expose them to potential firing.

Pakistan's military spokesman went on to say via Twitter that ceasefire violations "shall always be effectively responded" to, adding that security forces will "take all measures to protect innocent civilians" along the de-facto border. Tensions remain high with arch-rival India after the nuclear armed neighbours launched tit-for-tat air strikes in February following a suicide bombing in Indian Kashmir which was claimed by Pakistan-based militants.

Since then they have stepped back from the brink, but firing between the two sides across the de-facto border dividing Kashmir has continued. Kashmir is ruled in part but claimed in full by both countries, who have fought two of their three wars since independence in 1947 over it. The latest incident comes after US President Donald Trump Trump triggered a political fiasco in India last week by claiming during a meeting with Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan that Indian leader Narendra Modi had asked him to mediate in the Kashmir dispute. India vehemently denied that Modi had made any such request, saying the Kashmir issue must be resolved bilaterally between the two countries. —AFP ■

Tensions between Pakistan and India are still high following a suicide bombing in Indian Kashmir in February. **PHOTO: AFP**

NEWS IN BRIEF

Greece releases policeman convicted of teen killing

ATHENS — A Greek policeman, convicted of killing a teenager in Athens 11 years ago, has been released from prison after his life-sentence was reduced, a judicial source said Wednesday.

In 2010, Epaminondas Korkoneas was found guilty of killing 15-year-old Alexis Grigoropoulos two years earlier in the Athens neighbourhood of Exarchia, known for its repeated clashes between authorities and anarchists.

The teenager's death triggered riots in the capital and across Greece. Since then, students mark the event every year in rallies that often take a violent turn. On Monday, the Lamia Appeal Court reduced the policeman's life sentence to 13 years, as he had no previous criminal record.

Having already spent 10 years in detention and working in prison, he was also entitled to remission on his sentence and was accordingly released from prison late Tuesday.—AFP ■

Libya denies UN envoy's reports about military use of Tripoli airport

TRIPOLI — Ministry of Transport of the UN-backed Libyan government on Tuesday denied the remarks of UN Envoy to Libya Ghassan Salame about the military use of M'etiga international airport in the capital Tripoli.

"Ministry of Transport is surprised about the remarks of the UN Envoy to Libya Ghassan Salame during a UN Security Council session regarding the use of the Government of National Accord to M'etiga international airport for military purposes," the ministry said in a statement.

The ministry confirmed that the airport is only used for civil aviation as an international port.

"The repeated targeting of the airport has affected civilian facilities and aircraft. It endangers the safety of travelers and workers, obstructs the transportation movement, and causes great losses to the civil aviation and transportation," the statement explained.—Xinhua ■

Tensions high as Hong Kong pro-democracy protesters face court

HONG KONG — Dozens of Hong Kong pro-democracy protesters appeared in court Wednesday after being charged with rioting, setting the stage for further unrest in a weeks-long crisis that has rocked the global financial hub.

The announcement on Tuesday night that 44 people had been charged with rioting -- an offence that carries a jail term of up to 10 years -- immediately triggered another round of clashes between police and protesters.

Supporters continued to voice their outrage as they stood for hours on Wednesday outside court, braving heavy winds and rain, as the accused rioters appeared before a judge.

"Release the righteous... no rioters, only tyranny... reclaim Hong Kong, the revolution of our times," the supporters chanted.

The protesters were generally calm as they took turns to appear in front of the judge, who formally read the charges and granted them bail.

The range of their professions reflected the wide support across Hong Kong society for the pro-democracy movement.

They included a teacher, a nurse, an airline pilot, a barber, a chef, an electrician, a construction worker and unemployed people, according to their charge sheets. A 16-year-old girl was also among the group.

Protest evolution

Semi-autonomous Hong Kong has endured more than seven weeks of unrest that began with a government bid to introduce a law that would have allowed extraditions to mainland China. The protests evolved into a movement for deeper democratic reforms and an end to eroding freedoms, in the most significant challenge to Beijing's rule since the city's handover from Britain in 1997.

In the latest confrontation, police used pepper spray and batons against hundreds of protesters who had gathered outside a police station in solidarity with those who had just been charged.

Footage broadcast live on television showed an officer aiming a shotgun at protesters who were throwing objects at him.

The previous two weekends had seen a surge in the level of violence used by both protesters and police, who repeatedly fired rubber bullets and tear gas to disperse projectile-throwing crowds.

A mob of pro-government thugs also attacked protesters, putting 45 people in hospital.

The 44 protesters were charged for their alleged role in running battles between police and protesters in a well-heeled residential neighbourhood on the main island on Sunday.—AFP ■

Supporters of those charged with rioting voiced their outrage as they stood outside court, braving heavy winds and rain. **PHOTO: AFP**

The missiles fired by the North last week were described as a new type of tactical guided short-range weapon. **PHOTO: AFP**

N Korea fires two ballistic missiles: South

SEOUL — Pyongyang fired two ballistic missiles on Wednesday, Seoul said, days after a similar launch that the nuclear-armed North described as a warning to the South over planned joint military drills with the United States.

The two devices were fired from the Wonsan area on the east coast at dawn and flew around 250 kilometres (155 miles) into the sea, said South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff.

"We stress a series of missile launches do not help ease tensions in the Korean Peninsula and urge the North to refrain from such acts," they said in a statement, while the presidential Blue House expressed "strong concern".

The North is banned from ballistic missile launches under UN Security Council resolutions but it was the second such firing in less than a week, despite a meeting between leader Kim Jong Un and US President Donald Trump last month.

Pyongyang and Washington are engaged in a long-running diplomatic process over the North's nuclear and missile programmes that has seen three high-profile encounters between their leaders in the space of a year. They agreed to resume talks during their impromptu June encounter in the Demilitarised Zone that divides the peninsula, but that working-level dialogue has yet to begin.

Pyongyang has warned the negotiations could be derailed by Washington and Seoul's refusal to scrap the annual manoeuvres between their forces. The North has defied years of isolation and sanctions to develop its arsenal and has not given up any of its weapons, while proving itself adept at dragging out discussions.

On his way to an Asian regional forum where the North will be high on the agenda — even though its foreign minister will apparently not attend — US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo told reporters that the talks had been expected "within weeks" but were taking "a little bit longer" to start. There was no immediate comment from Pyongyang on the latest launch, but Harry Kazianis of the Center for the National Interest in Washington said it was a warning to the two security allies to stop the exercises or the North will "raise tensions to a slow boil over time".—AFP ■

China halts individual travel to Taiwan

BEIJING — China stepped up pressure on Taiwan on Wednesday as it announced the suspension of individual travel permits to the self-ruled democratic island "due to current cross-strait relations".

Relations between Communist-ruled Beijing and Taipei have plummeted since President Tsai Ing-wen came to power in 2016 because her party refuses to recognise the idea that Taiwan is part of "one China".

As punishment, Beijing has cut official communications, ramped up military exercises, poached diplomatic allies and ratcheted up economic pressure on the island.

The latest move comes as Taiwan prepares to hold a presidential election in January, with Beijing-friendly candidate Han Kuo-yu of the opposition Kuomintang (KMT) party hoping to defeat Tsai.

A programme had allowed Chinese citizens in 47 mainland cities to apply for permits to visit Taiwan on their own instead of visiting on group tours.

But the tourism ministry said in a brief statement that their issuance would be suspended from Thursday "due to current cross-strait relations" -- a move that could hurt the island's economy.

The statement did not mention any restrictions on group tours.—AFP ■

ome 65 per cent of China's 130 million international tourists preferred the independent mode of travel last year, according to an annual survey by Hotels.com. **PHOTO: AFP**

AFF U-15 Boys' Championship: Myanmar beat Philippines 1-0

Myanmar's Moe Khant (No.4) vies for the ball against the Philippines player (No. 21) during the Group A match of the AFF U-15 Boy's Championship 2019, held yesterday at Chonburi, Thailand. **PHOTO: AFF**

MYANMAR beat Philippines by 1-0 in the AFF U-15 boys' championship, held yesterday at the Stadium of Institute of Physical Education in Chonburi, Thailand.

Myanmar lined up with goal keeper Aung Kyaw Phyo, Htoo Myat Khant, Kaung Htet Paing, Moe Khant, Hein Htet Zaw Win, Wai Yan Lin Thu, Kyaw Min Khant, Wai Phone Myint Kyaw, Sai Sai Enn Htoo, Captain Lat Wai Phone, and Aung Ko Min.

It was a tough match for Myanmar, with the Philippines team, which had prepared well, dominating the play in the first half.

The Philippines team made all-out efforts, and the match almost ended in a draw, until the 74th minute, when Myanmar youth star Yan Naung Tun pounced on a loose ball and sent it directly into the net, past the Philippines goal keeper, to land the first and only goal in the match.

After the match, Myanmar coach Torssten Spittler said the match was not a good one from his team's perspective, but he was happy with the result.

"I had a serious talk with them at halftime because I was not satisfied with what happened in the first half. Fortunately, they changed and started to fight for the ball. I had told them before the match to shoot low as the Philippines keeper was tall. It took some time till they understood what I meant."

Speaking about Yan Naung Tun's goal, he said: "I think it was the first shot, a really low shot, and the goalkeeper could not block it and we scored." "It was not a good match from our side, but I'm happy with the win. We still have a long way to go," he added.

With the 1-0 win, team Myanmar are now standing fourth with 4 points in Group A of the tourney, while Timor Leste and Indonesia are placed first and second with 7 points each, and Viet Nam is third with 6 points.— Lynn Thit (Tgi)

Dagon beat Magwe 2-0 in U-19 Myanmar National League

TWO goals scored by Kyaw Wunna and Phoe Chit helped Dagon FC defeat the Magwe FC in their Week 19 match of the U-19 Myanmar National League, held yesterday at the Salin Stadium in Yangon.

Both teams were in attack mode right from the start.

The skills and football tactics used by the teams were impressive, with Magwe showing much improvement compared to previous matches.

The Dagon FC got their opening goal at 25 minutes, with a header from Kyaw Wunna Tun, off an assist from a teammate, passing the keeper from the right and landing directly into the net.

After Dagon's goal, Magwe changed their tactic, using a mix of midfield and attack.

The first half finished with Dagon leading by a goal.

In the second half, Magwe put more speed into their midfield attack in an effort to score the equalizer.

But, it was Dagon who scored again, with a surprise long kick from Phoe Chit, almost from the midfield, taking the ball over the Magwe keeper at 67 minutes.

After the second goal, Dagon stiffened their defence line to block Magwe attempts.

In the later minutes, both teams missed chances to score, and the match ended 2-0 in favour of Dagon FC. — Lynn Thit (Tgi)

A Dagon FC player (red) tries to take the ball past Magwe FC players (blue) in the Week 19 match of the U-19 Myanmar National League yesterday at the Salin Stadium in Yangon. **PHOTO: MNL**

Rooney says his future is in MLS ahead of All-Star clash

ORLANDO — Wayne Rooney stressed Tuesday that his future remains in Major League Soccer amid new suggestions his family are unsettled in Washington and want him to return to England before his current contract expires.

The former England and Manchester United forward bristled when asked about stories circulating in England that wife Coleen has demanded he quits North America when his current DC United contract expires at the end of 2021.

DC United striker Wayne Rooney, in center with his son watching an NBA game, said Tuesday he has not made any plans for a return to England. **PHOTO: AFP**

Rooney, in Orlando ahead of Wednesday's MLS All-Star match against Atletico Madrid, says he has started work on his coaching badges and admits he wants to follow the likes of new Chelsea coach Frank Lampard and make the transition from player to manager.

The striker signed a three-and-a-half year deal last summer following his move from Everton.

But when asked by AFP if his wife has put down demands for him to quit football for the sake of his family, Rooney snapped: "Is that what was in the media? That my wife has got her own way?

"Those reports are a bit far fetched. I'm concentrating on playing for DC United and trying to get them into the playoffs.

"I haven't thought about anything beyond that.

"I am a bit tired as I left on Tuesday morning at 4am to come to Orlando but I feel in good shape."

Rooney has enjoyed his spell in MLS, scoring 23 goals in 42 appearances.

At the age of 33, however, the Liverpool-born star knows his playing career won't last forever.

"Coaching is something which I have thought about for a long time," Rooney said.

"I'm in the process now of going through my badges. It would be a shame for me to finish playing and just walk away from the game.

"I have a desire to go into management and hopefully the right opportunity will come up."

Rooney will team with fellow European star Zlatan Ibrahimovich and Carlos Vela, the Mexcian forward and current MLS goals leader, against an Atletico side boasting the likes of Spanish international Diego Costa and Portuguese wonderkid Joao Felix.

LA Galaxy forward Ibrahimovich, 37, gave the impression of someone who would rather be resting than taking part in an exhibition game in the searing Florida heat and humidity.—AFP ■