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Union Minister U Kyaw Tint Swe delivers statement at General Debate of 74<sup>th</sup> Session of UNGA

THE leader of the Myanmar delegation and Union Minister for the Office of the State Counsellor, U Kyaw Tint Swe, delivered a statement at high-level General Debate on the fifth day of the 74th Session of the United Nations General Assembly held on 28 September 2019 at the United Nations Headquarters.

In his statement, the Union Minister apprised the Assembly of the Government's efforts on poverty eradication, quality education, climate action, democratization, constitutional reform, peace and reconciliation and addressing challenges regarding the situation in Rakhine State.

The Union Minister



Union Minister U Kyaw Tint Swe delivers the statement at high-level General Debate of the 74<sup>th</sup> Session of the United Nations General Assembly held on 28 September 2019 at the United Nations Headquarters. **PHOTO: MNA**

Darusman Reports, without exception, are biased and flawed, based not on facts but on narratives. The latest reports are even worse.

stressed the need of multilateral institutions to uphold the sovereignty of nations, working in concert for a greater good, ensure equality of actions and scrupulously avoid double standards and ‘exceptional-

ism’. He reiterated that Myanmar holds the view that issues between neighbours can and must be resolved bilaterally in an amicable and friendly manner, and called on Bangladesh to faithfully implement the bi-

lateral agreement.

He also reaffirmed Myanmar’s position on the reports of Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) (Darusman reports), the establishment of Independent Investigative Mechanism (IIM),

the jurisdiction of International Criminal Court (ICC) over the issue in Rakhine State and the Rosenthal report regarding the involvement of United Nations in Myanmar.

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Opening hour 10:30 am to 10:30 pm



# Union Minister U Kyaw Tint Swe delivers statement at UNGA

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The Union Minister highlighted the Government's commitment to build a society that respects human rights and fundamental freedoms, where all citizens can attain peace, prosperity and freedom from fear.

The Myanmar delegation leader's full statement is as follows:

### Mr. President, Excellencies, Distinguished delegates,

I would like to congratulate you on your election as President of the 74th session of the General Assembly. We are confident that under your able leadership this session will achieve fruitful results. I would also like to convey our deep appreciation to Her Excellency Maria Fernanda Espinosa of Ecuador, for her stewardship of the 73rd session.

Myanmar considers this year's theme, "Galvanizing multilateral efforts for poverty eradication, quality education, climate action and inclusion" to be most timely. These count amongst the most daunting challenges the world faces today which can only be overcome through the coordinated efforts of the entire international community.

### POVERTY ERADICATION Mr. President,

Eradicating poverty in all its forms is the greatest global challenge, and a sine qua non for sustainable development. In Myanmar, we pursue a careful balance between economic and social development on one hand and environmental protection and sustainability on the other. The government is resolute in its commitment to address poverty. To this end, we have developed a range of strategies which go beyond simply stimulating economic growth. Our efforts are bearing fruit, with poverty in Myanmar halved from 48.2 percent in 2005 to 24.8 percent in 2017.

As a member of the community of nations, the Government of Myanmar has confirmed its commitment to the 2030 Agenda. To attain the Sustainable Development Goals, we have developed a comprehensive social, economic and environmental policy reform agenda which



Members of the Myanmar delegation listen to the statement delivered by Union Minister U Kyaw Tint Swe at the 74th Session of United Nations General Assembly. **PHOTO: MNA**

we call the 'Myanmar Sustainable Development Plan (MSDP)'. Myanmar has experienced rapid growth in recent years, becoming one of the region's fastest growing economies with an annual growth rate of 6.5% in 2018-2019. As Myanmar opened its economy, investment and trade have grown significantly. In keeping with this trend, trade and investment policies continue to be revised in line with national and global commitments and in accordance with liberal inclusive principles.

### QUALITY EDUCATION Mr. President,

Myanmar fully recognizes that equitable access to quality education is foundational to a country's development. Our National Education Strategic Plan (NESP) recognizes that our education system must undergo a major transformation over the coming years, if we are to meet the life-long-learning and career aspirations of our students, adults and youth.

### CLIMATE ACTION AND THE ENVIRONMENT Mr. President,

The adverse impacts of climate change pose significant obstacles to poverty reduction and threaten hard-won progress towards achieving sustainable development. Indeed, climate change could be considered as the defining issue of our time. Urgent action is required to halt and reverse environmental degradation if we are even to have a chance of achieving SDGs. In this connection, I welcome the convening of the Climate Action Summit, and wish to underscore

the urgency of responding to climate change, and the importance of implementing both the Paris Agreement and the Kyoto Protocol.

To realize our country's full potential, we must protect and manage our natural environment. In this regard, Myanmar is gradually transforming itself into a climate-resilient, low-carbon society that is truly sustainable, prosperous and inclusive. Myanmar has promulgated a new Conservation of Biodiversity and Protected Areas Law, followed by a new Forest Law in 2018, in line with the SDGs and other international commitments. Furthermore, this year, we launched two new policies, the National Environmental Policy and the Myanmar Climate Change Policy, which shall guide government's decision-making on environmental management.

### MULTILATERALISM Mr. President,

The United Nations is at the heart of multilateralism on which we place our hopes and aspirations. This said, our world is facing the challenges of transition and geopolitical shifts. The UN and other multilateral institutions need to recognize the disconnect between the expectations of peoples and nations and the responses of institutions and policies. Such a disconnect creates mistrust in international system and institutions as is evidenced by the increase in nationalism and populism. Discontent with globalization, the imbalanced distribution of wealth, the danger of terrorism and anxiety over

immigration feed the growth of unilateralism.

Some nations, which once shared unifying priorities and visions, are now drifting apart politically and economically. The structure of international politics has also been transformed. Countries are coming to the realization that in the new geopolitical order it is getting harder to find a common thread that ties their members together.

### Mr. President,

**The UN should take a stern look at how it is evolving. It must avoid the mistake of allowing unwieldy mandates or unilaterally extending its powers with no corresponding due diligence as to impact and assurance of quality. Multilateral institutions should never be used as a tool to target member states. They should uphold the sovereignty of nations, working in concert for a greater good, ensure equality of actions and scrupulously avoid double standards and 'exceptionalism'. Left unchecked, the UN as a beacon of peace and security may end up with huge deficits of trust. This cannot be allowed to happen as there are critical issues that can only be addressed through multilateral efforts. No nation should be made to feel that its value in the UN is decided by the degree of material wealth and political influence it can muster.**

### DEMOCRATIZATION Mr. President,

Myanmar is undergoing a process of democratization and in doing so it has embraced the culture of political dialogue as a

means of solving internal conflicts by peaceful means. The achievement of durable peace is integral to Myanmar's journey towards sustainable and inclusive development. We regard rule of law as a fundamental principle of democratic governance. The government and the legislature are seeking to make our laws more transparent and in keeping with the interests of all our people to ensure that each and everyone is equal before the law. Steps are also being taken to combat corruption, to enhance the independence of courts, and to ensure that trials are open and fair that harmony and justice prevail throughout the nation.

### CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM

#### Mr. President,

To attain progress in these and many other areas, we need a constitution that can truly protect and advance the democratic rights of the people. In this regard, the Hluttaw (Parliament) has taken a bold initiative towards the amendment of a number of provisions in the Constitution. To that end, the Joint Committee on Amending the 2008 Constitution was established. The Committee has compiled more than 3,700 recommended changes from various political parties and intends to draft an amendment bill based on its findings. Our democratic endeavours and associated reforms are continuous and vibrant.

### PEACE AND RECONCILIATION

#### Mr. President,

Myanmar is a multi-ethnic society with a history of protracted insurgencies. The achievement of national reconciliation and peace is our government's topmost priority. We have convened 3 sessions of the Union Peace Conference and adopted a total of 51 basic principles to be included in the Union Peace Accord; an accord that will lead to a Democratic Federal Union which guarantees security, prosperity, peace, and national harmony. A total of ten Ethnic Armed Organisations (EAOs) have already signed the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA).

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Despite the recent successes in broadening the Agreement's coverage, there is still a long way to go before all remaining non-signatories are on board. Notwithstanding challenges, negotiations continue. A successful outcome calls for flexibility, a spirit of accommodation, and patience on all sides, as well as the continued encouragement and help of our friends. We are determined to resolve differences through dialogue, negotiation and peaceful means and thus build mutual trust and understanding.

**THE SITUATION IN RAKHINE STATE**  
**Mr. President,**

Let me now touch upon recent developments in Rakhine State. Our democratic transition is still young and as yet incomplete. As we struggle to step out from poverty's shadow, while striving for inclusive development and peace, we must overcome a range of challenges, from imperfect Constitution to continued conflicts. The situation in Rakhine State, an issue that has deep and historical roots, counts amongst these challenges.

We fully share the concern of the international community over the violence that affects communities in Rakhine State. In fact, the government's efforts to bring peace and stability predate the violent attacks by the ARSA terrorist group in 2016 and 2017 that triggered off the current humanitarian crisis. Since assuming office in 2016, the elected civilian government has placed the highest priority on addressing the situation in Rakhine State. To find a lasting solution, we established a Central Committee for the Implementation of Peace, Stability and Development in Rakhine State, chaired by our State Counsellor and the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State headed by Dr. Kofi Annan. Our aim was to find long-term, durable and practical solutions to these delicate and sensitive issues of Rakhine State.

The issue in Rakhine is one of the complex challenges faced by Myanmar on its path towards democracy. The government has been striving through a holistic approach



Union Minister U Kyaw Tint Swe delivers the statement at the United Nations General Assembly on 28 September at the United Nations Headquarters. **PHOTO: MNA**

for long term stability, security and sustainable development in the State. Our priority now is to expedite repatriation and to create a more conducive environment for verified returnees. To this end, we are cooperating with Bangladesh, UNDP and UNHCR, ASEAN, friends and well-wishers.

Myanmar is aware of the many obstacles, including destructive movements in the camps aimed at preventing repatriation and exploiting the plight of displaced persons that need to be addressed. Smooth and successful repatriation requires genuine political will, and committed efforts as well as strict adherence to the signed Agreements.

**Mr. President,**

The displaced persons now in Cox's Bazar who had been resident in Rakhine State have different legal status. We are willing to repatriate them in accordance with the bilateral agreement signed between Myanmar and Bangladesh. The agreement calls for the issuance of identity cards to the returnees. Those who qualify for citizenship under our Citizenship Law will be issued with citizenship cards. The rest will be issued with National Verification Cards (NVC). NVCs are similar to the "green card" much sought after by immigrants in the United States.

Myanmar strongly holds the view that issues between neighbours can and must be resolved bilaterally in an amicable and friendly manner. The current issue of displaced per-

sons in Cox's Bazar can and must be resolved bilaterally, particularly as Myanmar and Bangladesh have signed a bilateral agreement to address this issue since November 2017. There have been persistent calls to put pressure on Myanmar. There is also a call to set up a "Safe Zone" inside Myanmar. Such a demand is neither warranted, nor, workable. Despite obstacles, including killings and threats by ARSA, some 300 people from camps in Cox's Bazar have returned under their own arrangement

The people of Myanmar are pragmatic and resilient. We value friendly relations with all nations but we do not respond well to coercion that is removed from the fairness and consideration due to a sovereign independent member of the family of nations.

On the 15th of this month, Myanmar's Hluttaw (Parliament) celebrated the International Democracy Day, where Politicians from various political parties made statements. I wish to highlight one of the statements on Rakhine by the

We call on Bangladesh to faithfully implement the bilateral agreement, which is the only feasible way to resolve the issue of the displaced persons. We also call on Bangladesh to allow the speedy repatriation of those who have long expressed their desire to return, including some 400 people of Hindu faith.

and of their own volition. They have resumed their lives in conditions of safety and dignity.

We call on Bangladesh to faithfully implement the bilateral agreement, which is the only feasible way to resolve the issue of the displaced persons. We also call on Bangladesh to allow the speedy repatriation of those who have long expressed their desire to return, including some 400 people of Hindu faith. Grand standing, introducing new elements, putting forward new conditionalities will be a futile exercise.

Member of Parliament from an ethnic minority. He said in regard to the external pressure exerted on Myanmar "they are flouting our territorial integrity and national sovereignty. Only peoples of sovereign independent nations can enjoy the true essence of Democracy."

**ACCOUNTABILITY**  
**Mr. President,**

The Government of Myanmar sympathizes sincerely with all those who have been affected by the problems in Rakhine State.

Myanmar is not opposed to accountability for any wrong doing related to the large outflow of displaced persons to Bangladesh. We firmly stand for principles which are the cornerstones of the international legal order.

On 30 July 2018, President U Win Myint activated a special investigation procedure pursuant to which the Independent Commission of Enquiry is currently preparing its report, with recommendations for further action. Like some other member states of the United Nations, Myanmar has a military justice system, provided for in our 2008 Constitution. A military investigation into Rakhine-allegations is currently being undertaken by the Office of the Judge Advocate General. A recent announcement suggests that there will soon be a court martial. The integrity of these independent investigations should not be compromised by international actors.

On 4 July 2019, the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court requested a pre-trial chamber to authorise an investigation into Rakhine-allegations. Independent scholars have already identified the request as problematic in that: it excludes alleged crimes committed by the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA) with deliberate omission of the undisputed fact that their actions precipitated the displacement; that she relies heavily on human rights reports that contain factual errors with regard to both international and Myanmar law; and that her request mischaracterizes the criminal justice system of Myanmar. This critique is all the more serious when we consider that Myanmar is not a party to the Statute of the International Criminal Court. The Government's position remains that the Court does not have jurisdiction over alleged crimes in our country.

The ICC Prosecutor is focusing on the outflow from Rakhine State to Bangladesh, while she is silent on the broader picture of the various reasons, immediate as well as long-standing, that brought about the displacement, and the various actors who were involved.

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Embassy of India hosts photo exhibition to mark 150<sup>th</sup> Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi

THE Embassy of India yesterday on Merchant Road in Yangon hosted a photo exhibition to mark the 150<sup>th</sup> Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi.

Indian Ambassador Shri Saurabh Kumar and spouse cut the ceremonial ribbon to launch the ceremony at 9:30 am.

The ambassador and wife, the chairman of board of trustees, Celebration Committee Secretary U Win Kyaing and its joint secretary paid tribute to the Mahatma Gandhi with lighting oil lamp in front of his photo. The ambassador then made a speech before the exhibition organizer U Tin Maung Latt talked about the celebration and the chairman of board of trustee expressed thanks for the exhibition.

All the attendees posed for documentary photo and enjoyed the exhibition. The ambassador



Indian Ambassador Shri Saurabh Kumar and guests observe the photo exhibition to mark 150th Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi in Yangon yesterday. PHOTO: MNA

then signed the record book of celebration committee. The photo exhibition will be held until 30 September, and the walking event will be organized on Bo Aung Kyaw Road at 5: 30 am 2 October which is the birthday of Mahatma Gandhi.—MNA  
■ (Translated by Aung Khin)

Bodhi Tahtaung elephant camp getting fewer visitors



The view of Bodhi Tahtaung Elephant Conservation Camp in Monywa. PHOTO: WIN OO/ KO HTEIN

ONLY a small number of local visitors and tourists are visiting the Bodhi Tahtaung Elephant Conservation Camp, located

in the Bodhi Tahtaung pagoda precinct in Monywa, Sagaing Region, according to officials. “At present, the camp is

getting regular visitors. But, the number of visitors is not as high as it was during opening time. Tourists are preferring to go to the Winkabaw and Palin elephant camps. They rarely come here. Around 20 tourists have visited the camp so far. The camp receives a high number of visitors during holidays and on Sabbath days. Normally, only 20 to 30 people come to the camp,” said Daw Mi Mi Ko, the head of the Bodhi Tahtaung Elephant Camp.

The camp was opened on 14 July. There are three other elephant camps in Sagaing Region — Natpauk camp in Indaw Town-

ship, Pyarswe in Mawlaik, and Zalon Taung camp in Bamauk Township. The elephant camps have been opened to encourage the conservation of elephants and increase the revenue of the regional government, said officials. As per data from the Myanma Timber Enterprise, there are around 5,000 domesticated elephants and about 1,500 wild elephants in Myanmar. Their population is under threat as they are increasingly being poached for ivory and skin.—Win Oo/ Ko Htein ■ (Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Yield of sterculia gum falls in Sagaing Region due to poor rainfall

THE yield of sterculia gum, locally known as Saekalamae, has registered a drop in the tapping season this year owing to poor rainfall, said U Zaw Min, the chair of the Sagaing Region Sterculia Gum Producers and Exporters Association. “Lack of rainfall has led to a 20 per cent drop in yield. Last year, an acre produced 10 viss of gum (a viss is approximately equal to 1.6 kg). This year, only 8 viss of gum was produced. Despite the fall in yield, the price of sterculia gum is on the high side. I have 30 acres of sterculia farms, but only two can produce gum,” said U Chit Htay, a grower from Gwaypinkwin village, Butalin

Township. The herb is naturally found across the country. Growers from Mandalay, Sagaing, Magway, Bago, and Taninthayi regions are cultivating the gum on a commercial scale. There are 13,633 acres of commercial gum plantations, most of them based in Mandalay and Sagaing regions. Myanmar gum is currently being exported to China. Japan has also shown interest in it, but it wants only organically farmed gum. Gum producer bodies have submitted a report to the Commerce Ministry, seeking its help to link them with more external markets. Sterculia gum or Karaya

gum is grown in many countries. While the gum originating from many countries can only be used as an industrial raw material, the gum produced in Myanmar can be eaten. There-

fore, there is a high demand for Myanmar’s gum. To supply gum to other countries, farmers need to maintain high quality.—Win Oo/ Ko Khant ■ (Translated by Ei Myat Mon)



Sterculia versicolor plants thrive in hilly regions of Myanmar together with other trees. PHOTO: WIN OO/ KO KHANT



# Myanmar ratifies Optional Protocol to CRC on Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict

U Kyaw Tin, Union Minister for International Cooperation of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, who is currently at the 74th Session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York, attending the United Nations Treaty Event of 2019 at the United Nations Headquarters presented Myanmar's Instrument of Ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict to the United Nations Secretary-General who is the depositary, through Chief of the United Nations Office of Legal Affairs on 27 September 2019.

Together with the Union

Minister U Kyaw Tin, the Permanent Representative of Myanmar to the United Nations U Hau Do Suan and the members of the Myanmar Delegation attended the event while Under Secretary-General of the United Nations Office of Legal Affairs Mr. Miguel de Serpa Soares and Acting Chief of Treaty Section Mr. David K. Nanopoulos as well as Ms. Virginia Gamba, the United Nations Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict attended from the UN side.

Myanmar becomes the 169th State party to the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on



Union Minister U Kyaw Tin and dignitaries pose for a group photo at the 74th Session of the United Nations General Assembly. PHOTO: MNA

the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict.

Myanmar ratified the Optional Protocol with a declaration under article 3(2) and an interpretative declaration under

article 4 in order to implement the Optional Protocol in accordance with the domestic realities.

Myanmar's ratification of the Optional Protocol on the Rights of the Child on the In-

volvement of Children in Armed Conflict is another significant step to protect the rights of children following its enactment of the new Child Rights Law in July 2019. — MNA ■

## International Translation Day 2019 organized in Yangon



The International Translation Day 2019 event being held in Yangon yesterday. PHOTO: MNA

THE International Translation Day 2019 took place at the headquarters of News and Periodicals Enterprise on Theinpyu Road in Yangon yesterday morning.

The event at the Shwe U Daung Hall was organized by the Peak Point Academy, the translation and language society, with the participation of the Myanmar Translation Network and the Yangon Translation Society.

U Mo Lwin, the managing director of Peak Point Academy, extended greetings at the event and Saya U Hein Latt talked about the history of International

Translation Day.

Moderated by Daw Yadana, the manager of Academy, the dialogue was participated by the renowned translators Hein Latt, Ye Mya Lwin, Taw Kaung Min and Dinovo on the topics of technical terms, transliterations, loanwords and skills in original language.

The annual International Translation Day has been held for the third year in the country since the Myanmar Translation Network was established in 2017. —MNA ■ (Translation by Aung Khin)

## PPD hosts paper reading session on Myanmar culture, custom, perspectives

The paper reading session under the topic 'Myanmar Culture, Myanmar Custom and Myanmar Perspectives' entered its second day at the assembly hall of Printing and Publishing Department on Theinbyu Road in Yangon yesterday.

In the second day session, U Aye Cho (M.A) read his paper titled "Myanmar Cultural Perspective from Myanmar Custom Homily."

On behalf of Dr Toe Hla, Assistant Director of Department of Historical Research and National Library Dr Naing Naing Kyi read the paper titled "Badon Min and Royal Decrees (Tracing history of the era from

royal decrees).

Professor of the Myanmar-sar Department Dr Nyein Nyein read the paper titled "Dress Patterns from Poems," and Dr Soe Soe Naing (Yangon University) read the paper titled "Myanmar Farm-use Traditional Wooden Plow."

On behalf of Dr Mo Mo Thant (Yangon University), Professor of the History Department in Yangon University of Foreign Languages Dr Khin Thida read the paper titled "Myanmar Society and Thilashin (Nun)."

The resource persons also discussed the questions raised by the attendees.

After the discussion, Director-General of Printing and Publishing Department U Aung Myo Myint made a closing remark, and presented the chairman and resource persons with gifts.

The Sarpaybeikman of Printing and Publishing Department, Ministry of Information, organized the paper reading session, with the aims of disseminating Myanmar culture, Myanmar customs and Myanmar perspectives among younger generations through the Myanmar literature, conserving Union standard and cultural standards, strengthening patriotic and nationalistic spirits



The second day of the paper reading session on Myanmar Culture, Myanmar Custom and Myanmar Perspectives being held in Yangon yesterday. PHOTO: MNA

via Myanma customs, perspectives and cultural heritages, and assisting unity among the Union ethnic races via literary heritages.—MNA ■ (Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun )



# Union Minister U Kyaw Tint Swe delivers statement at UNGA

## FROM PAGE-3

This silence widens the divide between the International Criminal Court and the people of Myanmar who have been made to feel that their concerns are of less import than the perceptions of influential nations and organizations acquainted but superficially if at all with the true situation on the ground.

### Mr. President,

Myanmar was a British colony for nearly one hundred years. During this period, the colonial power transferred hundreds of thousands of civilians from British India to the then Burma to propel the rapidly expanding rice production and export. In 1927 alone, there were more than 480,000 such transfers into occupied colonial Burma. The Burmese were reduced to a minority in their own main city, Rangoon (Yangon). The British census of 1872 reported 58,255 Muslims in Akyab District (modern Sittwe). By 1911, the Muslim population had increased to 178,647. The waves of migration were primarily due to the requirement of cheap labour from British India to work in the paddy fields. Immigrants from Bengal, mainly from the Chittagong region, “moved en masse into western townships

of Arakan”. As in other colonized territories across the world, our local population had no say whatsoever with regard to the seismic demographic transformation of their lands. Nevertheless, Myanmar accepts it as part of the chequered legacy for which we assumed responsibility when we won our independence in 1948. It was only in 1949, with the adoption of the fourth Geneva Convention, that international law expressly prohibited the transfer of civilians into occupied territories. But there was no recognition of the troublesome consequences of such operations.

If the international community passes fundamentally different judgments on occurrences of one and the same practice albeit at a different time, perceptions of double standards will grow. If left unaddressed, such perceptions will undermine respect for international criminal justice and fuel the danger of extreme polarisation.

As this General Assembly Session is focusing on the galvanization of multilateral efforts for inclusion, we should reflect on the relationship between root causes of violent conflicts, accountability, social cohesion, and polarisation. International actors should turn every stone to contribute to the strengthening of national accountability

capacity, and at the same time ensure that they themselves uphold the highest standards of quality control in their international human rights and criminal justice efforts.

### DARUSMAN REPORTS Mr. President,

Myanmar has objected to the formation of the Fact Finding Mission since its inception because of our serious concern over its composition and mandate, as well as its capacity for fairness and impartiality. Events have proved that our concerns are justified. Darusman Reports, without exception, are biased and flawed, based not on facts but on narratives. The latest reports are even worse.

We cannot help but conclude that these were prompted more by hostility towards the democratically elected government and the peace loving people of Myanmar than by a genuine desire to resolve the challenges of Rakhine State. Therefore, we also reject the establishment of the new Investigation Mechanism (IIM) set up to bring Myanmar to tribunals to which we object strongly. These include the International Criminal Court (ICC). Our position on the ICC is abundantly clear. The ICC does not have jurisdiction over Myanmar.

### ROSENTHAL REPORT Mr. President,

We are also disappointed by the Rosenthal Report. The facts presented are inaccurate, distorted and lack professional objectivity. The methodology is technically flawed and highly biased, based on pre-conceived ideas.

The report excludes significantly relevant initiatives undertaken by the State and civil society of Myanmar as well as various support programmes provided under bilateral and multilateral arrangements.

We request the members of the United Nations to differentiate motives behind the actions in this Assembly: a genuine will to protect human rights or to hijack human rights issue for political purposes.

As we address the delicate issue of Rakhine, we need truth, fairness and constructive support. Exertion of discriminatory scrutinization and political pressure with malicious intent, will not contribute to our efforts in resolving the problems.

In this regard, we, the government and people of Myanmar, truly appreciate the support rendered by many friends and partners and their constructive cooperation based on genuine

goodwill. It benefits not just people of Myanmar but peoples all over the world who value justice and fair play for all nations, both great and small.

### CONCLUSION Mr. President,

The people of Myanmar have waited decades for the emergence of democracy in our country. Transformation from authoritarianism to a democratic system is a daunting challenge. But it is a challenge that our government and our people have taken on with faith and determination. Our peace process, based on an inclusive framework for political dialogue with all ethnic armed organizations, will continue. We will use the platform of the 21st Century Panglong, the Union Peace Conference, to create the Democratic Federal Union to which our people aspire. We will strive to build a society that respects human rights and fundamental freedoms, a society where all citizens can attain peace, prosperity and freedom from fear. We invite the international community to join hands with us, in a constructive way, to ensure that democracy takes firm root in Myanmar.

Thank you Mr. President.

■ ■ ■



The returnees are seen at Nga Khu Ya Reception Centre in Maungtaung Township, Rakhine State, of their own volition on 25 September. PHOTO: MNA

## Twenty-seven returnees from Bangladesh arrive back at Reception Centre in Maungtaung

A total of 27 returnees from Bangladesh arrived back at Nga Khu Ya Reception Centre in Maungtaung Township, Rakhine State, of their own volition at 9 am on 25 September.

Authorities managed their repatriation process, with providing humanitarian assistance and issuing national verification cards after scrutinizing them in accordance with the immigration and security rules.

The returnees of 14 families included 4 males and 3 females under 10 years old, 12 males and 8 females under 10. The repatriation process completed at 2 pm and they were provided with healthcare

services and household items.

Deputy Director U Min Ko, the incharge of Nga Khu Ya Reception Centre, handed over the displaced persons to Director U Soe Shwe Aung, the incharge of Hla Pho Khaung Transit Centre, and officials who supplied the returnees with foods and kitchen sets.

These returnees lived in U Shae Kya village, Kappakaung village, Myawtaung village and Kyatpyinyoe village of Maungtaung township in the past, and they were handed over to the respective war/village administrators before they left the camp at 6 pm.— (Rakhine State IPRD)

(Translated by Aung Khin)



# Certificates of Origin: MOC issues guidelines to private businesses

THE Ministry of Commerce (MOC) recently released Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for private businessmen seeking Certificate of Origin (CO), in accordance with the new trade environment in foreign countries.

According to a news release from the MOC, businessmen can apply for COs at the export-import office in Yangon and Nay Pyi Taw; the Thilawa Special Zone; and, at the 14 bor-

der trade gates — Muse, Lweje, Chinshwehaw, Kanpikete, Tachilek, Myawady, Kawthoung, Myeik, Tamu, Reed, Htikhee, Kengtung, Maese, and Mawtaung.

The MOC is issuing CO Form A so businessmen can enjoy the benefits under the Generalized System of Preferences offered by 40 developed countries, including Australia, Belarus, Canada, European Union countries, Iceland, Ja-

pan, Kazakhstan, New Zealand, Norway, Russia, Switzerland, Turkey, and the US. Form Korea, Form DFTP with India, and Form China are also being issued to help businessmen avail the duty-free tariff preference for Least Developed Countries.

Moreover, forms under the the ASEAN Trade in Goods Agreement (Form D), ASEAN-China Free Trade Area Preferential Tariff Certificate of Origin (Form E),

and ASEAN-Korea Free Trade Agreement (Form AK), ASEAN-Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership (Form AJ), ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand Free Trade Agreement (Form AANZ), ASEAN-India Free Trade Agreement (Form AI), and ASEAN-Hong Kong CO (Form AHK) are also being issued.

Only registered importers and exporters can apply for COs. The applications can

be filed online or manually at the border trade gates and offices.

At the time of application, certificates of product registration, export declaration, bill of landing, invoice, cost statement, HS-Code, and necessary documents for production will have to be submitted along with the CO Forms. Further details are available on [www.commerce.gov.mm](http://www.commerce.gov.mm). —GNLM ■ (Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

## Sino-Myanmar border trade likely to halt during week-long Chinese holiday

SINO-Myanmar border trade is likely to be suspended for a week, starting October 1, when China marks the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China, according to traders.

Normally, Chinese traders halt trading during long holidays, he added.

At present, border trade between Myanmar and China has returned to normal. Fighting in northern Shan State had brought about a temporary closure of trade. Additionally, the export of agricultural products has been halted often, on account of China clamping down on illegal goods. Myanmar merchants are facing difficulties in exporting goods to China through the legitimate channel as they find the tax levied by China is too high. Therefore, rice confiscation and price manipulation are occurring often at the border.

Data from the Ministry of Commerce shows the value of

Sino-Myanmar border trade plunged by US\$1.23 billion between 1 October, 2018 and 20 September, 2019 from \$6.86 billion recorded in the year-ago period. As of 20 September, border trade was pegged at \$5.63 billion.

At present, about 20,000 rice bags have been shipped through the border gates with the permission of the Yunnan provincial government.

Myanmar exports rice, sugar, pulses, sesame seeds, corn, dried tea leaves, fishery products, minerals, and animal products to China, while it imports agricultural machinery, electrical appliances, iron and steel-related materials, raw industrial goods, and consumer goods from the neighbouring country.

This FY, border trade values totalled \$4.6 billion at Muse, \$143.58 million at Lweje, \$518.38 million at Chinshwehaw, \$292.73 million at Kanpikete, and \$8.5 million at Kengtung.—Htet Myat ■ (Translated by EMM)

## Tax on transferring vehicle ownership to be cut to 3% next fiscal



The tax on transferring the ownership of vehicles will be brought down to 3 per cent of their value in the 2019-2020 financial year. PHOTO: MYINT MAUNG SOE

THE tax on transferring the ownership of vehicles will be brought down to 3 per cent of their value in the 2019-2020 financial year (1 October, 2019-30 September, 2020), according to the Yangon Region Road Transportation Administration Department (Myintha) office.

“We are encouraging vehicle owners to update the ownership status as the tax rate will drop significantly to 3 per cent from 15 per cent. But, the reduced rate will be applicable only for a period of one year.

Therefore, we would like to urge the current owners of vehicles to get the ownership transferred in their name within one year, as we cannot guarantee any tax relief thereafter,” said U Lian Cin Mang, the director of the RTAD (Myintha).

“The new tax rate has been set for the next fiscal year, and after that, the old tax rates of 15 per cent is likely to be imposed again. Transfer of ownership of vehicles valued below K100 million will attract a tax of just 3 per cent,” he added.

To transfer ownership, ve-

hicle owners will have to present a tax receipt from the Internal Revenue Department and the vehicle registration book to the RTAD. If the vehicle license is still valid, the vehicle will not be checked, according to the RTAD.

A radio-frequency identification (RFID) system is being implemented to track traffic crimes and control unregistered vehicles. The RFID will work only for actual vehicle owners, according to the RTAD. — Myint Maung Soe ■ (Translated by Ei Myat Mon)



Women collect the green tea leaves in a field in Shan State. PHOTO: HTET MYAT

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# The power of trees and water bodies

SOME parts of the country were inundated in August and September this year on account of unusually heavy rainfall.

Floods destroyed homes, roads, bridges, and crops, particularly in Mon and Kayin states and Taninthayi Region in the southern parts of the country. The downpour also triggered a landslide, killing a large number of people in Mon State.

Floods occurred in almost every part of western Bago Region in September and destroyed some standing crops. Subsequently,

rain-fed natural watercourses swelled up and, aided by the runoff from the hillsides, breached dams in some areas.

If we look at the complete picture, we will find that deluge and downhill currents wreaked the maximum havoc. Abnormal rainfall combined with forest depletion added to the force of downhill currents.

Although the government has completely banned timber extraction in the mountain ranges, trees are still being lost to the firewood and charcoal industry and slash-and-burn cultivation. As conventional agriculture tolerates the growth of weeds in plantations, it helps protect the soil to a certain degree. But the use of chemical weed-killers can wipe out weeds from their roots and make the land unproductive. Besides, rainwater,

downhill currents, and turbidity currents move unchecked on barren slopes or surfaces. Consequently, sediments carried by such water currents cause heavy silting in rivers, streams, and lakes.

Silting aids floods, and if lakes and watercourses are blocked with sediment, rainwater will definitely destroy property and lives.

In this regard, we must understand the importance of water bodies, both man-made and natural, and trees in holding water and preventing the occurrence of floods.

It goes without saying that the maintenance of dams and reservoirs, the preservation of natural water bodies, and the protection of forests have become our bounden duty. But, we are still weak in discharging this duty, because, perhaps, we are still ignorant.

Large swathes of forests are being cleared, chiefly for economic reasons, and many lakes and streams are giving way to new fields, industrial zones, and real estate projects. The result is that floods are growing stronger and more acute as there are few lakes, rivers, and streams to hold or channel water away.

But, the good news is that the government has put aside K9 billion to restore or save 25 silted or vanishing watercourses. We the people must also help preserve and maintain water bodies in our localities to mitigate rain-triggered natural disasters. The most important thing for us all is to realize the power of trees and water bodies in providing protection against floods.

■ ■ ■

Although the government has completely banned timber extraction in the mountain ranges, trees are still being lost to the firewood and charcoal industry and slash-and-burn cultivation.

## Diplomatic Academy of Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Myanmar

By Maha Saddhamma Jotikadhaja, Sithu Dr. Khin Maung Nyunt

THE ceremony of Architectural Design for Presentation on the Diplomatic Academy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Yangon and Honorary Awarding Ceremony was held at the Wyndham Grand Hotel, Yangon at 10.30 a.m. on 9 July 2019. Later followed a grand lunch jointly hosted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Friedrich Ebert Stiftung [FES].

U Kyaw Tin, Union Minister for the Ministry of International Co-operation handed over certificate of honour and memorable gifts to Jury Panel of Architectural Design Assessment, U Denzil Able, Director [Rtd] and retired officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. U Denzil Able also awarded honorary prizes to five Architect teams who were short-listed at the preliminary stage.

Though not a service man of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the writer of this article was and has been till today very much involved in the activities of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In the classes for reori-



Union Minister U Kyaw Tin poses for the photo with Advisory Board for the establishment of the Diplomatic Academy, Jury Members for Architectural Design Assessment in Yangon on July 8. PHOTO: MNA

Since over two decades ago till today the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has been opening two training classes: (1). Basic Diplomatic Skill [B.D.S] and Course in Diplomacy (CID). The B.D.S diploma holder can apply any Foreign Service job national, regional or international.

entation of the newly appointed Third Secretaries and already appointed ambassadors and other service men of Myanmar Embassies and Consular offices, the writer has been teaching diplomacy theory and practices, diplomatic etiquette, table manners, toasts and speeches at cocktail, dining and banquet including code of dress. Modern history, Political Science and

sovereign independent state has been conducting relations with countries far and near only specially trained and selected envoys were sent abroad for diplomatic affairs. Toyoke Than Yauk Maw Kun [တရုတ်သံရေတံဆိပ်] composed by Nawade II [Poet laureate of Konbaung Period [တရုတ်ဘောင်ခေတ်]] as one of the outstanding records of how Myanmar envoys, ambassadors and diplomats were chosen, trained and sent out on missions to countries far and near.

Since over two decades ago till today the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has been opening two training classes: (1). Basic Diplomatic Skill [B.D.S] and Course in Diplomacy (CID). The B.D.S diploma holder can apply any Foreign Service job national, regional or international. CID is for all service men in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs including already appointed and posted Myanmar ambassadors. Retired Ambassadors Directors General, Residing foreign

curriculums, teachers, standard and selection of the students were points of discussion at many meetings held. It was decided that Nay Pyi Taw should be the place for Diplomatic Academy. But it was unanimously decided that it should be in Yangon due to its facilities and global contacts.

The place chosen is on the Pyay Road facing National Museum. It is the old stadium building campus in which the earlier mentioned BDS, CID classes are being held very limited space on the ground. For Diplomatic Academy you need spacious land for buildings for classes discussion rooms, meeting, conference, seminar, workshop, library, archive, periodicals publication rooms recreation and rest room etc. . plus car parking. The said place is too small. But in view of the latest techniques architecture and ultra-modern design, they say it is possible. Space underground and upward be utilized.

Myanmar is developing, moving faster. Her international relations and global contacts are expanding by leaps and bounds. By virtue of her geographic and strategic position, Myanmar no longer afford to look east, look west, or act west and act east. She has to look around into all ten directions and act all around. She supports and join China's one Belt One Route Initiative [BRI], she also favours Indian's Bay of Bengal and Pacific BIMSTEC and SAARC etc.

Right now many new embassies are being opened. But because of the shortage of trained diplomats, some embassies are taking dual charges. Many of Myanmar ambassadors and staff are retiring. Timely production of new and enough qualified diplomats is urgently needed. We should therefore speed up the opening of Diplomatic Academy Yangon of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Hailing it !

■ ■ ■

Myanmar is developing, moving faster. Her international relations and global contacts are expanding by leaps and bounds. By virtue of her geographic and strategic position, Myanmar no longer afford to look east, look west, or act west and act east.



**BAY INFERENCE:** Weather is cloudy over the North and West central Bay and few cloud to partly cloudy over the Andaman Sea and elsewhere over the Bay of Bengal.

**FORECAST VALID UNTIL NOON OF THE 30th September, 2019:** Weather will be partly cloudy in Eastern Shan State. Rain or thundershowers will be fairly widespread in Upper Sagaing Region and Chin State, scattered in Nay-pyitaw, Mandalay, Magway, Bago and Taninthayi Regions, Rakhine and Kayah States and isolated in the remaining Regions and States. Degree of certainty is (80%).

**STATE OF THE SEA:** Sea will be slight to moderate in Myanmar waters. Wave height will be about (3-6) feet off and along Myanmar Coasts.

**OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS:** Likelihood of rain or thundershowers in Upper Sagaing Region, Kachin and Chin State.

**FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 30th September, 2019:** Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

**FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 30th September, 2019:** Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (80%).

**FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 30th September, 2019:** Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (80%).

## 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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Deputy Minister Dr Tun Naing inspects Phyu Chaung Hydropower Station

DEPUTY Minister for Electricity and Energy Dr Tun Naing inspected the Phyu Chaung Hydroelectric Power Station in Phyu, Bago, Region yesterday.

The hydroelectric power station built over the Phyu River is located seven miles west of Phyu.

Upon inspection of repairing work for broken down machine No.1 at the station, officials concerned detailed about conditions of the failure machine to the deputy minister. After hearing the report, the Deputy Minister urged the officials to regularly check the durability of the hydroelectric machineries and to give priority to the work-site safety.

The Phyu Chaung Hydroelectric Power Station is a 40-MW hydropower station with two 20-MW Francis turbines. On 23 August, Stator Winding of machine No.1 has broken down and its op-



Deputy Minister Dr Tun Naing inspects the Phyu Chaung Hydroelectric Power Station in Phyu yesterday. PHOTO: MNA

eration stopped. The broken down machine was being repaired by the skilled employees of the department. The Machine No.2 is currently generating fully 20-MW, transporting the electricity to the national grid. — MNA  
(Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)

Beijing hopes glitzy new airport will take off as aviation hub

BEIJING—Beijing’s new futuristic airport that resembles a giant starfish — opened days before the country celebrates the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of communist rule — promises to transform the Chinese capital into a major Asian aviation hub.

Located 46 kilometres (29 miles) south of Tiananmen Square, Beijing Daxing International Airport will be able to handle 45 million passengers by 2021, with plans for 72 million by 2025 and 100 million by 2040.

It was opened by President Xi Jinping Wednesday, but had an immediate hitch when its maiden commercial flight — an A380 superjumbo heading to the southern city of Guangzhou — was delayed by nearly 30 minutes. About a decade ago, Daxing was a sleepy suburb of

dusty farmland and cramped quarters home to migrant workers building roads and skyscrapers in the city.

Now — with the airport code PKX — Daxing is seen as an embodiment of the “Chinese dream” Xi has offered his fellow citizens.

At 700,000 square metres (173 acres) — about the size of 100 football pitches — the new structure will be one of the world’s largest airport terminals.

So far only China United Airlines has shifted their operations to the new hub but operations manager Wang Qiang said another seven domestic and eight international airlines would arrive in the “near future.”

British Airways, Cathay

Pacific and Finnair have already announced new routes to tap into its potential.

The SkyTeam alliance — which includes Delta, Air France and Dutch airline KLM — was also expected to move, along with local partners Eastern Airlines and China Southern Airlines.

The building was designed by Iraqi-British architect Zaha Hadid, who died in 2016.

The central atrium, with curves like a rolling landscape, is supported by eight giant columns and skylights filling the terminals with natural light.

Relatives and friends can also watch as their loved ones proceed to boarding gates through a viewing gallery.

An underground train station and metro line will allow travellers to reach Beijing city within 20 to 30 minutes.

The project cost 120 billion yuan (\$17.5 billion), or 400 billion yuan if rail and road links are included. At full capacity, Daxing would be the world’s largest single terminal in terms of traveller capacity, according to its designers.

Dozens of self check-in counters — where travellers only need to scan their passports — have been setup alongside conventional airline counters to speed up operations.—AFP ■



An interior view of the Beijing Daxing International Airport in Beijing, capital of China. PHOTO: XINHUA

Attacks, fraud fears dampen turnout in Afghan election

KABUL — Voter participation in Afghanistan’s presidential elections appeared Sunday to have been lower than in previous years, with turnout hit by the threat of attacks, a muted campaign and concerns of fraud.

Afghans went to the polls Saturday to vote in the first round of a presidential race that will decide whether President Ashraf Ghani will win a second five-year term.

About 9.6 million Afghans in the war-torn nation -- with an estimated population of 35 million -- had registered to vote in the election, which was held at some 4,900 polling stations.

An initial tally released early Sunday by Afghanistan’s Independent Election Com-

mission showed that with data from slightly more than half the stations, just under 1.1 million people had voted.

If that turnout trend holds, it would represent a participation level of less than 25 percent — lower than any of Afghanistan’s three previous presidential elections.

In 2014, for instance, turnout was a little under 50 percent, although direct comparisons are tough because previous polls were tainted by allegations of systemic fraud.

Authorities heralded Saturday’s election as a success because the Taliban were unable to pull off a large-scale attack resulting in high casualty numbers, and there were fewer technical difficulties than some had feared.—AFP ■

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## Prominent Egyptian dissident detained

CAIRO—Prominent Egyptian dissident Alaa Abdel Fattah was detained Sunday morning beyond his overnight probation, his family and a judicial official said.

“We don’t know where Alaa is... The police station says he’s most probably at state security prosecution... we seriously don’t have any information about him,” his sister Mona Seif, also a well-known activist, said on Twitter early Sunday.

Abdel Fattah, 37, is serving five years of probation after completing a five-year jail sentence in March for staging a protest against a 2013 law effectively banning public gatherings.

His probation requires him to report to a police sta-

tion near his home in Cairo at 6:00 PM every evening, and stay overnight in a cell until 6:00 AM.

On Sunday morning however he was not released.

Officers denied his mother Laila Soueif access to the police station and refused to say why he was not released.

The activist and computer programmer’s whereabouts remain unknown and no word has been given on when he might appear before prosecutors, the judicial official told AFP.

Abdel Fattah told AFP in June that security personnel had ordered him twice to stop talking about his probation publicly or face being sent back to jail indefinitely. —AFP ■

## UK’s Johnson rallies party with vow to ‘get Brexit done’



Britain’s Prime Minister Boris Johnson delivers a statement outside 10 Downing Street in central London on September 2, 2019. PHOTO: AFP

MANCHESTER—Embattled British Prime Minister Boris Johnson gathered his Conservative party Sunday for what could be its final conference before an election, promising to “get Brexit done”.

Despite a string of parliamentary setbacks and a defeat in the Supreme Court, Johnson insists he will take Britain out of the European Union next month, with or without a deal with Brussels.

“What we need to do is to

move on. And the way to do that is to get Brexit done on October 31,” he told BBC television in Manchester, northwest England, where the conference is taking place. His tough stance has put him at odds with the House of Commons, which has passed a law blocking a “no deal” exit, and lost him a number of his own MPs.

But it resonates with the overwhelmingly pro-Brexit Conservative party members who elected him in July -- and are expected to give him a hero’s welcome. The conference “will be a rally for Boris Johnson and a rally for Brexit”, predicted Tim Bale, professor of politics at Queen Mary University of London. —AFP ■

## Pelosi says public opinion shifting in support of impeachment inquiry

AUSTIN—US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said on Saturday that public opinion is now on the side of an impeachment inquiry against President Donald Trump following the release of new information about his conversations with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy. Pelosi this week announced her support for an investigation after the surfacing of a whistleblower complaint that said Trump appeared to solicit a political favor from Ukraine’s president aimed at helping him be re-elected next year.

Pelosi for months took a cautious approach in weighing the calls of other Democratic House members to launch impeachment proceedings against

Trump, which grew louder after former Special Counsel Robert Mueller testified on July 24 about his probe of Trump and Russian interference in the 2016 election.

“In the public, the tide has completely changed; it could change now - who knows - but right now after seeing the complaint and the IG (Inspector General) report and the cavalier attitude the administration had towards it, the American people are coming to a different decision,” Pelosi said at a journalism event hosted by the Texas Tribune news website.

She added that her resistance to holding an impeachment inquiry quickly evolved from urging that fellow Democrats

remain cautious of the political fallout ahead of next year’s elections to full steam ahead as details emerged of Trump’s dealings with Ukraine’s leader.

“A president of the United States would withhold military assistance paid for by taxpayers to shake down the leader of another country unless he did him a political favor - that is so, so clear,” Pelosi said.

In a July 25 telephone call between Trump and Zelenskyy, the US leader asked his counterpart to launch an investigation of Democratic presidential hopeful Joe Biden and his son, Hunter, who had served on the board of a Ukrainian energy company. —AFP ■

## One year on, Saudi struggles to turn page on Khashoggi murder



The murder of Jamal Khashoggi (L) last year has caused major setbacks for Saudi Arabia’s de facto ruler, Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, analysts say. PHOTO: AFP

RIYADH—Saudi Arabia is attempting a comeback on the global stage one year after journalist Jamal Khashoggi’s murder, but the crisis has weakened it and undermined its de facto leader’s ambitious reforms, analysts say.

Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, a self-styled moderniser shaking up the conservative petro-state, was feted by global leaders and business titans before the gruesome murder in Saudi Arabia’s Istanbul consulate on October 2 last year.

But the global fallout over the killing rendered the heir to the Arab world’s most powerful throne a pariah, casting a shadow on his reforms, putting the kingdom’s human rights record under the microscope and testing old alliances with Western

powers.

The prince has since sought to shore up his tarnished reputation, launching slick PR campaigns to win back foreign investment while accelerating what analysts call the kingdom’s “eastward tilt” towards less critical allies such as China and India.

But that has only had limited success.

“The spectre of Jamal Khashoggi hangs over the kingdom of Saudi Arabia,” said Bruce Riedel, a former Central Intelligence Agency officer and author of a book on Saudi Arabia entitled “Kings and Presidents”.

“The murdered journalist and commentator has not been forgotten, as Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman hoped.” —AFP ■



Speaker of the House of Representatives, Nancy Pelosi speaks with Texas Tribune CEO, Evan Smith during a panel at The Texas Tribune Festival on September 28, 2019 in Austin, Texas. PHOTO: AFP



# Growers promote exports of “Queen of Bonsai” to Europe

MATSUYAMA—Bonsai growers in western Japan are trying to boost exports of a tree known as “queen of bonsai” for the elegance of its leaves and trunk mainly to Europe, to establish a global brand and revitalize the regional economy.

In August, 12 suppliers in Shikokuchuo launched a group to promote overseas shipments of the “Akaishi Goyomatsu” tree, which is native to the 1,706-meter Mt. Higashiakaishi in Ehime Prefecture and suitable for the art of growing miniature ornamental potted trees.

The group led by local grower and seller Junichi Moritaka, 60, who personally began bonsai exports to France in 2017, aims to start collective overseas shipments of the tree around January next year



Junichi Moritaka pictured with bonsai plants on Sept. 11, 2019, in Shikokuchuo, Ehime Prefecture. **PHOTO: KYODO**

and achieve annual sales of some 1,000 pots worth more than 30 million yen (\$278,000) by 2022.

Moritaka’s company Akaishi no Izumi will directly purchase the queen of bonsai trees from the

member suppliers and ship them altogether in containers.

For the past decade, he has set his eyes on wealthy European bonsai fans and prepared for exports of the local tree

by taking measures to pass quarantines and exchanging information with buyers. In 2017, Moritaka managed to sell around 200 pots to France for about 3 million yen in total.—Kyo-do ■

## Registers, rates and points: tax hike woes for Japan retailers

TOKYO—Cash register shortages, differing tax levels and a complicated points system: from October 1, Japan will have a new consumption tax and its complex regulations have left some retailers baffled.

The long-awaited and twice delayed consumption tax hike will move Japan’s VAT from eight percent to 10 percent—a key revenue source

to fund government plans including free pre-school.

But a raft of exceptions and government efforts to use the hike to encourage cashless payments have left retailers fearing a meltdown.

In a bid to smooth out the impact of the hike on consumers, Japan has agreed to certain exemptions, including for food purchases, unless they

are being eaten onsite. That rule puts a range of retailers, from fast-food outlets and bakeries to Japan’s ubiquitous convenience stores, in a bind.

A bento box bought to be eaten outside qualifies for the old tax rate, but if the customer decides to eat in the small seating areas in many convenience stores, they face the new rate.—AFP ■

## Dubai developers race to lure buyers as downturn bites



Property firms offered unprecedented payment terms to drum up business at an industry expo in Dubai. **PHOTO: AFP**

DUBAI—Dubai, a city defined by its glittering towers and man-made islands, is stuck in a five-year property downturn with no end

in sight, drawing warnings of an industry reckoning that will see weaker players fail. Property developers are slashing prices and

offering ultra-easy financing to lure customers, while concerned authorities have stepped in with incentives and regulations to revive the crucial sector.

Ahead of the Expo 2020 global trade fair that Dubai hopes will deliver an economic windfall and some 300,000 new jobs, hundreds of mega projects have been unveiled in recent years, leading to an oversupply and a slide in prices. The government rushed to rescue the sector in 2018 with a raft of measures including easy visa terms for expatri-

ate buyers and permanent residence permits for big investors. This month, a top-level committee was established to rebalance the oversupplied market. The Standard and Poor’s ratings agency has said the industry, which makes up 7.2 percent of Dubai’s economy, may not stabilise before 2021. “Over a period of time, some correction will happen,” exposing the strong and the weak in the industry, said P.N.C. Menon, chairman of Dubai-based multinational developer Sobha Group.—AFP ■

### NEWS In BRIEF

#### Russia rolls out the red carpet for Huawei over 5G

MOSCOW—While the US banned Huawei for alleged espionage and asked its allies to do the same, Moscow has rolled out the red carpet for the Chinese tech company, letting it develop 5G networks in Russia.

Analysts say the move is as much a show of solidarity with Beijing against the US as it is a drive to bring ultra high-speed internet to Russian tech users.

This month, Huawei opened its first 5G test zone in Moscow in partnership Russian operator MTS, with a view to rolling out the service to the rest of the capital.

Moscow authorities say the network will become part of the city’s normal infrastructure within the next few years. A pioneer in telecoms networks compared to many Western countries, Russia plans to deploy 5G in all of its main cities by 2024.

When Chinese President Xi Jinping visited Russia in June—at the height of Washington’s conflict with Huawei—Russia’s main operator MTS signed a contract with the Chinese company.

#### ‘We live well in Russia’

At the inauguration of the 5G zone in Moscow, the CEO of Russia’s branch of Huawei Zhao Lei praised the company’s activities in the country.

“We have been working in Russia for 22 years. Thanks to our partners, we live well here,” he said.

He added that Huawei, considered a world leader in 5G technology, plans to “lead in the development of 6G” in the future.—AFP ■

### CLAIM’S DAY NOTICE

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AGENT FOR: M/S MCC TRANSPORT (S’PORE)  
PTE LTD**

Phone No: 2301185

### CLAIM’S DAY NOTICE

M.V ALS SUMIRE VOY. NO. (1017 W/E)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V ALS SUMIRE VOY. NO. (1017 W/E) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 30-09-2019 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T.T/M.I.P where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

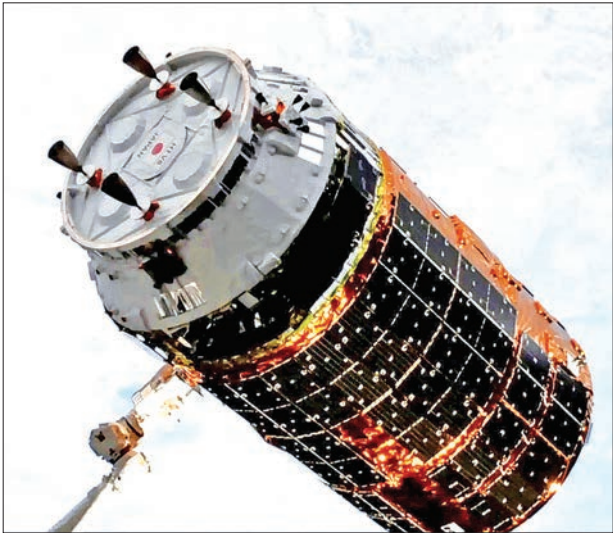
**SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT  
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY  
AGENT FOR: M/S OCEAN NETWORK  
EXPRESS (S’PORE) PTE LTD**

Phone No: 2301185



# Japan’s cargo spaceship docks with Int’l Space Station

TOKYO—Japan’s un-manned cargo spaceship loaded with supplies docked at the International Space Station at an altitude of about 400 kilometers Saturday, the country’s space agency said. The Kounotori8 docked after astronauts at the ISS caught the cargo transporter with a robotic arm, the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency said. An H-2B rocket carrying the cargo spaceship blasted off from the Tanegashima Space Center in Kagoshima Prefecture in southwestern Japan on Wednesday.



The Kounotori8 docks after astronauts at the ISS caught the cargo transporter with a robotic arm. **PHOTO: KYODO**

The cargo spaceship was carrying 5.3 tons of supplies, including food, batteries and experiment devices, JAXA said.—Kyodo ■

# Russian tech giant Yandex tests self-driving cars on Tel Aviv streets

JERUSALEM—On the busy roads of the Israeli city of Tel Aviv, one can see more self-driving test cars made by Russia’s tech company Yandex in these days. The self-driving prototype of Yandex uses a variety of sensors, including Lidars, specialized cameras, radars, inertial measurement units, and odometric sensors.

Inside car’s trunk is the central computer that calculates all the incoming data from the sensors. Computer vision and machine learning algorithms use all the data they collect to make

a 3D model of everything happening around the car. Self-driving cars still have a safety driver in case things go wrong. According to the company, its workers almost don’t interfere with the autonomous driving mode, though it didn’t provide exact figures.

Currently, there is a global race to dominate the future world of autonomous transport. The leading players are multinational software corporations which join hands with auto companies to produce smart self-driving cars.—Xinhua ■



## NOTICE OF TENDER



Date: 30 September 2019

1. The Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA)’s Project Management Consultant (hereinafter referred to as the “PMC”) for the Project for “Establishment of Integrated Agriculture and Irrigation Master Plan (EIAIDMP), Ayeyarwady Delta Region” invites prospective bidders for Consulting services for the Topographic Survey (hereinafter referred to as the “Services”). The EIAIDMP is being implemented with the grant aid of the Government of Republic of Korea

### Brief of Bidding

- **Bid Title:** Topographic Survey for the “Establishment of Integrated Agriculture and Irrigation Master Plan (EIAIDMP), Ayeyarwady Delta Region”
  - **Contract Duration:** 4 months from the commencement date
  - **Estimated Budget:** USD310,000 (inclusive of taxes)
  - **Summary of Consulting Services**
    - Type: Topographical Survey by UAV or Airplane
    - Survey area: Pyapon District and Maubin District (the location data will be provided)
    - Services/Survey Items: Specified in the Request For Proposals (RFP)
- ① Employer: KOICA PMC for the Project for “Establishment of Integrated Agriculture and Irrigation Master Plan (EIAIDMP), Ayeyarwady Delta Region”
- ② Bid Type: Open Competitive Bidding for Myanmar and Korean Consultants
- ③ Selection of the Successful Bidders:
- Evaluation consists of Bid Financial Evaluation of Twenty (20) Points and Technical Evaluation of Eighty (80) Points. Total of One hundred (100) points
  - Details of Selection of the Successful Bidder is specified in the RFP
- ④ The RFP will be provided upon applicants’ request by emails or written letters to the PMC.
- ⑤ **Instructions and Schedule:**
- [Clarification]**
- The Consultants may request clarification of RFP not later than 14 October 2019
- [Bid]**
- Place for Bid Submission: **PMC office**
  - Bid Closing (Submission): 21 October, 2019, 14:00 **at PMC office**
  - Financial Proposal Opening: 28 October 2019, 10:00 **at PMC office**
- ⑥ Currency of Financial Proposal (Bid Price): **United States Dollar**
- ⑦ Currency of Contract: **United States Dollar**
- ⑧ The applicants shall be consortiums or Joint Ventures of Korea and Myanmar consultants.

2. Bid Price of Financial proposal shall be equal or less than the Estimated Budget. Any bid exceeding the limitation may result in rejection of its bid.

3. The RFP includes following documents but not limited to:

- ① Letter of Invitation
- ② Instructions to Consultants
- ③ Technical Proposal – Standard Forms
- ④ Financial Proposal – Standard Forms
- ⑤ Terms of Reference
- ⑥ Standard Forms of Contract

4. Language of Proposal: All documents shall be in English. If the other languages documents delivered by the government administration, bank, educational, professional organizations and others for the proof of Bid Evaluation Criteria, the NOTARIZED English documents shall be attached.

5. PMC shall not be responsible for any costs or expenses incurred by Bidders in connection with the preparation or delivery of bids

6. All bidders are expected to examine all instructions, forms, terms and specifications of the bidding documents. Failure to furnish all information required by the bidding documents or submission of a bid not substantially responsive to the bidding documents in every respect shall be at the Bidder’s risk and may result in the rejection of the bid.

7. Contact Information

**PMC Office**  
Address: 1F, Extension Building, Design Branch, Irrigation and Water Utilization Management Department, Thitsar Road, Yankin T/S, Yangon  
Tel: 95-94 28460701, 95-97 95413155  
**E-mail: [eiaidmpkoica@gmail.com](mailto:eiaidmpkoica@gmail.com)**  
**Attention: ROH Gyeong Tae, Project Manager, EIAIDMP**



## The Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar Yangon City Development Committee

### Invitation for Prequalification Greater Yangon Water Supply Improvement Project Phase 2

Date: 30 September 2019  
Loan Agreement No: MY-P19  
IFP No: MY-P19/PQ-05

1. The Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has received a Loan from Japan International Cooperation Agency toward the cost of the Greater Yangon Water Supply Improvement Project Phase 2. It is intended that part of the proceeds of this Loan will be applied to eligible payments under the contract resulting from the bidding for which this prequalification is conducted.
2. The Yangon City Development Committee intends to prequalify contractors and/or firms for Construction of Distribution Networks in Zone 1 (High Subzone).
- Construction of distribution main pipe of Ductile Iron Pipe (DIP, DN600-1400mm) with total length of approx. 5.7km.
  - Construction distribution network of HDPE pipe (OD110-630mm) with total length of approx. 200.0 km
  - Replacement and new installation of house connections and water meters, with total number of 54,300 connections (including both existing and new connections)
3. It is expected that Invitation for Bids will be made in December 2019.
4. Prequalification will be conducted through procedures in accordance with the applicable Guidelines for Procurement under Japanese ODA Loans, and is open to all Applicants from eligible source countries, as defined in the Loan Agreement.
5. Interested eligible Applicants may obtain further information from and inspect the Prequalification Documents at the office of Head of Department, Engineering Department (Water and Sanitation), Yangon City Development Committee from 9:30am to 4:30pm.
6. A complete set of the Prequalification Documents may be purchased by interested Applicant(s) on the submission of a written Application to the address above and upon payment of a nonrefundable fee of MMK20,000 (Twenty thousand Myanmar Kyat). Payment shall be only by cash.
7. Applications for prequalification should be submitted in sealed envelopes, delivered to the address above by 14 November 2019, and be clearly marked “Application to Prequalify for Package No. ICB-05 Construction of Distribution Networks in Zone 1 (High Subzone) under the Greater Yangon Water Supply Improvement Project Phase 2.”

U Myint Zaw Than,  
Head of Department, Engineering Department (Water and Sanitation),  
Yangon City Development Committee  
No. 390, 12-Storey New Building, Merchant Road, Botahtaung Township, Yangon, Myanmar  
e-mail: kokkows5@gmail.com



# Maymyo or Pyin Oo Lwin

Part 2

By Thiha (the Traveller)



Maha Ant Htoo Kan Tha Pagoda in Pyin Oo Lwin. **PHOTO: PHOE KHWAR**

Continued Article of 23 September

## Waterfalls to visit in Pyin Oo Lwin

### (1) Dat Taw Gyaing Waterfall

It was known as Dat Taw Gyaing Waterfall but some knew it is Anisakan Waterfall. This is a very beautiful waterfall with water cascading down a considerable height. The view from the bottom was the most beautiful but the climb down was steep and climbing back up to Mandalay-Pyin Oo Lwin road would be a considerable climb. There were some porters around who'll carry you up but the price was quite high so do ensure that you are in good shape and health to hike up and down the steep path. The waterfall had three stages and all are beautiful in their own ways. The beauty of the entire waterfall can be seen from The View Hotel. Entry to the restaurant of the hotel was 1,000 Kyat and you can enjoy the complete view of the waterfall while having something at the restaurant.

### (2) Pwe Kauk Waterfall or B.E. Fall

Majority of visitors who pay homage to Maha Ant Htoo Kan Tha Pagoda normally

went to Pwe Kauk Waterfall. The entrance to the waterfall faces the pagoda across the Pyin Oo Lwin-Lashio Road. The waterfall was also known as B.E. Fall because the place renovated by Battlefield Engineers (B.E.) Corp and thus was known as such. During the colonial time, it was said to be known as Hampshire fall. The waterfall was not a high waterfall and it is more like a water cascade rather than a waterfall. Closeness to Pyin Oo Lwin and ease of going there attracts many visitors and was normally crowded during peak travel season. Visitors can swim and there were quite a number of restaurants and souvenir shops that cater to the visitors. Locally produced wines and jams can be bought there.

### (3) December Farm Waterfall

December Farm Waterfall located in December Farm mentioned in last week's article on Pyin Oo Lwin was another waterfall that was attracting visitors, especially youngsters.

### (4) Yay Pyan Taung Waterfall

The hike to Yay Pyan Taung Waterfall



National Kandawgyi Park. **PHOTO: PHOE KHWAR**



and back was quite similar to the one to Dat Taw Gyaing Waterfall. The way to the waterfall was descending through a forested hill or mountainside while the way back was ascending all the way out or rather up. So make sure you are fit and had a full stamina. The fall had seven stages and all stages had small but wide waterfalls. The bottom or the lowest one was said to be the most beautiful but I didn't made it that far and couldn't comment about it.

**Wine estate in Pyin Oo Lwin**

There were a number of wine estates in Pyin Oo Lwin out of which I visited Shwe Pyin Oo Lwin Wine Estate.

It was situated on the small road to Yay Pyan Taung Waterfall. As it was at a place away from town, natural beauties of forest, hills and mountains can be experienced. It is at Sin Gaung Lay Village. It can be reached via the circuit road that avoids the crowded town area of Pyin Oo Lwin while taking pictures of the pine trees along the way. Grapes were grown systematically there and you can help yourself to the grapes on the vine even though the price was a bit high. But the fact that you can fetch the tasty grapes from the vines and have it there and then makes it a worthwhile experience.

**Parks and other places to visit**

**(1) National Kandawgyi Park**

In addition to holding flow-

er festivals, varieties of flowers were grown there all year round. It is a wide open area where you can feel fresh simply by taking a deep breath. The beauty of the wide open lake and flowers can be experienced as well as variety of birds there naturally or in cages of various sizes can be observed. A variety of butterflies can be observed in the butterfly museum while a variety of orchids can also be seen the orchid museum. Except for shortage of clean rest rooms, a visit to the park gave you a good relaxing experience.

**(2) The Croft organic farm**

It is a small organic farm just within the town limit so the small size wasn't much of a wonder. It is not far from National Kandawgyi Park. A variety of vegetables were grown as well as strawberries. Entrance fee of 2,500 Kyat per person was charged that includes a complete Hi tea set. The tea set includes fruits, a cold drink or coffee. A red barn-like structure

entering Wetwun Village, you'll see a sign on a white wall pointing toward YGW Garden. The drive down the narrow entrance road took about 3 minutes but as the road was narrow, it would amount to test of the driving skill of the driver if any cars came down the road from the opposite direction.

**(4) Pine tree row and pine tree road**

This place became popular quite recently. It was on the circuit road around the town. The road was a good road that go through a small pine forest and that was where many people came simply to take pictures of the pine forest with rows of pine tree together with the road and the car. But do be careful and don't step onto the road when taking pictures.

**(5) Royal Rose Garden**

This was where roses were sold in thousands to tens of thousands. It is a commercial rose farm rather than a place made for tourist attraction or a gar-

Kyat 2,000 per person. With the ticket, you can get a free fresh orange juice at the restaurant inside. You can take a ride on a tractor trailer to go around the farm and pluck oranges from the trees. The oranges you plucked from the tree were then sold to you at a price of Kyat 1,500 per kilo. So don't get over eager and pluck more than you want.

**(8) Governor's House**

The Governor's House was another place to visit. The whole house can be rented for a night but the price was quite high. The house has a small restaurant as well as an indoor swimming pool. An entrance fee is collected for visitors and photography is not permitted inside the house. Some life-like wax models that include Myanmar's last king, King Thibaw can be seen there.

**(9) Bronze statues of three kings**

The three bronze statues of the three kings that founded first, second and third Myanmar empires, King Anawrahta, King



YGW Garden. PHOTO: THIHA

or cottage near the entrance makes the place quite an interesting one. The water tower was also an attraction and the place was becoming a well known or preferred spot for pre-wedding photo shoots.

**(3) YGW Garden**

YGW Garden is another interesting place, a garden, with a restaurant. The garden also had some small live bears, monkeys and birds that visitors can observe. The garden and restaurant was made up and constructed western country style with many country style memorabilia lying around making it even more interesting. It is another interesting photo spot. To go there take the Pyin Oo Lwin-Lashio road toward Peik Chin Myaung Cave. Just after descending the winding mountain side road and before

den or a park so it is best to go there to buy roses. And then you can have a look around. It is at Sin Gaung Lay Village situated on the way to Yay Pyan Taung Waterfall.

**(6) National Landmarks Garden**

National Landmarks Garden was just beside the National Kandawgyi Park. The garden contains scale models of well known landmarks of each States and Regions in Myanmar. A buggy can take you around the sight quickly but if the weather was fine, a leisurely walk could be enjoyable even though the walk would be a considerable distance.

**(7) Htoo orange farm**

Htoo orange farm can be reached by going past Pwe Kauk Waterfall and on to Pin-lane Vallage. Entrance fee was

Bayinnaung and King Alaungpaya at the entrance to Defence Services Academy was also becoming a place for visitors to the town to take photo.

**(10) Clock Tower**

The clock tower in the heart of Pyin Oo Lwin town was known as Purcell Tower during colonial time and was built to commemorate the Silver Jubilee of the reign of King George V of Britain. Most visitors took photographs there but some may not know the historical story behind the building of the clock tower.

More and more places of interest will keep on cropping up and Pyin Oo Lwin will keep on attracting visitors with both new and old places to visit. For me, I'll be visiting it quite frequently to visit the new places and to revisit the old places.

Translated by Handytips



## Can't wait for October 13: Myanmar icon Aung La N Sang

MYANMAR star Aung La N Sang, the ONE middleweight and light heavyweight world champion, revealed on his social media account that he is eagerly waiting for 13 October, when he will take on the Philippines icon Brandon Vera at an event entitled ONE: Century.

The fight is scheduled to take place at the Ryogoku Kokugikan Hall in Tokyo, Japan.

"Just a little over two weeks now and we are back in Japan. Steve Jobs once said, 'If you want to go far, you go together!' Thank you for going with me on this journey! Thank you for the love that you show me, my team is preparing me well and I can't wait for Oct 13th," Aung La N Sang posted on his social media page.

He also stated that weight and size are not a factor in the fight.

"I work with bigger guys, I work with taller guys, and I work with heavier guys than Brandon Vera," Aung La N Sang stated.

"When fight night comes along, size and power are not going to be an issue," he added.

"I think I match up well against him in all aspects of mixed martial arts.



ONE Championship's two-division world title-holder Aung La N Sang. **PHOTO: AUNG LA N SANG'S FACEBOOK PAGE**

My biggest strength would be my heart. I'm a grinder, and I fight with my heart. There is no quit in me.

He is going to have to do everything that he can, but I'm going to keep pushing forward, and that's going to be the key in the fight," Aung La N Sang stated.

"Everybody knows how explosive he is. Everybody knows the power that he has, but I'm

going to grind him down and beat him," he added.

Aung La N Sang and Brandon Vera could be described as the greatest rivals in ONE Championship history, according to the event's organizers.

The event is being billed as the biggest event in martial arts history. It will also be the 100th show under ONE Championship, they stated.

—Lynn Thit (Tgi)

## Thet Htar Thuzar wins bronze at Maldives competition

MYANMAR badminton idol Thet Htar Thuzar won the bronze medal at the women's single event of the Maldives International Challenge 2019, which was held from 24 to 29 September at the Ekuveni multipurpose stadium in Male, Maldives.

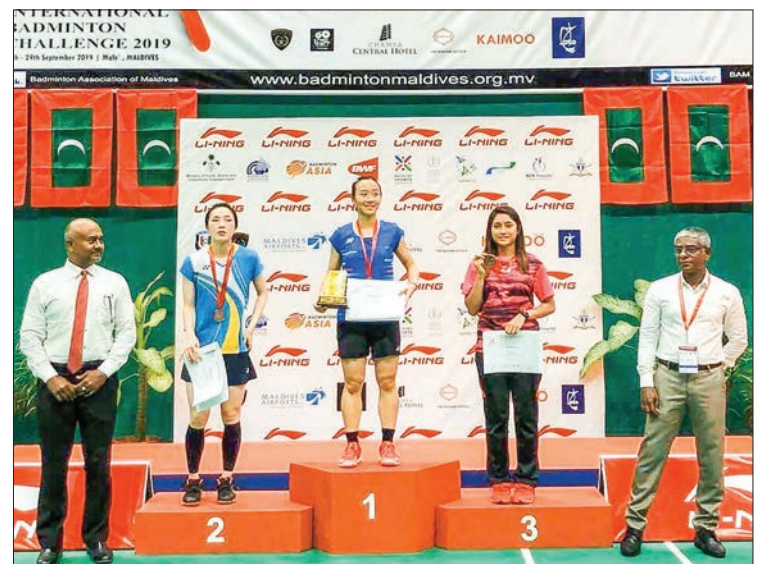
A 1-2 loss to Viet Nam's Thi Trang in the decisive semifinal on 28 September ended Thet Htar Thuzar's dreams of winning the championship title.

United States badminton player Iris Wang won the championship by beating Viet Nam's Thi Trang in the final. Thet Htar Thuzar passed the group stages successfully with good results.

In her first group match, Thet Htar Thuzar made a good record by beating Sri Lanka's Thilini Pramodika Hendaheva with a 2-1 result (21-9, 12-21, and 21-8). Thet Htar Thuzar also maintained good form in the next match, beating India's Vrushali Gummedi by a decisive 2-0 result (21-14 and 21-14).

In the third group match, Thet Htar Thuzar beat Bulgaria's Linda Zetchiri by a two-match solid win result: 21-8 and 21-11.

In the quarterfinal, Thet Htar Thuzar beat 47th world badminton ranker for women's single events, Brittney Tam, by 21-19, 14-21, and 21-9.—Lynn Thit (Tgi)



Thet Htar Thuzar (right) holds up her bronze medal at the Maldives International Challenge 2019. **PHOTO: THET HTAR THUZAR'S FACEBOOK PAGE**

## Hamilton win 'big step' to keeping titles says Mercedes chief

SOCHI (Russia)— Mercedes team chief Toto Wolff claimed his team had taken a major step towards retaining their titles with Lewis Hamilton's unexpected victory in Sunday's Russian Grand Prix.

Wolff admitted that Mercedes did not have the quickest car at the Sochi Autodrom, but had won thanks to some luck, good strategy and a never-say-die belief in their chances.

He offered sympathy to his Ferrari counterpart Mattia Binotto. "That's why we love racing," he said.

"You can win when you haven't got the quickest package. It makes it so special — it's unbelievable. "You start to doubt and you know where you have deficits and you cling on to the few hopes, like a late Safety Car, and then it happens.

"We're overwhelmed and it's a big step towards the championship." He said he had seen a transcript of Ferrari's radio conversations as their drivers and the team talked about an agreement that unravelled in the opening laps of the race.

"I haven't seen the whole thing," said Wolff. "I have the transcript, which I read, and it shows you that it's not trivial at all to have two drivers who want to win." "As a team we have been through his situation and it's certainly not easy," he added, referring to the fierce rivalry between Hamilton and Nico Rosberg at Mercedes in 2016.

He said also that it was ironic that a Ferrari retirement — when Sebastian Vettel, while leading, suffered an engine failure — had given Mercedes their victory.—AFP ■

## Outsider Pedersen survives storms to win cycling world title



The Denmark team lead Mads Pedersen into Harrogate. **PHOTO: AFP**

HARROGATE (United Kingdom)— Denmark's Mads Pedersen created a huge surprise when he emerged from a rain-drenched Yorkshire road race with cycling's world title on Sunday.

The 23-year-old timed his last-gasp run to perfection to beat a devastated Italian Matteo Trentin and Swiss rider Stefan Küng in silver and bronze positions after 261km and over 6 hours and 27 minutes of exhausting racing.

"That's an unbelievable day, I didn't expect this morning," said the Leopard-Trek team rider who won much as an under-23's racer.

"It was just survive, survive, survive. Then hope for the best in the sprint," said Pedersen, who was far from favourite to beat Italian 30-year-old Trentin, usually a crack in the sprints.

"When I saw the finish line I thought anything can happen," he said.

The race was shortened Sunday morning as relentless overnight rain took its toll on the narrow roads through the Yorkshire dales, flooding an iconic hilly section of the route which was cut out altogether.

The rain also turned the Harrogate fan park into a quagmire and grounded the television helicopters.—AFP ■