

NATIONAL

Union Minister for ALI inspects food production in Magway Region

PAGE-2

BUSINESS

Thailand-Myanmar friendship bridge-2 to help boost bilateral trade

PAGE-5

# Matho robe-weaving contests held at pagodas across nation



Contestants weaving a robe at the Matho Robe-Weaving Contest at the Shwedagon Pagoda in Yangon yesterday. PHOTO: YE HTUT

TRADITIONAL robe-weaving contests were organized at famous pagodas across the country yesterday, on the eve of the Full Moon Day of Tazaungmon.

At the Matho robe-weaving contest, a centuries-old tradition, participating teams make beautiful decorative robes for the Buddha statues in the temples. The teams that make the most beautiful robes win.

Tradition dictates that the weaving of the robes be completed in one evening, and that they be offered to the Buddha before dawn. If the weaving of a robe is delayed and cannot be completed, it is considered an unsuccessful attempt.

The most significant robe-weaving contest in Myanmar is the one held at the Great Shwedagon Pagoda. The 35th Matho robe-weaving con-

test was held yesterday at the pagoda, a national landmark of Myanmar. Nine teams took part in the event.

The ceremony was opened by Yangon Region Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein and members of the board of trustees of the pagoda.

A similar traditional event was also held at the Botahtaung Pagoda at 5 p.m. yesterday with the participation of 25 teams.

Meanwhile, the 22th robe-weaving ceremony was held at the Kaba Aye Pagoda in Mayangon Township yesterday evening. Seven teams of weavers took part in the competition. Officials viewed the work of the weaving teams at the looms yesterday evening.

The robes will be offered early tomorrow morning to Buddha images at the pagodas. — Ko Ko Zaw ■

## Weather bureau warns of landslides in hilly areas

THE Meteorology and Hydrology Department has warned of possible rain-induced landslides in highland areas of Sagaing Region, and Chin and Rakhine states due to the influence of the cyclonic storm ‘Bulbul’, which is likely to weaken into a deep depression today.

“People living near highland areas in Sagaing Region, Chin and Rakhine states must remain on alert for landslide events, and trawlers, vessels, and ships off and along Rakhine coast are advised to prepare for possible contingencies,” stated an announcement from the Meteorology and Hydrology Department yesterday.

The severe cyclonic storm crossed West Bengal (India) and the Bangladesh coast yesterday, and it was downgraded to a cyclonic storm and forecast to continue moving east-north-eastwards.

Frequent squalls with rough to very rough seas will be experienced off and along Rakhine coast.

Surface wind speed in squalls may reach 45-50 m.p.h. Seas will be moderate to rough elsewhere in Myanmar. Wave height will be about 10-13 feet off and along Rakhine coast and 7-9 feet in Deltaic, Gulf of Mottama, off and along Mon-Taninthayi coast. — GNLM ■

### INSIDE TODAY

NATIONAL

Hotel & tourism ministry coordinates for increased Japanese tourists

PAGE-2



NATIONAL

Health & Sports Ministry signs development MoU with Indonesian counterpart

PAGE-3



LOCAL NEWS

Islands in Kawthoung popular among Tazaungmone holidaymakers

PAGE-4





# Union Minister for ALI inspects food production in Magway Region

UNION Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation Dr Aung Thu visited Kyatsu Kyin Village of Yesagyo Township, Magway Region, to inspect the jaggery sugar production preparations made by Shwe Hintha Company on 9 November.

The Union Minister was accompanied by his regional counterpart U Win Maw Htay and Hluttaw representatives. He also discussed acquiring purified drinking water in the Shinmataung region, alternating to money-yielding crops, and producing FA-approved consumable goods.

From there, the Union Minister visited Thae Pone Village (East) and inspected the water pumps and tanks built with a donation from the '83 batch of Yangon Industrial University

and with volunteer labour from the Department of Irrigation and Water Management. The donation is providing sufficient water to 589 villages from 117 households.

The Union Minister and Regional Minister then visited Shwe Hintha Company's palm powder factory in Yesagyo Township. Palm powder is slowly seeing an increase in an organic-conscious global market.

Next, the Union Minister visited Taungsin goat rearing village and inspected the animal farms there. He met with local goat herders and companies at Aung Dhamma Thukha monastery and instructed them on proper animal husbandry practices and efficient use of their farmland.

Afterwards, the Union Min-



Union Minister Dr Aung Thu meets officials at Shwe Hintha Company's palm powder factory in Yesagyo Township, Magway Region yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

ister handed over 250 packets of veterinary medicine to Regional Minister U Win Maw Htay for local residents affected by natural disasters.—MNA (Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

# Hotel & tourism ministry coordinates for increased Japanese tourists



Union Minister for Hotels and Tourism U Ohn Maung attends the coordination meeting to promote Japan market for tourism held in Yangon yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

THE Ministry of Hotel and Tourism organized a coordination meeting to promote the Japan market for tourism as Yangon's Sule Shangri-La Hotel yesterday. Union Minister U Ohn Maung discussed how they have prepared digital marketing groups for the travel destina-

tions of different countries. He said they have translated CDs and DVDs of Myanmar's travel destinations into Japanese and distributed them extensively in Japan.

He said they have held JATA Tourism Expo and roadshows to attract more Japanese tourists and collaborated with ABC TV to document prominent travel routes in Myanmar. To further promote tourism in the nation, various tourism ambassadors have been assigned, including cherry tree expert Mr Kanta Kori in 2017, fashion designer Mrs Junko Koshino in April 2018, and Japanese singer Morisaki Win in August 2018, said the Union Minister.

He said they will hold the annual Japan-Myanmar cherry tree planting ceremony, now in its fourth year, in Loikaw, Nay

Pyi Taw and Chin State. He said they reduced visa restrictions in October 2018 to make traveling into Myanmar easier for people from Japan, China, South Korea, Hong Kong, Macao and India.

The Union Minister said it has been extended from 2019 to 2020 and that this meeting will focus on the months of April, May, August, December and January where Japan has more holidays.

Next, Deputy Minister U Tin Latt explained digital tourism promotion they have been working on and other matters. Japanese Ambassador Mr Ichiro Maruyama and Myanmar Tourism Federation Chairman U Yan Win also delivered addresses.

After several rounds of discussions, the meeting later concluded with a closing speech from the Union Minister.—MNA (Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

# Ministry of Electricity and Energy allows rural petrol stations to open

DEPUTY Minister for Electricity and Energy Dr Tun Naing was accompanied by Mon State Minister for Electricity, Energy and Industry U Hla Tun and Kayin State Minister for Electricity and Industry U Soe Hlaing as they visited the storage and distribution sub-department of Myanmar Petroleum Product Enterprise (MPPE) in Mawlamyine, Mon State, yesterday.

Department officials explained to the ministers the process of opening private petrol stations in each township of Mon

State and Kayin State.

The Deputy Minister responded to the explanations and said to take effective legal action against illegal imports of petroleum, close down unofficial petrol stations, to properly explain the processes of opening village petrol shops to local residents so they may acquire licenses and help develop rural SMEs, and design and implement fire safety procedures and precautions in the storage and distribution sub-department. He then the sub-department.

Afterwards, the Deputy Minister and entourage visited MPPE's petrol station No. 0862 in Hpa-an, Kayin State, where he gave instructions to ensure private petrol stations serve good quality products, to regulate for illegal sales, and ensure there are no losses prior to the tender process. The Ministry of Electricity and Energy helping SMEs in rural areas develop by issuing licenses to operate rural petrol shops beginning from 4 November.—MNA (Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)



Deputy Minister Dr Tun Naing inspects the storage and distribution sub-department of Myanmar Petroleum Product Enterprise (MPPE) in Mawlamyine, Mon State, yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**





Yangon Region Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein and members of the board of trustees of the pagoda cut ribbon to open the 35<sup>th</sup> Matho robe-weaving contest at Shwedagon Pagoda, Yangon yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**



Yangon Region Minister for Social Affairs U Naing Ngan Linn and officials cut ribbon to open the 22<sup>th</sup> robe-weaving ceremony at Kaba Aye Pagoda in Mayangon Township. **PHOTO: MNA**



Women weaving of Matho Thingan (robe) at the Botahtaung Pagoda, Yangon yesterday. **PHOTO: PHOE KHWAH**

## Poet's Corner brings modern & classics together in Irrawaddy Literary Festival

THE 5<sup>th</sup> Irrawaddy Literary Festival continued its second day yesterday with domestic and foreign poets competing in the Poet's Corner competition.

Held at Mercure Hotel in Mandalay, the festival is a volunteer-based event aiming to promote literature and Myanmar's literary status and free admission for all.

The Poet's Corner was mainly organized by Mandalay's very own poets Maung Thin Pan and Wai Min Thant (Mangyi Bote).

"Poet's Corner is a free platform for people to recite any kind of poem they like," said Wai Min Thant. He continued: "The poem competition was originally planned to take place in the afternoon, as it was planned every year. But the enthusiasm of all the gathered poets pushed it to take place earlier. It's a very pleasing

sight to see the international poets come and listen intently to our poems. Furthermore, while we were reciting modern poems, they chimed in to classic poems written by Sayar Zaw Gyi. Plus, it was an invaluable experience to meet veteran poets Min Chan Mon and Mandalay Maung Aung Khin, both between 70 to 80 years of age." A second year Myanmar Literature student from Mandalay University, Ma Hnin Wutt Yi said listening to the veteran poets was very enlightening and the opportunity to ask them questions was equally energizing.

More than a hundred literary enthusiasts from across Myanmar and over 30 international literates are attended the Irrawaddy Literary Festival, which will hold its last day today. —Mahn Sub-printing House (Translated by Zaw Htet Oo) ■



The second day of 5th Irrawaddy Literary Festival held in Mandalay yesterday. **PHOTO: MIN HTET AUNG (MAHN SUB-PRINTING HOUSE)**

## Health & Sports Ministry signs development MoU with Indonesian counterpart

UNION Minister for Health and Sports Dr Myint Htwe attended the Indonesia Pharmaceutical and Medical Device Health Expo (2019) from 7 to 9 November in Tangram, Indonesia.

He also signed an MoU with Indonesia's Ministry of Health. The expo commemorated the 55<sup>th</sup> Indonesia National Health Day.

The health expo and Health Business Forum were opened on the morning of 7 November and the Union Minister attended them along with Dr Oscar Primadi, Secretary-General of Indonesia's Ministry of Health, and Dr Eugko, Director-General of the pharmaceuticals and medical equipment department.

The expo was also attended by health ministry officials from Iran, Japan, South Korea, India, Russia, Cambodia, Thailand, Singapore, Denmark, America, The Netherlands and Portugal, embassy officials and representatives from pharmaceutical companies.

The Union Minister was accompanied by Myanmar Ambassador Daw Ei Ei Khin, FDA Director-General Prof Dr Khin Zaw and assistant undersecretary Dr Kyaw Khine.

From there, the Union Minister participated in the panel discussion of the Health



Union Minister Dr Myint Htwe meets with Indonesian Health Minister Dr. Terawan Agus Putranto on 8 November. **PHOTO: MNA**

Business Forum where he talked about organizing a workshop to swiftly issue licenses for medicine coming into Myanmar.

On 8 November, the Union Minister called on Indonesian Health Minister Dr Terawan Agus Putranto where discussed bilateral cooperation and signed the Memorandum of Understanding on developing the health sector of both countries.

Next, the Union Minister visited the central factory headquarters of Kalbe Company, who are also constructing a factory in Myanmar. He then visit-

ed the Presidential Indonesian Army Hospital and observed the latest technology used to treat an autoimmune-related disease, alzheimer and cancer at its Cellcure Centre.

Afterwards, the Union Minister visited RSUPN Dr Cipto General Hospital, National Cancer Treatment Centre and Hospital to exchange experiences on the administration system and services provided.

The Union Minister and delegation arrived back in Myanmar on the evening of 9 November. — MNA ■

(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)



THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR  
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**ACTING CHIEF EDITOR**  
Aye Min Soe  
dce@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

**SENIOR EDITORIAL CONSULTANT**  
Kyaw Myaing

**SENIOR TRANSLATORS**  
Zaw Min  
Zaw Htet Oo  
Aung Khin  
**INTERNATIONAL NEWS EDITOR**  
Ye Htut Tin,  
editor1@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

**LOCAL NEWS EDITORS**  
Tun Tun Naing (Editor),  
intlnews@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com  
Nwe Nwe Tun (Sub-editor),  
nwenwe913l@gmail.com

**TRANSLATORS**  
Hay Mar Tin Win,  
Ei Myat Mon  
Kyaw Zin Lin  
Kyaw Zin Tun

**REPORTER**  
Nyein Nyein Ei,  
reporter1@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

**PHOTOGRAPHER**  
Kyaw Zeya Win @ Phoe Khwar  
Kyaw Zeya

**COMPUTER TEAM**  
Thein Ngwe, Zaw Zaw Aung,  
Ye Naing Soe, Hnin Pwint,  
Kay Khaing Win, Sanda Hnin,  
Thein Htwe, Nyi Lin Thu

**EDITORIAL SECTION**  
(+95) (01)8604529,  
Fax – (+95) (01) 8604305

**CIRCULATION & DISTRIBUTION**  
San Lwin, (+95) (01) 8604532,  
Hotline - 09 974424114

**ADVERTISING & MARKETING**  
(+95) (01) 8604530,  
Hotline - 09 974424848  
marketing@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com  
subscription@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

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gnlmdaily@gmail.com  
www.globalnewlightofmyanmar.com  
www.facebook.com/TheGNLM



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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.

Islands in Kawthoung popular among Tazaungmone holidaymakers

ISLANDS in Kawthoung District have attracted locals and foreigners in the Tazaungmone holiday period.  
“This is our first trip to the natural islands in our lives,” said a man from Mandalay. He and his family decided to visit Kawthoung during the Tazaungmone holiday, which began last Saturday and will end on the coming Tuesday.  
Most of the local travellers hail from big cities such as Yangon and Mandalay. Most of the local travellers are from big cities likes Yangon and Mandalay while most tourists are entering through the border with Thailand. Since the beginning the holidays, the jetties in Kawthoung have been seen busy with travellers and ferries.  
There are 30 untouched islands featured in the archipelago trips in Kawthoung District.



Visitors seen at the Kawthoung Myoma Jetty during the Tazaungmone holidays.  
PHOTO : KYAW SOE (KAWTHOUNG)

Of them, visitors can make day trips to nine islands, and night trips to seven islands. At present, 12 hotels and resorts are offering their services in the area, and 28 tour agencies are operating 60 speed-boats for visitors.—Kyaw Soe (Kawthoung) (Translated by KZL)

Over 200 tourists visit Mogok in October

WITH the Mandalay Regional government issuing permits to tourists seeking to visit Mogok, well-known as Myanmar’s ruby land, more than 200 tourists visited the region in October, according to Mandalay Region’s Directorate of Hotels and Tourism.  
“Earlier, visitors had to submit an application in Nay Pyi Taw to be allowed to visit Mogok. Then, they had to wait for one month or one-and-a-half months to be granted the permission. Now, permission is being granted by the regional government. So, tourists can now get permits to visit Mogok within five days,” said an official from the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation.

Foreign tourists who visited Mogok last month were mainly from China, Thailand, India, France, the United States, Britain, Russia, and Germany.  
A total of 207 tourists visited



Photo shows the panoramic view of Mogok which is also known as Ruby Land. PHOTO : MAUNG THA

Mogok in October, and the number of visitors is rising month by month. The tourists arrived in the region via Mandalay. To develop tourism in the region, the authorities in February gave the green light to foreigners visiting three more villages — Kyaukp-yathet, Panling, and Bernard.  
From January to October, a total of 1,237 tourists visited Mogok, with the region welcoming 105 tourists in January, 156 in February, 146 in March, 72 in April, 159 in May, 118 in June, 113 in July, 93 in August, 68 in September, and 207 in October.  
Mogok is famous among local and foreign travelers for its diverse ethnic groups and culture, ruby mines, the Kyauk Pyat That (Stone Roof Tier) landmark, and natural caves. Its mountains are also a destination for trekkers. —Aye Maung (Translated by Hay Mar)

Bomb scare in Nay Pyi Taw

A fake improvised explosive device was found last night at the Water Fountain Park in Nay Pyi Taw, setting off a bomb alert at the park which was packed with holidaymakers.  
A police colonel from the Myanmar Police Force said the device was inspected and found to be a fake.

“The bomb is a fake. It is made like a time bomb. There is no detonator nor gun powder,” he said.  
The fake IED was made out of a plastic pipe part filled with concrete and attached with wires, a mobile phone battery, and a circuit.—MNA (Translated by KZL)

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Mattress, bedding production help Monywa, Kyemon villagers earn livelihood

MATTRESS and bedding production are helping families eke out a living in Monywa and Kyemon villages, Monywa Township, Sagaing Region.

“Our two villages are carrying out production of mattresses, bedding, and also other items out of wadded fabric. We purchase cloth from Yangon garment factories as the raw material. We try to ensure low levels of noise in our workplaces. Once we have wadding, we line it inside Korean cloth and casual cloth from China and sow it up nicely. We make three types of wadded blankets. The wholesale price of a single blanket ranges between K3,800 and K4,000, while bedding costs between K12,000 and K14,000, depending on the quality of cloth. We make a ten-per-cent profit on a single piece. Last year, we purchased

about 50,000 viss of raw materials. This year, we purchased about 30,000 viss of raw materials as the market has cooled. Mattress and bedding production businesses earn between K2.5 million and K3 million per year, and have created job opportunities for local people,” said U Bo Lin, a one-stop shop owner from Monywa village.

“We sew casual cloth bags for the wadding. A small bag costs K40 or K50. We can finish about 150 or 200 bags per day. A sewing business can earn from K5,000 to K10,000 per day,” said Ma Toe Toe, a tailor who makes blanket bags.

There are 1,500 houses in Monywa village and 700 houses in Kyemon village. About 75 per cent of the households are mainly involved in mattress and bedding production.



Workers make the mattress in Monywa, Sagaing Region. PHOTO: MAUNG CHIT LIN

Those villages are located beside the Sagaing-Monywa road and they are distributing mattress and bedding across the country.—Maung Chit Lin (Indaw) (Translated by Hay Mar)

Myanmar-India border trade declines by 4.6 mln this fiscal year

BORDER trade between Myanmar and India reached US\$7.35 million by 1 November in the current fiscal year 2019-2020, according to the Ministry of Commerce. The value of border trade during the period declined by \$4.6 million, compared with the same period in the previous fiscal year. Last year, the value of border trade was \$11.9 million.

The bilateral border trade, as of 1 November this FY, included \$6.99 million in exports and \$0.36 million in imports.

The two countries carry out border trade mainly through Tamu, Rhi, Htan Ta Lan and

Kenglap cross-border trade camps, while a major part of bilateral trade is delivered via ships. Myanmar mainly exports fruits and vegetables, as well as fishery and forestry products to India, while importing medicines, electronic products, motorbikes, cotton yarn, non-alloy steel and other construction materials. Myanmar's border trade with four neighboring countries, China, India, Thailand and Bangladesh, totalled \$881 million, consisting of \$631 million in exports and \$268 million in imports.—Zwe (Translated by Hay Mar)

Thailand-Myanmar friendship bridge-2 to help boost bilateral trade

WITH the Thailand-Myanmar friendship bridge-2 officially opening on 30 October, bilateral border trade between Myanmar and Thailand is expected to rise, according to sources from the Ministry of Commerce.

“A boost in bilateral trade is very important. The trade flow and logistics services are being increased through Mae Sot,” said Mr. Niyom Wairatpanich, vice-chairman of the Thailand Chamber of Commerce.

In the previous fiscal year, bilateral trade between Myanmar and Thailand reach US\$4.99 billion. The top five export

products through the Mae Sot checkpoint were energy drinks, motorcycles, diesel oil, mobile phones with components, and dried betel nuts, while the top five import products were corn, live cows and buffaloes, old slabs, and transformers.

Border trade via the new friendship bridge and Mae Sot is expected to top 100 billion baht in 2020.

With the opening of the new bridge, exports from Thailand are likely to increase by more than 30 per cent. Mae Sot handles a major share – up to 60 per cent — of the total border

trade between Thailand and Myanmar, followed by Mae Sai and Ranong-Kaw Thauang checkpoints, said Mr. Kich Aungvitulsalit, chairman of the Thailand-Myanmar Business Council.

In a related development, Thailand Commerce Minister Mr. Jurin Laksanawisit held a meeting with the joint public and private sector consultative committee on Thailand-Myanmar border trade promotion at Mae Sot to boost border trade between the two countries.—GNLM (Translated by Hay Mar)

Asian Investments in Myanmar on the rise

By Nyein Nyein

INVESTMENTS in Myanmar by Asian countries are on the rise, said U Thant Sin Lwin, Director-General of the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA).

Currently, Asian countries such as South Korea, Thailand and Malaysia are investing in Myanmar. About 20 local and foreign entrepreneurs arrive daily in Myanmar to negotiate investments, he added. “On 5 November, we met with a director-general from the Malaysia Economic sector. They want to make investments in cruising on the domestic river, construction of a new industrial

city and construction of a housing project in the middle of Myanmar,” said U Thant Sin Lwin.

South Korea also applied to seek approval from MIC to invest in a hotel business in Mayangon Township, Yangon, with an investment of \$5.5 million.

In October, Yangon Amata Smart and Eco City Ltd, part of the Thailand based Amata Group, is developing the Smart and Eco City and related businesses on a 2,000 acre plot near Lay Daung Kan, Dagon Myothit East and South Townships, Yangon region. The company invested \$ 274.680 million, according to official statistics from DICA.

Entrepreneurs from Asian

countries are interested in investments in hotels, oil and gas, industrial production, automobile businesses and other service businesses.

From 1988 to September 2019, some 50 countries have made 1837 foreign investments, totaling \$81.8 billion in 12 economic sectors. Singapore topped the list of foreign investors in Myanmar, followed by China and Thailand. The inflow of foreign direct investment (FDI) in Myanmar reached \$9.4 billion in the 2015-2016 fiscal year (FY), \$6.6 billion in 2016-2017 FY, \$5.7 billion in 2017-2018 FY and \$4.5 billion in 2018-2019 FY. (Translated by Hay Mar)

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# Russian e-commerce booms despite economic doldrums

MOSCOW — Moscow photographer Galina Goryushina says that online shopping has changed her life.

“I’ve got more time for myself,” said the 30-year-old freelancer.

“I don’t have to haul heavy shopping bags. And I don’t waste money on silly knick-knacks laid out on the store shelves,” said Goryushina.

The young woman began shopping online a decade ago when she could not find clothes she liked in Russia and now makes most of her purchases online.

Russia may be a latecomer to the world of online shopping but e-commerce is experiencing

explosive growth in the country despite a stagnant economy weighed down by Western sanctions.

Russia’s economic growth stood at just 0.7 percent in the first six months of 2019.

Over the same period, the Russian e-commerce market has expanded by 26 percent to 725 billion rubles (\$11.3 billion), according to a study by Data Insight, a Russian-based research agency.

The sector is developing rapidly despite numerous logistical challenges in the world’s largest country including an often unreliable postal service.

Long distances and low population density make e-commerce

an appealing – and sometimes even the only – option in Russia.

Even in affluent Moscow, where shopping malls offer a huge variety of consumer goods, many prefer to shop online to avoid the ubiquitous traffic jams.

‘Transformative for the country’

One of Russia’s biggest online retailers, Ozon, began as an online bookstore — much like the global giant Amazon — and later expanded into other types of merchandise.

On a recent tour of Ozon’s offices in Moscow’s business district, chief executive Alexander Shulgin said the potential for



Online retailer Ozon handles over 100,000 packages a day at one of its logistics centres in the town of Tver. PHOTO: AFP

growth in Russia was enormous.

“I am absolutely confident that e-commerce will be absolutely huge in Russia, it’s transformative for the country,” he said, pointing to Russia’s high internet penetration, with 95 million online users.—AFP ■

# Fuel shortage, price hikes squeeze protest-hit Lebanon



A big queue formed outside this money transfer shop in Beirut. PHOTO: AFP

BEIRUT — A rationing of dollars by banks in protest-hit Lebanon sparked growing alarm on Saturday as some petrol pumps ran dry and grocery stores hiked prices.

The president and banking officials responded by pledging to take steps to improve the situation and help businesses to stay open.

For two decades, the Lebanese pound has been pegged to the greenback and the currencies are used interchangeably in daily life.

But banks have been reducing access to dollars since the end of the summer, following

fears of declining central bank reserves. Access was further limited this week after banks reopened for the first time since an unprecedented popular uprising began on October 17.

On Saturday, several petrol stations ran out of fuel because of a shortage of dollars needed to pay for imports, a syndicate head said.

“The petrol stations that opened today are the ones that still have reserves. They will close down as soon as supply runs out,” said Sami Brax, the head of the Syndicate of Gas Station Owners.

He said if officials do not

facilitate access to dollars by Tuesday, “we will be forced to stop imports and close down all petrol stations”.

His warning came a day after hospitals threatened to stop receiving patients because of a lack of dollars to pay for medical imports. Current medical stocks in the country “will not last more than a month”, hospital syndicate head Suleiman Haroun said.

Price hikes

Grievances driving Lebanon’s protests range from power cuts and poor social security to alleged state corruption.—AFP ■

# Apple Card probed for alleged gender discrimination

NEW YORK — A New York financial regulator said Saturday it is investigating claims of gender discrimination by the new credit card from tech giant Apple and its issuer Goldman Sachs, after a cardholder’s tweet about his wife’s credit limit went viral.

American businessman David Heinemeier Hansson had tweeted on Thursday that the Apple Card is a “fucking sexist program.”

He said the card’s “black box” algorithm had given him 20 times the credit limit of his wife, even though they file joint tax returns and she has a higher credit score.

Hansson tweeted a series of messages recounting fruitless chats with Apple customer service agents, who were unable to explain the disparity but blamed it on the algorithm that determines an applicant’s credit-worthiness.

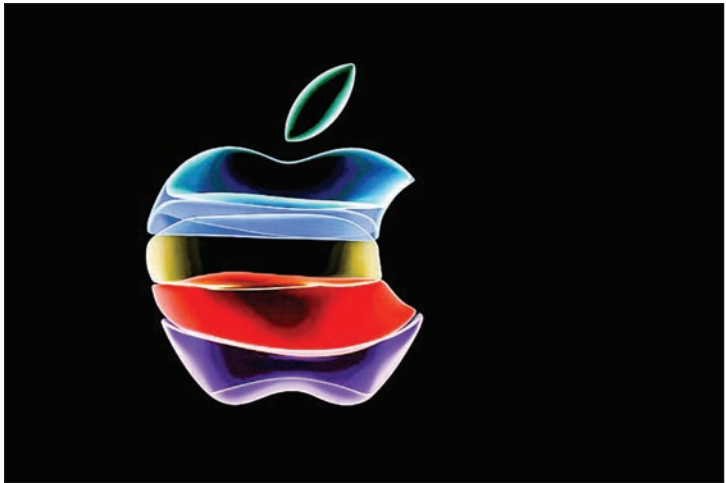
A “black box” algorithm

refers to artificial intelligence systems whose decisions cannot be explained.

In March, Apple started offering the Apple Card, issued by banking giant Goldman Sachs.

New York state regulators will “be conducting an investigation to determine whether New York law was violated and ensure all consumers are treated equally regardless of sex,” said a spokesman for Linda Lacewell, the superintendent of the New York Department of Financial Services.

“Any algorithm, that intentionally or not results in discriminatory treatment of women or any other protected class of people violates New York law.” Said Goldman spokesman Andrew Williams: “Our credit decisions are based on a customer’s creditworthiness and not on factors like gender, race, age, sexual orientation or any other basis prohibited by law.”—AFP ■



Apple began offering the Apple Card credit card, issued by Goldman Sachs, in March 2019. PHOTO: AFP



## Australians warned worst bushfires may be yet to come

SYDNEY — Sydney is facing a “catastrophic” fire threat, authorities said on Sunday, as firefighters in eastern Australia raced to prepare for worsening conditions after ferocious bushfires devastated communities.

Fires have killed three people and razed more than 150 homes since Friday, but cooler weather overnight provided a welcome reprieve for firefighters and residents.

Authorities were assessing the damage on Sunday, with more than 100 fires still burning across New South Wales and Queensland, including several blazes that remained out of control.

Wider swathes of the states — including greater Sydney — are now bracing for perilous fire conditions predicted for the coming days, as is Western Australia state.

It is the first time Sydney has been warned of a “catastrophic” fire danger, the highest possible level, since the grading system was introduced



In Old Bar, hectares of bushland had turned charcoal and small pockets of flames continued to smoulder. **PHOTO: AFP**

in 2009.

Massive fires tore through several towns on Friday and Saturday.

The mayor of Glen Innes, where two people died, said residents were traumatised and still coming to terms with their losses.

“The fire was as high as 20 foot (six metres) and raging with 80 kilometres-an-hour (50

miles-an-hour) winds,” Carol Sparks told national broadcaster ABC.

Five people reported missing have been found, but the unpredictable nature of the disaster means officials have not ruled out the possibility that others could still be missing, NSW Rural Fire Service spokesman Greg Allan told AFP. —AFP ■

## Russia releases last belugas from ‘whale jail’

MOSCOW — The last whales held in a notorious facility dubbed the “whale jail” in Russia’s Far East were released on Sunday, the institute overseeing the operation said.

The fate of the whales, which were captured to perform in aquariums, sparked international outrage earlier this year after pictures appeared in the media of them struggling to swim through ice-encrusted waters in cramped enclosures.

Moscow eventually bowed to pressure to release the 93 beluga whales and 11 orcas, which were held for more than a year in the secretive facility in Srednyaya Bay near the far eastern town of Nakhodka.

The whales have since been released in batches, with the last of the orcas freed in August.

The All-Russian Fisheries and Oceanography Institute said the operation to free the last belugas started five days ago.

“In the region of Primorsky Krai, the operation to release the marine mammals into their natural habit has been completed,”

it said in a statement on Sunday.

Russian NGO Sakhalin Watch, which campaigned for the whales to be freed, said the final 21 belugas were released from two ships on Sunday.

The organisation said it was delighted that “the release of all the beluga whales has taken place and that the ‘whale jail’ has finally freed its last prisoners!”

The operation began around 9:00 am (2300 GMT Saturday) and went on until 5:00 pm, Sakhalin Watch said. Many scientists and activists have criticised the Oceanography Institute for keeping the details of the release secret, not taking any observers on the trip and freeing only a small group of animals at a time rather than all of them together, which would boost their survival odds.

Sakhalin Watch said the coastguard forced its members to leave the bay where the whales were being released. Russia is the only country that captures wild orcas and belugas to sell to aquariums, a controversial practice made possible by legal loopholes. —AFP ■

## Stranded tigers recovering in Polish zoos

WARSAW — Nine stranded tigers whose plight sparked a wave of public sympathy after they were found emaciated and dehydrated during an odyssey from Italy are slowly recovering after their rescue by two Polish zoos.

The tigers endured a gruelling journey through Europe last month during which a tenth feline died.

But seven are now eating and have received vitamins and mineral salts at one of the zoos in Poznan, western Poland, an AFP photographer reported after a Friday visit.

Poznan zoo workers said the three males and four females are still stressed and aggressive and currently eating only half their customary five to six kilos daily diet of beef and horsemeat.

Vets say the amount must be increased only incrementally after the animals endured several days with no food at all.

Two others were housed in another zoo and are in a better condition. —AFP ■

## Iceland students see chilling reality of melting glacier

VIK (Iceland) — Icelandic seventh-grader Lilja Einarsdottir is on an unusual field trip with her class: they’re measuring the Solheimajokull glacier to see how much it has shrunk in the past year, witnessing climate change first-hand.

“It is very beautiful but at the same time it is very sad to see how much it has melted,” says Lilja, bundled up against the autumn chill in a blue pom-pom hat.

Each October since 2010, now-retired schoolteacher Jon Stefansson has brought students aged around 13 from a school in Hvolsvollur — a village about 60 kilometres (40 miles) away — to the glacier to record its evolution.

The results are chilling: nestled between two moss-covered mountain slopes, Solheimajokull has shrunk by an average of 40 metres (130 feet) per year in the past decade, according to the students’ measurements.

On this blustery October day, the youngsters — armed with a GPS, a measuring tape and two yellow flags — cal-

culate the distances on foot from various spots, struggling against strong winds.

Once done, some of the students hop in a dinghy and cross a lake of brown meltwater to reach an imposing wall of ice, the so-called terminus, or front of the glacier.

Here, they determine the gap between the terminus and a handpainted sign at the end of a footpath, where previous students have recorded their measurements over the years.

The numbers on the sign, pitched in black sand and steadied at the base by a pile

of stones, indicate how many metres of ice have disappeared over the past years: “24”, “50”, “110”.

“When (the first students) started here, you couldn’t see any water. So it (the glacier) was very big at first,” says Lilja. —AFP ■



The Solheimajokull glacier has shrunk by an average of 40 metres per year in the past decade. **PHOTO: AFP**







# The festivals of Tazaungmone

FROM PAGE-9

Tazaungmon is the month of festivals. Almost all kinds of festivals take place in this month because of clement weather. The following are other religious festivals of this month. Matho-Thingan weaving and offering. Literally translated “Non-stale robe”. It is the kind of robe made all at once with the prescribes period of the night. Its origin goes back to Lord Gotama Buddha’s foster mother Bhikhuni Gotami. She made Matho Thigan robe over night to be in time for offering it to Lord Buddha to wear on the following morning. Not an easy job to weave it and make it to become robe within the short period of a night. Late evening when the day ends and night begin. Matho Thingan making begins. It requires collective work of the participants making the time of previous night and following morning.

It the robe could not be finished within the prescribed time limit it is called Stale. Today this event takes place at many prominent Pagodas and monasteries across the country. Two other types of religious offering are Pant-Tha-Ku offering Kyathingan weaving and offering. Pant-Tha-Ku offering is any offering cash, kind, food or medicine for monks are left on the ground in the neighborhood of monasteries of nunneries with a note attached Pantthaku offering. Monks or nuns can take and use it Kya Thingan is the roe made of fibres of Lotus stems. Very fine and tender but Kya Thingan are cool in Summer and warm in Winter. This art of Kya Thingan making is waning today.

There is another religious festival held in the month of Tazaung mon. It is the festival in honor of Buddhist saint monk “Shin ma lei”. This monk is post Buddha time was a native of Lanka dipa [Sri Lanka]. By means of his deep meditation he went up to Tavatimsa, the deva kingdom to pay homage to Sulamani Pagoda in which the hair of Prince Sidhartha [Buddha to be] and the sacred tooth of Lord Buddha were enshrined. There, Shin ma lei met the deva who would become Miteya Buddha. This deva requested Shin ma lei to preach to the people Vessondara Jataka to propagate dan [giving] parami [virtue]. Shin Ma Lei promised. Since then Shin Ma Lei Festival is held a very high towers were

built with Shin Ma Lei Statue of Shin Ma Lei on the top of the tower temple one thousand times to represent one thousand stanzas of Vessandara Jatak is.

In the precincts of Maha Muni Temple in Mandalay, there is the Tower of Shin Ma Lei where Shin Ma lei festival takes place in Tazaung mon, these days new generations call this festival “Kya Pyit Pwe” [ကြာပိပွဲ]. It now assumes socio cultural significance. Two traditional feasts of Full moon Tazaung mon are Mei Zali Fest and Kyi Ma Noe Festival. Both are connected with the Festival of Net Khat Thabin as mentioned earlier in this article. Legend says that on Full moon Night of Tazaung Mon the guardian god of Kyat ti ka also the guardian god of Fire “Agni” comes down to visit the guardian god of Mei Zalee Tree [cassia siamea]. The guardian gods of all herbal trees gather at Mei Zale Tree to pay respect to Kyattika or Fire God. So it is believed that all medicinal herbal trees or plants gathered at mei zale tree make the Tree’s medicinal properties increased and more potent. People make good salad of mei zale, buds, and tender leaves and offer to all friends and strangers for dana of health and to longevity. Mei Zale salad is of course one of our favourite Sat lards.

Next festival Kyi Ma Noe literally means before crows wake up in early morning. It is in fact a customary prank played by male youths before crows wake up. It is also known as Thief’s Night Saw ya Net Khat [Thief’s Constellation] on Full moon Tazaung mon sheds its rays on to the Earth. Anyone who gets caught in the rays suffer temporarily kleptomania a psychological disorder that makes you to “steal” [pinch] anything. Just for the satisfaction of your mind for that moment. So youths play their pranks. They “steal” anything and everything outside the households and ends pots, pans, chamber pots, clothings, Ladies underwear, braziers, clothings, foot wears etc. etc. They also take vegetable and also eggs or chicken. At their gathering usually is front of the houses of pretty belles they cook Kalathachet rice and curries, kill chicken, put egg and all sorts of vegetable into one big earthen pot and while the pot is still boiling, they take cooked rice

with wooden ladle put on banana leaves and with wooden ladle spoon take carry and eat. It is said the taste of the chicken curry right out of the boiling earthen pot is excellent. It comes to be known as Kyat tha kala tha chet [chicken curry cooked by male youths].

After they have filled up their bellies they begin serenading in front of the houses of pretty girls. Whose parents pretend to be asleep to give their daughters time to enjoy. All lights are off but windows are open where girls watch and listen to the serenade. Flutes or wind instruments and banjo, mandolin, harps, or local string instruments are played. Many love songs especially pops and hip-hops song. Sometimes youths dance merrily. The odds and ends they “steal” [pinch] are displayed at the public places, street functions. The following morning they wait to see who come to claim the stolen pieces. But of their femining modesty, girls do not come to claim their stolen odds or ends. Their grandmas or aunts would come to take back the under wear or braziers etc. The youths hiding nearby will yell out “Grandma, Aunty is it your own underwear. Why do not you let real owner come to claim it? Whereupon these old ladies yell out “you stupid son of bitch stop and go away. None of your business who comes to claim you’ll go to hell”. Youths enjoy such kind of sharp remarks from the old ladies. Nothing serious happen only for merrymaking.

In remote villages and towns, such Thief’s days are performed on Full moon Tazaung mone. but Kyet Tha Kalatha Chet Curry has now become Tourists’ favourite meal at food stalls and restaurants are ordered to make it for foreign tourists, who enjoy the background history of it.

Most festive month of Tazaungmone is epitomized by the following folk song

အဘိုးကြီးအို ခါးကုန်းကုန်း  
မသေပါနဲ့ဦး  
နှောင်နှစ်ခါ တန်ဆောင်မုန်း  
ပွဲကြည့်ပါဦး။  
Oldman bent and double  
Don’t die so soon  
For watch again the pwes (festivals)  
At next Tazaungmone  
Full moon.

## NEWS In BRIEF

### Iran announces discovery of massive oil field

TEHRAN—Iran has discovered a massive new oil field, President Hassan Rouhani said Sunday, a find that would boost its proven reserves by about a third in a rare piece of “good news” for an economy battered by US sanctions.

In a speech aired on state TV, Rouhani said the country’s economy had stabilised despite punishing US measures against its senior leaders, banking and finance sectors. The vast field in the southwestern province of Khuzestan holds an estimated 53 billion barrels of crude, he said. — AFP ■

### Greece speeds up ‘Golden Visa’ scheme for Chinese investors

ATHENS—Chinese investor Jiang Rungong, who moved to Greece three years ago, says he and his family could not be happier in their new home on the Athens coast. “We chose Greece because of its cultural heritage, its history, the democracy, the freedom. We really like its atmosphere,” Jiang says. “Since we got the visa, we’ve travelled to many European countries. And every time we come back to Greece, the moment we set foot in the airport, we feel like it’s home.” The 52-year-old from Shanghai, his wife and son took advantage of Greece’s so-called Golden Visa scheme to come and live in Europe. — AFP ■

- The construction of nine industrial roads in Pauk Taw, Mrauk-U, Kyauk Taw, Min Byar, Butheetaung, Kyauk Phyu, Ann, Thandwe and Gwa townships, is 100% completed.
- The construction of 22 industrial bridges in Pauk Taw, Mrauk-U, Kyauk Taw, Min Byar, Butheetaung, Kyauk Phyu, Ann, Thandwe and Gwa townships, is fully completed.

#### Transport Sector

##### Water Transport

- Currently in operation are 22 privately owned water transport services, 51 river transport cargo vessels, 903 cargo vessels of more than 20 horse power, and 591 cargo vessels of less than 20 horse power.
- A Sittwe-Kyauk Phyu direct coastal passenger service has been available on Kissapanadi 3, a high-speed coastal passenger ship worth Japanese Yen 1 billion donated by the people of Japan, beginning with 5 April 2019.
- A total of 193 Life Saving Appliance Certificates have been issued between 1 January and 31 August 2019.
- Landing craft measuring 200 feet by 50 feet by 10 feet capable of transporting 25 large and small vehicles is under construction in Dagon Port Dockyard in Yangon. Upon completion, it will be used as a ferry at Yechanpyin-Ah Ngu Maw crossing on Sittwe-Maungdaw Road.



Kissapanadi 3

#### Rail Transport



Maintenance of Raised Roadway in Pyitawthar-Yaychanpyin Section of the Road



Construction of Passenger Terminal at Sittwe Railway Station

- Earth work and rail maintenance are being carried out in Pyitawthar-Yaychanpyin and Kun Taung-Kyauk Taw Section of the rail line. Earth work maintenance for the 3.69-mile Kyauk Taw-Mrauk-O Section of the rail line and bridge construction and maintenance on the Zaw Pu Jar-Yechanpyin Section of the rail line have been completed. The repair work on the roof of the passenger terminal of Sittwe Station, which was damaged by untimely rainfalls and strong winds, was completed on 9 August 2019.



## Cambodian opposition leader released from yearlong house arrest

PHNOM PENH—The leader of the banned opposition Cambodia National Rescue Party was released Sunday from yearlong house arrest after being charged with treason, but is still prohibited from engaging in political activities, a court said.

Investigations into Kem Sokha's case are now concluded and he has been temporarily discharged before his upcoming trial but cannot leave the country and is required to cooperate with authorities at any time, according to a statement from the Phnom Penh Municipal Court.

The statement did not say when Kem Sokha will be tried but sources with knowledge of the situation have suggested by mid-December at the latest.

Kem Sokha, 66, was charged with treason in September 2017 for allegedly conspiring with a foreign power to topple the government. He was immediately sent to a prison near the Vietnamese border before being transferred back to Phnom Penh a year later and put under house arrest.

The charges are widely seen as politically motivated and part of a wide-ranging effort by the government to crack down on any meaningful opposition.

In a post on Facebook following his release, Kem Sokha expressed disappointment with the investigating judge's rejection of a request from his lawyers to drop the charges against him.—Kyodo ■

## Afghan chief executive wants halt to election recount

KABUL—Afghanistan's Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah called Sunday for a halt to a recount of the recent presidential election, saying he would not accept "fraud-marked" results.

The move adds a fresh layer of uncertainty following the September 28 poll, which already has been marred by record-low turnout and continued bickering between Abdullah and his rival, President Ashraf Ghani. "The recounting should be stopped. We are trying to save the process from fraudsters," Abdullah said at a rally of his supporters in Kabul. "A fraud-marred election will not be accepted. The result should be based on the clean votes of our people," he added. Abdullah, who unsuccessfully ran in the previous two presidential elections and is fighting for his political future, has repeatedly raised questions about the validity of hundreds of thousands of votes.—AFP ■

## Cheering crowds greet Japan's new emperor in rare parade



Japan's Emperor Naruhito and Empress Masako wave during their royal parade in Tokyo. PHOTO: AFP

TOKYO—Tens of thousands of flag-waving spectators cheered Japan's new Emperor Naruhito on Sunday during a rare open-top car imperial parade that was rescheduled after a deadly typhoon.

Some in the crowd camped overnight to nab a prime stop by the palace for the 30-minute parade featuring the emperor and his wife Empress Masako.

The event was one of the final events marking Naruhito's ascension to the throne after his father Akihito earlier this year became the first Japanese emperor in two centuries to abdicate.

The royal couple emerged

from the palace moments before 3:00 pm (0600 GMT), with the Emperor wearing formal Western clothing and the Empress dressed in a long cream gown and jacket, wearing a tiara passed down by her predecessor.

Security was high for the event, with long lines forming hours ahead of the parade and thousands of police deployed to search bags and move spectators through metal detectors.

Security forces lined the entire length of the route in double rows, keeping close watch as the slow-moving parade passed, flanked by police on motorbikes.

In the minutes before the pa-

rade began, police at one checkpoint warned would-be attendees that the area was full.

"We're at Disneyland levels of crowding. The security check won't finish in time for you to see the parade," one policeman with a loudspeaker warned those still in line.

### 'Once in a lifetime'

Yoko Mori, 64, lined up from 10:00 am to secure a spot, traveling from Saitama outside Tokyo. "We came here because it's a once in a lifetime opportunity and we wanted to celebrate this event," she told AFP, flanked by her friend Chiyoie Ito, 70.—AFP ■

## Eight dead as Cyclone Bulbul smashes into India, Bangladesh coasts

NEW DELHI—Eight people died and more than two million others spent a night huddled in storm shelters as Cyclone Bulbul smashed into the coasts of India and Bangladesh with fierce gales and torrential rains, officials said Sunday.

The cyclone packed winds of up to 120 kilometres (75 miles) per hour when it hit late Saturday, closing ports and airports in both countries.

Three people were killed in India's West Bengal state, two after uprooted trees fell on their homes and another after being struck by the falling branches of a tree in Kolkata. A fourth person died in a wall collapse in nearby Odisha state.



Villagers gather in front of a collapsed house after Cyclone Bulbul hit the area in Bakkhali, Bangladesh, on November 10, 2019. PHOTO: AFP

In Bangladesh, four more were killed by falling trees and at least 20 people were injured.

The cyclone also damaged some 4,000 mostly mud and tin-built houses, Bangladesh's disaster

management secretary Shah Kamal told AFP. In coastal Khulna, the worst-hit district in Bangla-

desh, trees swayed violently and were ripped from the ground in the fierce storm, blocking roads and hampering access to the area. Some low-lying parts of the district were flooded, disaster management minister Enamur Rahman told AFP.

Authorities said the cyclone was weakening as it moved inland. "It has turned into a deep depression, causing heavy rainfall," Bangladesh weather bureau deputy chief Ayesha Khatun told AFP. Bulbul hit the coast at the Sundarbans, the world's largest mangrove forest which straddles Bangladesh and India, and is home to endangered species including the Bengal tigers and the Irrawaddy dolphins.—AFP ■



## Romania votes for president with liberal incumbent favoured



Former prime minister and presidential candidate Viorica Dancila casts her ballot. **PHOTO: AFP**

BUCHAREST—Romania voted in the first round of a presidential election on Sunday, with pro-European incumbent Klaus Iohannis the favourite to win, potentially adding to a liberal fightback against the region's prevailing nationalism.

Iohannis of the centre-right National Liberal Party (PNL) repeatedly clashed with the beleaguered government of the left-wing Social Democrat (PSD) party, which collapsed last month.

His main rival in the presidential vote, the PSD's Viorica Dancila, served as prime

minister for the government, which took power in 2016.

The PSD's government had engaged in a long battle with Brussels -- and Iohannis -- over allegations it was trying to push through controversial judicial reforms in order to neuter the judiciary and benefit PSD politicians.

"Today Romanians are deciding on the future of their country," Iohannis, 60, told reporters as he cast his ballot at a school in the capital Bucharest.

After casting her own ballot, Dancila told support-

ers she voted "for a safe and dignified Romania".

He has made rule of law a central plank of his campaign which has mirrored that of Slovakian anti-corruption activist Zuzana Caputova, who won the presidential election in that country in March.

In Hungary too, the nationalist government of Prime Minister Viktor Orban suffered a rare setback last month when centre-left candidate Gergely Karacsony united the opposition to wrest the mayoralty of the capital Budapest from Orban's Fidesz party.—AFP

## Farmers blocked as Israel-Jordan enclave deal expires

NAHARAYIM (Israel) — Israelis were prevented from entering Jordanian border enclaves on Sunday after a deal allowing farmers to work land there expired, 25 years after a landmark peace treaty. Since the two countries signed the deal in 1994, Jordan has allowed Israeli farmers access to the territories of Ghumar in the north and Baqura in the south under a renewable 25-year arrangement. In October last year however, Jordan's King Abdullah said his country had notified Israel that it wants them back.

An AFP journalist in northern Israel on Sunday said the yellow gate to a bridge over the river dividing the two countries, long the portal for Israeli

farmers to access Baqura, was locked. Baqura, known in Hebrew as Naharayim, lines on a spit of land where the Jordan and Yarmuk rivers meet. Ghumar, deep in the Negev desert south of the Dead Sea, is known in Hebrew as Tzofar.

The lands have been privately owned by Israeli entities for decades, but the 1994 deal saw the kingdom retain sovereignty there. Since the heady days of Israel's second peace treaty with an Arab state -- after Egypt -- relations with Amman have been strained. Opinion polls have repeatedly found that the peace treaty with Israel is overwhelmingly opposed by Jordanians, more than half of whom are of Palestinian origin.—AFP ■



The gate on the Israeli side of the border with Jordan at Naharayim / Baqura was locked on Sunday. **PHOTO: AFP**

## Spain votes in repeat general election amid Catalonia tensions

MADRID—Spain voted Sunday in its fourth general election in as many years amid heightened tensions over the separatist push in Catalonia that has fuelled a surge in support for upstart far-right party Vox.

The repeat polls were called after Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez failed to secure support from other parties following an inconclusive election in April which saw his Socialist party win the most votes, but no working majority in parliament. Opinion polls however suggest this new election will fail to break the deadlock. Neither the left nor the right look likely to win a ruling majority in Spain's 350-seat parliament.—AFP ■

## Russia's Napoleon expert confesses to chopping up lover



History lecturer Oleg Sokolov liked to dress up as French emperor Napoleon. **PHOTO: AFP**

MOSCOW—A prominent Saint Petersburg-based Napoleon expert has confessed to murdering his young lover and former student and dismembering her body in a grisly crime that sent shock waves across Russia.

Oleg Sokolov, a 63-year-old history lecturer who received

France's Legion d'Honneur in 2003, was arrested Saturday on suspicion of murder after he was hauled out of the icy Moika River with a backpack containing a woman's arms.

"He has admitted his guilt," Sokolov's lawyer Alexander Pochuev told AFP, adding he regretted what he had

done and was now cooperating.

Sokolov was reportedly drunk and fell in as he tried to dispose of body parts.

After disposing of the corpse he reportedly planned to commit suicide at the Peter and Paul Fortress, one of the former imperial capital's most famous landmarks, dressed as Napoleon. Sokolov teaches history at Saint Petersburg State University, President Vladimir Putin's alma mater, and was close to the Russian authorities. He told investigators that he shot and killed his lover during an argument and then sawed off her head, arms and legs, local media reported.

Pochuev suggested Sokolov may have been under stress or emotionally disturbed. "He is an elderly person," he said, adding he was being treated for hypothermia in a hospital. Police discovered

the decapitated body of Anastasia Yeshchenko, 24, with whom Sokolov had co-authored a number of works, and a blood-stained saw at his home.

### 'Simply monstrous'

The historian, who also taught at Sorbonne University, is the author of books on French emperor Napoleon Bonaparte. He acted as a historical consultant on several films and took part in historical re-enactments of Napoleonic wars. Both he and his lover studied French history and liked to wear period costumes, with Sokolov dressing up as Napoleon. Students described Sokolov as both a talented lecturer who could impersonate the French emperor and his generals and a "freak" who called his lover "Josephine" and liked to be addressed as "Sire".—AFP ■



Nigeria  
targets oil  
companies  
for a greater  
share of  
profits

LAGOS—In a move Nigeria’s president hailed as a “landmark moment”, Africa’s largest oil producer approved legislation this week to bolster its share of revenues from international majors.

The authorities say the amendment -- heralded as the biggest change in decades to its production sharing deals -- will bring billions of dollars into state coffers as the country belatedly claims an “equitable share” of its vast natural resources. But oil industry insiders have slammed the change as an ill-planned attempt to grab money and warn that it could prompt an exodus of investments as foreign firms turn their backs on Nigeria.

The changes redraw the Deep Offshore (and Inland Basin Production Sharing Contract) Act which been in force since it was passed in 1993 when Nigeria was under military rule. The law mandated that the split of revenues between the state and the international oil firms should be reviewed if prices climbed over \$20 per barrel. But while crude has soared far above that point over the past two decades, a revision of the formula for revenue sharing was never carried out.

Buhari’s government have accused previous Nigerian lawmakers of having vested interests in making sure the bulk of oil revenues remained in private hands. The new law sets a staggered “royalty rate” on crude oil sold above \$20 -- rising to the highest rate of 10 percent if the price reaches more than \$150 a barrel -- with the revenue due to the government increasing in line with oil price rises.—AFP ■

Tech juggernaut Saudi Aramco faces new  
test: shareholders

DHAHRAN—From robots to sniffer drones, Saudi Aramco has ramped up spending on technological innovation while its rivals cut back amid soft oil prices, but the energy giant risks losing its edge after its much-anticipated IPO.

Saudi Arabia is offering a sliver of the company, touted as the kingdom’s crown jewel, in its upcoming initial public offering that is the bedrock of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman’s ambitious strategy to overhaul the oil-reliant economy.

Its market debut on the Riyadh stock exchange will raise pressure for higher profit margins on a company that so far has been answerable to no one except the government.

“Aramco has never had to answer to investors



In recent years Saudi Aramco, the world’s most profitable company, increased spending on research and development as most of its competitors scaled back. PHOTO: AFP

looking at the company’s quarterly results,” Ellen Wald, author of the book “Saudi Inc.,” told AFP. “When it goes public, that will change.”

In recent years the world’s most profitable

company, billed as a juggernaut of innovation, increased spending on research and development as most of its competitors scaled back.

Aramco said it incurred R&D expenses of

\$591 million in 2018, up from \$507 million in the previous year. Its technological prowess was on display in a recent media tour of its sprawling Dhahran headquarters in eastern Saudi Arabia, akin to a manicured

American suburb with quaint houses, shopping plazas and schools for its 15,000-strong workforce. Engineers hunched over computers in an air-conditioned command centre with giant screens tracking the flow of crude from oil fields, through a complex web of pipelines and refineries, to tankers dispatched around the world.

Workers displayed innovations, from production-boosting drilling technology to nimble robots that crawl over pipes to carry out repairs and drones fitted with “sniffers” to detect leaks and inspect flare tips.

“Over the past five years, our R&D spending has more than doubled,” said Ahmad al-Khowaiter, Aramco’s chief technology officer.—AFP ■

Huawei leads China’s tablet market  
in Q3: IDC



A Huawei store in Shanghai. The company increased phone shipments in China as new models sold briskly. PHOTO: KYODO

BEIJING—Huawei took the lead in China’s tablet market for the first time due to the popularity of

its new flagship model and wide range of products, according to global market intelligence firm

International Data Corporation (IDC). Shipment of Huawei’s tablets amounted to 2.12 million units, up 24.4 percent from a year ago, accounting for 37.4 percent of the total market. Apple’s iPads ranked second with a 33.8-percent share, followed by Xiaomi, which took 5.9 percent of the market.

The data also showed the total shipment of tablets in China reached 5.67 million units, expanding for six consecutive quarters.—Xinhua ■

China’s hottest investment: overpriced  
sneakers

SHANGHAI—Forget stocks, real estate, even cryptocurrencies -- China’s hottest investment nowadays may be the Nike, Adidas, and Puma basketball shoes that “sneakerheads” like Hu Huaiyuan fight to get their hands on.

Enthusiasts worldwide have fuelled an expanding bubble in high-priced sneakers, often limited-edition collaborations between big names in sportswear and fashion, rappers or athletes.

But in China the craze is at fever

pitch, with devotees driving soaring trading volumes on online “sneaker exchange” platforms, prompting warnings from authorities about dangerous speculation as resale profits approach 5,000 percent. “The sneaker market is no longer just a game for enthusiasts. Speculators are flocking into the business now,” said Hu, who travelled 300 kilometres (187 miles) to Shanghai for the chance to buy the latest Nike Air Jordans.—AFP ■

CLAIM’S DAY NOTICE

M.V PROSPERITY

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V PROSPERITY VOY. NO. (06/19) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 11-11-2019 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of T.M.I.T where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT  
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY  
AGENT FOR: M/S RK SHIPPING & TRADING  
PTE LTD

Phone No: 2301928

CLAIM’S DAY NOTICE

M.V EVER RELIANCE

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V EVER RELIANCE VOY. NO. (047) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 11-11-2019 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of I.B.T.T where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

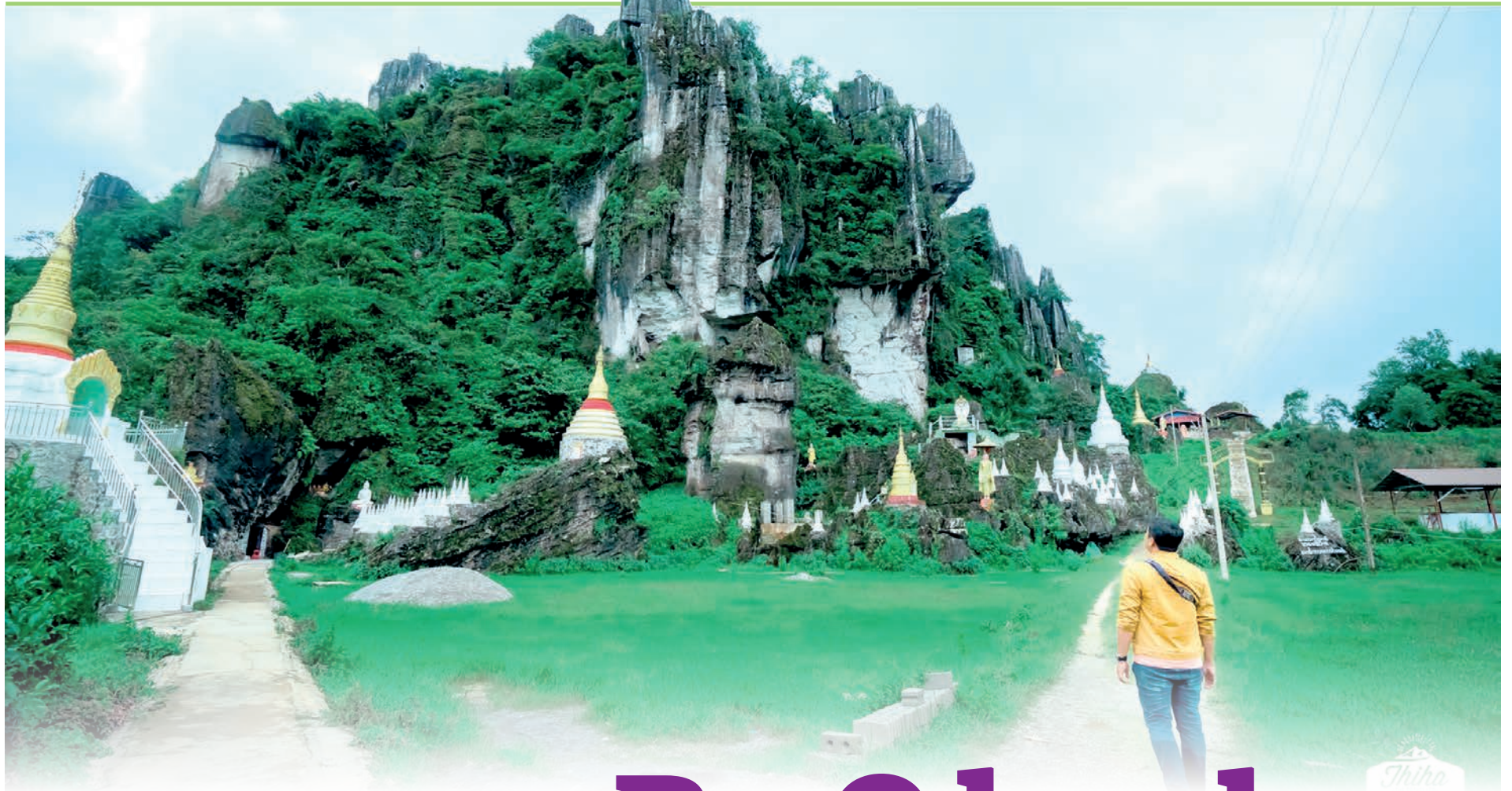
Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11:20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm to Claim’s Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the Vessel.

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT  
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY  
AGENT FOR: M/S BEN LINE AGENCIES  
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# Pa-O land with true natural beauties (Part 2)

By **Thiha** (the Traveller)

## Kaungdaw natural cave

Kaungdaw natural cave with a statue of a hunter known as Kaungdaw was really beautiful. Much thanks was owed to the locals and the head monk of a local monastery for maintaining the nature. We actually went quite deep into the cave hoping to reach the end but didn't dare to go any further beyond the point where electric lights were lit. The sight inside the cave was great with overhanging speleothems or cave formations but as we went deeper, there were waters on the ground so we beat a hasty retreat back to the mouth of the cave.

## Taung Hti Bwar Cave and Wingabar Mountain

Wingabar Mountain was 3.5 miles (5.7 kilometre) from Pinlaung near the village of Taung Hti Bwar. The cave at Wingabar Mountain known as Yar Za Cave or Hti Bwar Cave was long with many paths making it confusing for some visitors to find the way in or out. This makes the visit to the cave an exciting one. Most visitors can figure their way in or out so don't be too concerned about getting lost but you may choose to go along with some locals too.

## Orange farm

Oranges from Pinlaung were good. Even though we went at a time when it was not available, we visited an orange farm. During winter time, the orange tree will be full of oranges. A visit to an orange farm is one you must make if you ever made it to Pinlaung whether there are oranges or not.

Pa-O lacquer ware. **PHOTO: THIHA**



Traditional scale and wicker wares. **PHOTO: THIHA**





A cave where Kyansittha hid. PHOTO: THIHA



Footprint of King Kyansittha. PHOTO: THIHA

least would be a very attractive souvenir for any visitors be they locals or foreigners.

Footprint of King Kyansittha

Ask a local guide to show you where a footprint said to be of King Kyansittha was. There were two footprints of the great King Kyansittha of Bagan at some distance from one another near Pinlaung.

Many more places of interests

There were many more places of interests near Pinlaung



Kaungdaw natural cave. PHOTO: THIHA



Orange farm. PHOTO: THIHA



PHOTO: THIHA



People sitting around the fire. PHOTO: THIHA

Villages producing Pa-O traditional wicker ware

Villages producing Pa-O traditional wicker ware are must-visit places for any visitors, local or foreigner. Buying one as a souvenir would be better still as all were within the range of K

1,000 to 5,000. Ask a local guide to show you around. The guide will show you right into the homes where the wicker wares were produced. You will not only see first-hand how the wicker wares were produced but also how the locals live.

Pa-O lacquer ware

I was pleasantly surprised to find out that Pa-O had lacquer ware. Even though this practice was becoming close to extinction, it would be great if the locals continue to produce this useful handicrafts that at the

like Sin Hsin Waterfall, Aye Chan Myay Resort, Haa Waterfall, Ywet Pone Thi (Pa-O) Coffee factory, Balu Chaung water hole and cave, Shan paper making works, Pa-O traditional light festival, Rain Calling Festival where locally produced rockets were fired to induce rain, Laneli Bridge and Nant Mon Waterfalls.

Use local guides to see all places of interests

In Myanmar, we used to say that if we ask we can reach any village and the same goes with any places too. But if you don't know what was there to see or visit, you wouldn't be able to ask and visit it. So it is best to get in touch with a local guide and work out in advance what can be seen or visited. Find out what can be seen and where to go and then decide what to see and where to go. On my part, I contacted a local guide and arranged my trip to Pinlaung and its neighbourhood. May all have a happy visit to Pinlaung and nearby places.

Translated by Handytips



## Jiangsu Suning team beat the Myanmar National Women's Team with a 1-0 goal

THE Myanmar National Women's Team, who are preparing for the SEA Games, lost to the Chinese women's league champions Jiangsu Suning with 1-0 at Taihu Football Center in Suzhou, Jiangsu Province, the People's Republic of China yesterday at 1:30 pm.

Jiangsu Suning used elite players including Malawian striker Chawinga, the most prolific goal scorer.

Myanmar team comprised of players Mya Phu Ngon (Goalkeeper), Khin Than Wai, Chit Chit, Khine Thazin, Ei Yadanar Phyto, Khin Momo Tun, Ye Ye Oo, Myat Noe Khin, Win Theingi Tun, Khin Moe Wai and

San Thaw Thaw, Nu Nu, Thin Thin Yu, Lele Hlaing, July Kyaw and Phyu Phyu Win played

as substitute players during the match.

In the first half of the match, Jiangsu Suning Team were able to play a big ball in possession, and striker Chawinga scored in the 26<sup>th</sup> minute.

In the second half, the Myanmar National Women's Team was again forced to play but failed to score. The second possible goal of the Jiangsu Suning Team was defended by Goalkeeper Mya Phu Ngon and the Jiangsu Suning team beat the Myanmar National Women's Team with a 1-0 goal.

The Myanmar Women's National Team will be training in China until November 15, and plans to play two more matches with the China Women's Youth National. — Lynn Thit (Tgi)



In the second half, the Myanmar National Women's Team was again forced to play but failed to score.  
**PHOTO: MFF**

## Leicester, Chelsea leapfrog Man City as Arsenal, Tottenham fall further behind

LONDON — Leicester moved up to second in the Premier League as a 2-0 victory over Arsenal on Saturday further dented the Gunners' hopes of a top-four finish.

Chelsea were also 2-0 victors against Crystal Palace as they too jumped above Manchester City into third.

But it was another woeful afternoon for north London's big two as Tottenham were held 1-1 at home by Sheffield United to slip to 12<sup>th</sup>.

League leaders Liverpool host City in a highly-anticipated clash between the champions of Europe and champions of England at Anfield on Sunday.

Leicester and Chelsea took



Flying Foxes: Jamie Vardy (left) and James Maddison (right) scored in Leicester's 2-0 win over Arsenal. **PHOTO: AFP**

advantage of kicking off a day earlier to move a point ahead of City and close to within five

of Liverpool.

The Foxes' superior goal difference takes them into

second as second-half strikes from Jamie Vardy and James Maddison piled more pressure on beleaguered Arsenal boss Unai Emery.

"I'm playing probably the best that I ever have," said Vardy, one of the heroes of Leicester's remarkable 2015/16 Premier League title win.

"There's a lot of momentum round the club and everyone's enjoying themselves. That enjoyment comes with winning."

Arsenal are now eight points adrift of the top four and will fall even further behind should City avoid defeat at Anfield.

"We are very ambitious in

our target, but we know we need time and patience," said Emery, who faces an anxious wait to see if his wish will be granted by the Arsenal board with a two-week international break coming up.

Chelsea were equally as impressive with a patient performance to break down a defensively dogged Crystal Palace at Stamford Bridge.

Tammy Abraham opened the scoring as the England striker pounced on a deft flick through by Willian seven minutes into the second half.

Christian Pulisic then secured all three points when the American headed home his fifth goal in his last three Premier League games.—AFP ■

## France crush Australian dreams to win Fed Cup final

PERTH — A jubilant Kristina Mladenovic and Caroline Garcia led France to its first Fed Cup title since 2003 on Sunday, winning a deciding doubles rubber to crush Australian dreams 3-2.

In the last tournament played under the current format, the pair kept their focus at Perth Arena to overcome Ashleigh Barty and Samantha Stosur 6-4, 6-3, denying the home team their first crown in 45 years.

It was France's third title and first since they beat the United States 16 years ago, piling more misery on seven-time champions Australia who have

now lost all nine of the last Fed Cup finals they have appeared in.

Mladenovic and Garcia, who won the 2016 French Open doubles title, bounced back from going an early break down in the first set to expose Stosur's weaknesses, with the veteran out-of-sorts and making too many mistakes.

World number one Barty, stunned by Mladenovic in a singles rubber earlier Sunday, did her best to keep Australia in the hunt, but the French pair were clinical, racing to victory as their team-mates went wild.

"I'm the proudest man on



Kristina Mladenovic of France celebrates her victory against Ashleigh Barty of Australia with team's captain Julien Benneteau during the third rubber of the Fed Cup tennis final match between Australia and France in Perth on November 10, 2019. **PHOTO: AFP**

the planet right now, I'm so proud of my girls and my team.—AFP ■

## Nainggolan inspires Cagliari to third in Serie A with Fiorentina rout

MILAN — Radja Nainggolan inspired Cagliari to a 5-2 win over Fiorentina as the Sardinians continued their fine form to move third in Serie A on Sunday.

The Mediterranean outfit have 24 points from 12 games — seven points behind leaders Inter Milan, who moved top after beating Verona 2-1 on Saturday.

Defending champions Juventus are second and can reclaim the number one spot when they host 13th-placed AC Milan later on Sunday.

"Not even in the most opti-

mistic forecasts could we have imagined being here," said Cagliari coach Rolando Maran.

"Radja is capable of extraordinary things and you just have to stand back and applaud."

Fiorentina are struggling without Franck Ribery who has been given a three-match ban for pushing an official.

But Cagliari, who battled relegation last season, have been in superb form since Nainggolan returned after five years away, including a difficult season at Inter Milan last term.—AFP ■