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Monday, 23 December 2019

President, First Lady attend Christmas feast at residence of Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker



President U Win Myint, First Lady Daw Cho Cho, Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than, wife Nant Kyin Kyi and family pose for a documentary photo at the Christmas celebrations in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

PRESIDENT U Win Myint and First Lady Daw Cho Cho attended the feast of Christmas to mark Christ's birth and thanksgiving, held at the residence of Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than yesterday morning.

The celebration was also attended by Vice President U Myint Swe, Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U T Khun Myat and wife Daw Yin May, Union Chief Justice U Htun Htun Oo, Chairperson of the Constitutional Tribunal of the Union U Myo Nyunt, Chairman of Union Election Commission U Hla Thein and wife Daw Aye Thida, Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U Tun Tun Hein and wife Daw Sein Sein Thein, Amyotha Hluttaw Deputy Speaker U Aye Tha Aung, Union Ministers, Chairman of Union Civil Service Board, Nay Pyi Taw

Council Chairman, members of Constitutional Tribunal, members of UEC, Deputy Ministers, Deputy Attorney-General and their wives, departmental heads, clergies of Christian churches and the invited guests.

All the attendees enjoyed lunch and had the documentary photo taken.

At 7 pm, the Christian clergies said prayers, read Bible and preached Christmas sermons and sang songs together with the audience. —MNA
(Translated by Aung Khin)

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Find solution based on discussions and negotiations

Our ethnic brothers and sisters must find a solution based on discussions and negotiations free from mistrust and firm in faith. From there, we can proceed in lasting solidarity for the emergence of a Constitution that is fitting for our country and in accordance with democratic practices and federal principles.

(Extract from Message of Greetings sent by President U Win Myint to the 71st Anniversary of Independence Day Ceremony on 4 January 2019)



President, First Lady attend Christmas feast at residence of Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker



President U Win Myint is welcomed by Speaker U T Khun Myat and Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than (Left Photo) and by youths (Right Photo) in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO:MNA**

Govt, NCA-S EAO agree to hold 8th JICM next month

GOVERNMENT delegation and NCA-S EAO (Ten Ethnic Armed Organizations signatories of the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement) held a preliminary coordination meeting yesterday at the National Reconciliation and Peace Centre (NRPC) in Yangon, and agreed to organize the 8th Joint Implementation Co-ordination Meeting on Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement next month.

The coordination meeting was attended by NRPC Vice Chairman Union Attorney General U Tun Tun Oo, NRPC members Lt-Gen Yar Pyae, Lt-Gen Min Naung and Lt-Gen Tin Maung Win, Secretary of NRPC and Union Minister U Khin Maung Tin, NRPC secretary Lt-Gen (retired) Khin Zaw Oo, Pyithu Hluttaw representative U Pyone Cho, Peace Commission advisors

U Hla Maung Shwe and U Moe Zaw Oo, and Director General U Zaw Htay from the Office of the Ministry of the State Counsellor.

Representatives of NCA-S EAO peace negotiation team at the meeting were its team leader U Sai Ngin, Dr Salai Lian Hmung Sakhong, U Myo Win, Daw Saw Mya Yar Zar Lin, Khun Myint Tun, Saw Sein Win, Pado Saw L Klu Sae, Saw Kyaw Nyunt, Nai Aung Ma Ngay and Saw Lamon.

In his opening remark, Union Attorney General U Tun Tun Oo said “The JICM could not be held after the third Union Peace Conference—21st Century Panglong. However, we made several meetings to adopt a pragmatic plan by reviewing the whole process.

Chairmen of KNU and RCSS sent their letters on 11 October 2018, heading to the State Counsellor and the Commander in



Government delegation and ten Ethnic Armed Organizations hold a preliminary coordination meeting yesterday at the National Reconciliation and Peace Centre in Yangon. **PHOTO: PHO HTAUNG**

Chief of Defence Services about their views and expectations of NCA-S EAO groups on the peace process.

In serious consideration of those recommendations, the government offered a four-point way forward for the peace process at the informal meeting of UPD-JC secretaries held on 13 and 14 June this year.

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Shan State organizes first agriculture symposium in Kalaw



Vice President U Henry Van Thio inspects the farming process assisted by Drone Agriculture Sprayer at Heho Garden in Inkhaung village, Kalaw Township yesterday. PHOTO: MNA



Vice President U Henry Van Thio, in his capacity as the chairman of Farmer Rights Protection and Enhancement of their Benefits, made a speech at the opening ceremony of Shan State Agriculture Symposium held at Heho Garden in Inkhaung village of Kalaw Township in Taunggyi District of southern Shan State yesterday morning.

The Vice President was accompanied by Union Minister Dr Aung Thu, Deputy Ministers

said that the event was aimed to be able to develop sustainable agricultural system, to secure appropriate prices and markets for the products, to introduce agricultural equipment and to promote socioeconomics of local farmers and economic development of the whole Shan State.

He added that the symposium could expand the agricultural networks from cultivation to markets for their produce, as the agricultural training courses will be conducted together with

ports on the event. They also looked around research plots, plants for substitution crops, and the booths of private companies, government ministries, livestock and agricultural equipment, in a total of 180 booths, during the three-day symposium where training courses and paper reading sessions are also taking place.—MNA

(Translated by Aung Khin)

The symposium could expand the agricultural networks from cultivation to markets for their produce, as the agricultural training courses will be conducted together with paper reading sessions of agricultural experts.

Maj-Gen Than Htut, U Tin Myint, Dr Ye Myint Swe, U Aung Htoo, Chairpersons of Pyithu Hluttaw and Amyotha Hluttaw affairs committees, departmental heads.

As their helicopter landed at the Heho Airport, they were welcomed by Shan State Chief Minister Dr Lin Htut, State Hluttaw Speaker U Sai Lone Sine, Shan State Chief Justice U Kywe Kywe, Shan government members and officials.

At the opening ceremony of symposium which is the very first of its kind in Shan State, Vice President U Henry Van Thio

paper reading sessions of agricultural experts.

He also urged the farmers to get certificates of Good Agricultural Practices in consideration of public health.

The Vice President finally expressed thanks to all who participated in organizing the symposium.

Union Minister Dr Aug Thu and Shan State Chief Minister Dr Lin Htut also delivered speeches at the ceremony before cutting the ceremonial ribbon together with the State Hluttaw Speaker.

At the briefing hall, the Vice President and party heard re-



Vice President U Henry Van Thio delivers the speech at the Shan State Agriculture Symposium. PHOTO: MNA



Vice President U Henry Van Thio observes the machines showcased at the Shan State Agriculture Symposium. PHOTO: MNA

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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.

Bagan lacquerware market steady with domestic purchase

LACQUERWARE producers in ancient city Bagan said that they are relying only on domestic visitors for their products although tourists are visiting the UNESCO Heritage Site of Myanmar.

Daw Nilar Myint, the Principal, Lacquerware Technology College, said that the training facility is generating 200 trainees each year, and conducting a two-year diploma course aimed at producing attractive handicrafts for foreign markets.

"We are conversing traditional products, while creating alternative designs," the Principal added.

Myanmar Lacquerware Association is planning to organize a trade fair of products.

"Although both local and foreign visitors are coming to Bagan, few tourists purchased lacquerwares, and that we are



Traditional lacquerware businesses in Bagan are currently relying on domestic visitors.

PHOTO: MIN HTET AUNG (MANDALAY SUB-PRINTING HOUSE)

discussing to hold a grand sale of lacquers in near future," said MLA's Financial Officer U Myo Myo.— Min Htet Aung (Mandalay Sub-Printing House)
(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

980 cyclists take part in Inle By Cycle event

A mountain biking event called Inle By Cycle was held yesterday in Nyaungshwe town, with the participation of 980 cyclists.

Dr. Tun Hlaing, member of Shan State government, de-

livered remarks and officials formally opened the event by cutting the ribbon.

Amateur cyclists, professionals, and foreign tourists who joined the mass cycling event

had the option of two routes — one stretching 15 km and another 30 km. Since 2017, the Inle By Cycle initiative has brought together enthusiasts, businesses, and stakeholders to work

on bringing out more cycling products in the Inle Region. It is also a step towards sports tourism. —Nya Myo Thurein

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)



Confiscated drugs and related products. PHOTO: MPF



Drugs seized in three townships

ANTI-narcotic drug squad seized drugs from two men named Zin Maung Win and Thura Aung in Japan street, Ywarma (East) District, Insein on 21 December. Police searched the room of City Golf Course Hotel and found Zin Maung Win with 19,500 stimulant tablets. Then, the police seized Thura Aung in the same place by following the information.

There were also two cases at Ta Shwe Tan Village tract, Laukkai Township in the same day. Police searched the house near Nankaw village and found 1,020 stimulant tablets, 2.5g of ice and the apparatuses used in producing of stimulants. Police also found 1,040 liters of Diethyl

Ether, 50kg of Sodium Nitrate and 20kg of bone char in a tunnel inside the tent near Nankaw village at 2pm afternoon.

In Kengtung case, police found 800 Yaba pills from the motorbike of Sai Moon on Naung Hone-Yang Long village road, Katike Village tract, Kengtung Township. Following the information, Police searched the house of Ar Kite at Yang Pu Village, Lwei Long Village tract, Kengtung Township and found 4,000 stimulant tablets. Those suspects have been charged under the existing Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law, according to Myanmar Police Force.— GNLM

(Translated by Bahtoo)

Natural gas exports up \$150 mln in two months

MYANMAR'S exports of natural gas over the past two months of the current financial year amounted to US\$579 million, an increase of about \$150 million compared with the corresponding period of the 2018-2019 fiscal, according to the Commerce Ministry.

In the year-ago period, the country exported natural gas worth about \$430 million.

The increase in the value of exports is linked to the rise in the price of natural gas in the global markets, according to an expert.

Natural gas is included in the list of major export items of Myanmar. Over 20 per cent of the country's total export earnings come from the sale of natural gas.

Total natural gas production from inland blocks and offshore blocks in the third year of the incumbent government's rule is estimated at 623.838 billion cubic feet, according to a press statement on the Ministry of Electricity and Energy's third-year performance.

The Shwe natural gas field, located offshore from Rakhine State, was discovered in 2014. Natural gas extracted from the field is exported to China.

The Yadana natural gas project is being carried out by the TOTAL Company, with its pipeline supplying natural gas to Thailand. Natural gas is also extracted in Yedagon, located offshore from Taninthayi and discovered in 1992. The Zawtika Project in the Gulf of Moattama mainly supplies natural gas to neighboring Thailand.

Production at Yadana and Yedagon is declining, and those projects will be halted in the coming years.

According to the second five-year National Development Plan (from 2016-2017 to 2020-2021), the Yadana, Yedagon, Zawtika, and Shwe gas projects are expected to collectively produce over 630 billion cubic feet of natural gas in the 2019-2020 fiscal year.

As per data from the Ministry



Yadana Off Shore gas field in the Andaman Sea. PHOTO: MNA

of Electricity and Energy, there are over 104 oil and gas blocks in Myanmar: over 51 offshore blocks and 53 inland blocks.

Myanmar's exports of natural gas in the previous financial year totaled \$3.88 billion, as per

Commerce Ministry data.

Meanwhile, at the 30th regular meeting of the Vice President with private entrepreneurs, held on 19 October at the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry office,

U Thaung Tun, Union Minister for Investment and Foreign Economic Relations, said that heavy enterprises such as offshore oil and gas and mining projects will enter the country. — Ko Htet
(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Hong Kong investments in Myanmar cross \$800 mln in Oct-Nov

THREE Hong Kong-based companies pumped in US\$802.47 million into Myanmar in October and November in the 2019-2020 financial year, according to the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA).

Hong Kong topped the list of investors during the past two months and was followed by Singapore, which invested an estimated \$142.8 million in two projects. Foreign direct investments (FDI) of over \$1 billion flowed into Myanmar in the past two months. Besides Hong Kong and Singapore, investments also flowed into the country from Japan, Thailand, India, Malaysia, China, the UK, and China (Taipei).

The DICA intends to meet its FDI target of \$5.8 billion in the current fiscal year.

"South East Asian countries see investment potential in Myanmar on account of cheap labour and business opportunities. Thus, larger entities are likely to enter

the country," said U Thant Sin Lwin, director-general of the DICA.

"We see much investment potential for large companies. We are prioritizing responsible businesses and so, we are taking special care while screening investment proposals," he said.

Large investments are likely to flow into the oil and gas, agriculture, mineral, manufacturing, and industrial estate sectors, he added.

The economic interaction between Myanmar and Hong Kong has been increasing rapidly. Hong Kong has emerged as the third largest investor in Myanmar, after Singapore and China. Between 1988 and October, this year, 199 enterprises from Hong Kong brought in foreign direct investment of \$8.48 billion into Myanmar, according to official data on existing enterprises provided by the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration. — GNLM

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

72 firms registered for retail, wholesale services: Commerce Ministry

THE Ministry of Commerce (MOC) recently announced that it has issued registration cards to 72 trading firms providing retail and wholesale services.

Thirty-four wholly foreign enterprises from Thailand, Japan, the Netherlands, the US, China, Singapore, Switzerland, Malaysia, Poland, the Republic of Korea, and Germany have been granted registrations, along with 11 domestic businesses owned by Myanmar citizens and 27 joint ventures, according to the ministry.

With the recent reforms in the retail sector, domestic retailers

said they are seeking a level playing field against foreign players.

"Foreign businesses and joint ventures are now allowed to carry out wholesale and retail businesses in Myanmar. This liberalization might affect the market share of local manufacturers," according to the Myanmar Retailers Association. "At present, domestic retailers are facing difficulties in keeping up with the reforms in the retail and wholesale sector as they do not control the whole supply chain.

Retail shops need to link with many suppliers and find ways to offer lower prices to customers,"

said Yangon Region Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein. Proper supply chain management is important for retailers of any size as it can lower the price and give them a competitive advantage in the market, he said. "Foreign investments can play an important role in the development of the country and create better jobs for local people.

Thus, the country also needs to bring about investment opportunities and provide incentives to foreign investors, while promoting foreign investments," he added.

— Ko Khant
(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Power sector tops FDI line-up in current fiscal

FOREIGN direct investment of over US\$500 million has flowed from two enterprises into the power sector in the past two months of the current fiscal year, according to statistics provided by the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA).

The quantum of investment in power is higher than in any other sector.

Between 1 October and 30 November, FDI of \$1.027 billion, including expansion of capital, has flowed into the country. The Myanmar Investment Commission

(MIC) and the investment committees of states and regions have allowed 39 enterprises to invest in the country.

The manufacturing sector has absorbed FDI of \$85 million from 29 projects in the current fiscal. The livestock and fisheries sector has drawn two foreign investment projects worth \$6.58 million. One project worth \$0.4 million has been approved in the transport and communications sector.

The real estate sector has also raked in \$417 million from

two foreign projects. Over \$13.97 million in FDI has been pumped into the other services sector.

In the current fiscal, the MIC has set an FDI target of \$5.8 billion. In the 2018-2019FY, FDI into Myanmar totaled \$4.5 billion, falling short of the \$5.8-billion target by around \$1.3 billion.

Foreign direct investment into Myanmar was registered at \$1.76 billion in the last mini-budget period, \$5.7 billion in the 2017-2018FY, \$6.6 billion in the 2016-2017FY, and \$9.4 billion in the 2015-2016FY. — GNLM (Translated by EMM)

University of Veterinary Science presents certificates to graduates

THE University of Veterinary Science in Yezin, held the 20th veterinarian certificate presentation ceremony at the convocation hall of the university in Zeyathiri Township yesterday, presenting the certificates to 226 graduates and professional certificates to 56 livestock graduates.

Speaking the ceremony, Chairman of the Myanmar Veterinary Association Professor Dr Myint Thein advised veterinarians to take care of well-being of public with the help of veterinary medicine, abide by the laws of Myanmar Veterinary Council and the laws, by-laws, policies, orders and instructions related to veterinary health and livestock, and the animals' health be taken care.

Afterwards, the Chairman and members of the Myanmar Veterinary Association presented certificates to graduates.

Speaking at the professional certificates presentation ceremony, Permanent Secretary of Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation Dr Khin Zaw said to ensure food security and nutrition of the public with the help of livestock education, make sustainable learning for developing livestock businesses and personal development, and try to become livestock experts who are valuable for the country and admired by people.

The events were attended by Director General for Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Depart-



Professor Dr Myint Thein presents the certificate to a livestock graduate. PHOTO: MNA

ment Dr Ye Tun Win, Chairman and members of Myanmar Veterinary Association, Chairman and members of Myanmar Livestock

Federation, special guests, rector, pro-rectors and teachers of University of Veterinary Science, veterinary science graduates,

livestock education graduates, and their families.— MNA
(Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)

Christmas Decorations in downtown Yangon



Emmanuel Church in downtown Yangon decorated with Christmas lights. PHOTO: ZAW MIN LATT



St. Mary's Cathedral located on Bo Aung Kyaw Street in Yangon decorated with colourful Christmas lights. PHOTO: ZAW MIN LATT



Christmas lights in the shape of moons and stars at the Yangon City Hall in downtown Yangon attract the evening walkers. PHOTO: ZAW MIN LATT

Seven of family return to Rakhine



Officials from Taung Pyo Letwe Reception Centre scrutinize and issue National Verification Cards to the children. **PHOTO: MNA**

A family of seven displaced persons -- four men and three women -- returned to Myanmar of their own volition on Saturday and were received at the Taung Pyo Letwe Reception Centre, Maungdaw District, in Rakhine State.

The Taung Pyo Letwe Reception Centre in-charge and officials scrutinized the returnees

and issued National Verification Cards to the two women, aged above 10 years, and provided relief to the family.

Deputy director U Soe Tun, in-charge of the Taung Pyo Letwe Reception Centre, sent the returnees to the Hla Pho Khaung Transit Centre, where the camp's in-charge, director U Soe Shwe Aung, and officials

welcomed them. They were also supplied with provisions, including rice, oil, salt, peas, and kitchen utensils.

Afterwards, the returnees were handed over to the authorities at the Alae Than Kyaw Village, their native place. — District (IPRD)

(Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)

The Global New Light of Myanmar Daily Vacancy Announcement

1. Applications are invited from qualified candidates for the post of Chief Editor of the Global New Light of Myanmar Daily. The last date for submitting the applications is 15 January, 2020.
 - (A) The candidate for the Chief Editor's post should be a graduate and must be fluent in four skills of English. The candidate must have good writing and editing skills.
 - (B) The candidate must have experience in the newspaper field, and have at least five years' experience in editing English news and good newsroom management skills.
 - (C) The candidate must have computer and internet skills.
 - (D) The candidate must have good health and be willing to work at night.
 - (E) The candidate must be aged between 40 and 65
 - (F) The salary is negotiable
2. For more information, please contact U Win Zaw Htay, general manager, The Global New Light of Myanmar at No. 150, Ngahtetgyi Pagoda, Bahan Township, Yangon, Mobile: 09-250204653, and U Aye Min Soe, acting Chief Editor, Mobile: 09-428120086. Applications should be attached with resume and license photos.

Govt, NCA-S EAO agree to hold 8th JICM next month

FROM PAGE-2

The NCA-S EAO made a constructive response on the government suggestion, paving the ways for detailed and extensive discussions.

State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, as a Chairperson of NRPC, disclosed the three points of future peace process at the 4th anniversary of NCA held in Nay Pyi Taw in October.

The first peace process was the common process of how to proceed with 21st Century Union Peace Conference. This was proposed by the leaders of EAOs that had signed the NCA.

After accepting the requirement for a process that all agreed on in going forward based on the NCA, numerous unofficial meetings agreed on these three points to obtain a framework agreement on implementing NCA.

This framework agreement will be a part of the Union Accord that will be signed at the 21st Century Union Peace Conference fourth session.

The second was to attract

all the stakeholders into peace process, to reduce conflicts with the armed organizations which have not signed the NCA.

The third one was to ensure all the people enjoy the fruitful results of peace and to fulfill the needs of people in conflict-affected areas.

A common agreement has been made to resume ceasefire talks by holding JICM with the active participation of all stakeholders."

U Tun Tun Oo added the preliminary coordination meeting will discuss matters related to holding the JICM in near future, to organize the fourth Union Peace Conference—21st Century Panglong, and to resume Union Peace Dialogue Joint Committee (UPDJC) and Joint Monitoring Committee (JMC) which are the main mechanisms of NCA.

NCA-S EAO peace negotiation team leader U Sai Ngin said the preliminary coordination meeting was to discuss the issues raised on 25 October after reviewing them at respective organizations, and to hold talks

on the future peace process after the 8th JICM.

He added the importance of regular holding of JICM as it is a crucial backbone in adopting policies and removing obstacles in implementing peace process.

The next JICM is scheduled to be held in the second week of January 2020. The participants could show their responsibility and accountability in peace-making efforts as they could discuss preparations for the upcoming JICM.

Although it was scheduled to hold a JICM every three months, it could not be held over a year, causing speculations among the public on peace-making process.

He finally remarked that the time for peace process in

2020 will have only half of a year before the General Election next year, and that all the stakeholders were suggested to make discussions frankly and friendly to be able to organize the 8th JICM.

He also said that the participants made agreements on trust-buildings and suitable ways for all-inclusiveness in peace efforts.

He then advised all the stakeholders to hold the next round of Union Peace Conference—21st Century Panglong by mid-2020.

Union Attorney General U Tun Tun Oo made a concluding remark, confirming the next JICM in early January, agreements on eight points of resolutions such as holding meetings of UPDJC and JMC.

After the meeting, U Hla Maung Shwe and Nai Aung Ma Ngay answered to questions of media groups on the meeting. — Ye Gaung Nyunt

(Translated Aung Khin)

"The next JICM is scheduled to be held in the second week of January 2020. The participants could show their responsibility and accountability in peacemaking efforts as they could discuss preparations for the upcoming JICM.

Social media shouldn't be a double-edged sword for women in politics

EQUALITY is the basic principle of a democratic society, and participating in elections and voting are the rights of all men and women.

The 2020 general elections will have women running for office. Of the 3,069 candidates in the 2010 general elections, 127 were women, and of the 6,038 candidates in the 2015 general elections, 800 were women.

As more women are expected to compete in the 2020 general elections, they should meet democratic norms.

With the 2020 polls drawing near, it is necessary to prevent disinformation and hate speech against women candidates and to promote equality in the elections.

Globally, even as more women are participating in politics, they are facing not only the usual scrutiny involved in assuming

a public role, but also a greater degree of danger due to the ways they are targeted in terms of threats, intimidation, and personal attacks through social media. Women know that cyber violence can strike at any time, and there is little accountability for perpetrators.

Both men and women can be affected by violence in politics, but violence against women in politics is gender-based. It targets women because of their gender and acts of violence are gendered in form, such as sexist remarks, disinformation, hate speech, or sexual harassment and violence. Violence against women in politics is a violation of human rights, and by hindering women's political participation, it is also a violation of women's political rights.

It is critical that more investments go into tracking, understanding, and ultimately combating gendered disinformation campaigns and

online violence against women in politics.

Only then women will truly be able to take advantage of the opportunities for political activism, outreach, and engagement that social media represents and exercise their political rights on equal terms.

Despite evidence that gender-balanced institutions are much stronger and women's participation in governance increases the public's trust in democracy and reduces corruption, hardly any of these solutions are being implemented on a broad scale.

The Union Election Commission of Myanmar is implementing the policy on gender equality and promoting the role of women (2019-2022).

To address internet freedom, disinformation, hate speech, incitement in elections, raising awareness and educating the people is a must as part of efforts to prevent disinformation and hate speech against women candidates.



The Future of E-Commerce in Myanmar

By E-Commerce Expert

IN this article, I am going to examine the role of Myanmar government in the further development of e-commerce and how it can actively cooperate with the private sector, to help achieve the country's much needed economic growth. Since the first article that I wrote at the beginning of the year, some changes have taken place in the world of e-commerce. Yet, it may not be fast enough, judging on an e-commerce speed.

The government formed Digital Economy Development Committee (DEDC) in 2017 under the patronage of the Vice President (2), headed by the octogenarian U Soe Win, Minister of Planning and Finance. Internationally, the Myanmar government has also been one of the signatories to a joint statement issued in 2016 December to support the development of e-commerce globally.

The government, with the assistance of the UN and WTO, has set fourteen goals to achieve, in digital economy development of Myanmar. DEDC was further sub-divided into five sub-committees: Supervisory, digital trade and e-commerce development, SME & Priority Sectors Digital Transformation, Digital Infrastructure & Cyber Security Development and Innovation & Digital Technology Improvement sub-committees.

Digital trade and e-commerce development sub-committee (DTECD), headed by Deputy

Minister of Commerce would be the most appropriate committee to encourage the cooperation between private and public sectors to accomplish at least five of the fourteen goals, from SME adoption of digitalization to the use of digital transformation across business sectors.

In terms of working with private sectors, DTECD plans to regularly meet with representatives from the Digital Economy Association (DEA) and E-Commerce Association of Myanmar (ECAM). The former is an organization, under UMFCCI, covering everything effected by the digital economy, from retail to e-government to technology to logistics to financial services. The latter, formed slightly earlier, focuses primarily on those directly involved in e-commerce, i.e., marketplace, online shops, e-commerce logistics, etc.

Global donor organizations have also sent out development teams to assist in this transformation. These include representatives from UNCTAD, WTO, EU, US, etc. E-commerce development has been moving in the right direction. All have met the representatives of the above associations during the last quarter of this year, to explore areas of cooperation between the private sector representatives and themselves.

In fact, the DTECD sub-committee held its first meeting with the private sector on November

27, 2019. Based on the latest survey, employment figures by those directly involved in e-commerce alone exceeds 10,000 at present and this is expected to multiply significantly in the near future, as the digital economy grows. The meeting focus on regulations, the way forward, cooperation between government agencies and the establishment of a trust mark.

The government's position has been not to force the regulations down to the e-commerce players at present. At least for the time being, a soft registration is the preferred approach.

E-commerce players and ECAM members are, in general, against hard regulations as it would lead to higher operating costs, especially via taxation. Unless taxes can be applied fairly to other cross border sellers, regional and global operators of e-commerce, it would lead to job losses as sellers shift their operations to border towns such as Muse or Myawaddy, in order to avoid registration and taxes. Regulations would also work against innovation and further development in e-commerce. Alibaba would not have been what

it is today, if China imposes hard regulations so early.

In terms of payment systems, digital payment systems in Myanmar are one too many. We have the leader Wave Money, closely followed by KBZ pay and there are at least ten other licensed operators. Plus at least five more in the application pipeline expected to be in operation, before the end of the

having no one to come to their assistance. Not to lose heart, with even 85% cash on delivery (COD) payment rate for e-commerce transactions, Myanmar is not that far behind that of Vietnam (73%) in 2019.

In the view of the government and correctly so, e-commerce is a multi-agency issue. Trade to customs to taxes to economy to payments, they are handled by different ministry jurisdictions within the government. That is why the coordinating role of DTECD sub-committee is important; the parties involved need to be fully aware of the role of everyone and their respective positions, especially the feedback from the private sector.

The government's position has been not to force the regulations down to the e-commerce players at present. At least for the time being, a soft registration is the preferred approach. One solution being considered is to acknowledge genuine e-commerce merchants and platforms via a Trust mark, just like those that exist in Hong Kong or Singapore.

Within the month of December, further discussion and opinion gathering meetings would be held between donor organizations and stakeholders, with the aim of coming up with a e-commerce strategy or policy recommendations in relation to marketplace policy, payment

systems, logistics, infrastructure, cross border trade, cyber security, etc.

In fact, these global organizations can do more than just gather opinions, provide training or write recommendations. They can go down to the ground together with real e-commerce players and support the on boarding of merchants, producers and sellers across Myanmar, thereby directly assisting in the income uplifting of rural population. E.g., by learning how to go onto and sell via an e-commerce marketplace or sell online on his own, a pipe (smoke) maker from Blue Kyun (Mon State) can increase his revenues immediately, by selling directly to everyone across Myanmar and possibly around the world. Multiply this with a number of rural producers across the country. How can anything be more effective than this in terms of development!

The second thing that e-commerce associations and donors might consider doing together might be to get real data from outside of Yangon and Mandalay areas. Right now, all e-commerce surveys, whether conducted by Myanmar Insider, MCU or MMRD, focus only on Yangon and Mandalay. Only by having real data from rural areas, can we determine the exact digital development needs and design the assistance projects accordingly.



Progress of Construction Work at Technological University (Sittwe)

- The construction of a 3-storey classroom building is 66% completed.
- The construction of the university canteen is 100% completed.



Construction of 3-Storey Main Building at Technology University (Sittwe)

Progress of Construction Work at Taungkok Degree College

- The construction of a 3-storey classroom building is 91% completed. A 4-unit 4-storey living quarters for teaching staff is 98% completed. The construction of a 7-unit canteen is 99% completed. The construction of an indoor stadium is 100% completed.



Construction of 3-Storey Classroom Building at Taungkok Degree College



Construction of 4-Unit 4-Storey Living Quarters for Teaching Staff at Taungkok Degree College

Health

Provision of health care



Healthcare Services Being Provided by Mobile Medical Team in Buthitaung Town



2020, 72nd Anniversary Independence Day National Objectives

1. All National Ethnic Races to defend and protect with "collective strength" to ensure Non-disintegration of the Union, Non-disintegration of the Unity of National Ethnic Races and Perpetuation of National Sovereignty.
2. To give priority and work for transformation of the rule of law and justice sector which is important for stability, peace and development of the State.
3. To work on amendment of the Constitution, which is the basic foundation for building a Democratic Federal Union.
4. To build and create conducive environments for Union citizens which can elevate their sense of duty and improve their capabilities while the Democratic Federal Union is being built.
5. Emergence of a peaceful and prosperous Democratic Federal Union by implementing the Myanmar Sustainable Development Plan.



Myanmar Daily Weather Report (Issued at 7:00 pm Sunday 22nd December, 2019)

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

FORECAST VALID UNTIL AFTERNOON OF THE 23rd December, 2019: Light rain are likely to be isolated in Kachin State. Degree of certainty is (60%). Weather will be partly cloudy in Upper Sagaing, Bago, Yangon, Ayeyarwady and Taninthayi Regions, Chin, Rakhine, Kayah and Mon States and generally fair in the remaining Regions and States.

STATE OF THE SEA: Sea will be slight to moderate in Myanmar waters. Wave height will be about (4-7) feet off and along Myanmar Coasts.

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

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 23rd December, 2019: Generally fair weather.

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 23rd December, 2019: A few cloud.

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 23rd December, 2019: Generally fair weather.

THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR
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PM Modi expresses concern over attack on cops during anti-CAA protest



India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi told supporters in New Delhi that Muslims 'don't need to worry at all' about the new citizenship law -- provided they are genuine Indians. **PHOTO: AFP**

NEW DELHI—Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday expressed concern over the assault on police personnel in anti-citizenship law protests and claimed that 33,000 cops have lost their lives on the line of duty since Independence.

Addressing a rally at Ramlila ground here, Modi said that there were some people, who are instigating the violence remotely. "As many as 33,000 police personnel sacrificed their lives for peace and security in the country since independence. Today, you are

brutally thrashing them. When any problem arises, police don't ask your religion or caste. They are there to help no matter what time or whether it is," Modi said.

Police personnel have been attacked during the violent anti-CAA agitation in several parts

of the country in the last some days. Criticising protesters for resorting to violence and damaging public property, Modi said: "If you have any problem with Modi, then you are free to oppose Modi, Burn my effigies or hurl abuses at me. But please do not damage public property. "Do not set a poor's auto-rickshaw on fire," he said, in an apparent reference to damage of an autorickshaw during the RJD's Bihar bandh on Saturday.

RJD, however, quickly suspended three leaders responsible for the act from the party and promised to give a new auto to the victim. In an apparent reference to the Congress, he said: "Politicians belonging to 100-year old political parties are not voicing for peace. They are mum on the violence being meted out to the policemen and other people. It clearly shows you agree with this." Prime Minister Modi said that the CAA does not take away anyone's citizenship but grants it to the refugees who have been living in India in a very poor condition.—ANI ■

Philippine troops rescue two abducted Indonesians

MANILA—Philippine troops rescued two abducted Indonesian sailors in a Sunday pre-dawn raid on an Islamist militant stronghold which left two dead, a military official said. A soldier and a militant of kidnap-for-ransom group Abu Sayyaf -- which was behind some of the nation's worst attacks -- were killed during a 30-minute gunfight in the mountainous town of Panamao on the southern island of Jolo.

"During the firefights, the two victims managed to scamper away (from the militants) and we were able to rescue them," military commander Lieutenant General Cirilito Sobejana told AFP.

The pair were among three Indonesian sailors abducted by the militants in September off Malaysian waters near the southern tip of the Philippine island of Mindanao.—AFP ■

China, Japan, S. Korea trade ministers vow to accelerate free trade

BEIJING—Chinese, Japanese and South Korean trade ministers pledged Sunday to step up ongoing negotiations on a trilateral free trade agreement and a wider Asia-Pacific deal.

Chinese Commerce Minister Zhong Shan, Japanese trade minister Hiroshi Kajiyama and South Korean industry minister Sung Yun Mo met in Beijing ahead of a trilateral summit involving the leaders of the three countries scheduled for Tuesday in the southwestern Chinese city of Chengdu.

There was speculation that the Japanese and South Korean ministers might have formal bilateral talks during their stay in Beijing, but they just chatted for a few minutes, Kajiyama told



Chinese Commerce Minister Zhong Shan (3rd from R) and Japanese trade minister Hiroshi Kajiyama (2nd from L) hold talks in the southwestern Chinese city of Chengdu on Dec. 22, 2019. **PHOTO: KYODO**

reporters. He did not elaborate on what he talked about with Sung.

Tokyo and Seoul are seeking to mend their relations that have

fallen to the lowest point in years amid a dispute over wartime labor compensation and export controls.

The three-way trade ministerial meeting is held on a rotating basis by the three nations. The last one took place in Tokyo in October 2016.

China, the chair of this year's trilateral gathering, has recently been keen to bolster economic cooperation with its neighbors such as Japan and South Korea, with its exports shrinking due largely to a tit-for-tat trade dispute with the United States.

Beijing, Tokyo and Seoul "should ensure peace and stability in the region and promote development and prosperity of the global economy," Zhong told his Japanese and South Korean counterparts at the outset of the meeting opened to the media.—Kyodo ■

NEWS In BRIEF

Afghanistan: Ashraf Ghani secures victory in presidential elections

KABUL—Afghan President Ashraf Ghani on Sunday secured a victory in presidential elections with 50.64 percent votes, the country's election commission announced after an around three-month delay of the September vote, which resulted in protests and bitter dispute over claims of fraud.

Meanwhile, Afghanistan chief executive officer Abdullah Abdullah comes second with 39.52 percent votes. Abdullah has also alleged that "fraud" took place in favor of Ghani's State Builder team during the counting. Over 1.8 million people cast their votes in the elections which were held on September 28. Ghani has gained 9,23,868 votes, paving the way for his second five-year term, Pajhawk News Agency reported.—ANI ■

North Korea holds party meeting to bolster army

PYONGYANG—North Korea leader Kim Jong-un presided over a meeting of the Central Military Commission of the Workers' Party and discussed "important organisational and political measures and military steps to bolster up" the country's armed forces. The meeting was held amid heightened tensions between Pyongyang and Washington, Yonhap News Agency reported. "Supreme Leader Kim Jong-un gave analysis and briefing on the complicated internal and external situation and said that the meeting would decide on important organizational and political measures and military steps to bolster up the overall armed forces of the country," the Korean Central News Agency said. "Also discussed were important issues for decisive improvement of the overall national defense and core matters for the sustained and accelerated development of military capability for self-defence," it added.—ANI ■

Syria regime widens control over Idlib, fuelling exodus: monitor

DAMASCUS—Regime forces have seized dozens of towns and villages in northwest Syria from jihadists following days of violent clashes, fuelling an exodus of civilians, a war monitor said Sunday. The fresh advances in Idlib province bring regime loyalists closer to capturing one of the largest urban centres in Syria’s last major opposition bastion, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said. “This push is an attempt to get closer to Maaret al-Numan,” Observatory head Rami Abdul Rahman told AFP.

Residents of the southern Idlib town flooded out of the area fearing further advances, an AFP correspondent there said.

The Observatory said more than 30,000 people had fled the flashpoint area in southern Idlib in recent days. Abu Akram, a resident, said rescue workers and local relief groups were struggling to get families out. “Everybody is working at full capacity but they can’t handle such a large number of people,” the father of five told AFP after he couldn’t find a vehicle to drive his own family further north. The jihadist-dominated Idlib region hosts some three million people including many displaced by years of violence in other parts of Syria. The Damascus regime has repeatedly vowed to take back the area and bombardment has continued despite a ceasefire announced in August. Heightened regime and Russian bombardment on the Maaret al-Numan region since December 16 has forced tens of thousands of vulnerable people to flee their homes, according to the United Nations. The UN has called for “immediate de-escalation” and warned of further mass displacement if the violence continues.

“Nowhere is safe. If we stay inside our homes, or if we flee outside, we will die either way,” said Abu Akram. Damascus loyalists have since Thursday been locked in battles with jihadists and allied rebels, seizing a total of 25 towns and villages from their control, according to the Observatory.—AFP ■



An excavator clears rubble following a reported air strike in the Syrian town of Saraqib in Idlib province on Saturday. **PHOTO:AFP**

Toll rises to 8 as severe storms hit Portugal, Spain, France

PARIS—The death toll from two powerful storms that hit southern Europe earlier this week has grown to eight, local media reported.

The storms have been dubbed as ‘Elsa’ and ‘Fabien’. The storms battered southern Europe in quick succession on Friday and Saturday, causing widespread flooding and damage. Previous reports indicated that three people died as a result of the storm that brought high winds and torrential rain to the region.

According to reports, the weakened Storm Elsa moved over Britain after flooding rivers, bringing down power lines and disrupting rail and air travel across the region.

Meanwhile, it was replaced by the other storm that has already triggered high winds of 170 kilometers per hour (105 miles per hour) in northwestern Spain. As a result, 13 flights have been canceled.—ANI ■

Croatia votes in a three-horse presidential race



Popular Croatian singer Miroslav Skoro is running as an independent. **PHOTO:AFP**

ZAGREB—Croatians went to the polls Sunday in a presidential election that could weaken the ruling conservatives just as the country takes the helm of the European Union’s rotating presidency.

The pre-Christmas election, likely to be decided in a January 5 run-off, has evolved into a tight race between conservative incumbent Kolinda Grabar-Kitarovic and front-running rivals on the right and the left.

As she cast her own vote at a polling station in the capital Zagreb, 51-year-old Grabar-Kitarovic insisted that “every vote is important... in order that Croatia can be better and move

forward.”

At 1030 GMT, four and half hours after voting started, turnout was nearly 16 percent, the electoral commission said, just over two percentage points higher than in the previous election in 2014. One voter, Mihajlo Glodovic, in his 60s, was among those who braved heavy rain.

“I fulfil my duty (to vote) but without big expectations,” he told AFP, complaining that politics-related issues had become an “empty folklore”.

Grabar-Kitarovic has been president, a role with limited powers, since 2015.

She is backed by HDZ, the centre-right party that has led

Croatia for most of its independence since 1991.

The country’s first female president has often wavered between representing the party’s moderates and pandering to its nationalist faction. In her re-election bid, she is struggling to hold on to hardliners shifting to a right-wing folk-singer turned politician, Miroslav Skoro.

Playing on an emotive symbol of the 1990s independence war, Grabar-Kitarovic held her final campaign rally Friday in eastern Vukovar, the town whose bloody siege by Serb forces became a byword for Croatian suffering during the conflict.—AFP ■

Uzbeks vote in polls under pro-reform leader

TASHKENT—Voters in Uzbekistan cast their ballots Sunday in the first parliamentary election since a new leader ushered in an era of reform after years of isolation and authoritarian rule. Polling stations in Central Asia’s most populous country opened at 8:00 am (0300 GMT) and will close 12 hours later. President Shavkat Mirziyoyev took charge in 2016 after the death of hardline predecessor and former patron Islam Karimov, who had ruled for almost three decades. Mirziyoyev has been lauded for doing away with many of Karimov’s authoritarian excesses, releasing some political prisoners, battling forced labour and opening up the landlocked state to tourism and foreign investment. But choices on the ballot in the former Soviet republic are few -- all five parties



Polling stations opened at 8:00 am (0300 GMT) and will close 12 hours later. **PHOTO:AFP**

competing are represented in the outgoing parliament. Muslim-majority but staunchly secular Uzbekistan is home to 33 million people, over 20 million of whom can vote.

Rubber stamp

Britain’s influential magazine The Economist this week named Uzbekistan as its country of the

year, saying “no other country travelled so far” in 2019. Yet the reform drive has so far not allowed real competition to Mirziyoyev, 62, to develop. The president cast his vote close to midday local time at a Tashkent polling station where he arrived with his family, including daughter Saida Mirziyoyeva who holds a top government communications post.—AFP ■

As US Congress delays on privacy, California law in focus

WASHINGTON—As US lawmakers head home without agreeing on consumer privacy legislation, a new California law is set to become the de facto national standard, potentially leaving consumers and businesses confused over rules for personal data collection and protection.

The statute becomes effective January 1, covering most entities doing business in California, just months after enforcement began for Europe’s General Data Protection Regulation, which affects many US online operations.



Facebook has said it will be in compliance with the new California Consumer Privacy Act, but some analysts say smaller firms will face high costs. PHOTO: AFP

The new law stems from a widespread effort to rein in practices over handling on online consumer data after years of breaches and abuses that have made headlines. For much of the year, the US Congress debated efforts to draft a national privacy law that would avoid multiple standards but failed to

come up with a bill before the clock ran out for 2019. As a result, most companies with an online presence are rushing to comply with the California law even as other states consider their own protections and some in Congress pledge action when lawmakers return in 2020. “There’s definitely going to be a lot of confusion in the short term with all the different laws,” said Daniel Castro of the Information Technology and Innovation Foundation, a think tank in Washington often aligned with the tech sector.—AFP ■

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Dated **23rd December 2019** hh@kcyangon.com

Greek wine goes back to basics to resist climate change

THESSALONIKI—Thirty-eight years after he re-lived his family’s small vineyard in northern Greece, Vangelis Gerovassiliou proudly gazes on his property that grows one of the country’s most popular wines. And after 45 years in the business, Gerovassiliou says that with a little local savvy, there are answers even to global warming.

“It’s an opportunity for Greek winemakers to return to the original grape varieties, and to carefully choose the location of the vines on suitable land,” he told AFP, adding that until recently, vineyards were planted “everywhere”.

Growers in northern Greece, one of the country’s top wine-producing areas, have been among the first nationally to be interested in the consequences of rising temperatures.

Consequently, it has been a good year -- possibly the best this decade, according to a recent statement from their local association.

With the rise in temperatures, grape maturity “has accelerated by two to three weeks,” says Gerovassiliou, whose vineyard is located 25 kilometres (16 miles) south of Thessaloniki, on the northern shores of the Aegean Sea.—AFP ■

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loading-unloading machines and apparatus and parts and attachments thereof; mobile cranes and parts and attachments thereof; industrial fishing machines and instruments and parts and attachments thereof; chemical processing machines and apparatus and parts and attachments thereof; textile machines and apparatus and parts and attachments thereof; lumbering, woodworking, or veneer or plywood making machines and apparatus and parts and attachments thereof; pulp making, papermaking or paper-working machines and apparatus and parts and attachments thereof; printing or bookbinding machines and apparatus and parts and attachments thereof; agricultural machines and agricultural implements, other than hand-operated; machines and apparatus for use in forestry and apparatus and parts and attachments thereof; painting machines and apparatus and parts and attachments thereof; packaging or wrapping machines and apparatus and parts and attachments thereof; plastic processing machines and apparatus and parts and attachments thereof; semiconductor manufacturing machines and systems and apparatus and parts and attachments thereof; stone working machines and apparatus and parts and attachments thereof; non-electric prime movers, not for land vehicles and apparatus and parts and attachments thereof; parts of non-electric prime movers and attachments thereof; pneumatic or hydraulic machines and instruments and apparatus and parts and attachments thereof; repairing or fixing machines and apparatus and parts and attachments thereof; food mixing machines for commercial use; lawnmowers; waste compacting machines and apparatus and parts and attachments thereof; waste crushing machines and apparatus and parts and attachments thereof; machine elements, not for land vehicles; starters for motors and engines; AC motors and DC motors [not including those for land vehicles but including parts for any AC motors and DC motors]; AC generators [alternators]; DC generators; oil coolers for motors and engines; air condensers; arc welding machines; electric metal cutting machines; electric welding machines; gasoline station equipment” in **Class 7**; “Electronic machines and apparatus, and their parts and accessories; electronic machines, apparatus and their parts for remote monitoring systems; wireless remote control systems and devices for vehicles; telecommunication machines and apparatus, and their parts and accessories; computer software and computer hardware; computer programs; computer programs for data processing; computer programs for repair or maintenance of metalworking machines and apparatus, construction machines and apparatus, loading-unloading machines and apparatus, mining machines and apparatus, agricultural machines and implements, forest machines and apparatus; computer programs for managing position and battery, operational status and maintenance information of metalworking machines and apparatus, construction machines and apparatus, loading-unloading machines and apparatus, mining machines and apparatus, agricultural machines and implements, forest machines and apparatus; tablet computers, and their parts and accessories; tablet computers to measure the operation status of machine tools and to collect the operation data of machine tools by installing to the machine tools, and their parts and accessories; electrical control, testing and monitoring apparatus, and their parts and accessories; batteries and cells; battery boxes; capacitors; accumulators [batteries]; battery terminal; vehicle batteries; battery chargers for battery vehicles, and their parts and accessories; measuring or testing machines and instruments, and their parts and accessories; surveying machines and instruments, and their parts and accessories; power distribution or control machines and apparatus; LCD monitors; computer monitors; touchscreen monitors; tablet monitors; electroluminescent display panels; computer display monitors; electronic numeric displays; electrical controlling devices; electrical charge controllers; electronic power controllers; electronic speed controllers; pressure sensors; condensers; capacitance boxes; software recorded with computer programs; connectors [electricity]; electronic connectors; electric wires and cables; cables, electric; sensors [measurement apparatus], other than for medical use; optical sensors; humanoid robots with artificial intelligence; remote control telemetering machines and instruments for industrial robots; rotary converters; phase modifiers; electric or magnetic meters and testers; electric buzzers; electrodes, other than welding electrodes or medical electrodes; magnetic cores; resistance wires; laboratory apparatus and instruments; optical machines and apparatus; photographic machines and apparatus; cinematographic machines and apparatus; anti-theft warning apparatus; protective helmets; simulators for the steering and control of vehicles; sports training simulators” in **Class 9**; “Desiccating apparatus; recuperators; steamers; evaporators; distillation apparatus; heat exchangers; industrial furnaces; forage drying apparatus; boilers, other than parts of non-electric prime movers or engines; feed water heaters [for industrial purposes]; air conditioners; air dehumidifiers; freezing machines and apparatus; waste water treatment tanks for industrial purposes; solar water heaters; water purifying apparatus for industrial purposes; tap water faucets; level controlling valves for tanks; pipe line cocks; bath fittings; water heaters; heaters; apparatus and installations for cooling; temperature regulators” in **Class 11** and “Vessels and their parts and fittings; aircraft and their parts and fittings; railway rolling stock and their parts and fittings; automobiles and their parts and fittings; carts; carts [Riyakah]; car dampers; car pushers; car pullers; traction engine; non-electric prime movers for land vehicles, not including their parts; anti-theft alarms for vehicles; machine elements for land vehicles; AC motors or DC motors for land vehicles, not including their parts; self-driving cars; camera drones; civilian drones; dump trucks; fork lift trucks” in **Class 12**.

Fraudulent or unauthorised use or actual or colourableimitation of the Mark shall be dealt with according to law.

Daw La Min May, H.G.P
For KOMATSU LTD., C/o Kelvin Chia Yangon Ltd.,
Level 8A, Union Financial Centre (UFC), Corner of Mahabandoola Road & Thein Phyu Road, BotahtaungTsp, Yangon,The Republic of the Union of Myanmar.
Dated 23rd December 2019 Imm@kcyangon.com



Balloons Over Bagan celebrates 20 years of journeying through the sky

LOOK at any travel story or poster promoting tourism in Myanmar. It will feature one of two iconic images -- the shimmering golden stupa of Shwedagon Pagoda, or a hot-air balloon drifting celestially over the ancient temples of Bagan at sunrise.

While Shwedagon is said to be more than 2,000 years old, the balloons over Bagan flights have entered their 20th anniversary. Though 20 years might not sound like much, it's worth remembering that Myanmar, previously Burma, was for decades off-limits to visitors, and only in recent years has opened up to international travelers.

"Balloons Over Bagan pioneered a vision of portraying Myanmar history at a time when the country was as yet unknown to most travelers," said Cyrus Pun, the CEO of Memories Group, the parent company. "Sailing through the skies in these burgundy balloons has become a once-in-a-lifetime experience for thousands of international visitors from around the world, and will continue to be for decades to come, but most importantly it has contributed hugely to the local community, including our staff, many of whom have been with us since we first began."

Cary Crawley, who was the pilot of the inaugural flight of Balloons Over Bagan on 31 December 1999, recalled: "There were eight passengers on board and we had eight ground staff, none of whom had ever seen a hot-air balloon before. In fact, the local people were mesmerized by the sight of a hot-air balloon in the sky. Some thought it was a UFO. We used a tractor to retrieve the balloon from a sugarcane field when it landed. Sometimes, in those early days, the tractor could not reach the fields so we had to use an ox and cart."

Twenty years and more than 17,500 flights later, the award-winning and eco-friendly Balloons Over Bagan operates an average of 12 hot-air balloon flights every day and employs more than 200 ground crew, almost entirely locals.

"Following the huge popularity in Bagan, in 2013 we introduced balloons at Inle Lake, and in January 2020 we will launch in the picturesque town of Loikaw in northeastern Myanmar," said U Tun Thura, the current general manager. "We've hosted thousands of guests, including Bono from U2, CNN's Anderson Cooper, and a member of the British royal family."

"And in all that time, we have never had any accidents or injuries," said U Tun Thura. "The only 'accidents' we can recall are passengers dropping their phones or cameras out of the basket."

This exemplary safety record is undoubtedly down to the professionalism of the pilots, most of whom hail from the UK, such as 52-year-old David Sutcliffe who has been piloting balloons for 30 years.

"Flying a balloon over Bagan is a very unique experience," he said. "Taking off at sunrise, we rise up to 2,000 feet, giving guests spectacular views across a thousand years of history. The light is constantly changing at that time of the day and you feel an overwhelming sense of tranquility. You also get a chance to appreciate the wonder of this ancient kingdom, the layout of the city and its monuments, and a true sense of its history. I would say that flying in a hot-air balloon here is one of the greatest experiences - not only for passengers but for pilots too."

At the height of its empire between the 10th and 13th centuries, Bagan was a cultural center for Buddhism and boasted no less than 10,000 temples, stupas and monasteries. The kingdom collapsed in 1287 AD following successive Mongol invasions. A devastating earthquake in 2016 destroyed some 400 temples and monuments, and major renovation plans were subsequently drawn up plus a ban was enacted to prevent visitors climbing on the temples. This resulted in a surge of hot-air balloon rivals, as authorities, tour operators and visitors alike began to acknowledge that ballooning was by far the most sustainable

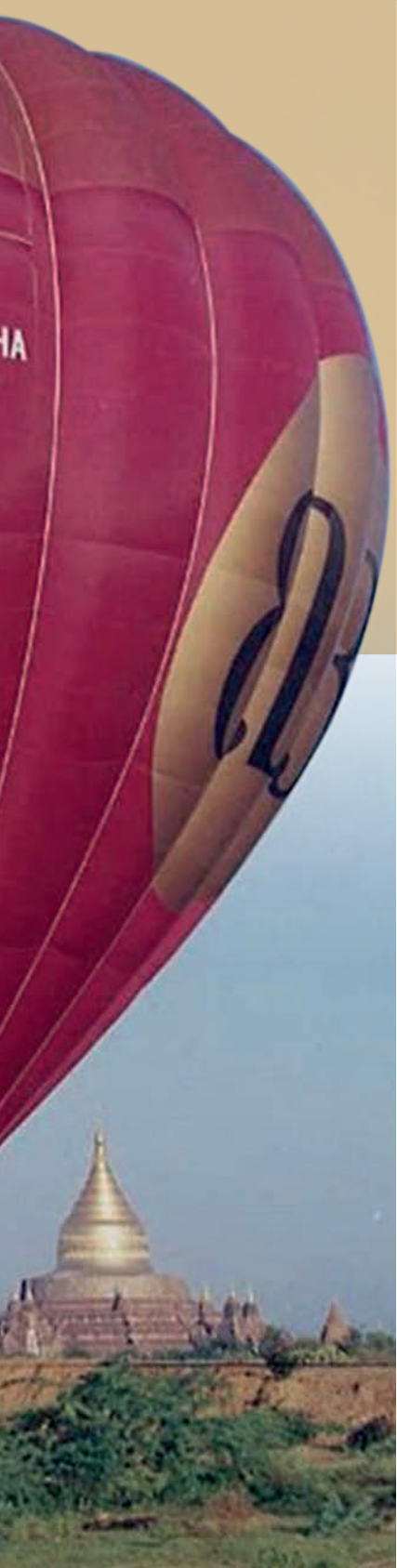


PHOTOS: SUPPLIED

way to view the ancient ruins without damaging them. The archeological site was finally awarded UNESCO conservation status in July 2019.

Balloons Over Bagan and its offspring, Balloons Over Inle

and Balloons Over Loikaw, run flights in Myanmar's dry season. They are part of Memories Group, which owns and operates a myriad selection of resorts and travel experiences across the country, including



its own island in the Mergui Archipelago with one resort, Awei Pila; yachting tours; eco-lodges; and Awei Metta, a resort-hotel in Yangon overlooking the country's leading golf course.—MEMORIES GROUP

More than 3.52 million tourists visit Myanmar during 10 months of 2019

By Kyaw Htike Soe

MYANMAR welcomed over 3.52 million tourists during the period from January to October this year, according to the figures from the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population. International travelers who toured the “Golden Land” in the first ten months this year totaled more than 3.52 million, making a 24 per cent increase when compared with the same period last year, the ministry said. Nearly 380,000 tourists visited the Southeast Asian country in October alone.

Chinese tourist arrivals to Myanmar increased by 161 per cent this year compared to the same period last year, and topped the list of tourists visiting the country, according to the ministry. China is Myanmar's number one source market with nearly 600,000 January to October arrivals. The figure was followed by Thailand with 218,167 tourists during this period and Japan came as third place with 101,996 visitors, while South Korea ranked the fourth with 91,869 tourists. But tourist arrivals from the United States saw a slight increase from 49,705 to 50,771, an increase of 3 per cent compared to the same period last year. The ease of visa restrictions on Asian tourists has significantly prompted the significant increase of tourist arrivals in the first ten months of 2019 to 3.52 million, rose by 436,098 compared with the same pe-



Tourists walk around at Maha Bandoola Park. PHOTO: YE HTIT TIN (NLM)

riod last year. The skyrocketing arrival of Chinese tourists to Myanmar had nearly doubled since visa restrictions were relaxed in October 2018.

But arrival of Europeans to Myanmar declined slightly this year when compared to last year. Arrival of Chinese tourists to Myanmar is up by nearly 70 per cent than previous year thanks to Myanmar's visa-on-arrival allowance to visitors from six more countries commencing 1 October last year. Due to the sharp inflow of Chinese visitors to Myanmar this year, Myanmar authorities are exerting efforts to further expand travel routes and promote the tourism industry by attracting global airlines to the country. Myanmar continues to attract a steady stream of foreign visitors to the country. The Ministry of Hotels and Tourism projected 6 million tourists would

visit Myanmar after the rainy season this year. The government is seeking all possible ways to lure more tourists to the country by organizing international invitational sports events and showcasing cultural heritages and traditional food.

The government has been launching new destinations and creating ecotourism for globe-trotters as well as conducting language proficiency courses and basic tour guide training courses for human resource development. The government paves the way for promoting the ecotourism in cooperation with private tour operators. “Myanmar has plenty of natural resources including fantastic natural scenery, social status and traditional culture of the ethnic people. Myanmar is a very promising country for the businessmen at home and

abroad who want to operate tourism industry. The tourism sector is the most promising business in Myanmar. If tourism industry booms in Myanmar, there will be more job opportunities for local people inevitably,” said an official from the ministry who declined to be named.

Myanmar's tourism industry could provide up to 1.4 million jobs by 2020, according to the Asian Development Bank (ADB). The ADB forecasts 7 million foreign visitor arrivals to Myanmar in 2020 and US\$ 10 billion in revenue in the same year. The number of people working in tourism-related jobs was more than 580,000 in 2018, making up over 2.5 % of total employment. According to the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTTC), total contribution of tourism sector to Myanmar's economy was US\$ 4.9 billion or 66.6 % of GDP in 2017. Total contribution of tourism is forecast to expand by 7 % per year to US\$ 10.1 billion or 7 % of GDP by 2028. By 2028 the sector is forecast to directly account for 914,000 job opportunities, an average increase of 4.6 annually over the next decade.

Myanmar fetched some US\$ 2 billion from 3.55 foreign visitor arrivals in 2018. The Southeast Asian country also earned US\$ 1.9 billion from 3.44 million tourist arrivals in 2017 and US\$ 2.1 billion from nearly 3 million international visitor arrivals in 2016, according to the government's figures.



A group of tourists on bicycles visiting Ava, an old city. PHOTO: SUPPLIED

Myanmar Hero's Golf Project to promote new women golfers



Officials seen at the MoU signing ceremony for the Myanmar Hero's Golf Project and distribution of World Handicap System certificates to Yangon golf clubs. **PHOTO: MGF**

WITH the aim of grooming a new generation of women golfers in Myanmar, a project titled Myanmar Hero's Golf Project will be launched soon in Myanmar, according to a statement issued by the Myanmar Golf Federation.

The program will help new women golfers to emerge within a five-year term, according to officials.

The project, to be implemented under the Myanmar Hero's Golf Management Co. Ltd, is being supported by Seiko Cooperation (Golf Management) of Japan and will be carried out in collaboration with the Myanmar Golf Federation.

A ceremony for signing the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for the project and

handing over of World Handicap System (WHS) certificates was held on 19 December at the Yangon Golf Club. Officials and concerned persons from the Myanmar Golf Federation and Myanmar Hero's Golf Management Co. Ltd attended the ceremony.

The MoU was signed by vice chairman of the Myanmar Golf Federation, U Aung Kyi, following opening addresses by officials.

Next, certificates of World Handicap System were distributed to golf clubs in Yangon.

The Myanmar Golf Federation was formed in 1957 and aims to provide opportunities to young, talented women golfers to play for Myanmar at the international level, according to the federation.—Lynn Thit (Tgi)

Man Utd implode against feisty Watford

WATFORD (United Kingdom) — Manchester United collapsed to a humiliating 2-0 defeat against Premier League bottom side Watford on Sunday after a David de Gea howler, bringing their recent revival to a shuddering halt.

Not even the returning Paul Pogba, on as a second-half substitute, could save his misfiring team, who again struggled to impose themselves against one of the league's lesser lights.

The key moment in the match came in the 50th minute when De Gea somehow allowed a tame, spinning effort from Ismaila Sarr to creep through his hands and in at the near post.

Watford doubled their lead four minutes later when Troy Deeney fired home from the

penalty spot after the otherwise impressive Aaron Wan-Bissaka brought down Sarr with a misjudged sliding tackle.

Nigel Pearson coaxed a battling performance from Watford in his first home game in charge and they deservedly won just their second league match of the season to give themselves hope of survival.

There was no hint of the drama to come in a largely uneventful first half.

Anthony Martial scuffed a shot wide as United, backed by vocal away support, enjoyed the bulk of early possession while Watford looked a threat when they came forward.

The home side had the ball in the net, but the goal was ruled out for a foul on De Gea.—AFP ■

Ayeyawady United signs midfielder Thaw Khant Oo for 2 years

AYEYAWADY United have signed former Rakhine United midfielder Thaw Khant Oo on a two-year contract, according to a statement released yesterday by the football club.

Upon joining Ayeyawady United, Thaw Khant Oo said he was confident of the team securing a win in the upcoming season.

"I was born in Ayeyawady Region. I am feeling proud about joining my native land's team, Ayeyawady United. I believe I will hold the championship trophy with my team in the upcoming season," he said. Thaw Khant Oo was born in Maubin, Ayeyawady Region and started his professional football career with the U-18 team of Rakhine United in 2014.

During his stint with the team in the 2014 season, Rakh-



Youth midfielder Thaw Khant Oo poses with the Ayeyawady United logo upon joining the team. **PHOTO: AUFC**

ine United won the championship trophy.

Later, Thaw Khant Oo was selected on the senior team in

2017, and his contract with the team ended in 2019. He has now moved to Ayeyawady United.—Lynn Thit (Tgi)

Nuebel linked to Bayern after rejecting new Schalke deal

BERLIN (Germany) — Schalke 04 captain Alexander Nuebel, a former Germany Under-21 goalkeeper, will leave at the end of the season after turning down a contract extension, the Bundesliga club announced Sunday.

"Following discussions with Alexander Nuebel and his agent in recent months, we aren't surprised by his decision and of course respect it. Howev-

er, we don't need to understand it," said sports director Jochen Schneider in a terse statement.

The 23-year-old is currently serving a four-match ban after being sent off for a karate-style kick on Eintracht Frankfurt's Mijat Gacinovic in last Sunday's 1-0 win.

Nuebel has yet to explain why he is leaving Schalke, but Germany's top-selling daily Bild reported Sunday that he

has agreed terms with Bayern Munich.

There he would be groomed as replacement for club and national team captain Manuel Neuer, who himself left Schalke for Bayern in 2011.

After months of negotiations the news Nuebel is leaving the Gelsenkirchen-based club after nearly five years is frustrating for Schneider and head coach David Wagner.—AFP ■



Manchester United goalkeeper David de Gea fumbles a shot from Watford's Ismaila Sarr into his own net. **PHOTO: AFP**