EXPAND CROP INSURANCE FOR FARMERS PAGE-8 (OPINION)

THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

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Republic of the Union of Myanmar
Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Office
Notification 1/2020

11th Waxing of Pyatho 1381 ME
5 January 2020

Summoning Second Pyidaungsu Hluttaw fifteenth regular session

In accord with Section 79 of the Constitution of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and Section 13 of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Law and Rule 3, Sub-rule (b) of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Rules, it is hereby announced that the Second Pyidaungsu Hluttaw fifteenth regular session is summoned at 1:30 pm on the 3rd Waxing of Tabodwe 1381 ME (27 January 2020) (Monday).

Sd/ T Khun Myat
Speaker
Pyidaungsu Hluttaw

Republic of the Union of Myanmar
Pyithu Hluttaw
Notification 1/2020

11th Waxing of Pyatho 1381 ME
5 January 2020

Summoning Second Pyithu Hluttaw fifteenth regular session

In accord with Section 126 of the Constitution of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and Section 35 of the 2012 Pyithu Hluttaw Law and Rule 3, Sub-rule (b) of the 2013 Pyithu Hluttaw Rules, it is hereby announced that the Second Pyithu Hluttaw fifteenth regular session is summoned at 10 am on the 3rd Waxing of Tabodwe 1381 ME (27 January 2020) (Monday).

Sd/ T Khun Myat
Speaker
Pyithu Hluttaw

Republic of the Union of Myanmar
Amyotha Hluttaw
Notification 1/2020

11th Waxing of Pyatho 1381 ME
5 January 2020

Summoning Second Amyotha Hluttaw fifteenth regular session

In accord with Section 155 of the Constitution of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and Section 35 of the 2012 Amyotha Hluttaw Law and Rule 3, Sub-rule (b) of the 2015 Amyotha Hluttaw Rules, it is hereby announced that the Second Amyotha Hluttaw fifteenth regular session is summoned at 10 am on the 3rd Waxing of Tabodwe 1381 ME (27 January 2020) (Monday).

Sd/ Mahn Win Khaing Than
Speaker
Amyotha Hluttaw

Gems Emporium sells 1,250 jade lots on 4th day

GEMS Emporium in Nay Pyi Taw could sell 1,250 jade lots in Myanmar currency through an open tender system on the fourth day of the event yesterday.

Attended by over 2,000 local gems merchants, the emporium at Mani Yadana Jade Hall will continue till 7 January, and has already sold out a total of 1,192 jade lots from 2 to 5 January.

The fourth-day event was visited by Deputy Minister for Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation Dr Ye Myint Swe and senior officials to view the sales. — Mawsi (MNA)

Gem merchants submitting their proposals at the Mani Yadana Jade Hall in Nay Pyi Taw on the fourth day of the Gems Emporium. **PHOTO: MNA**

INSIDE TODAY

NATIONAL
Union Education Minister meets Yangon Region education officers
PAGE-2

NATIONAL
Union Minister U Ohn Maung attends Visit Nepal 2020, ministerial meeting
PAGE-3

BUSINESS
Fresh green grams start to enter Mandalay market
PAGE-5

Foreign Heads of State send felicitations to President U Win Myint

From Kim Jong Un, Chairman, States Affairs Commission, Democratic People's Republic of Korea

On behalf of the government and people of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, I extend my warm congratulations to you and to the government and people of your country on the occasion of the 72nd anniversary of the independence of Myanmar.

I take this opportunity to wish you and the people of your country greater successes in the efforts for promoting national reconciliation and unity and for achieving independent development and prosperity of the country, and I express my conviction that the friendly and cooperative relations between our two countries will continue to expand and develop.

From AL-Sultan Abdullah Ri'Ayatuddin Al-Mustafa Billah Shah Ibni Al-Marhum Sultan Haji Ahmad Shah Al-Musta' In Billah, King of Malaysia

On this auspicious occasion of the 72nd Anniversary of the Independence Day of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, The Raja Permaisuri Agong joins us in extending Our heartfelt congratulations to Your Excellency and Madame Daw Cho Cho and the people of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

It is our earnest hope that in the coming years, Malaysia and Myanmar will endeavour to deepen the existing bilateral cooperation and people-to-people relations to cultivate better understanding and appreciation of each other's cultures, religions and aspirations.

The Raja Permaisuri join Us in wishing Your Excellency and Madame Daw Cho Cho's good health and happiness as well as for the continued peace, progress and prosperity of the people of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

From Md. Abdul Hamid, President of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

On behalf of the People's Republic of Bangladesh and on my own behalf, I have the pleasure to extend my best wishes and warm felicitations to Your Excellency and the people of Myanmar on the auspicious occasion of the Independence Day of the Union of Myanmar.

Bangladesh looks forward to working together with Myanmar in securing peace, prosperity and development for the benefits of our two peoples and the region as well.

I avail myself of this opportunity to convey my best wishes for your good health and happiness as well as for the continued peace, progress and prosperity of the people of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

From Sheikh Hasina, Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

I am pleased to convey my warmest greetings and heartiest felicitations to Your Excellency and through you to the people of Myanmar on the auspicious occasion of the Independence Day of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

Bangladesh attaches great importance to her neighbourly relation with Myanmar. We are keen to further strengthen our bilateral relationship for peace, security and prosperity for both nations. I believe that it would continue to grow in depth and dimension in the coming days.

I avail myself of this opportunity to wish you good health and happiness as well as the continued peace and prosperity of the people of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

From Tamim Bin Hamad Al-Thani Amir Of The State Of Qatar

I have the pleasure, on the Anniversary of your Country's Independence Day, to extend to you and your people, on behalf of the people of the State of Qatar and my own behalf, our sincere greetings and felicitations, coupled with our best wishes of good health and well-being to your excellency and further development and progress to your peoples.

From Abdullah Bin Hamad Al-Thani Deputy Amir Of The State Of Qatar

It gives me pleasure, on the Anniversary your Country's Independence Day, to extend to you my sincere greetings and felicitations coupled with my best wishes of well-being to your excellency and further development and progress to your people.

Foreign Heads of State send felicitations to State Counsellor

From Abdullah Bin Nasser Bin Khalifa Al-Thani Prime Minister And Minister Of Interior of The State of Qatar

It pleases me, on the Anniversary of your country's Independence Day, to Extend to you, on behalf of the Government of the State of Qatar and myself, our cordial greetings and felicitations, coupled with our best wishes of good health and happiness to your Excellency and further development and progress to your people.

Union Education Minister meets with Yangon Region education officers

Union Minister for Education Dr Myo Thein Gyi held a meeting with education officers in Yangon Region yesterday afternoon.

At the meeting, the Union Minister discussed timely distribution of school textbooks and teachers' handbooks, as well as teaching-learning methods and project-based learning with the assistance of teaching aid.

The ministry will upgrade the two-year education colleges to the four-year education degree colleges, recruiting basic education teachers, the priority of locals in ethnic areas, systematic transfer and promotion schemes, teaching of ethnic literature and culture, building individual and coordination skills of school children and their sports activities.

The Union Minister also advised to hold competitions of English language skills, mathematics skills and IT skills, to educate school children not to consume alcohol, cigars and narcotic drugs, but to abide by traffic rules and to practice a healthy life style with avoiding internet games, systematic disposals of garbage, personal hygiene and school health campaigns.

He also discussed capacity building courses, training programmes, oversea exchange programmes, life-long learning skills and organizational skills.

U Ko Lay Win, the Director-General of Basic Education Department, made discussions on practicing ethics and code of conducts in using social media among the teachers, sharing knowledge about G-10 new curricula, counselling and subjects, cooperation of teachers in education reform, teaching of Myanmar, English and other subjects through project-based learning, free of corruption and friendly relations with the relevant persons in education services.

Union Minister Dr Myo Thein Gyi addresses the meeting with education officers in Yangon Region yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

Daw Khin Mar Swe, the Deputy Director-General at Yangon Region Education Office, explained education projects in the region, followed by discussions of district and township education officers in the respective areas.—MNA

(Translated by Aung Khin)

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]

Union Minister U Ohn Maung attends Visit Nepal 2020, ministerial meeting

Union Minister U Ohn Maung attends the inaugural ceremony of Visit Nepal 2020 and tourism ministerial meeting in Kathmandu, Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal, on 1 January. **PHOTO:MNA**

UNION Minister for Hotels and Tourism U Ohn Maung attended the inaugural ceremony of Visit Nepal 2020 and tourism ministerial meeting held in Kathmandu, Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal, on 1 January.

In the morning, the Union Minister and party participated in the Ministerial Conclave 2020, the meeting based on the theme of Sustainable Tourism through Preservation of Natural and Cultural Heritages, at the Prime Minister's Residence Baluwatar.

Objectives of the Conclave 2020 were to share initiatives taken by respective countries for sustainable tourism and to make joint initiatives in fighting against climate change and preservation of products from natural and cultural heritages.

The meeting was also attended by the foreign ministers and senior officials from China, India, Jamaica, Bhutan and Cambodia, as well as heads of foreign missions in Nepal.

In the afternoon, the inaugural ceremony of Visit Nepal 2020 was organized at the Sasharah Stadium, and it was launched by Nepali President Mrs Bidhya Devi Bhandari in the presence of foreign ministers, tourism firms and related organizations in Nepal and 40 foreign media organizations.

The Ministry of Culture, Tourism & Civil Aviation (MOCTCA) introduced new 100 tourist attractions, targeting two million foreign visitors to Nepal in 2020.

On 2 January, Union Minister U Ohn Win and party visited some significant places, including the birthplace of Buddha in Lumbini Park and Myanmar Golden Temple.

The Union Minister and party also held talks with the local tourism minister and the Lumbini Development Trust on cooperation in tourism industry between the two countries, the itinerary of Buddhist Pilgrimage Circuit that covers Cambodia, Myanmar, Nepal and India.

Myanmar delegation also visited the surrounding area of Mt Everest, one of the tourist attractions in Nepal.—MNA ■

(Translated by Aung Khin)

ORPA Myanmar receives cash, clothes, toys for orphans

THE Orphans Reduction and Protection Association-ORPA (Myanmar) received cash, clothes and toys for the orphans yesterday.

The Diplomatic and International Golfer's Affiliation of Yangon (DIGAY) donated US$3,000; Singaporean Ambassador to Myanmar Ms Vanessa Chan presented clothes and toys; Honorary Consul of Hungary for Myanmar Daw Tint Tint Lwin, Honorary Consul of the Czech Republic Daw Hla Hla Wai, and Honorary Consul of Ukraine for Myanmar U Aung Hlaing Oo and wife offered K300,000 each.

Chairwoman of ORPA Myanmar Daw May Yin Tun extended greetings to the donors, and the Singaporean Ambassador talked on the donations before the honorary certificates were presented to the well-wishers.—MNA

(Translated by Aung Khin)

The donation ceremony for orphans in Myanmar being held in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

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We appreciate your feedback and contributions. If you have any comments or would like to submit editorials, analyses or reports please email **ce@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com** with your name and title.

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.

More than 400 rice sacks donated to displaced persons in Buthidaung

DISASTER Management Department of Buthidaung Township provided 427 rice bags to the displaced persons of IDP camps in Buthidaung Township, Maungtaw District in Rakhine State yesterday.

The provision was made by officials from Buthidaung Township Disaster Management Department of Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement led by in-charge Daw Zar Ngwe Oo.

First, the officials handed over the one month's assistance of 15 rice bags to the Sayadaw of Thiri Mingala Ywa Ma Monastery in Ywa Ma Village in Buthidaung Township for 49 students who are studying at the monastery.

An official donates sacks of rice to the Sayadaw of Thiri Mingala Ywa Ma Monastery in Buthidaung Township. **PHOTO: THET LWIN SOE (IPRD)**

They also handed over one month's provision of 422 rice sacks to the in-charges of seven IDP camps for 1,321 people of 275 households of the camps in Buthidaung Township. — Thet Lwin Soe (IPRD) ■

(Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)

External trade surges to $8.36 bln as of 20 December

Myanmar's external trade between 1 October and 20 December in the current fiscal year 2019-2020 reached US$8.36 billion, an increase of $1.23 billion compared to the corresponding period of the 2018-2019 fiscal, according to the Ministry of Commerce.

During the same period in the previous FY, trade stood at $7.13 billion, according to data released by the ministry. Both maritime and border trade showed an increase in the current fiscal compared with the year-ago period, with exports estimated at over $4.09 billion, and imports valued at $4.27 billion.

Myanmar exports agricultural products, animal products, minerals, forest products, and finished industrial goods, while it imports capital goods, raw industrial materials, and consumer goods. The country's export sector relies more on the agricultural and manufacturing sectors. Export earnings from the CMP (cutting, making, and packaging) garment businesses are rising, while reliance on natural resources, such as natural gas and jade, is lessening.

The government is trying to reduce the trade deficit by screening luxury import items and boosting exports, according to the Ministry of Commerce. — GNLM (Translated by EMM) ■

Hotels in Sagaing Region hosted over 200,000 guests in 2019

MORE than 220,600 tourists and domestic travelers stayed at hotels in the six tourism zones of Sagaing Region, said U Aung Thu Oo, head of the region's Directorate of Hotels and Tourism.

There are 46 hotels in the six tourism zones of Sagaing Region: Sagaing, Monywa, Shwebo, Katha, Kalay, and Khamti. A total of 192,073 local visitors and 28,548 tourists stayed at those hotels.

The number of local guests was registered at 15,576 in January, 14,597 in February, 16,130 in March, 15,019 in April, 14,618 in May, 13,616 in June, 16,790 in July, 14,579 in August, 15,499 in September, 19,245 in October, 18,140 in November, and 18,270 in December, according to data provided by the Directorate of Hotels and Tourism.

Tourist arrivals in those zones were pegged at 3,836 in January, 3,564 in February, 2,994 in March, 1,374 in April, 1,489 in May, 1,058 in June, 1,459 in July, 1,913 in August, 1,624 in September, 2,401 in October, 3,936 in November, and 2,900 in December,

"Sagaing Region has witnessed the construction of more hotels to provide accommodation to the increasing number of tourists and local travelers in the region year over year. In addition, there are still more hotels which are under construction," said U Aung Thu Oo.

Local pilgrims mostly flock to Zalon Taung and the reclining figure known as the Alaungdaw Kathapa in the region. Those places are crowded with pilgrims during the high season. — Win Min Tun ■

(Translated by EMM)

Narcotic drugs confiscated in three townships

LAW enforcement officers seized narcotic drugs in three townships yesterday, according to Myanmar Police Force.

A combined anti-narcotic squad of Shinbwayyan police station confiscated 7,000 stimulant tablets and 0.627 kg of heroin after they have searched the house of Ar Noe (a) Kyaw Soe Naing in No.3 Ward, Shinbwayyan Town in Tanai Township.

Similarly, law enforcement officers arrested Yuan Cheng Cheng who was going to Bangkok at the check-in counter of the Mandalay International Airport in TadaU Township, together with 29,800 stimulant tablets estimated K 149 million and a mobile phone.

Police from Mongmit also searched the motorcycle driven by Zaw Lwan at the entrance of Bawday Village in Monghot Village-tract in Mongmit Township and confiscated 0.9 g of heroin and 4,080 stimulant tablets.

On the same site, the police seized 80 stimulant tablets, 24.5g of heroin and a mobile phone from Ganfan (a) Ye Zin Min Thu, who was driving a motorcycle.

Police filed charges against them under the Anti-narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law.— GNLM ■

(Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)

Fresh green grams start to enter Mandalay market

THE Mandalay market is witnessing the entry of fresh green grams (Shwe Wah variety) at harvest time.

"About five 12-wheeled trucks of green grams entered the Mandalay market daily in end-December. Those grams were produced in Bago Region. This year, the yield of green grams has been high due to favorable weather.

Also, the price is higher than last year. In May last year, India purchased 200,000 tons of Myanmar green grams under its import quota. The growers hope to get a similar deal in 2020," said U Soe Win Myint from Mandalay.

Green grams (Shwe Wah variety) from Madaya and Singu townships of Mandalay Region and Myaung and Myinmu townships of Sagaing Region are also flowing into the Mandalay market.

On account of steady demand from China, the price of Myanmar's green grams is ranging between K116,000 and K120,000 per three-basket bag. The price per three-basket bag is K10,000 higher than last year.

Merchants evaluate various kinds of bean at a sale center in Mandalay. **PHOTO: AUNG PHYO KYAW**

Among beans and pulses, mung beans is the main export item of Myanmar, followed by green grams.

China accounts for 60 per cent of Myanmar's green gram exports, according to the Commerce Ministry.

Countries in the European Union also purchase green grams from Myanmar. The export volume of green grams to India is lower compared to other countries, said an official from the Commerce Ministry.

In the first month (October) of the 2019-2020 fiscal year, more than 80,000 tons of various pulses and beans were exported by the country.

Myanmar's green gram exports were registered at over 330,000 tons in the 2015-2016 fiscal year, over 400,000 tons in the 2016-2017FY, and over 350,000 tons in the 2017-2018FY. Green grams are mostly exported to China through the border trade channels.

Of the total pulses exports, green grams accounted for over 26 per cent of the exports in the 2015-2016FY, over 28 per cent in the 2016-2017FY, and over 26 per cent in the 2017-2018FY.

Green grams are primarily grown in Sagaing, Magway, Mandalay, Yangon, Bago, and Ayeyawady regions and Mon and Kayin states. — Min Htet Aung/ Ko Khant *(Translated by EMM)*

Stock trades on YSX rose in 2019

A total of 2.4 million shares worth K13.39 billion were traded on the Yangon Stock Exchange (YSX) in 2019, a significant increase compared to the previous year, according to the annual report released by the exchange.

In 2019, the value of stocks traded on the exchange reached a peak of K2.47 billion in September, whereas trading on the exchange registered an all-time low of K396 million in March.

At present, shares of five listed companies — First Myanmar Investment (FMI), Myanmar Thilawa SEZ Holdings (MTSH), Myanmar Citizens Bank (MCB), First Private Bank (FPB), and TMH Telecom Public Co. Ltd — are being traded on the stock exchange.

In January, 2019, 89,576 shares worth K526 million were traded on the exchange. The trading value slid to K409 million and K396 million in February and March as share prices fell.

In April, 102,682 shares worth K506 million were traded on the YSX. Starting from May, the value of shares traded crossed K1 billion. It touched a new peak of K1.4 billion, with 275,325 shares traded, in May; K1.32 billion, with 233,994 shares traded, in June; K1.22 billion, with 256,241 shares traded, in July, and K1.9 billion, with 322,176 shares traded, in August. The value of shares traded on the YSX reached a record-high in September and then plunged by nearly 50 per cent in October.

The value of shares traded on the Yangon Stock Exchange (YSX) declined sharply to K992.69 million and K794 million in November and December.

The price per share of FMI increased from K10,000 on 2 January, 2019 to K11,000 on 30 December, 2019. The share price of MTSH touched a high of K3,850 on 30 December compared with K3,000 on 2 January.

MCB's stock price also rose from K7,400 on 2 January, 2019 to K8,200 on 30 December, 2019. Meanwhile, the prices of stocks remained unchanged at K23,000 at the opening and closing time last year.

The price of TMH stocks rose by K1,000 at the end of the year. In 2016, shares of only three companies were traded on the YSX — FMI, MTSH, and MCB. One more public company, FPB, was listed on the YSX in 2017. In 2018, TMH debuted on the exchange.

More than 2.5 million shares of three listed companies were traded on the YSX in 2016, and their value was estimated at K70 billion.

In 2017, despite an increase in the stock trading volume to 2.6 million shares, the trade value was only K22 billion. In 2018, 2.3 million shares of five companies, worth K11.5 billion, were traded on the exchange, according to the annual report of the YSX

The YSX was launched four years ago to improve the private business sector. It disseminates rules and regulations regarding the stock exchange and knowledge of share trading through stock investment seminars.

In 2018, YSX increased the matching time from two to four per day. In addition to this, YSX held a promotional event for investors in order to increase number of new investors and encourage existing investors to trade more actively by letting know them about the financial reviews and future prospects of YSX-listed companies.

The YSX has also sought the government's support to get more public companies to participate in the stock market and to help more institutional investors, such as financing companies, investment banks, and insurance companies, to emerge. – Htet Myat

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Exports of cattle, animal products decline in current FY

MYANMAR'S exports of animal products between 1 October and 20 December in the current fiscal year touched a low of US$44.65 million, a sharp drop of $102.9 million compared with the corresponding period of the 2018-2019FY, when livestock trade was suspended by China.

In the previous fiscal, animal products exports were registered at $147.56 million.

Animal products exports are mainly driven by the private sector, with income from the public sector amounting to less than $1 million. At present, cattle exports to China are on the decline owing to suspension of trade by China even though the Chinese New Year is approaching, said cattle exporters.

Normally, a large cow is valued at over K1.6-2.3 million, but last year, the suspension of trade led to Chinese traders resorting to price manipulation and offering a lower price of about K1 million.

Myanmar has held a series of negotiations with China at the Joint Border Trade Cooperation and Coordinating Committee (JBTCC) meetings on legal exports of cattle along with cross-border control of communicable diseases.

While cattle exports are legal in Myanmar, livestock trade is still not permitted by China, according to the Myanmar Livestock Federation. Myanmar, which allowed livestock trade in late 2017, is now exploring new export markets for cattle.

The country exports cattle that are above five years old along with vaccination certificates, health certificates, and farming registration certificates According to the 2018 cattle census, there are 11.5 million heads of cattle in the country.

Between the 2017-2018FY and the month of October in the current FY, over 460,000 heads of cattle, with an estimated value of over $581 million, have been exported to China through Muse, according to trade figures.

The authorities have issued cattle export licenses to more than 300 companies in Magway region. There are around 5,000 companies holding cattle export licenses across the country. —Ko Htet *(Translated by EMM)*

Biggest bloom: 'world's largest' flower spotted in Indonesia

JAKARTA — Indonesian conservationists say they've spotted the biggest specimen ever of what's already been billed as one of the world's largest flowers.

The giant Rafflesia tuan-mudae — a fleshy red flower with white blister-like spots on its enormous petals — came in at a whopping 111 centimetres (3.6 foot) in diameter.

That's bigger than the previous record of 107 centimetres on a bloom also found in the jungles of West Sumatra several years ago. "This is the largest Rafflesia tuan-mudae that has ever been documented," said Ade Putra at the Agam Conservation Agency in Sumatra.

The flower's bloom will only last about one week before it will wither and rot, he added.

It was named Rafflesia after British colonialist Sir Stamford Raffles who spotted one in Indonesia in the early 19th Century.

The giant Rafflesia tuan-mudae grows in several Southeast Asian countries. **PHOTO: AFP**

The species grows in several Southeast Asian countries, including the Philippines where a 100 centimetre specimen was recorded.

The parasitic bloom, sometimes referred to as corpse flower, mimics the stench of rotting meat to attract insects.

Sharing that noxious smell is Indonesia's Amorphophallus titanum, a phallus-shaped flower that can reach heights of up to three metres (10 feet). — AFP ■

Radical treatment of oral infection is not necessary before stem cell transplantation, says study

WASHINGTON — A recent scientific study suggests that contrary to the conventional belief, oral infection has no association with the risk of patients that people developing serious infectious diseases within six months of undergoing stem cell transplantation.

The study was conducted by the researchers of the University of Helsinki and was published in the journal - PLOS ONE. During the study, researchers investigated to find out if oral infections are associated with infectious complications as well as mortality rate after stem cell transplantation.

"Contrary to our assumptions, untreated oral infections had no connection with post-stem cell transplantation survival during the six-month follow-up period. Another surprise was that they had no link with any serious infectious complications occurring during the follow-up period," said lead researcher Tuomas Waltimo.

The process of hematopoietic stem cell transplantation is used for treating cancers and other severe blood and autoimmune diseases.

Owing to long durations required for recovery of the human immune system following stem cell transplantation procedure, patients generally have a heightened risk of infections. — ANI ■

Chinese study finds aromas help plants resist cold weather

BEIJING — Aromatic plants not only have a sweet smell but also a strong tolerance to cold weather. A new Chinese study found that adding a floral scent to tea plants may help them withstand low temperatures.

Cold weather is an environmental stress factor that can limit the distribution, survival and growth of various plants. But the study published in the scientific journal New Phytologist says that increasing the concentration of aromatic substances in tea plants can enhance their resistance to cold temperatures.

Researchers from east China's Anhui Agriculture University have discovered that nerolidol, an aromatic substance accumulated in tea plants in cold weather, can be converted into a type of glucose by a key gene UGT91Q2. As the glucose is produced, it feeds the plant and is then gradually converted into other nutrients that promotes plant survival and growth when the temperature drops, subsequently enhancing the plant's cold tolerance.

Song Chuankui, lead researcher, said plants' cold resistance discovery might have significant potential applications in the food and cosmetics sectors. — XINHUA ■

FILE PHOTO: People visit the sunflower field during the second annual Sunflower Festival in Chilliwack, Canada, Aug. 2, 2019. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

Scientists develop lithium-sulfur battery that can power smartphone for 5 days

WASHINGTON — An international team led by Australian scientists developed an efficient lithium-sulphur (Li-S) battery with the potential to power a smartphone for five continuous days, or enable an electric vehicle to drive more than 1,000 km without needing to refuel.

The study published on Friday in the journal Science Advances described the ultra-high capacity Li-S battery that has better performance and less environmental impact than current lithium-ion products.

Using the same materials in standard lithium-ion batteries, researchers reconfigured the design of sulphur cathodes so they could accommodate higher stress loads without a drop in overall capacity or performance.

The researchers are inspired by the unique bridging architecture first recorded in processing detergent powders in the 1970s. They engineered a method that created bonds between particles to accommodate stress and deliver a level of stability not seen in any battery to date.

"This approach not only favours high performance metrics and long cycle life, but is also simple and extremely low-cost to manufacture, using water-based processes, and can lead to significant reductions in environmentally hazardous waste," said Matthew Hill, associate professor at Monash University. — XINHUA ■

FILE PHOTO: The BYD K12A, the world's longest pure electric bus, uses lithium ion batteries. **PHOTO: AFP**

Trade Mark Ads
Call Thin Thin May, 09251022355,09974424848

Trump says US targeting 52 sites in Iran as tension mounts

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump warned Saturday that the US is targeting 52 sites in Iran and will hit them "very fast and very hard" if the Islamic republic attacks American personnel or assets.

In a saber-rattling tweet that defended Friday's US drone strike assassination of a powerful Iranian general in Iraq, Trump said 52 represents the number of Americans held hostage at the US embassy in Tehran for more than a year starting in late 1979.

Trump said some of these sites are "at a very high level & important to Iran & the Iranian culture, and those targets, and Iran itself, WILL BE HIT VERY FAST AND VERY HARD. The USA wants no more threats!"

Trump spoke out after pro-Iran factions ramped up pressure on US installations across Iraq with missiles and warnings to Iraqi troops — part of an outburst of fury over the killing of Qasem Soleimani, described as the second most-powerful man in Iran.

Anti-war protesters march from the White House to the Trump International Hotel in Washington, D.C., on Saturday. **PHOTO: AFP**

With Iran promising revenge, his killing was the most dramatic escalation yet in spiraling tensions between Washington and Tehran and has prompted fears of a major conflagration in the Middle East.

In the first hints of a possible retaliatory response, two mortar rounds hit an area near the US embassy in Baghdad on Saturday, security sources told AFP.

Almost simultaneously, two rockets slammed into the Al-Balad airbase where American troops are deployed, security sources said.

The Iraqi military confirmed the missile attacks in Baghdad and on al-Balad and said there were no casualties. The US military also said no coalition troops were hurt.

With Americans wondering fearfully if, how and where Iran will hit back for the assassination, the US Department of Homeland Security issued a bulletin that said "at this time there is no specific, credible threat against the homeland." However on Saturday the website of the Federal Depository Library Program, a little-known US government agency, was breached by a group claiming to be linked to Iran, who posted graphics displaying the Iranian flag and vowing revenge for Soleimani's death.

Separately, US Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi said in a statement that information given to Congress by Trump, a Republican, "prompts serious and urgent questions about the timing, manner and justification of" the strike.— AFP ■

Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis heads for his first White House visit since seeing President Donald Trump at a NATO summit in December. **PHOTO: AFP**

Greek PM on White House trip amid Turkey tension

ATHEN — Six months into his term, Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis heads to his first White House visit on January 7 amidst tense relations with NATO ally and regional rival Turkey.

Athens is keen to enlist US investors for the growth spurt envisioned by the Greek conservative government -- but the visit comes as tensions escalate with Turkey over migration, energy exploration and territorial disputes.

"Greece and the United States are closer than ever," Mitsotakis said in a December 29 interview with the weekly, To Vima.

"Greece is a reliable ally and I expect this to be confirmed with deeds, not just words," he said.

The US has traditionally maintained a difficult balancing act between Greece and Turkey over the past six decades, with the Clinton administration actually stepping in to prevent hostilities over an uninhabited Aegean islet group in 1996.

But Trump has often struck a dissonant tone in his administration's foreign policy, preferring to forge personal bonds even with the leaders of countries whose policies have on occasion been rebuked by the US State Department or Congress.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan is one of them.— AFP ■

Iraqi MPs to meet on US troop ouster after Soleimani killing

BAGHDAD — Iraq's parliament was expected to vote Sunday on ousting thousands of US troops from military bases, which are threatened by pro-Tehran factions after an American strike killed top Iranian and Iraqi commanders.

Late Saturday, missiles slammed into the Baghdad enclave where the US embassy is located and an airbase north of the capital housing American troops, prompting US President Donald Trump to threaten strikes on 52 sites in Iran.

The near-simultaneous attacks seemed to be the first phase of promised retaliation for the US precision drone strike that killed Iran's Major General Qasem Soleimani and Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, deputy head of Iraq's Hashed al-Shaabi.

While no one claimed Saturday's attacks, a hardline pro-Iran faction in the Hashed, a network of Shiite-majority armed groups incorporated into the state, urged Iraqis to move away from US forces.

"We ask security forces in the country to get at least 1,000 metres away from US bases starting on Sunday at 5:00 pm (1400 GMT)," said the Kataeb Hezbollah faction.

American soldiers walk around at the Taji base complex which hosts Iraqi and US troops and is located thirty kilometres north of the capital Baghdad on December 29, 2014. **PHOTO: AFP**

The deadline coincides with the planned conclusion of Sunday's parliamentary session, which the Hashed has insisted should see a vote on the ouster of US troops.

Some 5,200 US soldiers are stationed across Iraqi bases to support local troops preventing a resurgence of the Islamic State jihadist group.

They are deployed as part of the broader international coalition, invited by the Iraqi government in 2014 to help fight IS.

The Hashed, whose factions have close ties to Iran, has vehemently opposed their presence and called on parliament to revoke the invitation.

'Post-humous victory'

The 329-member parliament was set to meet at 1:00 pm (1000 GMT) but two hours on, there was still no quorum and the session had not begun.— AFP ■

6 JANUARY 2020
THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

Expand crop insurance for farmers

CLIMATE change is a serious threat to agriculture and food security. Extreme weather conditions and changing patterns of precipitation can lead to a decrease in crop productivity.

Some areas of upper Myanmar and Shan State were hit by rain and hailstones recently caused by cloud banks triggered by Western Disturbances.

It is painful to see photographs of onion farms in Sagaing Region submerged by flash floods and crops destroyed by hailstones in Shan State.

> Hydrology Department can issue weather warnings, but disasters simply cannot be prevented.

Untimely rain poured down from the evening of 1st January to 5th January, flooding onion farms in Pauk Township, Magway Region.

It costs around K1.5 million to grow onion on one acre of land, and local farmers simply cannot afford to grow onions after the water recedes. The farmers are facing a big loss of income. It is the same elsewhere in other disaster-hit parts of the world.

But, for Myanmar farmers who are not familiar with crop insurance, it would be difficult to recover losses.

The agriculture sector in Myanmar, which is an agro-based country, is frequently affected by natural disasters such as droughts, excessive rainfall, floods, flash floods, etc. The Meteorology and Hydrology Department can issue weather warnings, but disasters simply cannot be prevented.

Agriculture or crop insurance based on a risk management strategy is an important method by which farmers can stabilize their income and investment against the disastrous effect of losses from natural hazards or low market price of crops.

Crop insurance helps farmers in developing and under-developed countries initiate production activities after a bad agricultural period.

We should have started agriculture or crop insurance system earlier for better output from the agricultural sector.

Now, we're in a pattern of increasingly frequent and severe weather. A once-in-a-century event seemingly occurs every year. The extreme is the new norm.

There's no argument here. People in the 21st century are facing harsh impacts from climate change. Therefore, we need to find ways or implement systems to bring relief from disasters.

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Japan, China, S. Korea step up banking cooperation with ASEAN

Myanma Foreign Trade Bank participates in the project backed by development banks of Japan, China and South Korea. **PHOTO: MFTB**

Tadashi Maeda, head of Japan Bank for International Cooperation. **PHOTO : KYODONEWS**

GOVERNMENT-backed development banks of Japan, China and South Korea have signed an agreement with public and private financial institutions in Southeast Asia to meet growing demand for infrastructure projects in the fast-growing region.

The Japan Bank for International Cooperation, the China Development Bank and the Korea Development Bank established the ASEAN-plus-Three Inter-Bank Cooperation Mechanism in response to the strong financial need in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, according to the JBIC. The scheme aims to "provide financial support based on the global standards such as openness, transparency, economic viability, debt sustainability, and compliance with laws and regulations for the development of the region," the Japanese lender said.

"Such financial support will benefit the country where the project is located and the origination of bankable projects, and thus lead to sound development of the entire region," it said.

Such assistance would also promote economic integration and connectivity in the 10-member ASEAN. ASEAN participants in the project are PT Bank Mandiri (Persero) Tbk. of Indonesia, Canadia Bank PLC of Cambodia, DBS Bank Ltd. of Singapore, Kasikornbank Public Co. of Thailand, CIMB Group Sdn Bhd of Malaysia, Myanma Foreign Trade Bank of Myanmar, BDO Unibank Inc. of the Philippines, Bank Islam Brunei Darussalam Berhad of Brunei, Joint Stock Commercial Bank for Investment and Development of Vietnam, and Lao Development Bank of Laos.

The agreement was struck on the sidelines of a summit involving leaders of Japan, China, South Korea and ASEAN in November on the outskirts of Bangkok. —*Kyodo News*

Return of livestock breeding in Kawkareik, Kayin State

By Tin Win Hlaing (Kawkareik)

Armed conflicts that began in the area soon after independence in 1948 affected the township and hit transportation services, education, health, and the socio-economic life of the locals hard.

The Kayin ethnic people who traditionally relied on cultivation and gardening for a livelihood had to abandon their gardens due to internal armed conflicts.

The local ethnic people who were born during the period of instability in the region migrated to neighboring Thailand and got involved in the illegal goods trade.

After the smuggling business collapsed and border trade emerged, many locals migrated to foreign countries in search of jobs, leaving Kayin State with a shortage of farm labor. Attempts to re-establish the gardens and farmlands were in vain.

Since 2015, the state has seen a return of stability, with better transportation services, 24-hour power supply, and public healthcare services in villages and schools, even in far-flung areas of the state. This has helped attract investment in livestock breeding.

The Pyai Pyai Natural Cow Milk business emerged as a small and medium enterprise (SME) in Kayin State in 2015 under Saw Noe Noe and Saw Win Ko. The dairy business started with seven cows in 2015 at the No.1 Ward in Kawkareik.

When the business began to grow, the two ethnic entrepreneurs bought seven cows from the Silver Parl Diary Production in Mingalardon. Today, the number of cows has crossed 60. They make milk from 20 cows everyday and collect about 200 litres of milk daily. The dairy farm has found a market for milk in Kawkareik and Myawady.

The Kawkareik District Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Department is providing free veterinary services to the farm.

Similarly, another small business involving farming of 40 goats is operating out of a ward in Kawkareik. Locals said buyers from Yangon come to their villages to buy cattle door-to-door.

The KNU Agriculture and Livestock Breeding Farm near the Tawnaw Waterfall on the Myawady-Kawkareik section of the Asia Highway is also farming cattle, including cows, buffaloes, and pigs. Fish, duck, and chicken farming has also developed there. The Kawkareik District Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Department is closely helping the farm, providing veterinary services.

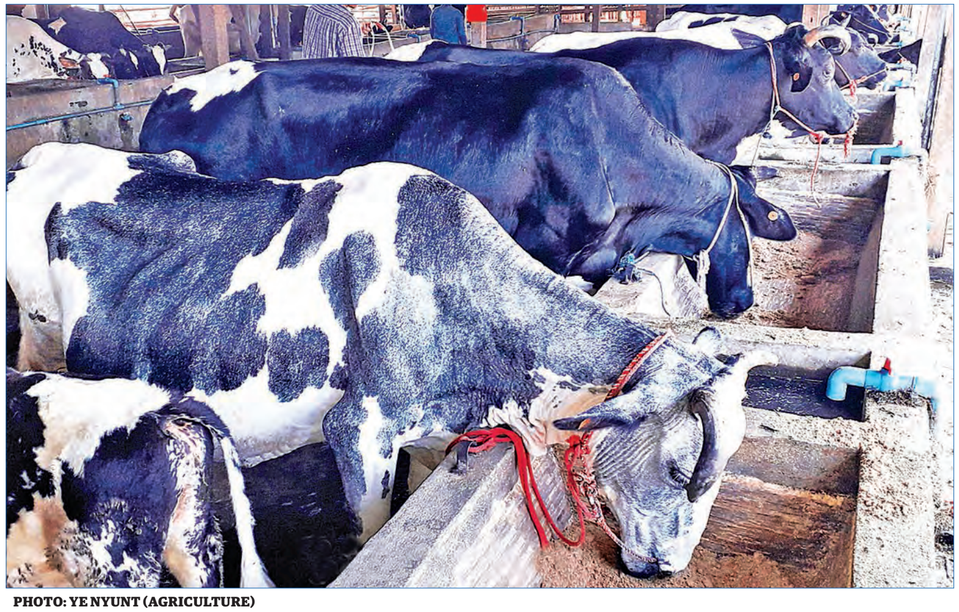

PHOTO: YE NYUNT (AGRICULTURE)

The local farmers are committed to expanding their farms into medium scale businesses once they are granted loans by the government.

Kawkareik Township is on the path to food sufficiency and earning an income from raising livestock.

(Translated by KZL)

Myanmar Daily Weather Report

(Issued at 7:00 pm Sunday 5th January, 2020)

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

FORECAST VALID UNTIL AFTERNOON OF THE 6th January, 2020: Rain or thundershowers will be widespread in Sagaing Region, Kachin and Northern Shan States, fairly widespread in Chin State, scattered in Mandalay Region and isolated in Naypyitaw, Magway and Bago Region, (Southern and Eastern)Shan and Rakhine States. Degree of certainty is (100%). Weather will be partly cloudy in the remaining Regions and States.

STATE OF THE SEA: Sea will be moderate in Myanmar waters. Wave height will be about (5 – 7) feet off and along Myanmar Coasts.

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Likelihood of slight decrease of night temperatures in Upper Sagaing Region, Kachin, Shan and Chin States.

FORECAST FOR NAYPYITAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 6th January, 2020: Likelihood of isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (60%).

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 6th January, 2020: Partly cloudy.

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 6th January, 2020: Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

Invitation to young writers for Sunday Special

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

management@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com
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Port City Colombo launches year-long project to clean-up Sri Lankan beaches

COLOMBO—Port City Colombo, in association with local partners, launched a year-long project to clean up a 5 km stretch of beach it the city of Colombo on Saturday.

The project was inaugurated at the Mount Lavinia public beach with the presence of Secretary to the Ministry of Urban Development, Water Supply and Housing Facilities, Priyath Bandu Wickrama, State Minister of Environment Jayantha Samaraweera and Port City Colombo Managing Director, Jiang Houliang.

Making a speech at the inauguration event, Jiang said that Port City Colombo promoted sustainable urban living. He noted that despite being blessed with pristine beaches, accumulation of waste and debris harms visitors as well as local residents and businesses.

Volunteers clean up rubbish at the Mount Lavinia public beach in Colombo, Sri Lanka, Jan. 4, 2020. Port City Colombo, in association with local partners, launched a year-long project to clean up a 5 km stretch of beach in the city of Colombo on Saturday. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

"We have undertaken this initiative as part of our corporate social responsibility to ensure a cleaner beach that will benefit people and support local tourism to sustain in a pleasant environment," Jiang said.

The year-long project is to provide daily clean-up of a five kilometre stretch of beach in Colombo, namely Wellawatte, Dehiwala and Mount Lavinia which is popular among local families and foreign tourists.—Xinhua ■

Russia unveils climate 'adaptation' plan

Snow problem: Russia will also look at "positive" effects of climate change such as are decreased energy use in cold regions, expanding agricultural areas and navigational opportunities in Arctic waters. **PHOTO:AFP**

MOSCOW—The Russian government has published a plan to adapt the economy and population to climate change, aiming to mitigate damage but also "use the advantages" of warmer temperatures.

The document, published on the government website on Saturday, outlines a plan of action and admits that "consequences of (climate) change have a prominent and increasing effect on socio-economic development, people's lives," health and industry.Russia is warming 2.5 times quicker than the planet on average, and the two-year "first stage" plan is an indication that the government officially recognises this as a problem, even though President Vladimir Putin denies it is man-madet.The plan is needed in order to "lower the losses and use the advantages".

It says climate change increases risks to public health and permafrost, of infections, turbulent weather and will have consequences for other species. Possible "positive" effects are decreased energy use in cold regions, expanding agricultural areas and navigational opportunities in the Arctic ocean.The document lays the groundwork for various agencies and stresses the need for more research on economic vulnerabilities, without detailing financing. It lists preventive measures such as dam building or switching to more drought-resistant crops, as well as crisis preparations including emergency vaccinations or evacuations in case of a disaster. Among a list of 30 measures, the government will calculate risks of Russian products becoming uncompetitive and failing to meet new climate-related standards as well as prepare new educational materials to teach climate change in schools.Russia is one of the most vulnerable countries to climate change, with vast Arctic regions and infrastructure built over permafrost. Recent floods and wildfires have been among the planet's worst climate-related disasters.—AFP ■

Nearly Aus$25 mn raised as Australia reels from bushfire fury

EDEN—A global appeal to help Australian firefighters tackling catastrophic bushfires raised almost Aus$25 million on Sunday, as swathes of the country suffered extensive damage and the death toll from the long-running crisis hit 24.

East coast seaside towns were plunged into darkness, ash rained down on rural communities and major cities were again cloaked in choking smoke, even as stunned Australians tried to regroup amid a wave of cooler air and light rain.

The weekend marked some of the worst days in the country's deadly bushfire crisis, with hundreds more properties destroyed and the overall death toll climbing to 24, including a man who died Saturday trying to save a friend's home.

Comedian Celeste Barber used her international social media fame to launch a Facebook fundraiser for firefighters that almost reached its Aus$25 million ($17 million) target in just two days with donations from all over the globe.

American pop star Pink said she would donate US$500,000 to the firefighters, a donation matched by Australian actress Nicole Kidman.

World number one Ash Barty pledged to handover all her winnings from this week's Brisbane International tennis tournament -- potentially US$250,000 -- to the Red Cross.—AFP ■

Japan educator helps bring cherry blossoms to Slovakia

Masumi Ormandy. **PHOTO: KYODO**

TOKYO—An 80-year-old Japanese English-language educator has collected donations for a project that aims to send hundreds of cherry blossom trees to Slovakia, as Japan and the central European country mark 100 years of diplomatic ties this year.Masumi Ormandy, is the vice principal and a co-founder of Tokyo-based Pacific Language School. But her more recent career as a jazz singer led to exchanges with a Slovakian musician, and from there, she decided to help out with the project initiated by the Japanese Embassy in Slovakia."I hope this will lead people who see the cherry blossoms to think of Japan, and those who donated them will visit the country to see the cherry blossoms," said Ormandy.The embassy is hoping to plant 500 cherry blossom trees in the Slovakian capital of Bratislava and other local cities in the spring and fall of 2020, as a part of centenary celebration projects.It has asked Slovakian municipalities, as well as individuals and businesses with ties to the country, to support the project. Ormandy managed to collect more than 2 million yen ($18,000) in donations.

Ormandy began her singing career in her 60s and now spends more than half the year touring the United States, Europe and Japan.She met with Slovakian jazz singer Peter Lipa about three years ago, and through her exchanges with him, and visits to Slovakia, she decided to help out with the project.—Kyodo ■

As Trump tariffs loom, US wine lovers battle tech giants

WASHINGTON—American importers of French cheese, bubbly and porcelain are raising their voices in Washington, hoping against hope they can outweigh Silicon Valley giants in a battle over tariffs on luxury items from France.President Donald Trump last month threatened to punish Paris for a new tax on tech giants like Netflix and Amazon, unveiling sky-high retaliatory duties on about $2.4 billion in French wines, makeup and leather handbags.US trade officials on Tuesday are due to hold a public hearing to allow individuals and companies to comment on the punitive measure.But already complaints have poured in from mom-and-pop outlets across the United States warning of lay-offs, lost business and damage to innocent bystanders.The new US import duties are designed to pinch some of France's most emblematic and politically sensitive industries -- adding to the pain already hitting the country from $7.5 billion in tariffs Trump slapped on European Union exports in October in a clash over subsidies to aircraft maker Airbus.

The price of French champagne could rise sharply if the US imposes tariffs threatened by President Donald Trump in a dispute with France over a digital tax. **PHOTO: AFP**

Jobs at stake

The latest battle pits the interests of globe-spanning American tech behemoths against local retailers and middlemen who eke out small margins supplying bars, restaurants, shops and department stores.

"The tariff will effectively shut down the access Americans have to European wines (and many other artisanal products) and as a result, tens of thousands, if not hundreds of thousands of people will lose their jobs," California wine merchants Kermit Lynch and F. Dixon Brooke said last month in a letter to US Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer.—AFP ■

Vertical farming envisages profitable and suitable agriculture business

NEW DELHI—A silent revolution is underway in the agriculture sector, which is going to be quite evident in the days to come. With the global population is set to reach near ten billion marks by 2050, the food production must increase by 70 per cent, estimates the United Nations.

However, there is a global appeal seeking restrictions on the forests getting converted into the farmlands in the wake of global warming. "There comes the need for technological innovation in the farming processes, and the idea of vertical farming is among them. It is in accordance with the principles of sustainable development, which beseeches judicious use of environmental resources," said Dr Shivendra Bajaj, Executive Director, Federation of Seed Industry of India (FSII).Vertical farming is a practice of growing crops in vertically stacked layers in a controlled environment.It does not just reduce the requirement of water but also increases yield and ability to cultivate a larger variety of crops.—ANI ■

Oil prices jump following U.S. killing of Iranian commander

Analyst cites risk that Iran may "disrupt seaborne crude oil flows and cause prices to rise further". **PHOTO:AFP**

HOUSTON—Oil prices jumped for the week ending Jan. 3 following the U.S. killing of an Iranian commander.Qassem Soleimani, commander of Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps Quds Force, and Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, deputy chief of Iraq's paramilitary Hashd Shaabi forces, were killed in a strike near the Baghdad airport.Sabah al-Sheikh, a professor of politics at Baghdad University, told Xinhua that the U.S.-Iranian conflict has become clear in Iraq, and there is a possibility that the conflict could spread to cover more areas in the Middle East region.

Shortly after the strike, oil prices jumped more than 3 percent, and on Friday evening, the West Texas Intermediate (WTI) for February delivery hit over 63 U.S. dollars a barrel, while Brent crude for March delivery climbed to 68.60 dollars a barrel.

Meanwhile, the U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA) said in a report on Friday that U.S. commercial crude oil inventories, excluding those in the Strategic Petroleum Reserve, decreased by 11.463 million barrels during the week ending Dec. 27, 2019, much more than the market expected draw of 3.288 million barrels, which implies greater demand and is bullish for crude prices.—Xinhau ■

Japan 'Tuna King' buys new year catch for $1.8 million

TOKYO—A celebrated Japanese sushi businessman, nicknamed "Tuna King", paid $1.8 million for a giant tuna at New Year's auction at Tokyo's main fish market on Sunday.

Kiyoshi Kimura, who runs a successful sushi restaurant chain, paid 193 million yen ($1.8 million) to purchase a 276-kilogramme (608-pound) bluefin tuna, caught off the Aomori region in northern Japan.

Kiyoshi Kimura paid 193 million yen ($1.8 million) to purchase a 276-kilogramme (608-pound) bluefin tuna. **PHOTO: AFP**

"This is the best," Kimura told reporters after the pre-dawn auction.

"Yes, this is expensive, isn't it? I want our customers to eat very tasty ones this year too," he said.

Media-savvy Kimura regularly pays top price at the first auction of the year at the Japanese capital's main fish market, making himself and his business a fixture in national news during this season. In last year's new year auction, Kimura paid a record $3.1 million to win a 278-kilogramme (612-pound) tuna.

The traditional auction is now being held in a new market in an area called Toyosu.

The world-famous Tsukiji market, which had long served as a popular tourist attraction in an area packed with restaurants and shops, closed in 2018.—AFP ■

Bangladesh orders arrest of 'fugitive' ex-chief justice

Surendra Kumar Sinha was the first Hindu to head the Supreme Court in Muslim-majority Bangladesh. **PHOTO:AFP**

DHAKA—A Bangladesh court ordered the arrest Sunday of former chief justice Surendra Kumar Sinha and 10 others on charges alleging they embezzled nearly half a million dollars, a prosecutor said.

"All of them are fugitives from justice," prosecutor Khurshid Alam Khan told AFP, adding Sinha was accused of embezzling money and laundering it from one bank account to another.

Sinha headed the South Asian nation's Supreme Court for a landmark verdict on judicial independence that went against the government, but fled Bangladesh in late 2017 amid allegations he had been forced to step aside.

Opposition groups and rights activists said the departure of Sinha, a Hindu, was a blow to the credibility of the judiciary in the Muslim-majority country.

Sinha, 68, now lives in North America.

He was the first Hindu to be made chief justice of the officially secular Muslim-majority nation of 168 million since its independence from Pakistan in 1971.

Sinha's departure came after a rare statement from the Supreme Court in October 2017 said other judges had accused him of graft and refused to sit with him on the top bench.

Just months earlier, Sinha had led the Supreme Court in a decision that scrapped parliament's power to sack top judges.

The ruling overturned a 2014 constitutional change introduced by authoritarian Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

In a written statement issued before he left the country, Sinha expressed dismay over criticism he had faced from the government over the ruling, saying he was "worried about the independence of the judiciary".

He later wrote a book titled "A Broken Dream: Rule of Law, Human Rights & Democracy", detailing the saga, saying he had been forced to resign and flee after being threatened by a military security agency.—AFP ■

Overload on train to Kashmir's internet oasis

BANIHAL—Every day the train to Kashmir's remote cyber oasis Banihal is packed as people travel for hours to get online in the disputed region where internet has been cut for five months.

The mountain town of fewer than 4,000 people has six internet cafes, which are booming due to a security clampdown by the Indian government.

"The speed is very slow," admitted Irfan, manager of one of the cafes where customers pay up to 3,000 rupees ($40) an hour to link their laptop to the snail's-pace broadband.

"Scores of Kashmiris, mostly students and income tax professionals, come visiting every day," said Irfan, who only gave one name.

In early August New Delhi made a sudden move to axe Kashmir's semi-autonomous status, shutting down communications and sending tens of thousands of extra troops into what was already one of the world's most militarised zones.

While phone calls and very limited text messages are now possible, the internet is still down.

Forcing people offline has crippled the economy and made it impossible to pay utility bills, make applications or just send a message to family outside the stricken zone.

Some Kashmiris make special trips to New Delhi or Jammu city -- an eight-hour drive from the regional capital Srinagar -- to connect.

Banihal, a two-hour train ride from Srinagar, is the nearest town with any access.—AFP ■

Cambodia building collapse death toll hits 36 as rescue called off

KEP—The search for victims in the rubble of a collapsed building in southern Cambodia drew to a close Sunday with the final death toll at 36 -- the latest tragedy in a string of deadly construction accidents.

Cambodia Prime Minister Hun Sen, said 23 people had been pulled alive from the rubble of the seven-storey hotel, which crumpled to the ground in seaside Kep on Friday afternoon.On Sunday rescuers also managed to free a dog trapped in the debris.

"This is yet another tragedy," said Hun Sen, who promised families of victims would get $50,000 each in compensation, while those injured would receive $20,000, he said.

He told reporters the contractor responsible for the construction had died in the accident, while the building's owner had been detained.

The rescue effort lasted more 40 hours, mobilizing hundreds of soldiers and labourers using excavators, drills and power saws to clear concrete and cut through metal bars of the pancaked structure.

Cambodia is undergoing a construction boom, with hotels, high-rises and casinos springing up under little regulatory oversight.—AFP ■

A rescuer carries a puppy that was found underneath rubble of an under-construction building that collapsed in southern Cambodia. **PHOTO: AFP**

NEWS In BRIEF

Full statehood to Delhi will be part of AAP's manifesto: Kejriwal

NEW DELHI— Ahead of the Assembly elections in the national capital, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Sunday said that full statehood of Delhi would be a part of the Aam Aadmi Party's (AAP) election manifesto.

"Full statehood will be a part of AAP election manifesto and the people of Delhi will appeal to the central government that Delhi should be given the status of a state," he told media persons here. "Delhi people want their city to be a state. They have chosen a fair government. We will appeal to the Centre for full statehood," he said.

The assembly polls in Delhi is likely to be held in February.

In the 2015 election, AAP had secured 67 seats in the 70-member Assembly while the BJP had managed just three seats. The Congress drew a blank in the polls.—ANI ■

China replaces representative in Hong Kong amid ongoing protests

HONG KONG—China's highest executive body has replaced the head of the country's representative office in Hong Kong, the state-run Xinhua News Agency reported Saturday, following months of anti-government protests.

The State Council announced that Luo Huining replaces Wang Zhimin as director of the Central Government Liaison Office, Beijing's representative body in the former British colony, the report said.Wang has been removed from office duty, the report said without giving a reason.Luo was in 2016 appointed secretary of the Shanxi Provincial Committee of the Communist Party of China.The reshuffle comes as the anti-government unrest, which began in June last year, spilled into the new year and shows no sign of relenting.—Kyodo ■

Mourners flood Iran city as top general's remains return

TEHRAN—A tide of mourners flooded the Iranian city of Ahvaz Sunday, weeping and beating their chests in homage to top general Qasem Soleimani who was killed in a US strike in Baghdad."Death to America," they chanted as they packed the streets and filled a long bridge spanning a river in the south-western city, where Soleimani's remains arrived from Iraq before dawn.

As Shiite chants resonated in the air, mourners held portraits of Soleimani, seen as a hero of the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq war and for spearheading Iran's Middle East operations as commander of the Revolutionary Guards' Quds Force.Soleimani was killed in a US drone strike Friday near Baghdad airport, shocking the Islamic republic. He was 62.The attack was ordered by President Donald Trump, who said the Quds commander had been planning an "imminent" attack on US diplomats and American forces in Iraq.

Iranians chanted "Death to America" as they flooded the streets of Ahvaz to mourn top general Qasem Soleimani. **PHOTO: AFP**

In the face of growing Iraqi anger over the US strike, the country's parliament was expected to vote Sunday on whether to oust the roughly 5,200 American troops in Iraq.Soleimani's assassination ratcheted up tensions between arch-enemies Tehran and Washington and sparked fears of a new Middle East war.Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei vowed "severe revenge" and declared three days of mourning.—AFP ■

Spain's Sanchez loses first bid to return as PM

MADRID—Spain's parliament rejected Socialist leader Pedro Sanchez's bid to be reappointed prime minister on Sunday, but he appeared on track to win a second confidence vote later in the week.Sanchez needed 176 votes—an absolute majority in the 350-seat assembly —to be confirmed as prime minister for another term in Sunday's vote.

He lost the vote as expected, with 166 in favour, 165 against and 18 abstentions. One lawmaker did not attend the vote. Sanchez will face parliament again on Tuesday, and this time he needs a simple majority – more yes votes than no -- to be become premier for another term.While the political math works in his favour after he struck a deal for the 13 lawmakers from Catalan separatist party ERC to abstain, the numbers still look tight. At the latest count Sanchez should win on Tuesday by a margin of just two votes.

Spanish caretaker prime minister Pedro Sanchez looks set to be re-appointed Tuesday by a simple majority of MPs. **PHOTO: AFP**

Spain, the eurozone's fourth-largest economy, has been in political gridlock without a proper government for most of the past year after two inconclusive elections in April and November.Sanchez's Socialists won the repeat November 10 polls but were weakened, taking 120 seats -- three fewer than in April.He quickly struck a deal with hard-left party Podemos, which won 35 seats, to form what would be the first post-dictatorship coalition government, in Spain.With the two parties' combined total of 155 seats still falling short of a majority, Sanchez has also secured the support or abstention of several smaller regional parties including the ERC to squeak by in a second vote.—AFP

NATO suspends training mission in Iraq

OTTAWA—The Canadian-commanding NATO mission in Iraq has suspended its training task after a U.S. airstrike killed an Iranian commander, Canadian newspaper The Globe and Mail reported Saturday.

A senior Canadian government official was quoted as describing the move as a "tactical pause."

The NATO mission run by Canadian General Jennie Carignan is reportedly a "non-combat, advisory and training" mission.

The suspension of NATO's training mission, where 253 Canadians are involved, does not affect the U.S.-led Operation Impact where Canada has approximately 600 soldiers servicing in Iraq, Kuwait, and Jordan and Lebanon as trainers and advisers, according to the report.

Canadian Foreign Minister Francois-Philippe Champagne on Friday called on all sides to exercise restraint and pursue de-escalation after a U.S. airstrike near Baghdad International Airport killed Iranian Major General Qassem Soleimani, who was commander of Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps Quds Force.

"Canada is in contact with our international partners. The safety and well-being of Canadians in Iraq and the region, including our troops and diplomats, is our paramount concern. We call on all sides to exercise restraint and pursue de-escalation. Our goal is and remains a united and stable Iraq," Champagne said in a statement.

Canada also urged its citizens in Iraq to consider leaving the country in updated travel advisory on Friday after the attack.

"This attack has led to increased tensions in the region," the advisory said. "There is an increased threat of attacks against Western interests and of terrorist attacks in general. Consider leaving by commercial means if it is safe to do so."—Xinhua ■

NATO's advisory activities are centered in Baghdad, while training is carried out at Iraqi military schools in the Baghdad area, Taji and Besmaya. **PHOTO: AFP**

Six Germans killed as car ploughs into pedestrians in Italy

ROME—Six Germans were killed when a car ploughed into them after they left a nightclub in the Italian Alps on Sunday, emergency services said, adding that 11 others were injured.

Media reports said the driver may have been drunk.

The accident happened at around 1:15 am (0015 GMT) in the village of Lutago near the Austrian border in the South Tyrol region, which is popular with skiers.

The group of Germans had spent the evening at the nightclub and were near their bus when the car slammed into them at high-speed.

Some of them were propelled dozens of metres by the impact.

Six Germans were killed, a fire service official in Lutago told AFP. Eleven other people were injured, including two from the region.—AFP ■

Monywa vs. Mohnyin Thanbuddhe

By Maung Tha (Archaeology)

WHILE in Monywa, I paid a visit to Mohnyin Thanbuddhe Pagoda at the entrance to the town. Beautiful multi-colours and wonderfully architectural works of the pagoda that I visited about 30 years ago for the first time have been attractable to visitors.

Thanks to proper maintenance in successive eras, the pagoda daily crowded with local and foreign guests has been magnificent and impressive in appearance with original works for about 80 years.

Inside part of the monyin Thanbuddhe. **PHOTO: MAUNG THA (ARCHAEOLOGY)**

Monywa

Monywa, the capital of Sagaing Region, is located on Mandalay-Kalay motor road, on the eastern bank of Chindwin River. Related to Chindwin River called Thallawady in the past, the town was named Thalla. Monywa, 50 miles from a confluence of Chindwin and Ayeyawady rivers, 80 miles west to Mandalay and 452 miles from Yangon, is the most strategic town among towns and villages along both banks of Chindwin River.

Monywa has been facilitated with embankments to prevent flooding whenever Chindwin River overflows. It is a focal point of trade and commercial processes in Sagaing Region. Local people trade agricultural products produced from Chindwin basin at Monywa. Moreover, the town is significant for distributing various textile products, wheat, edible oils and sausage as well as Kyaukka lacquerwares to four corners of Myanmar.

Although Monywa, destroyed by fire in 1956, was rebuilt as new city but it has been meeting development in successive eras. It became a main port of Chindwin River as well as a focal point on the motor road leading to India. In addition, the city enjoys good transport facilities due to a highway and a railroad to Mandalay.

Shwezigon and Hsutaungpyae pagodas in Monywa are famous. The Buddha Pujaniya festival of Hsutaungpyae Pagoda which lasts for 10 days in Thadingyut yearly is thronged with pilgrims and visitors. Significantly, Thanbuddhe Pagoda in Monywa is attractive to local and international travellers because of its wonderful arts and crafts.

Arlain Ngarsint. **PHOTO: MAUNG THA (ARCHAEOLOGY)**

The Myanmar Encyclopaedia stated the word of Monywa derived from Montywa. In the past, a king appointed a snack vendor (called Mont The) as his queen. That was why the town was named Mont-the-ma Village which changed to Monywa later. But, the saying did not mention name of the king and time. Actually, Monywa was a large village in the reigns of Myanmar kings. It was one of the towns under current Ahlon. After occupying Myanmar, British designated Monywa as administrative office town of lower Chindwin District in 1888.

Mohnyin Thanbuddhe

Among many destinations of local and foreign tourists around Monywa, Thanbuddhe Pagoda, on right side of Mandalay-Monywa Road at the entrance to Monywa, is famous destination due to its magnificent arts and crafts. The pagoda, 12 kilometres southeast of Monywa, built by Mohnyin Abbot, was named Mohnyin Thanbuddhe Pagoda.

Mohnyin Abbot laid cornerstones for construction of Thanbuddhe Pagoda on 20 July 1939 dedicating to numerous number of Samma Sambuddha. The design of the pagoda was directed by the abbot himself to order a team led by Saya Han Gyi from Amyint for construction of the pagoda within 10 years.

The pagoda was gilt in 1320 Myanmar era, and the consecration ceremony took place on the full moon day of Tazaungmone. From then onward, the Buddha Pujaniya festival has been held at the pagoda on Tazaungmone on a yearly basis.

The pagoda is 131 feet high, formed with a main structure comprising 124 small sections, 80 large sections and 42 doors.

Various sizes of Buddha images totalling 582,363 were kept interior and exterior walls of the main building in a row. A total of 864 encircled pagodas can be seen at the pagoda and the prayer hall. Visitors can pay homage to various sizes of standing and sitting Buddha images.

Mohnyin Abbot

Maung Boe Sa, childhood name of Mohnyin Abbot U Sumana, was born on waxing day of 1234 ME. At that time, his mother Daw Taw was 56 years

Thanbuddhe Pagoda in Monywa. **PHOTO: MAUNG THA (ARCHAEOLOGY)**

Two giant elephants at the entrance of Monyin Thanbuddhe.
PHOTO: MAUNG THA (ARCHAEOLOGY)

old. Maung Boe Sa learned basic Pitakat literature from Ayeywa Abbot U Acara. At 13 years old, he was novitiated by Ayeywa Abbot and titled Shin Sumana. He was ordained in Waso of 1234 ME. Four years later, he went to Mandalay so as to pursue Pariyatti literature. While in Mandalay, he learned Pitakat literature at U Yangon Monastery of Dekkhinayama Monastery.

The monk, aged 37 and 17 vasa, took meditation at Eibyamakhaya near Myitnge for two years. Then, he returned to Monywa and learned ways of meditation from venerable Leti Abbot. He arrived at the place that would be famous as Mohnyin Tawya, in Waso 1273 ME.

Mohnyin Tawya was located on the place of Mohnyin Monastery (the monastery of King Mohnyin) where King Mohnyin performed missionary in Inwa era. Before settlement of the abbot, local people called the place as Myaynetaw due to lack of public travelling.

Ashin Sumana found stone plaques as mentioned the ninth of 27 venues where King Mohnyin (1427-1440 AD) of Inwa City made donations. That was why Mohnyin Abbot named the place as Mohnyin Tawya. In the Second World War, thousands of displaced persons took shelter at Mohnyin Tawya.

Ashin Sumana resided at Mohnyin Tawya in line with the advice of venerable Leti Abbot for 10 years without talking and delivering sermons. Afterwards, he wondered various towns and villages to administer Desanas. Ashin Sumana was famous as Mohnyin Sayadaw who built Thanbuddhe Pagoda and religious edifices in the precinct of Mohnyin Tawya for devotees and disciples to enjoy merits.

Mohnyin Abbot Ashin Sumana wrote 36 treatises such as Visuddhi Practices Treatise, Paticcasamupadda Practices Treatise and Vipassana Exercise Treatise. These treatises are put on display at the Mohnyin Tawya Historical Museum. The government offered Agga Maha Pandita title to the abbot in 1941. The venerable abbot passed away at aged 93 and 73 vasa, on 8th waning of Tawthalin, 1325 ME.

Edifices in precinct of the pagoda

In addition to Thanbuddhe Pagoda, Tavatimsa Culamani Pagoda called Arleinngasint, two pagodas based on elephant statues, Pahtan Adipati Dhammayon, the great clock tower, the historical museum and the museum keeping the portray of Mohnyin Abbot are located in the precinct of the pagoda.

The halls namely Shwe Seikkyaik, Shwe Seikkyi, Shwe Seikpyaw, Shwe Seikaye, Shwe Seikshwin and Shukhintha to accommodate pilgrims from various regions of the nation were built in addition to more halls such as Myat Thiri, Myat Piti, Myat Chantha and Kyinubwe for night stays of pilgrims.

A large lake where fish and turtles are bred can be seen at 15-acre Mohnyin Tawya in addition to prayer halls, public rest houses and hostels. Moreover, wooden buildings were decorated with beautiful sculptural works such as flowers and animals that foreigners prefer.

Two large white elephant statues are kept at the entrance to Mohnyin Tawya. Each elephant statue is 36 feet in length. A pagoda based on seven-tier structure is kept on each elephant. These pagodas are 48 feet high from the base to its diamond orb. Visitors from the Arleinngasint Pagoda installed with a spiral stair outside the cylinder shaped structure can enjoy aerial views of Mohnyin Tawya.

Mohnyin Abbot planted a Bo tree in the precinct of the Tawya in Waso, 1282 ME. The Bo tree died with dried leaves on the day when the abbot passed away. The trunk of Bo tree was carved as a Dhammacakka Buddha image being kept at Bawdi Chamber for public obeisance. Stone wheels used in mixing concrete for construction of the pagoda can be seen in the park, north of Thanbuddhe Pagoda.

Mohnyin Thanbuddhe Pagoda was built in significantly architectural style, different from other pagodas across the nation. Foreign tourists compare Mohnyin Thanbuddhe Pagoda with Bawrawbudha Temple in Indonesia. Those paying homage to Mohnyin Thanbuddhe Pagoda will have chances to pay obeisance to the world's highest standing Buddha image called Laykyun Sekka Buddha Image.

The Buddhist religious structure built by Mohnyin abbot with his miracle thoughts about 80 years ago has been winning hearts of pilgrims in successive eras, and it is now under maintenance of members of the Sangha from the monastery and members of the pagoda board of trustees.

Translated by Than Tun Aung
Reference:
Myanmar Encyclopaedia, Volume IX
History of Mohnyin Thanbuddhe Pagoda

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Shan United win MFF Charity Cup 2020

DEFENDING champions of the Myanmar National League, Shan United F.C., won the MFF Charity Cup 2020 yesterday by a 2-1 margin over Yangon United at the Yangon United Sports Complex in Yangon.

With both teams equally skilled, the first half ended with a scoreless result.

The winning goals for Shan United were scored in the second half by Keith at 57 minutes and Ye Min Thu at 74 minutes.

The consolation goal for Yangon United was scored by substituted player Yan Paing Soe at 77 minutes.

The stadium was packed with fans for yesterday's charity match. The entrance fee and donations collected amounted to K15 million. All the proceeds will go to orphanages in Myanmar, according to the Myanmar National League.

Before the match, there were entertainment programs by famous singers: R Zar Ni, Phyo Gyi, Hel Lay, Moe Moe, Hlawn Paing, Yone Lay, Wai Lyan, and the Art Robots Music Band.

All the artistes and singers performed for free as the match was a charity one, said a source with the Myanmar National League.

Also, during the break time after the first half of the match, a lucky draw was held for football fans.—Lynn Thit (Tgi)

Shan United players celebrate their victory after beating Yangon United by 2-1 at the MFF Charity Cup 2020. **PHOTO: MNL**

Hantharwady United team manager U Tun Tun Lin (middle) receiving a jersey from Thaibev football academy officials. **PHOTO: MNL**

Hantharwady United officials visit Thaibev Football Academy

AT the invitation of Thai football academy Thaibev, a team of officials from the Hantharwady United, a Myanmar National League football club, yesterday visited the academy in Samsen Nok, Huai Khwang, Bangkok, Thailand.

The owner of the Hantharwady United, U Aung Moe Kyaw, team manager U Tun Tun Lin, technical director U Ngwe Tun, and head coach U Myo Min Tun visited the football academy, according to a statement issued by the Myanmar National League.

During their visit, the officials observed the football training program at the Thaibev football academy.

Afterwards, a coordination meeting was held and officials from both sides discussed future collaborations.

The Thaibev Football Academy will help develop the Hantharwady United in the near future, according to the Myanmar National League.

Hantharwady United F.C. is currently preparing for the upcoming 2020 season of the Myanmar National League under the coaching of former football star U Myo Min Tun.

The team placed fifth in the previous Myanmar National League. —Lynn Thit (Tgi)

Thway Thit Win Hlaing to fight Thai fighter Jenrob today

MYANMAR lethwei star Thway Thit Win Hlaing will take on Thai fighter Jenrob Sujebamekieow today at the UMTA Lethwei Challenge 2020, which will start at 2 p.m. at the Thein Phyu Lethwei Stadium in Yangon.

A pre-match conference was held yesterday at the Sat Sun Hotel in Yangon.

The lethwei contest is being organized under the supervision of the Union of Myanmar Travel Association (UMTA) with the intention of preserving Myanma Lethwei and to promote the martial art among youngsters.

There will be six other bouts at the event featuring Myanma Lethwei fighters versus Thai and Laos fighters: Myanmar's Thway Thit Maung will take on Prawit of Thailand; Saw Ba Hein of Myanmar will meet Watchara of Thailand; Lwan Chai of Myanmar will fight against Komgrich of Thailand; Auk Chin Lay of Myanmar will fight with Beng Sihakhoth of Laos; Moe Maung of Myanmar will take on Meng Sihakhoth of Laos; and, Thein Soe of Myanmar will clash with Buwin Luwin of Thailand.

The fights will be broadcast live on Channel 9 and Sky Net Sport 3 channels, according to the organizers.—Lynn Thit (Tgi)

Myanmar lethwei star Thway Thit Win Hlaing (left) and Thai fighter Jenrob Sujebamekieow (right) pose at a pre-match conference ahead of the UMTA Lethwei Challenge 2020. **PHOTO: MLC**