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THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

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UEC Chairman U Hla Thein meets Kayah State sub-commissions

Union Election Commission Chairman U Hla Thein meets with officials of election sub-commissions of Kayah State yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

UNION Election Commission (UEC) Chairman U Hla Thein held a meeting with officials of election sub-commissions of Kayah State at the sub-commission's office in the state yesterday morning.

Kayah State election sub-commission Chairman U Than Soe and members, chairpersons of district and township level sub-commissions and electoral officials attended the meeting.

The UEC Chairman delivered a speech first where he explained that the UEC continuously strives to make all elections conform with the five norms of being free, just, transparent, trusted and accepted by all, and producing results congruent with the will of the citizens of the nation.

He said 2019 was designated for compiling the electoral roll and officials compiled the list from the township level according to set directives. There were four directives to the process, said the UEC Chairman.

He said the first was to collect demographic information and review them, the second was to compile the electoral roll, the third was to monitor changes to the demographic and electoral roll and make monthly amendments where necessary, and

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NRPC organizes workshops for senior ministerial officials, local government members

THE National Reconciliation and Peace Center (NRPC) is holding a workshop on peace making process of the country at its office in Nay Pyi Taw.

U Khin Maung Tin, the Deputy Minister for the Office of the State Counsellor and the Secretary of NRPC, delivered an opening remark on the two-day workshop yesterday, which was attended by Secretary of Peace Commission Retired Lt-Gen Khin Zaw Oo, Member of Peace Advisory Committee U Hla Maung Shwe, Permanent Secretaries of the ministries, the Directors-General, the Managing Directors, officials from Shan, Mon, Kayin and Kayah governments and the invited guests.

In his opening remark, Deputy Minister U Khin Maung Tin explained that the workshop is to share knowledge about peace-making process, State policies, NCA implementation, the Union Peace Conference - 21st Century Panglong and basic agreements in the Union Accord which play crucial roles in creating laws, bylaws and directives of relevant ministries and organizations to harmonize with the government's peace policy, the NCA and the Union Accord.

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UEC Chairman U Hla Thein meets Kayah State sub-commissions

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the fourth was to put up the electoral rolls for public viewing. He said they are currently in the stages of the third directive.

U Hla Thein said the UEC works hard to ensure all eligible citizens do not lose the opportunity to exercise their voting rights and he urged the sub-commissions to be vigilant in ensuring the electoral rolls are comprehensive and updated regularly.

He said they should cooperate with political parties and civil society organizations during the fourth directive's phase to put up the electoral rolls where the public can view them unhindered and to raise voter awareness.

The UEC organized three workshops on building capacity related to election processes in Nay Pyi Taw back in November 2019 for respected persons and functionaries of sub-commissions of the states/regions, Union Territory, self-administered zones/division, and districts, said U Hla Thein.

He said the chairpersons, members and functionaries who attended those workshops are responsible for imparting what they have learned in their relevant districts. He said the workshops aimed to equip sub-commissions with the necessary skills to ensure all elections are held in accordance with existing laws, bylaws, directives and procedures.

The UEC Chairman said the Union Government has permitted conferring of a financial reward for the entire year of 2020 on three election sub-commission members from across the country who are not civil servants but are highly respected. He said the three persons, a chairperson and two members, will receive the rewards through a rotation system starting from this month.

U Hla Thein concluded his speech by saying all the sub-commissions must fulfill their assigned duties to ensure the 2020 General Elections are held in accordance with the five norms. Next, Kayah State Election Sub-Commission Secretary U Kyaw San Win explained the progress of their election-related processes and the UEC Chairman delivered a closing speech.
— Riral (Dimawhso)

(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

Joint Committee on Amending 2008 Constitution holds meeting 1/2020

THE Joint Committee on Amending the 2008 Constitution held its 1/2020 meeting at Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Building D in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

The meeting was attended by the Chairman of the Joint Committee, the Deputy Speaker of both the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw and Pyithu Hluttaw, U Tun Aung (a) U Tun Tun Hein, Deputy Chairman of the Joint Committee Amyotha Hluttaw, Deputy Speaker U Aye Tha Aung, Joint Committee Secretary Dr Myat Nyana Soe, Joint Secretary U Htay Win Aung (a) U Pyone Cho, committee members including Hluttaw representatives from political parties and Tatmadaw Hluttaw representatives, and officials from Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Office.

The Joint Committee is drafting the amendment bill for the 2008 Constitution as political parties, respective groups and independent MPs included in the amendment committee have made their suggestions on the whole charter.— MNA

(Translated by Aung Khin)

Joint Committee on Amending the 2008 Constitution holds meeting 1/2020 in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.
PHOTO: MNA

Free operations for patients with cleft lip, pallet, club foot, hand, tumours, burns to be performed in Monywa

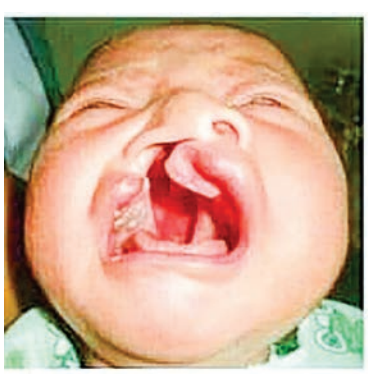
THE Myanmar Chefs Art and the German Inter Plast will provide free operations for patients with cleft lip, pallet, club foot, hand, tumours and burns at the People's Hospital in Monywa Township, Sagaing Region, from 19 January to 1 February. The programme will be run under the management of local government, the Public Health Department and civil communities of Monywa Township. Operations will be conducted by three groups of medical doctors from the German Inter Plast and Myanmar doctors to 100 patients in maximum from the townships of Sagaing Region.

Registrations may be submitted at phone numbers 09 774002468, 09400552283, 09 794010113 and 09 777550963.

Civil communities will also provide free accommodation and transportation to the patients.

The second edition of this programme will be carried out in Loikaw Township of Kaya State in February.—Hmwe Kyu Zin

(Translated by Aung Khin)



18 shortlisted applicants interviewed for permanent residence status

THE Central Committee for Implementation of Permanent Residency interviewed the 18 shortlisted applicants for permanent residence status at the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning.

Committee's Chairman Union Minister U Thein Swe oversaw interviewing one investor, 13 former Myanmar citizens and their four related persons, with the questions on personal facts and their understandings on the existing laws in Myanmar. Foreign professionals and technicians, investors, former Myanmar citizens and their related persons are eligible for permanent resident status under this system the country. Since 29th January 2015, Myanmar has granted 591 persons, out of 648 applicants, permanent residency until now.—MNA

(Translated by Aung Khin)

NRPC organizes workshops for senior ministerial officials, local government members

National Reconciliation and Peace Centre members and senior ministerial officials attend workshop at the NRPC office in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

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Senior officials from the Peace Commission and the Joint Monitoring Committee at Union Level (JMC-U) lead discussions at the workshop on the topics of Myanmar's peace-making process, regional development issues, NCA, the national-level political dialogues, ceasefire and monitoring processes, the Union Peace Conference - 21st Century Panglong and the Union Accord.

The Secretary of NRPC added that the government has pledged to build up a Federal Democratic Union to be able to end the 70-year long armed conflicts which began with the country's independence and has adopted three-step plans for peace making processes which were also confirmed by the State Counsellor at an event marking the fourth anniversary of the signing of the NCA.

The first step includes three elements; to develop a framework agreement in implementing NCA, to reach more points of agreements in addition to the existing the existing 51 points of federal principles for the Union Accord which is scheduled to be signed in the fourth edition of the Union Peace Conference - 21st Century Panglong, and to develop future plans for peace processes beyond 2020 General Election through step-by-step procedures and prioritized schemes.

The second step is to involve non-signatories of the NCA in political dialogue as the government is making more efforts to negotiate with these ethnic armed organizations.

The third step is to ensure that people could enjoy the fruits of peace as the grass roots are mostly affected by armed conflicts. The relevant Union Ministries and State/Region governments will implement development programmes of infrastructural, transportation, agriculture, education and healthcare sectors.

Secretary of Peace Commission Retired Lt-Gen Khin Zaw Oo then explained the peace-making efforts of present and previous governments.

Member of Peace Advisory committee U Hla Maung Shwe made a presentation on the commission's works in peace negotiations and national-level political dislogues. The attendees also presented their recommendations on the future peace-making efforts. The workshop will continue on the second day at the same venue today.—MNA

(Translated by Aung Khin)

Health Research Congress holds 48th iteration in Yangon

Union Minister Dr Myint Htwe delivers the speech at the opening ceremony of the 48th Myanmar Health Research Congress in Yangon yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

THE opening ceremony of the 48th Myanmar Health Research Congress was held at the Medical Research Department in Yangon yesterday morning.

Union Minister for Health and Sports Dr Myint Htwe first delivered a speech. He said this annual congress brings together researchers, medical experts and managers so that they may exchange experiences and knowledge.

He said research results and findings are important for the development of policies, management, implementation and work sector. He said the findings and recommendations from research conducted by his ministry need to be reassessed in practical usage situations.

He said research results and findings need to be genuinely used for the objective of conducting research to be successful. He said his ministry has acquired K1 billion in permitted funds in 2017-2018 FY for research matters, K500 million from April to September 2018, and K1.5 billion in 2018-2019 FY.

The Union Minister said they have used these funds for improving administration of health action plans, professional expertise, and management of medicine and medical equipment. He said they have conduced 955 research projects and will permit an additional K3 billion in 2019-2020 FY.

The Union Minister said they have implemented a health research registration system and will implement research on important sectors that require it. He said new generations of professionals need to have their research skills upgraded.

He said they will form a research titled bank in the future and design research guidelines and protocol that are coherent with the nation. He said this congress will read 107 research posters and 34 papers.

Next, the Union Minister observed the research posters and exhibition booths and then joined the research paper presentation as Chair.

The congress will be held under the title 'Antimicrobial resistance: a threat of global concern' until 17 January and include research papers from Japan, Norway, South Korea, Singapore, Britain, Australia, China, Thailand, Indonesia and Myanmar.

Later in the afternoon, the Union Minister met with the rector, professors and teachers, the department heads, professors, assistant professors and teachers of the protection and social affairs medicine department of five Universities of Medicine, teachers of University of Basic Health, and members of protection and social affairs medicine group at the University of Public Health.

The Union Minister told them to share global health information with their students, to make all-round improvements and will organize a seminar on relevant topics in the future. — MNA

(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

Farms need to ensure GAqP for EU market to get Govt's nod for using farmland

THE government would allow using farmland for other purposes such as fish farm only when the farmers ensure Good Aquaculture Practices-GAqP.

The Union Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries Dr Aung Thu made the comment at a coordination meeting on development of fish and prawn farming yesterday at his office in Nay Pyi Taw

"After getting the good laboratory results for chemical residues on aquaculture products from Myanmar, EU has given green light to Myanmar to export the fishery products to their countries. However, the fish farms which have got the green light from the EU would get export permission from our ministry only after they practice the GAqP," said Union Minister Dr Aung Thu. Earlier, only fish caught in the wild were permitted for export to the EU market.

Myanmar has over Myanmar exports fishery products to 40 foreign countries, including countries in the European Union, China, Saudi Arabia, the US, Japan, Singapore, and Thailand.

There are 400,000 acres of fish and prawn breeding farms across the country. Besides, the country is rich in natural water resources for producing fish and prawns. Out of over 400,000 acres of fish and prawn farms, only 10,000 acres practice GAqP system. Currently, about 500 fish farms on 9254 acres own are certified with GAqP. In the 2017-2018 FY, some 568,227 tonnes of fishery products, worth US$717.7 million, were exported, according to MFF statistics.

Myanmar shipped fishery products worth $533.29 million to foreign countries over the past seven and half months (Oct-May) of financial year 2018-2019, Commerce Ministry data showed.—MNA *(Translated by TTN)*

PyinOoLwin Children's Literary Festival launched with festive opening ceremony

Union Minister Dr Pe Myint and party observe student competing in the storytelling contest at the opening ceremony of Children's Literary Festival in PyinOoLwin yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

THE opening ceremony of the PyinOoLwin Children's Literary Festival was held at B.E.H.S. No (1) PyinOoLwin at 9a.m. yesterday and was attended by Union Minister for Information Dr Pe Myint and officials.

The first segment of the opening ceremony of the Children's Literary Festival, book fair and book sale took place at archway in front of the school. Union Minister Dr Pe Myint, Mandalay Region Hluttaw Deputy Speaker Dr Khin Maung Htay, Pyithu Hluttaw representative Dr Aung Khin, Mandalay Region Hluttaw representative U Aung Min, Director-General U Ye Naing of the Information and Public Relations Department, Director U Soe Lwin of the Mandalay Region Education Office, Interim Chairman U Htin Kyaw of the PyinOoLwin District Management Committee, and Luyechun students Ma Nan Thiri Nwe, Ma Yin Min Kyaw and Ma Lin Lett Khin cut ceremonial ribbons together with students to formally inaugurate the event.

Next, Union Minister Dr Pe Myint and esteemed guests took a collective documentary photograph with the students.

After this, the second segment of the Children's Literary Festival, book fair and book sale, jointly organized by the Information and Public Relations Department of the Ministry of Information, Basic Education Department of the Ministry of Education, and District Management Committee, took place in Ayeyawady Hall of the school and students opened the ceremony by performing the theme song of the Children's Literature Festival.

Next, Union Minister Dr Pe Myint delivered an address where he said the Children's Literary Festivals were held with three objectives. He said they had planned to make the event festive, happy and thronging in line with being a festival.

He said they have also organized poem recitals and story-telling programmes, which are related to literature, and opened book sale booths so that children can acquire reading hobbies and increase their knowledge and find delight together with books and literature in line with receiving long-term benefits through happiness there.

He said they have arranged for the festival to be an environment that is relevant and delightful with literature. In addition, it aims to impart a sense of satisfaction in participating in collaborative activities at a young age, said the Union Minister.

He said there are processes to succeed in ethnic solidarity and peace in the country and just as the beautiful flowers from a range of hues can be soothingly seen at the PyinOoLwin capital of flowers, if all the ethnic nationals in this country were to be united then it would be possible to establish prosperous new nation. He said it is his view that this is the reason the spirit of working together with others needs to be instilled at a young age.

The Union Minister said the Children's Literary Festival cannot be done by just the Ministry of Information and Ministry of Education alone but also requires forming committees with relevant state/regional government and departments and the participation and support of local elders to be festive and full of revelers and they have organized for it to be so.

The Union Minister said he is delighted to see local elders and former students actively participating in this PyinOoLwin Children's Literary Festival. He said organizing the festivals will allow them to become smart and honest people and will carry benefits for the nation once they grow up.

He said if there are many good citizens then the nation will be strong and they are organizing All-Round Youth Development Festivals in addition to Children's Literary Festival so that children can have all-round development.

The Union Minister said this is why organizing the Children's Literary Festival aims to make the nation strengthened and powerful in the future. He said may everyone be able to provide cooperation to ensure children are developed and receive happiness for the future of the nation. He added that may good traditions such as this be formed.

Next, Mandalay Region Hluttaw Deputy Speaker Dr Khin Maung Htay spoke on behalf of the Mandalay Region government. He said he was proud and delighted that the PyinOoLwin District Children's Literary Festival was organized unitedly and cohesively.

He said he believes and hopes that if the three objectives of organizing Children's Literary Festival continue to be maintained as good traditions then it would become a source of strength in establishing a democratic federal republic. He wished for them to become skilled human resources that the nation can rely on in the future through the Children's Literary Festival.

Next, Mandalay Region Education Office Director U Soe Lwin said the objective of this Children's Literary Festival is coherent with lessons from the current education system's new curriculum. He said the new education system teaches cooperative participation and innovation through practical and fun lessons in the classroom.

He said the Children's Literary Festival are a sort of investment in the new education system and that is why he extends his gratitude to the Ministry of Information for leading the implementation of them.

Afterwards, students from Naungkhamgyi Village B.E.P.S. performed 'Pann Kabar Mhyaw Sin', students from Hein Htet Shan private high school performed 'See Lone Soe Lay Tway Chin Do Myay', students from B.E.M.S. (1)/B.E.H.S. (Branch) performed 'Shan Yoma Ga O-si Tan', students from Shwe Sar Wyne private high school performed 'Naga Do Ye O-lay', and students from Snow Queen private high school performed 'U Shwe Yoe and Daw Moe'.

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Students observe the experiment of the machine at the opening ceremony of Children's Literary Festival in PyinOoLwin yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

A camera man taking photo of Japanese singer Ms Millet Takayama at Dhammayangyi Pagoda in Bagan yesterday. **PHOTO: TIN SAN (FDC)**

Japanese team takes documentary photos in Bagan

JAPANESE singer Ms Millet Takayama and camera crew shot sunrise, Myanmar traditional culture and scenic views of Sulamani, Dhammayangyi, and Laymyethna pagodas and Minnanthu hill in Bagan archaeological zone in Bagan yesterday. That team also shot Tharabar Gate and its scenic views, pagodas near Myinkaba Village and sunset views and scenic of the Ayeyawady River at Kyaukmyatmaw stupa on the riverbank on 12 January.

The documentary photo will be used in cover photo and poster of Japanese singer Ms Millet Takayama's new album. — Tin San(FDC)

(Translated by TTN)

Union Minister U Ohn Win inspects gemstones processing, plant nursery, greening plots in Mandalay Region

Union Minister U Ohn Win inspects plantation in Mandalay Region on 12 January. **PHOTO: MNA**

UNION Minister for Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation U Ohn Win inspected processing of gemstones, construction of office buildings, plant nursery for public and greening plots in Mandalay Region on 12 January.

The Union Minister and party arrived at the Mingalabar Gemstones Processing Factory and its finished products shop on Theitpan Road between 62nd and 63rd streets in Mandalay City in the morning.

The Union Minister gave advice to produce international standard finished gem products to attract foreign buyers.

They also visited construction sites of new buildings for Forest Department in Patheingyi Township where they also inspected cultivation of plant nursery managed by the department.

The Union Minister and party looked into timbers confiscated by the district Forest Department before they proceeded to plantations of firewood and public forests in Mahlaing and Meiktila townships.—MNA

(Translated by Aung Khin)

Union Supreme Court sits to pass judgements on special criminal, civil appeal cases, hears special civil appeal cases

THE Union Supreme Court convened at Union Supreme Court room number 1 yesterday with Chief Justice of the Union Supreme Court U Htun Htun Oo and all Union Supreme Court Judges passing judgements on four special criminal appeal cases and two special civil appeal cases, along with hearing five special civil appeal cases. — MNA

(Translated by TTN)

PyinOoLwin Children's Literary Festival launched with festive opening ceremony

Students participate the painting contest at the opening ceremony of Children's Literary Festival in PyinOoLwin yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

FROM PAGE-4

After the opening ceremony, Union Minister Dr Pe Myint and officials walked around the Children's Literary Festival and observed the competitions in story-telling, impromptu speaking, poetry in Kachin, Chin, Shan and Lisu languages, jigsaw assembly, origami, painting, coloring, soccer and team sports, literature seminars, entertainment programmes, department and Yadanarpon Cyber City University booths, basic education schools and private school booths, association booths and book sale booths, and charity food stalls.

Children's Literary Festivals were organized at the national-level, district-level and regional programmes starting from 2016. So far, the festival has been organized 9 times at the national level, 45 times at the district level, and 32 times through regional organizing for a total of 85 times in all.

There are plans to organize the Children's Literary Festival in the major cities of Loikaw, Hpa-an and Dawei where regional and state offices are located and at the district level in Papun, Gantgaw and Phakant within this year.

In addition, the Ayeyawady Region government aims to hold regionally organized Children's Literary Festival in its 26 townships within this year. So far, they have held the festivals in 16 townships. They will continue to plan the festivals in Myanaung, Nyaungdon, Yekyi, Kyangin, Bogale, Ngapudaw, Hinthada, Maubin, Kangyidaunt, and Pyapon. — Min Htet Aung (Mahn Sub-printing House)

(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

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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.

Conservationists conduct waterbird census at Inle Lake sanctuary

Birdwatchers watching waterbird census in Inle lake in Shan State. **PHOTO: NAY MYO THUREIN**

THE annual Asian Waterbird Census was carried out on 12 January in the Inle Lake, Balu Creek, Sagar Lake, and Moebye Dam.

Conservations recorded over 7,660 birds belonging to 19 species of local water birds, over 5,600 birds belonging to 17 species of migratory water birds, over 1,900 local forest birds, over 100 birds belonging to 11 species of migratory forest birds.

"They also spotted two Baer's Pochard (Aythyabaeri) (CR) at Inle Lake and three white-browed crake (Porzana cinerea), both of which are endangered species," according to U Sein Tun, head of the Wildlife Sanctuary in Inle Lake. The Asian Waterbird Census is carried out every year in January at sites across 25 countries in Asia and Australia. The census was carried out at Indawgyi Lake in Kachin Sate, Inle Lake in Shan State, Moeyungyi Lake in Bago Region, Paleik Lake, and Pyu Lake in central Myanmar. —Nay Myo Thurein

(Translated by TTN)

Preparations underway for Yangon-Cocokgyun ferry service: YRTA

By Nyein Nyein

PREPARATIONS are on to provide water transport between Yangon and Cocogyun under the guidance of the Yangon Region government, and arrangements are being made for commissioning a vessel for operating the service, said U Hla Aung, Joint Secretary of the Yangon Region Transport Authority (YRTA).

"The regional government has already notified the YRTA to operate the Yangon-Cocogyun ship once a month, staring from January this year. Having said that, we have been preparing for the necessary requirements of a vessel, in coordination with the officials concerned," said U Hla Aung.

Running a service to the remote islands is aimed at easing transportation difficulties faced by locals and improving healthcare, education, business, and regional development in the Cocogyun Township. Therefore, the Yangon-Cocogyun six-day route will be operated in the first week of every month, according to an announcement released by the Yangon Region government.

U Than Naing Oo, a Regional Hluttaw representative from Pabedan Township constituency, had raised a question at the regional Hluttaw meeting held in October, 2018 on ship operations between Yangon and Cocogyun Township. Daw Nilar Kyaw, the regional minister for electricity, industry and transportation, had responded that the government had invited Expressions of Interest from private entrepreneurs to operate the route regularly.

"Earlier, Myanmar Five Star Line had been allowed to provide ferry services to Cocogyun Township, along with other profitable routes. But, the services were offered only for a short duration in reality," she said.

On 17 December, 2019, the regional government ministers, including Daw Nilar Kyaw, Minister for Social Affairs U Naing Ngan Lin, Minister for Immigration and Human Resources Daw Moe Moe Su Kyi, Yangon Region Advocate General Daw Khin Myo Kyi, Hluttaw representatives, and officials concerned visited Cocogyun Township. The officials met with locals to implement regional development activities in the current financial year. They also coordinated on matters raised by the local people.

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Two CBT destinations in Sagaing Region host 1,976 visitors as of Dec

A total of 1,976 tourists and local travellers visited two Community-Based Tourism (CBT) sites in Sagaing Region as of December, 2019, said U Aung Thu Oo, head of the Sagaing Region Directorate of Hotels and Tourism.

The two sites are Nwe Nyein Village in Kyaukmyaung Town, Shwebo District and Indaung Village in Watlat Township of Sagaing Region. The CBT programmes caught the attention of many tourists on account of the special interactions between local fishermen and the famous Ayeyawady Dolphins. Tourists could also observe village life and learn about architecture, religion, tradition, and even handicraft skills.

As of December-end, the Nwe Nyein CBT site attracted 100 local travellers and 627 tourists, while 834 local visitors and 415 tourists visited the Indaung CBT destination, according to data released by the regional Directorate of Investment and Company Administration. —Win Oo (Zeyartine)

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Two mahouts killed by elephant in musth in Bago Region

A male elephant in musth trampled two mahouts to death on 10 January while it was being bathed in a creek in Kyauktaga, Bago Region.

The mahouts were identified as U Win Hlaing, 45, and U Kyaw Lin, 42. 'Musth' is described as a state when male elephants' testosterone levels surge and they become more aggressive and are gripped by an overpowering desire to mate, according to the local police force. —MNA

(Translated by Kyaw Zin Lin)

About 3,000 cattle stranded at Muse border as trade stalls ahead of Chinese New Year

WITH the Chinese New Year approaching, the live cattle export market at Muse has cooled, and about 3,000 heads of cattle have been stranded in the border area, causing difficulties to traders.

Traders usually transport 20-25 heads of cattle per 12-wheeled truck from Mandalay to Muse gate. The live cattle have to undergo an inspection at the 16th mile gate, Yebyu gate, and the animal disease surveillance station near Pakyu Village in Kutkai Township, to check whether they meet the export standard and a health certificate has been issued for them.

Prior to being exported, they are kept on the roadside in Kyinsankyawt and in farms rented in Muse Town.

Cattles in the animal disease surveillance station near Pakyu Village in Kutkai Township. **PHOTO: THANT ZIN**

Normally, a large cow is valued at over K1.8-2.2 million, but suspension of trade often leads to Chinese traders resorting to price manipulation and offering a lower price.

"We prefer a Government-to-Government agreement for live cattle trade as it can benefit both the traders and the two countries. While cattle exports are legal in Myanmar, livestock trade is still not permitted by China, leading to traders incurring debts. If there is a legitimate market for cattle export, we can get a good price and regular market. We are hoping for it to happen," said traders from Kyaukse Township.

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. As a result, traders have been burdened by labour wages, cost of feedstuff, healthcare services, and other general costs.

It costs K3,000-5,000 per day to feed one cow. For 100 heads of cattle, the cost totals about K400,000-500,000 per day. Corn, sugarcane, and straw are used as cattle feed.

Myanmar's exports of animal products between 1 October and 3 January in the current financial year touched a low of US$47.13 million, a sharp drop of $131.38 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 $178.28 million.

Animal products exports are mainly driven by the private sector, with income from the public sector amounting to less than $1 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.

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, more than 460,000 heads of cattle, worth 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. — Thant Zin/ Ko Htet

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

MRIC endorsed 79 foreign projects, 179 domestic proposals as of Dec

THE Mandalay Region Investment Committee has endorsed 79 foreign projects from more than 16 countries and 179 domestic proposals since its establishment until December, 2019.

The foreign projects pulled in a capital of US$3.97 billion, which flowed mostly into manufacturing, power, and other services sectors, while domestic businesses put in more than K5,249 billion, especially in infrastructure building, manufacturing, and other services sectors, said U Thant Sin Lwin, Director-General of the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA).

Under the new Myanmar Investment Law which was enacted in 2017, the Myanmar Investment Commission has delegated the power to endorse investment projects to region and state authorities to promote business. The Mandalay Region Investment Committee was formed to allow local and foreign investors to invest in the region.

According to statistics released by the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration, Yangon Region absorbs 60 per cent of all investments in Myanmar, Mandalay attracts 30 per cent, while the other regions and states get only a small share of investments.

To simplify the verification of investment projects, the Myanmar Investment Law allows the Region and State Investment Committees to grant permissions for local and foreign proposals, where the initial investment does not exceed K6 billion, or $5 million.

"An Investment Promotion Committee (IPC) has been formed this year. Manufacturing enterprises will have to operate their businesses under the IPC's guidance," said U Thant Sin Lwin.

"Foreign investments have flowed into the country from various countries. Earlier, China was the main investor in Myanmar. This year, Singapore has topped on the list as some Western countries have invested in Myanmar through Singapore," he added.

Starting from 1 August, 2018, a more favourable Myanmar Companies Law has been practiced, and more investments have flowed in under the incumbent government's term than under the former administration. – Tin Zar Hlaing (IPRD)

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

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China-Myanmar JV invests $172 mln in power generation project in Kyaukpyu

By Nyein Nyein

CHINA-MYANMAR joint venture Kyaukpyu Electric Power Company has invested US$172 million in a power generation project in Kyaukpyu, according to the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA).

The Kyauk Phyu Electric Power Co will establish a gas-fired power plant, which can generate 135 MW of power.

The JV has been formed by Myanmar's Supreme Group and Chinese government-owned Power China enterprise. The company signed an electricity purchase agreement with the Ministry of Electricity and Energy in November, 2019.

At the signing ceremony, Union Minister for Electricity and Energy U Win Khaing had said: "The country's power requirement is increasing by about 1,000 MW year on year. Therefore, a Notice to Proceed was issued for four long-term projects in January, 2018. Of them, a purchase agreement has been signed for the 135 MW power project in Kyaukpyu."

"The long-term projects are expected to take at least three years to start power generation. To meet the increasing power demand in 2020, seven short-term power projects with a capacity of 1,166 MW are being implemented. Moreover, short-term projects to fulfil power requirements of 1,000 MW in 2021 will also be carried out," he said.

Starting from 2022, out of the four long-term projects that were issued Notice to Proceed, the 135 MW power project and two 826 MW projects will generate 961 MW of power to meet the country's requirements, said U Win Khaing.

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

14 JANUARY 2020
THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

Creating plastic-free settlements

DURING her visit to Kachin State on 9 January, the State Counsellor met with local residents of Myitkyina and replied to a question on creating a plastic waste management system in the area by pointing out that public participation is paramount in that endeavor.

Myanmar is gifted with beautiful natural scenery but careless littering has stirred up plastic blemishes on that beauty. The people are not all lazy on this matter. We see in the news of the public and organizations partnering up to clear back alleys of rubbish and transform them into recreational areas and volunteers cleaning drains, sewage canals, parks and other public properties of litter.

> But plastic accompanies almost every aspect of our lives from the bag we use to carry groceries to phone covers we put our smartphones in. Only a few percentage gets recycled and the rest are still dumped out in nature.

It's just that there are more people who are indifferent to littering and continue to do so than there are those who care for environmental cleanliness. Thus, the efforts of the few are swiftly clouded by the carelessness of the majority and our cities, villages and settlements continue to me dominated by plastic waste.

This is what our State Counsellor meant when she said public participation is paramount. You can implement a flawless waste management system but if not everyone is adhering to it then we won't see the results we wish for.

Our neighbours of Thailand and Bangladesh have put certain restrictions to reduce plastic production and encouraged recycling to lower its impact on the natural environment. But plastic accompanies almost every aspect of our lives from the bag we use to carry groceries to phone covers we put our smartphones in. Only a few percentage gets recycled and the rest are still dumped out in nature.

There is only so much officials can do. It is up to businesses to be more accountable for plastic production and citizens to reduce their reliance on plastic products. But the most important thing everyone can do now is to stop littering everywhere and putting the garbage where it belongs – in the dustbin.

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Electrifying the rural areas

By Kayalet Maung (DRD)

AS A developing country, Myanmar understands well that energy is an essential need for its all-round development. In this regard, the country is generating more and more electricity to meet its demand. But the increase in the number of factories, especially the modern facilities and use of electrical appliances by the public has doubled the countr's power consumption rate in a short period. So, the country can now supply power to only one fourth of its population, meaning 75 per cent of the national has no access to electricity.

Eight villages between Ayeyawady and Chindwin rivers in Yasagyo Township get access to solar power last year. **PHOTO: THAN LWIN (MAGWAY)**

National Electrification Project

Myanmar has over 10.7 million households, and the power supply has reached 3.7 million of them in 2015-2016 and 4.19 million in 2017. The country is adopting and implementing rural electrification plans to increase the electrification ratio of the country, and the National Electrification Project is included in them.

Collaboration

Beginning financial year 2016-2017, Department of Rural Development of the Ministry Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation and of Energy Sector Management Assistance Programme-ESMAP of the World Bank are implementing the National Electrification Project with the state budget, World Bank loan and public contribution. The project covers the single household solar power system in financial year 2017-2018, and the magnitude of the work for financial year 2018-2019 was designated. Moreover, villages that are ten miles far from the national grid are being electrified through various means including solar power, micropower stations, mini hydropower stations and bio gas. The National Electrification Project will electrify almost the whole country in 2030. Now the institutions concerned are carrying out the task based on the priority list. According to Rural Development Department, over 90,000 households in Ayeyawady, Taninthayi, Sagaing, Magway and Bago regions and Mon and Kayin states will get power under the project.

Encouraging sign

Moreover, KfW of Germany will provide Euro 30.418 million – Euro 23.883 million in loans and Euro 6.535 million in aids – for the Rural Electrification Programme II on Grid Electrification in Shan State (South). The programme will supply power to over 30,000 households in 416 villages of Taunggyi, Loilem and Langkho districts in Shan State (South) during the five years from 2018 to 2022. The Ministry of Electricity and Energy using its annual budget allotment, the region/state government allotting funds from their budgets and taking international loans are also implementing the task of rural electrification.

Narrowing the rural-urban gap

Of the 506 villages in Kayah State, power is provided to 357 villages through the national grid, 11 villages through micro hydropower stations, 89 through solar power and two through diesel generators. Hpa-an Township in Kayin State has 474 villages. Under the programme to narrow the rural-urban gap, the Rural Development Department will electrify 64 villages, Department for Development of Border Areas and National Races 44 villages, Electric Power Generation Enterprise 194 villages and the private sector two villages. In addition, 130 households, 213 households, a monastery and a primary school on the islands in Thanlwin River in Hpa-an Townships have been electrified. The Department of Rural Development is implementing the National Electrification Project with the goal of supplying power to the whole nation in 2030. The success of the department in implementing the project has gone beyond the national level leave, as it has won awards in ASEAN level. After the 37th ASEAN Ministers on Energy Meeting (AMEM) held in Bangkok and the ASEAN Energy Business Forum sponsored by the Ministry of Electricity and Energy from 3 to 5 September 2019, the DRD accepted the ASEAN Energy Award.

Various means applied

DRD won the award at the micro solar power competition. The micro solar power plant project is at Hkamti Island village in Palaw Township in Taninthayi Region in the southernmost part of the country, and it is one of the Off-Grid programmes of the National Electrification Project. Under the said off-grid programme, over 100,000 households of 2489 villages were electrified with home-used solar power system and over 10,000 household of 38 villages by micro power plants during the three-year period from 2016-2017 to 2018-2019. The off-grid programme uses renewable energy in supplying about 137-megawatt to the abovementioned homes and thanks to the renewable energy, the off-grid program cuts 810.9 tons of carbon dioxide from releasing into the air.

In the past, rural areas had to pass through many days and nights without electricity. Now, the Union Government is applying various means to distribute power to the rural areas. Thanks to the Union Government's endeavours, more and more rural areas will have power supply very soon.

(Translated by TMT)

- Together with archaeologist Dr Bob Hudson, conducted field visits to study the rivers, streams, ponds, canals, topographical features, evidence of water ways, earthwork walls and ancient monuments.
- Meetings were held with a team of Korean experts, Professor Massimo Sarti, the local staff and representatives of Mrauk-U Heritage Trust, People in Need (PiN), and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) for the cultural mapping of Mrauk-U Area.
- Field visits are organized to study the ancient ponds, canals, water gates, confluence of streams, ancient monuments, elephant pit walls and landmarks. Discussions were held to upgrade Daing Kyi Pond.
- Field visits were organized to collect data on the boundaries (of the State, Districts, Townships, Villages and Wards) and the locations of monasteries and nunneries.
- Data collected on the urban socio-economic infrastructure was recorded at the Sri Ksetra Section of the World Heritage Sites Department.

Ancient Artifacts Documentation Sub-Committee -

- A list of the artifacts collected in the storage room of Mrauk-U Section was compiled. A list of ancient artifacts at the monasteries of Let Kauk Market and Bu Ywet Ma Hnyoo Village and at Pha Ya Paw Monastery was compiled. Captions were prepared for display items at the museums. Ancient monuments in the inventory are recorded using AutoCad software. Records of ancient artifacts were compiled. Field work reports are prepared.

Ancient Monuments Documentation Sub-Committee

- Ancient monuments in the inventory are recorded using AutoCad software.
- Maintenance work was carried out at Thet Kya Mar Aung Zedi and Koe Thaung Temple. Mrauk-U Ancient Palace site was excavated and researched. Excavated items were recorded. Stone posts inscribed with numbers and texts were set up at ancient monuments.

President's Office continues announcement of illegal drug arrests, seizures acting on tip-offs

THE Office of the President issued Press Release No 2/2020 yesterday, publicly announcing the Ministry of Home Affairs' arrests and seizures in the fight against illicit drug trafficking up till 11 January.

The ministry made the arrests, acting on information, sent to the Drug Activity Special Complaint Department of the Office of the President as of 11 January.

The full text of the press release will be reported in the 15 January issue of *The Global New Light of Myanmar*.—GNLM

Myanmar Daily Weather Report

(Issued at 7:00 pm Monday 13th January, 2020)

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

FORECAST VALID UNTIL AFTERNOON OF THE 14th January, 2020: Weather will be partly cloudy in Upper Sagaing and Taninthayi regions, Kachin 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 (4-6) feet in off and along Myanmar Coasts.

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Weather is generally fair in the whole country.

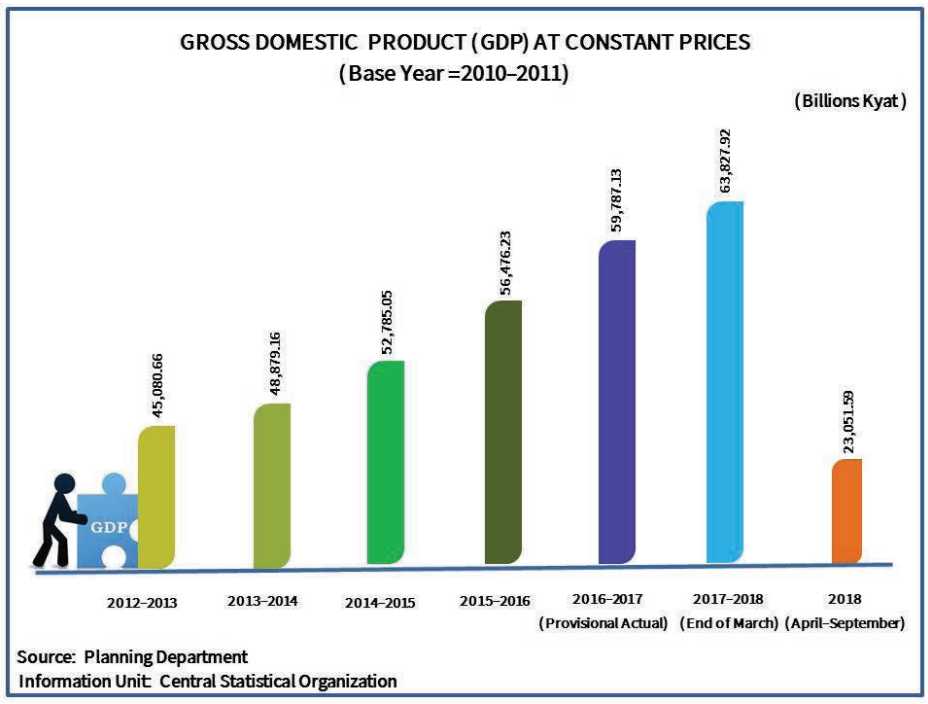
FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 14th January, 2020: Fair weather.

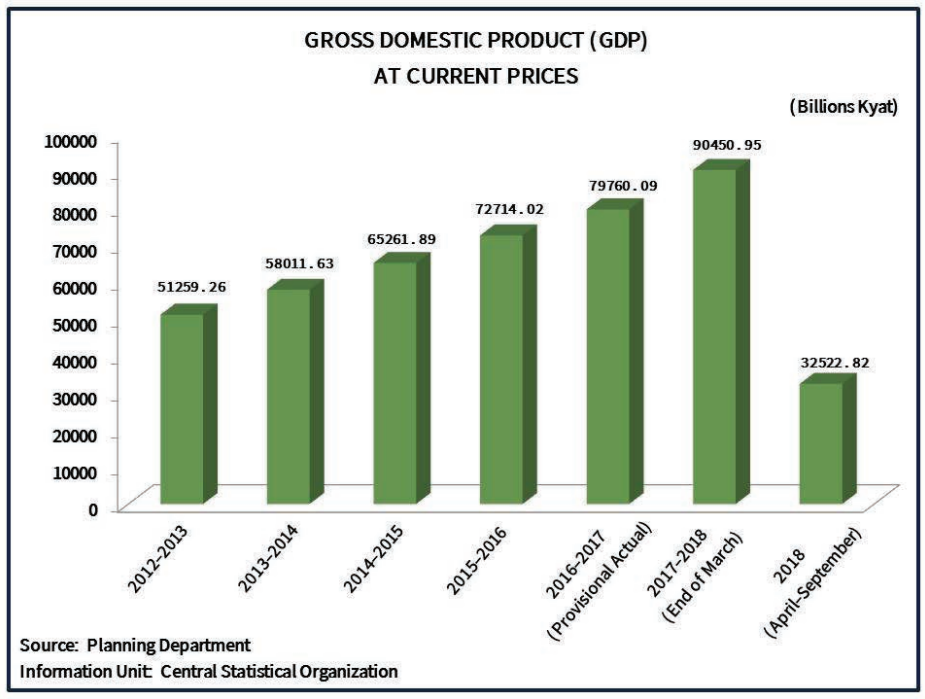
FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 14th January, 2020: Generally fair weather.

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 14th January, 2020: Fair weather.

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**





Meteorite found in China provides clues to Earth's lower mantle: study

WASHINGTON —An international team of scientists analyzed a meteorite found in China and gained new insight into Earth's lower mantle and how the planet evolved in the ancient time.

The study published in the latest edition of journal Science Advances showed that the metallic iron nanoparticles coexisted with the meteorite sample.

It represented the first direct evidence in nature of a chemical reaction called "disproportionation reaction" that help form metallic iron. This reaction had so far only been observed in high-pressure experiments.

The meteorite called Suizhou, fell in 1986 in central China's Hubei Province, is a shocked meteorite that has experienced high-pressure and high-temperature conditions through an impact event. Scientists collected the samples immediately after the fall, thus dispensing with any chemical weathering and alteration of the iron.

The Suizhou meteorite contains a specific silicate, considered the dominant material in the Earth's lower mantle and makes up about 38 volume percent of the Earth. "It provided our team with samples of natural high-pressure minerals like those believed to make up the Earth's deep mantle," said the papers co-author Sang-Heon Dan Shim with Arizona State University.

In the reaction, some Fe(II) ions in the sample converted to Fe(III) and Fe(0), the latter of which forms metallic iron, according to the study. The implications of this study go beyond the discovery, and it may ultimately help us understand how Earth itself was oxidized.

The Earth's upper mantle is more oxidizing than other planets, which was considered linked to the sudden rise of oxygen in the atmosphere 2.5 billion years ago.

The researchers suggested that when materials of the lower mantle are transported to the upper mantle, there would be a loss of metallic iron and the oxidized iron would cause more oxidizing conditions in the upper mantle. — Xinhua

This file photo taken on 19 September 2014 shows one of the dozens of meteorite specimens displayed under a spotlight at Tong Xianping's showroom in Urumqi, in China's far-western Xinjiang region. **PHOTO: AFP**

Chinese researchers release zebrafish gene knockout results

BEIJING — Chinese researchers reported that they have performed a systematic knockout of the genes on Chromosome 1 in zebrafish.

The completed resource has been made open to other researchers online and is expected to power studies of gene activity in models of human disease.

Zebrafish, a tropical fish about 2.5 cm to 4 cm long, is an ideal model for studying human genetics and disease due to its similar genetic structure to humans.

The complete genome sequence of zebrafish was published in 2013. Scientists have found that zebrafish share 70 percent of genes with humans, and 84 percent of genes associated with human diseases have a zebrafish counterpart.

Researchers from 24 Chinese research institutes on zebrafish reported in the journal Genome Research that with CRISPR/Cas9 gene-editing technology, they successfully knocked out 1,029 genes of 1,333 genes on Chromosome 1 in zebrafish, and found 1,039 alleles corresponding to 636 genes that can be genetically passed to offspring.—Xinhua

Wanted: Girlfriend to fly to the Moon with Japanese billionaire

Flamboyant entrepreneur Yusaku Maezawa said he agreed to the idea due to loneliness in middle age. **PHOTO: AFP**

TOKYO (Japan)— A Japanese billionaire has launched an online wanted ad for a girlfriend who will fly around the Moon with him on a SpaceX rocket.

Yusaku Maezawa, who recently announced his break-up with a Japanese actress, is accepting applications from "single women aged 20 or over" who want to enjoy life to the fullest.

The matchmaking exercise is being turned into a TV show for a web streaming service.

The flamboyant entrepreneur said he agreed to the idea due to loneliness in middle age.

"I have lived exactly as I've wanted to until now," said Maezawa, who has three children with two women.

"I'm 44 now. As feelings of loneliness and emptiness slowly begin to surge upon me, there's one thing that I think about: Continuing to love one woman," he said in the ad.

Maezawa has also made a pitch on his Twitter account, saying: "Why not be the 'first woman' to travel to the moon?"

The deadline to apply is January 17, 2020. He will make a final selection by the end of March after going on dates with the applicants.

Maezawa, formerly chief of online fashion company Zozo, which he sold to Yahoo! Japan last year, is known for buying pricey art.

He is scheduled to make a lunar trip in 2023 or later as the first private passenger on a voyage by entrepreneur Elon Musk's SpaceX.

Maezawa also plans to take about half a dozen artists with him on the trip, which will take them around the Moon without landing on it.— AFP

Two thirds of the glaciers of the Hindu Kush-Himalayan region, known as the world's 'Third Pole', will disappear by 2100 if current global warming trends continue. **PHOTO: AFP**

Asia's Great Rivers: Climate crisis, pollution put billions at risk

HONG KONG(China) — The year is 2100. The glaciers of the Hindu Kush-Himalayan region -- the world's "Third Pole" -- are vanishing as the planet warms, the ice that once fed the great rivers of Asia is all but lost, and with it much of the water needed to nurture and grow a continent.

Further stressed by extreme heatwaves, erratic monsoons, and pollution, the waterways are in crisis and the lives of hundreds of millions hang in the balance.

Access to clean water, now more precious than oil, is a preserve of the rich and has become a resource so valuable that people -- and nations -- are willing to fight for it.

This apocalyptic vision is the continent's future if nothing is done to limit global warming, scientists and environmentalists warn.

"If urgent climate action is not taken rapidly, starting today, and current emission trends continue unabated, it is starting to look conceivable that this will entail grave threats to all of humanity as we know it," says David Molden, director general of the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD).

The 2015 Paris agreement saw nations commit to limiting global warming to two degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels as a way of curbing the worst impacts of global warming.

A lower cap of 1.5C was set, only as a goal for nations to work towards. But this year's Hindu Kush-Himalaya (HKH) Assessment Report says unless it is met — two-thirds of the region's glaciers will be lost by the end of the century.

'Devastating health impact'

Running from Afghanistan to Myanmar, the HKH region takes in the Tibetan Plateau, and the Himalaya, Hindu Kush, and Karakoram mountain ranges.

Functioning as a vast water tower, some of the world's largest and most important rivers, including the Brahmaputra, Yangtze, Mekong and Indus, begin here.

Its health is inextricably linked to that of the continent: Some 1.65 billion people directly rely on these waters — for their lives and livelihoods.

But tens of millions more rely on the agriculture, hydropower, and industries the rivers fuel. "This is the climate crisis you haven't heard of," ICIMOD's PhilippusWester explains, adding that alongside glacier melt, there will be increased risk of floods, droughts, landslides and avalanches. But many in Asia are already living this dystopian future. In the southern Indian city of Chennai, 2019 brought a drought so severe reservoirs ran dry. Residents were forced to queue for water from government tanks or pay black-market prices. In some cases, desperation led to violence.— AFP ■

Sri Lanka mulling use of drone technology to control dengue virus

COLOMBO — Sri Lanka's Ministry of Science and Technology is exploring the possibility of controlling the dengue virus through the use of drone technology, the ministry said in a statement here on Monday.

State Minister of Technology and Innovation ThilangaSumathipala was quoted by the media as saying that discussions were held recently with stakeholders and leading experts on how drone technology can be used for the prevention of the dengue virus, which has had a serious impact on the health and development of Sri Lanka in recent years.

The ministry said that according to a recent study by Sri Lankan researchers, drone technology had been successfully used for aerial inspections to identify mosquito breeding sites and transmit the information to public health inspectors.

Earlier this month, Sri Lanka's Health Ministry said that dengue cases in the country doubled in 2019 compared to the previous year, with 90 deaths and over 99,000 cases reported nationwide. In 2018, 51,659 people were affected by the mosquito-borne virus with 58 deaths reported. —Xinhua ■

False alarm sets off nuclear scare in Canada

MONTREAL(Canada) — An alert signaling an incident at a major nuclear power plant near Toronto in Canada was sent in error to millions of residents Sunday, causing a scare and prompting calls for an investigation.

The emergency alert went out shortly before 7:30 am (1230 GMT). Though intended for residents living within a 10-kilometer (six-mile) radius of the Pickering Nuclear Generating Station, it went to all residents in Ontario province.

About an hour later, the Ontario Power Generation company that manages the nuclear plant announced on Twitter that the alert was issued by mistake.

"There is NO active nuclear situation taking place at the Pickering Nuclear Generating Station," it said.

"The previous alert was issued in error. There is no danger to the public or environment."

The Ontario provincial government apologized, saying the alert was issued during a routine training exercise.

"The Government of Ontario sincerely apologizes for raising public concern and has begun a full investigation to determine how this error happened," Solicitor General Sylvia Jones said.

One of the world's largest nuclear power plants, the Pickering facility is located about 50 kilometers east of Toronto, Canada's most populous city, with three million inhabitants.

Several local officials, including Pickering mayor Dave Ryan, immediately demanded an explanation of the incident.

"Like many of you, I was very troubled to have received that emergency alert this morning," Ryan said on Twitter.

"While I am relieved that there was no actual emergency, I am upset that an error such as this occurred. I have spoken to the province and am demanding that a full investigation take place," he said. Toronto mayor John Tory also called for a probe, saying area residents had been "unnecessarily alarmed by this event." — AFP ■

An alert signaling an incident at a major nuclear power plant near Toronto in Canada was sent in error to millions of residents. **PHOTO: AFP**

Nearly 40,000 people in Thailand's Bangkok seek treatment for respiratory illnesses

BANGKOK — The Bangkok Metropolitan Administration's (BMA) Health Department on Monday released a report indicating that nearly 40,000 people in the city's two main districts have sought medical treatment for respiratory illnesses at its hospitals since September last year.

Furthermore, the BMA's Environment Department also reported on Monday the unsafe levels of particulate matters in the two districts, and have urged residents to wear a mask outdoors. "Bangkok's two main districts, PhraNakhon and Wang Thonglang, have indicated its PM2.5 at 31-54mg per cubic meter of air in the past 24 hours while the safe threshold is at 50mcg," the BMA Environment Department said. "PM2.5 was at 54mcg at PhraNakhon district and 52mcg at Wang Thonglang district." Meanwhile, BMA permanent secretary SilapasuayRaweesaengsoon said the BMA ordered its Taksin Hospital, CharoenkrungPracharak Hospital and Klang Hospital to open their air pollution clinics to treat people.—Xinhua ■

Harry, William present united front ahead of royal crisis summit

Prince Harry last year revealed that he had grown apart from his older brother William. **PHOTO: AFP**

SANDRINGHAM (United Kingdom) — Prince Harry and his brother Prince William put on a united front as they were summoned to showdown talks Monday on Harry's future after he and his wife Meghan unilaterally announced they were quitting as front-line British royalty.

The brothers, who, at Harry's public admission, have drifted apart in recent years, lashed out at a story concerning their relationship, as newspapers speculated on what caused the Duke and Duchess of Sussex to quit their roles in search of a new life.

William, 37, and 35-year-old Harry formed a close bond following their mother Diana's death in 1997 but Harry admitted last month that they had drifted apart and were now on different paths.

The fraternal show of unity came as they were summoned to talks with their grandmother Queen Elizabeth II and father Prince Charles aimed at charting a way through the crisis.

The 93-year-old monarch called the trio to urgent talks at her private Sandringham retreat in eastern England.

A statement on behalf of Harry and William said: "Despite clear denials, a false story ran in a UK newspaper today speculating about the relationship between the Duke of Sussex and the Duke of Cambridge.

"For brothers who care so deeply about the issues surrounding mental health, the use of inflammatory language in this way is offensive and potentially harmful."

'Bullying' allegation

Among the stories in Monday's press was a report in The Times headlined: "Princes 'fell out because William wasn't friendly towards Meghan'."

It said Harry and Meghan saw themselves as having been "pushed away from the royal family" by William's "'bullying' attitude" — adding that sources close to the princes had denied this version of events.

The Sussexes last week said they wanted to step back as senior royals, divide their time between Britain and North America, rip up long-established ways of working with the media and seek a "progressive" and financially-independent new role.

That triggered the queen on Thursday to direct her officials, plus those of Charles, William and Harry, to seek urgent "workable solutions" following the bombshell announcement.

Charles, 71, the heir to the throne, flew back from Oman, where he attended a condolence ceremony Sunday following the death of the late Sultan Qaboos.

Meghan, 38, is expected to join the meeting via conference call from Canada as they attempt to work out the "next steps" towards a compromise.

Issues up for debate include how much money the couple will still receive from Charles — who largely bankrolls his sons and their families — the couple's royal titles and how they can raise their own finances without compromising the monarchy. — AFP ■

Libya rivals in Moscow to sign ceasefire deal

MOSCOW (Russia)— The heads of Libya's warring sides were to meet in Moscow on Monday to sign a ceasefire deal ending nine months of heavy fighting.

The meeting follows a diplomatic push by Turkey and Russia, which is keen to bolster its status as a powerbroker in the Middle East and step into a diplomatic void left by what observers see as a partial US retreat.

The two sides are expected to sign an agreement on the terms of a ceasefire that took effect over the weekend, raising hopes of an end to the fighting that has wracked the oil-rich North African country since a 2011 NATO-backed uprising killed longtime dictator Moamer Kadhafi.

The UN-recognised Government of National Accord (GNA) in Tripoli, headed by Fayez al-Sarraj, has been under attack since last April from forces loyal to strongman KhalifaHaftar, who is based in the east of the country.

Haftar and Sarraj were to meet in Moscow for talks along with "representatives of other Libyan sides", the Russian foreign ministry said, with Turkey and Russia's foreign and defence ministers acting as mediators.

Haftar (r) and Sarraj (l) were to meet in Moscow for talks along with "representatives of other Libyan sides", the Russian foreign ministry said. **PHOTO: AFP**

Russian news agencies reported representatives of the two sides had arrived for talks, but it was unclear if Haftar and Sarraj would meet face-to-face.

The ceasefire initiative was launched by President Vladimir Putin and Turkish counterpart RecepTayyipErdogan, who jointly called for a truce in Istanbul last week.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel visited Putin on Saturday and he supported her drive to hold a peace conference sponsored by the United Nations. Berlin said Monday the summit was planned for later this month.

French President Emmanuel Macron on Monday called for a "credible, lasting and verifiable" truce while Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte was due in Turkey to discuss the situation with Erdogan.

Foreign powers are keen to secure influence in Libya — home to Africa's largest proven crude reserves.

The GNA has signed agreements with Ankara assigning Turkey rights over a vast area of the eastern Mediterranean, in a deal denounced by France, Greece, Egypt and Cyprus. — AFP ■

Ex-athletics chief Diack in Paris trial over corruption linked to Russian doping

PARIS (France) — LamineDiack, the disgraced former head of athletics' world governing body, goes on trial in Paris on Monday facing a potential 10-year prison sentence for accepting millions of dollars to cover up tests showing Russian doping.

Diack, the 86-year-old Senegalese who was in charge of the International Association of Athletics Federations (now World Athletics), between 1999 and 2015, is charged with "giving and receiving bribes", "breach of trust" and "organised money laundering", and is expected to attend court.

The prosecution alleges that Diack obtained $1.5 million of Russian funds to help fund MackySall's campaign for the 2012 Senegal presidential election — which he won — in exchange for the IAAF's anti-doping arm covering up or delaying offences by 23 Russians.

The aim, prosecutors will say, was to allow the Russians to compete in the 2012 London Olympics and the 2013 World Athletics Championships in Moscow.

LamineDiack is accused of turning a blind eye to Russian doping in return for payment. **PHPOTO: AFP**

The trial, following a four-year investigation by the French Financial Prosecutor's Office, is scheduled to run for three days a week until 23 January and the charges carry not only a maximum sentence of 10 years' prison but also a heavy fine.

Also appearing in court will be HabibCisse, Diack's former legal advisor, who is suspected of having acted as an intermediary between the then-IAAF and Russian athletics and having received hundreds of thousands of dollars.

The former IAAF anti-doping chief Gabriel Dolle will also be there, accused of "receiving bribes" amounting to 190,000 euros. Both are French. — AFP ■

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Global stock markets mostly up as focus on China-US pact

LONDON (United Kingdom) — World stock markets mostly rose on Monday as investor attention turned to the global economic outlook and this week's planned signing of the China-US trade pact.

Heading towards midday, London won 0.5 per cent on the back of the weaker pound, which boosts share prices of multinationals that earn in dollars.

Sterling sagged as Bank of England policymaker GertjanVlieghe hinted at a potential vote in favour of a January cut to the central bank's main interest rate.

Stoking rate-cut speculation, official data showed the UK economy shrank 0.3 per cent in November, as Brexit and political uncertainty contributed to slashing manufacturing output.

In the eurozone meanwhile, Paris stocks added 0.3 per cent but Frankfurt flatlined.

"Equity market sentiment in Europe... is positive as traders are looking ahead to the signing of the first phase of the US-China trade deal on Wednesday," said CMC Markets analyst David Madden.

The picture was brighter in Asia with Hong Kong rallying more than one percent and Shanghai up 0.8 per cent.

While the optimism that characterised the end of 2019 is returning to trading floors, dealers were left a little disappointed by a below-par jobs report out of Washington on Friday.

All three main indexes on Wall Street ended in negative territory following the reading, having hit new highs, with profit-taking also playing a role.

However, analysts pointed out that while the data missed expectations, it did suggest that the Federal Reserve will likely maintain interest rates at low levels for some time to come, with some tipping the next move could be another cut.— AFP ■

Indonesia, UAE sign $23 bn investment deals: officials

JAKARTA (Indonesia) — Indonesia and the United Arab Emirates have struck nearly $23 billion in business deals, including agreements in the energy sector and on infrastructure projects, the Southeast Asian nation said Monday.

The investments will be made through a new Indonesian sovereign wealth fund set to also involve Japan's Softbank and US International Development Finance Corporation, Jakarta said, without elaborating.

The figure includes nearly a dozen deals signed after a meeting between Indonesian President JokoWidodo and Crown Prince Sheikh Mohammed Bin Zayed in Abu Dhabi over the weekend, Widodo said on social media.

About $12.6 billion was linked to an agreement between Indonesia's state energy firm Pertamina and Abu Dhabi National Oil Company to develop a petrochemical plant in West Java, according to Indonesia's foreign ministry.

Other investments include deals in ports, renewable energy and agriculture.

Indonesia's leader has said he will focus his second term on luring more foreign investment to Southeast Asia's biggest economy and keep up a multi-billion-dollar infrastructure drive.

Jakarta said the agreements could include investment in Indonesia's planned new capital on the island of Borneo as it moves away from congested Jakarta — one of the fastest sinking cities on Earth.— AFP ■

UK economy stalls, as Bank of England eyes rate cut

LONDON (United Kingdom) — Britain's economy has stalled, official data showed Monday, as Brexit and political uncertainty contributed to slashing manufacturing output, heaping pressure on the Bank of England to cut interest rates.

The file photo taken on 7 February 2019 shows the Bank of England building in central London. **PHOTO: AFP**

Gross domestic product contracted 0.3 per cent in November, the Office for National Statistics said in a statement. It grew only 0.1 per cent in the three months to the end of November, the ONS added.

Manufacturing meanwhile slumped 1.7 per cent in November.

Speaking ahead of the data a Bank of England policymaker, GertjanVlieghe, hinted at a potential vote in favour of a January cut to the BoE's main interest rate, weighing on the pound Monday.

It followed comments Friday by fellow policymaker SilvanaTenreyro, who said she could support a rate cut from the current 0.75-per cent level, if the economy did not strengthen.

And on Thursday, the bank's outgoing governor, Mark Carney, said the monetary policy committee was looking at the merits of near-term stimulus.

As for the latest GDP data, "a poor performance in November was always on the cards given that the uncertainties facing the economy were at a peak with the general election looming and doubts over what would happen on the Brexit front after it had been delayed again from 31 October", noted Howard Archer, chief economic advisor to financial researchers EY ITEM Club.

"It is clear that businesses were cautious in their behaviour while it also appears that consumers were reluctant to spend."

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson's Conservatives convincingly won a general election in December that has broken the deadlock over the UK's departure from the European Union.

Britain's parliament last week finally approved Brexit, ending years of arguments that toppled two UK governments.— AFP ■

Transferring Distributor for Registered Products

Distribution of following pesticides registered by Asiatic Agricultural Industries Pte Ltd (Singapore) is transferring from **Uni Crop Co Ltd to Farm Link Co Ltd**. Any objection regarding to this transfer can notify at Co Secretary, Myanmar Pesticide Registration Board, West Gyogone, Insein Township within two weeks.

Sr	Trade Name	Active Ingredient	Type of Reg	Reg No
1.	Endow	Imidacloprid 20% + Metalaxyl 20%WP	Prov	2014 – 1882

Asiatic Agricultural Industries Pte Ltd (Myanmar Branch). Rangoun Business Center, Room 209, No.97. West Shwe Gon Daing Road. Tele : 09-5145328, 09797801339

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV PRESIDIO VOY.NO. (031W/E)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV PRESIDIO VOY.NO. (031W/E) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 14-1-2020 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of MIP/MITT where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S NEW GOLDEN SEA SHIPPING PTE., LTD
Phone No: 2301185

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV CHERRY VOY.NO. (003 N/S)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV CHERRY VOY. NO. (003 N/S) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 14-1-2020 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of MIP where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

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MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
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CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV BBC KIBO

Consignees of cargo carried on MV BBC KIBO VOY. NO. (1048047) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 14-1-2020 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of AIPT2 where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
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Philippines on alert as volcano spews ash, lava

TALISAY CITY (Philippines) — Lava and broad columns of ash illuminated by lightning spewed from a volcano south of the Philippine capital on Monday, grounding hundreds of flights as authorities warned of a possible "explosive eruption".

Fine grit weighed down trees and turned roads into muddy messes across the region surrounding the Taal volcano, which burst to life Sunday and has forced over 20,000 people to seek refuge in evacuation centres, a provincial governor said.

Geologists said the volcano remained active, spurting red-hot lava some 500 metres (1,600 feet) into the air from new cracks that have opened in its northern flank, as accompanying earthquakes rattled the area.

Geologists said the volcano remained active, spurting red-hot lava some into the air as accompanying earthquakes rattled the area. **PHOTO: AFP**

"We are really scared of what might happen to us... that our house might collapse in a strong earthquake and that we'll all be killed by falling debris," said Bienvenido Musa, aged 56.

"Who wouldn't be scared? That's why I decided to send my family to an evacuation centre."

Taal is a tourist attraction that sits in a picturesque lake, yet is also one of the most active volcanoes in a nation where earthquakes and eruptions are a frightening and destructive part of life.

The Philippines sits on the Pacific "Ring of Fire", where tectonic plates collide deep below the Earth's surface.

Schools in the region around Taal, some government offices in Manila and the Philippine Stock Exchange were closed as authorities issued warnings against breathing the ash. Stores quickly sold out of dust masks, which health officials said could help protect against potentially harmful effects of the powder-like soot.

"I'll just stay at home and tie a handkerchief around my face. I think that's OK," Manila resident MenchieClaveria said, after attempting to buy a mask.

Limited flight operations resumed mid-Monday at Manila's main international airport, nearly a day after authorities halted them due to the safety risk volcanic ash poses to planes.

However, travellers booked on over 240 cancelled flights still faced delays at Ninoy Aquino International Airport.

"I'm disappointed because this (delay) means additional expense for me and it's tiring to wait," said stranded traveller Joan Diocaras, a 28-year-old Filipino who works in Taiwan.

"But there's nothing we can do." —AFP ■

China defends barring Human Rights Watch head from Hong Kong

BEIJING (China) — China on Monday defended barring the head of Human Rights Watch from entering Hong Kong, saying non-governmental organisations were responsible for political unrest in the city and should "pay the proper price".

Kenneth Roth was supposed to give a press conference in Hong Kong this week to unveil the New York-based rights group's latest global survey, which accuses China of prosecuting "an intensive attack" on international human rights agencies. The long-time executive director said Sunday that he was turned back by authorities at the city's airport.

China last month announced sanctions on American NGOs, including HRW, in retaliation for the passage of a US bill backing Hong Kong's pro-democracy movement. "Allowing or not allowing someone's entry is China's sovereign right," foreign ministry spokesman GengShuang said at a regular press briefing.

"Plenty of facts and evidence show that the relevant NGO has through various means supported anti-China radicals, encouraged them to engage in extremist, violent and criminal activity, and incited Hong Kong independence separatist activities," Geng said. "They bear major responsibility for the current chaos in Hong Kong. These organisations should be punished, and should pay the proper price."

Hong Kong has been battered by nearly seven months of occasionally violent protests, its biggest political crisis in decades.

Kenneth Roth was supposed to give a press conference in Hong Kong to unveil the New York-based rights group's latest global survey. **PHOTO: AFP**

Millions have turned out on the streets of the semi-autonomous financial hub to demand greater democratic freedoms. —AFP ■

Australian 'megablaze' brought under control

SYDNEY (Australia) — Exhausted firefighters said they had finally brought Australia's largest "megablaze" under control Monday, as wet weather promised to deliver much-needed respite for countryside ravaged by bushfires.

New South Wales firefighters said they finally had the upper hand in the fight against the vast Gospers Mountain fire on Sydney's northwestern outskirts, which has been burning for almost three months.

Visiting the area on Monday, New South Wales Rural Fire Service commissioner Shane Fitzsimmons said there was a "small area of burning still to complete" but the "containment prognosis looks promising".

The fire seared an area of national park three times the size of Greater London and lit several connected blazes totalling over 800,000 hectares.

As residents and authorities continued to come to grips with the sheer scale of the devastation, the Bureau of Meteorology forecast some firegrounds areas could get up to 50 millimetres (two inches) of rain in the next week, a relief after a prolonged drought. If that forecast bears out, the New South Wales Rural Fire Service said it would be "all of our Christmas, birthday, engagement, anniversary, wedding and graduation presents rolled into one. Fingers crossed."

Dozens of other fires are yet to be controlled.—AFP ■

The toll on wildlife has been catastrophic, with a billion animals killed, according to scientists. **PHOTO: AFP**

26 killed in rain, snow-related incidents in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD — Heavy rain and snowfall continued to wreak havoc by disrupting daily life in different areas of Pakistan as at least 26 people were killed in weather-related incidents during the last 24 hours, local media and officials said Monday.

Pakistan's southwest Balochistan province is the worst hit by the torrential rain and heavy snowfall, where at least 21 people lost their lives in separate incidents, according to the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) of Balochistan.

At least five people, including two children, were killed and 10 others injured in three different regions of the country's eastern Punjab province.

Earlier on Sunday, the PDMA imposed a state of emergency in seven districts of Balochistan after heavy rain and snowfall disrupted daily life.

Chief Minister of Balochistan Jam Kamal Khan told the media on Sunday that the situation was not normal and a high alert had been sent to local officials and rescue teams in the respective regions where up to four feet of snowfall had been reported so far.

"The government is on high alert and official teams are working round the clock for the rescue work. We are managing to clear roads from snow and reaching stranded and needy people to provide them with help," said the chief minister.

Heavy snowfall and torrential rain have disrupted daily life by stopping electricity supply and internet service and blocking almost all roads in the affected areas.

The Pakistan Meteorological Department said on Monday morning that up to 56 mm of rain was recorded in different areas of Balochistan, adding that heavy snowfall and rain are also expected in the upcoming days in different regions, including the provincial capital of Quetta. — Xinhua ■

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Iran agrees de-escalation 'only solution' to solve crisis with US

TEHRAN (Iran) — Iran has signalled it favoursa de-escalation after 10 days of heightened tensions with the United States during which both sides fired missiles and Tehran accidentally shot down a passenger aircraft.

Security was stepped up in Iran's capital Sunday after a vigil the previous night for those killed in the air disaster turned into an angry protest and police temporarily arrested the British ambassador for being there.

US President Donald Trump warned Iran against harming demonstrators and against a repeat of a deadly crackdown against rallies in November sparked by a fuel price hike.

"To the leaders of Iran - DO NOT KILL YOUR PROTESTERS," Trump tweeted Sunday in his occasional all-capitals style.

US Defense Secretary Mark Esper, however, said Trump was still willing to "sit down and discuss without precondition a new way forward" with Iran, although Tehran has steadfastly refused to hold talks with Washington unless it lifts sanctions first.

Tehran said it favoured an easing of tensions after its arch-enemy Washington on 3 January killed a revered Iranian general, Quds Force chief QasemSoleimani, in a Baghdad drone strike.

Iran's President Hassan Rouhani (r) meeting with the Emir of Qatar Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani in Tehran. **PHOTO: AFP**

'A critical time'

In a meeting between Iran's President Hassan Rouhani and the visiting emir of Qatar, both sides agreed de-escalation is the "only solution" to the regional crisis, the Qatari ruler said.

Qatar hosts the largest US military base in the region but also enjoys strong ties with Iran, with which it shares the world's largest gas field.

"We agreed... that the only solution to these crises is de-escalation from everyone and dialogue," Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani said on what was believed to be his first official visit to the Islamic republic.

For his part, Rouhani said: "We've decided to have more consultations and cooperation for the security of the entire region."

Iran's president also met with visiting Pakistani Foreign Minister Shah MehmoodQureshi, whose country has offered to mediate between Tehran and US ally Riyadh.

In a meeting Sunday with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe warned military conflict with Iran will have an impact on global peace and stability, Japanese foreign ministry spokesman Masato Ohtaka said.

In a briefing to parliament, Hossein Salami, commander of Iran's Revolutionary Guards, said the missiles it fired last Wednesday on Iraqi bases hosting US troops were not aimed at killing American personnel.

The US said no American personnel were harmed in the attacks.Across the border in Iraq, the military said rockets slammed on Sunday into Al-Balad, an Iraqi airbase where US forces have been stationed, wounding two Iraqi officers and two airmen.

The base had held a small US Air Force contingent as well as American contractors, but a majority of these personnel had already been evacuated due to the tensions between the US and Iran, military sources told AFP. — AFP ■

Iraq warns of 'collapse' if Trump blocks oil cash

BAGHDAD (Iraq) — Iraqi officials fear economic "collapse" if Washington imposes threatened sanctions, including blocking access to a US-based account where Baghdad keeps oil revenues that feed 90 percent of the national budget.

US President Donald Trump was outraged by the Iraqi parliament voting on January 5 to oust foreign forces, including some 5,200 American troops, who have helped local soldiers beat back jihadists since 2014.

If troops were asked to leave, he threatened, "we will charge them sanctions like they've never seen before." The US then delivered an extraordinary verbal message directly to Prime Minister Adel Abdel Mahdi's office, two Iraqi officials told AFP.

"The PMO got a call threatening that if US troops are kicked out, 'we' — the US — will block your account at the Federal Reserve Bank in New York," one official said. Parliament's vote to oust the troops was triggered by outrage over a US drone strike on Baghdad two days earlier that killed top Iranian general QasemSoleimani and his Iraqi right-hand-man, Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis.

The Central Bank of Iraq's account at the Fed was established in 2003 following the US-led invasion that toppled ex-dictator Saddam Hussein.

Under United Nations Security Council Resolution 1483, which lifted the crippling global sanctions and oil embargo imposed on Iraq after Saddam's invasion of Kuwait, all revenues from Iraqi oil sales would go to the account.

Iraq is OPEC's second-biggest crude producer and more than 90 per cent of the state budget, which reached $112 billion in 2019, derives from oil revenues. To this day, revenues are paid in dollars into the Fed account daily, with the balance now sitting at about $35 billion, Iraqi officials told AFP.— AFP ■

Iraqi officials say around $35 billion of the country's oil revenues are held at the US Federal Reserve, which means Washington's threat to restrict access could be a major problem. **PHOTO: AFP**

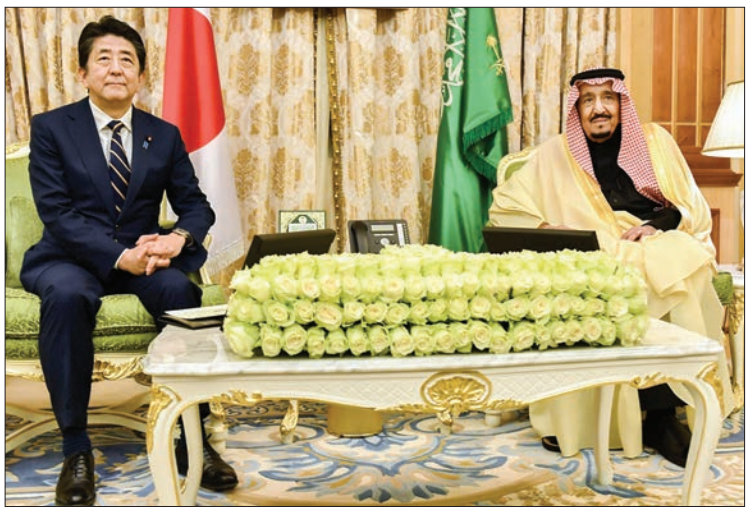
Abe calls for Saudi cooperation to stabilize Middle East

AL ULA/RIYADH — Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe on Sunday sought cooperation from Saudi Arabia to ensure stability in the Middle East as he urged all parties involved to exercise restraint amid heightened US-Iran tensions, a senior Japanese government official said.

In his meeting with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman near Al Ula in the country's northwest, Abe expressed his concern about the grave impact that a military conflict in the region would have on the rest of the world.

Both agreed that collective efforts are necessary toward easing Middle East tensions, according to the official.

"A military conflict in the Middle East would have a huge impact on global peace and stability," Abe told the crown prince, who is considered Saudi Arabia's de facto ruler. "I'd like to ask all countries concerned to respond (to the situation) in a restrained manner." Saudi Arabia has built good relations with the United States while both countries harbor hostility toward Iran. Japan, which maintains friendly ties with Iran, has been encouraging dialogue between Tehran and Washington amid a months-long standoff over a 2015 nuclear deal.



Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe (l) and Saudi King Salman hold talks in Riyadh on 12 January 2020. **PHOTO: KYODO NEWS**

Abe is visiting Saudi Arabia, the world's largest crude oil exporter and a crucial supplier to resource-poor Japan, on the first leg of a five-day trip that will also take him to the United Arab Emirates and Oman. Japan relies on the region for about 90 per cent of its oil imports.

Abe also briefed the crown prince on Japan's initiative to send a Self-Defence Forces destroyer and patrol planes to the region to safeguard commercial shipping. Prince Mohammed told Abe that he "fully supports" the decision, with the two agreeing to coordinate closely toward securing the safe navigation of ships in the region, according to the Japanese official.

Abe's visit comes as concerns about a US-Iran military conflict have receded somewhat.

US President Donald Trump did not resort to further military action last week against Iran following Tehran's targeting of Iraqi bases hosting US troops with missiles. The Iranian attack was in retaliation for the US killing of a top Iranian commander earlier this month.— Kyodo News ■

Second coordination meeting held for FIFA Football for Schools Programme

THE Ministry of Health and Sports, the Ministry of Education, and the Myanmar Football Federation on Sunday held the second coordination meeting on organizing the FIFA Football for Schools Programme this month at the Novotel Max Yangon.

At the meeting, President of the Myanmar Football Federation (MFF) U Zaw Zaw explained the plan for launching the FIFA Football for Schools Programme on 31 January and said the producers are cooperating with ministries to increase opportunities for playing football in all states and regions.

He also promised to help students, teachers, physical training coaches, referees, and match supervisors with techniques.

The MFF president also called for provision of stadiums and facilities and for cooperation with parents and town elders, local officials, and TFAs.

Afterwards, Union Minister for Health and Sports Dr Myint Htwe said his ministry would cooperate with MoE and MFF to develop youth footballers' skills over the long run.

Union Minister Dr Myo Thein Gyi also said the Education Ministry is cooperating with MFF for youth football competitions. The ministry is drawing football timetables and will also a draw budget plan, he said while calling for capacity building.

The FIFA Football For Schools Programme, designed by FIFA for Myanmar, will be launched on 31 January at the artificial turf of the National Football Academy in Yangon, according to the Myanmar Football Federation. — Kyaw Khin

(From left to right) Union Minister Dr Myo Thein Gyi, Union Minister Dr Myint Htwe and President of MFF U Zaw Zaw at the second coordination meeting on organizing the FIFA Football for Schools Programme at the Novotel Max Yangon on 11 January. **PHOTO: MFF**

WLC: 'Battlebones' lethwei fight planned on 31 Jan

A lethwei contest titled 'Battlebones' is being organized at the end of January in Yangon by the World Lethwei Championship (WLC), the world's largest bare-knuckle fighting organization.

The event will feature local and international fighters, and will start at 5 pm on 31 January at the Thein Phyu Indoor Stadium in Yangon.

The main bout of the event is scheduled to take place between Myanmar's Middleweight King and Lethwei pound-for-pound Number 1, Too Too, and Tiger Muay Thai fighter champion Naimjon Tuhtaboyev. Naimjon beat the current champion in 2014.

Sok Rith, Samuel Toscano, and Saw Kaung Htet are among the fighters who will participate in the event. The event will be broadcast live on CANAL+ Myanmar FG and UFC Fight Pass. — Kyaw Khin

PHOTO: WLC

After Week-1, Yadanarbon F.C. leads MPT Myanmar National League 2020

AFTER the first week of the MPT Myanmar National League 2020, Yadanarbon F.C. is at the top of the standing table, having earned three points with two goal difference, according to the Myanmar National League's website.

Sagaing United is in the second place with 3 points and one goal difference, followed by Yangon United in the third place, Hantharwady United in the fourth place, and Shan United F.C. in fifth place with three points each.

They are followed by Ayeyawady United F.C. and Magwe F.C. with one point each.

In Week-1, Shan United beat ISPE by 1-0, Ayeyawady United conceded a 0-0 draw against Magwe, Yadanarbon F.C. beat Zwekapin by 2-0, Yangon United defeated Chin United by 2-1, Hantharwady United beat Rakhine United by 1-0, and Sagaing United claimed a 3-2 win over Southern Myanmar F.C.

The Week-2 matches of the MPT MNL 2020 will be held on 29 and 30 January, Week-3 on 14 and 15 February, Week-4 on 20 and 21 February, Week-5 on 27 and 28 February, Week-6 on 5 and 6 March, and Week-7 on 14 and 15 March.

The first round of the MPT Myanmar National League II 2020 will end on 15 March, and the second seven-week round will be held from 21 May to 17 July.

The venues for the tourney are Sa Lin ground, Padonmar Stadium, University Stadium, M3 Bahan Stadium, and South Dagon Stadium. — Kyaw Khin

Mourinho plants seed of doubt over injured Kane's Euro 2020 hopes

LONDON (United Kingdom) — Tottenham manager Jose Mourinho has dropped an unexpected hint that England captain Harry Kane is not certain to be fit in time for Euro 2020.

Kane needed surgery on his left hamstring after suffering a ruptured tendon against Southampton on New Year's Day.

Tottenham have said they expect Kane to be back in training in April, with no exact date set for the striker's return to first-team action.

Mourinho was questioned about Kane at a press conference on Monday and his answer suggested there could be some doubt over the 26-year-old's participation at the European Championship in June and July.

Mourinho even appeared to admit Kane is not guaranteed to play again before next season, which would be a nightmare scenario for the Tottenham boss and England manager Gareth Southgate.

"News on Harry we don't have and if you ask me every time we come here the answer will be the same," Mourinho told reporters.

"We expect him to be out until, I don't know, mid-April, end of April, May, next season I don't know. I have no updates to give on Harry."— AFP ■

Tottenham and England star Harry Kane is sidelined with a hamstring injury. **PHOTO: AFP**