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THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

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President, First Lady attend 73rd Shan State Day celebrations

President U Win Myint delivers the opening speech at the commemoration of 73rd Shan State Day in Taunggyi, Shan State yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

PRESIDENT U Win Myint and First Lady Daw Cho Cho attended the commemoration of 73rd Shan State Day at Awaiyar fire balloon grounds, Taunggyi, yesterday morning.

Present at the event were Union Ministers Lt-Gen Ye Aung, Dr Aung Thu, U Ohn Win, U Win Khaing, U Ohn Maung, Shan State Chief Minister Dr Lin Htut, State Hluttaw Speaker U Sai Long Hseng, State Chief Justice U Kywe Kywe, Commander of Eastern Command Maj-Gen Lin Aung, State Advocate-General,

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State Counsellor, Canadian Ambassador exchange views on bilateral relations

State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi shakes hands with Ambassador of Canada Mr Francois Lafreniere in Nay Pyi Taw. **PHOTO: MNA**

DAW Aung San Suu Kyi, State Counsellor and Union Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar received Mr Francois Lafreniere, Ambassador of Canada to Myanmar in Nay Pyi Taw at 10:00 am yesterday. During the meeting, they exchanged views on matters related to the enhancement of the bilateral relations and cooperation between Myanmar and Canada, continued support on Myanmar's democratization process and developments were cordially discussed.—MNA ■

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Pyithu Hluttaw

Pyithu Hluttaw convenes 5th day meeting of 15th Session

DEPUTY Minister for Planning, Finance and Industry U Maung Maung Win said the ministry is planning to set the prices for vehicles to be fair and not much different from private auto sales associations in the 2020-2021 financial year.

He made the comment is his answer to the question raised by MP U Phyo Zeyar Thaw (a) Zeyar Thaw from Zabuthiri Constituency at the Pyithu Hluttaw yesterday. The Second Pyithu Hlttaw held its fifth day meeting of the 15th Session.

The Deputy Minister also detailed about the ministry's plan for adjusting current auto prices which are different too much from street value.

The vehicles include motorcycles, tri-cycle vehicles, trawlers and watercraft.

Deputy Minister U Maung Maung Win. **PHOTO : MNA**

MP U Phyo Zeyar Thaw (a) Zeyar Thaw. **PHOTO : MNA**

MP U Myo Zaw Aung. **PHOTO : MNA**

MP U Than Lin Lin. **PHOTO : MNA**

Increasing in Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Fund from K100 mln to K200 mln

MP U Myo Zaw Aung of Kawlin constituency asked the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Industry if it has a plan to increase Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Fund from K100 million to K200 million.

On behalf of the ministry, Deputy Minister U Maung Maung Win answered that the issue proposed by U Myo Zaw Aung can be dealt with the law.

Sports facilities in Maesae, Kayah State

U Than Lin Lin of Maesae Constituency asked if the Ministry of Health and Sports has a plan to establish sports grounds including football grounds, Futsal grounds and Sepaktakraw grounds in Maesae Township.

Deputy Minister for Health and Sports Dr Mya Lay Sein said the ministry has got about K1 billion yearly under the budget allocation of the State, adding that the ministry has to spend the budget allocation on establishing sports facilities and staff quarters of the ministry nationwide.

She continued to say that the ministry has no current plan to establish sports facilities in Maesae Township.

However, the ministry would give priority to the plan proposed by the MP next fiscal year, she added.

There are over 500 villages in 74 village-tracts in seven townships of Kayah State.

Upgrading Tharawaw Station Hospital

Asked if the Ministry of Health and Sports has a plan to upgrade the Tharawaw Station Hospital, Deputy Minister Dr Mya Lay Sein said the ministry is building a staff quarter building at the station hospital and so far, the staff quarter has seen 25 per cent completion.

The ministry has invited a tender for constructing a one-storey building attached to a surgical room for the station hospital at the cost of over K92 million.

That question was raised by MP U Kyaw Min of Latpadan constituency.

Afterwards, Dr San Shwe Win of Yaykyi constituency asked how the Ministry of Health and Sports has planned to prevent Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) and if the ministry has a plan to establish a transformer at the Thandaung People's Hospital by U Saw Vitor Khalaik.

(Translated by KZL)

Amyotha Hluttaw

Amyotha Hluttaw discusses school building budgets, telecom consumer affairs

THE 15th regular session of the Second Amyotha Hluttaw convened its fifth-day meeting yesterday.

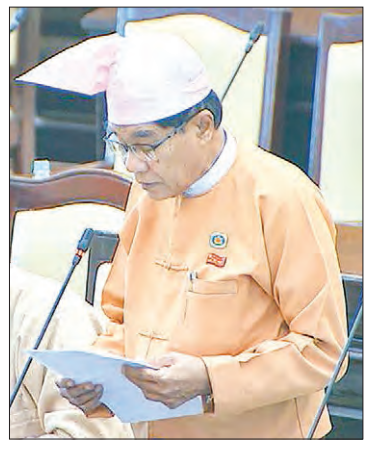
MP U Bwe Khein of Chin State constituency 3 asked if the high school building in Hmaungtalan Village, Thantlang Township, will be replaced with a new one in 2020-2021 financial year. Deputy Education Minister U Win Maw Tun replied it will be prioritized in that financial year.

Next, MP U Hla Myint (a) U Hla Myint Than of Mon State constituency 11 asked whether the middle school in Malawtchaung Village, Kyaikto Township, will be promoted to a branch high school. The Deputy Education Minister replied it has only been a year since the school was last promoted and is not in the prioritized list for 2020-2021 FY.

Next, MP U Hla Oo of Sagaing Region constituency 4 asked whether the branch high school of Ywarkyat Village, Ayadaw Township, will be promoted to a full high school. U Win Maw Tun replied there currently wasn't as the school is only four years old and is permitted to teach high school subjects.

MP U Bwe Khein. **PHOTO : MNA**

Deputy Minister U Win Maw Tun. **PHOTO : MNA**



MP U Hla Myint (a) U Hla Myint Than. **PHOTO : MNA**

MP U Hla Oo **PHOTO : MNA**

MP U Myint Naing of Rakhine State constituency 5 then asked whether the branch middle school of Leikma Village, post-primary school of Thinganat Village, and the middle school of Ywarmapyin Village, Kyauktaw Township, will receive new buildings in the 2020-2021 FY. The Deputy Minister answered the three buildings will be prioritized in that financial year's capital fund proposals.

Next, U Htein Win of Ayeyawady Region constituency 4 asked whether the 600×400 feet sports ground, with a 400-meter track, currently under construction in Hinthada University can be turned into a football field with tracks that meet set standards. The Deputy Minister replied they have already made arrangements to amend the shortcomings and ensure the construction meets set standards.

Next, MP U Tun Tun Oo of Mandalay Region constituency 2 asked whether appropriate measures will be taken against telephone operator companies that are deducting credits for other services from prepaid credits of mobile phone users without their consent or knowledge.

Deputy Minister for Transport and Communications U Thar Oo replied that they have responded to and resolved all reports of similar incidents for 2019. He said the public can continue to report such acts to the Directorate of Communications and the Consumer Affairs Department and that these matters will be handled in accordance with existing laws.

Following this, the Deputy Minister submitted the Myanmar Communication Commission Bill to the assembly and Amyotha Hluttaw Bill Committee member U Thein Lwin read the committee's report on that bill.

Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than then called for MPs interested in proposing amendments to the bill to register their names.

The sixth-day meeting of the Second Amyotha Hluttaw's 15th regular session will be held on 11 February.—Aung Ye Twin, Soe Win Tun

(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

President, First Lady attend 73rd Shan State Day celebrations

President U Win Myint and First Lady Daw Cho Cho pose for a commemorative photo with attendees at the commemoration of 73rd Shan State Day in Taunggyi, yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

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State Auditor-General, Hluttaw representatives, chairpersons of leading bodies of self-administered division/zones, ethnic leaders, department officials, representatives of political parties, ethnic races, ethnic literature and culture groups, local residents, students and invited guests.

During the ceremony, Chief Minister Dr Lin Htut read the Message of Greetings from President U Win Myint regarding 73rd Shan State Day. The President then delivered his keynote speech. **(Keynote speech displayed in full in separate article)**

Next, the President greeted local residents attending the event. He then cut the ceremonial ribbons to formally open the ethnic tradition and culture and departmental exhibitions for 73rd Shan State Day with Chief Minister Dr Lin Htut, State Hluttaw Speaker U Sai Long Hseng, Kachin Ethnic Affairs Minister U Zod Daung, Lisu Ethnic Affairs Minister U Gu Sar, Inn Ethnic Affairs Minister Dr Tun Hlaing and Ahkar Ethnic Affairs Minister U Arr Bay La.

The President and First Lady then took a group documentary photo with invited guests, observed the performances of ethnic literature and culture groups, and viewed the exhibitions on display.

Following this, the President, First Lady and entourage arrived at Shan State Buddhist University in Taunggyi and paid respects to Aggha Maha Pandita Dr Bhaddanta Pyinnyar Nanda of Loilem monastery and Oxford Sayadaw Rector Dr Bhaddanta Dhammasami, and other monks, offered them donations and donated K1 million to the university.

The President and First Lady then participated in the gangaw tree planting ceremony to commemorate the 4th anniversary of the university and offered meals to the monks.

Later in the afternoon, the President and First Lady traveled from Taunggyi to Nyaungshwe by motorcade.

The President met with Inn Ethnic Affairs Minister Dr Tun Hlaing, Forest Department Deputy Director-General U Kyaw Kyaw Lwin, and State Irrigation and Water Utilization Management Department Director U Tun Tun Oo at Inle Princess Resort. They explained to him the status of Inle Lake catchment area preservation, extracting sediments and processes to prevent their buildup.

The President said Inle Lake is an important image of Shan State and the nation and its basin area and water retention has been going down. He said the State government, departments and local residents must all work together to resolve this issue. He said Inle Lake is connected to the Moebye reservoir and Lawpita hydropower station and can potentially have negative effects on them if the issues were not addressed.

He said the use of fertilizers and pesticides in the nearby environment is contaminating Inle Lake. He said the State government and departments must work together to manage in accordance with the law and ensure local residents were made aware of this fact.

Next, the President observed the processes across the drainage basin in a motorboat. The President and First Lady then arrived at Hpaung Daw U Pagoda and paid homages to the 5 images of the Buddha housed inside. They offered a golden robe and donated K.500,000 to the board of trustees.

From there, the President and entourage visited the Haw Nan cultural museum in Nyaungshwe and toured inside.

Later in the evening, the President, First Lady and entourage attended a dinner banquet hosted by Shan State Government for the 73rd Shan State Day. They viewed musical performances and awarded cash prizes to the artistes. —MNA

(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

President U Win Myint and First Lady Daw Cho Cho visit Haw Nan cultural museum in Nyaungshwe, Shan State yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

All the national races must strive, with a strong union spirit, to preserve our three main national causes

To be able to stand as a sovereign nation in the region as well as in the world with a positive image, all the national races must strive, with a strong union spirit, to preserve our three main national causes: the non-disintegration of the union and the non-disintegration of the national solidarity and perpetuation of sovereignty while taking the lessons in the past to achieve mutual understanding, mutual trust and mutual respect among our national races.

(Excerpt from Message of President U Win Myint, sent to the 72nd Independence Day 4th January 2020)

All ethnic races are urged to cooperate in the 21st Century Panglong political dialogues with understanding, patience and coordination to find solutions: President U Win Myint

The following is an unofficial translation of President U Win Myint's keynote speech at the commemoration of the 73rd Anniversary of Shan State Day.

"*Mày sǎng khaa* to all the ethnic brothers and sisters attending this commemoration of 73rd Shan State Day. I wish auspiciousness to all of you."

"I would first like to extend my gratitude to the Shan State Chief Minister and his cabinet for inviting me to attend this celebration, and to the ethnic brothers and sisters who welcomed me with open arms upon my arrival."

"Shan State Day is filled with unique and meaningful political meaning and essence for our Union. It was on this same day on 7 February seventy-three years ago that Shan ethnic leaders held a meeting with fellow hilly region Chin and Kachin ethnic leaders and made the historic decision to unite with the central plains and establish the Union, with a common spirit."

"To commemorate this day where the decision to establish the Union together with the Union spirit is commemorated as Shan State day on 7 February, and we have now been celebrating it for 73 years of anniversary."

"But our ethnic leaders' dreams of solidarity, equality, democratic rights and autonomy being the fundamental principles of our Union, has yet to be fulfilled. Since gaining independence, ethnic races have been distrustful of each other and tried to resolve issues through armed force, resulting in a sea of disaster for the entire nation. The successive governments worked hard for peace, but failed to accomplish it due to various reasons,"

"We are taking steps towards democratic transition now. But for the newly-formed democracy to become resilient and sustainable, peace and development need to be paired, and everyone has accepted this. This is why, we as the government, have prioritized national reconciliation, union peace and development."

"And on this path, for all ethnic races to have a democratic federal union they can all agree on and take pride in, we are working hard to set fundamental principles in our Union Peace Conference - 21st Century Panglong meetings. There will be challenges and hardships in the future, and we need to coordinate with mutual understanding, respect and trust to achieve common agreements."

"We as the government have always set our belief to establish a democratic federal union where all ethnic races living within the nation can coexist in harmony. We will move forward with the democratic federal union with firm convictions. The things all our ethnic brothers and sisters have been yearning such as democratic rights, basic human rights, equality and autonomy will be possible with the emergence of a democratic federal union accepted by all. For this all ethnic races across the nation need to participate and cooperate."

"As we are all born of the same Union, we should increase understanding, trust and respect with each other and work hard through political dialogue – this is very important. All ethnic races are urged to cooperate in the 21st Century Panglong political dialogues with understanding, patience and coordination to find solutions."

"No matter what difficulties we face during the democratic transition and federal republic establishment, we must overcome them with Union spirit based on strong will, perseverance, conviction and wisdom."

"May we revive the unity of the Panglong spirit from 73 years ago, may all ethnic nationals cooperate in establishing a democratic federal union, may Shan State residents and all citizens of the nation be blessed with good fortune and may all their good wishes be fulfilled, and may the Shan State and the entire Union achieve peace, prosperity and development. Thank you."

■ ■ ■

Union Minister meets int'l organizations

UNION Minister Dr Win Myat Aye of the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement received CEO Mr Taku Sawanobori and officials of Fureasu Co., Ltd, who are jointly cooperating with the Japan Heart, with which the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement has signed an MOU; he received the UNICEF; he received Mr Michael Samson, Research Director of the Economic Policy and Research Institute (EPRI) and officials; he received Deputy Director-General Mr. Michael Koehler of Brussel-based European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operation (ECHO) and officials on separate occasions at the Ministry's Maykhala Hall yesterday morning and afternoon.

In the first meeting with the Fureasu Co., CEO, they discussed the matters relating to a life-long programme for the blinds to have training on medical education and massage/muscle therapies, then the certificates being issued to them after the trainings, coordination and collaboration work with the Myanmar Federation of Persons with Disabilities, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Health and Sports and other ministries concerned, and the establishment of Exam Test Board and formulation of training curriculum for issuing the certificates up to international standard.

Meeting with the UNICEF and the EPRI Research Director, the matters in connection with the emergence of necessary laws and policies to devise a social security system which is beneficial to all the people, extension measures of existing social welfare services to the remaining states and regions, formulation of finance strategy on expenditures of social welfare services as a long term plan, advancement of a data analysis programme on social security system, development of human resources, and supervision on project results were discussed.

Then, meeting with the European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO) officials, they cordially discussed the matters as regards with the resettlement programme being undertaken after the closing down of temporary shelter camps in Kachin and Rakhine following the national strategy plan, coordination and collaboration work with partner countries including ASEAN and international organizations on health, education, vocational and social services while resettlement in place, the work programme on mitigation and management of natural disasters being done by the government as well as by the international non-governmental organizations, and enhancement of effective mutual cooperation. —MNA

(Translated by Aungthu Ya)

Union Minister Dr Win Myat Aye meets with Fureasu Co., Ltd. CEO Mr Taku Sawanobori in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi receives Vietnamese Ambassador

DAW AUNG SAN SUU KYI, State Counsellor of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar received Mr Ly Quoc Tuan, Ambassador of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam to Myanmar at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

At the meeting, the State Counsellor and Ambassador of Viet Nam to Myanmar discussed matters on promotion of existing bilateral relations and cooperation, increasing cooperation in the regional and international arena especially in ASEAN and the United Nations.—MNA

State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi meets with Vietnamese Ambassador Mr Ly Quoc Tuan in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

VP U Myint Swe urges swift implementation to promote ease of doing business

VICE President U Myint Swe attended the 12th Private Sector Development Committee Meeting (PSDC), in his capacity as Chairman, and the coordination meeting of Ease of Doing Business Ranking Promotion Working Group (EDBRP) in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

The Vice President said the committee has been in existence for three years as it was formed on 24 October 2016 with 20 members to implement the five objectives for private sector development, led by three deputy ministers and two permanent secretaries.

The PSDC has passed a total of 96 resolutions, out of which 79 points have been implemented, and the remaining 17 points are being undertaken.

The committee received 369 suggestions from 31 monthly meetings with private firms till December 2019, and these issues have been replied by the relevant ministries, Nay Pyi Taw Council, Region/State governments, five work committees through the UMFCCI. The Vice President urged the officials to increase their momentum for implementation by designing systematic work plans.

He said the EDBRP Working Group was formed to facilitate cooperation between relevant ministries and is led by Deputy Commerce Minister U Aung Htoo. He said 10 auxiliary groups for each of the Ease of Doing Business' sub-indices had been formed and an additional one has been formed to address the employment regulations index.

A World Bank report listed Myanmar in the top-20 improvers in Doing Business 2020 by six points from 171st place to 165th place out of 190 countries on the index, proving certain improvements of the country. The Vice President also expressed thanks to the relevant organizations and international agencies for success.

In the report of Doing Business 2020 Report, Myanmar was listed in the top 20 countries for ease of doing business in the five sectors namely Starting a Business, Dealing with Construction Permits, Registering Property, Protecting Minority Investors and Enforcing Contracts.

The country remains unchanged in two sectors of Foreign Trade and 'Settlement of Indebtedness' and has declined in three sectors of 'Availability of Loan', 'Taxation' and 'Access to Electricity'.

Vice President U Myint Swe also advised to implementing suggestions for improving ease of doing business in Myanmar in 2020 made by the International Finance Corporation through short, medium and long term plans.

He added that the relevant departments were upgrading laws, bylaws, rules and policies to be able to promote Myanmar in the next edition of 2021 Ease of Doing Business Ranking, and these developments should be learnt by other state agencies and private firms for their better cooperation.

The Vice President said faster implementation of the e-Government system will boost promotion of the Ease of Doing Business indices. He said the Insolvency Law has been submitted to the Hluttaw while the Secured Transaction Law is being compiled. He said if both laws and the Credit Bureau processes were swiftly implemented, then related processes would become more efficient.

The Vice President said there only two months were left till the Doing Business 2021 Report will begin compiling processes up to April 2020. As such, he urged attendees to use their experiences and cooperation to speed up implementation of all remaining and necessary processes.

This was followed by detailed explanations and discussions from each of the attendees on their respective assigned duties, after which the Vice President gave comments and suggestions to ensure coordination based on the discussions and delivered his closing remarks after which the meeting was concluded.

The meeting at the Ministry of Commerce was attended by PSDC Vice Chairman Union Minister for Commerce Dr Than Myint, Union Ministers U Thant Sin Maung and Dr Myo Thein Gyi, Deputy Ministers Dr Min Ye Paing Hein and U Aung Htoo, Central Bank of Myanmar Deputy Governor U Soe Thein, Chairmen and officials of five working committees, officials from EDBRP Working Group, permanent secretaries, directors-general, the President of the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (UMFCCI), the Chairman of Myanmar Investors Development Association, the Chairman of Myanmar Industries Association and departmental officials.—MNA

(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

Vice President U Myint Swe addresses the 12th Private Sector Development Committee Meeting (PSDC) in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

VP U Henry Van Thio arrives back in Yangon from ROK

VICE PRESIDENT U Henry Van Thio left the Republic of Korea for Myanmar at 1:50 am local time yesterday after attending the Peace, Security and Human Development World Summit 2020 in Seoul, ROK.

The Vice President and members of the delegation were seen off at the Incheon International Airport by Myanmar Ambassador U Thant Sin, Universal Peace Federation Asia-Pacific Regional Chairman Mr Ek Nath Dhakal, Myanmar Embassy staff and their families.

They landed the Yangon International Airport at 5:50 am yesterday. The vice president and party were welcomed back by Yangon Region Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein, Yangon Mayor U Maung Maung Soe, and officials from the Korean Embassy in Myanmar at the airport. —MNA

(Translated by TTN)

Vice President U Henry Van Thio is welcomed back by Yangon Region Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein at the Yangon International Airport. **PHOTO: MNA**

Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker receives Canadian Ambassador

Speaker of Pyithu Hluttaw U T Khun Myat holds talks with Ambassador of Canada Mr Francois Lafreniere at the Hluttaw building in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

PYITHU Hluttaw Speaker U T Khun Myat received Ambassador of Canada Mr Francois Lafreniere at the reception hall of Hluttaw building in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday afternoon.

During the meeting, they cordially discussed promoting the friendship and collaboration between parliaments of the two countries, promoting the roles of women in the parliaments, and building capacities of the Hluttaw representatives.

They also exchanged views on their experiences in the democratic federal system. —MNA

(Translated by Kyaw Zin Lin)

Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker receives Canadian Ambassador

Speaker of Amyotha Hluttaw Mahn Win Khaing Than holds talks with Ambassador of Canada Mr Francois Lafreniere at the Hluttaw building in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

AMYOTHA Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than received Ambassador of Canada Mr Francois Lafreniere at the reception hall of Amyotha Hluttaw building in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

During the meeting, they cordially discussed on promoting the friendship and collaboration between the two countries, legislation processes of the Hluttaw, issues of Constitutional amendment, electoral processes, Myanmar Peace processes and the future of democratic federal system.

Amyotha Hluttaw Deputy Speaker U Aye Tha Aung and officials from Amyotha Hluttaw were also present at the meeting.—MNA *(Translated by Kyaw Zin Lin)*

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Central Committee on Monitoring and Prevention of 2019 Novel Coronavirus holds its daily coordination meeting (11/2020)

THE Central Committee on Monitoring and Prevention of 2019 Novel Coronavirus held its daily coordination meeting (11/2020) at the Ministry of Health and Sports yesterday in Nay Pyi Taw.

Speaking at the meeting, Union Minister for Health Dr Myint Htwe appreciated the China's treatment to patients who have positive for the disease as the mortality rate is just two per cent.

The number of infection rate is still higher in China and over 28,000 people have been infected with the Corona virus so far.

The Union Minister has also called for reinforcing surveillance as 334 travellers from six planes left from China landed in Myanmar, highlighting that the symptoms of the disease can not be shown as the incubation period of the disease is about 14 days.

"The most important point for our country is that our country shares a 1,300-mile-long border with China and travellers from both countries can cross the border through legal check points and illegal ones," said the Union Minister.

He urged the health workers of the ministry at the checkpoints to carry out the surveillance tasks in cooperation with officials of other ministries with added momentum.

The Union Minister also stressed the importance of cooperation from the international non-governmental organizations in border areas in surveillance at areas, urging the health authorities to coordinate with the local INGOs to beef up the surveillance.

He also urged the health authorities to make efforts for getting assistance including medicine and medical equipment and laboratory equipment from the UN agencies and partner countries.

Union Minister Dr Myint Htwe also called for distributing Coronavirus infection awareness pamphlets written in Chinese language to hotels, guest houses and places where travellers from China mostly stay.

He appreciated the health workers for their efforts which resulted in sending information from the public about patients who are suspected of Coronavirus infection, and the health authorities quickly respond the information and visited the patients.

"We must not reduce their kind of efforts," said the Union Minister, "we must release information on the field trips to the people."

As part of reinforcing surveillance, the Coronavirus infection awareness pamphlets and posters written in Myanmar and Chinese languages should be distributed to more places including industrial zones and factories where Chinese workers are working.

The coordination meeting (11/2020) of Central Committee on Monitoring and Prevention of 2019 Novel Coronavirus held in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

He also urged the authorities to tighten rules for international travellers saying that those who do not fill the Health Declaration Card at the airports should not be allowed to enter Myanmar.

The points filled in the health declaration card are very important for surveillance, said the Union Minister.

The Union Minister urged the Myanmar citizens not to visit China in efforts for preventing the Coronavirus infection, announcing that his ministry distributed the last therapy for the Coronavirus infection to the Myanmar health professionals yesterday.

He also stressed the importance of inclusiveness at the ministry's daily meeting inviting two representatives from each the Public Health University (Yangon) and Basic Health University (Magway) and one from the National Laboratory to collect views from different approaches in prevention and fighting the Coronavirus infection.

The Union Minister also appreciated the holding of teleconferencing between the region/state health authorities and district/township medical service personnel.

At the meeting, officials from different departments of the ministry discussed the issues related with prevention and preparation for medical services including updated information from the World Health Organization, assessment to the infection in the world, assessment to the treatment, giving treatment to patients who are monitored under the surveillance and containment strategy, surveillance at the international airports and border checkpoints, stockpiling of medicine and medical equipment, refuting the rumours and sharing updated information among the people.—MNA

(Translated by Kyaw Zin Lin)

Status report on 2019 Novel Coronavirus (7 February 2020, 4PM)

(1) The Ministry of Health and Sports is setting up 24-hour hotlines in their concentrated efforts to monitor and prevent the spread of the 2019 Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV). These tasks include receiving public reports and conducting field checks, disseminating genuine news, sharing health information, and monitoring news circulating on social media and the Internet. From among them:

(a) On 5 February 2020, the Ayeyawady Region Government investigated a report of a Chinese worker and one other having high fevers and coughing at a wool textile factory in Ward 1, Pathein Township.

Officials discovered that 16 of the company's 65 foreign workers had returned from China separately between 1 to 4 February. All of them were found to be healthy.

Officials informed them of the current situation of 2019-nCoV, urged them to contact the health department if suspected symptoms manifest, and are continuing to monitor them.

(b) On 5 February, news circulated that a Chinese citizen suddenly became ill and passed away at a mining company in Salingyi Township. Officials from Sagaing Region Public Health Department and Salingyi Township went to investigate.

They found the company had 101 workers and family members and that there had been no sudden deaths from illness. Officials found no signs of sickness or the virus in any of the people there. There had also been no one who had gone to China in the past 14 days.

Officials also inspected four other mining companies in the township and found the staff and their families there all healthy. Active monitoring is being continued.

(c) On 6 February, the (Central) Contagious Disease Prevention and Eradication Division received a call on hotline 067-3420802 about 7 Chinese workers in a textile factory of Shwepyitha Township's Hlawga Wah Tayar Industrial Zone. The phone call said all 7 workers had returned to Myanmar on 2 February after visiting China for New Year's, and that 3 of them had became ill. The department contacted the Yangon Region Public Health and Medical Services Department to verify the claim.

Officials of Shwepyitha Public Health Department went to investigate and found the 7 Chinese workers to be healthy. They are being actively monitored.

(2) As of yesterday morning, MoHS has been actively monitoring 7 patients, including 2 suspected patients, in their respective hospitals. Their health has been improving.

(3) Members of the public are urged to notify the nearest health department, public health department or the (Central) Contagious Disease Prevention and Eradication Division in Nay Pyi Taw (Hotline- 067-3420802) if they see anyone who has returned from China in the last 14 days who have developed high fevers, coughs, runny noses or other suspected symptoms.

(4) MoHS actively updates news and information on MRTV, www.mohs.gov.mm, and the Facebook pages of MRTV, MoHS, and Myanmar CDC.—MNA

(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

8 FEBRUARY 2020
THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

Improving ease of doing business through legal reform

MYANMAR improved its ranking on the World Bank's Doing Business 2020 report by six positions last year, moving up from the 171st place to 165th out of 190 countries on the index.

The ease of doing business index report is released every year and is based on 10 indicators.

Following the report, the World Bank said Myanmar had made strides forward in several areas and was among the top 20 reformers for the year.

However, the doing business index in some areas has not changed, and is still far from rising. It has been found that lack of necessary laws and regulations is one of the reasons for the absence of change in some areas.

> Our businesses lack knowledge on corporate governance. To overcome that challenge, the Myanmar Stock Exchange Authority, the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration, and the Union of Myanmar Chambers of Commerce and Industry are working on a corporate governance code with the help of experts.

For instance, we still have no law to help businesses facing financial crises. To resolve this problem, the Insolvency Bill has been submitted to the Hluttaw. Once the Insolvency Bill becomes law this year, some hardships in some areas of doing business in Myanmar would be eased.

Another requirement for easing doing business is the Secured Transactions Law, which can help businesses get loans. The law is currently being drafted, and after the law and the Credit Bureau for implementing it come into existence, we are confident our country's ranking in doing business would improve.

As legal reforms take time, some sectors have not seen improvement.

Myanmar has more than 70,000 companies, of which over 100 are public companies. Public companies need to be listed in order to enter the international stock exchange. We can assume that a public company can be listed if it has confidence.

Our businesses lack knowledge on corporate governance. To overcome that challenge, the Myanmar Stock Exchange Authority, the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration, and the Union of Myanmar Chambers of Commerce and Industry are working on a corporate governance code with the help of experts.

Once the corporate governance code comes into existence, more public companies are expected to get listed. Just five out of the over 70,000 companies in Myanmar are listed on the stock exchange. According to the World Bank, only when we have 10 listed companies can we enter the International Stock Exchange, which would help raise our ease of doing business index to a certain extent.

To achieve this, we would like to urge the government and the private sector to cooperate and commit to putting our economy on the path of development.

■ ■ ■

Health officials worldwide urge calm amid rigorous Chinese battle against coronavirus

The new coronavirus killed more than 630 people and spread around the world. The latest figures from China show there are over 30,000 people infected in the country. Outside mainland China, there have been more than 320 infections reported in nearly 30 other places.

HEALTH officials from around the globe have cautioned against unnecessary panic and overreaction amid swift and effective measures by the Chinese authorities to curb the novel coronavirus outbreak.

Bangladeshi Health and Family Welfare Minister Zahid Maleque said Beijing's relentless efforts and time-befitting strategies helped the entire world prepare well to deal with the novel coronavirus.

The actions taken by the Chinese government were effective from the very beginning, he said. "Things are not beyond control due to China's all-out efforts."

Costa Rican Health Minister Daniel Salas has lauded China's "responsible" and "transparent" manner in handling the outbreak.

The Chinese authorities "have been quite responsible in terms of undertaking the measures to contain (the virus)," Salas told Xinhua.

"Managing so many people is a real challenge. They have been handling it and it is laudable that they have been very transparent with the WHO," he said, stressing that Costa Rica has no plans to close its borders to anyone as recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO).

The virus' low mortality rate does not justify such a drastic measure, said the health minister.

The WHO said Tuesday that the novel coronavirus epidemic has not become a pandemic but an outbreak with multiple foresides.

The reason behind that judgment is that 78 per cent of cases in China so far have come from Hubei province, which is the epicenter of the outbreak, Dr Sylvie Briand, director of the Global Infectious Hazard Preparedness at WHO, said at a briefing in Geneva.

Dr Briand said that the Chinese authority has put in place "mitigation measures" to reduce the transmission to outside Hubei, and also been building hospitals to treat patients and reduce mortality.

While outside Hubei and in other countries, the current strategy is to stop the transmission. The WHO believes that strategy can be done, said Dr. Briand. She urged efforts to fend off "info-demic," or rumors and false information circulating at the same time, which Dr. Briand said could hamper measures to combat the virus.

Health Minister Anutin Charnvirakul (R) suggested 'Western' tourists not wearing face masks should be kicked out of the county / © Thailand Public Health Ministry. **PHOTO: AFP**

Wuhan combs communities to leave no coronavirus patient unattended

Wuhan, the epicenter of the novel coronavirus outbreak, is combing communities to ensure every confirmed or suspected patient is located and attended to as a senior official vowed to nail any official deserter "to history's pillar of shame."

A conference on epidemic control on Thursday ordered the megacity with a population of over 10 million to make all-out efforts to locate patients confirmed or suspected to be infected with the virus, close contacts of confirmed cases, as well as patients with fever.

Once identified, these people must be treated in a timely manner or placed in quarantine, the conference said, adding that "no family or individual shall be neglected."

Hong Kong unveils virus quarantine plans

Hong Kong on Friday said it will deploy an army of volunteers to bolster plans to forcibly quarantine all arrivals from mainland China, warning that anyone caught breaching the new rules faces up to six months prison.

In a major escalation of its battle against the new coronavirus, the international finance hub has said anyone arriving from the mainland from Saturday will have to undergo 14 days compulsory quarantine. Officials hope the new measures will virtually halt all cross-border traffic while allowing the city to remain stocked with food and goods from the mainland where the virus has killed more than 600 people.

Death of Chinese doctor fuels anger

The death of a whistleblowing doctor whose early warnings about China's new coronavirus outbreak were suppressed by the police has unleashed a wave of anger at the government's handling of the crisis -- and bold demands for more freedom.

Ophthalmologist Li Wenliang was among a group of people who sounded the alarm about the virus in late December, only to be reprimanded and censored by the authorities in central Hubei province.

After Li's death was confirmed early Friday, the 34-year-old was lionised as a hero on social media, while officials were vilified for letting the epidemic spiral into a national health crisis instead of listening to the doctor.

Thai warns 'Western' tourists

Thailand's health minister lashed out at "Western" tourists on Friday for not wearing face masks and suggested they be expelled from the country for putting others at risk during the coronavirus outbreak.

The outburst came as the kingdom faced steep losses over a drop in visitors from China, where the virus has killed more than 600 people and prompted sweeping travel restrictions.

Tourism accounts for 18 percent of the country's gross domestic product and Chinese holidaymakers make up a quarter of total arrivals. Thailand has detected 25 coronavirus cases and nine of those patients have recovered, while streets, public transport and shopping centres have filled with people wearing face masks.

Singapore tells public not to shake hands

Health authorities in Singapore on Friday urged people not to shake hands as a measure against the spread of the new coronavirus in the Southeast Asian city-state.

The warning comes amid a rise in the number of new infections not linked to recent travel in China or previous cases.

"As a general good practice, we advise people not to shake hands during this period, but adopt alternative greetings," the Health Ministry said in a statement, urging Singaporeans to be prepared for "widespread community transmission."

41 more on a cruise ship quarantined in Yokohama

Another 41 people on a cruise ship quarantined in Yokohama have tested positive for a new coronavirus, the health ministry said Friday, bringing the total number of people from the vessel infected with the pneumonia-causing virus to 61.

The newly diagnosed people, all passengers of the Diamond Princess who are in their 20s to 80s, were taken to medical facilities in Tokyo and nearby Saitama, Chiba and Kanagawa prefectures as well as Shizuoka Prefecture in central Japan.

None have severe symptoms, the ministry said. Among the 41 who tested positive for the virus originating in the Chinese city of Wuhan, 21 are Japanese, eight American, five Australian and five Canadian with one each from Argentina and Britain.

REFERENCES

Xinhua; Kyodo; AFP News Updates

The Diamond Princess, off the shore of Yokohama, south of Tokyo, is under two-week lockdown after a passenger tested positive for coronavirus. **PHOTO: HIROKO HARIMA/KYODO**

2020, 73rd Anniversary Union Day National Objectives

1. All ethnic nationals to preserve and protect for non-disintegration of the Union, non-disintegration of National Unity and Perpetuation of Sovereignty.
2. To work on the peace process till success is achieved based on Union spirit.
3. To strive with the collective strength of all ethnic nationals for rule of law, a fair justice system and the security and safety of all citizens.
4. To prevent/protect all people from the danger of narcotic drugs as a national duty and thereby uplift their standard of living.
5. Emergence of a Constitution which will be in alignment with a genuine Democratic Federal Union.

* Maintain unity of all ethnic brothers
Remember Union Day!
* Living on the same land and drinking the same water,
We are all Union nationals of the same blood.
* A hundred fruits from the same stem,
Our Union built in brotherhood.
* Unity is power,
Cohesion is strength,
This is the heart of our Union.
* Equal share for equal rights,
Peace and stability in our Union,
Responsibility in equal share,
security and stability in our Union.

Myanmar Daily Weather Report

(Issued at 7:00 pm Friday 7th February, 2020)

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

FORECAST VALID UNTIL NOON OF THE 8th February, 2020: Light rain are likely to be isolated in Kachin State. Degree of certainty of (60%). Weather will be partly cloudy in Sagaing, Mandalay, Magway and Tanintharyi regions, Shan, Chin, Rakhine 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 (4-8) feet off and along Myanmar Coasts.

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Likelihood of isolated light rain in Upper Sagaing Region and Kachin State.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 8th February, 2020: Generally fair weather.

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Vice Senior General meets with Indian Chief of Defence Staff

DEPUTY Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Soe Win met with General Bipin Rawat, Chief of Defence Staff at the temporary lounge of the Indian Chief of Army Staff at the DefExpo India-2020 on 6 February.

During the meeting, they discussed promoting the existing friendship and collaboration of the armed forces of the two countries for peace and stability in border areas. After the meeting, Myanmar Tatmadaw delegation observed the exhibitions of the strategic and tactical weapon systems, defence equipment and technologies developed by Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) at the DefExpo 2020.

Next, the delegation visited the Army Canteen Store of the Indian Army Central Command and Chairman of the Canteen Colonel AVS Pawan Kumar showed the exhibitions and explained their work process.

Vice Senior General Soe Win meets with General Bipin Rawat, Chief of Army Staff of the Indian Army in India. **PHOTO: OFFICE OF THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF**

The Army Canteen Stores sell electronics, baby utensils, clothes, foods and beverages at resonable price to former service members, military officers and lower ranks and their family members. There are a total of 3901 Army Canteen Stores in India and they are selling 5300 items of utensils and household products to 12 million customers, according to the news released by the Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services.—MNA

(Translated by Kyaw Zin Lin)

CB Bank branch in Dagon Myothit (North) robbed

A CB Bank branch in Ward 35 of Dagon Myothit (North) Township, Yangon, was robbed of an estimated K60 million by a masked gunman yesterday morning. He also left a fake bomb behind as he made his escape.

Photo shows CB Bank branch in Ward 35 of Dagon Myothit (North) Township, Yangon. **PHOTO: PE ZAW**

CB Bank's General Manager Daw Mar Mar Oo said the branch's head contacted her about the incident, which occurred before opening time, and said no one was injured. They have contacted authorities and the branch was reopened on the same afternoon.

Reportedly, the gunman had all branch employees lie down on the floor as he stashed the money in his black travel bag. He also pulled out two fake bombs and left them at the bank, threatening to trigger them if he was followed. He escaped by driving away in a car that was pre-parked in nearby Annawar lane.

The owner of a motor repair shop nearby, Ko Maung Zaw, said he and the bank's manager pursued the man on motorbikes but they maintained their distance from the robber's vehicle as he was supposedly armed. He said they lost sight of his car at a junction.

A bank employee said the robber seemed to have studied the bank for some time, as he was aware of the daily routines of the staff. Police are currently investigating into the matter. —Zaw Gyi

(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

Individual YBS owners must register companies by March: YRTA

By Nyein Nyein

INDIVIDUAL owners of YBS (Yangon Bus Service) bus lines have been asked to register their companies by March as part of the move away from individual ownership and operation of city buses, according to U Hla Aung, Joint Secretary of the Yangon Region Transport Authority (YRTA).

Registered companies will be effective in providing proper management, he added.

"Related to this matter, we haven't forced YBS owners to become shareholders. We have just said that YBS buses currently operating in town must belong to companies holding a title. If they have any difficulty, they can submit their difficulties and we are ready to cooperate with them," said U Hla Aung.

Under the new YBS system, the YRTA has allowed older buses to operate in the town so their owners do not suffer losses.

"We have already negotiated with the Union government to grant import slips and de-register buses from the 1999-2003 model years which are in poor condition in terms of energy sufficiency and which do not match the city's features. We have already granted permissions to bus owners. After de-registration, they will have to move out or withdraw from the business. And, if they do not want to operate under the (Ka) (B) trip transportation license in our bus line, they would be allowed to function as a private ferry service. If they plan to sell the buses and move to other regions, we would allow them to conduct the process under the business license law. We have not told them to stop," said U Hla Aung.

"To provide better transportation services, individual YBS bus owners are required to shift to the company system. Nearly two out of three YBS buses operating in Yangon region are now company-owned vehicles. But, some YBS buses are still owned by individuals. So, we will push for all buses to become company-owned vehicles," said U Phyo Min Thein, chief minister of Yangon Region.

Currently, there are more than 700 YBS buses, belonging to the 1999-2003 model years, which are in poor condition, have low energy efficiency, and do not match the city's features.

(Translated by Hay Mar)

Write for us

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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.

Strong corporate governance would make access to financing easy: officials

By Nyein Nyein

IF the corporate governance of public and listed companies is strong, they would find it easy to access capital from banks and get shareholders to trust and invest in them, said U Aung Naing Oo, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Investment and Foreign Economic Relations.

"Shoddy corporate governance could yield unexpected results for companies. Poor governance comes with high risk. Naturally, investors trust companies with good corporate governance because such companies have low risk of running into losses. Our people do not have much awareness about corporate governance. So, they are not able to analyze the market potential (of companies) and are not very willing to purchase shares. We have faced many similar situations. Once the corporate governance regulations are published, there will be good access to financing for companies. Additionally, public investors, banks, and other investor organizations would be able to easily evaluate the financial performance of companies," said U Aung Naing Oo.

Therefore, the Advisory Committee on Corporate Governance Reform will publish corporate governance regulations for public and listed enterprises in April.

"Corporate governance will help listed companies and public companies to regulate their management to ensure compliance with the best governance practices along with transparency and accountability. Once the regulation is instituted, all companies will have to comply with them," according to the Advisory Committee on Corporate Governance Reform. "Corporate governance is related to access to financing. When an enterprise tries to get financial support from banks, they look at how good the firm's corporate governance is. Earlier, there was no proper corporate governance in companies, and banks also found it difficult to analyze how companies were being managed. Now, corporate governance regulations will ease access to financing," said U Aung Naing Oo. "Currently, public and listed companies may be facing certain challenges in complying with the corporate governance regulations. The main challenges involve shareholders being unaware of their rights, weaknesses in transparency, and little awareness about the role of directors," he added. Therefore, corporate governance will be promoted step by step at public companies and listed companies. This would include conduct of discussions and awareness programmes and distribution of director's handbooks. In addition, the Myanmar Institute of Directors would be formed, and training courses on the responsibilities of directors would be provided.

Myanmar drafted the corporate governance regulations in cooperation with the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in 2013. The Advisory Committee on Corporate Governance Reform was formed in 2018 and, it started functioning in January, 2019. *(Translated by Hay Mar)*

Trade at Hteekhee gate touches $558 mln in Oct-Jan

BILATERAL trade between Thailand and Myanmar through the Hteekhee border gate between 1 October and 24 January in the 2019-2020 financial year rose slightly to US$558 million from $554.5 million registered in the year-ago period, according to data from the Commerce Ministry.

During the October-January period, exports through the Hteekhee gate stood at $550.48 million, while imports fell short of $7.7 million. Exports of natural gas from Taninthayi Region contributed to the enormous increase in trade through the Hteekhee gate in the previous fiscal, said an official from the ministry.

Normally, the Myawady gate sees the largest trade among the Myanmar-Thailand checkpoints. The rise in exports through the Hteekhee gate had boosted the value of the Myanmar-Thailand border trade in the 2018-2019FY.

Of the seven border trade points between Myanmar and Thailand, Myeik gate has witnessed a decrease in trade in the current financial year, while the remaining gates have reported an increase.

Myanmar primarily exports natural gas, fishery products, coal, tin concentrate (SN 71.58 per cent), coconut (fresh and dry), beans, and bamboo shoots to Thailand. It imports capital goods such as machinery, raw industrial goods such as cement and fertilizers, and consumer goods such as cosmetics and food products from the neighboring country.—Ko Htet

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

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New Housing Insurance Package offers 14 types of coverage

A press conference on the Housing Insurance Package (HIP) held in Yangon.
PHOTO: KHIN MAUNG HTWE

MYANMA Insurance and the Ministry of Planning, Finance and Industry and Shin Ye Htut Group jointly launched a Housing Insurance Package (HIP) on 6 February at the MI head office in Yangon.

"We (Myanma Insurance) arranged this Housing Insurance Package as part of efforts to underpin the Union government's low-cost and affordable housing projects," said Dr. Sandar Oo, Managing Director of Myanma Insurance.

"Low-cost and affordable apartments can be bought on installment, with loan periods ranging from 10 to 30 years, in accordance with the policy of the banks. But, the future is not ours to see. Sometimes, a buyer may die or become disabled before paying back the entire loan taken from a bank. Besides, a natural disaster can strike anytime. We (Myanma Insurance) have arranged the Housing Insurance Package to provide insurance to people to protect them from financial losses caused by 14 disasters that are mostly seen in Myanmar," she added.

At the press conference, Myanma Insurance's General Manager U Khin Maung Win gave details about the HIP to the press.

"The significance of HIP is that it covers 14 insurances, including life, fire, flood, earthquake, and storm. HIP can ensure those who buy apartments on installment through banks feel secure and banks lend cash to buyers with security," said U Ye Htut, Chairman of the Shin Ye Htut Group.

The HIP is being offered for low-cost housing, affordable housing, and high-cost housing.

The insurance package is aimed at helping ordinary people, government employees, and pensioners own apartments, said U Khin Maung Win.

The HIP comes at a time when the Yangon Region government is planning to building one million housing units in the region.

"The same kind of HIP internationally provides just life cover. But, our HIP covers 14 areas, including life insurance," said Dr. Sandar Oo.

Myanma Insurance's HIP covers fire, lightning strike, explosion, plane crash, earthquake, storm, flood, damage, damage to water tank and water pipe, damage caused by uprooting of trees, fire and smoke, burglary, broken window.

It also offers two types of premiums: budget premium and non-budget premium.—Khin Maung Htwe

Trump confirms killing of AQAP chief in Yemen

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump confirmed Thursday that the US had killed the leader of Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula — days after the jihadist group claimed responsibility for a mass shooting at a US naval base.

The US "conducted a counterterrorism operation in Yemen that successfully eliminated Qassim al-Rimi, a founder and the leader of Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP)," Trump said in a White House statement.

AQAP claimed responsibility on Sunday for a December 6 shooting at US Naval Air Station Pensacola in Florida, in which a Saudi Air Force officer killed three American sailors.

The announcement came with Trump touting US resolve following the killings of Islamic State group leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi in October last year and top Iranian general Qasem Soleimani three months later.

Washington considers AQAP to be the worldwide jihadist network's most dangerous branch.

The Sunni extremist group has thrived in the chaos of years of civil war between Yemen's Saudi-backed government and Shiite rebels who control the capital.

"Under Rimi, AQAP committed unconscionable violence against civilians in Yemen and sought to conduct and inspire numerous attacks against the United States and our forces," Trump said. "His death further degrades AQAP and the global al-Qaeda movement, and it brings us closer to eliminating the threats these groups pose to our national security."

'Eliminating terrorists'

Trump did not give any details about the circumstances or the timing of the operation.

But it follows the killing of al-Rimi's predecessor Nasir al-Wuhayshi in June 2015, as part of the US's long-running drone campaign in Yemen.

The following year top regional AQAP emir Jalal Belaidi, alias Abu Hamza, was also killed in a drone strike in the war-torn country.— AFP ■

In this file photo reproduction of a combo of two pictures of a suspected military chief of al-Qaeda network in Yemen, identified as Qassem al-Rimi (or Qassim al-Rimi), shows the activist on a Yemeni interior ministry document in two different undated images. US President Donald Trump confirmed on 6 February, 2020 that US forces had killed the leader of jihadist group Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula in Yemen. Yemeni Ministry of Interior. **PHOTO: AFP**

New 'mercy flight' due to leave rebel-held Yemen capital: WHO source

SANAA — A plane is due to evacuate 24 critically ill Yemenis from the rebel-held capital on Friday, a World Heath Organization source said, as the UN seeks to consolidate a medical air bridge.

A first "mercy flight" evacuated seven children from Sanaa on Monday for medical treatment in the Jordanian capital Amman and the United Nations is eager to build the necessary confidence between the warring parties to enable more.

"A plane carrying 24 patients and their companions is scheduled to leave today from Sanaa to Amman," a World Health Organization source told AFP.

A Saudi-led coalition that has been fighting in support of the beleaguered Yemeni government since 2015, has kept Sanaa airport closed to commercial flights since 2016.

But in November, the coalition announced that it was prepared to allow medical evacuations from the airport as a confidence-building measure to support UN peace efforts. — AFP ■

Election posters featuring Sinn Fein President Mary Lou McDonald (top), Irish Prime Minister Leo Varadkar (middle) seen in Dublin ahead of a general election on Sunday. **PHOTO: AFP**

Final scramble for votes before Ireland goes to the polls

DUBLIN — Ireland on Friday entered the final day of campaigning before this weekend's election, as polls predicted a historic three-way fight for control of the next government.

Prime Minister Leo Varadkar, of the Fine Gael party, was canvassing in the western town of Ennis while Fianna Fail leader Micheal Martin was in his home city of Cork, in the south.

But the two centre-right parties, who have had a duopoly on power for decades, were facing a stiff challenge from Sinn Fein, whose flagship policy is reuniting the republic with British-run Northern Ireland.

An Irish Times/Ipsos MRBI poll published Monday put the republicans on 25 per cent, suggesting its left-wing policies to tackle a housing and healthcare crisis have popular appeal.

Fianna Fail were on 23 per cent with Fine Gael on 20 per cent. Varadkar has touted his successful handling of Brexit negotiations, which eased immediate fears that a damaging split between Britain and the European Union could hurt Ireland.

Polls open at 0700 GMT on Saturday but 12 islands off Ireland's west coast began voting on Friday as a precaution against bad weather which can affect the transport of ballot boxes by boat.

The smallest — Inishfree — has an electorate of just four.

'Miscalculation'

Eoin O'Malley, of Dublin City University, called Varadkar's decision to call an election one week after Brexit a "miscalculation" as it focused attention on his party's failings.

"Because Brexit was actually happening during the election campaign, they thought that it might put it back up as an issue," he told AFP.

"But really for most people the issues are that they're spending long periods of time commuting to work and can't afford to buy a home and can barely afford to pay the rent."— AFP ■

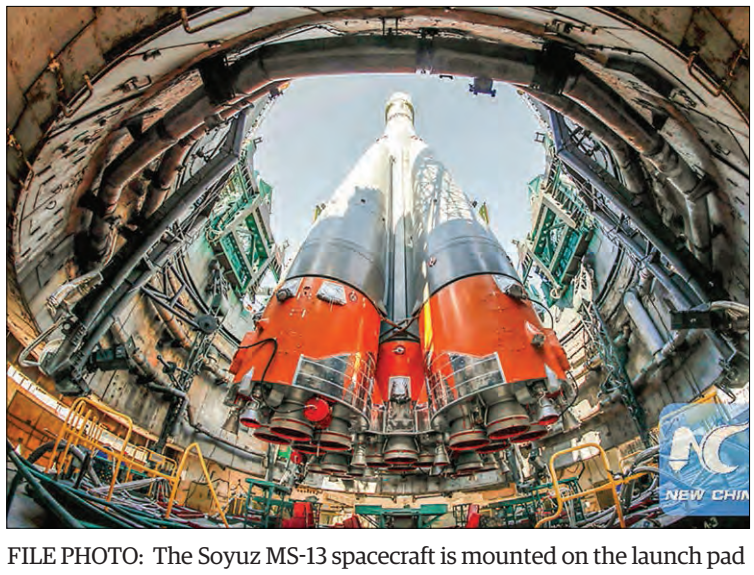
Russia sends 34 British communication satellites to space

MOSCOW — A Russian carrier rocket delivered 34 communication satellites of British company OneWeb into orbit on Friday, the Russian state space corporation Roscosmos said.

The launch from the Baikonur Cosmodrome in Kazakhstan was carried out under a contract signed in 2015 by OneWeb, Roscosmos and France's Arianespace, the corporation said in a statement.

One Web intends to deploy a total of about 600 satellites in low Earth orbit and provide 24-hour global communication coverage by 2021. Under the contract, Russia will launch all the satellites using its Soyuz carrier rockets.

The first six OneWeb satellites were launched from French Guiana in February 2019. —Xinhua ■



FILE PHOTO: The Soyuz MS-13 spacecraft is mounted on the launch pad at the Russian-leased Baikonur cosmodrome in Kazakhstan on 18 July, 2019. **PHOTO: AFP**

Europe's top economies falter as new virus clouds outlook

BERLIN — Tumbling industrial production in Germany and France in December rounded off a year blighted by trade war tensions for Europe's top economies, official data showed Friday, while the novel coronavirus outbreak threatens hopes of a 2020 revival.

Growth in both nations sputtered in 2019, with output actually shrinking for Germany in the April-June quarter and for France in October-December.

Germany's trade surplus narrowed last year. **PHOTO: AFP**

German growth overall slowed from 1.5 per cent in 2018 to just 0.6 per cent in 2019, according to preliminary data, while France did better but still slipped from 1.7 to 1.2 per cent.

In December, manufacturing output was down 3.5 per cent month-on-month in Germany and off 2.8 percent in its western neighbour.

In Germany, "there are very few positive elements to find in the December industrial data," ING bank economist Carsten Brzeski said, adding that the figures point to Europe's top economy having shrunk in the fourth quarter. In the final months of last year, there was still widespread uncertainty about whether the US and China would bury the trade hatchet, after months of tough negotiations and tit-for-tat tariffs. Figures released Friday showed Germany's trade surplus — the amount exports outweigh imports — shrank slightly from 228 billion euros ($250 billion) in 2018 to 224 billion euros in 2019.

The US and China last month signed a "phase one" trade pact, designed to ease the commercial tensions whose knock-on effects last year battered European manufacturers.

Meanwhile Britain's departure from the European Union — pushing the risk of a fresh "no deal" cliff-edge back to December — also helped brighten the mood.

More positive "soft" indicators like German business sentiment surveys in Germany have prompted some analysts to see clearer skies ahead for manufacturers. Despite December's data, "forward-looking indicators continue to point to a modest cyclical rebound in the near term," said Frederik Ducrozet, strategist at Pictet Wealth Management. —AFP ■

Former WTO chief says EU has upper hand in post-Brexit trade

BRUSSELS — The former head of the World Trade Organization expects Britain to struggle for years to redefine its ties with Europe — and says Brits won't swallow US products like chlorinated chicken.

In an interview with AFP, Pascal Lamy — who has also been an EU trade commissioner — said London and Brussels may yet come to a bare bones trade deal this year to avoid a breakdown in ties.

But further negotiations will continue for many years after that, and the smaller British economy will be at a disadvantage compared to the much bigger and richer European Union.

If 2020 and the post-Brexit transition period come to an end without a deal between London and Brussels, cross-Channel trade will be disrupted by border checks and tariffs.

"The EU and the United Kingdom would fall under WTO rules, which isn't hell but is far from today's heaven. It would hurt, which would be stupid," Lamy told AFP in Brussels.

"In my opinion, they'll find a way — that's the diplomat's art."

As things stand, the two camps seem far apart as, in Lamy's phrase, Prime Minister Boris Johnson and EU negotiator Michel Barnier put on their "war paint" ahead of intense negotiations.

BoJo the 'bluffer'

Johnson insists he will give no ground on reasserting British sovereignty over its fishing waters, ending free movement of citizens and escaping from EU laws and regulations.

But Barnier's negotiating mandate will be equally clear that Britain will not enjoy privileged access to the EU market if it does not accept tough conditions to ensure a level playing field.—AFP ■

Transferring Distributor for Registered Products

Distribution of following (1) Kind of pesticide registered by **SHANDONG BINNONG TECHNOLOGY CO.,LTD.** is transferring from **SWEETY TRADING CO.,LTD.** to **MYANMAR KETE CO.,LTD.** Any Objection regarding to this transfer can notify at Myanmar Pesticide Registration Board within (14) days.

No	Trade Name	Active Ingredient	Registration Type	Registration No
1.	BNS Buta B	Butachlor 60% EW	Provisional Registration	P2017-3660

MYANMAR KETE CO.,LTD.
No.(125-127), Kha 11 street, Myoe Thit(A+B)Quarter, Insein Township, Yangon.

Transferring Distributor for Registered Pesticides

Distribution and registration processes of pesticide produced by **SHANDONG BINNONG TECHNOLOGY CO.,LTD.** are transferring from **MARGAMIN COMPANY LIMITED** to **MYANMAR KETE CO.,LTD.** Any Objection regarding to this transfer can notify at Myanmar Pesticide Registration Board for the following Pesticide within (14)days.

No	Trade Name	Active Ingredient	Registration Type	Registration No
1.	BNS Bispyri 10	Bispyribac-sodium10% SC	Provisional	P2017-3657
2.	BNS Imida	Imidacloprid 70% WDG	Provisional	2015-2641

MYANMAR KETE CO.,LTD.
No.(125-127), Kha 11 street, Myoe Thit(A+B)Quarter, Insein Township, Yangon.

Transferring Distributor for Registered Pesticides

Distribution and registration processes of pesticide produced by **SHANDONG BINNONG TECHNOLOGY CO.,LTD.** are transferring from **ANAWRAHTA PRODUCTION CO.,LTD.** to **MYANMAR BYTER AGRO TECH CO.,LTD.** Any Objection regarding to this transfer can notify at Myanmar Pesticide Registration Board for the following Pesticide within (14)days.

No	Trade Name	Active Ingredient	Registration Type	Registration No
1.	BNS Prefit	Pretilachlor 30% EC	Provisional Registration	P2017-3664

MYANMAR BYTER AGRO TECH CO.,LTD.
No.(125-127), Kha 11 street, Myoe Thit(A+B)Quarter, Insein Township, Yangon.

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V SOUL OF LUCK VOY. NO. (1303N)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V SOUL OF LUCK VOY. NO. (1303N) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 8-2-2020 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of AWPT 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 SAMUDERA SHIPPING LINES
Phone No: 2301185

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V ALS SATSUKI VOY. NO. (015W/E)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V ALS SATSUKI VOY. NO. (015W/E) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 8-2-2020 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of MITT/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.

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S NEW GOLDEN SEA LINES
Phone No: 2301185

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V YANGTZE BRIGHTNESS

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V YANGTZE BRIGHTNESS VOY. NO. (1870) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 9-2-2020 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of MITT-5 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 CHUN AN INTERNATIONAL LOGISTICS CO, LTD.
Phone No: 2301928

Puzzle of Kyat Cave in Loikaw

By Maung Tha (Archaeology)

MOUNTAIN ranges linking with Shan plateau among various hills and mountains which emerged depending on geological conditions of the Earth are stretching from Kayin, Mon and Kayah states to Taninthayi Region. Natural caves and tunnels position in some parts of these mountain ranges, including Kyat Cave in Kayah State located in southern part of Shan plateau.

Stalactites, natural tracks of water, ancient Buddha images and votive tablets at natural caves attracted travellers. However, some pieces of wood assumed as damaged coffins in Kyat Cave caught interest of the travellers, increasing number of visitors. That was why Kyat Cave became a tourist destination of Myanmar.

Loikaw

According to the records of the Ministry of Home Affairs, as Loikaw was established by U Thiri in 1200 Myanmar Era (1838 AD), it was in the past named Thiridaw Village established near Taungkwe Hill. As such, the village was called Loikhaw in Shan language. In this regard, Loi means hill and Khaw, separately in Shan language. Later, Loikhaw changed to Lweikaw and then to Loikaw.

On 20 April 1888, Chieftain of Kandarawady Sao La Wee established his palace in Loikaw. Kayah region, which was located as Kayinni State before regaining independence of Myanmar, became Kayah State in 1951.

Existing Loikaw Township was formed with 19 wards and 123 villages of 12 village-tracts on 17 March 2016. Loikaw Township on 598.06 square miles of land shares border with Shadaw Township in the east, Demawhso Township in the west, Bawlakhe Township in the south and Pekhon and Hsihseng townships of Shan State in the north.

Loikaw Township is filled with lesser area of plains but with thick forests and mountains. Among the hills, Thiri Mingala Hill (Taungkwe), Shwe Hill, Taungthonlon Hill, Myakalat Hill and Shweletwah Hill are famous in the township. As Bilu Creek is a main water source in Loikaw Township, Bilu Creek hydropower plant (Lawpita) supplies electricity to various towns and villages across Myanmar.

Loikaw Township at an altitude of 2,950 feet is home to Kayah, Bamar and Shan ethnics as the majority.

Kyat Cave

Travellers who arrived in Loikaw focused on visits to Taungkwe Pagoda, Lawpita and Ngwetaung Dam in the past. Nowadays, travellers pay visits to Kyat Cave in addition to the aforesaid sites.

Kyat Cave, being famous among travellers since a few years, is located 10 miles east of Loikaw. Travellers leading to Kyat Cave must come from Pinlaung to Loikaw. At the junction to Loikaw, they need to turn the left. They can reach the cave by driving along the smooth road to the foot of the hill where the cave is located.

As the mouth of the cave is 120 feet high from the foot of the hill at an altitude of 2,990 feet, brick steps were made to the hill with rails. Local people called the hill, the location of Kyat Cave, as Rasuku in Kayah language.

Currently, local Buddhist monk U Vayama leads maintenance tasks of the cave. Travellers are urged to take off foot wares before entering the cave. But, Kyat Cave, being a limestone structure, is always wet at its earthen floor.

The 2,194 metres long one-closed end cave is gradually narrowing inside. Anyone cannot walk till the end of the pavement. The 600 metres long inside part of the cave is facilitated with lighting starting from the mouth. Wooden bridges at some parts help travellers move conveniently.

We found woods and pieces of timber logs in shape of coffins

Kyat Cave. **PHOTOS: MAUNG THA (ARCHAEOLOGY)**

Wooden bridge linking to the cave.

around 300 feet area from the entrance. Among them, some timber logs were carved in shape of coffins but some were sawn timber. No structure in good conditions was found. Collapsed wooden posts and bars assumed as stages on which carved timber logs might be put were found near the walls inside the cave. Some of the stages were 20 feet high from the cave floor.

Although local people said there remained human skeletons in the coffins, not only fossils but remains of humans were found there at present. However, some pieces of earthen pot were seen near the pieces of wood. That is why it needs to conduct research on these pieces whether or not related to the customs of Myanmar in breaking the water pot at a time when corpse was conveyed to the graveyard.

It was a strange fact that although the carved wooden pieces found in Kyat Cave were assumed as coffins, there was no piece of human bones.

A large number of woods assumed as coffins were found in the interior part of the cave. One ends of wood were on the interior walls and other ends on the cave floor in disarray. Drag-holes were seen at some timber logs. It can be assumed that these logs were tied with ropes to pull them out from the foot of hill to the cave and to control them inside the cave not to drop into the ravine.

The coffin shaped logs were carved of teak, most of which were broken and damaged. Each of them was eight to 15 feet long. The carved parts were about 20 inches to two feet wide. As the logs were longer than the area where a human body could be put, anyone did not know when the logs existed and these were in shape of coffins, Kyat Cave became a puzzle one.

Coffins hanging at rocky hill side

A cremation custom happened in China from 400 to 2,500 years ago that coffins in which dead bodies were kept were hung at the rocks for cremation. Similar hanging coffins were found in Indonesia and the Philippines. Especially, Bao race residing in southern China practised hanging coffins for cremation of remains.

We saw wooden coffins in various sizes and forms of logs put on the edges of rocks and hung at the rocky walls in the caves.

Hanging the coffins of dead bodies aimed to protect them danger of wildlife and to invite gods from the heaven. Due to the belief that gods from the heaven call the dead, coffins were placed on the high stages to be closer to the gods.

Evidences were found that similar traditions were practised in some parts of China, the Philippines and Indonesia. However, anyone could not know the aim of hanging the coffins but they could generally assume it might be easy access for the dead to the gods.

Coffins in Kyat Cave

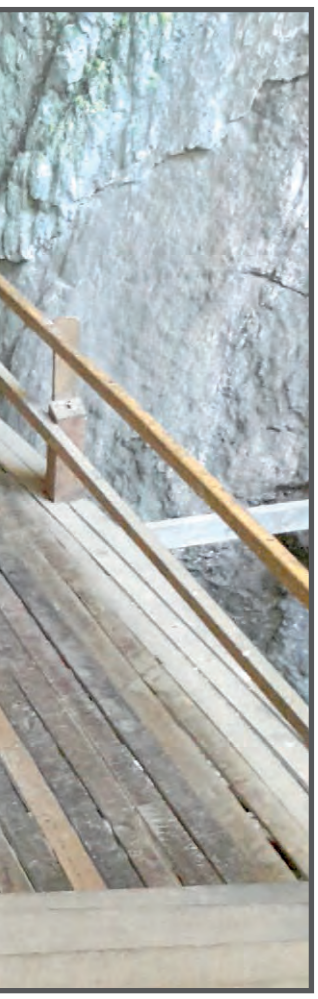
The evidences on hanging the coffins in which dead bodies were kept were found at Kyat Cave in Myanmar. However, any fossils, pieces of bones and bodies were not found around the coffins. That was why some researchers assumed pieces of woods in Kyat Cave might not be coffins. Post-graduate students of Anthropology Department of Yangon University reviewed these pieces might be the carved boats similar to the coffins. These boats might be stored in the cave due to something reasons. Although each human could not have more than seven feet high, the coffin-designed logs in the cave were sizes for two persons.

It was a puzzle for all that the exact fact when the carved logs were sent into the cave and who sent them could not be discovered, catching attentions of the travellers.

Although the custom on cremating the dead bodies in the carved logs into the cave was not found in Myanmar, teak log coffins were found on roofs of Bo Krai and Ban Rai caves in Pang Mapha District of Mae Hong Son Province in northern Thailand. As Pang Mapha District of Thailand is located in the east of Loikaw, close to same latitude via mountain ranges, if research could discover the relations of culture between the two areas, the puzzle of Kyat Cave could be solved.

Travellers to Kyat Cave are allowed to pay visits to the cave from 9 am to 4 pm daily. As interest of local and international travellers helps develop tourism industry at Kyat Cave, if firm evidences can be exposed, Kyat Cave will have more development.

Translated by Than Tun Aung



Destroyed coffins inside the Cave.

Yangon United midfielder Shori tries to get the ball past an opponent. **PHOTO: YUFC**

Myanmar National League: Yangon to play ISPE today

MYANMAR National League giants Yangon United will play their MNL Week-5 match against the Institute of Sports and Physical Education (ISPE) football club today at the Yangon United Sports Complex.

Currently, Yangon United is in the second place and ISPE F.C. in the tenth place in the MNL standing table.

Yangon United's Shori, who scored a goal for the team in the previous match against Sagaing United, stated on the official website of the club that he would try his best for a good result.

"We have a tight schedule this month. But, we are preparing the best for every match. Not only for this match, but also the coming match against Ho Chi Minh City, we will do our best.

I am happy to score the first goal for the team, and it was a nice assist of Mg MgLwin. So, I will work more for the team," stated Shori.

The midfielder also commented on the ISPE team, which has just been promoted from Myanmar National League 2.

"The lads from ISPE seem to be active and young. But, we won't underestimate (them) and focus on the match," Shori stated.

The match between Yangon United and ISPE F.C. will start at 3.30 p.m. today. —Lynn Thit (Tgi) ■

Week-20 of Myanmar Futsal League to begin today

THE Week-20 matches of the Myanmar Futsal League will start today at the National Indoor Stadium II in Yangon.

While AMM Brothers Futsal Club will play against the U-19 futsal team of the Myanmar Football Federation at 8.30 a.m., the much-anticipated match between first placed Victoria University College Futsal Club and third placed GV Futsal Club will take place at 10 a.m.

Meanwhile, Winner Futsal Club will meet On Doctor Futsal Club at 11.30 a.m., Myoma JY Futsal Club will face second placed Myanmar Imperial University Futsal Club at 1 p.m., Dream Team Futsal Club will play Do DoKoKo Futsal Club at 2.30 p.m., and Futsal Chit Thu Futsal Club will take on Let WelThone Nara Futsal Club at 4 p.m.

Currently, VUC F.C. has the five of the highest scorers in the league. While De Carvaiho Junior has scored 35 goals, Thaigo Mora De Oliveira has bagged 30 goals for the team. Three other VUC players — Aung Zin Oo, Nyein Min Soe, and Naing Lin Tun Kyaw — have scored 21 goals each for the team.—Lynn Thit (Tgi) ■

De Carvaiho Junior (No. 8) of VUC F.C. celebrates his goal over Myoma JY F.C. in the Week-19 match of the Myanmar Futsal League. **PHOTO: MFF FUTSAL**

Barcelona's new coach Quique Setien (right) is trying to introduce a new style of play that suits Lionel Messi. **PHOTO : AFP/FILE / LLUIS GENE**

Barca in turmoil trying to make up for Messi's lost time

MADRID: Lionel Messi admitted in December he could soon retire but Barcelona's frenzied attempts to make the most of his final years appear to be having the opposite effect.

As Athletic Bilbao's players celebrated Inaki Williams' 94th-minute winner at San Mames on Thursday (Feb 6) night, Messi stood still in the centre circle, hands on his hips and staring down at the ground in front.

He had missed a chance to win it, his shot saved by Unai Simon, just moments before Williams' flicked header crept inside the post to send Barca out of the Copa del Rey before the semi-finals for the first time in 10 years.

Messi has been the inspiration and saviour of this Barcelona team, his finger prints on their string of La Liga titles more than anyone else's.

But as Bilbao proved, when Messi misses, Barca are there to be hit, their insecurities known and ready to be exposed.

The political turmoil now engulfing the club stems in part from desperation, not to waste Messi's final years or at least to be seen to be trying to make the best of them.

He will be 33 in June and said at the Ballon d'Or presentation retirement was "approaching" but a sense of time running out haa long-lingered at Camp Nou.

When Messi won the Champions League in 2015, aged 27, the assumption was there would be more but instead there has been only disappointment, three quarter-finals and one semi-final, the last two tournaments ending in capitulation.

The fear of a repeat and another year squandered was instrumental in the decision to sack Ernesto Valverde last month, even if players insisted losses to Roma and Liverpool were not down to their coach.

After the clumsy appointment of Quique Setien, in which Xavi Hernandez was approached but not persuaded, and then a botched January transfer window, when strikers were targeted but not signed, frustration grew.—AFP