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Monday, 10 February 2020

Yangon Electricity Supply Corp opens 33/11 kV-5 MVA substation in Twantay



Union Minister U Win Khaing and Yangon Region Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein visit the 33/11 kV-5 MVA substation in Twantay Township yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

YANGON Electricity Supply Corporation opened its 33/11 kV-5 MVA substation in Twantay Township, the south district of Yangon Region, yesterday morning.

Union Minister for Electricity and Energy U Win Khaing attended the opening ceremony, and made a speech on power distribution in the region.

He emphasized the importance of public collaboration while the ministry is working for more distribution of electricity for socioeconomic development of people.

Out of 1,031 villages in the south district of the Yangon Region, electricity from the national grid has reached to 598 villages amounting 58 per cent

of the total villages in 2018-2019 fiscal year, increasing from 475 villages of 46 per cent in 2018.

For the entire area of the Yangon Region, 64 per cent of the villages have access to electricity in 2018-2019 fiscal year, and is expected to increase to 87 per cent in 2019-2020 FY. The Ministry has also targeted 100 percent power supply to the

whole region by December 2020.

Yangon Region Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein also delivered a speech and Twantay Township Pyithu Hluttaw MP U Myint Lwin and Khettiya New Village' Administrator U Wunna Soe expressed thanks for the substation. — MNA

(Translated by Aung Khin)

Mon National Day commemorates 73rd Anniversary in Mawlamyine

THE 73rd anniversary of Mon National Day, which falls on the first day after the full moon on Tabodwe 1382 ME, was commemorated at Than Lwin Garden, Mawlamyine in Mon State, yesterday.

The guests attending the ceremony were Union Minister for Ethnic Affairs Nai Thet Lwin, Mon State Chief Minister Dr Aye Zan, State Hluttaw Speaker Daw Tin Ei, Commander of the South East Command Maj-Gen Myo Moe Aung, state ministers, Hluttaw representatives, Chairman Min Banyar San of the Central Committee for Organizing Mon National Day, department officials, and Mon and other ethnic nationals.

Firstly, the ceremony was inaugurated by Kamawut Dat-taw Monastery Nayaka Sayadaw Baddanta Panita Maha Tre, Union Minister Nai Thet Lwin, Chief Minister Dr Aye Zan, State Hluttaw Speaker Daw Tin Ei, State Minister of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation Dr Min Kyi Win, and Chairman Min Banyar San cutting ribbons. This was followed by hoisting the Mon National Flag and attendees saluted the Union Flag and Mon National Flag and Mon martyrs.

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Union Minister Thura U Aung Ko inspects maintenance work of Fort Danubyu

UNION Minister Thura U Aung Ko of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture inspected the maintenance work of ancient Fort Danubyu in Ayeyawady Region, where late General Maha Bandoola resisted the British during

Union Minister Thura U Aung Ko inspects the maintenance work of ancient Fort Danubyu where General Maha Bandoola resisted the British during the First Anglo-Burmese War.
PHOTO: MNA

the First Anglo-Burmese War.

First, the Union Minister was briefed by Director-General U Kyaw Oo Lwin of the Department of Archeology and National Museum on the history of ancient Fort Danubyu, which was primarily constructed by the Mon kings and renovated by General Maha Bandoola to defend the British attacks; on the measures to maintain the fort by keeping its ancient style and avoiding the losses of its brick parts across the Ayeyawady River, with 2019-2020 financial year funds; and on

the measures to construct the necessary landscapes around it.

Next, the Union Minister and party watched the General Maha Bandoola Memorial Statute at the place within the compound of the State Pali University Uphill Monastery in Danubyu and gave instructions to make efforts to attract foreign visitors as well as to uplift morale of the next generations. He also paid homage to the Kyaikalunpun Pagoda and met members of the Pagoda's board of trustees. —MNA

(Translated by Aungthu Ya)

Yangon Nursing University holds graduation dinner



Union Minister Dr Myint Htwe delivers the speech at the Graduation Dinner of Yangon Nursing University.
PHOTO: MNA

THE University of Nursing in Yangon hosted a dinner to mark its 26th graduation ceremony on its campus on 8 February evening. Union Minister for Health and Sports Dr Myint Htwe at-

tended the dinner, and delivered a congratulatory speech urging the nursing graduates to continue further learning for advanced levels.

A total of 306 newly graduated nurses from Yangon and Mandalay will be employed soon at relevant hospitals for public healthcare services.

In 2017, Myanmar introduced a new nursing science curriculum which was designed with assistance of experts from the World Health Organization.

More midwives training schools were opened in the country, and recruitment rates were increased to 3,700 in each academic year of 2018-2019 and

the following year, expecting an increase to 4,500 in the upcoming academic year.

The 9-month courses are being conducted to generate 300 assistant nurses at the hospitals in Yangon and Mandalay, and at the 1,000-bedded hospital in Nay Pyi Taw.

At the 26th graduation ceremony of University of Nursing (Yangon), master degree certificates were conferred to 42 nurses, emergency nursing diploma to 4, bridge course to 199, bridge course (on campus) to 210, nursing science bachelor (regular) 123 and speciality nursing diploma to 74.—MNA

(Translated by Aung Khin)

Mon National Day commemorates 73rd Anniversary in Mawlamyine

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Next, Sayadaw Baddanta Katumalar delivered the opening ceremony.

After this, Union Minister Nai Thet Lwin read the Message of Greetings from State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi on the occasion of 73rd Mon National Day, and the State Chief Minister delivered a speech.

Next, Committee Chairman Min Banyar San delivered a speech and an official read the messages of greetings sent for the occasion.

Next, the Committee Chairman conferred certificates of honor upon Sayadaw Baddanta Panita Maha Tre and Nai Pan Aung for their assistance

in Mon National Day affairs over the course of many years.

After the ceremony, the Union Minister and officials observed the Mon traditional exhibition on display.

In the evening session of 73rd Mon National Day commemorations, Committee Chairman Min Banyar San first gave a speech and the New Mon State Party Chairman delivered an address.

Next, the Central Committee for Organizing 73rd Mon National Day expressed words of gratitude.

This was followed by a reading session on Mon literature, an explanation on the terrestrial poster for Mon National Day, a

round of discussions on Mon youth affairs, conferring awards for literature competition for Mon National Day and certificates of honor on donors.

Mon National Day is based on the time the Hanthawaddy Kingdom was founded by the two Mon brothers, Samala and Wimala, on the 1st Waning of Tabodwe, 1116 ME. It is celebrated where large Mon populations live, such as Kayin State and Yangon, Mandalay, Taninthayi and Ayeyawady regions.

The 73rd Mon National Day was also celebrated at People's Park in Yangon Region, Sasanna 2500 Damayone in Chanmyathazi Township of Mandalay Region, Kin Pun Chone Village of Toungoo and Shwe

Maw Daw Damayone of Bago in Bago Region, in five townships of Yebyu Township in Taninthayi Region, in Patheingyi of Ayeyawady Region, and in

Eindi Village and Pawkyugon Village Kawkaik City of Hpa-An Township in Kayin State.

Messages from the State Counsellor and the

Union Minister for Ethnic Affairs were sent to all of these commemorations. —MNA

(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

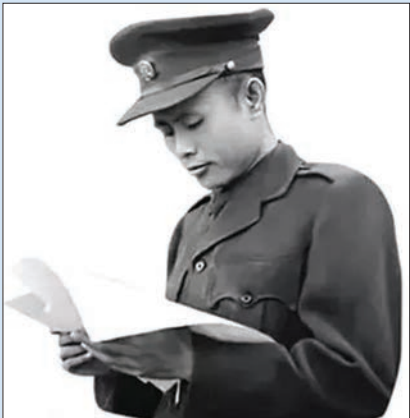


Union Minister Nai Thet Lwin and officials pose for a group photo at the 73rd Anniversary of Mon National Day in Mawlamyine yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

This work concerns every one.

There may be differences of opinion among us. However, if we have to sacrifice our lives and fight steadfastly without surrender against an aggression committed by another country, this type of effort concerns every one.

[Extract from the speech given by General Aung San at the dinner hosted by Sawbwas in Panglong on 11 February 1947]



MoHS receives donations of masks, personal protective suits

THE Ministry of Health and Sports received donations of face masks and protective suits from global Red Cross societies on 8 February to prevent infections of 2019-nCoV acute respiratory disease.

Union Minister Dr Myint Htwe attended the donation ceremony held at his office in Yangon.

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement partner groups, such as Myanmar Red Cross Society, Norwegian Red Cross, German Red Cross, Danish Red Cross, Turkish Red Crescent and Swedish Red Cross, donated 250 pairs of personal protective suits and 5,000 face masks worth about US\$16,500.

At the donation ceremony, MRC Chairman Dr Maung Maung Myint and officials said

their humanitarian group is coordinating with the MoHS to screen and control the transmission of coronavirus at the border crossings, and will also distribute educative posters and pamphlets published by the ministry and WHO.

The MRC has formed rapid response teams with 300 well-trained members to take action against acute infectious diseases.

The Union Minister expressed thanks for the donations as the items would be very useful for prevention of virus transmission.

The Ministry of Health and Sports has urged the UN agencies, INGOs and NGOs to cooperate in the control measures of 2019-nCoV.—MNA

(Translated by Aung Khin)



Union Minister Dr Myint Htwe receives the donation of face masks and personal protective suits from global Red Cross societies on 8 February. PHOTO: MNA

Tourism management students visit MoHT's headquarters

UNION Minister for Hotels and Tourism U Ohn Maung received 80 first-year students and 5 teachers from Mandalay Degree College yesterday.

The students are studying Bachelor of Tourism and Hospitality Management (BTHM) at the college, which is under the administration of the Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Education.

During the meeting, the Union Minister said it has been 8 years since the Ministry of Education opened B.A. Tourism courses at National Management Degree College in Yangon and Mandalay Degree College in Mandalay beginning from the 2012-2013 academic year.

He urged the students to

take the experience and practical training they will receive over the entire four-year course to become successful in every sector and duty entrusted to them in developing the nation's travel industry.

Next, Mandalay Degree College Rector Dr Sein Sein Aung explained the BTHM course processes and observational field trips, and Digital Marketing Deputy Director U Kyaw Kyaw Lwin explained the ministry's use of digital technology to promote tourism.

U Khin Maung Win, Managing Director of Nepal-based The Last Resort, then explained how bungee jumping is used to attract more travelers.

Afterwards, the Union



Union Minister U Ohn Maung and officials pose for a group photo with students from Mandalay Degree College yesterday. PHOTO: MNA

Minister and officials answered questions from the students, and a student representative expressed words of gratitude. —MNA
(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR
www.globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

ACTING CHIEF EDITOR
Aye Min Soe
dce@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

SENIOR EDITORIAL CONSULTANT
Kyaw Myaing

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

LOCAL NEWS EDITORS
Tun Tun Naing (Editor),
intlnews@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com
Nwe Nwe Tun (Sub-editor),
nwenwe9131@gmail.com

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

REPORTER
Nyein Nyein Ei,
reporter1@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

PHOTOGRAPHER
Kyaw Zeya Win @ Phoe Khwar
Kyaw Zeya

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

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

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

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

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Alaungdaw Kathapa pagoda packed with pilgrims for Tabodwe Festival

PILGRIMS thronged the Alaungdaw Kathapa cave shrine at the Alaungdaw Kathapa National Park in Kani Township of Sagaing Region for the Tabodwe Festival.

Hundreds of pilgrims could be seen at the pagoda on 7 February, the day before the full moon day of Tabodwe, and on the night of the full moon on 8 February.

Alaungdaw Kathapa, an enlightened monk, passed away on the Tabodwe full moon day. On 7 February, local visitors flocked to the cave where the remains of Alaungdaw Kathapa have been preserved.

“The pilgrims visited the cave. Earlier, only 50-100 pilgrims were seen per day. This time, every guest house was filled with visitors.

The number of pilgrims on the full moon day was estimated at over 7,000-8,000,” said U Aung Ko Lin, chair of the Alaungdaw Pagoda board of trustees.



Pilgrims arrive at the Alaungdaw Kathapa cave shrine at the Alaungdaw Kathapa National Park in Kani Township for Tabodwe Festival. PHOTO: THAN HTAY AUNG (KANI)

Every year, the Tabodwe full moon day is the high season of pilgrimage to Alaungdaw Kathapa. The park is an ASEAN heritage site and aims to preserve

the natural forest, ecosystem, and archaeological remains. It is home to elephants, tigers, leopards, gaurs, barking deer, jungle goats, mountain goats, bears, wild boars, jungle cats,

and many species of birds. However, it is more well-known as a religious site. —Than Htay Aung (Kani)
(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Myanmar-Japan Association awards scholarships for 2020 academic year

THE Myanmar-Japan Association (MJA) has called for outstanding second-year students from 8 Myanmar universities who are facing financial hardships in their pursuit of education to apply for the MJA University Scholarship Programme-2020.

The MJA Selection Committee has reviewed the preliminarily reviewed batch of applications and has selected the following 82 students eligible for the university scholarship stipend of K500,000 each for 2020 academic year:

- (1) Yangon University of Foreign Languages (Japanese Language) - 15 students
- (2) Mandalay University of Foreign Languages (Japanese Language) - 15 students
- (3) University of Education (Yangon) - 15 students

- (4) University of Education (Sagaing) - 10 students
- (5) University of Economics (Yangon) - 10 students
- (6) Technological University (Yangon) - 7 students
- (7) National University of Arts and Culture (Yangon) - 5 students
- (8) University of Nursing (Yangon) - 5 students

The scholarship conferring ceremony was held at Sein Lan Soe Pyay Garden on Inya Road, Yangon, in the afternoon of yesterday. It was attended by the MJA Chairman and executive members, professors and department heads of relevant universities, students chosen for the scholarship and their parents, and former scholarship recipients from 2014-2018.

During the ceremony, MJA Chairman U Saw Hla Min explained the reasons for providing the scholarship and its programme. He then conferred the allotted amount from the first-year stipend of K17,100,000 to each of the 57 students of 6 universities in Yangon Region.

The first-year stipend of K7,500,000 for the 25 students of Mandalay University of Foreign Languages and University of Education (Sagaing) was conferred on the students by the MJA Chairman and members during a ceremony at Link 78 Hotel, Mandalay, on 8 February 2020. The second round of stipends of K200,000 will be conferred on the successful completion of the first semester examinations.

During the conferring ceremony in Yangon, the 52 recipients of the 2014-2018 scholarships were also present and MJA officials awarded the five best students of ‘Personal and Professional Development’ for MJA Students Reunion Tour – 2019.

At the same ceremony, MJA officials awarded four junior ambassadors for the BRIDGE Summer Camp – 2020, Japan, to be held in Fukuoka.

MJA Chairman U Saw Hla Min personally handed over copies of his book, ‘My Diplomatic Journey’, to libraries of eight universities.—MNA (Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)



Chairman of the Myanmar-Japan Association, U Saw Hla Min, hands over his book entitled “My Diplomatic Journey” to an official. PHOTO: MNA

Flower festival to be held at Nay Pyi Taw Water Fountain Garden

A flower festival will be held at the Water Fountain Garden in Zabuthiri Township of Nay Pyi Taw Council Area from 14 February to 31 March.

The first event of its kind in the capital city of Myanmar will be celebrated together with entertainment programmes of famous singers, while young vocalists from Myanmar Idol will sing on the weekends till 31 March.

Daw Nu Nu Win, the manager from Sun Myat Construction Group Co., Ltd which is preparing for floral decorations at the event, said, “We have collected over 200,00 plants in more than 30 flowering plant species for the first flower festival in Nay Pyi Taw. Playgrounds for children and photography locations for couple photo shoot will also be set up at the festival.”

During the festival, the en-

try fee for each adult would be K1,500, and their children up to 5 years of age could be brought together free of charge.

The festival will also have a space for food stalls.

Ma Honey Soe, the resident in Nay Pyi Taw, said: “We are now visiting the Water Fountain Garden to see preparations for the Flower Festival in advance, and also being excited to enjoy the performance of famous singers.”

The festival is aimed at entertaining civil service personnel in Nay Pyi Taw and to attract both domestic and foreign visitors.

The Nay Pyi Taw Water Fountain Garden was opened on 4 January 2008 as an amusement park and an environmental conservation site.— Hein Min Soe

(Translated by Aung Khin)



People relax at the Nay Pyi Taw Water Fountain Garden. PHOTO: HEIN MIN SOE

External trade crosses \$13 bln as of Jan-end

MYANMAR external trade between 1 October and 31 January in the 2019-2020 financial year reached US\$13.1 billion, an increase of \$1.78 billion compared to the corresponding period of the 2018-2019 fiscal, according to the Ministry of Commerce.

During the same period in the previous FY, trade stood at \$11.3 billion, according to data released by the ministry.

Myanmar foreign trade has shown a 10 per-cent increase, year over year, under the incumbent

government’s term, said an official from the ministry.

Both maritime and border trade showed an increase in the current fiscal compared with the year-ago period, with exports estimated at over \$6.1 billion, and imports valued at \$6.98 billion.

Myanmar exports agricultural products, animal products, minerals, forest products, and finished industrial goods, while it imports capital goods, raw industrial materials, and consumer goods. The country’s export sector

relies more on the agricultural and manufacturing sectors. Export earnings from the CMP (cutting, making, and packaging) garment businesses are rising, while reliance on natural resources, such as natural gas and jade, is lessening. The government is trying to reduce the trade deficit by screening luxury import items and boosting exports. Higher exports have helped trim the trade deficit in the current fiscal, according to the Commerce Ministry.—GNLM (Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Number of 24-hour ABC convenience stores to reach 300 in two years

THE ABC Group plans to increase the number of 24-hour convenience stores it operates across the country to 300 in two years. Small and medium enterprises will play a pivotal role in the expansion of ABC convenience stores, said officials.

“At present, SMEs are still struggling to grow in Myanmar. ABC convenience stores will allow SMEs to sell their products using special offers. Our retail business is expecting to expand the number of outlets to 300 in two

years across the country. The operator will cooperate with SMEs. Some products from SMEs are of good quality, but the enterprises do not know how to penetrate the market. We will help SMEs develop,” said Mr Syed from ABC Convenience.

Currently, ABC convenience stores are located in Yangon, Mandalay, Nay Pyi Taw, and other big towns. The food suppliers for ABC stores are based in Mawlamyine, Myingyan, Heho, Kyaukpadaung, and other cities.

The food products are sold in line with the rules.

SMEs wishing to place their products in the stores are required to have an SME license and FDA certification. After obtaining an FDA certificate, the enterprises can tie up with ABC stores to sell products. The products can be sold under their logo or the ABC logo, according to ABC Convenience. —Myint Maung

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Annual inflation rate remains above 8% in Dec

THE annual rate of inflation in Myanmar, based on the Consumer Price Index, stood at 8.81 per cent in December, according to a report released by the Central Statistical Organization, under the Ministry of Planning, Finance and Industry.

The figure has remained above 8 per cent since June, 2019, while core inflation, which strips out volatile food and energy prices, has touched 9.96 per cent.

Last year, the inflation rate stood at 6.94 per cent in January, 7.07 per cent in February, 7.28 per cent in March, 7.51 per cent in April, 7.82 per cent in May, 8.08 per cent in June, 8.35 per cent in July, 8.53 per cent in August, 8.61 per cent in September, 8.6 per cent in October, 8.59 per cent in November, and 8.81 per cent in December.

The inflation rate began to climb gradually after January. It reached a peak in September, dipped slightly in November, and then jumped to its highest level in December.

In the month of December, the Myanmar Kyat strengthened against the US dollar. The price of imported oil dropped, but domestic fuel oil price remained on the higher side as locals headed out for vacations.

There was a remarkable increase in CPI in the food, household goods and maintenance, transportation, other commodities, clothing, health, education services, recreation, culture, non-food, and tobacco and beverages groups. The price of telecommunications stayed flat.

In December, Magway Region recorded the highest inflation rate of 12.23 per cent, followed by Sagaing Region (11.98 per cent), and Ayeyawady Region (11.03 per cent). The rate fluctuated with a maximum rate of 15.38 per cent recorded in Mandalay Region and a minimum of 3.16 per cent reported in Rakhine State.

Earlier, the inflation rate was calculated based on a 2006 survey. The base year was later changed to 2012. The Central Statistical Organization conducted a Household Income and Expenditure Survey in 82 townships in November 2012. To reduce inflation, the concerned authorities have been making efforts on the basis of policies on finance, trade, and foreign currency control, in keeping with the second five-year National Development plan. — Htet Myat

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

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Diplomats, families tour Myeik Archipelago

LED by Union Minister U Kyaw Tin of the Ministry of International Cooperation, officials from the foreign embassies in Myanmar and their families flew to Myeik from Dawei yesterday.

The diplomats and families toured the Myeik River by in a launch, and studied the surroundings of Pa Htaung Pa Htet Island. They also visited the Atu Lan Thi Shwe Thar Lyaung Pagoda on Pa Htet Island, and studied soft shell crab farming of Phae Phyo Tun Company.

In the afternoon, the diplomats visited Laykyun Si Mi Pagoda, natural bird nest house and Myeik Shopping Centre in Myeik Town.

In the evening, Union Minister U Kyaw Tin and his wife hosted a dinner for the diplomats and families at the Myeik Cooperation Public Co., Ltd. — Khaing Htoo (Myeik IPRD)

(Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)



Union Minister U Kyaw Tin, diplomats and their family members pose for a group photo at the Atu Lan Thi Shwe Thar Lyaung Pagoda on Pa Htet Island. **PHOTO: MNA**

Myaung Zee ethnic tribe in Wa Self-Administered Division holds New Year festival

MYAUNG Zee (or) Hmont ethnic community celebrated their New Year festival at Sanpya village in Hopan town of Wa Self-Administered Division yesterday morning.

Dr Kyaw Tun, the Rector of Lashio University, made a speech to mark the festival, and the Myaung Zee (or) Hmont Ethnic People Development and Cultural Group's Chairman U Soe Min explained the history of their people and celebration of the festival.

The festival was also held with traditional spinning top fighting contest and traditional dance of cultural dance troupe.

Myaung Zee (or) Hmont people are living mainly in northern, southern and eastern Shan State, as well as in Wa Special Region -2. The festival was the second time of its kind.

— Sai Zaw Kham (IPRD)

(Translated by Aung Khin)



Myaung Zee or Hmont ethnic tribe celebrate their New Year festival at Sanpya village in Hopan, Wa Self-Administered Division yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

Illegal drugs seized in Laukkai, Hsenwi, Mabein Tsps

A combined force containing police officers from the Drug Enforcement Division arrested a Chinese citizen named Lau Yi Xu in Laukkai Township on 8 February after discovering 24,000 psychotropic tablets on his person. He was walking along the Laukkai-Yanlonkyaing Road when police apprehended him.

Similarly, officers arrested three people named Shauk Kyein Shone (a) Tartee, Kyauk Pi Shwin and Lauk Hua in the same afternoon after discovering 22,000 psychotropic tablets in the car they were driving on



the Muse-Mandalay Road near Oriental Tollgate, Hsenwi Township of Shan State.

Then on the evening of the same day, police arrested two people identified as Lapar and Zaw Yaw for illegal drug possession on the Mabein-Momeik Highway in Mabein Township. They were transporting 104,000 psychotropic tablets worth an estimated K208 million in their vehicle when they were apprehended.

Myanmar Police Force reports they have opened cases against all suspects under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law. —MNA

(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

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As nations bicker, a greener future evolves in finance

LONDON— Away from the toxic atmosphere at climate summit talks, in boardrooms, banks and trading houses, a transformation in green finance is under way.

Its backers hope it could profitably help save the planet.

Regardless of the politics of climate change, there is real money to be made today in the exploding market for bonds and other instruments invested in environmentally sustainable projects.

But in the final analysis, uniform regulation derived from collective political action will be vital both for the markets and for the planet itself, observers ac-



Analysts believe that green finance could help save the planet and make money for investors. PHOTO: AFP

knowledge.

Hard-nosed US investors in fields such as solar panels are not necessarily

driven by anxiety about global warming, Climate Bonds Initiative chief executive Sean Kidney said.

“Most of them are Republicans for god’s sake,” he said at a conference on climate finance organised

by the European Bank of Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) in London.

“They care only about price,” he added, predicting the transition to a low-carbon future would generate \$90 trillion investment by 2050 in areas including low-energy cooling, urban farming and greener transport.

Kidney’s independent organisation certifies “green bonds” issued by governments, municipalities and companies whose proceeds are devoted to sustainable development.

Notable issuers last month included the Metropolitan Transportation Authority in New York, one of

a slew of US cities unwilling to wait on President Donald Trump’s climate-sceptic administration as they vie to adapt their creaking infrastructures to a low-carbon future.

Tipping point

The investment community more broadly is running ahead of climate politics, which have been stymied by the refusal of the United States and other major economies to chart a way forward on the 2015 Paris accord.

BlackRock, the world’s biggest asset management fund, shook the industry last month by announcing it would transition out of coal-based investments.—AFP ■

Scientists race to develop vaccine for new coronavirus

BRISBANE— Scientists from the United States to Australia are using new technology in an ambitious, multi-million-dollar drive to develop a vaccine in record time to tackle China’s coronavirus outbreak.

The new virus has spread rapidly since emerging late last year in China, killing more than 800 people in the mainland and infecting over 37,000. Cases have been reported in two dozen other countries.

Coming up with any vaccine typically takes years, and involves a lengthy process of testing on animals, clinical trials on humans and regulatory approvals.

But several teams of experts are racing to develop one quicker, backed by an international coalition that aims to combat

emerging diseases, and Australian scientists hope theirs could be ready in six months.

“It is a high-pressure situation and there is a lot of weight on us,” said senior researcher Keith Chappell, part of the group from Australia’s University of Queensland.

But the scientist added he took “some solace” knowing several teams around the world were engaged in the same mission.

“The hope is that one of these will be successful and can contain this outbreak,” he said.

But even a timeframe of six months looks agonisingly slow with the virus, believed to have emerged from a market selling wild animals, killing close to 100 people every day in mainland China.—AFP ■



Scientists around the world are racing to develop a vaccine for the new coronavirus that emerged in China late last year. HOTO: AFP

Food-share apps seeking to help environment

LONDON — Jack Convery pops into a London branch of Italian eatery Coco di Mama to grab a cut-price lunch ordered on his smartphone’s food-sharing app Karma.

The 27-year-old Amazon employee with an eye for a bargain and for helping the environment uses a mobile phone app that sells surplus food from hundreds of UK restaurants at discounted prices.

“Anything I can do to help the environment and look after the budget as well is beneficial, so yeah, it’s a win-win,” Convery tells AFP after collecting his bag from the counter near Old Street Tube station. “It ends up working out much cheaper than to go to (British supermarket) Tesco and buy a meal for one,” he adds, noting that he can usually source his daily dinner for about £3.50 (\$4.54, 4.10 euros) via the app.

Decomposing food waste is a key source of greenhouse gases – and a staggering one third of all food is thrown away, according to industry estimates.

Environmental danger

Amid growing public outcry over the climate emergency, consumers are



Users of apps like Karma can pick up left over food from restaurants at cut-rate prices, an arrangement that benefits consumers, businesses and the enviroment as food waste is an important source of greenhouse gas emissions. PHOTO: AFP

switching on to the environmental danger of carbon dioxide and methane emissions.

Britain’s cafes and restaurants are also embracing apps that generate some revenue from rescued food that would otherwise be destined for landfill.

However some restaurants

happily give unsold food to homeless charities on a daily basis.

Swedish start-up Karma was founded in Stockholm in 2016 and its app now helps serve 1.0 million users in Britain, France and home market Sweden. In the UK alone, it offers 2,000 outlets.—AFP ■

Four rare mountain gorillas ‘killed by lightning’ in Uganda

KAMPALA — Four endangered mountain gorillas, including three adult females, have been killed by an apparent lightning strike in a Ugandan national park, a conservation group has said.

A post-mortem examination has been performed on the four, including a male infant,

who died on February 3 in Mgahinga National Park in southwest Uganda.

“Based on the gross lesions from the post-mortem... the tentative cause of death for all four individuals is likely to be electrocution by lightning,” the Greater Virunga Transboundary Collaboration (GVTC)

said in a statement Saturday, although laboratory confirmation will take two to three weeks.

The four were members of a group of 17 known as the Hirwa family which had crossed into the Mgahinga National Park in August last year from Volcanoes National Park in neighbouring

Rwanda.

“This was extremely sad,” GVTC executive secretary Andrew Seguya told the BBC.

“The potential of the three females for their contribution to the population was immense.”

The other 13 members of the group had been found.—AFP ■

Cooperation, consensus key for IDP resettlement success

ARMED conflicts uprooted scores of people from their homes in Myanmar and forced them to take shelter in camps for the displaced in Kachin, Shan, Kayin, and Rakhine states.

Even after the armed conflicts ceased, the issue of internally displaced persons (IDPs) remained unresolved for years.

At present, to close IDP camps and resettle the internally displaced with dignity, a National Strategy, written in keeping with current requirements and international standards, has been adopted.

The government will keep open some IDP camps where they are still needed, such as Kachin and Shan states. It will close some camps which are no longer needed or deemed necessary.

The policy of the government would ensure the displaced people rebuild their lives with safety and dignity, without depending on others.

For the development of the people, ethnic armed groups are obliged to ensure long-lasting peace. In fact, the resettlement of IDPs can be considered as part of the efforts for building a Federal Democratic Union desired by all ethnic people.

Shan states till inmates gain confidence to return to their place of origin or a place of their choice in future.

At the meetings held so far between IDPs and the authorities, the IDPs have expressed their worries about jobs, dwellings, and health services. Hence, the government is obliged to address their worries by systematically implementing its strategy in cooperation with the people, donors, and civil society organizations.

At the same time, the cooperation of IDPs is sine qua non for making the implementation a success.

Since the government took office, it has been focusing on ethnic affairs and ending armed conflicts. Peace and development are intertwined.

For the development of the people, ethnic armed groups are obliged to ensure long-lasting peace. In fact, the resettlement of IDPs can be considered as part of the efforts for building a Federal Democratic Union desired by all ethnic people.

Hence, participation by the people with the Union Spirit is a must for all of us.



By Maung Hlaing

PHOTO: PHOE KHWAR

WHEN we were very very small, before we had even learned to read, we loved to listen to the tales grandpa or teachers told us. As far as 'Unity' is concerned, they told us a story about an old man and a bundle of sticks.

"Once upon a time, there was an old man who was troubled because his sons were always quarrelling. He was afraid that the family would be quite broken up when he died. So one day, he called his sons together and showed them a bundle of sticks, and asked them to break it. They tried in turn but they failed. Then the old man untied the bundle and told them to break each stick. The sons broke the sticks easily. In this way, he taught them that UNITY IS STRENGTH."

The story is very short and very simple. However, it shows the essence of unity that has to be conveyed to generation by generation. The story, indeed, is and will be true for a country like Myanmar which is home to over one hundred national races.

Besides, when we were in the primary standards, teachers usually told about the great French general, Napoleon, who used to say, "Divide and Conquer". He won victories by attacking one of his enemies when alone before the others could come up to help. He would weaken a whole nation by dividing it up into quarrelling

parties. The lesson that we have learned is "United we stand, divided we fall".

Now, we are going to celebrate the 73rd. Anniversary Union Day. Actually, Union Day is the symbol of unity which is the strength of all the nationalities. Every year in February, whenever the Union Day draws near, one cannot but help calling to mind the past events leading to the signing of the Panglong Agreement.

A look into history reveals that the people of this republic have lived in harmony and unity, sharing joys and sorrows, in weal or woe, despite subjugation and hardship under foreign rule and in time of war. Myanmar's feudal history saw her indigenous peoples caught in the iron grip of feudal forces, too strong for them to repel or reform. Besides, under the imperialist yoke, our history also recorded that all the national races of Myanmar had far lagged behind.

In the history of Myanmar, successive Myanmar kings had made efforts for perpetuation of the Union, sovereignty and national solidarity and gave guidance on the national development. There were a lot of examples that indicated unity among people and would bring peace and stability. In Myanmar, we saw victories during the reign of King Anawrahta and again during the reign of Bayintnaung, King Alaungpaya and Hsinbyushin when Myanmar people were

united.

However, due to the three aggressive wars launched by the imperialists, the colonialists practised the 'divide-and-rule' policy. The policy caused misunderstanding among national brethren, shattering the national unity. They ruled the highlands and the mainland separately to sow discord among the notional brethren. In the time of need, our national brethren who had great patriotic spirit joined hands each other to fight back the colonialists.

However, their struggles, due to the lack of systematic leadership, were nipped in the bud. In such a time, a group of patriotic and educated youths led by Bogoyoke Aung San emerged to fight and drive the imperialists out of Myanmar Soil with the help of fascists. However, the trouble was not over.

After giving us a pseudo independence, the fascists showed their true type of barbaric acts. At the end of their tether, all the national brethren fought them back. When the fascists were driven out, the imperialists came into Myanmar once again. They tried to give the independence only to the mainland, neglecting the highlands.

Because of the signing of the historic Aung San-Attlee Agreement on 27 January, 1947, the objective "to gain the early unification of the Frontier Areas and Burma (Myanmar) Proper" was implemented. Soon after this on 12 February of the same year, the

representatives of national brethren met the representatives of the Governor's Executive Council at Panglong and reached agreement which paved the way for national unity.

At the Panglong Conference, Bogoyoke Aung San assured the gathering that they could pursue their own culture and customs and enjoy freedom of belief so that their individual identities might not be lost. This was a remarkable speech by which Bogoyoke managed to win the hearts of the national races and erase the suspicions of the past.

Bogoyoke was a man who did as he said. Naturally, he won the confidence and respect of all the national races in the country. Although he did not live long to see the country gain its freedom, the posterity had achieved national unity and finally gained independence.

Regarding Bogoyoke Aung San's clear-cut vision on the Union-born ethnic nationals, we can see an excerpt from his address delivered at the Fourth Meeting of the State Leaders held in August, 1945. He said, "Nationalism should not be 'racialism' or 'chauvinism'; it must not be a narrow-minded racial doctrine based on the concept that only one's own race should rule the world. Loving one's own race should not mean hatred and disdain for other races; it should be a nationalism that makes countries across the world work for

In the Republic of the Union of Myanmar where national races are residing, the culture, traditions and customs, languages and social systems may appear to be different but in essence they are all based on the common blood of Union kinship ...

mutual prosperity in friendship and amity."

You can compare the view of Bogoyoke Aung San with his daughter's, "All ethnic national brothers and sisters are all sons and daughters of the Union. We can get only with Union Spirit. We should strive to live in unity although there may be differences in race, language and religion. It is of utmost importance for all of us who live in this Union and love her lands and water to cherish the task of building a strong, peaceful, united and developed Union." State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi said so at the opening ceremony of the Ethnic Culture Festival-2020 held on 1 February this year. You will see the farsightedness of the father and the daughter.

In the Republic of the Union of Myanmar where national races are residing, the culture, traditions and customs, languages and social systems may appear to be different but in essence they are all based on the common blood of Union kinship and Union Spirit like a hundred fruits from a common

stem.

"The country will prosper if there is unity" "Unity is strength" "United we stand, divided we fall," so go the sayings. They all stand for 'Unity'. Just as unity nourishes strength, lack of unity is enervating and may well lead to ultimate destruction.

"...Breed within self since young the union spirit, democracy federal citizen spirit that was in accordance with a democracy political system and federal system. Recognize the diversities within the union-born ethnic nationals. Our youths are urged to display mutual respect, sympathy and provide assistance to establish the nation's unity of strength.

Regarding the nation's unity of strength, President U Win Myint said so at the Youths All-Round Development Festival (Magway) held on 14 December, 2019. We should not forget it.

The 12th February, 1947 on which the Panglong Agreement was signed as a vivid manifestation of the unity and solidarity among the national races has been designated as "Union Day". The Union Day celebrations have been held every year with full political

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.

Myanmar Daily Weather Report (Issued at 4:00 pm Sunday 9th February, 2020)

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

FORECAST VALID UNTIL MORNING OF THE 10th February, 2020: Rain or thundershowers will be in scattered in Upper Sagaing Region and Kachin State and isolated in Taninthayi Region, (Northern and Eastern) Shan and Chin States. Degree of certainty of (80%). Weather will be partly cloudy in Lower Sagaing, Yangon and Ayeyarwady Regions, Southern Shan, Kayin 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 off and along Myanmar Coasts.

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Likelihood of isolated rain or thundershowers in Upper Sagaing Region, Kachin, Shan and Chin States.

FORECAST FOR NAYPYITAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 10th February, 2020: Generally fair weather.

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 10th February, 2020: Partly cloudy.

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 10th February, 2020: Generally fair weather.

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Thai city holds vigil for 30 victims of ‘unprecedented’ mass shooting

NAKHON RATCHASIMA (Thailand)— Holding candles and writing condolences as monks chanted prayers, hundreds of Thais held an evening vigil Sunday for the 30 victims of an “unprecedented” mass shooting carried out by a soldier.

Sharpshooters killed the gunman on Sunday morning after a 17-hour ordeal, including a night of firefights and terrifying dashes for mall exits by shoppers trapped in the Terminal 21 mall in Nakhon Ratchasima, also known as Korat.

The provincial governor told reporters that the death toll stood at 30 with dozens injured.

The dead include civilians -- one of them a 13-year-old boy -- and security forces going after the rogue soldier, who was upset over a debt dispute, according to Thailand’s prime minister Prayut Chan-O-Cha.



Sharp-shooters brought an end to the 17-hour-ordeal when they killed the gunman. PHOTO: AFP

“It is unprecedented in Thailand, and I want this to be the last time this crisis happens,” he said earlier outside a hospital where victims -- some in critical condition -- were being treated.

Those who attended the somber vigil scrawled messages on white sheets of paper laid out on the ground, including “Remember Forever” and “I wish you a good afterlife”.

Prayut, a former army chief, blamed a “personal prob-

lem” over the sale of a house for the soldier’s rampage, which began on Saturday afternoon near an army barracks and was for several hours relayed by the gunman via Facebook posts.

The attacker, identified as Sergeant-Major Jakrapanth Thomma, used a stolen M60 machine gun and rifles from one of Thailand’s largest barracks as well as a military humvee to carry out the attack.

Prayut said the gunman overpowered security at the barracks’ arsenal and that “carelessness” was not a factor.

“We don’t leave the arsenal depot alone -- we had people guarding it.”

Volley of gunfire rang out as the siege ran into dawn, hours after Thai security services stormed the ground floor and freed scores of terrified shoppers.—AFP

Surrendered Pakistani Taliban spokesman escapes custody: official



Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) spokesman Ehsanullah Ehsan (left) and with fellow TTP member Adnan Rasheed in Shabtoi, South Waziristan, in 2013. PHOTO: AFP

ISLAMABAD —A leading member of the Pakistan Taliban has escaped custody more than two years after surrendering to authorities, a senior security official said Sunday.

The confirmation comes days after Ehsanullah Ehsan -- the former spokesman for the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) -- released an audio message claiming he had escaped detention and was now in Turkey.

A senior security source told

AFP Ehsan was “one of our major assets in identifying and later tracking down militants”.

The source was unable to confirm claims that Ehsan was in Turkey, or provide details of how he escaped.

Ehsan was infamous for issuing chilling claims following TTP attacks and has been linked to some of the country’s most bloody attacks -- including the bombing at a park in Lahore during Easter 2016, and the tar-

getting of education activist and Nobel Peace Prize winner Malala Yousafzai.

Ehsan surrendered to authorities in 2017 and later gave high-profile interviews on Pakistani television, angering many in the country who believed he was being pampered by authorities after years of helping lead the bloody insurgency. Pakistani security officials argued, however, that he had supplied valuable intelligence in the fight against militants. Pakistan has been battling a homegrown Islamist insurgency for over a decade, with thousands of civilians and security personnel dying in extremist attacks, especially after the TTP began their campaign of violence in 2007.

Overall levels of extremist-linked violence have dropped dramatically last year, with 2019 seeing the fewest deaths since 2007 when TTP was formed.

Analysts have credited the fall to military offensives against the Taliban in the tribal areas of North Waziristan and Khyber where they were headquartered, as well as operations in the country’s largest city of Karachi.—AFP

China virus deaths rise past 800, overtaking SARS toll

BEIJING — The death toll from the novel coronavirus surged past 800 in mainland China on Sunday, overtaking global fatalities in the 2002-03 SARS epidemic, even as the World Health Organization said the outbreak appeared to be stabilising.

With 89 more people dying -- most in Hubei, the province at the centre of the outbreak -- the toll is now higher than the 774 killed worldwide by Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), according to official figures.

The latest data came after the WHO said the last four days had seen “some stabilising” in Hubei, but warned the figures

can still “shoot up”.

Almost 37,200 people in China have now been infected by the virus, believed to have emerged late last year in Hubei’s capital Wuhan, where residents are struggling to get daily supplies.

The epidemic has prompted the government to lock down whole cities as anger mounts over its handling of the crisis -- especially after a whistleblowing doctor fell victim to the virus.

With much of the country still not back at work after an extended Lunar New Year holiday, cities including financial hub Shanghai ordered residents to wear masks in public.—AFP



The new coronavirus has claimed more lives than the SARS outbreak in 2002-03, according to official figures. PHOTO: AFP

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Japan launches, puts in orbit new intelligence-gathering satellite

TOKYO — Japan launched Sunday a rocket carrying a government intelligence-gathering satellite which was successfully placed into orbit after the previous takeoff attempt was scrubbed due to a glitch during the countdown.

The H2A rocket, operated by Mitsubishi Heavy Industries Ltd. and the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency, lifted off from the Tanegashima Space Center in the southwestern prefecture of Kagoshima at 10:34 a.m.

It is the 35th time in a row that an H2A rocket has been launched successfully.

The launch, previously set for Jan. 28, was pushed back due to a leak in piping used to supply the rocket with nitrogen gas.

The optical satellite will take over from one of seven reconnaissance satellites believed to be monitoring developments at North Korean missile sites, among other tasks.



The H2A rocket, operated by Mitsubishi Heavy Industries Ltd. and the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency, lifts off from the Tanegashima Space Center in the southwestern prefecture of Kagoshima. PHOTO: KYODO

Japan operates two types of reconnaissance satellite -- optical satellites that take photos of the ground using a device similar to a digital camera, and radar satellites that can capture images in the dark as well as in poor weather conditions.—Kyodo News

German transportation company to build Luanda Surface Metro



FILE PHOTO: Siemens Mobility will build the “Luanda Surface Metro” in Angola under a Public-Private Partnership this year. PHOTO: AFP

LUANDA — German transportation company Siemens Mobility will build the “Luanda Surface Metro” in Angola under a Public-Private Partnership this year, according to a memorandum of understanding (MoU) signed on Friday.

Michael Peter, chief executive officer of the company, signed the MoU with Angola’s Transport Minister Ricardo de Abreu during the Angola-Germany Economic Forum held in the capital city of Luanda.

The minister said the Surface Metro line will cover a dis-

tance of 149 km, and the cost of the project is estimated at 3 billion U.S. dollars, with 30 percent of the cost to be assumed by Angola.

The German government has also made available a loan valued at 1.06 billion euros (about 1.16 billion dollars) to finance the construction of the Caculo Cabaca hydroelectric dam in the northern Cuanza Norte Province.

A total of four MoUs on co-operation were signed between the two countries during the forum.—XINHUA

Hong Kong border towns welcome virus controls, despite trade hit

HONG KONG — Traders in Hong Kong’s border towns are lamenting plunging business during the coronavirus outbreak but some residents say they are enjoying the absence of crowds of Chinese mainlanders.

The influx of migrants, tourists and traders has long been a controversial topic as the financial hub increasingly chafes under Beijing’s authoritarian rule and the ever-rising cost of living.

The polarisation is especially stark in towns along the city’s

border with mainland China.

They have become huge draws for “parallel traders” who buy up tax-free goods for re-sale in China, a booming trade but one that worsens over-crowding and spiralling commercial rents.

However, the coronavirus outbreak has closed all but two of the city’s land borders with the mainland.

And on Saturday officials rolled out plans attempting to ensure -- with spot checks and daily phone calls -- that all arrivals



Pharmacies and food stores are popular with parallel traders from China. PHOTO: AFP

from the mainland undergo 14 days of compulsory quarantine. Parked next to one of the shuttered checkpoints earlier this week, a minibus driver said he had waited for three hours without picking up a single passenger.—AFP

NEWS In BRIEF

UK cat and dog food market to hit 3.8 bln USD in 2020: report

LONDON — Britons are predicted to spend 2.9 billion pounds (about 3.8 billion U.S. dollars) on cat and dog food this year, with the market value rising by 16 percent over the past five years, a market research firm has said. Premiumization and overall inflation have been the driving force behind value growth, said London-based Mintel in a report released Friday.

About 60 percent of Britons own some kind of pet, according to the report. Meanwhile, data from Mintel also revealed that some 27 percent of dog owners cooked from scratch or served leftovers to their pets in 2019, up from 22 percent in 2018. The scratch cooking and serving leftovers among cat owners represented 21 percent in 2019, higher than in 2018 with 13 percent.—Xinhua

1,000-plus global exhibitors to join 117th Toy Fair in New York

NEW YORK — More than 1,000 exhibitors from worldwide will join the 117th annual Toy Fair at the Jacob K. Javits Center in Manhattan from Feb. 22 to 25, showcasing some 150,000 toys, games and youth entertainment products. The annual event will see retailers, wholesalers, importers, distributors, sales representatives, and trade guests get together, seeking to find the latest and greatest in the toy, game and youth entertainment world, and to exchange ideas on the latest trends in global markets.

Being producer of the event, The Toy Association will present its latest global market research on Japan as one of the highlights of this year’s Fair, aiming to provide in-depth analyses to help companies expand their business in the Japanese market, according to the website of the Fair. “Due to declining birthrates, children represent just under 13 percent of Japan’s population of about 126 million - far less than leading markets such as the United States and China,” said Anne McConnell, The Toy Association’s senior director of market research & data strategy. Xinhua

Cameroon elections overshadowed by violence, boycott

YAOUNDE — Cameroon voted Sunday in polls overshadowed by a partial opposition boycott and separatist violence that has displaced hundreds of thousands of people.

Elections for the central African country's legislature and local councils are taking place for the first time in seven years, after two postponements.

They are unlikely to ruffle the enduring rule of President Paul Biya, one of the world's oldest and longest-serving leaders, who has held a tight grip on power for 37 of his 86 years.

As voting began large numbers of police and soldiers were seen deployed on the streets of Buea, the capital of the Southwest Region, one of two provinces gripped by bloody separatist violence.

But polling stations in the city were quiet with no violence reported about four hours after they opened at 8am (0700 GMT).

Most of the morning's voting appeared to have been done by members of the secu-



Longevity: President Paul Biya has been in power since 1982. PHOTO: AFP

rity forces, deployed to keep the peace.

The main opposition party, the Movement for the Rebirth of Cameroon (MRC) is refusing to field a single candidate.

The boycott will all but guarantee a crushing victory for the ruling Cameroon People's Democratic Movement (RDPC in its French initials), which in the outgoing legislature had 148 out of 180 seats.

The other large opposition

party, the Social Democratic Front (SDF), which currently has 18 seats, will take part in Sunday's vote, going back on a threat to snub it.

In the capital Yaounde, it appeared that enthusiasm for the vote was subdued, with no crowds outside polling stations in the district of Briqueterie.

"People went to mass first, there'll be more coming in the afternoon," said one election official.—AFP ■

Iran unveils ballistic missile, 'new generation' engines

TEHRAN— Iran's Revolutionary Guards unveiled Sunday a short-range ballistic missile that they said can be powered by a "new generation" of engines designed to put satellites into orbit.

The Guards' Sepahnews website said the Raad-500 missile was equipped with new Zohair engines made of composite materials lighter than on earlier steel models.

It also unveiled Salman engines made of the same materi-

als but with a "movable nozzle" for the delivery of satellites into space.

The Raad was "a new generation missile that has half the weight of a Fateh-110 missile but with 200 kilometres more range," it added.

The Fateh-110 is a ballistic ground-to-ground missile first unveiled in 2002. Its latest generation has a range of 300 kilometres (186 miles).

Islamic Revolutionary

Guard Corps commander Major General Hossein Salami unveiled the missile and engines alongside IRGC aerospace chief Brigadier General Amirali Hajizadeh.

"The complicated achievements on the bleeding edge of global technology that were unveiled today are our key to entering space," Salami said.

Salami noted the movable nozzle on the new engine allowed "manoeuvrability beyond the atmosphere" and amounted to a "leap in modern missile technology".

The new technologies that made the missiles "cheaper, lighter, faster and more precise" could be applied to all of Iran's missile classes, he added.

Tensions between Iran and its arch foe the United States have soared since May 2018 when US President Donald Trump withdrew from a nuclear deal that offered Tehran sanctions relief in return for curbs to prevent it acquiring nuclear weapons.—AFP ■



Iran says its aerospace activities are peaceful but Washington claims that Tehran's ballistic missile programme is a "destabilising behaviour" in the region. PHOTO: AFP/

Greek asylum to refugees 'not indefinite' and reversible: minister

ATHENS — Greece will only grant refugee protection for three years as it struggles to integrate foreigners, the conservative government's migration minister Notis Mitarachi said in remarks published Sunday.

Greece last year was the first EU port of entry for migrants and has struggled to manage the influx, with many kept in overcrowded camps on the Aegean Greek islands near the Turkish coast.

"The asylum we grant has a duration of three years, it is not indefinite," Mitarachi told To Vima weekly.

"If conditions change in a country (of origin), asylum may not be renewed," Mitarachi added.

"It is difficult to integrate different populations," he said.

More than 36,000 asy-

lum-seekers are currently crammed into camps on five islands, where the official capacity is for 6,200 people and in conditions repeatedly condemned by aid agencies.

Overpopulation in migrant camps on Lesbos and other islands near Turkey has led to an outpouring of anger in recent days among island residents and asylum-seekers.

Since the migration crisis erupted in 2015, mainly fuelled by the war in Syria, Greece has granted asylum to around 40,000 people, Mitarachi said.

Another 87,000 asylum applications are pending, he added.

Repatriation of asylum-seekers whose applications are rejected are to be discussed in an overhaul of EU migration policy next month, the minister said.—AFP ■



Asylum won't be 'indefinite', Greece warns. FOTO: AFP

Germany stresses importance of confidence-building measures in Libya

TRIPOLI — German Ambassador to Libya Oliver Owczon Saturday stressed the importance of confidence-building measures in Libya, which is witnessing deadly armed conflict between the eastern-based army and the United Nations-backed government.

"Respect to all participants of this first round of intra-Libyan ceasefire talks. Encouraging signal that a date for continuation has been set," Owczon tweeted.

"Any confidence-building measures are to the benefit of all Libyans. Likewise progress on the political and economic tracks (is) necessary," said the

ambassador.

The United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) on Saturday said that the country's rival parties said they are trying to maintain the truce in and around the capital Tripoli at the conclusion of the first round of talks of the Libyan 5+5 Joint Military Commission (JMC) in Geneva.

"UNSMIL takes note of the existing consensus around the importance of maintaining the truce that had been announced on 12 January this year, of the necessity to respect it and refrain from violating it," UNSMIL said in a statement.—Xinhua ■

Port chaos leaves Liberian fuel pumps dry

MONROVIA — Liberians have faced long queues at petrol pumps for nearly two weeks as sloppy bookkeeping and poor port infrastructure have triggered economically damaging fuel shortages. Incorrect fuel-reserve figures in the impoverished West African country partly led to the shortage, which has dragged on since late January, an industry official said. But an undredged port in the capital Mon-

rovia has also prevented large fuel tankers from docking, according to port and government officials. Liberia's Commerce Minister Wilson Tarpeh told AFP the shortage has caused an "economic downtrend", without giving precise figures. Consumers are spending less on household items as fuel prices rise, he said, and businesses are operating under capacity. Liberia suffers fre-

quent fuel shortages, but the current one has lasted an unusually long time. Queues forming before dawn at petrol stations are now commonplace, and scarcity has forced taxis and buses to hike fares. "I have been here since 5:00 am but until now I am yet to receive gasoline," said Victor Gray, 45, at a Monrovia petrol station at 8:00 am this week. "I think the kids will miss class today," he added, exhausted after he and his children slept in the car. The shortage is another blow to President George Weah, who is under increasing pressure to improve living conditions in the country of some 4.8 million people. He inherited an economy already devastated by back-to-back civil wars from 1989 to 2003, and by the 2014-2016 West Africa Ebola outbreak.—AFP ■



Cars and tuk-tuk taxis often need to wait for hours at fuel stations as Liberia experience petrol a shortage. PHOTO: AFP

India's railway project with Japan faces \$4.5 bil. budget shortfall

TOKYO — Japan plans to discuss how to proceed with a high-speed railway project in India employing Japan's shinkansen technology after its estimate found a budget shortfall of some 500 billion yen (\$4.56 billion), a source close to the matter said Saturday. The cost for the project connecting around 500 kilometers between Mumbai and Ahmedabad rose from the previous budget of 980 billion rupees (\$14.68 billion) after India called for building a reinforced elevated bridge and using shield machines for excavations, the source said. The shortage is the latest setback for the iconic project in Japan-India partnership after the commercial operation was pushed back by five years from originally scheduled 2023 following a site acquisition delay. Japanese Prime



File photo of an N700S shinkansen bullet train taken in October 2018. PHOTO: KYODO

Minister Shinzo Abe and his Indian counterpart Narendra Modi plan to discuss the matter at a summit. The two leaders agreed in December 2015 on the introduction of the bullet train technology to India, which would be the country's first high-speed railway project. Under the agreement, Japan pledged to provide loans of up to about 1.46 trillion yen for the railway construction led by Indian companies. Japan International Consultants for Transportations Co., a subsidiary of East Japan Railway Co., has taken part in the project to help provide trains, while the parent company looks to offer maintenance and driver training services.—Kyodo News ■

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Master Plan of Agricultural Garden in Hpa-an.

Kayin State Medicinal Plant Resource Center (KSMPRC) based in Hpa-an, Kayin State is seeking expression of interest from private sector to develop a master plan of Agricultural Garden.

KSMPRC was established to support the effort in forest and medicinal plant resources management as well as utilizing it in sustainable manner in Kayin State. KSMPRC has now plan to develop the agricultural garden to share the knowledge of local agricultural resources and product information in participatory manner.

The interested companies may send a letter of expression as well as a record of professional work related to the development of master plan of agricultural garden. The letter should be titled "Expression of Interest: Agricultural Garden in Hpa-an", and please send it to the following address by 25th Feb 2020.

Mail Address: chawsulynn@ksmprc.com

Yangon Office: No. 2-10, Union Business Center (UBC), Nat Mauk Road, Bo Cho Quarter, Bahan T/ship.

Trade Mark Ads Call Thin Thin May, 09251022355,09974424848



Embassy of India, Yangon
Tender Notice

Renovation of Chancery Building

Sealed tenders are invited for renovation of Chancery Building of Embassy of India at 545-547, Merchant Street, Yangon. Details of tender is available in the Embassy's website <https://embassyofindiayangon.gov.in/> Tender - Tender (Embassy's) and CPP portal. The last date for bid submission is **10 March, 2020.**

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V XETHA BHUM VOY. NO. (1132W)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V XETHA BHUM VOY. NO. (1132W) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 10-2-2020 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 REGIONAL CONTAINER
LINES**

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V SINAR BINTAN VOY. NO. (664 N/S)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V SINAR BINTAN VOY. NO. (664 N/S) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 10-2-2020 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 SAMUDERA SHIPPING LINE**

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V PACAO VOY. NO. (080N/S)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V PACAO VOY. NO. (080N/S) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 10-2-2020 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of HPT 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
LINES**

Phone No: 2301185

IN our country Myanmar, hot air balloon flight began in Bagan. Almost everyone is still contemplating that hot air balloon flight in Bagan is perfect. Of course, there are different beauties across the country. The flight of hot air balloon in Bagan is not perfect enough. Being able to fly hot air balloon everywhere in the country ensures more perfection. I had ever thought of flying hot air balloon in Bagan only. I was doubtful about whether the impressive beauties of overlooking view and sunrise in Inle Lake outdid Bagan as I was flying the hot air balloon over the water surface of the lake. These days the flight of hot air balloon is available in Hpa-an on ethnic Kayin land where it isn't too far from Yangon. Diverse geographical features in the ethnic area can be also enjoyed and these feelings are irreplaceable.

Nearest hot air balloon flight from Yangon

Hot air balloon flight service is available in Bagan, Inle, Mandalay, Ngapali, Pindaya, Loikaw and Hpa-an. I am accustomed to oriental ballooning. Among these places, Hpa-an is the nearest to Yangon. The motor road is in a good condition and it is four hours' drive from Yangon. The travellers are not very familiar with the nature beauties of Kayin State. Anyhow Hpa-an can be regarded as hot air balloon flight region and it is the nearest place to Yangon.

Hot air balloon flying in the sky of Hpa-an

Oriental blooming attracted local people in and around Hpa-

an on 15 December in 2019, becoming the focus of attention on social media. Firstly, local people were unaware of the flight of the hot air balloon and later it was known to all local people. On that day I saw an opportunity for the flight of the hot air balloon in the sky of Hpa-an for the first time. While flying the hot air balloon, I felt the breathtaking beauty of Kayin State.

Oriental Blooming group members came to the hotel where I put up and picked me up there. Upon arrival to the sports ground of Kayin State at about 5.30 am, we had a friendly conversation with each other. Coffee, tea and snacks were served us and we were all to fly the hot air balloon. The pilot of the hot air balloon cordially greeted those who were going to fly individually. The pilot started talking about the trip of hot air balloon. There may be a few changes in schedule according to early and late sunrise. It also depends on wind direction and weather. The pilots decide

not to fly the hot air balloon when they suppose the weather is not good and it is windy. It is not easy to forecast the day which we want to fly. It is not meant for Hpa-an alone and the remaining parts of the country are the same matter.

The foreign pilots taught those who were going to fly the hot air balloon how to follow the rules before and after the flight. During that time, photographing, using phone and being talkative were prohibited and all are allowed doing nothing. All the passengers have to listen to what the foreign pilots instruct. Nothing is more important than life. And then the hot air balloon was ready to fly and waited for the passengers to carry. All the passengers ran to the hot air balloon and got into the basket of the hot air balloon. The hot air balloon rose slowly and slowly reaching in the sky within five minutes. At that time the hot air balloon brought outstanding natural beauty to the passengers. I had to feel the beauty of the sun rising behind

Zwegabin mountain, a famous monument of Kayin State as if my tear rolled down. The scenery in Kayin State is not the same as that in Shan State. I feel like my beautiful country and the native place of the ethnics. The creation of the God seems unbelievable. Similarly, the beauty of Thanlwin is just like reigning queen. While we were in the hot air balloon, we were able to see the proportional beauty of Thanlwin bridge and Hpa-an town, fields and plantations outside Hpa-an, natural caves and pagodas.

When the pilots flew low, the views of ripe paddy fields and already-harvested ones seemed more beautiful. The waves of farmers' families harvesting in the fields and sincere greetings both in Kayin and Myanmar languages were breathtaking and heart-stopping, and it strengthened loving Hpa-an more.

The places of the rise and fall of the hot air balloon are different. It depends on the wind direction. After flying the hot air balloon for

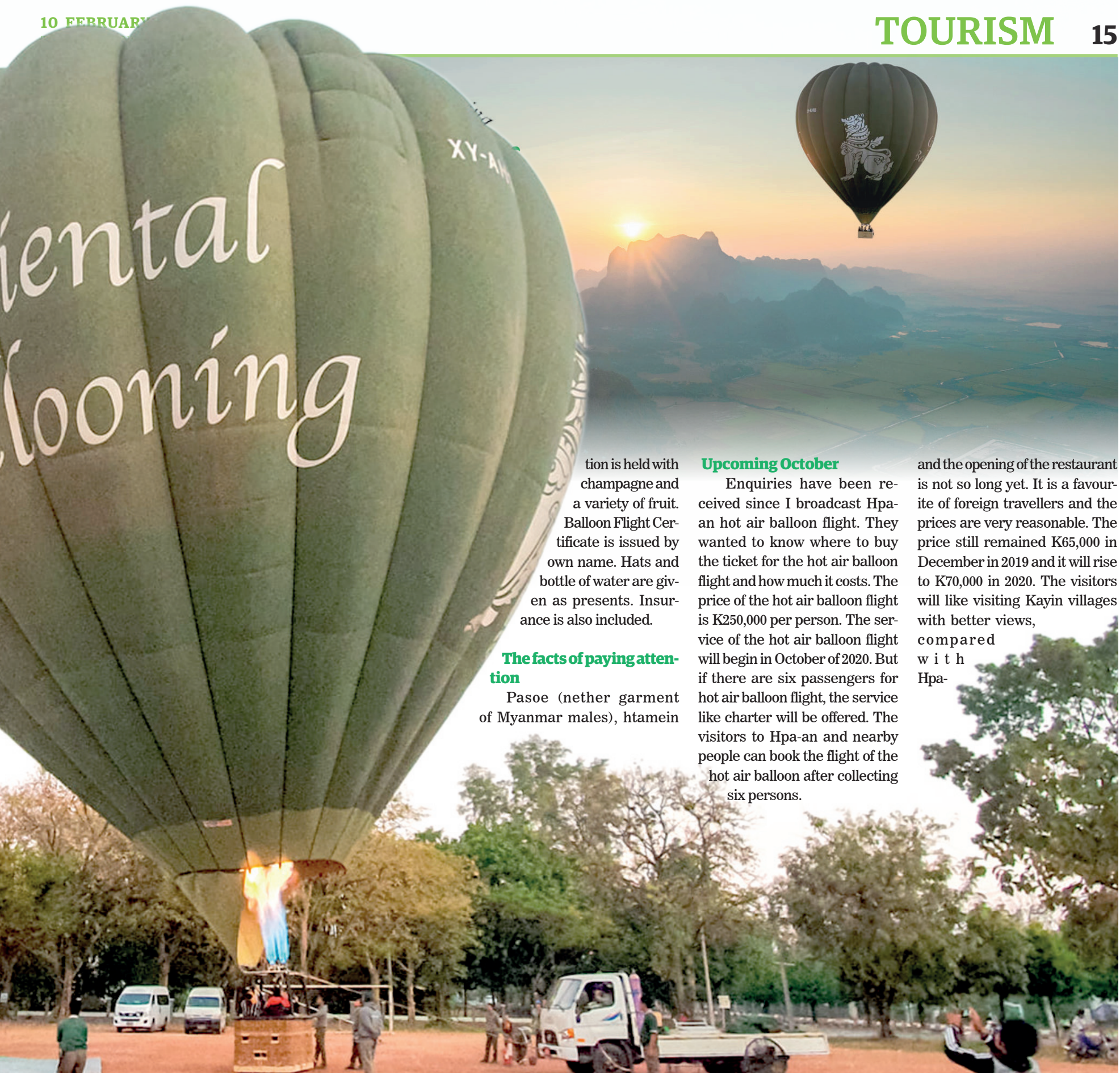
The balloon being inflated before flight across the sky of Hpa-an. **PHOTO: THIHA LULIN**



about one hour, we had to take position to go down in an open empty field. The villagers are very simple. All the villagers young and old came up to the hot air balloon and they were worried

Hot air balloon flight at sunrise in Hpa-an, Kayin State

By Thiha Lulin



tion is held with champagne and a variety of fruit. Balloon Flight Certificate is issued by own name. Hats and bottle of water are given as presents. Insurance is also included.

The facts of paying attention

Pasoe (nether garment of Myanmar males), htamein

Upcoming October

Enquiries have been received since I broadcast Hpa-an hot air balloon flight. They wanted to know where to buy the ticket for the hot air balloon flight and how much it costs. The price of the hot air balloon flight is K250,000 per person. The service of the hot air balloon flight will begin in October of 2020. But if there are six passengers for hot air balloon flight, the service like charter will be offered. The visitors to Hpa-an and nearby people can book the flight of the hot air balloon after collecting six persons.

and the opening of the restaurant is not so long yet. It is a favourite of foreign travellers and the prices are very reasonable. The price still remained K65,000 in December in 2019 and it will rise to K70,000 in 2020. The visitors will like visiting Kayin villages with better views, compared with Hpa-



A burner directing a flame into the ballon envelope. PHOTO: THIHA LULIN

worried about us. How lovely Kayin ethnics are in Hpa-an! All the passengers including foreign pilots got off Oriental Ballooning and drank champagne on a happy occasion as a gesture of a success of flight. The lid of champagne made in the form of hot air balloon was given as gift and then the certificate of successful flight was also presented. We were taken back to the hotel. It was an unforgettable journey for me.

Remembrances

Oriental Ballooning group offers transport service. Breakfast is served before the start of hot air balloon flight. There is also a photographing program while flying the hot air balloon. Upon arrival back to ground, a celebra-

(woman's skirt), skirt and mini skirt are not okay to get into basket of the hot air balloon. Pants and short pants are more suitable. The pilots do not allow the passengers listening to songs and speaking over the phone loudly, supposing that it might cause disturbances to others in the same flight. Small Action Cams are okay to take photograph. It is required to notice not to fall when taking selfie with the use of the stick. Not everyone is allowed jumping in the hot air balloon. Those who are afraid of height and those who are startling should take care. I am also afraid of height, but the flight of hot air balloon is not as exciting as that of a plane. I need not to be worried about that.

For nature lovers

The flight of the hot air balloon is so unique for all visitors. While I was in Hpa-an, I put up at My Hpa-an Residence by Amata Hotel, which it located in the quiet locality at the foot of Zweabin mountain. It is not far from the town. It looks modern and lovely with several bungalows. The visitors can feel the nature of mountain and forest among rubber trees. The moon above the mountain and sounds of the animals at the night time are a paradise for nature lovers. The employees are generous and friendly to the visitors and the restaurant is very excellent. The menus of breakfast, lunch and dinner are inclusive of Kayin cuisines. The visitors can try for traditional cuisines as they like

an town's. This is very suitable location for those wishing to do hiking and trekking. I visited nearby places by bicycle. It is not far from Kyaukkalat and Yaygu as well. The road is straight and it is also okay to climb Zwegabin mountain. It is an undeniable fact that it will be cherished more by feeling the beauty of Kayin land together with Thanlwin river and Zwegabin mountain. The visitors will immediately realize what I would like to say in course of flying the hot air balloon. Looking forward to seeing the days the hot air balloon flying in the sky of Hpa-an land under the arrangement of Oriental Ballooning. Wishing all the people could travel with best of health and happiness free from all obstacles. (Translated by Htut Htut (Twantay))

about all the passengers aboard the hot air balloon. They asked why you went down with this hot air balloon. Their question words made us smile and thank them as they came up to us and were

Myanmar National League: Shan United beat Yadanarbon 3-1



Shan United's David Htan (red) torches the ball during the Myanmar National League match against Yadanarbon F.C. yesterday at the Mandalay Thiri Stadium in Mandalay. **PHOTO: MNL**

SHAN United, defending champions of the Myanmar National League, beat Yadanarbon F.C. by 3-1 in the Week-5 match of the MNL yesterday at the Mandalay Thiri Stadium in Mandalay.

The goals for Shan United were scored by David Htan, Nanda Kyaw, and Daniel, while Aung Thu scored the lone goal for Yadanarbon.

Yadanarbon played tough at the beginning, with striker Aung Thu scoring the first goal for the team 3 minutes into the game.

After Yadanarbon's goal, Shan United switched to attack mode.

At 37 minutes, Shan United got a penalty shoot, and Da-

vid Htan scored the equalizer for the team off a penalty kick.

At the end of the first half, the teams were tied 1-1.

Shan United once again dominated Yadanarbon in the second half.

At 52 minutes, Nanda Kyaw scored the second goal for Shan United. Three minutes later, Shan United foreign player Daniel scored the third goal for the team, disappointing Yadanarbon United fans.

There were no more goals in the remaining minutes as Yadanarbon strikers failed to convert scoring opportunities.

At the final whistle, Shan United were leading over Yadanarbon F.C. by two goals.—Lynn Thit (Tgi)

Hantharwady United still leading Myanmar National League

AT the conclusion of Week-5 of the Myanmar National League, Hantharwady United is still leading the scoring table with full points from five wins.

Meanwhile, Yangon United is trailing Hantharwady United with 13 points from four wins and one draw, and Ayeyawady United is in the third place with the same points as Yangon United but with scored goal difference.

Rakhine United is in the fourth place with 10 points from three wins, one draw, and one loss.

Defending champions

of the Myanmar National League, Shan United, are currently standing fifth with 9 points from three wins and two losses.

Sagaing United is sixth with 7 points from two wins, one draw, and two losses.

Mandalay-based Yadanarbon F.C. is in the seventh place with 5 points from one win, two draws, and two losses, while Southern Myanmar F.C. is at the bottom of the table with no points from five losses.

There are 12 teams competing in the tourney. —Lynn Thit (Tgi)



Hantharwady United players celebrate their victory in an earlier match against Sagaing United. **PHOTO: HUFU**

Judo champion Riner loses after nine years undefeated

ONE of sport's longest winning runs came to an end on Sunday when two-time Olympic and serial judo world champion Teddy Riner was beaten for the first time in over nine years.

After 154 successive wins, the 30-year-old Frenchman, who competes in the 100-kilogramme heavyweight category, was beaten by ippon by the Japanese Kokoro Kageura in the third round of the Paris Grand Slam.

Riner's last defeat was back in September 2010 when he was controversially beaten by another Japanese Daiki Kamikawa in the openweight final at the world championships in Tokyo.

The defeat comes five months before the Tokyo Olympics when Riner will hope to emulate the lightweight judoka Tadahiro Nomura in winning gold at three successive Olympics.

"If this happens at the

Games I'll be annoyed. Better this happens now than then," a light-hearted Riner said afterwards.

"But I'll tell you another thing too. It's a relief in a way. Counting wins as I closed in on (Yasuhiro) Yamashita's record (203 wins) was really heavy."

Yamashita, whose run began in 1977, won four world titles and gold at the Los Angeles Games in 1984 before retiring in 1985 with his record intact.

He did not take part in the 1980 Olympics in Moscow because of a Japanese boycott over the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.

Ten-time world champion Riner's record still ranks alongside some of the greats of the sporting world.

American hurdler Ed Moses won 122 consecutive races over a 10-year period from 1977 to 1987, and Pakistani squash legend Jahangir Khan won 555 successive matches from 1981

to 1986.

Boxing has also thrown up at least two remarkable winning streaks.

Heavyweight champion Rocky Marciano never lost a fight in his professional career, winning 49 in a row between 1947 and 1955 while the Mexican Julio Cesar Chavez, a world champion at three different weights, won 87 consecutive fights before drawing with Pernell Whitaker in 1993. — AFP ■