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Message of Greetings sent by President U Win Myint to the 72nd Anniversary of Chin National Day Celebrations

20 February 2020

DEAR esteemed Chin ethnic brothers and sisters,

On this auspicious 72nd Anniversary of Chin National Day which is regarded by Chin ethnic nationals as a day of high significance, I send this message of greetings and good wishes to all Chin ethnic nationals residing in Chin State and all over Myanmar as well as those living in foreign countries to be blessed with good fortune and auspiciousness.

After Myanmar gained independence from the British colonialists on 4 January 1948, a Chin Affairs Council, a Chin Affairs Department and a Chin Affairs minister came into being in accordance with the 1947 Constitution. As the first order of business, the Chin Affairs Department tried to replace the old feudal administrative system that has been used in the past for many, many years up to the time of British rule, by a democratic administrative system. In a proposal

submitted by the Chin Affairs Department to the Cabinet, an Enquiry Commission for the Chin Hills was established in early February 1948. Thereafter, on 20 February 1948 at a people's conference held in Falam township, a unanimous and resounding decision was made to change from the feudal administrative system to a democratic administrative system and put into practice forthwith.

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State Counsellor meets with locals in Tonzang, Thantlang townships, Chin State



State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi meeting with local people in Thantlang. **PHOTO: MNA**

STATE Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, in her capacity as the Chairperson of the Central Committee for Development of Border Areas and National Races, met with the local people in Tonzang and Thantlang townships in Chin State on 19 February.

She also inaugurated a station hospital in Tikir Village and

50 houses donated by the Daw Khin Kyi Foundation.

During the visit, she was accompanied by Union Ministers U Min Thu, Lt-Gen Soe Htut, Lt-Gen Ye Aung, Dr Aung Thu, U Ohn Win, Dr Myint Htwe; Deputy Minister U Hla Maw Oo, Chief of Myanmar Police Force Lt-Gen Aung Win Oo and officials.

They left Nay Pyi Taw by

special flight, and landed at Kalay airport in Sagaing Region.

They were welcomed by Sagaing Region Chief Minister Dr Myint Naing, Chin State Chief Minister U Salai Lian Lwal, officials and local people at the airport.

They took helicopters to Tonzang Township where the State Counsellor met with the

locals in the town hall.

During the meeting, she delivered a speech, saying that "I would first like to apologize for being late. The weather delayed our helicopter's departure from Kalay. We have to be mindful of the weather when we go on trips like these, and especially to remote areas. This is a lesson for us all. We cannot alter what

happens in nature. We must try to overcome that which we cannot change. That is why we are trying hard to drive development of remote border regions like Chin State where the people are living harsh lives. Only by doing this will our nation have more connection between the people."

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Pyidaungsu Hluttaw

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw hears reports of Union Legal Aid Board, National Education Policy Commission

THE second Pyidaungsu Hluttaw held its 10th day meeting of 15th regular session yesterday, discussing urban restructuring plan and hearing reports of the Union Legal Aid Board and National Education Policy Commission.

It also voted for taking the loan from the Economic Development Cooperation Fund (EDCF) of South Korea.

Speaker U T Khun Myat informed the urban restructuring plan sent by the President's Office for renaming and resizing residential wards, village-tracts and villages in Kachin State, Sagaing Region, Magway Region and Mandalay Region. The Hluttaw put the plan on the record.

The Pyidaungsu Hluttaw also approved substitution of Tatmadaw member in the Joint Committee on ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly, replacing Major Zawana with Brig-Gen Zaw Myint San.

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Joint Bill Committee's Secretary Dr Myat Nyana Soe presented the controversial Myanmar Geoscience Council bill, and it was discussed by the Hluttaw MPs. The Speaker announced the approval of the bill with the recommendations of the Ministry of Education and the Joint Bill Committee.

Union Legal Aid Board Report

The six-month period report of Union Legal Aid Board was discussed by the Hluttaw representatives and its Secretary U



MP Dr Myat Nyana Soe.
PHOTO: SOE WIN TUN



ULAB Secretary U Khin Zaw.
PHOTO: SOE WIN TUN



Judge of Union Supreme Court U Thar Htay.
PHOTO: SOE WIN TUN



NEPC Chairman Dr Myo Kywal.
PHOTO: SOE WIN TUN

Khin Zaw and Judge of Supreme Court of Union U Thar Htay replied to the discussions.

Secretary U Khin Zaw said their legal body was formed to help in legal defences, with providing legal services to the common people.

He also explained employment of staff members at the board in accordance with instructions of President, the Union government and law and by-laws for civil service personnel.

He added the board has not employed foreign or local advisors by using the State revenue. Moreover, it did not receive cash donations from local or foreign donors. Instead, it got legal books, desks and tables. These donation items were listed and reported to the Ministry of Planning, Finance and Industry in accordance with the existing law.

Judge U Thar Htay reported the coordination among the chief judges of State/Region

High Courts to be able to form township level legal aid boards and the budgets of the Supreme Court of the Union. He also explained the budget affairs of the board by seeking approval from the Ministry of Planning, Finance and Industry.

The Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker announced to put the six-month report of Union Legal Aid Board on the record.

National Education Policy Commission Report

The six-month report of the National Education Policy Commission (for the period from 10 April to 9 October 2019) was discussed by the MPs and it was explained by NEPC Chairman Dr Myo Kywal and Deputy Minister for Education U Win Maw Tun.

The Speaker also announced to put the report, discussions of MPs and explanations of commission and the ministry on the record.

EDCF loan from South Korea

Deputy Minister for Electricity and Energy explained getting a loan from the Economic Development Cooperation Fund of South Korea for natural gas pipeline upgrade project which has been planned to be implemented between Magway and Shwedaung townships without damaging environment in the respective areas.

The US\$113.036 million loan plan was approved by the Hluttaw. There were 430 votes for and 1 against the motion, with 1 abstention.

Joint Public Accounts Committee's report

The Hluttaw also discussed tax revenue during the second-six months of 2018-2019 financial year at the Union Ministries and organizations sent by the Union Government and the Joint Public Accounts Commit-

tee's 2/2020 report on findings and recommendations.

MP U Khin Cho from Hlaing-bwe constituency discussed tax reform plans and finding the root causes for the financial losses at the state-owned factories.

MP Daw Cho Cho from Ottwin constituency discussed adopting an appropriate policy for tax as it is the main source for government budget and expenditures in a democratic country amidst a high unemployment rate and huge gap of income.

She also advised the importance of efficient tax collection procedures to increase state revenue.

The issue was also discussed by the other seven MPs.

The 11th day meeting of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw will be organized on 21 February.—Aung Ye Thwin and Aye Aye Thant

(Translated by
Aung Khin)



Pyithu Hluttaw Deputy Speaker U Tun Tun Hein meets with Resident Representative Mr Achim Munz of the Hanns Seidel Foundation (HSF) in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

Pyithu Hluttaw Deputy Speaker receives HSF Resident Representative

PYITHU Hluttaw Deputy Speaker and Chair of the Joint Coordination Committee on Hluttaw Development U Tun Tun Hein received Resident Representative Mr. Achim Munz of the Hanns Seidel Foundation (HSF) at his office yesterday afternoon.

At the meeting, they cordially exchanged views on the HSF's assistance in the development of Parliamentary process and capacity building for the MPs and staff, more effective assistance in providing for the

future development of Myanmar Parliament, the advancement of closer relations between the Parliament and the people, and the information sharing on basic principles of democracy among the students.

The meeting was also attended by Vice Chair U Aung Kyi Nyunt of the Joint Coordination Committee on Hluttaw Development and responsible officials with the Pyithu Hluttaw.—MNA

(Translated by Aungthu Ya)

Message of Greetings sent by President U Win Myint to the 72nd Anniversary of Chin National Day Celebrations

20 February 2020

FROM PAGE-1

At the meeting of the Chin Affairs Council held on 9th October 1950, February 20th, the date on which the decision was made to adopt and put into practice a democratic administrative system in place of the old administrative system, was designated as Chin National Day. Therefore, we have now reached the 72nd Anniversary of Chin National Day which was started in 1948.

Chin National Day is the date on which the decision was made to replace the old administrative system, a legacy of the feudal, colonial era in which the administrative authority and rights were kept in the hands of Sawbwas, feudal lords and village headmen, with a democratic administrative system. It is a significant and historic day full of essence and deep meaning for all Chin national racial groups.

Chin ethnic nationals have participated, hand in hand together with other ethnic nationals in the resistance movements against the colonial imperialists and fascists and also in the struggle for independence. Also, after our independence, Chin nationals have lived hand in hand, within the Union together with other ethnic nationals in unity, in weal and woe.

Chin State which is the home of the majority of Chin nationals, has known relative peace because Chin nationals have lived in peace among their own racial groups as well as with other ethnic nationals.

It is a matter of great regret that Chin State has

lagged behind in development because of the numerous mountains and rugged terrain and therefore full of limitations in the transport and communications sector. Be that as it may, our Union Government has carried out efforts to build new roads, repair old ones and upgrade several others as a matter of priority in Chin State which is very mountainous and transportation is difficult, because we do not wish to see least developed regions left behind in our nation building efforts. In the same way, we are working to improve and upgrade the education, health, and electricity supply sectors to improve the socio-economic status of Chin ethnic nationals. The Union Government, the state government and Chin ethnic nationals all need to join hands and participate in these efforts.

The Union Government has been working with the aim of ensuring the development of traditions, cultural festivals, language, literature and ethnic rights. I wish to urge that Chin ethnic nationals also work to promote and preserve their language, literature, culture and traditions so that their traditions and cultures will not die out. The diverse cultures, traditions, language and literature represent the beauty and diversity of our Union. That is why I wish to urge all of you to bring out the beauty of our Union by exerting more efforts to protect and preserve your ethnic culture, traditions and language.

In undertaking nation building projects, we can achieve full success only with the cooperation and par-

ticipation of the people. To get the cooperation and participation of all national ethnic peoples, I believe that it is important to establish a democratic federal union which can satisfy the needs of all national ethnic groups and is acceptable to them. That is why our Union Government has been convening the sessions of the Union Peace Conference – 21st Century Panglong, to enable us to build the Democratic Federal Union with the participation of all stakeholders.

I wish to also express my appreciation and acknowledge that fact that Chin ethnic nationals have been participating at a significant and deep level in the peace process.

It is my firm belief that we would be able to overcome all difficulties and obstacles in our efforts to build the Democratic Federal Union, which has been the aspiration of all Union nationals since many years ago, with the collective strength of the Union Government, all Union ethnic nationals and including Chin ethnic nationals.

As I send this message of greetings, I urge that all ethnic nationals join hands and strive in unity to build a developed and modern Democratic Federal Union.

Sd/-
Win Myint
President

Union Minister Dr Win Myat Aye comforts injured students, IDPs in Buthidaung

UNION Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Dr Win Myat Aye and Rakhine State Chief Minister U Nyi Pu visited the injured students and the internally displaced persons in Buthidaung Township, Rakhine State, yesterday morning.

A school girl was injured in an attack that hit her primary school in Khamwechaung Village. She was at the Buthidaung People's Hospital for medical treatment.



Union Minister Dr Win Myat Aye and Rakhine State Chief Minister U Nyi Pu encourage the school girl who was injured in an attack, at the Buthidaung People's Hospital. PHOTO: MNA

The Union Minister comforted the patient and her family members by presenting cash, jackets and medicines.

He also met with 15 wounded school children and their parents from the same village at the hospital hall, and provided them with some relief assistance.

During the meetings with the children, the Union Minister expressed his sorrow at the accident happened on 13 February, and said the government's

assistance to the children as the Rakhine State has been put in the top priority of government for peace and development of the region.

Rakhine State Chief Minister U Nyi Pu also pledged to provide assistance to the injured children.

The Chief Minister and officials also coordinated in water supply, transportation, health services and school renovations.

In the afternoon, the Union Minister and party visited the two temporary IDP camps in Buthidaung Township, and comforted the people, with giving rice, food items and toys.

At the meeting with the IDPs, the Union Minister explained the government's works for development of Rakhine State and for ending conflicts as it is part of the Union of Myanmar.

People requested for the needs at the camps, from foods to transportation.

The Union Minister and party also took a school girl for medical treatment in Yangon as she was injured in the heavy weapon attack.—MNA

(Translated by Aung Khin)

Union Minister U Soe Win receives KB Kookmin Bank Senior MD



Union Minister U Soe Win of the Ministry of Planning, Finance and Industry received Senior Managing Director Mr Choi Chang Su of the KB Kookmin Bank, Head of the Global Business Group at his ministry yesterday afternoon.

During the meeting, they discussed the matters pertaining to the ROK's investment status in the Korea-Myanmar Industrial Complex, the micro- and macro-economies development, the investment in microfinance businesses, the KB Kookmin Bank's investment in Myanmar's banking sector, the improvement of Myanmar's Credit Scoring System and the banking trainings to be conducted for the MPFI's service personnel among others.—MNA

(Translated by Aungthu Ya)

State Counsellor meets with locals in Tonzang

FROM PAGE-1

“There are many mountains and elevations in Chin State and few roads. That is why we are giving priority to Chin State’s transportation infrastructure. But we have to make things fair since our nation is expansive. I hope all ethnic nationals will understand this.”

“We want the states and regions to improve and develop. The Chin people would know more of what Chin State needs. We must also know the needs of Chin State and those of Kachin State as well. Kayin, Kayah, we must view them all as a whole. That is why I remind people that our nation is a Union whenever I get the chance when meeting local residents.”

“The Union is composed of states and regions. Especially, our nation is made up of a large number of ethnic nationals. This formation with many unique ethnicities is our strength. It is something to be proud of. That is why I want everyone to be proud of this nation that is composed of unique ethnicities. I wish for all our citizens and ethnic nationals born in the Union to provide their assistance in developing our nation.”

“Everyone knows that achieving peace is essential to developing the nation. Chin State has less armed ethnic organizations compared to other states. And that small number did not bring much trouble to the people. Some states have been in armed conflict since gaining independence and that has been over 70 years, and still peace hasn’t been attained. That is why I want everyone to work together for peace. This requires the participation of all citizens.”

“Our nation is composed of numerous ethnicities, as I’ve mentioned before. Different religions too. Chin State has a lot of Christians. However, there are different Christian sects but they all revere the same thing. Christians are united because they worship one God. In the same way, our ethnic nationals may be different but they are all siblings born from the same Union. That is why it is important to be united.”

“Peace is crucial for the nation and I want our ethnic nationals to keep that in their heart and consider. Peace is something that Christian-majority Chin State would want as well. Jesus Christ was an ambassador for



State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi poses for a photo with attendees at the meeting with local community in Tonzang yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

peace. He is extolled as the King of Peace. If you truly believe in this type of peace then it must begin in your mind. This must be started by placing compassion on one another.”

“Christianity says God is love. People who believe in love should desire peace and value it. I implore the people of Chin State to pursue course of actions that lead to peace. It must begin with compassion in your mind. The main antagonist to peace is anger, which is hatred and a desire for other’s benefits to be eliminated.”

“If each of us wishes for the other to succeed then our nation will develop. I urge all of you to do so in earnest. We need to be aware that there can’t be national development without peace. Peace and development are linked. Peace is needed for effective development. Development is required to maintain peace. This is because everybody wants to live a physically and mentally prosperous life. We must be aware that material wealth first requires security.”

“Without mental security or physical safety, we cannot have mental prosperity. Physical safety depends on peace and so does mental security. If your environment is not at peace then how can your mind be at ease. It can’t be peaceful or safe. That is why peace is the first step towards safety, mental health and physical wealth.”

“We must implement development in tandem with peace. Wherever I go, I ask the people for their questions and suggestions. It’s because I wish to know what kinds of issues, requirements and local desires exist in different parts of the country.

This is the duty of every government. Especially the duty of a democratically elected government is to fulfill the wishes of the people. I wish to inform you of the difference between necessity and wanting. Everyone has their own aspirations and wishes.”

“All your aspirations need to have necessity. Sometimes the things that you want may not be beneficial for other people, or even yourself and your community. It could even be detrimental for others. We must always gauge this.”

To build a democratic federal Union, we need to see both - our similarity and diversity. If we focus on our similarities, we all can strengthen our unity and build more empathy towards each other.

“The people who have taken the duty of a democratic government have to continually find the best solution for all citizens. This is not an easy task. We have 14 states and regions and they have different needs. But they are there. While not the same, some needs are similar. Roads need to be good on flatland too. While everyone knows that Chin State doesn’t have quality roads, most people overlook the fact that flatlands with high rain, like Ayeyawady Region, have increased difficulty on its roads during the rainy season.”

“Since the roads are not built for all weathers, they get damaged in the rain and some-

times become useless for 5 months even. The government then sees that all our citizens are facing extremely similar issues.”

“Chin State has difficult transportation in rainy season and so does Ayeyawady Region. We have to try and resolve these issues. The results of difficult transportation leads to difficulty in accessing healthcare, education and business. We cannot afford to open clinics in every village yet. During that time, if the roads are not good then it will be difficult for people to go to a place that has a clinic. Then you can’t perform emergency medical care. This is happening in Chin State and Ayeyawady Region.”

“While the two are geographically different, the rainy season brings its own health-care-related issues to Ayeyawady Region when roads are inaccessible. It is difficult to get to the nearest clinic. Education faces a similar issue.”

“Children in Chin State can’t go to school without good roads. We cannot build schools in every village yet. It is the same in Ayeyawady Region. Some children have to sail on boats to school if the conditions are bad. But there

are people who can do it and those who can’t. Some children don’t go to school for the whole rainy season sometimes.”

“The people of Chin State would have faced similar issues. We are all in the same boat. We are people of the same nation and same Union that are living on the same earth, drinking from the same water and are in the same boat. That is why it is important for all of us to cooperate for the development of the nation.”

“Only when everyone improves, individuals will improve too, and only when individuals improve will everyone too. I want our ethnic nationals to try hard in this regard. Our nation is lacking behind in development. Everyone knows this history. We need to try hard because we are late in development. We must move forward with momentum for increased development so that we can get on the same level as other nations. A nation’s main strength is within.”

“No matter how much external assistance is provided, the real strength comes from within our people. The strength accumulated from the individual skills of all citizens is our own strength. External strength can be there sometimes and not there at other times. But our own strength will be sustainable. If it can be collected then the nation can improve and develop and the people can be safe. Our children’s future can be secure. That is why it is important for us to consider the future generations in whatever we do.”

“We must carefully think of the legacy we will leave behind. What kind of legacy will we leave behind for the next generation and the children who will grow up one day. What sort of things did our parents leave behind for us. Looking back at this, I want everyone to collaborate as this is something that aims for increased development and prosperity with each successive generation.”

“The reason a democratic government is elected to represent the people in a democracy is because it is impossible for all 50 million people in our nation to assume government positions. That is why we have to elect the government that can lead the people with respect and stability. In our duty as government, we try our best and use all of our

State Counsellor meets with locals in Thantlang, Chin State

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skills when it comes to the public. And we will continue to do so. We will use all our skills to give the best answers to the people's questions."

After the speech, the State Counsellor, Union Ministers, the Chief Minister, local ministers and officials replied to the requests for upgrade of Tiddim from township to district, the Union government's assistance for cultivation of mulberry trees and breeding of silkworms as the business has dwindled since 2010, operating Forest Department office in Tonzang although the township has over 230,000 acres of forests, the government's long-term loan with low interest rate to support agriculture, livestock and livelihoods for socioeconomic development of the regional people.

The locals also discussed the needs for a border market near the major road between Myanmar and Imphal district of Manipur in India, getting electricity supply through 11 KV power line from India as the Cikha Town is only 9 miles far from Binhai village of Manipur district and upgrade of the 16-bedded station hospital in Cikha town hospital to a 25-bedded hospital.

Five locals outside the town hall requested for cleanliness and tidiness of the hospital in Tonzang and construction of a community hall, reviewing land allocations of seized lands, construction of earth retaining wall, fresh water supply and making a shorter waterway to reduce the existing distance of 16 miles.

After replies to the locals, the State Counsellor added: "Even though we are late, thank



State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi cut ribbon to open the handover ceremony for houses donated by the Daw Khin Kyi Foundation in Tikir village, Thantlang, Chin State yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

you for waiting for us so patiently. Everyone needs to cooperate so that all matters can be accomplished in a short amount of time. It cannot be done without cooperation. This meeting showed the needs of the local residents and their mindset and thus it is valuable. We will try to meet with the people like this again soon. There needs to be constant connection between the people and the government."

"A democratic government is elected by the people. You don't need to be afraid of the government. That doesn't mean you need to attack the government. It means to cooperate so that things will develop."

"We put deep emphasis on everything that has been reported. We will review all of them. We place special priority and perform swiftly for the items submitted during these public

meetings. Because hearing the voice of the people directly needs to be emphasized. "

"In conclusion, I apologize for any inconvenience caused to the local residents who came here because we were delayed by the weather. I want to say that we will try our best with full earnestness. Thank you."

The State Counsellor and party proceeded to Tikir village, and attended the opening ceremony of the village's station hospital.

After the launching ceremony of the hospital, the representatives from Dingdi Dream Organization and Media Myanmar Group Ltd and Visakha Foundation presented medical equipment and medicines to the Medical Services Officer of State Public Health Dr Aung-Ngwe San.

The State Counsellor then

planted Japanese cherry tree saplings to mark the launching ceremony of sub-station hospital.

She also witnessed the transfer of 50 houses to the State Chief Minister. These houses were donated by the Daw Khin Kyi Foundation for the Baung tribe people who have recently migrated to Thiki village.

The State Counsellor and party proceeded to Thantlang Township by choppers.

During the meeting with the locals at the town hall, the State Counsellor said, "I want to express my thanks to all the people of the Chin State for a warm welcome. I believe that the songs which welcome me wherever I go in Chin State represent a warm welcome to us.

Such a warm welcome we receive wherever we visit in the Union is a characteristic of the Union. All the people of the Un-

ion have a warm spirit and show a great hospitality to visitors. We thank all of you and we take pride in it.

The country can transform into a genuine democratic federal Union. The reason I am confident of this is the spirit of the people and the relations between the regions and states in the Union. In fact, the relationship between them is better than we expected.

I would like to urge all of you to consider the fact that we are the Union's brethren who are on the same journey. If we want to stay separate, we will be different from each other. To build a democratic federal Union, we need to see both - our similarity and diversity. If we focus on our similarities, we all can strengthen our unity and build more empathy towards each other.

We hold public meetings when we visit regions and states to know the needs and desires of the people and to share the feelings of the people. During our visits, I found that there are many similarities in different parts of the country. For instance, the demands of the people in Chin State, Kayah State, Magway Region and Ayeyawady Region are similar. No difference. That has been similar since I got involved in politics.

During the over 30 years of my journey in politics, I visited regions and states of the country. I love travelling as a leader of a political party than as a leader of the government. Because, when I was a political party leader, I could stop on the way and talk to local people. I still remember my visit to Chin State in 2001. During that visit, I could talk to workers doing road works, and I feel that we could stay more closer with the people.

I noticed one thing at that time. I always ask the people what they need. I found that the basic needs of the people in all parts of our country are similar. Basically, the first one is: drinking water. Second priority is good transportation. The third demand is electricity.

Health and education are their last demands. It is interesting that local people always give priority to education. Education comes after water, transportation and electricity. They demanded schools and teachers for the education of their children.



State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and local people enjoy the bonfire festival in Tikir village in Thantlang, Chin State. **PHOTO: MNA**

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State Counsellor meets with locals in Tonzang, Thantlang townships, Chin State

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It reflects that they have a view that our country can enjoy development only when our citizens are educated. Health is just as important as education. Today, they people also see that health is also as important as education. Because, today, they also demand schools, hospitals, doctors and nurses. It means they also value health in the same way as education. I admire it. The government has a responsibility to fulfill the needs of the people. We do it as much as we can.

As you all know our country is not yet rich. Prosperity of a country depends on its people. Even though a country is facing a bad situation, the unity of its people can bring development to it.

We can see the countries, which are working very hard, are highly developed countries. However, the first initial step is ‘unity’ for the development of a nation. Peace depends on unity. Development also depends on peace. Unity leads development in view of common people. It is the same as in religious views.

We cannot consider that ‘union’ is all the same and equal. Differences can turn out strength. If we all are equal in qualifications, we may have similar weaknesses. Only after we have different weaknesses and strengths we would be able to help each other to fulfil the gaps. We should teach this kind of mindset to the children since they are young. All ethnic national races should imbue their children with ‘Union Spirit’.

In this way, we can hand it over to next generations to fulfil our ancestors’ desires. It has been over 70 years since we regained our Independence. The Panglong Agreement was signed in one year before our Independ-

ence. We all know this. Chin ethnic nationals took a major role in signing the agreement.

With unity among all ethnic national races they believed and signed the Panglong Agreement to speed up the regaining of our Independence, which was of vital importance than other matters. An independent nation can administer its sovereign power by itself. These are slogans of our National Leaders. We hold our sovereign power ourselves and it belongs to no one else.

Yet, we cannot build our unity until now – not yet fully. We should consider why we cannot complete our unity building. We all may be different and diverse in languages, religions, and races. Why can’t we live in peace and unity. Religions like Christianity and Buddhism did not originate in Myanmar. We don’t need to divide ourselves based on our faiths. I would like to request all to work towards unity among ourselves for our nation.

All should collaborate to work for peace, unity, and development. We need to urge for all-inclusive participation in this regard. We meet local people with our major objective to obtain unity and development like ‘No Unity’ ‘No Peace’, ‘No Peace’ ‘No Development’. These three factors are intertwined and interrelated.

We would like to hear your worries and your needs when we meet you. We do want to fulfil your needs and to lessen your worries. We always find out the solutions. This is part of our daily routine.

This is government’s job. It also concerns with the people. Each and every citizen should take responsibilities in the societies where democracy flourishes. This is all what I often said. Some may count their fingers and ask what are their rights in a democracy.

But they do not think of their responsibilities. We should consider both for our development.

I like to promise that our ethnic national races have their entitled rights while they have their responsibilities. It is very important that you should clearly review yourselves on what rights and responsibilities you have. We don’t need to worry for our country if each and every one of us is a responsible citizen. Our nation will become a strong viable country.”

After her speech, the State Counsellor and senior government officials replied to the requests of local people for constructing 27- mile long road on Mara mountain, constructions of 170 ft bridge and 70 ft bridges and erecting mobile phone towers that cover some local villages.

Five locals who won lots for questioning also asked for construction of a bridge that crosses Bwenu river to link Lailin village with Ywalmun village, removing squatter houses in Thantlang Township, building mini-hydro-power plants and developing 350 acres of empty lands into industrialized farming with an irrigation canal in Ngaphaippee village.

The State Counsellor replied that the relevant departments would look into these matters. Then, the State Counsellor said, “I’m satisfied with this mass gathering. Questions are good and all-inclusive. I take pride of you all. I thank you all. I wish you all good health and well-being. Thank you all.”

In the evening, the State Counsellor and party enjoyed a bonfire festival and traditional dances held in the compound of the Tantlang High School on the eve of the 72nd Anniversary of Chin National Day. –MNA (Translated by Aung Khin/Aungthu Ya/ Zaw Htet Oo)

Inle Lake Wildlife Sanctuary added to EAA flyway

THE Inle Lake Wildlife Sanctuary was added to the East Asian-Australasian Flyway (EAAF), according to the government’s announcement on the World Wetlands Day 2020 (2 February).

The Lake’s Wildlife Sanctuary was designated as the sixth flyway network site in Myanmar of the East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership (EAAFP) and its site code is EAAF-147.

U Nyi Nyi Kyaw, Director-General of Forestry Department, expressed delight for designating the Inle Lake Wildlife Sanctuary as an EAA flyway network site, saying that the designation would assist not only the long-term conservation of water birds but also effective utilization of wetlands.

With the designation of the wildlife sanctuary as a flyway network site, the government would cooperate with related



Flock of migratory birds flying over Inle Lake.

organizations to carry out the tasks related to the site.

More flyway network sites will also be designated so that a regional flyway network can be established, the Director-General added.

Mr Doug Watkins, Chief Executive of East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership-EAAFP, said the designation of

the wildlife sanctuary as a flyway network site was just an initial stage of long-term administration for the welfares of the Inle Lake Wildlife Sanctuary, water birds and local people. He also stressed the importance of sustainable implementation of the tasks on monitoring, educating, raising awareness, capacity building and sharing information

among the East-Asian Australasian Flyway Partnership-EAAFP members.

The EAAFP is ready to collaborate with Myanmar government on the conservation of wetlands located on the flyway of migratory birds, said the EAAFP’s Chief Executive.

The Inle Lake Wildlife Sanctuary was gazetted in 1985. It was also designated as one of the ASEAN Heritage Parks in 2013, an UNESCO Biosphere Reserve in 2015 and a Ramsar site in 2018.

Along with the Inle Lake Wildlife Sanctuary, Gulf of Mot-tama, Indawgyi Wildlife Sanctuary, Moeyungyi Wetland Wildlife Sanctuary, Nanthar Island and Mayyu Estauries and Mein-mahla Kyun Wildlife Sanctuary are the EAA flyway network sites in Myanmar.—MNA

(Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)

UEC Chairman U Hla Thein receives DFID delegation



CHAIRMAN U Hla Thein of the Union Election Commission received Mr Holly Ruthrauff, leader of the External Team of Election Experts of the Department for International Development – DFID (UKaid), and delegation at the UEC office in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning.

During the meeting, they cordially discussed the matters in connection with the ongoing implementation of holding

UEC Chairman U Hla Thein, Mr Holly Ruthrauff and delegation pose for a photo at the UEC office in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.
PHOTO: MNA

the successful 2020 General Election based on 5 norms, the work being undertaken for the capacity building trainings and multiple-trainings in states and regions, the electoral awareness activities for the first time voters (youths), the measure to release correct news and information instead of hate speeches and fake news, the voting rights for those who escape from armed conflicts and stay at temporary camps and the invitation schedules for both domestic and international observation delegations among others.—MNA

(Translated by Aungthu Ya)

YCDC passes only 640 land purchase applications out of 120,000

By Nyein Nyein

THE Yangon City Development Committee (YCDC) has selected only 640 applications, out of 120,000, to allow purchase of land lots owned by the regional government, according to U Than, the Joint Secretary of committee.

An assessment team led by U Han Tun, Chair of the Yangon Region government's Land Management Committee, screened applications to check if they met six criteria — the person purchasing the form and the applicant were the same, the form was filled out completely, a financial statement was attached with the form, along with the proposed bid for land, business type proposal, and the timeframe stating by when the business would become operational. "Some forms proposed a high price for the land, but they were incomplete. So, they were rejected," said U Than. "Only 640 of the 12,000 applications were successful. We will allow successful applicants to buy the land," he said. "Some applicants wanted to buy the same plots of land, but their proposed prices showed a large gap. At that time, they were called to discuss the price. The government will confirm the price for them," he added.

If applicants bid for the same plots or quote the same price, the final decision will be taken by drawing of lots.

The Yangon Region government had announced the sale of land for setting up in-

dustrial businesses and public housing. Initially, land-use applications for 500 plots in Hlinethayar Shwepyitha, and four Dagon townships and more than 180 plots in the Myaungtagar Industrial Zone were sold on 7 October at the office complex of the General Administration Department (Eastern District), and interested buyers purchased 15,620 forms by 8 November, when the deadline ended, said U Than.

However, only 12,158 forms were submitted, he said. Next, more than 9,000 acres in East Dagon and Dagon Seikkan townships, which was previously marked as agricultural land, will go under the hammer, he added.

"The plots that are slated to be sold were previously seized by the government, and compensation had not been awarded to their original owners. Therefore, to compensate the original farmland owners, the lands are being sold again," according to officials.

At present, there are more than 3,000 cases with the Yangon Region government's Committee for Scrutinizing Confiscated Farmlands and Other Lands. Compensation of K6.9 billion was awarded to farmers on 28 September, 2019. In the 2019-2020 financial year, compensation of K31 billion would be provided to the original farmland owners.

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Air pollution to be measured at nearly 50 locations in Yangon

By Nyein Nyein

THE Yangon City Development Committee (YCDC) is planning to measure air pollution levels at nearly 50 locations in Yangon region, in cooperation with the Environmental Conservation Department, said Daw Hlaing Maw Oo, Secretary of the committee.

"The Environmental Conservation Department will cooperate with the YCDC to measure the level of air pollution at 47 locations in Yangon Region and some other locations which have weather stations of the Department of Meteorology and Hydrology," said Daw Hlaing Maw Oo.

"Civil society organizations and the US Embassy have measured the level of air pollution in Yangon Region. They have already announced that the level of air pollution is high during the office hours (mornings and eve-

nings) when people use more vehicles, causing pollution to reach the red level (a reading of 150 to 200 on the pollution index). However, the DMH has announced that the level of air pollution is 50 to 100," according to officials.

"Air pollution levels can be correctly ascertained through 24-hour measurements and they need to be measured across Yangon Region," said U Cho Tun Aung, head of the Environmental Conservation and Cleaning Department of YCDC.

"There are three steps involved in curbing air pollution — finding out how air has become polluted, finding solutions, and deciding how to gauge it. YCDC alone cannot bring down pollution levels. We need more cooperation from other departments," he said.

"The air in Yangon Region can become polluted if leaves, garbage, and dry wood are

burned. Smoke from factories and vehicles can also pollute the air. There are many construction businesses in Yangon. Dust and particulate matter from construction sites can also pollute the air," he added.

There are six colour codes in the Air Quality Index (AQI). A reading of 0-50 (green) on the index shows good air quality. A reading of 51-100 (yellow) is considered satisfactory. A reading of 101-150 (orange) reflects moderate levels of pollution which would affect old persons, young children, and people who are not in good health. A reading of 151-200 (red) and 201-300 (purple) shows moderately polluted to poor air quality. A reading of 301-500 (maroon) reflects very poor air quality to severe levels of pollution.

(Translated by Hay Mar)

Three killed in fire in flat in Yangon

THREE people were killed with one other injured in a fire that occurred in a flat in Yangon yesterday, according to police. The fire started at 11.40 am and it was put under control around 12 pm and totally extinguished at 12.17 pm, said the Myanmar Fire Services Department.

The victims are identified as Daw Khin Aye Win (a) Daw Kyi Pyar, 68, Daw Thidar, 56, and Muang Oh Waik (a) Maung Nyein Zeyar Tun, 8. The deaths are believed to be caused by choking on smoke. An injured woman was taken to the Yangon General Hospital, according to witnesses. The cause of the fire is under investigation.—GNLM



PHOTO: SOE WIN

More loan schemes can aid farmer development

IT is the micro-, small-, and medium-sized enterprises that are at the forefront of the current transformation being witnessed in Myanmar.

Our MSMEs, including smallholder farmers, are among the drivers of the domestic economy. Not only are they crucial employment generators, they are also a source of national innovation, wealth creation, poverty reduction, and human empowerment.

We welcome the joint efforts of the Myanma Economic Bank and the Myanmar Agricultural Development Bank to provide more loans to farmers and agricultural entrepreneurs, apart from the current agricultural and agro machinery loans.

It is worth noting that the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Industry recently disclosed that it will roll out a risk-based loan scheme, which does not require physical collateral from smallholder farmers, ...

as a pilot project at Pyimana Township in the Nay Pyi Taw Council Area.

Smallholder farmers frequently do not have physical collateral or other sources of income that can help them obtain loans.

Micro-finance institutions across the world are aware that financing farmers poses risks because farmer income is irregular and highly susceptible to environmental shocks, and many smallholder farmers have low incomes and low productivity.

However, we are confident that these risks can be mitigated. Providing smallholder farmers with credit to invest in their farms isn't just a good measure, it can also be a good business opportunity. There are risks involved, but there are strategies that can be implemented to reduce risk and make farm finance a successful product for micro-finance institutions.

Only when MSME development helps create job opportunities in the agricultural sector can our overseas workers find decent jobs in our own land.



THE Myanmar Geosciences Society, with the kind supervision of the Ministry of Education as a focal Ministry, submitted the draft Myanmar Geoscience Council Bill in 2019 to the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw and Amyotha Hluttaw respectively. Regarding the term 'Geoscience', as it is relatively new term, there being a controversial between above two Hluttaws. The author would like to take the opportunity to clarify the concise account of the term 'Geoscience' and its critical needs for the twenty-first century.

"Geoscience" is a relatively new term for the Earth sciences and the debate about the name and character of the geosciences taught in schools is an ongoing one. The perceived need to change from a narrow 'geology' perspective to a broader approach was reflected by the change in name of the UK 'Association of Teachers of Geology' to the 'Earth Science Teachers' Association' in 1989 and the change of the US 'National Association of Geology Teachers' to the 'National Association of Geoscience Teachers' in 1995 (Chris King, 2008).

Chris King provides five distinctive attributes of Geoscience; 1. Geoscience is 'an interpretive and historical science' involving a wide range of methodologies including those required for retrodictive thinking, for large-scale thinking and for integrating large and incomplete data sets.

2. Geoscience plays a crucial role in the development of holistic systems thinking, involving consideration of major Earth systems, such as the water and carbon cycles and their interactions and positive and negative feedback loops.

3. Geoscience requires high-level spatial ability thinking (three dimensional thinking).

4. In geoscience, the development of time perspectives is crucial, particularly those of geological time.

5. Geoscience fieldwork has particular strategies and methodologies that must be acquired. These strategies and methodologies involve development of all the attributes listed above, in field contexts.

The four Geosciences or Earth Sciences

Many different sciences are used to learn about the Earth; however, Hobart M. King classified the four basic areas of Earth science study such as geology, meteorology, oceanography, and astronomy. A brief explanation of



The Planet Earth. Source: NASA's presentation (AOGS meeting, 2019)

Geoscience to Meet the Needs of the Twenty-first Century

By Than Htun (Myanmar Geosciences Society)

these sciences is provided below.

Geology: Science of the Earth

Geology is the primary Earth science. The word means "study of the Earth". Geology deals with the composition of earth materials, Earth structures, and Earth processes. It is also concerned with the organisms of the planet and how the planet has changed over time. Geologists search for fuels and minerals, study natural hazards, and work to protect Earth's environment.

Meteorology : Science of the Atmosphere

Meteorology is the study of the atmosphere and how processes in the atmosphere determine Earth's weather and climate. Meteorology is very practical science because everyone is concerned about the weather. How climate changes over time in response to the actions of people is a topic of urgent worldwide concern. The study of meteorology is of critical importance in protecting Earth's environment.

Oceanography: Science of the Oceans

Oceanography is the study of Earth's oceans- their composition, movement, organisms and processes. The oceans cover most of our planet and are important resources for food and other commodities. They are increasingly being used as an energy source. The

oceans also have a major influence on the weather, and changes in the oceans can drive or moderate climate change. Oceanographers work to develop the oceans as a resource and protect it from human impact. The goal is to utilize the oceans while minimizing the effect of our actions.

Astronomy: Science of the Universe

"Geoscience" is a relatively new term for the Earth sciences and the debate about the name and character of the geosciences taught in schools is an ongoing one.

Astronomy is the study of the universe. Here are some examples of why studying space beyond Earth is important: the moon drives the oceans' tidal system, asteroid impacts have repeatedly devastated Earth's inhabitants, and energy from the sun drives our weather and climates. A knowledge of astronomy is essential to understanding the Earth. Astronomers can also use a knowledge of Earth's materials, processes and history to understand other planets- even those outside of our own solar system.

The Role of the Geosciences

In 2012, AGI (American Geosciences Institute) indicated the eight critical needs of Geoscience as below:

1. Ensure reliable energy supplies

Energy is essential for economic growth, national security international relations, sustainable communities, food security,

is covered by these saline water bodies. Oceans provide food, desalinated drinking water, and habitats plants and animals. The atmosphere couples with the solid Earth, oceans, and space. It affects water resources through precipitation, evaporation, and other parts of the water cycle, affects air quality as part of the carbon and nitrogen cycles, and moderate temperatures near the surface. The atmosphere shields us from harmful solar radiation and affects the weather.

Space is vast and mostly unknown, yet Earth orbit and the Sun to Earth interaction regions of space have been explored and monitored at a level that rivals oceanic and atmospheric exploration. Geoscientists, working with other scientists and engineers, observe and understand Earth and space processes to effectively utilize these vast resources.

4. Manage waste to provide a healthy environment

Each year the country requires more waste treatment and disposal. Wastewater, sewage, contaminated water, nuclear waste, landfills, brownfields, superfund sites, recyclable waste, and non-biodegradable waste must be managed with great care. Long term planning and responsible execution are needed to prevent toxic waste build-ups, additional contamination, reuse of certain waste materials for biologic or nuclear weapons, and release of hazard-

ous materials. The challenge is to efficiently and securely treat and dispose of waste with a minimum impact on ecosystem and human health. Waste can be transformed into a useful resource with ingenuity, effective waste management, and innovation.

5. Mitigate risk and build resilience from natural and human-made hazards

Natural hazards such as earthquakes, volcanoes, landslides, tornadoes, hurricanes, severe storms, floods, heatwaves, and drought, exact a significant toll on society. Our goal as a nation should be to develop resilient communities where losses are limited recovery is holistic, intelligent, and rapid. Geoscientists, working in cooperation with emergency man-

agers, developers, insurers, and others, are needed to understand the natural and human factors that may make Earth processes more hazardous and to help develop strategies to mitigate their risks.

6. Improve and build needed infrastructure that couples with and uses Earth resources while integrating new technologies

Infrastructure in all country faces increasing pressure from a growing, more mobile, more complex, and more interconnected population. Much of the infrastructure that provides critical lifelines is aging and in need of improvement while some are new technology that requires integration with existing systems. Infrastructure is affected by significant geologic processes beyond normal wear and tear; including climate change, weather, hazards, chemical corrosion, and mechanical erosion.

Much more work and funding are needed to understand problems with ground subsidence and soil conditions, the effects on ecosystems and the effects of water control on the health and maintenance of these systems. Geoscientists and geotechnical engineers play a critical role in the siting and design of the built environment to increase its resilience to natural hazards and minimize its impact on the natural environment.

SEE PAGE-10

Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar Ministry of the Office of the State Counsellor

Press Release
(19 February 2020)

New Deputy Minister Joins the Ministry of the Office of the State Counsellor

THE Ministry of the Office of the State Counsellor has added a new Deputy Minister U Min Lwin, whose appointment was announced on 4 February 2020 by Order 5/2020 of the Office of the President, assumed his responsibilities on 17 February 2020.

Until his appointment, he was Permanent Representative of Myanmar to ASEAN in Jakarta, Indonesia. Prior to that, he served as the Ambassador of Myanmar to Bangladesh and Indonesia.

He has also served as the Director General of the Consular and Legal Affairs Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in which capacity he was involved with bilateral negotiations to resolve the Myanmar-Bangladesh Maritime Boundary Dispute and the Continental Shelf Submission of Union of Myanmar to the United Nations Secretariat.

The current Deputy Minister U Khin Maung Tin will continue to handle the regular work of the Ministry of the Office of the State Counsellor and will focus on peace process issues.

Deputy Minister U Min Lwin will amongst others, deal with national reconciliation, social cohesion, and focus on International Court of Justice issues.



Myanmar Daily Weather Report (Issued at 7:00 pm Wednesday 19th 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 20th February, 2020: Rain will be isolated in Taninthayi Region, Kachin and Eastern Shan States. Degree of certainty is (80%). Weather will be partly cloudy in the remaining Regions and States.

STATE OF THE SEA: Sea will be moderate in Myanmar waters. Wave height will be about (5- 8) feet off and along Myanmar Coasts.

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Continuation of likelihood of isolated rain or thundershowers in Kachin State.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 20th February, 2020: Partly Cloudy.

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 20th February, 2020: Generally fair weather.

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 20th February, 2020: Generally fair weather.

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Geoscience to Meet the Needs of the Twenty-first Century

FROM PAGE-9

7. Ensure reliable supplies of raw materials

Minerals help to sustain life in numerous ways. They are natural or added supplements in food and drink. Minerals are essential in just about any product used in daily life from calcite in toothpaste to silicon in computers and solar panels. The global demand for metals, such as aluminum, copper, gold, and platinum, has led to a steep rise in their commodity prices. Rare earth elements (REEs) are increasingly critical to evolving technologies for use in fuel-efficient vehicles, electronic devices, and many military applications. Geoscientists need to locate these materials, assess quantity and quality, cleanly efficiently manage their extraction or use in place, reduce byproducts or excessive waste, and assess strategic needs for low-supply critical materials that are in high demand or relate to national security.

8. Inform the public and train the geosciences workforce to understand Earth processes and address these critical needs

There is a critical need for an increased number of people in the geosciences-based workforce now and in future. A geosciences-based workforce includes technicians, professional geoscientists, professional engineers, research and development managers, exploration managers, data managers, applied researchers, basic researchers and educators at all levels. Such a workforce has or will need a knowledge and understanding of the Earth system and Earth processes, computational and analytical skills, a sense of discovery and adventure, and strong problem-solving traits. In addition, this workforce is critical for teaching the next generation for workers, based on their sound understanding of geosciences concepts and their work experience.

Furthermore, geoscientists have made significant progress in developing increasingly reliable prediction models and through major research achievements, they now understand most of the mechanisms and timing of larger and smaller to neon-scale processes in the Earth. When discussing the future of planet Earth, its geosphere, atmosphere, hydrosphere and biosphere the results of such important studies cannot be ignored (Eduardo F.J.de Mulder et al.2015).

References: AGI (American Geosciences Institute, 2012. The Role of the Geoscience.
Christ J.H. King, 2008. Geoscience Education: An Overview.
EduardoF.J.de Mulder, 2015. Geosciences for Future Research.
Hobart M.King. . What is the Earth Science?

SMVTI has job guarantee for its graduates: Union Minister

ALL of the Singapore-Myanmar Vocational Training Institute – SMVTI graduates are guaranteed to get jobs with the supports from the two governments, said Union Minister for Education Dr Myo Thein Gyi at the handover ceremony of the institute yesterday.

The governments of Myanmar and Singapore jointly opened the SMVTI, and its handover ceremony was held at the institute’s compound in the Natmawk Lane, Bahan Township, Yangon.

Speaking at the ceremony, Union Minister Dr Myo Thein Gyi said the courses on Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) are conducted to produce qualified and competitive workforce for Myanmar economic development.

The ministry is also implementing an effective managing plan, in accordance with the National Education Strategic Plan (2016 - 2021), to create more opportunities for attending technical vocational education training, to get the trainings successful after their quality meet the local labour markets’ demands, and to more open skills-based short vocational training.

Since 2016, the ministry

has been upgrading the skills of technical vocational teachers and also promoting the cooperation between the training institutes and factories. Thus, the interests and trusts of the people in the technical and vocational sector were visibly increasing, the Union Minister said.

In cooperation with development partners, the ministry is opening the SMVTI, School of Industrial Training and Education – SITE, Technical Teacher Training Institute-TTTI, Japan-Myanmar Aung San Vocational Training Institute-JMASVTI and Nyaung Shwe Vocational Training Institute-NVTI. The SMVTI is now becoming a first-class training school, getting the interests and trusts of people.

The first-term of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for the institute between Singapore and Myanmar was due in April 2017.The second-term of the MoU for additional three-year extension was signed in March 2017. The second-term is also going to be due, the Union Minister added.

So far, a total of 3,060 students who had finished their high school education already completed the SMVTI’s courses on industrial



Union Minister Dr Myo Thein Gyi delivers the opening address at the handover ceremony of the Singapore-Myanmar Vocational Training Institute in Yangon yesterday. PHOTO: MNA

engineering and hotels and tourism. Sixty per cent of them got employments in their respective fields they learned, and some are working for the senior management positions of the international companies and hotels.

The ministry will cooperate with the institute in building capacity of the teachers and maintaining the sustainable quality of the institute, said the Union

Minister. Following the Union Minister’s speech, Singapore’s Education Minister Mr Ong Ye Kung explained the establishment of the institute.

Afterwards, a video clip on the activities of the institute was played, and the SMVTI’s students demonstrated their learned skills.

The Union Minister and officials also viewed inside the training institute.

Myanmar’s Department of Technical and Vocational Education and Training and Singapore’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs signed the MoU for founding the institute in April 2014. The opening ceremony of the institute on 9 June 2016 was attended by Prime Minister of Singapore Mr Lee Hsien Loong. —MNA

(Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)

MoHS updates surveillance measures against COVID-19

THE Ministry of Health and Sports released the updated information about its surveillance measures against the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) on 19 February.

1. The Ministry of Health and Sports is conducting the screening process to prevent respiratory disease COVID-19, which is now spreading China and other countries, at the international gateways and at the hospitals, through public-centered monitoring processes and in co-

ordination with private hospitals.
2. A 40-year old Chinese man from Weihai city of Shandong province, from China arrived in Myanmar on 17 February 2020, and he went to the Hlinethaya Township hospital on 19 February 2020 as he suffered from fever and diarrhea. He was then transferred to the Waibargi hospital where he was quarantined as a Person Under Investigation at the hospital. His specimens will be examined at the National Health Laboratory in

Yangon , although he was not diagnosed with the acute respiratory disease until now.
3. A 26-year old woman returned from Singapore to Myanmar on 14 February 2020. The International Health Regulations (IHR) Focal Point of Singapore informed to the Central Epidemiology Unit of Myanmar that she was in close contact with a laboratory confirmed patient in Singapore. She was quarantined as a Person Under Investigation at the

Mandalay General Hospital. Her specimens will be examined at the National Health Laboratory in Yangon, although she was not diagnosed with the acute respiratory disease until now.
4. Up to 8 pm on 19 February 2020, a total of 11 persons were being quarantined for medical treatments at the hospitals of respective States and Regions and they are in good health. The results of laboratory tests will be released in a timely manner.—MNA

FDI inflow estimated at \$500 mln per month in current fiscal

By Nyein Nyein
FOREIGN direct investments of approximately US\$500 million flowed into the country per month over the past four months of the 2019-2020 financial year, said U Thant Sin Lwin, Director-General of the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA).

The quantum of FDI was higher than domestic investments made by Myanmar citizens, he said.

“A higher quantum of FDI and more foreign investment projects were witnessed in the first four months of the current fiscal. The FDI net inflow was over \$1.9 billion (approximately \$500 million per month),” said U Thant Sin Lwin.

With steady FDI inflow in the current fiscal, Myanmar is likely to reach its FDI target of \$5.8 billion, set under the Myanmar Investment Promotion Plan (MIPP), he said.

The Myanmar Investment Commission held six meetings in the past four months (October-January). The number of those seeking MIC permits was higher than those applying for endorsements, according to the DICA.

“At previous meetings, enterprises seeking MIC permits

were more than those applying for an endorsement. All the businesses applying for endorsements received approval. However, 82 per cent of businesses which applied for MIC permits were given the greenlight. Businesses with negative social and health impacts were restricted,” said U Thant Sin Lwin.

“Other types of businesses also need to seek approval from the President’s office through the related department of the region or state. The opinions from the related ministries are also needed. If a business can affect the environment, it will be suspended. Businesses have been asked to comply with the rules and regulations. After a field inspection is conducted, a business can again re-apply for permit. The MIC will issue guidelines for failed proposals. In general, about 10 projects are approved at every meeting,” he added.

In the current financial year, the power sector topped the FDI sector line-up, with investments of \$1.02 billion, followed by the real estate sector with investments of \$601.9 million, and the transportation and telecommunication sector with \$145.4 million.

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Chin traditional costumes selling well ahead of Chin National Day



Chin traditional handicrafts put on display at a shop in Thantlang Town, Chin State. **PHOTO: MYINT NAING SOE (IPRD)**

WITH the 72nd Chin National Day drawing near, Chin traditional costumes, souvenirs, and gifts are selling well, said traditional costume sellers from Thantlang Town of Chin State.

The 72nd Chin National Day will be held for the first time at the national level in Thantlang. The celebrations will be held from 19 to 21 February.

Chin traditional costumes are selling well in Chin State, particularly in Kalay Town of Sagaing Region. The good sales of Chin

clothes can also be attributed to their modern styles and attractive designs. Women and young girls prefer to purchase Chin traditional clothes and necklaces.

“The traditional souvenirs and clothes are selling well. This year, the 72nd Chin National Day will be celebrated at the national level for the first time. So, Chin-style clothes are selling well. We have ordered them again because we are running out of stock,” said a traditional Chin-style clothes shop owner from

Thantlang Town.

The 72nd Chin National Day will be celebrated at the sports ground near No. 2 State High School in Ward 3, Thantlang Town. With local and foreign guests arriving in Thantlang ahead of the celebrations, the guesthouses and hotels are all fully booked, and visitors are thronging Chin traditional clothes, accessories, and souvenirs shops. —Myint Naing Soe (IPRD)

(Translated by Hay Mar)

Myanmar International Livestock Expo 2020 to be held from 14-16 May at YCC

By Nyein Nyein

A three-day Myanmar International Livestock Expo 2020 (MILE2020) is scheduled to be held from 14-16 May at the Yangon Convention Center (YCC). The expo is being organized by the Myanmar Livestock Federation (MLF).

MILE2020 will be the biggest livestock expo in Myanmar, and will be held alongside Agri-Tech Myanmar 2020, said officials.

It will feature the latest products and technologies in livestock, poultry, and related agribusinesses, and feature a conference of veterinarians, animal scientists, and manufacturers.

Exhibitors from 10 countries will display their products in 130 booths. The expo will also provide business matching opportunities.

Those operating businesses in animal health products and equipment, feed processing, livestock production facilities and equipment, livestock and poultry production, diagnostics, breeding, finance and insurance sectors must take part in the expo, said organizers.

Livestock and poultry production in Myanmar has been growing 10-15 per cent annually. Most breeders are using traditional methods and some have shifted to modern methods. Moreover, integrated poultry and fish farming is widely seen

in Myanmar.

According to the MLF, at present, there are 1.35 million broilers being raised for meat, about 1.465 million semi-broilers, and more than 2.9 million layers (for eggs) at integrated poultry and fish farms in Myanmar. “The industry has been producing meat and eggs at a reasonable price to fulfill the needs of consumers. It also helps support the country’s meat sector,” it stated.

Currently, there are 211 livestock entrepreneurs employing 6,330 workers in the integrated farming industry.

MLF is the leading organization in the livestock and poultry sector in Myanmar.

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Domestic investments touch K846 bln, \$154 mln in current FY

Domestic investments by Myanmar citizens, including expansion of capital by existing enterprises, reached K846.18 billion including US\$154.37 million as of 14 February in the 2019-2020 financial year, according to a press release issued by the Myanmar Investment Commission (MIC).

Between 1 October and 13 February in the current fiscal, 53 local enterprises were allowed to invest in various sectors, with an estimated capital of over K743 billion and \$132 million.

Domestic investments flowed into the real estate, manufacturing, hotels and tourism, construction, industrial estate, energy, mining, livestock and fisheries, agriculture, and other services sectors, according to figures from the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration.

To simplify the verification of investment projects, the Myanmar Investment Law allows

the region and state Investment Committees to endorse local and foreign proposals, where the initial investment does not exceed K6 billion, or \$5 million.

While some projects no longer need MIC approval, businesses that are strategic to the government require a permit from the commission. In addition, those businesses that have large capital investments exceeding \$5 million and that may have a possible impact on the environment and the local community need to be approved by the DICA proposal assessment team.

With a fast-track way to set up a business in Myanmar having been introduced, investors can apply to the MIC or the state and regional Investment Committees for getting investment proposals endorsed, depending on the business type.—GNLM

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Trade Mark Ads Call Thin Thin May, 09251022355,09974424848

MUFG Bank launches system development, operation unit in India

NEW DELHI — MUFG Bank has set up a system development and operation wing in India, planning to develop it into a unit to support the Japanese bank’s business in the Asian and Oceanian regions and elsewhere.

MUFG Bank, a unit of Mitsubishi UFJ Financial Group Inc., established MUFG Enterprise Solutions India Pvt. Ltd. last Thursday and placed the head office in the financial capital of Mumbai and a branch office in Bengaluru, known as India’s Silicon Valley, according to a MUFG Bank statement.

“The head and branch offices are expected to start operation in February to March,” a Mitsubishi UFJ Financial Group spokeswoman told NNA last Thursday, adding that a Japanese head will lead some 20 local staff members.

By utilizing the world’s largest digital workforce in India, the bank aims to build a more sustainable and efficient system operation platform, the statement said. —Kyodo News



Photo taken on 21 February, 2019, shows a sign for MUFG Bank in Tokyo. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

US lobster industry anxious to resume business with China

NEW YORK — Hugh Reynolds, a lobster dealer from the north-eastern US town of Stonington, Maine, was excited to learn that the China-US phase-one economic and trade deal came into effect on 14 February.

“I hope to resume business with China soon,” said Reynolds.

According to the deal, China promises to purchase more agricultural products from the United States, and lobster is highlighted in the sector.

Having been in the industry for more than 20 years, Reynolds’ company, Greenhead Lobster, is one of the largest lobster wholesalers in Stonington, a town long-known for its rich and historic tradition of lobstering.

“Our Stonington, Maine Lob-

sters are fresh caught by local fishermen, delivered daily to the Greenhead Docks, promptly prepared, packed and shipped,” the company said on its website.

His Chinese partners in Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou and many more cities loved his products. More than 200 boats used to go out lobstering for Greenhead Lobster every day, with an annual harvest of 10 million pounds of live lobsters, of which more than 30 per cent had been shipped to China. Reynolds remembered that in July 2018, China imposed 25 per cent additional tariff on imported US lobsters in response to the US threat of an additional 25-per cent tariff on Chinese imports worth about 50 billion US dollars.—Xinhua ■

PESTICIDES DISTRIBUTER CHANGING

We, Y AGRO SOLUTION CO., LTD, would like to change distributor of the following products, (registered by SHANDONG BINNONG TECHNOLOGY CO., LTD to Pesticide Registration Board. Myanmar), from following company. If any object or enquiry, please contact to Pesticide registration Board, Plant Protection Division, Bayint Naung Road, West Gyogone, Insein Township, Yangon, from here to next 14 days. Y AGRO SOLUTION CO., LTD. Ph-09787630272

Sr.	Trade Name	A.I	Receive No.	Old Distributer Company
1	BNS Cyper 25	Cypermethrin 25 % EC	P2017-3649	AKA YAZAR CO.,LTD
2	BNS Azoxy	Azoxystrobin 25% SC	P2017-3656	MARGA MIN CO.,LTD
3	BNS Buta A	Butachlor 60 % EC	P2017- 3659	MARGA MIN CO.,LTD
4	BNS Difeno	Difenoconazole 25 % EC	P2017-3661	MARGA MIN CO.,LTD

Summon for defence not to issue execution order
(Under Order-21, rule-22 of the Civil Procedure Code)
Yangon Western District Court

2015 Civil Execution Case No. 52 connected with 2011 year
Civil Regular Case No. 820

Decree Holder	VS	Judgement Debtors
Daw Hla Hla (her representative, U Cho Cho Maung)		1. Daw Hla Hla Htay 2. U Htay Hlaing 3. U Thein Han 4. Daw Mya Mya Than @ Daw Mya Mya Khaing 5. Daw Nu Nu Lwin 6. Daw Khin Khin Toe 7. U Zaw Min 8. Daw Khaing Khaing Myint 9. U Aung Thar Kyi (1 to 9 legal representatives of expired person U Kan Tun)
		10. U Tin Tun @ Bagawan Das (a) Gorangal Das 11. MR. LARLU 12. MR. GORA 13. MR. THUSHA 14. MRS. THAW PAW THEE 15. MR. OSHIN 16. MR. OLOK (11 to 16 legal representatives of expired person Daw Tin Aye @ Bugarthee)

To know judgement debtor (10) U Tin Tun @ Bagawan Das (a) Gorangal Das, residing at NO. 343, SUBARNA PATTAN KARJI PARA, BARASAT. NO. 24, PARGANAS, WEST BENGAL, INDIA and Judgement debtors, (11) MR. LARLU, (12) MR. GORA, (13) MR. THUSHA, (14) MRS. THAW PAW THEE, (15) MR. OSHIN, (16) MR. OLOK, NO. 293, SUBARNA PATTAN KARJI PARA, BARASAT. NO. 24, PARGANAS, WEST BENGAL, INDIA (unknown present address)

Whereas the decree holder has instituted in this court to execute the decree passed in 2011 year Civil Regular Case No. 820, you are here by summoned to appear in this court in person or by a pleader or representative to defence any cause not to issue execution order because of any reason, on the 25th March, 2020 (2nd waxing day of Taku, 1381 year) at (10:00 AM) before noon.

Given under my hand and the seal of court this 11st February, 2020.

Free charge for Summon.

Received Ks. /-
Clerk

(Myint Sein)
Deputy District Judge (15),
Yangon Western District Court

Ministry of Construction
Department of Rural Road Development(DRRD)
Invitation for Bids

- The Republic of the Union of Myanmar has received a Grant from the Federal Republic of Germany (KfW bank) through the Ministry of Construction towards the cost of Rural Development Programme - Phase V and Improvement of Agricultural Transport Infrastructure(IATI).
- Department of Rural Road Development under Ministry of Construction intends to implement, with contract system, the construction of bituminous roads,culverts and bridges along the roads in Taunggyi District,Southern Shan State. Rural roads express as follow:

No	Township	Lot No	Road Name	Road Type	Length(Km)
(i)	Taunggyi	TGI-3 Lot-A	Than Thai-Shan Chaung Road	DBST	9.23
(ii)	Taunggyi	TGI-3 Lot-B	Kyauk Ni-Su Bok Kwe Road	DBST	10.49
(iii)	Lawksawk	YSK-2 Lot-A	Naung Bo-Let Ban Pin Road	DBST	10.00
(iv)	Lawksawk	YSK-2 Lot-B	Let Ban Pin-Kyauk Ta Lone Road	BST	8.85
(v)	Hopone	HP-12	Nam Paw Supwo-Like Ka Htu Road	DBST	4.26
(vi)	Hopone	HP-5/ HP-6	Nam Khaok-Wan Lwe Road Naung Ya Sai -Ho Tut Road	DBST	3.83 4.56
(vii)	Hopone	HP-7 Lot-A	Tha Ya Gon-Ban Pein Road	DBST	8.20
(viii)	Hopone	HP-7 Lot-B	Chan Hti-Ywa Thit Road	DBST	7.86

- Bidding will be conducted by means of the national competitive bidding (NCB)Procedure with qualification as specified in the KfW Guidelines version 2019 (Guidelines for the procurement of consulting services,works plant goods and non-consulting services in financial cooperation with partner countries) (the KfW Guidelines)
- Interested companies may obtain further information and may inspect the complete bidding documents, and may purchase a set of the documents upon payment of a non-refundable fee of **MMK-65000** at International Relationship and Legal division of Department of Rural Road Development.
- A pre-bid conference will be held in the Meeting Room of the DRRD on Friday (13.3.2020) at 11:00AM. Each bidder is invited to attend the conference with maximum two representatives.
- Bids must be delivered to the address below on or before (7.4.2020) at 02:00 pm.Late bids will be rejected.
- Interested companies may obtain further information at following address :

Daw Tin Moe Myint
Deputy Director General
Department of Rural Road Development
Office No.(11), Ministry of Construction, Department of Rural Road Development
Tel/ Fax: 067-24821/09-448539415/ 09-793887785
Email: irdrrd.hq@gmail.com, ruralroad.drrd@gmail.com

Trade Mark Ads Call Thin Thin May. 09251022355,09974424848

EU seeks ‘responsible’ AI to dispel Big Brother fears

BRUSSELS — The EU unveiled its strategy for artificial intelligence on Wednesday as Europe jumps to catch up to the US and China and dispel fears of Big Brother control.

From household robots to facial recognition, AI will be the technology of the future and Europe is eager to play a central role in defining the rules as well as pushing its own champions.

“We want the application of these new technologies to deserve the trust of our citizens,”



The EU recognises it missed the internet revolution, and wants to make sure it doesn't repeat that mistake with the burgeoning field of artificial intelligence. PHOTO: AFP

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen told reporters.

“This is why we are promoting a responsible, human-centric approach to artificial intelligence,” she said.

EU officials widely acknowledge that Europe missed the first internet revolution with an online world dominated by Silicon Valley’s Google, Facebook and Apple, as well as Chinese players like Tencent. To avoid repeating the past, the AI roadmap proposed

on Wednesday is the first step in a long road to legislation, with Brussels hoping for draft laws by the end of the year.

The far-ranging plans will face furious lobbying from corporate giants and governments and will require ratification by European Parliament. The heads of Google and Facebook already made their views known during recent visits to Brussels.

“Artificial intelligence is not good or bad in itself. It all depends on why and how it is used,” said

the EU Commission’s executive vice president on digital policy, Margrethe Vestager. AI reproducing “human language can make a chat bot... and give us a better consumer experience, but it can also be used to create fake news,” she told a news conference. The commission, the EU’s executive arm, will first and foremost seek to repeat the success of its landmark GDPR regulation that has become a global standard for protecting data privacy online.—AFP ■

Foreign visitors to Japan down for 4th straight month in January

TOKYO — The number of foreign visitors to Japan fell for the fourth straight month in January, down 1.1 per cent from a year earlier; government data showed Wednesday, with sharper declines seemingly inevitable in the months ahead due to the new coronavirus

outbreak.

An estimated 2.66 million foreigners visited Japan, with the number of South Korean tourists continuing to fall sharply as relations between the two countries remain soured by wartime issues, according to the data from the Japan

Tourism Agency.

Visitors from China hit a record high for the reporting month at 924,800, up 22.6 per cent, on the Chinese New Year holiday period that started in late January. Last year, the holiday began in early February.

The Chinese government, however, banned group travel and some individual trips overseas on 27 January following the spread of the pneumonia-causing virus and Japan’s tourism industry is expected to be hit over the long term.—Kyodo News ■

TRADEMARK CAUTION

TASAKI & Co., LTD., a company incorporated in Japan and having its registered office at 3-2, 6-chome, Minatojima Naka-machi, Chuo-ku, Kobe 650-0046, JAPAN is the owner and proprietor of the following Trademark:

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Reg. No. 4/31281/2019 (8.1.2020)

In respect of “Platinum [metal]; alloys of precious metal; precious metals, unwrought or semi-wrought; pearls [jewellery]; diamonds; beads for making jewellery; jewellery; ornaments [jewellery]; paste jewellery; semi-wrought precious stones and their imitations; unwrought precious stones; semi-precious stones; trinkets [jewellery]; cloisonne jewellery; bracelets [jewellery]; brooches [jewellery]; chains [jewellery]; charms [jewellery]; clasps for jewellery; tie clips; necklaces [jewellery]; cuff links; rings [jewellery]; earrings; hat ornaments of precious metal; tie pins; lockets [jewellery]; pendants; tiaras; ankle bracelets; badges of precious metal; ornamental pins; pins [jewellery]; jewellery cases [caskets]; key rings [trinkets or fobs]; statuettes of precious metal; statues of precious metal; clocks; wristwatches; straps for wristwatches; movements for clocks and watches; stopwatches; buckles for watchstraps” all included in **Class 14**; “Retail services and wholesale services for woven fabric and bedding; retail services and wholesale services for bags and pouches; retail services and wholesale services for personal ornaments; retail services and wholesale services for personal articles; retail services and wholesale services for furniture; retail services and wholesale services for articles for use with rituals; retail services and wholesale services for bladed or pointed hand tools, hand tools and hardware; retail services and wholesale services for kitchen equipment, cleaning tools and washing utensils; retail services and wholesale services for cosmetics, toiletries, dentifrices, soaps and detergents; retail services and wholesale services for printed matter; retail services and wholesale services for paper and stationery; retail services and wholesale services for clocks, watches and spectacles [eyeglasses and goggles]; retail services and wholesale services for semi-wrought precious stones and their imitations; retail services and wholesale services for shells; auctioneering; commercial administration of the licensing of the goods and services of others; business management and organization consultancy; marketing research; marketing studies; shop window dressing; demonstration of goods; marketing; advertising” all included in **Class 35** and “Aquaculture services; vermin exterminating for agriculture, aquaculture, horticulture and forestry; rental of fishing equipment and instruments” all included in **Class 44**.

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

Daw La Min May, H.G.P
For TASAKI & Co., LTD.,
C/o Kelvin Chia Yangon Ltd.,
Level 8A, UFC Tower, Corner of Mahabandoola Road & Thein Phyu Road, Botahtaung Township, Yangon,
The Republic of the Union of Myanmar.
Dated 20th February 2020 lmm@kcyangon.com

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V KUO TAI VOY. NO. (204 N/S)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V KUO TAI VOY. NO. (204 N/S) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 20-2-2020 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of TMIT/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 CONTINENTAL SHIPPING LINE

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V PACAO VOY. NO. (081 N/S)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V PACAO VOY. NO. (081 N/S) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 20-2-2020 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

TRADEMARK CAUTION

KOMATSU LTD., a company incorporated in Japan and having its registered office at 3-6, 2-CHOME AKASAKA, MINATO-KU, TOKYO, JAPAN is the owner and proprietor of the following Trademark:

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

Daw La Min May, H.G.P
For KOMATSU LTD.,
C/o Kelvin Chia Yangon Ltd.,
Level 8A, Union Financial Centre (UFC),
Corner of Mahabandoola Road and Thein Phyu Road,
Botahtaung Township, Yangon,
The Republic of the Union of Myanmar.
Dated 20th February 2020 lmm@kcyangon.com

circulation@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

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HOTLINE 09-974424114

Former South Korean president jailed after losing appeal

SEOUL — Former South Korean president Lee Myung-bak was taken to prison Wednesday to begin a 17-year term for bribery and embezzlement after losing an appeal against a lighter sentence.

Lee, in office from 2008 to 2013, was briefly jailed in 2018 after being sentenced to 15 years and fined 13 billion won (\$11 million), but was granted bail while he appealed.

He was found guilty of creating slush funds of tens of millions of dollars and accepting bribes from Samsung Electronics in return for a presidential pardon for its chairman, Lee Kun-hee, who was jailed for tax evasion.

At a hearing on Wednesday, Seoul's Central District Court ordered a heavier sentence, saying Lee "did not show a sign of remorse or sense of responsibility" for his wrongdoings.

He instead blamed civil servants he worked with and Samsung employees, the court said.

Several South Korean presidents have ended up in prison after leaving office — often as a result of investigations started by political rivals.

Lee's successor, Park Geun-hye, is currently serving 32 years in jail for bribery and abuse of power after being ousted in 2017 over a nationwide corruption scandal that prompted



Former South Korean president Lee Myung-bak arriving at court to attend his original trial in 2018. **PHOTO: AFP**

massive street protests.

Another former leader, Roh Moo-hyun, committed suicide

after being questioned in a corruption probe involving his family.—AFP ■



In an excerpt from a Sky News documentary, Abbott claims he was told within a week of the plane vanishing that Malaysia believed the captain had intentionally downed the jet. **PHOTO: AFP**

Malaysia suspected MH370 downed in murder-suicide

CANBERRA — Former Australian prime minister Tony Abbott has claimed "very top" level Malaysian officials believed vanished Flight MH370 was deliberately downed by the captain in a mass murder-suicide.

The Malaysia Airlines jet vanished on 8 March, 2014 carrying 239 people — mostly from China — en route from Kuala Lumpur to Beijing.

No sign of the plane was found in a 120,000-square kilometre (46,000-square mile) Indian Ocean search zone and the Australian-led search, the largest in aviation history, was suspended in January 2017.

A US exploration firm launched a private hunt in 2018 but it ended after several months of scouring the seabed without success. The disappearance of the plane has long been the subject of a host of theories — ranging from the credible to out-

landish — including that veteran pilot Zaharie Ahmad Shah had gone rogue.

In an excerpt from a Sky News documentary airing Wednesday, Abbott claims he was told within a week of it vanishing that Malaysia believed the captain had intentionally downed the jet.

"My very clear understanding from the very top levels of the Malaysian government is that from very, very early on here, they thought it was murder-suicide by the pilot," he said.

"I'm not going to say who said what to whom but let me reiterate, I want to be absolutely crystal clear, it was understood at the highest levels that this was almost certainly murder-suicide by the pilot — mass murder-suicide by the pilot."

Zaharie's family and friends have long strongly rejected such claims as baseless.—AFP ■

Elated passengers leave Cambodia cruise ship after virus all-clear

SIHANOUKVILLE — Dozens of passengers stuck for nearly a week on a US cruise ship in Cambodia disembarked Wednesday, after being given the all-clear from a deadly coronavirus.

The Westerdam made shore in Sihanoukville on 13 February after being rejected by five countries over fears its passengers could be carrying the new virus, which has killed more than 2,000 people.

Hundreds were allowed off after basic health checks — among them an 83-year-old American woman who was later diagnosed with the virus while in transit in Malaysia.

That raised fears many other Westerdam passengers could be spreading the virus as they scattered, although no other cases have been recorded.

Once the American woman's case was discovered, the remaining passengers on the Westerdam were ordered to stay on board, but they have now all been given a clean bill of health.

The majority of the 1,455 guests were American, with Canadians, Brits, Dutch and Germans among the remaining passengers to take the re-routed cruise.

Swabs from the more than 700 crew members aboard were still being collected, a Sihanoukville provincial spokesman told AFP.

But the ship operator said late Wednesday that the boat was preparing to leave the port with the crew — who have endured a torrid extended journey — taking turns to rest on their onward trip.—AFP ■



Diners have lunch in the foreground of the Westerdam cruise ship in Sihanoukville. **PHOTO: AFP**

NEWS In BRIEF

Thai PM offers cash compensation to victims affected by mass shooting

BANGKOK — Thai Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha on Wednesday arrived in Thailand's northeastern province of Nakhon Ratchasima to give moral support and remedial payment to the victims of the recent shopping mall shooting rampage.

"Not all soldiers are rotten apples nor murderers," said Prayut, adding that he was once a soldier himself.

The frenzied non-commissioned soldier earlier in the month killed 29 people and injured over 50 in the Terminal 21 shopping center mass shooting. A total amount of 34.5 million baht (1.1 million US dollars) from the disaster relief fund was handed over to families of those killed in the tragedy.

Each family received 1 million baht (32,064 US dollars) and those who were injured got 100,000 baht (3,206 US dollars) each. People who were severely wounded received 200,000 baht (6,412 US dollars).

After the handing-over ceremony, the prime minister expressed his sorrow over the tragic loss and gave moral support to the injured and families of the deceased.

Prayut also walked inside the Terminal 21 mall where the shooting spree was carried out on 8 February and lasted for over 17 hours. The prime minister also greeted shop operators at the mall and assured them that the government is rolling out new measures for businesses affected by the shooting.—Xinhua ■

Uzbekistan's population exceeds 34 million

TASHKENT — Uzbekistan's population is now over 34 million after increasing by 100,000 since the beginning of the year.

According to the country's statistics committee, the population of men is roughly 17.10 million and women 16.90 million. Uzbekistan is a former Soviet republic with the biggest population in Central Asia.—Xinhua ■



London's aim is to "reduce overall migration numbers", a key demand of Brexit supporters. **PHOTO: AFP**

Critics slam UK post-Brexit immigration plans

LONDON — Britain's government on Wednesday faced a backlash over its new post-Brexit immigration plans, which are designed to cut "cheap Labour from Europe" in favour of high-skilled English speakers.

The points-based system is due to start on 1 January, 2021, and was billed as "taking back control" of Britain's borders — a key demand of anti-EU campaigners in the divisive Brexit debate.

Interior minister Priti Patel called the sweeping reforms "firm and fair" and said it would make it easier for higher-skilled workers to get visas, and harder for low-skilled migrants to do so. "We need to shift the focus of our economy away from a reliance on cheap labour from Europe and instead concentrate on investment in technology and automation," she said.

The plans are the biggest change to immigration policy in 50 years and will go before parliament, where Prime Minister Boris Johnson has a comfortable majority.

But the Conservative government was accused of failing to assess the impact of the reforms on the economy, while businesses heavily reliant on foreign labour questioned the feasibility of the policy. The main opposition La-

bour party said some sectors' reliance on foreign workers would force the government to make numerous exceptions, rendering the new rules "meaningless".

Its home affairs spokesman Diana Abbott called it a "salary threshold system", which would hit the already hard-pressed state-run National Health Service and social care sector.

"If they are all short-term visas, only the most desperate workers will come, and will have the effect of creating a two-tier workforce," Abbott said.

Her opposite number at the smaller Liberal Democrats said the policy was "based on xenophobia, not the social and economic needs of our country".

"Too many businesses are already struggling to hire the workers they need. Now the Tories want to stop them recruiting all but the highest-paid employees from abroad," said Christine Jardine.

Britain left the EU after 47 years of membership on 31 January. EU rules are still in place until the end of the year as London and Brussels thrash out a new trade deal. But Jardine and others warned that 10 months was not enough time for businesses to prepare for the end to free movement of EU nationals to other member states.— AFP ■

UAE loads fuel rods at Arab world's first nuclear plant

BARAKAH — The United Arab Emirates has started loading fuel rods into the first reactor at its Barakah nuclear plant, operators said Wednesday, two days after regulators gave the green light.

On Monday, the national nuclear regulator announced it has issued the operating license for the first of the plant's four reactors, opening the way for commercial operations to begin.

The plant, the first in the Arab world, had been due to go online in late 2017 but faced a number of delays that officials attributed to safety and regulatory requirements.

"The Nawah Energy Com-

pany has commenced loading the first nuclear fuel assemblies as the initial step in the process towards safely and gradually commencing operations and subsequent generation of clean electricity," Nawah said in a statement.

The statement added that Unit 1 will begin commercial operations after a "series of tests" leading to the start-up process.

During the process, the unit will be synchronised with the power grid and the first electricity produced.

"Our teams are trained, certified and ready to safely commence the testing and start-up

processes for Unit 1," said Nawah CEO Mark Reddemann.

Abu Dhabi authorities said in January that the plant, on the Gulf coast west of the capital, would start operating within a few months.

The UAE has substantial oil and gas reserves, but with a power-hungry population of 10 million it has made huge investments in developing clean alternatives, including solar energy.

The plant is a regional first — Saudi Arabia, the world's top oil exporter, has said it plans to build up to 16 nuclear reactors, but the project has yet to materialise.— AFP ■



The Arab world's first nuclear power plant is being built by a South Korean-led consortium at a cost of around \$24 billion. **PHOTO: AFP**

First civilian flight since 2012 lands in Aleppo

ALEPPO — The first civilian flight in eight years landed at Aleppo airport in northern Syria Wednesday, an AFP correspondent on board the aircraft reported.

The flight comes days after the government announced it had wrested the entire region around the second city of Aleppo back from jihadists and their rebel allies.

Together with the M5, a highway connecting the country's four largest cities which was fully se-

cured by the regime for the first time since 2012, the reopening of the airport is a key symbolic and economic move for the government.

The ministers of transport and tourism were both on the Syrian Air Airbus A320 that flew from the capital to Aleppo, as well as a group of journalists invited by the information ministry.

Roughly 40 minutes after takeoff, the plane touched down at 11:22 am (0922 GMT) at Aleppo airport, where officials and

staff were gathered in a festive atmosphere.

The event was broadcast live on state television.

State news agency SANA quoted Transport Minister Ali Hammud as welcoming the reopening of the airport and the relaunch of domestic and international flights.

He described it as "a significant victory achieved thanks to the sacrifices of the heroic Syrian army and the steadfastness of the Syrian people".— AFP ■

Portugal not to accept EU multi-annual budget proposal: PM

LISBON — Portuguese Prime Minister Antonio Costa said Tuesday that his government will not accept the European Union (EU)'s budget proposal.

"After the unanimous rejection yesterday by the social

partners, today in the debate in Parliament, all political parties also refused the President of the EU Council's proposal for the EU budget 2021-2027," Costa said in his tweet.

"We will not accept this pro-

posal," said the prime minister in parliament, quoted by Lusa News Agency, referring to the proposal presented on Friday by the President of the European Council, Charles Michel. In EU, Portugal and a majority of the member

states are against any cut in cohesion policy and the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), while Austria, Denmark, the Netherlands and Sweden, four of the so-called net contributors, designated as "frugal countries", refuse

to go beyond a global envelope of 1 percent of GNI. The so-called multiannual financial framework requires unanimity at the European Council and then has to be approved by the European Parliament.—Xinhua ■



Thet Htar Thuzar seen at the Yangon International Airport before leaving for Kampala to compete in the Uganda International Badminton Series 2020. **PHOTO: THET HTAR THUZAR'S FACEBOOK PAGE**

Thet Htar Thuzar to compete in Uganda Int'l Badminton Series

MYANMAR badminton icon Thet Htar Thuzar will compete in the Uganda International Badminton Series 2020, which will be held from 20 to 23 February in Kampala.

Thet Htar Thuzar left for Kampala from the Yangon International Airport on 17 February. Participating in the tournament is part of her plan to improve her current world ranking for a chance in the upcoming 2020 Summer Olympics in Tokyo, Japan.

Thet Htar Thuzar's current world ranking is 61st in Women's Singles, and she is now trying to improve her rank to ensure a place in the Olympics.

She is planning to play in tournaments in February and

April to achieve her dream of competing in the Tokyo Olympics, Thet Htar Thuzar stated on her social media page.

Thet Htar Thuzar has won seven international badminton series in her career: Egypt International in 2018, Uganda International, Kenya International, Mauritius International, Benin International, Cote d'Ivoire International, and Egypt International in 2019.

Thet Htar Thuzar recently competed in the Perodua Malaysia Master 2020 in Malaysia from 7 to 12 January. She lost to Yip Pui Yin from Hong Kong (world rank 50) in the quarter final stage with a 1-2 result of 21-14, 15-21, 10-21. — Lynn Thit (Tgi)

Myawady FC leads U-21 Myanmar National League

After the conclusion of Week-5 of the U-21 Myanmar National League 2020, Myawady FC is leading the standing table having earned 15 points from winning all five of the matches it has played so far.

ISPE FC is in the second place with 12 points from four wins and one loss.

Magwe U-21 FC is third with 11 points from three wins and two draws.

Ayeyawady United U-21 FC is placed fourth with 10 points from three wins and one draw.

Yadanarbon U-21 FC is next with the same points and results as Ayeyawady, but with difference in goals.

Meanwhile, Shan United U-21 FC is currently in the sixth place with 9 points from three wins and two losses. Yangon United is seventh with 9 points from two wins and three draws.

University FC is in the eighth place and Chin Land FC is in the ninth place with 9 points, but with differences in goals.

Nineteen teams are competing in the tournament this year, and Chin United is currently at the bottom of the table with no wins and no points earned. —Lynn Thit (Tgi)

Summer football courses for youths to be held in 3 major cities

WITH the aim of teaching basic football skills to the younger generation, summer football courses will be held for youth in Yangon, Mandalay, and Patheingyi from 11 March to 10 April, according to the Myanmar Football Federation (MFF). The football courses will be conducted at football academies of the MFF in Yangon, Mandalay, and Patheingyi. Those wishing to participate in the courses must be aged between 10 and 15 years, according to the football federation. The courses would be open for girls and boys, and MFF trainers certified by the Asian Football Confederation will impart basic football skills to them. The month-long course will be



Children participate in a football program under the supervision of trainers and football experts. **PHOTO: MFF**

held from 7 a.m. to 9 a.m. on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, and all the basic football skills will be taught, said officials from the MFF. The course fee for one child

is K30,000 and each child joining the course will get a jersey.

Those interested in attending the course can submit their applications at the football acad-

emies in Yangon, Mandalay, and Patheingyi by 5 March. Further information can be obtained at the following number: 09-766687291. — Lynn Thit (Tgi)

Former Villa defender Hutton retires

LONDON (United Kingdom)—Former Aston Villa and Tottenham defender Alan Hutton announced his retirement on Wednesday.

Hutton made 185 appearances for Villa before being released last year after playing a role in their promotion back to the Premier League in 2019. The 35-year-old right-back had a four-season spell with Tottenham after starting his career with Scottish club Rangers. He also earned 50 Scotland caps between 2007 and 2016. Hutton won the Scottish title with the Glasgow club in 2005 and helped Spurs lift the League Cup three years later.

"I have come to the conclusion that I am going to retire from football," Hutton told

talkSPORT.

"Obviously, it has been a really difficult decision that I've had to make. I've taken my time and thought about it a lot. "I could have played on, I had opportunities to play on, but nothing that really worked out for me and my family, if I am honest. "It's a sad moment for myself, but I think it is the right one overall.

"It has been such a big part of my life since I was six or seven. It has been a long journey, I've thoroughly enjoyed it. "I've had some amazing moments, I've had some not so good moments, but it has given me everything I've got, and I am really thankful for that."

—AFP ■



Former Aston Villa defender Alan Hutton. **PHOTO: AFP**