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THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

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Union Minister U Thein Swe meets young labourers preparing for ASEAN contest

UNION MINISTER for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement U Thein Swe inspected renovation works at the skill training centre under the management of Department of Labour in Yankin Township of Yangon yesterday morning.

Director-General U Win Shein presented the history of center, courses, assessment procedures in accordance with the National Skill Standards Authority (NSSA) and renovation works at the centre.

Mr Yamada Ryo from the Japan International Cooperation Agency explained upgrade of meeting hall at the centre, which is conducting skill trainings in co-ordination with JICA and KND Corporation for construction works and its assessment procedures on the skills of electricity, air con and welding are helpful for the workers.

The Union Minister also witnessed training session for young trainees who will take part in assembling contests of ASEAN countries, and level -1 assessment of assembling air con before he inspected renovations of a meeting



room and the skill development centre.—MNA
(Translated by Aung Khin)

Union Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement U Thein Swe inspects the training for young laborers preparing for ASEAN contest at the skill training centre under the management of Department of Labour in Yankin Township. **PHOTO: MNA**

Empowering women’s role to promote social cohesion in Rakhine State discussed

THE opening ceremony of the Workshop on Enhancing Women’s Social Cohesion Roles in Rakhine State was held this morning at 9:30 am at the Yangon office of the National Reconciliation and Peace Centre (NRPC). The workshop was co-organized by the Ministry of the Office of the State Counsellor, the National Reconciliation and Peace Centre and the Center for Diversity and National Harmony (CDNH).

Deputy Minister U Min Lwin of the Ministry of the Office of the State Counsellor gave the opening remarks. In his remarks, U Min Lwin stressed the government’s efforts in achieving its goals of promoting rule of law and socio-economic development; national reconciliation and peace; and constitutional reforms that will form the bedrock in building a Democratic Federal Union. He further noted that the Rakhine State affairs are being given priority when carrying out these aims and that the Central Committee for Implementation of Peace, Stability and Development in Rakhine State led by the State Counsellor with its four Working Committees have been formed to implement the short and long term plans relating to Rakhine State.

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Seminar held to develop public-private programmes for human resource development

A seminar was held at the Zwekabin Natural Hotel in Hpa-an Township in Kaying State yesterday morning to develop coordination programmes between the government and private sectors for human resource development.

Union Minister for Education Dr Myo Thein Gyi delivered an opening remark at the event, saying the requirements of soft and hard skills in regional jobs, adopting sustainable development plans, assistance of his office in technical and vocational education and training, private sector development and generating skilled workers required for micro, small and medium-sized enterprises.

He also talked on the National Education Strategic Plan (2016-2021) of the Ministry of Education, ordinary



Union Minister Dr Myo Thein Gyi delivers the speech at the seminar held to develop coordination programmes between the government and private sectors for human resource development. **PHOTO:MNA**



and intensive engineering courses for vocational training programmes at the government technical institutes and schools and other short term training courses.

Kayin State Government's Social Affairs Minister U Bo Bo Wai Maung explained development of education and private sector development jointly coordinated by the government

and the private sector.

Kayin State Chambers of Commerce and Industry's Vice President (1) U Zaw Htay extended greetings.

The Union Minister also

visited Hpa-an University and met with its rector, deputy rector, professors (deans), lecturers, administration staff and students. —MNA

(Translated by Aung Khin)

Empowering women's role to promote social cohesion in Rakhine State discussed

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Furthermore, the Deputy Minister stressed that an Advisory Commission on Rakhine State led by the former United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan was established to propose concrete measures for improving the welfare of all peoples in Rakhine State and that the government was currently implementing the Commission's recommendations. The Deputy Minister also remarked that the Union Enterprise for Humanitarian Assistance, Resettlement and Development (UEHRD) have been established and was currently undertaking measures to improve Rakhine State development. The Deputy Minister also noted that in addition to implementing all-round development programs within Rakhine State, a Rakhine State Investment Forum was held to improve investment opportunities and to link Rakhine businesses with foreign and domestic investors. The Deputy Minister added that the government was doing all it can to improve various sectors within Rakhine State, including education and healthcare.

He further stressed the need and urgency of peace and reconciliation efforts in Rakh-



Deputy Minister U Min Lwin delivers the speech at the opening ceremony of the Workshop on Enhancing Women's Social Cohesion Roles in Rakhine State yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

ine State and that women play an important and critical role in building trust and bringing about social harmony among all communities living in Rakhine State. He also highlighted the following actions taken by the Myanmar government: the ratification and implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW); cooperation with regional women's organizations

including ones within the ASEAN; the Joint Communiqué signed between the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General on Sexual Violence in Conflict and the Government of Myanmar to prevent and respond to conflict-related sexual violence in Myanmar; and the ongoing debates at the Hluttaw on the draft law to prevent sexual violence against women.

The Deputy Minister concluded his remarks by stating

that it was his belief that holding such workshops would help build mutual respect and understanding between different communities living in Rakhine State, which in turn will only enhance peace and development in Rakhine State. Moreover, he recognized the constructive support and urged continued assistance from the international community, UN agencies and development partners in promoting peace and development

of Rakhine State.

Afterwards, Dr. Kyaw Yin Hlaing, the Director of CDNHR, discussed the ongoing programs carried out by CDNHR to promote social harmony. Lastly, Dr. Aung Thurein, the Director from the Ministry of the Office of the State Counsellor, explained to the audience the reasons for holding the workshop.

140 women representatives from the 17 townships within the Rakhine State attended the opening ceremony. The opening ceremony was also attended by permanent secretaries and directors general from various ministries, officials from NRPC, ambassadors and diplomats from various embassies, officials from various UN agencies and ICRC, and other stakeholders from development partners.

The first day of the workshop continued with responsible officials from the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, the Ministry of Health and Sports, and the Ministry of Education explaining their projects in Rakhine State, and workshop participants joining in the discussions. The five-day workshop will continue with discussions on promoting empowerment of women to reinforce social cohesion.—MNA

MoI, Ygn Government discuss launching City Channel

THE Ministry of Information and the Yangon Region Government held a meeting to launch a broadcast media City Channel yesterday afternoon.

The meeting held at the office of Myanmar Radio and Television was attended by Union Minister Dr Pe Myint and Yangon Region Government Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein.

Union Minister Dr Pe Myint explained quality upgrade of MRTV, working with Forever Group and Shwe Than Lwin media and five content providers Mizzima, DVB, Channel K, YTV and Fortune TV.

He also remarked the City Channel would become an ef-



Union Minister Dr Pe Myint addresses the meeting to launch a broadcast media City Channel in Yangon yesterday. PHOTO:MNA



fective TV channel with very interesting news of Yangon city.

Yangon Region Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein presented broadcasting and publishing City FM and City Newspaper under the management of Yangon City Development Committee, and preparations for transforming the latter into online digital

version and launching a TV channel which can support for public education in cooperation with MRTV.

Deputy Mayor of YCDC U Soe Lwin briefed on the objectives of City Channel.

Permanent Secretary U Myo Myint Maung held talks on possible plans for broadcast of Yangon City Channel and other TV channels and content providers.

The meeting also discussed assistance of Ministry of Information and coordination of the ministry and the Yangon government to launch the new channel.

After the meeting, Union Minister Dr Pe Myint, Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein and officials looked around Studio 1 and newsroom.—MNA (Translated by Aung Khin)

Deputy Construction Minister inspects Myanmar-Korea Friendship Bridge in Yangon

DEPUTY MINISTER for Construction Dr Kyaw Lin inspected construction project of Myanmar-Korea Friendship Bridge that will link Yangon downtown area and its suburb Dala Township yesterday morning.

Deputy Director-General U Kyaw Kaung Cho from the Bridge Management Department and Project Director Mr Yun Ho Cho from the contractor company GS Engineering & Construction Corporation explained the construction project.

After inspecting working platform processes to bored piles, the Deputy Minister looked into construction works at the side of Dala Township.

A total length of the four-lane and steel suspension bridge

will be 1,867 meter, with 26.5 meter width and a maximum load capacity of 75 tons.

The project is implemented by US\$157.83 million loan from South Korea and \$30.34 million of Myanmar government.

The construction project was begun in May 2019 and is expected to complete in October 2022. It has reached 7 per cent of the whole project.—MNA (Translated by Aung Khin)

Deputy Minister U Kyaw Lin visits the construction site of Myanmar-Korea Friendship Bridge in Yangon yesterday. PHOTO:MNA



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MNREC drafts 10-year watershed conservation project to save Inle Lake

WITH the drafting of a 10-year multi-purpose project for conserving the watershed areas around Inle Lake in Shan State, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation has taken steps to conserve the environment around the lake, which is facing degradation.

The coordination meeting on drafting the project was held at the ministry in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday, with an opening address by Union Minister for Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation U Ohn Win.

Speaking at the meeting, the Union minister stressed the need for the first 10-year project, which is planned from the 2020-2021 fiscal year to the 2029-2030 fiscal year, to link with existing environmental conservation



Union Minister U Ohn Win addresses the coordination meeting for conserving the watershed areas around Inle Lake in Shan State yesterday. PHOTO: MNA

projects of the Forest Department, such as the Myanmar Reforestation and Rehabilitation Programme and projects being implemented, together with international organizations.

The project is targeted to be carried out as a 30-year-term

project, it was announced at the meeting.

The project comes after President U Win Myint's visit to Shan State, in which he witnessed the deforestation in the watershed areas of the lake.

Officials from the depart-

ments under the ministry also discussed the project.

The meeting came to an end following concluding remarks by the Union minister.—MNA

(Translated by Kyaw Zin Lin)

SWRR Union Minister inspects youth training school in Mawlamyine

UNION Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Dr Win Myat Aye visited youth training school and child care centre in Mawlamyine

yesterday.

The Union Minister visited the Mawlamyine Youth Training School where they were explained about the



Union Minister Dr Win Myat Aye meets with youths at the youth training school in Mawlamyine yesterday. PHOTO: MNA

school by its principal and had inspected the hair cutting, welding, computer and agriculture trainings, practicing Myanmar's traditional martial arts (Myanmar's Thaing) for physical fitness, construction of a multi-purpose stadium and bedrooms of the trainees.

The Union Minister coordinated with officials the requirements reported by the youths and provided cash assistance to fulfil the current needs of the youth trainees.

The SWRR Union Minister also met with the officials from the New Mon State Party (NMSP) and discussed the conditions of cooperation between the government and the public in the processes of

rehabilitating youths who are addicted to drugs.

Afterwards, they visited a training centre for children with special needs, met the centre's executive members, trainers and children's parents, and saw training the children.

On their visit to the child care centre of the Department of Social Welfare, the Union Minister and party provided toys and nutrition for the children.

The SWRR Union Minister finally visited the Safe House and encouraged the young women who are given care at the centre.—MNA

(Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)

Surveillance and investigation updates of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

1. The Ministry of Health and Sports is closely monitoring the outbreak of COVID-19, with conducting surveillance at international gateways and at the hospitals in the forms of people-centered investigation and in coordination with private hospital.
2. From 8 pm 22 February 2020 to 8 pm 23 February 2020, no new case was confirmed for the situation of under investigation.
3. Until 6 pm 23 February 2020, the five persons were kept to monitor for another 48 hours although they were tested negative for COVID-19 at the State/Region hospitals. They were also in good health conditions.
4. The Ministry of Health and Sports could not confirm the disease of COVID-19 in the following cases.
(a) A 41-year old Chinese man from Ruili of Yunnan province, China, arrived in Yangon on 31 January 2020 by a flight. He proceeded to Ye Township on 14 February 2020. After he fell in unconsciousness as he get in a car in Keikkalay village in Ye Township on 22 February 2020, he was taken to the township' hospital. He was diagnosed with brain hemorrhage, instead of

acute respiratory disease. After emergency medical treatments, he died at 11:05 am while preparations were being made to transfer him to the Mawlamyine hospital. His body was taken to Yangon General Hospital to perform an autopsy. It was found that he died of burst of blood vessels caused by hypertension.

- (b) On 23 February 2020, a 24-year old man who took a flight from South Korea to Yangon International Airport at 5:40 am claimed on a YBS bus to his apartment that he felt suffering COVID-19. He was handed over to the Healthcare Unite of the Public Health Department at the airport. However, he was not even diagnosed with fever (body temperature was only 35.2 degree centigrade) or other respiratory diseases. However, he was taken to outpatient unit of Waibargi Special Hospital at 8:30 am 23 February 2020 for other medical treatments.

The medical specialists conclude that the man was not tested with symptoms of COVID-19, and was seriously worrying about the disease. (Translated by Aung Khin)

Myanmar's trade deficit increases; crosses \$1 bln as of 14 Feb

MYANMAR'S trade gap widened to over US\$1 billion between October and mid-February in the current financial year, an increase from \$971.8 million registered in the corresponding period of the 2018-2019FY, according to data provided by the Ministry of Commerce.

Between 1 October and 14 February, Myanmar's external trade increased to over \$14.5 billion from \$12.38 billion recorded in the year-ago period.

While exports were estimated at \$6.76 billion, imports were valued at \$7.77 billion. Compared to the previous fiscal, exports showed an increase of \$1.05 billion, while imports climbed by \$1.094 billion.

Myanmar exports agricultural products, animal products,

minerals, forest products, and finished industrial goods, while it imports capital goods, intermediate goods, CMP raw materials, and consumer goods.

The country's export sector relies more on the agriculture and manufacturing sectors. While export earnings from the CMP (cut, make, and pack) garment businesses are rising, the country's reliance on natural resources, such as natural gas and jade, is lessening.

The government is trying to cut the trade deficit by screening luxury import items and boosting exports. Myanmar's trade deficit was pegged at \$1.14 billion in the 2018-2019 fiscal year, \$1.3 billion in the last mini-budget period (April-September, 2018), \$3.9 billion in the 2017-2018FY, \$5.3



A container ship crossing the Yangon River. PHOTO: PHOE KHWAR

billion in the 2016-2017FY, and \$5.4 billion in the 2015-2016FY,

according to statistics released by the Central Statistical Organ-

ization.—Mon Mon (Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

2nd Yangon International Motor Show concludes

THE three-day 2nd Yangon International Motor Show concluded yesterday and the show was crowded with buyers and visitors.

CB Bank, one of Myanmar's leading banks which has been operational for over 25 years and YIMS' banking partner, will offer 10-per-cent down payment for customers buying a car by availing a loan from the bank. This would allow customers to

purchase a new vehicle with ease at the show, which is aimed at supporting the growth of the Myanmar automotive industry.

The 2nd Yangon International Motor show was organized GPI Myanmar and the Automotive Association of Myanmar (AAM).

The show features latest car models, cutting-edge technology, and innovations.—Lynn Thit (Tgi)



Visitors make inquiry about Volvo at the 2nd Yangon International Motor Show featuring several international car brands. The company's larger XC 90 model was also named Myanmar's car of the year for 2017. PHOTO: KYAW ZEYA

Power sector tops \$1 bln in Oct-Jan period

FOREIGN direct investment of over US\$1.026 billion has flowed from six enterprises into the power sector in the past four months of the current fiscal year, according to statistics provided by the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA).

The total investment in power is higher than in any other sector.

During the October-January period, FDI of \$2.089 billion, including an expansion of capital, has flowed into the country. The Myanmar Investment Commission (MIC) and the investment

committees of states and regions have allowed 106 enterprises to invest in the country.

In the current fiscal year, the manufacturing sector has absorbed FDI of \$253.25 million. The livestock and fisheries sector has drawn foreign investments of \$15.53 million, and over \$145.4 million has been pumped into the transport and communications sector, while the hotels and tourism sector has pulled in investments of \$27.954 million.

The real estate sector has also reported investments of \$600 million. Over \$19.37 million in FDI has been

pumped into the other services sector.

In the current fiscal, the MIC has set an FDI target of \$5.8 billion.

In the 2018-2019FY, FDI into Myanmar totaled \$4.5 billion, falling short of the \$5.8-billion target by some \$1.3 billion.

Foreign direct investment into Myanmar was registered at \$1.76 billion in the last mini-budget period, \$5.7 billion in the 2017-2018FY, \$6.6 billion in the 2016-2017FY, and \$9.4 billion in the 2015-2016FY.—GNLM

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Investments from Hong Kong cross \$1.15 bln

HONG Kong has emerged as the largest investor in Myanmar in the current fiscal with 28 Hong Kong-based firms pumping in US\$1.15 billion in real estate development, electricity, and garment businesses as of January, according to the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA).

Hong Kong topped the list of investors in October, followed by Singapore, which invested an estimated \$513.46 million in five projects.

Investments also flowed into the country from France, Germany, India, Japan, Malaysia, the Republic of Korea, Thailand, the UK, Viet Nam, Samoa, and China (Taipei).

Foreign direct investment

(FDI) of \$2.08 billion flowed into Myanmar during the October-January period, including expansion of capital by existing enterprises, according to DICA.

The DICA intends to reach its FDI target of \$5.8 billion in the 2019-2020 financial year.

"South east Asian countries see investment potential in Myanmar on account of cheap labour and business opportunities. Thus, larger entities are likely to enter the country," said U Thant Sin Lwin, director-general of the DICA.

"We see much investment potential for large companies. We are prioritizing responsible businesses and so, we are taking special care while screening investment proposals," he said.

Large investments are likely to flow into the oil and gas, agriculture, mineral, manufacturing, and industrial estate sectors in the current financial year, he added.

The economic interaction between Myanmar and Hong Kong has been increasing rapidly. Hong Kong emerged as the third largest investor in Myanmar, after Singapore and China. Between 1988 and October, 2019, 199 enterprises from Hong Kong brought in foreign direct investment of \$8.48 billion into Myanmar, according to official data on existing enterprises provided by the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration.—GNLM

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

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UK pianist Alexis Ffrench bids to change image of classical music

LONDON (United Kingdom)—British composer and pianist Alexis Ffrench, a rising black star in the overwhelmingly white world of classical music, is on a mission “to change the narrative” that the genre is stuffy and outdated.

The 48-year-old, who is set to release his latest album next month, is trying to counter what he sees as a false perception by using his fresh take on the music and growing status to reach new audiences.

Ffrench’s 2018 hit record “Evolution” propelled him to wider recognition after topping Britain’s classical music charts for three weeks and spending around three months in the top 10.

He now boasts nearly two

million regular listeners on Spotify and has to date garnered around 200 million streams online, while also hosting a weekly show on new classical music digital station Scala Radio.

“Classical music is under-represented in certain echelons of society, no doubt about that,” he told AFP during a practice session this week at legendary piano-maker Steinway and Sons’ central London store.

“I’m determined to use whatever profile, influence, I can to help young people who are certainly disadvantaged in one way or another,” he added.

Ffrench was poised to dash from the interview to London’s famous Abbey Road studios to continue working with a group of British youngsters not typically

identified with classical music.

The scheme is a collaboration between his record label Sony and the Prince’s Trust, a charity helping people aged 11 to 30 get into jobs, education and training.

Ffrench, who will embark on a European tour in April, also uses his radio show to “talk about classical music in a new and exciting ways” and play music sometimes only loosely inspired by the traditions of the genre.

“I talk about Childish Gambino and all manner of hip hop artists and what classical music can learn from that,” he added, referring to the US rapper Donald Glover.

“I think my duty is to change the narrative.” —AFP



British pianist and composer Alexis Ffrench poses for a photograph after giving an interview at Steinway & Sons in London on 19 February 2020. PHOTO: AFP

Sandstorm forces closure of airports on Spain’s Canary Islands

MADRID (Spain) — Airports on Spain’s Canary Islands were closed again Sunday after a sandstorm hit the archipelago, airport authorities said.

Air travel was first disrupted on the archipelago on Saturday after strong winds carrying red sand from the Sahara shrouded the tourist hotspot, forcing flights to and from the islands of Gran Canaria and Tenerife to be cancelled or diverted.

Some flights briefly resumed Sunday morning before Spanish airport operator AENA was forced to close all eight airports in the Canaries – the three

in Gran Canaria and Tenerife as well as five others.

“Visibility is very low,” a spokeswoman for the airport operator said. AENA said flights were being diverted to mainland Spain as well as to Cape Verde, Morocco, Mauritania and Portugal.

In a tweet, Transport Minister Jose Luis Abalos thanked these countries for their “solidarity” and said air transport professionals “do not remember such adverse weather for air transport in the Canary Islands.”

The regional government declared a state of alert on Sat-

urday and advised people to keep doors and windows closed, avoid non-essential car travel and stay away from coastal areas.

Spain’s national weather service warned that winds of up to 120 kilometres (75 miles) were set to buffet the Canaries until Monday.

Strong winds also prevented water-dropping aircraft from putting out fires near Tasarte village in southwest Gran Canaria, which have scorched around 300 hectares of land and forced 500 people to be evacuated, as well as in the neighbouring island of Tenerife.—AFP



Cars drive on the TF-1 highway during a sandstorm in Santa Cruz de Tenerife, Spain, on February 23, 2020; airports on Spain's Canary Islands were closed after strong winds carrying red sand from the Sahara shrouded the tourist hotspot. PHOTO: AFP

China moves to change paper-reliant academic evaluation system in universities

BEIJING — Chinese authorities have released a guideline regulating the use of papers listed on the Science Citation Index (SCI) in institutions of higher education in a move to change the current academic evaluation system that is over-reliant on published papers.

A sound assessment system should be developed, in which different weight of paper publication is put on the evaluation of different types of scientific research work, according to the document issued by the Ministry of Education (MOE) and the Ministry of Science and Technology.

SCI papers should not be

used as a direct basis for professional titles evaluation and occupational promotion, nor a prerequisite for personnel employment, said the guideline.

It is inappropriate for higher education institutions to set paper publication requirements for departments and individuals, the document said, ordering the cancellation of rewards for SCI papers.

The introduction of the guideline is to reverse the phenomenon of one-sided, excessive and distorted reliance on SCI papers in the current scientific research evaluation, the MOE said, adding that it is not a denial of SCI, nor a refusal to publishing papers. — Xinhua

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Iran accuses foreign media of using virus to ‘discourage’ voters

TEHRAN — Supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei on Sunday accused foreign media of trying to use a deadly outbreak of coronavirus in Iran to “discourage” people from voting in a general election.

“This negative propaganda began a few months ago and grew larger approaching the election and in the past two days, under the pretext of an illness and a virus, their media did not miss the slightest opportunity to discourage people from voting,” said Khamenei.

“(Our enemies) are even opposed to any election by the Iranian people,” the leader was quoted as saying on his official website.

Iranians voted in a parliamentary election on Friday, two days after the announcement of an outbreak of the new coronavirus in the country.

A low turnout had already been expected after a conservative-dominated electoral watch-



Iranians voted in a parliamentary election on Friday, two days after the announcement of an outbreak of the new coronavirus in the country. **PHOTO: AFP**

dog disqualified thousands of candidates, most of them moderates and reformists.

Khamenei lauded the people’s “huge participation” in the vote.

The COVID-19 outbreak has claimed the lives of five people in the Islamic republic since Wednesday. They were the first deaths in the Middle East.

Authorities have ordered

as a “preventive measure” the closure of schools, universities and other educational centres in 14 provinces across the country from Sunday.

They include the holy city of Qom where the first cases emerged as well as Markazi, Gilan, Ardabil, Kermanshah, Qazvin, Zanjan, Mazandaran, Golestan, Hamedan, Alborz, Semnan, Kurdistan and the capital, Tehran.

Tehran’s city hall has ordered the closure of snack shops and water fountains in metro stations, officials said Sunday.

Gholamreza Mohammadi, the public relations head of Tehran municipality, said buses and underground trains were being disinfected.

Posters were also being put up across the sprawling city on Sunday, asking people not to shake hands as part of a coronavirus prevention campaign.—AFP

Rio carnival gets political in Bolsonaro’s Brazil

RIO JANEIRO — Rio de Janeiro kicks off its annual carnival parades Sunday, the first of two nights of glittering, over-the-top spectacle set to pack a heavy dose of political commentary on Brazil’s far-right President Jair Bolsonaro.

Vying for the title of carnival champions, the city’s 13 top samba schools will have one hour each to wow spectators and judges with elaborate shows flush with scantily clad dancers, small armies of drummers and floats built on seemingly impossible feats of engineering.

The event is shaping up to be especially political after a year under Bolsonaro, who has deeply divided Brazil with

his attacks on just about every cause close to the carnival community’s heart: diversity, homosexuality, environmentalism, the arts.

Reigning champions Mangueira are planning a show about Jesus returning to Earth in one of Rio’s impoverished favela neighborhoods with “a black face, Indian blood and a woman’s body,” in the words of its central samba song.

That has already drawn backlash from a key group of Bolsonaro supporters: evangelical Christians, who sent Mangueira a petition calling the show “blasphemous.”

Mangueira entitled its show “The Truth Will Set You Free,”

quoting -- with a heavy dose of irony -- a Bible verse often cited by Bolsonaro.

“In these times, when some are preaching a belligerent, intolerant and controlling Jesus, Mangueira is bringing back the Jesus of the gospel: loving, friendly, a companion of the oppressed and builder of peace,” said leftist theologian and Baptist pastor Henrique Vieira, who advised the samba school on its show.

The most successful school in the history of the contest, Portela, will pay tribute to Brazil’s indigenous Tupinamba people, who lived in Rio de Janeiro before the Portuguese colonizers arrived.—AFP



The Amigos da Onca street party heats up Rio de Janeiro ahead of the city’s famous carnival parades. **PHOTO: AFP**

Israel’s ‘most vulnerable’ hit by political stalemate



The head of one community organisation said he was not willing to cut services because “some crazy members of the Knesset” were incapable of forming a government. **PHOTO: AFP**

JERUSALEM — Israel’s grinding political deadlock has squeezed funding for programmes helping troubled youths, disadvantaged communities and the disabled, forcing state-backed social organisations to rely on crowd-funding to get by.

Polls indicate the country’s March 2 election, the third in less than a year, will not produce a clear win for right-wing Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu or his main rival Benny Gantz of the centrist Blue and White party.

That result could force more fraught coalition talks, prolonging the stalemate that has kept lawmakers from passing a budget for this year. But some analysts said the urgent need to approve a government spending package, especially for Netanyahu’s ultra-Orthodox political allies, could help break the logjam.

Former Bank of Israel governor Karnit Flug told AFP that a caretaker government without a majority in parliament, the Knesset, like the one currently led by Netanyahu, had no chance of passing a budget.

Core departments like the security services have remained funded but many other areas have suffered, added Flug, now a researcher at the Israeli Democracy Institute.—AFP

Guarding against African Swine Fever

THE deadly African Swine Fever (ASF) has been reported in Naungmon Village in Lashio Township, northern Shan State, in February, 2020.

In August last year, ASF infection was reported in Mongla area of eastern Shan State, prompting neighboring countries China and Thailand to ban pig and pork products from Myanmar.

The ASF outbreak is of particular concern for small-scale farmers, who account for a significant proportion of pig meat production, as they may lack the expertise and funds necessary to protect their herds from the disease in a timely manner.

To curb the spread of the virus, the health authorities must enforce rules to ensure small-scale farmers put measures in place to adequately protect their herds from infection.

The local health authorities should remain on the alert and keep in touch with pig farmers so they can immediately detect any suspicious signs in pig farms.

Cross-border trade of pigs, some of which may be contaminated, has also contributed to the prevalence of ASF.

African Swine Fever originated in Africa about 30 years ago, but it never spread very over there. Now, it has spread to Asia which has a large livestock market. So, the chances of the virus spreading further are higher. Although African swine fever is not harmful to humans, there is no vaccine for the virus yet. Therefore, we need to be careful.

The biosecurity of pig farms plays a pivotal role in preventing any ASF outbreak. Preventive measures that need to be taken include spraying pig markets with disinfectants, avoiding feeding of leftover

feedstuff to domestic pigs, systematic farming, purchasing only pedigree pigs, and carrying out separate farming of newly purchased pigs and existing pigs.

In addition, people must avoid consuming imported frozen pig and pork products such as bacon, ham, and sausage, according to officials. Hunting wild pigs and farming of wild pigs with domestic pigs must be avoided.

The local health authorities should remain on the alert and keep in touch with pig farmers so they can immediately detect any suspicious signs in pig farms.

The symptoms of ASF — red spots on the body, diarrhea, vomiting, and trembling — are similar to those of other diseases common to pigs, which also lead to the deaths of pigs. Therefore, only the results of a laboratory test are reliable.

Educating pig farmers about the virus is paramount. Knowledge of ASF should be within the reach of local pig farmers to ensure that they know what symptoms to look out for and how to effectively deal with an outbreak to prevent the virus from spreading.

Businesses and the general public must be provided up-to-date information on which types of products are prohibited and from which countries.



Tabodwe (February) Bonfire Festival

By Maha Saddhamma Jotika Dhaja, Sithu Dr. Khin Maung Nyunt

ALTHOUGH Pyatho (January) is the peak of Myanmar Cold Season, the last month of cold season Tabodwe (February) can be chillier than Pyatho (January). Therefore, the Festival of Tabodwe is Bonfire Festival. It originated in the lifetime of Lord Gotama Buddha. He happened to be residing in the monastery at the foot of Himalayas Mountain Ranges. So the weather was very cold. According to the Priestly Disciplines (Vinaya) each monk should not wear more than three pieces of robe so Lord Gotama Buddha at another robe stitched to the Dukkod Robe to become one. Even then after midnight, Buddha could not stand the chill so he made a fire to get warmth. In the morning, when the sun came out, he stayed in the sunshine to get the warmth from the sun and since then the festival of Tabodwe is called Bonfire Festival. Throughout Myanmar history Bonfire Festival is held without fail in February or Tabodwe.

Htamane or Myanmar Delicacy

There are many old saying such as nar ye yo tay Tabodwe (နာရယ်ယိုတေ့တေ့) we have runny nose in Tabodwe, ze win byet pyay Tabotwe (ဇေဝင်းပေါက်တေ့တေ့) in February, wild plum ripe open and Htamane tyoe pyay Tabodwe (ထမနဲတေ့တေ့). In Myanmar Delicacy called Htamane is concocted. We made concocting Htamane or delicacy. Myanmar traditional medicine men recommend eating Htamane or Myanmar



Preparation of Htamane provides a social occasion for a Myanmar community. It is an activity in which all involved. Men are making Htamane in the festive activity in Mandalay. PHOTO: APK

mar Delicacy to give oil for dried skin of our bodies.

There is another festival in this month “Shin Ma Lae”. It originated in Ceylon (Sri Lanka). One Monk Shin Ma Lae in his meditation spiritually went up to Tavatintar. There he met the Deva who was the future Aremettya Buddha and this Deva told Shin Ma Lae that when you return to earth to preach Vessantara Zataka to promote the virtue of giving.

Vessantara Zataka has one thousand stanzas and therefore people celebrated with one thousand lotus flowers, one thousand candles, one thousand incense sticks and one thousand pots of water.

A tall temple was built to present Tavantintha in which Aremettya Statue is placed. People threw up lotus flower into the Temple. That Festival is called “Shin Ma Lae” Festival. In Mandalay, in the compound of Maha Muni

Image, there is Shin Ma Lae Temple in which Shin Ma Lae Statue is housed. People throw up lotus flower to reached Shin Ma Lae Statue. So this is called Shin Ma Lae Puja Festival. Only after full moon day of Tabodwe chill reduces to usher in Taboung, the first month of summer season.

There is a recipe for concocting Htamane. For easy memorization, it is composed as a tayhtat song. According to its context:

“Take 4 pyi of a basket of nice glutinous rice and wash it clean by freshwater. Put one viss of pure sesame oil in a big iron pan which is placed on a wood fire. Fry 3 tical weight of ginger slices in the oil to produce flavor. Put the washed glutinous rice in the ginger flavoured oil and stir it thoroughly. Add some water to it and knead with wooden ladles. When the glutinous rice gets grilled, with oil oozing out of it, reduce the fire, and spray on the stuff in the pan

80 tickal weight of fired groundnut, 32 tickal weight of roasted sesame seeds, 20 tickal weight of shredded coconut kernel, and 7 tickal weight of salt. Then knead and crush the stuff again and again. Taste it to test if it has attained and the required quality. If so, the Htamane is put on the banana leaves for serving with plain tea “.

Social occasion for a Myanmar community

Preparation of Htamane provides a social occasion for a Myanmar community. It is an activity in which all involved — adult and young, male and female, and even children. It takes place on the platform of a Pagoda, in the courtyard of a Temple, in the precinct of a monastery or at any open space. Either under an individual or collective sponsorship, a Htamane making party is formed. Necessary kitchen utensils such as a giant iron pan, two pairs of long wooden ladles, knives, dag-

gers, baskets, trays and circular low tables etc, are hired from the monastery or some houses. They are carried to the place by young men. A fireplace is dug out in the ground by adult males who also bring firewoods, and fetch water from a nearby well or tank. Women and girls do the lighter work such as the winnowing and washing of rice grains, shelling groundnuts, slicing ginger, washing pots and pans. Men climb up the coconut palm trees to bring down coconut fruits, and split firewoods. Boys tear away the fibers of coconuts and break them open. Girls shred the kernel into tiny strips. Men put the big iron pan on the fireplace and keep it tight and stable. Women do the initial part of the process such as frying ginger and roasting groundnuts and sesame seeds. Men's hard labour comes in when the glutinous rice in the pan becomes soft and pliant. Muscular hands are needed to knead and crush the sticky stuff thoroughly with long wooden ladles. A good Htamane is the result of correct proportion of rice, oil, water and ingredients and thorough kneading and crushing by ladles.

It is so exciting to see men doing this arduous work are sweating in the cold of Tabodwe. When the giant Htamena pan is removed from the fire it is the turn of skillful feminine hands. While men keep on crushing the sticky mass with ladles, women spray ingredients, sesame seeds, groundnuts, and shredded coconut kernel in the pan at a regular interval, a right handful at a time. Experienced adults taste the stuff to test if it is well-made. If so, a portion is kept aside for offering to the Buddha and monks at dawn. The rest is

served first to the aged, second to the elders and adults, and finally to the young children. A ladleful of Htamane is placed on each of the banana or in leaves gathered by children. Earthen kettles of hot plain tea are ready on the circular tables for hot plain tea is the best to go with this oily delicacy.

Contesting parties invite music bands

If a contest is held there is more excitement and a more festive atmosphere is created. Contesting parties invite music bands such as Ozi or Dobhat troupes to agitate and cheer up the contestants. Folk songs are sung and folk dances are performed in full swing, performers teasing and mimicking one another. There is a panel of judges to supervise the contest, and to see that the proceeding is in accordance with game rule. These judges are also connoisseurs to taste and decide which party's Htamane is the best. The winner party is awarded with cash or cloths or both. The winner party celebrates by leading a procession followed by a music band to the Pagoda or monastery, and offering Htamane to the Buddha Images and monks. Htamane making contests are held in schools and Colleges to train young students in cultural activities and to breed a community spirit among them.

Htamane feasts are open to all. No invitation is needed to join them. Any stranger or passerby regardless of race, religion, rank, or creed, is welcome and is served Htamane to his fill with cups of hot plain tea. He may also take some home because there are packets of Htamane wrapped up with leaves for the taking.

Epidemic's impact on China's economic, social development temporary, generally manageable: Xi

THE impact of the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) on China's economic and social development is temporary and generally manageable, Chinese President Xi Jinping said Sunday.

Xi, also general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission, made the remarks when delivering an important speech at a meeting in Beijing to advance the work on coordinating the prevention and control of the COVID-19 and economic and social development.

Xi said the COVID-19 epidemic will inevitably deal a relatively big blow to China's economic and social development. However, at such a time it is even more important to view China's development in a comprehensive, dialectical and long-term perspective, and to strengthen and firm up confidence. In general, the fundamentals of China's long-term sound economic growth remain unchanged, Xi added.

South Korea on virus 'high' alert

South Korea went on high alert Sunday following a sharp

jump in coronavirus cases, while Italy and Iran took their own drastic containment steps as an epidemic that has killed nearly 2,500 people in China continued a relentless global expansion.

The World Health Organization (WHO) also warned Africa's poor health systems left it vulnerable to the COVID-19 disease, which has spilled out of China to more than 25 countries.

South Korea is raising the nation's alert to its 'highest' level, President Moon Jae-in said Sunday after the number of infections nearly tripled over the weekend

to 602. Quarantine questioned as Japan woman tests positive

apan on Sunday confirmed the first case of a former Japanese passenger of a coronavirus-stricken cruise ship testing positive for the disease after initially receiving a clean bill of health.

More than 20 foreigners evacuated from the ship have also tested positive after returning home.

The cases raise questions about the effectiveness of the quarantine on board the ship and fears for the nearly 1,000 former

passengers allowed to move freely around Japan.

The woman in her 60s returned to her home in Tochigi prefecture north of Tokyo by train after disembarking the Diamond Princess Wednesday, but she developed fever and tested positive on Saturday, a local official told AFP.

Novel coronavirus contained in Australia

The Australian government has relaxed its coronavirus travel ban to allow some students from China into the country after Minister for Health Greg Hunt said

COVID-19 has been contained in Australia. As a result, Chinese students enrolled in Australian secondary schools - excluding those from Hubei province, will be able to apply for an exemption to the travel restrictions and travel into the country on a case-by-case basis. There are more than 700 Chinese students enrolled in Year 11 and 12 - the final two years in the Australian education system - who have not been allowed into Australia because of the government's China travel ban. REFERENCES Xinhua; AFP



Myanmar Daily Weather Report (Issued at 7:00 pm Sunday 23rd February, 2020)

BAY INFERENCE: Weather is generally fair over the North Bay and partly cloudy over the Andaman Sea and elsewhere over the Bay of Bengal.

FORECAST VALID UNTIL AFTERNOON OF THE 24th February, 2020: Rain or thundershowers will be isolated in Upper Sagaing and Taninthayi Regions, Kachin and 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: Likelihood of isolated rain in Upper Sagaing Region and Kachin State.

FORECAST FOR NAYPYITAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 24th February, 2020: Partly cloudy .

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 24th February, 2020: Partly cloudy .

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 24th February, 2020: Partly cloudy.

Invitation to young writers for Sunday Special

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

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Walls, mud packs and monkey removal for Trump in India

AHMEDABAD (India) — US President Donald Trump makes his first official visit to India on Monday and work has been going on around the clock to spruce things up — to the annoyance of some locals as well as monkeys.

The photo opportunity highlights of the 36-hour trip include a rally of 100,000 people at the world's largest cricket stadium and watching the sunset with First Lady Melania at the Taj Mahal.

A long wall has been hastily built, along the route in Ahmedabad in western India to the new Sardar Patel Stadium in order; locals believe, to hide a slum, although officials deny it.

Sardar Sarania, a resident of the slum, is disgusted at what he

sees as Prime Minister Narendra Modi's attempt to conceal reality.

"So Modi has supposedly made everything good and there's development everywhere, right? But he's hid us behind here," Sarania told AFP.

"We're made invisible. So the gutter we live in, he (Trump) won't see us. That's why they're building this."

Scores of banners and hoardings with pictures of Trump, Modi and Melania Trump have been put up across the city, projecting the "Namaste Trump" rally as a historic event in US-India relations.

The route will be lined with thousands of people — well short of the 6-10 million Trump says he has been told will attend — as



Scores of banners and hoardings with pictures of Donald Trump and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi have been put up across Ahmedabad in western India. PHOTO: AFP

well as stages for performers and images of independence hero Mahatma Gandhi. Ahmedabad officials are also keen to avoid a repeat of when then-US secretary of state John Kerry's cavalcade hit one of India's ubiquitous stray dogs during a 2015 visit.

The local Cattle and Dog Nuisance Control Department (CDNCD) has constituted a crack team to remove dogs and errant cows — another common sight in Indian cities — in a three-kilometre radius of the route.—AFP

Japan presses claim to S. Korea-held islets at annual event



A ceremony to mark Shimane Prefecture-designated "Takeshima Day" is held in Matsue, western Japan, on Feb. 22, 2020. PHOTO: KYODO

MATSUE— Japan pressed on Saturday its claim to a pair of South Korea-controlled islets at an annual ceremony amid lingering tensions between the two countries over wartime issues.

In a speech, Shimane Gov. Tatsuya Maruyama criticized South Korea, saying it is "strengthening movements to make the occupation of Takeshima an established fact" and called for a resolute response from the Japanese government on the territorial issue.

The islets in the Sea of

Japan, northwest of the prefecture's main coast line, are known as Takeshima in Japan and Dokdo in South Korea.

The ceremony has been held every Feb. 22 since 2006 after the Shimane prefectural government designated the day as "Takeshima Day" the previous year, a century after bringing them under its jurisdiction following Cabinet approval.

Takashi Fujiwara, a Cabinet Office parliamentary vice minister, who represented the cen-

tral government at the annual event, said, "In light of historical facts and also international law, Takeshima is an inherent territory (of Japan)."

South Korea later summoned a senior Japanese Embassy official to the Foreign Ministry in Seoul to lodge a protest with the anniversary ceremony in Shimane Prefecture.

In a statement, a ministry official demanded that the annual event be abolished, saying the islets are South Korean territory, both historically and under international law.

The tone of the statement changed little from those from recent years.

As part of efforts to demonstrate its position on the Takeshima issue, the central government has sent a representative of Fujiwara's rank each year since 2013.

The islets, covering a total land area of 0.2 square kilometer, consist of volcanic rock with little vegetation or drinking water. But they are located in rich fishing grounds.

South Korea has stationed security personnel on the islets, located roughly 200 kilometers from either country, since 1954, and taken effective control of them.—Kyodo

Mobile phone services restored as Afghan truce holds

KABUL — Mobile phone services were restored across swathes of Taliban-contested areas of Afghanistan over the weekend as a partial truce with the militants held for a second day.

The Taliban, US and Afghan forces are currently overseeing a week-long "reduction in violence" that kicked off on Saturday.

The commitment has seen fighting drop dramatically and is set to pave the way for an American withdrawal deal to be signed later this week.

There have been reports of small clashes in rural areas, but no major attacks that have long defined the conflict have erupted.

"In general we do see (a reduction in violence)," acting interior minister Masood Andrabi told AFP.

The lull in violence allowed telecom operators to begin restoring networks across the country that have long been hampered by fighting.

"Around 730 cell towers have restarted," said Naqeebullah Sailab, vice chairman of the Telecom Regulatory Authority of Afghanistan.

"There are towers which started operating after almost five years."

Two separate officials with knowledge of the country's telecoms industry in northern Afghanistan also confirmed that mobile networks were being restored in insurgent-hit areas.—AFP



Afghans dance as they celebrate the first day of a "reduction in violence" agreement between the Taliban, US and Afghan forces in Kandahar. HOTO: AFP

Trump congratulates Sanders who appears to be winning Nevada caucuses



Supporters cheer as they watch returns from the Nevada caucuses while waiting for Bernie Sanders to arrive for a campaign rally at Cowboys Dancehall on February 22, 2020, in San Antonio, Texas [Drew Angerer. PHOTO: ANI]

WASHINGTON — US President Donald Trump has congratulated US Senator Bernie Sanders who is coming ahead in the Saturday Nevada caucuses, according to early results.

“Looks like Crazy Bernie is doing well in the Great State of Nevada. Biden & the rest look weak, & no way Mini Mike can restart his campaign after the worst debate performance in the history of Presidential Debates. Congratulations Bernie, and don’t let them take it away from you!” Trump wrote on Twitter on Saturday. In a separate Tweet, Trump

ironically retweeted a comment from Fox News regarding Kremlin reportedly backing Bernie Sanders’ bid to win the White House.

“Why didn’t somebody tell me this?” Trump wrote commenting on reporter Jon Scott’s Tweet.

With over four per cent of the Nevada caucuses votes counted, Sanders has 54.1 per cent, while Joe Biden has 17.8 per cent. Indiana Mayor Peter Buttigieg has 8.8 per cent, while Senator Elizabeth Warren has 10.1 per cent.

On Thursday, the New York Times reported that on Febru-

ary 12, a senior official with the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (DNI) told members of the House of Representatives’ Intelligence Committee that Russia was allegedly interfering in the 2020 election to get Trump re-elected. Meanwhile, The Washington Post reported that US lawmakers had been informed about alleged Russian assistance to Sanders.

Russian officials have repeatedly rejected accusations of meddling in the US or any other country’s elections or internal affairs.—ANI

2 sons of Egypt’s ex-president Mubarak acquitted of corruption charges

CAIRO — An Egyptian court acquitted on Saturday Alaa and Gamal Mubarak, the sons of ousted Egyptian president Mohamed Hosni Mubarak, in a corruption case, state-run Ahram Online news website reported.

According to Ahram Online,

the Cairo Criminal Court acquitted Alaa and Gamal, and others, in the case known in the media as “manipulating the stock exchange.” The defendants faced charges of violating the rules of Egypt’s stock exchange market and the Central Bank of Egypt.

They were also accused of making illegal profits through the Cyprus-based company in their control which acquired a majority of shares in several banks on their behalf to escape the monitor of the stock market.

The prosecution said the defendants made illegal financial gains of over 493 million Egyptian pounds (about 31.7 million U.S. dollars) by allowing a Cyprus company to get a national bank’s shares through hidden deals.

In September 2018, a Cairo criminal court ordered the release on bail of the two sons of toppled president Mubarak, just five days after their arrest over charges in the same case.

After Mubarak’s ouster in early 2011, Gamal and Alaa were in custody for a number of alleged corruption crimes.—Xinhua



File photo taken on Dec. 26, 2018 shows Alaa Mubarak (2nd R) and his father, ousted Egyptian president Mohamed Hosni Mubarak (C), in a court in Cairo, Egypt. PHOTO: XINHUA

Hamburg votes amid German political tumult

HAMBURG — Voters in the prosperous German city-state of Hamburg went to the polls Sunday, with the centre left expected to hold its own against the Greens who have been enjoying rising popularity across the country.

Turnout among the 1.3 million voters aged 16 and up was “somewhat higher” than in 2015, at 29.5 percent around 11:00 am (1000 GMT), election supervisor Oliver Rudolf told public broadcaster NDR.

Federal politics in Germany has appeared particularly chaotic in recent weeks, with a regional vote in the former communist east bringing down Chancellor Angela Merkel’s chosen successor.

Over the longer term, the progressive, ecologist Greens look set to replace the centre-left Social Democratic Party (SPD) as the main national rival to Merkel’s CDU conservatives,

with support for them surging last year and now almost twice as high as for the SPD.

But things are not so gloomy for the centre left in Hamburg, where despite the Greens’ gains, the SPD looks set to maintain its grip on the mayor’s seat.

In opinion polls in this wealthy “Free Hanseatic City” last week, support for the SPD was well over 30 percent, a lead of more than 10 points over the Greens and three times higher than the CDU.

“We have to hold our ground against the federal trend,” SPD lead candidate and incumbent Hamburg mayor Peter Tschentscher, 54, told AFP.

In part, the centre left has done so by adopting policies with a distinctly “green” feel, including a proposal to convert a massive coal power plant to natural gas so as to slash greenhouse emissions.—AFP



The lead candidate for the centre-left SPD, Peter Tschentscher, is currently Hamburg’s mayor. PHOTO: AFP

Trump’s national security adviser denies evidence of Russia helping Trump reelected

WASHINGTON — U.S. President Donald Trump’s National Security Adviser Robert O’Brien said that he had not seen any evidence that Russia will help Trump get reelected, according to U.S. media on Saturday.

ABC News released the transcript of O’Brien’s interview to be broadcast on Sunday, during which O’Brien said that he did not know about Russian’s potential interference in the 2020 U.S. election.

“I haven’t seen any intelligence that Russia is doing anything to attempt to get President Trump reelected,” O’Brien said. “And our message to the

Russians is stay out of the U.S. elections. We’ve been very tough on Russia and we’ve been great on election security,” he added.

O’Brien’s comments came after The New York Times reported earlier this week that intelligence officials recently briefed the House Intelligence Committee about Russia interfering in the presidential race to get Trump reelected.

Trump rejected the media report in a Friday tweet, calling it a “misinformation campaign” launched by Democratic lawmakers in the Congress.—Xinhua

After backing HS2 rail, Johnson mulls Heathrow runway

LONDON — Having backed Britain’s proposed high-speed railway HS2, Boris Johnson is under pressure to keep his pledge to scrap plans for a third runway at London Heathrow airport as climate fears intensify.

Prime Minister Johnson, who wants big infrastructure projects to help drive Britain’s post-Brexit economy, said earlier this month that the country would shortly begin full construction work on HS2, dismissing soaring costs.

The project, while quickening train journeys between London in southeast England and major cities in the north, will also free up capacity on existing lines and aims to help rebalance the UK economy.

While construction of the HS2 line is set to produce vast amounts of carbon emissions and destroy ancient woodlands and wildlife, according to experts, its electric trains

are set to be far more environmentally friendly than planes making similar trips.

‘Lying in front of bulldozers’

Johnson’s predecessor Theresa May in 2018 approved a new runway at Heathrow, Europe’s busiest airport, three years after Johnson had promised to “lie down in front of... bulldozers and stop the construction”, citing environmental as well as aesthetic concerns.—AFP



Activists from climate action group Extinction Rebellion perform a symbolic ‘bulldozer lie-in’ as they demonstrate against the building of a third runway at Heathrow Airport in west London last month. **PHOTO: AFP**

UK digital bank serves clients shunned by big lenders



Monese is a British digital app-based bank that attracts urban millennials and has spread to 31 European countries with two million customers in only five years. **PHOTO: AFP**

BRITAIN — Among Britain’s digital app-based banks that are attracting moneyed urban millennials is Monese, which also courts customers neglected by the country’s established lenders.

In early 2000, Estonia-born entrepreneur Norris Koppel arrived in Britain and spotted a major gap in UK banking for newly-arrived foreigners who had trouble opening traditional accounts.

Koppel was snubbed by banks owing to a lack of address documents and no credit history – and vowed

to help those in a similar predicament.

In the nation’s booming financial technology or fintech sector, mobile phone app-based “neo-banks” such as Revolut, Monzo and Starling have established themselves as plucky upstarts.

Koppel’s lender Monese joined them, expanding to 31 nations in Europe with two million customers in only five years of operation.

- Riding the wave -

“Investor trust in Fintechs and the amount of investment being poured into neo-banks is actually very significant; it hasn’t really slowed down. 2019 was definitely a peak point so let’s see how 2020 goes,” Koppel told AFP.—AFP

Precarious Dakar tenants face eviction as rents rise

DAKAR — After months of threats from his landlord, visits to the police and a court hearing, Djibril Diagne came home on New Year’s Day to find the water had been cut off.

Today, Diagne, his second wife and five children use outdoor taps to wash and cook.

Opposite their dark

flat in a scruffy suburb some 15 kilometres (nine miles) from central Dakar, workmen swing shovels on a building site, as horse-drawn carts travel up and down earth roads.

The tenants above and below him have both left, says the 64-year-old electrician, from a faux-leather armchair in his threadbare living room. In a tale that has echoes for many poor tenants in Senegal’s capital, Diagne’s landlord is trying to evict him and put up the rent.

Dakar is located on a cramped peninsula of some 3.7 million people, whose population has shot up as rural Senegalese have moved in – and rents have followed close behind.

International organisations and businesses are also lured by Dakar’s stability in an otherwise turbulent region.

Dakar’s poorest residents, however, are paying for the price of the boom. In a country where some 40 percent of people live in poverty, Senegal passed legislation in 2014 to ease pressure on tenants.—AFP



Housing boom: New apartment blocks are being built in Dakar, but spiralling rents make living there a distant dream for many. **PHOTO: AFP**

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V ALS SUMIRE VOY. NO. (1024 W/E)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V ALS SUMIRE VOY. NO. (1024 W/E) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 24-2-2020 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of MITT/MIP where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

**SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S OCEAN NETWORK EXPRESS
(S’PORE) PTE LTD**

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V MCC TOKYO VOY. NO. (008G/009K)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V MCC TOKYO VOY. NO. (008G/009K) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 24-2-2020 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of MITT/MIP where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

**SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S SEALAND MAERSK ASIAPTE
LTD**

Phone No: 2301185

INVITATION TO OPEN TENDER

Sealed tenders are invited by Department of Medical Services, Ministry of Health and Sports for the supply of Medical Equipment to all hospitals in the (2019-2020) Budget year.

Tender documents are available during office hours at the Procurement and Supplying Division, Department of Medical Services office No (4), Ministry of Health and Sports Commencing from (24.2.2020).

Sealed bids are to be submitted to the office, not later than (23.3.2020), 12:00 Noon, after which no bid will be accepted. No telegraph/telex proposal will be accepted.

For detail information please contact the Phone No.067-3411510, 067-3411634, Procurement and Supply Division Office, Department of Medical Services, Ministry of Health and Sports.

**Procurement and Supply Division
Department of Medical Services
Ministry of Health and Sports**

Trade Mark **Ads Call** Thin Thin May, 09251022355,
09974424848

EU wants battery autonomy, but first it needs graphite

BRUSSELS — As Europe looks to declare its tech independence by becoming a leader in next-generation batteries, it will have to start by making its own graphite. The problem is, nearly all of it now comes from Asia, mainly China.

So France’s Carbone Savoie and Germany’s SGL Carbon, the only European firms deemed capable of taking up the challenge, have been corralled into an ambitious battery alliance launched by Brussels last year.

“Thank you for bringing us on board this ‘Airbus for batteries,’ though to be honest, we weren’t even on the passenger list,” Carbone Savoie’s chairman Bruno Gastinne told France’s deputy



European officials have unleashed billions of euros in subsidies to develop homegrown electric batteries, not least to supply the continent’s automotive giants. PHOTO: AFP

finance minister Agnes Pannier-Runacher on Thursday.

They were attending the ribbon-cutting for a new, more efficient carbon baking oven, a “brick cathedral” some five metres underground at its site in Venissieux, just south of

Lyon in southeast France.

The 11 million euro (\$11.9 million) investment will allow the company to double its carbon production, the first step for making the ultrapure synthetic graphite prized for batteries.

The carbon is then

shipped to its factory at Notre-Dame de Briancon in the Alps, where nearby hydroelectric dams provide the intense electrical currents needed to turn it into graphite.

Carbone Savoie also says it has developed a new production technology that uses just half the energy required currently, and cuts waste levels in half.

“It will be less expensive and more efficient than Chinese graphite, while consuming less energy. The hard part is that we have to move quickly,” said Regis Paulus, the firm’s head of research and development.

“To catch up with the Chinese, we have to invest massively,” he said.—AFP

New Kosovo PM ready to revoke tariffs for Serbian goods

PRISHTINA — A few years ago, the newly elected Kosovo prime minister overturned Serbian trucks. But Albin Kurti now says he is ready to revoke tariffs

introduced by his predecessor on Serbian goods.

Kurti, who took office in early February, is backed by most of 1.8 million inhabitants of the former Serbian

province for such a move but is nonetheless walking on eggshells.

Under intense international pressure to abolish tariffs and resume stalled talks with Serbia, Kurti also faces a fierce backlash from veterans who fought for independence and dominated politics for decades.

The former student leader wrote recently on his Facebook account that he was “ready” to “abolish the 100 percent tariffs” on Serbian goods.

They were introduced in late 2018 by Ramush Haradinaj as retaliation for a Serbian blockade of Kosovo’s Interpol membership. Belgrade still refuses to

recognise the independence declared by the break-away territory in 2008.

The tariffs “will be replaced by the principle of reciprocity between the two states” in political, economic and commercial affairs, Kurti said.

The concept, common in use in international relations, could mean for example a ban for Serbian license plates in Kosovo, as Kosovar plates are prohibited in Serbia.

US envoy for Belgrade-Prishtina talks Richard Grenell urged Prishtina to abolish tariffs as “it hurts Kosovo and chases businesses away from creating jobs”.—AFP



Prime Minister Kurti’s proposal for reciprocity with Serbia would mean for example a ban on Serbian license plates in Kosovo, as Kosovar plates are prohibited in Serbia. PHOTO: AFP

Chinese restaurants starved for cash as virus hits industry

BEIJING— It is lunch time in Beijing, but the only diner in Cindy’s Cafe is an employee having a staff meal — it has been closed for more than three weeks as China battles a deadly virus epidemic.

Restaurants are taking a huge hit as many people

across the country of 1.4 billion have been either under some form of quarantine or are reluctant to venture outside since late January over fears of contagion.

At Cindy’s Cafe in Beijing’s Roosevelt Plaza, dine-in revenue has fallen to zero, and relying on deliv-

eries hardly makes up the shortfall, said manager Cai Yaoyang. “On a good day in the past, we could earn over 1,000 yuan (\$143) a day from deliveries,” Cai told AFP. “Now, it’s just around 200 to 300 yuan a day. The impact is especially big.”

He estimates losses

to the company, which has more than 10 outlets in China, could be “at least a few million (yuan)” given rent and unused stock from the unexpected Lunar New Year closures. “If there is no business, staff may be asked to take more days off,” said Cai.—AFP

Invitation for Bids

The Republic of the Union of Myanmar
National Electrification Project
Credit No 5727-MM

Date: 24th February 2020

Contract Title: Installation of Distribution Lines and Transformers for Sagaing & Bago (West)

Reference No: MOEE-NEP-P2/C1-W2/2020 and MOEE-NEP-P2/C1-W5/2020

1. The Republic of the Union of Myanmar has received financing from the World Bank toward the cost of the National Electrification Project, and intends to apply part of the proceeds toward payments under the contract for **Installation of Distribution Lines and Transformers MOEE-NEP-P2/C1-W2/2020 for Sagaing & MOEE-NEP-P2/C1-W5/2020 for Bago (West)**

2. The Ministry of Electricity and Energy now invites sealed bids from eligible bidders for **Installation of Distribution Lines and Transformers MOEE-NEP-P2/C1-W2/2020 for Sagaing & MOEE-NEP-P2/C1-W5/2020 for Bago (West)**

The number and identification of lots comprising this installation bidding **MOEE-NEP-P2/C1-W2/2020 for Sagaing** is:

- Lot 1: Sagaing – 56 Villages
- Lot 2: Sagaing – 74 Villages
- Lot 3: Sagaing – 50 Villages
- Lot 4: Sagaing – 56 Villages
- Lot 5: Sagaing – 66 Villages
- Lot 6: Sagaing – 63 Villages
- Lot 7: Sagaing – 99 Villages
- Lot 8: Sagaing – 95 Villages

The number and identification of lots comprising this installation bidding **MOEE-NEP-P2/C1-W5/2020 process for Bago (West)** is:

- Lot 1: Bago (West) – 88 Villages
- Lot 2: Bago (West) – 91 Villages
- Lot 3: Bago (West) – 89 Villages
- Lot 4: Bago (West) – 53 Villages
- Lot 5: Bago (West) – 55 Villages
- Lot 6: Bago (West) – 92 Villages
- Lot 7: Bago (West) – 80 Villages
- Lot 8: Bago (West) – 91 Villages
- Lot 9: Bago (West) – 80 Villages

3. Bidding will be conducted through the National Competitive Bidding procedures as specified in the World Bank’s *Guidelines: Procurement of Goods, Works and Non-Consulting Services under IBRD Loans and IDA Credits & Grants by World Bank Borrowers* (“Procurement Guidelines”), and is open to all eligible bidders as defined in the Procurement Guidelines. In addition, please refer to paragraphs 1.6 and 1.7 setting forth the World Bank’s policy on conflict of interest.

4. Interested eligible bidders may obtain further information from Project Management Office (National Electrification Project), Project Manager and nep.pmomoe@gmail.com and inspect the bidding documents during office hours [09:30 to 16:00 hours] at the address given below:

Attention: **Project Manager**
Project Management Office (National Electrification Project)
Office Building No.27, Ministry of Electricity and Energy

City: Nay Pyi Taw
Country: The Republic of the Union of Myanmar
Zip Code: 15011
Telephone: +95 67 3431175
Facsimile number: +95 673431176
Electronic mail address: nep.pmomoe@gmail.com

5. A complete set of bidding documents in English may be obtained free of charge by interested eligible bidders upon the submission of a written application to the address below. The Bidding Documents will be issued through email only.
6. Bids must be delivered to the address below on or before 10:00 a.m, **24th March 2020**. Electronic bidding will not be permitted. Late bids will be rejected. Bids will be publicly opened in the presence of the bidders’ designated representatives and anyone who choose to attend at the address below:

Attention: **Project Manager**
Meeting Room No.2, Ground Floor,
Office Building No.27, Ministry of Electricity and Energy

City: Nay Pyi Taw
Country: The Republic of the Union of Myanmar
Zip Code: 15011
Telephone: +95 67 3431175
Facsimile number: +95 673431176
Electronic mail address: nep.pmomoe@gmail.com
7. All bids must be accompanied by “Bid-Security”

ALTHOUGH some travellers retold a freezing story of the icy morning at Pyaunggaung Bernard Village, a 45-minute drive from Mogok, I did not have experiences yet to enjoy such a situation. Environs of Bernard or Pyaunggaung Village where olivine can be extracted were filled with icy dusts in the mornings of cold season whenever the sky was clear with clouds. So, travellers from the tropical region and those from deltaic area of the country intentionally came to the village for enjoying the scene and to record it as a natural beauty. Grasping an opportunity to pay a visit to Mogok, I rushed to Bernard Village so as to view the snow-capped scene.

Bernard Village without disappearing simplicities

Mogok region was a residence of British colonialists 120 years ago. At that time they extracted various kinds of precious gems from Mogok with the use of machinery. I noted down something that the village was named Bernard concerning the name of British Ambassador Charles Bernard. Despite changing to new name Ywathaya, the village is still called Bernard.

Villagers look like Chinese. Their clothes and behaviors are similar to that of Chinese. They are honesty and frank. When I



A scene captures icy dusts covering crops and all parts in Bernard Village.

Icy cold morning in Bernard Village

By **Thiha, the Traveller @ Thiha Lulin**

PHOTOS: **THIHA, THE TRAVELLER @ THIHA LULIN**



Over 100 years old Munitions Dump in Bernard Village.

took photos on frozen parts after stopping my car, a woman from nearby house shouted, "How wonderful coldness it is! You are endurable."

Heading to Bernard Village in icy morning of cold season

I started my trip from Mogok to the village at 5 am. Four-wheeled automobiles are the most suitable for driving along the hilly roads. Saloons can be used on the roads but these facilities are slightly rough and narrow. Especially, travellers need to take care of motorcycles which are driven with high speed. Some of them drive in the central way of the roads. That is why drivers of automobiles should take care of driving not to touch them. Moreover, all drivers must steer their vehicles along the roads because of ravines and hillsides on both sides.

Before enjoying icy dusts at Bernard Village, travellers will have an extra chance to view the beautiful scene of sunrise coupled with a bird's-eye panoramic view of Mogok on arrival at Laypauk Pagoda. It is significant that travellers standing on that

site can enjoy scenes of eastern and western parts of Mogok at night.

If travellers spend a short time of enjoying the sunrise scene at the site, they will arrive at Bernard Village at a time when icy dusts can clearly be seen in natural lighting of the

morning. In fact, as icy dust is not snow, it immediately melts in sunray. That is why travellers should rush to the village so as to enjoy natural beauty of icy dusts within the period of one or two hours.

When I started my trip from Mogok in the morning, I saw icy





dusts on the roof of car. So it was sure to see icy dusts in Bernard Village. As I noticed icy dusts on leaves and bushes on the way before arriving at Bernard Village, my soul could not control my heartbeat. On arrival at Bernard Village, I saw everything was capped with icy dusts. Roofs of the houses, crop plantations,

parts of soil and grass were frozen under white icy dusts. When I broke a leave, it was so rigid. I noticed my pleasure when I saw the wet leaves and plants on which drops of the water pipeline were frozen. Generally I do not satisfy feeling of very coldness because of causing dullness. However, I was very active and

happy that morning. I was not satisfied with taking photos over the scenes here and there.

Forgotten Bernard War Cemetery

Being a station of British troops, a war cemetery for British soldiers who died in action in the battles between Anglo-My-

anmar wars is located near Bernard Village. In the past, the war cemetery which lost in the bushes was not important site. In fact, the war cemetery should be valued similar to that of other cities to catch interest of globetrotters. On my arrival, I had a chance to visit the cleaned cemetery. At that time, sunray helped melt the icy dusts around the cemetery but some icy dusts on the ground away from sunray were still frozen.

Market day in Bernard

If you have experienced activities of the market day in Bernard Village, it would be excellent on your trip. If you visit the market at the entrance to the village, you will have to observe traditions of hustle and bustle of the locals at the market.

Noodle shops open sale for delicious foods at the market whether it is the market day or not. As it is a good delicacy of Shan traditional noodle meals, I urge all travellers to taste such a kind of noodle.

Munitions Dump in Bernard Village

Visitors can see an over 100 years old munitions dump beyond a crop plantation behind a house in Bernard Village. It is a small one. Its position is located among houses and crop plantations. As it is similar to a warehouse where some materials are stored, I observed it. The travellers wishing to visit the munitions dump need to seek help of local people because of difficulty to give direction of ways to it.

At a time when Bernard Village hides under icy dusts

Actually, chances cannot be grasped every morning to enjoy scenes of icy dusts covering Bernard Village. Such kind of scene can be seen on the days between November to February when the sky space is not filled with clouds. I have known that environs of the village are not frozen within a week after raining or being cloudy. That is why it is not sure to have experiences of freezing in Bernard Village whenever everybody pays a visit to the village.

If you arrive in Mogok in the cold season, I would like to urge you to pay a visit to Bernard Village so as to enjoy scenic beauties of icy dusts in the morning.

May you all have a safe, healthy and happy trip.

Translated by Than Tun Aung



War Cemetery of British soldiers seen in Bernard Village.

Thet Htar Thuzar wins Uganda International Series 2020

MYANMAR badminton icon Thet Htar Thuzar won the Uganda International Series 2020 with a 2-1 win over India's Aakarshi Kashyap in the final match of the tourney held yesterday in Kampala, Uganda.

The match was an entertaining one with Thet Htar Thuzar working hard for a win.

The first match ended with a 21-14 win for Thet Htar Thuzar. She lost the second match by 16-21.

The third match proved thrilling as the Indian player followed Thet Htar Thuzar with just a point difference from the start.

But after dominating by 18-17, Thet Htar Thuzar carried

point 18 to reach full 21 points, cutting out her opponent by a 21-18 result to win the championship.

In the round of 32, Thet Htar Thuzar beat Maldivian badminton player Fathimath Nabaaha Abdul Razzaq with a decisive result of 2-0 (21-15 and 21-9). In the round of 16, Thet Htar Thuzar upended Iran's Soraya Aghaei-hajiagha by 2-0 (21-19 and 23-21).

In the quarterfinal, Thet Htar Thuzar met with Slovak player Martina Repiska and beat her (10-21, 21-15 and 21-13), and in the semifinal Thet Htar prevailed over Mauritius player Kate Foo Kune by 21-15 and 21-12. — Lynn Thit (Tgi)



Myanmar badminton star Thet Htar Thuzar. **PHOTO: THET HTAR THUZAR'S FACEBOOK PAGE**



Three Tottenham Hotspur coaches (front) teaching basic football skills to children in Yangon yesterday. **PHOTO: KYAW ZEYA**

Tottenham Hotspur coaches teach football tactics to children in Yangon

THREE Tottenham Hotspur coaches held a day-long training session on football skills and tactics for 240 children at a free camp organized by the AIA yesterday in Yangon.

This was the second training camp held in Yangon. The first such training camp was organized in September, 2019.

The AIA said it invited the coaches from the English Premier League club, Tottenham Hotspur, to Myanmar for teaching world-level football skills to children.

The day-long program focused on youths aged between 7 and 14.

Children were given football instructions by three

coaches — Mr Anton Blackwood, Ms Shannon Moloney, and Mr Shaun Harris — with the support of coaches from the Yangon United Football Club.

Speaking about the event, CEO of AIA Myanmar Mr Nhon Luc Ly said: "AIA GOAL! fully embodies the spirit of AIA: fun, active, passionate, and healthy. We aim to help the youth fulfill their aspirations in a happy and safe environment under world-class supervision. Our coaches, Ms Moloney and Mr Harris, come devoted and ready to help unlock Myanmar's next superstar footballers."

Mr Anton Blackwood, a former Tottenham Hotspur player who holds a UEFA 'B' coaching

license said: "It's fantastic to be back in Myanmar as part of AIA GOAL!"

"To get the chance to help an enthusiastic group of children make the most of their skills is always fantastic and is an absolute blessing. Myanmar's youth have a lot of potential to succeed, and it's thrilling to be part of this effort in helping them reach their fullest potential," Mr Blackwood added.

Beside the training sessions, the AIA camp also featured onsite health and wellness checkups, where participating children and their families got free consultations.—Lynn Thit (Tgi)

Myanmar National League: Hantharwady United still leading with no losses

HANTHARWADY United is still leading the standing table of the Myanmar National League at the conclusion of Week-7 with 21 points earned from winning all the matches the team has played so far.

Yesterday, a late goal by substitute player Aung Myo Thura helped Hantharwady United defeat Sagaing United by 1-0 and keep its place at the top of the table.

Yangon United is trailing Hantharwady United with 17 points from 5 wins and 2 draws.

Ayeyawady United is placed third with the same points as Yangon United, but with difference in goals gained.

Meanwhile, defending champions of the Myanmar

National League, Shan United are fourth with 13 points from 4 wins, 1 draw, and 2 losses.

Rakhine United is in the fifth place with 12 points from 3 wins, 3 draws, and 1 loss.

Sagaing United is next with 3 wins, 1 draw, and 3 losses.

Yadanarbon FC is in the seventh place with 6 points from 1 win, 3 draws, and 3 losses.

Magwe FC and ISPE FC are in the eighth and ninth place with the same points as Yadanarbon, but with goal differences.

There are 12 teams participating in the MNL, and Zwegapin United is in the 12th place with 2 points from 2 draws. —Lynn Thit (Tgi)



Hantharwady United F.C. players pose for a group photo before an earlier MNL match against Sagaing United. **PHOTO: MNL**