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President U Win Myint, First Lady Daw Cho Cho make pilgrimage to Bodh Gaya in India's Bihar State



President U Win Myint and First Lady Daw Cho Cho present the cash donation to the monks at Mahabodhi Temple in Bodh Gaya yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

PRESIDENT U Win Myint and First Lady Daw Cho Cho, during a State Visit to India, went on a pilgrimage to the Bodh Gaya in the Indian state of Bihar; donated a 36-inch high bronze image of Buddha that is to be enshrined at the Mahabodhi Temple, and paid homage at the 7 sacred places of Buddha yesterday.

President U Win Myint, First Lady Daw Cho Cho and entourage left New Delhi by special flight at 8:30 am local time and they were seen off by Deputy Minister of State for Food Processing Industries Shri Rameswar Teli, Military Attaché Brig-Gen Thein Zaw and wife, and officials from the Myanmar Embassy in India and Ministry of External Affairs of India. The

delegation led by the President and the First Lady arrived in Bodh Gaya at 10:30 am local time and were welcomed at Gaya airport by Minister-Counsellor U Myint Soe and wife, and officials from the Office of the Minister-Counsellor and Ministry of External Affairs of India.

The President, the First Lady and party then proceeded in motorcades to Mahabodhi Hotel where they are staying temporarily.

Next, the President, the First Lady and party went to the Mahabodhi Temple, paid homage at the Great Buddha Statue, and presented it with a donation of flowers, water, lights, lotus robe and cash.

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Chief Scout of Myanmar, State Counsellor, receives representatives from Asia-Pacific Regional Scout Committee



State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi meets with Mr Hiroshi Shimada, first Vice Chairman of Asia-Pacific Regional Scout Committee of World Organization of Scout Movement, in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

CHIEF Scout of Myanmar and State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi received a delegation led by Mr Hiroshi Shimada, first Vice Chairman of Asia-Pacific Regional Scout Committee of World Organization of Scout Movement, at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

During the meeting, they discussed training camps for youths in the Asia and Pacific region organized by the Asia-Pacific Regional Scout committee of WOSM, scout movement process development and APR scout committee's assistance to Myanmar's scout movement. — MNA

(Translated by TTN)

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Pyidaungsu Hluttaw

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw continues to debate constitutional amendments

THE Pyidaungsu Hluttaw continued its 15th regular session yesterday, debating amendments to the 2008 Constitution and discussing the findings of the Hluttaw Joint Public Accounts Committee on tax earnings of Union-level institutions in the second half of the 2018-2019 financial year.

During the debate, MP U Aung Kyaw Zan of Pauktaw Constituency spoke against a proposed amendment to sub-section (a) of Article 26 of the 2008 Constitution. He said he agreed that civil services personnel should remain free from party politics, as prescribed in sub-section (a) of Article 26.

“That basic principle does not block any desire of civil services personnel for political participation. They can vote for any party they like,” said MP U Aung Kyaw Zan.

“Civil service personnel have to be accountable to a government elected by the people. As long as the country exists, the civil service machinery will continue to exist and it should stand separately to ensure that they implement the policies laid down by an elected government. Hence, the basic principle that



Second Pyidaungsu Hluttaw convened its 15th regular session in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. PHOTO: MNA

‘civil services personnel shall be free from party politics’ should not be amended,” he added.

Meanwhile, MP Daw Nan Than Than Lwin of Hpa-an Constituency spoke in favor of amending Article 8 of the 2008 Constitution. The proposed amendment states the Union is ‘constituted by the Federal Democratic System’. The federal democratic system is inspired by the ethnic people, she said.

Regarding an amendment

to Article 261 on the appointment of the Chief Minister of a region or state, MP U Aye Maung of Bawlake Constituency said he supported the amendment as it was in keeping with the idea of a federal democracy, which relaxes central control in the regions and states. The amendment to Article 261 was debated by MPs.

Ministry closely monitoring jade, gems mining

Union-level institutions

discussed issues regarding the findings on tax collection in the second half of the 2018-2019 financial year by the Joint Public Accounts Committee at the parliament.

Deputy Minister for Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation Dr Ye Myint Swe said the ministry has kept the extraction of jades and gems under control since April, 2016 after issuing of new permits was suspended the same year.

The ministry’s officials are closely supervising mining activities, in accordance with the rules and regulations, he said.

Joint-venture companies with Myanma Gems Enterprise have to give 11 per cent of uncut jade stones, 9 per cent of uncut gems stones, 5 per cent of finished gems, and a service fee to the ministry, he said.

Twenty-five per cent of the remaining earnings go to the Myanma Gems Enterprise and 75 per cent to the joint-venture company, he said.

Besides, a system that allows MGE and its JV company to split earnings 50-50 is also being practiced, if found necessary, he added.

Tax from State Lottery

Deputy Minister for Planning, Finance and Industry U Maung Maung Win said the ministry achieved the target set for the 2018-2019 financial year by 100.82 per cent, but the target for the first half of the current financial year is still far from being met.

The State Lottery was launched in 1938, and the government levies a tax on lottery winnings.— MNA ■

Permanent Representative makes rebuttal statement on the report of High Commissioner for Human Rights

THE Interactive Dialogue on “High Commissioner report on the situation of human rights of Rohingya and other minorities in Myanmar” was held on 27 February 2020 during the on-going 43rd Session of the Human Rights Council in Geneva, Switzerland.

During the session, Permanent Representative of Myanmar U Kyaw Moe Tun delivered a statement in response to the report of the High Commissioner on Myanmar, submitted to the Council in pursuant to the Council’s resolution 39/2.

In his statement, the Permanent Representative stressed that changing one system to another requires time and space, and “the present democratically elected government of Myanmar which came into office in 2016 has been transforming the country from the authoritarian to a democratic federal union in the midst of multiple challenges resulted from decades of armed conflict, years of underdevelopment and social and political



Permanent Representative of Myanmar U Kyaw Moe Tun attends the 43rd Session of the Human Rights Council in Geneva, Switzerland. PHOTO: MNA

stagnation”.

Emphasizing the interlinkage between national reconciliation and peace, democracy and human rights, and sustainable and inclusive development in building democratic federal union of Myanmar, he underscored

that achievement of the national reconciliation and peace is Myanmar’s highest priority. He also apprised the Council of the momentum gained in the peace process between the Government and the ethnic armed groups during the last three years. He

further informed that next session of the Union Peace Conference is scheduled to be held in the first four months of this year.

Speaking about the complexity of the issue of Rakhine State, while sharing the concern of the international communi-

ty over the conflict in Rakhine State, he urged the Council to look the root causes objectively and comprehensively as well as consider all political and economic issues involving cross-border migration since colonial time, poverty, lack of rule of law and security without overlooking the human emotions steamed from historical tension, mistrust and fear between the communities. He highlighted the number of concrete steps taken by the present Government since it came into office in finding a sustainable solution. He also pointed out that deliberate terrorist attacks of ARSA group in 2016 and 2017 not only derailed the Government’s efforts for finding sustainable solution to the issue of Rakhine State, also caused mass displacement and current humanitarian situation. Moreover, he said, “the armed conflict between Tatmadaw and AA added further challenges and complexity to the issue”.

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President, First Lady make pilgrimage to Bodh Gaya in India’s Bihar State

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President U Win Myint, First Lady Daw Cho Cho and the delegation then attended the donation ceremony of the 36-inch high bronze image of Buddha that is to be enshrined at the Maha Bodhi Tree and its golden precinct.

The donation ceremony was attended by State Central Working Committee of Sangha, Paradesi Sangha Nayaka Committee (India) Chairman Abhidhaza Agga Maha Saddhamma Jotika Bodh Gaya Myanmar Monastery Sayadaw Bhaddanta Nyaneinda and Sayadaws, Union Minister U Kyaw Tin of the Ministry of International Cooperation, Union Minister Thura U Aung Ko of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture, Union Minister U Thant Sin Maung of the Ministry of Transport and Communications, Rakhine State Chief Minister U Nyi Pu, Ambassador U Moe Kyaw Aung and wife of the Myanmar Embassy in India, Indian Ambassador to Myanmar Mr Saurabh Kumar, Minister-Counsellor U Myint Soe and wife, officials from the Office of the Minister-Counsellor and the Ministry of External Affairs of India.

President U Win Myint and First Lady Daw Cho Cho donated a 36-inch high bronze image of Buddha that is to be enshrined at the Mahabodhi Temple



President U Win Myint, First Lady Daw Cho Cho and party pose for a group photo at the Mahabodhi Temple in Bodh Gaya yesterday. PHOTO: MNA

and B.T.M.C Sayadaw U Carainda (India) received the donation.

Next, Sayadaws and monks led by the State Central Sangha Committee Sayadaw, Paradesi Sangha Nayaka Committee Chairman Bodh Gaya Myanmar Monastery Sayadaw recited the religious rituals according to the Buddhist doctrines to enshrine the 36-inch high bronze image of Buddha.

The President and the First Lady then presented the offertories to Sayadaws and monks, ob-

served the prayers given by Bodh Gaya Myanmar Monastery Abbot Sayadaw Maha Saddhamma Jotikadhaja Baddanta Tejeda, and shared Metta (loving-kindness) with respect to the donations.

After the donation ceremony, the President and the First Lady donated thin gold plates at the Maha Bodhi Tree and posed for a documentary photo with the delegation.

The President then paid homage to the Buddha Image on the upper terrace of the Maha Bo-

dhi Temple, offered it with flowers, water and lotus robe, made pilgrimage around 7 sacred places of the Buddha, and fed the fish with fish food at the Mucalinda Lake.

The President and the First Lady then watched the Buddha photo exhibition room and rang the peace bells at the Meditation Park.

The President, the First Lady and party were briefed by the Bodh Gaya Management Committee Chairman and officials on the background history

of the Bodh Gaya and the Seven Sacred Places of the Buddha, at the Guest Hall of the Bodh Gaya.

The President then signed in the Guest Record Book at the Seven Sacred Places where a documentary photo was taken with the delegation.

The President, the First Lady and party, in the afternoon, arrived in the Bodh Gaya Myanmar Monastery where they presented the offertories including ‘eight requisites for monks’ to the Sayadaws and monks from (13)

Myanmar Monasteries in the Bodh Gaya, and received the Five Precepts and listened to the Metta Paritta (Buddhist Loving-kindness chant).

President U Win Myint and First Lady Daw Cho Cho, Union Ministers U Kyaw Tin, Thura U Aung Ko, U Thant Sin Maung and Rakhine State Chief Minister U Nyi Pu presented a donation of cash and offertories including ‘eight requisites for monks’ to the Sayadaws and monks respectively.

Next, the President, the First Lady and the lay audience listened to the sermon given by the Bodh Gaya Myanmar Monastery Abbot Sayadaw Maha Thaddhamma Jotikadhaja Baddanta Tejeda and shared the merits with respect to the donations made.

The President and the First Lady made a study tour at the King Mindon’s Stone Inscription, paid homage to the Daijokyo Buddhist Temple (the Japanese Pagoda) by offering flowers, water and lights, and signed the Guest Record Book there.

The President, the First Lady and party arrived back at the Mahabodhi Hotel after they posed for a documentary photo with the Sayadaws, the officials and the delegation.—MNA

(Translated by Aungthu Ya)



President U Win Myint and First Lady Daw Cho Cho gild gold leaf over the Maha Bodhi Tree in Bodh Gaya yesterday. PHOTO: MNA



President U Win Myint and First Lady Daw Cho Cho visit at the Bodh Gaya yesterday. PHOTO: MNA

Indian President hosts dinner for President U Win Myint and First Lady



President U Win Myint delivers the address at the state banquet hosted by Indian President Shri Ram Nath Kovind at the Presidential Palace in India on 27 February. **PHOTO: MNA**

PRESIDENT U Win Myint and First Lady Daw Cho Cho met with President Shri Ram Nath Kovind of India on 27 February evening and attended the state banquet hosted by him.

President U Win Myint and his entourage were warmly welcomed by President Shri Ram Nath Kovind of India on their arrival at the Presidential Palace.

President U Win Myint then met with Indian President Shri Ram Nath

Kovind in the North Drawing Room of the Presidential Palace.

The meeting emphasized on strengthening the existing friendly relations and cohesive coordination, continued implementation of bilateral ties in the energy sector, tourism sector and human resources development, and closer cooperation in the international arenas.

Furthermore, the two Presidents cordially exchanged views on the issues

pertaining to India's continued support for Myanmar's peace-making and reconciliation process, peace, stability and socio-economic development, and acceptance of verified returnees in Rakhine State in accordance with the agreement between Myanmar and Bangladesh.

The meeting was attended by Union Minister U Kyaw Tin of the Ministry of International Cooperation, Union Minister Thura U Aung Ko of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture, Union Minister U Thant Sin Maung of the Ministry of Transport and Communications, Rakhine State Chief Minister U Nyi Pu, Myanmar Ambassador U Moe Kyaw Aung, and officials among others.

After the meeting, President U Win Myint, First Lady Daw Cho Cho and party attended the state dinner hosted by the Indian President.

The two Presidents first introduced their delegations to each other.

India's President Shri Ram Nath Kovind and President U Win Myint then delivered their speeches.

Indian President Shri Ram Nath Kovind said: Your Excellency, President U Win Myint, First Lady Daw Cho Cho, Dignitaries from Myanmar and India, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Minglabar!, Namaste and a warm welcome back to India!

I am delighted to receive you Mr. President on your first State Visit to India. It has been a little over a year since my State Visit to your beautiful country in December 2018, and less than a year since you honoured us with your presence at the swearing-in of our new Government last May.

As neighbours connected by land and water, with a long civilizational friend-

ship, it is only natural that we meet as frequently as possible. After all, from language to food, from dress to rituals, ours are sister civilizations: unique in their own right, but also related. The sacred waters of Irrawaddy and Phalgu have long been part of our religious beliefs, our spirituality and our cultural imagination. And so it is a pleasure to host you as family!

Excellency,

Your meetings here would have reassured you that India remains committed to providing its fullest support for the expansion of your democracy and economic development. India stands for a stable, united and prosperous Myanmar, established through a successful peace process.

And since peace is indivisible, the settlement of ethnic conflict in your country helps us ensure peace and tranquility on our shared borders. It is in this context that we are happy to help by sharing our experience with democracy, federalism and constitutionalism with you.

Excellency,

To foster sustainable peace, we must ensure a peace dividend through prosperity. Connectivity between our countries is already expanding, through the building of roads, use of waterways, upgradation of ports and increase of bilateral air services. We need to widen such connectivity to include energy as well.

Another important element of a peace dividend is the provision of capacity. As State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, has said, she attaches priority to "people understanding that they have the power to change things themselves". It is in this spirit that India is invested in capacity-building in Myanmar.

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President U Win Myint shakes hands with Indian President Shri Ram Nath Kovind at the Presidential Palace in India on 27 February. **PHOTO: MNA**

President U Win Myint meets with Indian counterpart

FROM PAGE-4

Excellency,

Myanmar has a proverb and I quote – “the islands depend on reeds, and reeds depend on reeds, and reeds depend on islands” unquote. That is to say, our interests are inter-dependent. From such wisdom are mutually-beneficial partnerships created. May your pilgrimage to Bodh Gaya and the divine shade of the Bodhi tree, continue to bless our age-old ties.

On that special note, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen:

- I wish good health, success and long life for President U Win Myint, and First Lady Daw Cho Cho;

- I wish continued progress and prosperity for the people of Myanmar; and

- I wish everlasting friendship between India-Myanmar.

Thank you. Chezu Din Bare.

President U Win Myint said: “Your Excellency Shri Ram Nath Kovind, President of the Republic of India, Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Myanmar delegation and on my own behalf, I take great pleasure in expressing our profound thanks and deep appreciation to Your Excellency, the Government and the people of India for the warm welcome and gracious hospitality accorded to us since our arrival at this beautiful and historic city of New Delhi.

Myanmar and India have been enjoying traditional bonds of friendship and close relations underpinned by shared cultural values and strong people-to-people ties for several centuries. Moreover, Buddhism which has its roots in the sacred land of India also binds us together spiritually and culturally and provides the fabric of our unique and special relations with the people of India. Our two countries share a similar historical background and worked together in our long struggle to regain our independence.

It gives me immense pleasure to have this opportunity to pay a State visit to the Republic of India at an important time when our two countries are enjoying excellent relations and closer cooperation which have reached to a new height.

Over the past years, there have been frequent exchanges of high level visits between our two countries. I fondly recall the recent fruitful visits to Myanmar



President U Win Myint accepts a souvenir from Indian President Shri Ram Nath Kovind in India on 27 February. PHOTO: MNA

of Your Excellency President Shri Ram Nath Kovind in 2018 and His Excellency Prime Minister Narendra Modi in September 2017 which broadened the areas of mutually beneficial cooperation and deepen bilateral relations to the mutual benefits of our two peoples.

I am extremely delighted that today, we have had fruitful discussions with both His Excellency President Shri Ram Nath Kovind and His Excellency Prime Minister Modi on a wide range of bilateral relations including promoting trade and investments, development cooperation, people-to-people exchanges, connectivity and cultural and on issues of mutual interests in a friendly and cordial environment.

I am also happy to witness the signing ceremony of Memoranda of Understanding and Agreements between our two countries today. I am convinced that these MOUs and Agreement signed today will significantly contribute to the acceleration and expansion of bilateral cooperation serving the mutual interests of our two countries and peoples. Our government highly values India's development assistance provided to Myanmar across many spheres of common interest including connectivity, infrastructure, Human Resource Development (HRD) and rural development.

I have every confidence that

through our joint endeavours, the existing friendly relations and mutually beneficial cooperation that happily exist between our two countries will continue to flourish in the coming years. Our joint endeavours are reinforced by India's “Act East” and “Neighbourhood First Policy” and Myanmar's “Independent, Active and Non-Aligned Foreign Policy”. In strengthening connectivity between India and ASEAN, Myanmar can play a pivotal role as a gateway to Southeast Asia, thanks to its strategic geographical location.

We are confident that the infrastructure projects such as the India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway Project, the Kaladan Multi-modal Transit Transport Project, once completed, will connect the North Western region of Myanmar and North Eastern region of India to bring benefits to the peoples of both the two less developed regions and beyond. We need to reiterate our commitments to work together for speedy completion of those key infrastructure projects.

We believe that there still exists ample room and greater potential for deepening the existing cooperation not only in bilateral context but also under the framework of ASEAN-India Strategic Partnership.

Myanmar is undergoing a delicate democratic transition facing numerous challenges.

Understanding each other's challenges and lending a constructive support is crucial in strengthening bilateral relations. Taking this opportunity, I would like to express our gratitude to the Government of India for its continuous support to Myanmar at the regional and international fora. We wish to reaffirm our desire to continue working more closely with India at both regional and multilateral arenas including ASEAN- India strategic partnership, BIMSTEC, Ganga-Mekong cooperation and the United Nations.

I am happy to witness the all-round development of our friendly neighbour, India. In this regard, I wish to congratulate the Government and the people of India for their relentless efforts and for making great strides in nation building task to turn India into an emerging global economic power. We are impressed by the rapid socio-economic development of the country and uplifting of living standards of the Indian people in a short period of time. I sincerely believe that the people of India will continue to achieve greater progress and prosperity under the able stewardship of the Indian leaders.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Myanmar always attach great importance to its relationship with its important neighbour,

India and based on our abiding faith in, and commitment to democracy, development and peaceful co-existence, I wish to reiterate our strong commitment to further consolidating and invigorating the traditionally strong and friendly relations between our two countries. Myanmar looks forward to working more closely with India in line with its inclusive development vision of “Sabka Sath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas” (Together with all, for development of all and with trust of all) to the mutual benefit of our two countries and peoples in all spheres of common interest.

Before I conclude, allow me to offer my best wishes to Your Excellency Shri Ram Nath Kovind and Shrimati Kovind for your good health and personal well-being as well as the continued progress and prosperity of India.

Long live Myanmar-India Friendship.

Thank you.”

Afterwards, President U Win Myint and First Lady Daw Cho Cho signed the Presidential Guest Book.

The Indian President gave President U Win Myint a photo album and souvenirs.

President U Win Myint and the First Lady then arrived back at Taj Palace Hotel where they are staying during their State Visit to India. — MNA

(Translated by Aungthu Ya)

Measures to speed up implementation of SEZs discussed

MYANMAR Special Economic Zone Central Committee held its first meeting for the year at the Ministry of Commerce in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday discussing measures to be taken for speeding up the implementation of special economic zones in the country.

The meeting was opened with remarks made by Vice President U Henry Van Thio, who is also chairman of this committee.

In his remarks, the chairman stressed the important role of the special economic zones for the economic development of the country, urging the cooperation of all ministries concerned in making the SEZs a success.

Out of three special economic zones, Thilawa SEZ is far ahead of the two remaining zones with completion of Zone-A and its Zone-B being implemented sector by sector.

Thilawa SEZ has attracted some 114 companies so far, with total investment of US\$1.92 billion. Of them, over 80 factories are in operation. The results reflects that the Thilawa SEZ is developing with momentum, said the vice president.

Regarding the Kyaukpyu SEZ, the vice president said the two companies namely CITIC Group and Framework Agreement who won the tender for the deep seaport project of the SEZ signed the Framework Agreement in November 2018. The two companies inked the Concession Agreement and Shareholder Agreement in January, 2020. Plans are underway to carry out the EIA, SIA surveys and GT Survey for geological situation.

The vice president has called on officials of the Kyaukpyu SEZ to make the best use of experiences of the Thilawa SEZ in implementing the Kyaukpyu



Vice President U Henry Van Thio addresses the first meeting of Myanmar Special Economic Zone Central Committee in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.
PHOTO: MNA

SEZ. He continued to say that Myanmar has already signed the Myanmar-China Economic Corridor Cooperation project, and that if the deep seaport project included in the Myanmar-China Economic Corridor Project were implemented successfully, it would benefit both countries.

Regarding the Dawei Special Economic Zone implementation, the vice president said the two-lane road linking Dawei SEZ and Hteekhee which was under construction could be seen as a progress of the project.

The Ministry of Construction is building the road at the cost of 4.5 billion baht borrowed from the Thai Government. The two sides are negotiating the Terms of Reference-TOR and the ground survey works have been completed. The two sides are also negotiating the Detailed

Project Report-DPR. “As special economic zones are playing an important role in development of the country and creating job opportunities for the people, all should make concerted efforts for success of the special economic zones,” said the vice president.

“On the other hand, the ministries concerned are obliged to coordinate with each other to provide services to foreign investors in accordance with the rules and regulations so that they can have confidence to invest in Myanmar,” said the vice president.

“Only when we give guarantees to them, will the investment flow into our country,” said U Henry Van Thio, “Or, there would be no benefits that we should gain.”

He also called for the ministries concerned to actively participate in implementing the

SEZs. Afterwards, Union Minister for Commerce Dr Than Myint, who is the secretary of the central committee and chairman of the work committee under the central committee, gave a detailed briefing about the current situation of the special economic zones and undertakings of the central work committee.

Afterwards, Permanent Secretary of the ministry gave a briefing about the progress of the implementation of the resolutions made at the meeting 1/2019.

Deputy Ministers U Set Aung, in his capacity as the Thilawa and Kyaukpyu SEZ Management Committee Chairman, and Dr Tun Naing, in his capacity as the Dawei Special Economic Zone Management Committee Chairman, also discussed the implementation of the respective

zones. Next, Yangon Region Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein discussed the plans for the Yangon Special Economic Zone.

Permanent Secretary U Aung Soe, who is the Joint Secretary of the Myanmar-Thai Joint Coordination Committee for development of the Dawei SEZ and related projects, discussed outcomes of the Myanmar-Thai Joint Task Force meeting and Myanmar-Thai-Japan meeting.

After hearing the discussion, Vice President U Henry Van Thio stressed the need to do reforms and to ensure that the rules and regulations meet international standards.

He also called for speeding up the implementation of the SEZs based on the win-win situation of the two sides.—MNA

(Translated by KZL)

Permanent Representative makes rebuttal statement on the report of ...

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Despite the challenges, he reaffirmed that “we never fail to lose our sight for finding sustainable solution and our top priority now is expeditious commencement of repatriation in accordance with the agreements signed between Myanmar and Bangladesh”. In this regard, he encouraged Bangladesh to strictly adhere to the signed agreements and to extend genuine and sincere cooperation.

On the accountability matter, he reiterated that that Myanmar is willing and able to address the issue of accountability. He apprised the Council of the final report of the Independent Commission of Enquiry (ICOE), submitted to the President of Myanmar in January 2020. He highlighted that the findings of the Commission’s Evidence Collection and Verification Team reveal no indication of pattern of conduct from which one could be reasonably concluded that the acts were committed with “gen-

ocidal intent”. He also informed the Council that in concurrence with the recommendations by the ICOE’s report, Myanmar President has transmitted the full report with annexes to the Union Attorney General and the Commander-in-Chief for further investigation and prosecution”.

Recalling the adoption of the of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, he stressed that any attempt to take the matter to any international judicial or legal body shall be rejected as national remedies

have not been exhausted.

He further informed of the utmost efforts by the Government to bring all communities together in building a democratic federal union through understanding and called for the international community to join hands with Myanmar in constructive way, stating “the reports and statements of the OHCHR and the approaches of the Council should contribute to our efforts for reconciliation, living in harmony and unity, and they should not be in

a way of creating hatred among communities and disunity of the country”.

He expressed that targeting unfairly and disproportionately under special scrutiny by multiple mechanisms of the UN will not contribute positively to our efforts for building a democratic federal union.

However, he concluded by saying “whatever challenges we have, we are resolute to overcome them for achieving our goal of democratic federal union”.—MNA

Union Minister for Information meets staff of state-run broadcast, print media separately

UNION Minister for Information Dr Pe Myint met with staff of the broadcast and print media of the ministry yesterday separately.

Also present at the meetings were Deputy Minister for Information U Aung Hla Tun and departmental officials, and staff of the Myanma Radio and Television-MRTV, the Kyemon Daily and the Myanma Alinn Daily.

Speaking at the meeting with the staff of the MRTV at the broadcast station's headquarters in Tatkon, Union Minister Dr Pe Myint discussed the responsibility and opportunities, and measures to be taken for producing good contents of the media, programmes for the centenary anniversaries, and the better

programmes for the Diamond Jubilee of the MRTV which can bring pride to the broadcast media.

After his discussion, staff of the departments of MRTV presented their needs.

The meeting came to an end with concluding remarks by the Union Minister.

Following the meeting, the Union Minister, the deputy minister and officials held a separate meeting with the programme producers of MRTV.

At the meeting, the producers reported on plans for centenaries of the Myanmar Motion Picture Organization and the Yangon University, and current programmes for the events.



Union Minister Dr Pe Myint delivers the speech at the meeting with staff of the broadcast and print media of the Ministry of Information in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

In the afternoon, the Union Minister, the deputy minister and officials met with staff of the Myanma Alinn, the Kyemon and the Nay Pyi Taw press in Zeyarthiri Township.

At the meeting, Union Minister stressed the need to improve the quality of the print media and to be flawless.

After hearing the reports of the staff of the print media, Acting Managing Director of the News and Periodicals Enterprise-NPE discussed their reports.

The meeting came to an end with concluding remarks by the Union Minister.—MNA

(Translated by Kyaw Zin Lin)

Press Statement for Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID 2019) From (4-1-2020) to (28-2-2020)

1. COVID-19 outbreak conditions around the world
(World Health Organization statement at 1:30 am, 28-2-2020)
Countries with suspected cases - 47
Confirmed cases - 82294
Total death toll - 2804

2. COVID-19 outbreak conditions in Myanmar
(until 6:15 pm, 28-2-2020)

	Number of patients	Laboratory Test		
		Positive Result	Negative Result	Under test
People under quarantine	43	-	42	1
Reported cases	2	-	2	-
Total	45	-	44	1

3. There are a total of 45 people under suspect and quarantine around Myanmar: 14 from Yangon Region, 12 from Shan State, eight from Mandalay Region and 11 from other Regions and States.

4. The Ministry of Health and Sports is closely monitoring the outbreak of COVID-19, with keeping surveillance at airports, harbours, international gateways the People's Hospitals and private medical facilities.

5. Authorities are speeding up novel coronavirus prevention by having Intensive Care Unit-ICU, Isolation Ward and necessary medical products at People's Hospitals of different States and Regions.

6. Following are medical products donors and organizations to helping for the controlling the COVID-19 disease outbreak.

No	Name of Organization	Personal Protective Equipment	N95 Mask	Sur-gical Mask	Hand Gel	Non-Contact Ther-mometer	Ven-tila-tor	Glove
1	World Health Organization	100	500	-	-	-	-	-
2	Myanmar Red Cross Society	2,000	-	5,000	1,857	-	-	6,000

3	Sea Lion Company	2,000	-	-	-	-	-	-
4	Okka Thiri Company	1,000	-	-	225	-	-	-
5	Zizawa Company	-	-	-	-	45	-	-
6	Gold Lite Co., Ltd	-	2,000	-	-	-	-	-
7	Eclion Global Group and other donors	3,300	-	-	-	-	-	-
8	Family members of Yee Shin Company	-	-	-	-	-	5	-
9	Valves Co.,Ltd	-	-	2,000	-	-	-	-
Total		8,400	2,500	7,000	2,072	45	5	6,000

7. The Ministry of Health and Sports has already disseminated information to public to prevent the COVID-19 with posters, pamphlets, stickers and Vinyl. For further updated information, anyone can browse the official website of the Ministry (www.mohs.gov.mm) and social media pages (<https://www.facebook.com/MinistryOfHealthAndSportsMyanmar>) and (<https://www.facebook.com/MyanmarCDC>).

8. Although there is no laboratory confirmed case of COVID-19 until 25 February, the ministry is conducting round-the-clock surveillance in upward momentum. As the COVID-19 is spreading across the globe, including China, Italy, Iran and Republic of Korea, people are suggested to follow health awareness instructions of the Ministry of Health and Sports on prevention of the disease.

9. Infected person could be likely seen in Myanmar thus people should avoid crowded areas and need to follow up updated health information given by the Ministry of Health and Sports.—MOHS *(Translated by Kyaw Zin Lin)*

Research needed to manage summer water shortage in rural areas

DUE to warmer temperatures in the summer, droughts and depleting water supply will likely become more common in Myanmar. The water crisis in rural areas every summer highlights the need for better urban planning and management.

Last year, the number of villages facing a water shortage rose from the expected number to reach nearly 400 nationwide.

When it comes to curbing water shortage in rural areas, urban planners and engineers need to learn from changing rainfall patterns and take future demand into account to build more resilient infrastructure.

The main reasons why rural residents experience water shortage every year should be considered when making short-term, middle-term, and long-term plans to resolve the issue. To quench the thirst of people in the summer, all hands — from the government, partner organizations, local and foreign donors,

regional authorities, and people — need to be on deck.

Climate change will surely make the problem of water shortage worse. A number of countries are facing a hotter, drier future. It is certain that our people will face similar challenges in the coming summer. Our preparations should be based on better research about water supply technology, depending on its suitability for each area.

Besides, we need to carry out a survey on water supply in rural areas, including current consumption and operation of the water supply

network.

The Rural Area Development Department has adopted a strategy and investment plan and has been implementing it to improve water supply, sanitation, and personal hygiene in rural areas.

The department has built more than 9,570 water supply facilities so far for about 8,064 villages with a population of 5.26 million.

The department plans to build another 1,720 facilities in this fiscal year, which started on 1st October, for nearly 1,700 villages with a total population of 1.3 million.

With better monitoring and evaluation, the water supply system must be expanded nationwide and existing water supply facilities must be maintained to meet the tenets of the Sustainable Development Goals and the Myanmar Sustainable Plan by 2030.

Myanmar has abundant water resources. It accounts for 16 per cent of the total water resources of ten ASEAN nations, and 12 per cent in all of Asia. However, diversity in rainfall, increase in population and population density, rise of industrial and economic zones, and other changes to social systems mean there would be a rapid increase in the demand for water and there will be new challenges in providing adequate water to everyone.

A water crisis is not merely a problem concerning people in rural areas, but may very well affect anyone in their lifetime.

It seems reasonable to encourage all people to get more involved in preventing a crisis through efficient use of water and water facilities.

■ ■ ■

A Joint Statement on Tourism and COVID-19 : UNWTO and WHO Call for Responsibility and Coordination

International cooperation is vital for ensuring the sector can effectively contribute to the containment of COVID-19

AS the current outbreak of the Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) continues to develop, the World Health Organization (WHO) and the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) are committed to working together in guiding the travel and tourism sectors' response to COVID-19.

On 30 January 2020, the Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the outbreak of COVID-19 to be a Public Health Emergency of International Concern and issued a set of Temporary Recommendations. WHO did not recommend any travel or trade restriction based on the current information available. WHO is working closely with global experts, governments and partners to rapidly expand scientific knowledge on this new virus, to track the spread and virulence of the virus, and to provide advice to countries and the global community on measures to protect health and prevent the spread of this outbreak.

Cooperation is key

The tourism sector is fully committed to putting people and their well-being first. International cooperation is vital for ensuring the sector can effectively contribute to the containment of COVID-19. UNWTO and WHO are working in close consultation and with other partners to assist States in ensuring that health measures be implemented in ways that minimize unnecessary interference with international traffic and trade.

Tourism's response needs to be measured and consistent,

proportionate to the public health threat and based on local risk assessment, involving every part of the tourism value chain – public bodies, private companies and tourists, in line with WHO's overall guidance and recommendations.

UNWTO and WHO stand ready to work closely with all those communities and countries affected by the current health emergency, to build for a better and more resilient future. Travel restrictions going beyond these may cause unnecessary interference with international traffic, including negative repercussions on the tourism sector.

LATEST DEVELOPMENTS
Medical science to fight epidemic

Chinese Premier Li Keqiang on Friday called for greater breakthroughs in the development of efficient detection reagents, effective drugs and vaccines to fight the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19).

Li, a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee and head of the leading group of the CPC Central Committee on the novel coronavirus prevention and control, made the remarks during an inspection tour to a national emergency platform for COVID-19 drugs and medical equipment.

Acknowledging China's development in nucleic acid detection reagents and other testing reagents, Li said that the reagents have played a key role in epidemic control, and efforts should be made to develop reagents with

shorter detection time, more accurate results and simpler operation.

Coronavirus arrives in megacity Lagos

Residents of Nigeria's economic hub Lagos scrambled for hygiene products Friday, after the chaotic megacity of 20 million announced the first confirmed case of new coronavirus in sub-Saharan Africa.

Health Minister Osagie Ehanire said in a statement overnight that the infected person was an Italian citizen who flew in from Milan, at the heart of Europe's largest outbreak, earlier this week.

"The patient is clinically stable, with no serious symptoms," Ehanire said, adding that he was being treated at a hospital for infectious diseases in Lagos.

The low number of cases so far across Africa, which has close economic ties with China, the epicentre of the deadly outbreak, has puzzled health specialists.

Prior to the case in Nigeria, there had been just two cases on the continent – in Egypt and Algeria.

British passenger dies

A British man who was on board a coronavirus-stricken cruise ship quarantined near Tokyo has died, Japan's health ministry said Friday.

The unidentified man's death is the latest linked to infections on the Diamond Princess cruise ship, where more than 700 other people tested positive for the illness.

The ministry confirmed the man's nationality and death on Friday without giving further details. He is the first Briton to die from the illness and joins five Japanese nationals who also succumbed to the pathogen.

The death comes as the governor of Japan's rural northern island of Hokkaido urged people to stay at home this weekend in a desperate effort to contain the coronavirus outbreak.

Iran reports 8 new coronavirus deaths

Iran on Friday reported eight new deaths from coronavirus, raising its toll to 34, as the number of infections jumped again in the Islamic republic, one of the worst-hit countries.

Health ministry spokesman



Tourists wear face masks visit Gyeongbokgung palace in Seoul on February 10, 2020. PHOTO : ED JONES/AFP

Kianoush Jahanpour said 143 cases had been detected over the past 24 hours, increasing the total of confirmed infections to 388.

Among the new cases, 64 were in Tehran while the number of provinces hit by the outbreak rose to 24, Jahanpour said.

"We are currently in a phase in which infections are increasing," he said, predicting that the situation "will continue for some days, even weeks".

US health workers exposed to virus

Federal health employees were sent to interact with repatriated Americans quarantined for exposure to the novel coronavirus without wearing protective gear or receiving training, a whistleblower complaint cited by US media said Thursday.

The filing, which was seen by the Washington Post and New York Times, was submitted by a senior official in the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) who said she was improperly re-assigned after raising her concerns and threatened with being fired if she did not comply.

According to the two newspapers, the incidents were in relation to two California air force bases, Travis and March. More than a dozen workers were sent to each site.

Travis Air Force Base is in Solano County, where the first US patient for whom the source of new coronavirus infection could not be immediately identified is from.

Singapore probes local chapter of sect

Singapore's government said Friday it is investigating the local chapter of a South Korean religious sect at the center of a surge of coronavirus cases in South Korea and plans to bar its activities in the city-state.

The Home Affairs Ministry said in a statement on its website that five South Korean nationals and two Singaporeans are assisting in investigations into the local activities of the Shincheonji Church of Jesus.

"(The ministry) believes, based on investigations, that the local SCJ chapter has used similar deceptive recruitment methods," it said, adding that it "intends to take action to proscribe the activities of SCJ in Singapore."

Coronavirus surge continues in S. Korea

South Korea continued to grapple with a surge in coronavirus infections on Friday as it reported 571 new cases, nearly doubling the total to 2,337 in just two days.

Of the new cases, 447 were in

the southeastern city of Daegu, home to a branch of a Christian sect that has become the epicenter of the outbreak in the nation. The surrounding province of North Gyeongsang accounted for 64 new cases.

The death toll from the outbreak stood at 13, unchanged from the previous day.

U.S. county declares public health emergency

Solano County in the U.S. state of California declared a public health emergency on Thursday over the first possible community spread case of COVID-19 in the United States.

"Solano County Public Health officials received confirmation from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) that a Solano County resident has tested positive for Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) and has possibly acquired the disease through community transmission," the county said in a statement.

"The patient had not been exposed to the virus through travel or through any contact with any infected individual and the patient's exposure is unknown at this time," it said.

REFERENCES
AFP; Xinhua; Kyodo;
WHO News Updated

■ ■ ■

Objectives of the 75th anniversary of the Armed Forces Day

- (1) Uphold our three main national causes: Non-disintegration of the Union, non-disintegration of national solidarity, and perpetuation of national sovereignty as a national duty, to serve the country at the risk of our lives
- (2) Participate in the peace-making process with the State Government under the six-point peace policy of the Tatmadaw as part of efforts to gain eternal peace
- (3) Guard peace and stability and protect the interests of the people; build a modern, strong, and capable army
- (4) Safeguard the fine traditions of the Tatmadaw which has been dutiful in discharging State and national political duties



Myanmar Daily Weather Report (Issued at 7:00 pm Friday 28th February, 2020)

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

FORECAST VALID UNTIL NOON OF THE 29th February, 2020: Likelihood of rain or thundershowers will be isolated in Upper Sagaing and Taninthayi Regions, Kachin and (Northern and Eastern) Shan States. Degree of certainty is (60%). Weather will be generally fair in Nay Pyi Taw, Bago, Yangon and Ayeyawady Regions, Rakhine State and partly cloudy in the remaining Regions and States.

STATE OF THE SEA: Sea will be slight to moderate in Myanmar waters. Wave height will be about (4-7) feet off and along Myanmar Coasts.

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Generally fair weather in the whole country.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 29th February, 2020: Generally fair weather.

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 29th February, 2020: Generally fair weather.

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 29th February, 2020: Partly cloudy.

WEATHER OUTLOOK FOR WEEKEND: Weather will be generally fair in Naypyitaw, Yangon Region and partly cloudy in Mandalay Region.

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Due to limitation of space we are only able to publish "Letter to the Editor" that do not exceed 500 words. Should you submit a text longer than 500 words please be aware that your letter will be edited.

Statement of the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission
Statement No. (1 / 2020)

1. The Myanmar National Human Rights Commission (MNHRC) was reconstituted with 11 Commission Members, including the Chairman, under Order No. 3/2020 of the Office of the President, on 14 January 2020.
2. Since then, the MNHRC has commenced its functions in full swing in accordance with the functions and powers conferred on it under the MNHRC Law Law No. (21/2014), by carrying out the activities to promote and protect human rights. These activities include, among others, giving human rights awareness lectures, participating in the Human Rights Awareness Raising Workshops for the officials of forest department held in Hmaw-Bi township, Yangon Region and Patheingyi township, Ayeyawady Region, inspection visits to the Mandalay Central Prison, Meiktila Prison, 5 labour camps under the Prison Department, hospital guard-ward, police detention centres and court lock-ups in Mandalay Region, Pyaw Prison, Paungde Prison, hospital guard-ward, police detention centres and court lock-ups in Bago Region (West), handling a total of (147) complaints and sending the findings on the complaints together with the recommendations to the relevant departments and organizations and sending MNHRC's comments and recommendations on the Protection and Prevention of Violence against Women (POVAW) Bill to the Speaker of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw.
3. The MNHRC had a working meeting with the UNDP led by UN Resident Representative Mr. Gordon Johnson, met with Democracy Reporting International (DRI), engaged with Shwe Min Tha Foundation (Myanmar) and met with the Ambassador of Singapore to Myanmar for further co-operation in the field of human rights.
4. To achieve the objectives of the MNHRC Law and, particularly to improve human rights situation on the ground to the extent possible and practicable, the Commission plans to further expand its usual activities by engaging, coordinating and cooperating with all stakeholders, including civil society organizations and registered non-governmental organizations working in the field of human rights.
5. For these reasons, the MNHRC requests Civil Society Organizations and registered non-governmental organizations working in the field of human rights to provide the following to the MNHRC at 27, Pyaw Road, Hlaing Township, Yangon, dydirectormnhrc@gmail.com, and fax no. 01 654 670:-
 - a. Name and Profile of the organization, including contact information;
 - b. Documents demonstrating that their work programmes are relevant to the activities to promote, protect human rights and fundamental freedoms, and the list of their duties and work programmes;
 - c. Information on the decision-making processes of the organization;
 - d. Copies of the constitution or charter of the organization and registration papers;
 - e. List of members of the organization's governing bodies;
 - f. A paper identifying areas in which the organization proposes to cooperate with the MNHRC;
 - g. Information, if any, on the organization's specific expertise or proven experience and capacity in the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms.
6. With the above information provided, the MNHRC will be able to consult the most relevant organizations whenever it plans to initiate an activity to promote, protect human rights and fundamental freedoms. This will provide an opportunity, if necessary, to consider their full participation in the said activity.
7. Through this approach, the MNHRC believes that the pluralist representation of the social forces will be ensured in the activities of the MNHRC to some extent and an enabling environment will be created in which all relevant stakeholders have an important role to play in promoting and protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms in the country.

Myanmar National Human Rights
Commission
Date: 28 February 2020

Local, foreign media gather news in Buthidaung

JOURNALISTS from local and foreign media groups gathered news at Internally Displaced Person (IDP) camps in Buthidaung Township, Maungtaw District, Rakhine State yesterday morning.

First, they visited IDP camp at Thiri Mingalar Ywama Monastery in Buthidaung and gathered information on camping of school children and how they reach to the IDP camp.

Next, the media group visited Post Primary School of Ywama Village and gathered news on school children sitting for their examinations.

Afterwards, the journalists met with family members at IDP camp of Lanma Monastery in Buthidaung Township.

In the afternoon, the media person interviewed with family members at IDP camp of Yan Aung Myay Monastery



Journalists gathering news on children's examination at Thiri Mingalar Ywama Monastery at the IDP camp in Buthidaung Township, Rakhine State yesterday. **PHOTO: THET LWIN SOE (IPRD)**

in Buthidaung Township and got news on youths from Buthidaung Township who offered entertainment for the people at the IDP camp with the aim of encouraging them.

The media group includes journalists from Myanmar Now, Eleven Media Group, VOA, CNA, European Pressphoto Agency, BBC Media Action and Aljazeera and this is the 36th

times of media personnel visiting Maungtaw since December 2016.—Myint Maung, & JT

(Translated by Kyaw Zin Lin)

Need to raise iron, steel production for lowering imports from China: MSA

By Nyein Nyein

MYANMAR currently imports steel mostly from China to fulfill domestic demand, according to the Myanmar Steel Association (MSA). Therefore, members of the MSA are exploring setting up an iron and steel industrial zone to boost production to help achieve self-sufficiency in steel.

Although Myanmar imports steel from China, Viet Nam, Japan, India and the Republic of Korea, China is the main supplier of steel to Myanmar, with a market share of over 50 per cent.

“At present, Myanmar’s steel demand is estimated to be about 2.5 million tons, 92 per cent of which is imported. Therefore, studies for implementation of iron and steel industrial zone projects are under way in Ayeyawady and Taninthayi regions and Rakhine and Mon states,” said U Sit Taing Aung, chairman of

the MSA.

If Myanmar can produce enough steel to meet local consumption and focus on import substitution, the steel industry will strategically contribute to our national interest, he added.

“Therefore, 11 executive members of the MSA have established the MSA Public Company Limited, and they are making efforts to set up an iron and steel industrial zone with a view to reducing the outflow of US dollars, bringing about the development of the steel industry, and assisting in the country’s infrastructure building effort,” U Sit Taing Aung said.

“Moreover, the MSA also formed an advisory board comprising five experts in the 2018-2019 fiscal year. The advisory board helped formulate steel standards, one of the most important processes in the sector, in cooperation with the National Standardization Commit-

tee. The committee completed the draft standards for iron and steel in January this year and they will be approved soon,” he said.

Once the standards for iron and steel are set, the next priority would be building a testing laboratory, he added.

The advisory board submitted a total of 16 papers, including an academic paper on the steel sector and standardization and laboratory documentation, to the related ministries and government organizations in the 2018-2019FY.

As the steel sector will involve large investments in the long term, the government needs to lend support in terms of providing tax relief, land, controlling illegal imports, implementing the anti-dumping law, and formulating iron and steel policies, according to the MSA.

(Translated by Hay Mar)

Banana growers reap profit amid strong demand



Banana plantation in Pwintbyu Township, Magway Region. PHOTO: YE WIN NAING

BANANA growers from Nyaung Pin Sauk Village in Pwintbyu Township of Magway region said they are pleased with the profits they have made this year as a result of strong demand in the local market.

Local farmers from Pwintbyu Township have been cultivating bananas (Pheegyan) on a commercial scale to earn an extra income. They have been cultivating not just

Pheegyan bananas, but also other varieties of bananas. But, this year, only Pheegyan bananas are in high demand in the local market, and growers in the village said they are, therefore, cultivating only marketable varieties of Pheegyan bananas on a commercial scale.

Some farmers are growing one or two banana plants per hole, while some are growing four plants per hole.

“This year, Pheegyan bananas are helping farmers earn a high profit. Last year, we priced one bunch of Pheegyan bananas between K500 and K600. But, this year, we are making between K1,000 and K1,200 per bunch said U Myo Win Tun, a local Pheegyan banana grower from Nyaung Pin Sauk village in Pwintbyu Township.—Ye Win Naing (Nyaung U)
(Translated by Hay Mar)

Arrival Data for Foreign Visitors Entering Myanmar

Sr	Subject	January 2019	January 2020	Increase	Percentage
1	Arrival by air	150229	183416	33187	+ 22
2	Arrival by cruise ship	633	671	38	+ 6
3	Arrival at border gates and getting into the country	11750	19958	8208	+ 70
	Visitors with visa	162612	204045	41433	+ 25
4	Visitors entering to the border area	217560	204137	-13423	- 6
	Total	380172	408182	28010	+ 7

Visitor arrivals by nationality(Compare)

No.	Nationality	2019(January)	2020(January)	Difference	p e r - centage
	<u>North America</u>	<u>8757</u>	<u>9492</u>	<u>735</u>	<u>8%</u>
1	USA	7375	8000	625	8%
2	Canada	1382	1492	110	8%
	<u>Other Americas</u>	<u>1392</u>	<u>1478</u>	<u>87</u>	<u>6%</u>
	<u>West Europe</u>	<u>23522</u>	<u>26305</u>	<u>2783</u>	<u>12%</u>
1	France	6477	7461	984	15%
2	U.K.	3942	4787	845	21%
3	Germany	4084	3917	-167	-4%
4	Italy	2296	2884	588	26%
5	Switzerland	1254	1337	83	7%
6	Netherlands	1115	1248	133	12%
7	Belgium	766	821	55	7%
8	Austria	648	616	-32	-5%
9	Spain	829	1054	225	27%
10	Others	2111	2180	69	3%
	<u>East Europe</u>	<u>2673</u>	<u>3178</u>	<u>505</u>	<u>19%</u>
1	Russia	816	921	105	13%
2	Others	1857	2257	400	22%
	<u>Africa</u>	<u>456</u>	<u>522</u>	<u>66</u>	<u>14%</u>
	<u>Middle East</u>	<u>910</u>	<u>1060</u>	<u>150</u>	<u>16%</u>
	<u>Asia</u>	<u>121439</u>	<u>158372</u>	<u>36933</u>	<u>30%</u>
1	Thailand	25325	28630	3305	13%
2	China	41860	73121	31261	75%
3	Hong Kong	2634	2932	298	11%
4	Japan	11468	11644	176	2%
5	Korea	14435	13062	-1373	-10%
6	Macau	196	302	106	54%
7	Singapore	4739	4611	-128	-3%
8	Viet Nam	2857	4413	1556	54%
9	Taiwan	4008	4295	287	7%
10	India	4594	5391	797	17%
11	Malaysia	3719	3978	259	7%
12	Philippine	1727	1683	-44	-3%
13	Others	3877	4310	433	11%
	<u>Oceania</u>	<u>3464</u>	<u>3638</u>	<u>174</u>	<u>5%</u>
1	Australia	3001	3187	186	6%
2	New Zealand	445	430	-15	-3%
3	Others	18	21	3	17%
	Total	162612	204045	41433	25%

VW strikes ‘dieselgate’ compensation deal with German consumers

BERLIN — German giant Volkswagen has struck a compensation deal with domestic consumer groups representing owners of cars caught up in its “dieselgate” emissions cheating scandal, a court said Friday.

“The consumer federation and Volkswagen have come to a comprehensive agreement,” in a first-of-its-kind collective lawsuit brought by around 400,000 diesel car drivers, the

Brunswick higher state court said, just weeks after talks between the two sides broke down in acrimony.

Consumer federation VZBV said it would reveal details of the agreement at a 1:00 pm (1200 GMT) press conference. The two sides earlier this month fell out in public after agreeing in principle on 830 million euros (\$916.3 million) in payouts for German diesel car drivers. VW

said at the time the talks failed because of “disproportionate” fee demands from VZBV’s lawyers.

But the consumer group said the money was needed to set up “a transparent, trustworthy and secure system” to actually pay out the cash.

The mass lawsuit is one of the biggest legal hangovers from VW’s 2015 admission to fitting 11 million vehicles worldwide with software to make the engines appear less polluting in regulatory tests than in real driving conditions.

While American diesel buyers have enjoyed generous buy-back and compensation schemes, German drivers have so far gone uncompensated for the impact of the scandal, which has since spread to other carmakers. On top of the 400,000 diesel owners in the VZBV’s grouped proceeding, around 70,000 individuals have open claims against VW. — AFP ■



German giant Volkswagen has struck a compensation deal with domestic consumer groups representing owners of cars caught up in its “dieselgate” emissions cheating scandal. In a photo taken on 25 September, 2015, an activist protests in front of Volkswagen’s headquarters in Wolfsburg, Germany. **PHOTO: AFP**

Sales of Kumamon mascot goods hit record 158 billion yen in 2019

KUMAMOTO — Products bearing the image of “Kumamon,” the black bear mascot of Kumamoto Prefecture, racked up sales of at least 157.9 billion yen (\$1.4 billion) in 2019, the local government said Friday.

Sales have hit fresh record highs every year since 2011 when the prefectural government began conducting the survey. Total sales since that time are upwards of 810 billion yen. “Products supporting Kumamoto earthquake re-

construction efforts, and those using illustrations (of Kumamon) overseas have grown steadily. I hope people will continue to support the mascot,” Kumamoto Gov. Ikuo Kabashima told a press conference.—Kyodo News ■

96 per cent of large-scale industrial enterprises in Yangtze River Delta demonstration zone resume operation

SHANGHAI — Over 3,000 enterprises above designated size in the Yangtze River Delta integration demonstration zone have resumed operation, local authorities said Thursday.

Zhang Zhongwei, vice chairman of the executive committee of the demonstration zone, said at a press conference that 3,099 enterprises above designated size in the dynamic demonstration zone had resumed operation by 26 February, accounting for 96.1 per cent of large-scale industrial enterprises in the region.

The demonstration zone, located at the junction between Shanghai and the eastern provinces of Zhejiang and Jiangsu, is a new pilot area of China to strengthen its reform and opening-up. Zhang said enterprises in the Yangtze River Delta region often span the upstream and downstream complex industrial chains and cross industries and borders. A joint prevention and control mechanism has been established in the demonstration zone since the outbreak of COVID-19, to exchange information, manage transportation, social security and deal with other issues to support the battle against the epidemic.—Xinhua ■

Vacancy Announcement

The National Reconciliation and Peace Centre in Nay Pyi Taw announces the vacancy for the following post for The Peace Support Secretariat:

Executive Director

Skills and Experience:

- Experienced professional background with proven track record
- Knowledge of the Myanmar Peace Process
- At least 15 years of experience in a higher management role
- Excellent organizational, diplomatic and interpersonal skills
- Proven experience in leadership positions
- Strong analytical and reporting skills
- Advance degree required
- Fluency in English language, both written and spoken

Duration of Work:

- One Year, with a possibility of extension thereafter (full-time)

Place of Work:

- Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar

Salary:

- Expected Salary

Other Requirements:

- Only citizens of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar
- May be required to travel at short notice

Application Process:

- An application, comprising a CV/resume and a covering letter outlining relevant experience and qualifications must be submitted to **Email: nrpcnpt1@gmail.com** with the position title. Application much includes a minimum of three referees and their contact details. (Download the application form: <http://www.nrpc.gov.mm>)

For details of the Terms of Reference and Job Descriptions, Skills and Experience and Other necessary documents, please visit our website: <http://www.nrpc.gov.mm>. Application should be received no later than 28th March, 2020.

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V SENTOSA

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V SENTOSA VOY. NO. (20.2020) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 2-3-2020 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of SPW-1 where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

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Industrial robots move production material in a factory of Wenzhou Ruiming Industrial Co Ltd. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

Virus slows China’s major projects in Asia

BEIJING — From an artificial island in Sri Lanka to a bridge in Bangladesh and hydropower projects in Nepal and Indonesia, China’s trillion-dollar Belt and Road plan is stuttering under the effects of the deadly coronavirus.

The outbreak that emerged in China in late December and spread to dozens of countries has cut off the Chinese labour supplies and equipment imports needed to keep major infrastructure projects running.

More than 133 countries have imposed entry restrictions on Chinese citizens or people who have visited China to prevent the spread of the disease, data from China’s National Immigration Agency showed.

China itself has imposed quarantines and travel curbs across the country to contain an epidemic that has killed more than 2,700 and infected around 79,000.

Sri Lanka requires 14-day quarantine for people



Sri Lanka requires 14-day quarantine for people arriving from China, and insists projects ensure Chinese staff are restricted to construction sites and their dorms. **PHOTO: AFP**

arriving from China, and insists projects ensure Chinese staff are restricted to construction sites and their dorms.

At Colombo’s Port City — an artificial island the size of central London that is to house one of South Asia’s biggest financial centres — work was progressing at a snail’s pace as nearly a third of the Chinese workers who left for the Lunar New Year holidays have not returned.

The March opening of South Asia’s tallest free-standing communi-

cations tower — built with Chinese state funding in the heart of Colombo — has also been delayed by two months. “Major construction projects in Sri Lanka that are funded by China mostly employ Chinese construction workers and they have hit a snag,” Nissanka Wijeratne, secretary of the Sri Lanka Chamber of Construction Industries, told AFP.

At the Port City project along Colombo’s main seaboard, the cafeteria for Chinese workers was half empty recently.—AFP ■

India’s improved ranking in ease of doing business has not aided in real terms: former official

MUMBAI — India’s elevation in ease of doing business as ranked by the World Bank may not have necessarily helped improved the actual ease of doing business in real terms, said a former top official of the country’s

capital market regulatory agency on late Thursday.

Raising doubt if the progress in ranking has made it easy for Indian business to operate, former Chairman at Securities and Exchange Board

of India M. Damodaran said “We have improved on rankings, has ease of doing business improved I’m not so sure.”

Speaking at a conference organized by industry body the Confederation of Indian Industry, Damodaran said there were 10 parameters evaluated by the World Bank that has improved the ranking, but India still shares the space with sub-Saharan countries in contract enforcement, as per one of the factors evaluated.

Substantiating his argument, he questioned why investments were shy of coming to India if the ranking had indeed moved up.— Xinhua ■



The Bombay Stock Exchange building in Mumbai. **PHOTO: AFP**

Bidding announcement (Second Round)

The Project for Establishment of the Agricultural Marketing Center in Myanmar is a project for strengthening agricultural marketing system in Myanmar by establishing a master plan, agricultural marketing facilities, and providing capacity building programs. The objectives of the project include 1) increasing farmers’ income, 2) increasing access to agricultural products, 3) reducing post-harvest losses. The project is supported by the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) and the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, and Irrigation (MOALI) of Myanmar Government. The PM team of the project is calling for proposals for conducting a Baseline Survey (Impact Evaluation). The tasks of the evaluation are as follows:

1. The Project Name: Conducting Baseline Survey for the Project for Establishment of the Agricultural Marketing Center in Myanmar
2. Scope of the Baseline Survey
 - Target area: Nay Pyi Taw and Kalaw Township, Shan State (mainly Heho and Aungban)
 - Target group: Around 1,700 people (800 producers in Kalaw Township and Nay Pyi Taw, 800 consumers in Nay Pyi Taw, and approximately 100 stakeholders in the agricultural value chain (collectors/brokers in the production area, wholesalers/retailers in the consumption area, and managers of the modernized market)
 - The consultant will be responsible for 1) making survey questionnaire in collaboration with KOICA expert team, 2) all the data collection activities, 3) data entry and management, 4) Submitting data and report
3. Total Baseline Survey Cost: Approximately 60,000 USD
4. Source of Funding: Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA)
5. Bidder requirements: the procurement is open to agencies, institutes, and companies experienced in conducting national level or regional level survey on the agricultural sector in Myanmar.

The expected proposal submission date shall be by 24:00 March 9, 2020 (Korean time).

*Request for Proposal will be provided upon request by email.

Contact person: Project Action Officer: Mr. Jinwoo Kim (+82-2-2077-2576, jwckim@newma.re.kr)



Ministry of Planning, Finance and Industry
Internal Revenue Department

Announcement on introduction of Self-Assessment System in Medium Taxpayers’ Office (2)

1. Internal Revenue Department, with a vision to become a modern organization that acts with integrity and is internationally recognized as a highly effective tax administration, has been implementing its tax reforms that are strategically in line with Myanmar Sustainable Development Plan (MSDP). As part of our tax reform program, transforming to Self Assessment System (SAS) from Official Assessment System (OAS) is regarded as one of the most important reform projects.
2. As the first phase, Large Taxpayers’ Office was established in 2014-2015 fiscal year and transformed to SAS system with around 500 taxpayers as a pilot project. Building on the achievements of LTO pilot project, SAS system was then extended to Medium Taxpayers’ Office -1 (MTO-1) in 2017-2018 fiscal year while managing over 700 taxpayers. As of January 31, 2020, LTO and MTO-1 offices extend their SAS taxpayers to 946 and 1847 respectively. As the third phase comes, Internal Revenue Department would like to announce that the taxpayers currently managed by Medium Taxpayers’ Office – 2 (MTO-2) will be introduced and switched to Self Assessment System from Official Assessment System starting from October 1, 2020.
3. Internal Revenue Department will duly communicate with the taxpayers to make sure that information on the benefits, obligations and requirements of Self Assessment System are delivered to the taxpayers in a timely manner.
4. If you have any question relating to SAS expansion reform project, please feel free to contact Director, Tax Reform Directorate, Internal Revenue Department, Office No. (46), Nay Pyi Taw through the phone number 067 3430533.

(Min Htut)
Director General
Internal Revenue Department

Maha Muni Buddha Image in the history

By Maung Tha (Archaeology)

MAHA Muni Buddha Image crowded with pilgrims from the morning to the evening on a daily basis is located in Kyunlon Okshaung Ward of Chanmyathazi Township in Mandalay. Its real title is Maha Muni.

Background history of Maha Muni

King Candasuriya of Rakhine ordered to cast a seven elbows, two mikes and two fingers (which are Myanmar measurement units) high bronze Buddha image. Kings of Danyawady in successive eras had paid homage to the Buddha image under the title of Maha Muni.

The Myanmar Encyclopaedia stated that King Anawrahta and King Alaungsithu tried to convey the Maha Muni Buddha

image to Bagan but missions failed.

On 16 October 1784 mentioned in the Konbaung Dynasty Myanmar Dated History, 33 troops led by Maha Uparaja, son of King Bodawphaya, marched to Rakhine and occupied Danyawady on 2 January 1785. Maha Uparaja conveyed the image on 4 January 1785 after paying homage. The image arrived at Taungup jetty on 31 January 1785. Maha Uparaja ordered Secretary Naymyo Zeyathu to supervise conveyance of the image.

The Myanmar Encyclopaedia recorded that the image was conveyed from Myohaung to Taungup by raft and then continued conveyance of the image to Padaung along the jungle route by difficultly passing the mountain ranges. Afterwards,



Maha Muni Buddha Image. PHOTOS : MAUNG THA (ARCHAEOLOGY)

the image was conveyed abroad two rafts from Padaung jetty along Ayeyawady River. On 4 May 1785, the image arrived at Sagaing.

The Myanmar Encyclopaedia stated the original place of the image was five miles from opposite site of Kyauktaw in Rakhine State. A wealthy person U Ye Kyaw Thu built a Buddha image on the place.

Residence of Maha Muni

King Bodawphaya built a nine-tier building on the place, 1,000 tar north of the royal palace in Amarapura. The king, the first queen, ministers, court of counsellors and secretaries

ways and public rest-houses respectively. Unfortunately, a fire which started outbreak in Yadana Bommi Ward on 7 April 1884 burnt the prayer hall and tier-roofed buildings down.

Despite destroying crested headdress, earplugs and sashes made of gold and gold foils, the outbreak of fire could not torch the image. In the incident, a record mentioned that melted gold in the fire weighing 5,450 could be collected but weighing unit was not mentioned.

A new crested headdress was decorated at Maha Muni Buddha Image on 23 June 1884. King Thibaw ordered to offer 60-viss gold plates made of melted gold in the fire to the image on 16 January 1885. Since then,

the image is 12 feet and seven inches high and its throne, seven feet high.

Maha Muni Image at present

The existing tier-roofed building was built of bricks and concrete in 1260 Myanmar era. The umbrella hoisted atop the tier-roof of the building fell on the ground in strong winds in 1278 ME. So, Yaksawk Chieftain hoisted a new umbrella atop the building. Members of the Sudhamma Sangha led by Taungtaw Sangharaja took responsibilities for management of the image while laypersons led by Kinwun Minister served for all management functions. Shweyay Hall Abbot U Nanda



The elephant with three heads.



the new one in 1896. The outer brick monastery named Suvana Maha Pasada which was completed construction on 18 January 1898 was hoisted an umbrella.

U Pe repaired the throne and backdrop of the image on 12 February 1900. He repaired the crested headdress donated by King Thibaw and offered a new one shaped with 940 pieces of jewellery to the image on 20 February 1902. The image was decorated with a gold sash made of nine great gems weighing 13.6 viss on 12 July 1908. Nyaungshwe Chieftain Sir Maung Tay donated a 19-tical diamond orb and the pennant-shaped vane atop the image in 1918.

As to increasing number of pilgrims to the image, hermit U Khanti built a brick stairway between the image and Ananda Ordination Hall on 29 January 1931. In commemoration of the 2,500th anniversary of the Theravada Buddhism, venerable abbots of Sankin, Nyaungyan, Khemathiwun and Hanthawady laid cornerstones for construction of Yadana Beikman building in 1956 and commissioned it into service on 14 April 1957. The wooden backdrop of the image was repaired in 1932-33.

More than 30 members of the Sangha led by U Jotika safeguarded objects of the image at the prayer building from 1942 to 1948. The bronze statue of Maha Uparaja who conveyed the image from Rakhine was cast in 1948 in order to display it in the precinct of the image. A central tower to mark the centennial anniversary of founding Yadanabon

Royal Palace in Mandalay was built at the northeast corner of the platform of the image on 28 May 1959. A large bronze drum named Nyein-chan-tha-ya weighing 3,264 viss was cast on 31 December 1965. Moreover, a bronze gong named Chan-ayeyi-thar weighing 2,156 viss was cast in 1972.

Two human statues, three lion statues and Eyawun elephant statue with three heads made of bronze can be seen in

the precinct of the image. These statues were brought along with the image from Rakhine.

These bronze statues were taken by King Bayintnaung from Yodaya. After that, King Nanda, son of King Bayintnaung clashed with governor of Toungoo but the latter conquered King Nanda in the war. Governor of Toungoo gave these bronze statues as gifts to the king of Rakhine who helped Toungoo governor in the war,



Maha Uparaja who conveyed Maha Muni Buddha Image.



Bronze statues.



Myanmar triangular brass gong.

was assigned with entrusting a key for the Gandakuti chamber to serve duty of cleansing the face of the image as of 1248 ME. Starting from 1st waxing of Tabaung 1349 ME, Abbot Bhaddanta Pannavamsa from Pitakat building of Taunghtilin Monastery served duty of cleansing the face of the image every morning.

The first financial supervisory committee for the image was formed in 1891. The Engineering Commissioner, the Assistant Engineer and Clerk laid cornerstones for the Gandakuti Chamber for the image on 27 June 1894. Under the supervision of Kinwun Minister, European architects enveloped the old Gandakuti Chamber by

according to the Myanmar Encyclopaedia.

After conquering Yodaya, King of Hanthawady Bayintnaung Kyawhtin Nawrahta arrived back in Bago on 18 May 1564, according to the second volume of New Thwinthin History. These statues brought by King Bayintnaung were in Rakhine when Hanthawady Royal Palace ruined and returned to Amarapura Royal Palace in Konbaung era.

A total of 30 bronze statues brought along with Maha Muni image were kept in the ordination hall donated by Siri Sucanda Devi, wife of Yintaung city governor, at southeast of the precinct of the image. It was reported that some statues were damaged in collapse of at the red ordination hall called the tier-roofed building of Ananda Pagoda while these statues were kept in the yard of the hall.

Some said these statues were from Angkor City of Cambodia, two human statues of which were portrayed for Yodaya King Pyathadipati and his queen. But some said these statues were portrayed for gods of Yodaya. These statues are of male. Some pilgrims assume that if those who touch and massage these statues, they will be healthy.

Maha Muni Buddha image was built in cross-legged sitting posture with Bhumihasa Mudra. The bronze image weighs 6.5 tons with 12 feet and seven inches in height, six feet in width between the two shoulders and 9.5 feet in width at the waist. It was reported that gold foils donated by Buddhists to the image reaches about six inches in thickness.

Homage and offering of Buddhist people helps ensure magnificent existence of Maha Muni Buddha Image throughout its history till today. Maha Muni in Pali language means a great noblest Lord Buddha in English. Being a religious, ancient image, Maha Muni Buddha Image is sure to be existence for many years thanks to preservation and renovation of Myanmar people in successive eras.

(Translated by Than Tun Aung)
Reference:
Myanmar Encyclopaedia, Volume VIII
Chronicle of Mandalay's Maha Muni Buddha Image (U Maung Maung Tin)
Konbaung Dynasty Myanmar Dated History (U Tikkhadhamalankara, Dr Than Tun)

World Lethwei Championship: Khmer Kingdom contest to be postponed

A Myanmar traditional lethwei championship entitled 'WLC: Khmer Kingdom', scheduled to be held on 3 April in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, may be postponed on account of the coronavirus outbreak (COVID-19), according to a statement issued by the World Lethwei Championship, the world's biggest bare-knuckle fighting organization.

"We are thinking about postponing the lethwei championship to be held in Cambodia. We don't want to endanger public health by holding such international tourneys," said

U ZayThiha, founder and chairman of World Lethwei Championship.

"And we don't want the very first lethwei event in Cambodia to be unsuccessful due to viral infection," U ZayThiha added.

The date and fixtures for 'WLC: Khmer Kingdom' will be announced soon in an official statement from the WLC, he said. The main fight in the contest will feature Antonio Fariavs Meun Mekhea, and the Kun Khmer Super Fight will pit Roeung Sophorn against Umar Semata, according to the WLC. —Lynn Thit (Tgi) ■



World Lethwei Championship matches are important cultural exports for Myanmar. **PHOTO: WLC**

Man Utd to play Austria's LASK in Europa League last 16

NYON, Switzerland: Manchester United will meet Austrian club LASK in the last 16 of the Europa League, while Wolves were pitted against Olympiakos in Friday's (Feb 28) draw in Nyon. United, who lifted the trophy in 2017, are one of six former champions left in the competition. The first leg will be played in Linz on March 12 with the return a week later at Old Trafford.

Austrian league leaders LASK made their group stage debut this season and secured a 3-1 aggregate win over Dutch outfit AZ Alkmaar in the last 32.

Wolves progressed to the last 16 of a major European competition for the first time since finishing runners-up in

the UEFA Cup in 1971-72, after overcoming Spanish strugglers Espanyol.

Nuno Espirito Santo's side will take on an Olympiakos team that shocked Arsenal in the last round, the Greeks advancing on away goals Thursday following a 2-1 extra-time victory in London.

Steven Gerrard's Rangers, the 2008 finalists, face Bayer Leverkusen who dumped out Porto in a clash of two former winners of the competition.

Inter Milan, winners of the tournament in 1991, 1994 and 1998, were drawn against La Liga surprise package Getafe, conquerors of last year's Champions League semi-finalists, Dutch giants Ajax. —AFP ■



Myanmar Football Federation president U Zaw Zaw (centre) speaking at the MFF executive committee meeting yesterday in Yangon. **PHOTO: MFF**

MFF to conduct School Football Program across Myanmar in 2021

OFFICIALS from the Myanmar Football Federation discussed implementing a School Football Program across Myanmar in 2021 at an executive committee meeting of the MFF (1/2020), held yesterday at the Novotel Yangon Max Hotel in Yangon.

The MFF has set up 12 standing committees and they are working together to improve Myanmar football standards and introduce the School Football Program, according to the MFF meeting.

The committees include Finance Committee, Audit and Compliance Committee, Legal Committee, Youth Competitions Committee, Women Football Committee, Referees Committee, Technical Committee, Players' Status Committee, Futsal and Beach Soccer Committee, Infrastructure Committee, and Media and Communications Committee.

President of the Myanmar Football Federation, U Zaw Zaw, vice president of the federation, Sai Sam Htun, and officials and

owners of Myanmar National League football clubs attended yesterday's meeting.

The officials focused on implementing the School Football Program in 2021 in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Health and Sports, using systematic budget system for work processes, and holding basic football courses for children in the summer across Myanmar with the help of township football associations. —Lynn Thit (Tgi) ■

Kane could return for Spurs ahead of schedule, says Mourinho

LONDON: Tottenham manager Jose Mourinho is hopeful that striker Harry Kane will return for the "last few games of the season" to help their push for a Champions League place.

The England captain underwent surgery on a hamstring injury in January after suffering a ruptured tendon at Southampton on New Year's Day and Spurs expected him to be back in training

at some stage in April.

But he appears to be making a quicker-than-expected recovery and Mourinho said: "I would say he is a little bit ahead. It gives me a hope that instead of (being fit for) one or two matches, three, four, five.

"Just speculating a bit, the feelings are good. He is doing what he can do at this stage but always with a good feeling.

Everything is going well.

"When he was injured I said 'forget him', then I said 'one or two games'. At this moment I have better hopes than that, hopefully that feeling is right and he can help us in the last few games of the season."

In another boost for the north London side, Mourinho admitted that he also hoped Son Heung-min would be back ahead of schedule.

The South Korea international underwent surgery on a broken arm suffered in a 3-2 win against Aston Villa earlier this month, with the club saying at the time he would be out for a "number of weeks".

On Friday (Feb 28), the Spurs boss said: "I cannot imagine when, but there is a good possibility before the end of the season we have Sonny and Harry playing together."

Spurs are sixth in the Premier League table, four points behind fourth-placed Chelsea. —AFP ■



Harry Kane could return for Tottenham for the "last few games of the season", according to manager Jose Mourinho. **(PHOTO: AFP/ADRIAN DENNIS)**