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State Counsellor receives delegation from IUCN Regional Hub for Asia-Oceania



State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi poses for a documentary photo with the delegation led by Ms Aban Marker Kabraji, Regional Director of Asia and Director of IUCN Regional Hub for Asia- Oceania, Union Minister U Ohn Win and official from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO:MNA**

DAW Aung San Suu Kyi, State Counsellor of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, received the delegation led by Ms Aban Marker Kabraji, Regional Director of Asia and Director of IUCN Regional Hub for Asia- Oceania at 10 am on 4 March 2020 at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Nay Pyi Taw.

During the meeting, they exchanged views on the cooperation in the area of ecosystem sustainability, and environmental and biodiversity conservation between Myanmar and IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature).

The meeting was also attended by U Ohn Win, Union Minister for Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation and senior officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.—MNA

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Pyidaungsu Hluttaw

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw sets date to decide on Constitutional amendment proposals



MP U Zaw Hein.
PHOTO: SOE WIN TUN



MP Brig-Gen Ye Naing Myo.
PHOTO: SOE WIN TUN



MP U Myint Naing.
PHOTO: SOE WIN TUN



MP U Zaw Min Latt.
PHOTO: SOE WIN TUN



MP Dr Khun Win Thaung.
PHOTO: SOE WIN TUN

THE Pyidaungsu Hluttaw is scheduled to decide whether to accept proposed changes to the Constitution or not on 10 March, according to Speaker U T Khun Myat at yesterday's assembly.

Hluttaw representatives also debated proposed amendments to the 2008 Constitution during the 17th-day meeting of the Second Pyidaungsu Hluttaw's 15th regular session yesterday.

Debating constitutional changes

First, U Zaw Hein of Taninthayi Region constituency 7 supported amendments to Article 109-(b) and Section 141-(b), which reserves 25 per cent of parliamentary seats in the Amyotha and Pyithu Hluttaws for Defence Services personnel

nominated by the Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services.

The amendments seek to gradually reduce the number of Tatmadaw Hluttaw representatives across the Hluttaw period, and U Zaw Hein said he welcomes the change as currently only 75 per cent of MPs are elected by their constituents.

Next, Tatmadaw Pyithu Hluttaw representative Brig-Gen Ye Naing Myo said Article 436-(a) should not be amended as it requires more time to consider the consequences of implementing changes to it. He said there is no flawless constitution anywhere in the world but amendments should only be made at the right time if necessary.

U Myint Naing of Rakhine State constituency 5 then said

he supports the amendment to Article 8, which seeks to add 'democratic federal' in front of 'Union system', saying it is the term also agreed upon at the Union Peace Conference. He said he believes a genuine democratic federal Union system will resolve some of the ethnic-related issues of the nation.

Next, U Zaw Min Latt of Shan State constituency 1 said he agrees with amending Article 6-(f) which enables the Defence Services to participate in the national political leadership role of the State in line with public support. He said only when it is amended will it be consistent with Article 4, which states the sovereign power of the Union is derived from the citizens.

Dr Khun Win Thaung of Kachin State constituency 11

was next to take the floor. He said the proposal made by U Tun Aung (a) U Tun Tun Hein and 351 Hluttaw representatives to amend Article 437-(a), which concerns the State Flag.

He said the proposed design, a red flag with a blue square in which a single white star is surrounded by 14 smaller ones, would correspond with the current path the nation is taking towards genuine democracy while still symbolizing the efforts of the national leaders in the successful struggle for independence.

Eighteen MPs continued the debate on constitutional amendment.

Date set for deciding on amendments
Following this, Pyidaungsu

Hluttaw Speaker U T Khun Myat announced that the Hluttaw will begin making decisions on the proposed amendments to the Constitution on 10 March. He then explained the balloting process concerning the amendments, which will be carried out with a secret voting system.

The Speaker then said Hluttaw representatives are each given equal rights under the law and reminded them that the results should be accepted with understanding, as it is conducted within the boundaries of the law.

The 18th-day meeting of the Second Pyidaungsu Hluttaw's 15th regular session will convene today.—Aung Ye Twin, Aye Aye Thant

(Translated by
Zaw Htet Oo)

Myanmar, Czech hold 2nd foreign office consultations in Prague



The 2nd Myanmar-Czech Foreign Office Consultations being held at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic in Prague on 3 March. PHOTO: MNA

THE 2nd Myanmar-Czech Foreign Office Consultations was held on 3 March 2020, at the

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic in Prague. The meeting was co-chaired

by U Soe Han, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Mr. Martin Tlapa,

Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs for Non-European Countries, Economic and Development Cooperation of the Czech Republic.

The meeting was attended by Daw Kay Thi Soe, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar to the Czech Republic.

During the meeting, the two sides cordially exchanged views on promotion of bilateral relations and to expand cooperation in various sectors including exchange of visits between the two countries, education, health, economy, trade and investment, culture and tourism. The meeting also discussed holding the 3rd meeting of the Joint Commission of the Economic Cooperation between the two countries in Nay Pyi Taw in May this year.

The Permanent Secretary also appraised on the Myanmar Government's priorities and ongoing efforts for economic reforms, peace and national reconciliation and recent developments in Rakhine State. They also exchanged views on regional and international issues of mutual interest.

Following the meeting, the Myanmar delegation led by Permanent Secretary attended a working lunch hosted by Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic.

While in Prague, Permanent Secretary U Soe Han paid a courtesy call on Mr. Thomáš Petricek, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic and discussed on promotion of bilateral relations and cooperation between Myanmar and the Czech Republic.—MNA

State Central Working Committee of Sangha holds second-day meeting

THE 8th State Central Working Committee of Sangha continued its meeting on the second day at Maha Pasana Cave in the precinct of Kaba Aye Pagoda in Yangon yesterday.

Along with the senior Buddhist monks, Union Minister for Religious Affairs and Culture Thura U Aung Ko and officials attended the meeting.

Senior monks of the committee provided consultations on religious affairs and the members of committee discussed them.

In the afternoon session, the meeting focused on organizing coordination meetings, election process of Sangha committees at various levels and annual report of State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee on disciplinary rules, religious affairs and education sector.—MNA

(Translated by Aung Khin)



The second day meeting of the second regular meeting of the 8th State Central Working Committee of Sangha is in progress at the Maha Pasana Cave in the precinct of Kaba Aye Pagoda in Yangon yesterday. **PHOTO:MNA**

Union Supreme Court will extend mediation pilot programme: Chief Justice

THE Supreme Court of the Union will extend its test on new dispute settlement system in the six townships of Nay Pyi Taw Council area.

Chief Justice of the Union U Htun Htun Oo announced extension of the Court-Led Mediation Pilot Programme at Myanmar International Convention Centre-II in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

The pilot programme will be introduced at the courts of Pyinmana, Lewe, Zabuthiri, Pobbathiri, Ottathiri and Dekkhinathiri after it was successfully tested at the two district-level courts and two township courts in 2019 under the Strategic Objective 5.3 of establishing efficient and effective court dispute resolutions system of the Judicial Strategic Plan (2018-2022).

The Chief Justice of the Union said the pilot programme will be initiated across the



Union Chief Justice U Htun Htun Oo delivers the speech at the introduction ceremony of the Court-Led Mediation Pilot Programme at Myanmar International Convention Centre-II in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO:MNA**



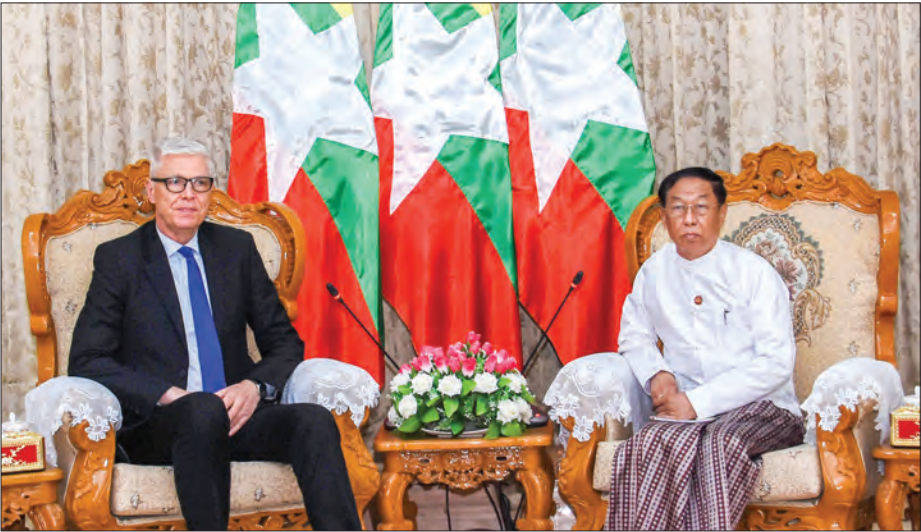
country before it is expected to approve for implementation by 2020, and he requested all the relevant organizations to coordinate with his office for the success of programme which was designed to help settle civil lawsuits.

Mr Karasawa Masayuki from the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) expressed his appreciation for the role of their agency to assist in conducting the pilot programme and pledged for further supports.

U Myo Tint, the Judge of Supreme Court of the Union, reported the success of Court-Led Mediation Pilot Programme during its trial period from 1 March 2019 to 29 February 2020.

Director-General Daw Tin Nwe Soe from the Office of the Union Judiciary Supervision presented reviews and future plans.—MNA

(Translated by Aung Khin)



Union Election Commission Chairman U Hla Thein holds talk with Ambassador of Denmark Mr John Nielsen in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO:MNA**

UEC Chairman discusses tackling online hate speech, fake news

U HLA THEIN, Chairman of Union Election Commission (UEC), discussed measures to tackle hate speech and fake news on social media at the meeting with Ambassador of Denmark Mr John Nielsen at his office in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

They also discussed arrangements for holding 2020 General Election in accordance with its five norms, compilation of an accurate voters' list, conducting electoral capacity building trainings for various levels of the sub-commissions.

In addition, their discussion includes organizing public and voters' awareness programmes in cooperation with civil society organizations, and amendment to the Code of Conduct for political parties and parliamentary candidates.—MNA

(Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)

Coordination meeting discusses timely supply of school textbooks



Union Minister Dr Pe Myint addresses the coordination meeting on the supply of schoolbooks in time for 2020-2021 academic year. PHOTO:MNA

THE School Textbook Printing and Distribution Committee held a coordination meeting on the supply of schoolbooks in time for 2020-2021 academic year.

Union Minister for Information Dr Pe Myint, in his capacity as chairman of committee, presided over the meeting at his office in Nay Pyi Taw, and explained the ministry’s role in printing the school books together with private sector through tender system.

Union Minister for Education Dr Myo Thein Gyi discussed the requirement of books for 9.7 million school children across the country, upgrade of curriculum and better qualities of books.

The Directors-General from the Printing and Publishing Department and the Basic Education Department, who are the secretaries of committee, explained the processes of printing, publishing and distributions of schoolbooks.

Chairman of the Sub-Committee and Deputy Minister U Aung Hla Tun put forward ideas for better production process.

Union Minister Dr Pe Myint made a conclusion remark on the meeting after the discussions of Permanent Secretary U Myo Myint Maung and officials.—MNA

(Translated by Aung Khin)

Union SWRR Minister discusses children development issues

DR WIN MYAT AYE, Union Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, held a meeting with a delegation led by UNICEF Education Associate Director Mr Robert Jenkins, at his office in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

During the meeting, they discussed arrangements for education and development of children of the families of IDPs, and children in conflict areas.

They also discussed matters relating to the ministry’s works on nurturing early childhood development, further tasks to be implemented by the government for protection and development of children, and implementation of Maternal and Child Cash Transfer (MCCT) programme.

In addition, their meeting also focused on education programmes for the disabled, early childhood intervention (ECI) services, and cooperation with UNICEF.—MNA

(Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)



Union Minister Dr Win Myat Aye holds talk with Mr Robert Jenkins, Education Associate Director of UNICEF headquarters in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. PHOTO:MNA

Coordination meeting assesses implementation of development in Maungtaw District

A technical working group comprised of representatives from UNDP and UNHCR proposed findings from a field visit to Buthidaung and Maungtaw townships, Rakhine State, and a coordination meeting for related implementation was held at the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement yesterday.

First, Union SWRR Minister Dr Win Myat Aye, who is also Chairman of the Committee for Implementing the Recommendations on Rakhine State, delivered an address.

He said a central committee for peace, stability and development in Rakhine State was initiated in May 2016 and the Advisory Commission was set up in August of the same year to uncover the basic necessities of the region. He said the ARSA group first attacked in October 2016 and then again on 25 August 2017 when the Advisory Commission submitted their final report.

Despite delays in overall



Union Minister Dr Win Myat Aye and officials pose for a group photo at the coordination meeting on implementation of fieldwork findings in Rakhine State yesterday. PHOTO: MNA

processes, the UEHRD was formed to perform sustainable cooperation on humanitarian assistance, repatriation, resettlement, avoiding conflict, and development, said the Union Minister.

He said an Investigation Commission was set up with Vice President U Myint Swe as Chairman to probe into the background situations that led to the violent attacks. The commission produced a report with 48 points, which are implemented along with the 88 points of the Advisory Commission.

The Union Minister said there were misunderstandings from other nations despite Myanmar’s best efforts to stabilize and develop Rakhine State. He said five public reports have been published and Myanmar has co-operated with the UN to conduct the Rakhine Joint Assessment across 130 villages in Kyauktaw, MraukU and Minbya townships in Rakhine.

The Union Minister said the Committee for Implementing the Recommendations on Rakhine State was thus formed once more with five foreign and domestic experts. He said as there were international accusations made

concerning the violent attacks, the Independent Commission of Enquiry (ICOE) was formed and their final report was submitted in January this year.

The Union Minister said the recommendations of the ICOE report are also being implemented and they are receiving assistance from the Office of the ASEAN Secretary-General and AHA Centre. He said processes to develop Rakhine State were already in implementation since 2016.

This was followed by attendees explaining the practical implementation and challenges of the technical working group’s recommendations, compiling a Rakhine Projects Portfolio for better cooperation between relevant entities, and discussing the findings sent by UNDP and UNHCR.

Afterwards, the Union Minister concluded the meeting with a closing speech. -MNA

(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

MoHS recommends increasing momentum for prevention of COVID-19

UNION MINISTER for Health and Sports Dr Myint Htwe presided over the daily meeting (29/2020) on prevention of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) at his office in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

At the meeting, the minister discussed the requirement of extraordinary measures against the deadly COVID-19 while the disease is rapidly spreading in some countries although Myanmar is still exempt from it.

He added the health authorities are taking priority on preventive measures with the readiness of oxygen machines and protective gears, disaster response plans, coordination of

relevant ministries and State/Region governments.

The Union Minister also advised not to organize big festivals as much as possible and make preparations for possible consequences from holding the events.

The MoHS has raised awareness to avoid public areas when someone is suffering any symptoms of fever, cough, sneeze and any form of respiratory disease and to follow instructions for personal hygiene habits.

Officials at the meeting also discussed daily updated situation reports of WHO, conditions of persons under investigation, preventative and con-



Union Minister for Health and Sports Dr Myint Htwe addresses the 29th daily meeting on prevention of Coronavirus Disease 2019 in Nay Pyi Taw. **PHOTO:MNA**

trol measures at Mann Shwe Set Taw pagoda festival, laboratory tests on specimens of quarantined patients, training programmes for the members of Myanmar Red Cross Society and civil and philanthropic organizations, preparations in Yangon, Mandalay and Nay Pyi Taw and the needs of medical items at the hospitals.—MNA
(Translated by Aung Khin)

Report on Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

From (4-1-2020) to (4-3-2020)
(4-3-2020), 8: 15 pm

1. Situation update worldwide (World Health Organization’s statement issued at 1:30 am (MST) on 4-3-2020)

Total affected countries	- 73
Total cases	- 90, 870
Total death toll	- 3,112

- * The WHO announced that outbreak of disease has occurred in many countries in both imported cases and local transmission.
- * 30 countries, territories or areas outside China with reported cases are:

Sr.	Regions in the list of WHO	Countries
1	Western Pacific Region	Republic of Korea, Japan, Singapore, Australia, Malaysia, Viet Nam
2	European Region	Italy, Germany, France, Spain, The United Kingdom, Croatia, San Marino, Norway, Netherlands, Switzerland, Greece, Finland, Denmark, Sweden, Israel
3	South-East Asia Region	Thailand, Indonesia.
4	Eastern Mediterranean Region	Iran, United Arab Emirates, Lebanon
5	Region of the Americas	United States of America, Canada, Ecuador
6	African Region	Algeria

Therefore, the WHO has changed the level of its risk assessment on COVID-19 transmission to “very high” in China, regional countries, and global countries.

2. Situation in Myanmar (Until 4:00 pm on 4-3-2020)

	Laboratory Test				Number of Patient
	Positive Result	Negative Result	Waiting	Under Test	
People under Investigation	-	47	4	3	54
Suspected cases	-	2	-		2
Total	-	49	4	3	56

- There are a total of 56 people under investigation across Myanmar from 31-1-2020 to 4-3-2020: 20 in Yangon Region, 13 in Shan State, 10 in Mandalay Region and 13 in other Regions and States.
- In preparation for COVID-19, the Ministry of Health and Sports is carrying out:
 - monitoring persons (family members and health workers) who had close contacts with the patients and prevention and control measures against the disease at the hospitals and clinics
 - identifying suspected cases, quarantining them and providing effective treatment
 - giving instructions to the health workers to strictly follow preventive measures and make public awareness
 - publishing situation reports about Myanmar and other countries in the state-owned newspapers and the Internet website of the Ministry (www.mohs.gov.mm) and social media pages (<https://www.facebook.com/MinistryOfHealthandSportsMyanmar>) and (<https://www.facebook.com/MyanmarCDC>) , with taking response to the fake news
 - coordination with relevant government agencies to lessen socio-economic impacts resulted from COVID-19
- Although Myanmar has not found any COVID-19 patient so far,
 - COVID-19 is spreading not only in China but also in Singapore, Republic of Korea, Italy, and Iran at high level
 - The chances of the travellers from the countries coming to Myanmar by flights, or through border crossings from other countries are high.
 - The ministry is increasing surveillance in upward momentum at the international airports.
 - The ministry is also closely monitoring the hotels, guest houses and houses where the foreign travellers will reside.
 - Local transmission was found in some countries where new cases occurred despite no close contacts with COVID-19 patients or no previous visit to the countries with the outbreak of disease.
 - In the crowd, people can be infected with the virus from COVID-19 patients and asymptomatic carriers.
- It is also possible that some cases could be found immediately, the people and social organizations are suggested:
 - to avoid crowded areas and festivals as much as possible
 - to organize only unavoidable public events
 - to restrict the number of attendees to those events where strictly measures must be posed to prevent the audience with fever or respiratory disease while following advises of the Ministry of Health and Sports. —MoHS
(Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)

Republic of the Union of Myanmar
Office of the President
Press Release 9/2020
10th Waxing of Tabaung, 1381 ME
(3 March 2020)

Additional statistical bulletin on drug seizures, acting on information

1. In order to prevent and eradicate the dangers of narcotic drugs and psychotropic drugs, the Office of the President has formed the **Drug Activity Special Complaint Department** on 26 June 2018 to systematically accept and respond to reports on drug abuses and other related cases from the general public.
2. With orders from the Office of the President, the Drug Activity Special Complaint Department relayed information on reports on drug-related offenses up to 29 February 2020 to the Ministry of Home Affairs to take action, as displayed below:

Sr	Nature of report	Details on seizure and legal action taken
1	Information received of Chinpu who lives in Mamon Village, Phakant Township, Kachin State, distributing and selling illegal drugs.	On 25 February 2020, police searched the house of Chinpu, 43, son of U Maung Thae, who lives in Mamon Village, Phakant Township, and arrested him with Than Naing, 53, son of U Phu Nyunt Oo, and Htay Shwe, 56, son of U Soe Pay, who live in the same village; Zaw Lin, 38, son of U Ya Tun, who lives in Gankha Village; and Tun Naing, 47, son of U Than Nyunt, who lives in Pahpyin Village together with heroin. A case has been opened against them with MaMaSa (Phakant)MaYa(pa)37/2020 under Section 16(c), 20(a) and 21 of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law.
2	Information received of Ma Mya Aye who lives in Ywartha Village, Phaungpyin Township, Sagaing Region, distributing and selling illegal drugs.	On 26 February 2020, police searched the house of Ma Mya Aye, 39, daughter of U Lu Kyaw, who lives in Ywartha Village, Phaungpyin Township, and arrested her together with heroin. A case has been opened against her with MaMaSa (Phaungpyin)MaYa(pa)39/2020 under Section 1(c) of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law.
3	Information received of Win Myint who lives in Myataung Village, Htigyaing Township, Sagaing Region, distributing and selling illegal drugs.	On 26 February 2020, police arrested Win Myint, 52, son of U Thein Aung, and Myint Lwin, 52, son of U Mae Nyo, who live in Myataung Village, Htigyaing Township together with heroin at the side of Segyi creek, east of Myataung Village, Htigyaing Tsp. A case has been opened against them with MaMaSa (Htigyaing)MaYa(pa)18/2020 under Section 16(c) and 21 of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law.
4	Information received of Myo Myint who lives in Salonn Village, Myeik Township, Taninthayi Region, distributing and selling illegal drugs.	On 23 February 2020, police searched the house of Myo Myint, 48, son of U San Tin, who lives in Salonn Village, Myeik Township and arrested him together with ‘WY’ stimulant tablets. A case has been opened against him with MaMaSa (Myeik)MaYa(pa)37/2020 under Section 16(c), 20(a) and 22(b) of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law.
5	Information received of Khaung Gyi who lives in Tizit Village, Longlon Township, Taninthayi Region, distributing and selling illegal drugs.	On 25 February 2020, police arrested Aung Than Soe (a) Khaung Gyi, 20, son of U Aung Than, who lives in Tizit Village, Launglon Township, together with ‘WY’ stimulant tablets and a homemade air gun in the mangrove forest near the village. A case has been opened against him with MaMaSa (Launglon)MaYa(pa)6/2020 under Section 19(a), 20(a), 22(b) and 21 of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law.
6	Information received of some people distributing and selling illegal drugs in Innet Village, Thabeikkyin Tsp, Mandalay Region.	Police have opened two cases, and arrested two men, and two women together with stimulant tablets. Acting on a tip-off, Myo Zaw Htet, 20, son of U Maung Nyunt, and Zaw Min, 35, son of U Htay Win, who live in Moungkon Village, Htigyaing Township, were arrested together with ‘WY’ stimulant tablets on the Nikel Seikkan Road of Innet Village, Thabeikkyin Township on 23 February 2020. A case has been opened against them with NaMaSa (Tagaung)MaYa(pa)3/2020 under Section 16(c), and 21 of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law.
7.	Information received of Hsan Ko who lives in No 3 Ward, Tagaung Town, Mandalay Region, distributing and selling illegal drugs.	On 26 February 2020, police searched the house of Hsan Ko, 45, son of U Maung Tin, who lives in No 3 Ward, Tagaung Town, and arrested him together with ‘WY’ stimulant tablets. A case has been opened against him with NaMaSa (Tagaung)MaYa(pa)4/2020 under Section 19(a) and 20(a) of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law.
8.	Information received of Tayoke Pu who lives in Kadonsi Ward, Paung Township, Mon State, distributing and selling illegal drugs.	On 24 February 2020, police searched the house of Tayoke Pu (a) Soe Min Latt, 42, son of U Tin Nyunt, who lives in Kadonsi Ward, Paung Township, and arrested him together with ‘WY’ and ‘R’ stimulant tablets. A case has been opened against him with MaMaSa (Paung)MaYa(pa)5/2020 under Section 19(a) and 20(a) of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law.
9.	Information received of Daw Wai Wai who lives in Thayattaw (south) Ward, Kyimyindine Township, Yangon Region, distributing and selling illegal drugs.	On 24 February 2020, police searched the house of Daw Wai Wai (a) Tin Tin Wai, 36, daughter of U Phoe Ni, who lives in Thayattaw (south) Ward, Kyimyindine Township, and arrested her together with ‘WY’ stimulant tablets. A case has been opened against her with MaMaSa (Kyimyindine)MaYa(pa)2/2020 under Section 19(a) of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law.
10.	Information received of San Myint who lives in Moelon Village, Mabein Township, northern Shan State, distributing and selling illegal drugs.	On 24 February 2020, police searched the house of San Myint, 44, son of U Wai Tin, who lives in Moelon Village, Mabein Township, and arrested him together with heroin. A case has been opened against him with MaMaSa (Mabein)MaYa(pa)26/2020 under Section 16(c) of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law.
11.	Information received of Tin Myo Win (a) Shwe Ah who lives in Nantlan Village, Hsipaw Township, northern Shan State, distributing and selling illegal drugs.	On 26 February 2020, police searched the house of Tin Myo Win (a) Shwe Ah, 36, son of U Chit Soe, who lives in Nantlan Village, Hsipaw Township, and arrested him and Chetgyi, 48, son of U Chit Hla, together with ‘88/1’ stimulant tablets. A case has been opened against them with NaMaSa (Nantlan)MaYa(pa)2/2020 under Section 16(c) and 21 of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law.
12.	Information received of some people using, distributing and selling illegal drugs in Thaphanseik, area number 6, No 9 Ward, Kyaukme Tsp, northern Shan State.	On 26 February 2020, police arrested Kyaw Lu, 42, son of U Maung Hsai, who lives in Hukwet Village, together with ‘WY’ stimulant tablets in the farm near Thaphanseik, area 6, No 9 Ward in Kyaukme Township. A case has been opened against him with MaMaSa (Kyaukme)MaYa(pa)15/2020 under Section 16(c) of the the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law.

3. Out of the information sent to the Drug Activity Special Complaint Department, a total of 1,002 cases have been filed as of 29 February 2020. A total of 1,544 people, including 1,290 men and 254 women had been arrested with 7,656.5814g of heroin, 1,347.42 g of ICE, 40,339.02166 g of opium, 661.27 g of low-quality opium, 53,242.76 g of speciosa powder, 12,097.32 g of speciosa, 2.5 litres of liquid speciosa, 504,962 stimulant tablets, 10,311.42 g of marijuana, 0.1 litre of opium tincture, 520.28 g of opium blocks, 60 g of poppy seeds, 55.45 g of crushed stimulant tablet powder, 0.001 g of crushed ecstasy powder, 25 firearms, different kinds of 609 cartridges and one grenade. Efforts for fighting the drug trafficking has been stepped up, and the department will report on further exposed cases.

4. To seize further drugs, and arrest drugs dealers, people are urged to inform the Ministry of Home Affairs, region and state governments and to inform huge cases of drug trafficking and other suspicious cases directly to the **Drug Activity Special Complaint Department** of the Office of the President via following contact numbers:

Contacts

Landline No.

— 067-590200

Fax Phone No.

— 067-590233

Email Address

— antinarcotics@presidentoffice.gov.mm

Kachin Government, Myanmar Heng Ya Co. to develop Kampaiti Business Park



The signing ceremony of a Memorandum of Understanding for developing the Kampaiti Business Park Project being held in Myitkyina yesterday. PHOTO: (STATE IPRD)

THE Kachin State Government and Myanmar Heng Ya Investment Development Co. Ltd signed a Memorandum of Understanding for developing the Kampaiti Business Park yesterday at the state office.

At the event, U Wei Lin, Kachin State Minister for Finance, Revenue, Planning and Commerce spoke about implementing the business park project in line with the existing law. He also discussed matters related to job creation, trade promotion at Kampaiti gate, co-operation to combat illegal trade,

and business opportunities for local people.

The managing director of Myanmar Heng Ya Investment Development Co Ltd also provided details on the project.

Kachin State minister for transportation, electricity and Industry; state government officials; and, officials from Yunnan-Teng Yin Trading Company also attended the signing event.

The Kampaiti gate is one of the border checkpoints between Myanmar and China. A proposal to upgrade the border gate was approved by the Kachin State

government at the second state meeting's 18th regular session. The Myanmar Heng Ya Development Company is a joint venture between Kampaiti Development Company and the Yunnan-Teng Yin Trading Company.

Between 1 October and 21 February of the current financial year, Sino-Myanmar trade at Kampaiti gate soared to US\$141.24 million from \$73.97 million in the year-ago period, according to data released by the Commerce Ministry. — State IPRD

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Number of companies registered on MyCO reaches about 68,000 in 18 months

By Nyein Nyein

THE number of companies registered on the online registry system, MyCO, has touched about 68,000 within one and a half years, according to the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA).

The registration and re-registration of companies on the MyCO website commenced on 1 August 2018, in keeping with the Myanmar Companies Law 2017. Since then, more than 21,521 new companies and 46,37 existing companies have registered and re-registered on MyCO, bringing the total number of registered companies to 67,898 by February-end. At present, 100 per cent of the applicants are using the online registration platform, according to data provided by the DICA.

In addition, all registered companies need to file annual returns (AR) on the MyCO registry system within two months of incorporation, and at least once every year (not later than one month after the anniversary of the incorporation), according to Section 97 of the law.

According to Section 266 (A) of the Myanmar Companies Law 2017, public companies must submit annual returns and financial statements (G-5) simultaneously.

All overseas corporations must submit ARs in the prescribed format on MyCO within 28 days of the financial year ending, as per Section 53 (A-1) of the Myanmar Companies Law 2017.

A total of 9,175 companies were suspended for failing to submit AR forms within the due date. Newly established compa-

nies are required to submit ARs within two months of incorporation or face a fine of K100,000 for filing late returns.

The DICA has notified any company which fails to submit its AR within 13 months will be notified of its suspension (I-9A). If it fails to submit the AR within 28 days of receiving the notice, the system will show the company's status as suspended. Companies can restore their status only after shelling out a fine of K50,000 for late filing of AR, K100,000 for restoration of the company on the Register, and K100,000 for late filing of documents.

If a company fails to restore its status within six months of suspension, the registrar will strike its name off the register, according to the DICA notice.

(Translated Ei Myat Mon)

Fruit trucks wait in long queues amid tight security at Myanmar-China border gate

By Nyein Nyein

SECURITY measures at Kyin San Kyawt gate on Myanmar-China border have resulted in hundreds of trucks queuing up at the checkpoint, said fruit traders.

"More than 200 trucks of watermelons and muskmelons pass through Kyin San Kyawt gate. The inspection at the gate takes longer for drivers holding a temporary border pass, except Chinese citizens holding a blue border pass and Myanmar citizens carrying Shan State census and red border pass," said Sai Khin Maung from Khwar Nyo Fruit Depot.

"The drivers are inspected using fingerprint identification, face recognition technologies, ID, and Myanmar National Registration card. Each truck takes 10-15 minutes to pass through the gate. The security system has been adopted since two years. The red border pass is valid for up to one year, unlike temporary cards," said Sai Khin Maung.

"China is currently allowing trucks to enter Kyin San Kyawt gate between 7-11 am and 1-4:30 pm. As some of the trucks could

not make it within that time, 175 trucks loaded with watermelons and muskmelons remain lined up at the gate. At present, more trucks are entering the gate. But, they are facing traffic congestion," said Sai Khin Maung.

The demand for watermelons and muskmelons is declining in wake of COVID-19. Fruit traders have raised concerns over the degradation of fruit quality on account of the delay, said fruit traders.

Other routes apart from Kyin San Kyawt road pose hazards for truckers, said fruit traders.

"On account of traffic congestion, about 400 trucks, including watermelon trucks, are queued up since 28 February. Only 200 trucks can pass the gate per day," said Sai Khin Maung.

Traders engaged in Muse trade have asked the government to ensure all regions are treated equally in issuance of passes, and red border passes be issued without discriminating against traders from regions and states than Shan State.

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Areca nut growers battered by drop in price

ARECA nut growers in Karathuri Town of Bokpyin Township, Taninthayi Region, have suffered dramatic losses this year due to a decline in prices.

Currently, fresh areca nuts are priced at K22 per nut, while dry areca nuts are fetching K4,300 per viss. The price of areca nuts has significantly declined this year compared to last year, affecting local growers adversely. Due to the fall in price, growers have begun storing areca nuts. (1 viss = 1.63 kg)

"The fall in the price of areca nuts can be attributed to the outbreak of the novel coronavirus. As a consequence, export and import activities have temporarily stopped, and the price of areca nuts has been on the decline," said an areca nut grower.

There are nearly 150,000 acres of betel nut plantations across the country, with Taninthayi and Ayeyawady regions and Mon State being the major producers. — Soe Win (IPRD)

(Translated by Hay Mar)



Areca nuts seen in a farm in Bokpyin. PHOTO: SOE WIN (IPRD)

Food safety concerns everyone

FOOD safety and nutrition are the most important factors to consider when purchasing food. Nowadays, consumers are worried about the presence of bacteria, viruses, or contaminants in the food supply chain.

Each food item sold to the people in the market and every product sold or served to customers should be free from chemicals or chemical residues, bacteria, and viruses. Only then can people lead healthy lives.

The incidence of food poisoning and non-communicable diseases depends on the food we consume every day. Globally, contaminated food and water are thought to be responsible for 600 million people falling ill and 420,000 deaths each year.

The burden of food-borne diseases falls largely on low-income and middle-income countries and young children. But, unsafe food can have a substantial impact on health even in high-income countries.

As a first step for ensuring food safety, we need to adopt a roadmap with the necessary rules and regulations, taking into consideration food scares and concerns of the people. Once implemented, the regulations must be monitored and assessed to achieve fruitful results.

As a first step for ensuring food safety, we need to adopt a roadmap with the necessary rules and regulations, taking into consideration food scares and concerns of the people. Once implemented, the regulations must be monitored and assessed to achieve fruitful results.

Food safety isn't just about rules and regulations and corporate bottom lines. It's about public trust and safety, and that is an emerging issue that needs to be resolved in our country.

The most important thing is that those who sell food should have knowledge of health and food safety and practice hygiene.

To achieve this, the health authorities are obliged to raise awareness on health and food safety among sellers.

The Ministry of Health alone cannot ensure effective enforcement of the rules and make each food item safe for consumption. All hands — from regional governments, development affairs committees, and organizations concerned with food production and consumption — need to be on deck for establishing food safety in the community.

Awareness of food safety issues is only the first step: considerable and concerted efforts need to be made by producers, governments, regulatory agencies, and consumers to ensure that the food we eat is safe.

Food safety really is everyone's business. To ensure the food we consume is safe, preventive measures need to be built into food production, processing, and marketing from the beginning.

■ ■ ■

Commemorating Chief Justice U Myint Thein's 120th birthday

By Dr. Myint Zan

THE 120th birthday of the third Chief Justice of independent Burma (as it was officially called then) U Myint Thein (22 February 1900-3 October 1994) was on 22 January 2020.

The Four Distinguished Brothers and also Brothers in (the) Law

U Myint Thein was born at the turn of the 20th century on 22 February 1900 and he belonged to a distinguished family of among others, four brothers (as well as sisters). Like him, two his elder brothers U Tin Tut (1895-1948), U Kyaw Myint (1898-1988) and a younger brother Dr Htin Aung (1908-1978) were Barristers-at-law from the Inns of Courts in London and legal luminaries.

On the lighter side, Sayagyi ('revered teacher') Dr Htin Aung's penchant or enthusiasm for academic pursuits was such that a nephew of Dr Htin Aung said the late U Kyaw Myint told him that he had 'a dead Uncle' (U Tin Htut), 'bad Uncle' (U Myint Thein) and 'mad Uncle' (Dr Htin Aung). Dr Htin Aung, among others, was Rector and later Vice-Chancellor of University of Rangoon from 1946 to 1959.

Coincidentally on 1 March 2020 the 100th anniversary of the establishment of the Law Department what was then formally called University of Rangoon was commemorated. U Myint Thein's elder brother U Kyaw Myint a Supreme Court Justice from the period of 1948 to 1950 was the Dean of the Law Department in the post-War years. In our criminal law and international law classes in the early 1970s at the Law Department of Rangoon Arts and Science University the judgment delivered in English by Chief Justice U Myint Thein in the case of *E V Kovtunenkov v U Law Yone* 1960 Burma Law Reports (Supreme Court), p.51, on 18 March 1960 was taught (in Burmese).

U Myint Thein's Life and Achievements till 2 March 1962

U Myint Thein, obtained an MA (Master of Arts) and LL.B (Bachelor of Laws) from the University of Cambridge, in England, around 1925. While studying at Cambridge he met and later married the late Daw Phwar Hmee (Daw Phwar Mee) (1902-1962). Daw Phwar Hmee was the first



U Myint Thein's 'exposition in the debates in the UN General Assembly was brilliant ... and a landmark in history'.

Burmese woman Barrister-at-law.

U Myint Thein was not merely a 'legal eagle' but a soldier (in the British Army at the rank of Colonel) and according to the late President Dr Maung Maung's profile of U Myint Thein in *The Guardian* (Rangoon) magazine of October 1957 at great risk to himself U Myint Thein stayed on in Japanese-occupied Burma at times disguised as a mali (Hindi word for 'gardener'). In his 1957 fulsome praise of U Myint Thein — slightly ironic based on later events in the 1960s — Dr Maung Maung wrote that U Myint Thein 'could have died' during those dangerous years.

Soon after independence U Myint Thein was appointed as the first Burmese Ambassador to what was then Nationalist China and when the People's Republic of China was established in October 1949 U Myint Thein was appointed as the first Ambassador to the People's Republic of China.

Soon after his appointment as a Supreme Court Justice in March 1953 U Myint Thein went to the United Nations to complain about Kuomintang (white-nationalist-Chinese) troops incursion into Burma. Dr Maung Maung wrote (in 1957) that U Myint Thein's 'exposition in the debates in the UN General Assembly was brilliant ... and a landmark in history'.

On or about 22 July 1957 the then President Mahn Win Maung appointed U Myint Thein as the 3rd Chief Justice of independent Burma. In September 1957 a joint session of Parliament unanimously approved his appointment. U

Myint Thein succeeded in his own words (personal communication to the writer, 1978 by U Myint Thein) to the top judicial position held by his 'illustrious predecessor' U Thein Maung (1890-1975). As Chief Justice U Myint Thein wrote many rulings a few of which are landmarks in independent Burma's legal history.

'Lady Luck' (or the Revolutionary Council) not being kind to U Myint Thein (March 1962 to February 1968)

Dr Maung Maung wrote in his 1957 profile of U Myint Thein that his life up till his appointment as Chief Justice of the Union was 'both lucky and unlucky'. Lady luck (in fact it was the Revolutionary Council regime which took over State power in the early hours of 2 March 1962) was unkind to U Myint Thein from that date for the next six years. Soldiers entered his house at 48 Kaba Aye Pagoda Road, Rangoon at 2 am in the morning and arrested him ('took into protective custody' was the euphemism used in those days). U Myint Thein did mention to me that he asked that he be allowed to phone or least enquire 'what was the matter' with the Paleik Min Gye (the Commissioner of Police) but he was politely told ma loke par net daut (not to indulge in such an activity) since all the phone lines have been cut.

On 30 March 1962 General Ne Win, (6 July 1910?-5 December 2002) then Chairman of the Revolutionary Council, issued an 'order having the effect of law' stating that U Myint Thein's - and

a few other Supreme and High Court Justices - services were terminated 'with effect from noon on 31 March 1962'. 'Indulgently' General Ne Win also stated that these Justices were to have the privileges (their pensions) after the termination of their services albeit the word pension was not used in the 'Order'.

U Myint Thein's wife Daw Phwar Hmee was not in good health at the time of her beloved husband's arrest and her health deteriorated thereafter. U Myint Thein was allowed to stay with Daw Phwar Hmee under strict guard. I also later learnt that U Myint Thein's elder brother U Kyaw Myint had to 'exchange' places in 'protective custody' in order for U Myint Thein to be allowed to be with his wife at his home during her last days.

When Daw Phwar Hmee passed away on 26 June 1962 U Myint Thein decided not to attend her funeral and voluntarily went back to (in his words written to me in personal correspondence in 1980) to the 'tender care' of his minders. U Myint Thein might also have thought that the quicker he volunteered to return to his own detention the quicker his elder brother U Kyaw Myint can be released.

Largeness of heart and magnanimity of this great man, indeed.

Mahn Win Maung spent 5 years and 8 months in detention before his release in October 1967.

Prime Minister U Nu (25 May 1907-14 February 1995) spent 4 years and over 7 months in detention was released on 27 October 1966 when he and the late U Ba Swe (another former Prime Minister, 1956-1957) was taken from custody straight to meet General Ne Win for more than 2 hours to 'reminisce about the past'. U Myint Thein spent about 4 years and eight months at the apex judiciary of Burma - one of the most prestigious and respected judiciaries in Asia at that time - and nearly six years in custody before his release on or about 28 February 1968.

In June 1980 Naing Ngant Goan Yi (literally 'jewel of the State') awards were conferred to dozens of persons including quite a few former detainees under the Revolutionary Council regime. The sacked Chief Justice U Myint Thein received the first class Naing Ngant Goan Yi award and also a 'political pension' — in addition to his Chief Justice pension - for life. Around the same time after conferring this honour - ironically both the Order terminating U Myint Thein's services in March 1962 and the announcement conferring the award to him in June 1980 was signed by General/ President Ne Win - invited him and other apex court judges whom he had previously incarcerated to dinner.

A (younger) close relative of U Myint Thein informed the writer that Ne Win tried to 'explain' the Revolutionary Council regime's incarceration of U Myint Thein but the gentle Chief Justice and poet (more on that later) stopped him stating 'Bogyoke (General) it is past: We do not need to dwell on it'. Largeness of heart and magnanimity of this great man, indeed.

U Myint Thein as Poet and Impish Humour in his last Days

While in custody U Myint Thein had the 'privilege' of listening on radio Burmese folk songs broadcast by Myanma Athan (Burma Broadcasting service) and he apparently wrote them down and translated them into English which came out as Burmese Folk Songs (published by Oxford University Press). And there are at least three other selection of his poems the more serious and reflective When at Nights I Strive to Sleep and poems suffused with

cheery sense of humour Burmese Proverbs Explained in Verse and Burmese Nursery Songs.

In 1983 U Myint Thein fell seriously ill but recovered. He wrote me in his handwriting 'please don't worry too much, Only good people die young and I am only 83'. At the age of 83 he was 'too old' or 'too bad' to have died then.

He could have died around 1989 or 1990 when he fell seriously ill again: ill to the extent that (U Myint Thein narrated this to my late mother Professor Dr Daw Myint Myint Khin around 1990 or 1991) U Aung Gyi (ex Brigadier) apparently sat beside his bed and wept murmuring in Burmese *thu kha myar democracy ya dar ko taung hma kyeit ma thwar ya boo* 'Poor him, he does not live to see democracy takes root'. U Myint Thein narrated this story with his usual self-deprecating humour and with a chuckle. But when he passed away at the age of 94 in 1994 as I wrote in my tribute of U Myint Thein in *The Australian Law Journal* (March 1995) 'Death takes away the 'baddest' indeed the best among us ... and all of us are impoverished by his passing'.

It is a privilege and honour to give my tribute to Chief Justice U Myint Thein on the occasion of his 120th birthday.

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■ ■ ■

Daw Kay Thi Soe concurrently accredited as Ambassador of Myanmar to Georgia

THE President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has appointed Daw Kay Thi Soe, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar to the Czech Republic, concurrently as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar to Georgia.—MNA

One more political party applies for registration

REGISTRATIONS of political parties are being scrutinized by Union Election Commission (UEC); and Wa National Party came to the UEC to register itself as a political party on 4 March 2020.—MNA

Myanmar Daily Weather Report

(Issued at 7:00 pm Wednesday 4th March, 2020)

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

FORECAST VALID UNTIL NOON OF THE 5th March, 2020: Rain or thundershowers will be isolated in Upper Sagaing Region, Kachin, Shan and Chin States. Degree of certainty is (80%). Weather will be 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 in off and along Myanmar Coasts.

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Continuation of rain or thundershowers in Upper Sagaing Region and Kachin State.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 5th March, 2020: Partly cloudy.

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 5th March, 2020: Partly cloudy.

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 5th March, 2020: Partly cloudy.

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THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR
www.globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

ACTING CHIEF EDITOR

Aye Min Soe
dce@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

SENIOR EDITORIAL CONSULTANT

Kyaw Myaing

SENIOR EDITOR

Aungthu Ya

SENIOR TRANSLATORS

Zaw Htet Oo
Aung Khin

INTERNATIONAL NEWS EDITOR

Aung Htein,
Ye Htut Tin,
editor1@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

LOCAL NEWS EDITORS

Tun Tun Naing (Editor),
intlnews@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

TRANSLATORS

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

REPORTER

Nyein Nyein Ei,
reporter1@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

PHOTOGRAPHER

Kyaw Zeya Win @ Phoe Khwar
Kyaw Zeya

COMPUTER TEAM

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

EDITORIAL SECTION

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

CIRCULATION & DISTRIBUTION

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

ADVERTISING & MARKETING

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

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Myanmar Academy Awards ceremony postponed over COVID-19 spread

MYANMAR'S Academy Award Presentation Ceremony, which was planned to be held at the People's Square in Yangon on 29 March, is postponed for nearly two months, according to U Nyi Nyi Tun Lwin, Chairman of Myanmar Motion Picture Organization.

"Myanmar's Academy Award Presentation Ceremony will not be held in March, but it is scheduled to take place in May," said U Nyi Nyi Tun Lwin at the meeting of Myanmar Motion Picture Organization yesterday.

The decision came after

the advices for public by the World Health Organization, and the Ministry of Health and Sports.

"Our Motion Picture Organization's patrons, and executives, officials from the ceremony's main sponsor Bella Company, and organizers of the

event made the decision," said U Zaw Myint Oo, Secretary of the organization.

The postponed date, and venue will be announced by the Myanmar Motion Picture Organization.—Khin Thuzar Win (FDC)

(Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)

Meiktila hiking team plans third climb to Mount Phon Kan Razi

OFFICIALS and members of the Meiktila hiking and mountaineering club will scale the 11,920-foot Mount Phon Kan Razi in Putao Township on 31 March for the third time.

"A team from the Meiktila hiking and mountaineering club will climb Mount Phon Kan Razi for the third time. The team will leave Meiktila for Putao Township on 30 March to climb Mount Phon Kan Razi, which is 11,920 feet high, on 31 March. A total of nine members from the club will reach the foot of Mount Phon Kan Razi. Doctors on the team will provide free medical treatment to locals residing in villages near Mount Phon Kan Razi. Then, the team will climb the mountain. The team will have two female members," said Dr. Myat Min, chairman of the Meiktila hiking and mountaineering club. The chairman was part of the team which climbed Mount Phon Kan Razi the first time.

Twenty members from the club tried to scale Mount Phon Kan Razi for the second



The Meiktila hiking and mountaineering team pose for a group photo near the summit of the Moungh Phon Kan Razi on 4 March, 2019. PHOTO: CHAN THA (MEIKTILA)

time on 4 March, 2019. However, they only managed to reach 11,000 feet because of inclement weather.

"For me, this will be the second climb to Mount Phon Kan Razi. The objective of the Meiktila hiking and mountaineering club is to make youth interested in mountain climb-

ing, keep them away from drug abuse, and learn to love nature. We will allow members to participate in the trip after screening their application forms to check if they have experience in climbing three mountains," said Ko Zayar, an executive of the Meiktila hiking and mountaineering club.

Members of the club climb Mt Elephant, Mt Myinmahti, and Mt Pyaikkhaeywe (East and West), among others, every year. They began scaling Mount Phon Kan Razi three years ago. In December, the club members plan to climb Mt Phonyin Razi or Mt Madwe.—Chan Tha (Meiktila)

(Translated by Hay Mar)

Religious edifices damaged by earthquake in Indaw

AN earthquake with a magnitude of 5.0 on the Richter scale was reported near Mawlu Town in Indaw Township, Sagaing Region, yesterday. The quake, which occurred at 6:50 am, damaged religious edifices in the area.

The earthquake caused the entrance gate of the Phone Kone monastery at Pone Hone village-tract to collapse. Cracks also appeared on the wall of the Yan Aung Myin Mingalar monastery, and a concrete altar was damaged. The losses due to the quake have been pegged at K3.5 million.

"Moreover, the 190 feet long and 7 feet high brick fence of the monastery in Thet Yint Thar Village collapsed, causing an estimated damage of K1.9 million.



The collapsed bricks of the entrance gate of the Phone Kone monastery seen after an earthquake jolted Pone Hone village-tract in Indaw Township yesterday. PHOTO: MAUNG CHIT LIN (INDAW)

Other religious edifices in Mawlu Town were also damaged, with losses amounting to K1 million. No humans or animals were injured in the earthquake,"

said an official from the Indaw Township General Administration Department.

The areas damaged by the earthquake were inspected by a

team led by U Tun Tun Lin, the administrator of Mawlu Town.—Maung Chit Lin (Indaw)

(Translated by Hay Mar)

EU unveils climate law as unsatisfied Greta Thunberg looks on

BRUSSELS — Europe unveils a landmark law on Wednesday to achieve “climate neutrality” by 2050, under the stern gaze of teenage activist Greta Thunberg who slammed it as meaningless.

The Swedish eco-warrior was in the Belgian capital for a Friday protest, but first attended a meeting of European commissioners, the top EU officials who will greenlight the draft law, that is rarely opened to outsiders.

Thunberg was also to appear before a European Parliament committee, a visit that has angered many MEPs who have been told to ban other visitors and key staff due to the corona-

virus outbreak.

According to a leaked draft seen by AFP, the proposed climate text aims to enshrine into law the EU’s grand ambition of zero net carbon emissions by mid-century.

It would give the EU executive new powers to impose emission targets on member state governments, a simple measure welcomed by greens and activists.

“One of the added values is to get out of the current situation where climate objectives are taken unanimously by the European Council” which brings together heads of state and government,



Greta Thunberg (R) calls the climate law championed by European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen (L) insufficient, or in her words, “surrender”. PHOTO: AFP

said French liberal MEP Pascal Canfin.

A rocky road to neutrality

But handing more power to the commission, the EU’s

executive arm, faces almost certain opposition from the national governments and the European Parliament which must ratify the proposal. — AFP ■

NEWS In BRIEF

Scientists recycle cell phones to make new lithium batteries

WASHINGTON — A group of researchers has achieved success in manufacturing new lithium batteries from used cell phones.

Lithium-ion batteries are used around the world and are indispensable for their widespread use in cell phones, laptops and electric cars. However, cell phones are devices with a low recycling rate, which, if not handled properly, would add up to the long list of electronic waste produced every year worldwide.

The project from the University of Cordoba (Spain) and San Luis University (Argentina) - which was undertaken by Lucia Barbosa, Fernando Luna, Yarivith Gonzalez Pena and Alvaro Caballero — found a way to recycle the graphite in these devices, a material located in the negative terminals of batteries whose function is to store and conduct lithium.

As highlighted by one of the heads of the study, Professor Alvaro Caballero, the researchers were able to eliminate the impurities of used graphite, reorganize its structure and reactivate it for new use. — ANI ■

US researchers develop new explanation for destructive earthquake vibrations

LOS ANGELES — Geophysicists at Brown University have a new explanation for how those high-frequency vibrations of earthquakes may be produced, according to a new study published Tuesday.

Earthquakes produce seismic waves with a range of frequencies, from the long, rolling motions that make skyscrapers sway, to the jerky, high-frequency vibrations that cause tremendous damage to houses and other smaller structures.

In the paper published in Geophysical Research Letters, Brown faculty members Victor Tsai and Greg Hirth propose that rocks colliding inside a fault zone as an earthquake happens are the main generators of high-frequency vibrations. —Xinhua ■

Australia developing satellite to predict bushfire danger zones

CANBERRA — Australian scientists are developing the country’s first satellite designed to predict where bushfires are likely to start, following months of devastating fires.

The Australian National University said Wednesday a team is creating a “shoebox-sized” satellite that will measure forest ground cover and moisture levels using infrared detectors.

It is hoped the data will help determine where bushfires are likely to start and where they may be difficult to contain.

The technology would be “specifically tuned to detect changes in Australian plants and



Firefighters protect a property from bushfires burning near the town of Bumbalong south of Canberra. PHOTO: AFP

trees such as eucalypts, which are highly flammable”, the university said in a statement.

It plans to partner with the private sector to launch the new satellite into low-Earth orbit and,

according to remote-sensing expert Marta Yebra, the data would be shared with firefighters.

“This infrared technology and data, which is not currently available, will help to target-controlled burns that can reduce the frequency and severity of bushfires, as well as their long-term impacts on Australia’s people, economy, and environment,” she said.

It is expected to take five years before scientists will be able to use the satellite.

Over summer, bush-fire-prone Australia experienced one of its worst fire seasons on record. — AFP ■

Pakistan struggles to combat devastating locust plague



Clouds of the noxious gas envelop the nearby fields each morning, where villagers gather the husks of dead insects for an official bounty of 20 rupees (13 cents) per kilogramme bag. PHOTO: AFP

ISLAMABAD — Pakistan’s farmers are struggling to combat the worst locust plague in nearly three decades as insect swarms decimate entire harvests in the country’s agricultural heartlands and send food prices soaring.

Heavy rains and cyclones sparked “unprecedented” breeding and the explosive growth of locust populations on the Arabian peninsula early last year, according to the United Nations.

The insects have since fanned out and wreaked havoc on farms from East Africa to India before making their way into Pakistan from the desert

on the country’s southwestern border with Iran.

The crisis is so severe that the government has declared a nationwide emergency and urgently appealed for help from the international community.

Officials in southern Sindh province fear the infestation will devastate the supply of cotton, the local cash crop, ahead of its harvest in the coming months.

Local surveys of the damage are continuing, but the Sindh Chamber of Agriculture says nearly half of all crops have been destroyed near the port city of Karachi. — AFP ■



Amazon has a strong foothold in India with its Prime Video service and typically appeals to wealthier urbanites. **PHOTO: AFP**

Streaming titans seek passage to India for new growth

NEW DELHI — Netflix and Amazon are battling a dizzying array of homegrown outfits, from Bollywood producers to broadcasters, for dominance of India's streaming market, a key target as growth in Western countries slows.

As more Indians shift to viewing movies and shows online, industry revenues from streaming in the country are set to jump from \$500 million in 2018 to as much as \$5 billion in 2023, according to Boston Consulting Group.

With many Western markets saturated and Asia's top economy China effectively closed off to foreign streamers, a nation of 1.3 billion where phone ownership is forecast to rocket makes for a tantalising prize.

"India is super important, for

both Netflix and Amazon," Tony Gunnarsson, a streaming analyst from consultancy Ovum, told AFP at the recent Asia TV Forum in Singapore.

"Netflix... need to continue to generate new subscribers, and there is no better place than India." But the US giants face tough competition in the vast, ethnically and religiously diverse country where the streaming scene is rapidly evolving.

There are dozens of subscription streaming services in India, according to Ovum, and some domestic outfits have more experience in producing content tailored for local audiences and in the country's myriad languages.

A major player is Hotstar — originally a homegrown outfit which later became part of the Disney empire — which has at-

tracted an army of followers in part by streaming Indian Premier League cricket matches live.

Other Indian rivals include ZEE5, run by major broadcaster Zee Entertainment, and ALTBalaji, the video-streaming service of Bollywood producers Balaji Telefilms. As well as offering their services direct to consumers, streamers are bundling their content with mobile phone services in a bid to broaden their reach.

'Golden age'

Netflix, the world's biggest subscription streaming service, has made expanding in India a priority and aims to attract 100 million subscribers in the country — an ambitious goal given analysts estimate it will only reach about seven million this year. — AFP ■

China port city sets up 30-bln-yuan development fund for high-tech firms

TIANJIN — A development fund for high-tech firms with an initial government funding of 30 billion yuan (about 4.2 billion US dollars) has been approved in northern China's port city of Tianjin, according to local authorities.

Set up in the Binhai New Area of Tianjin, the fund is aimed at wooing firms in new and high-tech industries across the globe to invest in Binhai, according to authorities in the 2,270-sq km new area.

The authorities expect the

fund will grow to a scale of over 100 billion yuan in five years by attracting private funding.

The fund will focus on supporting strategic emerging industries such as intelligent technology, bio-medicine, new energy and new materials to foster new momentum for development.

It also aims to develop high-end manufacturing in the area by supporting industries such as aerospace, equipment manufacturing, automobiles and petrochemicals.—Xinhua ■



Two workers examine the parts of a new energy vehicle in the welding workshop in Binhai Zone of Tianjin in December. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

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G-20 to switch meeting to teleconference due to virus outbreak

TOKYO — Finance chiefs from the Group of 20 major economies will switch their planned meeting in Washington in mid-April to a teleconference due to the coronavirus outbreak, according to Saudi Arabia, this year’s G-20 president.

“The Saudi G-20 presidency has in place a contingency plan to virtually hold the second G-20 finance ministers and central bank governors meeting” on the sidelines of spring meetings of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, the Saudi government said in a statement issued Tuesday.

The G-20 will “discuss the global economy, including the recent developments regarding COVID-19” such as the impact of the China-originated, pneumonia-causing virus on global growth and financial market stability,



(From l in front row) Bank of Japan Governor Haruhiko Kuroda and Japanese Finance Minister Taro Aso pose with other finance chiefs and central bank governors from the Group of 20 following the start of their two-day meeting in Washington on 17 October, 2019. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

it said.

The Saudi government said it is “deeply concerned” by the rapid developments regarding

virus infections, including the human tragedy and economic challenges, and that it “continues to coordinate closely with

G-20 member countries and other relevant international organizations in this respect.” — Kyodo News ■

Markets mostly rise after emergency Fed cut sinks Wall St

WASHINGTON — Asian and European stocks mostly rose Wednesday after the Federal Reserve sprang its first emergency rate cut since the global financial crisis to counter economic fallout from coronavirus.

In the first unscheduled rate reduction since 2008, the Fed axed its key interest rate by a half point to a range of 1.0-1.25, arguing it was needed because “coronavirus poses evolving risks to economic activity”. Wall Street then tanked on fears the central bank was in panic mode over the spreading COVID-19 disease, which has so far killed 3,200 people worldwide and infected

more than 90,000. However, equities in Europe and Asia mostly advanced on Wednesday as investor nerves subsided, dealers said. In commodities, oil rallied on indications that the OPEC crude producing cartel could slash output this week in order to prop up prices.

Sentiment stabilises
“Market sentiment certainly seems to have stabilised after a historic US session which saw the role of monetary policy undermined as traders sold into an extraordinary bout of easing from the Fed,” said IG analyst Joshua Mahony.—AFP ■

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Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte's (c) signature anti-narcotics crackdown has killed thousands and drawn international condemnation. **PHOTO: AFP**

Philippines to resume aid talks with backers of UN drug war probe

MANILA — The Philippines said Wednesday it is resuming aid talks with Western countries it had rebuked just months earlier for backing a UN resolution to review human rights abuses under President Rodrigo Duterte's rule.

Last year Duterte ordered his government to suspend all loan and grant negotiations with the 18 foreign governments that voted for a United Nations Human Rights Council resolution which passed by a minority vote in July.

The Iceland-led initiative was sparked by Duterte's signature anti-narcotics crackdown which has killed thousands and drawn international condemna-

tion but is widely supported by Filipinos.

"Please be informed that such directive is hereby lifted, effective immediately," said a memorandum by Duterte's executive secretary Salvador Medialdea which was released to the press Wednesday.

Government officials gave no explanation for the reversal.

But Defence Secretary Delfin Lorenzana said in September, when the ban was first made public, that he would ask Duterte to exempt Australia, a key military ally. Duterte's ban came as the Philippine military was in talks for Australian assistance to acquire offshore patrol craft to upgrade the Filipino navy.

The 18 countries that voted for the UN resolution also included among others Britain, Italy, Spain, and Denmark.

Duterte bristles at Western condemnation of his signature campaign. In March last year the Philippines officially withdrew from the International Criminal Court after the tribunal's chief prosecutor announced a preliminary investigation into alleged extrajudicial killings of purported drug dealers and users in the country. Last month Duterte also scrapped a key military pact with the United States that lays the legal framework for US troops to be on Philippine soil and is central to hundreds of annual, joint military exercises.—AFP ■

Nepal's prime minister undergoes 2nd successful kidney transplant

KATHMANDU — Nepal's prime minister, Khadga Prasad Sharma Oli, underwent a successful kidney transplant in Kathmandu on Wednesday, the doctor who led the surgery said.

"The renal transplant surgery was successful," Prem Raj Gyawali of Tribhuvan University Teaching Hospital in Kathmandu said after the five-hour operation.

This is the second time that Oli, 68, a long-time kidney patient who has been receiving dialysis since suffering from renal complications last year, has undergone such a transplant.

Since his first one in India in 2007, his health has been unstable, requiring him to undergo frequent, sometimes lengthy, follow-ups in Bangkok and Singa-



Undated photo shows Khadga Prasad Sharma Oli, prime minister of Nepal. **PHOTO: KYODO NEW**

pore. In a video message to the nation Tuesday ahead of surgery, a confident-looking Oli vowed to "return with renewed vigor and confidence to materialize our national dream of happiness and prosperity." Doctors said Oli's condition is stable and he could be discharged in a week depending on the pace of his recovery.—Kyodo News ■

Hong Kong's public housing ban on married gay couples unlawful: court

HONG KONG — Hong Kong's high court ruled Wednesday that married same-sex couples should be allowed to apply for public housing after a government ban was found to be unconstitutional.

It is a step forward for LG-BTQ rights in Hong Kong, which has been criticised by campaigners for lagging behind on equality issues.

Hong Kong permanent res-

ident Nick Infinger and his male partner — who married in Canada in 2018 — applied for public housing as an "ordinary family", but they were rejected by the city's housing authority.

The body argued that in a husband-and-wife relationship, according to the Oxford English Dictionary, a husband refers to "a married man especially in relation to his wife".—AFP ■

US launches airstrike against Taliban to defend Afghan forces

KABUL — The US launched an airstrike against Taliban fighters to defend Afghan forces Wednesday, an American military spokesman said, as violence spirals after a string of deadly attacks by the insurgents, throwing the country's nascent peace process into grave doubt.

News of the airstrike in southern Helmand province — the first in 11 days — came hours after US President Donald Trump told reporters he had had a "very good" chat with the Taliban political chief, who on Saturday signed a historic deal with Washington to withdraw foreign forces.

Since the signing in Doha however, the militants have ramped up violence against Afghan forces, casting a pall over peace talks between Kabul and

the Taliban, due to begin on 10 March US Forces-Afghanistan spokesman Sonny Leggett tweet-

ed that the airstrike targeted Taliban fighters who were "actively attacking" an Afghan forces

checkpoint in Helmand. "This was a defensive strike to disrupt the attack," he tweeted. "We call

on the Taliban to stop needless attacks and uphold their commitments. As we have demonstrated, we will defend our partners when required."

He said insurgents had carried out 43 attacks on checkpoints in Helmand on Tuesday alone.

Provincial police spokesman Mohammad Zaman Hamdard told AFP: "In the past two days we have witnessed the most intense Taliban attacks in Helmand."

"They have attacked several districts and many military bases," he added.

Elsewhere the insurgents killed at least 20 Afghan soldiers and policemen in a series of overnight attacks in other provinces, government officials told AFP Wednesday.—AFP ■



Afghan Taliban fighters and villagers attend a gathering in Alingar district of Laghman Province on the day the militants said they were resuming operations against Afghan government targets. **PHOTO: AFP**

French govt survives no-confidence votes over pension reform

PARIS — The French government faced down two no-confidence votes Wednesday over an overhaul of the country's byzantine pensions system, a key victory after fierce protests and a massive transport strike that brought France to a standstill for weeks this winter.

The bill's passage in the lower house of parliament clears a major hurdle for one of President Emmanuel Macron's signature reforms, though the text still faces opposition as it moves to the Senate. The law passed in the small hours after the government survived two no-confidence votes introduced by the opposition against Macron's centrist majority.

The attempt to topple the government came after it employed a rare constitutional measure to cut short a debate that had become bogged down in a morass of opposition amendments, effectively forcing the bill through.

Trade unions and opposition parties slammed the move as anti-democratic, but their calls for fresh protests against a bill that triggered the longest French

transport strike in decades fell largely on deaf ears.

Critics say the introduction of a single, points-based system will force people to work beyond the official retirement age of 62, or receive lower pensions.

The government argues that abolishing the country's 42 separate pension regimes, which offer early retirement and other benefits mainly to public-sector workers, will be fairer and end years of deficits.

Prime Minister Edouard Philippe hailed the text as a victory for "social justice", saying that "those who defend the status quo... too often are just talking nonsense." Damien Abad, head of the rightwing Republicans in the National Assembly, denounced "an unprecedented parliamentary fiasco" to push through a reform in which French workers will be "the biggest losers".

Questions remain

If passed, the reform will be phased in over the coming years for people born since 1975 but will not affect the pensions of those already nearing retirement age.—AFP ■



French Prime Minister Edouard Philippe faced down two no-confidence votes in parliament on Wednesday over the pension reform. **PHOTO: AFP**

Merkel's party in crucible as Thuringia votes again



Angenete Kramp-Karrenbauer was designated successor to German Chancellor Angela Merkel before their CDU party set off an earthquake in national politics by voting with the far-right AfD. **PHOTO: AFP**

BERLIN — Lawmakers in the eastern German state of Thuringia will try again to elect a new state premier Wednesday, re-running a vote that plunged Chancellor Angela Merkel's ruling CDU party into what has been described as the biggest crisis in its history.

It is the second attempt in a month to form a working govern-

ment in the former East German state, after CDU MPs there set off an earthquake in national politics by voting with the far-right AfD in February.

Amid the national outrage, the liberal candidate elected during the first vote on February 5 stepped down, leaving the state rudderless.

But more significantly, the

apparent cooperation of CDU politicians with the far right triggered the departure of Merkel's designated successor Angenete Kramp-Karrenbauer, and sparked a new leadership contest for the German chancellor's party. The race to a new CDU leadership election on 25 April is a fresh struggle for control between supporters of the chancellor's centrist course and those who believe the party must tack right.

But so far none has offered a convincing answer to the CDU's conundrum in Thuringia, squeezed between the extremes of left and right.

Former state premier Bodo Ramelow of the far left is now up against far-right firebrand Bjoern Hoecke. But hours before the vote, Ramelow spared Merkel's party an impossible choice by saying he would not rely on their votes to secure a mandate, withdrawing an earlier threat to seek new elections if he failed to win the vote with an outright majority.—AFP ■

Amnesty says Iran killed two dozen children in November crackdown

PARIS — Human rights group Amnesty International on Wednesday accused the Iranian security forces of killing 23 children, mostly with live ammunition, during a November crackdown on anti-government protests.

Protests broke out across Iran from November 15 after the announcement of a surprise petrol price rise.

The authorities responded with a crackdown that Amnesty has already said left 304 people dead, a figure vehemently disputed by Tehran.

Amnesty said in its new

report it had evidence that at least 23 children were killed, with 22 of them killed by the security forces "unlawfully firing live ammunition at unarmed protesters and bystanders."

The children killed included 22 boys, aged between 12 and 17, and a girl reportedly aged between eight and 12.

"There must be independent and impartial investigations into these killings, and those suspected of ordering and carrying them out must be prosecuted in fair trials," said Philip Luther, Amnesty's research

and advocacy director for the Middle East and North Africa.

'Quash dissent at any cost'

Twelve of the 23 deaths — recorded in 13 cities in six provinces across the country — took place on 16 November, a further eight on 17 November, and three on 18 November, according to Amnesty.

"The fact that the vast majority of the children's deaths took place over just two days is further evidence that Iranian security forces went on a killing spree to quash dissent at any cost," said Luther.—AFP ■

Amid protests over deaths of activist Agadil, Kazakh govt reaffirms judicial reforms

NUR-SULTAN — Amid protests in Kazakhstan following the death of activist Dulat Agadil last month in police detention, President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev-led government reaffirmed its commitment for judicial reforms.

Agadil passed away in police detention in Nur-Sultan on 25

February. He had been detained due to suspected violations of the terms of his house arrest, which he had been placed under following charges of contempt of court earlier this year.

A medical investigation concluded that the cause of death was acute cardiovascular failure, and found that there were no

injuries on Agadil's body.

This was confirmed by the four individuals in his cell, who all testified that Agadil suffered no physical harm while under detention.

The sudden death of civil activist Dulat Agadil, who was a participant in many protests, caused a wide resonance across

Kazakhstan. Protest ae taking place in the country. The supporters of Agadil said the authorities of Kazakhstan were allegedly behind the death of the activist.

However, the investigation revealed that Dulat Agadil died due to heart failure. President Tokayev personally reviewed the

case and stated, "I can fully assure people that, unfortunately, the activist [Dulat] Agadil passed away as a result of heart failure. To make any claims counter to this is to go against the truth." The President further noted that "no matter what his views, he was primarily a human being."—ANI ■

Myanmar National League U-19: Shan United beat Mawyawadi 6-0



Shan United U-19 player (white) vies for the ball against a Mawyawadi F.C. player (blue) during the Week-8 match of the Myanmar National League U-19 yesterday at the South Dagon Stadium in Yangon. **PHOTO: MNL**

THE Shan United U-19 football team trounced Mawyawadi F.C. by 6-0 with the help of a hat-trick by youth player Aye Min Tun in the Week-8 match of the Myanmar National League (U-19) 2020 yesterday at the South Dagon Stadium in Yangon.

Shan United relied on attack from the beginning of the match, while Mawyawadi F.C. focused on defense.

Shan United gained the opening goal as early as six minutes. The goal was scored by Aye Min Tun.

A minute later, Aye Min Tun scored the second goal for Shan United to give the team a two-goal lead over their opponents.

With the score reaching 2-0, Mawyawadi's players put up a massive defense in midfield to make it difficult for Shan United players to launch an attack. The first half ended with a score of 2-0 in favor of Shan United.

In the second half, Shan United changed tactics and launched an all-out attack to score four more goals.

Nway Aye scored the third goal for Shan United at 60 minutes, while Thuya Sing scored the fourth goal for the team at 64 minutes. With the score reaching 4-0, Shan United did not reduce their tempo and created more scoring opportunities. Aye Min Tun scored the fifth goal for Shan United at 79 minutes, completing his hat-trick.

Hein Zayar Min bagged the final goal for Shan United at 88 minutes, handing the team a resounding 6-0 win.—Lynn Thit (Tgi)

FA Cup 2020: Derby County, Manchester United match to be broadcast live on MRTV

THE FA Cup 2020 Round to Final match between Derby County and Manchester United, which will start at 2:15 am (Myanmar Standard Time) on 6 March, will be broadcast live on MRTV and MRTV Sports Channel from 2 am the same day. —MNA

(Translated by Kyaw Zin Lin)

Lethwei event to be held today in Phayathonzu

A Myanmar traditional lethwei event will be held today at Maketa Ywarhaung, Phayathonzu Town, Kayin State, according to Myanmar lethwei officials.

The event will have five main bouts featuring experienced fighters and newcomers, who will use the fighting style of Myanmar traditional lethwei, including the various clinching techniques. All the fights will be fought bare-knuckled, without gloves, with only tape and gauze allowed on the hands of fighters.

Gold medalist of the 2014 state and region lethwei tourney, Saw Htoo Zaw, will fight Aung Lan award winner Zwe Lin Aung in the first match.

Next, Nay Yine, a former

champion of the state and region level tourney, will take on Aung Htet Hein, another former champion at the state and region level.

The third match will feature Soe Naung Oo (Kayin State Day Aung Lan Award winner) vs San Htet Paing (a newcomer).

Saw Kyaw Kay (newcomer) will take on Saw Aung Yin (a gold medalist) in the fourth match. The fifth match will feature two youth fighters Saw Kyaw Aung Naing and Aung Khe Saw.

The first and second match will be round five matches, while the third, fourth, and fifth matches will be round four matches, according to the tourney's organizers.—Lynn Thit (Tgi)

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MNL II Week-6 matches to begin today

THE Week-6 matches of the MPT Myanmar National League II 2020 will start today, according to a statement issued by the Myanmar National League. Myawady F.C. will take on Yaw Myay F.C. at 4 p.m. today at the Salin Stadium in Yangon. Mawyawadi F.C. will go up against University F.C. at 4 p.m. today at the Padonmar Stadium in Yangon.

On 6 March, Kachin United will play against Silver Stars F.C. at 4 p.m. at the Padonmar Stadium in Yangon.

On 9 March, Chin Land F.C. will take on Junior Lions F.C. at 4 p.m. at the Salin Stadium in Yangon.

As the matriculation exams for the 2019-2020 academic year are set to be held across Myanmar from March 11-20, all the matches have been scheduled before the exam under a mutual agreement between officials of the League II teams, said MNL officials.

After the conclusion of the Week-5 matches, Oaker Soe from Silver Stars F.C. stood as the highest scorer with seven goals.

Meanwhile, Kachin United's Pyaw Du Aung, Chin Land F.C.'s Mung Theih Paw, and Mawyawadi F.C.'s Kyaw Zay Ya were tied in the second place with six goals each.—Lynn Thit (Tgi)



A Chin Land F.C. player (red) attempts a header during a previous Myanmar National League II match against Silver Stars F.C. **PHOTO: MNL**