

Union Biblical Seminary holds 18th graduation ceremony

AT the 18th graduation ceremony of the Union Biblical Seminary held at the Methodist English Church at No. 65 Alanpya Street, yesterday afternoon in Yangon, Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than was honored among others for outstanding works in all sectors, including social and religious works during the year.

At the ceremony Union Biblical Seminary Chairman Dr. Morris Remial Liana delivered a message of greetings, gave blessings and presented degrees to the graduates and award winners.

Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than in return delivered a message of thanks.

Union Biblical Seminary Chairman Dr. Morris Remial Liana said, "The Hluttaw Speaker was selected because he was not only the Speaker of Amyotha Hluttaw but promoted development of Myanmar in a leading position.



Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than, (Left), speaks words of gratitude on receiving an honorary doctorate at the 18th graduation ceremony of the Union Biblical Seminary at Methodist English Church in Yangon. **PHOTO: MNA**



He also provided social support to those in need."

The Union Biblical Seminary was established in 1999 and had honored those who had conducted beneficial religious works and presented degrees to 400 students. The Union Biblical Seminary also

selected and honored people regardless of race and religion who had conducted outstanding social works in all sectors.

At the 18th graduation ceremony, 23 were presented with religious degrees and six namely Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker Mahn

Win Khaing Than, Myanmar Missions International (MMI) Director Mr. Joshua Ngun Hei, Myanmar Evangelical Christian Alliance Public Relations Director Mr. Peter Ngun Za Cung, Yangon City Development Committee Deputy Director U M Hla

Thaung, Future Myanmar United Development Co., Ltd. Managing Director Daw Aye Aye Cho, Global Talent Development and Deere & Company Manager Mr. Rena M. Gainev were honored with honorary doctorates. —MNA ■

(Translated by Zaw Min)

Union Election Commission Chairman receives USA, EU, Canadian ambassadors

THE Union Election Commission Chairman, U Hla Thein, received Mr. Scot Marciel, Ambassador of the United States of America, Mr. Kristian Schmidt, Ambassador of The European Union, and Mrs. Karen Mac Arthur, Ambassador of Canada, at the UEC's guest hall yesterday afternoon.

During the meeting, the

UEC Chairman explained the formation of the Union Election Commission, the success of the 2017 and 2018 by-elections, formation of sub-commissions ongoing capacity building processes, and ongoing strategic planning for general election 2020. Ambassadors, Mr. Jeremy Kruse, the Chargé d'affaires of the Embassy of Australia, and

Mr. Joe Rolling from the Embassy of Britain explained about their visits to polling stations and gave recommendations for holding a better general election in 2020. Afterwards, they openly discussed assistance for the 2020 General Elections and other electoral matters. —MNA ■

(Translated by Su Mon Khaing)



Union Election Commission Chairman U Hla Thein and UEC members hold a meeting with ambassadors from the USA, EU, and Canada at the office of UEC in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

Independent Commission of Enquiry issues press release

THE OFFICE of the Independent Commission of Enquiry (ICOE) issued a press release yesterday following their fifth meeting from 8 to 10 January 2019 in Nay Pyi Taw and Yangon.

The press release stated that the ICOE met with Dr. Win Myat Aye, Union Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement and Chairman of the Implementation Committee on the Recommendations of the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State.

ICOE was briefed on the work undertaken by the Implementation Committee to address some of the critical issues affecting Rakhine State: development; human rights; security; initiatives for returnees and social cohesion.

The ICOE also met with Lt. General Aye Win, Office of the Commander-in-Chief (Army) and Team Leader of Military Investigation Team (2016) and (2017). During the meeting, information was shared related to the military investigations of the incidents in Rakhine in 2016 and in 2017.

The dialogue between the Commission and U Zaw Myint Pe, Secretary of Maungdaw Investigation Commission (2016)

was most informative and useful for enhancing ICOE's work.

Dr. Kyaw Yin Hlaing, Advisor to the former President of Myanmar and Director of the Center for Diversity and National Harmony, briefed the Commission on his work in Rakhine. The lessons learned from his experiences were useful for ICOE's work, said the commission.

ICOE also met with Mr. Stephan Sakalian, Resident Representative of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) who shared the work and modalities of the ICRC in Rakhine. ICOE held extensive discussions on the progress of the work of its Evidence Collection and Verification Team (ECVT). It discussed recruitment of personnel necessary for its effective work. It also discussed visit to Cox's Bazar and second visit to Rakhine State.

The deadline of the "Call for Submissions" had been extended from 31 January 2019 to 28 February 2019.

The Independent Commission of Enquiry was established as part of Myanmar's national initiative to address reconciliation, peace, stability and development in Rakhine.—GNLM ■

US detained over 50,000 illegal immigrants in December

WASHINGTON (United States)—Illegal border crossings into the United States continued at a high pace in December, with more than 50,000 people detained for a third straight month as the number of families illegally entering surged, US Customs and Border Protection said on Wednesday.

With the US government in its third week of a shutdown as President Trump demands that Congress fund the construction of hundreds of miles of new wall on the border, CBP said it detained 50,753 individuals who had entered illegally last month.

Another 10,029 people were blocked from crossing the border without documents at official ports of entry.

The total was roughly the same as October, when migrant crossings surged from earlier in the year, but below the 62,456 detained and blocked in November. The figures for the past three months have been the highest since a short-lived surge in 2014.

People arriving as families



US Border Patrol agents stand guard as they look for illegal immigrants in US soil after people jumped over the US-Mexico metal barrier from Playas de Tijuana in Mexico, on December 2, 2018. **PHOTO: AFP**

accounted for more than half of the total. A record 27,518 people who crossed the border as families were apprehended, and the number of unaccompanied children detained remained high at 4,766 for the month.

CBP said 96 per cent of

those apprehended after crossing the border were from the impoverished Northern Triangle countries of Central America: Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras.

Most are seeking asylum, citing the poverty and pervasive

violence in their countries.

The Trump administration has failed in efforts to deter them, and is being forced to quickly process them and release them into the country pending official status hearings.—AFP ■

80,000 stimulant tablets busted in Patheingyi Tsp

THE Drug Enforcement Division at the 16-mile Kyauk Chaw Paung inspection check point in Patheingyi Township confiscated 80,000 stimulant tablets (each worth K5,000) from two men, identified as Gam Aung and Tin Htoo Maung from Phaung Sai Village, Kutkai Tsp on 9 January.

A case has been opened with Ohn Chaw Area Police Station MuYit(Pa) 4/2019 under Sections 19-A/21 of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law. —GNLM ■
(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

Over 3 kilos of heroin seized in Waingmaw Tsp

POLICE confiscated 3.465 kg of heroin (estimated at K277,200,000) from two men, identified as Hun Tan Kyi and Xie Eain Zhuan, in Waingmaw Township, Kachin State, on 9 January. Police confiscated 0.121 kg of heroin from the duo and discovered an additional 3.344 kg of heroin at their home.

A case has been opened with Waingmaw Police Station MuYit(Pa) 10/2019 under Sections 19-A/21 of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law. Investigations continue. —GNLM ■
(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

Myanmar, Bangladesh conduct coordinated patrol

MYANMAR and Bangladesh conducted a coordinated patrol along the Naf River at 10:00 am yesterday according to information released by the Myanmar Police Force.

The Myanmar patrol was led by Police Inspector Kyi Soe from No.1 Border Police sub-division (Kyi Kyun), Area 3, Maungdaw Township, while the Bangladeshi side was led by Subedar Shaik Abdul Jalil from No.2 Whykong Outpost of Border Guards Bangladesh. The two troops met at the middle of the Naf River and patrolled together from nautical mile 15 to 18 along the Naf river.—GNLM
(Translated by JT)

British PM suffers fresh Brexit defeat

LONDON (United Kingdom)—British MPs voted on Wednesday to force Prime Minister Theresa May to quickly set out an alternative plan for Brexit if she loses a crucial vote on her EU withdrawal deal next week, in a second parliamentary defeat in 24 hours.

The House of Commons voted to reduce the time the government has to outline a “plan B” from 21 days to three if, as expected, lawmakers reject the Brexit agreement in a vote on Tuesday.

Members of May’s own Conservative party led the revolt amid fears that the current timetable takes Britain too close to crashing out of the European Union on 29 March with no deal at all. It was the second setback in as many days for the prime minister, after MPs voted late Tuesday to deny the government certain taxation powers in a no-deal scenario—another attempt to avoid such an outcome. Speaking to MPs earlier, May said: “The only way to avoid no deal is to vote for the deal.” But her spokesman added: “If that were not to take place... we would respond quickly and provide

certainty on the way forward.” Opposition Labour spokesman Keir Starmer said MPs could then start debating alternatives to her plan — and raised the prospect of delaying Brexit.

“I actually genuinely think we can’t do it on 29 March this year. It’s simply not viable, for so many practical reasons,” he told the Commons. “So we’re going to have to look at what are the available options that realistically are still on the table.”

‘Cosmetic’ changes

The parliamentary manoeuvres came at the start of five days of debate on the deal May struck with the EU last November, which has been strongly opposed from lawmakers on all sides.

She set out further clarifications she hopes will win over her own Conservative MPs and Northern Ireland’s Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), which props up her government in parliament.

The most controversial element of the agreement is the “backstop” arrangement, which could see Northern Ireland continue to follow certain EU trade rules after Brexit to avoid bor-

der checks with Ireland.

The government promised a greater say by British politicians, including devolved politicians in Northern Ireland, over the operation of the backstop, as well as guarantees on the free flow of trade between the province and mainland Britain.

But DUP deputy leader Nigel Dodds said the proposals were “meaningless and cosmetic”. May is also seeking further assurances on the temporary nature of the backstop from European leaders, which she hopes to deliver before the vote next week—but they insist they will not reopen the deal.

The prime minister has already postponed the vote once—in December—to avoid defeat by MPs, but insists next week’s will go ahead.

No deal fears

May has warned that if MPs reject her deal, Britain would still leave the EU on 29 March, with or without any new arrangements. Britain triggered two-year legal withdrawal process in March 2017 that will run its course unless London delays or revokes it. One of her own



Britain’s Prime Minister Theresa May leaves from 10 Downing Street in central London on 9 January, 2019, before heading to the House of Commons to attend the weekly Prime Minister’s Questions (PMQs). **PHOTO: AFP**

ministers this week raised the idea of a delay, which has been the source of speculation for weeks in Brussels, but May has rejected the idea. Both this week’s revolts were driven by Conservative MPs seeking to prevent a “no deal” scenario, which they fear would cause huge economic disruption.

Late on Tuesday, opposition MPs and more than a dozen former Conservative ministers voted to restrict the government’s taxation powers in a “no deal” scenario.—AFP ■