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President U Htin Kyaw, third from left, accepts a gift presented by the president of MRCS Professor Dr. Mya Thu. **PHOTO: MNA**

President donates cash to Myanmar Red Cross Society

PATRON of the Myanmar Red Cross Society President U Htin Kyaw met executive committee members of the MRCS and donated cash to them at the Presidential Palace in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

At the ceremony, President U Htin Kyaw extended greetings and presented cash to the President of the MRCS Professor Dr. Mya Thu to be used in various activities which will be beneficial to the public and are

being performed by the MRCS. Afterwards, the President of the MRCS presented a gift to the President.

Also present on the occasion were Union Minister for Health and Sports Dr. Myint Htwe, Dep-

uty Minister U Min Thu, and Permanent Secretary U Khin Latt, both from the Office of the President, executive committee members and part-time executive committee members of the MRCS.—MNA ■

Union Minister, World Bank director discuss Rakhine issue

UNION Minister for International Cooperation U Kyaw Tin received Ms. Ellen Goldstein, the World Bank's Country Director for Myanmar, Cambodia and Lao PDR, at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Nay Pyi Taw this morning.

Both sides exchanged views on the development of Rakhine State and discussed contributions and recommendations the World Bank could offer to the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State in an effective and productive manner.—MDN ■



PARLIAMENT

Farmers must study modern farming technology: Ministry

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PARLIAMENT

Census, ethnicities discussed at Amyotha Hluttaw

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'BANK OF THE YEAR IN MYANMAR 2017'

Awarded by Financial Times (The Banker)

Pyithu Hluttaw

Farmers can study modern farming technology: Ministry

THE Agricultural Mechanisation Department of the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation is planning to help farmers implement modern farming methods with the use of modern agricultural machinery.

Deputy Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation U Hla Kyaw was replying to a question raised by Dr. Daw Khin Soe Soe Kyi of Pyay Constituency at the Pyithu Hluttaw meeting yesterday.

Daw Khin Soe Soe Kyi asked the ministry if it planned to supply more agricultural machinery

to the Agricultural Mechanisation Department to provide agricultural services to farmers under the mechanised farming system.

Currently, the Agricultural Mechanisation Department has more than 2,800 tractors, more than 800 harvesters and 170 planters providing agricultural services to farmers through 2,137 workers.

To provide land repairing services, harvesting and winnowing, which are major challenges for farmers today, the Agricultural Mechanisation Department will require more

than 8,660 tractors, 123,772 power tillers, more than 29,650 harvest-cum-winnowing machines, more than 36,280 harvesters and more than 5,870 winnowing machines, according to the Deputy Minister.

“The cost of the machineries required to fulfil the needs of the farmers is too high, and the government also needs to employ more workers,” said Deputy Minister U Hla Kyaw.

Meanwhile, the ministry has helped farmers buy machinery by paying in installments from companies.—Kyaw Thu Htet, Mi Mi Phyto ■



U Hla Kyaw. PHOTO: MNA



Dr. Daw Khin Soe Soe Kyi.

Amyotha Hluttaw

Census, ethnicities discussed at Amyotha Hluttaw



U Thein Swe. PHOTO: MNA



U Shan Aw. PHOTO: MNA



U Sai San Aung. PHOTO: MNA



Dr. Maung Maung. PHOTO: MNA



Maj-Gen Aung Soe. PHOTO: MNA

THE results of the 2014 population and housing census have not been completed because Myanmar's ethnic groups have not been accounted for, it was learnt at yesterday's Amyotha Hluttaw meeting.

The delay was revealed when U Shan Aung from Chin Constituency (2) asked when the complete results of the 2014 Myanmar Population and Housing Census (MPHC) would be made public.

The Union Minister for Labour, Immigration and Population U Thein Swe replied that they were unable to publish the findings of the 2014 MPHC due to a requirement for ethnic recognition. The census was carried out based on the previous census conducted in 1973, which documented Myanmar having 135 ethnic lineages.

The Union Minister said that there was a space in the

2014 census form asking participants to fill in their ethnicity, and the data from there was compiled without any alteration to the spelling or name of the chosen ethnicity. The Union Minister said this has led to confusion and requests for modifications from State and Region Governments and Hluttaws and the Union Election Commission. Some of the requests asked for certain ethnicities to be recognised as a separate ethnicity and not as a sub-ethnic group, while other requests asked to change their affiliation from one ethnic group to another. Some examples were claims that there are only six sub-ethnicities of Kachin instead of 12, or that the Chin people do not have 53 sub-ethnic groups.

The results of the 2014 population and housing census have not been completed because Myanmar's ethnic groups have

not been accounted for, it was learnt at yesterday's Amyotha Hluttaw meeting.

The shortcoming was revealed when U Shan Aw from Chin Constituency (2) raised a question on when the complete results of the 2014 Myanmar Population and Housing Census (MPHC) will be made public.

The Union Minister for Labour, Immigration and Population U Thein Swe replied that they are unable to publish the findings of the 2014 MPHC due to a requirement for ethnic recognition. The census was carried out based on the previous census conducted in 1973 which documented Myanmar having 135 ethnic lineages.

For the most recent census, the Union Minister said they need to first document all the ethnics in Myanmar and to verify their ancestry in Myanmar.

“This requires a lengthy

procedure meeting with leaders and representatives of ethnic organisations, the different committees for ethnic affairs, historians, cultural and demographic scholars, and filing reports to the President's office and the Union Government”, the Union Minister said.

The 2014 MPHC can be completed only after a verification list of ethnic lineages recognised by the state has been announced, he said.

Also during yesterday's Amyotha Hluttaw meeting, U Sai San Aung of Shan Constituency (12) asked if township and village-tract administrators will have their funds increased, to which Deputy Minister for Home Affairs Major General Aung Soe replied that there is no plans for increasing funds due to current national situations and the state of the national reserve fund.

Next, Dr. Maung Maung of

Yangon Region Constituency (6) asked whether there will be changes to issue renewed passports with the same serial code instead of a new code, to which Maj-Gen Aung Soe replied that ordinary passports will be renewed with new serial codes only.

Afterwards, Daw Ohn Kyi of the Amyotha Hluttaw Bill Committee read the reviews and comments of a Bill for Myanmar Tourism. Union Minister for Hotels and Tourism U Ohn Maung and U Mya Min Swe of Magway Constituency (9) voted for the bill.

After a majority of votes, Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than announced the bill had passed with no amendments.

The next session of the Amyotha Hluttaw will be on 23 February.—Aye Aye Thant (MNA) ■



President U Htin Kyaw accepts the Letter of Credence of Ambassador of the Argentine Republic Mrs. Maria Alicia Cuzzoni de Sonschein at Presidential Palace, Nay Pyi Taw. **PHOTO: MNA**

President U Htin Kyaw accepts credentials of the Ambassador of the Argentine Republic

H.E. Mrs. Maria Alicia Cuzzoni de Sonschein, the newly-accredited Ambassador of the Argentine Republic to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, presented her Letter of Credence to U Htin Kyaw, President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar,

at Presidential Palace, Nay Pyi Taw at 3:05 pm yesterday.

Present on the occasion were Union Minister for International Cooperation U Kyaw Tin and Director-General U Thant Sin of the Protocol Department.— Myanmar News Agency ■



President U Htin Kyaw receives Mr. Hector Conde Almeida, the newly-accredited Ambassador of the Republic of Cuba to Myanmar in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

President accepts credentials of the Ambassador of the Republic of Cuba

H.E. Mr. Hector Conde Almeida, the newly-accredited Ambassador of the Republic of Cuba to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, presented his Letter of Credence to U

Htin Kyaw, President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, at Presidential Palace, Nay Pyi Taw at 2:30 pm yesterday.

Present on the occasion

were Union Minister for International Cooperation U Kyaw Tin and Director-General U Thant Sin of the Protocol Department.—Myanmar News Agency ■

Second discussion meeting on four pillars of government

To reinforce the balance among the legislative, executive, judicial powers and the media, a second discussion meeting on the four pillars of government was held at the Ministry of Information yesterday.

Prominent figures from the media spoke and highlighted the importance of the balance of powers and their responsibilities to provide checks and balances on each other.

Dr. Pe Myint, the Union Minister for the Information, said the main reason for the second meeting was to discuss how to overcome the obstacles that are preventing the media from exercising all their rights. He said that to do this, existing laws need to be changed, and that will require cooperation of the various media associations and other government pillars.

Dr. Pe Myint went on to say that in a democracy, power belongs to the people, but millions of citizens cannot coordinate for every decision or implementation. Therefore, they choose people to represent them in different parts of government. But for the people to know that their



Myanmar Press Council Vice President U Ohn Kyaing (Hanthawaddy U Ohn Kyaing) delivers the speech at the meeting of four pillars of government yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

elected officials are carrying out their will and not abusing their power, the people need information, and that is supplied by the media, which is why the media needs more autonomy than it currently has.

Deputy Minister U Aung Hla Tun spoke about the importance of cooperation among the four pillars to show the interna-

tional community the real image and situation in Myanmar.

“The news needs to be accurate, correct and unbiased, and for that to be realised, cooperation is the key”, he said. He added that if there is no cooperation with the other three pillars, then the news will be distorted as it is not verified by the respective department. This will lead to

misinformation, rumours and overall sloppiness with mistakes generating an obstructive image of the country.

Hanthawaddy U Ohn Kyaing then spoke at the meeting and compared the four pillars of government to actual pillars supporting a house and sheltering the people and its inhabitants.

The meeting ended with the

participants agreeing on numerous topics including reviewing media law, establishing media for ethnicities as a prominent sector, requesting ministries to hold monthly press conferences, appointing spokespersons to region and state government to provide updates to the media, compiling and sending a contact list of journalists and reporters to ministries, establishing a press corner in government departments and Hluttaw buildings, and holding regional-level meetings for the four pillars of government.

Attending the meeting were Dr. Pe Myint, U Aung Hla Tun, various officials from the three pillars of government, numerous officials from the states and regions, Myanmar Press Council Vice President U Ohn Kyaing (Hanthawaddy U Ohn Kyaing) and council members including Dr. Myo Thant Tin, and representatives from Myanmar Journalists Association, Myanmar Journalists Network, Myanmar Journalists Union, Burma News International, and the Myanmar Women's Journalists' Society.— Myanmar News Agency ■

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

Yadanar Hninsi Residence in Dagon Seikan, Yangon. **PHOTO: GNLM/PHOE KHWAR**

Income tax reduction likely to boost real estate market

By May Thet Hnin

Realtors are expecting the reduced income tax under the 2018 Union Tax Law to stimulate the real estate market, which has been cool for the last three years.

The new law will come into force from 1 April 2018.

"The real estate market will become buoyant from late April. Though the market will not rise significantly, it will grow gradually. The prices of property will remain unchanged for six months to one year. After one year, the real estate market will look up," said U Khin Maung Than, chairman of Myanmar Real Estate Services Association.

Earlier, an income tax of 15 to 30 per cent had to be paid on the trading value of property. According to the new 2018 Union Tax Law, taxpayers will have to pay only 3 per cent on the trading value within the first six months, from April to September, while those paying income tax in the second half have to pay 5 per cent.

Buyers and sellers will have

The real estate market is likely to grow on account of a decrease in the income tax.

to pay only 7 to 9 per cent tax, including 3 or 5 per cent income tax, and 4 per cent stamp duty.

The reduction in tax is likely to persuade traders who evaded tax in previous years to pay tax and make changes in ownership.

Entrepreneurs are satisfied with the reduction in tax, as the real estate market has been cool since 2014.

"We are glad about the slash in tax by the government. This is a great move by the elected government for the real estate industry. The sector will see more money. It will help raise the GDP," said U Khin Maung Than.

U Than Oo, managing director of Mandine Real Estate Agency, said that tax cuts will result in better real estate deals

and a possible decrease in real estate prices.

The real estate market is likely to grow on account of a decrease in the income tax. However, the stock market, automobile market, gold export/import market and banking operations are also competitive investment options. As there are many markets that can catch the investor's eye, price manipulation will not be seen significantly in the real estate market, he said.

Tax cuts will provide opportunities to foreign investors observing the local real estate market. In addition to this, related businesses in the construction sector will also do well.

Yangon Region Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein noted that there will be many projects

which will be implemented within three years, such as low-cost apartment projects in Yangon Region, a new city project in Kyimyintdine Township, and the Yangon Special Economic Zone, which will be developed in Kungyangon Township, among others. Property prices are likely to drop in the future. As a consequence, home ownership rates will increase. U Khin Maung Than pointed out that such activities are a driving force for the growth of the real estate market.

"The Yangon Region Chief Minister considers this as an effort towards economic development activities in the currency, gold and real estate markets, along with the new tax system," he noted during a meeting with entrepreneurs from the construction industry held on 17 February.

Property prices have dropped by 30 per cent to 65 per cent depending on their location in the past three years. Investors have therefore turned to banking operations. ■



A farmer works at an organic muskmelons farm in Nay Pyi Taw. PHOTO: AYE MIN SOE

Myanmar exports more muskmelons to China this fiscal year

MUSKMELON exports to China in the last 10 months of the current fiscal year (FY) reached more than 56,900 tonnes, at an estimated value of US\$11.6 million, according to news released by the Ministry of Commerce yesterday.

During the same period last FY, more than 44,400 tonnes, worth \$9.07 million, were exported to China.

A tonne of muskmelon fetched a minimum price of 1,500 yuan and a maximum price of 8,500 yuan last year, whereas the prices saw a slight decrease this year, ranging from 1,000 yuan to 6,200 yuan. The prices of muskmelons vary, depending on their quality.

Myanmar's muskmelons are sent out to China through the Muse 105th mile, mostly be-

tween November and December. Muskmelons are grown in the Mandalay, Sagaing and Bago regions. The growing demand from China has encouraged growers to expand their muskmelon cultivation farms.

Growers need to adopt advanced growing methods to boost the production and quality of fruits to penetrate more foreign markets.—GNLM ■

6th International Myanmar Pearl Auction to be held in Hong Kong

The 6th International Myanmar Pearl Auction will be held in Hong Kong from 23 to 25 February 2018, according to a report in Myawady Daily yesterday.

Myanmar pearls, which are produced from Myeik, will be showcased at the auction. Annually, the Myanmar pearl auction is held three times: once in the country with Myanmar kyat, the second time also in the country with foreign currency,

and the third time abroad.

Since 2013, the Myanmar Pearl Auction is being held in Hong Kong and has seen good international market penetration. According to trends observed during the local and international exhibitions, merchants from Asian and European countries mostly bought pearls from the Taninthayi region. Japan, China, Singapore, India, Thailand, Canada and

the United States also bought Myanmar pearls. Among them, merchants from Japan, China and India were most interested in Myanmar pearls.

Myanmar pearls have become popular and are now highly valued. Myanmar sold nearly 1.1 million pearls from the 2011-2012 fiscal year (FY) to the 2015-2016 FY. In the 2016-2017 FY, Myanmar sold more than 200,000 pearls.—GNLM ■

Thailand eyes Myanmar garlic from Northern Shan State

THE price of Myanmar garlic grown in the Northern Shan State has increased because Thailand is buying the good-quality garlic these days, according to the Garlic Cultivation Group.

"Thailand mostly buys the Htoo-1 and Htoo-2 (Myanmar garlic species) varieties. The price of Htoo-1 and 2 is between Ks3,000 and Ks3,500 per viss. The taste of garlic grown in Myanmar is better than that grown

in China. Previously, garlic from the Northern Shan State was sent to India through the Monywa road. However, it is not sent to India anymore, said U Than Muang, a businessman from the Garlic Cultivation Group.

Local farmers from the Southern Shan State cultivate nearly 30,000 acres of garlic, producing in excess of 90,000 tonnes. Garlic is cultivated mainly in Taunggyi, Pinlaung

and Hopong townships.

The production rate of garlic differs depending on the cultivated land, weather conditions and inputs. However, we usually export garlic produced in this region to Thailand," said U Myat Zaw, a local garlic cultivator from Mongpan township.

Garlic from Shan State is sent to Yangon brokerage, as well as Thailand, through Tachilek.—Zar Lin Thu (AMIA) ■

THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

တနင်္ဂနွေနေ့စဉ်: "Sunday Special" အချုပ်စီ (၈)
မျက်နှာပေါင်သော The Global New Light of Myanmar
နေ့စဉ်ထုတ် သတင်းစာကို အောက်ပါမြို့များတွင် ဖတ်ရှုနိုင်ပါပြီ

THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

SUNDAY SPECIAL

Three dead, one hurt in IED explosion in Maungdaw Tsp

"Sunday Special" အချုပ်စီ (၈) မျက်နှာ ပေါင်သော

နေပြည်တော်
မြန်မာ့ရေးရာကြီးကြားရေးအဖွဲ့ (၇) နေပြည်တော်၊
သတင်းနှင့်စာနယ်ဇင်းလုပ်ငန်း (ရုံးချုပ်)၊
စီမံခန့်ခွဲမှုဌာန၊ ဖုန်း - ၀၆၇ ၄၁၂၁၁၈

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ရန်ကုန်
The Global New Light of
Myanmar သတင်းစာတိုက်၊ အမှတ် ၁၅၀၊
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မန္တလေး
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ကလေး
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ဝင်စေ့
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ခြောက်
မေတ္တာလမ်း၊ ရှမ်းချောင်းရပ်၊ ကလွင်ကျေးရွာအုပ်စု၊
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မော်လမြိုင်
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ငုံရွာ
နန်ဝန်ရပ်ကွက်၊ ဆက်သွယ်ရေးတာဝါတိုင်အနီး၊
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47-member leading committee meeting of 7th State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee concludes

THE annual meeting of the 47-member leading committee of the 7th State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee concluded at the Wizaya Mingalar Dhammathabin Hall on Kaba Aye Hill in Yangon yesterday.

Chairman Sayadaw of the State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee Abhidhaja Maharattha Guru Abhidhaja Agga Maha Saddhamma Jotika Bharmo Sayadaw Dr. Bhaddanta Kumarabhivamsa president over the meeting and Joint-Secretary Sayadaw Agga Maha Pandita Bhaddanta Agga Dhamma acted as the master of the ceremonies.

The meeting was attended by member sayadaws of the State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee.

During the last day of the meeting, member Sayadaws discussed the code of conduct, religious affairs and educational affairs and decided over the issues.

The meeting also put on record on measures taken during the fifth period of the duty taken by the third branch of the



The last day meeting of the 47-member leading committee of the 7th State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee held at the Wizaya Mingalar Dhammathabin Hall in Yangon yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

7th State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee.

Union Minister for Religious Affairs and Culture Thura U Aung Ko and officials of the ministry were present at the meeting.

In first day meeting on Tuesday, Bharmo Sayadaw stressed the need to publish books on Theravada Buddhism after scrutiny, to prevent disputes over writings in the books.

He also called for enforce-

ing religious rules on presiding sayadaws of monasteries, monks and novices.

Sayadaw Dr. Bhaddanta Kumarabhivamsa also suggested the sayadaws join hands with local authorities to prevent

groups from seeking donations from people for the construction of religious buildings.

Following his opening address, Thura U Aung Ko supplied matters on religious affairs.— Myanmar News Agency

2nd Four-pillar Workshop holds in Nay Pyi Taw

THE second four-pillar workshop attended by personnel from the legislative, executive, judiciary and media sectors was conducted at the meeting hall of the Ministry of Information in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning.

The following are excerpts of interviews of attendees of the workshop.



Dr. Tin Tun, Member of the Myanmar Press Council

There are a lot of things to say at the workshop. As for our media world, we can be able to make any comments freely regarding the obstacles facing our country for the time being now. Media freedom, of course, can enhance the development of the country. If we don't have any rights to point out or make a comment on the wrong-doings of the governance, the fourth pillar would be no more than a show-off or display. Actually the fourth pillar ought to be for the benefits and interests of the public. The public has equal rights to enjoy freedom of speech and freedom of media as well. For me, I have attended similar workshops. In my opinion, there aren't many differences between the workshops. To be exact, we can witness the progress of the situation during the interim.



U Thiha Saw, Vice President of Myanmar Press Council

The main thing is that the relationship between the media personnel and other three pillars -- Executive, Judiciary and Legislative -- should be improved. We managed to reach 16 agreements including right of access to information and full cooperation between government officials and media personnel in the first workshop at that time. We are going to discuss which agreements have actually worked. It is certain that all the agreements cannot be made at one sitting. Therefore, we shall strive to proceed step by step according to the procedures. It is of vital importance to get a free, independent and powerful media which can acknowledge the other three pillars.



Dr. Than Win, Secretary of Pyithu Hluttaw Health and Sports Development Committee

It is of paramount importance to launch a workshop which can allow media personnel and representatives of the other three pillars at this workshop to meet. In the process of drawing up the laws, officials concerned of the relevant ministry and organisations have to talk and negotiate again and again in order to be accomplished. There are many points which can be applied during the first forum which had reached 16 agreements. For our committee, we are going to negotiate with other pillars so as to gain freedom of media and rights. Only when the fourth pillar is strong will the other three pillars be powerful enough to proceed.—Myanmar News Agency

Two jade scavengers killed in slag heap collapses in Kachin

A jade scavenger was killed in a slag heap collapse at an abandoned jade mine in Hpakant Township, Kachin State on 20 February.

The jade mine is being operated by Ever Jade Mining Company near Kahtan Ward in Phakant Township. The jade scavenger was identified as Nyein Htay, 35 years of age,

said Thein Zaw, nephew of the deceased.

Another jade scavenger identified as Pho Phyu, 24 years of age died in a landslide at Namma jade mine in Mohnyin Township, Kachin State on 19 February. Investigations into the cases is ongoing, according to the Ministry of Home Affairs.—MDN ■

Two people killed in bomb blast at Yoma Bank branch in Lashio

Two people were killed in a bomb blast at Yoma Bank branch on Lanmadaw Street, Ward 3 in Lashio, Northern Shan State, yesterday evening.

Some 15 people, including 11 women and four men, were injured in the explosion. The injured have been admitted to hospital. Four men and four women were undergoing

treatment at Lashio General Hospital. Daw Sanda Tun, 46 and Daw Maw Maw, 43 are staff of the Yoma Bank were killed on the spot.

The blast severely damaged the interior of Yoma Bank and several adjacent buildings. The police are investigating the cause of the explosion.—Myanmar News Agency ■



Authorities clear after a bomb blast at Yoma Bank branch in Lashio, Northern Shan on 21 February. **PHOTO: SUPPLIED**

Indian tourists visit Myanmar via Tamu border gate

A large number of tourists are visiting Myanmar for its unique natural scenes, eco-tourism and archaeological sites.

Myanmar now has a culture-based tourism industry, which allows tourists to observe the traditions and culture of the ethnic people. Tourists are arriving by air, sea and road. Moreover, tourists are also coming to Myanmar by vehicles, motorbikes and bicycles.

An India tour group of six tourists, travelling in their own

car, visited Myanmar through the Tamu border gate on 13 February.

They visited Myanmar through an arrangement with the Silver Hill Travels and Tours Co. Ltd, and under the supervision of the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism.

The tourists visited significant places along the Tamu-Kalay-Monywa-Mandalay-Yangon-Myawady town route. The tour group left the country, heading to Thailand via the Myawady border gate, on 16 February. —GNLM ■



Sidewalks and railing fences of the moat in Mandalay will be renovated. **PHOTO: SUPPLIED**

Sidewalks and steel railings around Mandalay moat are renovated

Renovation of the sidewalks and railing fences of the moat in Mandalay will be undertaken by the Mandalay City Development Committee. The financing will come from a fund in the amount of Ks.400 million that is appropriated for the project to beautify the surroundings of the moat.

The MCDC commenced the project of repairing the sidewalks and the steel railings on 26th Street, and it is expected to be complete by the end of March, according to an official from the MCDC.

“We have an appropriat-

ed budget of Ks. 400 million to beautify the surroundings of the moat and to renovate the Man Thida Park. When the Central Command takes responsibility for the project to renovate the Park, all of the Ks. 400 million will go exclusively to the project” said U Kyaw San Myint, a member of the Mandalay City Development Committee.

During the substitution of the railings, workers will use dull coloured steel railings in order not to tarnish the pristine beauty of the moat. Mandalay residents and the Mandalay Technological

University have sent designs of the railing to the committee and it will select the design which is the most suitable for the cultural environment.

“It’s good renovating the pavements and the railings around the moat; since they are in poor shape, the city look ugly,” said U Khin Maung Kyi, a resident in Mandalay.

The MCDC decided to renovate the pavement and railing because there are many rat holes under the pavement and the base of the fence of the moat is not as strong as it used to be.—MDN ■

CTDC chosen as preferred bidder for Yangon Central Station Project

By May Thet Hnin

THE Central Transport Development Consortium (CTDC) has been chosen as the preferred bidder to carry out a US\$2.5 billion redevelopment project at the Yangon Central Railway Station, according to a release of the CTDC.

The project will involve developing the station and the surrounding 63 acres of undeveloped land. The development

project will comprise six different zones to include twin towers, business hotels, apartments, a park and a railway museum.

The Yangon Central Railway, which was built in 1954, will be restored. A new railway station with a rotunda roof will also be built next to the existing railway station building.

The project will take eight years, starting with the signing of the contract with the government. The project will create

more than 100,000 job opportunities for the local people.

The CTDC is made up of local firm Min Dhama Co Ltd, Singapore-based Oxley Holdings and China-based Sino Great Wall Company, each sharing 40 per cent, 30 per cent and 30 per cent, respectively. The CTDC was chosen from among 18 companies from 14 countries.

The contract will be made after a detailed discussion with the government. ■

US company to provide cloud technology

A US-based technology company will provide cloud technology to Myanmar, in cooperation with a local company, according to a report in Myawady Daily yesterday.

Net App, a US-based top technology company, has introduced a hybrid cloud technology

market, in cooperation with local company ATG system, for local banking, telecommunications, education and governmental organisations. The press conference on hybrid cloud technology and Net App’s local market prospects was held at Sule Shangri-La Hotel on

20 February.

Net App plays an important role in the global data management industry. Net App helps organisations ensure the management and re-sharing of data on premises, private and public clouds. —GNLM ■

Manufacture of agricultural machinery should be welcomed

WHILE making efforts for modernizing the agricultural sector, Myanmar is facing some challenges, including a shortage of farm labourers. There are several ways to solve that issue. Mechanized farming is one of the answers to overcome the manual labour shortage, which is a major problem in the country.

Without an adequate number of experienced workers in the field, farmers cannot plant and cannot harvest.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation has been making efforts to promote modernized and sustainable production techniques, package systems and marketing strategies, with a view to meet the demand from home and abroad.

On November 17, 2017, the Ministry of Commerce issued Notification No. 55/2017, under section (13) (B) of the Import and Export Law, which grants permission for joint ventures (JV) between foreign and domestic companies to carry out the retail or wholesale trade of agricultural machinery.

The move is intended to promote growth and mechanization in the farming industry. The government currently has to import agricultural machinery, as the domestic production of agricultural machinery cannot meet the demand. There are shortcomings to imported machinery, such as in difficulty of obtaining spare parts and the unfamiliar technology that becomes a challenge for farmers.

It is learnt that the Ministry of Industry has formed a joint venture with India's CNH Industrial Services and will manufacture agricultural machinery soon. In the project, Convenience Prosperity Co, a division of Yoma Strategic Holdings, will take part in the project with CNH Industrial Services.

The project is being established at Thagara Heavy Industrial Factory of the ministry and will produce three types of tractors under the New Holland brand.

The skill of labourers at the factory will play an important role in producing the machinery. To improve their skills, workers from the factory will be sent to India to receive on-the-job training as part of efforts for taking over the technology from India. Generally, India's companies bought technology from foreign countries and created their own technology after doing research based on overseas technology.

The steps taken by the Ministry of Industry to produce tractors and to distribute them to farmers is welcomed in the country.

Currently, the Agricultural Mechanization Department is providing agricultural services to farmers with the use of 2,820 tractors, 811 harvesters and 170 planters, employing more than 2,100 workers.

To fulfill the farmers' needs for land repairing and post-harvesting, a further 8,600 more tractors, more than 123,700 power tillers, and over 65,900 harvesters and post-harvest machines will be required. The cost is too high for the government.

The joint venture system between the government and local and foreign investors is the best system to overcome the challenges.

Boosting the country's agriculture

By Dr. Thein Htay

THE agricultural sector is the backbone of Myanmar's economy. The country's economic development depends mainly on agricultural productivity, which sets goals for the all-round development programmes.

Historically and at present, the country's economy has been dependent on the agriculture sector, which is the main livelihood for the majority of the people.

Agricultural goods are one of the largest export commodities, and the most important sector for the country's economy. The agriculture sector contributes to 20.1 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP), or about Ks11,357.41 billion.

In Myanmar, the majority of the country's population lives in rural areas due to the dependence on farmland and forests for their livelihoods in agriculture, which is an important growth engine of rural development.

About 17.7 per cent of Myanmar's land is used for agriculture, which is about 12 million hectares. Myanmar was once Asia's largest exporter of rice, and it still remains one of the country's most important agricultural commodities. Other main crops include corn, rice, maize, black gram, green gram, pigeon pea, chick pea, pulses, beans, onions, groundnuts, sesame, spices, ginger, potato, turmeric, sugarcane, sunflower, rubber, coffee and rubber. Among these rice, pulses and sesame, groundnut, raw rubber, vegetables and fruit are chief commodities.

The country has established 12 political, economic and social objectives in its efforts to establish a peaceful, modern and developed country. One of the major economic objectives is "development of agriculture as a base and all-round development of other sectors of the economy as well."

As for the ministry, aims and objectives were set for the emergence of a modern, developed nation. Moreover, the Ministry has laid down the necessary vision, mission, policy, objective and strategy to develop the agricultural sector of Myanmar.

At the same time, implementations are being made to increase the products of agriculture in order to preserve the trading business.

As long as the world's population increases, the percentage of the population dependent on the agriculture sector also increases. Myanmar, as a member of World Trade Organization (WTO), needs for its people to abide by the rules and regulations which are prescribed by the country.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation has been trying its best to export high-value finished products which can enhance the income and living standards of the farmers. The ministry is trying to produce more agricultural products.



Photo: GNLM/Phoe Khwar

And with foreign financial assistance, long-term, mid-term and short-term plans are being made to support the farmers and cultivators in producing high-value products instead of raw products. The Ministry is implementing the National Export Strategy, which will be able to get a good price for export items.

It is important for the farmers and cultivators to utilise high-yield and good quality seeds, and training should be conducted on advanced agricultural techniques. For sustainable agricultural development, research and development activities are essential to implement the process. The authorities should encourage transformation from conventional to mechanised agriculture.

It is of vital importance to justify and amend existing agricultural laws and regulations in line with the current economic situation so that we can invite international investment in the agriculture sector for the development of advanced agricultural technology and commercial agricultural production.

In addition, the government has also taken steps to update and streamline the existing laws and regulations which are in need of changing or replacing.

Although Myanmar is rich in natural resources and has a strategic location, the agriculture sector has underperformed over the past decades, especially in terms of productivity, equity and stability.

Basically, the country abounds in natural resources such as oil, natural gas, gems, forests, livestock and fisheries.

Currently, the country depends on

For sustainable agricultural development, research and development activities are essential

The ASEAN Free Trade (AFTA) is a trade bloc agreement by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations supporting local manufacturing in all ASEAN countries.

Myanmar has signed a number of Memoranda of Understanding to expand bilateral trade with those countries.

As a member of ASEAN, Myanmar participates in all inter-ASEAN agreements and multilateral free trade agreements with Australia, New Zealand, China, India, Japan, and South Korea, in order to attract foreign direct investment from these countries

The primary goals of AFTA seek to increase ASEAN's competitive edge as a production base in the world market through the elimination, within ASEAN, of tariffs and non-tariff barriers.

Myanmar has opened border trade points with neighbouring countries including India, Thailand and China, and is aimed at opening more trade points to further enhance the trading with these countries.

Efforts are being made for the sustainable economic plans, which are targeted at developing a market-oriented economy in Myanmar. Plans are also underway to strengthen farming production, enhance food security, increase exports and improve the living standards of the rural population, which depend on farming as the first and key source of income. Moreover, the government is reforming the laws and policies governing the country's agriculture sector to meet the set targets under the economic plan.

Translated by
Win Ko Ko Aung

MOOCs, the distance education system that should be considered for Myanmar UDE system

By Dr. Thazin Lwin

A MASSIVE Open Online Course-MOOC is an online course aimed at unlimited participation and open access via the web. In addition to traditional course materials such as videos, readings, and problem sets, MOOCs provide interactive teaching-learning-discussion mode by an academic community for students, professors, and teaching assistants and instructors. MOOCs are the natural evaluation of Open Course, first created by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology-MITT in 2001.

Massive

It should allow access to a very large number of students, much larger than a face-to-face class, or a traditional online course. The course should be prepared to accept changes in the number of students in several orders of magnitude.

Open

Open has several meanings in MOOCs.
*The course should be open to everyone and should not require some prerequisites.
*The access to educational resources (videos, lecture notes, e-books) should be free.
*It is often interpreted as the course makes extensive use of open content.
*The interpretation of "open" is the least fulfilled nowadays.

Online

The course is done remotely via the Internet and does not require physical attendance at a classroom. This feature is essential for anyone from anywhere in the world with an Internet connection can participate in these courses.

Course

It should have some learning objectives to be achieved by students after certain activities within a given period of time. It should have some quizzes and exams to assess the knowledge acquired by students. There should be some kind of interaction between students and teachers in every possible way (student-student and students-teacher).

Massive Online Open Course (MOOC) represents a recent trend in online education, with many universities offering quality courses through online platforms. MOOCs offer students an opportunity to learn from the best educators in some of the world's top universities with minimal cost. The rapid growth in technology makes MOOCs to be able to reach thousands of participants all over the world. MOOC platforms allow individuals who are interested to develop or teach some courses to make full use of the MOOC platforms, which are supported by cloud computing technology and integrated with other resources. However, it

is important to identify the student preferences and intentions, and take these into considerations at an early phase before further implementation of new MOOC courses.

Current MOOCs Providers

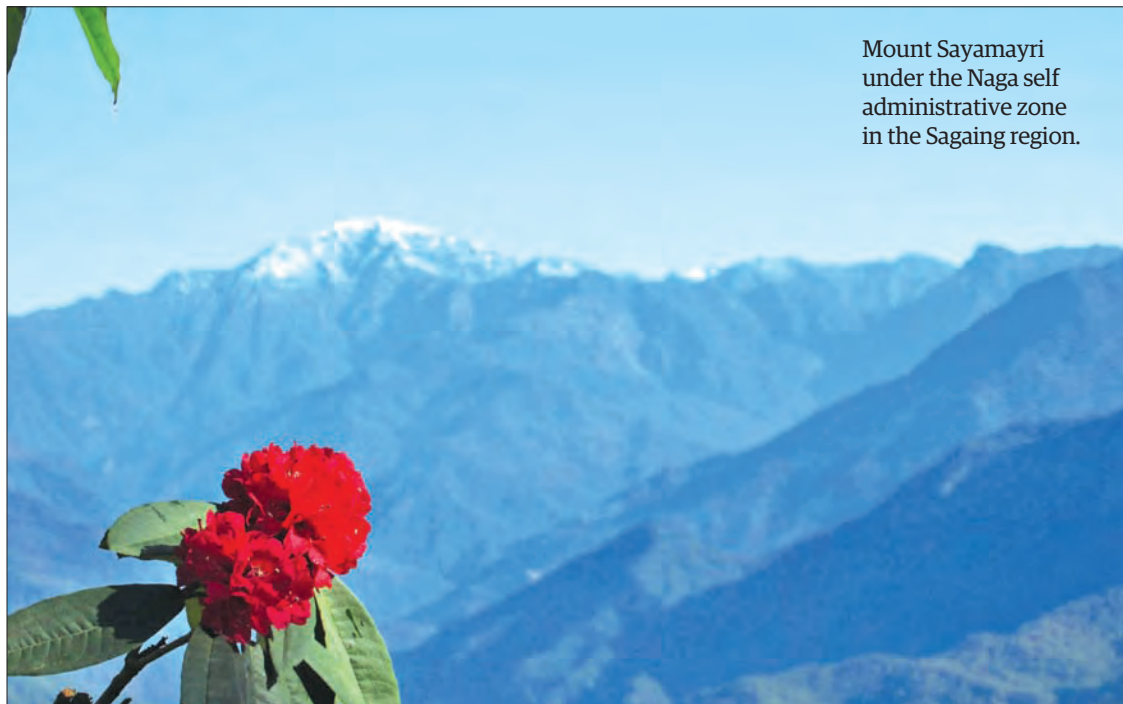
One of the main MOOC providers is edX, which is founded by Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Harvard University. Currently, there is a total of 20 to 30 MOOCs offered by edX. Another prominent MOOC provider is Coursera, which is a collaboration between a few venture capitalists, New Enterprise Associates and Kleiner; Perkins, Caufield & Byers Education with four (4) university partners, namely Stanford University, Princeton University and the Universities of Michigan and Pennsylvania. Coursera currently has 197 courses in 18 objects, including computer science, mathematics, business, humanities, social science, medicine, engineering and education. Another MOOC provider, UDACITY, is a start-up company funded by Sebastian Thrun, David Stavens and Mike Sokolsky. Currently, UDACITY offers 18 online courses in computer science, mathematics, general sciences, programming and entrepreneurship. Udemy, another MOOC provider, was founded by Insight Venture Partners currently offers over 5,000 courses. P2Pu was launched in 2009 with funding from the Hewlett Foundation and the Shuttleworth Foundation and currently offers over 50 courses. P2Pu is trying to improve the quality of the courses it offered relying on community-review, feedback and revision. Several similarities and variations are noted between these MOOC models of these providers and related to the models interaction to the participants, and, the content of these models.

Challenges of MOOCs

MOOCs offer a great opportunity for an Internet user to discover a new area of interest to take higher education. MOOCs grants the flexibility that many students need for knowledge acquisition. MOOCs motivate students to interact with other students who have the same interest. Being part of a universal class, participants can gain insight into attitude, thoughts, and trends among different people and nationality on a certain topic. Beside these benefits, the institutions face several challenges to apply MOOC efficiently. This issue is related to the participants and the courses which will be discussed below.

Very Low Completion Rates

This is the strongest argument against MOOCs, as there is supporting evidence to prove this. Research has shown that MOOCs completion rates can be as low as 7%, as learners' participation seems to start dropping even from the very first week of attendance. **SEE PAGE-11**



Mount Sayamayri under the Naga self administrative zone in the Sagaing region.

Forest area around Mount Sayamayri to be demarcated as protected

The Sagaing Region Forest Department will conduct a study tour to claim untouched natural forests around Mount Sayamayri under the Naga self administrative zone in the Sagaing Region as protected forest areas.

The study tour aims to maintain the undisturbed forest as a protected forest. There are three categories of forest areas: national parks, wildlife sanctuaries, and forest reserves and protected land areas. The Regional Government will help maintain the remaining forests, without abusing the rights, powers and customs of the local people. The aim is to maintain the natural forests for the long term and create a national park in cooperation with the locals. Some residents are concerned over possible harm to their culture and power. They are worried about the restriction on wearing ivory and other wildlife products, which are a part of their customs. However,



such acts are subject to punishment under the provision of the existing law.

The law is currently being amended. The locals are authorised to wear the products as part of their traditional customs. However, the sale of such products is banned. The state is preparing to enact an administrative law on the delegation of powers in the natural forests. "We will conduct a series of negotiations with the local residents to ensure they are

satisfied. There are a few mountainous farm areas, but they are not damaged owing to the small number of residents. We went on a field trip to the mountain, which is 1,800 feet above sea level. The forests are relatively similar to those on flat land. Trees that can produce precious wood are not seen here, except a few on the low mountains," said U Khin Maung Win, Director of Sagaing Region Forest Department.—Win Oo (Zeyar Tine) ■

Japanese govt. donates rice bags to displaced persons and disaster affected victims in Kachin

A ceremony to hand over 311,477 tons of rice to Kachin State government took place at Sama Duwa Sinwa Nawng Hall of the State Government office in Myitkyina this morning, with an address by Chief Minister Dr. Khet Aung.

The contribution was made by the Japanese Government under Tier 3 Programmes of the ASEAN Plus Three Emergency Rice Reserve (APTERR), according to a source from the In-

formation and Public Relations Department.

On behalf of the Japanese Government, Second Secretary from the Japanese Embassy Mr. Kazuyoshi Suzuki explained the purpose of the donation, saying the aid is a basic necessity for the people in Kachin State. Afterwards, General Manager of the APTERR Secretariat Mr. Chanpithya Shimphee and the Japanese representative handed over rice bags to the Kachin

State minister for social affairs who spoke words of thanks.

A total of 12,058 rice bags will be distributed to 3,180 households from 41 relief camps in Myitkyina District, 737 households from 23 relief camps in Mohnyin District, 116 households from 25 relief camps in Bhamo District, 73 households from two relief camps in Putao District and natural disaster affected victims in Sumprabum Area.—MDN ■

Two Reuters reporters, two prosecution witness appear at court

TWO Reuters reporters, who have been charged under the Official Secrets Act, appeared in court and two prosecution witnesses in the two reporters' hearing were testified yesterday.

Police Corporal Kyaw Lwin and Head of Kontalabaung Village U Win Lwin Oo, the first civilian to testify in the case of two reporters, were appeared in the Yangon North District Court.

"As the legal officer rejected the proposal of the defend lawyer to take action against the

prosecution witness appeared last hearing. So, the court rejected the proposal today," said U Ohn Khaing, Judiciary Officer of the court. The next hearing is scheduled for 28 February, according to the court.

Wa Lone, also known as Thet Oo Maung, and Kyaw Soe Oo, also known as Moe Aung, with the Yangon bureau of the Reuters news agency, were arrested on 12 December for illegally obtaining and possessing important and secret government documents.—Zaw Gyi ■

Yangon Mingalardon garden bazaar to be constructed in city

The Yangon Mingalardon garden bazaar will be constructed in the Mingalardon garden city this fiscal year, according to a report in Myawady Daily yesterday.

The Mingalardon garden bazaar will be constructed on a 124-acre plot in Mingalardon garden city, which is adjacent to the elevated highway project that connects the Yangon downtown area to the outskirts

of Yangon.

To be able to construct the Mingalardon garden bazaar, the Human Settlement and Housing Development Department had lent the land under a 60-year contract in 2017.

The project will be implemented within five years. The Mingalardon garden bazaar will include apartments, markets, offices, a school, a hospital and other buildings.—GNLM ■

Gun and bullets seized from car owner in Tachilek

A local police force rushed to a scene after they received information that a vehicle plunged into a creek near Parkwae Village in Tachilek on 19 February. The law enforcement officials took the vehicle to a traffic police office and confiscated one .38 pistol, 26 bullets from 9mm

luger and three magazines from a man identified as Ar T (alias) Aik T, 30 years of age who is allegedly the owner of the car.

He has been charged with possession of a weapon by the local police, according to a source from the Ministry of Home Affairs.—MDN ■



Only 20 sewage treatment plants in Yangon Region

Of the 3,470 factories operating in the Yangon Region, only 20 have sewage treatment plants, U Hla Maung Thein, Director of the Environmental Conservation Department, told Myawady Daily.

Several factories have been dumping gallons of raw sewage into the river and lakes, especially liquor and beverage producing factories. This will affect the environment negatively, harming the public's health and the ecosystem of biodiversity.

Factories will be inspected for environmental management plans and wastewater treatment plant activities, said U Hla Maung Thein. Factories are encouraged to strictly adhere to environmental emission guidelines while setting up wastewater treatment plants within nine months, as mentioned in the official announcement. If they fail to establish the wastewater treatment plant and abide by the prescribed procedures, action will be taken against them under the existing laws. —GNLM ■

WWF-Myanmar organises study visit to raise environmental awareness among Myanmar's youth

WWF-Myanmar organised a study visit programme, called Touching Nature, in collaboration with Dawei Development Association and Dawei University which aim to raise environmental awareness among young people in Myanmar.

The participants have visited the neighbourhood of Dawei township of Tanintharyi Region, where most of the WWF-Myanmar projects located, for three days since 18th February.

"Touching Nature is a study programme which let the youth to observe the benefits nature can give and the importance of environmental conservation," said Hanna Helsing, Green Economy Programme Manager, WWF-Myanmar, "The participants got an opportunity to learn more about benefits from the nature while having a fun trip with this programme."

With the aim to support the conservation of Myanmar's nature and ecosystem, this programme mainly targeted young generation. Those 5 participants from Yangon and 10 participants



Photo: WWF

from Dawei were selected from the applicants of the age between 18-25 in January.

With the Touching Nature programme, the participants have visited the watersheds areas and mangrove, community forests and villages in the neighbourhood of Dawei and learned

the relationship between people and the nature, benefits from the ecosystems and how important they are.

"I got an opportunity to learn the relationship between human and nature during this trip. And about the mangrove forests too. I would like to try my

best to raise awareness about the importance of mangrove forests when I get back to my town, Dala," said Thet Htar San, a 3rd year Botany student from Yangon University, "Touching Nature did help us to touch the nature as per its name." —GNLM ■

MOOCs, the distance education system . . .

FROM PAGE-8-9

Many attribute these low completion rates to lack of interaction or to the fact that completion is not important, as learners usually enter to look for a specific piece of information they need. The fact that MOOCs are given for those people who were initially interested in the subject matter or committed to complete the MOOC course. As a matter of fact, there are other studies mentioning that learners who were asked to pay a small fee had shown higher completion rates. Therefore, it is safe to conclude that low completion rates have nothing to do with the quality of MOOC courses, nor with the degree of satisfaction online learners may experience.

Low Motivation

It is generally true that self-study requires commitment and self-discipline. In most cases especially for asynchronous MOOC courses, learners may not be motivated enough to keep up with their online content. In synchronous e-Learning, however, this is part of the duties of the facilitator of the MOOC course.

Low Perceived Value Compared to University Degrees

Another major reason why MOOCs are not so widely spread yet is because they are considered to be "competitive" to university attendance. MOOCs give everyone the opportunity to access academic material and even acquire an online degree, which raises a series of questions, such as the future of instructor-led classroom, physical or virtual; the real value of university degrees earned online compared those earned at a college or university campus. Again, seeing MOOCs under the concept of lifelong learning and advertising them as such may be the answer to this issue.

Completion Among MOOC Providers and Smaller Academic Institutions

The decision to offer MOOC programs or not, also affects the way actual universities and colleges operate. Are MOOCs the new face of academic institutions for the 21st century? How does the private sector enter the game? Are small colleges willing buy MOOC material from

other universities, or even, private companies, or they will try to build their own MOOC material? Can they afford to do so? Is this not a typical example of unequal opportunities? From an instructor's and organizational point of view, it requires extensive time, money, effort and devotion to build a new MOOC course, and smaller colleges certainly neither do they possess the resources to develop them, nor the worldwide reputation to "market" them.

Time and the participant's motivation are the most cited issues caused the high dropout rate. Our critical review has highlighted many issues pertaining to the rate of completion, which have been further deliberated by the authors. Coursera and edX are contemplating charging a reasonable fee for issuing non-credit certificates. According to Coursera, it could function as a head-hunter, providing names of its top performing pupils to prospective employers, much on the lines of Udacity. The accreditation issue too is not impossible to tackle. Furthermore, few of the MOOCs students have managed

to receive transfer credits for the courses by means of another university. This included PhD students who made arrangements to have assignments graded by tutors at the university where they were enrolled. Furthermore, the technology deployed to deliver MOOCs is not fully developed and as user friendly as it ideally should be. Of course, this situation could change sooner, as edX has vowed to make its platform available free for all. Notably, complicated match subjects like mathematics and physics are quite tough to understand in the absence of assessments. All prior studies have highlighted the inadequate feedback to students' queries during the lectures, and the need for evaluation, given the high volume of low completion rates of the enrolled students for MOOCs.

Many MOOCs initiatives continue to report high completion rates among participants. Several studies reviewed to conclude crucial factors for the high dropout rate in MOOCs: lack of time, lack of learners' motivation, feelings of isolation and the lack of interactivity in MOOCs, insuf-

ficient background and skills and hidden costs. Some techniques should be used to increase the online completion rate, and allow more online participants to graduate. For example: accommodating students to different timetables, promoting student completion or enhancing "students to students and students to instructors" interaction as well as increasing online learning skills.

Conclusion

MOOCs is considered a modern education mode which can benefit Myanmar students of the University of Distance Education which can help them reduce the cost and allow the students to consume their study time as freely as possible. While Myanmar is transforming its education system in this critical period, we need to seek possible options which can bring a quick-win to the transformation of the education system within the scope of internationalization in education.

(Dr. Thazin Lwin is a Professor, (Head) of Chemistry Department, Yangon University of Distance Education (YUDE))

Oxfam investigates new sexual misconduct cases as MPs grill bosses

LONDON — Oxfam revealed on Tuesday it was investigating 26 new cases of sexual misconduct since the crisis erupted over its handling of a 2011 prostitution scandal in Haiti, which the British charity called a “wake-up call”.

Chief executive Mark Goldring told a parliamentary committee in London that the cases varied in their seriousness, while 16 related to its international operation.

“They range in time frame from more recent events to long historic events where people did not report them at the time,” he said.

Goldring added he believed the latest cases had emerged as “a direct response to the publicity” around the Haitian scandal.

“We really want people to come forward,” he added.

The Oxfam chief was unable to provide further details on the cases when pressed by British lawmakers.

The committee said it would be conducting its own inquiry into abuses in the foreign aid sector. Three of Oxfam’s most senior leaders repeatedly apologized for the charity’s handling of an internal investigation into the use of prostitutes by staff in Haiti following the devastating 2010 earthquake.

Caroline Thomson, chair of trustees, said: “It’s right to



Oxfam CEO Mark Goldring apologized “wholeheartedly” on behalf of Oxfam for the sexual misconduct scandal. **PHOTO: AFP**

admit this has been a real wake-up call.”

The charity revealed 7,000 regular donors had been lost since the scandal emerged following reporting by The Times newspaper.

It said safeguards had been put in place following the 2011 probe, but admitted they had not gone far enough.

Thomson vowed to take “personal responsibility” for ongoing reform: “I have decided that we need to have more focus

on safeguarding.”

Last week, Oxfam unveiled an action plan to tackle sexual harassment and abuse, including creating a new vetting system for staff.

The charity formally also apologized to Haiti on Monday over the scandal and for failing to report the matter adequately.

“Oxfam should have reported the matter to the Haitian authorities,” Goldring told lawmakers.

“It was not for Oxfam to de-

cide whether a crime had been committed... that was the wrong decision.”

Tip of the iceberg?

Oxfam had made public on Monday its 2011 report into the episode, revealing that three staff had physically threatened a witness in the prostitution investigation.

The report, compiled in the year after the workers were deployed to Haiti, found that a total of seven staff were accused

of using prostitutes at an Oxfam-funded residence.

Four staff were fired for gross misconduct and three others, including then country director Roland Van Hauwermeiren, were allowed to quit.

Stephen Twigg, chair of the international aid committee hearing the testimony on Tuesday, was blunt in his assessment.

“Demonstrably, you have got to get your house in order,” he told its leadership.

As part of its broader probe into sexual misconduct in the sector, the panel also questioned Kevin Watkins, chief executive of Save the Children UK. He revealed tentative figures that the charity dealt with 193 cases of “child safeguarding” issues in 2016, leading to 53 full investigations, 20 case referrals to police and 11 staff dismissals. “The difficult thing to know in these circumstances is whether you’re catching the tip of the iceberg or whether you’re catching the iceberg itself,” Watkins said.

The BBC reported on Tuesday that one of Watkins’ predecessors left the charity while facing three complaints of inappropriate behaviour towards female staff. Former CEO Justin Forsyth was accused in 2015 of sending inappropriate texts and making comments on what female staff were wearing. —AFP ■

Russian large amphibious assault ship enters Atlantic

MURMANSK — The Russian Northern Fleet’s large amphibious assault ship Alexander Otrakovsky has completed accomplishing missions as part of Russia’s permanent Mediterranean taskforce and taken its course towards its home port of Severomorsk, the Fleet’s press office reported on Monday.

“The warship has sailed through the Strait of Gibraltar and entered the Atlantic,” the press office reported.

In the first half of March,

the warship will arrive at the Northern Fleet’s main base in Severomorsk in northwest Russia, the press office said.

The warship Alexander Otrakovsky has been in distant waters since 12 September, 2017. Its crew accomplished missions to ensure naval presence in operationally important areas of the Mediterranean and Black Seas. Over this time, the warship has covered a distance of several dozen thousand nautical miles.—Tass ■



Alexander Otrakovsky large amphibious assault ship. **PHOTO: TASS**

N Korea canceled planned meeting with Pence at last minute: US

WASHINGTON — US Vice President Mike Pence was to have met with Kim Yo Jong, the younger sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, during the Winter Olympics in South Korea, but the North's delegation pulled out "at the last minute," the State Department said on Tuesday.

"The possibility arose of a brief meeting with the North Korean delegation leaders...At the last minute, DPRK officials decided not to go forward with the meeting," department spokeswoman Heather Nauert said, using the acronym of North Korea's formal name, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

"We regret their failure to seize this opportunity," Nauert said in a statement.

Pence and Kim Yo Jong were both present at the 9 February opening ceremony of the Pyeong-



South Korean President Moon Jae In (front, 6th from R), US Vice President Mike Pence (front, 3rd from R), both accompanied by their wives, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe (front, 2nd from R), International Olympic Committee President Thomas Bach (front, 3rd from L), Kim Yong Nam (back, 5th from R), president of the Presidium of the Supreme People's Assembly of North Korea, and Kim Yo Jong (back, 6th from L), North Korean leader Kim Jong Un's younger sister, listen to the South Korean national anthem during the opening ceremony of the Pyeongchang Winter Olympics in South Korea on 9 February, 2018. **PHOTO: KYODO NEWS**

chang Olympics.

Earlier Tuesday, the Washington Post reported the two sides had agreed to a "secret meeting" on 10 February at the Blue House in Seoul, but the

North Koreans pulled out of the scheduled meeting "less than two hours before."

Pence was scheduled to meet with Kim Yo Jong and Kim Yong Nam, North

Korea's ceremonial leader, in what would have been a first meeting between top officials from US President Donald Trump's administration and North Korea, the paper said in its on-

line edition. Tensions have been running high between the two countries, which have no diplomatic ties, as North Korea aggressively pursues development of a nuclear-tipped missile that could strike the mainland United States.

Pence's chief of staff Nick Ayers said on Tuesday that North Korea had "dangled" a meeting with the US vice president in hopes that doing so would help soften his tough stance on the country.

But after Pence condemned North Korea's human rights abuses and announced a plan for new US sanctions over the North's nuclear and missile programs, "they walked away from a meeting, or perhaps they were never sincere about sitting down," Ayers said in a statement.

Nauert said that while

Pence was ready to meet with the North Koreans, he would have used the opportunity to "drive home the necessity of North Korea abandoning its illicit ballistic missile and nuclear programmes."

"The maximum pressure campaign deepening North Korea's diplomatic and economic isolation will continue until North Korea agrees to credible talks on a way forward to a denuclearized Korean Peninsula," she said.

Ayers said Trump has made a decision that if Pyongyang wanted to talk, Washington would deliver its "uncompromising message." "Until they agreed to complete denuclearization we weren't going to change any of our positions or negotiate," Ayers said.—Kyodo News ■

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V SEA PEARL VOY. NO. (003)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V SEA PEARL VOY. NO. (003) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 3-1-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of B.S.W where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

**SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S ARINMA SHIPPING PTE LTD**

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V ANAN BHUM VOY. NO. (211 N/S)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V ANAN BHUM VOY. NO. (211 N/S) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 22-2-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of MIP where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

**SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S NEW GOLDEN SEA LINES**
Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V XING FU SONG V.35

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V XING FU SONG V.35 are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 22-2-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of MITT-5 where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

**SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S COSCO SHIPPING
SPECIALIZED CARRIERS CO, LTD.**

Phone No: 2301928

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V MEANAM-1 VOY. NO. (007 N/S)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V MEANAM-1 VOY. NO. (007 N/S) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 22-2-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of H.P.T where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

**SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S INTER ASIA LINES**
Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V NASICO FOGLE V.01/2018

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V NASICO FOGLE V.01/2018 are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 22-2-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of MITT-2 where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

**SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S COSCO SHIPPING
SPECIALIZED CARRIERS CO, LTD.**

Phone No: 2301928



UNICEF Myanmar is seeking Expression of Interest (EOI) from experienced and competent Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) to identify and pre-qualify potential partners for prospective partnership in specific result areas of County Programme 2018-2022.

Organisations interested in this Call for EOI should complete online form available at UNICEF Myanmar website www.unicef.org/myanmar/overview_13490.html no later than 8th March 2018.

Applications will be assessed by a committee using pre-defined criteria to identify CSOs that have the mandate, capacities and comparative advantage to support achievement of UNICEF programme results for children. It should be noted that participation in this EOI does not guarantee that the CSO will be ultimately selected. After pre-qualification, UNICEF Myanmar may request detailed proposals from pre-qualified organizations to select the CSOs for partnership.

All applications must be submitted in English. Any request for additional information and queries should be sent to CSO_EOI2018@unicef.org.

CSOs are requested to confirm on-line submission of application at CSO_EOI2018@unicef.org by completing the confirmation form given on the UNICEF Myanmar website.

Applicant CSOs will be informed of the outcome of their submissions by 1st week of April through a communication sent out to the email/postal address indicated in the on-line submission.

Sheeran and rising star Dua Lipa set to shine at Brits

LONDON — Folk-pop hit machine Ed Sheeran will go head-to-head with rising R'n'B star Dua Lipa at the Brit Awards in London on Wednesday, the country's showpiece pop-music ceremony.

The ceremony at the cavernous O2 Arena is expected to have a political edge, with many stars due to wear small white roses to highlight sexual harassment in the industry, and to show solidarity with its victims.

Sheeran's album "Divide", a global chart-topper, is on the shortlist for the "British Album of the Year", along with Dua Lipa, grime artist Stormzy, singer Rag'n'Bone Man and hip-hop artist J Hus.

In the "British Male Solo Artist" category, Sheeran is also up against Stormzy and Rag'n'Bone Man as well as former Oasis frontman Liam Gallagher and hip-hop singer Loyle Carner. He

is also running against Dua Lipa for the best video award.

Singer-guitarist Sheeran, 27, has already been honoured in 2018, winning the Grammy Awards for "Best Pop Vocal Album" ahead of Lady Gaga and Coldplay, and "Best Pop Solo Performance" for single "Shape of You".

His latest album "Divide" has smashed many records, including on streaming App Spotify, where it received 57 million listens on the day of its release.

Dua Lipa, 22, is the latest artist to break through on YouTube, and her single "New Rules" has surpassed one billion views on the video-sharing platform.

She is nominated in five categories, including "British Female Solo artist", along with Paloma Faith, who won the award in 2015, Kate Tempest, Jessie Ware and Laura Marling.

History of controversies

Born in London to Kosovo-Albanian parents, Dua Lipa tried modelling as a teenager before launching her musical career with a series of covers published on YouTube.

Her eponymous debut album, released in mid-2017, received rave reviews, with influential magazine NME praising her voice and a sound mature beyond her years.



Sheeran has already won the 2018 Grammy Award for "Best Pop Vocal Album". **PHOTO: AFP**

Other categories include "British Group", where the nominees are Gorillaz, London Grammar, Royal Blood, Wolf Alice and The xx and "International Group", which will be fought out between the Foo Fighters, Haim, The Killers, LCD Soundsystem and Arcade Fire. Budding soul sensation Sampha,

who won the coveted Mercury Prize in 2017, is nominated alongside Dua Lipa, J Hus, Loyle Carner and Dave in the "Breakthrough" category.

Taylor Swift, Lorde, Bjork,

Pink and Alicia Keys have all received nominations for the "International Female Solo Artist" award, with Childish Gambino, Beck, DJ Khaled, Drake and Kendrick Lamar all in the running for the male equivalent.

The Brit Awards have recognized the cream of British pop music since they were first held in 1977, but often attract controversy.

Pulp singer Jarvis Cocker invaded a performance by Michael Jackson in 1996 and then-deputy prime minister John Prescott was doused by a bucket of ice water in 1998.

This year's nominations have attracted criticism from the Daily Telegraph, which lamented the triumph of the "popular over the interesting, the successful over the plucky, and the beige over the bold."

—AFP ■



Dua Lipa is nominated in five categories, including "British Female Solo artist". **PHOTO: AFP**



Sampha. **PHOTO: AFP**

Berlin filmfest offers dark vision of E. European 'drift'

BERLIN — This week's Berlin film festival is turning a wary eye eastward with a series of new movies spotlighting the rise of violent extremism and anti-migrant sentiment in the ex-communist bloc.

The filmmakers show a region at a crossroads, divided between old loyalties to authoritarian Russia and forces trying to avert a drift away from the European Union and the West.

"They're isolated, don't want to share anything with other countries, they reject liberal values — this is the vision which is gaining strength in

former communist countries," said Czech director Jan Gebert, who presented "When the War Comes", a chilling documentary about a Slovak paramilitary group.

For three years, from 2015 to 2018, the 37-year-old filmed the rise of "Slovak Recruits" (Slovenski Branci), one of the country's leading far-right organisations.

The militia was founded in 2012 by Peter Svrcek, a then 20-year-old archaeology student, who drew up to 200 young middle-class men to join him in the woods and undergo weapons

training on the sidelines of their "civilian" lives.

The guns they use have been disabled but feel real in the clenched fists of the weekend warriors.

'Slavic blood'

Their ideology glorifies "Slavic blood", ultranationalism, hatred of refugees and foreigners, rejection of Europe and its values and a desire for a strong state on the model of Vladimir Putin's Russia.

Their goal? To halt the "invasion" of migrants, fight against "evil" and cure a "sick Slovak

society", Gebert said.

"It looks like Europe has to take moral lessons again," said Arpad Bogdan, a 37-year-old Hungarian director of Roma origin, who premiered his second feature film "Genesis".

The poignant movie focuses on a series of vicious racist attacks against Roma people in 2008-09 in Hungary in which six people including a child were killed.

"Genesis" examines how a tragedy targeting a minority contributes to a rot that is penetrating the entire society.

The film is inspired by

events in Hungary but "it is not a Hungarian film", Bogdan told AFP, because the violence and "evil" shown in "Genesis" have infected many parts of Europe.

This includes countries in the west of the continent, he said, such as Germany, where attacks against asylum seekers spiked at the height of the refugee influx in 2015-16.

"A lot of disturbing things are happening in Europe," the Hungarian director sighed, lamenting the populist, anti-migrant course charted by Viktor Orban, prime minister of Hungary since 2010.—AFP ■



Vincent van Gogh (1853 - 1890), "L'Arlésienne," 1890. PHOTO: AFP

Major Van Gogh exhibition opening in London next year

LONDON — Tate Britain has announced it will hold a major exhibition of work by Vincent Van Gogh next year, featuring the largest group of paintings by the Dutch artist to be shown in the UK in almost a decade.

Titled "Van Gogh and Britain," the show is said to be the first examining the artist through his relationship with Britain, exploring how he was inspired by British art, literature and culture and, in turn, inspired British artists such as Walter Sickert and Francis Bacon.

Van Gogh spent the years of 1873-1876 in London, where he arrived as a young trainee art dealer and ended up writing to his brother Theo, "I love London."

His enthusiasm for the city's culture — both in those early, formative years and later in his career — will be on display at Tate Britain, as seen in his responses to art by John Constable and John Everett Millais as well as in his love of British writers, including Shakespeare

and Charles Dickens. The latter in particular was a major, ongoing influence on the artist's style and subject matter, and the 1980 portrait "L'Arlésienne" features a book by Dickens in the foreground.

That work will be among more than 40 to go on display, coming from public and private collections around the world; others include "Starry Night on the Rhône" (1888, from the Musée d'Orsay); "Shoes" from the Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam, and 1888's "Sunflowers," a rarely loaned work from the National Gallery in London.

Van Gogh's love of British graphic artists and prints will also be explored: the artist collected around 2,000 engravings, most from English magazines, and as a struggling artist he is said to have written, "My whole life is aimed at making the things from everyday life that Dickens describes and these artists draw."

"Van Gogh and Britain" will be at Tate Britain from March 27 to August 11, 2019. —AFP ■

The art of theater: Oratory and communication skills for Arctic children

KRASNOYARSK — The first ever theater club for children from far-away settlement on the Taimyr Peninsula will open in Dudinka. Children from 7 years of age will learn secrets of theater arts and oratory; they will develop communication skills, as sometimes they face communication problems after living in very isolated environments, the project's organizers told TASS.

Theater lessons

The project was offered by the Mukistur community of the low-numbered indigenous peoples at Dudinka's school 1, the project's head Nadezhda Yermolina told TASS. Under the project, the school will have a class of theater arts and oratory, where professional teachers will be educating children. This is the first ever experience of a project, aimed at working with children from nomadic families on Taimyr.

"We are making all necessary preparations, so that it begins in September; at beginning of a new academic year," she said. "We shall teach 35 children from seven years of age, who live in the tundra."

The project's partner is a White Birds theater club in Dudinka. Its teachers have been work-

ing with the youth, and now they will teach Taimyr's indigenous children, who live in the tundra's settlements.

"Our work would be aimed at developing performance skills, the teachers will organize lessons in stage speech and actor's skills," the White Birds' head Marina Petrakova said, adding children from senior classes would make the theater essentials and costumes.

The initiative received support after Nornickel's competition among social projects. "Projects of the kind are very important for that area, as they are aimed at supporting traditional culture of Taimyr's indigenous peoples, at conditions for education of children and teenagers from the nomadic families, living in the tundra," the company's head of charity programs at the Polar branch Svetlana Rubashkina told TASS.

Developing communication skills and learning traditions

The project's organizers say the children living in the tundra are special first of all due to the living conditions. Until they are seven, when they begin school studies, together with the families they are wandering the tundra and quite often they would not have any other communication

than with the relatives.

"They do not have pre-school education, their oral speech is usually under-developed, they are tough to contact, very often they are not easy to make friends," Rubashkina said. "By participating in theater performances, the children will learn how to work in a team, how to perform, how to communicate with other people."

Besides the communication skills, the children will study and then promote their folk arts — many performances would be based on the Northern tales.

Competition of social projects

The competition of social projects, aimed at supporting public initiatives and at making conditions for sustainable development, is an important component of the World of New Opportunities charity programs, which Nornickel launched back in 2014.

Norilsk Nickel is a Russian diversified mining and metals company, the globally largest producer of nickel and palladium and the major producer of platinum, cobalt, copper, and rhodium.

The company produces also gold, silver, iridium, osmium, selenium, ruthenium, and tellurium. —Tass ■



The project's organizers say the children living in the tundra are special first of all due to their living conditions. PHOTO: TASS

Crimea looks forward to welcoming 6 million tourists in 2018

SIMFEROPOL — Crimea expects around six mln tourists in 2018, regional Tourism Minister Vadim Volchenko said on 15 Thursday February. In 2017, the number of tourists visiting Crimea slid back 3.2% to 5.39 mln (compared to 5.6 mln in 2016),

once the Russian government had lifted its ban on charter flights to Turkey. In 2016, a total of 4.6 mln tourists travelled to Crimea. "We expect around six million (tourists). I hope that the actual number will prove to be even larger; but I think

that specific estimates will be possible to make in May," Volchenko said. According to Chairman of the Crimean Parliament's Tourism Committee Alexei Chernyak, after the refurbished Simferopol International Airport and the Kerch

Straight Bridge are opened, the tourist inflow to Crimea is expected to surge. Crimea's spectacular coast awaits summer vacationers "This year, a new airport will be opened and the passenger traffic is expected to increase... Once it

reaches full operational capacity, the number of tourists will rise... Besides, the [Crimea] Bridge is also planned to be opened to traffic this year... which will lead to an increase in tourist traffic," Chernyak said. —Tass ■

Russia's Zagitova beats Medvedeva's short program world record at Olympics

PYEONGCHANG/South Korea — Russian figure skater Alina Zagitova has set a new world record in the short program at the Winter Olympic Games in South Korea's PyeongChang, earning 82.92 points. Zagitova beat the previous record in the short program set at the Olympics by another Russian figure skater Evgenia Medvedeva (81.61) just 10 minutes earlier.

Medvedeva, 18, who is competing in the Olympics for the first time, holds world records in the free program (160.46) and the sum of two programmes (241.31). Fifteen-year-old Zagitova, who won the 2018 European Championship and is the Grand Prix Final champion, said, "Emotions are running high. Have I set a world record? I didn't know, I'm

very glad." "It's not a secret for anyone that I have the most difficult programme in the world. If I perform it well, this will give the highest points in the world. We had worked on everything, even the smallest things," she noted. Canada's Kaetlyn Osmond came third with 78.87 points in the short programme.

—Tass ■



Alina Zagitova. PHOTO: TASS

Williams says terrifying health scare almost killed her

LOS ANGELES — Serena Williams says she lives in fear of blood clots, a condition that surfaced during a harrowing post-natal ordeal in September when she almost died giving birth to her first child.

In an op-ed piece she wrote for CNN on Tuesday, the tennis legend lifted the lid on her near-death experience while giving birth to daughter, Olympia, after getting blood clots in her lungs.

"I almost died after giving birth to my daughter," Williams said. The 23-time Grand Slam champion Williams said she had to have an emergency Cesarean section surgery after her heart rate plummeted dramatically during contractions. The surgery was successful and before she knew it she was holding the newborn. "But what followed just 24 hours after giving birth were six days of uncertainty," she said.—AFP ■

Royal Thanlyin beats University in U-18 MNL league match

IN the opening match of the U-18 Myanmar National League, Royal Thanlyin defeated University at Padetha Football field in Yangon yesterday.

The U-18 Myanmar National League, the country's newest football league, is comprised of players from many states and regions of Myanmar.

From the starting whistle, both teams played energetically. Though there were goal chances, neither team could convert.

After a hot, sweaty first half that was contested in the middle of the afternoon, the score was 0-0.

In the second half, Royal Thanlyin altered their strategy, slowing the play and increasing their accuracy.

The change in tactics paid off, as Royal Thanlyin got the icebreaker at the 56-minute mark that also turned out to be the winning goal.

The goal was scored with a beautiful kick by Saw Than Sein



Players from Royal Thanlyin and University FC vie for the ball in yesterday's U-18 MNL match at Padetha Football field. PHOTO: MNL

Htun, who converted a marvelous pass over the opponents' defence line. The pace of the match slowed dramatically in the later stages of the match as the temperatures increased

and the players tired. In other matches yesterday, the Dagon team trounced Silver Star by a score of 13-1 and Kachin United beat Mawyawady FC by a score of 2-1.—KyawZin Lin ■

Football collaboration between Myanmar, Japan to continue

Kyaw Zin Lin

COOPERATION between the Myanmar Football Federation (MFF) and the Japan Football Federation (JFF) will continue, it was announced on Tuesday.

With an aim to upgrade football education and skills for Myanmar youth, a delegation from the JFF met on Tuesday with U Zaw Zaw, the MFF president, and other officials, according to the MFF.

During their meeting, they discussed cooperation and planning between the two countries.

"Myanmar has recently founded football academies to discover and nurture

young, skilled players and to hold football tournaments and teach courses across the country.

As for the JFF, we are welcoming the more cooperation with Myanmar in football," said U Zaw Zaw.

The outcome of Tuesday's meeting, according to an MFF official, will be better collaboration, sharing of football strategies, training under the same roof and holding tournaments together.

The Japan Football Association is the governing body responsible for the administration of football in Japan.

It is responsible for the national team as well as club competitions. ■