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Wednesday, 28 February 2018



President U Htin Kyaw, fifth from right, First Lady Daw Su Su Lwin, third from right, and State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, fourth from left, offer a midday meal to members of the Sangha in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday, including Sayadaws who will receive religious titles. **PHOTO: MNA**

Union Government provides midday meals to members of the Sangha

THE Union Government offered midday meals to members of the State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee and Sayadaws who will receive religious titles at the Sasana Maha Beikman in the precinct of the Uppatasanti Pagoda in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

President U Htin Kyaw,

First Lady Daw Su Su Lwin, and State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi attended the ceremony and offered the lunches to the Sayadaws.

The ceremony was attended by the members of the Sangha led by Chairman of the State Sangha Maha Nayaka Commit-

tee Bhamo Sayadaw Dr. Bhaddanta Kumara Bhivamsa.

Also present at the ceremony were Vice President U Myint Swe and wife Daw Khin Thet Htay, Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker's wife Daw Nant Kyin Kyi, Chief Justice of the Union U Htun Htun Oo, Commander-in-Chief of

Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and wife Daw Kyu Kyu Hla, Chairman of the State Constitutional Tribunal U Myo Nyunt and wife Daw Htay Yi, Chairman of the Union Election Commission U Hla Thein and wife Daw Aye Thida,

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14th UPDJC meeting held at NRPC

The 14th Union Peace Dialogue Joint Committee (UPDJC) meeting was held at the National Reconciliation and Peace Centre (NRPC) in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday afternoon.

"The door remains open for ethnic armed organisations (EAOs) that are yet to sign the NCA (Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement). For its part, the UPDJC will support and urge these EAOs to sign the NCA," said Union Minister U Kyaw Tint Swe in his keynote address at the meeting, in his capacity as the Vice-Chairman of UPDJC.

The NCA was signed by the New Mon State Party (NMSF) and Lahu Democratic Union (LDU) in Nay Pyi Taw on 13 February. The two groups were warmly welcomed by UPDJC.

"UPDJC is leading the political dialogues to resolve and end armed conflict in the country, and ending the armed conflict in the country depends on political agreement. As the policy on federal matters can only be laid when political dialogues are successful, UPDJC is in a sector that is very important to keep peace in the union," he added.

At the 12th UPDJC meeting, the attendees decided the topics to be discussed during the Union Peace Conference-21st Century Panglong 3rd session.

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'BANK OF THE YEAR IN MYANMAR 2017'

Awarded by Financial Times (The Banker)

Pyithu Hluttaw

Road, bridge upgrades discussed at Pyithu Hluttaw

Aye Aye Thant,
Myo Thu Hein
(MYANMAR NEWS AGENCY)

THE upgrading of bridges and roads were among the issues discussed at yesterday's meeting of the Pyithu Hluttaw in Nay Pyi Taw.

The roads and bridges questions were answered by Deputy Minister for Construction U Kyaw Lin.

Responding to a question from U Nay Soe Aung of Wuntho constituency on building a new concrete bridge to replace the Maung Kaw Bridge in Wuntho Township on the Pinlebu-Wuntho-Sinkone road, the Deputy Minister said the bridge is a 115 ft. long R.P.T reinforced concrete bridge that has a 3.66 meter wide one-way road on it. The bridge is on the planned Muse-Namkham-Hti-chaint (Dikyi) -Wuntho-Pinlebu-Phaungpyin-Tamu main road that will connect India, Myanmar and China is planned to be upgraded to a two-way road bridge. Funds to upgrade the bridge will be requested starting from FY 2018-2019 and de-



Deputy Minister for Construction U Kyaw Lin. **PHOTO: MNA**

pending upon the availability of funds, it will be constructed, explained the Deputy Minister.

U Min Thein of Taungdwingyi constituency then asked if there was a plan to upgrade the Ohn Ne Tan-Kyaukphyutaw inter-villages road that is a bypass road around the Beikthano cultural site. The Deputy Minister replied that the ordinary rough earth road built by the villagers will be maintained to a hardened earth road starting from FY 2018-2019 and Magway Region government had already allocated fund in FY 2019-2020 and the road will be upgraded



Deputy Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation U Hla Kyaw. **PHOTO: MNA**

accordingly said the Deputy Minister.

Next, the Deputy Minister replied to a question by U Win Naing of Mogaung constituency on status of works conducted under B.O.T. system for a road section of the Myitkyina-Shwebo-Mandalay union road in Mogaung Township and Mogaung-Kamine-Hpakant road. Northern Taw Win Jade Company has been permitted to construct the Myitkyina-Namti-Tanai-Pansaung road section in Kachin State under a B.O.T. system with the recommendation of Kachin State government

and the company was able to lay only a 20 miles asphalt-concrete (AC) road from Namti to Lawa. The company was seen to site the unstable security situation as the reason for being unable to continue the work.

Funding will be requested starting from FY 2018-2019 for approach roads to the 12 bridges on Shwebo-Myitkyina road section and once funding is obtained, laying of an asphalt approach roads will be conducted. But the Deputy Minister added that there is no plan to build the Shwebo-Myitkyina road under a B.O.T. system. During a five-year period, a company recommended by the Kachin State government was permitted to construct the Mogaung-Kamine-Hpakant road section under B.O.T. system but it was unable to conduct any works on it siting security situation. After coordinating with the Kachin State government, Ministry of Construction took back the road section and start work on it with its own personnel. Similarly the Lawa-Pansaung road section will also be constructed by the ministry's engineering staff

explained the Deputy Minister.

Questions raised by U Phone Myint Aung of DaikU constituency, U Myint Oo of Bago Region Thanatpin constituency and U Oo Tun Win of Kyauktaw constituency were also answered by the Deputy Minister.

Afterwards, Deputy Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation U Hla Kyaw tabled a bill amending for the second time the Law of Protection of the Farmers Rights and Enhancement of their Benefits.

Following this, Bill Committee member U Htay Ngwe read explained the report of the committee on its findings and assessment of the bill amending for the second time the Law of Protection of the Farmers Rights and Enhancement of their Benefits.

Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U Win Myint announced for Hluttaw representatives who want to table the amendment to the bill to enroll their names.

The second Pyithu Hluttaw seventh session 24th-day meeting is scheduled to be held on 5 March. ■

Amyotha Hluttaw

2nd Amyotha Hluttaw 7th regular session 23rd day meeting

Aung Ye Thwin
(MYANMAR NEWS AGENCY)

THE 2nd Amyotha Hluttaw 7th regular session 23rd day meeting was held yesterday morning at the Amyotha Hluttaw meeting hall.

During the meeting, U Aung Kyaw Soe of Kayah State constituency (7) asked whether there was a plan to construct a new State High Court during fiscal year 2018-2019. Supreme Court Judge U Myint Aung said the Kayah State High Court had been renovated in 2011 by the Military Engineer Corp. Also, an extension building to the court was constructed using the Union Supreme Court budget of Ks 50 million in FY 2014-2015, with construction beginning on 16 October 2014 and completed on 28 January 2015. A 40x25 ft. and 12 ft. high township detention center was also built in Loikaw District during FY 2014-2015 and was in use after completion. As



Supreme Court Judge U Myint Aung. **PHOTO: MNA**

such, there is no plan to build a new State High Court in FY 2018-2019 replied the Supreme Court Judge.

U Sai Than Naing of Kayah State constituency (5) then raised a question on whether there is a plan to enact a law to dismiss a Hluttaw representative. Union Election Commission member U Aung Myint replied that a bill on this matter was debated in the first Pyidaungsu Hluttaw, but there was disagree-



Deputy Minister for Border Affairs Maj-Gen Than Htut. **PHOTO: MNA**

ment between the two Hluttaws and the bill committee conducted a re-assessment of the bill. The reassessment found that there were contentious matters that could affect national reconciliation and unity, and the bill committee reported to Pyidaungsu Hluttaw to enact the law only after detailed discussion is conducted on it.

The report was discussed by 15 Hluttaw representatives, after which Pyidaungsu Hluttaw

agreed to place it under suspension. With respect to Pyidaungsu Hluttaw's decision to suspend the matter, the Union Election Commission is continuing the preparations and discussions on the law, according to U Aung Myint.

Next, Daw Lwee Zar of Kayah State constituency (6) asked whether there is a plan to upgrade the road from Fruso Town to Dopre Village as an asphalt road, as well as to upgrade the road from Dopre Village to Lyadu Village as a gravel road. Deputy Minister for Border Affairs Maj-Gen Than Htut replied that the road from Fruso Town to Dopre Village road was being proposed to be upgraded to an asphalt road in FY 2018-2019 during the second 12-months period and will be carried out, depending upon the availability of funding.

For upgrading the Dopre Village to Lyadu Village road to a gravel road, the Kayah State

government proposed to allocate funds from border development (state) funds during the 2018 April to September period, said the Deputy Minister.

A question raised by U Zaw Min Latt @ U Ko Latt of Shan State constituency (1) was also answered by the Deputy Minister for Border Affairs.

Afterwards, U Soe Thein @ U Maung Soe of Taninthayi Region constituency 10 discussed the Caste Disabilities Removal Act.

Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than then informed the Hluttaw about receiving the Myanmar Investment Rule, approved and sent with amendment by Pyithu Hluttaw, and said that Hluttaw representatives who want to discuss the Myanmar Investment Rule to include their names.

The 2nd Amyotha Hluttaw 7th regular session 24th day meeting is scheduled to be held on 5 March. ■

Union Gov't provides midday meals to Sangha members



President U Htin Kyaw and First Lady Daw Su Su Lwin present offertory to Bhaddanta Kumara Bhivamsa. **PHOTO: MNA**



State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi presents offertory to Sayadaw Bhanddanta Sandima Bhivamsa of Minkyaung Monastery in Thainlyin. **PHOTO: MNA**

FROM PAGE-1

Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Soe Win and wife Daw Than Than Nwe, Deputy Speaker of Amyotha Hluttaw U Aye Tha Aung, Chairman of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw's Legal Affairs and Special Cases Assessment Commission Thura U Shwe Mann and wife Daw Khin Lay Thet, Union ministers, Union Attorney-General, Chairman of the Union Civil Service Board, Chairman of Nay Pyi Taw Council, Chairman of the Anti-corruption Commission, Governor of the Central Bank of Myanmar, senior military officers, deputy ministers and their wives, departmental officials and invited guests.

The congregation led by President U Htin Kyaw, First Lady Daw Su Su Lwin, and State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi

received the Five Precepts from Sayadaw Dr. Kumara Bhivamsa.

Afterwards, President U Htin Kyaw and First Lady Daw Su Su Lwin presented offertories to Bhaddanta Kumara Bhivamsa. State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi similarly presented offertories to Sayadaw of Thanlyin Minkyaung Monastery Agga Maha Pandita Bhaddanta Sandima Bhivamsa.

Vice President U Myint Swe and wife Daw Khin Thet Htay, Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker's wife Daw Nant Kyin Kyi, Chief Justice of the Union U Htun Htun Oo, Commander-in-Chief Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and wife Daw Kyu Kyu Hla presented offertories to Sayadaws.

The ceremony ended with sharing merits gained. A day meal was then offered to Saydaws and nuns.—Myanmar News Agency ■



Vice President U Myint Swe and wife present offertory to a Sayadaw. **PHOTO: MNA**



Union Chief-Justice U Htun Htun Oo presents offertory to a Sayadaw. **PHOTO: MNA**



Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker's wife Daw Nant Kyin Kyi presents offertory to a Sayadaw. **PHOTO: MNA**



Commander-in-Chief Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and wife present offertory to a Sayadaw. **PHOTO: MNA**

MOI holds discussions with Danish, Kuwait journalists



Deputy Minister for Information U Aung Hla Tun (Left) and Claus Blok Thomsen, Asian correspondent for Danish newspaper Politiken (Right). **PHOTO: MNA**

DEPUTY Minister for Information U Aung Hla Tun met with Claus Blok Thomsen, Asia correspondent for Danish newspaper Politiken, and Javaid Ahmad from Kuwait Times, separately, at the office of the Ministry of Information yesterday.

At the meeting with Thomsen, the Deputy Minister discussed the terror-

ist attacks that occurred in Rakhine State and the programmes undertaken to address the issue, the implementation of Rakhine's development plans with guidance from the Rakhine Advisory Board, the misleading news provided by the international media agencies on the Rakhine State situation and the pressure from the

United Nations, as well as other international agencies. During the meeting with Ahmad, the Deputy Minister discussed the repatriation process for returnees from Bangladesh, the false accusations made by the western media and the condition of free press and censorship in Myanmar.—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.

Free health care services given in Tachelik

WITH the joint cooperation of the Ministry of Health and Sports, the Shan State Government, Myanmar Chefs Association and Charity Organizations in eastern Shan State, free health care services were offered to patients who suffered with chapped lips, cleft palate and patients with varying degrees of burns in Tachelik yesterday.

The health care services were conducted by specialists from Germany led by Dr. Heinz Schoeneich and specialists from Myanmar and Tachelik General Hospital. The free health care services will be carried out until 7 March.

A total of 154 patients including 70 patients from Tachelik, 31 patients from Minephyat and 53 patients from Loikaw in Kayah State will receive medical attention. Furthermore, accommo-



Medical team provides check-up to a patient in Tachelik Township. **PHOTO: MDN**

dations for patients and their care givers will be provided by the donors.

The departmental officials and Mizzima charity organiza-

tion and other organizations and the Myanmar Maternal and Child Welfare Association assisted patients who were suffering from the different mal-

adies. Charity organizations from Minephyat Townshp and Tachelik Township furnished financial funds for blood tests for goiter patients.—MDN ■

Kayin State to reap benefits of community based nutrition programme

A five year community based nutrition programme will be jointly initiated in Kayin State by the Ministry of Health and Sports, the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation and the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement in cooperation with UNICEF, said Dr. Tun Min from the Department of Public Health.

He made the remark at the launching ceremony of a community based nutrition programme at the Tawwin Yadana Hotel in Hpa-an, Kayin State yesterday morning. "The programme includes healthcare services for infants, children and pregnant women," he add-

ed. The programme covers all wards and village in Kayin State and the pamphlets will be distributed as part of a knowledge dissemination programme and will be financed by UNICEF.

At the ceremony, Kayin State Minister for Social Affairs Dr. Tin Win Kyaw delivered an opening speech and Dr. Win Kyaw Sein, a representative from UNICEF Myanmar explained about the project. Dr. Tun Min also clarified special action plans to be carried out for nutrition improvement. Afterwards, the Deputy Director of the Agriculture Department U Zaw Lin and Director of the General Administration De-

partment U Thawdar Nyein explained the tasks to be executed by the governmental organizations in the programme.

The five year plan is scheduled to be undertaken from 2018 to 2022 at a cost of US\$ 14 million. The Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) movement is being carried out in 56 countries around the world and Kayin State will become the first state in Myanmar which will benefit from the programme. Next, the Kayin State minister for social affairs, Kayin State Minister for Planning, Finance and Municipality U Than Naing and officials viewed snacks made of various beans.—MDN ■



Participants pose for the documentary photo at the launching ceremony of community based nutrition programme in Hpa-an, Kayin State. **PHOTO: MYANMAR DIGITAL NEWS**

Temporary library to be opened in Maha Bandoolla Park

FOGGY Spring, a voluntary team helping children improve their reading habits, will launch a mobile library programme named "Library in the Park" in Yangon, according to a report in Myawady Daily yesterday.

A temporary library will be opened at Maha Bandoolla Park, one of the busiest public parks in downtown Yangon, on 11 and 25 March. Volunteers will help young children read books during the two Sundays.

Moe Thitsa, co-founder of Foggy Spring, said the new programme aimed to help children become more familiar with books and to improve their reading habits through the mobile library.

Plans are also underway to open temporary libraries in places frequented by children, such as parks, playgrounds and other public places, she added.

Enthusiasts have been invited to donate various kinds of publications to the Foggy Spring programme, which was initiated in 2016. —GNLM ■

Onion prices decline due to glut in supply

THE prices of onions have declined to Ks700 per viss after reaching a high on 5 January because of the surplus supply that will enter the market soon, according to traders in the Bayinnaung onion wholesale market.

In January 2018, the wholesale price of the Seikphyu onion variety was between Ks2,300 and Ks3,100 per viss, while the price of Myingyan onions was between Ks2,700 and Ks3,300 per viss. The price of Myittha onions was between Ks2,800 and Ks3,400 per viss.

"This is the time to harvest new summer onions. Therefore,

the price of Seikphyu onions is between Ks700 and Ks950 per viss, while the price of Taungdwin onions is between Ks500 and Ks700 per viss. The price of Myittha onions is between Ks1,250 and Ks1,450 per viss," said an onion trader from the Bayinnaung onion wholesale market.

The summer onions will enter the market in March from Pakokku, Myittha, Myingyan and Taungdwin. The supply of onions will be increased this year, he added.

Myanmar has imported the onions from China to decrease the price of local onions in the



Workers carry bags of onion at Bayinnaung wholesale market in Yangon. PHOTO: PHOE KHWAH

market in December. The Ministry of Commerce has also suspended the export of local onions since December, according to the request of onion exporters.

"We did not impose a ban

on onion exports. We have suspended it at the request of the onion exporters association as the onion price in the domestic market was very high. If the association says it is advisable to

allow exports in order to avoid a decline in onion prices in the domestic market, we will allow it again," said U Toe Aung Myint, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Commerce. — Zwe ■

Individual border trade tops Ks37.6 billion since last April

THE value of border trade using individual trading cards (ITCs) exceeded Ks37.6 billion in the current fiscal year (FY), according to a statistical report issued by the Ministry of Commerce this Monday.

Between last April and the second week of this February, border exports with the use of ITCs were worth Ks3.8 billion, while individual imports were worth Ks33.8 billion.

Individual trade is mainly conducted with neighbouring states through 11 active border trade camps, according to border authorities.

Among other cross-border points, Myawady, which is a Myanmar-Thailand border trade station, was reported to have the largest volume of trade with a value of more than Ks28.3 billion, followed by Mawtaung with \$2.6 billion, Tamu with \$2.1

billion and Kanpaiktee with \$1.6 billion.

Over the first 315 days of this FY, border trade through ITCs was Ks970 million at the Reed trade camp, Ks915 million at Tachilek, Ks743 million at Kawthoung, Ks160 million at Kengtung, Ks70 million at Lwe-jel, Ks4 million at Chinshwehaw and Ks11 million at Htantalan.

To boost border trade, the ministry started issuing ITCs to

individual businesspersons at borders from the 2012-2013 FY. Currently, there are more than 1,420 individual cross-border traders. The trade department said it had granted permission to 156 new applicants this FY.

An ITC holder may trade up to the value of Ks15 million in five days at borders and through import and export offices, with an average trade value of Ks3 million per day. — Shwe Khine ■

CBM to direct banks to open branches in secure places

U Soe Thein, Deputy-Governor of the Central Bank of Myanmar (CMB), said bank branches will be allowed to operate only in secure places nationwide, according to a report in Myawady Daily yesterday.

The CBM will issue directives for the security of banks. It will allow local banks to open branches based on the security conditions guaranteed by township and region/state-level security officers. Following the deadly bomb blasts at Yoma Bank in Lashio, the largest town in northern Shan State, last week, which left two dead and 20 more injured, the CMB enforced new regulations for the opening of branches of local banks.

"The central bank will allow banks to open branches only when there is regional security. Local authorities shall recommend it," U Soe Thein added.

Currently, there are some 24 private banks, four state-owned banks and 13 foreign banks. Kan-bawza, a leading private commercial bank, has topped the list of local banks with more than 500 branches. — GNLM ■

Association campaign to push for stickers on purified drinking water products

THE Myanmar Purified Drinking Water Producers' Association will campaign to convince producers of purified drinking water to affix stickers on the purified water products, according to a report in Myawady Daily.

Producers who meet the production norms will get stickers from the association. The

producers will have to affix the stickers on their products to show that they are certified by the association.

There are more than 600 brands of purified drinking water registered with the Food and Drugs Administration (FDA). At the same time, there are also many unlicensed brands.

FDA checks the quality of water produced by the registered producers.

"We are planning to issue stickers to producers who meet production norms to boost customer confidence," said U Ye Htut Oo, chairman of the Myanmar Purified Drinking Water Producers Association.

It is estimated that there may be between 2,000 and 3,000 purified drinking water brands in the whole country. According to international norms, the 20-litre water bottles for household use are only to be used for a year, but they are used for a longer period in Myanmar. — GNLM ■



Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U Win Myint receives South Korean Ambassador Lee Sang-hwa in Nay Pyi Taw. **PHOTO: MNA**

Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U Win Myint meets South Korea Ambassador

SPEAKER of Pyithu Hluttaw U Win Myint met with Ambassador of the Republic of Korea Mr Lee Sang-hwa in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. They discussed

bilateral relations between Myanmar and South Korea, and matters related to investment and cultural affairs. Also present at the meeting were Dep-

uty Speaker of Pyithu Hluttaw U T Khun Myat and other officials from the Pyithu Hluttaw office. —Myanmar News Agency ■

Agreement for Myanmar's biggest airport project expires

An agreement to design, build and manage a new \$1.4 billion international airport in Myanmar has "expired," according to a Yongnam Holdings Ltd., a Singapore company participating in a consortium that includes JGC Corp. of Japan.

Hanthawaddy International Airport was to have been built around 80 kilometers north of Yangon, near the city of Bago, by 2022, under a framework agreement signed in January 2016 between the consortium and Myanmar's Civil Aviation

Department.

"The FWA has not been renewed to-date as certain issues remain unresolved," Yongnam Holdings said in a statement released Monday night in Singapore, without elaborating.

In 2014, the consortium won a government tender for the design, construction and management of Hanthawaddy International Airport on the basis of a public-private partnership for a 30-year concessional period.

The consortium had won the tender on the basis it would

seek up to half of funding for the project from the Japanese government's official development assistance program.

JGC Corp. holds a 55 percent stake in the consortium while Yongnam Holdings has 25 percent and Changi Airport Planners and Engineers, a subsidiary of Changi Airports International, has 20 percent.

Apart from the local authorities fencing nearly half of the 3,645-hectares-wide project area, construction has not begun for unknown reasons.

Authorities have in the past said all international flights would be moved to the new airport from the current one, Yangon International Airport, which is at full capacity with 3 million passengers annually.

The new airport is expected to initially handle four times that number of passengers, bringing about a boost in global air connectivity for Myanmar, bolstering the flow of business and leisure travelers as the country sees growth in trade and tourism industries.

— Kyodo News ■



The conceptual design of Hanthawaddy International Airport. **PHOTO: CIVIL AVIATION DEPARTMENT**



Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than shakes hands with South Korean Ambassador Lee Sang-hwa in Nay Pyi Taw. **PHOTO: MNA**

Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker meets South Korea Ambassador

Speaker of Amyotha Hluttaw Mahn Win Khaing Than met with Ambassador of the Republic of Korea Mr Lee Sang-hwa in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. They discussed bilateral relations between Myanmar and South Korea, and strengthening of

communications between the two countries' parliaments.

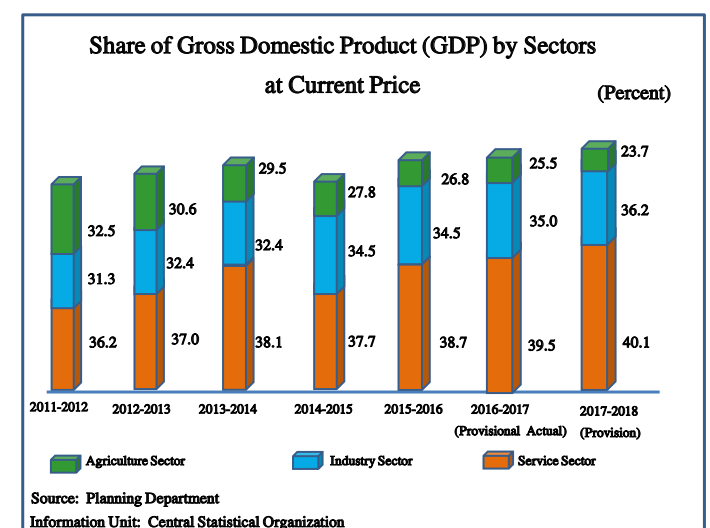
Also present at the meeting were Deputy Speaker of Amyotha Hluttaw U Aye Tha Aung and officials from the Amyotha Hluttaw office. —Myanmar News Agency ■



57th Kuwait National Day, 27th Kuwait Independence Day held

UNION Minister for Commerce Dr Than Myint and his wife Daw Khin Htay were welcomed by Charge d'affaires of Kuwait Embassy Mr Ahmad AL-Muzaini at a ceremony to

mark the 57th Kuwait National Day and 27th Kuwait Independence Day, held at Sedona Hotel in Yangon at around 6.30 p.m. on 27 February 2018. — Myanmar News Agency ■



14th UPDJC meeting held at NRPC

FROM PAGE-1

At the 13th UPDJC meeting, political framework, UPDJC ToR, ToR and SOP for national-level political dialogues were discussed, agreed upon and confirmed. Furthermore, everything, except the ToRs and SOPs that still remain to be discussed in the 6th Joint Implementation and Coordination Meeting (JICM), was confirmed. It is expected that the national-level political dialogues will be held successfully within these frameworks, ToRs and SOPs, said the Union Minister.

“Here, I would like to say again what the State Counsellor said during the NCA signing ceremony of the NMSP and LDU. It is to strive towards setting up a firm federal foundation for the forthcoming Union Peace Conference-21st Century Panglong 3rd session,” he added.

“The members of UPDJC are requested to cooperate with trust, build understanding, give and take with one another, and work together towards setting the political stage to achieve a political agreement.”

The Union Minister added that the day’s meeting needs to

discuss the holding of national-level political dialogues by the NMSP and RCSS/SSA.

Due to arbitration by State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi during the 6th JICM, an agreement was reached for the RCSS/SSA to hold a national-level political dialogue in Langkho. However, the Union Peace Conference-21st Century Panglong 3rd session was not held on the agreed date in the last week of January 2018 and discussions and negotiations are ongoing since then.

“The cancellation of the conference is directly related to UPDJC that is mainly responsible for conducting political dialogues. If political dialogues are delayed, people will lose hope,” he said.

“Everybody must ensure that understanding and trust do not decline when discussions come to a halt,” he noted.

“It is important for political dialogues to continue even if there are differences in our beliefs and views. It is important to meet regularly. The path of meeting and discussions should not be forgotten. We need to make concessions, and give and take to overcome challenges to the



The 14th Union Peace Dialogue Joint Committee (UPDJC) meeting held in Nay Pyi Taw. PHOTO: MNA

political dialogue,” U Kyaw Tint Swe said.

“The State Counsellor has said that being flexible does not mean one is weak. Negotiating is not surrendering. It is important not to fear meetings and discussions. I would like to emphasise that we must minimise matters that divide us and focus on formulating a common agreement,” he said. “I would like to conclude by praying that UPDJC members arrive at a sustainable internal peace plan by holding a political discussion at the round table” the Union Minister added.

Next, UPDJC Vice-Chairman Dr. Salai Lian Hmung Sak-hong spoke of being happy and honoured with the NMSP and

LDU signing the NCA and participating in the peace process in the country. He invited the EAOs who had not signed the NCA to do so as soon as possible and partake in the development of the country and for peace. He added that UPDJC was an important committee for formulating peace and urged everyone to keep in mind the interest of the whole country rather than their individual organisations.

UPDJC Vice-Chairman U Thu Wai also spoke of the importance of having a strong will for peace.

Later, the meeting agendas were approved, the matter of NMSP and LDU signing the NCA submitted, while the reformation

of UPDJC, the reorganisation of the work committees for sector-wise political discussions, and holding of national-level political dialogues and public meetings were discussed.

The attendees at the meeting then gave their suggestions on the discussions after which UPDJC Vice-Chairmen U Thu Wai, Dr. Salai Lian Hmung Sak-hong and U Kyaw Tint Swe delivered the concluding speeches.

The meeting was attended by UPDJC members, consisting of representatives from the government group, EAOs that had signed the NCA, political parties and officials. The JICM meeting will continue on 28 February. — Myanmar News Agency ■



UEC Chairman U Hla Thein receives Finnish Ambassador Mrs. Riikka Laatu in Nay Pyi Taw. PHOTO: MNA

UEC Chairman meets Finnish Ambassador

UNION Election Commission Chairman U Hla Thein met with Finnish Ambassador to Myanmar H.E. Mrs. Riikka Laatu in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

The UEC Chairman explained to Mrs. Laatu that preparations for the 2018 by-elections, including workshops organized for the different levels of UEC members, as well as their expanding voter education and awareness for the public. The

Finnish Ambassador then explained Finland’s support for Myanmar’s democratic transition, as well as the Finnish Embassy’s plans to offer direct support in the upcoming by-elections and the 2020 General Elections.

Present at the meeting were UEC members U Aung Myint, U Tun Khin, U Hla Tint, U Myint Naing, U Than Htay and other UEC officials. —Myanmar News Agency ■

Meeting to discuss counterfeit medicine menace held in Nay Pyi Taw

DEPUTY Attorney-General U Win Myint held a meeting with French Ambassador Mr Olivier Richard, and Ambassador Jean-David Levitte, the president of the board of directors of the International Institute of Research Against Counterfeit Medicines (IRACM), in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

During the meeting, they discussed the dangerous side effects of counterfeit drugs that Myanmar and the rest of the world have to face, and the need to enforce effective laws and punishment to dissuade producers of counterfeit drugs.

U Win Myint said Myanmar had signed the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organised Crime (UNTOC) and would cooperate with other countries in the region to combat transnational distributors of counterfeit medicine. He said there



Deputy Attorney-General U Win Myint holds talks with French Ambassador, IRACM delegation in Nay Pyi Taw. PHOTO: MNA

is an upcoming anti-counterfeit medicine workshop in Greater Mekong, where they will discuss laws, policies and their implementation to counter counterfeit medicines.

Myanmar enacted the National Drug Law in 1992 and

later made amendments in 2014, in accordance with modern practices. Also present at the meeting were Permanent Secretary Daw Nu Nu Yin and Director-General Daw Khin Cho Ohn. —Myanmar News Agency ■

Suggestions for improvement of rice sector welcomed

MYANMAR'S rice exports in the 2017-2018 fiscal year reached a record high with more than 3.17 million tons.

We need to maintain this type of production in the coming years in order to further expand and strengthen the market.

This can be accomplished with improved communication among all those in the supply chain, accurate information for sellers and farmers and other participants, better preparation and increased feedback. All farmers are encouraged to give suggestions to the Union Government on how to continue our agricultural success.

The achievement is the fruit of the collective efforts of farmers, local traders, rice millers and exporters.

Rice is the staple food of Myanmar and plays a vital role in the agricultural export sector. Myanmar's rice

Agriculture is the main industry in Myanmar, employing more than 60 per cent of the labour force.

was mostly exported to Bangladesh, the Philippines, other ASEAN countries and African markets from 2003 to 2008. The market was then extended to Russia and the Middle East. China has become the main buyer of Myanmar's rice in 2011 through the border areas. After a lift of the sanctions by the European Union (EU) against Myanmar in 2012, Myanmar's rice could penetrate the EU market through normal trade, according to the Commerce Ministry.

Agriculture is the main industry in Myanmar, employing more than 60 per cent of the labour force.

It is found that rice exports have increased this year in both in normal and border trade. While making efforts for expanding the export market for our rice, we should balance between the surplus of rice and domestic rice sufficiency. We should not lose sight of the stability of the local rice market and balancing supply and demand.

To maintain the current achievements in the rice sector, necessary preparations will be helpful for us so that we cannot rely on same export market. To improve the local rice industry, all those engaged in the supply chain are obliged to give suggestions to the Union Government.

Only then can the government know how it can provide the sector, which is urgently needed to improve supply chain so that it can penetrated further foreign market with high quality rice. There are good market prospects to accommodate higher rice exports from Myanmar over the next 10-15 years.

Besides, more accurate market information is needed for participants on production, consumption, exports, and prices in order allow smooth functioning of the rice market and to enable more informed policy decisions.

When we take the rice sector into consideration, we should not neglect the farmers' problems, gaining appropriate profits for rice millers, rice merchants and exporters. They also should be encouraged to engage into decision making in order to respond to market opportunities and increase the rice production.

By Naing Lin (WCS)

AS THE Myanmar literature itself is now more than 1000 years old, it is no wonder that the language is rich in proverbs, maxims and sayings.

As a rule, Myanmar people tend to illustrate many sayings and proverbs in their daily conversation, and these customs have been handed down from generation to generation in Myanmar. These sayings are presumably food for thoughts and words of wisdom which can make a lively conversation in the daily life of the people.

Traditionally, Myanmar people are a great believer in mythology and omen, they regard the vultures as "disgusting birds" associated with death and decay. In some parts of the country, vultures are caught and killed for no obvious reason but 'fun'.

Now that vulture populations have reached very low levels, destruction of nesting colonies, hunting and accidental poisoning appear to be the most immediate threats to the remaining birds.

Actually, vultures are magnificent birds that not only fulfill a vital function in our ecosystem, but are part of our culture and traditional beliefs. The vulture is used by several fictional super villains who are appearing in comic books for children.

Population of Vultures in Myanmar

It is estimated that the population of vultures in Myanmar is at least 136 individuals, made up of at least: 62 White-rumped Vultures, 21 Slender-billed Vultures, 51 Himalayan Vultures and two Red-headed Vultures. Myanmar presents an opportunity of global significance for vulture conservation, due to the persistence of endangered vulture species in a country where diclofenac is not used.

In Southeast Asia

In Southeast Asia, the near-total disappearance of white-trumped vultures predated the present diclofenac crisis, and probably resulted from the collapse of large wild ungulate populations and improved management of dead livestock, resulting in a lack of available carcasses for vultures.

Feeding Vultures

Vultures rarely attack healthy animals, but may kill the wounded or sick. When a carcass has too thick a hide for its beak to open, it waits for a larger scavenger to eat first. Vast numbers have been seen upon battlefields. They gorge them-

Vultures

or Magnificent Clean Flyers



selves when prey is abundant, until their crops bulge, and sit, sleepy or half torpid, to digest their food. These birds do not carry food to their young in their talons but disgorge it from their crops.

Biodiversity

Biodiversity is of great crucial to harmonize nature with its need for human in a sustainable fashion, and to restore and maintain a healthy planet. The basic goals include conservation of nature, primarily biological diversity through actions based on surveys and research, partnership, network building, environmental education and public awareness. It means the variability among living organisms from all sources including, inter alia, terrestrial, marine and other aquatic ecosystems.

Myanmar is a country located at the junction of three different eco-regions; Sino-Himalayan region in the north, Indochinese region in the east and Malayan peninsular in the south. This significant geo-position together with high variations in rainfall, temperature, topography and extensive river systems create diverse forest types in Myanmar, from sub-alpine forest in the north to tropical rain forest in the south.

Varied forest types are home of numerous flora and fauna that consist of more than 11,820 plant species, 252 mammals, 1056 birds, 293 reptiles, 139 amphibians, 775 fresh & marine water fishes, five marine turtles, and 52 coral species. Therefore, Myanmar has been recognized as one of the biodiversity richest countries in the Asia-Pacific region.

In addition, Myanmar has recorded several endemic species that consists of one mammal species, 22 reptile species, six amphibians, six bird species and eight plant species.

Biodiversity in Myanmar

Biodiversity is under serious threat as a result of human activities. The main dangers being population growth and resource consumption, climate change and global warming, habitat conversion and urbanization, invasive alien species, over-exploitation of natural resources and environmental degradation.

In Myanmar Primary threats identified included the commercial and subsistence exploitation and trade of natural resources including wildlife, timber, fish and non-timber forest products. Stakeholders also highlighted the expansion of the human footprint across the country.

Methods

To assess the historical and current status and distribution of Gyps and Sarcogyps species in Myanmar, published literature and unpublished reports were collated, and unpublished sightings were collected from observers known to have recently visited the country.

Areas for field survey were selected where there had been records from the last 12 years, regardless of historical records or recent survey effort. Kachin State, Sagaing Division, Shan State and Chin State were selected. Across these administrative divisions, surveys were conducted across the northern part of the country. Sites were chosen for their contribution to overall geographic coverage, complementarity to recent surveys, relative accessibility. All sites were situated at least 50 km apart in an effort to reduce (albeit not necessarily eliminate) double-counting of birds among sites. From these surveys absolute minimum population estimates for each species were generated by summing the maximum number of adults and sub-adults at any one restaurant.

Taking surveys

The surveys revealed that populations of these species are larger than the minimum population estimates of 62, 20 and two respectively derived from the survey (e.g. four years earlier; 78 White-rumped Vultures were seen together in southern Shan State. It was not possible to visit all possible locations during the surveys, the team received information on vulture sightings from areas not surveyed, which may relate to additional individuals.

In short, there have been significant declines in both populations and range of resident vulture species in Myanmar since historical times. Vulture populations in Myanmar therefore present a great opportunity to conserve diclofenac-free populations of three Critically Endangered vulture species. To retain these as viable populations, it is of global importance that the research and conservation interventions proposed in the Myanmar vulture action plan are implemented in the next few years.

The Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation is closely cooperating with other ministries and departments to conserve and manage Myanmar's biodiversity. Moreover the government has taken concerted efforts in order to rehabilitate forests and biodiversity in degraded watersheds and forests in the country.

*Translated by
Win Ko Ko Aung*

U Ko Ko Shein appointed as Non-Resident Ambassador of Myanmar to the Republic of Belarus

The President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has appointed U Ko Ko Shein, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar to the Russian Federation, as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar concurrently accredited to the Republic of Belarus.—MNA

Daw Ei Ei Khin Aye appointed as Non-Resident Ambassador of Myanmar to Timor-Leste

The President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has appointed Daw Ei Ei Khin Aye, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar to the Republic of Indonesia, as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar concurrently accredited to the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste.—MNA

Appointment of UK Ambassador agreed

THE Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has agreed to the proposed appointment of Mr. Daniel Patrick Brendon Chugg as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

Mr. Daniel Patrick Brendon Chugg joined the Foreign and Commonwealth Office of the United Kingdom in 1998. From then until 2015, he served in various capacities at different departments of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and at Her Britannic Majesty's Embassies and Missions in India, China and Hong Kong. He is currently serving as Head of the Counter-Daesh Communications Department, Communication Directorate of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. He is married and has two children.—MNA

Invitation to young writers for Sunday section

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



Hunting snakes is not an easy job and people can't do it alone, the job needs two or three people to search and capture snakes. **PHOTO: SUPPLIED**

The unbalanced population of animals threatens ecosystem

AS snake hunting becomes a good business option for the locals from dry areas in central Myanmar such as Chauk, NyaungU, Kyuakpadaung and Pakokku townships, the region is facing the risk of damaging the ecosystem, according to local people.

Hunting snakes is not an easy job and people can't do it alone, the job needs two or three people to search and capture snakes.

"I do not have a chance for other jobs. That's why I work as a snake hunter to earn my living. It is dangerous work if you are not good at catching snakes," said a snake hunter from a village in Nyaung U Township in Mandalay Region.

Snake buyers come and buy the snakes the hunters bagged. Villagers are not aware of the last destination the reptiles were sold. The hunters get Ks.6000 a viss for a viper snake. However, they get Ks. 22,000 for a viss of

rat snake. A snake hunter who works all day makes about Ks.30,000.

"Other jobs are not as profitable as snake hunting. When the season to catch snakes arrives, I have to hunt snakes, however I know it is not a good job," said a snake hunter from a village in middle Myanmar.

They mostly hunt snakes from December to March. They search the pits of snakes to capture them.

Snake buyers come in the evenings to buy the snakes that were caught. They buy viper and rat snakes, but never cobras.

The snake hunter said that the population of vipers and rat snakes is gradually decreasing and it's difficult to get these snakes now.

They could sell 10 viss of snakes a day previously, but they can now sell only three viss a day, he said.

The bad consequence of the snake hunting is the increase of

rats and squirrels that are the primary food source for snakes.

Amid the decreasing number of such snakes, the population of carnivorous birds such as owls, eagles, brown fish owls and ravens are down also because people hunt them for food.

Some local people who noticed the future of the ecosystem said that the region needs help to lessen the damage.

"I think, authorities need to control hunting animals in order not to damage the ecosystem. And, more job opportunities should be arranged for those who have no choice but to hunt snakes," said U San Myint, a villager from Yam Zam village in NyaungU Township.

The ecosystem in the region runs the risk becoming damaged now. The loss local are facing of their corn and peanuts cultivation is larger than before due to a higher population of rats and squirrels, according to local people.—MDN ■

Rice law expected to emerge this year

FOR the development of the local rice sector, the Myanmar Rice Federation (MRF) is drafting a rice law to be made public this year, according to a report in Myawady Daily.

"The rice sector is currently being regulated by other laws. Therefore, we are trying to enact a separate law. The law aims to make the rice sector more systematic and legal," said U Ye Min Aung, secretary of MRF.

The MRF started drafting the Myanmar rice law in 2017. Now, it has reached the draft stage. Efforts are being made to ensure it can be made public this year. The first, second and third drafts will be made public. The enactment of the law

is related to parliaments. The MRF will cooperate with the union parliament, the Union Attorney-General's office and the government to make the rules more systematic. The MRF will hold a Myanmar rice conference on 6 March, he added.

Fraud and violation of regulations are common when the trade grows, but this may obstruct the development of the rice sector.

The law will cover crop insurance, the contract farming system, matters beneficial to farmers, the requirements for rice mill owners, retail and wholesale sectors, and the systematic registration system.—GNLM ■

Production of pedigree seeds to be boosted through PPP

THE Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation has pledged to bolster the quality of seed production through Private Public Producers Partnership, according to a report in Myanma Alinn.

The Agriculture Department will make efforts to get access to technical and financial assistance provided by local and international contributors. Currently, it is carrying out land assessment to ensure product quality and safety.

The seed quality control management process includes granting a certificate after testing the sample seeds and distribution to farmers in a short time, and ensuring the seeds remain genetically unchanged.

The production of paddy

seeds was jointly conducted by farmers and private businessmen on some 10,000 acres in the 2016-2017 fiscal year (FY). The acreage of paddy seeds increased to 69,734 in the 2017-2018 FY.

Seeds play a vital role in producing quality crops. They also help fetch a good price in the export market. Cooperation between the growers and businessmen engaged in the supply chain process is needed, Dr Myo Aung Kyaw of the Myanmar Rice Federation told Myanma Alinn.

Although there are national-level pedigree seed production businesses in the country, the production has not yet covered all the farming areas across the state.—Zar Lin Thu (AMIA) ■

Testlane machines to be installed in RTAD offices

TESTLANE machines will be installed in all branch offices of the Road Transport Administration Department (RTAD) to check vehicles this year, according to a report in Myawady Daily.

Currently, the testlane ma-

chines have been installed in the Yangon Region RTAD office, but some of the district RTAD offices still need to install them.

"The installation of the machines costs some Ks100 million. The testlane machines can check some 100 vehicles

per day," said an official from RTAD.

Starting mid-year, the RTAD will check vehicles when they come to renew their vehicle registration. Testlane machines can easily detect problems in vehicles.—GNLM ■

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VP U Henry Van Thio inspects elephant conservation camp

Vice President U Henry Van Thio inspected the Shan Yoma elephant conservation camp in southern Shan State, the Sane Le Valley elephant conservation camp and Yadana Grape Plantation in Mandalay Region and the Tatkon Agriculture Research Central Plantation yesterday.

U Henry Van Thio, accompanied by Union Minister U Ohn Win, Permanent Secretaries Dr. Tin Htut and U Yi Mon and other officials arrived at the Shan Yoma elephant conservation camp near Nant Pan Tat village, Kalaw Township yesterday morning and were welcomed by Shan State ministers and officials.

The Vice President viewed elephant conservation works as Shan State minister Dr. Nyi Nyi Aung and officials provided explanations.

At the next venue, U Henry Van Thio, Union Minister U Ohn Win, state ministers and other officials planted pine trees.

The Vice President and party were then informed about the Shan Yoma elephant conservation camp, the Shan Yoma elephant recreation camp, services provided in the camp and the expansion programme by Myanmar Timber Enterprise Managing Director U Saw John Shwe Ba in the camp briefing hall.

The Vice President commented on successfully implementing the aims of the camps, and how the roads were upgraded into all-weather roads, how



Vice President U Henry Van Thio inspects Shan Yoma elephant conservation camp. PHOTO: MNA

the camp was transformed into a nature-based travel business and how to ensure that the camps are known internationally.

The Vice President then toured the Shan Yoma elephant conservation camp. The 900-acre elephant conservation camp is near Nant Pan Tat Village at the 54/3 mile post on the Meiktila-Taunggyi Road. It was set up with an aim to generate income for the country through green business, create employment opportunities for staff and families who worked with elephants, for the public to learn of elephant conservation works conducted by Myanmar Timber Enterprise, for the public to participate in the nature conservation works conducted by elephant conservation camps, to develop the nature-based travel business in

Myanmar and for the sustainable long-term survival of Myanmar Timber Enterprise elephants. The Shan Yoma elephant recreation camp was opened on 13 February.

Afterwards, the Vice President and party arrived to Green (Sane Le) Hill Valley elephant conservation camp and were welcomed by camp manager Daw Tin Win Maw in the Main Camp.

This was followed by Vice President U Henry Van Thio viewing the work of using elephant waste and then toured the Green Hill Valley.

The camp was established in 2011 for families of Myanmar Timber Enterprise to take care of retired logging elephants, to share knowledge about elephant conservation and for visitors to participate in elephant care and



conservation works, it is learnt.

The Vice President and party then arrived at Yadana Grape Plantation (1) in Se Htate Village, Yamethin Township, Mandalay Region, where they were welcomed and informed about the grape plantation works by (Mandalay) region minister Dr. Soe Than, plantation owner U Chit Phi and officials.

The Vice President commented on the explanations to expand the planting of grapes as it is an economically viable fruit for planters, to establish a firm grape market, wine factory and to produce value-added products.

The Vice President and party continue on to Tatkon Agriculture Research Central Plantation, where they were briefed about the plantation in the briefing hall

by Permanent Secretary Dr. Tin Htut, Director General Dr. Ye Tint Tun and Deputy Director General U Than Lwin Oo.

Responding to the briefing, the Vice President remarked on setting up more agricultural research plantations in states and regions, ensuring the establishment of organic agriculture systems, value-adding the region's products and exporting and selling internationally, constructing adequate cold storage to conserve the fruits and to coordinate with the private sector in distributing and selling the seeds produced.

After this, the Vice President observed the production of hybrid corn seeds on 60 acres of land and toured the agriculture research plantation.—Myanmar News Agency ■

Footbridges to be constructed along Yangon circular railway

THE Myanmar Railways (Lower Myanmar) has announced plans to construct 35 footbridges along the Yangon circular railway tracks.

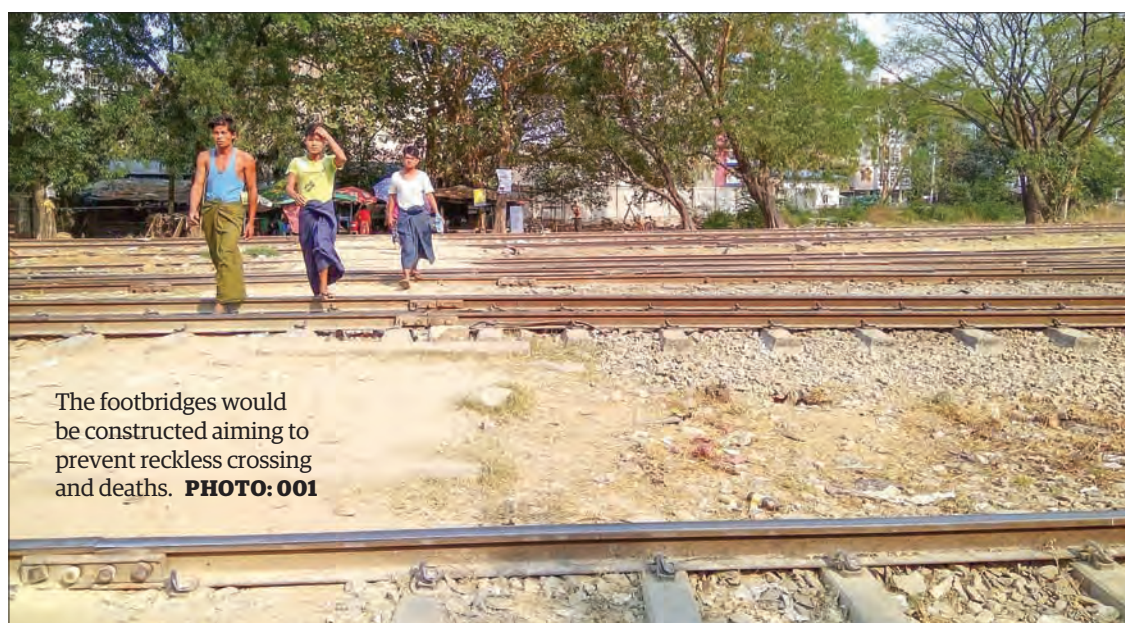
The Myanmar Railways said the footbridges would be constructed in areas where reckless crossing of railway tracks was rampant, resulting in deaths and injuries.

"We have designated 35 areas that need footbridges, and we will construct them at different stages," said an official from Myanmar Railways.

The footbridges will be constructed between designated railway stations, and the list includes

Ahlon station, Pun Hlaing station, Hledan station, Kamaryut station, Thiri Myaing station, Thamine station, Kyogun station, Insein station, Ywama station, Phawkan station, Aungsan station, Kyaikele station, Mingaladon Zay station, Mingaladon station, Waybargi station, Okkala station, Paywetsate Gon station, Kyauk Yay Thwin station, Tadarkalay station, Yay gu station, Parami station, Kanbe station, Bauktaw station, Tarmwe station, Myitta Nyunt station, Ma Hlwa Gone station and Pazundaung station.

Yangon's circular railway is undergoing a complete overhaul and is scheduled to be completed



The footbridges would be constructed aiming to prevent reckless crossing and deaths. PHOTO: 001

in 2022. Myanmar Railways has divided the project into three parts. The first part will focus on the western half of the railways from Insein to Danyingone and is expected to be completed by 31 May this year. The second part will focus on the tracks from In-

sein to Kyeemyindine. The third part will focus on upgrading the tracks from Kyeemyindine to Yangon (Pagoda Road) station and is scheduled to be completed by 31 March 2019.

The Yangon circular railway is 46km long with a 39-station

loop system that connects satellite towns and suburban areas to the city. Currently, a complete round-trip takes some 170 minutes, but this will be reduced to 110 minutes after the upgrade, which will enable the trains to run at 60km per hour.—001 ■

Russia's Baltic Fleet to get advanced S-400 air defence missile systems in 2018

KALININGRAD — Russia's Baltic Fleet will be beefed up with advanced S-400 long-range air defence missile systems, upgraded Sukhoi Su-30SM multirole fighter jets and Kamov Ka-27M shipborne helicopters in 2018, Fleet Commander Vice-Admiral Alexander Nosatov said on 22 Thursday.

"The Baltic Fleet's inventory will also continue to be renewed [in 2018]: it will get small missile ships of a new project, S-400 complexes and upgraded Su-30SM aircraft and Ka-27M helicopters," the Fleet's press office quoted

the vice-admiral as saying on the eve of Russia's Defender's Day.

As the press office told TASS, the Baltic Fleet currently operates six advanced Su-30SM multirole fighter jets. These super-maneuverable aircraft are capable of employing modern and up-and-coming air-to-air and air-to-surface precision weapons. The fighter jets can cover a distance of 3,000 km without refueling and external fuel tanks.

In 2018, the Baltic Fleet will get Ka-27M helicopters in addition to its sole modernized Ka-27M

version currently in service. The press office did not specify, however, how many helicopters with improved combat capabilities and also Su-30SM fighters would be delivered this year. The Fleet's warship stock will also be replenished with new Project 22800 missile-carrying ships. The warships of this Project are armed with attack and air defence weapons, combat control, target detection and designation systems and communications means. Precision missile systems are the backbone of the warship's strike weapons.—Tass ■



S-400 long-range air defense missile systems. PHOTO: TASS

British astronaut hails 'groundbreaking' Airbus satellite

PORTSMOUTH (UNITED KINGDOM) — British astronaut Tim Peake on Monday hailed a "groundbreaking" satellite being built by Airbus which its developers say will bring an unprecedented level of flexibility to space telecommunications.

The Eutelsat Quantum satellite is being put together by the multinational company in Portsmouth, on the south coast of England, where it was unveiled Monday ahead of transfer to France for

testing later this year.

When launched in 2019 it will for the first time allow a commercial satellite to be fully reconfigurable while in orbit, with operators able to change key elements in real time, such as its frequency and which parts of the earth it covers.

"What is really new is the level of flexibility that the satellite will provide and so this will be thanks to a combination of technologies that we will put on board the satellite,"

said Yohann Leroy, deputy CEO of French satellite operator Eutelsat.

Leroy said the new technology also allows operators to adapt to different regulatory constraints around the world and adjust to changing market conditions in the 15-year life span of the satellite.

"There can be much faster change in market demand, seasonal demand or even daily demand," he told AFP.—AFP ■

'Beast from the East' sends Europe mercury plummeting

ROME — A blast of Siberian weather dubbed "The Beast from the East" sent temperatures plunging across much of Europe early Tuesday as commuters braced themselves for another day of travel chaos.

Freezing temperatures have claimed at least seven lives across the continent in recent days with particularly acute fears for rough sleepers in the bitter cold.

An Arctic cold front, which Britain's tabloids have christened "The Beast from the East", has swept in from Russia, causing widespread travel disruption and school closures.

The frozen temperatures in Europe are in stark contrast to the Arctic itself which is experiencing an unusually warm period despite it being the depths of winter when the sun never even rises above the horizon.

Meteorologists have documented temperatures above freezing in some parts of the Arctic, causing astonishment among many scientists.

"The Arctic is having an off-the-charts heatwave this week," the European Geosciences Union wrote in a tweet.

Yet hundreds of miles further south, temperate Rome woke to its first snowfall in six years on Monday thanks to the Polar Vortex.

The mercury dipped as low as minus 4 C (24 Fahrenheit) early Tuesday morning according to the Italian Meteorological Service. A string of major football matches, including Italian Cup bouts on Wednesday between Juventus/Atalanta and AC Milan/Lazio, could be postponed if the cold weather continues, officials have warned.

In Poland, where at least two people have died of exposure since Saturday, temperatures dropped overnight to minus 12 Celsius while parts of Lithuania saw the mercury fall below minus 20.

Temperatures in France are forecast to drop to minus 10 C and feel as low as minus 18 C over the coming days.

On Sunday, a 35-year-

old homeless man was found dead in the southeastern city of Valence, and two days earlier, a 62-year-old man died in his cabin in the woods outside Paris.

Some local authorities have ordered officials to find shelters for the homeless.

In Belgium, a local mayor in a municipality of Brussels ordered homeless people to be forcibly detained if they refused to go to shelters.

Etterbeek mayor Vincent De Wolf said the cold was a "major risk", stressing that it was his responsibility to avoid potential deaths with temperatures set to drop to minus 15 C on Wednesday night.

In Berlin, local authorities said homeless shelters were already at 95 percent capacity with temperatures dropping to minus 20 C in some parts of Germany.

Icy temperatures have caused travel disruption in the Netherlands while in Croatia snow drifts have forced authorities to close numerous motorways.—AFP ■

THE REPUBLIC OF THE UNION OF MYANMAR MINISTRY OF ELECTRICITY AND ENERGY MYANMA OIL AND GAS ENTERPRISE (INVITATION FOR OPEN TENDER) (5/ 2018)

Open tenders are invited for supply of the following respective items in Myanmar Kyats and United States Dollars.

Sr.No	Tender No	Description	Remark
(1)	DMP/L-100(17-18)	Spares for GEFCO Drawwork Ex GEFCO Drilling Rigs (41) Items	Ks
(2)	DMP/L-101(17-18)	5 1/2" & 9 5/8" Casing Centralizer(3)Items	Ks
(3)	DMP/L-102(17-18)	Fire Fighting Hose Pipe & Accessories (8) Items	Ks
(4)	IFB/002(17-18)	5" Drill Pipe (1850) Meter	US\$
(5)	IFB/003(17-18)	8 3/8" PDC Bits & 3 1/2", 4 3/8" and 4 1/2" Junk Mill (5) Items	US\$

Tender Closing Date & Time- 23-3-2018, 16:30 pm

Tender Document shall be available during office hours commencing from 26 February 2018 at the Finance Department, Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise, No (44) Complex, Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar.

Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise
Ph . +95 67 - 411206

Prosecutors seek 30 years' jail for ousted S Korea president

SEOUL — South Korean prosecutors on Tuesday demanded a 30-year-jail sentence for former president Park Geun-hye, sacked over a wide-ranging corruption scandal which exposed shady links between big business and politics and prompted massive street protests.

The 66-year-old daughter of a former dictator was dismissed in March 2017 and has now been in custody for almost a year.

"We ask the court to hand down 30 years in prison and (a fine of) 118.5 billion won (\$110 million) for the accused, who must take ultimate responsibility for the scandal as the 18th president of this country," prosecutors said in a statement.

They said Park, in collusion with her secret confidante and long-time friend Choi Soon-sil, took or was promised bribes totalling 59.2 billion won (\$52 million) from three South Korean companies, Samsung, Lotte and SK, in return for policy favours.

Park has also been charged with coercing 18 large firms to "donate" a total of 77.4 billion won to two dubious foundations controlled by Choi.

The Seoul Central District Court earlier this month found Choi guilty of abuse of power, bribery and interfering in government business and sentenced her to 20 years in prison.

The verdict and sentence was seen as a potential pointer to the decision in Park's separate trial in the same court, because 15 of the 18 charges Choi faced mirror charges against the ex-president. A date for the verdict on Park may be announced at the end of Tuesday's session. "The accused (Park) abused her power delegated by the people for private gain for Choi and herself... violated core

constitutional values on the protection of the market economy and free democracy," the statement said.

"Consequently, the accused became the first president to be sacked through impeachment, leaving an indelible scar on the country's constitutional history."

The prosecutors also rebuked Park for "allying with the chaebol instead of the people", in reference to the country's family-controlled large conglomerates, accusing her of strengthening "unhealthy ties between political power and economic power".

They also decried her attitude toward justice.

- 'Cover up' -

When allegations about Choi's misdeeds started surfacing in news media, Park tried to mislead public opinion and denounced the reports as "political offensives", prosecutors said.

"When the court issued an arrest warrant for the accused Park, she tried to cover up the true picture of the case by describing the move as political revenge."

Park since October has stopped attending the court, which she denounced as politically biased.

Some legal experts believe she is in an even worse position than Choi was, noting that the judge who sentenced Choi had denounced Park for having "delegated" presidential authority to a private individual. Park, daughter of late dictator Park Chung-Hee, was brought up in Seoul's presidential Blue House.

The scandal sent her once-bulletproof approval ratings to record lows, with tens of thousands taking to the streets for months calling for her ousting. But she retained a loyal following from groups of mainly older rival protesters.—AFP ■

Japan successfully launches rocket carrying reconnaissance satellite

TANEGASHIMA, Japan — Japan on Tuesday successfully launched an H-2A rocket carrying a government intelligence-gathering satellite from the Tanegashima Space Centre in southwestern Japan, with the rocket later releasing the satellite as planned.

The optical reconnaissance satellite will be used for such purposes as monitoring developments at North Korean missile launch facilities, increasing the number of the nation's intelligence-gathering satellites to seven.

The Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency and Mitsubishi Heavy Industries Ltd launched the H-2A F38 rocket from JAXA's launch site in Kagoshima Prefecture.

The government is aiming to raise the num-



A H-2A rocket carrying an intelligence-gathering satellite successfully takes off from the Tanegashima Space center in Kagoshima Prefecture, southwestern Japan on 27 February, 2018. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

ber of reconnaissance satellites in operation to 10, consisting of radar and optical types. The radar satellites, which are not affected by weather conditions and can see through clouds, are suited to take

photos at night, while optical ones capture images of the ground as the human eye does. The Japanese government does not reveal images captured by reconnaissance satellites, except for those taken at

a time of natural disaster. When it releases data on disaster-hit areas, the government downgrades the image quality so as not to reveal the image-capturing capacity of the satellites.—Kyodo News ■

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V AS SOPHIA VOY. NO. (1803)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V AS SOPHIA VOY. NO. (1803) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 28-2-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T.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 MCC TRANSPORT
(S'PORE) PTE LTD

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V HTK UNITY V.02/2018

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V HTK UNITY V.02/2018 are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 28-2-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of BSW-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 GLOBAL MARS SHIPPING
& LOGISTICS SERVICES CO, LTD.

Phone No: 2301928

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V CRIMSON MAJESTY

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V CRIMSON MAJESTY are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 28-2-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of MIPL 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 BK SHIPPING CO LTD

Phone No: 2301928

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V SINAR BANDA VOY. NO. (081 N/S)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V SINAR BANDA VOY. NO. (081 N/S) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 28-2-2018 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 SAMUDERA SHIPPING
LINE

Phone No: 2301185

'A Wrinkle in Time': a girls' movie all boys should see

LOS ANGELES — If "Black Panther" demonstrated that women can dominate a highly-lucrative action movie, then "A Wrinkle in Time" takes the lesson further — showing the boys how to be gracious followers.

The sci-fi fantasy is aiming to dislodge its Disney stablemate from atop the box office when it hits US theaters on 9 March, with its young female protagonist leading two boys in the adventure.

"It's nice for a young boy, young man even, to see that it is OK to have a sensitive side of you," Zach Galifianakis, one of the movie's few white male actors, told a news conference in Hollywood on Sunday.

"I come from a very masculine upbringing, a lot of people do, and I love the way I was raised. But looking back, we need balance."

Striking that balance, Ava DuVernay's movie is the first in history to entrust a budget of more than \$100 million to a female African-American director.

Galifianakis, becoming emotional, told reporters he felt "real proud" to be part of the project alongside many non-white, mainly female, actors including Oprah Winfrey, Mindy Kaling, Storm Reid and Gugu Mbatha-Raw.

Much of the movie's messaging about gender comes in the shape of Calvin, Meg's classmate and travel companion, a teenage



Mindy Kaling, one of the stars of "A Wrinkle in Time," loved science fiction growing up, but said it was a genre "that largely did not love me back". **PHOTO: AFP**

boy perfectly at ease following, and instinctively trusting in, a young girl.

The character is played by Australian Levi Miller who, at the tender age of 15, called out the culture of "toxic masculinity" which he said was "rampant in society," in one of the news conference's more surreal moments.

- Timeless classic -

Based on Madeleine L'Engle's timeless 1962 classic of the same name, "Wrinkle" takes audiences across dimensions of time and space, examining the nature of darkness versus light and the redeeming power of love.

Through one girl's transformative journey led by three

planet-hopping guides, the movie posits that strength comes from embracing one's individuality and that the best way to triumph over fear is to travel "by one's own light."

Fresh off heavy projects like the civil rights drama "Selma" and prisons expose "13th," DuVernay directed from a screenplay by Jennifer Lee, one of the few women in Hollywood whose filmmaking achievements eclipse her own.

Lee, who won an Academy Award for "Frozen," is the first female director of a Disney animated feature and the first woman to steer a feature to more than \$1 billion at the box office.

"There's love in every frame of this movie. There's love in every frame of everything I do. I don't have children and I won't have children, by choice," said DuVernay.

"These films are my children, they have my name on them, my blood in them."

DuVernay plucked 14-year-old Reid from thousands of hopefuls to play Meg Murry, the daughter of two world-renowned physicists who struggles with her self-image and just wants to fit in at her Los Angeles middle school.

Her father's mysterious disappearance four years earlier has left Meg devastated and her mother (Gugu Mbatha-Raw) broken-hearted.

Her preternaturally intelligent younger brother Charles Wallace (Deric McCabe) introduces Meg and Calvin to three magical beings — Mrs Which, Mrs Whatsit and Mrs Who — who have descended to Earth to help in the search for Mr Murry.

- 'We're looking for warriors' -

Traveling via a wrinkling of time and space known as "tessering," they are transported to worlds beyond their imagination where they must confront a powerful evil force.

A rare original project in a Disney slate featuring mainly remakes and sequels over the next four years, "A Wrinkle in Time" stars Winfrey, Kaling and Reese Witherspoon as the celestial trio.

Kaling, who wrote, produced and starred in sit-com "The Mindy Project," loved science fiction growing up, but said it was a genre "that largely did not love me back."

"I never saw representation of a dark-skinned Indian woman, Indian girls, in anything I saw and it's a pretty peculiar thing when you grow up loving something that doesn't love you back," she said. "It's such a pure love, because you're not getting anything from it. To be part of this movie... is so fun because I finally feel welcomed with open arms in something that has ignored me completely."—AFP ■

Rolling Stones to restart European tour in May

PARIS — The Rolling Stones will kick off the second leg of their European tour in Dublin on 17 May, the granddaddies of rock said on Monday.

The "Stones — No Filter" tour will see Mick Jagger, Keith Richards, Charlie Watts and Ron Wood also play stadium shows in Britain, Germany, France, the Czech Republic and Poland.

The concerts — which end on 8 July in Warsaw — include their first UK and Ireland tour in five years.

The highlights are likely to be two monster gigs in their hometown, at the London Stadium and Twickenham rugby stadium.

Tickets will start to go on sale for the tour on 2 March.

The Rolling Stones ended the first part of their "No Filter" tour in October with a series of sell-out shows in France.

The rock legends said the

new tour would include their classic songs such as "Satisfaction" as well as some "surprise" additions to their repertoire.

—AFP ■



The Rolling Stones ended the first part of their "No Filter" tour in October with a series of sell-out shows in France. **PHOTO: AFP**

Ed Sheeran named world's best-selling artist of 2017

LONDON — British folk-pop phenomenon Ed Sheeran on Monday was named the best-selling artist in the world in 2017 by the global recorded music industry group IFPI.

Sheeran's ÷ (Divide) was the best-selling album of last year and "Shape of You" was the best-selling single, London-based IFPI said in its announcement.

Sheeran is the fifth recipient of the Global Recording Artist of the Year Award after One Direction (2013), Taylor Swift (2014), Adele (2015) and Drake (2016).

"The success Ed has achieved is astonishing and testament to his ability to write and perform songs that connect with a truly global fanbase," IFPI chief executive Frances

Moore said in a statement.

Drake came second in the ranking, followed by Taylor Swift, Kendrick Lamar, Eminem, Bruno Mars, The Weeknd, Imagine Dragons, Linkin Park and The Chainsmokers.

The ranking includes digital and physical album and single sales, as well as audio streaming.

Max Lousada, chief executive of Warner Music UK, said Sheeran's "ability to tell stories and make people feel is what stands him out from the crowd".

Sheeran lost out to grime star Stormzy at the Brit Awards in London last week but earlier this month took Best Pop Solo performance at the Grammys in New York for "Shape of You".—AFP ■

City Mart participates in blood donation ceremony

A COLLECTIVE blood donation ceremony with City Mart Holding Co., Ltd was held on 24 February at their headquarters on Bagayar Street, Sanchaung Township, in Yangon.

Marketing Executive of the City Mart Holding Co., Ltd Daw Hnin Lae Wai said that the staff donated blood as part of City Love and Hope Foundation's CSR program. She noted, "We donated blood to be able to save the lives of humans. The Yangon National Blood Bank also needs

blood. I appreciated our staffs' support for the blood donation at our blood donation ceremony."

The company has held blood donations nine times since 2011 and donated over 493 blood bags to the Yangon National Blood Bank. Food supplements and medicines were presented to staff members who donated blood. Some 6,000 staff members have participated in the ninth blood donation programme at City Mart Holding Co., Ltd.—GNLM ■



Nurse measures the blood pressure for blood donation. PHOTO: SUPPLIED



A plan to air a Mandarin version of MasterChef in Singapore has sparked anger. PHOTO: AFP

Anger simmers at MasterChef Singapore Chinese plan

SINGAPORE — A plan to air a Mandarin version of MasterChef in Singapore sparked anger on Monday, with netizens claiming that the cooking show will not cater to all in the multi-ethnic country.

The competition, created in Britain in 1990, pits amateur chefs against each other in a pressure-cooker environment.

It has since seen several spin-offs featuring celebrity chefs like Gordon Ramsay, including "MasterChef Asia" which was broadcast in English in 2015.

Announcing "MasterChef Singapore", national broadcaster Mediacorp said the programme would be shown on a free-to-air Chinese-language channel, and potential applicants were asked online to rate their fluency in Mandarin.

The city-state has a population that is over 70 per cent ethnic Chinese but is also home to large Malay and Indian mi-

norities, as well as many expatriates.

Singapore has four official languages — English, Mandarin, Malay and Tamil — but people mainly communicate in English. Facebook user Magen Prasad said the planned show was "catering to the majority race in Singapore. Minority race, we gotta deal with it".

"So what, Malays, Indians & Eurasians cant cook? What nonsense is this?" Shaik Syasa wrote on the networking site. But Mediacorp insisted that contestants do not need to be fluent in Mandarin. "For contestants, fluency... is not a prerequisite as translation services can be provided during the show," the broadcaster said in a statement. "For television viewers, the series will be subtitled."

According to Mediacorp, the Chinese channel which will show the programme attracts the largest audience of any channel in its network.—AFP ■

Rock art and mystery: Ancient camel sculptures in Saudi desert

AL-JOUF (Saudi Arabia) — Squinting in the Saudi desert, Hussain al-Khalifah points at his unprecedented archaeological discovery — camels carved on russet-hued rocky spurs that could shed new light on the evolution of rock art.

Around a dozen humped sculptures, some of them damaged from erosion and vandalism, are possibly around 2,000 years old and were recently found in a private property along a desert crossing in the northern province of Al-Jouf.

Chiseled on three rocky spurs, the sculptures, which also depict equids, or hoofed mammals, show a level of artistic skill unseen in other rock art forms in the Saudi desert.

They could help unravel the mysteries of ancient life in the Arabian peninsula.

"They are a work of artistry and creativity," Khalifah said, giving AFP a tour of the desolate area in Al-Jouf, now well known in archeological circles as "the camel site".

Khalifah, part of a Franco-Saudi research team that explored the site in 2016 and 2017, said he accidentally discovered the carvings some years ago when a local friend told him about a "camel-shaped mountain".

"Instead when I visited the area, I found camels were carved in the mountain outcrops. This is truly unique," he said.

Camels — for centuries venerated as the "ship of the desert" — are a familiar motif in artworks

from the kingdom.

But the three dimensional engravings in Al-Jouf, some featuring only part of a camel's body such as the hooves, differ from those discovered at other Saudi sites.

Many are perched high on the outcrops and would have required ropes or scaffolding.

One engraving in particular stands out — a camel facing what appears to be a donkey, mule or horse, animals that have rarely been represented in the region's rock art.

"The three dimensional carvings show great skill in their level of naturalism and their sheer size," Maria Guagnin, from the Germany-based Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History, told AFP.

"This may potentially change our understanding of prehistoric population dynamics and cultural traits."

But the site is shrouded in mystery, with little information

on who created the carvings or the tools they used.

Khalifah said the closest may be the Nabateans, a nomadic Arab tribe known for founding the city of Petra in modern-day Jordan that was carved out of sandstone desert cliffs.

- Rich past -

The discovery has shone a spotlight on Saudi Arabia's rich bedouin heritage. The kingdom is endowed with thousands of examples of painted rock art and ancient inscriptions.

Archaeologists last year used Google Maps to find hundreds of stone "gates" built from rock in a remote Saudi desert, which may date back as far as 7,000 years.

They also discovered evidence of 46 lakes that used to exist in Saudi Arabia's northern Nefud desert, which experts say has lent credence to the theory that the region swung between periods of desertification and a wetter climate.—AFP ■



The site of an archaeological discovery north of the city of Sakaka in Saudi Arabia's northwestern Al-Jouf province, with a carved sculpture of a camel's legs seen in the foreground (R). PHOTO: AFP

Dortmund held by Augsburg 1-1 in German Bundesliga

BERLIN — Kevin Danso's late 1-1 equalizer helped Augsburg to snatch one point against Borussia Dortmund at the closer of the 24th round in Bundesliga on Monday.

Marco Reus' opener wasn't enough to secure all three points on home soil as Augsburg levelled the scores late in the second half to end their two-game losing streak.

After two straight defeats, Augsburg started highly motivated and aggressive into the encounter giving hosts no time to gain a foothold into the game.

However, Dortmund kept their calm and implemented their style of play to break the deadlock against the run of the game as Marco Reus finished off a counter attack via Mario Goetze and Andre Schuerrle from close range with 16 minutes played.

Peter Stoeger's men controlled possession but lacked in ideas to extend their advantage meanwhile Augsburg barely posed threat to Dortmund's defence within the first half.

After the restart things changed as Augsburg came out with chances through Jonathan Schmid, who came close twice at the hour mark.

As the match progressed, Augsburg increased the pressure and rewarded their efforts in the closing period as Kevin



Lukasz Piszczek (L) of Borussia Dortmund vies with Caiuby of FC Augsburg during the Bundesliga match between Borussia Dortmund and FC Augsburg at the Signal Iduna Park in Dortmund Germany, on 26 February, 2018. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

Danso tapped home his own rebound from close range to restore parity in the 72nd minute.

The "BVB" threw everything up front but Augsburg were able to stand firm and to hijack one point from Dortmund. "We defended very well except for one situation. We have previously pointed out

their counter strength. I am very satisfied with the team's performance and the draw," Augsburg's head coach Manuel Baum said.

"I am not satisfied at all. We had an ideal start and we really wanted to press for a second goal. Instead, we just played back and forth and tried

to protect our lead," Borussia Dortmund's head coach Peter Stoeger said.

With the result, runner-up Dortmund dropped points on the hunt for runaway leaders Bayern Munich whereas Augsburg stay on the 8th position of the Bundesliga standings. —Xinhua ■

Neymar suffers fractured metatarsal, serious doubt to face Real

PARIS — Paris Saint-Germain star Neymar suffered a sprained ankle and a fractured metatarsal when he was stretchered off in Sunday's win over Marseille, the Ligue 1 leaders announced on Monday.

The Brazilian, who signed for PSG in a world-record move from Barcelona last year, is now a serious injury doubt for the Champions League last-16 second leg against Real Madrid at the Parc des Princes on 6 March.

PSG trail in the tie after a 3-1 first-leg defeat in Spain, with their hopes of a maiden Champions League title taking a further body blow with the confirmation of Neymar's injury, although they didn't specify how long the 26-year-old would be out of action.

"Additional examinations performed today (ultrasound and CT) confirmed an external sprain of the right ankle, but also an associated fissure of the fifth metatarsal," PSG said in a short statement.

The chances of Neymar returning to fitness in time to face the reigning European champions now appear extremely slim.

He is all but certain to miss Wednesday's French Cup quarter-final against Marseille and the weekend's Ligue 1 visit to Troyes, with the Real clash just three days later. Metatarsal injuries usually take weeks, if not months to recover from.

Just last year, Neymar's international team-mate Gabriel Jesus was out of action for two months after breaking a metatarsal with Manchester City, and has struggled with further injuries since.

Former England stars David Beckham and Wayne Rooney spent six weeks on the sidelines with metatarsal injuries in the past, with both still arguably being rushed back too soon for the 2002 and 2006 World Cups respectively.—AFP ■

Undefeated Thai 'dwarf giant' one win from Mayweather record

BANGKOK — Unsung outside the boxing world, a Thai fighter nicknamed the "dwarf giant" is quietly closing in on Floyd Mayweather's undefeated 50 fight record and with it an unlikely place among the sport's greats.

At 5ft 2in (1.57m) and weighing just 105lb (47.6kg), minimum-weight Wanheng Menayothin is shorter, leaner and significantly less wealthy than "Money" Mayweather, the brash American who was teased from retirement last year by a \$100 million purse to fight MMA star Conor McGregor.

But this spring Wanheng could tie Mayweather's 50-0 record and enter boxing lore.

His 50th bout in April or May is set to be against Panama's Leroy Estrada in Thailand, a low-key affair that will

be followed by fans and boxing enthusiasts, but not the global audience drawn to the cross-discipline spectacle between Mayweather and McGregor.

The milestone is generating boxing buzz in a country that is better known for Muay Thai, the kingdom's boxing-style martial art that also allows kicking, kneeing and elbows to the head.

"Am I proud? Yes I am, for being on par with the superstars," the softly spoken 32-year-old said while sitting on a tyre and wrapping his fists with gauze ahead of a training session at his Bangkok gym.

His record of 49 wins with 17 knockouts has been earned against relative minnows — many of them regional fighters — but he has been dominant in the minimum-weight division



Wanheng Menayothin trains in Bangkok — the man nicknamed 'dwarf giant' is aiming for a 50th win to equal Floyd Mayweather's all-time unbeaten boxing record. **PHOTO: AFP**

and holds the World Boxing Council belt.

With his present stats he has already matched the legendary fighter Rocky Marciano, but he doesn't dwell too much

on the numbers.

"I never thought about breaking records. I just want to win every fight like all athletes who don't want to lose. Keep winning until I quit."—AFP ■