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THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

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President U Win Myint receives Chinese Public Security Minister

PRESIDENT U Win Myint received a delegation led by Mr. Zhao Kezhi, member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and Minister of Public Security, at the Presidential Palace in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

During the meeting, they discussed several issues, including cooperation in all-round strategic bilateral relations through Pauk Phaw relations, border security, prevention of and fighting against drug abuse, anti-human trafficking and anti-terrorism. They also discussed China's assistance in providing the necessary police equipment to implement the rule of law and security, establishing police control headquarters and China-Myanmar economic platform, and implementing the Kyaukpyu project.

The meeting was also attended by Union Minister for Home Affairs Lt-Gen Kyaw Swe, Union Minister for International Cooperation U Kyaw Tin, President's Office Deputy Minister U Min Thu and other officials, while the Chinese delegation, led by Mr. Zhao Kezhi, was accompanied by Representatives led by China's Public Security Minister, Chinese Ambassador to Myanmar Mr. Hong Liang.—Myanmar News Agency

President U Win Myint, right, welcomes Mr. Zhao Kezhi, Member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and Minister of Public Security, in Nay Pyi Taw. **PHOTO: MNA**

State Counsellor receives Chinese Minister of Public Security, Swiss Ambassador

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, State Counsellor and Union Minister for Foreign Affairs, received Mr. Zhao Kezhi, member of the CPC Central Committee and Minister of Public Security of China, yesterday at 10 am at the Presidential Palace in Nay Pyi Taw.

During the meeting, they discussed promoting bilateral relations and providing assistance for internal peace, enforcement of the rule of law and security issues in Myanmar.

Also present at the meeting were Union Minister for Home Affairs Lt-Gen Kyaw Swe, Union Minister for International Cooperation U Kyaw Tin, Deputy Minister for Office of the President U Min Thu and responsible officials. Mr. Zhao Kezhi was accompanied by the Chinese Ambassador to Myanmar Mr. Hong Liang and representatives led by Minister of Public Security of China.

The State Counsellor later received Mr. Paul R. Seger, Ambassador of Switzerland to Myanmar, at 11:15 a.m. yesterday at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Nay Pyi Taw.

During the meeting, they exchanged views on matters related to promoting bilateral relations and cooperation between Myanmar and Switzerland, the drafting of Switzerland's New Development Strategy (2019-2023) for Myanmar and supporting Myanmar's peace and national reconciliation process.—Myanmar News Agency

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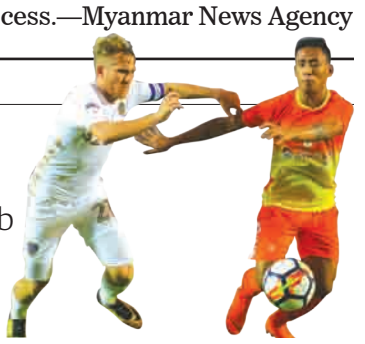

Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker receives Australian Ambassador

PYITHU Hluttaw Speaker U T Khun Myat received Australian Ambassador to Myanmar Mr. Nicholas Coppel at the Pyithu Hluttaw Building in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

During the meeting, they exchanged views and openly discussed matters related to Australia-Myanmar bilateral cooperation, cooperation in development programmes to strengthen the Hluttaw and democracy systems, and programmes to promote education and build the capacity of the Hluttaw representatives and the legislation sector.

Present at the meeting were Pyithu Hluttaw Deputy Speaker U Tun Aung (a) U Tun Tun Hein and officials from the Pyithu Hluttaw office.—Myanmar News Agency ■

Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U T Khun Myat welcomes Australian Ambassador in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

Union Minister for Information leaves for Singapore to attend AMRI

UNION Minister for Information Dr. Pe Myint left for Singapore yesterday to attend the 14th Conference of the ASEAN Ministers Responsible for Information (AMRI) and other related meetings.

The delegation led by the union minister was seen off at Yangon International Airport by officials from the Ministry of Information.—MNA ■

Officials see off Union Minister Dr. Pe Myint at Yangon International Airport yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

Union Minister for Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation receives chairman of China Huaneng Group Co Ltd

UNION Minister for Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation U Ohn Win received Chairman of China Huaneng Group Co. Ltd. Yuan Xianghua at his office in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

During the meeting, they exchanged views and discussed matters related to the hydroelectric production capacity of Myanmar, especially prospects to generate hydroelectric power on Shwe Li River, and the environmental and social impact assessments for the production of hydropower.—MNA ■

Union Minister U Ohn Win holds talks with China Huaneng Group Co. Ltd. Chairman Yuan Xianghua in Nay Pyi Taw. **PHOTO: MNA**

Press Statement

Myanmar rebuts Dhaka Declaration's reference on situation in Rakhine State. Myanmar calls for Bangladesh's sincere cooperation to start early repatriation

THE 45th Session of the Council of Foreign Ministers of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) held in Dhaka from 5 to 6 May 2018 issued the Dhaka Declaration expressing concern over alleged human rights violations by security forces in Myanmar.

The Declaration lacks balance and fairness, and fails to denounce the brutal attacks of the terrorist group, the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA) which triggered the humanitarian situation unfolding today.

Myanmar categorically rejects the irresponsible labelling of "ethnic cleansing" or "State backed violence" to describe events in Rakhine State. More than 50% of the Muslim community, which represents a majority in Maungtaw Region, have remained in their villages.

The Government has stated time and again that no violation of human rights will be condoned. Allegations supported by evidence will be investigated and action taken in accordance with the law.

It is highly regrettable that the Dhaka Declaration did not even mention the immediate need for the repatriation of displaced persons from Rakhine in accordance with the bilateral agreement between Myanmar and Bangladesh. Nor were there any suggestions aimed at promoting harmony and sustainable development in the Rakhine State.

As the monsoons are approaching, Myanmar is now focusing on expediting the repatriation process. To that end, Myanmar urges Bangladesh to take all necessary steps to help the process in accordance with the said agreement.

Myanmar stands ready to facilitate the voluntary, safe and dignified return of the displaced persons from Rakhine.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Myanmar women's delegation to receive ASEAN Outstanding Women Entrepreneurship Award

A DELEGATION of women entrepreneurs left for Bangkok, Thailand, yesterday to receive the ASEAN Outstanding Women Entrepreneurs Award granted by the ASEAN Women Entrepreneurs' Network (AWEN).

The 10-member delegation was seen off by executive members of the Myanmar Women Entrepreneurs Association (MWEA) at Yangon International Airport.

The Myanmar women's delegation will attend the annual meeting of AWEN and the ASEAN Outstanding Women Entrepreneurs Award Ceremony, which will be held on 10 and 11 May at the Department of Social Development and Welfare's Building in Bangkok, Thailand, and receive the ASEAN Outstanding Women Entrepreneurs Award.—Myanmar News Agency ■

Women entrepreneurs delegation poses for the photo before departure for Bangkok at Yangon International Airport. **PHOTO: MNA**

> We will abolish the red tape that burdens the people and eradicate corruption and bribery that plagues all levels of society as we work to strengthen the moral fiber of our people. We will draw out from our past experiences as a civilian government overcoming various obstacles and hardships, as we work to the best of our ability for the immediate present and head towards the future of a democratic nation that respects human rights and is free from all stains of corruption.
>
> **(Excerpt from the speech by President U Win Myint at the ceremony to take oath of office at Pyidaungsu Hluttaw on 30th March 2018)**

> Let us strive collectively for the emergence of a just and free nation– a nation which will guarantee equal rights and equality, a nation which practices a pure ideology.
>
> **(Excerpt from the speech by State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi on the 2nd Anniversary of NLD Government on 1st April 2018)**

State Counsellor receives Chinese Minister of Public Security, Swiss Ambassador

State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi welcomes Mr. Zhao Kezhi, Member of the CPC Central Committee and Minister of Public Security of China, in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA** **(NEWS ON PAGE-1)**

State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi meets with Mr. Paul R. Seger, Ambassador of Switzerland to Myanmar, in Nay Pyi Taw. **PHOTO: MNA** **(NEWS ON PAGE-1)**

Union Minister for International Cooperation calls in Bangladesh Ambassador

Union Minister U Kyaw Tin receives Mr. Manjurul Karim Khan Chowdhury, Ambassador of People's Republic of Bangladesh to Myanmar, on Tuesday in Nay Pyi Taw. **PHOTO: MNA**

Union Minister for International Cooperation U Kyaw Tin called in the Ambassador of People's Republic of Bangladesh to Myanmar Mr. Manjurul Karim Khan Chowdhury on 8 May 2018 at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Nay Pyi Taw and raised a number of border security issues and challenges hindering early repatriation of the displaced persons.

During the meeting, the Union Minister officially objected to the recent construction of bunkers and other structures by the Bangladeshi side near the borderline in the Non-Construction Zone and called for the removal of those structures, as such activities violate the bilateral Boundary Demarcation Treaty between the two countries. The Union Minister also conveyed Myanmar's request to the authorities of Bangladesh to stop assisting construction of sheds and shelters on the Myanmar side of the Non-Construction Zone and sought the cooperation of Bangladesh in facilitating the return of the displaced persons illegally staying inside the Zone.

The Union Minister also informed the Ambassador that a total of 368 people of Rakhine/ Mro / Khami / Daingnet ethnic origin, who are believed to be Bangladeshi citizens, have entered from Bangladesh into Myanmar during the past few months and called for early verification and voluntary repatriation to Bangladesh.

The Union Minister reiterated Myanmar's readiness to commence repatriation of verified displaced persons from Rakhine State before the monsoon as agreed by the two governments and sought the earliest cooperation of the Bangladeshi side to send back around 1,200 verified residents of Hindus and Muslim community as well as over 929 verified displaced persons contained in the list provided by the Myanmar side. The Ambassador was also reminded to send the list of displaced persons using the right form as agreed in the Physical Arrangement. The Union Minister also informed the Ambassador of Myanmar's desire to resolve the issue of displaced persons and any other issue of common concern through bilateral negotiations and cooperation in a spirit of good neighbourliness.

—Myanmar News Agency

THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR
www.globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

ACTING CHIEF EDITOR
Aye Min Soe,
ce@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com
dce@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

EXPATRIATE CONSULTANT EDITOR
Mark Angeles,
markrangeles@gmail .com

SENIOR EDITORIAL CONSULTANT
Kyaw Myaing

SENIOR TRANSLATORS
Zaw Min,
zawmin.gnlm@gmail.com
Win Ko Ko Aung,
kowink2aung@gmail.com

INTERNATIONAL NEWS EDITOR
Ye Htut Tin,
editor1@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

LOCAL NEWS EDITORS
Tun Tun Naing (Editor),
intlnews@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com
Nwe Nwe Tun (Sub-editor),
nwenwe9131@gmail.com

TRANSLATORS
Khaing Thanda Lwin,
Hay Mar Tin Win,
Ei Myat Mon
Zaw Htet Oo
Kyaw Zin Lin
Kyaw Zin Tun

REPORTER
May Thet Hnin,
reporter1@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com
mayreporter.mm@gmail.com

PHOTOGRAPHER
Kyaw Zeya Win @ Phoe Khwar

COMPUTER TEAM
Tun Zaw ,
Thein Ngwe, Zaw Zaw Aung,
Ye Naing Soe, Nyi Zaw Moe,
Hnin Pwint, Kay Khaing Win,
Sanda Hnin

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

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

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

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gnlmdaily@gmail.com
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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.

U Kyaw Win, chairman of the Myanmar Investment Commission and Union Minister for Planning and Finance, addresses the Yangon Investment Forum at the Novotel Yangon Max Hotel yesterday. **PHOTO: YANGON REGION GOVERNMENT**

Investment likely to increase after conclusion of Yangon Investment Forum

By May Thet Hnin/
Nyein Nyein

THE Yangon Investment Forum concluded yesterday at the Novotel Yangon Max Hotel, at which time the Yangon Region Chief Minister predicted that foreign investment is likely to rise.

Yangon Investment Forum 2018 was organised by the Yangon Region Investment Committee under the theme "Yangon Region: Investment Hub in Myanmar" in association with Myanmar Investors Development Association (MIDA) and supported by DICA, GIZ, UMFCCI, PwC and Max Hotels Group.

High-ranking officials of Yangon Regional Government and experts from various sectors participated as speakers and panelists, addressing on-the-ground challenges, realistic opportunities and portraying a positive investment climate within Yangon Region for Investors. "The investors who want to implement industrial zones in Myanmar can enter into the country to invest because Myanmar has sea outlets as well as cheap labour. Also, we expect housing projects to be available at an affordable price, with a long-term installment system. (We expect) the garment business, which needs a large labour force, to enter the country," said Yangon Region Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein.

During the forum, the chief minister discussed current implementation conditions and investment opportunities as part of an overall economic vision, including the classifications of trades and logistics, industrial development, urban public transportation development, and energy sector development.

"Yangon will be a clean city governed by rule of law and an economically vibrant city. Also, we will give priority to a green economy. We will try to create a Yangon that will be a vitally important city, not only for Myanmar but also for ASEAN countries. We will also invite more investment to create Yangon to become an imperative city. Our region government will also help to create it", said U Phyo Min Thein.

At the forum, the officials discussed the deep sea port and special economic zone projects as well as maritime, railway and road upgrading projects. Also explained were the Yangon Myothit project near Kyimyindine township in southwest of Yangon that includes an industrial zone and affordable housing, and an energy production and distribution project which will be implemented in Yangon Region.

The government officials and business entrepreneurs also discussed the topics of "Doing Business in Yangon", "Current investment situation in Yangon", "Investment Strategy in the Yangon Region", and "Private sector projects in Yangon". They also conducted a panel discussion on the investment framework in Myanmar and private sector perspectives focusing on agriculture, energy & electricity, logistics, tourism, textiles & garments, and banking sectors.

U Kyaw Win, chairman of the Myanmar Investment Commission and Union Minister for Planning and Finance, said that this forum was held with the aim of identifiying the basic processes for the development the country. Local and foreign investors will also be permitted opportunities to invest in Myanmar safety.

Mrs. Vicky Bowman, director of Myanmar Centre for Responsible Business (MCRB), said the forum is important because it allows the sharing of information for the Yangon city development project.

"All the presentations are very interesting. I am very pleased to hear that the speakers also included the responsible businesses, which are part of the government's investment policy, in their speech", she said.

"We really need both effective environmental regulations, but also for businesses to abide by regulations and do business responsibly, because we'd see more environmental pressure on Yangon such as we'd already seen with the Htain Bin waste dump fire and we see on a daily basis the pollution of waterways. So that is a joint role to be played by responsible businesses and Yangon Region to provide infrastructure for waste management, water, sewage, but also businesses need to abide by local laws and ideally aim for international standards" she added.

More than 1,000 local and foreign entrepreneurs attended the forum. ■

Bago Region Investment Committee grants endorsement for six investment proposals

SINCE January 2017, the Bago Region Investment Committee has issued endorsements for six investment proposals, with a capital of some US$16.35 million.

The investments are primarily in the manufacturing business, creating more than 7,100 job opportunities.

Some 78 foreign businesses are being executed in the Bago Region, with an estimated capital of some $1.58 billion. The region saw investments worth some Ks944.7 billion by Myanmar citizens through 37 domestic businesses. According to the guidance of the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA), an information event on "Myanmar Investment Law, Rules and Myanmar Companies Law" was held on 8 May 2018 at the City Hall of Bago in Bago Region with the support of GIZ Myanmar. At the event, U Win Thein, Chief Minister of Bago Region, delivered the opening speech.

The meeting was held in two sessions. During session 1, DICA directors Dr. Lwin Thuzar Shwe, U Myo Min and U Ko Ko Latt made a presentation on the Myanmar Investment Law, Rules and the Myanmar Companies Law.

During session 2, panelists from DICA and U San Lwin, chairman of Bago Region Hotel Association, held a panel discussion on the Myanmar Investment Law, Rules and the Myanmar Companies Law.

The Bago Region DICA (branch) office was opened in January 2017.

According to the new Myanmar Investment Law, region and state DICA offices are authorised to grant approval to investment proposals with capital not exceeding $5 million (Ks6,000 million), with the aim of facilitating the verification process of investment projects.—Tin Soe (Bago) ■

Some 78 foreign businesses are being executed in the Bago Region, with an estimated capital of some $1.58 billion. **PHOTO: NYI ZAW MOE**

IFC to offer food safety training courses

By May Thet Hnin

THE International Finance Cooperation (IFC) will provide food safety training courses, including those for the conservation of fish and prawn species, said Daw Toe Nandar Tin, vice chairperson of Myanmar Fisheries Federation (MFF).

"We will provide Training of Trainers (ToT). Local fish breeders do not have any knowledge about the conservation of fish species. Our local fish breeders are facing difficulties in fish hatching, because they are breeding on their own. Breeding will be effective, if we give priority to conservation of fish and prawn species, which is important in the fish hatching process," said Daw Toe Nandar Tin.

The IFC will provide food safety training courses on fish and prawn hatching and fish health management. Also, the IFC will provide knowledge of good aquaculture practices (GAP) in fish farming.

"Fish businessmen want to know about GAP to meet international standards . We are negotiating with the IFC to receive GAP knowledge, which is effective in penetrating international markets," she added.

"The fish and prawn hatching courses will be conducted at the MFF office. We are still negotiating the training timetable," she said.

The MFF is also planning to upgrade the fish and prawn breading businesses. It will network with international countries to penetrate new markets. The MFF is trying to obtain an international recommendation certificate, which is important for the export of marine products.

"The number of inflected fish has increased. Bacterial infection has increased with the water pollution rising. Therefore, aquaculture cannot be developed if we don't use technology in the fish and prawn breeding sector," said Daw Toe Nandar Tin.

Some of the fish and prawn species have almost disappeared because of illegal and excessive fishing. Yangon Region Fisheries Department Director U Tun Win Myint said the government is upgrading the fish and prawn ponds. It will focus on the fish and prawn breeding sector in the next three years.

Some 408,000 acres of fish and prawn breeding farms exist across the county. ■

Myanmar's foreign trade deficit stands at $491 million in April

MYANMAR's external trade from 1 to 27 April 2018 during the six-month transition period for the next 2018-2019 financial year showed a deficit of US$491 million, according to statistics provided by the commerce ministry.

Exports were worth $784.5 million, while imports were valued at $1.27 billion, totalling some $2.06 billion.

The government managed to reduce the trade deficit to $3.97 billion during the 2017-2018 FY. The trade deficit was more than $5.2 billion in the 2016-2017 FY.

Last FY, the value of Myanmar's external trade with foreign countries reached $33.3 billion, including $14.67 billion in exports and $18.64 billion in imports.

Trade deficits were registered at $91.9 million in the 2012-2013 FY, $2.5 billion in the 2013-2014 FY, $4.9 billion in the 2014-2015 FY, $5.4 billion in the 2015-2016 FY and more than $5.2 billion in the 2016-2017 FY, according to statistics released by the Central Statistical Organisation.

Concerted efforts were made to reduce the trade deficit by screening luxury import items, except essential goods.—Ko Khant ■

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing holds talks with Zhao Kezhi, member of the CPC Central Committee and Minister of Public Security, in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing receives Public Security Minister

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services, received a delegation led by Zhao Kezhi, member of the CPC Central Committee and Minister of Public Security, in the Zeyar Thiri Beikman in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday afternoon.

During the meeting, they discussed matters related to the two countries' borderline peace and stability, cooperation in bilateral security, anti-drugs and anti-human trafficking works, cooperation between the two armed forces and police forces of Myanmar and China, the efforts made by the Tatmadaw for the peace process in Myanmar, and the condition for China's approval of the solution of Myanmar's Tatmadaw on Rakhine.—Myanmar News Agency ■

Yangon-Mandalay railway to be upgraded in July

THE upgrade work on the Yangon-Mandalay railway will start in July, according to a report in Myawady Daily yesterday.

The upgrade will include work on rail tracks, fencing, repairs to bridges, and installation of modern technology and equipment.

"Myanma Railways (MR) has been upgrading the railway sections, step by step, since 2017. MR is arranging to start the railway upgrade work in July," said an official from MR. MR will implement the project, in cooperation with the Japan International Cooperation Agency. The project is classified into three sections: Yangon-Taungoo, Taungoo-Yamethin and Yamethin-Mandalay.

"We have to avoid errors and delays in the process. MR will have to present all reports to the relevant ministry. The only thing remaining is to sign the contract," he added.

MR will also upgrade the Yangon-Mandalay railway signalling system. After upgrading the railway project, MR will run new train coaches at a speed of 100 kilometres per hour in less than eight hours.—GNLM ■

Correction

Please read "1.89 million yuan" in the seventh sentence in fifth paragraph on page-6 of 9 May Issue of the Global New Light of Myanmar in stead of "18.9 million yuan" in the story titled "Myanmar-China bilateral security, rule of law ministerial-level meeting held".—Myanmar Police Force

Suspected bomber exposed, arrested

The police have arrested the alleged bomber responsible for the bomb blast during a pagoda festival that left one man injured on 28 September 2017.

A motorcycle parked in front of Pan Lay Pyay Shan Restaurant, Sate Tara Mahi Ward, Chanayethazan Township, Mandalay Region, exploded at 9.20 p.m. on 28 September 2017. At the time of the explosion, a pagoda festival was being held in Thone Ze compound Dhammayone. The explosion gutted the motorcycle and left a man with burn injuries on his face, stomach and left thigh. The Chanayethazan Myoma Police Station started an investigation to apprehend the bomber.

A white MICRO (mobile phone) handset (SIM card inside) with red and black wires attached was found at the explosion site, together with scrap iron and plastic pieces. The tests conducted on the materials found at the explosion site showed that chemical compounds were mixed with scrap iron pieces to form an explosive device, which was set off using the hand phone as a detonator.

Aung Myint Zaw @
Aung Min Zaw @ Hussein.

The phone number from which a call was made to the detonating phone was retrieved from the SIM card call record, and the suspect was found to be Aung Myint Zaw @ Aung Min Zaw @ Hussein, 20, son of U Thein Zaw @ Zarfaw Ali from Mamon Village Phakant Township, Ayezedi Ward, Myitkyina Town. He was absconding but the Myanmar Police Force continued to search for him and finally caught him in Aye Yeik Nyein male boarding house, 67 Street, between 41 and 42 Street, Mahamyaing Ward (1), Mahaaungmye Township at 6.15 p.m. on 3 May 2018.

According to the initial investigation, the suspect was found to be a student attending Mandalay University of Pharmacy, while staying in Shwe Sin Min boarding house in front of the university. In June 2017, he was upset with the pictures and video files being shared on Facebook about the fake and propaganda news about northern Rakhine State. He searched for information online on how to make explosive devices. He bought chemical compounds readily available in the market and successfully conducted small-scale test explosions twice behind the Shwe Sin Min boarding house in August 2017. On the day of the incident, he put the chemical mixture he had prepared, together with the handset and scrap iron pieces, inside a plastic bag, and went to Sate Tara Mahi Ward, Chanayethazan Township, Mandalay Region, where a pagoda festival was being held in Thone Ze compound Dhammayone. At the site, he attached the plastic bag to the handle of a parked motorcycle and left. Once he reached a safe distance from the pagoda festival site, he dialled the phone he had placed inside the plastic bag and heard an explosion. The next day, he left for his cousin's house, who was staying in Ruili, China, and stayed there for a month. He came to Mandalay for some 20 days in November 2017 and stayed at his friend's house on 59 Street, between 41 and 42 Street in Mahaaungmye Township, and then returned to live with his parents in Mamon Village. He came back to attend the third-year course in the university in January 2018 and stayed at Shwe Sin Min boarding house. He had moved to Aye Yeik Nyein male boarding house on 67 Street, between 41 and 42 Street, Mahamyaing Ward (1), Mahaaungmye Township, to attend the second semester, when he was arrested.

Action will be taken against the suspect according to the law, while the police have requested the public to report to the authorities on seeing any suspicious chemical (liquid or solid).—Myanmar News Agency ■

Solar panels to be installed in 125 townships of states, regions

According to the National Electrification Project (NEP), the Rural Area Development Department is planning to install solar panels in 125 townships of states and regions, as of October this fiscal year, to provide electricity in rural areas, according to a report in Myawady Daily yesterday.

Poly Solar Company and Complant Lemi Company, which have won the tenders for the project, will install solar panels in 12 states and regions in two phases. In the first phase, Poly Solar Company has already installed the solar panels, as of March. For the second phase, Complant Lemi Company started installing the solar panels in April.

The companies will install solar panels in the villages within the allotted period. The solar panels will be installed in the public building, said an official from the Rural Area Development Department.

According to NEP, the solar panels will be installed in 88,019 houses in 1,366 villages in 125 townships in the 2018-2019 fiscal year. —GNLM ■

Joint Monitoring Committee makes 15 decisions on second day meeting

THE Joint Monitoring Committees (JMCs) on Ceasefire met for the second day of their second general meeting in the Lotte Hotel in Yangon yesterday morning.

The meeting of the JMCs was held for two days on 8 and 9 May and was attended by 97 out of 126 committee members of various levels of JMCs. Strengths, weaknesses and challenges of ceasefire works as well as ways of overcoming these were discussed in the meeting, said Joint Monitoring Committee at Union Level (JMC-U) secretary (1) Dr. Shwe Kha.

The second day of Joint Monitoring Committee meeting held in Yangon. **PHOTO: PE ZAW GYI**

During the two-day meeting, increasing the formation of Joint Monitoring Committee Local-level (JMC-L), formation of Local Civilians Monitoring (LCM) groups, strengthening the contact between JMC member armed organisations, smoother running of office works as well as detailed status, successes and difficulties faced by all levels of JMCs were discussed.

In addition to this, future works such as JMC member armed organisations building trust and getting to know each other, informing the public of actions taken for complaints, conducting capacity building courses for JMC members and members of technical assistance office of the JMCs were also discussed in the meeting. Fifteen decisions and two records were made.

Yesterday's meeting was attended by chairmen and members of JMC-U, Joint Monitoring Committee at Region and State Levels (JMC-S), JMC-L and members of technical assistance offices of the JMCs,

"In addition to strengths and weaknesses, challenges were also discussed in the two-day meeting. Overcoming the challenges of the difficulties in communication among JMC-S and JMC-L were discussed. Another matter discussed was forming ward and village level LCMs and conducting courses to raise the capacities of technical assistance offices members," said JMC-U secretary (2) Col. Wunna Aung.

Responding to questions raised by the media on the two-day meeting, JMC-U Secretary (1) Dr. Shwe Kha said, "Local level commanders were told to conduct meetings to built understanding, trust and becoming familiar among each other to avoid (armed) conflicts. Furthermore, discussion on holding meetings involving senior commanders and groups from the headquarters was also discussed. It was decided not to hold meetings and discussion only between local level commanders, but also top level commanders as well."

On the matter of arranging meetings for local level commanders, JMC-U secretary (2) Col. Wunna Aung said, "The Tatmadaw holds a joint discussion because this is a joint committee. The aim is for the local level commander to get to know each other and to make it easier for them to build trust. If they don't know each other, trust can't be built. That is why it was decided for local level commanders to meet under the arrangement of JMC-S after each JMC-S meeting was conducted."

He added that conducting courses to raise capabilities is one of the works of the JMC. Courses for JMCs and courses on NCA, COC and TOR for members of armed organisations will be conducted, said Col. Wunna Aung in reply to questions raised by the media.

The JMC is forming JMC-S in Shan, Kayin, Bago, Mon and Taninthayi and JMC-L in Langkho and Hpapun, it is learnt. JMCs had received 411 complaints, out of which some 334 were resolved.

Members of the media were not permitted to enter the meeting room during the second day meeting.—Ye Khaung Nyunt ■

Coordinating meeting discusses holding 2nd Hluttaw's eighth regular session

The central committee and work committees of the Hluttaw held a work coordination meeting yesterday in Nay Ptyi Taw, discussing holding meetings of the eighth regular session of the 2nd Hluttaw.

At the meeting, Speaker of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Mahn Win Khaing Than, said, in his capacity as the patron of the central committee for holding Hluttaw meetings, that the upcoming meetings will mainly focus drafing the budget bill and will also discuss remaining bills at respective Hluttaws.

Speaker of Pyithu Hluttaw U T Khun Myat said, in his capacity as the patron of the central committee on holding meetings of Hluttaw, that said that he inspected the places where the Hluttaw members will stay, suggesting to open the clinics before MPs arrive there.

Union Ministers, Chairman of the Nay Pyi Taw Council, deputy ministers and officials also reported on arrangments for the upcoming meetings of the Hluttaw.

The meeting ended with concluding remarks by the Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker and Pyidaungsu Hlutaw Speaker.—Myanmar News Agency

Speaker of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Mahn Win Khaing Than addresses the coordination meeting of the central committee and work committees of the Hluttaw yesterday in Nay Pyi Taw. **PHOTO: MNA**

10 MAY 2018
THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

Expand export crops in favourable areas nationwide

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

Historically and at present, the agricultural sector is the main livelihood for the majority of the people.

As a result of an increase in investment, Myanmar's agriculture sector has prospects for growth.

Myanmar's rice exports this fiscal year was more than 3 million tons, the most in over 70 years. This will be remembered as the start of a return as one of the region's top rice exporters.

Currently, Myanmar's fruits and vegetables are flowing into Singapore and Taiwan, in addition to China. And we are making efforts for the fruits and vegetables market to gain access to Russia and the UAE (United Arab Emirates).

> Today is the time to support the farmers as the agriculture sector continues to play a large part in development of the country.

In addition to watermelons and muskmelons, the country exports grapes, pineapples, bananas, dragon fruit (pitaya) and mangoes.

Our country needs to expand the growing of crops as much as possible in areas throughout the country.

The Rakhine State Government is planning to cultivate ginger in Rakhine State as a pilot project with the cooperation of local entrepreneurs, according to the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (UMFCCI).

To be able to cultivate ginger in Rakhine State, the UMFCCI and Rakhine State Chambers of Commerce and Industry (RSCCI) will provide 1,000 viss of ginger seeds, while the Myanmar Fruit, Flower and Vegetable Producers and Exporters Association (MFVP) will provide technical assistance.

The groups are planning to cultivate several acres of ginger in four townships — Kyaukpyu, Ponnagyun, Buthidaung and Maungtaw — as a pilot project in Rakhine State with the investment of the Public Development Committee in Kyauktaw Township and the Cooperative Society in Rakhine State.

If the project is successful, they will extend the ginger cultivation project across the Rakhine State.

Myanmar exports the ginger to Bangladesh and earns around US$3 million annually. Currently, ginger is cultivated mainly in the southern part of Shan State. If our cultivation in Rakhine State is successful, we can export the ginger to Bangladesh directly, which can reduce transport costs.

Rakhine State has a favourable climate and environment for growing ginger. We have already had a ginger market in America, the Netherlands and Germany. But we could even fulfill demand from Bangladesh. An acre of ginger produces approximately 8,000 visses.

This can be an excellent model for our country. We need to make more efforts for growing crops which are currently gaining a foothold in the export market.

In addition to rice, various types of pulses such as mung beans, pigeon peas, green grams, peanuts, sesame seeds, and fruits and vegetables, including corn, watermelons, muskmelons, mangoes, as well as onion, ginger, dried tea leaves and coffee beans, among other things, are shipped to foreign countries.

Today is the time to support the farmers as the agriculture sector continues to play a large part in development of the country.

World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day

By Dr.Zaw Htun Lin
(M.Sc/ Medicine)

EACH year 8 May is celebrated as the World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day in honour of Henry Dunant's birthday(born 8 May, 1828) as he was a philanthropist who founded the International Committee of the Red Cross and won the First Nobel Peace Prize.

The International Committee of the Red Cross and Red Crescent movement is an international humanitarian movement with approximately 97 million volunteers, members and staff worldwide. Swiss businessman Henry Dunant arrived by chance in a small village of Solferino, Italy during the Battle of Solferino. He wrote about tragic events of the terrible aftermath of the battle, the suffering of the wounded soldiers and the near-total lack of medical attendance and basic care in a book entitled " A Memory of Solferino 1862". He was shocked by the tragic events of about 40,000 soldiers on both sides died or were left wounded on the field in a single day of 24 June, 1859. He completely abandoned the original intent of his trip and for several days he devoted himself to helping with treatment and care for the wounded. He took a point in organizing an overwhelming level of relief assistance with local villagers without discrimination. Back in Geneva, he published the book using his own money. He sent copies of the book to leading political and military leaders across Europe and people he thought could help him make a change. In addition to penning of vivid description of his experiences in Solferino, he explicitly advocated the formation of national voluntary relief organizations to help nurse wounded soldiers in the case of war and experience after the Battle of Solferino. One year after the publication of the book in1863, movements for formation of International Committee of the Red Cross started.

Myanmar Red Cross Society.

The International Red Cross Committee laid down the following basic principles in Geneva, Switzerland on 29 October, 1863:

1. To organize national committees for helping wounded soldiers
2. To protect the wounded soldiers by means of a neutral position
3. To utilize voluntary service of local populace in helping wounded soldiers in the field.
4. To carry out basic principles of the Red Cross, more conventions have to be organized.
5. Red Cross members have to wear white armbands with red cross symbols in order to distinguish them from soldiers on both sides.

A year later, the Swiss government invited the governments of all European countries as well as the United States, Brazil and Mexico to attend official diplomatic conference. Sixteen countries sent a total of 26 delegates to Geneva. On 22 August, 1864, the Conference adopted the First Geneva Convention" for the Amelioration of the Condition of the Wounded in the Armies in the Field." Representatives of 12 States and kingdoms signed the Convention. Ten articles were included in the Convention: basic rights of wartime prisoners; protections for wounded and sick and for civilians in and around a war zone. No discrimination, impartiality and protections are also included so that Red Cross volunteers could help nurse the wounded or sick in the field safely.

Formations of Red Cross societies started country-wise for the first time: Belgium, Denmark, France, Prussia, Spain and Wurttemberg were included; Major Louris Appia from Wurttemberg and Charles Vande Velde from Dutch Army became Red Cross representatives of independence, impartiality and neutrality.

International Conference of National Aid Societies for the Nursing of the War Wounded was held in Geneva in1867. The formations of Red Cross societies in European Countries followed several years later. In 1876, the Committee adopted the name" International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), which is still official designation today. In addition, almost all countries signed the Geneva Convention. The ICRC has become an international humanitarian and voluntary movement which has become known worldwide.

The International Committee of the Red Cross promulgated rules and regulations in 1921; aid to the poor, universality, independence and impartiality were added to the agreement. In 1948, seven basic principles emerged in the names of humanity, impartiality ,neutrality, independence, voluntary service, unity and universality. These principles were ratified for the Red Cross and Red Crescent movement in 20th Conference of the ICRC held in Vienna, Austria.

Myanmar and the Red Cross

As Myanmar people are usually in the habit of giving aids to the poor, making a donation to charity and giving offerings to monks, the basic principles of the ICRC are not strange to them. The Myanmar Red Cross Society was formed in 1920 and has become a member of the ICRC after signing the Geneva Convention.

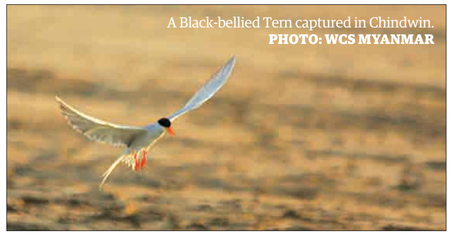
The Myanmar Red Cross get involved in different types of voluntary services: Alleviation of poverty, the interests of public health, prevention of infectious diseases and people affected by natural disasters; the programs are being carried out to help the people and their cases regardless of race and religion, the rich and poor covering all areas of Regions, rural and urban communities. Red Cross societies are formed extensively not only in universities and colleges but also in wards , villages and towns across the country.

The achievements by the Myanmar Red Cross were clearly seen when Sai Aung Hlaing Myint was awarded the Henry Dunant Medal in 1977. His achievement was an important milestone in the history of the Myanmar Red Cross. Myanmar Red Cross, in close cooperation with International Red Cross and Red Crescent and other red cross societies from around the world, carried out successfully in the rescue and rehabilitation tasks for damages hit by extremely severe storm Nargis in 2008 when nearly one hundred and fifty thousand people were perished in the worst natural disaster in Myanmar. That noble task was also a milestone for the Myanmar Red Cross.

Therefore , on the auspicious day of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent which falls on 8 May each year, humanitarian assistance should be rendered regardless of race, religion, the rich and poor, and disastrous areas far and near by means of active participation under the supervision of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent.

Translated by Arakan Sein

Black-bellied tern conserved in Tagaung, Yenangyoung towns along Ayeyawady River


A Black-bellied Tern captured in Chindwin.
PHOTO: WCS MYANMAR

By Nyi Tu (The Mirror)

SOME 14 adult and six baby birds of Myanmar's native black-bellied tern, which is on the verge of extinction, were conserved along Ayeyawady River in 2018.

Ayeyawady and Chindwhin rivers are the habitats of the endangered bird species, according to the 2012 survey of Wildlife Conservation Society (Myanmar).

Currently, the bird species are found along Ayeyawady River, said Ko Naing Lin, in charge of Ayeyawady Delta Region of WCS.

Some six black-bellied terns and a small baby bird were found near Tagaung Town in 2016, and six terns and two baby birds were found near Yenangyoung town. This year, eight adult terns and three baby birds were seen around Tagaung area, while six other birds and three small birds were also seen around Yenangyaung town, he said.

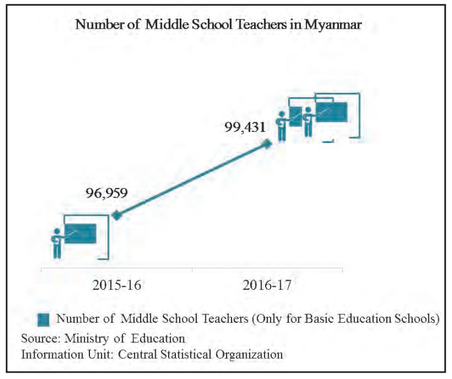
"Black-bellied terns usually mate between February and May, and they build their nests in breeding colonies along less accessible areas such as river sandbanks," said Ko Pyae Phyo Aung, assistance researcher from WCS (Myanmar).

"They keep laying eggs close to each other. The incubation and hatching period takes 22 days. They start to fly after 23 days. They are extremely protective of their young and attack anyone approaching them," he added.

The bird species was found in South East Asia, Bangladesh, India and Pakistan. Now, a small population is found only in Myanmar in South East Asia. Rampant hunting has led to their extinction. For instance, the terns were once found and recorded in Cambodia and Mekong River in 2012.

Thus, the forest department is carrying out conservation activities, in cooperation with WCS (Myanmar), along with the local people.

The terns are threatened due to the agriculture business on sandbanks, which are their habitats, besides domestic animals and erratic weather conditions.



MPU meeting held in Nay Pyi Taw

A MEETING of the Myanmar Parliamentary Union (MPU) was held at the Zabuthiri meeting hall in the Hluttaw Building yesterday in Nay Pyi Taw.

In his opening speech, MPU Chairman and Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker and Amyotha Hluttaw Mahn Win Khaing Than informed the speakers and deputy speakers from region and state Hluttaws about the formation of the Myanmar Parliamentary Union (MPU), pledging that the committee will help the regional and state Hluttaws to solve their difficulties.

He also explained the rules for the MPs on their foreign visits.

The aim of the formation of the committee is to help region and state Hluttaws, not to influence them, said Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than.

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than delivers the opening speech at the MPU meeting in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

MPU Vice Chairman Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U T Khun Myat said plans are underway to amend the laws and rules of the Pyidaungsu, Pyithu and Amyotha Hluttaws in order to solve the current difficulties at the ground level.

He also advised the speakers and deputy speakers of regional and state Hluttaws to review the laws of the regional and state Hluttaws in order to prevent differences.

He also urged the participants of the meeting to openly discuss the issues at the meeting.

MPU Secretary Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Deputy Speaker U Aye Tha Aung explained the resolutions and performances of the MPU meeting (2/2018).

Member of MPU Pyithu Hluttaw Deputy Speaker U Tun Aung (a) U Tun Tun Hein clarified the Hluttaw performances after which the MPU Office Head, Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Office Director General U Kyaw Soe explained the regions and states administrative matters. This was followed by speakers and deputy speakers of state and regional parliaments attending the meeting explaining each parliament's matters and status of works.

The meeting ended with concluding remarks by the Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker and the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker.

The meeting was attended by 13 States/Regions Hluttaw Speakers and one Deputy Speaker and officials from Hluttaw offices. — Myanmar News Agency ■

Union Attorney-General U Tun Tun Oo receives My Justice delegation led by Ms. Caitlin Regien in Nay Pyi Taw. **PHOTO: MNA**

Union Attorney-General meets with officials from My Justice

Union Attorney-General U Tun Tun Oo received My Justice team leader Ms. Caitlin Regien, Program Manager Mr. Vaclav Svejda, and Head of EU delegation of Cooperation Dr. Johann Hesse at the Union Attorney-General office in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

During the meeting, they discussed the matters related to the correlation between rule of law and peace process, judiciary sectors, technicians who are setting up some mobile applications for fundamental rights of the people.

Also present at the meeting were Directors-General, Deputy-Directors General and other officials.—Myanmar News Agency ■

Correction

The article headlined "WY stimulant tablets seized in Nay Pyi Taw" on Page 10 of yesterday's Global New Light of Myanmar contained errors. The seizure of the drugs occurred in Yathaydaung, Rakhine State, not Nay Pyi Taw. The headline should have read "WY stimulant tablets seized in Rakhine", and the first paragraph of the article should have read, "A drugs eradication team seized 1,700,000 stimulat tablets worth over Ks4.8 billion yesterday in Thawon Chaung Checkpoint in Yathedaung, Rakhine State".

The first coordination meeting for e-Government implementation held in Nay Pyi Taw. **PHOTO: MNA**

e-Government implementation stepped up

THE work committee on implementing the e-Government held its first coordination meeting yesterday, discussing priorities for implementing the task.

Speaking at the meeting, U Thaung Tun, Union Minister for the Office of the Union Government, also the chairman of the working committee, stressed the need to speed up the measures to be taken periodically and to gain quick win.

He urged the participants of the meeting to discuss formation of sub committees which will carry out survey on e-government works being practiced at the governmental offices and establishing Ne-ID system.

Afterwards, Union Minister for Transport and Communications U Thant Sin Maung, the deputy chairman of the e-Government implementation work committee, explained that measures are being taken to draft Cyber Legal and Policy Framework (Cyber Law) is being drafted with the loan of the World Bank targeting to complete the draft in early 2019.

The Union Minister also stressed the need to make the best of use of mobile network which is expected to cover about 90 per cent of the country's population.

The Ministry of Transportation and Communications is implementing the project of establishing an e-Government Integrated Data Centre in cooperation with the Economic Development Cooperation Fund from the Republic of Korea to boost government e-services.

He also stressed the need to form a monitoring team to monitor the e-government works of the governmental institutions.

Afterwards, Union Minister for Labour, Immigration and Population U Thein Swe explained the e-ID project.

The representatives of the ministries concerned also took part in the discussion at the meeting.— Myanmar News Agency ■

Kachin State Government assists more than 4,000 displaced people

Dr. Khet Aung, Chief Minister of Kachin State, said the authorities has spent about 200 million kyat on assisting the residents who are stranded in the jungle amid armed conflicts in the state.

"Armed conflict between the Tatmadaw and KIO began in April. The residents near the conflict areas fled their homes. Our government, Red Cross and social and religious organizations have helped them as much as possible," said Dr. Khat Aung at the meeting the media delegation yesterday in Myitkyina.

To evacuate and assist the residents in the conflict areas, the Kachin State Government formed four working committees and send them to four different areas to observe the situation.

The media team arrived Myitkyina, Kachin State, yesterday and visited churches where displaced people are sheltering.

They visited a church at Myitson Village where about 1,200 people from 18 villages have been sheltering since 26th April.

The journalists also visited Kawakha Village in Naungnan Village-tract and met with villagers who fled their homes due to the armed conflicts.

About 780 villagers are sheltering at the church in Kawakha Village.

About 160 villagers are trapped in Injayan amid fighting between the Tatmdaw and KIA.

"They said they want to return home and want to live in their villages at peace," said Father U Di La Khaung of the church.—Myanmar News Agency ■

The residents seen at the Kawakha Village in Naungnan Village-tract who fled their homes. **PHOTO: MNA**

Journalists and officials from the Ministry of Information seen at Yangon International Airport. **PHOTO: MNA**

The residents sheltering at the church in Tanphaye Myitson Village who fled their homes. **PHOTO: MNA**

HAPPY 42nd BIRTHDAY TO SAYARMA MAYFLORA
(10th MAY 2018)

U.S.A (Ko Ko)

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Consignees of cargo carried on M.V SIMA PERFECT VOY. NO. (039N/S) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 10-5-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of HPT 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 SHIPPING LINE

Phone No: 2301185

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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 SINAR BIMA VOY. NO. (406N)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V SINAR BIMA VOY. NO. (406N) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 10-5-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of AWPT 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 LIINE

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V ALS SUZURAN VOY. NO. ( )

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V ALS SUZURAN VOY. NO. ( ) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 10-5-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of AWPT 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 INTERASIA LINES

Phone No: 2301185

Israel gives HRW director two weeks to leave country

Israel accused Human Rights Watch's local director of supporting the campaign to boycott the country. **PHOTO: AFP**

JERUSALEM — Israel has given a Human Rights Watch director two weeks to leave the country, accusing him of promoting a boycott, in a move the rights group said sought to muzzle criticism.

The interior ministry said on Tuesday it had terminated the residency permit of HRW's Israel and Palestine director Omar Shakir, a US citizen, over accusations that he supported a boycott of Israel.

"Following the recommendations of the Ministry of Strategic Affairs, containing information that Shakir has been a BDS activist for years supporting the boycott of Israel in an active way, the ministry has decided to terminate (his) residence permit," the interior ministry said in a statement.

Israeli officials have clamped down on groups seen as supporting the global campaign for BDS (boycott, divestment and sanctions), which aims to pressure Israel to end its occupation of the Palestinian territories. HRW has written several critical reports about the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories.

Israel's government, seen as the most right-wing in the country's history, has been accused of putting pressure on both international and local rights organisations.

Shakir, who received permission to work in Israel in April 2017, months after being barred from the country, now has 14 days to leave, the New York-based rights group said.

"This is not about Shakir, but rather about muzzling Human Rights Watch and shutting down criticism of Israel's rights record," HRW said in a statement.

"Neither Human Rights Watch nor its representative, Shakir, promotes boycotts of Israel."—AFP ■

Europe, China defend Iran nuclear deal after US pullout

PARIS — European powers and China rushed on Wednesday to defend a landmark deal curbing Iran's nuclear programme after President Donald Trump pulled the United States out of the agreement and reimposed sanctions on Tehran.

Trump's move risks overturning years of diplomacy, worsening instability in the Middle East and threatens foreign companies' business in Iran worth billions of dollars.

"The risks of confrontation are real," warned France's Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian, adding Europe would act to "avoid the explosion (of conflict) that risks happening if... no measures are taken."

Iran reacted furiously to Trump's decision, with lawmakers burning a US flag and chanting "Death to America" in the Iranian parliament. But its regional rivals Saudi Arabia and Israel applauded the US move.

Protecting business in Iran

European powers and key trading power China vowed to save the accord and protect companies operating in the country.

Trump's advisor John Bolton said earlier that European firms doing business in Iran now have a six month deadline to wind up investments or risk US sanctions.

European governments are going "to do everything to protect the interests" of their companies, said an official in the French presidency, who asked not to be named.

But Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said Iran too would quit the nuclear deal unless Europeans offered solid guarantees that trade relations would continue.

"If you don't succeed in obtaining a definitive guarantee — and I really doubt that you can — at that moment, we cannot continue like this," he told Iran's government in a televised speech.

Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Geng Shuang said China will maintain "normal economic and trade exchanges" with Iran despite Trump's decision.

Beijing will "remain in dialogue with all parties and continue to devote itself to safeguard and implement the deal," he said.

'Economic policeman'

Slapping aside more than a decade and a half of diplomacy by Britain, China, France, Germany, Iran, Russia and past US administrations, Trump called for a "new and lasting deal".

Trump described the 2015 accord as an "embarrassment" to the US that did nothing to contain Iran's nuclear ambitions.

In response, the foreign ministers of France, Britain and Germany will meet Iranian representatives next Monday "to consider the entire situation," Le Drian told RTL radio.

French President Emmanuel Macron will also speak with his Iranian counterpart Hassan Rouhani by telephone on Wednesday afternoon about "our wish to stay in the agreement," Le Drian said.

In separate comments, French Economy Minister Bruno Le Maire said that it was "not acceptable" for the US to be the "economic policeman of the planet".

'Bomb threat'

Trump said a deal with Iran would have to include not just deeper restrictions on its nuclear programme, but on its ballistic missiles and support for militant groups across the Middle East.

"We will not allow American cities to be threatened with destruction," he said.

"We will not allow a regime that chants 'Death to America' to gain access to the most deadly weapons on Earth."

Iranian President Rouhani said Iran could resume uranium enrichment "without limit" in response to Trump's announcement.

But he said Iran would discuss its response with other parties to the deal before announcing a decision.

Trump warned: "If the regime continues its nuclear aspirations, it will have bigger problems than it has ever had before."

Blow for Europe

The decision marked a stark diplomatic defeat for Europe, whose leaders begged the US leader to think again.

In a joint statement, Germany's Angela Merkel, Britain's Theresa May and France's Macron voiced their "regret and concern" at Trump's decision.

Bolton insisted that cooperation with Europe on Iran was not over.

The US will "work with the Europeans and others not only on the nuclear issue but on Iran's ballistic missile development, its continuing support for terrorism and its military activities that jeopardise our friends," he told Fox News.

'Bold decision'

Trump's decision offers him a domestic political victory, fulfilling a longstanding campaign promise.

But the long term impact for US foreign policy and for the Middle East was less clear.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on Wednesday said that the United States will "lose in the end" from its decision.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu strongly supported the move.

Saudi Arabia's foreign ministry said it supported Trump's move and the sanctions. It said it will take all necessary measures to prevent oil supply shortages following the move. Like Saudi Arabia, Iran is a major crude producer.

Some analysts also warned the move would complicate US efforts to reach an agreement with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un over his country's own more advanced weapons programme.

Former CIA director John Brennan said Trump's move "gave North Korea more reason to keep its nukes".—AFP ■

Iran lawmakers burn US flag in parliament

TEHRAN — Iranian lawmakers burned an American flag and cried "Death to America" in parliament on Wednesday to protest President Donald Trump's decision to withdraw from the multi-party nuclear deal.

Images shown on various Iranian media showed an MP brandishing the paper flag and burning it in the centre of the parliament chamber.

A conservative lawmaker, MojtabaZolnour, joined him and burned a copy of the nuclear agreement.

Several dozen deputies joined them in shouting "Death to America", a favoured slogan of Iranian conservatives.

"Be careful not to burn down the parliament," speaker Ali Larijani said from the podium.

Iranian officials have condemned Trump's decision to pull out of the 2015 deal, which had lifted sanctions in exchange for curbs to Iran's nuclear programme.—AFP ■

A handout picture from the Iranian Parliament shows MPs preparing to burn a US flag in the parliament's chamber in Tehran on 9 May, 2018. PHOTO: AFP

Turkey coup 'ringleaders' face 252 life sentences each

ANKARA — Turkish prosecutors on Wednesday demanded that former generals suspected of being the ringleaders of a failed 2016 coup be handed 252 life sentences.

The trial in Ankara is the most significant in a series being held across the country to bring to justice tens of thousands of people charged over the coup aimed at ousting President RecepTayyipErdogan.

Several of the suspects on trial are accused of leading the so-called "Peace At Home Council", the name the plotters are said to have given themselves the night of the failed overthrow.

They include ex-air force commander Akin Ozturk, Mehmet Disli, the brother of senior ruling party figure SabanDisli and colonel Ali Yazici, Erdogan's former military aide.

Prosecutors called for these figures and other members of the so-called "Peace At Home Council" to be given 252 aggravated life sentences each, the official Anadolu news agency reported.

The Dogan news agency described the sentencing requests as a "record" in Turkey.

The aggravated life sentence is a life sentence with more severe detention conditions and was brought in after Turkey abolished the death penalty.

It is common in Turkey for serious criminals to be given multiple life sentences. Erdogan has at times mooted bringing in the death penalty for the coup suspects, but no concrete steps have ever been taken.

Turkey blames the 15 July, 2016 coup attempt on Muslim cleric FethullahGulen, a claim he strongly denies.

Gulen, who lives in self-imposed exile in the United States, is among several suspects named in the indictment but who are on the run.

The prosecutors also demanded that the suspects be held responsible for the bloodshed on the coup night and be given an additional 55,880 years in jail for this, Anadolu said.

The attempted coup left 249 people dead, not counting 24 coup-plotters killed on the night of the putsch.

Turkish authorities have launched a vast crackdown in the wake of the coup bid and arrested tens of thousands with alleged links to the Gulen group and Kurdish militants.—AFP ■

Turkish prosecutors demand heavy life sentences for former airforce commander Akin Ozturk and other senior military officers on trial for their role in a 2016 failed coup against President RecepTayyipErdogan. **PHOTO:AFP**

Saudi air defences intercept two missiles over Riyadh

RIYADH — Saudi Arabia's air defences intercepted two ballistic missiles over the capital Riyadh on Wednesday, state television said, the latest in a series of attacks claimed by rebels in neighbouring Yemen.

Two explosions were heard in the city, according to an AFP photographer.

A spokesman for the Saudi-led coalition said Saudi air defences hours earlier had also intercepted a ballistic missile originating from Yemen and targeting Saudi Arabia's southern city of Jizan.

Yemen's Huthi rebels quickly claimed responsibility for attacking "Riyadh Dry Port and other economic targets" in the Saudi capital with Burkan 2H ballistic missiles. The rebels also claimed the Jizan attack, via their Al-Masirah TV. Riyadh has long accused its regional rival Tehran of supplying the Huthis with ballistic missiles.

Saudi Arabia launched a military coalition in Yemen in 2015, aimed at rolling back the Huthis and restoring the internationally recognised government to power.

The Huthis have in recent months intensified missile attacks against Saudi Arabia.

The latest salvo came a day after US President Donald Trump exited the Iran nuclear agreement, which he criticised for not including measures to curb Tehran's ballistic missile programme. —AFP ■

Suicide bombers, gunmen attack Kabul police stations

KABUL — Suicide bombers and gunmen launched apparent coordinated attacks on two Kabul police stations on Wednesday, with officials saying at least one of the assaults is ongoing.

AFP journalists heard a series of loud explosions in the heart of the Afghan capital followed by volleys of gunfire that were confirmed by Afghan officials and witnesses.

In the first attack a suicide bomber blew himself up outside a police station in the west of the city, sparking an intense gunfight between other militants and officers, interior ministry spokesman Najib Danish told AFP.

Ariana TV footage showed a thick plume of black smoke rising into the sky while a photo posted on Twitter purportedly of the west Kabul police station showed a building on fire.

The second attack took place in front of a police station in Shar-e-Nawneighbourhood in central Kabul, Danish said.

"Two attackers who tried to enter the police compound were shot dead," the spokesman added. The attack on the first police station has ended while the operation at the second is ongoing, Danish said.—AFP ■

'Hamilton' musical creator to premiere Chicago exhibition

NEW YORK — When he sat down to his longtime goal of recording Chopin's famously demanding Ballades, the pianist Leif Ove Andsnes knew he had to choose the right space.

The Norwegian virtuoso, who has spent the past season as the artist-in-residence at the New York Philharmonic, has developed an intuition on the relationship between settings and the great composers whose works he brings to life. "With Beethoven, for instance, I feel that he speaks to the crowd — he's sort of delivering a speech in an extremely profound way. But with Chopin — and the same with Schumann — you feel it's very much between two persons," Andsnes told AFP over lunch near the Philharmonic's home at Lincoln Centre.

Norwegian virtuoso Leif Ove Andsnes, seen here at the piano in Lincoln Centre's David Geffen Hall on 2 May, 2018, tackles Chopin's famous Ballades in his latest CD. **PHOTO: AFP**

Andsnes had recorded well-regarded CDs of Sibelius and Stravinsky in Berlin's Teldex studio but he found its reflection from the walls and floor ill-suited to Chopin and the intimacy he requires. Instead Andsnes headed to the Sendesaal studio in Bremen, whose building-within-a-building design makes it thoroughly sound-proof. But the CD also features live recordings from the studio, which Andsnes described as "liberating" after days of solitary sessions.

"The problem with recording is that you're always thinking about how you did things and you become self-conscious about how it's going, because obviously you're recording all the time for things to be perfect on tape and for things to be good and intense," he said. "But in concerts, you're naturally thinking much more forward — you're thinking about what is coming and what you have to tell."

Life quest on Chopin

Andsnes, 48, had been playing the first three of Chopin's Ballades since he was a teenager. He only six years ago attempted the especially challenging fourth Ballade but has since played it frequently. "How it is possible to tell so much and with so much diversity within 10 minutes, it's quite a miracle to me," he said.

Considering the Ballades to be too passion-rich to play in a single cycle, Andsnes is interspersing them with Chopin Nocturnes for the CD, which will be released in September on Sony Classics. Throughout his residency at the New York Philharmonic, Andsnes highlighted works by major composers that often go overlooked. Andsnes, who plays with forcefulness yet grace, selected Rachmaninoff's modernist fourth concerto, Britten's often overlooked piano concerto and Debussy's "Fantaisie for Piano and Orchestra."

The "Fantaisie," the French master's sole work for piano and orchestra, was never played in Debussy's lifetime. The 1890 premiere was scrapped when the conductor said there was no time to prepare and Debussy later balked at attempts to perform it.

The "Fantaisie" presents a fine balancing act for the pianist, who has little scope for outward showmanship. Andsnes instead forged a rich blend with the New York Philharmonic, conducted with subtlety in the orchestra debut of Bergen-based British conductor Edward Gardner. Andsnes — who described the "Fantaisie" as "wonderful" yet indicative of a still-young Debussy — will perform the work again next month in Paris with the Orchestre Philharmonic De Radio France.

Looking back at World War I

Andsnes attaches particular importance to remaining active in Norway. A father of three, Andsnes briefly stepped back from curatorial roles but since 2016 has put together a summer festival in the western coastal village of Rosendal. The latest festival in August will examine music written during World War I on the conflict's centennial. One featured work, Janacek's "Violin Sonata," reproduced the sounds of bombs but most of the works, such as Ravel's "La Valse," tread more obliquely on the bloodshed.

Andsnes said he remained fascinated by the richness of music at a time of such carnage.

"There was so much great music written in those years and it's interesting to see how the war affected the lives of so many of the composers. But nevertheless they just wrote music, and not necessarily music reflecting the war."—AFP ■

As royal wedding hype builds, republican begs to differ

LONDON — As a whirlwind of pomp descends on Britain for the wedding of Prince Harry and Meghan Markle, republican campaigner Graham Smith will heave a disapproving sigh.

Smith and other members of anti-monarchy campaign group Republic regard the 19 May event as just another showbiz sideshow.

"It's not a lot different from the international fascination with the Kardashians," Smith, Republic's chief executive, told AFP this week in front of Buckingham Palace. "It's just another celebrity angle, if you like, or another celebrity story," he said, as tourists swarmed outside the official residence of Queen Elizabeth II.

Britain's Prince Harry and Meghan Markle will get married in Windsor on 19 May. **PHOTO: AFP**

Founded in 1983 as a niche group with only a handful of members, Republic was officially incorporated as a campaign group in 2006. Today they claim a 40,000-strong following which has the forthcoming fuss over the royal wedding in their sights. Smith said they see it as the latest effort to "shore up" the future of the crown. "I'm very happy for the couple and wish them all the best. But it is a private event which they have then turned into a major public spectacle, which is going to cost the taxpayer an awful lot of money.

"And it's going to be used for saturation PR for the royal brand and I think that's where the problem comes in," he said. Smith listed the grievances his group has with Britain's monarchy: "It's opposed by quite a lot of people. It's fairly divisive and it is completely unaccountable, it's very secretive." "And so it projects this sort of more benign brand as a way of protecting itself from scrutiny and criticism." "That brand is all about fairytale romances and weddings and babies."

'Co-opted by the royal machinery'

According to a poll published last year by market research agency Opinium, 65 percent of British adults want to keep the monarchy while 19 per cent support a republican model.

Republic propose abolishing the monarchy and replacing the Queen with an elected head of state. As an American, divorced, mixed-race former actress, Markle stands out among royal spouses past and has been seen as a breath of fresh air for the monarchy. But Smith remains unconvinced. "She's allowed herself to be completely co-opted by the royal machinery," he said.

"She's had her social media closed down, she's now very much managed by people that manage the public appearances of the rest of royals. "This isn't the monarchy opening up to the rest of us, it's Harry marrying one person who is then subsumed into the royal brand and the doors are then closed behind her."

On the wedding day itself, Republic will be hosting a international conference in London — featuring allies from similar movements across the world.

Its doors will be open to anyone fed up with the royal circus and the "bills for policing and disruption to businesses".

"On the day of the wedding we're going to be in the vast majority of people who aren't going to be paying any attention to it," Smith said.—AFP ■

TCEB and Bangkok Airways launch promotion in Myanmar aimed to attract CLMV business travellers

Thailand Convention & Exhibition Bureau (TCEB) had partnered with Bangkok Airways to kick-off its campaign to attract corporate meetings and incentives from the Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam (CLMV) markets to Thailand. The 'Fly and Meet Double Bonus' joint promotion for Myanmar was launched by TCEB's Director of President Office Department, Mr. Puripan Bunnag (TCEB's President Representative) and Bangkok Airway's Vice President – Sales, Mr. Varong Israsena Na Ayudhya at Chatrium Hotel in Yangon last month.

Mr. Puripan said "The partnership with Bangkok Airways is in line with Thailand's strategic development through collaboration with neighboring countries especially those in the CLMV. In addition, it is TCEB's policy to work closely with the private sector to boost Thailand's MICE industry. Our joint promotion campaign comes at the right timing because of the present active business activities in the region. We saw a healthy CLMV business traveler arrival growth of as high as 24% last year and we expect a healthier picture contributed by this campaign".—GNLM

Menus with calorie counts now a must in US as Obama-era rule takes effect

WASHINGTON — An Obama-era rule requiring thousands of US restaurants, stores and movie theaters to post nutritional information for items on their menus kicked in Monday, reminding Americans they are what they eat.

The calorie-labeling rules were a controversial provision of former president Barack Obama's signature 2010 health care law — which President Donald Trump has pushed to dismantle — and their implementation has been postponed several times.

The calorie-labeling rules were a controversial provision of former president Barack Obama's signature 2010 health care law. **PHOTO: AFP**

But the Food and Drug Administration announced last year it would press ahead with the regulation, which requires chains with 20 or more locations as well as grocery stores and convenience chains to post calorie counts for standard menu items.

Many major restaurant chains like McDonald's and Taco Bell are already complying with the rule, but the federal government will now require it.

"National menu labeling could help make a big difference in America's obesity rates, one of our most vexing public health challenges," wrote FDA Commissioner Scott Gottlieb, citing research that menu labeling prompts consumers to order 30 to 50 calories less per visit.

A number of public health advocacy groups as well as the National Restaurant Association have lauded the move, but some industry organizations have lampooned it as inflexible and anti-business.

"Regrettably, FDA's one-size-fits-all approach demonstrates a stunning lack of understanding about consumer preferences and the pizza category," said Tim McIntyre, chair of the American Pizza Community, a coalition of pizza chains.

"Pizza's unique ordering variations create countless combinations making it difficult to accurately deliver information on printed menu boards and costly to maintain," he said in a statement.

But Gottlieb emphasized that the FDA has "worked hard to make sure this new rule can be implemented in a way where the information will be maximally beneficial to consumers and the new requirements will be minimally burdensome to restaurants and retail establishments."

"Firms won't need to deal with a patchwork of different requirements for calorie labeling across the country," he added.

Posters, billboards and coupon mailings are exempted, and supermarkets and convenience stores do not have to post calorie information next to each item in self-service buffets and drink stations, Gottlieb said last November. More than a third of Americans are obese, putting them at higher risk for heart disease, diabetes and some types of cancer.—AFP ■

Should I stay or go? Birds migrate to save energy

PARIS — Why have some birds opted for a taxing life of constant migration — seeking out temperate climes to feed as winter arrives, only to return months later to breed?

Seemingly paradoxically, the behaviour is driven by a quest for energy efficiency, a study said on Monday.

Migrating birds, researchers found, gain more energy from whatever is on the destination menu than they expend getting there and back, or could find without making the trek.

Why don't they just stay in the warm place? Because there is too much competition for food with other species, said the study published in the journal Nature Ecology & Evolution.

Instead, they return to their cold, northern hemisphere home where they don't have to fight others for the food there is.

The work "provides strong support for the hypothesis that birds distribute themselves in an optimal way in terms of energy," study co-author Marius Somveille of the University of Oxford's zoology department told AFP.

While it was known that birds migrate in search of food, it has remained a puzzle why they have adopted this exacting lifestyle.

The new study explains the behaviour of not only migratory birds, but also that of sedentary or "resident" ones, its authors said.

These too weighed the available food against greener pastures, and came to a different conclusion.

Most resident birds are found in the tropics, where food is easier to get by.

Fly or die

The study used a theoretical model to examine why birds migrate — about 15 per cent of the total — while others do not.

It started with a model world with similar climatic differences between regions than our real one.

The researchers then added virtual birds, and the estimated amount of "energy", or food, available in different regions.

Given these inputs, the model birds dispersed very similarly to what happened in real life.

The birds started off in the food-rich tropics, but growing competition forced some to start moving further afield.

"In our increasingly crowded virtual world, species progressively started exploiting more extreme pockets of seasonally available energy supply, often migrating longer distances," the team wrote.

The model adds to our understanding of how Earth's plants and animals came to be distributed as they are, the researchers added.

It could also be useful in predicting the future movements of other animals — to determine how they might migrate in response to global warming, for example.—AFP ■

The new study explains the behaviour of not only migratory birds, but also that of sedentary or "resident" ones. **PHOTO: AFP**

Myanmar in semifinals with win over Philippines in AFF U-16 Girl's Championship

MYANMAR beat the Philippines by a score of 7-1 at Athletic Jaka Baring 1 Stadium in Palembang, Indonesia yesterday, and in the process secured a semifinal spot by leading Group (A) in the 2018 AFF U-16 Girl's Championship being held in Indonesia.

The win was a team effort, with all the goals scored by three players, Swe Mar Aung, Myat Noe Khin and Win Win.

The Myanmar girls played well enough to score goals out of virtually every golden opportunity.

Myanmar earned their first goal at the 4-minute mark with a brilliant score by Swe Mar Aung.

Myanmar remained active in attacking and made their second goal at 18 minutes with a neat and tidy score by Myat Noe Khin.

Swe Mar Aung scored again at 19 minutes as the Philippines felt the mounting pressure to get back into the game.

Myanmar made their fourth goal at 37 minutes with a goal scored by Win Win.

The fifth goal was scored at 45 minutes by Myat Noe Khin.

Both teams changed tactics in the second half, with the Philippines girls speeding up in wing field play and creating some chances, but the Myanmar defensive line was too clever and blocked every ball.

Myat Noe Khin then made the sixth and seventh goals at the 50 and 55-minute marks.

The Philippines averted a shutout by scoring in the 71st minute with a goal by Maria Gloria Diaz Lazo.

With yesterday's results, the semifinal pairings are complete.

In the semifinal matches, Myanmar will play Laos at Bumi Sriwijaya Stadium, while defending champion Thailand will play against Vietnam at Jakabaring 1 Stadium.—Lynn Thit(Tgi) ■

Girls from Myanmar (white), the Philippines (red) vie for the ball in yestereday's Group play of AFF U 16 Championship at Athletic Jaka Baring 1 Stadium in Palembang, Indonesia. **PHOTO: MFF**

Australia keen on Iniesta as a marquee star

SYDNEY — Australian football chiefs plan to contact the agent of Barcelona captain Andres Iniesta to sound him out about a move to the A-League, reports said on Wednesday, as the domestic competition looks to recruit a marquee star. Spain's Sport website named the A-League as the World Cup-winner's "preferred destination" this week, although Japan's Vissel Kobe is also seen as one of his possible next moves. China's Chongqing Lifan Tuesday denied reports that the 33-year-old legend will be joining them "as a player", but left the door open to future cooperation in some capacity.

Football Federation Australia's website indicated the governing body planned to contact Iniesta's agent after he announced he will leave Barcelona at the end of the season following two decades of phenomenal success.—AFP ■

MNL All Stars beat English club Leeds United in friendly

The Myanmar National League All Star team beat Leeds United, an English Football League (EFL) Championship Club, by a score of 2-1 in a friendly yesterday at Thuwunna Stadium in Yangon.

Leeds United possessed better skills and was physically superior, but the Myanmar team knew how to play Leeds United with a mix of slow and fast football play along with successful counter attacks.

Myanmar football star Si Thu Aung had the best performance in yesterday's friendly.

The MNL All Stars made the opening goal at the 22-minute mark with a crossing pass by Si Thu Aung and goal that was headed into the goal by striker Joseph Mpande.

Leeds United then went on the attack and equalised with a penalty shot goal at the 26-minute mark by its brilliant midfielder Samuel Saiz Alonso. The ball went straight into the net as Myanmar goalkeeper Naing Zayar Tun dove the wrong way. The first half ended in a 1-1 draw. Leeds United were much better in the second half with steady play and ball delivery toward its strikers via midfielders and defenders.

But the MNL All Stars played tough and scored their second goal at 63 minutes with a penalty shot by Lyikwobe Chizora Christopher. Due in part to the hot weather in Yangon, the English players showed signs of exhaustion and couldn't mount a successful another attack.

Leeds United will play another friendly match against Myanmar National Football team at 6 pm on 11 May at Mandalar Thiri Stadium in Mandalay. The match will be broadcast live on MRTV and MRTV Digital Sports Channel.—Lynn Thit (Tgi) ■

The Leeds United (white) battles for the ball with MNL All Stars (orange) in yesterday's friendly match at Thwunna Stadium in Yangon. **PHOTO:MFF**