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Vice President U Myint Swe urges traditional medicine practitioners to raise standards, preserve knowledge

VICE President U Myint Swe delivered an opening address at the 19th Myanmar Traditional Medicine Practitioners Conference in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

Vice President U Myint Swe said that the Myanmar Traditional Medicine Practitioners Conference has been held annually since 2000, and this year marked the 19th session of the conference.

In his opening speech, Vice President U Myint Swe said, this conference was being held to promote knowledge of Myanmar Traditional Medicine and the traditional medicine professional, improving the code of conduct of practitioners, and providing more healthcare services to the public through the use of traditional medical science, developing the Myanmar traditional medicine professional and improving traditional medicine.

Strong evidence has been found which proved that Myanmar traditional medicine has been practiced since the time of Tagaung, Sri Ksetra, and Bagan.

Thanks to the efforts of Myanmar traditional medicine practitioners, ministries related to traditional medicine, professionals, and the research conducted by monks throughout the long history of Myanmar, traditional medicine has progressed and evolved into a profession in which the Myanmar people took pride.

Having developed over successive generations, Myanmar



Vice President U Myint Swe visits booths of traditional medicine at 19th Conference of Myanmar Traditional Medicine Practitioners in Nay Pyi Taw.

PHOTO: MNA

Traditional Medicine has been found to include medical aspects of the teachings of Theravada Buddhism, daily traditions, and Myanmar traditional philosophies and beliefs. Myanmar traditional medicines and practices have also developed in keeping with the climate and geographical nature and natural herbal resources.

By encouraging traditional medicine, which is the heritage of the Myanmar people, and its potency, which has made Myanmar people fit and healthy and intelligent all through our history, the Union Government has aided the emergence and development of a powerful traditional medicine, in accordance with the current times. Our prac-

tioners, producers, concerned ministries, and our people must work with each other for the sustainable development of traditional medicine.

Today, the Union Government has been making efforts on all fronts to save Myanmar traditional healing practices, which are on the brink of extinction, by encouraging experienced

and learned practitioners, and working to rediscover traditional treatises and therapies written on ancient palm leaf manuscripts called 'Pay, Parabaik', highly effective traditional healing practices, valuable herbs, highly valuable medicinal plants, and natural herbal and mineral resources of medicinal value.

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Oral examinations were taken by venerable Sanghas at the 71st Tipitakadhara Tipitaka Kovida Selection Examination yesterday in Vizaya Mingala Dhamma Thabin, Kaba Aye Hill, Yangon. **PHOTO: MNA**

71st Tipitakadhara Tipitaka Kovida Selection Examination held in Yangon

AN opening ceremony for the 71st Tipitakadhara Tipitaka Kovida Selection Examination was held yesterday morning in the Vizaya Mingala Dhamma Thabin Hall at the Kaba Aye Hill in Yangon.

The congregation was attended by State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee Sayadaws, Ovadacariya Sayadaws of Tipitakadhara Tipitaka Kovida Selection Board, Examiner Sayadaws, candidates, Union Minister for Religious Affairs and Culture Thura U Aung Ko, Yangon Region Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein, Deputy Minister U Kyi Min, Yangon Region Minister for Social Affairs U Naing Ngan Lin, Director-General of the Department of the Religious Affairs U Myint Oo, departmental officials, and donors. First, Ovadacariya (patron) chairman of Tipitakadhara Tipitaka Kovi-

da Selection Board, Hlinethaya Township Sasana Gonyi Monastery Sayadaw Abhidhaja Maharattha Guru Bhaddanta Pyinyathara Bhivamsa gave the five precepts to the audience. The congregation listened to the sermons and recitation of parittas by the sayadaws and sanghas.

Next, State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee Chairman Mandalay Township, Bhamo Monastery Sayadaw Abhidhaja Maharattha Guru Abhidhaja Agga Maha Saddhamma Jotika Dr. Bhaddanta Kumara Bhivamsa delivered a message. Afterwards, Union Minister for Religious Affairs and Culture Thura U Aung Ko made a supplication about religious matters.

Donors then presented donations amounting to K33.9 million that were accepted by Union Minister for Religious Affairs and

Culture Thura U Aung Ko, Deputy Minister and officials who in return presented certificates of honour to the donors.

The congregation then listened to sermons delivered by Yangon Region, Thanlyin Minkyaung Pahtamapyan monastery Sayadaw Agga Maha Pandita Bhaddanta Sandima Bhivamsa and shared merits of their good deeds made. The 71st Tipitakadhara Tipitaka Kovida Selection Examination continued at the ordination hall of the Mahapasana Cave, where the Union Minister and officials donated cash to the Sayadaws. The 71st Tipitakadhara Tipitaka Kovida Selection Examination will be held from 28 December 2018 to 29 January 2019 for 33 days. A total of 220 monks are sitting for this examination.—MNA ■

(Translated by Win Ko Ko Aung)

UEC Chairman meets officials from Mandalay Region election sub-commissions

UNION Election Commission (UEC) Chairman U Hla Thein met with Mandalay Region election sub-commissions chairmen, members and secretaries in Mandalay City Hall yesterday morning.

UEC Chairman said UEC is holding election under the five norms of free, fair, transparent, credible and reflecting the will of the people.

By elections were held successfully and peacefully in 2017 and 2018 and this is due to the cooperation of personnel from all levels of election sub-commissions who performed their duties effectively. All election sub-commissions at all levels are required to start the preparation works for the 2020 General Election so that is held in accordance to the five norms.

Holding elections are the main duty and responsibility of UEC. But this could not be done alone by UEC and all levels of election sub-commissions are to follow the election law, rules, work procedures and guidelines. Only then can there be less election complaints, said the UEC Chairman.

Furthermore, relevant election sub-commissions are required to raise the capacity of their personnel continuously. Through raising the expertise and quality of the personnel can the election processes will become better and better. Even

though the 2020 General Election is two years away, there are processes that need to be done without interruption. As such, plans and arrangements need to be made for these processes so that works are completed and the election is successfully held. Election sub-commissions are to report and coordinate on requirements and difficulties encountered in a timely manner. On the Election Day it is important for poll station heads, deputy heads and members to know their duties, responsibilities and follow the work instructions so that there are no errors in doing their works. Members of negotiation and coordination committees are also required to resolve and coordinate any problems that occur during the election campaign period without any prejudice or bias explained the UEC Chairman.

Next Mandalay Region Election Sub-Commission secretary U Kyaw Kyaw Soe explained about the status of holding 2018 by-election. Afterwards UEC Chairman U Hla Thein urged officials from all election sub-commissions to learn and practice their works to successfully hold the 2020 General Election, coordinate and cooperate with relevant ministries and strives toward drawing up work programs in a timely manner.—Min Htet Aung (Mandalay Sub-Printing) ■ (Translated by Zaw Min)

Matric examiners discuss rules for 2019 matriculation exams

A MEETING on rules and regulations for matric exam chief/assistant/deputy examiners and examinees for 2019 matriculation examination was held at No. 2 Basic Education High School, Pyinmana, Nay Pyi Taw Council area yesterday morning.

At the meeting, Union Minister for Education, Dr. Myo Thein Gyi, said that the most important thing for successfully holding the 2019 matriculation examination is the examinees need to know about the rules for the conduct of examination, and examination administrators and examiners are responsible for knowing the rules beforehand. Based on the rules and regulations book published by Department of Myanmar Examination strengths are to be strengthened and weaknesses are to be reviewed and improved.

In the 2019 matriculation examination there'll be an increase in balanced easy, fair and difficult questions that promote contemplation. Adequate number of teachers who can conduct the examining of the exam papers according to rules and regulations and in an un-biased neutral manner are to be assigned while pregnant teachers, teachers who have recently given birth, teachers above 58 years old, teachers with poor health, and teachers who are not related to the subject are not to be assigned as examiners, said the Union Minister. Next, questions raised by the teachers were answered by the Union Minister and officials. The meeting will be held until 29 December and a total of 834 teachers from states and regions were in attendance.—MNA ■ (Translated by Zaw Min)



Union Minister Dr. Myo Thein Gyi addresses a meeting on discussing rules for examiners and examinees for 2019 matriculation exams, in Nay Pyi Taw. **PHOTO: MNA**

“Let us strive collectively to create such a nation as was envisaged by the architects of our independence: a nation practicing pure principles that guarantee justice and freedom, and equal rights that enable all our people to live in peace.”

(Excerpt from the speech by State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi at the 2nd Anniversary of the Government on 1st April, 2018.)



Phan Khon game, a Myanmar traditional game.
PHOTO: KYI MYO THET

Vice President U Myint Swe urges traditional medicine...



Vice President U Myint Swe delivers the speech at the 19th Conference of Myanmar Traditional Medicine Practitioners in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. PHOTO: MNA

FROM PAGE-1

Especially, the Union Government has been encouraging for integrating traditional medicine practitioners and exposing and collecting diverse traditional medicinal professionals of traditional medicine associations, healing ways and effective medicine region-wise.

Hence, the Union Government has convened this state-level conference and seminars annually for traditional medicine practitioners from around the country so they can share their knowledge each other, and this fine tradition has existed until today.

The Department of Traditional Medicine of the Ministry of Health and Sports has been providing medical care to the people and has helped produce qualified practitioners by establishing the Traditional Medicine University in 2001. In the drive to promote traditional medicine, the Union Government is working with the Traditional Medicine Council, the Myanmar Traditional Medicine Practitioners Association, and advisers for Traditional Medicine.

Besides, to develop traditional medicine, including treatment methods and research, Myanmar is cooperating with tradi-

tional medicine organizations from the ASEAN Task Force on Traditional Medicine (ATFTM), BIMSTEC, and Mekong region countries.

To set standards and adopt rules for registration of traditional medicine, Myanmar, is cooperating with ASEAN countries as a member of the ASEAN Traditional Medicine Health Supplement Product Working Group (TMHS PWG). It is also working with Japan, China, India, and Korea on matters related to traditional medicine. Besides, to preserve the healing practices and methods of Myanmar traditional medicine, which is based on the Four Great Nayar, as a national heritage and to develop them, we are coordinating with the Intellectual Property Rights Department.

To review and to test the old Myanmar traditional medicine teaching methods, which have been used across the ages, and to promote and propagate traditional medicine, the Myanmar Traditional Medicine University has re-written its curriculum.

To implement the Health and Sports Ministry's objective of enabling every citizen to attain full life expectancy and enjoy longevity of life and to ensure that every citizen is free from

disease, the Traditional Medicine Department has taken several initiatives, including disseminating knowledge about health, disease prevention, and providing effec-

from the original medical philosophy, potency, and professional knowledge.

Let me conclude my opening address by wishing you success

The Union Government has been encouraging for integrating traditional medicine practitioners and exposing and collecting diverse traditional medicinal professionals of traditional medicine associations, healing ways and effective medicine region-wise.

Vice President U Myint Swe

tive treatment for infection at the grassroots level in rural areas.

Our traditional medicine practitioners are requested and urged to cooperate with each other with goodwill, wisdom and utmost diligence, to pass the Myanmar traditional medicine, which comprises experiences and knowledge of our ancestral medicine practitioners and those who made treatises on traditional medicine, with the assistance of the Union Government and ministries concerned, down to future generations, without deviating

in implementing the conference objectives of working together to promote the traditional medicine industry in the country and raising the standards of traditional medicine, training and producing efficient practitioners, promoting research to find new medicines and remedies, enforcing medical ethics, and working together to deter fake practitioners.

Following his speech, Union Minister for Health and Sports Dr. Myint Htwe read out the message from President U Win Myint to the conference and the open-

ing ceremony came to an end.

Afterwards, Vice President U Myint Swe visited the booths of the 19th Traditional Medicine Practitioners Conference.

The opening ceremony was attended by Union Ministers Lt-Gen Kyaw Swe, U Ohn Win, U Khin Maung Cho, Dr. Myint Htwe and Dr. Win Myat Aye, Nay Pyi Taw Council Chairman Dr. Myo Aung, deputy ministers U Hla Kyaw and Dr. Daw Mya Lay Sein, Chairman of the Pyithu Hluttaw Health and Sports Development Committee Dr. San Shwe Win, Chairman of Amyotha Hluttaw Health, Sports and Culture Committee Dr. Zaw Lin Htut, ambassadors, permanent secretaries of ministries, directors-general, members of the Traditional Medicine Council, Traditional Medicine advisers, representatives from the Myanmar Traditional Practitioners Association, officials from Non-Governmental Organizations, traditional medicine producers, and special guests. The conference was led by Union Minister Dr. Myint Htwe. In the evening, Vice President U Myint Swe attended the dinner to mark the 19th conference at the Myanmar International Convention Centre-II.— MNA ■

(Translated by AMS)

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DEPUTY CHIEF EDITORAye Min Soe
dce@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com**SENIOR EDITORIAL CONSULTANT**

Kyaw Myaing

SENIOR TRANSLATORSZaw Min
Zaw Htet Oo
Win Ko Ko Aung**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
Kyaw Zin Lin
Kyaw Zin Tun**REPORTER**May Thet Hnin,
reporter1@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com
mayreporter.mm@gmail.com
Nyein Nyein Ei,**PHOTOGRAPHER**

Kyaw Zeya Win @ Phoe Khwar

COMPUTER TEAMTun Zaw, Thein Ngwe,
Zaw Zaw Aung, Ye Naing Soe,
Hnin Pwint, Kay Khaing Win,
Sanda Hnin, Thein Htwe**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
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Commemorative stamp to be issued for month of Pyatho

Myanmar Posts of Ministry of Transport and Communications will issue a special commemorative stamp to mark the month of Pyatho portraying its symbols of Kwanyo and equestrian festival on Sunday 6 January 2019 (1st Waxing of Pyatho 1380 ME). The stamp will be available at post offices in states and regions.

The tenth month of Myanmar calendar is Pyatho and the symbolic flower of the month is Kwanyo (*Clematis smilacifolia*) and Royal equestrian festival is held during the month.



Nay Pyi Taw Central Post Office, Yangon Post Office and Mandalay Post Office will stamp

post mark and date on the commemorative stamps and First Day Covers bought on 6 Jan-

uary 2019 it is learnt.—MNA
■ (Translated by Hla Yamin Eain)

Advice from Sitagu Sayadaw on placement of world's biggest drum

"ADVICE will be taken from Sitagu Sayadaw on the placement of the world's biggest drum carved in Latpankone Village, Indaw Township, Katha District, Sagaing Region," said Sagaing Region Chief Minister Dr. Myint Naing.

The subject world's biggest drum was carved in "Saya Pwel" Myanmar Instrument Enterprise from Latpankone Village, Indaw Township and the completion of it was observed by the Sagaing Region Chief Minister Dr. Myint Naing and authorities on 25 December.

"We are discussing with Sitagu Sayadaw and taking his advice. The Enterprise has donated the drum to us and left it in our hand to place it where it is appropriate.

We are seeking the advice of Sitagu Sayadaw as the drum is related with the religion and

we cannot take any risks," explained the Sagaing Region Chief Minister.



World's biggest drum seen in Latpankone Village, Indaw Township, Katha District, Sagaing Region. **PHOTO: KO MIN (INDAW)**

According to Saya Pwel Myanmar Instrument Enterprise, the world's biggest drum was carved with Kokko (Albizia lebeck) tree wood. It has a length of 128 inches, 64 inches high and the face of the drum is about 54 inches in diameter. The drum-head or drum skin is made from two layers of buffalo hide while drum ropes are made from 18 sheets of cow hides.

Furthermore, Lord Buddha's sermons and verses, Bamae Sayadaw's chants and lucky charms were carved in the interior of the drum while images of angels paying homage to Buddha footprint are carved decoratively in the exterior of the drum it is learnt.—Ko Min (Indaw) ■ (Translated by Hla Yamin Eain)

Watermelon, muskmelon exports rising year on year: Myanmar Trade Promotion Dept director

WATERMELON and muskmelon have topped the list of fruits exported to China and the export volume has been increasing significantly year on year, said U Myo Thu, the director of the Myanmar Trade Promotion Department of the Ministry of Commerce.

He made the remarks at a workshop on promoting exports of watermelon and muskmelon, which was held at the fruit depot meeting hall in the Muse trade zone on 15 December.

"Suppliers have now formed the Myanmar Watermelon and Muskmelon Exporters and Producers Association, which is not just a trade group. We will try to bring about an equilibrium

between production and market demand and hope to triple the export volume," said U Myo Thu.

The volume of watermelon exports was estimated at 500,000 tons in the 2014-2015 Financial Year, over 560,000 in the 2015-2016 FY, and over 170,000 tons in the mini-budget period from April to September. The volume of muskmelon exports stood at over 110,000 tons in the 2014-2015 FY, over 100,000 tons in the 2015-2016 FY, and over 40,000 tons in the mini-budget period.

"It is necessary to explore new markets and maintain market share. Growers and merchants can reap more benefits

if they come together and work in groups. The relevant department is providing technical assistance and supplying seeds to boost production, reduce input costs, and produce high quality fruits," said Daw Tin Soe Soe Hlaing, the assistant director of the Trade Department of the Ministry of Commerce.

During the workshop, participants discussed matters related to taxation, pest control, export licence, and market needs and prospects.

"I am glad that the authorities plan to help us develop our business. If our products are of low quality, we cannot place them in the export market. Fertilizers and pesticides are

important farming inputs. Importation of pesticides involves several stages and often takes months, which hinders cultivation. Some farmers have been forced to buy pesticides from the black market, which is expensive. The authorities have also been confiscating pesticides purchased illegally," said an exporter.

Watermelons and muskmelons are primarily grown in the Mandalay and Sagaing regions and Shan State. Myanmar's watermelons and muskmelons have grabbed a large market share in China.—Khaing Set Wai ■

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Potato prices remain unchanged in domestic market



Farm worker sorts potatoes during harvest. PHOTO: SUPPLIED

THE price of locally-grown potatoes has remained unchanged in the domestic market in the later part of this year at about K900 per viss (3.6 lbs), said Yangon merchants.

The potatoes, which are large in size, were priced at K1,400 early last year. The rates fell to K1,000 per viss in the beginning of this year and declined further to K440 per viss in March when the har-

vest from Sinbyukyun, located on the west bank of the Ayeyawady River, entered the market.

Later, the prices rose to K900 per viss and have since remained unchanged on account of potatoes from China entering the local market, said merchants.

This year, transport charges between Yangon and towns bordering with China decreased. The transport charge for a truck

loaded with potatoes decreased to K1.75 million from about K2.3 million in the previous year. Besides cooking, potatoes are used widely for a variety of purposes in the country. People are using potato-based products for their hair and skin as they contain vitamins C and B6, potassium, fiber, magnesium, and antioxidants.—Maung Say Aung / (Translated by Khaing Thanda Lwin)

Bilateral trade with Indonesia up 11.8% in October

TRADE between Myanmar and Indonesia in October, the first month of the 2018-2019 Fiscal Year, exceeded US\$90 million, an increase of \$9.6 million, or 11.77 per cent, from the corresponding period last year, the Ministry of Commerce reported.

In the first month of the current fiscal year, exports stood at \$8.7 million and imports were registered at \$82.8 million. In October last year, bilateral trade between the countries totalled \$81.8 million, with exports worth \$8.2 million and imports of \$73.6 million. Myanmar's imports always exceed exports in trade with the Republic of Indonesia. Compared with last year, the value of exports and imports increased this year, with exports rising slightly by \$0.5 million and imports rising by over \$9 million.

Myanmar's imports from Indonesia include medicine, paper, palm oil, steel, tobacco, and rubber, while its exports include agricultural and marine products.

According to the yearly statistical report of the ministry, Myanmar-Indonesia trade



Production of rubber latex sheets goes down as the temperature of the local weather increases. PHOTO: SUPPLIED

in the mini-budget period from April through September topped \$520 million, an increase of \$62 million from the corresponding period last year. Bilateral trade between the countries reached a peak of over \$1 billion in the 2017-2018 fiscal year.

Myanmar-Indonesia trade was pegged at \$827 million in the 2016-2017 FY, \$741 million in the 2015-2016 FY, \$636 million in the 2014-2015 FY, over \$490 million in the 2013-2014 FY, \$226 million in

the 2012-2013 FY, and \$472 million in the 2011-2012 FY.

According to the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration, Indonesian investments in Myanmar totalled \$9.8 million in the 2017-2018 fiscal year and \$0.95 million in the mini-budget period this year. There were no new investments from the ASEAN member state in October.—Khaing Thanda Lwin

(Translated by Khaing Thanda Lwin)

Myanmar's maritime trade touches \$5 bln this Fiscal Year

MYANMAR'S maritime trade has touched US\$5 billion in the 2018-2019 fiscal year, an increase of \$198 million compared with the same period last year, according to the latest trade report from the Ministry of Commerce.

Between 1 October and 14 December, the country exported goods valued at \$1.7 billion and imported goods worth almost \$3.3 billion. Compared with the corresponding period of last year, the value of exports rose by \$285.7 million, while imports increased by nearly \$13 million.

For the same period last year, the country's maritime trade totalled \$4.7 billion, with exports worth about \$1.5 billion and imports of \$3.24 billion.

Myanmar conducts trade through the maritime routes

as well as trade camps at the border. According to the Commerce Ministry, the country's border trade in the current fiscal stood at \$1.785 billion, with imports valued at \$566 million and exports worth \$1.2 billion.

The total trade increased to \$6.7 billion in the current fiscal year from \$6.3 billion in the corresponding period of last year.

Myanmar's major import items are divided into four groups—capital goods, intermediate goods, consumer goods, and CMP products. The country predominantly exports six groups of commodities - agro products, minerals, animal and fisheries products, forest products, and manufactured goods.—Shwe Khine

(Translated by Khaing Thanda Lwin)

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Myanmar delegation led by Bhamo Sayadaw, Union Minister Thura U Aung Ko leave for Thailand

MYANMAR delegation led by State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee Chairman Sayadaw Dr. Bhaddanta Kumara Bhivamsa and Union Minister for Religious Affairs and Culture Thura U Aung Ko left Yangon for Bangkok in Thailand by flight yesterday evening.

Myanmar delegation comprised 15 members of Sanghas will attend the New Year's Eve Recitation and Vipasana Meditation Ceremony that will be held in Bangkok from 28th December, 2018 to 2nd January 2019.

The delegation was seen off at the Yangon International



PHOTO: MNA

Airport by officials from Department of Religious Affairs, Department for the Promotion

and Propagation of Sasana and the International Theravada Buddhist Missionary

University. —MNA ■
(Translated by Win Ko Ko Aung)

Certificate Course in Basic Diplomatic Skills (41/2018) concludes



Ministry of Foreign Affairs Permanent Secretary U Myint Thu presents certificate to a trainee at the Graduation Ceremony of the Certificate Course in Basic Diplomatic Skills (41/2018) yesterday. PHOTO: MNA

THE Graduation Ceremony of the Certificate Course in Basic Diplomatic Skills (41/2018), conducted by the Strategic Studies and Training Department of the Ministry of For-

eign Affairs, was held at the Winzinminyarzar Hall of the Ministry's Office (Yangon) at 10 a.m. yesterday, with a closing address delivered by U Myint Thu, Permanent Secretary of

the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Present on the occasion were Retired Ambassadors, Responsible Officials of the Departments under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Senior Diplomats, Professors and Instructors as well as trainees.

The 13-week long course comprised the subjects related to diplomacy, negotiation skills, international relations, international law, international conferencing, contemporary international affairs, economics, etc., and also the simulation exercises for some subjects. And it was attended by 190 trainees.

Since 2000, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has conducted Basic Diplomatic Skill Courses two times in a year for the public who are interested in diplomacy and international affairs. At present, there are 7,112 trainees graduated from the training programmes. —MNA ■

(Translated by Win Ko Ko Aung)

Innwa Bank opens new branch in Hmawby Tsp

INNWA Bank commemorated the 71st Independence Day of the nation by opening a new branch in Hmawby Tsp. The Hmawby branch was formally opened yesterday by Yangon Regional Security and Border Affairs Minister Colonel Aung Soe Moe, Managing Director of Innwa Bank Limited U Aung Ngwe Oo and General Manager of Innwa Bank Limited U Soe Lwin Kyaw with a ribbon cutting ceremony. Yangon Command Commander Maj-Gen Thet Pone unveiled the new branch's signboard electronically.

The Hmawby branch is the 56th branch of Innwa Bank and it is situated in Advanced Housing for Veterans (Kyatphyukan) on Yangon-Pyay road, Hmawby Township, Yangon.

In addition to domestic remittance services, Innwa Bank also provides a 9 per cent interest rate on saving accounts, up to 10 per cent on fixed deposits, depending on the period of saving chosen by its customers, and also offers loans to business in need of capital. —MNA ■ (Translated by Myat Thandar Aung)



Yangon Command Commander Maj-Gen Thet Pone formally opens Innwa Bank's Hmawby branch signboard yesterday. PHOTO: MNA



Three new commemorative stamps issued to honor 71st Independence Day

MYANMA Post, under the Ministry of Transport and Communications, is issuing three special commemorative stamps to honor the upcoming 71st Independence Day, for sale at post

offices throughout all states and regions, from 9:30 a.m. Friday, 4 January 2019, and onward.

As a special arrangement, Nay Pyi Taw Central Post Office, Yangon Post Office and Manda-

lay Post Office will stamp post mark and dates on the commemorative stamps and First Day Covers bought on 4 January 2019. —MNA ■ (Translated by Myat Thandar Aung)

Over 169.12 acres of unused land returned in Taunggyi, Shan State

MYANMAR Pharmaceutical Enterprise of the Ministry of Industry handed over 169 acres of land which have been designated in Heho, Kalaw Township, as the State land to the Taunggyi District General Administration Department on 26 December.

The horse and sheep farm of the enterprise no longer need to use the land and decided to

return it to the Ministry of Home Affairs. The ceremony was also attended by Amyotha Hluttaw representative U Zaw Min Lat, Shan State Hluttaw representative U Than Htike and departmental officials from Taunggyi District and Kalaw Township also attended. —Maung Maung Than (Taunggyi)-District IPRD ■ (Translated by JT)

Muse District Children's Literature Festival commences



Children's Literature Festival attracts book lovers and children in Muse Township. **PHOTO: MNA**

MUSE District began their Children's Literature Festival, Children's Literature Exhibition and Book Sales Festival yesterday at Mingalar Muse Building, Muse Township, in Northern Shan State at 9 am yesterday.

The festival aims to foster comprehensive development for children, improve their literature knowledge, and promote their intelligence and performances.

Firstly, Shan State Minis-

ter for Bamar Ethnic Affairs, Dr. Aung Than Maung, State Minister for Lahu Ethnic Affairs, U Yaw That, Pyithu Hluttaw representative U Sai Phone Myat, State Hluttaw representative U Sai Kyaw Thein and U Kein Mine, Director-General of Information and Public Relations Department, U Ye Naing, Shan State Deputy-Administrator U Kyaw Thu Zaw, Muse District Administrator U Hlaing Soe

Thant, and Managing Director of North East Gate Public Company Limited, U Aung Kyaw Moe formally opened the festival with a ribbon cutting ceremony.

Next, Students from B.E.H.S (2) and MIEC Private School sang the theme song of the children's festival in the second part of the ceremony.

State Minister Dr. Aung Than Maung and Director-General U Ye Naing delivered sep-

arate opening remarks, and the Chairman of Muse District Management Committee then expressed his gratitude.

Afterward, students and ethnic culture groups performed songs and dances.

After that, officials awarded honorable certificates to the well-wishers, donors, the Education Department and civil society organizations who collaborated in Children's Literature Festival,

and students from MIEC Private School closed the ceremony with a song.

Later, attendees toured the festival and encouraged participants in competitions, viewed book sales festivals and galleries on display.

Muse Children's Literature Festival will be held until 30 December. — Muse District IPRD
■ (Translated by Myat Thandar Aung)



Officials tour the exhibition of the Children Literature Festival in Muse Township, Northern Shan State. **PHOTO: MNA**

Let us participate in December Mass Walking

By Than Phyo Naing
(Kanyinkyo)

MASS walking has already started from the very beginning of December 1. Mass walking usually starts in Nay Pyi Taw and other capitals of regions and states on Saturday of every week in December.

Different kinds of sports

December is popularly known as the month of sports and different kinds of sports are held in many countries. In Myanmar also, almost all kinds of sports are held in every ward and village tract and department under each ministry concerned;

presentation ceremonies are normally held on 4th January of Independence Day.

People go walking

In December, people go walking along the streets and roads early in the morning or in the evening in our environs. Mass walking by the Ministries concerned individually or collectively is carried out on Saturday of every week. All ministries headed by the Ministry of Health and Sports do their parts in sports activities every year in Nay Pyi Taw and states and regions across the country. In those activities, personalities of high-ranking offices such as

the Union and State officials are seen to take part respectively.

All people from towns and villages alike are invited to participate in mass walking. Not only government employees and their families but also their friends and colleagues also take part in the walking. At about 4 o'clock in the morning loud speakers are used to remind the public of mass walking by the ministries concerned; motor vehicles are rendered at their disposal at the corners of streets and roads.

Benefits of walking

Walking is of course one of the best physical activities for health. Walking, sound sleep and balanced diets are indispensable for one's health. Walking for 15-20 minutes a day will you physically and mentally fit. Walking is tantamount to producing the following benefits :

- 1) To increase the level of brainpower (To prevent several kinds of diseases such as Alzheimer's disease and increase mental capability)
- 2) Having good eyesight (Though eyes and feet are apart, walking makes eyesight powerful and prevents

cataract from forming in the eyes)

- 3) Prevention of heart attacks (Walking affects one's heart just like as running, according to American Heart Association. Walking makes blood pressure and cholesterol reduce and support blood circulation)
- 4) Strengthening lungs (As walking supports blood circulation, oxygen goes into lungs to remove toxins and deep breathing makes lungs stronger to relieve some diseases)
- 5) Aid to pancreas (Walking could make sugar content in blood reduce than running as well as 6 times in glucose annulment)
- 6) Digestion and relief in the chest (If one walks 30 minutes a day, one feels comfortable in the chest and at the time prevents constipation and colon cancer)
- 7) Development of the muscles (If you walk for more than 10 000 steps, you don't need to go to Gym; walking would make muscles compact and reduce your weight. Climbing mountains is better than walking on the surface of the ground)

- 8) Making joints stronger (Walking will surely make joints stronger in order to prevent rickets and bones from breaking)
- 9) Relief in backache (Walking is one of the best exercises and harmonizes the blood circulation to strengthen backbones by means of stretching and bending)
- 10) Relieving mental stress (Walking is the best way of relieving mental stress; it is much beneficial that one goes for a walk with a family member or a beloved one)

Instilling medical knowledge about health into the public is widely encouraged As walking is widely beneficial to the people, government departments are earnestly urged to persuade their employees and the general public in order to participate in mass walking by means of distributing sports uniform, giving talks on medical knowledge about walking so that people would go out for a walk.

In this way, national health will material; human resources will be gradually developed for future generations of our country.

(Translated by Arakan Sein)



Participants gathering physically exercise to start the mass walking activity. **PHOTO: SUPPLIED**

Read to cultivate critical thinking and refresh spirits

EDUCATION involves gaining of knowledge and ideas from literature. It is not limited to literature taught in schools, but includes all books and manuscripts in the literary world. Thus, reading is integral to education.

The love for reading was evident in Myanmar even during the campaign for our independence, with people reading widely, voraciously, and tirelessly.

“One has to read first in order to judge the habit,” said State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi in her speech at the ‘All Who Can Read Should Read’ campaign, held at MICC II in Nay Pyi Taw on 20 December.

“So, I can’t say how valuable or useless reading a book is as it is something that one should find out for oneself. For me, reading is valuable because it widens my world. It also strengthens my inner self and greatly supports my development,” said the State Counsellor.

Young people in those times searched within the pages of books for ideologies that were coherent with their vision for the country.

The benefits of reading are many. Reading diligently from a young age is beneficial for oneself, one’s community, and one’s country. This was evident in the campaign for independence, when the accumulation of a lifetime of reading pushed young nationalists forward in the drive for freedom.

Young people in those times searched within the pages of books for ideologies that were coherent with their vision for the country. They read every book on politics they could lay their hands on. Books were hard to come by in those days and interesting books were often passed on from one person to another.

Upon hearing of a good book, people tirelessly searched for it so they could borrow and read it. Thakin Kyaw Sein of Dobama Asiayone used to say: “We neglect our hunger and read.”

Literature is of immeasurable value. While struggling to achieve independence for our country, our forefathers read to enrich their minds and broaden their perspectives to develop a modern outlook.

In the present time, I wish the youths of the country develop the habit of reading so that they, too, may widen their horizons and work to help their community and their country.

By Thihe Soe Tun (Nat Ywar)

JOYOUS Independence Day of Myanmar is just around the corner for us. In the past, the people of Myanmar lived a life of happiness and prosperity with our own monarchy and liberty. Due to overwhelming wave of colonialism rolling in the world, Myanmar went down into subjugation in 1885.

Most respected and venerable See Bann Nee Sayardaw once had written a remarkable verse refutation the lives of the people of Myanmar in that era of suppression. The verse vividly depicted the situation that of the downfall of a monarchy and its people into zero value of nothingness; and that of emptiness in servitude was not actually worth living, but stepping into demise is much better.

Crossing bumpy road

However, many people came to realize that the situation in the country is needed to stand up and gather for strength, force and power, and then fight back to get the sovereignty and independence in the nation.

A long journey of hard struggle on the bumpy road was being exerted to regain independence and sovereignty, sacrificing the lives of people in flesh, blood and bone with much patience.

We regained the independence on 4 January 1948, and that the time had flown away for (71) years. Indeed the post-independence period stretched over a very long time, in which we had witnessed that of successes and also failures; that of unity and split events; that of peace and prosperity in conjunction with dreadful episodes.

Today, all the nationalities are heading for eternal peace hand

Goal of Eternal Peace

Due to suspicion and hatred among the nationalities, the civil wars and internal conflicts broke out erupting off and on in the country, and that the days and years stretched out in chaotic and unstable conditions. The dark shadow of arms conflicts are still going on in the country until today.

Now it is time to take lessons from the bitter experiences, and that if we stayed on with such disunity, the country would be in a nightmare. We regained independence due to the selfless sacrifices of our ancestors, which they had not enjoyed in their lifetime. For the sake of their gratitude, we need to walk on into the future with unity in building the nation.

We are indeed enjoying the fruits of independence that our ancestors planted and, therefore, we need to give back by striving for the ultimate destination they aspired to and dreamt of.

When our ancestors fought for the independence, they also had vision for better nation and laid down their ambition and goals. Although we had passed the journey of (70) years, the aims and objectives of our ancestors have not been completed so far.

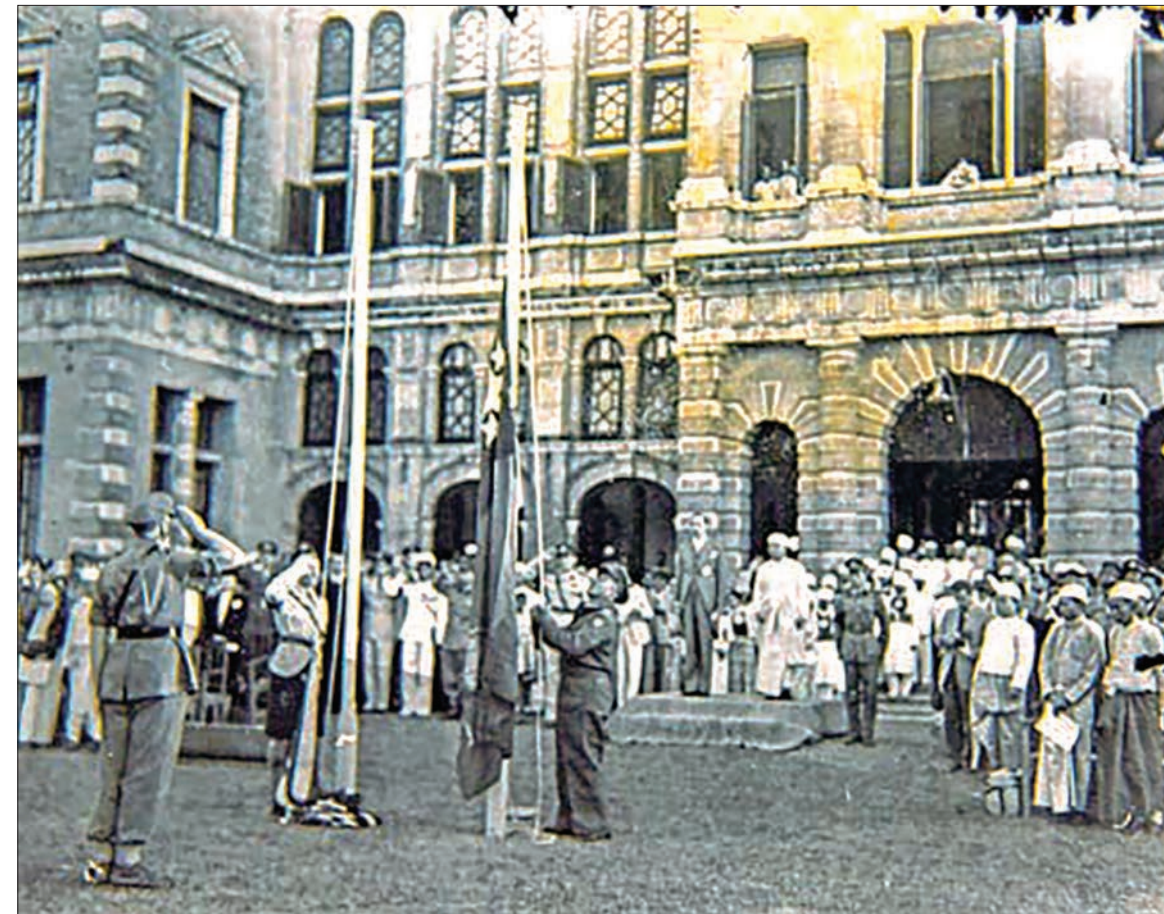
Band of brothers in building

Before regaining independence, all the brethren fought for sovereignty with unity, and also determined in building a Union without carving out flat lands and hilly regions. However, the post-independence gradually saw the split stories that led to civil wars. The conflicts should be stopped totally at this juncture, and that the past split episodes must be curtailed.

Today, all the nationalities are heading for eternal peace hand

We are indeed enjoying the fruits of independence that our ancestors planted and, therefore, we need to give back by striving for the ultimate destination they aspired to and dreamt of.

An Independent Road to Walk On



Ceremony to raise the flag of the Union of Burma on January 4, 1948.

in hand, and we have achievement and development with solid agreements on basic principles at Union Peace Conference – 21st Panglong. We have things to carry out in our future plan.

All the nationalities need to walk on the independent road to arrive at the goal of Union peace, and the goal of national reconciliation.

Lack of independence means the existence and staying under the shadow of extreme ideology and influence of some organizations.

Future road ahead

The human culture is changing and developing at all times, and that one should not keep thinking and believe that the bitter past events and episodes would repeat again in our lives.

It does not necessarily means that the past events were not important and vital. Of course, it has own value and significance. However, if we reflect the past events only and see each other with suspect and mistrust, then we will not be able to move ahead towards the destination.

The past events are meant to take and consider as lessons to learn. While we were under the subjugation, we were united, and thus we regained independence. However, after regaining independence, we were lack in unity,

On each anniversary of the independence day, the lessons of the past history were passed on to the new generation.

and as a result, we achieve very little success in nation building.

Looking at lessons, one could understand that unity is very much vital in building a nation and it is therefore, the future journey should be pursued in correct vision and unity.

Another factor to notice is that when we are pursuing for eternal peace, one should not think that he is merely fulfilling the desire and wish of other people and organization. One should decide independently on the basis of his outlook, and for the good of own nationalities and the upcoming generation.

If one lean on and sided with other organization, then he might not be in the status of independent. One day he might be off track. If one keep on own track with independent mind, it would last long.

Stepping towards pace goal

Full independent means, there is no influence whatsoever. Some people wanted to see a nation in peace and sustainable development, and some people wanted to see the diverse nationalities are fighting among other. These sorts of people can be seen inside the country as well as outside of the country.

If someone is under the influence of others, one should try to escape from that shadow, and that no assistance and aids should be taken because the other side has hidden agenda for their interest. They may provide one hundred, with the expectation of one thousand back in return.

In the past, we were in disunity and fighting each other, but now we have to stop all conflicts, and we must understand on that unity factor and accept it.

Good situation and good timing

One can have a look over the basic principles of the state, the performance of the tasks being carried out by the leadership, the aspiration and ambition, which are integrated with justice, liberty and equality. Therefore, it is a good time to arrive at in achieving eternal peace and national reconciliation. Suppose if we achieved these goals, then it is the achievements of all nationalities and they are to be enjoyed by all.

On each anniversary of the independence day, the lessons of the past history were passed on to the new generation, so that the younger generation might be able to use them wisely avoiding the wrong activities, and keeping up the good thing for the better future.

While handing down the past lessons, experiences and events to the upcoming generation, the elder generation is reflecting and creating the best possible ways and means for pragmatic use. Now is the time that we are forging ahead towards the goal of eternal peace. If all the nationalities walk on the road with independent spirit, then we are sure in arriving at the goal.

The goal is not at far away venue, but at a place that we could reach at, and that it could be reached when all the nationalities come together. There are things to be done on the road ahead, and that all the brethren must sit at the political round table and made agreements.

On the journey, we must be free from influence and manipulation from others, and that is the way to arrive at the goals such as the eternal peace, the national reconciliation, and the building of democracy federal union.

Standing up and develop

The independence is the heritage given by our ancestors by sacrificing flesh, blood and bone so that we could stand up and develop in a sovereign nation, which we could termed as good luck. In this regard, we have the responsibly to add more value to our national heritage, and we have determined to go for it.

The writer of this article would like to conclude and pledge that we must all work in unity and walk on the full independent road without influence of others.

Translated by UMT (Ahlon)

71st Anniversary Independence Day National Objectives

1. All National Ethnic Races to defend and protect with “collective strength” to ensure Non-disintegration of the Union, Non-disintegration of the Unity of National Ethnic Races and Perpetuation of National Sovereignty.
2. For the emergence of a Democratic Federal Union, to strive towards creating a suitable Constitution for the State in accordance with democratic standards.
3. To effectively combat and protect against the use of drugs and narcotic substances which can harm and erode the health and character of all citizens.
4. To continuously strive with determined effort for the balanced and equitable development of all states and regions.
5. To assist from all fronts the Union Government’s efforts for private sector development and the emergence of a fully-developed market economy.



Myanmar Daily Weather Report (Issued on Friday 28 December 2018)

SUMMARY OF OBSERVATIONS RECORDED AT 09:30 hrs MST: During the past (24) hours, weather has been partly cloudy in Sagaing, Yangon and Taninthayi regions, Kachin, Southern Shan, Chin and Rakhine states and generally fair in the remaining regions and states. Night temperatures were (3°C) below December average temperature in Yangon Region and (2°C) below December average temperature in Mandalay Region and about December average temperature in the remaining regions and states. The significant night temperatures were (-3°C) in Haka, (1°C) each in Pinlaung, Heho and Ramthlo, (3°C) in Loilin and (4°C) each in Putao and Namhsan. **BAY INFERENCE:** Weather is a few cloud over the Andaman Sea and Bay of Bengal.

FORECAST VALID UNTIL AFTERNOON OF 29 December 2018: Rain or thundershowers will be isolated in Taninthayi Region and Kachin State. Degree of certainty is (80%). Weather will be partly cloudy in Sagaing Region, Shan, Rakhine, Kayin and Mon states and generally fair in the remaining regions and states.

STATE OF THE SEA: Sea will be slight to moderate in Myanmar waters. Wave height will be about (3-5) feet in off and along Myanmar Coasts.

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Likelihood of isolated to scattered rain or thundershowers in Nay Pyi Taw, Bago, Yangon, Ayeyawady and Taninthayi regions, Kachin, Shan, Kayah, Kayin and Mon states.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 29 December 2018: Generally fair weather.

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 29 December 2018: Generally fair weather.

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 29 December 2018: Generally fair weather.

WEATHER OUTLOOK FOR WEEKEND: Likelihood of isolated rain or thundershowers in Nay Pyi Taw and Yangon Region and weather will be partly cloudy in Mandalay Region.

Patients flee after Ebola holding centre attacked in DRC

BENI (DR Congo)—Patients being monitored as possible Ebola patients fled a camp in eastern DR Congo on Thursday after it was attacked by demonstrators protesting further delays to the country's election, the health ministry said.

Around 20 patients fled the centre during the incident, at a holding centre in the Beni region, the epicentre of this latest outbreak of the highly infectious and potentially fatal disease.

The incident followed the announcement that elections planned for Sunday in the region had once again been postponed because of local unrest, as well as the Ebola outbreak.

At least three tents were ransacked on the edge of the site, run by Doctors Without Borders (MSF) and a heavy police presence was patrolling the site after the incident, an AFP correspondent noted.

"Of 24 patients, 17 had tested



People protesting election delays rally outside an Ebola response centre in the Beni region of DR Congo. PHOTO: AFP

negative (for Ebola) once. They had to be tested a second time before being discharged," said a health ministry spokeswoman.

"Four of them went home. Three other suspected cases

were in too serious a case to flee," the spokeswoman added.

But some of the demonstrators went into contaminated zones of the camp, according to one aid worker.

"The demonstrators wanted to attack the transit centre" and burned some of the tents, the health ministry said.

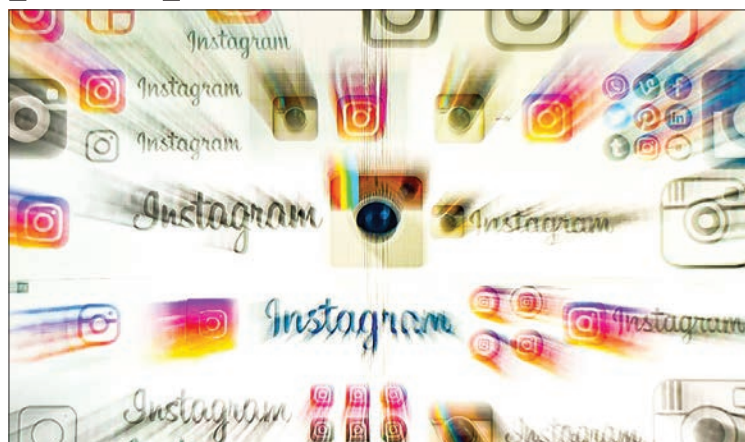
Kigali declared the Ebola epidemic in August 2018 and it

has already claimed 356 lives. That has generated concern that the disease could spread to other major towns in the region, such as Goma and Kisangani and even neighbouring Uganda.

Many local people have been reluctant to be vaccinated and others have resisted the idea of secure burials for victims of the disease. The city and region of Beni has also been the target of deadly attacks on civilians by the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), an armed group blamed for hundreds of killings since 2014.

On Wednesday, the country's electoral commission cited the unrest in the region and the Ebola outbreak as the reasons it was further postponing national elections there. However the vote will continue to take place in the rest of the country as scheduled on 30 December, and the next president will be sworn in on 18 January, the commission said. —AFP ■

Instagram blames 'bug' for design change that prompted backlash



Instagram angered many users with a design change requiring them to scroll horizontally through their feed, but quickly rolled back the change. PHOTO: AFP

WASHINGTON—Instagram said Thursday it accidentally rolled out a design change to a large number of users and quickly ended the test after complaints from users of the Facebook-owned social network.

The redesign required users to swipe horizontally instead of the normal vertical scroll to see their feed, befuddling many members of the photo- and video-sharing application, which has over one billion users worldwide. The move ignited complaints on Twitter where the hashtag #InstagramUpdate became a top trending issue. Twitter user Jeffree Star lamented "this #instagramupdate almost ruined my morning!!" while journalist Alex Heath of the online service Cheddar remarked

that it "seems maybe intended to reduce mindless vertical scrolling?" Adam Mosseri, who heads Instagram for Facebook, tweeted that the new design was "a test that went to a few orders of magnitude more people than intended." "Sorry about that." Instagram said a short time later that it had rolled back the redesign to the normal vertical scroll.

"Due to a bug, some users saw a change to the way their feed appears today," said an Instagram message posted on Twitter. "We quickly fixed the issue and feed is back to normal. We apologize for any confusion." Some Instagram users remained upset over the glitch. "Never do it again pls": tweeted one enraged user.—AFP ■

Egypt releases jailed anti-harassment activist

CAIRO (Egypt)—Egyptian authorities on Thursday released a rights activist jailed over a video she posted online criticising sexual harassment in the country, her husband said. Amal Fathi, 34, was handed a two-year suspended jail sentence in September on charges of spreading fake news after accusing the authorities of failing to protect women in a Facebook video.

She was, however, kept in detention awaiting trial in another case in which she is accused of a second charge of "spreading false

news" and "membership of a terrorist group". Her release on Thursday came after an Egyptian court last week ordered her to be freed. "She came out today," husband Mohamed Lotfy, a well-known rights activist, told AFP. Her conditional release means she must report to the police regularly.

Fathi was first arrested in May over footage in which she also alleged that guards at a bank had sexually harassed her.

She is appealing her two-year suspended sentence and

faces a decision in that case on 30 December.

Some 60 per cent of women in Egypt say they have been victims of some form of sexual harassment during their life, according to a 2017 report by UN Women and Promundo, an organisation that engages men and boys in tackling gender violence.

Rights groups have repeatedly accused the Egyptian authorities of using anti-terror legislation to crush a range of dissenting voices.—AFP ■

44,500 Ethiopians repatriated from Saudi Arabia

ADDIS ABABA—The Ethiopia Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) announced on Thursday it has repatriated 44,500 nationals stranded in Saudi Arabia during a six months period.

Speaking to local and foreign media outlets, Meles Alem, Spokesperson at MoFA, said the 44,500 Ethiopians who were stranded in Saudi Arabia were

repatriated with the joint efforts of Ethiopian and Saudi authorities. "Ethiopia beefed its diplomatic personnel at its consulates in Saudi Arabia to help for the mass repatriation of nationals who were stranded in Saudi Arabia without proper travel documents," said Alem. It is estimated every year thousands of Ethiopians travel across the Red Sea to Saudi Ara-

bia looking for better economic opportunities. These Ethiopians were often employed in the informal sector without having valid residency permits.

In a bid to curb illegal migration, Ethiopia signed an agreement in May 2017 with Saudi Arabia for an overseas employment agreement to help future legal Ethiopian migrants.—Xinhua ■

367 migrants rescued off northern Morocco

RABAT—Morocco's navy coast guards rescued Thursday 367 illegal migrants in the Mediterranean, the Moroccan army said. The rescued were onboard several boats, the army added.

The majority of the rescued are from sub-Saharan African nations, the same source said, noting that they included many women and children.

The migrants were brought safely to the neighboring ports, the same source added.

Morocco has witnessed a significant hike in illegal migration attempts in 2018. According to the Moroccan Interior Ministry, the authorities have foiled over 76,000 illegal immigration attempts between January and November 2018.—Xinhua ■

Disgraced bodyguard irks Macron with African ‘consulting’

PARIS (France) — The French presidency has written to Emmanuel Macron’s disgraced former bodyguard Alexandre Benalla raising concerns over his recent work as a “consultant” in Africa, according to the letter seen by AFP on Thursday.

Benalla faces criminal charges after it emerged in July that he roughed up protesters during a May Day demonstration in Paris while wearing a police helmet.

The “Benalla affair” sparked a major scandal for Macron, prompting a wave of accusations from opponents that the presidency covered it up.

Benalla, 27, was swiftly fired after the revelations, but officials are worried he may since have been profiting from his former insider status.

Two weeks ago it emerged that Benalla travelled to Chad in early December and met with President Idriss Deby, shortly before Macron himself paid a visit to the African country.

Benalla said he was accompanying a “foreign business delegation” promoting major Middle Eastern companies.

Macron’s office told AFP this week that Benalla had not informed the presidency of the trip until afterwards.

“No matter what Mr Benalla was up to, he is neither an official nor unofficial envoy of the president,” his office said.

But the fresh revelations have sparked questions in France over why he was granted such high-level access to an African leader. On Thursday the investigative website Mediapart reported that Benalla had used a diplomatic passport to enter several African countries as well as Israel in recent weeks.

The Foreign Ministry later confirmed that Benalla had indeed been issued two diplomatic passports but was asked to return them after his dismissal this summer.

The ministry said it would consider taking legal action if the passports were used.

‘Let us be clear’

In the strongly worded letter to Benalla dated 22 December, Macron’s office chief Patrick Strzoda warned the ex-bodyguard against divulging any confidential information gleaned during his previous job at the French president’s side.

“Let us be clear: we forbid you from claiming you have any kind of recommendation or tacit support from the presidency,” Strzoda wrote. “With regard to your current personal activities, we ask you to ensure they are conducted with strict respect for the confidentiality and ethical responsibilities of your time in this office.”

Strzoda further demanded



The “Benalla affair” sparked a major scandal for President Emmanuel Macron, prompting a wave of accusations from opponents that his government covered it up. **PHOTO: AFP**

that Benalla provide details of “personal and private trips” during his time working with Macron, including any payments.

The presidency would be forced to respond to any previously undisclosed business dealings deemed “incompatible” with his former role, Strzoda warned.

‘I won’t keep quiet’

Benalla has denied boasting of insider influence to win work after his sacking and accused members of Macron’s entourage of “trying to wreck” his life.

“I won’t keep quiet any longer,” he said in a statement Wednesday. Le Monde newspaper reported that Benalla had met in October with Congo’s President Denis Sassou-Nguesso as well as with top officials in

Cameroon as part of a business delegation. “Today I’m doing consulting work. I’m working in around ten countries in Africa,” Benalla told the newspaper.

Benalla, a former bouncer, became Macron’s chief bodyguard during his 2017 election campaign and was given a senior security job upon his victory.

He faces charges of assault, impersonating an officer, and illicitly receiving CCTV recordings of the May Day incident.

He has denied any wrongdoing, insisting he was simply trying to help police deal with violent protesters. The Benalla scandal has reared its ugly head again at an unwelcome time for Macron, following a wave of protests against him by the “yellow vest” movement.— AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

Japan, France to hold security talks in Paris next month

TOKYO — Japan and France will hold talks involving their foreign and defense ministers in Paris on 11 January to deepen their defense cooperation, the Japanese government said Friday.

The agendas for the fifth so-called “two-plus-two” meeting between the two countries may include maritime security issues amid China’s growing maritime assertiveness.—Kyodo News ■

Gov’t approves free preschool education program starting October 2019

TOKYO — The Japanese government on Friday formally approved the details of a program that will expand child care and higher education support, including free public preschool education for all children aged between 3 and 5, beginning in October 2019. To address the country’s falling birthrate, the government will also make day care services free for children up to age 2 from October if they come from low-income households, and provide grant-type scholarships to university students from low-income families from April 2020.

—Kyodo News ■

Five militants killed in airstrikes in E Afghanistan

KABUL — At least five militants of the Haqqani militant group have been killed following Afghan Air Force airstrikes in two eastern provinces, the Afghan Ministry of Defense said on Friday. “Five members of Haqqani terrorist network were killed after Air Force struck militants’ hideouts on the outskirts of Gardez, capital of eastern Paktia province and Gomal district of eastern Paktika province Thursday,” the ministry said in a statement. The Haqqani network, a Taliban-linked group which operated in eastern provinces and the capital Kabul, has been responsible for many high-profile attacks against security forces. A militants’ vehicle and a motorcycle were also destroyed during the raids. The Haqqani network has not made a comment on the report yet.—Xinhua ■

Cohen dismisses report of Prague meeting with Russians

WASHINGTON(United States) — Michael Cohen, Donald Trump’s former attorney, denied Thursday that he had ever visited Prague, shooting down a report that he had a meeting with Russian officials there during the 2016 presidential election campaign.

“I hear #Prague #CzechRepublic is beautiful in the summertime,” Cohen tweeted. “I wouldn’t know as I have never been.

“#Mueller knows everything!” he added in a reference to Special Counsel Robert Mueller, the former FBI director who is investigating whether Trump’s campaign colluded with Russia to get him elected to the White House.

Cohen’s tweet came several hours after the McClatchy news service reported that cell phone records showed that Cohen was near Prague in the summer of 2016, supporting claims that he met there with Russian officials.



Cell phone records support claims that Michael Cohen was near Prague during the summer of 2016 despite his denials, McClatchy news service reported. **PHOTO: AFP**

Cohen, who was sentenced to three years in prison this month after pleading guilty to tax evasion and other crimes, had denied previously ever visiting Prague. Cohen has been cooperating for the past several months with the Special Counsel’s office but details of his cooperation with

the Mueller probe have not been publicly revealed.

Trump vehemently denies any collusion with Russia and has denounced the Mueller investigation as a “political witch hunt.”

The purported meeting between Cohen and Russian government officials in Prague

was first reported in a document with compromising material on Trump compiled by former British spy Christopher Steele.

According to what has become known as the “Steele dossier,” Cohen had a clandestine meeting with Kremlin officials in Prague in August 2016 to discuss hiding links between members of the Trump campaign and Russia.

McClatchy, publisher of the Miami Herald and other newspapers, said a mobile phone traced to Cohen had briefly sent signals off cell towers in the Prague area in late summer 2016.

“The brief activation from Cohen’s phone near Prague sent beacons that left a traceable electronic signature,” it said.

Citing “four people with knowledge of the matter,” McClatchy said that the electronic record supports “claims that Cohen met secretly there with Russian officials.”— AFP ■

Six men arrested in Viet Nam for killing, eating endangered monkey

HANOI (Viet Nam) — Six men were arrested in central Vietnam for killing and eating an endangered monkey while livestreaming it on a social media site, police said Friday.

The trafficking and consumption of rare and endangered species is widespread in Viet Nam as many still believe in the healing and medicinal qualities of the animals' body parts.

But the sale of the animals occurs on the black market, and consumers rarely broadcast the killing and eating of the creatures, which are protected under Vietnam's conservation laws. The six men, aged from 35 to 59, filmed themselves with a mobile phone eating a live langur monkey and streamed the gruesome video on Facebook on 17 November.

They were finally identified and arrested on Thursday. "It took time for us to figure out the suspects involved," a police officer in central Ha Tinh

province told AFP. The men have been accused of violating regulations on protecting "endangered and precious animals" and they confessed to the crime, said a statement posted on Ha Tinh provincial police's website.

One of the men had bought the monkey off a hunter for \$49, said the statement.

Leaf-eating langurs are among the most endangered primate species in the world and are only found in the northern part of Viet Nam. The Southeast Asian country is also home to other endangered species, including the Red River giant soft-shell turtle, the mountainous Saola antelope, and the snub-nosed Tonkin monkey.

But critics say conservation protection laws are not enforced effectively, and poaching continues unchecked — feeding an appetite for rare and endangered species domestically and in neighbouring China. —AFP ■



The trafficking and consumption of rare and endangered species is widespread in Viet Nam, as many still believe in the healing and medicinal qualities of the animals' body parts. **PHOTO: AFP**

Pompeo to visit Colombia amid tensions with Venezuela

BOGOTA (Colombia) — US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo will meet Colombian President Ivan Duque in the resort city of Cartagena next week, as tensions flare with neighboring Venezuela.

Duque and Pompeo will seek to "continue strengthening the bilateral relationship and discuss the crisis provoked by the dictatorship in Venezuela" of President Nicolas Maduro, a statement from the Colombian president's office said Thursday.

The US State Department, in its own announcement, said the two would discuss "the regional crisis perpetrated by the disastrous policies of the Maduro regime."

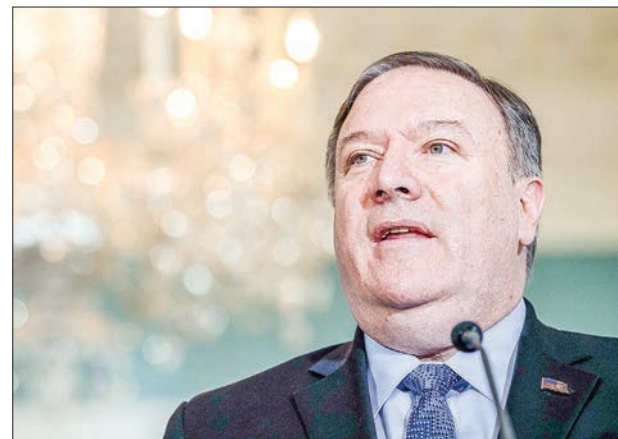
The meeting is scheduled for next Wednesday and comes after Duque

asked countries "that defend democracy" not to recognize Maduro's new administration, due to be seated on 10 January.

The socialist leader, who has overseen Venezuela's descent into the worst economic crisis of its history, will start a second mandate after winning an election earlier this year that was branded a fraud by the US, European Union, opposition groups and the Organization of American States.

Colombia, a strategic ally of the United States, is leading the regional opposition to Venezuela, with which it has extremely frayed diplomatic ties.

The arrival of Russian strategic bombers in Venezuela to participate in military exercises at the start of December sent tensions



US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo will meet with Colombian President Ivan Duque in Cartagena, as tensions with Venezuela rise. **PHOTO: AFP**

soaring.

Millions of Venezuelans have fled the economic crisis in their country, many into neighboring Colombia. According to the United Nations, 2.3 million people have left since 2015.

Maduro, who frequently denounces plots against him, insisted this

month that the United States was planning to overthrow him with the help of Colombia's right-wing government and Brazil's far-right president-elect Jair Bolsonaro.

Pompeo is visiting South America for Bolsonaro's inauguration. —AFP ■

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V HOANG PHUONG LUCKY

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V HOANG PHUONG LUCKY are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 29-12-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of T.M.T (1) 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

Phone No: 2301928

Mandalay region Government Mandalay City Development Committee Invitation for Open Tender

1. Open Tenders are invited local and International Companies for long term rental of Mandalay Convention Centre, located on Theik Pan Road, between 69th and 70th Street, managed by Mandalay City Development Committee.

2. Tenders will be processed as follows:

- (a) Date of Sale of tender forms (7-1-2019)
- (b) Closing date and time for submission of tenders (25-1-2019)(12:00)hrs
- (c) Venue of opening tender (Meeting Hall, MCDC)
- (d) Date and Time of opening tender (28-1-2019)(09:00)hrs

3. Tender forms will cost kyats (50000) and detailed information shall be available at Administration Department of MCDC with contact ph no: +952 4064750.

Tenders committee

Mandalay City Development Committee

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V PACITA VOY. NO. (031 W/E)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V PACITA VOY. NO. (031 W/E) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 29-12-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T.T/AIPT where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

**SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S NEW GOLDEN SEA LINES**

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V AS SOPHIA VOY. NO. (1817/1818)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V AS SOPHIA VOY. NO. (1817/ 1818) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 29-12-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T.T/MIP where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

**SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S TRANSPORT(S'PORE) PTE LTD**

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V CHANG SHUN II VOY. NO. (-)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V CHANG SHUN II VOY. NO. (-) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 29-12-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.P.L 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 CA SHIPPING PTE LTD**

Phone No: 2301928

Clean energy leader Costa Rica turns attention to electric cars

SAN JOSÉ (Costa Rica) — Costa Rica likes to advertise itself as an ecological paradise, where more than 98 per cent of its electricity needs are met by clean energy.

But in the automotive industry, it is lagging behind with just 600 out of 1.4 million private vehicles running on electricity rather than petrol or diesel.

Experts believe that is about to change, though.

Bernal Munoz, a director at Costa Rica's electricity institute (ICE), insists that 600 vehicles is in itself progress, having doubled the number on the roads in 2017. "We have studies done by the University of Costa Rica with mathematical models that say the growth rate will continue," Munoz told AFP.

"In five years, there could be 40,000 electric vehicles."

ICE is leading the way, having purchased a fleet of 100 electric vehicles to replace the same number of fuel-powered ones.

"The aim of this project is to demonstrate that the electric vehicle is perfectly adapted to the topographical conditions of this country, with its rolling, mountainous terrain," said Munoz. Costa Rica's state postal service has got in on the act too, purchasing 30 electric motorcycles for its employees to use on their rounds.

"We have proposed the transition towards a fleet of electric vehicles, facilitating the process so that public institutions buy zero emission vehicles," said First Lady Claudia Dobles.

An architect, Dobles has been tasked with the government's urban renovation program, including the modernization of its transport. When President Carlos Alvarado assumed office in May, he initiated a program of decarbonization of the economy, with the transition to electric cars a key to the project.

World leader

The central American country is already a world leader when it comes to green energy, having generated more than 98 per cent of its power through renewable sources for the last four years in a row.

That makes the country the ideal place to promote clean transport, according to Carlos Echeverria, senior regional specialist at the Inter-American Development Bank.

"The government wants to convert Costa Rica into a laboratory for the decarbonization of the economy, and transport is fundamental to that," he told AFP.

Transport is responsible for 66 per cent of hydrocarbon consumption and 54 per cent of carbon dioxide emissions. As well as the replacement of fuel powered vehicles with electric ones at state institutions, last year the government implemented tax exemptions for the private purchase of electric cars.

It's also planning a passenger train between major cities and a cargo locomotive to and from its major Caribbean port of entry and exit.

"What Costa Rica is doing is leading in the way of electrical mobility at a regional level," said Echeverria. Other Latin American countries, such as Chile, Colombia and Mexico, have made progress in the electric public transport sector, according to Munoz.—AFP ■

'All lives matter': Indonesia saves tsunami-stranded turtles

KALIANDA (Indonesia) — Searching a debris-strewn beach for victims of Indonesia's deadly tsunami, a rescue team happened upon a giant sea turtle trapped in a pile of marine trash.

It took four staff to haul the endangered creature back to sea, just the latest in a string of turtle rescues along the country's devastated coast.

"The turtle was really large and it got stuck in a pile of rubbish, lying almost upside down," AdiAyangsyah, a member of a search and rescue team in hard-hit Lampung on Sumatra island, told AFP Friday.

He said the turtle was "probably about 30 kilograms (66 pounds)".



It took four staff to haul the giant sea turtle back to sea after it became trapped in a pile of marine trash in the wake of Indonesia's deadly tsunami. PHOTO: AFP

This week, about 15 other turtles were rescued in the same area.

"We think they were swept ashore by the tsunami," said Teguh Ismail, head of Lampung's conservation agency.

"But they didn't have any wounds so we got them

back in the water."

An eruption of the Anak Krakatoa volcano, which sits in the middle of the Sunda Strait between Java and Sumatra islands, caused a section of the crater to collapse and slide into the ocean, triggering the killer tsunami on Saturday evening.

On Friday, the death toll stood at 430 with some 159 still missing.

Hopes for finding any survivors are all but gone, but the hunt isn't limited to human victims.

"We'll keep our eye out for other stranded turtles as well," Ayangsyah said.

"For us, all lives matter. Human or animal — we'll try to rescue them all."—AFP ■

Government of Mandalay Region Mandalay City Development Committee Invitation of Expression of Interest (EOI)

1. The Buildings on the 3.1672 acre land owned by MCDC (Former Nadi Myanmar Hotel, 62nd Street, Between 36th & 37th Street, Maha Aung Myay Township Mandalay) are to be upgraded. Call for tender with PPP will be made for the implementation of Mix-Used Development project including business infrastructure, investment and services. Therefore, those who are interested, local companies or consortium cooperating with foreign entrepreneurs are invited to submit EOI.
2. The entrepreneurs who are interested will be charged 500000 kyats for EOI application form to credit account number D-2 (3.5.2) Yandanarpon Bank limited. Then forms for EOI are available at cleansing department-
(i) EOI forms can be taken from 26-12-2018 to 20-1-2019
(ii) Last date for the submission of EOI form is 21-2-2019 at 16:30 (during office hour)
(iii) Address- Cleansing Department
Mandalay City Development Committee
19th Street, 63rd Street
Second floor of Nanshae Market
Ph-02-4072003
Mandalay City Development Committee

Announcement of Transferring Distributor for Registered Pesticides

Distribution of the following Pesticides registered by Sinamyang Group Pte.Ltd is transferring from Asian Crops Global Co.,Ltd to Diamond Light International Trading Co.,Ltd.Any objection regarding this transfer can notify at Joint. Secretary , Pesticide Registration Board, Plant Protection Division, west Gyogone, Insein within two weeks.

No.	Trade Name	Active Ingerdient	Registration	Registration No
1	Lover 0.005B	Brodifacoum 0.005%RB	Provisional	P2017-4049

Asian Crops Global Co.,Ltd.
No.(49/A),Thiri Mingalar (2) street,Ward No.(8), Kamayut Township,Yangon,Myanmar.
Tel:0931357156, 09420131708, 09449412300. E-mail: asiancropsglobal@gmail.com

Announcement of Transferring Distributor for Registered Pesticides

Distribution of the following Pesticides registered by Sinamyang Group Pte.Ltd is transferring from Min Mahaw Co.,Ltd to Diamond Light International Trading Co.,Ltd.Any objection regarding this transfer can notify at Joint. Secretary , Pesticide Registration Board, Plant Protection Division, west Gyogone, Insein within two weeks.

No.	Trade Name	Active Ingerdient	Registration Type	Registration No
1	Sinafat 75SP	Acephate 75%SP	Provisional	P2017-3897
2	Sinta 20SP	Acetamidiprid 20%SP	Provisional	P2017-3898
3	Lucky 2.243SL	Aromatic Nitrophenols 2.243%SL	Provisional	P2017-3900
4	Sinameisu 5SL	Validamycin A 5%SL	Provisional	P2017-3920

Min Mahaw Company Limited.
No.(49/A),Thiri Mingalar (2) street,Ward No.(8), Kamayut Township,Yangon,Myanmar.
Tel:(01)501070.536127.09420114655.Fax:(01)501070.
Email:Minmahaw30@gmail.com.
www.minmahawmyanmar.com



Korean donors hand over new building to No. 3 BEHS, Thanlyin

A new school building constructed with the contribution of Korean donors was handed over to No.3 Basic Education High School, Thanlyin, yesterday.

At the ceremony, Mr. Cho Young Keun and donors presented the documents related with

the building which is 120 ft long and 30 ft wide to Daw Nwe Ni Aye, Headmistress of the school.

The donation also includes teaching aid, furniture, two TVs, a projector, a copier and water purifier. — Maung Maung Htwe
(Translated by JT)

Shichida School holds awarding ceremony in Yangon

SHICHIDA Whole Brain Development School held their Shichida Yangon Awarding Ceremony at Gandamar Wholesale Compound's grand ballroom in Yangon on 21 December.

In addition to Outstanding Student Awards, the school also awarded Awesome Mom and Awesome Dad awards to parents who actively participated in their children's learning development.

Shichida Whole Brain Development School opened the world's first right brain school in Japan 30 years ago, and now has over 460 branch schools in Japan and over 300 around the world. Shi-



Shichida Yangon Awarding Ceremony held in Yangon yesterday. **PHOTO: SUPPLIED**

chida has opened also opened schools at Times Link Condo in Yangon and Mingalar Man-

dalay Compound in Mandalay. —GNLM
(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

Success of films with Chinese elements in North America excites Hollywood insiders

LOS ANGELES—The success of Hollywood films with Chinese elements at North American box office in 2018 has attracted interest from critics and Hollywood insiders, triggering enthusiastic discussions about cooperation between Chinese and American film industries. The shark-themed thriller, "The Meg," and the racial diversity triumph, "Crazy Rich Asians," are among the most successful films incorporating China-related elements, gaining mainstream appeal in North America. Hollywood films incorporating Chinese elements, including "The Meg," "Crazy Rich Asians" and Legendary and Universal's big-budget release "Pacific Rim: Uprising," have stayed atop North American weekend box office 5 out of 51 weeks as of 23 December this year. Notably, "Crazy Rich Asians" led North American box office three weekends in a row.

"The Meg," a Chinese-American co-production, released by Gravity Pictures in China and by Warner Bros. Pictures in the United States, grossed more than 530 million US dollars in the global box office against a production budget of around 150 million dollars.

"Crazy Rich Asians" was a Warner Bros. Pictures release, and produced by SK Global, Color Force, Ivanhoe Pictures, Electric Somewhere and China-backed firm Starlight Culture. The romantic comedy-drama film, based on Kevin Kwan's novel of the same name and directed by

Chinese American filmmaker Jon M. Chu, has brought in 238 million dollars worldwide against a modest 30-million-dollar production budget.

"Chinese co-productions have been among the most successful films of 2018. Titles like 'Crazy Rich Asians' and 'The Meg' reflected a true understanding of what global audiences are looking for when they go to the multiplex," said US movie analyst Paul Dergarabedian at Comscore. Dergarabedian pointed out that "Crazy Rich Asians" became a comedy sensation in North America and drew audiences of all backgrounds who were attracted by its universal themes and relatable situations while "The Meg" featured an irresistible concept embraced by audiences on a global scale and also featured notable Chinese talent.

"Films like 'The Meg' and 'Crazy Rich Asians' are great models for how to perfectly combine the best of US and China-based talent to create appealing filmed content for global consumption. In the future, we will likely see more such productions and perhaps there will be more China-based productions that reflect the taste and culture and Chinese point of view that could be produced in a way that will enable them to cross over in a more profound way to audiences outside of their country of origin," he told Xinhua. —Xinhua ■

Benedict Cumberbatch to star in 'eye-opening' Brexit thriller

LONDON (United States)—Actor Benedict Cumberbatch will play Brexit mastermind Dominic Cummings in a new TV drama airing in Britain next month that will focus on the controversial tactics used ahead of the 2016 referendum.

The two-hour long "Brexit: The Uncivil War" will air on Channel 4 on 7 January—the same day that MPs return to Westminster after their Christmas break and ahead of a critical parliamentary vote on Brexit the following week.

Cumberbatch, who supported staying in the European Union in 2016, said he wanted "the challenge of transforming into someone that's pretty far from myself, in many ways, and to see the world through his eyes".

"It's such an important story that's continuing to define our nation, and I didn't know an awful lot about how the Leave vote was won," the 42-year-old said.

Cumberbatch revealed he was initially "wary" about the project because Brexit was "the most divisive issue in politics certainly that I can remember in my lifetime".

"It's far more complex than just the question of in or out on the ballot paper," he said in a statement, admitting the issue had divided his own family and friends.

The British actor also predicted that the film "is not going to please everyone" since "politics, especially around this issue,

gets incredibly personal".

Cummings, a former political adviser to eurosceptic MPs, was the campaign director of Vote Leave, the pro-Brexit group that helped win the referendum against all odds despite the government backing continued EU membership. Little known by the wider public, Cummings is credited with playing a decisive role behind the scenes, particularly through his insistence on a data-driven social media campaign rather than traditional electioneering.

'Eye-opening' data tactics

Script writer James Graham said Cumberbatch had worked hard not to make the portrayal biased.

"Benedict's absolute obsession all the way through was to make sure that it wasn't too one-sided. That the film wasn't blaming him," Graham said.

Cumberbatch said he met with Cummings, studied the few video clips of him available and spoke to members of his staff about what he was like in person during the campaign.

"One of the most striking things was how calm and composed they said he was throughout the entire campaign. He has a very even spirit level," the actor said. The tactics employed by Brexit campaigners have come under intense scrutiny since the referendum, particularly the use of misleading slogans and targeted political ads. In July, the Electoral Commission watchdog fined Vote Leave for breaking campaign spending rules.

Investigators found that more than £675,000 (\$853,000, 747,000 euros) spent with Canada-registered data firm Aggregate IQ via another campaign group should have been declared. —AFP ■



Benedict Cumberbatch attends the premiere of "Dr. Seuss' The Grinch" at Alice Tully Hall on 3 November 2018 in New York City. **PHOTO: AFP**

China's BeiDou officially goes global

BEIJING—China on Thursday announced that the primary system of BeiDou-3 has been established and started to provide global services, meaning its home-grown BeiDou Navigation Satellite System (BDS) officially went global.

The BDS has been performing well in the Asia-Pacific region and it goes global with cutting-edge technology and high-quality service.

"The BDS is very popular in Indonesia," said Marianto Yang, an agent selling satellite navigation equipment in Indonesia, adding that the system offers services superior to similar equipment.

In November 2017, BeiDou-3, the latest generation of the BDS, started its satellite constellation, which was completed this November.

Xie Jun, deputy chief designer of the system, said the goal of the design of BeiDou-3 is to provide services with comparable accuracy to those of the

third generation of the Global Positioning System owned by the United States and European Galileo system. The new progress of BeiDou-3 offers an alternative to the world.

"We have seen great potential in the BeiDou system," said Sabira Khatun, a professor who specializes in electronics engineering at Universiti Malaysia Pahang, emphasizing that the system has brought opportunities for academic cooperation on navigation between the two countries.

The BDS was created in a spirit of openness and cooperation. Before BeiDou-3 started its global service, services provided by BeiDou-2 had been applied in over 70 countries and regions, from land planning and supervision of river transport in Myanmar to urban modernization and smart tourism in Brunei.

In recent years, the BDS's pace of globalization has been quickening. At the sixth ministerial meeting of the China-Ar-



China's BeiDou Navigation Satellite System (BDS) officially goes global. PHOTO: XINHUA

ab States Cooperation Forum in 2014, the application of the BDS in Arab countries has been discussed.

In May 2015, China and Russia signed the BeiDou-Glonass system compatibility and interoperability cooperation agreement. In April 2018, the China-Arab States BDS/GNSS Center, the first overseas center for China's indigenous BDS, was officially inaugurated in Tunisia.

"Cooperation on the BDS is of special significance for the Belt and Road construction," said Mohamed Ben Amor, secretary general of the Tunisia-based Arab Information and Communication Technology Organization, an Arab governmental organization under the Arab League.

"The next step of the China-Arab cooperation is to achieve further connectivity and both sides can apply the BDS to pro-

mote regional technological and economic development," Amor added. Shen Jun, deputy director of the International Cooperation Center of the China Satellite Navigation Office, said the China-Russia Commission on Important Strategic Satellite Navigation Cooperation has been established to continuously coordinate and promote bilateral cooperation in satellite navigation.—Xinhua ■

Russian scientists to share results of Antarctic research with global community, says RAS

MOSCOW—Russian Antarctic researchers will share their results with the international community, President of the Russian Academy of Sciences (RAS) Alexander Sergeev told TASS.

"We know that in recent years Antarctica has been turning into a zone of international political and economic interests. A joint program initiated by the Russian government has been launched this year. Under the project, our academic vessels will head to Antarctica to conduct research and share scientific information with the international community. This



Russian Antarctic researchers will share their results with the international community. PHOTO: TASS

has become a prerequisite for obtaining fishing permits from the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR)," Sergeev explained.—Tass ■

Warmer years in northern ecosystem associated with lower carbon uptake: study

BEIJING—Chinese scientists have found the summer carbon uptake of the terrestrial ecosystem in the northern hemisphere has been significantly weakened by ongoing climate warming. In other words, warmer years were associated with lower ecosystem carbon uptake — the process of removing and capturing carbon from the atmosphere.

Observations of atmospheric carbon dioxide concentration from atmospheric monitoring stations at high latitudes provide complementary monitoring of the dynamics of carbon exchange in northern ecosystems. Most studies of the northern hemisphere carbon cycle based on atmospheric carbon dioxide concentration have focused on spring and autumn, but the climate change impact on summer carbon cycle remains unclear. Summer has the highest vegetation productivity, actively contributes to year-to-year variations in terrestrial carbon uptake and generally has the most favorable climatic conditions for carbon

dioxide uptake, said the study published in Nature Communications.

Scientists from the Institute of Tibetan Plateau Research of Chinese Academy of Sciences used the record of atmospheric carbon dioxide concentrations to calculate the summer carbon dioxide drawdown, an indicator of summer carbon uptake, between July and August. They found that the summer carbon uptake is significantly negatively correlated with terrestrial temperature within 50 degrees north latitude year-to-year from 1979 to 2012.

A refined analysis at the decadal scale reveals strong differences between the earlier (1979-1995) and later (1996-2012) periods, with the significant negative correlation only in the later period.

The emerging negative temperature response is primarily due to summer vegetation activities no longer positively responding to temperatures, according to the scientists.—Xinhua ■

Water out of thin air? Just ask Russian scientists

MOSCOW—Russian scientists have developed a technique of making water out of air to ensure uninterrupted water supplies on the Crimean Peninsula, President of the Russian Academy of Sciences Alexander Sergeev said in an interview with TASS.

Crimea has been having problems with water supplies and irrigation of lands since 2014 when Ukraine cut water supplies via the North Crimean Canal. Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev earlier set a task for the Crimean authorities and the Academy of Sciences to look into ways

of addressing this matter. Sergeev reported in November that several options of how to resolve the problem had been offered to the government.

"I spoke about the search for water on Mars but we have a more earthly task - to look for water sources for Crimea. There are many various approaches, not in the area of fundamental research but as part on routine applied works," Sergeev said. "One of the best results that was reached by the Academy of Sciences' agricultural department is a device for making water by means of atmospheric condensation." —Tass ■

MFF Awards Night: Maung Maung Lwin, Lwin Moe Aung declared players of the year

MAUNG Maung Lwin, the star midfielder for the national football team and Yangon United, and Lwin Moe Aung, a young midfielder for the Ayeyawady United and the national football team, were adjudged Player of the Year in the men's and youth category, respectively, at the MFF Awards Night.

The awards ceremony, held Thursday night at the Novotel Max Hotel in Yangon, was attended by officials from the government, the Myanmar Football Federation (MFF), the Myanmar National League (MNL), the chairmen and owners of MNL football clubs, footballers, journalists, and invited guests.

Awards for the women's player of the year, girl's player of the year, and coach of the year were also presented at the ceremony.

Women's national football team and I.S.P.E team's strik-



Myanmar football stars Maung Maung Lwin (left) and Lwin Moe Aung (right) seen with their medals at the MFF Awards Night. **PHOTO: MFF**

er, Khin Mar Lar Tun, took the Player of the Year award in the women's category, while Women's national football team and YREO team's striker, Myat Noe Khin, won the award in the girl's category. Yangon United's head coach U Myo Min Tun walked away with the Coach of the Year

award. Yangon United took the award for winning the Myanmar National League, while first runner up Shan United and second runner up Zwegapin United were also awarded at the ceremony.

The Myawady F.C. took the award for winning the women's league.—Lynn Thit (Tgi) ■

Japanese midfielder Nakamura joins Shan United

THE Shan United F.C. have signed Japanese midfielder Nakamura Reo for a period of one year. The young player has participated in leagues across Asia since 2014 and took part in the Mongolian league in 2018.

Born in 1990, the 5 feet 6 inches tall midfielder has played both attack and defense positions, and is an offensive player with good stamina, said a source with Shan United.

"I know Shan United well. They are making a lot of preparations for the new football season. I will make every effort to achieve titles with the team," said Nakamura Reo.

With the recent signing of the Japanese midfielder, Shan

United have completed their recruitment for the 2019 football season.

For the upcoming 2019 Myanmar National League and the 2019 AFC Cup, Shan United have signed four foreign players – 3 from Brazil and one from Japan, said the source with the club.

The football club has also replaced local players with new comers Pyae Sone Aung (from Sagaing United), Ye Yint Tun (Yadanarbon F.C.), and Satt Phyto Wai and Nanda Kyaw (from Magwe F.C.). The newcomers joined Shan United after their contracts with their previous clubs expired, according to the source.—Lynn Thit (Tgi) ■

Arsenal, Man City double header tests Liverpool's new tag as title favourites

LIVERPOOL (United Kingdom)—Halfway towards ending a 29-year wait to win the Premier League, the next seven days will test Liverpool's title credentials to the fullest, starting with Arsenal's visit to Anfield on Saturday.

For a long time a new year visit to Manchester City on January 3 had the makings of a title decider, but Liverpool now have margin for error with a six-point lead at the top of the table.

Tottenham are Liverpool's closest challengers with City slipping down to third and seven points adrift after three defeats in their last four league games.

That is more than the six points Liverpool have dropped all season so far as Jurgen Klopp's men remain unbeaten.

"What we said as well is that we want to create our own history. We are the first Liverpool team in the Premier League to be unbeaten in 19 matches—a little history and a nice step," said Klopp after a 4-0 thrashing of Newcastle on Boxing Day. Much more significant history awaits, particularly if Liverpool are still unbeaten come the end of a frantic festive period.

"We have to win our games, we have to be focused, we need to be really in the mood with hav-

ing tunnel vision," added Klopp. "That's really important and then we will see where it leads us."

Arsenal are one of three sides to have held the league leaders in a 1-1 draw in November and contain the attacking potential in the Premier League's top-scorer Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang and Alexandre Lacazette to trouble a Liverpool side that has conceded just seven goals this season.

"There are two tough games now: Arsenal and Man City. We need to keep this momentum," said defender Dejan Lovren.

"We have big character in the squad. If you want to be at the top, you need to have the winning

mentality and the calmness."

Don't forget 'how good we are'

City will be hoping for Liverpool to finally cede some ground unless the champions will find themselves 10 points off the top when they kick off at a revitalised Southampton under Ralph Hasenhuetl on Sunday.

"The less important issue is Liverpool, we have to think about Southampton," insisted Pep Guardiola after defeat at Leicester.

"I don't forget who we are, how good a team we are, how exceptional these lads I have in the locker room are.—AFP ■



Eyeing history: Mohamed Salah celebrates as Liverpool beat Newcastle 4-0 to open up a six-point Premier League lead. **PHOTO: AFP**

Inter travel to Empoli without fans as racism, violence mar Christmas football

MILAN (Italy)—Inter Milan travel to Tuscany side Empoli on Saturday without their fans after racism and violence overshadowed Christmas football in the Italian league.

Police in Florence said that visiting Inter supporters would not be allowed to attend this weekend's match against promoted Empoli with the away stand closed.

It follows violence before Wednesday's clash against Napoli at the San Siro which resulted in a fan's death, with the game overshadowed by racist chanting towards Senegalese defender Kalidou Koulibaly.

For the second consecutive year Serie A has broken with tradition, playing matches over Christmas and the New Year like the English Premier League.

The initiative has proved a big hit with the public attracting fans en masse to stadiums.

But the worst was reserved for the game which should have been the highlight of the Boxing Day fixture list in Italy between title-chasing Napoli and Inter Milan at the San Siro.

An Inter supporter was killed after being struck by a car amid

brawling between rival fans before the game with tensions high on the pitch after Koulibaly was repeatedly subjected to monkey chants.

Napoli asked for the match to be halted, without success, and the team finished with nine men as Koulibaly and Lorenzo Insigne were both sent off late on.

Substitute Lautaro Martinez struck in the 91st minute to give Inter a 1-0 victory, a result that meant Napoli failed to capitalise on Juventus dropping points in a 2-2 draw at Atalanta.

Inter insisted that the club has "always said no to any form of discrimination," but tensions are now running high going into the final round of matches before a three-week winter break in Italy.

Inter have been ordered to play two matches behind closed doors and another game with their North Stand closed.

As for second-placed Napoli, five points clear of Inter despite the ill-tempered defeat, they host Bologna without Koulibaly.

The Senegalese defender will serve a two-match ban for his sending off, after seeing a second yellow card for sarcastically applauding the referee.—AFP ■