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Vice President U Henry Van Thio opens Ngawon Bridge (Laymyethna) in Hinthada District, Ayeyawady Region

THE Union Government has been prioritizing the development of infrastructure, including supply of electricity and road transport, which are the main requirements for socioeconomic progress of the people, said Vice-President Henry Van Thio at the opening of the Ngawon Bridge (Laymyethna) in Hinthada District of Ayeyawady Region.

“The Myanmar Sustainable Development Plan 2018-2020 adopted in 2018 involves setting up prioritized infrastructures that support sustainable development and different businesses, under the three-goal framework of prosperity and cooperation. The government’s national

development drive endeavours to ensure equitable development in all regions and states,” he said.

“As the Ayeyawady Region lies on a delta, it is the rice bowl of Myanmar. With its natural waterways, big and small, the region has rich water resources. The region also has unspoiled sea beaches and offshore natural resources, such as natural gas. With several rivers and streams running through it, the region primarily relies on water transport, which is the cheapest form of travel, but it is slow and, in some cases, people need other modes of transport to reach destinations which are far from the port.

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Vice President U Henry Van Thio opens the Ngawon Bridge (Laymyethna) on Laymyethna-Khattu-Pandawgyi Road in Hinthada District, Ayeyawady Region yesterday. PHOTO: MNA

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Thai cultural delegation pays respect to Bhamo Sayadaw, visits Bago

A delegation led by the Minister for Culture of Thailand, Mr. Vira Rojpojchanarat, paid respect to Chairman of State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee, Bhamo Sayadaw Bhaddanta Kumara Bhivamsa yesterday.

The Minister for Culture of Thailand, along with Myanmar Theravada Buddhist Federation and Border Areas and Hill Region Sasana Nuggaha Association (Central) Chairman Wunna Kyaw Htin Dr. Khin Shwe reported on religious matters to Sayadaw Bhaddanta Kumara Bhivamsa.

Afterwards, the delegation led by Minister for Culture of Thailand, visited Zaykabar Museum in Thanlyin where Elizabeth Moore, Professor in the

Art and Archaeology of South East Asia, and party explained the heritage conservation programmes.

The delegation then visited the Zabu Oak Shaung Myat Phone Khaung Pagoda in Mingaladon Township, and also observed Myanmar heritage items and fossils conserved by the company.

In the afternoon, the delegation paid homage to the Maha Zedi Pagoda in Bago built by King Bayintnaung, donating cash to the Pagoda Board of Trustees. The delegation then visited the Kanbawzathadi Golden Palace, and departed from Yangon by Thailand airline in the evening.—Min Thit (MNA) ■ (Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)



Minister for Culture of Thailand Mr. Vira Rojpojchanarat donates offertories to Chairman of State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee, Bhamo Sayadaw Bhaddanta Kumara Bhivamsa yesterday. **PHOTO: MIN THIT (MNA)**

Union Minister Dr. Pe Myint inspects Hinthada District IPRD office

THE Union Minister for Information, Dr. Pe Myint, yesterday visited the office and library (Community Centre) of Hinthada District's Information and Public Relations Department (IPRD) in Hinthada Township of Ayeyawady Region.

The Union Minister first inspected the mini-museum, children's reading room, and library at the District IPRD office, and then met with the staff.

The Union Minister urged

the staff to upgrade community centres by turning them into places where people can meet, and which are useful, reliable, and valuable to the public, making them an essential part of every town. He also asked the staff to conduct reading circles and public talks under the Community Centre's book club, in accordance with guidelines, and urged them to do their best to increase their capabilities.—District IPRD ■ (Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)



Union Minister Dr. Pe Myint inspects Hinthada District Information and Public Relations Department yesterday. **PHOTO: DISTRICT IPRD**

Khanti Island in Palaw Township benefits from solar-power



Union Minister Dr. Aung Thu inspects regional development undertakings in Taninthayi Region. **PHOTO: MNA**

A ceremony to electrify the entire Khanti Island in Palaw Township, Taninthayi Region was held yesterday morning.

The island power distribu-

tion project was jointly implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation, under the Nation Electrification Project (NEP), the World Bank

and Germany.

At the ceremony, Union Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation Dr. Aung Thu said the government is implementing the Nation Electrification Project (NEP) to supply power for the rural people, beginning 2016-2017 fiscal year.

The Ministry, on its part, is implementing the off-grid power distribution project, with the use of single-house solar power distribution system.

in accord with the NEP policy, regions which cannot get power from the national grid in 10 to 15 years, regions which are at least 10 miles from the national grid, and villages where public contribution for the cause is not possible are put in the priority list.

Within a two-year period

from fiscal years 2016-2017 to 2017-2018, the ministry electrified 230,000 households of 4074 villages and over 30,000 public buildings through single-house solar power distribution system.

He said the ministry has electrified 45 villages and implemented 34 projects with the help of World Bank and GIZ, a German cooperation agency. The single-house solar power distribution system and micro power distribution system are being implemented in accord with the norms of NEP, with the funds of the region government. Thanks to the NEP, the whole Khanti Island including Taungkhaunglaung, Kalamakaung, Khanti and Pyingyi villages can be electrified.

Ambassador of Germany Mrs Dorothee Janetzke Wenzel,

an official of World Bank and a representative of GIZ also gave speeches. Region Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation U San Myint discussed regional development undertakings and future programs.

The Union Minister observed the distribution of solar power that was generating electricity for micro production businesses, and a tailoring course conducted under the Village Development Program (VDP) and selling sewing machines in installments.

The whole project to electrify the entire Khanti Island was implemented at a cost of over K 1,483 million. So, the islanders can now use electronic appliances and micro and cottage industries.—MNA ■ (Translated by TMT)

Vice President U Henry Van Thio opens Ngawon Bridge (Laymyethna)...

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Thanks to efforts made by successive governments, Ayeyawady Region now has intra- and inter- road and waterway networks," said the Vice-President.

"The launching of an air trip between Yangon and Patheingyi, the capital of Ayeyawady Region, has ensured further convenience to both local and foreign travelers. The region now has 1,862 miles of roads and, with the opening of the 1,968-foot Ngawon Bridge, it now has 99 bridges measuring more than 180 feet. Necessary reinforcements will be made at Wakhema Bridge, Laputta (Pinlelay) Bridge, Shwelaung Bridge, and Kyungon Bridge, to increase their longevity. The new Myaungmya Bridge will be opened in April 2019. The completion of major bridges will improve transport for regional people and bring development to multiple sectors," he said.

"The Union Government is trying to use the most effective means, without financial wastage, to implement projects in the interest of the nation, the regions, and the states. Local people and officials concerned must cooperate to ensure there is no wastage of public funds and the facilities offered are of good quality. The President has already urged quality control in building infrastructure," he said.

The Vice-President said the government is putting an administrative machinery in place for shaping a democratic system. Administrative officials at all levels must discharge their duties fairly, within the framework of law, and ensure public freedom and security, he said. The administrative machinery should not become a burden for the people,



Vice President U Henry Van Thio and party pose for a documentary photo at the inauguration of the Ngawon Bridge (Laymyethna) on Laymyethna-Khattu-Pandawgyi Road in Hinthada District, Ayeyawady Region yesterday. PHOTO: MNA

and they should strictly follow the directives laid down by the President, he added.

"The government has been implementing multi-sector reforms and development projects in keeping with the slogans — 'Time for a change', 'Together with the people', and 'The strength of unity'. The success of the reforms will depend on full support from the people. So, the people of the Ayeyawady Region are urged to continue their involvement in the government's reforms. Officials concerned must take responsibility and ensure accountability for the quality of the infrastructure being constructed for national development, as taxes paid by the public are being used. The people should also lend a helping hand in maintaining the infrastructure. All ethnic brethren must strive in harmony and unison in building a democratic federal union with solidarity, consolidation, and love," said the Vice-President.

Afterwards, Union Minister for Construction U Han Zaw explained the salient points of the bridge project, and the Chief Minister for Ayeyawady Region U Hla Moe Aung highlighted undertakings for regional development.

The completion of major bridges will improve transport for regional people and bring development to multiple sectors

Vice-President

Thereafter, the Vice-President and officials watched students perform traditional dances. Then, the Union Minister for Construction and the Chief Minister

for Ayeyawady Region and other officials formally opened the bridge. This was followed by the Vice-President and the attendees posing for documentary photos.

After the Vice-President unveiled the stone plaque, he and other officials sprinkled scented water on it. At the briefing hall of the project, the Vice-President heard a report on completed bridges, bridges under construction, and future projects in the region for the fiscal year 2018-2019.

Measuring 1968.5 feet, the Ngawon Bridge (Laymyethna) is located on Laymyethna-Khattu-Pandawgyi Road in Hinthada District, Ayeyawady Region. Its foundation was laid with 1.2-metre bored piles, its body was built with reinforced concrete, the main structure was erected using steel box girders and paved with reinforced slabs.

The bridge has a 24-foot wide road, flanked by 3.5-foot walkways. The bridge's clearance area is 173 feet wide and 20 feet

high. It can withstand loads of up to 75 tons. The bridges department under the Ministry of Construction began building the bridge on 18 November, 2016.

In the afternoon, the Vice President inspected bank erosion in Zalun Township, Hinthada District, and visited the place where a new bank will be built. At the briefing hall, the Vice President and party heard a report on preventive efforts, building of a new bank to stop erosion, preventive measures against bank erosion near a village in Zalun Township, pest infection of corn fields in Ayeyawady Region and spraying of pesticides.

In response, the Vice President said the number and rate of bank erosions has increased in the region. So, the regional government must take preventive measures, curb illegal production of sand and stones in the watercourses and complete the new bank before the onset of monsoons. —MNA (Trs: TMT)



Vice President U Henry Van Thio and party inspect bank erosion in Zalun Township, Hinthada district yesterday. PHOTO: MNA

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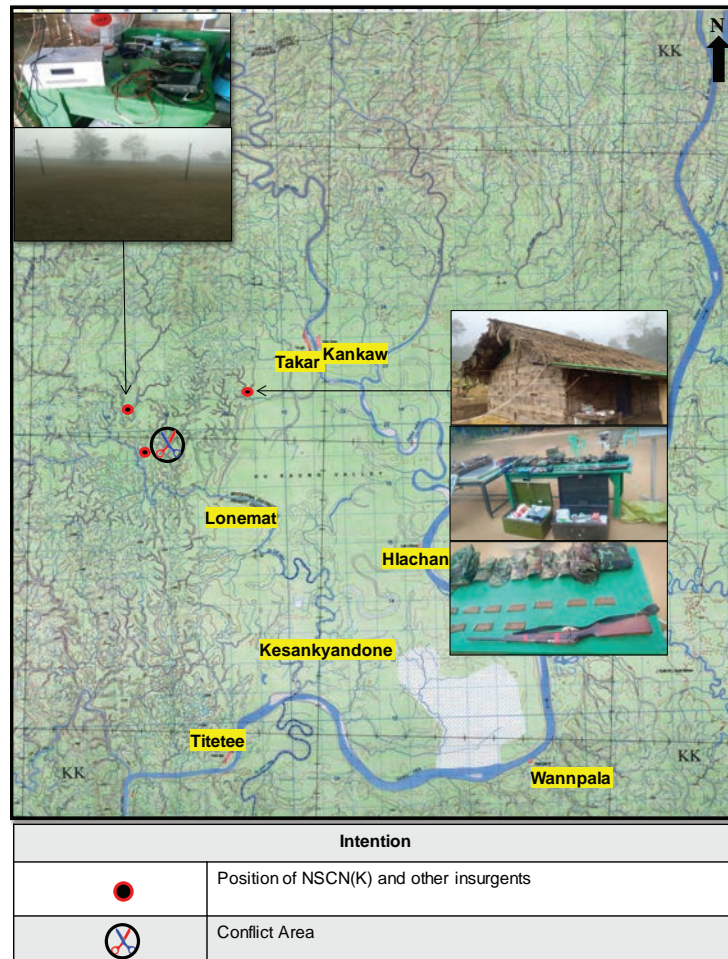
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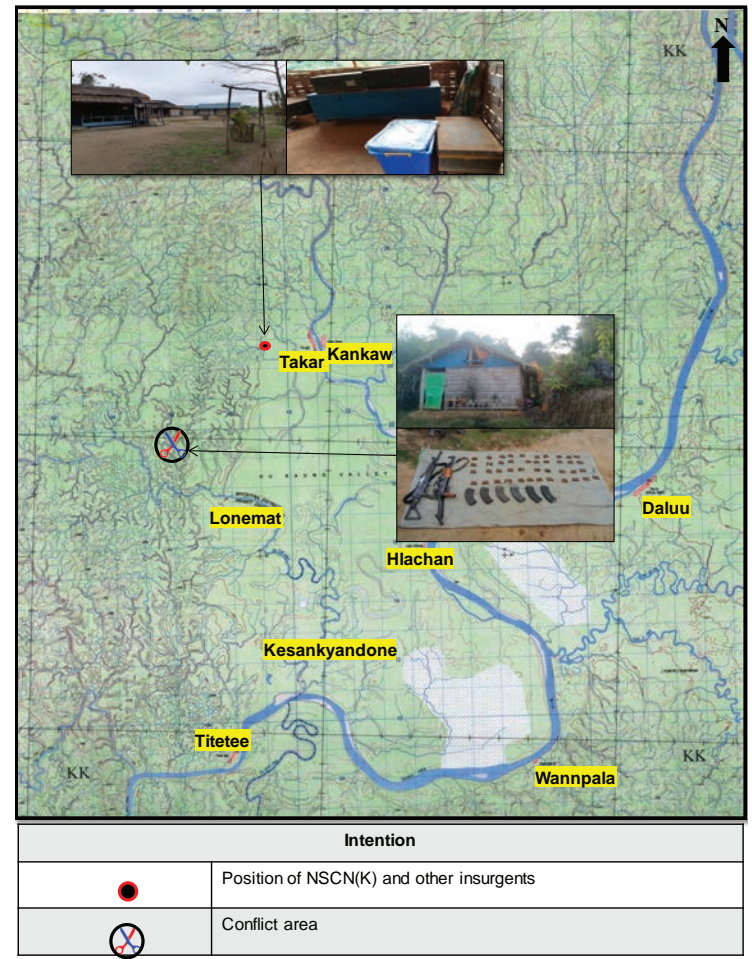
Due to limitation of space we are only able to publish "Letter to the Editor" that do not exceed 500 words. Should you submit a text longer than 500 words please be aware that your letter will be edited.

Camps, training camps of Assam, Kathe insurgents captured near NSCN (K) Camp which bases around Takar Village of Naga Self-Administered Zone

The map shows camps of NSCN(K) and other insurgents



The map shows camps of NSCN(K) and other insurgents



A combined security force comprising Assam rifle troops and police under control of Indian Army arrested five men and four women, totalling nine from NDFB-S armed group (the National Democratic Front of Bodoland-Sangbajit) along with small arms such as AK-47 and AK-45, pistol and ammunition near Jagun Village of Tinsukia District at the boundary between Assam State and Arunachal Pradesh State on 2 December 2018.

Indian news agencies namely Indian Defence News, TIMES-NOWNEWS.COM, the Shillong Times, Daily News & Analysis (DNA) stated that those insurgents who have attended the military training at their camp inside Myanmar were arrested while making attempts to re-enter India.

Based on preliminary scrutiny, the information was exposed that it may be related to NSCN (K) group. As NSCN (K) group signed the preliminary agreement on securing peace with the Sagaing Region government, it was allowed to temporarily base in the

bilaterally-agreed Takar region in order to carry out peace and stability and development tasks in Naga region. Sometimes, the military columns discharging security duties in the region enter the sites of NSCN (K) group and connect with them under continuous monitoring and provide necessary assistance, said the news released by the Office of the Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services.

Whenever the Tatmadaw finds suspects, the Tatmadaw always warns them to maintain the agreements and promises as part of considering their peace attitude and prestige of group because it is an organization which preliminarily agreed to secure peace.

The related information mentioned that NSCN (K) group allows some illegal armed groups, which are opposing India, in disguise of NSCN (K) group and to live in the area near their camps. As Myanmar holds the concept that it does not allow and accept bases of any insurgents opposing each government from neighbouring countries, news was

gathered and analyzed together with ground information. Hence, suspected evidences were firmly found that some Assam and Kathe insurgents deploy their strengths in NSCN (K) Camp near Takar Village in Naga Self-Administered Zone of Sagaing Region and its surrounding areas in the disguise of NSCN (K) group and may conduct military training. As such, military columns went there to perform proper security measures.

The Tatmadaw could occupy two outposts and two training schools about 6,500 meters and about 2,800 meters in the southwest of Takar Village, one temporary outpost about 1,800 meters in the north of Takar Village and one outpost around 1,600 meter in the west of Takar village respectively from 29 January to 1 February.

The Tatmadaw arrested six members of NSCN (K), two members of the Kathe insurgents, along with 11 small weapons of different kinds and ammunition and related items.

Moreover, the Tatmadaw took hold of the evidence that

Kathe and Assam insurgents resided and relevant documents on links with NSCN (K).

Moreover, a military column on duty of taking security measures in Tonzang Township of Chin State on 30 October 2018 performed appropriate security operations against an MPA Kathe insurgent camp, 800 metres north of Khota Village and captured the camp together with five assorted small arms, ammunition, related equipment, MPA badges and their utensils.

As the NSCN (K) violated the sub-paragraphs (C, D and E) of paragraph (1) of the preliminary agreement signed with the Sagaing Region Government for building peace, necessary action will be taken against the NSCN (K). No opposing organizations to India are allowed to reside in Naga Self-Administered Zone. Tatmadaw columns will go on taking security measures for the prevalence of regional stability and peace, according to the news released by the Office of the Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services.—MNA ■

Cold storage zone for fruits, crops to be established in PyinOoLwin

AUTHORITIES are planning to establish a cold storage zone for fruits and vegetables in PyinOoLwin, Mandalay Region, according to U Aung Soe, Permanent Secretary of Ministry of Commerce.

"We are planning to include

agro-based food in the export products. We have a plan to establish an industrial zone for value-added foods in PyinOoLwin, Mandalay Region," said U Aung Soe, at the workshop on development of oil crops and edible oil sector in

Mandalay yesterday. The new idea came after the watermelon and muskmelon farmers faced huge losses due to temporary closure of a border checkpoint at the Myanmar-China border in December. "As we can not store the export

products even about ten days, we saw losses. To overcome such kind of business obstacle in the future, we need cold storage factories," said U Myo Thu, Director of the Ministry of Commerce.—Ei Mo Mo Khaing (Translated by KZL)

India halts pulses imports; mung bean prices hit three-month low

INDIA'S provincial court issued a notice halting importation of pulses and beans on 30 January, prompting Indian merchants to stop purchases, which led to prices of mung beans sliding to a three-month low in the domestic market, said traders at the Bayintnaung commodity depot.

Before the end of January, mung bean RC was fetching K700,000 per ton. On 2 February, the prices slipped to K574,000 per ton — the lowest in three months. Mung bean was priced K576,000 per ton on 18 October.

India's move to restrict importation of pulses in August 2017 has severely affected growers in Myanmar. Before the restrictions were put in place, the prices stood at K800,000 per ton, but by 8 May, 2018, mung bean prices had plummeted sharply to K382,000 per ton.

In early May, India announced an import quota of

150,000 tons each on mung bean and green grams, and 200,000 tons on pigeon peas between mid-June and August. India bought the entire quota of mung beans and thereafter, some merchants continued to import the beans to fulfil local demand by applying for special licences.

Mung bean was priced below K600,000 per ton on 22 October 2018 and the rate bounced back to K988,000 per ton on 6 November, 2018 on the back of increasing demand from India.

Myanmar is trying to work out a government-to-government (G-to-G) agreement so that growers and traders do not suffer on account of changes in Indian policy on importation of pulses.

Myanmar's mung beans, pigeon peas, and green grams are primarily exported to India. Although Myanmar pulses and beans have penetrated the markets of Bangladesh, Paki-



A farmer sprays beans plants in Kangyidauk Village, Ayeyawady Region. PHOTO: PHOE KHWAR

stan, Nepal, Malaysia, and Indonesia, the volume of exports to those countries is extremely low.

Myanmar ships over 1 million tons of different varieties of pulses to other counties annually, and mung beans, green

grams, and pigeon peas make up a majority of the exports. —Maung Sae Aung/ Ko Htet ■
(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Trade with Malaysia down 17% in Nov: Ministry of Commerce

MYANMAR-Malaysia bilateral trade stood at US\$103.5 million in November, the second month of the present 2018-2019 fiscal year, down by \$21.4 million or 17.15 per cent, as against the same period last 2017-18 FY, the Ministry of Commerce reported.

The current bilateral exports topped \$30.9 million, while bilateral imports totalled \$72.5 million. Compared with last FY, this FY saw an increase in value of bilateral exports by \$14.7 million, however, the current import value decreased by \$36 million.

At this time during the 2017-2018 FY, the bilateral export was \$16.24 million when bilateral import was \$108.7 million, totalling \$124.9 million.

Top export/import products between the two countries cover marine products, clothing, forest products, agricultural commodities, oil, consumer goods, plastic ware, chemicals, stone and glass, footwear, minerals, metals, construction appliances, wire, medical products, electron-

ic devices and semi-finished goods.

During the 2018 mini-budget period (April-September), the ministry's statistical report showed that Myanmar-Malaysia hit \$600 million, increasing by over \$66 million than that of the corresponding period last year.

Trade between the two nations was over \$1 billion in the last 2017-2018 FY, \$980 million in the 2016-2017 FY, \$750 million in the 2015-2016 FY, over \$1 billion in the 2014-2015 FY, over \$940 million in the 2013-2014 FY, \$458 million in the 2012-2013 FY, and \$455 million in the 2011-2012 FY.

The Myanmar Investment Commission approved two projects from Malaysia with an investment of \$1.179 million in the current FY. Malaysian investment in Myanmar during the six-month period totalled \$7.34 million. Its investments in Myanmar in the previous 2017-2018 FY were \$21.8 million. —Swe Nye-in ■

(Translated by Khaing Thanda Lwin)

Mandalay region has raked in FDI of \$5.7 bln: Dr. Zaw Myint Maung

THE Mandalay region investment committee has permitted foreign direct investments totalling US\$5.7 billion from over 70 foreign enterprises so far, said Mandalay Region Chief Minister Dr. Zaw Myint Maung at the Invest Myanmar Summit 2019, held on 28 January.

Foreign businesses have invested in the manufacturing, tourism, and power sectors, and other services in the region, he said. As the ancient capital of Myanmar, Mandalay has more than 300 intangible cultural heritage assets such as the gold embroidery business, and traditional arts and crafts, said Dr. Zaw Myint Maung. He invited businesses to invest in the culture-based tourism sector.

The Mandalay Business Fo-

rum 2018, which was held from 9 to 11 November last year at the Mandalay Convention Center, showcased investment opportunities and local products, and included a study tour to the industrial zone and potential investment sites in Mandalay.

A trading and logistics hub in Upper Myanmar, Mandalay is the second largest city in the country, with a population of more than 1.4 million people. As Myanmar is among the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) countries, the region is targeting greater industrialization and economic development. Mandalay is a trade hub and centrally located, factors which help create a host of investment opportunities in the region. In addition, 68 per cent of the population in Man-

dalay is of working age. Under the new Myanmar Investment Law, enacted in 2017, the MIC has delegated powers to region and state authorities when it comes to permitting investments, a move aimed at encouraging business. The Regions and States Investment Committees are allowed to grant permissions to local and foreign proposals, where the initial investment does not exceed K6 billion, or \$5 million. The Mandalay Region investment committee was formed in July last year. Among the regions, Yangon attracts about 60 per cent of both local and foreign investments, followed by Mandalay at 30 per cent, while the remaining investment flows into other regions and states. —GNLM/(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Agro exports up \$76 mln in Oct-Jan

MYANMAR'S exports of agricultural products between 1 October and 25 January in the current fiscal year increased to over US\$1 billion from \$969.8 million in the corresponding period of the 2017-2018 FY, according to the trade figures released by the Ministry of Commerce. In the exports sector, the agriculture industry performed the best along with

the natural gas sector. The chief items of export in the agricultural sector are rice and broken rice, pulses, corn, and rubber. Fruits and vegetables, sesame, dried tea leaves, sugar, and other agro products are also shipped to other countries.

Agricultural exports have not seen a remarkable increase in terms of trade value owing

to China's tight confiscation on some agro products, including rice, since the second week of October. The Commerce Ministry is working to help farmers deal with challenges such as high input costs, procurement of pedigree seeds, high cultivation costs, and erratic weather conditions. —Ko Htet ■
(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Union Minister U Win Khaing inspects power plants as energy consumption reaches peak demand

Myanmar's national power grid currently generates 3,586 Megawatts with almost half of it (1,548.23 MW) consumed by the Yangon Region. As peak load in summer approaches, U Win Khaing, Union Minister for Electricity and Energy, inspected the Thilawa natural gas power plant, Thakayta power plant, and the TM-2500 mobile power plant under preparations to cope with the increasing demand for electrical energy.

Firstly, the union minister and entourage arrived at Thilawa natural gas power plant and instructed officials to regularly perform maintenance checks on the power plant and the machinery to ensure they run at full capacity, implement safety from

electricity, and make sure there were no power outages. They then inspected the power plant.

The Thilawa natural gas power plant is located in the Thilawa Special Economic Zone in Yangon Region. It uses Yadanar offshore natural gas to power the two 25 MW Hitachi H-25 gas turbines to provide the electricity needed to swiftly develop the SEZ. In addition, the two turbines each utilize Japanese water injection technology to boost generation by 5 MW within a short period of time without using up extra natural gas.

This project was initiated in 2015 using US\$126 million acquired from the Japan ODA Loan. Construction of the plant was completed in 2016. The Thil-



Union Minister U Win Khaing inspects a power plant during his tour of inspection in Yangon yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

awa power plant provides electricity to the national power grid via the 230 KV Kamanat power line and the 230 KV Thanlyin power line. It also provides 33 KV to Thilawa SEZ via 12 feeders and 33 KV to Kyauktan Township.

Afterwards, the union min-

ister and entourage arrived at the Thakayta power plant, gave instructions as necessary, and inspected the power plant.

The TM-2500 mobile power plant generates 25 MW and was initiated by the Yangon Region Government using K30 billion from the President's special

funds in 2017. The Yangon Electricity Supply Corporation handed responsibility of the project who began fully operating the mobile power plant to supplement the peak load in the summer after accomplishing successful test runs in 2018. — MNA (Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

Ministry of Health and Sports coordinates City Cancer Challenge

UNION MINISTER for Health and Sports, Dr. Myint Htwe, attended a presentation on C/Can2025; City Cancer Challenge Yangon City, held at Chatrium Hotel in Yangon yesterday.

The City Cancer Challenge is a collaboration between the ministry and The Union for International Cancer Control (UICC).

Speaking at the event, the Union Minister said there are many cancer deaths around the world, adding that there are many cancer patients and cancer deaths in Myanmar as well.

He said we must work towards pain reduction for cancer patients and early prevention of cancer. Global Can has predicted the number of cancer patients around the world will increase but we must work together in all relevant sectors to prevent the predictions from coming true and to reduce cancer rates in our country.

The union minister said the key messages of the cancer reduction initiative can be found on the Ministry of Health and Sports' website and social network pages.

We must acquire the support of the Union Government to enforce restriction on food and other items that can lead to cancer, such as prohibiting the sale of cigarettes and tobacco leaves near schools and banning sales of these items to children under 18, said the Union Minister.

He said work has begun on compiling the national Cancer Registry and will allow further understanding of cancer occurrences and systematic purchase of medicine and medical equipment to combat it. He said we must analyze the present situ-

ation and make changes to the process in accord to the registry while laying down priority tasks.

Next, Dr. Rolando Camacho, Senior Special Advisor to City Cancer Challenge, delivered some remarks. He explained that UICC began the City Cancer Challenge two years ago by collaborating with the government of major cities, organizations from the private sector, philanthropic organizations, INGOs and NGOs. He said they are implementing the program in four major cities in Myanmar, including Yangon, to transform them into key learning cities and a role model to implement in the rest of the major cities around the world.

Afterwards, Prof. Dr. Ye Mya, Chairman of the Working Committee on Yangon City Cancer Challenge Program, explained Yangon's involvement in the program. This was followed by Laura Solia Shellaby, Lead of City Health Financing LabMs of UICC, explaining the City Cancer Challenge Global Program, and Dr. Aung Naing Soe, Project Manager for Yangon City Cancer Challenge of UICC, explaining the process concerning the program.

Next, attendees asked questions to the officials and participated in discussions. — MNA (Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

5th Japan Myanmar Festival held

THE 5th Japan Myanmar Pwe Taw (festival) was held at Thuwunna Bumi Event Park in Yangon yesterday, with the aim of exchanging Japan-Myanmar friendship cultures.

State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi sent a video message to the festival, saying that Japan-Myanmar friendship is like cherry flowers which faithfully blossomed every year freshly and beautifully.

Japanese Ambassador to Myanmar, officials and Japan-Myanmar business persons were present at the festival. In the Japan-Myanmar friendship festival, traditional items, clothing and foods of Japan and Myanmar were sold.

Artists from Japan Nat-sukawa Rimi and Morisaki Win entertained the public, along with Myanmar artists, Bunny Phyo, G Fatt, Ni Ni Khin Zaw, Ah Moon, Pan Yaung Chel, Chan Myae Mg Cho and Project K band.

The aim of the festival is to cement mutual understanding, to strengthen Japan-Myanmar friendship, and to exchange traditional culture and customs of the two nations. — Kyaw Zeya (MNTV)/ Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun



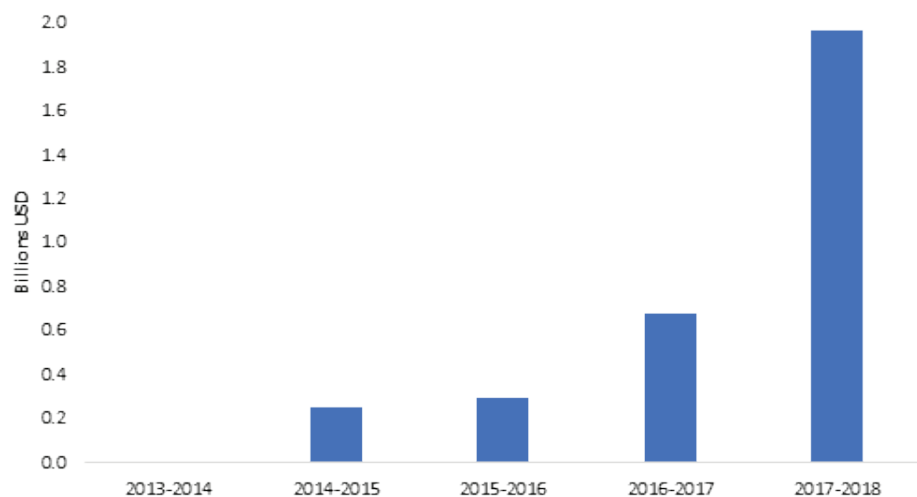
Union Minister Dr. Myint Htwe addresses the City Cancer Challenge Yangon City at Chatrium Hotel in Yangon yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

Press Release

CBM is introducing the market-based Reference Exchange Rate starting from February 5, 2019, which is simply a snapshot of actual market rates for the given day

THE CBM is currently setting the Reference Exchange Rate based on the cut-off rate of its two-way foreign exchange auction, which was introduced in 2012, in order to facilitate the development of the foreign exchange market. The two-way foreign exchange auction worked well to help foreign exchange market development and price discovery. The size of the interbank market increased from just USD 0.01 billion in 2013-2014 financial year to USD 2 billion in 2017-2018 financial year and continues developing (see Figure 1). Therefore, the Central Bank of Myanmar is moving forward to a new step of development: to determine Reference Exchange Rate as market-based weighted average rate in line with the international best practices of the central banks.

Figure 1: Interbank Foreign Exchange Market volume by financial years



The Reference Exchange Rate of the Myanmar Kyat against the U.S. Dollar will be calculated as the volume weighted average exchange rate of interbank and bank-customer deals during the day.

The CBM will also change publication time of Reference Exchange Rate to 4:00 PM, when all data for the day is available. In the current system, the CBM uses last business day's weighted average rate to set reference rate in the morning, which can create misalignment from current market exchange rate, especially after long holidays or weekends. New mechanism will help to avoid this misalignment, as reference rate will be published in the same day.

To promote public awareness, the CBM will change reference rate publication form on the first page of its website, where public can see interbank and bank-customer market exchange rates and market weighted average rate, which will be same as reference rate (see table 1).

Table 1: Example of Reference Exchange Rate publication form on the first page of the CBM website

Weighted-average (WA) Market Exchange Rate MMK per USD - Date: 29 th Jan 2019	
Reference Exchange Rate (WA market rate)	1521.9
Interbank Market WA Rate	1521.7
Bank-customers Market WA Rate	1522.3

- CBM announces daily Reference Exchange Rate every working day at 4:00 PM, based on deals between 9:00 AM and 3:00 PM.
- Methodology on determination of Reference Exchange Rate is available [here](#)
- MMK Exchange rate for other currencies are available here (forex.cbm.gov.mm)

The Central Bank of Myanmar also calculates and publishes the Reference Exchange Rates of other foreign currencies of Myanmar Kyat (cross-exchange rates), which will be determined according to the rate on international markets or the issuer country's domestic interbank foreign exchange market.

It should be noted that the Reference Exchange Rate is an indicative (not obligatory) rate. Participants in the foreign exchange market are not required to use it in their foreign exchange transactions. To settle Customs obligations, accounting and for statistical purposes, the Reference Exchange Rate of the previous day can be used.

To increase data availability for the public, the CBM will publish new data on daily Nominal Effective Exchange Rate (NEER) and monthly Real Effective Exchange Rate (REER).

One of the objectives of the CBM's foreign exchange operations is to smooth excessive short-term volatility of the exchange rate. Therefore, the CBM is working to develop foreign exchange operations to better serve this objective and dampen excessive volatility in the market as needed. The CBM will communicate more details about the new instrument as necessary.

The Central Bank of Myanmar

Dy Minister for Information inspects school textbooks at Photolitho Printing Press, meets with GNLM staff in Ygn

DEPUTY MINISTER for Information U Aung Hla Tun inspected the printing of school textbooks at the Photolitho Printing Press and met with the editorial team of the Global New Light of Myanmar at Ngahtetgyi Pagoda Road in Bahan Township yesterday.

The deputy minister arrived at Photolitho Printing Press, which is part of the Printing and Publishing Department, at 1 pm and inspected the printing of school text books for the 2019-2020 academic year.

In the meeting room at the factory, the Director-General of the Printing and Publishing Department and officials reported on work performed

in the factory.

After hearing the report, the Deputy Minister held discussions with officials of the Ministry of Information and Ministry of Education about the completion of the printing of school textbooks in a timely manner and while meeting the set standards, along with work site safety, measures to be taken for security in the factory and preparing for disasters. Also discussed was the planning for an around-the-clock power supply, transporting school textbooks to schools nationwide without damaging them and ensuring they arrive on schedule, and offering access to the Information Ministry's Shwe Thwe journals

for school children. The printing of the school textbooks for the 2019-2020 Academic Year is currently carried out by the Ministry of Information and Ministry of Education.

Following the meeting, the deputy minister visited the Global New Light of Myanmar, a joint-venture daily, and met with the editorial team and newspaper staff.

At the meeting, the deputy minister discussed with the editorial team the issues of newsworthiness, quality and maintaining flawless standards at the newspaper, along with coordination to ensure fulfilling the needs of the staff.—MNA

(Translated by GNLM)



Deputy Minister U Aung Hla Tun inspects printing of school textbooks at the Photolitho Printing Press in Yangon yesterday. PHOTO: MNA



Deputy Minister U Aung Hla Tun meeting with staff of the Global New Light of Myanmar in Yangon yesterday. PHOTO: MNA

Unity can be achieved with political foresight

MYANMAR has witnessed two significant events in its long and unique history in the month of February. On 12 February, the Panglong Agreement was signed after a mutual agreement was reached with ethnic leaders to ensure freedom across the highlands and central Myanmar. On 13 February falls the birth anniversary of Bogyoke Aung San, the leader who opposed colonialism and fascism and led the charge for independence. Bogyoke's birth anniversary is also commemorated as Children's Day.

Bogyoke Aung San took on the mantle of a national leader at quite a young age. Since his schooldays, he had cherished a wish for national independence, which he carried throughout his life. Bogyoke Aung San's achievements were many, and he was known by several monikers and held many titles — Student Council Leader Ko Aung San, Dobama Asiayone Thakin Aung San, the founder of Myanmar's Tatmadaw (known colloquially as the father of the Tatmadaw), and President of the Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League.

What we all need to understand now is we are living in an age where no country can remain indifferent to the rest of the world. All nations must learn to coexist and interact with each other.

combining the strength of Indochina, Indonesia, and other Eastern countries. While we cannot be on friendly terms with the British in a master-and-servant type of relationship, I hope we can be partners in an equal and free world."

We can see a glimmer of U Aung San's political foresight from this excerpt. His idea to work hand in hand with the countries of the world, right as the Second World War ended, echoes a very modern concept on unity that parallels the ASEAN and EU's organizational integrity.

His thoughts on internal politics were astute as well. "While there will be minor differences in beliefs and perspectives, it is every national's duty to rally together and drive back foreign oppressors, even at the cost of one's life," he said.

"When we go into battle, our commanding officer may be a Kayin, Kachin, or any ethnic national, but we must obey them all the same," said Bogyoke Aung San.

In the same spirit as our beloved Bogyoke, we earnestly request all entities working towards peace and reconciliation in Myanmar to have the foresight and love for our nation as the architect of our independence had in his heart.



Eternal spirit and strength of Panglong

By Yay Chan (Mann)

THE Union Day which falls on 12 February 2019 (Tuesday) is the 72nd anniversary of the signing of the Panglong Agreement by General Aung San and ethnic leaders, with the resolution of living in equality and unity of the people.

In accordance with the speech General Aung San had delivered at the London meeting to take the opinion of the people of the hill regions, preparations were made to hold the Panglong Conference in February 1947. Following their discussions, which they held till 11 February 1947, leaders of hill regions and General Aung San made a resolution to restore independence together.

The representatives of Kachin, Chin and Shan ethnic races together with General Aung San signed the Panglong Agreement, with the united and firm spirit of joining hands together for the emergence of an independent State, at 10 am on 12 February that year. It is a milestone in the history.

General Aung San, representing the Myanmar government, Shan chieftains and public representatives of Kachin and Chin states, totaling 23 attended the Panglong Conference and signed the Agreement. The Border Investigation Committee, formed after the Panglong Agreement was signed, toured from Myitkyina to Loikaw.

The dark period

According to history, the Third Anglo-Myanmar War broke out after the colonialists declared war on Myanmar on 11 November 1885. On 14 November, the combined colonialist force of nearly 10,000 soldiers under the command of Maj-Gen Prendergast sailed on Ayeyawady River on board 47 ships of Irrawaddy Flotilla, and passed Thayet. The war lasted only 14 days till King Thibaw was dethroned. King Thibaw and Queen Suphaya Latt were deported at 5.45 pm on 29 November 1885 onboard the Thuriya vessel.

From that time on, Myanmar fell under rule of a western power. The colonialist's initial military policy (1885-1890) was:

- (1) to exile the Myanmar king
- (2) to put the whole country totally under their control
- (3) to end the race and the monarchy



A monument celebrating the sense of national unity enshrined in the Panglong Agreement. Photo: L Sai

It was a time the whole country was suffering from pain and agony. About that fact, well-known monk portrayed the intense feelings of the whole country in his poem.

The Union

Human race first began to evolve thousands of years ago on the land now called Myanmar. Nationalities settled down in areas along the banks of Ayeyawady, on the Shan hills and other places. They then migrated to other places of the country, living in the length and breath of the Union as Kachin, Kayah, Kayin, Chin, Mon, Myanmar, Rakhine and Shan ethnic races.

Bagan, which is dotted with large number pagodas, Inwa, Shwebo, Amarapura, Yadanabon (Mandalay), Toungoo and Bago stood as the royal capitals of Myanmar, where Buddhism flourished, in history.

Noblemen, powerful kings, wise court ministers and brilliant generals appeared in Myanmar since Bagan era. Some of them are renowned internationally.

Gallant Myanmar leaders, who cherished the religion, cultural traditions, had defended the country against alien invasion during the respective periods. Sadly, during the time of King Thibaw, the 11th monarchy

of Konbaung dynasty, Myanmar fell under colonialist rule for certain reasons.

Before the Panglong Agreement

The efforts to achieve the Panglong Agreement always are milestone in the history of independence struggle of the Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League (AFPFL) under the leadership of General Aung San. The then military administrative bodies tried to crush General Aung San and the AFPFL through violent means. But Lord Mountbatten, the then military chief, understood well that the arrest of General Aung San would surely be met with strong public resistance.

The confrontation between the AFPFL and Governor Dorman-Smith lasted for about a year. At last, Dorman-Smith had to go back to his country on 14-6-1946 in accord with the public call for his resignation and departure. The AFPFL launched a campaign to rally public participation in the general strike in September. All employees of the road transport, inland water transport, saw mill workers, dockyard workers, communications employees, government employees and even the police force, which was the bastion of the colonialists, took part in the strike that thundered all around the country.

Ultimatum for independence

On 27-9-1947, Chairman of AFPFL General Aung San entered the executive body of the governor and formed the cabinet. The Sir Paw Tun government, a colonial stooge, fell. An accord was reached to give General Aung San a prime minister level post and to form an interim government. General Aung San declared to regain independence within a year.

The executive body of the AFPFL issued an important statement on 8 November 1946, demanding the colonialist government to give a definite answer in connection with the independence of Myanmar not later than 31 Jan-

The efforts to achieve the Panglong Agreement always are milestone in the history of independence struggle of the Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League (AFPFL) under the leadership of General Aung San.

San was invited to hold talks in London, and Sir Gibert Laithwaite, the permanent secretary of the British Foreign Ministry, was dispatched to Yangon to explain the matter. So, the rays of hope for independence started to beam as aspired by the AFPFL under the leadership of General Aung San and the entire people.

As a public leader, General Aung San made preparations for the prevailing and future situations according to his vision, before leaving for London. He went to Taunggyi and Loikaw in Shan State on 23 December 1946, held talks with local leaders and held public meetings.

The promise of General Aung San

The executive body of Myanmar governor declared its acceptance of the invitation of the British government under the approval of AFPFL on 26-12-1946. A 16-member delegation under the leadership of General Aung San was then formed.

The delegation held talks with the British government at noon on 13-1-1947. In his response to the greetings extended by Prime Minister Attlee, General Aung San said that Myanmar people aspired independence; that as for him independence means freedom for every part of the country including the frontier areas of ethnics such as Kayin, Kachin, Shan and Kayinni; that in his view Myanmar should be granted independence within a year starting from that date. He exactly represented the desire of the people.

General Aung San endeavored for the independence for the entire Myanmar including the plains and hill regions, with all-out efforts, goodwill and brilliant leadership abilities. At the same time, he was striving hard to attain the united strength of the ethnic peoples of hill regions.

The people of Myanmar including youths and students cherish and remember the struggles of General Aung San and the AFPFL government, leaders, the Panglong Agreement, and the public support and involvement in the independence struggles. They too should also safeguard the nation.

On this 72nd Anniversary Day of Independence, I pray for the ever flourishing of the value of the independence and Panglong spirit and strength, the essence of the Union, in the hearts of all the people of Myanmar.

A team led by General Aung

72nd Anniversary (2019) Union Day National Objectives

1. All ethnic nationals to work with collective strength for non-disintegration of the Union, non-disintegration of national unity, perpetuation of national sovereignty; and to work for preservation and protection of the above.
2. To strive for the emergence of a Constitution that is in alignment and harmony with the Democratic Federal Union.
3. To strive for the success of the Union Peace Conference – 21st Century Panglong and thence till the success of the internal peace process.
4. All union nationals to cooperate and work in "Unity and Harmony" for rule of law and for the people to be secure and free from danger.
5. All union citizens to be able to enjoy good education and adequate health care protection.



Myanmar Daily Weather Report (Issued at 7:00 pm Sunday 3rd February, 2019)

BAY INFERENCE: Weather is generally fair over the North Bay and a few cloud to partly cloudy over the Andaman Sea and elsewhere in the Bay of Bengal.

FORECAST VALID UNTIL AFTERNOON OF THE 4th February, 2019: Rain is likely to be isolated in Taninthayi Region. Degree of certainty is (60%). Weather will be partly cloudy in Upper Sagaing Region, Kachin 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 off and along Myanmar Coasts.

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Likelihood of isolated rain in Taninthayi Region.

FORECAST FOR NAYPYITAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 4th February, 2019: Generally fair weather.

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 4th February, 2019: Generally fair weather.

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 4th February, 2019: Generally fair weather.

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Foreign businesses fret as China fast-tracks investment law

BEIJING (China)—China is fast-tracking a foreign investment law at an unprecedented pace to meet Washington's demands on trade, but businesses fear that time to review and raise objections on a crucial piece of legislation has been cut short. The law will eliminate the requirement for foreign enterprises to transfer proprietary technology to Chinese joint-venture partners. It also includes other steps to level the business playing field that Western trading partners have long demanded. China's parliament is expected to vote on the legislation in March—barely two months after debating a first draft. "It is indeed unprecedented that the bill is being moved by the NPC (National People's Congress) at such a fast pace," Wang Jiangyu, an expert on Chinese law at the National University of Singapore, told AFP. "Normally it would take one to three years for a bill to be passed and signed into law."

Foreign businesses worry the draft glosses over details and that vague language leaves room for broad interpretation. For example, it gives China the right to expropriate foreign investment "for the public interest", which foreign business groups fear could be abused.

Ticking clock

A draft law was first published for comment in 2015 but was quickly shelved until it re-



The clock is ticking on a 1 March US-set deadline for China to address trade concerns and avert an escalation in their tariff war. PHOTO: AFP

surfaced late last year, Wang said. It was only submitted to China's rubber-stamp legislature for a first reading on December 23, and made available for public comment until 24 February.

The top decision-making body of the legislature convened a special two-day session this past Tuesday to debate another "updated version", state news agency Xinhua reported. The law will probably be approved during the parliament's roughly 10-day annual session which opens on 5 March, Wang said. The clock is ticking on a 1 March US-set dead-

line for China to address trade concerns and avert an escalation in their tariff war. "What we feel with this piece of legislation is that it's been squeezed between the normal legal process and the negotiation table (to defuse) the trade conflict," the president of the EU Chamber of Commerce in China, Mats Harborn, told AFP.

"In our view this is a little unfortunate because this is an important piece of legislation that will have an effect... on all foreign companies." Both the EU and American chambers of commerce in China said they rushed

to submit feedback from members this week.

Falling short

Although the legislation covers several pain points highlighted by US President Donald Trump including safeguarding foreign capital from government "interference", it falls short in other key areas, the business lobbies said. "The current draft law is high-level and general" and requires more detailed guidelines and implementing measures, the American Chamber of Commerce in Beijing wrote in its feedback

report, a summary of which was seen by AFP.

The December version debated by lawmakers is considerably shorter—by over 130 fewer articles—than the previous 2015 draft. A section describing how the government will scrutinise foreign investments for potential national security concerns is limited to two sentences in the December version—simply stating that China would establish a review process and that decisions would be made according to law.

The earlier version had a beefy five-page chapter detailing how companies could appeal security rulings, plus examples of factors that could trigger a security review, said Jacob Parker, vice president of China operations at the US-China Business Council.

But the latest draft stipulates that all national security review decisions are final, implying no administrative or legal appeals were possible.

Both the EU and American trade chambers are also urging China to consider having a single Company Law to govern both foreign and domestic enterprises, as is common in many countries.

"It's now time to make sure that all companies are seen as making the same positive contribution to China when it comes to growth, employment, taxes, R&D and so on. There shouldn't be a distinction based on where the investment comes from," Harborn said.—AFP ■

Iraq and Jordan launch oil, trade deals

BAGHDAD (Iraq)—Iraq resumed oil deliveries to neighbouring Jordan on Saturday as the premiers of both countries met along their shared border as part of a bid to boost trade.

Iraqi Prime Minister Adel Abdel Mahdi met with his Jordanian counterpart Omar al-Razzaz at the Trebil border crossing, referred to as Al-Karameh in Jordan, which reopened in August 2017.

The only crossing between the two countries was shuttered in 2014 as the Islamic State group swept across Iraq, but was reopened after Iraqi forces pushed back the jihadists. Baghdad declared victory against IS in late 2017.

On Saturday, the two sides agreed that Iraq would provide Jordan with 10,000 barrels of crude a day transported by truck from oil-rich Kirkuk province, Jordan's official Petra news agency said.

Transport costs would be taken into account under the deal, according to Petra, and the possibility of Baghdad granting discounts to Amman has upset some Iraqis.

Amman is pushing to meet its hydrocarbon

needs through a pipeline project that would connect Basra on the southern tip of Iraq with the Jordanian port of Aqaba.

The two countries said Saturday they had begun studying its construction.

In January, Jordanian King Abdullah II made his second trip to Baghdad in more than a decade after a flurry of meetings between senior officials of both countries.

For its part, Iraq is looking for solutions to its chronic electricity shortages. To secure an exemption from US sanctions on Iran, Baghdad has announced plans to curb its reliance on electricity supplied by Tehran and buy power from Jordan, Turkey and Kuwait. The two premiers agreed Saturday that Jordan would begin providing electricity to Iraq "in less than two years", according to Petra.

The two sides also agreed to lift Iraqi taxes on hundreds of Jordanian products, and to establish a joint industrial zone along the border, according to statement issued by the prime minister's office.—AFP ■

China's heavy truck sales remain robust in January

BEIJING—China's heavy truck manufacturers reported strong sales last month, pointing to continued vitality in the broader economy.

Some 96,000 heavy-duty trucks were sold in January in China, up 16 per cent from a month ago, according to cvworld.cn, an auto industry information service provider.

The performance was satisfactory as it remained high and notched the second-best January in recent years, although moderating from the same period a year ago.

Heavy truck sales are

highly related to the economic climate in China and usually in line with major economic indicators, such as the purchasing managers' index (PMI).

The manufacturing PMI came in at 49.5 in January, slightly up from 49.4 in December, the National Bureau of Statistics said earlier this week.

Analysts believe a stable economy, truck upgrades of transport companies and stricter environmental rules contributed to the vigorous heavy truck market.—Xinhua

Protesters mass in Venezuela, for and against Maduro

CARACAS (Venezuela) — Protesters flowed into the streets of Caracas on Saturday, with flags and placards, many to support opposition leader Juan Guaidó's calls for democratic elections and others to back embattled President Nicolas Maduro.

Carrying Venezuelan flags and blowing horns and whistles, Guaidó's supporters planned to converge on the European Union headquarters in eastern Caracas from five staging areas around the city.

The EU and major European powers have given Ma-

duro until Sunday to call "free elections" or they will recognize Guaidó, the head of the opposition-controlled National Assembly, as the crisis-torn country's acting president.

Underscoring the high stakes, a Venezuelan air force general announced on Saturday he rejected Maduro's "dictatorial" authority and pledged his allegiance to Guaidó, in a video posted on social media.

The pro-Maduro forces were rallying in the western side of the city to mark the 20th anniversary of the rise of power of the late Hugo Chavez, the leftist firebrand who installed a socialist government.

Maduro, Chavez's hand-picked successor, is facing the most serious challenge to his legitimacy yet, with the United States, Canada and nearly a dozen Latin American countries piling on pressure for his removal from office.

Hundreds of members of a civilian militia, public workers and people who have benefitted from the government's social programmes began to concentrate in the downtown Avenida Bolivar in a show of support for their beleaguered leader.

Although the rally was called by Maduro, it was not known if he would attend.

If he does, it would be the first time he has appeared in public since 4 August, when he claimed to have been the target of an exploding drone at a military parade in Caracas.



Opposition leader Juan Guaidó (bottom-C) delivers a speech before thousands of supporters, in Caracas on 2 February, 2019. PHOTO: AFP

UK's May says she is "armed with fresh" Brexit mandate



A video grab from footage broadcast by the UK Parliament's Parliamentary Recording Unit (PRU) shows Britain's Prime Minister Theresa May as she speaks during the weekly Prime Minister's Questions (PMQs) in the House of Commons in London on 30 January, 2019. PHOTO: AFP

LONDON (United Kingdom) — British Prime Minister Theresa May said on Sunday she would be "armed with a fresh mandate and new ideas" when she meets European Union negotiators over her Brexit deal. EU officials have insisted that the deal is not open for renegotiation. But May wrote in the Sunday Telegraph that she would be "battling for Britain and Northern Ireland" in her efforts to get rid of the agreement's unpopular backstop provision.

"If we stand together and speak with one voice, I believe we can find the right way forward," she said. The backstop is intended to ensure there is no return to a hard border with Ireland, but Brexit supporters fear it will keep Britain tied to the EU's customs rules. MPs voted last week to send May back to Brussels to renegotiate the clause, suggesting her deal would then be able to pass after it was roundly rejected in parliament last month.

"I am now confident there is a route that can secure a ma-

majority in the House of Commons for leaving the EU with a deal," she wrote.

"When I return to Brussels I will be battling for Britain and Northern Ireland, I will be armed with a fresh mandate, new ideas and a renewed determination to agree a pragmatic solution". The EU insists that the deal "remains the best and only way to ensure an orderly withdrawal," but with the clock running down until the March 29 exit date the risks of a no-deal Brexit for both Britain and the bloc are coming into sharp focus. May said opposition leader Jeremy Corbyn "also believes the potential indefinite nature of the backstop is an issue", and that the EU has "already accepted the principle of 'alternative arrangements' superseding the backstop should it ever be required." The backstop would kick in if Britain and the EU have not agreed a trade deal on their future relationship after a time-limited transition period of up to two years.— AFP ■

'Yellow vests' hit German streets in pro-diesel protest

FRANKFURT AM MAIN (Germany)— Hundreds of people demonstrated on Saturday in Stuttgart, the bastion of Germany's car industry, against a recent driving ban on older diesels, wearing yellow vests to match protesters in France whose movement began as a reaction to proposed fuel hikes. Since 1 January, only diesel vehicles meeting the Euro 5 emissions standard are allowed into Stuttgart, home of Mercedes-Benz maker Daimler, Volkswagen subsidiary Porsche and the world's biggest car parts supplier Bosch. The demonstrators held banners saying "Pro-diesel" and "Diesel drivers mobilise" as they gathered outside a car emissions centre. "What's happening to people is unjust," joint organiser Vasilos Topalis

told AFP.

"Tens of thousands of people are affected and can't afford to buy a new car" following the court-ordered ban, he added.

Environmental organizations last year took to the courts to push through similar driving bans in many German cities where emissions exceed European Union limits. Judges ordered Berlin, Mainz, Hamburg and Bonn to limit some diesels' access, while parts of a motorway near Essen will be closed to the cars.

In response, the Stuttgart organizers have asked people to hit the streets clad in the yellow high-visibility vests that have defined months of protests in France— themselves triggered by an increase in tax on diesel.—AFP ■

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Tokyo, Beijing agree to step up preparations for Xi's visit to Japan

BEIJING—Japan and China agreed on Saturday to accelerate preparations for Chinese President Xi Jinping's visit to Japan later this year, as the two nations have pledged to promote reciprocal visits by their leaders, a Japanese government official said.

At their meeting in Beijing, Japanese Senior Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs Takeo Mori and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi confirmed Xi's visit to Japan would be "the most important schedule" this year for the two countries, the official

said. But the official told reporters that Mori and Wang did not touch on a specific timeframe of the Chinese president's visit.

If realized, Xi would become the first Chinese president to make an official trip to Japan since May 2008, when Hu Jintao, Xi's predecessor, did so as a state guest. Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe has invited Xi to visit Japan on the occasion of the Group of 20 summit in Osaka in June.

At a summit with Abe in Beijing last October, Xi said he would "seriously" consider visit-

ing Japan, with both expressing willingness to promote high-level reciprocal visits. Sino-Japanese ties have been improving recently as 2018 marked the 40th anniversary of the signing and entering into force of the Treaty of Peace and Friendship between Japan and China.

In May 2018, Chinese Premier Li Keqiang visited Japan for the first time since he became China's head of government in 2013. Prior to that, the last Chinese premier to make an official visit to Japan was Wen Jiabao in 2011. —AFP ■

China opposes US withdrawal from INF

BEIJING (China)—China on Saturday said it opposes the US decision to withdraw from a landmark Cold War nuclear missile treaty and urged Washington and Russia to hold "constructive" discussions.

Moscow and Washington have long accused the other of violating the key Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces agreement, which was signed in 1987 and resolved a crisis over Soviet missiles.

The US has said a new Russian medium-range missile system breaches the INF Treaty and on Saturday President Donald Trump said the country was suspending its obligations under the treaty—a move mirrored shortly after by Moscow.

"China is opposed to the US withdrawal and urges the US and Russia to properly resolve differences through constructive dialogue," Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Geng Shuang said in a statement.

Geng warned the US decision could trigger "a series of negative consequenc-

es," echoing warnings by both Russia and Europe that the pull out might lead to a new arms race.

Washington also has an eye on China as the INF pact restricts the United States, but not the rising Asian power.

US officials say that some 95 per cent of China's ballistic and cruise missiles—a core part of Beijing's defence strategy—would violate the INF treaty if China were a party to it.

Trump said the United States was suspending its obligations as of Saturday and starting a process to withdraw in six months. China's foreign ministry ruled out the possibility of negotiating a new multilateral pact that includes Beijing.

Brokered by US president Ronald Reagan with last Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, the treaty ended a superpower buildup of warheads that had frightened Europeans, banning ground-launched missiles with a range of 500 to 5,500 kilometres (around 300 to 3,400 miles). —AFP ■

Bomb threat shuts Australia international airport

SYDNEY (Australia)—One of Australia's busiest international airports was locked down after a man brandished a knife and made a bomb threat at a food court, prompting travellers to flee in panic, officials said on Sunday. Queensland state police said they evacuated Brisbane Airport's international terminal late Saturday after finding a "suspicious device" when they responded to reports of the 50-year-old man, who spoke Arabic, threatening a woman.

Terrorism was later ruled out as the cause and the man was charged with domestic violence offences, falsely claiming to destroy or damage an aviation facility, and making a hoax bomb threat. The device was found to be "inert", but Queensland Police Commissioner Ian Stewart said its

complex appearance "indicates just the extraordinary lengths that a person has gone to create perception of risk, threat and fear". The device looked like a small, black safe with wires sticking out of it, according to a photograph released by police.

The man, who was taken into custody by police, is due to face court on Monday. The terminal was reopened after two hours. There have been growing fears of terror-linked attacks by radicals inspired by Islamic State and other groups, with a foiled effort to target an Etihad flight with a crude bomb in Sydney in 2017. Canberra introduced sweeping new security laws last year that included allowing Australian police to conduct random identity checks at airports. —AFP ■

Indian train derails killing six

NEW DELHI (India)—At least six passengers were killed and more than 20 injured on Sunday after an express train derailed in eastern India's Bihar state, officials said. Nine coaches of the Delhi-bound Seemanchal Express came off the tracks early Sunday near Sahadai Buzurg station, about 30 kilometres (20 miles) east of the state capital Patna. "Six people have died and nearly 24 have been injured," Indian Railways spokesman Rajesh Kumar told AFP. Local television footage showed huge crowds gathered near the accident site as emergency workers cleared the upturned wagons. Rescue teams with sniffer dogs sifted through the damaged carriages looking for trapped passengers.

Most of the travellers were asleep when the train travelling at 55 kilometres (34 miles) an hour came off the tracks around 4:00 am (2230 GMT Saturday). "I was sleeping and suddenly there was a big bang and found myself under a pile of bags," passenger Mahesh Kumar told reporters. A "rail fracture" caused the accident, Indian Railways said in a statement after an initial investigation. The company promised a thorough probe of the accident, which came days after the Indian government said it had improved rail safety. Cash compensation of 500,000 rupees (\$7,000) would be given to the relatives of those killed, the railways ministry said. Railways minister Piyush Goyal on Friday had claimed to have improved rail safety after a series of deadly accidents spooked the country. Goyal told parliament that all unmanned rail crossing had been eliminated, one of the main causes of train collisions in India. India's railway network is the main form of long-distance transport, but has been lagging in improving its infrastructure, often leading to disasters. —AFP ■



National Disaster Response Force and police personnel along with onlookers stand next to derailed carriages after a train came off the tracks near Hajipur on the outskirts of Patna in India's eastern Bihar state on 3 February. PHOTO: AFP

'Once in a century' floods hit northeast Australia

SYDNEY (Australia)—Once in a century floods have turned streets into rivers and forced thousands to abandon their homes in northeast Australia, with authorities warning of further downpours over the next few days. Australia's tropical north experiences heavy rains during the monsoon season at this time of the year, but the recent deluge has surged far above normal levels. Thousands of residents in the city of Townsville in northeast Queensland were without power and up to 20,000 homes are at risk of being inundated if the rains continue. Military personnel were delivering tens of thousands of sandbags to affected locals, as Queensland Premier Anastacia Palaszczuk warned residents to be careful. "It's basically not just a one in 20-year event, it's a one in 100-year event," she told reporters on Saturday. The Bureau of Meteorology said a slow-moving monsoonal trough was sitting above northern Queensland state, with some areas expected to receive more than a year's worth of rain before conditions ease.

"We could see the rain intensify into early next week as the low... moves out to the Coral Sea," meteorologist Jonathan How told national broadcaster ABC on Sunday. The region receives an average of some 2,000 millimetres (6.5 feet) of rain annually but some towns were already on track to pass that total. The town of Ingham received 506 millimetres of rain in 24 hours between Saturday and Sunday, of which 145 millimetres fell in just one hour, bureau meteorologist Adam Blazak told AFP. —AFP ■

US thaws from Arctic deep freeze as death toll climbs

CHICAGO (United States)—A brutal cold spell that paralyzed the US Midwest, freezing water mains, causing power outages and canceling flights, eased on Friday, with forecasts predicting a rapid thaw. The two days of intense cold from the so-called polar vortex that descended on the US Midwest and Northeast will go down in memory for its scenes of winter at its most bitter.

Blocks of ice floated down the river that runs through downtown Chicago, the rushing waters of the Niagara Falls were frozen in some places, and half the Great Lakes were covered in ice. US media reported as many as 21 weather-related deaths since a snow storm hit the Midwest early in the



People walk in a park on the US side of the Niagara Falls on 31 January, 2019. PHOTO: AFP

week, followed by plunging temperatures on Wednesday and on Thursday. Temperature readings were nosing up on Friday and "will continue to moderate," the National Weather Service said. The

concern, though, turned to the threat of flooding and further stress on already strained infrastructure as the region thawed out. "In some areas of the Midwest, the coming wild temperature swing will

be the most extreme warm-up from record winter cold ever seen in such a short time period," Jeff Masters, meteorologist at Weather Underground, told AFP. — AFP ■

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Announcement of Changing Company Name

We are pleased to announce that ARS CHEMICAL (THAILAND) CO., LTD., who is a manufacturer of insecticides and air fresheners in Thailand has changed its name to EARTH (THAILAND) CO., LTD. (Registration No. in Thailand 0105527022270) on 17th January, 2018. Its address and business purposes are remaining unchanged.

EARTH (THAILAND) CO., LTD.
Human Resources & General Affair Department
25 Bangkok Insurance/Y.W.C.A. Building, 30th Fl.,
South Sathorn Road, Tungmahamek, Sathorn
Bangkok 10120
Phone +66 2286 7117

EIA Study of M9 West Appraisal and Exploration Drilling Campaign in Block M9, Offshore Myanmar

PTTEP International Limited (PTTEPI) plans to conduct new appraisal and exploration drilling campaign in western part of Block M9 to discover gas resources and evaluate the feasibility of gas production in the future. The drilling campaign consists of 10 appraisal and exploration wells in Block M9 which is located in the Gulf of Moattama, offshore Myanmar. It is approximately 300 km from Yangon and 230 km from Dawei. The tentative plan for commencement will be in Q2 2019.

PTTEPI with third party EIA consultants, International Environmental Management Co. Ltd (IEM) and Environmental Quality Management Co. Ltd (EQM), are currently undertaking an EIA Study which includes associated stakeholder engagement. The Scoping Report has been approved by Environmental Conservation Department (ECD) and EIA will be conducted in accordance with the Myanmar EIA Procedure (2015).

More information about the proposed activity can be found on PTTEPI's website as follows: www.pttep.com.

Questions and comments can also be submitted to PTTEPI in writing by contacting the following e-mail address: TinNilarSoe@pttep.com

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V AS FIONA VOY. NO. (005 W/E)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V AS FIONA VOY. NO. (005 W/E) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 04-02-2019 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T.T/A.I.P.T where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S REGIONAL CONTAINER
LINES

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V OLYMPIA VOY. NO. (904S)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V OLYMPIA VOY. NO. (904S) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 04-02-2019 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T.T/M.I.P where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

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

Phone No: 2301185

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M.V LE HE

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

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

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'Roma' wins best Latin American film award at Spain's Goyas

SEVILLE (Spain)—Mexican film "Roma", which is tipped for Oscars glory, was on Saturday named best Latin American picture at the Goyas, the main Spanish film awards held in Seville.

Shot in black and white by Academy Award-winning filmmaker Alfonso Cuaron, "Roma" has already won the Golden Lion at Venice, two Golden Globes and four awards at the Critics' Choice Awards.

Set in Mexico City in the 1970s, it has 10 nominations for the 91st Academy Awards to be held in Hollywood on 24 February.

The 33rd Goya Awards' best picture went to "Campeones" (Champions), by director Javier Fesser, Spain's most successful film last year.

Rodrigo Sorogoyen took the best director award for his political thriller "El Reino" (The Realm) and the best actor gong went to Antonio de la Torre in the same film, while Susi Sanchez took the best actress award for her role in "La enfermedad del domingo" (Sunday's Illness).—AFP ■



Director Alfonso Cuarón (c) poses with the Nomination Medallion for Outstanding Directorial Achievement in Feature Film for "Roma", with actresses Marina de Távira (l) and Yalitza Aparicio in the press room during the 71st Annual Directors Guild of America (DGA) Awards at the Ray Dolby Ballroom in Hollywood on 2 February, 2019. **PHOTO: AFP**

'Guardians of the Galaxy Vol 3' definitely on the cards, says Chris Pratt



'Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 3'. **PHOTO: PTI**

LOS ANGELES—Chris Pratt has promised the "Guardians of the Galaxy" fans that the third film in the franchise will surely see light of the day.

The future of the threequel took a hit after Disney sacked director James Gunn from "Guardians of the Galaxy: Vol 3" last July when his old offensive tweets resurfaced on social media.

Gunn was in the middle of writing the script for the third film when he was fired from the job.

Pratt assured the fans that the movie will

happen.

"I promise there'll be a third movie, I don't know exactly what that's going to look like, but I know everyone on board is just eager to give the fans what they want and wrap up a trilogy in a meaningful way," he said.

"We're still circling the city of Jericho, I like to say," he added. The actor, who plays Peter Quill/Star-Lord in the series, was speaking on the sidelines of the "Lego Movie 2" premiere.—PTI ■

Chinese Film Festival kicks off in Sri Lanka

COLOMBO—A five-day Chinese Film Festival kicked off in Sri Lanka's capital Colombo on Friday evening to celebrate the Chinese New Year and the 70th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China.

The film festival was organized by the National Film Corporation of Sri Lanka in collaboration with the Chinese Embassy in Sri Lanka.

General Manager of the National Film Corporation of Sri Lanka Nimal Abeywardena said the Chinese Film Festival was being hosted for the fourth consecutive year and with China having a vast film industry, Sri Lanka hoped to come into a mutual agreement to air more Chinese films in theaters islandwide.

"We hope to show Chinese films in our local theaters throughout the year," Abeywardena said.

During the festival, seven Chinese films will be aired at the National Film Corporation till 6 February.

China's Ambassador to Sri Lanka Cheng Xueyuan said at the opening ceremony that within the past three years, the Chinese Film Festival had attracted over 4,000 people in the island country.

"The embassy will continue to work with the Sri Lankan sides to promote professional and technical exchange and cooperation in the film field between our two countries," Cheng said.

The films shown at the festival this year will feature love story, action, fantasy, suspense and environment.—Xinhua ■

Japanese anime film "Mirai" wins Annie award



Scene from Mamoru Hosoda's film "Mirai". **PHOTO: KYODO**

LOS ANGELES—Mamoru Hosoda's film "Mirai" won the Best Animated Independent Feature category at the 46th annual Annie Awards on Saturday.

"Mirai" depicts a young boy who happens upon a magical garden, enabling him to travel through time and encounter relatives from different eras, guided by his little sister from the future.

Organized by the interna-

tional animated film society, or ASIFA-Hollywood, the Annie Awards are considered one of the highest accolades in the animation production industry.

The Best Animated Independent Feature category of the award covers animation films with smaller distribution than major studio releases, shown at fewer than 1,000 theaters in the United States.—Kyodo News ■

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‘Inkjet’ solar panels poised to revolutionise green energy

WROCLAW (Poland)—What if one day all buildings could be equipped with windows and facades that satisfy the structure’s every energy need, whether rain or shine?

That sustainability dream is today one step closer to becoming a reality thanks to Polish physicist and businesswoman Olga Malinkiewicz. The 36-year-old has developed a novel inkjet processing method for perovskites—a new generation of cheaper solar cells—that makes it possible to produce solar panels under lower temperatures, thus sharply reducing costs. Indeed, perovskite technology is on track to revolutionise access to solar power for all, given its surprising physical properties, some experts say.

“In our opinion, perovskite solar cells have the potential to address the world energy poverty,” said Mohammad Khaja Nazeeruddin, a professor at Switzerland’s Federal Institute of Technology Lausanne, an institution on the cutting-edge of solar energy research. Solar panels coated with the mineral are light, flexible, efficient, inexpensive and come in varying hues and degrees of transparency. They can easily be fixed to almost any surface—

be it laptop, car, drone, spacecraft or building—to produce electricity, including in the shade or indoors. Though the excitement is new, perovskite has been known to science since at least the 1830s, when it was first identified by German mineralogist Gustav Rose while prospecting in the Ural mountains and named after Russian mineralogist Lev Perovski. In the following decades, synthesising the atomic structure of perovskite became easier.

But it was not until 2009 that Japanese researcher Tsutomu Miyasaka discovered that perovskites can be used to form photovoltaic solar cells.

‘Bull’s eye’

Initially the process was complicated and required ultra high temperatures, so only materials that could withstand extreme heat—like glass—could be coated with perovskite cells. This is where Malinkiewicz comes in.

In 2013, while still a PhD student at the University of Valencia in Spain, she figured out a way to coat flexible foil with perovskites using an evaporation method. Later, she developed an inkjet printing procedure that lowered production costs enough to make



A technician works in a laboratory of Saule in Wroclaw on 16 January, 2019. PHOTO: AFP

mass production economically feasible. “That was a bull’s eye. Now high temperatures are no longer required to coat things with a photovoltaic layer,” Malinkiewicz told AFP. Her discovery quickly earned her an article in the journal *Nature* and media attention, as well as the Photonics21 Student Innovation award in a competition organised by the European Commission. The Polish edition of the *MIT Technology Review* also selected her as one of its Innovators Under 35 in 2015.

She went on to cofound the company Saule Technologies—named after the Baltic goddess of the sun—along with two Polish businessmen. They had to

assemble all their laboratory equipment from scratch, before multimillionaire Japanese investor Hideo Sawada came on board. The company now has an ultra-modern laboratory with an international team of young experts and is building an industrial-scale production site.

“This will be the world’s first production line using this technology. Its capacity will reach 40,000 square metres of panels by the end of the year and 180,000 square metres the following year,” Malinkiewicz said at her lab. “But that’s just a drop in the bucket in terms of demand.” Eventually, compact production lines could easily be installed everywhere,

according to demand, to manufacture perovskite solar panels that are made to measure.

Self-sufficient buildings

The Swedish construction group Skanska is testing the cutting-edge panels on the facade of one of its buildings in Warsaw. It also inked a licencing partnership with Saule in December for the exclusive right to incorporate the company’s solar cell technology in its projects in Europe, the United States and Canada. “Perovskite technology is bringing us closer to the goal of energy self-sufficient buildings,” said Adam Targowski, sustainability manager at Skanska. —AFP ■

Egypt unveils more than 40 ancient Greek mummies

MINYA (Egypt)—Researchers in Egypt have discovered more than 40 mummies at a burial site in central Egypt dating to the Ptolemaic era, the antiquities ministry said on Saturday. The mummies, including adults, children and animals, had been laid on the floor or in open clay coffins in a crumbling underground chamber in Minya governorate, said Antiquities Minister Khaled el-Enany.

“So far we have more than 40 mummies,” he told officials and journalists during a ceremony at the Tunah Al-Gabal site, 260 kilometres (160 miles) south of Cairo. Archaeologist Rami Rasmi told AFP that “40 mummies were discovered, including 12 children and six animals, while the rest were adult men and women.” While mummification is mostly associated with ancient Egypt, the practice continued under the kingdom



This picture taken on 2 February, 2019 shows artefact fragments on display outside newly-discovered burial chambers dating to the Ptolemaic era (323-30 BC) at the necropolis of Tuna el-Gebel in Egypt’s southern Minya province, about 340 kilometres south of the capital Cairo. PHOTO: AFP

founded by Ptolemy, a successor to Alexander the Great, which lasted from 323 BC to 30 BC. The Minya graves, discovered during an excavation that started in February last year, are in a communal tomb “probably belonging to a petty bourgeois family”, the ministry said. Archaeologist Mohamed Ragab said two tombs were discovered nine metres under-

ground and contained more than six rooms. Shards of pottery and pieces of papyrus found at the site helped researchers to determine its date, said the head of Egypt’s Supreme Council of Antiquities Mostafa Waziri. Ancient Greek rulers reached the height of their power between the conquests of Alexander the Great and the rise of the Roman empire.—AFP

Carbon fiber may be engineered into a battery: study

WASHINGTON—American researchers developed a kind of porous carbon fiber that may power cars using energy stored in their exterior shells.

The study published in this week’s *Science Advances* reported the way of creating carbon fibers that wouldn’t only be structurally useful, but also functionally useful. Carbon fibers, the thin hair-like strands of carbon, are widely used in the aerospace and automotive industries. Liu Guoliang, a professor at Virginia Tech who led the study, said the carbon fibers could be designed to have tiny holes uniformly scattered throughout, similar to a sponge, that would store ions of energy.

Liu’s team developed a

process to make porous carbon fibers with uniform size and spacing for the first time.

Previously, chemists mixed two kind of polymers separately into a solution, resulting porous carbon fibers but with differently sized and spaced pores, making the energy storage difficult.

Liu bonded the two polymers into a block copolymer. “This is the first time we utilize block copolymers to make carbon fibers and the first time to use block copolymer-based porous carbon fibers in energy storage,” Liu said.

The modified carbon fibers can be used to make car shells while store energy like a battery in the future, according to the researchers.—AFP ■

I want Bale to perform how he knows he can—Solari

MADRID (Spain)—Santiago Solari has challenged Gareth Bale to hit top form ahead of what could prove a defining period in Real Madrid's season.

Madrid face a double-header against Barcelona in the Copa del Rey semi-finals in the next month, as well as two legs against Ajax in the last 16 of the Champions League. After Alaves on Sunday, they also play city rivals Atletico Madrid in La Liga before a third Clasico at the start of March. Madrid are 10 points adrift of Barca already and cannot afford to let the gap widen further. Bale has just come back after three weeks out with a calf injury but his return to the starting line-up is not guaranteed, given his team have won six out of their last seven matches. "The spotlight is always on Gareth," Solari said at a press conference on Saturday. "But I see him focused, connected, plugged in. "I want him to perform how he knows he can, like he did in the Club World Cup and against Roma. He is an important

player for us and I think he is determined to do well."

Madrid meet Barcelona in the first leg of the Copa del Rey on Wednesday, three days after the game against Alaves, but Solari was reluctant to divert focus to the contest at the Camp Nou. He insists, however, that Madrid are used to big matches coming thick and fast at this stage of the season. "We are used to it, this team has experience of this at this time of year," Solari said. "First, you have to reach this stage in all three competitions, the aim is to keep all of them open. "We have already won the Club World Cup and we come into this period in good form, with energy, with the whole squad available, except (Jesus) Vallejo, who is about to come back.

"We face this run of games with absolute tranquility." Madrid were thrashed 5-1 by Barcelona in their last outing at the Camp Nou in October, a match that led to Julen Lopetegui being sacked and Solari installed as his replacement. —AFP ■



Real Madrid's Welsh forward Gareth Bale (c) kicks the ball during the Spanish Copa del Rey (King's Cup) quarter-final second leg football match between Girona FC and Real Madrid CF at the Montilivi stadium in Girona on 13 January, 2019. PHOTO: AFP

Search for missing Sala plane to begin on Sunday

LONDON (United Kingdom)—The privately-funded search for the missing plane carrying Argentinian footballer Emiliano Sala will begin on Sunday, conditions permitting, the scientist leading the mission said on Saturday. Sala was travelling from France to join up with his new club, Premier League strugglers Cardiff City, in a light aircraft on 21 January when it went missing close to the Channel Islands.

Suspected debris from the plane washed up on the Normandy coastline on Wednesday. Marine scientist David Mearns, who

is directing the private search on behalf of the Sala family, said: "Tomorrow the weather will be good. We will be able to operate tomorrow." The search will be conducted "in close co-ordination" with the Air Accidents Investigation Branch (AAIB), with two vessels scouring around four square nautical miles of sea bed north of the Channel island of Guernsey.

Sala was flying in the Piper PA-46 Malibu plane after transferring from French team Nantes in a 17-million-euro (\$19.3-million) move.—AFP ■



Lethwei: Ye Thway Ni to face Ikkyu Sojun in Tokyo this month

A Lethwei event, entitled Japan 11 - 'Millenium Force', will be organized at Korakuen Hall in Tokyo on 27 February to showcase Myanmar Lethwei in Japan and to strengthen friendship between the two countries, according to a statement released by the International Lethwei Federation (Japan).

The main bout at the event, the eleventh such contest to be held in Japan, will feature Ye Thway Ni (Myanmar) vs Ikkyu Sojun (Japan).

The event will also have

other bouts featuring Myanmar and Japanese Lethwei fighters and martial artists from Malaysia, New Zealand, South Korea, and Congo. They will use the fighting styles of Myanma traditional lethwei, including various clinching techniques.

In the 60.50-kg bout, Ye Thway Ni (Myanmar) will take on Ikkyu Sojun (Japan). In the 61.50-kg bout, Joji Goto (Japan) will fight Kwon Dohyeong (Korea).

In the 63.00-kg bout, Shuhe Higashi (Japan) will fight Philip

Repelis (New Zealand)

In the 66.50-kg bout, Saw Min Aung (Myanmar) will face Kayne Conlan (New Zealand).

In the 74-kg bout, Shan Ko (Myanmar) will face Kohei Tokeshi (Japan).

In the 74.50-kg bout, Daryl Lokuku (Congo) will take on Kai Chee (Malaysia).

All the fights will be bare-knuckled, without gloves, with only tape and gauze allowed on the hands of the fighters, said a Myanmar Lethwei official.—Lynn Thit (Tgi) ■

I'll make every effort to help Shan United, says new technical director

FORMER Myanmar National League champions Shan United have appointed U Aung Naing as their new technical director, according to a statement released by the football club. Reacting to his appointment, U Aung Naing said: "I'll make every effort to help Shan United and the club's two junior teams."

"Shan United is a club with a good image, and so, I decided to

accept the offer from the team," he added.

A former Myanmar National Team player, U Aung Naing will focus on improving the main team and junior teams, said an official with the football club.

"We are preparing for good results in all competitions — the AFC Cup, the Myanmar National League, and the General Aung San Shield. We have just signed

with U Aung Naing, who is also an experienced coach," he said.

U Aung Naing takes over the post from U Sann Win, who handled the team last season.

U Aung Naing served as the head coach of the Nay Pyi Taw F.C. and Rakhine United F.C. in 2011 and 2012, and was an Assistant Coach with the Ubon United F.C. of the Thai 2nd Division in 2018.—Lynn Thit (Tgi) ■

Barca drop points on Saturday as Celta end losing streak

MADRID—FC Barcelona came back from 2-0 down to save a point at home to Valencia on Saturday evening. Leo Messi scored twice to ensure Barca took a point against arguably the best Valencia performance of the season. The visitors began the game by hitting the post and with both sides including changes due to their cup semi-finals next week, they controlled Barca's attacks and hit the league leaders on the break. Kevin Gameiro put Valencia into the lead af-

ter fine work from Rodrigo Moreno, although the striker had to abandon the game shortly afterwards after clashing heads with Barca's Gerard Pique. Dani Parejo doubled Valencia's lead from the penalty spot after Sergi Roberto was penalized for a slight push on Daniel Wass. A Messi penalty before halftime got Barca back into the game and he leveled the score 15 minutes after the break with a shot from outside of the area.—Xinhua ■