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President U Win Myint is welcomed by ethnic youths in Myitkyina Airport. PHOTO: MNA

President U Win Myint arrives in Myitkyina, Kachin State

PRESIDENT U Win Myint accompanied by Union Ministers Lt-Gen Kyaw Swe, Lt-Gen Ye Aung, Dr. Myint Htwe, U Han Zaw and Nai Thet Lwin, Myanmar Police Force Police Chief Lt-Gen Aung Win Oo and officials left Nay Pyi Taw by Tatmadaw special plane yesterday morning and arrived in Kachin State, Myitkyina.

The President and party were welcomed on arrival at the Myitkyina airport by Kachin State Chief Minister Dr. Khet Aung, State Hluttaw Speaker U Tun Tin, State High Court Chief Judge U Tu Ja, State Advocate U De Hsim Ran, State Auditor U Tin Hlaing, **SEE PAGE-2**



State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi shakes hands with Mr. Hiroto Izumi, Special Advisor to the Prime Minister of Japan, in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. PHOTO: MNA

State Counsellor receives Special Advisor to Japanese Prime Minister

DAW AUNG SAN SUU KYI, State Counsellor of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, received Mr. Hiroto IZUMI, Special Advisor to the Prime Minister of Japan, at 10 am on 21st March 2019 at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Nay Pyi Taw.

During the meeting, they discussed matters related to Yangon Urban De-

velopment Projects which are being implemented with Japanese Official Development Assistance, production of silk in Kayin State with Japanese technical assistance and the continued provision of humanitarian and development assistances of Japan in Rakhine State.—MNA

NRPC, eight EAOs hold peace talks in Nay Pyi Taw

A peace dialogue was held with eight ethnic armed organizations (EAOs) at the National Reconciliation and Peace Centre-NRPC in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

NRPC Vice Chairman Dr. Tin Myo Win delivered a speech at this meeting. He said the first aim of the Union Government was to end armed conflicts on the path to establish a democratic federal Union. He added that the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement – NCA was not just a part of the peace process but also the first step towards establishing the democratic federal Union.

EAO participation taken seriously

Since political dialogue was based on the NCA, they were carefully trying to include EAOs who were non-signatories as well, said Dr. Tin Myo Win. He said non-signatories have been invited to re-evaluate the political dialogue framework in light of this. In addition, both EAO signatories and non-signatories have been included in the Joint Coordination Body (JCB) for Peace Process Funding. He said they had opened the door for participation to the Union Peace Conference – 21st Century Panglong since

its first session. He continued, these actions meant to impart ownership to the peace process over to the non-signatories of the NCA, and were conducted in seriousness.

Dr. Tin Myo Win said the Peace Commission had met with MNTJP, PSLF, and ULA in Kunming, China, on 12 December 2018. He said that during that meeting, all three groups agreed to first halt military activities to pave the road towards peace. They also expressed their desire to employ political methods as opposed to military methods and

agreed to participate in the national reconciliation and peace process.

Tatmadaw takes constructive measures

The Tatmadaw also announced their 'ceasefire and eternal peace' announcement on 12 December 2018. The truce will be effective for four months in many conflict areas and will end on 30 April 2019. The Tatmadaw's gesture aims to help EAOs hold peace talks with the NRPC and the Tatmadaw's negotiation team will participate if necessary.

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President U Win Myint meets three pillars of government in Kachin State

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State Hluttaw Deputy Speaker U Dain Khan Phone @ U Khan Lin, state ministers, Hluttaw representatives, officials from state level departmental organizations and ethnic national cultural troupes.

From there President U Win Myint went to a meeting with State government members, Hluttaw representatives (Pyithu, Amyotha and State), State Hluttaw officials, state, district and township departmental officials held at Myitkyina Town Hall and delivered a policy guidance speech.

In his speech the President said now was the time when the country was under-

the beginning of any transition period.

When facing such difficulties and hardships there would be concerns in some transition processes or possible delays, hindrances and increasing of burdens. These were not a matter of concern. Transition was not to be taken as an enemy and to be concerned with. All need to understand that transition was a good friend to our people and the country's development. Transition was not a threat or a danger and must be understood as an opportunity for the country's development.

Only when all the citizens took part in the transition could they obtain the opportunities. If not, they would lose the oppor-

administrative sector, there would be problems between the two pillars. In the same way, the judicial pillar also needed to implement their works properly in accordance with the enacted Constitution. The three pillars were to monitor one another but must not influence each other.

Only when the Hluttaw law and rules were properly practiced can there be support for rule of law. The Judiciary sector also needed to be unbiased. There must be no discrimination based on power, money, race and religion and judgments need to be according to the laws and rules. All citizens and peoples are equal in the face of the law. Only then



President U Win Myint delivers the speech during the meeting with local people in Myitkyina, Kachin State yesterday. PHOTO: MNA

going a transition towards democracy. It was with the aim of increasing the momentum of the transition that the visit was made. Myanmar was determined to establish a democratic federal union and a democratic system provided equal justice, security, happiness and rights. A union system granted self-determination, self-rule and equality.

A democratic system supported the establishment of a federal union and the establishment of a federal union strengthened the democratic system. There were many difficulties and hardships when transitioning from an old system to a new system. Those who were performing their assigned duties must not despair from facing these difficulties and hardships and were to take it as an opportunity to show their capabilities. There would be difficulties and hardships at

opportunities. Transition consisted of administrative, legislative and judicial sectors. Administrative sector transition needed to be an administrative system that supported rule of law.

In an administrative system that supported rule of law, administrative matters were done according to law. The type of administrative system we want was people-oriented and must be administrative machinery that benefited the people. The administrative machinery must not oppress and restrict the people. Administrative sector needed to be aware of the fact that if the administrative system was not beneficial to the people, it would diverge greatly from a democratic system.

There were State Hluttaw law and rules in the legislative sector. Those law and rules must be followed. If the legislative sector influenced the

can there be a firm democratic system. No one must be above the law and only when a just society was established could a democratic system prevail.

State and region governments implemented the policies of the Union Government. They also instructed and managed the departments. A good state administration and management would support the development of the state and the union. All needed to strive towards the benefit of the people and the country and perform their duties and responsibilities. Transitioning from a system to another could not be done single handedly or by a single entity. All needed to participate and only then could there be progress in our country's move towards democracy.

Rule of law, democracy and human rights were three inter-linked sectors. Violation of one would result in violation of all.

Human rights needed to be protected and raised. The Judiciary needed to be straightened.

Judges were to inspect and look into the conditions of the prisoners in prisons. Only then could the transition be on the right path. The beliefs of the personnel need to be changed, reformed and guided. Success would be achieved and works straightened only when there were changes in the beliefs of the personnel. In a transition, emphasis must be on what you could do for the country rather than on what the country could do for you. In a democratic system, citizens need to understand their duties. Sovereignty comes from the people.

There would be no success if the rights to do things were taken as a power. If the thought of position being power came into the mind, our works would not be correct. Development of a state would be dependent

A democratic system supported the establishment of a federal union and the establishment of a federal union strengthened the democratic system.

upon the correct and quick decisions of the state governments. Only then could there be benefit for the state and the people in the state. Democracy would fail if the state and region governments were poor and bad in their administration and management.

There must be responsibilities and obligations for an administration to be good. Whatever was done must be done transparently. Whether the outcome was good or bad must be predictable. State/region governments needed to consult with state/region advocates in order for their works to be in accordance to the law. State/region auditors needed to be consulted on fund usage so that it was in accord with the financial rules and regulations. All needed to be dutiful and conduct their works properly, said the President.

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State Counsellor attends Hand-Over Ceremony of the Financing Agreement for Enhancing the Education and Skills base in Myanmar



State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi poses for the documentary photo together with participants at the hand-over ceremony of the Financing Agreement between Myanmar and the European Union for Enhancing the Education and Skills base in Myanmar held in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

STATE COUNSELLOR Daw Aung San Suu Kyi attended a Hand-over Ceremony of the Financing Agreement between Myanmar and the European Union for Enhancing the Education and Skills base in Myanmar held at the Ministry of Investment and Foreign Economic Relations in Nay Pyi Taw.

During the ceremony, Union

Minister Dr. Myo Thein Gyi and EU Ambassador to Myanmar Mr. Kristian Schmidt delivered remarks respectively. Next, Mr. Kristian Schmidt, European Union Ambassador to Myanmar and U Tun Tun Naing, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Planning and Finance exchanged copies of the Financing Agreement in the presence of

the State Counsellor.

The grant assistance Euro 221 million will be funded by the European Union and implemented by the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Planning and Finance and relevant departments, ADB, World Bank and I-IDEA to expand quality education for all across the country and to dramatically

improve Myanmar's education outcomes.

The Ceremony was attended by Dr. Myo Thein Gyi, Union Minister for Education, U Soe Win, Union Minister for Planning and Finance, Mr. Kristian Schmidt, European Union Ambassador to Myanmar, Ambassadors representing the Czech Republic and Denmark, Head

of Cooperation of the European Union Delegation to Myanmar, programme managers and representatives from Asian Development Bank (ADB), International Monetary Fund (IMF), UNESCO, International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (I-IDEA), and GoPA worldwide Consultant Group.—MNA

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing receives Special Advisor to Japanese PM



Senior General Min Aung Hlaing holds talks with Mr. Hiroto Izumi, Special Advisor to Prime Minister of Japan, in Nay Pyi Taw. **PHOTO: OFFICE OF THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF**

SENIOR General Min Aung Hlaing, Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services received H.E. Mr. Hiroto Izumi, Special Advisor to the Prime Minister of Japan at the Bayintnaung guest house in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday afternoon.

At the meeting matters re-

lated to the process of repatriating displaced persons from the Buthidaung and Maungtau region of Rakhine State, assistance provided by Japan towards development of Rakhine State, cooperation in the agriculture and technology sector for development of Myanmar, increasing trade

and increasing bilateral friendship between the two countries through cooperation between the armed forces of the two countries were discussed, according to news released by the Office of the Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services.—MNA

(Translated by Zaw Min)

Union Planning & Finance Minister receives Special Advisor to Japanese Prime Minister

UNION Minister for Planning and Finance, U Soe Win, received a delegation led by Mr. Hiroto Izumi, Special Advisor to the Prime Minister of Japan, at his office in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

During the meeting, they discussed projects Myanmar and Japan are cooperating on,

Yangon's urban development, upgrading Yangon's circular railway and the Yangon-Mandalay railway, developing Thilawa Special Economic Zone, and technical cooperation for cyber security.—MNA ■

(Translated by Kyaw Zin Lin)



Union Minister U Soe Win meets with Special Advisor to Japanese Prime Minister Mr. Hiroto Izumi. **PHOTO: MNA**

President U Win Myint visits Myitkyina People's Hospital

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Next Kachin State Chief Minister Dr. Khet Aung explained about regional development works conducted by the Kachin State government, State Hluttaw Speaker U Tun Tin explained about State Hluttaw affairs and State High Court Chief Judge U Tu Ja explained about State judiciary matters.

In response to the explanations made, the President commented on the judiciary sector to judge the cases correctly, quickly and without any delays. Confiscated evidences must be handled in a timely manner and according to the law so that public funds were not wasted. Hluttaw representatives needed to go down to their constituencies and must be in touch with their constituents. Returning of confiscated lands were to be done according to policies, laws, regulations set by the Union government and matters relating to drug, timber and jade must not be ignored and action taken according to

the law.

Emphasis must be placed towards caring for the health and livelihood matters of people avoiding conflicts and resettlement and security matters for them need to be conducted. There were restrictions on all three pillars and all must not go beyond these restrictions. The President urged them to take this opportunity to review what they have done for your region, state, union and the people. As future generations would evaluate how they had performed the responsibilities that fell on their shoulders, you were required to perform to the best of their abilities, said the President. He then cordially greeted the attendees of the meeting.

After the meeting the President went to the Myitkyina People's Hospital where hospital Superintendent Dr. Phone Maw explained about the hospital, treatment and prevention works and requirements at the hospital meeting hall. The President provided necessary guidance



President U Win Myint encourages the patient undertaking treatment in Myitkyina People's Hospital.

PHOTO: MNA

and then encouraged the patients undertaking treatment in the hospital and donated food stuffs

Following this, the President inspected the construction status of a new four storey ward and took a commemorative

group photo with the hospital superintendent, doctors, nurses and hospital personnel. — MNA
(Translated by Zaw Min)

Special ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Illegal Wildlife Trade held in Chiang Mai, Thailand

A MYANMAR delegation led by Union Minister for Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation U Ohn Win attended a Special ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Illegal Wildlife Trade held at Chiang Mai, Thailand yesterday.

The meeting was held with the aims of jointly preventing and eradicating the expanding and illegal regional and international trade and markets of wildlife. Current and future works will be discussed and implemented and a regional level joint declaration will be published it is learnt.

The meeting was hosted by alternating ASEAN chair Thai Minister for Natural Resources and Environment. The meeting was attended by Union Minister for Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation U Ohn Win, ministers from relevant ASEAN ministries, senior officials and other officials, ASEAN Secretary General Mr. Dato Lim Jock Hoi, representatives for Britain, United States of America and European Union, Con-



Union Minister U Ohn Win poses for the documentary photo with ministers from relevant ASEAN ministries at the Special ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Illegal Wildlife Trade in Chiang Mai, Thailand. PHOTO: MNA

vention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora Secretary General Ms. Ivonne Higuero and representatives from UNODC, INTERPOL and IUCN.

At the meeting, Union Min-

ister U Ohn Win discussed about Myanmar enthusiastic participation and continued participation in the eradication and prevention of illegal wildlife trade.

After the meeting, a joint declaration on eradicating il-

legal wildlife trade in ASEAN region was made. The joint declaration includes aligning international and regional policies on wildlife trade; enabling effective rule of law works; designate, eradicate and prevent organ-

ized crime in using internet as network and conduct wildlife trade; increase cooperation in all sectors and to reduce usage and demands.—MNA ■

(Translated by Zaw Min)

Thai religious foundation contributes cash to construction of Eternal Peace Pagoda

A CEREMONY to donate cash for the construction of Eternal Peace Pagoda was held at Office Building 35, Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture Union Minister's Office guest hall in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning and Union Minister Thura U Aung Ko accepted the cash donations.

At the ceremony Sayadaws from Thai Dhammakaya Foundation donated K 45 million cash donation and Thai Baht 3 million worth of gems and jewelries to

be embedded in the pagoda. Donors U Hla Tun and Thiri Thudamma Theingi Daw San San Wei (Shan Pyo May) family and Professor Dr. Hnin Hnin Aye donated K 2.5 million and K one million respectively. The donations were accepted by Union Minister Thura U Aung Ko and Deputy Minister U Kyi Min who in return presented certificates of honors.

An Eternal Peace Pagoda will be constructed near Gan-

gaw Flower Roundabout on Yazathingaha Road, Dekkhinathiri Township, Nay Pyi Taw, Union Territory and donors who wish to make donations are to contact U Thaung Win (Director), U Maung Maung Myo (Director), U Kyin Khaing (Director) and U Kyaw Sein Win (Director) at phone 09420701463, 09-2132191, 09-8600113 and 0943125373 respectively.—Han Lin Naing ■

(Translated by Zaw Min)



Union Minister Thura U Aung Ko accepts cash donations for construction of Eternal Peace Pagoda from Thai Sayadaws. PHOTO: MNA

Myanmar Permanent Representative responds one-sided report of High Commissioner for Human Rights, urges her to provide technical assistance to Myanmar at Human Right Council in Geneva

THE High Commissioner for Human Rights presented the annual reports and oral update on 20 March 2019 at the on-going 40th Session of the Human Rights Council in Geneva.

During the session, Permanent Representative of Myanmar U Kyaw Moe Tun delivered a statement in response to the High Commissioner's report on Myanmar submitted to the Council in pursuant to the Council's resolution S-27/1.

In his statement, the Permanent Representative affirmed that Myanmar shall not be obliged to accept the one-sided report of the High Commissioner and its recommendations.

He pointed out that the report reflected one-sided narratives and ignored government's efforts and visible progress. It has shown complete lack of understanding on the complexities and challenges on the ground.

He also stated that impartiality and inclusiveness are of fundamental importance for multi-ethnic and multi-religious Myanmar in the promotion and protection of human rights as well as in building a democratic federal union.

Speaking of the situation in Rakhine State, he said, "The issue of Rakhine State is hugely complex with many challenges" and that Government is fully committed to find a sustainable solution for all people in Rakhine State.

He informed the Council the speeding up of the implementation of Kofi Annan Advisory Commission's recommendations under an Action Plan, covering five priority areas

namely issuance of citizenship, freedom of movement, closure of IDP camps, education and health.

The Permanent Representative shared Myanmar's concern over the plight of all affected communities after the ARSA terrorists attack and reiterated Myanmar's readiness to receive verified returnees in accordance with the bilateral agreements with Bangladesh. Myanmar informed Bangladesh side to resume the Joint Working Group Meeting in April to commence repatriation of verified displaced persons including 444 Hindus who of their own volition are desperate to return. He added that Myanmar has been working with UNDP and UNHCR, ASEAN friends and regional partners to create conducive environment for the returnees.

The Rakhine State Investment Fair was held recently to generate job opportunities, income and long term development and a number of on-going projects were implemented to strengthen social cohesion in Rakhine State, he said.

The Permanent Representative expressed his disappointment at the irresponsible comments of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar on Rakhine State Investment Fair which is aimed for bringing prosperity to all people in Rakhine State.

He reaffirmed Myanmar's position on FFM that Myanmar categorically objected its establishment, as well as its narrative-based report. However, Myanmar takes allegations of human rights violation serious-

ly. He updated on the Independent Commission of Enquiry as well as the recent establishment of an investigation court by the Armed Forces of Myanmar to investigate all alleged violations of human rights in Rakhine State. He emphasized, "The Government is willing and able to address the accountability issue. Therefore, we strongly reject any move to bring the issue to international judicial system."

He pointed out that the world's attention narrowly and only focused on the negative aspects relating to the issue in Rakhine State. Notwithstanding positive developments, Myanmar has been unfairly targeted and disproportionately put under scrutiny of multiple mechanisms of the UN.

He stressed that understanding the situation in Rakhine State requires deeper analysis and wider perspective. It should not be seen in isolation with narrow perspective.

He expressed Myanmar's readiness to renew cooperation with OHCHR and urged the High Commissioner to extend the technical assistance to Myanmar for promotion and protection of human rights under the work plan proposed by the OHCHR last year.

He concluded by saying that Myanmar participated in the interactive dialogues in good faith and that only through constructive dialogue and cooperation, we can achieve our common goal of promotion and protection of human rights of people all over the world, according to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs—MNA ■

Union Minister U Thein Swe receives Japan Myanmar Association Chairman

UNION Minister for Labour, Immigration and Population U Thein Swe received Japan Myanmar Association (JMA) Chairman Mr. Hideo Watanabe at the ministry meeting hall in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday afternoon.

At the meeting matters relating to assessments conducted by JMA for sending on-job-training workers and work-

ers for elderly care to Japan, cooperation provided since 2012 on the matter of demand letters for workers, arrangements made for systematic transfer to Japanese Embassy in Myanmar a detailed information of Myanmar on-job-training workers in Japan and works to be conducted in accordance with the enacted law were discussed.—MNA ■



Union Minister U Thein Swe holds talks with Japan Myanmar Association (JMA) Chairman Mr. Hideo Watanabe in Nay Pyi Taw. PHOTO: MNA

Agro exports up by \$100 mln over past five months

MYANMAR'S exports of agricultural products between 1 October, 2018 and 8 March, 2019 in the current fiscal year exceeded US\$1.4 billion, which is an increase of over \$100 million compared with the corresponding period of the 2017-2018 FY, according to the data of the Ministry of Commerce.

In the similar period of last FY, agro export earned \$1.34 billion.

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.

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.—GNLM ■

(Translated by La Wonn)

NRPC, eight EAOs hold peace talks in Nay Pyi Taw

FROMPAGE-1

Dr. Tin Myo Win said many organizations announced their approval for the Tatmadaw's announcement and the truce has helped to set up this meeting. He said everyone must accept that using military means has never resolved any of the country's issues. He said the root causes of all armed conflicts are political issues and failing to resolve them will keep the cycle of armed conflicts in perpetual motion.

Fundamental principles require inclusivity to be complete

Dr. Tin Myo Win said everyone has accepted the belief that establishing a democratic federal Union, based on mutually agreed upon fundamentals, is the answer to resolving our political issues. He said we must work together to develop the type of federal system we will be establishing and this is why the modern Panglong conference is being held.

Dr. Tin Myo Win said the 21st Century Panglong has convened three times during the NLD government administration and has agreed on 51 fundamental democratic federal principles. However, since there are still EAOs who have not signed the NCA, the principles still have some requirements to them. He said if all the EAO non-signatories participate then the much-anticipated political conference will emerge. He explained his hope for all EAOs to eventually participate in the 21st Century Panglong in unison.

Dr. Tin Myo Win said the Union Government is working towards having all the EAOs in attendance sign the NCA and participate in political dialogue while halting all armed conflicts. He said the Union Government is intends to hold the political dialogues to produce agreements based on a democratic federal Union so as to achieve Union peace.



National Reconciliation and Peace Centre members and representatives from eight ethnic armed organizations held a meeting at the NRPC office in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

He said the government and Tatmadaw have accepted and agreed to establish a democratic federal Union. The political dialogues will then decide what form the federal system will take.

Armed conflicts are not the answer

Dr. Tin Myo Win explained that the conflicts in Rakhine State are not associated with which groups will be accepted and which will be not. He said Rakhine State is designated as a white area and the government has taken appropriate security measures to prevent armed groups from establishing their bases there. He said it is important to understand this fact.

He said we must reflect upon the 70-years of internal armed conflicts and look to the current situation of the Rakhine people to see that it is crucial to take things to the political discussion table rather than demanding rights through use of arms.

The government and Tatmadaw always have the door to peace open to join in the NCA path and the peace process, said Dr. Tin Myo Win. He said the NCA is not an end result but the first step to engaging in political dialogue. He said EAO non-signatories are

encouraged to voice their worries and challenges regarding the NCA.

He said holding a face-to-face meeting like this used to be a fanciful notion but has now become a reality. He urged everyone to have mutual respect and trust towards each other as we negotiate for solutions to achieve lasting peace and for ways to include everyone in the peace process.

The actual discussions commence

Next, leaders and representatives of the United Wa State Party (UWSP), Kachin Independence Organization (KIO), Mongla's Eastern Shan State Peace and Solidarity Committee (PSC), Shan State Progressive Party (SSPP), Kokang's Myanmar National Truth and Justice Party (MNTJP), Palaung State Liberation Front (PSLF), United League of Arakan (ULA), and Karenni National Progressive Party (KNPP) discussed future tasks for the peace process by group.

The NRPC and EAOs then discussed the role of NCA-NS EAOs in the pre-2020 and post-2020 periods, development affairs, regional residents' affairs, holding separate meetings with the Tatmadaw, issuing agreements, and

other general matters.

NRPC Vice Chair's closing speech

Dr. Tin Myo Win then delivered the closing speech. He said it is a historical day for the NRPC and the 8 NCA-NS EAOs to hold their first meeting. He said the meeting between the government, Tatmadaw, NRPC and leaders of the 8 NCA-NS EAOs can reduce the number of armed conflicts, and this will in turn reduce the fear and losses the people are suffering from.

Dr. Tin Myo Win said he believes good or bad luck are a person's own treasures. He said how much the suffering and fear of yourself, your environment and the people are reduced is an answer. He said if there is goodwill there will be good luck and it is important to have the desire to practice goodwill. He said if we truly want peace then our peace process will be successful.

Dr. Tin Myo Win said he believes holding meetings between the government, Tatmadaw, NRPC and the 8 NCA-NS EAOs is the best path to seeking solutions for peace. He said we need to find an answer that bring about decision-making. He said these meetings should be held at least

once every two months and if the results make improvements then they should become the basis for discussion concerning our respective state or region's residents.

List of meeting participants

NRPC members Union Attorney-General U TunTunOo, Lt-Gen YarPyae, Lt-Gen Min Naung, secretary Deputy Minister U Khin Maung Tin, Peace Commission Vice Chairman U Thein Zaw, secretary Lt-Gen (retired) U Khin Zaw Oo, member Pyithu Hluttaw MP U Aung Soe, support group member U Moe Zaw Oo, Director-General U Zaw Htay of the Ministry of the Office of the State Counsellor, and the leaders and representatives of the United Wa State Party (UWSP), Kachin Independence Organization (KIO), Mongla's Eastern Shan State Peace and Solidarity Committee (PSC), Shan State Progressive Party (SSPP), Kokang's Myanmar National Truth and Justice Party (MNTJP), Palaung State Liberation Front (PSLF), United League of Arakan (ULA), and Karenni National Progressive Party (KNPP). —MNA

(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

NRPC, eight NCA-NS EAOs issue joint declaration

AFTER a meeting between National Reconciliation and Peace Center (NRPC) and eight Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement Non Signatory Ethnic Armed Organisations (NCA-NS EAOs) a joint declaration was issued.

Following is the unofficial translation of the joint declaration.

Peace Talks between eight NRPC, NCA-EAOs Joint Declaration (21 March, 2019)

1. NRPC and representatives of 8 NCA-NS EAOs held a meeting at NRPC, Nay Pyi Taw on 21 March 2019.
2. At the meeting matter relating to future works of the peace process was discussed openly

and cordially among participants who were of equal statuses.

3. NRPC and the 8 NCA-NS EAOs agree to strive toward sustainable national reconciliation and peace as follows:

- Continuing the coordination and efforts toward reducing the ongoing armed conflicts.
- Continuing the coordination and efforts toward maintaining stability and peace.

(c) Both sides to place emphasis on regional development and the benefit of the people in the region.

(d) To solve the political problems, the basis for national reconciliation and peace, through political means peacefully.

(e) To continue holding frequent meetings with the participation of decision makers.

Disability Inclusion Training opened in Nay Pyi Taw

A Disability Inclusion Training held jointly by the Union Election Commission and Myanmar Independent Living Initiative (MILI) was introduced with an opening ceremony at the training hall of the UEC's office in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. UEC members U Tun Khin, U Saw Daniel Kyi, U Aung Soe Win and U Than Aung, and officials from the UEC office.

UEC Chairman U Hla Thein delivered a speech, saying 4.6 per cent of the national population (2.3 million people) are living with disabilities, according to the 2014 Myanmar Census, and 1.5 million from among them have the right to vote. He said the UEC works in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Constitution of Myanmar, and the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Law to



An opening ceremony of Disability Inclusion Training organized by the Union Election Commission and Myanmar Independent Living Initiative (MILI) held in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. PHOTO: MNA

ensure PLWDs can exercise their right to vote or run for election. He said MILI is the first organization to collaborate with UEC

on the rights of PLWDs and have provided their assistance in the commission's tasks concerning the elections. U Hla Thein said

PLWDs now enjoyed better voting procedures in the 2015 General Elections and the 2017, 2018 byelections. He said a national

strategy for 2019-2022 was designed for inclusivity for PLWDs and communication with people from all relevant sectors. He said the 2020 General Elections will be conducted in line with 5 standards. He said the training will give practical demonstrations for ensuring PLWDs can give votes and will ask participants for their ideas. He said the ideas and results from the training have to be carried over to the election processes in the region participants are assigned to. He said we need to realistically implement the motto 'Don't Leave Us Behind'. The Disability Inclusion Training is a 2-day training attended by 30 members of Region and State sub-election commissions and 5 assistant directors from the UEC office.—MNA ■

(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

SWRR Ministry provides aids to people displaced by current conflicts in Rakhine

UNION Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Dr. Win Myat Aye together with Deputy Minister U Soe Aung, Disaster Management Department Director General Dr. Ko Ko Naing and Department of Rehabilitation Director General U Win Naing Tun held a coordination meeting to systematically provide aids to the people displaced by current conflicts in Rakhine State. The meeting was held yesterday afternoon at Rakhine State government meeting hall.

In his address to the meeting, the Union Minister spoke of everyone knowing the efforts made toward stability and development of Rakhine State and importance of rule of law in achieving stability and peace. Therefore, efforts must be made toward achieving rule of law and peace. The Union Minister spoke of the recent armed conflicts in

Rakhine State effecting the stability, peace and development and efforts must be made towards achieving sustainable national reconciliation and peace. The government places great emphasis on regional development and the people in the region and the ministry will strive toward providing a better situation in comparison to the past situation. Supports were provided as soon as conflict occurs and armed conflicts were occurring between Tatmadaw and AA in Rakhine State Ponnagyun, Kyauktaw, Buthidaung, Yathedaung, MraukU and Minbya townships. The ministry in cooperation with Rakhine State government was providing funds for rice and cash assistance to killed and wounded peoples while WFP/RCM were providing food, sanitary goods and humanitarian assistances. —MNA

(Translated by Zaw Min)



Union Minister Dr. Win Myat Aye hands over aids for conflict avoiding peoples to Rakhine State Chief Minister U Nyi Pu at Rakhine State government meeting hall in Rakhine. PHOTO: MNA

Committee holds second coord meeting to draft by-laws of Broadcasting Law



Union Minister Dr. Pe Myint addresses the coordination meeting for Revision and Drafting by-laws on Television and Broadcasting Law in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. PHOTO: MNA

A second coordination meeting of the Committee for Revision and Drafting by-laws on Television and Broadcasting Law was held at Ministry of Information in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning.

At the meeting Union Minister for Information Dr. Pe Myint said the first coordination meeting of the committee was held on 1 March and the First Draft prepared by Ministry of Information was distributed to relevant departments for suggestion and discussion.

Only when the by-laws were enacted can Broadcasting Council formed, licenses for television and broadcasting issued and works for development of various stages of the service conducted. Therefore, meeting attendees are invited to conduct detailed discussions and suggestions on the First Draft, said the Union Minister. Next, Myanmar Radio and Television Director General U Myint Htwe explained about the status of drawing up Television and

Broadcasting Rule. This was followed with discussions and suggestions by officials from Pyithu Hluttaw Bill Committee, Legislative Vetting and Advising Department, Directorate of Communications and Myanmar Broadcasters Association on amendments to the First Draft and the Union Minister coordinated on the discussions and suggestions.

The meeting was attended by Deputy Minister U Aung Hla Tun and officials.—MNA ■
(Translated by Zaw Min)

Conservation of endangered species matter of pride for Myanmar

CRITICALLY endangered species, including golden deer (Cervus eldithamin), star tortoise, and other amphibians, have found a home in the Shwettaw and Chatthin sanctuaries in central Myanmar. They have been conserved at the sanctuaries for more than 77 years.

The species are the pride of Myanmar as they cannot be found anywhere else on the globe.

The star tortoise, a critically endangered species endemic to the dry zone forests of Myanmar, is counted among the most beautiful species of tortoise in the world.

The golden deer is a rare species of deer found in Myanmar, and is seen mostly in the Shwettaw and Chatthin wildlife sanctuaries.

The Shwettaw sanctuary was established to conserve endangered species, raise awareness about protecting and conserving flora and fauna, and preserve the catchment areas of the Mann and Mone creeks in central Myanmar.

The sanctuary has allowed conservationists to carry out scientific research, and helped local authorities bring about regional development through ecotourism.

Myanmar has 43 conservation areas which have been set up for protecting and preserving the country's ecosystem and biodiversity. The Shwettaw Wildlife Sanctuary is one of them.

It is home to 14 kinds of mammals, 146 species of birds, 43 species of amphibians, 39 species of butterfly, 22 species of freshwater fish, 89 tree species, three orchid species, and 26 kinds of herbal plants.

To disseminate information about wildlife conservation, which can ensure security of animals, especially the golden deer in the Shwettaw and Chatthin sanctuaries, we need the cooperation of local residents. We need to improve their knowledge about wildlife.

Educational programs were conducted at villages near the sanctuary, and a census taken last year found deer hunting has decreased. There were three cases in which the relevant authorities took necessary action against poachers.

We must keep on this trajectory, with the cooperation of the local people.

The Government has also increased the number of public awareness campaigns and engagement on illegal wildlife trade issues through public campaigns.

On 3 March, the authorities destroyed 219 pieces of ivory, 527 fragments of tiger and leopard bones, 800 horns belonging to different animals, 134.72 kg of pangolin scales, 5.5 kg of turtle shells, and dried elephant trunks, valued at K1,700 million, or \$1.1 million.

This is the second time the authorities have resorted to destroying animal parts seized during raids. This has been done to generate wider public awareness on the rise in poaching and trafficking of animals, such as tigers, elephants, gaurs, pangolins, and golden deer, globally, and public involvement in wildlife protection and conservation efforts.

Ending wildlife trafficking is a shared responsibility, and we must all take concrete action towards it.



Roundtable discussion on upgrading the capabilities of teachers

"We are working with partner universities both domestic and abroad along with other educational boards to increase the capabilities of our teachers"

Dr. Aye Aye Myint

(Continued from yesterday)

MRTV released an education roundtable talk on upgrading the capabilities of teachers. The roundtable includes discussion from National Education Policy Commission Member Dr. Win Aung, Yangon University of Education Rector Dr. Aye Aye Myint, Department of Higher Education Deputy Director General Dr. May San Yi, Department of Education Research Planning and Training Deputy Director General Dr. Zaw Latt Htun, Technical and Vocational Education Department Director Dr. Pyae Kyaw Thu and Department of Basic Education Director U Toe Win.

Dr. Aye Aye Myint: In regards to other additional training, there are also ones we collaborate with international organizations. The University of Yangon is a member of the ASEAN Teacher Education Network known as the AstEN University Network. We collaborate within the other nine universities in the network and also work with China and Japan, totaling up to 19 universities. The University of Yangon is also part of the nine education network including the UNESCO, UNICEF educational networks and others such as AstEN- mentioned previously - OSF, EU groups. These collaborations greatly enhance the skills of the Teacher Educator.

How do we execute it? We do Study Exchange programs. Through the Study Tours in the study exchange programs, international experts share their

working on creating a new Competence-based curriculum for teacher educators, DR. Michael Grosch -with the help of DAAD from Germany- came to give a workshop on transforming our current curriculum to a Competence-based curriculum to professors, assistant professors and teacher educators.

Advancing the capabilities of teachers

On one hand, we have to work on training and nurturing the teachers through capacity building and on the other, we have to build the capacities of student teachers. We send our teachers for study exchange programs and practice teaching programs to the schools mentioned along with youth and student forums. One example is the Philippine Normal University (PNU), who is also a member of the AstEN. PNU gives scholarships to two students from each members schools so we send two selected people from our program for a month of practice teach. They also participate in Youth forums and parliament field trips. In a nutshell, we are working with both domestic and international educational organizations and universities to build the capacity of student teachers along with the teachers.

Facilitator: Can you also tell us about the collaborative efforts between the University of Education and other domestic and international education organizations, and partner schools? Dr. Aye Aye Myint: This is re-

necessary to communicate with other international organizations, we have worked with British Council from 2014-2017 on various courses to advance the skills of the teachers in the University of Education. Courses from British council include EfECT courses (English for Education College Teachers), EfECT course Bridge Course and E-bridge Course for Teacher Educators for three consecutive years.

In addition, Teacher Educators at universities not only have to be good at teaching only. They need to develop their research skills as well. For research skills, we are collaborating with the above mentioned 19 partner schools. We send our people for submissions in academic journals, international conference presentations, seminars and workshops as well. We also encourage them to submit to MAAS, Myanmar science and chemistry Journal, Universities Research Journal and our very own Yangon University of Education Journal and a Monograph which is a collection of a theme of research topic starting last year. Not only does the students publish in such journals, they also go and present at other research centers and try to be included in the proceedings to improve the research skills of Teacher Educators.

Working towards improving research skills

We also submit to the AstEN (ASEAN Teacher Education Network University) Research Journal as we are a member to them. By submitting the papers, we try to improve our local, regional and international research skills. We do two projects with Hong Kong University. After submitting our first project, the world have asked about our work and request to send in papers of our findings to them. This success has allowed us to present in conferences such as the ASEAN Pacific Early Childhood ones for the UNICEF and ARNEC. But we've done projects with HKU before such presentations. We also do student exchanges with Kwansai Gakuin University in Japan as we have an MoU with them. There is also an

MoU for Faculty of International Development that is set to go for three years. In August, we have an exchange planned and also an ongoing research project. We also have collaborated on presentations with them together with our findings on our three year research of students dropping out after enrollment in basic education.

There is also an ECCD diploma training class with funds from OSF. With the help of the American Embassy and our government, research experts for ECED also come to help us as fellows. Like the German DAD program, experts also come as Visiting Lecturer. Starting January, we have longterm Visiting Lecturer that will work and teach

In addition, Teacher Educators at universities not only have to be good at teaching only. They need to develop their research skills as well. For research skills, we are collaborating with the above mentioned 19 partner schools.

together with our local professors on undergraduate and graduate courses to boost the capabilities of student teachers, undergraduates, graduate students along with the teachers.

Advancing the Skills

One thing is Fellows. The American embassy supports them to be here for four years. The Cultural Affairs department gets permission from the Ministry and get two people per year - one English teacher from Brunei via East-West Center and another American Native Speaker who specializes in English Language teaching.

The program has been going on for three years and the future teachers have been utilizing this to improve their English skills. We have asked for this fellows from the Ministry next year as well. Hence, we have capacity building programs such as receiving experts from domestic and foreign

experts, going to partner universities for presentations.

Facilitator: How do you plan to increase the capacity of teachers in Teaching Colleges?

Dr. May San Yi: Our Teaching Colleges have two courses: pre-service training and on the job training. First of all, I'd like to explain about the pre-service training. I'd like to talk about the ways to advance the different skillsets of Teacher Educators and Student Educators.

In regards to capacity building for teachers in the Teaching Colleges, we are currently working on curriculum building, attending workshops, working with ICT for classes, action research and also sending educators for scholarships abroad.

Facilitator: Can you explain more about capacity building for teachers and developing practical training skills?

Dr. May San Yi: We have started building a competency-based curriculum to cut down from our seven-year college course to four year degree colleges starting 2017. The Ministry of Education and UNESCO Myanmar's technological help along with International Bureau of Education (IBE) and University College of London (UCL) has teamed up together with their international experience to lecture about curriculum development skills starting 2017 June to a central committee of 50 members from Education Colleges and Universities and University for the Development of the National Races of the Union and has now completed up to 10 workshops for their professional development.

Facilitator: Can you also talk about how, in the Teaching

Colleges, ICT is being used to enhance the development and skillsets of the teacher's ability?

Dr. May San Yi: We have employed two teachers who have a masters in ICT for every college starting 2015 and has also used materials from UNESCO for technical help in developing the ICT training and the annual workshop curriculums.

Facilitator: Do you have any other skill development programs planned for the teachers?

Dr. May San Yi: We've had the teachers in Teaching Colleges perform action research and present in your bi-annual presentation events to build their capacity in addition to sending teachers abroad for workshops. For a long-term training program, the school sent 2 students in 2017, one in 2018, totaling of three for Master for Education in Japan.

Several others include four students for doctorates in China, one for a Computer Masters in Russia - totaling of 4. For shorter training courses to Japan, USA and Singapore, we have sent 11 in 2017, five in 2018 - a total of 16 to enhance the skills of teachers.

Facilitator: Can you explain about your current work in capacity building of the current students who will become teachers?

Dr. May San Yi: In Education Colleges, there is peer group teaching taught in groups for two subjects with 15 minutes teaching practicum for 30 days. In this coming four year teaching degree college curriculum, the practicum hours are more than the current two year teaching degree college curriculums.

It's not only Teaching Colleges. Even in partnership schools, we are working together to improve and implement great teaching skills. There are also Teaching Aids Competition being held twice every year.

May Thaw La Wun: Thank you all of you for giving us your time to discuss.

(Translated by Myat Thu)



U Kyaw Zeya presents Credentials to Co-Prince of Andorra

U Kyaw Zeya, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar to the Principality of Andorra, presented his Credentials to His Excellency Mons, Joan-Enric Vives Sicilia, Co-Prince of Andorra, on 13 March 2019 in Episcopal Palace.—MNA



I don't believe such kind of news



Invitation to young writers for Sunday Special

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

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Thailand repatriates 18 trafficked victims to Myanmar

THAILAND handed over 18 trafficked victims — eight men, six women, two boys, and two girls — to Myanmar yesterday.

The successful repatriation of the victims was achieved through the collaborative efforts of the Relief and Resettlement Department, under the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief, and Resettlement, and Thailand's Ministry of Social Development and Human Security.

The handing-over ceremony took place at a temporary care centre in Myawady. Officials from the General Administration Department of Myawady District, Anti Trafficking in Person Police Force, National Registration and Citizenship Department, Immigration Department, Labor Department, Rehabilitation Department and Social Welfare Department, and representatives from the Myanmar Women Affairs Association and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) attended the ceremony.

The wages of 13 victims and compensation from the Thailand government, totalling 41,110Baht, were handed over to the victims.

The victims will be kept for three days



Eighteen Myanmar nationals, who were trafficked to Thailand were sent back to Myanmar through an arrangement of Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement and Thailand's Ministry of Social Development and Human Security. **PHOTO: SUPPLIED**

at the temporary care center in Myawady Town. The Myawady Anti-Human Trafficking Police will look into their essential needs, travel documents, repatriation, and conduct necessary investigations.

The trafficking victims will be sent to

their hometown on 23 March, and they will be provided aid for resettlement, with the cooperation of IOM (Myanmar), UNICEF, World Vision (Myanmar), and Save the Children.— GNLM

(Translated by La Wonn)

Myanmar-China business association to be set up soon: UMFCCI

By Aye Yamone

A Myanmar-China Business Association will soon be formed to link Myanmar entrepreneurs with Chinese investors, according to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry. Individuals for the body are being chosen at the request of the Chinese Ambassador to Myanmar, it said.

"From time-to-time, Myanmar has discussed greater economic cooperation with entrepreneurs from other countries. Chinese businesses are keen to

invest in Myanmar. Therefore, the Chinese Ambassador asked for the formation of a Myanmar-China Business Council," according to the UMFCCI. "However, we agreed to form an association, not a council, as the process of forming a council is much more complicated under Myanmar law. Once the association is established, Chinese entrepreneurs will be able to make systematic investments in Myanmar," said U Zaw Min Win, the President of the UMFCCI. The Myanmar-China Business Association has been registered, he added.

"The Chinese side is compiling a list of entrepreneurs who want to invest and live in Myanmar. It is important for China to encourage only responsible and ethical businessmen to invest in Myanmar," he said.

"Our main difficulty was that some local businessmen made recommendations to Chinese entrepreneurs. But they showed no interest in our recommendations and formed their own associations for seeking information. But these associations lacked valid information about Myanmar companies. And, we also could not be

sure how responsible and ethical the Chinese entrepreneurs were. So, we needed an association like the MCBA to ensure systematic investments from Chinese businessmen," he added. "China tops the list in terms of foreign direct investments into Myanmar. More and more Chinese businessmen will come and invest in Myanmar as part of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)," he said. In this regard, the UMFCCI and the NLD's economic committee discussed the advantages and disadvantages of the BRI on 15 March. (Translated by Hay Mar)

MFVP moves for AQSIQ certification of 8 crops, border export permit

By Aye Yamone

THE Myanmar Fruit, Flower, and Vegetable Producer and Exporter Association has asked for the government's help to obtain certification from China's General Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection, and Quarantine (AQSIQ) for 8 crops. The association said it has also sought permits to export fruits legally through the border gates.

The MFVP has made the requests to the relevant ministries, such as the Ministry of Commerce and the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation.

"Earlier, watermelon and muskmelon were the only fruits that were being exported. Now, Myanmar wants to export other

fruits such as avocado, pineapple, pomelo, and jackfruit. We cannot export them legally yet as we do not have the AQSIQ's permission. However, we are sending the fruits illegally to China. If the Chinese authorities decide to seize them, they can do so. Therefore, we are trying to get AQSIQ certification for 8 crops," said U Soe Than Min Din, the chairman of the MFVP. "Watermelon, muskmelon, mango, and plum are on the list of fruits approved by China's AQSIQ. We want permission to export 8 more agricultural products, including avocado, pomelo, banana, pineapple, elephant foot yam, and lemon, not just through the Muse-Shweli gate, but also Kanpikete, Lwejel, and other border gates," he said. "The MFVP made this re-

quest to the government six months ago. We have to check the state of our crops so that we can tell the Chinese side their true condition. Once the Chinese authorities verify the information provided by us, they will proceed to grant the permission for imports," he added.

"Currently, pomelo and rambutan have seen a good harvest in Myitkyina. If we are permitted to export them to China through Muse gate alone, we will have to go to Muse from Myitkyina. So, we have requested that permits be granted to export the fruits through other gates such as Kanpikete and Lwejel," said U Soe Than Min Din.

China's AQSIQ is currently inspecting Myanmar avocado farms to check if they meet its

quality criteria.

"Among the agricultural products exported by Myanmar, only five - rice, mango, watermelon, muskmelon, and plum - are registered with China's AQSIQ. Others are exported to China illegally. As a result, Myanmar traders face losses due to various reasons," said U Ko Ko Gyi, a member of the Border Trade Promotion Committee of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry.

The MFVP has requested the relevant departments to expedite registration of agricultural products, livestock products, aquatic products, and industrial products with the AQSIQ so they are certified as soon as possible.

(Translated by Hay Mar)

Sale of imported pharmaceuticals to be held in Tatmadaw Hall next month



Western medicine products displayed on the pharmacy shelves at a drugstore. **PHOTO: PHOE KHWAR**

By Nyein Nyein

A THREE-DAY sales expo of imported pharmaceuticals and medical equipment will be held from 27-29 April at the Tatmadaw Hall, said U Zaw Moe Khaing, the chair of the Myanmar Pharmaceutical and Medical Equipment Entrepreneurs Association.

“The objective behind the expo is to promote legitimate businesses. At present, illicit trade of unregistered drugs and medications that have failed FDA tests is being witnessed on social networks. These give

unfair competition to legal businesses. This being the case, we would like to promote legal businesses through the expo,” said U Zaw Moe Khaing.

“We aim to encourage legal importers and distributors of pharmaceuticals and medical equipment, improve the pharmaceutical industry, put FDA-approved medicines directly into the hands of the consumers, and improve medical knowledge,” said Dr. Win Kyaing, the general secretary of the MPMEEA.

As part of the expo, the Food and Drug Administra-

tion Department will organize health seminars to raise awareness on public health.

Over 150 stalls at the expo will showcase pharmaceuticals, nutraceuticals, medical equipment and instruments, hospitals and healthcare services, dental care, laboratories, sports (fitness) and aesthetic and plastic surgery, Dr. Win Kyaing added.

At the expo, exhibitors will also offer special discounts for pharmaceuticals and medical equipment, and free gifts to visitors.

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Bilateral trade with Thailand worth \$1.7 bln in current fiscal

THE value of trade between Myanmar and the neighbouring country Thailand reached US\$1.76 billion from October, 2018 to January, 2019 of the current fiscal year, comprising export worth \$1.02 billion and import valued \$733.8 million, according to data released by the Ministry of Commerce.

Thailand tops on regional trade line-up with the largest trade value.

Myanmar’s main export items are fishery products

such as crab, fish and shrimp, as well as onions, sesame, dry tea leaves, coconut and turmeric, while consumer goods, cosmetic machinery, food products, while agricultural equipment and truck cars are imported into the country from Thailand. Bilateral trade was registered at \$2.95 billion in the past mini-budget period, \$5 billion in the 2017-2018 FY, \$4.28 billion in the 2016-2017 FY and \$4.86 billion in the 2015-16 FY respectively. —GNLM

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Muse trade down by \$588 mln as of 8 March

THE value of Sino-Myanmar border trade through Muse checkpoint as of 8 March in current financial year fell by US\$588 million, according to the data released by the Ministry of Commerce.

Between 1 October 2018 and 8 March 2019, the Muse gate is registered at \$2.19 billion which plunged from \$2.78 billion of the corresponding period of last FY.

Muse is the major border gate in Myanmar that performs the largest trade volume and it witnessed a steep drop, owing to tight confiscation and trade suspension by China, coupling with market holiday during Chinese New Year Festival. Over five-month period of current FY, export through Muse gate is worth

\$1.4 billion while import is valued \$750 million. Export fell by \$600 million whereas import showed a slight increase compared to the same time of previous FY.

Myanmar conducts border trade with China through the Muse, Lwejel, Chinshwehaw, Kanpiketee and Kengtung gates.

Myanmar’s rice, sugar, pulses, sesame seeds, corn, dried tea leaves, fishery products, minerals and animal products are exported to China, while agriculture machinery, electrical appliances, iron and steel-related materials, raw industrial goods and consumer goods flowed into the country.—GNLM

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Grab Partners with Denko introduces first petrol rebates programme

GRAB, Southeast Asia’s leading Offline-to-Online (O2O) platform, has introduced a new petrol rebate programme for its driver-partners in Yangon and Mandalay in partnership with leading fuel provider Denko.

This programme, which aims to reduce the most significant expense of driving daily, is the latest addition to Grab’s Better 365 scheme which provides benefits to improve the lives of its drivers-partners.

Through the partnership which launches today, Grab will issue 5,000 co-branded Grab Denko Smile Cards to its Gold and Platinum driver-partners. Driver-partners who receive a Grab Denko Smile Card, can use it when buying petrol at any of Denko’s 16 outlets in Yangon Region and 22 outlets in Mandalay region to receive

rebates. This is the first major corporate partnership that Denko has formed to date, and the collaboration with Grab will see it offer the largest exclusive rebate programme in the country.

For every petrol purchase worth K100 with the Grab Denko Smile Card, the driver-partner will receive 1.5 points, with each point equivalent to K1. This means a driver-partner who purchases petrol worth K10,000 will receive 150 points worth K150. The points can be accumulated over time and used by driver-partners for future petrol purchases at Denko outlets. Driver-partners will also be able to use the Grab Denko Smile Card in conjunction with any other promotions offered by Denko in the future. —GNLM

Ar Yu International Hospital partners GE Healthcare and Sea Lion to improve healthcare access and capability in Myanmar

GE Healthcare and Sea Lion Company Ltd. (“Sea Lion”) today announced a collaboration with Yangon’s newest internationally-designed hospital, Ar Yu International Hospital (“Ar Yu”). Ar Yu International Hospital is a joint-venture between Myanmar mall operator Ga Mone Pwint Co., Ltd. and Thonburi Healthcare Group Public Company Limited, Thailand’s renowned healthcare company with over 40 years of experience.

Dr. Watson Aphiwatanakoon, CEO and Hospital Director of Ar Yu International Hospital highlighted, “With highest regards to take Yangon’s medical services to the next level and to lift hospital standards in Myanmar, we need to have good facilities and well-trained profession-



Union Minister Dr. Myint Htwe, Yangon Region Chief Minister U Phyto Min Thein and officials cut ribbons to formally open Ar Yu International Hospital. **PHOTO: SUPPLIED**

als who are focused on quality and safety. We have invested in high-quality medical equipment manufactured from GE Healthcare for Ar Yu International Hospital.”

General Electric (GE) is an American company and has operations in 130 countries around the world including Thailand

and Myanmar. According to Oxford Business Group, about 90 percent of private hospitals in the country have fewer than 100 beds and these hospitals are mainly concentrated in the urban areas of Yangon and Mandalay. Phase One of the new hospital aims to address that, with a focus on cardiology. —GNLM

AA members found planting landmines, arrested



The two suspects captured near Yesochaung Village. PHOTO: MNA

SECURITY forces conducting an operation on 20 March in Rakhine State found three members of the AA group planting landmines. One of them was killed and two were arrested.

On the evening of 20 March, security personnel conducted a proper security operation in Yathedaung Township, Rakhine State, and found a man planting a landmine two miles north-west of Yesochaung Village. The AA

member was shot dead as he fled away when he saw the security forces. He was found carrying two improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and one knife.

Following the incident, the security forces conducted a search around the village during which, two remote-controlled mines exploded.

Security personnel found two men near the site where the mines went off and arrest-

ed them.

According to the head of Yesochaung Village and villagers, the two men were not from the village and were strangers. One of them was reportedly under the influence of drugs.

The two men were handed over to the concerned authorities for interrogation, according to the Office of the Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services.—MNA ■

World Bank targets 12 townships in Sagaing for education project

A total of 12 townships across Sagaing Region have been chosen for an education project financed by the World Bank, following a recent meeting with the Ministry of Education, said U Myat Khine from World Bank.

U Myat Khine said the project aims to develop basic education in six townships and promote non-formal education in six townships of Sagaing Region through a collaboration between the Ministry of Education and the World Bank, an international financial institution.

Under the project, basic education will be developed in Lahe, Shwebo, Kalewa, Homma-

lin, Lashi, and Nanyun townships, while non-formal education will be accelerated in Shwebo, Kanbalu, Lahe, Nanyun, Homalin, and Wetlet townships. The project will include school development programmes, student stipend programmes, capacity-building training for school teachers, non-formal education, and ethnic education, said U Myat Khine. The World Bank is continuing its support to the education project to help refine and expand Myanmar's School Grants Program and Student Stipend Program.—Myo Min Tun (Monywa) ■ (Translated by Khaing Thanda Lwin)

One civilian shot dead by AA

ACTING on information, security forces recovered the body of a man with gunshot wounds to the head from a boat on the evening of 19 March at the Chanmyay Nadi Park Jetty in Kyauktaw.

The man has been identified as U Aung Kyaw Nyunt, 53, the son of U Maung Ba Kyaw of Htarunai Village, Paletwa Township, Chin State. He was shot in the head.

According to investigators, U Aung Kyaw Nyunt was reportedly alone in the boat at the time he was killed. Another man from his village,

Maung Tun Min, who had accompanied him had gone to Kyawtaw to fetch U Aung Kyaw Nyunt's wife, Daw Khin Than Hlaing. She was on her way back from Nay Pyi Taw, where she had dropped their son off to school.

U Aung Kyaw Nyunt and Maung Tun Min had arrived in Kyauktaw by boat on the morning of 19 March to buy grocery items and to fetch Daw Khin Than Hlaing.

According to people with knowledge of the incident and accounts of villagers from Htaronai Village, U Aung Kyaw Nyunt was reportedly

killed by AA as he did not support the group.

In the past, AA reportedly sent bullets in envelopes to the heads of villages and departmental officials, and villagers who did not support them were abducted, tortured, and killed.

The local people expressed their displeasure over the actions of the AA group.

The local authorities have also asked people to send information about the group to help prevent their acts of terrorism, according to the Office of the Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services.—MNA ■

Netanyahu hails Trump 'historic' pledge on Israel sovereignty of Golan

JERUSALEM — Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Thursday welcomed US President Donald Trump's "historic" pledge to recognise Israel's disputed annexation of the Golan, which it seized from Syria in 1967.

"At a time when Iran seeks to use Syria as a platform to destroy Israel, President Trump boldly recognises Israeli sovereignty over the Golan Heights," he wrote on his personal Twitter account. "Thank you President Trump!" Trump's statement of intent on the strategic plateau Israel seized in the 1967 Six-Day War came after US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo visited Jerusalem and stood shoulder-to-shoulder with Netanyahu at the Western Wall in the city's Israeli-annexed eastern sector.

It was the first time such a high-ranking US official visited

the site in mainly Palestinian east Jerusalem alongside an Israeli premier. Both US gestures serve to boost Netanyahu's campaign for a fifth term, less than three weeks before Israel's April 9 elections.

Netanyahu's office said that he spoke to Trump by phone and thanked him personally for his decision, telling him: "You made history." Netanyahu has been pushing for the White House to recognise Israel's sovereignty over the Golan and Trump tweeted Thursday that "it is time" to do so.

Pompeo's visit with the premier to the Western Wall, one of the holiest in Judaism, could be taken as tacit approval of Israel's sovereignty over the city's eastern sector, which is claimed by the Palestinians.

Israel sees the entire city as its undivided capital.—AFP ■

11 dead, 50 rescued after India building collapse

ELEVEN people were confirmed dead on Thursday three days after a building under construction in southern India caved in, officials said.

Building collapses are frequent in India. Many firms use cheap materials and bribe officials to evade regulations, while on-site safety is lax.

Around 400 rescuers have been scouring through tonnes of concrete and steel after the latest tragedy in Karnataka state on Tuesday.

Fifty-three people have been rescued from the rubble of the five-storey building in Dharwad district, but three more bodies were pulled out on Thursday.

"At least 15 people are possibly still under the debris and it's unlikely they will survive," emergency official Srikant, who goes by one name, told AFP.

Heavy earth-movers and



Around 400 rescuers have been scouring through tonnes of concrete and steel after the building collapse. PHOTO: AFP

rescuers with specialised equipment and sniffer dogs were deployed in the increasingly desperate operation.

The victims were mostly from northern Indian states who came to the region for work.

Police have charged the builder with manslaughter but he remains free, with investigators saying he will be arrested after

the rescue operation is over.

Last September, five people were killed after a Delhi apartment block collapsed. Months earlier, a six-storey building in the capital had given way, killing nine.

Millions of Indians, who will vote in elections in April and May, live in dilapidated old buildings, many of which are susceptible to collapse during rain.—AFP ■

Canned air and water-spraying drones: Smog remedies

HONG KONG —As millions of people in Asia choke under polluted skies, authorities have turned to water-dispersing drones and outdoor air purifiers to improve air quality, while companies have tried to cash in by selling everything from canned air to lung-purifying teas.

According to the World Health Organisation, 92 percent of the population in the Asia Pacific region are exposed to levels of air pollution that pose a significant risk to their health, according to UN Environment.

Here is a look at some of the ways those living under the haze try to limit minimize its effects.

Spraying water

As public anger rises over toxic air, authorities have turned to spraying

water, which is thought to stick to pollutants and carry them to the ground, but tools such as water cannons have been criticised as having little effect and being a “band-aid” solution that distracts from root causes.

New Delhi - the world’s most polluted major city - tried in 2017 to use helicopters to sprinkle water over the city, but the choppers were not able to fly due to low visibility caused by smog.

In Bangkok, the government tried a raft of measures to combat a murky haze that blanketed the city for weeks in January, including spraying overpasses with water, cloud seeding and even deploying a fleet of water-dispersing drones.

Cloud-seeding is used to stimulate rain by inject-



This this photo taken on March 17, 2019, the leaf-shaped ventilation shaft (C) for the air purification system of the Central-Wan Chai bypass tunnel is seen beyond anchored boats in Hong Kong. **HOTO: VIVEK PRAKASH / AFP**

ing chemicals into clouds using rockets, cannons or aircraft, but the technique is not always successful.

An attempt by South Korea to create artificial rain to tackle air pollution in January failed, after an aircraft sent to seed clouds with silver iodide only produced several minutes of misty rain.

Outdoor air purifiers

The northern Chinese city of Xi’an is experimenting with a giant air purifier the size of an industrial smokestack which can reduce PM2.5 concentration by 15 percent within 10 square kilometres, according to researchers.—AFP

A tale of two Delhis: Deadly air exposes rich poor divide

NEW DELHI —Walls draped in lush vertical gardens and air filtered through purifiers insulate diners at a swanky New Delhi food court from the choking haze outside in one of the most polluted places on earth.

But these eco-eateries, offering cleaner air as well as modern menus to the well heeled are beyond reach for the poor, who have little means of escaping the deadly smog which coats the city for much of the year.

Air pollution kills more than one million Indians every year, according to a study by Lancet Planetary Health, and Delhi is ranked one of the most toxic urban centres to live, regularly exceeding World Health Organisation (WHO) limits.

But for Ramavtar Singh there is no escape: like

many of the city’s poorest, he eats, sleeps, and works outside.

“I work for six to eight hours every day and my children eat and sleep outside most times of the year,” the father of five tells AFP at a roadside food stall, gulping down a 50-cent dish of rice and lentils.

Singh earns a living by cycling passengers and cargo around Delhi on his rickshaw, a strenuous activity that means he’s inhaling dangerous concentrations of tiny pollutants deep into his lungs.

At best, he can wrap a rag over his mouth on smoggy days, a low-cost approach taken by labourers and rickshaw drivers that does little to prevent the most dangerous particles entering the bloodstream.—AFP

CLAIM’S DAY NOTICE

M.V MCC DHAKA VOY. NO. (911S)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V MCC DHAKA VOY. NO. (911S) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 22-03-2019 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

CLAIM’S DAY NOTICE

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Consignees of cargo carried on M.V IMKE SELMER VOY. NO. (1475) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 22-03-2019 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T.T-4 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.

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AGENT FOR: M/S CA SHIPPING PTE, LTD

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Consignees of cargo carried on M.V CHARITY VOY. NO. (-) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 22-03-2019 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T.T-3 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 UNIVERSE LOGISTICS
INTERNATIONAL CO LTD

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CLAIM’S DAY NOTICE

M.V CHERRY VESTA VOY. NO. (010N/S)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V CHERRY VESTA VOY. NO. (010N/S) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 22-03-2019 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of 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 CONTINENTAL SHIPPING
LINE PTE LTD

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM’S DAY NOTICE

M.V AQUA BLUE VOY. NO. (176)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V AQUA BLUE VOY. NO. (176) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 22-03-2019 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.P.L where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S TOKO KAIUN KAISHA LTD,
JAPAN

Phone No: 2301191, 2301178

CLAIM’S DAY NOTICE

M.V WINDS 3 VOY. NO. (EAL-1)

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S EVERETT ASIA LINE PTE
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Phone No: 2301191, 2301178

Old foes, millennials stand in way of Thai junta polls victory

CHAIYAPHUM (Thailand)—Thailand holds its first election in eight years on Sunday under rules concocted by a junta to keep it in power, but with the appeal of both old foes and the new millennial vote posing an unpredictable challenge.

The junta seized power in 2014, vowing to rescue the country from a treadmill of coups, short-lived civilian governments, and protests. But the kingdom goes to the polls on March 24 as divided as ever.

The arch-royalist army has no intention of leaving politics and has scripted a constitution that gifts it a foothold in power for a generation.

Standing in its way are supporters of its nemesis, ex-premier Thaksin Shinawatra, who has dominated Thai politics since his first election win in 2001. He was toppled by an earlier coup in 2006, but his affiliated Pheu Thai party taps a deep seam of loyalty from the poor but populous rural north and northeast.

Thousands of rice farmers gathered in a school yard earlier this week for a Pheu Thai rally in rural Chaiyaphum, applauding promises of better times ahead



Thousands of Thais loyal to ex-premier Thaksin Shinawatra gather for a political rally in rural Chaiyaphum. **PHOTO: AFP**

under an elected government and whistling disapproval at every mention of the junta.

“We still love Thaksin... we want him to come back,” 65-year-old Lamoon Moorsorping told AFP. Shinawatra-allied parties hope to win a comfortable majority of the 500 elected seats up for grabs across a country wearied by junta rule.

But Sunday’s vote is the first under new rules that mean win-

ning the popular vote does not automatically translate into leading a government, or choosing the next prime minister.

Instead, 250 junta-appointed senators are poised to play a key role in shaping the next administration. With the senate onside, the junta-linked party needs just 126 elected seats to secure a parliamentary majority — setting up a potential collision over a denied mandate. “Form-

ing a government and governing will be different,” warns Thitinan Pongsudhirak, a political scientist at Bangkok’s Chulalongkorn University.

“We will probably see some kind of deadlock... that will lead to some kind of constitutional crisis.”

Heart over head

With days to go, election fever has gripped much of a coun-

try starved for nearly five years of political expression.

Advance voting last Sunday saw a near 90 per cent turnout, while acerbic commentary, memes and satirical swipes are pinballing across social media.

More than seven million millennials are eligible to vote for the first time, most unencumbered by old political loyalties — injecting uncertainty into the outcome.

Sunday’s poll will essentially be a “vote on the military” said Thailand expert and historian Chris Baker.

With much of the country viscerally opposed either to the junta or to Thaksin, the ballot will be “more emotional than rational,” he added.

The junta’s affiliated party Phalang Pracharart is hoping an unspectacular campaign does not translate into a humiliation at the polls.

Its figurehead, army chief-turned-premier Prayut Chan-O-Cha has undergone a last-ditch Instagram makeover in a bid to strike a softer pose and return as a civilian premier, a cause aided by senators whose jobs will be owed to him. —AFP ■

Viet Nam police seize 300kg of meth in mansion bust

HANOI — Viet Nam police busted a massive meth ring in a Ho Chi Minh City mansion allegedly run by a Chinese national who used a textile company as a cover for the operation, police and state media reported Thursday (Mar 21).

Police on Wednesday stormed the luxury property in Viet Nam’s largest city, guarded with private security and outfitted with cameras during an hours-long raid which unearthed sacks of methamphetamine believed to have been smuggled in from Laos. Around 300kg (660 pounds) of methamphetamine was seized, and images in the press later displayed dozens of bricks of drugs.

“Eleven people were arrested including eight Chinese and three Vietnamese,” a police official from Binh Tan district where the bust took place told AFP Thursday, requesting anonymity.

The primary suspect was a 56-year-old Chinese national, whose Vietnamese girlfriend was reportedly registered as the owner of a textile export business. The Chinese suspect allegedly ran the drugs operation under the guise of the textile export business.

The confiscated drugs were likely transported from Laos, travelling through Kon Tum province for “consumption in Ho Chi Minh City”, the official Viet Nam

News Agency reported.

The bust was part of a larger investigation across central Viet Nam involving several provinces and further investigations are ongoing. Synthetic drug use is on the rise in the Southeast Asian country, especially among young people who prefer party drugs to opium and heroin popular among older users.

Several large hauls of synthetics have been seized by police in recent months as officials try to wrestle control over the rising trade. The narcotics are often smuggled in from the “Golden Triangle” — a lawless border zone that straddles Laos, Myanmar and Thailand — though police have also broken up domestic labs churning out meth and other synthetics.

Last year seven people died at a rave in Hanoi from suspected overdoses in a case that stunned the conservative capital.

Several were seen passed out and convulsing on the ground before being rushed to hospital, and authorities issued a blanket ban on music festivals after the accident, the deadliest drug-related incident in the city’s recent

US trade negotiators to visit China on March 28-29

BEIJING — Senior US officials will visit Beijing for a new round of trade war talks on 28-29 March, followed by a trip to the United States by China’s top negotiator in April, the Chinese commerce ministry said Thursday.

The back-to-back trips come as Washington and Beijing battle over the final shape of a trade deal, with American officials demanding profound changes to Chinese industrial policy.

US Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer and Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin are returning to the Chinese capital next week, commerce ministry spokesman Gao Feng said at a weekly briefing. After their visit, Chinese Vice Premier Liu He will head to the United States in April to continue the negotiations, Gao said.

President Donald Trump warned Wednesday that US tariffs on Chinese imports could remain in place for a “substantial period”, dampening hopes that an agreement would see them lifted soon. Over the last eight months, the United States and China have



US Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer will head to Beijing along with Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin for a new round of negotiations with China. **PHOTO: AFP**

slapped tariffs on more than \$360 billion in two-way goods trade, weighing on the manufacturing sectors in both countries.

On Friday, China’s rubber-stamp parliament approved a foreign investment law to strengthen protections for intellectual property — a central US grievance — but critics said the bill was rammed through without sufficient time for input from businesses. The law was adopted barely three months after a first draft was debated, an unusually quick turnaround for the legislature, which meets once a year.—AFP ■



Vietnamese police display bricks of methamphetamine in Ho Chi Minh City after a major bust on 20 March, 2019. **PHOTO: AFP**



Aerial photo taken on 10 March, 2019 shows the city of Ruili in southwest China's Yunnan Province. In 2010, Ruili was listed as a national opening-up pilot zone. PHOTO: XINHUA

Border province's trade volume up 8 pct with Belt and Road countries

KUNMING — Southwest China's Yunnan Province reached foreign trade volume of 33.11 billion yuan (about 4.84 billion US dollars) in the first two months of the year, with countries along the Belt and Road accounted for 70.5 per cent, according to the local customs office.

The province's foreign trade volume in the first two months grew by 22 per cent year-on-year and its volume with the Belt and Road countries registered a year-on-year rise of 7.9 per cent during the same period, according to the customs.

Statistics also show that trade with ASEAN countries has made the largest share of Yunnan's total foreign trade volume from January to February, and the province saw the biggest year-on-year increase of 120 per cent in trade with countries in Latin America. — Xinhua ■

Singapore e-commerce giant vows to create 20 million jobs in e-commerce ecosystem

SINGAPORE — Singapore-headquartered e-commerce giant Lazada Group said on Thursday that it will create 20 million jobs in the e-commerce ecosystem by 2030.

At the LazMall Brands Future Forum, the company said it plans to serve hundreds of millions of consumers by the year, as well as cultivate eight million successful and flourishing entrepreneurs and small- and medium-sized enterprises.

Lazada Group whose majority is owned by Alibaba Group Holding Limited is a top online shopping and selling destination in Southeast Asia, such as Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

The company also announced a series of products and services that will fire up the

growth of its brands and sellers to win market share in the region by transforming them into "Super eBusinesses."

The company told the brands and sellers who gathered at the annual summit to discuss growth opportunities and technological advancements that the offerings, dubbed super-solutions, are aimed at resolving three pain points that brands and sellers face, namely branding, marketing and sales.

"No seller is too small to aspire, and no brand is too big to be a Super eBusiness. That is why we are thrilled to roll out super-solutions to help our brands and sellers become more nimble in digitizing their businesses and better reach customers," said Pierre Poignant, Lazada Group chief executive officer.

The super-solutions will

also make it easier for brands and sellers to open up stores on LazMall, which is a dedicated space for Lazada users to get direct access to over 1,500 trusted leading international and local brands and top-rated online brands, and authorized brand distributors.

It also announced that it will host a first-of-its-kind concert, called Super Party, in Jakarta next week as part of its birthday shopping event.

Poignant said that backed by Alibaba's technology and logistics infrastructure, Lazada has been able to launch over the past year's industry-leading tech innovations, such as search-image function, consumer engagement games and in-app live streaming, to become a "shoppertainment" platform in the region. — Xinhua ■

Seven-Eleven tests shorter opening hours amid labor shortage

TOKYO — Japan's top convenience store chain operator Seven-Eleven Japan Co on Thursday started trials of shorter opening hours, in a move toward reviewing its long-held policy of operating stores 24 hours a day, amid a serious shortage of labor.

In the pilot project, Seven-Eleven will open 10 stores it directly operates according to one of three time frames — from 5 am to 1 am the following day, 7 am to 11 pm, and 6 am to midnight, to see any changes in sales and customer traffic compared with 24-hour operation.

It said one of the 10 stores is in Tokyo but did not disclose the locations of the other nine or which time frame will be tested in each store.

The Tokyo-based company has said it does not intend to change its policy of 24/7 operation in principle and whether shorter opening hours are introduced at its franchise stores will depend on the results of the trials.

Seven-Eleven decided to conduct the trials after a group of convenience store owners called on Feb. 27 for a review of its policy requiring all owners to keep their stores open 24 hours a day, citing difficulties securing staff.

Mitoshi Matsumoto, who owns a Seven-Eleven store in Higashiosaka, western Japan, started closing his store overnight from 1 February but was

accused by the chain operator of violating its contract. Matsumoto said he was asked to cancel the contract or pay a penalty if he did not return to 24/7 operation.

The chain, which started 24/7 business hours at convenience stores in 1975, operates around 21,000 of the over 55,000 such stores in Japan.

Around 96 per cent of Seven-Eleven stores open 24/7, except for those in locations such as office buildings and train stations, according to the company.

The company has not made public when it will end the pilot program.

It introduced 24-hour operation not only for customer convenience but because its logistics are built on the model, including restocking shelves during late-night hours.

The labor crunch in Japan has prompted other retailers and restaurant operators to review 24/7 operations.

Convenience store operator FamilyMart Co. has also tested shorter opening hours, while rival Lawson Inc. already allows franchise stores to cut operating hours.

Royal Holdings Co ended 24-hour operation at all Royal Host restaurants in January 2017. McDonald's Holdings Company (Japan) Ltd is also proceeding with a review of around-the-clock operations. — Kyodo News ■



Seven-Eleven Japan Co. on Thursday started trials of shorter opening hours, in a move toward reviewing its long-held policy of operating stores 24 hours a day. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

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Myanmar to play Timor Leste today in AFC U-23 Championship Qualifiers

HOST Myanmar will play against Timor Leste at 6 p.m. today, the first day of the qualifiers for the AFC U-23 Championship 2020, at the Thuwunna Stadium in Yangon.

In another match scheduled for 3 p.m. today, Asian football powerhouse Japan will take on Macau at the same venue.

A pre-match press conference was held yesterday in Yangon, where head coaches of participating teams spoke about winning the championship and steering their teams towards targets.

Velizar Popov, the head coach of the Myanmar U-23 men's football team, said the team is very excited about participating in the championship.

"It is a very good opportunity for us as one of Asia's best teams, Japan, has been placed in our group. And, we also need to take care with Timor Leste and Macau

teams as they are also good. We will try our best to advance to the next stage," he said.

Timor Leste head coach Norio Tuskitate said the team's target is advancing to the next stage of the championship, and they are focusing on getting good results in every match.

Macau head coach Yung Chu Yin said for passing the group stage, his team needs to try and win all their matches, with an unbeatable score. The coach said the team is focusing on advancing to the next stage.

Japan head coach Akinobu Yokouchi said this will not be an easy game for his team. "All three matches are important for us, as all the teams are very good in my opinion," he said. The matches for Myanmar team will be broadcast live on MRTV and MRTV Sports Channel. They will also be streamed live on My Sports Channel.—Lynn Thit (Tgi) ■

Alexander-Arnold pulls out of England squad

LONDON — Defender Trent Alexander-Arnold has withdrawn from the England squad for their Euro 2020 qualifiers due to a back injury.

Alexander-Arnold had been struggling with the problem before linking up with England and on Wednesday it was decided the

right-back wouldn't recover in time to feature against the Czech Republic and Montenegro.

The 20-year-old has returned to Liverpool to continue treatment on the injury with a view to featuring for the Premier League leaders after the international break.—AFP ■



Myanmar's Win Theingi Tun (red jersey) and a player from Viet Nam vie for the ball during yesterday's international friendly at the Mandalay Thiri Stadium in Mandalay. PHOTO: MFF

Myanmar suffers narrow loss to Viet Nam in international friendly

THE Myanmar women's football team lost to team Viet Nam by a narrow 0-1 in the international friendly match yesterday at the Mandalay Thiri Stadium in Mandalay.

The win for Viet Nam hinged on good understanding of the forward field, and speedy pass coupled with counter attacks.

Though it was a friendly match, both teams used key players to showcase their skills.

Both teams played energetically from the kick-off, trying to score the opening goal.

Myanmar tried to gain control of the ball in the beginning, but Viet Nam's counterattacks frequently rankled Myanmar's defense line.

Neither team scored in the first half, as they could not convert their chances into goals.

In the second half, Viet Nam refined their tactics and played a better game.

Viet Nam scored the ice-breaker at 50 minutes, with Nguyen Thi guiding the ball past the opposing team and landing it directly into the net with a strong kick.

In the hot Mandalay weather, Myanmar made an all-out effort to score in the last minutes, but it was in vain.

There were no more goals till the final whistle, and the match ended in favour of Viet Nam.—Lynn Thit (Tgi) ■

Youthful talent gives England a bright future, says Henderson

LONDON — Jordan Henderson says England are ready to fulfil the growing expectations around their vibrant young team as the Euro 2020 qualifying campaign starts with the Czech Republic's visit to Wembley on Friday.

Gareth Southgate's squad are back together for the first time in 2019, with the Czechs their first test before a trip to Montenegro for the second qualifier on Monday.

For the first time in years, there is a sense England can emerge as one of the main contenders for international football's top prizes. After reaching

the World Cup semi-finals for the first time since 1990, England rounded off a memorable 2018 by defeating Spain and Croatia to reach this year's inaugural Nations League finals.

While that stands as impressive progress for England after decades of underachievement, Liverpool midfielder Henderson is confident the best is still to come for Southgate's men.

With promising teenagers Jadon Sancho and Callum Hudson-Odoi and 20-year-old Declan Rice joining an England squad already bolstered by the rise of Harry Kane, Raheem Sterling,

Marcus Rashford and Dele Alli, among others, Henderson is enjoying the fresh feel to a group that plays without fear.

Sancho is unlocking his potential with Borussia Dortmund after leaving Manchester City, while Hudson-Odoi is a hot property despite still awaiting his first Premier League start with Chelsea.

Two more youngsters, Chelsea's Ruben Loftus-Cheek and Liverpool's Trent Alexander-Arnold were also in the original squad but have dropped out injured. Another of Henderson's Liverpool teammates, Joe

Gomez, has won six England caps but is recovering from a broken leg. "It is good, those younger players have so much talent. It's good for England because I can see in a few years we are going to have big, big players," he said. "Young players who are maybe only starting now who are going to be more experienced and even better in a few years.

"The future is bright really with all the young players coming through and how well they are doing, that's really good for England. "It's up to me to try and help them when they come here and perform and feel comfortable

around the lads and the squad to go out in a game and do what they do for their clubs."

Competitive instincts

Southgate's job has been aided by the rapid progress of the young English players under the astute guidance of Jurgen Klopp at Liverpool, Pep Guardiola with Manchester City and Mauricio Pochettino at Tottenham.

In the past, club allegiances have created damaging divisions in the England squad, but Henderson insists the camaraderie is now strong enough to withstand that pressure.—AFP ■