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President U Win Myint shakes hands with Minister of Public Security Police Lt-Gen Vilay Larkhamfong in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

President U Win Myint receives LPDR delegation led by Minister of Public Security

President U Win Myint received a Lao People's Democratic Republic (LPDR) delegation led by Minister of Public Security Police Lt-Gen Vilay Larkhamfong at the Presidential palace envoys hall yesterday afternoon.

At the meeting increasing bilateral cooperation, cooperating in regional and international matters, cross border crime, illegal arms trade, anti-drug and anti-human trafficking works, bi-

lateral cooperation in rule of law works along Mekong River, human resources development, two ministries of the two countries learning each other's languages, upgrading the Myanmar-Lao Friendship Bridge as a border gate and bilateral investment and trade matters were cordially and openly discussed and views exchanged.

The meeting was attended by Union Ministers Lt-Gen Kyaw Swe, U Min Thu and officials. — MNA ■



State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi meets with Japanese Special Envoy Mr. Yohei Sasakawa at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Nay Pyi Taw. **PHOTO: MNA**

State Counsellor receives Mr. Yohei Sasakawa, Special Envoy of the Government of Japan

DAW Aung San Suu Kyi, State Counsellor of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, received Mr. Yohei Sasakawa, Special Envoy of the Government of Japan for National Reconciliation in Myanmar and Chairman of the Nippon Foundation, at 4pm yesterday at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Nay Pyi Taw.

During the meeting, they cordially exchanged views on the mat-

ters pertaining to Japan's continued provision of constructive assistance for Rakhine State and peace and national reconciliation process of Myanmar.

During the visit, Mr. Yohei Sasakawa paid a visit to Sittwe and Maungtau from 22nd to 24th March 2019 to provide necessary assistance to the Myanmar Government's efforts for the repatriation process.—MNA ■

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Union Minister U Kyaw Tint Swe meets with United Nations Secretary General's Special Envoy on Myanmar Ms. Christine Schraner Burgener in Nay Pyi Taw. **PHOTO: MNA**

Union Minister receives UNSG's Special Envoy on Myanmar

UNION Minister for Office of the Secretary General's Special Envoy on Myanmar Ms. Christine Schraner Burgener at the ministry in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday afternoon. — MNA (Translated by Zaw Min)

Appointment of Ambassador agreed on

THE Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has agreed to the appointment of Mr. Jean-Paul Senninger as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar. Mr. Jean-Paul Senninger was born in Luxembourg in 1959. He obtained a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science and Literature from the Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität, Freiburg in Breisgau, Germany. In 1984, he earned

a Master Degree in European Studies at the College d'Europe, Bruges, Belgium. From 1985 to 2004, he served as Professor of German Language and Literature at the Athénée de Luxembourg, Attaché at the Luxembourg Mayor's Office, Head of Unit at the European Investment Bank of Luxembourg and Premier Conseiller de Gouvernement at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Cooperation and Defense. From 2002 to 2012, he served as Ambassador of Luxembourg to

Turkey, Spain, Nicaragua, El Salvador, the United States of America, Mexico, Canada and Holy See. From 2012 to 2013, he was Secretary General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Since December 2013, he has been serving as Secretary General of the Government of Luxembourg. He speaks Luxembourgish, German, French, English, Spanish and Swedish languages. Mr. Jean-Paul Senninger is married and has two children. — MNA

Union Attorney-General receives UN Special Envoy

UNION Attorney-General U Tun Tun Oo received the Special Envoy of the UN Secretary-General on Myanmar, Ms. Christine Schraner Burgener, at his office yesterday.

They discussed progress made in the peace process, promoting rule of law, the Hlutaw's progress on making Constitutional amendments, the legal framework for freedom of expression and preventing the spread of hate speech, and ongoing tasks for resolving land ownership issues. —MNA (Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)



Union Attorney-General U Tun Tun Oo meets with United Nations Secretary General's Special Envoy on Myanmar Ms. Christine Schraner Burgener in Nay Pyi Taw. **PHOTO: MNA**

Union Supreme Court sits to pass judgment, hear civil cases

Chief Justice of the Union U Htun Htun Oo, Supreme Court judges U Tha Htay and U Myo Win of Special Appellate Bench sit at Union Supreme Court room number 1 yesterday morning and passed judgment on five (Certiorari) civil cases and heard five other (Certiorari) civil cases. — MNA

8th Myanmar-Laos security and rule of law ministerial-level meeting in Nay Pyi Taw



Union Minister Lt-Gen Kyaw Swe poses for the photo with attendees at the 8th Myanmar-Laos security and rule of law ministerial-level meeting in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

8th MYANMAR-LAOS security and rule of law ministerial-level meeting was held at Ministry of Home Affairs in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday afternoon. The meeting was attended by Union Minister for Home Affairs Lt-Gen Kyaw Swe, Deputy Minister Maj-Gen Aung Thu, Chief of Myanmar Police Force Lt-Gen Aung Win Oo, directors general from Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population, Lao People's Democratic Republic Minister of Public Security Police Lt-Gen Vilay Lakhampong and high ranking officials.

At the meeting, matters relating to cooperation in bilateral security and stability, sharing of information, increasing border liaison office processes, anti-drugs and anti-human trafficking works, illegal crossing of borders, learning of Myanmar and Laos languages for easier and smoother communi-

cation and raising bilateral cooperation were discussed and continuing of cooperation agreements between the two ministries of the two countries were discussed and agreed. After the meeting the representatives of the two countries took commemorative group photo.

Earlier in the morning, prior to the Myanmar-Laos ministerial-level meeting, Myanmar-Laos high level officials meeting was held at Horizon Lake View Hotel and was attended by Ministry of Home Affairs acting Permanent Secretary U Khaing Tun Oo, subject wise officials from Myanmar Police Force, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population, Lao People's Democratic Republic Ministry of Public Security Permanent Secretary Police Brig-Gen Si-savath Keomalavong and high ranking officials it is learnt. — MNA

(Translated by Zaw Min)

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Senior General receives Japanese Government's Special Envoy

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing received Mr. Yohei Sasakawa, Special Envoy of the Government of Japan and Chairman of the Nippon Foundation, at the Bayintnaung Guest House in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday afternoon.

At the meeting, observations made by Mr. Sasakawa during his visit to Rakhine State; sales, seizures and eradication of drugs in Rakhine State; Mon State develop-

ment works conducted by Japan; continued assistance by Japan toward conflict avoiding people and development works in Kachin State; Tatmadaw's works toward internal peace and status of assistance provided by Japan were cordially discussed and views exchanged, according to information released by the Office of the Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services. — MNA

(Translated by Zaw Min)



Senior General Min Aung Hlaing holds talks with Japanese Special Envoy Mr. Yohei Sasakawa in Bayintnaung Guest House in Nay Pyi Taw. PHOTO: OFFICE OF THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

Union Minister U Kyaw Tin attends Second High-Level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation

MYANMAR delegation led by Union Minister for International Cooperation, U Kyaw Tin, arrived back Yangon yesterday evening after attending the Second High-Level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation which was held in Buenos Aires, the Argentine Republic from 20 to 22 March 2019.

The Conference marked the fortieth anniversary of the adoption of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action for Promoting and Implementing Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries (BAPA) at the UN Conference in 1978.

The Conference was attended by the Heads of State/ Heads of Government and Ministers from 160 member states to deliberate

on the overarching theme, "Role of South-South Cooperation and implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: Challenges and Opportunities". At the Conference, delegates discussed a wide range of issues including the reviewing of the trends of South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation that aimed at achieving sustainable development. They also discussed the progress made by the International Community and the United Nations in supporting and promoting such cooperation and identifying new opportunities, as well as challenges and suggestions to overcome them.

Union Minister U Kyaw Tin delivered a statement at the General Debate of the Conference

on 20 March 2019, stressing the growing potentials and opportunities of the South-South cooperation for promoting sustainable development due to emergence of well-advanced economies in the South. In his statement, the Minister also voiced support for the important role of the South-South cooperation in addressing challenges to achieve the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. He also emphasized the need to provide the least developed countries with sufficient external support in this regard and supported the call for continued granting of duty-free and quota-free market access for all products to all LDCs in line with the decision of the WTO.

The Union Minister also

briefed the Meeting of Myanmar's commitment to the realization of the 2030 Development Agenda and its national endeavors towards that end through adoption of Myanmar Sustainable Development Plan (MSDP) which was founded on a vision of a democratic federal union where all people live in peace, harmony and prosperity.

The Union Minister also apprised the meeting of the reform measures to build an investment friendly environment in Myanmar including the development of a project bank, a rolling database consisting of major projects screened and prioritized for implementation. He then invited the countries from both North and South to avail themselves of the vast opportunities for expanding cooperation with Myanmar through promoting trade and investment.

At its closing session held on 22 March 2019, the Conference adopted the Outcome document of the Second United Nations High-Level Conference on South-South Cooperation, reaffirming their commitments to continue working closely and extending support to one another at regional and international arena, especially within the frameworks of the United Nations, BAPA, WTO and other sub-regional cooperation mechanisms.

In the evening of 20 March 2019, the Union Minister attended the dinner hosted by Mr. Jorge Faurie, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Worship of the Argen-

tine Republic.

On 21 March 2019, the Union Minister attended High-level Dialogue with Ministers of Asian Countries organized by the Mr. Jorge Faurie, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Worship of the Argentine Republic. The high level representatives of Asian countries exchanged views on further underpinning multi-faceted cooperation between Argentina and Asian countries as well as the prospects of trade and investment sectors on bilateral and triangular cooperation.

On the sideline of the Conference, the Union Minister held bilateral meeting with Mr. Gustavo Zlauvinen, Deputy Foreign Minister of the Argentine Republic on 21 March 2019 and discussed strengthening of bilateral relations between Myanmar and Argentina and the possible cooperation in the areas of agriculture, livestock, biotechnology, pharmaceuticals, culture and sports.

On 22 March 2019, the Union Minister attended the working dinner hosted by Mr. Rodolfo Cafaro Kramer, President of ASEAN-MERCOSUR Chamber of Commerce and exchanged views on opportunities of promoting trade, tourism and investment between Myanmar and Argentina. Ambassador of Myanmar concurrently accredited to Argentina, U Myo Tint, officials concerned from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs also accompanied the Minister at the meetings.— MNA ■



Union Minister U Kyaw Tin delivers the speech during the Second High-Level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation held in Buenos Aires, the Argentine Republic from 20 to 22 March 2019. PHOTO: MNA

Implementation Central Committee for Permanent Residency holds coord meeting

IMPLEMENTATION Central Committee (ICC) for Permanent Residency coordination meeting was held at Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population meeting hall in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday afternoon.

At the meeting, Chairman of ICC for Permanent Residency Union Minister U Thein Swe explained about the numbers of foreigners reviewed, approved, certificates and cards issued to date from the time the preliminary application for Permanent Residency in Myanmar of foreigners were accepted in the country and at Myanmar embassies. The explanation also covers the applications reviewed and submitted by work committee that were to be re-assessed and approved at this meeting.

Next, ICC for Permanent Residency official explained about the steps of Permanent Residency work process and ICC members reviewed, assessed and provided recommendations for each application.

Afterwards, ICC for Permanent Residency Chairman Union Minister coordinated on the discussions and delivered a concluding speech to continue the steps of work process.

The Permanent Residency system in Myanmar was started in 29 January 2015 under four categories for experts, investors, former Myanmar nationals and foreigners who were related to nationals. In the day's meeting one expert, three investors and a total of 50 former Myanmar nationals and foreigners related to Myanmar nationals



Union Minister U Thein Swe attends the Implementation Central Committee (ICC) for Permanent Residency coordination meeting in Nay Pyi Taw. **PHOTO: MNA**

were assessed and approved and a personal interview will be arranged for them. The 50 former Myanmar national and foreigners related to Myanmar nationals include 21 former Myanmar nationals who applied through Myanmar embassies in Singapore and South Africa, 6 foreigners and 19 family members who were related to Myanmar nationals.

Earlier in the morning Union Minister U Thein Swe received United Nations Secretary General's Special Envoy on Myanmar Mrs. Christine Schraner Burgener at the minister's guest room and matters related to opening of camps to receive displaced persons; immediate and long term arrangements made for livelihoods of returnees; renewing the terms

of MoU between the ministry and UNDP-UNHCR; works conducted according to priority to close IDP camps in Rakhine State, naturalization application process for returnees issued with NV cards and issuing of appropriate identification cards in accordance to supporting documents submitted were discussed. — MNA

(Translated by Zaw Min)

Tatmadaw holds press conference in Nay Pyi Taw

The Tatmadaw held a press conference at the Defence Services Museum in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday afternoon.

Present at the press conference were Tatmadaw True News Information Team Chairperson Maj-Gen Soe Naing Oo, Vice Chairperson Maj-Gen Tun Tun Nyi, secretary Brig-Gen Zaw Min Tun, high ranking Tatmadaw officers and local and foreign news media personnel.

At the press conference Maj-

Gen Soe Naing Oo and Maj-Gen Tun Tun Nyi explained about the ceasefire status between the Tatmadaw and ethnic armed organizations, status of efforts made for the peace process, and peace and stability works conducted in Rakhine State. Questions raised by the news media were then answered by officials according to news released by Office of the Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services. — MNA

(Translated by TTN)



The Tatmadaw True News Team holds press-conference in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: OFFICE OF THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF**

Dress rehearsal of 74th Armed Forces Day Parade held in Nay Pyi Taw



Vice Senior General Soe Win inspecting the Tatmadaw columns during a dress rehearsal at Nay Pyi Taw parade ground in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: OFFICE OF THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF**

TATMADAW columns participating in the 74th Armed Forces Day Parade on 27 March conducted a dress rehearsal at the Nay Pyi Taw parade ground yesterday morning.

Anawrahta, Kyansittha, Bayintnaung, Aung Zeya, Sinyushin, Bandoola and Myawady columns participated in the dress rehearsal. The Tatmadaw columns led by a Tatmadaw military band marched from the assembly point of Thittat Parade Ground to the parade ground

while singing marching songs.

The dress rehearsal was observed by Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice Senior General Soe Win, Union Ministers Lt-Gen Kyaw Swe and Lt-Gen Sein Win, Chief of General Staff (Army, Navy and Air) General Mya Tun Oo, Commander-in-Chief (Navy) Admiral Tin Aung San, Commander-in-Chief (Air Force) General Maung Maung Kyaw, senior officers from Tatmadaw

Commander-in-Chief's Office, Chief of Armed Forces Training Lt-Gen Maung Maung Aye, Armed Forces Day organizing committee chairman Nay Pyi Taw Command commander Maj-Gen Myint Maw and officials and Vice Senior General Soe Win gave advice and instructions to officials concerned to ensure proper coordination, according to news released by the Office of the Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services. — MNA

(Translated by Zaw Min)

Union Minister attends MBEI survey finding explanation

AN explanation of Myanmar Business Environment Index (MBEI) survey findings conducted by Asia Foundation was made at Ministry of Commerce assembly hall in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning.

At the event Union Minister Dr. Than Myint said the MBEI survey findings will allow systematic comparison of the practice of regional administration in states and regions and will also allow investors to understand more about the regional investment environment. The survey findings will give an opportunity to understand and reform the dif-

ficulties and obstacles affecting Myanmar economic environment at the regional level and thus it will be very useful for Myanmar said the Union Minister.

Next UK Department for International Development (DFID Myanmar) Inclusive Growth Team head Mr. Tom Cowarol delivered an opening remark followed by Asia Foundation Myanmar resident representative Mathew Arnold and senior economic expert U Kyaw Thu explained about the survey findings. Afterwards questions raised by attendees were answered. — MNA ■ (Translated by Zaw Min)



Union Minister Dr. Than Myint delivers the speech at the explanation of Myanmar Business Environment Index (MBEI) survey findings in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. PHOTO: MNA

Union Minister calls for sending information about TB cases to ministry to fight spread of disease

UNION MINISTER for Health and Sports Dr. Myint Htwe attended the 2019 World Tuberculosis Day event held at Dagon Myothit (South) Township hall yesterday.

At the event Union Minister Dr. Myint Htwe said according to Global TB report (2018), Myanmar was still among the 30 countries of the world tuberculosis occurs the most and the ministry was striving toward getting out of this list. According to this report out of 100,000 persons 358 persons had TB in Myanmar and according to 2018 TB/HIV survey 9.3 per cent of new TB patients had HIV while 5 per cent had drug

resistant TB. Without the cooperation and participation of the people, the disease eradication and prevention work wouldn't succeed and success could only be reached with the interest of the people and the cooperation of people's organisations.

For the ministry to achieve the End TB by 2035, a national TB eradication five year strategic plan based on End TB Strategy published by World Health Organisation was drawn up and implemented. Strategies that were in line with the country's economic and social situation were being setup and implemented. The ministry was cooperating with a total of 38

local and foreign partner organisations and about 2,400 private general practitioners were also participating in TB eradication. The disease eradication work could only be successful if there were full information on occurrence of TB a Mandatory TB Case Notification was announced and issued on 18 September 2018 and it was mandatory for private hospitals, clinics and diagnostic centers to report of any occurrence of TB.

The government had allocated K 14 million for TB eradication work in 1995-1996. It was increased to K 5,568 million in 2016-2017 FY, K 4,241 million in 2017-2018 FY and more than K

4,000 million in 2018-2019 FY. In 2017, International Monetary Fund and 3MDG Group had provided supports worth US\$ 19 million and US\$ 1.2 million respectively. The allocated funds and supports were being utilized systematically and effectively, said the Union Minister.

Next, Region Hluttaw Speaker U Tin Maung Tun delivered a speech followed by World Health Organization (WHO) Myanmar Representative Dr. Stephan Paul Jost read WHO Regional Director's message.

Afterwards, Myanmar TB Association patron Prof. Dr. Kyaw Myint explained about TB eradication movement and USAID Mission Director Ms. Teresa McGhie explained about USAID's TB eradication works and supports provided.

Later township awards for enthusiasm in TB prevention and eradication works and outstanding award for diagnostic centres were presented and observed the exhibitions displayed.

World Tuberculosis Day was held with health education exhibits, health talks, question and answer session, free X-Ray diagnosis for TB with mobile X-Ray machine, free test for HIV and entertainment programs. The theme of this year World Tuberculosis Day was simple and short "It's Time."

— MNA ■
(Translated by Zaw Min)



Union Minister Dr. Myint Htwe addresses the 2019 World Tuberculosis Day event in Yangon. PHOTO: MNA

Public announcement

1. Citizens can now cast early votes for the Yangon City Development Committee elections scheduled for 31 March 2019.

2. Early voting ballots have been sent to the township development election sub commissions on 18-3-2019. The following persons can contact their relevant township election sub commissions to cast early votes if they will not be in their constituency on 31-3-2019:

- a. Union Government cabinet members or Union-level officials
- b. Region/State cabinet members
- c. District-level department heads
- d. Commission members currently serving in the Yangon City Development elections

3. The following persons can contact their relevant ward/village municipal development election sub commissions to cast early votes starting from 28-3-2019:

- a. Voting booth supervisors, members and ward/village commission members assigned to the voting booths.
- b. Individuals travelling far from their constituency on election day (Appropriate documents showing valid reasons need to be submitted)
- c. Constituents inclusive to Yangon City Development Committee Election laws and bylaw 41

Yangon City Development Election Commission

Third joint committee meeting for Singapore-Myanmar judiciary cooperation

THE office of the Union Attorney-General and Singapore's Ministry of Law held their third joint committee meeting at the UAG's office in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

The meetings are a mandatory component of the Memorandum of Understanding signed between Singapore and Myanmar on judiciary cooperation. Union Attorney-General U Tun Tun Oo and Singaporean Senior Minister of State for Law, Mr. Edwin Tong. During the meeting they dis-

cussed trainings and workshops conducted by both countries to develop Myanmar's judiciary sector, increasing theoretical and practical programmes for legal officers in 2019-2020, and increasing cooperation on the existing bilateral judiciary cooperation.

Deputy Attorney-General U Win Myint and officials from the UAG office and Singapore Law Ministry were present at the meeting. —MNA

(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)



Third joint committee meeting between Union Attorney-General's Office and Singapore's Ministry of Law held in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

Union Civil Service Board holds coordination meeting



PHOTO: MNA

THE Union Civil Service Board held coordination meeting 1/2019 for the first three months of 2019 at the USCB's meeting room yesterday.

USCB Chairman Dr. Win Thein first delivered the opening speech. Next, permanent secretaries, directors-general, rectors, and deputy permanent secretaries of the USCB, Chairman's office, departments, and the central

institutes of civil service reviewed their completed tasks for January to March, and discussed future tasks for 2018-2019 fiscal year. Dr. Win Thein gave advice as necessary and concluded the meeting with a closing speech.

USCB members U Win Maw, U Than Tun, Dr. U Pwa, U Saw Valentine, and other officials attended the meeting. —MNA

(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

Innwa Bank Nyaunglebin branch opens in commemoration of 74th Armed Forces Day

INNWA BANK Nyaunglebin branch was opened in a ceremony held at the bank branch compound yesterday morning to commemorate the 74th Armed Forces Day.

First Nyaunglebin Township General Administration Department head U Naw Mai Hla Kyi, Innwa Bank Executive Director U Aung Ngwe Oo and Deputy Executive Director U Tha Zan cut the ceremonial ribbon and Southern Command Commander Maj-Gen Myo Win pressed a button to unveil the signboard of the bank branch and inspected the inside of the bank branch. Innwa Bank Nyaunglebin branch is the 58th branch of the bank and is situated at Myoma Ward 3, old Yangon-Mandalay road, Nyaunglebin Town, Bago Re-

gion. In addition to providing local remittance services, Innwa Bank Ltd. provides 9 per cent interest on deposits, and depending upon the deposit

time, offers up to 10 per cent for fixed deposits. It also provides loans for business investors it is learnt. — MNA (Translated by Zaw Min)



The opening ceremony of the new branch of Innwa Bank in Nyaunglebin held in Nyaunglebin, Bago Region. **PHOTO: MNA**



PHOTO: THET LWIN TOE

Two cruise liners arrive in Yangon

TWO luxury cruise liners, carrying over 800 tourists and over 700 crew members combined, arrived in Yangon yesterday.

The MV Seven Seas Navigator carrying 477 tourists and 430 crew, arranged by Destinations Asia Company, arrived at the Myanmar Integrated Port Limited-MIPL and the MV Silver Shadow carrying 329 passengers and 294 crew, arranged by Myanmar Voyages International Tourism, arrived at the MITT port in Yangon yesterday.

The tourists will visit Yangon from 25 to 28 March. Their next stop is Phuket in Thailand.

The MV Silver Shadow made its 10th visit to Myanmar.

Over 16 luxury cruise liners from western countries are expected to visit Myanmar in this tourism season, and most are from the United States of America, said U Thet Lwin Toe, Managing Director of the Myanmar Voyages International Tourism Company.—MNA

(Translated by TTN)

Conservationists step up efforts to save rare turtle species in Kyeintali

“AS the number of rare species of turtles laying eggs along the sea shore of Pone Nyat Village in Kyeintali, Gwa Township, Rakhine State, has declined on a yearly basis, certain measures are being taken to prevent them from becoming extinct,” said U Thant Zin Oo, secretary, KIFCA.

It has been reported that fishing in the region is contributing to the decline in the turtle population due to indiscriminate consumption and use of nets.

“The number of turtles laying eggs is decreasing excessively, year by year. Prior to this alarming situation, five species of turtles could be seen laying eggs here. The last time we saw female Leatherback turtles, one

of the endangered species, laying eggs was eight years ago. It has been a number of years since the event. At the time, we recorded about 21 females of 4 different species — Olive Ridley, Hawksbill, Leatherback, and Loggerhead turtles — laying eggs on the shore,” said U Thant Zin Oo.

“If I remember correctly, we managed to free 1,800 baby turtles. Then for some reason, the preservation weakened over time. From January to 23 March this year, we spotted 5 female turtles laying eggs on the shore. In addition to that, we recorded some turtle species getting caught unexpectedly in fishing nets. They were eventually freed,” he said.



Endangered species Leatherback turtles laying eggs along the beach. **PHOTO: THARGYI (PONENYAT)**



Department of Fisheries staff saving eggs to prevent the endangered species from extinction. **PHOTO: THARGYI (PONENYAT)**

“This slow decline is being caused by consumption by fishermen and unsystematic use of fishing nets. In the long run, the turtles will become extinct. This is why we are working hard to preserve them,” he added.

DILIGENT EFFORTS

The Department of Fisheries is working hard to save the endangered species from extinction by creating and protecting breeding sites in collab-

oration with the RCA, the TSA, and the WCS.

RARE SPECIES

There are seven known species of turtles in the world. Some of the species such as the Leatherback turtle, Green turtle, Olive Ridley, Hawksbill Turtle, and Loggerhead Turtle are found in Rakhine, Myanmar. Experts say that most of them lay eggs along the beach in Pone Nyat Village in the town

of Kyeintali.

At present, 24 miles of the beach (1,79,200 acres) has been designated as a sanctuary and divided into three zones to protect endangered turtle species. The preservation work is being conducted in collaboration with the Kyeintali coastal association. A total of 97 baby sea turtles were released into the sea from Pone Nyat beach's Zone 1 on 19 July. —Painzalok Thein Nyunt

(Translated by Alphonsus)

Kayin State starts hot air balloon tour to boost tourism

A FIVE-DAY trial tour on a hot air balloon kicked off at 6 a.m. on 21 March at Thiri field in Hpa-an Township, as part of the Kayin State government's push to develop tourism in the state.

The 'Oriental Ballooning Myanmar' tour was organized by Myanmar Ballooning Co. Ltd at the direction of the Kayin Region Government. The hot air balloon tour seeks to promote Hpa-an region's scenic beauty, offering views of the Thanlwin River, mountains surrounded by natural caves, pagodas, Kantharyar park, and other unique sites. Hpa-an, the capital of Kayin State, draws local visitors and tourists because of its natural caves, waterfalls, pagodas, and other destinations.

The high season from December to February will be ideal for hot air balloon rides, which will not only help promote tourism in Kayin, but also Myanmar, said officials. Tourists will be able to enjoy the views of Kayin State by riding the hot air balloon, but the local people may find the charges for the rides steep, said U Aye Maung Hlaing, deputy director, Kayin State Directorate of Hotels and Tourism. Members of the Kayin State government, respective ministers, and mediapersons took part in the trial hot air balloon ride from 21-25 March. —Nay Myo Lwin

(Translated by La Wonn)



Hot air balloon tour starts to develop tourism on 21 March at Thiri field in Hpa-an Township. **PHOTO: NAY MYO LWIN**

Continuing the fight against tuberculosis

SOUTH East Asia is the region most affected by tuberculosis in the world, with serious social, political, and economic repercussions from the high incidence of the life-threatening disease.

According to the Global TB report (2018), Myanmar is among the 30 countries most affected by TB. As per the report, 358 of every 100,000 people in Myanmar are infected with TB, and about 9.3 per cent of new TB patients are also HIV carriers, while about 5 per cent have drug-resistant TB.

The Ministry of Health and Sports has adopted a five-year national strategy for fighting TB, as part of efforts towards the World Health Organization's 'End TB Strategy', which seeks to eliminate TB by 2035.

East Asia is also home to a growing number of drug-resistant cases of the disease, threatening the control of TB generally, as well as health security specifically.

The increase in the number of drug-resistant TB cases is also posing a problem for the healthcare sector in Myanmar.

The Ministry of Health and Sports has adopted a five-year national strategy for fighting TB, as part of efforts towards the World Health Organization's 'End TB Strategy', which seeks to eliminate TB by 2035.

A total of 30 local and foreign partner organizations, with about 2,400 private general practitioners, are participating in the drive.

As statistics on TB cases play an important role in the fight against the disease, we would like to urge private hospitals, clinics, and laboratories to send information about TB cases to the ministry, under the Mandatory TB Case Notification, announced on 18 September 2018.

Tuberculosis is curable. But, to contain the spread of infection and reduce mortality rate, it is important for TB patients to take drugs and follow the treatment guidelines.

We cannot make efforts to fight and prevent TB a success without the participation of the people and civil society organizations.

Today, mobile teams are reaching far-flung areas and providing TB treatment to patients within one or two days of the virus being identified. It has been found that the number of TB infections are on the rise.

South East Asia accounted for 44 per cent of the 10 million TB cases in 2017. The region accounts for 50 per cent of the 1.27 million TB deaths annually. After including TB-HIV mortality, the number of deaths rises to about 1.6 million a year.

Significantly, TB remains the region's leading cause of death and loss of productive years in the crucial 15-49 age group, thereby affecting the prospects of individuals, families, communities, and countries. South

East Asia is also home to a growing number of drug-resistant cases of the disease, threatening the control of TB generally, as well as health security specifically.

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Roundtable on Revising the New Basic Education Curriculum

"In drawing up a new curriculum, we are trying to include practical ways in which students can utilize the skills and knowledge learnt from the Myanmar Language course,"

Professor Dr. Aung Myint Oo

THE roundtable on revising the new basic education curriculum for Myanmar part 1 and 2 was broadcasted by MRTV. The roundtable talk includes: Dr. Zaw Latt Htun, Deputy Director-General of the Education, Research, Planning and Training Department; Dr. Aung Myint Oo, Professor (Department Head) of Myanmar, University of Yangon; Dr. Poe Poe, Professor (Department Head) of English Language, University of Yangon; Dr. Cho Win, Professor (Department Head) of Mathematics, University of Yangon; U Aung Sithu Hlaing, Curriculum Committee Head of Fine Arts; Dr. Khin Mya Thet, Curriculum Committee Head of Physical Education.

Facilitator: Can you explain to us about drawing the new basic educational curriculum?

Dr. Zaw Latt Htun: The Comprehensive Education Sector Review was completed for Myanmar in 2013 with help from both local and foreign experts, teachers, other stakeholders who were dedicated to improving the education sector of Myanmar.

The review brought light on several gaps in the system such as: a list of learning goals the respective subjects would achieve towards the end of each grade, ensure that such learning goals for the subjects are reflective of the children's ages and learning abilities, the current time assigned (30-35 minutes) for kindergarten classes are not sufficient for learning and the need to include materials that will help high school students enter the workforce and/or vocational training schools. Hence, we have decided to revise our current education curriculum to raise its standards for providing the best quality basic education system we can.

Facilitator: Would you like to share some insights about

the new curriculum?

Dr. Zaw Latt Htun: According to Section 5, Paragraph 16(A) in the Myanmar National Education Law (2014), "Basic Education is divided into the following three levels, aiming to have 12 years of education after the completion of kindergarten," we are targeting education from completion of kindergarten and the 12 years afterwards, also known as KG+12.

Facilitator: What are the main reasons behind changing the KG+12 education system?

Dr. Zaw Latt Htun: As we all are aware, our current education system focuses on Rote Learning which emphasizes memorization. Therefore, we are working towards including critical thinking along with other new standards in the curriculum and emphasize practical skills as well to match the needs of the 21st century workforce.

Facilitator: Can you also explain to us about drawing the curriculum for the different subjects?

Dr. Zaw Latt Htun: The Myanmar language can give you both practical skills and knowledge. We are working Myanmar towards redesigning the Myanmar language course so it will teach skills and knowledge that is applicable and used in a practical situation for the rest of the student's life.

Facilitator: What are some skills the Myanmar language can teach?

Dr. Zaw Latt Htun: In the Myanmar Language course, we teach about the Myanmar language, the grammar and emphasize on Myanmar arts and literature. Literacy in another language is a skill itself. In Myanmar, we use the Myanmar lan-

guage for the country so it is important to be able to speak, read and write the language. Hence, by teaching the language, we can help the youth become active members of society as they will be able to command the country's language and participate in the country's art and literature. We have plans to redesign the curriculum with these goals in mind.

Facilitator: What about the English language?

... "As the world gets more connected and interactions increase with globalization, it is not enough to just be able to read and write basic English. We'd like to teach the language so it can be utilized in real life, in everyday interactions, which is why, we have decided to change the curriculum." Dr Poe Poe ...

Dr. Poe Poe: There are three parts to changing to the new curriculum. Since the reason for teaching the English language has changed, the teaching methods have changed as well. This also affects the course. The first reason for redesigning is that the motive behind teaching the English language has changed. It used to be that English was taught so students can read and use reference books, and write in English. "As the world gets more connected and interactions increase with globalization, it is not enough to just be able to read and write basic English. We'd like to teach the language so it can be utilized in real life, in everyday interactions, which is why, we have decided to change the

curriculum." Dr Poe Poe

Facilitator: Can you explain to us the difference between the old and the new curriculum?

Dr. Poe Poe: Because the overall objective has changed, the curriculum did as well. Now there is a need to not only teach reading and writing but also reading and hearing skills. The courses books have to reflect the student's level of learning; something that was

courses to match the age and learning abilities of the students in the Primary, Middle School and High School levels.

Facilitator: So, there are other subjects such as Development included in the curriculum along with educational subjects. Can you explain to us a little bit about that as well?

Dr. Khin Mya Thet: In the previous curriculum, such subjects -including physical ed-

well practiced in the previous system as well. In the new coursework, we are redesigning it to match with the current trend and also the ones taught internationally. Hence, there have been the changes in the curriculum.

Facilitator: What about for math? Can you explain to us a little bit about that?

Dr. Choe Win: The reason we teach Mathematics for basic education is that math is very important in being the foundation for learning other subject materials, problem solving and to encourage a love for math in the hearts of the children through helping them solve real world problems. We are developing the

Facilitator: What about the subject Fine Arts? Can you explain to us a little bit on that as well?

Dr. Aung Si Thu Hlaing: The arts, especially painting has been in the basic education system since 1963. After 1963, it has been considered as a supplemental subject as there wasn't enough support for the materials and the teaching wasn't as effective. There was also a lack of assessment and enforcement of rules as there wasn't enough manpower to do field trips to school to check whether the schools actually taught the subject and how much the students have learned.

The reason for teaching arts is that it boosts the creativity, memory and innovation of students. It also boosts the general sense of responsibility and appreciation for beauty. As the Myanmar saying goes, a peaceful mind brings wealth and success. In order to build a well-rounded society, the arts provide tremendous support. Hence, teaching arts in the new national curriculum is very important.

Facilitator: Can you explain to us how the KG+12 education system is structured?

Dr. Zaw Latt Htun: KG+12 includes five grades in the primary education stage, four for middle school and three for high school. Hence, there is the name KG+12 (5+4+3). The main difference from the previous system is that in KG+12, KG is considered as kindergarten and is not included as primary education. The new system aims to help students become self-sufficient, happy, well-rounded in education and eager to learn and we have six areas of learning to work towards these goals.

(Translated by Myat Thu)
To be continued

President's Office continues announcement of illegal drug arrests, seizures acting on tip-offs

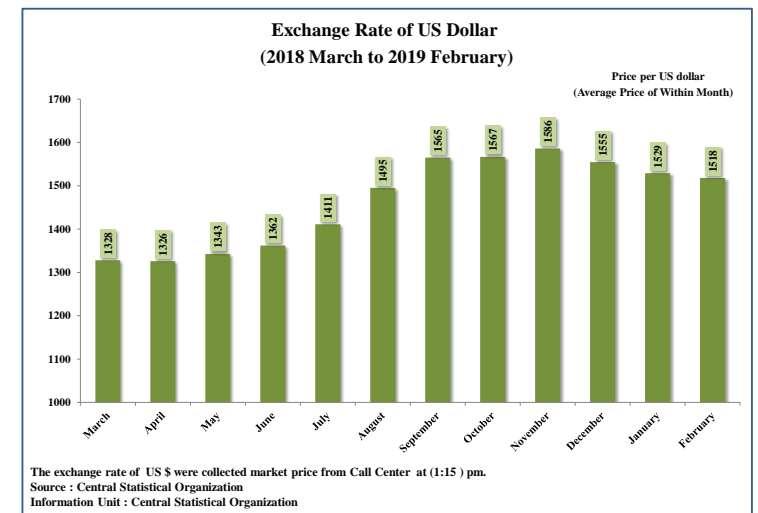
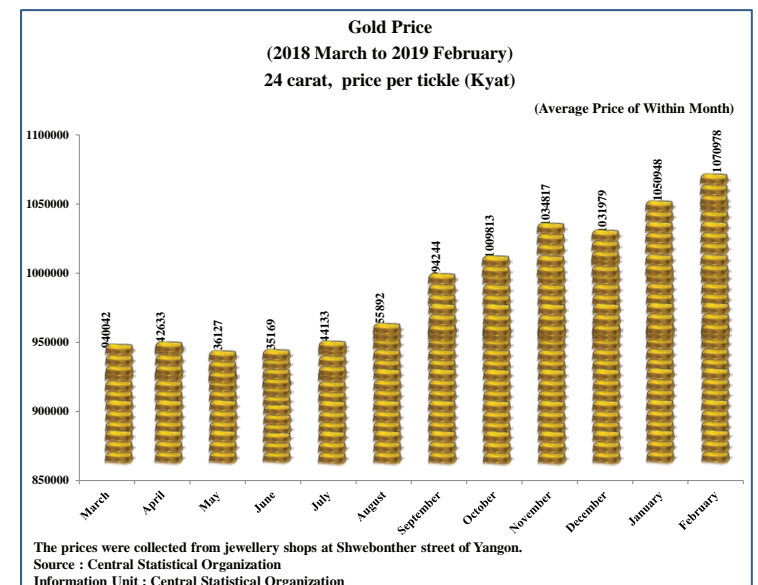
THE Office of the President issued Press Release No. 12/2019 yesterday, publicly announcing the Ministry of Home Affairs' arrests and seizures in the fight against illicit drug trafficking up till 23 March.

The ministry made the arrests, acting on information, sent to the Drug Activity Special Complaint Department of the Office of the President as of 23 March.

The full text of the press release will be reported in the 27 March issue of The Global New Light of Myanmar.—GNLM

Objectives for the 74th Anniversary of Armed Forces Day of 2019

1. Give priority to implementing the Three Main Causes being national policy, protecting the constitution and protecting the lives and property of the people.
2. Strive continuously for stability, peace, unity, and socio-economic development, which are the historic needs of the State, as the firm position of the Tatmadaw.
3. In working for establishing a Union based on a democratic federal system, the Tatmadaw to work with firm resolve for achieving eternal peace which is an essential requirement, according to the Six Principles of Peace which is based on the Three Main Causes.
4. To build a highly skilled and powerful Tatmadaw capable of effectively protecting the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the State.



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

Peace Bike Tour 2019 to kick off from Yangon

A PRESS conference on the 1,500-mile Peace Bike Tour 2019 was held on the morning of 25 March at the Myanmar Press Freedom Center on Boaungkyaw Street, Yangon.

The peace bike tour is being organized by young bike enthusiasts in Myanmar to promote peace among citizens.

"Our tour will help participants observe and gain knowledge of ethnic regions and local residents, at a time when the word 'peace' has come more popular among the youth," said

Ko Thet Swe Win, one of the organizers. The tour will start from the Yangon-Mandalay highway road on 27 March and pass Toungoo, Loikaw, Mongshu, and Lashio towns to end in Pyin-Oo-Lwin. After the tour, participants will visit Mandalay and then head to Yangon.

The tour will feature 35 riders on 20 motorcycles, and one emergency vehicle. The tour shows Myanmar's support of the peace process, said organizers.— Myint Maung Soe

(Translated by La Wonn)



Peace Bike Tour 2019 will start from the Yangon-Mandalay highway road on 27 March. **PHOTO: MYINT MAUNG SOE**

Sea Lion inaugurates new distribution solutions centre worth 10 mln in Yangon

SEA LION, a leading provider of healthcare, biomedical, life science, technical education, and industrial solutions in Myanmar, launched the new Distribution Solutions Centre (DSC) yesterday to improve supply chain efficiency and to fulfil rising and changing demands of customers.

Dr. Myint Htwe, Union Minister for Ministry of Health and Sports, Dr. Tin Myo Win, Chairman of Peace Commission, U Phyo Min Thein, Chief Minister of Yangon Region, Mr. John Fleming, Senior Commercial Officer of the Embassy of the United States of America, and Dr. Win Zaw Aung, Managing Director of Sea Lion Group commemorate the grand opening of the new Distribution Solutions



Union Minister Dr. Myint Htwe, Yangon Region Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein and officials cut ribbon to open the new Distribution Solutions Centre in Yangon. **PHOTO: SUPPLIED**

Centre with a ribbon cutting ceremony, and then toured the facility and "Integrating Innova-

tions for Lives" Exhibition.

The Union Minister witnessed the signing of an EOI

(Expression of Interest) for 1-million-dollar Scholarship Program for Healthcare Professionals for overseas trainings, and the Chief Minister witnessed the signing of an EOI (Expression of Interest) for Cooperation on Food Safety of Food Establishments in the City of Yangon. Sea Lion also signed an MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) with the Biomedical Engineering Society (BES) of Singapore for Collaboration in the area of Biomedical Engineering for safety use of medical devices.

Located in Kyan Sitt Thar Industrial Zone in South Dagon township of Yangon, Sea Lion Distribution Solutions Centre spans over 6,870 square meter in a total land area of 8.7 acres (35,276 square meter).—GNLM

Commercial city Yangon to get smart car parking

TO tackle traffic congestion in commercial hub Yangon, with its cramped roads and lack of designated areas for vehicles to park, the regional government and the Yangon municipal body have invited tenders from private companies for setting up smart car parking.

Companies from Japan, China, Israel, and Singapore have shown a keen interest in the project. Meanwhile, local companies are also eager to participate in the project. Therefore, the project is expected to take off soon. To implement the smart car parking project in Yangon, tender proposals and financial statements were screened on 5 March. The tender evaluation committee will enlist engineers, IT technicians, par-

liament members, and experts to thoroughly evaluate the bids.

On 12 March, Yangon Region Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein met with officials from Shin Watahan Co. Ltd at the Yangon Region Government Hall 4, and discussed the adoption of the smart car parking system to deal with the lack of parking space on Yangon roads. The meeting highlighted the regional government's focus on resolving car parking problems. Six downtown townships of Yangon — Kyauktada, Pabedan, Lanmadaw, Latha, Pazundaung, and Botahtaung — from have been designated for a pilot project for smart car parking. Thereafter, the project will be expanded to cover other busy townships in

Yangon. At the eighth meeting of the Second Pyidaungsu Hluttaw's 10th regular session, held on 30 November, Deputy Minister for Transportation and Communications U Kyaw Myo had said plans are under way to implement the smart car parking project, in cooperation with private companies, to find a solution to car parking problems. The statement underlined the authorities' concern over severe car parking problems and plans to deal with them.

The number of registered vehicles in Yangon Region jumped to 529,473 by 31 July, 2017 from 214,649 as recorded on 31 August, 2011. At present, the number of registered vehicles is more than 530,000. With so many vehicles on

the roads, parking problems were inevitable, and they need to be resolved at the earliest. This has prompted the authorities to go for a smart car parking system.

There are 144 roads in Yangon on which no vehicles are allowed to park. Vehicles parked on those roads are towed away and the owners are fined. Nevertheless, drivers are still parking their vehicles on public roads and violating traffic rules owing to the lack of parking space.

It was announced that old and scrapped vehicles have been removed from Yangon's roads from 31 January, 2018. But, they can still be found on the roads.— Wai Yan Oo

(Translated by Ei Mon)

Lower imports drag maritime trade down \$107 mln



A container vessel is seen near Yangon Port which is the main gateway for sea trade. PHOTO: PHOE KHWAR

THE value of Myanmar's maritime trade for the period between 1 October, 2018 and 15 March, 2019 in the current fiscal year totalled US\$11 billion, a decrease of \$107.46 million compared with the corresponding period of the previous FY, according to data provided by the Ministry of Commerce.

In the October-March period, maritime imports outperformed exports. However, the value of maritime imports saw a sharp decline of \$4,836.6 million compared with the same period last year, whereas exports were

up by \$376 million. Maritime exports were valued at \$4.2 billion, while imports were registered at \$6.8 billion.

During the five-and-a-half-month period, the value of trade through the border gates exceeded \$4.4 billion, an increase of \$293 million, amid tight confiscation and trade suspension by Myanmar's main trade partner, China.

The country's total external trade topped \$15.5 billion, an increase of \$185 million from the previous FY.

Myanmar exports ag-

ricultural products, fishery products, minerals, livestock, forest products, finished industrial goods, and other products, while it imports capital goods, consumer goods, and raw industrial materials.

The country currently has nine ports involved in sea trade. The Yangon Port is the main gateway for Myanmar's maritime trade, and includes the Yangon inner terminals and the outer Thilawa Port. —Mon Mon

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

About 3,700 tons of glass exported over last one month

THE No. 36 Heavy Industry factory in Kyaukse has shipped 3,700 tons of glass to the Philippines, Sri Lanka, India, and Nepal over the last one month, after resuming operations.

The No. 36 Heavy Industry is producing tinted glass, glass, and mirrors under a public-private partnership with International Glass Co. Ltd, located in Kyaukse Township, Mandalay Region.

Earlier, the industry produced only 100 tons of 7-foot glass per day. After an upgrade of glass kilns and production lines, production at the plant has increased to 250 tons per day. The plant is producing glass with a width of 12 feet and thickness of 3 millimeters.

The Union Minister for Industry, U Khin Maung Cho,

inspected the glass furnace operation, technology, thermal management, automated systems, and production processes at the plant yesterday. He urged officials to make products of marketable quality, and asked them not to violate any rules and regulations embodied in the contract and pay the natural gas and electricity charges before the deadline.

Afterwards, the Union Minister went to a pharmaceutical factory in Inyaung to inspect the production process of intravenous solutions, medical injection bags, and blow-fill-seal (BFS) equipment. He asked factory officials to produce drugs in line with WHO's GMP guidelines, boost production of pharmaceuticals to meet local demand, meet international

standards criteria, use new packaging design, develop capacity of factory staff, and get know-how on maintenance and handling systems from foreign technicians.

The Ministry of Industry produced 5 million bottles of intravenous solution per year. The pharmaceutical factory was opened to help meet 30 per cent of local demand and boost production to 1.5 million bottles per year, the minister said.

In the evening, the Union Minister visited a household goods factory in Minsu and observed the manufacturing process of steel beds for hospitals, and asked staff to find innovative ideas to increase the production of equipment. —MNA

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Kachin State Investment Committee endorses tissue-culture banana cultivation

By Nyein Nyein

THE Kachin State Investment Committee has endorsed one proposal by a company for carrying out tissue-culture banana cultivation, although the Myanmar Investment Commission has not permitted such projects, said U Aung Naing Oo, secretary of MIC.

"The MIC has not approved that tissue-culture banana cultivation business. But, the Kachin State government has allowed a company to execute tissue-culture banana cultivation on 188.7 acres of land owned by Myanmar citizens," said U Aung Naing Oo.

Meanwhile, according to data released by the Ministry of Commerce, the value of trade at Kanpikete gate has increased on account of tissue-culture banana exports. There are over 60,000 acres of tissue-culture banana plantations in Kachin State, and more than 20 companies are engaged in the business in Myitkyina and Waingmaw townships.

Tissue-culture banana is being exported to China through the Kanpikete border gate, as income from tissue-culture banana exports is increasing every year. Additionally, other agro products such as watermelon, chilli, and other crops are also being exported, creating jobs for local residents and increasing the country's revenues.

Myanmar's tissue-culture

banana is exported to Kunming, Beijing, Kwang Tung provinces in China and border areas of Russia.

A total of 266,369 tons of tissue-culture banana, worth US\$83.367 million, was exported through the Kanpikete gate in 2018; the figure stood at 266,450 tons worth \$55.2 million in the 2016-2017FY; 81,340 tons worth \$25.7 million in the 2015-2016FY; 33,770 tons worth \$4.98 million in the 2014-2015FY; 26,405 tons worth \$4.04 million in the 2013-2014FY; 5,129 tons worth \$0.84 million in the 2012-2013 FY; 25,880 tons worth \$3.14 million in the 2011-2012FY; and, 51,400 tons worth \$5.84 million in the 2010-2011FY, according to data from the Ministry of Commerce.

The government earned K1.4 billion from the two-per cent withholding tax imposed on tissue-culture banana exports through the Kanpikete gate in the 2016-2017FY, K2.1 billion in the 2017-2018 FY, and over K3 billion in the last mini-budget period.

Myanmar is strategically located between the most populous countries China and India. The country has established trade links with ASEAN and European countries. Myanmar's external trade is conducted by air as well as maritime routes and border gates.

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

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New Zealand announces royal commission into Christchurch attack

SYDNEY — New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern announced on Monday the launch of a Royal Commission of Inquiry into the country's security agencies following the terror attack on two mosques that saw 50 people shot dead.

Ardern said the commission, the country's highest form of investigation, would look at what "could or should have been done" to stop the attack.

"While New Zealanders and Muslim communities around the world are both grieving and showing compassion for one another, they are also quite rightly asking questions on how this terror attack was able to happen here," she said.

"This includes questions around the accessibility of semi-automatic weapons, the role social



People march in Christchurch on 23 March, 2019, to honor the victims of the recent mass shootings at two mosques. **PHOTO: KYODO NEWS**

media has played generally and the focus of the intelligence and security services."

The investigation will also inquire into the activities of alleged gunman Brenton Tarrant.

The inquiry follows Ardern's announcement last week that the country will strengthen its

gun laws by banning military-style semi-automatic weapons, assault rifles and high-capacity ammunition.

New Zealand will hold a national memorial for the two mass shootings this coming Friday at Hagley Park, opposite the Al Noor Mosque where 42 of the 50 victims were killed, two weeks after the attack.

The service is being jointly led by the New Zealand government, the city of Christchurch and the local Maori and Muslim community.

Australian-born Tarrant, 28, is alleged to have gone into the Al Noor Mosque on March 15, which was filled with hundreds of people attending midday prayers, and opened fire on the congregation.

He is alleged to have then travelled Linwood Mosque, 5 kilometers away, where he shot a further seven people. One victim died later in hospital.—Kyodo News

At least 18 dead as floods sweep Iran: emergency services

TEHRAN, (Iran) — The death toll of floods that have swept across most Iranian provinces has risen to 18 with more than 70 injured, the country's emergency services said Monday.

National Emergency Service chief Pirhossein Koolivand said the casualty toll in the southern city of Shiraz was 17 dead and 74 injured, while another person was killed in Sarpol-e

Zahab in the western province of Kermanshah, the service said on its website.

Iran has been facing unprecedented floods in 25 of its 31 provinces, the country's Crisis Management

Organisation said. The latest floods have struck mostly west and southwest Iran and follow major flooding on 19 March in the northeast's Golestan and Mazandaran provinces, for which no official casualty toll has been issued.

Emergency services have been hampered by Iranian New Year holidays, with many employees on vacation.

The police have advised against road trips in the coming days, with many roads blocked by flooding or landslides caused by heavy rains.

The Crises Management Organisation and the health ministry, in charge of hospitals, have cancelled all leave and been placed on full alert, while provincial chiefs have been ordered to remain at their posts.

Iran's meteorological service has warned that the rains will carry on into Wednesday.—AFP

India's main opposition party makes poll promise for poorest families

NEW DELHI— India's main opposition party - the Indian National Congress (INC) on Monday made a poll promise of providing an income support of 72,000 Indian Rupees (about 1,028 U.S. dollars) per annum to the 20 percent of the poorest families in the country, if the party was able to form the next government after the ensuing general elections.

Rahul Gandhi, INC president, termed this announcement as the final "assault on poverty" in the country.

India faces a seven-phased election beginning 11 April. Votes are scheduled to be counted on 23 May.

Announcing the party's election promise, Gandhi said that he and his party members had studied the fiscal implications of the scheme.

"20 percent of the

poorest families will be given an income support of 72,000 Indian Rupees every year.

All modalities have been worked out and this is possible within our budget.

We have studied fiscal implications of the scheme," Gandhi said while addressing media persons in the Indian capital.

The INC president, who is also a lawmaker, further said that the amount will be directly transferred to the bank accounts of the poor. "50 million families and 250 million members of these families will directly benefit from the scheme. We will end poverty in this country," Gandhi said.

Meanwhile, the INC is yet to come out with its final election manifesto ahead of the general polls.—Xinhua



An image made available by Iran's Mehr News agency on 25 March, 2019, shows cars piling up in a street in the southern city of Shiraz. At least 12 people were killed and 45 injured in floods that swept across most Iranian provinces, the country's emergency services said. **PHOTO: AFP**

US science educator encourages students to involve actively in science research

SAN FRANCISCO — Students should be more positive in taking training courses on science and research, Marcus Wojtkowiak, director of 2019 Golden Gate STEM Fair (GGSF), told Xinhua on Saturday.

Wojtkowiak made the remarks after a ceremony awarding dozens of students for their innovative projects on various scientific topics.

The annual event, which was held this year on 21-23 March in the US Army Corps of Engineering Bay Model Visitor Center in Sausalito, Northern California, aimed to award top-ranked students from schools in 17 cities in the San Francisco Bay Area, who emerged victoriously from local competitions before they advanced to the GGSF.

“Don’t wait for somebody to tell you what you should do, and the most successful scientists are those that have an idea

and go after it themselves,” Wojtkowiak gave his advice for students to focus on the study of Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM).

He said science fairs, in general, are an integral part of science learning because they are student-driven projects.

“It’s super important to secure interest in science and allow students to take responsibility and have control over their learning and the path of learning,” he added.

According to the GGSF, over 70,000 middle and high school students throughout the San Francisco Bay Area completed science projects for science fairs at their schools.

The student’s projects covered a diversity of research areas such as biological, behavioral, environmental, engineering and computer sciences, as well as mathematics.

Juliana Pearse, an

11th grader from Salesian College Preparatory, a Roman Catholic college preparatory high school in Richmond, East Bay, did research on behavioral psychology and conducted an interesting test on different responses they receive when they wear clothes of different colors. She found people would often get unfriendly responses when they were in dark outfits, but they were greeted with more smiles if they wore light-color clothes, such as light blue. Sahand Adibnia, an Iranian-American boy in the ninth grade of Dublin High School in Dublin city in East Bay, Northern California, addressed environmental problems such as water pollution in his neighborhood.

He studied the toxic content and water quality in a local creek where he lives. “We have to become more aware of the environment and figure out ways to decrease the effect of pollu-

tion on our environment,” he said. Ethan Kwan, a Chinese-American boy from St. Brendan Parish School in San Francisco, is also worried about the potential damage of day-to-day waste to the environment.

His research project focused on the tensile strength of various premium tapes that are often used in daily life.

“Instead of throwing things away, you can fix roof gutters, you can fix win-

dows with all these tapes. They’re all waterproof and they’re all very strong, and they can help sustain the environment,” he added.

Wojtkowiak said science fairs like the GGSF have a positive impact on students and make them feel really good about science and about their accomplishments.

“It does so much for them and for the confidence level in their future careers,” he added.

When asked for advice for Chinese student to participate in science research, he encouraged them to be bold in seeking science education. “If you have the initiative, and if you have the brain, you can get to anywhere you want to be,” he said. “Forgetting that maybe you don’t have the structure. You gotta take the initiative and not wait for somebody to tell you that you can,” said Wojtkowiak. —Xinhua

Researchers discover Japan’s oldest rock in western Japan

HIROSHIMA — Japanese researchers said Monday they have found the country’s oldest known rock dating

back 2.5 billion years in the western prefecture of Shimane, around 500 million years earlier than the previous oldest dis-

covery.

The Hiroshima University team collected fragments of the rock located near a forest road in the town of Tsuwano. The granite-gneiss metamorphic rock, formed by intense heat, has a striped appearance.

Many rocks of the same age exist in North Korea and northeastern China, and analysis of the latest specimen is likely to provide insight into the formation of the Japanese archipelago, which was originally connected to the Asian continent.

“We will study the chemical composition of the rock and make clear from which part of the continent it came,” said Yasutaka Hayasaka, an associate professor at Hiroshima University.

The previous oldest rock in Japan consists of 2 billion-year-old gneiss found in Hichiso, Gifu Prefecture, in 1970.—Kyodo News



Photo taken 25 March 2019 shows a rock collected from a layer in the western Japan prefecture of Shimane, believed to be the country’s oldest known dating back 2.5 billion years. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

The Republic of the Union of Myanmar



Ministry of Education Invitation for Bids

Date:	26 March 2019
Loan/Grant No. and Title:	MYA 3472 – Equipping Youth for Employment
Contract No. and Title:	MYA3472/EYE/NCB/Goods/CBMSC/Equip/01-01
Deadline for Submission of Bids:	10 May 2019

- The Government of Myanmar has received financing from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) towards the cost of **Equipping Youth for Employment Project (EYE Project)**. Part of this financing will be used for payments under the Contract named above. Bidding is open to Bidders from eligible source countries of ADB.
- The Ministry of Education (represented by the Department of Education Research, Planning & Training) (“the Purchaser”) invites sealed bids from eligible Bidders for **the Supply of CBMSC Workshop Training Equipment and Tools for the following Courses at 11 GTHS Locations.**
 - Lot 1 - Brick Laying Training Equipment & Tools
 - Lot 2 - Bar Bending Training Equipment & Tools
 - Lot 3 - Concrete Shuttering Training Equipment & Tools
 - Lot 4 - Basic Road Construction Training Equipment & Tools

Bidders may submit bids for any of the Lots or for all the Lots, Bid Evaluation will be carried out separately for each Lot and contract will be awarded separately for each Lot.
- National competitive bidding will be conducted in accordance with ADB’s NCB procedure and is open to all Bidders from eligible countries as described in the Bidding Document.
- To obtain further information and inspect the Bidding Documents, bidders should contact:

EYE Project Management Unit (PMU)
Department of Education Research, Planning & Training,
Ministry of Education, Bldg No 13,
Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar
Telephone: +95 67407261/67407273
Fax: +95 67407406
E-mail address: projectmanager.EYEPMU@gmail.com
With copy to: procurement.EYEPMU@gmail.com
- To purchase the Bidding Documents in English, eligible bidders should
 - write to the address above requesting the Bidding Documents for MYA3472/EYE/NCB/Goods/CBMSC/Equip/01-01
 - pay a nonrefundable Bidding Document Fee of MMK 15,000 either by cash payment or through bank transfer to:

Bank A/C No: MD-012898
Bank Name: Myanmar Economic Bank
Bank Address: Thiri Kyaw Swa Street, Near Bank Zone, Zabu Thiri Township, NayPyi Taw
Account Name: Department of Education Research, Planning & Training, Ministry of Education
- Deliver your bid to the address above
 - on or before the deadline: **10 May 2019 (13.00 Hours MST)**
 - together with a Bid Security as described in the Bidding Document

Bids will be opened immediately after the deadline for bid submission in the presence of Bidders’ representatives who choose to attend. Late Bids will be rejected. Electronic Bid submission is not permitted.
- The Ministry of Education will not be responsible for any costs or expenses incurred by bidders in connection with the preparation or delivery of bids.



A woman casts a ballot at a polling station in Udon Thani, Thailand, on 24 March 2019. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

Thai election still too close to call as Thaksin party takes lead

BANGKOK — The Pheu Thai Party, a political vehicle of former Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, has won the most constituency seats in Sunday's general election, but far from a majority, the Election Commission announced Monday.

The Pheu Thai Party, which was ousted from power in a 2014 coup, won 137 of the 350 directly elected constituency seats in the 500-seat House of Representatives, the commission said in announcing the unofficial results after vote counting reached 95 percent.

Of the remaining 213, the pro-junta Palang Pracharath Party won 97, Bhumjaithai Party took 39, the Democrat Party received 33, the Future Forward

Party got 30 seats and the remaining 14 will be divided among three smaller parties.

The other 150 seats in the lower house will be allocated on a proportional party-list basis. Under the "mixed member apportionment" system, the more constituencies a party wins, the fewer seats they will obtain from the party list.

Even as those results have yet to be announced, the two major political parties are already moving to form a coalition government.

Pheu Thai, whose loyalists have won every election since 2001, insists on receiving priority on grounds that the latest results show it again received a popular mandate.

The Palang Pracharath Party has also vowed to form a coalition. It has nominated junta chief Prayut Chan-o-cha for the premiership.

The Election Commission must announce the official results within 60 days.

The latest results come the day after those released late Sunday showed Palang Pracharath in the lead in terms of votes with around 7.5 million, Pheu Thai close behind with around 7 million, the Future Forward Party of businessman-turned-politician Thanathorn Juangroongruangkit with 5.2 million, the Democrats with 3.2 million and Bhumjaithai with 3.2 million.

Those figures were not updated Monday.—Kyodo News

North Korea returns to inter-Korean liaison office

SEOUL — North Korea has returned its staff to an inter-Korean liaison office, Seoul said Monday, just days after unilaterally withdrawing from the joint facility.

The office in the Northern city of Kaesong was opened in September as the two Koreas knitted closer ties, but the North pulled its staff out last week amid a deadlock in talks between Washington and Pyongyang.

The unification ministry said some of the North Korean staff were back at work on Monday saying they had come to cover their "shift as usual".

"Thus, the South and the North held consultations at the liaison office this morning and will continue to operate the office as usual," the ministry said in a statement. It said the North did not offer details on why they had returned or pulled out in the first place. Experts had suggested that the withdrawal was Pyongyang's attempt of pressuring Seoul to exert more influence on the US in the current diplomacy.

Their return follows US President Donald Trump's abrupt tweet at the weekend saying he had "ordered" the withdrawal of additional sanctions — without identifying the measures — against Pyongyang by the US Treasury. South Korean President Moon Jae-in was instrumental in brokering the talks process between the nuclear-armed, sanctions-hit North and the US, Seoul's key security ally.

Moon has long backed engagement with the North to bring it to the negotiating table, and

has been dangling the carrot of inter-Korean development projects, among them an industrial zone also in Kaesong and cross-border tourism for Southerners. But the failure by North Korean leader Kim Jong Un and US President Donald Trump to reach agreement in Hanoi last month on walking back Pyongyang's nuclear programme in exchange for relaxation of the measures against it has raised questions over the future of the process.

WILLINGNESS TO TALK

Both sides expressed willingness to talk further after the Vietnam summit, but it has since emerged that Washington presented Kim with a wider definition of what it regards as denuclearisation. A senior Pyongyang diplomat recently told reporters that the North was considering suspending nuclear talks with the US while last week Washington unveiled a new set of sanctions targeting two Chinese companies accused of helping Pyongyang.

The liaison office opened three months after Kim signed a vague pledge at his first summit with Trump in Singapore to work towards "denuclearisation of the Korean peninsula", and shortly before Moon went to Pyongyang for his third summit with Kim last year. When it opened, Seoul's unification ministry said the office would become a "round-the-clock consultation and communication channel" for advancing inter-Korean relations, improving ties between the US and the North, and easing military tensions.—AFP ■

Rocket hits house near Tel Aviv, Netanyahu to return home

MISHMERET — A rocket fired from the Gaza Strip hit a house in a community north of Tel Aviv on Monday, wounding seven Israelis and leading Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to cut short a visit to the United States.

Israel's army said the rocket was fired from the Palestinian enclave run by Islamist movement Hamas, raising the risk of another escalation between the two sides just ahead of 9 April Israeli elections.

Netanyahu is currently in Washington and said he would return home after meeting US President Donald Trump later Monday, cancelling an address to

pro-Israel lobby AIPAC's annual conference on Tuesday.

Israel also closed its people and goods crossings with the blockaded Gaza Strip and reduced the zone in the Mediterranean it allows for Palestinian fishermen off the enclave, a statement said.

The house hit was located in the community of Mishmeret, around 20 kilometres (12 miles) north of Tel Aviv, police said.

Mishmeret is more than 80 kilometres (50 miles) from the Gaza Strip and rocket fire from the Palestinian enclave at that distance is rare.

The hospital treating the

wounded said seven Israelis were injured lightly by burns and shrapnel, including three children. One of the wounded was a six-month-old child and

six of them were members of the same family. The house was destroyed in the wake of the rocket and subsequent fire, with burnt wood, a children's toy and other

debris piled at the site.

Netanyahu said "there has been a criminal attack on the state of Israel and we will respond with force." "I have decided, due to the security incidents, to cut short my visit to the United States," he said in a video released by his office.

"I will meet President Trump in a few hours and just after that I will return to Israel to lead closely the operations."

There was no immediate response from Hamas but its ally in Gaza, Islamic Jihad, said "we warn the Zionist enemy from committing an aggression against the Gaza Strip".—AFP ■



A general view shows a damaged house after it was hit by a rocket in the community of Mishmeret, north of Tel Aviv. PHOTO: AFP

Nepal, Japan sign government-to-government labor pact

KATHMANDU — Nepal signed a memorandum of cooperation with Japan on Monday to send to the country “specified skilled” workers for the first time.

The broad framework agreement, signed in Kathmandu by Japanese Ambassador Masamichi Saigo and a Nepalese government representative, opens doors for Nepali blue-collar workers to get jobs in Japan based on the government-to-government recruitment model.

It comes into effect on 1 April. “But the actual flow of workers from Nepal to Japan will take time because different bilateral mechanisms need to be set up to ensure that only those who meet employment criteria

reach Japan,” Narayan Regmi, spokesman at the Ministry of Labor, Employment and Social Security, told Kyodo News.

The ministry will set up a body that will facilitate the recruitment process, he added.

In December, Japan decided to recruit 345,000 foreign workers in five years from nine countries, including Nepal, to address the problem of rapidly depleting and aging workforce.

Nepal proposed to Japan to set up a government-to-government recruitment mechanism to prevent recruitment agencies in Nepal from duping Nepali workers. A similar mechanism set up with South Korea to send Nepali workers under the Employment

Permit System has been successful in protecting workers from being taken advantage of.

However, scores of cases of workers getting fleeced by recruitment agencies in Nepal or getting exploited by employers in job destinations such as Qatar and Malaysia are reported every year.

Tens of thousands of Nepali workers leave for foreign countries for work every year. An estimated 4 million Nepalis work abroad.

Over two decades of political turmoil that started in 1996 when former rebel Maoists started their 10-year-long armed insurgency dried up investment and jobs in Nepal.—Kyodo News ■

Trump declares ‘complete exoneration’ after Mueller finds no collusion

WASHINGTON— US President Donald Trump declared Sunday that he had been completely exonerated after his campaign was cleared of colluding with Russia in the 2016 election, in a major boost for his re-election hopes.

The long-awaited final report of Special Counsel Robert Mueller’s probe into Moscow’s election meddling concluded that no member or associate of the campaign conspired or coordinated with Russia in its plot to boost Trump in the vote more than two years ago. While the Mueller report did not exonerate the president of obstruction of justice, Attorney General Bill Barr’s letter to Congress summarizing the still-secret document cleared a dark cloud that had hung over the Trump’s legitimacy since he took office in January 2017.

“There was no collusion with Russia. There was no obstruction. It was a complete and total exoneration,” Trump said of Mueller’s conclusions. “It’s a shame that the country had to go through this,” he added. “This was an illegal takedown that failed.”

Deputy press secretary Hogan Gidley said Trump was “in a really good mood” and “very happy with how it all turned out.”

Gidley said the president watched television, talked to staff and made calls during his flight home from Florida.

Summarizing Mueller’s findings, Barr said no Trump campaign official was involved in Rus-

sian conspiracies in 2016 to hack Democratic computers and flood social media with disinformation to harm Trump’s Democratic election rival Hillary Clinton.

He also said there were no new surprises coming from the Mueller team, which is disbanding — no further indictments being referred, and no sealed indictments outstanding.

EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT

On the other hand, according to Barr’s letter, Mueller clearly had some evidence to support an obstruction case, but was uncertain whether it was enough to support criminal charges.

“While this report does not conclude that the president committed a crime, it also does not exonerate him,” Barr cited Mueller as saying. Democrats in Congress are now certain to demand Mueller’s underlying evidence and push to investigate further.

“It is unacceptable that, after Special Counsel Mueller spent 22 months meticulously uncovering this evidence, Attorney General Barr made a decision not to charge the President in under 48 hours,” the Democratic chairs of the House Judiciary, Intelligence and Oversight committees said in a joint statement. “His unsolicited, open memorandum to the Department of Justice, suggesting that the obstruction investigation was ‘fatally misconceived,’ calls into question his objectivity on this point in particular.”—AFP ■



FILE PHOTO: In December, Japan decided to recruit 345,000 foreign workers in five years from nine countries, including Nepal. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

Millions malnourished in Pakistan despite abundance of food

KARACHI — A frantic mother cradling her seven-month-old baby rushes towards the special paediatric ward in a desolate Pakistan town, his eyes are blank and he is smaller than most newborns.

NO SHORTAGE OF FOOD

He is starving in a country that has no shortage of food, but which has one of the highest infant mortality rates in the world and where malnutrition is rife.

The infant weighs just 2.5kg — the average for a healthy child of that age is almost three times that.

His case is not unique for the doctors at the Mithi Civil Hospital in hunger-stricken

Sindh province where millions survive on less than US\$1 a day.

Of the 150-250 patients who come in each day, roughly one fifth are suffering from malnutrition, Dr Dilip Kumar, head of the paediatric department, tells AFP. Inside the ward, nine other malnourished infants are crying inside glass incubators. A young mother, Nazeeran, clutches the hand of her toddler.

“Her weight is dropping, even though we consulted many doctors,” the 25-year-old says.

The International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), a poverty and hunger watchdog, estimates around one in five of Pakistan’s more than 200 million people are malnourished.

And yet, the nation is not short of food — in fact, according to the US Department of Agriculture, it is projected to export 500,000 tons of wheat from May 2018 until April 2019, and 7.4 million tons of rice in the same period.

Dawn, the English-language daily newspaper, even reported a potato glut earlier this month.

EXTREME DEPRIVATION

The issues, experts say, are socio-economic — that is, just because food is available, does not mean people can access it.

“There are four key pillars of food security in Pakistan: The first is availability, then acces-

sibility, utilisation and stability,” says Dr Ambreen Fatima, senior research economist at

the Applied Economic Research Centre of the Karachi University.—AFP ■



Nazeeran, a 25-year mother, holds her baby girl at Mithi Civil Hospital in Mithi, a remote town in southern Pakistan. PHOTO: AFP

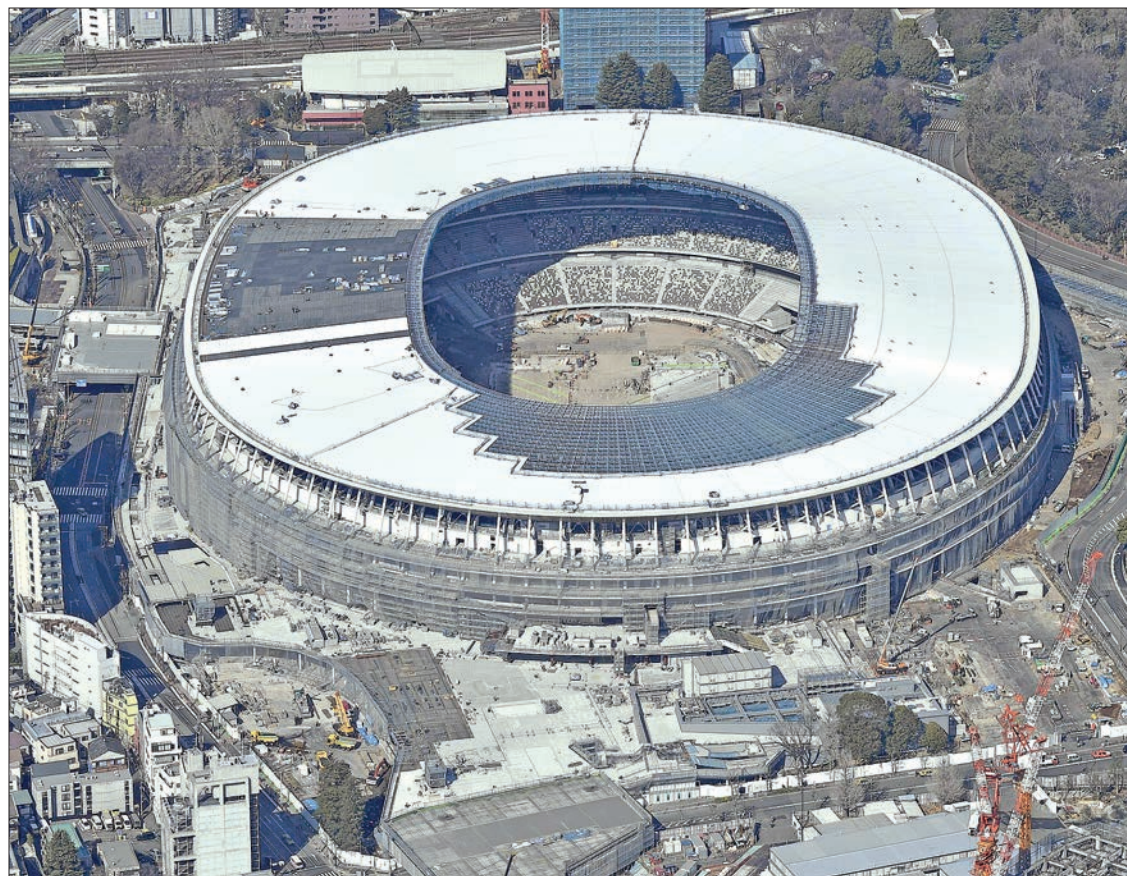


Photo taken from a Kyodo News helicopter on 9 March, 2019, shows Japan's new National Stadium, the main venue for the 2020 Olympics and Paralympics, under construction in Tokyo. **PHOTO: KYODO NEWS**

Tokyo 2020 organizers announce venue capacities

TOKYO — Tokyo's New National Stadium will hold a crowd of 68,000 people next year at the 2020 Olympics, organizers said Monday when venue capacities were announced.

Ajinomoto Stadium, which will host soccer and rugby, was listed at 48,000, while the Tokyo Aquatics Center will be able to hold 15,000. Due to cost cut-

ting, some venue capacities are smaller than those estimated in Tokyo's candidature file.

The totals announced will include seating used by officials and others.

For the purpose of ticket sales, the actual number of available seating will be carefully calculated from this point on.

Fukushima's Azuma Sta-

dium, a softball and baseball venue that was not in the candidature file, will have a capacity of 14,300. Shizuoka Prefecture's Fuji Speedway, where the cycling road race will finish, will hold 22,000, while the capacity at the sailing venue at Enoshima Yacht Harbor in Kanagawa Prefecture was given at 3,600.

—Kyodo News ■

Zorc dismisses rumours linking Sancho to United

BERLIN (Germany) — Borussia Dortmund sporting director Michael Zorc has dismissed rumours that 19-year-old rising star Jadon Sancho is set for a move back to Manchester.

English youngster Sancho has flourished since joining Dortmund from Manchester City two years ago, and recently signed a contract extension which keeps him at the German club until 2022. Yet Sancho, who picked up an assist in England's 5-0 thrashing of the Czech Republic on Friday, has been repeatedly linked with a return to the Premier League.

A recent report in The Sun alleged that Sancho's agent was in talks with Manchester United, but Dortmund boss Zorc dismissed the rumours as "irrele-

vant". "I have no knowledge (of the talks), but it is also completely irrelevant," Zorc told Bild.

In a recent interview with the same newspaper, Zorc admitted that it would be hard for Dortmund to hold on to Sancho long-term, but insisted that the youngster would remain at Dortmund next season.

"I can't put a price tag around Jadon's neck but I can say that even the biggest clubs in the world struggle to afford him at the moment," said Zorc.

"Jadon will be playing at Borussia Dortmund next season. But it is obvious that the interest in him will keep growing, especially from English clubs. He will not end his career in Dortmund, that much is true."—AFP ■



England's midfielder Jadon Sancho (L) vies with Czech Republic's midfielder Filip Novak during the UEFA Euro 2020 Group A qualification football match between England and Czech Republic at Wembley Stadium in London on 22 March, 2019. **PHOTO: AFP**

Djokovic downs Delbonis, Halep battles into Miami 4th round

MIAMI (United States) — Novak Djokovic remains on course for a record seventh Miami Open title, but the world number one admitted to a loss of focus in a 7-5, 4-6, 6-1 victory over spirited Federico Delbonis which booked his place in the last 16.

Djokovic is hoping to eclipse Andre Agassi's six ATP crowns in South Florida over the next week and although the 31-year-old endured some shaky moments at Hard Rock Stadium, he still possessed enough quality during the key moments to see off the battling Delbonis.

The Serbian, though, wasn't happy with letting a 5-2 advantage slip in the first set and became furious with himself as the second squirmed from his grasp.

He will need to tighten up his game if he is to reach next Sunday's final with Roberto Bautista Agut waiting in the fourth round after the Spaniard defeated Italian Fabio Fognini 6-4, 6-4.

"To be honest, I lost my focus," said Djokovic who smashed 36 winners compared to 24 from Delbonis. "I should have done better I think mentally than I have done at the end of the first two sets.

"I managed to really play well last couple games of first set, go up a break, put myself in front, then I played a couple of really bad service games. Credit to Federico, he stepped in."

Djokovic had looked impressive in the second round win over Bernard Tomic and the Serbian

continued his decent form by immediately imposing himself onto the Argentine.

Djokovic moved 5-2 ahead but after he missed a set point opportunity on the Delbonis serve, his game deserted him and suddenly, the South American had a spring in his step.

Delbonis had opportunities to steal ahead, yet calling on all his experience and mental resolve, the Serbian was able to hold firm and take the opener.

The world number one was getting incredibly frustrated, he received a warning for racquet abuse and was furious for allowing a 3-1 lead to slip in the second, yet credit to Delbonis who stayed calm and served out confidently to force a decider, something

which looked beyond him midway through the opening set.

He couldn't keep the pressure on, however, and when Djokovic managed to get 3-1 ahead, this time there was no way back for the 28 year-old from Azul who rightly received an ovation from the center court crowd for his monumental efforts.

"I think last four games were terrific, so I ended up in a positive way," Djokovic added.

Defending champion John Isner blew Spain's Albert Ramos-Vinolas off court with serves touching 139 mph as the American sealed an ultimately comprehensive 7-5, 7-6 (8-6) win to set up an intriguing match with Kyle Edmund in the last 16 after the British number one impres-

sively saw off Canadian Milos Raonic 6-4, 6-4.

In the women's draw, Simona Halep kept alive hopes of regaining the world number one ranking Sunday, beating Polona Herczeg 5-7, 7-6 (7/1), 6-2 to reach the last 16 where she will play Venus Williams. Halep, 27, lost her place at the top of the rankings following Naomi Osaka's triumph at the Australian Open earlier this year.

But with the Japanese faltering here on Saturday, Halep can return to the position she last held at the end of 2018 if she lands the Miami Open for the first time.

"It's always tough against Venus," said the current world number three, who has beaten the American in their previous three encounters.—AFP ■