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ELECTED GOVERNMENT MARKS THREE YEARS IN OFFICE

Making reforms, step by step

An efficient tax system demands honesty, authenticity, transparency, and accountability from all stakeholders. We are amending outdated tax laws and unnecessary protocol, and upgrading the qualification and changing the mindset of tax officials, the human resource of the tax system, step by step.

(Excerpt from the speech by President U Win Myint at the Ceremony of Honorary Awards and Certificates to the Highest Taxpayers for the 2017-2018 Tax Year in Nay Pyi Taw, on 24 January 2019.)

Facing challenges

I want our country to prosper, develop, and become a Union where all ethnic people live in unity. At the moment, every country in the world is facing challenges, and so is our country.

(Excerpt from the speech by State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi at the 2018 Myanmar Academy Awards ceremony on 23 March 2019.)

Ceremony held to celebrate NSSA's ISO certification



Union Minister U Thein Swe addresses the ceremony to celebrate National Skills Standards Authority ISO certification and to present NSSA certificates in Nay Pyi Taw. PHOTO: MNA

A CEREMONY to celebrate the awarding of the ISO 9001:2015 certification to the National Skills Standards Authority (NSSA) and to present NSSA certificates was held yesterday morning at the Tongapuri Hotel,

Nay Pyi Taw. At the ceremony, Union Minister U Thein Swe said the NSSA needs to conduct wide-ranging work to help workers acquire skills, and this can be done successfully only with the cooperation of everyone involved.

The ISO 9001:2015 Certificate was obtained to establish a Quality Management System for the sustainable development of work, managing work processes in accordance with international norms, and to ensure quality in

the work process.

NSSA was firmly established as certifying authority for the national skill level 1 to 4 under the vocational training sector's national skill quality frame. In order for NSSA to show its readiness to

connect and work together with relevant national skill level certifying groups from the countries of the region it needs to have a Quality Management System certification.

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Traditional ethnic songs, dances performed at Children's Literary Festival in Bago

TRADITIONAL ethnic songs and dances were entertained during the second day activities of the Children's literary Festival in Bago yesterday.

Traditional songs include the song of Pharsithan Choladaland and Kay Bo Toe festival song of Kayah ethnic people.

Kayin ethnic youth entertained the visitors with traditional songs titled Kayin New year and Chi Byu Bwe Mingalar.

Asho Chin ethnic youth entertained with traditional bam-

boo dance and song of taungzalat pann.

Mon ethnic youth entertained with the variety of Mon ethnic group dance and Tapintaing group dance. Similarly, Shan ethnic youth entertained by dancing the traditional Mooncake dance and Bawa Teikpwe dance. Likewise, Pa-O ethnic youth entertained with Yinkyaymhu Myitar Akardaw dance and a song titled Tamine Amway Anit Chit Myat Noe.— Wai Lyan (Translated by Kyaw Zin Lin)



Students entertain the visitors with Kayin traditional dances at the Children's Literary Festival in Bago yesterday. PHOTO: MNA



Deputy Minister U Aung Hla Tun looks at the Stone Inscription showcased in the Children's Literary Festival at the Bago University yesterday. PHOTO: MNA

Deputy Minister for Information inspects Children's Literary Festival in Bago

DEPUTY Minister for Information, U Aung Hla Tun inspected Children's literary festival in Bago held at the Bago University yesterday.

Deputy Minister U Aung

Hla Tun and party observed the entertainment programme conducted by the students of the university at the convocation hall. The Deputy Minister and party visited the booths run by

governmental departments, civil society organizations and booths staged at the library of the University.—Wai Lyan

(Translated by Kyaw Zin Lin)



A book shop attracts students on the second day of Children's Literary Festival in Bago yesterday. PHOTO: THET LWIN

Day 2 of Children's Literary Festival (Bago) includes story telling in ethnic languages

A STORY telling session in ethnic languages was included on the second day of Children's Literary Festival (Bago) yesterday.

The story telling session in ethnic language was conducted by ethnic nationals living in Bago Region consisting of Kayah, Kayin, Asho Chin, Mon, PaO and Shan. The story were told in ethnic national languages first and then a Myanmar translation

was provided.

Ministry of Information, Ministry of Education and relevant state/region governments were conducting children's literature festivals with the aims of making children spend more time reading books and make them life-long learners, acquire the habit of doing things together while participating in the festival and to become knowledgeable

and learned youngster who'll eventually lead the country.

Also with the cooperation and participation of ethnic nationals and peoples, recitation and reading of ethnic national language poems and stories, displays of cultural practices were also included to develop and maintain ethnic languages and cultures.— Nway Ingyin

(Translated by Kyaw Zin Lin)



Ethnic students compete in the storytelling contest in ethnic languages on the second day of Children's Literary Festival in Bago yesterday. PHOTO: THET LWIN



President Office holds press conference on peace making, IDPs, armed conflicts in Rakhine State

DIRECTOR-GENERAL of the Office of the President U Zaw Htay gave a press conference at the Presidential Palace in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday, briefing on internal peace making process, issues of Internally displaced person (IDP) displaced person and armed conflicts in Rakhine State.

Meetings between Peace commission, EAOs

After the Union Peace Conference-21st Century Panglong, the Peace Commission of the Union Government held negotiations with ethnic armed organizations-EAOs, said U Zaw Htay.

With 10 representatives each from the Union Government, EAOs and political parties reviewed the Frame Work (Term of Reference-ToR) on 1, 2 and 3 November, 2018.

To amend the discussion and to check spelling in detail, three representatives each from the three stakeholders sat down again on 12 and 13 November at the Thingaha Hotel in Nay Pyi Taw.

The Peace Commission held unofficial meetings with RCSS, KNU and KNPP in Chiang Mai on 17 and 18 November. On 12 December, 2018, the Peace Commission held a negotiation meeting with UWSA "Wa" Special Region-2, KIO, TNLA, AA and MNDAA in Kunming, China.

The Director-General said the purpose of the meeting to discuss the issue of statement, adding the representatives of the government discussed is-

using the statement with the three armed groups.

After the negotiation, the EAOs from the Northern Alliance released the statement demanding the Tatmadaw to stop military movements first, highlighting their willingness to make the political approach rather than military means and expressing their commitment to participation in the national reconciliation and peace processes through the political ways, said U Zaw Htay.

"On the day they released the statement, the Peace Commission also released a statement welcoming the way they chose to move forward with political approach and making a pledge to keep its efforts for co-operation of non-signatories of NCA in the NCA course through negotiations," he said.

Following the latest development with three EAOs of the Northern Alliance, the Office the Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services announced on 21 December its unilateral ceasefire.

The statement of the Tatmadaw said the Tatmadaw would cease military operations unilaterally in its five command areas from 21 December, 2018 to 30 April and offered peace negotiation with EAOs with a peace negotiation team led by Lt-Gen Yar Pyae if they wanted to hold peace negotiation with the National Reconciliation and Peace Centre.

After the Tamadaw's four-month unilateral ceasefire, the Peace Commission went to Chiang Mai, Thailand, in Jan-



Director-General of the Office of the President U Zaw Htay gives the press conference in the Presidential Palace in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

uary 2019 and held unofficial meetings with KNU, RCSS, KNPP and KIO on 13 and 14 January.

On 13 February, 2019, the NRPC and leaders of the signatories to NCA held an official meeting at NRPC. At the meeting, the government side was led by NRPC Vice Chairman while the NCA-S EAOs delegation was led by their leaders. On 22 February, 2019, NRPC held a meeting with SSPP, SSA on 22 February, 2019. At the meeting, SSPP delegation was led by its Vice Chairman U Sao Khun Sai and discussed issues related with Wanhai region development, detained members of SSPP and their families,

future peace making process and regional development. One day after the meeting between SSPP and NRPC, they held a negotiation with the Tatmadaw negotiation team led by Lt-Gen Yar Pyai at the Nay Pyi Taw Command and four agreement were reached at the meeting.

On 25 February, the delegation of the Peace Commission went to Kunming, China, and held unofficial meetings with KIO, TNLA and MNDAA and the discussions focused on reaching agreement on the Team Work Commitment. Previously, the meetings focused on signing Bilateral Ceasefire Agreement. But, the focus of the meeting turned from the bilateral cease-

fire agreement to the Team Work Commitment as the AA group launched attacks on three police outposts in Rakhine State on 4th January during the period of the unilateral ceasefire of the Tatmadaw. The Peace Commission held an unofficial meeting with KNU on 8th March, 2019, with 10 signatories to NCA on 9 March and with KNPP on 10 March in Chiang Mai, Thailand, respectively.

Afterwards, NRPC and RCSS held an official meeting on 11 March at the NRPC. At the meeting, the government side was led by NRPC Vice Chairman Dr. Tin Myo Win and RCSS side was led by Maj-Gen Baung Khay.

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CBM to sell new quality tical gold coin

THE Central Bank of Myanmar(CBM) has been issuing quality tical, half-tical, and quarter-tical gold coins since 1991. It has also introduced a new quarter-tical quality gold coin in 2018.

A single star is depicted in the centre of the tical gold coin. Images of a plowing farmer and an elephant hauling a log are depicted on the half- and quarter-tical gold coins, and image of Bogyoke is depicted at the centre of the new quarter-tical quality gold coin.

The new tical gold coin (one tical equal to 16.329 gm) which is

on high demand will be issued. The new quality tical gold coin has a diameter of 26.0 millimetres(mm) and a thickness of 2.0 mm.

At the centre of the face of the new gold coin is a portrait of Bogyoke Aung San with the words "Aung San" written at the bottom. Along the circumference of the coin, "Central Bank of Myanmar", and "16.329 gm 999.9 Fine Gold" will be etched in the English language, while the opposite face will have "Central Bank of Myanmar 2018, a tical, 999.9 Fine Gold" embossed in the

Myanmar language.

When a quality tical gold coin is bought, the CBM Governor and the gold coin casting department head will provide a certificate of authenticity.

The new gold coins can be bought at sale centres of Myanmar Gem Enterprise in Nay Pyi Taw, Yangon and Mandalay at the prevailing gold rate of the day, along with a payment of the casting fee of K38,950, from 2 April 2019, according to the CBM. — MNA

(Translated by TTN)

Union Minister receives Norway Minister for International Development



Union Minister U Win Khaing meets with Norwegian Minister of International Development Mr. Dag-Inge Ulstein in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

UNION Minister for Electricity and Energy U Win Khaing received Norway Minister for International Development Mr. Dag-Inge Ulstein at the Union Minister's guest hall in the Ministry yesterday morning.

At the meeting continuous cooperation between Norway and Ministry of Electricity and Energy in the hydro-electricity sector; human resources development sector; status of co-

operation between Norwegian Water Resources and Energy Directorate (NVE) and Ministry of Electricity and Energy in six areas; in-house consultant and Construction Management consultant for Thuhtaychaung and upper Kyaingtaung projects, arranging for Myanmar nationals to attend hydro-electric master course in Norway or other appropriate countries; status of establishing hydrolog-

ical database; status of waiting for Norway government's fund allocation approval to sign Norway Kroner 85,905,000 support toward continuing cooperation in Technical Assistant Program (2019-2022) Phase (II); short, medium and long term plans for electricity acquisition and Smart Metering System matters were discussed in a wide ranging manner. — MNA

(Translated by Zaw Min)

Union Minister receives ROK Ambassador to Myanmar



Union Minister U Thein Swe holds talks with Korean Ambassador Mr. Lee Sang-hwa at the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

UNION Minister for Labour, Immigration and Population U Thein Swe received the Republic of Korea Ambassador to Myanmar Mr. Lee Sang-hwa and party at the ministry meeting hall yesterday afternoon.

In the meeting, matters re-

lating to workers going to work in Korea under Employment Permit System (EPs), 9,000 Myanmar workers who had successfully passed the examination to go to Korea as soon as possible, the long waiting time, training courses conduct-

ed with the support of Korea's KB Bank, Myanmar workers remitting money to their families and sending marine/fishery workers to Korea were cordially discussed. — MNA

(Translated by Zaw Min)

Republic of the Union of Myanmar Union Election Commission Notification 42/2019

9th Waning of Tabaung, 1380 ME
29 March, 2019

Termination of registration and dissolution of political party

1. Union Election Commission had permitted Inn National League to set up as a political party with the registration No. 86 of the Notification (16/2015) on 9-6-2015.
2. Regarding the abolishing the party, Inn National League submitted the application letter, No. 009/ Admin / A Ta Pha / 2019 dated 16 February, 2019, to the Union Election Commission and the UEC discussed the issue at its meeting No. 12/2019 and made a decision to terminate the registration and to dissolve the Inn Nationalities League in accordance with the Political Parties Registration Law Article 19 (a).
3. It is hereby announced that the registration of Inn National League has been terminated and the party dissolved as from 28 March 2019.

(Hla Thein)
Chairman
Union Election Commission

Myanmar, Bangladesh conduct coordinated patrol

THE Myanmar Border Police and Border Guards Bangladesh have conducted coordinated patrols along their sides of the border, and along the Naf River on 28 March.

Two high-speed water crafts from No. 4 Border Guard

Police Force in area-6, Maung-taw, and two water crafts from Bangladesh side participated in the patrol along the river, according to news release from the Myanmar Police Force.— GNLM (Translated by Kyaw Zin Lin)



Myanmar Border Police and Border Guards Bangladesh conducting coordinated naval patrols. **PHOTO: MPF**

Trade Mark Ads

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Ceremony to present NSSA certificates ...

FROM PAGE-1

Only then can it conduct part of ASEAN Economic Community's work processes of mutually certifying skill levels and Myanmar migrant workers will have equal rights and opportunities as skilled workers from the

countries of the region.

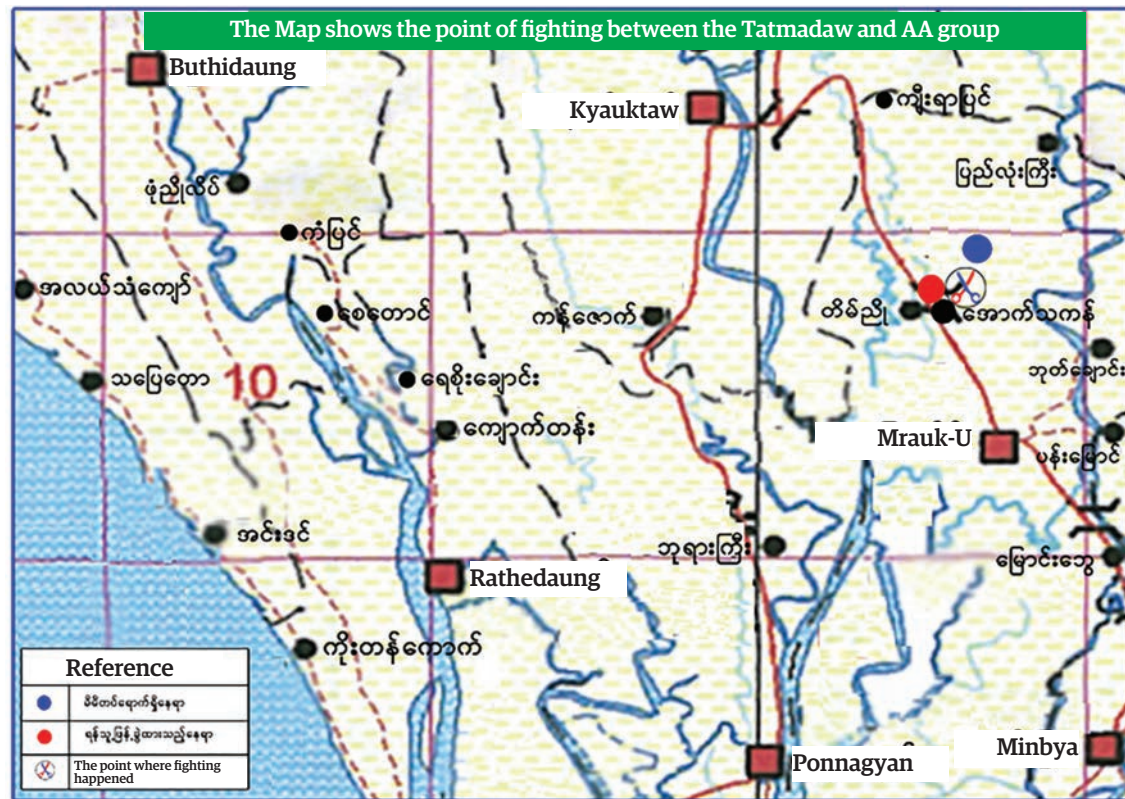
Organisations and entities cooperating with NSSA were also urged to obtain ISO 9001:2015 in order to participate honorably and have full capacity or quality in setting standards for skills, assessing and evaluating skills and issuing certificates

said the Union Minister.

From 2014 to third week of March 2019 NSSA had certified and issued certificates for 23 types of skills and had issued a total of 10,775 certificates consisting 10,009 Level 1 and 766 Level 2 certificates. — MNA ■

(Translated by Zaw Min)

AA attacks Tatmadaw column in Mrauk U Township



A TATMADAW column with personnel from the Myanmar Police Force was attacked by about 10 Arakan Army members with mines, and small and heavy arms yesterday morning in Auk Tha Kan Village, Mrauk U Township, Rakhine State.

The AA opened fire on the Tatmadaw column when it reached the Tane Nyo Bridge, about 1,700 m northeast of Auk Tha Kan Village. The AA members were stationed 800 m north of the village. Afterwards, they retreated into the village, and when the security forces closed in on them, they took cover inside the village, detonated two remote-controlled mines, and

opened fire with small and heavy arms before retreating towards the east.

Two Auk Tha Kan villagers were injured in the crossfire. U Win Kyaw Thein, 33, was wounded slightly by a splinter, and U Hla Aung Tin, 37, fell and hurt his head while fleeing from the firing. Both were given first-aid treatment by the Tatmadaw column and then sent to the Tane Nyo station hospital.

During a security check in the village, five suspected supporters and informants identified as U Ko Naing, U Hla Thein Maung, U Sein Tun, U Ba Tun, and U Maung Phyu Shay were captured and handed to the Tane

Nyo police station for interrogation. AA members have reportedly been taking cover in wards and villages in Rakhine, and have been opening fire and detonating mines against Tatmadaw security columns, according to the Tatmadaw Commander-in-Chief's Office.

To avoid unnecessary civilian casualties, people in towns, wards, and villages of Rakhine State have been asked not to take in AA members and report the presence of AA insurgents in their area to the relevant administrative organizations, according to the Tatmadaw Commander-in-Chief's Office.—MNA (Translated by Zaw Min)

Union Attorney General receives Israel Ambassador



Union Attorney General U Tun Tun Oo meets with Israel Ambassador Mr. Ronen Gilor at the Union Attorney-General Office. PHOTO: MNA

UNION ATTORNEY General U Tun Tun Oo received Israel Ambassador to Myanmar H.E. Mr. Ronen Gilor at Union Attorney General Office yesterday morning.

During the meeting similarity of Myanmar and Israel legal practices, raising capacity of law officers to keep up with increase in technology based crimes, enacting and amending laws to be

in accord with market economy, conducting training and workshops to raise subject wise expertise in order to cooperate and work with international organisations and cooperation between relevant organisations of the two countries for improvement in legal and justice matters were discussed and views exchanged.

— MNA ■ (Translated by Zaw Min)

AA abducts, kills villager in Kyauktaw Township

MEMBERS of the Arakan Army reportedly abducted and killed a villager who had come to Kyaninkan Village, Kyauktaw Township, to take refuge from the fighting near Taung Oo Village, Mrauk U Township, on the evening of 27 March.

The villager has been identified as U Maung Ni Oo, 33. He and his family arrived in Kyaninkan Village on 26 March because of fighting near Taung Oo Village. U Maung Ni Oo and his family were staying in a house inside the compound of his father-in-law U Maung Than Kyaw's (60) home.

Around 11 p.m. on 27 March, seven masked AA members,

wielding swords and speaking Rakhine language, reportedly came and abducted U Maung Ni Oo. His wife, Daw Thaung Aye Tin, searched for him near the village the next morning and reportedly found his body, bearing sword wounds.

Taung Oo Village, where U Maung Ni Oo lived before moving to Kyaninkan Village is only about 2,000 m away from Lin Mway Taung, where about 150 AA members attacked a Tatmadaw column conducting road security work twice on 26 March, according to news released by the Tatmadaw Commander-in-Chief's Office.—MNA (Translated by Zaw Min)

Joint SSA (Wanhai), TNLA forces attack Tatmadaw column in northern Shan State

A TATMADAW column conducting routine regional security operations in Namtu Township, Shan State (North), was fired upon by a joint SSA (Wanhai) and TNLA force on the afternoon of 26 March.

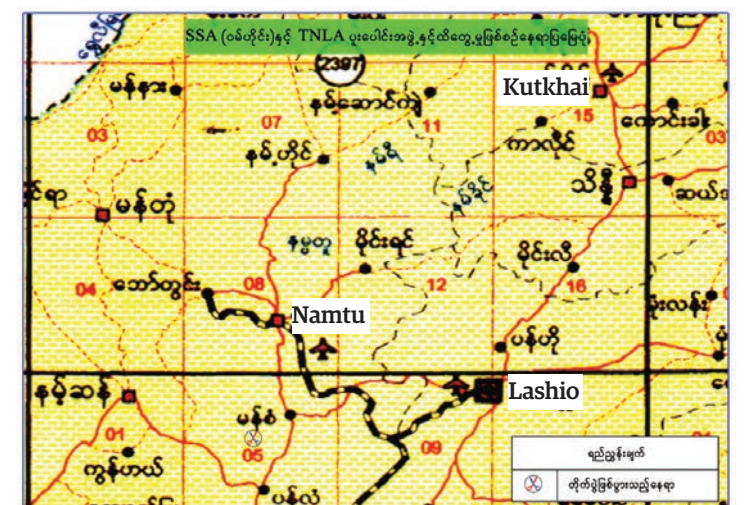
The Tatmadaw column was fired upon about 5,000 m southwest of Mansan Village.

Tatmadaw columns continued the security operation in the area and discovered that the joint SSA (Wanhai) and TNLA force was stationed at Point-1844 hill, 700 m south of the location where the Tatmadaw column was first fired upon. On the morning of 28 March, the Tatmadaw captured the hill

and the opposing forces retreated towards the west, east, and southeast.

Tatmadaw columns are continuing their security operations in the area, according to news released by the Tatmadaw Commander-in-Chief's Office.—MNA ■

(Translated by Zaw Min)



President Office holds press conference on peace making, IDPs, armed conflicts in Rakhine State

FROM PAGE-3

At the meeting, four agreements were reached, and one day after the meeting, the Tamadaw Negotiation Team and RCSS held separate discussion and reached agreements. A meeting between KNPP and NRPC was held at the NRPC on 18 March, 2019. A team led by NRPC member Union Attorney-General U Tun Tun Oo and a delegation led by KNPP Vice Chairman Khu Oo Reh also held a meeting and reached agreements. One day after the meeting, the KNPP delegation and the Tatmadaw Negotiation Team held a meeting at the Nay Pyi Taw Command, and in the meeting, the two sides reached agreement to set a time frame for signing the NCA.

On 21 March, 2019, NRPC and non-signatories to the NCA held a meeting at NRPC in Nay Pyi Taw, and at the meeting, the government side was led by Dr. Tin Myo Win and members of the NRPC while the non-signatories to the NCA were comprised of seven EAOs of the Northern Alliance and KNPP totaling eight EAOs.

After the meeting, the two sides released a five-point statement on measures to be taken for the peace making process, regional developments and peaceful negotiation and solving the issues through political dialogue.

The peace making process has found some progress following the meetings with EAOs.

An official meeting between NRPC and KNPP is scheduled to be held in coming April. Following that meeting, KNPP will hold a meeting with the Tatmadaw. Following the meetings, KNPP will move forward to signing NCA. These are agreements with KNPP, said U Zaw Htay.

Past and future meetings

Another point was to meet with KIA/KIO twice in April. The first will be from 2 to 9 April and the second one will be after Thingyan. The first will be with NRPC and then the Tatmadaw. In the second one the meeting will be with NRPC and then the Tatmadaw.

KIA will be submitting a counter proposal to the Team

Work Commitment proposed earlier by General (retired) Khin Zaw Oo. They'll be sending a draft reply on 30th of this month but was known to have amended the reply date.

Meeting with KNU was also agreed. The meeting was proposed for April 10 and 11. The

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There were matters discussed with SSPP and RCSS. Especially clashes in Kyaukme and Hsipaw between RCSS and SSPP, RCSS and joint SSPP, and with Tatmadaw were causes difficulties for people. A tripartite meeting of Tatmadaw, RCSS, SSPP, SSA was proposed first followed with a tripartite meeting between NRPC, SSPP and SSA. In the tripartite meeting with Tatmadaw, avoiding of clashes, deployment of troops and avoiding clashes in the region will be coordinated and discussed to reach an agreement. Once this discussion was concluded a proposal made for NRPC to lead another tripartite meeting the next day for displaced people. The date will be fixed after further discussion.

A meeting was held in Thailand, Chiang Mai with 10 EAOs that had signed. The outcome was to meet again in end April and strive toward restarting the regular meetings.

There were IDP camps managed by Kachin State government and IDP camps in KIO areas. A casual agreement reached with KIA about these camps was to conduct bilater-

al discussions. To build trust, discussion was made to close IDP camps with NRPC. NRPC and KECC leading committee had already met once and will meet again in April. The aim was to achieve principle agreement between NRPC and KECC that includes de-mining as well

were no clashes. One was released while six were killed. At the moment two were reportedly missing. A village administrator, former head of a hundred household and a former village administrator were among the six killed. The 12 civilians killed consist of a Bama, 9 Rakhines, a Shan and a Bengali while the 20 wounded civilians were 17 Rakhines, 2 Khamis and a Bengali.

It can be seen that the majority of killed and wounded were ethnic Rakhines. From 4 January when AA group enter Rakhine State and starts their destructive works, about 17,000 people were displaced to IDP camps. Those were 2,700 from Buthidaung Township, more than 3,500 from Kyauktaw Township, more than 2,000 from Minbya Township, more than 3,500 from Mrauk U Township, more than 1,900 from Ponnagyun Township, more than 2,500 from Yathedaung Township and more than 500 from Paletwa Township, Chin State. According to figures collected up to 24 March there were more than 17,300 people were displaced to IDP camps.

Matter about AA had been told repeatedly. NRPC Vice Chairman Dr. Tin Myo Win had also spoken about it during the

Both NRPC and the government urge AA and others that opportunity to participate in the political dialogues of 21st century Union Peace Conference has been opened.

meeting with 8 ethnic armed organisations that includes AA. The Government was extremely saddened about the dead, wounded and displaced innocent people and when there were continued armed conflicts, the directly affected people from the instability and insecurity were local Rakhines. Looking at the numbers killed and wounded, it could be seen that the majority were Rakhines and the Government was extremely saddened.

Historically, it could be seen that due to an attempt to resolve matters with arms, the country

was without peace for more than 70 years. As other states and regions had much experience in it, they were walking down the path of peace and Rakhine State was restarting the whole thing from the beginning. We were now in the 21st century and the 20th century belief of resolving matters through arms had given a historical lesson of being unable to achieve an answer.

Both NRPC and the government urge AA and others that opportunity to participate in the political dialogues of 21st century union peace conference had been opened. Detailed discussion on this matter had been conducted with the Peace Commission. The Government, Tatmadaw, political parties and EAOs had committed to head toward a democracy federal union that had justice, freedom and equality. A solemn request was made to participate in a peaceful resolution through a political culture of peace talk at a time when other ethnic nationals and other EAOs were heading toward a democracy federal union.

The press conference came to a close after director general U Zaw Htay responded to questions raised by news media personnel on works done by the

government for conflict avoiding people in Rakhine State, whether martial law will be declared in some part of Rakhine State, amending the Constitution, Myitsone Project, removal of Bohmu Ba Htoo monument, reorganization of General Administration Department, whether there'll be an extension of the ceasefire period, news circulation about court cases opened against Naga ethnic armed personnel and plan to purchase helicopter for the country's leaders. — MNA

(Translated by TTN and Zaw Min)

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al discussions. To build trust, discussion was made to close IDP camps with NRPC. NRPC and KECC leading committee had already met once and will meet again in April. The aim was to achieve principle agreement between NRPC and KECC that includes de-mining as well

as future works once military matters were agreed upon and clashes no longer occurs. There was a CSO network in Kachin called Joint Strategy Team that will implement this. It was supporting IDP camps and CSO Network will work together ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement and Kachin government from the government side with supports from INGOs and NGOs to support IDP and resettle to their places of origin. These were the progresses reached to date by the peace process.

Armed conflict in Rakhine State

With regards to the situation in Rakhine State from 4 January to 28 March there were 103 clashes with AA. During this period there were 44 land mine explosion incidents. A total of 39 consisting of 27 Myanmar Police Force personnel and 12 civilians were killed while a total of 46 consisting of 26 Myanmar Police Force personnel and 20 civilians were wounded. During the clashes, 58 AA personnel were killed and 8 captured. 22 small arms were also captured. Detailed Tatmadaw casualty figures will be released by the Tatmadaw.

There were killings and abduction of civilians while there

were no clashes. One was released while six were killed. At the moment two were reportedly missing. A village administrator, former head of a hundred household and a former village administrator were among the six killed. The 12 civilians killed consist of a Bama, 9 Rakhines, a Shan and a Bengali while the 20 wounded civilians were 17 Rakhines, 2 Khamis and a Bengali.

It can be seen that the majority of killed and wounded were ethnic Rakhines. From 4 January when AA group enter Rakhine State and starts their destructive works, about 17,000 people were displaced to IDP camps. Those were 2,700 from Buthidaung Township, more than 3,500 from Kyauktaw Township, more than 2,000 from Minbya Township, more than 3,500 from Mrauk U Township, more than 1,900 from Ponnagyun Township, more than 2,500 from Yathedaung Township and more than 500 from Paletwa Township, Chin State. According to figures collected up to 24 March there were more than 17,300 people were displaced to IDP camps.

Matter about AA had been told repeatedly. NRPC Vice Chairman Dr. Tin Myo Win had also spoken about it during the

Both NRPC and the government urge AA and others that opportunity to participate in the political dialogues of 21st century Union Peace Conference had been opened.

meeting with 8 ethnic armed organisations that includes AA. The Government was extremely saddened about the dead, wounded and displaced innocent people and when there were continued armed conflicts, the directly affected people from the instability and insecurity were local Rakhines. Looking at the numbers killed and wounded, it could be seen that the majority were Rakhines and the Government was extremely saddened.

Historically, it could be seen that due to an attempt to resolve matters with arms, the country

was without peace for more than 70 years. As other states and regions had much experience in it, they were walking down the path of peace and Rakhine State was restarting the whole thing from the beginning. We were now in the 21st century and the 20th century belief of resolving matters through arms had given a historical lesson of being unable to achieve an answer.

Both NRPC and the government urge AA and others that opportunity to participate in the political dialogues of 21st century union peace conference had been opened. Detailed discussion on this matter had been conducted with the Peace Commission. The Government, Tatmadaw, political parties and EAOs had committed to head toward a democracy federal union that had justice, freedom and equality. A solemn request was made to participate in a peaceful resolution through a political culture of peace talk at a time when other ethnic nationals and other EAOs were heading toward a democracy federal union.

The press conference came to a close after director general U Zaw Htay responded to questions raised by news media personnel on works done by the

government for conflict avoiding people in Rakhine State, whether martial law will be declared in some part of Rakhine State, amending the Constitution, Myitsone Project, removal of Bohmu Ba Htoo monument, reorganization of General Administration Department, whether there'll be an extension of the ceasefire period, news circulation about court cases opened against Naga ethnic armed personnel and plan to purchase helicopter for the country's leaders. — MNA

(Translated by TTN and Zaw Min)

Consumer Affairs Dept: Will ensure consumer rights, act against violators under new law

By Nyein Nyein

THE Consumer Affairs Department under the Ministry of Commerce will work to ensure consumer rights and will take action against businesses found violating food safety rules under the new Consumer Protection Law, said U Myint Cho, the Deputy Director-General of the department.

He made the remarks at a press conference on the new Consumer Protection Law, jointly held by the Myanmar Pharmaceuticals and Medical Equipment Entrepreneurs' Association, the Myanmar Retailers Association, the American Chambers of Commerce in Myanmar, and the Consumer Affairs

Department. "We will protect consumer rights. We will ask them to strictly follow rules and make sure they get on the right path. If businesspersons are found violating the laws on purpose, we will take strict action against them," said U Myint Cho. President U Win Myint ratified the new Consumer Protection Law on 15 March. The Myanmar Labelling Law will be effective one year after the institution of the law. The labelling law requires companies to provide labels in Myanmar language and/or other languages, and include information on type of good, net weight, number of packets, instructions for use and storage, precautions,

and possible side effects on the labels. "Therefore, the directive (1/2018) to provide labels in Myanmar language from 26 April, 2019, is no longer effective," said U Myint Cho. "As the new law has been instituted, the notification under the old Consumer Protection Law is no longer effective. We want to notify companies through this press conference," he said. "Now, companies and entrepreneurs will need to provide labels in Myanmar language by 15 March, 2020. The Consumer Affairs Department will start inspections on 16 March, 2020", said U Ye Htut Naing, the director of the department. *(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)*

Watermelon exports to China through Muse gate on the rise



Trucks loaded with Watermelon are seen at the China-Myanmar border. PHOTO: PHOE KHWAR

EXPORTS of watermelons and muskmelons to China through the Muse border gate have risen significantly, with around 700 fruit trucks entering the Muse market every day.

The watermelon market is likely to remain steady during the Thingyan festival, in spite of the possibility of low supply, said a merchant from the Muse trade zone.

"At present, there is a large influx of watermelons in Muse from Shan State. However, some of the watermelons have been harvested early and are

of low quality. On 29 March, watermelons were priced at 22,000-50,000 Yuan per truck carrying 15-16 tons of the fruit, depending on the quality," according to Khwar Nyo Trading Co. Ltd. "Market exploration and maintaining market share is necessary. Growers and merchants can reap more benefits in groups rather than individually. The related department is providing technical assistance and supplying seeds to boost production, reduce input costs, and allow production of high quality fruits," said

Daw Tin Soe Soe Hlaing, Assistant Director, Trade Department, Ministry of Commerce at a workshop to promote watermelon and muskmelon exports. The workshop was held at the fruit depot meeting hall in Muse trade zone on 15 December, 2018.

Traffic congestion, China's tight confiscation, and revamped border security measures caused enormous losses to merchants and growers early this year. China accounts for 95 per cent of Myanmar's fruit exports. Watermelon tops the list of

fruits exported to China, followed by mango and muskmelon. Mangosteens, rambutan, lychee, watermelon, and muskmelon from Myanmar have been approved by China's food safety inspection mechanism — the General Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection, and Quarantine (AQSIQ).

Myanmar's watermelon exports were pegged at over 170,000 tons in the last mini-budget period (April to September, 2018), over 560,000 tons in the 2015-2016 FY, and 500,000 tons in the 2014-2015 fiscal year. Muskmelon exports topped 40,000 tons in the mini-budget period, and stood at over 100,000 tons in the 2015-2016 FY, and over 110,000 tons in the 2014-2015 FY, according to data from the Ministry of Commerce. Watermelons and muskmelons are primarily grown in the Mandalay and Sagaing regions and Shan State. Myanmar's watermelons and muskmelons have grabbed a large share of the market in China. — Ko Htet *(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)*



THE REPUBLIC OF THE UNION OF MYANMAR
MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND FINANCE

ANNOUNCEMENT NO (32/2019)

The 9th Waning of Taboung, 1380 M.E.
(29 March 2019)

RESCHEDULING OF FORMAL ANNOUNCEMENT OF PREFERRED APPLICANTS FOR THE REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL TO APPLY FOR A LICENCE FOR LIFE INSURANCE BUSINESS IN MYANMAR TO BE OPERATED BY A FOREIGN INSURER THROUGH A 100% WHOLLY-OWNED SUBSIDIARY

1. The Request for Proposal issued by the Ministry of Planning and Finance stated that the lists of preferred foreign life insurers will be announced on 29 March 2019.
2. Due to continued selection process, the Ministry of Planning and Finance would like to inform that the list of the preferred foreign life insurers will be announced on 5 April 2019 (Friday).
3. In order to preserve the four (4) weeks window for eligible unsuccessful applicants to prepare for submission of an Expression of Interest ("EOI") to form a joint venture with an eligible local life insurer, the deadline for submission of the joint venture EOI has been correspondingly rescheduled to 3 May 2019, 1200 hours local time.

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Digital technology key for better future of MSMEs

MICRO, Small, and Medium Enterprises, or MSMEs, make up 99 percent of Myanmar's businesses. Therefore, only when MSMEs are developed can the country's economy progress.

Exhibitions and contests have been held in the regions and states, in keeping with the second point of the National Economic Policy, which seeks to 'support micro, small and medium enterprises for job creation and economic growth'.

Such MSME contests and exhibitions are aimed at helping expand the market for MSMEs; promote import substitution in various sectors; encourage linkages between the manufacturing and trade sectors; improve MSME competitiveness, technology and

MSMEs face constant competition and challenges while fulfilling the shifting requirements of consumers. To thrive and survive in an ever-changing economic environment, they must not lose sight of news and information, and strive to improve the quality of their products and services, and penetrate international markets.

knowledge of economics, in collaboration with local and international businesses; increase import substitution in products and promote innovative products; and, boost MSMEs.

The government is encouraging and supporting MSMEs engaged in making agri-based food products. MSMEs that make value-added agri products for export can help earn foreign exchange and stabilize the market.

MSMEs face constant competition and challenges while fulfilling the shifting requirements of consumers. To thrive and survive in an ever-changing economic environment, they must not lose sight of news and information, and strive to improve the quality of their products and services, and penetrate international markets.

Today, in the push for digital economies, modern technologies are being used in research, production, distribution, and for connecting and providing services. Therefore, digital technology is being employed in the country to support MSME programs such as courses and

competitions. We would like to urge MSMEs to use digital technology to adjust to the changing business landscape, including in areas such as upgrading production processes, selling products online, and offering products in response to demand from customers.

Only when MSMEs take the digital approach to increase their competitiveness can they enter international markets. Else, they stand to face barriers of operational costs and competitiveness.

With the use of information technology, MSMEs can advertise and promote their products and services to the public, gain information and utilize the opportunity to sell products online, and make services more attractive to the public. They can also get customer reviews and feedback, understand and meet the requirement of the public, establish contact with distributors, and coordinate and connect with other MSMEs in the supply chain.

At the same time, the government's support to local small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in terms of technological knowhow is playing an important role in the production of value-added and finished products.



Taung Nawin Dam Is In Good Hands

Interviewer: Thura Zaw

RUMOURS spread last January that Taung Nawin Dam was collapsed in Paukkaung, Pyay District. All the people residing near the dam were alarmed and they had to live in doubt and anxiety.

To relieve these anxieties, responsible persons from Water Resource Utilization Department and a Japanese expert were interviewed on the condition of the dam and measures taken for its maintenance.

U Aung Bo (Director, Taung Nawin Dam)

Q: Please explain how the dam project was started.

A: Taung Nawin Dam project was the fruit of a master plan designed to develop the upper part of Ayeyawady delta region. This master plan was made in three phases. Feasibility study was conducted as the first phase in 1978 followed by the second and third phases in 1979. In 1980, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) hired Sanyu Consultant Inc to conduct the feasibility study in 1984 and to finalize the design of the dam. The construction works started during 1985 and 1986 and completed during 1994 and 1995.

Q: What is the purpose of the dam?

A: The dam is spanning



U Aung Bo (Director, Taung Nawin Dam)

Taung Nawin creek near Yatthit village, two miles east of Paukkaung, Pyay District in Bago Region. It is to irrigate 57258 acres of agricultural land in Paukkaung, Pyay and Thegon townships. At present, the dam supplies water to 7000 acres of summer paddy and 12000 acres of monsoon paddy.

Q: Let us know about the crack on the surface of the dam and measures being taken.

A: In October 2018, three moderate earthquakes jolted near the dam and also in January 2019, another quake jolted again. The cracks were found on January 8. According to the study made by Myanmar and Japanese experts, the cracks were the consequence of the earthquake. After the incidents, the dam is under watchful eye of the department. Geological testing has been made



Dr Moto Yashika (Japanese Dam Expert)

together with Japanese experts. Based on the outcomes repair and maintenance measures are being taken in a timely manner before

the monsoon season.

Q: What is the plan for the monsoon season?

A: Water flow into the dam has been recorded monthly since 1996. Maximum water flow was in 2011. To relieve the anxiety of local people, only half of the storage capacity of the dam will be stored to supply water for monsoon and summer paddy. Geological study will also be made to know the condition of the dam.

Q: What is the opinion of the department on feedback given by locals on building sluice gate?

A: Suggestions are welcome, but building a sluice gate should

be conducted only after making a thorough study. Experts suggest that it is better to build sluice gate in the dams in the delta region. It is because in case there occurs floods and water is released from the dam, there may be inundation in downstream of the dam. We have witnessed such situation in our neighbouring countries. Therefore, we should take time to make a thorough study.

Dr Moto Yashika (Japanese Dam Expert)

A: Please give your opinion on building sluice gate at Taung Nawin Dam.

Q: In Japan, it takes at least ten years to make a study for building sluice gate or spill way at a dam. The study is made to know whether there is necessary or not to install such facilities and the consequences of it. If water is released from just one sluice gate while flood occurs, the downstream areas will be surely inundated. We have experienced such situation in Thailand. So, in my opinion, building of a sluice gate should not be rushed. My opinion is that taking a time, systematic study should be made phase-by-phase.

(Translated by Wallace)



Taung Nawin Dam

Roundtable on Revising the Basic Education Curriculum

"We have added individual, partner and group projects as part of the coursework"

Professor (Department Head) Dr. Poe Poe

(Continued from previous article appeared on 26 March)

THE roundtable on revising the 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 the six areas of learning?

Dr. Zaw Latt Htun: The six areas in the KG curriculum learning are: communication and language, physical development, personal, social and emotional development, literacy, mathematics, understanding the world and expressive arts and design. This is adopted and in line with the international KG curriculum standards.

The new system for KG is the real KG and is called kindergarten as per international standards as KG used to be called Grade-1 in the previous curriculum.

Facilitator: What about Grade-1, Grade-2? Can you help us understand a little bit about the terminology?

Dr. Zaw Latt Htun: In the previous system, the Grades are different in Myanmar and English. The Grade is one higher. For instance, we used to call kindergarten Grade 1 and first grade is Grade 2 and second grade is Grade 3 until the last grade (10th grade) called Grade-11. However,

in this new system, Grades are the same. Kindergarten is KG, first grade is Grade-1, second grade is Grade 2 and the last grade is Grade-12.

Facilitator: So in the new system, primary education will be from Grade-1 to Grade-5?

Dr. Zaw Latt Htun: Yes, that is correct. Primary schools will have Grade-1 till Grade-5, Middle school will be from Grade-6 till Grade-9 and high school will be from Grade- 10 till Grade-12.

Facilitator: What kind of classes will be taught in primary school?

Dr. Zaw Latt Htun: In Primary school, there will be Burmese, English, Maths, Science, Social Skills, civic education, other skills needed for life, physical education, art (painting and music) and other local courses.

Facilitator: Since the course structure has changed for KG, Grade-1 and Grade-2, how have you prepared the different subjects for these Grades?

Dr. Aung Myint Oo: For Burmese, we had to revisit the previous curriculum to draw the new one. After reviewing the strengths and weaknesses of the previous textbooks, we decided to fill in the gaps. The previous textbooks

have limited vocabulary and some are hard to use so students find it hard to study, especially ethnic children.

In drawing the new curriculum, we have put a lot of thought into overcoming these shortcomings. Teaching Burmese and English is quite similar. When we're teaching Burmese, we have to be able to sing and read poems so that they are entertaining and enjoyable for students. If the students are happy in classes, they will be more comfortable using the language outside of the classroom.

SEE PAGE-12



Myanmar Daily Weather Report

(Issued at 7:00 pm Friday 29th March, 2019)

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

FORECAST VALID UNTIL AFTERNOON OF THE 30th March, 2019: Rain or thundershowers will be isolated in Taninthayi Region and Kachin State. Degree of certainty is (80%). Weather will be generally fair in Naypyitaw, Sagaing, Mandalay and Magway Regions, Kayah State and partly cloudy in the remaining Regions and States.

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

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Likelihood of isolated rain or thundershowers in Upper Sagaing and Taninthayi Regions, Kachin State.

FORECAST FOR NAYPYITAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 30th March, 2019: Generally fair weather.

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 30th March, 2019: Partly cloudy.

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 30th March, 2019: Generally fair weather.

WEATHER OUTLOOK FOR WEEKEND: Weather will be generally fair in Naypyitaw and Mandalay Region, partly cloudy in Yangon Region.



The Rainbow Bridge

Seeing is Believing.
This bridge is really, amazing, wonderful, colourful and beautiful. I cannot capture its beauty in words for it is beyond words. She is like a picture painted by the Master painter. She is the Pride of Myanmar and Pride of Ayarwady Division. Just like a Rainbow fallen down from the sky to our land, the great Myaungmya is very lovely. She is **The Rainbow Bridge (New Myaungmya Bridge)**. I am very proud of her. I am also proud of the engineers, supervisors, workers for constructing and completing the Rainbow bridge in time. We, Myanmar are ABLE. Yes, we can. United as one, we can show our mighty if we are really in needs. Now we can walk, we can bike, we can drive on the Bridge starting April 2019. We can see the smiles on everyone's face. Thank you all for bringing Smiles, Happiness, giving us the newly born --- "The Rainbow Bridge".

Engr. Hla Min (Max Myanmar)

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Local products to be showcased at Chindwin Thingyan Festival

THE Chindwin Thingyan Festival will showcase local products made by SMEs in Monywa township, Sagaing Region, according to U Soe Naing, the deputy director of Sagaing Region's Industrial Supervision and Inspection Department.

This will be the second time local products are exhibited as part of the Chindwin Thingyan Festival.

SMEs interested in showcasing their products need to contact the department.

"The expo will have 25 stalls displaying food, medicines, and local products. SMEs can exhibit products at the expo free of charge.

The department will make the necessary arrangements for sellers and visitors," said U Soe Naing.



People celebrate 2018 Chindwin Thingyan Festival in Monywa Township, Sagaing Region. **PHOTO: KO MIN (INDAW)**

Over 20 local SME entrepreneurs took part in the first expo.

This will be the second such expo for Sagaing Region, and will feature

over 400 stalls. —Ko Min (Indaw) (Translated by La Wonn)

Young Myanmar entrepreneurs to visit China to study textile industry

By Aye Yamone

YOUNG entrepreneurs from Myanmar will visit China under a program to study textile and garment manufacturing technologies in the first week of June, according to the Myanmar Textile Manufacturers' Association.

The Guangxi Economic and Trade Vocational Institute, the Ministry of Industry, and the MTMA jointly launched the scholarship program on 28 March at the Sedona Hotel.

"This is the result of an MoU. The program has been launched to allow young Myanmar entrepreneurs to study textile and garment technologies. The Guangxi institute will provide a full scholarship, covering accommodation, food, and charges for the course," said U



An employee works on a production line at a garment factory in Yangon. **PHOTO: PHOE KHWAR**

Tin Myo Win, the chair of the MTMA.

Twenty young entrepreneurs will be selected for the first batch of the study program, which aims to improve Myanmar's textile and garment sector. Later, more batches will be sent

to China to learn cotton ginning, weaving, thread painting, sketching, and design.

"The first batch of the program will last 10 days. Twenty entrepreneurs engaged in garment manufacturing businesses will be selected for the pro-

gram. Priority will be given to entrepreneurs from townships outside Yangon such as Shwebo and Monywa. We will discuss continuing the program with the Guangxi institute," said U Tin Myo Win.

As the second outcome of the MoU, the Ministry of Industry, the MTMA, and the Guangxi institute will jointly offer free courses on weaving, cotton ginning, and thread dyeing.

To offer courses for Myanmar's textile sector development, a delegation from Guangxi institute came to Myanmar on 13 July, 2018. The MTMA and the Guangxi Economic and Trade Vocational Institute signed an MoU for technical assistance at the Guangxi trade expo, held on 13 September, 2018. (Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Value-added agarwood products draw attention of tourists, say businesses

AGARWOOD production in Myanmar is improving and the demand for agarwood products has risen compared with previous years, said U Aung Zaw Shein, Pwint Oo agarwood manufacturer from Hlegu Township.

He spoke about the cultivation and production process of agarwood, and said foreigners are interested in agarwood due to its medical value. The demand for agarwood is higher among foreigners, and it commands a price of US\$1,000 per kilo, he said.

"Diabetes patients must

add agarwood flowers in their tea every day as it can be good for controlling blood sugar levels and the nervous system. Scented agarwood candles are also being used to pay homage to the Buddha, and their fragrance has health benefits," said U Aung Zaw Shein.

The government has allowed local entrepreneurs to set up agarwood farms across the country.

"We sell agarwood seedlings and seeds. Some growers have concerns over sales and foreign demand. Anyone can sell

agarwood as long as they pay taxes," said U Aung Zaw Shein.

Japanese tourists bought agarwood plants and flowers from the Pwint Oo agarwood production business on 26 March in Yangon. Myanmar agarwood plantations are also attracting tourists. Production of agarwood is helping raise the country's revenues and create jobs for locals, said U Aung Zaw Shein.

Agarwood bangles and bead necklaces from abroad are entering the Myanmar market, but the majority of entrepreneurs

within the country are focusing on agarwood essential oils, uncut wood, and other products that can be made from the wood.

Portions of agarwood where the resin has congealed are incorporated into the carver's design, while the value of the finished product depends on the amount of resin within the wood, according to people in the industry.

Carved agarwood products can only be produced from agar trees that have matured for 10 to 15 years.—Pwint Thitsar (Translated by La Wonn)

Thai candidates lodge complaints over 'election irregularities'

BANGKOK — Several anti-military candidates in Thailand lodged fresh complaints with the Election Commission Friday over bungled tallies and alleged vote-buying following a controversial ballot that has left politics in the junta-ruled kingdom in limbo.

A military-backed party and its main rival led by an exiled billionaire have both claimed the right to lead the government in the wake of Sunday's polls, with official final tallies delayed for weeks.

Candidates from at least two parties issued fresh complaints with the commission on Friday over alleged irregularities they claim could skew final vote counts.

A member of the anti-junta Future Forward party accused the pro-military Phalang Pracharat of currying favour among local officials by gifting them cash and gifts. "It's against the law, it can be seen as vote-buying," said Future Forward spokeswoman Pannika Wanich.

Another Future Forward candidate reported voter intimidation inside a Bangkok polling station. "There was a military officer standing inside the polling station to see whether military officials have voted for the party he wanted," candidate Chris Potranan said in a complaint filed on Friday.

A member of the anti-junta Pheu Thai party also lodged objections over allegedly dodgy counts in his Bangkok constituency. "Our observers at polling stations reported inaccuracies in tallies as counting was conducted in a dark area," Pheu Thai candidate Trirat Sirichantharopas said.

The Election Commission has received more than 180 complaints, 40 of which were filed in the immediate aftermath of the poll.

'Failed to perform duty'

On Thursday the commission unexpectedly released the latest popular vote tallies, before quickly taking them down and

re-posting revised numbers.

The tally showed more than 2.1 million invalidated votes, but election officials did not respond to questions about the ballots.

The regional election monitor ANFREL said the haphazard release of the results "reflects poorly" on the commission.

"Many voters may never see this election as a legitimate expression of the people's will," said ANFREL's programme officer Amael Vier.

A campaign calling for the commission to be dissolved gathered steam Friday, with 20,000 supporters needed to officially submit a petition requesting the body be impeached.

"The Election Commission has failed to perform its duty," said the student activist behind the campaign, Tanawat Wongchai.

Some 1,000 supporters had backed the petition as of Friday afternoon, he said.

The junta-backed Phalang Pracharat party, whose prime ministerial candidate is



Complaints about alleged voting irregularities have dogged the Thailand election. PHOTO: AFP

2014 coup leader Prayut Chan-O-Cha, clinched the majority of popular votes in Sunday's polls.

In second place was its main rival Pheu Thai, the party linked to self-exiled former premier Thaksin Shinawatra. His sister, former prime minister Yingluck Shinawatra, was ousted in the 2014 putsch and also lives in exile.

With parliamentary seats yet to be confirmed, both parties have claimed the right to govern.

Pheu Thai and Future Forward formed a coalition with five other parties this week claiming

to hold more than half of all seats in the lower house of parliament and the right to form a government.

But observers say the seven-party bloc will not likely have enough overall seats in the upper and lower houses to stunt a junta-backed alliance with the balance of power stacked in the military's favour.

The 250 seats in the upper house are all military-appointed, which means anti-junta parties need an avalanche of votes to secure enough seats overall to elect a prime minister. —AFP ■

N Ireland's DUP: Brexit's hardline holdouts

LONDON — Northern Ireland's small but powerful Democratic Unionist Party is crucial to Prime Minister Theresa May's hopes of getting parliament to vote Friday for her Brexit divorce deal on a third attempt.

The party, which has consistently opposed the deal, is a hardline group whose tough negotiating tactics were forged in conflict.

The DUP, which props up May's minority Conservative government, said earlier this

week it could not back the un-amended deal even after May offered to resign if parliament voted for her unpopular agreement with Brussels.

The DUP is known for its fiery rhetoric and steely determination, rather than its willingness to compromise.

"No" has more often been its classic watchword.

The hard-bargaining party has only 10 MPs in parliament but has used its power-broker role to attempt to ensure that

Northern Ireland is not given a different economic status from mainland Britain after Brexit.

In a statement, the DUP said the so-called backstop guarantee for the Irish border "poses an unacceptable threat to the integrity of the United Kingdom".

The party said it would also "inevitably limit the United Kingdom's ability to negotiate on the type of future relationship with the EU".

After speculation that the party's MPs could simply abstain in the vote, thereby helping the government, the DUP's leader in Westminster Nigel Dodds tweeted: "The DUP do not abstain on the Union."

The group has propped up the Conservatives since the June 2017 snap general election.

May lost her majority in parliament and turned to the Conservatives' fellow Irish right-wingers for support in a "confidence and supply" deal.

The agreement came at a price of £1.0 billion (\$1.3 billion, 1.15 billion euros) in extra funding for Northern Ireland. —AFP ■

Rebuilding at N Korea's rocket site 'almost complete': Seoul

SEOUL — North Korea has almost completed rebuilding a long-range rocket site it had promised to close, Seoul lawmakers told reporters Friday after a closed-door meeting with South Korean intelligence officials.

The claim comes a month after a second summit between US President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un in February ended without an agreement, deepening a gap between the two on how to achieve "complete denuclearisation".

Shortly after the end of the Hanoi summit, a series of satellite images emerged suggesting increased activity at the North's Sohae rocket site, triggering international alarm that the nuclear-armed state might be preparing a long-range or space launch.

"The North began rebuilding the centre, which was partly dismantled last July, before the North-US summit in February," lawmaker Kim Min-ki told reporters after the closed-door

briefing by the National Intelligence Service.

"The work is almost complete with some maintenance activity being underway," he said.

North Korea has been banned by the UN Security Council from carrying out space launches, as some of its technology was similar to that used for intercontinental ballistic missiles, or ICBMs.

But earlier this month the Washington-based Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) said there was "deliberate and purposeful" activity going on at the Sohae rocket site.

Friday's latest assessment by Seoul could suggest a reversal in policy by Kim, who agreed to shut the Sohae site at a meeting with South Korean President Moon Jae-in in Pyongyang last year.

Experts have warned a launch of any kind would send the stuttering talks on denuclearisation into disarray. —AFP ■



The Democratic Unionist Party's 10 MPs have propped up the Conservative government since the 2017 general election. PHOTO: AFP

Roundtable on Revising the Basic Education Curriculum



High school students doing schoolwork with their classmates in the library. **PHOTO:**

FROM PAGE-8+9

Facilitator: What about for English?

Dr. Poe Poe: The difference between the previous and current curriculum is that now in KG, we ask teachers to incorporate activities with the English alphabets to familiarize the children with the language. When they get to Grade-1, we teach them the letters and vocabulary to get them started on speaking in English about their house, family, environment and other

basics. As they progress to other grades, we try to teach them to be able to use the language and not just memorize words and vocabulary. We have added individual, partner and group projects as part of the coursework.

There is also a Teacher's Guide with specific guidelines to help teachers navigate the new curriculum. In the guide, we have some explanations on teaching the words that the teachers might find difficult.

Additionally, there is also a listening aspect in addition to reading and writing. The Ministry of Education has distributed audio materials for listening classes to various schools. The audio files are also available for download on the Ministry of Education's website in collaboration with JIC (CREATE) Project Team Website.

Facilitator: Thank you all for giving us your time and participating in this discussion.

(Translated by Myat Thu)

US, Chinese negotiators wrap up 'constructive' trade talks

BEIJING — US and Chinese negotiators wrapped up "constructive" trade talks in Beijing on Friday ahead of another round next week, a top American official said as the economic superpowers aim to settle a bruising tariffs battle.

US Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer and Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin held negotiations with China's Vice Premier Liu He at the Diaoyutai State Guesthouse after a working dinner Thursday.

Mnuchin wrote on Twitter that he and Lighthizer "concluded constructive trade talks in Beijing" but he did not provide more details.

"I look forward to welcoming China's Vice Premier Liu He to continue these important discussions in Washington next week," he said.

The two negotiating teams, including China's central bank chief Yi Gang, posed for pictures in front of Chinese and American flags, but they did not make statements to the media.

Officials are seeking to iron out major differences over US accusations that China has been using unfair trade practices for years by heavily subsidising its companies while snatching the technological know-how of American firms.

US President Donald

Trump has said the two sides were close to a deal, but officials have played down expectations of an imminent agreement.

In Washington, White House economic adviser Larry Kudlow said Thursday the talks were not "time-dependent" and could last weeks or even months if necessary.

The talks are "policy and enforcement dependent", Kudlow said.

The Chinese commerce ministry said a "large amount of work" remains to be done and both sides confirmed before this round of talks that another face-to-face negotiation was scheduled for Washington next week.—AFP ■



A Vietnamese vendor sells strawberries on her bicycle in Hanoi's Old Quarter. **PHOTO: AFP**

Viet Nam GDP growth hit by swine flu, weakened exports

HANOI — Viet Nam's growth slowed in the first quarter of this year, dragged down by a weakened agricultural sector hit by a swine flu outbreak and a sharp drop in exports.

The communist country is one of Asia's fastest growing economies, buoyed by exports that have helped GDP growth hit above six percent annually since 2015.

But year-on-year growth slowed in the first three months of 2019, coming in at 6.79 per cent compared to 7.45 per cent in the same period last year, according to the General

Statistics Office (GSO).

One reason for the dip is a swine flu outbreak that has hit the agricultural sector hard and could affect growth for the rest of the year. The outbreak has so far spread to 23 provinces and cities in Viet Nam where 82,000 pigs have already been killed to try to stem further infection.

The UN's Food and Agricultural Organization has called on Viet Nam to declare the outbreak a national emergency.

First quarter growth slowed in line with a dip in global growth thanks in part to a trade war between

China and the US that has sent ripple effects around, badly bruising Vietnam's exports, GSO said.

Export growth dropped sharply in the first quarter from 22 per cent last year to 4.7 per cent, picking up slightly in March.

GDP first quarter growth "took place in the context of global growth, which slowed down with increasing risks and challenges", GSO said.

Viet Nam has seen glittering economic growth since it embraced market reforms introduced in the 1990s.—AFP ■

TRADE MARK CAUTION

We, **BIOTON SPOLKA AKCYJNA (S.A.)**, a Joint Stock Company organized and existing under the laws of Poland, carrying on business as manufacturers and having its principle office at ul. **Staroscinka 5, PL-020516, Warszawa, (PL)** is the owner and sole proprietor of the following trademarks:

Trademark	Class	Registration No.	Specification
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GENSUPEN	10	IV/14946/2019	Medical device, instruments and apparatus for delivery of hormonal medicines; medical devices, instruments and apparatus for delivery of insulin; medical devices, instruments and apparatus containing insulin; syringes for medical purposes; injection syringes; subcutaneous syringes.

Our client has secured registrations/ filed applications for the above marks worldwide including but not limited to Albania, Australia, Azerbaijan, China, European Union, Thailand, Poland, Russian Federation, Mexico, Macedonia, Uzbekistan, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Vietnam, Bosnia And Herzegovina, Mongolia, Serbia, Ukraine, Belarus, Croatia, Morocco, Montenegro, Kazakhstan, Egypt, India, Philippines, Mauritius and Tunisia.

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Nestlé continues to “Nourish Myanmar” across 5 key regions in 2019

THE “Nestlé Nourishing Myanmar” event will be held across 5 key regions in Myanmar including Yangon, Mandalay, Mawlamyaing, Taungyi and Magway. The nation-wide event will kick start in Mandalay this March.

As an extension of last year’s “Nestlé Nourishing Myanmar” event in Yangon that saw over 50,000 people in attendance, Nestlé Myanmar will continue its journey of “Nourishing Myanmar” by taking the event to 5 key regions across the country. The Nestlé Nourishing Myanmar” event in Mandalay was held at Mingalar Mandalay from 9:30am to 8:00pm on 23 and 24 March 2019.

Nestlé is the world’s largest food and Beverage Company present in 191 countries around the world, and for more than 150 years, Nestlé has been offering a wide portfolio

of 2,000 brands for people throughout their lives. Nestlé aims to enrich the quality of life and contribute to a healthier future of Myanmar people with a strong emphasis on Nutrition, Health and Wellness.

Malnutrition continues to be an issue in Myanmar that deserves much more attention than what it has today. With many children and adults in Myanmar still not receiving sufficient nutrition on a daily basis, Nestlé Myanmar aims to address their nutritional needs by educating them on the importance of choosing quality and healthier options, and at the same time making high-quality nutritious products and services accessible to Myanmar people.

Nestlé products first arrived in Myanmar in 1915 and Nestlé Myanmar Limited was formed in 2013.—GNLM



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

HK Disneyland to launch new Marvel-themed attraction

HONG KONG—A new Marvel-themed attraction is set to open to the public on March 31 at Hong Kong Disneyland, the theme park said on Thursday.

Ant-Man and The Wasp: Nano Battle is the first attraction to feature characters of Ant-Man and The Wasp, and also the first-ever Marvel attraction in a Disney Park to feature a female super hero as a title character. Combined with high tech and high energy, this attraction invites tourists to experience a critical mission to defend Hong

Kong. In the ride, tourists will be shrunk down to the size of an ant as 150 targets shown in various shapes and sizes provide different levels of shooting challenge. Marvel stories attract tourists from all around the world, and Hong Kong markets especially resonate with these stories, said Stephanie Young, managing director of the Hong Kong Disneyland Resort. Young added that more popular Disney characters and stories are arriving in HKDL under the multi-year expansion plan.—Xinxua ■

OPPO launches OPPO F11 Pro with brilliant low-light portrait in Myanmar

OPPO Myanmar has revealed its highly anticipated smartphone for 2019, the OPPO F11 Pro. With brilliant portrait in low light and other innovative technologies, the revolutionary new phone was launched to the public at Sedona Hotel on 21st March 2019. Available in Thunder Black and Aurora Green, a pop-up selfie camera and panoramic screen provide customers with an easy to use and flawless user experience. “Since the launch of our first F-series device, the F1 in 2016, we have set a high bar for smartphone photography, and we are dedicated to continuing this excellence in each new device. From a metal body to gradient colour design, and from thin bezels to a notchless panoramic screen, our F-series devices have consistently combined fashionable designs and excellent photography. Today, we are announcing our latest F-series smart-



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

phone, the new F11 Pro. Now, you will become a portrait master,” said Ko Than Aung, Product Manager of OPPO Myanmar.

The OPPO F11 Pro’s panoramic screen has no notch, no hole punch, and no bezel. The selfie camera pops-up from under the screen when required. The 6.5-inch display and 90.9% screen-to-body ratio means larger images and more space for entertainment and gaming, with no visual interruption or clutter.

The F11 Pro offers

exceptionally robust rear camera performance, giving Myanmar’s young people the tools, they need to capture the unforgettable moments of their lives. An ultra-high resolution 48MP+5MP dual camera system, an F1.79 aperture, and large 1/2.25-inch image sensor works together to create amazing low light photography performance.

Further, new Ultra-Night and Dazzle Colour modes use OPPO’s system-level optimization to create brilliant

portraits in low light situations. The F11 Pro is powerful enough to identify faces, adjust skin colour, suppress highlights, and correct brightness to create the best night shots ever on an F-series device.

2018’s OPPO F9 started the gradient colour smartphone design trend, and the F11 Pro takes it to the next level with a unique three colour gradient design. Driven by the aesthetic concept of “natural creation”, the F11 Pro draws inspiration from the beauty of the natural light colour spectrum. The Thunder Black model features a profound inky black blended with streaks of red and blue, just like meteors in the night sky. Conversely, Aurora Green has a flowing green to blue gradient along the width of the device.

Under different light conditions, the two colours blend into one, refreshing the body and mind.—GNLM

CLAIM’S DAY NOTICE

M.V RATANA THIDA VOY. NO. (133 W/E)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V RATANA THIDA VOY. NO. (133 W/E) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 30-03-2019 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T.T/A.I.P.T where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

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

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM’S DAY NOTICE

M.V MAERSK WIESBADEN VOY. NO. (912S)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V MAERSK WIESBADEN VOY. NO. (912S) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 30-03-2019 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T.T/T.M.T where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

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

Phone No: 2301185

Transferred Distributor for Registration Pesticides

Distribution and registration processes of below pesticides produced by Sanpu Multi Grass Plant Formulation Co., Ltd. Will have been transferred from MAY 28 Marketing Co., Ltd. to Baigreen Crop Science Company Limited. So, if there are any protest, please protest to this address; Co Secretary, Pesticides Registration Board, Plant Protection Division, Gyogone (West) Insein during (14) days from this announcement.

No	Trade Name	Active ingredient Name	Registration Type	Registration Number
1	Bio Green	Matrine Aqueous Solution 0.36%	Full	F 2010-718

MAY 28 Marketing Co., Ltd.
Tel : 95-9-5407158

Facebook to deploy new transparency tools ahead of European elections

MENLO PARK — Facebook announced on Friday changes to the way political advertisements are handled on the social media site ahead of the upcoming European Parliament elections.

“We are introducing some new tools to help us deliver on two key goals that experts have told us are important for protecting the integrity of elections: preventing online advertising from being used for foreign interference, and increasing transparency around all forms of political and issue advertising,” said Richard Allen, vice president for Global Policy Solutions at Facebook, in a statement.

The tools have been used since last year in other countries

where elections have been held, including the mid-term polls in the United States, and votes in Brazil and India.

Here are some of the key measures that will be applied on Facebook or on Instagram during the campaign for the May 23-26 European elections:

- All EU advertisers will need to be authorised in their country to run ads related to politics and issues, a move intended to be a barrier to potential election interference from outside a country.

All ads related to politics or issues must be clearly labelled, including indicating who is paying for the ad, and for any business or organisation, their contact details.



The tools have been used since last year in other countries where elections have been held, including the mid-term polls in the United States, and votes in Brazil and India. **PHOTO: AFP**

Facebook will block all political or issue ads that have not been properly registered from mid-April.

A new tool will be available called Ad Library where all the ads that have been classified as relating to politics or issues will

be kept for seven years. Clicking on “See Ad Details” will reveal the number of times the ad was viewed and demographics about the audience reached including age range, location and gender.

Allan noted, however, that these changes would not entire-

ly prevent abuse.

“We’re up against smart, creative and well-funded adversaries who change their tactics as we spot abuse, but we believe that they will help prevent future interference in elections on Facebook,” he said.— AFP ■

Scientists discover how mosquitoes detect human sweat

WASHINGTON — Scientists have known for decades that mosquitoes are attracted to the lactic acid contained in human sweat, but in the era before advanced genetics, the precise mechanism had remained a mystery.

Now, a team of researchers at Florida International University have discovered the olfactory receptor that allows the disease-carrying insects to hone in on our odor — and how to switch it off.

They published their work on the *Aedes aegypti* mosquitoes, known for spreading deadly illnesses like Zika, dengue and yellow fever, in the journal *Current Biology* on Thursday.

The team, led by FIU biologist Matthew DeGennaro, identified the guilty receptor as Ionotropic Receptor 8a, or simply IR8a, through a process of elimination that began in 2013 when DeGennaro was able to create the world’s first mutant mosquito, removing a gene to investigate how its absence affected the insect.

Tasked with investigating IR8a, DeGennaro’s PhD student Joshua Raji began by carrying out an exposure experiment using his own arm, and found the mutant mosquitoes



Aedes aegypti mosquitoes, known for spreading deadly illnesses like Zika, dengue and yellow fever. **PHOTO: AFP**

were significantly less attracted to him than wild ones.

The outcome was confirmed through testing on 14 additional subjects.

“People have been looking for a receptor for lactic acid since the 1960s,” DeGennaro told AFP.

The findings could offer a roadmap for a new generation of attractants that lure adult specimens into traps for population control, as well as advanced repellants that make people invisible to mosquitoes — though that could be some way away.

“It’ll take years, but we are definitely a step closer,” said DeGennaro.— AFP ■

Global amphibian populations being wiped out by skin disease: study

CANBERRA — A deadly skin disease is responsible for the extinctions of 90 amphibian species over the last 50 years, researchers from Australian National University (ANU) have found.

According to a study published by ANU scientists on Friday, chytridiomycosis, a fungal disease that eats away the skin of amphibians, has caused dramatic population declines in more than 500 species, including frogs, toads and salamanders.

“Highly virulent wildlife diseases, including chytridiomycosis, are contributing to the Earth’s sixth mass extinction,” Lead researcher Ben Scheele

said in a media release on Friday.

“The disease we studied has caused mass amphibian extinctions worldwide. We’ve lost some really amazing species.”

More than 40 researchers from around the world have worked on the study, revealing that the populations of at least 500 species have declined as a result of the disease, with 90 known or presumed extinct, or seven of which, were in Australia.

“The disease is caused by chytrid fungus, which likely originated in Asia where local amphibians appear to have re-

sistance to the disease,” Scheele said.

“Globalization and wildlife trade are the main causes of this global pandemic and are enabling the spread of disease to continue.”

“Humans are moving plants and animals around the world at an increasingly rapid rate, introducing pathogens into new areas.”

The hardest-hit regions were Central and South America and Australia’s east coast where chytridiomycosis thrives in moist and cool conditions.

The species that have been affected but have not gone extinct still have a high chance of doing so, Scheele said, because of the extreme difficulty associated with eradicating the disease.

“It’s really hard to remove chytrid fungus from an ecosystem, if it is in an ecosystem, it’s pretty much there to stay unfortunately. This is partly because some species aren’t killed by the disease,” he said.

“On one hand, it’s lucky that some species are resistant to chytrid fungus. But on the other hand, it means that these species carry the fungus and act as a reservoir for it so there’s a constant source of the fungus in the environment.”—Xinhua ■



A deadly skin disease is responsible for the extinctions of 90 amphibian species over the last 50 years, researchers from Australian National University (ANU) have found. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

UK lawmakers poised for pivotal vote on May's Brexit deal

LONDON—MPs are set for a momentous third vote Friday on Prime Minister Theresa May's Brexit divorce deal, which could end a months-long crisis or risk Britain crashing out of the EU in two weeks. The House of Commons has twice rejected May's withdrawal agreement, both times by large margins, but has been unable to agree any alternative—and time is running out. The pivotal vote takes place on the day Britain was supposed to leave the European Union until May asked the bloc's leaders last week for a little more time.

"We have the opportunity here to embrace certainty," Attorney General Geoffrey Cox told parliament at the start of the debate. "We are at an important crossroads for the purposes of this nation's future and its history," he said.

In a last-ditch bid to garner the support of discontented Conservative colleagues, May dramatically promised Wednesday to resign if the deal passed. She appealed to Brexit supporters to back her, saying that under the delay plan hatched with Brussels, approval on Friday could see Britain out of the bloc on May 22.

But if the deal falls again, she must set out a new plan to EU leaders – with the options including a potentially catastrophic "no deal" Brexit as early as April 12, or a lengthy delay.

May's sacrifice swayed some of her critics, including former foreign minister Boris Johnson, a potential leadership contender.



The House of Commons has twice rejected May's withdrawal agreement but has not been able to agree on any alternative. PHOTO: AFP

Johnson had objected in particular to the deal's "backstop" provisions to keep the Irish border free-flowing after Brexit.

"It is very painful to vote for this deal. But I hope we can now work together to remedy its defects, avoid the backstop trap and strive to deliver the Brexit people voted for," Johnson wrote on Twitter. But more than a dozen Conservative MPs still publicly oppose her deal. May's Northern Irish allies, the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), also continue to insist that its arrangements for the Irish border are unacceptable. **'Blindfold Brexit'**

Britain is leaving the EU after 46 years of membership following a divisive 2016 referen-

dum in which voters decided 52 to 48 percent for Brexit. But MPs appear incapable of agreeing on how to implement the result, reflecting the nationwide divisions that persist on the issue.

The ensuing chaos has led business leaders and trade unions to warn of a "national emergency". May admits her agreement, reached last November during more than 18 months of negotiations, is a compromise but insists it is the best available.

It covers citizens' rights, Britain's financial settlement, plans for the Irish border and for a transition period to ease the split until new trade terms are agreed.

Without the support of her own side, May would have to rely

on opposition Labour votes to get her deal through, but leader Jeremy Corbyn has vowed to vote against her. The government has decided to put only one part of the Brexit package to MPs Friday, separating out the withdrawal terms from an accompanying political declaration on future ties.

Another vote on the political declaration, which is not legally binding, will be required for Brexit to happen. Cox on Friday said that would happen "within the next few days". He also told MPs that the EU was "open to negotiating a change" to the text of the political declaration, which sketches out an intention to retain close economic ties between Britain and the EU. — AFP ■

Thousands of German teens join Thunberg's climate fight

BERLIN—Thousands of German youths went on strike from school on Friday, joining Swedish teen activist Greta Thunberg who has taken her protest against climate change to Berlin.

Armed with homemade posters bearing slogans like "It's getting hot in here" or "Our house is on fire" or "You're never too small to make a difference", the teenagers packed into a park in central Berlin to sound the alarm about global warming. From the park in front of the economy ministry, they were to march to Brandenburg Gate, where Thunberg is due to address the crowd. Police said they have dispatched 300 officers to the protest which is expected to draw around 15,000 people.

"We're going to continue skipping classes every Friday because we can't keep going like that with the climate. We have to pull the emergency brakes," vowed Franziska Wessel, one of the organisers of the protests in Berlin. Since December, teenagers across Germany inspired by the 16-year-old Thunberg's climate fight have been marching weekly instead of sitting in classes. With the protests coming at a time when a government commission recommended that coal be phased out by 2038, the youths have seized on the theme to demand a halt to the polluting fuel by 2030.

The youth engagement has left politicians divided on how to react. — AFP ■

Paris's Louvre museum: eight centuries of history

PARIS—From a medieval fortress protecting Paris to one of the world's biggest and most-visited museums, the Louvre has been reinvented many times over the centuries. Today it attracts 10 million visitors a year, most of them tourists drawn by star attractions such as the Mona Lisa and Venus de Milo. On the 30th anniversary of the inauguration of I.M. Pei's landmark glass pyramid within one of its courtyards, here is a look back over some of the colourful episodes in the long life of the Louvre.

1190: watchtower

It started off as a Middle Age fortress set up by King

Philippe-Auguste in 1190 as part of an enclosure to defend Paris, then several times smaller than it is today. As part of the fortification, the moated Louvre Castle monitored entry from the river Seine just as the Tower of London did with the Thames. The base of its "Grosse Tour", a large tower that served in part as a dungeon, still exists today.

1546: royal palace

As Paris expanded, the fortress lost its defensive role and was occasionally used as a royal residence. But when King Francis I returned after being imprisoned in Spain, he announced it would be converted into his main res-

idence. Celebrated French Renaissance architect Pierre Lescot designed the luxurious palace, with work starting in 1546 on its now-famous facade interspersed with columns, bas-reliefs and statues. It became home to successive monarchs, each adding to its transformation, but lost its status as a royal residence after Louis XIV moved in 1678 to Versailles, about 20 kilometres (12 miles) outside of the city.

1725: arts salon

The Louvre evolved into a centre for arts, the prestigious Royal Academy of Painting and Sculpture taking up residence in the 1690s.



The Louvre museum, designed by Chinese born US architect Ieoh Ming Pei, celebrates its 30th anniversary on 29 March, 2019. PHOTO: AFP

In 1725 the academy exhibited its members' work for the first time in its Salon Carré (Square

Salon). Such "salons" or shows became major events in the arts world. — AFP ■

Team Myanmar confident ahead of 2020 AFC Women's Olympic Qualifiers

MYANMAR is currently preparing for the second round of the 2020 AFC Women's Olympic Qualifiers, which are scheduled to take place from 3 April at the Mandalay Thiri Stadium in Mandalay.

According to a statement released by the Myanmar Football Federation, Myanmar goal keeper Zar Zar Myint has said: "I have confidence in our training, as team Myanmar has been training since the completion of the first round of the qualifiers. The teams we will meet in the second qualifiers are familiar to us. We met India and Nepal in the previous qualifiers."

"The player I will watch for is, I think, No.9 from the Nepal team. The Indian players are

very good in team play, but I think they need to work on their finishing. We did a good job in the previous international friendly against Viet Nam, and our team's strength is that all the players can do nearly everything, with the guidance of our head coach," she said. "I am now confident of qualifying to the next stage, or the third round, of the qualifiers for the 2020 AFC Women's Olympics," she added.

Myanmar has been placed in Group A of the qualifiers along with India, Nepal, and Indonesia.

Myanmar will play against Nepal on 3 April, Indonesia on 6 April, and India on 9 April. All the matches are scheduled to take place at the Mandalay Thiri Stadium in Mandalay.—Lynn Thit (Tgi) ■



Myanmar national women football team players pose for a group photo during their training session in Mandalay. **PHOTO: MWL**

Federer books Shapovalov showdown in Miami



Swiss great Roger Federer celebrates a semi-final win over South African Kevin Anderson in the ATP and WTA Miami Open. **PHOTO: AFP**

MIAMI — Roger Federer will make Denis Shapovalov's dream come true on Friday after the Swiss booked a Miami Open semi-final against the Canadian starlet with a ruthless 6-0 6-4 destruction of Kevin Anderson.

Shapovalov, who beat fellow young gun Frances Tiafoe 6-7 (5/7), 6-4, 6-2 to reach his third ATP Masters semi-final, grew up idolising and studying the 20 time Slam-winning Swiss legend who once again rolled back the years with a sublime show at Hard Rock Stadium.

This will be their first meeting and one the Canadian, who will break into the top 20 when the rankings are released next week, cannot wait for.

"It's a match up I have been looking forward to my whole life, a high stakes match against your idol. It's just a dream come true,"

said Shapovalov. "I will try and approach it like any other game, try and enjoy it, give it my all. It will be a difficult match but I am just happy to have a chance to play him." Federer may have been the 19-year-old's hero but he's attempted to learn from Rafael Nadal and Novak Djokovic too.

"With Roger, I was always looking at his backhand and tried to copy him and build my game like his - aggressive, always coming in," said the number 20 seed.

With Shapovalov taking on Federer and long time friend and compatriot Felix Auger-Aliassime, 18, facing defending champion John Isner in the semis, the tennis stars of tomorrow are beginning to prove their worth on the biggest of stages.

"It's crazy for me and Fe-

lix to both have reached the semi-finals," Shapovalov said, while Federer called the clash of generations "exciting".

"It's an exciting draw, for John and for myself here, playing these young guys," Federer said. "They are not just young, but they are very good, as well.

"I practiced with Denis way back, he might have been 16, 17. He was just hitting big. I was, like, 'Wow, it's unbelievable. How old is he? How good is he going to get? It's going to be tough against him.'"

The Swiss came into the match with Anderson knowing the world number seven's huge serve could be the difference, just as it was in a dramatic five set, last eight encounter at Wimbledon won by the South African last summer.

Yet after a whirlwind first set, Federer had broken the Anderson serve three times and "bageled" his opponent, much to the delight of a packed house on center court who came to show their appreciation for the ever-green 37 year-old as he chases a fourth Miami title which would take his career tally to 101.

It was the first time Anderson, 32, has ever lost a first set at ATP level to love and although the second was far tighter, Federer was always in control.

Shapovalov, meanwhile, crashed home 40 winners in an entertaining tussle with American Tiafoe on a rain interrupted day in South Florida.—AFP ■

Head coach Aung Naing: Shan United ready for April

AFTER sending key players for international tournaments and matches, former national league champion Shan United FC. is preparing for the upcoming matches for the Myanmar National League, said Aung Naing, the team's head coach. Shan United had sent key players to the U-23 and national football teams for international matches, and the players joined the local club back on 27 March.

Head coach Aung Naing said the team is ready for April as key players are back with Shan United after their stint with the national teams.

"We have prepared our best for the match against Zwekapin, which will take place on 30 March, with the efforts of our key players," he said. After five matches in the national league, Shan United F.C. now stands in the third place with 9 points, while Zwekapin United is in the eighth place with 6 points. "As my boys are good individually, I do not need to give so much time to preparations," said the head coach. There will be continuous matches of the national league in April and we will just focus on each match, said Aung Naing.—Lynn Thit (Tgi) ■

New Spurs stadium 'best in the world' for Pochettino

LONDON — Tottenham coach Mauricio Pochettino believes the club's state-of-the-art new stadium has been worth waiting for after months of delays.

Spurs trained at the 62,000 capacity venue for the first time on Thursday and will play for the first time there on Wednesday against Crystal Palace. "I think it is amazing, everyone was surprised by the magnitude of the project," said Pochettino. "The stadium is the best in the world, we can confirm that now. Every space is

the best I have seen in my life, you can't compare that with anything. "It's an amazing project, it is going to be fantastic for the future of the club. It is going to be a massive boost for our fans and it must be for our players too."

Pochettino's future seems very much tied to Spurs' exciting new venture as talk of him being appointed Manchester United's next permanent manager was ended by the appointment of Ole Gunnar Solskjaer on Thursday.—AFP ■