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# THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

Vol. V, No. 357, 4<sup>th</sup> Waxing of Tagu 1380 ME

www.globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

Monday, 8 April 2019

Republic of the Union of Myanmar  
Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Office  
Notification 1/2019

3<sup>rd</sup> Waxing of Tagu 1380 ME  
7 April 2019

Summoning Second Pyidaungsu  
Hluttaw twelfth regular session

In accord with section 79 the Constitution of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and Section 13 of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Law and Rule 3, Sub-rule (b) of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Rules, it is hereby announced that the Second Pyidaungsu Hluttaw twelfth regular session is summoned at 1:30 pm on the 10<sup>th</sup> Waning of Tagu 1381 ME (29 April 2019) (Monday).

*Sd/ T Khun Myat*  
Speaker  
Pyidaungsu Hluttaw

Republic of the Union of Myanmar  
Pyithu Hluttaw  
Notification 1/2019

3<sup>rd</sup> Waxing of Tagu 1380 ME  
7 April 2019

Summoning Second Pyithu Hluttaw  
twelfth regular session

In accord with section 126 of the Constitution of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and Section 35 of the 2012 Pyithu Hluttaw Law and Rule 3, Sub-rule (b) of the 2013 Pyithu Hluttaw Rules, it is hereby announced that the Second Pyithu Hluttaw twelfth regular session is summoned at 10 am on the 10<sup>th</sup> Waning of Tagu 1381 ME (29 April 2019) (Monday).

*Sd/ T Khun Myat*  
Speaker  
Pyithu Hluttaw

Republic of the Union of Myanmar  
Amyotha Hluttaw  
Notification 1/2019

3<sup>rd</sup> Waxing of Tagu 1380 ME  
7 April 2019

Summoning Second Amyotha Hluttaw  
twelfth regular session

In accord with section 155 of the Constitution of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and Section 35 of the Amyotha Hluttaw Law for the 2012 and Rule 3, Sub-rule (b) of the 2015 Amyotha Hluttaw Rules, it is hereby announced that the Second Amyotha Hluttaw twelfth regular session is summoned at 10 am on the 10<sup>th</sup> Waning of Tagu 1381 ME (29 April 2019) (Monday).

*Sd/ Mahn Win Khaing Than*  
Speaker  
Amyotha Hluttaw

## Union Minister reviews state of air pollution in Tachilek

UNION Minister for Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation U Ohn Win yesterday reviewed the air pollution situation in Tachilek, caused mostly by burning of agricultural waste and forest fires.

Tachilek, the border town of Myanmar, and Mae Sai in Thailand face pollution from burning of fields every opening season, but the smoke levels this year have been worse than the previous year.

After hearing reports from local authorities on measures taken to reduce trans-border smoke, the Union Minister promised to set up a machine permanently to read the air pollution levels in the border town in the 2018-2019 fiscal year.

He also promised to employ machines to spray water over polluted air.



**SEE PAGE-2** Union Minister U Ohn Win reads index of air pollution caused by burning of agricultural waste and forest fires in Tachilek. **PHOTO:MNA**

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## NATIONAL

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## Union Minister U Kyaw Tin hosts dinner for Malaysian FM in Nay Pyi Taw

A delegation led by Minister for Foreign Affairs of Malaysia Mr. Dato' Saifuddin Abdullah arrived in Nay Pyi Taw via Yangon yesterday.

The Malaysian delegation was welcomed at the Nay Pyi Taw Airport by officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and officials of the Embassy of Malaysia. Union Minister for International Cooperation U Kyaw Tin hosted a dinner for Mr. Dato' Saifuddin Abdullah and party at the Hilton Hotel in Nay Pyi Taw.—MNA ■



Union Minister U Kyaw Tin hosts dinner for Minister for Foreign Affairs of Malaysia Mr. Dato' Saifuddin Abdullah. **PHOTO: MNA**

## Deputy Minister for Planning and Finance attends 23<sup>rd</sup> AFMM in Thailand

A Myanmar delegation led by Deputy Minister for Planning and Finance U Maung Maung Win and Governor of the Central Bank of Myanmar U Kyaw Kyaw Maung attended the 23<sup>rd</sup> ASEAN Finance Minister's Meeting-23<sup>rd</sup> AFMM and the 5<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Finance Minister's and Central Bank Governors' Meeting-5<sup>th</sup> AFMM in Chiang Rai, Thailand from 4 to 6 April.

The deputy minister and party also attended the ASEAN Finance Deputy Meeting – AFDM, ASEAN Finance and Central Bank Deputy Meeting – AFCDM, ASEAN+3 Finance and Central Bank Deputy Meeting – AFCDM+3 and related meetings on 2 and 3 April.

During the meetings, the participants reviewed and analyzed the matters related to global and local economic development, and implementing economic and financial cooperation of ASEAN member nations.



Deputy Minister U Maung Maung Win attends the 23<sup>rd</sup> ASEAN Finance Minister's Meeting in Thailand. **PHOTO: MNA**

After analyzing the ASEAN Economic Community in sector-wise implementation, the processes of keys to challenges, widely use of electronic-based digital communication technologies, easing trade restrictions, and integrating the countries in the region into sustainable all-inclusive ASEAN region by narrowing development gaps were also discussed at the meetings.

ASEAN Business Council, ASEAN EU Business Council and ASEAN US Business Council meetings were also held.

Myanmar is working together with other member countries on the processes of ASEAN capital market development, financial and free industrial services, and insurance and tax industries cooperation.—MNA ■ / (Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)

### Pyithu Hluttaw representatives informed to attend parliamentary session

The Speaker of the Pyithu Hluttaw has sent invitation letters to the Pyithu Hluttaw representatives to attend twelfth regular session of the Second Pyithu Hluttaw to be held at Pyithu Hluttaw's meeting hall at 10 am on 29 April 2019 (Monday).

The Pyithu Hluttaw representatives, either they receive the invitation letters or not are urged to contact Pyithu Hluttaw Hall (I-11) not earlier than 27 April 2019 (Saturday) and not later than 28 April 2019 (Sunday) along with their identity cards.—MNA

### Amyotha Hluttaw representatives informed to attend parliamentary session

THE Speaker of the Amyotha Hluttaw has sent invitation letters to the Amyotha Hluttaw representatives to attend twelfth regular session of the Second Amyotha Hluttaw to be held at Amyotha Hluttaw's meeting hall at 10 am on 29 April 2019 (Monday).

The Amyotha Hluttaw representatives, either they receive the invitation letters or not are urged to contact Amyotha Hluttaw Hall (I-19) not earlier than 27 April 2019 (Saturday) and not later than 28 April 2019 (Sunday) along with their identity cards.—MNA

## Union Minister reviews state of air pollution in Tachilek

### FROM PAGE-1

In addition, the Union Minister stressed the need to step up efforts to educate farmers about pollution caused by burning of straw and stalks left over from the previous harvest to prepare for the next planting season.

Air quality in Tachilek had worsened from 15 March due to burning of agricultural waste in the border areas, according to the Environmental Conservation Department.

The air pollution index crossed the hazardous level on 16 and 17 March, but eased later.

The situation worsened again on 31 March, with the air pollution index reaching 502, which is much higher than the hazardous level of 300. The air pollution spiralled downwards in the first week of April.

According to the Environmental Conservation Department, the level of toxic chemicals in the air is very low.

Following the meeting with local authorities, Union Minister U Ohn Win visited the area where the air pollution level was being measured with the use of a machine and a shelter on the Shan Yoma Grounds.—MNA ■ (Translated by Kyaw Zin Lin)

## Illegal Bangladesh immigrant, ARSA member captured in Maungtaw

AUTHORITIES have captured an illegal immigrant from Bangladesh identified as Shahel on 29 March and an ARSA member identified as Osman Gawni in Maungtaw on 30 March.

Security forces captured Shahel near the village of Aung Tha Pyay in northern Maungtaw Township on 29 March. Upon questioning they discovered he had crossed from Noha Ali village, Rangamati Township, Bangladesh, into Myanmar with five villagers from Lainmaw Cherry village in Maungtaw

Township on 28 March to rustle cattle. He got separated from the others after losing his way and was subsequently arrested.

In a separate case, security officers patrolling Area 2 of northern Maungtaw Township arrested Osman Gawni (a) Osama for suspicious behaviour from a ravine located on Border Post 40. Upon interrogation, they discovered this man from Yinmakyang Taung village, Buthidaung Township, was involved in the attack on South Bazar Police Outpost on 25 August 2017.

He is reportedly an absconder from the Counter-Terrorism Law 50 (a) case and was in hiding in Kutupalong refugee camp in Bangladesh.

Authorities say Osman Gawni was recruited into ARSA after attending terrorism training for two months in 2018. The trainings were conducted with 50 ARSA recruits in temporary huts in the forest near Kutupalong, Balukhali, and Muthusaram refugee camps from 10pm to 1am. The recruits reportedly receive 5,000 Bangladesh taka per month



ARSA member Shahel.



ARSA member Osman Gawni.

during the training period. After their training, the recruits are tasked with surveying border

guard posts and police outposts and ambushing them.

**SEE PAGE-4**

“ **Our country can retain its former glory**

We have much to carry on fulfilling the hopes and needs of the people of the country. We must press on until our citizens have their dignity raised and our country can retain its former glory on the global stage.

(Excerpt from the speech by President U Win Myint at the ceremony to take oath of office at Pyidaungsu Hluttaw on 30<sup>th</sup> March 2018)

“ **Collective strength is vital to build peace and stability which we need**

We need to have mutual understanding and mutual respect as the basic foundation to bring to an end the armed conflicts which have existed for many years among the ethnic nationalities. We can make this foundation strong with our collective strength.

(Excerpt from the speech by State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Anniversary of NLD Government on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018)

# News and Periodicals Enterprise celebrates 21<sup>st</sup> anniversary

**T**HE 21<sup>st</sup> anniversary of the News and Periodicals Enterprise (NPE) was held Nay Pyi Taw Press House's Bo Waziya Hall yesterday.

Union Information Minister Dr. Pe Myint delivered a speech at the ceremony. He said the three newspapers published by NPE are valuable to the nation and fulfil the responsibility of disseminating news and information to the public. He said they fulfil the two tasks of reporting the government's actions to the public and sharing news of all corners of the nation to the people.

He said the state-run newspapers must continue giving knowledge and information to the readers and must be in line with the public's will.

The Union Minister said people around the world are reading less from printed media and more from digital media. He said the improving technology allows news to be shared in real time to a vast num-

ber of places. He called for changing with the altering media landscape.

The Union Minister said the digital media sector is an unavoidable component of the modern world as the NPE works to provide the public with accurate, timely, and fair news in real time. He said printed media are restricted in spreading to the whole country and reaching out to the world but this can be overcome with digital media. He urged all news staff of the NPE to collaborate on this.

The Union Minister said NPE has launched Myanmar Digital News (MDN) and the digital newspaper needs to be based on newer technology and changed to keep itself alive. He said procedures need to be changed to ensure new technology is allowed.

The Union Minister said *the Myanma Alinn*, *the Kyemon*, and *The Global New Light of Myanmar* need to convert



Union Minister Dr. Pe Myint delivers the speech at the 21<sup>st</sup> anniversary of the News and Periodicals Enterprise in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO:MNA**

into a new form and with more content.

He said the news articles will have to be written in a different format that incorporates different perspectives. He said doing this will separate the newspapers into unique categories.

### Award ceremony

The Union Minister then conferred *the Myanma Alinn's* outstanding news writers award to Peinzaloak Thein Nyunt, Ye Khaung Nyunt, and Zin Oo (*the Myanma Alinn*).

Deputy Minister U Aung Hla Tun conferred *the Kyemon's* outstanding reporting award on Zaw Gyi (PaNiTa), Win Naing (Kachin Myay), and Win Oo (Zayar Tine).

Permanent Secretary U Myo Myint Maung conferred *the Kyemon's* outstanding photo award on Soe Nyunt, Maung Win Kye, and Aung Min (Myaung Mya).

The Director-General of MRTV conferred *the Myanma Alinn's* outstanding news article award on Min Htet Aung (Man Sub-printing House) and Shin Min. The Director-General of the Information and Public Relations Department conferred *the Myanma*

*Alinn's* outstanding news article award on Than Htike (Hlinethaya) and *the Kyemon's* outstanding article award on Ko Yin Aw. The Director-General of Printing and Publishing Department conferred *the Myanma Alinn's* outstanding news photo award on Chan Thar (Meikhtila) and Than Zaw Min (IPRD).

The Acting Director-General of NPE presented the outstanding civil servant awards and outstanding the best trainee awards to its recipients and conferred honorary certificates on companies who put in the highest number of advertisements.

This was followed by speeches from former Managing Director U Than

Maung, Hanthawaddy U Ohn Kyaing, U Kyaw Kyaw Hlaing (Smart), and former *the Kyemon* Chief Editor U Myint Swe.

Next, a video on state newspapers benefitting the public was played and a lottery to commemorate the NPE's anniversary commenced. The Union Minister, Deputy Minister and Permanent Secretary conferred the awards on the winners. They also took a documentary photo with the attendees as the ceremony came to a close.

The NPE was established as the News and Periodicals Corporation in 1972 and later changed to its current name on 1 April 1998. —MNA ■/ (Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)



Union Minister Dr Pe Myint presents the outstanding award to Peinzaloak Thein Nyunt at the 21<sup>st</sup> anniversary of the News and Periodicals Enterprise in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO:MNA**

### Correction

The headline of the story on page-3, 7<sup>th</sup> April 2019 issue of the Global New Light of Myanmar should be read as "U Thaug Tun visits Adidas Shoe Factory in Thar Du Kan Industrial Zone".—Ed

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Light of Myanmar Printing Factory at  
No.150, Nga Htat Kyee Pagoda Road, Bahan  
Township, Yangon, by the Global New Light  
of Myanmar Daily under Printing Permit No.  
00510 and Publishing Permit No. 00629.glnldaily@gmail.com  
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# Illegal Bangladesh immigrant, ARSA member captured in Maungtaw

FROM PAGE-2

Authorities say the ARSA ambush on a vehicle carrying border police on 16 January near a bridge in Watkyein Village in Maungtaw Township was committed by a 12-men group led by Zubai (verification pending) from Thetkeyyin village, Maungtaw Tsp. These

men were reportedly rewarded 5,000 Bangladesh taka each upon returning from such attacks.

Osman Gawni is reported to have destroyed the border fence near Border Post 31 and entered Myanmar as part of three 50-men groups on 29 March. He was hiding in the forest to attack three police

outposts, including Ngayant Chaung Police Outpost but was captured by security forces while out scouting.

According to the Myanmar Police Force, ARSA intends to seize Maungtaw District in Rakhine through terrorism and establish an independent state. They persuade people in refugee camps in Bangladesh not

to return to Myanmar by telling them they will not receive citizenship.

Security forces have deployed numerous personnel to scour the vicinity of ARSA's temporary bases but have yet to discover anything.—MNA ■

(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

## Islands near Kawthoung crowded with visitors ahead of Thingyan festival

THE Kawthoung Myoma jetty has seen more local and foreign visitors in the one week leading to the Myanmar New Year festival, than any other period, said tour operators.

Local travelers across Myanmar and tourists entering through the border with Thailand are flocking to Kawthoung, a town in the Taninthayi Region of southernmost Myanmar, to travel to the islands near the township before the Thingyan Water Festival on 7 April.

The five-day holiday of the Thingyan, or New Year, water festival begins on 13 April.

With the gradual development of its marine tourism, Kawthoung has become a tourist spot. The township traffic police have made arrangements to curb accidents. The Ministry of Hotels and Tourism is working to ensure smooth transportation and making other necessary arrangements with the cooperation of tour agencies.



The Kawthoung Myoma Jetty packed with local and foreign visitors before the Thingyan holidays.

PHOTO: KYAW SOE (KAWTHOUNG)

The Myanmar marine police is laying down safety protocols for emergencies, according to the Myanmar Police Force.

According to tour opera-

tors, the arrival of visitors from home and abroad is spiralling upward.

Most visitors are coming to the area for eco-tourism ac-

tivities, such as fishing, diving, snorkelling near coral reefs, and bird-watching, they added.—Kyaw Soe (Kawthoung) ■

(Translated by La Wonn)

## Innovative products, handicrafts exhibited at Maker Fest Myanmar 2019



Visitors show their interest over the innovative products exhibited at the Maker Fest Myanmar 2019 in Mandalay. PHOTO: AUNG PHYO KYAW

THE Maker Fest Myanmar 2019 took place from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. last Saturday at the Jefferson Centre in Mandalay, and featured innovative products and handicrafts made by young makers.

The aim of the event was to encourage young makers' creative ideas, share their innovative ideas and creations in one place, and to motivate them. "Last February, we held Maker Fest Myanmar 2018 at the American Centre (Yangon), and this time, this event was for young makers in upper Myanmar. There is a little technology gap between Yangon and Mandalay makers. Mandalay makers are more creative than Yangon's, while Yangon makers have better access

to IT. An invention featuring a car with a motorcycle engine, and remote lock installation on a motorcycle were shown at the event. Some students also exhibited their creations. The event is aimed at observing and sharing of innovative ideas between inventors and visitors," said Ko Kyaw Khine, Library Director, American Centre (Yangon). At the event, more than 30 groups of youngsters showcased their innovative projects, handicrafts, biological products, DIY recycle products, and electronic appliances. The TALK, Workshop, and Robot Game programs were included in the 2019 edition of Maker Fest Myanmar.—Aung Phyio Kyaw ■ (Translated by La Wonn)

# Paddy trade in Shwebo cools ahead of Thingyan festival

PADDY trade in Shwebo, Sagaing Region, has cooled off ahead of the Thingyan festival, but the prices have not declined, according to local rice brokers.

Currently, Pawsan paddy is priced at K1.45 million per baskets 100 in Shwebo. Farmers in Shwebo grow nearly 500,000 acres of monsoon paddy every year, using water from the Thaphanseik Dam to irrigate their fields. This year, more than 400,000 acres of land were put under the Shwebo Pawsan paddy, which yields a good harvest as it is suited to the weather and soil in Shwebo. Shwebo Pawsan paddy fetches the highest price in Myanmar.

Some farmers want to sell

paddy in order to earn more money ahead of the Thingyan period. Currently, the paddy market has seen a decline in demand, but prices are high. "The price of paddy has not declined. There are no buyers in the market as trade has closed in the pre-Thingyan period. During this period, paddy brokerage centers and rice mills will not operate. Staff and drivers will take a rest, go on a pilgrimage, or visit their native towns. After the Thingyan New Year Water Festival, I will buy paddy at the local rates," said U Ye Lin, a paddy broker from Kanthit village.—Yaung Ni Tin Win ■

(Translated by Khaing Thanda Lwin)



Big heap of paddy seen at a village in Shwebo Township. PHOTO: YAUNG NI TIN WIN

## Agricultural export increases 8% in six months

MYANMAR'S export of agricultural products topped nearly US\$1.7 billion in the first half of this Fiscal Year 2018-2019, recording an increase in value by \$127.5 million or 8.12 per cent from this time last year, according to the Ministry of Commerce.

Between 1 October and 29 March this FY, the country earned \$7.9 billion from the export of seven major groups of domestic products, covering agricultural, animal, forest and aquaculture products, minerals, manufactured goods and other miscellaneous products. The current figures went up by \$656 million, as against the corresponding period in the 2017-2018 FY.

During the week between 23 and 29 March, the country exported agriculture products with a value of over \$90 million, registering an increase in value by \$16.9 million in comparison with this time last FY, when the agro export totalled \$74.3 million.

In export market, rice, beans and pulses, melons, man-

goes, coffee beans, avocados, corns and other fruits and vegetables, as well as herbal plants are marketable.

According to the ministry's annual statistical report, the country's export of agro products was \$1.28 bln during the 2018 mini-budget period from April through September. The country earned \$3.08 bln from agro exports in the 2017-2018 FY, \$2.93 bln in the 2016-2017 FY, \$2.62 bln in the 2015-2016 FY, \$2.92 bln in the 2014-2015 FY, \$2.66 bln in the 2013-2014 FY, \$2.69 bln in the 2012-2013 FY, and 2.37 bln in the 2011-2012 FY.

Myanmar conducts trade mainly with ASEAN member countries, East Asian nations, some European states and African states, delivering goods mainly through maritime routes.

Sustained efforts are being made by trade authorities to boost the country's export, as part of its strategic economic development plan.—Swe Nye-in ■

(Translated by Khaing Thanda Lwin)

## Condominium developers to get registration certificates in June

By Aye Yamone

CONDOMINIUM developers who hold business licences will be granted construction registration certificates in June, said U Myo Myint, a member of the Condominium Management Committee. He made the remarks on April 6, during a ceremony for handing over business licences to condominium developers with projects in Yangon.

"For condominium projects, developers will be required to get business licences in the first stage. Each licence will be valid for five years, and developers will have to deposit K10 million. Developers will be allowed to seek construction registration certificates only after obtaining licenses. Developers will be allowed to build one or five buildings with the five-year licence. The buildings will be considered as condominiums only if they fulfil the conditions in the Condominium Law. Developers of buildings whose construction was completed before the law was instituted, and of buildings undergoing con-

struction will be required to apply for permits. The buildings will be declared as condominiums by the Condominium Management Committee after a screening process," said U Myo Myint.

Once a condominium project developed by citizens or foreigners is complete, foreigners have the right to own up to 40 per cent of the units, under the Condominium Law. The collectively owned building will have to be developed on 20,000 square feet of land, and have more than six floors, elevators, a community room, offices, and proper waste management.

"While seeking construction permits, there are procedural requirements for developers, including declaring the shared value of the condominium development. After the Condominium Management Committee discusses those requirements with the Ministry of Construction, a permit will be issued in June or July. After that, we will clearly be able to see which buildings qualify as condominiums," said U Myo Myint.

The Condominium Law was

enacted on 29 December, 2016 and the rules were instituted in December, 2018 after a series of amendments.

To enforce the rules, the Condominium Management Committee was formed on 31 December, 2018 and it was granted the authority to issue business licenses. The Committee has so far issued licences to 30 local companies and two foreign entities.

"The licence holders need to strictly abide by the rules and regulations. Developers are urged to build international standard condominiums and put the interests of the people first," said Union Minister for Construction U Han Zaw. The business licence fee for developers has been set at K10 million, while the registration fee per unit has been fixed at K20,000 for units worth up to K100 million, K30,000 for units valued up to K300 million, and K50,000 for units worth more than K300 million. The region and state management committees will carry out ownership registration of condominium units. ■  
(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

## More Myanmar investors looking to buy property overseas

THE number of Myanmar investors in foreign property markets has been rising year over year.

"Earlier, Myanmar investors found it hard to purchase apartments overseas. Now, property agencies are providing services to buy apartment overseas. The agencies make sure to check the

apartments. Foreign property agencies have also been coming to exhibit apartments in Myanmar," said Ma Ei Ei, director, UPF Property. "The number of Myanmar citizens going overseas for jobs and education is increasing. This being so, property investments are climbing up. Myanmar

businesspersons invest in overseas property markets to provide apartments on rent to migrant workers. Additionally, it is a move to earn foreign currency," said Ma Ei Ei.

"Investors can get home loans at cheaper rates from foreign banks to buy condominium

apartments in foreign countries. They can buy condominium units for K200-400 million there as per the rate in the domestic market. Some condominium apartments in Bangkok can be purchased for K80 million per unit," Ma Ei Ei added. The International Property Expo was held yester-

day at Lotte Hotel in Yangon, and exhibitors from Singapore, Thailand, the UK, New Zealand, and Australia participated in the expo. The number of Myanmar property investors in the overseas market has been on the increase.—Myint Maung Soe ■  
(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

# ‘Yellow vests’ march again as government tries to regroup

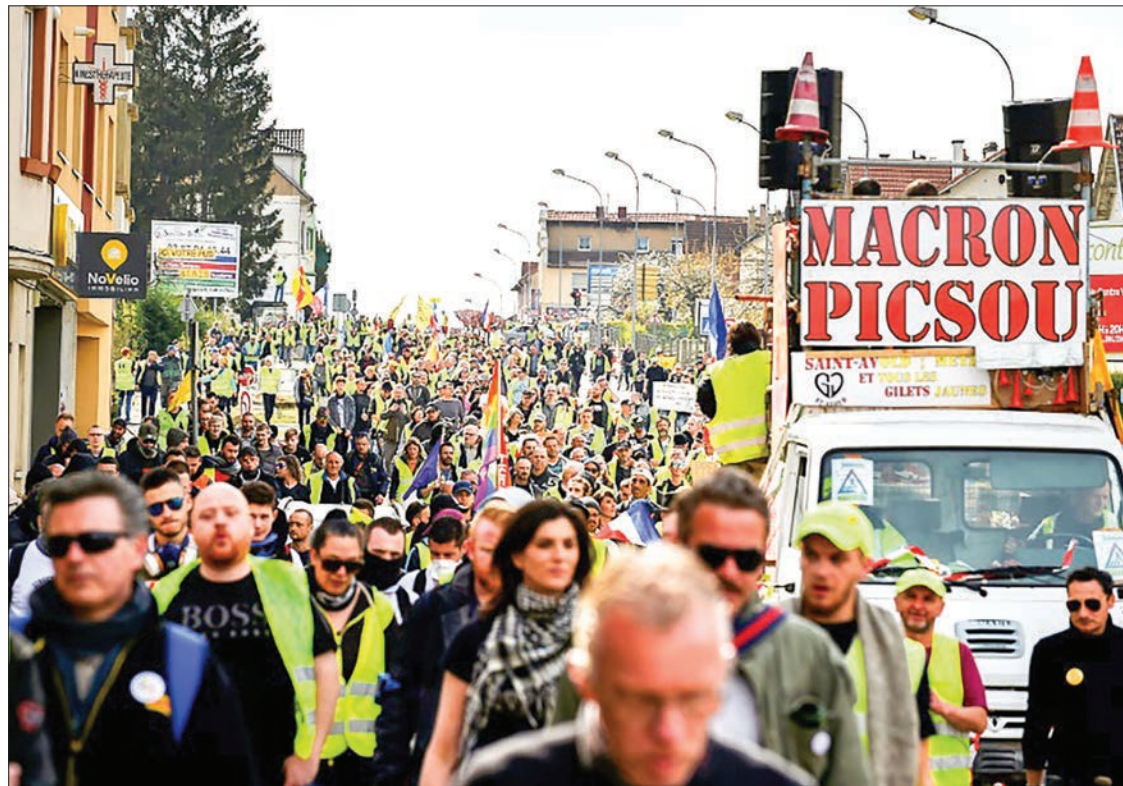
PARIS (France)—Thousands of “yellow vest” protesters marched Saturday for the 21<sup>st</sup> consecutive week to denounce French government policies, as the authorities prepare to unveil the results of a nationwide consultative exercise designed to address public grievances.

From Rouen in the north and Lyon in the southeast—as well as the capital Paris—protesters took to the streets carrying banners denouncing French President Emmanuel Macron. In the west, French and German activists joined forces on the border.

Some masked protesters clashed with police in Rouen, but there was nothing like the scale of violence seen in previous weeks, such as the 16 March riots in Paris that saw luxury stores on the Champs-Élysées ransacked.

Interior ministry figures—consistently dismissed as underestimates by the protesters—put the turnout across France at 22,300 of whom 3,500 were in Paris. These are the lowest figures officially recorded, and significantly down on the 282,000 who turned out for the first yellow vest rally in November last year. But many of the remaining activists insist they will keep marching until they get satisfaction from the government.

“What will get me to stop, is the resignation of (Interior Min-



French and German protesters joined forces at the border between the two countries in Stiring-Wendel, northeast France, for the latest wave of ‘yellow vest’ marches. PHOTO: AFP

ister Christophe) Castaner, because of the police violence,” said Catherine, 59, a demonstrator in Paris. Castaner has been heavily criticised both by yellow vest activists and opposition politicians for having played down reports of police violence despite growing numbers of serious injuries among protesters.

## Results of consultation

Next week, the government will announce the results of the “Great National Debate”,

a series of town hall meetings launched across France in January to take the temperature of the nation—and get Emmanuel Macron’s troubled presidency back on course. The idea is to collate grievances and decide on solutions. Macron’s office said the president would announce the first measures to be taken by the middle of April. But many yellow vest activists have denounced the exercise as a smoke screen designed to distract attention from their movement. An opinion poll

published Thursday by pollsters Delabre suggested that the public was not convinced either. Of 1,002 surveyed, 68 per cent did not think that people’s views would be taken into account; 79 per cent did not think it would resolve the current political crisis.

The government received a setback last Thursday when France’s Constitutional Council struck down a measure that would have let authorities ban certain individuals from protesting. — AFP ■

## Bridge collapse leaves several missing in Brazil

RIO DE JANEIRO—A bridge partially collapsed and fell into a river in Para state in northern Brazil in the early hours of Saturday, and there may be victims, authorities said. According to local authorities, part of the bridge which crosses the Moju River collapsed after a ferry crashed against one of the pillars. Two cars were reportedly crossing the bridge at the time of the accident, but so far information on deaths and injuries has not been disclosed. It is not known whether any passenger in the ferry was injured, either.

Three months ago, a technical inspection found problems with corrosion and worn-out pillars on this bridge, but without risk of collapse. At the time, the state government announced emergency measures, including placing fences to avoid crashes of boats against the pillars, but vehicle traffic on the bridge was maintained.

It is not the first time a crash like that occurred in the area. Five years ago, another bridge over the Moju River, part of the same highway network, also collapsed after a ferry crashed onto one of the pillars.—Xinhua ■

# Venezuelans protest as Guaido declares ‘definitive’ escalation

CARACAS (Venezuela)—Venezuelan opposition leader Juan Guaido on Saturday launched what he promised will be a “definitive” escalation of pressure to force the country’s embattled leftist leader from office.

Addressing a giant anti-government rally in Caracas, Guaido—whose claim to be interim president is supported by around 50 nations—kicked off what he called “Operation Liberty,” his plan to oust President Nicolas

Maduro. “Everyone to the streets, let’s start the final phase of the end of the usurpation!” he told supporters, speaking from the back of a pickup truck.

He called for a huge nationwide turnout on Wednesday, and

urged his followers to redouble their efforts to maintain pressure in the streets. “The greatest escalation of pressure we have seen in our history” has begun, Guaido said. The call comes amid massive blackouts and the collapse of water supplies affecting the nation, further exacerbated a growing political crisis.

The United States meanwhile has stiffened its economic sanctions against Maduro, and one top US official warned Venezuela’s military that it must protect the rights of peaceful protesters.

At the rally, Guaido also warned Cuba’s President Miguel Diaz-Canel that the supply of subsidized Venezuelan oil to the Caribbean communist island nation was over.

Venezuela has been sending cheap oil to Cuba in exchange for

labor from Cuban doctors and teachers, but Guaido said the oil was actually financing a Cuban intelligence group known as G2 that was cracking down on Maduro opponents in the Venezuelan military.

“The exploitation of Venezuelan oil is over, so Mr Diaz-Canel... Venezuelan oil will not be used to submit and investigate our military officials” through the G2, he told the crowd. Pro-Guaido protests drew thousands in rallies across the country on Saturday. A pro-Maduro counter-demonstration in Caracas, with supporters dressed in red, drew a large crowd that gathered at the Miraflores presidential palace.

“Together, permanently mobilized, let’s keep defending national peace and independence; no more interference!” Maduro tweeted. — AFP ■



At a giant Caracas rally, opposition leader Juan Guaido announced “the greatest escalation of pressure we have seen in our history” on the leftist government of Nicolas Maduro. PHOTO: AFP

# Cuba newsprint shortage sounds alarm for economy

HAVANA (Cuba)—The newsprint shortages which forced Cuba's Communist daily to run a trimmed-down edition on Friday would pass off as a simple supply glitch in most other countries, but in Havana they carry chilling memories of the not-so-distant past. The last time the government cut back on newspapers because of a lack of newsprint was in the early 1990s, when Fidel Castro ushered in a "Special Period" of drastic belt-tightening in the wake of the collapse of his main sponsor, the Soviet Union.

Today, the Caribbean state is facing difficulties once again, with US President Donald Trump—who has lashed out at Cuba for its support of Venezuela's socialist regime—determined to tighten Washington's six-decade trade embargo. Meager growth of 1.2 percent is not enough to cover the needs of an island nation that imports 80 per cent of what it eats.

Amid shortages, the government is being forced to ration basics like flour, cooking oil and chicken, leading to long lines out-

side stores. Tania, a 49-year-old nurse, has come to buy rice at a Havana grocery store but she's going away empty-handed.

"It's like that with everything. Sometimes you look for a product and you can find it in one place, then you go somewhere else and you can't get it," she said, summing up the average Cuban's daily struggle to fill their shopping basket. "What's happening now doesn't look like the Special Period, because at that time it was really a disaster," she said.

## 'Special Period'

Suddenly deprived of its big brother in Moscow—responsible for 85 per cent of Havana's foreign trade—the economy on the Caribbean archipelago ground to a standstill as it struggled to absorb the shock of Soviet collapse in the early 1990s. Cubans suffered shortages of food and fuel and the emergence of diseases linked to malnutrition. Thousands fled, if they could. For long since, the country has relied on medical and teaching services supplied



A man reads a slimmed-down edition of Cuban daily Granma in Havana, part of the country's first newspaper cut since 1990. PHOTO: AFP

to countries like Brazil and, in particular, Venezuela, in return for cheap oil imports. But trade with Caracas has plummeted as sanctions-struck Venezuela's economic crisis deepens. Tourism has been a bright spot but that has suffered after hurricane damage and a new US sanctions squeeze.

"For three years, Cuba has been trying to offset the impact of the slump in trade with Venezuela and the rise in tourism, private activity and foreign investment projects have helped cushion the

economic shock," said Pavel Vidal, a Cuban economist at the Javeriana University in Colombia. "But the measures and threats of the Trump administration are posing obstacles to these three factors that have helped keep the economy afloat." Cuba recently defaulted on a portion of its debt to Brazil, a big supplier of poultry.

At the end of 2018, Havana had accumulated short-term debt of \$1.5 billion, according to former economy minister Jose Luis Rodriguez. "There is a level of debt that we will not be able to

pay (in 2019) and that's affecting the smooth running of the economy," the current portfolio-holder Alejandro Gil said.

In Havana, 90-year-old Leandro Lopez has seen it all before and isn't overly concerned, expressing confidence in President Miguel Diaz-Canel—elected in 2018, the first of a new breed of leaders born after the revolution. "Diaz-Canel is trying to strengthen the economy so where he can reduce costs, we reduce them, so much the better. I do not think it will hurt the news." —AFP ■

# Elections over, Turkey's Erdogan eyes economic reforms



After a 2017 vote granting him broader powers as president, Erdogan is in a stronger position to deliver reforms. PHOTO: AFP

ISTANBUL (Turkey)—Soon after his ruling party faced defeat in Ankara and Istanbul in last Sunday's election, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan was quick to promise reforms to revive the country's weakened economy.

Stung by high living costs and a 2018 currency crisis, voters handed the AKP one of the party's worst setbacks after a decade and a half in power.

Now with no elections until

2023, Erdogan has room to focus on the economy, but analysts say he must convince investors already wary over his sometimes unorthodox policies, and worried about fallout from tensions with the United States.

Turkey's lira can be volatile, but analysts said Erdogan's government must balance any gains from short-term stopgaps with the need for deeper reforms for more long-term stability.

Finance Minister Berat Albayrak, also Erdogan's son-in-law, has said Turkey will enter "an economic rebalancing period" after the elections and he is set to reveal reform details next week.

Albayrak is due to meet IMF and World Bank officials in Washington 12-14 April to "shed light on the new road map" for Turkey's economy, according to the *Daily Sabah* newspaper. "As concerns about the struggling economy motivated many voters' decisions at the ballot box, Erdogan will be compelled to address its underlying problems," said Amanda Sloat at the Brookings Institute. "However, he has limited room for manoeuvre." The AKP built its success on Turkey's strong growth and his supporters point to progress in living standards during Erdogan's 16 years in office. But on Sunday, the AKP was punished in part because Turkish households were stung last year by a 30 percent slide in the lira during a diplomatic crisis with the US. —AFP ■

# Egypt on track to end fuel subsidies: IMF

CAIRO (Egypt)—Egypt is on track to end subsidies on most fuels by 15 June as part of a reform programme led by the International Monetary Fund, the Washington-based body said Saturday.

The economy of the Arab world's most populous country has suffered from political instability and security threats since the 2011 uprising that ousted long-time leader Hosni Mubarak.

Cairo secured a \$12 billion, three-year loan package from the IMF in 2016.

Egyptian authorities "remain committed" to ending subsidies granted to limit prices at the pump, the IMF said in a new report.

The prices of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) and fuels used in bakeries and for electricity generation would not be affected, it added.

Bread is a staple in Egypt and a price hike could spark

further discontent in the face of continued economic woes.

The IMF said cutting the subsidies is "critical to encourage more efficient energy use" and to "create fiscal space for high-priority spending on health and education".

The IMF in February approved the next \$2 billion loan payment to Cairo, citing "substantial progress" made by Egyptian authorities on reforms, which have boosted growth and cut unemployment.

But IMF chief Christine Lagarde at the time also urged Egypt "to press ahead with structural reforms that facilitate private sector-led growth and job creation."

The latest instalment brought the total paid to Egypt to about \$10 billion since the loan deal was signed in November 2016. —AFP ■

## Adapting farming methods to climate change

**T**ODAY, we are experiencing climate change and its impact, and it is vital that we improve our society's ability to withstand and respond to natural disasters.

At the moment, the negative impact of climate change surpasses efforts to combat natural disasters. The government has been conducting works to mitigate natural disasters along with activities to fight climate change.

Myanmar has long been struggling with the direct consequences of climate change. Over the last two decades or so, the country has experienced the worst effects of extreme weather events worldwide.

Due to climate change, there have been changes in Myanmar's monsoon seasons, and our farmers need to adapt to the changing weather pattern.

Changing weather patterns have created obstacles for farmers growing long-duration varieties of rice.

Why? About 51 per cent of storms which enter Myanmar occur in the pre-monsoon period, and 49 per cent are seen in the post-monsoon period of October, November, and December. Storms in the post-monsoon period can damage farms.

The situation has alerted us to the need for finding an agricultural system which is suitable to the current climate situation.

The Asia-Pacific Region is the region most prone to water-related disasters in the world. The rising frequency of water-related disasters in our region has forced us to respond with unity and resilience, but there is a wide variety in the degree and quality of response of individual nations. Obviously, all governments in the region need to do more to cope with the growing threat of disasters caused by climate change, but according to an ADB report only a small number of countries have been investing wisely in disaster risk reduction projects and programmes. Collaboration between the countries in the region will enable all to combat water-related disasters more effectively.

For Myanmar, it is very important to conduct research on a new system of agriculture, which is based on climate change.

While global warming is causing an overall increase in extreme rainfall patterns around the world, central Myanmar is experiencing longer periods of drought. This will make it even more challenging for the country's largely rural population to grow crops and earn a living.

Meanwhile, farmers in the country's low-lying areas are vulnerable to flooding in the monsoon season.

We have a chance to become an excellent model for climate change resilience, but we need to be cautious and make sure that new investments being made in the country are low carbon and climate resilient.

It we do little to tackle climate change, we will face an even more troubling future.



# Amyotha Hluttaw: Performing legislative duty without regard to race, region, or ideology

"MPs in the legislative pillar were striving for the establishment of a peaceful and developed democratic federal Union, to the best of their abilities, and the entire nation was asked to cooperate with collective strength."

Mahn Win Khaing Than, Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker.

By Han Ni  
PHOTO: HTEIN NAN NAW

**A**MYOTHA Hluttaw that had held onto the policy of performing legislative duty in accordance with the Constitution without regards to race, region or ideology had past the third year stage.

Second Amyotha Hluttaw's first regular session was started on 3 February 2016 and its eleventh session was held until 21 March 2019 so it can be said that its term had past the three year stage.

During this three year Amyotha Hluttaw raised motions and questions that reflect the people's voices, wills and expectations to check and balance the administrative and judicial pillars. It also represented the people, repealed, amended and enacted laws to be in line with the time and era.

### Organisation and conducts

Furthermore, it had formed committees and commissions to study legislation, administration, ethnic national affairs, economy, finance, foreign affairs and other matters.

Amyotha Hluttaw formed four permanent committees and 13 affairs committees with elected representatives from the constituencies to fulfil the desires and aspirations of the



Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than.

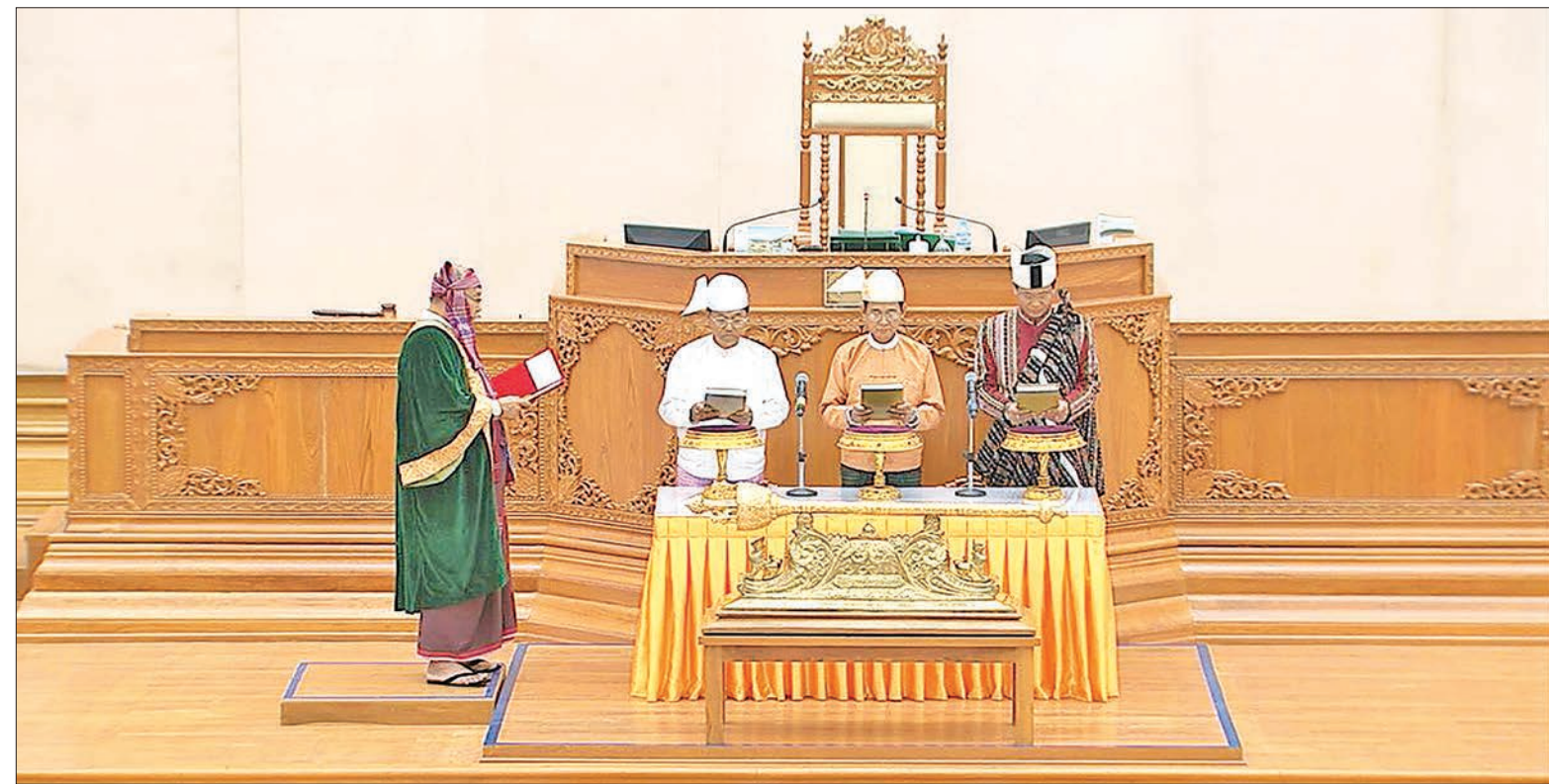
people in the best possible ways. With regards to complaints and grievances of the people, relevant committees made field and site visits and inform the relevant ministerial departments and government organisations and stand together with the people and worked for the benefit of the Amyotha Hluttaw.

From the legislative pillar, Hluttaws had amended, appended, repealed and enacted laws to be in accord with the time and

era. It also strives toward providing protection of the law for the people to live peacefully, safe and securely, had equal protection of the law equally and for people to understand and abide by the law in a wide ranging manner, said Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than while explaining about the works of the Amyotha Hluttaw.

In the Hluttaw meetings, speeches delivered by the President were put on record. Messages sent by the Presidents and messages sanctioned by the Speaker were read and put on record. Bills were tabled, debated and decided upon. Matters prescribed under the Constitution for the Hluttaw to conduct were discussed and decided. Reports submitted to the Hluttaw were discussed, decided, put on record. Motions tabled were debated, discussed, questions raised and answered.

Amyotha Hluttaw conduct these with the aims of achieving rule of law, peace and stability, instituting freedom, equality and justice, raising the quality and capacity of the Hluttaw represent-



Myanmar's new president U Win Myint (C), first Vice President Myint Swe (L) and second Vice President U Henry Van Thio attend their swearing-in at union parliament in Nay Pyi Taw.

atives and the personnel of the Hluttaw office and to coordinate among union level organizations.

full physical and mental abilities and the entire people were urged to cooperate with their full col-

was answered Union Minister for Health and Sports Dr. Myint Htwe. The question and answer were reported in detail by state-own newspapers.

Similarly U Pe Tin of Mon State constituency 6 raised a question on a plan to stop the decline in Myanmar railway sector and restore the good tradition and services it had provided. The question was answered by Union Minister for Transport and

Communications U Thant Sin Maung and the question and answer were reported in detail by state-own newspapers.

During the three year period Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker received foreign ambassadors, State leaders and organisations 135 times and occasionally met and discussed with ethnic national and civil society organisations

During the period when the Hluttaw was in recess Amyotha

Amyotha Hluttaw formed four permanent committees and 13 affairs committees with elected representatives from the constituencies to fulfil the desires and aspirations of the people in the best possible ways.

During the three year period 19 motions were tabled, 11 approved and four put on record by Hluttaw representatives for the benefit of the region, country and the people.

1,094 asterisk marked questions and 1,238 non asterisk marked questions were raised and union level members of relevant ministries answered in person in the Hluttaw or in writing.

Hluttaw representatives in the legislative pillar were striving toward the establishment of a peaceful and developed democratic federal union by using their

lective forces, said the Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker.

In addition to raising a total of 2,332 asterisk marked and non asterisk marked questions, 18 Hluttaw representatives had tabled 19 motions out of which 11 was approved, four were put on record, one was under discussion and three were not approved.

Of the asterisk marked questions, a question by U Aung Kyi Nyunt of Magway Region constituency 4 on preventing the sale of dangerous and harmful foodstuff and foodstuff without proper labels in Myanmar languages

Hluttaw Speaker went to states and regions 28 times to meet with members of the constituencies on Hluttaw and regional development matters.

In addition to this, Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker had formed 4 permanent committees and 13 affairs committees to conduct legislative and Hluttaw works on checking and balancing the three pillars of the country in accordance with the desire of the people.

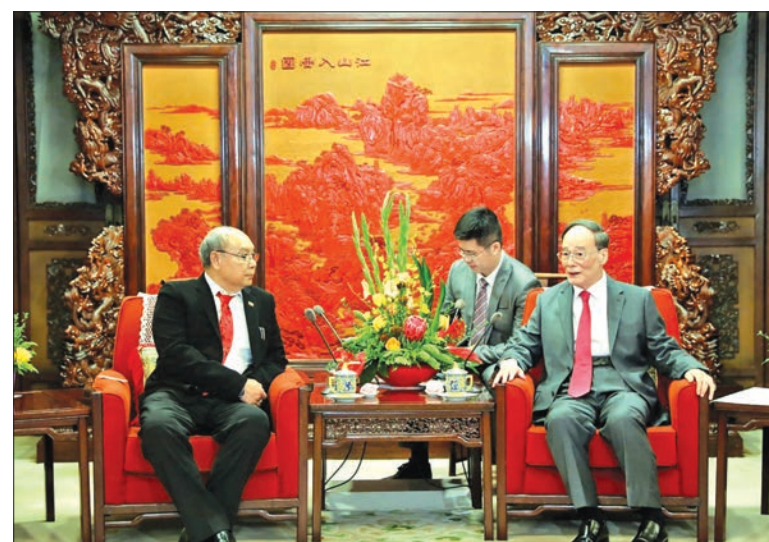
### Bill Committee

During the three year period the Bill Committee had tabled and discussed 47 bills out of which 9 were sent to Pyithu Hluttaw, 3 were still being worked on in Amyotha Hluttaw, 2 were suspended and 33 were enacted into laws.

Of the 41 bills that were originated in Pyithu Hluttaw and sent to Amyotha Hluttaw, 2 were worked on, 3 were returned to Pyithu Hluttaw and 36 were enacted into laws.

Of the total of 89 bills enacted into laws, 69 were worked on by Amyotha Hluttaw and Pyithu Hluttaw while 20 were worked on by the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw. Up to 2 February 2019 a total of 241 Bill Committee meetings were held.

SEE PAGE-10



Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than meets with Vice President of the People's Republic of China H.E. Mr. Wang Qishan in Beijing in June 2018.



Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than receives Chair of the European Parliament's Subcommittee on Human Rights in Nay Pyi Taw on 16 February, 2018.



# Amyotha Hluttaw: Performing legislative duty without regard to race, region, or ideology

FROM PAGE-9

## Public Accounts Committee

The committee held 38 committee meetings and 122 joint committee meetings. It attended 158 events and met with foreign organizations 12 times and held discussions once.

## Hluttaw Rights Committee

The committee held 31 coordination meetings, met with foreign organizations 7 times and submitted two reports to the Hluttaw.

## Government Guarantees, Pledges and Undertakings Vetting Committee

The committee held 40 committee meetings, 26 meetings with ministries and states/regions, 3 meetings with foreign organizations, 23 meetings with local organizations, submitted 9 routine reports and one interim report and conducted 3 discussions.

## Local and International Non-governmental Organizations Committee

The committee held 27 coordination meetings, 12 meetings with ministries, 9 meetings with INGOs, one foreign meeting with WFD, two meetings with NDI and submitted 3 reports.

## Health, Sports and Culture Committee

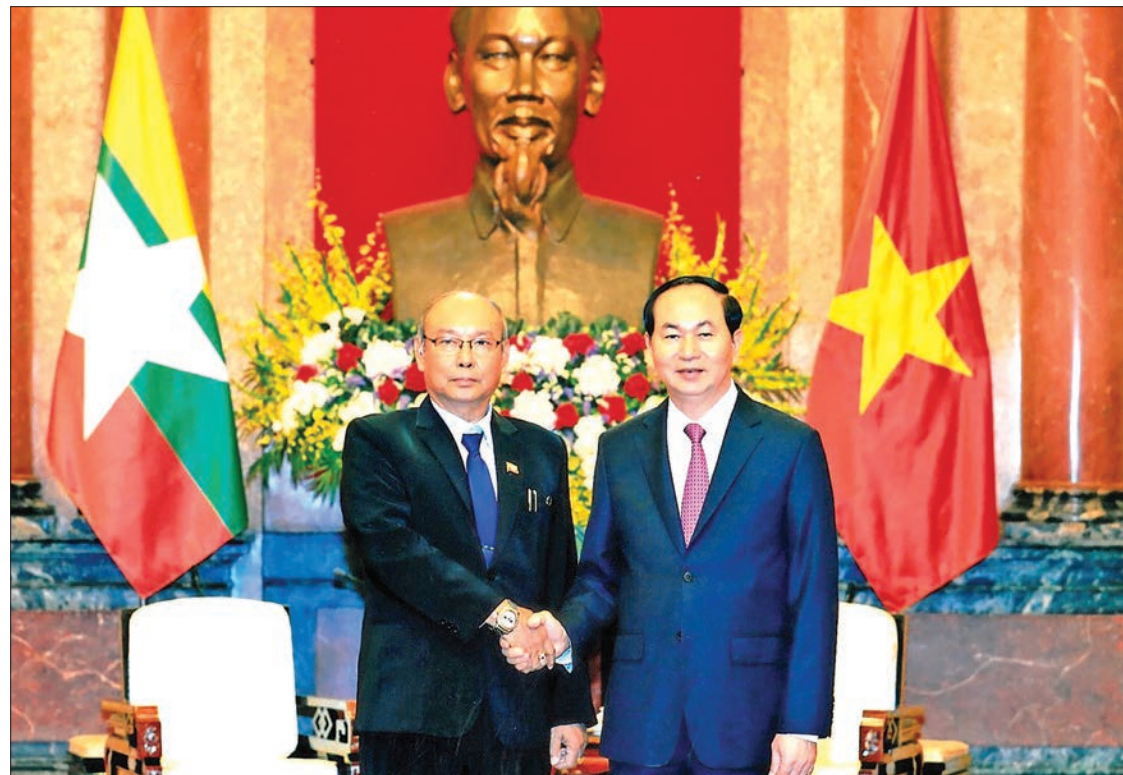
The committee conducted 54 work coordination meetings, 6 coordination meetings with ministries, 12 meetings with international organizations, 6 meetings with local organizations, attended 58 sports and award presentation events, 182 workshops, meetings and events, 14 foreign meetings and conducted 2 field visits.

## International Relations, Inter-Parliamentary Friendship and Cooperation Committee

During the three year period the committee held 33 work coordination meetings, seven meetings with Ministry of Foreign Affairs, received and met 42 times with international organizations.

## Ethnic Affairs Committee

The Ethnic Affairs Committee held 34 work coordina-



President of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam Tran Dai Quang (R) receives Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than on 16 May, 2017.

tion meetings, joint assessment group held 13 meeting with ministries, 3 meetings with ministries, met twice with foreign organizations and three times with local organizations, conducted one debate, three field visits and met once with a state/region Hluttaw.

## Farmer Affairs Committee

The committee held 59 work coordination meetings, 13 debates, 7 meetings with ministries, received 5 courtesy calls, met twice with state/region hluttaws, 7 times with local organizations and conducted seven field visits.

## Women and Children's Rights Committee

The committee met once with people who had filed a complaint, 24 times with foreign organizations, 20 times with local organizations, held 44 work coordination meetings, 4 debates, read one short paper, conducted 4 reviews after a law was enacted, conducted one field visit and held one legal discussion.

## Education Promotion Committee

The committee held 60 coordination meetings, 4 meetings with foreign organizations, 14 meetings with local organizations, 7 meetings with ministries, 2 discussions, made one local trip, had one hearing and submitted three reports.

## Immigration, Local and Overseas Workers Affairs Committee

The committee assessed 80 out of 306 complaints received. Out of 83 coordination meetings, 30 meetings were held with foreign organizations including ILO, 21 meetings with union ministerial departments, 22 meetings with local organizations, one coordination meeting with ministers responsible for resolving ongoing workers affairs in states and regions and a meeting with the Ever Green Group to discuss human trafficking of Myanmar fishery workers. Three reports were submitted and four field visits were conducted.

## Citizens' Fundamental Rights, Democracy and Human Rights Committee

This committee held 88 coordination meetings, one meeting with ministries and 4 discussions. It submitted 3 reports, conducted 10 field visits, met 8 times with local experts and had 9 foreign meetings.

## Mineral, Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation Committee

The committee held 4 meetings with foreign organizations, 39 meetings with local organizations, 74 work coordination meetings, 6 meetings with ministries and business persons, conducted 11 field visits, submitted 3 reports, made

2 foreign visits and 2 works related to laws and rules.

## Public Complaints Committee

The committee received 9,841 complaint letters, conducted 22 field visits on 53 cases, hearings 4 times, submitted 203 reports to authorities, 399 reports to ministerial departments, 846 reports to states/regions, 1,012 reports to Central Committee for Scrutinizing Confiscated Famrlands and Other Lands. It also submitted 3 reports, held 81 coordination meeting and sent letters to 517 persons.

## Agriculture, Livestock and Fishery Development Committee

The committee held 33 coordination meetings, 4 meetings with foreign organizations, 10 meetings with local organizations, 13 meetings with ministries, 8 discussions, submitted 3 reports and conducted 10 field visits.

## Construction, industry, electricity and energy committee

The committee held 18 coordination meetings, 8 meetings with ministries, one meeting with foreign organization, 2 meetings with local organizations, attended 60 workshops, courses and events.

With regards to research works conducted by Amyotha Hluttaw, from the Second

Amyotha Hluttaw first regular session to 11 February when the eleventh regular session was being held, Public Relations and International Relations Department conducted 29 research papers to support the legislative works of the Hluttaw representatives. 1,318 queries by Hluttaw representatives were researched and replied.

During the three year period 18,768 local and 1,826 foreign visitors visited the Amyotha Hluttaw.

Amyotha Hluttaw website was posted on 12 February 2015 and was upgraded on 26 February 2018.

## Additional postings

Amyotha Hluttaw website includes a Meeting section, Legislation section, Committee/commission section, Representative section, Library section, Hluttaw study section, Research section, International Relations section and News and information section. Starting from the Second Hluttaw term, a brief record of the days when meetings were held, seating plan of representatives, representatives and their constituencies, news notes and partner organization sectors were posted in the website.

Amyotha Hluttaw was formed with 12 elected representatives each from states and regions totaling 168 representatives, 4 Tatmadaw representatives each from states and regions totaling 56 Tatmadaw Amyotha Hluttaw representatives selected by Tatmadaw Commander-in-Chief. Amyotha Hluttaw was to be formed with not more than these 224 Amyotha Hluttaw representatives and at the moment 224 Amyotha Hluttaw representatives were striving to fulfill the wishes of the people.

## Second Amyotha Hluttaw organized in such a way will be continuing to strive toward fulfilling the people's requirement

The Second Amyotha Hluttaw organized in such a way with representatives representing the people will continue to strive toward fulfilling the desires of the people according to the motto of "People's Voice, Hluttaw's voice, People's Will, Hluttaw's Will, People's Expectation, Hluttaw implements."

(Translated by Handytips)

# EU on fake news alert as continent prepares to vote

BRUSSELS (Belgium)—Will Russian trolls, American social media giants and opportunistic fake news merchants combine to poison Europe's political landscape ahead of May's continent-wide election?

Brussels fears that online disinformation will fuel the populist wave officials believe skewed the Brexit referendum and carried Donald Trump all the way to the White House.

"There are external anti-European forces, which are seeking — openly or secretly — to influence the democratic choices of Europeans," EU leader Donald Tusk warned recently.

This was, he claimed, also "the case with Brexit and a number of election campaigns across Europe."

Between 23 and 26 May, European voters will go to the polls to choose around 700 MEPs to sit in the Strasbourg EU parliament and oversee continent-wide legislation.

In the final weeks of the campaign, officials are on alert fearing that opponents—including Mos-

cow—will attempt to spread fake news, amplified by viral social media.

This could in turn boost support for various populist insurgent parties, deepen existing divisions in the electorate and undermine faith in democracy or EU institutions. Some go as far as to call the phenomenon a state-led attack.

"There is strong evidence pointing to Russia as a primary source of disinformation in Europe," said EU Commission vice-president and former Estonian premier Andrus Ansip.

"Disinformation is part of Russia's military doctrine and its strategy to divide and weaken the West," he warned, in December.

Public trust in national and EU institutions and in the so-called mainstream media is already low, and web-users seeking cash from advertising clicks have found a market for fake news.

Add to this state-led covert propaganda and the viral effect of US-based media platforms like Facebook, Twitter and Google's YouTube and you have a recipe for disruption. Mariya Gabriel,

EU commissioner for the digital economy, brands this as an "invisible scourge" that "intrudes into the lives of our citizens and influences our opinions and decision-making".

## 'State censorship'

In response to the perceived threat, the EU Commission has drawn up guidelines for member states, calling on them to support quality journalism or to work with independent fact-checkers.

In March, it also set up an "early warning system", so capitals can share information on "coordinated attempts by foreign actors to manipulate" the democratic debate in real time.

The European External Action Service (EEAS), the Commission's foreign affairs arm, has a team of around 15, to detect and analyse misinformation campaigns targeting the EU.

Their website, "EU vs disinformation" (<https://euwdisinfo.eu/>), claims credit for refuting more than 5,000 items of fake news, mainly related to Russia.

But the unit's resources re-



Brussels fears that online disinformation will fuel the populist wave officials believe skewed the Brexit referendum and carried Donald Trump to the White House. **PHOTO: AFP**

main modest. And, as Paul Butcher of think tank European Policy Center observes, involving state intelligence services or ministries like the EEAS in the campaign can be counterproductive.

This fuels suspicions of censorship and plays "into narratives of censorship and a culture war between 'the establishment' and 'the people'," he said, in a recent report. Better than state-led counter-propaganda, he said, "structural resistance to disinformation can be built up through the efforts of civil society, NGOs and the private sector."

## 'World first'

In recent months, European authorities have increased calls for online platforms to be

more accountable for the content they push in front of millions of eyeballs. While some member states, such as France, have decided to legislate, the Commission is talking to internet giants. Late last year Facebook, Google and Twitter signed a code of best practice with the Brussels authorities—"a world first", according to Gabriel.

Under the code, the industry committed to transparency in political advertising, to close false accounts and to "demonetise misinformation providers"—to stop paid adverts on suspect sites. The initiative has produced results, but the firewall of truth is far from impregnable, as the Commission itself admits.—**AFP ■**

## UK finance minister says govt open to Brexit compromise with opposition

LONDON (United Kingdom) — British finance minister Philip Hammond said on Saturday the government had "no red lines" in talks with the main opposition party to break the deadlock in parliament over Brexit.

"Our approach to these discussions with Labour is that we have no red lines," he told reporters at a meeting of European finance ministers in Bucharest.

"We are expecting to exchange more texts with the Labour Party today, so this is an ongoing process and I expect we will reach some form of agreement," Hammond added. Senior ministers are negotiating with Labour leaders in a bid to find a compromise to end months of political crisis and allow Britain to leave the European Union smoothly after 46 years of membership.

But after three days of discussions, Labour said Friday it was "disappointed" by the failure to offer "real change or compromise" to Prime Minister Theresa May's unpopular Brexit

divorce deal. MPs have rejected her agreement finalised with European leaders last November three times, delaying Britain's original March 29 exit date and throwing the process into chaos. Ahead of an EU summit on Wednesday, May was forced to ask for another extension, until June 30, to prevent the country crashing out the bloc next Friday.

However with European leaders growing increasingly impatient at the paralysis in Westminster, they could offer just a shorter postponement—or a longer period of up to a year. The other 27 EU nations must give unanimous backing to any deadline extension. Hammond, who backed Remain in Britain's 2016 referendum and is seen as favouring as soft a Brexit as possible, urged his divided Conservative colleagues to show flexibility.

"We should be open to listen to suggestions that others have made and some people in the Labour Party are making other suggestions," he said. — **AFP ■**

## Prince William delves into UK's secretive spy world



As one of the most recognisable public figures in the world, Britain's Prince William would not make as effective a 007 as legendary fictional spy James Bond. **PHOTO: AFP**

LONDON (United Kingdom)—As one of the most recognisable public figures in the world, Britain's Prince William would not make as effective a 007 as legendary fictional spy James Bond. But that did not stop the heir to the British throne spending the last three weeks working with the security services, including in Bond's own foreign intelligence unit MI6. The Duke of Cambridge ended the top-secret

attachment — which also included a week with domestic intelligence service MI5 and cybersecurity agency GCHQ — on Saturday, according to Kensington Palace.

"Spending time inside our security and intelligence agencies, understanding more about the vital contribution they make to our national security, was a truly humbling experience," William said in a statement. "These

agencies are full of people from everyday backgrounds doing the most extraordinary work to keep us safe." The prince, who has a military background, began the secondment at the Secret Intelligence Service (SIS)—better known as MI6—whose spies work around the world gathering information and furthering British interests.

William, 36, "got to see firsthand how SIS helps the UK identify and exploit opportunities as well as navigate risks to its national security, military effectiveness and economy," Kensington Palace said. The father-of-three then switched over to the Security Service—MI5—to observe how counter-terrorism teams conduct investigations, including surveillance. The duke finished his foray into spycraft at the communications monitoring agency GCHQ in Cheltenham, in western England. There he spent time "with those using cutting-edge technology, technical ingenuity and wide-ranging partnerships to identify, analyse and disrupt threats," the palace added. — **AFP ■**

## Tourist numbers double at North Korea marathon

SEOUL (South Korea)—Twice as many foreigners as last year gathered in Pyongyang Sunday for the city's annual marathon, tour firms said, as reduced tensions see visitor numbers rise in North Korea.

The event—part of the celebrations for the anniversary of founder Kim Il Sung's birth in 1912—is the highlight of the North's tourism calendar and offers the chance to run or jog through the streets of the tightly-controlled city. Around 950 Westerners entered the event, according to market leader Koryo Tours, compared to some 450 last year when numbers slumped.

That brought participation almost back to the levels of 2017, before tensions soared as the North carried out a series of missile launches and leader Kim Jong Un traded threats and personal insults with US President Donald Trump.

The same year, Washington also banned its citizens from visiting the North following the death of Otto Warmbier, a US student jailed for trying to steal a propaganda poster who died in a mysterious coma days after his release. Several other countries subsequently raised their travel warnings, a combination of events that dealt a significant blow to the North's tourism industry. —AFP ■

## EU, China struggle to agree summit statement



Top EU leaders will sit down for talks with Chinese Premier Le Keqiang, but it looks increasingly likely there will be no common declaration at the end. **PHOTO: AFP**

BRUSSELS (Belgium)—China's refusal to give the EU solid commitments over access to its markets is preventing the two sides from agreeing a joint statement for a high-profile summit next week, European sources said Friday.

Top EU leaders will sit down for talks in Brussels with Chinese Premier Le Keqiang on Tuesday but it looks increasingly likely there will be no common declaration at the end, dealing a blow to hopes the meeting could yield a breakthrough in Europe's complex relationship with the Asian giant. The EU is seeking to build on "points of convergence" with China, its second biggest trading partner, but has deep reservations about Beijing's protectionism, trade practices and human rights record. EU Council President Donald Tusk has

told member states they should reject a draft summit statement, a source told AFP, "given that China has not delivered on key EU expectations and demands, including ensuring market access and a level playing field for European companies operating in China."

The source complained there was also a "lack of Chinese commitment" to serious World Trade Organization reform that would include industrial subsidies—a key demand of the EU, which says Beijing gives unfair support to its industries.

A senior EU diplomat confirmed that talks to agree a joint statement had foundered on the issues of market access and WTO reform. "This doesn't bode well and constitutes already now a serious burden for the summit," the diplomat said. —AFP ■

## Singapore's 'fake news' laws upset tech giants



Tech giants react with horror after Singapore proposed laws against "fake news".

**PHOTO: AFP**

SINGAPORE (Singapore)—Tech giants have reacted with horror after Singapore proposed laws against "fake news" allowing authorities to order the removal of content and impose hefty fines, in what critics say is an assault on free speech.

The government unveiled a bill last week containing tough measures, including powers for ministers to order social media sites like Facebook to put warnings next to posts authorities believe to be false and in extreme cases take them down. If an action is deemed malicious and damaging to Singapore's interests, companies could be hit with fines of up to Sg\$1 million (\$740,000). Individuals could face jail terms of up to 10 years.

Authorities in the tightly-controlled country—long criticised for restricting civil liberties—insist the measures are necessary to stop the circulation of falsehoods which could sow divisions in the multi-ethnic city-state.

But press freedom

groups condemned the proposals, saying they could stifle online discussion, as did tech companies which have big investments in the ultra-modern city.

"As the most far-reaching legislation of its kind to date, this level of overreach poses significant risks to freedom of expression and speech," said the Asia Internet Coalition, an industry association whose members include Facebook, Google and Twitter.

Simon Milner, Facebook's vice president of public policy in Asia-Pacific, said the social media giant was concerned about potentially being compelled to remove content.

"Giving people a place to express themselves freely and safely is important to us and we have a responsibility to handle any government request to remove alleged misinformation carefully and thoughtfully," he said in a statement.

The internet is a relatively free space in Singapore and there are some local alternative news sites, which are typically

more critical of the authorities than the traditional, pro-government newspapers and TV.

Singapore is among several countries pushing legislation to fight fake news, and the government stressed ordering "corrections" to be placed alongside falsehoods would be the primary response, rather than jail or fines. A government decision can also be appealed to the courts.

### 'Courts will decide'

K. Shanmugam, law and home affairs minister, said in a Facebook post that "the proposed law targets false statements of fact—not opinions, not criticisms.

"Ultimately, disagreement over truth and falsity will be decided by the courts". Google, Facebook and Twitter have their Asia headquarters in Singapore, a city of 5.6 million which is popular with expats as it is developed, safe and efficient. But there were already signs of tensions with tech companies as the government prepared to unveil the laws. During par-

liamentary hearings last year about tackling online falsehoods, Google and Facebook urged the government not to introduce new laws.

In November, Facebook refused a request to remove an article linking Singapore to a financial scandal in Malaysia which the government said was untrue—prompting the law ministry to say the firm "cannot be relied upon to filter falsehoods". Critics say one of the most worrying aspects of the new legislation is that it is up to authorities to decide what is false and what is not.

While authorities insist decisions can be appealed, Kirsten Han, the Singapore-based editor of regional news site New Naratif, said most people do not have the resources or will to fight the government. "Even if you are convinced that your Facebook post is in the right, how many average Singaporeans would appeal to the minister, and then spend thousands of dollars to hire a lawyer and file an application in the court?" she told AFP. Human Rights Watch has described the bill as "sweepingly broad" while critics note Singapore already has tough laws against sedition, defamation and disturbing racial harmony, that can be used to police the web.

But it is not yet clear how the legislation—which is likely to pass easily through the ruling party-dominated parliament—will be used in practice, and some believe authorities will wield it cautiously. —AFP ■

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## Farmers and nomads take to violence in drought-stricken Chad

ABECHE (Chad)—The chief medical officer at Adre hospital takes a routine phone call: a patient has been admitted with gunshot wounds and needs emergency surgery.

A dusty town in eastern Chad, once part of the proud Ouaddai empire, Adre is caught up in a mounting conflict between local farmers and nomadic camel herders from the north of the sprawling country. Last year, the hospital treated more than 100 patients with bullet wounds. In a territory where almost everyone seems to have a gun—a legacy of rebellions launched from eastern Chad and of the brutal conflict in Sudan's Darfur—squabbles over grazing land and trampled crops swiftly lead to violence.

Such disputes are tragically familiar in many parts of Africa.

But in arid eastern Chad, near the border with Sudan, the bloodshed is particularly acute, rooted in a bitter drought and population pressure sharpening rivalry over access to land. The vicious circle of attack and retribution is running full tilt.

### Seasonal

Admissions in Adre rise sharply during "times of tension", a source at the local hospital said.

Those times mirror the seasons. At the end of the rainy season, in December and January, herders drive their beasts northwards into the Sahel. When water sources start running low, they return south, from about the end of June.

Local chief Abderahim Dahab, who supervises 136 villages in his traditional leadership role, said the modern-day bloodshed

contrasted with long-established cohabitation.

"Movement of live-stock has always happened peacefully, for decades," he said. Migratory herders benefit from pasture on which to feed their animals, and farmers benefit from the animals, whose droppings fertilise the soil. And farmers and herders mutually benefit from trading with each other for food.

Historian Mahamat Saleh Yacoub said two factors explained the breakdown between the two communities. The first is a drought that has gripped the Sahel since the 1970s and seems to be worsening. Everyone who spoke to AFP agreed that the key issue is a lack of water.

"The herders are now coming earlier in the year and going back later. The established ways have broken down," said another district chief. —AFP ■

## Tens of thousands protest climate change in Switzerland



The climate change protests in Switzerland were inspired by the young Swedish activist Greta Thunberg. PHOTO: AFP

GENEVA (Switzerland)—Tens of thousands of people demonstrated Saturday in several Swiss cities against climate change, the Swiss news agency Keystone-ATS reported. Around 50,000 marched in all, the news agency report estimated, including 15,000 in Zurich and up to nine thousand in the capital Berne and in Lausanne. "It's about knowing if finally we want to listen to the voice of science," high school student Jan Burckhardt told ATS.

"Save the climate please: it's the last time we ask politely," read one of the placards at the Lausanne demonstration, an

AFP photographer saw. The marches were organised by an alliance of activist groups in Switzerland, including Greenpeace, Swiss Youth for Climate and green groups.

"We don't want to stop our movement as long as our claims have not been heard, as long as we have not obtained concrete results," said Laurane Conod, one of the organisers of a smaller march in Geneva.

The climate change protests in Switzerland were in part inspired by the teenage Swedish activist Greta Thunberg, who started weekly school strikes calling for policy change on the climate issue.—AFP ■

## Dire future etched in the past: CO2 at 3-million year-old levels

PARIS (France)—Planet-warming carbon dioxide in Earth's atmosphere — at its highest level in three million years — is poised to lock in dramatic temperature and sea level rises over a timescale of centuries, scientists warned this week. The last time that CO2 hit 400 parts per million (ppm) Greenland was ice free and trees grew at the edge of Antarctica. It was long thought that today's greenhouse gas levels were no greater than those 800,000 years ago, during a period of cyclical planetary warming and cooling that would have likely continued but for manmade emissions. But analyses of ice cores and ocean sediments in the coldest place on Earth have now revealed that 400 ppm was last surpassed three million years ago during the Late Pliocene, when temperatures were several degrees Celsius higher, and oceans at least 15 metres deeper.—AFP ■

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PTE LTD

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**M**INGALABAR! is a greeting that every tourist normally hears as they just land on Myanmar. This word represents honesty and moral principles of Buddhism. It also has profound insight in daily practices.

The essence of Minigalabar should be genuinely brought into Myanmar tourism industry that is still lagged behind most of our neighbouring countries in terms of services and quality.

Myanmar has adopted the Tourism Master Plan in 2012, covering the period 2013-2020. It includes a three-pronged strategy that focuses on expanding community-based tourism, building human capacity in the industry, and developing popular destinations as well as more access to less visited areas.

Relevant stakeholders need to put their efforts sincerely and ethically in capacity building for these all three areas. One of the significant voicing concerns among the tourists is the need of clean and hygienic practices that should be seriously considered as a tangible proof of a living standard in any society.

Everyone would like to spend their money effective and efficiently. From transportation to accommodation and from foods to souvenirs, both domestic and foreign visitors expect cost-effective services with competitive and reason-

# Cost-effective services to boost Myanmar's tourism industry

By Aung Khin

able prices during their visits.

Myanmar is launching campaigns and adopting policies to promote this sector because it is widely accepted as a non-smoking industry with a significant revenue source for almost all the countries across the world.

Recently, some regional countries become popular for their arrangements to attract budget travellers. The tourism market should be competitive, but it must guarantee reasonable and reliable services. The gap in services can closely be compared in border towns although the locals tried their best to mimic the practices of neighbouring countries. In this

regard, local authorities play crucial role in creating a competitive environment for tourism industry. They need to enforce rules and regulations on hygiene practices and other services, as well as infrastructural developments.

Local authorities should not allow operating dirty roadside shops that are largely found even in major cities of the country. Sound policies should be adopted to support these vendors as pretty roadside foods are attractive to the

visitors in foreign countries.

The National Tourism Industry Development Central Committee meeting was held in Nay Pyi Taw on 3 August 2018. In her address to the event, State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi proposed



ideas of more than 10 key tourism-promotion strategies, including railways extension, promoting community-based tourism and building small, livable hotels and hostels, planning new destinations and natural adventure tours.

Despite having a rich natural environment, Myanmar remains as one of the bottom countries in Southeast Asia in terms of tourism industry, while it has many unexploited tourist destinations.

According to the statistics of Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population, arrival of overall foreign visitors to Myanmar from January to February this year was 747,905, compared with 607,150 of the same period last year, increasing 23 per cent. Among the visitors from Asian

countries, Chinese stood first followed by Thailand, Korea, Japan, Singapore, Vietnam and India.

The government has expected 7 million annual tourist arrivals by 2020. Meanwhile, neighboring Thailand received 35.38 million tourists in 2017, the figure was more than half its population.

The State Counsellor suggested Myanmar needs new, innovative ideas to attract more tourists. She also remarked that neighbouring countries Thailand, Cambodia and Laos have taken several steps ahead of Myanmar in terms of developing their tourism sectors.

She also expressed her concerns about more investments in developing railways and waterways of

Myanmar, which are more convenient options for tourists to travel.

Despite optimism about her idea, railway networks, levels of rail infrastructure quality, train cleanliness and passenger comfort should be taken seriously into consideration, while many tourists would be interested in choosing railways to visit some tourist attractions.

In conclusion, development of tourism sector could only be done by all stakeholders, from all the roadside vendors to the lawmakers, and from local authorities to the central government, with the cooperation of respective community to prove that Mingalabar genuinely prevails among our society.



PHOTOS: PHOE KHWAR



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## Striker Kaung Si Thu gets award to mark his 100th goal in national league

SOUTHERN Myanmar F.C. striker Kaung Si Thu was presented an award to commemorate his 100th goal in the Myanmar National League, according to a statement released by the national league.

An award-giving ceremony was held yesterday, and the player was presented K300,000.

Forward player Kaung Si Thu made his 100th goal against the Magwe F.C. during the sixth

match of this year's national league in March.

During the match, Kaung Si Thu helped Southern Myanmar F.C. win by scoring two goals against Magwe F.C., and the match went 2-1 in favour of Southern Myanmar F.C.

The second goal at the match at the 85th minute, which was also the winning goal, was the 100th goal scored by Kaung Si Thu in the national league. —Lynn Thit (Tgi) ■



An official presents the 100th Goal Award to Southern Myanmar F.C. striker Kaung Si Thu during a ceremony yesterday. **PHOTO: MNL**

## Myanmar football teams to compete in Jockey Club tourney in Hong Kong

THE Myanmar U-15 and U-18 boy's football teams will compete in the Jockey Club International Youth Invitational Football Tournament 2019 in Hong

Kong, according to a statement released by the Myanmar Football Federation.

The tourney will be held from 19 to 22 April at Po Kong

Village Road Park Artificial Turf Football Pitch in Hong Kong.

The key objective of the tournament is to provide a platform for cultural exchange and

understanding among young players from Hong Kong and nearby regions. Players will gain valuable opportunities and experience through the competition to enhance their technical, tactical, and physical skills in the game, and also broaden their football horizons, said an organizer of the Hong Kong tournament.

Four teams — host Hong Kong, Myanmar, Malaysia, and Singapore — will compete in the U-15 tournament. Meanwhile, host Hong Kong, Myanmar, Viet Nam, and Singapore will participate in the U-18 tournament.

The Hong Kong U-18 boy's team will face Myanmar, Singapore, and Vietnam, while the Hong Kong U-15 boy's team will play against Malaysia, Myanmar, and Singapore. Both tournaments will be played in the single round-robin format.

The Myanmar U-15 team will play against Hong Kong U-15 on 19 April, Malaysia U-15 on 20 April, and Singapore U-15 on 22 April.

The Myanmar U-18 team will play against Hong Kong U-18 on 19 April, Viet Nam U-18 on 20 April, and Singapore U-18 on 22 April.

Each match will be 90 minutes long, comprising two periods of 45 minutes, with an interval of 15 minutes in between, from the whistle ending the first period to the whistle starting the second period.

Admission for the tournament is free of charge. Tickets for the matches will be available at the reception of the respective venues during match days, on a first-come-first-serve basis, according to the tournament's organizers. —Lynn Thit (Tgi) ■



The Myanmar U-15 team seen at an international football tournament. **PHOTO: MFF**

## Can Tiger Roll become first horse to win three straight Grand Nationals?

LONDON (United Kingdom)—Tiger Roll put his name alongside Grand National legend Red Rum on Saturday by winning the greatest steeplechase in the world in successive years—now the question is can he become the first to win three in a row?

Tiger Roll succeeded where 17 other National winners since Red Rum in 1973/74 had failed and won consecutive races.

The manner in which he won suggests Tiger Roll can go on and achieve something not even 'Rummie' did, and win three straight. One bookmaker is already quoting odds of 8/1.

After winning in 1973 and 1974, Red Rum finished second in 1975 and 1976 but remarkably won a third in 1977 ridden by Irishman Tommy Stack.

Jockey Davy Russell called Tiger Roll a "devil" for his habit of barely clearing fences, but the horse has an aura. Nothing fazes him and although he made a couple of errors, his 39-year-old Irish rider did brilliantly to rescue him from disaster. Tiger Roll will still only be 10 when the National comes round again next year.

His trainer Gordon Elliott, however, did not sound overly enthusiastic of a triple.

"I don't know about next year," said Elliott, who was winning his third National.

"Cheltenham again will be the plan," added Elliott. The Cross Country race is the most likely destination at the Festival.

Elliott originally did not want to buy Tiger Roll at the sales, preferring another horse but eventually gave in and paid £80,000.

Owner Michael O'Leary, the head of Ryanair, also would not commit, though, he revelled in having a horse mentioned alongside Red Rum and, with his renowned competitiveness in

business, a third tilt may prove be irresistible.

Victory next year would also make O'Leary the most successful owner in the race -- he has a joint record three to his name having won in 2016 with Rule The World. "He has improved even on last year," said O'Leary. "He is a legend of a horse to be in the same bracket as Red Rum is unbelievable. "It is a phenomenal training performance by Gordon."

### 'Once in a lifetime horse'

Tiger Roll has been described as a "little rat" by

O'Leary but that was long forgotten as he eulogised the horse.

"He is a once in a lifetime horse who has given us a twice in a lifetime experience." Elliott said he sees similarities between himself and Tiger Roll's relaxed aura. "He is a little like myself. He likes the good things in life —eating drinking and sleeping," the stocky Irishman said before adding, laughing: "though he is a little more athletic than me!"

Russell, who was once fired as first-choice jockey by O'Leary, will perhaps want Tiger Roll to give him less of a rollercoaster ride. —AFP ■