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Deputy Ministers explain Union Tax Bill 2019 at Pyidaungsu Hluttaw

THE 23rd day of Second Pyidaungsu Hluttaw's 13th Regular Session was convened yesterday, with the explanations Deputy Ministers about the Union Tax Bill 2019.

Deputy Minister for Industry Dr Min Ye Paing Hein talked about taxation plan on automobiles, out of other taxes on special commodities under the Union Tax Bill 2019.

He said it was learnt that MPs have suggested the range of engine capacity to be changed between 1501 CC and 2000 CC to between 1601 CC and 2000 CC; the tax to be reduced from the previous 30 to 20 per cent, and from the previous 50 per cent to 30 and 40 per cent respectively.

He remarked although the importers, manufactures and buyers of 1500 CC and below autos might enjoy 10 per cent discount in special commodity tax,

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The Second Pyidaungsu Hluttaw convenes its 23rd-day meeting, 13th Regular Session, in Nay Pyi Taw. PHOTO: MNA

Myanmar Permanent Representative delivers statement in response to oral update by High Commissioner for Human Rights and Interactive Dialogue on report of the Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar

THE Permanent Representative U Kyaw Moe Tun made a rebuttal statement in response to the oral update by the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Interactive Dialogue on the report of the Independent Investigative Mechanism (IIM) for Myanmar which

was held on September 9-10, 2019 during the ongoing 42nd Session of the Human Rights Council in Geneva.

During the general debate, the Permanent Representative of Myanmar stressed the urgent need for improvement in multilateral cooperation with

fair, constructive and practical approaches to achieve human rights for all. He pointed out the importance of adhering to the purposes and principles of the UN Charter as well as the need to avoid taking action against any state for political purpose by breaching the principles of

universality, impartiality, non-selectivity, objectivity, and interference in other state's domestic jurisdiction.

The Permanent Representative informed the Council of overwhelmingly strong objection from the whole spectrum of Myanmar - the government,

Chamber of Commerce, private enterprises, UEHRD, Federation of Trade Unions Myanmar - to FFM's reports and urged the Council "to strike a neutral balance between its obligations and the positions of concerned countries".

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## Deputy Ministers explain Union Tax Bill 2019 at Pyidaungsu Hluttaw

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however, the State will get less revenue from this tax plan; the ratio between tax and GDP of Myanmar is just 6 per cent and it is very lower than that of ASEAN countries. The decline of tax for state revenue will led to shortage of funds for infrastructure, human resource development and healthcare services. As a result, the projects would be run by self-reliant budget and internal and external loans.

He concluded that taxes on special commodities based on engine capacity should not be changed, while Myanmar Investment Commission has allowed automobile assembling and manufacturing in the country with the Semi Knocked Down system in the country as a move to promote foreign investments in automobile industry.

Deputy Minister for Planning and Finance U Maung Maung Win said the categories of special commodities, in accordance with international practices, include the items that can pose risks to health and environment. Therefore, cigarettes, che-

roots, tobacco, alcohol, beer and wines are levied with high tax to reduce their consumptions. Taxes are annually increased in foreign countries based on inflation rate. However, the tax rates in Myanmar are still lower than those of ASEAN countries, especially in automobile industry.

He also agreed with the discussion of MP U Than Soe to stop an exemption of commercial tax on some commodities. Paragraph 14 in the Union Tax Bill explained such commodities and services, including the items of basic foodstuff, agriculture, livestock, schools and offices, healthcare services, religious and social sector.

He then discussed the paragraph 25 of this bill, which is pointed out for the weakness by the MPs. The Deputy Minister expressed his appreciation for the concerns of MPs in this paragraph, and the matter should be controlled by the Anti-Corruption Law.

He finally suggested the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw for approval of the Union Tax Bill 2019 in line with Hluttaw law and rules.

The discussions on this bill was also taken part by Deputy Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation U Hla Kyaw, Deputy Minister for Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation Dr Ye Myint Swe and Deputy Minister for Commerce U Aung Htoo.

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker U T Khun Myat then presented a proposal sent by the President's Office about expanding, revoking and renaming of villages, village-tracts, wards and towns in Kachin and Rakhine states. And Pyidaungsu Hluttaw put it into the record.

Member of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Joint Bill Committee U Aung Kyi Nyunt read out the findings and recommendations of the Joint Bill Committee on the controversial Plant New Species Protection Bill 2019.

The Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker invited the list of MPs who want to discuss the bill.

Joint Public Accounts Committee's Vice Chairman U Aung Min and its member U Nay Myo Tun tabled the motion on the Union Budget Bill for 2019-2020

fiscal year and it was approved by the Hluttaw.

Deputy Minister for Planning and Finance presented the Union Budget Bill for 2019-2020 fiscal year to the Hluttaw for approval in line with Sub-paragraph (A) of Paragraph 91 under Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Bylaw, and it bill was approved by the Hluttaw.

The Deputy Minister for Industry explained about the plan to reciprocally recognize automobile parts in ASEAN region, which was sent by the President.

He said the plan could promote mutual understating in economic cooperation for ASEAN Economic Community, the flow of commodities and the establishment of a single market in the region. He added the plans could help removing unnecessary trade obstacles, and implement the global trade and guarantees for technologies, UN disciplines in timely manner and negotiations with the countries outside ASEAN region in line with the regional mutual agreement.

He added the government has show green light on this plan , and the approval was sought

from the Hluttaw. The Speaker then invited the lists of MP who want to discuss the mtion.

The MP, then, discussed about taking US\$ 185 million loan from Asian Development Bank to implement Community Development Project by the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation.

The discussion was participated by MP Daw May Than Nwe from Ayeyawady Region constituency 11, U Kyaw Htay, MP U Kyaw Htay from Leshi constituency, MP Dr Tin Tin Win from Bago Region constituency 5, MP U Tin Maung Win from Seikkan constituency, MP U Whae Tin from Chin State constituency 11, MP U Wun Hla from Nanyun constituency, MP U Lar Min Htan from Chin State constituency 10, MP Daw Cho Cho from Ottwin constituency and U Saw Tun Mya Aung from Papon constituency.

The 24<sup>th</sup> day meeting of the Pyiduangu Hluttaw session will be convened on 17<sup>th</sup> September.

—Aung Ye Thwin, Aye Aye Thant

(Translated by Aung Khin)

## Joint Committee on Amending 2008 Constitution holds meeting 35/2019

MEETING 35/2019 of the Joint Committee on Amending the 2008 Constitution was held at Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Building D in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday afternoon.

The meeting was attended by Chairman of the Joint Committee Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Deputy Speaker Pyithu Hluttaw Deputy Speaker U Tun Aung (a) U Tun Tun Hein, Deputy Chairman of

the Joint Committee Amyotha Hluttaw Deputy Speaker U Aye Tha Aung, Joint Committee Secretary Dr Myat Nyana Soe, and members who were Hluttaw representatives from political parties and Tatmadaw Hluttaw representatives and officials from Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Office.—

MNA ■

(Translated by TTN)



The Joint Committee on Amending the 2008 Constitution holds Meeting No. 35/2019 yesterday. PHOTO: MNA

## UAG Office explains report on implementation of rule of law strategic plan



Union Attorney-General U Tun Tun Oo poses for a documentary photo at the meeting to explain the assessment report on Moving Forward the Rule of Law: Strategic Plan 2015-2019 yesterday. PHOTO: MNA

THE Union Attorney-General Office held a meeting yesterday to explain the assessment report

on their Moving Forward the Rule of Law: Strategic Plan 2015-2019 yesterday.

Union Attorney-General U Tun Tun Oo first delivered an address where he said the UAG

Office and successive judicial offices aim to implement legal protection on rule of law in this strategic plan. He said they received assistance from the UNDP to review the strategic plan from February to April, 2019 as it nears completion. The UAG said they interviewed members of the Hluttaw Bill Committee, certain ministries, the Myanmar Police Force and international affiliated organizations during the reviewing period. He said 87% of successive judicial offices participated in the review, making it inclusive of the majority.

He said the results of the

review will be used to draft a better second strategic plan and expressed gratitude towards officials from the UNDP, international organizations and judicial officers of the UAG Office for their assistance.

The meeting was attended by the Deputy Attorney-General, permanent secretary, directors-general, deputy directors-general and directors of the UAG Office, UNDP officials and invited guests from UNODC, IDLO, JICE, MyJustice, and Promoting the Rule of Law in Myanmar (PRLM).—MNA ■

(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

## MoEE Minister discusses energy development with Finnish Amb



Union Minister U Win Khaing shakes hands with Finnish Ambassador Ms Riikka Laatu. PHOTO: MNA

UNION MINISTER for Electricity and Energy U Win Khaing received Finnish Ambassador Ms Riikka Laatu at his ministry yesterday.

During the meeting, both sides discussed initiating discussions on the Finnish Government's support for re-

newable energy sources and developing electric producing and distribution in Myanmar.

The agreement to do so was made in an MoU signed between Myanmar's MoEE and Finland's Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment on 30 July 2018.

The meeting also discussed the Deputy Minister of Finland's Foreign Affairs Economic Relations Department leading a delegation to Myanmar and sustainable methods for the electricity and energy sector. —MNA

(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

## Union Minister for Planning and Finance holds talks with Finland Ambassador

UNION MINISTER for Planning and Finance U Soe Win received Ambassador of Finland Ms Riikka Laatu at his office in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

At the meeting, they discussed economic cooperation and development between My-

anmar and Finland, environment and natural resources management sector, education sector and energy sector and prospects for holding bilateral meetings every year.—MNA

(Translate by TTN)



Union Minister U Soe Win receives Finnish Ambassador Ms Riikka Laatu at his office in Nay Pyi Taw. PHOTO: MNA

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## The establishment of IIM is another step of undue pressure and selective discriminatory scrutinization on Myanmar and intrusion on its sovereignty

Myanmar Permanent Representative to UN U Kyaw Moe Tun

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Speaking about Myanmar's fulfilment of the obligations to the international human rights conventions including recent constructive dialogues with the CEDAW Committee and the CRPD Committee, he informed the Council that Myanmar will ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict and will submit the 3rd national report under the UPR process next year.

He also expressed Myanmar's strong support for the UPR mechanism. Through UPR, he said, "human rights situation in ALL countries can be reviewed constructively and impartially". "Every country has human rights and development challenges and Myanmar is no exception", he added. He called for constructive support from the international community.

At the Interactive dialogue with IIM, Permanent Repre-



Myanmar Permanent Representative to UN U Kyaw Moe Tun. PHOTO: MNA

sentative U Kyaw Moe Tun reiterated Myanmar's firm position, conviction and commitment to human rights and to ridding of double standards, politicization, impartiality and selectivity. He mentioned that Myanmar is "fully aware of the differences between genuine concern for human rights and political drives".

He reiterated Myanmar's

strong objection to FFM and IIM. He pointed out FFM's reports as flawed and politically motivated. He said, "It deliberately discounted atrocities committed by ARSA terrorist group who massacred security personnels and hundreds of innocent civilians including a hundred Hindu villagers, other ethnic minorities and pro-government Muslims".

He pointed out the establishment of IIM as another step of undue pressure and selective discriminatory scrutinization on Myanmar and intrusion on its sovereignty. He expressed concern over the UN's wasting of more than 26 million US Dollar for 2 years for this mechanism, in the time of scarce resources, to monitor Myanmar whose

democratic transition is still very much alive. He said that "without consent of the country concerned", these intrusive measures, "heaping mechanism upon mechanism" not resolve any issue in Myanmar.

He underscored that Myanmar government does not and will not condone any human rights abuses. "The culture of impunity by policy or by practice is not accepted", He added. He also apprised the Council of how the government has been addressing accountability issue with its national accountability mechanisms: ICOE; Court of Inquiry. He explained the work of ICOE and its visit to Cox's Bazar. Myanmar is willing and capable of addressing the issue of accountability for alleged violations and "strongly rejects any mechanism or any attempt to take the matter to any international judicial or legal body unless it is patently clear that national remedies have been exhausted", he stressed, according to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.—MNA

# SWRR Ministry receives donations for flood-affected regions

UNION MINISTER for International Cooperation U Kyaw Tin handed over US\$40,000 donated by Myanmar families in California for flood-affected regions in Myanmar and \$300 donated by Myanmar family abroad for the UEHRD project to the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement yesterday.

The Ministry also received K6 million donated by San Hein Private High School from Mahaungmye Township, Mandalay Region, and K20 million donated by Myanmar Highway Project and Investment Company Ltd on the same day.

Union Minister Dr Win Myat Aye received the donations and gave certificates of honour in return. He spoke at the donation ceremony and



Union Minister U Kyaw Tin hands over cash donated by Myanmar families in California to Union Minister Dr Win Myat Aye yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

first expressed gratitude on behalf of the afflicted citizens. He said they have transferred

K60.69 million to the Taninthayi Region Government, K143.10 million to the Mon State Gov-

ernment and K160.460 million to the Kayin State Government so that they may swiftly replant

the damaged monsoon crops.—MNA  
(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

# Fire vehicles, computers donated to Forest Department



Korea Forest Service and Asian Forest Cooperation Organization Executive Director Mr Chencho Norbu and officials look around donated forest fire vehicles at the handover ceremony yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

KOREA Forest Service and Asian Forest Cooperation Organization (AFoCO) donated forest fire vehicles and computers to Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation at Forest Department yesterday morning.

At the event, Permanent Secretary of Ministry of Natural Resource and Environmental Conservation, U Khin Maung Ye delivered the opening remark. Minister Mr Kin Jae Hyun of Korea Forest Service and Executive Director of AFoCO Mr Chencho Norbu delivered key note speeches.

Then, Mr Kim Jea Hyun and Mr Chencho Norbu handed over documents concerning fire vehicles and computers to Director General Dr Nyi Nyi Kyaw. He presented certificate of appreciation.

It was reported that Korea Forest Service and AFoCO donated four forest fire vehicles and 24 computers to help the department prevent forest fire.

MoU between Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation, Forest Department and Korea Forest Service on ASEAN-ROK Forest Cooperation

regional level training was signed in Nay Pyi Taw on August 1<sup>st</sup> 2014. The training centre is located in Seed and Seedling center of Forest Department in Hmawbi Township Yangon. The project will last 10 years from 2014-2015 to 2013-2014.

During the project, ASEAN regional level training center was built and skill trainings, workshops and research were conducted by local and international technicians for the trainees from member countries.—MNA

(Translated by Alphonsus)

# Innwa Bank opens new branch in Bhamo

INNWA BANK Ltd formally opened their 62<sup>nd</sup> branch at No 58, Sinphyushin Street, Mingon Ward, Bhamo Township, Kachin State, with a ceremony yesterday.

Firstly, the Managing Director and officials of Innwa Bank cut ceremonial ribbons and the Commander of Northern Command, Maj-Gen Teza Kyaw, unveiled the bank's signboard. The officials

then looked around the interior of the bank.

Innwa Bank offers 9 per cent interest rates on savings accounts and up to 10 per cent on fixed deposit accounts, depending on the account owner's choice. The bank also gives out loan capitals for aspiring entrepreneurs. — MNA

(Translated by TTN)



Managing Director and officials of Innwa Bank cut ceremonial ribbons to open Innwa Bank Ltd's new branch in Bhamo Township, Kachin State yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

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# Myanma Tourism Bank opens third branch in Nay Pyi Taw



Union Minister Thura U Aung Ko, MTB Chairman U Yan Win and officials unveil signboard of Myanmar Tourism Bank branch in Thabyaygon depot, Nay Pyi Taw. **PHOTO: MNA**

THE Myanmar Tourism Bank inaugurated their third branch bank with a ceremony in front of the branch in Thabyaygon depot, Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

At the event, Union Minister for Religious Affairs and Culture Thura U Aung Ko delivered a speech while MTB's Chairman U Yan Win explained bank's services and aims, and bank's theme song and documentary video were played. Union Minister Thura U Aung Ko, MTB's Chairman U Yan Win, directors-general and officials cut ceremonial ribbons and unveiled the bank's signboard. MTB has opened its head office and a branch in Yangon and Mandalay respectively. — MNA ■

(Translated by TTN)

# Myanmar Scouts to participate in ASEAN Scout Youth Forum 2019 in Singapore



The Myanmar Scout delegation poses with the National Flag at Yangon International Airport before departing for ASEAN Scout Youth Forum 2019 to be held in Singapore. **PHOTO: MNA**

MYANMAR Scout delegation left for the ASEAN Scout Youth Forum 2019 which Singapore will host for the first time.

Ma Htet Htet Lin San, Ma May Thu Htet, Ma Nan Phoo Myat Thiri Hlaing and Mg Zwe Khaung Tay Zar left for Singa-

pore from Yangon International Airport.

Scout Chief Organizer, U Aye Kyaine, International Coordinator Mg Kaung Myat Htoo, Youth coordinator U Phyo Thura Win, Scout Representatives' teachers and families saw them off. The

forum will be held from 13<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> September at Raffles Institution. It is held under the theme of "Young People and Community Involvement" with the aim of getting youth engage more in social Welfare.—MNA

(Translated by Alphonsus)

# Narcotic drugs seized in Maungtaw

SECURITY forces confiscated 97,500 stimulant tablets in Myoma Kahnyintan Village, Maungtaw, Rakhine State, on Wednesday, according to Myanmar Police Force.

A combination team including police force of Maungtaw police station searched the house of Abu Karsane who lives in Myoma Kahnyintan Village, Maungtaw Township at 5:30 am on 11 September and found him accompanied by his brother Guyarsan, his

son Mohammed Eiliyet, his son-in-law Shawfi Oulsalin (a) Jawloo, Mamed Enus and Shaungshu Arlaung. The team seized 97,500 stimulant tablets from his house and garage. Myanmar Police Force have reported the case have been filed under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law, and the measures are being taken to arrest further suspects in connection with the case. — MNA ■

(Translated by TTN)



Six suspects from Myoma Kahnyintan Village, Maungtaw, seen with stimulant tablets seized from their home. **PHOTO: MNA**



MEODA Chairman U Myint Kyu and delegation depart for Viet Nam to attend the trade fair and seminar. **PHOTO: MNA**

# MEODA chairman leaves for Viet Nam

AT the invitation of the Malaysia Palm Oil Council, a delegation led by Chairman of Myanmar Edible Oil Dealers' Association (MEODA) U Myint Kyu left for Viet Nam yesterday to attend Malaysia-Viet Nam Palm Oil Trade Fair & Seminar held in Ho

Chi Minh City, Viet Nam on 13 September. The delegation was seen off at the Yangon International Airport by deputy chairmen of MEODA U Maung Myint, U Aung Myint Oo and U Ohn Thwin and officials. — MNA ■

(Translated by TTN)

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**ACTING CHIEF EDITOR**Aye Min Soe  
dce@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com**SENIOR EDITORIAL CONSULTANT**

Kyaw Myaing

**SENIOR TRANSLATORS**Zaw Min  
Zaw Htet Oo  
Alphonsus**INTERNATIONAL NEWS EDITOR**Ye Htut Tin,  
editor1@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com**LOCAL NEWS EDITORS**Tun Tun Naing (Editor),  
intlnews@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com  
Nwe Nwe Tun (Sub-editor),  
nwenwe9131@gmail.com**TRANSLATORS**Hay Mar Tin Win,  
Ei Myat Mon  
Kyaw Zin Lin  
Kyaw Zin Tun**REPORTER**Nyein Nyein Ei,  
reporter1@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com  
Aye Yamon Oo**PHOTOGRAPHER**Kyaw Zeya Win @ Phoe Khwar  
Kyaw Zeya**COMPUTER TEAM**Thein Ngwe, Zaw Zaw Aung,  
Ye Naing Soe, Hnin Pwint,  
Kay Khaing Win, Sanda Hnin,  
Thein Htwe, Nyi Lin Thu**EDITORIAL SECTION**(+95) (01)8604529,  
Fax - (+95) (01) 8604305**CIRCULATION & DISTRIBUTION**San Lwin, (+95) (01) 8604532,  
Hotline - 09 974424114**ADVERTISING & MARKETING**(+95) (01) 8604530,  
Hotline - 09 974424848  
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Due to limitation of space we are only able to publish "Letter to the Editor" that do not exceed 500 words. Should you submit a text longer than 500 words please be aware that your letter will be edited.

**Houses damaged after torrential rain in Maungtaw Township**

TORRENTIAL rainfall on 11 September submerged wards and villages in Maungtaw Township, Rakhine State, and destroyed four houses.

The rain struck seven villages — Bohmuu, Wimala, Ywarthitkay, Aungmyay Bohdi, Waythali, Kanpyin Thasi, Ywathayar, and Thihoaye — in Maungtaw Township. It caused severe damage to 24 houses and destroyed four houses.

A team comprising officials from the district and township fire services departments, the township Red Cross Society, and officials inspected the flooded areas, and shifted flood victims to temporary shelters. — Thet Lwin Soe (IPRD) ■

(Translated by La Wonn)



Firefighters conduct rescue operation at a site where a house is destroyed by torrential rain in Maungtaw. PHOTO: THET LWIN SOE (IPRD)

**YCDC taxes can be paid by mobile phone from 1 Oct**

BY Aye Yamone

YANGONITES will be able to pay Yangon City Development Committee's (YCDC) taxes by mobile phone from 1 October. The mobile payment system for taxes was launched at a ceremony held on 12 September at the Yangon City Hall.

The mobile payment system was introduced with the aim of facilitating the payment of YCDC taxes. It uses Yangon City Bank's (YCB) payment gateway, which has been set up in cooperation with the KBZ, AYA, and CB banks.

"The collection of tax is very important to allocate the budget

for the development of the city. People have complained to us, asking for a more convenient system for paying taxes. So, the YCDC has established the mobile payment system. Now, the YCB is planning to provide a convenient payment service to the people, in cooperation with the KBZ, AYA, and CB banks," said U Phyto Min Thein, the Chief Minister of Yangon Region.

"The payment of taxes plays an important role in making the YCDC a success. So, it is needed to hold the launching ceremony on a broad scale so that people are aware of the process of paying taxes online," he said.

Yangonites using KBZ, AYA,

and CB banks will soon be able to pay taxes such as the municipal land tax, property tax, general tax, and kitchen and sewage tax through a mobile application wallet.

"The new YCDC bills function gives customers flexibility and the assurance of safe and secure payments, and the option has been added to our QuickPay function, which allows payments to over 90 companies, organizations, and universities. We are trying to continue shaping the future of cashless bill payments," said U Soe Ko Ko, the head of agent banking at KBZpay.

"With full receipt of taxes,

better urban services can be extended and provided, such as the installation of GPS systems on garbage collection vehicles and construction of a waste-to-energy plant. In addition, rubbish bins and public toilets can be also be maintained as part of public services," according to YCDC.

Currently, the YCDC is using taxes collected from the public to upgrade the city to make it beautiful and clean.

The committee is also planning to launch other applications to provide better services to the public, if the mobile payment system succeeds. ■ (Translated by Hay Mar)

**Joint action needed to prevent formalin-laced fish, prawns from entering Myanmar**

By Aye Yamon

COOPERATION among the concerned departments, including the Department of Food and Drug Administration (FDA), is essential to prevent the entry of fish and prawns treated with formalin and chemicals into the Yangon market via the Myawady border gate, said U Hla Htay, the deputy head of the Yangon Region Fisheries Department.

"Currently, fish and prawns imported from Thailand through the Myawady border gate are cheaper than locally produced fish and prawns. The FDA should check the imported fish and prawns for formalin and chemicals," he said.

"Fish and prawns treated with formalin reach Yangon via Kayin State, Mon State, and Bago Region. Yangon has several entrances through which fish treated with formalin can enter. We need greater cooperation from other departments, such as the Myanmar Police Force and the FDA, because it is not possible for us alone to prevent their entry," he added.

In 2016 and 2017, the Fisheries Department had seized illegal shipments of fish and prawns entering Yangon through Myawady. "The seized fish and prawns were sold through a tender system. Later, the sale of illegal fish and prawns was stopped because they were found to be life-threat-

ening," said U Hla Htay.

"We know who has imported the fish and prawns sold in the San Pya market of Yangon. Now, we are making arrangements to seize the shipments. On 4 September, about 180 viss of fish and prawns were seized when the FDA conducted a check at the Mawlamyine market. Four shop owners were warned and made to sign letters of confession. Yangon markets will soon be checked," he added.

The authorities seized illegal fish and prawns at Yangon gate-2, at the junction of Zayatkin road and Indagaw road, in Bago region.

Acting on a tip, the Township FDA conducted a surprise check on 9 September for for-

malin-laced fish and prawns at the depot in Mawlamyine, Mon State. The Township FDA conducted the check in cooperation with the state consumer affairs department, with the use of a mobile lab van.

"Not only fish and prawns, but chicken are also being imported from Thailand via the Myawady border gate. The price of chicken from Thailand is cheaper, at around K1,500 per viss. Fish and prawns, chicken, and other food products are entering Myanmar daily through the border gates," according to the Myanmar Fish Paste, Dried Fish and Fish Sauce Entrepreneurs Association. ■ (Translated by Hay Mar)

# Mung bean price up K40,000 per ton within one week

BY Nyein Nyein

THE price of mung beans has shot up by K40,000 per ton within a week, said U Min Ko Oo, the secretary of the Myanmar Pulses, Beans and Sesame Seeds Merchants Association.

The price of pigeon peas has also risen by K20,000 per ton, he added.

At present, mung beans are fetching K760,000 per ton and pigeon peas (old stock) are priced at K830,000 per ton.

“The prices of both mung beans and pigeon peas have gone up. The price of mung beans

has increased from K715,000 to K760,000 per ton. Meanwhile, the price of old pigeon peas has also climbed from K810,000 to K830,000,” said U Min Ko Oo.

Last February, at the 4<sup>th</sup> ASEAN-India Expo and Summit, a Myanmar delegation, led by the Union Minister for Commerce and comprising pulses and beans merchants, had requested the Indian government to purchase 400,000 tons of mung beans from Myanmar. But, there has been no response to the request so far, according to the Myanmar Pulses, Beans and Sesame Seeds

Merchants Association.

India, which is the main buyer of Myanmar pulses, has announced a quota of 150,000 tons for mung beans and 200,000 tons for pigeon peas for exporter countries.

Besides India, Myanmar’s beans are purchased by Bangladesh, Pakistan, Nepal, Dubai, Malaysia, Indonesia, China (Taipei), Japan, and the European countries. But, the volume of demand is low, according to the domestic pulses market.

“India primarily demands mung beans and pigeon peas. Like India, Bangladesh, Paki-

stan, Nepal, and some ASEAN countries also purchase them, but the volume is still low. Currently, our supply of pigeon peas does not meet demand. Mung beans are flowing into the Indian market to a certain extent, and the remaining peas are being shipped to other countries as well. We are monitoring India’s market and policy,” said U Min Ko Oo.

The Ministry of Commerce has been conducting a series of discussions to sell Myanmar’s beans through government-to-government (G2G) pacts. In addition, the ministry

has been exploring more external markets, said U Aung Htoo, the Deputy Minister for Commerce.

India’s move to restrict importation of pulses in August, 2017 severely affected growers in Myanmar. The price of pulses also plummeted drastically.

In the 2017-2018 fiscal year, over a million tons of mung beans, pigeon peas, and green grams were shipped to foreign countries. But, the earnings totalled just \$713 million owing to a price drop, according to data from the Ministry of Commerce. ■ (Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

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## Agriculture, livestock, fisheries sectors pull in investment of \$200 mln, K25 bln

NEW businesses including one enterprise in the agriculture sector and two in the livestock and fisheries sector were permitted to bring in investments of US\$200 million and K25 billion in early September, said U Thant Sin Lwin, the Director General of the Directorate of Investments and Company Administration.

“The farming industry still makes up less than one per cent of the total investment, representing 0.5 per cent of the total investment. To promote investments in the agriculture sector, we will try to link it with the manufacturing sector,” said U Thant Sin Lwin.

“Foreign investors in the agricultural sector can share know-how of farming methods.

Agriculture accounts for 32 per cent of the GDP and 20 per cent of exports,” he added.

Myanmar’s agricultural sector has received investments from China, Singapore, South Korea, Malaysia, France, India, and Japan. Between October and early September this year, six enterprises entered the agriculture, livestock, fisheries and real estate development sectors. Investments in the agriculture industry hit \$134.48 million in the 2017-2018FY. In the October-August period of the current fiscal year, FDI into the sector exceeded \$19 billion.

The new Myanmar Investment Law allows up to 80-per cent foreign investment in the

agriculture sector. It also allows 100-per-cent foreign investment in seed production.

“Foreign investors have shown interest in investing in the farming industry. The sector has seen a relatively low FDI inflow as it involves long-term investment, and is directly associated with the climate. Investing in the farming sector may pose some risks for investors. It is still difficult to implement a crop insurance system in Myanmar. Land ownership also remains an important issue. This is why investment in the agriculture sector is relatively low compared with that in the non-agricultural sector,” said an official from the Myanmar Rice Federation.

In the current financial year, 224 businesses in 10 sectors have pulled in foreign direct investment of \$3.526 billion, with the majority of the FDI flowing into the country’s manufacturing sector.

The Myanmar Investment Commission plans to support those who want to invest in ten prioritized areas of investment as quickly as possible, including agriculture, livestock breeding and fisheries, export promotion industries, import substitution industries, power sector, education services, logistics industries, healthcare services, construction of affordable housing, and establishment of industrial estates. — GNLM ■

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

# Jaggery powder to be exported to five foreign markets

A plant is currently being constructed in Yesagyo Town of Magway Region to process jaggery powder, and there are plans to export the powder to five markets abroad, said Ko Kaung Sett Naing, the CEO of 555 Shwe Hinthar Co Ltd.

“We will produce jaggery powder after purchasing toddy juice from local palm farmers. Currently, the construction of the jaggery powder factory in Yesagyo Town is 80 per cent complete. The factory will be operational by the end of September,” he said.

“We are producing finished products after purchasing toddy juice from local palm farmers. We introduced jaggery to Korea two months ago. But they didn’t like it. So, we explained the benefits of jaggery. After looking

at the certificate confirming jaggery is good for health, they asked us to send jaggery,” he added.

“Currently, we are producing jaggery powder and exporting it to Japan, Indonesia, and Thailand. Additionally, we are exporting jaggery powder to Korea on a trial basis. Jaggery powder, which is an organic product, interests not only South East Asian countries, but also European countries,” said Ko Kaung Sett Naing.

“To extend the business, we plan to purchase jaggery from local farmers and produce its powder in the factory. So, local farmers will be able to save 50 per cent of the expenditure on fire wood. We also plan to produce high-quality toddy juice



Labours work at jaggery powder factory in Yesagyo Township, Magway Region PHOTO: KHINE SATT WAI

with the aim of dissuading local farmers from abandoning palm cultivation,” he added.

“In 2016, jaggery powder

was produced on a trial basis. In 2017, the powder was exported to Japan to see the response. We need to negotiate to keep the

price of the powder higher than that of jaggery,” said Ko Kaung Sett Naing.—Khine Satt Wai ■ (Translated by Hay Mar)

# Excessive use of chemicals sets alarm bells ringing on food safety

OUR economy is based on agriculture and our agricultural products have a good name. With changing lifestyles across the world, people are demanding safe food. Therefore, we would like to urge our farmers and peasants to use chemical inputs only when it is absolutely necessary.

As Myanmar is an agro-based country and exports agro products, we must meet the standards set by the world. If our agricultural products are not up to the mark, it'll be difficult for us to enter the world market.

Excessive use of chemicals will have a negative impact on the acceptability of our agricultural products, both in the local and international markets. Trust and reliability is important in business. Trust once lost is hard to restore. Our farmers and peasants must try to be responsible producers for the sake of consumers.

The government will help and support them, but farmers and peasants themselves must have the will to study. Crops that grew well in the past may no longer do so due to climate change. Planting methods may have to be changed. Continuous study must be made and appropriate and timely changes made.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation is conducting training on Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) and holding talks nationwide to educate farmers about reducing the use of chemicals and producing organic inputs.

However, it has been found that farmers in some areas are using chemicals excessively due to lack of knowledge and lax enforcement of rules on use of chemical inputs.

There are laws and by-laws necessary to the development of Myanmar's agricultural sector that have yet to be drafted, and educational programmes in ethnic languages are also advisable.

The government's training is not enough to ensure production of safe food and prevention of damage to the ecosystem. We need cooperation from Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and the public, otherwise the people will continue to suffer from the negative consequences of fertilizer and pesticide use.

Not only the ministry, but the CSOs must also encourage farmers to use GAP protocols in cultivating staples and export crops, in an effort to boost farmer incomes and develop Myanmar's agricultural sector, which will contribute to economic growth.

The situation in the agricultural sector has set alarm bells ringing to enforce strict rules on smuggling highly potent chemical inputs and educate farmers to ensure that if they use chemical inputs, they do so in the correct manner.

We need cooperation from Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and the public, otherwise the people will continue to suffer from the negative consequences of fertilizer and pesticide use.

# Recruiting Myanmar water forces (Navy) by Regatta and boat races

By Dr Khin Maung Nyunt (Maha Saddhamma Jotika Dhaja, Sithu)

MYANMAR is a country most favoured by nature. Being not a land locked country it possesses both land and aquatic sources. High snow-capped mountains in the extreme north which are simply off-shoots of the Himalaya, thickly forested hill ranger running north to south, the rivers with their tributaries and distributaries, flowing mostly from north to south, creating fertile valleys, plains and deltas with several archipelagos along the long sea coasts, natural aquatic bodies and man-made reservoirs and tanks require a strong water forces [Navy] to defend to protect and to preserve. A long land border with two thickly populated neighbours China and India expose Myanmar must always be alert to her geographic and strategic position.

Throughout her history Land and Water Forces, constantly reinforced by her rulers of the past and present. In the past, Myanmar kings always marched whether to battles or royal ceremonial progress or inspection of their kingdom with yey-arr [ရေအား] and kyi-arr [ကြည့်အား]. Therefore these two forces must be always strong fresh and well trained. The month Tawthalin [September] the 6<sup>th</sup> month of Myanmar Lunar Calendar is the most appropriate month for the exercise of Myanmar water forces and recruiting new blood into it. Because the monsoon has receded, element wealth permitting, fine and calm become all aquatic bodies in land and outside. Myanmar kings held without fail their Regatta Festival



Traditional boat race held at Meiktila's Phaung Daw Oo Pagoda Festival. PHOTO: CHAN THAR (MEIKTILA)

in calm aquatic bodies rivers or lakes to display their might in water forces and held boat races to recruit new blood into their water forces [Navy].

Yey Khin Taw [ရေခင်းတော်] literally translated Royal Regatta [Grand display of Royal water crafts of all categories were ceremonially displayed on the calm surface of water. Here Myanmar word khin and kin [ခင်း တင်း] should be well understood. Khin means to display. Kin means to patrol. Yey Kin Taw in the moats around the walled Palace city was the royal water patrol boats on duty every day to keep off or to find if anyone crossing the moat. These water pa-

"Pyi Gyi Mon" was a double barge built like the audience hall of siha sa na throne on which their Majesties sat and attended by Crown Prince and his consort, all princes, princesses, royal children and ministers and military commanders.

trol boats have their own musical band with Yey Kin songs to escape the monotony and to keep them always alert. Today Yey Khin and Yey Kin are mixed up, especially



Traditional boat race is a symbol of patriotism. PHOTO: CHAN THAR (MEIKTILA)

asionally Aquatic bodies in land e.g. Inlay Lake, Indaw Gyi Lake, Taung Tha Man Lake, Meikhtila Lake and many other lakes across the country do hold boat races. Myanmar ethnic people inhabiting on or near aquatics bodies or sea ports are water-borne. In the as Daweithas, Myekthas, Rakhines etc are water borne. They hold boat races of all kinds. They often win in international water craft races abroad such as rowing boat races, yatching, dragon boat races, etc. etc. In the time of military Governmemnts, Regatta and boat races were held in Yangon Kandaw Gyi Lake. Re-enacting the march of King Tharawaddy of Late Kon-baung dynasty of Myanmar history to Yangon on the pretext of paying homage to Shwedagon Pagoda in British Burma [Lower Myanmar already fell under British Colonial Rule after First Anglo-Myanmar War]. The King built a city for his residence called Aung Mye Yan Hnin [literally meaning victory land to drive out enemies]. He built fortresses around Shwedagon Pagoda hill and other strategic places. He dedicated to Shwedagon Pagoda a big alloy bell which was being made at Nay Pyi Daw Amarapura. Before the bell was finishes the king died. His son Singu Min carries out the unfinished task. You can see the Hsinbyushin Bell at the Sunday corner [north-east] of Shwedagon Pagoda, on which Tharawaddy Min's march to Yangon was recorded in 100 lines of inscriptions.

Tet yey thone zet Khun brit chin [တတိယေ ခု ချင်း]. Two long boats on either side piloted the royal barge. Behind follows a long entourage of barges, boats, all kinds of water crafts carrying royal families, civil and military authorities. Yey khin taw musical bands etc. We can see a replica of Pyi Gyi Mon Barge in Mandalay as well as Kandaw Gyi Lake in Yangon.

After the royal display, boat races of all kinds and categories took place, barges ships, canoes, sampans, cruises, laung hleys etc. A systematic Boat Race took place nearly 3 days in succession. Specially appointed supervisory committees, other related committees were appointed by royal order so that boat races were conducted systematically and types of boats are recorded on parabile folding papers with colourful illustrations. Sometimes, when protests appeared, an extra day was allowed to settle the protest.

Their Majesties awarded cash, kind and title to the outstanding ones. The best boat rowers were recruited into the royal water forces [Navy]. Foreign visitors, Envoys and Christian missic naries who had eye-witnessed Yey Khin Taw and Boat races and Awards and Recruitments noted down with illustrations in their diaries, reports and travelogues. After Myanmar became British Colony such monthly festivals could be held oc-

among younger generations. Royal Regatta was a grand royal ceremonial entourage of barges, boats, rafts and all kinds of water crafts. The grand royal barge "Pyi Gyi Mon" was a double barge built like the audience hall of siha sa na throne on which their Majesties sat and attended by Crown Prince and his consort, all princes, princesses, royal children and ministers and military commanders. His majesty ceremonially accepted credential of ambassadors, discussed with ministers about matters of state importance. The Pyi Gyi Mon Barge is the replica of this Siha Suna throne Room. With all royal paraphernalia of royal ceremony their Majesties displayed their might and main. Rows of barge rowers in rich uniform sat on both sides of the barge and rowed in tune with the 37 songs of 37 rowing styles called

## International Democracy Day to be broadcast live on 15 September

THE event to mark the International Democracy Day to be held in the Hluttaw Compound in Nay Pyi Taw on 15 September would be broadcast live.

The live broadcast would start at 12:55 pm on the Hluttaw Channel of the Myanma Radio and Television.—MNA

## China – ASEAN Expo and business investment summit to be held

Myanmar Trade Promotion Organization is planning to exhibit Myanmar product at international expo with the aim of promoting international trade.

The Expo and the summit will be held in Nanning, capital of Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region, from Sept 21 to 23.

For more detail call Minister of Commerce, Myanmar Trade Promotion Nay Pyi Taw Ph 067-430128/430446/430447 Email: moctradeair@gmail.com Yangon Ph: 01-254024 Email : itpic.moc@gmail.com MNA (Translated by Alphonsus)

Weather icons (sun, clouds, rain, moon) and text: Myanmar Daily Weather Report (Issued at 7:00 pm Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> September, 2019)

BAY INFERENCE: Monsoon is weak over the Andaman Sea and South Bay and moderate elsewhere over the Bay of Bengal.

FORECAST VALID UNTIL MORNING OF THE 13<sup>th</sup> September, 2019: Rain or thundershowers will be scattered in Lower Sagaing, Magway and Taninthayi Regions, (Northern and Eastern)Shan State, fairly widespread in Mandalay Region and Southern Shan State and widespread in the remaining Regions and States with isolated heavy-falls in Upper Sagaing, Bago, Yangon and Ayeyarwady Region, Kachin and Rakhine States. Degree of certainty is (100%).

STATE OF THE SEA: Sea will be moderate in Myanmar waters. Wave height will be about (6-8)feet in Deltaic, off and along Rakhine Coasts and about (4 – 6)feet in Gulf of Mottama, off and along Mon-Taninthayi Coasts.

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Moderate monsoon.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 13<sup>th</sup> September, 2019: One or two rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 13<sup>th</sup> September, 2019: Some rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 13<sup>th</sup> September, 2019: Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (80%).





## Union Attorney-General receives HCCH Secretary-General

UNION Attorney-General U Tun Tun Oo received Dr Christophe Bernasconi, the Secretary-General of the Asia and Pacific Region Branch of the Hague Conference on Private International

Law (HCCH), at his office in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

During the meeting, they discussed how private international law would assist the development of Myanmar's investment and trade sectors, cooperation between UAG Office and HCCH to develop the human resource necessary for handling international civil and trade lawsuits, and potential for Myanmar to join HCCH's conventions. —MNA ■

Union Attorney-General U Tun Tun Oo meets with Dr Christophe Bernasconi, the Secretary-General of the Asia and Pacific Region Branch of the Hague Conference on Private International Law yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

## Risk of old-age poverty in Germany increases: study

BERLIN — The risk of old-age poverty in Germany could “significantly” increase within the next 20 years, according to a study by the German Institute for Economic Research (DIW) and the Bertelsmann Foundation published on Thursday.

“Even if the labor market develops positively, we must expect an increase in old-age poverty in Germany over the next 20 years,” study author Johannes Geyer (DIW) told Xinhua.

Assuming a strong German labor market, the share of German pensioners at risk of poverty could still rise from

16.8 percent to 21.6 percent by 2039, according to DIW. The major risk groups would include singles and low-skilled workers.

In addition to policy measures to improve the employment situation of the risk groups, “specific reforms of the pension system are also needed to stop the increase in old-age poverty,” noted Christof Schiller, labor market expert at the Bertelsmann Foundation.

The study counted people with a monthly net income of less than 905 euros (998 U.S. dollars) as at risk of poverty.

The proportion of pension-

ers in Germany who would need government support to secure their living could rise from 9 percent to just under 12 percent by 2039, according to the study.

According to Bertelsmann, east German pensioners would be particularly affected by old-age poverty. The share of elderly people at risk would increase from 6.5 percent to just under 12 percent by 2039.

The new basic pension, which German Federal Labor Minister Hubertus Heil (SPD) plans to introduce in 2019, would not be “sufficiently on target,” Bertelsmann noted.—Xinhua ■



(FILE) German Chancellor Angela Merkel speaks during the Deutscher Arbeitgebertag congress, organised by the Confederation of German Employers' Associations (BDA) and gathering German employers in Berlin on November 22, 2018. **PHOTO: AFP**



FILE PHOTO: The Babcock International consortium said it will begin manufacturing the five Type 31 general-purpose frigates in 2021 and deliver them in 2027. **PHOTO: AFP**

## Britain awards £1.3bn warship contract to Babcock

LONDON — Britain on Thursday awarded a £1.3-billion (\$1.5-billion, 1.4 billion-euro) contract for its new fleet of warships to a UK firm that will keep jobs at historic but struggling yards.

The Babcock International consortium said it will begin manufacturing the five Type 31 general-purpose frigates in 2021 and deliver them in 2027.

The ships will be assembled in Scotland and involve supply chains throughout the UK.

“The UK is an outward-looking island nation and we need a shipbuilding industry and Royal Navy that reflect the importance of the seas to our security and

prosperity,” Prime Minister Boris Johnson said.

“I look forward to the restoration of British influence and excellence across the world's oceans.”

The contract delivers a potential boost to the under-threat Harland and Wolff shipyard in Belfast -- builder of the Titanic -- which entered into administration in August.

The Babcock consortium also includes Ferguson Marine Engineering — a Glasgow shipyard that was effectively nationalised by the Scottish government to save it from collapse.

“Arrowhead 140 will offer the Royal Navy a new class of ship with a proven ability to de-

liver a range of peacekeeping, humanitarian and war-fighting capabilities whilst offering communities and supply chains throughout the UK a wide range of economic and employment opportunities,” Babcock chief executive Archie Bethel said.

The UK shipbuilding industry has been in decline for decades due to growing competition from Asian rivals in places such as South Korea.

Britain's withdrawal from the European Union has further fuelled employment concerns.

Type 31 frigates are a smaller version of the Type 26 warships used by the navy today.

Each one is expected to cost around £250 million.—AFP ■



Saudi Arabia has been shouldering the burden of oil output cuts that came into effect in January, but other producers – notably Nigeria and Iraq – stand accused of exceeding their quotas. PHOTO: AFP

## Saudi raps oil producers over flouting of output cuts

ABU DHABI — OPEC kingpin Saudi Arabia urged oil producers on Thursday to comply with output cuts decided last year in a bid to stabilise a slumping oil market and support prices.

“Every country should live up to its commitments,” new Saudi Energy Minister Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman said as a committee of producers charged with monitoring the cuts and assessing the oil market opened talks.

Riyadh has been shouldering the burden of existing production cuts, but other nations — notably Nigeria and Iraq — are accused of exceeding their quotas.

Prince Abdulaziz told the Joint Ministerial Monitoring Committee (JMMC) meeting in Abu Dhabi that it was imperative to restore stability in the oil market where prices have slumped to below \$60 a barrel.

The 24-member OPEC and non-OPEC alliance decided last year to cut production by 1.2 million barrels per day (bpd) from January 2019, to boost prices after they fell by more than 40 per cent. The cuts were extended by nine months until the end of March but that move failed to invigorate the market.

Russian Energy Minister Al-

exander Novak said the OPEC+ alliance has managed in the past to “adapt and react to the changing market conditions.”

Novak, whose country is the largest producer in the group, said producers are determined to achieve stability in the oil market.

The JMMC does not take decisions but makes recommendations for action which will be considered by the full OPEC+ ministerial meeting in December.

The Saudi energy ministry said on Twitter that Prince Abdulaziz’s comment “underscores the key objective of the kingdom’s oil policy, which is to achieve market stability & stresses the importance of maintaining a high degree of cohesiveness among OPEC and non-OPEC producers, led by Russia.”

United Arab Emirates Energy Minister Suheil al-Mazrouei said on Sunday that the group will do whatever necessary to stabilise the market, and that further production cuts could be considered. However, he admitted the issue was not entirely in the hands of the world’s top producers, with the market no longer governed by supply but being influenced more by US-China trade tensions and geopolitical factors.—AFP ■

## Aussie PM defends Chinese-Australian ally over communist party ties

SYDNEY — Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison on Thursday staunchly defended a Hong Kong-born politician who is under mounting pressure over her links to the Chinese Communist Party.

Gladys Liu, the first Chinese-Australian woman elected to the country’s parliament, has been accused of being a member of organisations linked to China’s ruling party.

Public broadcaster ABC revealed that Liu was a member of several organisations linked to the United Front Work Department — a powerful group that promotes the party’s interests at home and overseas, including by recruiting ethnic Chinese abroad.

Liu initially claimed she could not remember being a member of one of those organisations, the China Overseas Exchange Association, but has now admitted she had previously held a role.

Morrison on Wednesday said Liu’s initial denial came in



Gladys Liu, the first Chinese-Australian woman elected to the country’s parliament, has been accused of being a member of organisations linked to China’s ruling party. PHOTO: AFP

a “clumsy interview” by a new member of parliament.

He levelled allegations of racism at critics, saying there was a “very grubby undertone” to the questions surrounding her alleged ties to a foreign government. “It is a ridiculous suggestion and I think it is an insult to every single Chinese-Australian in this country,” he told reporters in Canberra.

That was a charge angrily denied by the opposition Labor Party. “The only person linking these specific and serious concerns about Ms Liu to the entire Chinese-Australian population is Scott Morrison and he should stop,” said Malaysian-born Labor senator Penny Wong.

The Herald Sun reported that Morrison’s Liberal Party was warned about Liu’s activities by Australia’s spy agency ASIO before choosing her as a candidate for a fiercely contested seat with a large Chinese population.

She also admitted she had served as the honorary president of the United Chinese Commerce Association of Australia and the Australian Jiangmen General Commercial Association, but had since terminated her affiliations.

Australia recently adopted a series of measures to limit foreign interference in politics, after it emerged that both parties took money from a Beijing-connected billionaire who has now been banned from the country.—AFP

## Tonga PM, Pacific elder statesman, dead at 78



Tonga’s Prime Minister Akilisi Pohiva had suffered from ill health for several years. PHOTO: AFP

WELLINGTON — Tonga’s prime minister Akilisi Pohiva died in an Auckland hospital after years of ill health, New Zealand officials said Thursday, hailing the 78-year-old as a democratic

pioneer in the Pacific kingdom.

Pohiva was airlifted from Tonga on Wednesday to receive treatment for pneumonia, when his office issued a statement urging people to pray for him.

New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern said he died on Thursday morning.

“Pohiva was an elder statesman for the Pacific and a great friend to New Zealand,” she said.

“He will be remembered for his lifelong commitment to championing democracy.”

Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison said he was “terribly saddened” at Pohiva’s death.

“He was a passionate advocate for his people, for his beloved Tonga and our Pacific family,” Morrison tweeted.

Pohiva, a former history teacher, began his push for democracy in the mid-1970s, when Tonga was an absolute monarchy dominated by the royal family and nobles.—AFP ■

## Maori accuse Air NZ of cultural theft over ‘kia ora’ logo

WELLINGTON — Maori groups threatened to boycott Air New Zealand Thursday, accusing the airline of cultural theft over its attempt to trademark the masthead of its in-flight magazine Kia Ora.

The magazine’s title is an indigenous greeting commonly used by all New Zealanders and

the Maori Council said the Kiwi flag carrier had no right to trademark it.

“The words ‘kia ora’ are Maori and for them to be commercialised is a disgraceful act,” Maori Council spokesman Brent Reihana told TV3. “They’re two words that are synonymous not

just with Maori but with all of New Zealand. I don’t think it’s appropriate to take it into a commercial context.” Reihana said the council, a statutory body set up to advance indigenous interests, would call for a boycott unless Air New Zealand backed down. “The appropriation of culture has

never been right... Maori isn’t for sale,” he said. Air New Zealand said the trademark application was only for the magazine’s stylised Kia Ora logo, not for the phrase itself. “It’s standard corporate practice to have all our logos trademarked and we have just started the process given Kia

Ora has recently been through a refresh,” it said in a statement.

The airline added: “This is simply about protecting the logo.”

Reihana rejected the argument, saying the Maori words were an intrinsic part of the logo and granting a trademark implied ownership.—AFP ■

# Netanyahu says Israel “probably” start war in Gaza

JERUSALEM — Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said on Thursday that Israel “will probably have no choice” but to launch a war in Gaza to halt rocket fire at its southern part.

Speaking on Kan Bet Israel’s national radio four days before the parliamentary elections, Netanyahu said a war “would be the last option.” However, he said Israel “will probably have no choice but to set out on a full-scale military campaign, a war, against the terror forces in Gaza.”

The recent projectiles, including two rockets launched towards the southern city of Ashdod while Netanyahu was on a campaign rally there, were apparently fired by militants not affiliated with Hamas, an Islamist Palestinian movement that runs Gaza.

However, Netanyahu said he holds Hamas accountable for



FILE PHOTO: Likud party campaign material and posters of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu strewn on the floor following election night at the party’s Tel Aviv headquarters, 10 April, 2017. PHOTO: AFP

the fire, vowing to “bring down the Hamas regime in Gaza” in order to remove the threat of more rocket attacks.

The remarks came amidst

heightened tensions in the region. The last few weeks have seen several Palestinian rocket attacks and Israeli counter-attacks and airstrikes against Ha-

mas sites. Israel has been imposing a crippling blockade on the Gaza Strip since Hamas took over the coastal enclave in 2007.—Xinhua

# Johnson vows UK will be ready for no-deal Brexit

LONDON — Prime Minister Boris Johnson said Thursday Britain will be ready for a no-deal Brexit on 31 October despite his own government’s assessment warning that planning remained “at a low level”.

Johnson insisted the government had been “massively accelerating” its preparations for leaving the European Union without an agreement since the 2 August report, which was disclosed on Wednesday after MPs voted for its release.

He called the “Operation Yellowhammer” forecast, drawn up with input from various departments and which warned of possible civil unrest and shortages of food and medicines following no deal, a “worst case scenario”.

“All the industries that matter will be ready for a no-deal Brexit,” Johnson told reporters.



A government study warned of queues at British ports in the event of a no-deal Brexit. PHOTO: AFP

“What you’re looking at here is just the sensible preparations — the worst-case scenario — that you’d expect any government to do.”

The documents painted a grim picture of possible “public disorder and community ten-

sions” as well as logjams at Channel ports, threatening supplies, after a no-deal departure.

But Paul Carter, Conservative leader of the local authority in the southeast county of Kent where there are fears of such gridlock, agreed that Johnson’s

administration had made “real progress” in recent weeks.

“I’m pretty confident that we can avoid disruption in Kent,” he told the BBC.

But French Budget Minister Gerald Darmanin said he was “a bit worried about how the British are preparing”.

“You don’t re-create a border that hasn’t existed for several years... in just a few hours,” he said.

The Yellowhammer release has also fuelled fears among MPs that a disorderly divorce would be as calamitous as the documents warn. “It is unprecedented,” said MP Dominic Grieve, who was expelled from the ruling Conservatives last week for voting against the government over the issue.

“Even if we are ready for a no-deal Brexit, this is highly disruptive and costly.”—AFP ■

# S African police urge psychologists to intervene as murders rise

CAPE TOWN — Fifty-eight people were killed each day on average in South Africa last year, police said Thursday, urging the help of experts to understand why so many murders are committed by friends and relatives.

A total of 21,022 people were murdered between April 2018 and March 2019, a rise of 1.4 percent over the same months between 2017 and 2018.

“A very high number of people are murdered by the people that they know,” police minister Bheki Cele told lawmakers in Cape Town, adding that this made it difficult “to police such cases”.

He said the government had called on the help of sociologists and psychologists to understand why so many people were killed by family members, neighbours and lovers.

Most of the murders were carried out with guns, knives and other sharp instruments.

Another concerning figure showed that 1014 of the victims were children, 29 more than during the previous 12 months.

“Some of these murders of children are committed by other children,” Major General Norman Sekhukhune said, adding that around 736 of those were

committed by children under the age of 18.

Presenting the figures to parliament, Sekhukhune said alcohol and drugs were major influencers.

More than half of the murders were committed over weekends between 9 pm and 3 am, he added. South Africa’s murder rate has climbed steadily over the past six years.—AFP ■

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### 12 missing after coal laden vessel sinks in Bangladesh

DHAKA — Twelve people were missing after a coal laden vessel sank off southeastern Bangladesh Thursday, authorities said.

The vessel, carrying 1,100 metric tonnes of coal, sank near a gas field in the Bay of Bengal Thursday morning with 12 people onboard.

The Sangu gas field is located some 35 km southwest of Bangladesh’s seaport city Chattogram, some 242 km away of capital Dhaka.

Mahbub Rashid, executive director of Water Transport Cell, told journalists that the vessel’s engine went out of order and it capsized at around 10:00 am (local time) amid inclement weather.

A crack was developed in the Dhaka-bound vessel “Hira Parbat-8” and it eventually sank. All 12 crew members had been missing since then, Rashid said.

A massive search for the ill-fated crew members is under way, he added. Bangladesh Coast Guard and Bangladesh Navy personnel are working jointly to rescue the missing sailors, said the official.—Xinhua

### Egypt releases 712 prisoners on feast occasion

CAIRO — Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah al-Sisi announced on Thursday a presidential pardon for 237 prisoners, the interior ministry reported in a statement on its Facebook official page.

The Prison Sector of the Egyptian Ministry of Interior has also conditionally released 475 prisoners, the statement said.

The decree came on the occasion of the Islamic Sacrifice Feast came in early August.

Usually, the president issues a decree for pardoning prisoners on public holidays and feasts, including two religious Muslims feasts, holy month of Ramadan and the 23 July Revolution anniversary.—Xinhua



Chinese Commerce Ministry spokesman Gao Feng. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

## China says firms making inquiries into US farm goods

BEIJING — China's Commerce Ministry said Thursday that Chinese firms have begun to make inquiries about resuming purchases of US agricultural goods, a day after Washington offered an olive branch by delaying a planned tariff hike on Chinese imports.

"We welcome the goodwill action released by the US side," Chinese Commerce Ministry spokesman Gao Feng said at a weekly press briefing, adding that the Chinese inquiries include US soybeans, corn and pork.

Chinese companies suspended purchases of US farm products last month as a retaliatory measure against US President Donald Trump's plan to raise tariffs further on Chinese imports amid a prolonged trade war between the two countries.

—Kyodo News ■

## Iconic Okura hotel in Tokyo reopens main building before Olympics

TOKYO — A luxury hotel in central Tokyo known for the Okura lobby much loved by visitors for its classic Japanese ambience reopened its main building Thursday after four years of construction ahead of the Olympic and Paralympic Games next year in Japan.

The Okura Tokyo has reused much of the original decor from its old main building's lobby, which was considered a Japanese modernist masterpiece, for its new lobby area.

"I challenged myself not only to recreate the lobby my father created, but to make it even greater," Yoshio Taniguchi, the 81-year-old designer of the new hotel building, said in a statement. He is the eldest son of the hotel lobby's

original architect, Yoshiro Taniguchi.

The hotel, previously known as Hotel Okura Tokyo, first opened its doors in 1962, two years before the 1964 Tokyo Olympics. Its main building was closed in 2015 and then demolished, with an annex remaining open during construction.

The new lobby area features an assortment of original furnishings including ceiling lanterns shaped like ornamental beads and sets of tables and chairs assembled to resemble plum blossoms.

"The Okura Tokyo will endeavor to create a hotel beloved by all through providing the newest services and functions with the traditional beauty and Japanese spirit cultivated over the years by Okura,"



Photo shows The Okura Tokyo. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

the hotel's general manager, Shinji Umehara, said in a statement. Tokyo Gov. Yuriko Koike, Hotel Okura Co. President Toshihiro Ogita, Taniguchi and others cut a red tape in front of the main entrance to

celebrate the landmark event, which was attended by Princess Takamado, the widow of former Emperor Akihito's late cousin. The princess was then escorted into the hotel as the first guest, where she

joined others enjoying a Noh performance in the main lobby.

The two newly constructed Okura Tokyo buildings replace the original main 17-story hotel. —Kyodo News ■

**MYANMA TIMBER ENTERPRISE  
EXPORT MARKETING & MILLING DEPARTMENT  
INVITATION FOR OPEN TENDER**

1. MYANMA TIMBER ENTERPRISE WILL SELL TEAK & HARDWOOD ROUND LOGS AND SAWN TIMBERS BY OPEN TENDERS IN US DOLLARS. PARTICULARS OF THE OPEN TENDER SALES ARE AS FOLLOWS:

(a) DATE & TIME

- (26-9-2019) (09:00) (EX-SITE/YANGON)HARDWOOD LOG ONLY (27-9-2019) (09:)A.M
- YANGON & EX-SITE TEAK/HARDWOOD (LOG AND CONVERSION) (30-9-2019) (12:00)Noon
- YANGON TEAK LOG ONLY

(b) COMMODITIES & VOLUME

- TEAK LOGS ABOUT (1130) TONS
- THIRD QUALITY & UP TEAK CONVERSION ABOUT (386)TONS (EXPORT MARKETING & MILLING DEPARTMENT)
- THIRD QUALITY & UP TEAK CONVERSION ABOUT (192) TONS (WOOD BASED INDUSTRIES DEPARTMENT)
- PADAUK, PYINKADO, IN, KANYIN, THITYAR, INGYIN, HTAUK KYANT, THIT MAGYI, SAGWA, TAUNGPEINNE ABOUT (16704) TONS
- HARDWOOD LOGS (INCLUDING 2018-2019 EXTRACTION YEAR)
- TAW WIN HALL, GYOGONE, INSEIN TOWNSHIP, YANGON.

(c) PLACE

2. FOR FURTHER DETAILED INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT MYANMA TIMBER ENTERPRISE HEAD OFFICE AND ALSO VISIT MYANMA TIMBER ENTERPRISE WEB-SITE (www.mte.com.mm)  
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Corner of Mahabandoola Road & Thein Phyu Road,  
Botahtaung Township, Yangon,  
The Republic of the Union of Myanmar.  
Dated 13 September 2019 hh@kcyangon.com

**CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE**  
M.V MAERSK WESTPORT VOY. NO. (935S)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V MAERSK WESTPORT VOY. NO. (935S) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 13-09-2019 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T.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

**CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE**  
M.V OCEAN PROBE VOY. NO. (023N/S)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V OCEAN PROBE VOY. NO. (023N/S) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 13-09-2019 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.P where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

**SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT  
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY  
AGENT FOR: M/S CONTINENTAL SHIPPING  
LINE PTE LTD**

Phone No: 2301185

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

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

**SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT  
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY  
AGENT FOR: M/S BEN LINE AGENCIES  
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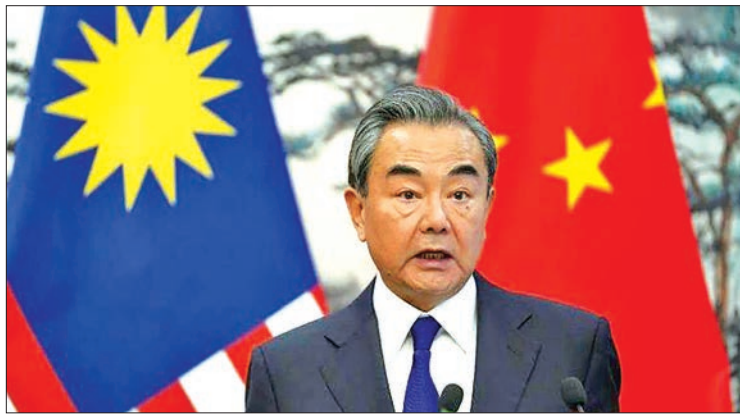
Phone No: 2301928

## China urges US to 'make efforts' on North Korea

BEIJING—Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi called on the United States on Thursday to make efforts to resolve the North Korean nuclear issue, warning that applying “maximum pressure” would never work.

Wang also repeated Beijing's suggestion that the United Nations Security Council should consider discussions on easing sanctions against the North.

The isolated regime is under heavy US and UN sanctions over its weapons programme, and has criticised Washington's position that they will not be lifted until the country gives up its



Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi said that imposing a list of conditions on North Korea or seeking concessions through maximum pressure would never work. **PHOTO: AFP**

nuclear arsenal. “Since last year, the DPRK has taken a series of positive measures, and on these grounds requested the US to

meet halfway and make a positive response,” Wang told reporters, using the initials of North Korea's official name.

“We think this is fair and reasonable. We hope that the US side can also take practical measures in this regard, and make due efforts to ease the situation and promote dialogue,” he said, after meeting Malaysian Foreign Minister Saifuddin Bin Abdullah.

Pyongyang said this week it was willing to hold working-level talks on denuclearisation this month with the United States. —AFP ■

## Beijing to exit 200 most polluted cities list

BEIJING — Beijing's notoriously bad air quality has improved in recent years and the Chinese capital is expected to drop out of a list of 200 most polluted cities in the world this year, a data provider said Thursday.

Beijing “is on track” to reduce PM2.5 — tiny particles that are the deadliest air pollutants — by nearly 20 percent this year compared to 2018, Swiss air purification technology company IQAir's research arm AirVisual said.

The average hourly PM2.5 readings in the smog-choked Chinese capital fell to 42.6 micrograms per cubic metre of air in the first eight months of 2019, down from 52.8 for the same period last year.

“Compared to a decade earlier, the difference is even more striking,” the report said. “The PM2.5 concentration in the first eight months of 2019 was less than half that of the same period in 2009.”

The annual average PM2.5 concentration reached an eye-watering 104.0 in 2010. It began a steady decline in 2013.

But the current levels are still four times higher than those recommended by the World Health Organization.

The tiny particulate matter can lodge deep in the lungs and cause respiratory ailments, lung cancer and cardiovascular diseases.

Beijing was ranked 122 among the most polluted cities in the world in 2018, according to a March report by environmental group Greenpeace and AirVisual's data.

The improvements in air quality were driven by the city's strict push to trim coal consumption and shut down or relocate polluting plants, the Beijing municipal government said in a February statement. —AFP ■

## Japan's new environment minister wants to scrap nuclear power

TOKYO — Japan's newly appointed environment minister has said he wants to “scrap” nuclear power plants, warning of the need to avoid a repeat of the 2011 Fukushima nuclear disaster.

The comments from Shinjiro Koizumi, a rising political star and son of former Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi, are his first on the controversial issue since he was named in a cabinet reshuffle Wednesday.

Speaking late Wednesday

night, he appeared to echo his father's post-Fukushima anti-nuclear stance.

“I would like to think about how we can scrap it, not how to retain it,” he told reporters when asked about the government's plans for nuclear power.

“We'll be finished if we let (a nuclear accident) occur twice in one country. We never know when we'll have an earthquake,” he added, without specifying further.—AFP ■



Japan's newly appointed Environment Minister Shinjiro Koizumi is a rising political star and son of former Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi. **PHOTO: AFP**

## Indonesia forest fires surge, stoking global warming fears

PEKANBARU — The number of blazes in Indonesia's rainforests has jumped sharply, satellite data showed Thursday, spreading smog across Southeast Asia

and adding to concerns about the impact of increasing wildfire outbreaks worldwide on global warming.

Illegal blazes to clear land

for agricultural plantations have been raging on Sumatra and Borneo islands, with Indonesia deploying water-bombing helicopters and thousands of security forces to tackle them.

It is just the latest such outbreak worldwide — huge blazes have torn through the Amazon in South America while bushfires are sweeping across eastern Australia in an unusually ferocious and early start to the wildfire season.

Indonesia's forest fires are an annual problem but have been worsened this year by particularly dry weather, and in recent

days sent toxic smog floating over Malaysia and triggered a diplomatic row.

The number of “hotspots” — areas of intense heat detected by satellite which indicate a high chance of fire — jumped sharply in Indonesia on Wednesday, according to the Singapore-based Asean Specialised Meteorological Centre.

There were 1,619 hotspots detected on the Indonesian part of Borneo and Sumatra up from 861 a day earlier, according to a tally from the centre, which monitors forest fires and smog outbreaks.—AFP ■



A member of Manggala Agni (forest fire brigade) tries to extinguish peatland fires at a palm plantation in Pekanbaru, Riau province, Indonesia, 4 September, 2019. **PHOTO: AFP**

## On Hanoi's Red River, fruit sellers forgo comfort for cash

HANOI — Card games and karaoke help migrant workers pass the time on the cramped houseboats of Hanoi's Red River, swapping their privacy to eke out a living selling fruit for a few dollars a day.

Temporary residents of

these open-air boats have left the countryside in search of higher wages in the city.

Life on a floating guesthouse can be tough.

There is no electricity and no running water for the 40 US cents (RM1.6) a night

rent.

Everyone sleeps on thin mats, exposed to the elements inside the open-sided boats, while privacy is non-existent with mosquito nets the only partitions between cramped living quarters.

But the migrant workers can earn up to US\$8 (RM33) a day selling bananas, mangoes, dragon fruit and lemons on the back of bikes or in the market stalls of Viet Nam's bustling capital.

That's four times what

Nguyen Thi Hong earned at a rural garment factory.

“I couldn't earn enough money to raise my kids,” she said, explaining that her three children are back home with their father in Ba Vi, 60km from Hanoi. —AFP ■

# L.L. Town Tharkayta Building B opens in Yangon

F & P opened “L.L.Town Thakayata Building B (First Phase Construction)”, which is the first logistics facility with refrigerated and cold storage in Yangon City, on 12 September, 2019.

L.L. Town is a logistics lifeline that supports the lives of local communities.

FLP Thakayta Co, Ltd (“FLP”), subsidiary real estate development company of the Japanese Fukuda & Partners Co Ltd (F&P) started the real-estate development of a multi-functional facilities for logistics and commercial office use in the Thakayta Township.

Fukuda & Partners Co, Ltd (“F&P”) is a Japanese company engaged in project management of architectural designs and constructions for logistics and commercial facilities. Over 130 distinguished guests were invited to the opening ceremony from the Embassy of Japan in Myanmar; the Japan Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Myanmar and other related companies, as well as the construction companies, tenants, stake holders, and related parties of the Tharkayta Industrial Park. Managing Director Fukuda, who represents



Officials cut ribbons at the opening ceremony. PHOTO: PHOE KHWAR

FLP, addressed to the guests that “There were many issues while developing this building. Today, this logistics facility is completed by overcoming such hardships. We have received support and guidance from many people both in Japan and Myanmar to make this possible. I deeply appreciate everyone’s support.”

“L.L. Town Tharkayta” is a multi-functional facility composed of three buildings, Building A, B and C, consisting of a total land area of approximately

9,095.6 m<sup>2</sup> and a total floor area of approximately 10,081 m<sup>2</sup>. In the next stage, Building C is scheduled to be completed and operational by February 2020 and Building A will be operational by September 2020. The services of these three multi-functional buildings will be expanded to include “three-temperature zone cold storage,” “commercial office,” “stores,” “training and educational centres,” and “rental conference rooms.”

“L.L. Town Tharkayta” is lo-

cated on the highway route from the Thilawa Industrial Park (an area developed by public-private partnership of Japan and Myanmar) to the central part of Yangon City and has the function of transferring supplies from the production / import / export base to large consumer city, Yangon. In addition, the office to be added is close to the centre of the Yangon for high convenience.

With these functions, this facility is expected to become the “transportation hub between

the Japanese and Myanmar public-private enterprises” through logistic distribution.

F & P has closed its Asia office in Singapore in March 2019, and relocated it to Thakayta Township, Yangon City in July of 2019.

Managing Director Fukuda stated that “F&P will contribute to the economic development and expansion of employment in Myanmar through cooperation and collaboration with Myanmar companies while keeping pace with the Japan and Myanmar relations. Business development in Myanmar is also one of the SDG (Sustainable Development Goals) initiatives we aim for.

The F&P Group strive to develop the community through delivering “Goods” and “Information” through “L.L. Town Tharkayta” which is the lifeline to the “Community” and “Peoples” lives”.

At the end of the ceremony, Managing Director Fukuda quoted, “We will continue to develop this facility to be treasured by the community for the lasting future. We request your continued understanding and support for our future endeavours.” —GNLM ■

## Chinese-made electric bus fleet joins Cali, Colombia mass transit system



A driver stands in front of a Chinese-made electric bus ready to leave for Cali at a bus station in Yumbo, Colombia, Sept. 10, 2019.

PHOTO: XINHUA

CALI (Colombia) — A fleet of Chinese-made electric and gas-powered buses Tuesday joined the mass transit system in Cali, the third largest city in Colombia.

A ceremony to inaugurate the 26 electric and 21 gas-powered buses drew officials from the government and mass trans-

it system, including Cali Mayor Maurice Armitage, who hailed the event as “a step in the right direction” for sustainable urban development in Cali.

“While Cali does not have the degree of pollution that cities like Medellin and Bogota have, purchasing these vehicles is the first step towards

establishing an ecological city and preventing (environmental) deterioration,” said Armitage.

The city plans to introduce more electric buses in the near future, he added.

“These first 26 electric buses are the pride of Cali. Another 110 buses will arrive in a month and a half, and we will seek to close the bidding on another 300 buses by the end of the year,” said Armitage.

Eduardo Bellini, manager of “Blanco y Negro Masivo” (Black and White Mass Transit), a private transportation operator that works for the city’s mass transit system, said the new vehicles his company bought from Chinese firm Sunwin are designed with features to improve riding experience.

“These are very comfortable zero-pollution buses that are easy to access for passengers, with low, comfortable platforms and air-conditioning,” said Bellini.—Xinhua ■

## ECB unveils hotly-awaited stimulus package

FRANKFURT — European Central Bank governors overcame divisions Thursday to agree a “big bang” package of monetary easing measures, aiming to support the eurozone economy through external shocks but prompting a howl of complaints from the White House. A key interest rate deeper into negative territory, new net purchases of government and corporate debt and support to struggling banks were all agreed at the Frankfurt meeting, a spokeswoman said.

With lower rates, ECB policymakers “are trying, and succeeding, in depreciating the Euro against the VERY strong dollar, hurting US exports,” US President Donald Trump complained in a tweet soon after the decision.

The moves mean ECB president Mario Draghi, who will yield his seat to departing International Monetary Fund chairwoman Christine Lagarde on October 31, has set the tone

for her first months — and possibly years — in office, although he will chair a final meeting next month. “The final showdown has started with a big bang. The ECB just announced a big policy package to revive the Eurozone economy and to bring inflation back to target,” said ING analyst Carsten Brzeski. Looking in more detail at the measures, the interest rate on banks’ deposits with the ECB will drop to -0.5 percent, from -0.4 previously.

Negative rates mean lenders pay the central bank to park their cash in Frankfurt. Meanwhile the ECB left its two other headline rates unchanged, and said that all three would remain at present or lower levels “until it has seen the inflation outlook robustly converge” towards its just-below-two-percent target. The “forward guidance” on rates abandons previous language naming mid-2020 as the earliest possible date for a rate hike.—AFP ■

## AFC U-16 Championship Qualifiers: Myanmar to meet Asian powerhouse South Korea

THE Myanmar U-16 boys football team will face Asian powerhouse South Korea next week in the Group K match of the Asian Football Confederation's (AFC) U-16 Championship 2020 Qualifiers, which are scheduled to take place at the Thuwunna Stadium in Yangon.

Myanmar has been placed in Group K for the tourney with South Korea, Thailand, and Chinese Taipei. Myanmar will play against Thailand on 18 September, South Korea on 20 September, and Chinese Taipei

on 22 September. The 2020 AFC U-16 Championship qualification, organized by the Asian Football Confederation, is an international under-16 football competition in Asia, which will decide the participating teams in the 2020 AFC U-16 Championship.

A total of 16 qualified teams will advance to the 2020 AFC U-16 Championship, which is usually held once every two years for Asian under-16 teams, that also serves as a qualification tournament for the FIFA U-17 World Cup.—Lynn Thit (Tgi) ■



The Myanmar U-16 boys football team sing the national anthem during an international match against Timor Leste on 29 July, 2018. **PHOTO: MFF**

## Eriksen is happy to remain with Spurs insists Pochettino

LONDON — Mauricio Pochettino insists Christian Eriksen is happy to stay with Tottenham after the Denmark midfielder failed to get a move during the transfer window.

Eriksen admitted last season that he was interested in a new challenge, sparking talk of a potential move to Real Madrid, Barcelona or Manchester United.

Tottenham boss Pochettino conceded several times he was unsure where Eriksen's future lay and the Argentine opted to leave his playmaker out of the starting line-up twice in the early weeks of the season.

But when the European transfer window closed recently, Eriksen remained with Tottenham, even though he is entering the final year of his contract with

the Premier League club.

Asked on Thursday how Eriksen's mood was now, Pochettino told reporters: "He's happy. He was always happy. He never said he wasn't happy here.

"Everyone of course has aims, goals, challenges. I told you before the Arsenal game he was in his right mind and that's why I played him.

"Always he was an impor-

tant player for us. In our sixth season, we've always appreciated him a lot.

"His qualities are there and important for the team. He's happy and if we believe he deserves to play then he's going to play.

"It's not because he has less than one year on his contract we're going to take a different decision. All decisions are based on performance."—AFP ■

## Myanmar International Series 2019: Thet Htar Thuzar advances to quarter finals

THE third-day badminton events for the Myanmar International Series 2019 were held yesterday at the National Badminton Stadium in Yangon. The day ended with a win for Myanmar badminton star Thet Htar Thuzar, and losses for other Myanmar players. Thet Htar Thuzar beat Saranporn Pornpattamongkol of Thailand 21-10 and 21-14 in the women's singles.

With the win, Thet Htar Thuzar has advanced to the quarter final, where she will meet Samiya Imad Farooqui of India. The match has been scheduled today at the same venue. In another match in the women's singles, Benyapa Aimsaard of Thailand beat Thin Thin San of Myanmar 21-7 and 21-5. Meanwhile, PC Thulasi of India beat Thwe Tar Oo of Myanmar 21-11 and 21-10.

In the mixed doubles, Chun Hsien Yang and Wang Yu Qiao of Taiwan beat Ye Ye Lwin (Myanmar) and Kai Fuk Leung (England) by 21-7 and 21-15.

Meanwhile, Paramet Promsarin and Pitchayanin Unga of Thailand beat Hein Si Thu Toe and Twe Tar Oo of Myanmar by 19-21, 21-17, and 21-13.

The fourth day matches of the series will take place today at the National Badminton Stadium in Yangon.—Lynn Thit (Tgi) ■

## Two arrested in transfer fraud raids in Belgium, Monaco, London



Police conduct raids in London, Monaco and Belgium linked to Serbia's striker Aleksandar Mitrovic's transfer to Newcastle United. **PHOTO: AFP**

BRUSSELS — Police investigating suspected fraud linked to the transfer of Serbia striker Aleksandar Mitrovic to Newcastle United have made seven raids in Belgium, Monaco and London,

arresting two people including an agent, officials said Wednesday.

Under the direction of a Belgian anti-corruption judge, police and tax officials made seven raids on Tuesday and Wednesday, de-

taining an agent in Monaco and his assistant in the Belgian city of Liege.

Eric Van Duyse, spokesman for the Belgian Federal Prosecutor's Office, told AFP that two

men were being held after being indicted for "money laundering, forgery and the use of forgeries, private corruption and criminal conspiracy".

He refused to reveal their identities but a judicial source confirmed the agent was Belgian Christophe Henrotay, who is based in the Principality. He was indicted by a Belgian judge who had travelled down to Monaco.

The probe, which earlier this year saw the Belgian FA headquarters searched, is looking into suspected money-laundering related to transfers including Mitrovic's 18.5 million euro (13 million pound) move from Anderlecht to St James' Park in 2015.

Henrotay is one of the top football agents in Belgium. His clients include Belgian internationals Thibaut Courtois, the Real Madrid goalkeeper, and winger Yannick Carrasco.

A source close to the inquiry told AFP that Henrotay is suspected of taking illegal kickbacks in connection with another transfer.—AFP ■