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Tuesday, 8 October 2019

UEC, sub-commissions hold series of electoral coord meetings



Chairman of the Union Election Commission U Hla Thein delivers the speech at the launching of Electoral Coordination Meetings between the Union Election Commission and sub-commissions in Nay Pyi Taw. PHOTO: MNA

THE Union Election Commission (UEC) initiated a series of coordination meetings between the UEC and sub commissions with a launch ceremony at Grand Amara Hotel, Nay Pyi Taw, yesterday.

A collaboration with the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES), the meetings will take place from 7 to 10 October.

During that time, partici-

pants will discuss implementation of the strategic plan for effectively organizing the 2020 General Elections, reviewing electoral data, cybersecurity, organizing multi sectoral meetings, compiling mechanisms for coordination committees, and establishing a case tracking system.

UEC Chairman U Hla Thein first spoke at the opening ceremony. He said they are

implementing action plans in a designated timeline to ensure the strategic plan for the 2020 General Elections is successfully carried out.

He said the monitoring group has to regularly give updates to the commission so it can make informed decisions and the sub commissions need to make systematic reports on the tasks assigned to them.

U Hla Thein said the elec-

tions are based on the information of previous organized elections and shares it publicly through its website and other means. He said the gradual integration into an e-Government system will open opportunities for potential cyberattacks and this is why it is paramount to understand cyber policies and guidelines to counteract perceived attacks.

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Union Minister U Kyaw Tint Swe inaugurates Myanmar Embassy in Havana

UNION Minister for the Office of the State Counsellor of Myanmar U Kyaw Tint Swe as Special Envoy of the Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar paid an official visit to the Republic of Cuba from 2 to 5 October 2019.

During the visit, he called on Mr. Roberto Morales Ojeda, Vice President of the Councils of State and Ministers of the Republic of Cuba at the Palace of the Revolution on 3 October and had the meetings with Mr. Jose Angel Portal Miranda, Minister of Public Health of Cuba, and Mr. Bruno Eduardo Rodriguez Parrilla, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Cuba, at their offices on 3 October and 4 October, respectively.

At the meeting with the Vice-President, they cordially discussed matters pertaining to the political and economic developments in Myanmar and Cuba and promotion of bilateral relations and cooperation between the two countries especially in the area of health. The Union Minister also informed the Vice-President that after his visit to Cuba last year, the Embassy of Myanmar has recently been established in Havana and the launch of the Myanmar Embassy establishment would take place on 4 October 2019.

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UEC, sub-commissions hold series of electoral coord meetings

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The UEC Chairman said holding regular meetings with all relevant personnel will allow for better understanding of a region's issues and help allocate electoral assistance. He determines that the formation of the successive election coordination committees helped reduce the number of disputes in the recent by-elections.

U Hla Thein said it is important for all members of the committee to be unbiased and for the process to follow legal procedures. He said using a case tracking system will make recording information easier and be more appealing to the public. He urged everyone to wisely use the technology provided by IFES in implementing the system.

Afterwards, the UEC Chairman took a documentary photo with attendees and commenced the first day of the meetings. The opening ceremony was attended by members and staff of the UEC and its office, officials from the regions/states sub-commissions and IFES. — MNA

(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

Union Minister U Thein Swe receives French Ambassador



Union Minister for Labour, Immigration and Population U Thein Swe meets with Ambassador of France Mr. Christian Lechervy in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

UNION Minister for Labour, Immigration and Population U Thein Swe received the Ambassador of France to Myanmar, Mr Christian Lechervy, at the former's office in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning.

During the meeting, they discussed the immigration procedures of Myanmar, French investments, activities of the

French Myanmar Chamber of Commerce and Industry, employment of local staff in French companies in Myanmar, capacity-building and safety measures for the labours, drawing labour law with the assistance of ILO and the discussion of minimum wages among the government, the employers and the employees.

They also exchanged views on issuing e-Visa for the visiting French people to Myanmar; implementation of Unique ID for each citizen, digitalization of national ID cards and assistance of France in immigration and security checks in the country. — MNA

(Translated by Aung Khin)

MP to issue new postage stamps to celebrate World Post Day

MYANMAR Post (MP) under the Ministry of Transport and Communications will issue a special postage stamps of K200 denomination to commemorate the 145th anniversary of World Post Day. The special stamp will go on sale at 9:30 am from 9 October (11th waxing of Thadingyut 1381 ME) at all

post offices in the states and regions.

As a special programme, the Central Post Office of Nay Pyi Taw, the Yangon General Post Office, and the Mandalay General Post Office will stamp the postmark and date on the commemorative stamps and First Day Covers purchased

on 9 October. The commemorative stamps and First Day Covers will also be stamped the postmark and date at the Office No 2 of the Ministry to celebrate 145th anniversary of World Post Day ceremony on 9 October. — MNA

(Translated by TTN)

Union Supreme Court sits to pass judgment and hears (Certiorari) civil and criminal cases

CHIEF Justice of the Union U Htun Htun Oo, Supreme Court judges U Myo Tint and U Soe Naing of Special Appellate Bench sat at Union Supreme Court room number 1 yesterday morn-

ing and passed judgment on one (Certiorari) criminal case and four (Certiorari) civil cases. It also heard one (Certiorari) criminal case and four (Certiorari) civil cases. — MNA

First Mandalay Gems Emporium aims to sell 5,000 jade lots

THE first gems emporium in Mandalay will be displaying about 5,000 jade lots for sale and will be held from 23 to 29 October at Mandalay Convention Center; said U Aung Win Oo, Secretary-3 of the Mandalay Gems & Jewellery Entrepreneurs Association.

"This emporium will be conducted in Myanmar currency," said U Aung Win Oo, "We started accepting jade lots on 28 September and we will continue to accept more as long as space exists. Also, the emporium in Nay Pyi Taw asked for 18.5 per cent tax but this emporium only asks for 13 per cent." Organized by the regional government and

managed by Myanmar Gems and Jewellery Entrepreneurs Association, sellers will have to pay 13 per cent of sales while buyers have to pay 5 per cent. Officials say they are negotiating with government departments to further lower the rates and the sales will be conducted in an open tender system.

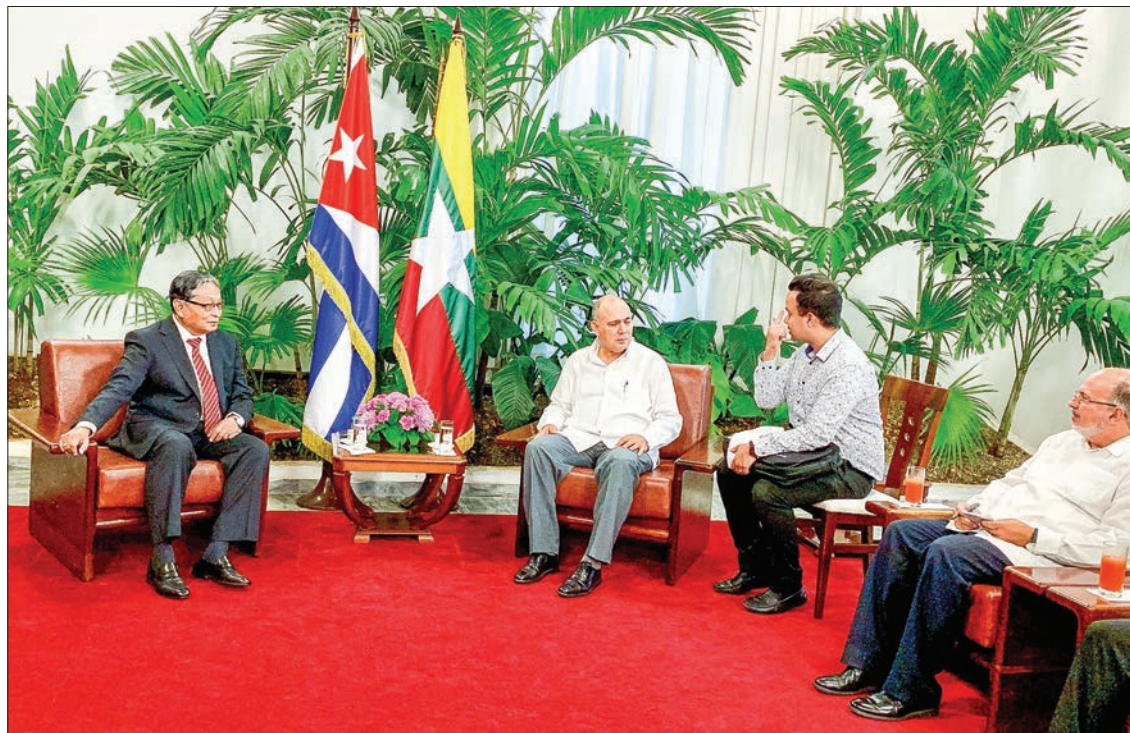
The floor price for both unrefined and refined jade lots is K1 million. Sellers will be able to display lots up to 1,000 kilos and have to submit their wares in metal cases. — Khine Sett Wai

(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

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Union Minister U Kyaw Tint Swe meets with Mr Roberto Morales Ojeda, Vice President of the Councils of State and Ministers of the Republic of Cuba, at the Palace of the Revolution on 3 October. PHOTO: MNA



Union Minister for the Office of the State Counsellor of Myanmar U Kyaw Tint Swe delivers the speech at the reception to launch the official establishment of Myanmar Embassy in Havana on 4 October 2019. PHOTO: MNA

Union Minister U Kyaw Tint Swe inaugurates Myanmar Embassy in Havana

FROM PAGE-1

The Union Minister and the Minister of Public Health discussed ways and opportunities to enhance cooperation in health sector, particularly in the areas of pharmaceutical industry, human resource development and research. At the meeting with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the two Ministers exchanged views on further consolidating the traditional ties of friendly relations and cooperation, promoting trade and economic

official establishment of Myanmar Embassy in Havana and gave remarks. In his remarks, he stressed that the establishment of Myanmar Embassy reflects the importance of how Myanmar attached her relationship with Cuba and signifies wide opening of windows of opportunities for promotion of bilateral cooperation, trade and investment between the two countries. Mr. Rogelio Sierra Diaz, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Cuba also delivered remarks. Officials from the Min-

The establishment of Myanmar Embassy reflects the importance of how Myanmar attached her relationship with Cuba ...

cooperation between the two countries as well as in the health sector, enhancing contacts between Myanmar and Cuba and the Myanmar Government's efforts to achieve peace, stability and national reconciliation in Rakhine State. He expressed his appreciation to the Minister and officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Cuba for their support in establishing Myanmar Embassy in Havana.

In the evening of 4 October 2019, the Union Minister attended the reception to launch the

istry of Foreign Affairs of Cuba and Ambassadors and Heads of Missions of ASEAN member countries and diplomatic corps in Havana attended the event.

The establishment of Myanmar Embassy in Havana will further consolidate the relations and cooperation between the two countries as well as promoting cooperation with the countries in the Caribbean region.

The Union Minister and the delegation left Havana on 5 October 2019, according to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.— MNA

MADB expands loans for 8 strong demand crops

THE Myanmar Agriculture Development Bank under the Ministry of Planning and Finance will give loans for the strong demand crops under eight categories in 2019-2020 FY, in addition to the existing 14 items of agricultural produce.

The new scheme will cover four beans (haricot bean, lablab bean, rice bean and green bean); two crops edible oil (flaxseeds and sunflower seeds), and two kitchen crops (onion and chili). The loans

for these crops will be given commencing this winter at K 100,000 per acre like other crops.

To support the small-scaled farmers, the government increased to this amount from K20,000 per acre in 2017-2018 FY and K50,000 per acre in 2018-2019 FY respectively, while the loan for paddy was increased to K150,000 per acre from K100,000 per acre in 2016-2017 FY.—MNA

(Translated by Aung Khin)

Deputy Minister Dr Mya Lay Sein to attend sports ministers meeting in Philippines

DEPUTY Minister for Health and Sports Dr Mya Lay Sein left Yangon International Airport yesterday morning to attend the 5th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Sports (5th AMMS) and the related meetings in the Philippines.

She was seen off at the airport by officials from the Department of Sports and Physical Education.

In the Philippines, the Deputy Minister will attend the 1st ASEAN Plus Japan Meeting on Women and Sports and the 2nd ASEAN Plus Japan Senior Officials Meeting on Sports (2nd SOMS+ Japan) on 8 October, and the 5th AMMS



Deputy Minister Dr Mya Lay Sein seen off at the Yangon International Airport by officials from the Department of Sports and Physical Education yesterday. PHOTO: MNA

on the following day. —MNA

(Translated by Aung Khin)

MRTV marks completion of broadcasting equipment installation

THE Myanmar Radio and Television has completed the Broadcasting Equipment Installation with the official development assistance grants of the Japan International Cooperation Agency - JICA yesterday.

The launching ceremony on completion of broadcasting equipment in MRTV was held at Studio 1 of MRTV on Pyay Road in Yangon yesterday morning. The ceremony was attended by Union Minister for Information Dr Pe Myint, Yangon Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein, Deputy Minister U Aung Hla Tun, departmental heads of MoI and officials from NHK Technologies Inc., Sumitomo Corporation, Toda Corporation, NEC Corporation and Panasonic Corporation, which contributed in the ODA grants of JICA.

In his welcoming remark, Union Minister Dr Pe Myint appraised the years-long friendly relationship and broadcast media cooperation among other



Union Minister Dr Pe Myint delivers the opening speech at the launching ceremony on completion of Broadcasting Equipment Installation in Myanmar Radio and Television in Yangon yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

assistance which included training programmes for enabling MRTV staff to develop their programme production skills and to enhance the quality of the broadcast content of MRTV.

The fourth project was the expansion of MRTV's broadcasting equipment which has been installed and in operation.

The Union Minister also

explained their contribution in public service project of Myanmar.

Then, a video clip on the installation and expansion of equipment was shown.

Yangon Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein and Deputy Minister U Aung Hla Tun presented gifts to the officials from NHK Technologies Inc.,

Sumitomo Corporation, Toda Corporation, NEC Corporation, and Panasonic Corporation that contributed in the project together with JICA.

Then, the use of visual studio system equipment was demonstrated before MoI's Permanent Secretary U Myo Myint Maung received the project document presented

by Mr. Kazuyuki TAKIMI and Mr. Masayuki KARASAWA.

The demonstration of live broadcast was conducted among MRTV's studio in Yangon, the headquarters in Nay Pyi Taw (Tatkon) and the People's Park in Yangon.

The newly installed equipment in this project are similar to the system, quality and design of the NHK studio in Japan. The expansion included content transmission, three vans for Digital Satellite News Gathering (DSNG) vans, also known as outside broadcast (OB) van, upgrading the studio and the installation of world standard broadcasting equipment with advanced security system, totally worth of 2,263 million yen.

The new system will help MRTV to broadcast additional 110 programmes in 110 hours of airtime per week. —MNA

(Translated by Aung Khin)



Mr. Kazuyuki Takimi, Head of Economic and Development Assistance Section at the Embassy of Japan. **PHOTO: MNA**

various important sectors between Myanmar and Japan.

He also said the assistance contained not only transmitter and broadcasting equipment, but also studio facility, while Japan is the first and the most important partner country for Myanmar in the area of TV broadcasting.

Myanmar could start colour television transmission in 1980 with the assistance of Japanese Sasakawa Foundation and official development assistance grant of JICA.

The second was the cultural grant aid allotted by the Japanese government to MRTV to broadcast 383 programmes of NHK. The third project was the technical cooperation as-

expressed thanks to the Japan and its people for their generous contribution to the improvement of MRTV in Yangon and Nay Pyi Taw.

He also remarked the project is very significant contribution to produce a wide variety of programmes in good quality.

In conclusion, he wished for further cooperation that can support friendly ties between the two countries and that will be beneficial for both countries.

Mr. Kazuyuki Takimi, the Counsellor and Head of Economic and Development Assistance Section at the Embassy of Japan, and Mr. Masayuki Karasawa, Chief Representative of JICA Myanmar Office extended their greetings, and



Mr. Masayuki Karasawa, Chief Representative of JICA Myanmar Office. **PHOTO: MNA**



Union Minister Dr Pe Myint, Yangon Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein, Deputy Minister U Aung Hla Tun and officials watch the video clip on the installation and expansion of broadcasting equipment. **PHOTO: MNA**

MNA welcomes new ATR 72-600 aircraft



Officials, pilots and crews Myanmar National Airlines pose for photo at the ceremony to welcome the new ATR 72-600 aircraft at the Yangon International Airport yesterday. PHOTO: MNA

MYANMAR National Airlines received 11th ATR aircraft at the Yangon International Airport on 6 October.

Officials of the MNA welcomed the new aircraft, which was manufactured by ATR Company in France. The new aircraft rented by the MNA from the

GECAS company in the United States arrived at the airport on 6th October eight days after the previous ART 72-600 XY-AMT plane on 29 September.

The new aircraft will be added to the services on the MNA's local and foreign destinations.

As MNA bought new six

ATR aircrafts from the ATR company, the company has provided assistance to establishing the workshop for maintenance, repair and overhaul-MRO services of ATR aircraft operating and MNA got EASA certificated in October, 2018. —MNA

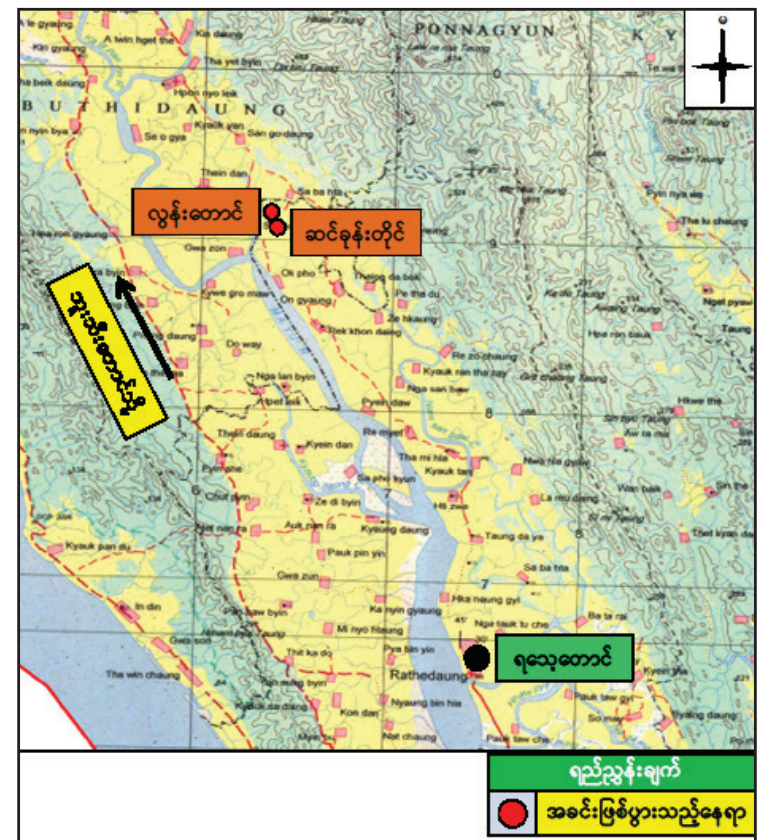
(Translated by Kyaw Zin Lin)

Seven armed men rob villagers, kill cattle in Yathedaung Township

SEVEN armed men robbed gold and cash from five houses in two villages of Yathedaung Township and shot dead two cows on the morning of 6 October.

On the morning of 6 October seven armed men speaking Rakhine language and in civilian clothing fired shots into the air and entered Yathedaung Township Sinkondaing village. They robbed 12.247 gm of gold from Abdu Khoran, K 800,000 from Abdu Zabor and a tical (16.3293 gm) of gold and K 300,000 from Ma Sajida. Simi-

arly in Luntaung village, they robbed a tical (16.3293 gm) of gold and K 500,000 from Mabilia Khatu and 4 ticals (65.3172 gm) of gold from Majida after breaking into the houses. A total of 6 ticals and 12.247 gm of gold and K 1,600,000 were robbed. In addition to this two cows owned by Ma Sachida of Sinkondaing village were shot and killed by the armed men. A case has been opened at Zedipyin Police Station, according to the news from Myanmar Police Force.—MNA (Translated by Zaw Min)



Comparison chart reflecting foreign tourist arrivals at international airports, sea ports, and border gates

Sr	Month	2017-2018 financial year			2018-2019 financial year		
		Tourist	Business	Total	Tourist	Business	Total
1	October	46693	21253	67946	52647	21005	73652
2	November	63529	21828	85357	77498	21482	98980
3	December	63522	19619	83141	82474	19538	102012
4	January	61123	20485	81608	93125	18689	111814
5	February	57450	18581	76031	100145	23949	124094
6	March	51461	25650	77111	95932	23693	119625
7	April	31198	20392	51590	71148	22848	93996
8	May	29096	21425	50521	67410	22123	89533
9	June	28844	18636	47480	65879	21714	87593
10	July	30496	20672	51169	78835	23245	102080
11	August	32068	19807	51875	88772	21955	110727
12	September	30768	21451	52219	81064	23721	104785
Total		526248	249800	776048	954929	263962	1218891

Comparison chart reflecting foreign tourist arrivals at international airports, sea ports, and border gates

Sr	International airports and border gates	September 2018		September 2019		Remark
		Tourist	Business	Tourist	business	
1.	Yangon Airport/ Sea Port	25057	16671	42717	16173	
2.	Mandalay Airport	4283	3685	31660	4024	
3.	Nay Pyi Taw Airport	193	282	1401	315	
4.	Myeik Airport	0	0	0	0	
5.	Tachilek	426	142	3930	122	
6.	Myawady	558	533	913	2984	
7.	Kawthoung	59	70	146	64	
8.	Hteekhee	40	12	24	22	
9.	Tamu	152	54	268	13	
10.	Reedhorda	0	2	5	4	
Total		30768	21451	81064	23721	

Bago police seize illegal drugs, teak from runaway vehicle

ON 6 October, police in Bago seized a passenger vehicle that refused to pull over for inspection near industrial zone Ward No 8, Ottha Myothit, and confiscated 22 WY psychotropic tablets and 3 tons of teak lumber.

The driver is identified as Thiha Kyaw (a) Shan Pane, 28, and was accompanied by another called Aung Myat Thu, 32. The two men ignored the police unit flagging them down and drove away on the old Yangon-Mandalay Highway towards Intagaw.

The offices pursued on vehicle and the two men backed up the car and crashed into the police vehicle. Police fired warning shots at the two men's car and arrested them at milepost 6/0, Intagaw-Htone Gyi road. Intagaw Police Station has opened cases against the two men, according to information released by Myanmar Police Force.—MNA (Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)



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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.

DMA plans to install AIS on coastal vessels for maritime security

THE Department of Marine Administration (DMA) is planning to install automatic identification systems (AIS) on coastal vessels to ensure maritime security and lay an information sharing network, according to the department.

"The AIS is an automatic tracking system. AIS stations will also be set up at ports. Myanmar's coastal ships and fishing vessels will be equipped with AIS soon," said U Ko Ko Naing, the Director of the DMA.

All inland water transport ferries and coastal ships will have AIS by 2021. Installations will start at the end of this year.

At present, there are about



Maritime police conducting marine patrol along the coastal route.

PHOTO: MYINT MAUNG

600 cargo and passenger ships and 4,000 fishing vessels. With the inclusion of small vessels, the

total number of vessels crosses 10,000. They all will get AIS, according to the DMA.

To implement the plan, the DMA is discussing setting up AIS stations at 19 jetties with the Myanma Port Authority. The range of the AIS would stretch to 30-50 miles. The stations would control the AIS and exchange navigational information.

The AIS would also help track illegal activities of ships, according to the DMA.

While Myanmar is making efforts to adopt AIS, the neighboring countries have been using the systems since 2004, according to the Inland Water Transport (Dawbon). —Myint Maung

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

169 patients get free eye surgery in Laikha S-Shan State

THE Cherry Myittar Foundation organized its 29th free eye surgery and eye care camp from 5 to 6 October in Laikha, Loilem District, southern Shan State.

Patients were offered services of eye specialists free of charge at the camp. A total

of 3,230 people got their eyes tested at the camp. Of them, 2,413 were prescribed glasses and 169 patients underwent eye surgeries from 5 to 6 October at the Township People's Hospital in Laikha. —Kay Thi (IPRD)

(Translated by La Wonn)



PHOTO: KAY THI (IPRD)

Officials distribute rice bags to over 1,000 IDPs in MraukU Town

OFFICIALS from the Natural Disaster Management Department under the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement on 6 October morning distributed bags of rice to over 1,000 IDPs (internally displaced persons) in MraukU Town of Rakhine State.

MraukU Disaster Management Department officials hand over rice bags to IDPs in MraukU, Rakhine State. PHOTO: TOWNSHIP IPRD

Daw Nan Moe Nwe, the head of the District Disaster Management Department, and other officials from the department handed over 372 rice bags to 1,240 IDPs from 336 households at Shwehteezaung, Myatazaung, Dinekyi, and Koenawin monasteries in MraukU Town. Meanwhile, a team led by U Ye Htut Kyaw, a deputy officer from the department, handed over rice bags to 517 IDPs at four camps in MraukU Town. —Tin Tun Oo (IPRD)

(Translated by La Wonn)

GAP certificate validity to be extended to two years

THE validity of Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) certificates will be extended to two years, according to the Agriculture Department.

Good Agricultural Practices ensure food safety, and GAP growers can get more market access, locally and internationally, according to the department. In addition to food safety, GAP also ensures worker safety, health and

welfare, and conservation of the environment, it added.

Therefore, the Agriculture Department is planning to extend the validity of certificates to two years.

"Fruits and vegetables produced under GAP can fetch good prices. They ensure food safety and traceability. So, the department is raising awareness of GAP among growers by pro-

viding courses," according to the Agriculture Department.

"Next, the department is planning to introduce digital touch for seeking GAP certificates soon. Online applications can reduce red tape, and help bring smooth and quick service to growers," it added.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation has encouraged farmers to use its

GAP protocol in a bid to boost productivity, profitability, market access, and competitiveness in the agricultural sector. The GAP protocol and guidelines include the most consumed and major export items — mango, pomelo, honeydew, watermelon, avocado, chili, tomato, onion, cabbage, corn, sesame, various beans, rice, and coffee. —Htet Myat

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Coconut shell lantern makers expect good sales during Thadingyut festival

COCONUT shell lanterns, which are a work of art, will sell well during the Thadingyut lighting festival, said Ko Pho Zaw, a coconut shell lantern artist.

During the lighting festival, people hang the lanterns in their homes.

“I learned the art three years ago. To create art on a coconut shell, we need to have artistic as well as sculpting skills. Most foreigners like to purchase lanterns with good-quality designs. They especially purchase coconut shell lanterns bearing paintings during the Thadingyut festival,” said Ko Pho Zaw, a coconut shell artist from Pazundaung Township, who is showcasing his paintings at the

Bogyoke Aung San market.

Coconut shell art was first invented in Myanmar, he said.

“To create art on coconut shells, we first collect good-quality and hard coconut shells. Then, we clean the shells and draw paintings,” he added. There are over 50 types of coconut products sold in the market, including coconut shell rings, coconut shell combs, coconut shell kettles, and coconut shell cups.

The prices range from K5,000-K10,000 for coconut shell rings, K3,000-K5,000 for coconut shell combs, K70,000 for coconut shell lanterns, and up to K300,000 for coconut shell kettles and cups.—Myint Maung Soe

(Translated by Hay Mar)



Coconut shell lanterns displayed at the market. PHOTO: MYINT MAUNG SOE

Lower imports pull down external trade in 2018-2019FY

A significant drop in Myanmar's imports in the previous fiscal year led to a lower total trade figure compared with the 2017-2018FY.

Between 1 October and 30 September in the 2018-2019FY, Myanmar's external trade plunged to \$34.97 billion from \$35.89 billion in the previous FY. The figure included an estimated \$16.9 billion in exports and \$18.05 billion in imports.

Compared with the 2017-

2018FY, exports increased by \$473 million, while imports declined by \$1.388 billion, which helped bring down the trade deficit.

Myanmar exports agricultural products, animal products, minerals, forest products, and finished industrial goods, while it imports capital goods, raw industrial materials, and consumer goods.

The country's export sector relies more on the agricultural

and manufacturing sectors. Export earnings from the CMP (cutting, making, and packaging) garment businesses are rising, while reliance on natural resources, such as natural gas and jade, is lessening.

The government is trying to reduce the trade deficit by screening luxury import items and boosting exports, according to the Ministry of Commerce.—GNLM

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

SEZs rake in investments of over \$360 mln in 2018-2019 fiscal

FOREIGN investments of US\$362.28 million flowed into the Special Economic Zones (SEZs), under the Special Economic Zone Law, in the 2018-2019 fiscal year, according to figures released by the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration.

A total of 106 enterprises from 18 countries and four local businesses have ploughed in \$1.84 billion so far in the zones, data on FDI of existing enterprises shows.

Japan topped the list of foreign investors in the previous fiscal, accounting for more than 36 per cent of the overall investment, followed by Singapore and Thailand. FDI also flowed into the SEZs from the Republic of Korea, Hong Kong, the UK, Australia, the UAE, Malaysia, Austria, China (Taipei), Panama, China, Brunei, Viet Nam, France, Switzerland, and the Netherlands.

Currently, 74 businesses are operating in the Thilawa SEZ, and 18 businesses are beginning to export goods. The SEZ is employing over 20,000 workers, including permanent and construction workers, according to the management committee.

The Myanmar Thilawa SEZ Holdings Public Limited's annual report for 2017-2018 stated that 97 per cent of Thilawa Zone A and 61 per cent of Zone B have been sold. Over 60 per cent of businesses in Thilawa are domestic-oriented manufacturing enterprises, while 40

per cent are export-oriented manufacturers, according to a press statement issued by the company in June this year.

A company exporting at least 75 per cent of the production in value is registered as a Free Zone investor, and is exempt from paying corporate tax for 7 years from the time it starts commercial operations. Companies such as logistics, which support export-oriented manufacturing, can also be free zone companies. Domestic-oriented manufacturing companies are regarded as promotion zone companies and they are eligible for a five-year holiday on corporate tax.

There are other tax incentives for free zone and promotion zone investors on importation of capital goods, raw materials, and merchandise, and consigned goods and vehicles. Further details about the tax system are available on <http://www.myanmarthilawa.gov.mm>.

While the manufacturing sector has absorbed the largest share of foreign investments, FDI has also flowed into the trading, services, transportation and logistics, real estate, and hotel sectors in the past.

Myanmar is currently implementing three Special Economic Zones — Thilawa, Kyaukpadaung, and Dawei. Out of the three, Thilawa is leading with better infrastructure and successful businesses.—Ko Htet

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

NyaungU Tsp corn farmers make a profit despite Fall Armyworm invasion

CORN farmers in NyaungU Township of NyaungU District are continuing to cultivate corn in spite of a Fall Armyworm invasion as they are earning a good profit due to high demand, according to a grower.

Villages along the NyaungU-Myingyan-Pakokku road in NyaungU Township, Nyaung District comprise the corn belt, and farmers in the area solely cultivate different varieties of corns throughout the year.

“Growers are still cultivating corn though their fields were destroyed by the Fall Armyworm (FAW) the previous year,” said U Tin Win, a corn grower.

“With the corn market becoming stable due to high demand from corn brokers from rural regions, farmers made a profit in spite of the FAW problem,” according to U Min Nyo, a farmer from Taungphattan village.



Maize crop plantation in NyaungU Township.

PHOTO: KO HTAIN (NGATHAYAUK)

Farmers also earned more profits by cultivating corn as it can be harvested quickly in just two months, said U Win Tin. “After two months, growers can pluck corns from the fields and sell them along the highway road,” he said.

“Most of the customers are people traveling on the highway and brokers from Myingyan, NyaungU, Ngathayauk, and Pakokku towns, and the Palin

Kanthar elephant camp. Last year, the corn fields in NyaungU endured an FAW invasion, and most of them yielded poor-quality corn. However, corn is in high demand and corn fields are flourishing year after year. Some fields use river water and some use private wells for irrigation,” he added.—Ko Htain (Ngathayauk)

(Translated by La Wonn)

We must exercise common sense when using social media

A LARGE number of people across the globe are using social media nowadays, and Facebook remains the most widely used social networking site. Searching for information, communicating with friends, sharing knowledge, and interacting with the business, social, and political aspects of society, all of these can be done easily and conveniently on Facebook.

While it hasn't been long since Facebook arrived in Myanmar, it is already a part of the daily lives of the young and old alike. Ninety per cent of people with Internet access use Facebook in Myanmar, which means over 20 million people use it daily. More than just a platform for sharing, Facebook can create success stories and fame.

But, like everything, there are positives and negatives to using social media. While social media can be a platform for communication and sharing, it can also be used as a tool to swindle, destroy, spread hatred, or attack people or organizations. We must keep this in mind and remember that social media is a platform, an intermediary for social and business transactions, and benefits.

Social media is an expansive platform for spreading thoughts, general knowledge, perspectives, findings, humor, accomplishments, progress, among other things. What's more, it is easily accessible. This makes it simple for people to showcase their talents and also provides benefits for observers.

However, since social media is accessible to everyone, we must use our

reasoning skills to discern what is true and what is false, and whether it is actually beneficial. In a network with a large number of users, there will be both helpful individuals and pessimistic troublemakers. There will also be fabricators and people who launch deliberate attacks against an individual or organization.

We must be careful not to encourage or participate in actions that could harm the public, damage social and health-related programs, harass others, cause racial, religious, or personal harm, undermine someone, involve illegal trade, and invade privacy and freedom, or be outright rude on social media.

Social media can bring multiple benefits to the people. We just need to use our rational thinking and common sense to avoid the negatives and utilize the positives.



Big-doll dancing helps keep alive Rakhine traditions

By Aung Kyi Moe -(Sittway)

BIG-DOLL dance is one of the traditional Rakhine dances performed during communal offerings of provisions and articles to monks. Such offerings are made in townships across Rakhine State during the full moon days of Thadingyut and Tazaungmone. The collective offerings to Sanghas during these festivals are a way for the Rakhine people to preserve their customs and traditional ways.

In Sittway, during the periods of Thadingyut and Tazaungmone around the labyrinth on the flat ground on the Atulamarazein Pylone Chantha Pagoda, almost all people from the township have celebrated the festival without fail. When seeing big-doll dancing the Rakhine people instinctively come to know about the commencement of Thadingyut Festival.

Every year in Sittway, almost all people from the township have celebrated the festival of offering provisions and various articles to monks including venerable Sanghas, novices, and nuns; together with them are the laymen such as Rakhine Chief Minister and his wife,

Rakhine government ministers and their wives, departments concerned, university students, associations and well-wishers who donate yearly various articles to the monks.

To Sittway communal offerings of provisions and various articles to the monks, as many as over 500 monks and 100 nuns

commencement of Thadingyut is near around, the people of Sittway have been waiting for bid-doll dancing.

In the past, Big dolls were made of thin bamboo strips; nowadays, they are made of plastic by changing faces and wearing different kinds of clothes yearly in order not to

Big-doll dances, which often take place across town, help promote Buddhism, and the money collected can be used to obtain provisions and articles for monks.

come for donations.

Big-doll dancing follows the Sanghas and nuns to the enjoyment of well-wishers who praise a good deed. Big-doll dances, which often take place across town, help promote Buddhism, and the money collected can be used to obtain provisions and articles for monks.

In order to celebrate the communal offerings of provisions and various articles to the monks, a big doll and his wife keep dancing around the town to collect donations. When the

get bored.

Big dolls are made-- one for male and other for female--for the festival of communal offering provisions and various articles to the monks for the whole people of Sittway. The height of a big doll is about 6 feet and the girth is large enough for two people to go into it. Once inside the big doll, they have to dance to the rhythms of the drums. Singers have to follow the big dolls by car. Men have to get into the big dolls one by one in turns. They usually wear



the white stockings and white shoes.

When the beginning of Thadingyut is drawing near, the relatives and friends in a

far-flung corners usually ask me if big-doll dancing is going to take place in the Rakhine State. Big-doll dancing goes round every nook and cranny

of the town, children are very happy and the townspeople love it when nearing the commencement of Thadingyut. Some children touch the big dolls and at the same time, dancers inside bowed ridiculously. When big dolls get to their ward, parents raise their children above their heads intentionally to have a look at them.

When I was young, I used to send big dolls towards the end of our ward. A week before communal offering provisions and different articles to the monks, big-doll dancing goes around at every nook and cranny of the town. Local fans earnestly award cash to the big dolls and they simply believe that evil spirits are expelled from their town by means of big-doll dancing.

During the full moon days of Thadingyut and Tazaungmone, almost all people from each and every town in Rakhine State hold festivals of communal offering provisions and various articles to the monks with big dolls which keep dancing for the enjoyment of the townspeople.

(Translated by Arakan Sein)



Suggestions on Early Childhood Learning and Development

By Lokethar

THE National Education Law (NEL) states that Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) promotes the holistic development using developmentally appropriate methods for children from birth to age eight. Preschool is for children aged three to five years to develop their physical, intellectual, moral, social and psychological skills and prepare them for continuing into primary education. Besides, according to learning psychologists, researches show that the age around three to six is most receptive period for learning and it will enhance learning ability throughout life. It's imperative that Early Childhood Education should be gradually extended to cover all children in the whole of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

The National Education

Strategic Plan (NESP) 2016-2021, was developed to implement education policies, strategies and programs for the different but related areas and levels of Education. Under the plan, I suppose, Committees for the various levels of education were formed and tasked with developing curricula and learning materials for the level assigned to them.

I'd like to if I may, as a lay citizen, make suggestions as to the "Contents" of one of the important new Early Childhood Learning text books developed by the Committee concerned. I am offering my suggestions with a view to the future, after accessing through the internet, the proposed English Text Grade 1.

First and foremost, I would like to congratulate the "designers" of the English Text Grade 1 for the lay out and the nice pictures in the book. At the same time I

would like to suggest inclusion of, in addition to the traditional ABC Alphabet Chart (A for Apple, B for Ball, C for Cup etc.) in the English Text Grade 1, an Alphabet Chart based on the "Natural Environment". I think it would be more in line with a "21st Century learning agenda". It would be more attuned to the "Natural Environment", concern for the state of which is being echoed around the World. My suggestion is to start teaching in early childhood, the Alphabets (as well as the vocabulary) using a Chart that is about raising awareness of the "Natural Environment" we live in.

The suggested "ABC Environmental Alphabet Chart" would comprise of Alphabets relating to the various aspects of the natural environment as for example; A for Air, B for Birds, C for clouds, D for Dawn, E for earth and so on. Similarly group songs about

the "Natural Environment" would raise Environmental Awareness of the children as well. An "ABC Environmental Alphabet Song" (as well as the vocabulary) using a Chart that is about raising awareness of the "ABC

Grade 1.

As for increasing the "vocabulary" of the children, showing pictures of objects or the real objects wherever and whenever possible, and letting them "touch"

We need to ensure good physical and mental development in early childhood through better nutrition if we are to nurture healthy future citizens who would be able to contribute fully to society.

Environmental Alphabet Chart" suggested.

The present traditional ABC Chart in the English Text Book Grade 1 which, as I understand, is also meant to be used in vocabulary development of the children, would continue to be used, as it is referred to in the many lessons that are in the said English Text

and "feel" the objects - lets say an Apple or Mango or a Flower; would increase their "perception" of the same and hence enhance learning.

While the mind is being developed the body should be too. Playing outdoors, as well exercising to improve strength and stamina, learning to walk distances, run, climb and swim, should be includ-



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

THE Office of the President issued Press Release No. 38/2019 yesterday, publicly announcing the Ministry of Home Affairs' arrests and seizures in the fight against illicit drug trafficking up till 5 October.

The ministry made the arrests, acting on information, sent to the Drug Activity Special Complaint Department of the Office of the President as of 5 October.

The full text of the press release will be reported in the 9 October issue of *The Global New Light of Myanmar*.—GNLM

U Myo Tint presents credentials to president of the republic of Chile

U Myo Tint, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar to the Republic of Chile, presented his Credentials to His Excellency Mr. Sebastian Piñera Echenique, President of the Republic of Chile, on 2 October 2019, in Santiago.—MNA



Myanmar Daily Weather Report

(Issued at 7:00 pm Monday 7th October, 2019)

BAY INFERENCE: Weather is a few cloud over the West Central Bay and partly cloudy to cloudy over the Andaman Sea and elsewhere over the Bay of Bengal.

FORECAST VALID UNTIL AFTERNOON OF THE 8th October, 2019: Rain or thundershowers will be widespread in Upper Sagaing and Taninthayi Regions and Kachin State, fairly widespread in Chin and Rakhine States, scattered in Lower Sagaing, Mandalay, Yangon and Ayeyarwady Regions, (Northern and Southern) Shan and Mon States and isolated in the remaining Regions and States with isolated heavyfall in Lower Sagaing Region. Degree of certainty is (80%).

STATE OF THE SEA: Sea will be slight to moderate in Myanmar waters. Wave height will be about (3-6) feet off and along Myanmar Coasts.

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Continuation of scattered to fairly widespread rain or thundershowers in Upper Sagaing and Taninthayi Regions, Kachin and Chin States.

FORECAST FOR NAYPYITAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 8th October, 2019: Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (80%).

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 8th October, 2019: Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (80%).

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 8th October, 2019: Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (80%).

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Mogok: Tourists numbered over 1,000 up to Sept this year

A total of 1,030 tourists visited Mogok, the Ruby Land of Myanmar, in Mandalay Region, according to the figures of Directorate of Hotels and Tourism up to September this year.

Daw Phyu Phyu Myint, the chairwoman of local gems merchants association, said,

“Tourists visited Banard village of Lisu people, and it is an icy village like a Korean style. They also reached a gems trading village.” They also experienced traditional cultures and customs of local people during their visits to this area.

The number of tourists usu-

ally increased in high season, and most of them were from China, Thailand and the European countries.

Mandalay Region government has allowed tourists access to Mogok since September last year.— Khaing Set Wai

(Translated by Aung Khin)



Europeans make up a third of September visits to Mogok. **PHOTO: MNA**

Ar Yu Health Expo provides free medical checks-up



A visitor gets checked for diabetes during the health expo held at Ar Yu International Hospital, Yangon. **PHOTO: PHOE KHWAR**

Ar Yu International Hospital in Yangon is conducting a health expo from 4 to 6 October, offering free medical checkups to visitors.

During the expo titled “Ar Yu Health Expo-Healthier Life for All”, the visitors can receive free medical checkups for non-communicable disease and can enjoy

lucky draw programme for free medical checkups.

Meanwhile, the expo has offered medical check-up packages including advanced package for ages between 41 and 50, comprehensive package for aged between 55 and above and elite package at special discount price. — GNLM

Iraq armed force says ‘ready’ to back government amid protests

BAGHDAD (Iraq) — Iraq’s powerful Hashed al-Shaabi force said Monday it was ready to implement government orders to prevent “a coup d’etat or a rebellion” after protests that have left more than 100 dead.

Faleh al-Fayyadh, who heads the force mostly integrated into

the state, told reporters in Baghdad he wanted “the fall of corruption, not the fall of the regime.”

The rallies began on Tuesday with calls to reduce youth unemployment and corruption but have spiralled to demand a total overhaul of the Iraqi political system.

The Iraqi government has announced a series of reforms to create jobs, boost social welfare and oust corrupt officials but have also accused “saboteurs” of infiltrating the protests. “We know who stands behind these protests. The plan to bring down the regime has failed,” Fayyadh

said. His words echoed a statement earlier Monday by Iran’s supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei who accused “enemies” of trying to drive a wedge between Tehran and Baghdad.

State news agency IRNA said he was reacting to recent violence in Iraq.— AFP ■

More than 16,000 flee unrest in Indonesia’s Papua

JAKARTA (Indonesia) — More than 16,000 scared residents have fled an unrest-hit city in Indonesia’s Papua region, the military said Monday, as one of the deadliest eruptions of violence in years sparked calls for an independent probe. Several dozen people were killed when violence broke out in Wamena city last month, with some victims burned alive when buildings were ablaze, and others stabbed in the chaos, according to authorities. Since mid-August, Papua has been hit by waves of mass protests and violence fuelled by racism against indigenous Papuans by Indonesians from other parts of the archipelago, as well as calls for self-rule in the impoverished region. The majority of Papuans are Christian and ethnic Melanesian with few cultural ties to the rest of Muslim-majority Indonesia.

On Monday, the air force said about 11,400 people — mostly migrants — had been evacuated aboard military aircraft. Several thousand more have left aboard commercial aircraft since late September, it added.— AFP ■

Saudi, UAE talk military cooperation after Yemen rebel truce offer

ABU DHABI (United Arab Emirates) — Top officials from Saudi Arabia and the UAE, key players in a coalition fighting Yemeni rebels, have discussed military cooperation following a positive response by Riyadh to a truce offer from the insurgents.

Saudi’s deputy defence minister Prince Khalid bin Salman met with Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al-Nahyan in the UAE capital to discuss “coordination and joint action in defence and military affairs”, Emirati state news agency WAM reported on Monday.

The two officials, who spoke late Sunday, also discussed the “challenges” facing the Gulf region and “their implications on the security” of the region, WAM said. Last week, Prince Khalid

said on Twitter that a truce offer made last month by Yemen’s Huthi rebels was “perceived positively” by the kingdom and hoped it would be “implemented

effectively”.

Since 2015, Riyadh has led a military coalition in support of Yemen’s internationally recognised government against the

Iran-backed Huthis.

The conflict has killed tens of thousands of people, most of them civilians, according to humanitarian organisations, and left Yemen faced with what the UN terms the world’s worst humanitarian crisis.

The Huthis offered to halt all attacks on Saudi Arabia as part of a peace initiative to end the devastating conflict, later repeating their proposal despite continued air strikes from the Saudi-led coalition. The offer came after the Huthis claimed responsibility for attacks on September 14 against two key Saudi oil installations that temporarily knocked out half of the OPEC giant’s production.

Riyadh and Washington, however, blamed Iran for the attacks — a charge denied by Tehran.— AFP ■



The file photo shows a masked Yemeni Huthi rebel in front of a heavily damaged building in central Saada, north of the capital Sanaa, on 28 February 2010. **PHOTO: AFP**

Nobel season opens with Medicine Prize

STOCKHOLM (Sweden) — The announcement of the Nobel Medicine Prize on Monday opens an unusual 2019 Nobel season in which two literature laureates will be crowned after a scandal postponed last year's award, amid speculation Greta Thunberg could nab the prestigious Peace Prize.

The winner of the Medicine Prize will be revealed on Monday at 11:30 (0930 GMT) in Stockholm. It will be followed by the prizes for physics on Tuesday, chemistry on Wednesday, literature on Thursday, and economics on Monday, 14 October.

In between, the Peace Prize will be awarded in Oslo on Friday, 11 October, with Swedish teen climate activist Greta seen as the favourite on betting sites such as Ladbrokes.

Predictions about possible winners are notoriously difficult as the prize-awarding institutions keep the names of the nominees secret for 50 years.

For the Peace Prize, the Norwegian Nobel Committee has only disclosed that it received 301 nominations this year.

Traditionally sensitive to issues gripping the public's attention, the committee has undoubtedly noted the recent "Greta phenomenon" and the enthusiasm she has sparked among young generations in her cam-

paign to raise awareness about climate change.

Experts remain however divided on whether there is an actual link between armed conflicts and climate change.

The head of the Peace Research Institute of Oslo, Henrik Urdal, therefore deemed it "extremely unlikely" the 16-year-old would win, adding her young age could also work against her.

The youngest laureate so far is Malala Yousafzai, who won the 2014 Peace Prize at the age of 17.

Other names circulating are Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, who clinched a peace deal with arch foe Eritrea, and NGOs such as Reporters without Borders and the Committee to Protect Journalists.

Lithium batteries?

For the Medicine Prize, the Karolinska Institute has received 633 nominations.

According to Swedish public radio SR, the honour could go to Lebanese-born American geneticist Huda Zoghbi for the discovery that a genetic mutation leads to the brain disorder Rett Syndrome.

Sweden's biggest daily Dagens Nyheter (DN) meanwhile said immunologists Marc Feldmann of Australia and Indian-born British researcher Ravinder Maini could win for



Predictions about possible winners are notoriously difficult as the prize-awarding institutions keep the names of the nominees secret for 50 years. PHOTO: AFP

their work on rheumatoid arthritis. American Mary-Claire King, who discovered the BRCA1 gene responsible for a hereditary form of breast cancer, was also mentioned.

DN said meanwhile the Physics Prize could go to quantum physics research, citing US scientist John Clauser, Alain Aspect of France, and Austria's Anton Zeilinger.

Ronald Hanson of the Netherlands could win for his work on quantum entanglement, SR said.

For the Chemistry Prize, American John Goodenough, who invented lithium batteries,

could become the oldest ever winner of a Nobel, at the age of 97.

But it could also go to two women, Emmanuelle Charpentier of France and Jennifer Doudna of the US, for the gene-editing technique known as the CRISPR-Cas9 DNA snipping tool, a type of genetic "scissors" used to cut out a mutated gene in a human embryo and replace it with a corrected version.

Chinese-born American Feng Zhang also claims to have discovered the technique, which could also be eligible for the Medicine Prize.—AFP ■

NASA astronauts complete 7-hour spacewalk

WASHINGTON — Two US astronauts completed a spacewalk out of the International Space Station on Sunday, the first in a series of five spacewalks in October to replace batteries on the far end of the station's port truss.

Astronauts Christina Koch and Andrew Morgan wrapped up their spacewalk at 2:40 pm American Eastern Time, lasting about seven hours and one minute, according to the US space agency NASA.

They installed new lithium-ion batteries that would upgrade the station's power systems. The existing nickel-hydrogen batteries are being upgraded with more powerful lithium-ion batteries transported to the station aboard the Japanese H-II Transfer Vehicle, which arrived on 28 September, according to NASA. Also, the two astronauts accomplished some get-ahead tasks, including the removal of an additional nickel-hydrogen battery, originally scheduled for the next spacewalk on 11 October.

The batteries store power generated by the station's solar arrays to provide power to the station when the station is not in the sunlight, as it orbits the Earth during orbital night.—Xinhua ■

Global Extinction Rebellion protests begin in Australia

SYDNEY (Australia) — Dozens of protesters were arrested across Australia and New Zealand on Monday as Extinction Rebellion activists kicked off a fortnight of global civil disobedience demand-

ing governments take urgent action on climate change.

Hundreds joined a sit-in on busy inner Sydney road, which police brought to an end by dragging away demonstrators. Thirty

people were later charged.

A small group of activists also locked themselves to a bridge in Brisbane, where police said they arrested and charged seven people. Meanwhile, dem-

onstrators shut down part of Wellington, New Zealand's capital, by chaining themselves to a bright pink car. Police said 30 people were arrested later in the day of protest, but none were charged.

They were the start of planned disruptions in 60 cities around the world over the next two weeks by Extinction Rebellion, which is warning of a looming environmental "apocalypse".

Thousands are expected to join other events this week in Australia, including a bee die-off enactment, a nude parade and a funeral procession for the planet.

"We have tried petitions, lobbying and marches, and now time is running out," Australian activist Jane Morton said.

"We have no choice but to rebel until our government declares a climate and ecological emergency and takes the action that is required to save us."

Australia is ruled by a conservative government that has

resisted taking comprehensive action to tackle climate change, while backing lucrative coal exports. Prime Minister Scott Morrison last month snubbed a United Nations climate summit after he was not invited to speak because of his lack of new climate announcements.

"Our governments are lying to us about the state of the climate and ecological emergency," Melbourne-based climate activist Christine Canti told AFP.

"I have got four small young children and I want to be able to look them in the eye and tell them when I found out the extent and the severity of the crisis... I did absolutely everything within my power to be able to try and reverse that."

Extinction Rebellion's tactics in Australia have prompted senior conservative politicians to call for protesters' welfare payments to be cut and for public denunciations.—AFP ■



'We have tried petitions, lobbying and marches, and now time is running out.' Extinction Rebellion protesters in Melbourne, Australia. PHOTO: AFP

Asia stocks mostly up on US jobs but growth, trade fears persist



Chinese Vice Premier Liu He is due to lead a delegation to Washington to resume trade talks this week. PHOTO: AFP

HONG KONG (China) — Most markets rose in Asia Monday after a mixed US jobs report eased worries about a recession in the world's top economy but maintained expectations the Federal Reserve will press ahead with more interest rate cuts.

However, there was some nervousness after reports said China had cut back on the number of areas it is willing to discuss at this week's top-level trade talks with the US, rekindling concerns about the chances of any agreement between the two.

After a string of below-par data last week that

highlighted the impact of Donald Trump's trade war on the key manufacturing and services sectors, Friday's much-anticipated non-farm payrolls figures showed unemployment at a 50-year low in September.

But the pace of job creation was the slowest in four months, wages fell and the manufacturing workforce also shrank for the second time this year.

All three main indexes on Wall Street rallied more than one percent as dealers breathed a sigh of relief that the jobs figures did not miss badly, with most still expecting another Fed

rate cut at its next meeting this month.

"As the US unemployment rate dropped to its lowest level in 50 years, worries over US recession eased, but at the same time expectations for further rate cuts remain untouched," Hideyuki Ishiguro, senior strategist at Daiwa Securities, said in a commentary.

Most Asian markets followed the lead from New York.

Sydney rose 0.7 per cent and Singapore added 0.6 per cent with Seoul gaining 0.1 per cent, while Wellington jumped 0.8 per cent and Taipei put on 0.4 per cent. Mumbai and Bangkok also rose.

Tokyo closed 0.2 per cent down as the yen strengthened on bets for another Fed cut, while there were also losses in Manila and Jakarta. Hong Kong and Shanghai were closed for a public holiday.

In early trade, London fell 0.3 per cent, Paris lost 0.4 per cent and Frankfurt was off 0.2 per cent. —AFP ■

Japan downgrades economic assessment to "worsening" for 1st in 4 months

TOKYO — Japan downgraded Monday its assessment of the economy for August for the first time in four months, saying it is "worsening," hit by sluggish production and exports due partly to lingering US-China trade tensions.

The downgrade comes at a time when concerns are growing over the outlook for the world's third-largest economy as the consumption tax hike earlier this month could dampen private consumption.

The Cabinet Office said its coincident index of business conditions for the reporting month fell 0.4 point from the previous month to 99.3 against the 2015 base of 100, the lowest level since September 2016.

After using the phrase

"worsening" — the most pessimistic expression adopted by the government — for March and April, the office upgraded the view, saying that downside movements had come to a halt in May and the two following months.

The latest downgrade of the evaluation followed the release of weak industrial output, shipment and employment data for August. As "worsening" indicates Japan is highly likely to have fallen into recession, the assessment appears to contradict the government's official view that the economy has been recovering at a moderate pace, supported by solid domestic demand, as shown by its monthly economic report.

Asked about the diverging views, a govern-

ment official who briefed reporters said the evaluation is made automatically based on the movements of the coincident index consisting of indicators reflecting the present economic condition, while the monthly report is a broader evaluation of various economic activities and trends.

The Cabinet Office also said the leading index of business condition, which predicts the trend in the coming months, dropped 2.0 points from the previous month to 91.7 in August, the lowest level since November 2009. Last Tuesday, the consumption tax rate was raised to 10 per cent from 8 per cent to help pay for swelling social security costs amid the rapid graying of the country's population.

—Kyodo News ■

THE REPUBLIC OF THE UNION OF MYANMAR MINISTRY OF ELECTRICITY AND ENERGY MYANMA OIL AND GAS ENTERPRISE (INVITATION FOR OPEN TENDER) (6 / 2019-2020)

1. Open tenders for 2019-2020 fiscal year are invited for supply of the following respective items in United States Dollars / Myanmar Kyats.

Sr No.	Tender No.	Description	Remarks
(a)	IFB/001(19-20)	20" LSAW API 5L Grade X-46 MS 3 LPE Coated Line Pipe (PSL-2) (33810) MTR	US\$
(b)	IFB/002(19-20)	14" HFERW API 5L Grade X-46 MS 3 LPE Coated Line Pipe (PSL-2) (53130) MTR	US\$
(c)	IFB/003(19-20)	Natural Gas Engine Driven Compressor (1) Unit	US\$
(d)	IFB/004(19-20)	CNG Compressor Driven Electric Motor Package & Accessories (1) Lot	US\$
(e)	DMP/L-037(19-20)	10" HFERW API 5L Grade X-42 MS 3 LPE Coated Line Pipe (PSL-2) (41860) MTR	Ks
(f)	DMP/L-038(19-20)	8" HFERW API 5L Grade X-42 MS 3 LPE Coated Line Pipe (PSL-2) (16100) MTR	Ks
(g)	DMP/L-039(19-20)	4" HFERW API 5L Grade X-42 MS 3 LPE Coated Line Pipe (PSL-2) (16100) MTR	Ks
(h)	DMP/L-040(19-20)	Welding Electrode E-6011 (53) MT	Ks
(i)	DMP/L-041(19-20)	Heat Shrinkable Sleeve & Closure Patches (1) Lot	Ks
(j)	DMP/L-042(19-20)	Assorted Sizes of Pipe Fittings (1) Lot	Ks
(k)	DMP/L-043(19-20)	Pipe Line Testing Equipment (5) Items	Ks
(l)	DMP/L-044(19-20)	5 Ton Truck Crane (2) Units	Ks
(m)	DMP/L-045(19-20)	Water Bowser (2800 Gallons) (2) Units	Ks
(n)	DMP/L-046(19-20)	7 Ton Cargo Truck (4x2) (22) Units	Ks
(o)	DMP/L-047(19-20)	7 Ton Cargo Truck (4x4) (7) Units	Ks
(p)	DMP/L-048(19-20)	Fire Fighting Truck (10) Units	Ks
(q)	DMP/L-049(19-20)	10 Ton Truck with Crane (1) Unit	Ks
(r)	DMP/L-050(19-20)	10 M3 Dump Truck (1) Unit	Ks
(s)	DMP/L-051(19-20)	Installation of Cathodic Protection System for Buried Pipe Line	Ks
(t)	DMP/L-052(19-20)	Welding Machine with Accessories & Portable Fire Pump (3) Items	Ks
(u)	DMP/L-053(19-20)	Shale Shaker Unit and Accessories (1) Set	Ks
(v)	DMP/L-054(19-20)	Fire Fighting System (1) Lot	Ks
(w)	DMP/L-055(19-20)	Skid Mounted Crude Transfer Pump (3) Items	Ks
(x)	DMP/L-056(19-20)	Pumping Unit (2) Items	Ks
(y)	DMP/L-057(19-20)	Testing Equipment for Apply Research Centre (6) Items	Ks
(z)	DMP/L-058(19-20)	Geological Survey Instrument & Field Equipment (7) Items	Ks
(aa)	DMP/L-059(19-20)	Seismic Acquisition / Data Processing Work Station / Data Center (6) Items	Ks
(ab)	DMP/L-060(19-20)	Diesel Engine Driven Generating Set (3) Items	Ks
(ac)	DMP/L-061(19-20)	NDT Services for 10" & 14" Domestic Natural Gas Pipe Lines (Pyay - Myanaung / Maubin-Nyaungdon)	Ks
(ad)	DMP/L-062(19-20)	NDT Services for 14" & 4" Domestic Natural Gas Pipe Lines in Yangon Area	Ks
(ae)	DMP/L-063(19-20)	3.3 KV Auto Transformer / 185 KW, 3300 V Induction Motor (2) Items	Ks
(af)	DMP/L-064(19-20)	Class 'G' Cement (2000) Tons	Ks
(ag)	DMP/L-065(19-20)	Lubricant Oil (8) Items	Ks

2. The Open Tender forms including Description of Materials / Qty with details specifications and Tender Terms & Conditions can be available during office hours commencing from 7 October 2019 at the Finance Department, Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise, No. (44) Complex, Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar.

3. The interested Bidders should submit the **Technical Specifications with Original Bid Bond and Commercial Quotation in each separate sealed envelopes** on which to be addressed to the Managing Director, Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise and should reach in Tender Box of the Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise not later than **14:00 pm on 7 November 2019**.

4. Tender Closing Date & Time **7-11-2019, 14:00 pm**

Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise
Ph No. + 95 67 - 411206



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UK completes Thomas Cook repatriation of passengers

LONDON(United Kingdom) — Britain's government on Monday completed the country's biggest peacetime repatriation that returned 140,000 UK-based Thomas Cook customers stranded abroad after the collapse of the holiday operator.

The final flight arrived at 8.31 am (0731 GMT), touching down at Manchester airport in northern England from Orlando, Florida, said a spokesman for the

Civil Aviation Authority (CAA).

The flight, with 392 passengers onboard, marks the end of two-week-long Operation Matterhorn — Britain's biggest repatriation since World War II.

Matterhorn, which involved 150 aircraft from 50 partners worldwide, "required an extraordinary effort from all involved," CAA chief executive Richard Moriarty said in a statement.

Moriarty paid tribute "to the many amazing former Thomas Cook employees" who helped to make the operation successful.

"It needed an unprecedented team effort from our commercial partners, our friends across government and my colleagues at the CAA," he added.

The regulator on Monday said it would now launch its largest ever customer reimbursement programme under the Air

Travel Organiser's Licence (ATOL) scheme.

The scheme is a safety net, based on an EU directive and managed by the CAA, which covers tourists who have bought all-inclusive trips with flights and hotels.

"We know that customers are devastated by the cancellation of their holidays," Moriarty said.

"Those who bought a Thomas Cook ATOL-protected holiday are entitled to a full refund of all the money they have paid towards the cost of their holiday.

"In addition to this, ATOL protected passengers that were abroad when the company went into liquidation might be able to claim for out of pocket expenses."

Debt-plagued Thomas Cook, which struggled against fierce online competition for years and blamed Brexit uncertainty for a drop in bookings, declared bankruptcy on 23 September after failing to secure fresh funds.

—AFP ■



British tourists, clients of Thomas Cook travel group are helped by an airport employee at the Heraclion airport on the island of Crete on 24 September 2019. PHOTO: AFP

WHO regional meet opens to tackle key priorities

MANILA — The World Health Organization started the annual regional meeting of its Western Pacific office on Monday, aiming to further the discussions on its priorities for the next five years.

Health ministers and city officials from 37 countries, as well as from

non-governmental organizations, attended the first day of the five-day summit in the Philippine capital, where policy recommendations for member states in a region home to 1.9 billion people will be made.

The WHO Western Pacific Regional Office identified its key priorities

as health and security, including microbial resistance; non-communicable diseases and aging; climate change, the environment and health; and reaching the unreached.

The rising trend in antimicrobial resistance, one of the priorities, has been described as "alarming"

by the organization, with at least 700,000 deaths globally per year. "We are already facing situations that we cannot treat with increasing antibiotics," Takeshi Kansai, WHO regional director for the Western Pacific, told a press conference prior to the meeting.—Kyodo News ■

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V XETHA BHUM VOY.NO. (1126 W)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V XETHA BHUM VOY.NO. (1126 W) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 8-10-2019 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T.T/M.I.P where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

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

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V MATSUMAE

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V MATSUMAE VOY.NO. (116) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 8-10-2019 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of I.B.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 NYK BULK & PROJECTS
CARRIERS LTD

Phone No: 2301928

Invitation for Bids

THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE UNION OF MYANMAR
NATIONAL ELECTRIFICATION PROJECT
SPECIFIC PROCUREMENT NOTICE
IDA Credit No.: 5727-MM

Date: 8th October 2019

Contract Title: Insulators and Related Fittings for National Electrification Project

Reference No. : MOEE-NEP-P2/C1-G5/19

1. The Ministry of Electricity and Energy has received financing from the World Bank towards the cost of the National Electrification Project, and intends to apply part of the proceeds towards payments under the contract for Insulators and Related Fittings for National Electrification Project.

2. The Ministry of Electricity and Energy now invites sealed bids from eligible bidders for supply of Insulators and Related Fittings to be delivered in 2020 to multiple destinations in all Regions and States of Myanmar. Domestic preference with the margin of 15% will apply. The goods will be grouped into 4 lots and bidders may submit bid for any one or more lots. Evaluation and award of contract will be on a lot-wise basis.

3. Bidding will be conducted through the International Competitive Bidding procedures as specified in the World Bank's Guidelines: Procurement of Goods, Works and Non-Consulting Services under IBRD Loans and IDA Credits & Grants by World Bank Borrowers [edition of January 2011 revised in July 2014] ("Procurement Guidelines"), and is open to all eligible bidders as defined in the Procurement Guidelines. In addition, please refer to the paragraphs 1.6 and 1.7 setting for the World Bank's policy on conflict of interest. 4. Interested eligible bidders may obtain further information from Project Manager, Office No (27), Ministry of Electricity and Energy, nep.pmomoep@gmail.com and inspect the bidding documents during office hours 10:00 to 16:00 hours at the address given below. 5. A complete set of bidding documents in English may be obtained free of charge by interested eligible bidders upon the submission of a written application to the address below. The Bidding Documents will be issued through email only.

Attention : Project Manager
Project Management Office (National
Electrification Project)
Office Building No.27
Ministry of Electricity and Energy

City : Nay Pyi Taw

ZIP Code : 15011

Country : The Republic of the Union of Myanmar

Telephone : +95 67 3431176

Facsimile number : +95 673431176

Electronic mail address : nep.pmomoep@gmail.com

6. Bids must be delivered to the address below on or before 10:00 am, 20th November, 2019. Electronic bidding will not be permitted. Late bids will be rejected. Bids will be publicly opened in the presence of the bidders' designated representatives at the address below at 10:00 am, 20th November, 2019.

Yadanar Hall at Ground Floor, Office Building No.27,
Ministry of Electricity and Energy
City: Nay Pyi Taw
ZIP Code: 15011

7. All bids must be accompanied by a Bid Security as stated in ITB 19.1 Bid Data Sheet of the bidding document.

8. The address referred to above para 4 and 5 are:

Attention : Project Manager
Project Management Office (National
Electrification Project)
Office Building No.27, Ministry of Electricity and
Energy

City: Nay Pyi Taw

ZIP Code: 15011

Country: The Republic of the Union of Myanmar

Telephone: +95 67 3431176

Facsimile number: +95 673431176

Electronic mail address:

nep.pmomoep@gmail.com

Myanma Port Authority "Notice of High Tide"

Exceptionally high spring from 20.11 feet to 20.21 feet high above the chart datum are expected to occur in Yangon River during the period of October 15th to October 17th, 2019. Please be noted that it is not serious level of tide because the highest tide level have reached up to 22 feet above the chart datum in year 2014 and 2015, and this notice is normally issued whenever high tide of Yangon River is expected to reach over 20 feet high above the chart datum in order to take precautionary measures to the public living near river foreshore area of Yangon City.

US forces start Syria border pullback, alarming Kurds

QAMISHLI (Syria) — US forces in Syria started pulling back Monday from Turkish border areas, opening the way for Ankara's threatened military invasion and heightening fears of a jihadist resurgence.

The withdrawal from key positions along Syria's northern border came after the White House said it would step aside to allow for a Turkish operation President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has said could come at any moment.

The move marks a major shift in US policy, and effectively abandons the Kurds, who were Washington's main ally in the years-old battle against the so-called Islamic State group.

The Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), the Kurdish militia that controls much of northeastern Syria, said early on Monday in a statement that "US forces withdrew from the border areas with Turkey".

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights war monitor confirmed that US forces had pulled back from key positions in Ras

al-Ain and Tal Abyad.

A Kurdish official also told AFP that US forces had started withdrawing from the border, making way for a Turkish invasion, the scope of which remains to be seen. Turkey has sent reinforcements to the border in recent weeks, and Erdogan said Monday in televised remarks the long-threatened offensive could "come any night without warning". His comments came after Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said on Twitter that Turkey was "determined to ensure our country's existence and security by clearing terrorists from this region." He was referring to the SDF, which has ties to Kurdish militants inside Turkey and which Ankara considers a terrorist organisation.

'At all costs'

"The United States Armed Forces will not support or be involved in the operation, and United States forces, having defeated the ISIS territorial 'Caliphate,' will no longer be in the immediate area," the White House said.

Ankara says it wants to urgently establish a "safe zone" on the other side of the border in which to send back some of the 3.6 million refugees who fled the eight-year war in Syria and live on Turkish soil.

But the Kurds argue that Turkey's goal is to weaken the Kurdish presence in the region by modifying the demographics of the area with the return of mostly Sunni Arab refugees.

The SDF, which has repeatedly complained that US President Donald Trump's declared intention to pull out of Syria was a historic betrayal, warned of the risks that a Turkish invasion would carry for the region.

The organisation, which spearheaded — with backing from the US-led coalition — several of the most significant battles against IS over the past five years, vowed to resist any Turkish attack.

"As the Syrian Democratic Forces, we are determined to defend our land at all costs," it said in a statement posted on social media. —AFP ■



A US soldier sits atop an armoured vehicle during a demonstration by Syrian Kurds against Turkish threats at a US-led international coalition base on the outskirts of Ras al-Ain town in Syria's Hasakeh province near the Turkish border on 6 October 2019. PHOTO: AFP



Socialist Prime Minister Antonio Costa (C) arrives at a party gathering in Lisbon as exit polls show the Socialists have taken the lead in Sunday's election. PHOTO: AFP

Portugal's Socialists win re-election

LISBON (Portugal) — Portugal's incumbent Prime Minister Antonio Costa's Socialists won a general election marked by low turnout on Sunday after presiding over a period of solid economic growth following years of austerity.

The Socialist Party (PS) took 36.65 percent of the vote, followed by the centre-right Social Democrats (PSD) with 27.9 percent, according to near total results from the interior ministry.

That left the PS, which has governed for the past four years with the support of two smaller hard-left parties, with 106 seats in the 230-seat parliament, up from 86 seats in the outgoing assembly and just ten seats short of an outright majority. Four seats still must be attributed according to the results of votes cast abroad.

The election bucks the trend of declining centre-left fortunes and the rise of far-right populist forces seen elsewhere in Europe.

A new far-right formation, Chega! or "That's Enough!" entered parliament for the first time but it won a single seat.

Turnout was just 54.5 percent, the lowest level for a general election since Portugal returned to democracy after a decades-long right-wing dictatorship was toppled in 1974.

The question now is who Costa, 58, a former Lisbon mayor, will pick as his allies.

After the last general election in 2015 in which the PS finished second, Costa convinced the Communists and the Left Bloc to support a minority Socialist government, an unprecedented alliance that foes nicknamed the "geringonca", or odd contraption.

'Stability is essential'

During his victory speech Costa said he wanted to "renew this experience" of an alliance with the hard-left.

"The election shows that the Portuguese like the 'geringonca', they like this political solution," he said as supporters chanted "Victory!".

"Stability is essential for Portugal's international credibility and for attracting investors. The PS will strive to find solutions that ensure this stability for the entire legislature." Both the Left Bloc, which won 19 seats just as in the last election, and the Communists, which won 12 seats, five fewer than in the last polls, said they were willing to once again back the Socialists.

A strengthened PS has more alternatives to get laws approved in parliament, political analyst Pedro Norton told public television RTP. "This is an incentive for it to govern alone, by searching for ad hoc agreements" to govern instead of forming a formal agreement, he added. —AFP ■

Dissidents under late Uzbek leader still out in the cold

TASHKENT (Uzbekistan) — Journalist and former prisoner Dilmurod Saidov knows a thing or two about the brutal rule of Uzbekistan's first leader, the late Islam Karimov.

His house is full of reminders of the wife and daughter who died in a 2009 car crash that he nev-

er accepted was an accident, en route to visit him in a jail where he should never have served time.

"God gave me such a faithful wife and such a wonderful daughter," he told AFP, of his partner Barno, framed in a photo on a table in his flat, and five-year-old Rukhshona, who stared out from

the desktop background of a battered computer in a festive frock.

"Then he took them back again."

Saidov, 57, is one of more than 30 people imprisoned on politically motivated charges who have been released since Karimov's death in 2016 as new

leader Shavkat Mirziyoyev takes steps to reverse the country's isolationist course.

Mirziyoyev's reforms have won plaudits, and seen the ex-Soviet republic — long ranked as one of the world's worst abusers of human rights — throw its doors open to tourists and foreign in-

vestments surge.

But the new president has not publicly renounced Karimov, a man he served as prime minister for more than 13 years before stepping up as acting head of state three years ago, and has kept much of the authoritarian system intact. —AFP ■

North Korea boat collides with Japan sea patrol

TOKYO (Japan) — A North Korean boat collided with a Japanese fisheries agency patrol vessel in the Sea of Japan Monday, sending around 20 North Koreans overboard, Japan's coastguard said.

"We rescued some 10 people but their condition has not yet been confirmed," a coastguard spokesman told AFP.

Satoshi Kuwahara, a Japanese fisheries agency official, told reporters the patrol boat was warning the North Korea vessel to leave the area, which falls under Japan's exclusive economic zone. When foreign vessels illegally operate in Japan's waters, Japanese patrol boats often send an audio message, display a warning sign on an electric bulletin board, or spray water at them, Kuwahara said.

The North Korean ship, believed to be a fishing vessel, capsized after the crash with Japanese patrol boat Okuni, the spokesman added. Local media said no crew members on the Japanese patrol vessel were injured. The collision occurred in waters some 350 kilometres (217 miles) northwest of Noto peninsula

in Ishikawa prefecture in central Japan, said Kazuma Nohara, another coastguard spokesman.

"We've been strengthening patrols around the water there in cooperation with the fisheries agency," in recent years following reports that many North Korean fishing boats were poaching fish and squids, he told AFP.

Experts say some fishermen from the North are travelling far out to sea in order to satisfy government mandates for bigger catches. But their old and poorly equipped vessels are prone to mechanical faults and other problems, including running out of fuel, and there are few ways for them to call for rescue.

A record 225 suspected North Korean fishing vessels washed up on Japan's coast last year, according to the coastguard.

Boats have also washed up on Japanese shores with the crew on board dead — referred to as "ghost ships" by local media.

In 2018, 10 North Koreans rescued from a tiny wooden boat drifting off northern Japan were deported back to their country. —AFP ■

Malaysia orders ex-PM's brother to return money in 1MDB case

KUALA LUMPUR — Malaysia's anti-corruption agency said Monday it has ordered the brother of former Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak to return money allegedly embezzled from a scandal-plagued state fund.

Nazir Razak, Najib's younger brother and a former banker, was among the 80 companies, individuals, political parties and nonprofit organizations that are subject to the order issued by the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission.

The agency traced 420 million ringgit (\$100 million) paid out to the entities and individuals to funds allegedly funneled into Najib's personal bank accounts from the state fund, 1Malaysia Development Berhad, or 1MDB.

"We have given them two weeks to pay up the fine and the fine will be as low as the amount they received or as high as 2.5 times the amount they received," agency chief Latheefa Koya said. "We hope to recover as much as we can."

Najib, who is facing a total of 42 corruption charges, is accused



Former Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak speaks to reporters in Kuala Lumpur on 25 October 2018, after being released on bail. PHOTO: AFP

of pocketing nearly \$700 million from 1MDB, which he founded in 2009 just after he became prime minister. He resigned last year after his party suffered an electoral defeat. The sum was part of the more than \$4.5 billion that authorities estimated had been misappropriated from 1MDB.

Nazir, Najib's brother, received 25.7 million ringgit of the embezzled money, according to the agency. The amount received by Nazir is believed to be related to an election funding scandal

in which Najib had reportedly transferred \$7 million into Nazir's personal bank account just before the May 2013 general election to be disbursed to then ruling-party politicians. Nazir has admitted receiving the money.

The entity that had received the largest amount of money among those named offenders on Monday under the anti-money laundering law was Solar Shine Sdn. Bhd.

The company received 134 million ringgit, the agency said. Appearing as a witness during one of Najib's trials, Lew Choon Lai, the company's founder, admitted receiving money from Najib for campaign purposes. In June, the agency initiated a civil forfeiture proceedings against 41 individuals and entities to recover 270 million ringgit that also came from Najib's personal bank accounts.

So far, the government has recovered over \$220 million worth of 1MDB-linked assets with assistance from authorities abroad, including in the United States and Singapore. —Kyodo News ■

First Hong Kongers appear in court for defying mask ban

HONG KONG (China) — Hong Kong pro-democracy protesters arrested for defying a new face mask ban appeared in court on Monday following a weekend of unrest which saw bloody clashes with police and widespread vandalism that crippled the city's train network.

The international finance hub convulsed with three straight

days of rallies and riots after its pro-Beijing leader invoked colonial-era emergency powers to ban face coverings at protests.

Chief Executive Carrie Lam, who has record-low approval ratings, said the measure was needed to try and quash four months of huge and increasingly violent pro-democracy rallies.

But the ban did little to halt

the chaos or stop huge crowds of masked protesters from hitting the streets in defiance as opponents decried the move as a slide towards authoritarianism.

On Monday morning, a male university student and a 38-year-old woman were the first people to be charged with illegally wearing masks as supporters packed the courtroom, many wearing

face coverings.

They were both charged with unlawful assembly, which carries up to three years jail time, and with defying the mask ban, which has a maximum one-year sentence. Both were released on bail.

Outside the court, demonstrators queued to get in, some chanting slogans like "Wearing a face mask isn't a crime" and "The law is unjust".

Many said they feared the mask ban was just the first of more emergency orders to come.

"It's an excuse to just introduce other totalitarian laws, next is martial law," one protester outside the court, who gave his surname Lo, told AFP.

Internet next?

In a radio interview, a government cabinet member suggested internet curbs could be introduced, a move which would have profound repercussions for the city. "At this stage, the government will consider all legal means to stop the riots," Executive Council member Ip Kwok-him told Commercial Radio. "We would not rule out a ban on the

internet."

Protesters use online forums and encrypted messaging apps to mobilise and organise.

On the mainland, Beijing flexed its muscles by pulling a top US basketball team's games from state broadcaster CCTV after its manager posted a tweet featuring the message "Fight for Freedom. Stand with Hong Kong".

The Houston Rockets tried to calm waters, issuing apologies from players and the manager.

Hong Kong has been battered by 18 consecutive weekends of unrest, fanned by widespread public anger over Chinese rule and the police response to protests. The rallies were ignited by a now-scrapped plan to allow extraditions to the mainland, which fuelled fears of an erosion of liberties promised under the 50-year "one country, two systems" model China agreed to ahead of the 1997 handover by Britain.

After Beijing and local leaders took a hard stance, the demonstrations snowballed into a wider movement calling for more democratic freedoms and police accountability. —AFP ■



Protesters covered themselves with umbrellas as they gathered outside the Eastern District Courts in Hong Kong. PHOTO: AFP

Myanmar U-19 train in Taunggyi for 2020 AFC qualifiers



Myanmar U-19 players receive training yesterday at the Fitness Gym Center in Taunggyi Sports Stadium ahead of the 2020 AFC U-19 qualifiers. **PHOTO: MFF**

IN preparation for the upcoming qualifiers for the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) U-19 Championship, the Myanmar U-19 men's national football team is currently undergoing special training in Taunggyi, according to the Myanmar Football Federation.

The team took fitness training yesterday at the Fitness Gym Center of the Sports Stadium of Taunggyi.

Team Myanmar also played a friendly match

against a local club, in spite of the cold weather in Taunggyi City last week.

Myanmar has been placed in Group I of the qualifiers for the 2020 AFC U-19 Championship with China, South Korea, and Singapore.

Myanmar will play China on 6 November, South Korea on 8 November, and Singapore on 10 November.

All the matches will take place at the Thuwunna Stadium in Yangon.

The qualifiers, which are set to be held at the

Thuwunna Stadium in Yangon, are crucial for team Myanmar to advance to the next round of the 2020 AFC U-19 Championship, which will be held in Uzbekistan from 14 to 31 October, 2020.

The best teams and the best four runners-up teams from each of the 11 groups will advance to the championship, according to the AFC.

The Myanmar U-19 had entered the semifinal stage in the 2014 edition of the AFC U-19 Championship.—Lynn Thit (Tgi)■

Yangon United signs midfielder Maung Maung Win

YANGON United recently signed former Zwegapin United player Maung Maung Win on a two-year contract, as part of preparations for the next season of the Myanmar National League in 2020, according to a statement issued by the football club.

Speaking about joining Yangon United, the midfielder said: "The team made me an offer to play in the midfielder position, and that came as a real chance for me to work towards a better future with the team."

"I believe that Yangon United is the most suitable place for me to showcase and hone my talents," he added.

Maung Maung Win also asked fans to support him during his stint with Yangon United.

"I am very pleased to be here, and I also want to tell my fans that I need all your support to do my best," the midfielder said.

Meanwhile, Yangon United team manager U Myint Thein said: "We have been trying to sign him since last year, but the real chance has come now.

Actually, our team needs stronger midfielders. The main reason we signed him is that Maung Maung Win is an all-round player, and he has achieved the impossible in every season of the Myanmar National League with his former clubs."

Maung Maung Win started his professional football career in 2009 with Magwe F.C.

He spent two years with Magwe, and then moved to Zeyar Shwe Myay F.C. for two years.

Maung Maung Win next joined Rakhine United for two years.

After that, he transferred to ChinLand (former GFA) for the 2016 and 2017 season.

Before joining Yangon United, he spent two years with Zwegapin United. He has represented the nation at various youth levels.

The midfielder had also been selected on the Myanmar national football team in 2018.—Lynn Thit (Tgi) ■



Midfielder Maung Maung Win (L) holds the Yangon United insignia after a contract signing with the team's officials. **PHOTO:YUFC**

Na outlasts Cantlay in playoff to win US PGA Las Vegas title

LOS ANGELES (United States)— Kevin Na made it closer than it had to be, but shook off a triple-bogey to beat Patrick Cantlay in a playoff Sunday to win the US PGA Tour Shriners Hospitals for Children Open for the second time.

Korean-born American Na, who won his first tour title on the same TPC Summerlin course in Las Vegas in 2011, captured his fourth with a gritty finish as the shadows were starting to fall.

His one-under par 70 put him level on 23-under 261 with Cantlay, who closed with a 68, through 72 holes.

After both birdied the first playoff hole, Na sealed it with a par at the second

extra hole, where Cantlay left his birdie putt nearly six feet short before Na hit his four feet past.

Cantlay ended up with a three-putt bogey while Na rolled in his par attempt for an emotional win.

"I've lost three playoffs," Na said. "This is my first playoff win. I kept telling myself 'This is a playoff that I'm going to win.'"

Na, who took a two-shot lead into the final round after three rounds of spectacular putting, looked headed for a much easier victory after birdies at the sixth and seventh -- where he rolled in a 27-footer.

He bounced back from a bogey at the eighth with

a birdie at the ninth, where he got up and down from a greenside bunker.

But a poor tee shot at the 10th led to a triple-bogey seven. He remained one shot in front of Cantlay

only because Cantlay also bogeyed 10.

Both players birdied the 12th, 13th and 15th before Cantlay took a one-shot lead with a birdie at 16, where Na was in the



Korean-born American Kevin Na celebrates with the trophy after winning the US PGA Tour's Shriners Hospitals for Children Open at the second playoff hole in Las Vegas. **PHOTO: AFP**

water on the way to a bogey.

It was Cantlay's turn to find the water at 17, where Na drained a 23-foot par saving putt that sent them to the 72nd hole tied on 23-under.

- 'A fighter' -

"Came down way too close," Na said. "I had a comfortable lead, I felt really comfortable. I hit a bad tee shot, got unlucky and made a triple and all of a sudden I felt like I was the underdog.

"But I'm a fighter," he added. "That putt on 17, I'm doing everything I can to make that putt."

Cantlay, who won the Las Vegas title in 2017 and finished runner-up last year, said his six-footer for

par at the second playoff hole "broke a little more than I thought.

"The first one was really slow," added Cantlay, who said he couldn't be too disappointed with his week.

"I played really well," he said. "I had a lot of putts I thought were going to go in today that didn't. All in all I'm playing really well and I'll take that momentum into next week."

American Pat Perez finished alone in third on 263 after a three-under 68. Defending champion Bryson DeChambeau fired a 63 to head a group on 264 that also included Canadian Adam Hadwin and American Brian Stuard. — AFP ■