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State Counsellor receives Princess Yoko of Mikasa of Japan



State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi meets with Her Imperial Highness Princess Yoko of Mikasa in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

DAW Aung San Suu Kyi, State Counsellor of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, received Her Imperial Highness Princess Yoko of Mikasa, at 10:00 am on 16 December 2019 at her residence in Nay Pyi Taw.

At the meeting, they cordially dis-

cussed matters relating to the significance of historic places of Myanmar Princess Yoko had visited during her trip, traditional and cultural affinities between Myanmar and Japan and further enhancement of friendly ties between Myanmar and Japan.—MNA ■

Biographical Resume H.E. MR. Nguyen Xuan Phuc Prime Minister of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam

H.E. MR. Nguyen Xuan Phuc was born on 20 July 1954.

Mr. Nguyen Xuan Phuc started his career at the National Economics University (NEU) as Student of economics from 1973 to 1978. He also studied economic management at the National University of Singapore from 1993 to 1996. From 1978 to 1979, he worked as the Staff at the Quang Nam-Da Nang Economic Management Board. From 1979 to 1993, he worked as the Staff, Deputy Chief, Chief of the Office of Quang Nam-Da Nang Provincial People's Committee, Party Secretary of the Office. From 1993 to 1996, he worked as Director of the Tourism Department, Director of the Planning and Investment of Quang Nam-Da Nang Province.

From 1997 to 2001, he worked as the Deputy Chairman, Permanent Deputy Chairman of Quang Nam Provincial People's Committee cum Head of the Management Board of the Quang Nam Industrial Zones cum Chairman of the Quang Nam Cooperative Alliance. From 2001 to 2006, Mr. Nguyen Xuan Phuc worked as the Vice Secretary of the Quang Nam provincial Party Committee, Chairman of the Quang Nam Provincial People's Committee, deputy to the 11th National Assembly, member of the 11th National Assembly's Economic and Budgetary Commission, Vice Secretary of the Quang Nam provincial Party Committee, Chairman of the Quang Nam Provincial People's Committee, deputy to the 11th National Assembly and member of the 11th National Assembly's Economic and Budgetary Commission.

From March 2006 to August 2007, he worked as the Deputy Inspector General. He also worked as member of the 10th



CPV Central Committee, Permanent Vice Chairman of the Office of Government and member of the 11th National Assembly's Economic and Budgetary Commission.

From August 2007 to January 2011, he worked as the Member of the 10th CPV Central Committee, Minister-Chairman of the Office of Government and Head of the Prime Minister's Task Force for Administrative Procedure Reform. From January 2011 to July 2011, he worked as the Member of the Politburo of the 11th CPV Central Committee and also worked as the Minister-Chairman of the Office of Government.

From August 2011 to March 2016, he worked as the Member of the Politburo of the 12th CPV Central Committee, Deputy Prime Minister and Deputy Head of the Central Steering Committee for Prevention and Control of Corruption, respectively.

Mr. Nguyen Xuan Phuc was elected as Prime Minister of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam by 11th session of the 13th National Assembly on 7 April 2016.

He is married to Mrs. Tran Nguyet Thu, and they have two children. ■

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Pyithu Hluttaw

Second Pyithu Hluttaw 14th regular session holds 16th-day meeting

THE 16th-day meeting of the 14th regular session of the Second Pyithu Hluttaw was held at the Pyithu Hluttaw meeting hall of the Hluttaw Building in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

Asterisk marked questions and answers

During the asterisk marked questions and answer session, questions raised by Dr Sein Mya Aye of Dala constituency and U Sein Bo of Myawady constituency on electric meters and electricity supply to Myawady were answered by Deputy Minister for Electricity and Energy U Khin Maung Win.

Questions raised by U Aung Myint of Thayawady constituency on upgrading Thayawady District People's Hospital, U Kyaw Soe of Bamauk constituency on health care coverage for Bamauk Township, Daw Aye Aye Mu (a) Daw Shamie of Kalay constituency on a plan to construct a station hospital in Kalay Township Mauklin village tract, U Nyein Thit (a) U Thaug Tun of Mahaangmyay constituency on accommodation for 403 nurses serving in Manda-



Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U T Khun Myat. PHOTO: MNA

lay General Hospital and U Pa Htan of Matupi constituency on upgrading a rural health centre to a station hospital in Matupi Township were answered by Deputy Minister for Health and Sports Dr Mya Lay Sein.

Amendment motions on Tax Appellate Tribunal Rule

Following the asterisk marked question and answer session Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U T Khun Myat announced for Hluttaw representatives who want to table amendment motions on Tax

Appellate Tribunal Rule sent by Ministry of Planning, Finance and Industry to register their names.

Hluttaw discusses, approves and accepts Hluttaw Rights Committee annual report

Next, Tatmadaw Pyithu Hluttaw representatives Lt-Col Moe Myint Aung and Lt-Col Kyaw Moe Aung discussed Pyithu Hluttaw, Hluttaw Rights Committee annual report. Committee secretary Dr Hla Moe responded to the discussion and committee member Dr Myint Thein tabled a motion

for the Hluttaw to approve and accept the annual report. Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker obtained the comment of the Hluttaw and approved and accepted the annual report.

Pyithu Hluttaw Banks and Financial Development Committee annual report

Similarly Tatmadaw Pyithu Hluttaw representative Colonel Myint Han discussed Pyithu Hluttaw Banks and Financial Development Committee annual report and committee chair person Daw Khin San Hlaing responded to the discussion. Committee Secretary U Tin Tun Naing tabled a motion for the Hluttaw to approve and accept the report and Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker announced the Hluttaw's approval and acceptance after obtaining the comments of the Hluttaw.

Pyithu Hluttaw Investment and Industrial Development Committee annual report

Pyithu Hluttaw Investment and Industrial Development Committee annual report was also discussed by Tatmadaw Py-

ithu Hluttaw representative Major Win Min Tun and committee chairman U Win Thein Zaw responded to the discussion. Committee secretary U Aung Kyaw Kyaw Oo then tabled a motion for the Hluttaw to approve and accept the report. Here too Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker obtained the comment of the Hluttaw and announced the Hluttaw's approval and acceptance of the report.

Pyithu Hluttaw Electricity and Energy Development Committee annual report

Afterwards, Pyithu Hluttaw Electricity and Energy Development committee secretary U Soe Myint (a) U Aung Zaw Myint tabled a motion of the Hluttaw to accept and approve the annual report. Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker announced the Hluttaw's acceptance and approval of the annual report after obtaining the comment of the Hluttaw.

The 17th-day meeting of the 14th regular session of the Second Pyithu Hluttaw is planned to be held on 18 December. —Aye Aye Thant (MNA)

(Translated by Zaw Min)

Amyotha Hluttaw

16th-day meeting of 14th regular session of Second Amyotha Hluttaw

THE 16th-day meeting of the 14th regular session of the Second Amyotha Hluttaw was held at Amyotha Hluttaw building yesterday morning where asterisk marked questions were raised and answered, a motion debated and approved and a report read and submitted.

Asterisk question and answer session

In the question and answer session a question raised by U Min Swe Naing of Kachin State constituency 6 on a plan to combine five wards and village tracts in Kachin State Mohnyin Township Mohnyin town to a town wards was answered by Union Government Office Ministry Deputy Minister U Tin Myint. Deputy Minister U Tin Myint also responded to a question raised by Win Maung of Magway Region constituency 6 on a plan to construct a two store building in Magway Region Salin Township as a combined office for departments. Questions raised by U



Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than. PHOTO: MNA

Lal Min Htan of Chin State constituency 10 was also answered by Union Government Office Ministry Deputy Minister U Tin Myint.

Questions raised by U Kyaw Thaug of Sagaing Region constituency 1 on a plan to conduct river water pumping project to provide water to a village in Sagaing Township and U Tin Aung Tun of Magway Region constituency 5 on farm land issue were answered by Deputy Minister for Agricul-

ture, Livestock and Irrigation U Hla Kyaw.

Deputy Minister for Education U Win Maw Tun meanwhile responded to a question raised by U Myint Naing of Rakhine State constituency 5 on upgrading two schools in Rakhine State Kyauktaw Township.

Hluttaw approves Industrial Zone Bill

Following the asterisk marked question and answer session Amyotha Hluttaw bill

committee member Brig-Gen Tint Lwin reread the committee report on Industrial Zone Bill approved and sent with amendments by Pyithu Hluttaw and Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than obtained the decision of the Hluttaw and approved it.

Hluttaw discusses and approves motion on regulating tissue-culture banana plantations

Next, a motion tabled by Dr Khun Win Thaug of Kachin State constituency 11 on properly regulating tissue-culture banana plantations tabled by Dr Khun Win Thaug of Kachin State constituency 11 was discussed by U Hla San of Magway Region constituency 1, U Sa Khin Zaw Lin of Ayeyawady Region constituency 2, U Khin Win of Magway Region constituency 2, U Maung Maung Ohn of Ayeyawady Region constituency 5, Naw Chris Tun (a) Dr Arkar Moe of Kayin State constituency 7 and Deputy Minis-

ter for Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation U Hla Kyaw.

As Dr Khun Win Thaug want the motion approved by the Hluttaw, the matter was put to a vote where 168 voted for 4 against and 2 abstaining and an announcement was made of Hluttaw approving the motion.

Committee report read

As a final agenda of the day, Amyotha Hluttaw Government Guarantees, Pledges and Undertakings Vetting Committee report for the period from Second Amyotha Hluttaw first regular session to 13th regular session was read by committee member U Pyu Lwin.

Afterwards, Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker announced for Hluttaw representatives who want to discuss the report to register their names. The 17th day meeting of the Second Amyotha Hluttaw's 14th regular session will be held on 18 December. —Aung Ye Thwin

(Translated by Zaw Min)

Vietnamese Prime Minister lands in Nay Pyi Taw

UPON the invitation of President U Win Myint and First Lady Daw Cho Cho, Prime Minister Mr Nguyen Xuan Phuc of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam arrived on an official visit and landed in Nay Pyi Taw at 7:45 pm yesterday. The Vietnamese Prime Minister was first welcomed by U Min Thein, Director-General of the Protocol Department, and Vietnamese Ambassador Dr Luan Thuy Duong on board his special flight.

The Prime Minister and delegation were then welcomed with a Guard of Honor at Nay Pyi Taw International Airport by Union Minister for Education Dr Myo

Thein Gyi, Union Minister for Investment and Foreign Economic Relations U Thaug Tun, Nay Pyi Taw Council Chairman Dr Myo Aung, Myanmar Ambassador to Viet Nam U Kyaw Soe Win, MOFA Permanent Secretary U Soe Han and other officials. — MNA (Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

Vietnamese Prime Minister Mr Nguyen Xuan Phuc welcomed by Union Minister U Thaug Tun at the Nay Pyi Taw International Airport on 16 December. **PHOTO: MNA**



WHO's public health prize handed over to National Archive Department

THE handover ceremony of Dr Lee Jong-wook memorial Prize for Public Health (2019) to the National Archive Department was held in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday afternoon.

The WHO presented the prize to Myanmar in August this year during the 72nd session of World Health Assembly to recognize public healthcare services at PinU rural health centre in Ngaphe Township, Magway Region. The report was produced by Deputy Director-General Dr Than Lwin Tun from the Department of Traditional Medicine and his team from the Department of

Public Health.

Dr Than Lwin Tun handed over the prize and related document to the Director General of National Archive Department.

The WHO also awarded this prize to Director General of the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) Professor Balram Bhargava this year.

Myanmar has won the Sasakawa Health Prize in 1986 and the Leon Bernard Foundation Award in 2007.— MNA

(Translated by Aung Khin)



Dr Lee Jong-wook memorial Prize for Public Health (2019) handed over to the National Archive Department. **PHOTO: MNA**

45th Rakhine State Day commemoration held in Sittway



Rakhine State Chief Minister U Nyi Pu delivers a speech at the 45th Anniversary of Rakhine State Day event at U Ottama Hall in Sittway, Rakhine State on 15 December. **PHOTO: MNA**

THE 45th Anniversary of Rakhine State Day was observed at U Ottama Hall in Sittway, Rakhine State, at 9 am on 15 December.

The event was opened with a performance of Tharliswa Rakhine State by the local cultural troupe. Rakhine State Chief Minister U Nyi Pu then read a message from President U Win Myint commemorating 45th Rakhine State Day.

This was followed by a historical explanation on the formation of Rakhine State by the lecturer of the Myanmar Literature Department, Sittway

University, U Zaw Win Naing.

Next, the Chief Minister and wife, the Deputy Speaker of the State Hluttaw, State Chief Justice, state ministers and their wives, and the State Advocate-General conferred awards on winners of the outstanding performances regarding the 45th Rakhine State Day, including literary excellence, essay composition for the occasion, cartoon drawings and storytelling competitions.

This was followed by Grade-6 student Maung Ye Wunna Lin of B.E.H.S. (2) Sittway retelling his first place

story, 'Kye-phyu-ywar' to the audience, after which the Chief Minister took a documentary photo with all attendees.

The commemoration was attended by department officials, local elders, teachers, writers, receivers of outstanding awards and students.

Earlier at 5:30 am, Rakhine State cabinet members led the offering of the first meal for Buddhist monks at daybreak to commemorate Rakhine State Day at Khine Thazin Hall. —MNA

(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U T Khun Myat receives Vietnamese Ambassador

PYITHU HLUTTAW Speaker U T Khun Myat received Ambassador of Viet Nam Dr Luan Thuy Duong who has completed her tour of duty at the Pyithu Hluttaw guest hall in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

During the meeting, they cordially discussed and exchanged views on promoting friendship relations between the governments, parliaments

and peoples of Myanmar and Viet Nam, in investment and trade, cooperation in economic, communications and education related sectors. – MNA

(Translated by TTN)

Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U T Khun Myat shakes hands with Vietnamese Ambassador Dr Luan Thuy Duong. **PHOTO: MNA**



National Urban Policy Forum held in Nay Pyi Taw



Union Minister for Construction U Han Zaw addresses the National Urban Policy Forum for final consultation at MICC-II in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

THE Ministry of Construction organized the National Urban Policy Forum for final consultation at the Myanmar International Convention Center-II in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning.

The event was attended by Chairman of Constitutional Tribunal of the Union, Chairman of Union Election Commission, Union Ministers, Union Attorney-General, Chairman of Nay Pyi Taw Council, Committee Chairs of Pyithu Hluttaw and Amyotha Hluttaw, Deputy Ministers, State/Region government ministers, Mayors of Yangon and Mandalay, Vice Mayors, Hluttaw representatives, departmental heads, Korean Ambassador to Myanmar, officials from UN-Habitat and partner organizations, representatives from local and international organizations.

In his opening remark, Union Minister for Construction U Han Zaw talked about insufficiencies of infrastructure in global countries resulted from rural to urban migrations, random settlements unsystematic urbanization plans and natural disasters.

He added Myanmar also has many challenges, like oth-

er countries, in handling urban management, public services, living and safety of people amidst tremendous changes in various situations, and that the country needs to develop urban laws for sustainable development of urban areas and a strong link between urban and rural and city to city. According to survey on Myanmar urban development, the number of urban population 15.4 million (30 per cent of the country's population) in 2014 is expected to reach 20 million by 2030. Another research has also shown that Myanmar cities with over 0.2 million of residences would see double number of population by 2030. The country also needs to invest US\$7 billion annually in urban development plan as a total of \$146 billion is required for 20 years. Myanmar is also implementing smart city projects in Nay Pyi Taw, Yangon and Mandalay, while the Union-level projects Korea-Myanmar Industrial Complex Project, New Mandalay Resort City and Smart District Project are being developed under smart development programmes.

The National Urban Policy Forum focused on implementation of prioritized sector in urban

policy in line with the Myanmar Sustainable Development Plan (MSDP), township administration and financing, enactment of urban law, land management, real estates, urbanization, environment and climate changes, regional development programmes, infrastructure and public services, and socio-economic development.

Korea Ambassador to Myanmar Mr Lee Sang-hwa and Regional Director of UN-Habitat Mr Atsushi Koresawa extended greetings before 'The Future of Asian & Pacific Cities' video was shown. UN-Habitat Myanmar's Country Programme Manager Mr Bijiay Karmacharya briefed on national urban policy, followed by the show of 'The New Urban Agenda'.

During the forum, consultations were made on the four prioritized areas in National Urban Policy, strategies for Smart City plan, draft National Urban Law and creating city profile of Kalaw.

The forum was aimed to adopt national urban policies which could implement the Myanmar Sustainable Development Plan (MSDP) and the Sustainable Development Goals.—MNA
(Translated by Aung Khin)

MNHRC conducts advanced human rights course

MYANMAR National Human Rights Commission is organizing its second advanced human rights course at the headquarters in Hline Township, Yangon.

U Win Mra, the Chairman of MNHRC, made a remark at the opening ceremony yesterday morning.

Vice Chairman U Sit Myaing and Training In-charge Deputy Director-General Dr Khaing Khaing Win explained the course which is attended by 37 trainees

and will be conducted until 17 January 2020.

The course is intended for better understanding about basic concepts of human rights, practicing them and supporting to emerge a society with high human rights norms.

The MNHRC has already organized the five basic human rights courses, and one advanced course to disseminate human rights knowledge.—MNA
(Translated by Aung Khin)



Myanmar National Human Rights Commission Chairman U Win Mra addresses the second advanced human rights course at MNHRC headquarters yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

Trade Mark Ads

Call Thin Thin May, 09251022355, 09974424848

Find solution based on discussions and negotiations

Our ethnic brothers and sisters must find a solution based on discussions and negotiations free from mistrust and firm in faith. From there, we can proceed in lasting solidarity for the emergence of a Constitution that is fitting for our country and in accordance with democratic practices and federal principles.

(Extract from Message of Greetings sent by President U Win Myint to the 71st Anniversary of Independence Day Ceremony on 4 January 2019)



The meeting 69/2019 of the Joint Committee on Amending the 2008 Constitution is in progress at Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Building D in Nay Pyi Taw on 16 December. **PHOTO: MNA**

Joint Committee on Amending 2008 Constitution holds meeting 69/2019

MEETING 69/2019 of the Joint Committee on Amending the 2008 Constitution was held at Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Building D in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

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

Deputy Chairman of the Joint Committee Amyotha Hluttaw Deputy Speaker U Aye Tha Aung, Joint Committee Secretary Dr Myat Nyana Soe, Joint Secretary U Htay Win Aung (a) U Pyone Cho and members who were Hluttaw representatives from political parties and Tatmadaw Hluttaw representatives and officials from Pyidaungsu

Hluttaw Office. The meetings of Joint Committee on Amending the 2008 Constitution so far had covered suggestions and comments from Preamble of the Constitution up to Chapter VIII Citizen, Fundamental Rights and Duties of the Citizens. It was now covering suggestions and comments on Chapter IX Election. — MNA

(Translated by TTN)

MOGE signs agreements with private companies on development of offshore block A-6

THE Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise under the Ministry of Electricity and Energy signed agreements with MPRL E&P Pte Ltd., Woodside Energy (Myanmar) Pte Ltd., and Total E&P Myanmar on production sharing contract and upstream midstream ratio for development of the discovery area in offshore block A-6.

The signing ceremony was held at Kempinski Hotel in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday af-

ternoon, and Union Minister U Win Khaing delivered a speech, calling for successful cooperation of partner companies, safety measures and commercial production commencing at the end of 2023.

The Myanmar national-owned signed a production sharing contract with MOGE in 2007, and discovered natural gas for commercial production. It partnered with the Woodside Energy (Myanmar) Pte Ltd.,

and the Total E&P Myanmar in 2015 and 2018 for discovering and exploration at the block.

The offshore block A-6 is a very reliable project for domestic natural gas consumption, and that it is jointly implemented by the private companies.

The signing ceremony was also attended by Union Minister for Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation U Ohn Win, Union Minister for Planning, Finance and Industry U Soe Win, Union Minister for Investment and Foreign Economic Relations U Thaung Tun, Union Attorney-General U Tun Tun Oo, Pyithu Hluttaw Electricity and Energy Development Committee Chairman U Kyi Moe Naing, Amyotha Hluttaw Construction, Industry, Electricity and Energy Committee Chairman U Saw Moe Myint, Deputy Minister U Khin Maung Win and Dr Tun Naing, Ayeyawady Region Government's Electrical Power, Energy, Industry and Transport Minister U Win Htay and officials.—MNA

(Translated by Aung Khin)



Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise and MPRL E&P Pte Ltd. sign an agreement on development of offshore block A-6. **PHOTO: MNA**

Union Minister for IFER receives Executive Vice-President of Woodside Energy Ltd



U Thaung Tun, the Union Minister for Investment and Foreign Economic Relations, holds talks with Ms Meg O' Neill, Executive Vice-President of Woodside Energy Ltd, at his ministry in Nay Pyi Taw on 16 December. **PHOTO: MNA**

UNION MINISTER for Investment and Foreign Economic Relations, U Thaung Tun, received Executive Vice-President Ms Meg O' Neill of Woodside Energy Ltd, Australia's largest oil and gas production company, at the Ministry of Investment and Foreign Economic Relations in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning.

The Union Minister and the Executive Vice-President of Woodside Energy company discussed matters relating to

plans to develop the A-6 offshore block as well as the company's Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programs.

Woodside Energy company has a 40 per cent stake in the A-6 block with Myanmar Petroleum Resources Ltd. (MPRL E&P) form Myanmar which holds 20 per cent. French Energy Company TOTAL has a 40 per cent share. —MNA

(Translated by TTN)

Myanmar, India election commissions hold joint capacity building training

THE Union Election Commission of Myanmar and the Election Commission of India have jointly organized a training course on voting, vote counting and announcing the results, with the opening ceremony for the course held at the UEC Office in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

Firstly, UEC member U Aung Myint spoke of the UEC's emphasis on raising the capacity and capabilities of staff to ensure the upcoming 2020 General Election are held successfully to the standards of the five norms.

He said the processes of voting, counting the votes and

announcing the results are all integral parts of the electoral process. He said he hoped that this training course will produce good experiences in having participants compare the electoral processes of India and Myanmar, in line with its election laws, by-laws and protocols.

Next, Dr Noor Mohammad, Consultant of the India International Institute of Democracy and Election Management (IIDEM), delivered an address. The first day of the training course then commenced and will continue for 5 days till 20 December. —MNA

(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)



The opening ceremony of the training course on voting, vote counting and announcing the results is in progress at the UEC Office in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

Mass rally in Maubin shows support for State Counsellor



People in Maubin take part in the rally supporting State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. **PHOTO: AUNG KHAING**

RESIDENTS of Maubin in Maubin District, Ayeyawady Region, held a mass rally yesterday to show support of State Counsellor and Union Minister for Foreign Affairs, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, who contested the case filed by The Gambia against Myanmar at the International Court of Justice.

Regional Chief Minister U Hla Moe Aung and his cabi-

net, Maubin Township Hluttaw Representative U Zaw Moe, district/township-level department officials, philanthropic organizations, religious groups, teachers, students and residents of 76 village-tracts, 12 wards and 442 sub-villages showed up at the rally.

The forty-thousand strong mass rally first gathered in the compound of Maubin's Shwe

Phone Myint Pagoda holding placards with 'We Stand With Our Leader' on them. They then peacefully marched through Phayar Street to Myo Shaung Street, from Bogyoke Statue to Yele Main Road to Kannar Road and back to the first rendezvous location. — Aung Khaing, Aung Myint Myat (Maubin)

(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

Police seizes heroin, stimulant tablets in Muse

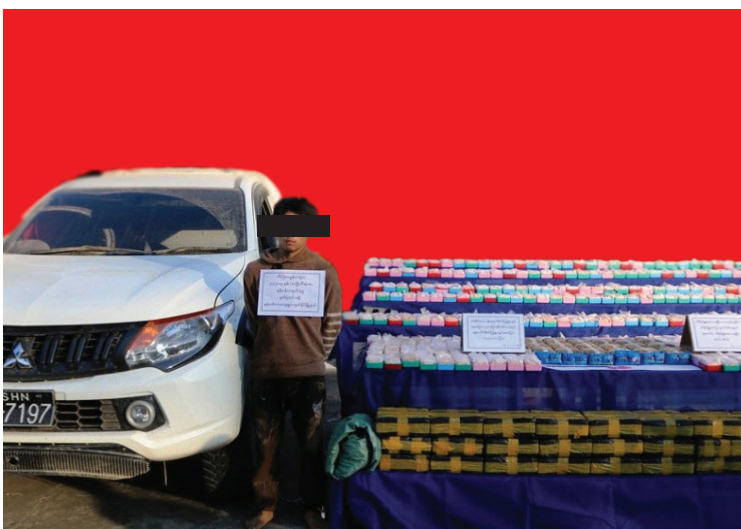
LOCAL police seized drugs worth K312 million in Muse on 15 December.

A combination team including police personnel from Drug Enforcement Division searched a car driven by Li Kyar Hlan near Oriental toll gate on the Lashio-Muse Road, Mongyu 105-mile Village, Muse Township, and arrested him together with 6.6

kilogram of heroin and 120,000 stimulant tablets worth K312 million and two hand phone.

The police charged the 30 years old suspect under the Anti Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law, according to Myanmar Police Force. — GNLM

(Translated by TTN)



Suspect Li Kyar Hlan seen together with illegal drugs confiscated. **PHOTO: MNA**

Hluttaw Committee scrutinizes completion of government pledges



The first day of the meeting of the Government's Guarantees, Pledges and Undertakings Vetting Committee of the Pyithu Hluttaw in progress on 16 December. **PHOTO: MNA**

THE Government's Guarantees, Pledges and Undertakings Vetting Committee of the Pyithu Hluttaw is checking implementations of government ministries at both Union and State/Region levels on their answers to the questions raised from the

first regular session to the 13th regular session of Second Pyithu Hluttaw.

On the first day of coordination meeting, Dr May Win Myint, the Chair of committee, urged officials from government ministers for implementation of

these works without delay.

The meeting will be held until 19 December to coordinate discussions and recommendations between the committee and government officials. — MNA

(Translated by Aung Khin)

Three more companies expected to list on YSX next year

THREE more companies are likely to get listed on the Yangon Stock Exchange (YSX) in 2020, according to the Securities and Exchange Commission of Myanmar (SECM).

“The companies will be listed on the exchange in early 2020. They must file a prospectus with the SECM to receive approval for offering shares. The listing process takes approximately 1 year and 6 months,” said an official with the YSX at the Media Workshop for Myanmar Capital Market, held on 5 December at the stock exchange.

The SECM will strive to encourage companies to list on the YSX and proceed with foreign participation on the exchange, he added.

At present, shares of five listed companies — First Myanmar Investment (FMI), Myanmar Thilawa SEZ Holdings (MTSH), Myanmar Citizens Bank (MCB), First Private Bank (FPB), and TMH Telecom Public Co. Ltd — are being traded on the stock exchange. The value of shares traded on the Yangon Stock Exchange (YSX) declined sharply last month to K992.69 million compared with K1.36 billion recorded in October. While 141,361 shares were traded on the exchange in November, 259,245 shares were traded in October.

The value of stocks traded on the exchange had reached a peak this year in September at K2.47 billion. A total of 421,358 shares were traded on the



YSX that month. In November, the shares of FMI closed at K12,000, MTSH at K3,850, MCB at K8,000, FPB at K25,500, and TMH at K2,700. On 12 July, the SECM, under the Ministry of Planning, Finance and Industry, had issued a press statement announcing that foreigners would be allowed to invest in shares listed on the YSX within a few months and currently, they are making preparations for this. The YSX held a seminar on Foreign Participation in Myanmar Stock Market on 14 December at the stock exchange.

At the seminar, U Than Aung, founder and CEO of Maximax Solution Corporate Advisory and Executive Learning Institute, made a presentation on Investors' Perspective on Foreign Participation in Myanmar Stock Market. U Thet Htun Oo, executive senior manager of Yangon Stock Exchange, discussed the advantages of foreign participation in

the Myanmar stock market compared with experiences in other developing countries, highlighting better capital inflow, long term and sustainable investment, encouragement to good corporate governance, and support for market orientation. He also discussed trends on the YSX.

In accordance with Section 42(a) of the Securities and Exchange Law and Section 4 of the Trading Participant Business Regulations, the YSX has given trading qualification to some securities companies — Myanmar Securities Exchange Centre Co. Ltd. (MSEC), KBZ Stirling Coleman Securities Co. Ltd. (KBZSC), CB Securities Limited (CBSC), AYA Trust Securities Co. Ltd. (AYATSC), KTZ Ruby Hill Securities Co. Ltd. (KTZRH), and UAB Securities Limited (UABSC).

According to the exchange, investors have to send their buying or selling orders to the YSX through

securities companies which have a securities license issued by SECM as well as a trading qualification provided by YSX.

The stock exchange was launched three years ago to improve the private business sector. It disseminates rules and regulations regarding the stock exchange and knowledge of share trading through stock investment seminars.

The YSX has doubled its stock trade matching time from two to four per day. In addition to this, it has held promotional events to attract new investors and encourage existing investors to trade more actively. The YSX has also sought the government's support to get more public companies to participate in the stock market and to help more institutional investors, such as financing companies, investment banks, and insurance companies, to emerge.— Ko Htet (*Translated by Ei Myat Mon*)

Land in Myaungtagar Zone, Phase 1 plots put on sale; committee sorting land types

By Nyein Nyein

AS part of the sale of land announced by the Yangon Region Government for setting up industrial businesses and public housing, plots of land in the Myaungtagar Industrial Zone went under the hammer along with plots identified for Phase 1 of the sale, said U Than, joint secretary of the Yangon City Development Committee (YCDC).

The Land Management Committee is currently processing applications and apportioning land types submitted by interested buyers for the regional government-owned land, he said. “Earlier, lands at the Myaungtagar Industrial Zone were designated to be sold in Phase 2, but they have been sold at the same time with those in Phase 1. There are more than 170 plots in the industrial zone. Currently, land types are being processed for the applications we have received. We will divide the applications for public housing and industrial businesses,” said U Than.

As per the Yangon Region Government's announcement, plots of land will be sold in three phases.

Land-use applications for 500 land plots in Hline-thayar, Shwepyitha, and four Dagon Myothit townships and over 170 plots at Myaungtagar Industrial Zone were sold on 7 Octo-

ber at the office complex of the General Administrative Department (Eastern District), and interested buyers purchased 15,620 forms by 8 November, when the deadline ended, said U Than.

However, only 12,158 forms were submitted, he said. “The committee led by chair U Han Tun is still processing more than 12,000 applications. They are screening them with attached documents and financial statements,” said U Than.

More than 9,000 acres, previously marked as agricultural land, in East Dagon and Dagon Seikkan townships will go under the hammer in the next phase, he added.

The plots that are slated to be sold were previously seized by the government, and compensation had not been awarded to their original owners. Therefore, to compensate the original farmland owners, the lands are being sold again, according to officials.

At present, there are more than 3,000 cases with the Yangon Region Government's Committee for Scrutinizing Confiscated Farmlands and Other Lands. Compensation of K6.9 billion was awarded to farmers on 28 September. In the 2019-2020 financial year, compensation of K31 billion would be provided to the original farmland owners. (*Translated by Ei Myat Mon*)

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Yangon Region commemorates 45th Rakhine State Day with festive event



Yangon Region Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein (6th from left of the back row) poses for a group photo together with attendees of the Rakhine State Day event at the National Races Village in Thakayta, Yangon on Sunday. PHOTO: MNA

THE Yangon Region government led the commemoration of the 45th anniversary of Rakhine State Day at the National Races Village in Thakayta Township, Yangon Region, at 11 am on Sunday.

Yangon Region Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein, Rakhine Ethnic Affairs Minister U Zaw Aye Maung, Chairman of

Organizing Committee U Soe Win and other officials cut ceremonial ribbons and opened the ceremony.

Firstly, the Union Flag and Rakhine State Flag were saluted in succession and the Chief Minister then read a commemorative message from President U Win Myint on the occasion.

The Chief Minister and the

Rakhine Ethnic Affairs Minister then conferred the Rakhine Dagon Award and cash rewards on 5 Sayadaws and 13 common people.

The Regional government that handed over K3 million to Aryana Literary Group to install copies of the Ananda Chandra Stone Inscriptions in the National Museum, and Rakhine Eth-

nic Affairs Minister U Zaw Aye Maung spoke words of thanks in return.

Traditional Rakhine accessories were on display at the event, which also organized traditional Rakhine Kyin wrestling, pillow fighting and women's tug-of-war. — MNA

(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

New outpatient building inaugurated at Ywar Thar Gyi Mental Health Hospital

A new emergency and outpatient building was opened on yesterday at the Ywar Thar Gyi Mental Health Hospital in Dagon Myothit (East) Township, under the supervision of the Yangon Region Government. A medical devices donation event was also held the same day.

Yangon Region Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein and officials formally opened the event by cutting the ceremonial ribbon.

The Chief Minister said it was auspicious to donate a new building for people with mental health issues in Yangon. "We will support the hospital to provide good services to the public. Moreover, we are trying to fulfill the need for staff nurses. Also, I am grateful to those well-wishers who donated medical devices," he said.

Then, the head of the Mental Health Hospital deliv-



Yangon Region Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein and officials cut ceremonial ribbons to open the Ywar Thar Gyi Mental Health Hospital in Dagon Myothit (East) Township. PHOTO: SAN KYAW OO (IPRD)

ered remarks.

An outbreak of fire at the hospital on 24 December, 2018 had damaged the two-storey building. The hospital's inpatients were shifted to safety.

To reconstruct the building, the Myanmar Engineering Society had inspected the building under the guidance of the regional government. The Ministry of Construction's Building Department

built the hospital with disaster management funds of K173.88 million allocated by the Yangon Region Government. —San Kyaw Oo (IPRD)

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Japanese Princess Yoko departs from Myanmar



Japanese Princess Yoko of Mikasa seen off by officials at the Yangon International Airport on 16 December. PHOTO: MNA

JAPAN'S Princess Yoko of Mikasa and her delegation departed from Yangon at 10 pm yesterday night and

were seen off at Yangon International Airport by officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japanese

Ambassador Mr Ichiro Maruyama and other officials. — MNA (Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

Magway Chief Minister supports local youth festival in person

MAGWAY Region Chief Minister Dr Aung Moe Nyo visited the Youth All-Round Development Festival at Magway University yesterday.

The Chief Minister was accompanied by his cabinet ministers and other officials as they observed the traditional Myanmar dances, ethnic

dances and puppet performances, organized by the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture, in the university's Convocation Hall.

Next, they viewed the exhibitions, booths and book stalls on display at the festival and then conferred prizes on winners of the puzzle programme.

Later in the evening, the Chief Minister and officials observed more performances in the Convocation Hall and encouraged participants of sports competition at the university's gym, after which he conferred awards on the winning teams. — Wai Hlan (Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

H & S Union Minister attends ceremony for malaria program

A central-level launching ceremony for malaria elimination in Myanmar was held yesterday morning at the Mingalar Thiri Hotel in Nay Pyi Taw, as part of efforts for meeting the country's target of ending malaria by 2030.

Speaking at the event, Union Minister for Health and Sports Dr Myint Htwe called for a review of the existing directives and rules for elimination of malaria so they are in conformity with the current situation.

The Union Minister also stressed the importance of active cooperation between the ministry and NGOs, INGOs, private hospitals, and health organizations.

Myanmar is implementing a malaria elimination strategy (2016-

2030) and procedures.

It is making efforts for meeting the targets of eliminating plasmodium falciparum malaria by 2025 and all kinds of malaria in Myanmar by 2030.

There were about 600,000 people who contracted malaria in 2009, and 672 people died from the disease. In 2018, the number of infected persons decreased to 76,518 and the number of deaths to 19. Sixty-four per cent of the infected persons were from 12 townships, according to the Union Minister.

"The responsible persons from regions and states and participants in the process need to study the plans, strategies, and processes for preventing malaria and develop the plans so they are in line

with the current situation by reviewing the plans and standard procedures for preventing malaria," said the Union Minister.

Afterwards, deputy director Dr Aung Thi, project manager of the National Plan for Malaria Elimination, explained the responsibilities and procedures of the national-level committee for a malaria-free Myanmar, the Malaria Elimination Roadmap for Myanmar, and the National-Level Strategic Plan for Freedom from Malaria(2020-2025). Consultant on disease prevention with the Ministry of Health and Sports, Dr Saw Lwin, explained the upcoming projects for eliminating malaria and answered questions from attendees. — MNA

(Translate by Ba Htoo)



Union Minister Dr Myint Htwe delivers a speech at the "Central Level Launching Ceremony for Malaria Elimination" at the Mingalar Thiri Hotel, Nay Pyi Taw, yesterday. PHOTO: MNA

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MOHS, WHO organize workshop on standard packaging legislation

THE Ministry of Health and Sports and WHO jointly organized the Workshop on Developing Road Map for Standard Packaging Legislation at Grand Amara Hotel in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

In his speech, Union Minister Dr Myint Htwe said the consumption of cigarettes and tobacco seriously affects health and causes damages in other sectors across Myanmar and the world. He said this workshop aims to address this issue by reducing the consumption of cigarettes and tobacco.

The Union Minister said statistics show an average of 64,000 Myanmar citizens die as a consequence of cigarettes and tobacco consumption every year. He said the WHO STEPS survey conducted in Myanmar in 2014 reveal that 94 per cent have one same reason to develop noncommunicable diseases while 19.6 per cent have 3-5 reasons for the



Union Minister Dr Myint Htwe addresses the Workshop on Developing Road Map for Standard Packaging Legislation at Grand Amara Hotel, Nay Pyi Taw. **PHOTO: MNA**

same thing.

The Union Minister said that if usage of cigarettes and tobacco are not effectively controlled within the next five years then it will become exceedingly harder to control by then. He

said it has the potential to become a public health crisis and will cause grave losses in the nation's health, economic and other sectors.

The Union Minister said the standard packaging practices to

be discussed in the workshop are implemented worldwide and is essential to controlling tobacco. He said suggestions from the Union Attorney-General Office will be taken into consideration when implementing standard

packaging. He said the results of this workshop will be submitted to the Union Government.

This was followed by an explanation from Mr Andrew Black, Technical Officer of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, on how consumption of tobacco in Myanmar has negatively affected 3.3% of national GDP, how standard packaging can effectively change first time usage habits among youths and what makes up standard packaging.

The workshop then began with participants from the Ministry of Health and Sports, Ministry of Commerce, Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of Planning, Finance and Industry, Ministry of Information, Union Attorney-General Office, WHO FCTC and Public Health Foundation officials, and retired experts. —MNA

(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

Union Minister Dr Win Myat Aye receives NIS delegation

UNION MINISTER for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Dr Win Myat Aye received the delegation of Nordic International Support Foundation (NIS), a Norwegian-registered non-profit organization, yesterday morning.

During the meeting at ministry's headquarters in Nay Pyi Taw with Country Director of NIS Ms Elizabeth Jane Arm-

strong, they discussed preparations for signing MoU between the NIS and the Department of Social Welfare, enhancement of civil communities, social harmony, unity of different communities, empowerment of women, closure of IDP camps and plans for holding a state-level event on social community.—MNA

(Translated by Aung Khin)



Union Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Dr Win Myat Aye poses for a documentary photo with a delegation from Nordic International Support Foundation at his office in Nay Pyi Taw. **PHOTO: MNA**



Union Minister U Ohn Maung, Qatar Charge d'affaires Mr Mansoor Mubarak Al-Khayarin and guests pose for a documentary photo at the National Day of Qatar celebration at Novotel Max Hotel in Yangon. **PHOTO: MNA**

Qatar Embassy celebrates National Day of Qatar in Yangon

QATAR Embassy in Yangon celebrated the National Day of Qatar yesterday at the Novotel Yangon Max Hotel.

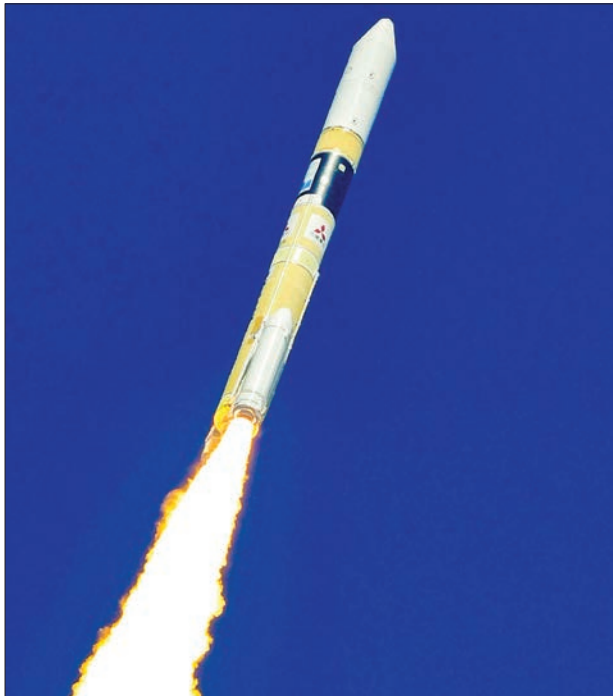
The event began with the national anthems of Myanmar and Qatar.

Afterwards, Chargé d'affaires a.i of Qatar Embassy Mr Mansoor Mubarak Al-Khayarin and Union Minister for Hotels and Tourism U Ohn Maung cut the National Day commemorative cake to celebrate the

national day.

Before the reception dinner, the Union Minister, Chargé d'affaires a.i of Qatar Embassy and diplomats posed for the documentary photos.

The reception was also attended by Yangon Region Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein, ambassadors and diplomats of the embassies in Yangon, resident representatives of UN agencies and invited guests.—MNA



H-2A rocket carrying Ibuki-2 greenhouse gas observation satellite is launched from Tanegashima Space Center. **PHOTO: KYODO NEWS**

Japan to launch intelligence-gathering satellite in January

TOKYO — Japan will launch an H2A rocket carrying a government optical intelligence-gathering satellite in January from a launch site in southwestern Japan, Mitsubishi Heavy Industries Ltd. said Monday.

The device will join the country's seven other reconnaissance satellites believed to be utilized for purposes such as monitoring development in North Korean missile sites.

The H2A F41 rocket will lift off between 10 am and noon on 27 January from the Tanegashima Space Center in Kagoshima Prefecture, said Mitsubishi Heavy, which is in

charge of the launch. Japan operates two types of reconnaissance satellites — optical satellites that take photos of the ground using a device similar to a digital camera, and radar satellites which can be used to capture images in the evening as well as in poor weather conditions.

In June last year, the H2A F39 rocket was used to launch a radar intelligence-gathering satellite at the same launch site.

The government currently operates five radar and two optical satellites, and aims to operate a total of 10 satellites in the future. — Kyodo News ■

European stocks rally, pound steadies

LONDON (United Kingdom) — European stock markets pushed higher Monday, led by strong gains for London thanks to a steadier pound.

The dollar largely weakened and Asian equities mostly retreated as markets awaited details of a key China-US trade deal.

Sterling held up, but

was down from Friday's 18-month highs against the dollar and more than three-year peak on the euro.

The pound surged Fri-

day after Prime Minister Boris Johnson's crushing election win that allows him to push through his Brexit agreement.

—AFP ■

Remittances from Filipinos abroad rise to 3 bln USD in October 2019

MANILA — Personal remittances sent by Overseas Filipinos (OFs) reached 3 billion US dollars in October 2019, a 7.7 per cent increase from 2.8 billion US dollars in October 2018, the the Philippine central bank Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) said on Monday.

On a year-to-date basis from January to October, the BSP said remittances grew by 4.3 per cent to 27.6 billion US dollars, higher than last

year's level of 26.5 billion US dollars.

By type of worker, the BSP said personal remittances for January to October 2019 from land-based workers with work contracts of one year or more grew by 3.8 per cent to 21.1 billion US dollars from 20.3 billion US dollars in the same period last year.

According to the BSP, the combined remittances of sea-based and land-based workers with

short-term contracts also increased by 7.5 per cent to 5.9 billion US dollars during the period compared to 5.5 billion US dollars a year ago.

Meanwhile, the BSP said cash remittances coursed through banks by OF workers with work contracts of less than one year rose by 8 percent to 2.7 billion US dollars in October 2019 from 2.5 billion US dollars in October 2018.

By country or region source, the BSP said the

United States registered the highest share to total remittances during the period January to October 2019 at 37.6 per cent.

It was followed by Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Japan, United Arab Emirates, Britain, Canada, Germany, China's Hong Kong, and Kuwait.

The combined remittances from these sources accounted for 78.4 per cent of total cash remittances during the period.

— Xinhua ■

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V TOVE MAERSK VOY. NO. (950W)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V TOVE MAERSK VOY. NO. (950W) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 17-12-2019 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 MCC TRANSPORT (S'PORE)
PTE LTD

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V ALS SUZURAN VOY. NO. (100N/S)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V ALS SUZURAN VOY. NO. (100N/S) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 17-12-2019 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of A.W.P.T where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

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China's Xi gives Hong Kong leader 'unwavering support'

BEIJING (China) — Chinese President Xi Jinping told beleaguered Hong Kong leader Carrie Lam on Monday that she had Beijing's "unwavering support" despite another huge pro-democracy rally earlier this month and her government's thrashing at recent local elections.

The city has been upended by six months of massive pro-democracy protests that have seen violent battles between police and hardcore demonstrators, as well as regular transport disruption.

Protesters have called for the unpopular Lam to stand down as leader, but she received the backing of China's leadership during a visit to Beijing on Monday. "The central government fully recognises the courage and sense of responsibility you have

demonstrated in such an exceptional period in Hong Kong," Xi told Lam at the imposing Great Hall of the People.

"We will continue to provide unwavering support for you to lead the SAR (special administrative region) administration to govern according to the law," Xi said. Lam thanked Xi for his concern for the city's situation, "for his guidance for us, and for the trust and support for the SAR government and me to handle such a big crisis".

Lam met earlier with Chinese Premier Li Keqiang, who said her government had "tried its best to maintain social stability" amid "an unprecedentedly severe and complicated situation". But he also called for the Hong Kong government to "step up studies of the deep-seated



This weekend the relative calm in Hong Kong was broken by clashes between black-clad pro-democracy protesters and police in some of the city's shopping malls. **PHOTO: AFP**

conflicts and problems that hinder Hong Kong's economic and social development" in order to restore calm to the city.

"Hong Kong is yet to get

out of its plight. The SAR government must continue its hard work, stop violence and subdue chaos according to laws and restore order," Li told Lam. —AFP

Police action over student protest attack on soul of India: Priyanka

NEW DELHI (India) — Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Monday alleged that police action in Delhi and Aligarh following the protest by students against Citizenship Amendment Act was "attack on the soul of India" and said the party will fight against it.

"The government has given a blow to the Constitution. It is an

attack on the soul of the nation, youth is the soul of the nation," Priyanka told reporters at the end of her protest at India Gate in support of the students. She said it is "right of the students to protest". "I am a mother too. You entered into their library, dragged them out and thrashed them up. This is tyranny. Every person in Congress will fight

against this tyranny and stand with the students," she said.

Priyanka Gandhi and several senior party leaders sat on a protest at the India Gate here against the police action during students' protests over the citizenship amendment Act in the Jamia Millia Islamia and the Aligarh Muslim University.

The protest started at 4 pm

and continued till 6 pm with Congress leaders holding placards. The placard held by Priyanka Gandhi said "Stop attacks on young students". Another placard said "not lathi and shooting, give us employment". Party leaders KC Venugopal, AK Antony, PL Punia, Ahmed Patel and Randeep Singh Surjewala were among those present.—ANI ■

Japanese artists celebrate Reiwa Era at Sydney's Opera House

SYDNEY — The largest-ever gathering of traditional Japanese artists in Sydney performed together on Monday in celebration of the new imperial era, Reiwa, at the World Heritage listed Sydney Opera House.

All proceeds from the "Japan Spectacular" performance were donated to a Japan Club of

Sydney charity established in the wake of the 2011 earthquake and tsunami that devastated north-eastern Japan, which brings children from across Fukushima Prefecture to have homestay experiences in Sydney.

"At this time when the new era, Reiwa, has begun and the Tokyo Olympics will be occurring

next year, I hope we can also look back to the good old days through the appeal of traditional Japanese culture," Yukiko Hirano who leads the JCS Rainbow Project told Kyodo News.

About 400 people came to see the two-hour performance featuring taiko drummers and Okinawa sanshin string instru-

mentalists, along with non-instrumental performances by swordsmen and kimono-clad traditional dancers for the one-night-only show.

Rufus Whitlemore, 24, and Rhian Owen, 25, came to the show as part of their holiday to Australia from Britain.

"It's very different from any Western theatre I've been to. There's such a huge range of performances," said Whitlemore, who was particularly impressed by an ikebana (Japanese traditional flower arrangement) demonstration performed to live koto music.

"The respect the performers show to nature is lovely," said Owen, commenting on the show's "Day in the life of Japan" theme, which began with a sunrise and sounds of the ocean. The new Japanese era started 1 May when Emperor Naruhito ascended the Chrysanthemum Throne after former Emperor Akihito abdicated the previous day. —Kyodo News ■



Musicians play "sanshin" three-stringed instruments from the southern island prefecture of Okinawa during a Japanese traditional arts show at the Sydney Opera House on 16 December 2019. **PHOTO: KYODO NEWS**

NEWS In BRIEF

New Zealand observes silence as PM warns of long volcano probe

WELLINGTON (New Zealand) — New Zealand marked one week since the deadly White Island eruption with a minute's silence Monday, as Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern warned grieving families they face a lengthy wait for answers.

At 2:11pm (0111 GMT) — exactly a week since the eruption — offices and shops fell silent as New Zealanders remembered the 16 international tourists and two local guides who died, along with at least 18 more now receiving intensive treatment for severe burns. —AFP ■

Samajwadi Party seeks emergency session of Parliament to amend citizenship law

NEW DELHI (India) — Samajwadi Party (SP) leader Prof Ram Gopal Yadav on Monday demanded an emergency session of Parliament to make amendments in the Citizenship Amendment Act or the citizenship law should be revoked.

Speaking to ANI, Prof Yadav said: "I demand that an emergency session of Parliament should be called. Amendments should be made to the Citizenship Amendment Act to see that no discrimination is done on the basis of religion or the Act should be revoked. Citizenship should not be based on religion." ANI ■

At least 10 dead from fan factory fire in Bangladesh capital

DHAKA — At least 10 people died in a fire at a fan factory in Gazipur on the outskirts of Bangladesh's capital Dhaka on Sunday, Fire Service Headquarters Duty Officer Lima Khanom told Xinhua.

Firemen brought the blaze under control at around 7:00 p.m. local time after a hectic effort of about two hours.

Firemen had recovered 10 bodies from the scene, most of whom charred beyond recognition, according to the official. —Xinhua ■

First stop, Brexit: UK's Johnson gets down to work

LONDON (United Kingdom) — Prime Minister Boris Johnson got down to work Monday following his sweeping election victory, appointing ministers and announcing plans to publish legislation this week to get Britain out of the European Union.

The Conservative leader was expected to carry out a limited cabinet re-shuffle before welcoming new MPs to parliament following his landslide win in Thursday's general election.

But his main focus is on fulfilling his promise to get Britain out of the European Union by the end of next month after years of acrimonious debate in parliament and across the nation.

Johnson will present legislation on Friday that begins the process of ratifying the divorce terms he struck with Brussels in October, his spokesman said.

"The government has just

been elected with a clear majority to deliver Brexit, and we're focused on passing the legislation to ensure that happens by 31 January," he said.

Johnson's simple promise to "get Brexit done" resonated in a snap election Thursday that for many became a re-run of Britain's 2016 EU membership referendum.

A narrow majority had opted to leave the EU back then but was followed by years of debate in parliament over how — or even when — Britain should end almost five decades of integration with its closest neighbours.

Johnson declared the argument settled when his Conservatives won 44 per cent of the vote on Thursday, giving it a majority of 80 in the 650-seat Commons — its biggest since the heyday of Margaret Thatcher in the 1980s.

The main opposition Labour

party meanwhile was relegated to its worst defeat since before World War II, forcing leader Jeremy Corbyn to announce a plan for his departure.

Canada-style deal

Johnson is only expected to tinker around the edges of his current government and conduct a real overhaul once the first stage of Brexit is safely out of the way.

London and Brussels will then have to embark on yet more negotiations aimed at striking new trade and security partnership.

The withdrawal deal sets out a post-Brexit transition period until the end of 2020 to hold these talks, during which time UK-EU ties will remain broadly the same.

London has the option to extend the transition but Johnson has insisted this will not happen,



Five more years, but Boris Johnson's first task is to pull Britain out of the European Union. PHOTO: AFP

saying it is time to break free of EU rules.

His spokesman repeated on Monday that he would be seeking a "Canada-style free trade agreement", similar to the recent deal signed between the

EU and Canada.

But EU officials caution that trade deals can take years, and experts warn that failure to reach agreement before the transition ends could lead to a severe economic shock.—AFP ■

France extradites 'butcher' of Argentine dictatorship

PARIS (France) — An Argentine ex-police officer linked to the murder of hundreds of people during the country's "dirty war" was on a plane to Buenos Aires on Monday, after France extradited him to face trial over the disappearance of a student.

Mario Sandoval was arrested Wednesday at his home near Paris, after French authorities gave the final go-ahead for his extradition, ending an eight-year legal battle.

The 66-year-old who had been living in France since 1985 and obtained French citizenship with few aware of his full identity, was sent back on a plane that left Paris around midnight on Sunday.

"Everything happened as expected," a lawyer for the Argentine state told AFP.

Argentina suspects that Sandoval took part in more than 500 cases of kidnappings, torture and murder at a time when some 30,000 were "disappeared" during the 1976-83 military dictatorship. But the extradition concerns only the alleged kidnapping in October 1976 of Hernan Abriata, an architecture student whose body has never been found.

Argentine authorities say investigators have several witness accounts linking Sandoval

— known there as the "butcher" of the dictatorship — to Abriata's killing. Sandoval's lawyers had argued that he would not get a fair trial in Argentina where he would face torture or poor detention conditions.

But their appeals to the European Court of Human Rights to take up his case failed.

Legal tussle

Abriata was detained at the notorious ESMA navy training school in Buenos Aires, where an estimated 5,000 people were held and tortured after the military coup of 1976 — many of them thrown from planes into the sea or the River Plate. Sophie Thonon, a lawyer acting for

Argentina, told AFP that Abriata's 92-year-old mother Beatriz Cantarini de Abriata had been "desperately waiting" for Sandoval to "explain himself before Argentine justice". Sandoval, who has dismissed the accusations as fabrications, fled Argentina after the military junta fell.

Despite taking French nationality he can be extradited as the alleged crime took place beforehand. Sandoval was a professor at the Sorbonne's Institute of Latin American Studies in Paris and the University of Marne-la-Vallee outside the French capital. His colleagues at both schools called for his arrest when they recognised his picture during his legal battles.—AFP ■



Abriata's 92-year-old mother Beatriz Cantarini de Abriata, shown here at a protest in 2014, is "desperately waiting" for his trial, a lawyer for Argentina told AFP. PHOTO: AFP

Lebanese protesters clash with police for a second night

BEIRUT (Lebanon) — Lebanese protesters clashed with police Sunday for the second consecutive night near parliament on the eve of much-delayed consultations to form a new cabinet needed to fix a deepening economic crisis.

The renewed clashes in Beirut came as Interior Minister Raya El-Hassan ordered security forces to open a "rapid and transparent" enquiry after dozens were wounded on Saturday night.

Undaunted by the violence, thousands of demonstrators flooded central Beirut Sunday ahead of the parliamentary consultations due to begin on Monday to appoint a new premier after weeks of largely peaceful street protests forced the previous cabinet to quit.

The unprecedented rallies have swept Lebanon since 17 October, demanding the overhaul of a political system deemed inept and corrupt and the formation of an independent government of technocrats.

Clashes again erupted near parliament, with demonstrators throwing water bottles and firecrackers at the security forces who responded with tear gas and water canon, an AFP photogra-

pher said.

There was no immediate reports of casualties.

But the clashes threatened a repeat of scenes on Saturday evening that had seen dozens of people hurt when security forces used tear gas and rubber bullets to disperse demonstrators who tried to breach metal barricades near the legislature.

The Lebanese civil defence said they took 36 injured to hospital and treated 54 people at the scene on Saturday night. The Lebanese Red Cross said it ferried 15 people to hospitals, while 37 others were given first aid on site.

The Red Cross said the injured included protesters and security forces, with some affected by tear gas and others struck by stones.

Lebanese security forces said about 20 from their ranks were hospitalised.

An AFP photographer saw men in plainclothes hitting protesters on Saturday, while anti-riot police fired rubber bullets at protesters throwing stones.

Hassan demanded the identification of those responsible for the most violent episode since the anti-government protests began in October. — AFP ■



MFF President U Zaw Zaw inspects the construction of futsal stadium at the Thuwunna Stadium in Yangon on 16 December. **PHOTO: MFF**

MFF president inspects work at Thuwunna Stadium

PRESIDENT of the Myanmar Football Federation (MFF) U Zaw Zaw yesterday inspected the work of planting new grass and construction of a futsal stadium and training playground at the Thuwunna Stadium in Yangon, according to the official website of the football federation.

U Kyaw Lin Htwe, in-charge of the MFF turf, explained the growing of new grasses at the stadium.

U Zaw Zaw instructed that new grasses be planted in accordance with international standards, international competitions be hosted, and an all-round renovation of the stadium be undertaken as it is the only stadium being maintained by the MFF and it is where the Myanmar National

League and other competitions are being held.

The MFF president also inspected the construction site of the Futsal Indoor Stadium near Thuwunna Stadium. Aided by FIFA, the Futsal Indoor Stadium is being constructed by the Sun-tac Company, and is targeted to be completed in September, 2020.

He also inspected the construction of a training playground at the stadium, and instructed the related officials to provide services so that training can be conducted with convenience.

The MFF is constructing a new training ground as it has only two training grounds, No.1 and No.2, and so that the teams of the MNL and international teams can train. — Kyaw Khin

Medical check-up conducted ahead of 2020 Myanmar National League

WITH the instruction that players for 2020 Myanmar National League must submit their contracts with respective clubs and medical check-up certificates, medical check-ups for the players were being conducted ahead of 2020 Myanmar National League.

Myanmar Football Federation's medical department is providing medical check-up for the footballers, in which Ayeyawady United FC was examined yesterday.

With the guidelines from FIFA and AFC and professional criteria, the check-up are being made to prevent sudden death



A player from Ayeyawady United FC receives medical check-up ahead of 2020 Myanmar National League. **PHOTO: MNL**

among athletes and to improve their ability.

The medical check-up will

be alternatively provided to the clubs until 24 December.

— Kyaw Khin

Liverpool face Atletico in Champions League last 16 clash

NYON (Switzerland) — Holders Liverpool will return to the scene of last season's Champions League triumph after they were drawn against Atletico Madrid in the last 16 of the competition on Monday and Manchester City face 13-time winners Real Madrid.

Jurgen Klopp's side will travel to the Wanda Metropolitano, where Liverpool lifted the trophy in June, for the first leg of their tie against three-time runners-up Atletico.

"Madrid is the place where

we only have fantastic memories, all of us, so that's great, but this time we play Atletico there and it's their home ground," said Klopp. "It's a tough one, but if you go through all of the draws, there are pretty much four or five potential finals already in the last 16."

Pep Guardiola's City, who are trying to win a first Champions League crown, face a tough task against Real, the record winners of Europe's top club prize, for a place in the quarter-finals. The two clubs met in the 2015-16

semi-finals, the furthest City have progressed in the tournament. That tie was won 1-0 on aggregate by Real.

"It is a difficult one, of course. Real Madrid have won 13 times so they are the best," City director of football Txiki Begiristain told BT Sport. "We want to be the best so we want to beat them." The clash is a first competitive meeting between Guardiola and Zinedine Zidane, who won the Champions League three times in a row with Real from 2016. — AFP ■

Ben Arfa's compensation claim against PSG thrown out: sources

PARIS (France) — Hatem Ben Arfa's demand for millions of euros of compensation from Paris Saint-Germain has been dismissed by an industrial tribunal in the French capital AFP learned from both parties on Monday.

Contacted by AFP, PSG's lawyer Marie-Helene Cohen-Guilleminet said all of Ben Arfa's "requests have been thrown out".

Ben Arfa's legal representative Jean-Jacques Bertrand told AFP the 32-year-old forward, who is currently without a club after Rennes released him in the summer, would appeal the decision.

The former France international wanted between 7-8 million euros (\$7.8-\$8.9 million) after accusing PSG of sidelining him for non-sporting reasons between April 2017 and the summer of 2018, when his contract with the

French champions expired.

His last game for PSG was a 4-0 French Cup win over Avranches on April 5 2017, a match in which he scored twice and set up another.

He played in 23 Ligue 1 matches for PSG, often as a substitute, without scoring a single league goal.

French newspaper Journal du Dimanche reported he claims he was shut out after the club took exception to him appealing directly to PSG's owner, the emir of Qatar, over a lack of contact with the club's president Nasser Al-Khelaifi.

Ben Arfa has already had some revenge against PSG after helping Rennes to a penalty shoot-out win over the capital club in last season's French Cup final.

— AFP ■



Hatem Ben Arfa claimed PSG had sidelined him for non-footballing reasons. **PHOTO: AFP**