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Speech delivered by State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi about experiences of oral proceedings at International Court of Justice to public

(18th December 2019, Nay Pyi Taw)

AT the public sitting of the International Court of Justice held on Wednesday 11 December 2019, I said that it was an honour to appear as agent of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar. It was indeed an honour for my delegation and myself to represent our country at the ICJ, but it was also a grave responsibility as the case submitted by The Gambia accused Myanmar of the most serious of crimes, genocide. Our delegation discharged this responsibility to the best of our ability, constantly keeping in mind the honour of our nation, the aspirations of our people, the future of our Union, and our obligations as a member of the international community.

We built our defence firmly on a foundation of honesty and respect for the rule of law, never losing sight of our ultimate goal, which is sustainable peace and harmony among all the communities in our country. Our legal team understood our concerns as well as our aspirations and I would like to take this opportunity to express our deep appreciation for the outstanding legal expertise, dedication to justice and good will that they brought to our case. Acting as our Counsel and Advocates were:

Mr. Christopher Staker, member of the Bar of England and Wales,

Mr. William Schabas, OC,



State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi delivering a speech about her experiences of oral proceedings at International Court of Justice to public. PHOTO:MNA

MRIA, Professor of International Law, Middlesex University and Professor of International Criminal Law and Human Rights, Leiden University,

Miss Phoebe Okowa, Professor of Public International Law, Queen Mary University of London, Advocate of the High Court of Kenya, member of the Permanent Court of Arbitration.

Every country passes through difficult times and Myanmar is no exception. Such trials provide us with an opportunity to assess our strengths and weaknesses, to reinforce one and rectify the other. To grow and develop, we need the courage and wisdom to face challenges honestly and constructively. The challenge that we are now facing at the ICJ stems back not just to the events of the last few years but to the missed opportunities in decades past to address the social, economic and political ills of Rakhine squarely. The past cannot be changed but we can make the best of the present to enable us to build a happy future.

I have often said that no national enterprise of any note can be successfully accomplished without the willing cooperation of the people. And such cooperation, to be truly effective, must be based on a sound understanding of the issues involved. The support of our people, given generously and unquestioningly,

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Pyithu Hluttaw debates four annual reports from its committees

THE 17th-day meeting of the Second Pyithu Hluttaw's 14th regular session was held in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday where starred questions were raised, two annual reports debated, and the annual report of the Public Affairs Management Committee was tabled for approval.

Hlinethaya sports stadium, UEC affairs

Firstly, U Win Min of Hlinethaya constituency asked whether there were plans to make the indoor sports stadium on Kanaung Mintar Gyi Road in Shwe Lin Ban industrial zone accessible by the general public.

Deputy Minister U Kyaw Lin replied that his ministry has difficulties to maintain the stadium in the long run and cannot provide full administration to prevent squatters from coming in. He said the stadium and the land will be transferred to the Ministry of Health and Sports as soon as possible to facilitate public use.

Next, U Maung Myint of Mingin constituency asked whether there is any guarantee that the computers and related items provided by the International Foundation for Electoral Systems will not contain any



Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U T Khun Myat. PHOTO: MNA

preinstalled software.

Union Election Commission member U Myint Swe replied that they will have experts check on the computers when they receive them from IFES. He said that the computers will only be used for compiling electoral rolls and the processes for counting, tallying and announcing the results of votes during the election will be conducted in the manner stated in existing laws. He added that IFES and the UEC have no personal relations.

Next, U Myo Zaw Oo of Lewe constituency asked if the UEC is

actively reviewing whether political parties are maintaining the pledges in the Political Parties Registration Law.

UEC member U Myint Swe replied that they continually monitor political parties through the election sub-commissions and may summon party officials for interviews if necessary. He said they had to warn two political parties to abide by Section 6 of the aforementioned law but have never as of yet had to abolish political parties for failing to abide by it.

After the Q&A session, Py-

ithu Hluttaw Speaker U T Khun Myat announced the receiving of the Myanmar Geosciences Council Bill sent back with amendments from the Amyotha Hluttaw and called MPs wishing to submit amendments to register their names.

MPs debate four annual reports

Next, U Myint Kyi of Katha constituency, U Sein Myint of Myingyan constituency, Daw Khin Than Nu of Mindon constituency, and Tatmadaw Pyithu Hluttaw representatives Lt-Col Htin Lin Oo debated the annual report of the Pyithu Hluttaw Education Promotion Committee and committee member U Saw Kyaw Win then responded to the MPs' debate.

Fellow committee member U Than Aung then tabled for the Hluttaw to approve the report and the Speaker approved it after gathering the deliberation of the assembly.

Next, Dr U Khin Maung Maung of Dagon Myothit (North) constituency, U Myint Lwin of Twantay constituency, U Kan Oo of Salin constituency, Dr Daw Pyone of Indaw constituency, and Tatmadaw Pyithu Hluttaw representative Lt-Col Moe Myint

Aung debated the annual report of the Pyithu Hluttaw Agriculture, Livestock and Rural Development Committee.

Committee Chairman U Yan Lin responded to MPs, committee secretary U Maung Maung Oo tabled for the Hluttaw to approve the report and the Speaker approved it after gathering the deliberation of the assembly.

Similarly, U Myat Lay Oo of the Pyithu Hluttaw Farmer and Labour Affairs Committee tabled for the Hluttaw to approve their annual report and the Speaker approved it after gathering the deliberation of the assembly.

Next, a debate on another annual report, this time compiled by the Pyithu Hluttaw Public Affairs Management Committee, was led by U Tin Ko Ko Oo (a) U A Tut of Bilin constituency. Committee secretary U Tint Soe responded to the debate and then tabled for the Hluttaw to approve the report and the Speaker approved it after gathering the deliberation of the assembly.

The 18th-meeting of the Second Pyithu Hluttaw's 14th regular session will convene today. —Aye Aye Thant (MNA)

(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

14th regular session of second Amyotha Hluttaw convenes 17th day meeting

THE 14th regular session of second Amyotha Hluttaw held its 17th day meeting yesterday, with queries to the Ministry of Border Affairs, and the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, and debates on the release of unused state-owned properties from the respective ministries for urban development programmes.

Queries to ministries

MP U Shan Ora from Chin State constituency 2 asked for supply of drinking water for Hawsin Village in Haka Township of Chin State. Deputy Minister for Border Affairs Major General Than Htut pledged to install two 5,000 gallon-tanks, 2,800 ft pipeline, a pump engine and a pumping facility with K32 million Union Budget in 2019-2020 financial year.

MP U Bwe Khane from Chin State constituency 3 asked for construction of inter-village roads in Thantlang Township in 2020-2022 financial year. Major General Than Htut advised to submit a proposal after making a joint field survey with local



Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than. PHOTO: MNA

authorities.

MP U Khin Maung Latt from Rakhine State constituency 3 asked the plans of Union Government for storage and distribution of reserved rice for Rakhine State. Deputy Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement U Soe Aung replied that the Disaster Management Department, UN/INGO/NGO and civil organizations are distributing rice in the State. Although there is no accumulation

of reserved rice at present, the crops can be distributed from the warehouses of Township General Administration Department and Disaster Management Department.

Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than announced approval on recommendations of Pyithu Hluttaw for fifth amendment bills on Pyithu Hluttaw Election Law, Amyotha Hluttaw Election Law and Statte/Region Election Law.

Properties for urban development programmes

MP U Ko Ko Naing from Sagaing Region constituency 8 tabled a motion to the relevant ministries to release unused state-owned property for urban development programmes.

MP U Kyaw Thauung from Sagaing Region constituency 1, MP U Kyaw Toke from Mandalay Region constituency 7 and MP U Hla Oo from Sagaing Region constituency 4 supported the motion. It was also debated by Tatmadaw Representative Major Ye Aung Saw, Daw Hla Htay (a) Daw Ohn Kyi from Mandalay Region constituency 4 and U Hla San from Magway Region constituency 1.

Deputy Minister for Planning, Finance and Industry U Maung Maung Win said the Privatization Commission is handling transfer of state-owned properties after reviewing reports from the Union Ministries and State/Region governments, and that he advised the motion to be kept for the record.

MP U Ko Ko Naing asked

for voting of Amyotha Hluttaw to implement this motion not to delay for the public welfare. The motion was passed by 114 votes to 57, with 5 abstentions.

Report of Government's Guarantees, Pledges and Undertakings Vetting Committee of the Amyotha Hluttaw

MP U Khin Myo Win from Taninthayi Region constituency 12 and MP U Zaw Hein from constituency 7 of the same region discussed the report of Government's Guarantees, Pledges and Undertakings Vetting Committee of the Amyotha Hluttaw on motions and queries submitted from the first to the 13th regular sessions of second Amyotha Hluttaw.

Committee's Chairman U Thein Swe tabled a motion for approval of Hluttaw on the report, and it was passed by the Hluttaw without any objections.

The second Amyotha Hluttaw will hold its 18th day meeting of 14 regular session on 19 December.—Aung Ye Thwin

(Translated by Aung Khin)

State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's speech on ICJ proceedings to be broadcast again

State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's speech relating her experience of the proceedings at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) will be broadcast again on the MRTV Programme at 8 a.m., noon, and 6 p.m. on 19 December. – MNA

Speech delivered by State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi about experiences of oral proceedings at International Court of Justice to public

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not just in Myanmar and The Hague but all over the world, was a great source of strength to us when we presented our case at the ICJ. However, I believe there are many who would like to acquire a more detailed knowledge of the proceedings in court and the possible legal and political consequences. And I would like to make this knowledge available to you as fully as possible, for not only is it your right, it is an asset to our country if our people are with us, not just with their hearts but also with their minds, solidly and steadfastly.

We are making arrangements for the full court proceedings to be translated into the Myanmar language and made available to the public. Moreover, tomorrow, members of the team who came with us to the The Hague will be taking part in a discussion on the proceedings and the legal, political and diplomatic aspects of International Criminal Justice. I hope that our people will take a keen interest in these discussions to learn not just about the possible implications of the case for Myanmar, but also to acquire a broad understanding of international justice as it stands today.

It fell to me, as Myanmar's Agent, to present to the Court relevant facts pertaining to the situation on the ground in Rakh-

ine today, as well as the historical context of the roots of conflict, economic, social and military, in the region. This was particularly important as the Agent, Counsel and Advocates for The Gambia had neglected to address those issues and barely touched on the ARSA attacks that had triggered off the conflicts of 2016 and 2017. Neither was there any

mention of the present armed conflict between the AA and the Tatmadaw, which has added to the complexity of the challenges in Rakhine. I did not dispute that in situations of armed conflict there could have been violations of human rights and infringement of universally accepted norms of justice and rule of law. However, these do not amount to genocide or intent of genocide and we are willing and able to prosecute wrongdoers. Myanmar is committed to defend the lawful rights of all peoples in our country through our own justice system, military as well as civil, in accordance with our Constitu-

tion. I also apprised the Court of the concrete steps we have been taking to address what the Kofi Annan Commission described as complex challenges of low development and poverty rooted in enduring social conflict between the communities.

The Gambia had applied for the Court to impose provisional measures on Myanmar,

should provisional measures not be imposed. The presentation of The Gambia was based on allegations made in the report of the Fact Finding Mission. We have rejected the FFM since its establishment by the Human Rights Council. The detailed legal arguments will be discussed tomorrow (19 December) night on MRTV.

In my closing statement, I expressed my hope that the Court would make, "with the wisdom and vision of justice" a decision that would "help us to create unity out of our diversity, to develop the potential of our people, and to meet the challenges of a nation in quest of sustainable peace and development."

I concluded with the formal presentation of the final submissions of Myanmar:

"In accordance with Article 60, paragraph 2, of the Rules of Court, for the reasons given during the hearing from 10 to 12 December 2019 and any other reasons the Court might deem appropriate, Myanmar requests the Court:

- (1) to remove the case from its List;
- (2) in the alternative, to reject the request for the indication of provisional measures submitted by The Gambia."

We now wait for the Court to make known its decision, very likely next month. Our case was presented honestly and fully,

and I believe the arguments of our Counsel and Advocates were sound and in accordance with the highest norms of justice. Once again I would like to thank all the members of our legal team and the members of our delegation, and their counterparts at home, for their dedication and excellent work.

I can only conclude by thanking our people who rallied to us in our country's time of need. They gathered at The Hague from different countries in Europe, as well as from such faraway places as the United States, Japan, Australia. And, of course, from Myanmar. Not all of them were affluent but they had not hesitated to come to infuse us with the strength of their trust and love. Our people with homes in The Hague opened their doors to strangers, providing them with shelter, meals, warmth, making them members of our Union family. Some who had come have become citizens of other countries but that in no way detracted from the value of their support. Citizenship is a provision under the law, the solidarity of hearts and minds is the solid foundation of unity.

I am heartened that our people who rallied to us had expressed their support in an orderly and civilized manner.

In solidarity, we will overcome all the challenges that we may have to meet. Together.

In solidarity, we will overcome all the challenges that we may have to meet. Together.

ment of the present armed conflict between the AA and the Tatmadaw, which has added to the complexity of the challenges in Rakhine. I did not dispute that in situations of armed conflict there could have been violations of human rights and infringement of universally accepted norms of justice and rule of law. However, these do not amount to genocide or intent of genocide and we are willing and able to prosecute wrongdoers. Myanmar is committed to defend the lawful rights of all peoples in our country through our own justice system, military as well as civil, in accordance with our Constitu-

measures that could have a negative impact on efforts aimed at reconciliation and sustainable peace and development. In their presentations, our legal team confined their arguments to whether the Court should indicate provisional measures. Professor Schabas pointed out that the case as presented by the Gambia did not meet the plausibility requirement for provisional measures. Mr. Staker then spoke on the requirement of prima facie jurisdiction and standing, followed by Ms Okowa who addressed the lack of real and imminent risk of irreparable prejudice to the rights in dispute

UEC, Facebook discuss collaboration ahead of polls

UNION Election Commission Chairman U Hla Thein yesterday received a delegation from Facebook, led by its Director of Public Policy for Southeast Asia Mr Rafael Frankel, at the UEC office in Nay Pyi Taw.

At the meeting, they discussed collaboration on civic education and voter education, programme for curbing fake news and hate speech related to the generation elections, and current efforts for releasing factual information and electoral news.

Members of the UEC were also present at the meeting.—MNA

UEC chairman U Hla Thein and members receive the Facebook delegation. PHOTO: MNA



State Counsellor discusses rule of law, professionalism of MPF



State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi addresses the meeting with the Chief of Myanmar Police Force and senior police officers at the headquarters of Ministry of Home Affairs in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO:MNA**

STATE COUNSELLOR Daw Aung San Suu Kyi held a meeting with the Chief of Myanmar Police Force and senior police officers at the headquarters of the Ministry of Home Affairs in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning.

At the Meeting, the MPF Chief gave a briefing about the background history, organizational structures, missions, duties and future plans of the MPF. Next State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi gave a guidance speech. She said nowadays, it was important to note that there were no differences in security affairs between internal and external threats to the country.

The informal title 'police' implies 'control' or 'guard', and it was assumed that the name was changed to Myanmar Police to protect Myanmar people from internal and external dangers.

She added that the MPF played a crucial role in protecting people, and that they should be proud of their duties.

The State Counsellor added that it cannot be differentiated between rule of law and peace and stability. Without rule of law, security would not improve in the country. Rule of law could guarantee security, peace and stability. Laws were enacted to prevent emotional acts and to follow rules and regulations. Courts are also responsible for handling legal affairs based on human nature.

Justice must go together

with sympathy. Peace will not prevail without loving-kindness. In developed and stable countries in the world, their police forces have the trust of their people who have believed no dangers would fall on them if they get protection of the police.

The mindset of police forces can shape public attitudes and that they should lead in promoting public mentality. People will appreciate valiant efforts of police members for their security. A fair balance of power must be maintained in duties to meet

worst kind of government was one which the people hated, a bad government was one which the people feared, a good government was one which the people praised, and the best kind of government was one which was invisible, which means serving people from the behind without creating any problems for the people.

International standard of police to citizen ratio is 1 to 450. However, each Myanmar police is serving for 1,000 people, showing insufficient manpower

The mindset of police forces can shape public attitudes and that they should lead in promoting public mentality. People will appreciate valiant efforts of police members for their security

international policing standards. Excess force might cause problems, and it is breaching the human rights of individuals.

The State Counsellor also reminded that the threats of narcotic drugs can undermine moral ethics of human beings as it is related to criminal cases.

Referring to an eastern saying, she remarked that the

for security purposes and this required that more efforts had to be exerted. More police personnel have been dispatched to Rakhine State for security reasons. MPF needs to promote their image through responsible security measures.

The first line of defence for external threats is diplomacy which causes no harm to any

party, the second line is development, and the last line is military action; once this stage is reached, there can be harm and losses to both sides.

While the second line of development is not strong enough for the country yet, police forces need to make more strenuous efforts. It is a chance for police to serve the country. Police need to work for people as an opportunity for merit-making. The nature of the police force is not the same as the military. The former is more responsible for security, peace and stability of people in their daily life.

The State Counsellor also advised the MPF to uplift their willingness, endeavours, attitude and knowledge to overcome their difficulties and challenges.

She said it was important to use state-of-the-art modern technology, and that the government is allocating possible budgets to the police force although it has not met the actual needs due to limited budget allocations.

Security forces are more influential figures than any other government departments in the country. However, police must try to secure people's respect instead of their fears, till the people believe that the police are taking responsibilities of security and stability for the public.

She also said the government needs to know the challenges of police personnel and give cash and kind assistance to the family members of police

personnel who lost their lives in the line of duty in Rakhine State.

Psycho tests in recruiting police must include tests to identify the attitude of misuse in power. They must have strong determination to overcome challenges, persistence of the good or the bad in any circumstance of power or positions, and that they must work to leave a good tradition for the future.

The State Counsellor also stressed that it was important to have discussions between the senior officials and their subordinates for the requirements in MPF, and urged them to be loyal to the government.

Union Minister for Home Affairs Lt-Gen Kyaw Swe presented the functions of MPF and its coordination with the relevant ministries.

Next, the State Counsellor gave comments and suggestions based on the discussions to ensure coordination. She then had lunch together with senior police officers of MPF.

The meeting was attended by Union Minister for Home Affairs Lt-Gen Kyaw Swe, Union Minister for Office of the Union Government U Min Thu, Deputy Minister for Home Affairs Maj-Gen Aung Thu, Chief of MPF Police Lt-Gen Aung Win Oo, Deputy Chiefs of MPF Police Maj-Gen Myo Swe Win, Police Maj-Gen Aung Naing Thu and senior police officers from different branches under the MPF.—MNA

(Translated by Aung Khin)

Equality of opportunity for all

To be a genuine democracy, it is not enough to be a "government of the people, by the people, for the people". The government must uplift the economic standard of our people to the point where there is equality of opportunity for all. Then only can we go forward towards genuine democracy.

*(Extract from the speech given by
General Aung San at the Jubilee Hall First Preparatory Conference held on
19 May 1947)*



Nay Pyi Taw commemorates International Migrants Day



Vice President U Myint Swe delivers the speech at the ceremony to commemorate the International Migrants Day at the MICC-II in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

NAY PYI TAW commemorated International Migrants Day at the Myanmar International Convention Centre-II yesterday with Vice President U Myint Swe delivering the opening speech.

In his speech, the Vice President first explained that 18 December was designated as International Migrants Day by the UN General Assembly during the 55th Session in 2000. He said this is the eighth year Myanmar has commemorated the event.

The Vice President said there are numerous factors for the rise of migrant workers and these include global economic shifts, different economic development rates among nations, difference in wages, seeking better job opportunities, climate change, and technological advancements making information on migration easily accessible which makes migrating for work between nations, especially from a developing country to a developed country, more common.

The Vice President said there has been a noticeable in-

crease in migrant workers as a report in 2014 showed there were 150 million migrant workers around the world and it increased to 272 million in 2019, according to a UN report.

He said this year's International Migrants Day theme was 'Migration and Social Cohesion' and focuses on how individual cooperation can benefit society, working together for the good of everyone, ensuring no ostracizing occurs, and increasing trust.

The Vice President called for the need to promote safe, systematic and legal migration for work and reducing illegal migration to other countries. He said taking illegal routes to migration carries the possibility of people landing in dangerous work environments, exploitation, unfulfilled rights and opportunities, human trafficking, forced labour and insufficient pay.

Myanmar participated in the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration with other UN member nations in December 2018, said the Vice President. He said the agree-

ment is not legally binding but reflects the pledge to cooperate among the member nations and will bring numerous benefits to Myanmar. He said female migrant workers and children are the most susceptible to exploitation and their needs should not be forgotten when implementing processes for better migrating work systems.

The Vice President said that migrant workers in Southeast Asia are usually indebted and a major portion of their pay is used to repay owed money. He said this greatly delays development in their lives and is a challenge to sustainable family reunification. He said being free of debt will allow the creation of a good environment. He said the money migrant workers transfer back to their families is an important part of a nation's GDP and as such, should be provided with a safe channel of remittance.

The Vice President said as expenses for migrant workers should be reduced and traveling implemented seriously, some employers are doing it for zero

cost and the government is pushing for all employers to adopt this practice. He urged for licensed overseas employment agencies to abide by existing laws, bylaws, rules and regulations.

Next, the Vice President took a documentary photo with the attendees and concluded the first half of the programme. He then observed the commemorative displays of photographs, books and reports on International Migrants Day.

Later in the second part of the programme, a video clip on the International Organization for Migration's (IOM) assistance to the Myanmar government in promoting constructive benefits of migration and protecting the rights of migrant Myanmar workers was shown.

This was followed by Union Minister for Labour, Immigration and Population U Thein Swe delivering an address on International Migrants Day and IOM Chief of Mission Mr Akio Nakayama read messages from the UN Secretary-General and the IOM Director-General.

Afterwards, the Union Minister conferred certificates of honor on the Joint Myanmar Affairs Committee, Bangkok-based Migrant Workers Network, Migrant Workers Rights Network, Education and Development Foundation, and Labour Hittai for all their assistance with the affairs of Myanmar migrant workers in Thailand and the education, healthcare and social affairs of their families.

The event was attended by Union Ministers Lt-Gen Ye Aung, Dr Pe Myint, U Thein Swe and Dr Win Myat Aye, Nay Pyi Taw Council Chairman Dr Myo Aung, Deputy Minister U Kyaw Myo, Nay Pyi Taw Council member U Nyi Tun, regional/state cabinet ministers, Pyithu and Amyotha Hluttaw representatives, Ambassadors and diplomats, permanent secretaries, directors-general, department heads, UN officials, representatives of INGOs, NGOs, employers and employees, and invited guests.—MNA

(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

Vice President U Henry Van Thio attends Christmas dinner

VICE PRESIDENT U Henry Van Thio and wife Dr Shwe Hluan attended a Christmas dinner at Myanmar International Convention Centre-II in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

Firstly, Rev Dr Aye Min, Chairman of the Myanmar Evangelical Christian Alliance (MECA) said prayers.

Next, MECA General-Secretary Rev Dr Maurice Hlyan Nar delivered the welcoming speech and Union Minister for Religious Affairs and Culture Thura U Aung Ko then gave the Christmas speech.

This was followed by Archbishop Steven Than Myint Oo, Chairman of the Myanmar Council of Churches, extending good wishes to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, leaders of the country and the people.

Next, Rev U No No of the Myanmar Christian Propagation Cooperative Federation, MECA's Rev U Myo Win and Father Lucus Suan Za Lian of the Federation of Myanmar Catholic Bishops read passages from the Bible.

Next, Father John Saw Yaw Han, Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Yangon, gave a



Vice President U Henry Van Thio and wife Dr Shwe Hluan, Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U T Khun Myat, Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than and their wives attend the Christmas dinner. **PHOTO: MNA**

short sermon on Christmas and the General-Secretary of the Myanmar Council of Churches' Rev Mahn Par Mar Stan spoke words of thanks.

Next, John Mahn Hsane Hgyi of the Federation of Myanmar Catholic Bishops handed

over a Christmas present to the Vice President on behalf of all the Christian entities, and they in turn received Christmas presents handed by Union Minister Thura U Aung Ko.

Vice President U Henry Van Thio then took a docu-

mentary photo with the guests, Myanmar Council of Churches Vice-Chairman Bishop U Myat San speaking words of gratitude, and all the guests then sang a hymn.

Afterwards, Myanmar Christian Propagation Coop-

erative Federation Chairman Rev U Aung Thet Nyunt said prayers and closed the ceremony, after which the all the invited guests enjoyed the dinner together.

The dinner was attended by Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U T Khun Myat and wife Daw Yin May, Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than and wife Daw Nant Kyin Kyi, Union Constitutional Tribunal (UCT) Chairman U Myo Nyunt and wife Daw Htay Yi, Union Election Commission (UEC) Chairman U Hla Thein and wife Daw Aye Thida, Amyotha Hluttaw Deputy Speaker U Aye Tha Aung and wife Daw Thein Yin Chay, Union Ministers, the Union Attorney-General, Union Auditor-General, Union Civil Service Board (UCSB) Chairman, Nay Pyi Taw Council Chairman, UCT members, UEC members, Deputy Ministers and their wives, UCSB members, permanent secretaries, directors-general, bishops, pastors, representatives of Christian churches, invited guests and other officials.—MNA

(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

Union Minister U Kyaw Tin attends 14th ASEM FMs' Meeting in Madrid

UNION Minister for International Cooperation, U Kyaw Tin, arrived back Yangon today after attending the 14th ASEM Foreign Ministers' Meeting held in Madrid, Spain from 15 to 16 December 2019. The Meeting was inaugurated by His Majesty King Felipe VI, the King of Spain and attended by Ministerial delegations from 51 members of ASEM and representatives from the European Union and the ASEAN Secretariat.

On 15 December 2019, the Union Minister attended the official welcome dinner hosted by the Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation of the Kingdom of Spain.

The Union Minister delivered a statement at the Plenary Session of the ASEM 14th Foreign Ministers' Meeting held on 16 December 2019 under the theme "Revitalizing the multilateral system-advancing the ASEM partnership on global issues". In his statement, the Union Minister highlighted the vital role of ASEM in promoting the relations between Asia



Union Minister for International Cooperation U Kyaw Tin attends the 14th ASEM Foreign Ministers' Meeting held in Madrid, Spain. **PHOTO: MNA**

and Europe at the time of rapid global change, the role of multilateralism in finding solutions to the global challenges including climate change and the national efforts of Myanmar for adaptation and mitigation of the effects of climate change. He also stressed the need to strengthen the effectiveness and independence of the United Nations and to ensure that response of the multilateral institutions match

with the priorities and expectations of the member States concerned.

The Union Minister also highlighted that the observance of the principles of the UN Charter and the applicable international law is of utmost importance for the maintenance of the world peace and security. At the same time, he added, application of international law should be based on sovereign

equality, impartiality and avoidance of double standards. He also emphasized the need to correct the mistake of allowing unwieldy mandate holders with no corresponding due diligence to adhere to the principles of independence, impartiality and integrity.

The Union Minister U Kyaw Tin also attended the Working Lunch-Retreat Session hosted by Mr Josep Borrell, High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. At the working lunch, the Union Minister gave a factual background of the communal violence in Rakhine State, which goes back into past centuries including the movement for creation of an autonomous space in Northern Rakhine State. He also informed the meeting of the ongoing measures taken by the Government to address the accountability of the alleged human rights violations.

While in Madrid, the Union Minister met with Dato Lim Jock Hoi, ASEAN Secretary General and discussed on speeding up the implementation of priority

projects for creating conducive conditions in Rakhine State for the repatriation process. The Union Minister also held bilateral meeting with Mr Fernando M. Valenzuela Marzo, State Secretary for Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation of Spain on the sidelines of the meeting and discussed issues of mutual interests and promotion of bilateral relations. The Union Minister also met with three youth representatives from Myanmar who were attending the 9th Model ASEM Meeting in Madrid. During the meetings, the Union Minister was accompanied by the Myanmar Ambassador to Spain U Kyaw Zeya and officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The Asia Europe Meeting (ASEM) was established in 1996, to serve as a platform for informal dialogue and cooperation between Asia and Europe. Presently it comprises 53 partners: 30 European and 21 Asian countries, European Union and the ASEAN Secretariat. Next ASEM Summit will be held in Cambodia in November 2020.—MNA

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing to attend National Defence Day, People's Army Foundation Day in Viet Nam

COMMANDER in Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and Myanmar Tatmadaw delegation left Mingalardon Air Base yesterday for Viet Nam at the invitation of Senior Lieutenant General Phan Van Giang, Chief of the General Staff of the Vietnam People's Army.

Myanmar Tatmadaw delegation will attend the 30th anniversary of National Defence Day and the 75th anniversary of People's Army of Viet Nam Foundation Anniversary.

On arrival at the Noi Bai International Airport, the Senior General and party were welcomed by Lt-Gen Ngo Minh Tien, Myanmar Ambassador to Viet



The Myanmar Tatmadaw delegation led by Senior General Min Aung Hlaing visit the 102 Mechanized Infantry Regiment of Vietnam People's Army. PHOTO: OFFICE OF THE C-IN-C OF DEFENCE SERVICES



Nam Daw Win Sandar Swe, Myanmar Military Attaché (Army, Navy, Air) Brigadier General Aung Zeya and officials.

In the afternoon, the Myanmar Tatmadaw delegation visited the 102 Mechanized Infantry Regiment under the 308th Infantry Division of the 1st Corps of Vietnam People's Army.

Myanmar Tatmadaw delegation also looked around at agriculture, livestock breeding, and military vehicles of the 1st

Corps.

The 102 Mechanized Infantry Regiment was established on 6 January 1947 with 2,000 members. Its original name was the Regiment United Area (Inter-regional Regiment). A military meeting on 12 January 1947 decided to develop it into a corp, according to the report of the Office of the Commander -in-Chief of Defence Services.—MNA

(Translated by Aung Khin)

Seminar focuses on building better employer-employee relations

A seminar on Constructive Industrial Relations and Job Security concluded yesterday with representatives from the government, employers, and employees exchanging views on current challenges in labour relations.

Organized by the Confederation of Trade Unions of Myanmar (CTUM), the two-day seminar was held in the Hlinethaya Industrial Zone in the western part of Yangon. The speakers at the seminar echoed calls from the tripartite group for constructive relations between employers and employees.

Regarding good relations between employers and employees, Mar Si of Tailor Garment, a representative from the employers' sector, highlighted the need for clear and concise directives from the government and stressed the importance of accountability and responsibility among employers.

She also highlighted the important role played by HR personnel in factories in pre-



Seminar on Constructive Industrial Relations and Job Security being convened in Yangon. PHOTO: KYAW ZEYA

venting misunderstandings between employers and employees which could spark labour disputes.

Next, Aung Naing Tun, a representative of the basic labour union and from the Alpine Drinking Water Factory, spoke about labour challenges, which include discrimination at factories, surveillance, and attempts to break up labour unions.

"Giving overtime opportunities only to non-members

of a labour union is leading to breaking up of the unions," he said, adding that some factories restrict labour strikes when they recruit new workers.

U Zaw Than Tint, an official of the Labour Relations Department of the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population, called on both employers and employees to utilize the negotiation skills of the Work Coordination Committee, which is formed with three represent-



Mr Hiroyuki Nagumo, president of the Japan International Labour Foundation. PHOTO: KYAW ZEYA

atives from the employer's side, three from the employees' side, and three dignitaries chosen from among the local people, to settle labour disputes in factories.

"I am confident that if both employers and employees follow the EC (Employment Contract), labour disputes would decrease," said U Zaw Than Tint.

Asked to comment on the labour environment in Myan-

mar, Mr Hiroyuki Nagumo, president of the Japan International Labour Foundation, who was also present at the seminar, said that after seeing the results of the discussion, he felt that Myanmar is still far from the point it needs to reach in terms of labour relations.

He said that to build good relations, employers and employees should not consider each other as enemies, and both sides should take responsibility and do their work dutifully.

He said the role of a labour union is not to fight with others but to build trust with them.

"Our stand is to try hard to build trust with local people, then with authorities and employers," said Mr Hiroyuki Nagumo.

He added that a labour union is concerned with all workers, not just its members, and a labour union must work for all.

The president of JILAF also pledged to continue supporting the Myanmar labour sector.—GNLM

Building a strong foundation for construction sector

A S part of legislative efforts in the construction sector, the parliamentary committee on transport, communications, and construction is discussing several bills, including the real estate services bill and housing apartments bill, and is also planning to meet with the governmental departments in this regard.

At present, the Ministry of Construction and the legislative committee are working together to enact Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) in the construction sector.

SOPs would play an important role in removing current obstacles in the construction sector in regions and states, aid the tender process, and ensure timely completion of construction projects funded by the State-budget which meet the set target.

For this, SOPs must be adaptable to the on-ground situation and must benefit all stakeholders — the contractors, the State, and the people.

Meanwhile, the Build, Operate and Transfer (BOT) system, which is also connected with the construction sector, is facing challenges that need to be tackled.

When we look at the contracts signed between the Ministry of Construction and private construction companies under the BOT system to build roads, we find that weaknesses and problems in past contracts have not benefited the people or the contractors.

This reflects the need for binding BOT contracts, which offer a win-win situation to businesses, the State, and the people. To achieve this, the legislative committee has suggested possible solutions to the Ministry of Construction to ensure that BOT contracts do not burden the people and the investors. We have realized that this cannot be

achieved within a day, but we hope a pragmatic approach to problems related with BOT projects would be more successful than the earlier idealistic one.

We have made achievements in the legislative sphere. For example, in the 2018-2019 fiscal year, the Myanmar Engineering Council Law submitted by the Ministry of Construction was amended. The Pyidaungsu Hluttaw approved the Bridges Law in June this year. The Ministry of Construction and the legislative committee are currently working on drafting the Building Control Act and plan to enact it within six months.

While we work on legislation, we also need to look at tender directives as there is much to be amended when it comes to them. Once tender directives become accurate, precise, and clear, and the Building Control Act and the Procurement Law, which are being drafted, come into effect, we would feel confident that we have laid a strong foundation for the construction sector.

We believe this can be achieved within a short time frame.



Press Release on the Official Visit of H.E. Mr. Nguyen Xuan Phuc, Prime Minister of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar

At the invitation of the President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, U Win Myint, and Daw Cho Cho, Prime Minister of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, His Excellency Mr. Nguyen Xuan Phuc paid an official visit to Myanmar from 16 to 18 December 2019.

The delegation led by Prime Minister His Excellency Mr. Nguyen Xuan Phuc arrived at Nay Pyi Taw International Airport by flight in the evening of 16 December 2019. At 0900 AM on 17 December 2019, Prime Minister His Excellency Mr. Nguyen Xuan Phuc was accorded a ceremonial welcome at the Presidential Palace in Nay Pyi Taw by President U Win Myint. After the ceremony, President U Win Myint had a courtesy call with Prime Minister His Excellency Mr. Nguyen Xuan Phuc at the Credential Hall of the Presidential Palace. During the meeting, the two leaders touched on a wide range of issues relating to the promotion of bilateral relations, trade and investment, exchange of visits between the leaders of the two countries and to maintain and strengthen the friendly bilateral relations by enhancing people to people contact.

After that, the State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and Prime Minister His Excellency Mr. Nguyen Xuan Phuc held bilateral talks at the Presidential Palace. During the meeting, both sides reviewed the existing traditional ties of friendship established by General Aung San and President Ho Chi Minh, and exchanged views on matters pertaining to the significant achievements in bilateral cooperation in recent years and ways to further enhance closer cooperation between the two countries. The two leaders also reviewed the close friendship and cooperation cultivated by successive leaders and peoples from both countries. They also discussed the progresses achieved in bilateral cooperation in the past years, particularly the elevation of bilateral ties to Comprehensive Cooperative Partnership in August 2017, which has opened up a new chapter in bilateral relations.

Both sides discussed to co-



President U Win Myint and First Lady Daw Cho Cho and State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi attend the luncheon for Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam on 17 December. PHOTO: MNA

operate more closely to strengthen the effectiveness of comprehensive cooperation in all areas, including trade and investment, agriculture, agro-forestry and fishery, connectivity, energy and telecommunications, tourism, Information and Communication Technology; to promote cooperation in regional and international arena, activities to celebrate the commemoration of the 45th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries in 2020, to continue working closely and extending support to each other at the regional and international fora, especially under the frameworks of ASEAN, the United Nations, ASEM and Mekong sub-regional cooperation mechanisms, to coordinate more closely during Viet Nam's Chairmanship of ASEAN in 2020.

The two Leaders reaffirmed their commitments to accelerate in promotion of trade and investments between the two countries since the volume of two-way trade between Myanmar and Viet Nam in 2019 has increased by 11.61% compared to 2018. Currently, Viet Nam stands as the 9th largest trading partner and 7th largest foreign investor in Myanmar.

The two sides emphasized that the exchange of visits at all

levels and channels, including government to government, parliament to parliament, party to party, people to people especially young generations, will enhance and consolidate friendship, mutual trust and cooperation between the two countries and peoples.

The Vietnamese side stressed the importance attached to its relations with Myanmar and reaffirmed its continued support for Myanmar's effort towards peace and national reconciliation. Likewise, Myanmar side expressed its admiration on the achievements of reforms in Viet Nam especially for the progress on socio-economic life of its people and sustainable development. The Myanmar side expressed its appreciation to Viet Nam for its consistent support extended to Myanmar's peace process and national reconciliation as well as for sharing with Myanmar its experiences with regard to economic development. The two leaders reiterated their commitments to enhance close cooperation in regional and international fora, including ASEAN, Non-Aligned Movement and the United Nations.

Following the meeting, State Counsellor and Vietnamese Prime Minister witnessed the signing of the Memoranda of Understanding and the Action

Plan between the two sides. The Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in Agriculture and Rural Development, between the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam was signed by Dr. Aung Thu, Union Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and Mr. Nguyen Xuan Cuong, Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam. Then, the Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation between the two Foreign Ministries and the Action Plan on Implementation of the Comprehensive Cooperative Partnership between the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam (2019-2024) were signed by U Soe Han, Permanent Secretary for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and Mr. Dang Minh Khoi, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam. After that, diplomatic notes for the extension of stay for ordinary passport holders from 14 to 30 days were exchanged.

Then, State Counsellor and

paid homage to the Shwe Dagon Pagoda. Then, Prime Minister His Excellency Mr. Nguyen Xuan Phuc visited Mytel Office, THACO, BIDV and SHB Offices at Myanmar Plaza in Yangon. After that, visiting Prime Minister received the Myanmar-Vietnam Friendship Association, attended the opening ceremony of HD Bank and received U Phyo Min Thein, Chief Minister for the Yangon Region Government at Melia Hotel, Yangon.

The delegation led by the Prime Minister His Excellency Mr. Nguyen Xuan Phuc left for Viet Nam in the evening.

A Joint Statement was issued at the conclusion of the Official Visit. According to the statement, both sides agreed to promote the mutually beneficial cooperation especially in the areas of politics, trade and investment, defence and security, legal affairs and justice, agriculture, forestry, culture, sport, transport and communication, tourism, information technology, protection of natural resources and environment, implementation of e-government projects and the exchange of visits and to strengthen the closer collaboration in the regional and international fora.

The Official Visit of Prime Minister His Excellency Mr. Nguyen Xuan Phuc to Myanmar is his first visit to Myanmar after the assumption of the high office as Prime Minister of Viet Nam on 7 April 2016. The visit is a significant milestone in Myanmar-Viet Nam bilateral relations. It is also the first visit of the Prime Minister of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam to Myanmar since December 2011. His visit further strengthened the traditional bonds of friendship between the two countries. The MoU on Cooperation in Agriculture and Rural Development, the Action Plan (2019 - 2024) and the MoU on Cooperation between the two Foreign Ministries which were signed during the visit also served as an impetus to accelerate the bilateral cooperation between Myanmar and Viet Nam.

His Excellency Mr. Nguyen Xuan Phuc and delegation departed for Yangon by flight at 1600PM. In the evening, Vietnamese Prime Minister visited Embassy of Viet Nam in Yangon and met with Embassy staffs, family members of the Embassy and the Vietnamese Community.

In the morning of 18 December 2019, Prime Minister His Excellency Mr. Nguyen Xuan Phuc

2020, 72nd Anniversary Independence Day National Objectives

1. All National Ethnic Races to defend and protect with "collective strength" to ensure Non-disintegration of the Union, Non-disintegration of the Unity of National Ethnic Races and Perpetuation of National Sovereignty.
2. To give priority and work for transformation of the rule of law and justice sector which is important for stability, peace and development of the State.
3. To work on amendment of the Constitution, which is the basic foundation for building a Democratic Federal Union.
4. To build and create conducive environments for Union citizens which can elevate their sense of duty and improve their capabilities while the Democratic Federal Union is being built.
5. Emergence of a peaceful and prosperous Democratic Federal Union by implementing the Myanmar Sustainable Development Plan.

Discussion on ICJ hearing experiences to be broadcast

A discussion on the experiences at the ICJ hearing will be broadcast on MRTV at 8 p.m. tonight after the weather forecast, and on MRTV radio at the same time.

Union Minister for Office of the State Counsellor U Kyaw Tint Swe (Joint Representative, Myanmar delegation), Union Attorney-General Office Permanent Secretary Dr Thida Oo Myanmar delegation member, Legal Advisor U Thi Han Myo Nyunt, Myanmar delegation member, Legal Advisor U Kyaw Tin, Myanmar delegation member, and U Ko Ko (Hsetmu) as moderator will be participating in the discussion. —MNA



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

FORECAST VALID UNTIL AFTERNOON OF THE 19th December, 2019: Light rain are likely to be isolated in Taninthayi Region and Kachin State. Degree of certainty is (60%). Weather will be partly cloudy in Upper Sagaing Region, Chin and Mon States and generally fair in the remaining Regions and States.

STATE OF THE SEA: Sea will be slight to moderate in Myanmar waters. Wave height will be about (5 - 7) feet in Deltaic, Gulf of Mottama, off and along Mon-Taninthayi Coasts and about (3 - 5) feet off and along Rakhine Coasts.

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Decrease of night temperatures in the Eastern Myanmar areas.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 19th December, 2019: Fair weather.

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 19th December, 2019: Fair weather.

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 19th December, 2019: Fair weather.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Nay Pyi Taw
18 December 2019



PM Mr Nguyen Xuan Phuc visits Shwedagon Pagoda, Vietnamese investments in Yangon before return home



Vietnamese Prime Minister Mr Nguyen Xuan Phuc and delegation pay homage to the Shwedagon Pagoda in Yangon. **PHOTO: MNA**



V IETNAMESE Prime Minister Mr Nguyen Xuan Phuc and party concluded their 3-day visit to Myanmar yesterday.

Accompanied by Union Minister for Education Dr Myo Thein Gyi, the Vietnamese delegation visited Shwedagon Pagoda in Yangon at 7:45 am.

They paid homage to the pagoda where Senior Buddhist monks presented them a relic replica of Shwedagon Pagoda to be erected in Viet Nam to mark friendship ties between the two countries.

After signing the visitor's book, the Vietnamese Premier and delegation members made donations at Myanmar's landmark pagoda.

They then arrived at the Telecom International Myanmar Co., Ltd (Mytel) headquarters on Shwedagon Pagoda Road, and heard reports on operations of the joint venture telecom firms.

The Prime Minister and officials witnessed signing of an MoU between the Viettel Group and the HD Bank.

They also attended the opening ceremony of the first representative office of HD Bank in Myanmar from Viet Nam after visiting the offices of Truong Hai Auto (THACO) and the Bank for Investment and Development of Vietnam (BIDV) at Myanmar Plaza.

They proceeded to Hotel Melia, and held a meeting with Myanmar-Viet Nam

Friendship Association about promotion of investments and cultural exchange programmes.

The Prime Minister and party also attended the launching ceremony of the HD Bank representative office held at the Inya Ballroom at the same venue. It was also attended by Union Minister for Planning, Finance and Industry U Soe Win, Yangon Region Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein, Governor of Central Bank of Myanmar U Kyaw Kyaw Maung and officials.

The Vietnamese Premier held talks with the Yangon Region Chief Minister and his cabinet members about fostering cooperation in investments between the two countries.

The Vietnamese delegation left Yangon International Airport for home at 12:25 pm. They were seen off by the Union Minister for Education, the Yangon Region Chief Minister and his cabinet members, departmental heads of Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Vietnamese Ambassador to Myanmar and his Myanmar counterpart in Viet Nam.—MNA



Vietnamese Prime Minister Mr Nguyen Xuan Phuc holds the meeting at Mytel HQ, the joint-venture telecoms firm between Myanmar and Viet Nam. **PHOTO: MNA**



Vietnamese Prime Minister Mr Nguyen Xuan Phuc holds the meeting with Yangon Region Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein on future bilateral investments. **PHOTO: MNA**



Vietnamese Prime Minister Mr Nguyen Xuan Phuc and dignitaries inaugurate the HD Bank branch at Melia Hotel. **PHOTO: MNA**

Rubber export income down \$5 mln in current fiscal



A worker loading a truck with smoked rubber sheets at a rubber trading market. PHOTO: KHUN (WIN PA)

MYANMAR exported rubber worth US\$40 million over the last two months of the current financial year, a sharp drop of \$5 million compared with the corresponding period of the previous fiscal, according to the Ministry of Commerce.

Over 32,000 tons of rubber was shipped to the external markets in the current financial year. The export volume was over 36,000 tons in the year-ago period.

An improvement in Myanmar rubber exports will be directly related to the price offered, said U Khaing Myint, secretary of the Myanmar Rubber Planters and Producers Association (MRPPA).

The volatile rubber price is related to global climate change, and government subsidy will be required for growers in need,

he said.

Rubber is primarily produced in Mon and Kayin states and Taninthayi, Bago, and Yangon regions in Myanmar. There are over 1.6 million acres of rubber plantations in Myanmar, with Mon State accounting for about 500,000 acres, followed by Kayin State (270,000 acres), according to the MRPPA.

About 300,000 tons of rubber is produced annually across the country. Seventy per cent of rubber produced in Myanmar goes to China. It is also shipped to Singapore, Indonesia, Malaysia, Viet Nam, Korea, India, Japan, and other countries.

At present, Myanmar is exporting only rubber sheets owing to lack of machinery and technology. Export rubber varieties include synthetic rubber, ribbed smoked sheet RSS 1,3,5, Myan-

mar Standard Rubber MSR-20, Technically Specified Rubber TSR-20, and Crepe Rubber.

The MRPPA had sought special rubber zones in the regions and states to produce value-added rubber and quality raw materials at the 15th regular meeting with private entrepreneurs, led by Vice President U Myint Swe, which was held in March.

About 150,000 tons of rubber were exported in the 2017-2018 financial year. Myanmar shipped over 190,000 tons of rubber, with an estimated value of \$250 million, to external markets in the 2018-2019 fiscal year, an increase of 41,000 tons which helped boost earnings by \$60 million compared to the year-ago period, according to data released by the Ministry of Commerce. —GNLM

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

MIC clears investments of \$84.17 mln from 17 firms, K12 bln from two local enterprises

THE Myanmar Investment Commission (MIC), at a recent meeting, approved and endorsed investments of US\$84.17 million from 17 foreign enterprises, along with two domestic investment projects with estimated capitals of K12 billion and \$4.27 million.

The 17 foreign businesses were given the go-ahead by the MIC, and the proposals of 15 foreign enterprises were endorsed

by the regional Investment Committees of Yangon and Bago. The majority of investments will flow into the manufacturing sector, while electricity and real estate sectors have attracted one project each. The projects are expected to create over 8,500 jobs for local residents.

Meanwhile, the proposals of two domestic enterprises were approved and endorsed by the MIC. The domestic projects will

be executed in the manufacturing and power sectors, and create over 80 jobs.

The Myanmar Investment Law allows regional and state Investment Committees to endorse local and foreign proposals, where the initial investment does not exceed K6 billion, or \$5 million, with the aim of simplifying the verification of investment projects. — GNLM

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Annual inflation rate remains at 8.6% in Oct

THE annual rate of inflation in Myanmar, based on the Consumer Price Index, stood at 8.6 per cent in October, according to a report released recently by the Central Statistical Organization, under the Ministry of Planning, Finance and Industry.

The figure showed no remarkable change month-on-month. The rate was registered at 8.61 per cent in September.

The Myanmar Kyat gained against the US dollar in October. The price of imported oil dropped, but domestic fuel oil price was on the higher side.

There was a remarkable increase in CPI in the food, household goods and maintenance, transportation, other commodities, clothing, health, education services, recreation, culture, non-food and tobacco and beverages groups and telecommunications.

The annual inflation rate

based on CPI stood at just 6.6 per cent in November, 2018 and reached its highest level in September this year at 8.61 per cent.

In October, Magway Region recorded the highest inflation rate at 12.4 per cent, followed by Sagaing Region at 11.53 per cent, and Mandalay Region at 10.1 per cent.

Earlier, the inflation rate was calculated based on a 2006 survey. The base year was later changed to 2012. The Central Statistical Organization conducted a Household Income and Expenditure Survey in 82 townships in November, 2012. To reduce the inflation rate, the concerned authorities have been making efforts on the basis of policies on finance, currency, trade, and foreign currency control, in keeping with the second five-year National Development plan. — Htet Myat

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Domestic investments cross K630 bln as of mid-December

By Nyein Nyein

INVESTMENTS by Myanmar citizens in the country exceeded K600 billion from 1 October to 14 December of the current fiscal, as per a press statement issued by the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA).

As of 14 December, 26 local enterprises were allowed to invest in the country by the Myanmar Investment Commission and the state and region investment committees. Domestic investments have reached K638 billion so far, including expansion of capital by existing enterprises.

This financial year, the quantum of investment was larger compared with the year-ago period.

Thirteen enterprises invested in the manufacturing sector; four businesses pumped funds into the other services sector; the hotels and tourism and the real estate development sectors attracted three enterprises each; and, one project was approved in

the livestock and fisheries, electricity, and agricultural sectors each.

Since 1988 and as of 30 October, domestic investments of K19, 644 billion have been made by 1,649 enterprises in the country, as per data from the DICA.

To simplify the verification process of investment projects, the Myanmar Investment Law allows the region and state Investment Committees to endorse local and foreign proposals, where the initial investment does not exceed K6 billion, or \$5 million.

While some projects no longer need MIC approval, businesses that are strategic to the government require a permit from the commission. In addition, those businesses that have large capital investments exceeding \$5 million and that may have a possible impact on the environment and the local community need to be approved by the MIC's proposal assessment team.

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

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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.

Twenty shuttle buses to run from Yangon airport to highway terminals

By Nyein Nyein

THE Omni Focus Company will offer shuttle bus services from Yangon airport to the highway bus terminals with the help of 20 buses, said U Hla Aung, Joint Secretary of the Yangon Region Transport Authority (YRTA).

The company has also forwarded a request to the YRTA to operate 27 buses on a route linking four universities — Yangon Technological University (Hlinethayar), University of

Medicine (2), Dagon University, and University of Economics (Ywarthargyi).

"The Omni Focus Company has submitted proposals for two more bus lines. The first one is a shuttle bus service from Yangon airport to two highway bus terminals—Aungmingala and Dagon Ayar. The second service would link four universities," said U Hla Aung.

"At present, we are preparing space to accommodate the shuttle buses at Aungmingala

and Dagon Ayar highway terminals," he said.

"The registration process of those buses is delaying the services. The company is making efforts to offer the services as soon as possible," according to the YRTA.

"The bus lines can help ensure the security of commuters. The YRTA is striving to provide better transportation services," said U Hla Aung.

At present, the Omni Focus Company is running services with YBS No 20, 83, 98, 99,

56, and the airport shuttle bus from Yangon airport to Yangon Central Railway Station.

To improve transport facilities in Yangon, the Yangon Bus Service system (YBS) was launched on 16 January, 2017, during the incumbent government's term. At present, more than 100 bus lines are operating 4,500 buses on 135 routes, along with the airport shuttle and city transit. The number of daily commuters has been estimated at 1.8 million.

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Several flowering plants on display at Pyin Oo Lwin flower festival this year

THE Pyin Oo Lwin National Kandawgyi Garden Flower Festival is showcasing a variety of flower species this year. The month-long flower festival is being held from 15 December 2019 to 15 January 2020.

The flower festival is crowded with visitors. This year, the flower festival will also display Naykyarpanwingabar from Myanmar, Kyulit flower from the Netherlands, Hninsep (Rose) from England, and lilies from Italy. A variety of beautiful flowers will also be displayed and sold at the flower festival, said an official from the festival organizing committee.

Famous singers will perform on 21, 22, and 25, December at the flower festival, free of charge (FOC).

"Our team is visiting the flower festival from Yangon



Flowers are showcasing on the horse cart at the Pyin Oo Lwin National Garden Flower Festival.

PHOTO: THET NAING (PYINOOLWIN)

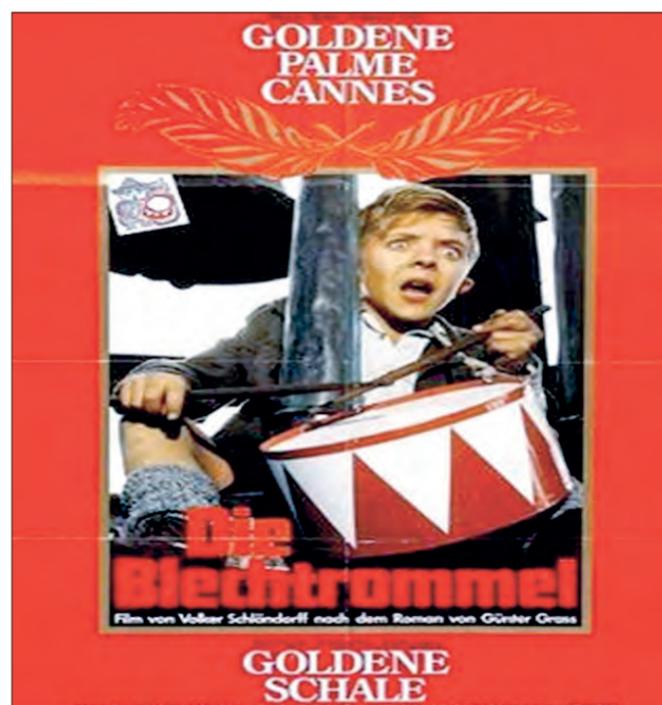
Region. We come for the flower festival every year in December. We are very glad to see that many flower species are being

displayed this year compared to last year," said a local visitor from Yangon Region.

Many travelers are visiting

the Pyin Oo Lwin flower festival this year compared with last year.—Kyaw Kyaw (Mahlaing)

(Translated by Hay Mar)

Film analysis programme for "The Tin Drum" to be held at FDC

A film analysis programme for the Palme D'or and Best Foreign Language Film awards winning film "The Tin Drum" by director Volker Schlöndorff will be held at the movie theater, No.50, Golden Valley, at 22 December, noon.

The programme aiming to develop Myanmar films is happening 32nd time under the sub-category of Cinematheque Programme and the management member of Film Development Center Dr Aung Min will lead the discussion.

The film chosen for coming programme is a Drama film with the taste of erotic and surreal. The film won the Palme D'or award of Cannes Film Festival in 1979 and Best Foreign Lan-

guage Film at the Oscars 1980. In 1980, the film got its highest gross. The film "The Tin Drum" is a film adaption of a novel by Günter Grass and the director wrote the script with French scriptwriter Jean-Claude Carrière.

The story is about a boy named Oskra who tried to stop the growing of his body on his 7th Birthday during the World War 2 period. He accidentally knew the power of the tin drum and used the power of drum every time he was upset. However, in the end, he threw away the tin drum and decided to live normally.—Thein Htike Thu (FDC)

(Translated by Bahtoo)

Japan to earmark record 102 tril. yen for FY 2020 budget

TOKYO — The government has decided to earmark a record 102.66 trillion yen (\$938 billion) in the initial draft budget for fiscal 2020 to fund swelling social security and defense outlays, government sources said Wednesday.

The spending plan, which Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's Cabinet will approve on Friday, will top 100 trillion yen for the second consecutive year. The draft budget includes funds for free preschool education as well as record defense spending, partly due to the North Korean nuclear and missile threat.

The government will also allocate around 1.8 trillion yen for steps aimed at underpinning the world's third-largest economy, including a shopping reward point program for purchases made by holders of "My Number" national identification cards.

The initial general account budget for the current fiscal year ending in March stood at 101.46

trillion yen.

Tax revenues are estimated to stand at record 63.51 trillion yen in fiscal 2020, up roughly 1 trillion yen from the initial budget for the current fiscal year, supported by the consumption tax increase to 10 percent from 8 percent starting on Oct. 1 this year.

As part of efforts to improve its battered fiscal health, the gov-

ernment plans to cut new bond issuance by about 100 billion yen to 32.56 trillion yen, down for the 10th consecutive year.

The total amount of the draft budget was decided after a meeting between Finance Minister Taro Aso and internal affairs minister Sanae Takaichi over the allocation of national tax revenues to local governments.

— Kyodo News ■



Finance minister Taro Aso (r) and internal affairs minister Sanae Takaichi. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

EU chief says UK risks more in post-Brexit trade talks



European Commission chief Ursula von der Leyen. PHOTO: AFP

STRASBOURG — European Commission chief Ursula von der Leyen warned Wednesday that failing to rapidly negotiate a new trade deal after Brexit would hurt Britain more than it would the EU. "The timetable ahead of us is extremely challenging," she told the European Parliament in Strasbourg.

"In case we cannot conclude an agreement by the end of 2020, we will face again a cliff edge. This would clearly harm our interests but it will impact more the UK than us." Eurosceptic British

MEPs laughed at the warning, but it reflects a pessimistic mood among Brussels officials.

"Time is limited and it won't be possible to do everything, but we'll do everything we can. We can't do it all but we will give it our all," EU Brexit negotiator Michel Barnier said.

"After the transition period we'll have to continue to work with the British and to negotiate," he said. Britain is due to leave the European Union on 31 January, but will remain in a transitional arrangement until the end of the year while negotiators debate future trade ties.

Under the withdrawal agreement which Prime Minister Boris Johnson has agreed with Europe but not yet pushed through parliament, the UK could ask for a one or two year extension.

But Johnson, who last week won a comfortable majority in the UK general election, insists he will not ask for more time and is preparing legislation to forbid such a move.—AFP ■

French government, unions to meet over pension strike impasse

PARIS — The French government and labour unions face off Wednesday over a pensions overhaul, 14 days into a crippling transport strike that is hurting businesses, wearing out commuters and casting a shadow over holiday plans.

After hundreds of thousands of people took to the streets on Tuesday, both sides stood firm

ahead of a series of meetings, with government officials having said they are ready to negotiate.

Union leaders have vowed to continue their action into the new year as the government defended its plan to forge the country's 42 pension schemes into a single points-based system.

With attitudes appearing to be hardening,

the hardline CGT union claimed it had cut electricity to tens of thousands of homes in the Gironde department in the southwest and the cities of Lyon, Nantes and Orleans on Tuesday, and about 2,000 households in Paris. And it has warned of further cuts.

At a meeting late Tuesday, four unions including the CGT decided

to continue their action, which has wreaked havoc on public transport in Paris and other cities, hobbled regional and international trains, and grounded planes on some strike days.

The unions urged their members to take "local actions" throughout the Christmas holidays, and vowed there would be no letup unless the reform plan is withdrawn.

'Willing to make some improvements'

Critics say the overhaul could force millions of people to work beyond the official retirement age of 62 — one of the lowest in Europe — by setting a "pivot age" of 64 for a full pension.

The government insists the new system will be fairer and more transparent, improving pensions for women and low earners in particular.

—AFP ■



Union leaders have vowed to continue their action until the new year. PHOTO: AFP

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V PACAO VOY. NO. (075N/S)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V PACAO VOY. NO. (075N/S) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 19-12-2019 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of H.P.T where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S NEW GOLDEN SEA SHIPPING LINES

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V MP STAR

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V MP STAR VOY. NO. (13/2019) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 19-12-2019 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of A.I.P.T-2 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 RK SHIPPING & TRADING PTE LTD

Phone No: 2301928

China, Japan defense ministers agree to boost mutual trust

BEIJING — The defense ministers of China and Japan agreed Wednesday to boost mutual trust and strengthen communication amid growing Japanese concerns over China's increasing military assertiveness in the East and South China seas.

"We want to strengthen communication and boost mutual trust to build a constructive bilateral security relationship," Chinese Defence Minister Gen. Wei Fenghe said at the start of the meeting.

While also expressing a de-

sire to increase mutual trust, Japanese Defence Minister Taro Kono made clear that there are still various concerns between the two countries including the East China Sea.

"We have strong concerns especially regarding Chinese vessels and airplanes in the sea and airspace surrounding the Senkaku Islands," Kono said.

This is the first visit by a Japanese defense chief to China since 2009, reflecting a recent thaw in bilateral ties that had previously grown frosty over



Japanese Defence Minister Taro Kono (l) and Chinese Defence Minister Gen. Wei Fenghe. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

wartime history and territory.

Kono told reporters in Tokyo on Tuesday that he plans to have

a "frank discussion" over various security and defense issues with Wei.—Kyodo News ■

Thai police make arrest over 'inappropriate' Facebook rally photo

BANGKOK — Thai police arrested a suspect behind an "inappropriate" photo posted

on Facebook from an anti-government rally, a minister said Wednesday, as the offending

image went viral days after the largest protest since March's elections.

Downtown Bangkok saw thousands turn out Saturday for a rally led by ultra-popular opposition frontman Thanathorn Juangroongruangkit and his Future Forward Party (FFP) executives.

Carrying posters denouncing "dictatorship" and calling for prime minister Prayut Chan-O-Cha to "get out", the protesters rallied peacefully for an hour.

The event drew the ire of authorities, however, with Digital Economy and Society Minister Buddhpongse Punnakanta singling out an "inappropriate

post of a picture that has upset all Thais".

The photo shared was snapped during the rally, displaying a protester holding a profanity-laced sign decrying "dictatorship".

A mural of the revered late King Bhumibol Adulyadej appeared in the background.

Thailand has some of the world's harshest lese majeste laws, but authorities have not specified what the suspect was charged with.

Buddhipongse said he had conducted investigations before the suspect's arrest, but refused to give any further details.—AFP ■



The rally in support of Thanathorn Juangroongruangkit, leader of the opposition Future Forward Party, was the first major protest since elections in March 2019 returned the military junta to power. PHOTO: AFP

Japan journalist wins high-profile #MeToo case

TOKYO — A Tokyo court Wednesday awarded 3.3 million yen (\$30,000) in damages to journalist Shiori Ito, who accused a former TV reporter of rape in one of the most high-profile cases of the #MeToo movement in Japan.

The civil case made headlines in Japan and abroad, as it is rare for rape victims to report the crime to the police -- according to a 2017 government survey, only four percent of women come forward.

Ito, 30, has become an outspoken symbol for #MeToo in Japan, where the movement against sexual harassment and abuse has struggled to take hold.

She had sought 11 million yen (\$100,000) in compensation

from Noriyuki Yamaguchi, a former TV reporter with close links to Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, alleging he raped her after inviting her to dinner to discuss a job opportunity in 2015.

Yamaguchi continues to deny any wrongdoing and had filed a counter-suit against Ito, seeking 130 million yen in compensation.

"We won. The counter-suit

was turned down," said Ito outside the court, holding up a banner that read "victory" as supporters cheered and clapped.

"Honestly I still don't know how I feel," she told reporters, struggling to hold back the tears. "However, winning this case doesn't mean this (sexual assault) didn't happen... This is not the end," she added.

She said she hoped the case would change what she called the "under-developed" legal and social environment surrounding rape in Japan.

Japan hiked minimum jail terms for rapists from three to five years and widened the definition of sexual assault victims to include men for the first time in 2017.—AFP ■



Ito's civil case made headlines in Japan and abroad. PHOTO: AFP

NEWS In BRIEF

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh visits largest US naval base in world

WASHINGTON — Ahead of India-US 2+2 Ministerial dialogue, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Tuesday visited the largest US naval base in the world, during his visit to the country.

The visit to Naval Station Norfolk highlighted the depth of the US-India defence partnership and the close ties between the Navies of the two countries. This comes ahead of Wednesday's second India-US 2+2 Ministerial dialogue in Washington for a comprehensive review of cross-cutting foreign policy on salient regional and global issues. Defence Minister said his visit reflected the strong defence ties between India and the United States and hoped that the relations will further strengthen in the near future.

US officials said the Indian delegations' visit to Naval Air Station Oceana and onboard USS Dwight D. Eisenhower will further bolster partnerships between the two countries.—ANI ■

Parents of girl found in Malaysia jungle say case has 'criminal element'

DUBLIN — The parents of a Franco-Irish teenager whose body was found in the Malaysian jungle said they believe there was a "criminal element" to her disappearance, which police classified as a missing-person case.

The unclothed body of 15-year-old Nora Quoirin was discovered in August after a 10-day hunt through dense rainforest, in a ravine about 2.5 kilometres (1.5 miles) from the resort where she had been staying.

Meabh and Sebastian Quoirin told Irish broadcaster RTE they could not imagine that Nora, who had learning difficulties, would have been able to wander that far.

"For us something very complex happened. We have insisted from the beginning that we believe there was a criminal element to what happened," they said in an interview published Tuesday.—AFP ■

Impeachment vote set for Wednesday as Trump rages

WASHINGTON — An enraged US President Donald Trump said he was being subjected to an “attempted coup” and a witch trial as Democrats set a historic impeachment vote for Wednesday.

In an extraordinarily angry six-page letter, Trump on Tuesday told Nancy Pelosi, speaker of the Democratic-led House of Representatives, that “history will judge you harshly.”

Referring to a famous miscarriage of justice and religious extremism in the 17th-century United States, resulting in 20 executions, Trump said he had been given less rights than “those accused in the Salem Witch Trials.”



Protesters gather on Boston Common near the Massachusetts State House during a rally where over a thousand people stood in the rain and snow, calling for the impeachment of President Donald Trump. **PHOTO: AFP**

The letter came just minutes before Pelosi announced that the House would vote Wednesday to make Trump only the third US leader ever impeached and placed on trial in the Senate.

“The House of Representatives will exercise one of the most solemn powers granted to us by the Constitution as we vote to approve two articles of impeachment against the president of the United States,” House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said in a letter to Democratic colleagues on Tuesday.

“During this very prayerful moment in our nation’s history, we must honor our oath to support and defend our constitution

from all enemies, foreign and domestic,” she added.

Frustration and fury

Trump is accused of attempting to force Ukraine into what would have been a damaging announcement of an unfounded probe into a main 2020 reelection rival, Joe Biden.

He is also accused of obstructing Congress by refusing to cooperate with the impeachment investigation, barring staff from testifying and holding back documentary evidence.

The two articles of impeachment are certain to pass in the House, where Democrats hold a firm majority.— AFP ■

US Congress ends Cyprus arms embargo, in blow to Turkey

WASHINGTON — The US Congress voted Tuesday to lift a decades-old arms embargo on Cyprus, defying Turkey by seeking warmer ties at a time of renewed tensions.

The Senate approved the measure as part of a massive defense spending bill that passed 86 to eight and already went through the House of Representatives, with President Donald Trump likely to sign it.

The United States imposed an embargo on the full island in 1987 with an aim to prevent an arms race and encourage

a peaceful settlement between the Greek majority and Turkish minority. Critics say the step has been counterproductive by forcing Cyprus to seek other partners while Turkey, a NATO member, has stationed forces in northern Cyprus since its invasion in 1974. Democratic Senator Robert Menendez and Republican Senator Marco Rubio spearheaded the effort, saying they also wanted to encourage growing cooperation between Cyprus, Greece and Israel.

“With Cyprus seeking to deepen its strategic partnership

with the United States, it is in our national security and economic interest to lift this outdated decades-long arms restrictions that are no longer helping US security objectives,” Menendez said after initial approval of the lifting of the embargo.

While the two Cypriot communities have made progress in improving relations, tensions have spiked over an accord between Turkey and Libya for newly discovered gas reserves in the eastern Mediterranean, undercutting claims by Greece and the internationally recognized Republic of Cyprus.

US officials have been concerned that the ban has brought EU member Cyprus closer to Russia, with the island in 2015 signing off on an access deal to its ports. Under the new act, the United States will still restrict certain sensitive technologies to Cyprus unless the US certifies that the island is denying Russia military vessels port access for refueling and servicing. In a standoff in 1997, Turkey threatened an attack on Cyprus if it went ahead with installing the advanced S-300 missile defense system from Russia.— AFP ■



A Romanian soldier with civilians in Bucharest, December 1989. **PHOTO: AFP**

Romania’s 1989 revolution in five testimonies

BUCHAREST — In December 1989, Romania was shaken by 10 days of protests that led to the fall of Europe’s last communist dictatorship.

The protests started in Timisoara in the west of the country and spread to Bucharest, causing leader Nicolae Ceausescu to flee on 22 December.

Ceausescu was executed on 25 December with his wife Elena. More than 1,000 people died in the crackdown on protesters before and after Ceausescu’s death. Five witnesses share their memories with AFP.

The pastor

Laszlo Tokes, a Reformed

Church pastor, is often described as the one who sparked the revolution when his threatened expulsion for criticising the Ceausescu regime first brought people into the streets. “I couldn’t imagine that on 15 December, people would respond to my call... and that they would come to my church to express their solidarity.

“Our life was on the line. We were in a desperate situation. There was no alternative other than Ceausescu’s fall, but that seemed unlikely. 22 December was a miracle.” Today the 67-year-old ex-parliamentarian from the Hungarian minority is still pastor in Oradea in the north-east.— AFP ■



People in Nicosia wave flags during a military parade marking the 59th anniversary of Cyprus’ independence from British colonial rule in October 2019. **PHOTO: AFP**

2 killed, 13 injured as parking roof collapse at Riyadh university

RIYADH — At least two people died, and 13 others were injured as a result of a parking roof that collapsed at the Almaarefa University in the Saudi Arabian cap-

ital city of Riyadh, the country’s civil defense service said.

The incident took place on Tuesday. “An incident of a roof collapse at the southern parking

lot of a Maarefa University building in the Dariya district of Riyadh resulted in the death of two people and the injury of 13 people who received necessary medical

attention in a timely manner and most were discharged from the hospital in good health,” the service wrote on Twitter.

The Saudi civil defense add-

ed photos that also showed a partially fallen high wall near the university building and rescuers evacuating people from under the debris.— ANI ■

Thet Htar Thuzar joins Asia Olympic Project in Malaysia

MYANMAR badminton icon Thet Htar Thuzar is currently taking part in the Asia Olympic Project, which is being held in Cyberjaya, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

The project is being supervised by the Badminton Project as a year-end regional training programme.

Twenty players from Iran, Lebanon, Maldives, Laos, Myanmar, Vietnam, Jordan, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka are participating in the training session.

Thet Htar Thuzar has been chosen for seven days of physical, on-court, technical, and tactical training, and physiotherapy with physicians, trainers, and experts. The training is aimed at making players physically fit ahead of international competitions.

During the Asia Olympic Project week in Malaysia, all 20 badminton players will get sparring partners from Malaysia and Indonesia to play with and gauge their level of play, according to Badminton Asia Development.

Along with Thet Htar Thuzar, two more Myanmar players — Khaing Thinzar and Zaw Lin Htoo — are taking part in the training session. They left from Yangon International Airport on 15 December for the training programme in Kuala Lumpur.

Thet Htar Thuzar and her team will be back home before 25 December for a national badminton tournament, according to Thet Htar Thuzar's official social media page.—Lynn Thit (Tgi)



Myanmar badminton star Thet Htar Thuzar poses in front of her poster in Kuala Lumpur, where she is participating in the Asia Olympic Project. **PHOTO: BADMINTON ASIA DEVELOPMENT**



A player from MIU F.C. (yellow) vies for the ball with an opponent from AMM Brothers F.C. (red) at the Week-7 match of the Myanmar Futsal League yesterday. **PHOTO: MFF FUTSAL**

VUC, MIU score big in Week-7 of Myanmar Futsal League

THE Victoria University College (VUC) F.C. and Myanmar Imperial College (MIC) F.C. made big wins in yesterday's Week-7 matches, which took place at the National Indoor Stadium II in Yangon.

The VUC F.C. drubbed Let Wel Thone Nara F.C. by 20-4, and the MIU F.C. beat AMM Brothers

F.C. by 14-0 in yesterday's matches.

With the wins, the two teams remain at the top of the Myanmar Futsal League standing table with 18 points and no losses. VUC is leading the table with a goal difference.

In the meantime, other matches saw good competition

with narrow results.

The Myanmar Football Federation U-19 F.C. played to a 5-5 draw with On Doctor F.C., and Futsal Chit Thu F.C. beat Dream Team F.C. by 5-2.

Meanwhile, GV F.C. beat Myoma JY F.C. by 5-2 and maintained its no-loss streak.—Lynn Thit (Tgi)

4th Inter-School Sailing Championship continues in Yangon

THE 4th Myanmar Inter-School Sailing Championship 2019 is being held at the Yangon Sailing Club in Yangon, under the supervision of the Myanmar Yachting Federation. Students from schools in Yangon and Mandalay and are participating in the seven-day competition which started on 15 December and will

conclude on 21 December.

Students from Basic Education High School No 1, Dagon, Basic Education High School No 4, Kamayut, Basic Education High School No 2, Kamayut, Teacher Training College's High School, Basic Education High School No 2, Bahan, ILBC, and Aung Academy Private Schools

in Yangon Region are participating in the competition, along with students of Sports and Physical Education Sciences in Mandalay and Yangon.

The winners of the championship will be given prizes in a ceremony, according to the Yangon Sailing Club.—Lynn Thit (Tgi)



Children participate in the sailing event at the 4th Myanmar Inter-School Sailing Championship 2019. **PHOTO: MYF**