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Union Minister Dr. Myo Thein Gyi meets with trainees at the opening ceremony of English proficiency course for government employees in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

Education Ministry opens English proficiency course in Nay Pyi Taw

THE Education Ministry has created good opportunities to promote inclusive education and continuing education programs, said Union Minister Dr. Myo Thein Gyi at the opening of an English Language Proficiency Upgrading Course No.2 for government employees in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

This will be the second such course organized for government officials. A total of 70 offi-

cial and 55 service personnel from 21 government bodies are attending the 12-week course.

In his address, the Union Minister for Education expressed his belief that the course will turn trainees into active learners of English and seekers of career development, and promised more master's degrees and diploma courses for human resource development.

Welcoming the participants to the course, Dr. Myo Thein Gyi

said his ministry is working to enhance the efficiency of government staff.

The Union Minister also lauded the trainees for grabbing the opportunity to increase their English language proficiency, a necessary tool in serving the State effectively.

The current era has witnessed the efforts of the government to develop the nation through the involvement of the people, he said.

A total of 52 government officials and service personnel attended the first course for English language proficiency, he said. The second course concludes on 7 April.

Deputy Minister U Win Maw Tun, Directors-General, Deputy Permanent Secretaries, Deputy Directors-General, officials, and course instructors were also present on the occasion. — MNA ■ (Translated by TMT)

Yangon General Hospital gets new 320-bed cancer ward

THE Yangon General Hospital opened its new 320-bed cancer ward at a five-storey building in its compound yesterday.

Speaking at the opening ceremony, the Union Minister for Health and Sports, Dr. Myint Htwe, said the government allotted K 3,200 million for building the five-storey ward, with the aim of providing quality treatment to cancer patients.

“Before the opening of the new oncology ward, the existing ward was treating 180 to 200 patients daily, even though its accommodation capacity is just 80 beds,” he said.

“The new ward is equipped with an adequate amount of medicines and facilities, especially ones that can alleviate the pain suffered by cancer patients,” he said.

“Additionally, the ministry will provide good nutritionists and neurologists for the convenience of patients,” he said.

“The new ward has its own management body, medics skilled in solving the social problems of patients, restrooms, reading corners, and TVs,” said the Union Minister. “The ward will also raise awareness among families about nosocomial infections, as cancer normally reduces the immunity of patients,” he added.

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Meiktila University of Economics opens MBF, MDevS courses in Nay Pyi Taw



Union Minister Dr. Myo Thein Gyi addresses the opening ceremony for the Master of Banking and Finance and the Master of Development Studies courses at No.8 B.E.H.S in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

THE Meiktila University of Economics launched the Master of Banking and Finance (MBF) and the Master of Development

Studies (MDevS) courses at No.8 B.E.H.S in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

The opening ceremony was

attended by Union Minister for Education Dr. Myo Thein Gyi, Union Auditor General U Maw Than, Deputy Minister U Win

Maw Tun and officials, the Rector, Pro-rector and lecturers of the Meiktila University of Economics, and trainees.

In his speech at the ceremony, Union Auditor General U Maw Than said the MBF and MDevS courses are very important for the nation's economic growth and development, and will help produce financial professionals needed in Myanmar, especially after the Yangon Stock Exchange (YSX) opened.

"The country needs to produce banking professionals as state and private owned banks are developing and increasing," he said.

He then praised Meiktila University of Economics for opening the courses in Nay Pyi Taw, where there are many government employees.

Afterwards, Union Minister Dr. Myo Thien Gyi said the courses aim to enhance the capacity of staff and efficiency of citizens,

and develop human resources. As the courses have been opened in Nay Pyi Taw, government employees from concerned departments will be able to continue their studies after work hours, he added.

He said people should focus on lifelong learning rather than scoring high marks, and pointed out the importance of English proficiency for undertaking international standard courses to reach the door of lifelong learning.

Rector Dr. Tun Aung of the Meiktila University of Economics then explained matters related to the courses.

A total of 155 trainees are attending the courses, with 63 trainees in the Master of Banking and Finance (MBF) course and 92 in the Master of Development Studies (MDevS) course.—MNA ■

(Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)

Yangon General Hospital gets new 320-bed cancer ward

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A cancer registry has already been started for the whole nation as greater accuracy in the number of patients is the determining factor in supplying sufficient medicines and medical equipment, he said.

The ministry is prioritizing health awareness campaigns in order to reduce the number of cancer patients, he said adding, screening tests are also being conducted, depending on the budget allotment.

The Union Minister also elaborated on the extension of human papilloma virus (HPV) vaccination in 2020, in cooperation with Gavi, the dissemination of breast self-exam (BSE) through mobile tablets distrib-

uted by the ministry, and MoUs with international organizations for the supply of high-quality anticancer drugs, and called for greater financial allotment for broader research programs.

Later, the Chief Minister of Yangon Region, U Phyo Min Thein, thanked all those who lent a helping hand in opening the oncology ward, which will support the City Cancer Project of Yangon. He promised continuous assistance for the sustainable progress of the ward.

Afterwards, Dr. Myint Htwe, Dr. Tin Myo Win, the Patron of the YGH supportive committee and the Chair of the Union Peace Commission, and Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein unveiled the signboard



Union Minister Dr. Myint Htwe addresses the opening ceremony of the Oncology Ward at Yangon General Hospital yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

for the ward.

Then, Deputy Minister Dr. Mya Lay Sein, Permanent Secretary Prof. Dr. Thet Khaing Win, Rector/YGH Medical Su-

perintendent Dr. Yee Yee Myint, and Dr. Myint Myint Aye formally opened the ward.

An official with the contractor of the new ward presented

related documents to the permanent secretary after which the Union Minister toured the ward.—MNA ■ (Translated by TMT)



The new elephant camp not far away from the Shwesettaw Pagoda will offer an amazing experience for travellers. **PHOTO: ZEYATHU (MAGWAY)**

New elephant camp to be opened in Magway

A new elephant camp will be opened as a tourist destination and a wildlife conservation centre on 9 February in Magway Region.

The opening of the camp, which is only three miles from the famous Shwesettaw Pagoda, will coincide with the inauguration day of the pagoda which enshrines the footprints of Buddha.

The eight-acre camp fea-

tures bungalows, common rooms, messing halls, elephant houses plus a 700-acre grazing ground. Moreover, it has 120 acres of vacant and virgin land to build a public place and grow trees.

"Visitors will be able to ride elephants and rest at the camp, which aims to be a wildlife-based tourist destination. Moreover, we will have 11 bungalows equipped

with all necessary facilities and a food stall run by camp staff," said U Aung Ko Ko Htet, the deputy head of the camp.

Currently, the camp has seven elephants, and later the number will be increased to 15. It will have more than 30 staff, including supervisors, administrators, and a veterinary surgeon. Zeyatu (Magway) ■ (Translated by TMT)

Union Minister reviews development works in Putao

THE Union Minister for Border Affairs, Lt-Gen Ye Aung, visited the women's vocational training school in Putao, Kachin State, on 12 January.

The Union Minister looked into the requirements of the advance tailoring course, basic tailoring course, woollen-sweater-knitting course, hostels, and the messing hall at the school.

During the inspection of the border area ethnic youth development training school, he heard a report on academic matters and staff social welfare presented by an official.

After offering his advice, the Union Minister stressed the need to teach trainees the value of discipline, time, systematic management, sociability, health, and reading. He then visited the

hostels and the messing hall.

Afterwards, the Union Minister inspected the construction of three new hostels to accommodate more youth from remote border areas.

He then inspected the completed part of the 22-mile earth road connecting Putao and the snow-capped Phonkanrazi mountain. Yesterday morning, the Union Minister looked into the requirements for paving the Putao-Namhtonkhu gravel road and village-to-village earth roads in Putao Township. The Ministry of Border Affairs in its projects to develop infrastructure and human resources in border areas is also adopting and implementing sustainable development programs in Kachin State. — MNA

(Translatey by TMT)



Union Minister Lt-Gen Ye Aung visits the women's vocational training school in Putao, Kachin State, on 12 January. PHOTO: MNA

Children's Literature Festival opens in Sagaing



Union Minister Dr. Pe Myint opens the Children's Literature Festival at the high school in Sagaing yesterday. PHOTO: MNA

THE Information and Public Relations Department of the Ministry of Information, the Basic Education Department, and the district management committee jointly opened the Children's Literature Festival, Exhibition, and Book Sale at a high school in Sagaing, Sagaing Region, yesterday.

Speaking at the ceremony, the Union Minister for Information, Dr. Pe Myint, said his ministry serves as the base for organizing children's literature festivals in various places at township, district, and region/state levels.

"Thanks to cooperation

from other ministries, organizations, and donors, the festivals are gaining success. The Information Ministry alone cannot bring about such a degree of success. The festival will nurture reading among youth. It is due to the earnest participation of the Ministry of Education that the Information Ministry can hold the festival together with the Basic Education Department. The concerned regions or states are also rendering their assistance to make the festival a success," he said.

"The development of reading among children is a national concern. It involves us, parents,

and teachers. Hence, the ardent involvement of all stakeholders is essential," he said.

"The goal of the festival has two parts. The first is to achieve immediate benefits, which mean the joyful and active participation of a large number of children. So, the children will have at least a joyful and thrilling memory that will last through their life. The festival will introduce them to books.

The second is to give them the pleasure of reading and inculcate the spirit of unity and enthusiasm," he added.

"Every festival includes of a lot of games which give children

experience and knowledge. The long-term goal of the festival is to produce upright and ingenious citizens, imbued with wisdom and knowledge, for the country," he said.

"Nowadays, the country is encouraging all children, including those who have not attended any class, to have an interest in literature. Programs are under way to hold summer reading tables with the assistance of teachers, librarians, and literature enthusiasts during the long holidays to promote the reading habit among children," he added.

Union Minister Dr. Pe Myint, Deputy Minister U Aung Hla Tun, Region Social Affairs Minister Dr. Zaw Win, Pyithu Hluttaw Representative U Khin Maung Thein, Director-General of IPRD U Ye Naing, and two

outstanding students formally opened the festival. This was followed by a photo session. Thereafter, students sang the theme song.

Region Social Affairs Minister Dr. Zaw Win and Region MP Daw Su Myat also gave speeches at the event.

The Union Minister presented a certificate of honor to the Chairman of the Gems Entrepreneurs Association (Sagaing) for their assistance in holding the festival.

Afterwards, students sang songs and performed dances. The Union Minister, the Deputy Minister, and officials visited the booths and watched the entertainment programs by children. The festival will end at 5 p.m. today. — Min Htet Aung (Mann Sub-printing House) ■

(Translatey by TMT)



Union Minister Dr. Pe Myint visits the Myanmar traditional arts and crafts booth at the festival. PHOTO: MNA

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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.

Final frame of new Myaungmya Bridge installed

A ceremony to install the final part of the steel structure framing of the new Myaungmya Bridge was held yesterday on the Myaungmya side of the construction site on the Labutta-Myaungmya-Einme-Kyaung Kone-Kyonyaw Road in Myaungmya Township of Ayeyawady Region.

Before the installation, Union Minister for Construction U Han Zaw and Deputy Minister for Construction U Kyaw Lin confirmed the durability of the bridge based on the finding results of survey data. Then, Union Minister U Han Zaw, Ayeyawady Region Chief Minister U Hla Moe Aung, Ayeyawady Region Hluttaw Speaker U Aung Kyaw Khaing, Myaungmya Township Pyithu Hluttaw representative Dr. Soe Moe Thu, and Region Hluttaw representative of Myaungmya Township Daw Khaing Zin Oo took their designated places to witness the first stage of the installation of the bridge's final section and sprinkled it with holy water. Afterwards, Deputy Minister U Kyaw Lin, the Ayeyawady Region Electricity, Power, Industry, and Communications Minister; U Win Htay, the Myaungmya Township Amyotha Hluttaw represent-



Union Minister U Han Zaw and Deputy Minister U Kyaw Lin confirm the durability of the Myaungmya Bridge based on the results of a survey yesterday. **PHOTO: SANDAR MOE (IPRD)**

ative, Mahn Tun Kyaing, the Region Hluttaw representative of Myaungmya Township, U Than Zaw Win, and the Bridge Department's construction team No.1 Director (Civil), U Myo Win, took their designated places for the installation of the second stage of the bridge's final steel structure with torque shear wrenches and sprinkled it with holy water.

The installation ceremony of the final part of the new Myaungmya Bridge was successfully concluded with commemorative group photos of the Union Minister and guests. J&M Steel Solution, incorporated by the JFE Company and the Ministry of Construction, created the detailed design and produced the steel frames for the bridge.

The main body of the steel truss deck-type bridge was constructed using new technology.

Construction team No.1 of the Bridge Department, under the Ministry of Construction, began work on the new Myaungmya Bridge on 1 May 2017, with target to finish the bridge by end-March 2019.—MNA ■ (Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)

Ferry services between Monywa, upstream towns extended

FERRIES plying from the Monywa jetty in Sagaing Region to areas upstream of the Chindwin River have increased service timings to 5 a.m. to 7 p.m. from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m., according to the Monywa private vessel supervisory committee.

The committee issued a notification on 10 January informing of the change in timings.

"The Sagaing Region private vessel supervisory committee has notified us to increase

ferry schedules. We have directed the ferries registered with our committee to do so. It is the peak shipping season and so, we have expanded ferry services," said U Arkar Myint, the chair of the Monywa private vessel supervisory committee.

On the earlier 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. time schedule, there were some difficulties such as congestion, vessel arrival time gap, and other problems due to which vessels could not arrive on the

jetty on time. To optimize arrival time and ensure smooth transportation, ferry services have been extended. The changed timings will only apply for the peak season. Once the season is over, ferries will switch back to the earlier schedule.

There are about 19 passenger vessels groups which offer ferry services from Monywa to Kanni and Homalin townships upstream of the Chindwin River. About 10 passenger vessels

regularly ply the river. There are 20 cargo vessels groups and more than 10 cargo vessels running on the Chindwin River, depending on the volume of cargo shipments.

The Monywa jetty handles more than 1,000 vessels, including cargo vessels and passenger vessels, according to the Sagaing Region's Department of Marine Administration.—Ko Min (Indaw) ■ (Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

One killed, one injured in head-on collision in Hlegu

A 20-year-old motorcyclist died after his bike collided head-on with a car in Hlegu Township of Yangon Region on Sunday, according to a police report.

The accident occurred at 2.30 a.m. on the Ngasutaung

Road in the township. The motorcyclist, identified as Naing Lynn Aung, sustained severe head injuries and was killed on the spot.

San San Maw, 30, who was riding pillion, was critically in-

jured and admitted to the Hlegu Hospital. She is now receiving treatment at the North Okkalapa Hospital.

The driver of the car fled the scene. Police have filed a case of causing death by reckless driv-

ing against the unidentified driver under Sections 304 (a), 337, 338, and 279 of the Penal Code, and are continuing their investigations.—Than Win (Hlegu)

(Translated by Khaing Thanda Lwin)

Man in Htigyaing charged with drug possession

ACTING on a tip-off, police raided a house in Kwingyi Village, Htigyaing Township, Sagaing Region, and found more than 5.05 grams of black opium and

184 yaba pills early on Saturday morning.

The occupant of the house, Tha Htoo, also known as Myint Shwe, has been arrested and

charged with drug possession under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law.

The township police are

continuing their investigations to find others connected with the case.—Ko Min (Indaw)

(Translated by Khaing Thanda Lwin)

Sino-Myanmar border trade falls by \$562 mln in Q1

THE value of Sino-Myanmar border trade between 1 October and 4 January totalled US\$1.24 billion, a decrease of \$562.8 million compared with the corresponding period of the previous financial year, according to data from the Ministry of Commerce.

Border trade stood at \$1.8 billion in the same period of the 2017-2018 fiscal. The drop in trade in the current fiscal year can be attributed to China's trade suspension and tight confiscation on the border coupled with the closure of the Kyin San Kyawt gate near Muse.

Myanmar conducts border trade with China through the Muse, Lweje, Chinshwehaw, Kanpiketee, and Kengtung gates. Of them, the Muse gate sees the largest trade volume. Since the second week of October, China has suspended importation of some agro products.

This has resulted in a steep fall in trade at Muse.

In Q1 of the current FY, the Muse, Lweje, and Chinshwehaw gates suffered a drop in trade value, while the remaining two gates registered a small increase in trade.

Trade between China and Myanmar totalled \$1 billion at Muse, \$43.4 million at Lweje, \$163.58 million at Chinshwehaw, \$28 million at Kanpiketee, and \$1 million at Kengtung.

Myanmar exports rice, sugar, pulses, sesame seeds, corn, dried tea leaves, fishery products, minerals and animal products to China, and imports agricultural machinery, electrical appliances, iron and steel-related materials, raw industrial goods, and consumer goods.—GNLM ■

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)



Trucks from Myanmar carrying agro-products, fishery products and animal products wait Chinese buyers at Kyin San Kyawt Gate near Muse. PHOTO: VAN YO HTAN (MUSE-IPRD)

Myanmar's border trade down 3.2% in Q1

BORDER trade between Myanmar and its neighbours in the first quarter (Q1) of the 2018-2019 fiscal year exceeded US\$2 billion, a decline of \$71 million, or 3.2 per cent, from the corresponding period of the 2017-2018 FY, the Ministry of Commerce reported.

In Q1 of the current fiscal year, Myanmar's border exports touched \$1.45 billion, a decline of \$107 million from the \$2.233 billion registered in the previous FY. Meanwhile, the value of border imports increased to \$712 million from \$676 million in the last FY.

Myanmar conducts trade with neighbouring Thailand through the Tachilek, Myawady, Kawthoung, Myeik, Hteekhee, and Mawtaung border gates. Myanmar and Bangladesh carry out trade through the Sittway and Maungtaw camps, while trade with India is conducted through the Tamu and Reed border gates. Myanmar's trade camps with China include Muse,

Lweje, Kanpiketee, Chinshwehaw, and Kengtung.

In the current fiscal year, trade at the border has declined, especially at Muse, Lweje, Chinshwehaw, Tachilek, Myawady, Myeik, and Maungtaw.

Roughly 80 per cent of Myanmar's total external trade is conducted through the sea routes. Between 1 October and 4 January, the country shipped goods worth nearly \$6.3 billion via the maritime routes, an increase of \$177 million from the 2017-18 FY.

The Commerce Ministry is working to promote the country's export sector by shipping valued-added products from the manufacturing sector in accordance with the second five-year National Development Plan for the period between fiscal years 2016-2017 and 2020-2021.—Shwe Khine ■

(Translated by Khaing Thanda Lwin)

Mandalay Region Mining Dept to grant permits to artisanal, small-scale miners

TO reduce illegal mining and create jobs for locals, the Mandalay Region's Department of Mines will allow artisanal and small-scale mining businesses to seek permits from the regional mining block assessment team, said U Moe Swe, the director of the department.

Ahead of the move, rules and regulations that are appropriate to the situation in the region were drafted over a period of more than 3 months. With the regional government passing the new rules, miners will be able to apply for permits from 14 January.

"The State Counsellor directed us to eliminate illegal extraction. The regional government can generate revenue from the permitted blocks. So, we formulated the project at the soonest. Earlier, those permits could be granted only by the ministry. Now, that has been decentralized and rules and regulations in accordance with the circumstances in the region have been instituted. We have notified the opening date for submissions through state-owned newspapers," he said.

The regional permit will open for exploitation, trading, and measurement of mines. If miners want a small-scale permit, they will have to apply

through a company registered in Mandalay Region. Only one block will be granted to each public or private company. Meanwhile, artisanal miners can individually apply for permits per household. Those who have already got permission cannot seek further permits.

"Applications will be reviewed once a week. After they pass the screening stages, the related assessment team will inspect the sites," said U Moe Swe.

The team will ensure permits for blocks do not overlap. If one block is proposed by more than one individual miner, the

department will try to negotiate with them to combine their businesses. If they do not reach an agreement, the block will be put up for bidding. The department will focus on systematic procedures in granting permission.

To grant permits, the regional mining block assessment team was formed with officials from the Administrative department, the Forest Department, the Environmental Conservation Department, and other assigned departments of the regional government.—Khine Sett Wai ■

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)



Small-scale miners at a local mine in Mandalay Region. PHOTO: KHINE SETT WAI

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Sagaing students enjoy reading, games at Children's Literature Festival

CHILDREN Literature Festival in Sagaing has attracted students from schools and universities in Sagaing on the opening day yesterday.

Bookstalls and games were crowded with university students and children from government schools, private schools and monastic education schools. "This kind of festival is necessary not

only for children but also for students and teachers. This festival is helpful to attract children for reading books at a time when they are attracted by IT materials. Different kinds of books are available here and it also benefit teachers and parents," said Daw Kyawt Kyawt Khaing, a teacher from Sagaing Training High School.— Aye Mya (Mandalay) ■



Students entertain the visitors with Shan traditional dances at the Children's Literature Festival in Sagaing yesterday. **PHOTO: AUNG MIN HAN**



Bookstalls are crowded with visitors. **PHOTO: AUNG PHYO KYAW**



A student takes part in the colour painting competition. **PHOTO: AUNG PHYO KYAW**



The booth of Technological University (Sagaing) has attracted children. **PHOTO: AUNG PHYO KYAW**



A child reading a comic book. **PHOTO: AUNG PHYO KYAW**



A traffic police distributes the pamphlets about traffic education to the students. **PHOTO: AUNG MIN HAN**



The closing numbers are displayed after the closing bell of the Dow Industrial Average at the New York Stock Exchange on 10 January, 2019 in New York. PHOTO: AFP

US stocks post solid weekly gains amid trade optimism, data

NEW YORK—US stocks posted solid weekly gains for the second week in the new year as progress of trade talks between China and the United States lifted market sentiment. For the week, the Dow advanced 2.4 per cent, the S&P 500 gained 2.5 per cent, and the Nasdaq added 3.5 per cent.

All three major indices ended on green territory for four consecutive sessions in the past week as negotiations between the world's top two economies showed signs of progress. On the economic front, the US Federal Reserve released the summary of its December meeting, which showed the central bank is patient on rate hikes. The Fed officials acknowledged that the policy path ahead is "less clear" after approving an interest rate hike at their recent meeting. The minutes showed the rate hike came with reluctance from a few members who thought the lack of inflationary pressures argued against another increase. The minutes came after Fed chair Jerome Powell hinted at slower monetary tightening last Friday.

He said Fed officials were

keeping a close eye on the voices of financial market, and that Fed policy was flexible and clung to real-time economic developments. He added that the central bank would not hesitate to adjust its balance sheet reduction plan if it causes problems in the markets. US consumer price index for all urban consumers fell 0.1 per cent in December, the first drop and weakest reading since March. Over the last 12 months, the all items index increased 1.9 per cent before seasonal adjustment.

The decrease was caused by sharp decline of gasoline price but underlying inflation pressures remained firm as rental housing and health care costs rose steadily. On corporate news, shares of Macy's plunged nearly 18 per cent to close at 26.11 US dollars apiece on Thursday after it reported weak holiday sales for 2018 and cut its earnings outlook for the year. In a statement released on Thursday, the department store chain said online sales in November and December and sales at stores operating for at least 12 months were up a combined 1.1 per cent. The

company expected no growth in net sales for fiscal 2018, rather than an increase between 0.3 per cent and 0.7 per cent that was previously estimated. American Airlines cut its profit forecast and said it struggled to grow revenue at the end of 2018. The airline, the largest in the United States, said its revenue per available seat mile, a key industry metric, rose 1.5 per cent in the fourth quarter of 2018 year on year, compared with a range of 1.5 per cent to 3.5 per cent it gave investors previously.

The airline said excluding special items, it expects to post earnings per diluted share of between 4.40 and 4.60 dollars, down from its estimate in October. Shares of the airline dropped 4.13 per cent to close at 32.04 dollars apiece. The US government partial shutdown entered its 22nd day on Saturday, the longest lapse in federal funding in history. On Thursday, US President Donald Trump tweeted that he would cancel his trip to the annual World Economic Forum at Davos later this month due to the shutdown. —Xinhua ■

LIC's market share falls below 70 pc

NEW DELHI—State-owned Life Insurance Corporation's (LIC) market share fell below 70 per cent in the financial year ended March 2018 as private insurers get more aggressive. The market share of private insurers increased to 30.64 per cent in 2017-18, from 28.19 per cent in 2016-17. "On the basis of total premium income, the market shares of LIC decreased from 71.81 per cent in 2016-17 to 69.36 per cent in 2017-18," said the annual re-

port of the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (Irdai). Further, the market share of private insurers in new business premium also saw an increase during 2017-18 over the previous year. In the case of renewal premium, LIC had a share at 69.35 per cent (down from 72.31 per cent in the previous year). This compares with 30.65 per cent (27.69 per cent in the previous year) share of private insurers.

During 2017-18, life insurers issued 281.97 lakh new individual policies, out of which LIC issued 213.38 lakh policies or 75.7 per cent of the total new policies issued and the private life insurers issued 68.59 lakh policies (24.3 per cent).

"While the private sector achieved a growth of 8.47 per cent in the number of new policies issued against the previous year, LIC achieved a growth of 5.99 per cent," the report said. —PTI ■

China will tackle US trade dispute in 2019: minister

BEIJING (China)—China will work to straighten out trade frictions with the US this year, the country's commerce minister told state media, following talks with US negotiators this week.

A large US delegation ended a three-day visit to Beijing on Wednesday in the first face to face trade talks since President Donald Trump and Chinese leader Xi Jinping in December pledged a three-month truce in the escalating tariff spat.

China said the talks had "laid the foundation" to resolve mutual concerns on trade.

"We will properly handle the China-US economic and trade frictions" this year, commerce minister Zhong Shan said, according to a Saturday report by state media outlet Xinhua.

Zhong said Beijing will also promote outside investment, work to pass a foreign investment law and improve its dispute resolution system, Xinhua reported.

China's policymakers have long promised a more open and free market with better protections for foreign investors, but officials have been slow to make good on those pledges—leading the European Union Chamber of Commerce in China to coin the term "promise fatigue".

Zhong said China's negative list—which restricts investment in certain industries—will be further slimmed down, while Beijing also intends to expand economic sectors open for foreign investment without the need for a Chinese joint-venture partner.

The minister specifically outlined a push for foreign investment in manufacturing, high-tech industries and investment in China's inner regions—pledges which are similar to promises made last year. Pushing Beijing to implement economic reforms and further open up areas for US investment is a focus in trade negotiations with Washington.—AFP ■

Ford sells 1.1 mln F-Series pickups in 2018



PHOTO: XINHUA

CHICAGO—Ford Motor Co sold nearly 1.1 million F-Series vehicles globally in 2018. The Dearborn-based US automaker sold most of it pickups in the United States in 2018, with F-Series sales standing at 909,330 units, up 1.4 per cent year on year, the Detroit News quoted Ford spokesman Mike Levine as saying on Friday. He said Ford primarily sells its pickups outside of the United States in Canada, the Middle East and in China. The automaker sells the behemoth Raptor off-roader in China.

The more-than 1 million pickups sold last year would have generated 50 billion US dollars for Ford. Ford's F-Series brand is the most valuable piece of the company, analysts and investors hold. Ford F-Series pickups include F-150, F-250, F-350 and F-450. F-Series trucks are built at Ford's Kentucky Truck Plant, Kansas City Assembly Plant, Ohio Assembly Plant and Dearborn Truck Plant.—Xinhua ■

Easing rules to help start businesses

REFORMS that strengthen macroeconomic management are absolutely essential for economic stability which, in turn, is a strong magnet for increased investment.

An important reform which can be considered “revolutionary” is the modernization of the more than one hundred years old Companies Act to reflect the current business and regulatory environment.

The Myanmar Companies Law was enacted on 6 December 2017. It came into effect on 1 August 2018 with the implementation of the electronic registry.

During the August-December period of 2017, only 3,758 new companies were formed in Myanmar. During the same period in 2018, 32,917 companies were re-registered and 8,514

new companies were established and registered under the Myanmar Companies Online (MyCo) electronic registry system.

The number of new companies has more than doubled in 2018, and reflects the ease of starting a business in Myanmar.

In the 2016 Ease of Doing Business report, Myanmar showed the best performance in reforms. But its ranking dropped slightly to 155 in 2017. The report covers not just one country, but 190, and each country tries to better its score every year.

Previous assessments of Myanmar on Ease of Doing Business were made based on the old Company Act and old rules and regulations. The new law was enacted in 2017.

The new law makes it easier to run a business as it does away with many unnecessary regulations.

Under the incumbent government, the registration fee was reduced from 1 million kyats to 500,000 kyats. In 2017, the fee was brought down to just 250,000 kyats.

Now, registrations can be completed online and as a result, the process only involves three steps. The duration has also been shortened. Previously, registering a company took at least three days, but now it can be completed within hours. If you have a mobile phone, you can register within hours.

We can say that more reforms were made, and some procedures for establishing a company were also abolished. How much we score on Ease of Doing Business does not matter. A high score with poor conditions on the ground is useless. We aim to make doing business easy and convenient by easing restrictions as much as possible.

This will provide greater flexibility to companies in the conduct of business and management of internal affairs, and, at the same time, ensure certainty and stability in corporate regulations.

A high score with poor conditions on the ground is useless. We aim to make doing business easy and convenient by easing restrictions as much as possible.

Myanmar Economic Development: Past, Present and Future

By Dr. Maung Aung

(Continued from previous article appeared on the issue of 11 January)

INDUSTRIAL Revolution changed the Northern Hemisphere countries such as Europe and United States, East Asian country Japan into rich countries, while the countries in the Southern Hemisphere remained poor.

When the industrial revolution was happening, railroads were a huge importance to the local economies, supplying them with immense loads of cargo. The industrial revolution hugely impacted the north because they were an industrial region. It did not affect the South much because they relied on slavery.

Second amazing economic change had taken place in 1970 with rapid communication technology across the world in the age of globalization with the shift of industries to cheap labor countries, multiplying with more industrial countries on this planet.

G - 7 (The Group of Seven) is a group consisting of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the United States. These countries, with the seven largest advanced economies in the world, have been expanded into G - 20, and more countries are likely to join in a near future.

Evidences showed that the outward looking economic policy in conjunction with strong economic integration with larger economic community being adopted by China, Poland, and Mexico in the 1980s have developed rapidly. Therefore, our country has set in the full implementation of outward looking economic policy, and now opening up to the world in stages.

Time to take part actively

Each and every citizen has the duty and responsibility in taking part actively for the development of the country in anticipation of progress for the posterity. On the part of the state, necessary laws and basic infrastructure have been implemented, and that regular meetings in addressing the difficulties are in progress headed by Vice Presidents.

Moreover, Ministry of Investment and Foreign Economic Relations was newly established



A huge petrochemical facility in Kyaukphyu: Initial Gas Station. PHOTO: PHOE KHWAR

with focus on market oriented economic system and outward looking economic policy, which is in fact to be implemented by the public in the private sector with capable strength of human resources.

According to Notification 48/2018 of Office of the President, Republic of the Union of Myanmar on 21 June 2018 Myanmar Companies Law takes effect in accordance with the Myanmar Companies Law section 1(b) on 1 August 2018, allowing (35) per cent of investment from foreign companies, resulting with more advantages to Myanmar side. More foreign investors are expected to come in.

More SMEs are to be registered with momentum with proper functioning so as to win trust with international partners, and that the latest economic opportunities must be accessible to the public so that they could take part in the development endeavors.

The Challenges

Facing many difficulties, the new government during the initial two years period had to solve such as that of flooding in the country, that of the world trade war triggering the hikes of dollar; that of northern Rakhine issues, that of the fake news, that of the international pressures, and that of maintaining GSP privileges.

It is necessary to keep up the

The economic reforms process requires reflections on the past and constant observation in the present to benefit the people. All citizens must work to enhance their capability for performing tasks and uplift the economy of the nation.

implementation of peace process and to keep the stability of the nation.

Success of the Myanmar economic development depends on the reform of the state and that the tasks are to be dealt by the business community and the people. The main economic sectors such as the agriculture sector, the industrial sector, and the service sector have many untapped resources. The existing problems such as that of lack in investment, technical knowhow, and foreign market access had been resolved to a certain extent.

Prospect of agriculture sector

Having abundant of land resources, we could go ahead with cropping intensity for multiple crops using dams and reservoirs with plenty of space for improve-

ment in Asian region.

Despite the foreign investment in the country is still thin, we could expect more as the state has opened up. Contract farming on the basis mutual interest of the farmers could be considered for market access towards China and India.

The cultivation of the high yield crops is on the plan, and therefore, a strong market competition is likely to take place. Animal breeding industry on fish, prawn, chicken, pig, and cow could be elevated through foreign investment and technical knowhow. We have potential in producing food.

Potential in industrial sector

As a result of economic and investment reform, the export oriented industry is sure to prosper in the near future. Building of indus-

trial sector is a way of rapid development as it involved the supply of raw materials, creating large job opportunities for workers, market distribution of produced goods.

These huge enterprises need to produce merchandise intended for foreign countries, the establishment of industries connected with world production land routes, and the construction of deep sea ports. Therefore, Yangon and its environment are most likely to become an industrial sphere, and that Mawlamyine, Dawei, Patheingyi, and Kyaukphyu are also poised to become industrial cities.

Potential of Service Industry

Trade, transport, communication, hotel and tourism, education, and health in the service industry sector have potential for development. When the export oriented industry sector developed, the trade value would be elevated, and at the same time, the finished good, the semi-finished goods, and other accessories could be exported.

As the connected roads with the neighboring countries have been completed, the border trade would be in the upswing, and also the transit trade, the re-export trade, and the re-import trade would be in the up-tempo status.

At a time when the ASEAN Economic Community has been activated, the businesses in trade,

transportation of goods, communications, wholesale and retail trades, banking services would be flourishing. Thanks to the visa exemption facilities and the border entry and exit permissions, all the related services would be functioning well.

Opportunities stand out for the economic development of Myanmar with the completion of the South Asian Road starting from Vietnam in connectivity with the roads to India, linking the projects of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), leading westwards from Asia to Europe.

These are the future economic potentials in general concept and perspective; however, one factor is certain that the market oriented economic system and the outward looking economic policy is sure in its making, with the possibility that Myanmar becoming the central hub of Asian economy.

Let us united

Today, in responding the challenges and for the continuous economic development of the country, the people under the directive of the state must work hard in unity. Especially, the five national objectives of the (71) Anniversary of Independence Day must be taken up seriously by the people in building modern developed and peaceful nation.

As the economy is the basic building block of a nation, the new economic opportunities being offered by the state must be utilized as practical purpose by the business people and the public as earliest as possible.

By taking the lessons of the past, constant observation is to be made in the economic reform process for the benefit of the people. All the citizens must equipped themselves with fine capabilities in their tasks and uplift the economy of the nation.

In conclusion, based on the chronicle of Myanmar economy and the world market, the author of this article firmly believed that the clear cut market oriented economic system and the outward looking economic policy being adopted by the state would surely pushed up the Myanmar economy with strength, power and might.

Translated by UMT (Ahlon)



Myanmar Daily Weather Report

(Issued at 7:00 pm Sunday 13 January, 2019)

BAY INFERENCE: Weather is partly cloudy to cloudy over the Andaman Sea and the Bay of Bengal.

FORECAST VALID UNTIL AFTERNOON OF THE 14 January, 2019: Light rain will be isolated in Taninthayi Region. Degree of certainty is (80%). Weather will be generally fair in Natogyi and Magway Region and partly cloudy in the remaining Regions and States.

STATE OF THE SEA: Sea will be slight to moderate in Myanmar waters. Wave height will be about (3-5) feet off and along Myanmar Coasts.

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Slight decrease of night temperatures in Upper Sagaing Region, Kachin, Northern Shan and Chin States.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 14 January, 2019: Generally fair weather.

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 14 January, 2019: Partly cloudy.

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 14 January, 2019: Generally fair weather.

Invitation to young writers for Sunday Special

The Global New Light of Myanmar is accepting submissions of poetry, opinion, articles, essays and short stories from young people for its weekly Sunday Next Generation Platform. Interested candidates can send their work to the **Global New Light of Myanmar** at No. 150, Nga Htat Kyee Pagoda Road, Bahan Township, Yangon, in person, or by email to ce@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com with the following information: (1) Sector you wish to be included in (poetry, opinion, etc.), (2) Own name and (if different) your penname, (3) Your level of education, (4) Name of your School/College/University, (5) A written note of declaration that the submitted piece is your original work and has not been submitted to any other news or magazine publishing houses, (6) A color photo of the submitter, (7) Copy of your NRC card, (8) Contact information (email address, mobile number, etc.). - Editorial Department, The Global New Light of Myanmar

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Scuppering Brexit would be 'catastrophic', May warns MPs

LONDON (United Kingdom) — British Prime Minister Theresa May on Sunday warned MPs ready to reject her EU divorce deal next week that failing to deliver Brexit would be a “catastrophic and unforgivable breach of trust in our democracy”.

May is fighting doggedly to save her withdrawal agreement — forged during 18 months of gruelling negotiations with European leaders — from a crushing defeat in parliament on Tuesday.

The embattled leader said some voters in Britain's 2016 referendum on EU membership had trusted politicians “for the first time in decades” and lawmakers must not let them down by now scuppering Brexit. “Doing so would be a catastrophic and unforgivable breach of trust in our democracy,” May wrote in the Sunday Express newspaper.

“So my message to parliament this weekend is simple: it is time to forget the games and do what is right for our country.”

Britain is set to leave the European Union on March 29



Theresa May, who is fighting to save her agreement negotiated with the EU, told lawmakers they must not let down Brexit-backers in a crunch parliamentary vote Tuesday. PHOTO: AFP

but, with less than 11 weeks left, has yet to finalise the terms of its departure. May's deal agrees a 21-month transition period under current terms while the future relationship with the bloc is nego-

tiated, but it has drawn steadfast opposition from both Brexiteers and Remainers.

The prime minister has said rejecting it will throw Britain into “uncharted territory” and put the

country at risk of crashing out without an agreement, or even no Brexit at all.

'No confidence in the government'

The opposition Labour Party, which favours remaining in a permanent customs union with the EU, has suggested it will seek a no-confidence vote in the government if MPs throw out the plan.

The *Observer* newspaper reported Sunday that its lawmakers have been told it could be tabled “within hours” of that on Tuesday, with the confidence vote to be held the following day.

If the government lose a no-confidence motion, there will be a period of 14 days in which parties can seek to find an alternative working majority in parliament. If they fail to do so, a general election would be called.

“We will table a motion of no confidence in the government at a time of our choosing, but it's going to be soon, don't worry about it,” Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn told the BBC on Sunday.

Corbyn conceded if the party won power, parliament would likely need to delay Brexit beyond 29 March so it could renegotiate the withdrawal agreement.—AFP ■

Paris gas blast toll rises to 4 as body found in rubble

PARIS (France) — The death toll from a powerful gas explosion in central Paris has risen to four after rescue workers found a woman's body in the rubble, investigators said Sunday. Two firefighters and a Spanish tourist were also killed in the Saturday morning blast that injured dozens and badly damaged nearby apartments. Rescue workers with sniffer dogs had earlier searched for a missing woman who lived above the explosion site and who was believed to be in the rubble.

A source close to the investigation said the body could be that of the missing woman.

The blast gutted the lower part of the building which housed a bakery and a restaurant, and also overturned cars, leaving glass and rubble strewn across large swathes of the street.

Around 50 people were injured, nine of them seriously, including several foreign tourists who were in the area to visit local attractions like the Musee Grevin wax museum and the popular Rue des Martyrs.

A fire service spokesman said 40 firefighters were clearing the debris by hand on Sunday due to the dangerous conditions.

“We will only leave once everything is cleared, stone by



A woman's body has been found under the rubble following Saturday's massive blast in Paris, which also killed two firefighters and a Spanish tourist. PHOTO: AFP

stone, to be certain there is no one else,” he said, indicating that such an operation could last for about a week. Given the extent of the damage, around 50 people were put up in temporary accommodation. Twelve buildings remained closed on Sunday, with officials saying the safety of each would be assessed.

Residents on edge

In a city that has been shaken by a string of terror attacks in recent years, the huge blast jangled nerves. “I was in bed when it happened, I heard a muffled boom, it

moved the building,” said Sylvie, who lives close to Rue de Treviso where the explosion occurred.

“I heard the sirens. I burst into tears.” Others were out trying to repair some of the damage, with Philippe Benoliel attaching wooden panels to the front of his tourism business that is located on the same street. “When I arrived this morning we found two windows blown off, glass shards everywhere. The explosion 200 metres away caused all that,” he said. “It could have been worse — we don't work on Saturdays.”

Local resident Soufiane,

28, was one of many people who came to lay flowers at the site. His bouquet had a note saying “For Laura”, the Spanish tourist who died. “As soon as I heard the noise, I went out to see what was happening. I heard this Spanish woman calling for help,” he said.

Her head was covered in blood and she was taken to a nearby hotel where two doctors, still in their pyjamas, tried to help her, he said. “When the ambulance took her away, she was still alive.”

Largest gas blast in years

The blast was believed to be accidental, but Paris prosecutor Remy Heitz remained cautious.

“At this stage, we do not exclude any hypothesis,” he said.

Christian Buffet of gas distributor GRDF said it was “too early to identify the cause” of the explosion, which he called the largest and most serious in more than a decade. Many homes and buildings in Paris use gas for heating and cooking, though explosions due to leaks are relatively rare. French President Emmanuel Macron tweeted his condolences to the “families, loved ones and comrades of the two hero firefighters”, adding that his thoughts were with all of the victims.—AFP ■

7 bodies of immigrants recovered off Libya's Sirte

TRIPOLI — Libyan Red Crescent Society on Sunday recovered seven bodies of immigrants off the shore of the city of Sirte, local media reported.

The bodies were recovered with the assistance of the Libyan coast guards and will be handed over to the authorities for legal procedures, the Al-Wasat news site reported.

A total of 20 bodies of immigrants have been recovered off Sirte, some 450 km east of the capital Tripoli, so far this month.

Libya has become a preferred departure point for illegal immigrants hoping to cross the Mediterranean Sea into Europe because of insecurity and chaos in the North African country following the 2011 uprising that toppled former leader Muammar Gaddafi.

Earlier last December, the Libyan Red Crescent said that 15 illegal immigrants drowned when their boat capsized off the city of Misurata, some 250 km east of Tripoli.—Xinhua ■

Israel retaliates after rocket fired into Gaza: army

JERUSALEM—Palestinian militants in the Gaza Strip fired a rocket at Israel late Saturday, Israel's army said, prompting retaliatory strikes on the territory's Islamist rulers Hamas as tensions rose after another day of violent border clashes.

"Earlier tonight, a rocket was launched from Gaza towards Israeli territory. In response, IDF fighter jets targeted two of Hamas' underground structures in the Gaza Strip," Israel Defence Forces tweeted. "We will continue operating to defend Israeli civilians," it added. Two targets in Gaza City were hit by the Israeli strikes and no one was harmed, security sources in Gaza said. The clashes come a day after a Gaza woman was shot dead by Israeli forces during weekly protests and clashes along the Gaza border.

The health ministry named her as Amal al-Taramsi, 43, saying she was the third woman to die in months of clashes that have seen at least 241 Palestinians killed. Another 25 Palestinians were wounded along the Israeli border in Friday's violence. The Israeli army said that around 13,000 Palestinians had gathered in multiple sites along the border. — AFP ■

Trump blasts FBI counterintel probe into whether he worked for Russia



President Donald Trump. PHOTO: AFP

WASHINGTON (United States)—President Donald Trump blasted the FBI on Saturday, insisting it acted "for no reason & with no proof" when it opened an investigation into whether he was acting on Russia's behalf after he fired the agency's director, James Comey, in May 2017. *The New York Times* reported that the FBI launched the previously undisclosed counterintelligence investigation to determine whether Trump posed a national security threat, at the same time that it opened a criminal probe into possible obstruction of justice by the president. The FBI investigation was subsequently folded into the broader probe by Special Counsel Robert Mueller into Russia's meddling in the 2016 election and possible collaboration by the Trump campaign.

No evidence has publicly emerged that Trump was secretly in contact with or took direction from

Russian officials, the *Times* said. "Wow, just learned in the failing *New York Times* that the corrupt former leaders of the FBI, almost all fired or forced to leave the agency for some very bad reasons, opened up an investigation on me, for no reason & with no proof, after I fired Lyin' James Comey, a total sleaze!" Trump tweeted.

According to Trump, "the FBI was in complete turmoil... because of Comey's poor leadership" and the way he handled the investigation into Hillary Clinton's use of a private server to send some government emails. "My firing of James Comey was a great day for America," Trump said, describing the former FBI director as "a Crooked Cop who is being totally protected by his best friend, Bob Mueller." Asked in a late Saturday interview with Fox News whether he had ever worked for Russia, Trump replied: "I think it's

the most insulting thing I've ever been asked... I think it's the most insulting article I've ever had written and if you read the article, you'd see that they found absolutely nothing."

'Increasingly unhinged attacks'

Such standard reactions from Trump "do nothing to address the incredibly serious nature of these allegations," said Democratic Congressman Jerrold Nadler, Chairman of the House Judiciary Committee. "There is no reason to doubt the seriousness or professionalism of the FBI," Nadler said in a statement which said his committee "will take steps to better understand both the president's actions and the FBI's response to that behaviour, and to make certain that these career investigators are protected from President Trump's increasingly unhinged attacks." — AFP ■

REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST (Consulting Services – Individual Consultant)

For
Flood and Landslide Emergency Recovery Project (FLERP) (P158194)
Department of Highways (DOH)
under the Ministry of Construction (MOC)
Myanmar
IDA Credit 5889-MM

Assignment Title: International Procurement Specialist
Reference Number: NewC4-DOH-IC02

The Republic of the Union of Myanmar has received financing from the World Bank towards the cost of the Flood and Landslide Emergency Recovery Project (FLERP). The Department of Highways (DOH) of the Ministry of Construction (MOC), which implements the FLERP, intends to apply part of the proceeds for obtaining consultancy services of an international procurement specialist to implement the project's procurements in compliance to the requirements from both the World Bank and Myanmar Government.

FLERP addresses rehabilitation of the primary transport sector from Chin and Rakhine States, some of the areas most severely affected by 2015 floods and landslides in Myanmar. The project also provides livelihood support through labor-intensive rehabilitation and maintenance of roads to alleviate the suffering of the most-affected communities with both immediate and long-term benefits resulting from income generation, capacity building, and increased connectivity as well as business opportunities by the project. The project implementation period is expected to extend up to the end of 2020.

The consulting services include but not limited to procurement of goods, equipment, and consultancy services, preparation for tenders, assisting project management in procurement processes, capacity building of national procurement assistant and DOH's permanent procurement staff, facilitation in improvement of project coordination, and supporting the project management unit to meet the World Bank's requirements and time-lines. This Consultancy will support the DOH project office in Nay Pyi Taw and the local offices in Chin and Rakhine States.

FLERP now invites eligible consultants to indicate their interest in providing the Services described above. Interested Consultants should provide information demonstrating that they have the required qualifications and relevant experience to perform the Services. The shortlisting criteria are:

- Possession of an advanced degree in management, economics, business administration, engineering or any relevant field
- At least 10 years of working experience in public procurement in developing countries, including at least 5 years in conducting procurement under World Bank financed projects or under projects financed by similar international institutions such as ADB.
- Familiarity with Myanmar Government procedures and procurement requirements.
- Proven ability to develop clear and precise procurement procedures and processes in compliance to requirements from both Myanmar Government and the World Bank.
- Willingness to set highest priority for DOH's tasks and assignments and be flexible with time.
- Capacity to work together with the project team for the Project's improvements and to facilitate for better and effective coordination.
- Willingness to provide on the job training for national consultants and local staff on day-to-day basis and to carry out technical transfer for capacity building for the DOH procurement team covering procurement of consulting services and goods, and one session on ERC procurements.
- Strong will to improve procurement processes in the project and to navigate rooms for improvement to shorten the time requirements while not compromising the integrity of the procurements.
- Ability to complete procurement tasks and functions as described in the TOR.
- Proven experience to develop regular progress reports and work plans: in the first week starting from the second month, to provide summary of progress and issues for attention by the Ministry and World Bank.
- Workflow, procedures and realistic timeline for handling procurement activities following the requirements from the World Bank and Myanmar Government.
- Achievements of the Project's procurement goals within the time defined both by the World Bank and Myanmar Government.
- Coordination and leading skill for the procurement functions working with different departments. Conducting regular meetings with implementing departments.
- Providing quality assurance to the work of government staff and local consultants
- Ability to develop, update, monitor, and evaluate annual procurement plans, work flows, activities, and performance
- Experience in customizing bidding documents for National competitive bidding – 4 weeks after contract signature
- Excellent oral and writing communication skills in English.
- Good working knowledge of computer programs such as word, excel etc.
- Proven experience in working with challenging situations.

Expressions of interest must be received by the email address shown below by [4pm on February 10, 2019]. Interested qualified consultants meeting are cordially invited to apply by demonstrating the specific qualifications that meet the needs of the project. A Consultant will be selected in accordance with the selection based on the Consultants' Qualification or CQS method set out in the Consultant Guidelines. The Terms of Reference (TOR) and further information can be obtained by emailing at the address below three days before the submission deadline. Application and all email communications for clarifications can be directed to: U Khin Zaw, Project Director
Flood and Landslide Recovery Project
The Department of Highways, Office No. 11, Ministry of Construction, Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar.
Email address: flerp.moc@gmail.com

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Cambodia PM says EU holding country 'hostage' with tariff threats



Cambodia's Prime Minister Hun Sen. PHOTO: AFP

PHNOM PENH (Cambodia)—Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen blasted the European Union on Saturday for holding the country “hostage” with threats to axe trade preferences after it held elections with no credible opposition.

The EU threatened in October to withdrawal the duty-free Everything But Arms scheme (EBA), which benefits exports from Cambodia's garment and footwear sector, the largest formal employer.

The multi-billion dol-

lar sector employs hundreds of thousands of labourers and is seen as one of the 66-year-old's few vulnerable positions in a country he has run for nearly 34 years by building up vast patronage networks.

In recent months he has requested pardons for activists and eased up on the crippled opposition, which was banned in a Supreme Court ruling ahead of the July vote swept by Hun Sen's ruling Cambodian People's Party.

The moves were seen

as concessions to avoid any loss of the trade preferences but Hun Sen has balked at the idea of his hand being forced, and said so in his most direct comments on the issue yet in a meeting with former Irish prime minister Enda Kenny in Phnom Penh.

After bringing up several historical grievances with the bloc he said it was making another mistake by “using EBA as a threat to sanction Cambodia ... and take about 16 million Cambodians as hostage of the so-called EBA.”

Hun Sen's spokesman conveyed the remarks to reporters. They were also posted on the leader's official Facebook page and quickly picked up by state-friendly media.

He asked Kenny to pass along his message to the EU.

Hun Sen is known for fiery speeches that toss aside diplomatic niceties, but he usually avoids calling out the trade scheme by name.

Last month he rapped Western governments for pushing “democracy and human rights” on the country in comments believed to be tied to the EU threat. Removing the preferences is a long, drawn out process that would take several months.

The ruling party swept all seats in the July vote turning Cambodia into a one-party state.

The Southeast Asian country enjoys the economic support of China, which in turn relies on its smaller ally to support it in regional disputes over control of the potentially resource-rich South China Sea.—AFP ■

191 telecom fraud suspects escorted back to China from Laos

BEIJING—A total of 191 telecom and Internet fraud suspects were brought back from Laos to central China's Henan Province on two chartered airplanes under escort of Chinese police officers on Friday, according to authorities.

They were linked to more than 800 fraud cases in various provinces and regions of China that involved more than 60 million yuan (8.9 million US dollars), the Ministry of Public Security said. Henan Province has reported a slew of telecom fraud cases since last year. According to the police, the victims were conned into believing they could earn money by faking orders to help merchants increase online sales, only to find out

that they could not make any money or get their own money back. They were allegedly defrauded out of between 5,000 and 30,000 yuan (741 to 4,447 US dol-

lars) each.

Thanks to cooperation between Chinese and Lao police, the fraudsters' hideouts were located in Laos and raided, resulting

in the arrest of 191 suspects from 11 fraud groups. In December 2012, the ministry started a year-long campaign against telecom and Internet fraud.—Xinhua ■



Suspects are brought back to China from Laos at Xinzheng International Airport in Zhengzhou, capital of central China's Henan Province on 11 January, 2019. PHOTO: XINHUA

SPECIFIC PROCUREMENT NOTICE (PROCUREMENT OF GOODS / WORKS)

REPUBLIC OF THE UNION OF MYANMAR
MINISTRY OF CONSTRUCTION
FLERP – FLOOD AND LANDSLIDE EMERGENCY RECOVERY PROJECT
Credit No.:5889-MM
Contract Title: Road Construction and Maintenance
Equipment: Heavy Equipment
Reference No. : ICB C2-DRRD-G01-A

The Republic of the Union of Myanmar has received financing from the International Development Association (IDA) toward the cost of the Flood and Landslide Emergency Recovery Project (FLERP). The Department of Rural Road Development (DRRD) under the Ministry of Construction, in its role as implementing agency of the FLERP, intends to apply part of the proceeds toward payments under the contract for the procurement of heavy equipment for road construction and road maintenance.

The Department of Rural Road Development (DRRD) now invites sealed bids from eligible bidders for the procurement of the following heavy equipment:

- Lot 1: 6 Hydraulic Excavators
- Lot 2: 12 Bulldozers
- Lot 3: 6 Three Wheel Road Rollers
- Lot 4: 6 Water Browsers
- Lot 5: 6 Transporters
- Lot 6: 12 Backhoe Loaders
- Lot 7: 6 Skid Steer Loader with 6 sets attached Grader and 6 sets Vibrating Roller
- Lot 8: 6 Truck mounted Cranes

The heavy equipment will have to be delivered to two (2) project sites within the Republic of the Union of Myanmar: DRRD, Union Territory, ZabuThiri Township, DekkhinaThiri District, Nay Pyi Taw DRRD, Lower Myanmar Based Office, Pale Myothis, Nwe Khway Compound, Yangon

The delivery is split into two partial deliveries each for half of the quantity of heavy equipment specified for each of the lots. The delivery time for the first partial delivery is limited to ninety (90) days, and for the second partial delivery to two hundred ten (210) days to be counted from the date of signature of the contract.

Bidding will be conducted through the International Competitive Bidding procedures as specified in the World Bank's Guidelines: Procurement of Goods, Works and Non-Consulting Services under IBRD Loans and IDA Credits & Grants by World Bank Borrowers dated January 2011 and Revised July 2014 (“Procurement Guidelines”), and is open to all eligible bidders as defined in the Procurement Guidelines. In addition, please refer to paragraphs 1.6 and 1.7 setting forth the World Bank's policy on conflict of interest.

Interested eligible bidders may obtain further information from the Department of Rural Road Development, Ms. Tin Moe Myint, Deputy Director-General (ruralroad.drrd@gmail.com) and/or flerproject.drrd@gmail.com) and inspect the bidding documents during office hours Monday to Friday from 09.00 to 16.00 Hrs at the address given below.

A complete set of bidding documents in English may be obtained by interested eligible bidders upon the submission of a written application to the address below. The bidding documents will be sent by e-mail only.

Bids must be delivered to the address below on or before Friday 1 March 2019 10.00 am Hrs Myanmar time. Electronic bidding will not be permitted. Late bids will be rejected. Bids will be publicly opened in the presence of the bidders' designated representatives and anyone who choose to attend at the address below on Friday 1 March 2019 immediately after the bid submission.

All bids must be accompanied by a Bid Security

The address referred to above is:

Address:
Department of Rural Road Development,
Ministry of Construction
Yanaung (2) quarter, North of (200) Bedded Hospital,
Pyinmana
Nay Pyi Taw, Republic of the Union of Myanmar
Attention:
Daw Tin Moe Myint, DRRD Deputy Director-General
Telephone: (+95-67) 24821
Facsimile number: (+95-67) 24824
Electronic mail address rbbdrd@gmail.com and/or
flerproject.drrd@gmail.com

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Extreme weather waves across northern hemisphere result in death, chaos

BEIJING—Extreme weather, including snowstorms and heavy rains, has slammed the northern hemisphere from Germany to Japan, taking several lives and resulting in severe economic losses. At least 10 people have been killed in weather-related conditions over the last week while authorities said extreme weather will still continue in the coming days in several areas. Three skiers and two hikers were killed over the weekend by avalanches in the Austrian region of Vorarlberg on 9 January, according to rescue services on 7 January. A woman who was buried by avalanche in Uri canton (state) of Switzerland earlier

also reportedly died of her injuries on Saturday. Authorities also said on 7 January that a woman who was buried by an avalanche last week has died of her injuries on 8 January. In Norway, an avalanche on 2 January left four tourists from Finland and Sweden missing and presumed dead by police two days later. The snowstorms have also caused traffic delays and other disruptions.

Southern parts of Germany suffered a walloping of snow on 6 January, while the German Weather Service (DWD) forecast snow through next week, primarily in the Alpine region. About 350 people are still trapped in Berchtesgaden,

a small town in the German southern area, and the affected residents have to be supplied with food by trucks because the only road to the neighbourhood has been cut off by snow and fallen trees, a regional official said.

Many schools in Germany will remain closed for the rest of the week, while schools in the Greece's capital Athens and some surrounding areas also closed after a heavy snowfall. The heavy snow in Greece also affected dozens of refugees there, said local police, where they have protested living conditions in tents as temperatures sunk to minus 20 degrees Celsius in some areas. —Xinhua ■

California sea lions killed to protect migrating fish



Sea lions bathe in the sun in California. PHOTO: AFP

LOS ANGELES (United States)—Authorities in the western US state of Oregon have euthanized four sea lions in the last month as part of a programme to protect salmon runs and steelhead trout that are at risk of going extinct.

A spokesman for the state's Department of Fish and Wildlife told AFP the lethal removals of the California sea lions began in mid-December and would continue through May.

Rick Swart said the killings were necessary to save migrating steelhead that have been ravaged

by the sea lions in recent years as they swim upstream from the ocean to spawn. "Our scientists believe that if these sea lions aren't removed, that run of steelhead could go extinct anytime," Swart said.

He said salmon were also threatened by the sea mammals, whose population has exploded since the Marine Mammal Protection Act was passed in 1972. "What's going on here is we have a run of wild native Oregon steelhead and they are moving right now from the ocean upstream to spawn," Rick

Swart said. "And when they get to Willamette Falls in Oregon, in downtown Portland, they come up against the waterfall and a dam and it takes them a while to get across that." He said that as the fish gather in a big school while preparing to go over the waterfall and dam, the sea lions swim in and feast on the trout.

"Two years ago, the sea lions destroyed 25 per cent of that wild steelhead run," Swart added. "They killed about 512 fish and that represented about one fourth of all the fish that we had left."

He said the state was authorized to kill up to 93 sea lions a year but he expected that no more than 40 would be removed this year. Authorities in the past have used various non-lethal techniques, including loud noise or rubber buckshot, but the animals have adapted and learned how to avoid the threat.—AFP ■

Agreement for changing the Distributor

Changing the **Godrej Consumer Products Ltd.** (Godrej One, 4th floor, Pirojshanagar, Eastern Express Highway, Vikhroli (East), Mumbai 400 079, India) and **Fytcare Chemicals (P) Ltd.** (SF No. 397/3 Maddukkarai Main Road, Bodipalayam, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu- 641105, India (Marketed by: Godrej Consumer Products Ltd India) Household Insecticide products Marketing from **Mega Lifesciences Ltd.** to the new distributor **Myanmar Consumer Enterprise Ltd.** (No-22, ThiriYadanar Housing, Waizayandar Road, MiKyaungKan Part(3) Quarter, Thingangyun Township, Yangon, Myanmar) will distribute the following pesticide products.

SL. NO.	TRADE NAME	ACTIVE INGREDIENT NAME	REGISTRATION TYPE	REGISTRATION NO.
1	Hit Aerosol Flying Insect Killer	D-Trans Allethrin 0.25% W/W	PROVISIONAL	2014-2128
2	Hit Aerosol Crawling Insect Killer	Imiprothrin 0.07% + Cypermethrin 0.2%	PROVISIONAL	2014-2129
3	GK Mosquito Coil 12Hr	Prallethrin 0.05% w/w	PROVISIONAL	2015-2470
4	GK Mosquito Coil 8 H	Prallethrin 0.05% w/w	PROVISIONAL	2015-2471
5	insecticide Paper	Transfluthrin 1% w/w	PROVISIONAL	2015-2472
6	Goodnight Aerosol	Cypermethrin 0.1% + Imiprothrin 0.05% + Prallethrin 0.09%	PROVISIONAL	2015-2473
7	Goodnight Aerosol 0.25	D-Trans Allethrin 0.25% W/W	PROVISIONAL	2015-2474
8	GK Mosquito Coil 10 Hr	Metrofluthrin 0.0075% W/W	PROVISIONAL	2015-2475
9	GK Mosquito Repellent Cream	N,N-Diethylbenzamide 12% w/w	PROVISIONAL	2015-2476
10	GK Mosquito Coil 8 Hr	Prallethrin 0.04% w/w	PROVISIONAL	2015-2477
11	Mosquito Mat	Prallethrin 1.2% w/w	PROVISIONAL	2015-2478
12	(Liquid Vaporiser 30/45/60 Nights)	Prallethrin 1.6% w/w	PROVISIONAL	2015-2479
13	(Liquid Vaporiser 90 Nights)	Prallethrin 2.4% w/w	PROVISIONAL	2015-2480
14	GK Liquid Vaporiser 45 Night	Transfluthrin 0.88% w/w	PROVISIONAL	2015-2481
15	Hit Chalk	Cypermethrin 1%	PROVISIONAL	2014-2127
16	Hit Rat Bait	Bromadiolone 0.005% Powder	PROVISIONAL	2015-2469
17	Good Knight Express Liquid Vaporiser	Transfluthrin 1.6% w/w	PROVISIONAL	P2018-4488

And we would like to invite any objection for above changing the new distributor, within the two week of the publication of this notice to the Joint Secretary, Myanmar Pesticide Registration Board, Plant Protection Division, West Gyogone, Insein.

Address:

Daw Khin Mar Kyi

Myanmar Consumer Enterprise Ltd.

No.42, Yan NaingSwe 2nd lane, Tharkayta Industrial Zone, Tharkayta Township, Yangon, Myanmar.

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V OLYMPIA VOY. NO. (901S)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V OLYMPIA VOY. NO. (901S) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 14-01-2019 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

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V MCC DHAKA VOY. NO. (901S / 903N)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V MCC DHAKA VOY. NO. (901S / 903N) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 14-01-2019 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

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V YANTRA BHUM VOY. NO. (1018 W/E)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V YANTRA BHUM VOY. NO. (1018 W/E) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 14-01-2019 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.P/M.I.T.T where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

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

Phone No: 2301185

Malaysian state chooses new sultan, expected to be elected king

KUALA LUMPUR (Malaysia)—A Malaysian state announced it had a new sultan on Saturday, who is expected to be elected king after the former monarch abdicated following his reported marriage to a Russian former beauty queen. Tengku Abdullah Shah has replaced his father, Sultan Ahmad Shah as the ruler of Pahang state, the official Bernama news agency said, citing a senior palace official. Local reports said the move was designed to pave the way for Sultan Abdullah to be chosen as the next king of Malaysia by the Council of Rulers, who will choose a new king on 24 January. Malaysia is a constitutional monarchy with a unique arrangement where the national throne changes hands every five years between rulers of the country's nine states. Pahang state is due to provide the next ruler.

The country was thrown into shock Sunday when reigning king Sultan Muhammad V abdicated unexpectedly after just two years of rule, following reports that he married an ex-beauty queen in Russia in November during a purported two-month medical



This picture taken on 11 January, 2019 shows Tengku Abdullah Shah (c) walking after a meeting in Kuala Lumpur. PHOTO: AFP

leave. The abdication was the first for the country since its independence from British rule in 1957. Royal officials have not commented on the reported wedding, or said what condition prompted the former king to take the leave.

Sultan Abdullah Shah, 59, is a popular figure in the sports scene and is currently president

of the Asian Hockey Federation and a council member of football's world governing body, FIFA. While their role is ceremonial, Malaysia's royalty command great respect, especially from Malaysia's predominantly Muslim Malays, and criticising them is regarded as offensive. Portraits of the king and queen adorn gov-

ernment buildings throughout the country. The king is also the symbolic head of Islam in the nation, as well as the nominal chief of the military. Malaysia's sultans trace a lineage back to the Malay sultanates of the 15th century. The king is referred to as Yang di-Pertuan Agong, or "He Who Is Made Lord".—AFP ■

Animated film to spotlight bear that served in WWII

WARSAW (Poland)—During World War II, Wojciech Narebski and his fellow Polish servicemen had to lift crate after heavy metal crate of artillery. Fortunately for them, one of the soldiers had superhuman strength: Corporal Wojtek, a Syrian brown bear.

"When he saw that we were struggling, he'd want to help... He'd come over, grab a crate and carry it to the truck," Narebski,

now 93, told AFP of his days with Wojtek in the 22nd Artillery Supply Company. This can be heavy work, even for a bear. When Wojtek got tired, he would simply stack one crate on top of the other, "which also helped us, because we didn't have to lift the crate off the ground," recounted the veteran who spent two and a half years with the friendly giant he considered a brother. "Of course

he got a reward. Honey, marmalade. That was his favourite." Wojtek the Bear also liked to drink beer and smoke (or rather eat) cigarettes, take showers, snuggle with his handler at night, and wrestle with his comrades. When an opponent lost, Wojtek would lick their face in apology.

Old photos show the bulky beast—who grew to be over 1.8 metres (six feet) tall and weighed about 220 kilogrammes (490 pounds)—giving bear hugs, opening his toothy jaw wide for food, and enjoying a day at the beach with smiling soldiers.

The unbelievable true story of the orphaned cub, which was found by Polish troops in Persia and then travelled through Iraq, Syria, Palestine, Egypt, Italy and Scotland as a morale-booster, is now being turned into an animated movie.

The British-Polish filmmakers hope to release the family-friendly "A Bear Named Wojtek" in 2020 on the 75th anniversary of Victory in Europe Day.

But the film's British producer, Iain Harvey, was skeptical when Scottish animator Iain

Gardner first approached him.

"To be honest I thought, 'This man has had too many whiskys'," Harvey said, before he realised that: "For once the magic is real."

Real-life fairytale

"When you actually find a story that is almost like a fairytale but is real, and documented and true, it just opens up so many more emotions I think," he told AFP. "You know, that humanity can have magic and that things can happen that you wouldn't normally think are rational," he went on. Not that all the lore is true. Wojtek probably did not visit the Sphinx in Egypt, as recounted by some storytellers. Nor did the Nazis necessarily know they had a special animal enemy and bombard his positions. Sometimes truth is stranger than fiction, however. Docile Wojtek was an enlisted soldier, with his own paybook, rations, and rank—a status he needed to sail from Egypt to Italy with his comrades in arms. "The port authority is being difficult about the bear and monkey," reads a 1944 entry in the company's journal.—AFP ■



93-year-old former Polish soldier Wojciech Narebski stands in front of a monument of brown bear Wojtek who was his fellow Polish servicemen during World War II in Krakow on November 14, 2018. PHOTO: AFP

Russian TV series Better than Humans to be available on Netflix

MOSCOW—The streaming company Netflix has bought the rights to the Russian series Better than Humans, Yulia Mindubaeva, general director of the Start video service told TASS on 11 January. Start is an online video service offering best Russian films, series and cartoons. In Russia, the rights for Better than Humans series belong to Yellow Black&White and Gazprom-Media holding.

Better Than Humans series will be released worldwide under the Netflix Original brand, will be translated in 25 languages and will be available exclusively in all territories except Russia and China," she said. The amount of the transaction was not disclosed but according to a source of the *Kommersant* newspaper, it is about \$1 mln, which is a record sum for Russian TV series. According to Mindubaeva, in Russia, first 9 episodes of the series are already available on the Start video service, and in total 16 episodes will be released.

"This is a unique situation, when Russian viewers can watch the Netflix Original series before the world premiere on Netflix," she said. The first episode was released on 23 November, 2018.

Mindubaeva also noted that for the creators of the film series, the deal with Netflix is first of all the approval of a high quality of the original project of Start and Channel One by the global Internet giant. "This is also confirmation that the service has significant growth potential both in Russia and abroad," she added.

The action sets in the near future, where androids are serving the population in various positions where the robots finally began to help people, and even replace them in some jobs. The megacity, in which the series is taken place, is awash with androids. They raise children, work as chauffeurs and security guards, and they are able to think and feel empathy. The main character, robot named Arisa is trying to understand how it is to be a human. Netflix covers 190 countries and has an audience of 120 million subscribers.—Tass ■

China to deepen lunar exploration: space expert

BEIJING —As the Chang'e-4 probe made the first-ever soft landing on the far side of the moon, a senior Chinese space expert said China will deepen its lunar exploration and venture further into the unknown.

China's current lunar programme includes three phases: orbiting, landing, and returning. The first two phases have been accomplished, and the next step is to launch the Chang'e-5 probe to collect 2 kg of samples and bring them back to the earth, said Wu Weiren, an academician of the Chinese Academy of Engineering and chief designer of China's lunar exploration programme.

There are still many mysteries about the earth's nearest heavenly neighbour and future missions will be more exciting. The programme will also promote China as a major player in space exploration. "We are discussing and drawing up the plan for the fourth phase of the lunar exploration program, including missions to the polar regions of the moon," Wu said. Some places at the south pole of the moon receive

sunlight for over 180 consecutive days, and some areas in craters there are never exposed to sunlight and might hold frozen water, scientists say. "We hope to build a scientific research station in the south polar region of the moon. It would be operated automatically and visited by people for short periods," Wu envisioned. China is also planning to launch a probe in 2020 that would orbit, land and rove on Mars the following year.

A heavy-lift carrier rocket, with a takeoff weight of about 4,000 tonnes and a diameter of 10 metres, is a goal for 2030. It would help realize the aim of bringing Mars samples back to the earth and sending Chinese astronauts to the moon. China is becoming a major player in lunar exploration, and contributing to scientific discovery.

"Exploring the unknown is human nature. The moon is a mysterious world to us. We have a responsibility to explore and to understand it. Exploration of the moon will also deepen our understanding of earth and ourselves," Wu said.—Xinhua ■

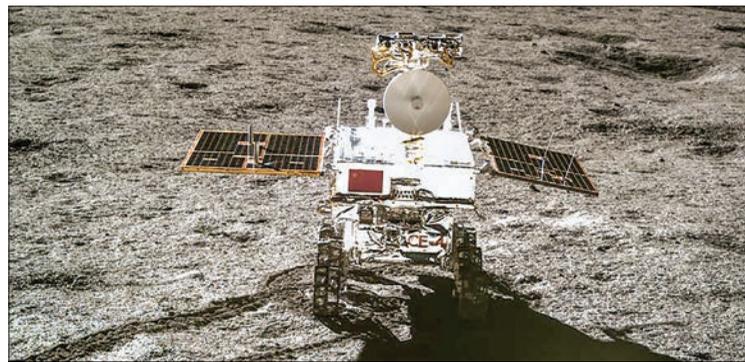


Photo taken by the lander of the Chang'e-4 probe on 11 January, 2019 shows the rover Yutu-2 (Jade Rabbit-2). China announced on Friday that the Chang'e-4 mission, which realized the first-ever soft-landing on the far side of the moon, was a complete success. With the assistance of the relay satellite Queqiao (Magpie Bridge), the rover Yutu-2 (Jade Rabbit-2) and the lander of the Chang'e-4 probe took photos of each other. PHOTO: XINHUA

IN Picture samples of panoramic cameras installed on lunar rover Yutu-2

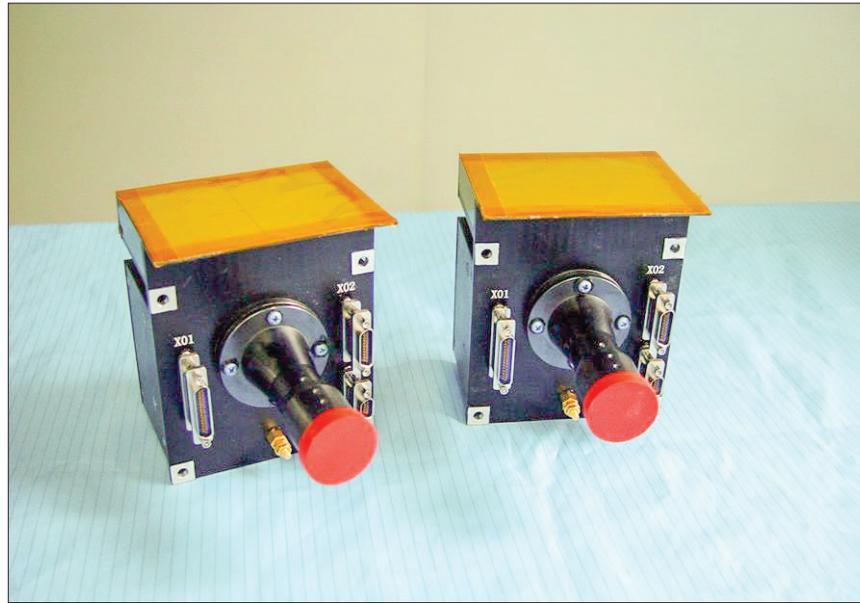


Photo shows samples of the panoramic cameras installed on the lunar rover Yutu-2. The cameras were developed by Xi'an Institute of Optics and Precision Mechanics of the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS). PHOTO: XINHUA

Russia launches project to design concept of spacecraft for lunar mission — source

MOSCOW—Russia's state space corporation Roscosmos and the Rocket and Space Corporation (RSC) Energiya have launched a project to design the concept of a new transport system for a manned lunar mission, a rocket and space industry source has told TASS.

"Work has begun to design the concept of a transport system involving a modification of a Soyuz-MS spacecraft for missions to the Earth's natural satellite. The first working conference of Roscosmos and RSC Energiya engineers on the issue took place on Thursday," the source said.

According to him, the preliminary concept envisages sending a spacecraft to the Moon from the orbit of the International Space Station (ISS).

"The transportation module of the new system would include the special modification of the Soyuz-MS spacecraft and a booster, which are to be delivered to the ISS atop Soyuz-2.1a carrier rockets in two launches. The transportation module will be assembled in space under the control of the Russian crew of the ISS," he continued.

The official did not elaborate on how the Soyuz spacecraft should be modified to perform a mission

to the Moon, as well as on other technical specifications of the new system. "It is too early to speak about such details," he said.

Roscosmos Chief Dmitry Rogozin said in an interview with Rossiya-24 TV Channel on Thursday that NASA had requested Russia's State Space Corporation Roscosmos to develop the Soyuz spacecraft version for flights to the Moon.

"They are requesting us to develop the Soyuz spacecraft that could fly to the Moon and back to create a backup space transport system," Rogozin said.

The US has earlier announced its Deep Space Gateway programme with international participation, which envisages building a lunar-orbit space station to regularly accept spacecraft from the Earth. In his earlier interview to TASS, Rogozin said Russia would participate in this programme only on the parity basis.

Russia also runs its own lunar programme. The first stage of it envisages the launch of unmanned missions, followed by manned orbital missions with subsequent moon landing and the creation of a lunar base.—Tass ■

Some nose, throat bacteria make it less likely to get flu: study

CHICAGO—Researchers at the University of Michigan (UM) have identified a cluster of nose and throat bacteria that made their hosts less likely to get the flu. The researchers have used data from a longitudinal household transmission study of influenza to evaluate the relationship between nose/throat bacteria and the host's susceptibility to the influenza virus.

The participants were enrolled in the Nicaraguan House-

hold Transmission Study during 2012-2014. Household members of individuals with confirmed influenza were recruited for the study and followed for 13 days or until they developed influenza, whichever came first. Of the study's 717 enrollees from 144 households, the analysis included only the 537 individuals who tested negative for influenza at the beginning of the study.

The researchers looked at samples of nose and throat bacte-

ria collected at the time of enrollment and used DNA sequencing to identify which bacteria were present. When analyzing the bacterial composition across all samples, they found five clusters.

After taking into account other known factors that could affect an individual's susceptibility to influenza, such as age, exposure to tobacco, crowded household and flu vaccination, the researchers then looked to see if individuals with a given

cluster were less likely to get influenza.

"We looked at who had which cluster and whether it makes a difference on whether they got influenza, and it does," said lead author Betsy Foxman, a professor of epidemiology at the UM School of Public Health. "That's the exciting thing about it. It tells us if you have this bacterial community, you have lower risk for getting the flu. That's big news because it really hasn't

been shown before." This also brings new questions. "Is it really possible to push someone's microbiome in a way that would make a difference? Is it possible that we could tell people, 'Here's your microbiome pill?'" Foxman said. "It's a very long road and we're at the beginning." In the next step, the researchers hope similar studies can be done in a different population and possibly follow them longer for secondary bacterial infections.—Xinhua ■

Inter Region & State Thaing C'ship 2019 to be held in Nay Pyi Taw this week

THE Inter Region & State Thaing Championship 2019, Myanmar's martial arts competition, will be held at the Wunna Theikdi indoor stadium in Nay Pyi Taw from 17 to 21 January, said a source with the Myanmar Thaing Federation.

The 18th championship is being organized under the supervision of the Sports and Physical Education Department and the MTF.

The championship will have 'attacking' and showcasing events for both men and women.

The 'attacking' events will include the Bando attack, the one-sword attack, and the two-sword attack.

The performance showcasing events will involve mixed groups of men and women, and only men and only women, said the source.

A total of 13 teams from different states and regions, except Kayah and Kayin states, will be competing in the championship, said an official.

Medals will be given for each category. At the championship, 37 gold medals, 37 silver medals, and 60 bronze medals will be awarded, said the source with the MTF.

In addition to medals, trophies will be also given to outstanding men and women athletes, the source said.—Lynn Thit (Tgi) ■



A men's Bando event in progress at the last Inter Region & State Thaing Championship.
PHOTO: SALAI HA HTAUNG (MTF)

Lethwei contest to be held in Loikaw to mark Kayah State Day

A Myanmar traditional lethwei, or bare-knuckle boxing, contest will be held at the Stadium in Loikaw, Kayah State, on 15 January to commemorate the 67th Kayah State Day, according to the official webpage of Myanmar Lethwei (ML).

The lethwei contest is be-

ing organized with the aim of preserving and showcasing the martial art to youngsters and youths.

The event organized by Nating Moe Entertainment, under the supervision of the Myanmar Traditional Lethwei Federation, will feature men as well as wom-

en competitors. Ten matches will be held for newcomers and six for experienced fighters.

The ML webpage lists the six matches that will be worth watching. Among them, Ye Thway Ni (Myanmar) vs Krueba (Thailand) and Khun Lin Htet (Myanmar) vs Pap-

passi (Thailand) promise to be thrilling with two Myanmar fighters competing against Thai fighters.

In the women's event, May Thazin Htoo (Loikaw) will fight against Thaw Nay Htoo (Zar Ni Maung).

The other three matches

will feature Kachin Thar (Myitkyina) vs Nay Lin Oo (Zar Ni Maung), Myo Htet Thu (King of the Lion) vs Zin Ko, and Aung Min Naing (Taung Galay) vs Thway Thit (Toungoo). Entry to the contest will be free of charge, according to the ML webpage.—Lynn Thit (Tgi) ■

Willian eager to stay at Chelsea despite exit rumours

LONDON (United Kingdom)—Willian insisted he had no intention of leaving Chelsea after his superb goal sealed a 2-1 win at home to Newcastle on Saturday.

Newcastle, threatened with relegation from the Premier League, had seen Ciaran Clark score a surprise equaliser before half-time after an early goal from Pedro put Chelsea ahead at Stamford Bridge. But with the Magpies making life tough for their hosts, Willian's brilliant curling shot in the 57th minute secured all three points for the Blues. It was just his fifth goal of the season and first in the league since October but Willian told BT Sport: "I think it's always difficult in the Premier League. We have to be more clinical... I scored a good goal. I found the space and put the ball exactly where I wanted." Willian has been repeatedly linked with a move away from Chelsea but he was adamant he wanted to stay at the west London club.

"My future is here at Chelsea, I don't know what you're talking about," he said. Chelsea

manager Maurizio Sarri was equally keen for Willian to remain a member of his squad, especially as he is deploying Eden Hazard as a striker. "You know very well that Willian for us is a very important player," Sarri told reporters. "In my opinion, Willian has to stay with us. With Eden playing as a striker we need wingers. In this moment he is a fundamental player." Victory saw fourth-placed

Chelsea open up a six-point lead over London rivals Arsenal in the race for a place in next season's Champions League.

But Sarri was unhappy with the way the Blues struggled to see off a Newcastle side stuck in the relegation zone. "I am very happy with the result but the performance was not so good, especially between 1-0 and 1-1," he said.—AFP ■



Chelsea's Brazilian midfielder Willian (r) vies with Newcastle United's Spanish striker Ayoze Perez during the English Premier League football match between Chelsea and Newcastle United at Stamford Bridge in London on 12 January, 2019. PHOTO: AFP

'Legend' Murray can be proud of achievements-Federer

MELBOURNE (Australia)—Roger Federer said on Sunday he was shocked that tennis was to lose "legend" Andy Murray this year and the Scot should be "incredibly proud" of all he had achieved. Murray on Friday tearfully declared that his chronic hip injury had not been eased by surgery a year ago. He then emotionally revealed that he hoped to end his storied career at Wimbledon, but admitted the Australian Open may be his last event because the constant pain was so bad.

"I was disappointed and sad, a little bit shocked, to know now that we're going to lose him at some point," Federer told reporters on the eve of the year's first Grand Slam. "But we're going to lose everybody at some point. It's just now that it's definite," he added, acknowledging that the era of the "Big Four"—himself, Novak Djokovic, Rafael Nadal and Murray was drawing inexorably to a close. "Of course, it

hits us top guys hard because we know Andy very well. We like him. He doesn't have many enemies, to be quite honest," the world number three said of the three-time Grand Slam champion and double Olympic gold medal winner. "He's a good guy, Hall of Famer, legend. He won everything he wanted to win. Anybody would substitute their career with his. He's a great guy." Murray has won Wimbledon twice and Federer hoped the Scot could keep playing long enough to be able to say goodbye on the famous grass courts where the Swiss maestro has won a record eight titles. "Of course, I hope that he can play a good Australian Open and he can keep playing beyond that, really finish the way he wants to at Wimbledon. That's what I hope for him," said 20-time Grand Slam champion Federer, who begins his Australian Open title defence Monday against Denis Istomin.—AFP ■