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Dances, floating lamps mark Tazaungdine on Sittoung River



Local people seen on boats to float paper lamps along the Sittoung River during light festival in Madauk. PHOTO: YE THEIN

WITH rains brought on by cyclonic storm 'Bulbul' letting up, thousands of locals and visitors gathered yesterday for the annual festival of traditional boat rowing and dances and floating of lamps on the Sittoung River in Madauk, Bago Region.

Cyclonic storm 'Bulbul' had made landfall on 11 November.

As part of the annual ritual, locals and visitors floated 45,000 lamps on the river as the sun set,

while a barge decorated with the Ashin UppaGutta theme toured along the river for the public observance.

Before the floating of lamps, people enjoyed boat-rowing contests and spectacles such as dance performances by troupes on boats.

The festival, which is known as the 'Madauk Floating Lamp Festival', is held every year on the Fullmoon of the Tazaungmon.

Another famous traditional light festival was held in Shwegyin, a neighbouring town with Madauk, one month ago after the ending of monsoon.

Locals believed that the festival began in the Konboug era and have preserved the annual traditional festival. Tuesday is the last day of four-day holiday to mark the Tazaungdine Holiday.

During the days, nationwide activities with donors carrying

offerings by cars and tricycles to monasteries while in many wards and streets, free offering of foods and merit making market events were held.

Besides, the pagodas, offices, residences, streets and roads were lighted up with oil and electric lamps fully displaying Myanmar's tradition that was held on every Fullmoon of Tazaungmone.

—Yan Aung Tun ■
(Translated by KZL)

4.1 magnitude quake shakes Yangon

AN EARTHQUAKE measuring 4.1 on the Richter scale jolted people living in and around Yangon last night. The quake was felt by people residing in Yangon, according to the Meteorology and Hydrology Department.

The epicentre of the earthquake was about 30 miles north-west of Yangon's KabaAye seismological observatory. The quake shook Yangon at 9:54 pm last night.

The earthquake forced people living in high-rise buildings in Yangon to flee their homes.

Early yesterday morning, another earthquake of magnitude 3.9 on the Richter scale was recorded at 4:21 am about 39 miles north-northwest of the Myitkyina seismological observatory. The epicenter of the quake was inside Myanmar, about 38 miles north-northwest of Myitkyina, latitude 25.94°N, longitude 97.26°E, and depth 10 kilometers. No casualties were reported in either quake.

Myanmar lies on the Sagaing, Kyaukgyan, Kaba and Kalatan faults and earthquake is one of the natural disasters in the country.

A magnitude 6 earthquake hit the eastern part of Shan State in 2011 and killed 76 people.— GNLM ■

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Union Minister for Construction inspects road, bridge works on Yangon-Magway Road

UNION Minister for Construction U Han Zaw inspected road maintenance works along the Yangon-Pyay-Magway Road yesterday morning.

The Union Minister arrived at Bwet Gyi Bridge on the Pyay-Magway Road and inspected the bridge maintenance work, preventive work conducted against erosion of bridge approach road, status of water way and bridge piers.

From there the Union Minister inspected the construction project site of Ayeyawady Bridge (Thayet-Aunglan) in Magway Region. The bridge was in Thayet District Magway Region and connects Aunglan Town on the east bank of the river with Thayet Town on the west bank of the river. The bridge has a



Union Minister U Han Zaw inspects the construction project site of Ayeyawady Bridge (Thayet-Aunglan) in Magway Region. **PHOTO: MNA**

total length of 2,272.5 meter with 8.5 meter wide road and a meter wide pedestrian path on both side of the bridge. Waterway clearance beneath the bridge was 130 meter wide and

16 meter high. The bridge was a steel frame arch type with AASHTO HS 25-44 Loading.

It was an important bridge that lies on the economic corridor road that connects Kyauk-

pyu Special Economic Zone with Shweli (Ruili) passing through Thayet, Aunglan and Nay Pyi Taw. — MNA

(Translated by Zaw Min)



Deputy Minister inspects petroleum product storage, distribution depot in Thaton

DEPUTY Minister for Electricity and Energy Dr Tun Naing inspected petroleum product storage and distribution depot of Myanmar Petroleum Product Enterprise in Thaton.

Depot officials explained to the Deputy Minister about the works of the Storage and Distribution Division's work and private fuel and lubricant sale stations in Thaton District. The Deputy Minister commented on taking measures to prevent the unauthorized and illegal sale of

fuel and lubricants, systematically managing and maintaining state-own fuel, lubricants and vehicles and put in place fire prevention arrangements.

Afterwards, the Deputy Minister inspected the Bower Filling Station Point, above ground and underground fuel and lubricant storage tanks and depot own vehicles in the petroleum product storage and distribution depot. —MNA

(Translated by Zaw Min)



Deputy Minister Dr Tun Naing inspects petroleum product storage and distribution division of Myanmar Petroleum Product Enterprise in Thaton. **PHOTO: MNA**

Natural gas power stations in Yangon Region maintained to operate at full capacity



Deputy Minister U Khin Maung Win and officials inspect natural gas fired power station in Yangon. **PHOTO: MNA**

DEPUTY Minister for Electricity and Energy U Khin Maung Win inspected natural gas-fired power stations in Yangon Region on 10 November.

The Deputy Minister first visited inspect Hlawga Natural Gas Power Station in Mingaladon Township. Officials from the power station explained to the Deputy Minister about the particulars the power station, annual power generation status, maintenance works conducted, power distribution through the national grid, upgrading and modification of the power plant by Golden Green Energy Co, Ltd and sub-station upgrade works conducted with JICA loan.

The Deputy Minister then inspected the Control Room,

GIS E-house, upgrading work of 33 kV Switchyard with Gas Insulated Switchgear (GIS), power generation from 50 MW MCP power station and power distribution plan.

Next, the Deputy Minister went to Ywama Natural Gas Power Station in Insein Township and inspected the upgrade works on sub-station conducted with JICA loan. The Deputy Minister then went on to inspect the construction of a new 151 MW power station in Ahlon Township, construction status of a new 350 MW power station and a 25 MW Combine Cycle Power Plant constructed with JICA loan in Thilawa Natural Gas Power Station in Kyauktan Township.

Afterwards, the Deputy

Minister inspected the construction sites of 400 MW LNG to Power power-station and 66 kV GIS sub-station constructed with JICA loan in the compound of Thakayta Natural Gas Power Station.

While inspecting the power stations the Deputy Minister said seven new power station projects were being implemented in Magway, Shwetaung, Kyunchaung, Ahlon, Kyaukpyu, Thanlyin and Thakayta to meet the rising consumption of electricity in the forthcoming summer and remarked on the requirement for continuously inspecting and maintaining the power stations to generate at full capacity. —MNA

(Translated by Zaw Min)

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Union Minister Dr Win Myat Aye attends ethnic youth conference

UNION Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Dr Win Myat Aye attended an ethnic youth conference organized by the Internal Youth Fellowship (Myanmar) at the Myanmar Convention Centre on Min Dharma Road in Yangon, yesterday morning.

The audience were entertained with ethnic traditional dances, music, Korean dances, documentary video of IYF-Myanmar and an opera of Jindallae Choir.

In making a remark, the Union Minister said although it would take times for infrastructural development of the country,

the mental development of individuals could be developed by themselves depending on their strong desires for it.

He also added the importance of developing union spirit for peace and prosperity of the country without keeping doubts, antipathy and hatred and by learning mind education.

Then, Dr. Ock Soo Park, the founder of Mind Education, made his lecture on mind.

The Union Minister also discussed with the founder about the mind education and possible assistance of the ministry.—

MNA ■
(Translated by Aung Khin)



Union Minister Dr Win Myat Aye and attendees pose for a photo at the ethnic youth conference organized by the Internal Youth Fellowship (Myanmar) in Yangon, yesterday. PHOTO: MNA

UN Special Envoy makes 9th mission to Myanmar



Special Envoy of the UN Secretary-General on Myanmar Mrs Christine Schraner Burgener welcomed by officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs at Nay Pyi Taw International Airport. PHOTO: MNA

UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy on Myanmar arrived in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday, making her 9th official visit to Myanmar.

Ms Christine SchranerBurgener, who took a flight from Thailand, was welcomed by Director-General U Chan Aye

from the International Organizations and Economic Department under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and officials at the Nay Pyi Taw International Airport.—

MNA ■
(Translated by Aung Khin)

Union SWRR Minister provides support to Special Olympic athletes

UNION Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, Dr Win Myat Aye, in his capacity as Chairman of the Working Committee for Rights of Disabled Persons met with athletes with disabilities at the Myanmar Paralympic Sport Federation in Yangon yesterday.

During the meeting, the vice chairman of the Feder-

ation explained their Federation, preparations for the Paralympic Games, Asian Para Games and ASEAN Para Games, the formation of the new Myanmar Federation for Persons with Intellectual Disability, and participation in the 10th Southeast Asian Games in the Philippines. Next, the Union Minister said his ministry is always supporting people living

with disabilities by drafting and enacting laws that will benefit them and forming national committees to implement their protection.

Afterwards, the Union Minister handed over nutritional milk packets for the athletes and discussed ways to continue providing proper nutrition to them.— MNA (Translated by Zaw Htet Oo) ■



Union Minister Dr Win Myat Aye delivers the speech at the meeting of working committee for rights of disabled persons, athletes with disabilities in Yangon yesterday. PHOTO: MNA



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Large number of pilgrims flock to Zalone Mountain during Tzaungdaing holidays

THE number of pilgrims visiting Zalone Mountain in Bamauk Township, Katha District, Sagaing Region has increased in the first week of November on account of the Tzaungdaing holiday.

After the mountain roads were repaired in October, the Zalone Mountain has been filled with crowds of pilgrims during the four-day holiday in November. The Zalone Mountain is surrounded by forests and has been designated as an eco-tourism site.

Some visitors are also thronging to the Shwenhit-

tawya Maha Bohdi Myaing monastery to pay homage to the residing monk. After visiting the monastery, they usually visit the Zalone Mountain.

Meanwhile, a number of visitors can be seen at the Bamauk market buying vegetables, fish, and local products. At present, the Zalone Mountain passenger buses stop at the Khamoe terminal, and around 65 to 70 buses go up the mountain every day, according to U Ba Lin, Chairman of the Zalone Mountain Vehicle Association.

—Kyaw Swar (Bamauk)
(Translated by La Wonn)



Visitors seen with the beautiful scene of Zalone Mountain in Sagaing Region. **PHOTO: KYAW SWAR (BAMAUK)**

Vessel owners earning well at Buu Phaya jetty during Tazaungdaing holidays

WITH Bagan hosting a large number of visitors in the Tazaungdaing holidays, vessel owners at the Buu Phaya jetty are earning well because they have to run more rounds than on normal days.

"The cost of hiring a vessel is K20,000 per round trip on normal days. But, the rate has shot up to K50,000 per round in the Tazaungdaing holidays," said U Nyan Win, a vessel owner.

"With the Bagan-Nyaung-U heritage zone packed with a large number of pilgrims and tourists in the Tazaungdaing hol-

iday, people are likely to visit the Tantkyitaung pagoda by vessel. Furthermore, some are willing to look around the pagodas by riding cruise ships on the river," according to U Aung, a vessel owner. "There are 198 vessels at the Buu Phaya jetty, and sometimes we run only one round per day. But, we can earn more profit on the fullmoon days of Tazaungdaing and Thadingyunt. Visitors rent vessels to cross the river, and they also hire cars to go to the Tantkyitaung Pagoda. Car rental rates range from K18,000 to K25,000, depending on



Travellers watching sunsets at Jetty near Buu Pagoda in Bagan. **PHOTO: KO HTAIN (NGATHAYAUK)**

the size of the vehicles. The rates for renting vessels are usually up during holidays, and a vessel driver can earn K25,000 per round. Although visitors have to spend

more on transportation, vessel drivers and owners earn well only during holidays," he added. — Ko Htain (Ngathayauk)
(Translated by La Wonn)

National Races Village crowded during Tazaungdaing festival

THE National Races Village, located in Thakayta Township, Yangon Region, was crowded with visitors from across the country during the Tazaungdaing festival holidays, according to officials.

"These days, there are more than 8,000-10,000 visitors per day. The National Races Village has entertained visitors with traditional dances during the festival. Moreover, the reason for the increase in the number of visitors is the erection of signs advertising the National Races Village in busy places, which has encouraged more people to visit it," said U Myo Win, deputy head of the National Races Village (Yangon) office.

A total of 5,200 local visi-



People visit National Races Village in Thakayta Township, Yangon on the fullmoon of Tazaungmone yesterday. **PHOTO: MYINT MAUNG**

tors and 175 tourists visited the village on 10 November, while a total of 13,000 local visitors and 177 tourists visited the village on

11 November. The admission fee per person has been fixed at K500 for locals and K3,000 for foreigners. Children under 10 years can

enter the village free of charge. Currently, the National Races Village displays information about eight major races and the Salon ethnic gallery. The different styles of houses of the ethnic people and their musical instruments as well as ethnic costumes are also on display at the village. "The National Races Village was constructed by the Ministry of Progress of Border Areas and National Races and Development Affairs on December 28, 2002. It is open from 9 am to 5:30 pm daily. We will upgrade the village to make it one of the attractive places in Yangon for foreigners to visit," according to the National Races Village (Yangon) office.— Myint Maung

(Translated by Hay Mar)

Thai enterprises discuss shifting to Myanmar for cheap labour

By Nyein Nyein

WHILE labour wages are rising in Thailand, some of its enterprises are discussing moving their businesses to Myanmar, according to U Thant Sin Lwin, Director-General of the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA).

“At present, Thailand investors are entering Myanmar as cheap labour wages are attracting them,” he said.

“As labour wages in Thailand have risen, the kingdom’s business firms are considering moving their businesses to Myanmar,” said U Thant Sin Lwin.

The businesses are engaged in manufacturing LEDs, auto parts and accessories, among other things.

Last October, Thailand-based Amata Group’s Yangon Amata Smart and Eco City Ltd was awarded the contract to develop and operate a smart and eco city on 2,000 acres of land near Laydaunkan, near East and South Dagon townships, with investments of US\$274.680 million, according to DICA.

From 1988 to September-end, 2019, 1,837 enterprises from 50 countries have been permitted to bring investments of \$81.874 billion into Myanmar. Thailand has been the third largest investor in Myanmar, bringing in over \$11 billion, according to statistics released by DICA.

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Kaleinaung town sees onion prices spike during harvest season

WITH the harvest of onions beginning in the central region, the prices of old onions have risen to K3,000 per viss (one viss equals 1.6 kg) in Kaleinaung town, Dawei District, Taninthayi Region, said traders.

Onions were priced at K1,100-1,300 per viss in October. During the current harvest time, old onions are fetching at K2,500-3,000 per viss, said a vendor.

“It is normal for onion prices to rise during that time,” she said.

The price of onions was K800-900 per viss in Sep-

tember. Last month, Bangladesh’s demand for Myanmar’s onions coupled with high demand in the local market had hiked up prices, according to the Mandalay commodity depot.

In response to the surge in prices, the government allowed onion imports. In the previous years, China flooded the onion market with bulk supply.

The prices may change depending on the weather conditions and market supply, said traders. —Township IPRD/ Ko Khant

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)



Red onions for sale at the market in Yangon. PHOTO: PHOE KHWAR

Gold price dips below K1.2 mln in domestic market tracking global cues

By Nyein Nyein

WITH gold prices sliding in the global market, the price of gold has plunged below K1.2 million per tical (0.578 ounces or, 0.016 kilograms) in the domestic market for the first time since 7 August, according to gold traders.

In early September, the price of pure gold crossed K1.3 million per tical in the domestic market, and then, it dropped to K1.188 million on 12 November.

The domestic gold price is positively related to the global gold price. Global prices were pegged at over US\$1,500 per ounce on 1 November and then, they fell to \$1,453 on 12 November, according to the gold market.

The domestic gold price has remained above K1.2 million per tical since 7 August, rising to a record high of K1.3 million on 5 September, said gold businessmen.

With global gold prices on the



Gold jewelry seen at shop in downtown Yangon. PHOTO: PHOE KHWAR

uptick, the domestic price has hit fresh highs this year, reaching K1,000,000 per tical between 17 January and 21 February, crossing K1,100,000 (22 June to 7 August), climbing to 1,200,000 (7 August-4 September), and then reaching a fresh peak of K1,300,000 on 5 September.

According to gold traders, the lowest price for gold in June was K1,099,000 (1 June) and the highest was K1,149,400 (31 June).

In August, the gold price touched the lowest level of K1,142,000 on 1 August and the highest level of K1,260,500 on 29 August. In September, the price moved in the range of K1,223,800 (14 September) and 1,307,000 (5 September). Last month, it reached the lowest level of K1,211,500 on 1 October and the highest level of K1,229,000 on 10 October, according to gold traders.

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

New onion prices likely to be volatile in November



Onion farmers have earned high income from this year harvest as demand for the crop is high.

PHOTO: THAN TUN AUNG

THE price of new onions is expected to be volatile in November, said U Thein Win, the owner of a local onion depot on Nyaungtabin road in Monywa.

“In the next 15 days, new onions will be entering the market. We won’t dare guess the price of new onions. I think, the price of new onions will be based on the current market price. Anyway, the new onions will be marketable at any price because they have an inelastic demand,” said U Thein Win.

Currently, the price of good-quality onions is K2,000 per viss, while that of low-quality

ones is ranging from K1,000 to K1,300.

“Now, the price of onions is a bit on the decline. New onions have not entered the market yet. The onion price is expected to be higher than last year. The market entry price is K350 per viss. At present, there are a few onions entering the market,” he added.

Myanmar consumes 5 million viss of onions per month. The demand for onions stands at around 60 million viss per year.

“Onions are directly purchased from Bangladesh and India. Sometimes, we have to

send onions to the Yangon market. Therefore, the price of onions can increase significantly. In 2017, the price of onions touched a record high of K3,000-K3,500 per viss,” said a local onion grower.

Onions are mainly grown in Pakokku, Seikpyu, Salin, Hsinphyukyun, Yenangyoung, Kyaukpaduang, Taungdingyi, Myingyan, Taungtha, Myittha, Kyaukse, Monywa, and Yinmabin.

Onion acreage is less in the lower regions of Myanmar.—Myo Win Tun (Monywa)

(Translated by Hay Mar)

Iraqi protesters rally as UN steps up mediation efforts

BAGHDAD — Iraqi protesters shut down state institutions Tuesday as the United Nations stepped up pressure on the government to enact a raft of reforms in response to anti-government rallies.

Backed by the country's top Shiite authority, the UN's phased plan demands an immediate end to violence that has killed more than 300 people since protests erupted in October.

It comes just days after Iraq's influential neighbour to the east Iran brokered an agreement among Iraq's main political forces to close ranks around the government. As night fell on Tuesday in Baghdad, security forces fired live rounds, tear gas canisters and stun grenades from behind

concrete barriers to disperse demonstrators near their main gathering place in Tahrir Square.

The mostly young demonstrators scattered briefly then defiantly regrouped, some using slingshots to fire rocks or Molotov cocktails at security forces.

An AFP reporter and a security source said some two dozen people were wounded in the skirmishes, which have persisted in recent weeks as demonstrators resist efforts to snuff out their movement.

They were bolstered by a meeting Monday between the UN's top Iraq official Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert and senior Shiite cleric Grand Ayatollah Ali Sistani.— AFP ■



A lack of jobs is a key driving force behind the popular anger, with demonstrators accusing the government — the country's biggest employer by far — of handing out jobs based on bribes or nepotism. PHOTO: AFP

Pakistan installs statue of Indian pilot shot down over Kashmir

ISLAMABAD — Pakistan has put on display a statue of an Indian pilot whose plane was shot down over Kashmir earlier this year, invoking the ire of India's media.

The life-sized statue of Wing Commander Abhinandan Varthaman — complete with his signature moustache — has been installed in an exhibit at a museum in Karachi run by the Pakistan Air Force.

Varthaman's plane was shot down in a dogfight over the disputed Himalayan region of Kashmir in February during clashes which brought nuclear-armed India and Pakistan to the brink of a new war.

After his capture, the Pakistani military released video showing him sipping a cup of tea and politely refusing to answer questions.

His stoic and courteous demeanour — and comment that the tea was “fantastic” — catapulted him to hero status in India.

He was released several days later in a peace gesture from Pakistan aimed at defusing tensions. The statue stands in a gallery named Operation Swift Retort.

The exhibit includes what Pakistan says are parts of the fuselage and tail of Varthaman's



Pakistan students look at parts of the wreckage of an Indian Mig-21 being flown by Indian pilot, Abhinandan Varthaman when he was shot down over Kashmir. PHOTO: AFP

aircraft, a Mig-21, as well as a tea mug — though apparently not the same one the pilot was seen sipping from.

The gallery also contains

images re-enacting the moment his plane was shot down, and photographs showing him being handed back to India at the Wagah border crossing.— AFP ■

Cat-shaming: Russian loses airline miles over fat pet swap

MOSCOW — Russia's Aeroflot on Tuesday stripped a passenger of his air miles after he boasted online of sneaking his overweight cat on board by switching him for a slimmer cat during check-in.

Traveller Mikhail Galin wrote in a Facebook post last week that his cat Viktor was judged too fat to be taken into the passenger cabin during a layover in Moscow on a trip from Latvia to his home in Far Eastern Vladivostok.

“The weigh-in showed that the animal had fattened up to 10 kilograms, a level not allowed for the cabin,” where the limit is eight kilograms, Galin wrote.

But he could not abandon his nervous feline friend to the cold luggage hold, so he refused to fly and took a “strategic decision to find a similar cat of a



Aeroflot said its investigation showed that Galin broke airline rules. PHOTO: AFP

lower weight” in Moscow. The next day Galin came to the airport prepared with “the cat, the cat double and its owners,” and successfully checked into business class after “the operation to switch Viktor the fat cat for Phoebe the miniature kitty was successful”.

He posted a photo of happy Viktor sitting on the plane with a glass of bubbly, becoming an instant hero for Russia's cat lovers.

Aeroflot however was in no mood for jokes and told AFP the incident had triggered an investigation.— AFP ■

Restive Kashmir marks 100 days since India stripped autonomy

NEW DELHI — Kashmir on Tuesday marked 100 days since India stripped the restive Himalayan valley of its autonomy and imposed a strict communications blackout, with local journalists protesting the internet blackout.

Tensions have been high since August 5 when the national government moved to bring the region under direct rule, cut telecommunications and detained thousands to quell any unrest.

Shops and businesses have remained shut to protest against the controversial decision, and children have not been going to school.

Dozens of journalists held a silent demonstration against the internet ban, holding their laptops with open with blank screens or held placards with the words “100 days no internet” and “stop humiliating Kashmir

journalists”.

“The authorities have treated journalists too as potential trouble-makers and choked journalism in the process,” a freelance journalist reported AFP.

“Internet is so fundamental to journalism in this day and age. The authorities have choked our practices instead of enabling free press here,” said another journalist, Naseer Ganai.

Authorities have justified the ban as necessary to stop militants from neighbouring Pakistan from using the internet to fan radicalisation in the territory.

They instead set up an office with 10 internet-enabled stations for around 200 working journalists, who queue up to use the computers for 15 minutes each.

The protest came as reports said three militants died in two separate gunfights with government forces this week.— AFP ■

Pakistan allows convicted ex-PM Sharif to go abroad for treatment

ISLAMABAD — Pakistan's Cabinet on Tuesday conditionally allowed ailing former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, sentenced last year to seven years imprisonment, to go abroad for medical treatment, a Cabinet minister said.

"It has been decided that Sharif can go abroad after completing the legal requirements," Railways Minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmad told reporters after a marathon Cabinet meeting.

Rashid said that terms decided by the Cabinet include the submission of surety bonds and the timeframe of his return after treatment.

In December last year, an anti-corruption court sentenced the three-time prime minister to seven years imprisonment and



Former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

fine of 6.5 billion rupees (\$43.3 million) over a corruption case relating to ownership of a steel mill in Saudi Arabia.

A court in Islamabad last month released him from a prison in Lahore on two months' bail for medical treatment.

Sharif is said to be suffering from "critically low platelet counts," a blood disorder, and his family wants him to be treated abroad.— Kyodo News ■

Traffic disruption protest continues in Hong Kong for 2nd day

HONG KONG — Anti-government protesters on Tuesday disrupted traffic across Hong Kong for a second day, following the shooting the previous morning of

a 21-year-old protester by police that left him in critical condition.

Demonstrators occupied road junctions, threw objects into railway tracks and disrupted

train services, forcing rush-hour commuters on one line in the New Territories area to walk on tracks after debris on the tracks halted their train.

Protesters also blocked roads near university campuses. Police fired tear gas at protesters who threw bricks at them from a footbridge to City University of Hong Kong. Debris including chairs was thrown onto a road from another footbridge near the University of Hong Kong.

Violence erupted at the Chinese University of Hong Kong as the protesters hurled petrol bombs and bricks at police, who fired rounds of rubber bullets and tear gas in return. Police then entered the campus to chase after the protesters.— Kyodo News ■



Buses are stranded on a road in Hong Kong on Nov. 12, 2019, after getting flat tires during the previous day's clash between police and protesters. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

British rocker Pete Doherty arrested again in Paris

PARIS — French police arrested British rocker Pete Doherty after a drunken brawl in Paris Sunday, a day after they released him following cocaine bust, prosecutors and his lawyer said.

Doherty, 40, the front man of the Libertines, was arrested for assaulting a man while drunk,

said the Paris prosecutors' office

His lawyer Arash Derambarsh said Doherty was arrested after a fight with another man who was also drunk, who had filed a complaint for assault against him.

After being released Saturday from custody following an

arrest for possession of cocaine, Doherty "went home then went out again to have a drink", the lawyer added.

But because of the detox treatment he has been following for a month he cannot hold his drink, said Derambarsh.

Doherty was first arrested in the early hours of Friday morning when Paris police caught him just after he had bought cocaine.

The singer opted for a simplified procedure for people caught using drugs, agreeing to pay daily 50-euro fines for 100 days, failing which he will be jailed, the Paris prosecutors' office said. A judge still has to sign off on that deal, however.

Derambarsh said on Saturday that his client, who is at the start of a major tour, had agreed to undergo full-time a medical treatment for his addiction to avoid a relapse.—AFP ■



Doherty has a long history of drug and alcohol abuse. PHOTO: AFP

CPC education campaign to highlight implementing spirit of key session

BEIJING — The leading group of an ongoing Communist Party of China (CPC) education campaign has stressed learning and implementing the spirit of the fourth plenary session of the 19th CPC Central Committee held in late October.

The learning and implementation should be closely combined with the work in the second round of the education campaign themed "staying true to our founding mission," according to a circular released by the group, which was made public Tuesday.

Party members, especially Party cadres, at all levels

should be gathered to learn and deliberate the content of the session, so as to profoundly learn the essence, characteristics and strengths of socialism with Chinese characteristics and the system for state governance, the circular read.

It also asked for stronger leadership and guidance over the learning and implementation of the spirit of the session, calling on leading groups at all levels of the education campaign to take learning and implementing the spirit of the CPC Central Committee session as a major political task.— Xinhua ■

2020 royal exhibition to celebrate Britain-Japan ties

LONDON — A collection of some 200 Japanese artworks are to go on display at a special exhibition at Buckingham Palace in 2020, organizers said.

The works, selected from the British royal family's own collection, have been acquired over a period of more than 300 years and include many that were given as gifts by Japanese emperors and feudal leaders.

Among the show's oldest

pieces is a suit of samurai armor gifted to King James I by acting Shogun Tokugawa Hidetada in 1613, the first of its kind to enter Britain and which marked the beginning of formal relations between the countries.

Also featured at the exhibition titled "Japan: Courts and Culture" will be examples of porcelain and lacquer work, highly prized in 17th and 18th century Europe, where the

techniques needed to produce such works had not yet been discovered.

More recent works include a lacquer cosmetics box created by renowned artist Shirayama Shosai and presented to Queen Elizabeth II upon her coronation in 1953 by the then Emperor Hirohito.

Curator Rachel Peat said the exhibition "tells the story of 300 years of Japanese-British

relations," with more than 75 percent of works on display to the public for the very first time.

While not a deliberate decision, Peat said it is "very fortunate" the show will coincide with a momentous couple of years for Japan, with the recent enthronement of Emperor Naruhito and the country playing host to both the Rugby World Cup this year and the Olympic Games in 2020.— Kyodo News ■

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Practising rational thinking in a digital age

THE rapid advancement of the technological age has made the world more connected and essentially smaller. Thus, it can be likened to a global village. The north of the village immediately knows anything that happens in the south, and just like that, the East and West have updated news of each other in a split second.

The media chooses to broadcast or print topics of mass public interest and the general public is made aware in real time. This also presents people the opportunity to make instantaneous reactions based on their interests, beliefs and understanding.

Modern technology not only allows news and information to reach the public quickly, it also allows faster facilitation of responses and information from and between people. Alas, whether for a humour, satire, trickery, political motive, or personal attacks, there is also the advent of fake news or partial truths composed of only the facts that a person wants to see.

The flood of misinformation makes it more difficult for a person to make informed decisions or understand things clearly. This in turn can lead to increased disagreements and conflicts. This dividing agent can even be seen in people of the same faith and compassion.

What we all need is better digital literacy so that we can filter out disinformation, spot fake news, and check from multiple sources to make rational and informed choices. We should always check for the source of particular news item to see if they are reliable and trustworthy and how authentic their information could be.

There is also the issue of who should be accountable for the accuracy of information. Digital platforms make information available to every person with an Internet connection, but should they be responsible for fact-checking everything that pops up on their platform?

Facebook is a good example, as being a global platform it will have an ocean of information from all sorts of cultures and languages from around the world. But if a person makes a false statement through their platform (such as companies making exaggerated claims of their products) is it up to Facebook to fact-check and take it down or are the people expected to be educated enough to tell right from wrong?

And what if a young lad were to meet a potential mate on Tinder but it turns out he was being catfished with a false profile picture or the person intends to extort or blackmail him. Should he have known better or is Tinder responsible to have made sure nothing bad was to happen? These are ongoing debates on freedom of speech and better accountability that all of us need to weigh in on.

In this modern world diluted with all sorts of information, both necessary and possibly useless, we need to make more use of our rational thinking if we want to avoid being the targets of entities with ill intentions.

■■■

(CONTINUED FROM YESTERDAY'S ARTICLE)

"Looking at the environment in a simplistic manner, we see that it is made up of Abiotic, Biotic and Cultural (ABC) attributes. Starting with the 'C' or cultural component first, we note that of three features it is this one which is generally the most known and interpreted, that is, through information about the built or cultural environment either in the past (historical accounts) or present (community customs and culture). The 'B' or biotic features of fauna (animals) and flora (plants) has seen a large focus of interpretation and understanding through ecotourism. But it is the first attribute of the 'A' or abiotic features including rocks, landforms and processes that has received the least attention in tourism, and consequently is the least known and understood. This then is the real power of geotourism, in that it puts the tourist spotlight firmly on geology, and brings it to the forefront of our understanding through tourism".

Geosite in Geopark

Geosite is a location that has a particular geological or geomorphological significance. As well as its inherent geological characteristics, it may also have cultural or heritage significance.

Bahram N. Sadry in his "Fundamentals of Geotourism with a special emphasis on Iran" pointed out that the forgotten more than half of the nature-based tourism deals with geotourism and geoconservation. Through geotourism, a better understanding of the earth's geological wonders can be achieved. At an earlier time, much of the focus in nature-based tourism activities was on living things (namely biotic nature attractions or biodiversity phenomena such as visiting natural areas to view wild flowers and animals, ...), ecotourism, wildlife tourism, and so on. In general, geotourism deals with non-living parts of the natural environment (that is to say, abiotic nature or ge-



Mudeungsan Geopark is located near the city of Gwangju, South Korea. PHOTO: THAN HTUN (MYANMAR GEOSCIENCES SOCIETY)

odiversity such as geological features, landforms and land processes...). Nature-based tourism moves forward with attention to biotic nature and its integration with tourism industry, and is recently completed with other distinct sub-sector of nature namely abiotic nature via geotourism. Particularly, defines geotourism as: "Geotourism is a knowledge-based tourism, an interdisciplinary integration of the tourism industry with conservation and interpretation of abiotic nature attributes, besides considering related cultural issues, within the geosites for the general public." Geosites generally involve geomorphological sites (or geomorphosites) and geological sites such as petrological, volcanological, ... sites and all selected geodiversities are considered as potential geosites that after providing tourism infrastructures and geoconservation basic frameworks and preparing geointerpretation centers will change to be real geosites, for the purpose of tourism marketing and advertising as geotourism destination.

The concept of geoconservation for general people can be conceptualized in relation to

the spiritual values of abiotic nature, and it may help develop a proper relationship between man and nature, and decrease the spiritual crisis in modern man. The geodiversity of landscapes and geomorphological landscapes in association with the body of knowledge relating to earth history and geological processes provide for immense scope within the context of potential geosites. The aim of visiting geosites by general people and students includes: learning geoconservation and its appreciation, engaging a sense of wonder against creation of abiotic nature by the Supreme being in plain language via a sacred science at interpretation centers and passive or once in a while active recreation with additional components to visitor experience. On the other hand, natural heritages besides cultural-historical heritages form man's national identity.

Geoheritage

Geoheritage is a concept concerned with the preservation of features with importance to earth science, such as landforms, natural exposures of rocks, and sites where geological features

can be examined for further study, reference, and conservation for coming generations. Geoheritage, geoconservation, and geotourism studies are gaining interest worldwide because of their scientific, academic, historical, societal, cultural, and aesthetic values. Several countries have their government policy to look after the geoheritage sites and conserve with the help of local agencies; however, there is a need for national legislation. The advantage of a geopark comprises also in creating new employment opportunities for local youths. Further, it will help enhance the local economy by infrastructure development, health, and educational pursuits to the village-level society. The prime objective of this investigation is to make local people aware of sustainable mining and insatiable thrust for monetary that threatens ecologically important sites. The geological records are the consequences of millions of years of processes and are considered precious which require special care. If these records once destroyed will be lost forever and cannot be restored artificially, it is our prime responsibility to transfer

the knowledge and geoheritage to future generations.

UNESCO Global Geopark

UNESCO Global Geoparks are unique. They are not simply a geosite of interest or a landscape; they are living territories where stakeholders work together to construct a sustainable future. UNESCO defines UNESCO Global geoparks as "Single, unified geographical areas where sites and landscapes of international geological significance are managed with a holistic concept of protection, education and sustainable development".

Each UNESCO Global Geopark is defined by its specific geoheritage; a collection of identified, assessed, and documented geosites framed within the specific context of the geological and cultural background of each territory. Drawing on the geosites and regional stories, UNESCO Global Geoparks engage in geotourism for the benefit of the local population and their visitors. They are of particular interest when considering the questions of geotourism and Earth Science communication for two reasons. The first is that geoparks are long-term commitments made by territories and their management bodies; the second is their spatial aspect.

Looking more closely at the long-term characteristics of geoparks, this is, in part due to the nature of the UNESCO Global Geopark label itself. To obtain the label requires many years of preparation, and then to retain it necessitates the constant engagement of the area concerned. The terms of reference for a UNESCO Global Geoparks are lengthy, and require not only a strong management structure, visibility and international networking, but crucially, the drawing together of the local community, scientific experts, territorial stakeholders and politicians. Each area awarded a UNESCO Global Geopark label undergoes regular revalidation missions to confirm that the territory continues to respect the terms of reference for a UNESCO Global

Geopark. Furthermore, geoparks are far reaching; their activities concern geoconservation, geotourism, climate change, natural risks, sustainable development, education and research. It takes time to build networks, to associate and implicate the local population, and to communicate. Parties need to share common goals and construct long term projects that remain relevant even as regions undergo political renewal. Geoparks embrace a holistic approach, providing a narrative for the territory; within this context individual geosites are valorized similarly to other natural and cultural heritage. The stories are not told once; they are echoed, amplified, recast and retold, and crafted for local audiences, reworked for visitors, reformulated with school children.

Returning to the second defining feature of UNESCO Global Geoparks, it is their spatial extent that also sets them apart. Their commitment and activities are intertwined with a region and its people. These territories cover a coherent managed area with towns, villages, commercial and industrial activity, but also natural and protected space too. They have their own culture, identity and intangible heritage. A UNESCO Global Geopark does not position itself for a narrow, niche market; rather, it seeks to educate and inform the local population, and create ambassadors for the preservation of its many natural and cultural heritages, to train local stakeholders to transmit the stories and authentic experiences of the area. A region that fully commits to a long term sustainable development plan, delivered by an effective management structure, will have strong social and political associations and a clear commercial position. Reynard and Giusti, (2018), in their review of the concept of "landscape", examined various definitions and amongst others identified the "political" dimension associated with the spatial notion of the territory.

SEE PAGE-10

The Emergence of Geotourism and Geoparks

Than Htun (Myanmar Geosciences Society)

ဧကရာဇ်တို့၏သောကြာနေ့အစောပိုင်းတွင် မြန်မာ့အလင်းစာတိုက်မှ အခြေခံပညာရေးနှင့် ဖွံ့ဖြိုးရေးကော်မရှင်တို့ ပူးပေါင်းစီမံကွပ်ကဲသော

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Myanmar Daily Weather Report

(Issued at 7:00 pm Tuesday 12 November, 2019)

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

FORECAST VALID UNTIL NOON OF THE 13 November, 2019: Rain or thundershowers will be scattered in Upper Sagaing Region and Kachin and Chin States, isolated in Lower Sagaing, Mandalay and Taninthayi Regions, Northern Shan, Rakhine, Kayin and Mon States. Degree of certainty is (80%). Weather will be partly cloudy in the remaining Regions and States.

STATE OF THE SEA: Sea will be moderate in Myanmar waters. Wave height will be about (5-7) feet off and along Myanmar Coasts.

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Likelihood of rain or thundershowers will be isolated in Taninthayi Region.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 13 November, 2019: Partly cloudy.

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 13 November, 2019: Partly cloudy.

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 13 November, 2019: Partly cloudy.

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

Floating lamps festival held for three days in Meiktila



Local people celebrate light festival with lotus lamps at Andaku Mogaung Yele Pagoda in Meiktila from 10 November to 12 November. **PHOTO: CHAN THA (MEIKTILA)**

27th Tazaungdine lamp on lotus festival of Andaku Mogaung Yele Pagoda in Meiktila was held for three days from 10 November (14th Waxing of Tazaungmon) to 12 November (1st Waning of

Tazaungmon).

Full moon day of Tazaungmon was the busiest day with crowds flocking to observe and participate in the lamp on lotus festival said pagoda trustee

board chairman U Khin Nyo.

A maze festival was held last year in Meiktila but it was not held this year. This year, a Math robe weaving event and a meal donation festival were held in

Naga Yone Maha Bodhi Pagoda while the lamp on lotus festival was held in Andaku Mogaung Yele Pagoda. ShweSawlu Pagoda, Shwemyintin Pagoda, Dhamma Thukha Shwezigon Pagoda,

Wun Daw Pyae Pagoda and other pagodas were also teeming with devotees and pilgrims on full moon day of Tazaungmon.

— Chan Tha (Meiktila)

(Translated by Zaw Min)

The Emergence of Geotourism and Geoparks

FROM PAGE-9

Smaller Geoparks cover several hundred square kilometres (for example, the Hong Kong UNESCO Global Geopark extends across 150 km²), but UNESCO Global Geoparks can extend over several thousands of kilometres (such as Katla UNESCO Global Geopark which covers 9542 km²). These place-based organizations do not promote a single geosite that is promoted by one council or a particular company; instead, schools, the public, geotourists, and specialists

are offered the opportunity to discover a web of geosites and experiences framed in the context of the regional geosystem. These geosites are interpreted and communicated, but are also conserved and monitored. Together, they are linked to a regional interpretation, and can provide the opportunity to develop deeper Earth Science content. In this regard, there is no comparable international label or approach that capitalizes upon the Earth sciences in this manner.

The maturing of the

Geopark concept has been evidenced through the ratification of the UNESCO Global Geopark label in 2015, and through the growing numbers of UNESCO Global Geoparks worldwide, all members of the Global Geopark Network. It is also seen through the broadening of the international reach of the UNESCO Global Geopark label. The label is also experiencing a diversification in the inherent nature of its member geoparks. Early geoparks, and indeed many geoparks, have engaged in rural development. Today howev-

er, the members of the Global Geopark Network demonstrate the strength and interest of this label that has been successfully applied to diverse territories. For example, Pollino UNESCO Global Geopark, Italy, contains naturally hazardous materials. Other geoparks such as Hong Kong UNESCO Global Geopark, China the Chablais UNESCO Global Geopark, France and the English Riviera UNESCO Global Geopark, United Kingdom are not only densely populated territories, but are already popular tourist destinations.

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Aviation

During the reporting period, 15.5% of all domestic flights were operated in Rakhine State.

Comparison Showing Flights to and from Rakhine State

Period	Percentage
1.1.2018 to 30.4.2018	9%
1.5.2018 to 31.8.2018	13%
1.9.2018 to 31.12.2018	13%
1.1.2019 to 30.4.2019	15.3%
1.5.2019 to 31.8.2019	15.72%

Telecommunications Sector

Between 1 January and 31 August 2019, 152 mobile radio stations were built, 280 kilometers of fibre optic cables were laid and 60 auto telephone lines were expanded.

No.	Description	1 Jan - 30 Apr 2018	1 May - 31 Aug 2018	1 Sep - 31 Dec 2018	1 Jan - 30 Apr 2019	1 May - 31 Aug 2019
1	Construction of mobile radio stations	77	67	126	94	58
2	Fibre optic cables	84 km	123 km	-	18 km	262 km
3	Post Office Stations	28	-	2	-	-
4	Auto Telephone lines	-	-	17	60	-
5	ADSL Internet Line	365		12	-	-
6	OK\$ (Mobile Money)	-	-	16 villages	-	-

Mitsubishi Heavy mulls more powerful H-3 rocket for lunar missions

TOKYO — Mitsubishi Heavy Industries Ltd. is looking to develop an upgraded version of Japan's mainstay next-generation H-3 rocket capable of delivering heavy payloads to far-flung destinations in space, company officials said.

Its move comes after the country agreed this fall to take part in missions to the Moon led by the United States, making it necessary for Japan to send a cargo transporter much further than its current scope of the International Space Station.

The original H-3 rocket it is jointly developing with the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency

will be operational from fiscal 2020 starting next April.

Its initial remit was to carry a cargo transporter, HTV-X, which will deliver food and batteries to the ISS, 400 kilometers above the Earth, starting fiscal 2021. However, the scope of its usage has widened to include traveling to a proposed lunar orbiting space station — Gateway — after 2025. JAXA is now thinking of splitting payloads across two spacecraft as additional fuel needed to cover the extra distance would require a reduced burden on the rocket which will carry the transporter part way toward lunar orbit, 380,000 km

away from Earth.

The more powerful version of the H-3 with double launch capability will be in development by 2030, company officials said.

Hiroshi Sasaki, director of JAXA Space Exploration Center, said cost is an issue as launch facilities at the Tanegashima Space Center in southwestern Japan need to be upgraded.

"It will be cheaper to launch a rocket twice than develop a new rocket," he said. In order to cover the cost of operating the more powerful H-3 rocket, "It is necessary to increase demand for large rockets in the country," Sasaki said. The 63-metre long



Image of an upgraded version of Japan's mainstay next-generation H-3 rocket. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

H-3 will replace Japan's H-2A and H-2B rockets. It will be capable of carrying a 6.5-ton satellite

to a geostationary orbit with a distance of 36,000 km from Earth. —Kyodo News ■



Dara Khosrowshahi, CEO of Uber, which has major investments from Saudi Arabia, said he was wrong to describe the murder of journalist Jamal Khashoggi a 'mistake'. PHOTO: AFP

Uber chief walks back comment about murder of Saudi journalist Khashoggi

WASHINGTON — Uber chief Dara Khosrowshahi apologized on Monday after he called the assassination of Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi, in which Riyadh admitted responsibility, a "mistake."

"There's no forgiving or forgetting what happened to Jamal Khashoggi & I was wrong to call it a 'mistake,'" Khosrowshahi tweeted Monday morning as he walked back his remarks Sunday in an interview with Axios.

"I said something in the moment I don't believe. Our investors have long known my views here & I'm sorry I wasn't as clear on Axios."

Khashoggi, a columnist for The Washington Post, was strangled and dismembered at the kingdom's consulate in Istanbul on 2 October, 2018, prompting harsh criticism of the country and de facto ruler Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman. Saudi

Arabia, through its sovereign wealth fund, is the fifth largest shareholder in the ride-hailing company, and the fund's governor, Yasir al-Rumayyan, sits on its Uber's board of directors.

"I think that government said that they made a mistake," he said in the interview Sunday, likening the incident to a fatal crash of a self-driving Uber vehicle that killed a pedestrian in March 2018.

"I think that people make mistakes and that doesn't mean that they can never be forgiven," Khosrowshahi said, after the Axios reporter pressed him on the comparison between an assassination and a traffic accident. The reporter confirmed that the executive called him shortly after the interview to "express regret for the language he used" about the Khashoggi murder. The Uber chief's comments caused an uproar in the United States.—AFP

Chinese consumers smash 'Singles' Day' shopping record

BEIJING — Chinese shoppers set new records for spending during the annual "Singles' Day" buying spree despite an economic slowdown and worries over the US trade war, with state media calling it a sign of China's rising economic strength.

E-commerce giant Alibaba said consumers spent \$38.3 billion on its platforms on Monday during the world's biggest 24-hour shopping event, up 26 per cent from the previous all-time high mark set last year.

The growth rate slowed slightly, however, from the 27 per cent increase last year and 39 per cent in 2017.

Alibaba's main domestic competitor JD.com, which holds

an 11-day promotion ending at midnight on 11 November, said early Tuesday it had handled sales over that stretch totalling \$29.2 billion, which was up 30 per cent.

US President Donald Trump has repeatedly said his tariffs on Chinese goods have put the country's economy on the ropes.

But state-run Xinhua news agency said the "Singles' Day" performance proved China, once known as the "world's factory" for its reliance on manufacturing for export, had evolved into a globally powerful consumer market of its own.

"Where there is a market, that is where the future lies," it

said in a report.

"From the 'world's factory' to the 'world's market', a China that is continually moving towards high-quality development will unleash greater consumption potential in the future, allowing China's dividends to benefit the whole world."

Singles' Day, also called "11.11" for the November 11 date, was originally set as an unofficial day for unmarried Chinese.

But Alibaba — which accounts for more than half of China's e-commerce — commandeered it as a discount sales event akin to the late-November US "Black Friday", which "Singles' Day" now handily surpasses.—AFP ■



The "Singles' Day" event was kicked off with a show by US superstar Taylor Swift. PHOTO: AFP



Afghan President Ashraf Ghani said the prisoner release would 'pave the way' for unofficial talks with the Taliban. **PHOTO: AFP**

Afghanistan to release senior Taliban prisoners in apparent swap

KABUL — Afghan President Ashraf Ghani announced Tuesday that three high-ranking Taliban prisoners would be released, in an apparent exchange for two Western hostages who were kidnapped by the insurgents in 2016.

The three Taliban prisoners include Anas Haqqani, who was seized in 2014 and whose older brother is the deputy Taliban leader and head of the Haqqani network, a notorious Taliban affiliate.

"We have decided to conditionally release three Taliban prisoners who... have been in

Bagram prison in the custody of the Afghan government for some time," Ghani said in an announcement at the presidential palace.

He did not specify the fate of the Western hostages — an Australian and an American — and it was not clear when or where they would be freed.

But Ghani noted in his speech that "their health has been deteriorating while in the custody of the terrorists".

He added that the release of the two professors would "pave the way" for the start of unofficial direct talks between his government and the Taliban, who long

have refused to negotiate with Ghani's administration.

Ghani, flanked by his top security advisors, said the decision to release the three Taliban prisoners had been "very hard and necessary".

His announcement came one day after Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) agency chief Faiz Hameed met with Afghanistan's national security adviser Hamdullah Mohib in Kabul.

"They talked about improving the relation between the two countries," Afghanistan's national security council spokesman Kabir Haqmal said.—AFP ■

Singapore baggage handler jailed for swapping luggage tags

SINGAPORE — A Singaporean baggage handler has been jailed for 20 days for swapping tags on nearly 300 suitcases at the city-state's airport, causing them to end up at wrong destinations around the world.

Tay Boon Keh, 66, had pleaded guilty to charges of swapping the tags on 286 bags at Changi Airport, one of the world's busiest hubs.

He made the swaps between November 2016 and February 2017 out of "frustration and anger" after his request for additional staff at his work section was ignored, a district court heard.

Suitcases originally bound for various parts of the world, including Perth, Manila, Frankfurt, London and San Francisco,

were affected, according to court documents.

The bags belonged to passengers transiting through Changi and using Singapore Airlines and its regional wing SilkAir.

Tay was suffering from major depressive disorder when he committed the offences, the court heard.

But state prosecutors said evidence presented at a hearing showed his condition "did not contribute significantly to his commission of the offences" as he continued to have control over his actions. Prosecutor Thiam Jia Min said the swapping could have caused "potentially, even serious or fatal, consequences" as some passengers could have been left without medications.—AFP ■



A baggage handler at Singapore's Changi Airport has been jailed after switching the tags on hundreds of pieces of luggage, sending them to wrong destinations around the world. **PHOTO: AFP**

16 people die in Bangladesh train collision

DHAKA — At least 16 people were killed and more than 50 injured after two trains collided early on Tuesday in east-central Bangladesh, officials said.

The accident took place at the Mondobagh Railway Station in Brahmanbaria district, about 100 kilometers east of the capital

Dhaka, at around 3 am when a train headed for the capital Dhaka slammed into one bound for the southern port city of Chittagong. Railway officials and witnesses said the death toll might rise as rescue workers were still searching through the wreckage.

On the cause, local me-

dia quoted officials as saying the driver of the Dhaka-bound Turna Nishita train from Chittagong ignored a signal that was emitting a red light, hitting the Chittagong-bound Udayan Express from Sylhet as it was changing its track.—Kyodo News

Chinese Taipei's 1st offshore wind farm completed

TAIPEI — Chinese Taipei's pioneer offshore commercial wind power plant has been completed, President Tsai Ing-wen announced on Tuesday, moving a step forward toward her government's renewable energy generation goal of 20 per cent by 2025.

Speaking at the ceremony in Miaoli County, northwestern Taiwan, Tsai said the Formosa 1 offshore wind farm will become fully operational by year's end, generating 128 megawatts of electricity, equivalent to that used by 128,000 households annually.

"After pioneering the development of renewable energy in Asia, our next goal is to become a development center of green energy in Asia," Tsai said.

Formosa 1 is a multinational project invested by global power companies. Danish energy developer Orsted A/S owns a 35 per cent stake, followed by Japan's power producer JERA Co. with 32.5 per cent, Australia-based Macquarie Capital with 25 per cent and Taiwan's Swancor Renewable with 7.5 per cent.

Construction began in 2013. The first phase of installing two 4 MW turbines along 6 kilometers off the coast of Miaoli County was completed in October 2016. They went on-line in April 2017. The second phase of installing 20 120 MW turbines was completed last month and is scheduled to become operational at the end of this year.—Kyodo News ■

51 kindergarten children injured in China chemical attack

BEIJING — Fifty-one children and three teachers were injured when a man sprayed them in a liquid chemical attack at a kindergarten in China's Yunnan Province earlier this week, local media reported Tuesday.

In the southwest city of Kaiyuan on Monday, a 23-year-old

unemployed man entered the kindergarten after breaking through a wire fence and proceeded to spray liquid sodium hydroxide at children and teachers, the media quoted local authorities as saying.

Two people were seriously hurt without sustaining life-threatening injuries, the re-

port said, adding the male suspect was detained by police.

The authorities were also quoted as saying that the man was motivated to take "revenge" on society. China has seen a number of incidents involving attacks on schoolchildren in recent years.—Kyodo News ■

Spanish royals visit Havana for 500th anniversary celebrations

HAVANA — Spain's King Felipe VI begins an unprecedented visit to Cuba on Tuesday to celebrate the 500th anniversary of the capital Havana at a time of increased tensions between the island nation and the United States.

King Felipe is traveling alongside Queen Letizia in the first state visit by a Spanish monarch to the former colony, one of the last to gain independence from Madrid in 1898.

The capital — a magnet for millions of tourists every year — is celebrating the anniversary of its foundation on 16 November, 1519.

However, the wider political context is anything but festive as relations with the United States have soured considerably since President Donald Trump replaced Barack Obama almost three years ago.

Washington accuses Cuba of oppressing its people and providing military support to Venezuela President Nicolas Maduro, thus helping thwart a US bid to force out the socialist leader in favor of parliament speaker Juan Guaido.



King Felipe VI of Spain and Queen Letizia arrive at Havana's Jose Marti International Airport on 11 November, 2019 PHOTO: AFP

Last month Washington announced the suspension of all flights from the US to Cuba except to Havana as the Trump administration continues to roll back the improved ties instigated by Obama.

Cuba has increasingly turned towards traditional allies Russia and Venezuela for support, but also the European Union.

"Faced with the harassment of Cuba by the Trump administration, the royal couple's journey to

the island can be interpreted as a support to economic, political, cultural relations and cooperation between Cuba and Spain," said Raynier Pellon, an expert at the center for international political research in Havana.—AFP ■

Belarus leader visits Austria, seeking closer EU ties

VIENNA — Belarus's isolated leader Alexander Lukashenko on Tuesday visits Austria, marking his first trip to an EU member in more than three years as he seeks closer ties amid tensions with Russia.

Lukashenko will meet Austrian President Alexander Van der Bellen in his first official visit to the small Alpine nation following a trip of then Austrian chancellor Sebastian Kurz to Belarus in March.

Often dubbed "Europe's last dictatorship", Belarus has



Belarus President Alexander Lukashenko's visit to Austria represents a "diplomatic success" says analyst Artyom Shraibman. PHOTO: AFP

been the target of Western sanctions over its poor rights record and lack of fair elections, and

65-year-old Lukashenko has rarely travelled to Europe.

In recent years however the West and Belarus have sought to improve ties as the Kremlin has pushed for a closer relationship between Moscow and Minsk.

Karin Kneissl, Austria's foreign minister under Kurz's previous administration, said in January that her country wanted to develop closer ties with Belarus as a "buffer state" between Russia, the EU and Ukraine.

Belarus's closest ally is

Russia and the two have formed a nominal "union", with close trade and military cooperation.

In recent months Moscow has been pressuring Minsk into closer integration.

While Lukashenko has welcomed closer ties with Moscow, he has pushed back at the idea of outright unification.

Moscow has denied that is on the cards.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitri Peskov said it was "normal" for Minsk to have contacts with other countries.—AFP ■

Rocket fire after Israel kills Palestinian militant commander in Gaza strike

GAZA CITY — Israel's military killed a commander of Palestinian militant group Islamic Jihad in a strike on his home in the Gaza Strip early Tuesday, prompting retaliatory rocket fire and fears of a severe escalation in violence.

Separately in Damascus, Syrian state media reported that

an Israeli strike hit the home of another Islamic Jihad militant, killing his son and another person. Israel did not immediately comment on that strike.

Islamic Jihad's armed wing announced the death of the commander in Gaza City after Israel confirmed it had targeted Baha

Abu Al-Ata, 42, in a strike. The group said Ata's wife was also killed. Israel blamed Ata for recent rocket fire into its territory and said he was preparing further attacks. The strike led to "substantial" rocket fire from the Gaza Strip towards Israel and air raid sirens rang out in parts of

the country, Israel's military said, but it was unclear if it resulted in casualties or damage. Islamic Jihad said it was targeting Jerusalem, Tel Aviv and other cities with rocket fire. "We are preparing for a number of days of fighting," Israeli military spokesman Jonathan Conricus said.—AFP ■

NEWS In BRIEF

Four armed separatists arrested over murder of Cameroonian army officer

YAOUNDE — Four armed separatists suspected of murdering an officer of the Cameroon armed forces were captured on Monday in Muyuka, a locality in the troubled English-speaking region of Southwest, according to the army.

They were ambushed and arrested in their camp by the military who also seized their weapons. The operation was successful thanks to the collaboration of the public, the army said. The officer Jean Noel Ndongo was kidnapped by the separatists and then buried alive in the locality last week, according to security reports.—Xinhua ■

Jimmy Carter hospitalized for procedure to relieve brain pressure

WASHINGTON — Former US president Jimmy Carter was hospitalized on Monday for a procedure to relieve brain pressure after recent falls, his organization said.

The 95-year-old Nobel laureate spent three days in hospital last month after suffering a pelvic fracture.

The injury came weeks after he injured his head in a fall at home, recovering quickly to volunteer the next day — with a black eye and a bandage covering 14 stitches — at a Habitat for Humanity site. He was taken to Emory University Hospital "for a procedure to relieve pressure on his brain," The Carter Center said in a statement, adding it would take place on Tuesday morning.

"President Carter is resting comfortably, and his wife, Rosalynn, is with him," it said.

In office from 1977 to 1981, Carter placed a commitment to human rights and social justice at the core of his presidency.

He enjoyed a strong first two years, which included brokering a peace deal between Israel and Egypt dubbed the Camp David Accords.—AFP ■

Japanese companies pour massive investment into Myanmar

By Kyaw Htike Soe

MYANMAR was one of the ASEAN's fastest-growing economies with GDP increasing from US\$ 8.9 billion in 2000 to more than US\$ 71 billion in 2018. Investment inflows into Myanmar under the Myanmar Investment Law from Japan reached over US\$ 1.208 billion at the end of June this year. Thilawa Special Economic Zone where around 110 foreign companies have invested US\$ 1.86 billion as of 30th September this year and more than half of the companies came from Japan.

Foreign direct investment (FDI) worth more than US\$ 11 million has been channeled into Thilawa Special Economic Zone this fiscal year, according to an official from the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration under the Ministry of Investment and Foreign Economic Relations. Investments from Malaysia and Japan came to the industrial sector. "The investment proposals were approved in accordance with the Special Economic Zone Law. Japan and Malaysia invested over US\$ 11 million into Thilawa SEZ," he added. A total of 114 enterprises have been permitted to operate their businesses in

Thilawa SEZ, with 39 businesses came from Japan and 27 firms from Singapore. Most of the investment came to industrial, transport, real estate and hotels and tourism sectors. As part of efforts to expand Thilawa SEZ, approximately 200 hectares of land are being reclaimed, said an official from Myanmar-Japan Thilawa Development Ltd.

Sales of land plots in Zone A and Zone B of Thilawa SEZ are expected to be finalized by 2021. So far 99% of land plots in Zone A and about 50% in Zone B have already been sold out, according to the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). Toyota Motor Corp is setting up an automotive assembly plant on 21 hectares of land in Thilawa SEZ in the suburbs of Yangon and the new factory will produce 2,500 Hilux pick-up trucks per year from 2021. Since its establishment in 2015, Thilawa SEZ has attracted 113 investment projects and 76 companies have begun commercial operations. Japanese investment in Myanmar is expected to go up in the fiscal year 2019-2020, according to the DICA. Successful establishment of Thilawa SEZ marks a new phase in promoting bilateral relations between Myanmar and

Japan. At the same time, the JICA is cooperating with Myanmar government departments in many areas.

Arrangements are being made to establish a textile and garment industry park in Mandalay Region as part of a joint project with the JICA, said Chief Minister of Mandalay Region Dr Zaw Myint Maung. Discussions on the establishment of the textile industry zone are still at the early stages, but it will potentially create job opportunities for around 50,000 local people, according to an official from SMART Myanmar. Traditionally, Mandalay Region has been a hub of garment manufacturing in Myanmar and nearly 20,000 garment, textile and footwear jobs have been created in Mandalay Region over the past five years. Myanmar is one of the fastest-growing garment, footwear, and travel goods suppliers in the world. The Southeast Asian country earned US\$ 2.7 billion in 2017 from garment exports and fetched US\$ 3.86 billion in 2018.

A new four-lane tarred road from Thanlyan Bridge to Thilawa SEZ and the Bago River crossing bridge (Thanlyan Bridge No-3) are being built with the Official



Thilawa SEZ Zone A Gate 2. PHOTO: YE HTUT TIN (NLM)

Development Assistance (ODA) loans from Japan. The new tarred road is slated for completion by the end of this year. The Bago River crossing bridge measuring 1,982 metres in length will be built through three phases by spending some US\$ 300 million of Japanese ODA loans. Once completed, the four-lane tarred and the new bridge will facilitate better flows of goods to Thilawa SEZ. Plans are underway to restart development of the Dawei Special Economic Zone in Dawei, Taninthayi Region, according to media reports. The government is seeking ways to resume establishment of the US\$ 8 billion Dawei SEZ, which has been halted since 2013 due to financial constraints. The project consists of a deepwater seaport,



Yakult factory which is located at Thilawa Special Economic Zone's Zone A. PHOTO: YE HTUT TIN (NLM)





Hot-dip galvanization is a form of galvanization. It is the process of coating iron and steel with zinc, which alloys with the surface of the base metal when immersing the metal in a bath of molten zinc at a temperature of around 840 °F (449 °C). **PHOTO: SCI METAL TECH MYANMAR CO., LTD.**



PHOTO: YE HTUT TIN (NLM)

high-tech zones, information technology zones, export-processing zones, transportation zones, services business zones, and other infrastructures.

Myanmar set a target to attract US\$ 221 billion of FDI within 20 years from 2016-2017 FY to 2035-2036 FY under the short-term, mid-term and long-term Myanmar Investment Promotion Plan and to encourage the inflow of responsible investments into the country. In addition Myanmar is estimated to become a middle-income country by 2030. The MIPP is aimed to realize the responsible and quality investments necessary for Myanmar to become a middle-income country by 2030 and for pursuing subsequent further growth until 2035, through fundamental improvement of the business environment. It will be assessed and reviewed once in five years due to changing political and economic situations globally. The DICA has been cooperating with NGOs and INGOs so as to attract foreign direct investments to the country by organizing seminars, investment and business forums.

Singapore and China were the largest foreign investors in Myanmar, with both countries channeling more than US\$ 1.3 billion and around US\$ 350 million into the projects in the Southeast Asia country. Singapore is the largest foreign investor in Myanmar, pouring more than US\$ 22 billion into 312 projects of the Asia's last frontier market between 1988 to date. Most of the investments from Singapore came to oil and gas sector. Around 1,780 foreign enterprises from 50 countries around the world were permitted to invest in 12 sectors, with the total amount of US\$ 81,597.743 million during the period from 1988 to the end of August 2019. The largest sector of FDI came to oil and gas sector, accounting for 27.48 per cent of the total foreign investments, followed by the power sector with 25.95 per cent and the manufacturing sector with 14.01 per cent.

Myanmar mainly exports clothing, marine and agricultural products to Myanmar and imports car and machinery from the East Asian country. Japan has been one of the largest providers of development assistance to Myanmar for decades. In terms of foreign investments in Myanmar, Japan ranks 10th place with over US\$ 1.2 billion invested in 117 enterprises in the country, according to the government's figures. ■■■

Myanmar consumers keen to use biometrics for payment and authentication – Visa Study

VISA, the world's leader in digital payments, today announced findings from Visa's Consumer Payment Attitudes Study¹ (the "Study"), that reveal nearly half of Myanmar consumers surveyed (40 per cent) are interested in adopting biometrics for payments and authentication.

The Study is an in-depth report examining the perceptions, attitudes and behaviors Myanmar consumers have towards payment and emerging payment methods.

Lillian Wang, Country Manager for Visa Myanmar, said: "Given the evolving payment landscape, which has transformed the way consumers make payments, Myanmar consumers are clearly upbeat about technological advancements in payment solutions. We are encouraged and motivated that technology savvy Myanmar people recognize the benefits of using digital payments." The Study showed top methods of biometric payments are finger scan (52 per cent), facial recognition (17 per cent), retina scan (9 per cent) and voice recognition (5 per cent).

When it comes to level of comfort in using biometric payment and authentication, finger scan tops the list with 99 per cent of respondents expressing comfort in using such a method. Facial recognition records the second-highest level of comfort level at 95 per cent, followed by voice recognition at 91 per cent. Myanmar respondents are least comfortable using retina scan at only 89 per cent.

The Study also tracks the level of awareness and interest of Myanmar consumers in using wearable technology to make payments, including

smartwatch, wristband and ring. Based on the findings, only one in ten of respondents (9 per cent) are aware of wearables to make payments. However, despite low awareness level, nearly half (41 per cent) of the respondents express interest in using such technology to make payments.

Myanmar consumers express highest preference towards using smartwatch (39 per cent) to make payments, followed by wrist band/bracelet (26 per cent), ring (22 per cent). When asked about comfort level in using wearables to make payment, nearly all Myanmar respondents are most comfortable using wristband/bracelet (99 per cent), followed by smartwatch (98 per cent) and ring (95 per cent).

The Study also showed that Myanmar consumers are comfortable with the use of AI Chatbots for tasks such as making reservations, making payments, and placing orders for goods and services. Over 80 per cent of people surveyed said they are at least somewhat comfortable with each of these functions, despite only 1 per cent of respondents having previously used AI Chatbots.

"In Myanmar, we have taken the lead to introduce new innovative payment solutions, such as Visa contactless technology, as well as educating consumers on the benefits of digital payments and financial management. While we are proud of the progress, we remain committed to expanding the usage and acceptance of digital payments across the country. We are working hard to introduce new payment innovations and invest in the payments ecosystem in Myanmar to drive economic growth," concluded Lillian.—GNLM



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

Myanmar beat China Women's Youth Selection team 4-0 in friendly match



A Myanmar footballer (white) tries to block a China Women's Youth Selection team player (red) during a friendly match yesterday in Suzhou, China. **PHOTO: MFF**

THE Myanmar women's national football team beat China Women's Youth Selection team by 4-0 in a friendly match yesterday afternoon at Suzhou, Jiangsu Province, China.

The friendly match was part of team Myanmar's preparations for the women's football tournament of the 2019 South East Asian Games in the Philippines. The friendly match was the second friendly match for team Myanmar in China. Myanmar used youth players for the match.

Myanmar lined up with May Zin New (goalkeeper), Khin Myo Win, Wai Wai Aung, May Thet Mon Myint, Aye Aye Moe, Lae Lae Hlaing, May Thu Kyaw, Nge Nge Htwe, San Thaw Thaw, Pont Pont Pyae Maung, and Nu Nu.

The team substituted July

Kyaw, Thin Thin Yu, Phyu Phyu Win, Khin Mho Mho Tun, Myat Noe Khin, Khin Moe Wai, goalkeeper Thandar Oo, and Khaing Thazin Oo. Myanmar kept the pressure on the Chinese players throughout the match, with Nu Nu scoring the first and second goals at 28 and 45 minutes. The first half ended with a 2-0 score in favor of Myanmar.

July Kyaw scored the third and fourth goals for Myanmar at 64 and 78 minutes in the second half. The match ended with a four-goal win for Myanmar. Myanmar will next play their third friendly match in China against the same team (China Women's Youth National Team) on 14 November, according to a statement from the Myanmar Football Federation.—Lynn Thit (Tgi)

Klopp tells UEFA seminar that VAR must improve

LAUSANNE — The day after Liverpool beat Manchester City in a crunch match where VAR decisions were hotly disputed, the Premier League leader's coach Jurgen Klopp and other top football figures have suggested improvement is needed to the fledgling system.

Klopp, his City opposite number Pep Guardiola, Real Madrid coach Zinedine Zidane, and Thomas Tuchel of Paris Saint-Germain all attended the UEFA coaches forum in Nyon, Switzerland on Monday, where the VAR (Video Assistant Referee) system was a hot topic. "It is clear it's a process where they have to keep on improving," Klopp said.

"It can be improved, a lot of things have to be done by human beings and we are not 100 percent (either). "There is space for some mistakes, no-

body asks for perfection, just to have the right decision, that's all."

His comments were made a day after the marquee game of the Premier League season so far saw a controversial VAR call after six minutes when City could easily have had a penalty when the ball ricocheted around the Liverpool area and hit the Reds' defender Trent Alexander-Arnold on the arm.

Not only did VAR fail to overturn the referee's decision not to award City a penalty, but they were doubly punished 22 seconds later when Liverpool midfielder Fabinho fired home a brilliant strike to give the Reds a 1-0 lead.

UEFA assistant general secretary Giorgio Marchetti said uniformity was needed but called for time for the promising new system to bed in.—AFP ■



Liverpool's German manager Jurgen Klopp attends a press conference at Anfield stadium. **PHOTO: AFP**

MFF to hold Community Champions Football Clinic in Yangon

THE Myanmar Football Federation (MFF) will soon hold the Community Champions Football Clinic course on the football turf of the MFF in Yangon, according to an official statement issued yesterday by the federation.

The football clinic is being jointly organized with the Embassy of the United States in Yangon with the aim of improving Myanmar football standards and

helping young players improve their football skills, health, and football education, said an MFF source.

A press conference for the football clinic and the opening ceremony of the sports exchange programme by the community champions will be held on 13 November. The MFF has posted an invite for mediapersons to cover the event on its official page.

The course will be conducted by football coaches from the United States, the Myanmar U-19 national men's football team coach U Myo Hlaing Win, and women's football specialist Daw Zin Mar Wan.

The course will have both theoretical and practical modules, and 100 youths have signed up for the course, according to the MFF.—Lynn Thit (Tgi)

Emotions got the better of me, says dropped Sterling

LONDON — Raheem Sterling said he allowed his "emotions" to get the better of him leading to a brief altercation with Liverpool's Joe Gomez that resulted in the Manchester City player being dropped for Thursday's Euro 2020 qualifier against Montenegro.

Sterling admitted on Instagram on Tuesday he and Gomez "had words" when they met up at the England camp the day after Liverpool's 3-1 win over defending champions City which left the latter nine points adrift of Jurgen Klopp's side.

"Both Joe and I have had words and figured things out and moved on," Sterling said.

"We are in a sport where emotions run high and I am man enough to admit when emotions got the better of me.

"This is why we play this sport because of our love for



England's defender Joe Gomez arrives to attend an England team training session at St George's Park in Burton-on-Trent, central England on November 12, 2019, ahead of their Euro 2020 football qualification match against Montenegro. **PHOTO: AFP**

it — me and Joe Gomez are good, we both understand it was a five to 10-second thing... it's done, we move forward and not make this bigger than it is.

"Let's get focus on our game on Thursday," Sterling added.

The Daily Mail reported that Gomez and Sterling had to be separated by teammates on Monday after a "physical confrontation".

The pair had also clashed on the field towards the end of Sunday's match.—AFP ■