

PARLIAMENT

Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker meets Senate Vice President of Czech Republic

PAGE-2

PARLIAMENT

Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker receives Senate Vice President of Czech Republic

PAGE-2

THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

Vol. VI, No. 300, 3rd Waning of Tabodwe 1381 ME

www.globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

Tuesday, 11 February 2020

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw hears report of joint committee on constitution amendment process

THE second Pyidaungsu Hluttaw convened its 7th day meeting of 15th regular session yesterday, and discussed the report and recommendations of the Joint Committee on Scrutinizing Second Bill on Amending 2008 Constitution.

Dr Myat Nyana Soe, the committee's Secretary, explained the 7 bills presented by Hluttaw representatives.

The amendments in each bill were edited to meet legal terms without changing the meanings by the officials led by the Deputy Attorney-General from the Union Attorney-General Office.

Referring to the sub-paragraph (a) of Article 436 under the Chapter 12 of the State Constitution, Dr Myat Nyana Soe said the bills could be approved only if more than 491 Pyidaungsu Hluttaw representatives (over 75 per cent) agreed with it. There were 655 Pyidaungsu Hluttaw MPs while the report was being prepared and one Pyithu Hluttaw representative from Aunglan Township passed away.

The secretary of Joint Committee also suggested secret voting system while making decision on constitution amendment in the Hluttaw.

The Joint Committee was formed with 15 members of Pyithu Hluttaw Bill Committee and 15 members of Amyotha Hluttaw.

Brigadier General Maung Maung, Brigadier General Tint Lwin, Daw Nan Ni Ni Aye and U Stephen suggested to make a



The 15th regular session of Second Pyidaungsu Hluttaw holds its 7th-day meeting in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. PHOTO: SOE WIN TUN

separate discussion on the paragraph 14 and 18 of the report, Pyidaungsu Hluttaw in accordance with Article 139 of the Py-

The secretary of Joint Committee also suggested secret voting system while making decision on constitution amendment in the Hluttaw.

while the remaining members of committee remarked to continue the process with the decisions of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Bylaw. Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker U T Khun Myat then invited

the names of MP who wanted to debate articles and sub-articles in the appendixes H-1 and I-1.

However, Tatmadaw representative Brig-Gen Maung Maung insisted separate discussions as the proposal was supported by 20 per cent of MPs in accordance with their rights.

The Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker replied that the Hluttaw has agreed with the decision of the joint committee which includes the Hluttaw representative, and that the Hluttaw would

not agree on separate discussions on the topics.

The Pyidaungsu Hluttaw also agreed appointment of Lt-Gen Soe Htut as the Union Minister for Home Affairs without any rejection. Deputy Governor of the Central Bank of Myanmar U Soe Min made a discussion on the reports of implementing financial policy and financial stability from April to September 2018.

The Pyidaungsu Hluttaw kept the reports as a record.

SEE PAGE-2

INSIDE TODAY

NATIONAL
Myanmar, Singapore supreme courts sign MoG on enforcing money judgments
PAGE-3



NATIONAL
Union Minister U Soe Win receives Czech Republic Ambassador
PAGE-4



BUSINESS
Mineral exports up \$579 mln in current FY
PAGE-7



Pyidaungsu Hluttaw

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw hears report of joint committee on constitution amendment process

FROM PAGE-1

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Joint Bill Committee's Secretary Dr Myat Nyana Soe presented each paragraph of the Insolvency Bill sent back with recommendations by the President, and the Hluttaw approved the paragraphs. The bill will also be returned to the President with the amendments of Hluttaw in accordance with Article 109 of

its bylaw.

The Hluttaw also approved the Amendment Bill on Farmland Law and it will be sent back to the President with amendments.

Deputy Minister for Electricity and Energy Dr Tun Naing presented progress of the two fertilizer factories and their future plans being implemented by the Myanmar Petrochemical Enterprise with the approval of

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw.

The activities of Union Legal Aid Board in the six month period were discussed by the Hluttaw representatives.

Major Win Min Tun discussed formation of this group is a topic for questioning whether it was approved by the Union Chief Justice and the Chief Judges of the High Court of the Region or State in accordance with the laws. He also suggest-

ed mentioning the results from the formation of this group in the next report as the group should be a model organization for transparency.

MP U Myat Lay Oo from Htilin constituency said that the legal supporting body helped in a total of 470 legal disputes, including the highest number of 146 cases in Bago and the lowest number of 3 cases in Ayeyawady Region. He also remarked on

ineffectiveness of such groups in many areas of the country, and made suggestion to set up more branches of this group.

The report was also discussed by the other six Hluttaw representatives.

The 8th day of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw will be organized on 13th February.—Aung Ye Thwin and Aye Aye Thant

(Translate by Aung Khin)



Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U T Khun Myat meets with Mr Jan Hornik, Vice President of the Czech Republic's Senate, in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. PHOTO: MNA

Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker meets Senate Vice President of Czech Republic

PYITHU Hluttaw Speaker U T Khun Myat received the Vice President of the Czech Republic's Senate, Mr Jan Hornik, at the Hluttaw building in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

They discussed increasing cooperation and communication between the parliaments of both nations, environmental conservation, protection of children and the elderly, and the duties of Hluttaw repre-

sentatives within and outside the Hluttaw.

Also present at the meeting were the chairpersons of Pyithu Hluttaw committees U Zaw Thein, U Soe Thura Tun, U Kyi Moe Naing and Dr Aung Tun Khaing, officials from the Pyithu Hluttaw office, and Czech Ambassador Mrs Hana Mottlova.—MNA

(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)



Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than meets with Mr Jan Hornik, Vice President of the Czech Republic's Senate, in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. PHOTO: MNA

Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker receives Senate Vice President of Czech Republic

AMYOTHA Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than received Vice President Mr Jan Hornik of the Senate of the Czech Republic at the reception hall of the Amyotha Hluttaw yesterday.

At the meeting, they cordially discussed the matters pertaining to the promotion of friendship and cooperation between the two countries, the enhancement of closer relations between the two

parliaments, the amendment to the Constitution of Myanmar, and the environmental conservation.

Present on the occasion were Deputy Speaker U Aye Tha Aung of the Amyotha Hluttaw, International Relations, Parliamentarian's Friendship and Cooperation Chair Dr Than Win of the Amyotha Hluttaw, and officials.—MNA

(Translated by Aungthu Ya)

Amyotha Hluttaw Deputy Speaker meets Czech counterpart

AMYOTHA Hluttaw Deputy Speaker U Aye Tha Aung received a delegation led by Mr Jan Hornick, Vice President of the Senate of Czech Republic, at the Hluttaw building in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

They discussed bilater-

al relations and promoting friendly relations between the parliaments of both countries. Also present at the meeting were Amyotha Hluttaw Public Accounts Committee member Naw Hla Hla Soe and officials from the Amyotha

Hluttaw office.—MNA

(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

Amyotha Hluttaw Deputy Speaker U Aye Thar Aung meets with Mr Jan Hornik, Vice President of the Czech Republic's Senate, in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. PHOTO: MNA



Today is the time when all the national brethren have been striving with a strong union spirit to obtain eternal peace

Today is the time when all the national brethren have been striving with a strong union spirit to obtain eternal peace and to achieve mutual understanding and trust without doubts and conflicts while taking the lessons in the past. The Union Peace Conference - 21st Century Panglong has been successfully held three times in order to obtain peace and national reconciliation and some agreements for building a democratic federal union have been reached. We have been undergoing the peace process in order to build a federal union all the national races have been craving for.

(Excerpt from Message of President U Win Myint, sent to the 72nd Independence Day 4th January 2020)



Myanmar, Singapore supreme courts sign MoG on enforcing money judgments

THE Union Supreme Court and the Supreme Court of Singapore signed the Memorandum of Guidance as to Enforcement of Money Judgments yesterday.

The signing ceremony was held at the meeting hall of the Union Supreme Court in Nay Pyi Taw. Chief Justice U Htun Htun Oo and The Hon Sundaresh Menon, Singapore Supreme Court's Chief Justice, signed and exchanged the memorandum.

U Htun Htun Oo first delivered a speech where he said while the memorandum has no binding legal effect, it must be acknowledged as an important step forward while there exist no memoranda of understanding concerning the enforcement of money judgments between the two countries.

He said the Code of Civil Procedure shows possible steps for Myanmar to enforce foreign judgments and this MoG explains the scenarios, rules and regulations for either

country to enforce judgments from the other. He said there need to be practical discussions to implement the content of the MoG.

This was followed by a speech from The Hon Sundaresh Menon, after which the two chief justices signed and exchanged the MoG.

Myanmar and Singapore currently have numerous investments between them and show a promise of increased economic cooperation in the future.

The recently signed MoG will assist in enforcing foreign judgments of a financial nature. This will help in safeguarding the interests of investors from both nations and create better business opportunities for Myanmar businesses as well.

Present at the signing ceremony were Union Ministers, the Union Attorney-General, Justices from the Union Supreme Court, chairpersons and secretaries from Hluttaw com-



Chief Justice of the Union U Htun Htun Oo and Hon Sundaresh Menon, Singapore Supreme Court's Chief Justice exchange documents at the signing ceremony in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

mittees, Judges and officials from Singapore's Supreme Court, the Singaporean Ambassador to Myanmar and embassy staff, affiliated international or-

ganizations, and the permanent secretaries, directors-general, deputy directors-general, directors and officials of the office of the Chief Justice, Office of

the Union Supreme Court and Office of the Union Judiciary Supervision. —MNA

(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

Certificates presented for completion of renewables energy courses



Union Minister U Win Khaing delivers the speech at the Twinning Programme on Renewables, Certificate of Completion Award Ceremony in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

CERTIFICATES were conferred to the trainees who completed renewable energy

courses conducted under the MoU between the Ministry of Electricity and Energy and

the Embassy of Denmark in Yangon with the support of the World Wide Fund-Myanmar.

Union Minister U Win Khaing made a speech at the ceremony held at his office in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday afternoon.

He said the MoU was signed on 9 February 2018 for more efficient use of renewable energy in Myanmar.

The government has targeted the 100 per cent of power supply in the country by 2030 as the national electricity distribution has passed 50 per cent in December last year, increasing from 34 per cent in 2016.

He added that more renewable energy resources will be used in power generation

to avoid environmental degradation.

The utility scale of electricity generated from the 40-MW solar energy plant in Minbu Township was distributed to the national grid.

Danish Ambassador to Myanmar Mr John Nielsel explained the programme which was attended by two trainees for advanced course on renewable energy, 12 for project survey and implementation course and 18 for wind power systems, electricity networks and financial assessment for wind power projects.—MNA

(Translated by Aung Khin)

Course on Sangha Nayaka & judgement on disputes 1/2020 concluded

Course No 1/2020 (Central) on Sangha Nayaka and delivering judgement on disputes involving the ecclesiastic code was concluded yesterday at the Wizaya Mingalar Dhamma Hall at Thiri Mingala Kaba Aye Hill in Yangon.

In his conclusion address, State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee Chairman Abhidhaja Maharattha Guru Abhidhaja Agga Maha Saddhamma Jotika Bhamo Sayadaw Dr Bhaddanta Kumarabhivamsa urged the trainees to work their best with enthusiastic teaching when they lecture other Sayadaws in multiplier courses in regions and states.

The chairman Sayadaw also called on the trainees for machining arrangements for ensuring that all chairmen Sayadaws of the township, ward/village Sangha Nayaka

Committee attend the multiplier courses with the help of local authorities.

The Bhamo Sayadaw also stressed the importance of the digesting the rules and principles of the Sangha Committee to deliver judgement on disputes with monks and monasteries in right way.

The first course on Sangha Nayaka and delivering judgement on disputes involving the ecclesiastic code came after the State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee considered that Sangha Nayaka committees in regions and states are weak in understanding the rules for solving the cases related to the monks.

“The purpose of the course is to build the capacities of the Sangha Nayaka Sayadaws and Sayadaws who are taking responsibility for

delivering judgement on disputes with monks and monasteries, said the chairman Sayadaw in his address at the opening of the course on 3 February.

The similar course was held in 1981 one year after the first Meeting of All Orders in Yangon in 1980 for the Purification, Perpetuation and Propagation of Sasana.

Lectures at the 1981 course were compiled and published as the manual for rules for Sangha Nayaka. The State Sangha Nayaka Committee also ordered directives and approved the Vinaya Manual for judging the disputes.

Sangha Nayaka committees were established at region/state, township, ward/village levels after the 1980 meeting of the All Orders of the Sangha. — MNA

Union Minister U Soe Win receives Czech Republic Ambassador



Union Minister for Planning, Finance and Industry U Soe Win holds talks with Mrs Hana Mottlova, Ambassador of the Czech Republic in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

UNION MINISTER U Soe Win of the Ministry of Planning, Finance and Industry received Ambassador Mrs Hana Mottlova of the Czech Republic to Myanmar at the reception hall

of the ministry yesterday.

They discussed the matters relating to the development aid and technology assistance, finance and tax, possible collaboration in combating money laun-

dering, industrial development, and cooperation in privatization process (public enterprises to private sector). —MNA

(Translated by Aungthu Ya)

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

THE Office of the President issued Press Release No 6/2020 yesterday, publicly announcing the Ministry of Home Affairs' arrests and seizures in the fight against illicit drug trafficking up till 8 February.

The ministry made the arrests, acting on information, sent to the Drug Activity Special Complaint Department of the Office of the President as of 8 February.

The full text of the press release will be reported in the 12 February issue of *The Global New Light of Myanmar*.—GNLM

Appointment of Ambassador agreed on

The Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has agreed to the proposed appointment of Mr. Mohamed Abdellahi El Boukhary El Vilaly as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar with residence in Beijing.

Mr Mohamed Abdellahi El Boukhary El Vilaly earned a Bachelor Degree in Agronomy Sciences from Ain Chems University in Egypt in 1991, and a Master degree in Economics from University of Nouakchott, Mauritania in 1995. From 2009 to 2010, he served as Minister of Communication and Relations with Parliament. Then, he was appointed as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Mauritania to Côte D'Ivoire and concurrently accredited to Ghana, Sierra Leone and Liberia, from 2012 to 2018. Since December 2018, he is serving as Ambassador of Mauritania to the People's Republic of China.—MNA

Appointment of Ambassador agreed on

The Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has agreed to the proposed appointment of Mrs. Fatoumata Balde as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Guinea to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar with residence in New Delhi.

Mrs Fatoumata Balde obtained a Bachelor Degree in Literature from Gamal Abdel Nasser University of Conakry in 1985. She also studied Projects Management at the Atlanta Management Institute in Atlanta, USA in 1991 and Leadership and Management of Financial Resources at the Washington International Management Institute in Washington, D.C., USA in 2001. In 1989, she started her career as Research Officer at the Ministry of International Cooperation. From 2006 to 2010, she served as Chief of Department for Partnership, Innovating, Financing and Coordination for Assistance at the Ministry. From 2010 to 2014, she was an advisor to the President of the Republic for International Cooperation. In February 2014, she was promoted as Minister, Advisor to the President of the Republic for International Cooperation. From 2015 to 2018, she served as Ambassador of Guinea to Germany. Since September 2018, she has been serving as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Guinea to India.—MNA

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Flag hoisting ceremonies for 73rd Union Day to be broadcast live

FLAG hoisting ceremonies to mark the 73rd Union Day will take place at Nay Pyi Taw City Hall and Panglong Town of Shan State on 12 February.

The ceremonies will be organized at 6:40 am in Nay Pyi Taw and at 9:15 am in Panglong respectively.

The event will be broadcast live at the MRTV, NRC Channel, MRTV-4, Skynet Up to Date, Channel 9, Taiyintha; MITV, MNTV, Mizzima, Myanma Radio, Ministry of Information Facebook page, MRTV Facebook page, Myanmar Digital News Facebook Page and Skynet DTH Facebook Page.

Traditional dances for Union Day will be going out live on NRC Channel at 6 pm on that day.—MNA

(Translated by Aung Khin)

Media to broadcast live coverage of unveiling Bogyoke Aung San statue on 13 February

UNVEILING ceremony of Bogyoke Aung San bronze statue at Thapyaegone circular roundabout in Nay Pyi Taw will go out live to mark his birthday at 7:50 am on 13 February, in coincidence with the celebration of Myanmar Children's Day.

Contests of essay writing, painting, poems, songs, impromptu talks and delivering speech of Bogyoke Aung San (first session) will also be broadcast live from the Myanmar International Convention Centre-II in Nay Pyi Taw at 9:45 am on the same morning.

Local media MRTV, NRC Channel, Skynet Up to Date, Channel 9, Taiyintha; MITV, MNTV, Mizzima, Myanma Radio, Ministry of Information Facebook page, MRTV Facebook page, Myanmar Digital News Facebook Page and Skynet DTH Facebook Page will air the programmes at the respective times. —MNA

(Translated by Aung Khin)

Study-tour of diplomats & families continues in Myeik Archipelago



Union Minister U Kyaw Tin and diplomatic delegation observe pearl farm at the Myeik Archipelago yesterday.

PHOTO: MNA



Union Minister U Kyaw Tin and diplomatic delegation pose for a documentary photo on the island at the Myeik Archipelago yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

A DIPLOMATIC delegation led by Union Minister U Kyaw Tin of the Ministry of International Cooperation continued, in a speed launch, their study tour of islands around the Myeik Archipelago yesterday.

First, they arrived at the

Thayawthadangi Kyun (island) where a pearl farm was developed by the Myanmar Atlantic Company. Pearl farm in-charge U Saw Hte La briefed them on pearl farming and they studied the pearl farm.

They then proceeded to

the Smart Island, one of the most popular sightseeing tours among domestic and foreign visitors both, where there are two beaches.

One is full of white sand on north and the other of colourful gravels on south. Diplomats and family members

enjoyed its sceneries.

Next, they studied the life styles of Salon people at Donenyaunghmai Village and the Union Minister gave a donation of K 200,000 to them. The ambassador of Timor-Leste, head of the diplomatic corps, also donated their

collection of US 568 dollars and K 1,328,000 to them. The diplomatic delegation led by Union Minister U Kyaw Tin left Myeik for Yangon by Myanmar Airways yesterday evening.

—MNA

(Translated by Aungthu Ya)



Union Attorney-General U Tun Tun Oo receives IAA president

UNION Attorney-General U Tun Tun Oo received President Dr Cheol-kyu Hwang of the International Attorney Association (IAA) at the UAGO's reception hall yesterday afternoon. During the meeting, they

Union Attorney-General U Tun Tun Oo meets with president Dr Cheol-kyu Hwang of the International Attorney Association (IAA) yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

discussed on the responsibilities the UAGO are now taking, international cooperation, the Korean Ministry of Government Legislation, the cooperation programme between the Korean International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) and the UAGO, and the future cooperation programme between the International Attorney Association and the Union Attorney-General Office. —MNA

(Translated by Aungthu Ya)

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Printed and published at the **Global New Light of Myanmar Printing Factory** at No.150, Nga Htat Kyee Pagoda Road, Bahan Township, Yangon, by the **Global New Light of Myanmar Daily** under Printing Permit No. 00510 and Publishing Permit No. 00629.

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British student in Mohnyin to study Zawti Shan Buddhism

A PhD candidate from King's College London in England recently attended the 22nd Zawti Shan novitiation and ordination ceremony in Mohnyin Twonship in Kachin State.

"There is little Western literature that focuses solely on the Zawti and as a result, the tradition has sometimes been misunderstood," said Ms Olivia Porte, a PhD student at King's College London.

"My PhD thesis focuses on Shan Buddhism and I am particularly interested in the Zawti tradition," said the visiting research scholar at Shan State Buddhist University.

She also attended the Sang Long ordination ceremony in Mohnyin.

"I am very grateful to be in Mohnyin at this auspicious time. Everyone has been very friendly and welcoming and very generous with their time.



An ordination ceremony and 22nd Zawti Shan novitiation held in Mohnyin. PHOTO: SALAIMANG NGAI

There is so much to learn about the Zawti tradition. I am very happy to have been able to at-

tend this ordination ceremony," said Ms Olivia. The week-long religious cer-

emony started on 2 February.—Salai Mang Ngai
(Translated by GNLM)

IPRD conducts capacity building course

DEPUTY MINISTER for Information U Aung Hla Tun delivered a speech at the opening ceremony of capacity-building training course (2/2020) conducted by the Information and Public Relations Department at its office in Yangon yesterday morning.

In his opening remark, the Deputy Minister said the goals of nation and practices of its administration body has significantly changed, comparing with the situations in 30 years ago when the IPRD was founded.

He added that rapid development of digital technology has changed lifestyles of people while mobile phone users have comprised over 80 per cent and the penetration of mobile phones has passed 100 per cent in Myanmar; and that it is the highest rate among ASEAN



Deputy Minister U Aung Hla Tun delivers the speech at the opening ceremony of capacity-building training course (2/2020) in Yangon yesterday. PHOTO: MNA

member countries.

The Deputy Minister also highlighted the importance of publishing correct and accurate news in real time to clear rumours, false news and mis-

leading news being spread on online media platforms. The course attended by 35 trainees from State/Region offices of lower Myanmar will conduct news writing, media and information

literacy, media laws, library process, museum knowledge, public relations, official letter writing, financial rules and accounting till 6 March.—MNA
(Translated by Aung Khin)

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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.

Drug smuggler fatally shot in Maungtaw

Two people smuggled illegal drugs tried to flee from police in Maungtaw, Rakhine State, on 9 February and one was fatally wounded from a warning shot while the other managed to escape.

The deceased person was identified as Lin Lin Tun, 27, from Ywar Gyi (North) Ward of Sittway while his accomplice is

still at large. Police confiscated 914,550 psychotropic tablets worth an estimated K1,829,100,000 and a 'L' driving licence from the vehicle the suspects were driving.

The two were flagged down by police for inspection at 11:10 am on that day but ignored the officers and drove past instead. They were pursued up to Setee Hla Village

where they abandoned their vehicle and attempted to escape.

Myanmar Police Force has reported that both of them will be charged under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law and officers are pursuing the runaway suspect. —MNA

(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

Mineral exports up \$579 mln in current FY



Gem merchants checking Myanmar's precious pearls shown at Myanma Gem Emporium in Nay Pyi Taw. PHOTO: MNA

MYANMAR'S mineral exports showed a marked climb this fiscal, touching US\$907 million between 1 October and 31 January, an increase of \$579 million compared with the year-ago period, according to data from the Ministry of Commerce.

Last year, mineral exports were pegged at just \$328 million.

Both private and public sector mineral exports witnessed an increase in the current fiscal, with private sector exports valued at \$452.458 million and public sector exports estimated at \$454.87 million.

Of the seven export

groups, exports of agricultural goods, minerals, fishery, and finished industrial goods showed an increase, while the exports of livestock, forest products, and other goods declined.

Export values stood at \$1.2 billion for agricultural products, \$50.37 million for livestock, \$343.65 million for fishery products, \$58.59 million for forest products, over \$3.4 billion for manufactured goods, and \$114.6 million for other goods.

The country's export sector relies more on the agriculture and manufacturing sectors. While export earnings from the CMP (cut,

make, and pack) garment businesses are rising, the country's reliance on natural resources has been lessening.

Due to limited extraction of natural resources, exports of forest products and minerals dropped significantly in the previous year. Permits for mining blocks were suspended in 2016, but after a period of two years, Myanmar's mining sector has now been opened to local and foreign investors, according to the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation. —GNLM

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Myanmar International Furniture Expo 2020 to kick off on 13 Feb at Tatmadaw Hall

A four-day Myanmar International Furniture Expo 2020 will take place from 13 to 16 February at the Tatmadaw Hall in Yangon. The event will be organized by the Myanmar Rattan and Bamboo Entrepreneurs Association and the Wood-based Furniture Association.

The expo aims to expand the business of SMEs engaged in Myanmar's furniture industry, promote talented designers, and build closer interactions among furniture entrepreneurs.

The expo will showcase locally produced furniture for businesses and houses. More than 60 exhibitors will put up 180 booths at the show.

Visitors will get a chance to observe unique furniture designs at the expo, said organizers.

Rattan and bamboo SMEs are facing financial constraints in efforts to reach more external markets, said a rattan and bamboo maker.

"At present, some producers are relying solely on the domestic market. For instance, they are providing hampers to City Mart Holdings and furniture to local markets," he said.

"If the related department can help us explore foreign markets and provide technical and financial assistance to SMEs, the rattan and bamboo production sector might improve," the rattan and bamboo maker added.

At present, Myanmar exports furniture made of bamboo,

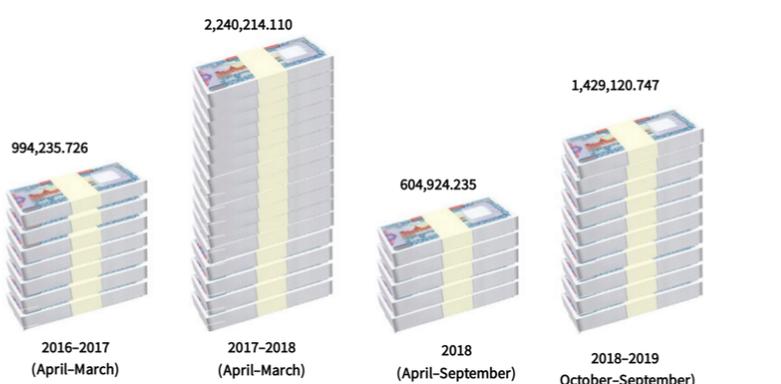
rattan, and wood to markets in the US, the Republic of Korea, Japan, New Zealand, Australia, and the EU countries. Traders earn only \$1-2 million annually from the export of bamboo, rattan, and wood furniture, according to the Myanmar Rattan and Bamboo Entrepreneurs Association.

"Over the last 30 to 40 years, Myanmar has exported teak logs and raw materials due to lack of infrastructure. There are more than 700 rattan and bamboo companies in Viet Nam. However, Myanmar has only 30 to 40 value-added rattan and bamboo enterprises. We need to make efforts to increase the number of value-added producers and help their businesses grow," said an official from the Myanmar Rattan and Bamboo Entrepreneurs Association.

The Myanmar Rattan and Bamboo Entrepreneurs Association and the Wood-based Furniture Association have been holding the Myanmar International Furniture Expo biannually, with a view to boost Myanmar's furniture industry, promote shift to value-added production, create jobs, alleviate poverty, improve import-substitution businesses, encourage value-added producers, hold international furniture expos beyond the domestic market, and upgrade technology by linking with international producers. —Ko Khant

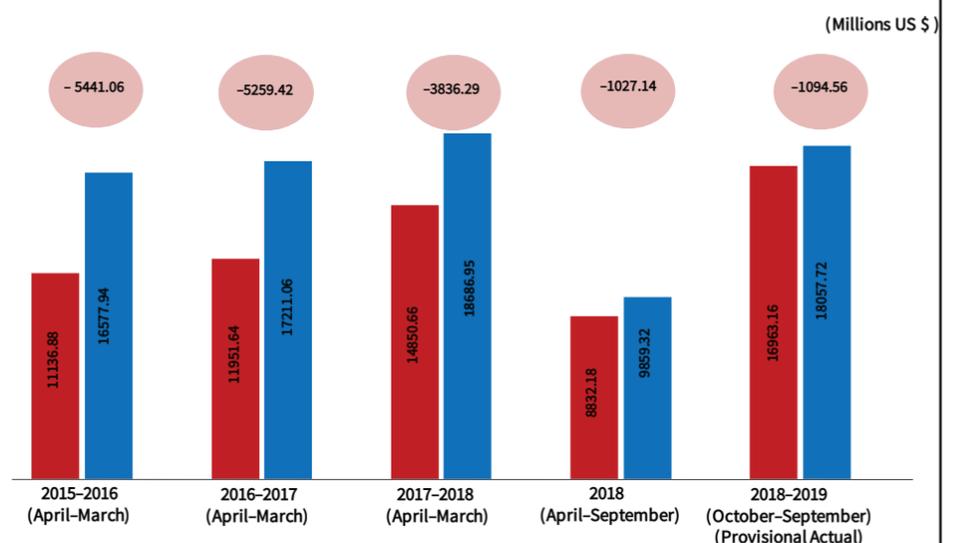
(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Annual Specific Goods Tax Collection from Fiscal Year From 2016-2017 to 2018-2019 (Millions Kyat)



Source: Internal Revenue Department
Information Unit: Central Statistical Organization

VALUE OF FOREIGN TRADE IN MYANMAR (Millions US \$)



Source: Customs Department
Information Unit: Central Statistical Organization

Survey vital to tackle challenges in immunization programme

THE nationwide initiative for inoculating children younger than 5 years against 12 diseases could serve as an important milestone in the history of immunization programmes in Myanmar.

In addition, girls aged between 9 and 10 years will be administered the Human Papilloma Virus vaccine against cervical cancer in July and August. The HPV vaccine will be the 13th vaccine on the immunization list.

The cost of vaccinating a child against 12 diseases is about US\$40. Twenty-six per cent of the total funds required for the nationwide immunization programme has been allocated by the Union government, while Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, has donated 74 per cent of the funds.

The government will have to fund the entire immunization programme in 2025. Hence, it is important that the funds allocated for the programme are used effectively.

To make the 2025 Expanded Programme on Immunization a success, we need to find out the possible challenges ahead and find ways to tackle them. In any such undertaking, the role of surveyors would be important for conducting a nationwide survey for the programme.

Making the best use of the results of the survey, we can lay down good policies and strategies to ensure that everyone benefits from immunization.

It has been learnt that the Ministry of Health and Sports will launch the three-month survey in late February.

It is important for surveyors to know that people's beliefs on science are deeply influenced by their culture, context, and background.

We need to care more about these connections if we want everyone to benefit from immunization.

At the same time, we also need to prepare for refuting rumors and misinformation on social media, which has become an amplifier of doubt and is highly volatile. It also has the power to change the landscape.

We believe that the Ministry of Health and Sports and its health workers would leave no stone unturned to make the nationwide immunization programmes a success at a time when deadly diseases like diphtheria and measles, which can be prevented through vaccination, are surging in developing countries.

WHO experts coming to China for joint epidemic control

A joint expert team comprising China and the World Health Organization (WHO) will provide suggestions on joint prevention and control of the coronavirus outbreak to China and other affected countries in the next step.

CHINA and the World Health Organization (WHO) will form a joint expert team to conduct in-depth discussions on and evaluations of the novel coronavirus epidemic and the containment, said a spokesperson with the National Health Commission (NHC) on Monday.

They will provide suggestions on joint prevention and control of the coronavirus outbreak to China and other affected countries in the next step, Mi Feng told a press conference in Beijing.

An advance team of the WHO is scheduled to arrive in Beijing Monday to discuss related arrangements with the Chinese side, Mi said.

"We welcome international experts including those from the United States to take part in the joint expert team," Mi said, adding that appropriate arrangements for the team will be made after thorough consultation and communication.

WHO warns overseas virus spread may be 'tip of the iceberg'

The head of the World Health Organization has warned that confirmed cases of coronavirus being transmitted by people who have never travelled to China could be the "tip of the iceberg".

Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus's remarks come as members of a WHO-led "international expert mission" flew to China on Monday to help coordinate a response to the outbreak that has so far infected more than 40,000 people and killed 908 in the country.

"There've been some concerning instances of onward #2019nCoV spread from people with no travel history to (China)," Tedros tweeted Sunday, using the virus's provisional scientific name.

"The detection of a small number of cases may indicate more widespread transmission in other countries; in short, we may only be seeing the tip of the iceberg."

While the spread of the virus outside China appeared to be slow, Tedros warned it could accelerate.

"Containment remains our objective, but all countries must use the window of opportunity created by the containment strategy to prepare for the virus's possible



Chinese President Xi Jinping, also general secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission, inspects the novel coronavirus pneumonia prevention and control work in Beijing, capital of China, on Feb. 10, 2020. PHOTO: XINHUA

arrival," he said.

Outside mainland China, there have been more than 350 infections reported in nearly 30 places. There have been two deaths, one in the Philippines and the other in Hong Kong.

Several countries have banned arrivals from China while major airlines have suspended flights, and Air China cancelled some of its flights to the United States.

The WHO-led mission to China is being headed up by Bruce Aylward, a veteran of previous health emergencies, Tedros said. Aylward oversaw the WHO's 2014-2016 response to the Ebola epidemic in West Africa.

Novel coronavirus vaccine starts animal trials

A candidate vaccine targeting the novel coronavirus has been tested on animals, according to a report Monday on news portal yicai.com, citing sources with the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

The mRNA vaccine was co-developed by the CDC, Shanghai-based Tongji University School of Medicine and Stermerna Therapeutics Co., Ltd. The vac-

cine samples were injected into more than 100 mice Sunday, the report said.

This came just two weeks after the center successfully isolated the first new coronavirus strain on Jan. 24.

A CDC official warned that the animal testing is in a very early stage of vaccine development and there are still many steps to be taken before the vaccine is ready to be used on humans.

Testing on mice is only an initial screening of a candidate vaccine. After that there will be toxicity tests on larger animals such as monkeys to ensure the safety of the vaccine in human clinical trials, said the report, citing a researcher of Tongji University.

The development and production cycle of the mRNA vaccine is shorter than that of traditional vaccines.

A number of research institutes and companies around the world are stepping up efforts in developing vaccines and agents against the novel coronavirus.

Latest developments worldwide

Death toll tops 900. Prices

Kong and one in the Philippines. There have been 97 new deaths from the virus — with 91 in hardest-hit Hubei province.

The number of confirmed infections in China reaches 40,171, according to the National Health Commission.

The World Health Organization warns that while there are signs the epidemic is stabilising, there could be more infections abroad in people who have never travelled to China.

Slow return to work

After the extension of the annual Lunar New Year holiday, millions of people in China return to work, but the pick-up is only partial.

Tens of millions of people in Hubei province remain under lockdown and outside the quarantined region, many companies are limiting staff.

Schools and universities across the country remain closed.

Soaring prices

Consumer prices in China rise 5.4 percent in January over one year, a record since the end of 2011. The spike in pork and fresh vegetables prices in particular push up costs.

Beijing reports a jump of more than 20 percent in food prices, due in part to the disruption of transportation and other lockdown measures, and people

buying supplies in bulk.

'Imminent threat'

With four confirmed cases in Britain, the government warns the outbreak of the coronavirus is "a serious and imminent threat" and announces new measures to protect the public.

Anyone with the virus can now be forcibly quarantined if they are deemed to pose a public health threat.

Infections rise aboard cruise ship

Around 60 more people on board the Diamond Princess cruise ship off Japan's coast are diagnosed with the coronavirus, bringing the total infections to about 130.

The quarantine of all aboard — around 3,600 people, many elderly — started a week ago and could last until February 19. The WHO recommends psychological support measures for passengers.

Golf calendar in tatters

Golf's LPGA Tour cancels its HSBC Women's World Champions and the LPGA Thailand, capping off a trio of scrapped competitions in women's golf held in Asia.

REFERENCES

AFP; Xinhua News Updates



Residents and hospital visitors wearing face masks walk outside the Government Medical College in Thrissur, Kerala. PHOTO: AFP

Republic of the Union of Myanmar Office of the President Order 6/2020

2nd Waning of Tabodwe, 1381 ME
10th February, 2020

Appointment of Union Minister

In accordance with the provisions stated in article 232, 235 (d) of the Constitution of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and section 12 of Union Government Law, Lt-Gen Soe Htu, the Office of the Commander-in-Chief (Army), has been appointed as Union Minister for Home Affairs.

Sd/ Win Myint
President

Republic of the Union of Myanmar

Myanmar Gazette

Head of service organization appointed

The President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has appointed U Hein Htet, Deputy Director-General, Department of Electric Power and Planning under the Ministry of Electricity and Energy as Director-General of the Department of Hydropower Implementation under the same ministry on probation from the date he assumes charge of his duties.

2020, 73rd Anniversary Union Day National Objectives

1. All ethnic nationals to preserve and protect for non-disintegration of the Union, non-disintegration of National Unity and Perpetuation of Sovereignty.
2. To work on the peace process till success is achieved based on Union spirit.
3. To strive with the collective strength of all ethnic nationals for rule of law, a fair justice system and the security and safety of all citizens.
4. To prevent/protect all people from the danger of narcotic drugs as a national duty and thereby uplift their standard of living.
5. Emergence of a Constitution which will be in alignment with a genuine Democratic Federal Union.

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Deputy Minister for Health and Sports Dr Mya Lay Sein fires gun to start the peace cycling event in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. PHOTO: MNA

Peace cycling event to mark 73rd Union Day kicks off in Nay Pyi Taw

A peace cycling event to mark 73rd Union Day kicked off at the Gate 1 of Wunna Theikdi Stadium in Nay Pyi Taw at 6 am yesterday.

The event was jointly organized by Sports and Physical Education Department of Ministry of Health and Sports and Myanmar Cycling Federation.

Deputy Minister for Health and Sports Dr Mya Lay Sein opened the event by firing a gun.

A total of 153 cyclists took part in the event that began from the Gate 1 of Wunna Theikdi Stadium in Nay Pyi Taw on 10

February and ends at the Panglong Union Monument on 12 February (Union Day).

The cyclists rode along Yangon-Mandalay old road through Tatkon, Yamethin and Pyawbwe on 10 February, and took rest at night in Meiktila. They will ride through Meiktila, Kalaw, Aungban and Heho to Taunggyi where they will take rest at night on 11 February.

They will ride to the Panglong Union Monument through Taunggyi and Hopong on 12 February. — MNA

(Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)

E.Guinea leader's son fined 30mn euros, suspended jail confirmed



Teodorin Obiang is the son of Equatorial Guinean President Teodoro Obiang Nguema, who has ruled the country for four decades. PHOTO: AFP

PARIS (France) — The son of Equatorial Guinea's leader was handed a 30-million-euro fine by a Paris court Monday on top of a suspended jail term for using public money to fund a jet-set lifestyle in Europe.

Teodorin Obiang, the son of Equatorial Guinea's leader Teodoro Obiang Nguema, had been convicted in 2017 of embezzlement.

He had been handed a three-year jail term as well as the \$32.9 million fine, with both sentences suspended.

Obiang, who is also vice president, challenged the penalty only to have the Paris appeals court return a heavier sentence on Monday by removing the suspended provision from the fine.

The notorious playboy fond

of fast cars and Michael Jackson memorabilia was not in court for the ruling.

Obiang, 50, was put on trial on charges of using money plundered from his country's state coffers to fund a jet-set lifestyle in France, where he bought a six-storey mansion in an ultra-posh part of the capital.

The judges in his initial trial, which he did not attend, had ruled that his 107-million-euro mansion — which boasts a hammam, a disco and gold-plated taps — should be confiscated, along with other assets.

The case, initiated by anti-corruption NGOs, is one of three involving families of African leaders which campaigners hope signals a new willingness of French authorities to tackle

money laundering.

Paris has long been a favoured destination for the ill-gotten gains of wealthy figures linked to political leaders in Africa, particularly in France's former colonies.

When investigators first raided the home, they hired trucks to haul away a fleet of Bugattis, Ferraris, a Rolls-Royce Phantom and other cars as evidence.

Obiang was agriculture and forestry minister before being promoted by his father to vice president, putting him in pole position to succeed him as leader when the post becomes vacant.

Africa's only Spanish-speaking nation, Equatorial Guinea is the continent's third-biggest oil producer but more than half of its 1.2 million population live below the poverty line.

It is regularly accused by human rights reports of corruption, repressive laws, extrajudicial killings and torture.

President Obiang has ruled with an iron fist for four decades.

He overthrew his uncle Francisco Macias Nguema in a bloody coup in August 1979 and became president a few months later. He has since seen off at least half a dozen assassination or coup attempts. The latest of them, in December 2017, reportedly involved a group of men from Chad, Central African Republic and Sudan. — AFP ■

'Parasite' makes Oscars history with stunning best picture win

HOLLYWOOD (United States) — South Korean black comedy "Parasite" made movie history at the Oscars on Sunday, becoming the first non-English-language film to win the best picture award — Hollywood's biggest prize of all.

A genre-defying thriller about a poor family infiltrating a wealthy household, "Parasite" won four awards, stunning the pundits who believed the Academy would never crown a subtitled Asian movie.

"It's such a great honor. I feel like I'll wake up to find it's all a dream. It all feels very surreal," a jubilant Bong Joon-ho, who also won best director honors, told journalists backstage, calling the night "crazy."

"Parasite" also won the Oscar for best international feature, and became the first Asian film to scoop best original screenplay.

"I thought I was done for the day and ready to relax," Bong had said earlier after his best director win, promising to "drink until next morning."

Bong also paid tribute on stage to his childhood hero and fellow nominee Martin Scorsese, drawing a standing ovation for the veteran director of "The Irishman" — which went home empty-handed.

But a bigger shock was in store as the movie beat frontrun-

ner "1917" to win best picture, the night's final prize.

"It feels like a very opportune moment in history is happening right now," producer Kwak Sin-ae told an audience of Tinseltown A-listers, who cheered the film's wins throughout the night at the Dolby Theatre.

Bong predicted that "naturally we will come to a day" when "a foreign language film winning this won't be much of an issue."

Phoenix and Zellweger win

The pre-Oscars favorite "1917," Sam Mendes's innovative and personal World War I movie about two soldiers crossing no-man's-land, had to settle for best cinematography, visual effects and sound mixing prizes.

The movie — filmed to appear like one continuous shot — had swept up trophies at several other galas in the build-up to Sunday.

Joaquin Phoenix won his first Oscar for his turn in supervillain origin story "Joker," the film that started the night with the most nominations.

In an emotionally charged speech, the actor railed against injustice and "an egocentric worldview" that leads to environmental destruction, before paying tribute to his actor brother River, who died of a drug overdose in 1993. — AFP ■

Solar Orbiter launches on mission to reveal Sun's secrets

MIAMI (United States) — The US-European Solar Orbiter probe launched Sunday night from Florida on a voyage to deepen our understanding of the Sun and how it shapes the space weather that impacts technology back on Earth.

The mission, a collaboration between ESA (the European Space Agency) and NASA, successfully blasted off from the Kennedy Space Center in Cape Canaveral at 11:03pm (0403 GMT Monday) and could last up to nine years or more.

At 12:24am Monday (0524 GMT) the European Space Operations Centre in Darmstadt, Germany, received a signal from the spacecraft indicating that its

solar panels had successfully deployed. Space Orbiter is expected to provide unprecedented insights into the Sun's atmosphere, its winds and its magnetic fields, including how it shapes the heliosphere, the vast swath of space that encompasses our system.

By journeying out of the ecliptic plane — the belt of space roughly aligned with the Sun's equator, through which the planets orbit — it will acquire the first-ever images of our star's uncharted polar regions.

Drawing on gravity assists from Earth and Venus, Solar Orbiter will slingshot itself into a bird's eye view of the Sun's poles, reaching its primary science orbit in two years' time.

"I think it was picture perfect, suddenly you really feel like you're connected to the entire solar system," said Daniel Muller, ESA project scientist, shortly after the launch. "You're here on Earth and you're launching something that will go close to the Sun." "We have one common goal and that is to get the good science out of this mission. I think we're going to succeed," added Holly Gilbert, director of NASA's heliophysics science division.

Space weather

Ten state-of-the-art instruments on board will record myriad observations to help scientists unlock clues about what drives solar winds and flares.



This handout illustration image provided by NASA shows the Solar Orbiter, which, in collaboration with the European Space Agency, launched Sunday on a mission to study the Sun's polar regions and magnetic environment. PHOTO: AFP

These emit billions of highly charged particles that impact the Earth, producing the spectacular Northern Lights. But they can also disrupt radar systems, radio networks and even, though rarely, render satellites useless.

The largest solar storm on record hit North America in September 1859, knocking out

much of the continent's telegraph network and bathing the skies in an aurora viewable as far away as the Caribbean. "Imagine if just half of our satellites were destroyed," said Matthieu Berthomier, a researcher at the Paris-based Plasma Physics Laboratory. "It would be a disaster for mankind." — AFP ■

Iran satellite launch fails, in blow to space programme

TEHRAN (Iran) — Iran said it "successfully" launched a satellite Sunday but failed to put it into orbit, in a blow to its space programme that the US alleges is a cover for missile development.

The attempted launch of the Zafar — "Victory" in Farsi — comes days before the 41st anniversary of the Islamic Revolution and crucial parliamentary elections in Iran.

Arch foes Iran and the United States have appeared to be on the brink of an all-out confrontation twice in the past seven months.

Long-standing acrimony between Tehran and Washington was exacerbated in 2018 when US President Donald Trump unilaterally withdrew from a deal that froze Iran's nuclear programme, before issuing new demands that

Tehran curtail its development of ballistic missiles.

Washington has also raised concerns in the past about Tehran's satellite programme, saying the launch of a carrier rocket in January 2019 amounted to a violation of limits on its ballistic missiles.

Iran maintains it has no intention of acquiring nuclear weapons, and says its aerospace activities are peaceful and comply with a UN Security Council resolution.

On Sunday, it launched the Zafar satellite at 7:15 pm (1545 GMT) but it fell short of reaching orbit, the defence ministry said.

A ministry spokesman said initially that the satellite was "successfully" launched and went "90 percent of the way", reaching an altitude of 540 kilo-

metres (335 miles). "The Simorgh (rocket) successfully propelled the Zafar satellite into space," said Ahmad Hosseini of the ministry's space unit. "Unfortunately, in the final moments the carrier did not reach the required speed" to put it into orbit, he told state television.

"God willing with improvements made in future launches this part of the mission will be done as well," he added.

"We achieved most of the goals we had and data has been acquired, and in the near future, by analysing the data, we will take the next steps."

Telecommunications Minister Mohammad Javad Azari-Jahromi admitted in an English-language tweet soon after that the launch had "failed". — AFP ■



Iran has said the scientific observation satellite Zafar would be launched into orbit by a Simorgh rocket like the one seen in this picture released by the defence ministry in July 2017. PHOTO: AFP

Chinese scientist awarded UNESCO-Equatorial Guinea International Prize for Research in Life Sciences

ADDIS ABABA — Chinese Nobel laureate Tu Youyou has been awarded the UNESCO-Equatorial Guinea International Prize for Research in the Life Sciences for her research into parasitic diseases.

At ceremony held on Monday as a side event of the ongoing 33rd African Union (AU) summit in Ethiopia's capital Addis Ababa, two other scientists, namely Prof. Cato Laurencin (USA) and Prof. Kevin McGuigan (Ireland) have also been awarded the prize.

As the winner of the 2015 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine, Prof. Tu Youyou of the China Academy of Chinese Medical Sciences, discovered an entirely new anti-malarial treatment, artemisinin, which made possible the treatment of thousands of patients in China in the 1980s.

Since the turn of the century, the World Health Organization (WHO) has been recommending artemisinin-based combination therapies as the first-line treatment for malaria; and these combination treatments have saved 6.2 million lives reducing malaria mortality in Africa by 66 per cent, and by

71 per cent among children under 5 years of age.

Speaking at the awarding ceremony at the AU headquarters in Addis Ababa, Audrey Azoulay, the Director-General of UNESCO, has hailed the contribution of Tu Youyou to lives of humanity.

"Professor Tu has not been able to be with us, who we would like to greet is also an exceptional woman.

Her work is revolutionary; she used traditional Chinese remedy at the manuscript of a 12th century in order to provide a new treatment for malaria," the Director-General has noted.

"She is among the ones who have received the Nobel Prize; she has used indigenous knowledge and we are very proud in UNESCO because we have specific program which is very ambitious in order to develop the position of women in sciences," she said.

With its fifth edition now, the UNESCO-Equatorial Guinea International Prize for Research in the Life Sciences rewards outstanding scientific research projects in the life sciences that have led to an improvement in the quality of human life. — Xinhua ■

China inflation rises as coronavirus disrupts supply chains

BEIJING (China) — China consumer prices rose at their highest rate in more than eight years, official data showed Monday, with inflation more than expected on the back of Lunar New Year demand and a deadly virus outbreak.

Beijing had already been battling a slowing domestic economy before the new coronavirus emerged, disrupting businesses, travel and supply chains.

The consumer price index (CPI), a key gauge of retail inflation, came in at



The coronavirus outbreak in China has disrupted supply chains, causing a spike in food prices. PHOTO: AFP

5.4 per cent last month on-year, up from 4.5 per cent in December — with prices of pork and fresh vegetables

pushing up costs.

Food prices spiked 20.6 per cent.

The overall monthly

figure exceeded the 4.9 per cent forecast by analysts in a Bloomberg survey and is the highest since October 2011. “The year-on-year increase has been affected not only by Spring Festival-related factors but... by the new coronavirus as well,” said the National Bureau of Statistics on Monday.

Analysts expect China’s struggle to contain the spread of the virus over the Lunar New Year holiday, which started in late January, to keep prices high-

er than usual. “Some food supplies may spoil before shipping to large cities due to the disruption of transportation and other lockdown measures, especially for fruits, vegetables and livestock,” said Lu Ting of Nomura in a research note last Thursday.

“People also tend to hoard food and other supplies in this kind of situation. The hoarding will most likely push up prices.”

The virus has so far claimed more than 900 lives in China.

The rise in January was the highest since October 2011 when CPI inflation was 5.5 per cent.

UOB’s head of research Suan Teck Kin told AFP that while prices tend to fall after the Lunar New Year break, “this year, prices may continue to stay high” because of supply chain disruptions.

Over the past year, a spike in pork prices due to African Swine Fever, which ravaged pig herds across the country, had also driven up CPI.— AFP ■

Global markets mostly dip on coronavirus woes

LONDON (United Kingdom) — Asian and European markets mostly fell Monday with investors worried over the impact of China’s coronavirus outbreak on the global economy.

At midday in Europe, London was down 0.2 per cent, Paris dipped 0.4 per cent, and Frankfurt slid 0.3 per cent.

“Coronavirus concerns are weighing,” noted CMC Markets UK analyst David Madden.

“The deepening health crisis is chipping away at market confidence.

“In London, stocks that are connected to China are under pressure. Mining, energy as well as travel stocks are in the red.”

The virus has killed

more than 900 people, infected more than 40,000 across mainland China and spread to more than two dozen countries in what has been termed a global health emergency.

It has also jolted major supply chains for everything from food and household supplies to car and electronics parts.

In Asia, Tokyo’s benchmark Nikkei 225 index closed 0.6 per cent down, while Hong Kong pared some losses, ending the day 0.6 per cent lower after tanking 1.1 per cent at the open.

Shanghai however rebounded after opening lower and ended with a 0.5-per cent gain at the close.

Investors around the world have been watching

with concern as China, the world’s second-largest economy, battles the novel coronavirus, which emerged at the end of last year in the central city of Wuhan.

The domestic impact was reflected in China’s inflation figures released Monday, which showed the highest rise in consumer prices in more than eight years, with food prices spiking more than 20 per cent.

It has also disrupted the supply chains of major global firms such as Apple supplier Foxconn and auto giant Toyota. Key production facilities across China have been temporarily closed, with authorities imposing lockdowns and quarantine measures.

— AFP ■

China’s CPI up in January

BEIJING — China’s consumer price index (CPI), a main gauge of inflation, rose 5.4 per cent year on year in January, the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) said Monday.

The increase was up from 4.5 per cent for December.

The hike was mainly driven by the effect of Spring Festival holiday and the novel coronavirus pneumonia epidemic, said NBS senior statistician Dong Lijuan.

Food prices grew 20.6 per cent year on year last month, up from 17.4 per cent in December, while non-food prices gained 1.6 percent, 0.3 per centage points higher than that of December.

Pork prices rose 116 percent year on year last month, while vegetable prices saw a 17.1 per cent increase from a year ago.

The CPI in urban and rural areas posted a year-on-year growth of 5.1 per cent and 6.3 per cent, re-

spectively. The CPI of Hubei Province rose 5.5 per cent year on year in January, generally in line with the growth of the country’s CPI, reflecting a positive effect of the government’s efforts on securing supply and stabilizing prices, said Dong.

Monday’s data also showed that China’s producer price index, which measures costs for goods at the factory gate, rose 0.1 per cent year on year in January.—Xinhua ■

Request for Bids Goods (Two-Envelope Bidding Process)

Country: Myanmar

Name of Project: National Electrification Project (NEP), Funding: Italian Soft Loan

Contract Title: Supply, Installation and Maintenance of Solar PV Systems for Households and Public Facilities

Credit No.: 5727-MM

RFB Reference No.: S&I – NEP-IT1 (1 lot)

- The Government of Myanmar has received financing from the Government of the Italian Republic toward the cost of the National Electrification Project – Component 2: Off-grid Electrification, and intends to apply part of the proceeds toward payments under the contract for Supply, Installation and Maintenance of Solar PV System for Households and Public Facilities.
- The Department of Rural Development, Ministry of Livestock and Irrigation now invites sealed Bids from eligible Bidders for supply, installation and maintenance of solar PV Systems for households and public facilities in the following State and Region :
Lot 1– NEP Solar PV Packages in Chin (5), Sagaing (6) and Rakhine (5)
- For quick reference, some key qualification requirements include:
 - The average annual turnover (or annual sales volume) of the last three years should be a minimum of EURO 3,000,000.
 - The bidder has successfully completed at least two (2) contracts in supplying, installing, supervising, commissioning and/or maintaining off-grid solar PV systems with batteries, in any year over the last five (5) years, and at least one of the two (2) contracts had a value equivalent to or greater than 50% of the corrected Bid Price.
 The details of the qualification requirements are in the bidding document.
- 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 (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 address below and inspect the bidding document during office hours 10.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m. at the address given below.
- A complete set of bidding documents in English may be obtained free of charge by interested eligible bidders upon the submission of a written application to the address below. The Bidding Documents will be issued through e-mail only.
In case of any difficulty in obtaining the bidding documents, interested parties may contact in writing:
Dr. Soe Soe Ohn, Director
Department of Rural Development, Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation.
Office No. 36, Naypyitaw, Country: Myanmar
Tel./Fax +95 673 418635, 418636
Email: ksaung@gmail.com ; dr.soesoeohn@gmail.com; drdnep.procurement@gmail.com
- Bids must be delivered to the address below on or before **March, 26, 2020** (10.00 a.m.) Myanmar time. Electronic Bidding will not be permitted. Late Bids will be rejected. The outer Bid envelopes marked “ORIGINAL BID”, and the inner envelopes marked “TECHNICAL PART” will be publicly opened in the presence of the Bidders’ designated representatives and anyone who chooses to attend, at the address below on or before **March, 26, 2020** (10.00 a.m.) Myanmar time. All envelopes marked “SECOND ENVELOPE: FINANCIAL PART” shall remain unopened and will be held in safe custody of the Purchaser until the second public opening.
- All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid Security” as stated in ITB 19.1 – Bid Data Sheet of the Bidding Document.
- The address referred to above is :
Attention: Dr.Soe Soe Ohn, Director,
Project Manager of National Electrification Project
National Electrification Project
Department of Rural Development, Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation.
Office No. 36, Nay Pyi Taw, Country: Myanmar
Tel /Fax: +95 673 418635, 418636
ksaung@gmail.com, dr.soesoeohn@gmail.com, drdnep.procurement@gmail.com
- Clarification of the bidding document will be conducted through e-mail or letter to the Purchaser as stated in ITB 7 of the bidding document.

Intelligent Automation will boost India's economy to USD 5 trillion by 2024-25

NEW DELHI (India) — Intelligent automation will catapult Indian economy to USD 5 trillion dollars in the next five years, up from USD 2.7 trillion dollars, according to a new study commissioned by Automation Anywhere, a global leader in Robotic Process Automation (RPA)

Today, automation is driving efficiencies for enterprises, resulting in dramatic productivity gains in the back office and enhanced customer experiences in the front office. According to the study conducted by Ernst and Young India (EY) the country will experience a significant boost to its economy to reach USD 5 trillion by as early as 2024. The research, presented today at the IAMA's India Digital Summit 2020, examined the economic impact of automation and

found that large-scale adoption of automation technologies, such as RPA, artificial intelligence, natural language processing, and machine learning will drive increased efficiencies and new jobs resulting in economic growth in the next few years.

"Our research shows that intelligent automation and RPA, in particular, will make businesses more efficient by automating business processes end-to-end, allowing organizations to become true digital enterprises," said Kamalanand Nithianandan, Partner, Advisory Services, EY India.

"As more organizations adopt intelligent automation at scale, this will eventually create more high-skilled jobs providing more economic opportunities for everyone," added Nithianandan.

According to the re-

port, automation is driving intrinsic growth in every sector of the Indian economy and is influencing every activity of the workforce by creating higher-skilled jobs, resulting in more opportunities for workers and higher economic output.

Banking, insurance and financial services have emerged as key industry adopters of intelligent automation as they experience the benefits of lowering costs of business transactions and providing a differentiated customer experience.

Telecom, retail-consumer packaged goods, oil and gas, logistics and transportation organizations have also increased efforts to automate core business functions, driven by mandates to cut costs and improve customer experiences. — ANI ■

Australia, Indonesia move to implement trade deal

SYDNEY (Australia) — Australia and Indonesia announced a 100-day plan on Monday to implement a long-awaited trade deal, as the two countries hailed a "new beginning" for their sometimes troubled relationship.

The two G20 economies hope to deepen trade currently worth a modest US\$12 billion a year, in a region increasingly dominated by China's economic and military might. Addressing Australia's parliament on a landmark state visit, President Joko Widodo cast the two nations as would-be "Avengers" — "forces of good" uniting to defeat a "common enemy" and shared challenges like protectionism, intolerance and climate change. Widodo said his visit to Australia marked "a new beginning of a new relationship" between the two nations. —AFP ■

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

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

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Sinn Fein finds its voice in Ireland after vote gains

DUBLIN (Ireland) — Republican party Sinn Fein on Monday stood on the threshold of a potential role in Ireland's government after winning the popular vote in a weekend election, a result shattering the political landscape.

The result from Saturday's ballot broke the stranglehold of two-party politics in Ireland, opening up a potential role for a party once shunned because of its links to IRA paramilitaries.

Former leader Gerry Adams and other party representatives were even banned from the airwaves in the UK as violence raged over British rule in Northern Ireland over three decades to 1998.

But with two decades of peace and a new leader under Mary Lou McDonald, Sinn Fein's left-wing policies on tackling crises in housing and health found favour with voters.

McDonald said the two main parties — Fine Gael and Fianna Fail — were "in a state of denial" and had not listened to the voice of the people.

"I will talk to and listen to



Sinn Fein supporters celebrated the party's success in Ireland's weekend election. PHOTO: AFP

everybody," she said on Sunday night.

Prime Minister and Fine Gael leader Leo Varadkar acknowledged the shift, and raised the prospect of protracted negotiations between the parties.

"It seems that we have now a three-party system. That is

going to make forming a government quite difficult," he said.

After ballots in all 39 constituencies were tallied on Sunday, Sinn Fein received 24.5 per cent of first preferences in Ireland's single transferable vote system.

That outstripped the opposi-

tion Fianna Fail party on 22.2 per cent and its centre-right rivals Fine Gael on 20.9 per cent.

"The Irish political system has to react to it and probably accept that Sinn Fein will be part of the next government," Eoin O'Malley, associate professor at Dublin City University, told AFP.

Young appeal

At 1000 GMT on Monday, state broadcaster RTE reported 78 of the 159 seats in the Dail — Ireland's lower house of parliament — were filled.

Sinn Fein, whose flagship policy is uniting the republic with Northern Ireland, had 29.

But because it ran just 42 candidates, even a strong performance in the popular vote may not result in it becoming the biggest party in the next parliament.

Fine Gael and Fianna Fail have both ruled out any deal with Sinn Fein because of its past associations under Adams, who has long denied allegations he had a leadership role in the IRA.

"The Troubles" saw the IRA wage a campaign against unionist counterparts and British security forces over UK-rule in Northern Ireland that saw more than 3,000 killed on all sides. McDonald's policies on tackling wealth inequality and housing shortages appear to have appealed to younger voters in the EU member state's 3.3 million-strong electorate.—AFP ■

US Democrats trade barbs as New Hampshire vote nears

WASHINGTON (United States) — Bernie Sanders and Pete Buttigieg locked horns in their fight for the US Democratic presidential nomination Sunday as they scrambled for votes with just two days to go before New Hampshire's closely-watched primary.

The 78-year-old Vermont senator and the 38-year-old former mayor of South Bend, Indiana came top of the first contest in Iowa — marred by messy confusion about the result — giving each momentum as Democrats seek a candidate to take on Donald Trump in November.

Sanders, a leftist who won the New Hampshire primary by a landslide in 2016, led in four polls released Sunday, each of which had the moderate Buttigieg in second followed by Massachusetts Senator Elizabeth Warren and then former vice president Joe Biden.

"I think we have an excellent chance to win," Sanders told CNN as he started a final push on the ground in the small northeastern state.



Bernie Sanders and Pete Buttigieg came top of the first contest in Iowa, giving each important momentum. PHOTO: AFP

With the primary season underway in earnest, earlier collegiality among Democrats has fallen away.

"I am running against a candidate, Pete Buttigieg, among others, who has raised contributions from more than 40 billionaires," Sanders told CNN. "Our support is coming from the working class of this country."

His campaign, based heavi-

ly on small donors, says it raised \$25 million last month.

Buttigieg, appearing separately on CNN, turned aside the billionaire charge, quipping, "Well, Bernie's pretty rich, and I would happily accept a contribution from him."

Turning serious, he said he was "building the movement that is going to defeat Donald Trump," boosted by donations from some two million people.

Barrage of mysterious bomb hoaxes plagues Moscow

MOSCOW (Russia) — Moscovites are mystified by a flood of bomb hoaxes forcing the evacuation of courts, schools and malls while authorities appear unable to find the culprits even after months of disruption to public life.

The warnings of planted bombs, all of them false, have been sent to numerous Russian cities, but particularly targeted the capital, where around 16 million live and work, with up to 1,000 threats per day.

Since late November, more than 1.6 million people have been evacuated from buildings in Moscow, the Interfax news agency said citing sources.

Yet, both the authorities and Kremlin-controlled television channels stay mostly clear of the topic.

Yulia Olshanskaya, a local government official, said her daughter Maria's school was evacuated "sometimes several times a day" throughout December. "We can't keep count of how many times it's happened," she said.

"Sometimes our lessons were cancelled or postponed on those days and they also evacuated people," said 13-year-old Maria Olshanskaya.

Another Muscovite, Yulia Grebenchenko, said her daughter's school has been evacuated 13 times since the start of December.

"Some parents even hired a dog handler to check the school more quickly because you never know how long the sniffer dog units will take," said the office worker.—AFP ■

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This photo released on 10 February 2020 by China's Xinhua News Agency shows Chinese President Xi Jinping (l) meeting local residents during an inspection of the novel coronavirus pneumonia prevention and control work at the Anhuai Community in Beijing on 10 February 2020. PHOTO: AFP

Xi inspects coronavirus-treating hospital in Beijing

BEIJING — Xi Jinping, general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, inspected the Beijing Ditan Hospital, a designated institution treating the novel coronavirus pneumonia, on Monday afternoon.

Xi, also Chinese president and chairman of the Central Mil-

itary Commission, learned about the treatment of infected patients and made video calls to hospitals in Wuhan receiving patients with severe conditions, heard reports from the central guiding team in Hubei Province and the provincial headquarters on the prevention and control of the epidemic, and extended regards to medical

workers on the frontline.

Xi then went to the center for disease control and prevention of Chaoyang District, where he learned about the district's emergency response, epidemiological investigation and screening report efforts, and the city's overall epidemic prevention and control work. — Xinhua ■

66 more test positive for coronavirus on cruise ship in Japan

TOKYO — An additional 66 people on a cruise ship quarantined in Yokohama have tested positive for a new coronavirus, the operator of the ship said Monday, bringing the number of confirmed cases in Japan — including some 130 on the vessel — to more than 150.

Of the 66, 45 are Japanese, 11 are Americans, four are Australians, three are Filipinos and there is one each from Canada, Britain and Ukraine, US company Princess Cruise Lines Ltd., operator of the Diamond Princess, said in a statement.

In an effort to prevent the spread of the deadly pneumonia-causing virus in Japan, the

health ministry said it is considering testing all of the approximately 3,600 passengers and crew members aboard the ship when the two-week isolation period ends on 19 February. Once their results are clear, they will be able to leave the vessel. “We need to properly address the unease and concerns of our citizens,” said health minister Katsunobu Kato. The Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare had previously said it might be possible for people to disembark from Feb. 19.

The ship has been kept in quarantine since a passenger, who disembarked in Hong Kong, was found to be infected with the virus.—Kyodo News ■



Photo taken from a Kyodo News helicopter on 7 February, 2020, shows the cruise ship Diamond Princess at a port in Yokohama, eastern Japan. Diamond Princess passengers and crew have been barred from getting off the vessel due to the new coronavirus outbreak among them. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

Grief swells as Thais mourn 29 killed in mass shooting

NAKHON RATCHASIMA (Thailand) — Grieving relatives of 29 people murdered by a rogue soldier in Thailand held tearful Buddhist prayer ceremonies Monday, as fresh details emerged of shoppers cowering in terror while the gunman stalked the mall.

Holding portraits of their relatives and dabbing away tears, families of the victims arrived on Monday morning at a city morgue in NakhonRatchasima, better known as Korat, in the morning to carry home coffins bearing their dead.

The gunman—Sergeant-Major JakrapanthThomma — was shot dead by a commando unit Sunday morning, ending a rampage that left 29 dead and scores more wounded.

The killer started his killing spree on Saturday afternoon with weapons stolen from a barracks' arsenal, where he gunned down Mehta Lertsiri, 22, who was



Mourners lay flowers at the Terminal 21 shopping mall, where a mass shooting took place, in the Thai northeastern city of NakhonRatchasima. PHOTO: AFP

guarding the depot.

“I don't know what to do next,” Mehta's grief-stricken grandfather, UdomPrapotsang, said outside of the morgue waiting to claim his body.

“His four-year-old son keeps asking why he can't call his dad.” After seizing the weapons,

the shooter drove to a Buddhist temple, where blood splatters and bullet holes attested Monday to the horrors that unfolded.

NarissaraChotklang, a 52-year-old Pharmacist, was among nine people to die there.

Her funeral rites began late Monday a few kilometres away,

where hundreds of mourners lined up to pour water over a jasmine garland placed delicately over her outstretched hand.

The attacker then moved to the town centre mall, where a terrifying siege unfolded late Saturday.

Armed with automatic weapons, the gunman held out overnight as hundreds of shoppers sought refuge in toilets, store-rooms and under tables — staying silent or making a break for the exits when they could.

Pressed to the ground in an office inside a Japanese home goods shop, PartiyaAree, 29, tried to control her breathing as she watched the masked soldier stop just yards away on the shop's own CCTV. “He was carrying a gun, looking left and right constantly,” Partiya told AFP.

Alongside 21 others, they disabled location services on their phone fearing the social

media-obsessed gunman might be able to find them.

Her group escaped several hours later, flanked by police in a sprint for the mall entrance “which felt like forever.”

But others were not so fortunate. Flowers and messages of condolences including one saying “R.I.P. Korat, we will not forget” piled up outside the bullet-riddled mall. A Buddhist monk in orange robes led a prayer ceremony on a grass verge outside the mall for PeeraphatPalasan, shot dead as the gunman sprayed bullets into traffic, killing the 25-year-old engineer.

His father, Witoon, was among a dozen mourners crying, kneeling, hands clasped — some holding incense sticks — in prayer. “My son had just finished work and came here to go shopping,” Witoon told AFP. “I never thought I would lose him so soon.”—AFP ■

J. League Football Clinic opens at National Football Academy



Officials and students attending the J. League Football Clinic pose for a group photo at the National Football Academy in Yangon yesterday. **PHOTO: MFF**

THE J. League Football Clinic opened yesterday at the National Football Academy in Yangon, according to the Myanmar Football Federation (MFF).

The programme, which ends 14 February, is being jointly organized by MFF, J. League, and ASIA Center Japan Foundation.

MFF President U Zaw Zaw, Japanese Ambassador to Myanmar Mr. Ichiro Maruyama, Albirex Singapore CEO Mr. Namba, Mr. Koji Sato from the Japan Foundation (Myanmar), officials, coaches, and students attended

the opening ceremony of the programme.

Speaking at the ceremony, U Zaw Zaw said, "The sport of football is beneficial for children as it not only encourages emerging outstanding footballers, but is also linked with factors involving health, cooperation, and remaining drug-free."

He then expressed thanks to Albirex Singapore for coming and training young children in Myanmar.

"It is the relationship between Japan and Myanmar that

is very important in many sectors, including football. We are hoping to achieve all-round development and trying to be like this," said Japanese Ambassador Mr. Ichiro Maruyama.

The Japanese Ambassador also expressed his delight at the improvement in the Myanmar football community and thanked Albirex Singapore for coming and teaching children.

During the J. League Football Clinic, 80 children under 12 years of age will be taught basic football techniques. —Kyaw Khin

Yangon United to face Ho Chi Minh City today in Yangon

YANGON United F.C. and Ho Chi Minh City F.C. will meet in the qualifiers for the 2020 AFC Cup today at the Thuwunna Stadium in Yangon, according to the Myanmar National League.

Yangon United has been placed in Group F for the qualifiers with Ho Chi Minh City of Viet Nam, Hougang United of Singapore, and Lao Toyota. The Group F winner will advance to the zonal semi-finals.

After Ho Chi Minh City, Yangon United will play against Lao Toyota on 25 February and Hougang United on 10 March at the Thuwunna Stadium.

The away matches for Yangon United will be against Hougang United on 15 April at the Jurong West Stadium, Singapore; Ho Chi Minh City F.C. on 29 April at the Thong Nhat Stadium, Ho Chi Minh City; and, Lao Toyota on 13 May at the New Laos Nation-

al Stadium, Vientiane.

There are nine groups, from Group A to I, competing in the group stage of the tourney. Each group match will be played on a home-and-away round-robin basis.

The winners of each group and the best runners-up in the West Asia Zone and the ASEAN Zone will advance to the zonal semi-finals.

The winners of each group in the Central Asia Zone, the South Asia Zone, and the East Asia Zone will advance to the inter-zone play-off semi-finals.

This year marks the 17th edition of the AFC Cup, Asia's secondary club football tournament, organized by the Asian Football Confederation (AFC). The winners will automatically qualify for the 2021 AFC Champions League for the first time ever, and enter the tourney at the play-offs stage. —Kyaw Khin

McTominay says Man Utd determined to end season on high

LONDON (United Kingdom) — Scott McTominay says Manchester United are "fully focused" on ending their troubled season on a high note, with silverware still on offer in the FA Cup and Europa League as he nears a return from injury.

United have found it hard to establish any momentum in a challenging campaign that has threatened to spiral into disarray at times.

They are six points adrift of the Premier League's top four but could still qualify for the



Scott McTominay believes Manchester United can enjoy a successful end to the season. **PHOTO: AFP**

Champions League through another route if they win the Europa League.

United face Club Brugge in the last 32 later this month, while their next FA Cup assignment is a fifth-round tie at second-tier Derby.

Despite distracting speculation about Ole Gunnar Solskjaer's future as manager, combined with fan protests against United's owners the Glazer family and the club's executive vice-chairman Ed Woodward, McTominay is adamant there is still a possibility of a happy ending for everyone at Old Trafford.

"It would be nice to come back and have a massive push with the rest of the boys to get into some finals, get some trophies under our belts and really set the bar for next season, set a bar that we don't step underneath," McTominay told United's website.

"All of the boys are fully focused on doing that and hopefully we can do it as well."

McTominay's performances have been one of the few bright spots for United this season, but the 23-year-old Scotland midfielder has been sidelined with a knee injury since late December.

He will be out until early March but has stepped up his recovery during United's warm-weather training camp in Spain. —AFP

Jim Ratcliffe: British tycoon oversees growing sporting empire



British chemicals tycoon Jim Ratcliffe has signed a sponsorship deal with Mercedes' F1 team. **PHOTO: AFP**

LONDON (United Kingdom) — Chemicals tycoon Jim Ratcliffe has often been labelled a recluse but the British billionaire's latest foray into the world of sport with Formula One team Mercedes thrusts him into the global sporting spotlight.

Mercedes on Monday announced a five-year "principal partnership" with Ratcliffe's company Ineos, adding to an ever-growing portfolio of

sporting investments for one of Britain's richest men.

It follows last year's launch of the Team Ineos cycling outfit, formerly known as Team Sky. That reaped immediate dividends as Colombia's Egan Bernal won the 2019 Tour de France.

Ineos bought Swiss football club Lausanne-Sport in 2017 and last year completed the purchase of French Ligue 1 side Nice.

Ratcliffe, a Manchester United fan, has been mentioned as a possible future owner of Chelsea, if Russian tycoon Roman Abramovich ever sells the Premier League club.

Ineos also ploughed £110 million (\$142 million) into British sailor Ben Ainslie's Americas Cup team and sponsored Eliud Kipchoge's successful 2019 project to break the two-hour mark for running the marathon. —AFP