Union Government holds Waso robes offering ceremony in Nay Pyi Taw

THE Union Government held a Waso robe offering ceremony for 2018 at the Sasana Beikman, Uppatasanti Pagoda, Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

President U Win Myint, First Lady Daw Cho Cho and State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi donated Waso robes and offertories to the Members of the Sangha.

Before the ceremony, State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi paid homage to the Buddha Image and offered food, fruits, flowers, water and candle lights.

The Waso Robe Offering Ceremony for 2018 held by the Union Government began with the President, First Lady, the State Counsellor and the congregation receiving the Five Precepts given by the Chairman Sayadaw of State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee Bhamo Sayadaw Dr Bhaddanta Kumarabhivamsa, after which they listened to the parittas recited by Members of the Sangha.

Afterwards, President U Win Myint and First Lady Daw Cho Cho offered Waso robes to Bhamo Sayadaw Dr Kumarabhivamsa.

State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi offered Waso robes and offertories to Secretary Sayadaw of the State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee Sayadaw Agga Maha Pandita Bhaddanta Sandimabhivamsa.

Next, Vice President U Myint Swe and wife Daw Khin Thet Hsui offered Waso robes and offertories to Vice Chairman Sayadaw of State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee Hsinphyugyun Sayadaw Bhaddanta Nanninda; Speaker of Amyotha Hluttaw Mahn Win Khaing Than's wife Nant Kyin Kyi to Vice Chairman Sayadaw of the committee Pathein Kontha Sayadaw Bhaddanta Vilasa.

Myanmar to host 10th meeting of ASEAN education ministers, dialogue partners in October

VICE President U Myint Swe attended a meeting in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday in preparation for the 10th meeting of ASEAN Education Ministers (ASED) and Dialogue Partners and related meetings.

“We should be proud that we are getting a chance to host this meeting, just as we are promoting cooperation with South East Asian countries and partner countries to promote Myanmar’s education sector,” said the Vice President, the patron of the leading committee for hosting the 10th ASED, in his opening address at the meeting.

A 16-member leading committee for hosting the 10th ASED and related meetings was formed on 20 June with Notification No. 46/2018 of the Office of the President which assigned five tasks.

The meeting is to be hosted by Myanmar in October this year.
Ninth regular session of the 2nd Pyidaungsu Hluttaw commences

THE 2nd Pyidaungsu Hluttaw began the first day of its ninth regular session at the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Hall in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaihaing Than addressed the assembly, noting that during the ninth regular session the members will primarily focus on discussing and approving the National Planning Bill and the Union Budget Bill for Fiscal year 2018-2019.

The Speaker said members of parliament should keep in mind the immediate and long-term benefits for the public, while avoiding unnecessary spending of public funds when reviewing and approving plans proposed by the Union Government. He added that MPs need to consider whether the plans have relevance to the current state of affairs, and to approve them on time when reviewing the budget phase in the implementation process.

The Speaker said MPs should be mindful of the existing laws and bylaws when reviewing, in conjunction with set policies, the plans to fulfill the immediate requirements and long-term development of the country and its people. He said MPs have to collaborate with officials from union-level departments and organizations in discussing the respective numbers in the plans related to them. He added that MPs should keep in mind the objectives of union-level departments and organizations, the all-round equal development of states and regions, and the emergence of opportunities for future generations.

The Speaker noted that within days the 2nd Pyidaungsu Hluttaw will have been held for 30 months;

First-day meeting of 2nd Pyithu Hluttaw’s 9th regular session held

The first-day meeting of the second Pyithu Hluttaw’s ninth regular session was held at the Pyithu Hluttaw meeting hall, Nay Pyi Taw, yesterday morning, where the Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker delivered a message of greeting, asterisk-marked questions were raised and answered and a bill was tabled.

At first, Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U T Khun Myat said that during the ninth regular session, there were 23 bills to be discussed. On bills, four submitted during the eighth regular session and three more would be discussed and in the asterisk-marked question, 137 transferred from the eighth regular session to the ninth regular session, as well as 156 more would be raised.

Now is the time when special emphasis is placed on the Union Peace Conference-21st Century Panglong. Therefore, the State has set stages for the peace process and is implementing them vigorously. While with regard to national reconciliation work, our Hluttaw representatives are to cooperate and work together in conducting political discussions through agreements based on proposals of the government, Hluttaw, Tatmadaw and ethnic armed organisations.

Before the start of the third session of the Union Peace Conference on 10 July, the Pyithu Hluttaw speaker met with Pyithu Hluttaw committee chairmen and representatives from the two Hluttaws who are attending the conference and assigned duties to five groups to effectively conduct coordinated discussions. The groups were formed to include multi-party and multi-ethnic members, and our Hluttaw representatives were found to participate in the discussion enthusiastically. Our Hluttaw are to participate in achieving and eternal peace, said the Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker.

Being a Hluttaw that reflects the voice of the people, Hluttaw representatives are required to perform their roles and legislative duties so that it becomes a legislative sector that the people depend on. The laws enacted by our Hluttaw need to improve the physical and mental safety and security of the people. Motions tabled in the Hluttaw need to reflect the voices of the people and questions raised are to indicate the thoughts of the people.

First-day meeting of 2nd Amyotha Hluttaw’s 9th regular session held

THE ninth regular session of the second Amyotha Hluttaw held its first-day meeting at the Amyotha Hluttaw’s meeting hall yesterday morning, where Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaihaing Than delivered a message of greeting, asterisk-marked questions were answered and a bill sent back with amendments was discussed.

In his message of greeting, Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaihaing Than said the term of the Hluttaw had reached over 2 years, close to two-and-a-half years, and the Hluttaw representatives had obtained a certain degree of experience. As such, they were expected to serve the people better, said the Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker.

Asterisk-marked questions

U Myint Naing of Rakhine State constituency 5 posed a question on a plan to clear the silt and sand bars along the rivers and creeks in Rakhine State. Deputy Minister for Transport and Communications U Kyaw Myo replied that it is a massive undertaking to clear silt and sand bars along the rivers and creeks and at the mouth of the rivers and creeks in Rakhine State and depending on the importance of a river/creek, the removal of silt and sand bars will be done based on the availability of funds.

Replying to a question raised by Dr. Khin Ma Gyi of Kachin State constituency 8 on increasing the number of Putoa-Myitkyina flights during the summer holidays for the convenience of teachers serving in difficult places such as Khaunggampu, Ngunmon, Machanbaw and Putoa townships, Deputy Minister for Transport and Communications U Kyaw Myo said Myanmar National Airlines of the Ministry of Transport and Communications is increasing the number of round-trip flights from four times to five times a week starting 5 June 2018.

Myanmar National Airlines is an airline working with its own funds outside of government funding and operates regular flights to Yangon, Nay Pyi Taw and Mandalay international airports and 23 other local airports and it can only increase the number of Myitkyina-Putoa round-trip flights when there is an increase in demand.

If the relevant ministry informs and coordinates with the Ministry of Transport and Communications about its requirements, special flights and special ticket fares can be arranged, said the deputy minister.

Next, Dr. Khin Maung Win of Taninthayi Region constituency 11 asked whether there was any plan to provide electricity at a reasonable price to Kawthaung Township, Kawthaung District, Taninthayi Region.
Union Government holds Waso robes offering ceremony in Nay Pyi Taw

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Union Chief Justice U Htun Htun Oo to Vice Chairman YeU Sayadaw Bhaddanta Ottamananabhivamsa.
Chairman of the Constitutional Tribunal of the Union U Myo Nyunt and wife Daw Htay Yi, Chairman of the Union Election Commission U Hla Thein and wife, Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and wife Daw Kyu Hla offered the Waso robes to the Members of the Sangha.

Afterwards, the congregation listened to the sermon delivered by Sayadaw Agga Maha Pandita Bhaddanta Sandimabhivamsa.
The ceremony came to an end with donation of ‘soon’ (day meal) to the Members of the Sangha.—Myanmar News Agency

Myanmar to host 10th meeting of ASEAN education ministers, dialogue partners in October

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Myanmar to host 10th meeting of ASEAN education ministers, dialogue partners in October

To implement the tasks of the leading committee for holding the meetings, the Secretariat and 11 working sub-committees would be set up.
The working sub-committees will share the work with regard to decoration, welcoming and transportation, making documentaries and recording the meetings, security and surveillance, reception, health care services, entertainment, financial, auditing and office work.
The Vice President urged the leading committee and sub-committees to coordinate with each other to be able to hold the meetings successfully.
The 1st ASED was held in Singapore in 2006. So far, the meetings have been hosted by Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, the Philippines, Brunei and Laos.
The ninth ASED was hosted by Malaysia.—Myanmar News Agency
Health care and food provided for people in Kayin State flood relief camps

TOWNSHIP-wise flood relief camps were opened in Kayin State for people affected by flooding and inundation following continuous heavy rain. People in the camps were provided with health care and food assistance, according to the state government.

Eight camps opened in Hpa-an were occupied by 818 households. Meanwhile, 12 camps in Hlaingwe Township were occupied by 321 households, two camps in Kawkaikie Township by 65 households, two camps in Kya-in-Seikkyi Township by 122 households and nine camps in Myawady Township by 448 households. —Myanmar News Agency

First-day meeting of 2nd Amyotha Hluttaw’s 9th regular session held

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Deputy Minister for Electricity and Energy Dr. Tun Naing replied that the Pachau Kawkathing township electricity production and distribution public company had won the tender to provide electricity 24 hours a day at a reasonable price in Kawkathing township and arrangements are underway to do this with ten 630KVA diesel generators.

In addition to this, to reduce the price of electricity, a memorandum of understanding was signed between Taninthayi Region government and Royal Eagle Myanmar Development Group Co. Ltd. on 2 February 2018 to conduct a preliminary feasibility study on implementing a medium-sized 30MW wind power electricity generating and distributing project atop a mountain near Kawkathing, said the deputy minister.

Similarly, questions raised by U Saw Cho Oo of Kayin State constituency 3 and U Aung Thein of Bago Region constituency 12 were answered by Deputy Ministers U Kyaw Myo and Dr Tun Naing.

Discussion of the Bill amending the Vacant, Fallow and Virgin Land Management Law (2017) sent by the Pyithu Hluttaw with amendments.

The second-day meeting of the second Amyotha Hluttaw’s ninth regular session will be continued today, it is learnt.—Aung Ye Thwin (MNA)

Mandalay tax collection sees Ks24 billion

THE Mandalay Region gained Ks24 billion in tax, two months before the designated six-month budget period this year, according to the Department of Internal Revenue in Mandalay.

“The overall target amount was Ks33 billion over a six-month budget period. Now, Ks24 billion has been received over a four-month period. During the remaining two months, arrangements are being made to hit the financial target. Public awareness discussions on paying tax were held,” said an official from the Department of Internal Revenue in Mandalay Region.

The overall amount of tax was based on the previous tax collections. Although the designated amount was Ks140 billion in the 2016-2017 fiscal year, over Ks160 billion had been received.

In the 2017-2018 FY, the targeted amount was Ks176 billion. However, Ks140 billion had been collected.—MDN

Myanmar National Airlines to provide charter flight services

Myanmar National Airlines (MNA) is planning to provide Yangon-Gaya charter flight services, from September to April 2018. It is learnt. A negotiation to operate the Yangon-Gaya charter flight services had been underway since 2017, and arrangements are being made to provide Charter Flight Services for Popular Star, Nay Yang La Yang Thorn, Shwe Taw Win, Myat Bodhi, MTM Travels & Tours, Thit Shwe- in, Than Keenaw, Nilar Travels & Tours, May Thu Maung Buddhagaya, Amazing Land Tours, and Aung Chan Thar Co. Ltd. The Boeing 737-800 flight will begin operations in September; three times a week.—Shin Min

Yangon’s remote village gets access to fresh tube well water after nearly a century

Located in Kyauktan Township, Yangon Region, U In, Village now has access to fresh water through a 740-feet tube well, thanks to well-wishers, water experts and the government.

U Thein Myint, Assistant Director of Kyauktan Township Rural Development Department, said, “The village, with its 1,800 residents from 200 households, has access to fresh drinking water after nearly a century.

It has been said that the village had been under the sea for more than 100 years. It emerged as an island after sandbank formation and only saline groundwater was available in the village and nearby areas for nearly a century. Villagers mainly relied on rainwater through reservoirs, but it was insufficient for their daily use because of the population growth.”

Water experts tried to dig several tube wells with a depth of 400 or 500 feet in some parts of the village. Fortunately, technicians successfully found freshwater at a depth of 740 feet.

After laboratory testing, the well water was found to be at PH level 8.46 and villagers can now use it as drinking water. The new tube well is situated within the compound of Myatshweegu, the village’s monastery. Lucky Gold Shop and Golden Legend Co. provided funds for the construction of the tube well and related water facilities.—Pwint Thitsa
Onion growers in Kyaukpadaung Township experience losses

ONION growers in Kyaukpadaung Township, Mandalay Region, are facing losses as a result of low prices, said Daw Waing Nyein, an onion grower.

During growing period, onion seeds were bought at Ks80,000 per pyi or one small rice basket (volume equals to eight condensed milk cans). Cultivation costs around Ks50,000 for onion seeds per small basket. Meanwhile, this year, onions fetched only Ks500 per viss (3.6 lb), leading to a great loss, said U Tin Tun Aung, an onion grower working on a large scale.

A low price and severe losses this year might bring down the number of onion growers next year, said a grower.

Onion growers who do not own farmlands, rent land at an additional cost of Ks300,000 per acre on lease. Other inputs, such as organic fertilisers with by-products and waste from farm animals, labour wages and irrigation water cost around Ks2.2 million per acre. Growers can survive only when the yield is high and the onions fetch a fair price. If the price remains on the low side, they will not earn the capital cost, said U Tin Tun Aung.

It takes some five-and-a-half months from farmland treatment to onion harvesting.

A farmer works in an onion field. PHOTO: PHOE KHWAR

Onions should also be kept systematically, as they are perishable.

Decaying of onions and deterioration of their quality, such as weight reduction, can also lead to losses, said the onion growers. —Ko Htein (Ngathayaung) ■

Brown sesame, peanut prices high in domestic market

GROWERS from the central arid zone reaped a handsome profit from the sale of brown sesame and peanuts due to increasing demand from China, according to growers.

A broker from Salin Township said the market in Mandalay is better than that of other regions. Growers earn a healthy price, thanks to the increasing demand from China. Almost 3,000 baskets of newly harvested sesame from two townships enter the market on a daily basis.

Sesame is one of the most useful products for making herbal medicines, foodstuffs and edible oil. The high price of sesame may be linked with the demand to sesame plantations caused by heavy rains in some townships. In Yenangyoung market, the prices of brown sesame rose to Ks45,000 from Ks35,000 per basket last week, while peanut prices went up to Ks2,500 from Ks1,700 per viss (3.6 lb).

The township Department of Agriculture is making continuous efforts to boost the annual production of sesame. The township saw 42,975 acres of sesame plantations last year and the number increased to 56,615 this year.—Shwe Nya Tha (Yenangyoung)■

Regional trade exceeds $2 billion in first two months of the interim period

REGIONAL trade between Myanmar and its ASEAN neighbours through sea routes and border gates amounted to US$2.25 billion in the first two months of the six-month interim period prior to the 2018-2019 fiscal year.

Imports in regional trade surpassed exports, with exports totaling $686 million and imports amounting to $1.56 billion, according to statistics released by the Ministry of Commerce.

Thailand was ranked first among ASEAN countries in terms of trade with Myanmar, with trade value between the two neighbours totaling $845 million, followed by Singapore with a trade value of $740.7 million. Malaysia was listed third with a trade value of $365.5 million, while Indonesia stood fourth with an estimated value of $165.322 million. Myanmar’s trade with Viet Nam reached over $123.7 million.

The value of bilateral trade with the Philippines stood at $11.421 million, while trade with Cambodia reached $2.459 million. Trade between Myanmar and Laos was valued at less than one million dollars, while no bilateral trade was recorded between Myanmar and Brunei in the last two months.

The country’s main exports included agricultural and fishery products, and minerals, while imports included food and beverages, electronic tools, motor vehicles, and consumer goods. Apart from its main trade partner China, Myanmar’s external trade was carried out mostly with its regional partners. Trade with countries in the European Union, however, remained uncompetitive compared with regional trade partners.

ASEAN’s focus this year is on resilience and innovation. Its second objective is to push ahead with regional economic integration and improving regional connectivity, aimed at helping the region remain competitive and prosperous, according to the keynote speech of Union Minister U Thaung Tun at Myanmar Insight 2018 held at the Myanmar Investment Commission. —Ko Khant ■

15,000 acres of monsoon paddy to be grown across Meiktila Township

PLANS are underway to cultivate a total of 15,000 acres of monsoon paddy throughout Meiktila Township, Meiktila District, Mandalay Region, in the financial year 2018-2019.

Farmers from nearly 380 villages in 58 village-tracts across the township will grow monsoon paddy starting next month.

The cultivation will begin only after harvesting the summer paddy.

Farmers in the township cultivated 24,200 acres of summer paddy during the fiscal year 2017-2018. Farmers are currently busy during harvest time, gathering summer paddy from their fields.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation has already filled up seven dams with water to sufficiently irrigate the monsoon paddy plantations. The ministry started providing agricultural water to the target farmlands from mid-July.

Rice is a major staple food and the main export product of Myanmar. The government is making continuous efforts to boost the country’s rice production in anticipation of healthy exports.—U Tin Hlaing ■

Regional trade exceeds $2 billion in first two months of the interim period

Onion growers in Kyaukpadaung Township experience losses

Brown sesame, peanut prices high in domestic market

15,000 acres of monsoon paddy to be grown across Meiktila Township
Union Minister Lt-Gen Kyaw Swe meets new officers of Anti-Narcotics Task Force

UNION Minister for Home Affairs Lt-Gen Kyaw Swe met senior officers and 44 officers transferred to the Anti-Narcotics Task Force at the meeting hall of the Ministry of Home Affairs yesterday afternoon. The union minister said that the new officers were specifically recruited from other police force branches in order to reorganise the Anti-Narcotics Task Force so that the task force can conduct its work and take action against those involved in drug-related cases, regardless of their status and stature.

The meeting was attended by Deputy Minister Maj-Gen Aung Thu, Chief of Myan-anmar Police Force Police Lt-Gen Aung Win Oo, senior police officers, transferred senior officers and officers, it is learnt.—Myanmar News Agency

President’s Office announces a series of arrests, seizures acting on tip-offs given by the people


The ministry made the arrests, acting on information sent to the Drug Abuse Reporting Department of the Office of the President from 27 June to 21 July.

The full text of the press release will be covered in the 25 July issue of the Global New Light of Myanmar. — GNLM

LPDR Minister of Foreign Affairs and party arrive in Nay Pyi Taw

A DELEGATION led by Lao People’s Democratic Republic (LPDR) Minister of Foreign Affairs Mr. Saleumxay Kommasith arrived by air in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday evening.

The delegation led by the LPDR Minister of Foreign Affairs was welcomed at Nay Pyi Taw International Airport by Ministry of Foreign Affairs Protocol Department Director General U Thant Sin, Deputy Director General U Aung Kyaw Oo, Laos Ambassador to Myan- mar Mr. Loying Sayaxang and officials.—MNA

First field visit to Buthidaung, Maungtaw townships in Rakhine State, by Technical Working Group

TECHNICAL Working Group (TWG) visited some potential projects sites in Buthidaung and Maungtaw townships from 21 to 23 July 2018. It was the first field visit by TWG conducted before effective implementation of the MoU signed between Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population (MLIP), UNDP and UNHCR on 6 June 2018. The field visit was led by TWG, consisting of representatives from Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of the Office of the State Counsellor, Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population, Ministry of the Social Welfare, Relief and Resettle-ment, Rakhine State Government, UNDP and UNHCR.

During the field visit, TWG team went on site visits to the villages of Buthidaung and Maungtaw townships, namely Kan Pyin, Tatu, Zawtidaung, Da Pyu Chaung, Inn Myaung, Nga Khu Ya, Naung Chaung, Shwe Yin Aye and met the local people.

The purpose of the mission is for the TWG to familiarise with the situation on the ground, including visiting some of the potential project sites of the region. The visit of the TWG team will be immediately followed by assessment teams from the Government of Myanmar, UNDP and UNHCR to the Village Tracts being considered.—MNA
Press conference held in Loikaw over Bogyoke Aung San statue

A PRESS conference was held at the Kayah State government office meeting hall over the setting up of a statue of Bogyoke Aung San San in Kayah State, Loikaw, Kayah State. The press conference was attended by Kayah State Chief Minister U L Phaung Sho, State Hluttaw Speaker U Hla Htwé, deputy speaker, state government ministers, departmental officials, region-based civil society organisations and 25 reporters from 10 news media houses.

At first, Kayah State Chief Minister U L Phaung Sho said three meetings were held at the Kayah State government office meeting hall on 3 February 2018, at the state hall on 30 April 2018 and at the Kayah State government office meeting hall on 20 June 2018 for setting up a bronze statue of Bogyoke Aung San in Kayah State, Loikaw, according to the wishes of a majority of the people. Comments and opinions were taken at these meetings and the work continued, said the state chief minister. He added that the statue of Bogyoke Aung San was set up as there was no statue of Bogyoke Aung San in Kayah State and for future generations to emulate Bogyoke, the benefactor of 135 ethnic nations in Myanmar, architect of the country’s independence, his union spirit and his selfless act for independence.

He added that, according to the Constitution, there only exists Kayah State. Kayah State came into existence in 1952 and Kayah State Day had been commemorated yearly for 66 years. Names should be used as described in the Constitution. Any word usage that disintegrates the Union and creates disharmony among ethnic nationals should be avoided. Speaking and writing words that strengthen the establishment of a federal union are welcome. All need to be aware of maintaining the sovereignty. A demonstration, against the setting up of the Bogyoke Aung San statue, held on 3 June 2018 by the Karenni Students Union (UKSY) and Kayah State Students Union (KSSU) was handled compassionately according to Peaceful Assembly and Peaceful Procession Law, said the chief minister.

As UKSY and KSSU protested against the setting up of the Bogyoke Aung San equestrian statue by the Kayah State government, they were called for a meeting by the State government was disbanded and a people-based committee, based on the wishes of the people, and a committee formed with persons elected by the people will be formed and the state government will provide the necessary assistance. A video clip of the meeting was shown, where there was enthusiastic support on setting up the Bogyoke statue. Kayah State government secretary U Khin Maung Win then explained that the announcement issued by the Kayah State government was different from what the state government had discussed. Head of State Police Force Colonel Win Kyi explained the action taken over the demonstration event. Later, questions raised by the media were answered by the state chief minister, state Hluttaw speaker, state minister for development and social affairs, state minister for planning and finance and officials. The press conference concluded at 11.45am.

The press conference was attended by the state media, as well as Skynet, Eleven Media Group, DVB, Kandawaddy Times, Democracy Today, Shwe Trigian, 7 Day, Karenni Times, etc.—U Sai Nyan Lin Htut, State IPRD ■

Ninth regular session of the 2nd Pyidaungsu Hluttaw

FROM PAGE 2

marking the completion of the first half of the Hluttaw term; and, therefore, the role of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker and Deputy Speaker will be transferred to the Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker and Deputy Speaker, respectively, as stated in the Constitution, making the ninth regular session unique in the assembly’s history.

Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Thaung added that MPs will have to assume more responsibilities through these sessions, so it is important to systematically organize the available time to complete the increased workload. He urged MPs to ensure the public fund is in line with the respective laws, bylaws, rules and regulations, as it is used for the benefit and development of the nation and its people.

The Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker then announced that the Hluttaw has put on record executive orders from the President’s Office on the expansion, renaming, reformation, and abolishment of townships, wards, village-tracts and villages in Kayin State, Mon State, and Bago Region.

Afterwards, Union Minister for Planning and Finance U Soe Win explained to the Hluttaw about the 2018-2019 National Planning Bill. The Union Minister said the 2018-2019 National Planning Bill was drawn up to reduce current socio-economic challenges, to mitigate consequences from future socio-economic difficulties, to put in place prioritized operations and regional work with relevance to existing state of affairs, and to promote development of the private sector.

The Union Minister said the projected economic growth of Myanmar is 7.6 per cent and the projected gross domestic product (GDP) growth will reach Ks 90,269.99 billion. The Per Capita GDP is projected at Ks 1,976,496, he said. The Union Minister said the gross private domestic investment (GPDI) is projected at Ks 8476.3 billion in the government sector; Ks 20,880.0 billion in exports; Ks 21,488.0 billion in imports; and Ks 42,980.0 billion in foreign trade.

Next, U Thein Lwin of Kayin State constituency 10, a member of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Joint-Bill Committee, read and submitted to the Hluttaw the Revenue Appellate Tribunal Bill, which had been sent back with remarks from the President’s Office. The Speaker announced that those MPs interested in discussing the bill could register their names.

Union Minister U Soe Win explained and submitted to the Hluttaw the Union Budget Bill. He said the GDP for fiscal year 2018-2019 is estimated to include 21.90 per cent from the agricultural sector; 37.27 per cent from the industrial sector, and 40.43 per cent from the service sector. Inflation is estimated to reach 5.91 per cent in FY 2018-2019, said the Union Minister.

The Union Minister also said the Ministry of Commerce has projected trading US$ 15.300 billion in exports, a 15.400 billion in imports; a total of $ 31.100 billion and GDP proportion for FY 2018-2019 is 4.62 per cent, so, therefore, the Central Bank of Myanmar has calculated reducing 20 per cent of the budget deficit to reduce the Union budget deficit.

The Central Bank of Myanmar has taken into consideration foreign budget acquisitions and increased domestic loans to project the estimated growth of the monetary base by 11 per cent, and the overall money supply by 21 per cent in FY 2018-2019.

To reduce the deficit of states and regions, a subsidy of Ks 1,794.444 trillion has been proposed in the FY 2018-2019, an increase of Ks 87 billion from the original subsidy, calculated with last year’s six indexes.

Concerning the revenue allotment for states and regions, Ks 54,253 billion of tax collected from the government sector was divided according to the half-year budget framework. With tax from the private and cooperatives sector not included in the calculation, 15 per cent of tax from commercial tax, 15 per cent of specific goods tax, 5 per cent from personal income tax, and 2 per cent of tax from the stamp duty were divided, based on tax levied from states and regions. The total revenue allotted amounted to Ks 336,918, billion, whereas Ks 22,900 billion is assigned for the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Development Fund.

Next, U Nyan Win, Chairman of the Union Legal Supporting Group, read and submitted the group’s six-month progress report. U Nyan Win said that on 18 May 2018, they had formed the Project Drafting Executive Committee, Working Committee on Policies, Working Committee on Staff Affairs, Working Committee on Financial Administration, Working Committee on Marking Criminal Offences approved for Legal Support, Working Committee on Rules and Regulations, Working Committee on Verifying Poverty Claims in Requesting Legal Aid, and Working Committee on Raising Legal Awareness, and Working Committee on International Relations.

The President has received the Union Legal Supporting Group, led by Chairman U Nyan Win, at the Presidential Palace on 13 May 2018, and was constructively engaged in the discussion on the need for consolidating the development of legal services in order to create a culture of law and the judicial sector.

The Speaker then said that interested MPs should include their names for discussing the report.

Also, the Speaker announced that the Hluttaw has approved the appointment of U Tin Htwe from Waw Constituency as a member of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Legal Affairs and Special Cases Assessment Commission.

The second day of the ninth regular session of the 2nd Pyidaungsu Hluttaw will continue on 25 July.—Thura Zaw
As the rainy season approaches, it is delightful to see ceremonies to release fingerlings into lakes and rivers, as part of efforts for the food sufficiency of the country.

However, on the dark side of the fishery sector, illegal electrofishing has become a big challenge for conservationists and local authorities in their quest to save not only the endangered fish species but also the fish population in rivers and creeks, which people have been relying on for food since the days of yore.

The Myanmar government has banned electrofishing nationwide, punishing violators with a three-year prison sentence and a Ky300,000 fine.

The illegal fishing method involves putting lines of wire into the water, connecting the two ends to a battery and passing an electric shock into the water. This stuns the fish, which then float to the surface.

The technique kills fish of all sizes. In some cases, it is found that the Ayeyawady dolphins, which are facing the risk of extinction, often also fall prey to electrocution.

According to a local report, a total of 21 cases of electrofishing in Singu and Thabeikkyin townships in Sagaing Region were reported in the 2017-2018 fiscal year. We can imagine that the number must reach over hundreds if we count cases across the country.

Meanwhile, news of fishermen being killed as a result of electrofishing in rivers and creeks is also frequently reported in the dailies.

In a bid to prevent fish resources from extinction in the country and to save lives, the district and township fisheries departments should draw up projects to eliminate illegal fishing methods, such as electrocution.

At the same time, the existing laws and laws amended to be adaptable with the current age are being reviewed to comply with international standardisation.

We should educate people about the ban on electrofishing and the penalties for violators.

Before alarm bells ring, authorities should step up efforts to tackle illegal fishing through education and punishment. While the people, authorities and conservationists are deeply concerned about saving the endangered species and the sustainability of fishing stocks in rivers and creeks, the violators would be reflecting about their jobs and livelihoods. Just educating them would not be enough to fight illegal fishing.

Legal Empowerment: Equitable Standards

By Khin Cho Ohn (The Office of the Union Attorney-General)

Rule of law is the fundamental foundation which will enhance peace, development, flourishing democracy, public security, and safeguarding fundamental rights for the interest of the State and people.

As for the Union Government, implementations to restore rule of law and to enhance the socio-economic lives of the people are being made, as a top priority.

Law enforcement officers, who are serving at the Office of the Union Attorney-General, are involved in the three organs of power — the legislative power, the administrative power and the judicial power of the state, while taking part in the process of the justice sector reform in the country.

Each country has practised different types of legal systems based on the provisions of local laws, procedures and ratification of international human rights treaties. But fair judicial standard and relevant rights are included in the international human rights treaties, and they are designated to safeguard the fundamental rights of relevant persons involved in the process of criminal investigation and administering justice.

In order to support the prevalence of the rule of law for the State, the Office of the Union Attorney-General has published a book on Fair Trial Standards for the benefit of law officers, so that they can be able to handle the cases effectively by studying and applying the said standards.

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With regards to the phrase “presumption of innocence and the benefit of the doubt”, which states that guilt has not been proven and the accused person can then enjoy the presumption of innocence, just like everybody else, including persons who have not been accused of any crimes. No guilt can be presumed until the charges have been accused of any crime.

Regarding Article 11 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, everyone charged with a penal offence has the right to be presumed innocent until proved guilty according to law in a public trial at which they have all the guarantees necessary for their defense. Moreover, no one shall be held guilty of any penal offence on account of any act or omission which did not constitute a penal offence, under national or international law, at the time when it was committed. Nor shall a heavier penalty be imposed than the one that was applicable at the time the penal offence was committed.

On the fourth point of human dignity, Article 44 of the 2008 Constitution of Myanmar states, “No penal law shall be enacted to provide retrospective effect”. Moreover it says that the purpose of this article was to restore rule of law in the country.
Capacity Building for Legal Affairs

remaining silent is to prevent people from hurting their cases by helping the police. As a general rule, when people choose to remain completely or partially silent, this cannot be interpreted as a sign that they are guilty. People detained or arrested but who know about and understand their right to remain silent can speak to the police if they want to.

Regarding the seventh point of “right to speak to a lawyer” in the 2008 Constitution of Myanmar states, “An accused shall have the right to defence in accord with the law.” It means that the right to speak to a lawyer is a fundamental right and it allows people detained or arrested to discuss their rights and responsibilities with a lawyer.

The eighth point of “right to interpretation” states that “An accused shall have the right to interpretation and translation, legal interpreting, and interpreting assistance”, means that in some cases, language is one of the vital communication tools, and a suspect has a right to effectively exercise their rights so that they might obtain information that requires the assistance of an interpreter or translator. Moreover, interpreters and translators play a crucial role in safeguarding a fair trial.

The ninth point of “freedom and impartiality of judges” states that for a free, good and fair standard for judicial ethics, it is a policy of free legal system of a country as well as an essential principal of the rule of law. The freedom of the judge can be referred to as judicial freedom.

The tenth point of “the right to public hearing” states that all persons shall be equal before the courts and tribunals. The hearing and judgment must be made in public. Also a public hearing is a special type of public meeting for the purpose of governing body accepting public comment and testimony on local legislation.

The eleventh point of “the right of accused person in criminal proceeding” also states that an accused person must have the right to have effective participation in a criminal trial. He or she is entitled to be physically present to give evidence in person and be legally represented.

The twelfth point of “avoiding delayed judgment without sufficient reasons” states that the procedures for lodging judicial systems should be completed more quickly within a proper timeframe as a sign of fair justice system. The need for a time limit for delivering the judgment plays a pivotal role to improve the performance of the judicial system.

On the Office of the Union Attorney-General has been making all-out efforts to safeguard the fundamental rights of the individual citizen, and thus published a book on Fair Trial Standards, with the aim of empowering the capacity building of the law enforcement officers, enhancing judicial empowerment and strengthening the rule of law in the Union.

Translated by
Win Ko Ko Aung
Israel to reopen Gaza goods crossing if calm holds

JERUSALEM — Israel will reopen its only goods crossing with the blockaded Gaza Strip on Tuesday if calm holds following a ceasefire, a minister said, after closing it 9 July partly over kites carrying firebombs.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu warned separately, however, that the military was prepared for far more intense strikes in the Gaza Strip if it deems necessary after a severe flare-up of violence on Friday.

UN officials meanwhile said that the Gaza Strip was facing serious fuel shortages affecting hospitals as well as water and sanitation facilities, calling for restrictions to be lifted.

Israeli Defence Minister Avigdor Lieberman on Sunday spoke of reopening the goods crossing, known as Kerem Shalom.

“If today and tomorrow the situation continues as it was yesterday, then on Tuesday we will allow Kerem Shalom to return to normal activity and the fishing zones will return to the same distances as before,” he said.

Lieberman, speaking at the crossing, stressed that calm also meant an end to months of kites and balloons carrying firebombs over the border fence from the Palestinian enclave run by Islamist movement Hamas to burn Israeli farmland.

Israeli authorities say hundreds of fires have been started by the firebombs since April.

Lieberman said “the key is quiet, calm, zero firebombs, zero friction on the fence and zero rockets or God forbid, shooting.”

A spokesman for Israel’s fire service said there were no fires caused by the devices along the Gaza border on Saturday and Sunday. He said there had been an average of around 24 per day in recent weeks.

But on Sunday evening the Israeli military said that one of its aircraft had earlier fired “at a terrorist squad launching arson balloons from the northern Gaza Strip into Israeli territory”.

There were no reports of casualties. The comments by Lieberman and Netanyahu came after a ceasefire was reached following a major flare-up of violence between Palestinian militants in Gaza and Israel on Friday.

The escalation — the second in as many weeks — followed months of tension that have resulted in a fourth war since 2008 could erupt between Hamas and Israel.

The ceasefire followed a wave of deadly Israeli air strikes across Gaza sparked by the death of an Israeli soldier shot near the border. There has been relative calm on the Gaza border since the ceasefire.

At the weekend we gave Hamas a very severe blow, and if necessary we will strike them sevenfold,” Netanyahu said.

‘Being fast depleted’

Israel announced on 9 July that the goods crossing was being closed to most deliveries partly in response to the firebombs and other incidents along the border fence. On 17 July, it further tightened the restrictions to also prevent fuel deliveries while other incidents along the border fence. On 17 July, it further tightened the restrictions to also prevent fuel deliveries while other incidents along the border fence are being fast depleted.”

The crossing has remained open for food and medicine on a case-by-case basis.

The UN humanitarian coordinator for the Palestinian territories, Jamie McGoldrick, said on Sunday that “supplies of emergency fuel provided by the UN for critical facilities in Gaza are being fast depleted.”

He called on Israel to end restrictions on fuel imports and warned hospitals could soon be forced to close, with emergency supplies set to run out in early August.

“Given ongoing blackouts of about 20 hours a day, if fuel does not come in immediately, people’s lives will be at stake, with the most vulnerable patients, like cardiac patients, those on dialysis, and newborns in intensive care, at highest risk,” he said in a statement.

Gaza suffers from a severe electricity shortage and relies on generators in many cases.

Mass protests and clashes erupted on the Gaza border on 30 March and have continued at varying levels since then.

At least 140 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli fire since 30 March. The soldier shot dead on Friday was the first Israeli killed in that period.

Gaza’s only other goods crossing is with Egypt. It had been kept largely closed in recent years, but Egypt opened it in mid-May and the crossing, known as Rafah, has remained open most of the time since then. —AFP

Ethiopian PM seeks to embrace ‘multi-party democracy’

NAIROBI, (Kenya) — Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed has called for “multi-party democracy”, his chief of staff said on Sunday in a country that has long been under the tight control of a single coalition.

“Given our current politics, there is no option except pursuing a multiparty democracy supported by strong institutions that respects human rights and the rule of law,” Abiy said, according to his chief of staff Fitsum Arega on Twitter.

“This will allow us to mediate our differences peacefully and to ensure lasting progress.”

The comments were made at a meeting Abiy had with leaders of numerous political parties and indicate a possible opening up of the narrow political space.

It also signals the latest in a series of stunning turnarounds under Abiy who has pursued economic reforms and sealed peace with neighbouring Eritrea since coming to power in April.

Ethiopia is technically a multi-party democracy but in practice has been dominated since 1991 by the Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) which, together with its allies, controls every seat in parliament.

Earlier this month Ethiopia’s parliament removed three groups from the country’s list of “terrorist” organizations in a bid to mend fences with the political opposition.

Rights groups have long accused Ethiopia of using allegations of involvement with the armed anti-government groups Ginbot 7, Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) and Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF) as a pretext to jail journalists and opposition politicians.

Since Abiy came to power, thousands of dissidents have been released from jail and this week parliament voted to grant amnesty to “individuals and groups either under investigation or convicted on treason, crime against the constitutional order and armed struggle.”

—AFP

Yemen government demands Huthis release captives to restart talks

RIYADH (Saudi Arabia) — Yemen’s government said on Sunday that it will return to the negotiating table with Huthi rebels if they release all the prisoners they are holding.

“It is necessary to show goodwill before the start of new talks through the release of all the detainees in their prisons,” Yemeni Prime Minister Ahmed bin Dagher said at talks with United Nations envoy Martin Griffiths in Riyadh, the Saba news agency reported.

He also demanded for the Huthis to “facilitate the arrival of humanitarian aid” in provinces where they control airports and ports.

UN envoy to Yemen Griffiths has been trying for weeks to restart talks on ending the conflict between Yemen’s Saudi-backed government and the Iran-aligned Huthis that has killed nearly 10,000 people in the past three years.

Bin Dagher told Griffiths that any talks would have to lead to a withdrawal of Huthi forces from the capital Sanaa and other towns under their control, and the group’s disarmament, Saba reported.

The war has pushed the impoverished country to the brink of famine, triggering what the UN says is the world’s worst single humanitarian crisis. —AFP
Trump hits back at Iran ‘war’ talk

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump on Sunday hit back at bellicose comments by Iran’s president, warning him of dire consequences as the US intensifies its campaign against the Islamic republic.

“NEVER, EVER THREATEN THE UNITED STATES AGAIN OR YOU WILL SUFFER CONSEQUENCES THE LIKES OF WHICH FEW THROUGHOUT HISTORY HAVE EVER SUFFERED BEFORE,” Trump said on Twitter in a direct message to President Hassan Rouhani.

Earlier Sunday the Iranian leader had warned Trump not to “play with the lion’s tail,” saying that conflict with Iran would be the “mother of all wars”.

The US president, writing his entire message in capital letters, continued his riposte:

“WE ARE NO LONGER A COUNTRY THAT WILL STAND FOR YOUR DEMEANT-ED WORDS OF VIOLENCE & DEATH. BE CAUTIOUS!”

His comments Sunday night came after Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, in a major address to the Iranian diaspora in California, said Washington is not afraid to sanction top-ranking leaders of the “nightmare” Iranian regime.

Trump in May pulled the US out of a hard-won agreement with Tehran, also signed by Britain, China, France, Germany and Russia, which lifted sanctions in exchange for curbs on Iran’s nuclear programme.

The 2015 agreement was in response to fears that Iran was developing a nuclear bomb.

European allies maintain their support for the deal and have vowed to stay in it, though their businesses fear US penalties.

Following Washington’s pull-out Pompeo unveiled Washington’s tougher line under which, he said, the US would lift the new sanctions if Iran ended its ballistic missile programme and interventions in regional conflicts from Yemen to Syria.

Rouhani immediately dismissed those US threats and on Sunday said: “You cannot provoke the Iranian people against their own security and interests.”

'More to come'

In a televised speech ahead of Pompeo’s address, Rouhani repeated his warning that Iran could shut down the strategic Strait of Hormuz, a vital shipping lane for international oil supplies.

“Peace with Iran would be the mother of all peace and war with Iran would be the mother of all wars,” Rouhani said.

On Saturday, Iran’s supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said US words and “even... their signature” cannot be trusted, “so negotiations with the United States are useless.”

The US in January had already sanctioned Saeed Jalili, the head of Iran’s judiciary, for human rights violations, Pompeo noted on Sunday.

“We weren’t afraid to tackle the regime at its highest level,” he said, confirming that Washington wants all countries to reduce their imports of Iranian oil “as close to zero as possible” by 4 November, or face American sanctions.

Pompeo called on “all gov- ernments to end their flirtations” with Iran’s regime, and said “there’s more to come” in terms of sanctions.

“Regime leaders — especial- ly those at the top of the IRGC and the Quds Force like Qassem Soleimani — must be made to feel painful consequences of their bad decision making,” said Pompeo, a longtime Iran hawk. He was referring to Iran’s special forces and Revolutionary Guards.

Rouhani immediately dis- missed those US threats and on Sunday said, “The United States has a nightmare for the Iranian people,” he said.

“The United States hears you. The United States supports you. The United States is with you.”

To reinforce that message, Washington’s top diplomat announced an intensified American propaganda campaign, through the launch of a multimedia channel with 24-hour coverage on television, radio, and social media. Pompeo refused to distin- guish between moderates and radicals at the heart of the Islam- ic republic.

The Trump administration is regularly suspected of favor- ing regime change in Iran, and Pompeo said “our hope is that ultimately the regime will make meaningful changes in its behav- ior both inside Iran and global- ly.”—AFP

Maltese PM says name cleared in Panama Papers probe

VALLETTA, Malta — Maltese Prime Minister Joseph Muscat said Sunday a year-long inquiry into allegations of fi- nancial wrongdoing linked to the Panama Papers scandal had cleared him.

Muscat called a snap election last year — which he won comfortably — after he and his entourage, including his wife Michelle, were accused of owning a company mentioned in the papers.

“Today, justice has been served,” a visibly emotional Muscat told a press conference.

He said a judicial investiga- tion running to 1,500 pages showed former opposition leader “Simon Busuttil has thrived on a lie in a bid to win power.”

And Muscat said that “the only honourable thing for (Busuttil) to do is resign from all his positions, including as MP”.

The year-long probe was conducted by judge Aaron Bugeja and its conclusions were published a day after the report had been passed on to the attorney general.

The inquiry also did not find any evidence that Muscat, his wife, his close aide Keith Schembri, Tourism Minister Konrad Mizzi, or former European Commissioner John Dalli were involved in money launder- ing or suspicious financial transactions involving holders of bank accounts in Azerbaijan via Pilatus Bank.

The allegations had been made on the blog of slain investiga- tive journalist Daphne Caruana Galizia, killed by a car bomb last year.

After winning the election, Muscat had promised to resign if the probe showed there was an “ounce of truth” in the alleg- ations.

Malta’s financial servic- es watchdog froze the assets of Pilatus Bank and removed the bank’s chairman Ali Sadri Hashemi Nejad in March, three months after three people were charged in connection with Caruana Galizia’s death.—AFP

Cuban president calls for fight against corruption

HAVANA — Cuban President Miguel Diaz-Canel on Sunday called on his countrymen to fight corruption and crimes in the country.

In his closing speech at the ordinary session of the National Assembly of People’s Power, Diaz-Canel said that “fighting corruption is not only a task of the government and the police force, but a mis- sion for the whole society.”

The president insisted that the “unity” of citizens would be the main tool against corruption in the island na- tion.

Cuban authorities con- sider corruption as a major threat to the country, with the potential to undermine its so- cialist ideology to a greater degree than the current fi- nancial crisis.

The Office of the Comp- troller General reported in May that a national audit of 361 state-owned entities had discovered economic damage worth over 1 billion US dollars.

The office added that 1,251 people had been sanc- tioned as a result.

“There will be no impuni- ty for the offenders,” Comptroller General of Cuba Gladys Bejerano told reporters.

The office was founded by former President Raul Castro in 2009 to bolster anti-corruption measures, especially in the state-run entrepreneurial sector. —Xinhua
Suspected acid attack seriously injures boy aged 3 in UK

LONDON — British police said Sunday they have arrested a man after a three-year-old boy was seriously injured in a “deleterious” suspected acid attack in central England on Saturday.

The boy is being treated for “serious burns to his arm and face” in hospital following the mid-afternoon incident at a discount store in the city of Worcester, according to local police.

A 39-year-old man from the nearby city of Wolverhampton was arrested on suspicion of conspiracy to commit grievous bodily harm and remained in custody on Sunday.

Police also released photos of three men that investigators would like to speak to. “At this time we are treating this as a deliberate attack on a three-year-old boy,” chief superintendent Mark Travis said, adding the motive was unclear.

“Officers are working hard to establish exactly what happened and what the substance involved was.”—AFP

EU finance chief blasts Trump over ‘inappropriate’ trade sanctions

BUENOS AIRES — EU finance chief Pierre Moscovici fired a barb at US President Donald Trump on Sunday as he called on both sides of an ongoing global trade dispute to “act as allies.”

“He and we must remain cool-headed.”

Trump’s protectionist policies have come under fire from all sides at the summit, which grouping finance ministers and central bankers from the world’s 20 largest economies. On Saturday, French finance minister Bruno Le Maire called on Trump to “return to reason.”

As well as imposing tariffs of 25 per cent on steel and 10 per cent on aluminum, Trump stuck a 25 per cent levy on $34 billion of goods from China with an additional $16 billion on the way.

He has threatened to target European automotive exports and impose duties on the entire $500 billion of goods the US imports from China.

“The impact of protectionist measures already implemented has been, luckily, so far limited, but the risk of escalation is there,” said Moscovici. The International Monetary Fund predicts that in a worst-case scenario, $430 billion — or a half percentage point of global GDP — could be cut in 2020 if all tariff threats and retaliations are carried out.

Further trade escalation conflicts would negatively affect welfare in all countries involved — in the US also,” said Moscovici.

Protectionism, he said, benefits no one, creating “no winners, only casualties.”

IMF chief Christine Lagarde had warned on Wednesday that the US economy was “especially vulnerable” to trade conflicts “because so much of its global trade will be subject to retaliatory measures.”—AFP

Scandal in Brazil over black man in mistaken identity case

RIO DE JANEIRO — Brazilians are up in arms over the arrest of a black man jailed for more than a week in Rio because he was mistaken for a suspect who was also an Afro-Brazilian with a shaved head.

“It does not change, and it will never change. Society is racist and it will always be,” Antonio Carlos Rodrigues told local media when he was released from jail late Friday.

The story might seem a bit different in a less diverse society but more than half of Brazilians are black or mixed race.

Police in Rio de Janeiro said they had opened an investigation “to establish the responsibilities” in this case.

The 43-year-old worker was arrested on July 13, accused of taking part in an armed robbery at the Venezuelan consulate.

To identify him, police compared video surveillance images from the consulate to photos the man had put on social networks.

In those images the suspect was wearing sunglasses. —AFP

**Invitation for Bids**

Date: 24 July 2018

Loan No. and Title: Loan 3330-MYA Power Transmission Improvement Project

Contract No. and Title: Package No (2) - (T) DPTSC/PTP/((2018-2019)) Design, Supply and Installation for 230kV Thaketa Substation Extension and Three New Substations at Kyakasan, South Oakkalapa and West University

Deadline for Submission of Bids: 6 September 2018, 13:00 hours (local time)

1. The Republic of Myanmar has received financing from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) toward the cost of the Power Transmission Improvement Project. Part of this financing will be used for payments under the contract named above. Bidding is open to bidders from eligible source countries of ADB.

2. The Department of Power Transmission and System Control (DPTSC) (“the Employer”) invites sealed bids from eligible bidders for the Extension of the 230kV Thaketa Substation and the Construction of three new substations at Kyakasan, South Oakkalapa and West University Substations (the Facilities). The Facilities are all located within Yangon region.

3. International Competitive Bidding will be conducted in accordance with ADB’s Single-Stage: One-Envelope bidding procedure and is open to all Bidders from eligible countries as described in the Bidding Document.

4. Only eligible Bidders with the following key qualifications should participate in this bidding:

   • Experience for successful completion of at least two (2) comparable contracts (Design, supply, delivery, installation and testing & commissioning of (a) GIS substation with voltage level 220 kV or higher at least on (1) contract to prove, (b) AIS substations with voltage level 220 kV or higher on turnkey basis) within the last ten (10) years as on the date of opening of proposals of which at least one (1) GIS substation and one (1) AIS substation shall be in successful operation for minimum of three (3) years.

   • Minimum average annual turnover of US$ 50.0 million calculated as total certified payments received for contracts in progress or completed, for the last three (3) years.

The qualification criteria are more completely described in the Bidding Document.

To obtain further information and inspect the bidding documents, bidders should contact:

Department of Power Transmission and System Control (DPTSC)
Address: Building No. 27, Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar
Mr. Kyi San Lin, Director
Telephone: 95 67 8104286
Website: http://www.moeep.gov.mm
Email: sedesignptp.mepe@gmail.com, kyilinn@gmail.com
Fax: 95 67 8104286

To purchase the bidding documents in English, eligible bidders should write to the address above requesting the bidding documents for the Facilities. And pay a nonrefundable fee of US$ 100.

The 43-year-old worker was arrested on July 13, accused of taking part in an armed robbery at the Venezuelan consulate.

To identify him, police compared video surveillance images from the consulate to photos the man had put on social networks.

In those images the suspect was wearing sunglasses. —AFP
Japan logs historic high temperature amid persistent heat wave

TOKYO — Japan logged its highest-ever temperature of over 41°C on Monday as a deadly heat wave continued to grip wide areas of the country.

The mercury hit 41.1°C in Kumagaya, Saitama Prefecture, near Tokyo, at 2:16 pm, eclipsing the previous record of 41.0°C marked in August 2013 in Shimanto, Kochi Prefecture, while Tokyo also logged a record-high 40.8°C in the city of Ome, according to the Japan Meteorological Agency.

Temperatures in Taji-mi, Gifu Prefecture, rose to 40.5°C after the central Japan city already reported 40.7°C on Wednesday, the agency said.

Through Monday, at least three people, all senior citizens, have died in prefectures surrounding Tokyo, according to the local authorities.

The three are a 90-year-old man in Chichibu, Saitama Prefecture, an 89-year-old man in Namegata, Ibaraki Prefecture, and a 95-year-old woman in Sano, Tochigi Prefecture, they said.

The agency has issued advisories over the scorching heat, urging people to drink water frequently and take measures against heatstroke.

Kyodo News ■

Chinese premier vows crackdown in latest pharma scare

SHANGHAI — Chinese Premier Li Keqiang has vowed stern action over the latest safety scare to hit the country’s pharmaceutical industry, as a mounting scandal over a rabies vaccine sent drug stocks tumbling.

China’s Food and Drug Administration announced late Sunday that it had ordered all production stopped at one of the country’s biggest vaccine makers, Changchun Changsheng Biotechnology.

Li said the latest case had crossed a “line of human ethics”, and vowed a thorough investigation and harsh consequences for any infractions or lax supervision.

(“We must resolutely strike with heavy blows all law-breaking criminal behavior; severely punish the criminals according to the law; and hold accountable those who were negligent in supervision,” Li said in a statement posted late Sunday on the government’s website.)

Regulators said last week they had halted production of a rabies vaccine made by the company, which is based in northeastern China, after finding fabricated records and other problems during an inspection.

China is hit regularly due to “lax supervision and inadequate control,” the regulator said.

Censors and regulators struggled to stay abreast of the public’s response to the latest scandal, deleting posts on WeChat over the weekend as state media tried to take control of the narrative.

Stocks of major Chinese vaccine producers plunged on Monday.

In Shenzhen, Walvax Biotechnology, which makes a range of flu and other vaccines, dropped by its 10 per cent daily allowable limit, as did vaccine suppliers Shenzhen Kangtai Biological Products and Chongqing Zhifei Biological Products.

After a brief trading halt, shares of Changchun Changsheng’s parent company also fell by the 10 per cent limit.

The CFDA said last week that the problematic rabies vaccine had not left Changsheng’s factory, but state media reports have suggested otherwise.

Changchun Changsheng said on Sunday it had already halted production of a diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis vaccine that regulators found last year to be sub-standard.

But concerns have grown that problematic vaccines had already been administered to children.

Authorities in Hebei announced on Monday that nearly 150,000 people in the northern province received a sub-standard diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis vaccine made by another firm, Wuhan Institute of Biological Products.

Hebei said it has launched steps to re-administer new vaccines to those affected.

The state-run Global Times newspaper questioned in an editorial Monday how dodgy vaccines were still being produced following the harsh lessons of the past.

“People do not understand why the country had not prevented a sub-standard vaccine from being produced in the first place,” it said, suggesting it may be due to “lax supervision and light punishment.” —AFP
FUKUI, Japan — A Japanese hand-made paper retailer is taking on the role of “sommelier” and bringing out the charm in the traditional craft to consumers at home and overseas amid a declining demand for such products.

To showcase the paper’s unique use in home interior, Yoshinao Sugihara, the 10th-generation successor of a traditional paper wholesaler in Echizen, Fukui Prefecture, opened a gallery next to his shop in January.

Echizen is one of the country’s most prominent areas producing “washi,” or traditional Japanese hand-made paper.

Among eye-catching displays at Sugihara’s renovated traditional warehouse are a paper tapestry designed with a watermark and a huge sheet of paper stretching more than 10 meters.

Just as a sommelier chooses wine according to the taste and budget of customers, the 56-year-old Sugihara, as a “washi sommelier,” picks the paper and craftsmen tailoring to the needs of his architect and designer clients. “I myself do not make (Japanese paper) but I have extensive knowledge of Echizen paper,” said Sugihara, who began advertising it, alarmed that the product is not selling.

According to a local industry association, Echizen paper, which dates back about 1,500 years, boasts the largest production both in terms of volume and types in Japan, backed by about 60 factories and more than 300 craftsmen.

Annual sales hit a peak of about 9.4 billion yen ($83 million) in 1990 but has since declined to about one-third on the back of falling demand of paper used for fusuma, or sliding doors to partition rooms in traditional Japanese houses, and the digitalization of stock certificates.

After taking over the family business, Sugihara entered an international interior exhibition and bringing out the charm in the potential of washi in the interior industry, where the use of Japanese paper was considered novel at the time.

He has so far been involved in hundreds of lighting and art projects at hotels and restaurants at home and abroad and was invited to join exhibitions and joint projects with artists in Europe and the United States.

“I was able to respond to various requests thanks to the technique of Echizen craftsmen,” Sugihara said, referring to their skills in being able to produce any kind of paper.

Following his travel overseas, he was reminded of the potential of Echizen as the production site of the paper but that the region still has a low profile in Japan.

“Now that the Japanese people today rarely appreciate traditional paper, I want them to know its beauty and diversity,” Sugihara said.—Kyodo News

Second time lucky for Denzel, whose new film tops box office

HOLLYWOOD (United States) — Superstar Denzel Washington had never made a sequel in a career reaching back nearly four decades, but when he did, with the Sony-Columbia production of “The Equalizer 2,” it managed to open at the top of the North American box office.

With estimated ticket sales of $35.8 million for the three-day weekend, “Equalizer” edged out another new sequel, star-studded “Mamma Mia! Here We Go Again,” according to industry tracker Exhibitor Relations.

In his new film, Washington again plays a former black-ops agent — and now soft-spoken Lyft driver — who is drawn back into action to avenge a friend’s death. Director Antoine Fuqua also made “Training Day,” which earned Washington a best actor Oscar nod.

Industry watchers had expected Universal’s “Mamma Mia!” to open atop the box office, but its ticket sales of $34.4 million were “by no means a disappointment” at 22 per cent above the original film’s opening, according to Hollywood Reporter.

With a star-studded cast — including Meryl Streep, Amanda Seyfried, Colin Firth and Pierce Brosnan — the film is set after the events of the original “Mamma Mia!” but uses flashbacks to fill in the story of Streep’s carefree character on the sun-splashed Greek island where an ABBA soundtrack is never far away.

In third spot was “Hotel Transylvania 3: Summer Vacation” from Sony, which took in $23.2 million. The animated comedy, whose voice cast includes Adam Sandler and Selena Gomez, follows Count Dracula and his family as they get away from their hotel for their own vacation.

Slipping from second last week to fourth was “Ant-Man and the Wasp,” the 20th release in Disney’s Marvel Cinematic Universe, at $16.1 million. It has ex-con Scott Lang (Paul Rudd) struggling to balance home life and Ant-Man duties as he and old flame Hope van Dyne (Evangeline Lilly, alias the Wasp), take up an urgent new mission.—AFP
AMSTERDAM — A world AIDS assembly opens in Amsterdam on Monday hoping to harness the star power of activists Elton John and Prince Harry to bolster the battle against an epidemic experts warn may yet spiral out of control.

Thousands of delegates — researchers, campaigners, activists and people living with the killer virus — will attend the 22nd International AIDS Conference amid warnings that “dangerous complacency” may cause an unstoppable resurgence.

In recent days, experts have alerted that new HIV infections, while down overall, have surged in some parts of the world as global attention has waned and funding has leveled off. And they lamented that too sharp a focus on vi- rus-suppressing treatment may have diverted attention from basic prevention programmes such as condom distribution, with the result that the AIDS-causing virus is still spreading easily among vulnerable groups.

“The encouraging reductions in new HIV infections that occurred for about a decade has embold- ened some to declare that we are within reach of ending AIDS,” Peter Piot, virus researcher and founder of the UNAIDS agency, said last week. However, “there is absolutely no evidence to support this conclusion,” he insisted, and warned: “The language on ending AIDS has bred a dangerous complacency.”

A UNAIDS report warned of a long and diffi- cult road ahead even as it reported a drop in new in- fections and AIDS deaths, and a record number of people on life-saving antiretroviral therapy (ART).

These hard-fought gains could be reversed, experts said on Sunday as finishing touches were put on the venue that will host some 15,000 delegates — also including celebri- ties Charlize Theron and Conchita — for five days. An alarming rate of new infections coupled with an exploding young population in hard-hit countries could spell “a crisis of epic pro- portions,” said Mark Dybul, a veteran American AIDS researcher and diplomat.

“Bad things will happen if we don’t have more money,” he told a pre-con- ference, saying the world was “probably at the highest risk ever of losing control of this epidemic.”

“Not to war on drugs”

Dybul and colleagues said donor and domestic funding has dropped signifi- cantly and would likely con- tinue to decline, from about 20.6 billion euros ($24.1 bil- lion) last year — most of it financed from the domestic budgets of nations with the heaviest AIDS burden.

According to UNAIDS, the funding gap is almost $7 billion per year. Under Donald Trump, the US ad- ministration has proposed massive spending cuts, though these have so far failed to pass through Con- gress. The United States is by far the biggest funder of the global AIDS response.

The immune sys- tem-attacking HIV virus has infected nearly 80 mil- lion people since the early 1980s. More than 35 million have died. Today data show the infection rate is rising in about 50 countries, and has more than doubled in eastern Europe and cen- tral Asia. Experts regret that the focus on preven- tion has faded. Last year’s 1.8 million new infections showed that “unless we did something complete- ly drastic, we will not get anywhere near” the target of no more than 500,000 in 2020, said Ndiku Kilonzo of Kenya’s National AIDS Control Council. “We have a crisis and it is a preven- tion crisis,” she said.

At high risk are sex workers, gay men and people who inject drugs — many of whom are forced onto society’s fringes by repressive laws in their countries.

At the conference, NGOs will launch a liber- alisation campaign titled: “Just say no to the war on drugs,” a direct challenge to the 1980s Reagan adminis- tration’s “Just say no” message at the height of America’s “war on drugs”.

The programme’s criminal-isation of drug use has compounded the stigma and discrimination ex- perienced by users. —AFP

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WASHINGTON — The United States space agency NASA is preparing to launch a probe on an Au- gust morning to study the Sun closer than any human-made object ever has, revealing multiple mysteries behind the star.

The car-sized spacecraft called Parker Solar Probe is slated to lift off no earlier than August 6 on a United Launch Alliance Delta IV Heavy, according to NASA.

The Sun’s atmosphere constantly sends magnet- ized material outward, en- veloping our solar system far beyond the orbit of Pluto. Coils of magnetic ener- gy can burst out with light and particle radiation that travel through space and create temporary disrup- tions in our atmosphere, sometimes garbling radio and communications sig- nals near Earth. Therefore, the key to understanding its origins lies in under- standing the Sun itself and that’s where Parker Solar Probe comes in, accord- ing to the researchers at NASA.

The spacecraft carries a lineup of instruments to study the Sun both remote- ly and directly.

One science task is the mystery of the accelera- tion of the solar wind, the Sun’s constant outflow of material, and the other is the secret of the corona’s enormously high tempera- tures, according to NASA.

Also, Parker Solar Probe’s instruments might reveal the mechanisms at work behind the acceler- ation of solar energetic particles, which can reach speeds more than half as fast as the speed of light as they rocket away from the Sun. Such particles can interfere with satellite electronics, especially for satellites outside of Earth’s magnetic field.

The biggest break- through for the spacecraft is its cutting-edge heat shield, according to NASA.

“The Thermal Pro- tection System (the heat shield) is one of the spacecraft’s mission-enabling technologies,” said Andy Driesman, Parker Solar Probe project manager at the Johns Hopkins Applied Physics Lab. “It allows the spacecraft to operate at about room temperature.”

The heat shield is a sandwich of carbon-carbon composite surrounding nearly four and half inches of carbon foam, which is about 97 per cent air.

Other critical innova- tions are the solar array cooling system and on- board fault management systems. The solar array cooling system allows the solar arrays to produce power under the intense thermal load from the Sun and the fault management system protects the space- craft during the long peri- ods of time when the space- craft can’t communicate with the Earth.

“The launch energy to reach the Sun is 35 times that required to get to Mars, and two times that needed to get to Pluto,” said Guo Yanping from the Johns Hopkins Applied Physics Laboratory, who designed the mission trajectory. The Delta IV Heavy is one of the world’s most powerful rockets.

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NASA to launch car-sized spacecraft to study Sun in August

PARIS — French IT ser- vices group Atos said on Sunday it has agreed to buy US information technolo- gy group Syntel in a move to significantly expand its presence in North America.

Atos said in a state- ment that it will acquire Syntel for $41 per share which amounts to around $3.4 billion.

“This transaction is a major step in the strategy of Atos to reach a global scale,” the French compa- ny said.

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‘Dangerous complacency’ feared as AIDS conference opens
**Ozil quits Germany side after ‘racism’ as Turkey applauds**

BERLIN, GERMANY — Mesut Ozil on Monday was warmly applauded by Turkey but faced uproar at home in Germany after announcing he was quitting the German national football team, lambasting “racism” over criticism for the side’s World Cup debate.

Ozil, who has Turkish roots but was born in Germany, had been under fire since posing for a controversial photograph with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan in May which sparked questions about his loyalty to Germany’s squad ahead of the tournament in Russia.

“It is with a heavy heart and after much consideration that because of recent events, I will no longer be playing for Germany at international level whilst I have this feeling of racism and disrespect,” he said in a statement on social media channels on Sunday.

Ozil, 29, said he had been unfairly blamed in Germany for the side’s shock group stage exit at the World Cup.

He insisted he was true to both his Turkish and German origins and did not intend to make a political statement by appearing with Erdogan a month ahead of elections in Turkey.

“I have two hearts, one German and one Turkish,” said Ozil.

The Turkish government of Erdogan, who has championed a campaign against what Ankara sees as growing Islamophobia in Europe, hailed Ozil’s move.

“I congratulate Mesut Ozil who by leaving the national team has scored the most beautiful goal against the virus of fascism,” Justice Minister Abdulhamit Gul wrote on Twitter.

“Turkey’s Sports Minister Mehmet Kasapoglu, like Gul posting the picture of a smiling Ozil with Erdogan, added: “We sincerely support the honourable stance that our brother Mesut Ozil has taken”.

**Immigrant when we lose**

The Arsenal midfielder blamed the German Football Federation (DFB) for failing to defend him against his most strident critics, lashing out at “mistrustment” in particular from DFB President Reinhard Grindel.

He said that Grindel and Germany coach Joachim Loew had asked him to give a “point statement to end all the talk and set the record straight” over the picture with Erdogan.

“Whilst I attempted to explain to Grindel my heritage, ancestry and therefore reasoning behind the photo, he was far more interested in speaking about his own political views and belittling my opinion.”

“I will no longer stand for being a scapegoat for his (Grindel’s) incompetence and inability to do his job properly,” he said.

“In the eyes of Grindel and his supporters, I am German when we win, but I am an immigrant when we lose.”

**Pleas German international Ilkay Gundogan, born in Germany to Turkish parents, was also present at the London meeting with Erdogan in May on the president’s visit to Britain, as well as striker Cenk Tosun of Everton who was born in Germany but represents Turkey.**

The photo, which was published on the presidential website and the Twitter feed of the ruling party came just before the June 24 polls Erdogan won to claim sweeping new powers.

Ozil said that despite the timing of the picture “it wasn’t about politics or elections, it was about me respecting the highest office of my family’s country”.

“My job is a football player and not a politician, and our meeting was not an endorsement of any policies,” Ozil added.

Germany is home to more than three million people of Turkish origin.

Manchester City midfielder Gundogan presented Erdogan with a signed club shirt on which he had written “to my president”.

The two players were booed by German fans in pre-World Cup friendlies over their appearance with the Turkish strongman, and Ozil said Sunday that he and his family had received threats.

**‘Crosses a line’**

Ozil said he could abide criticism of his performance on the pitch but not when it was linked to his ethnic background.

“If a newspaper or pundit finds fault in a game I play in, then I can accept this,” he said.

“But what I can’t accept are German media outlets repetitively blaming my dual-heritage and a simple picture for a bad World Cup on behalf of an entire squad,” he added, calling it “right-wing propaganda.”

“This crosses a personal line that should never be crossed, as newspapers try to turn the nation of Germany against me.”

He also furiously denounced disparaging remarks by former captain Lothar Matthaeus, who he noted “met with another world leader a few days back and received almost no media criticism” in an apparent reference to an appearance with Russian President Vladimir Putin.

**Molinari on verge of remarkable British Open victory**

CARNOSTIE, UNITED KINGDOM — Italy’s Francesco Molinari was on the verge of winning the British Open at Carnoustie on Sunday after a faultless two-under-par final round of 69.

Playing with Tiger Woods, Molinari birdied the last to take the outright lead in the clubhouse on eight under par, two shots ahead of Justin Rose and Rory McIlroy.

Molinari must now wait to see how Xander Schauffele concludes his last round before he can celebrate winning his first major. Schauffele was seven under par for the championship coming down the 17th, with Kevin Kisner six-under on the last. It had looked at one point as though Woods would end his decade-long wait to win a 15th major, but he faded for a 71 to finish on five under par.—AFP

Italy’s Francesco Molinari watches his shot from the 6th tee during his final round on day 4 of The 147th Open Golf Championship at Carnoustie, Scotland on 22 July, 2018.

PHOTO: AFP

**Busy Fognini seals Swedish title**

BASTAD (Sweden) — Italian Fabio Fognini, ranked 15 in the world, beat Frenchman Richard Gasquet, 6-3, 3-6, 6-1, in Sunday’s ATP Swedish Open final in Bastad.

It was the seventh career title for Fognini and, like the previous six, came on clay.

It was also his second title of the season after Sao Paulo and confirmed that at 31 he is playing his best tennis as he closes in on his highest ever ranking, 13th which he reached in 2014.

His busy weekend in Sweden did not end with the singles final. He was playing the doubles final with fellow Italian Simone Bolelli later against the South-American pair of Chilean Julio Peralta and Argentine Horacio Zeballos.

At 32, Gasquet remains on 16 career titles, the most recent on grass in s-Hertogenbosch, Netherlands in June.—AFP