President U Win Myint meets separately with BIMSTEC leaders, Nepali merchants

President U Win Myint who was in Nepal to attend the Fourth Summit of the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) met separately with the Indian Prime Minister, Interim Government of Bhutan Chief Advisor and Nepal Business Association Chairman and party yesterday.

President U Win Myint met with Republic of India Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi in the Madhavi Hall, Soaltee Crown Plaza Hotel, Kathmandu yesterday morning at local standard time 10:15 am.

During the meeting continuation of India’s positive cooperation toward Rakhine State development, increasing the momentum of the Kaladan River project, increasing bilateral relations and cooperation were discussed.

State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi receives Brazilian Vice Minister for Asia Pacific

Promotion of bilateral relations, cooperation discussed

DAW Aung San Suu Kyi, State Counsellor and Union Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, received H.E. Mr. Henrique da Silveira Sardinha Pinto, Vice Minister for Asia and the Pacific of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Brazil.

In the meeting, they cordially exchanged views on matters related to the promotion of bilateral relations and cooperation of the two countries. — Myanmar News Agency
Second Pyithu Hluttaw’s ninth regular session holds 14th-day meeting

THE 14th-day meeting of the Second Pyithu Hluttaw’s ninth regular session was held at the Pyithu Hluttaw meeting hall yesterday morning. At the meeting, questions on communications, compensation for land, auctioning of seized items before being damaged, upgrading of a bank branch and regional allowance for pensioners were asked and answered, two motions tabled and a report submitted.

Q&A Session
In the question and answer session, U Min Thein of Taungdwingyi constituency asked whether inspection plans and arrangements were made to inspect the maintenance and sturdiness of telecommunication towers. Deputy Minister for Transport and Communications U Tha Oo replied that Ministry of Transport and Communications, Directorate of Telecommunications has set guidelines for communication towers constructed on the ground and on the buildings to ensure that telecommunication operators and tower construction companies follow guidelines when applications are made to construct telecommunication towers. The telecommunication operations and telecom tower companies are to inspect for maintenance and sturdiness of the towers once every six months and after an occurrence of a natural disaster. Instructions were also issued to inspect other parts of the telecommunication towers on a regular schedule. Recommendation of engineers with licenses from Myanmar Engineering Council and city development committees are required to check the strength of the materials used in the construction work and arrangements are made for steel components used in the telecommunication towers to have test certificates of internationally-recognized ISO certified third party companies, explained the Deputy Minister. Regarding the question posed by U Tun Tun of Pwintthu constituency on plans to auction or dispose seized items (vehicles and wood products) before being damaged, Deputy Minister for Planning and Finance U Maung Maung Win replied that whenever information of transferring unlicensed vehicles seized from illegal trades is obtained and court decision was made to detain it as government property, vehicles that can be repaired and used are distributed to departments that are in need of vehicles. If the vehicles are beyond repair; arrangements are made to scrap it according to rules and regulations, said the Deputy Minister.

As for wood and other seized products, once court decision was made, the products are inspected and auctioned off by state/region governments, according to auction plan drawn up. If the seized items are of use for government departments, they are used by paying appropriate tax.

Arrangements will be made to speed up the processes so that the seized items are not wasted through being damaged, said the Deputy Minister. U Tin Nu @ U Tin Nu Aung of Mannaung constituency on the other hand asked if there is a plan to provide regional allowance to pensioners living in designated socially-difficult towns in the country. Deputy Minister for Planning and Finance U Maung Maung Win replied that the national budget is running at a deficit and thus there is no plan to provide regional allowance to pensioners living in remote townships in the same manner as hardship allowance provided to public servants serving in remote townships. Similarly, questions raised by Dr. U Saw Naing from South Okkalapa constituency of plan to increase a bus line in South Okkalapa Township and U Oo Tun Maung of Pornagyan constituency on land compensation for 28 farmers whose farm lands were confiscated when the Sitway-Minbu railway line passed over their farm lands, were replied by Deputy Minister U Tha Oo, while a question by U Kyin Wan of Hopan constituency on plans to upgrade banks in Hopan Township was answered by Deputy Minister U Maung Maung Win. Hluttaw decides to approve Myanmar Gemstone Bill
After the question and answer session, Hluttaw decided to approve the Myanmar Gemstone Bill, approved and sent with amendments by Amyotha Hluttaw.

Two motions tabled
Next, Dr. Daw Thet Thet Khang of Dagon constituency tabled a motion urging the government to set up appropriate reform policies to reform state-owned enterprises, while U Myo Zaw Aung of Kawlin constituency tabled another motion urging the government to set up and implement a strategy to reduce and eliminate illegal trade.

Hluttaw decided to discuss the two motions and announced for Hluttaw representatives who wanted to discuss the motions to register their names.

Submission of Pyithu Hluttaw Rights Committee report
Afterwards, Pyithu Hluttaw’s Rights Committee report was submitted to the Hluttaw by committee secretary Dr. Hla Moe. Announcement was also made for Hluttaw representatives who wanted to discuss the report to enroll their names. The 13th-day meeting of the ninth regular session of the Second Pyithu Hluttaw is scheduled for 5 September.—Myo Myint (MNA)

Second Amyotha Hluttaw’s ninth regular session holds 14th-day meeting

THE 14th-day meeting of the Second Amyotha Hluttaw’s ninth regular session was held yesterday morning at the Amyotha Hluttaw meeting hall where astereisk-marked questions were asked and answered, discussions on Major Bridge bill and Myanmar Mining Rules were held.

Q&A session
In the asterisk-marked questions raised, U Hla Myint @ U Hla Myint Than of Mon State constituency 11 asked why permission to construct towers and tower construction companies are allowed inspection plans and arrangements are made to inspect the maintenance and sturdiness of the towers once every six months and after an occurrence of a natural disaster. Instructions were also issued to inspect other parts of the telecommunication towers on a regular schedule. Recommendation of engineers with licenses from Myanmar Engineering Council and city development committees are required to check the strength of the materials used in the construction work and arrangements are made for steel components used in the telecommunication towers to have test certificates of internationally-recognized ISO certified third party companies, explained the Deputy Minister. Regarding the question posed by U Tun Tun of Pwintthu constituency on plans to auction or dispose seized items (vehicles and wood products) before being damaged, Deputy Minister for Planning and Finance U Maung Maung Win replied that whenever information of transferring unlicensed vehicles seized from illegal trades is obtained and court decision was made to detain it as government property, vehicles that can be repaired and used are distributed to departments that are in need of vehicles. If the vehicles are beyond repair; arrangements are made to scrap it according to rules and regulations, said the Deputy Minister.

As for wood and other seized products, once court decision was made, the products are inspected and auctioned off by state/region governments, according to auction plan drawn up. If the seized items are of use for government departments, they are used by paying appropriate tax.

Arrangements will be made to speed up the processes so that the seized items are not wasted through being damaged, said the Deputy Minister. U Tin Nu @ U Tin Nu Aung of Mannaung constituency on the other hand asked if there is a plan to provide regional allowance to pensioners living in designated socially-difficult towns in the country. Deputy Minister for Planning and Finance U Maung Maung Win replied that the national budget is running at a deficit and thus there is no plan to provide regional allowance to pensioners living in remote townships in the same manner as hardship allowance provided to public servants serving in remote townships. Similarly, questions raised by Dr. U Saw Naing from South Okkalapa constituency of plan to increase a bus line in South Okkalapa Township and U Oo Tun Maung of Pornagyan constituency on land compensation for 28 farmers whose farm lands were confiscated when the Sitway-Minbu railway line passed over their farm lands, were replied by Deputy Minister U Tha Oo, while a question by U Kyin Wan of Hopan constituency on plans to upgrade banks in Hopan Township was answered by Deputy Minister U Maung Maung Win. Hluttaw decides to approve Myanmar Gemstone Bill
After the question and answer session, Hluttaw decided to approve the Myanmar Gemstone Bill, approved and sent with amendments by Amyotha Hluttaw.

Two motions tabled
Next, Dr. Daw Thet Thet Khang of Dagon constituency tabled a motion urging the government to set up appropriate reform policies to reform state-owned enterprises, while U Myo Zaw Aung of Kawlin constituency tabled another motion urging the government to set up and implement a strategy to reduce and eliminate illegal trade.

Hluttaw decided to discuss the two motions and announced for Hluttaw representatives who wanted to discuss the motions to register their names.

Submission of Pyithu Hluttaw Rights Committee report
Afterwards, Pyithu Hluttaw’s Rights Committee report was submitted to the Hluttaw by committee secretary Dr. Hla Moe. Announcement was also made for Hluttaw representatives who wanted to discuss the report to enroll their names. The 13th-day meeting of the ninth regular session of the Second Pyithu Hluttaw is scheduled for 5 September.—Myo Myint (MNA)

State government to demolish the building, according to rules and regulation. U Ko Ko Naing of Sagaing Region constituency 8 then said in small towns, only a small amount of municipal tax is collected and the towns were lagging behind in development. He asked if there is any plan to support the civic development work in such towns with support from state/region government fund or union government special fund. Nay Pyi Taw Council member U Aung Myin Tun replied that not only city development committee fund but state/region government funds were provided to small towns that were lagging behind in development. In reply to a question raised by U Hay Oo of Yangon Region constituency 2 on plans to resolve the water supply problem faced by people living in Shanteegei ward, Dagon Myothit (South), who are using water from a small creek, Nay Pyi Taw Council member U Aung Myin Tun replied that Yangon City Development Committee is implementing Lagunpyin water distribution project to provide water to Dagon Myothit (East), Dagon Myothit (South), Dagon Myothit (North), Dagon Myothit (Seikkan) townships and Thilawa Special Economic Zone. Once this project is completed, it will distribute a total of 40 million gallons of water; 10 million gallons to Thilawa Special Economic Zone and 30 million gallons to the four townships. Of the project works, a water treatment factory is 98 per cent complete and the construction of water distribution works, pipelines, pumping stations were being conducted with loan from the government of Japan and are now 15 per cent complete. The works are estimated to be completed by 2021, and water can be distributed by then. Shanteegei ward will also be included in the water distribution network and water will be distributed once the Lagunpyin project is completed, said the Nay Pyi Taw Council member. Similarly, questions posed by U Aung Myo of Sagaing Region constituency 2, U Nigun of Chin State constituency 1, U Min Swe Naing of Kachin State constituency 6 and U Wae Tun of Chin State constituency 11 were answered by Deputy Minister for Education U Win Maw Tun.

Discussion on Major Bridge Bill and Myanmar Mining Rules
Next U Ko Ko Naing of Sagaing Region constituency 8 discussed the Major Bridge Bill and U Saw Moi Myint @ Samu of Kayin State constituency 1 discussed the Myanmar Mining Rules. The 13th-day meeting of the ninth regular session of the Second Amyotha Hluttaw is scheduled for 5 September.—Aung Ye Thuwin (MNA)
President U Win Myint meets separately with BIMSTEC leaders, Nepali merchants

FROM PAGE-1

Next, President U Win Myint met with Interim Government of Bhutan Chief Advisor Mr. Dasho Tshering Wangchuk in Kathmandu, Nepal, yesterday.

Afterwards, President U Win Myint met with Nepal Chamber of Commerce President Mr. Rajesh Kazi Shrestha and party during which the attendance of Myanmar companies and merchants at a trade fair in Nepal, increasing bilateral trade and visits between business persons of the two countries were discussed.

Present at the meetings were Union Minister for International Cooper-ation U Kyaw Tin, Myanmar Ambassa-dor to Nepal Thiri Pyanchi U Tun Nay Lin and officials.— Myanmar News Agency

President U Win Myint meeting with Indian Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi in Kathmandu, Nepal, yesterday. PHOTO: MNA

President U Win Myint meeting with Nepal Chamber of Commerce in Kathmandu, Nepal, yesterday. PHOTO: MNA

President U Win Myint meeting with Interim Government of Bhutan Chief Advisor Mr. Dasho Tshering Wangchuk in Kathmandu, Nepal, yesterday. PHOTO: MNA

Independent Commission of Enquiry issues press release

THE Independent Commission of Enquiry (ICOE) held their second meeting from 28 to 31 August 2018. The ICOE is tasked to investigate allegations of human rights violations and related issues following the terrorist attacks by Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA) in Rakhine State with a view to seeking accountability and formulating recommendations on steps to be taken to ensure peace and stability in Rakhine State.

On 29th and 30th August 2018, the Commission met with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, State Counsellor of the Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, Vice-Senior General Soe Win, Deputy Command-er-in-Chief of Defence Services, Lt-Gen Kyaw Swe, Union Minis-ter for the Home Affairs, and U Kyaw Tint Swe, Union Minister for the Office of the State Counsellor. They also had a working lunch with the representatives from Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement and from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The ICOE appreciated the openness of the Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services and Union Minister for Home Affairs in sharing of information. They were heart-ened by the assurance of their full cooperation to the work of the ICOE and also welcomed their commitment to provide safe and secure passage to the sites to be visited.

There was a frank and open exchange of information and discussions on Rakhine State such as background history of Rakhine State, the current situation in Rakhine, the relat-ed works of the government in Rakhine State, the progress of work between Myanmar and Bangladesh governments and the work and objectives of the ICOE during the courtesy calls. The ICOE reiterated their commitment to ensure that the rule of law prevails, seek accountability and promote reconciliation.

On 31st August 2018, the ICOE made a day trip to the affected areas in the Northern Rakhine to have an understanding of the prevailing environment. They toured the villages in the Maungdaw region such as Nga Khau Ya, General Administrative Department and Shwe Zwar. During the visit, the Commission met with Rakhine Chief Minis-ter and was briefed on the government’s efforts for the repatriation process for the displaced persons who crossed over to Bangladesh after the terrorist attacks on 16 October 2016 and 25 August 2017 by ARSA in line with the principle of “voluntary, safe and dignified return” under the “Arrangement” signed by Myanmar and Bangladesh governments on 23 November 2017.

The activities of the Union Enterprise for Humanitarian Assistance, Resettlement, and Development in Rakhine (UEHRD) and their ten task-forces was also elaborated. The ICOE inspected one of the Reception Centres for returnees to understand the process of verification and to see first-hand the preparedness of Myanmar for the returnees. The ICOE Members also took time to dialogue with the different communities in the various villages in Northern Rakhine namely Rakhines, Muslims and Hindus living in mixed villages. They also spoke to some surviv-ors and their family-members of the terrorists’ attacks of 25-26th October 2018.

The ICOE met with a family of eight members who had returned to Myanmar on their own volition and not under the “Arrangement”. They had candi-ied discussions on their ex-periences prior and after their return.

This second meeting of the ICOE was very productive and allowed for more substantive discussions to take place. The field visits also provided them the opportunity to have better understanding of the situation on the ground and to hear the voices of the different communities.

Office of the Independent Commission of Enquiry (ICOE)  
Nay Pyi Taw  
31 August 2018

President U Win Myint meeting with Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at a trade fair in Kathmandu, Nepal, yesterday. PHOTO: MNA
Vice President U Henry Van Thio addresses NWRC coord meeting 3/2018

VICE President U Henry Van Thio, who is the Chairman of the National Water Resources Committee (NWRC) attended and addressed the NWRC co-ordination meeting 3/2018 held at the meeting hall of Ministry of Transport and Communications, Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning.

In his address the Vice President said the NWRC had conducted eight meetings including this meeting. The country faces cyclones, flooding, inundations, river bank erosions and landslides during the raining season and those affected encounter economic, social, health and education losses.

The country on the other hand is spending funds annually for relief and rehabilitation works. Due to the efforts put up by relevant ministries and weather situation, this raining season saw less water related disasters along the Ayeyawady and Chindwin rivers. However much flooding and inundation are currently occurring along the Sittoung, Thanlwin, Bago, Shwekyin and Taninthayi rivers in Mon and Kayin states and Bago and Taninthayi regions. The President, the State Counsellor as well as responsible persons went to help and support flood affected citizens.

As Chairman of NWRC, a work coordination meetings related to recent floodings and inundations were held on 28 July and 8 August with relevant ministries and organizations.

At the moment, due to damage of the Swa dam’s spillway, a population of more than sixty thousands faces flooding. Assessments are underway to compile a list of losses in lives and property. At the moment, Tatmadaw Commander-in-Chief, Union Ministers, Deputy Ministers and responsible officials are on site to provide necessary coordination and supports, he said.

The NWRC is conducting water resources management and water sector development works and water related works of distribution of irrigation and potable waters, hydro-electricity generation, reducing flooding, inundation and water scarcity, reducing bank erosion, safety of waterway passages, personal hygiene and maintaining of natural surroundings, waste water disposal and maintaining of water quality in coordination with water related ministries, organizations and state/region governments.

In her meeting with Kayin State government members, the State Counsellor had pointed out the need to uncover the root causes of flooding and inundation and if the cause were due to silting of river ways, dredging and maintaining of river ways need to be conducted.

The State Counsellor also remarked on preventing the blockage of drains in towns by setting up proper regulations for waste disposal and informing the public about it to prevent flooding and inundation in towns.

As it is the raining season, the problems and dangers of flooding, inundation and water related disasters and health problems of mosquito breeding will be encountered.

Majority of the meeting decisions on future work of the committee has been implemented and remaining works will also be implemented. Meeting attendees can support river banks, disposal of waste waters in rivers and managing waste disposals, systematic usage of underground water, establishing a good water law, short and long term work processes to reduce flooding and

secretary Dr. Khin Ni Thi explained about work processes relating to drawing up water laws and works conducted by the advisory group.

Following this, Union Ministers Dr. Aung Thu and U Win Khaing, Deputy Minister Major Than Htut, state/region government ministers, heads of departments and officials discussed and explained about experiences of governments in states/regions where recent flooding and inundation was occurring, arrangements made to mitigate damages and losses, maintaining and improving water ways and works of ministerial departments.

The meeting came to a close after Vice President U Henry Van Thio had given his comments on the discussions and suggestions; he said there was a need to place emphasis on the requirement of the country and to listen to the voices of the people as the committee conducted its work for the long term development of the country’s water resources.

The meeting was attended by NWRC member union level organization members, state/region government member ministers, heads of departments, advisory group chairman and members, technicians and officials. — Myanmar News Agency
President U Win Myint attends BIMSTEC Summit, closing of 4th BIMSTEC Summit

President U Win Myint attended the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) Summit meeting and the closing ceremony of 4th BIMSTEC Summit meeting yesterday.

President U Win Myint and First Lady Daw Cho Cho arrived at the BIMSTEC Summit venue Soaltee Crown Plaza Hotel swimming pool at local standard time 9:30 a.m. and were welcomed by the Nepalese Prime Minister Mr. Khadga Prasad Sharma Oli and wife.

Next, President U Win Myint and First Lady Daw Cho Cho posed for commemorative photos with heads of states and heads of governments of BIMSTEC member countries who were attending the summit.

Afterwards, President U Win Myint attended the BIMSTEC Summit meeting. BIMSTEC Summit meeting was attended by heads of states and heads of governments of BIMSTEC member countries.

Later, President U Win Myint attended the closing ceremony of 4th BIMSTEC Summit meeting held in the Soaltee Crown Plaza Hotel.

At the event heads of states and heads of governments of BIMSTEC member countries discussed and approved the 15th and 16th BIMSTEC ministerial level meeting reports.

Following this, BIMSTEC secretary Mr. Shahidul Silam read and submitted the BIMSTEC cooperative work report of member countries.

President U Win Myint and heads of states and heads of governments of BIMSTEC member countries then attended and observed the foreign ministers of BIMTEC member countries signing the Memorandum of Understanding for Establishment of the BIMSTEC Grid Interconnection.

After the signing of the MoU, heads of states and heads of governments of BIMSTEC member countries approved and announced the 4th BIMSTEC Summit meeting declaration.

Nepali Prime Minister Mr. Khadga Prasad Sharma Oli then handed over the duty of BIMSTEC chair to Sri Lanka Prime Minister Mr. Maithripala Sirisena after which the Nepalese Prime Minister delivered a concluding speech. After this, President U Win Myint posed for commemorative photos with heads of states, heads of governments, foreign ministers of BIMSTEC member countries and officials.

After the event, President U Win Myint, First Lady Daw Cho Cho and party left Soaltee Crown Plaza Hotel by motorcade and arrived at the Kathmandu Tribhuvan International Airport and departed for Myanmar. They were seen off by Nepalese Deputy Prime Minister Mr. Ishwor Pokhrel, Myanmar Ambassador to Nepal Thiri Pyan Chu, U Tun Nay Lin and Chief of Protocol Mr. Deepak Adhikari of the Nepalese Foreign Ministry and officials.

President U Win Myint, First Lady Daw Cho Cho and party arrived back in Nay Pyi Taw International Airport yesterday.

President U Win Myint, other leaders of BIMSTEC member countries and officials posing for a documentary photo at BIMSTEC yesterday. PHOTO: MNA

Signing Ceremony for BIMSTEC MOU on Grid interconnection being convened in Kathmandu, Nepal yesterday. PHOTO: MNA

President U Win Myint and the First Lady are welcomed by officials at Nay Pyi Taw International Airport yesterday. PHOTO: MNA

President U Win Myint greets with Nepali Prime Minister Mr. Khadga Prasad Sharma Oli at closing of BIMSTEC Summit. PHOTO: MNA

President U Win Myint and the First Lady are welcomed by officials at Nay Pyi Taw International Airport yesterday. PHOTO: MNA

President U Win Myint attends BIMSTEC Summit, closing of 4th BIMSTEC Summit. PHOTO: MNA

President U Win Myint attending the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) Summit meeting in Kathmandu, Nepal yesterday. PHOTO: MNA

President U Win Myint, other leaders of BIMSTEC member countries and officials posing for a documentary photo at BIMSTEC yesterday. PHOTO: MNA

President U Win Myint attending the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) Summit meeting in Kathmandu, Nepal yesterday. PHOTO: MNA
RAKHINE State Chief Minis-
ter U Nyi Pu and members of
the Rakhine State cabinet met
with Chairperson of the Inde-
pendent Commission of Enquiry
Ambassador Rosario Manalo
and members at the Sittway Air-
port after the commission tour
to Maungtaw, Rakhine State,
yesterday.

At the meeting Chief Min-
ister U Nyi Pu said he thanked
the commission for the visit to
Rakhine, expressing his hope
that the chairperson and mem-
ers of the commission would
satisfy the tour as they enjoy
environment, climate and his-
toric cultural areas.

He continued to say that
the leaders of the State, the
government and people of the
Rakhine State are very sorry
for the conflicts happened un-
expectedly in the state and the
commission would see the truth
as it observed the true situation
of the Rakhine issue.

The Chief Minister also ex-
pressed his hope that Rakhine
State would see better future as
the government making its best
for the state, adding that the trip
of the Independent Commission
of Enquiry would be supportive
for the development of Rakhine
State.

Afterwards, an official of the
Rakhine State Government gave
presentation on terrorist attacks
by ARSA including conflicts in
2017, current preparedness for
repatriation of displaced people.

Afterwards, Ambassador
Rosario Manalo, Chairperson
of the Independent Commission
of Enquiry, expressed thanks to
the Chief Minister and officials
for explaining the situation of
issues in Maungtaw.

She said the commission
was very happy and satisfied
with the tour as they could see
the situation on the ground with
transparency and meet the local
people.

On behalf of the commis-
sion, Mrs. Rosario Manalo
pledged to work with fair and
without bias.

Afterwards, Dr. Aung Tun
Thet, Chief Coordinator of the
Union Enterprise for Human-
itarian Assistance and Reset-
tlement and Development in
Rakhine State explained the
works of the UEHRD.

Following the meeting, the
chairperson and members of
the commission left Sittway.

Maung Sein Lwin.—Maung Sein
Lwin (Myanma Alinn)

INDEPENDENT Commission of
Enquiry visited Maungtaw, Rakh-
line State, yesterday and met with
and local people and authorities.

Ambassador Mrs. Rosar-
io Manalo, Chairperson of the
Independent Commission of
Enquiry, and members U Mya
Thein, Ambassador Kenzo Oshi-
ma and Prof. Dr. Aung Tun Thet
left Yangon yesterday morning
and arrived Sittway at 8 am.

The delegation, accompa-
nied by Deputy Minister for Social
Welfare, Relief and Resettlement
U Soe Aung, Rakhine State Social
Affairs Minister Dr. Chan Thar
and officials, flew to Nga Khu Ya
Reception Centre by helicopter.

At the centre, In-charge
of the centre U Htay Maung
explained works related with re-
patriation and Chairperson
Mrs. Rosario Manalo and members
of the commission raised questions.

Afterwards, the delegation
met with local people at the Office
of Nga Khu Ya Village Admin-
istration and questioned about
their livelihood.

Following the meeting, the
delegation visited Kaing Gyi
(Mro) Village, Shwe Zar Village
and Pann Taw Pyin Village and
met with local villagers cordially.

During the visits to villages,
they witnessed the development
works and also discussed with
local authorities for the livelihood
of the villagers.

Afterwards, the Chairperson
of the ICOE and members held
talks with local authorities led
by Maungtaw District Deputy
commissioner U Ye Htut and de-
partmental officials in the district
over socio economy, transporta-
tion and regional development
tasks in the district.—Maung Sein
Lwin

Ambassador Mrs. Rosario Manalo meets with local people in Maungtaw, Rakhine State yesterday.

Chairperson Mrs. Rosario Manalo and members of the Independent Commission of Enquiry meeting with
local people during their field visits in Maungtaw yesterday.

Chairperson Mrs. Rosario Manalo and members meeting with officials at Nga Khu Ya Reception Centre at Nga Khu Ya Village.

Rakhine State government holds meeting with Independent Commission of Enquiry in Sittway.

PHOTO: MIN HTET
UN Security Council held open briefing on “The situation in Myanmar”

THE United Nations Security Council held an open briefing on “The situation in Myanmar” on 28 August 2018 at 3:00 p.m under the presidency of the United Kingdom. The briefing was chaired by Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon, Minister of State for the Commonwealth and the United Nations. United Nations Secretary-General Mr. Antonio Guterres, Associate Administrator of UNDP Mr. Tegegnework Gettu, UNHCR Goodwill Ambassador Ms. Cate Blanchett briefed the Council. All members of the Council took part in the discussion.

According to Article 37 of the rules of procedures of the Security Council, as countries concerned to Myanmar and Bangladesh were also invited to deliver statement at the briefing. At the briefing, Permanent Representative of Myanmar, Ambassador U Hau Do Suan, participated and delivered a statement. Some salient points of his statement are as follows:

- At the outset, please allow me to pay tribute to the late Dr. Kofi Annan, former Secretary-General of the United Nations who had contributed tremendously toward our efforts to find lasting solutions to the problems that were jeopardizing peace and progress in Rakhine State.
- We should learn from his way of solving conflicts in a peaceful manner with a constructive and caring approach.
- An Advisory Commission on the Rakhine State headed by Dr. Kofi Annan was established on 5 September 2016. Barely a month later, a religious extremist terrorist group called Aqa Mul Mujahidin (later became Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army-ARSA) launched its first attack on three Border Police posts in northern Rakhine State on 9 October 2016. The attack was premeditated and well organized, causing death of 13 security personnel and other civilians.
- The Advisory Commission submitted its interim report on 16 March 2017 which addressed some of the most urgent challenges facing the state including the immediate security concerns following October terrorist attack of police posts.
- On 24 August 2017, the Rakhine Advisory Commission presented its final report including 88 recommendations to the Government of Myanmar. We reviewed the report and decided to carry on the task to implement the recommendations in good faith to the fullest extent, within the shortest timeframe possible, and consonant with the situation on the ground.
- In the early hour of 25 August 2017, just a few hours after Mr. Kofi Annan handed his final report, ARSA launched premeditated, well planned and coordinated indiscriminate armed attacks on 30 Border Guard posts and one army Battalion headquarters in northern Rakhine. The attacks caused death of dozens of security personnel as well as many innocent civilians. ARSA has also brutally killed over 250 non-Muslims ethnic minorities in northern Rakhine since October 2016.
- On 25 August 2017, ARSA massacred a hundred Hindus, which was well documented.
- The ARSA attack is predictable and logical response of Myanmar security forces to protect the life and property of every citizen, resulting in the subsequent mass displacement of people.
- These are plain facts and nothing but the truth. These events were well planned and executed with the support of foreign terrorist organizations.
- The present grave humanitarian problem and the untold suffering of the innocent civilian people of all communities in Rakhine State were carefully calculated, instigated and created by ARSA.
- Their objective was to undermine Myanmar Government’s commitment and efforts to find lasting solution through the speedy implementation of the Commission’s recommendations and to elicit maximum international pressure on Myanmar to achieve their political goals.
- We share deep sympathy and concern for all displaced persons, friends, especially women and children. We believe that we will able to solve the issue with our neighbor Bangladesh if we work together amicably in the spirit of good neighbourliness.
- According to the Agreement on physical arrangement for repatriation, the process of repatriation was scheduled to have commenced on 23 January 2018.
- In line with these bilateral agreements, Myanmar made arrangements with momentum for the repatriation of verified displaced persons. We have been ready to receive the first batch of verified returnees since 23 January.
- We call on Bangladesh to fulfill its obligations in accordance with the bilateral agreements, to allow without delay, the return of verified persons who consented to return to Rakhine voluntarily.
- Another important issue is the systematic repatriation of displaced persons staying on the border. Since occupying the areas 150 feet from the international border line is unlawful, these people put themselves unwittingly in a situation that can affect stability of the two bordering countries. It is highly possible that the areas become an ARSA terrorist foothold. In this regard, we have requested Bangladesh authorities not to provide them any assistance from their side of the border; instead we are now arranging to provide humanitarian assistance for them from Myanmar side.
- Moreover, the Government of Myanmar also signed an MoU with the UNDP and the UNHCR to assist speedy and efficient resettlement and rehabilitation of the returnees. We have already mapped out potential resettlement sites. On 7 August, UN officials have been granted access to 23 villages in 13 village tracts, selected for the first phase of assessment programme. An additional three village tracts have also been marked out for the resettlement of IDPs residing near the borderline. We urge the UN team to start the assessment programme as soon as possible.
- The Government continues to implement the recommendations of the Rakhine Advisory Commission in earnest. 81 out of 88 recommendations have been implemented or under implementation.

In the process of implementation, the Government attaches great importance to the advice and opinion of the Advisory Board chaired by Dr. Surakiart Sathirathai, former Deputy Prime Minister of Thailand.

- We recognize the crucial role of the United Nations in addressing the issue of Rakhine and, the present humanitarian crisis in particular. We facilitated the visit of Security Council members and representative of neighbouring countries and the ASEAN chair in April this year. We welcomed appointment of Ambassador Christine Burgener as Special Envoy of the Secretary-General.
- Let me now turn to the question of accountability. The Government of Myanmar has made its position very clear that it will not condone any human rights abuses. Action will be taken against anyone if there is sufficient evidence. In this regard, the Government has established an Independent Commission of Enquiry, led by Ambassador Rosario Manalo, an eminent diplomat with rich experience in the field of human rights. The Commission also includes Ambassador Kenzo Oshima, another prominent diplomat, and two highly respected members of Myanmar.

The Commission is tasked to investigate allegations of human rights violations and related issues following the terrorist attacks with a view to seeking accountability and reconciliation, and to formulate recommendations on steps to be taken to ensure peace and stability in Rakhine State. The Commission will submit its report to the President of Myanmar within a year, including its recommendations prepared on the basis of the outcomes of its investigation.

The Government of Myanmar will provide protection to all those who are in contact with COEFO, particularly victims and witnesses. The Commission will conduct its mandate in the principles of independence, impartiality and objectivity.

With regard to the allegation of atrocity crimes committed by Myanmar security forces as contained in the recent report of the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar, I would like to reiterate that we did not accept the mandate of the Mission because we have our genuine concern by taking practical steps.

Besides, I have serious doubt on the intention of the timing of the release of the report.

The challenges we are facing today in Rakhine State is formidable. We shall not let these challenges derail our ultimate goal of democratic nation building.

While the primary responsibility to address the situation in Rakhine rests with the Government and people of Myanmar, objective, positive and constructive contribution and support of the international community is crucial for the success of Myanmar’s national efforts.

This is not the time for exploiting the plight of innocent people particularly women and children, from Rakhine for self-interest and political grandstanding. This is the time to act, to show our genuine concern by taking practical steps.

We should make important policy decisions based on facts and full understanding of the issues at hand. We should view this complex issue from a broader perspective.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Nay Pi Taw
Dated 30 August 2018
Active cooperation under the BIMSTEC framework is a must to fight terrorism and trans-national crime.

Myanmar took responsibility as a lead country of the BIMSTEC region under the authority of Narcotic Drugs, Psychotropic Substances and Precursor Chemicals. Myanmar is one of the most ethnically diverse countries in the world. It is home to 131 officially recognized ethnic groups, each with its own distinctive culture and adherence to a variety of religious beliefs, including Buddhism, Islam, Christianity and Hinduism. These religious groups have been living in harmony throughout the country.

The situation that we face today is due to terrorism and is not based on any religion.

Therefore, Myanmar attaches great importance to the issues of terrorism and trans-national crime, and assures its continued active cooperation under the BIMSTEC framework.

The fact is that on 27 August 2018, Myanmar deposited its Instrument of Ratification of the BIMSTEC Convention on Combating International Terrorism, International Crime and Illicit Drug Trafficking, which was signed in 2001.

BIMSTEC National Security Chiefs Meeting is one of the key meetings under the BIMSTEC framework, which provides platforms for strategic dialogues and practical cooperation for the BIMSTEC counter terrorism sector.

Q: Could you explain the trading conditions in Myanmar?

Permanent Secretary U Toe Aung Myint: Many countries, including ASEAN countries, have thrived in their trading business. Regarding the arrangements made by the trading sector, I would like to describe the situation with figures.

In order to become a Landlocked Developing State, the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) should support economic development.

Another thing to note is that trading is one of the tools for development. Besides these two points, I am going to present some of the reviews done by experts in 2015.

According to statistics compiled in 2015, the trading volume of our country reached 12,691 billion kyats, but per capita export is US$126. Compared to our country, Cambodia is making an effort to leave the Least Developed Country (LDC) status, and its per capita export is US$373, which is three times higher than us. Although Laos is the only landlocked country in Southeast Asia region, its per capita export is more than us. However, we are not able to export as much as other countries like us, but they are rich in human resources, development that is not our case.

Hence, we can see that there are still some points that are essential to be well versed in the nature of markets, procedures and directives. When we discuss with our neighboring countries, such as Vietnam and Thailand, we set up economic and trade departments, comprised of youths expert in the field of international trade.

Q: Could you elaborate on the region? We have also been talked about consumer protection, interests and what are the purposes of issuing an announcement regarding product labeling requirements to be written in the Myanmar language?

According to statistics done by UNCTAD, the world market of good is only serving to create further division and mistrust in the global situation.

In order to develop a market-oriented economy, cooperation plays a vital role in the economic growth and overall development of a nation. With an aim for the emergence of a market-oriented economy and enhancing socio-economic life of people, we have formed the Myanmar Trade Promotion Organization, which is a private sector organization in the region. Singapore is a rich country with its natural resources and a private sector organization in the region. As a result, Singapore has a GDP of US$170,000.

We are dealing with all customer complaints within the framework of our laws.

The Department of Consumer Affairs under the Ministry of Commerce, was established in 2016. It has opened an online complaint section on its website, so people can express their grievances and dissatisfaction about products and services faster. With the aim of protecting consumer rights, speedy action was taken against several online complaints that the department has received.

Q: Could you explain the trading conditions in Myanmar?

Permanent Secretary U Toe Aung Myint: Many countries, including ASEAN countries, have thrived in their trading business. Regarding the arrangements made by the trading sector, I would like to describe the situation with figures.

In order to become a Landlocked Developing State, the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) should support economic development.

Another thing to note is that trading is one of the tools for development. Besides these two points, I am going to present some of the reviews done by experts in 2015.

According to statistics compiled in 2015, the trading volume of our country reached 12,691 billion kyats, but per capita export is US$126. Compared to our country, Cambodia is making an effort to leave the Least Developed Country (LDC) status, and its per capita export is US$373, which is three times higher than us. Although Laos is the only landlocked country in Southeast Asia region, its per capita export is more than us. However, we are not able to export as much as other countries like us, but they are rich in human resources, development that is not our case.

Hence, we can see that there are still some points that are essential to be well versed in the nature of markets, procedures and directives. When we discuss with our neighboring countries, such as Vietnam and Thailand, we set up economic and trade departments, comprised of youths expert in the field of international trade.

Q: Could you elaborate on the region? We have also been talked about consumer protection, interests and what are the purposes of issuing an announcement regarding product labeling requirements to be written in the Myanmar language?

Private sector should be encouraged to boost productivity

By Khin Yadana

In order to develop a market-oriented economy, cooperation plays a vital role in the economic growth and overall development of a nation. With an aim for the emergence of a market-oriented economy and enhancing socio-economic life of people, we have formed the Myanmar Trade Promotion Organization, which is a private sector organization in the region. Singapore is a rich country with its natural resources and a private sector organization in the region. As a result, Singapore has a GDP of US$170,000.

We are dealing with all customer complaints within the framework of our laws.

The Department of Consumer Affairs under the Ministry of Commerce, was established in 2016. It has opened an online complaint section on its website, so people can express their grievances and dissatisfaction about products and services faster. With the aim of protecting consumer rights, speedy action was taken against several online complaints that the department has received.

Q: Could you elaborate on the region? We have also been talked about consumer protection, interests and what are the purposes of issuing an announcement regarding product labeling requirements to be written in the Myanmar language?
Roundtable discussion on reviewing framework for political dialogue being convened in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO:** AYE THAN/MNA

A roundtable discussion on reviewing the framework for political dialogue with Government, Hluttaw and Tatmadaw groups continued at the National Reconciliation and Peace Center in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

“When we reviewed the number of agreements gained at the second and third Union Peace Conference-21st Century Panglong, it was found that the secretariat group strongly cooperated in the second session but their cooperation was weak in the third session. So, we all agreed to review the role of the secretariat group and to amend its organizational setup,” said U Zaw Htay, Secretary of the Union Peace Dialogue Joint Committee.

The discussion of the group of the Government, Hluttaw and the Tatmadaw focused on situation of political dialogue, organizational setup and framework for political dialogue, reviewing current political process and obstacles.

State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi gave instruction to the peace makers to draw an effective framework taking experiences and lessons gained at the second and third sessions of the conference, according to U Zaw Htay.

In accordance with the instruction, political parties, ethnic armed organizations and the groups of the Government, the Tatmadaw and the Hluttaw are reviewing the framework for political dialogues, organizational setup, Terms of Reference (TOR) and Standard Operating Procedure (SOP).

On the first day of the roundtable discussion, Prof. Christina Murray, an international expert on federalism, shared her experiences of participatory mechanism in political discussions in South Africa, Kenya and Yemen.

The participants of the group also agreed to make the Terms of Reference and Standard Operating Procedure more effective.

“Another point we discussed is the fact that we got the papers submitted by groups and from political dialogues only at the conference and it brought us obstacles to political dialogue. So, we discussed how we can solve the problems we faced,” said U Zaw Htay.

U Jimmy, a representative of the 88 Generation Peace and Open Society, who is also participating in the discussion said majority of the participants preferred the current organizational setup rather than amending or adding to it.

“But, the current organizational setup needed to be upgraded to become more effective. To achieve this, the capability of the secretariat group and work committee should be promoted as from the national-level political dialogues,” he said.

U Yi Mon (a) Maung Tin Thit, who is participating in the discussion, representing the Hluttaw, stressed the need to have willingness to achieve agreements which have not yet been discussed at the Union Peace Conference. — Zaw Zin

Roundtable discussion on reviewing the framework for political dialogue continues, role of secretariat group to be reviewed

High timber prices force villagers to turn to toddy palm wood

TODDY palm wood is more and more used in village houses in NyaungU District, Mandalay Region during the last two decades, substituting for other expensive hardwoods.

U Hmat Sein, an owner of toddy palm trees in Legwa Village, Kyaukpadaw Township, said that toddy climbing business is low due to scarcity of toddy palm climbers as well as a decline in prices of toddy leaves and jaggery (taddy palm candy). Some owners have halted the operation of this kind of business and sold off their toddy palm trees. The price of toddy palm wood is cheaper than that of hardwood in the local market. High timber prices have forced people to turn to toddy palm wood.

U San Maung from Ohnheechaung Village in Letpancheap Village-tract, NyaungU Township, said that actually he wanted to build a wooden house instead of a house of toddy palm wood. However, he was not able to construct a wooden house because of the increase in prices of hardwoods. For the time being, the price of toddy palm trees has also increased to Ks30,000 from Ks8,000 per tree due to its high demand. Builders normally used seven toddy palm trees to construct a house with four posts on the facade. Palm trees that are around 45 years can have their parts used as building materials. In the village, palm trees that over 50 years are more marketable. — Ko Htain (Nga-thayouk)
Agricultural export reaches over $1 billion

EXPORT of agricultural products reached US$1.071 billion since this April, recording a decrease in value by over $170 million from this time last year, when the export of the same was $1.242 million, according to trade authorities.

 Marketable agro products include rice, beans and pulses, melons, mangoes, coffee beans, avocados, corns and other fruits and vegetables, as well as herbal plants.

 Between 1 April and 24 August this year, the country earned $6.643 billion from overall export of local goods, consisting of agricultural, animal, forest and aquaculture products, minerals, manufactured goods and other miscellaneous products, registering an increase in value by $1.610 billion, as against the same period in the 2017-2018 fiscal year.

 This year saw an increase in value of export products apart from agricultural commodities and forest-based products.

 Myanmar conducts trade mainly with ASEAN member countries, East Asian nations, some European and African states. It delivers goods principally through maritime routes.

 The government is making sustained efforts to boost the country’s exports in each sector, as part of its strategic economic development plan.—Shwe Khine

Myanmar’s overseas trade exceeds $14 billion, $1 billion in trade deficit

THE total value of external trade between Myanmar and partner countries in nearly five months totalled US$14.383 billion, with a trade deficit of more than $1 billion, according to the latest trade figures issued by the Ministry of Commerce on 31 August.

 From 1 April through 24 August this year, the country exported $6.643 billion worth of domestic products and imported foreign commodities with a value of $7.740 billion. This year saw an increase in value of both exports and imports, compared with last year.

 At this time last year, the country’s external trade was valued at $12.287 billion, comprising $5.032 billion in exports and $7.255 billion in imports, resulting in a trade deficit of $2.2 billion. Trade deficit this year declined by half in comparison with that of the same period in the last year.

 The data showed that the country’s international trade included over $11 billion from non-border trade and $3.274 billion from border trade.

 In the last 2017-2018 fiscal year, the country suffered a trade deficit of more than $3.97 billion, decreasing by over $1 billion matched against that of the trade deficit of $5.2 billion in the previous 2016-2017 FY, according to the annual trade report.

 Efforts have been made by trade authorities to reduce the trade gap by boosting domestic production in anticipation of healthy exports.—Swe Nyein

Myanmar-Indonesia trade up by $58 million in three months

MYANMAR-Indonesia trade topped US$267 million in the first half of the current interim fiscal period commencing this April, increasing by $58.6 million, as against the same time last year, when the bilateral trade was $208 million, according to the Ministry of Commerce.

 Myanmar’s imports always outdo its exports in bilateral trade with the Republic of Indonesia. Between April and June this year, Myanmar’s export to the Southeast Asian country totalled $35.45 million, while its imports exceeded $230 million.

 This year saw an increase in value of both export and import in Myanmar-Indonesia trade. When compared with the previous fiscal year, exports between the two countries increased by $6.5 million, with bilateral imports up by $52 million.

 Myanmar’s export to the ASEAN member state covers agricultural, aquaculture products and other miscellaneous items. Normally, its import consists of medicine, paper, palm oil, steel, tobacco, rubber and other products.

 The bilateral trade with Indonesia reached its peak of $1.025 billion in the last 2017-2018 financial year, according to the annual statistical reports of the commerce ministry. The data shows that Myanmar-Indonesia trade was $827 million in the 2016-2017 FY, $741 million in the 2015-2016 FY, $636 million in the 2014-2015 FY, over $490 million in the 2013-2014 FY, $226 million in the 2012-2013 FY and $472 million in the 2011-2012 FY.

 According to the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA), Indonesia’s investment in Myanmar in the last 2017-2018 fiscal year was $9.8 million. The country received no new Indonesian investment so far this year.—Shwe Khine

Consumer goods import up by $225 million as of mid-August

IMPORT of capital goods amounted to US$1.94 billion from 1 April to 17 August 2018 in the six-month interim period prior to next fiscal year 2018-2019, which is an increase of $225 million compared to that in similar period of last FY 2017-2018, according to data from the Ministry of Commerce.

 In the similar period during last FY, $1.7 billion worth of import was seen.

 Consumer products such as pharmaceuticals, cosmetics and palm oil are imported. The private sector showed an income increase of $283 million against last FY, whereas the public sector saw a decrease of $75.6 million.

 Intermediate goods make up most of the imports, with petroleum products and plastic raw materials being the main import items. The import value of raw materials is up by $130 million against last FY.

 Additionally, capital goods such as auto parts, vehicles, machines, steel and airplane parts are also flowing into the market, showing an increase of $63 million against last FY.—Ko Khant

Famers plant rice seedlings in a rice field in a village during the rainy season in Myanmar. PHOTO: PHOE KHWAR

External trade between Myanmar and foreign countries within five months reached over US$14 billion. PHOTO: PHOE KHWAR

Famers plant rice seedlings in a rice field in a village during the rainy season in Myanmar. PHOTO: PHOE KHWAR

Famers plant rice seedlings in a rice field in a village during the rainy season in Myanmar. PHOTO: PHOE KHWAR

Famers plant rice seedlings in a rice field in a village during the rainy season in Myanmar. PHOTO: PHOE KHWAR

Famers plant rice seedlings in a rice field in a village during the rainy season in Myanmar. PHOTO: PHOE KHWAR
Myanmar delegation continues study tour of film and video arts in Republic of Korea

A Myanmar delegation led by Union Minister for Information Dr. Pe Myint continue tour in Seoul, the Republic of Korea, to observe arts of films and video yesterday.

The Union Minister and party arrived Seoul in the afternoon and met with education, culture, sports and travel work committee chairman and party in the parliament of Republic of Korea and explained the purpose of the visit by the Myanmar delegation, discussed possibility of cooperating in all sectors of films and arts and investing in Myanmar.

The Myanmar delegation met with SEOUL Film Commission at DMC Hi-Tech Industry Center.

The commission is an institution which is providing one stop services for producing local and foreign films and have provided its services to more than 2,000 films starting from 2002.

With the support of the government, businesses and organisations, it is providing film production services and explained about how the Republic of Korea’s film sector developed through proper establishment of a democracy system, free creation of film arts and enthusiastic investment of businesses. Union Minister and officials raised questions and held discussions. —Myanmar News Agency

Myanmar, Brazil hold 3rd session of Political Consultations in Nay Pyi Taw

The Third Session of the Political Consultations between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Brazil was held at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Nay Pyi Taw on 31 August 2018 at 11:00hrs. The meeting was co-chaired by U Myint Thu, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and H.E. Mr. Henrique da Silveira Sardinha Pinto, Vice Minister for Asia and Pacific, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Brazil.

In the meeting, they discussed and exchanged views on political and economic developments in Myanmar and Brazil, trade relations, energy, agriculture, livestock and fisheries, environment, academic, consular matters, regional and multilateral issues and others matters of mutual interests. Permanent Secretary U Myint Thu hosted a lunch to the Brazilian delegation.

The Third Session of the Political Consultations was attended by senior government officials from relevant Ministries from Myanmar side, and H.E. Antonio J.M. de Souza e Silva, Brazilian Ambassador to Myanmar; Ambassador Maria Izabel Vieira, Director-General for East Asia of Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and officials from the Embassy of Brazil.—MNA

Announcement on sending ballots to overseas eligible voters for advanced voting

Nay Pyi Taw, 31 August

1. THE Union Election Commission-UEC will take measures to send ballots in envelopes to embassies concerned through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in timely manner for overseas eligible voters who asked the ballots for advanced voting as they applied the ballots with Form 15. Hence, those who are responsible personnel from the township sub-election commissions will sign and stamp seals of respective sub-commission on the advanced ballots at the office of Union Election Commission and will hand over them to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as from 4th September 2018.

2. Therefore, representatives of the political parties, candidates for Hluttaw representatives, local and foreign election observers and media are invited to observe the work.

Seventy-five children discharged from Tatmadaw

The UN Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting (CTFMR) on Grave Violations against Children issued a statement yesterday welcoming the release of 75 children and young people who were recruited by Tatmadaw.

Since June 2012, when the Myanmar government signed a Joint Action Plan with the United Nations to prevent recruitment and use of children in the Tatmadaw, 924 children and young people have been released.

In the statement, CTFMR said it welcomed this latest discharge as ‘one more positive development in the Government’s effort to end and prevent the recruitment and use of children within the Tatmadaw.

The CTFMR commends the Government for steps taken to reinforce age assessment procedures within the centralized military recruitment process and encourages the further roll out of this important prevention mechanism.

Since the signature of the Joint Action Plan, other important actions have been taken: notably the signature of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict in 2015 (still requires ratification) and in 2017, the signature of the Paris Principles for the reintegration of children who have been associated with armed groups or forces, into civilian life, said the statement.

During the recent visit of Ms Virginia Gamba, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict (SRSG CAAC) to Myanmar in May 2018, she met with high-level officials from relevant Government Ministries, the Tatmadaw, as well as representatives from three listed armed groups out of seven.—Myanmar News Agency

UN Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting (CTFMR) on Grave Violations against Children issued a statement yesterday. PHOTO: MNA
Chilean environmentalists fight to protect glaciers from mining dust

SANTIAGO — Chile is home to four-fifths of South America’s glaciers and has some of the largest ice fields in the world outside the polar regions, but they are coming under threat from mining industry dust.

Climatologist Fabricio Lambert from Chile’s Catholic University believes that the country’s 24,114 glaciers are in danger from mining activity, although the direct cause and effect are hard to establish.

“The dust generated by mining can settle on the glaciers, covering the white surface so the particles absorb solar energy that results in rapid glacial melting,” Lambert told AFP.

It’s a problem because “some glaciers in Chile are close to mines,” he says.

Sara Larrain, director at the Sustainable Chile environmental NGO, says the country needs legislation like its neighbor Argentina to protect its glaciers, but says such proposals keep getting stonewalled by the powerful mining sector.

“Since 2005, there have been six or seven glacial protection projects presented to senators or deputies but every time they’ve been blocked by the mining sector,” she said.

Joaquin Villarino, president of Chile’s Mining Council, says such laws aren’t necessary.

“More than 70 per cent of mining activity takes place in areas where there are no glaciers,” he said.

In any case, under current legislation “there is certain protection that prevents mining companies from damaging existing glaciers.” For Lambert, there’s a happy medium to be struck somewhere.

“They’re not going to close the mines within the next five years, but we need to find a way to protect the glaciers without destroying the mining industry, which is essential to the country’s economy,” Chile’s economy depends on mining. It’s the world’s biggest producer of copper with around 5.6 million tons, a third of global production.

“Glacial protection” Environmental law specialist Pilar Moraga says that Chile urgently needs a legal framework to specifically protect the glaciers. In 2014 a bill was introduced in Congress to ban certain dangerous industrial activities near the glaciers. But the bill underwent several damaging modifications before it was finally ditched altogether by the government of right-wing President Sebastian Pinera in June.

The government says that existing rules aimed at protecting biodiversity and the country’s national parks and reserves are ample enough.

But specialists complain that not all of Chile’s glaciers are located in protected parks.

“In Chile, 86.4 per cent of glaciers are in protected zones, but in the center and the north of the country, where water scarcity worsens every day, there’s no protection for glaciers,” said Lambert.

He added that “climatic projections” in those regions “predict a 30 per cent decrease in rainfall over the next 50 years.” As glaciers are formed out of the compacting of accumulated snow, such a major reduction in rainfall would have a massive impact on the regeneration of glaciers that are reduced by meltwater during the summer.

Mining industry representatives deny they’ve put pressure on authorities and have praised the decision to block any further regulation. “The government has made a responsible decision that carries a political cost. It’s a well thought-out decision,” Villarino told AFP.

All is not lost for environmentalists, though, as Minister for the Environment Marcela Cubillos announced two weeks ago the creation of regional committees of experts tasked with finding “an effective solution to protect glaciers.”—AFP

One killed as Pakistani navy helicopter crashes in Arabian Sea

ISLAMABAD — A crew member was killed when a helicopter of the Pakistani Navy crashed into Arabian Sea on Friday, local media reported.

Spokesperson of the navy said that the helicopter was on its routine operation when it crashed into the sea, stretching off the shores of Pakistan’s south Sindh and southwest Balochistan provinces.

A rescue operation is underway, he confirmed, adding that the cause of the crash has not been ascertained yet and an investigation into the incident has been launched. —Xinhua

CLAIM’S DAY NOTICE

M.V HUNSA BHUM VOY. NO. (424)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V HUNSA BHUM VOY. NO. (424) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 1-9-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of MLT/T/AL/P/L/T where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

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

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM’S DAY NOTICE

M.V DD VOGUE VOY. NO. (-)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V DD VOGUE VOY. NO. (-) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 1-9-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.P.I.L, where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY AGENT FOR: M/S WILHELMSEN SHIPS SERVICE(S) PTE LTD

Phone No: 2301928
**London Film Festival champions female directors**

LONDON — The London Film Festival said Thursday it was championing female directors, as half of all competition films were made by women.

Around 38 per cent of the movies screened across the whole festival are directed by women, up from 24 per cent last year.

The 62nd London Film Festival, which runs from 10 to 21 October, features 225 movies from 77 different countries.

It will showcase films including the world premiere of Peter Jackson’s “They Shall Not Grow Old”, marking the centenary of the end of World War I.

The film features restored and hand-coloured archive footage, bringing to life the realities of death and survival in the trenches. The festival kicks off on the red carpet with the European premiere of Oscar-winning director Steve McQueen’s “Widows”, starring Viola Davis, Liam Neeson and Colin Farrell.

“Can You Ever Forgive Me?” by director Marielle Heller, a darkly humorous biopic about an audacious literary forger, starring Melissa McCarthy and Richard E. Grant, gets a headline gala screening.

“Capernaum” by Lebanese filmmaker Nadine Labaki, the Cannes Film Festival’s Jury Prize winner which depicts a journey into subterranean areas of Beirut, gets the Debate Gala screening slot. The world premiere of “Stan and Ollie”, about the Laurel and Hardy double-act’s 1953 UK tour; closes the festival, which is run by the British Film Institute (BFI). —AFP

---

**In Kenya, rubbish reborn as art**

NAIROBI — In a room that is both home and studio, Evans Ngeru works on a sculpture, a fantastical fish fabricated from found objects: wooden spoons, broken scissors and an old matchet.

Long before upcycling became a hipster mantra, Ngeru turned his Nairobi apartment into a workshop, and junk into art, his choice of artistic expression echoing a necessary developing world culture of re-use.

After trying his hand at painting and graphic design, Ngeru became a “junk artist” as an act of reciprocity and community.

“My goal is to have an impact on society, from the ground where I live to everybody that comes in contact with my art,” he says.

Sometimes he forages for raw materials himself, sometimes his neighbours bring him items, sometimes buyers hand over bits and pieces.

People “end up seeing my work, they relate to it, so they take part by giving me stuff that I can use,” he says.

**Rubbish, resurrected**

The artist’s imprint is clear on the roof of the four-storey apartment building where he lives in the north of the Kenyan capital. Reclaimed art is scattered about, a strip curtain made from hundreds of buttons, a belt made from buttons, a peacock, its body made entirely of cutlery for a train.

Evans Ngeru’s work includes jewellery but also large pieces of art, made from discarded items. PHOTO AFP

---

**Detroit hosts star-studded funeral for Aretha Franklin**

DETROIT (United States) — Detroit will bid a final goodbye to US music icon Aretha Franklin at her star-studded funeral on Friday, her family to be joined by political dignitaries and music royalty in celebrating her life.

The 76-year-old singer, beloved by millions around the world, died of cancer on 16 August, closing the curtain on a glittering six-decade career that made her one of America’s most celebrated artists.

Former president Bill Clinton and Smokey Robinson are among those due to address her six-hour, invitation-only funeral at the Greater Grace Temple. Stevie Wonder and Ariana Grande are to lead musical tributes.

The service is for family and friends only, meaning that members of the public will have to watch online or on a giant screen reportedly being erected near the church. The formal part of the service is to begin at 10am (1400 GMT) in her Michigan hometown.

Franklin won 18 Grammy awards and was feted for her civil rights work, raising money for the cause and uplifting activists with her anthems.

She influenced generations of female singers from the late Whitney Houston to Beyoncé, with unforgettable hits including “Respect” (1967), “Natural Woman” (1968) and “I Say a Little Prayer” (1968).

“I think it’s going to be a very upbeat service. I think it’s going to be a very jubilant service,” Bishop Charles Ellis, the officiating pastor, told AFP this week.

The daughter of a prominent Baptist preacher and civil rights activist, Franklin sang at the funeral of Martin Luther King Jr, as well as the inaugurations of presidents Clinton and Barack Obama.

She was awarded America’s highest civilian honor by George W. Bush in 2005. Letters from Bush and Obama are expected to be read at the funeral.

After the service, she will make her final journey in the same ivory 1949 Cadillac LaSalle that transported the body of her father in 1984, and that of civil rights icon Rosa Parks in 2005. —AFP

---

**Detroit hosts star-studded funeral for Aretha Franklin**

PHOTO: AFP

---

**Evans Ngeru’s work includes jewellery but also large pieces of art, made from discarded items. PHOTO AFP**

---

**Detroit hosts star-studded funeral for Aretha Franklin. PHOTO: AFP**

---
Top trends at Berlin’s IFA tech fair

BERLIN — Europe’s biggest tech fair, Berlin’s IFA, opens its doors Friday with a flood of new product launches. Here are some of the top trends making waves along the aisles:

Future TV: higher resolution, bigger screens

With four times as many pixels as today’s 4K ultra-high-definition (UHD) screens, the latest 8K TV sets have the potential to hit an average of 50 inches last year. And wireless or Wi-Fi connectivity is moving from the “nice-to-have” to the “must-have” column, with many sets offering on-demand video that users can launch via voice command.

Earphones get cuddly

Many of the bulky headphones that dominated audio over the past decade have shed wires in favour of Bluetooth connections in the past two years. And as listeners increasingly opt for smaller earbuds for everyday use, headsets are evolving to fit new niches — like integration in soft neckbands that won’t bother users as they drift off to sleep while binging on podcasts.

For shared sounds, TV-connected sound bars or multi-room speaker set-ups sport fewer and fewer buttons as voice commands become the control scheme of choice.

Laptop or tablet? Why choose?

While ever-lighter and thinner laptops are a constant feature of tech shows, the real action at IFA is elsewhere.

High dynamic range (HDR) monitors increasingly offer gamers and other power users more true-to-life images on their desktop computers, while “convertible” PCs — useable as either laptop or tablet — are increasingly popular for travel.

As for “classic” tablets, sales fell some 18 per cent last year according to IFA organisers.

Wearables quit the gym

After a 2017 that saw wearable gadgets for monitoring fitness take off, this year they’re increasingly present elsewhere, for example as trackers on the wrists of children or the elderly.

But authorities in some countries are leery of such developments.

Last November, Germany banned a smartwatch aimed at children that allowed parents to remotely activate a microphone to listen in on the playground.

Space station reports ‘leak’, crew not in danger

MOSCOW — The International Space Station crew on Thursday was repairing a small “leak” most likely caused by a collision with a small meteorite, the head of the Russian space agency said, adding the incident presented no danger.

“The leak has been isolated to a hole about two millimetres in diameter and slowed through application of thermostatic tape, but a more permanent solution was in development.”

Six men are currently orbiting Earth aboard the ISS, including NASA astronauts Drew Feustel, Ricky Arnold and Serena Aunon, as well as Alexander Gerst of the European Space Agency and two Russian cosmonauts — Oleg Artemyev and Sergei Prokopyev.

Global warming will make insects hungrier, eating up key crops: study

TAMPA (United States) — Researchers have found a new way that global warming is bad for the planet: more hungry bugs.

Rising temperatures will stimulate insects’ appetites and make some prone to reproducing more quickly — spelling danger for key staples like wheat, corn and rice which feed billions of people, researchers said Thursday.

And since these three crops account for 42 per cent of the calories people eat worldwide, any uptick in scarcity could give rise to food insecurity and conflict, particularly in poorer parts of the globe. “When it gets warmer, pest metabolism increases,” said Scott Merrill, a researcher at the University of Vermont and co-author of the study in the journal Science.

“And when pest metabolism increases, insect pests eat more food, which is not good for crops.”

Prior studies have already warned of climate change’s harmful effects on food staples, whether by making water scarce for irrigation or sapping nutritious content from cereal grains.

The latest study adds to that body of research by focusing on the boosted appetites of pests like aphids and borers.

To find out just how bad it could get, researchers ran simulations to track temperature-driven changes in metabolism and growth rates for 38 insect species from different latitudes.

Results varied by region, with cooler zones more likely to see a boost in voracious pests, and tropical areas expected to see some relief.

Overall, “global yield losses of these grains are projected to increase by 10 to 25 per cent per degree of global mean surface warming,” said the report.

“In France or the northern United States, most of those insects will have a faster population growth if the temperature warms up a bit,” lead author Curtis Deutsch told AFP.

“In Brazil or Vietnam or a very warm place, then it might be the opposite,” said Deutsch, a researcher at the University of Washington.

France stands to lose about 9.4 per cent of its maize to pests in a world that is 2 C warmer, compared to about 6.6 per cent of yield losses today due to pests.

In Europe, currently the most productive wheat producing region in the world, annual pest-induced yield losses could reach 16 million tons.

Eleven European countries are predicted to see 75 per cent or higher losses in wheat from pests, compared to current pest damage.

In the United States, the world’s largest maize producer, insect-induced maize losses could rise 40 per cent under current climate warming trajectories, meaning 20 fewer tons of maize per year.

China, home to one-third of the world’s rice production, could lose 32 million tons annually.

The study did not account for any anticipated increase in pesticide use, or other methods of stemming the expected crop losses.

China, home to one-third of the world’s rice production, could see losses of 27 million tons annually.

There was an abnormal pressure drop at the International Space Station, pictured 2007, due to a micro fracture, likely from a micrometeorite. PHOTO: AFP

NASA confirmed the problem, saying it consisted of a “minute pressure leak” and that the crew was repairing it.

“The leak has been isolated to a hole about two millimetres in diameter and slowed through application of thermostatic tape, but a more permanent solution was in development.”

Six men are currently orbiting Earth aboard the ISS, including NASA astronauts Drew Feustel, Ricky Arnold and Serena Aunon, as well as Alexander Gerst of the European Space Agency and two Russian cosmonauts — Oleg Artemyev and Sergei Prokopyev.

—AFP
Federer, Djokovic through as storm rages over umpire’s Kyrgios pep-talk

NEW YORK — Roger Federer on Thursday set-up a US Open third round clash against Nick Kyrgios who found himself at the centre of an impartiality row after an umpire climbed down from his chair to tell him: “I want to help you.”

Second seed and five-time champion Federer, 37, made it 18 wins in 18 second round appearances in New York by seeing off error-plagued Frenchman Benoit Paire 7-5, 6-4, 6-4.

“I think it’s always tricky against Benoit, never quite the same point. Sometimes he plays very deep in the court, then he plays up in the court,” said Federer.

Also going through were Wimbleon champion and two-time US Open winner Novak Djokovic as well as Maria Sharapova, the 2006 champion in New York.

However, women’s second seed Caroline Wozniacki was knocked out by Lesia Tsurenko of Ukraine.

Kyrgios reached the third round by seeing off France’s Pierre-Hugues Herbert 4-6, 7-6 (0/6), 6-3, 6-0.

The match created a huge storm after respected umpire Mohamed Lahyani lost patience with the under-performing 30th seed and climbed down from his chair to tell the Australian, trailing by a set and 3-0, to try harder.

“I want to help you,” Lahyani could be heard saying. “This isn’t your job. I don’t think he’s a coach, he can tell him is pay attention, talk to him at all. The only thing he can do is throw the mark.

“The umpire doesn’t have to talk to him at all. The only thing he can tell him is pay attention, because if you continue like this, I’m going to give you a warning,” said the 27-year-old.

“They can tell him from the chair. He doesn’t need to go down. He doesn’t need to say the words he said on the video. That is not his job. I don’t think he’s a coach, he’s an umpire.”

Kyrgios, however, played down the incident.

“He said he liked me. I’m not sure if that was encouragement,” said the Australian who nevertheless won 19 of the last 25 games following Lahyani’s unprecedented intervention.

“Just said that it’s not a good look. I know what I was doing out there wasn’t good.” — AFP

First round of 2019

AFC U-19 Women’s Championship Qualification in October

THE first round of 2019 Asian Football Confederation (AFC) U-19 Women’s Championship Qualification will be held from 27 to 28 October at the playgrounds of six different host countries.

A total of 27 teams, divided into six groups, will take part in the qualification event.

Host countries for Group A and Group E are to be confirmed, and Thailand, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Myanmar will be the host countries for the remaining respective groups. Of the 27 teams, eight teams will advance to the second round qualification which will be played from 22 to 30 April 2019, divided into two groups.

Four teams winning in the second round will qualify to play in the 2019 AFC U-19 Women’s Championship.

Japan, North Korea and China, the top three of 2017, and Thailand, the host country, will automatically qualify for the Championship.

The 2019 AFC U-19 Women’s Championship, played by the eight teams, will be held from 27 October to 9 November 2019 in Thailand. — K. Banana