State Counsellor to pay official visit to Japan

At the invitation of the Government of Japan, State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi will pay an official visit to Japan to attend the Ceremony of the Enthronement of His Majesty the Emperor Naruhito in the near future.—MNA

State Counsellor addresses 2019 Conference on Implementing Development of Universities

THE 2019 Conference on Implementing Development of Universities was held at the Myanmar International Convention Centre II in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning.

In her speech, State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi said, “The government is fully and consistently implementing policies and projects that are appropriate with and essential for building a democratic federal union from various sectors. In this regard, it is required to develop outstanding experts and technicians who are the human resources of the country. Development of human resources, including the young generation, is a vital need for the future of the country. They will have to perform state duties in the future. Therefore, the government is striving for harmonious development of basic and higher education, and for promoting the country’s education up to the international level.”

She added, “The Ministry of Education is implementing the National Education Strategy (2016-2021) for the emergence of quality education in the country. In this aspect, education conferences are aimed to support this sector. The ministry is carrying out the plans adopted from the 11 papers submitted in the education conference last year.”

A total of 16 papers on higher education sector and related fields have been submitted to identify the prioritized plan for implementation in 2019-2020.

She also said that these papers were good enough to develop future plans that could bring in fruitful results.

The State Counsellor remarked that education was a lifelong process, and that it was a necessary investment for socio-economic development of the country, and added that human resource was very important for the development of the country in the 21st century.

She added, “The government will encourage research works, inventions and vocational training courses in developing the country’s education up to the global standard. Quality assurance will be required in the development of national education.”

SEE PAGE-3
Absence of hunger will bring health, educational, economic development: Vice President

The Vice President said only an absence of hunger can bring about nutritional sufficiency, robust health, elevate education and drive socioeconomic development. He said it was the duty of every global citizen to realize the objectives laid out in the Sustainable Development Goals for 2030. He said that while Myanmar was receiving international assistance to meet the second SDG goal, it should be remembered that the Myanmar people must be the main drivers for change.

On behalf of the entire Myanmar population and the Union Government, the Vice President expressed gratitude to the FAO for providing valuable technical and financial assistance in the agricultural, livestock and rural development sectors.

The Vice President concluded his speech with a sincere wish for the government, private sector and general public to work hand in hand, while fulfilling their individual duties, to provide a safe and nutritional production of food for the 9 billion people, and growing, around the world.

After the Vice President's speech, Union Minister for Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation U Ohn Win gave an address on the 2019 World Food Day event and FAO Representative in Myanmar Ms Xianjie Fan read a message from the FAO Director-General. This was followed by a commemorative video on the 2019 World Food Day.

Afterwards, Vice President U Henry Van Thio took documentary photos with attendees and toured the exhibits at the event.

(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)
State Counsellor addresses 2019 Conference on Implementing Development of Universities

FROM PAGE-1

"This system can upgrade national education level and learning process. It is also required to focus on promoting the quality of technicians, academic management, and the leaders of schools, training centers and universities."

She also said that research works were very crucial for the higher education sector. Teachers and students of higher education need to do their research works consistently in their respective subjects. Findings from these works should be useful for economical, social, physical and mental developments. The research works and projects should be qualitative, rather than quantitative.

She also urged to prioritize subjects and topics which were appropriate for the requirements of the country, and she also reiterated the need for assistance of private sector in research works.

The State Counsellor continued, “The higher education sector has a role not only to support socio-economic development of the country, but also to nurture decent citizens and global people who have humane attitude. The sector also needs to generate human resources which were necessary for business organizations and industries and which have the qualities of wisdom and good attitude. Only decent citizens could build up a peaceful and united country. These people would eventually become citizens of a humane global society.”

She also suggested that the students need to be trained for multi-sectoral developments inside or outside the classrooms without limiting their learning only in the classroom, instead they should be trained to be in sync with their environment, region and country.

In order to create good learning environments, she also advised to encourage the young persons for improving their reading habits, and also to organize literary contests, literary talks and sport competitions. She said it was necessary to work towards training and producing young persons with nationalist spirit, who value and practice respect for human rights in accordance with good citizenship and democratic practices. The State Counsellor suggested technological and vocational subjects were crucial for implementing pragmatic education reforms. Likewise, it was important to preserve languages, cultures and customs of ethnic people, and to support these works. As development of each region was fundamental to the prosperity of whole country, the education development program must be effectively implemented in respect of regional resources.

She also stressed the importance of a new generation of dynamic and intelligent youths which could play a pivotal role for multi-sectoral development of the country, internal peace building a genuine union and a democratic federal union. In this regard, a quality education could generate such valuable human resources.

She also expressed that the 2019 Conference on Implementing Development of Universities could find ways to implement a quality education that was necessary for the country, and advised the results from the conference could be helpful to wipe out disunity and instability, and to work for the rule of law, justice, peace and freedom.

The State Counsellor emphasized the need of collaborative efforts, rather than the popular notion of leadership training, in all sectors, including politics and education. Only these collaboratively efforts could turn out success.

Many conferences on leadership role were noticed at home and abroad, with the emphasis on the leadership role.

She also remarked that it became popular to match the term ‘leader’ with the words of young women, ethnic, political and economic, and then asked about the role of the ‘follower’.

She also stressed the importance of ‘teamwork’, and the value of leaders who can really lead the team with their genuine capacities for this role to benefit the country and people.

The State Counsellor urged for development of collaborative ability without concentrating on a single leadership role to correct personal deficiencies and to use one’s good qualities for the benefits of others.

She finally advised all the participants to focus the conference on the sense of collaborative attitude, rather than personal or organizational leadership role.

Then, Union Minister for Education Dr. Myo Thein Gy on presented a detailed briefing about multi-sectoral development programmes at the universities, followed by a presentation by Dr Zaw Wai Soe, chairman of Myanmar Rectors’ Committee, on their cooperation with universities.

Then documentary photos of the State Counsellor together with senior officials were taken. During the conference, the following papers were presented: Country Director Dr Richard Sunderland from the Myanmar British Council read out his paper ‘National Institute for Higher Education Development (NIHED) project’, Senior Program Manager Mr. Oleksandr Shiokrykh from the Central European University ‘Towards University Autonomy in Myanmar: Policies, Planning and Implementation’, Retired Rector Dr Htin Zaw Soe from the University of Community Health (Magway) ‘Completion of Myanmar Universities’ Research Conference 2019, Its Advantages and Disadvantages’, Rector Dr Soe Win from Monywa University of Economics ‘Financial System and Development at Myanmar Universities’, Director General Dr Thein Win from the Department of Higher Education ‘Widespread Use of e-payment System at Universities, Degree Colleges and Colleges’, Rector Dr Mie Mie Thet Thwin from University of Computer Studies, Yangon ‘Process and Coordination of ICT Working Committee’, Retired Rector Soe Win from Sagaing University of Education ‘Extending Two-Year Courses to Four-Year Education Specialization Degrees at the Universities of Education’, Senior Program Manager Dr Aung Naing Soe of Mandalay University of Distance ‘Reform of UDE Intensive Courses’, and Associated Professor Dr Myo Min from Chemistry Department of University of West Yangon ‘Social Problems of Teachers in Higher Education Sector and Solving Ways’.

The event was attended Lt-Gen Kyaw Swe, Lt-Gen Sein Win, Lt-Gen Ye Aung, U Kyaw Tin Swe, Thura U Aung Ko, U Thant Sin Maung, U Thein Swe, Dr Myo Thein Gy, Union Auditor General U Maw Than, Chairman of Union Civil Service Board U Win Thein, Chairman of Nay Pyi Taw Council Dr Myo Aung, Deputy Minister U Win Maw Tin, chair of National Education Commission, permanent secretaries, directors general, rectors, deputy rectors, professors, heads of universities, responsible officials from the Myanmar Academy of Arts and Science, and National Accreditation and Quality Assurance Committee, authors of research paper, teacher and student representatives from University Unions, officials and invited guests.

The conference will continue on 17 October, and the eight authors will present the eight papers for the multi-sectoral development of Myanmar universities.

There are 174 universities under the management of eight ministries, and 164 universities are the members of Myanmar Rectors’ Committee—MNA (Translated by Aung Khin)
Senior General receives Russian Federation Deputy Defence Minister

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing received a delegation led by Russian Federation Deputy Minister for Defence Colonel General Alexander V Fomin at the Bayintnaung Guest Hall in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

During the meeting, they discussed matters related to promoting cooperation in economic and other sectors including training sector, and making mutual friendship visits, according to the Office of the Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services.—MNA

(Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)

Union Information Minister attends launching ceremony of ASEAN-Korea Train tour

THE launching ceremony of the ASEAN-Korea Train tour was held at Seoul Station in Seoul, the Republic of Korea, at 8 am local time yesterday, with the participation of representatives from ASEAN member countries and dignitaries in various sectors of ROK.

The ceremony was also attended by Minister for the SMEs and Startups Mrs Park Young-sun, Union Minister for Information Dr Pe Myint, Chair of the Presidential Committee on New Southern Policy Mr Joo Hyung Chul, Secretary-General of the ASEAN Korea Centre Mr Lee Hyuk, Ambassador of ASEAN-Korea Mission Mr Lim Sungnam, Executive Director of 2019 ASEAN-ROK Commemorative Summit Mr Suh Jeong-in, Mayor of Yeongdong-gun County Mr Park Se Bok and officials, the deputy ministers and ambassadors from ASEAN member countries, Myanmar Ambassador to ROK U Thant Sin, Secretary-General of ASEAN-China Centre (ACC) Mr Chen Dehai, Secretary General of ASEAN-Japan Centre (A-JC) Mr Masataka Fujita, and Director at the ASEAN Secretariat Mr Tran Dong Phuong.

At the opening ceremony, the Minister of the SMEs and Startups and the Chair of the Presidential Committee on New Southern Policy explained about the tour, objectives and expectations from ASEAN-Korea cooperation.

Union Minister for Information Dr Pe Myint expressed thanks to the ASEAN-Korea Centre and the organizers of the tour.

The ASEAN-Korea Train tour is organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of ROK and the ASEAN-Korea Centre, with the aims to promote partnership relations of the two region, to hold the 2019 ASEAN-ROK Commemorative Summit and the 30th Anniversary of ASEAN-ROK Dialogue Relations.

The Train tour is organized to strengthen regional cooperation based on cultural and economic relations of people from ASEAN and Korea, with the participation of 200 persons, including senior government officials from the 10 ASEAN member countries, ROK, the People’s Republic of China and Japan, as well as representatives of artists and youth.

Along the ways through Gyeonggi, Busan, Suncheon and Gwangju cities, the train is set to stop at significant places, art museums and cultural heritages of tourist destinations in the ROK, before returning to Seoul.—MNA

(Translated by Aung Khin)
President of Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal arrives in Nay Pyi Taw

At the invitation of U Win Myint, President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, Her Excellency Mrs Bidya Devi Bhandari, President of the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal, arrived in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

The goodwill delegation led by Mrs Bidya Devi Bhandari, President of the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal, was welcomed by Union Minister for Religious Affairs and Culture Thura U Aung Ko, Union Minister for International Cooperation U Kyaw Tin, Nay Pyi Taw Council Chairman Dr Myo Aung, Director-General U Min Thein of the Protocol Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Nepalese Ambassador Mr Bhim Krishna Udas, Myanmar Ambassador to Nepal Thiri Pyanchi U Tun Nay Lin and officials at the Nay Pyi Taw International Airport.—MNA

(Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)

SWRR Union Minister receives former member of the Advisory Board for CIRRS

UNION Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, Dr Win Myat Aye, received a delegation led by Mr Roelof Meyer, former member of the Advisory Board for the Committee for Implementation of the Recommendations on Rakhine State (CIRRS) and former Defence Minister of South Africa, at his office in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

During the meeting, Mr Roelof Meyer first explained the implementation of social cohesion processes between the communities in Rakhine State, which is one of the various recommendations.

The Union Minister replied that social cohesion is important for proliferating peace, stability and development in Rakhine State.

He also stressed the importance of continued cooperation needed for these social cohesion activities, which will require long-term planning.

The meeting then discussed matters related to implementing peaceful coexistence between the communities in Rakhine State, which would be instrumental in building trust between them and assist in the government’s repatriation process of displaced people in Bangladesh. —MNA

(Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)

Deputy Minister U Aung Htoo meets with Japan Patent Office Commissioner

DEPUTY Minister for Commerce U Aung Htoo, who was in Japan and attending Myanmar IP Seminar from 14 to 17 October in Tokyo, met with Japan Patent Office Commissioner Mr Matsunaga at the commissioner’s office in Tokyo, Japan yesterday.

During the meeting, they discussed matters related to arrangement for establishing a patent office in Myanmar, conducting training by Japan Patent Office for those whose duty is to scrutinize the applicants, and aiding Myanmar patent department by sending experts.

They then observed the operation producers in the office. In the evening, the Deputy Minister met with Mr Lwasaki, the Director-General of Japan Patent Office, and discussed matters related to advantages of using information technology for patent procedures and confidentiality of documents. The Deputy Minister then studied the procedures for examining patent.—MNA

(Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)
THE eastern part of the Yangon railway — from Danyinbon-Minggaladon to Pyaywatseikone — will be partially reopened on 17 October to ensure smooth transportation for the public, according to officials.

Starting from 21 December, 2018, work has been on to upgrade the Yangon circular rail network, resulting in the closure of some railroads.

The road section that will be reopened includes Okkalapa, Waibargi, Minggaladon, Minggaladon market, Kyakkaikali, and Gaw Gwin (Golf Course) stations, and there are about 4,000 daily commuters on that section.

Simultaneously, a 2.5 mile stretch on the Danyinbon-Pyaywatseikone railroad will be partially closed for upgrade. Therefore, train schedules may change slightly, and passengers will be notified through railway stations.

The fare will remain unchanged at K100 for a 15-mile trip and K200 for journeys of above 15 miles.

The upgrade project has been divided into two parts. The Swetaung Company is conducting the upgrade work on the eastern part of the Yangon railway, while the At Company is working on the western part.

The western part from Insein to Kyunmyindine railway stations, spanning 5.5 miles, and the eastern part from Danyinbon to Pyaywatseikone, spanning 7.25 miles, have been under simultaneous upgrading since 21 December, 2018. The fare will remain unchanged at K100 for a 15-mile trip and K200 for journeys of above 15 miles.

The competition has been divided into two parts. The Swetaung Company is conducting the upgrade work on the eastern part of the Yangon railway, while the At Company is working on the western part.

The western part from Insein to Kyunmyindine railway stations, spanning 5.5 miles, and the eastern part from Danyinbon to Pyaywatseikone, spanning 7.25 miles, have been undergoing a simultaneous upgrade since 21 December, 2018.

After upgrading the Yangon Circular Railway, the Myanma Railways (MR) will be able to offer its services to triple the current number of passengers and cut an hour off the travel time on the entire Yangon circular rail network, said U Zaw Lwin, the traffic manager for the No.7 division of MR.

“The fare will remain unchanged at K100 for a 15-mile trip and K200 for journeys of above 15 miles.”

The Yangon circular rail way upgrade is scheduled to be completed by the end of 2019, according to the Myanma Railways. —Pwint Thit San/ Ko Khant

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Mountain Bike Challenge 2019 to be held in Kawthoung

KAWTHOUNG Town will host the Mountain Bike Challenge 2019 with the cooperation of the Kawthoung District Sports and Physical Education Department, and the Kawthoung Cycling Club (KTCC) on 19 October.

Cyclists and bike lovers from Dawei, Myeik, and Kawthoung districts have been invited to participate in the mountain bike competition.

The competition will be held annually in the districts. The mountain bike competition 2019 will be held on 19 October 2019.

The competition are to encourage young bike lovers and strengthen ties between cyclists in three districts. The mountain bike competition will be held annually in those towns alternately; according to the organizers. —Kyaw Soe (Kawthoung)

(Translated by La Wonn)

400 wells to be established for irrigation in Yinmabin District

THE Yinmabin District Irrigation Water Utilization Management Department (IWU/MD) will dig 400 wells in the villages of Yinmabin and Salingyi townships in Yinmabin District, Sagaing Region, in the 2019-2020 fiscal year to provide water to local growers, according to U Maung Maung Than, the head of the department.

With a loan from the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the department will drill 150 feet deep and 4 inches wide wells for villages in Yinmabin District, outside of the flood zone.

“A tube-well being sunk in Yinmabin District. Sagaing Region. PHOTO: HTAY AUNG (KANI)

“The department will dig 400 wells in the villages. The purpose is to provide water for agriculture. Currently, the Agriculture Department, Agriculture Land Management and Statistics Department, Rural Development Department, related departments, and residents are discussing the project and sites,” added U Maung Maung Than.

In the 2019-2020 FY, a total of 400 wells, including 200 wells in Yinmabin Township and 200 wells in Salingyi Township, will be built under the supervision of the Yinmabin District Irrigation Water Utilization Management Department. —Than Htay Aung (Kani)

(Translated by La Wonn)
EOIs invited for construction of nine staff buildings in Chin State

EXPRESSIONS of Interest (EOIs) have been invited for the construction of nine staff quarters in eight townships of Chin State in the 2019-2020 fiscal year, according to the Chin State Urban and Housing Development Department.

Tenders have been invited for one three-storey building in Hakha town, two two-storey buildings in Tiddim, and one two-storey building each in Falan, Mindat, Matupi, Htantalan, Kangpatlat, and Loilenpi towns.

Companies submitting a bid will be screened according to standard norms and procedures, starting with the cost estimate from blueprints and material take-offs. Companies will have to forward a copy of their registration and profile to the tender evaluation team. Companies applying for more than one project must make a tender deposit for each project as per the prescribed rate, according to an announcement from the Chin State Urban and Housing Development Department. Sale of tender forms began on 7 October, and they need to be submitted to the director of the Chin State Urban and Housing Development Department by 15 November.—Zo Hay Hsar (Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Maritime trade dropped $1.9 bln in previous fiscal

THE value of Myanmar’s maritime trade for the period between 1 October and 30 September was $34.97 billion, which was lower than the $35.89 billion recorded in the year-ago period, according to an announcement from the Commerce Ministry. Meanwhile, the country’s total external trade crossed $10.2 billion, an increase of $24.8 million from the year-ago period, according to statistics released by the Commerce Ministry.

The previous fiscal, the export volume of fishery products crossed $406 million metric tonnes, according to the Commerce Ministry. The value of fishery exports has risen, but the price offered is much lower than that during the same period in the previous fiscal, said an official from the Commerce Ministry.

Myanmar exports fisheries products, such as fish, prawns, and crabs, to markets in 40 countries, including China, Saudi Arabia, the US, Japan, Singapore, Thailand, and countries in the European Union. Earlier, only fish caught in the wild were allowed to be exported to the EU market. At present, Myanmar is exporting farmed fish, prawns, and crabs to the EU.

Saudi Arabia’s suspension of fish imports from Myanmar, beginning April last year, has affected rohu fish suppliers. Myanmar keeps only 25 per cent of rohu exports to Saudi Arabia, the UAE, as well as Bangladesh.

Myanmar’s exports to Saudi Arabia account for 30 per cent of its farm-raised fish exports and 40 per cent of rohu exports.

The Myanmar Fisheries Federation is making concerted efforts to increase fishery export earnings by developing fish farming lakes which meet international standards and adopting advanced fishing techniques.

There are over 247,000 acres of fish farms and 240,000 prawn breeding farms across the country. Myanmar exported 340,000 tonnes of fishery products worth $530 million in the 2013-2014 FY, 330,000 tonnes worth $480 million in the 2014-2015 FY, 360,000 tons worth $500 million in the 2015-2016 FY, 430,000 tonnes worth $600 million in the 2016-2017 FY, and 560,000 tons worth $700 million in the 2017-2018 FY, according to the Commerce Ministry.

MFF Vice President Dr. Toe Nandar Tin said the federation has asked the government to tackle problems faced in the export of farm-raised fish and prawns through G2G pacts and ensure smooth freight movement between countries to bolster exports.

According to the MFF, integrated poultry and fish farming cannot ensure food safety, which is a requirement for export. Therefore, the federation has asked for the formulation of a law to restrict that kind of mixed farming. Fish farming must be conducted as a large-scale project to get access to Project Bank loans, according to the MFF.—GNLM (Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Fishery exports cross $730 mln

EXPORT earnings from the fishery sector during the period between 1 October and 30 September 2018 fiscal year reached US$731.9 million, an increase of $24.8 million from the year-ago period, according to statistics released by the Commerce Ministry.

In the previous fiscal, the export volume of fishery products crossed $406 million metric tonnes, according to the Commerce Ministry.

The value of fishery exports has risen, but the price offered is much lower than that during the same period in the previous fiscal, said an official from the Commerce Ministry.

Myanmar exports fisheries products, such as fish, prawns, and crabs, to markets in 40 countries, including China, Saudi Arabia, the US, Japan, Singapore, Thailand, and countries in the European Union. Earlier, only fish caught in the wild were allowed to be exported to the EU market.

Saudi Arabia’s suspension of fish imports from Myanmar, beginning April last year, has affected rohu fish suppliers. Myanmar keeps only 25 per cent of rohu exports to Saudi Arabia, the UAE, as well as Bangladesh.

Myanmar’s exports to Saudi Arabia account for 30 per cent of its farm-raised fish exports and 40 per cent of rohu exports.

Two-day real estate expo to showcase apartments worth K20 mln this month

By Nyein Nyein

A real estate expo will be held from 16 to 20 October at the Tatmadaw Exhibition Hall and will feature apartment units worth K20 million, besides affordable housing and luxury condominiums located across the city.

The main organizer of the expo is online real estate site Shwe Property.com, and the expo is aimed at bringing buyers and sellers on a single platform.

Plots of land, resident of- fers, and properties will be showcased at the expo. The featured properties will be from Sanchaung, Kyimyindaing, Yankin, Tarmwe, Hllwe, Mayangon, Kamayut, Insein, South Dagon, North Dagon, North Okkalapa, Thingyankyun, Mingala Tarz Nuoy, Kyauktada, Ahlon, Tharkayeta, and Dawbon townships. Install- ment payment plans without down payment will be offered at the expo. Buyers would have the option of purchasing affordable apartments for a daily payment of K180,000. There would also be the option of a 5- to 25-year long-term payment plan, linked with a bank home loan scheme.

The down payment can negotiate with the real estate agent. Those paying cash down will be offered a special discount. Interested buyers would be able to apply for a home loan scheme at the expo. In order to apply, they would have to present their national registration card, census, ward certificate, job and salary certificate, and bank statement.

Branding new cars will also be showcased at the expo. Parquet and tile floorings, security doors, and home security cameras will also be featured at the two-day event. (Translated by Ei Myat Mon)
Ensuring safety from lightning strikes, gale in monsoon season

SINCE the monsoon retreated in late September, news of lightning strikes which kill cattle and people indiscriminately has been appearing in the newspapers. Besides, incidents in which houses have been damaged or destroyed by gale force winds have been reported almost daily in the newspapers since late September. It has been found that most of the victims of lightning strikes were cattle and people working in the fields. Four people were killed by lightning strike on 14 October. Two were killed in Twantay Yangoon Region, and two more in Zalun, Ayeyawady Region.

People must stay indoors because thunderstorm activity is likely to continue this month as cumulus clouds usually appear in the monsoon and late monsoon seasons. Apart from thunderstorms, high speed winds are likely to hit areas where cumulus clouds form this month.

The number of deaths caused by lightning strikes has also increased, reaching over 250 this year. The death toll is expected to continue rising this year.

Most parts of the country have experienced lightning and strong winds during the day due to high temperatures. However, there are ways which people can protect themselves and reduce the risk of death.

We will start off electrical appliances, such as televisions and mobile phones, during rains accompanied by thunder and lightning.

Gale force winds, which tend to follow heavy rainfall, hit parts of Myanmar every year, destroying homes and toppling trees.

Rain accompanied by thunderstorm and gales is expected over many areas, especially in the Ayeyawady region and adjoining areas such as Yangon, Bago, and Sagaing regions and coastal areas as cumulus clouds have formed over the areas.

As the weather conditions are favorable and cumulus clouds have formed in Southeast Asian countries, we can expect more lightning strikes rather than a gradual increase as the world warms up due to climate change.

... we can expect more lightning strikes rather than a gradual increase as the world warms up due to climate change.

The word ‘malnourish’ tends to invoke images of starving children in refugee camps, food shortages or drought in lands far away. While that image does reflect a reality of hunger, it does not solely define malnutrition nor those who suffer from it.

Certainly with more than 820 million hungry people in the world, most of them living in our Asia-Pacific region, under-nourishment is definitely a huge problem and one that has stubbornly resisted attempts to crack. But there are other malnutrition phenomena in our midst and these are probably lurking closer to your own home than you might realize. Waterlines of men and women have been expanding in recent decades and there are now more than 2 billion overweight adults in the world – while 670 million of them are obese. More than 120 million girls and boys are either not available or might be deemed too expensive – so they eat whatever is available – often fried street food.

What we eat, of course, defines how well-nourished (or malnourished) we are. In other words, it’s not simply quantity (as in how much we eat) that’s causing the malnourishment, it’s more to do with what we’re eating – or not eating.

Technologies such as computers and smartphones, which bring us much of our entertainment these days, encourage more sedentary lifestyles which mean the additional calories we are absorbing are not being burned due to a lack of exercise. That’s simply a ‘fat fact.’

This phenomenon of poor diets is not restricted to urban areas or richer countries or wealthier people within poorer countries. Some people, due to where they live, don’t even have the option to buy healthier foods. Fruits and vegetables, in some cases, are either not available or

The global burden of malnutrition – is (80%).

The private sector – food manufacturers, retailers, etc. – can improve the nutritional quality of their products and promote them as such to the public. Farmers can plant a wider variety of nutritious foods like fruits, vegetables, legumes and nuts. The diversification should even improve the farmer’s livelihood and help make his or her family more food secure in the process.

So we all have a role to play, particularly as the world has pledged to end malnutrition in all forms by 2030 as one of the key Sustainable Development Goals.

On 16 October this year countries worldwide will observe World Food Day and this year’s theme calls upon us to take action to achieve healthier diets. It claims “our actions are our future.” The future is already here. So our actions should start now.

About the author: Kundhavi Kadiresan is an Assistant Director-General and Regional Representative of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). She is based in Bangkok, Thailand.

As one example, in the Republic of Korea, the city of Seoul is tackling rising obesity through a number of initiatives including certifying ‘smart meals’ with lower levels of fat and salt at restaurants, child care centres and even pre-packed meals in convenience stores.

As individuals, we can start by having a look in the mirror, and realizing that there are personal choices that we all can, and should, make about the foods we eat. But governments, farmers and the private sector have equally important roles.

Governments can improve food systems by implementing policies that place a higher priority on nutritious foods. As one example, in the Republic of Korea, the city of Seoul is tackling rising obesity through a number of initiatives including certifying ‘smart meals’ with lower levels of fat and salt at restaurants, child care centres and even pre-packed meals in convenience stores.
Over 17,400 Yaba pills seized in three townships

POLICE seized over 17,400 stimulant tablets in total in three townships on Tuesday.

According to the news released by the Myanmar Police Force, 7600 stimulant tablets were seized during a surprise check in Moehnyin, 3,843 tablets in Monywa from a house and 6,000 tablets in Myeik.

In the Moehnyin case, the police also arrested two suspects namely Kyaw Soe who was riding the motorcycle and Soe Win who was on board when the search carried out by the police.

In the Monywa case, the police searched the house owned by Pyhone Wai Thant (9) Ko Phone acting on a tip-off and seized the tablets together with 11 g of stimulant powder and K510,000.

The police also detained Aung Phyo Khant, Nyan Lin Aung and Nay Myo Tun who were found at the house.

Those suspects who involved in the cases have been charged under the Anti-Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law.—GNLM

Translated by Bo Htoo Kyaw

NASA unveils new spacesuits for lunar landing

WASHINGTON — The U.S. space agency NASA unveiled on Tuesday the next-generation spacesuits to be used in its Artemis program that will send the first woman and next man to the Moon's surface.

NASA Administrator Jim Bridenstine showcased the ground prototypes of two spacesuits designed for lunar exploration: one for exploring the Moon's surface, known as the Exploration Extravehicular Mobility Unit (xEMU), and one for launch and re-entry aboard the agency's new Orion spacecraft, known as the Orion Crew Survival System.

The xEMU, a red, white and blue suit, is composed of the pressure garment and a life-supporting backpack, and it can protect the astronauts from radiation, temperature extremes, and micrometeoroids, according to NASA.

One of its advantages compared with previous ones goes to its better mobility. At Tuesday's launch event, a female NASA engineer who wore the xEMU for demonstration played deep squat, full arms spinning and delicate fingers movement with much ease.

The suit's advanced mobility enables them to accomplish much more complex tasks on the Moon's surface.

Those bearings allow full rotation of the arm from shoulder to wrist, bending and rotating at the hips, increased bending at the knees and hiking-style boots with flexible soles, according to NASA.

The xEMU has a rear-entry hatch, so astronauts can climb into it from the back of the suit, allowing the shoulder elements of the hard upper torso to be closer together than the suits currently in use, thus enabling a better fit while reducing shoulder injury risks.—XINHUA

Scientists explain how brains turn pain up or down

WASHINGTON — Pain perception is essential for survival, but how much something hurts can sometimes be amplified or suppressed for example, soldiers who sustain an injury in battle often recall not feeling anything at the time.

A new study published in Cell Reports on Tuesday honed in on the brain circuitry responsible for upgrading or downgrading these pain signals, likening the mechanism to how a home thermostat controls room temperature.

Yarimar Carrasquillo, the paper’s senior author and a scientist for the National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health (NCCIH), told AFP the region responsible was the central amygdala, which according to her work appeared to play a dual role.

Studying mice, Carrasquillo and her colleagues found that the activity in neurons that express protein kinase C-delta amplified pain, while neurons that express somatostatin inhibited the chain of activity in the nerves required to communicate pain.

The central amygdala isn’t completely responsible for pain itself: if it were removed entirely, then “the ‘ouch’ of things, or the protective pain, would remain intact,” said Carrasquillo. “It seems to be sitting there waiting for something to happen,” for example responding to stress or anxiety that amplifies pain, or being forced to focus on a task that diverts your attention and reduces pain.—AFP

Germany calls crisis meet over Shell North Sea platforms

BERLIN — Germany said Wednesday it had called a special meeting of international partners this week to pressure Royal Dutch Shell to remove old rigs containing crude oil in the North Sea.

An environment ministry spokesman said Berlin had convened signatory countries of the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic (OSPAR) on Friday in London.

“Germany finds it absolutely unacceptable that these crude oil quantities remain in these structures,” said the spokesman, Stephan Gabriel Haufe, citing a “danger for the environment”.

“That is why we have made our objections to this known.”

He said the participants at the special meeting – the first of its kind – would “insist” Shell dismantle the rigs.

The OSPAR convention groups Belgium, Denmark, the European Union, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and Britain along with Luxemburg and Switzerland.

Greenpeace campaigners on Monday boarded Shell’s Brent Alpha and Bravo platforms, which lie northeast of Scotland’s Shetland Islands and are no longer operational, to protest what Greenpeace said were threats to the environment.—AFP

THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

NATIONAL/SCIENCE/ENVIR

17 OCTOBER 2019

THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

POLICE seized over 17,400 stimulant tablets in total in three townships on Tuesday.

According to the news released by the Myanmar Police Force, 7600 stimulant tablets were seized during a surprise check in Moehnyin, 3,843 tablets in Monywa from a house and 6,000 tablets in Myeik.

In the Moehnyin case, the police also arrested two suspects namely Kyaw Soe who was riding the motorcycle and Soe Win who was on board when the search carried out by the police.

In the Monywa case, the police searched the house owned by Pyhone Wai Thant (9) Ko Phone acting on a tip-off and seized the tablets together with 11 g of stimulant powder and K510,000.

The police also detained Aung Phyo Khant, Nyan Lin Aung and Nay Myo Tun who were found at the house.

Those suspects who involved in the cases have been charged under the Anti-Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law.—GNLM

Translated by Bo Htoo Kyaw

NASA Administrator Jim Bridenstine showcased the ground prototypes of two spacesuits designed for lunar exploration: one for exploring the Moon's surface, known as the Exploration Extravehicular Mobility Unit (xEMU), and one for launch and re-entry aboard the agency's new Orion spacecraft, known as the Orion Crew Survival System.

The xEMU, a red, white and blue suit, is composed of the pressure garment and a life-supporting backpack, and it can protect the astronauts from radiation, temperature extremes, and micrometeoroids, according to NASA.

One of its advantages compared with previous ones goes to its better mobility. At Tuesday’s launch event, a female NASA engineer who wore the xEMU for demonstration played deep squat, full arms spinning and delicate fingers movement with much ease.

The suit’s advanced mobility enables them to accomplish much more complex tasks on the Moon's surface.

Those bearings allow full rotation of the arm from shoulder to wrist, bending and rotating at the hips, increased bending at the knees and hiking-style boots with flexible soles, according to NASA.

The xEMU has a rear-entry hatch, so astronauts can climb into it from the back of the suit, allowing the shoulder elements of the hard upper torso to be closer together than the suits currently in use, thus enabling a better fit while reducing shoulder injury risks.—XINHUA

Yarimar Carrasquillo, the paper’s senior author and a scientist for the National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health (NCCIH), told AFP the region responsible was the central amygdala, which according to her work appeared to play a dual role.

Studying mice, Carrasquillo and her colleagues found that the activity in neurons that express protein kinase C-delta amplified pain, while neurons that express somatostatin inhibited the chain of activity in the nerves required to communicate pain.

The central amygdala isn’t completely responsible for pain itself: if it were removed entirely, then “the ‘ouch’ of things, or the protective pain, would remain intact,” said Carrasquillo. “It seems to be sitting there waiting for something to happen,” for example responding to stress or anxiety that amplifies pain, or being forced to focus on a task that diverts your attention and reduces pain.—AFP

BERLIN — Germany said Wednesday it had called a special meeting of international partners this week to pressure Royal Dutch Shell to remove old rigs containing crude oil in the North Sea.

An environment ministry spokesman said Berlin had convened signatory countries of the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic (OSPAR) on Friday in London.

“Germany finds it absolutely unacceptable that these crude oil quantities remain in these structures,” said the spokesman, Stephan Gabriel Haufe, citing a “danger for the environment”.

“That is why we have made our objections to this known.”

He said the participants at the special meeting – the first of its kind – would “insist” Shell dismantle the rigs.

The OSPAR convention groups Belgium, Denmark, the European Union, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and Britain along with Luxemburg and Switzerland.

Greenpeace campaigners on Monday boarded Shell’s Brent Alpha and Bravo platforms, which lie northeast of Scotland’s Shetland Islands and are no longer operational, to protest what Greenpeace said were threats to the environment.—AFP
Indonesian police foil planned bombings ahead of Jokowi’s swearing-in

JAKARTA — Indonesian counterterrorism police have foiled a series of planned suicide bombings in some cities ahead of next Sunday’s swearing-in of President Joko “Jokowi” Widodo, who was re-elected for his second term in the 17 April presidential election.

National Police Spokesman Dedi Prasetyo told a press conference Tuesday that at least four suicide bombers had been prepared for the attacks using “high-explosive bombs made of various substances,” including a potent toxin called abrin. Abhin, found in the seeds of rosary pea, has been classified as a biological select agent by the US government that could pose as a high-explosive bomb made of various substances, “including a potent toxin called abrin.”

Abhin, found in the seeds of rosary pea, has been classified as a biological select agent by the US government that could pose as a high-explosive bomb made of various substances, “including a potent toxin called abrin.”

“These bombs are different from those usually assembled by terrorist groups. These ones are more dangerous with less than 0.7 micrograms of abrin being able to kill 100 people,” Dedi said.

Since last month, counterterrorism police detachment 88 has arrested 27 terrorist suspects, including a couple who stabbed Coordinating Minister for Political, Legal and Security Affairs Wiranto and a local police chief last week, across the country, from Sumatra to Bali. “They are targeting police personnel and government officials,” the police spokesman said.

All of the suspects are members of Jamaah Ansharut Daulah, or JAD, a Muslim militant network linked to Islamic State. JAD was banned by the government in 2018, a year after the US State Department declared it a terrorist organization.

— Kyodo News

Japan searching for reportedly capsized N Korea boat in Sea of Japan

NIIGATA — A fishing boat believed to be North Korean may have capsized in the Sea of Japan on Wednesday, throwing its crew into the waters of Ishikawa Prefecture, the Japan Coast Guard said.

The coast guard and the Fisheries Agency are searching for the boat but have yet to find the vessel or its crew, Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga said at a press conference. It is not immediately known how many crew members were aboard and if any were rescued.

The coast guard said it received a call around 10:16 a.m. Wednesday that a wooden fishing boat believed to be North Korean overturned and its crew were thrown into the sea, about 320 kilometers northwest of Suizu, Ishikawa Prefecture.

The location is near the Yamatotai area within Japan’s Exclusive Economic Zone that has fertile waters for squid and other types of fish.

According to Suga, a fishing boat likely from North Korea told a Fisheries Agency patrol ship by radio that another fishing boat operating in the distance had capsized.

The area has seen a rise in illegal fishing by North Korean and Chinese ships, and Japanese authorities have been stepping up their patrols.

— Kyodo News

China threatens “countermeasures” against Hong Kong bill in US

HONG KONG — China on Wednesday expressed strong opposition to the passing of a human rights bill by the US House of Representatives in support of anti-government protests in Hong Kong, threatening “strong countermeasures” in response.

The Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act, adopted Tuesday, would require the US secretary of state to regularly certify whether Hong Kong is sufficiently autonomous to justify special treatment by the United States for bilateral agreements and programs.

The House “is disregarding and distorting facts by referring to serious criminal offenses such as arson, smashing of shops and violence against police officers as an issue of human rights and democracy,” said Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Geng Shuang in a statement.

The measure would not only harm China’s interests and Sino-US relations but will also seriously damage US interests, Geng said, adding that “China will definitely take strong countermeasures in response” if it becomes law.

Four months after its introduction in June, the bill passed the House unanimously. With bipartisan support, it is expected to clear the Senate but still must be signed by the president, or vetoed.

The bill also compels the president to ensure individuals responsible for human rights violations in the former British colony are identified and sanctioned.

While reiterating that Hong Kong affairs are “purely China’s internal affairs,” Geng said the House approval of the bill “fully exposes the shocking hypocrisy of some in the US on human rights and democracy and their malicious intention to undermine Hong Kong’s prosperity and stability to contain China’s development.”

Meanwhile, the Hong Kong government expressed regret over the passage of Hong Kong-related bills and resolutions.

In a statement, the government reiterated that it has strictly exercised a high degree of autonomy in accordance with the Basic Law, the mini-constitution in effect since the former British colony was returned to Chinese rule in 1997.

The government “attaches great importance to human rights and freedoms and is determined to safeguard them,” it said, while adding that police used “appropriate force” when handling protesters.

“Foreign legislatures should not interfere in any form in the internal affairs of Hong Kong,” it added.

China can use “techniques” to force Hong Kong to use its own constitutional provisions to deal with the current problems. In other words, China can use “techniques” to compel Hong Kong to use its own constitutional provisions to deal with the current problems.

Government leader Carrie Lam told a press conference that the act is “totally unjustified and unwarranted.”

— Kyodo News

Another quake of 5.5 magnitude shakes southern Philippines

MANILA — Another earthquake of 5.5 magnitude struck Sultan Kudarat province in the southern Philippines on Wednesday, the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) said.

It was the second earthquake that shook Mindanao island.

The second earthquake, which struck at 8:09 pm local time, hit at a depth of 5 km, 16 km southeast of Claveria, Misamis Oriental province.

The institute said the first inland quake, which struck at 7:37 pm local time, hit at a depth of 15 km, about 22 km southeast of Talunan town.

No injuries or damage have been reported. But the institute said they are checking if the first quake that rattled North Cotabato caused any damage or injuries.

The first quake with a magnitude of 6.3, which was epicenter in origin, was also felt in Kidapawan City, Davao del Sur, and Bucandala in South Cotabato province.

The institute said they are checking if the first quake that rattled North Cotabato caused any damage or injuries.

The second quake, which struck at 8:09 pm local time, hit at a depth of 5 km, 16 km southeast of Claveria, Misamis Oriental province.

No injuries or damage have been reported. But the institute said they are checking if the first quake that rattled North Cotabato caused any damage or injuries.

The first quake with a magnitude of 6.3, which was epicenter in origin, was also felt in Kidapawan City, Davao del Sur, and Bucandala in South Cotabato province.

The institute said they are checking if the first quake that rattled North Cotabato caused any damage or injuries.

The second quake, which struck at 8:09 pm local time, hit at a depth of 5 km, 16 km southeast of Claveria, Misamis Oriental province.

No injuries or damage have been reported. But the institute said they are checking if the first quake that rattled North Cotabato caused any damage or injuries.

The first quake with a magnitude of 6.3, which was epicenter in origin, was also felt in Kidapawan City, Davao del Sur, and Bucandala in South Cotabato province.

The institute said they are checking if the first quake that rattled North Cotabato caused any damage or injuries.

The second quake, which struck at 8:09 pm local time, hit at a depth of 5 km, 16 km southeast of Claveria, Misamis Oriental province.

No injuries or damage have been reported. But the institute said they are checking if the first quake that rattled North Cotabato caused any damage or injuries.

The first quake with a magnitude of 6.3, which was epicenter in origin, was also felt in Kidapawan City, Davao del Sur, and Bucandala in South Cotabato province.
US consumers hit the brakes in September

WASHINGTON — American consumers tightened their purse strings unexpectedly last month, breaking a seven-month winning streak, government data showed Wednesday.

Shoppers took home fewer autos and spent less on gasoline, groceries and building supplies while buying less online as well, according to the Commerce Department.

The September slump meant momentum waned at the end of the third quarter and could be a worrying development for the world’s largest economy. The American consumer is almost single-handedly sustaining the US expansion as the economy in the rest of the world slows and President Donald Trump’s trade wars eat into US exports, business investment, manufacturing and agriculture.

The September dip in sales looked bigger after August’s numbers were revised upward, however. Compared to August, total retail sales fell 0.3 percent to $525.6 billion, the first decline since February. Economists had instead expected a 0.3 percent increase, as shoppers moved to buy at lower prices ahead of looming tariffs on Chinese goods. Compared to September of last year, sales were up 4.1 percent. Sales of autos and parts slumped 0.9 percent while gasoline stations were down 0.7 percent.—AFP

No-deal Brexit poses ‘significant’ border risks: UK audit office

LONDON — British government efforts to minimise border chaos should the UK leave the EU without a negotiated deal face “significant risks” that are largely outside its control, an audit said Wednesday.

The government’s own worst-case scenario assumes trade flows across the Channel slowing by 45 to 65 percent and taking up to a year to recover in full.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson has created a task force to make sure these do not cause food and medicine shipment disruptions that his government fears could spark riots on the streets.

The National Audit Office (NOA) said Wednesday that government departments “have done a great deal to prepare”.

But “despite their efforts, significant risks remain which may have consequences for the public and businesses”, NOA head Gareth Davies said in the office’s updated preparedness report. “The most significant risks to the smooth operation of the border remain and resolving them is now, to some extent, out of government’s control,” the report said.

The government’s own worst-case scenario assumes trade flows across the Channel slowing by 45 to 65 percent and taking up to a year to recover in full. PHOTO: AFP

China’s GDP growth slows to 6% in third quarter: AFP poll

BEIJING — China’s economy expanded at its slowest rate in nearly three decades during the third quarter, held back by cooling domestic demand and a protracted US trade war, according to an AFP survey of analysts.

Gross domestic product (GDP) figures due on Friday are expected to show that the Chinese economy expanded 6.0 percent in July-September, compared with 6.2 percent in the second quarter, the poll of 13 economists predicted.

The reading would mark the worst quarterly figure since 1992 but be within the government’s target range of 6.0-6.5 percent for the whole year. The economy grew at 6.6 percent in 2018.

Beijing has stepped up support for the economy with major tax and rate cuts and has scrapped foreign investment restrictions on its stock market.

In its latest measure to shore up growth, the central bank said Wednesday it was pumping 200 billion yuan ($28 billion) into the financial system through its medium-term lending facility to banks, which is designed to maintain liquidity in the market.

But the efforts have not been enough to offset the blow from softening demand at home.—AFP
Huawei says nine-month revenue up despite US pressure

A journalist takes pictures of a projection screen prior to the start of Germany’s auction for the construction of an ultra-fast 5G mobile network in Mannheim on 19 March. **PHOTO: AFP**

SHANGHAI — Chinese tech giant Huawei said on Wednesday that its revenue for the first nine months of the year grew by almost a quarter despite a US campaign to isolate the company globally.

Huawei’s revenues jumped 24.4 percent on-year to 610.8 billion yuan ($86.2 billion) and its profit margin increased 8.7 percent, it announced.

Huawei, based in the southern Chinese city of Shenzhen, is the world’s leading supplier of telecoms networking equipment and the number-two global smartphone vendor.

But it has been under pressure this year as US officials lobbied allies worldwide to avoid doing business with the company’s telecom gear over security concerns, amid a wider trade conflict between the two economic superpowers.

In May, Washington said it would blacklist Huawei from the US market and it buying crucial US components, though it has twice extended the company’s 90-day reprieves, the latest coming in August. The United States has expressed concern that Huawei equipment could contain security loopholes that allow China to spy on global communications traffic.

The company has repeatedly denied the accusation.

Huawei has maintained its focus on investing in 5G (第五代无线通信技术) infrastructure and smart devices, and continued to boost the efficiency and quality of its operations,” a company statement said.

“This contributed to increased operational and organisational stability and solidified the company’s performance in the first three quarters of 2019.” — AFP

Turkey’s Halkbank says US sanctions case punishment for Syria operation

ISTANBUL — Turkey’s state-run Halkbank on Wednesday denied any wrong-doing after US prosecutors charged it with a scheme to evade sanctions on Iran, saying the case was introduced to punish Turkey for its military operation in Syria.

The US Department of Justice said it had charged Turkey’s Halkbank with six counts of fraud, money laundering, and sanctions offences — arguing Halkbank was guilty of “illegally giving Iran access to billions of dollars’ worth of funds”.

The case comes at an extremely sensitive time between Washington and Ankara, with the US slapping sanctions on Turkey on Monday after its military offensive against Kurdish fighters in northeastern Syria.

The charges “were filed as part of the sanctions introduced by our country by the US government in response to Operation Peace Spring, heroically launched by the Turkish Army to secure our borders and establish peace in the region,” Halkbank said in a statement.

US prosecutors say Halkbank was involved in a massive gold-for-oil scheme that allowed around $20 billion of illegal Iranian money to be deposited with it between 2012 and 2016.

Iran’s government used the money — much of it from oil and gas sales — to buy gold, the prosecutors allege. — AFP
No sign of Brexit breakthrough with time running out

LONDON — British and European negotiators on Sunday played down hopes of a rapid breakthrough in their last-ditch bid to strike an amicable Brexit divorce deal.

Intense talks continue in Brussels, but European diplomats say the two sides are still far apart on how to manage trade and customs on the island of Ireland.

And EU negotiators also want British Prime Minister Boris Johnson to promise to maintain a level playing field in business regulation after Brexit, in order to ease the path to a future free trade deal.

The last planned European Council summit before Britain is due to leave the bloc on 31 October opens on Thursday, and diplomats see little hope that there will be a treaty ready for them to sign. “A lot of work remains to be done,” EU negotiator Michel Barnier told the bloc’s ambassadors. For once, a British spokesman in Brussels echoed him: “There is still a significant amount of work to be done. Technical-level talks will continue tomorrow.”

London and Brussels are trying to achieve in a few days what they had failed to do in the more than three years since Britons first voted to leave the European Union after nearly 50 years. They agree the terms of Britain’s departure.

Ongoing technical talks are variously described as “intense” or “constructive”, but no-one familiar with the closed-door process would point to progress on issues like Northern Ireland’s place in or out of the EU customs zone.—AFP

Protests against fuel hikes leave 6 dead, 1,507 injured in Ecuador: govt’t

QUITO — More than 10 days of anti-government protests sparked by fuel hikes left six people dead and 1,507 people injured in Ecuador, the government said on Tuesday.

A total of 1,330 people were arrested for protest-related crimes, such as vandalism, Interior Minister Maria Paula Romo said at a joint press conference with General Commander of the National Police Nelson Villegas.

A wave of protests took place on 3-13 October, following an 1 October presidential decree that eliminated fuel subsidies and pushed up the price of gasoline and diesel, and public transit fares.

Of the 1,330 people arrested, 57 are foreign nationals, most of whom were released within 24 hours, said the minister.

As a result of the protests, 1,507 people were treated at public health facilities, including 435 police officers.—Xinhua

Syria troops fight Turkish forces alongside Kurds: monitor

BEIRUT — The Syrian army deployed alongside Kurdish forces on the front line in northern Syria Wednesday but their new-found cooperation saw no let-up in the week-old Turkish invasion, a monitor said.

In a rare scene in Syria’s eight-year-old civil war, government troops and Kurdish fighters were “fighting together” against Turkey’s Syrian proxies northeast of the town of Ain Issa, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said.

The Britain-based monitor reported “violent clashes” near the M4 highway — a key east-west artery that links the Kurdish heartland in the northeast with Syria’s second city Aleppo and the Mediterranean coast beyond.

Under the deal announced on Sunday after President Donald Trump ordered the withdrawal of US troops, government troops have returned to key Kurdish-held areas for the first time in years.

Syrian soldiers have been sent to Manbij, Tal Tamr, Ain Issa and Tabqa in their most significant deployment since the army started withdrawing from Kurdish-majority areas in 2012.

Russia’s special envoy on Syria, Alexander Lavrentyev, said Turkish and Syrian officials were in contact to avoid clashes which “would simply be unacceptable”. But two Syrian soldiers were killed near Ain Issa on Tuesday in shelling by Turkey’s Syrian proxies — mostly former rebels paid and equipped by Ankara, the Observatory said.

On Monday, artillery fire by the Syrian former rebels killed another soldier in the flashpoint city of Manbij, it added.—AFP

US destroys former base in northern Syria

DAMASCUS — The US-led warplanes struck a former US base in northern Syria on Wednesday, state news agency SANA reported.

The United States destroyed the base in the town of Kharab near the city of Ayn al-Arab in the northern countryside of Aleppo province, said the report.

The base was one of the military positions the United States had been holding in northern Syria ahead of US withdrawal from areas in northern Syria, which came in tandem with a Turkish military assault against the Kurdish forces in that region.

Meanwhile, the Russian state TV said the Syrian army has taken control of military bases in northeast Syria that were abandoned by US forces.

On 9 October, Turkey and local rebel groups started an assault to eliminate Kurdish forces in northern Syria in order to end what Turkey perceives as the threat of “terrorist and separatist” groups on its southern border and to impose a safe zone to host millions of Syrian refugees.—Xinhua
Trump impeachment probe claims ‘dramatic progress’

WASHINGTON — The leader of the impeachment investigation of President Donald Trump said Tuesday that witnesses had provided substantial support for allegations that Trump illegally tried to force Ukraine to investigate his political rival Joe Biden.

While the White House and Trump’s personal lawyer Rudy Giuliani refused to turn over subpoenaed documents on the Ukraine affair to Congress, House Intelligence Committee Chairman Adam Schiff said five witnesses had backed up allegations of misuse of power that could underpin formal impeachment charges.

Witnesses have supplied information showing that Trump’s July 25 phone call with Ukraine leader Volodymyr Zelensky, in which Trump appeared to tie military aid to getting dirt on Biden from Kyiv, was planned in advance and then followed up, Schiff said. “We’ve made dramatic progress in answering some of the questions surrounding that July phone call... in which the president of the United States sought to coerce a vulnerable ally into conducting what can best be described as sham investigations involving his opponent,” Schiff told reporters. “We have learned that call was not in isolation. There was a great deal of preparatory work that was done before the call. There was a lot of follow-up work done after the call,” he said.


Ukraine pressure like a ‘drug deal’

Schiff spoke a day after former White House Russia expert Fiona Hill reportedly told Congressional investigators in closed-door testimony that several high-level aides reported the Trump-Zelensky phone call to a White House lawyer as possible wrongdoing by the president.

Hill said her own boss, then-national security advisor John Bolton, characterized Trump’s pressure on Zelensky together with Giuliani and White House chief of staff Mick Mulvaney as akin to a narcotics transaction. “I am not part of whatever drug deal Rudy and Mulvaney are cooking up,” Bolton said, according to Hill’s testimony as reported by the New York Times.

Rising star Warren weathers attacks at Democratic White House debate

WESTERVILLE — Surging White House hopeful Elizabeth Warren faced a barrage of attacks from fellow Democrats at the party’s fourth 2020 debate Tuesday, cementing her status as a frontrunner in the race to challenge Donald Trump.

The president himself loomed large as the dozen Democratic contenders traded their fire on him, calling for his impeachment and assailing a Syrian troop pullout that Joe Biden slammed as “shameful.”

“My son did nothing wrong. I did nothing wrong,” Biden said, when asked about his son’s employment with a Ukrainian company, which even some Democrats say held the appearance of a conflict of interest.

The Ukrainian scandal thrust Biden into the spotlight, while 78-year-old liberal Senator Bernie Sanders — the other heavyweight held in relation to the case, is a hand grenade who’s going to blow everyone up.”

Iran president’s brother starts 5-year jail term: report

TEHRAN — Iranian President Hassan Rouhani’s brother was convicted of corruption, the semi-official ISNA news agency reported, citing his lawyer.

Hosein Fereydoun, who served as an aide to the president, was arrested in July 2017 and put on trial in February this year on allegations of financial violations. In a final ruling, his sentence was reduced to five years from seven and he was ordered to pay a fine as well as bribes he was convicted of receiving, the judiciary said on 1 October. His lawyer said he entered Tehran’s Evin prison on Wednesday. “This morning Mr Fereydoun together with myself were present at the prosecutor’s office,” Hossein Sarfipi said, quoted by ISNA.

Austrian man held in Dutch cellar family case

THE HAGUE — Dutch police were holding an Austrian man after the discovery of a father and his adult children who were believed to have stayed hidden in a remote farmhouse for years, officials said Wednesday.

The mystery surrounding the case in the village of Ruinerwold in the northern province of Drente also deepened with reports that one of the children had been active on social media this year. Police said they discovered a father and five children aged between 18 and 25 on Monday and arrested a 58-year-old man — the father — for failing to cooperate. They initially spoke of six children but later revised the number down.

The Austrian foreign minister confirmed that a Austrian national from Vienna was being held in relation to the case, but said the man did not want to have contact with Austrian officials.

Ministry spokesman Peter Guschelbauer told AFP said they did not know the exact grounds for his arrest. Dutch authorities said all others in the cellar case were Dutch, Guschelbauer added.

Dutch and Austrian media said the man was known as “Josef, the Austrian” and the one holding the group in the cellar, renting the house and cooking up, the garden. According to media reports, the family had spent years ‘waiting for the end of time’, with Ruinerwold’s mayor telling journalists “I have never come anything like this before.”
Quarterfinals of inter-ministries football tourney begin in Nay Pyi Taw

THE quarterly matches for the inter-ministries football tour- nament began yesterday at the Wunna Theikdi Stadium in Nay Pyi Taw.

Yesterday’s quarterfinal match drew the interest of local people as the football team from the Union Attorney General’s Office played against the football team from the Ministry of Electricity and Energy. The match took place at Training Center I of the stadium. In another match, the football team from the Ministry of Home Affairs played against the football team of the Ministry of Defense at Training Center III of the stadium.

The team from the Union Attorney General’s Office beat the team from the Ministry of Electricity and Energy by 3-2, and the team from the Ministry of Defense beat the team from the Ministry of Home Affairs by 6-5 in a penalty kick-off result.

The quarterfinal matches that will be played today include Ministry of Health and Sports vs Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation at Training Center I of the Wunna Theikdi Stadium and another match between the teams from the Ministry of Planning and Finance and the Nay Pyi Taw City Development Committee at Training Center III of the Wunna Theikdi Stadium.

Fans have been invited to watch the matches free of charge, according to officials.—MNA

(Translated by Kyaw Zin Lin)

Tokyo Olympics marathon and walks could be moved to Sapporo over heat fears

LAUSANNE (Switzerland) — The marathon and race walks at the 2020 Tokyo Olympics could be moved from the Japanese capital to Sapporo where temperatures will be “significantly lower”, the Internation- al Olympic Committee said on Wednesday.

The IOC is proposing the move because temperatures in Tokyo during the July 24-August 9 Games could reach into the high 30s Celsius.

In Sapporo, more than 800 kilometres (500 miles) further north, they would be five to six degrees cooler during the day.

“Athletes’ health and well-being are always at the heart of our concerns,” IOC President Thomas Bach said in a statement.

“The new far-reaching pro- posals to move the marathon and race walking events show how seriously we take such concerns.

“The Olympic Games are the platform where athletes can give ‘once-in-a-lifetime’ perfor- mances, and these measures ensure they have the conditions to give their best.”

The plan to change the loca- tion of the events has yet to be rubberstamped.

The initiative will need the backing of all the major stakeholders, notably the host city Tokyo, the national Olympic committees and the relevant broadcasters. The IOC Coordi- nation Commission for Tokyo 2020 will dedicate a special session in its meeting in Tokyo at the end of the month to measures to deal with the heat.

When Tokyo last hosted the Olympics in 1964 the marathon — won by the great Ethiopi- an Abebe Bikila — was run at 1:59:52pm but that was in the month of October, not August as will be the case next year.—AFP

MFF grassroots football festival held in Pathein

A grassroots football festival and the opening ceremony for a U-14 youth football tourney were held yesterday at the Kyauktine stadi- um in Pathein, under the super- vision of the Myanmar Football Federation, the Myanmar Nation- al League, and the Sports and Physical Education Department.

Government officials and executives from the Myanmar Football Federation also attend- ed the opening ceremony and spoke words of encouragement to the youths participating in the festival.

Afterwards, officials kicked a ball into the nets to open the U-14 youth football tourney, which will be held in Pathein from 17 October. Then, 400 foot- balls were donated to children, and officials posed for a group photo with the children, and cer- emony concluded. Grassroots football festivals are being organ- ized to use the power of soccer to educate, inspire, and mobilize youth in Myanmar to overcome health challenges, live productive lives, and be agents for change in Myanmar’s communities.

Grassroots festivals have also been held in Yangon, Manda- lay, Mawlamyaing, Taunggyi, and Bago, with the hopes of improving youths’ skills and health.—Lynn Thit (Tgi)