TRADE ON THE RISE, MORE FDI NEEDED: UMFCCI VICE PRESIDENT

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THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

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Myanmar migrant workers sort shrimp at a wholesale market in Mahachai, Samut Sakhon province, Thailand, on 4 July 2017. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

Thailand to issue work IDs to Myanmar workers

THAILAND's Ministry of Labour recently announced they will issue worker identity (ID) cards to workers from Myanmar, Cambodia and Laos who are in Thailand with no legal documents or are considered illegal immigrants.

Those who possess no legal documents will be required to request their employers to register them in centres set up across Thailand from 27 July to 8 August. The labour office will issue a demand letter and the worker must apply for a passport at the centres or back in Myanmar. After receiving the passport, the worker must take out a visa from the respective township in Thailand and register for health insurance in government hospitals. They must also apply for a work permit in an employment agency. The complete procedure will cost 2,950 baht.

The announcement apparently brings to an end the controversy created when a decree was issued in part to tackle human trafficking concerns raised by the international community. The move sparked a panic and prompted about 60,000 foreign workers, including thousands from Myanmar, to flee Thailand. In early July, as the exodus of workers continued, the Thai government acquiesced and delayed enforcement of the new labour law. On 6 July, Thailand announced they would issue worker ID cards, though thousands of Myanmar workers who returned to their native villages financial and relocation challenges.

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STRENGTH OF MYANMAR
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2nd Pyidaungsu Hluttaw 5th session 11th day meeting

Myo Myint
(MYANMAR NEWS AGENCY)

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw is being convened in Nay Pyi Taw. **PHOTO: MNA**

The report of the Joint Public Accounts Committee on the status of tax collection for second six months of FY 2016-2017 was confirmed by the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw in its 5th session 11th day meeting held yesterday.

In discussing the report, U Khin Cho of Hlaingbwe constituency said no figure was included by Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation on tax collected for insertion of tissue grafts to mollusk shells in the second six months of FY 2016-2017 and an explanation should be given about this.

Similarly, Daw Khin San Hlaing of Pale constituency, U Tin Tun Naing of Seikkyi Khanaungto constituency, U Aung Hlaing Win of Mingaladon constituency, Daw Nan Moe of Mongton constituency, U Myo Win of Mon State constituency No 8, Daw Cho Cho of Ottwin constituency, U Tun Tun of Pwintbyu constituency, U Kan Myint of Thayet constituency, U Yan Lin of Kyaiklat constituency, U Khin Maung Thi of Loilem constituency, Dr. Aung Khin of Pyin Oo Lwin constituency, U Myo Zaw Aung of Kawlin constituency, Dr. Sein Mya Aye of Dala constituency and Dr. Khun Win Thaung of Kayin constituency No 11 discussed about the report.

Union Minister Dr. Than Myint and Deputy Ministers responded to the discussions.

The Hluttaw then decided to confirm the report and put on record the discussions of the Hluttaw representatives and the explanations of the union level organisations.

The meeting also put on record the appointment of state and regional ministers for security and border affairs sent by the President and the bill to repeal the oversight of people's auditor that was approved by the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw.

Union Minister for Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation U Ohn Win then explained the matters of Myanmar ratifying the Doha Amendment of Kyoto Protocol sent by the President, with Myanmar becoming a member of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and a member of International Environmental Organisation. An announcement was made for Hluttaw representatives to enroll their names to discuss the matter.

Next, the Joint Bill Committee's reports about findings and comments on a bill on the Myanmar territorial sea and maritime zone sent with the President's remarks, an artisan oil well bill and an inland water transport bill were read and an announcement was made for hluttaw representatives who want to discuss the bills to enroll their names.

Afterward, the Joint Bill Committee's report on findings and comments on oil and petroleum products bill that was not agreed by the two Hluttaws was read and an announcement was made for Hluttaw representatives who want to discuss the bill to enroll their names. Hluttaw then decided paragraph by paragraph a bill amending the special goods tax law sent by the union government after which the hluttaw announced its agreement to it. Hlutaw also confirmed the repatriation of a culprit bill that was not agreed upon by the two hluttaws and obtain its decision on agreeing to it. ■

Global Study on Intrinsic Motivation in Developing Countries held

Global Study on Intrinsic Motivation in Developing Countries was held at the Myanmar International Convention Center (2) in Nay Pyi Taw, with a view to upgrading confidence, concepts and spirits of civil service in developing countries, yesterday morning.

The event is a part of the four-year Civil Service Reform Strategic Action Plan launched on Monday.

Present at the ceremony were chairman and members of Union Civil Service Board, chief ministers of regions and states, ministers, representatives from central organization and union-level ministries, representatives of region and state cabinets, Hluttaw representatives, representatives from ASEAN countries, civilian institutions from home and abroad, scholars, development aligned organisations, international organizations, foreign embassies in Myanmar and representatives from UNDP.

In the first phase of the ceremony, Mr Ryan Orange, ex-deputy commissioner for State Services Commission, New Zealand discussed the topic of extrinsic and intrinsic motivation which will instigate changes—the very basic of capacity development, with a senior consultant of UNDP Global Center for Public Service Excellence of Indiana University, United States on the topic of upgrading staff's motivation in jobs (from 1990 till now) respectively. Following the discussion, those present at the meeting made queries what they wanted to know while Dr Win Thein, Chairman of Union Civil Service Board and international experts replied to them.

In the second phase of the meeting, discussions were made in groups and exchange of views were made.— Myanmar News Agency ■

Applications available for Peace Music Festival

To honour the peace making process, the Ministry of Information is holding Peace Music Festivals in many townships.

Taunggyi was selected as the first place to hold the Peace Music Festivals – song competitions and it was held at Taunggyi City Hall. Three finalist for the final contest have been selected from the initial ten singers on 9 July.

Peace Music Festivals – song competitions are planned to be held in Taunggyi, Myitkyina, Mawlamyine, Lashio, Pathein, Kalay, Yangon, Sittway, Nay Pyi Taw and Mandalay. But, Hpa-An has also been added to the list of cities as an increasing number of people showed interest. The application forms for the Hpa-An Peace Music Festivals will be available from 13 July at the Information and Public Relations Department (IPRD) offices of Hpa-An, Kawkareik, Hlaingbwe and Myawady townships. —Myanmar News Agency ■

Mrs. Seiko Takase presents the replicas to Union Minister Thura U Aung Ko. **PHOTO: MNA**

Ceremony to present replicas of UN Peace Bell

Japan's Association for the Preservation of Peace presented three replicas of the United Nations Peace Bell to government officials at a ceremony yesterday at the National Museum in Nay Pyi Taw as a token of goodwill between Japan and Myanmar.

The four-kilogram, 150-millimeter-diameter, 265-millimeter-tall replicas are casted from old coins, Japanese swords, bullet casings and medals from 65 nations and inscribed with the phrase "may world peace prevail," in Japanese script.

The bells were presented by Mrs. Seiko Takase, vice chair of the Association for the Preservation of the Peace Bell. Mrs. Takase's father, Mr. Chiyoji Nakagawa, presented the first such replica to the late UN Secretary General U Thant. The original UN Peace Bell was created by Mr. Nakagawa who served in the Japanese army during World War II in Myanmar battlefield and was the former counselor of the United Nations Association of Japan. That bell was donated to the UN on 8 June 1954. Union Minister for Religious Affairs and Culture Thura U Aung Ko said the donation of the Peace Bell replicas is a valuable and noble act with an aim toward peace. It will increase bilateral relations and peace between the two countries. —Myanmar News Agecny ■

To Be Able To Live A Decent Life

What we are trying to do is not an insignificant endeavour. In short, we are striving for the independence of a people so that they will be able to live a decent life. If time has to be wasted in protecting against seditious elements, then what is the use of gaining independence?

(Excerpt from Bogyoke Aung San's speech broadcast on radio on 5th April 1947)

State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, right, welcomes Mr. Prak Sokhonn, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Kingdom of Cambodia in Nay Pyi Taw. **PHOTO: MNA**

State Counsellor receives Cambodian Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation

State Counsellor and Union Minister for Foreign Affairs Daw Aung San Suu Kyi received Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Kingdom of Cambodia Mr. Prak Sokhonn yesterday morning at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Nay Pyi Taw.

During the meeting, matters relating to the restoration of Mon-Khmer culture, increasing bilateral cooperation in the travel sector and increasing the export of agriculture produce to Cambodia were discussed.—Myanmar News Agency ■

President U Htin Kyaw shakes hands with Mr. Prak Sokhonn, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Kingdom of Cambodia yesterday in Nay Pyi Taw. **PHOTO: MNA**

President U Htin Kyaw receives Cambodian delegation

PRESIDENT U Htin Kyaw received a Cambodian delegation led by Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Kingdom of Cambodia Mr. Prak Sokhonn at the Presidential Palace in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning.

Matters relating to bilateral cooperation in education, culture, travel and trade sectors, promoting bilateral relations and people to people contact were discussed during the meeting.

Present at the meeting were Union Ministers Dr. Myo Thein Gyi, U Ohn Maung, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs U Kyaw Tin, Deputy Minister U Min Thu, officials and the Cambodian Ambassador to Myanmar H.E. Mr. Sok Chea.—Myanmar News Agency ■

Thailand to issue work IDs to Myanmar workers

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In Myanmar yesterday, the Union Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Dr. Win Myat Aye helped Myanmar workers returning from Thailand in Myawady, Kayin State with legal help, vocational training and welcoming camps.

The Union Minister oversaw departmental officials, Tatmadaw officials and humanitarian organisations helping returning Myanmar workers at the welcoming camps. He supervised the legal procedures for workers who will be returning to work in Thailand and instructed them to abide by the rules and regulations of the two countries.

The Union Minister thanked officials at the welcoming camps who ensured the Myanmar workers could safely return to their respective homes. He said they are ready to accept more workers returning from Thailand.

The Union Minister then conferred a cash donation of Ks5 million to purchase a fiberglass boat for use in natural disaster prevention and search and rescue operations in Myawady District.

The Union Minister together with the Kayin State Chief Minister then attended the 69th ceremonial birthday of Myaing Gyi Ngu Sayadaw. He donated Ks10 million for displaced people taking shelter in Myaing Gyi Ngu. He met with villagers who fled from conflict zones and discussed with them and camp officials about his ministry's plans to provide vocational training and meet the current requirements of the villagers.

The Union Minister said the ministry will provide cash assistance for use as capital in the traditional loom weaving businesses of the villagers. He gave words of encouragement to the people and said he believes everybody will be able to one day return to their respective villages and have security and proper income for each individual and their family. The Union Minister also donated Ks13,209,200 for purchasing rice provisions and Ks500,000 for use as capital in the loom weaving business. –Myanmar News Agency, Kyaw Soe (Kawthoung) ■

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Due to limitation of space we are only able to publish **"Letter to the Editor"** that do not exceed 500 words. Should you submit a text longer than 500 words please be aware that your letter will be edited.

A Yangon policeman moves his stalled motorcycle off of Bagayar Street near Padonmar Park in Myaynigone. A heavy rainstorm yesterday afternoon flooded many of Yangon's streets, stalled vehicles and overflowed storm drains. More rain is predicted for today. **PHOTO: MARK ANGELES**

Myanma Port Authority revenues grows by Ks2 billion

The Myanma Port Authority (MPA) projects it will earn Ks2 billion more this year compared to last year, said an official from the Myanma Port Authority.

Last year, MPA estimated it would earn Ks7.1 billion from the ports. But this year, the authority predicted it would earn Ks7.3 billion. Annually, MPA earns nearly Ks7 billion.

"Currently, we don't have a plan to increase port service charges. But, our income from ports has increased year after year because there are many cargo ships arriving from abroad with the development of the economy. Therefore, the income from the ports has increased, said an official from the Myanma Port Authority.

Most of the ports were handed over to the private sector by the former government. Currently, the Myanma Port Authority have collected service charges at Sule wharves No. 5, 6 and 7 and at the ports of Kyaukpyu, Thandwe, Sittway, Myeik, Dawei, Kawthoung, Patheingyi and Mawlamyine.

MPA collects service charges depending on the length and tonnage of docked ships.— Min Min ■

Heroin and yaba stash worth Ks100 million seized in Bamauk Township

A local counter-narcotics force seized heroin and yaba at a house near Anoutgon village in Bamauk Township, Katha District, Sagaing Region.

After a tip-off from an informant, a team led by Police Deputy Superintendent Myint Naing Oo and township officers searched a residence and discovered 468 grams of heroin and 12,000 grams of yaba with an estimated value of Ks100 million, according to authorities. According to investigation, they purchased the drug from a man who lives in Mongmit town in northern Shan State. Three suspects have been charged with drug violations.— Ko Min (Indaw) ■

Gov't plans to spend Ks 5.6 billion for Mon State education buildings

THE Education Ministry intends to spend Ks5.598 billion in Union funds for school-related construction projects in Mon State for the 2017-2018 academic year.

Dr. Cho Cho Myat Aung, assistant director of the state education office, said the budget is Ks917 million more than 2016-17, with plans for 105 new construction projects including school structures, offices, staff residences and laboratories. She added that the education office spent Ks204 million for textbooks for 200,000 basic education primary students, including 4,346 Mon national schools students, the current academic year.

Mon State currently has 14,043 education staff and 400,000 students attending 1,455 basic education schools and 132 Mon national schools. Almost 70 schools have been converted to higher grade level schools during this academic year.—Htut Htut (Ye) ■

Mon State Gov't to arrange bank loans and training for rubber manufacturers

MON State government plans to facilitate bank loans for rubber manufacturers, according to a report in the Myawady Daily yesterday.

The Mon State Rubber Production Association will provide financing and technical assistance to replace old rubber plants with high-yield, high quality rubber plants.

The plan is intended to enhance Myanmar's rubber industry. Myanmar rubber sells for lower prices in the international market due to its low quality.—GNLM ■

Uber appoints leader to its Myanmar office

UBER has appointed Daw Ei Phyu Lwin as General Manager of its local operations, marking another major milestone in Myanmar on 3 July.

The appointment comes nearly two months after it launched in May and reaffirms its commitment to create better earning opportunities for driver partners and safer, more convenient mobility for riders.

Ei Phyu Lwin said that "Having left Myanmar as a child, I am thrilled to return to my home country and now be leading the team to make Myanmar Uber's latest success story.

I can already see the positive impact we are having on drivers' lives, and it's a privilege to be a part of this."

Ei Phyu Lwin holds a Bachelor's degree in Business from the University of Technology Sydney, and a Masters in Finance from INSEAD.—GNLM ■

Daw Ei Phyu Lwin, Uber General Manager. **PHOTO: SUPPLIED**

PHOTO: GNLM/PHOE KHWAR

Real Estate sector attracts over US$569 million

MYANMAR'S real estate sector attracted US$569 million in foreign direct investment between 1 April to 30 June, according to recent Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA) statistics.

During the same period, total FDI was an estimated $1.96 billion. Foreign investment mainly flowed into agriculture, livestock and fisheries, manufacturing, transport and communication and real estate. Total foreign direct investment in Myanmar since FY1988-89 is estimated at $72 billion, according to the Myanmar Investment Commission (MIC). Real Estate placed fifth among categories of FDI with $4.3 billion. Oil and gas investment accounted for 30 per cent of total investment with estimated investment of $22.4 billion. Energy investments were 28 per cent, drawing more than $20.5 billion. Manufacturing absorbed 11.6 per cent of total investment, attracting more than $8.3 billion. FDI of $8.2 billion was invested in transport and communication sectors.

Mining, hotel and tourism, livestock and fisheries, agriculture, industrial estate, construction and other services have also attracted foreign investments. Last financial year total FDI in Myanmar was $6.8 billion, exceeding by $800 million of financial prediction.—Ko Htet ■

Broiler chicken business flourishing due to high price

POULTRY farmers in Paung Township, Mon State have been reaping healthy profits due to unusually high demand since the end of June, according to a report of City News yesterday.

Chickens cost Ks2,800 per head between January and April, after which the price increased to Ks3,700 at the end of June.

A viss (3.6 pounds) of chicken was around Ks5,000 until early this year, when the price increased to Ks6,000 per viss.

Chickens cost more this year than last, in part because other meat is more expensive this year, leading consumers to economize with chicken. A recent crackdown on frozen chicken smuggling in border areas has also reduced market supply of chicken, said U Maung, a poultry farmer. Chicken breeders say they need to sell chickens for at least Ks2,700 to recoup costs of feed and other up front investment. Some poultry farmers have attempted to capitalize on higher chicken prices by purchasing chickens from larger farms at scale and reselling them at a profit. —GNLM ■

Myanmar's gold market shows flat demand despite prices lower than global market

DEMAND for gold has not significantly increase since prices fell in early July, according to an article in Myawady Daily newspaper yesterday.

Pure gold is around $652 per tical (0.578 ounce) in Myanmar compared to the global gold price is $700 per tical. Gold prices remain higher than prices last year.

Gold prices in Myanmar correlates with global gold prices, said U Kyaw Win, the general secretary of Myanmar Gold Entrepreneurs Association to Myawady Daily.—GNLM ■

Trade on the rise, more FDI needed: UMFCCI VP

UMFCCI Vice President blames global trends, poor infrastructure, low tax participation for lagging national growth; sees improvements in trade, potential in privatisation

U Ye Min Aung, UMFCCI Vice President.

By May Thet Hnin

U Ye Min Aung, vice president of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry, told the Global New Light of Myanmar his views on Myanmar's economy in an exclusive interview.

Q: Please tell us about the current economic situation in Myanmar?

A: At the present period, global economy continues to decline, with world's leaders trying to boost the sluggish economy with global cooperation through Group of 20 (G20), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and Association of Southeast Asian Nation (ASEAN) using different methods. China is also putting forth concerted efforts to improve the economy through its One Belt, One Road programme. Our country is also suffering the effects of global recession in international trade. For the time being, Myanmar's economy is operating at a slow pace, as we know. This is due to the country's political change, policies and legal reforms of the current government and integration of ministries. Our president said at an economic development forum that the country's economic growth is between six and seven per cent and we all accept this. I openly say, currently, the country is experiencing sluggish economic growth.

Q: Please tell us your view on the cause of slow economic growth? What sectors need to develop to boost the country's economy?

A: Development of electricity, infrastructure and agriculture play a very important role in the country's economy. The country's electricity sector has not reached the development level which the public expected within the last year and a half. For example, authorities wish to set a new price for electricity as the sector is operating at a loss of over Ks300 billion per year. In this case, the authorities need to announce their plan to the general public first. Then they need to revise the details of the plan in order to introduce new higher prices without hurting the people because it will have a negative effect for low-income households if the authorities increased rate rises suddenly. To develop more road transport infrastructures in the country, the sector is required to have effective plans. Agriculture development is also vital for the economic growth. A close collaboration is required among Union government, regional government and private entrepreneurs to improve the country's farming businesses. The country's monetary system should help small and medium-sized enterprises get soft loans with low interest rate from domestic banks. The government needs to work to get international loans as quickly as possible when local banks face difficulties to disburse loans to SMEs. At the present time, the government prepares to start paying two-step loans provided by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) over the past two years. We know that the loan disbursement works need a lot of time, and we hope the government will carry out the work as fast as it can for economic development. It takes a long time to get foreign loans because the government can't take loans without parliamentary approval. The government needs to set a direct link between international lenders and private entrepreneurs to support the country's businesses. Traditionally, businesses can't expand without investment. The fall in the business development in all sectors is directly associated with weak investment. The last point I want to say is about the tax system. The government needs to decrease tax rates and increase the tax base. The sector requires an increase in the number of taxpayers more than in the tax rate. Revenue authorities should increase awareness programmes, not only in commercial cities like Yangon and Mandalay, but also in other big cities such as Mawlamyine and Taunggyi, to educate and sensitize people about the importance of paying tax.

> The government needs to set a direct link between international lenders and private entrepreneurs to support the country's businesses.

Q: What sectors meet economic development in recent years?

A: I am gratified by the policies and performance of the trade sector. The agriculture sector in the last fiscal year saw a slight increase of over US$300 million when compared with the previous fiscal year. I am also glad there is more development in international markets. However, I am unsatisfied with the country's trade negotiations with China. The financial sector is also seeing more progress during this current government. We can easily improve international money transfers now that the US has removed trade sanctions against the country.

Q: What sectors need changing to ensure the smooth flow of commodities?

A: Gateways include major points of commodity flow. Currently, Yangon is a main gateway to trade and investment that creates traffic and urban problems. Yangon is located between the port and industrial zone. The town's geographical condition has an impact on trade. It is clear that we cannot transport three million tons of rice through Yangon Port, only. Plans are underway to implement the Yangon chief minister's deep sea port project within next five years. It needs to increase connections across the country's gateways. In Myanmar, Yangon and land ports of entry are major gateways to transport commodities. We transport goods through our borders by trucks. Coastal areas including Pathein, Sittway, Kyaukpyu, Dawei and Mawlamyine are suitable places to enhance ports of entry to promote trade by sea. Banks as well as customs are also required in these areas. We should practice the way of 'start small, grow big' to solve the problem with slow economic growth. Laboratories for international quality standards are required to be built under the supervision of the government in order to make our exports more marketable. We usually spend lots of money to do laboratory testing for products in Thailand because of lack of quality labs in our country.

Q: May I know current situation of foreign investment in the country?

A: From businesspeople's point of view, international companies are showing greater interest in Myanmar. However, it is difficult to get robust investment due to the country's inadequate electricity supply and poor transportation. When compared with international practices, some systems being practiced in the country need to change. As an investor, he first thinks about access to electricity and land prices in the country. The country's land price is higher than that of land in industrial zones in neighbouring countries. Industrial development helps promote the country's manufacturing sector and economy as well as creates more employment opportunities for citizens. Land disputes have also occurred across the country. We understand that these problems are rarely resolved quickly. The country requires a strong land policy to allow use of land to help foreign investors start their investment projects as quickly as possible. This is one of challenges we face.

Q: How we improve economic sector?

A: The country has to concurrently develop import substitution as well as export promotion. The country's export revenues reach more than 10 billion per annum while neighbouring Bangladesh earns about 50 billion in export revenues.

SEE PAGE-7

Myanmar observes World Population Day as it struggles with access to family planning

Myanmar celebrated World Population Day in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday with the theme "Family Planning: Empowering People, Developing Nations", as Vice President U Myint Swe highlighted the gains made but stressing the need to improve access to contraceptives for the country's women.

U Myint Swe said Myanmar could fulfill its pledge to the Global Planning 2020, referring to Myanmar's increase in percentage of those using contraceptives.

"It is found that the number of married women in Myanmar who practice modern family planning methods has reached 51 per cent in 2015, an increase of 38 per cent since 2007", U Myint Swe said.

Today, over half of married women (52 per cent) in Myanmar practice family planning. But one in six women (16 per cent) have an unmet need for contraceptives. This means that although they would like to, they cannot access modern methods of contraception. This leads to unintended pregnancies, unsafe abortions, and maternal and infant death, and it limits women in their work and career choices.

Vice President U Myint Swe delivers the opening speech at World Population Day ceremony. **PHOTO: MNA**

As the UNFPA points out, thanks to voluntary family planning, millions of women in Myanmar are empowered to make a choice in the number of children they want, and to start their families later in life. This gives them an opportunity to complete their schooling, earn a better living, and escape the trap of poverty. Investments in family planning create a reinforcing cycle of empowerment, which supports healthy, educated and economically productive women and families, propelling development forward.

The theme for World Population Day, 11 July 2017, is "Family Planning: Empowering People, Developing Nations". The day coincides with the London Family Planning Summit, which will be attended by Dr Myint Htwe, Union Minister for Health and Sports. The Government of Myanmar and UNFPA, the United Nations Population Fund, are organizing a summit event via satellite in Nay Pyi Taw under the umbrella of World Population Day.

The London Summit brings together the stakeholders of the FP2020 initiative, which aims to expand access to voluntary family planning to 120 million more women globally by 2020. In Myanmar, the government's commitment to FP2020 is to reach a modern contraceptive prevalence rate (MCPR) of 60 per cent, and to reduce unmet need for family planning to below 10 per cent by 2020.

From 2014 to 2016, UNFPA provided family planning, and lifesaving maternal and reproductive health commodities worth US$9.6 million, and invested US$1.4 million into a new logistics system to track where supplies are being used and how they are being used. This contributed significantly to the national achievement where, in 2016 alone, access to modern contraceptives and the availability of lifesaving medicines for mothers helped avert 1,340,000 unintended pregnancies, 466,000 unsafe abortions, and 1,000 maternal deaths.

The right to exercise voluntary family planning is an integral part of the Sustainable Development Goals, including a mission to achieve universal access to sexual and reproductive health services.—GNLM and Mizzima ■

Trade on the rise more FDI needed: UMFCCI VP

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This means that our country needs to set up a target to get at least 25 billion export revenues per year, requiring strategies, policies and master plans to raise export income from respective segments, including agriculture, fisheries, mining and garment sectors. The government has to encourage the private sector by assigning appropriate duties, smart intervention, strong policy, financial supports and technical assistance. Government to government negotiations are sometimes necessary. The government should carry out promotion of trade and elimination of smuggling imports at the same time, followed by more FDI for import substitution, to replace foreign imports with domestic production, by inviting foreign manufacturers to the country. It also needs to increase exportation of local products and reduce imported goods. Export of agriculture, fisheries and garment products are high on the list of priorities. The important thing is to exert efforts to increase productivity of as many marketable products as they can. It is also important to establish growth policies to increase fisheries and agricultural exports by 15 percent each year. We can meet these trade targets through these plans. In the trade sector, everything is possible to successfully run a market oriented system led by the private sector with facilitation by the government. My next point is a move toward privatization of government-owned enterprises which are running at a loss. It is necessary to conduct corporatization and privatization as soon as possible. With respect to this issue, I don't accept the argument that the private sector will make easy profits on privatized enterprises. It is not easy to generate profits in unprofitable enterprises. The government currently operates these businesses at a loss. The private sector will face challenges attempting to make profits with these businesses, although the sector can reduce government regulatory obstacles. Regarding establishment of public utilities, it is necessary to invite international expertise to participate in important entities like including Yangon Electricity Supply Corporation, Mandalay Electricity Supply Corporation and Myanmar Agricultural Development Bank instead of being managed by ministries. Corporate governance is essential in this process.

Q: How do you think the government and private sectors should cooperate for economic development?

A: In my opinion, a results-oriented approach is suitable for economic cooperation between the government and private enterprises. There is a need to increase trust between the government and the private enterprise. The private sector needs to be able to trust the government and to follow guidance provided by the authorities. We don't like the government's interference in market economy. However, a smart government intervention is needed including regulation, deregulation and re-regulation. To stabilize the macro-economy, finesse is required to control the exchange rate and inflation as well as implementing monetary policy and fiscal policy.

The main point I want to make is that we must analyze the weaknesses and strengths of the country in order to promote international trade, with targets to improve our "doing business" ranking from our current position to a higher level. This is also related to the government's proposal review process. The current system takes a long time to scrutinize proposals within three or four departments. One stop services are needed to reduce waiting times for government approvals. This is one difficulties businesspeople are facing. changes in private sector working practices are also needed. For example, private businesspeople need to prepare a perfect project proposal and tell the government what kind of help they need. The sector needs to reduce corruption and make efforts to end special privileges granted by the authorities. The country will see more economic development as the government and private sector implement reforms.

Q: May I know legal barriers to doing businesses in the current time?

A: There are laws restricting agribusiness. Permission is needed to substitute one crop for another on the same farmland. It is also difficult to shift to livestock breeding from cultivation. From my point of view, the process of amendment of laws and procedures needs added momentum and should be completed this year.—Translated by Khaing Thanda Lwin, Edited by Solomon Moore ■

On Martyrs' Day, we are Myanmar more than ever

By Aye Min Soe

ON 19 July, the people of Myanmar will mourn the country's martyrs who were assassinated in Yangon 70 years ago.

The martyrs, including General Aung San, were assassinated in the morning of 19 July, 1947 while holding a meeting at the Secretariat building in downtown Yangon. The seven men were assassinated at a crucial juncture in the struggle to free the country from colonial rule.

Killed that day were Thakin Mya, U Ba Cho, U Razak, U Ba Win, Mahn Ba Khaing, Sao San Htun, U Ohn Maung and Ko Htwe.

This day is now a national day of mourning observed across the country as a token of gratitude to their sacrifices for national independence. In the history of our country, no one will ever forget this event.

General Aung San is gone, but his memory, his love for the country and the people and our gratitude to him will go on forever.

The martyrs, who devoted themselves to the welfare of the people and the country at great risk to their own lives, will always be remembered in the hearts of good citizens.

In fact, the day has taught us a precious lesson that can be applied to the present day — that violent approaches to political issues never work. Peaceful negotiations are the best way to find solutions to political issues.

We would like to urge the people to continue marching on to the democratic federal union goals set by General Aung San. Whatever your religion, ethnicity or political persuasion, this is a day for all of us to come together to honour those who laid the groundwork for Myanmar's independence.

Among the people killed 70 years ago at an office in the Secretariat were Sao San Htun, a Shan, Mahn Ba Khaing, a leader of the Kayin people, and U Razak, a Muslim.

Let this be a day on which we celebrate what brings us together as a country, rather than focusing on what divides us. This is the right way to honour and respect the martyrs. ■

Gender equality and women's empowerment

By Dr. Khine Khine Win

IN HONOR of Myanmar Women's day which will be held on 3rd July, I am writing this article for every Myanmar women.

Gender equality is at the very heart of human rights. It is also central to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the global plan agreed by leaders of all countries to meet the challenges we face. Goal 5 of the Sustainable Development is to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, and this is foundation to the achievement of all the 17 SDGs.

Women comprise more than half of the today world's population and are primary caretakers for most of the children and elderly. Actually the women rights movements had a long and good history, women are still fighting for their rights and far more progress is needed to foster real gender equality and empowerment. With the aims to transform the structural barriers to equality and to address multifaceted nature of problems women face, Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against women, CEDAW was adopted in 1979 by votes of 130 to none, with 10 abstentions by Union General Assembly resolution 34/180 according to UN Women. This is specifically a tool for achieving equality for women and the core principles of CEDAW are equality and non-discrimination. Myanmar is the State Party of CEDAW which means that the government commits to put in place legislation and policy to ensure Myanmar women's equality.

> According to gender equality and women's rights in Myanmar situation analysis done by Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, ADB and UNDP, Myanmar has a mixed narrative on gender equality and women's rights.

Virtually every human rights instrument includes a non-discrimination clause. Given that the universality of human rights is based on the premise that all people are born free and equal in dignity and rights regardless of their sex. Indeed equality is the corner of all democratic States: equality before the law, equality access to education, equality of opportunity and so on and so forth regardless of their sex.

At International Women's Day on 8 March of this year, UN Secretary General António Guterres highlighted in his message that despite some improvements, leadership positions across the board are still held by men, and the economic gender gap is widening and we must change this, by empowering women at all levels, enabling their voices to be heard and giving them control over their own lives and over the future of our world. He mentioned that denying the rights of women and girls is not only wrong in itself; it has a serious social and economic impact that holds us all back.

According to gender equality and women's rights in Myanmar situation analysis done by Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, ADB and UNDP, Myanmar has a mixed narrative on gender equality and women's rights. It progress lays a strong foundation for greater advancement, largely attributable to the combined efforts of government, civil society groups and development partners. There are also major challenges, which include contradictory messages in the legal framework, the plural legal system with different gender equality and women's rights standards, policy-practice deficits and gaps between sectors.

Indeed, based on Human Development Report 2016 by UNDP, Myanmar has a Gender inequality index, GII value of 0.374, ranking it 80 out of 159 countries in the 2015 index. Gender Inequality Index, GII reflects gender-based inequalities in three dimensions- reproductive health, empowerment and economic activity. Reproductive health is measured by maternal mortality and adolescent birth rates, empowerment is measured by the share of parliamentary seats held by women and attainment in secondary and higher education by each gender and economic activity is measured by labor market participation rate for women and men.

Gender equality indicates that people are free to make choices without the limitation set by stereotypes. For the universal realization of gender equality, it is the time to act to increase political will and the resources to achieve full and lasting gender equality and women's empowerment. This is the time to start to think about how we can help to achieve gender equality and help women fully enjoy their rights.

Why women's empowerment is important? It is important because empowering women fuels thriving economies and social development and it only can foster overall development of society and it can reduce poverty, reduce domestic violence and get equal opportunities. Ignorant to gender equality and empowerment for women at every level leads to fail the achievement of social and economic improvement.

Since gender equality is not only a fundamental human right, but a necessary foundation for a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world, this is the time to enhance understanding and application of gender equality concepts including gender mainstreaming with various stakeholders. For the better family, better society, better Nation, better world and better future we absolutely need healthy, educated and empowered women. ■

Over 10,000 dengue victims so far this year

By May Thet Hnin

ABOUT 10,100 people are suffering from Dengue Haemorrhagic Fever (DHF) with 54 reported deaths caused by the disease between January and 1 July, said Dr. Zaw Lin, project manager of anit-DHF in Dengue and Elephantiasis section under the Ministry of Health and Sport.

The dengue fever breaks out mostly in Yangon and Ayeyawady regions and Rakhine State. The number of dengue fever patients has slightly increased this year compared to the same period of last year.

"Occurrence of DHF this year was seen to be more frequent with fewer gaps between cases compared to previous years. Dengue fever, which traditionally a disease usually contracted during monsoon, has been common all year round for the last five years. The sickness afflicts different regions in different seasons. In Yangon, dengue fever infects people in the earlier months of the year. In Mandalay, dengue occurs in the last six months of the year. It is raining earlier this year", said Dr. Zaw Lin.

Between 1 January and 27 May this year, over 3,300 patients were infected with the fever, 19 of whom died. The number of the dengue fever incidents significantly increased this month.

Myanmar officials are encouraging residents to keep their homes clean and to discard standing water to deny the mosquitos the ability to breed, said Dr. Zaw Lin.

Between 1 January and 27 May this year, about 1,277 patients were infected and 10 dead in Yangon Region and 1,393 patients were infected; 15 died in Ayeyawady region and 1,277 infected and 10 died in Rakhine State.

The DHF outbreak hit hardest in Hlinethaya and South Dagon Myothit townships in Yangon Region. Outbreaks are also common in Minbya, Kyauktaw, Taungup and Sittway townships of Rakhine State and Pathein, Myaungmya, Maubin, Hinthada, Wakema and Labutta townships in Ayeyawady Region.

The Aedes mosquito can be recognized by white stripes on its body. The Aedes mosquito often breeds in bottle-caps of water, old tires, vases, puddles and other vessels of standing water. The Aedes mosquito is distinct in that it is active during the day. Dengue fever symptoms include high fever, headaches, joint and muscle pains, vomiting and rashes. Dengue fever is a serious illness, and patients who suspect they have it should seek medical treatment.

There were 42,913 cases of dengue fever in Myanmar resulting in 140 deaths in 2015. There were fewer cases in 2016, with 10,770 cases and 58 deaths. ■

One illegal immigrant arrested in Yathedaung

Border patrol officers arrested one illegal immigrant who stayed in Auknam Yar village in Yathedaung Township, Rakhine State at 4pm on 9 July.

Harbae Zarmout, an illegal immigrant has ever run away from Myanmar to other countries in 2010 and entered back illegally to Myanmar.

An investigation is ongoing under the immigrant law.—Myanmar News Agency ■

Kyein Chaung Market becomes active again with business

By Myint Maung Soe & Aung Kyaw Oo

Officials inspect ploughs on sale at the Kyein Chaung Village. **PHOTO: THAKKA**

DURING the inspection by a combined team of Maungtaw Township's administrator, head of township police force and officials, the market of Kyein Chaung village, the biggest one in northern Maungtaw was found active again with buyers and sellers from nearby villages. The market sells especially agricultural produce from the local area, fish and meat, equipments and tools used in agriculture, dried fish, drugs and a variety of commodities.

Being situated at the junction of Bandoola and Taungpyo Letwe, bordering area of Bangladesh, Kyein Chaung market is a crowded place. The village has a state high school and a village dispensary.

Responsible officials gave words for making the market clean and for sellers to sell their commodities in disciplined ways. Following that, the team inspected the collapsed houses due to erosion by the Pyuma Creek, U Ko Ko Aung, township administer explained that 17 houses were evacuated to a safer place.

Township responsible personnel consulted on the matters of protecting from erosion and evacuating houses to safer places, it was learnt. ■

Myanmar Anti-Corruption Commission and UNODC hold Asset Recovery Workshop

Participants of the Asset Recovery Workshop in Nay Pyi Taw pose for a documentary photo. **PHOTO: MNA**

Under the UNODC's Aid Programme, the Asset Recovery Workshop was held with the intention of upgrading capacities of Myanmar Anti-Corruption Commission and other related organisations, especially for the tasks of eradication of corruption in Myanmar, at the Royal ACE Hotel in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

Present at the workshop were commission members of Myanmar Anti-Corruption Commission, Mr Shervin Majlessi, the Senior Legal Advisor to the World Bank/ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime Stolen Asset Recovery Initiative (StAR) and representatives, representatives from ministries and respective organisations, officials and staff from the commission office and invited guests.

Mr Shervin Majlessi gave introductory words at the workshop.

Mr Shervin Majlessi and those present at the meeting discussed at length topics regarding recovery in order to implement the recovery of assets included in chapter 5 of UNCAC Prescription among other topics.

At the workshop, members and staff of Myanmar Anti-Corruption Commission, representatives from the Union Supreme Court, Myanmar Police Force of Prevention and Suppression of Financial Crimes, Bureau of Special Investigation and Office of Union Attorney General, regarding the recovery of assets.

UNODC established (StAR) Stolen Asset Recovery Initiative in cooperation with the World Bank. With regards to assets acquired from corruption, it has been learnt that a special international website on the acquisition of assets in countries suffering from loss and those receiving assets had been formed. In addition, UNODC will conduct trainings on upgrading capacities of justice institutions, investigation officers and filing officers.

The workshop will be held till 12 July.—Myanmar News Agency ■

Invitation to young writers for Sunday section

The Global New Light of Myanmar is accepting submissions of poetry, opinion, articles, essays and short stories from young people for its weekly Sunday Next Generation Platform. Interested candidates can send their works to the **Global New Light of Myanmar** at No. 150, Nga Htat Kyee Pagoda Road, Bahan Township, Yangon or by email to **dce@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com** with the following information: **(1)** Sector you wish to be included in (poetry, opinion, etc.), **(2)** Real name and (if different) your penname, **(3)** Your level of education, **(4)** Name of your School/College/University, **(5)** A written note of declaration that the submitted piece is your original work and has not been submitted to any other news or magazine publishing houses, **(6)** A color photo of the submitter, **(7)** Copy of your NRC card, **(8)** Contact information (email address, mobile number, etc.).— Editorial Department, The Global New Light of Myanmar news office

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and Tatmadaw delegation attends a dinner hosted by No. 11 Division Commander Major Gen Anil Puri. **PHOTO: MNA**

Commander of India's No. 11 Division host dinner in honour of Tatmadaw delegation

A TATMADAW delegation led by Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing in Ahmedabad, Gujarat State, India were hosted a dinner on 10 July by Commander of No. 11 Division Maj-Gen Anil Puri.

After being entertained by traditional dances Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and wife presented gifts to the military band and dance troupe. —Myanmar News Agecny ■

Myanmar Economic Bank says 7Day daily's article is misleading

An article in the 5 July edition of the 7Day Daily newspaper that said Myanmar Economic Bank could not make interest payments on Shwedagon Pagoda savings accounts is incorrect and the bank is demanding a correction.

Donations to the Shwedagon Pagoda totalling about Ks60 billion and US$20 million are being kept in several accounts in Myanma Economic Bank (MEB) in Yangon. The Pagoda's board of trustees had decided to deposit the donations in several savings accounts, savings certificates guaranteeing fixed interest for 12 years and several fixed deposit accounts.

The bank said they regularly add interest into the bank accounts when they reach their respective maturity dates.

MEB reports that the total amount of interest they have added into the bank accounts totals over Ks17.7 billion as of 31 March 2017.

The bank said Shwedagon Pagoda's board of trustees purchased the savings certificates of their own accord and not because MEB is unable to continue paying the interest rates. The bank said it objects to the article containing the phrase "because the bank is unable to pay the interest rate" and has requested that 7Day publishes an official correction in their paper. —Myanma Economic Bank ■

Cambodia Foreign Affairs Minister Mr. Prak Sokhonn views the white elephant at the elephants house at the foot of Uppatasanti Pagoda in Nay Pyi Taw. **PHOTO: MNA**

Cambodian delegation tour Nay Pyi Taw

Cambodian delegation led by Mr. Prak Sokhonn, Minister for foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Kingdom of Cambodia is on an official visit to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and made a pilgrimage to Uppatasanti Pagoda in Nay Pyi Taw at 1:15pm yesterday.

Next, they visited the white elephants house at the foot of Uppatasanti Pagoda and then visited Myanma Gems Museum in Nay Pyi Taw. —Myanmar News Agency ■

Ms Yanghee Lee visits Kyauktalon IDP Camp. **PHOTO: PHYO WAI LIN**

Ms Yanghee Lee meets authorities, people in Kyaukpyu

Ms Yanghee Lee, Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar met with local authorities and people in Kyaukpyu yesterday.

At the meeting with Ms Yanghee Lee, officials of the Kyaukpyu District General Administration Department clarified measures for development, security, the rule of law and regional development.

Following the meeting, the UN delegation went to Pyinphyumaw Village which has a population of 318 Rakhine people are living and looked into resettlement and challenges of the villagers.

She also met with 15 farmers in the evening, discussing over Kyaukpyu Economic Zone. She also met with 12 people from Mala Island, Chaungwa Village and Kalarbar Village at the Palace Hotel.

She also visited the Kyauktalon Camp for the internally displaced persons and held talks with 20 people living there.— Phyo Wai Lin (Kyaukpyu District IPRD) ■

Crane conservation planned in Inndawgyi

Fauna & Flora International (FFI) will implement a conservation programme for endangered cranes,also known as sarus crane (grusantigone), near Inndawgyi Lake in Kachin State. FFI will attempt to improve the local eco system by providing environmental awareness training to local people to promote sarus crane breeding.

FFI started a survey of the sarus crane in 2016 in collaboration with local people. After a year, FFI statistics show that there are only 23 sarus cranes in Myanmar. They also found five nests of sarus cranes near Inndawgyi Lake.

"The most important thing we need to know is the location of breeding sarus cranes. The number of sarus crane can decline further if we do not conserve their breeding," said a Indawgyi wildlife sanctuary employee.—GNLM ■

Islamic State tightens grip on village near Mosul after defeat

TIKRIT (Iraq) — Islamic State has captured most of a village south of Mosul despite losing control of its stronghold in the city, an Iraqi army officer and residents said, deploying guerrilla-style tactics as its self-proclaimed caliphate crumbles.

Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi declared victory over Islamic State (IS) in Mosul on Monday, marking the biggest defeat for the hardline Sunni group since its lightning sweep through northern Iraq three years ago.

But the militants, armed with machine guns and mortars, have now seized more than 75 per cent of Imam Gharbi, a village on the western bank of the Tigris river some 70 km (44 miles) south of Mosul, and reinforcements are expected, the Iraqi army officer said.

Islamic State launched its attack on Imam Gharbi last week, in the kind of strike it is expected to deploy now as US-backed Iraqi forces regain control over cities the group captured during its shock 2014 offensive.

Stripped of Mosul, IS's dominion in Iraq will be reduced to mainly rural, desert areas west and south of the city.

Islamic State also faces pressure in its operational base in the Syrian city of Raqqa, where US-backed Syrian Kurdish and Arab forces have seized territory on three sides of the city.

The campaign to retake Mosul from the militants was launched last October by a 100,000-strong alliance of Iraqi government units, Kurdish Peshmerga fighters and Shi'ite militias, with a US-led coalition providing key air and ground support.

Abadi's government in Iraq now faces a difficult task managing the sectarian tensions which enabled Islamic State to gain supporters in the country among fellow Sunnis who say they were marginalised by the Shi'ite-led government.

The US-led coalition warned that victory in Mosul did not mark the end of the group's global threat.

"Now it is time for all Iraqis to unite to ensure ISIS (Islamic State) is defeated across the rest of Iraq and that the conditions that led to the rise of ISIS in Iraq are not allowed to return again," Lieutenant General Stephen J Townsend said in a statement. —Reuters ■

Iraqis celebrate as Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi announces victory over Islamic State in Mosul, Iraq on 10 July, 2017. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

Lebanese army kills Islamic State-linked militant — sources

BEIRUT — The Lebanese army killed a suspected Islamic State-linked militant accused of carrying out several bomb attacks in Ras Baalbek town near the Syrian border, a security source and a military source said on Tuesday.

The man, a Syrian national, was shot dead during an operation launched after the army received intelligence that an Islamic State-linked cell was meeting, the security source said.

A Lebanese national suspected of weapons smuggling was also arrested in the raid, and the army discovered several bombs, an explosive belt, and nearly 50 kg of explosives, the source said.

The operation took place in the Arsal area, where the army says it has been carrying out a major security operation against suspected militants. In late June, authorities arrested several hundred people in a raid at refugee camps in Arsal.

A Lebanese military prosecutor ordered forensics last week to examine the bodies of four Syrian detainees who died in army custody, after rights groups called for an investigation.

The Lebanese army says it regularly stages operations targeting Islamic State and former al Qaeda-linked militants in the hills around the border.

Some attacks in Lebanon have been linked to the six-year war in neighbouring Syria, where Lebanese Shi'ite group Hezbollah is fighting in support of President Bashar al-Assad.—Reuters ■

US-backed forces seize town with IS military base near Raqqa — SDF

BEIRUT — US-backed Syrian militias have captured a town south of the city of Raqqa where Islamic State ran a major military base and training camp, a spokesman for the militias said on Tuesday.

An alliance of Kurdish and Arab militias fighting under the banner of the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) is trying to oust Islamic State from its headquarters in Raqqa.

SDF media official Mustafa Bali said the militias had seized the town of al-Ukeirshi, some 15 km (10 miles) downstream from Raqqa on the Euphrates river.

The SDF pushed into Raqqa last month after a long offensive, backed up by air strikes and special forces from the US-led coalition.

A series of recent advances along the southern bank of the Euphrates have allowed the SDF to completely besiege the militants inside Raqqa and to press on south of the city.

The SDF alliance, spearheaded by the Kurdish YPG militia, has also been waging fierce battles inside the Old City of Raqqa since last week, after US-led coalition jets breached its historic walls.

In al-Ukeirshi, Islamic State killed scores of its own forces execution-style in 2015 for desertion or on accusations of treachery, said the Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights.

Islamic State named the training camp it established in the town after Osama bin Laden, the founder of the al-Qaeda militant group killed by US forces in 2011. —Reuters ■

Turkey detains dozens of tech staff suspected of coup links — agency

ISTANBUL — Turkish authorities have ordered the arrest of 105 people working in information technology on suspicion of involvement in an attempted military coup a year ago, state-run Anadolu news agency reported on Tuesday.

Over the last year, there has been a large number of police operations targeting people suspected of links to the US-based Islamic cleric Fethullah Gulen, whom Ankara accuses of orchestrating the failed putsch on 15 July.

In the latest operations focused on IT employees in both the private and public sectors, police have so far detained 52 people out of the 105 targeted by arrest warrants across eight provinces, including former staff from Turkey's scientific research council TUBITAK and a telecommunications authority, Anadolu said.

It said the suspects were believed to be users of ByLock, an encrypted messaging app the government says was used by Gulen's followers. Gulen has denied involvement in the attempted military takeover.

On Monday authorities issued arrest warrants for 72 university staff, including a former adviser to Turkey's main opposition leader who staged a mass rally on Sunday to protest against a crackdown in the last year.

Last week police detained 10 people, including the local head of rights group Amnesty International at a meeting on an island near Istanbul. Their detentions were extended for another seven days on Tuesday, a source close to the matter said.

In total, about 50,000 people have been arrested and 150,000 state workers including teachers, judges and soldiers have been suspended under the emergency rule imposed in late July.

Rights groups and government critics say Turkey has been drifting toward authoritarianism for years, a process they say has accelerated since the coup bid and a referendum in April granting President Tayyip Erdogan sweeping new powers.—Reuters ■

Russia's Alligator attack helicopter's land version to get folding blades

Ka-52 Alligator attack helicopter. **PHOTO: TASS**

MOSCOW — The land version of the Kamov Ka-52 Alligator (NATO reporting name: Hokum-B) reconnaissance/attack helicopter is expected to get folding blades as part of its upgrade, Russian Helicopters Group, part of Russia's state hi-tech corporation Rostec, told TASS on Monday.

"As the technique of folding blades has been mastered, a possibility is being considered to use this technology also in the manufacture of the land version of this helicopter's modification," the Russian Helicopters press office said.

The helicopter's modernization has already begun.

This innovation will make it possible to keep this helicopter at hangars, which gives the Alligator's land version a fundamental advantage, the press office said.

Russian Deputy Defence Minister Yuri Borisov earlier said that Ka-52 Alligator helicopters could be modernized considering the experience of their combat use in Syria.

According to the deputy defence minister, the Ka-52 has proved its worth in combat operations in Syria.—Tass ■

US says test of THAAD missile defence system in Alaska hits target

WASHINGTON — The United States said on Tuesday it successfully tested its THAAD missile defence system against an intermediate-range ballistic missile in the Pacific Ocean near Hawaii and Alaska, a key area as tensions with North Korea mount.

A Terminal High Altitude Area Defence (THAAD) near Kodiak, Alaska, intercepted the ballistic missile target that was launched north of Hawaii, the US Missile Defence Agency (MDA) said in a statement.

Although the test was planned months ago, the US missile defence test has gained significance following North Korea's 4 July launch of an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) that raised concerns about the threat from Pyongyang.

"The successful demonstration of THAAD against an IRBM-range missile threat bolsters the country's defensive capability against developing missile threats in North Korea and other countries around the globe and contributes to the broader strategic deterrence architecture," MDA said in the statement.—Reuters ■

London mayor recruits architects to build "inclusive" city

LONDON — London's mayor says he has recruited a team of architects and designers to help build socially inclusive and environmentally sustainable communities, as the British capital's population grows toward 10 million people.

Sadiq Khan said the city, with a population of 8.7 million, faces a "mammoth task" to rectify a failure to deal with decades of poorly planned growth, and begin building the 50,000 new homes Londoners need each year.

"Today, we face another wave of growth, the likes of which we've not seen for a century," Khan said in a speech at the London School of Economics (LSE) on Monday to launch his 'Good Growth by Design' programme.

"In recent years, too much focus has been dedicated to developing the high-price, high-rise central London market. These expensive developments... haven't delivered the genuinely affordable homes ordinary Londoners desperately need."

Tony Travers, director of LSE's research centre for London, said the city's population is predicted to rise by 100,000 a year, exceeding 10 million by 2030.

Across London, average property prices have risen 90 per cent in the past decade, and a report by the mayor's office in February said a lack of affordable housing is depriving Londoners of the security of home ownership. Khan said the team of 50 design advisers, including Ghanaian-British architect David Adjaye and fashion designer Wayne Hemingway, are the first of a new generation he will bring in to guide the city toward inclusive growth.

A new scheme aims to fast-track talented designers and planners from across the city into year-long placements in local authorities.

Khan said the new programme would reverse the drain of urban design expertise from local councils, after a massive fall in the proportion of architects employed in the public sector since the 1970s. Khan said the explosion in the number of skyscrapers and drastic changes to the city skyline under his predecessor Boris Johnson had failed to provide the homes regular Londoners need.—Reuters ■

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German military resumes tanker flights after move from Turkish base

BERLIN — The German air force on Tuesday resumed refuelling operations from an air base in Jordan in support of US-led air strikes against Islamic State after moving its Airbus MRTT tanker out of Turkey's Incirlik air base, a military spokesman said.

Germany began pulling its troops out of the Turkish base on Sunday after a long-running row with Ankara over its decision to block German lawmakers from visiting German soldiers stationed there.

Turkey is at odds with Germany over a number of issues , ranging from criticism of the post-coup clampdown by Ankara to limiting Turkish political campaigning in Germany.

Germany insisted that lawmakers be given the right to visit its soldiers, since parliament, not the government, has oversight of the country's armed forces."The tanker has now flown its first mission out of Jordan," the spokesman told Reuters after officials briefed lawmakers. Six German Tornado fighter jets that are flying surveillance missions as part of the fight against Islamic State in Iraq and Syria, will continue operating out of the Turkish air base until the end of July, officials have said.—Reuters ■

Rhinos take shelter at flooded Kaziranga national park in India

One-horned rhinos take shelter on higher ground at flooded Kaziranga national park in northeastern Indian state of Assam, on 11 July, 2017. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

Thai gov't approves $5 bil. China-developed high speed rail project

BANGKOK — Thai Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha said on Tuesday his government has approved the start of construction of a $5 billion high-speed train project, to be developed by China. Speaking at press conference, Prayut said construction of the rail link between Bangkok to the northeastern province of Nakhon Ratchasima, a distance of more than 250 kilometrs, will start later this yeare and is scheduled for completion in 2021.

It will cost an estimated 179 billion baht (around $5.1 billion). The government hopes to eventually extend the high-speed railway by some 350 km to Nong Khai Province, opposite Laos, in the hope of boosting cross-border trade volume and turning Thailand into a regional hub. It could eventually link Bangkok and China's southwestern city of Kunming, over 1,200 km away, via landlocked Laos. China, as part of its "One Belt, One Road initiative" to link Asia with Europe, is already constructing a 417-km stretch of single-track railway through Laos as part of a planned regional railway network linking Kunming with Singapore via Laos, Thailand and Malaysia. The high-speed rail project in Thailand has been delayed for two years due to problems related to loans and technical matters. Earlier this year, Prayut, who heads Thailand's military junta, invoked his power under the interim constitution to pave the way for the project.—Kyodo News ■

More rain on way for southwest Japan as rescue efforts continue

FUKUOKA — Thunderstorms are predicted on Tuesday for areas in southwestern Japan still reeling from torrential rains that have left 25 people dead and another 25 unaccounted for. The Japan Meteorological Agency is warning of more heavy rain in northern parts of the island of Kyushu though early Wednesday and calling for caution against landslides. About 1,500 people have been displaced from their homes in Fukuoka and Oita prefectures. The midsummer heat is adding to concerns for the health of people staying in evacuation centers, with daytime temperatures exceeding 30 C in hard-hit Asakura, Fukuoka Prefecture.

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said he plans to visit the affected areas on Wednesday, having arrived back in Japan on Tuesday afternoon after cutting short his European tour due to the disaster.

"We will move forward with clearing debris and restoring roads and other infrastructure, devoting every effort to securing places for people to live and getting their lives back in order as soon as possible," Abe told a ministerial meeting after his return.

"About 12,000 personnel from the SDF, police, fire service and coast guard are still engaged in search and rescue efforts...I want them to continue their thorough search operations, keeping in mind those who are praying for their loved ones' safety," he said. —Kyodo News ■

People remove driftwood from a residential area on 11 July, 2017, in the city of Asakura, Fukuoka Prefecture, following torrential rain in the southwestern Japan. **PHOTO: KYODO NEWS**

Eight killed in Thailand in rare mass shooting — police

BANGKOK — Gunmen shot dead eight people, including at least one child, in a house in Thailand after holding them hostage, police said on Tuesday, a rare incident in a country where although guns are common, such mass shootings are rare.

The eight were killed in the southern province of Krabi, which is a popular beach destination, after the gunmen stormed the house late on Monday and held the inhabitants hostage before shooting them, police said.

Three people were wounded.

Police said they believed the motive was some kind of personal dispute. "They were found this morning. Eight people died, three were injured. They were all found at the house," Manat In-prom, an officer at the Ao Luk police station in the province, told Reuters. "We believe there were five or six criminals."

Thailand has a high rate of gun ownership and many people carry guns for their self-protection but such mass shootings are very rare.

According to the Interior Ministry, there are 6.1 million registered firearms in the country of 67 million people. But there are also many unregistered guns in circulation.

According to 2016 data from the University of Washington, Thailand had the highest reported rate of gun-related deaths out of 10 countries in Asia, about 50 per cent higher than the Philippines, which came second on the list.—Reuters ■

Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation
No.(2) Mining Enterprise
Invitation for Opening Tender

1. No. (2) Mining Enterprise, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation invites to submit the tender quotation for the following materials.

Sr. No.	Materials Classifies	Weight (MT)	Location	Tender Closing Date / Time	Delivery Term
1	Tin Concentrate	86.695	Dawei, Tanintharyi Region	9.8.2017 / 2:00 PM	F.O.B (Dawei)
2	Wolfram Concentrate	2.560			
3	Tin - Wolfram Mixed Concentrate	172.721			
4	Tin Concentrate	24.684	Myeik, Tanintharyi Region	9.8.2017 / 2:00 PM	F.O.B (Myeik)
5	Wolfram Concentrate	0.408			
6	Tin -Wolfram Mixed Concentrate	1.401			
7	Tin Concentrate	13.612	Pyinmana, Nay Pyi Taw	9.8.2017 / 2:00 PM	F.O.B (Pyinmana)
8	Low Grade Tin -Wolfram Mixed Concentrate (Arrested)	61.582			
9	Tin Concentrate	3.802	Kyinetong, Shan State (East)	9.8.2017 / 2:00 PM	F.O.B (Kyinetong)

2. No.(2) Mining Enterprise could provide necessary documents to interest companies and contact under mention address within office hours.
-No.(2) Mining Enterprise,
Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation,
Office Building No.(19), Nay Pyi Taw,
Ph:+95-(0)67 409391, e-mail; metwo@e-monrec.gov.mm

Tender Committee
No.(2) Mining Enterprise

Jay Z's '4:44' goes platinum but absent from Billboard chart

American rapper Jay-Z performs at Bercy stadium in Paris on 17 October, 2013. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

LOS ANGELES — Jay Z's latest album "4:44" may already be certified platinum but it was noticeably absent from Monday's Billboard 200 album chart because the rapper's own streaming platform Tidal did not report numbers to Nielsen Music.

The album, on which the Jay Z addresses cheating on his wife Beyonce and the birth of their twins, was released on 30 June as an exclusive to members of Tidal and customers of wireless carrier Sprint Corp, who were offered a free six-month subscription to Tidal to listen to the album.

The Billboard 200 album chart is based on retailers and streaming platforms reporting sales and streaming figures to Nielsen SoundScan. Tidal did not report first week streaming figures of "4:44" to Nielsen, David Bakula of Nielsen Music said.

Representatives for Tidal and Jay Z did not immediately respond to Reuters' request for comment on the album's exclusion from this week's Billboard chart, but this is not the first time the streaming platform's exclusive releases have not charted on Billboard.

Kanye West's "Life of Pablo" did not enter the Billboard charts during its exclusive Tidal release in February 2016. It only debuted on the Billboard 200 chart, at No 1, after West made it available widely in April last year on platforms including iTunes, Apple Music and Spotify.

Just six days after "4:44" was released, the Recording Industry Association of America certified the album as platinum, meaning one million US consumers had already downloaded the album.

But instead of featuring Jay Z, DJ Khaled's "Grateful" topped the Billboard 200 chart for a second consecutive week on Monday with another 70,000 album units sold.

"4:44" was made available to purchase and stream widely on 7 July, which will count toward next week's Billboard chart. The album has been praised by critics for Jay Z's raw self-examination and socially conscious themes.

Jay Z announced a "4:44" tour on Monday and will play 31 shows across North America and Canada from October to December.

New albums in the top 10 of this week's Billboard 200 album chart include electro-pop DJ Calvin Harris' "Funk Wav Bounces Vol 1" at No 2 with 68,000 album units sold and rock group Stone Sour at No 8 with "Hydrograd."—Reuters ■

'Planet of the Apes' flags dangers of lack of empathy, actor Serkis says

NEW YORK — The "Planet of the Apes" films highlight the risks of a lack of empathy with people from different cultures, actor Andy Serkis said at the premiere of "War for the Planet of the Apes", the final film of a recent trilogy spun off from science fiction.

Set in a post-apocalyptic world, the film depicts an epic battle between a band of intelligent apes led by a chimpanzee called Caesar, played by Serkis, and an army led by a ruthless colonel, who is played by Woody Harrelson.

"It's (about) the perils of lack of empathy, and we live in a world that is sadly getting closer to reaching a tipping point of not being able to empathize with other cultures, other people," said Serkis.

Matt Reeves, director of the second and third films in the current trilogy, called his five years of immersion in the tale a "great journey", adding, "It's very bittersweet because now this chapter is over."

Actor Andy Serkis is seen on the red carpet at a screening of 'War for the Planet of the Apes' in Manhattan, New York, US on 10 July, 2017. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

The "Planet of the Apes" science fiction franchise began with French author Pierre Boulle's 1963 novel of the same name, which spawned a five-film series that ran from 1968 to 1973.

The first movie, starring Charlton Heston, won an Oscar for its prosthetic make-up effects, and was a critical and commercial hit that led to sequels, television series and other related releases.

"The War for the Planet of the Apes" hits US cinemas on 14 July.—Reuters ■

Actor Tom Hanks to receive award for work reflecting US history

Actor Tom Hanks. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

WASHINGTON — For his work in films reflecting US history such as "Saving Private Ryan," "Apollo 13" and "Bridge of Spies," actor Tom Hanks has won this year's Records of Achievement Award, the National Archives Foundation said on Monday.

Hanks, 61, will receive the award, given to individuals who bring a broad awareness of US history through their work, at an 21 October event at the National Archives Museum in Washington, the nonprofit organization said in a statement.

"As a dive into archives of almost any kind is, to me, a swim in the finest of waters, I'm dazzled to be a part of this event," said Hanks, a two-time Oscar winner, who last year was one of 21 people awarded the 2016 Presidential Medal of Freedom — the highest US civilian honour.

"Part of my job has always been one not far from that of a lay-Historian, to understand that I am a part of the documenting of the human condition and the American idea, even in the silliest of stories," he added in the statement.

Hanks has appeared in numerous films based on historical events and figures, including the World War Two drama "Saving Private Ryan" and crime thriller "Catch Me If You Can," based on the true story of fraudster Frank Abagnale.

More recently, Hanks played the title role in "Sully," based on pilot Chesley Sullenberger's 2009 emergency landing of a passenger flight on the Hudson River. He was also an executive producer and co-writer/director on the 2001 World War Two television miniseries "Band of Brothers."

"He's served in World War II (in both the European and Pacific Theaters), negotiated for the US in the Cold War, fought in Viet Nam, worked in Congress, and led the space programme," said David Ferriero, archivist of the United States and board member of the National Archives Foundation. A past winner of the award is Steven Spielberg, who directed Hanks in "Saving Private Ryan," "Bridge of Spies" and the upcoming Pentagon Papers movie "The Papers."

Previous recipients also include Pulitzer Prize-winning historian Ron Chernow, Tony award-winning film and theater director Thomas Kail and Tony award-winning "Hamilton" composer, lyricist and performer Lin-Manuel Miranda.—Reuters ■

Tokyo launches campaign to ease overcrowding on trains

TOKYO — Tokyo on Tuesday launched a campaign to ease overcrowding on trains during morning rush hour by encouraging staggered commuting.

To boost the two-week campaign, which involves a total of about 260 companies and municipalities, extra trains will run early in the morning while commuters avoiding the rush hour have a chance to earn gifts.

Called Jisa Biz, or staggered work shifts, and led by Tokyo Governor Yuriko Koike, the campaign is aimed at alleviating train congestion in the city in the run-up to the 2020 Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics. Koike promised to mitigate train congestion when she first ran for governor last summer.

The Tokyo government plans to make it a yearly campaign.

Tokyo Governor Yuriko Koike watches efforts to ease overcrowding on trains during morning rush hour by encouraging staggered commuting, at a train station on 11 July, 2017. **PHOTO: KYODO NEWS**

"Packed trains and long working hours are the remnant of Japan's rapid growth period backed by mass production and mass consumption. Changing such a mindset is the key" for the campaign to succeed, Koike said.

Early Tuesday, she visited Shinjuku-Nishiguchi station on the Oedo line to monitor an event to distribute bottles of water to early-morning commuters.

Tokyu Corp will run a special limited express between Shibuya and Chuo-Rinkan stations on the Denentoshi line, which many suburban commuters take, through 21 July between 6 and 7 am, while Tokyo Metro Co will boost the number of early-morning trains.

People getting on trains before and after rush hour on weekdays can collect points giving them a chance to win gifts in a service offered by the Tokyo metropolitan government's Bureau of Transportation.

Participating companies and municipal governments will promote flexible working hours, or telecommuting.

In the 2015 fiscal year, the train congestion rates of many railways in the Tokyo area was well over 150 per cent for the morning rush hour, with passengers packed shoulder to shoulder. With some railways, the rates almost reach 200 per cent, with commuters' bodies pressed against each other, according to the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism.—Kyodo News ■

New York men's wear event showcases rising designers

NEW YORK — A four-day parade of men's fashion has kicked off in New York, showcasing the 2018 Spring/Summer collections of rising designers, several making their debuts on this closely watched global stage.

That internationalism was felt this year through the fashion collections displayed.

Nigerian-born designer Taofeek Abijako dressed male models in boxy fits and bright colors, saying he drew on the colonial history of his country for inspiration.

"I took inspiration from African contemporary photographers like Malick Sidibé, Seydou Keita ... and how they reacted to Western influence," he said.

Although just in its fifth year, New York Fashion Week: Men's is fast becoming an important stop on the fashion circuit.

"I love that New York Fashion Week: Men's is really gaining momentum," said American designer David Hart, who showcased light summerwear that invoked a feel of Cuba, which has recently restored ties with the United States and seen a rise in tourism.

"I feel like there is a new energy, and big excitement, and it really is a platform for the menswear designers here in New York City," he said.

The event mostly dropped the traditional catwalk associated with large fashion shows and designers instead had models stand in large spaces to showcase the clothes.

Later in the week, the show will feature collection debuts by Raf Simons and Boss, while Robert Geller launches a contemporary line called "Gustav von Aschenbach" and Barbara Sanchez-Kane of Sanchez-Kane shows for the first time in New York.

"New York Fashion Week: Men's" will run till Thursday.—Reuters ■

mitv Myanmar International Programme Schedule

(12-7-2017 07:00am ~ 13-7-2017 07:00am) MST

07:03	Am	News
07:25	Am	Myanmar Social & Charitable Association (Ep-2) (Jivitadana Hospital)
07:51	Am	Licuala Palm Leaf
08:03	Am	News
08:26	Am	U Kyaw Thu: From Artist to Philanthropist (Part-I)
08:46	Am	Traditional Thatch Roof - Thet Nge
09:03	Am	News
09:26	Am	Hive Hunter
09:46	Am	Elegant and Exquisite Myanmar Cotton Fabrics
10:03	Am	News
10:27	Am	The Richly Blessed Gem Land
10:54	Am	Creations of a Designer: Fashion

(11:00 Am ~ 03:00 Pm)- Tuesday Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)
(03:00 Pm ~ 07:00 Pm) -Today Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)

Prime Time

07:03	Pm	News
07:26	Pm	Travelogue: A Tour in Korea (Part-2)
07:41	Pm	Elephant Catching and Scaring Trip Mile Stone 26
07:55	Pm	Scented Buddha Images
08:03	Pm	News
08:27	Pm	Mosaic Painting (Precious Stones & Gems)
08:43	Pm	Clam Farming

(09:00 Pm ~ 11:00 Pm) -Today Repeat (09:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)
(11:00 Pm ~ 03:00 Am)- Tuesday Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)
(03:00 Am ~ 07:00 Am) -Today Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)

(For Detailed Schedule – www.myanmaritv.com/schedule)

Int'l fingerstyle guitar festival to be held in Viet Nam

HANOI — The 2017 Viet Nam International Fingerstyle Guitar Festival will take place here on 18 July, and in Ho Chi Minh City on 19 July.

The festival is highlighted with participation of five well-known artists, including Justin King from the United States, Jacques Stotzem from Belgium, Agustin Amigo from Spain, Akihiro Tanaka from Japan and Duy Phong from Vietnam, the Vietnam Fingerstyle Guitar Organization announced on Monday.

The two-hour concerts will be held at the Youth Theater in Hanoi and the Ho Chi Minh City Conservatory of Music.

Fingerstyle guitar is the technique of playing the guitar by plucking the strings directly with the fingertips, fingernails, or picks attached to fingers, as opposed to flatpicking — plucking individual notes with a single plectrum. —Xinhua ■

Myanmar U-15 defeats Laos U-15

MYANMAR's U-15 football team defeated Laos U-15, 2-1 yesterday evening at the Thailand-ASEAN youth tournament hosted in Thailand.

Myanmar's Yan Naing Lin scored the first goal at 65minutes and La Min Htwe scored the final shot at 80 minutes.

Myanmar's U-15 football team ended in a draw with Indonesia in its first match. Myanmar won a total of four marks after playing two matches. The third match for Myanmar's U-15 football team falls on 13 July versus Singapore's U-15 football team.—Phoe Thaw Zin ■

Djokovic eases past Mannarino into last eight

LONDON — Second seed Novak Djokovic eased into the Wimbledon quarter-finals with a routine 6-2, 7-6(5), 6-4 win over France's Adrian Mannarino on Tuesday.

The match was postponed after the marathon battle between Rafa Nadal and Gilles Muller concluded late on Monday.

Djokovic was due to follow Nadal on to Court One but the Spaniard's defeat by Muller lasted 4 hours 48 minutes and made it impossible for the Serb's match to be completed before dark.

Light rain led officials to close the roof over Centre Court. Djokovic, who will face Czech Tomas Berdych in the last eight, received treatment to his shoulder during a medical time-out late in the third set.—Reuters ■

Serbia's Novak Djokovic celebrates winning the fourth round match against France's Adrian Mannarino in London, Britain on 11 July, 2017. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

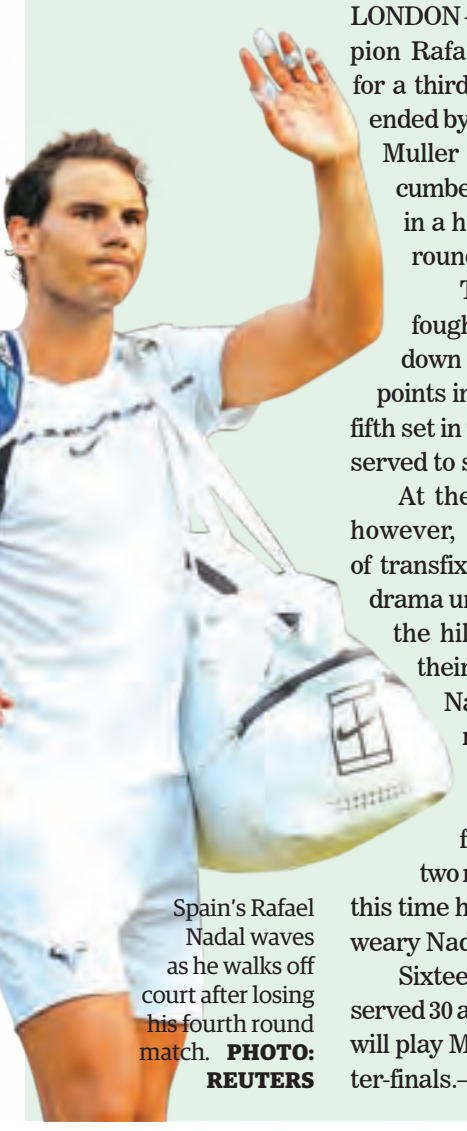
Nadal beaten by Muller in fourth-round classic

LONDON — French Open champion Rafael Nadal's challenge for a third Wimbledon title was ended by Luxembourg's Gilles Muller as the Spaniard succumbed 6-3, 6-4, 3-6, 4-6, 15-13 in a heart-pounding fourth-round classic on Monday.

The 31-year-old Nadal fought back from two sets down and saved four match points in a 135-minute minute fifth set in which he successfully served to stay alive nine times.

At the 10th time of asking, however, and with thousands of transfixed fans watching the drama unfold on the screen on the hill and on the edge of their seats on Court One, Nadal buckled under the relentless pressure exerted by an inspired Muller. A miss-hit forehand gave Muller two more match points and this time he finished the job as a weary Nadal went long.

Sixteenth seed Muller, who served 30 aces and hit 95 winners, will play Marin Cilic in the quarter-finals.—Reuters ■



Spain's Rafael Nadal waves as he walks off court after losing his fourth round match. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

Rooney keen on England return after Everton switch

LONDON — Everton forward Wayne Rooney is eager to revive his England career after losing his place in Gareth Southgate's squad earlier this year due to a lack of playing time at Manchester United.

Former captain Rooney is England's top scorer with 53 goals but last played for the Lions in the World Cup qualifier against Scotland in November with Southgate omitting him in favour of in-form strikers.

Rooney scored eight goals in 39 matches for United last season as he struggled to beat out the club's new signings and younger players for a regular starting spot.

The 31-year-old is hopeful of a different scenario after re-joining his boyhood club after 13 years at Old Trafford. "I love playing for England," Rooney told reporters during his first press conference for Everton on Monday.

Everton's Wayne Rooney poses with the club shirt after the press conference on 10 July, 2017. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

"Of course Gareth had to make a decision... I wasn't playing the football that I like and I don't think you should play for your country if you are not playing for your club.

"He told me that, if I get back playing every week, then the door is still open. I want to play for England. I am focused on Everton, getting back playing and doing well and, if I do well, Gareth Southgate will have a decision to make."

Rooney, who has 119 caps for England, also said that he would be forced to retire from international football if he had moved to a Chinese club.

"If I had gone to China, which was an option, then I would have called it a day. It's the time difference, the difference in the standard of the league," Rooney added.—Reuters ■

Arsenal ready to roll out 'red carpet' to Monaco's Mbappe

LONDON — Manager Arsene Wenger revealed Arsenal's interest in Monaco striker Kylian Mbappe but conceded the talented 18-year-old will be spoilt for choice as top European clubs chase his signature.

Mbappe has emerged as a hot property after scoring 27 goals in all competitions to lead Monaco to the Ligue 1 title, the semi-finals of the Champions League and the finals of the French League Cup.

"He's a player who, when he gets up in the morning, can choose where he wants to go," Wenger was quoted as saying on the club website (www.arsenal.com). "There are not many players with that kind of luck, because he's only 18 years of age and has the whole of Europe rolling out a red carpet for him."

Asked if Arsenal were chasing him as well, Wenger said, "Nobody can say they are not interested in a player of that calibre, because he has such immense quality at 18 years of age. All the clubs are open and interested in him."

Arsenal travelled to Australia to kick off their pre-season tour and Wenger said that the club's new record-signing Alexandre Lacazette would make his debut against Sydney FC on Thursday. "Lacazette will make his debut here, yes," Wenger said. "On Thursday night he will certainly play a part in the game and in the other game as well. In the two games he will take part."

Arsenal have two matches in Australia before travelling to China for friendlies against league rivals and champions Chelsea and German champions Bayern Munich.—Reuters ■