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Ministry of the Office of the State Counsellor issued the press release on 27th May on the first returnees from Bangladesh. Following is the full text of the press release.

Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar Ministry of the Office of the State Counsellor

13th Waxing of Nayon, 1380 ME
(27th May 2018)
PRESS RELEASE

The first returnees from the Camps in Cox's Bazaar arrived in Reception Centres

The Republic of the Union of Myanmar and the Republic of Bangladesh have signed the Arrangement on Return of Displaced Persons from Rakhine State on 23 November 2017. One of the provisions of the agreement was that action will not be taken against the returnees except for the cases that involved terrorist activities.

In accordance with the agreement, arrangements

have been made to receive the returnees at Nga Khu Ya and Taung Pyo Latwe reception centres. After verification at the reception centres, the returnees are to be housed at the transit camp in Hla Phoe Khaung temporarily.

To implement the agreement, the delegation led by Union Minister Dr. Win Myat Aye visited Cox's Bazaar in April 2018. Subsequently, Myanmar leader of the Joint Working

Group, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, U Myint Thu visited Dhaka on 17 May 2018. Despite these efforts, the procedures for systematic repatriation are still not yet widely known by the displaced persons. As a result, the displaced persons who no longer find it tenable to continue their stay in the camps in Cox's Bazaar began returning to Rakhine State of their own volition and under

their own arrangements.

These returnees were arrested under the existing laws and some were given prison sentences.

In accordance with the bilateral agreement, the returnees should be properly processed, verified and be accepted without any action being taken against them. In order to implement this process, the President has pardoned 58 persons. These

people were released from prison and sent to the Nga Khu Ya Reception Camp on 26 May 2018. After the necessary verification, they will be transferred to the Transit Camp in Hla Phoe Khaung.

This arrangement concerns only those who have not been involved in terrorism. Effective action will be taken against those implicated in terrorist acts in accordance with law.

Interfaith delegation visits Maungtaw

An 18-member interfaith delegation composed of local and international members of Religions for Peace (RfP) and interfaith group, accompanied by Union Minister for Religious Affairs and Culture Thura U Aung Ko, Cardinal Charles Bo and Rakhine State Minister U Kyaw Aye Thein, visited Hla Phoe Khaung Transit Centre yesterday.

They flew to the transit centre in a Tatmadaw helicopter, and were welcomed by Deputy Minister for the Office of the State Counsellor U Khin Maung Tin and other officials.

At the transit centre, Maungtaw District Deputy Commissioner U Ye Htut and Project Engineer U Tin Soe reported on the readiness for repatriation, plans for accepting returnees and the resettlement plans.

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Members of the interfaith delegation meet Hindus, who were abducted by ARSA terrorists at the Maungtaw District General Administration Department in Maungtaw, Rakhine State. PHOTO: MYANMAR NEWS AGENCY

Ten investors hold talks with Kayah State cabinet

TEN groups of investors called on Kayah State chief minister yesterday in Loikaw, seeking opportunities for investment in the state.

The investors included two cinema companies, three marble production companies, one company seeking to set up an adventure tourism business in Pon Chaung, one company growing perennial trees, two companies involved in hotel businesses, and one company engaged in mining and agriculture businesses.

The companies called on the Kayah State cabinet, led by Chief Minister U L Phaung Sho, following the Kayah State Investment Forum that concluded on Saturday. The film companies proposed to run cinemas in the state within a year. Ardent Alliance Co. Ltd. proposed to set up an adventure tourism business in Pon Chaung to attract tourists to the natural beauty of Pon Chaung in Bawlake District.

The investors also expressed



A meeting between investors and Kayah State cabinet in progress in Loikaw. **PHOTO: MNA**

their interest in the production of marbles of international standards. They also discussed prospects for hotels and mining businesses in the state.

To promote investment in

Kayah State, the Kayah State Investment Forum was held on Saturday at the State Hall in Loikaw, Kayah State. It was jointly organised by the Kayah State government and the Kayah State

Investment Committee, supported by the Myanmar Investment Commission. The Kayah State government is working to establish an international trade centre. The main objectives of the

forum are to promote investment in Kayah State effectively and develop a linkage between local businesses, and potential local and foreign investors. —Sai Nyan Lin Hut ■

SWRR Deputy Minister, Japanese Ambassador visit IDPs in Rakhine

A delegation led by Deputy Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement U Soe Aung and Japanese Ambassador to Myanmar Mr. Ichiro Maruyama arrived in Sittway Township and discussed the closure of internally displaced persons' (IDPs) camps, resettlement programmes and socio-economic development with those in charge of the camp and residents yesterday morning.

The deputy minister and the Japanese ambassador, accompanied by the Rakhine State development affairs minister, arrived at Thetkeyyin IDP camp in the township and met those in charge and residents. During the meeting, the ambassador said they had met with State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, who told them to visit Rakhine State, study its real situation, and give



Deputy Minister U Soe Aung meets those in charge of the IDP camps in Thetkeyyin. **PHOTO: MNA**

suggestions on the means to deal with the situation. He said they had conducted field tours in the state to provide humanitarian aid and invited suggestions on the requirements in connection with resettlement and socio-development.

Those in charge and residents agreed to the IDP camps closure programme, suggesting that they be resettled at their original place or built homes in nearby places. They also discussed freedom of movement, continuous provision for food, healthcare services, educational needs, and provision for electricity and transport until after the closure of the IDP camps. Further, they spoke about the pursuance of university education and citizenship.

In his response, the deputy

minister thanked them for their frank discussions, pointing out the need to adopt short-term, as well as long-term programmes, for their requirement. He said the state government was compiling data for the continuous pursuance of higher education, explaining his knowledge of national identity card holders national registration cardholders and citizenship applicants among the residents. The deputy minister assured cooperation of relevant ministries in dealing with their requirements, in accordance with the law.

The ambassador said he would find the means to deal with the matter, in accordance with the existing laws of Myanmar, through cooperation between the Myanmar and Japanese govern-



Japanese Ambassador to Myanmar Mr. Ichiro Maruyama shakes hands with a resident of Bawdupha IDP camp. **PHOTO: MNA**

ments, and generate jobs.

The deputy minister, the ambassador and the delegation visited Daungdokka and Bawdupha camps in Sittway and discussed their closure and resettlement, as well as the socio-economic

development undertakings.

In the evening, the delegation visited Nidin camp in Kyauktaw and discussed the resettlement of camp residents at places adjacent to the former villages. —Myanmar News Agency ■

We will abolish the red tape that burdens the people and eradicate corruption and bribery that plagues all levels of society as we work to strengthen the moral fiber of our people. We will draw out from our past experiences as a civilian government overcoming various obstacles and hardships, as we work to the best of our ability for the immediate present and head towards the future of a democratic nation that respects human rights and is free from all stains of corruption.

(Excerpt from the speech by President U Win Myint at the ceremony to take oath of office at Pyidaungsu Hluttaw on 30th March 2018)

May we all be able to build the peaceful, modern, prosperous and genuine Democratic Federal Republic which is the dream of the fathers of our independence and which is what our people desire.

(Excerpt from the speech by State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi on the 2nd Anniversary of NLD Government on 1st April 2018)



U Myint Swe presents cash assistance to a Hindu woman. **PHOTO: MNA**



Members of the Interfaith delegation meet locals at the Mro ethnic village. **PHOTO: MNA**

Interfaith delegation visits Maungtaw

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The interfaith delegation raised questions on the plans for the resettlement of returnees at their original places, the aid provided to them, plans for assisting them in settling down in their original places when they return, the situation of the Islamic community who fled and have been living in peace, and raising awareness for peaceful coexistence and harmony between the various communities. The officials replied to their queries.

During their visit to Taung Pyo Letwe Reception Centre, U Soe Tun, deputy director of the administration of the reception centre, and U Ko Ko Thaw, direc-

tor of the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population, briefed them on the facts about the centre, citizenship verification process, registration and the issuing of the national verification cards. The officials also explained the immigration works and measures taken for the displaced people to access information on NVCs.

The delegation visited the office of the Taung Pyo Letwe Reception Centre, where the NVC issuing works, biometric programme, rehabilitation and healthcare services are being carried out.

Later, the interfaith delegation, led by Union Minister Thura U Aung Ko and Cardinal Charles Bo, went to the office of the local

authorities and met the Hindu families who were abducted by ARSA terrorists. At the meeting, they enquired about their security, healthcare, livelihoods, the terrorist attacks they experienced and their need for development. Later, RfP Chairman U Myint Swe presented cash assistance to the Hindu families.

The interfaith delegation also visited Pantawpyin Village, where administrator of Pantawpyin Village-tract U Annawah briefed about the construction of the Pantawpyin new village and the socio-economy of the villagers.

The members of the delegation enquired about the situation of academic education in

the basic education schools, the religious Lessons provided at the Islamic schools and harmony between the various communities.

The interfaith delegation also visited Kainggyi Village of the Mro ethnic people and observed the situation of food safety, education and prospects for living

in harmony between the different communities.

Later, the delegation flew back to Sittway in a helicopter. The interfaith delegation arrived in Sittway on 26 May to visit the reception centres and to meet the local people in Maungtaw. —Myanmar News Agency ■



Members of the Interfaith delegation visit office of the Immigration Department in Taung Pyo Letwe Reception Centre. **PHOTO: MNA**

Participation in Japanese travel fair discussed

UNION MINISTER for Hotels and Tourism U Ohn Maung met Senior Vice-chair of Myanmar Restaurant Association (Central) Daw Tin Mar Myint, Chair of Myanmar Restaurant Association (Mandalay Zone) Daw Khin Saw Oo and its members on 26 May.

The union minister said restaurants played a major

role in developing the tourism industry in Myanmar.

A standard restaurant needs cleanness, hospitality and skilled services. Restaurants should make preparations for the Tourism Expo Japan to be held in September this year, under the sponsorship of Japan Association of Travel Agents (JATA), and the Myanmar tra-

ditional food festival to be held during the Manuha Pagoda festival in the same month.

The participants presented their plans to take part in the festivals.

The hotels and tourism ministry, Myanmar Restaurant Association (Mandalay Zone) and tourist agent from Switzerland offered a dawn meal to 200

members of the Sangha at the foot of Mandalay Hill yesterday morning.

The Swiss tourist agent arriving on 22 May in Myanmar, under arrangement with Diethelm Travels Company Limited, visited Yangon and Bagan, offered provisions to members of the Sangha in Mandalay, studied chinlon sports, and offered

day meals to nuns in Sagaing. They will leave Myanmar today.

During his meeting with the Swiss visitors, the union minister explained the stable situation of tourism destinations in Myanmar and the economic and social development undertakings of the government. —Myanmar News Agency ■

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edited.

Sagaing Region to grow over 1 million acres of marketable beans this FY

A plan to grow more than one million acres of marketable beans and pulses has been implemented in the Sagaing Region in the current six-month transitional financial year, according to the region's Agriculture Department.

Under the new scheme, 18,989 acres of mung beans, 604,266 acres of pigeon peas and 389,395 acres of green grams will be planted on 1.012 million acres in seven districts in the region within the period between April and September this year.

The plan targets to cultivate 133,588 acres of pigeon peas, 7,242 acres of mung beans and 37,611 acres of green grams in Monywa District; 120,011 acres of pigeon peas, 185 acres of mung beans and 44,415 acres of green grams in Yinmabin District; 155,396 acres of pigeon peas, 240 acres of mung beans and 78,727 acres of green grams



Sagaing Region will put over 1 million acre under beans. PHOTO: WIN OO (ZEYATAING)

in Kantbalu District; 66,293 acres of pigeon peas, 4,573 acres of mung beans and 78,727 acres of green grams in Sagaing District; 120,530 acres of pigeon peas,

6,499 acres of mung beans and 136,908 acres of green grams in Shwebo District; 3,366 acres of pigeon peas and 8,866 acres of green grams in Kalay Dis-

trict; and 5,082 acres of pigeon peas, 250 acres of mung beans and 686 acres of green grams in Katha District.—Win Oo (Zeyataing) ■

Myanmar-Sweden trade decreases by \$6 million in 2017-18 FY

TRADE between Myanmar and Sweden reached US\$55.848 million in the 2017-2018 fiscal year, which saw a slight decrease in value by \$6.148 million than the previous FY, according to the latest statistical report of the Ministry of Commerce.

In the 2017-2018 FY, the total bilateral exports of the two

countries amounted to \$31.934 million, increasing by \$10.611 million against the 2016-2017 FY, while Myanmar's imports from European member states were worth \$23.914 million, decreasing by \$19.808 million.

Myanmar exports aquaculture products, garments, coffee, tea leaves and agricultural products to European

countries. Cosmetics, food and beverages, transport equipment, machinery and consumer goods are usually imported into the country.

Investments from EU member states mainly enter the country's petroleum and natural gas enterprises, hotels and tourism firms, manufacturing and transport sectors,

and livestock businesses.

The Myanmar-Sweden trade was \$20.141 million in the 2011-12 FY, \$12.675 million in the 2012-13 FY, \$12.139 million in the 2013-14 FY, \$41.258 million in the 2014-15 FY and \$21.323 million in the 2015-16 FY. The bilateral trade reached a record high of \$61.996 million in the 2016-17 FY.—Swe Nyein■

Public sector export of manufactured goods down by over \$78m this FY

THE export of manufactured goods by the public sector over the first 48 days of the current transitional fiscal year reached US\$195 million, down by \$78 million compared to \$273 million during the same period last year, the commerce ministry reported.

The total export value of manufactured goods be-

tween 1 April and 18 May was \$767 million, including \$572 million through the private sector. Compared with the last FY, the private sector's export of manufactured products increased by some \$300 million.

This time last year, international importers bought a wide variety of manufactured

goods from Myanmar amounting to \$545 million.

According to the ministry's latest figures, the country's earning from the export sector reached \$1.645 billion, including \$394 million from agro products, \$31 million from animal products, \$95 million from marine products, some \$157 million

from minerals, \$23 million from forest products and \$174 million from miscellaneous products.

Although the value of exports increases each year, the country's import value is always greater than its export value. The current import value from all sectors topped \$2.675 billion.—Khine Khant■



A woman piling grains at a rice depot. **PHOTO: SUPPLIED**

Farmers expecting monsoon paddy to fetch Ks600,000 per 100 baskets

FARMERS are expecting the monsoon paddy to fetch Ks600,000 per 100 baskets on account of their good quality and the high yield in the Mandalay Region.

“The monsoon paddy is freshly produced. Some farms are still harvesting the paddy. Although the government set the floor price at Ks500,000 per 100 baskets, it is likely to fetch some Ks600,000,” said U Thein, a farmer from Patheingyi Township.

The local paddy varieties — Shwethweyin, Meetauk and Paethwe — are mainly cultivat-

ed in Patheingyi Township. All the paddy varieties except long-term paddy will be harvested in the Mandalay Region in the second week of June.

Currently, Chinese merchants are offering lower-than-actual market price for Myanmar’s rice. Also, with the various regions and states set to produce more rice, high prices are uncertain, said U Kyaw Kyaw Naing, chair of Mandalay region rice commodity depot.

The Ayeyawady Region has already produced monsoon paddy, but it sells for some Ks500,000 per 100 baskets in the market.

The demand for the paddy is low, and the export volume is dropping due to the lower price. Therefore, paddy is not expected to fetch a high price, said U Kyaw Kyaw Naing.

During the pre-Thingyan period, a 50-kilogram bag was worth some Ks25,000, which decreased slightly to Ks24,000 after the Thingyan Festival. The rice price is Ks23,000 per bag in the fourth week of May. The price is likely to be on the lower side, with fresh rice entering the market, said the rice merchants.—Min Htet Aung (Mandalay sub-printing house)■

Inflation rate rises slightly in April

THE annual rate of inflation in April 2018, based on the 2012 survey, is recorded at 4.12 per cent, showing a slight increase against March, according to statistics recently released by the Central Statistical Organisation (CSO), operating under the Ministry of Planning and Finance.

Rakhine State recorded the highest inflation rate of 8.36 per cent, as of April 2018, followed by Mandalay city with 7.86 per cent and Ayeyawady Region with 4.98 per cent. The year-on-year inflation rate was 5.87 per cent in April 2018 versus April 2017.

Yangon city recorded an inflation rate of 3.14 per cent, while Nay Pyi Taw recorded 3.94 per cent.

Earlier, the inflation rate was evaluated based on the 2006 survey. The base year was then shifted to 2012. The CSO conducted a Household Income and Expenditure Survey in 82 townships in November 2012.

The consumer price index (CPI) in April recorded an increase of 0.51 per cent compared to March on account of the high prices of vegetables and fish, as well as gasoline, diesel and consumer goods.

The CPI in Kachin, Kayah,

Chin and Shan states and the Sagaing region slipped slightly, whereas Kayin, Mon and Rakhine states; the Taninthayi, Bago, Magway and Mandalay regions; and Yangon city and Nay Pyi Taw in April recorded a slight increase in their CPI.

The inflation rate during the first five-year plan from the 2011-2012 FY to the 2015-2016 FY rose. The authorities concerned are making efforts to reduce the inflation rate, based on the policies of finance, currency, trade and foreign currency control, according to the second five-year national development plan.—Ko Htet ■

Myeik market sees low demand for jengkol beans

THE jengkol beans market in Myeik District, Taninthayi Region, has cooled with the demand for the fruits going down this harvest season, according to local wholesalers.

The jengkol beans, also known as Danyinthee in Myanmar, are a locally-produced seasonal food, popular among the Myanmar people. They use the fruits principally in cooking. Baked, boiled or raw jengkol beans are served with salty fish sauce and boiled rice.

Depending on their size and freshness, jengkol beans were worth some Ks70-Ks80 per fruit previously. The prices have gone down to Ks5 per

fruit this month due to high production.

A wholesaler said the prices of jengkol fruits had declined owing to the supply exceeding demand in the market. Jengkol beans can usually be harvested in April and May. This year saw a mass production of jengkol beans in Kyunsu, Myeik, Palaw and Taninthayi townships simultaneously.

Last year, growers reaped a handsome profit from the sale of the same products despite a decrease in production. The majority of jengkol beans were sent to Yangon market through Myeik.—Myint Oo (Myeik)■



Jengkol beans. **PHOTO: SUPPLIED**

Sino-Myanmar border trade shows \$57-m increase as of mid-May

THE border trade between China and Myanmar between 1 April and 18 May during the six-month transitional period for the 2018-2019 financial year (FY) exceeded US\$763 million, up by some \$57 million compared to the same period in the 2017-2018 FY, according to the commerce ministry.

Myanmar conducts trade with China through the Muse, Lwejel, Chinshwehaw, Kanpikete and Kengtung gates.

Muse is the major border trading gate of Myanmar conducting the largest border trade. The Muse gate saw an increase in trade value by \$71

million in over a month-and-a-half of trade during the interim period.

The value of the Sino-Myanmar border trade was worth \$660 million at Muse, \$32.7 million at Lwejel, \$40.24 million at Chinshwehaw, \$53.3 million at Kanpikete and \$0.34 million at Kengtung.

Myanmar exports rice, sugar, various pulses, sesame seeds, corn, dried tea leaves, fishery products, minerals and animal products to China, while capital goods, intermediate goods and consumer goods flow into the country.—Mon Mon ■

Few tourists stay overnight in Magway Region



The Ayeyawady bridge (Magway). **PHOTO: ZEYYA TU (MAGWAY)**

ALTHOUGH a total of 20,000 tourists visit Myanmar annually, few tourists stay overnight in the Magway Region, according to the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism.

There are a total of 38 hotels in the region, and 3,000 tourists stayed in these hotels in a year. A total of 10,000 tourists took a day's visit to Beikthano and Salay, according to the ministry's records.

"If we prepare a plan for a two-day visit in the region, more tourists will stay overnight. No such plan is available now, as most tourists make a day's visit to Myathalun Pagoda, Minbu Sakeinte Pagoda and other sites such as Beikthano and Salay. They stop for the night in Ba-

gan or Pyay but not in Magway. The Magway Region should be able to develop more interesting destinations so tourists stay the night," said U Myint Sein, an official from the Hotels and Tourism Department.

In 2016, 19,458 tourists arrived in the Magway Region, and 3,234 tourists stayed in the hotels and motels in the region. A total of 11,125 tourists visited the Salay monastery, 93 tourists visited the Beikthano sites, 735 tourists enjoyed community-based tourism (CBT) programmes, while 4,271 tourists arrived in the region through the waterway.

In 2017, a total of 20,150 tourists arrived in the region, and 2,281 tourists stayed in

the hotels and motels in the region. A total of 12,607 tourists visited the Salay monastery, 207 tourists visited the Beikthano sites, 760 tourists enjoyed the CBT programmes, while 4,223 tourists arrived in the region through the waterway.

Tourists arriving via water visited the town and slept in a boat. Mostly, they continued their tour through boats after visiting the interesting sites in the region. Tourists who visited Salay monastery and Beikthano sites usually stayed the night in Bagan and Mandalay.

Thus, new and interesting destinations must be developed to promote the tourism sector in the Magway Region. —Zeyya Tu (Magway)■

Villagers raise income by making toddy-palm chair

LOCAL people in Lay Tine Sin Village in Myothit Township, Magway Region increased income by producing chairs from toddy palm, according to a chair-maker in this village.

The villagers collected the branches of toddy palm in summer and make the chair in the raining season. They sell a chair with Ks 3,500 on the tricycles driving in the towns of Myothit, Natmauk and Taungdwingyi.—Zaw Zaw (IPRD)■



Chairs made with toddy-palm are seen in the car. **PHOTO: ZAW ZAW (IPRD)**

Parts of ancient statue discovered in Mohnyin Township

A villager in Mohnyin Township, Kachin State found parts of ancient statue, according to a source from the Ministry of Home Affairs.

The villager identified as U Maung Oo discovered 23 pieces which are believed to be parts of ancient statue in the bushes near a tomb yesterday while he was searching for

the mushroom. He handed the metal pieces weighing 2.17 viss in to the township administrator's office. The metal pieces are allegedly made of gold and bronze.

Arrangements are being made to hand the ancient artifacts in to the Department of Archaeology, National Museum and Library.—MDN ■



Parts of ancient statue are seen. **PHOTO: MDN**

Kids show drawing skills in Mandalay



People visit the drawing expo in Mandalay. **PHOTO: THIHA KO KO**

CHILDREN displayed 165 showed paintings as a show of their art skills at a drawing expo in Mandalay on Saturday.

With the aim of improving the art skills, innovation and to have better thinking, a drawing expo was showed that will the arts drawn by the 3 months drawing course attended children from Shwe Pann Myaing philanthropic school in Mandalay on Saturday.

Works of 18 kids' from Shwe Pann Myaing philanthropic school and other 75 kids who have completed their summer painting course were displayed

at the expo.

Sponsored by Daw Nanda Myint, an art teacher, the summer course was conducted with the aim of improving the art skills, innovative mind, creativity and thinking power of children.

The expo was attended by Mandalay Mayor Dr Ye Lwin and other officials and many interested persons.

The 3 month summer drawing course was conducted from 1 March to 25 May with free of charge and above 5 year old kids attended the course.—Thiha Ko Ko (MDY)■

Transport and Communications Union Minister assists in dry port construction in East Dagon

OFFICIALS led by Union Minister for Transport and Communications U Thant Sin Maung checked construction of the dry ports at the East Dagon Myothit Township, Ywar Thargyi on Saturday.

At first the Union Minister and party arrived the briefing hall of KM Terminal & Logistic Limited and the officials from the

company explained the working processes and the Union Minister instructed the requirements.

Afterwards, the Union Minister and party looked around the buildings that are under construction and then they arrived to the explanation hall of Resources Group Logistic Co.Ltd and the Union Minister also instructed some

requirements over the project.

Each of the two companies is constructing a 40-acre dry port.

After the completion of that project at the end of the year, there will be convenient in transportation by rail from Thilawa to Ywar Thargyi to Myitnge, it is learnt. —Myanmar News Agency ■



A dry port under construction at Ywar Thargyi in East Dagon Myothit Township. PHOTO: MNA



Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn conferring Dhammajakra religious title, on Myanmar Sayadaw. PHOTO: MNA

Three Myanmar win Dhammajakra

TWO Myanmar Buddhist monks and a lay person have become the first recipients of Dhammajakra a religious title conferred under the sponsorship of the ministry responsible for religious affairs of Thailand.

Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn, elder sister of the Thai King, conferred the title on them at the specially decorated religious pavilion in Bangkok on 25 May.

The Dhammajakra is a title

conferred on monks and lay persons doing missionary services in foreign countries.

An eminent monk widely known in the country as Kyai-khtohsaung Sayadaw and another monk who is the Chairman of the highest religious body of Yangon Region and the chairman of All Myanmar Theravada Federation and the religious mission on border areas and hill regions were the title winners. — Myanmar News Agency ■

Electricity and Energy Dy Minister assists in energy, electrification in Magway Region

DEPUTY Minister for Electricity and Energy Dr. Tun Naing inspected the main storage and distribution unit in Chauk, Magway Region, of the Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise yesterday, assisting in systematic storage, distribution, minimising loss, and wastage and preventive measures against fire.

The main storage and distribution unit stored diesel from the No. 1 Refinery (Chauk) and the Petrochemical Plant (Thanpa-

yarkan) and distributed 150,000 gallons every month to refilling stations, battalions and regiments, and governmental departments in Kayah State.

The deputy minister also went to Kyaukpadaung, Mandalay Region, and assisted in minimising wastage of electricity by upgrading the transformers in Kyaukpadaung.

He also visited the Concrete Pole Factory of Apex Concrete Co. Ltd. in Paleik, Mandalay Re-

gion. Under the National Electrification Project, which is being implemented with a US\$310 million loan from the World Bank, villages located in the two-mile area from the 11KV grid would be provided with access to electricity as part of the first step of the NEP.

The second step would target the villages within the five-mile area to get access to electricity by 2030. —Myanmar News Agency ■



Deputy Minister for Electricity and Energy Dr. Tun Naing and party inspect an electrification facility. PHOTO: MNA

Kayah State Chief Minister receives Turkish diplomat

CHIEF Minister for Kayah State U L Phaung Sho received Deputy Head of Mission Mr Eymen Ozsahin who arrived in Myanmar to attend Kayah State Investment Forum, yesterday morning at the office of Chief Minister.

During the meeting the Deputy Head of Mission said he was pleased to see the all-round efforts made by the Myanmar officials at the forum and he hope Turkish Embassy to take part in the cooperation processes of Myanmar.

He also said that Turkey is also interested to invest in Tourism and Hydro Power sector of Myanmar.

As Turkey is a country with a robust agricultural industry it is also interested to support agro technology in Kayah State, he added. The Kayah State Chief Minister said that the State Government is welcoming investment and business initiatives from abroad he will report the matter soonest to the Union Government. —Kayah State (IPRD) ■

Fire breaks out in Thatkalpyin Village, Sittway

FIRE broke out in Thatkalpyin Village, Sittway Township in Rakhine State on Saturday.

The fire incident started from a fire in the kitchen of U Aye Maung (a) Gin Bu, son of U Yar Sein and destroyed two

houses, estimated worth Ks 1.5 million.

Police filed a case and taking action the suspect U Aye Maung (a) Gin Bu at the Sittway Myoma Police Station. —Tin Htun (IPRD) ■

Safe and secure environment for women

NOWADAYS, the safety of women has become a vital need in Myanmar. Amidst the legal measures against trafficking or intimidation of women, or sexual assaults on the persons of feminine gender, crimes against them never fade away. So serious attention on this matter has become a requisite.

A question on the ongoing program for handing down severe punishment on child rapists and reducing child rape cases was raised at a recent Pyithu Hluttaw (Lower House) session. The Deputy Minister for Home Affairs and a Union Supreme Court judge responded to the question.

Whether the victim is a juvenile or an adult, the root cause behind a sexual assault is usually alcohol and drugs or easy availability of pornography on the Internet. Most of

Unfortunately, predators are not always the strangers, as in some cases they are from the close associates or relatives or in certain cases even the father himself is the offender. So, close maternal protection is the safest way for girls, particularly the children.

sex crimes occurred. The country has recorded 533 sex crimes in which 360 were child victims up to April this year.

Women, especially young women and girls should be aware of the cunning methods of sex predators. They themselves must have knowledge of the root causes of the crime and avoid visiting unsafe places where they can fall prey to the predators. Parental and family protection for persons of feminine gender is also a must. Unfortunately, predators are not always the strangers, as in some cases they are from the close associates or relatives or in certain cases even the father himself is the offender. So, close maternal protection is the safest way for girls, particularly the children.

Here, we firmly believe that heightened awareness campaigns, stricter preventive measures against possible root causes and harsher legal actions against offenders will help create a safe and secure environment for women. ■

Myanmar agriculture rebounds amid push towards sustainable development

By Oxford Business Group



FAVOURABLE weather conditions and improved yields have helped drive a return to growth in Myanmar's agricultural sector, a trend likely to be supported by government efforts to embrace modern farming methods to ensure long-term sustainable development.

The agriculture sector grew by 3.5% in FY 2017/18, which ended on March 31, rebounding from a drought-induced contraction recorded in FY 2016/17, according to the Asian Development Outlook 2018 report, released by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) in early April.

Merchandise exports grew by an estimated 15%, following a 0.3% fall in FY 2016/17, with the report crediting the 2.8m tonnes of exported rice – the highest level in half a century – as a key factor behind the increase.

While agricultural growth was below overall GDP expansion of 6.8%, the ADB said it expects the sector to grow robustly in the present financial year, supported by improved weather conditions.

Agriculture's enhanced performance also saw food and headline inflation fall from early-2017 levels of around 10% and 8%, respectively, when drought conditions were prevalent, to more moderate levels of 5% and 4% in January 2018, according to the Central Statistical Organisation.

New technology and modern farming methods to combat climate risks

While less-damaging weather patterns have led to an improved agricultural outlook in the near term, the overall

efforts to adopt modern technology and farming methods to provide greater long-term security for the sector.

The Global Climate Risk Index 2018, released by Germanwatch, a Bonn-based NGO, ranked Myanmar third in terms of countries affected by climate change over the past 20 years, with the list based on the frequency of natural disasters such as drought, flooding and cyclones.

With agriculture accounting for around 30% of GDP and directly or indirectly employing about two-thirds of the workforce, weather-related damage to crops poses a significant threat to the

According to the ADB, Myanmar – along with countries such as Bangladesh and Laos, which also maintain a large rural workforce – must better utilise available and accessible technologies to advance farming techniques and maximise farm production and earnings.

"Productivity can be enhanced, and food security safeguarded, by further extending the use of proven technologies such as mechanisation, high-yielding crop varieties, and improved irrigation, fertiliser and pesticide," the bank said.

Sustainable fishing to increase production output

One segment being prioritised for modernisation is fisheries and aquaculture, as the government looks to stabilise the industry amid a decline in wild fish stocks.

In addition to being an important resource for domestic consumption, fishery products are a key economic driver, accounting for nearly 25% of total agricultural shipments in FY 2017/18, with exports of 560,000 tonnes representing a 20-year high, according to the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation (MALI).

Local media reported 2017/18 fisheries exports to have a value of \$711m, while industry officials say the segment could

next two years if the right technology and equipment are deployed, including ponds for aquaculture, processing factories and cold storage facilities.

However, these projections are being threatened by dwindling wild fish stocks, which are largely the result of increased levels of fishing activity and pollution.

To improve sustainability, U Htay Myint, chair of the Myanmar Fishery Federation, told local media in April that the Ministry of Planning and Finance had agreed to provide MMK100bn (\$75m) to develop the fisheries supply chain and modernise the aquaculture process.

This followed the launch of the Myanmar Sustainable Agriculture Programme (MYSAP) in February. Developed by MALI, along with £22.5m in funding from the EU and the German government, the programme will see officials draft a National Aquaculture Development Plan by the end of the year, aiming to diversify the fisheries industry away from its dependence on wild-capture fishing, which accounts for some 65% of annual take, and towards a greater reliance on organised fish farming.

Officials estimate MYSAP will directly benefit 250,000 fish farmers and provide 25,000 rice growers with the chance to boost earnings by diversifying into aquaculture.

Liberalisation laws to improve access to fertilisers

In addition to direct support for farmers, the government is working to improve efficiency through liberalisation reforms, which it is hoped will lead to an increase in agricultural products in the market.

In June 2017 the Ministry of Commerce relaxed restrictions on foreign fertiliser companies importing products and operating domestically, providing local growers with access to higher quality seeds, fertiliser and other products used to boost yields and protect plantations from infestations.

One such company to enter the market is the Norwegian-headquartered fertiliser firm Yara International, which on top of selling its products in Myanmar, has invested \$500,000 in training programmes to improve the skills of local farmers and subsequently boost crop quality and yields.

"Increased productivity among farmers will not come automatically," Svein Tore Holsether, president and CEO of Yara International, told local media in January. "It will require new ways of working together. It will require improved farming techniques. It will require increasing both the productivity and quality out in the fields." ■



PHOTO: PHOE KHWAH



PHOTO: PHOE KHWAH

To Fulfill its Mission, ADB Must Prioritize Sustainability

ASIA is rapidly evolving as are its development needs. To keep pace with these changing needs and to ensure that solutions multilateral development banks like the Asian Development Bank (ADB) bring are effective, thorough assessment of their operations is crucial. In its 2018 Annual Evaluation Review (AER), Independent Evaluation at ADB draws out an overall picture of ADB's performance.

"Delivering results is critical to ADB's existence. Evaluation is a central piece for ensuring that the solutions ADB brings to development problems are fit for purpose, and as effective as possible," said Director General of Independent Evaluation at ADB Mr. Marvin Taylor-Dormond.

The AER identifies areas in which ADB has been successful, where it hasn't, and what were the reasons behind this. A review of its overall performance reveals that over the past 3 years, there has been a marginal decline in the success rate of public sector projects.

In 2015 to 2017, 74% of public sector projects were successful, down from 76% in 2014 to 2016. A sector-wise look shows that four sectors—education, health, public sector management, and transport—dropped in performance.

These four sectors account for 58% of the portfolio that was evaluated.

If one looks at private sector-supported ADB projects, the decline is more apparent. About 58% of projects were categorized successful in 2015 to 2017, compared to 67% in 2014 to 2016. This fall can be attributed to the disappointing performance in financial intermediary and private equity funds, which account for half of the projects evaluated.

Performance at the country-level was steady at 75%, although it was still below ADB's 80% target. AER notes that ADB achieved good results in its operations with middle-income countries. Also, when it came to promoting inclusive growth, middle-income countries were highly appreciative of ADB's work. Other areas where ADB is doing well include environmentally sustainable growth, regional cooperation, and gender mainstreaming.

However, there are some areas where results can be improved. The Independent Evaluation Department (IED) assesses the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of ADB projects and programs. One third of completed projects and programs were evaluated as less likely to be sustainable, well below the desired rate of four out of five.

"The sustainability problem is well illustrated by the inadequate financing for operations and maintenance of ADB-supported transport projects," said IED Thematic and Country Division Director Mr. Walter Kolkma. "Other factors affecting the sustainability of ADB operations are often limited capacity of government agencies to run these projects and governance issues."

For private sector operations, the AER recommends that to achieve better outcomes, ADB expand operations beyond infrastructure and help middle-income countries better adapt to new challenges.

With specific reference to the use and leverage of guarantees, loans, and other credit enhancement tools, the AER calls for the mobilization of much-needed private sector finance for development, particularly to help close Asia's huge infrastructure gap, estimated at \$1.7 trillion a year.

"Impartial evaluation is crucial for accountability and learning. ADB must capitalize its learning and use these lessons to design better, smarter, and stronger future projects to stay relevant because in today's world, developing member countries are not short of options of development financing," noted Mr. Taylor-Dormond.—ADB

Fed-up Spanish cities are bursting Airbnb's bubble

MADRID — And now, their city councils are taking action.

Airbnb and other peer-to-peer rental websites have for years been credited with enabling lovers of travel and culture to find new ways to explore foreign lands.

However, complaints have abounded in Spain that greedy landlords are throwing out long-term tenants in order to cash in on the tourist flow, and that the short-term leases are pushing up rent.

By introducing a slew of new rules, Madrid's leftwing city hall plans to make it impossible for short-term rental companies to rent out 95 per cent of apartments in the Spanish capital by the end of the year.

To get a holiday rental licence homeowners will have to prove their property has a separate entrance from the rest of the building — a condition that is in most cases impossible to fulfil.

Homeowners who rent their primary residence for less than three months a year will be exempt.

"We are aware that this is a very restrictive condition, and that is our intention," Madrid's city councillor for sustainable urban development, Jose Manuel Calvo, told AFP.

He said certain Madrid neighbourhoods have reached "the same saturation level" as Barcelona, where a boom in holiday rentals has drained the city's housing supply and pushed up rents, sparking a backlash against tourists that saw protesters take to the streets.

Locals out?

There are now around 9,000 flats in Madrid that are rented out to tourists, six to seven times more than in 2013, Calvo said. Of these, about 2,000 operate without a licence.

In some buildings landlords have evicted all local residents in order to rent their flats to tourists for more money, Calvo explained.

"The consequence is that these neighbourhoods end up emptying out gradually, and this must be prevented. There is still time," he said.

Madrid city hall in January stopped issuing new licences for tourist apartments, and only plans to resume licensing once the new system is in place.

'Theme parks'

Other cities in Spain, the world's second most visited country after France according to the UN World Tourism Organization, are also facing a surge in the number of sharing economy short-term rentals, threatening



No escape: In Barcelona, protesters have hit the beaches to make their message heard. PHOTO: AFP

hotel businesses.

In the Mediterranean port city of Valencia the number of peer-to-peer holiday apartments has soared by 30 per cent since 2016.

While the situation is not as critical as in Madrid and Barcelona, the city's leftwing mayor wants a raft of new regulations to be approved by July.

"It seems important to have rules in place that, without stopping this model of the sharing economy, are compatible with cities' desire to preserve the spirit of their neighbourhoods, without becoming theme parks," the city's economic development coordinator, Julio Olmos, told AFP.

The plan is to apply the same laws regulating hotels to tourist rentals. In practice under the new rules, only apartments on the ground floor or first floor can

be legally rented out to tourists.

In the old town centre the legislation will be even tighter. There, licences will only be awarded to flats in buildings specifically designated for holiday rentals.

Internet tracking

To ensure the rules are respected, Madrid and Valencia plan to follow Barcelona's lead.

The Catalan city employs 40 people tasked with poring through holiday rental sites to ensure that properties have the proper licences.

Between mid-2016 and mid-2017 Barcelona city hall, headed by a former housing rights activist, ordered the closure of over 2,300 holiday rental flats.

Fewer than 750 have obeyed the order, with legal proceedings under way against those still resisting. Airbnb has, however, removed 1,500 ads for unlicensed

flats, helping to return the properties to the regular rental market. Palma de Mallorca, capital of Mediterranean tourist destination the Balearic Islands, is going even further — it is poised to ban nearly all short-term rentals of private homes like those listed on Airbnb.

The island city saw the number of holiday flats jump 40 per cent between 2013 and 2017.

The surge is blamed for a shortage of long-term rental apartments, forcing some locals and seasonal workers to live in vans and campsites in the summer because they can't find affordable housing.

Detached homes will be available to rent for tourists only if they are located near the airport, in industrial areas, or in buildings not designated for residential use. —AFP ■

Tests show air pollution worse in classrooms than on London streets

LONDON — Science tests offered surprise results: air inside London classrooms is more polluted than outside, meaning that children in schools are being exposed to higher levels of damaging air pollution inside the classroom than outside.

This puts them at risk of lifelong health problems, a new research has revealed.

Scientists from the University of Cambridge and King's College London studied five primary schools and one nursery in the British capital as part of research into levels of air pollution indoors.

Primary schools and nurseries in London contain levels of fine air particles that are "consistently higher than outdoors" and breach World Health Organiza-

tion (WHO) guidelines, according to the study, which was commissioned by London Mayor Sadiq Khan. Pollution is thought to be worse inside than out due to air being less able to circulate and getting trapped.

The research showed that outdoor air pollution from diesel vehicles and other sources — both of nitrogen dioxide and particulate pollution — is affecting the lives of children inside schools. Fine air particles, which weigh as little as 0.0025mg, are given out in vehicle exhaust fumes and, when breathed in, become deposited in the lungs where they enter the circulation. Children are more vulnerable to pollution due to their less developed lungs and breathing in

more air per kilogram of body weight. The researchers wrote in the study, saying: "The exposure of children's developing lungs to air pollution can result in reduced lung function that persists through to adulthood, increasing susceptibility to respiratory and cardiovascular diseases."

"Children living or attending schools near high traffic density roads were exposed to higher levels of motor vehicle exhaust gases, and had higher incidence and prevalence of childhood asthma and wheeze," it said.

For nitrogen dioxide, which is strongly related to asthma attacks and is released from vehicle exhaust fumes, outdoor sources account for 84 per cent of the variation between classrooms.

Air pollution levels in classrooms depend on factors such as building design and maintenance levels. The schools studied were a modern suburban nursery and a primary school away from high traffic streets, a Victorian-built primary next to a busy road, two schools away from high traffic areas and a suburban modern school building close to a major road.

The findings came as the London mayor published his first audit of air pollution at 50 of the capital's schools and a series of measures to counter the impact of poor air quality. Khan, who has launched a million-US dollar fund to protect pupils from toxic air, said: "Air pollution is a national-health crisis that is putting the

health of children at risk." "As mayor, I've moved fast in London to implement the most ambitious plans to tackle air pollution of any major city in the world," he said.

"This includes cleaning up our bus and taxi fleets, bringing forward the introduction of the world's first ultra-low emission zone and introducing the toxicity charge — T-Charge — for the oldest polluting vehicles in central London." "But I can't do this alone," he said. "The government must step up and act with more urgency if we are going to tackle London's filthy air once and for all." The British Lung Foundation welcomed the mayor's fund for the most polluted schools but said that it was up to the government to take action. —Xinhua ■

**The Republic of the Union of Myanmar
Ministry of Construction
Department of Highways**

**Request for Expressions of Interest dated May 18, 2018
Yangon Expressway PPP Project**

The Ministry of Construction of the Union Government of Myanmar, coordinating with the Yangon Regional Government, is planning to develop an elevated four-lane ring road expressway project in Yangon of approximately 47.5 kilometers, through a Public Private Partnership (PPP). The elevated toll road is expected to connect Downtown Yangon, Yangon Port, Yangon International Airport, Mingalardon Industrial Park and the Yangon-Mandalay Expressway (the "Project"). The Ministry of Construction is inviting local and/or international sponsors interested in designing, engineering, financing, constructing, operating and maintaining the Project through a long-term PPP concession agreement. The selection of PPP sponsors by the Ministry of Construction will be done through an international competitive tender expected to commence later this year. The Ministry of Construction may decide to split the project into sections and implement it through multiple PPP tenders with the support of the International Finance Corporation (IFC), a member of the World Bank Group.

Interested sponsors shall send their **Expression of Interest** in the Project by 5:00pm on **June 29, 2018**, providing the following documents:

- a cover letter expressly stating the interested sponsor's interest in the Project;
- a short description of the interested sponsor and of its group of companies (if applicable) and its/their activities;
- the interested sponsor's financial statements for the last three years;
- a list of relevant certifications (e.g. ISO certifications);
- a list of projects undertaken by the interested sponsor similar to the Project including the following details (maximum of five projects):
 - project name;
 - location;
 - project description including length in kilometers, and length of elevated sections in kilometers;
 - role in the project (sponsor, contractor and/or operator); and
 - total project cost and shareholding percentage, if any, in the project company by the interested sponsor;
- for international sponsors, a brief description of their current presence and/or involvement in Myanmar, if any (maximum one paragraph); and
- name of contact person and contact details.
- a letter confirming the sponsor's name can be published by the Ministry of Construction on its website for having submitted its Expression of Interest

Interested sponsors shall submit their expression of interest in three hard copies and in electronic format by email at the following address:

Ministry of Construction, Office No. 11
Department of Highways
Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar

Telephone: +95 67 407068
Attention: U Kyi Zaw Myint, Deputy Director General, Minister's Office

Email: Unionminister@construction.gov.mm
cc'ing kyizawmyintmyanmar@gmail.com
jleber@ifc.org
gfridegotto@ifc.org

This Request for Expressions of Interest constitutes an invitation to submit an expression of interest to participate in a subsequent pre-qualification and tender(s) for the Project. It does not constitute a solicitation to invest, or otherwise participate in, or pre-qualify for, the Project. The Ministry of Construction reserve the right not to proceed with any of the interested sponsors at their own discretion, and to invite additional interested sponsors to participate in a subsequent pre-qualification for the Project. Details of all Interested Sponsors responding to this Request for Expressions of Interest will be published and submitting parties agree to that publication.

Trump and Kim raise summit hopes after days of brinkmanship

SEOUL — North Korean leader Kim Jong Un is committed to “complete” denuclearisation of the Korean peninsula and to a landmark summit with US President Donald Trump, South Korea’s leader said Sunday, as Trump announced that plans for the meeting are moving along “very nicely”.

The latest conciliatory declarations capped a turbulent few days of diplomatic brinkmanship that had sent tensions soaring.

Trump rattled a sabre on Thursday by cancelling the planned 12 June meeting with Kim in Singapore, citing “open hostility” from Pyongyang.

But within 24 hours he reversed course, saying it could still go ahead after productive talks were held with North Korean officials.

“It’s moving along very nicely,” Trump told reporters when asked for an update. “We’re looking at 12 June in Singapore. That hasn’t changed.”

Trump’s unpredictability sparked a surprise meeting on Saturday between Kim and South Korean President Moon Jae-in — only the fourth time leaders from the two countries have ever met — as they scrambled to get the talks back on track.

Pictures showed them shaking hands and embracing on the North Korean side of the Demilitarised Zone separating the two nations. Moon said Kim reached out to him to ar-



Kim Jong Un and South Korean President Moon Jae-in held a surprise meeting in a bid to get US-North Korea talks back on track. **PHOTO: AFP**

range the hasty meeting “without any formality”, a stunning development given that the Koreans only reopened a defunct hotline between the two nations last month. The North Korean leader described the Singapore summit as a landmark opportunity to end decades of confrontation. “He... expressed his intention to put an end to the history of war and confrontation through the success of the North-US summit and to cooperate for peace and prosperity,” Moon told reporters on Sunday.

Moon added that Kim reaffirmed his commitment to “complete denuclearisation” but was un-

certain “whether he could trust that the US would end its hostile policy and guarantee the security of his regime” if he gave up those weapons.

Pyongyang’s state-run KCNA news agency said Kim “expressed his fixed will” to meet Trump, adding South and North Korea would hold another round of “high-level” talks on 1 June.

Shaky detente

There was a further signal of progress Saturday as White House press secretary Sarah Sanders confirmed a team of US officials was leaving for Singapore “in order to prepare should the summit take

place”.

Trump’s original decision to abandon the summit initially blindsided South Korea, which had been brokering a remarkable detente between Washington and Pyongyang in a desperate bid to avoid a devastating conflict.

Last year Trump and Kim were trading war threats and insults after Pyongyang tested its most powerful nuclear weapon to date and missiles which it said were capable of reaching the US mainland.

Tensions were calmed after Kim extended an olive branch by offering to send a delegation to the Winter Olympics in South Korea, sparking a rapid detente

that led to Trump agreeing to hold direct talks with Pyongyang.

But the flurry of diplomatic backslapping and bonhomie disappeared in recent weeks with increasingly bellicose rhetoric from both top US administration officials and Pyongyang.

There are still stark differences between what the two sides hope to achieve. Washington wants North Korea to give up all its nukes in a verifiable way as quickly as possible in return for sanctions and economic relief.

Pyongyang has a different view of what denuclearisation might look like and remains deeply

worried that abandoning its deterrent would leave the country vulnerable to regime change.

‘Back on track’

Saturday’s meeting between Moon and Kim took place on the North Korean side of Panmunjom, a village that straddles the border between the two countries, where the 1953 armistice was signed.

The two leaders had met in the same village only last month.

Kim Yong-hyun, professor of North Korea studies at Dongguk University in Seoul, said Moon and Kim moved quickly to defuse the crisis after Trump’s shock cancellation. “Moon essentially helped relay messages from Trump to Kim and vice versa, to further smooth the process and to resume negotiations,” he told AFP, saying the Singapore meeting was “clearly back on track”.

In Seoul Sunday most people whom AFP spoke to appeared to welcome Moon’s move to talk to Kim.

“I think it was a good thing if meeting in person and having a direct conversation about each other’s intentions helps us proceed to the next step,” said Lee Tae-kyoung. Unlike last month’s summit, which was held in front of live TV cameras, Saturday’s meeting took place in utmost secrecy, with reporters only told later that it had taken place.—AFP ■

CLAIM’S DAY NOTICE

M.V TOVE MAERSK VOY. NO. ()

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V TOVE MAERSK VOY. NO. () are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 28-5-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T.T where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

**SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S MCC TRANSPORT
(S’PORE) PTE LTD**

Phone No: 2301185

Pakistan announces general elections on 25 July: presidential spokesman

ISLAMABAD — Pakistan will hold general elections on 25 July, a presidential spokesman said Saturday, offering the prospect of what would be only the second ever democratic transfer of power in the nuclear-armed country.

“The president has approved 25 July as the date for holding general elections in the country,” a spokesman from Mamnoon Hussain’s office told

AFP. The date was also confirmed by the government of Pakistan’s Twitter account and was reported by state media outlets. The announcement comes as the current government enters its final week in office. It is expected to hand over power to a caretaker administration in the coming days. Turmoil continues to rock the country after former prime minister Nawaz Sharif was ousted

by the Supreme Court last July on corruption charges and later barred from politics for life. Sharif was the 15th prime minister in Pakistan’s 70-year history — roughly half of it under military rule — to be removed before completing a full term. After Sharif was ousted from power, Shahid Khaqan Abbasi of Sharif’s Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz party (PML-N) took over the premiership.

Pakistan completed its first ever democratic transfer of power following elections in 2013, when the government headed by the Pakistan People’s Party handed over to the PML-N, following a landslide victory. The general elections are largely expected to pit the PML-N against its main rival, the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party led by former cricket star Imran Khan.—AFP ■

Northern Ireland under pressure after historic abortion vote

DUBLIN — Pressure mounted on Sunday for British-ruled Northern Ireland to liberalise its strict abortion laws after a historic referendum in the neighbouring Republic of Ireland overturned its ban.

A traditionally Catholic country, Ireland voted by a landslide to ditch its strict abortion laws in a referendum that Prime Minister Leo Varadkar said lifted decades of stigma and shame. Varadkar's government has promised to approve the drafting of abortion legislation at a cabinet meeting on Tuesday and is aiming to enact the new law before the end of the year. More than 66 per cent of voters backed repealing the constitutional ban on terminations, triggering scenes of tearful jubilation in Dublin after an emotional campaign.

British lawmakers said Northern Ireland, where abortions are only allowed if the physical or mental health of the mother are at severe risk, should now follow suit. Women who have unsanctioned abortions in Northern Ireland face life imprisonment under 19th-century legislation still in place.

International Development Secretary Penny Mordaunt said Ireland's vote was a "hopeful" day for Northern Ireland.

"That hope must be met," she said.

Newspapers reflected



Ireland voted by a landslide to ditch its strict abortion laws, with eyes now on British-ruled Northern Ireland. PHOTO: AFP

on the historic vote, while the government promised to allow abortion in the first 12 weeks of pregnancy and between 12 and 24 weeks in exceptional circumstances.

"The power of women," was the headline on The Sunday Independent, while The Sunday Business Post ran with "Generation Yes" saying Ireland had wrestled with its past and voted to redefine its future.

The Irish Sun on Sunday pictured two women hugging under the headline "No more lonely journeys" in reference to those who had been forced to travel to England to have an abortion.

Seismic change

Writing in The Sunday Times, columnist Una Mulally said: "The fiction of Ire-

land as a conservative, dogmatically Catholic country has been shattered. "What happened in the referendum vote was seismic, but more seismic still was the realisation that this vote was reflecting change, not just instigating it."

In the Sunday Independent, Jody Corcoran said the big pro-choice vote "maximises to a visceral, guttural roar what must amount to be a demand to end decades of hypocrisy and shame". The result is another hammer blow for the Catholic Church's authority in Ireland, coming three years after referendum voters backed legalising same-sex marriage by 62 per cent.

The Church's influence has crumbled in recent years due to a series

of child sex abuse scandals.

Diarmuid Martin, the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin, said the Church could not compromise its position on abortion. In an address to mass-goers in Maynooth, west of Dublin, Martin said the Church needed to renew its pro-life stance not just in words but in deeds also, Irish media reported. That would include helping women struggling with difficult decisions over pregnancies. "Pro-life means radically rediscovering in all our lives a special love for the poor," he reportedly said.

Northern Ireland in spotlight

But any hope for quick change in Northern Ireland, the only part of the United Kingdom where

terminations are almost always illegal, appears improbable.

May's minority Conservative government relies on support from MPs from Northern Ireland's Democratic Unionist Party for a majority in the British parliament — and the Protestant DUP strongly opposes abortion law reform.

Sinn Féin and the SDLP, the two major parties representing Northern Ireland's Irish Catholics, and the cross-community Alliance Party, back overturning the ban.

Among the crowds celebrating the referendum outcome at Dublin Castle where the result was announced, were many from Northern Ireland.

"We believe this is going to be a springboard for the movement in Northern Ireland," 27-year-old Claire told AFP, without giving her last name due to the sensitivity of the issue in the British-ruled territory.

"It is a criminal offence in Northern Ireland and we have absolutely had enough of it."

Another demonstrator from Belfast said the Republic of Ireland was "giving a voice to women."

"In Northern Ireland, we don't have a voice," said Sarah, 26, who also did not give her surname.

"We're really a tiny place, there's not that many of us and we can only shout loud now." —AFP ■

Freed from a Venezuela jail, US couple arrive back home

WASHINGTON — An American couple who spent nearly two years in a Venezuelan jail received a heroes' welcome at the White House as they returned home Saturday after Caracas freed them in a bid to spur dialogue with Washington. But US officials immediately quashed any suggestion that the punitive sanctions against Venezuela would be eased after the release of Joshua Holt and his wife Thamara Caleno. "Very glad that Josh Holt is now back home with his family where he has always belonged. Sanctions continue until democracy returns to Venezuela," Vice President Mike Pence wrote on Twitter. Holt, a 26-year-old Mormon missionary from Utah, had traveled to Venezuela in June 2016 to marry Caleno whom he met online.

But shortly after they married, they were arrested by the Venezuelan intelligence service on charges of possessing weapons and plotting to destabilize the government of President Nicolas Maduro. Meeting President Donald Trump at the White House, Holt, 26, said he was "overwhelmed with gratitude" before thanking those who supported them through a "very, very, very difficult two years." "Not really the great vacation I was looking for. But we're still together." —AFP ■



Argus NPK Fertilizers Myanmar 2018

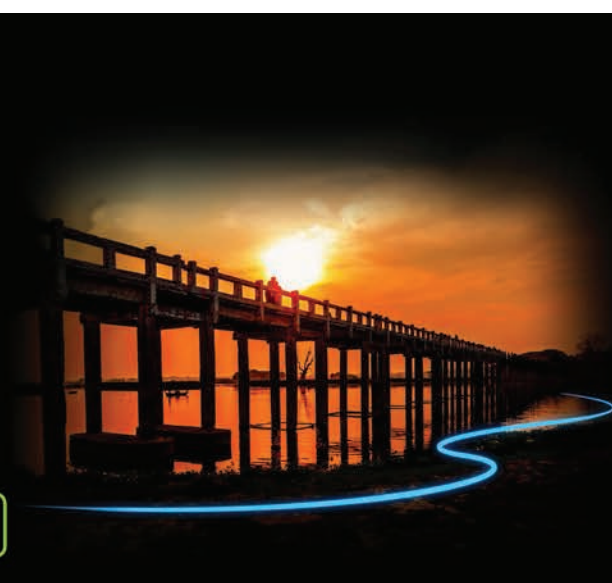
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Simultaneous interpretation (English-Burmese) will be provided

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Golden age for Kylie as Australia's pop princess turns 50

SYDNEY — From teenage soap sensation to pop royalty, over Kylie Minogue's three-decade career she has sold 80 million records, survived breast cancer and become a gay icon whose fanbase spans generations.

The pint-sized Aussie superstar celebrates her 50th birthday on Monday, another milestone for the singer who is one of the few celebrities known simply by their first name.

To mark the occasion Kylie has said she is planning "an extravaganza" with friends in London, where she is based — and if her litany of hits including "I Should Be So Lucky" and "Can't Get You Out Of My Head" is anything to go by, she will have no trouble getting the party started.

Born in Melbourne on 28 May, 1968, Kylie has defied critics who once wrote her off as a "singing budgie" to establish herself as one of Australia's biggest cultural exports and an international sex symbol.

"Kylie is a star that has become iconic outside of just singing," Australian fashion expert Paula Joye told AFP of the country's highest-selling artist of all time. "She's become part of the fabric of Australian culture."

Kylie was just 11 when she



Pint-sized Australian singer Kylie Minogue is turning 50. PHOTO: AFP

appeared in the television series "Skyways", but is best known for her star turn as Charlene in long-running soap opera "Neighbours" from 1986 to 1988.

She and her co-star Jason Donovan won popularity as an on-screen couple and were secretly a real-life item at the same time, although their romance did not last. Her first single — a cover of 1960s Little Eva hit "Locomotion" — reached number one in Australia in 1987 and became a global hit, launching the girl-next-door's new career as a pop star and, later, dance diva.

She teamed up with Donovan for 1988 duet "Especially For

You", which sold more than a million copies in Britain alone and topped the charts across Europe and Australasia.

While Jason's career since then has seen him star in musicals and speak frankly about his struggles with drug addiction, Kylie went on to record top-selling singles such as "Better the Devil You Know", "Spinning Around" and "All The Lovers" — performing them around the world in glitzy showgirl outfits.

"On stage, she always looks like a giant sequin," said Australian fan Troy Lester, who pursued a career in costume design and fashion after falling in love with

Kylie's costumes.

"It's incredible that you can be this little ball of energy and sparkle so much... She's a little pocket rocket that just keeps going and it's great to have that kind of positivity in your life."

Gay icon

Kylie's high-energy performances and feel-good pop tunes are still a winning formula, according to veteran music journalist Jenny Valentish.

"She's dazzling, an all-rounder entertainer. In a previous time, she would have been a dancing girl probably going around Australia in the gold rush age (of the 1850s) entertaining the miners," Valentish said.

The pop princess has long had a big LGBTI following and has often graced Sydney's annual Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras parade. In 2016, Kylie and her then-fiance British actor Joshua Sasse wore "Say 'I Do' Down Under" t-shirts in support of same-sex marriage at Australia's top music awards.

Fan Owen Lambourn, who goes by the moniker Owen Minogue on Twitter, recalled how her career kicked off during the AIDS epidemic of the 1980s.

"A lot of high-profile people steered clear of the community

because there was that stigma that you were endorsing death, but she looked at everybody as being human," Lambourn told AFP. "She's a great icon and an ambassador for universal love."

The singer was also outspoken about her battle with breast cancer in 2005, which forced her to cancel her headline slot at Britain's Glastonbury Festival.

She was given the all-clear a year later and has helped to raise awareness of the need for women to undergo screening for the disease, even in their 30s.

Aside from these campaigns, Minogue has kept much of her personal life under wraps, although her numerous boyfriends — including late INXS rocker Michael Hutchence and French actor Olivier Martinez — have been tabloid fodder over the decades.

She's showing no signs of slowing down and released new album "Golden" — her 14th — this year, making number one in both Australia and Britain.

"I am very aware and thankful that this is a good time in my life," she recently told the Sydney Morning Herald. "I know I have worked for it and I have paid for it and so I am enjoying it, between my schedules and trying to take care of myself as well." — AFP ■

LA's people walker is beating loneliness, one step at a time

LOS ANGELES — Chuck McCarthy's walking service provides fresh air, exercise and companionship for \$30 an hour — but peeing on trees is an absolute no-no.

The Los Angeles-based entrepreneur works with humans, not animals, and is striking a blow for health and social inclusion as the founder of the famously car-friendly city's first people-walking business.

"I was thinking about becoming a dog walker. But I've never had a dog in the city, so I've never had to pick up dog poop," McCarthy told AFP on a recent leisurely saunter in the Hollywood Hills.

"I was also seeing a lot of personal trainer ads. And so I kind of said to my girlfriend, 'Maybe I'll just become a people walker.'"

McCarthy was joking but the more he thought about it, the more he realized there was a

need for the kind of comradeship he could provide.

The People Walker started as a one-man operation two years ago. But demand was so high that McCarthy now has a roster of 35 walkers, and a website where people can choose routes and walking partners.

Social disconnection has been linked in various studies to depression, heart disease, diabetes and cancer, and can shorten life as profoundly as regular smoking, according to some estimates. Eric Klinenberg, a professor of sociology at New York University, identified a major cause of loneliness in a recent column in The New York Times: a growing global culture of individualism.

'Human connection'

It's not that people have fewer friends, say experts, but rather that the "gig economy" has produced a generation of freelancers

with none of the routines or social bonds that traditionally connected workers. "I've walked people that are married with kids that have tons of friends. It's about convenience and it's about location and basically having things your way," McCarthy says.

Meanwhile smartphones and social media have deepened divisions, replacing real human relationships with the ersatz companionship of a social media following. Instead of "screaming into the void of Twitter or Facebook," McCarthy's clients get to enjoy real human connections with people that don't know them and won't judge or gossip.

"It seems like something new but it's very similar to going to confession, to a bar, to a therapist, or going to a hairstylist," he tells AFP. McCarthy is an aspiring actor, which makes him coy about revealing his exact age — "I guess I'm in my 30s," he



Chuck McCarthy discusses his passion for his work as a professional people walker in Los Angeles. PHOTO: AFP

concedes — but auditions have taken a back seat to the business recently. "I still wouldn't turn down a starring role opposite George Clooney," he adds, just for the record. The business is on the cusp of making the kind of money McCarthy could call a living, with an app about to launch and grand plans for expansion across California, the US and, eventually, the world.

All shapes and sizes

McCarthy has no idea how

far his feet have taken him in the last two years but he walks clients four or five times a week, typically for an hour, and describes himself as more of a listener than a talker.

"It's less of a confession and more of a conversation. So I wouldn't say that I'm getting the deepest darkest secrets and nobody is breaking down crying on our walks," he says.

McCarthy's clients come in all shapes and sizes, and walk for a variety of reasons. — AFP ■



The creators behind “Sesame Street” are suing over a marketing campaign for a new bawdy puppet movie, on the grounds that it’s confusing viewers into believing the film is connected to the beloved show for kids. **PHOTO: AFP**

‘Sesame Street’ creators sue over lewd puppet murder mystery

NEW YORK — Promotion for a new raunchy puppet crime comedy has the group behind the beloved children’s TV series “Sesame Street” in Oscar-the-Grouch mode — and they’re suing on claims the film “tarnishes” the educational show’s brand.

The movie “The Happytime Murders” — starring Melissa McCarthy, who partners with a puppet detective to solve a string of grisly murders — are promoting their film slated for an August release under the tagline, “NO SESAME. ALL STREET.” “We were surprised and disappointed that Sesame Street, a show dedicated to educating young children, is being exploited to market this R-rated film,” the nonprof-

it Sesame Workshop said in a statement, referring to the film’s restricted maturity rating.

In the suit filed against production company STX Entertainment in Manhattan federal court, the Sesame Workshop organization says a just-released trailer’s implied association with the children’s show is “irreparably harming Sesame and its goodwill and brand.”

“Scenes from the movie shown in the trailer depict repeated foul language by humans and puppets; drug use by humans and puppets; puppet prostitutes offering sexual favors to a human; gun and other types of violence; and puppet sex that culminates in scene where a puppet is depicted

copiously ejaculating for an extended period,” the lawsuit reads.

The group said they contacted the film’s distributor asking they remove the “Sesame” name from the movie’s trailer as well as marketing material but that STX “declined.”

The trailer is showing in select cinemas and is available online for those over the age of 18.

Court documents include screenshots of social media reactions conflating the new adult puppet film with the educational program aimed at teaching young kids colors, numbers and the alphabet.

A cheeky statement from STX widely circulated on US media — attributed to a lawyer puppet named Fred, Esq. — said

that “while we’re disappointed that ‘Sesame Street’ does not share in the fun, we are confident in our legal position.”

“We look forward to introducing adult moviegoers to our adorably unapologetic characters this summer.”

The Sesame Workshop is suing for undisclosed damages and an order to force alternative marketing of the movie.

The American childhood staple “Sesame Street” — which premiered in 1969 to high viewership and glowing reviews — features a cast of Jim Henson’s Muppets including the bright yellow Big Bird and the furry red monster Elmo, known for his falsetto voice. —AFP ■

I’m not a natural actor: Aamir Khan

MUMBAI — Aamir Khan believes he is not a natural actor and unlike others has to work his way through a performance to reach the perfect pitch.

The actor says he has a sense of what a good performance entails but

it takes him a while to embody the character.

“When I see actors like Naseer (Nasseruddin Shah), Om Puri ji, Raghubir Yadav, Dilip Kumar sahab, Amitabh Bachchan ji and Zaira Wasim, I feel they are a powerhouse. When they

give their shot, there is so much belief in them and it comes out very naturally and effortlessly.

“I don’t feel that I have that gift.

I feel I have to work myself up to that level, it will take a bit of effort to reach to that level,”

Aamir said in a group interview.

The actor, who has completed 30 years in the film industry, says he fights through his doubts and does not mind going through multiple rehearsals if it can better the performance. —PTI ■

U SOE WIN
(75) YEARS
B.E (MECHANICAL) 66TH BATCH
RETIRED GENERAL MANAGER
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MYANMAR RAILWAYS

NO (12), PANGYAN ST, SANCHANG, YANGON, SON OF (U SOE NYUNT – DAW KHIN THAN), SON-IN-LAW OF (U KYAW KHIN – DAW KHINYEE), HUSBAND OF DR KHIN MYO MYINT (MYANMAR RAILWAYS/TB), FATHER OF U KYAW ZAY YA (KEPPEL INFRASTRUCTURE) – DR PHYU PYAR SOE (NUH SINGAPORE), DR MUYAR SOE (NUH SINGAPORE), MAUNG KYAW LIN SOE (SINGAPORE), MR IAN WRIGHT – DR THANDAR SOE (U.K), GRANDFATHER OF MA MAY MYAT NOE KYAW HAS PASSED AWAY ON 27.5.2018 (SUNDAY), AT 2:30 AM AND CREMATED AT YAYWAY CEMETRY ON THE SAME DAY.

America revisits ‘Pizza Bomber’ mystery with new Netflix series

WASHINGTON — As bank heists in America go, this was one of the weirdest: in 2003, a pizza delivery man walks into a bank with a bomb around his neck and a note demanding a quarter of a million dollars.

Police in Pennsylvania apprehend him, but shortly thereafter, the explosive device goes off, ripping a hole in his chest that kills him minutes before the bomb squad arrives.

Netflix has now come out with a mini-series on the robbery and returns to a question that has divided opinion for 15 years: was that man, one Brian Wells, a willing accomplice, or was he the unwitting victim of a bizarre plot?

The four fast-moving episodes of “Evil Genius,” directed by Barbara Schroeder and Trey Borzillieri, look back at all the puzzles that made up this heist in Erie, a small city in the Great Lakes region.

It all begins when

Wells, 46, walks into a branch of PNC Bank with a gun shaped like a cane. Around his neck is a collar with a bomb on a timer.

He hands over a note demanding \$250,000, but was given just over \$8,000, and leaves sucking on a lollipop he grabbed from the counter.

In his hand he carries pages of rambling, hand-written instructions for a sort of a scavenger hunt for keys and combinations hidden around Erie that would remove the collar.

Death by remote control

But he never got as far as that hunt. Wells was apprehended near the bank, and handcuffed. Police realized he was wearing a bomb, and kept their distance.

That scene was filmed and broadcast by TV stations around the world. — AFP ■



In 2003, one Brian Wells robs a bank in Pennsylvania with a collar bomb in a bizarre heist now examined in a Netflix mini-series. **PHOTO: AFP**

Yangon United beat GFA in U-21 MNL

YANGON United (U-21) beat GFA 2-1 in their first match of the second-round season of the U-21 Myanmar National League (MNL) at Salin Stadium, Yangon.

Thura Kyaw (GK), Nay Oo-Lwin, Hlwan Moe Oo, Kaung HtetSoe, Nyein Chan Soe, Kyaw Swar Win, Aung Myo Oo, Aung Bala, Naing Min Thu, Tay Zaw Lin and Saw Aung Myo Tun lined up for Yangon United.

Htut Khant (GK), John Babu, Thet Ko Ko, San Lwin, Mg Mg Che, Khaw Puia, Aung Thu Zaw, Saw Htet Aung, Thura Tun, Lang Muan Sang and Bawi Lian formed the GFA team.

Both teams put in equal efforts in the beginning with backward and forward attempts.

However, GFA defenders were too strong for the Yangon strikers in the early minutes. Yangon, however, continued to attack their opponents.

Yangon got its first goal at the 38th-minute mark through the effort of Yangon's Kyaw Swar, who managed to beguile the GFA keeper in a head-to-head situation.

GFA responded with an equaliser scored through star player Aung Thu Zaw at the 40th minute.

The first half ended with both teams having scored a goal apiece. Yangon United were better in the second half.



Yangon United (white) and GFA (red) vies for the ball in yesterday's MNL U-21 match at Salin Stadium. **PHOTO:MNL**

A second goal for Yangon was scored by Saw Aung Myo Tun at the 56th-minute mark, when he tapped in the ball from close quarters with support from Naing Min Thu.

At the final whistle, Yangon United (U-21) had won 2-1 over GFA (U-21).

Yangon United U-21 is in the fourth place with 29 points from 14 plays, including eight

wins, five draws and 1 loss.

GFA (U-21) is in the 12th place, having earned nine points from 14 matches, including two wins, three draws, and nine losses.—Lynn Thit(Tgi) ■

Players' efforts perfect: Myanmar head coach

ALTHOUGH Myanmar lost 0-1 to China in the friendly match held in Nanjing, China, Myanmar's head coach Antoine Hey had some words of praise for his team, according to the Myanmar Football Federation (MFF).

He congratulated his team for their efforts.

"I am satisfied with the team's result although it lost. China is one of the best football teams in Asia. They possess star players from many well-known leagues. I am also happy with my boys' abilities and their efforts, as they responded in the best possible manner to the Asian powerhouse team. The Myanmar players also created chances to earn equalisers in the second half but luck was not in our favour. The friendly match was a good experience for both teams," said Antoine Hey.

Myanmar team Captain Zaw Min Tun said his team had put up a good fight against China.

"We played very hard against China, whose players are quick and possess great football skills. We got so many experiences from the match," said Zaw Min Tun.—Lynn Thit(Tgi) ■

Aussie Lee seizes LPGA lead in Michigan

LOS ANGELES — Australian Minjee Lee fired a bogey-free four-under par 68 on Saturday to put herself in position to give herself the LPGA Volvik Championship title for her birthday.

Lee, who turns 22 on Sunday, held a two-stroke lead heading into the final round at Ann Arbor, Michigan.

She's been knocking on the door all season, with her five top-10 LPGA finishes including a playoff loss to Lydia Ko in San Francisco in April.

Lee nabbed her fourth birdie of the day at Travis Pointe's par-five 18th to build a 12-under par total of 204.

American Stacy Lewis, expecting her first child later this year, fired a 67 to join a group

sharing second on 206. She was joined by South Korea's Kim In-kyung, who also posted a 67, and by England's Jodi Ewart Shadoff and American Lindy Duncan, who both signed for 69s.

"I had a pretty solid day today, made no bogeys," said Lee, who is seeking a fourth LPGA title and her first since 2016. She finished second in this event by a stroke last year.

Although play was halted for more than two hours by rain, Lee said the greens firmed up by the time she finished her round.

"I think just keeping it in play was pretty important today," she said. Lewis, seeking her first win since the Portland Classic last August, said she didn't hit the ball well, but made some solid

up-and-downs to get on a "nice little run."

"This golf course, you can shoot a number," said Lewis, who birdied four of her last five holes. "You can shoot six- or seven-under, but you can also play pretty good and shoot even par."

"So you've just got to get runs like I did there at the end of the day and just keep hanging around and post a number and see what happens." Lewis admitted she was tired after the stop-and-start day, but said she didn't think her pregnancy prevented her from being competitive.

"The little one was telling me it's dinner time right now, but other than that I feel pretty good," she said. "Excited to be in the hunt."—AFP ■



Minjee Lee of Australia held a two-stroke lead heading into the final round of the LPGA Volvik Championship. **PHOTO: AFP**