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THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

Vol. V, No. 88, 1st Waxing of Second Waso 1380 ME

www.globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

Friday, 13 July 2018

President U Win Myint receives Hungarian, Irish ambassadors



President U Win Myint receives Hungarian Ambassador Dr. Peter Jakab. **PHOTO: MNA**

PRESIDENT U Win Myint separately received two outgoing ambassadors, Hungarian Ambassador to Myanmar Dr. Peter Jakab and Ireland Ambassador to Myanmar Mr. Brendan Gerard Rogers at the Presidential Palace in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning.

During the meeting with the Hungarian Ambassador, they discussed promoting diplomatic relations and friendship between the two countries, Myanmar democracy and national reconciliation processes,

and promoting investment between the two countries.

During the meeting with the Ambassador from Ireland, they discussed promoting bilateral relations, providing humanitarian aid and Myanmar democracy and peace processes. Also present at the meetings were Union Minister for Union Government Office U Thaung Tun, Deputy Minister for President Office U Min Thu and responsible officials.— Myanmar News Agency ■



State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi welcomes the delegation of United Wa State Army (UWSA) at the National Reconciliation and Peace Centre. **PHOTO: MNA**

State Counsellor receives EAOs

UNION Peace Conference-21st Century Panglong Central Organising Committee Chairperson and State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi received leaders and representatives of Ethnic Armed Organisations (EAOs) at the National Reconciliation and Peace Centre (NRPC) in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday afternoon.

The State Counsellor separately re-

ceived United Wa State Army (UWSA) Vice Chairman U Kyauk Kaw An, Shan State Progressive Party (SSPP) Chairman U Hsay Htin, National Democratic Alliance Army (NDAA) [Mongla] Vice Chairman U San Pae and Kachin Independence Organisation (KIO) Vice Chairman (2) S. Gun Maw at 3 pm and

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Day Two of 21st Century Panglong Third Session held

GROUP meetings of the Third Session of the Union Peace Conference-21st Century Panglong were held on the second day of the conference at the Myanmar International Convention Centre II in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

At the government group

meeting, Union Peace Dialogue Joint Committee (UPDJC) member Union Minister U Thein Swe delivered an opening speech.

Next, UPDJC member Union Ministers Dr. Win Myat Aye, U Thant Sin Maung, Nai Thet Lwin and Union Attorney Gen-

eral U Tun Tun Oo explained the conference work process.

Afterwards, Peace Commission advisor U Hla Maung Shwe, Director General U Aung Naing Oo, Director General Daw San San Aye, Director General U Kyaw Kyaw Han and Director

General Dr. Wah Wah Maung explained the policy proposals on the political sector, economic sector, social sector, security sector and land & environment sector and group members discussed and made suggestions on the sector-wise policy proposals.

At the Hluttaw group meeting, UPDJC member U Khun Maung Thaung delivered an opening speech, followed by UPDJC secretary U Aung Soe explaining the conference work process.

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President U Win Myint receives UN Special Envoy to Myanmar

PRESIDENT U Win Myint received a delegation led by UN Special Envoy to Myanmar Ms. Christine Schraner Burgener at the Presidential Palace in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

Among the topics discussed were the Rakhine situation, the peace process, democratic transition, democracy and human

rights, rule of law and national peace.

Present at the meeting were Union Minister for Labour, Immigration and Population U Thein Swe, Union Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Dr. Win Myat Aye and other officials.—Myanmar News Agency ■



President U Win Myint poses for a photo together with a delegation led by UN Special Envoy Ms. Christine Schraner Burgener in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**



Vice President U Myint Swe welcomes UN Special Envoy Ms. Christine Schraner Burgener in Nay Pyi Taw. **PHOTO: MNA**

Vice President U Myint Swe meets UN Special Envoy to Myanmar

VICE President U Myint Swe met with UN Special Envoy to Myanmar Ms. Christine Schraner Burgener and her delegation at the Presidential Palace in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

They discussed national reconciliation, the peace process, and national level opera-

tions for the development and stabilisation of Rakhine State.

Present at the meeting were Union Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Dr. Win Myat Aye, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs U Myint Thu and other officials.—Myanmar News Agency ■

Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker receives Malaysian ambassador

AMYOTHA Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than received Malaysian Ambassador to Myanmar Mr. Zahairi Baharim at the guest hall of the Hluttaw in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

During the meeting, they cordially discussed promoting bilateral relations between the

two countries, legislation processes of the parliaments of the two countries and development issues in the economic and education sectors. Also present at the meeting were Amyotha Hluttaw Deputy Speaker U Aye Tha Aung and officials from the Amyotha Hluttaw office.—MNA

Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker receives outgoing Hungarian ambassador

PYITHU Hluttaw Speaker U T Khun Myat received outgoing Hungarian Ambassador to Myanmar Dr. Peter Jakab at the Hluttaw building in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

During the meeting, they discussed cooperation between the Myanmar and Hungary parliaments, along with exchanging



Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U T Khun Myat meets with Hungarian Ambassador to Myanmar Dr. Peter Jakab in Nay Pyi Taw. **PHOTO: MNA**

views on issues relating to cooperation in the economic and education sectors. Also present at the meeting were Pyithu Hluttaw

Deputy Speaker U Tun Tun Hein and officials from the Pyithu Hluttaw office.—Myanmar News Agency ■

Day Two of Union Peace ...

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Hluttaw representatives U Pyone Cho @ U Htay Win Aung, Naw Chris Tun @ Dr. Arr Kar Moe, Mi Kun Chan, U Lwin Ko Latt, U Myint Lwin, Daw Zin Mar Aung, U Min Oo, Daw Nan Htwe Thu, U N Hton Kha Naw San, Daw Ni Shwe Hlyan, U Tin Thit @ U Yi Mon, U Aung Soe, U Zaw Min Latt and U Soe Lay @ U Soe Win policy proposals on political sector, economic sector, social sector, security sector and land & environment sector respectively and group members discussed and made suggestions on the sector-wise policy proposals.

At the Tatmadaw group meeting, chairman Lt-Gen Tin Maung Win delivered an opening speech and members of discussion committees on political, economic, social, security and land & environment conducted sector-wise discussion on policy proposals. At the ethnic armed organisations group meeting, UPDJC Vice Chairman Dr. Salai



Second day of the Union Peace Conference-21st Century Panglong Conference at the Myanmar International Convention Centre II in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

Lian Hmung Sakhong delivered an opening speech.

At the group meetings, explanations on the programme of the discussion and work guidelines were conducted and group members discussed and made suggestions on the political, economic, social, security and land & environment policy proposals.

At the political parties group meeting, UPDJC Vice Chairman

U Thu Wai delivered an opening speech and group-wise meetings were conducted, where programmes of the discussion were explained, work guidelines were explained, work guidelines read and sector-wise discussion subjects explained. Group members discussed and suggested on the political, economic, social, security and land & environment policy proposals.—Myanmar News Agency ■

Spread democracy!

We must spread democracy and must try to build an independent Myanmar through this system. Only democracy is suitable for independence as it is the only system that supports peace. So, democracy must be our goal!

(Excerpt from the speech delivered by Bogyoke Aung San at the fourth State leaders meeting in August 1945)



State Counsellor receives UCCPF committee members

UNION Peace Conference-21st Century Panglong Central Organising Committee Chairperson and State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi received the Union Level Committee CSOs (Civil Society Organisations) Peace Forum (UCCPF) committee members at the National Reconciliation and Peace Centre (NRPC) in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning.

During the meeting, matters relating to work conducted by the CSO Forum, support and assistance provided by CSOs in the national reconciliation and peace process and the status of representatives from the CSO Forum attending the Union Peace Conference-21st Century Panglong

were discussed.

Present at the meeting were Union Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Dr. Win Myat Aye, Peace Commission Chairman Dr. Tin Myo Win, Deputy Minister U Khin Maung Tin, Yangon Region government Minister for Social Affairs U Naing Ngan Lin and Director General U Zaw Htay. UCCPF committee members who attended the meeting were Daw Hsaung Win, Naw Takaw Poo, U Kyaw Moe Hlaing, Daw Khaing Lei Lei Myint, U Win Myint Htway, Nan Nu Sabe Phyu, Daw Ohnmar Kyaw, U Zin Myo Aung, U Soe Hlaing Oo, U Moe Thu Aung, Daw Thida Oo, U Kyaw Zin, U Ye Lwin Soe and U Myat Thu Win.—MNA ■



Members of the Union Level Committee CSOs Peace Forum pose for a documentary photo taken together with State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, following their meeting in Nay Pyi Taw. **PHOTO: MNA**

State Counsellor separately receives UN senior official, IOM director general



State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi welcomes United Nations Assistant Secretary-General Mr. Haoliang Xu. **PHOTO: MNA**



State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi receives International Organization for Migration Director General Mr. William Lacy Swing in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

STATE Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi separately received United Nations Assistant Secretary-General and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Assistant Administrator and Director for Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific Mr. Haoliang Xu and International Organization for Migration (IOM) Director General Mr. William Lacy Swing at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Nay Pyi Taw, yesterday morning.

During the meeting with Mr. Haoliang Xu, they discussed matters relating to the implementation of a memorandum of understanding between the Myanmar government, UNDP and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees; Myanmar drawing up a sustainable development programme; finalizing the drawing up of the United Nations assistance framework; and current and future cooperation between My-

anmar and the United Nations.

During the meeting with Mr. William Lacy Swing, they discussed matters relating to work conducted by IOM, necessary assistance provided by IOM to Myanmar over migrants and the progress of the peace and reconciliation process in Myanmar.

Also present at the meeting were Ministry of Foreign Affairs Permanent Secretary U Myint Thu and senior officials.—Myanmar News Agency ■

THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

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subscription@globalnewlightofmyanmar.comPrinted and published at the **Global New Light of Myanmar Printing Factory** at No.150, Nga Htat Kyee Pagoda Road, Bahan Township, Yangon, by the **Global New Light of Myanmar Daily** under Printing Permit No. 00510 and Publishing Permit No. 00629.gnlmdaily@gmail.com
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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.

Second earthquake forum to be held in Yangon

By Nyein Nyein

THE second earthquake forum, organised by the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement and the government of Yangon Region, will be held at Yangon Technological University today and tomorrow (13 and 14 July).

The forum will be held with the aim of sharing information about earthquakes, increasing community awareness on earthquake preparedness and response, ensuring earthquake preparedness among stakeholders concerned, organising key players for strengthening earthquake preparedness and response capacity through emergency planning and organising key players to establish quick and effective earthquake response mechanisms and plans for Yangon Region.

Moreover, to be able to prepare and respond to massive earthquakes, a mechanism system will be set up so that different departments remain connected.

According to current situation, the government needs to review the survey, preparedness and response over earthquakes to reduce the damage caused. Small and medium earthquakes frequently hit Myanmar in the first three months of 2018.

Previously, there was no major damage caused by earthquakes in Yangon Region



A tourist takes a picture of the damaged ancient Tayoke Pyay Temple on 26 August, 2016, after a 6.8 magnitude earthquake hit Bagan. **PHOTO: AFP**

because of the small population and only a few high-risk buildings. But now, if a massive earthquake hits, it can cause a major disaster and loss of life because of lower capacity to respond, lack of preparedness, lower-quality high-risk buildings and a growing population.

The key to surviving an earthquake and reducing the risk of death or injury lies in identifying potential quake areas, establishing a proper building code and putting in place comprehensive disaster response plans that involve families, schools, government agencies, the police and

security forces.

According to Myanmar's geographic position, being located on geological faults, such as the Sagaing, Kyaukkyan and Rakhine faults, earthquakes are significant hazards here. According to the history of Myanmar, some of the earthquakes have led to the loss of human lives and caused major damage to the affected regions. Myanmar's biggest earthquake, measuring 8.2 on the Richter scale, took place in 1912 along the Kyaukkyan fault in Shan State. In April 2016, there was an earthquake of 6.8 magnitude in some townships of Sagaing

Region. Again, in August 2016, there was another earthquake of the same magnitude near Chauk Township in Magway Region. It caused lots of damage to many pagodas and temples in Bagan in central Myanmar. Last January, there was an earthquake of a magnitude of 6 near Pyu Town of Bago Region.

Due to massive and frequent earthquakes in Myanmar, it is necessary that all those who are involved should be prepared and have proper systems, plans and actions in place which can safeguard people, cities and communities in Myanmar. ■

Gov't, World Bank discuss speeding up Myanmar economic policy reformation

By Nyein Nyein

MYANMAR government and World Bank officials discussed the Myanmar economic policy reformation process for the implementation of the Myanmar Sustainable Development Plan (MSDP) at Hilton Hotel, Nay Pyi Taw, yesterday.

The discussion was jointly organised by the Ministry of Planning and Finance and the World Bank, and focused on the MSDP.

"As described in the MSDP, economic stability and macroeconomics man-

agement are essential to achieving the objectives of peace, stability and other sustainable development goals. The MSDP is drawn up to rally all necessary resources to achieve the goal of bringing stability to our nation," said U Maung Maung Win, Deputy Minister for Planning and Finance.

Moreover, the discussion was held with the aim to exchange ideas over the recent economic policy and analysis of the Myanmar Economic Monitor (MEM), which was released in May.

According to MEM, the gross domestic product growth rate in Myanmar has increased to 6.4 per cent in 2017-2018 from 5.9 per cent in 2016-2017. The report indicates a favorable outlook with growth expected to increase to 6.8 per cent in 2018-2019.

But, there are many risks in Myanmar's economic sector. Among them is the uncertainty in global trade and commodity prices.

"Myanmar has the potential to grow even faster than its current rate. The MSDP provides the framework to realise

this potential by building human and physical capital and by harnessing the nation's innovative and creative power, including mobilising a dynamic private sector, said Gevorg Sargsyan, World Bank Myanmar Representative.

The MEM also indicated some risks related to concerns over the slow pace of reforms and limited progress in addressing the humanitarian crisis in Rakhine State. There also remain perceptions of practical inefficiency, centralised decision-making and emerging protectionism. ■

MRF farmers get access to 3-year loan plan from MAB



A farmer ploughs land to get it ready for paddy cultivation. **PHOTO: SUPPLIED**

By May Thet Hnin

MYANMAR Rice Federation's (MRF) member farmers can get three-year loans from the Myanmar Apex Bank (MAB), by putting up land registration document Form-7 as a collateral, said U Ye Min Aung, secretary of MRF.

MRF is promoting access to finance and financial inclusion for its members, in collaboration with MAB, he maintained.

MAB provides Ks400,000 per acre under the three-year-term loan programme and it demands repayment in five installments during harvest time at an annual interest rate of 13

per cent.

This loan plan can benefit farmers in their agribusiness activities, such as farmland treatment, improving irrigation water, livestock breeding and growing crops, he continued.

MAB's chief business officer U Kyaw Ni Khin said that MAB is introducing farmer loans on a trial basis and will try to promote its service based on MAB's collaboration with its development partners, respective state and region governments and related departments.

MAB provides loans to MRF's farmers in Danubyu and other townships in the Ay-

eyawady, Bago and Yangon regions. Some farmers in Danubyu Township have built roads on their own on a small scale with the use of loans, in order to ensure smooth transportation in the rural areas.

The state-owned Myanmar Agriculture Development Bank also provides seasonal and agricultural loans to farmers. However, loan plans of private commercial banks are limited in scope and difficult for farmers to access. Now, MAB has introduced its three-year-term loan plan to help support farmers in increasing productivity, profitability and prosperity. ■

MFF fish & prawn sector to participate in Myanmar-China Eco Corridor Project

By May Thet Hnin

THE Myanmar Fisheries Federation's (MFF) fish and prawn farming sector will participate in the Myanmar-China Economic Corridor Project, which is part of China's One Belt, One Road (OBOR) initiative, said U Win Kyaing, secretary of MFF.

"The China market is a huge one and the consumption rate is growing, year after year. Therefore, we have to take advantage of the Myanmar-China Economic Corridor Project," he added.

"China is one of the capital-rich and high-technology countries. Therefore, we will try to get the capital loan, technology and machinery from China," he further added.

China has offered to purchase as much white shrimp—identified as Vannamei shrimp—as Myanmar can produce. The consumption of giant sea perch and striped dwarf catfish, which are bred in Myanmar, has increased in China, and there-

fore, also carry a potential in the China market.

MFF is planning to set up a new project for the China market. Recently, MFF met with Chinese diplomats in Myanmar, and during the meeting, China's central and state governments showed interest in Myanmar's fisheries sector, said U Win Kyaing.

"The Myanmar-China Economic Corridor Project will be set up by both governments and include a variety of businesses. So, we are planning to incorporate the fisheries sector into the project. If the government and private sector will cooperate, it will be successful. If MFF can handle the China market, it can meet the target, said U Win Kyaing.

The governments of China and Myanmar will sign a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to implement the OBOR project very soon. Under the MoU, China will provide assistance in many sectors, including basic infrastructure and loans for entrepreneurs. China will also plan to invest in Myanmar. ■

Corrigendum

Please read 'that federal is not a system for secession' and 'the main principles of non-secession from the Union', in place of 'that federal is not a system for cessation' and 'the main principles of non-cessation from the Union', in first and second paragraphs of column 3, page 5, of the news story, "State Counsellor: Historical duty of establishing a democratic federal union for future generations now resting on our shoulders", that appeared in our 12 July 2018 issue. — GNLM ■

Agro export value down by \$137 million in nearly three months

THE export of agriculture products from 1 April to 29 June in the current six-month interim period prior to the 2018-2019 fiscal year was worth US\$710.8 million, a decrease of \$137 million compared to the same period in the 2017-2018 FY, according to trade figures released by the commerce ministry.

The decline in agro exports is attributed to low demand from neighbouring country, China.

Chinese buyers are currently observing the market and lowering the purchase price of rice. Additionally, the mung bean and pigeon pea markets have also not fully recovered yet, following India's restrictions on the importation of those items.

In the export sector, the agriculture industry performed the best, along with natural gas exports. The main goods exported in the agriculture sector are rice

and broken rice, pulses, corn and rubber. Fruits and vegetables, sesame, dried tea leaves, sugar and other agro products are also exported to foreign countries.

The commerce ministry is striving to help deal with the challenges faced by farmers, such as high input costs, procurement of pedigree seeds, high cultivation costs and erratic weather problems. —Mon Mon ■

THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

Trade
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State Counsellor receives EAOs

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Ta'ang National Liberation Army (TNLA) Deputy Chairman U Tar Ku Lan, U Yan Win Zhong of Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA) and U Nyo Tun Aung of Arakan Army (AA) at 4:30 pm.

During the meeting, matters related to reducing conflicts, the signing of the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) and participating in political discussions were discussed.

Also present at the meetings were Union Peace Dialogue Joint Committee (UPDJC) Vice Chairman Union Minister U Kyaw Tint Swe, Peace Commission Chairman Dr. Tin Myo Win, Deputy Ministers U Min Thu and U Khin Maung Tin and Director General U Zaw Htay.

After the meetings, the State Counsellor presented the leaders and representatives of the EAOs with regional products, and they in return presented gifts to the State Counsellor and then posed for commemorative photos.—Myanmar News Agency

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing receives UN special envoy, Malaysian Ambassador, KNU chairman separately

COMMANDER-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing received UN Special Envoy to Myanmar Ms. Christine Schraner Burgener at the Bayintnaung Guesthouse in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning. They openly discussed collaborative efforts towards sustainable peace and anti-drug operations by the Union Government and the Tatmadaw.

The Senior General received Malaysian Ambassador Mr. Zahairi Bin Baharim at noon. They openly discussed promoting military relations between the two countries, sharing news and information, collaborating on anti-terrorism and anti-drug trafficking, conducting goodwill visits between military personnel, exchange programmes between sports teams, joint military drills and exchanging military medical expertise.

Next, the Senior General received members of the Peace Process Steering Team of NCA (Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement) signatories, led by Karen National Union (KNU) Chair-



Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and members of the Peace Process Steering Team of NCA (Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement) signatories pose for a documentary photo in Nay Pyi Taw. **PHOTO: MNA**

man Saw Mutu Sae Poe.

During the meeting, they discussed what measures should be taken to achieve union peace and to encourage non-signatories to sign the NCA as soon as possible.

Present at the meeting with the Senior General were Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice Senior General Soe Win, Chief of the General Staff (Army, Navy and Air) General Mya Tun Oo,

Commander-in-Chief (Navy) Admiral Tin Aung San, Commander-in-Chief (Air) General Maung Maung Kyaw, Tatmadaw officials from the Office of the Commander-in-Chief (Army) and Lt-Gen Khin Zaw Oo (retd).

Present with the KNU Chairman were Karen Benevolent Army Chairman Saw Mo Shae, Karen National Union/Karen National Liberation Army (Peace Council) General Secretary Naw Kapaw Htoo, Chairman of the Restoration Coun-

cil of Shan State/ Shan State Army U Baung Khe, Pa-O National Liberation Organization Patron Khun Okkar, Arakan Liberation Party Vice-Chairman U Khaing Soe Naing Aung, All Burma Students' Democratic Front Chairman U Tan Khe, Chin National Front Chairman U Pu Zin Kyone, New Mon State Party Chairman U Naing Htaw Mon and Lahu Democratic Union Vice-Chairman U Kyar Solomon.—MNA ■

Peace Commission Chairman receives China's special envoy, NSCN-K Chairman, KNPP Vice Chairman

PEACE Commission Chairman Dr. Tin Myo Win separately received a delegation led by Mr. Sun Guoxiang, Special Envoy for Asian Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, National Socialist Council of Nagaland – Khaplang (NSCN-K) Chairman U Ant Kant and party and the Karenni National Progressive Party-KNPP

Vice Chairman Khu Oo Reh and party at the Myanmar International Convention Centre II meeting hall yesterday morning. During the meetings, with the delegation led by Mr. Sun Guoxiang and NSCN-K Chairman U Ant Khant and party, they discussed matters relating to peace and regional developments. At the meeting with KNPP Vice

Chairman Khu Oo Reh and party, matters relating to peace and signing of the NCA (Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement) were discussed. Present at the meetings were Peace Commission Vice Chairman U Thein Zaw, member U Aung Soe, advisers U Hla Maung Shwe and Dr. Min Zaw Oo, and support group members and officials.—MNA



Peace Commission Chairman Dr. Tin Myo Win holds talk with the delegation of the Karenni National Progressive Party. **PHOTO: MNA**

Central Committee for implementing Myanmar-China Border Economic Zone holds first meeting

THE Central Committee for implementing the Myanmar-China Border Economic Zone held its first coordination meeting at the Ministry of Commerce in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. Central committee Chairman Union Minister for Commerce Dr. Than Myint delivered the opening address.

The Union Minister said China is implementing the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road to commercially connect with countries around the world. The Myanmar-China border economic

zone is part of the One Belt One Road initiative by China to create economic corridors.

The Myanmar-China economic zone was discussed between Chinese officials and the State Counsellor during her state visit to China in August 2016 and an MoU was signed in May 2017.

The benefits from establishing this economic zone include increased investment from home and abroad, a wider range of regional business opportunities and local employability, development

of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) resulting in increased productivity, and increased trade between Myanmar and China, said the Union Minister.

The MoU states that a location should be designated for the economic zone and Kanpiketi near Kachin State and China's border; Muse in Shan State and Chinshwehaw region are in consideration. The Union Minister implored the attendees to engage in discussions about the MoU's future operations.

Later, central committee secretary Deputy Minister U Aung Htoo and joint-secretary Director-General of the Department of Trade U Yan Naing Htun gave explanations.

Next, central committee Vice-Chairmen Kachin State Chief Minister Dr. Khet Aung, Shan State Chief Minister Dr. Lin Htut and U Kyauk Htechan, Chairman of the leading body of Kokang Self-Administered Zone, presented their respective region's investment and economic

development, creation of job opportunities for local residents, and implementation of the three designated locations considered in the MoU.

This was followed by the attending deputy ministers, state and region ministers for planning and finance asking questions and affirmations concerning the establishment of the economic zone. Central committee Vice-Chairman Dr. Khet Aung delivered the closing speech.—Myanmar News Agency ■

Mongpon Sawbwa Sao San Tun, advocator of Shan, Bamar solidarity



By Thi Thi Min
Photo: Aye Min Thu
(Kyemon)

"MY father passed away on 20 July, the day after the assassination. He died of over bleeding at the Yangon General Hospital," said U Sao Kai Pha, the third son of Mongpon Sawbwa (Chieftain) Sao San Tun.

Mongpon Sawbwa Sao San Tun was shot along with other martyred leaders at the Secretariat on 19 July 1947. He died at noon the next day from the gunshot wounds.

"I was ten years old when he died. My mother had already passed away, and now my father had left this world too. We were living in Taunggyi when my maternal uncle Momeik Sawbwa Sao Khun Cho took me and my siblings to Yangon to live under his care," said U Sao Kai Pha.

Mongpon Sawbwa Sao San Tun was born to Mongpon Sawbwa Sao Khun Htee and Maha Devi Nang Sein U on 31 May 1907.

Sao San Tun attended a high school for the children of Shan Sawbwas, where he passed his matriculation examination. He also attended a police officer training school.

He became a Sawbwa in 1928 and married Sao Khin Thaung, a daughter of Momeik Sawbwa, in 1932.

Mongpon Sawbwa Sao San Tun was interested in literature and music and could play the accordion and bamboo xylophone. He loved his ethnic literature and championed Shan

and Bamar solidarity.

The Mongpon Sawbwa was very health-conscious and abstained from drinking, smoking and chewing betel. He would take early morning walks, practice martial arts, go horse-riding, swimming and other sports.

The Mongpon Sawbwa also promoted the rise of scientific agricultural practices in Shan State. He would order books on agriculture, modern devices and crop seeds from England.

"He established the Sanpya (Model) Garden in Mongpon to spread the knowledge from these books to the community. As a result, the local people grew fine, healthy crops," said U Sao Kai Pha.

The Mongpon Sawbwa opposed the White Paper administration, brought with the British after the Second World War. He viewed this as an attempt to divide the hilly regions and central Myanmar, and so he took it upon himself to unite these areas instead.

"He held many meetings and discussions. The other Sawbwas weren't very enthusiastic because my father was the youngest among them," said U Sao Kai Pha.

Mongpon Sawbwa Sao San Tun was one of the Shan Sawbwas who signed the historical Panglong agreement.

"When negotiations at the Panglong conference were not going smooth, my father got involved with Shan Youth Association and together with Shan youth leaders U Tin Aye, U Tun Myint and U Khun Htee, and

hand in hand with Bogoyoke (Aung San), tried to create a Union," said U Sao Kai Pha.

The Mongpon Sawbwa became the Minister of Hill Region Affairs and an advisor in Bogoyoke Aung San's interim government. He also served as a member of Union and states subcommittee, the subcommittee for ethnic minorities, and the Constitution Drafting Committee at the Union Parliament.

The Mongpon Sawbwa's wife, Sao Khin Thaung, passed away in the forests of Mongpon in 1945, while fleeing from the encroaching Japanese fascists. His daughter passed away the next year.

When the Mongpon Sawbwa passed away in 1947, his daughters Sao Thu Nandar, Sao Myint Kyi, sons Sao Say Hone and Sao Kai Pha were left.

The government supported the remaining family members of the martyred leaders with a monthly grant of Ks 100,000 for each family, but since the Mongpon Sawbwa's children were underage at that time, the grant was safeguarded by co-executors, including Myanma Alinn U Tin.

"Other martyred leader fam-



U Sao Kai Pha and his wife.

ily members received gas stations and motor vehicles, but we didn't receive anything. Myanma Alinn U Tin dispersed the grant money when the revolutionary government came to power," said U Sao Kai Pha.

"In the same year I graduated, during the Union government's term, I got a job as a secretary to my uncle at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. But I lost the job after the coup on 2 March 1962," said U Sao Kai Pha. "I couldn't find a job anywhere so I kept pursuing further education. Eventually, I applied for the position of third secretary at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and was shortlisted in the top 5. Yet, they gave many excuses not to hire me."

After his death, the Mongpon Sawbwa's body was carried to his

hometown where he was cremated, according to local customs. Half of his ash was kept at the Martyr's Mausoleum in Yangon and the rest at a mausoleum in southern Mongpon.

It is learnt that, General Ne Win would not only attend Martyrs' Day celebrations together with the remaining families, he would also do the same on Independence Day and Union Day, but the practice was later discontinued.

"We always hand-made the flower wreaths for Martyrs' Day. We will still do it this year. We have to send the wreaths before 18 July. We usually offer *soon* (meals) to monks at the Sawbwa school, but we haven't decided on what to do this year," said U Sao Kai Pha.

When asked his views about the reemergence of Martyrs' Day celebrations in the current administration, U Sao Kai Pha said, "I feel they're doing what needs to be done. Other countries also commemorate their leaders who worked for the good of their country."

U Sao Kai Pha and his elder brother are the last remaining children of Mongpon Sawbwa Sao San Tun. U Sao Kai Pha lives with his wife Daw Thaung Thaung, children and grandchildren.

"My brother is settled abroad, and he's not coming back to Myanmar," said U Sao Kai Pha.

U Sao Kai Pha worked at the state-owned English daily, *The Working People's Daily*, and the Burmese daily, *Lokethar Pyithu Nezin*, under the Ministry of Information, and climbed to the ranks of a chief editor. Later, he worked as a foreign correspondent at a Japanese news agency for 15 years.

"In my view, journalists should prioritize national affairs. To tell it plainly, news must be written with care, since the newspaper has the potential to defame one's country," he said.

U Sao Kai Pha, son of the martyred leader Mongpon Sawbwa Sao San Tun, concluded, "Great leaders have given their lives to unify the nation, so it's up to everyone to cooperate for the development of the nation. The countries that we used to assist have surpassed us. Only when we work together in unity and strength, can our nation and our people follow suit and reap the benefits of development." ■



Mongpon Sawbwa
Sao San Tun

(31 May 1907 - 20 July 1947)

* Mongpon Sawbwa Sao San Tun became the Minister of Hill Region Affairs and an advisor in Bogoyoke Aung San's pre-independence government. He also served as a member of Union and states subcommittee, the subcommittee for ethnic minorities, and the Constitution Drafting Committee at the Union Parliament.

* He was born to Mongpon Sawbwa Sao Khun Htee, a chieftain of Mongpon Town, and Maha Devi Nang Sein U on 31 May 1907.

* Sao San Tun attended a high school for the children of Shan Sawbwas, where he passed his matriculation examination. He also attended a police officer training school.

* He became a Sawbwa in 1928 and married Sao Khin Thaung, a daughter of Momeik Sawbwa, in 1932.

* He endeavored to achieve cooperation between hilly regions and central Myanmar and attempted to ensure national unity made by General Aung San.

* He was assassinated at 10:37 am on 19 July 1947 together with other martyred leaders. He passed away at noon the next day.

Do not lose sight of our goal of a Federal Democratic Union

THE solution to our country's long-running armed conflicts is a federal system that is acceptable to all. Our goal is, therefore, the "emergence of a democratic federal Union based on democracy and federalism".

Our country has borne the brunt of armed conflicts and their consequences for more than 70 years. The hopes of our people have dimmed and been diminished for more than 70 years.

The time has come for all of us to make concerted efforts for a federal system for establishment of a Union which our founding fathers yearned for; a Union with justice, freedom and equal rights, and untainted by political ideologies.

To cease the armed conflicts, it is important to reach common political agreement and principles among many diverse groups. The ruling government, since it was an opposition party, has firmly grasped the ideology that only when we have established a federal system which is acceptable to all the people of our country can we achieve total peace. Ethnic armed organizations

have assisted in establishing a federal system to end the armed conflicts.

However, lack of necessary agreements on the "federal" issue has delayed the peacemaking process and we are still far away from total peace.

The stance which absolutely denied the use of the term 'federal' in the country in the past has changed today, and we have signed the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement, which pledges to build a federal democratic country. Today, our history demands a federal system for the future of our Union. It is none other than a federal system which can build and sustain our Union that will last long and endure for our country and our peoples.

However, lack of necessary agreements on the 'federal' issue has delayed the peacemaking process and we are still far away from total peace.

During the period when the term 'federal' was defined wrongly and denied, the then-opposition party told the country repeatedly that 'federal' does not mean 'secession from a Union' but a system of strengthening the unity.

Today, not only those who signed the NCA, but also those who want to build a federal democratic Union, have adopted the same ideology with us.

Negotiation over the principles of non-secession from the Union and self-determination are important and a politically delicate subject, though it is not included in the agenda of the conference. There is no doubt at all that we are all aware of this herculean task.

At the same time, we need to remind ourselves that we are walking towards our goal of a federal democratic Union, which can guarantee peace and security to our people.

The opportunity to dispel the darkness caused by our inability to achieve peace, due to lack of unity, is right now before our very eyes. This is an opportunity given by history. This is the opportunity given to us by our people. All of us should not waste this opportunity.

No matter what challenges we may have to encounter, we will not lose sight of our goal of a Federal Democratic Union.

For his fight for independence, Bogyoke mastered the English language

By Maung Sein Ei (Na Bai Myay)

ALTHOUGH his life span was much too brief, the same person known as student leader Ko Aung San, national leader Thakin Aung San, Tatmadaw founder Bogyoke Aung San, and independence architect Bogyoke exerted tireless efforts for his nation and people. In the end, he sacrificed his life for the country.

During the struggle for independence, Bogyoke read a lot of books, including political literature written in English. While attending university, he had written articles in Myanmar as well as in English and also delivered speeches in the English language.

Outstanding in English

At the seventh standard examination held in March 1929 at Yenangyaung National High School, three students, including Bogyoke Aung San, were awarded with academic scholarships. At that juncture, Maung Aung San was the English section editor of the handwritten school magazine. Even though he was only in the ninth grade, his articles written in English were excellent. Sayar Gyi U Khin Than, his English teacher, shared an example of his writing that showed Bogyoke Aung San was fluent and skillful in the English language.

Life as a university student

Bogyoke came to Yangon University in 1932, after passing the matriculation examination. With high ambitions and aspirations, he was keen only in literature. During university debates, Bogyoke competed in events in the English language. Although his accent, tone and intonation were not perfect, Bogyoke could comfortably convey to the audience what he wanted to say. Some students and observers criticised the imperfect pronunciation, but Bogyoke ignored their disapproval. Whatever the situation may be, Bogyoke moved forward with his own beliefs and convictions.

As a university student, Bogyoke contributed English articles, such as "Burma and Buddhism", and "Freedom of Dress in Schools". At all the meetings held at the University Students' Union, Bogyoke participated in English, despite some students shouting at him in protest to speak in the Myanmar language. Bogyoke strongly believed that good conversation in English was the sure gateway to excellent English writing. With this belief, he was also convinced that the English language was critical and instrumental in the arena of international relations.

Taken for granted, he profusely accepted as true that the English language might surely be useful in the struggle for independence of Myanmar. With firm conviction, Bogyoke worked hard, and hoped that his endeavours would be emulated by the new generation.

Writing speeches in English

During the hard struggle for independence, Bogyoke wrote his speeches in English, including his well-known speeches titled: The Resistance Movement; Problems for Burma's Freedom; Critique on

British Imperialism; Welcome India; The Situation and Tasks; and An Address to the Anglo-Burma. The collection of these six English speeches were compiled and printed in 1971 from Sar Pay Beik Man Publishing House. The book is ideal for the young English learners in which the outlook, philosophy and characteristics of the Arzarni (martyred) leader could be studied.

During the struggle for independence, he had conversations with British dignitaries in English, and eventually signed the Aung San-Atlee Agreement, which was written in English. Bogyoke worked very hard until the day he was assassinated.

The author of this article has the pleasure of sharing with the new generation some portions of Bogyoke's conversations with Clement Richard Atlee, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, at No. 10 Downing Street in London on 13 January 1947.

"I would like to say on behalf of the delegation that whatever differences we may have in Burma, though indeed they are few and unimportant, we are one in our demand for full and unfettered freedom. We want that freedom soon, and we want to have the opportunity to prepare for it now", Bogyoke said."

This should be emulated.

Despite his young age of 32, his insight and

wisdom was multifaceted and still lively. Since childhood, Bogyoke was unlike other kids. He never lied, but spoke candidly and courageously what he wanted. These are the characteristics for the new generation to be followed.

Without the slightest sign of arrogance or boastfulness, Bogyoke remained in the realm of hard study. He was not a pleasing personality who said 'yes' and nodded to everyone, but he responded whenever he deemed it was appropriate and suitable among his peers. Bogyoke was regarded as a person who was hard to make a friend with. As he was a straightforward person, he was chosen the leader among university students.

Took the risk of sacrifice

With the strongest determination, he left his beloved university and sacrificed his life in the struggle for independence. Indeed, the spirit of sacrifice of Bogyoke was so deep that the normal person could never endure such strength of mind. His maturity of mind was unparalleled, as he knew very well that a strong and tough armed force was necessary to fight the imperialists in gaining back independence.

Bogyoke faced a variety of hardships when he secretly went abroad to get help and assistance

in the formation of the armed force. Firm conviction and determination made it possible for him to acquire military training along with the Thirty Comrades. Next, they took a solemn vow to sacrifice their lives in the struggle for independence. This was symbolised by a blood oath, and thus was formed the Burma Independence Army (BIA).

Leading forces such as the BIA, the Burma Defence Army (BDA) and Patriotic Burmese Forces (PBF), Bogyoke drove out the imperialists and fascists from Myanmar soil.

Bogyoke demanded independence from the imperialists in straightforward terms and achieved what he wanted. Free and fair elections were held, and the National Parliament was convened, where important decisions for the nation were decided. Due to the wisdom of Bogyoke, a sovereign nation was born on 4 January 1948.

It was sad to say that he lived for only 33 years, having given his life for his country and his people. His patriotism should be emulated by all. He successfully achieved his ultimate aim of independence, and fulfilled what was needed. He knew in advance that the country needed to negotiate with the colonialists, and that was why he studied English very hard since his student days. ■

Translated by UMT (HK)

To hoist flag of Myanmar half-mast and to sound siren on 71st Martyrs' Day

THE President's Office has issued an instruction to government departments and institutions, which in turn have to convey the instruction down to the lower levels of government organizations. The instruction stated that the flag of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar be hoisted half-mast throughout the whole country, on Thursday 19 July (71st Martyrs' Day) Myanmar Radio and Television to transmit the sound of wailing siren at 10:37 am, the time Bogyoke Aung San and his colleagues were assassinated, and all vehicles on the roads to stop for a moment and honk their horns.— Myanmar News Agency

Myanmar Daily Weather Report

(Issued at 7:00 pm Thursday 12th July, 2018)

BAY INFERENCE: Monsoon is vigorous over the Andaman Sea and South Bay and strong elsewhere over the Bay of Bengal.

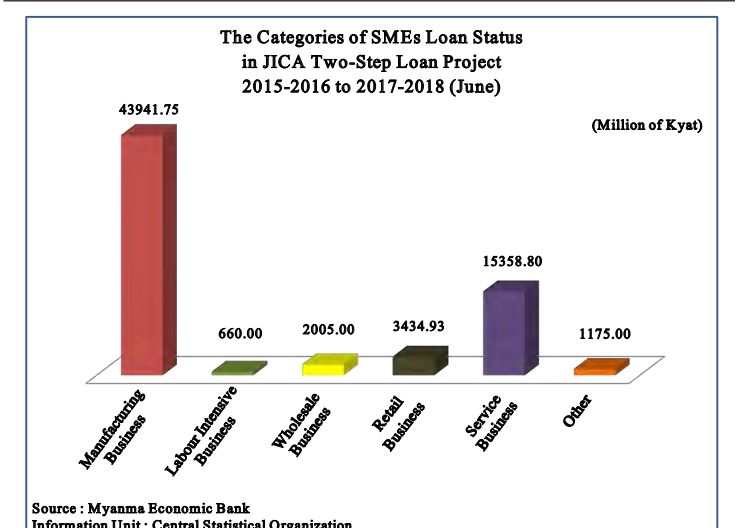
FORECAST VALID UNTIL AFTERNOON OF THE 13th JULY, 2018: Rain or thundershowers will be isolated in Lower Sagaing, Mandalay and Magway regions and scattered in Nay Pyi Taw, (Southern and Eastern) Shan and Kayah states and widespread in the remaining regions and states with regionally heavy falls in Ayeyawady and Taninthayi regions, Rakhine State, isolated heavy falls in Yangon Region, Kayin and Mon states. Degree of certainty is (100%).

STATE OF THE SEA: Squalls with moderate to rough seas are likely at times off and along Myanmar Coasts. Surface wind speed in squalls may reach (35-40)m.p.h. Wave height will be about (10 - 12) feet in Deltaic, Gulf of Mottama and off and along Mon-Taninthayi Coasts and about (8 - 11) feet in off and along Rakhine Coasts.

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Strong monsoon over the Andaman Sea and South Bay of Bengal. **FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 13th JULY, 2018:** Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 13th JULY, 2018: Some rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 13th JULY, 2018: Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (80%).



Parity work conducted between CBM reference exchange rate and market exchange rate

Interviewed by
Khin Maung Htwe

SINCE mid-June, the American dollar has been appreciating against the Myanmar kyat. In 2017, the exchange rate of the kyat against the dollar had been stable at Ks1,350 to a dollar, but it started to rise around mid-June.

On 25 June, it was at Ks1,370 and on 27 June, it increased to Ks1,404—an increase of Ks20 to 30 within a period of two days. On 2 July, it decreased to Ks1,388 and then rose again to Ks1,398 on 10 July and Ks1,405 on 11 July—an increase of some Ks17 within a ten-day period.

The Central Bank of Myanmar (CBM) Foreign Exchange Management Department Director-General Daw May Toe Win said, “At the moment, the kyat has depreciated against the dollar, and so have the currencies of Myanmar’s trading partner countries, so there is little effect on the economy of Myanmar.”

Following is the transcript of an interview conducted with Daw May Toe Win:

Q: What is the effect of the instability in the exchange rate between the Myanmar kyat and the US dollar on the economy of

Myanmar?

A: If the exchange rate rises, the Myanmar kyat will depreciate and if the exchange rate decreases, the Myanmar kyat will appreciate. When countries trade, the import and export of products are shown in foreign currency (US dollar) and any increase or decrease in the exchange rate will have an effect on the country’s exports and imports. Due to the depreciation of the Myanmar kyat, Myanmar’s exports have become cheap, while imports have become more expensive. Thus, more exports are encouraged. But at the moment in Myanmar, imports are greater than exports, so more expensive products are being imported, causing costs of imported goods to rise. This also

increases inflation.

Depreciation of the Myanmar kyat could affect the country’s economy, but the currencies of our trading partners are also depreciating, so the effect on Myanmar’s economy is still low.

Fluctuation of the exchange rate between the Myanmar kyat and the US dollar does not have only a negative impact on the country’s economy. There are some positive effects, such as making our exports cheaper (and more competitive). But the unstable exchange rate is less attractive for foreign direct investments (FDI), so FDIs can decrease.

The exchange rate between the kyat and the dollar is also dependent on the exchange

rate fluctuation of Myanmar’s trading partner countries’ currencies. At the moment, the dollar is appreciating and due to changes in the trade policy of the United States, exports of China, the main trading partner of the US, are also decreasing, causing the value of the Chinese yuan to decrease. As China is the main trading partner of Myanmar, the depreciation of the yuan is also affecting the value of the kyat.

Q: What is the Central Bank of Myanmar doing to stabilise the exchange rate?

A: The Central Bank of Myanmar is regularly monitoring the foreign exchange market and is strictly controlling any currency trading that could destabilise the exchange rate. Starting from mid-April 2012, a Managed Floating Exchange Rate Regime was practised and the reference exchange rate of the kyat was based on the auction conducted by the Central Bank of Myanmar. For the exchange rate to be based on the actual market rate, Myanmar entered into the Interbank Market in 2013 and there was some market development.

At the moment, the participation of banks in the auction has decreased and from the



Director-General
Daw May Toe Win.

second half of 2017, as per the suggestion of IMF, the daily reference exchange rate was based on the Interbank Market. Since the reference exchange rate of the Central Bank of Myanmar is mainly based on the Interbank Market, it would be in close parity with the market exchange rate.

When the auction started to control the rate fluctuation, a trading band of +/- 0.8% was set. However, quite frequently, this does not reflect the market rate and encourages illegal foreign currency trade, having undesirable consequences. A plan is underway to remove the trading band. ■



DICA issues five notifications of the Myanmar Companies Law 2017

By May Thet Hnin

THE Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA) issued five notifications (56,57, 58, 59,60/2018), under the Myanmar Companies Law 2017, on 9 and 10 July 2018.

Those notifications state requirements for public companies and business associations, prescribed fees and late lodgment fees, prescribed forms for an instrument of transfer for shares or other registrable interests in a company, prescribed form of model constitution for a private company limited by shares, which will come into effect from 1 August 2018.

Requirements for public companies include prohibition of allotment of the companies’ share capital unless minimum subscription is received, time limit for allotment of securities,

a statement in lieu of the prospectus lodged by or on behalf of a public company to be in the prescribed format, every prospectus issued by or on behalf of a public company to be lodged with the Securities Exchange Commission of Myanmar prior to it being filed for registration. Applications to the Registrar must be made in the prescribed format and on an electronic registry system unless otherwise directed by the Registrar, according to notification (No 59/2018) of the DICA.

Meanwhile, requirements for business associations are that a business association can be registered under Section 42 of the Myanmar Companies Law 2017 as a company limited by guarantee without share capital. A business association is subject to the provisions of the Myanmar Companies Law 2017, applicable to

companies limited by guarantee, including in relation to the filing and lodgment of documents with the Registrar. For the purpose of issuing a licence to a business association under Section 42 of the Myanmar Companies Law 2017, the Registrar classifies an association into one of the following categories: union-level association, state- or regional-level association, district-level association and township-level association.

Additionally, a business association can send together with its annual return, a list of its members on the date of the annual return. This notification (No 58/2018) of the DICA also highlighted that a business association shall not qualify as a small company under the Myanmar Companies Law 2017.

The notification No 57/2018 of the DICA describes how to pay prescribed fees and late

lodgment fees, as directed by the Registrar.

MIC will issue regulations of companies in July after submitting them to the cabinet, said U Aung Naing Oo.

The Myanmar Companies Law will come into effect on 1 August and all companies are required to re-register within six months from the effective date of 1 August of the Myanmar Companies Law. All registered companies and other entities under the Myanmar Companies Act 1914 and the Special Company Act 1950 will be required to re-register on (MyCO) registry starting from 1 August 2018 to 31 January 2019 during the 6-month re-registration period. Re-registration can be completed online or in person at the offices of the DICA, using the prescribed forms for re-registration, according to the MIC announcement.

Re-registration will ensure the Company Registration number is the same as the Tax Identification number issued by the Internal Revenue Department.

MIC will introduce the new Myanmar Companies Law on 31 July at Melia Hotel and continue discussions with the public sector in order to have a better understanding of the new law.

On 10 July, MIC released sample prescribed forms for an instrument of transfer for shares or other registrable interests in a company through the DICA website, according to notification (56/2018). Companies can apply for registration in the prescribed sample format or submit their own. On the same day, another notification (60/2018) also came out, mentioning prescribed form of model constitution for a private company limited by shares. ■

Different approaches for EAOs to sign NCA

News – Ye Kaung Nyunt
Photo – Pho Htaung

THE Union Peace Dialogue Joint Committee (UPDJC) Secretariat met with the media at Myanmar International Convention Centre-II yesterday and explained matters relating to the Third Session of the Union Peace Conference-21st Century Panglong, seven groups from the Northern Alliance meeting with State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, the signing of the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) by non-signatory ethnic armed organisations (EAOs) and armed engagements between the Tatmadaw and the Restoration Council of Shan State (RCSS).

On the second day of the conference, the government group, Tatmadaw group, EAO group, political parties group and Hluttaw group conducted separate discussions on the political sector, economic sector, social sector, security sector and land & environment sector, and the Peace Commission Vice Chairman held a discussion with Karen National Progressive Party (KNPP) Vice Chairman U Khu Oo Reh on signing the NCA, it is learnt.

In addition, State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi met the seven EAOs from the Northern Alliance in two separate groups at the National Reconciliation and Peace Centre (NRPC) in the afternoon.

“The meeting with UWSA (United Wa State Army) Vice Chairman U Kyauk Kaw An, SSPP Chairman U Hsay Htin, NDAA (National Democratic Alli-



Secretariat of the Union Peace Dialogue Joint Committee conducts a press conference following day two of the Union Peace Conference-21st Century Panglong at the MICC-II in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

ance Army) [Mongla] Vice Chairman U San Pae and KIO (Kachin Independence Organisation) Vice Chairman (2) S. Gwan Maw was at 3:30 pm, and the meeting with TNLA's (Ta'ang National Liberation Army) Tar Ku Lan, MNDAA (Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army) U Yan Win Zhong and AA (Arakan Army) U Nyo Tun Aung at 4:30 pm. The main point discussed was to sign the NCA and participate in the Union Peace Conference-21st Century Panglong”, said U Zaw Htay, the spokesperson for the President's Office.

The three groups – AA, MNDA and TNLA – were left out of the peace process when the Nationwide Ceasefire Coordination Team (NCCT) was discussing the NCA because of ongoing conflicts in Laukkai.

“They were left out when the NCCT was discussing the NCA because of the battles at Laukkai. After the NLD government took office, AA, MNDA and TNLA held discussions but they were left out because of two issues. The first was make an announcement and the second was to leave the Underground. If they get these two, they said they will talk about signing the NCA. Now it is not like that. The approach will be different. At this time, too, they want to sign the NCA”, said U Zaw Htay.

Discussions will be held after the third session of the conference for the AA, MNDA and TNLA to participate in the NCA. But this discussion will not be at the same level as the KIA, UWSA, NDAA and SSPP, it is learnt.

The seven groups from the Northern Alliance were met in two groups by the Tatmadaw Commander-in-Chief and the Tatmadaw Deputy Commander-in-Chief on Wednesday, it is learnt.

“The AA, MNDA and TNLA were met by Tatmadaw Deputy Commander-in-Chief. They have no bilateral agreement (with the Tatmadaw), and they were battling with the Tatmadaw. The KIA, SSPP, UWSA and NDAA have a bilateral agreement (with the Tatmadaw). So they have this difference. Reducing conflicts and how to go toward the NCA was discussed, it is learnt. The main discussion is about signing the NCA”, said U Zaw Htay.

The government will approach the seven members of the Northern Alliance in two sep-

arate ways, it was learnt. The reason for inviting them to the conference was to reduce armed engagement with the Tatmadaw and to sign the NCA with the government, officials said.

U Zaw Htay added that “Once the conference is over, there'll be (discussions on) reducing armed engagements and building trust, and it is hoped that there'll be an increase in groups signing the NCA between the third and fourth sessions of the conference.”

It was learnt from the press conference that the RCSS and Tatmadaw had agreements signed, but there were armed engagements because of cases of encroaching into delineated areas. Once the Joint Monitoring Committee (JMC) designates the ceasefire areas exactly, armed engagements will be reduced.

The reason the State Counsellor and Tatmadaw Commander-in-Chief had targeted 2019 and 2020 for peace is to prevent the waning of enthusiasm on peace from long, drawn-out periods (of discussion) and other matters, it is learnt.

“To achieve the State Counsellor's aim of 2019, the government could not do it alone. EAOs and political parties can turn up with various reasons if they don't want to do it. That is why the State Counsellor had told to do this with determination and without worrying,” said U Zaw Htay.

Answering the media's questions at yesterday's press conference were UPDJC secretariat members U Zaw Htay, U Hla Maung Shwe, Yebaw Myo Win and Sai Kyaw Nyunt. ■



Deputy Minister for Information U Aung Hla Tun, third from left, receives Malaysian Ambassador Mr. Zahairi Baharim, Defence Attache Col. Abdul Razak Haron and First Secretary Mr. Tajul Ariffin Tajuddin at the Ministry of Information in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA.**

Deputy Information Minister receives Malaysian Ambassador to Myanmar H.E. Mr. Zahairi Baharim

UAUNG HLA TUN, Deputy Minister of Information, received Ambassador H.E. Mr. Zahairi Baharim, Defence Attache Col. Abdul Razak Haron and First Secretary Mr. Tajul Ariffin Tajuddin from the Malaysian Embassy in Myanmar at the Information Ministry in Nay Pyi Taw at 11 a.m. on Thursday.

Among the cordial discussions at the meeting were matters concerning further pro-

moting over 60 years long close and friendly bilateral relations, shooting a documentary on the prevalence of religious harmony around the Sule Pagoda and its environs in Yangon in order to narrate to the international community.

Responsible ministry officials were also present at the meeting together with the Deputy Minister.—Myanmar News Agency ■

UK set to publish Brexit plan that sparked rebellion

LONDON — British Prime Minister Theresa May will publish details Thursday of her long-awaited Brexit blueprint to restart talks with the EU, after facing down a revolt by eurosceptic ministers that could still unseat her. In a policy paper, the government will outline proposals for a free trade area and a “common rule book” with the EU in goods after pressure from businesses to allow cross-border trade to continue as normal. But Britain would still plan to leave the EU single market and customs union and set its own path on the far bigger services sector, hoping to be able to curb EU immigration and strike its own trade deals with third countries. For the City of London the plan would propose “a looser partnership” with the EU rather than original proposals for “mutual recognition” of British and EU



UK Brexit negotiator Michel Barnier. PHOTO: AFP

rules after Britain leaves the bloc in March, the *Financial Times* reported.

“We’re making sure we’ve got a bespoke relationship with the EU,” Brexit Secretary Dominic Raab, who was only appointed on Monday after his predecessor David Davis quit in protest over the plan, told BBC radio.

“It’s a credible proposal. It’s bold, it’s ambitious but it’s also pragmatic,” he said. The plan has caused outrage among eurosceptic members of May’s Con-

servative party, and foreign minister Boris Johnson joined Davis in dramatically quitting this week in protest. Their departures, followed by a clutch of junior aides, destabilised May’s government and revived talk of a leadership challenge against her.

The prime minister is also likely to face some opposition in Brussels, where officials have repeatedly warned Britain to lower its expectations about how close ties can be.

“Of course the EU-

27 is open to compromise but not one that can undermine the main pillars of the single market,” an EU official said on condition of anonymity. An EU source said: “We will look at these things constructively, and in a way that is helpful to the prime minister.”

May has briefed leaders including EU President Donald Tusk and German Chancellor Angela Merkel on her plan and reported a positive response, although they are awaiting the detail.

Britain does not have long to argue its case -- both sides are aiming for a deal by October, to allow time for its ratification by the British and European parliaments.

Failure to agree would see Britain leave the EU without a deal, with the risk of huge economic disruption on both sides of the Channel. *The Financial Times* has reported that

one contingency plan being examined in case of a no-deal Brexit is using barges to help keep the lights on in Northern Ireland in case there is disruption to electricity imports from the Republic of Ireland.

‘Status of colony’

Britain voted for Brexit in June 2016, but May has so far been unable to present a common position to Brussels on what she wants because of deep divisions in her government.

Amid warnings from businesses that continued uncertainty is risking investment and jobs, and fears time is running out, her cabinet finally agreed on a plan last week.

The aim is to keep EU rules on goods to protect complex manufacturing supply chains, using technology to levy its own duties on UK-bound products from outside the bloc, while diverging on services.

“We need to rise to the challenge and grasp the opportunities” of Brexit, said Raab, adding that the policy represented a “balance”.

But Johnson, a leading Brexit campaigner, said following EU rules without being able to alter them risked consigning Britain to the “status of colony”, and said it looked like a “semi-Brexit”. Other eurosceptics who want a clean break with the bloc are also livid, prompting speculation they may launch a confidence vote against May.

Brexit-backing MPs, including leading eurosceptic Conservative Jacob Rees-Mogg, will also seek to force her hand by submitting amendments to a trade bill being debated in the House of Commons next week. Rees-Mogg told AFP his aim was only “to help the government stick to some of its earlier promises”.—AFP ■

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V EVER ALLY VOY. NO. (0249-566W)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V EVER ALLY VOY. NO. (0249-566W) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 13-7-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of H.P.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 EVERGREEN SHIPPING
LINES**

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V SENTOSA STAR VOY. NO. (1803N/S)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V SENTOSA STAR VOY. NO. (1803N/S) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 13-7-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of A.I.P.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 BLPL SHIPPING LINE**

Phone No: 2301185

Indonesia to take majority stake in massive gold, copper mine

JAKARTA — Indonesia will take a majority stake in one of the world's biggest gold and copper mines, the government said Thursday, as it moves to claw back control of its natural resources.

State-owned mining firm Inalum is to assume a 51 per cent interest in the Grasberg mine under an agreement to be signed later in the day, President Joko Widodo said.

Indonesia currently holds just under 10 per cent of the mine, which is owned and operated by a unit of US-based Freeport-McMoran. Freeport is expected to continue operating the vast complex in the jungles of Papua province — and keep the remaining ownership stake. Widodo did not reveal financial details of the agreement, which he said came after “very difficult, intense” negotiations.

“This is a leap forward,” he told reporters. “It’s a done deal, we just need to sign it.” The deal means more tax and roy-



The Grasberg mine is a flashpoint in Papua's struggle for independence from Indonesia and has fuelled resentment over how much locals benefit from the region's resources. PHOTO: AFP

alties revenue for the government, he added. Ministers were set to hold a news conference about the deal later in the day. The announcement comes after more than a year of see-saw negotiations over the future of Freeport's operations in the Southeast Asian nation. The company and Indonesia's government have sparred over the ownership of Grasberg and its social and environmental impact, including how the firm manages mine waste known as tailings.

The mine is a frequent flashpoint in Papua's struggle for independence from Indonesia and has fuelled resentment over how much locals benefit from the region's rich resources.

Papua, on the western half of New Guinea island, has been the scene of a simmering independence insurgency since it was annexed by Jakarta in the late 1960s. Anglo-Australian mining giant Rio Tinto has a joint venture agreement with Freeport for about 40 per cent of Grasberg's

production. Rio Tinto has previously said it would be willing to sell its interest in the complex, with earlier reports pegging a potential deal at around \$3.5 billion.

Foreign firms have been ordered to comply with new mining ownership rules launched by Widodo — who is seeking re-election next year — aimed at exercising more domestic control of Indonesia's resources. Despite sitting atop some of the world's most abundant natural resources, successive governments have failed to take advantage of its vast riches, with critics blaming badly thought-out and nationalistic policies that make the country an uncertain place to invest.

A series of regulatory changes from the government in recent years have caused jitters among miners, with some foreign firms choosing to exit Indonesia rather than deal with such an unpredictable environment.—AFP ■

Turkey jails mine bosses over 2014 disaster that killed 301

MANISA (TURKEY) — A Turkish court on Wednesday handed jail terms of up to 22 years to five top managers convicted of negligence over Turkey's worst ever mining disaster, which claimed hundreds of lives.

The accident in May 2014 killed 301 people when one of the pits of the Soma mine became engulfed by flames and carbon monoxide gas, trapping 800 miners working inside.

The tragedy sparked protests and raised new concerns about Turkey's dire industrial safety record.

Relatives and the opposition denounced Wednesday's verdicts —handed out on negligence rather than murder convictions — as outrageously lenient after prosecutors had initially demanded terms of 301 times 25 years for all the

main suspects.

After a trial lasting over three years, the court in the western Turkish town of Akhisar jailed the former CEO of the Soma mine, Can Gurkan, for 15 years, the state-run Anadolu news agency said.

The mine's general manager Ramazan Dogru and technical manager Ismail Adali were handed prison sentences of 22 years and six months, and operations manager Akin Celik and technical supervisor Ertan Ersoy 18 years and nine months, it added.

The chairman of the Soma Mines Company which owned the mine, Alp Gurkan, the father of Can Gurkan, was acquitted along with 36 other suspects.

Out of 51 suspects on trial, nine other lower-ranking mine managers were given jail terms of six to 11 years.

'No justice for Soma'

The Dogan news agency said the verdicts prompted victims' lawyers and families to walk out of court in protest. Emergency services needed to be called as several collapsed due to stress, it added.

The opposition Republican People's Party (CHP) slammed the sentences, which it said were drawn up in advance as a result of pressure from the company and the authorities.

"Justice has not come for Soma and... the law has, once again, gone bankrupt," its deputy chairman Veli Agbaba said in a statement.

Alp Gurkan had denied responsibility for the disaster, asking when the trial opened in April 2015 to be freed "to do our own research and shed light on the accident".



Turkish union members hold a banner reading "We will not forget Soma" at a 2015 march in Ankara in memory of the 301 people killed the previous year in a mining disaster. PHOTO: AFP

'Not negligence'

Turkey's Confederation of Progressive Trade Unions (DISK) expressed outrage that the convictions had been made on the lesser negligence charges, arguing the mine had failed to take necessary precautions and had overworked its employees.

"Three-hundred-and-one of our worker brothers lost their lives before our

eyes as a result as a slaughter," said its chairwoman Arzu Cerkezoglu.

"This is not called negligence or a mistake. It is a crime. We do not accept this decision," she added in a statement.

The accident on 13 May, 2014, exposed the lacklustre reaction of the government led by President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who was prime minister at the time. Prosecutors

said that the miners were killed after inhaling gas and toxic smoke from the fire which was caused when an abandoned pile of coal left next to an electrical transformer caught fire.

Erdogan had notoriously appeared to play down the disaster, saying that "accidents are in the nature of the business" and comparing it to accidents in industrial revolution-era Britain.

The verdict hearing had been scheduled for 9 July, the day Erdogan was inaugurated for a third term. However, it was postponed after one of the judges fell sick.

The tragedy sparked protests that rattled the government a year after mass nationwide anti-government rallies, with an advisor to Erdogan, Yusuf Yekel, inflaming tensions by kicking a protester in Soma.—AFP ■

Iran says ties with Russia "strategic"

TEHRAN — Tehran and Moscow need to bolster their "strategic" cooperation in the face of US hegemony, a senior adviser to Iran Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei said on Wednesday. "The current (regional and global) situation is very critical and the world is under the hegemony of a wayward person, the US president,

who defies international regulations," Ali Akbar Velayati said upon arrival in Moscow. "Therefore, it is necessary that the cooperation (between Iran and Russia) to be increased," Velayati was quoted as saying. He also praised cooperation between the two countries in the international arena, including Syria issue, Iran nuclear

deal, as well as on defense, economic and security sectors. He expressed the hope that his visit to Russia would be a turning point in bilateral ties. Velayati visited Moscow on Wednesday to deliver messages from the Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei and Iranian President Hassan Rouhani to Russian President Vladimir Putin.—Xinhua ■

INVITATION FOR PRICE QUOTATIONS

The Republic of the Union of Myanmar has received financing from the International Development Association (IDA) towards the cost of the National Community Driven Development Project (NCDDP). The IDA N° of the financing agreement is N° H814MM. The **Department of Rural Development (DRD) of the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation**, in its role as implementing agency of the NCDDP, intends to apply a portion of the proceeds of this financing towards eligible payments under the Purchase Order/Contract for the Communication Material **G 104 Motorcycle Crash Helmets**. DRD now invites eligible suppliers to express their interest in supplying the following item:

Reference Number: G 104 Motorcycle Crash Helmets

Lot N°	Item N°	Description	Quantity (Nos)
1	1	Safety Equipment: Motorcycle Crash Helmets	2,880
Supply to		Department of Rural Development, Office N° 36, Nay Pyi Taw	

Expressions of Interest on Quotation must be submitted in a written form to the email address below and clearly indicate the reference number above. The invitation to quote will be distribute on the needs of DRD. Eligible suppliers having expressed interest will receive an INVITATION TO QUOTE (ITQ). Sealed Quotations will be submitted to the address below at the latest **at the dead line of Tuesday 31 July 2018 at 10am Myanmar time**, after which no Quotations will be accepted.

The goods will be contracted in lot-by-lot basis. Suppliers will be selected following the Shopping Method as per the "Guidelines for Procurement of Goods, Works and non-Consulting Services under IBRD Loans and IDA Credits & Grants by World Bank Borrowers" dated January 2011.

Please submit your Expression of Interest for receiving the Invitation to Quote (ITQ) to: U Kyaw Soe, Deputy Director General, Department of Rural Development, Office No.(36), Nay Pyi Taw. For detailed information please contact U Kyaw Swa Aung, Director, Procurement and Logistic Section, Mobile phone 0943434333 or office phone 067418637/ Email: unioncddprocurement@gmail.com. Please indicate your e-mail address as only electronic copies of the ITQ will be send as well as introduce your company name and contact number to communicate with you. For more information on the NCDDP please also visit Website: www.cdd.drdmyanmar.org.

MYANMA TIMBER ENTERPRISE
EXPORT MARKETING & MILLING DEPARTMENT
INVITATION FOR OPEN TENDER

1. MYANMA TIMBER ENTERPRISE WILL SELL TEAK & HARDWOOD ROUND LOGS AND SAWN TIMBERS BY OPEN TENDERS IN US DOLLARS. PARTICULARS OF THE OPEN TENDER SALES ARE AS FOLLOWS:

(a) DATE & TIME

- (25-7-2018) (09:00)A.M
- EX-SITE HARDWOOD LOG ONLY**
- (26-7-2018)(09:00)A.M
- YANGON & EX-SITE TEAK/HARDWOOD(LOG AND CONVERSION)**
- (30-7-2018) (12:00)Noon
- YANGON TEAK LOG ONLY**

(b) COMMODITIES & VOLUME

- TEAK LOGS ABOUT (1100) TONS
- TEAK CONVERSION ABOUT(395)TONS
- PADAUK ,PYINKADO, IN/KANYIN ,THINWIN, THITYAR,SAGAWA,INGYIN,HNAWHTUK KYANT ABOUT(9128)TONS
- HARDWOOD LOGS (2017-2018 EXTRACTION YEAR)
- TAW WIN HALL, GYOGONE , INSEIN TOWNSHIP, YANGON.

(c) PLACE

- YANGON.

2. FOR FURTHER DETAILED INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT MYANMA TIMBER ENTERPRISE HEAD OFFICE AND ALSO VISIT MYANMA TIMBER ENTERPRISE WEB-SITE (www.myanmarntimber.com.mm).
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OPEN TENDER COMMITTEE
MYANMA TIMBER ENTERPRISE

Scientists find method to help target HIV virus in human cells

SYDNEY — Scientists from Australia and Britain have discovered a new method which may help to target the HIV virus as it makes its way to infecting cells.

Scientists from the University of New South Wales (UNSW) in Australia, led by Associate professor Till Bocking, described on Tuesday how the HIV virus forms a protein shell called a capsid, to protect itself from the hosts defence mechanism as it infects

the nucleus of a cell.

Using a new microscope technique developed at UNSW, the team discovered that the HIV virus uses a molecule from the host cell to strengthen its capsid.

"It's like a switch, when you bind this molecule, you stabilize the capsid, and release the molecule to open it up," Bocking said.

The molecule, called inositol hexakisphosphate, is abundantly present in mammals and has

been seen to make the HIV capsid much stronger, stabilising it for 10 to 20 hours.

Because the infection process takes hours, it was crucial for scientists to find out how the virus was keeping stable within the cell.

"The HIV capsid has been intensively studied," leader of the British research team at Cambridge, Dr Leo James said.

"But the question of how it

can simultaneously be both stable and poised to 'uncoat' has been one of the great unanswered questions in HIV biology."

To assist in their study, the team engineered viruses with fluorescent tags to monitor the viral capsid using fluorescence microscopy.

"We can now see the effect of different molecules on the capsid, and pinpoint precisely when it cracks open and begins to col-

lapse," Bocking said.

In the team's findings, they identify a new target for antiviral therapy against HIV and provide a method for testing and measuring new drugs designed to target the capsid.

While there are currently no HIV therapies targeted at the HIV capsid, it is hoped that new therapies could improve treatment with reduced toxic effects.

—Xinhua ■

Stone tools age Asia's first Homo presence

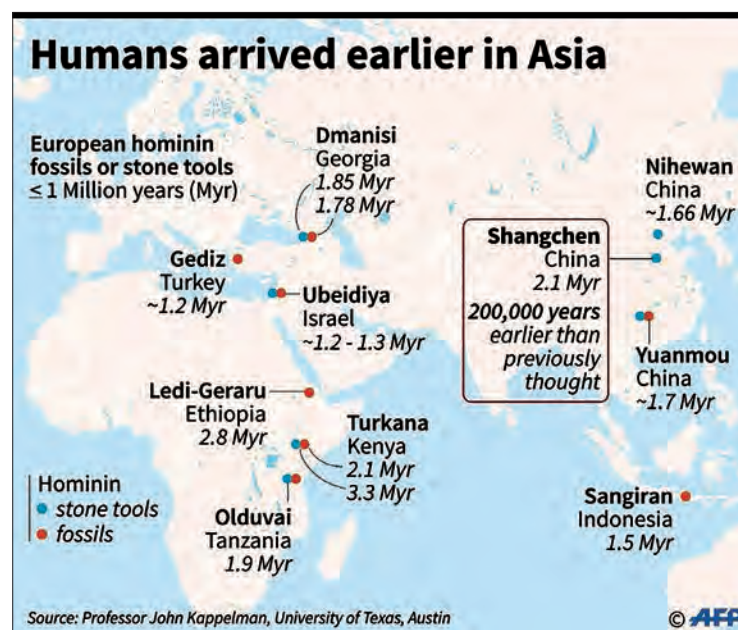
PARIS — The remains of crudely fashioned stone tools unearthed in China advances the presence of human ancestors in Asia by around 200 millennia to 2.1 million years ago, scientists said Wednesday.

If correctly dated, the find means that hominins — the group of humans and our extinct forefather species — left Africa earlier than archaeologists have been able to demonstrate thus far, a team reported in the scientific journal *Nature*.

"Our discovery means that it is necessary now to reconsider the timing of when early humans left Africa," said study co-author Robin Dennell of Exeter University in England.

Hominins are believed to have emerged in Africa more than six million years ago. They left the continent in several migration waves starting about two million years ago.

The first migrants were like members of the species *Homo*



Stone tool discovery pushes back arrival of humans in Asia. PHOTO: AFP

erectus (upright man) or *Homo ergaster* (working man) — extinct predecessors of our own group, *Homo sapiens* (wise man), which first emerged about 300,000 years ago.

The oldest known African fossil attributed to a member of the *Homo* family is a 2.8 million-

year-old jawbone from Ethiopia.

Previously, the oldest evidence for hominins in Asia came from Georgia in the form of fossilised skeleton bits and artefacts dated to between 1.77 million and 1.85 million years ago.

Water-tight

There have been other, un-

proven, claims of even older fossil discoveries, the study authors said.

The latest find of 96 stone tools, mainly flakes made with rudimentary hammers and likely used for cutting meat and other food, was extracted from 17 layers of sediment in the southern Chinese Loess Plateau.

The youngest layer was 1.26 million years old, and the oldest 2.12 million years.

There were no hominin bones.

Dennell and a team used a field of science known as "palaeomagnetism" to date the sediment layers. These form when dust or mud settles before being capped by another new soil coat.

Any artefact found within a layer would be the same age as the soil around it.

Palaeomagnetism relies on shifts in the Earth's magnetic field, the historic dates of which are well known to scientists.

Dennell and a team meas-

ured the magnetic properties of minerals in the soil layers to determine when they were deposited.

This dated the tools, of a type known to have been manufactured by *Homo* species in Africa since at least 3.3 million years ago. The paper offers strong evidence for a hominin presence in Asia further back than we thought, Dennell said.

"There may be older evidence in places like India and Pakistan, but so far ... the evidence is not strong enough to convince most of the research community," he told AFP.

"With this type of claim, for an early human presence in a region, the evidence has to be absolutely water-tight and bomb-proof."

Who made the tools?

"Probably an early form of our own genus *Homo*," said Dennell, though further research is needed to pinpoint the species. — AFP ■

Virtual whale ride helps ease fear of heights: study

PARIS — People who had lived with a fear of heights for decades became less afraid after virtual reality (VR) therapy that saw them riding a flying whale, researchers said Thursday.

A specialised team that included psychologists and IT experts put confirmed acrophobes through their paces in a series of life-like VR simulations, after which all reported "a reduction in fear", they announced.

VR-based treatments, the team concluded, "have the potential to greatly increase treatment provision for mental health disorders."

With a virtual "coach" to

guide people through treatment, the new method could offer a low-cost way of providing care to people who cannot afford or access a face-to-face therapist.

The VR coach uses the recorded voice of an actor.

Fear of heights, the most common phobia, affects one in five people at some point of their lives, according to researchers who published their findings in *The Lancet Psychiatry* medical journal.

Most never receive treatment.

For the latest study, the team recruited 100 volunteers. Half were given VR treatment

and the other half not, to allow for comparison.

This was the first VR phobia treatment not to require the presence of a real-life therapist, said the team.

"We designed the treatment to be as imaginative, entertaining and easy to navigate as possible," explained study leader Daniel Freeman of the University of Oxford's psychiatry department.

Wearing goggles and tactile gloves while standing safely on firm ground, patients moved around a 3-D world centred in the massive atrium of a computerised, ten-storey office building.

The pre-recorded, 30-minute programme sessions ran automatically, with the virtual coach explaining what the participants must do.

Tasks included having to cross a rickety bridge, rescue a cat from a tree, perform tasks near the edge of a balcony, and ride a flying whale.

The outcome after several sessions exceeded the researchers' expectations.

In self-reported feedback, "over three-quarters of the participants receiving the VR treatments showed at least a halving of their fear of heights," said Freeman. — AFP ■



VR-based treatments, the team concluded, "have the potential to greatly increase treatment provision for mental health disorders". PHOTO: AFP

Thai cave rescue site to become a museum

MAI SAI —Rescuers who pulled a young Thai football team from deep inside a flooded cave were dismantling their worksite Thursday, as plans emerged to turn the spot into a museum in tribute to the daring operation.

At least one film production house was already working on a scheme to make a Hollywood treatment out of the heroics of divers, cavers and medics who risked their lives to free the “Wild Boars”.

Stunning footage of that rescue was released Wednesday showing the youngsters — aged 11 to 16 — being stretchered to safety.

They were also seen sitting cheerfully in their hospital beds, where they are being kept in isolation until doctors are sure they did not pick up any nasty diseases during more than two weeks in the dark.

Workers were Thursday packing up the industrial water pumps, heavy-grade machinery and construction equipment at the mouth of the Tham Luang cave, which had been a high-tech command centre during the 18-day ordeal.

Rescue chief Narongsak Osottanakorn told reporters the



The rescued boys are being kept in isolation until doctors are sure they did not pick up any nasty diseases during more than two weeks in the cave. PHOTO: AFP

site would ultimately be converted into a museum showcasing the clothes and equipment used during the dramatic rescue.

“I believe it will become another highlight in Thailand,” he said. “Tourists will come visit.”

About 50 people were working at the site, National Park ranger Pinitpong Wongma told AFP, adding that he expected work would continue until at least

Sunday. “Nobody is allowed to go inside the cave at all even though there is still a lot of equipment there because water levels have been rising since the rescue mission,” he said.

Inspiring story

The rescue of the “Wild Boars” team was still being celebrated in Thailand as the 12 boys and their 25-year-old coach recovered in a local hospital.

The Nation newspaper called the operation a “Triumph of global cooperation” on its front page Thursday while the *Bangkok Post* published a collage of images of those involved under the heading “You Are Heroes.”

The saga started on 23 June when the players walked into the Tham Luang cave complex after football practice and were trapped when monsoon flooding

blocked their exit.

Nine days later British divers found the dishevelled and hungry group perched on a ledge four kilometres (2.5 miles) inside the cave. Over the following week, experts from around the world descended on northern Thailand and rescuers pumped out more than 50 Olympic-sized swimming pools-worth of water.

A huge media pack of more than 1,000 journalists gathered at the mouth of the cave feeding audiences all over the globe with every twist and turn of the dramatic rescue until its joyful conclusion on Tuesday.

The huge international interest in the story sparked immediate talk of books and films.

Michael Scott, the managing partner of faith-based production house Pure Flix, said the company intends to pursue a film about the against-the-odds mission.

Scott, who lives in Thailand and went to the site in Chiang Rai as the boys were being pulled to safety, made the announcement late Tuesday on Twitter in a video.

“We’re here really looking at this as a movie that could inspire millions of people across the globe,” Scott said. —AFP ■



Chadwick Boseman.
PHOTO: PTI

Chadwick Boseman to next star in police thriller ‘17 Bridges’

LOS ANGELES — Chadwick Boseman is set to produce and star in a police thriller titled “17 Bridges”. The “Black Panther” star will play a disgraced NYPD detective, who gets a shot at redemption when he gets involved in a city-wide hunt for a cop killer, *Variety* reported. STXfilms will also back the project with Russo brothers, who have directed Boseman in this year’s blockbuster “Avengers: Infinity War”, and Logan Coles. Brian Kirk, known for shows like “Game of Thrones” and “Luther”, will direct the film, written by Adam

Mervis. “Chadwick Boseman’s razor-sharp instincts and undeniable charisma captivated millions of people around the world in ‘Black Panther’, and Joe and Anthony Russo have breathed a new energy into the action genre with films like ‘Avengers: Infinity War’.

“Their unique and intelligent approach to filmmaking is anything but formulaic, and with Brian Kirk at the helm directing, this film promises to go beyond the typical popcorn fare,” STX-films chairman Adam Fogelson said.—PTI ■

TV land launches awards slugfest with Emmy nominations

LOS ANGELES —Television insiders are expecting old faces to dominate Thursday as Hollywood revs up for its annual awards merry-go-round with the announcement of the Emmy nominations.

The Television Academy’s 22,000-plus members spent two weeks in June sifting through thousands of entries for the small-screen equivalent of the Oscars.

Critics agree that it hasn’t been a vintage year, with very few new shows breaking through, but perennial favorites have delivered and the medium continues to out-innovate cinema.

“As someone who has traditionally been more about movies than TV, the richness of the small screen landscape these days genuinely excites me,” Hollywood entertainment journalist and producer Simon Thompson told AFP.

“It’s taking risks that Holly-

wood is still hesitant to take, and so far they are paying off.”

The Emmys recognize programs shown in the year to 31 May, meaning traditional big-hitters from “Better Call Saul” to “House of Cards” and “Veep” are absent this time around.

But HBO’s “Game of Thrones” returns from a year off, having made television history in 2016 to become the most decorated fictional show in the Emmys’ seven-decade history.

That pits the 2016 drama champion against last year’s winner, Hulu’s dystopian sci-fi series “The Handmaid’s Tale,” which is also the 2018 favorite.

Other nominations are likely to come from NBC’s family drama “This Is Us” and HBO’s dark sci-fi western “Westworld,” Netflix hits “Stranger Things” and “The Crown,” and FX Cold War spy show “The Americans.”

The most star-studded category is likely to be best actor in a limited series or TV movie,

with Al Pacino, Kyle MacLachlan, Benedict Cumberbatch and Michael B. Jordan all in the hunt for nominations. The early money for the win in September is on a much lesser-known face, Darren Criss (“The Assassination of Gianni Versace”).

The follow-up to the acclaimed “The People v. O. J. Simpson” (2016) in Ryan Murphy’s “American Crime Story” strand for FX is expected to dominate the miniseries/TV movie acting races. “Veep,” which delayed its seventh and final season to allow star Julia Louis-Dreyfus to recover from breast cancer treatment, is likely to pass its comedy crown to Donald Glover’s FX show “Atlanta.”

Second round voting takes place in August while the ceremony itself will be beamed live from the Microsoft Theater in Los Angeles on 17 September on CBS — hosted by “Saturday Night Live” duo Colin Hanks and Michael Che.—AFP ■

Croatia reach first World Cup final as England pain goes on

MOSCOW — Croatia reached the World Cup final for the first time in their history on Wednesday, after Mario Mandzukic's extra-time winner prolonged England's suffering in major tournaments and set up a decider against France.

Luka Modric's team fell behind in just the fifth minute to Kieran Trippier's superb free-kick but hit back through Ivan Perisic and Mandzukic to win a tense contest 2-1 in front of 78,000 spectators in the Luzhniki Stadium. In beating Gareth Southgate's young team, Croatia — a country of just four million people — have surpassed the achievements of the heroes of 1998, who reached the semi-finals in France.

Croatia's players celebrated wildly in front of their supporters in Moscow while in Zagreb tens of thousands of fans poured onto the streets and squares, singing and waving red-white-and-blue flags.

Having led for over an hour, the defeat will be difficult for England to digest as their hopes of reaching a first World Cup final since 1966 were crushed, but their young team have won many admirers in Russia. Croatia must recover quickly for Sun-



Mario Mandzukic celebrates Croatia's win against England in the World Cup semi-final in Moscow. **PHOTO: AFP**

day's showpiece — no easy feat after being taken to extra-time for a third consecutive match. "It was a very difficult game, we all know what was at stake, how important a semi-final is for a small country like Croatia," said man-of-the-match Perisic. "We started slowly but we've shown our character, just as we have in the previous two knockout rounds when we were one goal down in both matches. We didn't used to be that resilient."

"Twenty years ago I was back home in Omis, my home town. I rooted for Croatia, wearing a Croatia jersey, and I could only dream of playing for my

country and scoring one of the most important goals to send us to a final."

'We're gutted'

England's players slumped to the ground at the final whistle, barely able to believe their World Cup dream was over after reaching the semi-final for the first time since 1990. "We're gutted," said Harry Kane, still on course to finish as the tournament's top goalscorer with six strikes in Russia, even though his golden touch deserted him on Wednesday.

"It hurts, it hurts a lot. It's going to hurt for a while of course. We can hold our heads up high. It's been a fantastic journey. We

got further than anyone else could thought we would have."

"I can't ask for more from the players," said a disappointed Southgate. "I think knockout football is about fine margins and when you have good spells against fine sides you need to take your chances. "Tonight we weren't quite there but we will learn from that. We left everything out there." In London, an initial wave of elation turned to heartbreak as 30,000 beer-soaked fans in Hyde Park watched their team come up short. Around 30 million people were believed to have watched the match on TV in Britain.

Trippier gave England a dream start, curling in a free-kick from 25 yards past the despairing dive of Danijel Subasic after Dele Alli was brought down in a central position. Croatia started to find their range in the second half and Perisic levelled for Croatia in the 68th minute, nipping ahead of Kyle Walker to steer home Sime Vrsaljko's cross past a diving Jordan Pickford. The game went into strength-sapping extra-time and Mandzukic scored the winning goal in the 109th minute, sweeping the ball

low past Pickford after Perisic's header back into the area caught the England defence on the hop. Prince William, the president of the Football Association, said despite the defeat England could be proud of Southgate's team. "I know how disappointed @england must feel right now but I couldn't be more proud of this team and you should hold your heads high," he tweeted.

Solid French defence

France have the advantage of a day's more rest than their opponents after they reached the final for the third time in their history on Tuesday. A second-half header from Samuel Umtiti proved enough for a 1-0 victory against Belgium in Saint Petersburg, sending tens of thousands of people pouring onto the Champs-Elysees avenue in Paris in scenes of joy last seen when France won the World Cup on home soil in 1998. Despite the much-vaunted attack of teenager Kylian Mbappe and Antoine Griezmann, France's defence proved the difference as they shut down Eden Hazard and Romelu Lukaku and showed they will be hard to beat on Sunday.—AFP ■

Myanmar in AFF U-19 final with win over defending champ Thailand

IN yesterday's semifinal match of the AFF (ASEAN Football Federation) U-19 Championship 2018, the Myanmar team successfully advanced to the final of the tournament by defeating defending champion Thailand by a score of 1-0 at Gelora Delta Stadium in East Java, Indonesia. The important win for Myanmar was decided by the goal scored by the

young striker Win Naing Tun at the 87-minute mark. Myanmar will play Malaysia in the final. Malaysia beat Indonesia in yesterday's other semifinal match by a score of 3-2. The match had to be decided by a penalty shootout. The coach of Myanmar's team said yesterday's victory was a team effort. "My boys can play very well, free from defect or er-

ror. I really thank all the players who brought a win result. The victory actually shows the unity of the team's coaches, authorities and footballers. Whatever opponent in the final that we will meet, we will try our best to win the trophy of the tourney", said Myo Hlaing Win, head coach of the Myanmar U-19 national boys' football team.—Lynn Thit (Tgi) ■



Myanmar team celebrates the victory as it advances to final after beating Thailand 1-0 in yesterday's AFF U-19 Championship's semifinal. **PHOTO: MFF**

Men's U-20 Volleyball Championship begins in Nay Pyi Taw

THE 20th Southeast Asian Men's U-20 Volleyball Championship, organised by the Myanmar Volleyball Federation, began in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. It will continue until 16 July. The Asia World Foundation, the charitable arm of Asia World Group of Companies, is the main sponsor for the event. The volleyball matches will be played at Wunna Theikdi Indoor Stadium. This year's tour-

nament comprised of two teams from Myanmar and one team each from Malaysia and Thailand. U Htun Myint Naing, president of the Myanmar Volleyball Federation, commented: "At Asia World Foundation, we see health as one of our key areas of work and sports plays an important role towards a healthy lifestyle. This is the second time we are hosting this tournament and we are delighted to work

with young talent to help them rise to the best of their ability in volleyball. For some of the players today, this may be their first time participating in a tournament at a regional level. We hope such events can provide opportunities for all players to pit their skills against each other while enjoying the games' experience, as well as the warm hospitality of Myanmar."—GNLM ■



**FIFA WORLD CUP
RUSSIA 2018**

Play-off for 3rd place
20:30 MST (14.7.2018)

Belgium





England