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Tuesday, 24 July 2018

Union Government holds Waso robes offering ceremony in Nay Pyi Taw

THE Union Government held a Waso robe offering ceremony for 2018 at the Sasana Beikman, Uppatasanti Pagoda, Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

President U Win Myint, First Lady Daw Cho Cho and State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi donated Waso robes and offertories to the Members of the Sangha.

Before the ceremony, State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi paid homage to the Buddha Image and offered food, fruits, flowers, water and candle lights.

The Waso Robe Offering Ceremony for 2018 held by the Union Government began with the President, First Lady, the State Counsellor and the congregation receiving the Five Precepts given by the Chairman Sayadaw of State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee Bhaddanta Kumarabhivamsa, after which they listened to the parittas recited by Members of the Sangha.

Afterwards, President U Win Myint and First Lady Daw Cho Cho offered Waso robes to Bhaddanta Kumarabhivamsa.

State Counsellor Daw Aung



President U Win Myint, First Lady Daw Cho Cho and State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi offering 'soon' to Sayadaws as part of the Waso robe offering ceremony. **PHOTO: MNA**

San Suu Kyi offered Waso robes and offertories to Secretary Sayadaw of the State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee Sayadaw Agga Maha Pandita Bhaddanta Sandimabhivamsa.

Next, Vice President U Myint Swe and wife Daw Khin Thet Htay offered Waso robes and offertories to Vice Chair-

man Sayadaw of State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee Hsinphyugyun Sayadaw Bhaddanta Nanninda; Speaker of Amyotha Hluttaw Mahn Win Khaing

Than's wife Nant Kyin Kyi to Vice Chairman Sayadaw of the committee Pathein Kontha Sayadaw Bhaddanta Vilasa;

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Myanmar to host 10th meeting of ASEAN education ministers, dialogue partners in October

VICE President U Myint Swe attended a meeting in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday in preparation for the 10th meeting of ASEAN Education Ministers (ASEM) and Dialogue Partners and related meetings.

"We should be proud that we are getting a chance to host this meeting, just as we are

promoting cooperation with South East Asian countries and partner countries to promote Myanmar's education sector," said the Vice President, the patron of the leading committee for hosting the 10th ASEM, in his opening address at the meeting.

A 16-member leading

committee for hosting the 10th ASEM and related meetings was formed on 20 June with Notification No. 46/2018 of the Office of the President which assigned five tasks.

The meeting is to be hosted by Myanmar in October this year.

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Pyidaungsu Hluttaw

Ninth regular session of the 2nd Pyidaungsu Hluttaw commences

THE 2nd Pyidaungsu Hluttaw began the first day of its ninth regular session at the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Hall in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than addressed the assembly, noting that during the ninth regular session the members will primarily focus on discussing and approving the National Planning Bill and the Union Budget Bill for Fiscal year 2018-2019.

The Speaker said members of parliament should keep in mind the immediate and long-term benefits for the public, while avoiding unnecessary spending



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

of public funds when reviewing and approving plans proposed by the Union Government. He added that MPs need to consider whether the plans have relevance

to the current state of affairs, and to approve them on time when reviewing the budget phase in the implementation process.

The Speaker said MPs

should be mindful of the existing laws and bylaws when reviewing, in conjunction with set policies, the plans to fulfill the immediate requirements and long-term

development of the country and its people. He said MPs have to collaborate with officials from union-level departments and organizations in discussing the respective numbers in the plans related to them. He added that MPs should keep in mind the objectives of union-level departments and organizations, the all-round equal development of states and regions, and the emergence of opportunities for future generations.

The Speaker noted that within days the 2nd Pyidaungsu Hluttaw will have been held for 30 months;

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Pyithu Hluttaw

First-day meeting of 2nd Pyithu Hluttaw's 9th regular session held

The first-day meeting of the second Pyithu Hluttaw's ninth regular session was held at the Pyithu Hluttaw meeting hall, Nay Pyi Taw, yesterday morning, where the Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker delivered a message of greeting, asterisk-marked questions were raised and answered and a bill was tabled.

At first, Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U T Khun Myat said that during the ninth regular session, there were 23 bills to be discussed. On bills, four submitted during the eighth regular session and three more would be discussed and in the asterisk-marked question, 137 transferred from the eighth regular



Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U T Khun Myat. **PHOTO: MNA**

session to the ninth regular session, as well as 156 more would be raised.

Now is the time when special emphasis is placed on the Union Peace Conference-21st Century Panglong. Therefore,

the State has set stages for the peace process and is implementing them vigorously, while with regard to national reconciliation work, our Hluttaw representatives are to cooperate and work together in conducting political

discussions through agreements based on proposals of the government, Hluttaw, Tatmadaw and ethnic armed organisations.

Before the start of the third session of the Union Peace Conference on 10 July, the Pyithu Hluttaw speaker and deputy speaker met with Pyithu Hluttaw committee chairmen and representatives from the two Hluttaws who are attending the conference and assigned duties to five groups to effectively conduct coordinated discussions. The groups were formed to include multi-party and multi-ethnic members, and our Hluttaw representatives were found to participate in the discussion

enthusiastically. Our Hluttaws are to participate in achieving eternal peace, said the Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker.

Being a Hluttaw that reflects the voice of the people, Hluttaw representatives are required to perform their roles and legislative duties so that it becomes a legislative sector that the people depend on. The laws enacted by our Hluttaw need to improve the physical and mental safety and security of the people. Motions tabled in the Hluttaw need to reflect the voices of the people and questions raised are to indicate the thoughts of the people.

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Amyotha Hluttaw

First-day meeting of 2nd Amyotha Hluttaw's 9th regular session held

THE ninth regular session of the second Amyotha Hluttaw held its first-day meeting at the Amyotha Hluttaw's meeting hall yesterday morning, where Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than delivered a message of greeting, asterisk-marked questions were answered and a bill sent back with amendments by the Pyithu Hluttaw was discussed.

In his message of greeting, Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than said the term of the Hluttaw had reached over 2 years, close to two-and-a-half years, and the Hluttaw representatives had obtained a certain degree of experience. As such,

they were expected to serve the people better, said the Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker.

Asterisk-marked questions

U Myint Naing of Rakhine State constituency 5 posed a question on a plan to clear the silt and sand bars along the rivers and creeks and at the mouth of the rivers and creeks in Rakhine State. Deputy Minister for Transport and Communications U Kyaw Myo replied that it is a massive undertaking to clear silt and sand bars along the rivers and creeks and at the mouth of the rivers and creeks in Rakhine State and depending on the importance of a river/creek, the

removal of silt and sand bars will be done based on the availability of funds.

Replying to a question raised by Dr. Khin Ma Gyi of Kachin State constituency 8 on increasing the number of Putao-Myitkyina flights during the summer holidays for the convenience of teachers serving in difficult places such as Khaunglanphu, Nagmon, Machanbaw and Putao townships, Deputy Minister for Transport and Communications U Kyaw Myo said Myanmar National Airlines of the Ministry of Transport and Communications is increasing the number of round-trip flights from four times to five times a week starting 5



U Myint Naing of Rakhine State constituency 5. **PHOTO: MNA**

June 2018.

Myanmar National Airlines is an airline working with its own funds outside of government funding and operates regular flights to Yangon, Nay Pyi Taw and Mandalay international air-

ports and 23 other local airports and it can only increase the number of Myitkyina-Putao round-trip flights when there is an increase in demand.

If the relevant ministry informs and coordinates with the Ministry of Transport and Communications about its requirements, special flights and special ticket fares can be arranged, said the deputy minister.

Next, Dr. Khin Maung Win of Taninthayi Region constituency 11 asked whether there was any plan to provide electricity at a reasonable price to Kawthoung Township, Kawthoung District, Taninthayi Region.

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President U Win Myint and First Lady Daw Cho Cho present offertories to Bhamo Sayadaw Dr Bhaddanta Kumarabhivamsa in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**



State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi presents offertories to Sayadaw Agga Maha Pandita Bhaddanta Sandimabhivamsa in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

Union Government holds Waso robes offering ceremony in Nay Pyi Taw

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Union Chief Justice U Htun Htun Oo to Vice Chairman Sayadaw of the committee Hsinmin Sayadaw Bhaddanta Obasa Bhivamsa and Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and wife Daw Kyu

Kyu Hla offered the Waso robes to Vice Chairman of the committee YeU Sayadaw Bhaddanta Ottamanannabhivamsa.

Chairman of the Constitutional Tribunal of the Union U Myo Nyunt and wife Daw Htay Yi, Chairman of the Union Election Commission U Hla Thein

and wife, Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Soe Win and wife, Deputy Speaker of Amyotha Hluttaw U Aye Tha Aung, Union Ministers, Union Attorney-General, Union Auditor-General, Chairman of the Union Civil

Service Board, Chairman of the Nay Pyi Taw Council, Governor of the Central Bank of Myanmar, Chairman of the Anti-Corruption Commission, Commander of Nay Pyi Taw Command, and Deputy Ministers offered Waso robes to the Members of the Sangha.

Afterwards, the congrega-

tion listened to the sermon delivered by Sayadaw Agga Maha Pandita Bhaddanta Sandimabhivamsa.

The ceremony came to an end with donation of 'soon' (day meal) to the Members of the Sangha.—Myanmar News Agency ■

Myanmar to host 10th meeting of ASEAN education ministers, dialogue partners in October

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The meeting was attended by Union Minister for Education Dr. Myo Thein Gyi, Chairman of the leading committee for hosting the 10th ASEAN Education Ministers Meeting and related meetings, and members of the leading committee Deputy Minister U Win Maw Tun, Member of the Nay Pyi Taw Council U Tin Tun, Chairman of the National Education Policy Commission Dr. Myo Kywe, Permanent Secretaries of the ministries and departmental heads of related ministries.

The 10th ASED will see the participation of education ministers and senior officials from the ASEAN-member countries, education ministers from ASEAN's dialogue partners: the Republic of Korea, Japan, China, New Zealand, the Russian Federation, the United States, India and Australia, and officials from the ASEAN Secretariat.



Vice President U Myint Swe delivers a speech at the meeting to prepare for holding the 10th ASEAN Education Ministers Meeting in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

To implement the tasks of the leading committee for holding the meetings, the Secretariat and 11 working sub-committees would be set up.

The working sub-committees will share the work with

regard to decoration, welcoming and transportation, making documentaries and recording the meetings, security and surveillance, reception, health care services, entertainment, financial, auditing and office work.

The Vice President urged the leading committee and sub-committees to coordinate with each other to be able to hold the meetings successfully.

The 1st ASED was held in Singapore in 2006. So far, the

meetings have been hosted by Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, the Philippines, Brunei and Laos.

The ninth ASED was hosted by Malaysia.—Myanmar News Agency ■

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Health care and food provided for people in Kayin State flood relief camps

TOWNSHIP-wise flood relief camps were opened in Kayin State for people affected by flooding and inundation following continuous heavy rain. People in the camps were provided with health care and food assistance, according to the state government.

Eight camps opened in Hpa-an were occupied by

818 households. Meanwhile, 12 camps in Hlaingbwe Township were occupied by 321 households, two camps in Kawkareik Township by 65 households, two camps in Kya-in-Seikkyi Township by 122 households and nine camps in Myawady Township by 448 households. —Myanmar News Agency ■



Kayin State government staff visit people in relief camps affected by flooding in the state. **PHOTO: MNA**

First-day meeting of 2nd Amyotha Hluttaw's 9th regular session held

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Deputy Minister for Electricity and Energy Dr. Tun Naing replied that the Pachan Kawthoung region electricity production and distribution public company had won the tender to provide electricity 24 hours a day at a reasonable price in Kawthoung Township and arrangements are underway to do this with ten 630KVA diesel generators.

In addition to this, to reduce the price of electricity, a memorandum of understanding was signed between

Taninthayi Region government and Royal Eagle Myanmar Development Group Co. Ltd. on 2 February 2018 to conduct a preliminary feasibility study on implementing a medium-sized 30MW wind power electricity generating and distributing project atop a mountain near Kawthoung, said the deputy minister.

Similarly, questions raised by U Saw Chit Oo of Kayin State constituency 3 and U Aung Thein of Bago Region constituency 12 were answered by Deputy Ministers U Kyaw Myo

and Dr. Tun Naing.

Discussion of the Bill amending the Vacant, Fallow and Virgin Land Management Law (2017)

Later, U Kyi Win of the Ayeyawady Region constituency 12 discussed the Bill amending the Vacant, Fallow and Virgin Land Management Law (2017) sent by the Pyithu Hluttaw with amendments.

The second-day meeting of the second Amyotha Hluttaw's ninth regular session will be continued today, it is learnt.—Aung Ye Thwin (MNA) ■

Mandalay tax collection sees Ks24 billion

THE Mandalay Region gained Ks24 billion in tax, two months before the designated six-month budget period this year, according to the Department of Internal Revenue in Mandalay.

"The overall target amount was Ks33 billion over a six-month budget period. Now, Ks24 billion has been received over a four-month period. During the remaining two months, arrangements are being made to hit the financial target. Public awareness discussions on paying tax were held," said an official from the Department of Internal Revenue in Mandalay Region.

The overall amount of tax was based on the previous tax collections. Although the designated amount was Ks140 billion in the 2016-2017 fiscal year, over Ks160 billion had been received.

In the 2017-2018 FY, the targeted amount was Ks176 billion. However, Ks140 billion had been collected. —MDN ■

Myanmar National Airlines to provide charter flight services

Myanmar National Airlines (MNA) is planning to provide Yangon-Gaya charter flight services, from September to April 2019, it is learnt.

A negotiation to operate the Yangon-Gaya charter flight services had been un-

derway since 2017, and arrangements are being made to provide Charter Flight Services for Popular Star, Nay Yaung La Yaung Thorn, Shwe Taw Win, Myat Bodhi, MTM Travels & Tours, Thit Shwesin, Tharkeenwe, Nilar Trav-

els & Tours, May Thu Maung Buddhagaya, Amazing Land Tours, and Aung Chan Thar Co. Ltd.

The Boeing 737-800 flight will begin operations in September, three times a week.—Shin Min ■

Yangon's remote village gets access to fresh tube well water after nearly a century

LOCATED in Kyauktan Township, Yangon Region, Uyin Village now has access to fresh water through a 740-foot tube well, thanks to well-wishers, water experts and the government.

U Thein Myint, Assistant Director of Kyauktan Township Rural Development Department, said, "The village, with its 1,800 residents from

200 households, has access to fresh drinking water after nearly a century.

It has been said that the village had been under the sea for more than 100 years. It emerged as an island after sandbank formation and only saline groundwater was available in the village and nearby areas for nearly a century. Villagers mainly relied on

rainwater through reservoirs, but it was insufficient for their daily use because of the population growth."

Water experts tried to dig several tube wells with a depth of 400 or 500 feet in some parts of the village. Fortunately, technicians successfully found freshwater at a depth of 740 feet.

After laboratory testing,

the well water was found to be at PH level 8.46 and villagers can now use it as drinking water. The new tube well is situated within the compound of Myatshwegu, the village's monastery. Lucky Gold Shop and Golden Legend Co. provided funds for the construction of the tube well and related water facilities.—Pwint Thitsa ■

Onion growers in Kyaukpadaung Township experience losses

ONION growers in Kyaukpadaung Township, Mandalay Region, are facing losses as a result of low prices, said Daw Waing Nyein, an onion grower.

During growing period, onion seeds were bought at Ks80,000 per pyi or one small rice basket (volume equals to eight condensed milk cans). Cultivation costs around Ks50,000 for onion seeds per small basket. Meanwhile, this year, onions fetched only Ks500 per viss (3.6 lb), leading to a great loss, said U Tin Tun Aung, an onion grower working on a large scale.

A low price and severe losses this year might bring down

the number of onion growers next year, said a grower.

Onion growers who do not own farmlands, rent land at an additional cost of Ks300,000 per acre on lease. Other inputs, such as organic fertilisers with by-products and waste from farm animals, labour wages and irrigation water cost around Ks2.2 million per acre. Growers can survive only when the yield is high and the onions fetch a fair price. If the price remains on the low side, they will not earn the capital cost, said U Tin Tun Aung.

It takes some five-and-a-half months from farmland treatment to onion harvesting.



A farmer works in an onion field. PHOTO: PHOE KHWAH

Onions should also be kept systematically, as they are perishable.

Decaying of onions and deterioration of their quality, such as weight reduction, can also

lead to losses, said the onion growers. —Ko Htein (Ngathayauk) ■

Brown sesame, peanut prices high in domestic market

GROWERS from the central arid zone reaped a handsome profit from the sale of brown sesame and peanuts due to increasing demand from China, according to growers.

A broker from Salin Township said the market in Mandalay is better than that of other regions. Growers earn a healthy price, thanks to the increasing demand from China. Almost 3,000

baskets of newly harvested sesame from two townships enter the market on a daily basis.

Sesame is one of the most useful products for making herbal medicines, foodstuffs and edible oil. The high price of sesame may be linked with the damage to sesame plantations caused by heavy rains in some townships.

In Yenangyoung market, the prices of brown sesame rose to

Ks45,000 from Ks35,000 per basket last week, while peanut prices went up to Ks2,500 from Ks1,700 per viss (3.6 lb).

The township Department of Agriculture is making continuous efforts to boost the annual production of sesame. The township saw 42,975 acres of sesame plantations last year and the number increased to 56,615 this year.—Shwe Nya Tha (Yenangyoung) ■

15,000 acres of monsoon paddy to be grown across Meiktila Township

PLANS are underway to cultivate a total of 15,000 acres of monsoon paddy throughout Meiktila Township, Meiktila District, Mandalay Region, in the financial year 2018-2019.

Farmers from nearly 380 villages in 58 village-tracts across the township will grow monsoon paddy starting next month.

The cultivation will begin only after harvesting the summer paddy.

Farmers in the township cultivated 24,200 acres of summer paddy during the fiscal year 2017-2018. Farmers are currently busy during harvest

time, gathering summer paddy from their fields.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation has already filled up seven dams with water to sufficiently irrigate the monsoon paddy plantations. The ministry started providing agricultural water to the target farmlands from mid-July.

Rice is a major staple food and the main export product of Myanmar. The government is making continuous efforts to boost the country's rice production in anticipation of healthy exports.—U Tin Hlaing ■

Regional trade exceeds \$2 billion in first two months of the interim period

REGIONAL trade between Myanmar and its ASEAN neighbours through sea routes and border gates amounted to US\$2.25 billion in the first two months of the six-month interim period prior to the 2018-2019 fiscal year.

Imports in regional trade surpassed exports, with exports totaling \$688 million and imports amounting to \$1.56 billion, according to statistics released by the Ministry of Commerce.

Thailand was ranked first among ASEAN countries in terms of trade with Myanmar, with trade value between the two neighbours totaling \$845 million, followed by Singapore with a trade value of \$740.7 million. Malaysia was listed third

with a trade value of \$365.5 million, while Indonesia stood fourth with an estimated value of \$166.322 million. Myanmar's trade with Viet Nam reached over \$123.7 million.

The value of bilateral trade with the Philippines stood at \$11.421 million, while trade with Cambodia reached \$2.450 million. Trade between Myanmar and Laos was valued at less than one million dollars, while no bilateral trade was recorded between Myanmar and Brunei in the last two months.

The country's main exports included agricultural and fishery products, and minerals, while imports included food and beverages, electronic tools, motor vehicles, and consumer

goods. Apart from its main trade partner China, Myanmar's external trade was carried out mostly with its regional partners. Trade with countries in the European Union, however, remained uncompetitive compared with regional trade partners.

ASEAN's focus this year is on resilience and innovation.

Its second objective is to push ahead with regional economic integration and improving regional connectivity, aimed at helping the region remain competitive and prosperous, according to the keynote speech of Union Minister U Thaung Tun at Myanmar Insight 2018 held at the Myanmar Investment Commission. —Ko Khant ■

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Union Minister Lt-Gen Kyaw Swe meets new officers of Anti-Narcotics Task Force



Union Minister for Home Affairs Lt-Gen Kyaw Swe meets with Anti-Narcotics Task Force officers yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

UNION Minister for Home Affairs Lt-Gen Kyaw Swe met senior officers and 44 officers transferred to the Anti-Narcotics Task Force at the meeting hall of the Ministry of Home Affairs yesterday afternoon. The union minister said that the new officers were specifi-

cally recruited from other police force branches in order to reorganise the Anti-Narcotics Task Force so that the task force can conduct its work and take action against those involved in drug-related cases, regardless of their status and stature.

The meeting was attended by Deputy Minister Maj-Gen Aung Thu, Chief of Myanmar Police Force Police Lt-Gen Aung Win Oo, senior police officers, transferred senior officers and officers, it is learnt.—Myanmar News Agency ■

First-day meeting of 2nd Pyithu Hluttaw's . . .

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At the same time, Hluttaw representatives are to follow the laws and rules enacted by the Hluttaw and follow the ethics and regulations of the Hluttaw representatives. Only when the capability of the people's representatives is high can they serve for the benefit of the people, and Hluttaw representatives are urged to work towards increasing their capabilities, said the Pyithu Hluttaw speaker in his greeting speech.

Informing the Hluttaw about trips and registration

The Pyithu Hluttaw speaker then informed the Hluttaw and put on record the 13th Study Tour of the Legal Project in Japan conducted by Dr. U Aye Kyu of Labutta constituency from 1 to 14 July, study tour to the Legislative Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region by a Myanmar delegation led by U Phyo Zeya Thaw @ U Zeya Thaw of Zabuthiri constituency from 9 to 13 July 2018, study tour of the policy and work of the Netherlands on HIV prevention and reduction of risks for needle users by a Myanmar delegation led by Dr. Daw Khin Soe Soe Kyi of Pyay constituency from 20 to 27 July 2018 and a trip to attend the 22nd International AIDS conference.

Question and answer session

In the question and answer session, first, U Khin Cho of Hlaingbwe constituency raised a question on the management, account and record system of licenced sellers of stamps and action taken against them for failure to follow set procedures, which was answered by Deputy Minister for Planning and Finance U Maung Maung Win.

Next, Deputy Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation U Hla Kyaw responded to a question raised by Daw Nan Htwe Thu of Pasawng constituency about a plan on deploying tractors, powered tillers and combined harvesters in Pasawng Township.

Later, Deputy Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation U Hla Kyaw replied to a question regarding taxation on registration of deeds, paying registration fees and valuation of stamp fees posed by U Saw Thalay Saw of Shwegyin constituency.

Similarly, questions raised by Daw Aye Mya Mya Myo of Kyauktan constituency, U Sai Tun Sein of Mongpyin constituency and Dr. U Lin Lin Kyaw of Myittha constituency were answered by Deputy Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation U Hla Kyaw.

Motion tabled

Following the question and answer session, U Sein Win of Maubin constituency tabled a motion urging the government to prevent the export of draught cattle and buffaloes before agricultural machineries can be fully utilised and to correctly support and resolve the matter. The motion was supported by a Hluttaw representative.

The Pyithu Hluttaw speaker announced the agreement of the Hluttaw to discuss the motion after the Hluttaw voted 231 for, 104 against and four abstained from voting on the motion.

Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U T Khun Myat then announced that Hluttaw representatives who wanted to discuss the motion should enroll their names.

Receipt of rule and bill

This was then followed by the Pyithu Hluttaw speaker announcing the receipt of the condominium rules, returned with amendments by the Amyotha Hluttaw, and Myanmar dental, oral medical council bill, and a further announcement was made for Hluttaw representatives who wanted to submit an amendment motion to enroll their names.

The second-day meeting of the second Pyithu Hluttaw's ninth regular session will be held on 24 July, it is learnt.—Aye Aye Thant (MNA) ■

President's Office announces a series of arrests, seizures acting on tip-offs given by the people

THE Office of the President issued Press Release No.6/2018 yesterday, making public the Home Affairs Ministry's arrests and seizures in fight against illicit drug trafficking between 27 June and 21 July.

The ministry made the arrests, acting on information sent to the Drug Abuse Reporting Department of the Office of the President from 27 June to 21 July.

The full text of the press release will be covered in the 25 July issue of the *Global New Light of Myanmar*. — GNLM

LPDR Minister of Foreign Affairs and party arrive in Nay Pyi Taw



LPDR Foreign Minister Mr. Saleumxay Kommasith arrives at Nay Pyi Taw International Airport, Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

A DELEGATION led by Lao People's Democratic Republic (LPDR) Minister of Foreign Affairs Mr. Saleumxay Kommasith arrived by air in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday evening.

The delegation led by the LPDR Minister of Foreign

Affairs was welcomed at Nay Pyi Taw International Airport by Ministry of Foreign Affairs Protocol Department Director General U Thant Sin, Deputy Director General U Aung Kyaw Oo, Laos Ambassador to Myanmar Mr. Lying Sayaxang and officials. —MNA ■

First field visit to Buthidaung, Maungtaung townships in Rakhine State, by Technical Working Group

TECHNICAL Working Group (TWG) visited some potential projects sites in Buthidaung and Maungtaung townships from 21 to 23 July 2018. It was the first field visit by TWG conducted before effective implementation of the MoU signed between Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population (MLIP), UNDP and UNHCR on 6 June 2018. The field visit was led by TWG, consisting of representatives from Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of the Office of the State Counsellor, Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population, Ministry of the Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, Rakhine State Government, UNDP and UNHCR.

During the field visit, TWG team went on site visits to the villages of Buthidaung and Maungtaung townships, namely Ka Kyet Kan Pyin, Tatyar, Zayditaung, Da Pyu Chaung, Inn Gyn Myaing, Nga Khu Ya, Naung Chaung, Shwe Yin Aye and met the local people.

The purpose of the mission is for the TWG to familiarise with the situation on the ground, including visiting some of the potential project sites of the region. The visit of the TWG team will be immediately followed by assessment teams from the Government of Myanmar, UNDP and UNHCR to the Village Tracts being considered.—MNA ■

Press conference held in Loikaw over Bogyoke Aung San statue

A PRESS conference was held at the Kayah State government office meeting hall over the setting up of a statue of Bogyoke Aung San in Kandar Hay Wun Park, Loikaw, Kayah State. The press conference was attended by Kayah State Chief Minister U L Phaung Sho, State Hluttaw Speaker U Hla Htwe, deputy speaker, state government ministers, departmental officials, region-based civil society organisations and 25 reporters from 10 news media houses.

At first, Kayah State Chief Minister U L Phaung Sho said three meetings were held at the Kayah State government office meeting hall on 3 February 2018, at the state hall on 30 April 2018 and at the Kayah State government office meeting hall on 20 June 2018 for setting up a bronze statue of Bogyoke Aung San in Kayah State, Loikaw, according



Kayah State Chief Minister U L Phaung Sho. **PHOTO: STATE IPRD**

to the wishes of a majority of the people. Comments and opinions were taken at these meetings and the work continued, said the state chief minister. He added that the statue of Bogyoke Aung San was set up as there was no statue of Bogyoke Aung San in Kayah State and for future generations to emulate Bogyoke, the benefactor of 135 ethnic nationals in Myanmar, architect of

the country's independence, his union spirit and his selfless act for independence.

He added that, according to the Constitution, there only exists Kayah State. Kayah State came into existence in 1952 and Kayah State Day had been commemorated yearly for 66 years. Names should be used as described in the Constitution. Any word usage that disintegrates the Union and creates disunity among ethnic nationals should be avoided. Speaking and writing words that strengthen the establishment of a federal union are welcome. All need to be aware of maintaining the sovereignty. A demonstration, against the setting up of the Bogyoke Aung San statue, held on 3 July 2018 by the Karenni Students Union (UKSY) and Kayah State Students Union (KSSU) was handled compassionately according to Peaceful Assembly and Peace-

ful Procession Law, said the chief minister.

As UKSY and KSSU protested against the setting up of the Bogyoke Aung San equestrian statue by the Kayah State government, they were called for a meeting on 20 July 2018. However, UKSY and KSSU made one-sided accusations and left the meeting. The meeting continued with the remaining people where the public and civil society organisations willingly supported the setting up of the statue. The Bogyoke statue organising committee formed by the State government was disbanded and a people-based committee, based on the wisher of the people, and a committee formed with persons elected by the people will be formed and the state government will provide the necessary assistance.

A video clip of the meeting was shown, where there was

enthusiastic support on setting up the Bogyoke statue. Kayah State government secretary U Khin Maung Win then explained that the announcement issued by UKSY and KSSU was different from what the state government had discussed. Head of State Police Force Police Colonel Win Kyi explained the action taken over the demonstration event. Later, questions raised by the media were answered by the state chief minister, state Hluttaw speaker, state minister for development and social affairs, state minister for planning and finance and officials. The press conference concluded at 11.45am.

The press conference was attended by the state media, as well as Skynet, Eleven Media Group, DVB, Kandalayawadi Times, Democracy Today, Shwe Trigan, 7 Day, Karenni Times, etc.—U Sai Nyan Lin Htut, State IPRD ■

Ninth regular session of the 2nd Pyidaungsu Hluttaw commences

FROM PAGE-2

marking the completion of the first half of the Hluttaw term; and, therefore, the role of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker and Deputy Speaker will be transferred to the Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker and Deputy Speaker, respectively, as stated in the Constitution, making the ninth regular session unique in the assembly's history.

Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than added that MPs will have to assume more responsibilities than in previous sessions, so it is important to systematically organize the available time to complete the increased workload. He urged MPs to ensure the public fund is in line with the respective laws, bylaws, rules and regulations, as it is used for the benefit and development of the nation and its people.

The Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker then announced that the Hluttaw has put on record President U Win Myint and his delegation's state visit to Thailand, having received the invitation of Thailand's Prime Minister.

The Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker then announced the Hluttaw has also put on record executive orders from the President's Office appointing Dr. Mya Lay Sein as Deputy Minister for Health and Sports, and Colonel Hla Oo as Shan State Minister for Security and Border Affairs.

The Speaker further an-

nounced the Hluttaw has put on record executive orders from the President's Office on the expansion, renaming, reformation, and abolishment of townships, wards, village-tracts and villages in Kachin State, Mon State, and Bago Region.

Afterwards, Union Minister for Planning and Finance U Soe Win explained to the Hluttaw about the 2018-2019 National Planning Bill.

The Union Minister said the 2018-2019 National Planning Bill was drawn up to reduce current socio-economic challenges, to mitigate consequences from future socio-economic difficulties, to put in place prioritized operations and regional work with relevance to existing state of affairs, and to promote development of the private sector.

The Union Minister said the projected economic growth of Myanmar is 7.6 per cent and the projected gross domestic product-GDP growth will reach Ks 90,269.99 billion. The Per Capita GDP is projected at Ks 1,978,486, he said. The Union Minister said the gross private domestic investment (GPDI) is projected at Ks 8476.3 billion in the government sector; Ks 20,808.0 billion in exports; Ks 21,488.0 billion in imports; and Ks 42,296.0 billion in foreign trade.

Next, U Thein Lwin of Kachin State constituency 10, a member of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Joint-

Bill Committee, read and submitted to the Hluttaw the Revenue Appellate Tribunal Bill, which had been sent back with remarks from the President's Office. The Speaker announced that those MPs interested in discussing the bill could register their names.

Union Minister U Soe Win explained and submitted to the Hluttaw the Union Budget Bill. He said the GDP for fiscal year 2018-2019 is estimated to include 21.90 per cent from the agricultural sector; 37.27 per cent from the industrial sector; and 40.83 per cent from the service sector. Inflation is estimated to reach 5.91 per cent in FY 2018-2019, said the Union Minister.

The Union Minister also said the Ministry of Commerce has projected trading US\$ 15.300 billion in exports, \$ 15.800 billion in imports; a total of \$ 31.100 billion in trade; and a trade deficit of \$ 500 million for FY 2018-2019. The Union Minister said the Central Bank of Myanmar, after taking into consideration the projected economic growth and inflation rate for FY 2017-2018, had worked to increase the monetary base by 16 per cent and the money supply by 23 per cent. As of March 2018, the monetary base has increased by 6 per cent and the money supply by 18 per cent, noted the Union Minister.

The Union Minister added that the projected budget deficit and GDP proportion for FY 2018-

2019 is 4.62 per cent, so, therefore, the Central Bank of Myanmar has calculated reducing 20 per cent of the budget deficit to reduce the Union budget deficit.

The Central Bank of Myanmar has taken into consideration foreign budget acquisitions and increased domestic loans to project the estimated growth of the monetary base by 11 per cent, and the overall money supply by 21 per cent in FY 2018-2019.

To reduce the deficit of states and regions, a subsidy of Ks 1.794 trillion has been proposed for FY 2018-2019, an increase of Ks 87 billion from the original subsidy, calculated with last year's six indexes.

Concerning the revenue allotment for states and regions, Ks 54.255 billion of tax collected from the government sector was divided according to the half-year budget framework. With tax from the private and cooperatives sector not included in the calculation, 15 per cent of tax from commercial tax, 15 per cent of specific goods tax, 5 per cent from personal income tax, and 2 per cent of tax from the stamp duty were divided, based on tax levied from states and regions. The total revenue allotted amounted to Ks 336.918 billion, while Ks 32.200 billion is assigned for the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Development Fund.

Next, U Nyan Win, Chairman of the Union Legal Supporting

Group, read and submitted the group's six-month progress report. U Nyan Win said that on 18 May 2018, they had formed the Project Drafting Executive Committee, Working Committee on Policies, Working Committee on Staff Affairs, Working Committee on Financial Administration, Working Committee on Marking Criminal Offences approved for Legal Support, Working Committee on Rules and Regulations, Working Committee on Verifying Poverty Claims in Requesting Legal Support, Working Committee on Raising Legal Awareness, and Working Committee on International Relations.

The President has received the Union Legal Supporting Group, led by Chairman U Nyan Win, at the Presidential Palace on 4 May 2018, and were instructed about becoming organized in developing strategies to aid the rule of law and the judicial sector.

The Speaker then said that interested MPs should include their names for discussing the report.

Also, the Speaker announced that the Hluttaw has approved the appointment of U Tin Htwe from Waw Constituency as a member of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Legal Affairs and Special Cases Assessment Commission.

The second day of the ninth regular session of the 2nd Pyidaungsu Hluttaw will continue on 25 July.—Thura Zaw

Education, punishment and job creation needed to fight electrofishing

AS the rainy season approaches, it is delightful to see ceremonies to release fingerlings into lakes and rivers, as part of efforts for the food sufficiency of the country.

However, on the dark side of the fishery sector, illegal electrofishing has become a big challenge for conservationists and local authorities in their quest to save not only the endangered fish species but also the fish population in rivers and creeks, which people have been relying on for food since the days of yore.

The Myanmar government has banned electrofishing nationwide, punishing violators with a three-year prison sentence and a Ks300,000 fine.

The illegal fishing method involves putting lines of wire into the water, connecting the two ends to a battery and passing an electric shock into the water. This stuns the fish, which then float to the surface.

The illegal fishing method involves putting lines of wire into the water, connecting the two ends to a battery and passing an electric shock into the water. This stuns the fish, which then float to the surface. The technique kills fish of all sizes.

The technique kills fish of all sizes.

In some cases, it is found that the Ayeyawady dolphins, which are facing the risk of extinction, often also fall prey to electrocution.

According to a local report, a total of 21 cases of electrofishing in Singu and Thabeikkyin townships in Sagaing Region were reported in the 2017-2018 fiscal year. We can imagine that the number must reach over hundreds if we count cases across the country.

Meanwhile, news of fishermen being killed as a result of electrofishing in rivers and creeks is also frequently reported in the dailies.

In a bid to prevent fish resources from extinction in the country and to save lives, the district and township fisheries departments should draw up projects to eliminate illegal fishing

methods, such as electrocution.

At the same time, the existing laws and laws amended to be adaptable with the current age are being reviewed to comply with international standardisation.

We should educate people about the ban on electrofishing and the penalties for violators.

Before alarm bells ring, authorities should step up efforts to tackle illegal fishing through education and punishment. While the people, authorities and conservationists are deeply concerned about saving the endangered species and the sustainability of fishing stocks in rivers and creeks, the violators would be reflecting about their jobs and livelihoods. Just educating them would not be enough to fight illegal fishing. ■

Legal Empowerment: Equitable Standards

By Khin Cho Ohn
(The Office of the Union Attorney-General)

RULE of law is the fundamental foundation which will enhance peace, development, flourishing democracy, public security, and safeguarding fundamental rights for the interest of the State and people.

As for the Union Government, implementations to restore rule of law and to enhance the socio-economic lives of the people are being made, as a top priority.

Law enforcement officers, who are serving at the Office of the Union Attorney-General, are involved in the three organs of power — the legislative power, the administrative power and the judicial power of the state, while taking part in the process of the justice sector reform in the country.

Each country has practised different types of legal systems based on the provisions of local laws, procedures and ratification of international human rights treaties. But fair judicial standard and relevant rights are included in the international human rights treaties, and they are designated to safeguard the fundamental rights of relevant persons involved in the process of criminal investigation and administering justice.

In order to support the prevalence of the rule of law for the State, the Office of the Union

Attorney-General has published a book on Fair Trial Standards for the benefit of law officers, so that they can be able to handle the cases effectively by studying and applying the said standards. Law officers should have integrity, impartiality, propriety, equality, competence, due dignity, responsibility and accountability in every case as they are legal servants of the State.

This book includes international standards, internal laws and judicial procedures, the 2008 State Constitution, the provisions in local laws, law reports, Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and 12 points of judicial standard, together with international standards of fairness.

Regarding the first point of “Equality Before the Law and Equal Protection of Law”, section 347 of the 2008 Constitution of Myanmar has prescribed that the union shall guarantee any person who is entitled to enjoy equal rights and equal protection before the law. Thus the book says it is needed for everyone to enjoy their rights regardless of race, religion, culture, social standing, gender and differences in wealth.

Regarding the second point, Article 43 of the 2008 Constitution of Myanmar states, “No penal law shall be enacted to provide retrospective effect”. Moreover it says that the purpose of this article was to re-

store rule of law in the country.

With regards to the phrase “presumption of innocence and the benefit of the doubt”, which states that guilt has not been proven and the accused person can then enjoy the presumption of innocence, just like everybody else, including persons who have not been accused of any crimes. No guilt can be presumed until the charges have been accused of any crime.

Regarding Article 11 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, everyone charged with a penal offence has the right to be presumed innocent until proved guilty according to law in a public trial at which they have all the guarantees necessary for their defense.

Moreover, no one shall be held guilty of any penal offence on account of any act or omission which did not constitute a penal offence, under national or international law, at the time when it was committed. Nor shall a heavier penalty be imposed than the one that was applicable at the time the penal offence was committed.

On the fourth point of human dignity, Article 44 of the 2008 Constitution of Myanmar states, “No penalty shall be prescribed that violates human dignity.”

Regarding the fifth point of “protection against the unlawful detention”, it says that the detention or arrest can be carried out lawfully, aiming to restore rule of law without violating one’s rights, according to the laws.

Law enforcement officers have to make sure that they understand and abide by the prescribed laws.

On the sixth point of “right to remain silent”; it states that people detained or arrested have a right to remain silent. The purpose of the right of

In order to support the prevalence of the rule of law for the State, the Office of the Union Attorney-General has published a book on Fair Trial Standards for the benefits of law officers, so that they can be able to handle the cases effectively by studying and applying the said standards.



Capacity Building for Judges in Legal Affairs



remaining silent is to prevent people from hurting their cases by helping the police. As a general rule, when people choose to remain completely or partially silent, this cannot be interpreted as a sign that they are guilty. People detained or arrested but who know about and understand their right to remain silent can speak to the police if they want to.

Regarding the seventh point of “right to speak to a lawyer”, Article 375 of the 2008 Constitution of Myanmar states, “An accused shall have the right to defence in accord with the law.” It means that the right to speak to a lawyer is a fundamental right and it allows people detained or arrested to discuss their rights and responsibilities with a lawyer.

The eighth point of “right to interpretation, right to translation, legal interpreting, and interpreting assistance”, means that in some cases, language is one of the vital communication tools, and a suspect has a right to effectively exercise their

rights so that they might obtain information on their legal position. That requires the assistance of an interpreter or translator. Moreover, interpreters and translators play a crucial role in safeguarding a fair trial.

The ninth point of “freedom and impartiality of judges” states that for a free, good and fair standard for judicial ethics, it is a policy of free legal system of a country as well as an essential principal of the rule of law. The freedom of the judge can be referred to as judicial freedom.

The tenth point of “the right to public hearing” states that all persons shall be equal before the courts and tribunals. The hearing and judgment must be made in public. Also a public hearing is a special type of public meeting for the purpose of governing body accepting public comment and testimony on local legislation.

The eleventh point of “the right of accused person in criminal proceeding” also states that an accused person must

have the right to have effective participation in a criminal trial. He or she is entitled to be physically present to give evidence in person and be legally represented.

The twelfth point of “avoiding delayed judgment without sufficient reasons” states that the procedures for lodging judicial systems should be completed more quickly within a proper timeframe as a sign of fair justice system. The need for a time limit for delivering the judgment plays a pivotal role to improve the performance of the judicial system.

On the Office of the Union Attorney-General has been making all-out efforts to safeguard the fundamental rights of the individual citizen, and thus published a book on Fair Trial Standards, with the aim of empowering the capacity building of the law enforcement officers, enhancing judicial empowerment and strengthening the rule of law in the Union.

Translated by
Win Ko Ko Aung



၂၀၁၈ ခုနှစ်၊ ဩဂုတ်လ (၁၁၊ ၁၂၊ ၁၃) ရက်၊ (စနေ၊ တနင်္ဂနွေ၊ တနင်္လာ)
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Flood Bulletin

(Issued at 2:00 pm Monday 23rd July, 2018)

Flood condition of Sittoung River

According to the (13:30) hrs MST observation today, the water level of Sittoung River has exceeded by about (½) foot at Madauk, above its danger level and may remain above its danger level during the next (1) day.

Flood condition of Thanlwin River

According to the (13:30) hrs MST observation today, the water level of Thanlwin River has exceeded by about (2½) feet at Hpa-an, above its danger level and may remain above its danger level during the next (2) days.

Advisory

It is especially advised that the people who have settled near the river banks and low lying areas in Madauk and Hpa-an townships, to take precautionary measures.

Myanmar Daily Weather Report

(Issued at 2:00 pm Monday 23rd July, 2018)

SUMMARY OF OBSERVATIONS RECORDED AT 09:30 hrs MST: During the past (24) hours, rain or thundershowers have been isolated in Lower Sagaing Region, (Northern and Eastern) Shan State, scattered in Mandalay and Magway regions and widespread in the remaining regions and states with regionally heavy falls in Bago Region, Rakhine, Kayin and Mon states and isolated heavy falls in Upper Sagaing and Yangon regions and Kachin State. The noteworthy amount of rainfall recorded were Kamamaung (7.82) inches, Bilin (7.48) inches, Shan-Ywar-Thit (4.63) inches, MyaukU (3.90) inches, Chaungzon (3.74) inches, Nyaunglebin (3.39) inches, Mohnyin and Kayan (3.35) inches each, An and Theinzayat (3.31) inches each, Shwegyin (3.27) inches, Toungoo and Kawkaireik (3.20) inches each, Homalin (3.07) inches, Hpa-an (3.03) inches and Sittway (3.00) inches.
BAY INFERENCE: Monsoon is moderate to strong over the Andaman Sea and Bay of Bengal.

SPECIAL FEATURES: According to the observations at (11:30) MST today, the tropical depression over the South China Sea (Gulf of Tonkin) weaken into low pressure area.

FORECAST VALID UNTIL MORNING OF THE 24th JULY 2018: Rain or thundershowers will be scattered in Lower Sagaing, Mandalay and Magway regions, fairly widespread in (Northern and Eastern) Shan State and widespread in the remaining regions and states with regionally heavy falls in Rakhine, Kayin and Mon states and isolated heavy falls in Upper Sagaing, Bago and Yangon regions, Kachin and Chin 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) mph. Wave height will be about (7 -10) feet off and along Myanmar Coasts.

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Increase of rain in Kachin, Rakhine, Kayin and Mon states.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 24th JULY 2018: One or two rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 24th JULY 2018: Some rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 24th JULY 2018: Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

Israel to reopen Gaza goods crossing if calm holds

JERUSALEM — Israel will reopen its only goods crossing with the blockaded Gaza Strip on Tuesday if calm holds following a ceasefire, a minister said, after closing it 9 July partly over kites carrying firebombs.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu warned separately, however, that the military was prepared for far more intense strikes in the Gaza Strip if it deems necessary after a severe flare-up of violence on Friday.

UN officials meanwhile said that the Gaza Strip was facing serious fuel shortages affecting hospitals as well as water and sanitation facilities, calling for restrictions to be lifted.

Israeli Defence Minister Avigdor Lieberman on Sunday spoke of reopening the goods crossing, known as Kerem Shalom.

“If today and tomorrow the situation continues as it was yesterday, then on Tuesday we will allow Kerem Shalom to return to normal activity and the fishing zones will return to the same distances as before,” he said.

Lieberman, speaking at the crossing, stressed that calm also meant an end to months of kites and balloons carrying firebombs over the border fence from the Palestinian enclave run by Islamist movement Hamas to burn Israeli farmland.

Israeli authorities say hundreds of fires have been started by the firebombs since April.

Lieberman said “the key is quiet, calm, zero firebombs, zero friction on the fence and zero rockets or, God forbid, shooting.”

A spokesman for Israel’s fire service said there were no fires caused by the devices along the Gaza border on Saturday and Sunday. He said there had been an average of around 24 per day in recent weeks.

But on Sunday evening the Israeli military said that one of its aircraft had earlier fired “at a terrorist squad launching arson balloons from the northern Gaza Strip into Israeli territory”.

There were no reports of casualties. The comments by Lieberman and Netanyahu came after a ceasefire was reached following a major flare-up of violence between Palestinian militants in Gaza and Israel on Friday.

The escalation — the second in as many weeks — followed months of tension that have raised fears that a fourth war since 2008 could erupt between Hamas and Israel.

The ceasefire followed a wave of deadly Israeli air strikes across Gaza sparked by the death of an Israeli soldier shot near the border. There has been relative calm on the Gaza border since the ceasefire.



A lorry passes through the Kerem Shalom crossing, the main passage point for goods entering Gaza, in the southern Gaza Strip town of Rafah on 17 July, 2018. **PHOTO: AFP**

“At the weekend we gave Hamas a very severe blow, and if necessary we will strike them sevenfold,” Netanyahu said.

‘Being fast depleted’

Israel announced on 9 July that the goods crossing was being closed to most deliveries partly in response to the firebombs and other incidents along the border fence. On 17 July, it further tightened the restrictions to also prevent fuel deliveries while reducing the fishing zone Israel enforces off Gaza to three nautical miles from six.

The crossing has remained open for food and medicine on a case-by-case basis.

The UN humanitarian coordinator for the Palestinian territories, Jamie McGoldrick, said on Sunday that “supplies of emergency fuel provided by the UN for critical facilities in Gaza are being fast depleted.”

He called on Israel to end restrictions on fuel imports and warned hospitals could soon be forced to close, with emergency supplies set to run out in early August.

“Given ongoing blackouts of about 20 hours a day, if fuel does not come in immediately, people’s lives will be at stake, with the most vulnerable patients, like cardiac patients, those on dialysis, and newborns in intensive care,

at highest risk,” he said in a statement. Gaza suffers from a severe electricity shortage and relies on generators in many cases.

Mass protests and clashes erupted on the Gaza border on 30 March and have continued at varying levels since then.

At least 149 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli fire since 30 March. The soldier shot dead on Friday was the first Israeli killed in that period.

Gaza’s only other goods crossing is with Egypt. It had been kept largely closed in recent years, but Egypt opened it in mid-May and the crossing, known as Rafah, has remained open most of the time since then.—AFP ■

Ethiopian PM seeks to embrace ‘multi-party democracy’

NAIROBI, (Kenya) — Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed has called for “multi-party democracy”, his chief of staff said on Sunday, in a country that has long been under the tight control of a single coalition.

“Given our current politics, there is no option except pursuing a multiparty democracy supported by strong institutions that respects human rights and rule of law,” Abiy said, according to his chief of staff Fitsum Arega on Twitter.

“This will allow us to mediate our differences peacefully and to ensure lasting progress.”

The comments were made at a meeting Abiy had with leaders of numerous political parties

and indicate a possible opening up of the narrow political space.

It also signals the latest in a series of stunning turnarounds under Abiy who has pursued economic reforms and sealed peace with neighbouring Eritrea since coming to power in April.

Ethiopia is technically a multi-party democracy but in practice has been dominated since 1991 by the Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) which, together with its allies, controls every seat in parliament.

Earlier this month Ethiopia’s parliament removed three groups from the country’s list of “terrorist” organizations in

a bid to mend fences with the political opposition.

Rights groups have long accused Ethiopia of using allegations of involvement with the armed anti-government groups Ginbot 7, Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) and Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF) as a pretext to jail journalists and opposition politicians.

Since Abiy came to power, thousands of dissidents have been released from jail and this week parliament voted to grant amnesty to “individuals and groups either under investigation or convicted on treason, crime against the constitutional order and armed struggle.”

—AFP ■

Yemen government demands Huthis release captives to restart talks

RIYADH (Saudi Arabia) — Yemen’s government said on Sunday that it will return to the negotiating table with Huthi rebels if they release all the prisoners they are holding.

“It is necessary to show goodwill before the start of new talks through the release of all the detainees in their prisons,” Yemeni Prime Minister Ahmed bin Dagher said at talks with United Nations envoy Martin Griffiths in Riyadh, the Saba news agency reported.

He also demanded for the Huthis to “facilitate the arrival of humanitarian aid” in provinces where they control airports and ports.

UN envoy to Yemen Griffiths has been trying for weeks to restart talks on ending the conflict between Yemen’s Saudi-backed government and the Iran-aligned Huthis that has killed nearly 10,000 people in the past three years.

Bin Dagher told Griffiths that any talks would have to lead to a withdrawal of Huthi forces from the capital Sanaa and other towns under their control, and the group’s disarmament, Saba reported.

The war has pushed the impoverished country to the brink of famine, triggering what the UN says is the world’s worst single humanitarian crisis.—AFP ■

Trump hits back at Iran 'war' talk

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump on Sunday hit back at bellicose comments by Iran's president, warning him of dire consequences as the US intensifies its campaign against the Islamic republic.

"NEVER, EVER THREATEN THE UNITED STATES AGAIN OR YOU WILL SUFFER CONSEQUENCES THE LIKES OF WHICH FEW THROUGHOUT HISTORY HAVE EVER SUFFERED BEFORE," Trump said on Twitter in a direct message to President Hassan Rouhani.

Earlier Sunday the Iranian leader had warned Trump not to "play with the lion's tail," saying that conflict with Iran would be the "mother of all wars".

The US president, writing his entire message in capital letters, continued his riposte:

"WE ARE NO LONGER A COUNTRY THAT WILL STAND FOR YOUR DEMENTED WORDS OF VIOLENCE & DEATH. BE CAUTIOUS!"

His comments Sunday night came after Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, in a major address to the Iranian diaspora in California, said Washington is not afraid to sanction top-ranking leaders of the "nightmare" Iranian regime.

Trump in May pulled the US out of a hard-won agreement with Tehran, also signed by Britain,

China, France, Germany and Russia, which lifted sanctions in exchange for curbs on Iran's nuclear programme.

The 2015 agreement was in response to fears that Iran was developing a nuclear bomb.

European allies maintain their support for the deal and have vowed to stay in it, though their businesses fear US penalties.

Following Washington's pull-out Pompeo unveiled Washington's tougher line under which, he said, the US would lift the new sanctions if Iran ended its ballistic missile programme and interventions in regional conflicts from Yemen to Syria.

Rouhani immediately dismissed those US threats and on Sunday said: "You cannot provoke the Iranian people against their own security and interests."

'More to come'

In a televised speech ahead of Pompeo's address, Rouhani repeated his warning that Iran could shut down the strategic Strait of Hormuz, a vital shipping lane for international oil supplies.

"Peace with Iran would be the mother of all peace and war with Iran would be the mother of all wars," Rouhani said.

On Saturday, Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said US words and "even... their



Trump's tweet to Iran's Rouhani was written entirely in capital letters. PHOTO: AFP

signature" cannot be trusted, "so negotiations with the United States are useless."

The US in January had already sanctioned Sadeq Larijani, the head of Iran's judiciary, for human rights violations, Pompeo noted on Sunday.

"We weren't afraid to tackle the regime at its highest level," he said, confirming that Washington wants all countries to reduce their imports of Iranian oil "as close to zero as possible" by 4 November, or face American sanctions.

Pompeo called on "all governments to end their flirtations" with Iran's regime, and said "there's more to come" in terms of sanctions.

"Regime leaders — especially those at the top of the IRGC and the Quds Force like Qasem Soleimani — must be made to feel painful consequences of their bad decision making," said Pompeo, a longtime Iran hawk. He was referring to Iran's special forces and Revolutionary Guards.

Roundly applauded by his audience, Pompeo affirmed support by Washington for protesters who have taken to the streets of Iran as economic woes mount after the US withdrawal from the nuclear accord.

"The regime in Iran has been a nightmare for the Iranian people," he said.

"The United States hears you. The United States supports

you. The United States is with you."

To reinforce that message, Washington's top diplomat announced an intensified American propaganda campaign, through the launch of a multimedia channel with 24-hour coverage on television, radio, and social media.

Pompeo refused to distinguish between moderates and radicals at the heart of the Islamic republic.

The Trump administration is regularly suspected of favoring regime change in Iran, and Pompeo said "our hope is that ultimately the regime will make meaningful changes in its behavior both inside Iran and globally." —AFP ■

Maltese PM says name cleared in Panama Papers probe

VALLETTA, Malta — Maltese Prime Minister Joseph Muscat said Sunday a year-long inquiry into allegations of financial wrongdoing linked to the Panama Papers scandal had cleared him.

Muscat called a snap election last year — which he won comfortably — after he and his entourage, including his wife Michelle, were accused of owning a company mentioned in the papers.

"Today, justice has been served," a visibly emotional Muscat told a press conference.

He said a judicial investigation running to 1,500 pages showed former opposition leader "Simon Busuttil has thrived

on a lie in a bid to win power."

And Muscat said that "the only honourable thing for (Busuttil) to do is resign from all his positions, including as MP."

The year-long probe was conducted by judge Aaron Bugeja and its conclusions were published a day after the report had been passed on to the attorney general.

The inquiry also did not find any evidence that Muscat, his wife, his close aide Keith Schembri, Tourism Minister Konrad Mizzi, or former European Commissioner John Dalli were involved in money laundering or suspicious financial transactions involving holders

of bank accounts in Azerbaijan via Pilatus Bank.

The allegations had been made on the blog of slain investigative journalist Daphne Caruana Galizia, killed by a car bomb last year.

After winning the election, Muscat had promised to resign if the probe showed there was an "ounce of truth" in the allegations.

Malta's financial services watchdog froze the assets of Pilatus Bank and removed the bank's chairman Ali Sadr Hashemi Nejad in March, three months after three people were charged in connection with Caruana Galizia's death. —AFP ■

Cuban president calls for fight against corruption

HAVANA — Cuban President Miguel Diaz-Canel on Sunday called on his countrymen to fight corruption and crimes in the country.

In his closing speech at the ordinary session of the National Assembly of People's Power, Diaz-Canel said that "fighting corruption is not only a task of the government and the police force, but a mission for the whole society."

The president insisted that the "unity" of citizens would be the main tool against corruption in the island nation.

Cuban authorities consider corruption as a major threat to the country, with the potential to undermine its so-

cialist ideology to a greater degree than the current financial crisis.

The Office of the Comptroller General reported in May that a national audit of 361 state-owned entities had discovered economic damage worth over 1 billion US dollars.

The office added that 1,251 people had been sanctioned as a result.

"There will be no impunity for the offenders," Comptroller General of Cuba Gladys Bejerano told reporters.

The office was founded by former President Raul Castro in 2009 to bolster anti-corruption measures, especially in the state-run entrepreneurial sector. —Xinhua ■

Suspected acid attack seriously injures boy aged 3 in UK

LONDON — British police said Sunday they have arrested a man after a three-year-old boy was seriously injured in a “deliberate” suspected acid attack in central England on Saturday.

The boy is being treated for “serious burns to his arm and face” in hospital following the mid-afternoon incident at

a discount store in the city of Worcester, according to local police.

A 39-year-old man from the nearby city of Wolverhampton was arrested on suspicion of conspiracy to commit grievous bodily harm and remained in custody on Sunday, it said.

Police also released photos of three men that

investigators would like to speak to. “At this time we are treating this as a deliberate attack on a three-year-old boy,” chief superintendent Mark Travis said, adding the motive was unclear.

“Officers are working hard to establish exactly what happened and what the substance involved was.—AFP ■

Invitation for Bids

Date:	24 July 2018
Loan No. and Title:	Loan 3330-MYA Power Transmission Improvement Project
Contract No. and Title:	Package No (2) - 7(T) DPTSC(PTP)/(2018-2019): Design, Supply and Installation for 230kV Thaketa Substation Extension and Three New Substations at Kyaikasan, South Oakkalapa and West University
Deadline for Submission of Bids:	6 September 2018, 13:00 hours (local time)

1. The Republic of Myanmar has received financing from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) toward the cost of the **Power Transmission Improvement Project**. Part of this financing will be used for payments under the contract named above. Bidding is open to bidders from eligible source countries of ADB.

2. **The Department of Power Transmission and System Control (DPTSC)** (“the Employer”) invites sealed bids from eligible bidders for the **Extension of the 230kV Thaketa Substation and the Construction of three new substations at Kyaikasan, South Oakkalapa and West University Substations** (the Facilities). The Facilities are all located within Yangon region.

3. **International Competitive Bidding** will be conducted in accordance with ADB’s [Single-Stage: One-Envelope](#) bidding procedure and is open to all Bidders from eligible countries as described in the Bidding Document.

4. Only eligible Bidders with the following key qualifications should participate in this bidding:

- Experience for successful completion of at least two (2) comparable contracts (Design, supply, delivery, installation and testing & commissioning of (a) GIS substation with voltage level 220 kV or higher at least one (1) contract to prove, (b) AIS substations with voltage level 220 kV (or higher on turnkey basis) within the last ten (10) years as on the date of opening of proposals of which at least one (1) GIS substation and one (1) AIS substation shall be in successful operation for minimum of three (3) years.
- Minimum average annual turnover of US\$ 50.0 million calculated as total certified payments received for contracts in progress or completed, for the last three (3) years.

The qualification criteria are more completely described in the Bidding Document.

- To obtain further information and inspect the bidding documents, bidders should contact:
Department of Power Transmission and System Control (DPTSC)
Address: Building No. 27, Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar
Mr. Kyi San Lin, Director
Telephone: 95 67 8104286
Website: <http://www.moee.gov.mm>
Email: sedesignptp.mepe@gmail.com, kyilinn@gmail.com,
Fax: 95 67 8104286
- To purchase the bidding documents in English, eligible bidders should write to the address above requesting the bidding documents for the Facilities. And pay a nonrefundable fee of purchase order (bank draft) with Myanmar Kyats which is equivalent to US\$ 100.
- A Pre-bid meeting shall take place on 10 August 2018 at 14:00 hours (local time) at the address above, Meeting Room, Material Planning Department.
- Bids must be delivered to the address above **on or before the deadline: 6 September 2018 at 13:00 hours (local time)** together with a Bid Security as described in the bidding documents.
Electronic Submission is not allowed.
- Bids will be opened immediately after the bid submission deadline in the presence of bidders’ representatives who choose to attend.

Tender Committee

**Department of Power Transmission and System Control
Ministry of Electricity and Energy, office No.27, Nay Pyi Taw**

EU finance chief blasts Trump over ‘inappropriate’ trade sanctions

BUENOS AIRES — EU finance chief Pierre Moscovici fired a barb at US President Donald Trump on Sunday as he called on both sides of an ongoing global trade dispute to “act as allies.”

The US and EU have been at loggerheads since Trump angered European allies by announcing tariffs on steel and aluminum as he launched trade restrictions targeting China in particular.

Referring to Trump branding the EU, alongside China and Russia, as trade “foes,” Moscovici said the EU is “willing to build bridges.”

“What I stressed several times in my meetings here is that the EU is certainly not the author of major trade imbalances,” Moscovici told reporters during the Group of 20 summit in Buenos Aires. On Saturday, US Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin spoke at the conference about wanting to “balance” the country’s trade relationships with China and the EU, calling on both to respect “free, fair and reciprocal trade.”

But Moscovici said that “we believe that targeting us is certainly inappropriate... and that we must act with the US as allies — not foes but allies.”

“These meetings take place in an international context which



EU finance chief Pierre Moscovici hits out at Trump over the US president’s protectionist policies. **PHOTO: AFP**

is changing,” he said. “The multilateral system of which the G20 is a central piece is under significant pressure, trade tensions are high and threaten to escalate further. All of this creates uncertainty for the economic outlook.”

He added: “We must remain cool-headed.”

Trump’s protectionist policies have come under fire from all sides at the summit, which groups finance ministers and central bankers from the world’s 20 largest economies. On Saturday, French finance minister Bruno Le Maire called on Trump to “return to reason.”

As well as imposing tariffs of 25 per cent on steel and 10 percent on aluminum, Trump stuck a 25 per cent levy on \$34 billion of goods from China with an additional \$16 billion on the way.

He has threatened to target European automotive exports and to impose duties on the entire \$500 billion of goods the US im-

ports from China.

“The impact of protectionist measures already implemented has been, luckily, so far limited, but the risk of escalation is there,” said Moscovici. The International Monetary Fund predicts that in a worst-case scenario, \$430 billion — or a half percentage point of global GDP — could be cut in 2020 if all tariff threats and retaliations are carried out.

“Further trade escalation conflicts would negatively affect welfare in all countries involved — in the US also,” said Moscovici.

Protectionism, he said, benefits no one, creating “no winners, only casualties.”

IMF chief Christine Lagarde had warned on Wednesday that the US economy was “especially vulnerable” to trade conflicts “because so much of its global trade will be subject to retaliatory measures.”—AFP ■

Scandal in Brazil over black man in mistaken identity case

RIO DE JANEIRO — Brazilians are up in arms over the ordeal of a black man jailed for more than a week in Rio because he was mistaken for a suspect who was also an Afro-Brazilian with a shaven head.

“It does not change, and it will never change. Society is racist and it will always be,” Antonio Carlos Rodrigues told local me-

dia when he was released from jail late Friday.

The story might seem a bit different in a less diverse society; but more than half of Brazilians are black or mixed race.

Police in Rio de Janeiro said they have opened an investigation “to establish the responsibilities” in this case.

The 43-year-old work-

er was arrested on July 13, accused of taking part in an armed robbery at the Venezuelan consulate.

To identify him, police compared video surveillance images from the consulate to photos the man had put on social networks.

In those images the suspect was wearing sunglasses. —AFP ■

Japan logs historic high temperature amid persistent heat wave

TOKYO — Japan logged its highest-ever temperature of over 41°C on Monday as a deadly heat wave continued to grip wide areas of the country.

The mercury hit 41.1°C in Kumagaya, Saitama Prefecture, near Tokyo, at 2:16 pm, eclipsing the previous record of 41.0°C marked in August 2013 in Shimanto, Kochi Prefecture, while Tokyo also logged a record-high 40.8°C in the city of Ome, according to the Japan Meteorological Agency.

Temperatures in Tajimi, Gifu Prefecture, rose to 40.5°C after the central Japan city already reported 40.7°C on Wednesday, the agency said.

The heat wave, which

has persisted for weeks, has already claimed dozens of lives across Japan all while the country reels from destruction brought by torrential rains earlier this month.

The scorching weather has resulted in the deaths of more than 40 people and sent tens of thousands to hospitals, according to a Kyodo News tally and local authorities. On Saturday alone, at least 11 people died from suspected heatstroke.

Through Monday, at least three people, all senior citizens, have died in prefectures surrounding Tokyo, according to the local authorities.

The three are a 90-year-old man in Chichi-

bu, Saitama Prefecture, an 89-year-old man in Namegata, Ibaraki Prefecture, and a 95-year-old woman in Sano, Tochigi Prefecture, they said.

The Tokyo Fire Department dispatched ambulances 3,125 times on Sunday alone, apparently reflecting a surge in the number of people falling ill from scorching temperatures. More than 300 people were taken to hospitals for possible heatstroke as of Monday morning, it said.

The agency has issued advisories over the scorching heat, urging people to drink water frequently and take measures against heatstroke.—Kyodo News ■



Women walk with parasols amid a continued heat wave in Tokyo on 23 July, 2018. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

Chinese premier vows crackdown in latest pharma scare

SHANGHAI — Chinese Premier Li Keqiang has vowed stern action over the latest safety scare to hit the country's pharmaceutical industry, as a mounting scandal over a rabies vaccine sent drug stocks tumbling.

China's Food and Drug Administration announced late Sunday that it had ordered all production stopped at one of the country's biggest vaccine makers, Changchun Changsheng Biotechnology.

Li said the latest case had crossed a "line of human ethics", and he vowed

a thorough investigation and harsh consequences for any infractions or lax supervision.

"(We) must resolutely strike with heavy blows all law-breaking criminal behavior, severely punish the criminals according to the law, and hold accountable those who were negligent in supervision," Li said in a statement posted late Sunday on the government's website.

Regulators said last week they had halted production of a rabies vaccine made by the company, which is based in north-

eastern China, after finding fabricated records and other problems during an inspection.

China is hit regularly by quality-control scandals, fuelling fear over the safety of food and medicines and anger at regulatory lapses.

Censors and regulators struggled to stay abreast of the public's response to the latest scandal, deleting posts on WeChat over the weekend as state media tried to take control of the narrative.

Stocks of major Chinese vaccine producers plunged on Monday.

In Shenzhen, Walvax Biotechnology, which makes a range of flu and other vaccines, dropped by its 10 per cent daily allowable limit, as did vaccine suppliers Shenzhen Kangtai Biological Products and Chongqing Zhifei Biological Products.

After a brief trading halt, shares of Changchun Changsheng's parent company also fell by the 10 per cent limit.

The CFDA said last week that the problematic rabies vaccine had not left Changsheng's factory, but state media reports have

suggested otherwise.

Changchun Changsheng said on Sunday it had already halted production of a diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis vaccine that regulators found last year to be sub-standard.

But concerns have grown that problematic vaccines had already been administered to children.

Authorities in Hebei announced on Monday that nearly 150,000 people in the northern province received a sub-standard diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis vaccine made by another firm, Wuhan Institute of Biologi-

cal Products.

Hebei said it has launched steps to re-administer new vaccines to those affected.

The state-run *Global Times* newspaper questioned in an editorial Monday how dodgy vaccines were still being produced following the harsh lessons of the past.

"People do not understand why the country had not prevented a substandard vaccine from being produced in the first place," it said, suggesting it may be due to "lax supervision and light punishment."—AFP ■

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V MCC HALONG VOY. NO. (1819/1820)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V MCC HALONG VOY. NO. (1819/1820) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 24-7-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T.T/M.I.P where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

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

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V VICTORIA 82 VOY. NO. (-)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V VICTORIA 82 VOY. NO. (-) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 21-7-18 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of MITT-2 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 RK SHIPPING &
TRADING PTE LTD.

Phone No: 2301928

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V UNI WEALTH VOY. NO (-)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V UNI WEALTH VOY. NO (-) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 24-7-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of SPW-1 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 CA SHIPPING PTE LTD

Phone No: 2301928

Japanese paper “sommelier” elicits charm of traditional craft

FUKUI, Japan — A Japanese hand-made paper retailer is taking on the role of “sommelier” and bringing out the charm in the traditional craft to consumers at home and overseas amid a declining demand for such products.

To showcase the paper’s unique use in home interior, Yoshinao Sugihara, the 10th-generation successor of a traditional paper wholesaler in Echizen, Fukui Prefecture, opened a gallery next to his shop in January.

Echizen is one of the country’s most prominent areas producing “washi,” or traditional Japanese hand-made paper.

Among eye-catching displays at Sugihara’s renovated traditional warehouse are a paper tapestry designed with a watermark and a huge sheet of paper stretching more than 10 meters.

Just as a sommelier chooses wine according to the taste and budget of customers, the 56-year-old Sugihara, as a “washi sommelier,” picks the paper and craftsmen tailoring to the needs of his architect and designer clients. “I myself do not make (Japanese paper) but I have ex-



Yoshinao Sugihara, the 10th-generation successor of a traditional paper wholesaler in Echizen, Fukui Prefecture, stands in front of a tapestry made of Echizen paper displayed at his gallery on 13 June, 2018. Sugihara, as a “washi sommelier,” picks the paper and craftsmen tailoring to the needs of his architect and designer clients. **PHOTO: KYODO NEWS**

tensive knowledge of Echizen paper,” said Sugihara, who began advertising it, alarmed that the product is not selling.

According to a local industry association, Echizen paper, which dates back about 1,500 years, boasts the largest produc-

tion both in terms of volume and types in Japan, backed by about 60 factories and more than 300 craftsmen.

Annual sales hit a peak of about 9.4 billion yen (\$83 million) in 1990 but has since declined to about one-third on the back

of falling demand of paper used for fusuma, or sliding doors to partition rooms in traditional Japanese houses, and the digitalization of stock certificates.

After taking over the family business, Sugihara entered an international interior exhibition

in 2002 and displayed a lighting device that used Japanese paper.

His work was recognized for its design and innovative-ness in the use of light and received an award at the exhibit. This inspired him to tap into the potential of washi in the interior industry, where the use of Japanese paper was considered novel at the time.

He has so far been involved in hundreds of lighting and artwork projects at hotels and restaurants at home and abroad and was invited to join exhibitions and joint projects with artists in Europe and the United States.

“I was able to respond to various requests thanks to the technique of Echizen craftsmen,” Sugihara said, referring to their skills in being able to produce any kind of paper.

Following his travel overseas, he was reminded of the potential of Echizen as the production site of the paper but that the region still has a low profile in Japan.

“Now that the Japanese people today rarely appreciate traditional paper, I want them to know its beauty and diversity,” Sugihara said.—Kyodo News ■



The First Wedding Show at LOTTE Hotel Yangon

The first-ever Wedding Show with a lot of activities took place in LOTTE Hotel Yangon on 21 and 22 July 2018. It was hosted by LOTTE Hotel Yangon. **PHOTO: GNLM**

Second time lucky for Denzel, whose new film tops box office

HOLLYWOOD (United States) — Superstar Denzel Washington had never made a sequel in a career reaching back nearly four decades, but when he did, with the Sony/Columbia production of “The Equalizer 2,” it managed to open at the top of the North American box office.

With estimated ticket sales of \$35.8 million for the three-day weekend, “Equalizer” edged out another new sequel, star-studded “Mamma Mia! Here We Go Again,” according to industry tracker Exhibitor Relations.

In his new film, Washington again plays a former black-ops agent — and now soft-spoken Lyft driver — who is drawn back into action to avenge a friend’s death. Director Antoine Fuqua also made “Training Day,” which earned Washington a best actor Oscar nod.

Industry watchers had expected Universal’s “Mamma Mia!” to open atop the box office, but its ticket sales of \$34.4 million were “by no means a disappointment” at 22 per cent above the original film’s opening, according

to *Hollywood Reporter*.

With a star-studded cast — including Meryl Streep, Amanda Seyfried, Colin Firth and Pierce Brosnan — the film is set after the events of the original “Mamma Mia!” but uses flashbacks to fill in the story of Streep’s carefree character on the sun-splashed Greek island where an ABBA soundtrack is never far away.

In third spot was “Hotel Transylvania 3: Summer Vacation” from Sony, which took in \$23.2 million. The animated comedy, whose voice cast includes Adam Sandler and Selena Gomez, follows Count Dracula and his family as they get away from their hotel for their own vacation.

Slipping from second last week to fourth was “Ant-Man and the Wasp,” the 20th release in Disney’s Marvel Cinematic Universe, at \$16.1 million. It has ex-con Scott Lang (Paul Rudd) struggling to balance home life and Ant-Man duties as he and old flame Hope van Dyne (Evangeline Lilly, alias the Wasp), take up an urgent new mission.—AFP

NASA to launch car-sized spacecraft to study Sun in August

WASHINGTON — The United States space agency NASA is preparing to launch a probe on an August morning to study the Sun closer than any human-made object ever has, revealing multiple mysteries behind the star.

The car-sized spacecraft called Parker Solar Probe is slated to lift off no earlier than August 6 on a United Launch Alliance Delta IV Heavy, according to NASA.

The Sun's atmosphere constantly sends magnetized material outward, enveloping our solar system far beyond the orbit of Pluto. Coils of magnetic energy can burst out with light and particle radiation that travel through space and create temporary disruptions in our atmosphere, sometimes garbling radio

and communications signals near Earth. Therefore, the key to understanding its origins lies in understanding the Sun itself and that's where Parker Solar Probe comes in, according to the researchers at NASA.

The spacecraft carries a lineup of instruments to study the Sun both remotely and directly.

One science task is the mystery of the acceleration of the solar wind, the Sun's constant outflow of material, and the other is the secret of the corona's enormously high temperatures, according to NASA.

Also, Parker Solar Probe's instruments might reveal the mechanisms at work behind the acceleration of solar energetic particles, which can reach speeds more than half as

fast as the speed of light as they rocket away from the Sun. Such particles can interfere with satellite electronics, especially for satellites outside of Earth's magnetic field.

The biggest breakthrough for the spacecraft is its cutting-edge heat shield, according to NASA.

"The Thermal Protection System (the heat shield) is one of the spacecraft's mission-enabling technologies," said Andy Driesman, Parker Solar Probe project manager at the Johns Hopkins Applied Physics Lab. "It allows the spacecraft to operate at about room temperature."

The heat shield is a sandwich of carbon-carbon composite surrounding nearly four and half inches of carbon foam, which is about 97 per cent air.

Other critical innovations are the solar array cooling system and on-board fault management systems. The solar array cooling system allows the solar arrays to produce power under the intense thermal load from the Sun and the fault management system protects the spacecraft during the long periods of time when the spacecraft can't communicate with the Earth.

"The launch energy to reach the Sun is 55 times that required to get to Mars, and two times that needed to get to Pluto," said Guo Yanping from the Johns Hopkins Applied Physics Laboratory, who designed the mission trajectory. The Delta IV Heavy is one of the world's most powerful rockets. — Xinhua ■

Dawood Ali Khorasanee Age 99 years

Dawood Ali Khorasanee (son of the late Backer Khorasanee) passed away peacefully July 11, 2018, in British Columbia, Canada.

He is survived by his wife Banu and daughters Zarina and Pari, grandchildren and great grandchildren. He was the last in the line of a first generation Khorasanee and will be dearly missed.

French IT services group Atos to buy Syntel of US

PARIS — French IT services group Atos said on Sunday it has agreed to buy US information technology group Syntel in a move to significantly expand its presence in North America.

Atos said in a statement that it will acquire Syntel for \$41 per share which amounts to around \$3.4 billion.

"This transaction is a major step in the strategy of Atos to reach a global scale," the French company said.

"In particular, the highly complementary portfolio, customer base, and geographic footprint of the combination between Atos and Syntel will significantly enhance our presence in North America," said chief executive Thierry Breton. Syntel generated revenues of \$924 million in 2017, of which 89 per cent was in North America. Its operating margin — underlying profits measured as a proportion of sales — stood at 25 per cent. —AFP ■

'Dangerous complacency' feared as AIDS conference opens

AMSTERDAM — A world AIDS assembly opens in Amsterdam on Monday hoping to harness the star power of activists Elton John and Prince Harry to bolster the battle against an epidemic experts warn may yet spiral out of control.

Thousands of delegates — researchers, campaigners, activists and people living with the killer virus — will attend the 22nd International AIDS Conference amid warnings that "dangerous complacency" may cause an unstoppable resurgence.

In recent days, experts have alerted that new HIV infections, while down overall, have surged in some parts of the world as global attention has waned and funding has levelled off.

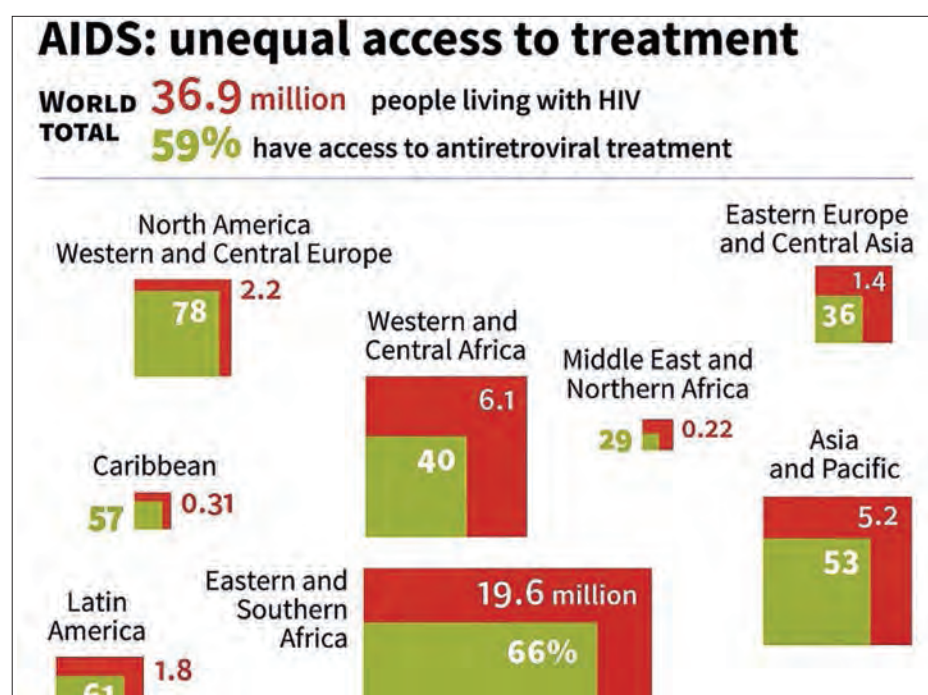
And they lamented that too sharp a focus on virus-suppressing treatment may have diverted attention from basic prevention programmes such as condom distribution, with the result that the AIDS-causing virus is still spreading easily among vulnerable

groups.

"The encouraging reductions in new HIV infections that occurred for about a decade has emboldened some to declare that we are within reach of ending AIDS," Peter Piot, virus researcher and founder of the UNAIDS agency, said last week. However, "there is absolutely no evidence to support this conclusion," he insisted, and warned: "The language on ending AIDS has bred a dangerous complacency."

A UNAIDS report warned of a long and difficult road ahead even as it reported a drop in new infections and AIDS deaths, and a record number of people on life-saving antiretroviral therapy (ART).

These hard-fought gains could be reversed, experts said on Sunday as the finishing touches were put on the venue that will host some 15,000 delegates — also including celebrities Charlize Theron and Conchita — for five days. An alarming rate of new infections coupled with an exploding young population



Experts have warned that new HIV infections, while down overall, have surged in some parts of the world. PHOTO: AFP

in hard-hit countries could spell "a crisis of epic proportions," said Mark Dybul, a veteran American AIDS researcher and diplomat.

"Bad things will happen if we don't have more money," he told a pre-conference, saying the world was "probably at the highest risk ever of losing control of this epidemic."

'No' to war on drugs

Dybul and colleagues

said donor and domestic funding has dropped significantly and would likely continue to decline, from about 20.6 billion euros (\$24.1 billion) last year — most of it financed from the domestic budgets of nations with the heaviest AIDS burden.

According to UNAIDS, the funding gap is almost \$7 billion per year. Under Donald Trump, the US administration has proposed

massive spending cuts, though these have so far failed to pass through Congress. The United States is by far the biggest funder of the global AIDS response.

The immune system-attacking HIV virus has infected nearly 80 million people since the early 1980s. More than 35 million have died. Today, data show the infection rate is rising in about 50 countries, and

has more than doubled in eastern Europe and central Asia. Experts regret that the focus on prevention has faded. Last year's 1.8 million new infections showed that "unless we did something completely drastic, we will not get anywhere near" the target of no more than 500,000 in 2020, said Nduku Kilonzo of Kenya's National AIDS Control Council. "We have a crisis and it is a prevention crisis," she said.

At high risk are sex workers, gay men and people who inject drugs — many of whom are forced onto society's fringes by repressive laws in their countries.

At the conference, NGOs will launch a liberalisation campaign titled: "Just say no to the war on drugs," a direct challenge to the 1980s Reagan administration's "Just say no" message at the height of America's "war on drugs". The programme's criminalisation of drug use has compounded the stigma and discrimination experienced by users. —AFP ■

Ozil quits Germany side after 'racism' as Turkey applauds

BERLIN, GERMANY — Mesut Ozil on Monday was warmly applauded by Turkey but faced uproar at home in Germany after announcing he was quitting the German national football team, lambasting "racism" over criticism for the side's World Cup debacle.

Ozil, who has Turkish roots but was born in Germany, had been under fire since posing for a controversial photograph with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan in May which sparked questions about his loyalty to Germany's squad ahead of the tournament in Russia.

"It is with a heavy heart and after much consideration that because of recent events, I will no longer be playing for Germany at international level whilst I have this feeling of racism and disrespect," he said in a statement on social media channels on Sunday.

Ozil, 29, said he had been unfairly blamed in Germany for the side's shock group stage exit at the World Cup.

He insisted he was true to both his Turkish and German origins and did not intend to make a political statement by appearing with Erdogan a month ahead of elections in Turkey.

"I have two hearts, one German and one Turkish," said Ozil.

The Turkish government of Erdogan, who has championed a campaign against what Ankara sees as growing Islamophobia in Europe, hailed Ozil's move.

"I congratulate Mesut Ozil



File photo taken on 13 May, 2018 shows Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan (right) posing with German footballer of Turkish origin Mesut Ozil (left) in London. **PHOTO: AFP**

who by leaving the national team has scored the most beautiful goal against the virus of fascism," Justice Minister Abdulhamit Gul wrote on Twitter.

Turkey's Sports Minister Mehmet Kasapoglu, like Gul posting the picture of a smiling Ozil with Erdogan, added: "We sincerely support the honourable stance that our brother Mesut Ozil has taken".

'Immigrant when we lose'

The Arsenal midfielder blamed the German Football Federation (DFB) for failing to defend him against his most strident critics, lashing out at "mistreatment" in particular from DFB President Reinhard Grindel.

He said that Grindel and Germany coach Joachim Loew had asked him to give a "joint statement to end all the talk and set the record straight" over the picture with Erdogan.

"Whilst I attempted to explain to Grindel my heritage, ancestry and therefore reasoning behind the photo, he was far more interested in speaking about his own political views and belittling my opinion."

"I will no longer stand for being a scapegoat for his (Grindel's) incompetence and inability to do his job properly," he said.

"In the eyes of Grindel and his supporters, I am German when we win, but I am an immigrant when we lose."

Fellow German interna-

tional Ilkay Gundogan, born in Germany to Turkish parents, was also present at the London meeting with Erdogan in May on the president's visit to Britain, as well as striker Cenk Tosun of Everton who was born in Germany but represents Turkey.

The photo, which was published on the presidential website and the Twitter feed of the ruling party, came just before the June 24 polls Erdogan won to claim sweeping new powers.

Ozil said that despite the timing of the picture "it wasn't about politics or elections, it was about me respecting the highest office of my family's country".

"My job is a football player and not a politician, and our meeting was not an endorsement

of any policies," Ozil added.

Germany is home to more than three million people of Turkish origin.

Manchester City midfielder Gundogan presented Erdogan with a signed club shirt on which he had written "to my president".

The two players were booed by German fans in pre-World Cup friendlies over their appearance with the Turkish strongman, and Ozil said Sunday that he and his family had received threats.

'Crosses a line'

Ozil said he could abide criticism of his performance on the pitch but not when it was linked to his ethnic background.

"If a newspaper or pundit finds fault in a game I play in, then I can accept this," he said.

"But what I can't accept are German media outlets repeatedly blaming my dual-heritage and a simple picture for a bad World Cup on behalf of an entire squad," he added, calling it "right-wing propaganda".

"This crosses a personal line that should never be crossed, as newspapers try to turn the nation of Germany against me."

He also furiously denounced disparaging remarks by former captain Lothar Matthaeus, who he noted "met with another world leader a few days back and received almost no media criticism" in an apparent reference to an appearance with Russian President Vladimir Putin.

—AFP ■

Molinari on verge of remarkable British Open victory

CARNOUSTIE, UNITED KINGDOM — Italy's Francesco Molinari was on the verge of winning the British Open at Carnoustie on Sunday after a faultless two-under-par final round of 69.

Playing with Tiger Woods, Molinari birdied the last to take the outright lead in the clubhouse on eight under par, two shots ahead of Justin Rose and Rory McIlroy.

Molinari must now wait to



Italy's Francesco Molinari watches his shot from the 6th tee during his final round on day 4 of The 147th Open Golf Championship at Carnoustie, Scotland on 22 July, 2018. **PHOTO: AFP**

see how Xander Schauffele concludes his last round before he can celebrate winning his first major. Schauffele was seven under par for the championship coming down the 17th, with

Kevin Kisner six-under on the last. It had looked at one point as though Woods would end his decade-long wait to win a 15th major, but he faded for a 71 to finish on five under par.—AFP ■

Busy Fognini seals Swedish title

BASTAD (Sweden) — Italian Fabio Fognini, ranked 15 in the world, beat Frenchman Richard Gasquet, 6-3, 3-6, 6-1, in Sunday's ATP Swedish Open final in Bastad.

It was the seventh career title for Fognini and, like the previous six, came on clay.

It was also his second title of the season after Sao Paulo and confirmed that at 31 he is playing his best tennis as he closes in on his highest ever ranking, 13th which he reached in 2014.

His busy weekend in Sweden did not end with the singles final. He was playing the doubles final with fellow Italian Simone Bolelli later against the



Fabio Fognini gained his seventh career title as he beat Richard Gasquet in Bastad on Sunday. **PHOTO: AFP**

South-American pair of Chilean Julio Peralta and Argentine Horacio Zeballos.

At 32, Gasquet remains on 16 career titles, the most recent on grass in s-Hertogenbosch, Netherlands in June.—AFP ■