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Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker hands over Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker's responsibilities to Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker

IN yesterday's fifth-day meeting of the Second Pyidaungsu Hluttaw's ninth regular session, Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than handed over the responsibilities of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker to Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U T Khun Myat.

Attending the assembly were President U Win Myint, State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, Vice Presidents U Myint Swe and U Henry Van Thio, Chief Justice of the Union U Htun Htun Oo, Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, Chairperson of the Constitutional Tribunal U Myo Nyunt, Chairperson of the Union Election Commission U Hla Thein, Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Soe Win, Pyithu Hluttaw Deputy Speaker U Tun Tun Hein, Amyotha Hluttaw Deputy Speaker U Aye Tha Aung, Chairman of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw's Legal Affairs and Special Cases Assessment Commission Thura U Shwe Mann, Union Ministers, Union Attorney General, Union Auditor General, Chairman of the Union Civil Service Board, Nay Pyi Taw Council Chairperson, Governor of the Central Bank of Myanmar, Chairperson of the Anti-Corruption Commission, Chairperson of the National Human Rights Commission, state and regional Hluttaw speakers, Deputy Ministers, and observers.

Outgoing Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than's speech

First, Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than delivered a speech concerning his term as Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker for the first thirty

months of the Hluttaw term.

In his speech, Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than elaborated on his performance for the first half of the Hluttaw term, saying that the first-day meeting of the 1st regular session of the 2nd Pyithu Hluttaw was held on Monday 1 February 2016. In line with Section 76 Sub-section (A) of the Constitution, the Speaker and Deputy Speaker of the Amyotha Hluttaw have served as the Speaker and Deputy Speaker of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw from the day the term of the Pyithu Hluttaw commences up to the day of the end of 30 months, and the Speaker and Deputy Speaker of the Pyithu Hluttaw will serve as the Speaker and Deputy Speaker of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw for the remaining term, which is why today's meeting will include the handing over of the responsibilities of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker and Deputy Speaker.

He said during his term as Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker, he endeavored for the strengthening of the multi-party democratic system, enhancing opportunities in the country, promoting every citizen's equality, freedom, fairness, and human rights free from corruption, and to the best of his ability, providing checks and balances to the executive and judicial branches of the government for rebuilding national peace, unity and development.

He expressed his gratitude to the Deputy Speaker for assuming the roles of Chairperson for the Joint Bill Committee, Public Accounts Joint Committee, and Joint Hluttaw Management Committee, and as the Secretary of the Myanmar Parliamentary Union and leading the duties of each respective sector and enabling better fundamentals.

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President U Win Myint, State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, Vice Presidents U Myint Swe and U Henry Van Thio arrive to attend the fifth-day meeting of the Second Pyidaungsu Hluttaw's ninth regular session in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. PHOTO: GNLM



Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than hands over the responsibilities of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker to Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U T Khun Myat at the Second Pyidaungsu Hluttaw's ninth regular session. PHOTO: GNLM

Vice President U Myint Swe calls on youth's innovation, leadership, inclusiveness in All-Round Youth Development Festival (Mandalay)

INNOVATION, friendliness, leadership and inclusiveness of youths should be taken into account in activities of the forthcoming Mandalay All-Round Youth Development Festival, said Vice President U Myint Swe.

The remark came yesterday at the meeting of the leading committee for holding the All-Round Youth Development Festival at Mandalay University, slated to be held mid-August.

"Today is the time when the State is boosting the efficiency and strength of youths. Youths constitute an enormous driving force for the development of the country," said Vice President U Myint Swe, in his capacity as the patron of the leading committee, at the meeting held at the Ministry of Information.

In his address, he also highlighted the importance of promoting the development of the five strengths of youths—physical, knowledge, character, friendship and wealth, as the youths who are the leaders of the future it is necessary to build the Myanmar society based on freedom, development and prosperity.

The All-Round Youth Development Festival (Yangon) was held at Yangon University in 2017



Vice President U Myint Swe addresses the meeting of the leading committee for holding the All-Round Youth Development Festival at Mandalay University in Nay Pyi Taw. **PHOTO: MNA**

from 1 to 3 December.

"The first festival at the Yangon University met with success, and it became a bridge between past and future generations, with participation of students from universities and colleges, youths from social organizations, and former students," he added.

"We took pride in holding the All-Round Youth Development Festival at the Yangon University and were delighted to visit the festival with booths systematically set up by youths and universities and colleges, talks, arts activities, sport activities and songs," said the Vice President.

He also called for systematic cooperation between work

committees and sub-committees in organizing the activities of youths and entertainment activities at the Mandalay festival.

Also present at the meeting were Union ministers Dr. Pe Myint, Thura U Aung Ko, Dr. Myo Thein Gyi and Dr. Win Myat Aye, Chief Minister of Mandalay Region Dr. Zaw Myint Maung, deputy ministers Maj-Gen Aung Thu, U Aung Hla Tun and Dr. Mya Lay Sein, cabinet members of the Mandalay Region government, senior military officers, members of the work committee and sub-committees.

The All-Round Youth Development Festival (Mandalay) will be held with the aim of promoting

youths' skills, knowledge, ethical values, as well as developing their five strengths – physical, knowledge, character, friendship and wealth – and establishing a future Myanmar society based upon their views and ideas.

The leading committee for holding the All-Round Youth Development Festival (Mandalay) was formed with 20 members led by the Vice President.

The work committee, under the leading committee, was formed with 17 members, led by the Deputy Minister for Information.

Following the opening address of the Vice President, Union Minister for Information Dr.

Pe Myint reported on measures taken for holding the festival and future plans.

Union Minister for Education Dr. Myo Thein Gyi reported on suggestions to include the IT sector, while Mandalay Region Chief Minister Dr. Zaw Myint Maung on sector-wise arrangements for the festival.

Afterwards, members of the leading committee Union Ministers Thura U Aung Ko and Dr. Win Myat Aye also reported on measures taken by their ministries respectively.

The meeting ended with concluding remarks by Vice President U Myint Swe.—Myanmar News Agency ■

Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker receives Japanese Parliamentary Vice-Minister of Justice

PYITHU Hluttaw Speaker U T Khun Myat received Japanese Parliamentary Vice-Minister of Justice Mr. Takashi Yamashita at the Pyithu Hluttaw building in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

During the meeting, they discussed promoting friendship and cooperation between the governments and parliaments of Myanmar and Japan, promoting the legal and judicial processes between Myanmar and Japan, matters about judicial transformation regarding market economy to be developed and foreign investment to be promoted.

Also present at the meeting were Deputy Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U Tun Tun Hein, Pyithu Hluttaw Judicial and Legal Affairs Committee



Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U T Khun Myat shakes hands with Japanese Parliamentary Vice-Minister of Justice Mr. Takashi Yamashita in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

Chairman U Aung Tin Lin, Secretary U Hla Than and other

officials.—Myanmar News Agency ■

Battalion commanders of Myanmar, Bangladesh meet in Maungta

A Myanmar-Bangladesh battalion commander-level meeting was held on Tuesday on the Myanmar side at the meeting hall of No.1 entry/exit checkpoint in Maungta Township, Rakhine State. Ten attendees from Myanmar led by Provisional Police Lt.Col Nay Myo Thu of No.2 border unit and ten attendees from Bangladesh led by Lt.Col of No.2 border regiment Md Asadud-Zaman Chowdhury attended the meeting. During the meeting, Myanmar border

police unit exchanged information on drug seizures and also discussed further cooperation on it. They also discussed to fully cooperate and confirm the information related to movement and activities of ARSA and exchange of the news and information in a timely manner. Afterwards, Bangladesh border regiment discussed matters related to border crossing, holding meetings regularly and arrangements to conduct joint patrols.—Myanmar News Agency ■



PHOTO: MNA

Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker hands over Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker's responsibilities to Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker

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He said eight regular sessions were successfully held during the first 30 months of the Second Pyidaungsu Hluttaw term, with the ninth regular session in progress. Relating to lawmaking, during the first half of the Hluttaw term, 44 bills were discussed and enacted into law in 2016, 29 in 2017 and 22 in 2018, as of this date, totaling 95 enacted laws, said the Speaker. To aid in the development operations of various sectors, 40 cases of foreign and domestic loans were discussed, 26 cases of MoU signing were discussed for international cooperation, in addition to discussions relating to the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw.

Special regional relations performed in the first half of the Hluttaw term include hosting the 37th ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly, forming the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Cooperation Committee and the Inter-Parliamentary Union Cooperation Committee to collaborate with international organizations and international parliaments, and attending 21 meetings related to the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly and 2 meetings related to the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

The Myanmar Parliamentary Union was formed to promote discussions between the Union-level Hluttaws and state/regional Hluttaws, and between state and regional Hluttaws, said the Speaker. He added that the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw's Legal Affairs and Special Cases Assessment Commission was formed to scrutinize, amend, abolish existing laws and enact new laws, scrutinizing special cases from a legal perspective, and support important Hluttaw processes.

The Speaker said the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw is formed with representatives from the entire nation and represents all the people living in the country, while conducting legislative work for the country and its citizens, in addition to assuming the Hluttaw's responsibilities.

He said at the present time it is focusing on ethnic solidarity and national reconciliation for a long-lasting union peace. He instructed the Hluttaw representatives to work for the peace and rule of law starting from their constituencies up to the



U Kyaw Kyaw Maung, Governor of the Central Bank of Myanmar, taking the oath of office in front of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker. **PHOTO: MNA**

national-level.

The Speaker requested the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw representatives to use their accumulated experiences and knowledge to carry out the hopes and wishes of the people in the remaining 30 months of the Hluttaw term. He thanked the Hluttaw representatives and officials from respective sectors, departments, and organizations who have worked together with him in the first 30 months of the Hluttaw term.

Next, Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than handed over the responsibilities of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker to Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U T Khun Myat.

Incoming Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker U T Khun Myat's speech

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker U T Khun Myat then delivered a speech.

Incoming Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker U T Khun Myat expressed his gratitude to Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than and Deputy Speaker U Aye Tha Aung for successfully fulfilling the responsibilities of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker and Deputy Speaker, respectively, for the first 30 months of the Hluttaw term.

He said the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw will honor and put on record the endeavors of the Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker and Deputy Speaker based on the Constitution, Hluttaw laws and bylaws, and the national policies and agenda for the emergence of a democratic federal union togeth-

er with Hluttaw representatives, using their skills in difficult undertakings in different sectors during the 30 months of the first half of the Hluttaw term.

The Speaker said he has heard that parliaments around the world are the bedrocks of a country's democracy as well as their spirit and blood vessels. Parliaments exercise legislative power and represent the people while listening to the people's voices, wishes, opinions and needs and working to fulfill them.

He said carrying out these duties and the emergence of laws that have relevance on the actual development of the people's socio-economy, national development, and ensuring the basic socio-economy of the people is beneficial require the checks and balances and cooperation with the entities and organizations who wield executive and judicial authority.

It is evident that we are all cooperating in the Third Session of the Union Peace Conference – 21st Century Panglong for the emergence of a democratic federal union, said the Speaker. He said for the Hluttaw representatives to fully participate in the discussions with constructive intentions, ethnic representatives from various political parties have been included in the preliminary formation.

He said the legislative Hluttaw enacts laws that protects and enables the benefit of the nation and the people while implementing them in accordance with the existing laws, bylaws, rules and regulations of the executive and judicial branches and

other related organizations, and cooperating with them for the nation and people's benefit. Hluttaw representatives and every citizen have to respect and follow existing laws to be accountable, responsible and disciplined in cooperation.

The Speaker said the three branches of the government being the executive, legislative and judicial branches have been equally divided as per the Constitution, providing checks and balances to each other and working for the continued discussions and cooperation for national development.

People wish to see immediate results in the democratic transition but should note that the basis of democracy sometimes requires a period of time for a solution to emerge, said the Speaker. He added that a true democratic system is the only system that can handle the challenges of the 21st Century.

The Speaker said he believes the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw representatives will have sincere compassion for the people, foresight and systematic individual accountability in the democratic transition process. As experience and maturity is accumulated with each successive meeting, Hluttaw representatives will increase their performance by continued adherence to the Constitution, Hluttaw laws, bylaws and existing laws, rules and regulations.

The Speaker requested the Hluttaw representatives to cooperate with him in the remaining half of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw term, as all work together for the benefit of the nation and the

people, without any bias regarding one's political party, ethnicity, region, language, culture or beliefs. He said he believes that by upholding responsibility and accountability with sincerity and kindness, more improvements will be made in the process for the emergence of a democratic federal union.

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker U T Khun Myat then announced the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw has put on record the successful term of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker and Deputy Speaker served by Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than and Deputy Speaker U Aye Tha Aung.

This was followed by U Kyaw Kyaw Maung, Governor of the Central Bank of Myanmar, taking the oath of office in front of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker.

Soft loan from Italy

Union Minister Dr. Aung Thu and Deputy Minister U Maung Maung Win explained to the Hluttaw the matter sent from the Office of the President concerning the soft loan of Euro 30 million from Italy for the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation's projects.

Union Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation Dr. Aung Thu said the Italian government offered co-financing a soft loan of Euro 30 million for the National Electrification Project. He said the soft loan is offered with no interest, a grace period of 18 years and an amortization period of 10 years.

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Gov't to assist paddy replantation in flooded fields

By Nyein Nyein

MORE than 300,000 acres of farmland were destroyed among over 700,000 acres that were inundated, according to a nationwide assessment conducted by the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation.

Heavy rains caused floods in several parts of Myanmar in July. The 300,000 acres of farmland were destroyed in Bago, Magwe, Sagaing, Yangon and

Ayeyawady regions and Kayin and Mon states.

Out of the destroyed 300,000 acres of farmland, about 200,000 acres were summer and monsoon sesame cultivations and the remaining more than 100,000 acres were paddy plantations, said U Myo Thint Tun, assistant secretary from the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation.

"According to reports, more than 700,000 acres of farmland were flooded across

the country. Except for 100,000 acres, water has now receded in more than 600,000 acres and over 300,000 acres of farmland have been destroyed. Farmers are now cultivating monsoon paddy in their fields. A total of over 60,000 acres of farmland has already cultivated," he added. The government is ready to provide assistance in the replantation of paddy in time in flooded and inundated farms, according to the ministry.

Moreover, Myanmar Rice

Federation (MRF) will provide farmland education awareness and fertilizers, in cooperation with the government and other relevant organizations, for timely replanting of paddy on destroyed farmlands, so that paddy production would not be affected.

Farmers who had their farms flooded or inundated should contact the MRF head office through these phone numbers: 01-218266 to 68 and 01-2301128 and 29. ■

ICOMS to consider putting Bagan on UNESCO's world heritage list

THE International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMS) will decide if Bagan should be placed on UNESCO's world heritage list. The council will inspect the pagodas and buildings in the Bagan area, in accordance with ICOMS' set rules and regulations.

"Officials from ICOMS will visit Myanmar in September, but the date of this visit has not been fixed yet. Arrangements have been made to put the ancient area on UNESCO's world heritage list. However, in spite of local efforts to do so, we're

not sure if it will be included or not," said U Aung Kyaw Kyaw, director of Archaeology and National Museum Department. The Bagan region was previously nominated to UNESCO's world heritage list in 1996. However, it was not successful due to the sub-standard conditions of some pagodas. Recently, a second proposal was put forth in February of this year.

"In 2015, pagodas were renovated in their original designs, in accordance with designated plans and other procedures from the Archaeology



File photo shows a view of Bagan, Mandalay Region.

PHOTO: PHOE KHWAR

and National Museum Department. After these procedures had been successfully carried out, submission of documents to UNESCO's world heritage organization was carried out,"

U Aung Kyaw Kyaw added.

As many as 4,446,733 pagodas were used as places of worship since the ancient dynastic period in Bagan. —Thurein Lin/MDN ■

Innwa Bank Ltd. opens new branch in South Dagon Myothit

THE opening ceremony of a new branch of Innwa Bank Ltd. was held at the compound of its bank in South Dagon Myothit Township on 30 July.

At the ceremony, U Thant Swe, Managing Director of Myanmar Economic Corporation, U Hla Myint, administrator of

Township General Administrative Department and U Aung Ngwe Oo, Managing Director of Innwa Bank Ltd. cut the ribbon to launch the new opening. Then, Yangon Command Commander Major General Thet Pon unveiled the signboard of the Innwa Bank Ltd. and went

around the bank.

The newly opened bank is the 52nd branch for Innwa Bank Ltd. It is located at 436, at the corner of Padamyar and Hlawga roads, Ward 19, South Dagon Myothit Township.

Innwa Bank Ltd. is providing money transfer services

around the country. The bank is offering 10 per cent of interest rate for fixed account, depending on time duration, and 9 per cent on variable saving account. Innwa Bank Ltd. also provides loans to people who would like to start their own business.—Myanmar News Agency ■

Diploma in Business Studies opened at Monywa University of Economics

THE Diploma in Business Studies (DBS) course has been launched at the Monywa University of Economics this month, under the management of the Department of Commerce and Accountancy.

To attend the DBS course, a candidate must be a graduate from any university, interested in starting their own business,

be a business person at present, and have received a CABS certificate.

Previously, DBS provided only CABS certificates. But now, the diploma training course has been opened with the arrangement of the University of Economics Human Resources Development Department. The diploma course will accept only

50 students. Those who have already received CABS certificates can directly attend the DBS course.

The nine-month program consists of three semesters. It will be open Mondays through Fridays from 7am to 9am. The department will also invite other experts and guest speakers to conduct discussions with the

students.

The University of Economics Human Resources Development Department will collect Ks 180,000 as fees for the nine-month program. The Department of Commerce and Accountancy has now begun calling for applications at the Monywa University of Economics.—Myo Min Tun (Monywa) ■

Severe weather condition hinders rice export

By May Thet Hnin

RICE exports through normal trade routes as well as border gates are facing obstacles attributed to severe weather condition.

Regarding sea trade, the poor weather condition is hindering loading of rice and ships could still be seen docked at the ports. Rice stocked in warehouses are affected by moisture, and measuring rice moisture content and drying are being carried out.

“When rice is loaded on the ship, they need to pass the qual-

ity control process. We have to manage the drying process to pass this stage. Besides, there is storage difficulty in the warehouse. Exporters will get money only after loading. Therefore, they are stuck in this business and are not able to do other things”, said U Than Oo, secretary at the Bayintnaung depot.

Flood in Shweli River has caused transport problems on the Muse-Shweli Road and trading is temporarily closed, according to U Chanthar Oo, vice chair at Muse rice depot.

At present, rice supply to Muse depot is only 2,000 to 3,000

tons per day.

“This season sees usually low supply. The nasty weather condition worsens the trading. Additionally, China’s merchants this year cannot buy rice at the sales price. Therefore, both rice trading and the price is much lower than the similar period of last year,” said U Chan Thar Oo.

Export prices of quality rice is down by Ks2,000, compared to the retail price of the rice in the domestic market.

“There is a less rice flow out of Muse border gate. Normal trade is also facing obstacles. This being so, the supply at Bay-

intnaung depot is lower than usual, and so is the trading,” said U Than Oo from Bayintnaung depot.

The prevailing price of rice at Bayintnaung market ranges from Ks20,000 to Ks21,500 per bag depending on quality. The price shows a decrease of Ks1,000 per bag.

Normally, around 50,000 rice bags are daily supplied at the Bayintnaung depot when the business is high. At present, only 5,000 to 10,000 rice bags are entering the market.

Rice and broken rice exports in the past three months

were valued at US\$219.5 million, with the export volume of over 638,468 metric tons, according to an announcement of the Myanmar Rice Federation.

Between 1 April and 29 June of this year, over 480,787 metric tons of rice were exported to 36 countries, while 157,681 metric tons of broken rice were shipped to 14 foreign countries. The border trade surpassed sea trade, accounting for 53.7 per cent of the total export. Export through the border checkpoints earned an estimated \$122 million, whereas the sea trade saw an income of \$97 million. ■

Low-quality green grams selling well as aqua feed

THE Yangon market is seeing a high demand for low-quality green grams, rejected by mills in Mandalay, as aqua feed, according to the Mandalay beans and pulses market.

During this time last year, the low-quality green grams saw a low demand. This year, they are selling well as fish ponds in Yangon and Ayeyawady regions highly demand them as aqua feed, said U Soe Win Myint, depot owner from Mandalay.

Green grams are placed in the market after the cleaning process. There are 10 bean cleaning machines in Mandalay. Previously, they were stockpiled in the warehouse due to low demand. But at present, they are reaping profits and nearly sold out. Green grams are being manufactured by feed processing factories from Yangon as aqua feed, he maintained. Some five or 10 bags of low-quality green grams are produced when Mandalay mills carry out the cleaning process for 100 bags. The poor-quality green grams fetch Ks580 per viss (3.6lb) in the Mandalay beans and pulses market. In early June, green grams were worth Ks128,000 per three-basket bag. The price dropped to Ks95,000 per bag by the end of July, when they were harvested. Over 30,000 bags are supplied daily to the Mandalay beans and pulses market. —Min Htet Aung/Mandalay sub-printing house ■



Thilawa Special Economic Zone attracts foreign investors through its manufacturing sector in nearly four months. **PHOTO: PHOE HTAUNG**

Manufacturing sector attracts foreign investments in Thilawa SEZ

By May Thet Hnin

THE manufacturing sector absorbed the overall foreign investments of US\$171 million made in the Thilawa Special Economic Zone (SEZ) between 1 April and 26 July this year.

Four enterprises from Singapore and Japan entered the Thilawa SEZ in the past four months.

Since the 2014-2015 fiscal

year, a total of 97 enterprises have invested in the Thilawa SEZ, with estimated investments of \$1.49 billion.

The manufacturing sector accounts for 80.13 per cent of the total investments in the zone, attracting \$1.18 billion from 74 enterprises.

The trading sector has attracted investments of \$111 million. Investments were registered at \$82 million in the ser-

vice sector, over \$73 million in the transportation and logistics sector, over \$30 million in the real estate sector and over \$12 million in the hotel sector.

Singapore placed first on the list, with investments of \$598 million so far, followed by Japan with \$441 million and Thailand with over \$170 million. South Korea, Hong Kong, the UK, the UAE, Malaysia, Austria, China (Taipei), Panama, China, Bru-

nei, Viet Nam, Australia and the Netherlands have also invested in the Thilawa SEZ. Three domestic enterprises are also present at the special economic zone.

The country is currently implementing three Special Economic Zones—Thilawa, Kyaukpadaung and Dawei. Of the three, Thilawa is leading with its better infrastructure and thriving business. ■

National Natural Disaster Management Committee advises people in flood-hit areas

THE National Natural Disaster Management Committee (NNDMC) yesterday alerted people living near rivers and low-lying areas in Madauk and Hpa-an townships to immediately leave their homes and those in Homalin Township to take precautionary measures, as the water levels in the rivers near them have exceeded the danger level. The NNDMC and Ministry of Social Welfare,

Relief and Resettlement (MSWRR) had provided so far over Ks 50 million worth of rice, Ks 400,000 worth of construction materials, over Ks 32 million other supplies, over Ks 11 million rescue materials and natural disaster fund's Ks 100 million cash assistance to the flood-hit people in Kayin State.

The NNDMC and MSWRR also provided about Ks 14 million worth of rice, Ks 6.5 mil-

lion worth of other supplies and natural disaster fund's Ks 100 million cash assistance to the flood-hit people in Mon State. Similarly, Kayin State government, well-wishers, donors and Wai Lu Kyaw Foundation together delivered, on 31 July, purified drinking water and foods to the 16 rescue centers, over 2,080 households, over 10,500 people and flood-hit villages in Hpa-an Township.—MNA ■



Union Minister for Health and Sports Dr. Myint Htwe and wife welcomed by Switzerland Ambassador Mr. Paul Rene Seger.

Photo: MNA

National Day of Switzerland celebrated in Yangon

A CEREMONY in commemoration of the National Day of Switzerland was held yesterday evening at Melia Hotel in Yangon with the attendance of Union Minister for Health and Sports Dr. Myint Htwe and wife. The ceremony commenced with the playing of the national anthems of Myanmar and Switzerland. Ambassador of Switzerland Mr. Paul Rene Seger and Union Minister for Health and Sports Dr. Myint Htwe de-

livered speeches of greetings. Afterwards, the ambassador and the union minister posed for documentary photos together with the ceremony attendees.

The ambassador and wife then hosted a dinner for the attendees. Present at the event were ambassadors and responsible persons from the embassies in Yangon, United Nations representatives and invited guests.—Myanmar News Agency ■

Coordination meeting held to continue healthcare provision in flooded areas

A COORDINATION meeting to continue emergency healthcare provided in the flooded areas was held yesterday at the Ministry of Health and Sports (MHS) in Nay Pyi Taw. During the meeting, matters related to continuing of emergency healthcare in the flooded areas of Kayin and Mon states and Bago and Taninthayi regions were coordinated.

Matters related to adding of emergency medicines, including snake antidotes and medical equipment, gathering data and reconstruction of destroyed buildings by flood, making preparedness in the possible areas of flooding, medicines and medical equipment storage and other requirements were also discussed at the meeting. Ministry of Health

and Sports is carrying out their rescue activities by conducting temporary clinics and forming mobile medical teams. In addition, medical treatments, transferring patients, inspections of infectious diseases, managing on water and environmental clearance and healthcare education are also being implemented by the MHS.—MNA ■

18th Myanmar Mining Summit held in Nay Pyi Taw

UNDER the supervision of the Department of Rehabilitation of the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement and UNICEF, the 18th Myanmar Mining Summit was held at Mingalar Thiri Hotel in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

During the meeting, Direc-

tor-General U Win Naing Tun from the Department of Rehabilitation said that the working committee of the Mining Education team was formed in 2012 and the 18th Myanmar Mining Summit is aimed to prevent from the dangers of mining explosions.

He also said that as part of the efforts of the peace processes, educating, giving information and conducting the courses for prevention of the dangers of the explosion of mines are being undertaken by the officials as mining explosions can cause severe loss to the lives of the

public along with productivity in State.

He also urged that educating is also a humanitarian matter and should be considered in all aspects by understanding the value of each and every citizen to lead an all-round development of the democracy nation.

Also present at the meeting were officials from relevant ministries, UNICEF, INGOs, NGOs and the meeting continued with presenting cash to mine-hit people followed by explaining the future agendas of the committee's tasks.—Myanmar News Agency ■

Myanmar Companies Law (2017), Electronic Registry (MyCO) launched

1 August 2018, the effective date of the Myanmar Companies Law, will be a remarkable day that will bring landmark reform and a game changer for Myanmar's business environment. The Myanmar Companies Law, a regulatory foundation for companies and private sector economic enterprises, and Electronic Registry system (MyCO) were launched simultaneously yesterday at Melia hotel in Yangon for the smooth running of companies. Around 150 people attended the ceremony, including departmental officials, development partners, local and foreign investors from private sectors, legal consultants and the media.

H.E U Soe Win, Union Minister for Planning and Finance attended the ceremony and delivered an opening speech. In his speech, the Union Minister said that Myanmar Companies Law is a legal reform that could have marked changes on Myanmar economy. By creating an enabling business environment and reducing the regulatory burden, the Myanmar Companies Law would help the development of Myanmar's economy with the success of company registration system. He congratulated those who have made a concerted effort to get ready the implementation of a law that is fundamental to the business sector and Elec-

tronic Registry.

After that, Director General of the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration delivered a speech. The Director General said in his speech that the Myanmar Companies Law 2017 will improve the transparency and provide an efficient and effective way for companies by reducing the regulatory burden and lowering the compliance cost. Legal reforms on both policy and procedures will be found in the Myanmar Companies Law. Following the ceremony, U Myo Min, director of the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration, gave a brief presentation on the



Union Minister U Soe Win delivers the speech at the launching ceremony of Myanmar Companies Law (2017) and Electronic Registry system (MyCO). PHOTO: MNA

Electronic Registry and demonstrated the Myanmar Compa-

nies Online Registry (MyCo). —Myanmar News Agency ■

AmyothaHluttaw Speaker hands over PyidaungsuHluttaw Speaker's responsibilities to PyithuHluttaw Speaker

FROM PAGE-3

The soft loan will allow officials to provide electricity, in the form of solar home systems and mini-grid systems, to the hard-to-reach Chin State and its neighboring areas, with a projected outreach to 96,500 households in 1,015 villages, said the Union Minister. He said the Italian government intends to help implement the pre-electrification system for villages that are out of reach of the national power grid.

The Union Minister said that when considering areas for implementing the solar home system, the chosen criteria was for villages that will take 10-15 years to connect to the national power grid, areas more than 10 miles away from the grid, and villages that can put in 10 per cent of the payment for the solar home system. Likewise, areas for implementing the mini-grid sys-

tem were chosen on whether they will take 10-15 years to connect to the national power grid, villages that can put in 20 per cent of the payment for the mini-grid, villages willing to pay electrical bills and villages wishing to conduct small-scale businesses, among other considerations.

The Union Minister said the Italian government will support a separate fund of US\$1.05 million to the World Bank for technological and technical assistance. He requested the Hluttaw to approve the soft loan so as to realize the 2030 Myanmar National Electrification Plan (NEP).

Deputy Minister for Planning and Finance U Maung Maung Win explained that the Department of Rural Development, under the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation, will lead the rural electrification project funded by the soft loan and an an-

nual payment of Ks4,996.2 million from the national budget will have to be made after the grace period was over. He said the national debt to GDP ratio of Myanmar is 15.45 per cent, as of 31 March 2018, and therefore has the capacity to withstand the debt.

The Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker then announced for MPs interested in discussing the soft loan of Euro 30 million from the Italian government to register their names.

Agricultural loan from Asian Development Bank

Union Minister Dr. Aung Thu and Deputy Minister U Maung Maung Win explained to the Hluttaw the matter sent from the Office of the President concerning the loan of US\$40.5 million from the Asian Development Bank for the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation's project.

Union Minister Dr. Aung Thu

said the loan will be used to fund the Climate Friendly Agribusiness Value Chains Sector Project for 5 townships in Magway Region, 4 townships in Mandalay Region, and 5 townships in Sagaing Region, totaling 14 townships in central Myanmar.

The amortization period for the loan is 32 years, including an 8-year grace period, with 1 per cent interest during the grace period and 1.5 per cent in the remaining period. Payments after the grace period will be made twice a year (once each in March and September) over a period of 24 years, totaling 48 separate payments. The Union Minister requested the Hluttaw to approve the loan from Asian Development Bank.

Deputy Minister U Maung Maung Win explained the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation will lead the projects

funded by the loan from the Asian Development Bank. He said the project will allow the production of agricultural products that meet the ISO 17025 standards, which will in turn aid in penetrating the foreign market and increasing income. He said annual payments for the loan will be calculated into the respective ministry's budget plans. He said the national debt to GDP ratio of Myanmar is 15.45 per cent, as of 31 March 2018, and therefore has the capacity to withstand the debt.

The Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker then announced that MPs interested in discussing the loan of US\$40.5 million from Asian Development Bank should register their names.

The sixth-day meeting of the ninth regular session of the Second Pyidaungsu Hluttaw will continue on 7 August. —Thura Zaw, Han Lin Naing ■

MPU holds 4/2018 meeting



MPU Vice Chairman Mahn Win Khaing Than delivers a speech at the Myanmar Parliamentary Union meeting in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

MYANMAR Parliamentary Union held a meeting yesterday to review the budget scrutinizing process for projects in regions and states and Hluttaw affairs.

In his opening remarks at the meeting at the Hluttaw building in Nay Pyi Taw, U T Khun Myat, Speaker of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw and Chairman of the MPU, suggested region and state Hluttaws to draft budget scrutinizing bill as there is no time frame for the scrutinizing budget for the projects in regions and states.

Regarding legislation, the Legal Affairs and Special Cases Assessment Commission would review and report the current situation at the meeting, said U T Khun Myat, adding that Speakers of the region and state Hluttaws are to take part in the discussion openly.

Mahn Win Khaing Than, Vice Chairman of the MPU and Speaker of Amyotha Hluttaw, underscored the importance of sufficient time for scrutinizing the budgets submitted by region and state governments, saying that it is found that some inconveniences happened due to time constraints for reviewing the budgets by the Hluttaw.

The Union Budget Law has been enacted to scrutinize the National Planning and Budget bills at Pyidaungsu Hluttaw, he added, saying that the date when the Union Government should submit the bills to the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw and the date when the Hluttaw's scrutinizing committee submit their report to the Hluttaw has been set.

Afterwards, U Tun Tun Hein, Secretary of MPU and Speaker of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw,

reported on the resolutions of meeting No. 3/2018.

U Aye Tha Aung, member of the MPU and Speaker of Amyotha Hluttaw called for cooperation in Hluttaw's undertakings and situation of work being carried out by the Hluttaw.

At the meeting, Union Minister for Planning and Finance U Soe Win and Deputy Minister U Maung Maung Win discussed matters related to projects in regions and states and process for submitting the annual budget bill.

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Legal Affairs and Special Cases Assessment Commission suggested measures to be taken to prevent contradictions and differences between laws enacted by Pyidaungsu Hluttaw and regional and state Hluttaws.— Myanmar News Agency ■

New border pass launched at Rekhawda

A NEW travel border pass to enter Falam District, Chin State, is to be launched on 8 August at a ceremony to open the Myanmar-India international border check point in Rekhawda.

The two kinds of border pass permit would allow travelers enter Falam District.

The Border Pass-BP system would allow holders to travel in Falam District for 14 days (13 nights) and the Temporary Border Pass-TBP for sev-

en days (six nights), according to U Tezar Lin, Head of Falam Township Rekhawda Immigration and Population Department at Rekhawda.

Besides, the check point would become the same on the international route.

Previous border passes allowed visitors from India to enter Myanmar through the border bridge to visit the Reed Lake for a day.—Reekhawda IPRD ■



Myanmar-India international border check point in Rekhawda. **PHOTO: MNA**

Disaster resilience at local level

THE Asia-Pacific Region is the most water-related disaster prone region in the world. The rising frequency of water-related disasters in our region has forced us to respond with unity and resilience, but there is a wide variety in the degree and quality of response of individual nations.

The increased frequency with which our country has been hit by floods, linked to climate change, deforestation and global warming, has long ago placed this matter on our and other people's agenda.

Myanmar has abundant water resources and our hydro-power potential is considerable. At the same time, we are facing uneven distribution of rainfall, changing pattern of hydrological conditions and climate change, and floods and drought caused by environmental and ecological degradation.

We need to step up our efforts in supporting communities, departments concerned and organizations to strengthen their resilience against unforeseen or significant disruptions.

Building disaster-resilient communities will take time and enormous resources. While the process moves slowly, local authorities can upgrade resources for rescue and relief. Meanwhile, under the leadership of the National Natural Disaster Management Committee, local government units can improve warning systems and protocols for timely evacuation, with decent facilities provided for housing evacuees.

Preparedness efforts, early warning systems and communication systems must all be in place, all the time, and people must be properly informed and trained on what to do.

We will have to work on several fronts, efficiently and creatively, using all available resources, starting with disaster prevention and mitigation. That includes doing the little things and getting them right.

Regarding floods, our roads, drains, bridges, sewerage system, water-distribution mains and other public facilities must be strengthened.

All institutions concerned in the country need to do more to cope with the growing disaster threat. Collaboration between us and regional countries will enable all to combat water-related disasters more effectively.

By Tekatho Zaw Htoo Oo

THIS year's monsoon season has brought flash flood hazards, including heavy flooding and landslides, to many parts of the country. Not only in Myanmar but also its neighbouring countries have been enduring these devastating natural disasters, such as flood damage, wind hazards, storms and earthquakes due to severe climate change.

The main monsoon season in Myanmar runs from June to October, and the country usually encounters flash floods, strong winds, and heavy rains since the beginning of the monsoon season. Normally, floods occur in Myanmar as water overflows from the monsoon months of June to October, but the country suffers its monsoon flooding most in July and August. This can occur in a multitude of ways. Rain water flows into the Ayeyawady, the Chindwin, the Sittaung and the Thanlwin rivers as well as into many of its tributaries, which can lead to overflowing of the waterways. Storms can also cause unexpected flooding sometimes. Heavy rainfalls, accompanied by a storm surge, can cause flash flooding in many towns and villages located near the rivers.

A flash flood occurs when water overflows on or inundates land that is normally dry. Rivers can overflow their banks to cause flooding, and sea waters can be pushed towards land by massive winds, which then causes flooding. Rainfalls over an extended period can cause major rivers to overflow their banks, causing flooding during heavy rains, severe storms and dam breaks. Huge amounts of water flowing in rivers are due to incessant heavy rains and melting of snow, resulting in severe flooding. Flash flood normally happens during the monsoon season. Around this time, potholes can overflow fast, breaking and damaging the river banks.



PHOTO: MNA



PHOTO: MNA

Impact of flash floods, taking effective long-term measures

Flash flooding

Generally, most flash flooding can be caused by a number of things due to slow-moving thunderstorms or a multiple of thunderstorms moving over the same area. Flash floods often carry away some trees along the river, and these floods can destroy buildings, roads, bridges, etc.

Coastal flooding can result from heavy rains due to cyclones or tropical storms, causing sea water to flow towards inland. Moreover, tsunamis are caused by an underwater earthquake and a volcanic eruption, and these can carry away sampans and motor boats into the sea. Flooding in ur-

ban areas can be caused by flash floods, coastal or river floods, but there is also a specific flood type that is called urban flooding.

Urban floods are entirely manmade with poorly maintained drains, plastic bags and trash shrinking free passage for water to flow. Climate change is also a factor in contributing to accumulation of water on roads after a heavy downpour. Coastal flooding can result from a variety of different causes, including storm surges created by hurricanes and tropical cyclones, rising sea levels due to climate change and tsunamis. Man-made floods can be caused by unsystematic cultivation method, poor urban in-

frastructure, deforestation and growing urban development.

Causes of landslides

A landslide is defined as the movement of a mass of rock, debris or earth down a slope. Landslides are a type of 'mass wasting,' which denotes any down-slope movement of soil and rock under the direct influence of gravity.

Almost every landslide has multiple causes. Slope movement occurs when forces acting down-slope exceed the strength of the earth materials that compose the slope. Causes include factors that increase the effects of downward-slope forces and

factors that contribute to low or reduced strength. Landslides can be initiated in slopes already on the verge of movement by rainfall, snowmelt, changes in water level, stream erosion, changes in ground water, earthquakes, volcanic activity, disturbances of human activities, or any combination of these factors.

Earthquake movements and other factors can also induce landslides underwater. These landslides are called submarine landslides. Submarine landslides sometimes cause tsunamis that damage coastal areas. Landslides can also be caused on account of heavy rains and instabilities in slopes. Slope movement oc-

The consequences of events triggered by a flash flooding usually overwhelms local response capacity and seriously affects the social and economic development of the country.



PHOTO: MNA

curs with forces acting downwards-slope. There are also other factors that cause underwater landslides.

Effects of flash flooding

Flash flooding can have devastating consequences and can have effects on the economy, environment and its people. During floods, especially flash flooding, houses, offices, hospitals, transportation, roads, bridges, water tanks are destroyed. People become homeless. Additionally, the government deploys firemen, police and other emergency apparatuses to the affected areas. It usually takes years for affected communities to be rebuilt and resettle in order to be back to normalcy. The environment also suffers when floods occur. Moreover, chemicals and other hazardous substances end up in water and eventually contaminate the water bodies that floods end up in. In addition, flooding can destroy the natural balance of the ecosystem.

Coping with the aftermaths of flooding

Many people and animals have perished in flash floods and others have been made homeless. Thus, they have to take shelters at the temporary relief centers, schools, halls and monasteries. Flooding brings a lot of diseases and infections including fever, pneumonia and dysentery.

The consequences of events triggered by a flash flooding usually overwhelms local response capacity and seriously affects the social and economic development of the country. As for the authorities concerned, concerted efforts are being made to provide necessary assistance to these flood victims nationwide. The collaboration between governments, NGOs, CSOs and donors plays a pivotal role to fulfill their requirements and to return these regions to a better than normal condition.

Translated by
Win Ko Ko Aung



Flood Warning

(Issued at 13:00 hrs M.S.T on 1-8-2018)

ACCORDING to the (12:30) hrs M.S.T observation today, the water level of Chindwin River at Homalin is observed as about (1½) feet below its danger level. It may reach its danger level during the next (2) days.

It is especially advised to the people who settle near the river bank and low lying areas at Homalin Township, to take precaution measure.

Flood Bulletin

(Issued at 13:00 hrs M.S.T on 1-8-2018)

Flood condition of Sittoung River

According to the (12:30) hrs M.S.T observation today, the water level of Sittoung River has exceeded by about (5½) feet at Madauk above its danger level. It may fall about (1) foot during the next (2) days and may remain above its danger level.

Flood condition of Thanlwin River

According to the (12:30) hrs M.S.T observation today, the water level of Thanlwin River has exceeded by about (5½) feet at Hpaan above its danger level. It may fall about (1½) feet during the next (3) days and may remain above its danger level.

Advisory

It is especially advised to the people who settle near the river banks and lowlying areas in Hpaan Township and Madauk, to avert due to the rise of water level.

Myanmar Daily Weather Report

(Issued at 7:00 pm Wednesday 1st August, 2018)

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

FORECAST VALID UNTIL AFTERNOON OF THE 2nd AUGUST, 2018: Rain or thundershowers will be isolated in Lower Sagaing Region, scattered in Mandalay and Magway Regions, fairly widespread in Kachin, Shan and Kayah States and widespread in the remaining Regions and States with regionally heavy falls in Rakhine State and isolated heavy falls in Yangon, Ayeyawady and Taninthayi Regions, Kayin and Mon States. Degree of certainty is (100%).

STATE OF THE SEA: Squalls with rough seas are likely at times off and along Myanmar Coasts. Surface wind speed in squalls may reach (35) m.p.h. Wave height will be about (8 - 12) feet in off and along Myanmar Coasts.

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Strong monsoon over the Andaman sea and South Bay of Bengal.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 2nd AUGUST, 2018: One or two rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 2nd AUGUST, 2018: Some rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 2nd AUGUST, 2018: Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

Union Attorney General receives Japanese Parliamentary Vice-Minister of Justice



Union Attorney-General U Tun Tun Oo meets with Japanese Parliamentary Vice-Minister of Justice Mr. Takashi Yamashita in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

UNION Attorney-General U Tun Tun Oo received Japanese Parliamentary Vice-Minister of Justice Mr. Takashi Yamashita at his office in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

During the meeting, they discussed cooperation for the development of legal sectors between Myanmar and Japan,

transformation of judicial sectors, enhancing human resources along with the programmes to be assisted in drawing business laws, including intellectual properties rights, exchanging views in youth forums and the International Conference on Law to be held in Japan, and

providing scholarships to Japan with the cooperation of Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). Also present at the meeting were Deputy Attorney-General U Win Myint, Permanent Secretary Daw Nu Nu Yin and Director-General Dr. Thida Oo.—MNA ■

Myanmar Red Cross Society provides aid to flood victims

MYANMAR Red Cross Society (MRCS) has been providing aid to the people in flooded areas in Mon and Kayin states, Bago and Taninthayi regions and Nay Pyi Taw. Until 30 July, the MRCS has provided 300 hygiene parcels and 300 dignity kits to the flood victims and additionally provided rain coats, helmets and flags to the volunteers of MRCS who worked in the flood-stricken areas of Ye, Thaton, Bilin and Paung in Mon State.

The MRCS also provided first aid, drinking water and ready meals as well as 400

mosquito nets, 40 family kits, 100 dignity kits for women, 2,200 water purification tablets and 400 packs of electrolyte powder to the flood victims in the townships of Hpa-an, Hlaingbwe, Kya-in-Seikkgyi, Myawaddy and Papun in Kayin State. Similarly, 700 hygiene parcels, 300 dignity kits for women, 200 sheets of tarpaulin, 1,200 packs of electrolyte powder and other requirements were also provided to the flood victims in the townships of Bago, Waw, Dai-kU, Shwegyin and Kyaukgyi in Bago Region. MRCS also provided

ed rescue materials, including 40 family kits, dignity kits for women, 30 sheets of tarpaulins, 500 packs of electrolyte powder for the flood-stricken damaged houses in Lewe Township in Nay Pyi Taw.

Moreover, MRCS also provided safety materials to the rescue-volunteers of MRCS. Myanmar Red Cross Society was and is providing humanitarian services, with over 250 volunteers, to the people in the flooded areas of Nay Pyi Taw, Bago, Taninthayi, Mon and Kayin states.—Myanmar News Agency ■

MYANMAR GAZETTE

Head of Service Organization confirmed

THE President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has confirmed Dr Tha Tun Kyaw as Director-General of the Minister's Office under the Ministry of Health and Sports on expiry of the one-year probationary period from the date he assumes charge of his duties.—Myanmar News Agency ■

Constitutional Tribunal chairperson receives Japanese Parliamentary Vice-Minister of Justice



Constitutional Tribunal chairperson U Myo Nyunt meets with Japanese Vice Minister of Justice Mr. Takashi Yamashita. **PHOTO: MNA**

CHAIRPERSON of the Constitutional Tribunal of Myanmar U Myo Nyunt received a delegation led by Parliamentary Vice-Minister of Justice of Japan Mr. Takashi Yamashita at his office in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

During the meeting, they discussed promoting Myanmar-Japan relations, matters related to the constitution and promoting the skills and capacity of tribunal officers.—Myanmar News Agency ■

Permanent Secretary U Myint Thu attends 1st round of Myanmar-Nepal Bilateral Consultations Meeting

A Myanmar Delegation led by U Myint Thu, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, attended the 1st round of Myanmar-Nepal Bilateral Consultations Meeting held in Kathmandu, Nepal, on 30 July 2018 and arrived back in Yangon on 1 August 2018. The signing ceremony of the MoU on the establishment of Bilateral Consultation Mechanism between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Myanmar and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Nepal and the Agreement between the Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and

the Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal on Exemption of Visa Requirements for Holders of Diplomatic and Official (Special) Passports was held in the morning of 30 July 2018 at Yak & Yeti Hotel in Kathmandu, followed by the 1st round of Bilateral Consultations Meeting. The meeting was co-chaired by U Myint Thu, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Myanmar and Mr. Shanker Das Bairagi, Foreign Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Nepal. The Myanmar delegation comprising U Myint Thu, Permanent Secretary

of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Thiri Pyanchi U Tun Nay Lin, Myanmar Ambassador to Nepal, and responsible officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Myanmar Embassy in Kathmandu attended the meeting.

At the Bilateral Consultations, both sides extensively discussed wide range of issues relating to the promotion of the bilateral relations and multi-faceted cooperation including trade, investment, tourism, connectivity, human resources development, cooperation in regional and international arenas, climate change, poverty reduction and other se-

curity matters as well as potential areas of future cooperation between the two countries.

The Nepal Foreign Secretary Mr. Shanker Das Bairagi hosted a lunch to the Permanent Secretary U Myint Thu and the Myanmar delegation in the afternoon on the same day. In the evening of 29th July 2018, the Permanent Secretary and delegation visited the Myanmar Embassy in Kathmandu and met with the Ambassador, staff and family members of the Embassy. On 31 July 2018, U Myint Thu, the Permanent Secretary, called on Mr. Ram Bahadur Thapa, Nepalese Min-

ister for Home Affairs and Acting Foreign Minister at the Ministry of Home Affairs of Nepal. During the meeting, they discussed and exchanged views on matters pertaining to promotion of bilateral relations and cooperation between Myanmar and Nepal as well as on regional and international issues of mutual interests. The signing of the Agreement on Exemption of visa requirements for holders of diplomatic and official passports between Myanmar and Nepal, allows officials of both countries a stay of up to 90 days without visas.—Myanmar News Agency ■

Trump could raise tariffs further on Chinese goods: reports

WASHINGTON — US President Donald Trump is now considering a 25 per cent tariff on \$200 billion in Chinese imports, more than the 10 per cent previously touted, reports said on Tuesday.

The US imposed 25 per cent tariffs on \$34 billion of Chinese products earlier this month, with plans to add another \$16 billion of imports on Tuesday.

Trump initially threatened to levy 10 per cent on an additional \$200 billion but that figure may now rise to 25 per cent, sources told the *Washington*

Post and *Bloomberg*.

It would represent a ramping up of pressure over Washington's trade standoff with Beijing.

Markets were however steady on Tuesday, given a boost by hopes for new negotiations.

In 2017, the United States had a \$376 billion trade deficit with China, which it is keen to cut.

Trump recently threatened to slap punitive tariffs on all Chinese imports, which accounted for more than \$500 billion last year.—AFP ■



US President Donald Trump recently threatened to slap punitive tariffs on all Chinese imports, which accounted for more than \$500 billion last year. PHOTO: AFP

Mexico hits back over Trump 'murder rate' jibe

MEXICO CITY (Mexico) — Mexican Interior Minister Alfonso Navarrete hit back on Tuesday at Donald Trump's criticism of his country's murder rate by telling the US president to stop the flow of arms across the common border.

"If they safeguard the—border, preventing the illegal entry of arms... and money from illicit activities into Mexico, there would be an almost immediate and dramatic drop in murders," said Navarrete.

He was responding to an earlier tweet from Trump addressing one of his favorite bugbears, security along the 3,000-kilometre (1,900-mile) border between the two countries.

"One of the reasons we need Great Border Security is that Mexico's murder rate in 2017 increased by 27% to 31,174 people killed, a record!" said Republican Trump, before launching into his regular tirade against the opposition Democrats, in particular "Crooked Hilary" Clinton, whom

he beat in the 2016 presidential election. Trump wants to put a stop to illegal immigration and has made several inflammatory statements in the past about Mexicans, branding them criminals and "rapists."

Official Mexican government statistics dispute Trump's figures, with 28,711 murders registered in 2017, the highest since records began in 1997. The situation has worsened, with another 15,973 murders over the first half of this year alone.—AFP ■

Right-wing candidate rejects Brazil's guilt over slavery

RIO DE JANEIRO (Brazil) — A Brazilian presidential frontrunner, former army captain Jair Bolsonaro, says the country should not feel guilty about having been the world's biggest slave importer.

The right-winger, a surprise leader in opinion polls after the imprisoned former president Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, said Brazil "owes no debt" to blacks.

"What historic debt are you talking about? I didn't send anyone into slavery," he said late Monday in an interview with TV Cultura.

Brazil, a former Portuguese colony, only abolished slavery in 1888, two decades after the United States and last of all western

countries. A decade of leftist rule under presidents Lula and Dilma Rousseff, ending in 2016, saw Brazil introduce widespread quotas for blacks in higher education and public sector jobs — part of historic measures to reduce inequality in Latin America's biggest country.

Bolsonaro said he would push to roll back that policy.

"The blacks are not better than me and I'm not better than them," he said. While the quotas can only be voted in or out by Congress, Bolsonaro said he would "propose to reduce them."

According to Bolsonaro, Portuguese traders were not to blame for the huge influx of slaves across the Atlantic, insisting that

"blacks themselves handed over the slaves."

Despite limited national airtime, the longtime congressman has launched an impressively effective presidential campaign using social media and capitalizing on his image as someone ready to respond to widespread disenchantment with the elite.

As a former military officer, Bolsonaro is also casting himself as the candidate who would bring a tough response to crime and corruption. In the television interview he yet again defended the record of the 1964-1985 military dictatorship, which started with a coup against the leftwing president, amid fears of rising communist influence.—AFP ■

97 injured as Mexican plane crashes at airport in hail storm

DURANGO (Mexico) — An Aeromexico flight crashed on takeoff during a heavy hail storm in northern Mexico, engulfing the plane in flames and injuring 97 people, officials said on Tuesday.

The Embraer 190 aircraft, which was operating between Durango and Mexico City and crashed around 3:00 pm local time (20:00 GMT), was carrying "88 adults, nine minors, two infants, two pilots and two flight attendants," the airline's director general Andres Conesa told a news conference.

"It is confirmed that there have been no deaths from the flight #AM2431 accident," tweeted Jose Rosas, the governor of Durango state where the crash occurred.

The accident did cause two serious injuries: a pilot had to undergo a spinal operation, and a young girl suffered burns on 25 per cent of her body, the governor said. A total of 97 people were admitted for treatment following the crash, most of them for "very light" injuries, according to Durango civil defence spokesman Alejandro Cardoza. Cardoza said the plane was caught in a heavy hailstorm and the pilots tried to make an emergency landing, after which the fire broke out.

Conesa thanked the crew "for their professionalism" and said that the aircraft "was perfectly maintained," but did not provide details on the circumstances of the accident.

Brazilian aircraft manufacturer Embraer announced the dispatch of a team to investigate the crash.

Dozens of lightly injured passengers were seen leaving the plane, which was engulfed in gray smoke in a field.

'We had to jump'

An image taken using a drone and obtained by AFP shows the aircraft immobilized in a field at the end of the runway.

"We were on the runway when the visibility grew worse," 47-year-old Jacqueline Flores, who was traveling with her 16-year-old daughter, told AFP.

"When we were already aloft, up high, it felt like the plane was going to level out but just then is when it plunged to the ground."

"I think we fell back on the runway because it was a hard surface, then we skidded on the ground until it stopped," added the Durango native, a housewife who was on a journey back to Colombia where she lives.

With the plane on the ground amid some bushes and brush, Flores said luggage began sliding down the aisle and she started to smell smoke. "I undid my seatbelt and saw flames, and realized we had to jump. 'There was a hole right next to us and the plane had broken up, I told my girl 'We have to jump over here' and we jumped,'" she added. According to Rosas, the passengers helped each other quickly evacuate the aircraft through the openings in the cabin caused by the accident.—AFP ■

Russia, Japan discuss Moscow's concerns over deployment of US missile defence

MOSCOW—Moscow once again voiced its concerns to Tokyo over the deployment of elements of the US global missile shield in the region, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said on Tuesday after talks between the two countries' foreign and defence ministers.

"On our part, we once again drew attention to the concerns the Russian side has already voiced over the deployment of elements of the US glob-

al missile defence in the region," he said.

In December 2017, the Japanese government took a decision to deploy two US Aegis Ashore missile defence systems in the north and southwest of the Honshu Island in 2023. Tokyo claims these systems are meant to protect the country from ballistic and, possibly, from cruise missiles. Japan plans to spend about 100 billion yens (about 897 million US dollars) for each of



Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov. PHOTO: TASS

the systems. Russia and China are against Tokyo's missile defence buildup, saying it will tilt the balance of forces in the region.—Tass ■

Manchester bomber evacuated from Libya in 2014

LONDON — The suicide bomber who killed 22 people at a pop concert in Manchester was rescued by the British navy from conflict-ridden Libya three years earlier, it was reported on Tuesday.

Salman Abedi, a British man of Libyan heritage, was among 110 Britons and their families evacuated by the ship HMS Enterprise and taken to Malta in August 2014, the *Daily Mail* newspaper said.

In May 2017, the then 22-year-old blew himself up outside Manchester Arena in northwest England at the end of a concert by Ariana Grande. Seven children were among the dead.

"For this man to have committed such an atrocity on UK soil after we rescued him from Libya was an act of utter betrayal," a government source told the paper. His brother Hashem Abedi, who is currently being held in Libya under investigation over the Manchester attack, was also reportedly evacuated.

An official review published last December revealed that Salman Abedi was under active investigation by British intelligence agency MI5 between January and July 2014, but it was a case of mistaken identity.

It found howev-

er that MI5 had come across intelligence in the months before the attack which, "had its true significance been properly understood", would have caused a new investigation to be opened.

The *Mail* reported that Abedi had taken a year off before university and was visiting Libya on holiday at the time of the evacuation.

The *Wall Street Journal* last year cited a family friend saying that Abedi had travelled to Libya with his father in 2011 to join the Tripoli Brigade militia as it battled the regime of dictator Moamer Kadhafi. A government spokesman said: "During the deteriorating security situation in Libya in 2014, Border Force officials were deployed to assist with the evacuation of British Nationals and their dependents."

He added: "The Anderson review into the Manchester attack concluded that the investigative actions taken in relation to Salman Abedi in 2014, and the subsequent decision to close him as a subject of interest, were sound on the basis of the information available at the time." Abedi was born in Manchester in 1994, to parents who had been granted asylum after fleeing Kadhafi's regime. —AFP ■

New Zealand adopts gender-neutral road sign after girl's letter

SYDNEY — The New Zealand Transport Agency will revise its "LINEMEN" road signs to be gender-neutral after receiving

a letter from a 7-year-old girl who said that "women can be line-workers too."

Zoe Carew wrote to the government authori-

ty in June after seeing the "LINEMEN" sign — used to indicate that workers are fixing electric power lines in the area — while driving with her family in Eastbourne in New Zealand's South Island, local media reported.

"Why does the sign say 'LINEMEN' when the people working on the lines may be men or women?" Carew wrote.

"I think that this sign is wrong and unfair. Do you agree?" Chief Executive of the New Zealand Transport Agency Fergus Gammie wrote back to Carew with news of the decision to change the signs to "LINE CREW" and congratulated her "for taking action where you think something unfair should be fixed."

Carew's letter became international news after the young girl's mother shared the correspondence on Twitter on Monday.

"So proud of my 7yo," Caitlin Carew said on Twitter. "High 5s all round!"

The New Zealand Transport Agency also tweeted that it was happy to take on Carew's suggestion "because great ideas can come from anyone, including seven-year-olds!"

Gammie invited Carew to have her photo taken with the new designs, but noted that the new signs will take some time to be rolled out. "The new signs will replace the old ones when they need replacement due to wear and tear, this may take some time," he wrote.—Kyodo News ■

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V MCC SHANGHAI VOY. NO. (1827-28)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V MCC SHANGHAI VOY. NO. (1827-28) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 2-8-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T.T where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

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

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V SINAR BIMA VOY. NO. ()

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V SINAR BIMA VOY. NO. () are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 2-8-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of HPT 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 SAMUDERA SHIPPING LINE

Phone No: 2301185

The Republic of the Union of Myanmar

Ministry of Industry

No.(3) Heavy Industrial Enterprise

Invitation of Expression of Interest (EoI) for Cooperation in the area of Eco-Industrial Park (Thaton)

Eco- Industrial Park (Thaton), located in Inn Shae Village, Thaton Township, Mon State, under No.(3) Heavy Industrial Enterprise, Ministry of Industry is intended to invite the investors who are interested to operate **any type of industries and businesses** in the area of Eco- Industrial Park (Thaton).

The investors who interested in those cooperation are required to submit their **Expression of Interest (EoI) Proposal**, in which mentioning kinds of business, to Technology Development Department, No.(3) Heavy Industrial Enterprise, Ministry of Industry at Office No.(37) Nay Pyi Taw, the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, **not later than (16:00) pm (Myanmar Standard Time) on (28-9-2018).**

Base Line Data concerning the Eco- Industrial Park (Thaton) are available at above office from the date of (30-7-2018) and interested entities can submit the Draft Proposal by presenting the following **documents of company.**

- Cover Letter expressly stating the interested investor's interest in the Project
- Valid Certificate of Incorporation
- Memorandum of Association & Articles of Association (MoA & AoA)/ Constitution
- Information of Foreign Technical Cooperation (if it is Local Company)
- Experience of Investor to operate in the Project.
- Contact Person Name, Occupation, Address, Phone, Email

For more information, please contact phone number:+95 67408129, 09254557887 E-mail : mpcipl@gmail.com.

In the hands of the gods: Viet Nam's Golden Bridge goes viral

DANANG, (Viet Nam) — Nestled in the forested hills of central Viet Nam two giant concrete hands emerge from the trees, holding up a shimmering golden bridge crowded with gleeful visitors taking selfies at the country's latest eccentric tourist draw.

Designed to make visitors feel like they're taking a stroll on a shimmering thread stretching across the hands of gods, the "Golden Bridge" has attracted hordes of guests since it opened in the Ba Na Hills near Danang in June.

Images of the bridge have gone viral on social media, much to the surprise of the architect who had no idea it would attract so much attention.

"We're proud that our product has been shared by people all over the world," principal designer and founder of TA Land-

scape Architecture, Vu Viet Anh, told AFP.

At 150 metres long (490 feet), the bridge snakes through the forest high up in mountains first developed by French colonists as a hill station in 1919.

Today the area is a major tourist attraction, boasting a cable car, replica French medieval village — including faux castle and cathedral — manicured gardens and a wax museum featuring statues of Lady Gaga and Michael Jordan.

The only remnants of the original French occupants are the crumbling remains of their holiday homes that can still be spotted from the cable car.

But visitors are mostly interested in the newly built Cau Vang, which means "Golden Bridge" in Vietnamese.

"The bridge is beauti-



The bridge is designed to make visitors feel like they're taking a stroll on a shimmering thread stretching across the hands of gods. **PHOTO: AFP**

ful with an amazing architectural style, from here we can see Danang City, it's so nice," Nguyen Trung Phuc told AFP.

Another visitor, Nguyen Hien Trang, said: "I have travelled quite a lot but I've never seen any

bridges as beautiful as this one."

The Ba Na Hills project was built by Sun Group, which has divided opinion with audacious projects elsewhere in Viet Nam. In 2016 it opened a cable car on Viet Nam's

tallest mountain Fansipan in the tourist hotspot Sapa, prompting complaints from locals who felt it spoiled the landscape and took business away from trekking guides.

Viet Nam is no stranger to off-the-wall at-

tractions. A "crystal cloud" installation of 58,000 shimmering Swarovski beads in the rice-terraced hills of northern Viet Nam opened earlier this year, while the surreal "Crazy House" hotel in central Da Lat, designed to look a trippy treehouse, has long attracted legions of curious visitors. The communist country has long sought to boost visitor numbers and position itself as a must-see destination in South-east Asia.

It clocked 13 million foreign visitors last year, mostly from China — a far cry from the 35 million international visitors to Thailand in 2017.

Golden Bridge designer Anh said he already has another project in the works: a silver bridge made to look like a god's strand of hair that will connect to his existing structure in the Ba Na Hills.—AFP ■



Photo taken in April 2017 shows the Foreign Ministry in Tokyo. **PHOTO: KYODO NEWS**

Japan to ease visa requirements for Filipinos from August

TOKYO — Japan will loosen visa requirements for Filipino visitors with business purposes on Wednesday, with the aim of promoting exchanges of people between the two countries.

The Foreign Minis-

try said on Tuesday the maximum validity period of multiple-entry visas for Filipino visitors will be extended from the current five years to 10 years, while the scope of applicants eligible for the visas will be also expanded.

Medical doctors, lawyers and certified public accountants will also be applicable to visas for cultural and intellectual figures, which Japan has restricted to some occupations such as university professors.—Kyodo News ■

Thailand prepares evacuation measures as Mekong water level increases

BANGKOK — Thai Interior Minister Anupong Paochinda on Tuesday night instructed governors of all northern provinces to prepare evacuation of residents as water level in the Mekong River continues to rise. Before noon on Tuesday, the Mekong River has burst its banks, allowing water to flow into riverside areas of Mukdahan Province. Mukdahan Governor Paithoon Rakprathet said the water level at the Mukdahan hydrographic center was measured at 12.54 meters, four cm higher than the designated "maximum level" of 12.50 meters.

At the Indochina Market, hundreds of shops moved their goods to higher grounds.

"Aside from the monsoon floods, water discharged from Nam Ngum 5 Dam in Laos into Nong Khai Province has also increased the water mass in the river," said Paithoon, "and because of this, we had to declare the districts of Muang and Dong Luang

as flood disaster zones."

Col Boonsin Padklang, commander of the military peace-keeping force in Mukdahan, has deployed soldiers to help flood victims. Military trucks have been sent to flood stricken areas to transport residents out and into higher grounds. Meanwhile the Disaster Prevention and Mitigation Department on Tuesday announced warnings that 20 Northern provinces are at risk of flood disaster due to high cumulative rainfall.

Chiang Rai and the six northeastern provinces of Mukdahan, Nakhon Phanom, Sakon Nakhon, Yasothon, Roi Et and Ubon Ratchathani were especially warned of flash flooding flushing in from the Mekong River as a result of continuous heavy rainfall in northern and central Laos.

On Monday night, flash floods in Chiang Rai's northernmost district of Maesai displaced 500 households, according to the Disaster Prevention

and Mitigation Department. Last Saturday, a mudslide in another northern province killed a family of eight and forced more than 200 residents into temporary shelters. In northeastern province of Ubon Ratchathani, flash floods submerged several communities along its banks. Officials said the water level has risen an average of 40 to 50 cm per day.

On Monday, an officer from the national power utility said the Vajiralongkorn Dam in Kanchanaburi province was at 78 per cent capacity, its highest level in 34 years. Thailand's national weather agency said that about 70 per cent of the north and northeast will see thunderstorms for the rest of the week while less rain is forecast for the rest of the country through Saturday.

Flooding usually peaks around October.

The last mega flood in Bangkok was at 2011, causing billions of baht in damage.—Xinhua ■



(L-R) British actor Henry Cavill, US director Christopher McQuarrie, US actor Tom Cruise and British actor Simon Pegg, stars of the new film 'Mission: Impossible-Fallout' form hearts with their fingers as they pose for photos at a red carpet event in Seoul, South Korea on 16 July 2018. PHOTO: AFP

Latest "Mission Impossible" flick cruises to box office gold

LOS ANGELES — "Mission: Impossible — Fallout" topped the weekend box office in North America, outperforming the five earlier editions of the stunt-filled Tom Cruise action franchise, final figures showed on Monday.

The Paramount/Skydance production took in \$61.2 million for the three-day weekend, according to industry tracker Exhibitor Relations, more than quadrupling the \$15.1 million earned by second-place "Mamma Mia! Here We Go Again."

"Impossible" has 56-year-old Cruise, who famously still does his own cliff-hanging, car-rolling stunts, ordered to track down some missing plutonium and find a terror-minded villain.

Universal's "Mamma Mia" clung to the second spot for a

second straight weekend, though its take was nearly 60 per cent below its opening."

With a star-studded cast including Meryl Streep, Amanda Seyfried, Colin Firth and Pierce Brosnan, the film uses plentiful flashbacks to fill in the story of Streep's carefree character on the only Greek island with a built-in ABBA soundtrack.

In third was Sony's "The Equalizer 2," with Denzel Washington again playing a former black-ops agent — and now low-profile Lyft driver — drawn into action to avenge a friend's death. It took in \$14 million.

Fourth spot went to another Sony film, "Hotel Transylvania 3: Summer Vacation," at \$12.3 million.

The animated comedy, whose voice cast includes Adam Sandler and Selena Gomez, fol-

lows Count Dracula and his family as they get away from their hotel for their own vacation.

In fifth was a new release, Warner Bros's family-friendly "Teen Titans Go! To the Movies," at \$10.4 million, which Variety called slightly disappointing given the film's 90 per cent rating on Rotten Tomatoes.

The first feature film based on a popular animated series, "Titans" has a voice cast including Kristen Bell, Will Arnett and Greg Kinnear.

Rounding out the top 10 were:

"Ant-Man and the Wasp" (\$8.8 million)

"Incredibles 2" (\$7.3 million)

"Jurassic World: Fallen Kingdom" (\$6.7 million)

"Skyscraper" (\$5.3 million)

"The First Purge" (\$2.2 million).—AFP ■

Mark Wahlberg open to work with Leonardo DiCaprio again

LOS ANGELES — Actor Mark Wahlberg who had recently spoken about his feud with Leonardo DiCaprio, is open to working with "The Revenant" star in another film. The 47-year-old actor and DiCaprio had disliked each other during the making of "Basketball Diaries".

In an interview with *Extra*, Wahlberg elaborated on his spat, saying they became "fast friends" afterwards.

"It wasn't a disagreement. It was just, like, I think we both had a specific opinion about each other, certainly. I was just, ya know, as a rapper, I was just kinda out-there and loud and crazy and all this stuff, and it was a very serious movie and this very serious part, and so the director of the film, he had made all my music videos, he felt like I was more than capable to play the part," he said.

"But no one had seen me act in a film, so I had to really kinda just go out there and prove myself. Once I finally got

to the point where I was able to audition and read with him, then we just both kinda looked at each other, we were like, 'Wow!' We were literally out that night and we became fast friends," he added. Wahlberg replied in the affirmative when asked whether he would act with DiCaprio in another film and said, "We've talked about it." The actor had revealed during his address at the 2018 LEAP Foundation Conference that DiCaprio was not keen on having Wahlberg in the 1995 film, which led to a brief dispute between the two.

"He didn't want me for the part, and I didn't think he was right for the part," Wahlberg had said. It was the second feature for Wahlberg, who had played the role of Mickey, after he had switched from music to acting.

After the film, Wahlberg went on to star in features such as "Boogie Nights", "Planet Of The Apes" and "The Departed", where he once again acted alongside DiCaprio.—PTI ■



Mark Wahlberg and Leonardo DiCaprio. PHOTO: PTI

Pop singer Demi Lovato reportedly hospitalized for heroin overdose

LOS ANGELES — Singer Demi Lovato was taken to a Los Angeles hospital on Tuesday after a suspected heroin overdose, according to US media reports.

Paramedics found Lovato, 25, unconscious in her home and treated her with Narcan, which is typically used for drug overdoses, said TMZ.com and *US Weekly*.

People magazine, citing an unnamed source, reported Tuesday afternoon that the singer was "OK and stable."

The Los Angeles Police Department only confirmed that officers responded around noon to a home in Hollywood for what was described as a medical emergency, but declined to provide further details.

In a single released last

month, Sober, Lovato revealed that she had relapsed, singing: "Mommy, I'm so sorry I'm not sober anymore. And daddy please forgive me for the drinks spilled on the floor."

Lovato, a teen star in Disney Channel television films, had struggled to beat cocaine and OxyContin addictions and had been clean for six years.—Xinhua ■

Andrew Lincoln explains his exit from 'The Walking Dead'

LOS ANGELES — Actor Andrew Lincoln has explained his decision to quit "The Walking Dead", saying it was time for him to "come home".

The 44-year-old has been the face of the popular series ever since it premiered on AMC in 2010. However, Lincoln is all set to hang his boots after the forthcoming ninth season.

In an interview with *Entertainment Weekly*, the actor said he wants to spend more

time with his family, especially his children.

He said the show's Georgia-centric shooting locations make it difficult for him to see his family, which is based in England.

"I have two young children, and I live in a different country, and they become less portable as they get older," Lincoln said.

"It was that simple. It was time for me to come home," he added.—PTI ■

Mars makes closest approach to Earth in 15 years

LOS ANGELES — Earth's neighbouring planet, Mars, is closer than it has been in the past 15 years, offering unusually bright views of the Red Planet's auburn hues.

"The Red Planet and Earth haven't been this close since 2003, and won't be again until 2035," NASA said. Astronomers around the world trained their telescopes on the sky on 31 July, when the Red Planet was 35.8 million miles (57.6 million kilometers) away.

One popular public viewing spot was the Griffith Observatory in Los Angeles, where Mars was visible with the naked eye as a

bright orange spot in the sky, according to a live broadcast held to mark the celestial event.

"Mars is invading us tonight," said observatory director Ed Krupp.

The nearest point to Earth in Mars' elliptical orbit came at around 1100 GMT on Tuesday, NASA said.

Astronomers are interested in Mars' travel path because it helps decide the best times for spacecraft to launch.

When the Sun, Earth and Mars are lined up, with Earth sitting in between, a phenomenon called "opposition" is in effect, giving the

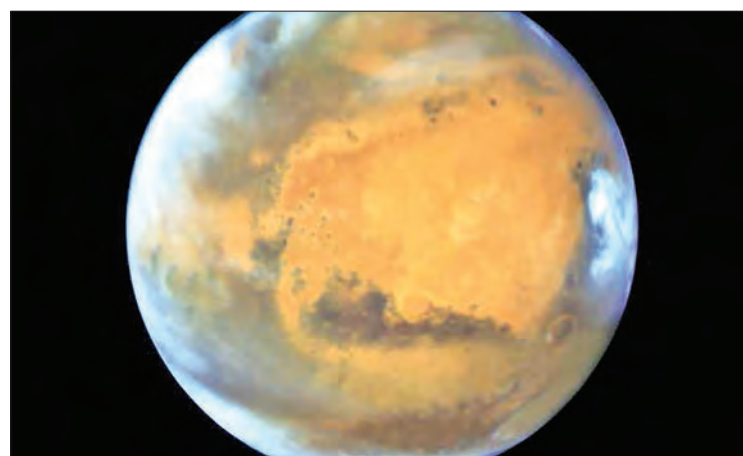
brightest view of Mars.

But also, "around the time of opposition, a planet is at its closest distance to Earth for a given year," the US space agency explained.

Since the Earth and Mars align in opposition about every two years, "this is why most NASA missions to the Red Planet are at least two years apart — to take advantage of the closer distance."

This year's close approach is not a record-breaker.

The minimum distance from the Earth to Mars is about 33.9 million miles (54.6 million kilometers), and is rarely achieved.



Our neighbouring planet Mars in 2016, from the NASA/ESA Hubble Space Telescope. **PHOTO: NASA**

The last closest approach was in 2003, when Mars was 34.6 million miles (55.7 million kilometers) from Earth "and the closest it had been in nearly 60,000 years," said NASA.

Another close encounter like

2003's will not happen until the year 2287.

For those who missed the closest approach, not to worry. Mars will still be visible in the night sky for the next few months.—AFP ■

Stanford researchers find new clue for diagnosis of depression

SAN FRANCISCO — Researchers from Stanford University have found that people suffering depression have very low blood levels of a substance called acetyl-L-carnitine, a new study shows on Monday.

Natalie Rasgon, a professor of psychiatry and behavioural sciences at Stanford, and her team have conducted extensive experiments on animals, and discovered a deficiency of acetyl-L-carnitine was associated

with depression-like behaviour, the first rigorous indication that the link between acetyl-L-carnitine levels and depression may apply to human beings.

The findings, which were published online on Monday in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, suggest that acetyl-L-carnitine plays a special role in the brain, where it works at least in part by preventing the excessive firing of excitatory nerve cells in brain regions

Acetyl-L-carnitine is a crucial mediator of fat metabolism and energy production throughout the body. It is either naturally produced in human body or available in drugstores as a nutritional supplement. The scientists examined a group of men and women, aged between 20 and 70, who have been diagnosed with depression and screened with a detailed questionnaire or assessed clinically. Twenty-eight of them were judged to have moderate

depression, and 43 had severe depression. Their blood samples showed they had substantially lower levels of acetyl-L-carnitine, regardless of age. The lowest levels of acetyl-L-carnitine were in patients with treatment-resistant depression.

According to the research, the degree of acetyl-L-carnitine deficiency reflected both the severity and age of onset of depressive disorder, and the decrease in acetyl-L-carnitine was more

significant in patients with a history of treatment-resistant depression. Among them, childhood trauma including abuse, neglect, poverty or exposure to violence, and, specifically being female, are linked to reduced levels of acetyl-L-carnitine.

Those patients, who account for about 25 per cent and 30 per cent of all people with depression, are in bad need of effective pharmacological interventions, Rasgon said.—Xinhua ■

Nokia to help with T-Mobile superfast telecom network

LOS ANGELES — Nokia will help T-Mobile deploy a superfast "5G" mobile internet network across the United States in a \$3.5-billion deal, the companies announced on Monday.

Finland-based Nokia will provide T-Mobile its suite of 5G technology, and help build the telecommunications firm's new-gen-

eration nationwide wireless network, the companies said.

"We are all in on 5G," T-Mobile chief technology officer Neville Ray said in a release.

"And together with Sprint, we'll be able to do so much more."

US wireless operators Sprint and T-Mobile announced earlier this year that they are merging

to form a new company and push development of a super-fast 5G network.

The merger must still be approved by regulators.

5G or fifth-generation wireless communications networks promise to move data so quickly that they would enable services such as remote surgery or driverless cars and allow customers to experience video and virtual reality with greater ease.

"Nokia and T-Mobile will advance the large-scale deployment of 5G services throughout the United States," Nokia chief customer operations officer Ashish Chowdhary said in the release.

T-Mobile is one of the biggest earners for its parent Deutsche Telekom of Germany.

T-Mobile and Sprint — a subsidiary of Japan's SoftBank — are at present the third and fourth largest US wireless operators, respectively.—AFP ■



Nokia — its Finland HQ pictured here — is to help T-Mobile deploy a superfast "5G" mobile internet network across the United States. **PHOTO: AFP**

China's newest micro-rocket has fast production cycle

BEIJING — China Aerospace Science and Technology Corporation (CASC) on Tuesday unveiled its micro rocket the Lightning Dragon No 1.

The rocket, the first in the Lightning Dragon series, could have a carrying capacity of no less than 150 kilograms and operate on the sun-synchronous orbit, said CASC.

The rocket is capable of launching within 24 hours after arriving at the launch site.

It can be delivered to the customer six months after the signing of the contract.

It is now under development by Chinrocket Co, Ltd

under CASC.

The device features a complete cabin space of 1.1 metres in width and 1.5 metres in height.

The rocket is capable of carrying out launch missions consisting of one-rocket-one-satellite and one-rocket-multiple-satellites, said CASC.

"The Lightning Dragon series micro-rocket is named after the Chinese word for dragon, as they are both fast, agile, and flexible," said Tang Yagang, president of Chinrocket.

The unit loading cost is lower than other similar products in the global market.—Xinhua ■

Manchester United hold on to beat Real Madrid 2-1

MIAMI — Jose Mourinho was finally given something to smile about as a tempestuous trip to the United States ended with Man United's 2-1 win over former club Real Madrid thanks to first-half strikes from Alexis Sanchez and Ander Herrera.

Mourinho has cut a miserable figure during their two week trip to the United States, lashing out at a lack of transfer activity while reserving stinging criticism for a number of first team players.

But seeing his side establish a two goal lead in the first half was encouraging, as was holding Real at bay after Karim Benzema's goal just before the interval gave the Spanish side hope of mounting a comeback.

"I didn't learn anything (from this tour)," said Mourinho. "I know what Ander Herrera, Juan Mata and Alexis Sanchez are.

"I know the kids are very young and need time to grow up, I know my players gave everything



Manchester United's Chilean forward Alexis Sanchez (L) vies for the ball with Real Madrid's Spanish defender Javier Sanchez (R) during their International Champions Cup friendly football match at Hard Rock Stadium in Miami, Florida on 31 July, 2018. **PHOTO: AFP**

and in the last 15 mins we are dead and they bring on Toni Kroos and Asensio and Isco and I thought we wouldn't resist but we did.

"That's the spirit we need because our first two or three weeks in the Premier League are going to be really hard for us because we didn't prepare for that."

The Portuguese has been without 12 key players for most of the tour with many enjoying an extended break following the World Cup. In front of 64,141 at

Miami's Hard Rock Stadium, United were finishing off their pre-season preparations against a Real Madrid side just starting theirs.

La Liga starts a week later than the Premier League so new Real manager Julen Lopetegui was able to name the likes of Gareth Bale to start while Germany star Toni Kroos was on the bench. Spanish international David de Gea was making his first start since returning from the extra time given to him following the World Cup and he was almost beaten in the eighth minute — Bale starting a move which saw Benzema fire just wide from close range.

Brazilian Fred, who was signed earlier this summer for £52 million, was making his first United start and looked comfortable in his new surroundings.

And on 18 minutes, United were ahead. Herrera fed Matteo Darmian and teed up Sanchez who clinically swept the ball home.—AFP ■

Kante offered huge raise by Chelsea to deter PSG: reports

LONDON — French midfielder N'Golo Kante, labelled the "essential element" in the World Cup-winning side by Didier Deschamps, has been offered a new five-year contract by Chelsea, according to British media reports on Tuesday.

The pocket-sized 27-year-old dynamo — who recovered the ball more often than any other team-mate during the finals in Russia — will earn £290,000 (\$380,000, 325,000 euros) a week if he signs the new deal, reported *The Times* and the *London Evening Standard*.

Chelsea, who sacked Antonio Conte as manager despite winning the FA Cup after finishing outside the Champions League spots last season, want to ward off apparent interest from Qatari-owned French champions Paris Saint-Germain.

The new contract would see Kante's pay almost doubled from his present deal — £150,000 a week — which terminates in 2021. Kante was a pivotal fig-



France midfielder N'Golo Kante was labelled the 'essential element' to the World Cup-winning side by coach Didier Deschamps. **PHOTO: AFP**

ure in Chelsea's title-winning campaign in 2016/17 under Conte after joining from Leicester City for a reported £32 million.

His move followed an equally influential role in The Foxes' shock league-winning campaign in 2016. Chelsea are also reported by both newspapers to be prepared to increase Belgian playmaker Eden Hazard's weekly pay from £220,000 — at present he is the highest wage earner

— to £300,000 in an effort to dissuade him from moving to Spain with Real Madrid showing an interest, although the £200-million price tag may put them off.

Hazard and fellow Belgian Thibaut Courtois, who is also believed to be subject of a £35.5-million bid from Real Madrid, are due back in training this weekend after their holidays following Belgium's run to the World Cup semi-finals.—AFP ■

Konta stuns Serena Williams in opening round at San Jose

LOS ANGELES — Former world number one Serena Williams, who was playing her first match since losing in the Wimbledon final, was sent crashing out of the WTA San Jose tournament in straight sets on Tuesday.

The 23-time Grand Slam winner struggled mightily against the British No 1 and former winner Johanna Konta who needed just 51 minutes to crush Williams, 6-1, 6-0 in their opening round match.

Williams, who was seeded sixth, managed just nine winners against 25 unforced errors and had her serve broken six times.

She looked nothing like

the player that dominated the Tour for decades, winning 72 singles titles and earning more than \$86 million in prize money.

Both women were playing their first match since Wimbledon, where Williams finished runner-up to Angelique Kerber and Konta lost in the second round to eventual quarter-finalist Dominika Cibulkova.

Konta won her maiden WTA title at this event in 2016 when it was held in Stanford University, defeating Serena's older sister Venus in the final.

Konta next faces Sofia Kenin, who earned a dominating win over qualifier Veronica Cepede Royg on Monday.—AFP ■