

NATIONAL

Ministry contributes cash to Maha Vihara, Dhammaduta Sakeindaryama Monasteries in Hmawby

PAGE-3

NATIONAL

National Unity Party presents its policy, stance and work program

PAGE-6

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Second Pyidaungsu Hluttaw's ninth regular session holds 16th-day meeting

MPs call for review of budget for dam project, ineffective irrigation expenses

THE 16th-day meeting of the Second Pyidaungsu Hluttaw's ninth regular session was held at the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw meeting hall yesterday morning. At the meeting, two reports were read and Hluttaw representatives discussed the basic principles, project works and budgets of the National Planning Bill and Union Budget Bill.

Reading of reports

At first, Joint Bill Committee member U Nay Myo Tun read the committee's findings and comments report on bill amending the Vacant, Fallow and Virgin Land Management Law, sent back by the President with comments.

An announcement was made for Hluttaw representatives who wanted to discuss the report to register their names.

Next, on behalf of the Union government, Deputy Minister for Planning and Finance U Maung Maung Win reported to the Hluttaw the draft bill amending the Public Debt Management Law sent by the Union government.

The Deputy Minister said the law was enacted in 2016 and the Union government has also designated the fiscal year to be changed from 1 April-31 March to 1 October-30 September. This change will be implemented in fiscal year 2018-2019, he added. Due to this change in fiscal year,



Second Pyidaungsu Hluttaw's ninth regular session holding its 16th-day meeting in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. PHOTO: MNA

some wordings in the law had to be changed, reported the Deputy Minister.

An announcement was then made for Hluttaw representatives who wanted to discuss the report to enroll their names.

Hluttaw representatives discuss National Planning Bill and Union Budget Bill

Afterwards, Hluttaw representatives discussed the basic

principles, project works and budgets of National Planning Bill and Union Budget Bill.

In her discussion, Daw Yin Min Hlaing of Gangaw constituency said Myittha (Multipurpose) Dam Project was started in 2002, with an estimated cost of Ks 55.182 billion. It was increased to Ks 122.851 billion in 2009-2010 and was increased again to Ks 271.255 billion. It was increased yet again to Ks 304 billion in 2017-



Deputy Minister for Planning and Finance U Maung Maung Win. PHOTO: MNA

2018. The doubling of the cost from 2002 to 2009 was at least acceptable as 7 years had passed, but doubling again in 2012 and 2017 is grossly unacceptable. In 2016-2017, the remaining 23 billion was also permitted.

The 2016-2017 estimate of Ks 271.2 billion includes more than Ks 2,920 million (nearly 3 billion) of unforeseeable expenses,

SEE PAGE-2

INSIDE TODAY

NATIONAL

Union Minister for Information and party visit ASEAN-Korea Centre and K'ARTS

PAGE-3



LOCAL BUSINESS

Fraudulent cases prompt financial institutions to strictly follow bank loan screening process

PAGE-5

NATIONAL

Galvanized sheet metal, monetary aid donated to flood victims

PAGE-3



Second Pyidaungsu Hluttaw's ninth regular session holds 16th-day meeting

FROM PAGE-1

and as this amount could be used to construct a river crossing bridge it should be reviewed, said Daw Yin Min Hlaing.

U Tin Tun Naing of Seik-kyi-Khanaungto constituency discussed about more than 50 per cent of Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation budget being allocated to the Irrigation Department for construction of new dams and irrigation infrastructure. The expenditures are costly but ineffective expenses, as mentioned in the World Bank report, and the ministry ought to review this, said U Tin Tun Naing.

Daw Cho Cho of Ottwin constituency commented about state-owned sector and private sector being respectively allocated more than 25 per cent and 74.57 per cent of the investment for fiscal year 2018-2019. She discussed about the requirement to establish detailed financial, monetary, foreign exchange, trade and

investment policies to ensure private sector investment of 74.57 per cent as planned.

She also discussed about the reported plan in agriculture sector to reduce the cultivated area by 818,484 acres (1.6 percent of total cultivated area), compared to fiscal year 2017-2018, but no indication of which crops are being reduced and the reason for the reduction.

Similarly Dr. Than Aung Soe of Minhla constituency, Daw Khin San Hlaing of Pale constituency, U Yan Lin of Kyai-



Dr. Than Aung Soe of Minhla constituency. **PHOTO: MNA**

klat constituency, U Sai Thant Zin of Hsipaw constituency, U Soe Aung Naing of Kyonpyaw constituency, Dr. Pyae Phyo of Ayeyawady Region constituency 7, U Myint Han Tun of Budalin constituency, U Sai Oo Khem of Hsenwi constituency, U Myo Win of Mon State constituency 8, U Zaw Min Thein of Laymyethna constituency, Dr. Maung Maung of Yangon Region constituency 6, U Tha Aung of Myothit constituency, U Aung Kyaw Kyaw Oo of Hline constituency, Dr. Aung Khin of Pyin Oo Lwin constituency, U Sai Tun Sein of Mongpyin constituency, U Kyaw Ni Naing of Shan State constituency 11, U Khin Maung Thi of Loilem constituency, U Shwe Ko of Kyaukpadaung constituency, U Than Soe of Yangon Region constituency 4 and U Kyaw Myo Min of Monyo constituency also discussed the bills.

The 17th-day meeting of the ninth regular session of the Second Pyidaungsu Hluttaw is scheduled to be held today. — Myo Myint, Han Lin Naing (MNA) ■



Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Deputy Speaker U Tun Tun Hein is seen off by Yangon Region Hluttaw's Deputy Speaker U Lin Naing Myint as he leaves for Singapore to attend 39th ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary General Assembly. **PHOTO: MNA**

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw delegation to attend 39th AIPA General Assembly in Singapore

A delegation led by Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Deputy Speaker U Tun Tun Hein and his party left Yangon by air yesterday morning to attend 39th ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary General Assembly (AIPA) from 3 to 7 September in Singapore.

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Deputy Speaker and party were seen off at Yangon International Air

Port by Yangon Region Hluttaw Deputy Speaker U Lin Naing Myint and officials from Hluttaw Office.

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Deputy Speaker was accompanied by Hluttaw representatives U Zaw Thein, Daw Su Su Lwin, Dr Than Win, U Aung Kyi Nyunt and officials from Hluttaw Office. — MNA ■

Experts meet for combating AMR under Mekong basin region health security project

A workshop on combating Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) under the Mekong basin region health security project was opened with an address by Health and Sports Ministry's Permanent Secretary Prof. Dr. Thet Khaing Win at the Summit Park View Hotel, Yangon, yesterday.

In his opening speech, the Permanent Secretary said there is a special requirement for countries in Mekong basin region to cooperate in facing the problems and challenges of AMR. AMR problem resulting from excessive usage of antimicrobial medicines by human, animals and in agriculture works are to be handled through the tactics of informing, monitoring, controlling outbreak and conducting research. Myanmar has formed National Multi-Sectorial Steering Committee (NMSC) for Combating AMR led by Union Minister for Health and Sports in January. Central department to coordinate and eliminate AMR was put under national



The opening ceremony of workshop on combating Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) held in Yangon yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

health laboratory and technical work group meetings were successfully held in August 2018 and techniques obtained from the present workshop are required to be practically implemented together, said the Permanent Secretary.

Next, Professor Dr. Htay Htay Tin of Ministry of Health

and Sports, Department from Medical Services and Dr. Stephan Paul Jost, World Health Organization (WHO) Representative to Myanmar delivered speeches. The workshop will approve tactics to combat AMR, country wise priority works and networking among related organisations. — MNA ■

Students from remote areas to send applications for universities of medicine to MoH by 28 Sept

STUDENTS who matriculated from remote areas where regional allowance is provided by the government and from six self-administered regions who met the specified qualification can apply to attend universities of medicine under Ministry of Health and Sports, Department

of Human Resources for Health for academic year 2018-2019.

Applications are to be made directly to Department of Human Resources for Health by 28 September. Details about the application can be enquired to Department of Human Resources for Health. —MNA ■

Rising water in Sittoung River forces schools to close

THE rising water in the Sittoung River in Nyaunglebin, Bago Region, has forced 14 schools in the township to close, according to the Nyaunglebin Township General Administration Department.

The river has seen the rising water level for the second time in this rainy season following the first one in the last week of July which forced 45 schools to close in the township.

The water level of the Sittoung River reached over three foot above its danger level in Madauk yesterday, according to the 2:30 pm observation of the Meteorology and Hydrology Department.

The weather said the water level is expected to fall about one foot in next two days, but it may remain above its danger level. — Peinzalok Thein Nyunt ■

Galvanized sheet metal, monetary aid donated to flood victims

THE Coordinating Body for Swiftly Rehabilitating Flood Stricken Regions, led by its Chairman Dr. Win Myat Aye, and officials donated galvanized sheet metal for roofing and monetary aid in Yedashe Township yesterday morning.

The breach from Swar Chaung dam has flooded 85 villages from 18 village-tracts, destroying 185 houses and damaging 322 more. Donations of Ks82,260,000 and 4,625 panels of galvanized sheet metal worth Ks17,575,000 have been offered to the aforementioned houses

and ten monasteries in the area, as well as Ks1,500,000 for five people who died, Ks7,421,460 worth of rescue equipment, and Ks 68,840,100 for purchasing rice rations.

Next, the Bago Region Chief Minister donated Ks 500,000 and the Wai Lu Kyaw Foundation donated Ks 500,000 as well.

Today's donations were made to the survivors of the flood after the sluice gate of Swa Chaung dam burst, and there will be more support in the future. —MNA ■



Union Minister Dr. Win Myat Aye accepts donations for survivors of the flood, caused by the damaged Swa Chaung dam sluice gate, at his ministry in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO:MNA**



Union Minister for Religious Affairs and Culture Thura U Aung Ko presents cash donation to board of trustees of Sakeindaryama Monastery in Hmawby. **PHOTO:MNA**

Religious Affairs Ministry contributes cash to Maha Vihara, Dhammaduta Sakeindaryama Monasteries in Hmawby

MINISTRY of Religious Affairs and Culture has contributed cash for the meals of the Members of the Sangha at the Maha Vihara Monastery and Dhammaduta Sakeindaryama Monastery in Hmawby, Yangon Region, yesterday.

The donation ceremony began with receiving the Five Precepts from Presiding Sayadaw of Maha Vihara Monastery Bhaddanta Vijja Nanda by the congregation, led by Union Minister for Religious Affairs Thura

U Aung Ko and wife, and departmental officials. The Union Minister presented K3 million and religious books to the Members of the Sangha through the board of trustees of the monastery.

A similar donation ceremony was also held at the Dhammaduta Sakeindaryama Monastery with a sermon delivered by presiding Sayadaw of the monastery Dr. Bhaddanta Ashin Chekinda. The congregation listened to the parittas recited by Members of the Sangha, led by Ashin

Chekinda.

Afterwards, Union Minister Thura U Aung Ko handed over K3 million and religious books to the monastery's board of trustees.

The Union Minister and wife presented offertories to the presiding Sayadaw of the Dhammaduta Sakeindaryama Monastery.

The ceremony came to an end with sharing merits gained for the donation and donating soon (a day's meal) to the Members of the Sangha.—MNA ■

Union Minister for Information and party visit ASEAN-Korea Centre and K'ARTS

UNION Minister for Information Dr. Pe Myint and delegation visited ASEAN-Korea Centre and Korea National University of Arts (K'ARTS) in Seoul, Republic of Korea, and met with officials yesterday.

In the morning, Union Minister and delegation met with ASEAN-Korea Centre Secretary General H.E. Lee Hyuk and party at ASEAN-Korea Centre where Mr. Lee said ASEAN-Korea Centre is working towards all round development of ASEAN region, starting from media sector as well as travel sector. As motion picture plays an important role in the development of Republic of Korea, the effort of Myanmar aiming towards similar development is welcomed and will help and support it, said Mr. Lee. Union Minister, in return, said the

Myanmar delegation includes government ministerial departments, Nay Pyi Taw development council, Myanmar Motion Picture Organisation and movie producers, and will continue the close cooperation.

Next, the Union Minister and delegation visited the culture and arts items of ASEAN and Republic of Korea displayed in the building and took commemorative photos.

In the afternoon, they went to K'ARTS, met and discussed with department heads led by President Kim Bongryol on subjects taught, difficulties faced in teaching and learning, assessments for entry to the university, job search assistance after completion of university, reason for becoming a successful university, opportunity to attend the



Union Minister for Information Dr. Pe Myint poses for a photo together with officials from the ASEAN-Korea Centre in Seoul yesterday. **PHOTO:MNA**

university under the Art Major Asian (AMA) Scholarship Programme and status of continuing cooperation.

The university is one and only university under Republic of Korea Ministry of Culture (Sports and Tourism) having six departments – Music, Drama, Film, TV and Multimedia,

Dance, Visual Art, Traditional Arts – with 135 lecturers, a thousand external instructors and teaching 3,500 students, including three from Myanmar for four-year degrees as well as 2-3 years long post-graduate courses. Many graduates of the university are famous and successful artistes in Korea, it is learnt. In

the evening, the Union Minister and delegation left Republic of Korea by air and was seen off at Incheon International Airport by Myanmar Ambassador to Republic of Korea Thura U Thet Oo Maung and officials. The Union Minister and delegation arrived back to Yangon later in the night. —MNA ■

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Two Reuters reporters sentenced 7 years in prison

Yangon Northern District Court has sentenced two Reuters journalists to seven years in prison for illegal possession of official documents.

Wa Lone, 32, and Kyaw Soe

Oo, 28, got the seven year sentences as they were found guilty of breaching the Official Secrets Act when they collected and obtained confidential documents, said Daw Su Sandar Win, the

information office of the court, in her reply to the questions of journalists yesterday.

The time the two reporters served will be taken into account, according to

the court.

The defense can appeal the decision to a regional court and then the supreme court, according to the court. — Myo Min Thein (Mayangon) ■

Tourist arrivals to Mandalay Region increasing annually

Tourists taking photographs on the top of the Mandalay Hill. **PHOTO: MIN HTET AUNG (MANDALAY SUB-PRINTING HOUSE)**

ARRIVAL of local and foreign tourists has been on the rise in Mandalay Region year after year according to the Directorate of Hotels and Tourism (Mandalay).

The Directorate of Hotels and Tourism has conducted a tourism arrival survey beginning from 2016. Mandalay hosted 385,031 foreign visitors and 517,290 local visitors in 2016, 483,784 foreign visitors and 589,374 local visitors in 2017,

and 231,002 foreign visitors and 329,567 local visitors in over six months of 2018.

“Not only foreign but also local visitors visited Mandalay Region during their long weekends. People visit Mandalay with their families and groups, said U San Yu, Deputy Director of the Directorate of Hotels and Tourism (Mandalay).

Additionally, the department has planned to conduct

visa exemption for South Korea, Japan and China, beginning from October, in order to increase the number of foreign visitors entering Myanmar. The department will give visa-free entry to South Korea and Japan and visa-on-arrival to Chinese tourists.

“Visa exemption is a major factor in boosting the tourism industry. Authorities are preparing rest rooms and other in-

frastructures in significant and well-known places,” he added.

At present, the number of Chinese tourists visiting Mandalay through Mandalay International Airport has increased because two more airlines are now landing there.

About 500,000 foreign visitors are expected to visit the region in 2018, it is learnt. — Min Htet Aung (Mandalay Sub-printing house) ■

Assistance provided to Taninthayi flood victims

FOLLOWING continuous rain in Taninthayi Township, water level in Taninthayi River has reached above the danger level. Therefore, the township natural disaster management central committee is providing assistance to over 8,000 flood victims who have difficulties in accessing food and being evacuated from their houses.

The water level in Taninthayi River reached 19 feet 1 inch on the afternoon of 3 September, which is above the danger level. At present, authorities have opened eight flood relief camps in the township

and about 832 persons from 179 families are temporarily sheltering at the camp.

A total of 6,762 flood victims from 71 villages and wards were moved to the houses of their relatives or to temporary relief camps. At present, about 2,858 flood victims still remain to be moved to safe places. Over 8,600 people are facing difficulties because their work areas are also flooded by river water, said U Nyan Lin Aung, township administrator.

The township natural disaster management central committee has provided vic-

**PHOTO: KHINE HTOO (MYEIK IPRD)**

tims from flood areas assistance donated by the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettle-

ment, the Taninthayi government and other donors.—Khine Htoo (Myeik IPRD) ■

Fraudulent cases prompt financial institutions to strictly follow bank loan screening process

By May Thet Hnin

FINANCIAL institutions are strictly following tight screening process for asset pledges and documents to secure bank loans as many fraudulent cases are reported, said bank officials.

“People are complaining over tight verification process. However, it is a risk-adjusted process. We have to set more rules over fraudulent cases. Even with tight rules, fraudulent cases are still found”, said U Aung Myo Tun, assistant general manager from Myanmar Economic Bank.

At present, while taking out bank loans, counterfeit tax receipts and grants as collateral

are found during screening process.

Therefore, to avoid fraudulent cases, banks are screening pledged documents and making property valuations for some assets by hiring lawyers and appraisers.

“Banks inevitably face fraudulent cases sometimes. Some assets as collateral for loans are sometimes dishonestly used for two banks. This being so, tight screening process is a must. Banks accept deposits and make loans. It is a bank’s liability to maintain customers’ deposits. So, we cannot provide unsecured lending, based on a borrowers’ creditworthiness,

rather than a collateral. To avoid fraudulent case, tight screening process is required. Systematic secured loan is needed”, said U Than Lwin, senior consultant at Kanbawza Bank.

Credit bureau system has not emerged in Myanmar yet, and so, false documents exist. This system will help you trace the borrowers’ history, collecting credit information. It will grade borrowers. It will take a period of time to exercise this system in Myanmar although establishment of a credit bureau has been approved.

This is why banks are asking for documents and some assets and screening them, he

continued. Banks detect fraud cases during the screening period. But sometimes, they realize this after a long time, said bank officials.

Currently, there are many verifications for loans. It will take time to take out loans, some businessmen criticized.

Exploiting those delayed cases, some brokers take advantage on businesses convincing them to get access to loans at the soonest time just by paying brokerage fees. So, they need to discuss with officials from the respective banks, said bank officials.

“SME loan plans were introduced in Myanmar recent-

ly. Therefore, some bank staff are not familiar with loan procedures. Banks also have their weaknesses. Similarly, we can see poor preparation stages by businesses to get access to loans. They make fake documents, instead of keeping genuine records. Some audit firms are paid to scam the balance, which is subject to be sued in foreign countries”, said Saw Dino Ku, executive director of A Bank.

Banks are planning create a viber group to verify complaints of fraudulent cases. They are also notifying the Settlement and Land Records Department to confirm property ownerships. ■

UMFCCI to organise Invest Myanmar Summit in early 2019

THE Republic of the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (UMFCCI) will organise Invest Myanmar Summit in Nay Pyi Taw in early 2019, according to a press release by the UMFCCI.

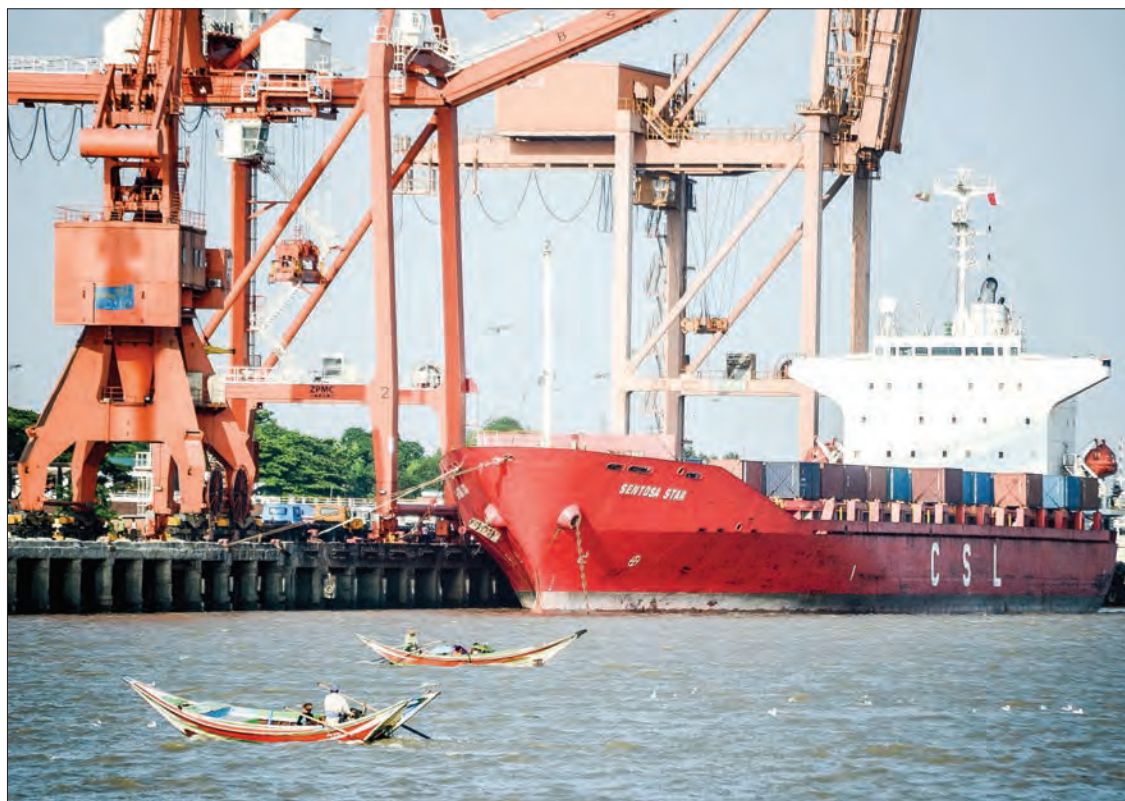
The 2019 Invest Myanmar Summit is scheduled to take place on 8-9 January at Myanmar International Convention Center II in the administrative capital of Nay Pyi Taw, with the aim of developing domestic economy and promoting investment and market, not only in Yangon Region but also in Mandalay, Ayeyawady and Taninthayi regions and Shan, Kayah and Mon states.

The UMFCCI will invite investors from nine countries to participate in the event, including the US, England, China, India, Japan, South Korea, Australia, Singapore and Thai-

land. This summit is projected to create local and foreign investments and employment opportunities in eight major sectors of manufacturing, garment, electricity and energy, foodstuff, tourism, education, healthcare and land.

U Wai Phyto, vice president of the UMFCCI, said that the UMFCCI is responsible for helping develop the country’s economy through the promotion of local and foreign investments. Hence, it organised the Invest Myanmar Summit.

More than 800 people, comprising investors at home and abroad, businesspersons and departments concerned, are expected to attend the summit. The event is believed to bring new business opportunities to the country and encourage public-private partnership.—GNLM ■



A cargo ship at a shipping container port in Yangon. PHOTO: PHOE KHWAH

Sea trade reaches \$11.1 billion as of last week this year

TRADE through sea routes reached US\$11.1 billion from 1 April to 24 August in the interim period of the 2018-2019 fiscal year, increasing by \$1.5 billion compared with the same period last year, according to the Ministry of Commerce.

Exports through sea routes were worth over \$4.5 billion, whereas the import value was recorded at \$6.6 billion. Sea route

export declined, while import increased.

The country’s value of imports is usually greater than its exports.

In the same period, border trade from 1 April to 24 August in the interim period of the 2018-2019 fiscal year hit US\$3.3 billion, comprising \$2.1 billion worth of exports and \$1.1 billion worth of imports.

Eighty per cent of foreign trade is conducted through sea route, whereas the remaining is carried out through border gates.

The country exports agricultural products, fishery products, minerals, animal products, forest products, finished industrial goods and other products, while capital goods, personal goods and raw industrial materials are imported into Myanmar.—Zwe ■

Trade
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National Unity Party presents its policy, stance and work program



U Han Shwe, Vice-Chairman of National Unity Party.

VICE-CHAIRMAN of National Unity Party U Han Shwe presented the party's policy, stance, work programs and other issues from radio and TV on 3 September. Following is a translation of the text:

Esteemed people,

I wish you all Mingalabar!

Soon by-election will be held for the vacant seats of the Hluttaw representatives of the respective constituencies. The National Unity Party (NUP) will stand for the election at Thabeikkyin Township constituency 1 for Mandalay Region Hluttaw.

NUP was established 30 years ago, and since then the party has been standing firmly in unity. We have a firm policy and guidance, based on the "benefit of the majority". We have also adopted "Myanmar way of serving the public interest" as means to realize this policy. We are always on the "middle path" to avoid extremes in carrying out the work programs of the party. The adoption and exercising of the party policy, programs and actions are always in harmony.

The party is resolutely exercising collective leadership, collective responsibility and collective accountability in accordance with its constitutional

principles, while staying away from the policy of relying on an individual.

The party has strongly stood for 30 years because of the loyalty, zeal, perseverance, endurance, capabilities and sacrifices of the members. It is the touchstone of our party.

The representative who will stand for the coming by-election from Thabeikkyin Township constituency 1 for Mandalay Region Hluttaw is U Nyi Nyi. He is a native of Leikkya Village in Thabeikkyin Township. As he is a native, people of the whole township know everything about him. So, we believe that we don't need to present anything about him. He can be tested from any angle.

Under the multi-party democratic culture, there may be flaws if we elect a candidate only in consideration of the party, without knowing who they are. And if a candidate is elected regardless of the party they are representing for, it can be an imperfect selection. So, in all seriousness, I, on behalf of the NUP, would suggest the voters to study in detail both the party and the candidate before casting a ballot.

Esteemed voters,

Recently, farmers and their

families and rural people in five regions and states faced flooding because of the terrible weather conditions. The government, the people, the political parties, social organizations have been collectively providing help for the victims. Hundreds of thousands of acres of crops were destroyed in the agricultural sector which is the nation's lifeblood. We resolutely accept the fact that all-inclusive efforts for the rehabilitation of the farm industry of the rural people is the main task.

Our party regards the restoration of all damaged homes, roads, bridges, schools, powerlines as a special priority. It needs help from all quarters.

Farmers faced the terrible Cyclone Nargis in 2008. Since then they have been facing the bad impacts of climate change annually. They are not happy at their work as they are facing lack of capital, shortage of farm labourers, high expenses of farm-related materials, unstable farm market and unreliability of the farm permits almost annually.

The country now has the Law of Protection of the Farmer Rights and Enhancement of their Benefits. But the rights and benefits enshrined in the law have not been fully realized. Hence the party will render a helping hand for the soonest realization of the provisions of the law.

Esteemed people,

The minimum wage for workers has been increased to Ks4,800. But the unhealthy national economy pushes the commodity prices further skyward. The workers cannot enjoy the benefits as the rise in wages is always followed by the hike in prices. So, the policy of "wage vs commodity price" should be adopted for the long-term interest of the workers.

There are also difficulties resulting from factory closures,



Party Logo.

layoffs, changes in operations, and the failure to fully realize the provisions of the existing laws.

The party has already formed action teams for protecting and enhancing the rights of workers in regions and states. These teams will do their best to protect and promote the workers' rights.

When the budget for the amended fiscal year was presented at the Hluttaw, there appeared the record budget deficit of nearly Ks5,000 billion for the fiscal year 2018-2019. The State will surely apply tax as one of the means to remedy the deficit. Tax should not be a burden to the people. So, taxation policies should be adopted and campaigns should be launched to prevent the tax from becoming a burden.

Esteemed voters,

Peace is a national cause as well as the future of the country. The work of realizing democracy and a federal union mainly depends on the success of the peace process. In this regard, our party is in the mission of partaking in the peace process with all-out efforts.

Our stance for the success of the peace process are:

- Participation of all the ethnic armed organizations as signatories of the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA);
- Successful holding of the national level political dialogue;
- Emergence of a Union based

on democracy and federalism;

- Adoption of policies on national defence and security.

We will be deeply involved in the peace process while embracing the above mentioned points.

As regards the issue in Rakhine State, the reactions of certain foreign organizations and countries, besides local organizations, are based on the false information and comments of the West media, while ignoring the true situation and acts of the nation. Our party regards such deeds amount to insulting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the nation.

Together with the people, the NUP will stand against the interferences in the sovereignty, threats against a territory of the Union, and all acts endangering the peace and progress of Rakhine State, based on the Rakhine issue.

Esteemed people and voters,

Now I have presented a brief account of the stance and work programs of our party and our candidate of Thabeikkyin Township constituency 1, so that people will cast their votes after thoroughly studying both the party and the candidate.

I would request the people to vote for our candidate who will truly serve the interests of the State, the region and the entire people.

I wish you all health and happiness!

Thank you.

Appointment of Ambassador agreed

THE Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has agreed to the appointment of Mrs. Suphatra Seemaitreephitak as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Kingdom of Thailand to

the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

Mrs. Suphatra Seemaitreephitak was born on 28 October 1962 in Thailand. She obtained a Bachelor's degree of Political Science (International Rela-

tions) from the Chulalongkorn University of Thailand, a Master's degree in International Affairs from the Ohio University, United States of America.

She joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand in

1984, and has served in various capacities in the Ministry, the Royal Thai Embassy in Brussels, Permanent Mission of Thailand to the World Trade Organization, Geneva, and Consulate-General in Hong Kong

and Guangzhou. Currently, she is serving as Director General of Thailand International Development Cooperation Agency (TICA) from 2015.

Mrs. Suphatra Seemaitreephitak is married.—MNA ■

Rakhine State Returnee Resettlement Work Committee holds coord meeting 1/2018



The coordination meeting of the Rakhine State Returnee Resettlement Work Committee in progress at the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

COORDINATION meeting 1/2018 of Rakhine State Returnee Resettlement Work Committee was held at the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement yesterday.

Present at the meeting were Work Committee Chairman Deputy Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement U Soe Aung, Joint-Chairman Rakhine State minister for Electricity, Industry and Transportation U Aung Kyaw Zan, secretary, joint secretary and members.

At the meeting Rakhine State Returnee Resettlement Work Committee Chairman said duties and work for the committee were designated and resettlement work is to be conducted according to rules and regulations. Villages for resettlement were also designated, and once the work of receiving returnees according to bilateral agreement is completed in a village, the village should be developed accordingly. All are urged to discuss on requirements in the con-

struction sector. The houses will be constructed according to work assigned and based on suggestion by UN-Habitat, said the committee chairman.

Next, Work Committee Joint-Chairman Rakhine State Minister U Aung Kyaw Zan explained about works to be conducted.

Afterwards, work committee members discussed about the status of completed and ongoing works, requirements and provided suggestions, it is learnt. — MNA ■

President's Office continues announcement of illegal drug arrests, seizures, acting on tip-offs

THE Office of the President issued Press Release No. 13/2018 yesterday, publicly announcing the Ministry of Home Affairs' arrests and seizures in the fight against illicit drug trafficking up till 1 September.

The ministry made the arrests, acting on information, sent to the Drug Activity Special Complaint Department of the Office of the President, as of 1 September.

The full text of the press release will be reported in the 5 September issue of *The Global New Light of Myanmar*.—GNLM

Union Supreme Court sits to pass judgment and hear cases

UNION Supreme Court sat at Union Supreme Court room number 1 yesterday morning with Chief Justice of the Union Supreme Court U Htun Htun

Oo and Union Supreme Court judges to pass judgments on seven special civil appeal cases and hear 17 special civil appeal cases. —MNA ■

Donations for flood victims in Yedashe Township

THE Pyidaungsu Hluttaw's Legal Affairs and Special Cases Assessment Commission donated one day's worth of rations and the Mahn Aung Nyein Foundation donated Ks2 million to the flood-stricken residents in Yedashe Township, Swa area, Taungoo District, Bago Region.

The donations were made at the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday, and the donations were accepted by Union Minister Dr. Win Myat Aye who returned words of gratitude and conferred honorary recognition certificates to the donors. —MNA ■

Hlegu combined task force confiscates teak, arrests assailants

A COMBINED task force from the No. 1 Forestry Security Police (Northern District) and officials from the Hlegu Township Forestry Department, acting on a tip-off, staked out the Yangon-Mandalay highway at milepost 20 in Hlegu Township.

At 6:20am, three vehicles drove out from the Bawnatgyi crossroads onto the Yangon-Mandalay highway but quickly turned back to avoid interrogation. Authorities pursued the vehicles, and at 6:45am, they discovered one of the vehicles abandoned 200 feet away from milepost 32/1 of the highway.

The driverless vehicle was carrying 4 tons of teak while another 4 tons were left in the

vicinity.

The combined task force continued searching the highway and they found another of the three vehicles around 7am, carrying 4 tons of teak, abandoned in a rubber plantation 4 miles away from highway milepost 36/5.

At around 9:30am, the Deputy Director of the Bago Region Forestry Department and additional officials joined the combined task force in patrolling the highway. They discovered a car parked in the underpass of Sittpinseik bridge, located at the edge of Sittpinseik Village at highway milepost 37/2.

As authorities were investigating the vehicle around 11:30am, a group of 20 local villagers, armed with knives

and sticks, and led by local villager Nay Zaw, attacked the combined task force. A police officer's hip was injured and a warning shot was fired. One of the local village assailants then drove off into Sittpinseik Village with the parked vehicle around 12:10pm.

At around 1pm, the combined task force handed over to the Bawnatgyi highway police force the 12 tons of confiscated teak and the two seized vehicles. At the request of U Aung Min Thu, the in-charge of the Bago Region Forestry Department, a case has been opened against Nay Zaw and the 20 villagers with Bawnatgyi Highway Police Force (Pa) 283/2018, under Sections 332/294/114 of the Penal Code.—MNA ■



Police and local officials inspect one of three vehicles carrying four tons of illegal teak, abandoned some distance off the Yangon-Mandalay highway in Hlegu Township. **PHOTO: MNA**

Make positive contribution to solving Rakhine issue

THE State's ultimate goal on Rakhine State is to find a durable answer for the problem that damaged the region's peace and progress. If the international community provides help and support, taking a positive approach similar to that of the late Dr. Kofi Annan, former Secretary General of the United Nations, the goal will be reached in a shorter period of time.

The Union Government has already implemented 81 of the 88 points recommended by the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State, led by Dr. Kofi Annan. With the spirit of good neighborliness, Myanmar has tried various ways and means in negotiating with

“ We share deep sympathy and concern for all displaced people, friends, especially women and children.

officials from Bangladesh to tackle the repatriation issue. We are ready to welcome the displaced people from Bangladesh at the border. We believe that we will be able to solve the issue with our neighbor Bangladesh if we work together amicably in a spirit of good neighbourliness.

In accordance with a bilateral agreement, Myanmar had been ready to accept the first batch of returnees since 23 January 2018.

Moreover, the Myanmar government has signed an MoU with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to assist in a speedy resettlement and rehabilitation of the returnees. In dealing with the Rakhine issue, the Union Government has not only acknowledged the important role of the UN but has also welcomed the appointment of Christine Burgener as a special envoy of the UN Secretary General to Myanmar.

The present grave humanitarian problem and the untold suffering of the innocent civilian people of all communities in Rakhine State were carefully calculated, instigated and created by the ARSA terrorists group.

Their objective was to undermine the Myanmar Government's commitment and efforts to find a lasting solution through the speedy implementation of the Commission's recommendations and to exert maximum international pressure on Myanmar to achieve their political goals.

We share deep sympathy and concern for all displaced people, friends, especially women and children.

We see the Rakhine issue as a challenge, rather than a problem. No country can wipe out what has happened in history for more than a century within a few months, nor even within a few years. Even long standing democracies have their share of problems.

We shall not let these challenges derail our ultimate goal of building a federal democratic republic.

While the primary responsibility to address the situation in Rakhine rests with the Government and people of Myanmar, objective, positive and constructive contributions and support of the international community is crucial for the success of Myanmar's national efforts.

This is not the time to exploit the plight of innocent people in Rakhine, particularly women and children, for self-interest and political grandstanding.

Ever since the beginning of my career days, nearly six decades ago, I have heard of these two words being used quite frequently. Thus I am very familiar with these two words and had used them myself a lot of times when speaking to my staffs. I used them whenever a staff member demanded that they were entitled to this or that as a right. I used to differentiate "rights" and "privileges" to point out that there are certain things that cannot be demanded as "rights", but as "privileges" they can request or ask for and may be allowed to enjoy some favours, advantages, immunity or benefits if the authorities grant them. For example - promotions, transfers, some types of leave and etc.

During my career days, I had to do alot of explaining the meanings of "rights" and "privileges" to my staffs, because some of them thought they had the rights to everything. From my experience, I am of the opinion that most of them are confused with the terms "rights" and "privileges". Some would demand a privilege as though it was their right. Today that confusion is more profound, not only in our country, but also in other countries too. One good example to prove that point is the people demonstrating and demanding, under the banners of "human rights", for things that are not entitled to them as their "rights".

Here, I would like to mention that this confusion is not only among the common people, but even some dictionaries too are confused. Because if you care to look up the meanings of those words in different dictionaries, you are bound to see the confusion they are in. Some dictionary even went far as to say that privilege is synonymous to the rights, which is totally wrong. "Right" and "privilege" are totally two different things, but it's true there is only a very thin line separating them. Thus, I wouldn't blame anyone for being confused.

To eradicate those confusions, these two words need to be analyzed thoroughly. Here it is noteworthy to learn that there are different interpretations and definitions of these two words, many are in agreement with one another, while some contradict others. Anyway, I'll not be judging which are right or which are wrong, but will be mentioning them for the readers to choose what they want.

Some believe that "rights" are granted by God and everyone is born with those "rights" and some are of the opinion that "rights" are inherent in everyone since their

Rights and Privileges

By Khin Maung Myint



births or in other words they are their "birth rights". Some are of the opinion that "rights" are granted by a community or an organization. One such example is the "Constitutional Rights" prescribed by the Constitutions. As for the "privileges", they can be granted by an individual or an organization based on the parameters prescribed by the respective rules and regulations they have to follow, but demands for undue privileges wouldn't be accepted.

The concept I grew up with is: "rights" cannot be demanded, they will accessible to those who are entitled, but the "privileges" can be requested or asked for, but in a legal way. In other words, "rights" are entitlements, but they cannot be demanded, while "privileges" are favours or advantages that can be asked for. However, today, as people are being confused with "rights" and "privileges", they are wrongfully demanding the "privi-

leges" as "rights".

For example most "human rights" issues, as the advocates of such movements label them, are not legitimate. Personally, I don't accept them as "rights" but they are "favours" or "privileges". People from far away lands who had never been to, or even know where that place is, are advocating for the cause of some people from that place who claimed they were being persecuted, are just ridiculous. The situations in one country may not be the same with other countries, due to differences in cultures, civilizations, racial attitudes and religious concepts, politics, etc, so measuring every case, all over the world, with the same yard stick cannot be realistic. A set of norms may work for some country but may not be applicable in others. I would like to humbly suggest they should consider changing the name to "human privileges", which would

be more appropriate.

To further clear the confusions, I would like to define the two words more precisely based from what I learned from an article



found on the Internet, as follows: -

Characteristics of a right

It is something endowed on human beings naturally and inherently since their birth or they are born with it (Birth rights). It has not been given to them by others and thus should not be taken from them. No government can grant it, and no government should violate it. Since it is inherent to human beings, all human beings have the same rights. It is recognized universally—or very nearly so. Since

everybody wants their rights recognized by others, it logically follows that they must recognize the rights of others. It imposes only a passive (or negative) obligation on

other people. It says what others may not do to you.

It can be summed up that "right" is something that is claimed by almost all people and recognized by almost all people as an inherent property or quality of human beings that imposes a passive or negative obligation on other human beings.

Characteristics of a privilege

It is something that is given to them by somebody else. It is something that certain people have

while other people do not have it. For example, some people receive the privilege of going to college at no cost to them, while other people must pay full tuition. It is open to dispute and is often disputed. Another example is, should people have the privilege of free health care? That question is debatable. It imposes an active (or positive) obligation on other people. It says what somebody must do for you.

Privilege can be summed up as something that people ask for or that somebody voluntarily grants to another as a special favor that imposes an active or positive obligation on the one providing it.

Conclusion

Apart from the "inherent rights" or "birth rights", there is also what are called "constitutional rights", prescribed by the constitutions of governments or organizations that people are entitled to. In reality the latter should be categorized as privileges, because they do not satisfy the true sense of the word "rights", which says it cannot be granted or taken away from you by anyone, even by a government. Just notice how confusing these two words are by observing the word "right" is being used in the terms: "constitutional rights", "human rights", "workers' rights", "students' rights", etc. In the precise sense of the terms "right" and "privilege" explained above, these should not be called "rights", but "privileges". Thus people taking to the streets, in future, to demand or demonstrate under the banners of, "human rights", "workers' rights", "students' rights", etc, should consider substituting the word "rights" with a more appropriate word "privileges".

Along with the "rights" and "privileges", come the responsibilities. It's only natural that if one enjoys the rights (constitutional rights) and privileges, one must take responsibilities too. Every citizen has the duty to safeguard the sovereignty of the country they live in, has the duty to cast vote and involved in the political process. One must at least fulfill the responsibilities of a citizen or in other words fulfill the civic duties. In most foreign countries, every citizen is required by law to vote, serve in the military, volunteer in the community services and sit on the jury. Before concluding I would like to ask you whether you have fulfilled your civic duties and responsibilities today.

Reference:

The Difference Between Rights and Privileges - an article by Kyle Ambrose.



Central Body for Suppression of Trafficking in Persons



Myanmar Anti-Trafficking in Persons Day

13th September

The entire public needs to participate, Trafficking in persons to eliminate...

2018 Anti-Trafficking in Persons Day's Objectives

- ❖ To mobilize the participation of all citizens in combating human trafficking as a national duty;
- ❖ To have the public instilled with awareness about and knowledge of trafficking in persons;
- ❖ To protect and care trafficked victims with empathy; and
- ❖ To strengthen cooperation and coordination among all counter trafficking stakeholders – government agencies, civil society organizations, UN agencies, international organizations and general public.

ပြန်ကြားရေးနှင့်ပြည်သူ့ဆက်ဆံရေးဦးစီးဌာန

အခြေခံပညာဦးစီးဌာနနှင့် ကျောက်ဆည်မြို့ပြည်သူ့လူထုဦးစီးဌာန



ကလေးစာပေပြပွဲနှင့်စာအုပ်ချေးရောင်းပွဲတော်

(ကျောက်ဆည်မြို့)



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အထက(၁)ကျောက်ဆည်မြို့။

Myanmar Daily Weather Report

(Issued at 7:00 pm Monday 3rd September 2018)

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

FORECAST VALID UNTIL AFTERNOON OF THE 4th September 2018: Rain or thundershowers will be scattered in Lower Sagaing, Mandalay and Magway regions, fairly widespread in Nay Pyi Taw, Upper Sagaing Region and Chin State and widespread in the remaining regions and states with isolated heavy falls in Yangon and Ayeyawady regions, Kachin, Shan, Rakhine and Chin states. Degree of certainty is (100%).

STATE OF THE SEA: Squalls with moderate to rough seas are likely at times Deltaic, Gulf of Mottama, off and along Mon-Taninthayi Coasts. Surface wind speed in squalls may reach (35)mph. Sea will be moderate elsewhere in Myanmar waters. Wave height will be about (8-10)feet in Deltaic, Gulf of Mottama, off and along Mon-Taninthayi Coasts and about (5-7) feet in off and along Rakhine Coasts.

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Likelihood of increase of rain in Taninthayi Region, Shan, Rakhine, Kayin and Mon states.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 4th September 2018: One or two rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 4th September 2018: Some rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 4th September 2018: Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (80%).

Netanyahu meets US envoy over Syria, Iran

JERUSALEM, (Undefined) — Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu met on Sunday with a US envoy for Syria for talks on the war-ravaged country and Iran, his office said.

Netanyahu discussed “the situation in Syria and the joint effort to stop Iran’s terror and aggression” with James Jeffrey, the US special representative for Syria engagement, said a statement.

Ahead of the visit, the US State Department said Jeffrey, accompanied by US special envoy for Syria Joel Rayburn, would discuss “maintaining Israel’s security while countering Iran’s destabilizing activity throughout the region”.

Jeffrey and Rayburn would



PHOTO: AFP

travel on to Jordan and Turkey, where they would reiterate the US position against a military

offensive in Idlib, the State Department said.

The two “will also address

Russia’s specious allegations of international plans to stage a chemical weapons attack in Syr-

ia” in their meetings across the region, according to the State Department.

Iran is backing Syrian President Bashar al-Assad in his country’s civil war along with Russia and Lebanese Shiite group Hezbollah.

Israel has sought to avoid direct involvement in the conflict but acknowledges carrying out dozens of air strikes in Syria to stop what it says are deliveries of advanced weaponry to its Lebanese enemy Hezbollah.

It has also pledged to prevent its arch foe Iran from entrenching itself militarily in Syria, and a series of strikes that have killed Iranians in Syria have been attributed to Israel.—AFP ■

Yemen government announces pay rise after mass protest

ADEN (Yemen) — Yemen’s embattled government has agreed to raise the salaries of thousands of public-sector employees, including pensioners, after hundreds of people protested in Aden against the rising cost of living.

For more than a year, the government has been unable to pay salaries in the impoverished and war-torn country, as the local currency plummets against the dollar.

Late Sunday a cabinet meeting in Riyadh chaired by President Abedrabbo Mansour Hadi, who has lived in exile since 2015, approved “an increase in civil sector salaries, including retirees and contractors”, Yemen’s state-run Saba news agency reported.

It was not immediately clear when the raise would take effect.

The decision came hours after hundreds of people took to the streets of Aden, the southern province that now serves as the government’s de facto capital, burning tyres and blocking main roads to demand government aid.

Protest organizers have called for further civil disobedience until the government institutes measures to aid millions of Yemenis struggling to survive.

The riyal has lost more than two-thirds of its value against the dollar since 2015, when Saudi Arabia and its allies joined the government’s fight against Yemen’s Huthi rebels.

The economic downturn, along with a blockade on the rebel-held international airport and ports, has left Yemenis unable to

afford food staples and bottled water.

In January, Saudi Arabia — Hadi’s main ally — announced a \$2 billion bailout to help bolster the central bank. The riyal rose briefly that month but has since plummeted by a hefty 36 per cent.

In 2016, more than one million civil servants lost their jobs as Hadi transferred the official central bank from Sanaa to Aden.

The rebels operate their own central bank from the capital, which they have controlled since 2014. The Yemeni war has triggered what the UN calls the world’s largest single humanitarian crisis, with more than three-quarters of the population in need of humanitarian aid and 8.4 million at risk of famine.—AFP ■

Hundreds escape prison near Libya’s Tripoli

TRIPOLI (Libya) — Some 400 detainees escaped after a riot on Sunday at a prison in the southern suburbs of the Libyan capital Tripoli, theatre of a week of deadly battles, police said.

“The detainees were able to force open the doors and leave” as fighting between rival militias raged near the prison of Ain Zara, police said in a statement, without specifying what crimes the escapees had committed.

Guards were unable to prevent the prisoners escaping as they feared for their own lives, the statement said.

A police official contacted by AFP was unable to provide further details.

Most detainees at the prison have been convicted of common crimes or were supporters of former dictator Moamer Kadhafi, found guilty of killings during the uprising that toppled his regime in 2011.

According to a health ministry toll, at least 39 people have been killed and some 100 injured since clashes, including rocket fire, broke out among rival militias on Monday in suburbs

south of Tripoli.

Rocket strike on camp

And on Sunday rockets hit a camp for displaced people in Tripoli, leaving at least two dead and five injured from the same family, according to emergency services and witnesses.

The camp is home to hundreds of displaced people from the Libyan city of Taourga who were forced into mass exile due to their support for Kadhafi.

“Most of the families have left the camp fearing more rockets,” Khaled Omrane, a camp resident, told AFP.

According to emergency services, at least 23 rockets fell on the capital on Friday and Saturday causing fresh casualties.

The Government of National Unity (GNA) which is recognised by the international community on Sunday said it was declaring a state of emergency in the Libyan capital and its environs.

The Libyan capital has been at the centre of a battle for influence between armed groups since Kadhafi’s fall and killing.—AFP ■

Saudi Arabia confirms interception of Houthi missile fired toward border city

RIYADH — The Saudi-led coalition involved in a war in Yemen confirmed on Sunday the interception of a ballistic missile fired by Houthi militias toward the border city of Jazan, Al Arabiya local news reported.

The frequency of Houthi

missile attacks has increased in recent weeks, with most of them destroyed by Saudi air forces without reporting casualties or property damage.

The missile attacks were claimed to be launched in response to Saudi airstrikes in

Yemen.

Saudi Arabia has been leading an Arab military coalition in Yemen over the last three years against Houthi militias, which overran much of northern Yemen, including the capital Sanaa, in late 2014.—Xinhua ■

Norway police probe disappearance of WikiLeaks associate

OSLO (Norway) — Norwegian police on Sunday said they were investigating the disappearance of WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange's associate Arjen Kamphuis, a cyber security expert, who was last seen in northern Norway.

"We have started an investigation," police spokesman Tommy Bech told AFP, adding that so far they had no clue about the Dutch citizen's whereabouts.

The police "would not speculate about what may have happened to him," Bech said.

WikiLeaks tweeted on Saturday about Kamphuis's "strange disappearance", saying he had been missing since 20 August when he left his hotel in the northern Nor-

wegian town of Bodo.

It added that Kamphuis had a ticket for a flight departing on 22 August from Trondheim, a city located more than 700 kilometres (435 miles) south of Bodo.

"The train between the two takes (approximately) 10 hours," suggesting he disappeared either in Bodo, Trondheim or on the train, WikiLeaks said, triggering numerous conspiracy theories on Twitter.

Assange has been holed up at Ecuador's embassy in London since 2012 when he was granted political asylum as he feared extradition to the United States to face trial over WikiLeaks' publication of secret US military documents and diplomatic cables in 2010. —AFP ■

Lavrov to speak at conference on countering weapons supplies to terrorists

MOSCOW — Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov will address the participants in the conference dedicated to counteraction to illegal arms supplies in light of the fight against international terrorism, which will be held in Moscow's World Trade Centre.

The top diplomat's speech will open the event. According to Russian Foreign Ministry Spokeswoman Maria Zakharova, taking part in the conference will be senior officials of Russia's Federal Security Service (FSB), Foreign Intelligence Service, members of Russia's State Duma (lower house of parliament) and Federation Council (upper house of parliament).

UN Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) Yuri Fedotov is expected to address the event.

Representatives of 21 countries and heads of coun-



Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov. PHOTO: AFP

terterrorism units of 11 international organizations have confirmed their participation.

On 12 August, Russia's Permanent Representative to the UN Vasily Nebenzya said that Russia had reliable information on the involvement of some countries' special services in organizing the shipment of arms to terrorists in the Middle East and North Africa and was ready to share that data.

Prior to that, the UN Security Council passed a resolution on countering the supply of small arms to terrorists. However, it made no mention of some proposals put forward by Moscow, including the initiative to impose a comprehensive trade and economic embargo on territories controlled by the Islamic State terror group (outlawed in Russia). —Tass ■

Former UK leader Brown urges Labour to act on anti-Semitism

LONDON (United Kingdom) — Former British Prime Minister Gordon Brown urged his opposition Labour party on Sunday to adopt the internationally agreed definition of anti-Semitism in order to resolve a bitter row that has engulfed the party for months.

The issue has opened up deep and bitter divisions within Britain's main opposition party.

And its current leader, Jeremy Corbyn, has come under prolonged attack for refusing to adopt fully the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of anti-Semitism in Labour's new code of conduct.

He has also been accused of allowing anti-Semitism to spread in the left-wing party.

The Labour leadership has argued the definition, signed by 31 countries and used by many British institutions, does not allow for full criticism of Israel's treatment of Palestinians.

Ahead of a meeting of its

ruling executive committee on Tuesday, Brown — who was prime minister between June 2007 and May 2010 — said the issue touched at "the soul of the Labour Party".

"This is a problem that is real and present and something that's got to be dealt with now," he told a Jewish Labour Movement conference.

"I want to say to you very clearly today that the IHRA definition of anti-Semitism is something we should support unanimously, unequivocally and immediately."

His comments came as Jewish leaders continue to vilify Corbyn over the controversy.

Former chief rabbi Jonathan Sacks said on Sunday the majority of Jews are questioning whether Britain is a safe place to bring up their children.

The crossbench peer insisted the Labour leader must "recant and repent" and that he risked engulfing the country "in the flames of hatred".

"Jews have been in Britain since 1656, I know of no other occasion in these 362 years when Jews... are asking 'is this country safe to bring up our children'," he told the BBC.

Veteran Labour lawmaker Frank Field, who has sat in the House of Commons for almost 40 years, quit the party's group in parliament on Thursday over the mounting anti-Semitism allegations.

In a letter to the party, he said that Corbyn's leadership was overseeing an "erosion of our core values". Shadow chancellor John McDonnell defended the Labour leader on Sunday, telling the BBC that critics had "got it wrong".

"Jeremy has made it absolutely clear we will protect Jewish members of our party from any form of abuse and anti-Semitism," he said.

McDonnell predicted all sides would be "satisfied" with the proposals agreed on Tuesday. "It will be resolved, and there will be a balance about acceptance," he said. —AFP ■

Fire engulfs National Museum, one of Brazil's oldest

RIO DE JANEIRO — A massive fire gutted the National Museum in Rio de Janeiro, one of Brazil's oldest, authorities said on Sunday, but no injuries were immediately reported.

The cause of the fire, which broke out around 2230 GMT, was not yet known, according to local media.

Television footage showed the building engulfed by a raging blaze that firefighters had not brought under control.

The museum was founded in 1818 by King Joao VI and is among Brazil's most important, with valuable national treasures inside.

"This is a tragic day for Brazil," President Michel Temer said in a statement. "Two hundred years of work and research and knowledge are lost."

"This is a cultural tragedy," the director of the National History Museum said on Globo TV. —AFP ■



People watch as a massive fire engulfs the National Museum in Rio de Janeiro, one of Brazil's oldest on 2 September, 2018. The cause of the fire was not yet known, according to local media. PHOTO: AFP



Combined file photo shows Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe (L) and Russian President Vladimir Putin. **PHOTO: KYODO NEWS**

Abe to hold meet with Putin in Vladivostok, talks with Xi eyed

TOKYO — Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said on Monday he will attend a regional economic forum to be held in the Russian Far East port city of Vladivostok next week and have a bilateral meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Abe said he is also arranging separate meetings with Chinese President Xi Jinping, South Korean Prime Minister Lee Nak Yon and Mongolian President Khaltmaa Battulga

on the sidelines of the Eastern Economic Forum scheduled for 11 to 13 September.

The prime minister expressed his determination to push forward talks on joint economic activities on the Russian-held, Japanese-claimed islands off Hokkaido during his meeting with the Russian leader.

Tokyo sees the activities as a path towards a resolution of the territorial row over the is-

lands and to a possible signing of a postwar peace treaty, while Moscow looks to attract Japanese investment on the islands.

Abe was looking to have a meeting with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, if he attended the forum, in an attempt to achieve a breakthrough over the issue of Japanese nationals abducted by the North decades ago. But the Russian government said the North's leader will not take part. —Kyodo News ■

China supports Africa jointly building Belt and Road: Xi

BEIJING — China supports African countries in jointly building the Belt and Road to share the win-win outcomes, President Xi Jinping said on Monday when addressing the High-Level Dialogue Between Chinese and African Leaders and Business Representatives.

China stands ready to strengthen comprehensive cooperation with the African countries to build a road of high-quality development that is suited to national conditions, inclusive and beneficial to all, Xi said in his keynote speech at the meeting, also the Sixth Conference of Chinese and African Entrepreneurs.

Realizing common prosperity for the people of all nations, including African people, is an important part of building a community with a shared future for humanity, Xi said in his speech themed “walk together towards prosperity.”

“Africa is an extension of the Belt and Road development historically and naturally and an important par-

ticipant in the initiative,” the president said.

China does not attach any political strings to its investment in Africa under the Belt and Road Initiative, nor does it interfere in African countries' internal affairs or impose its demands on others, he noted.

The China-Africa cooperation under the initiative targets inadequate infrastructure and other key constraints on Africa's development, “with funds to be used where they count most,” Xi said.

He said China and Africa's joint development of the Belt and Road completely follows established international rules, noting that China is ready to strengthen third-party cooperation with any country that has the capability and the intent.

China welcomes entrepreneurs worldwide, including those from Africa, to invest and develop in China and encourages Chinese entrepreneurs to explore and develop business in Africa, so as to jointly promote the Belt and Road, Xi said. —Xinhua ■

Blast in Philippine port damages army, coast guard boats, no injuries

MANILA — An explosion broke out on Monday in a port in Masbate, an island province in the Bicol region in the Philippines, damaging Philippine army and Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) boats, but no injuries were reported.

PCG spokesman Captain Armand Balilo said the explosion occurred around 12:30 am local time at Masbate port, some 100 meters away from a PCG station where the speedboats were moored.

Balilo said two new PCG boats were damaged while an army boat was totally destroyed.

“Witnesses disclosed that prior to the incident, a small motorized banca was seen roaming the vicinity of the

incident,” Balilo said, adding that a police investigation is underway.

According to the initial investigation, a homemade explosive was apparently used in the attack by an unknown group.

Police recovered pieces of orange polyvinyl chloride pipes and shattered pieces of the damaged boats from the site.

It was the second explosion that rocked the port in over a month. On 2 August, an improvised explosive device also went off at the port and damaged two motorboats owned by fishermen, police said.

No one was hurt in both incidents, police said.

Police have yet to conclude whether the two explosions are related. —Xinhua ■

Volunteers provide service at FOCAC media centre



in
Picture

Tian Yu (1st L), a volunteer from Beijing University of Posts and Telecommunications, provides language service to journalists from Cuba at the media centre for the Beijing Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) in Beijing, capital of China, 3 September, 2018. The FOCAC Beijing Summit involves some 2,500 volunteers, most of whom are students from 32 higher education institutions. The volunteers are mainly responsible for tasks in venue services, guest reception, registration, media services and transportation. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

Typhoon on course to hit western Japan, could be strongest in 25 yrs

TOKYO — A powerful typhoon was approaching Japan's southern Pacific coast on Monday and is likely to rip through western Japan on Tuesday, with the weather agency warning it could become the strongest typhoon to make landfall in the country in 25 years.

The Japan Meteorological Agency said a wide area of the country should be on high alert for strong gusts, high waves and heavy downpours.

As of noon on Monday, Typhoon Jebi was traveling north-northwest in the Pacific Ocean south of Japan's main island of Honshu at a speed of 20 kilometres per hour with an atmospheric pressure of 940 hectopascals at its centre and packing gusts of up to 234 kph, according to the Japan Meteorological Agency.

Categorized as "very strong" by the agency based on the strength of gusts, Jebi would become the strongest typhoon to make landfall in Japan since 1993 if it maintains its force, an agency official said at an emergency press conference.

"Rainstorms will likely intensify suddenly as the typhoon is approaching while picking up its speed," the official said, urging people not to go out unless necessary and prepare for evacuation.

Japan has been hit by a



A scene of stormy weather . PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

string of typhoons recently, with western parts of the country battered by massive flooding and landslides that left more than 220 people dead.

The weather agency also called for vigilance against flooding and mudslides as well as high tides. Fearing potentially massive damage and traffic disruption, airline companies and railway operators are expected to cancel their services on Tuesday.

West Japan Railway Co said it is planning to cancel train services in the metropolitan area centering on Osaka from early Tuesday to around 10 am.

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe told a meeting of the government and ruling parties, "We have seen typhoons and torrential rains. The government will do its ut-

most to prevent disaster."

After making landfall somewhere on the main island of Shikoku or Kii Peninsula on Tuesday, the typhoon is expected to pass over the Sea of Japan, the agency said, adding that it will likely weaken to an extratropical cyclone there.

The agency said strong gusts of up to 216 kph could hit the Shikoku and Kinki regions, and gusts of up to 162 kph could affect a wide area including the Tohoku, Tokai and Hokuriku regions. The Tokyo metropolitan area may see strong winds, though the typhoon is unlikely to pass close to the capital.

Up to 150 millimeters of rain may fall in some regions in western and central Japan through Tuesday morning, the agency said.—Kyodo News ■

Alaska wildlife officials try in vain to help wandering sea lion back to ocean

SAN FRANCISCO — Wildlife officials in the northwest US state of Alaska have failed to usher back to the ocean a sea lion that has been wandering around a community of Sitka, a city near the Alaska capital of Juneau, for three days.

The adult Steller sea lion, who was first spotted running down a road Friday morning, seemed to have lost his way back to the ocean.

He is now "hiding out in the woods" about 402 metres away from the sea on Japonski Island, an area of Sitka that's separated from downtown by a bridge, the *Anchorage Daily News* (ADN) quoted an official of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) as saying on Sunday.

The huge animal, which weighs between 680 kg and 771 kg, appeared to be increasingly stressed and hungry, and spent all Sunday hunkered down in the woods.

"At this point he's likely stressed, dehydrated and hungry," said NOAA spokeswoman Julie Speegle.

The NOAA on Sunday urged on social media people to stay away from the sea lion and try not to disturb the huge animal.

"NOAA is asking the public to clear the area in Sitka where a male Steller sea lion is in distress, and is hiding in the woods; the incident is drawing onlookers. Please, for your own safety and the well-being of the animal, if you are in the area, leave," NOAA tweeted Sunday evening.

If the sea lion does not return to the ocean on his own, officials are considering calling in a veterinarian on Monday to "talk about next steps," including sedating and relocating the animal using heavy equipment, Speegle said.

Scientists are puzzled why the sea lion went astray and meandered hundreds of metres into an inland town on the island, the farthest distance that such a marine animal has ever traveled, which is not a usual occurrence known to humans before. — Xinhua ■

US firefighters battle suicidal thoughts after the blaze

LOS ANGELES—Matt Shobert opens his eyes and wishes he was dead, a recurrent thought that started four years ago when the former firefighter first contemplated taking his own life.

He is not the only one: some of his comrades suffer in silence, and some end up committing suicide. Fighting forest fires such as those that have ravaged the western regions of the United States this summer means days that are both exhausting and interminable, while the death and destruction weigh heavily on the minds of those tasked with stemming the flames.

"You've got firefighters working 12 to 36 hours straight on the fire line, so they are physically exhausted, they are emotionally exhausted because we've been killing firemen in these fires, firemen have been dying," said fire chief Tony Bommarito in Yorba Linda, 40 miles (65 kilometres)

south of Los Angeles. California, one of the worst-hit states, has seen five firefighters die battling the flames so far this year. Across the whole country, that number rises to 64, according to official figures. That figure does not include the 45 who killed themselves in 2018, according to Jeff Dill, whose Firefighter Behavioral Health Alliance (FBHA) group helps those battling depression or Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, otherwise known as PTSD.

"We are not superheroes. Everybody has a limit," said Bommarito, 48. "We are expected to act brave, strong, courageous to help, don't ask for help," said Dill, a retired firefighter whom Matt Shobert called when his thoughts turned to leaping off a bridge in San Diego.

Left with nothing

Shobert, 56, was overseeing a clean-up in the middle of no-

where: the brush was dry and combustible, perfect tinder for a forest fire. In a freak accident, the blade of commercial-grade mower hit a rock and fired it like a missile into his jaw: the operator of the machine was half a football field away and failed to notice what had happened.

Shobert was knocked out cold, and was covered in blood when he woke up. He was not sure how he was going to make it 500 yards to his pick-up truck to call for help. "I basically had this very traumatic injury and I had to save my own life," he said. "After spending about 30 years in the fire service, dealing with death and destruction and carnage, and I think all those things came together."

It took him a long time to recover from his injury. When he returned to work he was not the same man, oscillating between bursts of anger and sadness.

"I realized at that point I had to retire from the fire service and that was all I knew for the past 30 years because it was my life, it was my hobby, it was everything I did. And in a split second it was taken away," he said.

"I contemplated suicide. And for whatever reason I decided to just call a friend of mine... rather

than jump off the bridge in San Diego," he said. Shobert was diagnosed with PTSD and since then has undergone therapy and taken medication, but the road is long and hard. "I still wake up in the morning and sometimes wish I was dead," he said. "I'm still fairly miserable, but at least now I have a tool box."—AFP ■



Fighting forest fires involves days that are both exhausting and interminable. PHOTO: AFP

Thunderstorm halts Lady's Gaga's movie debut

VENICE — Lady Gaga has been called a force of nature but a spectacular thunderstorm pulled the plug on the gala premiere of her big acting debut at the Venice film festival.

An hour into the screening of "A Star Is Born" late Friday a violent electrical storm rolling across the Venetian lagoon left the cinema in the dark for 20 minutes. Earlier the superstar made mimed prayers on the red carpet so that she could reach her seat in her fluffy pink Valentino gown without being soaked.

While the gala was something of a washout, the film itself and the singer's performance earned rapturous reviews.

Variety called the second remake of the 1937 classic "a transcendent Hollywood movie", heaping praise on Lady Gaga and her co-star Bradley Cooper,



Pop queen Lady Gaga arrives for the premiere of her major acting debut film "A Star is Born" at the 75th Venice Film Festival. **PHOTO: AFP**

who also directed the film.

Critic Owen Gleiberman

hailed as "luminous" its story of a waitress who climbs to

fame after falling in love with an alcoholic country singer on

the slide.

He said Gaga's "ebullient and winningly direct performance never lets her own star quality get in the way of the character."

The talented "ugly" girl who thinks her nose is too big and hides behind layers of outrageous makeup when she goes on stage, had obvious autobiographical echoes for the US star.

Lady Gaga told reporters she "always dreamed of being an actor", and channelled her own difficult early experiences in the music business into her performance.

The *Hollywood Reporter* declared it a "captivating debut in a big-screen leading role". "There's a lot to love in Bradley Cooper's film, it added, even if "at times it becomes pedestrian as it follows her conquest of superstardom".—AFP ■

'Crazy Rich Asians' still on top of N America box office

LOS ANGELES (United States) — It has been another crazy good weekend for rom-com "Crazy Rich Asians," which topped the box office for a third straight weekend amid a pretty good summer for North American theaters overall, industry watchers said Sunday.

The Warner Bros. film, with its mostly Asian cast, took in an estimated \$22.2 million for the Friday-through-Sunday period, dropping just 10 percent from the previous weekend, box office tracker Exhibitor Relations said.

The film's estimated take jumps to \$28 million when Monday's Labor Day holiday is included. The adaptation of Kevin Kwan's best-selling novel, starring Michelle Yeoh, Henry Golding and Constance Wu, follows an American economics professor as she meets her super-rich boyfriend's family in Singapore in a story about the clash of love, family and great wealth.

"Crazy Rich" also helped boost the summer box office to what *Hollywood Reporter* called a "spectacular year-over-year recovery," with domestic revenue expected to be up 14 percent over last summer.

Warner Bros. meanwhile scored another hit with shark-thriller "The Meg," in the No. 2 spot again with takings of \$10.5 million. Jason Statham

stars as a rescue diver trying to save scientists trapped in a submarine being attacked by a huge, prehistoric shark.

In third spot was Tom Cruise adventure film "Mission Impossible — Fallout" from Paramount, which took in \$7 million. Globally, the action blockbuster has earned \$649 million, the best performance of any of the "MI" films to date. Fourth went to MGM's new "Operation Finale," at \$6 million. Oscar Isaac plays an Israeli Mossad agent who tracks Nazi war criminal Adolf Eichmann (Ben Kingsley) to the Buenos Aires suburb where he is living under a false name. And in fifth

was "Searching" from Sony, at \$5.7 million. Written and directed by filmmaker Aneesh Chaganty, it tells the story of a Korean-American man's desperate effort to find his teenage daughter after she goes missing in California. It stars John Cho, Michelle La and Debra Messing. Rounding out this weekend's top 10 were:

"Christopher Robin" (\$5 million)

"Alpha" (\$4.5 million)

"The Happytime Murders" (\$4.4 million)

"BlackkKlansman" (\$4.1 million)

"Mile 22" (\$3.6 million) —AFP ■



Actor Henry Golding and his wife Liv Lo pose at the 21 August, 2018 premiere in Singapore of "Crazy Rich Asians," which led the North American box office for a third straight weekend. **PHOTO: AFP** ■

Bono says 'back to full voice', U2 tour will resume



U2 frontman Bono. **PHOTO: AFP**

DUBLIN (Ireland)—U2 frontman Bono has said he will be "back to full voice" for the rest of a European tour after the Irish rock band was forced to cancel a gig in Berlin when they were only a few songs in.

Thousands of fans were left disappointed on Saturday night when the band's set was abruptly cancelled after Bono appeared to be unable to sing.

"It's not right for you. It's useless," he told fans from the stage after pausing to drink from a thermos before the show was eventually called off.

The surprise cancellation left the remainder of U2's seven month "Experience + Innocence" tour in doubt.

But in a statement released through his publicist

late Sunday, Bono said he had recovered his vocal health and that the tour would continue as planned.

"I've seen a great doctor and with his care I'll be back to full voice for the rest of the tour," the 58-year-old singer said.

"So happy and relieved that anything serious has been ruled out."

He added that his joy was "tempered by the knowledge that the Berlin audience were so inconvenienced".

But he said the band will return to Berlin at the end of their tour to play a new gig on November 13th for those who missed out on Saturday.

The statement will come as a relief to U2 fans across Europe with tickets for upcoming shows.

The band's next scheduled concert is in Cologne on Tuesday before they head to France, Portugal, Spain, Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands, Italy, Britain and Ireland.

At the first Berlin show on Friday, Bono condemned the recent far-right violence in the eastern German city of Chemnitz. During the concert, the slogan #wirsindmehr (we are more) used by counterprotesters in Germany against the far-right was also projected on the stage, to cheers from the crowd.—AFP ■

Colour-changing sensor detects signs of eye damage in tears

CHICAGO — Researchers at the University of Illinois (UI) have developed a gel laden with gold nanoparticles that changes colour when it reacts with a teardrop containing ascorbic acid released from a wound to the eye.

The study has been newly published in the journal *Biosensors and Bioelectronics*.

The sensor, called OjoGel, can measure ascorbic acid levels, a key marker of eye injury in minutes.

A tiny teardrop is all that's needed to cause a colour-change reaction in the OjoGel. The extent of the colour change correlates to the concentration of ascorbic acid in the tear sample, shifting from pale yellow to a dark reddish-brown as the concentration increases.

The researchers did extensive testing to determine the concentrations associated with each degree of colour change. They developed a colour key and guidelines for using a mobile phone app, Pixel Picker, to precisely measure the concentration indicated by a reacted gel sample.

Previous research by UI researchers found that ascorbic acid concentration in tears is a good measure for determining extent of injury to the eye. Ascorbic acid normally has very low concentration in tears.

"Deep damage to the cornea from trauma or incisional surgery releases aqueous humor into the tear film, which increases the concentration of ascorbic acid in tears to a measurably higher level than that found in normal eyes," said study leader Dipanjan Pan, a UI professor of bioengineering and the Carle Illinois College of Medicine. "OjoGel offers a unique biosensing technique that provides an effective and simple method for testing ascorbic acid in a point-of-care delivery system."

In the next step, the researchers plan to continue refining OjoGel technology in hopes of producing a low-cost, easy-to-use clinical device. They also will perform clinical studies to determine whether OjoGel readings reliably evaluate eye damage. —Xinhua ■

Can crunch talks bring the Paris climate treaty to life?

PARIS — As the pace of global warming races ahead of efforts to tame it, diplomats from more than 190 nations begin crunch UN climate talks in Bangkok on Tuesday to breathe life into the Paris Agreement.

This year is the deadline to finalize the "rule book" for the 2015 treaty, which calls for capping the rise in global temperatures at "well below" two degrees Celsius, and 1.5° C if possible.

The pact also promises \$100 billion annually from 2020 to poor nations already coping with floods, heatwaves, rising seas and superstorms made worse by climate change.

"The Paris Agreement was like a letter of intent," said Michael Oppenheimer, a professor of geosciences and international affairs at Princeton University.

Unless detailed rules of implementation covering dozens of contentious and unresolved issues are agreed upon, he and other experts said, the landmark treaty could run aground.

Lamenting "uneven progress" to date, co-chairs of UN talks last month urged rank-and-file negotiators to produce "clear and streamlined options" that ministers and heads of state can push across the finish line at the December UN climate summit in Poland.

"If Parties do not achieve

this in Bangkok, a satisfactory outcome in Katowice will be in jeopardy," they wrote in the unusual appeal.

The most persistent sticking points in the UN talks revolve around money.

Developing countries favour outright grants from public sources, demand visibility on how donor nations intend to scale up this largesse, and object to under-investment in adapting to climate impacts.

Rich countries want more private capital in the mix, prefer projects with profit potential, and have been reluctant to make hard-and-fast long-term commitments.

This tension flared spectacularly in July when the UN's flagship climate finance initiative, the Green Climate Fund, suffered a boardroom meltdown after members could not agree on funding priorities.

Symptom and cause

The executive director quit, and the paralysed fund — hampered by US President Donald Trump's refusal to honour a US \$2 billion pledge — is facing a cash crunch.

The Fund's woes are both symptom and cause, and will complicate the broader talks on finance, experts say.

An even more daunting — and arguably urgent — task fac-



As the pace of global warming races ahead of efforts to tame it, diplomats from more than 190 nations begin crunch UN climate talks in Bangkok on Tuesday to breathe life into the Paris Agreement. PHOTO: AFP

ing diplomats in Bangkok and Katowice is ratcheting up voluntary national commitments to cut planet-warming greenhouse gas emissions.

Taken together, current pledges would allow average global temperatures to climb more than 3° C (5.4 degrees Fahrenheit) above pre-industrial levels. The mercury has gone up 1° C so far. Under the Paris accord, countries are not required to revisit these commitments until 2023.

But waiting that long could doom the planet to runaway global warming, scientists warn in a UN special report obtained by AFP, to be officially unveiled in October.

"The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

(IPCC) 1.5° C report will show the need for increased ambition if we want to have a functional human civilisation in the future," said Wael Hmaidan, executive director of Climate Action Network, which groups hundreds of climate NGOs.

Debilitating heatwaves and deadly fires across the northern hemisphere this summer may be a mild foretaste of what a climate addled future would look like.

"We need to see announcements of increased ambition from some of the big countries that put out 2030 commitments — China, India, Brazil, the European Union, Japan," said Alden Meyer, policy and strategy director for the Union of Concerned Scientists in Washington. —AFP ■

NASA plans 45-day effort to get its Mars rover back

WASHINGTON — US space agency NASA is planning to start its effort to restore communication with the Mars rover Opportunity.

In a recent statement, NASA said it would begin a 45-day campaign of active efforts to restore communications with Opportunity once skies above the rover cleared to a sufficient level.

The rover has been out of contact since early June, when a major dust storm deprived the rover of solar power and the storm is fading.

"The dust haze produced by the Martian global dust storm of 2018 is one of the most extensive on record, but all indications are it is finally coming to a close," said Rich Zurek, project scientist for the Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter.

Zurek said in the statement that there had been no signs of

dust storms within 3,000 kilometers of Opportunity "for some time."

John Callas, Opportunity project manager at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory, said in a statement that "assuming that we hear back from Opportunity, we will begin the process of discerning its status and bringing it back online."

However, NASA's plan attracted criticism because it limited the active part of the recovery to 45 days.

Mike Seibert, a former flight director and rover driver for Opportunity said that Jet Propulsion Laboratory under NASA once attempted "active listening" of Spirit, the twin of Opportunity, for 10 months in 2010 and 2011 when that rover stopped transmitting before giving up.

Callas said that if Opportunity did not respond to com-

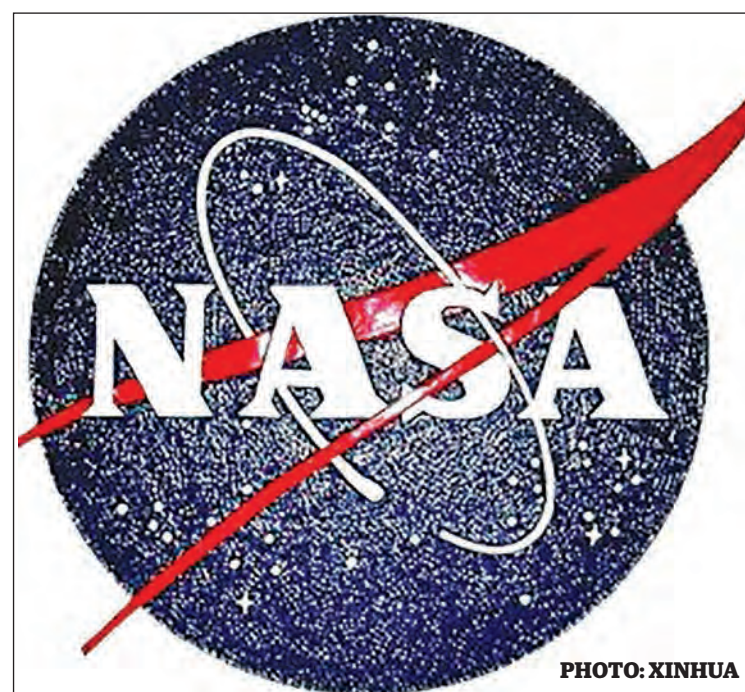


PHOTO: XINHUA

munications attempts after that 45-day campaign, it likely meant the spacecraft had suffered a mission-ending malfunction.

"We will keep trying to get our Martian friend back online.

We will not give up on #Oppy even after the 45 days of plan we have put in place!" tweeted Thomas Zurbuchen, NASA associate administrator for science. —Xinhua ■

18th Asian Games draw to close as China dominate medal table again

JAKARTA — The 18th Asian Games drew to a successful end with a stellar closing ceremony here on Sunday as Asian sports power China again dominated medal table of the multi-sport event.

China once again called the shots leading with 132 gold, 92 silver and 65 bronze medals, although the Asian giant sent a relatively young delegation, with 631 out of their 845-athlete squad have participated in neither the Olympics nor the Asian Games.

“The Asian Games can serve as a mid-term exam for us in build-up to the Tokyo Olympics,” Chinese delegation general secretary Liu Guoyong said during the Games. “The Games could let them have a feel for major international sporting events.”

Japan Sunday won the mixed triathlon gold in the last event of the two-week, 40-sport Games, ahead of the closing ceremony held in the Gelora Bung Karno Main Stadium.

Japan achieved better-than-expected results at the Asiad as they wrapped up the campaign with a total of 205 medals, including 75 golds, 56 silvers,



The closing ceremony of the 18th Asian Games is held at the Gelora Bung Karno (GBK) Main Stadium in Jakarta, Indonesia, on 2 September, 2018. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

and 74 bronzes, overtaking South Korea to finish second in the tally for the first time in a decade.

South Korea totalled 49 golds, including men's football gold medal. The Big Three were followed in the gold-medal ranking order by: Indonesia (31), Uzbekistan (21), Iran (20) and Chinese Taipei (17). India and Kazakhstan each had 15 followed by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPR Korea) and Bahrain with 12.

DPR Korea and South Korea formed a unified team to participate in three sports of the Games and won four medals overall, in-

cluding a historic gold in dragon boat racing, which was the first gold medal by a unified Korean team at a major multi-sport event.

Six months ago, a unified women's hockey Korean team played at the PyeongChang Winter Olympics, but they failed to earn a medal.

The Asian Games have been a great athletic success, witnessing six world records highlighted by Chinese swimmer Liu Xiang's stunning performance in the women's 50m backstroke.

Liu's time of 26.98 seconds made her the first woman breaking into the 27-second mark in the

event. A total of 18 Asian records have also been set up at these Games.

A flag handover ceremony was held amid the closing ceremony as Xu Liyi, mayor of east China's Hangzhou, was handed the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) flag, marking the Asian Games enter into “Hangzhou Time”.

Hangzhou, set to hold the next Asian Games in 2022, is the third Chinese host of the continent's showpiece event after Beijing in 1990 and Guangzhou in 2010.

The Hangzhou Asian Games

Organising Committee (HAGOC) has promised an event of the “highest possible standards” and sent a delegation of nearly 260 people to Jakarta for learning and observation purposes.

“We assure you it will meet the highest possible standards in staging a special edition of the Asian Games with Chinese grandeur, Asian style and a Hangzhou flavor,” said Xu Jianfeng, deputy director of international relations of HAGOC, at the 37th OCA General Assembly held in Jakarta.

Jakarta has had less than the normal amount of time to prepare for the Games. It was selected only four years ago after Vietnam, the original host, pulled out due to financial setbacks. This allowed for only four years of preparation, instead of the usual six to seven years.

Although Jakarta had to organize the event in a short time, on a tight budget, the capital city has proved that it can host a multi-sport international event involving 45 countries and regions.

It's the second time for Jakarta to host the Asiad, which had its fourth edition in the Indonesian capital in 1962. —Xinhua ■

Nadal to face Thiem in eighth US Open quarter-final

NEW YORK (United States) — Defending champion Rafael Nadal on Sunday reached the

US Open quarter-finals for the eighth time where he will face Dominic Thiem, one of only

three men to defeat him in 2018.

World number one Nadal saw off a battling Nikoloz Basilashvili, the first Georgian in a fourth round in New York, 6-3, 6-3, 6-7 (6/8), 6-4.

Next up for Nadal, the three-time champion in New York, is Thiem who he defeated in the Roland Garros final in June when he captured an 11th French Open.

Thiem, who beat Nadal on clay in Madrid, booked his place in the quarter-finals for the first time with a 7-5, 6-2, 7-6 (7/2) win over 2017 runner-up Kevin Anderson.

The ninth-seeded Austrian's three other appearances in the last-eight of a Slam have all been at Roland Garros in 2016, 2017 and 2018. — AFP ■

Rafael Nadal of Spain competes against Nikoloz Basilashvili of Georgia during Day 7 of the 2018 US Open Men's Singles match at the USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center in New York on 2 September, 2018. **PHOTO: AFP**



Arsenal's German midfielder Mesut Ozil returned to the team against Cardiff. **PHOTO: AFP**

Ozil back for Arsenal after rift talk

CARDIFF (United Kingdom) — Mesut Ozil returned to the Arsenal starting line-up for their Premier League game at Cardiff on Sunday after reports he had fallen out with boss Unai Emery.

Ozil missed Arsenal's first win under Emery against West Ham last weekend amid claims the German midfielder had been involved in a training ground bust-up with his manager.

It was suggested Emery, in his first season after replacing Arsene Wenger, had told Ozil his place was in danger if he didn't try harder to adapt to the Spaniard's

desire for a high-tempo pressing game. Ozil had played poorly in Arsenal's defeats against Manchester City and Chelsea.

But Emery said Ozil was merely absent due to illness and the former Real Madrid star was at the Emirates Stadium to watch the 3-1 victory over the Hammers.

And, with Ozil apparently over his illness, he was back in the team at the Cardiff City Stadium.

Ozil's inclusion was one of two changes, with Alexandre Lacazette also included and Alex Iwobi and Henrikh Mkhitaryan dropping out. — AFP ■