

NATIONAL

Vice-Senior General attends BIMSTEC Army Chiefs' Conclave in Pune, India

PAGE-3

OPINION

Beware of risks of bogus democracy

PAGE-8

NATIONAL

Asians share disaster resilience knowledge

PAGE-2

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Senior General Min Aung Hlaing cordially greets Tatmadaw members and their families at Kalaw station, Shan State. **PHOTO: OFFICE OF THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF**

Senior General: Unity among nationalities vital in making Myanmar stand strong

EVERY big and small country which has unity can stand as a strong country in the world. Like the saying "unity is strength", all our ethnic nationalities are to strive for unity, said Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing in a meeting with officers, other ranks and their families at Kalaw station yesterday morning.

It was also attended by the Senior General's wife Daw Kyu

Kyu Hla, Commander-in-Chief (Navy) Admiral Tin Aung San and wife, Commander-in-Chief (Air) General Maung Maung Kyaw and wife, senior military officers from the Office of Commander-in-Chief (Army), Commander of Eastern Command Maj-Gen Lin Aung and officers, other ranks and their families at Kalaw station.

In his speech, the Senior General said respective military headquarters alone cannot

perform duties and objectives individually. All servicemen are to perform their duties. So servicemen must have thorough understanding of their duties and abide by standing orders. It aims to ensure the enforcement of military rules which is the lifeblood of Tatmadaw. It will become a good Tatmadaw only when each serviceman has good discipline. It will become a Tatmadaw on which the people can rely.

The Senior General stressed

that Our Three Main National Causes, administrative machinery of the State, life and property of the people and rights of the people should not be harmed in performing the current tasks of restoring eternal peace and walking along the path of multi-party democracy.

Then, the Senior General presented food items for officers and other ranks at the station through the station commander.

SEE PAGE-3

Myanmar observes World Ozone Day in Nay Pyi Taw

MYANMAR observed the World Ozone Day in Nay Pyi Taw on 16 September with an address by Union Minister for Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation U Ohn Win.

In his speech, Union Minister U Ohn Win said Myanmar issued an order in 2014 in implementing the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer through the cooperation of the relevant departments, organizations and entrepreneurs.

The country has laid down strategies and is implementing them to reduce hydrochlorofluorocarbon (HCFC) in the atmosphere, under the assistance of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO).

The Union Minister called on all-inclusive efforts to lessen substances that cause ozone layer depletion, to alleviate the ill impacts of climate change and sustainable improvement of the natural environment and atmosphere for the future generations.

Country Programme Manager Mr Bijay Karmacharya of UN-Habitat read out the message of the UN Secretary General and UNEP's video message on ozone layer protection was screened.

The Union Minister and the attendees looked around the exhibition booths on the World Ozone Day.

Talks on awareness of the ozone layer was also held at schools in Nay Pyi Taw.—MNA■

INSIDE TODAY

NATIONAL

High-level Chinese official arrives in Nay Pyi Taw

PAGE-3



ENVIRONMENT

African tourism alarmed by rhino, elephant losses

PAGE-13



SCIENCE & TECH

NASA blasts off space laser satellite to track ice loss around the world

PAGE-15



Literary awards presented for progress of literature

THOSE who honour men of letters with awards are also included in the persons striving for the progress of literature, said Union Minister for Information Dr Pe Myint in Yangon yesterday.

Speaking at the 25th Pakokku U Ohn Pe Literary Awards presentation ceremony at Sarpay Beikman Building, the Union Minister praised the award-presenters as a force for the development of literature of the country alongside the creators, producers, distributors and critics of the literary world.

In fact, the award-presentation ceremony serves as an encouragement for the literary development of the country, he said, adding, the standard of literature is high in every developed country.

Thanks to the vision of the late Pakokku U Ohn Pe and the efforts of his successors, the literary awards can be presented till today, said the Union Minister who gave away the Life-Long Award and awards for poems.

The chairman of Myanmar Writers Association (MWA) explained the purpose of the



Minister for Information Dr Pe Myint and 2017 Pakokku U Ohn Pe Literary Scholarship winners pose for a documentary photo. **PHOTO: MNA**

award-presentation ceremony.

Officials of the Ministry of Information, MWS, Pakokku U Ohn Pe literary awards trust fund and Pakokku U Ohn Pe library committee presented prizes to the persons of the literary world for their lauded works and

to outstanding students.

An official of the library committee then recounted the history of the Pakokku U Ohn Pe Literary Awards which began in 1994 with the aim of promoting literature that benefits the people and developing of the

literary world.

Life-long Award winner Dr Than Oo (Pyi Soe Min) spoke words of thanks.

The Union Minister then posed for a documentary photo together with the prize winners. **MNA ■**

Asians share disaster resilience knowledge

ASIAN countries shared knowledge of the sustainable development and disaster resilience of their cities at a workshop in Incheon, the Republic of Korea on 13 and 14 this month. At the workshop, a Myanmar delegation led by Deputy Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement U Soe Aung discussed the common disasters of the country and the adoption of national level policies and action programs on disaster management.

The delegation also dealt with matters relating to this year's floods, particularly in Mon State where rehabilitation is underway and viable long-term and short-term plans for upgrading the disaster resilience of its capital Mawlamyine, substantial reduction of disaster risk and losses in lives, livelihoods and health and in the economic, physical, social, cultural and

environmental assets of persons, businesses, communities through collective efforts by all stakeholders under the Sendai Framework. implementation of disaster management and response programs, efficiency enhancement of local governments and the public, and promotion of disaster awareness campaigns.

Delegates to the workshop also visited the disaster and security control bureau in Incheon.

At the two-day workshop, the implementation of the Sendai Framework at the regional level was assessed and the knowledge of the adoption of a program on disaster resilience of cities was shared by the local-level delegates of Mawlamyine in Myanmar, Dhaka in Bangladesh, Ulaanbaatar in Mongolia, Kathmandu in Nepal and Sialkot in Indonesia and federal level delegates of five countries.—MNA ■



Deputy Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement U Soe Aung discussing at the workshop. **PHOTO: MNA**

Renewable energy sector likely to improve in 2020s

By May Thet Hnin

MYANMAR'S renewable energy sector will improve in 2020s, said Chief Engineer Dr. Maung Maung Kyaw of Electric Power Generation Enterprise under the Ministry of Electricity and Energy. He revealed that at the 2nd Myanmar-German Renewable Energies Symposium held at Rose Garden Hotel on Thursday. "Renewable energy sector will grow gradually in late 2020s. It should be enhanced. However, we cannot rely on only one energy source, such as wind and sunlight. We need to implement all energy sources proportionally", said Dr. Maung Maung Kyaw.

Government is enhancing renewable energy sector in co-operation with international organizations and production is expected to increase from 8 per cent in 2020 to 12 per cent in 2025. Myanmar will receive

technical sharing from foreign companies which have proposed to be engaged in renewable energy sector.

Solar energy will be primarily generated among many renewable energy resources. Second, wind energy source will be utilized. Solar power projects are also seen in Minbu, Wundwin and Myingyan.

In order to carry out wind power project, power purchase agreement is also being prepared. In a bid to enhance renewable energy sector, related department is drafting to formulate legislation, said Dr. Maung Maung Kyaw. "Myanmar has natural resources. However, the foreign investors still cannot enjoy investors' rights and protections, including tax incentive, owing to lack of law and by-law related to renewable energy. Law is needed to monitor the investment businesses and

give investors opportunities to enjoy tax relief. Investors will not make investments unless there is tax incentive. Therefore, our department has started to develop a draft", he pointed out. The government has started to implement the development of renewable energy sector. With technical support of international organizations, possible renewable energy resources will be explored.

At present, only 40 per cent of Myanmar's households receive electric supply. And, 60 per cent of the country's electric power is from hydropower, while gas and coal also contribute to energy resources in small amount. According to the National Electrification Plan, all households will have access to electricity by 2030. Local and foreign INGOs, such as the World Wide Fund for Nature, are also providing solar power to some far-flung villages. ■

Ten out of 41 jailbreakers arrested

SECURITY personnel have found and arrested 10 out of the 41 inmates who escaped from prison after smashing through four gates by a garbage truck they hijacked, in the capital of Kayin State in the southeast of Myanmar yesterday morning.

While the truck was about to leave the prison in Hpa-an, after collecting garbage piled by inmates, a prisoner serving life sentence without parole pulled down the driver and hit him, and then drove the car out of the pris-

on together with other inmates.

Security personnel involving Tatmadawmen, led by Brig-Gen, Myint Kyaw Tun of local station, police members, led by the head of Kayin State police force, and, jailors are hunting the escapees who drove the truck along the Hpa-an-Hlaingbwe road.

Security personnel blocked all possible escape routes, conducting search on the roads and warning locals to contact authorities if any stranger appeared in their villages.

Authorities asked cooperation of the neighbouring regions and states after they found the truck stuck in the mud in Hlinebwe Township in the afternoon.

The inmates included 29 convicts and 12 prisoners under trial, totaling 41. Their leader, who attacked the driver, is serving a prison term without parole for drug trafficking, illegal possession of arms and attempted murder of two persons, in which one died and the other recovered at the hospital.—Min Thu (Hpa-an) ■



Vice Senior-General Soe Win addresses the BIMSTEC Army Chiefs' Conclave in Pune, India. **PHOTO: OFFICE OF THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF**

Vice-Senior General Soe Win attends BIMSTEC Army Chiefs' Conclave in Pune, India

DEPUTY Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Soe Win who has arrived in the Republic of India, attended BIMSTEC Army Chiefs' Conclave held at College of Military Engineering (CME) in Pune on September 15 morning.

The Indian army hosted the conclave. Also present at the meeting together with Vice-Senior General Soe Win were military representatives from BIMSTEC countries, Deputy Chief Operations Officer of the Royal Bhutan Army Brigadier Dorji Rinchen, Deputy Chief of Staff (Operations) Lieutenant General Choochart Buakhao of

the Royal Thai Armed Forces, the Chief of Army Staff of the Bangladesh Army General Aziz Ahmed, Commander of the Sri Lanka Army Lieutenant General NUMMW Senanayake and Chief of Army Staff of the Indian Army General Bipin Rawat.

At the conclave, General Officer Commanding-in-Chief of Southern Command of Indian Army Lieutenant General Dewan Rabindranath Soni, PVSM, VSM, extended greetings and delivered an opening address.

Leaders of the delegations from BIMSTEC countries alphabetically participated in the discussions titled, Possibility of Creating Viable Regional

Security Architecture to Deal With Threats: Terrorism and Transnational Crime, and had a working lunch.

Delegations exchanged views on promotion of security cooperation among armed forces of BIMSTEC countries for carrying out anti-terrorism and preventing transnational crimes, exchange of information and experiences, and ensuring a secure, peace and tranquil region.

After the conclave, a question and answer session was held. Then, they had documentary photos taken according to a press release from the office of the Commander-in-Chief. — MNA ■

Senior General: Unity among nationalities vital in making Myanmar stand strong

FROM PAGE-1

Next, Daw Kyu Kyu Hla presented cash award for the maternal and child welfare association of the station to the wife of the station commander.

Admiral Tin Aung San, General Maung Maung Kyaw and Lt-Gen Maung Maung Aye of the Office of the Command-

er-in-Chief (Army) gave food items, sports equipment and fiction and non-fiction books for officers, other ranks and families of the station to officials.

Later, the Senior General and party cordially greeted officers, other ranks and families who attended the ceremony. — MNA ■

High-level Chinese official arrives in Nay Pyi Taw



Vice Chair of Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of China Mr. Ding Zhongli being welcomed by officials. **PHOTO: MNA**

AT the invitation of U Tun Tun Hein, Deputy Speaker of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw and Pyithu Hluttaw, a goodwill delegation led by the Vice Chairperson of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China H.E. Mr. Ding Zhongli arrived in Nay Pyi Taw by air yesterday evening.

The Vice Chairperson of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China H.E. Mr. Ding Zhongli and party were welcomed by U Zaw Thein, Chairman of International Relations Committee of the Pyithu Hluttaw, and officials at the Nay Pyi Taw International Airport. — MNA ■

Yangon Region government to set up ambulance service system

YANGON Region government will assist civil service organizations (CSOs), charitable organizations and philanthropic foundations in ensuring the effective use of ambulances, according to a workshop held yesterday at University of Medicine 1, Yangon.

"Through this event, those working in various fields will formulate a plan and everyone needs to understand responsibilities and act accordingly. We will implement this upon great results which come out from this event", said Yangon Region Chief Minister U Phyo

Min Thein.

At the event, Yangon Region Chief Minister continued to discuss registration of CSOs, providing ambulance staff education and training, setting telecommunications network for ambulance service and legal status of ambulances.

Experts also discussed matters concerning registration of the organization, ambulance vehicle licences, ambulance related crimes, management of call center and dispatch center, coming up with traffic control plan for ambulances, first aid training,

resuscitation training, traffic rules enforcement on ambulance and related laws.

Present at the event were Yangon Region Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein, officials from Yangon Region government and related departments, Hluttaw representatives, members of respective CSOs and officials from Yangon Region Emergency Ambulance Services Committee, doctors, nurses and Red Cross members and experts. They took commemorative photos after the event was successfully held. — Myint Maung Soe ■

Myanmar National Airlines celebrates 70th birthday

THE 70th Anniversary of Myanmar National Airlines (MNA) was held at Novotel Yangon Max Hotel in Yangon yesterday.

Union Minister for Transport and Communications U Thant Sin Maung delivered a speech at the anniversary, where CEO of Myanmar National Airlines U Than Tun also expressed his words of thanks.

During the event, video files of the MNA Employees' Daily Activity, MNA Passenger Wishing, MNA Staff Award were presented followed by entertainments.

Born on 15 September

1948 as the UBA or the Union of Burma Airways, the MNA has become a septuagenarian this year. It was also christened Myanma Airways (MA) on 1 April 1989, before re-branded as the Myanmar National Airlines.

At present, MNA is flying to 28 local airports and four foreign cities, Singapore, Hong Kong, Chiang Mai and Bodh Gaya.

MNA also has plans to extend its wings to Chengdu and Wuhan in China. Also present at the event were former deputy ministers and departmental officials, special guests and airlines staff. — MNA ■

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Public opinion survey report on YCDC issued

By Nyein Nyein

ALIN Saetamarn Library and Resource Centre issued a public opinion survey report on Yangon City Development Committee (YCDC) at a media conference at Orchid Hotel on Saturday.

The survey was conducted by civil society organisation Alin Saetamarn Library and Resource Centre in March 2018 at 33 townships of Yangon City, which are under the jurisdiction of YCDC. Alin Saetamarn surveyed 1,205 members of the public across Yangon, including 310 people from East District, 132 from West, 203 from South and 560 from North.

Ma Ohnma, who runs the Alin Saetamarn Library and Resource Centre, said the survey was conducted with an aim to know the public's point of view over the services of YCDC, and to know the public needs interests and opinions over decisions made.

Further aims are for the local government to implement essential reforms through awareness of public requirements and electing of representatives who truly represent the public in a democratic regional municipal



A media conference on public opinion survey report on YCDC being held at Orchid Hotel in Yangon. **PHOTO: SUPPLIED**

election to provide more public services, she added.

"After the survey was conducted, we notified and discussed with the Hluttaw, the government and MPs from the four districts. Although municipal law is enacted, our service (survey) is more related to the rules. Even if the enactment of rules are delayed for any reason, we want the government to conduct essential work processes as quickly as possible," she said.

The survey found that 11 per

cent of the people are satisfied, while 46 are not with garbage collection system. 15 percent are and 64 percent are not with the drainage system, 13 percent are satisfied and 65 percent are not with cleaning of platforms (sidewalks) and roads.

Most importantly the people are willing to pay more service charges if municipal services improve, said Daw Mya Nandar Thin, executive director of New Myanmar Foundation.

When asked if communication channels, like a Call Center,

for the public to contact YCDC is required, 93 percent of the people surveyed said yes.

Suggestions received from the survey covers electing YCDC members, budget, public services and general matters.

Suggestions on public services include establishing call centers in every township for residents to report problems or make complaints, advance notice of the garbage collection schedule or inform the public of arrangements made, modify garbage bin system, improve garbage collection system in schools, markets and densely populated areas, improve public toilet system, improve and provide proper drainage system, provide adequate car parking spaces, paving roads to new towns to be coordinated between (Yangon) Region government and YCDC to avoid duplication, coordinating and discussing with local residents in paving, maintaining and repairing roads in wards, setting up enough lamp poles along main roads and side roads, and having a clear procedure in providing license for trishaws. ■

Illegal fish ponds need permit to operate

By May Thet Hnin

Illegal fish and shrimp ponds are soon to get a chance to turn to a legal status, according to Myanmar Fisheries Federation (MFF).

Union Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation Dr. Aung Thu mentioned that at a meeting with entrepreneurs at MFF's office on Wednesday.

Mandalay Region government has imposed a fine of Ks1 million per acre of illegal fish farms. Payment for the fine can be made in three installments, according to August 23 notice of Mandalay Region government. This notice prompted MFF to report to the Union Minister that businesspersons face hardships from this.

The Union Minister responded that the ministry has issued a notification to respective regions and states regarding illegal fish farms, for which owners must seek permit again. However, Mandalay

Region government misunderstood the notification and fined illegal fish farm owners. The ministry will negotiate with Mandalay Region government concerning this matter.

When illegal fish and shrimp ponds apply for permit to get a legal status, village, township, region-level farmland monitoring committees will screen and review forms for work permit of those fish farms and later, it will be submitted to national-level farmland monitoring central committee. The Union Minister stressed that region and state governments cannot separately impose fine as they wish. Only the Union can officially impose fines, U Win Kyaing, general secretary of MFF described.

"The Union Minister seems to give favour to those businesses and want them to better support the country's economy. The government will surely support them if

they help earn hard currencies, prove self-sufficiency and create job opportunities. This action of the government is a great support to us, encouraging us to grow our businesses", U Win Kyaing maintained.

"If fines are set too high that fish breeders cannot afford to pay, they are obliged to go to a court only. Sure, they want to cooperate with the government, instead of facing legal action. We want the growth of our businesses under the guidance of the government", he added.

According to 2012 Farmland Law, farmlands are authorized to do only farming rather than do others. If farmers want to utilize them for other purposes, they need to seek land use certificate Form-7. They were not granted permission despite submitting applications, and they continue to stay under illegal status, said U Win Kyaing.

Of the 490,000 acres of fish

and shrimp farming acres in the country, only 130,000 acres are authorized for fish farms.

The incumbent government has allowed illegal fish farmers to apply for Form-7. They need to provide Environmental Impact Assessment and Social Impact Assessment documents when they submit their application, the Union Minister addressed. The government mentioned that those owners executing illegal fish ponds will be fined a reasonable amount, if needed; however, the amount of fine per acre has not been announced yet.

Prior to 1988, there were only 70,000 acres of fish farms. Farmland acreage has increased up to over 400,000 acres under the military government period. Fish breeding businesses were supported then, but there were no permits issued for those applying for it. This led to a series of problems in the past and current government periods. ■

Foreign investors eye Myanmar to open petrol retail stations

By Nyein Nyein

FOREIGN investors are interested in exploring Myanmar's petrol station market, said U Than Aung Kyaw, deputy director general of the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA).

"Those who are enthusiastic are discussing with officials concerned regarding rules and regulations. Foreigners show their interest in opening petrol retail stations", said U Than Aung Kyaw. Potential investors need to seek approval from the Ministry of Electricity and Energy to invest in petrol sector, according to the DICA.

"Opening retail stations needs the ministry's approval. The ministry screens investor companies' experience, international background and technology. They also check the companies whether or not they can comply with the country's rules

and regulations. After screening process, the ministry gives a green light to invest", U Than Aung Kyaw maintained.

At present, Thailand's oil and gas conglomerate, PTT Company, is preparing to open retail outlets in Myanmar. Multinational companies, such as PUMA and Shell are also prepping to team up with local companies to open retail stations in 2019.

About 95 per cent of the fuel oil is imported into the country. Domestic fuel oil price depends on the import price as well as the dollar exchange rate, described U Win Myint, secretary of Myanmar Petroleum Trade Association.

Myanmar imports fuel oil primarily through Singapore, with a monthly figure of 200,000 tons of gasoline and 400,000 tons of diesel. There are around 70 fuel oil importer companies in Myanmar, with over 2,000 petrol stations. ■



An attendant filling up a car at a petrol station. PHOTO: AYE MIN SOE

Myanmar-Italy trade exceeds \$100 million, up by \$33 million

BILATERAL trade between Myanmar and Italy, a member of the European Union, totalled US\$102 million within the past four months, increasing by \$33 million from this time last year, according to a monthly report of the Ministry of Commerce. Between April and July this year, exports between the two countries were valued at \$77.7 million, whereas import value reached \$24.7 million. Compared with the same period last year, bilateral exports this year increased by half; however, the bilateral imports slightly decreased by \$6.8 million. In the last 2017-2018 financial year, trade between the two countries amounted

to \$217 million, compared with \$136.774 million in the 2016-2017 FY, \$73 million in the 2015-2016 FY, \$113 million in the 2014-2015 FY, \$124 million in the 2013-2014 FY, \$27 million in the 2012-2013 FY and \$23 million in the 2011-2012 FY. Since 2011, the EU has progressively re-engaged with Myanmar, including in its trade and investment relations. Usually, the European countries import garments, coffee seeds, tea leaves, some agricultural and aquaculture products from Myanmar. Its export covers machinery, transport equipment, chemicals, food and beverages and cosmetics, among other products.—Khine Khant ■



EU has progressively re-engaged with Myanmar since 2011, including in its trade and investment relations. PHOTO: PHOE KHWAH

Sino-Myanmar trade exceeds \$4 billion in four months

THE value of Myanmar's trade with China from April to July of the current mini-budget period totalled US\$4 billion, including export worth \$1.89 billion and import valued \$2.14 billion, according to figures released by the Ministry of Commerce.

Meanwhile, Myanmar's regional trade with ASEAN countries showed the highest growth, closely followed by its bilateral trade with China. The border

trade with China performed better than trade through sea.

The value of bilateral trade with China was \$1.17 billion in the 2017-2018 FY, \$10.8 billion in the 2016-2017 FY, \$10.9 billion in the 2015-16 FY, \$9.7 billion in the 2014-2015 FY, \$7 billion in the 2013-2014 FY, \$4.95 billion in the 2012-2013 FY and \$5 billion in the 2011-2012 FY. Rice, various types of peas, sesame seeds, corn, fruits and vegetables, dried tea leaves, fish-

ery products, rubber, minerals and animal products are exported to China, whereas machinery, plastic raw materials, consumer products and electronic tools flow into Myanmar.

In four months of mini-budget period, China invested a capital of \$112 million in 21 projects, according to statistics provided by the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration.—GNLM ■

Marine exports by private sector increase slightly

THE private sector exports of marine products over the first 160 days of the current six-month interim fiscal period hit US\$254 million, which saw a slight increase in value by \$10.7 million, matched against the same period last year, the Ministry of Commerce reported.

From 1 April through 7 September this year, the public sector made no trade deal for this kind of product, according

to the ministry.

Myanmar exports freshwater fishes, shrimps and prawns, eels, mud crabs, seafood as well as dried fish, especially to ASEAN member countries, East Asian states and some European nations through border trade routes as well as non-border points of entry.

At this time last year, the private sector sold marine products worth \$243 million to the partner

overseas buyers.

The country's marine export reached its peak of more than \$700 million in the 2011-2012 fiscal year.

The value of the same decreased in the three consecutive financial years, commencing in the 2012-2013 FY. It rebounded to \$469 million in the 2015-2016 FY, \$581 million in the 2016-2017 FY and \$699 million in the 2017-2018 FY.—Shwe Khine ■

Public sector shows import decrease in consumer goods

THE public sector saw a decrease of US\$62 million in import of consumer goods compared to similar period of last FY, as of first week of September during current mini-budget period (from April to September), according to data of the Ministry of Commerce. Meanwhile, the private sector showed an income increase of

\$396.6 million. Import of consumer goods totaled \$2.29 billion from 1 April to 7 September, which is an increase of \$334 million against same period of last FY 2017-2018.

Consumer products, such as pharmaceuticals, cosmetics and palm oil are imported.

Additionally, intermediate goods make up most of the im-

ports, with petroleum products and plastic raw materials being the main import items. The import value of raw materials is \$3.29 billion. Moreover, capital goods, such as auto parts, vehicles, machines, steel and airplane parts, are also flowing into the market, with an estimated value of \$3.06 billion.—GNLM ■

Chin League for Democracy Party presents policy, stance and work program



Salai Wom Za Pyaung, General Secretary of Chin League for Democracy Party.

General Secretary Salai Wom Za Pyaung of Chin League for Democracy presented the party's policy, stance and work program on radio and television on 16 September.

Following is a translation of the presentation:

Respected and esteemed people,

Allow me to extend my heartiest greetings with the words Mingalar Par for the physical and mental wellbeing of all people.

I am General Secretary Salai Wom Za Pyaung (Salai PP) of Chin League for Democracy (CLD) Party. I will present the policy, stance and work program of Chin League for Democracy.

Respected and esteemed people,

Even before subjugation under the British, Chin nationals have had the opportunity for self-determination and had administered the homeland independently. When the land was under the British rule, it was administered by The Chin Hills Regulation - 1896.

Representatives headed by Bogyoke Aung San and the leaders of Chin, Kachin and Shan nationals signed the Panglong Agreement on 12 February 1947 for the establishment of the Union of Myanmar. Since the Chin nationals had signed the historic Panglong Agreement, they are among the nationals that jointly founded the Union of Myanmar, and therefore, they have the responsibility for non-disintegration of the country.

Respected and esteemed people,

The aspiration and essence of the Panglong Agreement by leaders of the nationals has not been incorporated and integrated in the 1947 Constitution of the Union of Burma, the 1974 Constitution of the Union of

Burma, and the Constitution of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar (2008).

Ethnic armed groups and the civil war were born together with the independence of the country, and the conflict has existed for 70 years. It is due to this reason that the aspiration mentioned in the Panglong Agreement for a federal union system could not be implemented, there is an absence of self-determination of the nationals, non-existence of guarantee to protect suppression over the minority nationals. Therefore, it is necessary to implement the non-disintegration of the Union, to forge the unity of all the nationalities, to end the civil war in the country, to realize the national reconciliation, to build the country where nationals have equality, and to have self-determination of all the nationalities.

The Chin League for Democracy has been constituted and founded with the objective to build a federal union and to exercise self-administration system. Moreover, it is formed with the aim and objective to represent and stand by the whole Chin nationals, to ensure obtaining all the rights according to law, to have rights to participate in the task for non-integration of the country on the same level with other nationalities in the nation.

Allow me to explain on the symbol and logo of our Chin League for Democracy.

At the background of the party flag with color, there are three rhododendrons in red color along with male and female hornbills facing upfront with the words "Chin League for Democracy Party" and inscribed under with the founding year, 2014.

It means that the background color represents the par-

ty, the three rhododendrons depict the ever freshening flowers of Chin Hills, the three flowers stand out as liberty, justice and equality. The hornbills -- male and female birds -- speak out for the loyalty of Chin nationals and the gender equality, in addition to allegiance and devotion for the stability and perpetuation of the Union.

Respected and esteemed people,

Please allow me to explain the policy and the aspiration of the party. Just to get a democratic system is not enough for Chin nationals. In accordance with the Panglong Agreement and the Panglong commitments, it is necessary to build a federal union system for all the nationalities of the country, including the Chin nationals, where all nationals have the rights to exercise in the legislative, administrative and judiciary sectors. Moreover, among broader context of the Chin nationals, the minority Chin tribes must never be suppressed, influenced and humiliated, but treated with equality and fairness.

It is therefore, at a time when the constitution is amended or modified, integration and incorporation is inevitably needed for a federal union system and self-determination. Implementation of development projects is the obvious duty of the government, and no matter what government comes into power, development tasks are to be carried out, and it is appropriate and more important for nationals in building a federal union.

For the second part, I would like to say that the Chin nationals were deprived of political, economic and social rights, as it was only given Chin special area division instead of Chin State, despite the fact that the Chin nationals were part of the Union of Myanmar in accordance with the Panglong Agreement. With the backdrop of denial of rights for self-determination, Chin nationals need to endeavor within the bound of law to get the rights for self-determination.

The third point that I would like to say is that the Chin State is the poorest area throughout successive eras, as it was not treated with equal and fair development projects. Now is the time that the Chin nationals must attempt to get the full rights for the political, economic and social tasks.



Party logo.

The fourth point is about the fact that Myanmar has already signed the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (commonly abbreviated as the CRC) agreements. Moreover, the country has also signed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Therefore, it is necessary to ensure that full rights for the children are secured, that the women are protected from violence, that gender equality be granted, that religious freedom prevails, and that the minority rights is guaranteed. Therefore, the Chin League for Democracy would try its best in getting the rights for all nationalities, including the Chin nationals. The Chin League for Democracy has been formed to work for the stability and perpetuation of the country along with the nationalities and also stand on the side of Chin nationals in accordance with the law.

The fifth part that I would like to present is that to protect the minority Chin tribes and interests of the Chin nationals, and to enact basic and adequate laws for them.

Another point is that the Chin nationals are residing not only in the Chin State but also have spread out and staying outside the state, such as in Rakhine State, Sagaing, Magway and Yangon regions. Moreover, Chin nationals can be seen in many countries around the world.

The leaders of the Chin Party have decided to serve the interest of each Chin national to enable to enjoy rights according to law. Regarding politics, economics and social matters, the Chin nationals will be able to have the rights on a par equal to other nationals. As the Chin nationals happens to be minority people, adequate protection would be provided according to law.

Lastly, I would like to say that Chin State has only a pop-

ulation of 500,000. If added with other Chin nationals residing outside of the Chin State, the number may come up to one million people. With that setting, it is necessary to avoid acts that may create division and disunity, and by all means we need to unite to the best of our ability.

Chin nationals and Chin tribes may not be the same in their attitude and perspective over different themes and cases, but we must discuss, negotiate and compromise with mutual understanding.

In implementing this plan and objective, we have to endeavor for unity and join hands with other political parties, organizations and individuals that are also stepping ahead for a genuine federal union and for self-determination similar to Chin League for Democracy.

The Chin League for Democracy has joined and participated in the Union Peace Dialogue Joint Committee (UPDJC) as a political party representative in 2015. Moreover, it took part in the political discussion framework, and furthermore, the party participated in the initiative role in the Union Peace Conference held from 12 to 16 January 2016. Based on the result of the by-election, the party has the desire to actively participate in the upcoming Union peace process.

The by-election is scheduled to be held on 3 November 2018, and the Chin League for Democracy candidate Salai Aung Lyan will compete for the Chin State Hluttaw from Matupi Township constituency 1. Candidate U On Khaw Htan (a) U Chit Maung of the party will compete for the Sagaing Region Hluttaw from Tamu District, Tamu Township constituency 2. I urge voters to vote for our candidates.

In conclusion, I wish all the best, success, health and prosperity for all the people.

Thank you.

Translated by UMT (HK)

Are we there yet? No bottom in sight for China stocks

SHANGHAI — Shanghai is the world's worst-performing major stock market this year despite respectable corporate earnings, a disconnect which is feeding growing talk that Chinese equities are now a screaming buy.

Not so fast, say brokers and analysts, who warn shares have further to fall due to US-China trade squabbling, slowing Chinese economic growth, and a government crackdown on debt that is drying up liquidity.

Despite China's still enviable economic growth of over six percent, the Shanghai Composite Index is down 19 percent this year and flirting with levels not seen since late 2014.

As a result, share valuations in relation to earnings are the most attractive in years, down as much as 50 percent compared to 10-year averages in some cases. Investors are waiting to pounce "like lions and leopards lurking in the



Shanghai is the world's worst-performing major stock market this year despite respectable corporate earnings **PHOTO: AFP**

grass," said Zhang Qun, chief market strategist with Citic Securities. "Looking at historical data, valuations are definitely appropriate (for buying)," he said.

"But they could stay low for a while." Nervy authorities have begun repeatedly stressing the market's overall attractiveness,

and a report last week by China's top state think tank touted "historically low" valuations. "Value has emerged in the stock market," it said.

Anticipation of a rebound has also been fed, brokers told AFP, by major listed firms snapping up their own shares, viewing them as undervalued

compared to the companies' fundamentals.

Show me the money

But the market is unconvinced: sluggish trading volume last week hit its lowest levels in two years. 2018 wasn't supposed to be this way.

The government began the year on guard against excessive share price increases, and optimism was fuelled by the June introduction of hundreds of Chinese companies into MSCI's global equities indices.

The move is expected to eventually lure billions in foreign investment into Chinese shares.

The government also outlined plans to entice emerging domestic tech giants to list shares in China rather than abroad, after first-generation champions like Alibaba and Tencent went overseas. But

2018's declines are by no means irrational, said Brock Silvers, managing director of Shanghai-based investment advisory Kaiyuan Capital.

"The economy is slowing, inbound investment is declining, credit is worsening, the trade conflict is expanding, the yuan is weakening, and global interest rates are rising," he said. "There's little hope for positive momentum until China's economy revives or it reaches a trade truce."

Securities giant Nomura said it expects China's economy and exports to weaken, has trimmed forecasts for key China share indices, and was shifting money away from Chinese equities into cash.

There are potential trade-war bright spots, Nomura added, saying well-known Chinese consumer brands could benefit from patriotic, "buy domestic" sentiment.—AFP ■

Central bank says Latvia needs to increase productivity

RIGA — The Latvian economy needs to increase productivity and use smarter methods in organizing production processes, the central bank of Latvia said on Friday.

"The only long-term solution is to increase productivity. It needs investment and smarter methods when organizing production processes, which in turn

requires knowledge and qualifications," vice-president of the Bank of Latvia Zoja Razmusa told a press conference here.

She said that growth of wages currently exceeds that of productivity, and that may harm development in the long term.

To achieve the same level of well-being as in Western Europe, Latvia needs to significantly in-

crease spending for science, research and development, the vice president of the Bank of Latvia noted.

"Our level of spending for research and development at the moment is the lowest in the European Union, and it is truly alarming in the perspective of future development," Razmusa noted.—Xinhua ■

Platform registers 94 million online loans

BEIJING — Online loans worth 116 billion yuan (16.97 billion U.S. dollars) had been registered by the end of August on a unified platform operated by an industry association in China, amid a nationwide campaign to reduce financial risks.

The volume was up 18 percent from a month ago, the National Internet Finance Association (NIFA) has said.

The platform, established

in June 2017, had recorded 94.31 million lending deals submitted by 66 online agents, which involved a total of 3.6 million borrowers.

NIFA wants all intermediary financing agents to register the deals they have brokered on the single platform, to ensure the records of all loans will still be available in case an agent goes bankrupt.

Unified registration will help regulators improve su-

pervision and raise the awareness of P2P lending platforms to properly disclose information, NIFA said, adding that the platform would eventually be available to investors.

Chinese financial regulators have rolled out stricter rules to toughen supervision over P2P lending, as a fast-growing, loosely regulated online financing sector has increased risk and posed a threat to market order.—Xinhua ■



The closing numbers are displayed at the New York Stock Exchange on Wall Street, New York. **PHOTO: AFP**

US stocks end flat amid worries over Fed, trade

NEW YORK — Wall Street stocks finished essentially flat on Friday, with worries about higher interest rates and the US-China trade fight weighing on sentiment.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average ended slightly higher at 26,154.67. The broad-based S&P 500 rose less than 0.1 percent at 2,904.97, while the tech-rich Nasdaq Composite Index slipped 0.1 percent to 8,010.04. After a positive open, stocks veered into negative territory at midday following a report that President Donald Trump still planned to go ahead with new tariffs with China, despite another effort at negotiations with

Beijing launched by Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin.

However, stocks later worked themselves back towards the flat-line, the latest sign investors are taking Trump trade threats with a grain of salt.

"This is part of the president's negotiating playbook and should not be a surprise for the market," said Quincy Krosby, chief market strategist at Prudential Financial.

Analysts also pointed to unease after the yield on the 10-year US Treasury bond hit 3.0 percent before declining a bit, with investors fearing that interest rate hikes could pinch consumers.—AFP ■

Beware of risks of bogus democracy

IN a message extended by President U Win Myint, on the occasion of the International Day of Democracy, he mentioned that “we need to be aware of the risks of bogus democracy”. He said, “democracy-related risks involve people who do not want democracy, who wish to destroy democracy, who do not believe in democracy, who believe in democracy but wish to take democratic transition into their own hands leading to the revitalization of dictatorship, who misuse democracy in favour of dictatorship and who wish to take over people’s power not in line with democratic practices.”

At a time when a Democratic Federal Union, aspired by all citizens, is being built through a collective strength, all nationalities need to be seriously cautious of those risks highlighted by the President. If these destructive elements gradually gain hold of the situation, it could negatively impact what the entire citizens had envisioned.

We are, at present, marching towards the goal of democracy; thereby, genuinely implementing a true democratic system, the duration of which is still short. Undoubtedly, Myanmar would face challenges and difficulties in carrying out a genuine democratic system, as the country had been rooted under dictatorship for over half a century.

As a nascent democracy, it is going through a rough and dangerous path amidst turbulent storms. Caught unawares, the country not only risks from being pulled apart from democracy, but also the people’s aspiration of building a Democratic Federal Union might not be materialized. Therefore, people who want true democracy need to be aware of those risks.

Democracy is endowed with Justice, Freedom and Equality. It leads to peace and development of the country and minimises the gap in prosperity of its citizens. It guarantees the right to survive, freedom and happiness of its people. According to an individual’s physical and mental power, the system also provides people with equal opportunities under the law. Genuine democracy is to be valued as it truly benefits all citizens. Consequently, a majority of the people wish for democracy. However, some people, working only for their own benefits, are trying to destroy it by their malicious schemes.

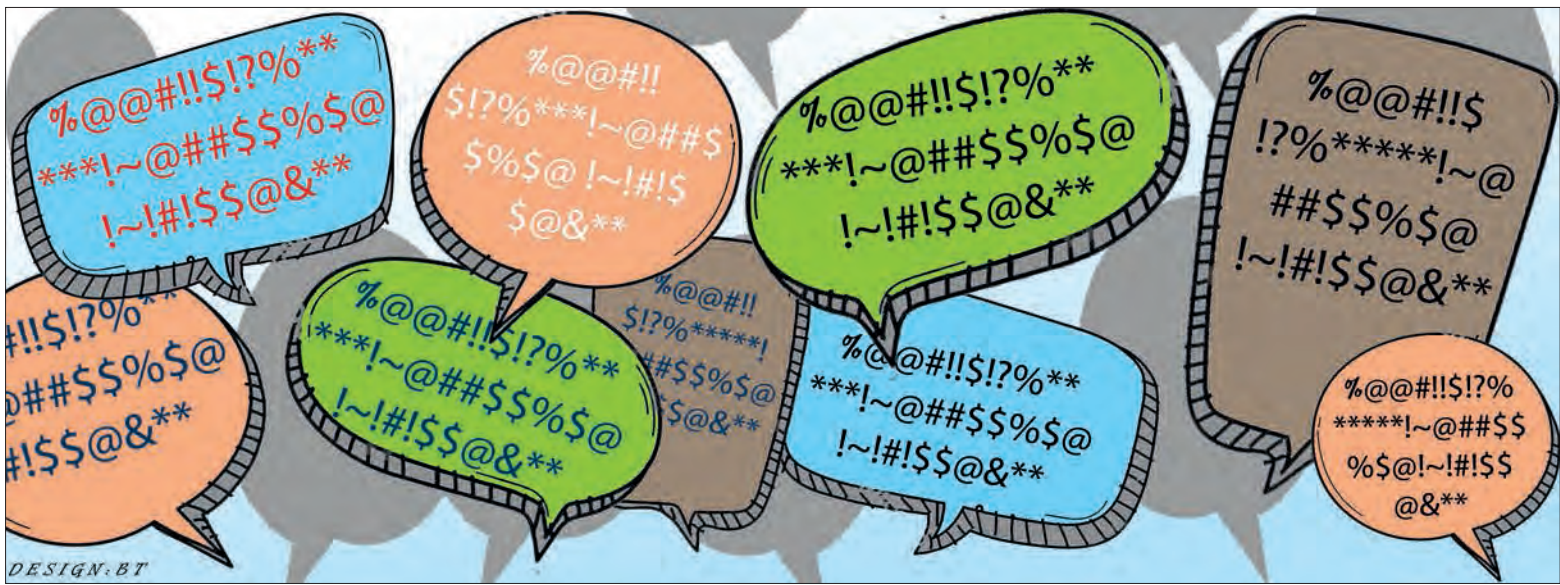
Therefore, the entire nationalities need to be aware of the risks of bogus democracy, occurring at present, by practising “Oversight”, the theme of this year’s International Day of Democracy, so as to maintain and strengthen the country’s democratic path.

Unlimited freedom of expression can create chaos

By Tommy Pauk

THESE days, citizens from almost every society are given leeway of expression on politics, their grievances, disagreements, discontentment, poor administration and difficulties in their livelihood, etc. Citizens have the right to express what they want or what they want the authorities or concerned government to do, or to complain about their government’s inappropriate acts in the society. This sort of expression may be called a demonstration made by the public or citizens. Normally, people take to the streets and express their complaints by holding placards or shouting their demands. Basically, all demonstrators march in the streets or around public areas. The procession must not hinder the traffic and create congestion on the streets, and security police are to be stationed along the route of the procession. Instead of marching, some demonstrators go on a hunger strike. These are the patterns of leeway of expression, which can be often seen in societies around the world.

How much freedom of expressions can be granted to citizens? Sometimes, due to unlimited or extreme leeway of expression, chaotic situations or brawls between



demonstrators and the police squad occur in some societies. All citizens should exercise freedom of expression as demands to be settled or fulfilled by concerned authorities or government. In other words, the requirements of the general public should be fulfilled by the government properly. Nevertheless, the abuse of leeway, such as violent acts, is unacceptable and illegal. These days, the general public in most of the countries in the world exercise freedom of expression, whenever weaknesses arise in the authorities or government. Normal demonstrations take place in the streets of big cities when the public wants

to express their bitter feelings or strong disagreements towards the administration or protest against the government.

Especially in full-fledged democratic states, like the US, UK and France, citizens know well enough how to express their voices or disagreements or grievances to their respective governments and administrators in their countries. Thus, freedom can be exercised calmly and effectively. In other words, leeway of expression appears whenever an administrative body mismanages or misappropriates, or when a non-government organization, company or factory

management causes grievances to the general public. Therefore, leeway of expression can be called public complaints. However, citizens have to express or show non-violent means of demonstrations or processions. Concerned governments as well as administrators usually listen to the voices of the demonstrators respectfully and attentively to fulfil the wants and needs pertaining to the freedom of expression.

In a nascent democratic state like Myanmar, citizens are given the right to gather in the streets, public areas or specific areas designated by the concerned au-

thorities to exercise their freedom of expression. Frankly speaking, ways and means to exercise leeway of expression are not fully familiar with the citizens in Myanmar. When protesters misuse the freedom of expression, the situation turns into a riot. In this situation, a lot of confusion occurs between the protesters and the security squad. This is caused by an unlimited leeway of expression indeed. Concerned citizens should obey and follow the procedures and limits for demonstrations when they exercise freedom of expression in the country.

Even though citizens are given

the right to express their discontentment, grievances and some complaints about weaknesses of public services, they might use the leeway of expression beyond limit. In order to avoid potential chaotic situations, citizens must control their minds or emotions and abide by the regulations prescribed for freedom of expression. On the other hand, their needs, wants, discomforts and grievances must be properly fulfilled or settled by the authorities and administrators concerned, in line with prescribed laws.

As we all know, leeway of expression is practiced in democratic states in the world, and this practice shows true public voices that would be alarming to elected governments. Concerned governments obligate to serve the immediate public requirements and to fulfill the public demands as much as they can. In doing so, harmony and trust can be built between the public and the concerned governments. In conclusion, the proper use of freedom of expression, one of the democratic rights, is crucial or essential in democratic states, so that violent acts against governments cannot materialize. However, we must be aware that unlimited leeway of expression can be chaotic in society!

Why is English so important?

By Arakan Sein

LANGUAGE
ENGLISH
KNOWLEDGE
READING
VOCABULARY
SPELLING
GRAMMAR

PEOPLE often talk about English as a global language or lingua franca. With more than 350 million people around the world speaking English as a first language and more than 430 million people speaking as a second language, there are many more English speakers in most countries around the world. It is the most commonly spoken language in the UK, the US, Canada, Australia and New Zealand and widely spoken in some areas of Caribbean, Africa and South Asia. It is a co-official language of the UN, the EU and many other world and international organizations.

According to a survey published in 2006, 13% of EU citizens speak English as their native language and another 38% of EU citizens state that they have sufficient skills in English to have a conversation, so the total reach of English in the EU is 51%. That is why English has become the most useful language to connect different language groups in Europe. The impact of Brexit on language policy remains to be seen, but it is possible that the EU will retain English as a key working language without the dominant presence of British English speakers.

How English has developed

During the reign of Elizabeth 1 (1558-1603), English literature blossomed, and the English language became the symbol of the nation as well as the national church. In 1755, Samuel Johnson published “A Dictionary of the English Language”, which was introduced as a standard set of spelling conventions and usage norms. In 1828, Noah Webster published the “American Dictionary of the English Language” in an effort to establish a norm for speaking and writing American English that was independent from the British Standard.

By the late century, the British Empire has facilitated the spread of English through its colonies and geographical dominance. Commerce, science and technology, diplomacy, art and formal education, all contributed to English as the first truly global language. In the 20th century, the growing economic and cultural influence of the United States and its status as a superpower following the Second World War has, along with worldwide broadcasting in English by the BBC, the VOA and other broadcasters,

significantly accelerated the spread of English language across the planet. British English is now undergoing change under the influence of American English, fuelled by the strong presence of American English in the media and the prestige associated with the United States as a world power.

A working knowledge of English has become a requirement in a number of occupations and professions, such as medicine and computing. Thus, English has grown in worldwide use much more than any other living languages. By the 21st century, English was more widely spoken and written than any other language has ever been. English has become so important in scientific publishing that more than 80% of all scientific journal articles indexed by Chemical Abstracts in 1998 were written in English. The increased use of English globally has had an effect on other languages, leading to some English words being assimilated into the vocabularies of other languages. English is easy to learn but hard to master because it is a living language. Several skills – listening, speaking, reading, writing, learning and teaching, grammar and pronunciation – are required to be able to speak, read and write well.

English in India and Myanmar

India gained independence from the British in 1947, whereas Myanmar got it in 1948. Myanmar expelled the British and its language English, prioritizing Myanmar as our first language and diminishing the use of English in the educational institutions. The result we are facing now is that students are weak in English and even graduates are unable to write a resume or a report. In this context, India retained English as a second language, producing a world-class group of writers such as VS Naipaul, Salman Rushdie, Vikram Seth and Arundhati Roy.

In conclusion, this author would like to urge education authorities concerned to focus on the teaching and learning of English as the top priority in the school syllabuses and curricula. At the same time, proficiency courses for teachers from all levels from across the country must be conducted during summer holidays. Outstanding teachers should be sent to the US, UK and Australia for further studies as a sort of incentive.

References : Wikipedia, Google

Flood Bulletin

(Issued at 14:00 hrs M.S.T on 16-9-2018)

Flood condition of Sittoung River

According to the (13:30) hrs M.S.T observation today, the water level of Sittoung River has exceeded by about (1) foot at Madauk above its danger level. It may fall about (½) foot from the present water level during the next (2) days and may remain above its danger level.

Flood condition of Thanlwin River

According to the (13:30) hrs M.S.T observation today, the water level of Thanlwin River has exceeded by about (½) foot at Hpaan above its danger level. It may fall below its danger level during the next (2) days.

Advisory

It is advised to the people who settle near the river banks and low lying areas in Madauk Township, to take precaution measure.



Myanmar Daily Weather Report (Issued at 7:00 pm Saturday 15th September, 2018)

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

FORECAST VALID UNTIL AFTERNOON OF THE 16th September, 2018: Rain or thundershowers will be scattered in Sagaing, Mandalay, Magway and Bago regions, Kachin, (Northern and Eastern) Shanand Rakhine states, fairly widespread in Nay Pyi Taw, Yangon Region, Southern Shan, Rakhine and Kayah States and widespread in the remaining Regions and States with isolated heavy falls in Magway, Yangon and Taninthayi regions, Chin and Mon 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 (30-35)m.p.h. Sea will be slight to moderate elsewhere in Myanmar waters. Wave height will be about (7-9)feet in Deltaic, Gulf of Mottama, off and along Mon-Taninthayi Coasts and about (3 -6)feet in off and along Rakhine Coasts.

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Likelihood of increase of rain in Taninthayi Region and Mon State.

FORECAST FOR NAYPYITAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 16th September, 2018: Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 16th September, 2018: One or two rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

FORECAST FOR Mandalay AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 16th September, 2018: Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (80%).

WEATHER OUTLOOK FOR WEEKEND: Rain or thundershowers will be fairly widespread in in Nay Pyi Taw and Mandalay Region and widespread in Yangon Region.

THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

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Police arrest protesters at new Istanbul airport site

ISTANBUL — Turkish police on Saturday arrested at least 20 people as they broke up a protest against work-related deaths and poor conditions at the construction site of Istanbul's third airport, touted to be the world's largest airport when completed.

The security forces moved in to break up the protest by dozens of people following a wave of arrests on Friday.

Among those held by police on Saturday was AFP photographer Bulent Kilic who was covering the event. He was released after two hours in custody.

In total some 500 people have been arrested during protests at the site of what is one of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's mega development projects, according to Turkey's Revolutionary Unions Confederation (DISK).

Security forces had on Friday dispersed a demonstration by hundreds of workers outside the new airport, which was due to be completed in October, the private DHA news agency reported.

The protesters complained of work-related deaths and accidents as well as poor on-site living and labour conditions.

The opposition daily *Cumhuriyet* quoted live-in workers



Riot police and security officers at the entrance of Istanbul new airport building site on Saturday. PHOTO: AFP

complaining about fleas and bed bugs. The airport construction and operating company, Istanbul Grand Airport, issued a statement saying management had met the workers and pledged to take measures to resolve the issues quickly. A spokesman for IGA refused further comment on Saturday.

The hashtag supporting the workers, "we are not slaves" (#köledegiliz) was trending

strongly in Turkey on Saturday.

Dozens of security forces, backed by armoured vehicles, controlled access to the site on Saturday, AFP journalists said.

When the first plane landed at IGA in June, Erdogan said the new airport will be the biggest in the world with a first phase capacity of 90 million passengers a year going up to 150 million in 2023. Some 35,000 people are employed on the project including,

3,000 engineers and administrative staff. Twenty-seven workers have died at the construction site — 13 in work-related accidents, the transport minister said during a press visit to the airport last April.

However, several workers, asking not to be named, told AFP on Saturday that the ministry figures were far too low and that accidents were very common at the site. —AFP ■

UAE, Jordan FMs discuss regional issues

DUBAI — The United Arab Emirates (UAE) Foreign Minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan on Saturday discussed with his visiting Jordanian counterpart Ayman Safadi regional issues and ways to enhance bilateral cooperation, UAE state news agency WAM reported. The two diplomats exchanged views on the latest developments in the region, as well as a number of regional and international issues of mutual interest, including the situation in Syria, according to WAM.

They emphasized the important role of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, and the need to continue rallying international support to enable the agency to perform its tasks for the Palestinian refugees. Sheikh Abdullah applauded the great efforts by Jordan in support of UNRWA, saying the UAE will continue to provide necessary support to Jordan. For Safadi, he highlighted the deep-rooted relations between the UAE and Jordan. —Xinhua ■

Egyptian court orders arrest of 2 sons of ousted President Mubarak

CAIRO — An Egyptian court ordered on Saturday the arrest of Gamal Mubarak and Alaa Mubarak, the sons of former President Hosni Mubarak, and two other defendants over charges of stock market manipulation, official Ahram news website reported.

According to the report, the

Cairo Criminal Court has also set the date of the trial at Oct. 20.

The prosecution charged the defendants with profiteering from selling the National Bank and obtaining illegal financial gains of over 493 million Egyptian pounds (27.6 million U.S. dollars) by allowing a Cyprus-based company to get the bank's shares.

The two sons of Mubarak, who ruled Egypt for almost 30 years, had been released pending trial in June 2013.

Alaa and Gamal Mubarak were put on trial over a number of corruption charges in the wake of the January 2011 uprising that led to the fall of their father's regime. —Xinhua ■



File photo taken on 9 July 2012 shows Gamal Mubarak(L) and Alaa Mubarak(R front) behind bars during a trial in Cairo. An Egyptian court ordered on Saturday the arrest of Gamal Mubarak and Alaa Mubarak, the sons of former president Hosni Mubarak, and two other defendants over charges of stock market manipulation, official Ahram news website reported. PHOTO: XINHUA

Libyan tribal elders demand UN-backed gov't disarm militias in capital

TRIPOLI — The Libyan Tribal Forum, held in the city of Tarhuna, some 80 km southeast of the capital Tripoli, on Saturday demanded the government disarm all militias in Tripoli within three days.

"The Libyan tribes felt the gravity of the general situation, following violation of its sovereignty, the suffering of its children, loss of its capabilities, and deprivation of its political will because of the control of the armed gangs, which legitimized themselves and dominated sources of decision-making," a joint statement by 1,800 Libyan tribal elders said. The statement also demanded the militias in the capital Tripoli hand over all their weapons and dissolve all parallel bodies after being disarmed.

"A joint force must be formed from all Libyan cities, consisting of regular army and police to secure and protect" the capital, it

added.

Tripoli recently witnessed violent clashes between government forces and the "7th Brigade" militia from Tarhuna, killing at least 78 and injuring 210 others.

The UN Mission in Libya later brokered a cease-fire between the fighting parties in the capital. However, the 7th Brigade threatened to break the truce and resume fighting to "eliminate crime and gangs in Tripoli."

The UN-backed government last week rejected the threat of the 7th Brigade, and confirmed keenness to maintain security and stability in the capital.

The UN mission also called on the parties of the peace agreement to "refrain from issuing provocative statements."

Libya has been suffering insecurity and escalating violence since the fall of former leader Muammar Gaddafi's regime in 2011. —Xinhua ■

Residents of hurricane-hit US town start to pick up the pieces

NEW BERN (Etats-Unis)—With rain still falling and no electricity, residents of New Bern, North Carolina are starting to pick up the pieces after devastating flooding caused by Hurricane Florence.

At the confluence of the Neuse and Trent rivers, where several hundred people were rescued from flood waters, uniformed national guardsmen tour an area to provide assistance. “Do you need anything?” one asks. “Power!” a weary young woman replies.

Clint Hawkins and Jenny Baras accept food and water. They did not imagine living such a “nightmare” when they moved from New York to North Carolina.

“It’s our first hurricane. The wind was quite strong, some branches went down. But we were mainly affected by the flooding. The water started to rise even before the hurricane was here,” Baras said.

She shows photos taken the day before on her phone: “Do you see the red car over there? It was completely covered with water.”

Debris litters the ground around their modest red brick home and neighbors have left



Members of the National Guard check a neighborhood in New Bern for anyone who needs help. PHOTO: AFP

wet mattresses and sofas on the sidewalk, but the young couple had time to climb upstairs before the water came.

“We’re now waiting for the power to come back to give it a deep clean,” said Hawkins.

“We can’t really stay in at the moment, the smell is just

too bad.”

‘Dry up and clean up’

Sheltered from the rain by the porch of the imposing family home, Laurie Eudy, the fourth generation to occupy the premises, takes time to update her journal. “There’s a lot to write about,” she says. An entry in her neat

handwriting reads: “That was an adventure!”

She heard “a loud bump” in the middle of the night when the waters of the Neuse River swept up the street: “I first thought it was a tree, but when I opened the door, I saw a boat knocking at the front of the house.”—AFP ■

‘Mariachi’ gunmen kill five in Mexico City tourist plaza

MEXICO CITY — Gunmen dressed as mariachi musicians opened fire in Mexico City’s famed Plaza Garibaldi, killing five people and wounding eight others including a foreigner, law enforcement officials said on Saturday.

The five assailants opened fire with rifles and handguns shortly before 10:00 pm Friday (0300 GMT Saturday) as the downtown plaza was filled with partiers enjoying the September 16 Independence Day weekend celebrations.

Investigators later found 60 empty bullet casings on the ground.

“There are five people who have died in the Plaza Garibaldi incident. Three men died at the scene and two women while in hospital,” a prosecutors’ state-

ment said, further revising a death toll initially given as three, and then four.

The shooters fled aboard three motorcycles, the Mexico City prosecutor’s office said.

Music and partying continued until after the city’s chief of public security, Raymundo Collins, showed up at the crime scene, video footage broadcast on TV showed. Collins described the attack as a targeted hit. No details were released on the identity of the foreign victim.

Investigators have not given a motive for the shooting, but did say that two of the slain men, ages 36 and 46, had been previously convicted for robbery.

The shooting eventually emptied the plaza — one of Mexico City’s most popular attractions — and the restaurants and bars in the nearby streets.

Police patrol vehicles on Saturday were parked outside venues usually bursting with customers seeking to pay mariachi musicians to perform. —AFP ■



Downtown Mexico City’s Plaza Garibaldi square the morning after gunmen dressed as mariachi musicians opened fire with rifles and handguns, killing four people and wounded nine others. PHOTO: AFP

British PM ‘irritated’ by leadership speculation

LONDON—British Prime Minister Theresa May said Sunday she was “irritated” by speculation about a leadership contest as she slammed former foreign secretary Boris Johnson, seen as her most likely challenger.

The centre-right Conservative Party’s leader said she was focused on securing a Brexit deal rather than her own future, in a BBC television interview marking the six-month countdown to Britain’s departure from the European Union. May blasted Johnson for using “completely inappropriate” language when he described her Brexit blueprint as putting Britain in a “suicide vest”.

Asked about her plans to stay in the job, she said: “I get a little bit irritated but this debate is not about my future—this debate is about the future of the people of the UK and the future of the United Kingdom. “That’s what I’m focused on and that’s what we should all be focused on.” The leader added it was important to ensure “we get that good deal from the European Union which is good for people in the UK, wherever they live in the UK”. Johnson, who quit the cabinet over May’s proposals to keep Britain close to the EU on trade, is the bookmakers’ favourite to succeed May, ahead of interior minister Sajid Javid, eurosceptic backbench leader Jacob Rees-Mogg, environment minister Michael Gove and Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt.

May’s Conservative minority government contains a sizeable bloc of hardcore Brexiters headed by Rees-Mogg and would likely need the support of the left-wing main opposition Labour Party, or a chunk of their MPs, to get her Brexit proposals through parliament.

Keir Starmer, Labour’s Brexit spokesman, said any EU deal must meet Labour’s key Brexit tests, which include delivering the “exact same benefits” as Britain currently has inside the single market and customs union, to win their support.

In a letter published by *The Sunday Times*, he said they also could not back a loosely worded agreement: “A vague political declaration would not meet those tests. Labour will not—and cannot—vote for a blind Brexit.” —AFP ■

Moon seeks to break nuclear deadlock at Pyongyang summit

SEOUL — South Korean President Moon Jae-in travels to Pyongyang this week for his third summit with Kim Jong Un, looking to break the deadlock in nuclear talks between North Korea and the United States.

Moon — whose own parents fled the North during the Korean War — flies north on Tuesday for a three-day trip, following in the footsteps of his predecessors Kim Dae-jung in 2000 and mentor Roh Moo-hyun in 2007.

No details of the programme have been announced, but Pyongyang is likely to pull out all the stops to create a good impression, with tens of thousands of people lining the streets to welcome him.

The visit comes after the North put on its “Mass Games” propaganda display for the first time in five years.

The new show featured imagery of Kim and Moon at their first summit in April in the Demilitarized Zone that divides the peninsula — prompting the unusual sight of tens of thousands of North Koreans in the May Day Stadium applauding pictures of Seoul’s leader.

One diplomatic source predicted the visit would see “Kim and Moon together receiving the same sort of applause”.

But while the Panmunjom summit was high on headline-grabbing symbolism, with Moon stepping briefly into the North and the two sharing an extended one-to-one woodland chat, pressure is mounting for substantive progress.

Moon was instrumental in



South Korea's Moon Jae-in will meet North Korean leader Kim Jong Un for the third time in Pyongyang this week. **PHOTO: AFP**

brokering the historic summit between US President Donald Trump and Kim in Singapore in June, when Kim backed denuclearisation of the “Korean peninsula”.

But no details were agreed and Washington and Pyongyang have sparred since over what that means and how it will be achieved.

At the same time the US and South have sometimes moved at radically different speeds in their approach to the North.

Moon will try again to “play the role of facilitator or mediator”, said his special advisor on foreign affairs Moon Chung-in.

“He believes that improved inter-Korean relations have some role in facilitating US-DPRK talks as well as solving

the North Korean nuclear problem,” he told reporters, using the North’s official acronym.

Last month, Trump abruptly cancelled a planned visit by Secretary of State Mike Pompeo to Pyongyang, after the North condemned “gangster-like” demands for what it called its unilateral disarmament.

Washington has been adamant that the North carry out a “final, fully verified denuclearisation” first, while Pyongyang is demanding a formal declaration from the US that the Korean War is over.

But Kim has since sent Trump a letter seeking a second summit and held a military parade for his country’s 70th birthday without showing off any intercontinental ballistic missiles,

prompting warm tweets from the US president.

Special guests

North Korea will want to exploit Trump’s eagerness to declare progress before the US midterm elections in November to secure concessions, said Go Myong-hyun, an analyst at the Asan Institute of Policy Studies, and will view “every meeting as a viable political opportunity” towards that goal.

But whether Pyongyang is willing to offer something concrete in return has yet to be seen.

Moon may try to convince the North Korean leader to verbally commit to providing a list of the country’s existing nuclear programme, said Shin Beom-cheol, another analyst at

the Asan Institute.

“It won’t be South Korea that inspects and verifies so if we can get something out of Kim Jong Un’s mouth, that will be significant,” Shin said, adding the next step could be a summit between Kim and Trump sometime in October.

Despite the deadlock in denuclearisation talks, since the Panmunjom summit the two Koreas have sought to pursue joint projects in multiple fields.

But North Korea is under several different sets of sanctions for its nuclear and missile programmes, hampering efforts to revive cross-border economic schemes.

The dovish South Korean president has invited the heads of the country’s largest conglomerates — including Samsung Electronics and Hyundai Motors — to accompany him to Pyongyang.

“He is sending a message to the North to speedily complete denuclearisation, conclude talks with the US so that South Korea can begin full-fledged economic cooperation,” said analyst Go.

And special advisor Moon Chung-in added that the South Korean president could look to convince Kim to come up with a “somewhat radical and bold initiative”, such as dismantling some nuclear bombs, and press the US for reciprocal measures.

“And the United States should be willing to come up with major economic easing of economic sanctions,” he said. —AFP ■

Coach-truck collision in northern Viet Nam kills 12, injures 3

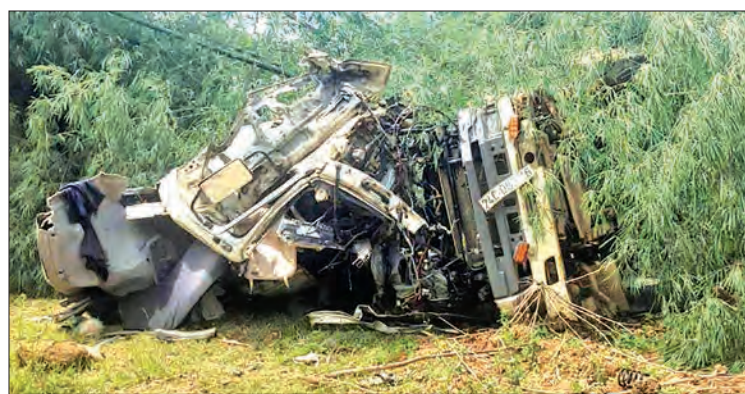


Photo taken on 15 September 2018 shows the site of a traffic accident in Viet Nam’s Lai Chau province. A truck crashed into an inter-provincial coach in Viet Nam’s northern mountainous Lai Chau province on Saturday, killing 12 people and injuring three others, the provincial police said. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

HANOI — A truck crashed into an inter-provincial coach in Viet Nam’s northern mountainous

Lai Chau province on Saturday, killing 12 people and injuring three others, the provincial po-

lice said.

After the strong collision on Tien Binh Bridge in Cam Duong province, the two vehicles plunged off the bridge into the river.

The truck’s driver lost control over the vehicle, so it broke a median strip and collided with the 16-seater coach on the opposite lane head-on. The coach departed from northern Lao Cai province. From January to August, 11,782 traffic accidents happened in Viet Nam, killing 5,366 people, severely injuring 3,249 people and lightly hurting 5,951 others, the Traffic Police Department said. —Xinhua ■

Fire breaks out in 5-storey building in eastern India

NEW DELHI — A major fire broke out in a five-storey building in eastern city of Kolkata in the wee hours of Sunday, local media reported.

Over 30 fire tenders have been pressed into service to douse the fire. No injuries have been reported so far. The fire broke out in the city’s Bagri Market area.

The fire broke out at 2:45 am in the congested area on the Canning Street, “India Today” news website reported.

“We are trying our best but firefighting operation is tough here because of the number of buildings.

No injuries have been reported,” the media quoted Kolkata Mayor Sovan Chatterjee as saying.

More than 30 fire tenders were rushed to the spot, and the area has been closed to traffic, according to traffic police.

A senior traffic cop tweeted, “Due to a fire incident Rabindra Sarani in between M.G. Road and Podder Court and Canning Street in between Brabourne Road and Rabindra Sarani is closed to traffic.”

Further reports of the fire incident are awaited. —Xinhua ■



Revellers attend the Stihia electronic music festival in the town of Muynak. PHOTO: AFP

Uzbeks attend first electronic music fest by ravaged Aral Sea

MUYNAC (Uzbekistan) — Beats pumped and strobe lights beamed across the desert in ex-Soviet Uzbekistan into the early hours of Saturday as festival-goers danced beside rusting boats beached miles from the shrinking Aral Sea.

The event, called Stihia or Element in Russian, was the first electronic music festival ever held in the Central Asian state, which has recently moved to open up to international tourism.

It was staged in an area of desert caused by one of the world's largest man-made environmental catastrophes, the shrinking of the Aral Sea that borders Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, caused by Soviet irrigation projects that diverted its tributary rivers.

"Let's fill the Aral Sea with an ocean of sounds. If we cannot fill it with water right now, let's start with the sounds," implored Otabek Suleimanov, one of the organisers of the festival that ran overnight from Friday.

The venue for the festival, Muynak, was once a fishing town on the shores of the sea, formerly the world's fourth largest freshwater lake, known for its "graveyard" of beached boats.

The rare music event drew DJs from across the former Soviet Union and Europe as well as 60 foreign tourists and around 7,000 locals, according to organisers.

Perhaps more no-

tably, it did so with the blessing of Uzbekistan's authoritarian government and the conservative mainly Muslim population in this dust-swept patch of the Central Asian country.

"I wanted to witness the concert and the light show," said Guldona Turakulova, a 25-year-old nurse who works at Muynak's state hospital. "This is the first time I have seen anything like this. I really want my Muynak to become a place that attracts (people) again," she said.

Her generation has lived with the after-effects of the Aral Sea disaster including lost livelihoods from fishing and tourism.

"My father tells me stories about the sea,

about how they used to fish and swim here," Turakulova told AFP.

At the heavily-policed festival, a mock-up lighthouse loomed over revellers as a reminder of the receding sea, close to where a real lighthouse once stood.

Now, each year, tens of thousands of tons of salt-laced dust blow from the dried-up seabed, much of it contaminated by pesticides, affecting health.

This May one such storm blew across the region and into neighbouring Turkmenistan, seriously damaging crops according to international media reports that were not confirmed by the secretive government in Ashgabat. —AFP ■

Invitation of Expression of Interest (EOI) for long-term lease in Naypyitaw Cement Factory under Naypyitaw Development Committee, Naypyitaw

Naypyitaw Cement Factory under Naypyitaw Development Committee near Aung Si Lar village, far (8/6) miles from Taung Sin Aye village, Lewei Township is intended to cooperate with Local or Foreign companies as long-term lease.

As a first step, Companies who interested in that cooperation are required to submit their Expression of Interest (EOI) not later than 4:00pm (Myanmar Standard Time) on (16.11.2018) to Chairman, Tender Committee, City Hall, Naypyitaw Development Committee, Naypyitaw, Republic of The Union of Myanmar.

Interested Companies can inquiry and take over the EOI form and other indications at procurement section, sub office of cement factory, City Hall, Naypyitaw Development Committee, Naypyitaw, commencing from (20.9.2018) by presenting document of company profile.

Document of company profile

- Valid Certificate of Incorporation
 - Record and Regulation of Company
 - Name of Foreign Technology Partner
- (For more information: Please Contact : 067- 3432312, 09254080542)

Tender Committee
Naypyitaw Development Committee

African tourism alarmed by rhino, elephant losses

CAPE TOWN — Animal conservation in Africa has suffered several setbacks in recent months prompting experts at an African tourism conference this week in Cape Town to warn about the cost to the travel industry.

"Obviously it's negative," said the African Tourism Association's (ATA) managing director Naledi Khabo, who spoke at the inaugural event organised by Airbnb. "Whether it's people or animals, you see them being killed or slaughtered in such a terrible manner — it has a negative impact." Kenya was thrust into the conservation spotlight when an effort to move endangered black rhinos between national parks, launched with great fanfare in June, left



The cost of environmental crime to developing countries is estimated to be more than \$70 billion a year. PHOTO: AFP

11 of the animals dead.

"It's very clear it was not managed well by my officers — and we took action on that," said Kenya's Tourism Minister Najib Balala, who was the public face of the project.

Balala insisted that tourists considering visiting would not be deterred by the incident but industry experts have warned

that such setbacks could hurt the continent's appeal.

"It does impact the overall pan-African perception as well, which in turn has a negative impact on tourism," added Khabo.

The cost of environmental crime to developing countries is estimated to be more than \$70 billion a year. —AFP ■

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Dated 17 September 2018



Starting in October, six historic districts in central Paris will remain traffic-free on the first Sunday of every month, including Opera, City Hall says. **PHOTO: AFP**

Paris, Brussels call for car-free day in Europe

PARIS—Europe should hold an annual car-free day in a bid to ease air pollution, the mayors of Paris and Brussels said Saturday on the eve of a vehicle-free day in their cities.

The call came in a joint statement by Paris Mayor Anne Hidalgo and her counterpart in Brussels, Philippe Close, in which the two pointed to “the urgency of climate issues and

the health impact of pollution”.

Both capitals will on Sunday hold their annual car-free day as part of the European Heritage Days 2018, a weekend of cultural events staged every year in countries throughout the bloc.

In Paris, City Hall had on Friday said six areas at the heart of the capital would remain traffic-free on the first Sunday of every month, including Ile de la

Cite and Ile Saint-Louis, Louvre, Opera, Chatelet and the Marais.

The plan will kick in from October 7, with cars only allowed on the major roads crossing these neighbourhoods.

Between 2017 and 2018, car traffic in central Paris fell by 6.0 percent, which reduced air pollution “by a comparable proportion,” City Hall said, describing it as a “record” drop.—AFP

‘Game of Thrones’ back at Emmys for duel with ‘Handmaid’s Tale’

LOS ANGELES—Hollywood’s A-listers gather Monday to honor the best in television at the Emmy Awards, with record-breaking fantasy epic “Game of Thrones” back in the competition and once again looking to slay its rivals.

But winter could come early for HBO’s blood-spattered smash hit if it fails to snare the coveted best drama series prize, with last year’s winner “The Handmaid’s Tale” hotly tipped to defend its crown.

Both shows have already picked up some Emmys hardware: “Game of Thrones” won seven statuettes in technical categories at last weekend’s Creative Arts Emmys, while “The Handmaid’s Tale” scooped up three.

And both are likely to add to

sci-fi mystery “Stranger Things,” and NBC family saga “This is Us.”

The Television Academy’s 22,000-plus members have already cast their ballots for the 70th Primetime Emmys, the small-screen answer to the Oscars—so it’s time for red carpet glamour and heartfelt speeches.

For Robert Thompson, professor of pop culture and television history at Syracuse University in New York, there are no “obvious winners” on the drama side—but a plethora of innovative, quality comedies.

“As peak TV settles into middle age, half-hour comedies are television’s red Corvette,” Thompson said—a shiny new toy for viewers.—AFP ■

Emmy Awards 2018

Ceremony on September 17 in Los Angeles

Nominees, key categories

Outstanding drama series	Outstanding comedy series	Outstanding limited series
• “The Americans”	• “Atlanta”	• “The Alienist”
• “The Crown”	• “Black-ish”	• “The Assassination of Gianni Versace: American Crime Story”
• “Game of Thrones”	• “Curb Your Enthusiasm”	• “Genius: Picasso”
• “The Handmaid’s Tale”	• “Glow”	• “Godless”
• “Stranger Things”	• “The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel”	• “Patrick Melrose”
• “This is Us”	• “Silicon Valley”	
• “Westworld”	• “Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt”	

Series with most nominations

Game of Thrones	22
Saturday Night Live	21
Westworld	21
The Handmaid’s Tale	20

Platforms with most nominations

Netflix	112
HBO	108
NBC	78
FX Networks	50

Source: www.emmys.com



A look at this year’s Emmy nominees. **PHOTO: AFP**

Victoria Beckham debuts at home to celebrate decade in fashion

LONDON—Untested in the fashion world, Victoria Beckham launched her VB label in 2008 in New York, across the Atlantic from her native Britain.

A decade on, she will exhibit at London Fashion Week for the first time on Sunday, in a triumphant homecoming of sorts for a now widely-respected designer and entrepreneur.

The ex-Spice Girls singer oversees an empire comprising four clothing lines, more than 400 retail outlets in over 50 countries and offices in London and New York.

At the outset Beckham, a longtime fashionista, faced a daunting challenge: convincing a competitive and demanding industry that she could make a lasting impression on fickle fashion fans.

Seizing the opportunity to surpass her status as a pop star and the original footballer’s WAG -- meaning wives and girlfriends

—she has gradually earned widespread recognition, even from fashion luminaries such as Karl Lagerfeld, the creative genius behind Chanel.

“Many saw her as just another example of a celebrity wanting to have a fashion range with no formal fashion training,” Andrew Groves, a professor of fashion design at the University of Westminster, told AFP. “Through hard work and determination, she has proved those early critics wrong.”

Evolution

In the space of a decade, Beckham, 44, has ventured into accessories, expanded sales internationally and online and multiplied collaborations with the likes of Reebok, Target and Estee Lauder.

Her style has also evolved, from the chic classicism that marked her first steps into haute couture to the more daring cuts and vibrant colours—neon or-

ange, mint green, lilac—of more recent offerings. “It’s been an incredible journey, even when things can be challenging. I’ve

had to learn incredibly quickly,” she told *The Daily Telegraph* newspaper recently.

She claims the secret of her

success is a tireless work ethic and the support of her family—football superstar husband David and their four children.—AFP ■



Victoria Beckham is to present her fashion designs in London for the first time. **PHOTO: AFP**

NASA blasts off space laser satellite to track ice loss around the world

LOS ANGELES—NASA's most advanced space laser satellite blasted off Saturday on a mission to track ice loss around the world and improve forecasts of sea level rise as the climate warms.

Cloaked in pre-dawn darkness, the \$1 billion, half-ton ICESat-2 launched aboard a Delta II rocket from Vandenberg Air Force base in California at 6:02 am (1302 GMT).

"Three, two one, liftoff!" said a launch commentator on NASA television. "Lifting ICESat-2 on a quest to explore the polar ice sheets of our constantly changing home planet."

The launch marks the first time in nearly a decade that NASA has had a tool in orbit to measure ice sheet surface elevation across the globe. The preceding mission, ICESat, launched in 2003 and ended in 2009.

The first ICESat revealed that sea ice was thinning, and ice cover was disappearing from



Cloaked in pre-dawn darkness, the \$1 billion, half-ton ICESat-2 launched aboard a Delta II rocket from Vandenberg Air Force base in California at 6:02 am (1302 GMT). **PHOTO: AFP**

coastal areas in Greenland and Antarctica. In the intervening nine years, an aircraft mission called Operation IceBridge, has flown over the Arctic and Antarc-

tic, taking height measurements of the changing ice.

But a view from space—especially with the latest technology—should be far more precise.

An update is particularly urgent since global average temperatures have climbed year after year, with four of the hottest years in modern times all taking

place from 2014-2017.

"Loss of things like the sea ice that covers the Arctic ocean affects our weather, and loss of ice that covers Greenland and Antarctica raises sea level," said Tom Wagner, cryosphere program scientist at NASA.

He added that the satellite should reveal new insights into the ice in the deep interior of Antarctica, which is area of mystery to scientists.

Potent laser

The new laser will fire 10,000 times in one second, compared to the original ICESat which fired 40 times a second. Measurements will be taken every 2.3 feet (0.7 meters) along the satellite's path.

"The mission will gather enough data to estimate the annual elevation change in the Greenland and Antarctic ice sheets even if it's as slight as four millimeters – the width of a No. 2 pencil," NASA said in a statement. —AFP ■

Non-coding RNA regulates genes in developing brain: study

CHICAGO—Researchers at Northwestern University (NU) Medicine have identified how an RNA sequence called Evt2 regulates genes over an unprecedented distance in the genome, during a key process of embryonic brain development that affects adult seizure susceptibility and other neurological diseases.

In the study, the researchers described for the first time the complex process through which Evt2 affects the 3-D chromosomal structure, revealing how Evt2 directs a DNA element to four target genes over an unprecedented distance of 30 million bases.

The study demonstrated in a mouse model that the presence of Evt2 reduces seizure susceptibility; adult mice lacking Evt2 were susceptible to more frequent and more severe seizures, due to impaired GABA function.

"Understanding embryonic mechanisms of gene regulation that affect brain function in the adult can lead to the development of novel therapies for early

intervention," explained Ivelisse Cajigas, research assistant professor of pediatrics at the university and first author of the study.

In addition, the researchers discovered that Evt2 regulates the expression of a serotonin receptor through repression of an enzyme called aldo-keto reductase in developing neurons.

"It's a novel pathway that allows for a whole new avenue of research into neuronal activity, and possibly mood disorder and seizure susceptibility treatment," said Jhumku Kohtz, research professor of pediatrics at NU. Evt2, discovered by Kohtz's laboratory in 2006, is a long non-coding RNA that regulates transcription factors critical for the development of interneurons that produce GABA. Kohtz's team demonstrated that loss of Evt2 during early development results in GABA defects in adult mice, suggesting the significance of the non-coding RNA in neurological disorders. The study has been published in *Molecular Cell*. —Xinhua ■

Eyes in the sky aim to protect Earth's rainforests, resources



Priscila Santos, a Brazilian Environmental Institute geographer, points at a satellite map to detect deforestation areas in Para state, northern Brazil, on 27 November 2009. **PHOTO: AFP**

SAN FRANCISCO—In the Brazilian state of Para, every week, authorities receive alerts showing them which parts of the Amazon forest have been chopped down, with photos to back it up. The pictures are taken every day at 10:30 in the morning by American satellites, offering a detailed view of every three to five meters on the ground.

An algorithm helps reveal

automatically where logging has taken place.

The authorities send agents to investigate and potentially apprehend the suspects before they do any more damage.

"It used to take six days, sometimes two or three months without images," said Iara Musse Felix, CEO of SCCON, the company which distributes the alerts. "Now we have daily images."

This revolution in forest surveillance, and the Earth in general, comes from a constellation of satellites run by a company called Planet.

Founded in San Francisco in 2010 by three former NASA scientists, Planet is a leader in small satellites, which are easier to produce and replace, and tend to have mission lives of between three and five years. —AFP ■

Barcelona fight back to beat Real Sociedad, Real held in Bilbao

MADRID — Barcelona came from behind to beat Real Sociedad on Saturday as Real Madrid lost ground in La Liga after a 1-1 stalemate at Athletic Bilbao.

Real, unbeaten after three games, fell behind to Iker Muniain's 32nd-minute goal on a counter-attack.

Athletic keeper Unai Simon held Real, who open their Champions League campaign against Roma at the Santiago Bernabeu on Wednesday, at bay until Isco headed in Gareth Bale's assist after the hour.

The draw put Julen Lopetegui's men on 10 points, two adrift of Barcelona with Atletico Madrid also slipping back in the La Liga title race by drawing at home to Eibar.

Seven points is now the gap between Atletico and Barca, who were in danger of tripping up themselves when Aritz Elustondo put Real Sociedad in

front at Anoeta.

But the hosts missed a series of excellent chances and paid the price, as two goals in three minutes from Luis Suarez and Ousmane Dembele clinched a hard-fought 2-1 win.

"The league is defined by these kind of games," Suarez said afterwards. "Last year we also came back from 2-0 after many years without winning here. The reaction says a lot about this team."

Atletico rallied too, Borja Garces equalising with virtually the last kick of the game, but there were no celebrations at the Wanda Metropolitano.

Garces' strike was enough only to rescue a 1-1 draw for Diego Simeone's side, who had looked on course for defeat when Eibar's Sergi Enrich bundled home in the 87th minute.

Barcelona might easily have dropped points too had

their opponents been more clinical.

Mikel Oyarzabal and Theo Hernandez both could have made it 2-0 after half-time but the former blazed over and the latter was denied by Barca keeper Marc-Andre ter Stegen.

Within minutes, they were behind, as two crosses caused havoc in Real Sociedad's defence, with Suarez and Dembele perfectly placed to pounce.

Barca coach Ernesto Valverde had made the surprise decision to omit Sergio Busquets from his starting line-up, presumably with Tuesday's Champions League opener against PSV Eindhoven in mind.

But it was testament to the hosts' performance that Busquets was called upon in the second period after Philippe Coutinho had also been introduced at half-time.

"In the first half they closed us down well but Philippe coming on in the second half helped changed the dynamics," Suarez said.

Simeone might also have liked to keep one eye on their Champions League game against Monaco on Tuesday, but a victory was much-needed following defeat to Celta Vigo two weeks ago.

Antoine Griezmann and Diego Costa, however, were both sloppy in the final third and Eibar might even have scored earlier, twice denied by the woodwork.

It means Atletico have now recorded their worst league start since 2009.

"I would worry if we had not created those chances

to score," Simeone said. "The team also showed a reaction after their goal. We continued to push forward and managed to take a point."

— AFP ■



Luis Suarez scored the first of Barcelona's two goals in three minutes. PHOTO: AFP

Sarri wants more goals from hat-trick hero Hazard as Chelsea go top

LONDON — Chelsea manager Maurizio Sarri hailed Eden Hazard as the best player in Europe after the Belgian's hat-trick inspired a 4-1 victory over Cardiff on Saturday to maintain the Italian coach's perfect Premier League start. However, Sarri believes Hazard can be even more prolific if he preserves his energy more to make the difference in the final third.

"I thought that Hazard was one of the best players in Europe. But now I change my mind because maybe he is the best," said Sarri of the man crowned the second-best player at the World Cup this summer.

Hazard struck twice in seven minutes just before half-time to cancel out Sol Bamba's early shock for the hosts at Stamford Bridge before completing his hat-trick from the penalty spot to take his tally for the season to five goals in just three starts.

But Sarri wants his star man to spend more time closer to the opposition goal rather than dropping deep to get attacks started.

"Hazard can improve more. I think he can spend less energy

than now at 50 or 60 metres from the opposition goal," added the former Napoli boss.

"I told him... for me you can score 40 goals but you have to spend less energy. You have to play in the last 25 metres."

And Hazard hailed the freedom Sarri's set-up has offered him to get forward and try to improve on his best ever tally of 19 goals for a season in English football.

"(He) just wants us to play and to find space between the lines so then Jorginho, Mateo Kovacic, Cesc Fabregas can find us," said Hazard.

"We have a lot of freedom on the pitch, and at the moment when we try to do something, it's coming off."

something, it's coming off."

Unlikely title challenge

Chelsea rebuffed interest from European champions Real Madrid for Hazard after the player himself declared an interest in moving on after the World Cup.

And that resilience could yet yield an unlikely title challenge after finishing 30 points adrift of Manchester City last season.

Willian's sumptuous strike for Chelsea's fourth edged the Blues ahead of Liverpool at the top of the table on goal difference with City just two points further back. But Sarri insists last season's champions and Champions League finalists remain the benchmark for his side.

"My target is to be the best team in England, but not in one month. Maybe one season, maybe a little more but our target is this. "At the moment, for me, in my opinion, Liverpool and Manchester City are better than us."

The feeling of being out-classed is one Cardiff may become accustomed to, having failed to significantly strengthen over the summer on their return to the top flight. — AFP ■



Eden Hazard struck three times in a virtuoso display against Cardiff. PHOTO: AFP

Munguia batters Cook to retain light-middle crown



Jaime Munguia had Brandon Cook in trouble with a flurry of punches at both the end of the first and second rounds before unloading in the third. PHOTO: AFP

LAS VEGAS — Mexico's Jaime Munguia successfully defended his WBO light-middleweight crown for the second time on Saturday, battering outclassed Canadian Brandon Cook to score a one-sided knockout win.

The talented 21-year-old from Tijuana swarmed all over the outmatched Cook from the start of a one-sided undercard contest at the T-Mobile Arena.

Munguia had Cook in trouble with a flurry of punches at both the end of the first and second rounds before unloading in the third.

A series of shots to the body and head as Cook crouched on the ropes forced referee Benji Esteves to step in to prevent further punishment.

Munguia is one of the divisions brightest prospects and is seen as a potential future oppo-

nent for middleweights Gennady Golovkin and Saul "Canelo" Alvarez, who fight in the main event later Saturday.

Munguia improved to 31-0 with 26 knockouts following the victory as Cook slipped to 20-2.

"With each fight you will see me getting better," Munguia said afterwards.

"I just want to show that I can get better and that I want to face the best, so I can show that I am the best."

Cook meanwhile complained of being hit with low blows that went unpunished.

"He kept hitting me in the hip and a lot of low blows, which surprised me because the referee is experienced and didn't give Munguia a warning," he said.

"He's tough, and it is what it is, and I hope to come back soon." — AFP ■