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CCDNTI meeting held to promote country's tourism industry

THE Central Committee for the Development of the National Tourism Industry (CCDNTI) was held yesterday, with an opening address by State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.

(The opening speech of the State Counsellor is covered on pages 3 and 5.)

The meeting is the first for 2018, becoming the fourth since the formation of the committee in 2016, and it was held to promote the country's tourism industry.

In his speech, Vice President U Henry Van Thio called for promoting the image of Myanmar in international communities by participating in international and regional tourism events and by holding road shows in target market countries.

He also stressed the need for arranging excursion visits for international tourism organizations, for making the best use of digital marketing to penetrate the market and to post updated information related with tourism on the web sites of the ministries.

The meeting was attended by U Henry Van Thio, Chairman of the CCDNTI, Union Ministers who are members of the central committee, Chairman of Nay Pyi Taw Council, Chief Ministers of regions and states, Deputy Ministers, cabinet members of the region and state governments, departmental heads, representa-



State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi delivers a speech at the meeting of Central Committee for the Development of the National Tourism Industry in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

tives of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry, representatives of the Myanmar Tourism Federation, affiliated associations and invited personnel.

The Vice President pledged that the State would fund the efforts for promoting tourism industry, urging the tourism or-

ganizations to cooperate and coordinate each other in promoting the industry and in finding the market.

According to the forecasts of the World Tourism Organization, international arrivals are expected to reach nearly 1.6 billion by the year 2020, and of them about 123 million are expected to visit

the Southeast Asia region.

He stressed the need to make arrangements for tourists to be convenient in their traveling and accommodating them from the time of their arrival to their departure, and for their secured touring during their stay.

Vice President U Henry Van Thio also urged regional

and state governments to systematically take measures for providing good services, such as reasonable prices for accommodations, clean and safe food and good sanitation.

He also stressed the need to promote the traditional food of ethnic minorities in regions and states and to provide safety to tourists.

Myanmar is a country, rich in tourist attractions, such as cultural heritage, natural beauties, traditional customs and cuisines of ethnic minorities, he added, saying that they must improve the weaknesses and strengths in paying attention to the recommendations of the visitors, as part of efforts for development of the tourism industry.

"To provide good services to tourists, we need to prepare to make the best use of the systems which are suitable for the current times," he said.

More than 3.44 million foreign visitors visited Myanmar in 2017, an increase of 18 per cent compared to the same period last year.

The country launched the visa relaxation programme for visitors from Japan, South Korea and China, and the number of visitors from other countries can increase if visa restrictions for them are also relaxed, said the Vice President.

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Pyithu Hluttaw

Fifth-day meeting of Second Pyithu Hluttaw's 9th regular session held

AT the fifth-day meeting of the Second Pyithu Hluttaw's ninth regular session held yesterday at the Pyithu Hluttaw meeting hall, Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker announced the Hluttaw putting on record and keeping the matter under observation a motion by U Sein Win of Maubin constituency urging the government to prevent the export of draught cattle and buffaloes before agricultural machineries can be fully utilised and to correctly support and resolve the matter.

Asterisk-marked questions raised at the meeting were answered by Union Minister for Health and Sports Dr. Myint Htwe, while decision of the Hluttaw was obtained on Myanmar dental, oral medical council bill.

Asterisk-marked questions

U Khin Maung Thaung of Pinlaung constituency posed the first asterisk-marked question and asked if there is a plan to build a new ward for patients in Tigyt station hospital. Union Minister for Health and Sports Dr. Myint Htwe replied that there were on an average 29 in-patient and 59 out-patients per day in Pinlaung Township



Dr. Myint Htwe. PHOTO: MNA

during 2017 with the hospital having 16 beds. A total of 2,217 in-patients and over 14,300 out-patients were treated in the hospital in 2017. The estimated cost of constructing a new ward for patients is about Ks 187 million and in the forthcoming October budget year, Ks100 million will be requested. If approved, it will be granted and the remaining Ks 87 million will be provided in fiscal year 2019-2020, said the Union Minister.

Replying to a question raised by U Khin Maung Thi of Loilem constituency on plan to open a sub-rural health centre in Loilem Township, Tant Al village



U Khin Maung Thi. PHOTO: MNA

tract, Konkyang Village, Union Minister Dr. Myint Htwe said that since the sub-rural health centre could cover a population of about 3,000 in 12 villages with 436 houses it will be opened in fiscal year 2019-2020, according to procedure.

Similarly, questions raised by U Khin Cho of Hlaingbwe constituency, U Kyaw Swe Win of Kawhmu constituency, Daw Nan Moe of Mongton constituency and U Thein Tun of Kyaunggon constituency were answered by Union Minister Dr. Myint Htwe.

Hluttaw's decision on Myanmar dental, oral

medical council bill

Next, a bill committee member submitted to the Hluttaw the Myanmar dental, oral medical council bill sent by Amyotha Hluttaw with amendments for the Hluttaw's decision. The bill committee member tabled a motion to the Hluttaw for Pyidaungsu Hluttaw to discuss and decide on this bill as the two Hluttaws disagreed on it. Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker announced the agreement of the Hluttaw and to proceed with it after taking the decision of the Hluttaw.

Discussion and decision on motion to prevent export of draught cattle and buffaloes

Afterwards, a motion tabled by U Sein Win of Maubin constituency urging the government to prevent the export of draught cattle and buffaloes before agricultural machineries can be fully utilised and to correctly support and resolve the matter was discussed by U Khin Cho of Hlaingbwe constituency, Tatmadaw representative Maj Zwa Nay Zaw, Dr. Than Aung Soe of Minhla constituency, Daw Cho Cho of Ottwin constituency, U Saw Tun Mya Aung of Papun con-

stituency, U Zarni Min of Shwegu constituency, U Toe Thaung of Mongmit constituency, U Tha Aung of Myothit constituency, U Win Win of Minbu constituency, U Oo Tun Maung of Ponnagyun constituency, U Myint Wei of Gwa constituency, U Thant Zin Tun of Dekhinathiri constituency, Dr. U Min Thein of YeU constituency, Dr. Daw Pyone of Indaw constituency, U Thein Tun of Kyaunggon constituency and U Kyaw Myint of Taikkyi constituency.

Deputy Minister for Commerce U Aung Htoo also discussed and explained in detail about the motion and to put the motion on record only and not to approve it. Union Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation Dr. Aung Thu also explained to put the motion on record.

Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker then announced to put the motion on record, keep it under observation, after Hluttaw voted 23 for, 206 against the motion with 109 abstaining.

The sixth-day meeting of the Second Pyithu Hluttaw's ninth regular session will be held on 6 August, it is learnt.—Aye Aye Thant (MNA) ■

Amyotha Hluttaw

Fifth-day meeting of Second Amyotha Hluttaw's 9th regular session held

The Second Amyotha Hluttaw's ninth regular session held its fifth-day meeting at the Amyotha Hluttaw meeting hall yesterday morning where asterisk-marked questions were answered, a bill discussed and a report read.

Construction of two Bailey bridges in Lahe Township

Replying to a question by U Min Naing of Sagaing Region constituency 12 on plan to construct two Bailey bridges on India border road across Wah creek and Yam Kyone creek in Sagaing Region, Naga Self-Administered Zone, Lahe Township, Deputy Minister for Border Affairs Maj-Gen Than Htut said the two bridges are included in a list of works to be conducted with the fourth assistance from India.

Upgrade of Kalay airport building and compound

Next, U Zon Hle Htan of Chin State constituency 4 posed a question on plan to upgrade



U Min Naing. PHOTO: MNA

Kalay airport building and compound. Deputy Minister for Transport and Communications U Kyaw Myo said only Ks 11 million was used to maintain Kalay airport passenger building during the 11 year period of fiscal year 2007-2008 to fiscal year 2017-2018 as the ministry was upgrading works in other airports and giving priority to works on passenger safety in Kalay airport.

However, in addition to in-



U Zon Hle Htan. PHOTO: MNA

stalling an air conditioner in the departure lounge of the airport as soon as possible, Ks 400 million in fiscal year 2019-2020 and Ks 300 million in fiscal year 2020-2021 are earmarked to expand the present airport building from 120 ft. x 60 ft. to 120 ft. x 100 ft. and to conduct maintenance work on it. Depending upon the receipt of fund, the work will be conducted, replied the Deputy Minister.

Similarly, questions raised by U Ze Khaung of Kachin State

constituency 3, Daw Ma Ma Lay of Shan State constituency 8 and U Htein Win of the Ayeyawady Region constituency 4 were answered by Deputy Minister Maj-Gen Than Htut and Deputy Minister U Kyaw Myo.

Discussion on Traditional Medicine Council Bill

Afterwards, Hluttaw representatives discussed the Traditional Medicine Council Bill. In his discussion, Dr. Than Win of Mandalay Constituency 1 said, starting from 1962, traditional medicine practitioners were systematically trained and there are now more than 7,500 traditional medicine practitioners. As such, it is not appropriate to register traditional medicine practitioners who don't have any diploma when Traditional Medicine University is producing qualified traditional medicine practitioners with diplomas. It is contrary to international practices and could reduce the trust and faith in tra-

ditional medicine. Therefore, clause 15 (f) and 31 (c) should be deleted said Dr. Than Win.

U Soe Thein @ U Maung Soe of the Taninthayi Region constituency 10 also discussed the bill.

Report on Myanmar Maternal and Child Welfare Association Bill read

Following this, Amyotha Hluttaw Bill Committee member Daw Ohn Kyi read and explained the committee's report on Myanmar Maternal and Child Welfare Association Bill approved and sent with amendment by the Pyithu Hluttaw.

Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than then announced that Hluttaw representatives who wanted to discuss the bill to enroll their names.

The sixth-day meeting of the ninth regular session of the Second Amyotha Hluttaw will be held on 6 August, it is learnt.—Aung Ye Thwin ■

State Counsellor: International visitors are humans like us – they want to see, experience things conveniently, comfortably

Following is an unofficial translation of a speech delivered by State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi at the Central Committee for Development of National Tourism Industry (CCDNTI) meeting (1/2018):

At the moment, international travel business is important not only for a country but also for the entire world. Since the earliest time, there were instances of travelling. At that time, merchants were the ones who mostly travelled and they travelled for trading purposes. The first time travel was done not for trade but for knowledge was by extraordinary people who wished to seek knowledge. There were also people who travelled for adventure.

As the world became developed, most of the travelling is done for recreation, to see things that do not exist in one's country of origin and to gain knowledge. To attract international travellers to our country, we need to think of ourselves as hosts. If the thinking is to make money only, I don't think it would be as successful as we want. A host first thinks about the requirement of the guests.

What are they expecting when they come to our country? Some come to see what they haven't seen and to be where

they haven't been before. Some want to visit places where others haven't. Some visit for recreation. Some come to seek peace of mind that they can't find in their own country. They come to our country for many reasons.

If we truly want international visitors to visit our country, we shouldn't consider them as an opportunity to make money only. They are humans like us. They want happiness and tranquility. They come with a mindset of wanting to have the opportunity to see and experience things conveniently and comfortably. If we can fulfill these necessities, more international visitors will arrive.

The first convenience we need to offer is in the entry process. That is why we are making the entry easy with Free Visa and Visa on Arrival programmes. Another requirement is to look into the condition of entry airports from the country's financial and security stand point.

Most international visitors travel around our country by air. For example, they'll come to Yangon. Then they'll go by air to Bagan. If they want to go to Inlay, they'll take a plane to Heho, and from there, they'll take a car onwards. If we can improve and modernize road transportation, we'll be able to attract more international trav-

elers, I think.

For example, it is very convenient to travel by train. It is also very pleasant. Our train travels haven't reached that stage yet. Travel by air is different from travel by train. If travel is by air, the visitor will only see clouds and see what they wish to see only when they reach the destination. But if the travel is by trains, more scenery can be seen along the way. Towns and cities can be seen as the train passes by.

When the train stops at a small town or city, international visitors get to know the culture, natural scenery and many other things about the country to a certain degree. They can see the local foods sold at the station. If local foods, local products and souvenirs were offered, it would be very interesting to the foreign visitors.

I like travel by train. First there is no air sickness as when you travel by air. Second, there is no motion sickness as when travelling by car. Third, you can stretch your legs and walk about on a train when you feel tired or cramped after sitting for a long time. I could not do this in a car or plane, where it is quite cramped. That is why I say we need to have new thoughts and views to attract international travellers. What is required in our country? We need to think

whether expanding the rail sector would be attractive or not.

Another is travelling along waterways. I'm seasick, so I don't have much interest in this, but many travelers enjoy this. They can view the scenery. They can breathe fresh air. They can walk around. Make friends. Talk in a leisurely way (with fellow travellers). When stopping at small towns along the way, they can look around. We need to give the visitors this option. For now, they are only travelling by air, so we need to think about making available means to travel by car, train and boats.

Those who come for a vacation or recreation want to see the scenic views in a leisurely manner. There are many who want to observe and study the culture of the country they visit. We need to take into account such visitors too. Some want to learn in-depth about a country's culture. They don't just want to see sights or buy some souvenirs. We need to create opportunities for such visitors. For example, we must suggest where a visitor should go if they are interested in history or historical research. Where should they go if the interest is in Buddhism? Most travellers from Asia are Buddhists, so it is not difficult to show where such visitors should go. But we also need to think about other types of visitors who want to visit

in other ways (instead of on a pilgrimage).

We need to think of what arrangements to make for those who want to study about culture or religion. Some come with a serious intention to follow up on their interest during the short time that they are free.

We have in-depth topics on culture, history and religion, as well as social. Social is how we live our lives. Community tourism is being promoted for this. It is not only for the development of our villages and wards. This will help the visitors who want to know about us, our country's traditions and cultures. If we do this thoughtfully and after careful study, we will be able to develop our wards, villages and people in rural areas. We also need to make it satisfactory for the visitors too.

Some visitors seek adventure. Adventures, such as climbing a mountain or trekking. They want to go to places where it is a bit adventurous. They don't want leisure or convenient travel. They want to test themselves and experience some challenges. We need to think for such visitors too. Where can they climb a mountain? Where can they trek? They don't want to trek on a smooth road. They want to go a bit up and down. The scenery also needs to be pleasant.

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CCDNTI meeting held to promote country's tourism industry

FROM PAGE-1

Following his speech, Secretary of the central committee Union Minister for Hotels and Tourism U Ohn Maung, members of the committee, Union Ministers Lt-Gen Kyaw Swe, Thura U Aung Ko, U Thant Sin Maung, U Thein Swe, Dr. Myint Htwe and U Soe Win reported on matters to be carried out by the ministries.

Chief ministers from regional and state governments and representatives of the industrial and tourism organizations also discussed matters related with the restrictions which should be relaxed to attract tourists.

The meeting came to an end with concluding remarks by the Vice President. — Myanmar News Agency



State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, Vice President U Henry Van Thio, union ministers, chief ministers of regions and states and dignitaries pose for a photo at the Central Committee for Development of National Tourism Industry (CCDNTI) meeting (1/2018). **PHOTO: MNA**

Gov't to speed up coastal area management, to improve disaster preparedness

THE Union Government would step up its efforts for coastal area management projects through cooperation with local authorities while taking the natural disaster preparedness into consideration in its drive, said Vice President U Myint Swe yesterday.

The Vice President, in his capacity as the Chairman of the National Level Central Committee for the Administration and Management of Natural Resources in coastal areas, also called for effective collaboration from respective departments for drafting the plan for coastal area conservation at the fifth meeting of the central committee in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

The 20-member committee led by Vice President U Myint Swe held the first meeting on 3 March, 2017 making 33 resolutions related with conservation of coastal areas in its previous three meetings, and of them, 24 have been implemented and nine are undergoing.

The central committee was formed on 30 November 2016.

To reach the goal of sustainable development in coastal areas, Vice President U Myint Swe has called for solving possible contradiction between building infrastructures and conservation of coastal areas through 'negotiation'.

"For sustainability of marine resources, only the fishery sector should not be focused. For con-



Vice President U Myint Swe delivers a speech at the meeting of National Level Central Committee for the Administration and Management of Natural Resources in coastal areas. **PHOTO: MNA**

servation of mangrove forests, only the forestry sector is not concerned. Therefore, all related sectors are obliged to cooperate each other," said Vice President U Myint Swe.

The country's mangrove resources are declining because of the proliferation of fish farms and because the mangrove trees are being used as firewood, according to environmentalists.

There are over 500,000 hectares of mangroves along the coast of Myanmar.

According to the 2014 census, half of the population of Myanmar are living in coastal areas and depend on the coastal ecosystems which serve them in many ways through marine products and

environmental services.

Regarding the degradation of coastal ecosystems, the Vice President put the blame on man-made errors including extra extraction of the natural resources, the lack of systematic management of coastal ecosystems, the lack of understanding on sustainability and the lack of effective cooperation from departments concerned for drafting the management plan.

"The central committee is committed to achieving progress in tackling these issues," said Vice President U Myint Swe. He also urged the people to carry out disaster preparedness, saying that natural barriers, such as coral reefs, sea grasses, beaches

and mangrove forests should be given priorities for conservation.

The mangrove forests at Myanmar's Meinmahla Island which is also a wildlife reserve was not hardly hit by the Nargis cyclonic storm on 2nd May, 2008.

Myanmar was ranked the second highest by the Global Climate Risk Index 2016.

Myanmar's efforts for promoting the coastal area management work can be considered as the Sustainable Development Goal-14 of the 17-points of the sustainable development goals of the United Nations.

In his concluding remarks, the Vice President called on region and state governments for stepping up cooperation and

coordination with the Union Government and departments concerned.

Following his address, Union Minister U Ohn Win, Taninthayi Region Chief Minister Dr. Daw Le Le Maw, Bago Region Chief Minister U Win Thein, Rakhine State Chief Minister U Nyi Pu, Yangon Region Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein and Ayeyawady Region Chief Minister U Hla Moe Aung and regional and state ministers for environment and natural resources also took part in the discussion for conservation of coastal areas, research, illegal fishing and conservation of mangrove forests in coastal areas.

— Myanmar News Agency ■

Union Minister briefs diplomats, UN on repatriation of displaced persons from Rakhine State

UNION MINISTER for the Office of the State Counsellor U Kyaw Tint Swe briefed the Diplomatic Corps and the United Nations Specialized Agencies in Yangon on the implementation of Agreements on repatriation of displaced persons from Rakhine State at the National Reconciliation and Peace Centre in Yangon yesterday at 10:00 hrs.

In his briefing, the Union Minister reiterated that Myanmar government is making both bilateral efforts with Bangladesh and cooperation with the UNDP and UNHCR. He stated that Myanmar and UN had successful experience of cooperation in the area of voluntary, safe and dignified return of displaced persons



Union Minister for the Office of the State Counsellor U Kyaw Tint Swe (Centre) briefs on repatriation of displaced persons from Rakhine State. **PHOTO: MNA**

in early 1990s..

The Union Minister explained the stages of implemen-

tation by the Myanmar side in line with the Agreements signed between Myanmar and Bangladesh.

Briefing on the Memorandum of Understanding signed between the Myanmar government and UNDP and UNHCR, he stated the roles of UNDP and UNHCR in assisting the Myanmar government in its efforts for repatriation and resettlement process in the implementation of the bilateral agreements between Myanmar and Bangladesh. He also explained the progress of implementation of the MoU including the visit of the Technical Working Group to potential project sites.

He stressed that Myanmar government is committed to the implementation of bilateral agreements. He concluded by saying that Myanmar will contin-

ue to cooperate with Bangladesh based on the desire to maintain and promote friendly and good neighborly relations existing between the two countries.

Subsequently, the Union Minister answered the questions raised by the diplomats.

Present on the occasion together with the Union Minister for the Office of the State Counsellor were Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs U Myint Thu and Advisor to the Chairperson of UEHRD U Toe Oung. The briefing was attended by the Heads and representatives of Diplomatic Mission and the UN Specialized Agencies in Yangon.—Myanmar News Agency ■

State Counsellor: International visitors are humans like us – they want to see, experience things conveniently, comfortably

FROM PAGE-3

Some want to sleep in tents they themselves erected. There are some who are adventurous. We need to think for them too.

Most visitors first arrive in Yangon, and the most important thing for them is to have a place to stay. Places where they stay would have many levels of standard. But cleanliness is the one important thing, whether the place is a small motel or a grand hotel. Visitors want to stay in a clean place that would be safe for their health. If the surrounding is not clean, they wouldn't feel comfortable. This is most important. If a visitor can afford it, it can be as grand as they want, but the basic is to have a clean place. As we want to encourage small businesses, places need not be pricey and grand, but they should at least be cozy and clean. I think we need to encourage such small motels and hotels.

Eating places or restaurants are the same. Most visitors, nowadays, are interested in eating at street stalls rather than in grand hotels and restaurants. Even Myanmar's like to eat food at roadside stalls when they visit Bangkok, as they say local food is better there than in a hotel. It is more interesting and a bit cheaper. But they think about cleanliness as they think about their health.

It is not for long-term health only. If a person comes to visit the country for a week and is in bed for five days because of food, it wouldn't be a worthwhile visit. We need to think about offering local foods in a clean and cheap way. As you all know, in Bangkok, these roadside stalls are clean. They are very reliable and are disciplined. They clean up their trash themselves. If we aim towards this example, visitors will be happy, and it would be beneficial to the country, too.

Another benefit in doing this is retaining the traditional food. If visitors are interested and like the food, it could be retained and continued to be offered. These can compete with cheap and non-nutritious foods that come in from abroad. It will be a good business for the poor in our country. It will be small enterprises. We also need to think about small shops or mobile shops on carts.

I frequently hear about the matter of culture. Sometimes, international visitors ask what



State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi delivers a speech at the meeting of Central Committee for the Development of the National Tourism Industry in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

more should we see after visiting a pagoda. We have many pagodas, no doubt. Visitors are interested in seeing pagodas, but after they see a number of them, they would want to see some other things. We have only a few programs on culture. For example, where can we see Myanmar puppet or marionette shows? At present, visitors need to ask a lot of questions to find one.

Where can they see traditional dances? I think we don't have much to show them. That is why I want to say we need to fill the gaps here, too. I'm not talking about building huge theatres and halls for this. Of course, these are required too. But we need to aim towards having something along this line. A puppet show doesn't need a huge and expensive place. Why can't there be a place for such a thing? Why isn't there a place for a single dancer or two? Can't this be done? Why can't the government support such a thing? The Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Transportation need to coordinate and think together about this.

We can consider waterways when we think about adventure. Our rivers are not like the rivers in Nepal. When I was young, I took a raft ride in a river in Nepal and I enjoyed it. It is also interesting. We need to think about such things, too. We will have to compete with other countries. Everyone is trying to attract visitors all the time. Every country is doing this. Because international travel is a big business that earns big money for a country. That is why everyone is trying to attract visitors all the time. In order to compete with others, we need to provide more in terms of interest, culture, satisfaction, and only then can there be more attractions.

In our country, there are

many places that are quite uninhabited or far off. Some travellers come with a mindset of being able to be far off and in uninhabited places. They take photographs there and say no one, besides them, was in those places. We can expand our travel business in this way, too, as this is human nature. But we must be careful. It is important to make sure that the places are not destroyed or spoiled by visitors. Most of you must have heard about this. Once Mt. Everest was like a huge garbage dump. It became that bad. They went to climb the mountain and then left their garbage there. It became a big garbage dump. We need to prevent such things from happening. Being least developed at least gives us the opportunity to take lessons from others, and this itself is a plus, so it is important for us to take these opportunities and make the best out of it. When we plan our travel business and attract visitors, we need to look at the requirement of the whole country. We should not look at one, two or three places only.

For example, everyone wants to go to Bagan. But there are many places that many people don't know about yet. Those places need to be attracted, too. Everyone also wants to go to Inlay. But in addition to Bagan and Inlay, there many more interesting places for international visitors. Historical, scenically, natural beauty wise. Talking about history, historical places of interest should be based on true facts. There shouldn't be places that are imagined. For example, there are rebuilt palaces. Are these historically correct? Were these really built in such a way? We need to think about this.

There are statues of former kings. Do these kings really look like these statues? Do they

dress as they are dressed in the statues? I don't know how others think, but I do think this way. Some visitors would come up with such questions. If we don't know for sure whether it is historically correct or not, we shouldn't show it. We must not imagine up things as though we know it for a fact. Then trust will be lost. But if we say it outright that the statue was made in such a way, because we think the king was as such, then they wouldn't say much, because there is no photograph or painting of that king.

We need to show things that are true and factually correct. Sufficient facts should be included. It will help visitors who are interested in our history. Some are interested in our country because of our animals especially our elephants. Some may think that I'm praising my own country too much, but many researchers from abroad had said it many times that there are no elephants in the world that are as good as Myanmar elephants in timber extraction. Some neighboring countries may not agree with this because they also use elephants in timber extraction. But I read a lot about many who study this. I don't know why, but Myanmar elephants are uniquely experts in timber work.

As elephants are not widely used in timber work in the world, we should think how it could be valuable for international travel business and for the elephants. In thinking in such a way, we need to think not only for the visitors but also for the elephants, too. We can give names to individual elephants so that each traveler can come visit their favorite elephant. I don't mean to give the elephant away, but they can be foster parents from afar and donate money for the elephant. In a similar way devel-

oped countries help and support children in undeveloped countries. In the same way they support their nieces and nephews, they can support our elephants. A child visitor will be more interested in this. Would a child like to care for an elephant? I don't mean I want to make money out of their pocket money. The idea is to bring them back again, so that they can see the progress and development of their own personal elephant.

Another thing is to create opportunities to view rare animals like the Ayeyawady dolphin. It will create income and support for conserving nature. When doing things for travel business, we need to see how things are done in other countries in our region. As mentioned earlier, we are competing with them. When visiting Southeast Asia, they'll think of going to Myanmar, Thailand, Laos or Cambodia, as these countries are similar geographically as well as culturally. They can visit all on a package tour. We will have to think about this, too. For our international travel business to develop, the main requirement is to think and do things in a new way. When implementing these new things, think about the long term benefit for the country.

Whenever I have the chance, I caution everyone. Our country is a Union. A Union is a country formed with many nationals. Never forget about the Union. Do anything without forgetting this. Travel business is also the same. It needs to be conducted in such a way that benefits all in the Union. It must be in a way that brings together, closer and unite the people of the Union. We must not compete against each other and fall apart. We must work together and become united. Our country needs to develop. We don't need to say much about this. We only need to think whether the development is in the best way.

As our country develops, the majority of our people, not hundred percent as this is not possible, but the majority need to develop. Not only a small group or a single group. We must always be careful about this. May we all establish travel businesses that benefit the majority of our people. I wish that this business becomes a big income generator for the country. Thank you.

(Unofficial Translation)

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able to publish "Letter to the Editor"
that do not exceed 500 words. Should
you submit a text longer than 500 words
please be aware that your letter will be
edited.Asian Development Bank assists power
substation upgrade in KhinU Township

A POWER substation in KhinU Township, Shwebo District, Sagaing Region, has currently been upgraded to 10MVA from the existing 33/11KV and 3MVA transformers, according to the township electricity department.

U Min Aung, electrical engineer from the township, said that there are a total of 7,069 electric power consumers in the township, and upon completion of the project, the department hopes to fully supply power to end-users and to fulfill the growing local consumption than before.

With the use of loans from Asian Development Bank (ADB), the project is now near-

ing completion and is expected to be finalized very soon.

Under the project, the department is replacing all existing 33/11KV and 3MVA transformers with new 10MVA transformers, 11KV control panels and related accessories.

The country's electricity demand is increasing annually. According to experts' estimation, the electricity consumption of the country is likely to rise three-fold within a decade. Compared to other regions, Yangon, as the largest commercial city, consumes nearly half of the country's total electricity generation.

The Ministry of Electricity and Energy is putting



Workers arrange steel plates for a power substation in KhinU, Sagaing Region. **PHOTO: KHINU SOE WAI**

up concerted efforts to generate more electricity to offer

better services to consumers. —KhinU Soe Wai ■

FDA to check purified water factories in Mandalay

THE Food and Drug Administration (FDA) will be running spot-checks at purified water factories in Mandalay Region to see whether or not they are following rules and regulations, said an official from the FDA department.

The department will conduct surprise visits to purified water factories as well as test the water quality whether it consists chemicals or not. The FDA will force factories to stop distribution of their purified water temporarily, if they failed to follow those rules and regulations.

"There are over 200 drinking water factories in Mandalay Region. Factories which failed to comply with the prescribed rules and regulations would be ordered to stop their distribution of the drinking water on a temporary basis. Authorities will also take legal action if they found chemicals in the water test result," he added.

In 2016, FDA found 12 purified drinking water factories not following the rules and regulations in Mandalay Region. The FDA has temporarily shut down a total of 15 drinking water factories from

2017 to present. It is also planning to conduct water quality tests at these factories so that they could be reopened. Those factories that do not pass the tests and are still found to have chemicals in their water product will still not be allowed to re-open.

"We usually check how the room is structured at the water factories, whether workers are following their dress code or not, test the water quality, before providing the FDA certification to a factory. If factories match with our criteria, we issue them the certificate. After

certifying, we usually conduct surprise visits. FDA can fine Ks30,000 and pass three years' imprisonment to purified drinking water factory owners who failed to obey the rules and regulations during FDA's surprise checks," he added.

The number of drinking water factories has increased in Mandalay Region after 2010. At present, there are over 200 of them. Factories wishing to produce purified drinking water are many, and they are putting up their proposals at the FDA.—Min Htet Aung (Mandalay sub-printing house) ■

Construction of gems market in Sagaing planned

THERE are plans to construct a gems market in Sagaing, according to U Aung Gyi, chairman of the Sagaing Regional Gems and Jewelry Entrepreneurs Association (GJEA).

The current gems trading center in Sagaing is not a legal one, so the regional government is losing tax. "If an official gems market can be opened, the regional government will accumulate more tax which can be used for regional development tasks. Therefore, arrangements are being made to construct a new and legitimate gems market," said U Aung Gyi.

Although the Sagaing Re-



Jade jewellery are displayed inside a glass case. **PHOTO: SUPPLIED**

gion GJEA tried to construct a gems market during the previous government's tenure, it did not materialize. The GJEA has met with the regional chief minister and has requested a

location for the construction of the new market. However, there has been no official reply from the regional chief minister yet, according to the association.

"When a gems market is established, it will not only help the regional government acquire foreign income but also create job opportunities for locals. So the proposal was submitted to the Amyotha Hluttaw, Pyithu Hluttaw and Regional Hluttaw more than four months ago. However, there has been no reply, so we have submitted the proposal a second time," he added.

At Sagaing's gems trading center, there are over 200 shops. More than 2000 merchants from China visit Sagaing during the peak gem trading season.—Thurein Lin/MDN ■

Myanmar Anti-Corruption Commission announcement

MYANMAR Anti-Corruption Commission has issued an announcement yesterday regarding the Yangon East District Court criminal case no. 34/2018 under Criminal Code section 302 with complainant U Thant Zin Oo and three accused including Than Tun Aung @ Tha Gyi on the manslaughter of actor Aung Ye Htway.

The announcement said Yangon East District Court had permitted the case to be withdrawn on 25-7-2018, causing news to spread on journals and media of the possible involvement of corruption in the case being withdrawn.

Anti-Corruption Commission held a meeting on 2-8-2018 to discuss the matter where all commission members came to a unanimous decision to consider the case as notorious and to inform the commission and confirm the case as a notorious case.—Myanmar News Agency ■

Myanmar Investment Commission Meeting (11 / 2018)

THE Myanmar Investment Commission (MIC) meeting (11 / 2018) was convened in Yangon on 3 August 2018 and reviewed investment proposals consistent with the Myanmar Investment Law.

U Thaung Tun, Chairman of MIC and seven members of MIC attended the meeting.

The submission of proposals and endorsement applications from investors and post-permit activities of MIC-permitted companies were discussed in the meeting.—Myanmar News Agency ■



Myanmar Investment Commission meeting (11 / 2018) convenes in Yangon on 3 August. PHOTO: MNA

37 dams, reservoirs overflow through spillways

THE water level in some dams and reservoirs in regions and states exceeded the full tank levels due to torrential rain and overflowed through their spillways.

People have been urged not to worry about the overflowing water as it goes through spillways into the rivers, said the Irrigation and Water Utilisation Management Department.

Bawsin Dam 2 from Zegon Township, Thayawady District, Bago Region, and

Tamandu Dam from Myebon Township, MraukU District, Rakhine State, and Humon Dam from Lashio Township in Shan State are no more overflowing from their spillways.

A total of 37 dams and reservoirs including Shwepyi 3 Dam from Bago Township, Bago Region and Shwenattaung Dam from Mawlamyine Township in Mon State are currently overflowing, said the department yesterday.—Myanmar News Agency ■

Aids supply for flood-affected people, cautions issued

THE National Natural Disaster Management Committee (NNDMC) has issued advice and caution to people in Hpa-an, Thabaung, Mingin, Madauk and Ngathaingchaung townships living near the river area and in lower parts of the ground.

With the cooperation of Department of Rural munity

Development, hygiene kits and water containers had already been provided to 142 flood-affected households at Hpa-an Ward No.(1), indoor stadium and 354 households at Shwe Yin Myaw rescue camp and 266 households at Sports Hall of BEHS No.(3), it is learnt.—Myanmar News Agency ■

Meeting held to form Orphans Reduction and Protection Association

A MEETING to establish an association to provide protection and reduction of orphans in Ayeyawady Region was held at Ayeyawady Region Government office in Patheingyi yesterday. At the meeting, the Orphans Reduction and Protection Association's (Myanmar) chairperson Daw May Yin Tun explained

about the requirements to apply for membership of the association and the situation of formation of the associations in states and regions.

The association's General Secretary Prof. Dr. Mya Thida also explained about protecting orphans and reducing the number of single mothers.

Present at the meeting were Prof. Dr. Mya Thida, association members Daw Khaing Nwe Oo and Dr Khin Than Aye, Ayeyawady Region Chief Minister's wife Daw Khin Hnin Nyo, Social Minister Dr. Hla Myat Thwe and other responsible officials.—Maung Maung Myint (Patheingyi District IPRD) ■



Chairperson, Secretary-General and members of the Orphans Reduction and Protection Association hold a meeting at Ayeyawady Region government office in Patheingyi yesterday. PHOTO: PATHEINGYI DISTRICT IPRD

Towards a better future equipped with vocational training skills

It is of paramount importance to upgrade the professional level of vocational education due to the increasing demand of employment in various fields.

Ferry operators who ignore safety rules should get steeper fines and punishment. People should not be dying because of negligence.



FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING
AREA FOR 4th AUGUST, 2018: Isolated rain or thundershowers.
Degree of certainty is (100%).

Mnangagwa wins Zimbabwe's first post-Mugabe election

HARARE (Zimbabwe) — Zimbabwe President Emmerson Mnangagwa, a former ally of Robert Mugabe, narrowly won the country's landmark election, results showed early Friday, in an outcome set to fuel fraud allegations as security forces patrolled the streets to prevent protests.

Mnangagwa won 50.8 per cent of the vote, ahead of Nelson Chamisa of the opposition MDC party on 44.3 per cent, the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) said.

"Mnangagwa, Emmerson Dambudzo, of ZANU-PF party is therefore duly declared elected president of the Republic of Zimbabwe," announced ZEC chair Priscilla Chigumba.

Mnangagwa won by the smallest of margins, after needing more than 50 percent of the vote to secure victory without a second-round run-off.

He quickly took to Twitter to say he was "humbled" to have won the election, hailing it as a "new beginning" for the country.

"Though we may have been divided at the polls, we are united in our dreams. This is a new beginning," he said.

Since independence from Britain in 1980, Zimbabwe has known only two presidents — Mugabe, who ruled with an iron fist for 37 years, and his erstwhile right-hand man Mnangagwa, who was appointed after Mugabe

was forced out by the military in November last year.

Zimbabwe was braced for public reaction to the election results — the first since the ousting of Mugabe — after a deadly crackdown on protesters.

Six people were killed on Wednesday when troops fired live rounds against MDC demonstrators alleging the vote had been rigged.

Soldiers and police cleared central Harare ahead of the results, shouting at pedestrians and traders to leave the area, as the opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) repeatedly alleged that ZANU-PF was stealing the election.

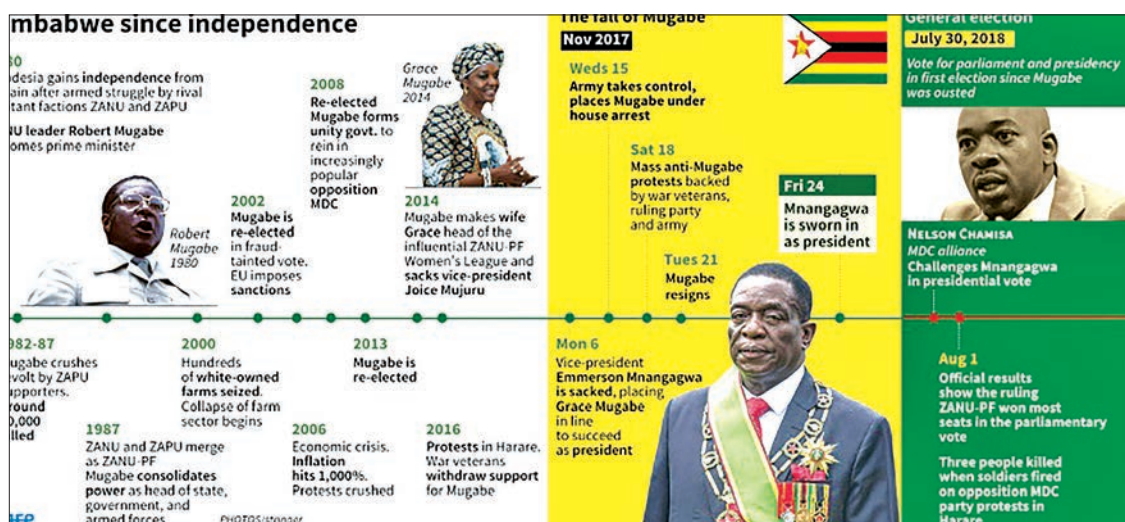
Opposition anger

Moments before the official announcement, MDC spokesman Morgan Komichi denounced the vote count as "fake" as he took to the stage at the ZEC results centre before being removed by police.

After Mnangagwa was declared the winner, he told AFP that his party rejected the outcome. "We will take this to the courts," he said.

Police and soldiers were on the streets of Harare overnight, but there were no reported protests and few public celebrations when the results were announced after midnight.

Turnout was high at over 80 per cent in most of the country's 10 provinces.



Zimbabwe since independence. **PHOTOT: AFP**

"What they have been trying to do of late is to play around," Chamisa told reporters hours before the final results.

"That is rigging, that is manipulation, trying to bastardise the result, and that we will not allow."

On Thursday, the army had guarded ZANU-PF headquarters, while armoured personnel carriers, water-cannon trucks and police anti-riot vans took positions outside the MDC headquarters.

Monday's vote was meant to turn the page on years of brutal repression under Mugabe, end Zimbabwe's international isolation and attract foreign investment to revive the shattered economy.

Mnangagwa had promised a

free and fair vote after the military ushered him to power when Mugabe was forced to resign in November.

In the parliamentary election, also held on Monday, ZANU-PF won easily.

Before the violence, European Union observers declared they found an "un-level playing field and lack of trust" in the election process.

Election observers from the Commonwealth issued a statement after Wednesday's clashes to "denounce the excessive use of force against unarmed civilians".

"It means our suffering will continue," Emion Chitsate, a security guard at a shopping centre in the Waterfalls district of Harare, said of the result. —AFP ■

UN holds joint working session on securing Libyan elections

TRIPOLI — The United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) said Thursday it held a joint working session to discuss securing the upcoming Libyan elections scheduled for the end of this year.

"UNSMIL facilitated a joint meeting in UN Tripoli and Tunis HQs, bringing the international community together with the High National Elections Commissions (HNEC) Libya and the Libyan Ministry of Interior, to discuss the necessary provisions for election security," the mission said in a statement.

The mission gave no further details on the specific plan to secure the elections.

Paris in May hosted a meeting on Libya with the participation of different Libyan parties to end the political crisis.

The parties agreed to hold and commit themselves to "credible" presidential and parliamentary elections slated for 10 December.

Despite a UN-sponsored political agreement signed in December 2015, Libya remains politically divided between rival authorities in the east and west of the country, both competing for legitimacy. —Xinhua ■

Turkey vows retaliation in crisis with US over pastor

ISTANBUL (Turkey)—Turkey was on Thursday drawing up retaliatory measures after Washington slapped sanctions on two Turkish ministers in the one of the biggest crises between the two NATO allies in recent years.

Tensions have soared over Turkey's detention on terror charges of American pastor Andrew Brunson, who was first held in October 2016 and was moved



US pastor Craig Brunson was moved to house arrest last week. **PHOTO: AFP**

to house arrest last week.

The sanctions targeting Justice Minister Abdulhamit Gul and Interior Minister Suleyman Soyulu freeze any property or assets on US soil held by the two ministers, and bar US citizens from doing business with them.

White House spokeswoman Sarah Sanders told journalists both ministers had "played leading roles in the arrest and detention of Pastor Brunson", who led a Protestant church in the Aegean city of Izmir.

The US Treasury implemented the sanctions under the 2016 Global Magnitsky Act named after Russian lawyer Sergei Magnitsky, who died in a Moscow jail, and which allows the US to sanction foreign officials implicated in rights abuses.

The Turkish foreign ministry

warned that the move "will greatly damage constructive efforts" to solve outstanding issues.

Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu, who is set to meet US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo in the next few days, said the move "will not go without response".

'Historic rupture'

The standoff appears to be one of the most serious crises between Turkey and the United States in modern history, along with the rows over the 1974 Turkish invasion of Cyprus and the 2003 US-led invasion of Iraq.

"A historic rupture," said the headline in the opposition daily *Cumhuriyet*.

Soner Cagaptay, director of the Turkish Research Programme at the Washington Institute, told AFP the crisis had erupted with Turkey undergoing a

"transformation" under Erdogan which has seen the country more closely orientating towards the Muslim Middle East.

But Cagaptay said Ankara would think twice before escalating, given "the pain of the economic burden which is really costing Turkey", and suggested Erdogan might seek a "graceful exit" from the crisis.

The sanctions rattled financial markets with the Turkish lira hitting five to the dollar for the first time in history. The currency has lost four percent against the dollar in the last week alone.

Finance Minister Berat Albayrak, who is Erdogan's son-in-law, insisted the impact on the economy would be "limited" and said Turkey's priority "is to solve the issue with diplomacy and constructive efforts". —AFP ■

Pope says death penalty 'inadmissible'

ROME — Pope Francis has declared the death penalty “inadmissible” in an update of Catholic believers’ most important guide to Church teaching, the catechism, the Vatican said Thursday.

“The Church teaches, in the light of the Gospel, that ‘the death penalty is inadmissible because it is an attack on the inviolability and dignity of the person,’” the new text states.

The move comes after decades of hardening opposition from the Church to capital punishment, with Francis and his predecessors Benedict XVI and John Paul II all making similar pleas for it to be stopped.

John Paul II called for its abolition on a visit to the United States in 1999, while Benedict XVI said there was “the need to do everything possible to eliminate capital punishment,” without ever going as far as to ask for an edit of the catechism.

The Community of Sant’Egidio, an association that represents Christians in 70 countries and a long-time campaigner against the death penalty, expressed “joy” at the move.

“The Pope’s decision is a further push to the Church and

Catholics, beginning with the Gospel, to respect the sacredness of human life and to work in every continent towards the abolishment of this inhuman practice,” the association said.

More than two-thirds of countries — including most predominantly Catholic states — have abolished or suspended judicial killings.

However, human rights organisation Amnesty International recorded at least 2,591 death sentences in 53 countries and nearly 1,000 executions in 2017 alone.

Amnesty says that those figures exclude China, which it claims does not make public announcements on the thousands of death sentences it passes.

‘Increasing awareness’

Francis approved the change to the catechism, which covers a wide range of moral and social issues, during a meeting in May with the head of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith — Cardinal Luis Ladaria — the Church’s doctrinal watchdog.

In an explanatory letter to bishops, Ladaria says that the update highlights “the clearer awareness of the Church for the



Francis has long opposed capital punishment, saying in June 2016 that “it doesn’t give justice to victims, but it feeds vengeance” and arguing that the biblical commandment “thou shall not kill” applies equally to the innocent and the guilty. **PHOTO: AFP**

respect due to every human life”.

The update also says the Church will “work with determination” for the abolition of the death penalty worldwide, added Ladaria. “Recourse to the death penalty on the part of legitimate authority, following a fair trial, was long considered an appropriate response to the gravity of certain crimes and an acceptable, albeit extreme, means of safeguarding the common good,” the new text says.

“Today, however, there is an

increasing awareness that the dignity of the person is not lost even after the commission of very serious crimes.”

Francis has long opposed the death penalty, saying that the execution of a human being is fundamentally against the teachings of Christ because, by definition, it excludes the possibility of redemption. He has shown concern for prisoners, whom he regularly visits, advocating for their rehabilitation into society.

Speaking in October, he ac-

knowledgeed that the Vatican itself had historically had “recourse to the extreme and inhuman remedy” of judicial execution, but said past doctrinal errors should be put aside. “It doesn’t give justice to victims, but it feeds vengeance,” he said in June 2016, arguing that the biblical commandment “thou shall not kill” applies to the innocent as well as the guilty. Francis has also called for an “international consensus” on the abolition of capital punishment.—AFP ■

White House: Trump responds to Kim’s letter, reply to be delivered “shortly”

WASHINGTON — The White House said on Thursday that US President Donald Trump has responded to a new letter from Kim Jong Un, top leader of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK), and Trump’s letter will be delivered “shortly.”

In a press briefing, White House spokesperson Sarah Sanders said “we have responded to Chairman Kim’s letter, the president has, and that letter will be

delivered shortly.”

Refusing to reveal the contents of the two letters, Sanders only said that the letters “addressed their commitment from their joint statement” made in the Singapore summit.

“They are going to continue to work together towards complete and total denuclearization,” she said.

Trump earlier tweeted that he looks forward to seeing Kim

“soon.” However, Sanders said that although the White House is “certainly open to that discussion,” there is not “a second meeting that is currently locked in or finalized.”

Speaking of the DPRK’s repatriation of the remains of fallen US soldiers from the 1950-1953 Korean War, Sanders said that the US side was “incredibly grateful and thankful.”

“We are going to continue to work with North Korea,” she said, referring to the DPRK.

Earlier on Thursday, Sanders said in a statement that Trump has received a letter from Kim, and “the ongoing correspondence between the two leaders is aimed at following up on their meeting in Singapore and advancing the commitments made in the US-DPRK joint statement.” Trump also thanked Kim via Twitter for returning the remains of fallen US soldiers from the Korean War.—Xinhua ■



White House spokesperson Sarah Sanders (Rear) attends a press briefing at the White House in Washington D.C., the United States on 2 August 2018. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

Britain’s Hunt warns of “no deal” outcome to Brexit talks

VIENNA — British Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt has warned that the Brexit process could come to a close without a deal reached by Britain and the European Union (EU), during a visit to Vienna on Wednesday.

Hunt was joined at a press conference by his Austrian counterpart Karin Kneissl following talks between the two, saying a collapse in negotiations with the EU is a distinct possibility that Britain is preparing for.

A “no deal” would have a “profound impact on the relations between Britain and EU countries for a generation,” he said. In addition, it would be a “geo-strategic mistake,” he added.

He said an extension of the Brexit negotiations is unlikely,

however, given that neither the British parliament or the populace would likely accept this.

Kneissl said Austria too is preparing for a number of potential scenarios, and noted that the negotiations cannot be skirted around, and must be conducted as per relevant commission guidelines.

Hunt noted Austria’s current key role in the Presidency of the Council of the European Union, and said the good relations between the two countries should provide positive impetus in finding a workable solution.

The EU and Britain have common values and should stand shoulder-to-shoulder, he said, though noting that the time remaining for a solution is now “very short.”—Xinhua ■

ASEAN FMs hail 15th anniversary of ASEAN-China strategic partnership

SINGAPORE — Foreign ministers of member countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) on Thursday welcomed the commemoration of the 15th anniversary of the ASEAN-China strategic partnership this year.

China and ASEAN forged a strategic partnership for peace and prosperity in 2003.

In a joint communique released at the ASEAN foreign ministers' meeting, the ministers also hailed an upcoming ASEAN-China maritime exercise, saying the exercise in October will enhance confidence and trust among the ASEAN and Chinese navies.

The ministers said they looked forward to the adoption of the ASEAN-China Strategic Partnership Vision 2030 at the ASEAN-China summit in Singapore in November, as well as the designation of the year 2019 as the ASEAN-China Year of Media



Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi (6th L) attends the China-ASEAN foreign ministers' meeting in Singapore on 2 August 2018. PHOTO: XINHUA

Exchanges.

The ministers said they warmly welcomed the continued improving cooperation between ASEAN and China and were encouraged by the progress of the substantive negotiations toward the early conclusion of an effective Code of Conduct (COC) in the South China Sea on a mutually-agreed timeline.

They noted that ASEAN member states and China had agreed on a single draft COC negotiating text at an ASEAN-China senior officials' meeting on the implementation of the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea in Changsha, China, on June 27.

Discussions at Thursday's ASEAN foreign min-

isters' meeting focused on continued efforts to build a resilient and innovative ASEAN, ASEAN's relations with external partners, including through ASEAN-led platforms, and the importance of ASEAN Centrality and unity amidst rapid changes in Southeast Asia and beyond, according to the joint communique. —Xinhua ■

Cambodia reports sharp rise in dengue fever cases in H1, killing 10

PHNOM PENH — Cambodia had reported a total of 5,284 dengue fever cases in the first six months of 2018, a 234 per cent rise compared with 1,580 cases over the same period last year, according to a dengue fever report on Friday. The incidence rate was 31.7 cases out of 100,000 people, said the report released by the National Center for Parasitology, Entomology and Malaria Control.

The report said the dengue virus killed 10 people during the January-June period this year, up from only one death over the same period last year. Huy Rekol, director of the National Center for Parasitology, Entomology and Malaria Control, said dengue fever cases spiked according to the seasonal variation of the climate and over 71 per cent of the patients were children aged between five and 14 years old.

"The fatal cases

occurred (this year) because parents had sent their ill children to hospitals late, or sought medical treatment at private places that made the condition of the disease become more severe, so when they transferred their severely ill kids to public hospitals, it was too late," he said in the report.

He added that parents should send their children to the nearest public hospital within 48 hours after they suspect that their kids are infected with a dengue virus.

Dengue is a viral disease transmitted by Aedes mosquitoes. The disease causes an acute illness that usually follows symptoms such as headache, fever, exhaustion, severe muscle and joint pain, swollen glands, vomiting and rash.

In Cambodia, the peak of dengue epidemic period is in the rainy season from May to October. —Xinhua ■

Who were the Russian journalists killed in CAR?

MOSCOW — The three Russians killed in the Central African Republic had followed very different career paths before uniting on a daring journalistic assignment to report on the shadowy Russian mercenary group Wagner.

Journalist Orkhan Dzhemal was an experienced war reporter who worked for liberal and opposition media, while cameraman Kirill Radchenko had worked in Syria for pro-Kremlin media.

Director Alexander Rastorguyev had won awards for no-holds-barred documentaries about life in Russia.

'I love war'

Journalist Dzhemal, who died at 51, suffered a serious leg injury from shelling in Libya in 2011 while reporting on the

conflict for Izvestia newspaper.

In one of his last interviews to Radio Liberty he said: "I love war. You go and you touch history."

He recalled that after recovering from his injury in Libya, he went to eastern Ukraine, where he covered the conflict from both sides of the frontline.

"If something blows up now somewhere, I will definitely go," he said, saying that for him "journalism is a profession that allows you to be free".

He worked for *Novaya Gazeta* as a special correspondent and for many other newspapers and magazines. In 2008 he published a book about the brief war between Georgia and Russia.

In a tribute video broadcast by independent

television channel Dozhd on Wednesday, journalist Mikhail Fishman said Dzhemal had a "particular lack of fear".

Dzhemal's late father Geidar was a philosopher and Muslim preacher. His former wife and the mother of his son Irina Gordiyenko is a *Novaya Gazeta* journalist.

'Unflinching'

Director Rastorguyev, who died at 47, won awards for his documentaries, which also attracted plenty of criticism for shocking scenes.

His film "Tender's Heat. Wild, Wild Beach," co-directed with Vitaly Mansky and Susanna Baranzhiyeva, followed an eccentric group of characters on Black Sea beaches.

Variety called it "frequently grotesque but ad-



Russian journalists Alexander Rastorguyev, Kirill Radchenko and Orkhan Dzhemal were killed in the Central African Republic. PHOTO: AFP

mirably unflinching" and it won a special jury award at the Amsterdam International Documentary Film Festival in 2006.

Mansky told Dozhd's tribute video that Rastorguyev was "maybe the most outstanding chronicler of the crazy, in some ways pointless and cruel life in Russia."

"I urge everyone now to drop everything and

watch his films."

Rastorguyev in a 2013 interview with The Village website said that "any art form tries to shed light on the real state of things, which is hidden from most people."

He took part in a high-profile project called Srok, a series of short Internet films about the Russian protest movement including opposition leader

Alexei Navalny.

He was detained at a 2011 protest against Putin's return to the Kremlin.

At the time of his death he was making a film with Pyotr Verzilov of the Pussy Riot punk group.

He began his career working for television in his home town of Rostov-on-Don, where he continued to live and work and where his parents live. —AFP ■

Concern for climate as Sweden's highest peak melts away

STOCKHOLM — Researchers expressed concern Thursday about the rapid pace of climate change, after a glacier on Sweden's Kebnekaise mountain melted so much in sweltering Arctic temperatures that it is no longer the country's high-

est point.

"It's quite scary," Gunhild Ninis Rosqvist, a Stockholm University geography professor who has been measuring the glacier for many years as part of climate change research, told AFP.

"This glacier is a sym-

bol for all the glaciers in the world. This whole environment is melting, the snow is melting, and it affects the entire ecosystem: the plants, the animals, the climate, everything," said Rosqvist, who is also the head of the Tarfala research station near Keb-

nekaise.

"You see the effects of climate change so clearly here. And for Sweden, Kebnekaise's southern peak is such an iconic symbol."

A popular tourist destination located in Sweden's far north, Kebnekaise has two main peaks — a southern one covered by a glacier and a neighbouring, northern one free of ice.

The southern peak lost four metres (13 feet) of snow between July 2 and July 31.

"It looked different this year. The snow was melting, the glacier surface has never been as low as it is now. I saw meltwater trickling down the sides, I've never seen that before," Rosqvist said.

When measured early Tuesday, the southern peak reached 2,097 metres above sea level, just 20 centimetres higher than

the northern tip's 2096.8 metres.

On a daily basis in July, the southern peak lost an average 14 centimetres of snow, as Sweden registered record hot temperatures that triggered dozens of wildfires across the country, even in the Arctic Circle. On Thursday Rosqvist said the southern peak was most certainly lower than the northern peak.

"We haven't gone up today to measure it, but we've checked the temperature and it was really warm yesterday, it was over 20 degrees C (68 F) so it has surely melted", below the level of the northern peak, she said.

Rosqvist and her team will measure the peak again around September 8, "when the summer is over."

"It could easily be a metre under the northern

peak by the end of summer."

—'Extreme heat more common'—

The southern glacier, whose height has been registered since 1880, has been melting by one metre every year over the past two decades, according to Stockholm University.

The glacier could grow this coming winter and the southern peak could even rise above the northern peak again, before some of it melts away next summer if the weather is warm.

According to Martin Hedberg, meteorologist at the Swedish Weather and Climate Centre, "extreme heat is 100 times more common today than it was during the 1950s, 60s and 70s" globally.

"The temperature differences between the Arctic and the Mediterranean are narrowing," he told AFP. —AFP ■



A handout picture released by Stockholm University, taken on July 31, shows Gunhild Ninis Rosqvist, a Stockholm University geography professor making measurements of the glacier atop Sweden's highest point on the southern peak of the Kebnekaise mountain in Sweden's far north. **PHOTO: AFP**

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V RU YI SONG VOY. NO. (48)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V RU YI SONG VOY. NO. (48) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 5-8-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T.T-5 where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

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CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V GSS YANGON VOY. NO. (1088 S/N)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V GSS YANGON VOY. NO. (1088 S/N) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 4-8-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of A.W.P.T where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

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M.V AREZOO VOY. NO. (SCY1037)

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

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

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AGENT FOR: M/S LAND AND SEA
SHIPPING LINE**

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CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V HUNSA BHUM VOY. NO. (423)

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

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

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Art of cinema comes alive in basement of Iraq aficionado

KIRKUK (Iraq)—From black-and-white musicals to action movies, Abdel Qader al-Ayoubi screens films and exhibits paraphernalia of the art form in his basement in the Iraqi city of Kirkuk, a cinema-free zone.

Ayoubi has scoured the country to collect 8 mm, 16 mm and 35-mm reels of old films, projectors, screens and archive materials from second-hand dealers, sometimes at exorbitant prices.

Back in the 1970s, the city of Kirkuk was home to five cinemas: the Khayyam, Hamra, Alamein, Atlas and the Sala-heddin, the educational advisor and longtime movie enthusiast told AFP.

The silver screen pulled in audiences in towns across Iraq, until 1980 when war broke out with Iran, marking the start of decades of conflict.

It was only in December that Baghdad declared victory after a three-year battle against the Islamic State group.

While the level of violence has declined sharply, the rich cultural life long associated with Iraq has struggled to make a return.

More than a decade of sanctions following Saddam Hussein's 1990 invasion of Kuwait, as well as long periods of militia and jihadist dominance after the 2003 US-led invasion that toppled the dictator, have ensured an end to the golden age of cinema in Iraq.

The cinema experience in the country is now restricted to multi-screen theatres in shopping malls of Baghdad and the

main southern city of Basra.

In oil-rich Kirkuk, which is home to Kurdish, Arab and Turkmen communities, "all the movie theatres have closed, for different reasons but mainly because of security concerns", said 59-year-old Ayoubi.

Purring projector

Only in the basement of his home can a Kirkuk cinemagoer experience the whirring of the film reel and the purring of the projector's fan.

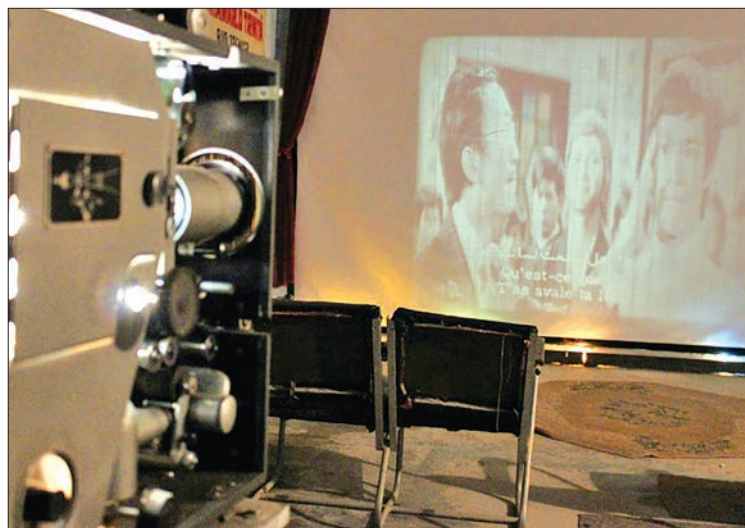
Ghassan Hawwa, an oil sector worker who remembers the days of the Atlas and Hamra cinemas, is a regular in the audience on leatherette seats at the weekly rendezvous in the basement.

"Today, everybody watches DVDs or goes on the internet," sighed Hawwa, who along with a cluster of co-enthusiasts aim to bring cinema back to life in Kirkuk.

Action and horror flicks are a hit at Ayoubi's cinema but his personal favourites are the Arabic movies, the musical comedies of the 1950s and 1960s, or the good old-fashioned love stories.

Foreign films are also on the programme, such as the Spaghetti Westerns whose posters plaster the walls of his small museum that is open to the public on weekends and public holidays.

Ayoubi guides visitors around his museum, giving the history of the reels, projectors and other cinema paraphernalia to a new generation "who know nothing of the cinema world of old". —AFP ■



A movie plays in the basement museum of Abdel Qader al-Ayoubi in Kirkuk **PHOTO: AFP**

Ariana Grande, Mendes among performers at MTV awards

NEW YORK—Pop stars Ariana Grande and Shawn Mendes will be among the performers at the MTV Video Music Awards on 20 August, the network announced Thursday.

Announcing the first batch of appearances for the live broadcast from New York, MTV said Grande would

sing "God Is a Woman," the 25-year-old former child star's newly mature track about the delights of sex.

The awards will come three days after Grande releases her fourth album, "Sweetener."

MTV also said that rapper Logic would perform live

for the first time his new song "One Day" alongside featured artist Ryan Tedder, the singer of pop group OneRepublic.

MTV earlier announced that Jennifer Lopez would receive an award named after Michael Jackson for her lifetime contributions to pop culture.

The bilingual New York-born diva will appear at the awards for the first time since 2001.

Rapper Cardi B is the frontrunner at the latest VMAs, narrowly taking more nominations than Jay-Z and Beyonce for their Louvre-shot video "Apathy" and Childish Gambino for his politically charged "This Is America."

But unlike the industry-led Grammys, the VMAs prides itself on outrageous made-for-television moments with less focus on who wins the awards. —AFP ■



Pop star Ariana Grande - performing here at the Washington DC March for Our Lives rally in March 2018 - will sing "God Is a Woman" about the delights of sex at the MTV Video Music Awards. **PHOTO: AFP**

Playing with history: Corsica's Playmobil homage to Napoleon

AJACCIO (France) — Tucked away on a side street near the Corsican home where Napoleon Bonaparte was born, a mini museum invites young minds to relive the French emperor's story — through scenes painstakingly built from hundreds of Playmobil figurines.

Frederic Pierrot, a 53-year-old IT entrepreneur, came up with the idea a few years ago as a way to pay homage to the Mediterranean island's most famous son while "rediscovering the historical reconstructions I did when I was 10 years old".

"I wanted an original idea, far from all the digital technology offerings," he said, of his Naporama museum in the island's capital, Ajaccio.

Using pieces from his vast Playmobil collection, he began customising the figurines with paper, raffia and even hand-made accessories to create historically accurate scenes and characters.

For 20 euros (\$23) fans can buy their own made-to-order Napoleon or his wife Josephine.

Giving guided tours, Pierrot

sharpens his visitors' curiosity with little known anecdotes while sketching out the events which changed the course of history.

"When he was 13 years old, Napoleon organised a snowball fight which lasted three days at the Brienne military school" in northeast France, he said, during a recent visit.

"For historians, these days already gave a hint of the future chief's character."

Next up are reconstructions, beginning with the 1793 Siege of Toulon, where the young general showed his strategic flair, and ending with his crowning as emperor in 1804.

The tone is unabashedly upbeat — there is no reproduction of his disastrous final defeat at Waterloo, for instance — with tales of courage, friendship and a bit of coquetry.

"It's funny when we see (Emmanuel) Macron and his wife today," Pierrot says, referring to the age difference between the French president and his wife, Brigitte, 25 years his senior.

"But for their civil wed-

ding, Josephine de Beauharnais declared herself five years younger than her real age, while Napoleon made himself older so they could hide their (six-year) age difference."

'A child's dream'

The episode leads to the tale of Napoleon's coronation, when a rushed church wedding had to be arranged after Josephine informed the pope that they were not yet married in the eyes of God.

Napoleon was so annoyed that he made sure only civil weddings had any legal foundation in French law when he laid out what would become known as the Napoleonic Code.

Pierrot also has another trick to keep visitors on their toes. Hidden among the Playmobil models are characters who don't belong: Harry Potter, Yoda, Sherlock Holmes, a Pokemon...

"All right kids, learn how to keep your eyes peeled," he tells them.

"That's what I liked best," says Maxence, a seven-year-old from the French city of St. Etienne visiting his grandmother. —AFP ■

Heavy drinking, long-term abstinence could both contribute to dementia risk

LONDON — Whether you drink more than 14 units of alcohol a week or totally abstain from it during middle age, you could probably at increased risk of developing dementia, according to a study released Thursday by the University College London (UCL).

Researchers from French national institute of health and medical research (INSERM) and UCL investigated the association between midlife alcohol consumption and risk of dementia into early old age.

Their findings are based on 9,087 British civil servants aged between 35 and 55 in 1985 who

were taking part in the Whitehall II Study, which is looking at the impact of social, behavioural, and biological factors on long-term health.

Participants were assessed at regular intervals between 1985 and 1993 on their alcohol consumption and alcohol dependence. Alcohol consumption trajectories between 1985 and 2004 were also used to examine the association of long-term alcohol consumption and risk of dementia from midlife to early old age.

Of the 9,087 participants, 397 cases of dementia were recorded over an average follow-up period of 23 years, and average age at

dementia diagnosis was 76 years, according to the study.

The researchers found that abstinence in midlife or drinking more than 14 units a week was associated with a higher risk of dementia compared with drinking one to 14 units of alcohol a week, said Severine Sabia from UCL and INSERM.

Meanwhile, among those drinking above 14 units a week of alcohol, every seven unit a week increase in consumption was associated with 17 per cent increase in dementia risk, said Sabia.

In Britain, 14 units of alcohol a week is now the recommended maximum limit for both men and



Drinking more than 14 units of alcohol a week could probably cause increased risk of developing dementia. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

women, but many countries still use a much higher threshold to define harmful drinking.

However, the researchers said that this is an observational study, so no firm conclusions can

be drawn about cause and effect, and they cannot rule out the possibility that some of the risk may be due to unmeasured factors.

The study has been published in the journal *BMJ*.—Xinhua ■

Scientist explains why Russian women seldom fly to space

MOSCOW — Two factors explain why Russian women seldom fly to space - national mentality and subjective low self-esteem, the chief of a section at the Russian Academy of Sciences' Institute of Biomedical Problems, Mark Belakovsky, told TASS on Thursday.

Earlier it was announced that more than ten aspirants had gone through the full cycle of selection for the team of Russian cosmonauts but there were no women among them.

"There are no obstacles to women's space missions from

the physiological point of view. I believe there are two hindrances that can explain why there are no Russian women among the crewmembers of the International Space Station: national mentality and subjective low self-esteem," Belakovsky said.

The IBMP has invariably supported the idea of women's participation in space missions.

"In 1980 the chief medical commission selected four women medics - Galina Amelkina, Yelena Dobrokvashina, Tamara Zakharova and Larisa

Pozharskaya, who worked at IBMP's research laboratories. All were awarded the cosmonaut-researcher status. Their training lasted up to 1993. The sole reason why none of them participated in space flights was the flights' program was changed," Belakovsky said.

Also, he mentioned as an example the Luna-2015 experiment imitating a flight to the Moon, in which a crew of six women spent eight days in a sealed room.

"We formed this crew on purpose to draw attention to the importance of women's space

flights. The participants in the experiment did a good job. Later on some of them took part in the experiment SIRIUS-17 [Scientific International Research in Unique Terrestrial Station]. Others now provide assistance in conducting a four-month isolation experiment," Belakovsky said.

He also mentioned Anna Kikina, a member of the cosmonauts training team, who earlier successfully participated in the experiment SIRIUS-17.

On recruitment of women into cosmonaut training team

The 17th recruitment into the cosmonaut team in March 2017 was open. Applications were accepted from Russian citizens under 35 years of age having higher education and engineering, research or flight specialties.

Women filed more applications than before.

In the previous recruitment in 2012 (the first open one) eight aspirants were selected from a group of 304 volunteers. Six of them are in the cosmonaut team now. Anna Kikina was among the contenders. She is the only woman in the cosmonaut team at the moment. Kikina has participated in no space missions so far. In the history of Soviet and Russian space research only four women have been to space - Valentina Tereshkova, Svetlana Savitskaya, Yelena Kondakova and Yelena Serova. —Tass ■

Engine flaw delays Boeing test of crew capsule to 2019

TAMPA — An engine flaw discovered during a launchpad test of Boeing's Starliner spaceship, designed to carry humans to the International Space Station, has delayed its first crew test flight until next year.

The problem involved failures with several abort engines that did not close as planned and allowed propellant to leak, company officials said in a conference call on Wednesday. "We are confident we identified the root cause and are implementing corrective actions now," said vice president and program manager of Boeing's commercial crew program John Mulholland, indicating that "minor design changes" are under way. The setback means the first crewed test flight will be pushed back to the middle of 2019, he said. Initially, the first test flights with people on board were scheduled to take place late in 2018. Both Boeing and SpaceX are building spaceships to transport astronauts and restore US access to the space station, a capacity lost when the shuttle program was retired in 2011, as planned after 30 years of operation.

It is unclear when these first flights will happen. A report issued last month by a US government auditor said Boeing and SpaceX are unlikely to be able to send astronauts to the ISS next year, resulting in a possible gap in the US presence on the spacecraft.—AFP ■



Svetlana Savitskaya (center) became the second woman in space some 19 years after Valentina Tereshkova **PHOTO: TASS**

Poulter leads Bridgestone with 62, Woods four back

LOS ANGELES — Ian Poulter, gunning for a spot on the European Ryder Cup team, fired an eight-under par 62 on Thursday to grab the first-round lead in the World Golf Championships Bridgestone Invitational in Ohio.

The English golfer, who won the Houston Open in April, had eight birdies without a bogey to hold a one-stroke lead over Americans Kyle Stanley and Rickie Fowler.

Eight-time Bridgestone winner Tiger Woods, Northern Ireland Star Rory McIlroy, former world number one Jason Day and US Open champion Brooks Koepka were among the 19 players within four strokes of Poulter on a talent-laden leaderboard.

"My whole game was great today," said Poulter, who hit 12 of 14 fairways and 14 of 18 greens in regulation.

"Whenever you shoot eight-under par you've generally done a lot of good stuff.

"I did very well tee to green, proximity to the pin, I rolled a few nice putts in. As silly as it sounds, I would have liked to have nicked another couple. But any time you shoot

eight-under par on this golf course it's a great round of golf."

Poulter admitted he found extra motivation from his lack of success in previous trips to Firestone Country Club in Akron.

In his last six appearances his best finish was a tie for 17th in 2015.

"I looked at my stats over the last 15 attempts at this place, and they're not very good," he said. "So today I was a bit more aggressive and it paid off."

After his lowest round ever on the PGA Tour, Poulter said a "good change in mindset" and "a good cleanup from behind the scenes" had contributed to a solid year that has seen him climb to 32nd in the world rankings.

"It's a Ryder Cup year," he said. "I want to play in it and I need to play some good golf."

He'll have to keep playing good golf to hold off a bevy of talented chasers.

Stanley set the early target with his 63, and he was joined at seven-under by a bogey-free Fowler.

Spain's Jon Rahm, South Korean Kim Si-woo and American Patrick Cantlay shared fourth on 64.

McIlroy headed a group of six on 65 that also included Day, India's Anirban Lahiri and American Justin Thomas -- who defends his PGA Championship title next week at the final major of the year.

Woods fights to 66

Woods, the 14-time major champion who is seeking his first victory since winning the 2013 Bridgestone Invitational, had five birdies with one bogey at his final hole to lead a group on 66 that also included Koepka and Mickelson.

"I kind of fought out a score today, which is good," said Woods, who said solid putting helped make up for the fact that his ball-striking wasn't all it could have been.

In ideal scoring conditions, 45 of the 71-player field finished under par.

"We won't find the golf course on any easier day so you really needed to take advantage of it," said McIlroy, who thought he made the most of his chances. "Any time you



Fourteen-time major champion Tiger Woods is seeking his first victory since 2013 and said solid putting helped compensate for his ball-striking. **PHOTO: AFP**

can get around this golf course with no bogeys it's a good day," he said. "I scrambled when I

needed to. I felt like I took advantage of most of the chances I gave myself." —AFP ■

Myanmar likely to play best in Asian Games 2018

MYANMAR U-23 men's national football team is included in the tough group in the Asian Games 2018 which will be held from 14 August to 1 September 2018 in Jakarta and Palembang, Indonesia, as Myanmar was booked in Group F, together with world-class teams DPR Korea, Saudi Arabia and Iran.

The team from DPR Korea won the silver medal at the 2015 Asian Games. Saudi Arabia, this year, qualified for the World Cup for the first time since 2006. Iran has won numerous med-

als in football at the Asian Games, including gold in 1998 and 2002.

There are a total of 24 teams comprising in six groups, A to F.

The teams in each group play each other, and the top two teams in each group along with the four best third-placed teams will advance to the Round of 16.

Myanmar will play their opener against DPR Korea on 15 August, Saudi Arabia on 17 August and Asian football powerhouse Iran on 20 August. — Lynn Thit(Tgi) ■

After Pacquiao loss, ex-WBA champ Matthysse calls time on career

BUENOS AIRES — Just two weeks after a punishing knockout loss to Filipino great Manny Pacquiao, Argentine former WBA welterweight champion Lucas Matthysse announced his retirement on Thursday.

"Today I decided to hang up the gloves, another stage in my life is beginning," said the 35-year-old Matthysse, who ends his 43-fight career with a record of 38 wins, 36 inside the distance, for just five defeats and one no contest.

Matthysse's last fight was a seventh round stoppage loss to Pacquiao in Kuala Lumpur, in which the previously explosive Argentine looked past his best.

"Pacquiao is a great boxer, I lost to a legend," he said.

"I'm proud to have stayed

at the top for 10 years fighting the best in the world." He won the WBA welterweight title in January with an eighth round knockout of Thailand's Tewa Kiram.

He previously held the interim WBC super-lightweight title but was narrowly beaten by American Danny Garcia in Las Vegas in 2013 when challenging for the full strap.—AFP ■



Challenging Filipino great Manny Pacquiao (right) proved a step too far for Argentine Lucas Matthysse. **PHOTO: AFP**