

NATIONAL

Union Minister Dr. Win Myat Aye visits women's vocational training school in Myeik, Taninthayi Region

PAGE-2

NATIONAL

Union Minister Thura U Aung Ko to attend 6th International Buddhist Conference in India

PAGE-2

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Ministry of Foreign Affairs issues press release on State Counsellor's Singapore visit

PRESS RELEASE

AT the invitation of His Excellency Mr. Lee Hsien Loong, Prime Minister of the Republic of Singapore, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, State Counsellor of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar paid a working visit to Singapore from 19 to 21 August 2018 and arrived back to Nay Pyi Taw on 22 August 2018.

On 20 August 2018, Myanmar Delegation led

by State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi visited Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy. At the School, the State Counsellor was welcomed by H.E. Mr. Goh Chok Tong, Emeritus Senior Minister and Professor Danny Quah, Dean of Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy. Professor Danny Quah explained the history of the School, future visions,

functions and subjects taught at the School. State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi then observed a class room in the School. After that, State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi attended the High Tea hosted by H.E. Mr. Goh Chok Tong, Emeritus Senior Minister.

SEE PAGE 3

State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi returns from Singapore

STATE Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi arrived back in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning by special flight, after she concluded her working goodwill visit to Singapore.

The State Counsellor and party were welcomed by Chairman of the Nay Pyi Taw Council Dr. Myo Aung and wife, Chief of the Myanmar Police Force Police Lt-Gen Aung Win Oo, the chargé d'affaires of the Embassy of Singapore in Myanmar and responsible officials at the Nay Pyi Taw International Airport.

The State Counsellor and party were seen off at the Changi International Airport in Singapore by senior Minister of State at the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Dr Mohamad Maliki Bin Osman, Myanmar Ambassador to Singapore U Htay Aung and wife, Ambassador of Singapore to Myanmar Ms Vanessa Chan, Military Attaché Col Win Myat and wife, and families of the Myanmar Embassy and officials. — Myanmar News Agency



State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi (centre) being welcomed by responsible officials at the Nay Pyi Taw International Airport. **PHOTO: MNA**

Union Minister Thura U Aung Ko to attend 6th International Buddhist Conference in India

UNION Minister for Religious Affairs and Culture Thura U Aung Ko and expert U Aung Thein Nyunt (Retd Deputy Director-General) left for India yesterday, to attend the 6th International Buddhist Conference to be held in New Delhi from 22 to 26 August.

Union Minister Thura U

Aung Ko and expert U Aung Thein Nyunt were seen off by U Myint Oo, Director-General of Religious Affairs Department, U Aung Naing Myint, Rector of University of Culture (Yangon), and officials at the Yangon International Airport.—Myanmar News Agency ■



Union Minister Thura U Aung Ko leaves for India to attend 6th International Buddhist Conference. **PHOTO: MNA**



Union Minister Dr. Win Myat Aye meets with trainees at the women's vocational training school in Myeik. **PHOTO: MNA**

Union Minister Dr. Win Myat Aye visits women's vocational training school in Myeik, Taninthayi Region

UNION Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Dr. Win Myat Aye paid homage to the Laykyunsimee Pagoda in Myeik Township and offered flowers, oil lamps and libation to the Buddha image of the pagoda, made donations and also signed the guestbook.

The union minister and his entourage then visited the women's vocational training school, under the Department of Social Welfare, in Myeik Township and cordially met with the women and children under national protection. He gave them words of encouragement and discussed the courses

conducted at the school. School officials then presented the requirements of the school to which the union minister and other officials offered discussions and advice.

The women's vocational training school in Myeik Township, Taninthayi Region, houses 58 women under national protection while providing them education befitting to their respective age, teaching them the three R's (reading, writing and arithmetic), teaching them vocational skills, creating employment opportunities and reuniting families.—Myanmar News Agency ■

Forum on better economic reporting held in Nay Pyi Taw

THE Forum on Better Economic Reporting (Availability, Access and Quality of Data and Statistics) facilitated by USAID, was held in Mingalar Thiri Hotel in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning.

Speaking at the forum, Deputy Minister for Information U Aung Hla Tun said data and statistics are important for news, journalists represent the fourth pillar coordinating the public and the three pillars of government, besides disseminating information among the people, and economic reports are important for those involved in national policies, entrepreneurs and for every citizen. The deputy minister said the Ministry of Information has urged all relevant ministries and departments to publicize available information in a timely manner. The Right to Information Law is being drafted, creating better environment for journalists in newsgathering once it is enacted, he said. He also urged the forum to openly

discuss current issues. The deputy minister said the country is undergoing democratic reforms and the new Foreign Investment Law was recently enacted, making it more important than ever to relay timely, accurate and reliable data and statistics to foreign businesses interested in entering the country. He added that the media presentation of a country is the primary factor on which international governments, organizations and entrepreneurs look to when making decisions relating to the said country. Therefore, journalists should be careful in avoiding errors in facts and figures concerning the country, said the deputy minister. Next, USAID Head Economist Mr. Paul Pleva said USAID is ready to assist in Myanmar's myriad development processes and to ensure accurate news is disseminated in the country. This was followed by a presentation from Dr. Daw Wah Wah Maung, Director-General of the Central Statistical Organ-

ization (CSO), on CSO's efforts to ensure it receives accurate data, to enact a new statistical law, and to collect data for each category.

During the second part of the forum, Deputy Minister U Aung Hla Tun assumed the role of panel chair for the discussion on assessing current state of affairs, while Director-General Dr. Daw Wah Wah Maung, Director-General U Soe Thein from the Directorate of Communications and 7-Day Media CEO U Thaung Su Nyein, who is also Chairman of the Myanmar Computer Professionals Association, presided over the discussions that included the constraints of journalists in gathering data and statistics for factual news reporting, difficulties in receiving information from ministries and gathering data, and developing the media sector. The forum was attended by ministry and departmental officials and journalists from media agencies.—MNA ■



Deputy Minister for Information U Aung Hla Tun addresses the forum on better economic reporting in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

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Ministry of Foreign Affairs issues press release on State Counsellor's Singapore visit

FROM PAGE 1

In the morning of 21 August 2018, State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi called on Madame Halimah Yacob, President of the Republic of Singapore and met with Mr. Lee Hsien Loong, Prime Minister of the Republic of Singapore on separate occasions at Istana Presidential Palace. During their meeting, the leaders discussed further strengthening of the existing bilateral relations and cooperation between the two countries, promoting trade, investment and economic cooperation, concluding of a bilateral investment treaty, providing vocational training for youth, to strengthen ASEAN's cooperation in coping with natural disasters, recent developments in Rakhine State, Myanmar Government's efforts for peace process in Myanmar. After that, State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and party attended the luncheon hosted by Prime Minister Mr. Lee Hsien Loong.

In the afternoon of 21 August 2018, State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi met with H.E. Mr. Teo Chee Hean, Deputy Prime Minister and Coordinating Minister for National Security at the Grand Hyatt Hotel.

Afterwards, State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi delivered the 43rd Singapore Lecture, "Democratic Transition in Myanmar: Challenges and Way Forward" at Grand Hyatt Hotel.

The State Counsellor's lecture covers wide range of issues related to Myanmar's different phases of transition, Myanmar's Sustainable Development Plan, 21st Century Panglong Conference, measures taken to address the Rakhine issue and the government's efforts for economic development, creating enabling environments for promoting foreign investments in Myanmar.

In her lecture, State Counsellor explained that, during the last three quarters of a century, Myanmar has undergone three major transitions: from colonial rule to independence in 1948, from parliamentary democracy to military dictatorship in 1962, and still in progress today since 1988, still incomplete, is the transition from dictatorship to democracy. The first transition was a straight forward culmination of a hard and costly struggle: a clean-cut change from the status of colonial subject country to that of sovereign independent nation. The second transition too was sharp and clearly placed in time: tanks on the streets of the capital one morning, a crisp declaration on the radio. The present transition is the most complex, the most challenging of all. The degree of progress of the current transition has to be measured by the extent to which we are able, together with the people, to realize our aspirations.

On Myanmar Sustainable Development Plan, a



State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi (L) shakes hands with Singapore Prime Minister Mr. Lee Hsien Loong at Istana Presidential Palace during a working visit in Singapore on 21 August 2018. PHOTO: MNA

roadmap for the transition, identifies five goals, supported by three pillars. Goal 1 is Peace, National Reconciliation, Security and Good Governance and Goal 2 is Economic Stability & Strengthened Macroeconomic Management. These rest on the pillar of Peace & Stability. Goal 3 is Job Creation & Private Sector-led Growth, held up by the pillar of Prosperity & Partnership. The third pillar, People and Planet, supports Goal 4, Human Resources & Social Development for 21st Century Society and Goal 5, Natural Resources & the Environment for Prosperity of the Nation. Regarding three pillars, Myanmar Government is determined to persevere because without peace, transition could not blossom and bear fruit.

The Twenty-first Century Panglong Conference seeks to put an end to the armed strife that has ravaged Myanmar since its birth as an independent nation, and to construct a strong democratic federal union founded on a lasting unity created out of diversity. Serious challenges remain and armed conflicts continue to break out between the Tatmadaw and the EAOs, as well as between the EAOs themselves. Myanmar Government is constantly alert to the challenges and it aims to resolve them through dialogue and negotiation, by persevering in the endeavor to build mutual trust and understanding.

Addressing destabilizing issues in Rakhine State was a fundamental part of building of Pillar 1. Dr. Kofi

Annan wanted Myanmar Government to succeed, to reach the goals of peace, prosperity, security and progress for our country. The recommendations of Dr. Kofi Annan's Commission, 88 in all, of which 81 have been implemented so far, aimed to establish lasting peace and stability in Rakhine State.

The Government of Myanmar also signed with the UNDP and the UNHCR an MOU that aims at assisting speedy and efficient resettlement and rehabilitation. Involved at various fronts and levels is the Union Enterprise for Humanitarian Assistance, Resettlement and Development in Rakhine State. An Independent Commission of Enquiry, led by Ambassador Rosario Manalo, an eminent diplomat from ASEAN, has been established. Myanmar Government hopes to work with Bangladesh to effect the voluntary, safe and dignified return of displaced persons from northern Rakhine State. The danger of terrorist activities, which was the initial cause of events leading to the humanitarian crisis in Rakhine, remains real and present today.

The investment that is paramount for the transition is investment in human resources. It is also fundamental to the sustainable development plan. The greatest strength of a democratic transition, the involvement of the people, is also its greatest challenge. To weld together the will and purpose of millions into a whole that allows the wonderful diversity of our country to shine through is a formidable undertaking.

Myanmar believes that its people have the capacity to meet this challenge and to carry the transition to a successful conclusion which will be the starting point of a new, better era for the nation.

In the evening of 21 August 2018, State Counsellor and party visited Myanmar Embassy in Singapore and met with officials and families of the Embassy and the Military Attache Office. After that, State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi attended dinner hosted by Myanmar Ambassador to Singapore. After dinner, State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi visited the Gardens by the Bay.

State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi was accompanied by Union Minister for Government Office U Thaung Tun, Union Minister for International Cooperation U Kyaw Tin and Deputy Minister for President Office U Min Thu and Officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Myanmar Delegation led by State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi arrived back to Nay Pyi Taw by special flight on 22 August 2018 at 1030 local time.—Ministry of Foreign Affairs ■

Standard Operating Procedures on Health Care in Prison launched

UNION Minister for Health and Sports Dr. Myint Htwe delivered an opening speech at the launch event of the Standard Operating Procedures on Health Care in Prison, held in Nay Pyi Taw's Hotel Max yesterday morning.

In his opening speech, Dr. Myint Htwe said medical ethics maintain that prison inmates are entitled to the same healthcare services as other citizens. He highlighted the importance of prison inmate's rights to healthcare, the duties and rights of

healthcare officials, an inmate patient's right to making their own health decisions, confidentiality of inmate health records, and the quality and skill of healthcare officials.

A weak prison healthcare system will allow inmates with tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS, hepatitis B and other contagious diseases to spread into society upon their release, said the union minister.

The union minister said prison inmates are a vulnerable population that is more susceptible to

diseases and thus require serious health security. He said the guide book on standard operating procedures on health care in prison is a collaboration project between the Ministry of Health and Sports and the Ministry of Home Affairs with support from UNODC, WHO, UNAIDS, and 3MDG Fund, with a vision to be implemented simultaneously across the country. The union minister said the guidebook is comprehensive as it covers in detail general healthcare practices, protection against

contagious and noncontagious diseases, mother and child protection, mental health issues, chronic disease treatments, as well as various disease preventions.

The union minister said the guidebook needs to be practically implemented and closely linked to relevant ministries and departments. He added that the Ministry of Health and Sports and the Ministry of Home Affairs can further promote implementation by cooperating with UN agencies,

INGOs, NGOs, ICRC and Myanmar Society of the Red Cross.

Next, U Tin Myint, permanent secretary of the Ministry of Home Affairs, delivered remarks, followed by gratitude speeches by Ms. Marie Cauchois Pegie from UNODS and Mr. Oren Ginzburg, the fund director of 3MDG Fund.

Lastly, Dr. Thandar Lwin, deputy director-general (disease suppression) of the Department of Public Health delivered a presentation on the guidebook.—Myanmar News Agency ■

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Local, foreign journalists visit IDP Camp in Sittway

A group of foreign and local journalists visited Thakelpyin Internally Displaced Persons-IDP Camp in Sittway, Rakhine State, yesterday.

At the IDP Camp, they interviewed the displaced people and collected news.

The journalists are from Kyodo News, TV Asahi, Asahi Shinbun, French 24, AFP, EPA and BBC.

Thakelpyin (IDP) camp was founded in 2012. About 6000 people from over 1000 households are sheltering there currently.—Maung Sein Lwin (Myanma Alinn)

Journalists interview displaced people at Thakelpyin IDP camp in Sittway. **PHOTO: MIN HTET**

Swollen Thanlwin River inundates dozens of villages in Hpa-an Township

OVERFLOW water from the Thanlwin River has submerged nine wards and 26 village-tracts in Hpa-an Township, forcing about 20 schools to be closed yesterday.

The overflowing river has also inundated roads and caused traffic chaos on some sections of the Hpa-an-Zarthapyin Road.

Over 9,000 people from flood-hit areas are sheltering at 12 shelters.

"About 47 villages have been submerged. Of them, some villages in the Kamamaung in Hapun District are facing serious situation," said Ko Phyo Wai Satt, a local resident who is volunteering for fighting against the flooding in Hpa-an.

The low-lying areas have been inundated and the main road linking Wabodaw and

Cars crawling in the flooded road in Hpa-an. **PHOTO: HPA-AN IPRD**

Hapun have been submerged in three feet of floodwater, causing grave hardships to residents.

Firefighters and red cross members have evacuated the people from the flood-hit areas.

The Thanlwin River

The water level of the Thanlwin River has reached

over four feet above its danger level at Hpa-an yesterday. The Meteorology and Hydrology Department announced yesterday that the water level is expected to fall about one foot next two days.

Meanwhile, torrential rain in Pantanaw, Ayeyawady Region, pushed the Ayayawady

River in Pantanaw into rising, forcing two schools to be closed.

The Sittoung River

The water level of the Sittoung River has reached over two foot above its danger level yesterday, and the water level is expected to fall next two days, but to remain its danger level, said the weather bureau in its yesterday's flood bulletin.

The Bago River

The water level of the Bago River at Bago is observed at about one and half feet below its danger level, but it is expected to reach its danger level next two days.

The department has advised the people living near the river banks and low-lying areas to be alerted to the floods and to keep informed of rising water in the rivers.—GNLM ■

Legal action against six porters extorting money at Yangon Central Railway Station

POLICE have filed charges against six porters who extorted money from two passengers at Yangon Central Railway Station on 18 August, after carrying the passengers' luggage.

The No.13 Railways Police investigated and identified the workers as Maung Ni, 34, from Dagon Myothit (South) Township, Aung Ko Lat (alias) Shee

War Lay, 23, from Hlinethaya Township, Kaw Aye (alias) Ba Ba Lay, 29, from Botahtaung Township, Kyaw Khin, 32, from Signals and Communications Department, Myanma Railways in Mingala Taungnyunt Township, Star Lone (alias) Kyaw Oo, 33, from Shwepyitha Township and Zaw Zaw, 24, from Dagon Myothit (South) Township.

According to the investigation, the two passengers asked the workers to carry their bags. After carrying the bags, the six workers asked for extra money. They admitted that they asked Ks 17,000 from the two passengers, but received only Ks 6,000.

The police has filed charges against Maung Ni, Aung Ko Lat (alias) Shee War Lay, Kaw

Aye (alias) Ba Ba Lay, Star Lone (alias) Kyaw Oo and Zaw Zaw under section 88(A) of the Railways Safety Act, while Kyaw Khin has been filed charges under section 87(A) of the Railways Safety Act.

The police has also filed charges against the six porters under section 386/114 of the Penal Code.—MNA ■

China's demand hikes rice price up before harvest time

PRIOR to harvest time of rice, prices are up by Ks1,000 per bag this week in Mandalay market due to high local and foreign demand, said U Kyaw Kyaw Naing, chair of Mandalay Rice Commodity Depot.

China is increasingly purchasing Myanmar's old rice before harvest season. The prices of rice varieties highly consumed by local people increase by Ks1,000 per bag owing to Yangon's high demand. The price is not possibly to continue rising than current market price as paddy is going to be harvested in the end of September, he continued.

The prices of export rice ranges from Ks24,000 to 24,500 per 30.75-viss bag depending on varieties while locally consumed rice fetches from Ks30,000 to Ks57,000 per 30-viss bag depending on quality, according to Mandalay market.

Last year, erratic weather destroyed rice, resulting in low price. Buyers are rarely seen even though 100-basket low quality rice sold for above Ks800,000.



Workers carry bags of rice at the Botahtaung Jetty in Yangon. **PHOTO: PHOE KHWAH**

Therefore, the growers expect a good price this year. They want the merchants to offer a reasonable price for standard rice, said U Thein, a grower pointed out his opinion on high price of the rice.

The growers last year faced with a great loss from

low quality despite high yield of monsoon paddy amid erratic weather. This year, they anticipate having a high price as the yield and quality of rice is likely to be high with favourable weather condition. — Min Htet Aung (Mandalay Sub-printing House) ■

Myanmar Wanbao Co creates over 1,000 job opportunities for local people in Sagaing Region

MYANMAR Wanbao Mining Copper Limited provides small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in Sagaing Region, creating over 1,000 job opportunities for local people.

Local villages can now shift their career to vocational skills from traditional farming businesses. Sagaing Region government held a three-day

exhibition of SMEs from 17 to 19 August.

The SMEs provided by Myanmar Wanbao Mining Copper Limited are concrete factory, fertilizer, HDPE pipe factory, egg laying poultry farms which can accommodate 50,000 chicken, maize plantations, purified drinking water factory and other small enterprises. They also

showcased their products at the expo. The expo also shows LED displays of SMEs to help those enthusiastic visitors realize the conditions of SMEs. Myanmar Wanbao Company initiated SMEs in Myanmar in 2013. They help to create job opportunities for local people and enhance their living standards.—GNLM ■

Garlic growers in Meisei facing losses

LACK of demand for winter garlic is causing losses for growers in Meisei Township, Bawlake District, Kayah State, said garlic growers.

"Last year, Thailand's merchants went down to the farms to purchase fresh garlic. Some offered higher price for dried garlic. This year has rarely seen buyers and garlic have dried up, causing losses to growers", said a grower. Fresh garlic fetched 30 to 35 baht per kilo last year, while dried ones got 100 to 120

baht per kilo. This year, a kilo of fresh garlic is worth only 13 to 15 baht, while dried garlic fetched only 20 baht per kilo.

"Last year, Thailand gave a good price to garlic from Meisei area, profiting the growers. This year, garlic does not fetch a good price and there is a garlic glut in the market.

Cultivation of garlic costs over Ks1 million, including input costs such as fertilizers, pesticides and other general cultivation costs. Thailand's

merchants came here to purchase large-sized garlic at 20 baht per kilo and so, the growers are suffering from lower prices", said Daw Aye Aye Tun, a garlic grower from Meisei.

Winter garlic is primarily grown in Nangman, Wangkan, Meisei and Hose villages in Meisei Township. Thailand purchases them due to small amount of pesticide use, and the garlic from Meisei area depends on Thailand's market. —Wut Yee (Meisei) ■

Singapore tops on foreign investment list in past four months

SINGAPORE-listed seven enterprises brought US\$315 million into the country, making Singapore top of the list, according to data from the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration.

China follows Singapore with foreign direct investments of \$112 million from 21 projects, followed by Japan with FDI of \$81 million from three enterprises.

Hong Kong, India, South Korea, Thailand, US, Viet Nam, China (Taipei), Seychelles and Cambodia also invested in Myanmar in the past four months.

A total of 53 foreign enterprises received permits and endorsements, bringing in a capital of \$442.7 million as of July in the current six-month interim period (April to September) prior to the next fiscal year 2018-2019. Overall, foreign direct investments of over \$1 billion flowed into the country so far, including increased investments and new investments of over \$171 million in the Thilawa Special Economic Zone, according to a recent press release of the Myanmar Investment Commission.—GNLM ■

Tourist arrivals with visa as of July shows slight increase against last year

TOURIST arrivals holding visa as of July 2018 is up by over 11,850 tourists compared to that of a similar period last year, according to the figures recently released by the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism.

Myanmar hosted a total of 777,393 tourists from January to July, whereas last year tourist arrivals were registered at 765,543 during the same time.

However, some tourists entering Myanmar with border pass are down by 49,739. Over 1.97 million tourists entered Myanmar through border checkpoints in the first seven months of this year, while 2 million tourists entered Myanmar through border checkpoints during the same time last year.

The tourists entered the country through three international airports in Yangon, Mandalay and Nay Pyi Taw and

through Tachilek, Myawady, Kawthoung and Hteekhee checkpoints.

Additionally, package, caravan, yacht, riverine tours along Ayeyawady and Chindwin rivers and cruise and chartered flight tours need permission from the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism, linked with local tour agencies.

Tourists arriving from US, Europe, Middle East, Africa and Oceania fell this year, compared to the same period last year. Nevertheless, more tourists from China, Thailand, Malaysia and India visited Myanmar this year.

Passport holders from 100 countries are eligible to apply for eVisa on tourist purpose and businessmen from 52 countries can apply for eVisa Business. For more details, tourists can visit www.evisa.moip.gov.mm. —GNLM ■

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UNDP's Asia-Pacific director commends Cambodia for socio-economic development, poverty cut

PHNOM PENH — Haoliang Xu, United Nations Assistant Secretary-General and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)'s Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific, on Wednesday commended Cambodia for its efforts in promoting socio-economic development and poverty reduction.

Xu made the remarks during a meeting with Cambodian Foreign Minister Prak Sokhonn in Phnom Penh, said a UNDP's press release.

He expressed the UN's commitment to supporting Cambodia's middle-income transition to be inclusive and equitable so that no one is left behind, in line

with the commitment of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Xu emphasised that inclusive growth can be achieved by integrating social and environmental considerations, and by promoting strong governance institutions, partnerships and innovation.

"I would like to reiterate the United Nations' commitment to supporting the realization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs," he said in the press release.

Currently, the United Nations in Cambodia is developing a new UN Development Assis-

stance Framework (UNDAF).

Xu said the strategic partnership between the UN and the Cambodian government is reflected in this new UNDAF, which articulates the joint commitment of the UN to national development priorities covering the period of five years from 2019 to 2023.—Xinhua ■

Russia boosts domestic industry, looks to Southeast Asia to meet US ban on electronic exports

MOSCOW — The US ban on exporting high-tech electronic equipment to Russia will not impact related Russian industries critically as Moscow is boosting its domestic industry and will also tap Southeast Asia, Russian Industry and Trade Minister Denis Manturov said on Tuesday.

"The ban on exporting du-

al-purpose electronic devices and components to Russia will undoubtedly affect certain high-tech sectors, including defence, but not critically," Manturov was cited by TASS news agency as saying.

Russia will replace the sanctioned American components with domestically produced ones or import them from Southeast

Asia, he added.

The minister said Russia has already prepared a package of countermeasures to offset the impact of the US action.

"We have been preparing for this situation for quite a time. More than 1,500 types of basic electronic components have been developed within various

federal programs in the past six years," he said. By 2020, Russia will create another 2,000 types of high-tech basic electronic components, which can replace more than 9,000 foreign-made components, Manturov said. The United States and Russia have been levying sanctions against each other as bilateral relations continue to

worsen.

Earlier this month, the US State Department said Washington would impose new sanctions on Russia around 22 August over the alleged poison gas attack on former Russian spy Sergei Skripal and his daughter Yulia in the British city of Salisbury in March.—Xinhua ■

US hits Chinese pipes with 132% import duties

WASHINGTON (United States) — On the eve of renewing talks to try to defuse the spiraling trade dispute with China, the US Commerce Department hit the country with import duties of 132 per cent on metal pipe.

Commerce said China was selling the large diameter welded pipe used in the oil and gas industry far below the fair price, and that dumping harms US industry, according to the preliminary decision.

US imports of the pipe from China last year totaled \$180 million.

Although this case is a separate from the series of punitive tariffs that President Donald Trump has imposed on thousands of Chinese goods, it is another example of the aggressive tactics against Beijing to try to protect US industry and lower the trade deficit.

Canada also was found to be dumping the product, and

will face duties of over 24 per cent, while India was slapped with a tax of over 50 per cent, Commerce said.

Greece and Korea will face 22 per cent duties, while Turkey will be charged up to five per cent. Six US pipe manufacturers filed the antidumping complaint with the Commerce Department in January.

Commerce said it will make a final ruling in November on whether the pipe from China and India is dumped into the US market.

However, if the independent International Trade Commission finds that US industry was not harmed from the imports, the duties will be refunded. That decision is due on 20 December.

The Commerce Department's final ruling on Canada and the others is due in January, with the ITC due to rule the following month.—AFP ■



US senator John Barrasso submitted a bill to the US Congress concerning sanctions against investors into Russian projects for exports of energy resources. **PHOTO: TASS**

Sanctions against Nord Stream 2 violate WTO norms — Kremlin

MOSCOW — Sanctions the United States intends to introduce against participants in the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline project constitute violation of international trade norms and cannot be justified by any motives, press secretary of the Russian President Dmitry Peskov said on Monday.

"We have already said that

attempts to oppose a purely commercial international project are absolutely in conflict and constitute a strong violation of all trade rules and norms, WTO norms," the press secretary said. "This is nothing short of that [violation - TASS] and they cannot be disguised by any other motives," Peskov noted.

It was reported earlier

that US senator John Barrasso submitted a bill to the US Congress concerning sanctions against investors into Russian projects for exports of energy resources.

Experts explain such steps by the desire of the United States to push forward much more expensive liquefied natural gas to the European market.—TASS ■

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Japan's July air conditioner shipments hit record due to heat wave

TOKYO — Japan's shipments of air conditioners in July hit a record high, an industry body said on Wednesday, due to brisk demand as an unprecedented heat wave swept over the Japanese archipelago.

The volume of shipments last month rose 10.9 per cent from the previous year to 1,763,000 units, the highest level on a monthly basis since 1972 when comparable data became available, the Japan Electrical Manufacturers' Association said.

The country logged its highest-ever temperature of 41.1°C in Kumagaya, Saitama Prefecture, near Tokyo on 23 July, prompting the Japan Meteorological Agency to call the heat wave "a natural disaster" and warn the public to take precautions to avoid heat-stroke or heat exhaustion.

Government data released earlier this month showed the heat wave has sent more than 70,000 people, including about 140 who died, to hospitals across the country over the last three

months.

The shipment value of air conditioners stood at 137.9 billion yen (\$1.2 billion) in July, up 12.2 per cent from the previous year and the largest for the month in 10 years, according to the association.

The total shipments of home appliances increased 7.2 per cent to 281.1 billion yen in the reporting month, buoyed by growing demand for refrigerators, washing machines and vacuum cleaners.—Kyodo News ■



Air conditioners sold at a consumer electronics store in Tokyo.

PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

Tokyo stocks close higher as dollar recovers

TOKYO (Japan) — Tokyo stocks rose on Wednesday, helped by a halt in the dollar's weakness and rallies on Wall Street, though investors were cautious ahead of trade talks between China and the US.

The benchmark Nikkei 225 index gained 0.64 per cent or 142.82 points to close at 22,362.55, while the broader Topix index was up 0.77 per cent or 12.95 points at 1,698.37.

"As the yen declined further against the dollar, buying sentiment expanded," said Hikaru Sato, senior technical analyst at

Daiwa Securities.

"If US shares continue rising, it will benefit Japanese shares," Sato told AFP.

"But many market participants were on the sidelines" ahead of the US-China trade negotiations.

The dollar fetched 110.37 yen in Asian afternoon trade, against 110.27 yen in New York and 110.02 yen in Tokyo on Tuesday.

Turning to individual shares, commercial vehicle specialist Isuzu Motors jumped 4.50 per cent to 1,669 yen after

a brokerage firm upgraded its estimate of the firm's shares.

Telecom shares were mixed a day after Japan's top government spokesman suggested they should cut costs, prompting stocks in the firms to lose ground.

NTT DoCoMo was lower by 0.60 per cent at 2,803 yen and KDDI dropped 1.89 per cent to 2,897.5 yen, but SoftBank ended up 1.31 per cent at 9,950 yen.

In New York, US stocks rose for a fourth straight session with the S&P 500 hitting a record during the session.—AFP ■

Gold extends gains as US dollar weakens

CHICAGO — Gold futures on the COMEX division of the New York Mercantile Exchange continued to rise on Tuesday as the US dollar weakened over President Donald Trump's criticism on the Fed's monetary policy.

The most active gold contract for December delivery went up 5.4 dollars, or 0.45 per cent, to close at 1200.00 dollars per ounce. In a recent interview, Trump again criticized the Federal Reserve for raising key interest rates, which he insisted would not help boost the economy. His remarks drove

down the US dollar index, a gauge of the greenback against a basket of other key currencies, which fell 0.68 per cent to 95.14 as of 1907 GMT. When the dollar weakens, gold futures usually rise as gold, priced in the dollar, becomes less expensive for investors using other currencies. As for other precious metals, silver for September delivery went up 9.6 cents, or 0.65 per cent, to close at 14.766 dollars per ounce. Platinum for October fell 0.90 dollars, or 0.11 per cent, to settle at 793.00 dollars per ounce.—Xinhua ■

Asian markets mostly up ahead of trade talks, Trump fears ease

HONG KONG (China) — Asian markets mostly rose on Wednesday before keenly awaited trade talks between China and the United States, while early worries over a double whammy for Donald Trump also eased.

While not expecting a major deal when officials from Beijing

and Washington meet, investors are hopeful they can find a way out of the months-long row that has seen tariffs imposed on billions of dollars of goods and stock markets tumble.

Recent comments from US Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross, signalling plans to delay

a final decision on whether to impose duties on auto imports, have also provided some cheer.

Tokyo and Hong Kong both ended 0.6 per cent higher, while Seoul and Taipei each put on 0.1 per cent and Wellington closed up 0.5 per cent. Manila and Jakarta were also well up.

However, Shanghai finished 0.7 per cent down while Sydney shed 0.3 per cent, with political uncertainty in Canberra adding to selling pressure.

The day had started with a wobble as the US president's legal troubles deepened when his long-time personal lawyer Michael Cohen admitted several charges including illegally using campaign contributions to pay off a porn star and a Playboy model ahead of the 2016 election.

Cohen also said he had been directed to do so "at the direction of a candidate for federal office" and with the aim of influencing the election.

The claim could put Trump

in legal jeopardy and raises the prospect that Cohen is about to open up to lawyers for the Russia investigation.

Pound bounce

Also Tuesday, the tycoon's one-time campaign chairman Paul Manafort was convicted on eight counts, including bank fraud, tax fraud and a failure to declare foreign bank accounts.

However, Richard Harris, chief executive officer at Port Shelter Investment Management, said he thought Trump would ride out the storm.

"I don't think that what we saw... in terms of Manafort and Cohen are necessarily fatal to the president," he told Bloomberg TV.

"There are quite a lot of things that could continue and he could still ride them out. It takes an awful lot to impeach a president and it may take an awful lot for Trump not to be elected for a second term."

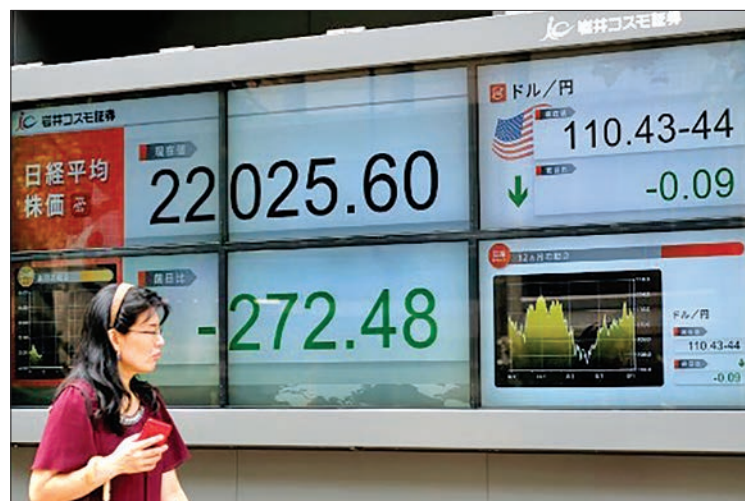
In currency markets the dollar continued to stutter after Trump's negative remarks about the Federal Reserve's interest rate rises, extending losses against most other units.

The pound was one of the best performers against the greenback, breaking above \$1.29 for the first time in almost two weeks after top European Union negotiator Michel Barnier said officials would now work non-stop on Brexit talks, which are in their final stage.

But Greg McKenna, chief market strategist at AxiTrader, suggested more pain down the road.

"Barnier essentially said if the UK wants a deal they have to abide by EU rules — sounds like Brexit in name only and hard to get through the UK Parliament, surely," he said in a commentary.

In early European trade London fell 0.3 per cent, Frankfurt shed 0.3 per cent and Paris was flat.—AFP ■



A pedestrian walks past an electronic board showing the share prices of the Tokyo Stock Exchange (L) and the foreign exchange rate between the yen and the US dollar (R) in Tokyo on 13 August, 2018. PHOTO: AFP

Repatriation issue can be resolved amicably, in the spirit of good neighbourliness

THE Rakhine issue is a long standing issue. And it is not something that happened yesterday. Restoration of peace and stability have been carried out ever since the violent attacks on 25 August 2017, and with the State Counsellor herself leading the efforts, stability is being swiftly restored. But despite these efforts, people left their homes to cross into other countries.

Efforts were made to speed up the national verification process and repatriation of the displaced people in accordance with the existing laws and regulations.

Arrangements have been made for National Verification card applicants to simultaneously apply for the citizenship scrutinization process.

But, speeding up the repatriation process depends much on us but also on Bangladesh. The repatriation is a two-way business.

Until the displaced persons have been given the forms, until they have been informed fully of all the steps they need to take to come back to Rakhine, Myanmar will not be able to carry forward the process quickly.

Some have come back but not through the official channels. According to those who have come back but not through the official channels, they were not aware of the need to fill in forms and to follow a certain procedure.

Hence, the government of Myanmar has distributed leaflets that outline the national verification process and advantages of NVC and responsibilities of NVC holders as part of its efforts for ensuring full advantages and benefits of NVC holders and to properly identify the people crossing the border.

We share deep sympathy and concern for all displaced persons, especially women and children. Let us take a look at resolving migrant labour issue between Myanmar and Thailand. There are around four million Myanmar migrant workers and displaced persons at present in Thailand.

Myanmar and Thailand have succeeded in working together to resolve the issue amicably, in the spirit of good neighbourliness. Today, the majority of our workers have been legally registered and both employers and employees have benefitted from the improved arrangements. The return of displaced persons to our country is also working smoothly as a result of close consultation and cooperation between Myanmar and Thailand.

Similarly, we hope to work with Bangladesh to affect the voluntary, safe and dignified return of displaced persons from Rakhine. Myanmar and Bangladesh have agreed, inter alia, to deliver on commitments made, to speed up implementation of bilateral agreements on repatriation, and to set up a hotline between the two countries at the ministerial level.

We have mapped out resettlement sites and we were ready to receive returnees since January 23. But, Bangladesh will have to decide how quickly it can send back the displaced people. Myanmar is ready to welcome them at the border.

“ Efforts were made to speed up the national verification process and repatriation of the displaced people in accordance with the existing laws and regulations.



PHOTO: PHOE KHWAR

Impacts of the rising fuel prices in Myanmar

Fuel prices are on the rise at the domestic markets in Myanmar due to the record-high exchange rate of the US dollar. Following is an interview with Dr. Win Myint, Secretary of the Myanmar Fuel Oil Importers and Distributors Association, regarding the impacts of the rising fuel prices in the country.



Dr. Win Myint

Question: Let me know how the rising fuel prices in the domestic markets in Myanmar are being impacted by the falling kyat value and the rising US dollar rate?

Answer: In Myanmar, there was the record-high exchange rate of the US dollar -- ranging from Ks 1500 to Ks 1580. The rate rose to 80 Kyats within a day, and it has risen dramatically. The prices of crude oil have remained stable in the international oil market, whereas the country was experiencing the highest currency exchange rate. The fuel price remained relatively low compared to the time when the exchange rate to the US dollar for the Myanmar Kyat was around Ks. 1400. I have talked about the dollar rate

surge and that we have to buy engine oil in dollars. When we sell it here, we conduct the trading through the use of Myanmar currency. We sell it depending on the exchange rate of foreign currency that we had spent. Sometimes, it doesn't take effect immediately for some reasons. Suppose the dollar rate has gone higher, the engine oil prices will not go up immediately. When the dollar rate drops, the fuel oil prices cannot

drop easily, either. I'd like you to check the market floating price, the ups and downs of the dollar rates. Whenever the dollar rate is up, the prices of fuel oil will reasonably be higher. The reason is that we need dollars to buy fuel oil again.

Q: What measures have you taken to appease the consumers?

A: Our team has adopted some

The main thing is to securing a free trade flow, which is an economic practice, whereby many countries can import and export goods without any intervention.

basic principles, and we also trade in accordance with the policy of market-oriented economy. We are implementing the characteristics of a market-oriented economy, and believe that every citizen is entitled to enjoy the advantages of trading in heavy fuel oil. Having said that, we don't control the fuel prices any more, as we are implementing

in accordance with the market economy. We may need to set limits in the prices if the dollar rates remain unstable. We are monitoring the rates and prices. As you are already aware, we are not in a position to control the dollar market. We conduct the survey of the fuel prices continuously. Then we ask our office staff to prepare a flow analysis of the currency exchange market. We also have formulas to calculate the possible market prices, to figure out how much the original prices, sales prices and the amount of profits are. We resort to making negotiations with the traders, thus avoiding black marketing and fuel shortages. So far, I admit that the prices have gone up to some extent, but they are reasonable with the changing currency rates.

Q: If the dollar exchange rates continue to rise and Myanmar currency continues to drop, to what extent will it impact on the fuel oil prices?

A: What I shall say is that it would depend on the traders. Compared to former times, fuel oil trading takes two or three steps in the international market. Formerly, fuel oil was delivered to us after we had made the payments in advance. Now things are changing. To make the situation worse are the traders who do not want to make the deal anymore, because of the unstable dollar exchange rates which cause many inconveniences in the market.

Q: Could you explain the factors for the appreciation of the dollar, and the situations in neighbouring countries?

A: As far as I am concerned, many countries will suffer the consequences of a trade war between the United States and China that can lead to negative impact on the

global economy. In dealing with foreign exchange policy, every country has assigned to set up their own relevant policies and regulations in regard to their central banks, so that there would be better solutions for the country. There are several different types of policies that may differ from one country to another. The main thing is to securing a free trade flow, which is an economic practice, whereby many countries can import and export goods without any intervention. Everyone is in favour of trade liberty, and I hear that many countries have to encounter the impacts of the consequences of a trade war.

Q: Being a businessperson, how would you find the most appropriate solution of dealing with this crisis?

A: Regarding this kind of condition, there can arise three types of situations. If you ask the manufacturers, they would say that it is better to get higher prices. Generally speaking, we all want the prices to remain stable and we should find a better solution to deal with this problem. I think the situation will return to normalcy if the government does it part by making significant endeavors. As for me, all I want to urge the government is to make an announcement of what percentage of dollar amount is being impacted, so that they can target for reduction within a month. Personally, the Central Bank of Myanmar should open up the selling and buying rates of the dollar currency, making arrangements for the purchase of foreign currency from the central bank, so that it would be a good approach in solving the problem in the long run.

Translated by Win Ko Ko Aung



Myanmar Daily Weather Report

(Issued at 7:00 pm Wednesday 22nd August, 2018)

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

FORECAST VALID UNTIL MORNING OF THE 23rd AUGUST, 2018: Rain or thundershowers will be scattered in Magway and Ayeyarwady regions, fairly widespread in Lower Sagaing and Mandalay regions and Kayah State and widespread in the remaining regions and states with isolated heavy falls in Upper Sagaing and Taninthayi regions, Kachin and Mon states. Degree of certainty is (100%).

STATE OF THE SEA: Squalls with rough seas are likely at times Deltaic, Gulf of Mottama, off and along Mon-Taninthayi Coasts. Surface wind speed in squalls may reach (35)mph. Sea will be moderate elsewhere in Myanmar waters. Wave height will be about (7-9)feet in Deltaic, Gulf of Mottama, off and along Mon-Taninthayi Coasts and about (5 -7)feet in off and along Rakhine Coasts.

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Moderate to strong monsoon.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 23rd AUGUST, 2018: One or two rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA

FOR 23rd AUGUST, 2018: One or two rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 23rd AUGUST, 2018: One or two rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

Flood Bulletin

(Issued at 14:00 hrs MST on 22-8-2018)

Flood condition of Sittoung River

According to the (13:30) hrs MST observation today, the water level of Sittoung River has exceeded by about (2½) feet at Madauk above its danger level. It may fall about (½) foot during the next (2) days and may remain above its danger level.

Flood condition of Thanlwin River

According to the (13:30) hrs MST observation today, the water level of Thanlwin River has exceeded by about (4½) feet at Hpaan above its danger level. It may fall about (1) foot during the next (2) days and may remain above its danger level.

Advisory

It is especially advised to the people who settle near the river banks and low-lying area in Madauk and Hpa-an Township, to take precautionary measures.

Flood Warning

(Issued at 14:00 hrs MST on 22-8-2018)

According to the (13:30) hrs M.S.T observations today, the water level of Bago River at Bago is observed as about (1½) feet below its danger level. It may reach its danger level during the next (2) days.

It is especially advised to the people who settle near the river banks and low-lying area at Bago Township, to take precautionary measures.

The Gulf of Guinea: hunting ground for pirates

PARIS (France) — The Gulf of Guinea, where a tanker with 17 Georgian sailors aboard has been missing for a week, has in recent years become the epicentre of maritime piracy in Africa.

The siphoning of oil from hijacked cargo ships, illegal fishing, trafficking of all kinds: the 5,700-kilometre (3,541-mile) coastal zone stretching from Senegal to Angola is a happy hunting ground for pirates.

It has upstaged the Gulf of Aden, where once rampant piracy has considerably diminished faced with the deployment of an international military armada.

During the first half of 2018, the crews of six ships were kidnapped by pirates around the world, all in the Gulf of Guinea, according to the International Maritime Bureau (IMB), in a report published in late July.

In 2017, out of 16 incidents around the world in which ships came under gunfire, seven were listed in the Gulf of Guinea. Ten hostage-takings involving a total of 65 crew members were per-

petrated last year in the waters off Nigeria.

Pirates operating off Nigeria, Togo and Benin are usually well-armed and violent. They sometimes hijack ships for several days, long enough to loot the holds, knocking around the crews, who are less and less willing to sail in these waters. Others release them after a ransom is paid.

In February, an oil tanker flying the flag of Panama, with 22 Indian sailors and 13,500 tonnes of fuel aboard, was held in such conditions for five days by pirates off Benin, before being released with its crew and its cargo.

Piracy in the Gulf, home to Sub-Saharan Africa's two main oil producers Nigeria and Angola, has seriously disrupted this international shipping route and cost the global economy billions of dollars.

The 17 countries in the region, whose surveillance and maritime defence capabilities are limited and disparate, have



Gabon. PHOTO: AFP

been trying for several years to bolster their means of intervention and to put in place

a closer regional collaboration, with the help of the United States and France.—AFP ■

Saudi Arabia intercepts missile shot from Yemen

RIYADH — The Saudi-led coalition involved in a war in Yemen announced on Tuesday the interception of a ballistic missile shot from Yemen by Houthi militias towards border city Jazan.

The coalition spokesperson Turki Al-Maliki said in a statement that the missile was shot on Tuesday evening from Omran province towards Saudi Arabia. He said that the Saudi air forces destroyed the missile and no injuries were reported.

The statement highlighted that since the beginning of the war in Yemen, the Houthi militias shot 179 missiles towards Saudi cities.

Saudi Arabia has been accusing Iran of supporting the militias by supplying them with missiles and weapons to destabilize the regional security.—Xinhua ■

Zimbabwe top court hears appeal against election result

HARARE (Zimbabwe) — Zimbabwe's Constitutional Court will Wednesday hear an opposition petition seeking to overturn the presidential election result, in a legal challenge seen as unlikely to succeed despite allegations of vote fraud.

The Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) has accused the ruling ZANU-PF party and the election commission of rigging the 30 July vote, Zimbabwe's first poll since the ousting of Robert Mugabe last year.

Mugabe's successor, Emmerson Mnangagwa, won with 50.8 per cent of the vote — just enough to avoid a run-off against the MDC's Nelson Chamisa, who scored 44.3 per cent.

"We have a very strong case

and we are going to reverse the electoral fraud," Chamisa told reporters this week.

"We are going to defend your vote, our vote, the people's vote. We have no doubt that victory is certain."

Mnangagwa, who has vowed to turn around Zimbabwe's ruined economy, hoped the elections would draw a line under Mugabe's repressive 37-year rule.

The election campaign was more open than previous votes, but was marred by the army opening fire on protesters, killing six, allegations of vote-rigging and a crackdown on opposition activists.

"I won the court case before it began," Mnangagwa said on the

sidelines of a regional summit in Namibia at the weekend. "It's declared free and fair... why would I ever think that I will lose?"

Biased courts?

Senior ZANU-PF legal representative Patrick Chinamasa ridiculed the MDC's legal bid.

"Just as you cannot give life to a dead horse, even the best lawyers in the world cannot give life to a hopeless case," he said in a statement.

"To those who voted for Chamisa, I ask you to gracefully accept defeat so that the country can move on."

The MDC has cited a catalogue of irregularities and discrepancies including more people voting at some polling stations

than were registered.

The case, presided over by nine judges at the country's top court, will be broadcast live on state television. A ruling is expected by Friday.

Derek Matyszak, a legal expert at the University of Zimbabwe, said the opposition faced an uphill struggle given the courts' historic tilt towards ZANU-PF, which has ruled since independence from British colonial rule in 1980.

"The outcome is pretty predictable," Matyszak told AFP. "There is absolutely no chance of the election results being overturned."

"The judiciary (is) perceived to be partisan. Once the ruling is made, Chamisa will accuse it

of bias and try to make political capital out of it."

The MDC's appeal, which was lodged hours before the deadline on 10 August, has already forced Mnangagwa's inauguration — planned for 12 August — to be postponed.

International monitors largely praised the conduct of the election itself, although EU observers said that Mnangagwa, a former long-time Mugabe ally, benefited from an "un-level playing field".

The court could declare a winner, call another election, or order a run-off or recount.

The inauguration should take place within 48 hours of the court's ruling, according to the constitution.—AFP ■

Taliban frees 29 private company workers in Afghanistan

KANDAHAR (Afghanistan) — Taliban militants on the advent of Eid al-Adha festival have freed 29 workers of a private construction company in Afghanistan's southern province of Kandahar, a local official said

on Wednesday.

The prisoners, who were abducted in mid June by the militants, released under a decree by the militants' leaders, on the occasion of Eid al-Adha, in Shorabak district's Srusa-

han area of the province on Tuesday, provincial governor spokesman Aziz Ahmad Azizi told Xinhua.

The local government officials aided the released workers to join their families.

Taliban rejected a ceasefire offer announced by Afghan government on Sunday, but in their Eid message, the group said their Commission on Prisoners Affairs were working to release those qualified inmates under

their captivity.

The annual festival of Eid, also known as the festival of sacrificing animals, is observed in the Islamic world from Tuesday 21 August until Thursday 23 August this year.—Xinhua ■



US President Donald Trump speaks during a political rally at Charleston Civic Center in Charleston, West Virginia on 21 August, 2018. **PHOTO: AFP**

Trump's Fed comments dent dollar

LONDON — The dollar fell versus the euro and yen on Tuesday after US President Donald Trump hit out at the Federal Reserve's interest rate rises, accusing it of not backing his economic plan, while most equity markets climbed looking ahead to China-US trade talks.

The dollar, on the ascent in recent months thanks to Fed rate rises and a robust US economy, stumbled after Trump's latest criticism of the central bank.

In an interview with Reuters, the president said he was "not thrilled" with the rate rises under new Fed boss Jerome Powell, repeating comments made last month about the bank's tightening measures.

"The dollar has slipped in response to President Trump's comments, though the underlying upward trend remains intact," VTB Capital economist Neil MacKinnon said on Tuesday.

"Most Fed-watchers are of the view that Powell is emphasizing the need for financial stability and with a positive US economic

backdrop is obliged to tighten policy. There is little indication that he will accede to any demands from President Trump to halt monetary tightening," he added.

When Trump was asked if he believed in the Fed's independence, he refused to say yes, telling the reporter: "I believe in the Fed doing what's good for the country."

The Fed is expected to raise rates twice more this year.

Higher-yielding and emerging market currencies — from South Korea's won and the Indonesian rupiah to the Australian dollar and Mexican peso — were also higher against the dollar Tuesday, having come under pressure last week from the Turkey financial crisis.

In his interview, Trump accused the European Union and China of manipulating their currencies, adding that Beijing was weakening the yuan to offset the effects of US tariffs.

Traders were meanwhile turning their attention to the China-US talks due Wednesday

and Thursday.

The trade meeting will be the first since the world's top two economies started imposing tit-for-tat tariffs on billions of dollars' worth of goods, with the *Wall Street Journal* saying they are aimed at smoothing the way ahead of a November summit.

They also come despite Washington continuing to push through fresh measures slated for Thursday. However, JP Morgan Asset Management global market strategist Tai Hui said: "Given the little progress made on the US-China negotiations in the past six months, investors' expectations are still low.

"Ongoing negotiation is good news, and that's what the market is riding on at this stage, but a sustainable agreement to end this tension still seems unlikely at this point."

He added: "If China's earlier offer to buy US products and open up its market did not convince the US to de-escalate, it would take more creativity from Beijing to reach a compromise."—AFP ■

Britain, EU vow continuous Brexit talks in final phase

BRUSSELS (Belgium) — London and Brussels will start rolling Brexit negotiations in the final phase of talks as fears grow that Britain could leave the European Union next year without a deal, EU negotiator Michel Barnier said on Tuesday.

Barnier and his British counterpart Dominic Raab said after talks in Brussels that key differences remained and it was important to "intensify" the pace of negotiations.

"The negotiations are now entering the final stage. We have agreed that the EU and the UK will negotiate continuously from now on," Barnier said after meeting the UK's Brexit minister Dominic Raab in Brussels.

"Dominic and I will meet regularly to take stock and move the negotiations forward."

The Brexit talks have become stuck on fundamental issues including how to avoid a hard border between EU member Ireland and the British province of Northern Ireland after Britain leaves the EU's single market, and on the future trading relationship.

The two sides have just a few months before an agreement on Britain's divorce from the European Union — set for 29 March, 2019 — must be forged in principle by October or November.

Raab — whose predecessor David Davis resigned in July over differences with Prime Minister Theresa May's negotiating strategy — said that he would be back in Brussels next week for further talks.

"We have agreed that we need to step up the intensity of the negotiations," he added.

"If we have that ambition, that pragmatism, that energy on both sides, I'm confident we can reach a deal in October," he said.

'Picking up the intensity'

Until now there have been separate "rounds" of Brexit talks every few weeks, but the pace has increased noticeably since Raab took over from Da-

vis, who made just a handful of visits this year.

Leaving without a deal could hamper exports to the EU, Britain's largest market, as it would end tariff-free trade.

Raab played down talk of a "no deal" scenario, saying only that Britain had to be ready for "all eventualities".

"Our actions speak louder than words. We're out here, I'm here seeing Michel again, I should be returning next week. We're going to be picking up the intensity of the negotiations — we agree on that — at a political level," he said.

Barnier said the main challenge in the coming months was to set the shape of the future trading relationship between Britain and the EU, saying it was a "partnership that has no precedent."

May's strategy calls for largely frictionless trade with the EU, but Brussels has warned that Britain cannot expect all the benefits of the single market without also respecting rules on free immigration within the 28-nation bloc.

British Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt was set on Tuesday to once again warn that a Brexit with no deal could threaten the continent's unity for a generation, according to his office.

"One of the biggest threats to European unity would be a chaotic no-deal Brexit," Hunt was to say in a speech at the US Institute of Peace in Washington, according to excerpts provided by the Foreign Office.

Meanwhile, British Trade Secretary Liam Fox urged Britain to look beyond Brexit as he unveiled the government's future strategy to become an "exporting superpower".

A key problem for Britain is its aim to stay part of the EU's customs regime while also being able to strike its own trade deals with other countries.

"It's really important that we don't have such a narrow bandwidth that we only think about Brexit," Fox told a business audience in London. —AFP ■

Nazi camp guard deported to Germany from US

BERLIN (Germany) — Germany on Tuesday took in a 95-year-old former guard at a Nazi labour camp where more than 6,000 people were killed, after he was stripped of his US citizenship.

The German foreign ministry said it had agreed to accept the former Ukraine national Jakiw Palij after his expulsion from the United States late Monday, citing Berlin's "moral duty" in light of the Nazis' crimes.

"The United States had repeatedly pressed for Germany to

take in Palij," the ministry said.

Berlin had long resisted because he was not a German citizen. "The US administration, senators, members of Congress and representatives of the Jewish community in the United States stress that people who served the rogue Nazi regime should not be able to live out their twilight years in peace in their country of choice, the United States." Palij illegally concealed his Nazi past from US immigration agents when he moved to the United States

in 1949, the Justice Department said. He became American in 1957. The White House said in a statement that President Donald Trump had "prioritised" the removal of Palij "to protect the promise of freedom for Holocaust survivors and their families". "Palij's removal sends a strong message: The United States will not tolerate those who facilitated Nazi crimes and other human rights violations, and they will not find a safe haven on American soil," it said.—AFP ■

North and South Koreans prepare to part for last time

SEOUL (South Korea) — Elderly North and South Korean family members allowed to meet for the first time in nearly seven decades prepared to bid each other farewell on Wednesday, in all probability for the last time in their lives.

Millions of people were swept apart by the 1950-53 Korean War, which left the peninsula split by the impenetrable Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) and separated brothers and sisters, parents and children and husbands and wives.

Over the years most have died, and fewer than 60,000 South Koreans remain alive who have registered to meet their Northern kin at the occasional reunions — this week's are the first for three years.

Those survivors lucky enough to be chosen to take part — 89 families this time, with a similar number to follow later this week — have to cram a lifetime's relationship into just three days.

When they come to an end, the realities of age and the nuclear-armed North's isolation mean they are unlikely ever to see each other again.



North Koreans wave farewell to their South Korean relatives after a three-day family reunion event at North Korea's Mount Kumgang resort on 22 August, 2018. **PHOTO: AFP**

At a morning reunion before the final farewells, South Korean Kim Byung-Oh, 88, started to sob as soon as his younger sister joined him at the table.

"Brother, don't cry. Do not cry," she said, squeezing his hands hard, but his tears kept flowing, before his sister — who had bitten her lips to try to stay

calm — also broke down.

They squeezed each other's hands, without saying a word, for nearly 10 minutes.

"I didn't know my father would cry this much," said Byung-oh's son.

Hostilities ceased with an armistice rather than a peace treaty, leaving the two Koreas

technically still at war and with all direct civilian exchanges — even mundane family news — banned.

Many drew family trees on pieces of paper and exchanged relatives' names and photos, according to South Korean pool reports.

As South Korean Lee Soo-

Nam, 77, sat with his eldest brother he abruptly asked his Northern nephew to write down all his siblings' and children's names.

"I asked for their names to remember them while I'm alive," Lee said.

"Words fail to describe how I am feeling right now," he went on. "When can we meet again? No one knows. It's so sad. I wish we were younger."

But he was "tremendously happy" they had been able to meet.

"Now I can go to the graves of my parents and tell them, 'Father, mother, I met brother Jong Song and saw him alive. I thank you. It is all thanks to your prayers'."

Others were grateful they had been able to see their relatives, however briefly.

South Korean Lee Byung-joo, 90, met a nephew and niece, the children of his late elder brother.

"Now, having met them, my lifelong sorrow is gone," he said.

"All the questions I had have been answered. Now I can put down the burden in my heart. We have found our roots."—AFP ■

Viet Nam's Mekong Delta to apply hi-tech in tra fish farming

HO CHI MINH CITY — Viet Nam's southern Mekong Delta provinces will apply advanced technologies in producing tra fish, a common kind of catfish favoured by many foreign countries in the world, Viet Nam News Agency reported on Wednesday.

Under a project on producing high-quality catfish species in the Mekong Delta recently

approved by the Vietnamese Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, a three-level catfish fingerling production chain will meet 50 per cent of the demand for high-quality catfish in the delta by 2020, and 100 per cent of the demand by 2050.

The project will build up a chain of catfish production in the region, focusing on An

Giang and Dong Thap provinces. It is expected that the catfish chain of Viet Nam will be strictly controlled, from the first to final stage in the production chain.

Mekong provinces must re-plan production, diversify their seafood products, with priority given to value-added products, and find more export markets, said Minister of Agri-

culture and Rural Development Nguyen Xuan Cuong.

Vietnamese tra fish exports in the first seven months of this year increased by 19.3 per cent over the same period last year to nearly 1.2 billion US dollars. Specifically, catfish exports to China reached 289.8 million US dollars, up 40.6 per cent, according to the agriculture ministry.—Xinhua ■

Abe plans to declare candidacy for LDP leadership contest on Sunday

TOKYO — Prime Minister Shinzo Abe plans on Sunday to declare his candidacy for the Liberal Democratic Party leadership contest next month as he looks to secure his third consecutive term as party head, a senior party lawmaker said on Wednesday.

During his visit to Kagoshima Prefecture, southwestern Japan, over the weekend, Abe is expected to express his intention to run in the election

scheduled for 20 September, according to the lawmaker.

The prime minister has been touring Japan in an apparent attempt to broaden his support base among rank-and-file party members and beat his rival, former Defence Minister Shigeru Ishiba, who has already thrown his hat into the ring.

The LDP presidential election effectively determines who will be Japan's next prime minister, as the ruling party

controls the majority of both chambers of the Diet.

Abe is believed to be in the lead with support from five out of seven intraparty factions. Victory for Abe would give him another three-year term, putting him on track to become Japan's longest-serving premier.

The two veteran lawmakers are expected to register their candidacies on 7 September, setting off the official campaigning.

Debates are expected on a number of issues, including amending the Constitution — in particular, its war-renouncing Article 9.

Abe also faces the challenge of how to regain public trust amid persistent allegations of favoritism leveled against him in connection with a pair of school building projects carried out by people with ties to him or his wife.—Kyodo News ■

Massive fire breaks out at highrise in India's Mumbai

NEW DELHI — A massive fire broke out at a highrise residential building in India's financial capital Mumbai on Wednesday, officials said.

There have been no reports of any casualty yet as almost all those trapped on the top floor of Crystal Tower building in Parel area were rescued, a fire official told the media. "The blaze started on the 12th floor of the building around 8.30 am (local time). It soon started spreading to other parts of the building before it came under control," he said.

As many as 10 fire tenders were pressed into service to contain the flames, the official said, adding that the cause of the fire is yet to be ascertained.

Local TV channels aired footage of white smoke billowing out of the building and people being evacuated by fire fighters using hydraulic cranes. "A probe has been ordered into the incident," the official said.—Xinhua ■

Trump administration moves to relax coal pollution rules

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump's administration on Tuesday announced a plan to weaken regulations on US coal plants, giving a boost to an industry that former leader Barack Obama had hoped to wind down in order to cut harmful emissions that drive global warming.

The Environmental Protection Agency's new Affordable Clean Energy (ACE) rule would allow states the flexibility to set their own standards for performance at existing coal-fired power plants, rather than follow a single federal standard.

The EPA says it is designed to replace Obama's 2015 Clean Power Plan which called for cuts to greenhouse gas emissions from power plants, and a shift toward solar, wind, and less polluting natural gas.

The move marks the latest effort by Trump's administration to roll back the environmental legacy of his Democratic predecessor, having pulled out of the 2015 Paris climate accord aimed at slashing global

fossil fuel emissions.

Obama's energy plan aimed to usher in the strictest anti-pollution measures in history on power plants, but was put on hold in 2016 by the US Supreme Court.

Trump, whose ascent to the presidency effectively killed off the plan, had blasted it "intrusive" and claimed it would "kill jobs."

The president is due to trumpet the new plan as he rallies supporters Tuesday night in the coal-producing state of West Virginia.

"The era of top-down, one-size-fits-all federal mandates is over," said EPA acting administrator Andrew Wheeler, in a phone call with reporters.

The new plan could take months or even years to take effect. Legal challenges are already lining up, as the proposal awaits a 60-day comment period before it can be finalized.

Environmental advocates blasted the proposal, saying it will boost emissions from power plants, which emit about 28 per cent of US greenhouse gases, and worsen global warming.

"The plan calls for only modest efficiency improvements at individual power plants, which will barely make a dent in cutting heat-trapping emissions from the electricity sector, and could even, under some circumstances, lead to increased emissions depending on how much the plants are run," said Ken Kimmell, president of the Union of Concerned Scientists.

"This proposal would also result in more pollution from nitrogen oxide, sulfur dioxide, mercury and other harmful pollutants."

Coal in decline

The White House said in a statement that if finalized, the rule "will significantly decrease bureaucratic red tape and compliance costs, keeping American energy affordable and competitive on the world stage."

The White House claimed it would also save \$6.4 billion in compliance costs for industry, compared to the Obama plan.

"We're the only country in the world doing this, looking at coal as



Emissions spew from a large stack at the coal fired Brandon Shores Power Plant in Baltimore, Maryland. **PHOTO: AFP**

the future instead of understanding the future is about clean air, the future is about clean energy," Gina McCarthy, the former EPA administrator under Obama, said on CNN.

Despite Trump's support for coal plants, they continue to shut down. Some 40 percent of coal plants in operation in 2010 are now closed or slated for closure, according to estimates from the American Coalition for Clean

Coal Electricity.

According to Bob Perciasepe, president of the Center for Climate and Energy Solutions, "EPA is now proposing a plan that will essentially be ignored by most of the industry."

Bill Wehrum, administrator for EPA's office of Air and Radiation, acknowledged that the industry "continues to transform in front of our eyes," he told reporters.

"What we see is an

ongoing significant shift in the direction of natural gas and renewable energy generation."

Wehrum said that because of the shifting energy landscape, he expected emissions to fall at a rate "roughly comparable" to the goals outlined under the Obama-era plan, which called for a 26 per cent cut in greenhouse gases from power plants by 2025, compared to 2005 levels.

—AFP ■

Parts of Hawaii under hurricane watch as Lane approaches

LOS ANGELES — Part of the Hawaiian islands were put under a hurricane watch on Tuesday as major Hurricane Lane advanced toward

the American archipelago in the central Pacific.

Lane, a Category Four storm, was expected to make a turn toward

Hawaii later in the week, forecasters at the Central Pacific Hurricane Center said.

The storm was packing winds of 150 miles

(240 kilometres) per hour and was 620 miles (990 kilometres) southeast of Honolulu at 1500 GMT, the center said.

Hurricane watches

were issued for Hawaii, the chain's biggest island, and Maui, Lanai, Molokai and Kahoolawe, the center said.

The eye of the storm

is projected to pass near Hawaii and Maui on Thursday, bringing hurricane force winds, heavy rainfall and large swells, it said.—AFP ■

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V AS FENJA VOY. NO. (049 N/S)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V AS FENJA VOY. NO. (049 N/S) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 23-8-2018 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.

**SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S NEW GOLDEN SEA LINES**
Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V KOTA HASIL VOY. NO. (KHSA 0089 N/S)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V KOTA HASIL VOY. NO. (KHSA 0089 N/S) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 23-8-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T.T/H.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.

**SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S ADVANCE CONTAINER LINES**

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V MAERSK WOLGAST VOY. NO. ()

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V MAERSK WOLGAST VOY. NO. () are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 23-8-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T.T/M.I.P where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

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

Phone No: 2301185

Eagles overtake Michael Jackson with biggest selling album in US

NEW YORK (United States) — A box set of The Eagles' greatest hits has surpassed Michael Jackson's "Thriller" as the biggest selling album ever in the United States, according to a new ranking by the Recording Industry Association of America.

RIAA said "The Eagles: Their Greatest Hits 1971-75," a compilation of the country-rock group's first four albums, has now sold 38 million units, topping "Thriller's" 33 million.

The set had long held the top spot for US album sales but was overtaken in 2009 by "Thriller" following a surge of sales for the album after Jackson's death.

"Hotel California," the Ea-



Eagles' Vince Gill, Timothy B Schmit, and Don Henley seen performing at The Grand Ole Opry in Nashville, Tennessee on 29 October, 2017. **PHOTO: AFP**

gles' 1976 album with the hit single of the same name, was ranked third, with 26 million units sold.

The new ranking includes sales both of discs and via streaming, which had not been

calculated for the Eagles since 2006, according to *Rolling Stone* magazine.

"We are grateful for our families, our management, our crew, the people at radio and, most of all, the loyal fans who have stuck with us through the ups and downs of 46 years. It's been quite a ride," Don Henley, 71, the group's lead singer and co-founder, said in a statement carried by *Rolling Stone*.

After the death of Eagles co-founder Glenn Frey in 2016 at the age of 67, the group was re-configured and resumed touring the following year. It has scheduled a series of concerts in the United States in September.—AFP ■

Oscar-winning director Danny Boyle quits new Bond movie

LOS ANGELES — Oscar-winning British film director Danny Boyle has exited the 25th James Bond movie over "creative differences," the official 007 website announced on Tuesday.

"Michael G Wilson, Barbara Broccoli and Daniel Craig today announced that due to creative differences Danny Boyle has decided to no longer direct Bond 25," the site said, referencing the producers and star of the long-running British spy movie franchise.

The film is due for release on 25 October next year in Britain, with Universal handling the international distribution. MGM and EON Productions plan to release it in the US on 8 November, 2019.

It was not immediately clear whether Boyle's exit would delay the production, with filming expected to begin in December.

Boyle was beginning the casting process, *Variety* magazine reported, for new Bond girl and villain. There was no announcement on Boyle's replacement but the producers were said to be interested in admired Scottish director David Mackenzie ("Hell or High Water") and Denis Villeneuve ("Blade Runner 2049") before the "Trainspotting" and "Slumdog Millionaire" director was hired. Craig is due to return for a fifth appearance as the legendary British spy for the 25th as yet untitled film in the storied 007 franchise.

Boyle, 61, who won an Academy Award in 2009 for "Slumdog Millionaire," was due to partner again with screenwriter John Hodge on the new movie.—AFP ■

Must do better: Japan eyes AI robots in class to boost English



Japan hopes to use tech to boost education. **PHOTO: AFP**

TOKYO—English-speaking AI robots will be helping out in some 500 Japanese classrooms from next year as the country seeks to

improve its English skills among both children and teachers.

The education ministry plans a pilot project costing around 250

million yen (\$227,000) to improve Japanese students' notoriously weak oral and written English, an official told AFP.

"AI robots already on the market have various functions. For example, they can check the pronunciation of each student's English, which is difficult for teachers to do," added the official in charge of international education, who asked not to be named.

AI robots "are just one example of the trial and we are planning other measures" such as using tablet apps and having on-line lessons with native speakers, he said. The move comes ahead of a change in the national cur-

riculum in two years that will require children from the age of 10 to learn English. Japanese schools struggle to find qualified teachers for English classes and generally lack the cash to hire trained language assistants.

Some primary and middle schools have already turned to technology to bolster English teaching, introducing English-speaking AI robots in the classroom.

English classes are currently compulsory for Japanese students aged between 12 and 15 but the starting age will be lowered to primary school children in 2020.—AFP ■

Music world mourns Aretha Franklin at MTV video awards

NEW YORK — "Queen of Pop" Madonna led an impassioned tribute to "Queen of Soul" Aretha Franklin on Monday as the music world paid its R-E-S-P-E-C-Ts to the superstar at the MTV Video Music Awards.

The show came four days after 76-year-old Franklin died of pancreatic cancer and the industry used the telecast to send Franklin off in style. "She led me to where I am today, and I know she influenced so many people in this house tonight, in this room tonight," said Madonna, who turned 60 last Thursday—the day Franklin died. Franklin has influenced generations of singers with iconic hits including "Natural Woman" and "I Say a Little Prayer." But "Respect" (1967) was her signature tune and the broadcast ended with a recording of Aretha belting out the Otis Redding cover as the audience danced wildly. "I want to thank you, Aretha, for empowering all of us. R-E-S-P-E-C-T. Long live the Queen," Madonna added. Fast-rising rapper Cardi B — who recently became a mother — was expected to launch the show at New York's Radio City Music Hall with a song but instead turned heads by simulating breastfeeding onstage. She left performing duties to Canadian singer and songwriter Shawn Mendes, who treated fans to his acclaimed single "In My Blood," which chronicles his struggle with anxiety disorder.—AFP ■



Madonna poses in the press room at the 2018 MTV Video Music Awards at Radio City Music Hall on August 20, 2018 in New York City. **PHOTO: AFP**

Madonna speaks onstage during the 2018 MTV Video Music Awards at Radio City Music Hall on 20 August, 2018 in New York City. **PHOTO: AFP**

Facebook flags users who try to 'game' fact-checking effort

SAN FRANCISCO (United States) — Facebook acknowledged on Tuesday it has developed tools to identify users “indiscriminately” flagging fake news as it refines its effort to combat misinformation.

But the leading social network disputed as “just plain wrong” a *Washington Post* report that it has developed an overall “reputation score” for its users as part of the initiative.

Facebook said it has developed “a process to protect against people indiscriminately flagging news as fake and attempting to game the system” which relies in part on how often a user reports something as fake despite verification by fact-checkers. “The reason we do this is to make sure that our fight against misinformation is as effective as possible,” Facebook said in a statement.

Users who report what appears to be bogus news are given a standard probability score of from zero to one depending on how reliable they are when it comes to



Facebook says it has a ranking system that identifies users who “indiscriminately” flag fake news. **PHOTO: AFP**

reporting posts that are untrue, according to the social network.

The rating is one of many “signals” used to prioritize flagged posts sent to be reviewed by fact-checking teams.

But Facebook said the *Post* report was misleading because it did not create

a “unified score” to rank the overall trustworthiness of its users.

Over the past 18 months, Facebook and other online platforms have stepped up efforts to combat the spread of false news with the intent to manipulate the platforms.

Part of the challenge battling bogus

content is that some people report posts as false simply because they disagree with stories, or in efforts to wrongly discredit them, according to the social network.

Repeatedly reporting accurate information to be false at Facebook would skew a users reliability rating toward zero in the ranking system.

Facebook last month shut down 32 fake pages and accounts involved in an apparent “coordinated” effort to stoke hot-button issues ahead of November midterm US elections.

The US intelligence community has concluded that Russia sought to sway the vote in Donald Trump’s favour, and Facebook was a primary tool in that effort, using targeted ads to escalate political tensions and push divisive online content.

Facebook has since made a priority of preventing the social network to be used to spread misleading or outright deceitful messages aimed at influencing politics. —AFP ■



Signs of ice on the Moon have been reported by scientists for years, but previous observations could have been explained by other phenomena, such as unusually reflective lunar soil, researchers said. **PHOTO: AFP**

Scientists confirm ice exists at Moon’s poles

TAMPA (United States)—Scientists said on Tuesday they have confirmed the existence of ice on the Moon’s surface for the first time, a discovery that could one day help humans survive there.

Signs of ice on the Moon have been reported by scientists for years, but previous observations could have been explained by other phenomena, such as unusually reflective lunar soil, the study authors said.

“This is the first time scientists have definitive evidence for the presence of water ice on the surface,” lead author Shuai Li of the Hawaii Institute of Geophysics and Planetology told AFP.

The ice mainly lies in the frigid shadows of craters at the lunar poles, and was detected using instruments that flew on the Chandrayaan-1 spacecraft, launched in 2008 by the Indian Space Research Organization.

Using data from NASA’s Moon Mineralogy Mapper (M3) instrument, researchers identified three chemical signatures “that definitively prove there is water ice at the surface of the Moon,” said a NASA statement. The polar regions where the ice lies are “super cold,” Li said, noting that the warmest temperatures never reach above minus 250 degrees Fahrenheit (-157 Celsius). It is unclear exactly how much ice exists on the surface, since the instruments could only detect ice within a few millimeters of the Moon’s surface, he said.

But NASA said if there is enough of the ice, “water would possibly be accessible as a resource for future expeditions to explore and even stay on the Moon.”

The US space agency is aiming to return humans to the Moon in the coming years for the first time since the storied Apollo missions of the 1960s and 1970s. —AFP ■

Your smartphone is likely tracking your location

PARIS (France) — A new lawsuit accusing Google of tracking people’s locations against their will has served as a reminder that every movement of most smartphone users is being recorded, often without their knowledge. The California man who filed the suit claims that the tech behemoth continued to track the whereabouts of Android smartphone users even after they turned off “location history”.

But the history of geolocation and the privacy issues it raises are as old as the mobile phone itself.

Early days

Before smartphones arrived more than a decade ago, it was still possible to use geolocation. Mobile phones constantly connect to local antenna towers, and by triangulating the signals the user can be found — as Jeff Goldblum illustrated in the 1996 movie “Independence Day”.

However smartphones brought about a far simpler way to track people: GPS.

GPS revolution

After the release of the first iPhone revolutionised the industry in 2007, GPS—Global Positioning System using satellites—became prevalent, and it is now included on all smartphones.

Most apps now use location tracking, and not just for obvious purposes like maps and transport. It’s also used for dating, food delivery and gaming, such as *Pokemon Go*, which became hugely if briefly popular across the world in 2016.

Trackers on 75% of apps

As the popularity of apps using geolocations grows, so does their money-making potential. For example, when tourists use their phone to explore, they can be targeted with advertising not just from the country they are in but also the city and even the street they are standing on.

A 2014 study by CNIL, the French government’s technology consumer protection body, showed that between a quarter to a third of apps had access to the phone’s location.

By 2017, a study by Yale University found that three quarters of Android apps contained trackers — usually containing advertising.

The CNIL study also found that some apps tracked the phone’s location more than a million times over a three-month period—accessing the information about once per minute.

Even flashlight apps

The new Google lawsuit is far from the first time privacy concerns have been raised over geolocation. In 2011 fellow tech giant Apple faced a lawsuit over location tracking on its ubiquitous iPhones and iPads. And there are also national security concerns. In July of this year, researchers found that the fitness app *Polar* had revealed sensitive data on military and intelligence personnel from 69 countries.

The app later disabled the function. —AFP ■



A Myanmar athlete compete in men's archery competition in 2018 Asian Games in Indonesia. **PHOTO: MNA**

Myanmar collects 2 bronze in 2018 Asian Games in Indonesia

MYANMAR won 2 bronze medals yesterday, at the fourth day of the 2018 Asian Games, which is being held in Jakarta and Palembang in Indonesia.

Myanmar, represented by the women's sepak takraw squad, had to be contented with bronze medal at JSC Roneu Stadium as they were beaten by Thailand 0-2.

Similarly, in men's wushu

competition, Nyein Chan Ko Ko won the bronze medal by earning a total of 19.40 points. In taekwondo competition, Myanmar was knocked out from the Round of 32 level. In men's archery competition, Zin Thurein Mue from Myanmar stood in the 13th place among 60 athletes.

In the women's canoeing competition, Myanmar ad-

vanced to the final by a record of 7:44:19 while competing against Thailand, Viet Nam, Indonesia and India. In the men's canoeing competition, Myanmar team just completed in the fifth place.

In women's pistol shooting competition, Myanmar's May Poe Wha stood in the 16th place among 32 by garnering 574 points in total. —Myanmar News Agency ■

Lyon sign Belgium defender Denayer from Man City

LYON (France)—Lyon have completed the signing of Belgian international defender Jason Denayer from English champions Manchester City for a fee of up to 10 million euros (\$11.5 million), the French club announced on Tuesday.

Denayer has signed a four-year deal, with the transfer fee taking into account 3.5 million eu-

ros in potential bonus payments.

The 23-year-old joined City's academy as a youth but never established himself in their first team, and has spent the last four years being loaned out to various clubs. After stints at Celtic and Sunderland, Denayer played for Galatasaray last season, helping them win the Turkish title. —AFP ■

Shan United wins two times MNL U-19 Championship



Shan United U-19 players celebrate their victory after winning the MNL U-19 2018 Trophy. **PHOTO: MNL**

AFTER completion of the Myanmar National League (U-19) 2018, Taunggyi-based Shan United U-19 secured a champion for the tournament, earning 54 points in total with 17 wins, 3 draws and 2 losses.

In 2017 season of the same tourney, Shan United also lifted the Championship trophy, and this is the second time Shan had won the title. Following the Shan United, Mandalay-based Yadanabon U-19 FC stood as the first runner-up with 16 wins, 4 draws and 2 losses, collecting 52 points in total, and just two points different from Champion Shan United. Southern Myanmar finished in the third place, garnering 46 points after playing all 22 games, with 14 wins, 4 draws and 4 losses, while Sagaing United stood in the bottom of the teams with just a match win. —Lynn Thit (Tgi) ■

McClaren under fire as QPR crash again

LONDON — QPR manager Steve McClaren is in danger of being sacked less than a month into the new Championship season after his struggling side were beaten 3-0 by Bristol City on Tuesday.

McClaren's team are rooted to the bottom of the second-tier table following their fourth successive league defeat.

The former England coach, dubbed the 'Wally with the broly' during his ill-fated spell with the national team, only took over from Ian Holloway in the close-season.

But reports have suggested he is already on the verge of being axed by QPR chairman Amit Bhatia. A humiliating 7-1 loss at West Brom on Saturday triggered a barrage of abuse for McClaren from angry QPR fans and he endured a similar reception at Loftus Road after City ran riot.

Matty Taylor's goal four min-

utes before the interval put the Robins ahead. Andreas Weimann doubled their lead five minutes into the second half before putting the seal on McClaren's miserable night in stoppage-time.

"It's not been a good start. Am I determined to put this right? Yes," McClaren said. "I knew this was a tough job and it wouldn't happen overnight. The message to the supporters, and it's a difficult one, is patience." Asked if he is the right man for the job, McClaren said: "Yes. Absolutely. I knew the situation when I came in." Taylor opened the scoring when he collected the ball near the right touchline and was inexplicably allowed to score from a tight angle.

He beat Jake Bidwell, who slipped, before firing through the legs of Alex Baptiste and past keeper Matt Ingram, who should have done better. —AFP ■

Coach keeps Argentina guessing about Messi's future

BUENOS AIRES—Argentina's interim coach Lionel Scaloni refused to be drawn on Lionel Messi's international future after leaving the five-time World Player of the Year out of his squad for upcoming friendlies next month.

Local media had claimed the Barcelona star asked to be excused from international duty for Argentina's four remaining friendlies in 2018, starting with a trip to the United States in September to play Guatemala and Colombia. "I've spoken with Messi and from that conversation I picked my squad," said Scaloni, who took over from the sacked Jorge Sampaoli after Argentina's underwhelming World Cup last-16 elimination to eventual champions France.

"We didn't speak about what could happen in the future. We know what Messi represents for us and we'll see for the future."

Messi, 31, has retired from international duty once before after missing a penalty in Argentina's shoot-out defeat by Chile, for the second year running, in the 2016 Copa America final.

That lasted little more than a month, though, before Messi returned to the

the twice former world champions were on the brink of elimination until a Messi hat-trick in their final qualifier earned a 3-1 come-from-behind victory away to Ecuador and a place at the global showpiece in Russia.

He failed to dazzle there, though, and hasn't spoken publicly since the South Americans beat Nigeria in the group stage to earn a spot in the knock-out rounds. —AFP ■



blue and white shirt for Argentina's 2018 World Cup qualifying campaign.

As it turned out,

Lionel Messi. **PHOTO: AFP**