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President U Win Myint and First Lady Daw Cho Cho visit Lumbini in Nepal. PHOTO: MNA

President, First Lady visit birthplace of Buddha in Lumbini, Nepal

PRESIDENT U Win Myint and First Lady Daw Cho Cho, who are in Nepal on official visit, visited the birth place of the Buddha in the Lumbini Garden in Bhairahawa of Province-5 of Nepal yesterday.

The Myanmar delegation led by the President and First Lady left Kathmandu by special flight yesterday morning and arrived at the Gautam Buddha Airport in Bhairahawa at 9:50 am.

The delegation flew to Lumbini by helicopter of Nepali and armed forces and they were welcomed there by Chief of Province Mr. Umakant Jha, Minister for Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation Mr. Rabindra Adhikari, Province-5 Chief Minister Mr. Shankar Pokharel, the Mayor of Bhairahawa and officials.

The delegation went to Maya Devi Temple by car and Nepali officials conducted them around the temple.

The President and First Lady paid obeisance to the Buddha Image, listened to the Parittas recited by the members of the Sangha led by Myanmar Shwe Kyaung Monastery's Sayadaw Bhaddanta Kovida and donated cash to the members of the Sangha. At the briefing hall of the temple, Nepali Minister for Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation Mr. Rabindra Adhikari extended greetings to the Myanmar delegation. The President signed in the visitor's book and had a documentary photo taken together with the dignitaries.

Afterwards, the Myanmar delegation visited the Panitayama International Meditation Centre and donated offertories to Sayadaw Bhaddanta Vivakananda of the monastery. Later, the delegation proceeded to the Myanmar Shwekyang Monastery.

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State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi delivers address at the meeting on renovation and upgrading Yangon University. PHOTO: MNA

State Counsellor attends meeting on renovation, upgrading Yangon University

A COORDINATION meeting on renovating Yangon University (Main Campus) and upgrading the university was held at the meeting hall of the Convocation Building of the university yesterday with an attendance by State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.

Speaking at the meeting, the State Counsellor has called for strengthening the strong points and to correct the weak points of the university regarding the promoting and upgrading as Yangon University should be a model for higher education sector of the country and the main university in Myanmar as well.

The work on renovating the Yangon University and upgrading the university launched in 2013.

At the meeting, Union Minister for Education Dr. Myo Thein Gyi reported

measures being taken for renovating and upgrading the university and priorities to be taken before the centenary celebration of the university in 2020.

Afterwards, Prof. Dr. Maung Maung Wint, Chairman of the Software Committee on renovation and upgrading of the Yangon University reported on the Master Plan, formation of committees for implementing the Master Plan, meetings with local and foreign experts, meetings experts from the Central European University in Hungary, main sectors in the Master Plan 2018-2030 and priorities set to be completed by the university's centenary celebration in 2020.

Dr. Phoe Kaung, Rector of the Yangon University, reported on arrangements for the 2018 Academic Year.

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Pyithu Hluttaw

Ninth regular session of Second Pyithu Hluttaw holds 13th- day meeting

DURING the 13th-day meeting of the ninth regular session of the Second Pyithu Hluttaw held in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning, asterisk-marked questions were asked and answered, two reports were read and one motion discussed and tabled.

Appointing additional committee members

Firstly, Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U T Khun Myat announced that the Pyithu Hluttaw has approved the appointing of Dr. U Soe Moe Thu of Myaungmya constituency in the International Natural Relations Committee, U Kyaw Swe Win (a) U Arlu of Kawhmu constituency in the Natural Resources and Environment Conservation Committee, and U Nyunt Aung of Monywa constituency in the Investment and Industrial Development Committee as additional members in the respective committees.

Constituencies divided according to regional population

U Khin Maung Yi of Hinthada constituency raised a ques-



Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U T Khun Myat. PHOTO: MNA

tion as to whether the upcoming 2020 General Elections will also be held in three Amyotha Hluttaw constituencies in Hinthada District as they had been in the 2010 elections.

Union Election Commission member U Than Htay replied that the Amyotha Hluttaw constituencies are divided and demarcated in accord with Section 4 of the Amyotha Hluttaw

Election Law, which states that a maximum of twelve constituencies are permitted in a single state or region, with the markers for division determined by the population in the area, as stated in Section 4-C of the same law. Established constituencies remain fixed for the duration of a Hluttaw term, and the Union Election Commission has to set the constituencies for the next

Hluttaw term at least 60 days before the term ends, said U Than Htay. Therefore, constituencies in Hinthada District will be designated again in accord with the area's population as the 2020 General Elections approaches.

No differentiation in technological university degrees

Dr. U Than Aung Soe of Minhla constituency raised a question asking for an explanation on the difference between job opportunities for engineering graduates from centre of excellence institutions and other technological university degrees.

Deputy Minister for Education U Win Maw Tun replied that time is still needed to conduct a survey on whether there is a difference in the levels of employability with graduates from Yangon, Mandalay or other technological universities. He said there were no differentiations between universities in accepting applicants for job vacancies in government departments by the Union Civil Service Board, as of January 2018. The focus was

on the actual degree earned, he added.

Teaching knowledge training short courses

U Oo Tun Win of Kyauktaw constituency raised a question on whether the Ministry of Education will open short courses for private subject teachers, in accord with the Private School Law, throughout the states and regions.

Deputy Minister for Education U Win Maw Tun replied that they issue private school teaching licenses for teachers who meet set standards and qualifications or have at least 5 years of experience in their related field. The Ministry of Education released an announcement on 30 April 2012 that calls for director-general of education in an area to submit to the Ministry of Education the list of teaching knowledge training applicants, and the ministry continues to do so with collaboration between the Department of Basic Education and the Department of Higher Education, said the deputy minister.

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Amyotha Hluttaw

Ninth regular session of Second Amyotha Hluttaw holds 13th-day meeting

THE 13th-day meeting of the ninth regular session of the Second Amyotha Hluttaw was held in the Amyotha Hluttaw meeting hall in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning. Asterisk marked questions were asked and answered, two reports were read and the Hluttaw's decision was requested for one motion discussed.

All loose ends tied with confiscated land in Rakhine State

U Myint Naing of Rakhine State constituency 5 raised a question on whether farmland in area 784-A and 787 of Lanmadaw Village-tract, Kyauktaw Township, Rakhine State confiscated by No 9 Operations Control Command and land confiscated by the military in area 786-A and B of Peinechaung Village, Nyaungpinhla, Lanmadaw, area 787 of Kyauktawtaung and No 375 Light Infantry Regiment area will have excess land returned, whether land not affiliated with the military will be returned, or compensations be provided in



Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than. PHOTO: MNA

case of nonreturnable land.

Deputy Minister for Defence Rear-Admiral Myint Nwe replied that No 9 Operations Control Command has received the proper documents to the farmlands from the Ministry of Home Affairs and compensation has been provided to all concerned. He said that the lands cannot be relinquished as they will be used for future expansion projects and

are also strategically important strategy-wise. He added there are no remaining compensations to be provided.

Drinking water for Chin village requires feasibility

U Bwe Khein of Chin State constituency 3 raised a question on whether funds for acquiring drinking water in Loneleh Village, Thantland Township,

Chin State, will be allotted in either fiscal year 2018-2019 or 2019-2020.

Deputy Minister for Border Affairs Maj.Gen Than Htut replied that Loneleh Village will need to link to springs 4/4 miles away to get a supply of drinking water. A feasibility survey needs to be conducted to gauge the success of the project and the best time to do that is in the months of March, April and May of 2019. If the study shows favorable results then the Chin State government will include the project as high-priority event in their FY 2019-2020 border development fund, as permitted.

Juvenile protection programs fully implemented

Naw Hla Hla Soe of Yangon Region constituency 10 raised a question on whether the protection programs for juvenile offenders and juvenile witnesses stated in the Myanmar Child Law will be reviewed and practically implemented.

Justice U Tha Htay of the Supreme Court of the Union re-

plied that procedures for juvenile cases are handled in accordance with existing child laws in separate courts and locations specifically for juvenile cases. Juvenile offenders, child victims and witnesses are in contact with their parents or guardian, concerned staff, police officers and other concerned individuals only, with emphasis on individual security. He said the protection programs do not require revision as they are being fully implemented by the juvenile courts in the respective townships and the Supreme Court is supervising the cases as well.

Bill Committee reads two reports

Next, Amyotha Hluttaw Bill Committee member Daw Nan Ni Ni Aye read a report by the committee on the Myanmar Maternal and Child Welfare Association Bill, sent back from the Pyithu Hluttaw with amendments. The Speaker called for the Hluttaw's resolution on the report and approved it.

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President U Win Myint and First Lady Daw Cho Cho visits the birth place of Buddha in Lumbini. **PHOTO: MNA**

President, First Lady visit birthplace of Buddha in Lumbini

FROM PAGE-1

At the monastery, President U Win Myint, First Lady Daw Cho Cho and party paid obeisance to the Lawkamani Sula Pagoda in the compound of the monastery and donated offertories to Presiding Sayadaw of the monastery Bhaddanta Kovida.

Afterwards, the Myanmar delegation flew the Gutam Buddha Airport by helicopter, and thence, the delegation flew to Kathmandu by special flight.— Myanmar News Agency

ries to Presiding Sayadaw of the monastery Bhaddanta Kovida.

State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi visits Daw Khin Kyi Women's Hospital



State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi speaks to nurses at the Daw Khin Kyi Women's Hospital.

PHOTO: MNA

STATE Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi yesterday visited and inspected the Daw Khin Kyi Women's Hospital on Bogyoke Museum Lane in Bahan Township, Yangon.

State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi accompanied by Dr. Tin Myo Win, Chairman of the Union Peace Commission, Yangon Region Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein, Deputy Minister U Min Thu, region ministers and officials, first met the staff of Daw Khin Kyi Women's Hospital.

During the meeting, Daw Khin Kyi Women's Hospital Medical Superintendent Dr Thin Yu Zaw explained the matters of current staff capacity, providing medical cares and other necessities. State Counsellor coordinated the explained matters and gave words of encouragement to the pregnant and women newborn babies mothers in the hospital.

State Counsellor then inspected the nutrients for the breast-feeding mothers. She also urged to make and show

educational short films at the hospital for the health knowledge of the pregnant women and to highly take care of newborn-to-two-year-old babies as their intelligence developments are very important.

Daw Khin Kyi Women's Hospital is affiliated to the Ministry of Health and Sports and giving medical cares to 40 inpatients. Daw Khin Kyi Women's Hospital is providing various medical cares including emergency caesarean delivery. — Myanmar News Agency

Roundtable discussion on reviewing political dialogue framework held

A ROUNDTABLE discussion on reviewing the framework for political dialogue with government, Hluttaw and Tatmadaw groups was held at the National Peace and Reconciliation Center in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

During the roundtable discussion, UPDJC secretary group members Lt-Gen U Khin Zaw Oo (ret'd) and U Zaw Htay explained about the topics for discussion and the current state of the peace progress.

The attendants then discussed their views and opinions of the Third Session of the Union Peace Conference – 21st Century Panglong.

The workshop on reviewing the framework for political dialogue continued in the afternoon where Prof. Christina Murray, an international expert on federalism, shared her ex-

periences of participating in political discussions in South Africa, Kenya and Yemen, and answered to questions asked by the attendants.

U Sit Aye, member of the group of inclusive people from Tatmadaw group, said they had the opportunity to exchange experiences on the difficulties that international political discussions had to undergo to reach agreements as well as reaching mutual agreements. He said many successive governments have had accomplishments and setbacks in the history of Myanmar, as well as incomplete accomplishments. In the democratic government's administration there has been increased transparency, he said.

He continued saying that during the democratic government's second term, State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu



Roundtable discussion on reviewing the policy framework on political discussions being convened. **PHOTO: MNA**

Kyi continued the UPC – 21st Century Panglong. There are still difficulties, challenges and mutual agreements, he said. He added that in the roundtable's three days, they will discuss how international experiences can

be incorporated in achieving benefits.

Attending the roundtable discussion and workshop yesterday were UPDJC secretariat members, joint committee members, and working commit-

tee members from government, Hluttaw and Tatmadaw groups.

The workshop will be held today and the roundtable discussion with government, Hluttaw and Tatmadaw groups will be held tomorrow. —Zaw Zin

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Vice Senior General Soe Win receives Independent Commission of Enquiry

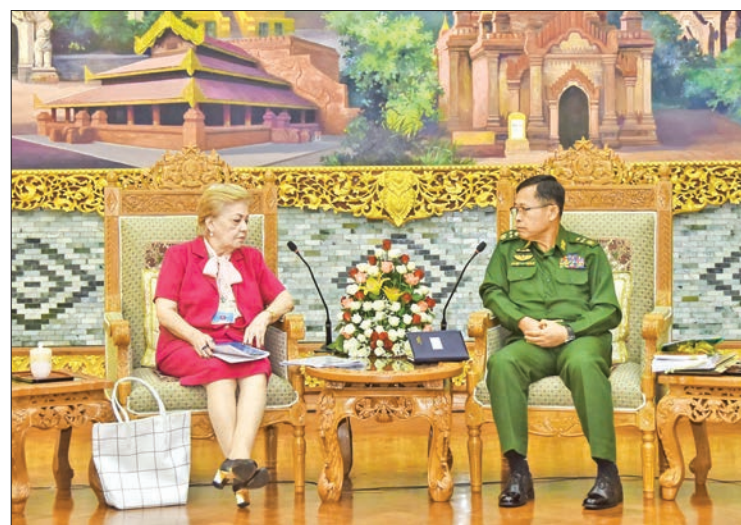
DEPUTY Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Soe Win received the Independent Commission of Enquiry yesterday at the Bayintnaung Guest House in Nay Pyi Taw.

During the meeting, Vice-Senior General Soe Win first explained the commission and the background of Rakhine issue to be able to find out the truth.

He has offered the Tamadaw's full cooperation with the commission, saying that

the Tatmadaw distributed evidences related true situation of Rakhine issue to diplomats including diplomats from the United Nations Security Council who met with the Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing on 30 April, 2018 and media in timely manner but the international communities remain lack of understanding the true situation.

Mrs. Rosario Manalo discussed the commission's commitment to making correct solution based on evidences



Vice-Senior General Soe Win meets with Independent Commission of Enquiry Chairperson in Nay Pyi Taw. **PHOTO: TATMADAW NEWS**

and to present the truth to the international communities.

Afterwards, Vice-Senior General Soe Win presented facts and photos about evidences of

Rakhine issue and books on history Rakhine to each member of the commission, according to the news release of the Tatmadaw News.—Myanmar News Agency

Career fair to come to Yangon in September

A NEW job fair is due to take place in Yangon next month, according to JobNet.com.mm, an online recruitment site.

The fair will be held on 22 September at Yangon's Novotel Hotel on Pyay Road in Kamayut Township between 9 am and 5 pm. This will be the biggest of its kind organised by the JobNet.com.mm this year, with an intention of ensuring development of good human resource management practices as well as offering job opportunities.

Mr Matt De Luca, managing director of JobNet.com.mm, said that about 70 companies are preparing to take part in

the fair, including Nestle, Ooredoo, Wilmar, Anada, CB Bank, Yoma Bank, Success Property, Grab and Hong Kong Shinning Star Investment Co. He added that about 15,000 job seekers are expected to join this year's event. Numerous jobs will be offered for the sectors of sale and marketing, manufacturing, administration, human resources management, accounting, engineering, information technology and public relations. JobNet.com.mm annually holds career fairs in Myanmar for the purpose of helping job hunters find out which professions fit their personality. It hosted VR



A job fair in Yangon being crowded by youths interested in making changes to their professionals. **Photo: supplied**

Job Fair, HR Seminar, Sales and Marketing Career Conference, Myanmar-Singapore Biggest Job

Fair and Tech & Engineering Career Conference this year.—Swe Nyein ■

UMFCCI submits plan to government for stabilizing exchange rate

By Nyein Nyein

DURING the meeting between the State Counsellor and local business leaders held in Nay Pyi Taw on 27 August, the Republic of the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (UMFCCI) submitted to the State Counsellor a four-point plan for stabilizing exchange rate, according to UMFCCI.

The four-point plan was to promote export sector, investment, import substitution and reducing reliance on the dollar.

"Normally, when exchange rate decreases, it could promote export sector. However, a drastic increase in a short time greatly affects the local economy," said

U Zaw Min Win, President of UMFCCI.

In addition to the four-point plan, suggestions include reviewing the entire export supply chain, applying demand-based agriculture policy, earliest implementation of banks' support services towards export, providing tax incentives to potential export products, PPP (Private Public Partnership) towards effective development of export and earliest formation of National Export Promotion Council (NEPC).

Furthermore, the government is urged to let foreign banks that bring in foreign capital to expand their businesses in the country. For import substitution, the government should reduce trade imbalance and give priority

towards creating more job opportunities for local people. The government should also handle illegal trading effectively, said U Zaw Min Win.

UMFCCI urges the government to reduce reliance on the dollar by strictly forbidding pricing, trading and payments by dollar in the country. The government is also urged to conduct trading with currencies of neighboring countries.

State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi said the government will do as much as it can about the economy, and businesses should also work with the government to develop the country's economy. "I also like to request to help us by pointing out where the bottle-necks are. Only when

we know about it can we solve it. In some cases, we don't know, as it is difficult to know everything. Economic development is very important for our country. It is important from the political side as well. This is a time where economic wealth is becoming a real force. On the world stage, there is a connection between our weakness in political power and our weakness in economic power. We need the help of business persons for our manpower, brain power and influence to develop. A sustainable and balanced economic development plan from 2018 to 2030 has been envisioned so that everyone knows clearly how we plan to help," said State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. ■

Domestic gold price on high side amid kyat depreciation against dollar

AFTER domestic gold price hit a new record high of Ks983,500 per tical (16.4g) on 28 August, it slipped a bit around Ks979,000 yesterday, according to local foreign exchange market.

Domestic gold price yesterday decreased a bit compared to last Tuesday's price, with Ks980,500 at opening time in the morning and above Ks979,000 in the afternoon, according to Aung Thamardi Gold and Jewellery Shop and Refinery. However, it is still on the high side.

With dollar exchange value strengthening in the market, domestic gold price is fluctuating on the high side these days. The gold price was around Ks963,500 per tical on 25 August, 968,500 on 27 August and hit a new record of

Ks983,500 on 28 August, according to domestic gold market.

Meanwhile, global gold prices are also seen increasing above \$1,200 per ounce, with \$1,206 per ounce on 25 August, \$1,204 on 27 August, \$1,210 on 28 August and \$1,214 yesterday. The local gold market is cool, with instability in the local gold price and the US dollar exchange rate. The demand is also low as the buyers are observing the market condition. The domestic gold price was recorded at a high of Ks948,500 per tical in mid-July, but the price dropped to Ks945,500 per tical on 18 July. Then, the price was on a high side again and hit a high of Ks961,300 on 24 August with the US dollar gaining. Meanwhile, the US dollar exchange rate to



Gold jewellery displayed at a shop in downtown Yangon. PHOTO: PHOE KHWAR

the kyat is gradually increasing in value and it reached above Ks1,500 in the second week of this month. The current dollar exchange rate is above Ks1,550 in the floating exchange system.

Last year, the global gold price fluctuated on account of instability in the global political climate and the appreciating of the US dollar price. However, the domestic gold price remained on

the high side. In September 2017, the global gold price hit \$1,348 per ounce and the local gold price also hit a record high of Ks958,000 per tical, triggering a drastic drop in the trading of gold. —GNLM ■

Myanmar-Hungary trade down by \$16 million in three months

BILATERAL trade with Hungary, a member of European Union, between April and June this year totalled US\$3.8 million, which saw a significant decrease in value by \$16 million as against the same period in the last year, the Ministry of Commerce reported.

The current figures include \$1.3 million in exports and \$2.5 million in imports. At this time last year, the bilateral export/import was \$20 million, with ex-

ports worth \$0.292 million and imports worth \$19.7 million.

The bilateral trade reached its peak of \$30.8 million in the last financial year 2017-2018. The trade between the two countries was \$7.9 million in FY2016-2017, \$1.37 million in FY2015-2016, \$0.4 million in FY2014-2015, \$0.44 million in FY2013-2014 and \$0.02 million in 2012-2013.

Myanmar primarily exports rice, pulses, tea leaves, coffee and some vegetables,

apparel from garment sector and aquaculture products to the European Community. Its imports cover cosmetics, food and beverages, consumer goods, mechanical appliances, plastic wares, pharmaceutical products and others.

Investments from EU member states chiefly went to the country's petroleum and natural gas, manufacturing, hotels and tourism, transportation and livestock sectors.—Khine Khant ■

Trade with Bangladesh increases by \$47 million this FY

MYANMAR-Bangladesh border trade has exceeded US\$54.4 million in the present six-month interim fiscal period, up by \$47.6 million in comparison with the same period last year, according to the Ministry of Commerce.

This time last year, the bilateral trade totalled \$6.84 million, consisting of \$6.798 million in imports and \$0.041 million in exports. Between 1 April and 17 August this year, Myanmar exported \$8.2 million worth of domestic products to Bangladesh and imported goods amounting to \$46.2 million from the South Asian country.

Normally, Myanmar's exports to Bangladesh surplus

its imports in bilateral border trade; however, this year saw a significant increase in border imports from Bangladesh by \$46.184 million.

The two countries deliver goods mainly through maritime routes. The bilateral border trade is conducted through Sittway and Maungdaw borders. During four and a half months this year, trade from the Sittway gate was \$50.5 million, including \$4.3 million in exports and \$46.2 million in imports, whereas trade from the Maungdaw gate totalled \$3.9 million and no commodities were imported through this gate.

Marketable items at the Myanmar-Bangladesh

cross-borders are bamboos, ginger, peanuts, saltwater prawns and fish, dried plums, garlic, rice, mung beans, blankets, candy, plum jams, footwear, frozen foods, chemicals, leather, jute products, tobacco, plastics, wood, knitwear, beverages and human hair.

The total border trade with Bangladesh was over \$29 million in the 2017-2018 FY.

According to the annual statistical report of the ministry, the bilateral border trade was \$3.83 million in FY2012-2013, \$22.8 million in FY2013-2014, \$14.3 million in FY2014-2015, \$11.5 million in FY2015-2016, \$1.6 million in FY2016-2017.—Shwe Khine ■

JICA to offer two-step loan of Ks8 billion to seven banks in two months

By May Thet Hnin

JAPAN International Cooperation Agency (JICA) will offer two-step loan of Ks8 billion to seven banks in September and October.

Those loans can be taken out through Myanma Economic Bank (MEB). MEB, Kanbawza, Myanmar Apex Bank, Ayeyawady Bank, Myanmar Citizens Bank, the Co-operative Bank and United Amara Bank, all seven banks, will get Ks1 billion allocation each. A bank practicing best model for bank compliance will be granted the remaining loan of Ks1 billion, said Daw Nilar Wai, assistant general manager of Yangon Region Myanma Economic Bank.

“Under government to government (G to G) agreement, JICA will offer loans through MEB. The banks have started to apply for the loans at the Central Management Unit that includes officials from MEB and JICA. JICA's two-step loans can be taken out in two months. Small and medium entrepreneurs are entitled to apply for it, upon completion of bank loan requirements”, she continued. “Those businesses from underdeveloped and remote Chin and Kayah states will be given priority for loans. JICA will give a full score to a bank which prioritizes entrepreneurs from those far-flung areas to grant the remaining loan of Ks1 billion, apart from its loan allocation”, said U Aung Myo Tun, general manager of Yangon Region Myan-

ma Economic Bank. In 2015-2016 fiscal year, 11 businessmen took out JICA's two-step loans of Ks4.8 million through SMIDB. In 2016-2017 FY, JICA offered Ks36.7 billion of loans for 175 entrepreneurs in 2016-2017 FY and Ks16 billion in 2017-2018 FY. JICA's two-step loan is offered at an interest rate of 0.01 per cent to the government which provides loans at an interest rate of 4 per cent to private banks and then, the banks will give loans at an interest rate of 8.5 per cent to SMEs. The SMEs constitute 90 per cent of Myanmar's businesses, but most of them are facing barriers and challenges regarding capital, technology and market access. The SMEs are facing difficulties to get access to loans as there are many bank loan requirements. Most of them cannot provide collateral, some traders criticized.

U Ngwe Tun, Genius Coffee producer, said that although there should be easy loan plans, the SMEs should keep their income and expenditure account and records, including taxpayer receipt, especially business plan. If they can provide all the verifications required, they can get access to loans. However, it does not mean banks can provide all the capital you need. Therefore, it's better to find other financing options.

There are over 67,000 registered SMEs, but still, there are many businesses which fail to register, according to SME Development Department. ■

State Counsellor attends meeting on renovation, upgrading Yangon University

FROM PAGE-1

Next, Dr. U Nyi Hla Nge, Chairman of the Hardware Committee on renovating and upgrading the Yangon University, reported on the number of students and faculty members expected in 2020-2030 at the university, steps for implementing the Yangon University Master Plan (Draft) and committee's review over the Hardware Master Plan.

In her conclusion remarks, State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi has urged the university's authorities to promote the law and water studies at the university.

She also stressed the importance of encouraging students to have the culture of doing research at schools, saying that they should not wait till arrive the universities as it is found that students are more interested in doing team research.

The State Counsellor also called for giving priorities to water studies in doing research as Myanmar is rich in water resources and the water study is relevant to current time of climate change.



State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi addresses the meeting on renovation and upgrading Yangon University. PHOTO MNA

If the water studies becomes the special subject in research field, international students are expected to come to Myanmar to do research the subject, she added.

Capacity building of faculty members is also underlined in the State Counsellor's remarks.

She also highlighted the importance of teaching methods and English language as

the skills are required not only for economy but also for politics.

The State Counsellor stressed the need to have the relations with foreign universities not only for education but also for social bonds with them.

She urged some students to understand the nature of the Centre of Excellence and urged the authorities to lay

down plans for narrowing the gap between the number of female and male students at the higher education level.

The Union Government is willing to see the improvement of the higher education sector and the Yangon University, but it also want to promote the vocational education sector.

State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi pledged that the

government would support the improvement the Yangon University's library.

Also present at the meeting were Yangon Region Chief Minister U Pyo Min Thein, Yangon Mayor U Maung Maung Soe, the rector, pro-rector and members of the committee on renovating and upgrading of the Yangon University. —Myanmar News Agency ■

U Kyaw Tint Swe receives Independent Commission of Enquiry

UNION MINISTER for the Office of the State Counsellor U Kyaw Tint Swe received Chairperson of the Independent Commission of Enquiry, Ambassador Rosario Manalo, and

commission members at his office in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday afternoon. During the meeting, they discussed about Rakhine issues.—Myanmar News Agency ■



Union Minister U Kyaw Tint Swe discusses with Chairperson of the Independent Commission of Enquiry, Ambassador Rosario Manalo yesterday. PHOTO:MNA



Union Minister Dr Pe Myint and officials pose for a documentary. PHOTO:MNA

Myanmar delegation visits Korean Academy of Film Arts

THE delegation led by Union Minister for Information Dr. Pe Myint visited film arts academy and an arts centre in Busan, Republic of Korea yesterday.

The delegation which is on study tour of film making technology visited Daesung film arts university where students from Asian countries are learning

the film arts. At the university, the delegation held talks over conducting film arts training in Myanmar.

The delegation also visited a centre where 22nd Busan International Film Festival will be held and studied the preparations for holding the festival.

In the afternoon, the delegation went to the Korean Academy of Film Arts-KAFA and studied the Republic of Korea's efforts for development of film arts. The delegation heard presentation about the film law, infrastructure and human resource development in the film industry. —Myanmar News Agency ■



Ariel view of inundation in Yedashe Township caused by overflowed water from Swa Chaung Dam and destruction of the dam's spillway yesterday . **PHOTO: TATMADAW NEWS**

Vice President U Henry Van Thio, Senior General Min Aung Hlaing inspect inundation, damages caused by overflow of Swa Chaung Dam

VICE President U Henry Van Thio and Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, flew over the inundation in Yedashe Township caused by overflowed water from Swa Chaung Dam and destruction of the dam's spillway yesterday.

The spillway of the dam burst at 5:45 am yesterday, flooding 85 village in 17 village-tracts in Yedashe Township affecting over 63,000 people and submerging the section between mile post 161 and 166 on the Yangon-Mandalay Highway.

During the tour of inspection, the Vice President and the Senior General was accompanied by Union Minister Dr. Aung Thu, Commander-in-Chief (Navy) Admiral Tin Aung San, Commander-in-Chief (Air) General Maung Maung Kyaw, senior military officers from the Ministry of Defence, officials of the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation, and officials concerned.

They, first, inspected the damage to the Swa Chaung bridge near Mile Post 165 on the Yangon-Mandalay Highway and gave instruction on measures to be taken for safety of the bridge.

Deputy Minister for Construction U Kyaw Lin and officials reported the condition of the bridge and landslides caused by the flash flood.

Afterwards, Vice President U Henry Van Thio and Senior General Min Aung Hlaing went to the dam and inspected the damaged spillway.

The Swa Chaung Dam began to overflow at around 5:45 am yesterday and 63,421 people have been evacuated.

The road section between Mile Post 161 and 166 on the Yangon-Mandalay Highway and the road section between Mile Post



Vice President U Henry Van Thio and Senior General Min Aung Hlaing inspect damages to the bridge on the Yangon-Mandalay Highway caused by overflow of Swa Chaung Dam. **PHOTO: TATMADAW NEWS**

169 and 204 in Yedashe Township on the Yangon-Mandalay old road were submerged one foot to four feet under water.

At the briefing hall of the dam, U Bo Bo Kyaw, Deputy Director-General of the Irrigation and Water Utilization Department of the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation, reported on condition of the dam's spillway, condition of the damaged spillway and situation of the water storage of the dam.

After the meeting, they inspected the submerged road at the 156 milepost on the Yangon-Mandalay road and inspected, together with Union Ministers U Thant Sin Maung and Dr. Win Myat Aye, and Deputy Minister U Soe Aung, the Tatmadaw members, firefighters, department officials and local residents

working together to help and rescue affected residents at the Swa Command Centre. They also arranged for Tatmadaw vehicles to transport railway passengers at the submerged railway tracks between Yedashe and Swa townships.

Afterwards, they arrived at Yedashe Township General Administration Office where Head of Taungoo District General Administration Department U Moe Htet explained about water breaching into the township's villages, submerging of villages, and collaboration from the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, regional government, Tatmadaw and rescue organizations in local rescue operations. The Vice President and the Commander-in-Chief then instructed to make sure canals

are not flooded to ensure the quick drainage of water, acquiring motorized fiber and rubber boats form the National Disaster Management Committee and the Tatmadaw, ensuring rescue teams can enter into affected villages, and ensuring adequate food and healthcare is available for people in the rescue centers.

Afterwards, they inspected the flooding at the old Yangon-Mandalay road near Yedashe Township and inspected officials to ensure the safety of the local residents.

The Swa Chaung Dam was damaged at the 360 feet mark at 5:45am yesterday, flooding Swa Town and seventeen village-tracts containing 85 villages in Yedashe Township, affecting 63,421 people. There have also been a flood measuring 1:4 feet

high between milepost 161 to 166 on the Yangon-Mandalay Highway and milepost 169 to 204 on the Yangon-Mandalay old highway between Yedashe and Thargara Villages. The Swa Chaung Dam has dropped by two water mark levels. The Bago Region Government, Tatmadaw and humanitarian organizations have cooperated in relocating affected residents to safer locations. The Swa Chaung Dam is 403 square miles large, with an annual 312,040 square feet of flowing through it. The dam can store up to 216,350 square feet of water. The dam can withstand storage up to the 337 feet water level mark but excessive rain this year raised the water level mark up to 338.6 feet water level mark, destroying the dam's spillway.— Myanmar News Agency ■

Investment in agro-industry key to sustainable development

IN Myanmar, about 70 per cent of the population lives in rural areas and is pre-occupied with agriculture at the level of farmers where the bulk of the production comes from.

Today, they are facing poverty and find it difficult to afford even the basic necessities for their families. Younger generation of farmers walked out of their farms in search of better jobs in cities.

To improve the socio-economic condition of our farmers, we need to formulate a long term plan for the sustainable development of our country.

Today, our business leaders are urging us to think about which economy is suitable for our country and where they should invest to develop the country.

“ Technological support is needed for Myanmar's SMEs to produce high-quality commodities, as well as encouragement for pioneers, innovation, creativity and exploring new markets.

Investments in the agro-based industries or small and medium scale industries in the agriculture sector are welcomed today because SMEs are seen as keys to integrated growth, alleviation of poverty and reduction of unemployment in the country.

Technological support is needed for Myanmar's SMEs to produce high-quality commodities, as well as encouragement for pioneers, innovation, creativity and exploring new markets.

According to the 2015 Myanmar Economics Survey, the manufacturing sector made up the bulk of the economic sector at 40 per cent, while 90 per cent of the businesses in Myanmar were small businesses. But, only two per cent of businesses in the country employ more than 250 employees.

To create business opportunities in the agriculture sector, the restrictions for investment in the agriculture sector have been eased since 2016, allowing foreign investors to invest up to 80 per cent.

Hence, our business leaders are invited to invest in the agro-based industry in preparation for future food security and for the sustainable development of Myanmar.

When we think about it, we should not forget the fact that food security would be a major challenge in the late 21st century. What can we do in the years to come to ensure food security? To improve the socio-economic condition of our farmers and to boost our economy, we need to set up agro-based industries such as flour, rice and sugar mills, cotton ginning, and a dairy milk industry in rural areas.

We should prepare for development of agro-based industries while seeking ways for boosting our economy through these agro industries.

The setting up of such agro-industries would create job opportunities for our people as well as for farmers. This in turn, would ease the trend of rural folk migrating to urban cities in search of livelihoods.



PHOTO: PHOE KHWAH



PHOTO: PHOE KHWAH

Should such disregards for hygiene be tolerated?

By Khin Maung Myint

EARLY every morning, I take a walk through a street, where a makeshift market is located, on my way to Kandawgyi Lake for routine workouts. Though I called it makeshift, it's almost a permanent one, which had been operating for decades, except for the fact that it is not systematically built for that purpose. Thus it lacked all the prerequisites of a clean and hygienic market place. Goods sold there range from vegetables, fruits, fish, poultry, meat, clothing and a variety of household necessities. Overall, it is what would be called a fresh market in other countries. The market is open daily from dawn to midday.

The times I used to pass through that place are just before dawn, while the vendors are just arriving by various means of transportations - trishaw, bicycle carrier, taxi and pickup truck, bringing their goods from the wholesale markets. They have to get to those wholesale markets around 2 or 3am to purchase what they will retail off to their customers at this street market.

The scenes I am about to describe are the ways their goods are handled. Some bring the processed chickens and ducks heaped on the seat of a trishaw without any sort of container or packaging. The trishawmen are always in a hurry to return to the bus stops to bring in another load of goods, so they are not patient to wait until

the vendors could unload them. Thus they will dump the goods on the roadside or even in the middle of the road. Some commodities come by pickup trucks—vegetables, fish, poultry and meat, all heaped on the floorboards where people tread on them with their dirty footwear. Some come by taxis, stuffed inside the trunk and on the floorboards leaving no place for the passengers or the owners of the goods to set their feet down, except on the bundles of foodstuffs.

People who are observant and also conscious of hygiene will agree with what I am going to write. Most of our roads and streets inside the residential areas are filthy, especially during the rainy season. They are almost always covered with sludges, plastic and other wastes, caused by frequent floods. Carcasses of dead rodents and sometimes even cats and dogs, run over by cars during the night, can be found. These animals met their deaths while out on the streets, scavenging for scraps of foods that are recklessly strewn in the streets due to lack of proper garbage collection system and lack of discipline on the part of some people. Dog poohs are regular sights everywhere.

In such circumstances, it is not rare to see goods dumped indiscriminately, as described above, and lying side by side with dead rodents and dog poohs or in a pool of sludge. Fish scales and tendrils of all sorts are just discarded in

the streets when the shops close for the day, attracting vermin. It's not an exaggeration, but a reality that has been going on in the said street market, and may be in other such places, too. Worst still, is the fact that some fish, poultry and meat vendors leave their chopping blocks by the roadside for scavengers to feast on the scraps of meat and blood clinging on them, during the nights.

I can go on describing such unhealthy, unhygienic and undisciplined behaviours that can cause adverse health effects on the consumers, but I deemed I have written enough for the readers to visualize the horrible conditions. I am not being pessimistic by writing thus, but I was once criticized by a young chief editor of a certain daily newspaper as being too critical and demeaning to our own people, and as that can lead foreigners who happened to read it to look down on us. I want to say that I disagree with him. If there is no one like me to point out the shortcomings like these, authorities may not know and there wouldn't be any improvement, whatsoever.

Not to waste time and space by writing about the many good examples, let me mention what I have seen. Undeniably, there are street markets in Thailand, of course. However, theirs are nothing comparable to the ones in our country. Unlike in our country, the vendors



PHOTO: PHOE KHWAH

are allowed to place tables or racks to display their commodities only just a few minutes before the opening time. At closing time, all these materials and trashes would nowhere to be seen. The vendors must clear their spaces. Those places will be washed down and brushed with mobile equipment during the nights by workers from departments concerned.

Then, there are environmental inspectors, mostly belonging to a third party or being on a contract, who go on inspections to check the health and hygiene conditions. Even a campsite for a road construction project, where I used to stay on my frequent visits, is inspected every month by a team

of such inspectors. They check the garbage bins, drainages, sewage systems, kitchens and the cleanliness of the whole camp. Thus, even if a construction campsite is inspected thoroughly, imagine what the markets and food vendors would be subjected to.

Let's face the fact that our street food vendors and even some restaurants will not pass such inspections. I had seen dogs and rodents on top of dining tables at street food stalls during the nights. Most are covered with scabies. When I once told that to a fried rice vendor, she replied that because she knew of such going-ons, she changed the old newspapers and journal sheets she uses as

table covers every day, as though her actions are enough to prevent the germs carried by those animals from entering the food she served. Some may not believe if I write that I had seen a tiny mice sneaking in and out from behind the readymade snacks displayed at a convenient store that opens 24/7. That shows how ignorant of hygiene and health risks our people are, indicating that they need education in such matters.

In my opinion 'the carrot and stick' policy should be applied. In Bangkok and other provincial towns in Thailand, the restaurants and other eateries, including street food stalls, displayed emblems with words that read, 'CLEAN FOOD, GOOD TASTE' in English. Not every shop can display them all the time, but only those that are certified after thorough periodical inspections, and once they don't meet the set norms, the emblems have to be withdrawn until they improve again. All food vendors, be it in the street or restaurants, must compulsorily wear aprons and chef's head gears at all times to prevent hairs falling into the foods they cook and serve. It is a very effective practice for the



Flood Warning (Issued at 15:00 hrs MST on 29-8-2018)

According to the (14:30) hrs MST 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 that people who have settled near the river banks and low lying area at Bago Township, to take precautionary measures.

Flood Bulletin (Issued at 15:00 hrs MST on 29-8-2018)

Flood condition of Sittoung River

According to the (14:30) hrs MST observation today, the water level of Sittoung River has exceeded by about (3) feet at Madauk above its danger level. It may rise about (½) foot from the present water level during the next (2) days and may remain above its danger level.

Flood condition of Shwegyin River

According to the (14:30) hrs MST observation today, the water level of Shwegyin River has exceeded by about (1) inch at Shwegyin above its danger level. It may rise about (½) foot from the present water level during the next (1) day and may remain above its danger level.

Flood condition of Thanlwin River

According to the (14:30) hrs MST observation today, the water level of Thanlwin River has exceeded by about (4) feet at Hpa-an above its danger level. It may fall about (½) foot from the present water level during the next (2) days and may remain above its danger level.

Advisory

It is especially advised that people who have settled near the river banks and low lying areas in Madauk, Hpaan and Shwegyin Townships, to take precautionary measures.

Myanmar Daily Weather Report (Issued at 7:00 pm Wednesday 29 August 2018)

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

FORECAST VALID UNTIL AFTERNOON OF THE 30 AUGUST 2018: Rain or thundershowers will be scattered in Lower Sagaing, Mandalay and Magway regions, Northern Shan and Kayah states, fairly widespread in Upper Sagaing Region and Chin State and widespread in the remaining regions and states with isolated heavy falls in Magway, Ayeyawady and Taninthayi regions, Rakhine, Kayin and Mon states. Degree of certainty is (100%).

STATE OF THE SEA: Squalls with moderate to rough seas are likely at times off and along Myanmar Coasts. Surface wind speed in squalls may reach (30-35) mph. Wave height will be about (6-9) feet in off and along Myanmar Coasts.

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Moderate monsoon.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 30 AUGUST 2018: One or two rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 30 AUGUST 2018: One or two rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 30 AUGUST 2018: Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (80%).



Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U T Khun Myat, right, receives Pakistan Ambassador to Myanmar, left, in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U T Khun Myat receives Ambassador of Pakistan to Myanmar

PYITHU Hluttaw Speaker U T Khun Myat received H.E. Mr. Khalid Hussain Memon, Ambassador of Pakistan to Myanmar, at the hall of the Pyithu Hluttaw, Hluttaw Building in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday afternoon.

During the meeting, matters relating to increasing bilateral relations between Pakistan and Myanmar and Hluttaw matters were openly discussed.—Myanmar News Agency ■

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Joint Bill Committee holds meeting

THE Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Joint Bill Committee held a meeting over Vacant, Fallow and Virgin Lands Management Law, sent back with remarks from President U Win Myint at the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Building D, second floor meeting hall,

yesterday afternoon.

The meeting was attended by Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Deputy Speaker and Joint Bill Committee Chairman U Tun Aung @ U Tun Tun Hein, Joint Bill Committee deputy chairmen, secretary, joint secretary and com-

mittee members, Legal Affairs and Special Cases Assessment Commission members, Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation, officials from Union Attorney General Office and Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Office.—Myanmar News Agency ■



PHOTO: MNA

Repair to spillway breach at Swa Chaung Dam begins yesterday evening

GROUND survey to repair the Swa Chaung Dam's spillway breach in Yedashe Township, Bago Region, was conducted yesterday evening to repair the damage to the dam's spillway, according to the Irrigation and Water Utilization Management Department.

"Ground survey will be taken today to repair the collapse of the dam spillway. Cars are unable to directly reach the spot, but motorcycles are able to enter. Ground survey and searching for good soil will be carried out this evening," said Dr. Zaw Lwin Tun, the Deputy Director General of Irrigation and Water Utilization Management Department.

The Swa Chaung Dam's

spillway structure broke around 6am of yesterday, flooding nearby areas including Yangon-Mandalay highway, old Yangon-Mandalay road and Yedashe township's Swa town and villages.

Due to the unleashed water, a road section between Mile Post 165/4 and 166/0 on the Yangon-Mandalay highway was submerged about two feet under water and the nearby Swa Chaung bridge was slightly destroyed by the flash floods. The road section near the Mile Post 199/4 in Yedashe Township of the old Yangon-Mandalay road was also inundated. "The spillway's right side collapsed in the morning and overflowed. Of the two bridges over the Swa Chaung (creek) on

the Yangon-Mandalay highway, one was slightly destroyed and traffic was temporarily prohibited in the morning. Later, one bridge was allowed for traffic. There remains a little overflowing water on the old Yangon-Mandalay road. The flooding in the dam receded. The collapse is caused by the damaged spillway. The dam is in good condition. The Yangon-Mandalay highway can operate now and the old Yangon-Mandalay road will be able to operate soon," said Dr. Zaw Lwin Tun said. Bago Region government and related departments are cooperating for rescue efforts and repairs of the damaged spillway.

A total of 82 villages from 18 village-tracts were flooded and 17 rescue camps in Yedashe Township and 16 rescue camps in Toungoo Township are open, according to the list released by the Bago Region government yesterday.

Foods and aid are being sent timely to the flooded villages by the Bago Region Disaster Supervision Office, according to the Bago Region government.—Myanmar News Agency ■



Yangon-Mandalay Highway is submerged by overflow caused by the spillway breach of Swa Chaung Dam. **PHOTO: MNA**

Deputy Information Minister U Aung Hla Tun exclusively interviewed by DVB

U Aung Hla Tun, Deputy Minister of Information, was exclusively interviewed by Executive Producer U Ye Wint Thu and team from the DVB at the Ministry of Information in Nay Pyi Taw at 10 a.m. on Wednesday.

At the exclusive interview, the Deputy Minister answered DVB's questions concerning the situation of press freedom in Myanmar, difficulty in reporting in the conflict areas, reporters facing legal actions, the assessment of Myanmar

media by international watchdogs, sustainability of Myanmar local media and so on.

Besides, the Deputy Minister called for the participation and cooperation by all the stakeholders from the Myanmar media Industry for the emergence of independent responsible and self-regulated media in order to nurture talented and qualified journalists to carry our proper Myanmar narrative among the international community.—Myanmar News Agency ■



Deputy Minister for Information U Aung Hla Tun interviewed by Executive Producer U Ye Wint Thu of DVB. **PHOTO: MNA**

Ninth regular session of Second Pyithu Hluttaw holds 13th- day meeting

FROM PAGE-2

Union Election Commission member U Than Htay and Deputy Minister for Education U Win Maw Tun also replied to questions raised by Dr. U Maung Thin of Meiktila constituency, U Myo Zaw Aung of Kawlin constituency and U Aung Thaung Shwe of Buthidaung constituency.

Committee, bill reports read

Next, U Khin Maung Than, secretary of the Pyithu Hluttaw Public Accounts Committee, read a report from the committee. Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U T Khun Myat called for MPs interested in discussing the report to enlist their names.

The Speaker then notified the assembly that the Bill to amend the Myanmar Accountancy Council Law, sent back with remarks and approved by the Amyotha Hluttaw, has been received and Bill Committee member U Htay Ngway read the report on the bill. The Speaker then called for MPs interested in submitting a proposal to amend the bill to enlist their names.

The Speaker also notified the assembly of receiving with amendments from the Amyotha Hluttaw the Bill amending the Law of Protection of the Farmer Rights and Enhancement of their Benefits a Second Time and the International Theravada Buddhist Missionary University Bill, and called for MPs interested in submitting proposals of amendments to enlist their names.

MPs discuss motion to perform education research, supply funds

MPs then discussed a motion tabled by Dr. U Hla Moe of Aungmyaythazan constituency urging the Union Government to supply adequate research funds to experts in developing Myanmar's higher education sector, and accordingly the entire education sector.

U Kyaw Aung Lwin of Sedoktara constituency remarked that basic education subjects are not taught in the mother tongue but in English, which poses subject learning and theoretical studies difficulties in students. Consequently, this leads to the rise of

rote memorization and tuition dependency, seriously limiting a student's time for physical activities and acquiring extrinsic knowledge as well as pursuing artistic interests and socializing with the outside world, he said, adding that the future for this looks grim if continued. He said he supports the motion and advises following the examples of other developed countries to provide subject teaching in the mother language and to promote English language learning separately.

Tatmadaw representative Maj. Win Min Tun said there are two departments under the Ministry of Education that performs research, namely the Department of Educational Research, Planning and Training and the Department of Research and Innovation. He said comparisons to the two departments' research expenditures in previous fiscal years have revealed a deficit and although monetary support of US\$ 404.15 million have been received from international organizations, there is still a need for beneficial and noteworthy research projects. He said the

Department of Educational Research, Planning and Training has proposed a budget of Ks 16.5 billion and the Department of Research and Innovation has proposed a budget of Ks 5.2 billion for the upcoming fiscal year. He advised for the budgets to be effectively used for research projects at 136 colleges and universities.

There are obstacles in the path of research projects such as people conducting only one research project as a means to acquire a degree or a promotion, a limited amount of earnest researchers, low participation from government, universities and donors, lack of proper research equipment and documents, inability or lack of conditions to apply the research data effectively, lack of expert guidelines, inability to penetrate onto the global stage, research papers not meeting standard quality, and the incapacity to maintain or sustain research projects. He said as the country could develop only by good researches, he seriously supports this motion.

The motion was further dis-

cussed by U Soe Myint (a) U Aung Zaw Myint of Amarapura constituency, U Myint Lwin of Twantay constituency, Dr. Salai Riyanbel of Falam constituency, U Yan Lin of Kyaiklet constituency, U Myint Tun of Taze constituency, Dr. Daw Khin Sithu of Loikaw constituency, Dr. U San Shwe Win of Yekyi constituency and Daw Wint Wah Tun of Shataw constituency. Deputy Minister for Education U Win Maw Tun then said the Ministry of Education supports the motion since it will allow for publication of research papers, holding research seminars, forums, exhibitions and competitions in universities, reading papers in international research seminars, allow universities to perform research to benefit SMEs in states and regions, and conduct learning in practical fields.

The Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker then asked for the Hluttaw's decision, acquired it, and then announced that the Hluttaw has approved the motion. The 14th-day meeting of the ninth regular session of the Second Pyithu Hluttaw will be held on 31 August. —Aye Aye Thant (MNA) ■

Ninth regular session of Second Amyotha Hluttaw holds 13th-day meeting

FROM PAGE-2

Additionally, Amyotha Hluttaw Bill Committee member Daw Nwe Nwe Aung read a report on the Bill amending the Penal Code a second time. The Speaker called for MPs interested in discussing the bill to enlist their names.

MPs discuss motion to clear corruption, manage land loss

MPs then discussed a motion by U Myo Win of Mon State constituency 8 urging the Union Government to quickly address the issue of unlawful forming and selling of gardens which contribute to the rapid decrease in agricultural lands and the potential loss of useable land left behind in

urban and rural areas as a result of corrupted practices in the relevant administration committee, municipal committee and farmland management committee.

U Zaw Min Latt (a) U Ko Latt of Shan State constituency 1 said he agrees with the motion in amending laws relating to land, as well as uncovering the corruption of the three aforementioned types of committees. He said there are 135 ethnicities in Myanmar who have different uses of lands, and this is something that should be considered when reviewing and amending land laws so that the focus is not just on rice production but rather on regional crops as well.

Tatmadaw representative

Lt-Col Aung Kyaw Zaw said there needs to be improved and effective methods to scrutinize the conversion of farmland into other land in a systematic and transparent way; otherwise it will result in the reduction of farmland and hinder urban and rural development that will likely contribute to the emergence of houses alongside roads. He said proper taxes should be levied from farmland converted into land for other uses or if these lands are sold by the original recipient to another entity, and that he supported U Myo Win's motion.

The motion was further discussed by Dr. U Kweye Kweye of Mandalay Region constituency

6, U Hla San of Magway Region constituency 1, and Dr. Kun Win Thaung of Kachin State constituency 11.

Deputy Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation U Hla Kyaw replied to the motion saying that there are departments and agencies that do not follow the enacted laws, have organizational weaknesses and look out for their personal benefits, thus contributing to the corruption. He said there needs to be increased cooperation between his ministry, the Ministry of Home Affairs, relevant municipal committees and other organizations.

The deputy minister said there will be submissions at the meeting of the Central Farmland

Management Committee to successfully implement strategies to ensure effective administration in all relevant organizations. He said he approved of the MP's motion, as it encourages the emergence of standards and procedures to combat corruption and ensure farmland and other lands are not exploited.

The Speaker then called for a ballot via electronic voting from the Hluttaw, resulting in a majority 177 votes, no votes, and two abstentions. The Speaker announced the motion has been approved.

The 14th-day meeting of the ninth regular session of the Second Amyotha Hluttaw will be held on 31 August.—Aung Ye Thwin ■

MM-Bangladesh continue coordinated patrol

A 20-member troop led by Sub-inspector Myint Maung of No. 51 Guard Outpost under the No. 5 Border Guards Sub-division in Aungtapyay Area, Region-1 of Maungtaw Township and a 15-member troop led by Officer Naib Subedar Md. Ekramul Haque of No. 11 Border Guard

Police Bangladesh of Panchari Outpost conducted a coordinated patrol along the border on 28 August.

They conducted the patrol from Mile Post No. 51 to 51/5 according to the Information Department of the Myanmar Police Force.—Myanmar Police Force



PHOTO: MYANMAR POLICE FORCE

China-backed trade pact talks at 'critical stage': Singapore PM

SINGAPORE — Talks on a China-backed free-trade pact have reached a "critical stage", Singapore's leader said on Wednesday as he urged regional economic ministers to seal the deal by the end of the year.

The 16-nation Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), which will be the world's biggest free-trade accord if it is agreed, has taken centre stage as Washington embarks on a unilateral, protectionist agenda.

Covering about half the world's population, the RCEP notably excludes the US, which had been leading another regional pact — the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) — until President Donald Trump abandoned it on coming to office early last year.

"The RCEP negotiations have continued for some time, and have now reached a critical stage," Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong said as he opened a five-day meeting of economy ministers from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). The Singapore meeting will be joined later in the week by



Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong delivers the opening address at the 50th ASEAN Economic Ministers (AEM) Meeting and Related Meetings in Singapore on 29 August, 2018. PHOTO: AFP

top trade officials from ASEAN's main trading partners, including China, Japan, Australia and the US. "After a great deal of work, the possibility of substantively concluding the RCEP negotia-

tions is finally in sight," he said.

Lee also warned about escalating tensions between the US and China — who have been locked in a spiralling trade row — and other major economies in-

cluding the eurozone and Canada.

"The RCEP will be an important signal to the world that ASEAN members and our partners place high value on free trade, regional integration and inter-

national cooperation," he said.

The pact will group the 10 ASEAN members plus China, India, Japan, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand, and will cover a third of the world's gross domestic product.

A diplomatic source said Singapore, this year's ASEAN chair, is pushing for an agreement on the RCEP before handing over the chairmanship to Thailand in 2019.

Another source involved in the talks said ASEAN leaders hope to announce the "substantial conclusion" of negotiations during a summit in November with their main trading partners, and they expect the pact to be implemented in 2020.

Beijing is keen to use Washington's rejection of the TPP to build enthusiasm for its own deal and increase influence in the region. RCEP is a more modest deal that prescribes lower and more limited regulatory standards. The 11 remaining TPP members signed a slimmed down version of the agreement in March. —AFP ■

Philippines hunts bombers in deadly festival blast

SULTAN KUDARAT (Philippines) — Philippine authorities were hunting on Wednesday two men believed to have planted the explosives that killed two people, including a young girl, at a festival in the nation's south.

The blast late Tuesday in the town of Isulan, which wounded 35 others, is the second deadly bombing in less than a month in the region where Islamist militants have waged a decades-long insurgency.

A man left the improvised bomb in a bag near a grocery store as crowds gathered to

celebrate the town's founding anniversary but he and an accomplice escaped, the military said.

"One (man) did the emplacement while the other one (drove) the getaway motorcycle," Brigadier General Cirilito Sobejana told AFP, adding a manhunt was underway.

The attack, claimed by the Islamic State group, is the latest violence in the south of the mainly Catholic archipelago where a long-running Islamist insurgency has left more than 100,000 people dead by govern-

ment count. Sobejana said it was "highly likely" that the pro-IS Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF) plotted the bombing.

A military spokesman said the blast could have been in retaliation for offensives against the BIFF, adding the group had planned bomb attacks in parts of the southern region of Mindanao.

"They want to create and sow terror in the area," regional military spokesman Captain Arvin Encinas told AFP, adding two soldiers were among the

wounded. The attack comes less than a month after a van bomb ripped through a military checkpoint on the neighbouring island of Basilan on 31 July, killing 10 people.

IS claimed responsibility for that bombing as well and authorities believe the man behind the wheel of the explosives-laden van may have intended to target a nearby children's parade.

President Rodrigo Duterte put Mindanao under martial rule until the end of this year after pro-IS militants seized the southern city of Marawi last year.

On Wednesday, Duterte's aides condemned the bombing saying it could prompt the president to extend martial law in the area. The recent blasts follow the Duterte government enacting a law to create greater autonomy for the Muslim minority in the south and which is hoped will help end the conflict.

The mother of the girl who died in Tuesday's bombing pleaded with authorities for justice.

"I hope they help us and catch the perpetrators," Nezel Alayon said in between tears. —AFP ■

Malaysian ex-spy chief detained over theft of poll funds

KUALA LUMPUR (Malaysia) — A controversial Malaysian former spy chief was remanded in custody on Wednesday over the alleged theft of funds intended to be used for a historic general election in May.

Hasanah Abdul Hamid, ex-head of Malaysia's External Intelligence Organization, was an ally of former leader Najib Razak, who was unexpectedly ejected from office at the polls amid alle-

gations he and his cronies stole huge sums of public money.

There has been a purge of senior officials with links to the former government since the election upset, with the attorney-general and the head of the civil service among those losing their jobs.

Hasanah was arrested on Tuesday by anti-corruption investigators probing the theft of the election funds from the prime

minister's department, which reports say amount to millions of ringgit. The 61-year-old appeared in court on Wednesday in the administrative capital Putrajaya and was remanded in custody for five days, an official from the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission told AFP.

"Hasanah is being investigated for abuse of power," the official added.

Anti-graft investigators have

this week arrested seven other officers from Hasanah's agency, which worked directly under the prime minister's department, as part of their probe into the missing money.

Hasanah was at the centre of a controversy last month after a letter she wrote to the head of the CIA before the election leaked online. In the letter, she urged the US to back Najib and said he was a friend of America, while

describing Mahathir Mohamad — Malaysia's new leader after triumphing in the election at the head of a reformist alliance — as "anti-West".

Najib was accused of overseeing the theft of billions of dollars from sovereign wealth fund 1MDB, which he set up. Since his election loss, he has been arrested and charged over the scandal. He denies any wrongdoing. —AFP ■

Paris, Tokyo, New York and others pledge to slash waste

PARIS — By slashing food waste and improving waste management and recycling, 23 global cities and regions representing 150 million people pledged on Tuesday to significantly cut the pollution-causing garbage they generate by 2030.

Places like New York, Tokyo, London, Paris and Sydney vowed to “cut the amount of waste generated by each citizen 15 per cent by 2030,” said a statement from C40 Cities, a global network dedicated to fighting climate change.

They will also “reduce the amount of waste sent to landfills and incineration by 50 per cent and increase the diversion rate to 70 per cent by 2030,” according to the declaration.

The goal of the “Advancing Towards Zero Waste Declaration” is to avoid the disposal of at least 87 million tons of waste by 2030.

Waste is becoming one of the leading threats to the environment, increasing faster than any other pollutant. Each year, 1.3 billion tons of wasted food is sent to landfills where rotting scraps send the potent heat-trapping greenhouse gas methane into the atmosphere.

Improving waste and material management around the world globally could reduce global emissions by 20 per cent, and are “essential” to delivering on the goals of the 2015 Paris climate accords and keeping global temperature rise below 1.5 Celsius, said the C40 Cities statement.

The announcement was released ahead of the Global Climate Action Summit in San Francisco in mid-September.

Signatories include Auckland, Copenhagen, Dubai, London, Milan, Montreal, New York City,



A reclaimer wades through the waste at Robinson Deep landfill, Johannesburg's largest landfill on 29 June, 2018. PHOTO: AFP

Newburyport, Paris, Philadelphia, Portland, Rotterdam, San Jose, San Francisco, Santa Monica, Sydney, Tel Aviv, Tokyo, Toronto, Vancouver Washington DC, and the regions of Navarra and Catalonia.

Specific steps include reducing food waste and

facilitating safe food donation. Participating areas may encourage separate collection of food scraps that could be used for compost, and supporting local policies like sustainable procurement and boosting awareness and use of recycling for construction

and demolition materials.

Areas may also support reductions or bans on single-use and non-recyclable plastics.

The signatories pledged to publicly report their progress every two years. “Dramatically reducing waste will help curb

carbon emissions while helping us build a fairer, cleaner and more livable city for all New Yorkers,” said New York Mayor Bill de Blasio. “We’re proud to stand alongside other leading cities worldwide in taking ambitious steps to cut down on waste.”—AFP ■

Small tsunami waves after New Caledonia quake

SYDNEY (Australia) — A 7.1 magnitude earthquake struck off the eastern coast of New Caledonia on Wednesday and generated small tsunami waves, seismologists said, but there were no immediate reports of damage.

The tremor hit at a depth of 27 kilometres (16 miles) in the southern Pacific Ocean, some 231 kilometres from the

nearest town Tadine in the lightly populated Loyalty Islands, the US Geological Survey said.

The Pacific Tsunami Warning Center said “small tsunami waves have been observed”. “Persons along coastal areas near the earthquake should be observant and exercise normal caution. Otherwise, no action is required,” it added. —AFP ■

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V KOTA HADIAH VOY. NO. (KHAD 0104N/S)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V KOTA HADIAH VOY. NO. (KHAD 0104N/S) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 30-8-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T.T/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 ADVANCE CONTAINER
LINES

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V VINALINES FREEDOM VOY. NO. (-)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V VINALINES FREEDOM VOY. NO. (-) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 30-8-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of T.M.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 BEN LINE AGENCIES
(SINGAPORE) PTE LTD

Phone No: 2301928

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V PATHEIN STAR VOY. NO. (027 N/S)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V PATHEIN STAR VOY. NO. (027 N/S) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 30-8-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of 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 CONTINENTAL
SHIPPING LINE PTE LTD

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V MCC SHANGHAI VOY. NO. (1833-1834)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V MCC SHANGHAI VOY. NO. (1833-1834) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 30-8-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T.T where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

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

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V SINAR BINTAN VOY. NO. (601 N/S)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V SINAR BINTAN VOY. NO. (601 N/S) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 30-8-2018 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 SAMUDERA SHIPPING
LINE

Phone No: 2301185

Alec Baldwin to play Bruce Wayne's father in 'Joker'

LOS ANGELES — Alec Baldwin has joined "Joker" with Joaquin Phoenix in the lead.

The 60-year-old actor will play the role of Bruce Wayne/Batman's father, Thomas Wayne in the origin story of one of DC's most iconic antagonists.

According to *The Hollywood Reporter*, sources say the script portrays Thomas Wayne as a cheesy and tanned businessman

who is more in the mould of a 1980s Donald Trump.

To be directed by Todd Phillips, the film is scheduled to begin shooting in a fortnight.

Phillips co-wrote the script with Scott Silver.

Also starring Robert De Niro, Zazie Beetz and Frances Conroy, Warner Bros has set on 4 October, 2019 as release date.—PTI ■



Alec Baldwin. PHOTO: PTI

Screen legend Judi Dench to get honorary award in Spain

MADRID (Spain) — British screen legend Judi Dench, best known for her role as M in James Bond films, will receive a lifetime achievement award at Spain's famous San Sebastian film festival, organizers said on Tuesday.

The 83-year-old actress who won an Oscar in 1999 for her role as Queen Elizabeth I in "Shakespeare in Love" will get the Donostia Award on 25 September, they said.

Dench, a veteran star of the stage and screen, made her cinema debut in 1964 and has worked with directors as varied as Stephen Frears, Kenneth Branagh, Clint Eastwood and Sam Mendes.

Her subtle portrayal of complex characters such as Queen Victoria in "Mrs Brown" or author Iris Murdoch in "Iris" have earned her critical acclaim.

A seven-time Oscar nominee and the recipient of several Bafta awards, Dench is perhaps best known worldwide for playing M, the head of MI6, in James Bond films.

It will be her first visit to the film festival in the Basque Country, where her new film "Red Joan," directed by Trevor Nunn, will be screened.—AFP ■

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PHOTO: AFP

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A seven-time Oscar nominee and the recipient of several Bafta awards, Dench is perhaps best known worldwide for playing M,

the head of MI6, in James Bond films. It will be her first visit to the film festival in the Basque Country, where her new film "Red Joan," directed by Trevor Nunn, will be screened. In the film inspired on a true story, she plays a tranquil retiree who is suddenly arrested by MI5 and exposed as a long-standing KGB spy. She will join US actor Danny de Vito and Japanese director Hirokazu Kore-eda, whose film "Shoplifters" won the Palme d'Or in this year's Cannes Film Festival, in receiving the Donostia Award.

Past recipients include Gregory Peck, Robert De Niro, Bette Davis, Susan Sarandon and Meryl Streep.—AFP ■

Epic, extreme film-art project to rebuild Berlin Wall

BERLIN — A massive film-art project in the German capital is set to rebuild part of the Berlin Wall to create a closed-off mini-state, complete with visa

checks, organizers said on Tuesday.

The walled-in "city within a city" will host the world premiere of the mysterious and mammoth

"DAU" film project and social experiment of enigmatic Russian filmmaker Ilya Khrzhanovsky, 43.

Pending final approval from Berlin city authorities, which or-

ganizers said was "in the works", staff plan to erect 900 concrete wall slabs, each 3.60 metres (about 12 feet) tall, for the 6.6 million euro (\$7.7 million) event.

Visitors to the parallel world will have to apply online for entrance "visas" and swap their cellphones for off-line digital devices with an algorithm that will suggest a personalized tour.

Set on a city block on Unter den Linden boulevard, the time-capsule project is due to launch on 12 October and end with a ritualistic tearing down of the wall on 9 November, the day of the historic event in 1989.

The aim is not to create "a Disney GDR" (German Democratic Republic), said Thomas Oberender, director of culture festival Berliner Festspiele which will host the mega-event.

"It is not a film premiere but

a mixture of social experiment, artistic experiment and... an impressive form of world-building," he told a Berlin press conference.

The aim, said organisers, is to spark "a political and social debate about freedom and totalitarianism, surveillance, co-existence and national identity".

'Most insane film shoot'

Long shrouded in mystery, a trickle of news and cryptic clues has created buzz and sparked controversy about the project, with critics labelling it a stunt hurtful to people who lived in communist East Germany.

"Out of respect for the victims who really experienced such situations, we should step away from this," Berlin politician Sabina Bangert of the Greens party said, according to *Tagesspiegel* daily.—AFP ■



(l-r) Medienboard's Kirsten Niehuus, cameraman Juergen Juerges, Schinkel Pavillon curator Nina Pohl, Berliner Festspiele director Thomas Oberender, Susanne Marian of Phenomen Films and director Tom Tykwer pose at the presentation of DAU project in Berlin. PHOTO: AFP

Physicists finally observe 'elusive' Higgs decay

PARIS — Six years after tracking down the Higgs boson, the subatomic particle that confers mass on matter, physicists said on Tuesday they have “at long last” witnessed it decaying into tiny bits called “bottom quarks”.

The predicted decay was observed at the Large Hadron Collider (LHC) famous for the Nobel-capped discovery of the Higgs particle in 2012, Europe's CERN physics lab announced.

“During the early preparations of the LHC, there were doubts on whether this observation could be achieved,” the ATLAS scientific collaboration said of the “elusive interaction” now documented at the massive particle accelerator.

Because Higgs bosons themselves are hard to find, and other particles also break up into bottom quarks, it has been difficult to track down those attributed specifically to Higgs decay.

Researchers say the long-awaited observation serves as further verification of the Standard Model of physics — the mainstream theory of the funda-

mental particles that make up the Universe and the forces that govern them.

Under the model, developed in the early 1970s, quarks and leptons are the most basic building blocks of matter.

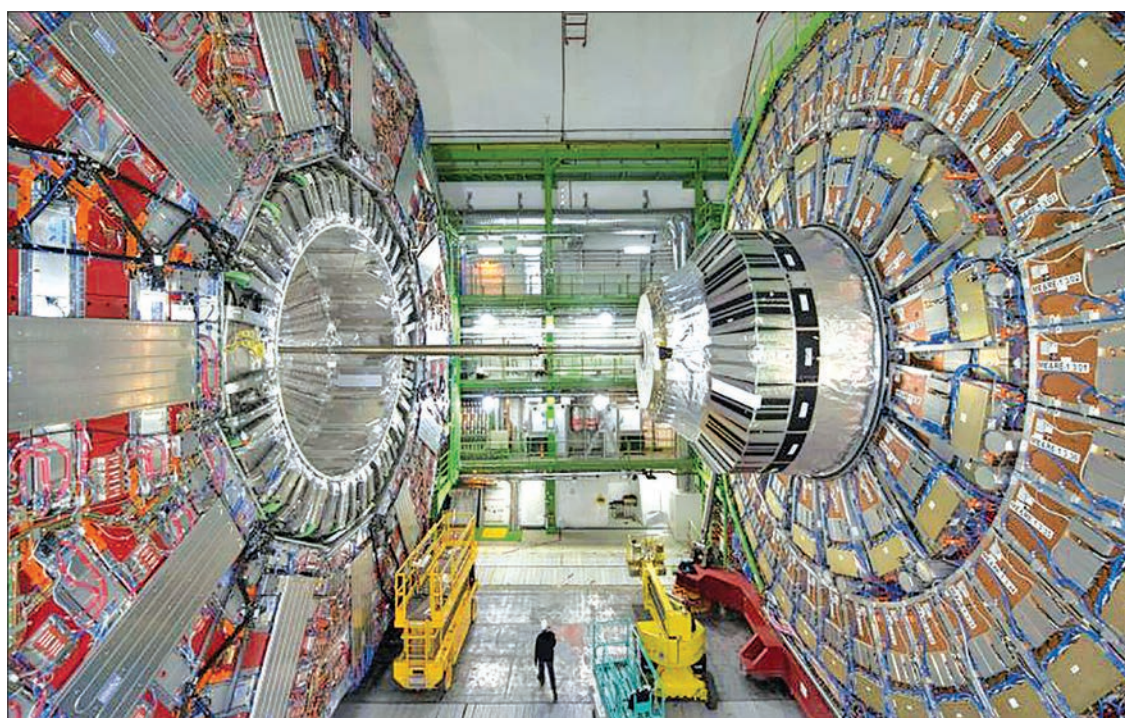
There are six types of quarks, of which bottom quarks — also called beauty quarks — are among the heaviest.

The Standard Model predicted that Higgs decay would yield pairs of bottom quarks about 60 per cent of the time. But finding these quarks has been “among the most demanding analyses carried out by ATLAS so far,” the team said in a statement.

New physics?

Scientists probing the nature and workings of the Higgs and other particles are on the lookout for anything that does not fit with Standard Model predictions.

This is because the model doesn't explain dark matter or dark energy, and appears to be incompatible with the theory of gravity. Some other model of “new physics” is needed to ex-



A picture of the CMS (Compact Muon Solenoid) Cavern at the European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN) in Geneva. **PHOTO: AFP**

plain these.

Proposed alternatives have included the existence of extra dimensions, or “supersymmetry” which postulates the existence of a sibling of equal mass for every known Standard Model particle.

Evidence for neither has yet been found.

The latest observation was also “consistent with” the Standard Model, said the CMS team that worked with ATLAS on the

project. But it “still leaves room for contributions from new physics.”

“It's another point for the Standard Model,” physicist Pauline Gagnon told AFP.

While it was an important scientific breakthrough, the observation was also “a disappointment (for physicists) because the Standard Model has not yet been disproven.”

Physicists have sifted

through mountains of experimental data these last years to piece together a profile of the elusive Higgs boson first predicted in 1964. They have so far observed its mass, spin, and lifetime.

“In the coming years, much more data will be collected and the precision will be improved in our quest to see if the Higgs boson reveals the presence of physics beyond the Standard Model,” said the CMS collaborati on.—AFP ■

Bees get hooked on harmful pesticide

PARIS — Bumblebees acquire a taste for food laced with a pesticide known to harm them, according to a study suggesting the chemicals pose an even greater threat to pollinators than previously thought.

In experiments, researchers showed that bees initially put off by sugar water containing neonicotinoids — the most widely-used class of insecticide worldwide — soon started seeking them out to the exclusion of untainted food.

The findings were published on Wednesday in the journal *Proceedings of the Royal Society B*.

Neonicotinoids, earlier research has shown, disrupt the ability of bees to reproduce and lower their resistance to disease.

“At first, it appeared that the bees did avoid the food containing the pesticide,” said lead author Andres Arce, a researcher at Imperial College London.

“However, as individual bees increasingly experience the treated food they develop a preference for it.”

Even when the position of their feeders was switched, the pollinators made a beeline for



Pesticides have been blamed as a cause of colony collapse disorder in bees. **PHOTO: AFP**

the one laced with insecticide.

Neonicotinoids target nerve receptors in insects much in the way nicotine — the addictive ingredient in tobacco — does in humans and other mammals.

“Our findings... tick certain symptoms of addictive behaviour, which is intriguing given the addictive properties of nicotine on humans,” said lead researcher Richard Gill, also from Imperial.

Unlike contact pesticides, which remain on the plant surface, neonicotinoids are absorbed by seeds and transported to leaves, flowers, roots, and stems as the plant grows.

Several countries have banned forms of the insecticide, mainly due to its impact on Na-

ture's little helpers.

In the European Union, three neonicotinoid-based products will be off-limits in open fields starting on 19 December. France has banned five chemical variants starting Saturday.

Canada recently announced it would phase out two neonicotinoids used on canola, corn, and soybean crops.

Widely used over the last two decades, neonicotinoids were designed to control sap-feeding insects such as aphids and root-feeding grubs.

In recent years, fears have been growing over the declining health of bees globally, and the possible role of neonicotinoids.

Pesticides have been blamed as a cause of colony collapse disorder, along with mites, viruses, and fungi, or some combination.

The United Nations warned last year that 40 per cent of invertebrate pollinators — particularly bees and butterflies — risk global extinction.—AFP ■

Robot teachers invade Chinese kindergartens

BEIJING (China) — The Chinese kindergarten children giggled as they worked to solve puzzles assigned by their new teaching assistant: a roundish, short educator with a screen for a face.

Just under 60 centimetres (two feet) high, the autonomous robot named Keeko has been a hit in several kindergartens, telling stories and challenging children with logic problems.

Round and white with a tubby body, the armless robot zips around on tiny wheels, its inbuilt cameras doubling up both as navigational sensors and a front-facing camera allowing users to record video journals.

In China, robots are being developed to deliver groceries, provide companionship to the elderly, dispense legal advice and now, as Keeko's creators hope, join the ranks of educators.

At the Yiswind Institute of Multicultural Education on the outskirts of Beijing, the children have been tasked to help a prince find his way through a desert — by putting together square mats that represent a path taken by the

robot — part storytelling and part problem-solving. Each time they get an answer right, the device reacts with delight, its face flashing heart-shaped eyes.

“Education today is no longer a one-way street, where the teacher teaches and students just learn,” said Candy Xiong, a teacher trained in early childhood education who now works with Keeko Robot Xiamen Technology as a trainer.

“When children see Keeko with its round head and body, it looks adorable and children love it. So when they see Keeko, they almost instantly take to it,” she added. Keeko robots have entered more than 600 kindergartens across the country with its makers hoping to expand into Greater China and Southeast Asia.

Beijing has invested money and manpower in developing artificial intelligence as part of its “Made in China 2025” plan, with a Chinese firm last year unveiling the country's first human-like robot that can hold simple conversations and make facial expressions.—AFP ■

Serena attitude defused dress code row says French Open director

PARIS—French Open director Guy Forget says Serena Williams' attitude defused a potential row over an up-coming dress code that he insists will be far less strict than the one at Wimbledon, French sports daily *LEquipe* reported on Tuesday.

The idea he said would be to establish a certain level of elegance or as he put it "a Roland Garros style".

The move comes hot on the heels of a furore following

French tennis federation chief Bernard Giudicelli describing the "Black Panther" catsuit American star Williams wore at the French Open in May as "going too far".

Williams at the time took the announcement in her stride, describing her relationship with the French Open organizers as wonderful. "He's (Guidicelli) been so easy to talk to," Williams said. "My whole team is basically French so, yeah, we

have a wonderful relationship." Forget congratulated Williams on her attitude.

"With social media everything goes viral these days," Forget said.

"Serena was perfect, defusing any budding controversy," he explained.

"The idea with the dress code will be much more flexible than the one at Wimbledon, which has hardened over time," he said.— AFP ■



Thierry Henry will not join Bordeaux, the French club has confirmed.
PHOTO: AFP

Henry not joining Bordeaux as talks break down

PARIS — Thierry Henry will not be the next coach of Bordeaux, with the French club's president confirming to AFP on Tuesday that negotiations had broken down. "Yes, we can confirm the end of those negotiations," Stephane Martin told AFP, following earlier reports in France and England that Henry had turned the job down.

Sky Sports, the channel for whom Henry worked as a pundit for four years before quitting last month, said late on Monday that he had refused the offer to take his first managerial role since retiring as a player.

According to French sports daily *LEquipe*, Henry felt that he had not been given sufficient guarantees by General American Capital Partners (GACP), the American consortium expected to take over Bordeaux at the end

of September from current owners, the media conglomerate M6.

Despite his lack of experience as a coach, appointing the 41-year-old would have been a remarkable coup for Bordeaux, the six-time French champions.

They are looking for a replacement for the Uruguayan Gustavo Poyet, whose departure from the club is expected to be made official later on Tuesday.

Poyet was only appointed in January and led the club to European qualification at the end of last season, but he was suspended earlier this month after a very public outburst at directors over transfer policy.

Henry, who had been working as an assistant coach to the Belgian national team, met GACP in New York at the end of last week having come to an initial agreement with M6.— AFP ■

West Ham survive scare, three Premier League sides exit League Cup



Manuel Pellegrini secured his first win as West Ham manager. PHOTO: AFP

LONDON — West Ham survived a scare from League One Wimbledon to register Manuel Pellegrini's first win in charge and progress to the third round of the League Cup as Premier League sides Cardiff, Huddersfield and

Brighton bowed out on Tuesday.

The Hammers have suffered three straight defeats to begin their league season, despite former Real Madrid and Manchester City boss Pellegrini being backed with nearly £100 million

(\$128.7 dollars) in the transfer market, and went behind inside two minutes at Kingsmeadow through Joe Pigott's header.

But the hosts were reduced to 10 men after just 18 minutes as Rod McDonald was dismissed for a second yellow card and second-half goals from Issa Diop, Angelo Ogbonna and Javier Hernandez secured a 3-1 win to spare Pellegrini's blushes.

Cardiff's poor start to the season on their return to the top flight continued with a comprehensive 3-1 defeat at home to Championship side Norwich.

Saido Berahino scored his first goal since February 2016 to send Stoke into the last 32 with a 2-0 win over Premier League Huddersfield.— AFP ■

Myanmar to play friendly matches with Singapore teams

IN preparation for the international football tournaments, Myanmar U-16 and U-19 women football teams will play friendly matches against Singapore U-16 and U-19 women football teams on 4 and 6 September, according to the Myanmar Football Federation (MFF).

Myanmar U-16 will play two friendly matches with Singapore U-16 team on 4 and 6 September, and Myanmar U-19 team will play a friendly match against Singapore U-19 team on 6 September.

The friendly matches against Singapore teams will really help Myanmar teams to get experience to compete in Asian Football Confederation (AFC) U-16 Women Championship Qualification Round (1) and 2019 AFC U-19 Women's Championship Qualification, said an MFF official.

Myanmar U-16 team will be headed by its head coach Daw San San Thein, while Myanmar U-19 will be headed by its head coach Daw Thet Thet Win.—Lynn Thit (Tgi) ■



Maria Sharapova of Russia hits a return to Patty Schnyder of Switzerland (off frame) during their 2018 US Open women's match on 28 August, 2018 in New York. PHOTO: AFP

Sharapova downs battling 39-year-old Schnyder at US Open

NEW YORK—Maria Sharapova shattered the fairytale return of 39-year-old Patty Schnyder at the US Open on Tuesday, winning a roller-coaster first round clash 6-2, 7-6 (8/6).

Schnyder, the oldest ever player to make the main draw of a Grand Slam via qualifying, was outgunned by the five-time major champion in the first set and for the majority of the second.

However, she bravely battled back from 1-5 down to 6-6, showing the sort of ability and court-craft which won her 11 titles and once took her to seven in the world rankings.

She even saved three match points in the tiebreaker before Sharapova's 23rd winner of the night sealed victory shortly before midnight.

"My average match against her is like two hours and 20 minutes so I knew I was in for a battle no matter what my story is or hers," said Sharapova who is now 21-0 in US Open high sessions. — AFP ■