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Message from President U Win Myint, on occasion of 52nd Anniversary of founding of ASEAN

(8 August 2019)

TODAY is the 52nd anniversary of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN); a regional grouping of ten countries established by a common desire and collective will to live in a region of lasting peace, security and stability, sustained economic growth,

shared prosperity and social progress, and to promote our vital interests, ideals and aspirations. On this auspicious day, I have the pleasure to extend my warmest greetings and best wishes to our fellow citizens and to the peoples of ASEAN.

As we celebrate the occasion, we must also be reminded that ASEAN did not come this far easily. There were even doubts on whether it would thrive or whether it would meet its aspirations and commitments.

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President receives outgoing Pakistani Amb

PRESIDENT U Win Myint received outgoing Pakistani Ambassador Dr Khalid Hussain Memon, who has completed his tour of duty in Myanmar, at the Presidential Palace in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

During the meeting, they discussed matters relating to promotion of the bilateral relations of the two countries and friendship, increasing cooperation between the Foreign ministries of both countries and exploring possibilities for promotion of bilateral trade.

Also present at the meeting were Union Minister for the Office of the Union Government U Min Thu and officials.— MNA (Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)



President U Win Myint meets outgoing Pakistani Ambassador Dr Khalid Hussain Memon in Nay Pyi Taw. **PHOTO: MNA**

Myanmar Sat 2 heads for space to support national e-government programme

THE Myanmar Sat 2 satellite conveyed by Intelsat 39 was launched into space from French service provider Arianespace's Space Port in French Guiana at 2 am yesterday.

The Arianespace orbited two communications satellites in this mission — the Intelsat 39 from Intelsat Satellite Operator and the EDRS-C from European Data Relay System that is a public-

private partnership between the European Space Agency (ESA) and Airbus.

Myanmar named the satellite as Myanmar Sat 2 as it contributes US\$155.7 million for the

joint programme with operator Intelsat. U Soe Thein, Permanent Secretary of Ministry of Transport and Communications, said "The launch of Myanmar Sat 2 is aimed to provide 95 per

cent of people in the country with better communications, health-care services and education under the country's e-government programme."

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Pyidaungsu Hluttaw

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw hears Union budget, tax reports

THE 9th-day meeting of the Second Pyidaungsu Hluttaw's 13th regular session was held at the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Hall in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

Audit report on Union budget

First, the assembly listened to Union Auditor-General U Maw Than read a report on his office's findings on the Union's budget proposal for the Union Budget Law for 2017-2018 Financial Year.

This was followed by the secretary of the Joint Public Accounts Committee reading the report of their committee's findings and suggestions (No 11/2019) on the audit report. The Hluttaw moved the report for further debate and the Speaker called for interested MPs to register their names.



Union Auditor-General U Maw Than. **PHOTO: HTAN PHON**



Deputy Minister for Planning and Finance U Maung Maung Win. **PHOTO: HTAN PHON**

Union Taxation Bill 2019

Next, Deputy Minister for Planning and Finance U Maung Maung Win explained the Union Taxation Bill 2019 to the assembly. He said they are implementing an online monitoring system with cooperating businesses to ensure tax stamps are administered on receipts

and special commodities and to collect authentic figures on alcohol production.

The Deputy Minister said they have had restaurants, hotels, guesthouses and broadcasting media agencies begin adding tax stamps on their receipts a few years back and they will have mobile phone and their

related accessory shops being the same practice this year.

He said they administer the proper penalties to those who do not follow the law and give proper rewards to those who report these offences. The Pyidaungsu Hluttaw will continue with the proper legal procedures regarding this bill.

Union-level tax statements

The Deputy Minister then explained the tax reports of Union-level ministries and institutions for the first 6 months of the 2018-2019 FY. He said they had estimated to levy K3,878.583 billion within the first six-month period but the ministries and institutions have exceeded the estimate and levied K4,042.739 billion.

The Deputy Minister said they had exceeded tax levying estimates for 11 categories out of the 22 groups, received lower

tax than estimated on 10 categories, and have neither estimated or levied tax on one category.

The Deputy Minister said nine ministries and Nay Pyi Taw Council took the duty of levying those taxes. The Ministry of Planning and Finance levied K3,293.145 billion in tax for 6 categories and exceeded the estimate of K3,286.127 billion.

The Deputy Minister said the remaining eight ministries and Nay Pyi Taw Council managed to successfully levy K749.594 billion in tax for the other 16 categories.

The Speaker then announced that the report from the Joint Public Accounts Committee concerning this Union-level tax statement will be read at the next Pyidaungsu Hluttaw meeting on 9 August. —Mawsi, Mhwae Kyu Zin

(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

UHDD, LH Corporation sign MoU on building KMIC Industrial Complex

THE URBAN and Housing Development Department-UHDD of Ministry of Construction and the Korea Land and Housing Corporation-LH Corporation signed an Memorandum of Understanding-MoU on building KMIC Industrial Complex on 555.81 acres of Nyaung Hna Pin Training School in Hlegu Township, Yangon Region.

The ceremony to sign MoU was held at the Ministry of Construction in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday, and attended Union Minister for Construction U Han Zaw, Permanent Secretary U Win Tint, departmental heads, CEO of LH Mr Byun Chang Heum and officials, CEO of Global SAE-A Mr Kim Ki Myug and officials, invited guests and departmental officials in attendance.

Speaking at the signing ceremony, Union Minister U



Union Minister U Han Zaw attend the signing ceremony of Urban and Housing Development Department of Ministry of Construction and Korea Land and Housing Corporation-LH Cooperation's joint venture agreement in Yangon yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

Han Zaw said building KMIC Industrial Complex will greatly underpin the development of industrial, export and human resource sectors in Yangon Region and Myanmar, creating 50,000 to 100,000 job opportunities.

He then expressed thanks to the Government of the Republic of Korea for assisting Myanmar with the implementation of not only Dala Bridge and KMIC Industrial Complex projects but also other projects

for development.

He then said joint venture partners – Department of Urban and Housing Development, LH Corporation and Global SAE-A – to work hard with mutual trusts and cooperation to get good re-

sults and achievement in the KMIC project which is jointly cooperated by the governments of Korea and Myanmar.

Mr Byun Chang Heum, CEO of Korea Land and Housing Corporation, and Mr Kim Ki Myug, CEO of Global SAE-A, also extended greetings.

Afterwards, U Min Htein, the Director-General of Department of Urban and Housing Development, explained about the procedures of the project.

U Min Htein, the Director-General of Department of Urban and Housing Development, Mr Byun Chang Heum, CEO of Korea Land and Housing Corporation, and Mr Kim Ki Myung, CEO of Global SAE-A, then signed partnership projects agreements in the presence of the Union Minister. —MNA

(Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)

FDA inspects 2,445 street food stalls in Yangon

THE Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has carried out food hygiene inspections at 2,445 street food stalls in the downtown areas of Yangon Region between 1 October, 2018 and 30 July, 2019, according to a press conference

organized by the Yangon City Development Committee on 5 August.

“The Health Department has the right to inspect registered street food stalls to check whether they are selling hygienic food

or not. Illegal street food stalls will not be allowed for operations after hygiene inspections,” said Yangon Mayor U Maung Maung Soe.

Some street food markets one registered, while some others

have no licence of operations. The Yangon City Development Committee is conducting inspections to remove illegal street food stalls to ensure food safety and health. The Health Department is currently distributing guide-

books and pamphlets, explain how to prepare hygienic food, the problem of formalin abuse in food items, and provide other information on food safety to street vendors. —Zarni Maung ■

(Translated by La Wonn)

Message from President U Win Myint, on occasion of 52nd Anniversary of founding of ASEAN

FROM PAGE-1

But it is clear that ASEAN, since its inception on 8 August 1967, has successfully evolved into a rules-based regional organization, giving legal personality in the pursuit of its purposes and principles as enshrined in the Charter of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. The collective strength of its three pillars further brings ASEAN into a politically cohesive, economically integrated, socially responsible and people-oriented, people-centred community.

ASEAN today is moving toward a full realization of a Community which was established on 31 December 2015. In doing so, in this ever evolving regional architecture, we are committed to pursue our efforts through effectively engaging with Dialogue Partners and other stakeholders while upholding ASEAN centrality and unity. We are encouraged to see tangible results in various areas in this regard. There is no doubt that key enablers such as consultations and consensus have not only brought ASEAN thus far but also gained the confidence of many others. As a result, ASEAN has elevated its relationship with most of its Dialogue Partners to the strategic level. We are confident that the strategic partnership will forge us closer in realizing mutually beneficial cooperation.

The Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC) has also served us well in the conduct of inter-State relations in the region and beyond. The rise in number of countries acceded to the TAC demonstrates the growing interests of the international community to engage with ASEAN. We also encourage the ASE-

AN Committees in Third Countries and International Organizations, as well as the accredited Permanent Representatives and non-ASEAN Ambassadors to ASEAN, to continue to engage closely in bridging ASEAN and the rest of the world.

On the other hand, ASEAN is committed toward further economic integration. We are working toward achieving the vision of the ASEAN Economic Community 2025 and the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. We also hope to conclude the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) negotiations within this year to reinvigorate international trade and to strengthen ASEAN economy and vibrancy.

In the same way, we wish to see success in the ASEAN Smart Cities Network (ASCN) which is envisioned as a collaborative platform where up to three cities from each ASEAN Member States, including capitals, work toward a common goal of achieving smart and sustainable urban development. Its primary goal is to improve the lives of ASEAN citizens, using technology as an enabler. Through networking smart cities across ASEAN would contribute us to come together to explore potential complementarities, share best practices, develop individualized action plans for smart cities development for future and craft a framework for smart cities development that is unique to ASEAN. In Myanmar, we have identified Nay Pyi Taw, Yangon and Mandalay as the Pilot Cities.

Another important aspect is that 2019 has been designated as the ASEAN Cultural Year. We are aiming at bringing a unified voice through ASEAN culture

and heritage to the world through cultural exchanges among the ASEAN Member States and with others. In Myanmar, events such as ASEAN food festival and charity bazaar are planned to take place in Mandalay and Yangon respectively. I urge everyone to take active participation since these activities will showcase the best of ASEAN and rich cultural diversity of ASEAN to our public and to the world. A Network of ASEAN Associations, expected to be launched soon, would also help to promote peoples' awareness and sense of belonging to the ASEAN Community.

In order to sustain the achievements reached thus far, ASEAN Leaders at the 34th ASEAN Summit not only reaffirmed the importance of maintaining ASEAN centrality and unity in our Community-building efforts and engagement with external partners but also adopted the ASEAN Leaders' Vision Statement on Partnership for Sustainability which aims to ensure sustainability in all dimensions.

ASEAN's founding fathers, with their far-sighted aspirations enshrined in the Bangkok Declaration, paved the way for ASEAN to become a vibrant and thriving regional organization. These aspirations were further built up in the ASEAN Charter. Today, it is up to us to see how we would shape its future. May I take this opportunity to reaffirm our commitment to contribute to the advancement of our community building efforts. I also encourage our fellow citizens to actively join us in our efforts to promote peace, progress and prosperity for all in our region and beyond.

Myanmar Sat 2 heads for space to support national e-government programme

FROM PAGE-1

With latest technologies, the Myanmar Sat 2 will be able to offer 8 to 10 times faster in communication services than its precursor Myanmar Sat 1.

The Information Technology and Cyber Security Department under the Ministry of Transport and Communications signed MoU with Intelsat Corporation of Luxembourg on 1 June 2018 for building Myanmar Sat 2 satellite .

The Intelsat 39 is the 52nd satellite built by Maxar Technologies based in Colorado, the United States.—MNA

(Translated by Aung Khin)



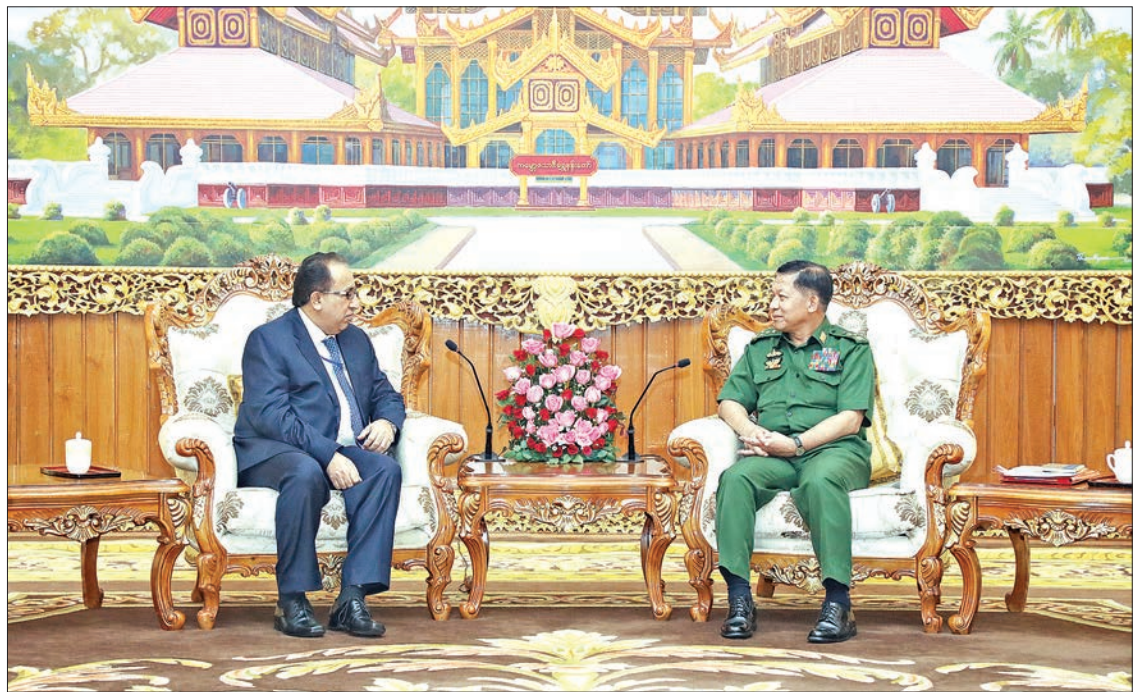
Myanmar Sat 2/Intelsat 39 launched on 7th August from a launch base of the Arianespace satellite launching company in French Guiana, the French territory in South America. **PHOTO: MNA**

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing receives outgoing Pakistani Ambassador

COMMANDER-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing received outgoing Pakistani Ambassador Dr. Khalid Hussain Memon, who has completed his tour of duty in Myanmar, at the Bayintnaung guesthouse in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

During the meeting, they cordially exchanged views on matters concerning the good relations existing between the two friendly countries, the prospect of strengthening the

close relations between the two Tatmadaws, the possibility for increasing cooperation to boost trade, economy, and other areas, and the need to take extensive actions for dissemination of true information to the international community regarding wrong views of the international community on Myanmar and international relations, according to information released by the Office of the Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services.—MNA ■ (Translated by Win Ko Ko Aung)



Senior General Min Aung Hlaing receives outgoing Pakistani Ambassador Dr Khalid Hussain Memon at the Bayintnaung guesthouse in Nay Pyi Taw. **PHOTO: OFFICE OF THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF**



Union Minister for Information Dr Pe Myint holds talks with the delegation led by Mr Masayuki Karasawa, the Chief Representative of JICA in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

Union Minister Dr Pe Myint receives JICA Chief Representative, Myanmar Honorary Consul-General in Busan separately

UNION Minister for Information Dr Pe Myint received delegations led by Mr Masayuki Karasawa, the Chief Representative of JICA, and Mr Won Bae Dahn, Honorary Consul-General of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar in Busan, the Republic of Korea separately yesterday at his office in Nay Pyi Taw.

During the meeting with JICA Chief Representative and delegation, they cordially discussed matters related to technical assistance for Myanmar

Radio and Television-MRTV, advantages and disadvantages of the staff in carrying out their duties after attending capacity building courses and cooperation on television broadcasting.

At the meeting with Honorary Consul-General of Myanmar in Busan and delegation, they cordially discussed matters related to promotion of bilateral cooperation between the two countries in the film industry, and establishing a film school in Nay Pyi Taw.—MNA ■ (Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)

Myanmar EITI tripartite coalition clarify its 4th report on transparency initiatives

REPRESENTATIVES from the tripartite coalition of the Myanmar Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (MEITI) officially explained its fourth report for 2016-2017 at the Office of Anti-Corruption Commission in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning.

The multi-stakeholder coalition is comprised with the government, private sector and civil society, and the fourth report was released on 31st March this year.

U Aung Kyi, Chairman of ACC, made an opening remark at the event which was also attended by the secretary and members of the commission, officials from EITI's Myanmar National Coordinator Office, responsible persons from the state departments and representatives from private sectors and social communities.

The ACC Chairman said

that according to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, long-term socio economic development for a community depends on proper conservation of natural resources; strong practices of democratic administration could ensure natural resources national prosperity; the Commission well appreciate the objectives of MEITI and also recognize a huge gap between the underlying procedures and the laws, rules and regulation, procedures and directives.

He also concluded that this problem was caused either by the restrictions at relevant ministries or the insufficient anti-corruption measures.

The functions of MEITI and its fourth report were briefly explained by the experts from MEITI, Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise, Myanma Gems Enterprise, Department of Mines



Anti-Corruption Commission Chairman U Aung Kyi delivers the opening speech at the event of clarification on the contents in the report report of Myanmar Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (MEITI) in Nay Pyi Taw. **PHOTO: MNA**

and Myanmar Pearl Enterprise.

Representative of Myanmar EITI tripartite coalition presented their works, and answered to the questions of attendees at the event.

Myanmar was recognized as an EITI candidate country in July 2014 as it began to implement the functions of EITI in transparent initiatives in December 2012.

Published in March this year, the fourth EITI Report covered Myanmar's extractive sector in 2016 and 2017.—MNA ■

(Translated by Aung Khin)

Union Minister Dr Than Myint attends UN convention

UNION Minister for Commerce Dr Than Myint attended the signing ceremony of the United Nations Convention on International Settlement Agreement on Mediation (Singapore Convention on Mediation) and High level Conference on Mediation yesterday morning.

Prior to the convention, the Union Minister met with foreign ministers and Prime Minister of Singapore Mr Lee Hsien Loong.

At the event, Mr Lee Hsien Loong and Assistant Secretary-General for Legal Affairs of UN Mr Stephen Mathias delivered their key note speeches, and UN Secretary General Mr.

Antonio Guterres with video conferencing. The convention was attended by the ministers and high-level representatives from about 70 countries. Forty-six countries including the United States, China, India and ASEAN Countries signed the agreement. Afterwards, the Union Minister attended working lunch with the ministers and representatives. He then met with Singaporean Minister for Home Affairs and Law Mr K Shanmugam SC, and attended the dinner hosted by Mr Heng Swee Keat, Vice Prime Minister for Singapore. ■

(Translated by AlphonSus)



Union Minister Dr Than Myint attends the United Nation Convention on International Settlement Agreement on Mediation (Singapore Convention on Mediation) in Singapore. **PHOTO: MNA**

Installation of broadcasting equipment at MRTV completed



Permanent Secretary U Myo Myint Maung accepts the documents from Mr. Akira Nagase, Chief consultant of NHK Technologies, Inc. **PHOTO: MNA**

A project for the extended installation of broadcasting equipment at the Myanmar Radio and Television-MRTV was completed yesterday.

A ceremony was held at the MRTV in Yangon to mark the completion of the project, which was reportedly valued at 2,263 million yen.

The project included upgrade of the network system and record-keeping system, outdoor shooting system in two DSNG Vans using digital technology, digitization of old film reels, maintenance of machinery, installation of LED lighting at MRTV (Yangon

and equipment in HD studio, art of drawing computer graphic designs, installation of a virtual record-keeping system, indoor shooting system with DSNG Van, and changing the roof of the MRTV studio.

The supplier for the whole project was Sumitomo Corporation, and the renovation of the MRTV building was done by the Toda Corporation. The NEC installed hardware and software in the sub control room, graphic, virtual, and archive systems, and equipment for the network between Yangon and Tatkon.

The project will improve the

process of broadcasting and allow display of different backgrounds using the virtual system. This will also help broadcast new programs.

At the event, the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Information, U Myo Myint Maung, delivered a speech appreciating the project, and Mr. Akira Nagase, the chief consultant with NHK Technologies Inc., expressed his delight at the completion of the project and handed over the documents pertaining to the project to U Myo Myint Maung. —MNA

(Translated by AlphonSus)

Suspect arrested for AA affiliation

SECURITY forces arrested a man near Phone Nyo Laik Village, Buthidaung Township in Rakhine State, for being suspected in affiliation with AA group on 7 August.

His name was identified as Nay Zaw Lin, son of U Kyaw Than, and his mobile phone was found to use messenger application to send messages about operation of Tatmadaw columns to AA group.

The report of Office of Commander in Chief of Defence Services said that the suspect was brought to the local police station for legal action.—MNA ■

(Translated by Aung Khin)



A suspect named Nay Zaw Lin. **PHOTO: OFFICE OF THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF DEFENCE SERVICES**

Flood affects 6,600 people in Hpa-an

WITH the water level in the Thanlwin River exceeding its danger mark in Hpa-an, over 6,600 residents in low-lying areas have been evacuated. The local authorities has opened about 12 shelters for the flood victims. The water level reached 83 cm above the river's danger mark 750 cm. Kayin State

Government has provided food and shelters to the flood victims.

The Sittoung River is receding at Madauk, reaching 1089 cm yesterday. The water level in the river exceeded its danger mark 1,070 cm and reached 1,282 cm recently. The swollen river forced over 16,900 people from 3,579 house-

holds in low-lying areas to shift to temporary shelters opened at monasteries and pagodas. Relief aid are flowing to the temporary shelters.—Painzalok Thein Nyunt/Nay Myo Lwin (IPRD) ■

(Translated by TTN)



A Tatmadaw medical team providing medical check-up to flood victims at a temporary shelter in Kayin State. **PHOTO: NAY MYO LWIN (IPRD)**

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Some YBS bus lines to be diverted during Yangon-Dala bridge construction

By Nyein Nyein

ONCE construction work on the Yangon-Dala bridge begins on the Yangon side, the Yangon Bus Service (YBS) lines will be rerouted, said U Hla Aung, the joint secretary of the Yangon Region Transport Authority (YRTA).

He made the remark at a press conference held yesterday at the YRTA office.

Phase I of the Yangon-Dala bridge project will be carried out on the approach road on the Yangon side — the Phoneygi Street between Annawrahta road and Mahar Bandula Road. The YBS lines running on that road will be diverted from 11 August. The new routes for those bus lines will be announced through state-owned newspapers and broadcasting channels.

At present, YBS lines 21,35,37,39,78, and the airport shuttle bus are running on that road section, and they will change route only on that part, said U Hla Aung.

"Phase I of the project will



YBS buses seen in downtown Yangon. PHOTO: PHOE KHWAR

take around six months. The YRTA has forwarded the diverted route of YBS lines to the Yangon Region government to minimize transportation difficulties. The sudden route change of YBS may cause transportation difficulties for the people," said U Hla Aung.

To facilitate public transportation, the YRTA will raise awareness about the changed routes at some YBS bus stops with the help of mobile vehicles. It will also monitor bus lines to ensure systematic transportation. The Yangon Region government has directed that the

approach road on the Yangon side be closed to ensure the safety of passengers and buses.

The Yangon-Dala bridge project is slated to be complete in 2022, said Yangon Region Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein. ■ (Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Feasibility study on Yangon sky train project starts

By Nyein Nyein

A feasibility study is currently being conducted on the Yangon sky train project, said Mayor U Maung Maung Soe at a press conference held by the Yangon City Development Committee on Monday.

"A step-by-step measurement for the sky train project has begun. The project area includes land owned by state departments and private land. The project area will be announced after a detailed measurement to avoid unnecessary social prob-

lem," said U Maung Maung Soe.

The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) is working on the measurement for the Yangon sky train project, and the Ministry of Transport and Communications will decide on the project area. After that, the YCDC will proceed with further plans. The owners of the lands acquired for the project will be duly compensated, said U Maung Maung Soe.

"We will make those land owners aware of the skyline road project is aimed to upgrade the City's basic road infrastructure,"

he said.

The Yangon sky train project, known as the Yangon Urban Mass Rapid Transit (YUMRT), will cover the Yangon North-South Road connecting Dala Township and Mingaladon Township and the East-West Road connecting Hlinethaya Township and Toekyaung Ka Lay in South Dagon Township, the Ministry of Transport and Communications has announced. The Yangon East-West Road will be built initially, it has stated.

The YUMRT project is

jointly implemented by the Ministry of Transport and Communications and the Yangon Region government. The project is slated to start in 2021 and expected to be completed in 2027. Phase I of the sky train project will begin from Hline-thaya railway station, cross the Hlaing River, run parallel with the Yangon-Pathein Road, and end at the Parami station. Phase II will extend from Parami to Toekyaungkalay. Myanmar has received a loan from the JICA to implement the sky train project. ■ (Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Sky bridge to become first private investment project in Myanmar

THE sky bridge project, which is being implemented for the first time in Myanmar, will also be the first undertaking to get private investment, according to the Road Department under the Ministry of Construction.

Currently, the project has been a bit delayed because the government and the private entrepreneur involved in the project are required to make step-by-step negotiations to prevent both sides from suffering grievances or losses, said officials. "This is the first project which will have a private

entrepreneur making an investment for a long-term road project in Myanmar. Later on, the construction process will be faster," said the ACE from the Ministry of Construction.

A coordination meeting has been held for drawing the second draft for the sky bridge project. The draft is being formulated by the Ministry of Construction, and detailed designs will be drawn up by the private company that has won the tender. A total of 12 companies had submitted their tenders for the project, and the

names of only 10 had been announced on 5 December, 2018. The 10 enterprises included companies from France, Korea, Japan, a Thailand-China joint venture, a Myanmar joint venture company, and five Chinese companies, according to the Ministry of Construction.

The project will be implemented in cooperation with a private entrepreneur. The sky bridge will be 47.5 kilometers long. It will have a four-lane road on the east side, which will be 19 kilometers long, a four-lane road connecting the east

and west sides, which will be 6 kilometers long, and a two-lane road connecting the Yangon international airport, which will measure 2.5 kilometers in length, he added.

Construction of the sky bridge will begin in July, 2020 and is expected to finish by 2023. The project will be implemented in two phases. The second phase will connect the Bayintnaung junction and the Yangon international airport, according to the Ministry of Construction.—Aye Cho ■ (Translated by Hay Mar)

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Floods, drought affect 150,000 acres of sesame, groundnut crops in Magway

THIS year, natural disasters, such as floods and the ongoing drought, have affected more than 150,000 acres of crops, including sesame and groundnut,

and destroyed around 10,000 acres of farmland, according to the Magway Region Agriculture Department. Magway Region, which mainly grows oil crops,

has over 1.3 million acres of land under peas and pulses cultivation.

According to statistics, the drought has affected more than

270,000 acres of groundnuts and over 1.3 million acres of sesame grown in the early monsoon season. Besides, the recent swelling of rivers has added to farm stress, submerging crops grown on land along the rivers.

“We have made field trips to the areas and inspected the situation. Up till 31 July, around 150,000 acres of crops have been affected by drought and floods. Of them, about 9,797 acres of crops have been destroyed by the disasters,” said U Khin Maung Win, the Head of the Magway Region Agriculture Department.

The about one-month-long drought has spelt ruin for sesame farmers, and groundnut farmers say they will face the same fate, if there is no rainfall soon.

“The drought has caused shortage of feedstuff for draught

cattle and drinking water. The situation at sesame farms is hopeless. But, we can expect groundnuts only when it rains these days. If there is no rain, the plants will turn into feedstuff for our draught cattle,” said U Myo Nyunt, a farmer from Htonpauk Village. “About 600 farmers from 17 villages in Magway Township and 13 villages in Minbu Township are growing sesame on a total of 1,500 acres of land using Good Agricultural Practices. Of them, 80 per cent of each acre of the crop has been affected by the drought,” said U Naing Win Latt, Project In-charge of PC (Progetto Continenti) Myanmar. About 70 tons of sesame grown using the GAP system was exported to Japan and other countries in 2017, and about 88 tons in 2018. —Zayatu (Magway) ■ (Translated by TTN)



The drought troubles farmers and kills sesame plants in Magway Region. PHOTO: ZAYATU (MAGWAY)

Regional workshop for drafting Myanmar marine conservation policy held in Myeik

A TWO-DAY regional workshop for drafting a marine conservation policy in Myanmar was held at the Green Eyes hotel in Myeik Town of Taninthayi Region. It was jointly organized by the Forest Department and Fauna and Flora International (FFI).

“We just showed the draft policy for marine conservation to the related persons. The related departments and organizations and the local people will give their suggestions on the policy to make an agreement,” said U Pe Chit, Director of the Forest Department.

Participants at the workshop discussed exercising control over extraction, issuing licenses to enable access to natural resources, along with land use policy and management, processes to protect the local people, women’s role in the sector, equal access to work and resources, the process that will be implemented, Myanmar marine conservation policy, and

the type of land needed for conservation efforts.

The workshop was held on 5 and 6 August and was attended by Hluttaw representatives, departmental officials, representatives from non-government organizations, and the local people.

“The Myeik archipelago is rich in natural resources. So, we need to conserve the resources for the sake of intergenerational justice. We need to think about how to conserve them. We are going to conserve the Marine Protected Area (MPA). In order to do so, we need to formulate a policy. Therefore, we have conducted this workshop to draft a policy, with the suggestions made by the related organizations and departments,” said U Zaw Loon, the Wetland and Marine Conservation Manager of FFI.

Efforts on marine conservation will be concentrated over an area covering 1,830.77 square kilometres in Don Island at Kyunsu Township, and



Participants discuss marine conservation for Myanmar at the workshop in Myeik. PHOTO: KHINE HTOO (MYEIK IPRD)

182.26 square kilometres in La Ngan Island at Bokpyin Township, Taninthayi Region. There are also plans to implement a Marine Nation Garden by conserving water, wildlife, and for-

est resources, according to the Forest Department.

There are over 800 islands in the Myeik Archipelago, which forms a part of the marine coast of Myanmar. Myeik Archipelago

has coral reefs, sea grass, mangroves, and large clay mud, and serves as a habitat for aquatic animals.— Khine Htoo (Myeik IPRD) ■ (Translated by Hay Mar)

Current water charges lower than production cost: Yangon Mayor

By Nyein Nyein

THE current rates for water supply do not cover production costs, said Yangon Mayor U Maung Maung Soe at a recent press conference on the Yangon City Development Committee (YCDC).

The calculations for water meter bills must include charges for laying the pipe network and

the water distribution cost, he said. At present, the bills do not even cover the cost of distribution, he added.

“If we compare the water meter rates with the distribution cost, the existing bills are much lower than that, excluding the cost of machines. This being so, the government is making a loss on running this, like power supply,” said U Maung Maung Soe.

However, there is no plan yet to hike the water charges up for now, he said. At present, the Yangon authorities are raising awareness about systematic water meter installation, dealing with water pipe leakages, unsystematic water consumption, management of water loss in urban water distribution, and curbing illegal connections to the water pipe network, said U

Maung Maung Soe. Currently, the rates for water are K88 per unit (220 gallons) for households and K120 per unit for businesses. The Gyophyu, Phoo Gyi, and Nga Moe Yeik reservoirs are the main sources of water supply in Yangon at present, providing over 2 million gallons of water every day.

To expand the water distribution network, projects are under way at Lagunpyin and Kokkowa,

which aim to cover 90 per cent of the region’s population by 2025, according to the YCDC.

In addition, the YCDC is creating water supply resources to provide adequate drinking water to Yangonites, and is taking measures to reduce wastage in urban water distribution, with the assistance of international development donors. ■ (Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Municipal stalls in Danyingone market to be sold through tender system

A TOTAL of eight municipal stalls in the Danyingone market will be sold through the tender system, according to the Markets Department of the Yangon City Development Committee (YCDC).

“We will sell three-storey two-unit building and four-storey one-unit building. The width of the stalls will depend on the height and type of the building,” said an official from the Markets Department.

The shops can be purchased from the department till 15 August. Application forms and the necessary documents need to be submitted by 16 September.

The Danyingone Wholesale Market is a joint venture between the YCDC and the Myan-

mar Agro Exchange Public Limited. MAEX began construction work on the project in 2017, with an investment of K99.8 billion.

The new market comprises four buildings and a parking lot for 2,500 vehicles. It will have an area where fruits and vegetables can be washed, a building to sell dried fish, a cold storage for meat and fresh fish, a wholesale centre for farmers, a petrol station, rest rooms for staff, and a recreation centre for customers.

The market has been designed to help farmers sell their produce directly to customers. Other wholesale markets for agricultural products are also being constructed in Nay Pyi Taw, Mandalay, and Muse. — Zwe

(Translated by Hay Mar)



Vendors are seen at Danyingone wholesale fruit, vegetable and flower market in Yangon. PHOTO: ZAW GYI

Taninthayi Investment Forum to take place in October

AN investment forum will be organized for Taninthayi Region in October, according to Myanmar Investment Commission Chairman U Thaug Tun, who is also the Minister for Investment and Foreign Economic Relations.

He made the remarks during a July-end meeting with Kawthoung Chamber of Commerce representatives, businessmen, and local residents at the Victoria Cliff Hotel in Kawthoung.

At the meeting, the Union Minister pointed out that the Taninthayi Region has potential in the tourism investment sector, and the MIC will help fulfill the needs of the region. It is vital to consider sustainable tourism

development as well, he said.

“Investment can improve the socio-economic conditions of local residents. With the implementation of the Myanmar Sustainable Development Plan, the government is encouraging responsible and sustainable businesses. Tourism is a key economic contributor in Taninthayi Region and so, sustainable tourism is required,” the Union Minister said.

The MIC’s mission is to facilitate businesses, promote investment, and sustain the country’s development. Therefore, it has been organizing investment fairs to attract local and international investors and ensure the states and regions develop more uniformly.

The Directorate of Investment and Company Administration has been apprising local and international investors of the latest developments, such as the recent enactment of the new Myanmar Investment Law and new opportunities for investments.

Under the new Myanmar Investment Law, those investing in undeveloped regions are being given tax exemptions as an incentive. The new law has also authorized Investment Committees of regions and states to approve local and foreign projects where the initial investment does not exceed K6 billion, or US\$5 million. — GNLM

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Sino-Myanmar bilateral trade worth \$8.73 bln in nine months Oct-June

THE value of Myanmar’s trade with China in the nine months (Oct-June) of current fiscal year 2018-2019 totalled US\$8.73 billion, including \$4 billion worth of exports and \$4.69 billion for import, according to data released by the Ministry of Commerce.

Meanwhile, Myanmar’s regional trade with ASEAN countries showed the highest growth of \$9 billion, closely followed by its bilateral trade with China.

Normally, import surpassed export in trade with China, and Myanmar primarily exports agro products to China through the border gates. However, trade in agricultural products was halted on account of China clamping down on illegal trade in border gates.

The value of bilateral trade with China was \$6 billion in the past mini-budget period, \$11.78 billion in the 2017-2018 fiscal

year and \$10.8 billion in the 2016-2017 FY respectively.

Rice, various types of peas, sesame seeds, corn, fruits and vegetables, dried tea leaves, fishery products, rubber, minerals and animal products are exported to China, whereas machinery, plastic raw materials, consumer products and electronic tools flow into Myanmar.

During the Oct-June period, 97 projects from China were approved by Myanmar Investment Commission and the related investment committees of regions and states. China brought capital of \$437 million into the country including expansion of investments by the existing enterprises, according to statistics provided by the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration. —GNLM

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Myanmar’s export, import status of FY 2018-2019 Oct-June

MYANMAR’S total export as of June in Fiscal Year 2018-2019 reached \$1363.63 million, of which \$804.18 million was through the normal export while \$559.45 million was the border trade export. Total import for the same period was \$1521.48 million, and the normal import was \$1277.48 million while \$244.00 million was through the imports of the border trade. Therefore Myan-

mar’s total trade volume for June 2018-2019 FY was \$2885.11 million. There was a trade deficit of \$157.85 million.

Myanmar’s total export for the 2018-2019 FY October to June was \$12591.05 million of which \$6893.71 million was through the normal exports while \$5697.34 million was through the border trade export. Total import for the same period was \$13632.88 million

of which \$11293.36 million was through the normal import while \$2339.52 million through the border trade import.

Therefore the total trade volume from October to June of 2018-2019 FY was \$26223.93 million and a total trade deficit was \$1041.83 million, according to the monthly reports of the Central Statistical Organization. — MNA

(Translated by Win Ko Ko Aung)

THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR



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STATEMENT ON THE REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT INTERNATIONAL FACT-FINDING MISSION ON MYANMAR

7th August 2019
Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar

WE, the Union Enterprise for Humanitarian Assistance, Resettlement and Development in Rakhine (UEHRD), categorically reject the allegations in the recent report (A/HRC/42/CRP3 “The economic interests of the Myanmar military”, 5 August 2019) released by the Fact-Finding Mission (FFM). The report alleges that UEHRD, its Task Forces and projects contributed to “the commission of crimes under international law” and “consolidated the consequences of war crimes, crimes against humanity and acts of genocide.”

From its inception, UEHRD’s objectives were to provide effective humanitarian aid, to coordinate resettlement and rehabilitation efforts, and to promote conflict resolution and durable peace for all communities in Rakhine. We have never wavered in our pursuit of humanitarian objectives and have worked consistently to improve conditions on the ground for the relief, dignified return, and resettlement of conflict-affected communities and displaced persons.

The FFM paints a distorted picture of the UEHRD which was established to address the complex issues of Rakhine.

We shall continue to strive for viable, inclusive and durable solutions that will enable communities and inhabitants in Rakhine to live in peace, harmony and dignity, and to realize a safe and vibrant future.

About UEHRD

UEHRD is a partnership mechanism aimed at enabling the government, multi-sectoral stakeholders, concerned citizens, and international partners, to collaborate and coordinate in efforts to achieve our common goal: sustainable development and prosperity for Rakhine that all communities may live together in harmony and security.

We strive for a just, inclusive and harmonious society rooted in human rights and human dignity. We embrace the shared values of a common humanity, empowerment for all, and commitment to peace and prosperity together with our partners and stakeholders.—UEHRD

Monsoon flood hits Yangon



Some 36 rescue members from east and west districts of Yangon Rescue Organizations evacuated the patients from their flooded wards in North Okkalapa Hospital after torrential rainfall on 7 August. The monsoon flood submerged several areas of Yangon. **PHOTO: MYO MIN THEIN**

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Number of rare star tortoises dwindles by 357 at Shwesettaw Sanctuary

A TOTAL of 357 star tortoises out of 650 have been found dead or lost in the Shwesettaw Wildlife Sanctuary, where they were kept in fenced enclosures on three farms measuring 2.5 acres, said U Thein Lwin, the administrator of the sanctuary.

The farms are located about 20 miles from the sanctuary, located on the Pathein-Monywa road.

“The number of star tortoises has dwindled as they are at risk of being eaten by wild boars and wild dogs who enter the farms through broken fencing. Besides, some of the tortoises venture into the forest or get killed by poachers,” he added.

“On July 15, staff found farm No.1 and No.2 opened. Upon inspection, the staff saw footprints of wild boars, remnants and shells of star tortoises, along with 28 star tortoises that were still alive. There were a total of 400 star tortoises on the farms,” U Thein Lwin added.

“When the staff inspected farm No.3, they could not locate about 110 star tortoises. That’s why

they installed cameras and carried out surveillance. After the cameras recorded two suspects carrying knapsacks, bags, and knives, a case was registered against them at the police station,” he added.

U Thein Lwin said that the captive-bred star tortoises are being reared and fed till they reach four or five years of age, and then they are set free in fenced areas in the farms,

measuring 2.5 acres, so they can learn to survive on their own.

“In the enclosures, they cannot obtain food from people. Officials have built some ponds and observe star tortoises for one year. Next, the staff set them free in the forest once they are able to manage and survive on their own,” he said.

There are eight local staff appointed by the Tur-

tle Survival Alliance-TSA, and they seemed unaware of the broken fencing. Moreover, they said they haven’t experienced such incidents in the last three years.

Around 60 star tortoises died due to extreme heat in March and April, said the administrator with the Shwesettaw Wildlife Sanctuary.—Zayyatu (Magway) (Translated by Win Ko Ko Aung)



Remnants and shells of star tortoises, . **PHOTO: ZAYYATU (MAGWAY)**

Invitation For Open Tender No.(1/2019)

1. Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation, Department of Mines invites to submit the tender quotation sale open tender of (2000) Metric Tons, (15) Lot of Cathode Copper by United States Dollar as follow,

- (a) (100) Metric Tons each, (10) Lot Monywa, Mine Site
(b) (200) Metric Tons each, (5) Lot Monywa, Mine Site

2. Base price of Cathode Copper shall be based on the London Metal Exchange Copper price on the date of tender opening. The highest proposal amount (Premium amount added to the LME price and deduction of transportation and handling expenses) shall be winning tender.

3. Tender Closing Date and Time is 2nd September, 2019 (14:00) hrs and Opening Tender is (15:00) hrs.

4. Tender documents are available from the Mineral Development Division, Department of Mines, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation, Office Building No.(19), Nay Pyi Taw and details can be asked to (+95) 067 3 409378 and 3 409372 within the Office hours.

Tender Committee
Department of Mines
Ministry of Natural Resources and
Environmental Conservation

CLAIM’S DAY NOTICE

M.V MAERSK WESTPORT VOY. NO. (930S/932N)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V MAERSK WESTPORT VOY. NO. (930S/932N) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 8-8-2019 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.

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MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S MCC TRANSPORT (S’PORE)
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Malaysian divers scour river in hunt for missing Franco-Irish teen

KUALA LUMPUR — Malaysian divers scoured a river Wednesday, joining a large team hunting for a Franco-Irish teenager with learning difficulties who vanished from a rainforest resort.

Nora Quoirin went missing on Sunday morning after checking in with her family to the Dusun Resort, about an hour from the capital Kuala Lumpur.

The 15-year-old lives in London and is the daughter of a Franco-Irish couple.

Her family suspect foul play, but the Malaysian government has stressed police do not believe she was abducted and are calling for an end to speculation about her disappearance.

As the hunt entered a fourth day Wednesday, a small team of divers searched a river running through the forest near the resort, AFP journalists at the scene said.

A helicopter, almost 180 people from various government agencies, and sniffer dogs had

already been deployed in the hunt for the girl.

Police have classified her disappearance as a missing person case, but her grandfather, Sylvain Quoirin, told AFP Tuesday that she had gone in “extremely mysterious” circumstances and was not in the habit of running off.

“In the morning, the window was open and she had disappeared,” Quoirin said by phone from Venisy, in north-central France where he is the mayor.

“After an 18-hour flight and a seven-hour time difference you would sleep soundly and not go for a stroll at night,” he said.

‘Very fearful’

The family had planned to stay for two weeks, he said, and Nora was “absolutely not” in the habit of running off.

“This is a young girl with a mild handicap who is rather timid, reserved. She is someone very fearful.”

Malaysian Home Minister



Members of Malaysian K-9 unit pray before taking part in a search and rescue operation for the missing 15-year-old Franco-Irish, Nora Quoirin in Seremban on 7 August, 2019. PHOTO: AFP

Muhyiddin Yassin, however, said police do not believe anyone else was involved.

“What other people say is not important because the police know better,” he was cited as saying by official news agency Bernama. “Everyone who comes to our country is safe and does not face problems.”

The Dusun is a 12-acre (five-hectare) resort in the foothills of a mountain range and next to a forest reserve.

The resort’s management said in a Facebook post that its employees were “extremely distressed and worried” about her disappearance and were assisting in the search.—AFP ■

Monaco to decriminalise abortion, but no legalisation

NICE (France) — Monaco would move in the coming months to stop making abortion a crime for women, but stopped short of full legalisation since doctors would still be prohibited from carrying out the procedure.

Women will still have to seek abortions outside the principality, where Roman Catholicism has long been the official religion, the government said in a statement.

Currently, abortion is allowed only in cases of rape, when the mother’s health is at risk, or if the foetus has irreversible health defects.

Women who have an abortion in other cases could face punishment of up to three years in prison and a maximum fine of 18,000 euros (\$20,150). —AFP ■

Bank Holiday

All Banks will be closed on 12th (Monday) August 2019 “Eid Day (Qurbani Eid)” being public holiday under the Negotiable Instruments Act.

Central Bank of Myanmar

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Okinawa files another lawsuit over US base landfill work

NAHA — The Okinawa government on Wednesday filed another lawsuit against the central government to halt ongoing landfill work for the relocation of a US air base within the southern island prefecture.

In the lawsuit filed with the Naha District Court, Okinawa challenged the legality of land minister Keiichi Ishii's involvement in the authorization of the landfill work to build a replacement facility for US Marine Corps Air Station Futenma.

A similar lawsuit was filed on 17 July with the Naha branch of the Fukuoka High Court.

The central and Okinawa governments have been at odds over the relocation of the Futenma base from a crowded residential district in Ginowan to the less densely populated Henoko coastal area of Nago.

Many Okinawa residents

have long hoped for the base to be moved out of the prefecture, which hosts the bulk of US military facilities in Japan. In February, over 70 per cent of voters rejected the decades-old base transfer plan in a local referendum.

The central government maintains the current relocation plan is "the only solution" to remove the dangers posed by the Futenma base without undermining the deterrence provided by the Japan-US security alliance.

The landfill work in the Henoko area was initially approved in 2013 by then Gov. Hirokazu Nakaima.

In August last year, the Okinawa government retracted its permission for the landfill work, citing weak ground found in the planned reclamation area.—Kyodo News ■



Photo taken from a Kyodo News helicopter on 16 September, 2018, shows US Marine Corps Air Station Futenma in Ginowan in Japan's southern island prefecture of Okinawa. **PHOTO: KYODO NEWS**

NEWS IN BRIEF

Japan should support nuclear ban treaty: Malaysia PM

FUKUOKA — Visiting Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad said Wednesday that Japan should support a UN treaty banning nuclear weapons as the world's only country to come under wartime nuclear attack.

In an interview with Kyodo News in the southwestern Japan city of Fukuoka, Mahathir also urged Japan and South Korea to try to resolve their dispute over historical and trade issues through dialogue, rather than confrontation.

"I think Japan is one country that should work hard to prohibit the use of nuclear weapons, in fact, to get rid of all nuclear weapons because Japan is the only country in the world that suffered from bombing by nuclear device so Japan knows how horrible it is when nuclear weapons are used," Mahathir said.

In arguing that Japan should sign the treaty banning nuclear weapons, Mahathir said other countries could emulate Japan's constitution that bars it from waging war as a means of settling international disputes, saying it is the only such constitutional provision in the world.—Kyodo News ■

Hong Kong's most urgent task is to stop violence, end chaos, restore order

SHENZHEN — The most pressing and overriding task of Hong Kong is to stop violence, end the chaos and restore order, a central government official said here Wednesday.

Hong Kong is facing the most severe situation since its return to the motherland, said Zhang Xiaoming, director of the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of the State Council, at a symposium jointly held by the office and the Liaison Office of the Central People's Government in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR). "The most pressing and overriding task at present is to stop violence, end the chaos and restore order, so as to safeguard our homeland and prevent Hong Kong from sinking into an abyss," Zhang said.—Xinhua ■

Taliban kill at least 14, wound 145 in Kabul blast

KABUL — At least 14 people were killed and 145 wounded in a massive Taliban bomb blast Wednesday as fresh violence gripped Kabul even as insurgents appear to be closing in on a peace deal with the US.

The bloodshed in the capital comes amid an ongoing surge in attacks across Afghanistan, where some 1,500 people were killed or injured last month alone.

A huge plume of black smoke was seen rising over west-

ern Kabul following a massive explosion at the entrance to a police compound around 9:00 am (0430 GMT).

The Afghan interior ministry said the explosion was caused by a car bomb, but the Taliban, which claimed the attack, said it was a much larger truck bomb. An Afghan security official also told AFP it was a truck bomb.

Images on social media showed toppled blast walls surrounding several largely de-

stroyed buildings in a compound.

Afghan authorities said at least 10 civilians and four police officers had been killed. Another 145 people, including 92 civilians, were wounded.

"As the air cleared, I saw several women crying, desperately looking for their husbands or children near the blast site," local journalist Zakeria Hasani, who lives near the police station, told AFP.

Shopkeeper Ahmad Saleh

said his store windows had blown out, sending glass flying.

"My head is spinning and still I don't know what has happened but the windows of about 20 shops around one kilometre from the blast site are broken," he said.

The US and the Taliban met in Doha this week for an eighth round of talks aimed at striking a peace deal that would slash the American military presence in Afghanistan.—AFP ■

The Future of Flying: A Japanese Flying Car Takes to the Skies



Flying vehicles are expected to be used for tourism, leisure activities, disaster relief, cargo transportation and easing of traffic congestion. **PHOTO: KYODO NEWS**

NEWS IN PICTURE

A SLEEKER, HELICOPTER-LIKE FLYING VEHICLE BY NEC CORPORATION FROM JAPAN HAS ARRIVED. THEY HAVE CREATED THEIR OWN VERSION OF WHAT A FUTURISTIC FLYING CAR LOOKS LIKE. THE COMPANY HAS BEEN WORKING ON THE PROTOTYPE FOR MONTHS, BEFORE UNVEILING IT ON MONDAY THIS WEEK.

Pentagon chief urges Japan to mull joining Strait of Hormuz coalition

TOKYO — US Defence Secretary Mark Esper has urged Japan to consider taking part in a coalition to protect shipping in the Strait of Hormuz as Washington struggles to garner support for its efforts to counter Iranian activities in the strategically key sea lane.

“Any and every country that has an interest in freedom of navigation and freedom of commerce needs to really consider (being) involved in this type of monitoring of the strait,” he told reporters Tuesday en route to Tokyo where he was meeting with Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and Defence Minister Takeshi Iwaya.

“I think it’s something that the Japanese should strongly consider. I’ll be discussing this with them,” he said.

Esper, who is on his first overseas trip since taking office last month, raised the issue in the

meeting with Iwaya on Wednesday, according to a Japanese government source. He did not bring it up with Abe, Japanese Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga told a press conference.

Iwaya told reporters afterward that he explained Japan will think carefully about what role it can play in safeguarding ships in the Middle East, taking into consideration its oil needs and ties with both Washington and Tehran.

Enthusiasm for the plan among US allies has been mixed. Britain and Israel have announced their willingness to participate, while Germany has declined. In the meeting with Abe at the premier’s office, Esper lambasted China for destabilizing the Indo-Pacific region, saying “their military aggression and calculated strategy of predatory



US Defence Secretary Mark Esper (l) and Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

economics violates the international rules-based order that we are trying to uphold.”

His comments on China came a day after the United

States designated the country as a currency manipulator, escalating their row that has played out through tit-for-tat tariffs.

—Kyodo News ■

Ukrainian president says asked Putin to curb separatists

KIEV — Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky on Wednesday said he had asked Russian leader Vladimir Putin to put pressure on separatist fighters in the east,

after four Ukrainian soldiers were killed in a grenade attack.

“I called him urgently. I told him that this brings us no closer to peace,” Zelensky said

during a briefing, adding that he had urged Putin to ask the Moscow-backed separatists to “stop killing our people”.

“These aren’t toys,” Zelen-

sky said.

The Ukrainian leader said he had a “long conversation” with Putin on Wednesday morning, only their second publicly announced phone call since former comedian Zelensky was elected in April.

Kiev reported Tuesday that four soldiers died in a rocket-propelled grenade attack, the highest daily toll since a truce went into force on 21 July.

Zelensky at the time called the incident an attempt to “undermine” Ukraine’s efforts toward peace and called on France, Germany and Russia to “meet as quickly as possible to resume negotiations”.

Ukrainian forces and pro-Russian separatists, who carved out two “people’s republics” in eastern Donetsk and Lugansk regions, have fought since April 2014, after the annexation of Crimea.—AFP ■



Kiev reported Tuesday that four soldiers died in a rocket-propelled grenade attack, the highest daily toll since a truce went into force on 21 July. PHOTO: AFP

Indonesia threatens sackings over forest fires

JAKARTA — Indonesian leader Joko Widodo warned Tuesday that officials would be sacked if they failed to stamp out rampant forest fires that are belching out toxic smog over Malaysia and Singapore.

The threat came as Indonesia faced pressure from its

neighbours to douse the blazes, which are blamed for sending air quality plummeting in parts of Southeast Asia.

“I’ve told the military and police chiefs to sack people who don’t tackle forest fires,” Widodo told a ministers meeting on the issue in Jakarta.

“We’ll be humiliated in front of other countries if we can’t solve this haze problem. “No matter how small the fire is, put it out immediately,” he added. Indonesian authorities are deploying thousands of extra personnel to prevent a repeat of the 2015 fires, which were the worst for two dec-

ades and choked the region in haze for weeks. The blazes are an annual problem during the dry season but they have worsened in recent weeks. Many of the worst fires occur in carbon-rich peat, which is highly combustible once drained to make way for agricultural plantations.—AFP ■

WORLD BRIEFS

N Korea missile firing was warning against US-S Korea drills: KCNA

SEOUL — North Korea sent a “warning” to the United States and South Korea over their ongoing joint military exercises with Tuesday’s firing of “new-type tactical guided missiles,” the country’s state-run media reported Wednesday.

Defence Minister Takeshi Iwaya told reporters in Tokyo the same day that Japan has determined that the two projectiles North Korea fired into the Sea of Japan the previous day were short-range ballistic missiles.

Iwaya called the launches “extremely regrettable” as North Korea is banned from testing such missiles under UN Security Council resolutions.

Wednesday’s Korean Central News Agency report quoted leader Kim Jong Un as saying that the “military action would be an occasion to send an adequate warning to the joint military drill now under way by the US and South Korean authorities.” —Kyodo News ■

Armed soldiers patrol silent streets after Kashmir curfew

NEW DELHI — Armed soldiers stand in front of coils of barbed wire in Indian Kashmir’s summer capital of Srinagar as a massive security lockdown imposed on the restive region by the Hindu nationalist government takes hold.

An eerie silence hangs over the city, punctuated by sporadic bursts of gunfire and the rumbling of armoured vehicles moving through near-empty streets. New Delhi stripped the Himalayan region of its seven-decade-long semi-autonomous status Monday through a contentious presidential decree, just hours after it imposed a crippling curfew on the valley.

Home to more than one million people, Srinagar now appears a ghost-town: armed soldiers on street corners and in front of barbed-wire barricades are among the few people to be seen.—AFP ■

U Min Thu to be head coach of Myanmar U-15 boys' team

FORMER head coach of Shan United and the manager for Shan United youth teams, U Min Thu, will handle the Myanmar U-15 boys' national football team in the near future, according to a statement issued by the Myanmar Football Federation.

The Myanmar U-15 team is preparing for the International U-16 Tournament 2019 organized by the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) and the Union of European Football Association (UEFA).

U Min Thu is likely to take charge of the Myanmar boys' team during the International U-16 Tournament 2019, which will be held for the first time with the AFC-EUFA Assist Program at the Mandalay Thiri Stadium in Mandalay from 14 to 18 August.

U Min Thu will take over from Torsten Frank, the former head coach of the U-15 boys' team who made his own decision to bid goodbye to the team, said officials from the Myanmar Football Federation.



Head coach U Min Thu. PHOTO: SUFC

U Min Thu is a former national footballer and has had much coaching experience in the Myanmar National League.

He has already obtained the Asian Football Confederation's A-Level License in coach-

ing, and he is ready to handle the team, according to the Myanmar Football Federation.

This is the first time U Min Thu will coach a national-level football team.—Lynn Thit (Tgi)

Zwekapin's Thein Tan to miss match against Shan United

ZWEKAPIN United defender Thein Tan will miss an important match against Shan United on 11 August as part of Week 20 of the MPT Myanmar National League 2019 at Shan United's home stadium in Taunggyi, the capital of Shan State.

Thein Tan, who wears the No. 25 jersey for Zwekapin United, will not play in the match as he faces a match ban on account of getting three yellow cards in the previous matches.

He has played 17 matches out of 19 for his team, and has shown brilliant skills, scoring three goals so far.

When the two teams met last, Shan United had beaten Zwekapin United by 4-0.

The match between Shan United and Zwekapin United will be shown on Mizzima TV, a free-to-air channel.

After playing 19 matches in the Myanmar National League, Zwekapin United is standing in the 10th place with 18 points from four wins, six draws, and nine losses. Meanwhile, Shan United, which is expected to win the championship, is second with 37 points from nine wins, ten draws, and no losses.—Lynn Thit (Tgi)



Zwekapin United defender Thein Tan (No. 25 jersey) tries to clear the ball from a Southern Myanmar player during an earlier national league match. PHOTO: MNL

Bale snubbed again by Zidane for Madrid friendly

Madrid — Gareth Bale's stand-off with Real Madrid continued on Wednesday after the forward was left out of Zinedine Zidane's squad to face Red Bull Salzburg in a friendly.

Bale has only played in two of Real Madrid's five pre-season games so far, coming on as a substitute against Arsenal and Atletico Madrid, and has now been left out completely for a third fixture in a row.

James Rodriguez and Mariano Diaz, who are both expected to be sold, were also not included for the match in Austria.

Zidane has made clear that Bale is not in his plans as he looks to rejuvenate Real Madrid following their miserable season last term.

The club are keen to sign Manchester United midfielder Paul Pogba, with Tottenham's Christian Eriksen and Ajax youngster Donny van de Beek potential alternatives.

But Madrid first need to

raise funds, after already spending around 300 million euros (\$336 million) this summer.

Zidane said last month that Bale being sold would be "best for everyone", while Bale's agent Jonathan Barnett told AFP: "Zidane is a disgrace — he shows no respect for a player that has done so much for Real Madrid."

Bale is in no rush to leave the Santiago Bernabeu, where he has a contract until 2022, worth around 18 million euros a year.

He agreed terms with Chinese Super League club Jiangsu Suning last month but the move was called off after Madrid failed to agree a fee for the 30-year-old.

Bayern Munich retain an interest but any deal would be hugely expensive, making it increasingly likely Bale will remain at Madrid for the start of the La Liga season next weekend.—AFP ■

Italy risk Olympic exclusion over new sports law — IOC

LAUSANNE — Italy's place at next year's Olympic Games in Tokyo is in danger after the International Olympic Committee (IOC) warned the Italian Olympic Committee (CONI) of "serious concerns" about a proposed new sports law.

The letter, which was addressed to CONI president Giovanni Malago and has been seen by AFP, said the legislation "would clearly affect the autonomy of CONI".

The letter, disclosed Tuesday in the Corriere de la Serra newspaper, recalled the fundamental principles of Olympism whereby membership of the Olympic movement "requires compliance with the Olympic Charter and recognition by the IOC."

James Macleod, director of Olympic Solidarity and NOC Relations, who signed the letter, said the new legislation would not conform to the Olympic charter.



Italy risk suspension from the Olympic movement if a proposed new sports law is passed. PHOTO: AFP

He suggested amendments to the draft decree and emphasised that CONI should not, as the draft law proposes, be reorganised by "unilateral decision from the government."

"CONI should be an autonomous and legally independent organisation governed primarily by the Olympic Charter and its

own statutes, within the framework of the applicable laws under which it is legally registered in the country," he said.

Contacted by AFP, a CONI official said the situation was "complicated" after Italy's parliament adopted framework legislation late Tuesday following the publication of the letter.—AFP ■