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Republic of the Union of Myanmar Ministry of the Office of the State Counsellor Press Release

(21st July 2017)

1. The UN Human Rights Council (HRC) passed at its 34th Session a resolution that called for the dispatch of an international fact-finding mission to Myanmar. This resolution also extended the mandate of the Special Rapporteur.
2. The resolution was based on unsubstantiated allegations. Additionally, the establishment of the fact-finding mission would do more to inflame, rather than resolve, the complex and challenging situation that confronts the country.

- Myanmar therefore dissociated itself from the HRC resolution as a whole.
3. Cooperation with the United Nations is the cornerstone of Myanmar's foreign policy. Despite our dissociation, we agreed to accept the proposal for the visit of the Special Rapporteur and to facilitate the discharge of her HRC mandate.
 4. Many government representatives discussed with the Special Rapporteur, during her visit, the challenges facing our country and our efforts to resolve them.
 5. During these discussions we outlined clearly for the Special Rapporteur the extensive steps the government has taken to promote peace and development for the benefit of the people of Myanmar. We also stated that we are committed to overcoming the challenges we face.

SEE PAGE-10

Rakhine slayings by insurgents

Journalists say militants are killing villagers who support government

IN the middle of the night on 4 July, more than a dozen masked men, dressed head-to-toe in black, surrounded Abdu Sulwon's home in northern Rakhine State. His widow says that was the last time she saw him alive.

"I saw a trail of blood where they dragged him away," said Haleda, 40, showing bruises on her body where she says the men beat her with sticks. Her husband's body was found in a ravine near their village, Maung Hna Ma, a week ago.

She gave her account to reporters during a government-organised trip for local and foreign journalists to northern Rakhine State.

Officials say Muslim insurgents are behind this and a slew of killings in the area that has been racked by violence in recent months, with security forces accused of committing atrocities against civilians.

"It is clear that Muslim militants are taking out Muslim villagers who are perceived to be collaborating with the government," U Thaug Tun, National Security Adviser of Myanmar, told diplomats in Yangon.

At least 44 civilians have been killed and 27 have been kidnapped or gone missing in



A Myanmar border guard police officer stands guard in Tin May village, Buthidaung township, northern Rakhine state, Myanmar on 14 July 2017. Picture taken July 14, 2017. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

northern Rakhine in the past nine months, U Thaug Tun said.

It was not possible to independently verify those figures or establish who was behind any of the killings described to journalists. Insurgents have denied

targeting civilians.

But in two cases, including that of Abdu Sulwon, relatives of the victims broadly supported the official version of events.

Journalists who have reported from Rakhine State con-

firmed that many Muslim villagers have been killed by Muslim militants.

"Villagers who have relations with the authorities are mainly targeted by the insurgents, so far about 17 have been

killed", said Myint Maung Soe, a reporter from Myanma Alin Daily, who also took part in the recent trip to troubled areas along with local and foreign journalists.

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Pyidaungsu Hluttaw

Presidential appointment, nominees announced by Pyidaungsu Hluttaw

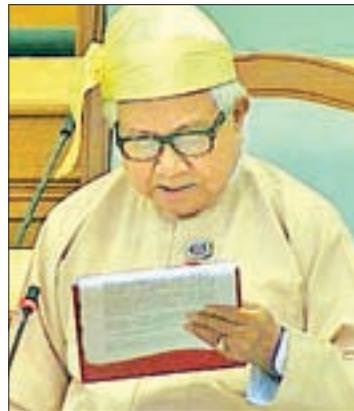
Myo Myint
(MYANMAR NEWS AGENCY)

THE presidential appointment of Rakhine State government Security and Border Affairs Minister Col. Phone Tint was placed on the record by the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw at its meeting yesterday in Nay Pyi Taw.

The Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker also informed the hluttaw of a list of nominees from the President for vice governors and board of director members for the Central Bank of Myanmar. The positions will soon be vacant as the present terms are expiring. U Soe Min, U Soe Thein and U Bo Bo Nge were nominated for vice governor positions and U Kyaw Min Tun, U Myint Thein Tun, U Soe Paing, Daw Yi Yi Win and Daw Khin May Hla were nominated for board of director



U Myint Lwin of Pazundaung constituency. **PHOTO: MNA**



U Kyi Win of Yangon Region constituency 2. **PHOTO: MNA**



U Maung Soe @ U Soe Thein. **PHOTO: MNA**



Dr. Myat Nyana Soe. **PHOTO: MNA**

member positions.

Hluttaw representatives who wanted to object the appointment of vice governors and board of director members were asked to submit their names.

A Joint Bill Committee report on the findings and comments on a bill amending the Special Goods Tax Law sent

back by the President with remarks was then read by the committee secretary Dr. Myat Nyana Soe.

An announcement was made for hluttaw representatives who wanted to discuss the bill to enroll their names.

Afterward, Myanmar National Human Rights Commis-

sion Vice Chairman U Sit Myaing explained the commission's works described in the commission's 2016 annual report and an announcement was made for hluttaw representatives who wanted to discuss the report to submit their names.

U Myint Lwin of Pazundaung constituency, U Kyi Win

of Yangon Region constituency 2 and U Maung Soe @ U Soe Thein of Taninthayi constituency 10 then discussed the bill to amend the Myanmar stamp duty act sent by the government.

A proposal to confirm the bill in section and the hluttaw to make a decision is scheduled for 26 July. ■

Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker receives UK House of Commons Clerk of Legislation

PYITHU Hluttaw Speaker U Win Myint received Mr. Liam Laurence Smyth, Clerk of Legislation from the House of Commons of the United Kingdom at the Pyithu Hluttaw hall in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

During the meeting, they discussed matters relating to cooperation between the two parliaments, strengthening of the hluttaw works and assistance on hluttaw development processes.—Myanmar News Agency ■



Speaker of Pyithu Hluttaw U Win Myint holds talks with Clerk of Legislation from the House of Commons of UK. **PHOTO: MNA**

UN Special Rapporteur meets with Union officials

MS. YANGHEE LEE, the Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Myanmar, met yesterday with Union Attorney-General U Tun Tun Oo at 8am, Union Minister for Information Dr Pe Myint at 9am, and Maj-Gen Aung Soe, Secretary of Central Review Committee on Confiscated Farm Lands and Other Lands at 10am.

Media matters were discussed with the Union Minister, while the conversation with the Union Attorney-General centre on the judiciary sector

development activities of the Union Attorney General's office in ensuring its activities to be timely, impartial and in accord with the law, forming of coordination sub groups for rule of law and fairness in states and regions.

In her call on the Secretary of Central Review Committee on Confiscated Farm Lands and Other Lands, the status of returning confiscated farmlands and other lands to rightful owners was discussed.—Myanmar News Agency ■



Maj-Gen Aung Soe, Secretary of Central Review Committee on Confiscated Farm Lands and Other Lands, meets with UN Human Rights envoy Ms Yanghee Lee. **PHOTO: MNA**

UCSB chairman receives Graduate School of Public Policy delegation

DR WIN THEIN, Chairman of the Union Civil Service Board (UCSB), yesterday received Mr. Toshiro Nishizawa, Project Professor of the Graduate School of Public Policy (GraSPP) and party at the

UCSB's meeting room in Nay Pyi Taw.

In the meeting, entry details for public servants to attend the Master of Public Policy and International Programme course of GraSPP,

future work of GraSPP on training public servants to help in capacity building and human resources development and scholarship programmes were explained.—Myanmar News Agency ■

President U Htin Kyaw attends stake-driving ceremony for staff housing

A stake-driving ceremony for staff housing in Nay Pyi Taw was held yesterday morning in the presence of President U Htin Kyaw. The ceremony was held at the staff housing site near the highway police chief's office in Dekkhina Thiri Township.

The ceremony was attended by Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U Win Myint, Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than, Union Constitutional Tribunal Chairman U Myo Nyunt, Union Election Commission Chairman U Hla Thein, Pyithu Hluttaw Deputy Speaker U T Khun Myat, Amyotha Hluttaw Deputy Speaker U Aye Thar Aung, Union Ministers Lt-Gen Kyaw Swe, U Thant Sin Maung, U Ohn Win, Dr. Myo Thein Gyi, Dr. Myint Htwe, U Kyaw Win, U Win Khaing, Union Auditor General U Maw Than, Nay Pyi Taw Council Chairman Dr. Myo Aung, Deputy Ministers, Nay Pyi Taw Council members, heads



President U Htin Kyaw poses for a documentary photo with participants at a stake-driving ceremony for staff housing yesterday. PHOTO: MNA

of departments, Myanmar Construction Entrepreneurs Association Chairman and members, invited guests and officials.

First, Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U Win Myint, Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing

Than, Union Ministers Lt-Gen Kyaw Swe, Dr. Myo Thein Gyi, Dr. Myint Htwe, U Kyaw Win, U Win Khaing and Nay Pyi Taw Council Chairman Dr. Myo Aung

drove stakes at the designated places.

Next, President U Htin Kyaw conducted a Myanmar traditional stake driving ceremony and concluded the event.

After the ceremony, the President and invited guests took commemorative photos.

The staff housing is built on a 21.84 acre plot beside the Nay Pyi Taw circular road consisting of 33 units of five-storey buildings with apartment sizes ranging from 502 sq. ft. to 1,000 sq. ft.—Myanmar News Agency ■

VP U Henry Van Thio addresses UN special session on water and natural disasters

VICE President U Henry Van Thio delivered a speech yesterday in New York City at the 3rd UN Special Thematic Session of Water and Disasters, pledging that Myanmar would focus on people, the planet, prosperity, peace, and partnership towards an inclusive and robust development path to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

“Myanmar has been playing an active role in regional and international arenas not

only for water-related development but also for water-related disaster management,” said the Vice President.

Myanmar suffers from many water-related disasters such as storms and floods every two or three years.

The country also faced flash floods and landslides in several states in regions across the country in 2015.

In his speech, U Henry Van Thio announced that the government of Myanmar was

going to host the 3rd Pacific Water Summit from 11 to 12 December in collaboration with the Asia-Pacific Water Forum-APWF.

The outcome of the Summit would be put forward to the 8th World Agenda for Sustainable Development and other internationally agreed-upon agendas.

He also endorsed the UN Resolution on International Decade for Action, “Water for Sustainable Development, 2018-2028”, which recommends further steps towards the achievement of sustainable development and integrated water resource management.

Meanwhile, Myanmar has joined the World Bank’s South East Asia Disaster Risk Management Project for financing resilience and disaster risk insurance.

In collaboration with the World Bank, the Netherlands and Australia, Myanmar has launched a water resources panel to find development and research partners as well as financial and technical assistance to enhance its networking relationship in the water sector.—Myanmar News Agency ■



Vice President U Henry Van Thio delivers a speech at the 3rd UN Special Thematic Session of Water and Disasters. PHOTO: MNA

State Counsellor receives Ms. Yanghee Lee



State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi shakes hands with Special Rapporteur Ms. Yanghee Lee in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. PHOTO: MNA

State Counsellor and Union Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar Daw Aung San Suu Kyi received the Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Myanmar Ms. Yanghee Lee at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Nay Pyi Taw, at 11:30 hours on 21 July 2017. During the meeting, they discussed matters pertaining

to promotion and protection of human rights in Myanmar, measures taken for development of Rakhine State and peace process in Myanmar.

U Kyaw Tint Swe, Union Minister for the Ministry of State Counsellor’s Office and U Kyaw Tin, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs were also present at the meeting.—Myanmar News Agency ■

THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

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ACTING CHIEF EDITORAye Min Soe,
ce@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com
dce@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com**EXPATRIATE CONSULTANT EDITOR**Mark Angeles,
markangeles@gmail.com**SENIOR EDITORIAL CONSULTANT**

Kyaw Myaing

SENIOR TRANSLATORSKhin Maung Oo,
editor2@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com
Khin Maung Win (Chief Proof Reader),
Zaw Min, zawmin.gnlm@gmail.com**INTERNATIONAL NEWS EDITOR**Ye Htut Tin,
editor1@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com**LOCAL NEWS EDITORS**Tun Tun Naing (Editor),
intlnews@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com
Nwe Nwe Tun (Sub-editor),
nwenwe9131@gmail.com**TRANSLATORS**Khaing Thanda Lwin,
reporter1@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com
Hay Mar Tin Win,
translator@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com
Ei Myat Mon
Zaw Htet Oo
Kyaw Zin Lin
Sandar Soe
Kyaw Zin Tun**REPORTERS**May Thet Hnin,
mayreporter.mm@gmail.com
Tun Aung Kyaw,
reporter2@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com**PHOTOGRAPHER**

Kyaw Zeya Win @ Phoe Khwar

COMPUTER TEAMTun Zaw (Chief of Computer Team),
Thein Ngwe, Zaw Zaw Aung,
Ye Naing Soe, Nyi Zaw Moe,
Hnin Pwint, Kay Khaing Win,
Sanda Hnin, Zu Zin Hnin**EDITORIAL SECTION**(+95) (01)8604529,
Fax – (+95) (01) 8604305**CIRCULATION & DISTRIBUTION**San Lwin, (+95) (01) 8604532,
Hotline - 09 974424114**ADVERTISING & MARKETING**(+95) (01) 8604530,
Hotline - 09 974424848
marketing@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com
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Due to limitation of space we are only able to publish "Letter to the Editor" that do not exceed 500 words. Should you submit a text longer than 500 words please be aware that your letter will be edited.

4,000 apartments to be constructed in Hlegu

By May Thet Hnin

About 4,000 apartments will be constructed on a 1500-acre plot of land between mileposts 3 and 5 in Hlegu Township, Yangon Region within two and a half years, said U Yu Khine, the director of Urban and Housing Development Department.

In the future, the department will also construct universities, hospitals, schools, supermarkets, golf courses, parking lots and parks. Initially, the department will only construct the apartments within two and a half years, he added.

"Now, we have already arranged to build the 4,000 apartments. We will lay the foundation very soon. The department is conducting the soil test now. The department has also constructed the walls on the land to ensure the safety of the construction site. The project will start as soon as possible despite the heavy rains," said U Yu Khine.

The land has been lent by the Alliance Stars Group of

Companies since 2013 for agricultural purposes. But the land cannot be put under cultivation. Therefore, the company has submitted a proposal in 2015 to implement this housing development project. In the first month of 2016, the presidential office ordered the company to give back the land. Later, the presidential office allowed the Alliance Stars Group of Companies to co-operate with the housing department to implement the housing development project. Both the previous and the incumbent governments have moved over 5,000 squatters off the land to implement this project. The project was begun after the incumbent government moved the squatters out in June.

"Only four- or five-storey apartment buildings are permitted to be constructed because of the soil condition. When we construct the apartments, we will focus on good quality. We have not decided yet for whom we will construct," said U Yu Khine.

After constructing the apartments, we will continue to build other facilities, but we don't know how long we will take to construct these facilities, he added.

Myanmar Property Association vice chairman U Than Oo said, "Upon completion of the project, we will think about squatters who have been moved out from the land. When we are selling the apartments in installments, we should sell the apartments with a longer payment period, like 30 years.

Five miles away from this project, a 600-acre plot of land in Hmawbi Township will be the site of industrial zones, industrial training schools, and agricultural and livestock breeding vocational training schools. This project will be implemented jointly by the Yangon Region government and Korean government.

The government plans to construct 100,000 apartments within five years term and targets one million apartments by 2030. ■

A truck runs near Muse 105-mile trade zone in northern Shan State. **FILE PHOTO: PHOE KHWAR**

Roads to be paved at Muse 105-mile trade zone

Upgrading the roads at the Muse 105-mile trade zone will involve construction of reinforced concrete roads for the convenience of trucks going to and from Muse 105-mile trade zone.

The mayor of Shweli, a major city in Yunnan Province, China, said his city will spend 10 million yuan on the

construction of the concrete roads to speed up the flow of commodities.

An official also said that the Shweli mayor will not charge entrance fees into the trade zone and will spend their own funds for constructing the concrete roads. Completion of the roads will facilitate the arrival and departure of the trucks to

and from the checkpoints.

About 500 export vehicles and 400 import vehicles travel the roads to and from the Muse 105-mile trade zone every day. Priority will be given to paving of the concrete roads at the import/export checkpoints because the budget of 10 million yuan is not enough for the entire zone.—GNLM ■

NEWS BRIEFS

WY-brand Amphetamine tablets seized at the 3-mile check-point, Maungtaw

At about 8:40 pm on 20 July, security forces checked the hilux vehicle carrying 6 passengers to search for drugs, finding WY brand amphetamine tablets worth Ks 156 million, packed in a Penang Bag brought by Naw Dolar and Soe Naing residing in Myoma (East) in Maungtaw township, at 3-mile check-point. Both were arrested, it has been learnt.—MNA ■

One Suspect Seized in Buthidaung Tsp

It has been learnt that more one suspect of the murder case of Adul Suwon living in Maung Hna Ma village of Nga Yant Chaung village-tract, in Buthidaung township was arrested by the security forces in the evening of 20 July.

After an anonymous tip-off that a suspect of the murder case in Maung Hna Ma village arrived at the village, security forces went there to seize the suspect named Marmed Tarshein residing in that village. He was being investigated at the local police station, it was learnt.—MNA ■

A Fire Breaks Out in Maungtaw Tsp

At about 2 pm on 21 July, a fire broke out in Latha Auk village in Maungtaw township, causing the loss of Ks 15000. A case was filed against Isu, the house owner for carelessness, it was learnt.—MNA ■

40,000 people visit the Secretariat in three days

About 40,000 people visited the Secretariat in three days to get a glimpse of the cabinet room where Bogyoke Aung San and the martyrs were assassinated. The historic building opened to public for three days from 19th July to mark the 70th Martyrs' Day.—Phoe Saint ■



A farmer ploughs a farmland with a machine in Dala, outside Yangon. PHOTO: GNLM/PHOE KHWAR

Agri machinery trading zones to be established

By Ko Moe

AGRICULTURAL machinery trading zones will be established in 14 states and regions, with discussions already held with related businesses, said Union Minister for Planning and Finance U Kyaw Win during a Myanmar Private Sector Development Committee and Myanmar Entrepreneurs Regular Meeting led by Vice President U Myint Swe on Thursday at the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry. The aim of setting up trading zones for agricultural

machinery is to develop the agriculture sector, which is prevalent in Myanmar, officials said. Value-added agriculture products and acquisition of international markets will also be accomplished for agriculture sector development, it is learnt. Loans from Myanmar Agricultural Development Bank will allow farmers to buy the agricultural machinery added the Union Minister.

“The government will support in any way possible for the livelihood development of the farmers. Loans will be provided so that the farmers can

purchase the machinery that they want. Interest is much reduced as a two-step loan system is used. Everything has been discussed, and the final step of giving loans only needs to be done. Afterward, arrangements are made to provide inputs required by the farmers such as fertilizers and technical knowledge”, said the Union Minister.

The Union Minister also said coordination with the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation will be achieved to obtain land and foreign investment required for livestock breeding sector development. ■

Border trade amounts US\$ 1.9 billion, exports decrease by US\$1.2 million

THE value of border trade from 1st April to 7th July this fiscal year was up by US\$48 million when compared to the same period last year.

Border trade from 1st April to 7th July this fiscal year hit US\$1.9 billion, a decrease of \$1.2 million in exports and an increase of \$49.7 million in imports, according to official statistics of the ministry of commerce.

Myanmar trades primarily with neighboring countries — China, India, Thailand and Bangladesh. Myanmar’s trade

with China primarily takes place at the Muse, Lweje, Kanpiketee, Chinshwehaw and Kengtung gates of entry; Myanmar’s Indian trade primarily takes place at Tamu and Reed; Thai trade at Kawthaung and Myawady; and Bangladeshi trade at Sittway and Maungtaw.

The border trade value as of 7th July in the current FY was US\$1.2 billion in Muse, \$68.6 million in Lweje, \$151 million in Chinshwehaw, \$45.9 million in KanPiketee, under \$1 million in Kengtung, \$20.6 million in Tachilek, \$210 million in

Myawady, \$40.2 million in Kawthaung, \$43.3 million in Myeik, \$2.10 million in HteeKhee, \$1.35 million in Mawtaung, under \$1 million in Maese, under \$1 million in Sittway, \$2.77 million in Maungtaw, \$7.22 million in Tamu and \$11.52 million in Reed.

Myanmar exports agricultural products, forest products, animal products, minerals, fishery products, manufactured goods and other products while capital goods, raw industrial materials and consumer products are imported into the country. —GNLM ■

China CITIC Construction Group, MAPCO and MRF ink MoU for Agribusiness Centers Project

WITH the recommendation and support of Ministry of Commerce and Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries, China CITIC Construction Group has entered into MoU with Myanmar Rice Federation (MRF).

The signing ceremony was held in Nay Pyi Taw Thingaha Hotel on 21st July, witnessed by Union Minister Dr Than Myint, Union Minister Dr Aung Thu, MRF Chairman U Chit Khine and CITIC Construction Chair-

man Mr Chen Xiaojia.

After the Tripartite MoU, the parties will conduct feasibility study and will invest in 400 million USD Agribusiness Project, which will cover 33 townships at 10 states and regions of Myanmar. Agribusiness Centers will provide services to farmers, such as contract Farming service, mechanization service, drying and storage service, fertilizer sale services and other agriculture relate services.—GNLM ■

Individual trade card holders do Ks11 bln in border trade this FY

BORDER trade value by holders of individual trade cards (ITCs) cleared Ks 10.86 billion this fiscal year, according to the official statistics the Ministry of Commerce.

The Myawady border trade camp is reported to have the largest volume of trade with a value of more than Ks8.38 billion. ITC exports reached Ks638 million from 1 April to 7 June this fiscal year, whereas ITC imports with ITC hit Ks10.22 billion, ac-

ording to statistics provided by the Ministry of Commerce.

ITCs did trade worth Ks319 million at Tamu land port of entry, Ks 6.7 million at Muse; Ks499 million at Tachilek, 54 million at Lwe Gin, 4.09million at Chin Shwe Haw, Ks719 million at Kanpiketee, Ks207 million at Kawthaung, Ks161 million at Reed, Ks450 million at Mawtaung and Ks48 million at Kengtung.—GNLM ■

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THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

သတင်းစာများကို ဤဆိုင်များတွင်ဝယ်ယူဖတ်ရှုနိုင်ပါပြီ

- Market Place by City Mart (6.5 Mile)
- Market Place by City Mart (Damasidi Road)
- City Mart (Aung San Stadium)
- City Mart (47th street)
- City Mart (Yankin)
- City Mart (China Town)
- City Mart (Myay Ni Gone)
- City Mart (FMI)
- City Mart (Junction Square)
- City Mart (Junction Maw Tin)
- City Mart (Sule Square)
- City Mart (Star City - Thanlyin)
- City Mart (Waizayandar)
- City Mart (Hledan)
- City Mart (Myanmar Plaza)
- Ocean North Point (9 mile)
- Ocean Shwegonedine

Ocean City Supercenter City Mart Supermarket



Dr. Win Myat Aye addresses at UN Special Thematic Session on Water and Disaster meeting. PHOTO: MNA

Dr Win Myat Aye discusses natural disaster management at UN session

A Myanmar delegation led by Vice President U Henry Van Thio attended the 3rd UN Special Thematic Session on Water and Disaster held at UN Headquarters in New York City on Thursday morning.

At the meeting, delegation member Dr Win Myat Aye, Union Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, took part as a panelist in a discussion on dealing with natural disasters.

“In Myanmar, a national natural disaster management committee and a national water resources committee were formed to bring about social considerations and social harmony such as green economy development and sustainable

development, to implement the tasks of reducing poverty through the alleviation of economic difficulties and natural disasters and framework of the International Flood Initiative (IFI) based on water resources” Dr. Win Myat Aye said.

The Union Minister said it was imperative to implement a cohesive, nation-wide effort with the help of regional and international organisations.

“Sustainable Development Goals — Agenda 2030, Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and Paris Agreement on Climate Change are being implemented by the country. The government had made arrangements to set up the national-level emergency fund

and fund for the management of national-level natural disasters. And preparation for reducing natural disasters, upgrading the capacity in preparation for disasters, building up cyclone shelters, smoothness of transportation, providing subsidies of boats for easy access in carrying out rescue works, preparation of special helicopters for prompt and effective response, co-operation in Southeast Asia Disaster Risk Management Project.”

The Union Minister also attended a formal breakfast during which he explained to UN permanent representatives the Asia-Pacific Water Forum, which will be held in Myanmar. —MNA ■

Gender equality in politics discussed in Yangon

WITH an eye toward the 2020 general elections, members of the Union Election Commission, Yaung Chi Thit public social organisation and the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) held a discussion on gender equality and inclusion in politics at the Chatrium Hotel yesterday.

In the discussion, the participants discussed matters relating to legal framework, leadership of political parties, expenditures on campaigning, promoting capacity and training, implementing in elections, shar-

ing knowledge in security, and forming change in the future.

There were about 140 attendees at the discussion. Hlutaw representatives, officials from related ministries and representatives of social organisations agreed to organise the Joint Gender Working Group for the implementation on the tasks of gender equality for the 2020 general election.

“The Union Election Commission will help the implementation of gender equality by the Joint Gender Working Group in Myanmar, and it needs to per-

form strongly in the including of gender equality in the election and political works of Myanmar,” said U Tin Tun, secretary of the Union Election Commission.

The Joint Gender Working Group will conduct the implementation of advice by all on gender equality and politics in 2017.

U Tin Tun said that they began the tasks of inclusion in the future election.

All the attendees discussed the important aims of gender equality in politics.—Myanmar News Agency ■

Chinese tax on Myanmar goods slows trade to a trickle in July

TO protect the local production of Chinese farmers, the China authorities increased its tax rate to 100 per cent for imported goods, prompting most merchants to halt trade in July.

Main exports through Chinswehew checkpoint to China are pulses, sesame seeds, sugar, rice and rubber, said the merchants.

Sino-Myanmar border trade is mainly conducted through Muse, Lweje, Kanpikete, Chinswehew and Kengtung. Values of trade through Sino-Myanmar land ports of entry as of 7 July was estimated at US\$1.56 billion, which is an increase of \$56

million compared to the same period last year. Of five Sino-Myanmar checkpoints, Chinswehew and Kengtung showed slight decreases in trade. Total border trade value from 1 April to 7 July was \$1.9 billion, an increase of \$48 million compared to last year. Myanmar is carrying out border trade with India via Tamu and Reed checkpoints. The country's land ports of entry with Bangladesh are Sittway and Maungtau. Myanmar and Thailand border trade takes place at Tachilek, Myawady, Kawthoung, Myeik, Hteekhee, Maese and Mawtaung land ports of entry. —Htet Myat ■

Rubber price increases over Ks950 per pound in the local market

THE price of rubber has increased over Ks950 per pound in the local market as the global rubber price rises, according to the rubber market.

“Since July, the local rubber price has been on the increase. In February 2017, the local rubber price reached a record high of about Ks1300 per pound. But, the price of local rubber fell again to under Ks800 per pound,” said U Myint Maung, a local rubber grower. “The rubber is exported mainly to China. Now, we just export a limited volume of rubber because the price of local rubber has declined. If the price of rubber rises up again, we will send back a high volume of rubber. Our local rubber has already had a place in the market in China”, he added.

Myanmar rubber is being exported to China together with Thailand, Vietnam and Japan. Therefore, if the rubber plantations do not yield the quality rubber, the price of rubber will not be high enough. Currently, local rubber plantations are facing a scarcity of the labourers, he added. Myanmar produces over 200,000 tons of rubber annually across the country. Eighty-thousand out of over 200,000 tons of rubber have been exported to China legally while over 100,000 tons of rubber have been exported to China illegally, according to Myanmar Rubber Planters and Producers Association.

Ninety per cent of rubber was exported to China while 10 per cent was used for the local tire production.—Min Thu ■

Myanmar Young Entrepreneurs attend 9th China -Asean Forum

MYANMAR Young Entrepreneurs attended 9th China -Asean Young Entrepreneurs Forum 2017 held in Kunming in Yunnan Province.

The forum is from July 18 to 21 and the topics such as building on Belt and Road Initiative, status quo of exchange and cooperation, focus on cooperation and direction in future efforts on Economic and Trade Exchange will be discussed, said U Zaw Naing Thein, Vice Chairman of Myanmar Young Entrepreneurs

Association (MYEA). To promote the relationship and cooperation between China and Asean young entrepreneurs, the forum is held annually. Twelve members of Myanmar young entrepreneurs led by vice chairman attended the forum for this year. MYEA is founded as the association which represents Myanmar young entrepreneurs and also the founder and executive member of China -Asean Young Entrepreneurs and Asean Young Entrepreneurs Association.—MYEA ■



Senior General Min Aung Hlaing peruses books displayed at the Myawady Literary House. **PHOTO: MNA**

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing visits Myawady Literary House

Accompanied by the Commander-in-Chief (Navy) General Tin Aung San, high-ranking officials of the Office of Commander-in-Chief and the Commander of Yangon Command, Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, C-in-C of Defence Services, visited Myawady Literary House yesterday morning, where he received explanations about the situations on publication and distribution of periodicals of Myawady issues by the chief editor of MLH, in-charge of Myawady news house (branch) Yangon.

The Senior General stressed the need for reading because it brings knowledge to people, though some books are found to contain false information overwhelmed by prejudices and bias, hence the need to make the truth known to the public, he said.

Afterwards, the C-in-C of Defence Services and members inspected books, periodicals and back issues such as collections of Myawady and Ngwetaryi magazines since the time of its first publication.—Myanmar News Agency ■



A nurse gives polio vaccine to a child in Maungtaw. **PHOTO: THAKKA**

Polio vaccination drive kicks off in Maungtaw Township

By Myint Maung Soe & Aung Kyaw Oo

A five days Oral Polio Vaccination (OPV) campaign commenced in Maungtaw, Rakhine State, yesterday to boost immunity of local under five children against the crippling disease.

The move to vaccinate

more than 10,000 children under five year old against polio comes after the five times door-to-door OPV vaccination in Maungtaw in 2016 following the finding of disease in 2015.

The vaccination activities began at more than 400 locations in the township simultaneously as part of the state-level cam-

paign covering 17 townships.

Besides, children aged from 3 months to two year old would be vaccinated against polio from 20 to 25 August, said Dr Ny Kaythi San, of Public Health Department in Maungtaw.

Myanmar is expected to declare a polio free country in 2019. ■



Ms Yanghee Lee talks to media at a press conference in Yangon. **PHOTO: MNA**

UN rights envoy asks ASEAN to assist Myanmar's transition

THE UN's human rights envoy to Myanmar urged ASEAN to assist Myanmar in its democratic transition.

Ms Yanghee Lee held a press conference in Yangon yesterday following completing of her 12-day fact-finding mission yesterday.

She expressed thanks to the government for assisting her in visits to Yangon, Nay Pyi Taw, Rakhine State, Shan State and Kayin State.

Ms Lee said during her visits to Shan and Rakhine states,

she met with representatives from local authorities and civil societies, discussing about issues internally displaced persons, impacts on the local people due to implementing special economic zones, and people detained on suspicion of involvement in October 9 attacks in Rakhine State.

She also discussed issues related with land grabbing and compensation in Kayin State, and Section-66 (D) of the communications law.—Myanmar News Agency ■

Yangon New City Project to start after rainy season

By Ko Moe

YANGON Region Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein said they will begin the Yangon New City Project at the end of the rainy season.

He said the project is ready to begin to address the growing population in Yangon City, with the regional government also dealing with the flooding issue in the city.

The Chief Minister made the remarks at a meeting at the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (UMFCCI) on Thursday. The meeting was facilitated by Vice President U Myint Swe.

The Yangon New City Project will be launched in a proposed plot of 30,000 acres of land between The Hlinethaya-Twante Motorway and Seikkyi Kanaung-to Township on the opposite bank of Kyimyindine Township.

The New Yangon Develop-

ment Corporation was formed for the realisation of the project, under the complete administration of the Yangon Region Government.

The government has received loans from the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the International Finance Corporation (IFC) and other international organisations, said Daw Nilar Kyaw, the Yangon Minister of Electricity, Industry, Road and Communication.

A public-private partnership system will be used to provide a means to generate electricity and its own power grid and water supply for the new city.

The new city project is aimed at addressing the Yangon's increasing number of squatters, rising unemployment, unequal water distribution, inadequate electric supply, traffic jams and

rising land prices.

The new city project is also predicted to help boost domestic and foreign trade in Yangon and Ayeyawady Region.

Daw Sandar Min, chairman of the Yangon Hluttaw's Committee for Finance, Planning and Commerce, said she wants to discuss the new city project in the regional Hluttaw due to the massive scale of the project and the change in investors. The Yangon South West Development Public Company, Business Capital City Ltd and Shwe Popa International Construction Company formed a consortium as developers for the new city project during the previous government's administration. In the current government's administration, the contract with the previous consortium developers was abolished to give private businesses a chance to develop underdeveloped regions at the same pace. ■

A major driving force of the country

By Khin Maung Oo

A country needs financial strength for its survival. Without wealth or finance, it will find it difficult to operate the government's administrative machinery. Accordingly, every nation has to depend upon its revenues and taxes. Most people assume that the government is wholly responsible for the country to become a developed nation. In fact, every citizen is responsible to contribute to nation building. In the Constitution, it is definitely prescribed that every individual is under duty to pay tax. Paying tax regularly will make the country develop.

In Myanmar, most are not familiar with paying tax. Some try to evade paying tax, with some seeming to ignore the existence of the tax collec-

tion system. Most fail to consider that they are responsible to pay tax to the government if they earn money doing a business transaction or running a business of their own. Undutiful tax payers exceed dutiful ones. By seeing this, we can say that the culture of paying taxes has not developed yet in our country. Not only tax payers but also tax assessors are responsible to contribute towards making the national economy grow. In performing tax collection duty, it needs to distinguish duty from authority. Duty is commitment to be performed to perfection while authority is performance in accord with rules, laws or discipline. We need to take care not to abuse power and authority over ignorant people. The tax collectors should not exploit the ignorant citizens for their own personal benefits. If so,

this action will be a case of misappropriation of national finances. So, it must be supervised with great care.

In working for national development, failure to perform according to laws, rules and regulations is a hindrance for the national development process. It may be deemed a great weakness. Provided that every individual including revenue staff performs their citizen's duties dutifully, that country will surely develop promptly. As known by all, there are a lot of debts we have to pay as well as many necessities we have to fulfill. To perform these duties earnings received from collecting taxes and revenues will be a driving force. Only if the culture of paying taxes free from corruption can be developed among the public, will people come to trust in the culture and take an active

part in spreading knowledge about tax.

In the financial year, 2016-2017, tax income collected was less than that of the financial year 2015-2016. In 14 categories, it exceeded the targeted amount, while in 7 categories it was less than the targeted amount. So, we should find ways and means to collect taxes and revenues, according to the target. Being a major driving force for national development, we should make scrutiny of tax assessments and control and supervision of tax payment. Concurrently, we should expand our tax resources and scrutinize the assessment over special commodities such as liquor, beer, cigars and cigarettes. Let us build a better country for our future generations by developing the culture of paying taxes free from corruption. ■

ALCOHOLIC LIVER DISEASE : CHALLENGE TO LONGEVITY AND QUALITY OF LIFE

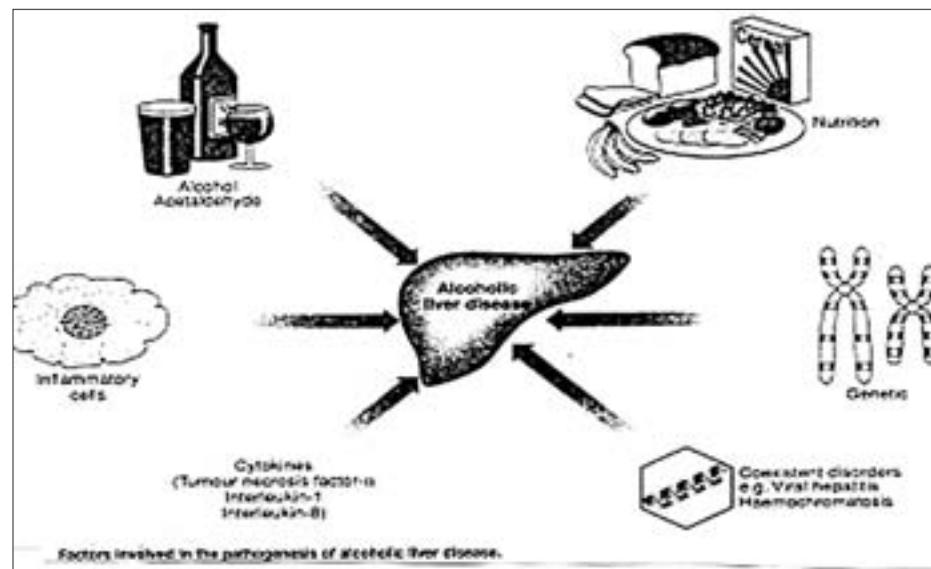
By Dr. Aung Soe (a) Aung Kyaw Moe
Retired State Medical
Superintendent

Myanmar Gastro - enterology and Hepatology Society is going to hold World Hepatitis Day ceremony at UMFCCI on 23rd July, it is learnt Elaborating the slogan "ELIMINATE HEPATITIS", World Hepatitis Day event comprises such activities as health talks, distributing health educative pamphlets and memorial gifts. Further more, free laboratory tests will be performed detecting Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C, preceded by inoculation for Hepatitis B (first dose - free) for lucky guys.

For awareness of hepatitis (inflammation of liver, a vital organ), World Hepatitis Day is celebrated all over the world every year on May 19 since 2008, elaborating the slogan chosen each year by the World Hepatitis Alliance. Slogan for 2017 is ELIMINATE HEPATITIS, as mentioned above.

Let me hail the World Hepatitis Day event with the article, Alcoholic Liver Disease. Hepatitis and miscellaneous liver disease is on rise globally as well as nationally, probably due to easy accessibility and poor knowledge of alcohol hazards.

The liver performs a wide variety of functions. Following a meal, more than half the glucose absorbed is taken up by the liver and stored as glycogen or converted to lactate and released into the systemic circulation. Amino



acids are used for hepatic and plasma protein synthesis and excess amino acids are broken to urea. In contrast, during fasting the liver releases glucose, derived either from the breakdown of glycogen or from gluconeogenesis using amino acids released from extrahepatic tissues outside the liver such as muscle. Synthesis of urea and endogenous protein and hepatic amino acid release are suppressed during fasting. In both the fed and fasting state the liver plays a central role in lipid metabolism, producing very low density lipoproteins and further metabolising low and high density lipoproteins.

The liver plays a central role in the metabolism of drugs and alcohol. Some vitamins, such as A, D and B12 are stored by the liver in large amounts, while others, such as vitamin K and folate, are stored in smaller concentra-

tions and disappear rapidly if dietary intake is deficient. The liver is also able to metabolise vitamins to more active compounds, e.g tryptophan and vitamin D. Vitamin K is essential for the hepatic synthesis of coagulation factors. The liver stores minerals such as iron, in ferritin and haemosiderin, and copper.

The liver is the main organ in which drugs are metabolised and consequently is important in determining the effects of drugs in the body. Liver disease may alter the capacity of the liver to metabolise drugs and unexpected toxicity may occur.

In many societies alcohol is the most common cause of chronic liver disease.

Alcohol is metabolised almost exclusively in the liver. It is first converted to acetaldehyde, mainly by the mitochondrial enzyme alcohol dehydro-

genase. Alcohol is a powerful inducer of the mixed function oxidases, thereby increasing the ability of the liver to metabolise other drugs, toxins or carcinogens metabolised by enzymes.

The hepatic lesions of alcoholic liver disease are attributable directly to alcohol. The risk of developing alcoholic liver disease is related directly to the amount of alcohol (of any kind) ingested but is more likely to be clinically apparent at daily intakes above 30 g (3 units) in men and 20 g (2 units) in women. More than 5 years of drinking, and usually more than 10 years, are required to produce alcoholic cirrhosis, and a steady daily intake is more hazardous than intermittent drinking.

The mechanism or mechanisms underlying the ability of alcohol to produce individual liver lesions are poorly understood. Fatty change is attributed to an impaired excretion and enhanced synthesis of triacylglycerol by liver cells. The development of alcoholic hepatitis, fibrosis and cirrhosis is much more obscure. Biochemical mechanisms involving the production of toxic metabolites, called adducts, during the conversion of acetaldehyde to acetate and an immune reaction to liver cells altered by alcohol may be involved in these forms of liver damage. Alcohol-induced liver injury, particularly hepatitis, is more common in women and other genetic factors have been implicated in the genesis of alcoholic liver disease.

SEE PAGE-9

Heavy rains submerge 688 houses in Mon State

HEAVY rain that began in Kyai-
kto Township, Mon State on
Thursday has caused several
injuries, displacement of thou-
sands and extensive damage.

Heavy rains near Thein
Zayet Village in Kyai-
kto Township eroded a cliff side and
caused it to collapse onto the
house of U Myint Htun Naing,
39. He suffered an injury to
his right foot and is receiving
treatment in Thein Zayet Hos-
pital. Similarly, another cliff
side collapsed near Seikkanthar
Ward in the same village and
destroyed the house of U Aye
Ko, 58. In addition to numerous
injuries, livestock were also lost.

Over 688 houses in the
combined areas of Kawsanna-
ing Ward, Zayarmon Ward, the
Northern Ward and Lone Pa-
kkalate Village were partially
submerged, forcing over 2,746
people to take refuge in tem-
porary camps set up in local
monasteries and schools.



Houses are submerged in flood water after heavy rains in Kyai-
kto Township, Mon State. PHOTO: SUPPLIED

Pyithu Hluttaw Represent-
ative Dr. Khin Saung, Mon State
Minister U Wunna Kyaw and
officials from the Mon State
Government travelled to Kyai-

kto yesterday to provide support
to flood victims in their camps.
Five camps were set up by the
Natural Disaster Management
Committee.

The Regional Department
for Relief and Resettlement
donated Ks500,000 to Kawsan-
naing camp, Ks400,000 to Za-
yarmon camp, Ks300,000 to the

northern camp and Ks300,000
to the Taungtsu camp. The
Kyai-
kto Motor Vehicle Team
also donated packets of instant
noodle, cans of condensed milk
and dried snacks to the camps.

Floods from the heavy rains
in Kyai-
kto also submerged the
railway tracks near the 77/14
and 77/20 milepost on the Yan-
gon-Mawlamyine railroad under
2.6 inches of water.

This caused a train from
Mawlamyine station to halt on
the tracks and wait till floodwa-
ters receded.

Similarly, the Mawlamyine
highway near milepost 96/2 and
96/5 were submerged under one
foot of water.

Rising water levels of the
Ayeyawady River forced 189 res-
idents in Outywarlay Village in
Hin-thada Township to move out
of their homes, with some moving
into the local monastery.—Win
Maung, Kyai-
kto, Mawlamyine,
Hin-thada Township IPRD ■

UEC Pronounces Decrees on Election Complaints Case Nos 1, 2 and 3 in By-Elections, 2017

UNION Election Commission
Tribunal 2 made decrees of
rejection over the complaints
made by complainants—com-
plaint of U Tin Yu, parliamentar-
ian candidate for Pyithu Hluttaw
constituency of Hlinetharyar
Yangon Region, complaint of
U Ne Lin, parliamentarian

candidate for Pyithu Hluttaw
constituency of Dagon Myo-
thit (East) Yangon Region and
complaint of U Kyaw Zin Hein,
parliamentarian candidate
for Pyithu Hluttaw constitu-
ency of Kawthmu in Yangon
Region.

Union Election Commis-

sion Tribunal 2 chaired by U
Hla Tint, member of UEC, with
legislators U Mya Win and U
Win Swe as members did hear-
ings and pronounced decrees
of rejections, respectively over
the complaint no 1/2017 made by
complainant U Tin Yu of USDP
against U Win Min of NLD party,

who won the parliamentarian
seat of Hlinetharyar constitu-
ency, Yangon Region, regarding
the complaint no 2/2017 made by
complainant U Ne Lin of USDP
against U Ne Kyaw of NLD par-
ty who won the parliamentarian
seat of Dagon Myothit (East)
constituency, Yangon Region,

and as regards the complaint
no 3/2017 made by complain-
ant U Kyaw Zin Hein of USDP
against U Kyaw Swe Win (a) U
Ar Loo of NLD party who won
the parliamentarian seat of Ka-
wthmu constituency, Yangon
Region.—(Translated by U
Khin Maung Oo) ■

ALCOHOLIC LIVER DISEASE : CHALLENGE TO LONGEVITY AND QUALITY OF LIFE

FROM PAGE-8

Alcohol causes several
different pathological lesions
in the liver which can occur to-
gether in any combination such
as fatty liver, liver enlargement,
painful on touch, severe illness,
malnutrition, jaundice, confu-
sion, bulging abdomen due to
fluid collection swollen veins in
food canal giving rise to bleed-
ing (varices), kidney failure and
cancer liver.

Alcoholic liver disease
manifests as a clinical spec-
trum ranging from non-specific
symptoms, with few or no phys-
ical abnormalities, to advanced
cirrhosis. The ready availability
of laboratory investigations can
reveal alcoholic liver damage
in patients with other diseases
or in asymptomatic people un-
dergoing medical examination.
These overlap considerably
and the various pathological

changes can coexist in the
same liver.

Investigations aim to es-
tablish alcohol misuse, exclude
alternative causes of liver dis-
ease and assess the severity of
liver damage. The clinical his-
tory from the patient, relatives
and friends is most important
in establishing alcohol misuse,
its duration and in particular,
its severity. Biological markers
suggest and support a history
of alcohol misuse. Unexplained
rib fractures on a chest radio-
graph are also associated with
alcohol misuse. Investigation
of the extent of liver damage
often requires a liver biopsy.

Cessation of alcohol intake
is the single most important
treatment and without this all
other therapies are of limited
value. Life-long abstinence is
the best advice and its essen-
tial for those with more severe

liver damage. Good nutrition
is also important and feeding
via a fine-bore nasogastric
tube may be needed in severe-
ly ill patients. Treatment for
complications such as swollen
brain, ascites and variceal
bleeding may be required.
Corticosteroid therapy may be
of some value in patients with
severe alcoholic hepatitis. The
role of liver transplantation in
the management of patients
with alcoholic liver disease
is controversial. However, in
most centres alcoholic liver
disease is common indication
for considering transplantation.
The challenge is to identify
patients with an unacceptable
risk of returning to harmful
levels of alcohol consumption.
Many programmes require a
6-month period of abstinence
from alcohol before a patient
is considered for alcohol

relapse after transplantation.
Discussion or assessment by
a psychiatrist with a particular
interest in substance misuse
may be invaluable in differenti-
ating harmful alcohol use from
alcohol misuse. Continuous
input from psychiatric services
may also prevent relapse.

The most important prog-
nostic factor is the patient's
ability to stop drinking alcohol.
General health and longevity
are improved when this occurs,
irrespective of the form of alco-
holic liver disease. Alcoholic
fatty liver generally has a good
prognosis and usually disap-
pears after about 3 months of
abstinence. Alcoholic hepatitis
has a significantly worse prog-
nosis because about one-third
of patients die in the acute
episode if liver function is poor;
as evidenced by hepatic brain
swelling or a prothrombin time

sufficiently prolonged bleeding
to preclude liver biopsy. Pa-
tients may progress to cirrho-
sis after recovery, particularly
if drinking continues. Alcoholic
cirrhosis often presents with a
serious complication such as
variceal bleeding or ascites,
and only about one-half of such
patients survive 5 years from
presentation. However, most
who survive the initial illness
and who become abstinent will
survive beyond 5 years.

Hepatitis including alco-
holic liver disease is a socioec-
onomic problem endangering
individuals, families, communi-
ties and the nation.

Health education such
as by Gastro-enterology and
hepatic society at UMFCCI on
23rd July as well as community
participation are of utmost
importance in combating hep-
atitis. ■

Republic of the Union of Myanmar
Ministry of the Office of the State Counsellor
Press Release

(21st July 2017)

FROM PAGE-1

6. The Special Rapporteur met many government representatives who discussed with her the challenges we are striving to overcome in our efforts to achieve stability and peace throughout the country. The steps the Government has taken to promote development and communal harmony was also explained to the Special Rapporteur.

7. However, we are disappointed with the Special Rapporteur's end of mission statement.
8. We had hoped that the Special Rapporteur's statement would reflect the difficulties of resolving the problems that are a legacy of decades of internal conflict, isolation and underdevelopment. The Special Rapporteur's statement instead contains many sweeping allegations and a number of factual errors.
9. Our goal is clear: to achieve a peaceful, democratic, and prosperous country, for all the people of Myanmar. While we have made significant strides, we accept that many challenges remain and that these cannot be resolved overnight.
10. Forging a lasting nationwide peace is our first priority. The Government is committed to building a democratic federal union based on the principles of freedom, equal rights, and justice for all. ■

Rakhine slayings by insurgents

FROM PAGE-1

If militants were to blame for at least some of the killings, it would add to evidence the insurgency that flared in October has not been fully rooted out, despite the government announcing the end of its security operation in February.

A group known as Harakah al-Yaqin attacked Myanmar border guard posts on 9 Oct., killing nine policemen and prompting months of security clearance operations by the Tatmadaw.

About 75,000 Muslim villagers fled to Bangladesh during the ensuing military crackdown, which was beset by allegations of rape, torture and extrajudicial killings by security forces.

State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi's government has denied most of the allegations and is refusing access to a United Nations panel of experts, saying its mission will aggravate the situation on the ground in Rakhine.

Muslim villagers and Myanmar security sources described to Reuters earlier this year how Harakah al-Yaqin (HaY), or Faith Movement, began as a small group of leaders who recruited hundreds of young men in the run-up to the October attacks.

HaY says it is fighting for the rights of 1.1 million members of



A woman speaks to media in Maung Na Ma village, northern Rakhine, on 13 July 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

the Muslim community in Rakhine who are denied citizenship and face restrictions on their movement in Buddhist-majority Myanmar. Militants have rarely confronted security forces in recent months, but troops checking a report of a militant hideout in Tin May village on 9 July clashed with armed men, killing two and arresting two.

Anthony Davis, a security analyst with Jane's at IHS-Markit, said the militants appeared to be regrouping.

"The pattern of events we've seen this year appears to reflect

a strategy of going back to grassroots and working politically in villages," said Davis.

"It appears they are attempting to eliminate potential intelligence liabilities and to a degree intimidate waverers among the population."

Brigadier General Thura San Lwin, Border Guard Police commander, said information garnered from interrogations and the discovery of militant training camps indicated that at least some of the recent killings were committed by insurgents.

Other killings could be down

to local disputes, he said.

Mohammad Tason, 28, was found dead with knife wounds across his neck and torso in Yinma Kyaung Taung village.

"My husband was on friendly terms with the military; I think that's why they killed him," said his wife Hawdiza, 23.

Like Haleda, Hawdiza was brought to meet reporters earlier this month by administrators in Buthidaung township during a media visit conducted under the close watch of Border Guard Police. Following Abdu Sulwon's killing, security forces raided

Maung Hna Ma village, arresting several men and sending others into hiding, according to accounts given by women there who beckoned reporters from a riverbank to tell of their missing husbands and sons.

"My son has nothing to do with terrorism," said Marmuda Hatu, 48, whose son Saad Ullah, 24, was arrested. "They don't have any evidence."

Chris Lewa from the monitoring group Arakan Project said the region was seeing "vicious cycles of violence" with security forces launching night-time raids in response to killings.

Police Major Tun Hlaing said around 20 people had been arrested in Maung Hna Ma this week in the investigation into Abdu Sulwon's killing. Most had been released, he said, but four suspected of working with the insurgents were being questioned.

Reporters said the threat of being recruited, intimidated or killed by Muslim militants continues to this day.

"Insurgents are still active", said Myint Maung Soe, the reporter from Myanmar Alin Daily. "Villagers from both (Muslim and Buddhist) communities are worried that they will be attacked by insurgents".—Reuters and GNLM ■

UNAIDS report: AIDS-related deaths drop by 52%

AIDS-related deaths in Myanmar have decreased dramatically since 2011 because of a widespread, centralised government effort at prevention and treatment, according to a UNAIDS report released yesterday in Paris.

The UNAIDS report on the global HIV epidemic showed AIDS-related deaths in Myanmar have dropped by 52 per cent in the past six years, which is

the steepest decline in Asia and the Pacific. Since 2010, new HIV infections have also fallen by 26 per cent, double the regional average of 13 per cent.

"The phenomenal drop in AIDS-related deaths and new HIV infections are strong indicators of the progress of Myanmar's national HIV response," said Oussama Tawil, UNAIDS Country Director. "This shows the country's leadership, com-

mitment and engagement is having results, which are saving thousands of lives."

The large decline in AIDS-related deaths is due to a massive scale-up in HIV treatment over the past few years. In 2013, the Myanmar government started to decentralise HIV services to provide HIV prevention and treatment even in remote rural areas, through government-run clinics. Previ-

ously, HIV treatment was mostly available only in private clinics. There were an estimated 230,000 people living with HIV (PLHIV) in Myanmar as of 2016, and 57 per cent were accessing life-saving antiretroviral therapy. This is a four-fold increase since 2010. Significant efforts have also been made to eliminate new infections among children, with 88 per cent of women living with HIV accessing services for the prevention

of mother to child transmission.

Myanmar's HIV epidemic is concentrated among key populations of people who inject drugs (PWID), men who have sex with men (MSM) and female sex workers (FSW) with national HIV prevalence at 28.5 per cent, 11.6 per cent and 14.6 per cent respectively, based on data from the National Strategic Plan on HIV and AIDS 2016-2020.—GNLM ■

Hezbollah, Syria army launch offensive at Syrian-Lebanese border

BEIRUT — Lebanon's Hezbollah and the Syrian army launched an offensive to drive insurgents from their last foothold at the Syrian-Lebanese border on Friday, a pro-Damascus military commander said.

The operation targeted insurgents from the Nusra Front group in the mountainous outskirts of the Lebanese town of Arsal and areas near the Syrian town of Fleita, the commander said.

Media run by Hezbollah reported significant gains by its side the early stage of the operation.

A Lebanese security source said refugees living in the area were fleeing towards Arsal and the Lebanese army was facilitating their passage with UN supervision. It was not yet clear how many refugees were on the move, the source said.

Several thousand Syrian refugees occupy camps east of the town in an area known as Juroud Arsal, a barren mountainous zone between Syria and Lebanon that has served as a base for Islamic State militants, jihadists and other rebels fighting in Syria's six year civil war.

Hezbollah's al-Manar TV said Nusra militants were under attack in Juroud Arsal and



A Lebanese soldier carries his weapon as he stands on sandbags at an army post in the hills above the Lebanese town of Arsal, near the border with Syria, Lebanon, on 21 September 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

in areas near the Syrian town of Fleita. Al-Manar broadcast footage showing an artillery gun being fired from the back of a truck flying the Hezbollah flag. Plumes of smoke were shown rising from the hills.

Hezbollah, a Shi'ite group backed by Iran, has played a critical part in previous campaigns against insurgents along the border, part of the much wider role it has played supporting President

Bashar al-Assad in the Syrian war.

The Lebanese army is not taking part in the operation, the commander in the pro-Damascus military alliance and the Lebanese security source said. The Lebanese source said the army had assumed a defensive position, was monitoring militant movements, and would fire if it came under attack.

The Lebanese National

News Agency later reported that the army had fired on a group of militants trying to flee the fighting towards Arsal town. The Lebanese army, a recipient of US and British military support, deployed reinforcements on the outskirts of Arsal in anticipation of the operation this week to prevent militants from crossing into Lebanon.

Hezbollah's role in the Syrian war has been a major point of contention in Lebanon, facing

criticism from opponents including Prime Minister Saad al-Hariri. Hariri's Future Movement on Thursday said the anticipated Arsal battle was part of "the services" offered by Hezbollah to "the Syrian regime".

Hariri said on Tuesday the Lebanese army would carry out a carefully planned operation in the Juroud Arsal area, but there was no coordination between it and the Syrian army.

The Nusra Front was al Qaeda's official affiliate in the Syrian civil war until last year when it formally severed ties to al Qaeda and renamed itself. The group now spearheads the Tahrir al-Sham Islamist alliance.

In 2014, Arsal was the scene of one of the most serious spillovers of the Syrian war into Lebanon, when jihadists briefly overran the town.

Negotiations failed to secure the militants' withdrawal from the Juroud Arsal area to other rebel-held parts of Syria. Earlier this month, Hezbollah leader Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah said time was running out for Syrian militants along the border near Arsal to reach deals with Syrian authorities, saying it was "high time to end the threat of militant groups in Arsal".—Reuters ■

Gunmen attack elite security unit in Ivory Coast, steal weapons

ABIDJAN — Gunmen, some of them in uniform, attacked the base of an elite security unit in Ivory Coast's main city, Abidjan, killing an officer, stealing weapons and then fighting security forces in another part of the city, defence officials said on Thursday.

The raid, late on Wednesday, follows months of military mutinies. It came hours after the government rejigged top security posts, and two days before an event that will bring in thousands from around the French-speaking world to Ivory Coast.

Shooting broke out at around 9.30 p.m. (2130 GMT) at the national police academy in Abidjan's Cocody neighbourhood and lasted for about an hour, one Reuters witness said. The academy houses a detachment of the CCDO, a rapid response unit composed of police officers, gendarmes and soldiers that is one of the best-equipped units in the Ivorian security forces.

Defence Minister Hamed Bakayoko told Reuters during a visit to the base early on Thursday that the attack was clearly aimed at seizing weaponry.

"These are saboteurs, men who mount sporadic operations and create a feeling of insecurity, and sabotage the work of the government. They aren't able to hold a position for long," he said.

Bakayoko, previously minister of the interior, was appointed defence minister on Wednesday. The government shake-up was part of an attempt to end successive waves of armed uprisings by members of the security forces demanding bonus payments.

Bakayoko said security forces had fought off the attackers, who fled with stolen weapons.

Spent bullet casings littered the parking lot outside the CCDO base and bullet holes marked the walls inside. An army spokesman said later that one security officer was killed in the initial raid.—Reuters ■

Currency slides, prices jump as Sudan grapples with sanction decision

KHARTOUM — Sudan's struggling economy took another hit this week after the United States postponed a decision on lifting sanctions, causing the Sudanese currency to slide, prices to rise and businesses to halt sales.

The United States last week postponed for three months a decision on whether to permanently lift 20-year economic sanctions that have hobbled the Sudan's economy and cut it off from the global banking system.

Businessmen in Khartoum said the postponement dealt another blow to an economy that's been in turmoil since 2011, when the south seceded and took with it three-quarters of Sudan's oil output, the main source of foreign currency and state income.

The Sudanese pound lost over 13 per cent of its value against the dollar on the un-

official market just over the past week, dropping to 21.5 pounds from 19. A severe shortage of hard currency has for months forced businesses to resort to the black market to get the dollars they need to import.

"The import companies we deal with said the extension of sanctions has increased the price of the dollar, and most food items like canned food, sugar, flour, cooking oils and biscuits come from outside Sudan," said Mohamed Abdallah, the owner of a supermarket in central Khartoum where tomatoes have jumped to 30 pounds from 20 the week before.

The import-dependent country had an annual inflation rate of 32.63 per cent by May, after the pound weakened by over 50 per cent against the dollar in the past year. Prices have also been driven up by

cuts in fuel and electricity subsidies as the government tries to save cash.

Some businessmen said they stopped making sales altogether this week, unable to price goods that could rapidly grow more expensive should the dollar price continue its rapid ascent.

"There is a state of utter confusion. We don't know whether to stop selling products or to continue... it's difficult to set prices," said the manager of a company that imports electrical equipment who declined to be named.

"It's better to keep the goods in storage than sell at prices that could make us a loss, because we import all our goods from abroad and are buying hard currency on the black market," said an official at a pharmaceutical company.—Reuters ■

UK must agree implementation period for EU migration curbs

LONDON — The British government should agree an implementation period for curbs to immigration from the European Union after Britain leaves the bloc to allow businesses time to adapt, a committee of lawmakers said in a report published on Friday.

The economics committee of the House of Lords, parliament's upper chamber, also said that without improvements to the accuracy of migration data the government would struggle to control immigration after Brexit as it would be formulating policy "in the dark".

Concerns over immigration were a key driver behind last year's vote to leave the EU and the government has made controlling Britain's borders central to its Brexit plans.



UK Border control is seen in Terminal 2 at Heathrow Airport in London, in 2014. PHOTO: REUTERS

"It will take companies time to adapt their business models to be less dependent on EU workers and an implementation period is essential to ensure a smooth transition," Michael Forsyth, the committee's chairman, said in a statement.

The report said the necessary training of the British workforce and investment in new technologies could take a number

of years, and businesses would need to retain access to the EU labour market during this time.

The committee also criticised existing migration data, which has a large margin of error, as "wholly inadequate".

It does not provide an accurate number of migrants entering or leaving the country, or the number of migrants in work, it said, calling on the government

to work to improve the reliability of the data before basing new policy on it.

The government has repeatedly failed to meet a pledge to reduce the annual net migration level to below 100,000. In 2016 the figure fell to its lowest in more than two-and-a-half-years but, at 248,000, was still more than double that target.

The committee said sticking with a numerical target risked causing "considerable" disruption to businesses and the economy.

"The objective of reducing migration to sustainable levels should be implemented flexibly and be able to take account of labour market needs, in particular during the implementation period," it said.—Reuters ■

Mexico marines kill eight suspected gangsters in Mexico City

MEXICO CITY — At least eight suspected gang members died on Thursday in a gun battle with Mexican marines in Mexico City, which has largely been spared the worst of the country's drug violence.

Mexico's Navy said in statement that a patrol of marines in Tlahuac, in the southeastern part of the capital, was attacked by suspected gang members, sparking the gunfight.

The Navy said that among the dead was Felipe de Jesus Luna, whom it described as the head of a violent criminal organisation.

The Navy said the gangsters were suspected of drug dealing, extortion, murder and kid-

napping. It did not say if any of the marines were injured.

Marines were in the area to follow up on intelligence about the whereabouts of local criminal gangs, the Navy said in the statement.

The exchange was one of the most violent clashes between security forces and gangs since 17 suspected gangsters were killed in northwestern Mexico at the end of June.

Since 2007 when former President Felipe Calderon launched his assault on drug cartels, Mexico City has largely avoided the violence that has plagued much of the country and resulted in more than 100,000 deaths.—Reuters ■

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

MV HONG YU VOY. NO (1707)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV HONG YU VOY. NO (1707) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 22.7.2017 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of MITT-5 where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

**SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S BRIGHT SAIL SHIPPING LTD.**

Phone No: 2301928

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

MV PATHEIN STAR VOY. NO ()

Consignees of cargo carried on MV PATHEIN STAR VOY. NO () are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 22.7.2017 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T.T/A.I.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 REGIONAL CONTAINER LINES**

Phone No: 2301185

Evacuation order may be lifted Friday as California wildfire slows

MARIPOSA (California) — Some residents of a historic gold-mining town in central California may be able to go home on Friday as a wildfire nearby slowed its progress after destroying dozens of houses over the past several days, the local sheriff said. About 2,000 residents of the town of Mariposa in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada mountains fled their homes on Tuesday as the so-called Detwiler Fire approached.

It eventually destroyed 99 structures, including 50 houses, in the area, according to local and state officials. "We are in very detailed conversations about repopulation," Mariposa County Sheriff Doug Binnewies said during a community meeting on the fire on Thursday. He said authorities hoped people from Mariposa could go home on Friday. At total of 5,000 residents in the small communities on the edge of Yosemite National Park have been evacuated since the fire began on Sunday.

The community of Coulterville was evacuated on Wednesday. The fire, which has burned 70,596 acres (28,570 hectares), is just 10 per cent contained, the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection said on its website.

After expanded by more than 22,000 acres overnight, the fire's progress slowed on Thursday, taking only 500 acres during the day, Cal Fire said.

"Except for (Wednesday), this fire doubled in size every day," Tim Chavez, a state fire official said during the community meeting. "That is really unusual for it to progress like that." More than 3,700 firefighters, working in temperatures of 90 to 96 degrees Fahrenheit (32 to 36 Celsius), were battling the fire, Cal Fire said. Chavez blamed the fire's growth on spot fires, drought and grassy vegetation. The area's rough topography made fighting the fire harder, he said.—Reuters ■

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

MV SHAMIM VOY. NO ()

Consignees of cargo carried on MV SHAMIM VOY. NO () are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 22.7.2017 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 LAND AND SEA SHIPPING LINE**

Phone No: 2301185

Bank of India (Yangon Representative Office) Notice of closure of representative office

It is hereby notified that pursuant to the approval from the Central Bank of Myanmar dated [22 May 2017] and Head Office's Board of Directors' Resolution, the closing down of the above Yangon Representative Office has been started with effect from [1 July 2017].

Advertisement to Creditors

All persons claiming to be creditors of the above Yangon Representative Office are, therefore, requested to submit details of their claims together with any documentary evidence in their possession and the names and addresses of their attorneys, if any, to the undersigned Liquidator at the address given below before [31 August 2017] in the default thereof, they will be excluded from the settlement of such debts and claims.

Daw Tin Tin Yee
Liquidator, Facilitation Limited
Room (4), 1st Floor, 24 (C),
Yaw Min Gyi Street, Dagon Township,
Yangon.



Oil nudges higher; Brent crude below \$50 ahead of OPEC meeting

SINGAPORE — Oil prices edged up on Friday ahead of a key meeting of major oil producing nations next week, but Brent held below the \$50 per barrel level that was briefly breached for the first time in six weeks in the previous session.

International benchmark Brent crude futures were up 10 cents, or 0.2 per cent, at \$49.40 per barrel at 0658 GMT. US West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude futures were up 7 cents, or 0.2 per cent at \$46.99 per barrel.

Both benchmarks hit their highest levels since early June in choppy trading the previous trading session, having been pushed higher by data showing US crude and fuel inventories fell sharply last week.

“The impact of strong draw-down in inventories announced earlier this week was still lingering in the market,” ANZ bank said.

Ric Spooner, chief market analyst at CMC Markets in Sydney, said the decline in inventories could continue in the near term, although overall stock levels this year would likely be higher than in 2016. US oil stocks, at roughly 490 million barrels, remain well above the five-year average, while US production has increased almost 12 per cent since mid-2016 to 9.4 million bpd.

An abundance of global



A worker checks the valve of an oil pipe at Nahr Bin Umar oil field, north of Basra, Iraq, in 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

crude supplies has put pressure on oil prices and key members of the Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) are scheduled to meet non-members in St. Petersburg, Russia, on Monday to discuss market conditions and whether more action is needed to support prices.

“Market participants seem to be convinced that the supply glut is here to stay and that the market is unlikely to rebalance anytime soon,” said Sukrit Vijayakar, director of energy consultancy Trifecta.

OPEC, together with some non-members like Russia, has pledged to reduce the global glut by cutting production by

1.8 million barrels per day (bpd) between January this year and March 2018.

US investment bank Jeferies said “actions from the next OPEC/non-OPEC working committee meeting seem unlikely,” although it added that “if OPEC is to achieve its objective of bringing OECD inventories back to normal levels it will need to take further steps.”

Traders have been watching reports that the world’s top crude producer Saudi Arabia is working to draw down bloated stocks, particularly as other OPEC members — including Iraq and Libya — are raising output. —Reuters ■

Laos, Thailand to enhance technical cooperation in environment

VIENTIANE — Laos and Thailand have reached an agreement to enhance technical cooperation in natural resources and the environment, local daily Vientiane Times reported on Friday.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with respect to this cooperation was signed by Lao Minister of Natural Resources and Environment Sommad Pholsena and his counterpart from the Kingdom of Thailand General Surasak Karnjanarat in Lao capital Vientiane on Thursday.

Under the agreement, dur-

ing 2017-2021 the two countries would work together in areas such as pollution control, environmental promotion initiatives, water resources management, capacity building on climate change, and sustainable development, according to the report.

The two ministries will transfer or exchange scientific and technical information, joint organisation symposia, training, study tours, staff exchanges, and joint projects to demonstrate environmental-management approaches and technologies.

—Xinhua ■

Shanghai grilled by hottest day in 145 years

SHANGHAI — The meteorological department of east China metropolis Shanghai recorded an air temperature of 40.9 degrees Celsius (105.6 degrees Fahrenheit) at around 2 pm Friday, the highest on record in the city in 145 years. A red alert for high temperatures was issued by the Shanghai Central Meteorological Observatory on Friday. The previous record high temperature in the city of 40.8 degrees Celsius was recorded on 7 August, 2013.

A total of 13 high temperature red alerts have been issued since the new meteorolog-

ical early warning system was adopted in 2007. China has a three-tier early warning system for high temperatures: a yellow warning is issued when high temperatures above 35 degrees Celsius are predicted for three consecutive days, orange indicates a predicted high temperature of 37 degrees Celsius in the next 24 hours, and a red alert is issued when the temperature is forecast to reach 40 degrees Celsius within 24 hours. Heat waves have hit the city since the beginning of summer and are expected to linger until the end of July.—Xinhua ■

Labour shortage poses challenge to Japan’s economic growth

TOKYO — Japan needs to resolve its severe labor shortage, last seen roughly a quarter-century ago, to achieve sustainable economic growth, a government report showed Friday. Japan’s economy looks to be in the third-longest expansion phase in the postwar era, but consumption remains weak as wage growth is tepid despite tight labor market conditions, according to the white paper on the economy and finances for fiscal 2017. As productivity in Japan still remains lower than in other major developed economies, it should promote labour reform — cutting long work hours and eliminating unjustifiable discrimination between regular and nonregular workers — and greater use of advanced technol-

ogy such as artificial intelligence.

“It’s one of the major limitations that the Japanese economy needs to overcome to realize sustainable growth,” the white paper said, referring to the country’s labour shortage. “At the same time, it could also create a big opportunity to boost productivity and break with deflation.” Since taking office in late 2012, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe has been seeking to pull the Japanese economy out of chronic deflation under his “Abenomics” policy mix that includes bold monetary easing by the Bank of Japan.

But beating deflation remains an unattainable goal four years later as the BOJ has pushed back the timing for hitting its 2 per cent inflation target

for the sixth time. The paper, presented to the Cabinet on Friday, acknowledges that more women and elderly people — who tend to prefer working relatively short hours — have joined the workforce even though overall labour is still in short supply. The unemployment rate fell below the 3 per cent mark in February for the first time since 1994, while job availability has been at the best level in over four decades in Japan as companies hunt for workers.

However, such improvements have yet to translate into strong wage growth for workers, promoting the government to describe it as a “new phenomenon.” The white paper stated that companies, aware of future economic and other risks, ap-

pear to be dragging their feet.

Tepid income growth has been blamed for sluggish private consumption, which accounts for nearly 60 percent of the Japanese economy. In analyzing consumer trends, the white paper refers to a growing number of “minimalists” among young people, or those who hope to keep their material possessions at a minimum, and increased social security payments by people in their 40s and 50s.

The government recognizes the need to boost confidence, especially among young people, in the outlook for employment and income conditions.

The report said a correction of the nation’s long working hour culture could boost consumption by encouraging shopping

and travel in people’s increased spare time.

The release of the annual report comes as Abe, who has been calling on companies to increase pay for workers, is now spearheading labor reform and views stepped-up investment in human resource development as the key to rev up the economy.

“Labour reform should primarily contribute to improving work-life balance but it would also have a major economic impact,” the report said.

On capital spending, another critical component of the economy, the white paper predicts increased demand for investment in labor-saving and to brace for the 2020 Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics. —Kyodo News ■

Linkin Park singer Chester Bennington dead in apparent suicide: coroner

LOS ANGELES — Chester Bennington, the lead singer of Linkin Park, was found dead on Thursday of apparent suicide a week before the California alt-rock band was due to embark on a US tour.

Bennington, 41, known for his powerful, belting vocals, died at his Palos Verdes home near Los Angeles, the Los Angeles County Coroner's office said.

Spokesman Brian Elias said the death was being handled as an apparent suicide, and celebrity website TMZ, citing law enforcement sources, said Bennington had hung himself while alone at the house when his family was out of town.

"Shocked and heartbroken, but it's true. An official statement will come out as soon as we have one," tweeted Linkin Park vocalist Mike Shinoda.

Bennington had a history of alcohol and drug abuse. He spoke openly in the past about his struggles to overcome his demons when Linkin Park first found fame in 2000 with their best-selling debut album "Hybrid Theory" and went on to become one of the most popular alt-rock bands of their gen-



Chester Bennington of the band Linkin Park performs during the second day of the 2012 iHeartRadio Music Festival at the MGM Grand Garden Arena in Las Vegas, Nevada in 2012. PHOTO: REUTERS

eration.

The band's latest album, "One More Light," was released in May, and Linkin Park had been touring South America and Europe until two weeks ago.

Bennington's death came a week before the band was due to kick off the US leg of the tour on 27 July in Mansfield, Massachusetts. It also came the same day as the release

of Linkin Park's music video "Talking to Myself."

"This BREAKS OUR HEART. Suicide is the devil on earth walking amongst us," tweeted US band One Republic.

Punk rock singer Tyson Ritter, frontman of All-American Rejects, said on Twitter that Bennington was "another gifted voice silenced to the spirit in the sky-forever alive in song."

Bennington, who was twice married and had six children, was a close friend of Soundgarden front man Chris Cornell, who committed suicide in Detroit in May.

Fans noted on Thursday that Bennington had apparently taken his own life on what would have been Cornell's 53rd birthday.

"Just when I thought my heart couldn't break any more," Cornell's wife Vicky tweeted on Thursday on hearing of Bennington's death.

Linkin Park's debut album "Hybrid Theory" included hits such as "In the End," "One Step Closer" and "Crawling," which won a Grammy award in 2002 for best hard rock performance.

The band experimented with rock, metal and rap, most notably collaborating with Jay-Z in 2004 on the "Collision Course" album. The album, a mash-up of the rapper's hits with Linkin Park songs, included "Numb/Encore," which won a Grammy award in 2006 for best rap/sung collaboration.

The band has sold more than 70 million albums worldwide.—Reuters ■



PHOTO: PTI

Kangana Ranaut injured on 'Manikarnika' set

MUMBAI — Actress Kangana Ranaut has suffered an injury while shooting "Manikarnika - The Queen of Jhansi" in Hyderabad and has been advised rest for five days. Kangana got severely injured during an intense sword-fighting sequence with co-star Nihar Pandya, when the latter's sword accidentally hit her forehead, causing a deep cut.

The 30-year-old actress was soon rushed to a hospital and got 15 stitches on her forehead. The doctors have also advised her to rest for a few days.

"I am a bit embarrassed to be thrilled to have a battle scar on my face. Also, people from my team have been telling me that it's like that Peshwa teeka that Manikarnika wore," Kangana said in a statement here.

"It's a bit dramatic but I am excited that my face was covered in blood and I got a genuine and authentic glimpse of the Queen's life."—PTI ■

Ryan Seacrest to return as host of 'American Idol' reboot in 2018

NEW YORK — Ryan Seacrest confirmed on Thursday that he will return as host of "American Idol," the most popular music reality show in U.S. television history, when it comes back to the screen on ABC TV in 2018.

After much anticipation and speculation, Seacrest, who served as host of the talent competition show during its initial 15-season run that ended in April 2016, confirmed the news on "Live with Kelly and Ryan" Thursday morning.

"Is it OK if I announce this big news?" talk show host Kelly Ripa asked Seacrest, who was seated next to her. "I've been waiting and waiting."

With a nod from Seacrest, Ripa said, "We've been talking about it for a little while, but I am happy to confirm ... that Ryan Seacrest is returning as the host of 'American Idol,'" prompting cheers from the studio audience. Seacrest has co-hosted ABC's morning



Ryan Seacrest. PHOTO: REUTERS

talk show with Ripa since May.

The radio and TV personality, who will continue to host "Live with Kelly and Ryan" from New York, said he was "very, very excited" about reprising his "American Idol" duties. He will also remain as host and executive producer of his syndicated radio program "On Air With Ryan Seacrest" from Los Angeles.

"It's genuinely hard to put into words what 'American Idol' means to me," Seacrest, 42, said in a statement. "I'm so grateful for the show and all the career and life opportunities it's allowed me to experience."—Reuters ■

Judge will not allow auction of Madonna's personal items

NEW YORK — A New York state judge on Thursday said an online auction of Madonna's personal items including worn satin panties, a hair brush with her hair, and a break-up letter from a former boyfriend, late rapper Tupac Shakur, cannot go forward.

Supreme Court Justice Gerald Lebovits in Manhattan let stand his 18 July temporary restraining order blocking the sale of 22 items by Gotta Have It Collectibles. Lebovits will on 6 September consider whether to issue a preliminary injunction.

Darlene Lutz, a former friend of Madonna, had consigned the items for auction. Madonna's lawyers said they were stolen after Lutz helped the Material Girl, whose given name is Madonna Ciccone, move out of a Miami home in the mid-1990s.

At a hearing, Lebovits said "Ms. Ciccone has made a strong likelihood" of showing she would



Madonna poses on the red carpet at the Billboard Magazine's 11th annual Women in Music luncheon in New York, US, on 9 December 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

prevail, and said he "sincerely doubts" she lost her rights by waiting two decades to sue.

"There is no prejudice to Ms. Lutz or to the auction house, because if anything the property will increase in value if the court finds for Ms. Lutz," the judge added.

Lutz's lawyer Judd Grossman and Madonna's lawyer Brendan O'Rourke declined to comment.

The 22 items were among

128 up for an auction that was to have begun on Wednesday.

Madonna claimed in court papers she would face "irreparable harm" from a sale of "extremely private and personally sensitive belongings."

But Grossman said she gave up her rights in a 2004 settlement with Lutz, with whom she had a falling out.

"Every day this TRO remains in place ... is another day that the world believes my client is a thief," Grossman said.

O'Rourke countered that the 58-year-old singer "has lots of personal items, as you can imagine," stored in many places, but this did not make them "any less" hers.

"My client frankly wasn't thinking about these specific items until she saw them being auctioned," he said. "That's when the light bulb went on over her head."—Reuters ■

Egypt's 'Cool Runnings' Special Olympians train for snowshoeing - on sand

ALEXANDRIA, (Egypt) — For Egypt's Special Olympics athletes, a lack of snow in their homeland did not stop them winning medals at this year's Winter Games. They trained on a surface that Egypt has plenty of: sand.

The four-member snowshoe team of two men and two women with learning disabilities had never seen snow before arriving in Austria for the tournament in March, but they were prepared: winning gold in the relay as well as individual medals.

They trained for two months by strapping on snowshoes and running

across the sandy beaches of Alexandria, on Egypt's Mediterranean coast.

They have kept up the training regime since the 2017 World Winter Games, which brought together 2,700 competitors from 107 nations to venues in Graz, Schladming and Ramsau.

"Our training continues throughout the year. If we are not preparing for winter sports, then we are preparing for summer sports," she said as two members of the team, Esraa Gamal Fathy Abdelrahim and Alaa Abdelaziz Mahmoud, snowshoed along the beach. —Reuters ■

'American Horror Story' season 7 title revealed

LOS ANGELES — Ryan Murphy and Brad Falchuk's "American Horror Story" season seven is titled "Cult".

The news was announced during an event at Comic-Con after co-creator Murphy previously revealed that the next installment of FX's horror anthology is inspired by the 2016 US

presidential election, according to The Hollywood Reporter.

The new season will premiere on September 5.

Evan Peters and Sarah Paulson are returning for the show with franchise newcomers Billie Lourd and Billy Eichner. Lena Dunham is also joining the new season. —PTI ■

Lana del Rey could not sleep due to scary intruders

LONDON — Singer Lana del Rey said she had a tough time falling asleep when someone had once robbed her cars.

The 32-year-old songstress said one time some crazy fans had barged inside her house, while she was present there and it was one of the most harrowing experiences she had gone through, reported

FemaleFirst.

"They have. Someone stole both my cars. All the scary stuff. I've had people in my house for sure, and I didn't know they were there while I was there.

"I called the police. I locked the door. Obviously, that's the one in 100,000 people who's crazy. But I (had a hard time sleeping) for a minute," del Rey said. —PTI ■

Mongolian-born wrestler turned Japanese to get to grips with sumo

NAGOYA, (Japan) — The sound of bodies slapping against each other rocks the stifling sumo "stable" in the Japanese city of Nagoya, as 11 gigantic wrestlers wearing only loincloths take turns throwing each other out of a ring of sand.

The wrestlers, or 'rikishi', at the prestigious Tomozuna stable spend more than three hours each morning practicing holds in Japan's 15-century-old national sport, with defeat facing the first to fall or be forced out of the ring.

With rare permission granted by sumo's governing body, Reuters was able to observe the stable's wrestlers training at their temporary Buddhist temple base for the Nagoya Grand Sumo Tournament that began last week, gaining insight into the intricacies of sumo.

Entering the world of sumo is to eat, live, and breathe Japanese — from the samurai-style topknots to the rigid hierarchy.

But the tough training and tradition-bound ways have put off many Japanese youth, leaving sumo to be dominated by foreign — mostly Mongolian — wrestlers, who



Tanabata festival decorations, made with a bamboo branch and strips of coloured paper, often with people's wishes written on them, are presented to sumo wrestlers from kindergarteners. PHOTO: REUTERS

face a grueling path to assimilation.

"Language was the biggest source of stress," said Tomozuna Oyakata, better known by his fighting name Kyokutenho, the first Mongolian-born wrestler to lead a sumo stable.

"I couldn't understand anything when I was being scolded, or even when I was being praised," said the master, one of the first six Mongolians to be inducted into the sport in 1992.

Today, the one-time champion, who was born Nyamjavyn Tseveg-

yam, speaks near-flawless Japanese, has a Japanese wife, and has given up his Mongolian nationality to become Japanese — a requirement to become a sumo master, or 'oyakata'.

After ending practice at 10:30 am, the wrestlers mingle with fans, sign autographs and pose for photos before the first of their two daily meals.

Lunch, prepared by the junior wrestlers, is a spread of pig's feet, grilled and deep-fried sardines, steamed rice, and 'chanko nabe' — a signature hot-pot dish associated with

sumo wrestlers, who are said to consume 8,000 calories a day.

The wrestlers nap for several hours immediately after eating, wearing oxygen masks to aid breathing.

Full assimilation into Japanese culture means that foreign wrestlers face no ill-will.

"We wear our topknots, kimonos and sandals, and live by Japanese rules, and the rules of sumo," said Tomozuna Oyakata. "It's only by chance that we were born a different nationality." —Reuters ■

mitv Myanmar International Programme Schedule

(22-7-2017 07:00am - 23-7-2017 07:00am) MST

07:03	Am	News
07:26	Am	Great Shwedagon-The Ten Traditional Arts & Crafts
07:47	Am	All About Orchids
08:03	Am	News
08:26	Am	Lantern Floating Festival in Kyauk Kyi Township
08:41	Am	Lucrative Myanma Rattan Industry
09:03	Am	News
09:26	Am	Myanmar Turban
09:53	Am	Graffiti: Portraiture
10:03	Am	News
10:26	Am	NEXGEN: Next Generation (Min Thu Rein)
10:36	Am	Farming: Duck Breeder

10:46 Am A Way of Life: Karate-do

(11:00 Am ~ 03:00 Pm)-Friday Repeat (03:00 Pm ~ 07:00 Pm)
(03:00 Pm ~ 07:00 Pm)-Today Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)

Prime Time

07:03	Pm	News
07:26	Pm	Travelogue: To my dream city (Part-2)
07:44	Pm	Kyeikhteeyoe: Welcome All
07:51	Pm	TodayMyanmar: CBTinKampetletTownship
08:03	Pm	News
08:26	Pm	Myanmar Music Icon Ko Nay Win, Creator of Myanmar Own Tune Songs (Episode-1)
08:51	Pm	Colourful Threads

(09:00 Pm ~ 11:00 Pm) - Today Repeat (09:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)
(11:00 Pm ~ 03:00 Am)-Friday Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)
(03:00 Am ~ 07:00 Am)-Today Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)

(For Detailed Schedule - www.myanmaritv.com/schedule)

Myanmar trounces Brunei in AFC U-23 qualifying



Myanmar shining player Aung Thu vies for the ball with the opponents during the match against Brunei. **PHOTO: MFF**

By Kyaw Zin Lin

THE host Myanmar national football team defeated Brunei 3-0 in AFC U-23 qualifiers held at Thuwanna Stadium in Yangon yesterday.

Myanmar used their star players including Aung Thu, Si Thu Aung, Nyein Chan Aung and Naing Lin Tun for the match and played solid football right from the kick-off.

Myanmar had many chances to get goals throughout the match, but could not convert the opportunities to goals.

At the nine-minute mark, Myanmar striker Si Thu Aung headed the ball far from the goal but missed the net slightly to the right.

Myanmar got its first goal at 19 minutes by star player Nyein Chan Aung, who headed the ball

into the net after receiving a pass from Hein Thiha Aung.

After the opening goal, Myanmar played more aggressively and scored their second goal at 44 minutes by Naing Lin Tun, who kicked an unbelievably long shot from near midfield that passed over eight of Brunei's players.

A Brunei player left the match just before the end of the first half after clearing the ball carelessly and receiving a red card.

During the second half, Myanmar attacked frequently and Nyein Chan Aung scored the third goal for Myanmar at the 61-minute mark after lovely passing through multiple opponents within the penalty area.

The win gives Myanmar a total of six points. On Sunday, Myanmar will face Australia, which has also earned six points. ■

Liverpool stars not for sale, says Klopp

HONG KONG — Juergen Klopp has declared Liverpool will not part with their best players as speculation continues over the future of midfielder Philippe Coutinho amid a proposed move to Barcelona.

The Spanish side are believed to have made a 70 million pounds (\$91 million) bid to sign the Brazilian this summer, but the German manager stressed none of his squad were for sale.

"I'm not surprised but it's not a compliment," he said of interest in one of his key players.

"It's not that I need it but a few people obviously see that Liverpool have a few good players. So, that's how it is.

"But, a very important message — maybe we're not a selling club. That's how it is.



Liverpool Juergen Klopp. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

"We believe in working together, we believe in development together, we believe in using the basis that we want to work together, we want to make the next step together and for this we need to stay together."

Coutinho was a standout performer for Liverpool last season as Klopp's team put in a strong

challenge for the Premier League title before eventually slipping to fourth and securing a place in the qualification rounds of the UEFA Champions League.

Klopp, however, is hoping for more from the 25-year-old as Liverpool chase a first league title since 1990.

"Phil is a very, very important player but we need to react better when he's not on the pitch," said Klopp.

"There were a few games when he was out and when he came back and he was not in the best shape and he tried to get back his rhythm.

"Phil, when he's able to run properly then you want to have him on the pitch again. We have to be better in moments like this. —Reuters ■

It's Premier League title or nothing for United's Carrick

NEW YORK — Manchester United cannot be content with a top-four finish and must target the Premier League title next season, captain Michael Carrick has said. The 35-year-old won three league titles in his first three seasons at United and collected two more before long-serving manager Alex Ferguson retired in 2013.

"It's all about winning things," Carrick told British media on Thursday. "In some ways, it's winning the league or nothing...I can't get my head around that — to say top four is acceptable. I know we've had changes and adjusted as players have come in and out and you can't expect to win the league every year, but you've got to set out to do that. "I was obviously fortunate enough to win the league straight away and, having that run we did in my first three years, gives you that taste of 'Right, it's all or nothing now', so maybe I was spoiled in my early years." The England midfielder



Manchester United's Michael Carrick. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

also said that talented players failed at United as they could not handle the intensity of playing for the Old Trafford club.

"I think it has done over the years, we can all see that, there are big players who come here and, for whatever reason, it hasn't worked for them," Carrick added. "They haven't been able to deal with it. There is a certain level of expectation, standards and scrutiny you probably don't get elsewhere."

United beat local rivals Manchester City 2-0 in a pre-season match in the International Champions Cup on Thursday night and will face Spanish champions Real Madrid this weekend. —Reuters ■

Thailand pulls out of Asian Cup bid

MELBOURNE — Thailand have withdrawn their bid to host the Asian Cup in 2023, the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) confirmed on Friday.

"Football Association of Thailand (FAT) have today noti-

fied the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) of its decision to withdraw from the on-going bidding process for the AFC Asian Cup to be staged in 2023," the AFC said in a statement. The AFC did not provide any reason for the with-

drawal. It leaves only China and South Korea contesting the right to stage the next but one version of quadrennial continental championship. The United Arab Emirates will host the next Asian Cup in 2019. —Reuters ■