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An independent journalist records video footage of a destroyed car near a house that was burnt down in an ARSA extremist terrorist attack in Maungtaw yesterday. One terrorist was killed and four were arrested, including one 13-year-old boy. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

ARSA attacks, evacuations continue in northern Rakhine

MORE than 150 members of the terrorist group Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA) attacked security forces yesterday afternoon near Indin Village, Rakhine State, leaving one terrorist dead, according to government sources.

Four of the terrorists were

arrested, including one 13-year-old boy. Security forces arrested two more men found near a local police outpost in Maungtaw on suspicion of their involvement in the attacks, the government said. Yesterday's attack comes after more than 100 ARSA extremist terrorists ambushed

security forces on Wednesday morning.

In yesterday's fighting, four terrorists were arrested: Khawbi Ramud, 35; Arnu Saubi, 13; Swayauk Dusaung, 54; and Eiliyas, 24. They were sent to a local police station for interrogation.

As the violence continued,

more than 500 members of Hindu families in Maungtaw who were blocked in by ARSA were evacuated by security forces yesterday. Police carried out security operations to save about 300 people from 70 families in Latha Village and transported them to shelters. **SEE PAGE-6**



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Pyidaungsu Hluttaw

Fifth regular meeting of second Pyidaungsu Hluttaw concludes

Myomyint, Hmwe Kyu Zin
(MYANMAR NEWS AGEENCY)

Eight new laws were enacted, 11 laws were amended and one law revoked at the fifth regular meeting of the second Pyidaungsu Hluttaw.

During the meeting, the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw discussed, approved and documented issues including seeking foreign loan, eight cases for signing international accords and MoUs, two reports on debt management, two reports of findings of the Union Auditor-General Office, reports on a special goods tax and commercial tax, a national planning report for 2016-2017 and the Union Budget.

In his address at the final day of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw,

Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than urged township development committees to tackle challenges they are facing through coordination among others when they carry out development tasks in their respective townships.

The meeting, Pyidaungsu Hluttaw also documented the annual report of the National Planning for the 2016-2017 FY and findings of the Public Joint-Account Committee sent by the Union Government and discussions of the MPs.

In the debate yesterday, Deputy Minister for Electricity and Energy Dr Tun Naing explained the decreasing income for gas and oil in 2015-2016 FY, saying that it is found that oil wells, which have been oper-



Pyidaungsu Hluttaw is being convened in Nay Pyi Taw. PHOTO: MNA

ating for more than 25 years, cannot produce as much oil and gas as was previously done.

Also, the price of gas has decreased in the 2016-2017 FY,

he added.

Deputy ministers from Home Affairs, Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation, Transport and Communications, Educa-

tion and Planning and Finance clarified findings of the Public Joint-Account over the annual report of the National Planning for the 2016-2017 FY. ■

Pyithu Hluttaw

Second Pyithu Hluttaw fifth regular session ends

Aung Ye Thwin, Mi Mi Phyo
(MYANMAR NEWS AGEENCY)

In the 2nd Pyithu Hluttaw 5th regular session 54th day meeting held yesterday, four starred questions were asked and answered and the Pyithu Hluttaw speaker gave a message of greeting.

In response to a question by Dr. U Aye Min of Kayan constituency on plan to develop small scale chicken and fish breeding businesses in Kayan township, the Deputy Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation U Hla Kyaw said 12 villages in Kayan township had 1,600 acres

of fish breeding ponds where freshwater fish were bred at a rate of 3,000 fish per acre and there were 328 chicken breeding farms built above the ponds where about 700,000 chickens were bred. Three fish hatcheries in Hlawga, Laydauntkan and Twantay, under the Department of Fisheries in Yangon Region, were providing fish fingerlings that had a high rate of growth and are of good pedigree at cheap prices.

Two small-scale fish hatcheries operated by local fish breeders were set up in Thatkekone and Pazinikan villages in fiscal year 2014-2015 with government funding. The laboratory



Deputy Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation U Hla Kyaw. PHOTO: MNA

of the Department of Fisheries is conducting tests of the farm-raised fish and issuing recommendations in order for the fish



Dr U Aye Min of Kayan constituency. PHOTO: MNA

to be exported in accordance with required standards and quality.

Constructing cold storag-

es for the small-scale chicken breeding farms is not cost effective, and arrangements are being made to set up chicken shops in Yangon Region that will provide affordable chicken to consumers while stabilising the price. Plans are also being drawn up to invite investors to build modern storage facilities, said the deputy minister.

Next, a question by U Sai Ngaung Hsaing Hein of Maukmai constituency on the ministry's plan to maintain the Nantmon Aqueduct was answered by the Deputy Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation U Hla Kyaw.

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Amyotha Hluttaw

2nd Amyotha Hluttaw 5th Regular Session concludes at its 53rd Day Meeting

Aye Aye Thant
(MYANMAR NEWS AGENCY)

The distribution of electricity to villages was one of the issues discussed at the 2nd Amyotha Hluttaw 5th regular session at its 53rd day closing meeting yesterday in Nay Pyi Taw.

Dr Tun Naing, Deputy Minister for Electricity and Energy replied to the question raised by U Kyaw Myint Oo of constituency 10 in Mandalay Region on electricity delivery to villages.

"Distribution of electric power to villages has been un-

der way by spending the annual budget allotment for the ministry, by using annual budget allotments for Region and State Cabinets and by getting annually granted loans from international countries. Some villages are implementing the acquisition of electric power on a self-help basis, with the money collected from the villagers to brighten their locations earlier than normal. In doing so, the ministry designated 12 principles to abide by for village committees acquiring electricity. The aims of those 12 principles include long-term



Dr Tun Naing, Deputy Minister for Electricity and Energy. PHOTO: MNA

survival of gridlines and transmitters to be constructed by village committees and freedom

from the risks of electric power and techniques for reducing power loss. Members of village committees were transparently elected by voting in accord with rules and regulations of the constituency of teams and organisations, under the supervision of the township department of general administration. If the tenure of the committee expires, new members are to be elected again. Annual financial reports must be made, and if financial frauds are found, new committee members are to be elected again by voting. The Office of the Union Attorney

General, the Office of the Union Auditor General, the Ministry of Home Affairs, representatives from Region and State Cabinets, Hluttaw representatives and the public are negotiating for the emergence of rules and regulations for supplying power in villages", Dr. Tun Naing said.

Afterward, Speaker of Amyotha Hluttaw noted the accomplishments of the parliamentary body. "The 2nd Amyotha Hluttaw 5th regular session held its meetings from May 18 to August 31 for 53 days.

SEE PAGE-9

Union Minister for Health and Sports visits Rakhine



Union Minister Dr Myint Htwe and Rakhine State Chief Minister U Nyi Pu visits a clinic at an IDP camp. **PHOTO: MNA**

Dr Myint Htwe, the Union Minister for Health and Sports, together with Rakhine Chief Minister U Nyi Pu, Rakhine Minister for Social Affairs Dr Chan Thar and other officials, arrived at Maungtaw yesterday morning and visited Maungtaw General Hospital and a camp for internally displaced people.

The Union Minister met with medical staff at the hospital and explained the circumstances in Maungtaw and how the various ministries plan to deal with it. He said the Chief Minister is working with local officials to provide security to the area.

The minister also visited the temporary shelter set up at Maungtaw Basic Education High School to give words of encouragement to internally displaced

people (IDPs) and to donate provisions. They also inspected the makeshift clinic at the school.

In the afternoon, the Union Minister and entourage travelled to Buthidaung and visited the general hospital there. They listened to the medical staff explaining their requirements and reassured them it will be dealt with in a timely manner.

Afterwards, they visited the temporary shelter set up in the Buthidaung Basic Education High School and gave words of encouragement to the IDPs there. In the evening, the Union Minister and entourage visited monasteries in Sittway and inspected temporary shelters set up there and also gave words of encouragement to the IDPs. —Myanmar News Agency ■

Independent journalists visit conflict areas in Maungtaw, Rakhine State

A group of independent journalists, including local and foreign media, yesterday interviewed people who had fled their villages for Buthidaung, Sittway after the ARSA extremist terrorist attacks in Maungtaw, northern Rakhine State.

During their tour, they witnessed preparations for burning

down homes and improvised explosive devices planted by ARSA extremist terrorists in Maungtaw.

The group included 22 journalists from Kyodo News, TV Asahi, Nippon TV, Asahi Shimbun, Fuji TV, Nikkei Shimbun, VOA, Reuters, AFP, News Watch, Eleven and Skynet Media.

They will tour the conflict

areas from 30 August to 1st September.

This is the fourth visit of the independent journalists to northern Rakhine following their third visit in July 2017. The first trip was made from 19 to 22 December in 2016 and the second from 28th March to 1st April in 2017.

—Myanmar News Agency ■



Independent journalists interview local people from conflict areas. **PHOTO: MNA**

NLD Patron U Tin Oo discharged from Yangon General Hospital

U Tin Oo, Patron of the National League for Democracy, receiving medical treatment for over 3 months, at the Intensive Care Unit, Yangon General Hospital was recovering from his illness, being discharged from the hospital yesterday.

On May 17, U Tin Oo slipped over in the bath room of his residence, Shwe Taung Gyar 1st ward of Bahan township in Yangon, losing consciousness because of blood clots in the blood vessels to the brain.

Just after the incident, he received the medical treatment at the Yangon General Hospital.

U Tin Oo aged 92 is suffering from heart disease and hypertension, so the special medical committee comprising of professors and spe-



U Tin Oo is seen as he is discharged from Yangon General Hospital. **PHOTO: ZAW GYI (PANITA)**

cialists from the neurological care unit are giving medical treatment to U Tin Oo. Now his health was found to have improved, discharged from

the YGH. It was learnt that he needs to do physical exercises which will help improve his health, at his residence. —Zaw Gyi (Panita) ■

Three-step plan for Yangon floods

Yangon City's Mayor U Maung Maung Soe said they will deal with flooding in the Yangon Region with a three-step plan using a US\$124 million loan from the World Bank.

The mayor made the statement in response to questions by Yangon Region Hluttaw representatives at the 2nd Yangon Region Hluttaw meeting held yesterday. Step 1 is called the Insurance Fund for Natural Disaster in Southeast Asia. It will be headed by the Ministry for Planning and Finance and will use \$20 million and a subsidy of \$1 million. Step 2 is called the Administration of Urban Floods and its Danger and will use \$77 million, although the Yangon mayor said the amount is quite low if divided into steps. He said after the second step of the project is finished it will be beneficial for Lanmadaw, Latha, Pabedan, Kyauktada, Botathaung and Pazundaung townships in Yangon.

The mayor also said it will have an indirect beneficial effect on Ahlone, Dagon, Bahan and Mingalar Taungnyunt townships that are connected to the aforementioned six townships. He said the remaining townships will have their flood control worked on with a six-year project using loans from the World Bank.

The third step of the project will use \$22 million to protect essential public buildings. The first priority will be given to the Gyophyu Water Reservoir, the second priority will be given to the air compressor factory in Botathaung Township, the third priority will be given to the water compressor factory in Mayangone Township, the fourth priority will be given to Bogyoke Market and the fifth priority will be given to Theingyi Market buildings A and B. The mayor said they will spend \$5 million on raising public awareness and planning and administering services.—Ko Moe

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Rare sarus crane eggs seen in Ayeyawady Delta. PHOTO: SHIN MIN

Rare sarus cranes found in Ayeyawady Delta

ORNITHOLOGISTS from the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) who are cooperating with the Forestry Department of Maubin University to protect endangered cranes discovered a large group of sarus cranes, which are considered nearly extinct, in wetlands in the Ayeyawady delta.

Groups of this species of crane have been found in

Maubin, Pantanaw, Eainme and Wakema townships in the Ayeyawady delta. Previously thirty-seven sarus crane groups were recorded in Ayeyawady delta.

The population of Sarus cranes has declined not only in Myanmar but also around the world. Only 500 of these rare birds can now be found in Myanmar.

"We found this large group of sarus crane in the area this year with the assistance of local farmers. We need to carry out conservation works, especially in Ayeyawady Delta, to protect the birds from extinction," said U Thet Zaw Naing, an ornithologist from Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS).—Shin Min ■

Planned 6,315-acre Mandalay forest reserve nearing its goal

A FOREST reserve in Mandalay has nearly reached its goal of 6,315 acres of protected wilderness, according to a recent Forestry Department announcement.

Only 225 acres remain to be secured, said Forestry Department Director U Myint Thein.

The reserve is being established to fight climate change and to provide environmentally sustainable livelihoods for local populations.

Under a United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, Myanmar's Intended Nationally Determined Contributions committed 30 per cent of total land area for reserved and protected forest

areas and 10 per cent of total land mass for conservation.

Local residents who plant and maintain public forests will have a right to share forest resources, extracting wood and timber without having to pay revenue. A modest tax will be levied on those products if they sell them in towns away from reserves or conservation areas. U Myint Thein said there is no restrictions on what plant varieties can be grown.

In a bid to build the public forest, seedlings are being supported free of charge by the government. In Mandalay Region, public forests areas include 201 acres in Mandalay, 1,992 acres in Pyin-Oo-Lwin, 565 acres in Kyaukse,

1,359 acres in Meiktila, 835 acres in Myingyan, 60 acres in NyaungU and 1,077 acres in Yamethin districts.

Myanmar's Forest Landscape Restoration Project is sponsoring a series of courses to inform forestry officials, residents and entrepreneurs about the plan. About 200 people have attended and the next class will be held in November.

Mandalay Region has 1,543,687 acres of reserved and protected forest land, managed by 733 Forest Department staff. Between FY2000-2001 and FY2016-2017, public forests grew by 21,729 acres, according to July 2017 data of Forest Department.—Nadi Hline ■

Kayin State job fair scheduled in September

THE Myanmar Youth Entrepreneurs Association is hosting the SuntOo Tee Htwin Zweekabin, or Zweekabin Entrepreneurs, job fair on 2 September in Hpa-an town, Kayin State.

"There are many enterprises in Kayin State which have moved back from Thailand," said Dr. May Pyay Zon Kywe, a central executive committee member of MYEA. "Some of Kayin people have high expectations on us, so, we want to create job opportunities for them. There are many university graduates in Kayin State but they struggle to find work."

The fair will feature panel discussions and seminars highlighting opportunities in Kayin, including jobs in the government and finance sectors.—May Thet Hnin ■

Japan to contribute to Myanmar port infrastructure project

JAPAN will build four new pontoon bridges and a container port bridge in 2018 in the Thilawa Special Economic Zone with a loan provided by Japan Official Development Assistance, according to a report in the Myawady Daily yesterday.

The Japanese projects are part of a Myanmar Port Authority plan to construct 37 200-meter-wide and 750-meter-long ports in Thilawa.

Currently, Wilmer Myanmar Port Terminal is being constructed on the plots_ 20 and 21. A general merchandise port will emerge in 2018.

Moreover, MPA will also construct eight container ports in Thilawa port area.

The project is aimed at easing the flow of goods in and out of Yangon.

A total of 21 pontoon Bridges in Yangon port area and Thilawa port area handled cargo volume of 40,584,254 metric tons in financial 2016-2017. Volumes are expected to increase in the next several years.—GNLM ■



Workers sort fish at the Nyaungtan Jetty in Yangon. PHOTO: GNLM/PHOE KHWAR

5,200 tons of marine products exported to Thailand within a week

FISHERIES businesses in Myanmar exported 5,232 tons of marine products worth US\$4 million to Thailand through Myawady, Kawthoung and Myeik ports of entry between 12 and 18 August.

The week's total represented an increase of 1,404 tons against the prior week. Total fisheries sector exports have had an estimated value this financial year of more than \$200 million as of 18 August this FY both through sea

route and border trade.

Total border trade with Thailand at Tachilek, Myawady, Kawthoung, Myeik, Hteekhee, Mawtaung and Maese gates is estimated to be \$461 million, so far this financial year.—Ko Khant ■

Gov promises subsidies for agriculture, SMEs sectors

By Ko Moe

LOANS for small and medium-sized businesses, especially in agriculture sectors, will be made more accessible, said Union Minister for Planning and Finance U Kyaw Win during a

meeting with business people on Tuesday. The Construction and Housing Development Bank is also preparing to increase loan amounts, said U Kyaw Win, in an effort to stimulate the lagging real estate and construction sector, said U Kyaw Win. ■

\$3 million worth fertilizer imported within a week

MORE than 14,740 tons of fertilizer with import values of US\$3 million was imported into the country through sea route between 13 and 19 August, according to a recent Commerce Ministry report.

Those imports originated from Belarus, China, South Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, Russia, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam. Fertilizer import volume of that week was 9,790 tons more than previous week.

Myanmar agriculture has struggled to adequately meet domestic and export demand due, in part, to its lack of domes-

tic fertilizer production capacity.

The Myanmar Agribusiness Public Corporation (MAPCO) is establishing a new fertilizer manufacturing plant Agri First Co., Ltd (AFC) in cooperation with Japan-based Company Mitsui and German firm chemical distributor Behn Mayer in Thilawa Special Economic Zone. The plant is likely to produce 150,000 to 200,000 tonnes of fertilizer a year, with a capacity of 50 tonnes per hour. The plant is expected help reduce fertilizer imports, thereby lowering farmers' overheads and improving yields.—Htet Myat ■

Retailers want government to regulate e-commerce

By May Thet Hnin

MYANMAR Retailers Association has requested the government to formulate clear rules and policies regarding online-shopping, said U Myo Min Aung, vice chairperson of this association.

“Currently, online-shopping seems illegal trading due to lack of traceable background. Sellers and buyers are unknown. Digital marketing through SNS lack business licences and do not pay taxes. Therefore, we urged the government to develop policies concerning online-shopping”, he added.

Regarding this matter, Myanmar retailers and the officials from the Commerce Ministry had a brief meeting. Additionally, this matter was already raised at regular meeting between Vice President U Myint Swe and the entrepreneurs.



A woman browses on a desktop computer. PHOTO: NZM

There will be ongoing meeting concerning this, said U Myo Min Aung.

“Most online-shopping businesses are unregistered and so, it is hard to tackle this. Registered businesses can take part in fair play only after formulation of policy”, he said.

Online payments are still small in Myanmar, where cash-on-delivery is more common. There is no accountability for the product and no law and policy to file complaints on sellers or buyers. The country does not earn any revenue from this, said U Myo Min Aung. ■

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THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR
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- Market Place by City Mart (6.5 Mile)
- Market Place by City Mart (Damasidi Road)
- Market Place by City Mart (Junction City)
- 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)
- City Mart (Junction 8)
- City Mart (St. John)
- Ocean North Point (9 mile)
- Ocean Shwegonedine

Ocean City City Mart
SUPERCENTER Supermarket

Interview with Hindus who fled from their villages

ON Saturday night, the family of 12 attempted to take cover from a firefight between terrorist gunmen and government security forces in an unfinished building near Myothugyi Village in Maungtaw Township, northern Rakhine State.

Six family members, including two men, a woman and three children were killed by ARSA extremist terrorists. The Myanmar News Agency interviewed surviving family members and is publishing their words below. —Myanmar News Agency



Ko Ram Fawdar, aged 20 years, a Hindu

My brother, his wife and children were killed by terrorists on 26 August.

My brother runs a barber shop in Myinlut. On that day, they were travelling from Alethankyaw village with security personnel and when they reached three mile junction, they headed toward Maungtaw on their own.

They were near Myothugyi village when they heard gunshots and ran into Maungtaw District court that was still under construction. Terrorists inside the district court killed them. My brother and his family was killed by the terrorists.



Ko Khukan Dor, aged 29 years, a Hindu

My brother is a goldsmith in Khamaungsate Village. My brother's name is Pufondor and his wife is Karikha. They had three children. My brother was killed and his wife was abducted, taken to Bangladesh and forced to convert to Islam.

Some men in the village were also killed.

A total of six women, including my brother's wife and children were abducted. My brother's wife called from Bangladesh and said my brother was killed by terrorists. They were rescued and helped by a Hindu organisation in Bangladesh.



Daw Raburi, aged 62 years, a Hindu

My nephew's family was going to Maungtaw from Alethankyaw village and up to three mile junction, they were with others. When they passed three mile junction and arrived near Myothugyi village, they heard gunshots and took refuge in a nearby building still under construction where terrorists already there killed them.

A total of six were killed from my nephew's family of eight. Two escaped to Buthidaung and they are not here. A Hindu at four mile reported the incident to authorities and when the authorities went to check, they found the corpses.

Help us to stay in peace. We want to return and live where we had lived.



U Milawn, aged 58 years, a Hindu

In this camp, there are a total of 1,842 Hindus from three villages who fled from the danger of terrorists.

There was an incident when terrorists killed 6 Hindus near Myothugyi village on 26 August.

In addition to this, 6 women and 4 children were abducted and taken to Bangladesh. Those who abducted them told them to convert to their religion and to marry them.

As these women were afraid from being killed, they agreed to convert. They were also told to say that the villagers in their villages were not killed by terrorists but instead by Arakanese. They were then stolen to Bangladesh where the women were raped and tortured. These women and children were rescued by Hindus in Bangladesh. They contacted us by phone and told us that they were in a Hindu village.

Poverty declined in Myanmar: World Bank report

Poverty in Myanmar continues to decline, falling from 32.1 per cent to 19.4 per cent in the 10 years up to 2015, while standards of living overall have improved, with average household spending increasing annually by 1.4 per cent, according to a new report jointly prepared by the Union Government and the World Bank.

Spending growth has been faster in recent years. Living standards improvements are reflected in a number of indicators, including in more pronounced sales of consumer goods such as mobile phones, motorcycles and televisions. In 2015, over 42 per cent of households owned motorcycles, compared to only 25 per cent in 2009.

"This analysis provides us with an overview of the poverty trends over time in Myanmar," said H.E. U Kyaw Win, Union Minister for Ministry of Planning and Finance. "We are encouraged by the decline in poverty, moving ahead it will be critical to ensure that economic reforms continue to reach everyone in

Myanmar. Supporting stronger growth in Myanmar's farms and villages will be vital to continuing the reduction in poverty."

Two methodologies were applied for the report. The first methodology is outlined in the Integrated Household Living Conditions Survey report of 2007, and uses data from 2004/05. A second methodology was introduced by the World Bank in a 2014 report, using data from 2009/10. Similar trends are seen from both methods. The second method showed a decline in poverty to 26.1 per cent in 2015, falling from 44.5 per cent in 2004. The joint assessment recommends that the Government of Myanmar consider revising and rebasing its measurement of poverty using the updated living standards data. This change is recommended to allow poverty measures to reflect new goods, such as mobile phones, in people's lives.

"The decline in poverty seen in Myanmar during the last decade is encouraging, and reflects the country's strong

track record on economic growth," said Ellen Goldstein, Country Director for Myanmar, Laos and Cambodia. "With conditions in both the country and lower-income communities continuing to change, the World Bank is recommending an update in the way that poverty is measured to capture living conditions in 2015." The report is the first of a two-part series on poverty assessment that recommends a revision of poverty measurements for Myanmar. Part two of the assessment will be released in late 2017.

The poverty report is part of a series of analytical work outlined in the Country Partnership Framework (CPF). After a recent review of the CPF for Myanmar, the strategy has been extended to 2019, to continue to help strengthen the country's programs and reforms that will promote growth in rural areas, invest in basic social services to provide better nutrition, health and education services, build infrastructure and create more and better jobs.—World Bank ■

ARSA attacks, evacuations continue in northern Rakhine

FROM PAGE-1

Meanwhile, about 200 Hindu people from Ngayantchaung Village in Buthidaung Township were also evacuated to safe shelters.

Hindu families have recently been forced to flee their villages out of fear of the ongoing terrorist attacks. Most are being sheltered at a primary school in Maungtaw.

On their way to Maungtaw, six were shot dead by ARSA extremist terrorists on 26th August, it was previously reported.

Amid ongoing attacks in northern Maungtaw, the government announced yesterday that an investigation will be launched into international non-governmental organizations' aid found at the hideouts of ARSA extremist terrorists.—Myanmar News Agency ■



South Korean soldiers take part in a military drill held as a part of the Ulchi Freedom Guardian exercise in Yongin, South Korea, on 29 August 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

South Korea, US wrap up annual war drills; Trump says talk not the answer

SEOUL/TOKYO — South Korea and the United States were finishing annual war games on the Korean peninsula on Thursday amid high tension over North Korea's weapons programmes and a disagreement between US President Donald Trump and his defence secretary on how to respond.

A series of threats and missile launches by North Korea, including one on Tuesday that flew over Japan, has fuelled a tense standoff with the United States and its Asian allies in recent weeks.

The drills, involving tens of thousands of US and South Korean troops, have been focussed on computer simulations but reports highlighting the prospect of more "visible" demonstrations of US power in the region have circulated in the wake of Pyongyang's latest test.

Trump on Wednesday declared "talking is not the answer" to resolving the long-standing impasse with North Korea.

"The US has been talking to North Korea, and paying them extortion money, for 25 years," Trump, who just last

week said North Korean leader Kim Jong Un was "starting to respect" the United States, wrote on Twitter. "Talking is not the answer!"

However, US Defence Secretary Jim Mattis, when asked by reporters just hours later if the United States was out of diplomatic solutions with North Korea, replied: "No."

"We are never out of diplomatic solutions," Mattis said before a meeting with his South Korean counterpart at the Pentagon. "We continue to work together, and the minister and I share a respon-

sibility to provide for the protection of our nations, our populations and our interests."

Japanese Defence Minister Itsunori Onodera spoke to Mattis by phone on Thursday and agreed to keep putting pressure on North Korea in a "visible" form, Japan's defence ministry said.

Trump, who has vowed not to let North Korea develop nuclear missiles that can hit the mainland United States, had said on Tuesday "all options are on the table," a veiled reference to military force.—Reuters ■

Birthday wishes

Wish husband Dr Maung Maung (Tharaphu Hospital-Meiktila) a physical and spiritual wellbeing on his birthday which falls on 1 September 2017.

Wife Daw Kyu Kyu and family
Sydney

'Bombshell' New Zealand poll shows support for Labour overtaking National

WELLINGTON — The race to form New Zealand's next government took an unexpected turn on Thursday as a "bombshell" poll showed the opposition Labour party had overtaken the ruling National party, threatening its almost decade-long hold on power.

Prime Minister Bill English, a political veteran and former finance minister, faces a highly contested race against Labour's Jacinda Ardern, whose charisma and rising popularity have prompted domestic media to coin the term "Jacindamania".

National fell three points to 41 per cent, its lowest result since 2005, in a poll commissioned by 1 News and published on its website only an hour before English and Ardern face off in a debate.

Support for the newly invigorated Labour party jumped six points to 43 per cent, after the last-minute leadership change boosted its chances.

"This is a bombshell," said Bryce Edwards, political analyst at Wellington-based Critical Politics.

"It does mean that this campaign has turned on its head. National being in second place is entirely unexpected for the last ten years."

The result pushed the New Zealand currency to a three-month low of \$0.7148 as the result at the 23 September election looks increasingly uncertain.

Ardern, 37, took the helm of the Labour Party this month, after poor poll results prompted the resignation of Andrew Little, breathing fresh air into an election that until then had been widely considered a slam dunk for National.

National or Labour would still need to strike a deal with smaller parties to form a government in New Zealand's German-style proportional voting system.

The Green Party, with which Labour has an agreement to work, edged up to 5 per cent. The two parties would probably still need the nationalist New Zealand First party, which slipped two points to 8 per cent, to form a government.—Reuters ■

Japan, Britain to expand security ties amid North Korea threat

TOKYO — Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and his British counterpart Theresa May agreed Thursday their countries will strengthen security cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region, citing the threat from North Korea's nuclear and ballistic missile development.

They also confirmed that Japan and Britain will form a "new economic partnership" in light of the latter's withdrawal from the European Union, but did

not make a clear commitment to the kind of two-way trade pact London is likely seeking.

Describing North Korea as a "global threat, including to Europe" following the launch on Tuesday of a ballistic missile across Japan, Abe told a joint press conference after the talks that he and May agreed to seek a greater role from China, which has economic ties to the North.

According to a joint

statement announced after the meeting, Japan and Britain will work together and with other countries "to strengthen pressure against North Korea, including by increasing the pace of sanctions implementation and working towards the adoption of a new and effective resolution" at the UN Security Council.

The leaders committed more broadly to greater cooperation in ensuring an international order based

on the rule of law, expressing concern over stability in the East and South China seas in an apparent reference to China's activities there.

According to the declaration -- to be reflected in action plans drawn up in each country -- "Japan welcomes the UK's strengthened security engagement in the Asia-Pacific region, including through...the potential deployment of a UK aircraft carrier."

Abe and May also pledged to cooperate further on the transfer of defense equipment and technology, and undertake government-wide cooperation on counterterrorism and cybersecurity.

In a show of unity in security matters, May attended a meeting on Thursday afternoon of Japan's National Security Council. She is only the second foreign leader to do so after Australia's then Prime Min-

ister Tony Abbott in 2014.

On the economy and trade, Abe and May affirmed in a separate joint declaration that Britain "wants a smooth and orderly transition to its new relationship with the EU to avoid disruption," including to Japanese companies.

Japan signaled its faith in the future of the European Union in July when it sealed a broad agreement on a free trade deal with the bloc.—Kyodo News ■

Only if terrorists are brought to court can national sovereignty be protected

By Khin Maung Oo

“A conflict in front of the house may bring unrest in the back,” as the saying goes. Now we must reverse the saying under the current situations. As known by all, we are now seeing and hearing news and information through papers and social media almost every day concerning northern Rakhine State. At the time when we are performing our normal daily rituals, our national brethren are being displaced by extremist terrorists’ inhumane attacks. What is worse, many innocent civilians and servicemen were brutally killed, and all are living in fear of these attackers. Now is the time for us to take the problem into consideration seriously as a danger to our national sovereignty.

Their atrocious deeds reveal that this was a systematic, long-term plan of the extremist terrorists. They aimed at occupying our land by frightening our local nationals through their cruel killings and torturing of villagers. And they tried to launch their operations by using external media as their propaganda agencies and by taking aid from outside terrorist groups.

Now the Anti-Terrorism central committee for eradication of terrorism officially announced these violent armed attackers as an extremist terrorist group under section 6(E) of the Anti-terrorism Law, and simultaneously it is trying to solve the problem with the conventions on anti-terrorism. At the 52nd day meeting of 2nd Amyotha Hluttaw 5th regular session, the

parliamentarian of constituency 12 in Ayeyarwady Region explained that the Union Government and the State Counsellor has been exerting efforts as assigned by Pyidaungsu Hluttaw, for the populace in Rakhine State in accord with the State Constitution and the prescriptions of the law on rule of law and anti-terrorism law. As regards the motion put forward, Deputy Minister for Home Affairs clarified at length on the occurrences in Rakhine. He pledged solemnly that those involved in the terrorist attacks would be brought to court under criminal law.

According to him, a total of 466 cases have been opened concerning the attacks in Rakhine State during the period from 9 October 2016 to 16 August. Of these, 116 cases had been judged by

courts while 147 cases were still pending, with 180 under investigation and 23 cases acquitted. Following the series of coordinated attacks last Friday, which were claimed by ARSA (Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army), the Anti-Terrorism Central Committee declared ARSA terrorist group. Tatmadaw and Myanmar Police Force increased security forces for the security, peace and stability in the area. Concurrently, Union Ministers and responsible officials of Rakhine State Cabinet frequently went to Maungtaw, Buthidaung and Yathedaung townships to fulfil the needs of the local populace. In brief, the Tatmadaw and Myanmar Police Force are carrying out the regional security and area consolidation increasingly so that the national sovereignty can be assured.

FOOD and beverage companies face the risk of forced labor in countries where they obtain sugarcane but most fall short in efforts to tackle the problem that threatens millions of workers, according to a study released on Tuesday.

Most of 10 companies studied offered only limited details of how they assess and monitor risks of forced labor in specific countries, and most of grievance procedures for workers are weak, said KnowTheChain (KTC), a partnership founded by U.S.-based Humanity United.

Sugarcane, a major agricultural commodity, can be found in a list of household foods and beverages from cereals to sauces and is often harvested by rural migrant workers with machetes who work long hours for low wages in hazardous conditions.

KTC said there is often little law enforcement and those workers are vulnerable to becoming victims of forced labor, especially by recruiters who deceive them about work and wages in other regions or countries.

“It is possible that the sugar in the cereal you ate for breakfast or the soda you drank at lunch was produced with forced labor,” said Kilian Moote, KnowTheChain

Sugarcane produced by forced labour has been found in Bolivia, Brazil, the Dominican Republic, Myanmar and Pakistan, according to a list published in 2016 by the U.S. government.

Cereal, drinks companies often overlook risk of forced labor in sugarcane



A farmer plants sugarcane in the traditional manner at a farm near Nay Pyi Taw in Myanmar. **PHOTO: AYE MIN SOE**

project director, in a statement.

“Agricultural workers, particularly migrants, are at most risk of abuse.”

Sugarcane produced by forced labour has been found in Bolivia, Brazil, the Dominican Republic, Myanmar and Pakistan, according to a list published in 2016 by the U.S. government.

RISK ASSESSMENT?

Verite, a KTC partner, also found reports of debt bondage of sugarcane workers in India and found sugarcane workers in Guatemala at a high risk of

trafficking.

Globally, about 21 million people are victims of forced labor, made to work for free after falling into debt or forced to work due to deception, coercion or threat of violence, according to the International Labour Organization (ILO).

In Brazil, the world’s largest producer of sugarcane, roughly a half million people work cutting the crop, according to industry statistics.

The companies studied were Coca-Cola Co., Fomento Economico Mexicano S.A.B de C.V (FEMSA), Monster

Beverage Corp., PepsiCo Inc., The Hershey Co., Mondelez International Inc., Nestlé S.A., Archer Daniels Midland Co., Associated British Foods (ABF) and Wilmar International Ltd.

PepsiCo, Coca-Cola, Nestlé and ABF were the only four companies to undertake forced labor risk assessments of sugarcane supply chains in specific countries, the study said.

Coca-Cola has committed to conduct 28 country-level studies on child labour, forced labor, and land rights for its sugar supply chains by 2020, it said.

Most companies were lacking in revealing details of their risk assessment, monitoring and grievance procedures, it said.

“Few companies disclose information explaining how they address forced labour risks in specific countries, and, where they do, the information is typically focused on understanding and assessing risks, with limited information on concrete follow-up steps,” the researchers said.

Contacted by email, none of the companies responded immediately to requests for comment.

The study compared policies and practices and used a questionnaire, to which eight of the 10 companies responded. ADM supplied only limited answers and Monster Beverage, a U.S. maker of energy drinks, did not respond, it said.

Coco-Cola, PepsiCo, and Nestlé listed the countries they sourced from most, while Hershey, Mondelez, and Monster Beverage disclosed just one of their sugarcane-sourcing countries, it said.

ADM and Monster Beverage disclosed nothing about if or how they monitor working conditions in their sugarcane supply chains, it said. (Reporting by Ellen Wulffhorst/Thomson Reuters Foundation)



Speaker of Pyithu Hluttaw U Win Myint (left) meets with local and international news media reporters in Nay Pyi Taw. PHOTO: MNA

Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U Win Myint meets news media

PYITHU Hluttaw Speaker U Win Myint met with editors and reporters of local and international news media yesterday afternoon in Zabuthiri Hall, Hluttaw Building in Nay Pyi Taw.

Questions by the news media were answered by the Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker. The

meeting was attended by Pyithu Hluttaw Deputy Speaker U T Khun Myat, officials of Pyithu Hluttaw office, editors and reporters from 29 local news media, locally based international news media, newspaper and journals. —Myanmar News Agency ■

UN, foreign countries, embassies and organisations denounce ARSA terrorist attacks in Rakhine State

THE Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, the embassies of Canada and China in Myanmar, the Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP), the All-Myanmar Hindu Federation and two organisations of Myanmar Muslim Civil Society, Twe Let Myanmar and Yyaw Let Yar, released statements denouncing the ARSA extrem-

ist terrorist attacks in northern Rakhine State.

Other similar statements were also released by the United Nations, the foreign affairs ministries of the United States, India and Turkey and the embassies of the United States, Australia and the United Kingdom. —Myanmar News Agency ■

Second Pyithu Hluttaw fifth ...

FROM PAGE-2

The deputy minister said the Nantmon Aqueduct, which is three miles west of Narsaing village in Maukmai Township, southern Shan State, was constructed and maintained by locals to provide irrigation water to 235 acres of farmland. It is 200 feet long and 35 feet high, constructed with wooden poles and planks and was not very strong. In fiscal year 2013-2014, with more than Ks 40 million of state government funds, the Irrigation and Water Utilisation Management Department replaced the wooden poles with concrete pillars. In fiscal year 2015-2016, more than Ks 4 million of state government funds were used to maintain and improve the waterway, but due to a lack of funds, only about 60 per cent of the work was completed. At the current moment, there is a requirement to do more repair and maintenance work, said the deputy minister.

Afterwards, Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U Win Myint gave a speech saying the fifth regular session was started in 18 May 2017 and today is the 54th day. During the meeting period, 310 starred and 729 non-starred questions were answered, 23 motions including two important motions were tabled, of which 11 were confirmed while 12 were put on record. Thirty-three bills were discussed, 16 were approved and 17 remain.

During the meeting period, 22 Pyithu Hluttaw representatives were sworn in, 19 reports by committees formed by the Pyithu Hluttaw were confirmed, the Pyithu Hluttaw judicial and law

committee's term was extended and the duties and responsibilities of the Pyithu Hluttaw farmers and workers affairs committee was amended and redefined. Two Tatamadaw Pyithu Hluttaw representatives were transferred and reassigned as committee members, and five Tatamadaw Pyithu Hluttaw representatives were replaced and reassigned as observers.

Representatives should take note that in conducting legislation, the primary responsibility of the hluttaw is to defend the people. If the laws confirmed and enacted by them are unable to defend the people, it is hindering and slowing down the transition to democracy. Strict laws lead to governance by law, which is an extremist type of government and should be avoided. Laws should not oppress but protect the basic human rights of the people. Only then will the laws become beneficial for the people and earn the trust and confidence of the people. Another responsibility of the hluttaw is the matter of checks and balances. With regards to this matter, everyone knew that the hluttaw representatives have the right and are doing this in accordance with laws and rules related to the hluttaw. Only a few questions that are not in accord with the restrictions and procedures were amended or changed for the dignity of the hluttaw representatives. The hluttaw speaker especially requested hluttaw representatives to act and talk in accordance to democracy practices when meeting with the people so that they gain the trust and confidence of the people during

the time when hluttaw meetings were adjourned. It is important for hluttaw representatives to earn the respect of the authorities and authoritative departments too. As we are implementing a democracy system and we need to cooperate in order for the people to have a democracy culture and practices. We all need to cooperate and work toward an all-inclusive democracy.

Finally, the hluttaw speaker said while the hluttaw representatives conduct their legislative responsibility dutifully and loyally, they also need to continuously upgrade their abilities. They must not lose touch with the people and must always be in touch with the people and become people's representatives. They need to oversee and manage the local region development works. They also need to coordinate the works of the committee to assess cases of confiscated farmlands and other lands. Cooperate to establish a democratic federal union with public democratic participation. Be vigilant for the danger of those who want to hinder and destroy democracy. Violence and terrorism that could deviate the democracy transition process, destroy and damage the rule of law, stability and peace of the community should also be prevented and defended with unity and cooperation, said the Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker.

After his speech, the Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker announced the adjournment of the 2nd Pyithu Hluttaw 5th regular session 54th day meeting and the successful completion of the 2nd Pyithu Hluttaw 5th regular session. ■

2nd Amyotha Hluttaw 5th Regular Session concludes at its 53rd Day Meeting

FROM PAGE-2

Parliamentarians made 235 asterisk-marked questions and 208 non-asterisk-marked questions regarding their performance for the sake of the people. Over those questions asked by the parliamentarians, authorities concerned at the Union Level gave replies in writing or verbally, individually or collectively from the ministries. In the sector of submitting motions, six motions urging the Union Government were put forward to the Hluttaw, it was decided to accept for discussion by the Hluttaw, so four motions were approved, one put on record and one left to be car-

ried out further."

"As regards submitting bills, five bills sent from Pyidaungsu Hluttaw were put forward to the Hluttaw for discussion. Then, drafting committee read out the report. After discussions of parliamentarians over the report, it was sent to the Pyithu Hluttaw after getting the Hluttaw's approval. Out of the bills approved by Amyotha Hluttaw, sent to Pyithu Hluttaw for discussion, four bills were returned to the Hluttaw with the amendment attached. Hluttaw approved them as amended by Pyithu Hluttaw. Hluttaw sent to Pyithu Hluttaw 7 bills with amendment attached



U Kyaw Myint Oo of constituency 10 in Mandalay Region. PHOTO: MNA

and two bills as amended by Pyithu Hluttaw. Moreover, putting the bill on the amendment of anti-corruption law (third revised) forward to Hluttaw, reading out

the report of drafting committee and getting approval of Hluttaw were performed and sent it to Pyithu Hluttaw. Pyithu Hluttaw sent back the decision of approval without any amendments. Similarly, bill on Myanmar Gems and Jewellery, 2017 was put forward to Hluttaw. After reading out the report, parliamentarians made discussions and acquisition of Hluttaw's approval, sending it back to Pyithu Hluttaw", the Speaker of Amyotha Hluttaw added. "In the sector of submitting reports, reading out the reports of 12 committees to Amyotha Hluttaw, discussing in support from parliamentarians

and approving from Hluttaw were performed. Committees formed inside the Amyotha Hluttaw held 174 meetings in all, during the session. With the view to upgrading capacities of Amyotha Hluttaw representatives made eight debates. Research, Public and International Relation Department issued three short term papers for representatives during the session, with 65 parliamentarians finding 113 pieces of information they wanted, and 24 underway."

Finally, Speaker of Amyotha Hluttaw announced that the 2nd Amyotha Hluttaw 5th regular session successfully came to a close. ■

Old Mumbai building overdue for demolition collapses, killing 21

MUMBAI — An 117-year-old condemned building collapsed in the Indian financial hub of Mumbai on Thursday after two days of torrential rain, killing at least 21 people, with some feared trapped.

Thirteen people were rescued and were recovering in hospital, with six firemen also injured in the six-storey building, the chief fire official said.

“There was a massive bang. We couldn’t see anything due to the dust and smoke. Once the dust settled, we realised it was a building collapse,” said area resident Amina Sheikh.

Disaster struck early in the morning as Mumbai was emerging from two days of heavy rain that flooded the city and killed 14 people. The collapse was the

second in Mumbai in a little over a month. In late July, 17 people were killed when a four-storey building collapsed after suspected unauthorised renovations.

The building that collapsed on Thursday in one of the most densely populated areas of the city housed a nursery school, despite being declared unsafe by the city’s municipal housing authority in 2011.

And families were still living there. Desperate relatives pleaded with rescuers to help find their loved ones after getting phone calls from trapped survivors. About 200 police and fire personnel sorted through the debris. Police had yet to determine what caused the collapse near Crawford market, a



Firefighters and rescue workers search for survivors at the site of a collapsed building in Mumbai, India, on 31 August 2017. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

landmark of south Mumbai’s old city with narrow streets packed with markets and shops. Many Muslims live in the neighbour-

hood. Rescuers said the area’s narrow roads made it difficult to bring in excavators. The building housed a sweet shop warehouse

on the ground floor and a nursery school on the first floor, although the collapse happened before the children arrived. —Reuters

Japan Defence Ministry seeks record-high budget amid North Korea threat

TOKYO — The Japanese Defence Ministry on Thursday requested a record-high budget of 5.26 trillion yen (\$47.8 billion) for fiscal 2018 as it seeks to counter missile threats from North Korea and defend remote islands in southwestern Japan in light of China’s rising maritime assertiveness.

The requested sum marks a 2.5 per cent increase from the initial budget for the current year through March. Japan’s defence budget has been on the rise under Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, who wants Japan to play a more active role in security issues, having topped 5 trillion yen in fiscal 2017 for a second-straight year.

The ministry said in the request that it is aiming to seek funds to introduce a new missile shield system, possibly the land-based Aegis Ashore, while leaving open the actual sum. Details are expected to be fleshed out before the government finishes drawing up the fiscal 2018 budget plan by the end of the year.

Currently, the Maritime Self-Defence Force’s destroyers, equipped with the Aegis combat system and Standard



Japanese Defence Minister Itsunori Onodera speaks at a ministry meeting in Tokyo on 31 August, 2017. **PHOTO: KYODO NEWS**

Missile-3 interceptors, are tasked with stopping missiles in the outer atmosphere. If they fail, the Air Self-Defence Force’s ground-based Patriot Advanced Capability-3 interceptors will counter the attack in the lower tier.

Aegis Ashore uses similar components to those fitted on MSDF Aegis destroyers, but is expected to reduce the workload

of the Japanese Self-Defence Forces members in missile intercept operations because the system will be permanently installed on land.

Experts say around two Aegis Ashore units will be enough to cover the entire landmass of Japan, each costing about 80 billion. The system is made by Lockheed Martin Corp.

To improve the defence ca-

pabilities of existing systems, the ministry asked for 47.2 billion yen and 20.5 billion yen, respectively, to acquire more capable interceptor missiles known as SM-3 Block 2A and PAC-3 MSE.

The current PAC-3 batteries deployed nationwide have a range of several dozen kilometers, but the use of PAC-3 MSE missiles is expected to double the range of defence.

About 10.7 billion yen is eyed to upgrade Japan’s air defence command and control system so that it can be better prepared for missiles launched simultaneously or on a highly “lofted” trajectory, a method North Korea has recently tested when firing missiles.

The ministry also sought 19.6 billion yen as costs to work toward the development of a new radar system with improved abilities to detect and track ballistic missiles, which is called Multi-Input Multi-Output, or MIMO.

Ahead of the planned deployment of Ground Self-Defence Force units tasked to guard Japan’s far-flung islands, the ministry sought 55.2 billion yen that includes outlays to build

barracks and other facilities on Miyako Island and Amami-Oshima Island, located southwest and northeast of Okinawa’s main island, respectively.

The ministry also said it wants to set aside 10 billion yen to study technologies to create high-speed glide bombs, a longer-range weapon which it says would be useful for operations to retake invaded remote islands.

Another 7.7 billion yen is also requested for research on anti-ship missiles also for the purpose of island defense.

The ministry also asked for 88.1 billion yen to acquire six F-35 stealth fighter jets and 45.7 billion yen for four Osprey tilt-rotor transport aircraft.

With Japan and the United States using satellites to check on missile threats and other purposes, the ministry demanded 4.4 billion yen to design a space observation system that would protect the satellites from harmful space debris and other satellites.

The budget request was worked out by setting the dollar’s exchange rate at 110 yen for the next fiscal year, the ministry said. —Kyodo News ■

US acknowledges more troops in Afghanistan than previously stated

WASHINGTON — About 11,000 US troops are serving in Afghanistan, the Pentagon said on Wednesday, thousands more than it has previously stated.

The announcement by Pentagon officials at a news conference did not represent an increase in troops in Afghanistan and came after US Defence Secretary Jim Mattis expressed frustration with the method of counting US troops in conflict zones.

The Pentagon said previously that there were roughly 8,400 US troops in Afghanistan, under a cap set during President Barack Obama's administration.

While the Pentagon said the move was a step in increasing transparency, it did not provide counts of US troops in Iraq and Syria.

"This is not an attempt to bring more forces in, but it is an attempt to actually clarify a very confusing set of reporting rules that has the unintended consequence of forcing commanders to make readiness trade-offs," said Lieutenant General Kenneth McKenzie, joint staff director.



US troops walk outside their base in Uruzgan province, Afghanistan, on 7 July 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

neth McKenzie, joint staff director.

"So what it does is, it actually lets the American people know what their sons and daughters are doing in Afghanistan," McKenzie said.

Previously disclosed troop numbers did not reflect the extent of the US commitment on the ground since commanders sometimes brought in forces temporarily to get around the Obama-era limits.

Mattis has said that he would wait for a complete count of US troops in Afghanistan before making a decision on how many additional troops to send, calling the accounting system strange.

Mac Thornberry, the Republican chairman of the US House Armed Services Committee, welcomed the change.

"The Obama Administration did not shoot straight on how many people they sent to Afghanistan, which added cost to the mission and made it harder to succeed," Thornberry said.

On Iraq and Syria, Pentagon spokeswoman Dana White said accounting for troop numbers was still under review.

The force levels, which are officially at 5,262 in Iraq and 503 in Syria, are believed by US officials to be more than a couple of thousands troops shy of the actual number of US forces in both countries.

"We are reviewing Iraq and Syria and the same guiding principals will govern how we roll out those numbers as well," White said.

US officials have suggested that the delicate political situation in Iraq could be one reason why the United States is cautious in releasing a full picture of forces in the country.—Reuters ■

Several wounded after blast hits bus in Turkey's Izmir

ANKARA — Seven people were wounded when an explosion hit a shuttle bus carrying prison guards in the Turkish coastal province of Izmir on Thursday, and authorities were investigating a possible terrorist attack, the local mayor said.

The bus was hit as it passed a garbage container at around 7:40 am (0440 GMT), Levent Piristina, the mayor of Izmir's Buca district, said on Twitter.

Photographs he posted on social media showed its windows blown out and its windscreen shattered. The force of the blast appeared to have blown out some of the bus's panels, and the nearby street was littered with debris.

"We are getting information from police sources and they are focussing on the possibility of a terrorist attack," he said, adding that all seven wounded were in good condition. Both state-run TRT Haber and private broadcaster Dogan news agency said the explosion was caused by a bomb placed in the garbage container that exploded



Plainclothes police officers stand after an explosion hit a shuttle bus carrying prison guards in Izmir, Turkey, on 31 August 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

when the shuttle bus passed.

No one immediately claimed responsibility. Both Kurdish militants and jihadist Islamic State militants have carried out suicide and bomb attacks in major Turkish cities in recent years.

Kurdish militants have previously targeted buses carrying security personnel.

In December, a bomb killed at least 13 soldiers and wounded more than 50 when it ripped through a bus carrying off-duty

military personnel in the central city of Kayseri, an attack the government blamed on Kurdish militants.

The Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), considered a terrorist organisation by the United States, Turkey and the European Union, has waged a three-decade insurgency against the Turkish state.

The outlawed PKK wants autonomy for Turkey's largely Kurdish southeast.—Reuters ■

After tense talks, UN agrees to renew peacekeepers in Lebanon

UNITED NATIONS — The United Nations Security Council unanimously voted to renew the mandate for a peacekeeping mission in Lebanon on Wednesday, following tense negotiations amid US and Israeli criticism that UN troops should do more to stop Hezbollah gaining arms.

The UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) — established in 1978 — patrols Lebanon's southern border with Israel. Washington regards Hezbollah, which supports the Syrian government and has a strong presence in south Lebanon, as a terrorist organisation.

US Ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley said Washington wanted the French-drafted resolution to renew UNIFIL's mandate to "ensure UNIFIL is doing its job to the fullest extent possible."

After a 2006 war between Israel and Hezbollah, the UNIFIL mandate was expanded to task peacekeepers with making sure southern Lebanon was "free of any armed personnel, assets

and weapons" other than those belonging to the Lebanese government.

"For too long UNIFIL's leadership has failed to make sure this goal is realized," Haley told the council after the vote.

The mission mandate has not changed, but the resolution adopted on Wednesday spells out that peacekeeping operation is authorized to "take all necessary action in areas of deployment of its forces ... to ensure that its area of operations is not utilized for hostile activities."

The resolution also asks UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres to look at ways the peacekeeping mission can increase its visible presence, including through patrols and inspections.

"At the direction of its patron, Iran, the terrorist organisation Hezbollah is stockpiling an offensive arsenal in southern Lebanon," Haley told the 15-member council after the vote. "It is preparing for war." —Reuters ■

THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE
UNION OF MYANMAR
MINISTRY OF ELECTRICITY AND ENERGY
NATIONAL ELECTRIFICATION PROJECT
Invitation for Bids

Date: 1st September, 2017
SPECIFIC PROCUREMENT NOTICE

IDA Credit No. : 5727-MM

Contract Title: Steel Parts and Accessories for National
Electrification Project

Reference No. : C1-G7

1. The Ministry of Electricity and Energy has received financing from the World Bank toward the cost of the National Electrification Project, and intends to apply part of the proceeds toward payments under the contract for Steel Parts and Accessories for National Electrification Project.

2. The Ministry of Electricity and Energy now invites sealed bids from eligible bidders for supply of Steel Parts and Accessories to be delivered in 2018 to multiple destinations in all Regions and States of Myanmar. Domestic preference with the margin of 15% will apply. The goods will be grouped into 7 lots and bidders may submit bid for any one or more lots.

3. For quick reference, some of the key qualification requirements include:

- The minimum average annual turnover (or annual sales volume) of the last three years shall be shown in the table column (b) below.
- The bidder should have past experience of having satisfactorily completed during the last 5 years at least **two contracts** for supply of similar goods, with the value of each such contract should be greater than the minimum amount shown in the table column (c) below.
- The details of the qualification requirements are seen in the bidding documents.

Lot no. and description	Amount in USD (million)	Amount in USD (million)
(a)	(b)	(c)
Lot 1 – Steel Parts package for Yangon	2.0	1.5
Lot 2 – Steel Parts package for Mandalay	5.0	4.0
Lot 3 – Steel Parts package for Kayin, Mon	1.5	1.3
Lot 4 – Steel Parts package for Kachin, Kayah, Chin, Sagaing, Naypyitaw	12.0	9.5
Lot 5 – Steel Parts package for Bago(E)	7.0	5.8
Lot 6 – Steel Parts package for Ayeyarwaddy	7.0	5.7
Lot 7 – Steel Parts package for Rakhine, Shan(E), Shan(N), Shan(S), Magwe, Bago(W)	20.0	16.8

4. Bidding will be conducted through the International Competitive Bidding procedures as specified in the World Bank's [Guidelines: Procurement of Goods, Works and Non-Consulting Services under IBRD Loans and IDA Credits & Grants by World Bank Borrowers](#) [edition of January 2011 revised in July 2014] ("Procurement Guidelines"), and is open to all eligible bidders as defined in the Procurement Guidelines. In addition, please refer to the paragraphs 1.6 and 1.7 setting for the World Bank's policy on conflict of interest.

5. Interested eligible bidders may obtain further information from Project Manager, Project Management Office, Office No.(27), Ministry of Electricity and Energy, nep.pmomoep@gmail.com and inspect the bidding documents during office hours 10:00 to 16:00 hours Myanmar time at the address given below.

6. A complete set of bidding documents in English may be obtained free of charge by interested eligible bidders upon the submission of a written application to the address below. The Bidding Documents will be issued through email only.

In case of any difficulty in obtaining the bidding documents, interested parties may contact in writing:

Director General, Department of Electric Power Planning
Office No(27), Ministry of Electricity and Energy
City: Nay Pyi Taw
Country: The Republic of the Union of Myanmar
Email: nep.pmomoep@gmail.com

7. Bids must be delivered to the address below on or before **October 27, 2017, 10:00 hrs (10:00 am) Myanmar time**. Electronic bidding will not be permitted. Late bids will be rejected. Bids will be publicly opened in the presence of the bidders' designated representatives at the address below on **October 27, 2017, 10:00 hrs (10:00 am) Myanmar time**.

8. All bids must be accompanied by a Bid Security as stated in ITB 19.1 Bid Data Sheet of the bidding document.

9. The address referred to above is:

Attention : Director General Office, Department of Electric Power Planning
Office No (27), Ministry of Electricity and Energy, Nay Pyi Taw
The Republic of the Union of Myanmar

Telephone : +95 67 410203
Facsimile : +95 67 410077
E-mail : nep.pmomoep@gmail.com
Web site : <http://www.moep.gov.mm>



A 747 SuperTanker drops retardant while battling the Ponderosa Fire east of Oroville, California, US, on 30 August 2017. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

Man arrested for causing wildfire in Northern California

OROVILLE (California)

— Fire officials have arrested a 29-year-old man they accused of causing a fast-moving wildfire that has destroyed 10 homes and forced the evacuation of about 1,500 residents in Northern California, they said on Wednesday.

John Ballenger of the town of Oroville is accused of "recklessly" starting a campfire outside a designated area and allowing it to spread out of control, Cal Fire Butte County Chief Darren Read said in a statement. Oroville is about 70 miles (110 km)

north of Sacramento.

Ballenger will be arraigned in a Butte County court on Friday, officials said. No further information was disclosed.

Less than 24 hours after it began on Tuesday afternoon, the so-called Ponderosa Fire had consumed about 3,150 acres (1,275 hectares) in Butte County, about 85 miles (135 km) north of Sacramento, the Cal Fire website showed. Besides homes, the fire has destroyed 20 outbuildings.

Another 15 buildings have been damaged by the

flames and 1,300 more are threatened, Cal Fire said.

Photographs on social media showed the fire reducing houses to ash as smoke billowed into the sky and flames ripped through trees and vegetation.

"My grandparents' house is gone," said on Twitter user. "Everything on their road burned and it feels like losing my grandma all over again."

About 1,500 people have been ordered to evacuate the remote area. Two shelters were opened for displaced residents, county officials said.

Northern California faces a heat wave over the next few days with temperatures expected to top 105 degrees Fahrenheit (40 Celsius), the National Weather Service said.

Since the beginning of the year, wildfires in the US West have burnt more than 6.8 million acres (2.8 million hectares), about 50 per cent more than during the corresponding 2016 period. More than 45,000 fires have burnt this year across the region, 15 per cent more than in 2016, the National Interagency Fire Center says.—Reuters ■

Frankfurt to evacuate 60,000 people to defuse British WWII bomb

FRANKFURT — Around 60,000 inhabitants of Germany's financial capital Frankfurt will be ordered to leave their homes on Sunday while a large World War II bomb discovered at a building site is made safe, the police said.

Germany's central bank, the Bundesbank, Frankfurt's Goethe Uni-

versity, and at least two hospitals will also be evacuated, in one of the largest evacuations in German post-war history.

The 1.4-tonne HC 4000 bomb dropped by the British air force during World War II was uncovered on a building site on Wismarer Strasse in Frankfurt's leafy Westend



The skyline of Frankfurt, Germany, on 11 May 2017. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

where many wealthy bankers live.

Bomb disposal experts who examined it said the massive evacuation could wait until the

weekend. "We are still working on the modalities of the evacuation plan," a spokeswoman for Frankfurt police said on Wednesday.—Reuters ■

Harvey moves inland, leaving trail of death and destruction

LAKE CHARLES, (La.)/
HOUSTON — Tropical
Depression Harvey weak-
ened as it moved inland
over Louisiana on Thurs-
day, leaving behind record
flooding that drove tens
of thousands from their
homes in Texas, with the
death toll rising as bodies
were found in receding
waters.

The storm that paraly-
zed Houston is predicted
to be one of the most ex-
pensive natural disasters
in US history and presents
the administration of US
President Donald Trump
with massive humanitar-
ian and rebuilding chal-
lenges.



Residents wade with their belongings through flood waters brought by Tropical Storm Harvey in Northwest Houston, Texas, US, on 30 August 2017. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

The storm has killed at least 35 people and forced 32,000 people into shelters since coming ashore on Friday near Rockport, Texas, on the Gulf of Mexico Coast as the most powerful hurri-

cane to hit the state in half a century.

The Houston Fire Department will begin a block-by-block effort on Thursday to rescue stranded survivors and recover bodies, Assistant Fire Chief Richard Mann told reporters.

On Thursday Harvey is forecast to move north-east through Louisiana into Mississippi, dumping 4 to 8 inches (10 to 20 cm) of rain, the National Hurricane Center said. Flood watches and warnings extend from the Texas-Louisiana coast into Kentucky.

“Our whole city is underwater,” said Port Ar-

thur, Texas Mayor Derrick Foreman in a social media post where he also broadcast live video of floodwaters filling his home in the city of 55,000 people, about 100 miles (160 km) east of Houston. Nearly 30 inches (75 cm) of rain hit the Port Arthur area, the National Weather Service said.

Clear skies in Houston on Wednesday brought relief to the energy hub and fourth-largest US city after five days of catastrophic downpours. The first flight out of Houston since the storm hit boarded on Wednesday evening. Mayor Sylvester Turner said he hoped the port of Houston,

one of the nation’s busiest, would reopen soon.

The latest reported deaths on Wednesday included a married couple who drowned while driving through high water near Simonton, Texas, Major Chad Norvell of the Fort Bend County Sheriff’s Office said on Twitter.

Houston’s KHOU-TV said an infant girl was swept away after her parents got out of their pickup truck near New Waverly, Texas, and tried to carry her across rushing water.

Police in Harris County, home to Houston, said 17 people remained missing. —Reuters ■

China, Africa step up renewable energy cooperation

BEIJING — Cooperation between China and Africa has seen remarkable progress in renewable energy, showing the determination of developing countries to harness the huge potential of clean energy and combat climate change.

China-Africa Renewable Energy Cooperation and Innovation Alliance, a coalition of financing institutions, smart grid providers and core manufacturers, on Thursday signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on cooperation with Africa Renewable Energy Initi-

ative (AREI).

“Africa has the highest potential for renewable energy, but the least access to it,” said Seyni Nafo, chairman of AREI endorsed by the African Union Assembly. The MOU will enable the two parties to cooperate in renewable energy generation in Africa, with Chinese smart grid providers and core renewable energy manufacturers providing technological and financial support. Pilot projects include helping build micro-grids in some African households and villages, in combination

with large-scale power construction.

As part of China’s technology transfer efforts advocated by the United Nations Development Programme, the move is expected to better deploy and distribute renewable energy technology in Africa.

The MOU indicates a shared vision to combat climate change and to promote sustainable development, as renewable energy is expected to function as a central pillar of China-Africa cooperation on climate issues, Nafo said. —Xinhua ■

Japanese scholar receives 2017 Magsaysay Award

MANILA — Japan’s Yoshiaki Ishizawa on Thursday received the Ramon Magsaysay Award, one of Asia’s highest honors, with a vow to carry on his advocacy for cultural heritage preservation and promotion.

Ishizawa, 79, a former president of Sophia University who spent decades helping to restore Cambodia’s Angkor Wat, is one of this year’s six recipients of the prestigious honour regarded as Asia’s Nobel Prize.

The others are Abdon Nababan of Indonesia, Gethsie Shanmugam of Sri Lanka, Tony Tay of

Singapore, and Lilia de Lima and the Philippine Educational Theater Association of the Philippines.

All five individuals and Cecilia Garrucho, president of PETA, attended the award ceremony on Thursday held at the Cultural Center of the Philippines in Manila. Philippine Vice President Leni Robredo conferred the awards.

At the ceremony, the recipients received a certificate, a medalion bearing the image of Magsaysay, and a cash prize. The 2017 recipients join 318 other Magsaysay

laureates.

Ishizawa was recognized for his “selfless, steadfast service to the Cambodian people, his inspiring leadership in empowering Cambodians to be proud stewards of their heritage, and his wisdom in reminding us all that cultural monuments like the Angkor Wat are shared treasures whose preservation is thus, also our shared global responsibility.”

On Wednesday, Ishizawa spoke about the importance of the award to his work at a lecture in Manila. —Kyodo News ■

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As the wharves, warehouses and chellan Offices of Yangon Port will be closed on the 2nd SEPTEMBER 2017 (Qurbani Eid), Loading, Unloading and delivery for Goods will be received on Payment as Holiday Fees.

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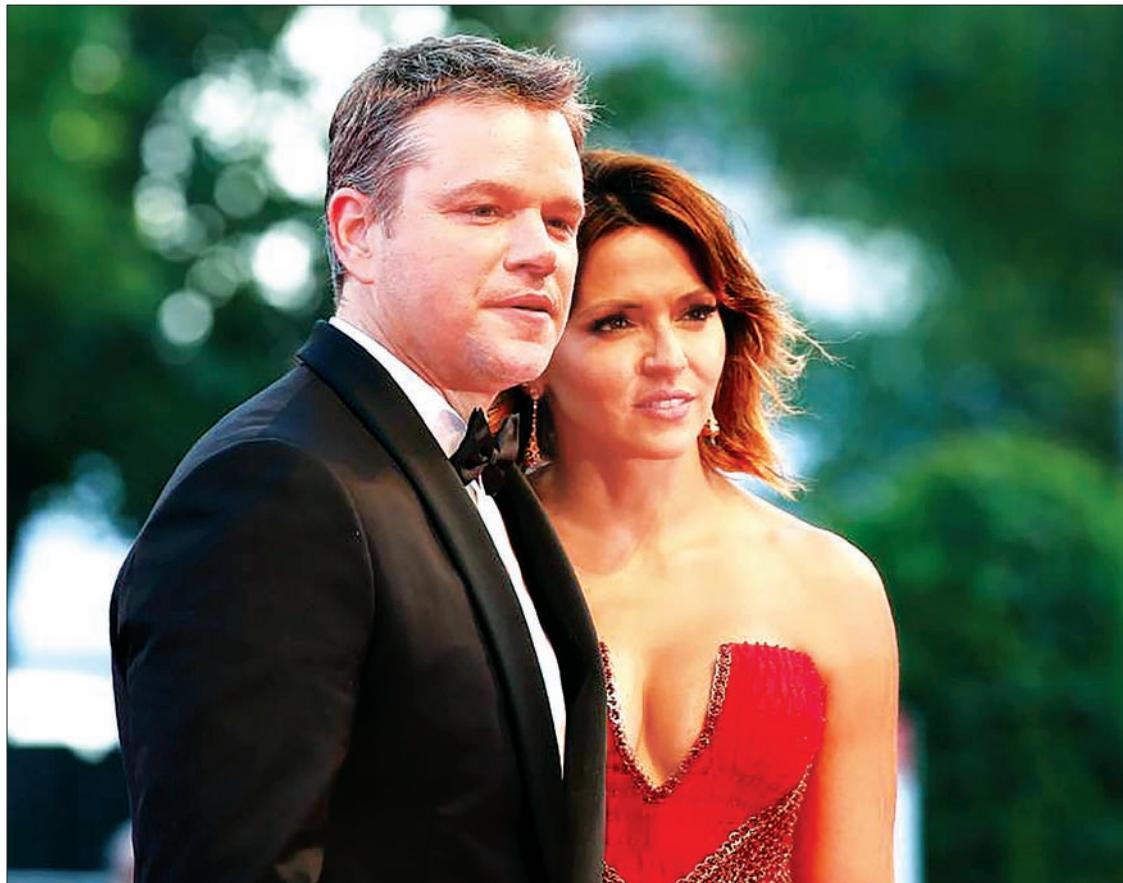
Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11:20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm to Claim’s Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the Vessel.

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Shrunken Matt Damon opens 74th Venice film festival



Actor Matt Damon and his wife Luciana pose during a red carpet for the movie "Downsizing" at the 74th Venice Film Festival in Venice, Italy, on 30 August 2017. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

VENICE — Alexander Payne's "Downsizing", a satire about shrinking humans to five inches tall as a solution to over-population and global warming, opened the Venice film festival on Wednesday.

It kicked off days of screenings, parties and red carpet glamor at the world's oldest film fest on the historic lagoon city's Lido island.

The movie, starring Matt Damon and Kristen Wiig, tells

the story of financially-strapped occupational therapist Paul Safranek and his wife Audrey who decide to be downsized — a process that is irreversible — so they can be part of the affluent "small community" where mon-

ey goes a lot further.

Safranek is attracted by the idea of starting over, leaving problems behind and doing one's bit for the planet in the process.

But unlike the noble intentions that drove scientists to find a way to fight global warming, most of the people who sign up for the irreversible procedure are lured by the promise of being able to multiply their possessions and afford luxuries — from villas to diamond necklaces — they could normally only dream of.

Soon Leisureland — the glass-covered downsized community where Safranek and his wife decide to move — turns into a micro version of today's society, where corruption, wealth-disparity and people like Dusan Mirkovic, a party boy and smuggler of counterfeit goods played by Christoph Waltz, thrive.

Damon said films were the best vehicle to help humans empathize with each other, adding that despite its apocalyptic tone, "Downsizing" ultimately is an optimistic movie.

"At the end of the day there is the sense that we are all in this together ... I feel that is a very hopeful message in what is a very divided world," the 46-year-old American actor told

journalists.

"Downsizing" is one of 21 US and international features vying for Venice's Golden Lion that will be awarded on 9 September.

The Venice festival is considered a launching pad for the film industry's award season, having premiered Academy Award winners in its last four editions.

While "Downsizing" is set in America, Payne brings in characters from across the world to show how something like this phenomenon "would ripple around the world", the director said.

This is a new foray for the Nebraska-born filmmaker, whose past features - including "Nebraska" and "About Schmidt" - primarily focused on America's Midwest.

"Payne tackled some really big issues that humans are facing right now and the message was really boiled down to just living the moment, respect each other," said Hollywood Reporter film critic Ariston Anderson.

All the while Payne created an environment "where everyone is just really uncomfortable", Anderson added. "I watched it with terror throughout, it felt like a horror in disguise." —Reuters ■

Tour insurers say Kanye West not cooperating with \$10 million claim

LOS ANGELES — Syndicates of Lloyd's of London insurance market filed a countersuit to Kanye West's claim that he was owed \$10 million (7.74 million pounds) after cancelling his tour last year, saying it found "substantial irregularities" in the rapper's medical history.

The counterclaim was filed in federal court in Los Angeles on Tuesday, saying West's Very Good Touring Inc had failed to cooperate in the insurance company's investigation into the claim for cancelled concerts, according to the court documents.

Without going into details, Lloyd's also noted that its policies exclude any losses caused directly or indirectly by the possession or use of illegal drugs, the impact of prescription drugs not used as prescribed, or the use of alcohol.

The court documents said

in order to protect West "from public disclosure of details of his private life," Lloyd's would not include specific information it had obtained in relation to the claim. Lloyd's did say the underwriters' investigation found "substantial irregularities in Mr. West's medical history."

West, 40, sued Lloyd's, an insurance market housing more than 80 syndicates in London, for nearly \$10 million in insurance payouts after he abruptly cancelled his Saint Pablo tour in November 2016 with more than 20 shows left.

The musician's lawsuit, filed in early August, said he was hospitalized with a "serious, debilitating medical condition," following a week of no-shows, curtailed concerts and on-stage political rants.

West's lawsuit said Lloyd's had suggested "they may deny

coverage of the claim on the unsupported contention that use of marijuana by Kanye caused the medical condition."

In its countersuit, Lloyd's said West's company and other representatives "have delayed, hindered, stalled and or refused to provide information both relevant and necessary for Underwriters to complete their investigation of the claim."

"Underwriters are informed and believe, and thereon these same persons have wilfully concealed and or misrepresented relevant facts in an effort to thwart Underwriters' investigation," the counterclaim added.

West's lawyer, Howard E. King, said in a statement on Wednesday that Lloyd's did not "want to honour a legitimate claim but can't find a factual basis to deny a claim." —Reuters ■

American Idol Texas auditions cancelled due to Hurricane Harvey

LOS ANGELES — Auditions for the singing reality TV show "American Idol" have been called off in wake of Hurricane Harvey.

The auditions were previously supposed to be held in Houston on 2 September and San Antonio on 4 September have been cancelled, citing safety of the people is of "the utmost importance" to the makers.

The announcement was made on the show's official Twitter account.

"In light of Hurricane Harvey and the devastation in Texas, the 'American Idol' bus will be cancelling the previously scheduled auditions in Houston on 2 September and San Antonio on 4 September.

"The safety of the community is of the utmost importance and our thoughts go out to all of those affected," the statement read.

The post further suggested that aspiring participants from Houston and San Antonio can turn up at upcoming auditions in Louisiana's Shreveport on 4 September and New Orleans on 14 September.

One can also submit their auditions online at americanidol.com.

Recently, music band Coldplay and singer Mary J Blige also pushed back the dates of their concerts in Houston, with Lady Antebellum completely shelving their show in the city.—PTI ■

Vivien Leigh's diaries recording Olivier romance up for auction

LOS ANGELES — Diaries and a ring tracing the love affair between “Gone with the Wind” star Vivien Leigh and Laurence Olivier are going up for auction in London next month, providing a glimpse into one of Hollywood’s most notorious relationships.

“Told Leigh,” wrote the British actress on 10 June 1937, recording the day she informed her husband, Leigh Holman, about the affair. “Left with Larry,” is the hasty entry six days later.

The diaries, which carry an estimated auction value of 2,000-3,000 pounds (\$2,587-\$3,880), form part of Leigh’s personal collection of jewelry, photos and paintings that is to be auctioned in London on 26 September, Sotheby’s said on Wednesday. Leigh also made notes about her screen tests for “Gone with the Wind” and the day in January 1939 when she finally started filming. She went on to win an Oscar for playing petulant Southern belle Scarlett O’Hara in the American Civil War classic.

Leigh and Olivier began their affair around

1936 when both were married to other people, according to Olivier’s previously published love letters.

Because of the scandal of adultery and divorce, they married in secret in California in August 1940 at a low-key ceremony. A silver goblet gift from Katharine Hepburn, one of only four guests recorded at the wedding, is included in the auction.

A ring, inscribed with the words “Laurence Olivier Vivien Leigh Eternally” is expected to sell for up to 600 pounds (\$776).

Leigh and Olivier remained married for 20 years before divorcing in 1960. Leigh died in 1967 and Olivier died in 1989.

Other auction highlights include Olivier’s annotated working copy of “Hamlet” from his 1948 film, a set of Leigh’s monogrammed luggage and a first edition of Ian Fleming’s first James Bond novel “Casino Royale,” valued at up to 9,000 pounds (\$11,640).

The collection is being sold following the death of Leigh’s only child, Suzanne Farrington, in 2015.—Reuters ■

China highlights importance of vocation schools

BEIJING — The Ministry of Education (MOE) Wednesday announced China now has a total of 12,300 vocational schools with over 26.8 million enrolled students, highlighting the importance of the education system.

Vocational schools nationwide have set up nearly 1,000 majors and 100,000 vocational training courses, recruiting an average of 9.3 million students each year, said Wang Jiping, an official with the MOE.

“China has established a vocational educa-

tion system with Chinese characteristics, offering skills training for nearly all areas of the national economy,” said Wang.

China has been highlighting the importance of vocational education in recent years, underlining its growing role in industrial upgrading, job creation and poverty alleviation.

In 2016, China’s central government allocated 92.7 billion yuan (about 14.1 billion US dollars) to local governments to support elementary and vocational education.—Xinhua ■

Revellers hurl tomatoes in Spanish festival amid higher security



Revellers play with tomato pulp during the annual Tomatina festival in Bunol near Valencia, Spain, on 30 August 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

BUNOL, (Spain) — More than 20,000 revellers threw 160 tonnes of over-ripe tomatoes at each other in Spain on Wednesday in an epic, annual food fight known as the “Tomatina”.

Amid higher security measures after the recent Islamist attacks in Catalonia, partygoers from Spain and abroad gathered for the messy battle in the

town of Bunol in eastern Spain, held every year on the last Wednesday of August.

Revellers crammed the narrow streets of Bunol to smear each other with squashed tomatoes.

Security at the event — including police and local safety personnel — was stepped up after militant attacks in Catalonia earlier

this month killed 16 people, the Civil Guard said.

Most of those were killed when a jihadist in a van mowed down crowds on Barcelona’s famous Las Ramblas boulevard.

Similar measures will be taken at many Spanish national festivals, a spokeswoman for the Civil Guard said.

“I’m not really that

worried,” said one Tomatina reveller, Tess Papadopoulos, from Australia. “There’s lots of security around so I feel really safe.”

The Tomatina is said to have originated from a spontaneous bust-up between locals in 1945, and has since drawn a huge following across the globe.—Reuters ■



Myanmar International Programme Schedule

(1-9-2017 07:00am ~2-9-2017 07:00am) MST

07:03	Am	News
07:25	Am	Welcome To Naga Land
07:57	Am	Dances of Myanmar (Bwe Traditional Dance)
08:03	Am	News
08:26	Am	Bago: A City Of Famous Historic Pagoda
08:48	Am	Designer Ya Tu
09:03	Am	News
09:26	Am	Applied Myanmar Traditional Martial Art (Part-2)
10:03	Am	News
10:27	Am	The Green Corner (Epi-20) E-waste Robot
10:35	Am	Htan Taw Drums (Part-I) "Osi"
10:48	Am	Myanmar Railways City Circular Train

(11:00 Am ~ 03:00 Pm)-

Thursday Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)

(03:00 Pm ~ 07:00 Pm)-

Today Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)

Prime Time

07:03	Pm	News
07:26	Pm	Wonderful Indonesia
07:53	Pm	Traffic Police
08:03	Pm	News
08:26	Pm	Orchidologist Dr. Saw Lwin
08:48	Pm	Myanmar Masterclass: Artist Win Pe

(09:00 Pm ~ 11:00 Pm)-

Today Repeat (09:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)

(11:00 Pm ~ 03:00 Am)-

Thursday 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 ranked seventh in 29th SEA games medal count

Myanmar earned a total of seven gold, 10 silver and 20 bronze medals in the 2017 Kuala Lumpur SEA Games, putting them in seventh place among the 11 countries for the most medals.

Myanmar participated in 29 sports in this year's SEA Games, winning gold medals in shooting, sepak takraw, chinlone and wushu.

The 2017 SEA Games, officially known as the 29th Southeast Asian Games, is an annual multi-sport competition that took place this year in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia from 19 to 30 August. There were a total of 404 events in 38 sports featured. Malaysia marked the end of the 29th SEA Games in spectacular fashion on Wednesday night with a grand closing ceremony at the Bukit Jalil Stadium, where the Games flag was passed to The Philippines, the hosts for the 2019 Games.—Kyaw Zin Lin ■



Myanmar Sepak takraw players seen with gold medals at the 29th Sea Games. **PHOTO: PUBLIC SPORTS & EDUCATIVE DEPARTMENT**

Myanmar team sent to 2017 Asian Indoor and Martial Arts Games

KyawZinLin

Myanmar will compete in the 2017 Asian Indoor and Martial Arts Games hosted in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan starting on 17 September.

The 2017 Asian Indoor and Martial Arts Games is also counted as the 5th Asian Indoor Games. The opening ceremony will be held on 17 September and the closing ceremony will be 10 days later at Olympic Stadium in Ashgabat.

The Ashgabat 2017 Mascot is called Wepaly – meaning loyal friend in Turkmen. He is an albai, a traditional Turkmen dog known as a beautiful and courageous animal.

All 45 member countries of the Olympic Council of Asia including Myanmar were invited to compete at the Games.

Myanmar has won three bronze medals at this competition and is ranked 25th among 43 nations for the total number of medals at previous Asian Indoor and Martial Arts Games.

The gold, silver and bronze medals to be awarded at this year's competition have been described as a lasting legacy of the event's true Turkmen-style hospitality. A total of 2,000 medals will be produced for this year's Games. ■

Liverpool sign Oxlade-Chamberlain, Klopp excited by his potential

LONDON — Liverpool boss Juergen Klopp believes Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain can finally reach his full potential after the 24-year-old sealed his move from Premier League rivals Arsenal on Thursday.

The deal, for a reported 40 million pounds, will give the Eng-

land international a chance to finally define a role for himself after six years in various positions for Arsenal.

"I hear a lot of talk about positions but let's talk about the player," Klopp told Liverpool's website. "He is someone with really good abilities who always

gives everything for his team. A player that is positive and willing to take risks to try and make positive things happen.

"Already he is a very good player and I think he has the mentality and desire to get even better - that excites me."

Oxlade-Chamberlain, the

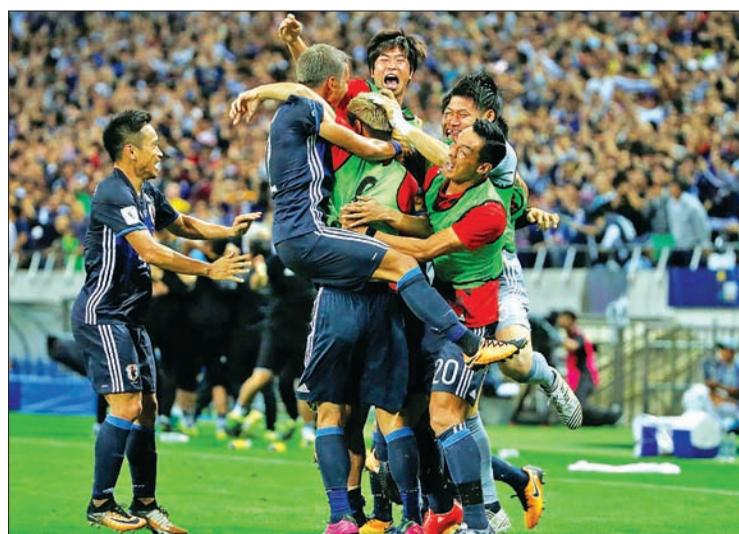
second England international to leave Arsenal in two days after left back Kieran Gibbs joined West Bromwich Albion on Wednesday, has said he prefers a central midfield role, although his best spells at Arsenal have seen him play on the right side of midfield. —Reuters ■

Japan book ticket to Russia with 2-0 win over Australia

TOKYO — Japan booked their place next year's World Cup final with an emphatic 2-0 win over Australia in Saitama on Thursday that took their Asian rivals' hopes of qualifying for Russia out of their own hands.

Takuma Osano scored four minutes before the break and 21-year-old midfielder Yosuke Ideguchi covered himself in glory with a sumptuous finish in the 82nd minute as the Samurai Blue sealed a sixth straight appearance in the global showpiece.

Japan are now assured of finishing top of Group B in Asian qualifying before their final match away to second-placed Saudi Ara-



Japan's Ideguchi Yosuke (C) celebrates his goal with teammates during World Cup 2018 Qualifiers at Saitama Stadium 2002, Saitama Japan, on 31 August 2017. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

bia, a match that Australia will watch nervously.

Level with Saudi Arabia on 16 points but two in arrears on goal difference, the Socceroos will hope for a handsome win over Thailand in their final qualifier and for Japan to beat or hold the Saudis to a draw.

With Australia's final match in Melbourne on Tuesday scheduled first, Saudi Arabia will know exactly what they need to do to snatch the second direct ticket to Russia when they take the field against Japan in Jeddah.

The third-placed team faces two playoffs to reach the finals, starting with the third-placed side

in the other Asian group.

Japan join Iran, Brazil and hosts Russia in the 32-team tournament, which will be held from June 14 to July 15 next year.

Vahid Halilhodzic's Japan inflicted Australia's first defeat of the final phase of qualifying while also ending their own winless streak against the Socceroos in World Cup qualifiers.

Australia lost captain Mile Jedinak to a groin injury in the lead-up and suffered a further blow with in-form midfielder Aaron Mooy a late withdrawal due to illness. But crushed coach Ange Postecoglou was not reaching for excuses.—Reuters ■