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Pyithu Hluttaw MP: let's fight against H1N1

MEMBERS of Parliament will discuss the latest outbreak of the H1N1 virus at the Pyithu Hluttaw, urging the Union Government to extensively carry out the battle against the virus, which has claimed six lives so far in the country.

U Thein Htun of Kyaung Kone Constituency submitted a motion yesterday to the Pyithu Hluttaw to raise awareness and to reduce the risk of fatality from the seasonal H1N1 influenza.

He said 50 patients have received treatment between 19 and 27 July for the disease that affects the respiratory system.

Thirty patients have been confirmed to have the H1N1 influenza virus. Six of them have died, a fairly high fatality rate, MPs said.

"Many people assume they have contracted a normal flu, as the symptoms with the influenza are quite similar and this is one of the causes of death as people receive late treatment from it. Knowledge sharing seminars are planned to be held in schools, hospitals, offices, factories, bus stops, train stations, ports and airports,



SEE PAGE-9 Nurses wearing masks are seen in Nay Pyi Taw. Two H1N1 patients are receiving medical care at a hospital in Nay Pyi Taw. **PHOTO: AUNG SHINE OO**

5,000 chickens with avian flu dead in Dawei Township

By Shin Min

ABOUT 5,000 chickens ranging in age from 3 to 12 months have died at a chicken farm in Wekyun Hteinthit quarter in Dawei township since 16 July due to an outbreak of the H5N1 virus, also known as avian or bird flu, according to the Yangon Animal Diseases Searching Laboratory.

The pathogenic animal deaths in the capital of the Tanintharyi Region due to the highly contagious Type A of the H5N1

virus, which affect both humans and animals, have prompted a ban on the sale of chickens and eggs in the area.

Dr. Ye Tun Win, director-general of Animal Husbandry and the Veterinary Department, said all facilities in the area, most of them operated out of residential backyards, have been cleaned, and monitoring of abnormal deaths will be ongoing.

"As regards the outbreak of H5N1, all chicken farming backyards had already been cleansed.

Checks and examinations are under way as to whether there has been a spread of the disease by disease control teams, with educative talks being held among the people. Systematic prevention works are being carried out as it spread quickly just after a person is infected with the disease. Selling chicken, chicken meat and egg is strictly prohibited in the area."

The Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Department sent samples of the disease to Aus-

tralian Animal Health Laboratory (AAHL) in Geelong, Australia in combination with the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the UN to learn about the specimens of the disease.

The Cabinet of Tanintharyi Region issued a news release on 26th July, in which the local people are advised not to consume chicken, ducks and their by-products and not to carry avian items from one place to another.

Dr Ye Tun Win said systematic procedures are in place to

control the disease.

"Cleansing measures had been carried out in the Dawei Chicken Farming on 22nd July. Out of 5 chicken farming businesses nearby, there are chickens in four businesses with no sign of infection. Those in the above four (businesses) were cleansed on the night of 27 July. For the disease not to spread, infectious chickens were burnt to death and buried in the 10-foot-deep holes.

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Pyithu Hluttaw

Pyithu Hluttaw calls for stepping up measures against illegal logging



U Ohn Win. PHOTO: MNA

A motion was passed for the Union Government to handle illegal logging and illegal timber trade with the full force of the law at the Pyithu Hluttaw yesterday.

U Maung Myint from Minkin Constituency said there is not enough cooperation between forestry officers and department officials to combat illegal logging across the border. He said members of political parties and high ranking officials should stay away from cases of illegal logging. He also said the public knows who are behind the illegal logging business in the country but they will be hesitant to report these cases if officials are involved in this.

U Ohn Win, Union Minister for Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation,



U Maung Myint. PHOTO: MNA

said a penalty of Ks 3 million is being included along with a prison sentence of 5 to 15 years in the amendment of the Forestry Law. He said officials at forestry departments are penalized according to the law if they are found to be slacking on the logging administration as this is viewed as abetting in illegal logging. During the financial years 2011-2012 to 2017-2018, around 1,111 forestry officials were charged with lawsuits. The Hluttaw approved the motion.

Finally, a motion for the draft bill for the Children (Guardianship and Custody) Act and a motion for the draft bill for the Burma Divorce Act were read and MPs interested in discussing the two motions registered their names. —Kyaw Thu Htet, Mhwa Kyu

Amyotha Hluttaw

2nd Amyotha Hluttaw 5th regular session 34th day meeting

2nd Amyotha Hluttaw 5th regular session 34th day meeting was held yesterday morning at Amyotha Hluttaw meeting hall.

First, U Khin Myo Win of Taninthayi Region constituency 12 raised a question on Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation delisting a mineral project area near Yadanapon Village, Bangla Village Tract, Bokeyyin Township. Union Minister for Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation U Ohn Win said the area in question is 700 yards away from the Yadanarpon Mineral Project and was already delisted in order to convert it into a village land. Furthermore, it is not in an area applied for small scale production of tin and tungsten. However, Pyigyimandaing Sub-township settlement and land records department is checking its records and a team consisting of the state government and the departmental officials will make a site visit. If the land is found to be in a mineral project area, it will be delisted from being a mineral project area in accordance with the regulation and in coordination with relevant union ministries and Taninthayi Region government added the Union Minister.

U Saw Moe Myint @ Samuel of Kayin State constituency 1 then raised a question on actions taken against companies who failed to provide the government share of gold production in Moehti Moemi Block A, Wahphyu South Block B and Lepyin Block D that contain gold deposits with high



U Saw Moe Myint @ Samuel. PHOTO: MNA

gold content percentage. Union Minister for Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation U Ohn Win said according to the agreement between No. 2 Mining Enterprise and National Development Company, up to 2016 December, government's production share amounted to 106.0157 viss (1 viss = 3.6 pounds) of pure gold. The company's security deposit of Ks 1 billion was converted to gold at the prevailing rate and recorded as 11.2612 viss of gold being provided to the government as production share. The company is also being informed to put up the security deposit within two months.

Furthermore, a group led by director of No. 2 Mining Enterprise took out a certain ratio of gold produced from Block A and provided to the enterprise as the government's production share totaling 10.0483 viss. According to the production sharing agreement, Shwe Moe Yan Company and Asia Kabar Myay Company had an outstanding gold payment



U Khin Myo Win. PHOTO: MNA

to government of 62.7536 viss and 25.6982 viss respectively up to 2016 December and arrangements are made to deduct Ks 1 billion each from the companies' security deposits. The ministry had sent management groups to collect the outstanding production share gold from Block B and D.

The ministry had sent management groups to the worksites in the three blocks to monitor the works. Meanwhile, the companies had submitted their difficulties and the ministry, taking into consideration other additional matters, was obtaining comments of Union Attorney General and Union Auditor General. At the same time, the ministry met repeatedly with the companies' officials to collect the outstanding gold, assessed the requirement to amend the agreement as proposed by the companies and submitted a report to the office of the President said the Union Minister.—Thura Zaw, Mi Mi Phyto (MNA) ■

SL Agritech targets expansion to India, Myanmar

MANILA — Philippine-based rice research company SL Agritech Corp. is looking to expand its operations to India and Myanmar, its chairman said Friday.

The company may invest around \$2 million to \$3 million in Myanmar and are already in talks with a potential partner from India, said Chairman Henry Lim Bon Liong.

The company plans to produce seeds that will be sold to farmers, and eventually sub-contract farmers to plant these for the sale of both their

seeds and their brand of rice, Doña Maria.

Lim Bon Liong is also working on a project to make farming "cool." He has found a partner in Kapamilya star and "Ang Probinsyano" lead actor Coco Martin.

"Over the years, farmers have been depicted as senior, matanda na, amoy lupa, bungi ngipin. Now we want to change the image of farmers," Lim Bon Liong told ABS-CBN News on the sidelines of the 25th Metro Manila Business Council.—ABS-CBN News ■

Telenor accepts application for October internship intake

Telenor Myanmar is accepting applications for a new batch of internship that will begin in early October this year. Interested students and graduates may submit their application via online by 31st August.

"Internship program is introduced as part of our efforts to empower Myanmar youths and strengthen their career development and employability. Our objective is to prepare interns to become industry-ready talents by leveraging their existing knowledge. So far we have accepted 26 young and enthusiastic candidates and we expect to accept

more in the future," said Goldie Shwe Yee Win Lei, Chief People Officer at Telenor Myanmar.

As part of introducing its internship program Telenor will also hold a series of awareness sessions at a few universities including Thanlyin and Hmawbi technological universities in August. Telenor will begin short-listing of potential candidates in September, and only shortlisted candidates will be contacted for interview. New interns will participate in a Telenor's three-day onboarding session before joining their respective workplace. For October intake Telenor expects

to recruit about 15 interns for its marketing and digital services, corporate social responsibility, technology, corporate communications and human resources teams.

Telenor accepted 13 students and graduates from government and private universities/colleges for May intake and they joined the company's technology, marketing and corporate social responsibility teams respectively. The interns were conferred internship completion certificates at the graduation ceremony held on 26 July at Telenor House in Yangon.—GNLM ■



Dead chicken are buried in Dawei. **PHOTO: KYS, ANIMAL HUSBANDRY AND VETERINARY DEPARTMENT.**

5,000 chickens with avian flu dead in Dawei Township

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After that, insecticide spraying was done. The test period is 90 days. After 90 days, if the virus was not found, it will be declared free from the disease. If the virus is found, another 90-day period will be designated again”.

Dr. Min Thein Maw, an official with the animal husbandry and veterinary department, said the type of avian flu found in Dawei affects both humans and birds.

“Avian flu is categorized into three groups — A, B and C. The A group is the virus type which easily infects both humans and animals. H5N1 was found to have spread to humans and chickens. According to statistics issued by the World Health Organisation (WHO) on 15th July, in 16 countries avian flu caused 859 flu patients, claiming 453 deaths, roughly half of the victims.”

In Myanmar, the first outbreak of A/H5N1 was in 2006, and eight other times since then. In all nine outbreaks, disease control was successfully managed under

the emergency protection and control project, according to the animal husbandry and veterinary department.

“The Central Committee for protection of avian flu was formed, with regional committees formed in their respective areas. By sending projects to be performed to these committees, measures were made to be carried out. As soon as the outbreaks happened in Dawei, the remaining regions and states are simultaneously examining whether there were similar outbreaks in their regions or not”, the director-general said.

The H5N1 outbreak comes as the H1N1 seasonal “swine flu” which has killed six people so far in Yangon and in remote Matupi in Chin state. The health ministry said at least 39 people have contracted the H1N1 virus.

The ministry has urged people to wear masks and wash their hands frequently as protective measures, especially during the rainy season, when influenza normally spreads in the country. ■

Myanmar Democracy Film Festival to feature five films

On the first day of the democracy film festival, 46 cinemas throughout Myanmar will show five films free of charge, accompanied by traditional anyenit (comedy) shows and dances, it was announced yesterday.

Dr Pe Myint, Union Minister for Information, gave an opening speech at the coordination meeting for the film festival in Yangon yesterday.

Afterwards U Myo Myint Maung, the Permanent Secretary of Ministry of Information, U Myint Htwe, the Director General of MRTV, U Maung Pe, the Director General of the Information and Public Relations Department, U Lu Min, Chairman of Myanmar Motion Picture Organisation, U Tin Oo Lay, Chairman of Myanmar Music Association, Daw Padamyar Kay Khine, representing the Chairman of Myanmar Writers and Journalists Association submitted reports



Dr Pe Myint, Union Minister for Information, gives an opening speech at the coordination meeting for the film festival in Yangon yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

for their responsible sectors.

The film festival will be held from 15 to 21 September. A sub-committee has been formed to handle the anyeint and dances, with the Union Minister for Information and Chairmen of the motion picture, music and journalists associations acting as patrons.

The five films that will be shown nationwide are “Naychi Mhar Shweyi Laung”, “Thara Sawhtee”, Demo Yakkwak”, “Tain Pyar thaw Nay” and “Kyi Myat thaw Myanmar”.

Prominent celebrities will also be entertaining in the dance and anyeints.—Myanmar News Agency ■

PRESS RELEASE

Appointment of Ambassador agreed

The Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has agreed to the appointment of Mr. Fernando Julio Antonio Quiros Campos as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Peru to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar. He will reside in Bangkok.

Mr. Fernando Julio Antonio Quiros Campos earned a

Bachelor of Law from Catholic University of Peru in 1983 and a Master's degree in International Relations from Graduate Institute of International Studies, Geneva, Switzerland in 1993. He joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Peru in 1986. Since then, he has served at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as well as

in Permanent Mission, Embassies and Consulate General in Geneva, Caracas, and Washington D.C., in various capacities. From 2017 to date, he has been serving as Ambassador of the Republic of Peru to the Kingdom of Thailand. Mr. Fernando is married, and has three children.—Myanmar News Agency ■

Appointment of Permanent Secretary

The Union Government has appointed Director-General U Tun Ohn, Department of Fine Arts, Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture, as the Permanent Secretary of the same ministry.—Myanmar News Agency

Appointment of Permanent Secretary

The Union Government has appointed Director-General U Chit Wai, Department of Information, Technology and Cyber Security, Ministry of Transport and Communications, as the Permanent Secretary of the same ministry.—Myanmar News Agency

More international real estate expos to be held

The first Bangkok housing expo held in Myanmar drew the attention of Myanmar buyers, prompting SQFT Global Properties to hold more international real estate exhibitions, according to a report in yesterday's Myawady Daily newspaper.

The events will feature real

property sectors in international countries which can attract public's interest, said Ma Hnin Ei Lwin, the country director of SQFT Global Properties.

Condominiums at Whizdom Connect Tower from the Whizdom 101 housing project was exhibited at the two-day Bangkok Housing Expo held

on 22-23 July in Myanmar. The Whizdom 101 housing project has been developed in a good surrounding area, including apartments and office buildings. Wealthy people from Myanmar travel regularly to Thailand to receive medical treatment and check-ups at hospitals, clinics and doctor's offices.—GNLM ■

Pomelo supply still too low to meet foreign demand

Local production of pomelo is still too low to meet demand from foreign countries, it was reported yesterday in the Myawady Daily newspaper.

Myanmar's pomelo has a foothold in the China market. Additionally, Brunei, Dubai and

Singapore have proposed to purchase pomelo from Myanmar. Pomelo is likely to penetrate more international markets if the quality of the citrus fruit goes up. There are over 3,000 acres of pomelo plantations in Myanmar, predominantly in

Mon State, and are also found in Kayin State, Bago, Yangon, Ayeyawady and Mandalay regions. However, some pomeloes are of substandard quality. Only about a third of pomelo produced are placed on the export market.—GNLM ■

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

Kyaw Myaing

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

Kyaw Zeya Win @ Phoe Khwar

COMPUTER TEAMTun Zaw (Chief of Computer Team),
Thein Ngwe, Zaw Zaw Aung,
Ye Naing Soe, Nyi Zaw Moe,
Hnin Pwint, Kay Khaing Win,
Sanda Hnin, Zu Zin Hnin**EDITORIAL SECTION**(+95) (01) 8604529,
Fax — (+95) (01) 8604305**CIRCULATION & DISTRIBUTION**San Lwin, (+95) (01) 8604532,
Hotline - 09 974424114**ADVERTISING & MARKETING**(+95) (01) 8604530,
Hotline - 09 974424848
marketing@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com
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Myanmar migrant workers sort shrimp at a wholesale market for shrimp and other seafood in Mahachai, in Samut Sakhon province, Thailand, July 4, 2017. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

Migrant worker agencies to be graded on adherence to labour standards

A committee will be formed to prevent abuses by and protect migrant workers against unscrupulous overseas employment agencies, according to the Myanmar Overseas Employment Agencies Federation.

Committee members will include a representative from the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population, an anti-trafficking police officer, a legal expert, a labour expert, a representative from overseas employment agencies, a migrant labour representative and an independent representative, said U Win Tun, the vice chairman of the Myanmar Overseas Employment Agencies Federation.

Overseas employment

agencies and the International Labour Organization participated in drafting a code of conduct to govern agencies. About 114 overseas employment agencies have ratified the code of conduct since its creation in August 2016.

The code is based on the legal framework for responsible business practices in Myanmar's apparel sector.

The federation plans to issue rankings of overseas employment agencies on 19 August.

"Our MOEAF will give grades to agencies according to the CoC," said U Win Tun. There are three sets of criteria to determine whether agencies are following labour rules and

regulations. While there is no plan yet to take legal action against scofflaws, those who fail to meet agreed standards will be made public and known to migrant workers for their protection.

"Overseas labour agencies need to act in a correct way and show transparency in dealing with workers and international employers," said U Win Shein, the director-general of the labour department under the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population at a 16 July overseas employment agencies meeting.

In 2016, 25,320 women and 56,306 men from Myanmar used overseas employment agencies.—May Thet Hnin ■

Yangon government earns over Ks8.6 million from restaurant fines

THE Internal Revenue Department has earned Ks8.6 million in fines in the first four months of this year from restaurants in Yangon Region that failed to put tax stamps on receipts, according to a report in the City News Daily yesterday.

The Internal Revenue Department has formed five teams which inspect the restaurants in every township in Yangon Region, posing as customers.

According to section 5 (B) of the commercial tax law and 40 (A) (3) of the commercial tax regulations, the restaurants have to collect the commercial tax on the bill from the consumers. Then, the restaurants have to affix tax stamps which are equal to 5 per cent of the commercial tax.

Restaurants that fail to attach the tax stamps will face a fine of Ks200,000 for the first offense, Ks500,000 for the second offense, Ks700,000 for the third offense and Ks1 million each for the fourth and subsequent offenses. The use of stamps to collect sales taxes from restaurants was conducted as a pilot project starting in 2014 in Yangon and was adopted across the country in 2015.—GNLM ■

Renovation of Mingun's ancient buildings to be conducted

THE Sagaing Region Archaeology and National Museum Department will renovate the ancient buildings in Mingun town this financial year, according to a report in the Myawady Daily yesterday. The regional government has allocated the budget for the renovation.

The renovation will begin this financial year, but it is not yet known how long the renovation process will take. Estimated cost of the whole project is Ks 30 million. "We will renovate the building with the assistance of local experts. Most of the tourists visit Mingun with an aim to observe the ancient buildings. We expect to attract more tourists by repairing those ancient sites", said an official from the Sagaing Region Archaeology and National Museum Department.—GNLM ■

India commercial committee approves Manipur-Myanmar highway upgrade

THE India commercial committee approved on 12 July to extend and upgrade the national highway from Imphal, India to the Myanmar border, according to a report from the ministry of commerce.

Estimated cost of the four-lane road is Rs16,302.9 million (Ks344,694.7 million). The Imphal-Moreh Road connects India and Myanmar. Through this part of the road, travellers can go to Bangkok, and then on to Indonesia and Malaysia. The road en-

ables connectivity to the nation in the region and beyond, said Mr. Nitin Gadkari, the minister for the India Road Transport, Water Transport and Highway.

The road will be very useful to the development of the north-east region of India. Upgrading of the road will create employment opportunities and a business boom in that area, particularly in Manipur, officials said.

The project is being implemented with the assistance

of the South Asian Sub-Regional Economic Cooperation (SASEC). The Imphal-Moreh corridor is also a part of Asian highway-1 and acts as India's gateway to the East. This project has created job opportunities for thousands of daily wagers.

Upon completion of the road, travelling time from Imphal, India to the Myanmar border will be reduced from three-and-a-half hours to one-and-a-half hours.—GNLM ■



Workers loading boats with bags of rice in Maungtau. PHOTO: YE HTUT

Maungtau border trade earns over US\$4 million

Trade through Maungtau border land point of entry between Myanmar and Bangladesh earned more than US\$4 million in the first half of this year.

Maungtau trade slowed due to conflicts and attacks in October 2016, but trade has since resumed.

The Maungtau checkpoint trade in the first half of the year consisted of 90 per cent exports and 10 per cent imports, said U Aung Myint Thein, the chairman of Maungtau Border Trade Merchants Association.

The main export items at Maungtau gate are ginger, pea-

nuts, mung bean, dried plums, garlic, rice from agriculture products, saltwater prawn and hilsa fish. Also exported are bamboo from forest products, blankets, candy, plum jam, footwear, and Tun Shwe Wah ointment.—A1 Soe, Myo Thu Hein ■

Japan's Hotel Okura to open first hotel in Myanmar in 2020

Japan's Hotel Okura Co. announced plans Friday to open a 390-room luxury hotel in Myanmar's commercial hub Yangon in 2020 and said it is keen to add three to five more in the country in the next five years.

It said the Okura Prestige Yangon will be situated within a large commercial complex to be built on the site of the former Defense Services Museum in downtown Yangon, a short walk from the Yangon Central Railway Station.

For the operation and management of hotel, Hotel Okura

expects to sign a contract in August with a local alliance comprising Fujita Corp., Tokyo Tatemono Co., Japan Overseas Infrastructure Investment Corp. for Transport & Urban Development and Yangon Technical & Trading Co., a subsidiary of Ayeyar Hinthar Holdings Co.

It said the hotel's inaugural Myanmar property is part of an ambitious undertaking to expand the group's global portfolio to 100 properties, primarily in Asia, by 2020.

Okura Nikko Hotel Management, a subsidiary of Hotel

Okura, currently has six properties in the pipeline in Southeast Asia, including the Okura Hotel & Resorts property in Yangon.

Also among them are three Okura Hotel & Resorts properties opening in Manila, Phnom Penh and Saigon in 2020, and two Nikko Hotels International properties opening in Bangkok in 2018 and in Vietnam's Haiphong in 2020.

It already operates 47 properties in Japan and 25 overseas, more than any other Japan-headquartered hotel operator.—Kyodo News ■

Catfish farming cooperative with Japan

A plan for a local short-headed catfish reproduction business is underway in cooperation with Japan, said U Tun Win Myint, head of the Yangon Region Fishery Department to Myawady Daily last Thursday.

"Experts from Japan will come to the hatchery station in Twantay Township to provide technical assistance", he said. Sample species of

short-headed catfish from Twantay Hatchery Station has already been sent to Japan for laboratory analysis concerning reproduction.

If the local hatchery business is successful, it will be a boon for fishery businessmen in Myanmar, officials said.

Short-headed catfish are rare in the market and can command a high price. In a

bid to have enough supply of short-headed catfish in the market, efforts are being exerted to bring about effective processes for reproduction.

Short-headed catfish are currently found in Ayeyawady delta regions. The catch volume is still low and a viss (1.6 kg) of short-headed catfish fetches over Ks10,000 in the market.—GNLM ■

Ride-hailing service Grab starts full operations in Myanmar

Southeast Asian ride-hailing giant Grab has begun full operations in Myanmar, launching localized apps with new safety and technology features after a four-month trial period.

Hooi Ling Tan, co-founder of Grab, said Myanmar has become the seventh country to be covered by its ride-hailing platform, the largest online transportation network in Southeast Asia.

Tan said the expansion of its technology and local partnerships is aimed at bringing improvements to users as well as supporting the government's efforts to upgrade transport infrastructure.

The Singapore-based firm launched its business operation in Yangon, Myanmar's commercial hub, in March.

More than 5,000 drivers in Myanmar have been registered in Grab's network.

Tan said the company's drivers have seen 30 percent growth in their average income during the trial period.

"We have seen positive and meaningful results, including improvements in taxi service standards and transport efficiency," she said.

The new service expansion in Yangon includes a care program for local drivers and a 24-hour customer call service as well as GrabVenue terminals at major shopping malls such as Junction City, a newly opened high-end shopping mall in Yangon.

The soon-to-open terminals will allow customers without a smartphone to access the service.

Founded in 2012, Grab started operation of its on-demand transportation and mobile payment platform in Malaysia and later expanded to Indonesia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

The operator says it has partnered with more than 1.1 million drivers in 65 cities across the seven countries.

The company has received several fund injections from some firms to accelerate its expansion in the region, including \$250 million channeled by Japan's Soft-Bank Group Corp. in 2014.

Grab said Monday that Soft-Bank and China's ride-hailing leader Didi Chuxing will invest up to \$2 billion in extra financing to strengthen its market position in the region.—Kyodo News ■

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သတင်းစာများကို ဤဆိုင်များတွင်ဝယ်ယူဖတ်ရှုနိုင်ပါပြီ

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

Ocean City Supercenter City Mart Supermarket

Australia to build superhighway for electric vehicles beside Great Barrier Reef

MELBOURNE — Australia is building a superhighway offering free charging stations in a bid to boost use of electric vehicles, the northeastern state of Queensland said on Thursday, most of its route fringed by the Great Barrier Reef tourist attraction.

The move comes as governments around the world regulate to cut emissions by boosting the use of electric vehicles.

Britain this week said it would ban the sale of new petrol and diesel cars from 2040, following France. The mayors of Paris, Madrid, Mexico City and Athens have said they plan to ban diesel vehicles from city centers by 2025.

Australia's new superhighway, an 1,800-km (1,118-mile) stretch of mostly coastal road alongside the Great Barrier Reef, will be supplied by renewable energy, State Minister Steven Miles said in a statement.

"This project is ambitious, but we want as many people as possible on board the electric vehicle revolution, as part of our



A tourist swims on the Great Barrier Reef in this undated file picture. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

transition to a low-emissions future," he added.

Eighteen towns and cities will make up the first phase of the superhighway, which will become operational in the next six months, making it possible to drive an electric vehicle from the

state's southern border to the far north, he added.

The road runs from Coolangatta on the border of neighbouring New South Wales to the city of Cairns, in Australia's far north.

Brisbane-based charging station maker Tritium will sup-

ply most of the project's charging stations, a spokeswoman for the state government said, with Schneider Electric supplying the rest. Tritium's commercial director, Paul Sernia, confirmed the company had supplied its products.

The government's early support for the project is a signal to the market that Queensland is serious about electric vehicles, said Behyad Jafari, chief executive of Australia's Electric Vehicle Council.

The step "provides certainty to unlock investment to grow our economy and create new, high skilled jobs," he added.

Australia's uptake of electric vehicles lags other nations, but is set to increase to around 12,000 by 2020 and about 1 million by 2030, Energy Minister Josh Frydenberg said in May.

Australia's management of the Great Barrier Reef has come under sustained criticism amid the biggest ever coral die-off as a result of the strongest El Nino in 20 years, a weather event scientists say is exacerbated by climate change.

More than two million people visit the reef each year, generating more than A\$2 billion (\$1.53 billion) in tourism dollars, an Australian government report showed in 2016.—Reuters ■

Thailand celebrates King Maha Vajiralongkorn's birthday

BANGKOK — Thailand marks King Maha Vajiralongkorn's 65 birthday on Friday with major religious ceremonies and public display of loyalty around the country.

Thai Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha and government officials gave alms to 651 Buddhist monks on Friday morning at the Royal Plaza in Bangkok.

Provincial halls around the country and Thai embassies around the world also host similar mass alms-offerings on Friday to mark King Vajiralongkorn's birthday, which has been made a public holiday for the first time this year. Government offices and private organisations have been hosting various events and religious ceremonies to celebrate King Vajiralongkorn's birthday since Wednesday.

The Thai government is officially in a year-long period of mourning following the death last October of King Bhumibol Adulyadej, Vajiralongkorn's father, which means government offi-



A portrait of Thai King Maha Vajiralongkorn is seen on a building on the eve of his 65th birthday in Bangkok, Thailand, on 27 July 2017. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

cials have to wear black clothes or official uniform.

But the government has instructed officials and members of the public to wear white clothes on Friday to celebrate King Vajiralongkorn's birthday.

The King's birthday has always been an important date in Thailand, a country where the monarchy is held in high regard

by vast majority of Thais.

The previous King Bhumibol, who ruled for seven decades and was widely regarded as the nation's moral compass, traditionally marked his birthday with a series of public appearances and delivered a speech to the nation which revealed his thoughts on current affairs of the country.—Reuters ■

Mongolia bans grain exports as hottest temperatures in 56 years cause drought

ULAANBAATAR — Mongolia has suspended grain exports with as much as a third of its farmland suffering from severe drought after temperatures last month rose to the highest in more than half a century, agricultural officials said.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Industry has banned grain exports as it prepares for a shortfall in the autumn harvest. Temperatures in Mongolia reached their highest level in 56 years in June, according to weather reports, threatening crop production.

"This summer is really dry," said Odbayar, a spokesman with the Information and Research Institute of Meteorology, Hydrology and Environment on Friday. "Central and eastern Mongolia are most affected."

Authorities are also dealing with wildfires in Mongolia's fragile steppe and desert environment. Earlier this month, thick acrid clouds blanketed the

capital Ulaanbaatar as winds blew smoke from the wildfires blazing in the north.

Officials are concerned the droughts will lead to crop failures that will leave the country's semi-nomadic herders with insufficient fodder to help sustain their animals through the country's notoriously long and cold winter.

Mongolia frequently experiences conditions known as the "dzud", where freezing temperatures and heavy snowfall results in the deaths of hundreds of thousands of livestock.

The country has made the expansion of its agriculture sector a major priority to shield its economy from swings in resource commodities prices.

The IMF agreed to a \$5.5 billion bailout with Mongolia earlier this year after a decline in copper and coal prices and falling demand from China sparked concerns that Mongolia would miss debt payment deadlines.—Reuters ■



People use a boat as they try to move to safer places along a flooded street in West Midnapore District, in the eastern state of West Bengal, India, on 27 July 2017. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

Floods kill 120 in India's Gujarat, with industry, cotton hit

AHMEDABAD, (India) — Widespread flooding in India's western industrial state of Gujarat has killed more than 120 people and paralyzed infrastructure, officials said on Friday, with tens of thousands of cotton farmers also suffering heavy damage.

Torrential monsoon rain and flooding in recent weeks have killed at least 300 people in western and eastern states, an official in the National Disaster Management Authority told Reuters in New Delhi.

"Our teams are working in different parts of India with soldiers to ease the situation," said Deepak Ghai, an emergen-

cy room control officer.

More than a million households had been affected and losses to farmlands were being assessed.

The airport in Ahmedabad, the main commercial hub of Gujarat, was partially flooded, forcing airlines to divert flights. More than 150 factories were forced to shut down, said A.R. Raval, a district administrator.

The floods have come at a particularly bad time for cotton farmers in Gujarat, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's home state.

Raval said more than 50,000 were struggling to drain water from their land and homes.

Recent downpours have hit cotton and millet in Gujarat and Rajasthan, where farm experts now fear pest infestations.

"Cotton and millet harvests are expected to suffer in about three districts each in Gujarat and Rajasthan, but the biggest worry is that the extra moisture could lead to pest attacks in these areas," Devinder Sharma, an independent farm expert, said.

Rains have been 4 per cent above average since the four-month monsoon season began in June, according to the state-run India Meteorological Department. —Reuters ■

Japan to slap emergency tariffs on US frozen beef from August

TOKYO — The Japanese government said Friday it will impose emergency tariffs on frozen beef, widely used in fast food, from the United States and other regions from August after soaring imports prompted by a price hike in Australian beef following a draught.

Japan will raise tariffs on the product from the current 38.5 per cent to 50 per cent until next March. It is the first time in 14 years Japan has taken the emergency measures on US beef imports, a decision likely to irk Washington.

Imported frozen beef is mainly used in foods such as hamburgers and beef-bowl dishes and could lead to increases in consumer prices.

Allowed under World Trade Organisation rules, Japan automatically introduces the so-called safeguard tariffs when imports grow more than 17 per cent in a quarter on a year-on-year basis.

Finance Minister Taro Aso told reporters the government is explaining the move to the United States and other countries.

Aso, who doubles as Japan's deputy prime minister, said he is ready to discuss the emergency measure, if requested, at a high-level economic dialogue with US Vice President Mike Pence being arranged for later this year.

Farm minister Yuji Yamamoto told reporters that



Japanese Finance Minister Taro Aso announces at the prime minister's office in Tokyo on July 28, 2017, that the government will impose emergency tariffs on frozen beef from the United States and other regions, raising the rate from the current 38.5 per cent to 50 per cent, starting in August, due to soaring shipments. **PHOTO: KYODO NEWS**

the effect of the measures on consumers should be "limited" as frozen beef targeted by the measure accounts for 20 per cent of the Japan's total beef imports.

Following the Japanese government's announcement, US Meat Export Federation President Philip Seng criticized the decision, saying in a statement, "The safeguard will not only have negative implications for US beef producers, but will also have a significant impact on the Japanese food-service industry." —Kyodo News ■

Gov't says 70% of land suitable for nuclear waste disposal

TOKYO — The Japanese government unveiled Friday a map indicating potential deep-underground disposal sites for high-level radioactive nuclear waste, identifying some 70 per cent of the country's land as suitable.

Based on the map, the government is expected to ask multiple municipalities to accept researchers looking into whether those areas can host sites to dispose of waste left by nuclear power generation. But the process promises to be both difficult and complicated amid public concerns over nuclear safety following the 2011 Fukushima nuclear disaster.

The nationwide map showed

that up to 900 municipalities, or half of the country total, encompass coastal areas deemed "favorable." Areas near active faults, volcanoes and potential drilling sites such as around oil fields are considered unsuitable.

For permanent disposal, high-level radioactive waste, produced as a result of the process of extracting uranium and plutonium from spent fuel, must be stored more than 300 meters underground so that it cannot impact human lives or the environment.

The government will store them for tens to hundreds of thousands of years until the waste's radioactivity decreases.

The map, illustrated in four different colours based on levels of the suitability of geological conditions, was posted on the website of the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry.

Energy minister Hiroshige Seko said Friday that the unveiling of the colored map is an "extremely important step toward the realization of the final disposal but also the first step of a long road."

Taking the map as an opportunity, "we hope to have communications (with municipalities) nationwide and earn the understanding of the public," he said.

"It scientifically and objectively shows nationwide condi-

tions, but it is not something with which we will seek municipalities' decisions on whether to accept a disposal site," Seko said.

Areas near active faults, volcanoes and oil fields which are potential drilling sites are deemed unsuitable because of "presumed unfavorable characteristics" and coloured in orange and silver.

Areas other than those are classified as possessing "relatively high potential" and colored in light green.

Among the potential areas, zones within 20 kilometres of a coastline, around 30 per cent of total land, are deemed especially favorable in terms of waste transportation and colored in green.

The map has also colored as suitable a part of Fukushima Prefecture, where reconstruction efforts are underway from the 2011 massive earthquake and tsunami that led to the Fukushima nuclear plant disaster.

But Seko said the government has no plans at this stage to burden the prefecture additionally with the issue of disposal of high-level radioactive waste.

The minister also indicated that Aomori Prefecture in north-eastern Japan, home to a facility to reprocess nuclear fuel, is exempt as the prefectural government and state have agreed not to construct a nuclear waste disposal facility there. —Kyodo News ■

Upgrading of finance services in Myanmar

By Khin Maung Oo

Now, the country needs local and foreign investments so as to increase the momentum of national development. Especially, we need an influx of foreign investment with many capacities—modern technology, experiences and skills in management and large amounts of capitals to be invested in the country. In persuading foreign investors to enter the nation, especially finance services including banking and insurance services it is important to give authority in accordance with international standards.

A brief look at our recent history reveals that the nation's financial sector

still has needs and shortcomings compared to international standards. So as to be able to fulfill these necessities, the Union Government is performing the necessary tasks for sustainable development by taking financial assistance from international organizations such as the World Bank and Asian Development Bank. Though, presently, there are bank branches opened in the country by 13 foreign banks, those banks have only limited authority to take part in the internal banking services. Until now, foreign banks have the right to give banking services to foreign entrepreneurs only, in Myanmar.

Yet, it has been learnt that arrange-

ments are being made to allow foreign banks to offer project loans to local entrepreneurs as well. I hereby express my heart-felt welcome to the above mentioned arrangement of the Central Bank, assuming that it can become a driving force for the acquisition of foreign direct investment which is of great need for the country.

Here, I would like to highlight the country's need of FDI. SMEs, backbones of the nation's industrial economy are making their concerted efforts to vie with other ASEAN countries, with the increasing activities of (ASEAN Economic Community—AEC). In such a situation, foreign investment is of vital

need for local entrepreneurs. For the fulfillment of this vital need, we must implement in every way till we achieve success.

Under the current situation, it was welcome news to have heard that the American Economic Delegation has met with the Myanmar Investment Commission (MIC) to discuss making investments in Myanmar. It has been learnt that the AED is composed of entrepreneurs on financial services including banking and insurance services. I humbly present my opinions that the discussions between MIC and AED will support the upgrading of financial services in Myanmar. ■

We all must work together for the Internal Peace

By Tommy Pauk

WE want to ensure that internal peace is restored firmly. That is the ardent aspiration of the entire people in Myanmar. Therefore, we must strive hard for internal peace in unison. The people of all national races of Myanmar love to live and work in their native country called the Union of Myanmar. We, the entire people of Myanmar must cooperate with the government to solve the problem effectively and seriously. We do not ignore the lives of IDPs. Myanmar people raise funds for IDP and encourage the nationwide ceasefire agreement constantly. The IDPs of Rakhine, Shan, Kachin are our national brethren living together in the same country. We all must find the solution for the armed conflicts and help them escape from suffering miserable lives within the country. The word "we", represents the government, Myanmar Army, some ethnic armed organizations and all the national races indeed. The internally displaced persons are the victims of the civil war. They suffer the evil of armed conflicts miserably. This issue has been existing in Myanmar for decades. The British colonialists had alienated among the national brethren during the British colony. Even after Myanmar regained own independence, the misunderstanding and estrangement between Bamar and some other national races remain embedded. IDPs are still in trouble for seeking safety and stable livelihood for themselves even in their States.

Actually, they have not been protected by the specific ethnic armed organizations. No organizations can

guarantee or safeguard the lives of IDPs beyond the conflict zones practically. Therefore, the defenseless IDPs move to the safe haven in the forests or in the remote areas or border areas but it is very hard for them to find food and clean water for daily consumption. They encounter difficult situation for their survival hopelessly. Their children have to accompany or flee with them, losing access to education and health care elsewhere. In fact, the gun fighting, combat and warfare are taking places within the territory of the Union of Myanmar which is composed with diverse ethnic groups. All the soldiers engaged in gun-fighting are national brethren and we should not be proud or happy of winning some battle over other ethnic armed organizations

The internally displaced persons are the victims of the civil war. They suffer the evil of armed conflicts miserably. This issue has been existing in Myanmar for decades. The British colonialists had alienated among the national brethren during the British colony.

or Myanmar army. The innocent ethnic people are on the brink of abysmal man-made disaster horrendously. Some have been totally victimized of the six-decade-long civil war in Myanmar. The innocent people in the conflict zone are scarred by civil war. The trauma of IDPs must be treated with warmth, love and kindness while establishing the prevalence of nationwide peace.

They are spending their life as refugees or victims of the civil war in Myanmar although Myanmar is being an independent nation recognized by UN and other nations around the world. Because of the civil war, some ethnic people cannot enjoy the taste or fruit of own independence. The IDPs and peace-loving local people hate to hear the lip services of permanent nationwide ceasefire agreement. In other words, the leaders of all national brethren must not pay lip service for nationwide ceasefire agreement. That is our hearty aspiration for ending the six-decade-long civil war. They practically want to see or enjoy the true peace on a permanent basis among the 135 national races. We wish all ethnic people in Myanmar to be able to live in their states with enduring peace and harmony with all national brethren. We are not enemies, but we are the members of the same family living in Myanmar. The armed conflict should not exist as an insoluble issue indeed. If we maintain honesty, mutual respect, mutual understanding, cordiality, trust, sincerity, unity among the 135 national races, the armed conflicts will never arise by any means. The already-signed NWC document agreement must be implemented or utilized or complied as immediate as possible. Myanmar has already been on

the track of democratic endeavors and building democratic state. All the citizens of Myanmar can enjoy human rights equally among any other nationals home and abroad.

Our prime concern is to save the innocent IDPs in the civil war in Myanmar. We all are responsible for rehabilitating and saving the lives of IDPs and their settlement in the habitable places in Myanmar. Their fears and insecurities should have been vanished as quickly as possible.

Our prime concern is to save the innocent IDPs in the civil war in Myanmar. We all are responsible for rehabilitating and saving the lives of IDPs and their settlement in the habitable places in Myanmar. Their fears and insecurities should have been vanished as quickly as possible. We all hope for the genuine peaceful settlement in successful way. Let's work together for ensuring Internal Peace with harmony, equity and unity. We firmly believe that when we attain internal peace, there will be no more IDPs in Myanmar. ■

Myanmar Gazette

1. The President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has transferred Dr Khaing Mye, Director-General of the Department of Alternative Education under the Ministry of Education as Director-General of Alternative Education and Life Long Learning Department from the date he assumes charge of his duties.
2. The President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has appointed Dr Thar Tun Kyaw, Head of Yangon Region Health Department, the Ministry of Health and Sports as Director-General of the Department of the Public Health, on probation from the date he assumes charge of his duties.

Villager killed in Buthidaung Township

A man in Pho Khaung Chaung village was attacked and killed by a suspected terrorist armed with a knife on 27 July in Buthidaung Township.

Harr Chine was asleep at

home when he was attacked. He was pronounced dead at the scene. An investigation into the killing has been launched by Nyaung Chaung police.—Myanmar News Agency ■

Five detained in Maungtaw for not included in household list

Security forces arrested five in Maungtaw on 27th July for living without household certificate. While patrolling Kappa Kaung Village, Maungtaw Township on the morning of 27 July, the

security forces scrutinized them. The five, including Mar Mark Dula in Kan Tat village are detained at the police station for further investigation.—Myanmar News Agency ■

Pyithu Hluttaw MP: let's fight against H1N1

FROM PAGE-1

as they have a large number of civilians passing through them”, said MP U Thein Htun in his motion to Pyithu Hluttaw.

One concern is that neighbouring India reports they had 12,460 cases of H1N1 influenza up till 17 July and 600 people have died from it. The motion urged health checks at ports and airports to people coming from India as well as Thailand.

The Ministry of Health and Sports issued a statement yesterday, stating that more people were confirmed to have contracted the H1N1 virus.

“The Ministry of Health and Sports is monitoring and carrying out prevention and control of the infection of H1N1 virus and

12 more patients suspected of have contracted with H1N1 are found from 2 pm on 27th July and 2 pm on 28th July. But, no more patients have died from the infection,” said the statement.

The statement also said that 10 patients receiving treatment for H1N1 at Matupi People's Hospital were discharged from the hospital on 25th July after they recovered from the illness. The ministry will use laboratory testing and medicines including Tamiflu to be provided the World Health Organization and India.

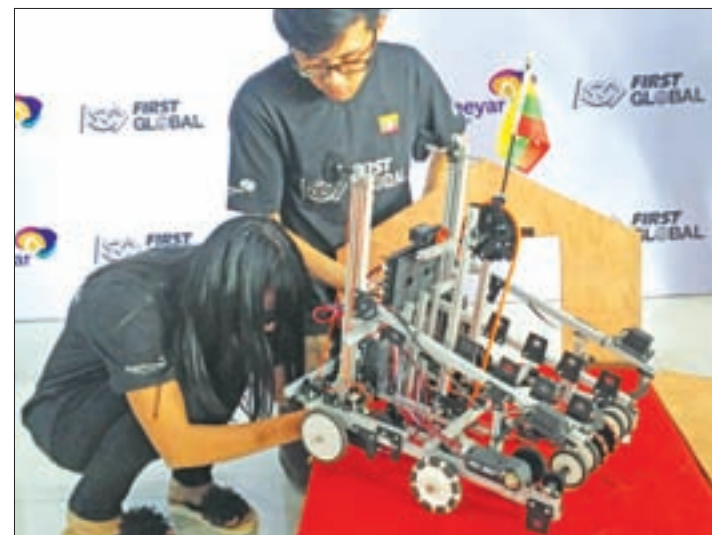
The next meeting of the Pyithu Hluttaw will be on Monday, at which the H1N1 outbreak will be discussed. — GNLM ■

Myanmar team ranked 6th out of 163 teams at World's first international robotics Olympics in USA

A team of 7 highly talented students represented Myanmar and achieved a ranking of 6 out of the 163 teams at FIRST Global Robotics Olympics, the world's first international robotics competition. The three-day long competition took place at Constitution Hall in Washington, D.C., USA from 16 July to 18 July 2017, with over 100 countries from 6 continents.

Prior to the competition, Phandeeyar: Myanmar Innovation Lab with support from USAID organized a team of high school and university students (aged between 15 to 18 years old) from a pool of over 50 promising applicants, to represent Myanmar in the FIRST Global Robotics Olympics. Using the materials given from FIRST Global, the team built and innovated the robot through coaching and support from Phandeeyar: Myanmar Innovation Lab.

Mr. Jes Kaliebe Petersen, CEO of PHandeeyar: Myanmar Innovation Lab said: “Myanmar youth has extraordinary talent when it comes to technology and innovation. Achieving a top 10 ranking in technology at a global stage is truly inspiring for all of Myanmar. We hope that this



Two members of Myanmar team participates in the Global Robotics Olympics. **PHOTO: SUPPLIED**

story will continue to inspire many more young people to use STEM skills- Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics- to build the solutions for the future of Myanmar”.

Mr. Scot Marciel, U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar said: “This competition provides an environment where young, innovative thinkers can develop and fortify their ideas. The U.S. government is proud to have supported this team and the next generation of thought leaders who will set the stage and pave the way for a peaceful

and prosperous Myanmar”.

The FIRST Global Myanmar team included a roster of talented engineering students from high schools and universities: Phone Thiha Kyaw (Yangon Technological University, Inn Sein), Wai Yan Aung (Yangon Technological University, Inn Sein), Kyaw Za Aw (ILBC), Yuzana Win (University of Information Technology), May Pyae Sone Kyaw (University of Information Technology), Wai Yan Htun (Bursa Orhangazi Universitesi, Turkey), Tun Htut Aye (University of Computer Studies).—GNLM ■

C-in-C Office (Army, Navy, Air) family plant trees

Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing attended the second monsoon tree planting event of Commander-in-Chief Office (Army, Navy, Air) family held yesterday morning near Yezin Dam, Zeyathiri Township, Nay Pyi Taw.

At the event, the Senior General said since 2011 we planted trees near Yezin Dam and within the seven years period, more than 100,000 trees were planted.

Next, Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and wife planted teaks as Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Soe Win, union ministers and wives, high ranking Tatmadaw officers and wives of Commander-in-Chief



Family members of the Tatmadaw plant trees. **PHOTO: MNA**

office, event attendees planted tree saplings in designated places.

8,000 teak saplings were planted in the Commander-in-Chief Office (Army, Navy, Air) families' second monsoon tree planting event for 2017.

Commander-in-Chief Office (Army, Navy, Air) families had conducted twenty monsoon tree planting events starting from 2011 and had planted more than 100,950 trees that includes teak, padauk, pyinkado etc.—MNA ■

Invitation to young writers for Sunday section

The Global New Light of Myanmar is accepting submissions of poetry, opinion, articles, essays and short stories from young people for its weekly Sunday Next Generation Platform. Interested candidates can send their works to the **Global New Light of Myanmar** at No. 150, Nga Htat Kyee Pagoda Road, Bahan Township, Yangon or by email to dce@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com with the following information: (1) Sector you wish to be included in (poetry, opinion, etc.), (2) Real name and (if different) your penname, (3) Your level of education, (4) Name of your School/College/University, (5) A written note of declaration that the submitted piece is your original work and has not been submitted to any other news or magazine publishing houses, (6) A color photo of the submitter, (7) Copy of your NRC card, (8) Contact information (email address, mobile number, etc.).— Editorial Department, The Global New Light of Myanmar news office



Simorgh rocket is launched and tested at the Imam Khomeini Space Centre, Iran, in this handout photo released by Tasnim News Agency, on 27 July 2017. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

WORLD BRIEFS

Pakistan PM Sharif resigns after top court disqualifies him: statement

ISLAMABAD — Pakistan's Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif resigned from office Friday after the country's apex court disqualified him for being dishonest to parliament regarding his wealthy family's acquisition of overseas assets.

In a statement, a spokesman for Sharif's political party also voiced reservations about the Supreme Court's decision, but said he and his party are confident he will eventually "triumph" in the court of public opinion, in an apparent suggestion that the three-time prime minister may again stand for election. —Kyodo News ■

Trial of two women suspects involved in death of DPRK man to start October in Malaysia

SHAH ALAM, (Malaysia) — A Malaysian court decided on Friday that the trial of two women suspects, who were arrested following the death of a Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) man in February, will begin in October. Shah Alam high court judge Azmi Ariffin set more than 20 days for the trial starting from 2 October till the end of November.

The two female suspects, Siti Aisyah from Indonesia and Doan Thi Huong from Viet Nam, appeared in the court on Friday following previous appearances in lower courts. The defence lawyers said they received the surveillance footage at the airport during the incident from the police on Friday. —Xinhua ■

Russia orders US to cut diplomatic staff, says to seize diplomatic property

MOSCOW — Russia ordered the United States to cut its diplomatic staff by 1 September and said it was seizing a dacha compound and warehouse used by US diplomats in retaliation for new US sanctions against Moscow. Russia's retaliation, outlined in a statement from the Foreign Ministry, came a day after the US Senate voted to slap new sanctions on Russia, putting President Donald Trump in a tough position by forcing him to take a hard line on Moscow or veto the legislation and anger his own Republican Party. —Reuters ■

US says Iran rocket test breaches UN resolution

DUBAI/WASHINGTON — Iran successfully tested a rocket that can deliver satellites into orbit, state television reported on Thursday, an action the United States said breaches a UN Security Council resolution because of its potential use in ballistic missile development.

Iranian state television showed footage of the firing of the rocket, mounted on a launchpad carrying pictures of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, founder of the Islamic Republic, and Supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

The rocket launch violated United Nations Security Council Resolution 2231, State Department spokeswoman Heather Nauert said on Thursday.

That resolution, which endorsed a 2015 nuclear deal between Iran and world powers, calls upon Iran not to undertake activities related to ballistic missiles capable of delivering nuclear weapons, including launches using such technology. It stops

short of explicitly barring such activity.

"We would consider that a violation of UNSCR 2231," Nauert said at a briefing with reporters when asked about the launch. "We consider that to be continued ballistic missile development. ... We believe that what happened overnight, in the early morning hours here in Washington, is inconsistent with the Security Council resolutions."

Tehran denies it has missiles designed to carry nuclear warheads.

"The Imam Khomeini Space Centre was officially opened with the successful test of the Simorgh (Phoenix) space launch vehicle," state television said. "The Simorgh can place a satellite weighing up to 250 kg (550 pounds) in an orbit of 500 km (311 miles)."

"The Imam Khomeini Space Centre ... is a large complex that includes all stages of the preparation, launch, control and guidance of satellites," state televi-

sion added.

The United States this month slapped new economic sanctions on Iran over its ballistic missile programme, and said Tehran's "malign activities" in the Middle East had undercut any "positive contributions" from the 2015 accord curbing its nuclear programme.

President Donald Trump, who this month reluctantly recertified Iran's compliance with the nuclear deal, told the Wall Street Journal in an interview published this week that the United States had been "extremely nice" to Iran by saying it was complying with the terms of the deal.

Trump said he thinks the United States will declare Iran to be noncompliant at the next deadline, which is in October. "They don't comply," he told the Journal. "I would be surprised if they were in compliance."

Nauert on Thursday called Iran's rocket launch a "provocative action" that violated the "spirit" of the nuclear deal.

Iran says its space program is peaceful, but Western experts suspect it may be a cover for developing military missile technologies.

On Monday, Scott Kripowicz of the directorate for international affairs at the Pentagon's Missile Defence Agency told a conference in Israel: "Space-launch activities which involve multi-stage systems that further the development of technologies for intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBM) are becoming a more realistic threat."

"In this region, Iran has successfully orbited small satellites and announced plans to orbit a larger satellite using the Simorgh space-launch vehicle, which could be configured to be an ICBM," Kripowicz said.

"Progress in Iran's space programme could shorten the pathway to an ICBM, as space-launch vehicles use similar technologies, with the exception of their payloads," he added. —Reuters ■

WHO calls for 'commitment to action' in eliminating hepatitis

GENEVA — On the eve of World Hepatitis Day 2017, the World Health Organization (WHO) urged countries on Thursday to turn their commitment into action, by accelerating efforts and increasing investments to eliminate hepatitis.

Viral hepatitis caused 1.34 million deaths in 2015, close to the

number of tuberculosis deaths and exceeding deaths linked to HIV, the WHO said. Viral hepatitis affected 325 million people worldwide in 2015, with 257 million living with hepatitis B and 71 million living with hepatitis C, the two main killers of the five types of hepatitis. New WHO data show that more than 86 per cent

of countries have set national hepatitis elimination targets, and more than 70 per cent have begun to develop national hepatitis plans to enable access to effective prevention, diagnosis, treatment and care services. Despite the momentum gained towards hepatitis elimination, the WHO is calling on countries to continue

to increased services.

"There is simply no reason why many millions of people still have not been tested for hepatitis and cannot access the treatment for which they are in dire need," said Dr. Gottfried Hirnschall, WHO's director of the HIV/AIDS department and global hepatitis programme. —Xinhua ■

Hillary Clinton releases tell-all book about her 2016 presidential election defeat

NEW YORK — Hillary Clinton, the former Democratic presidential nominee, is releasing a book titled “What Happened” in which she opens up on her stunning 2016 election defeat to her Republican rival Donald Trump.

The book, to be published by Simon & Schuster in September, will explain how the former secretary of state came up short again in her fight for the White House.

“Writing ‘What Happened’ was hard, so is what we see every day. As we move forward & fight back, I hope this helps,” Clinton posted on her Twitter account on Thursday with a link to the book’s page at amazon.com.

“In the past, for reasons I try to explain, I’ve often felt I had to be careful in public, like I was up on a wire without a net. Now I’m letting my guard down,” Clinton writes in the introduction of What Happened.

“This is her most personal memoir yet,” said Simon & Schuster on its Web page for the book in which for the first time Clinton reveals “what she was thinking and feeling during one of the most controversial and unpredictable presidential



File photo taken on 9 November 2016 shows that US Democratic presidential nominee Hillary Clinton arrives for her first public concession speech after losing the presidential election to the Republican candidate in New York, the United States. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

elections in history.”

“Now free from the constraints of running, Hillary takes you inside the intense personal experience of becoming the first

woman nominated for president by a major party in an election marked by rage, sexism, exhilarating highs and infuriating lows, stranger-than-fiction twists, Rus-

sian interference, and an opponent who broke all the rules,” the publisher said.

The book describes “what it was like to run against Donald

Trump, the mistakes she made, how she has coped with a shocking and devastating loss, and how she found the strength to pick herself back up afterward,” it added.

Twitter users were quick to offer their thoughts about the book, with some saying that they “cannot wait” to read it.

“...Filled with fun Russian info!! Can’t wait,” tweeted sarah.siskin.

“What Happened to Hillary is proof that this country is still anti-woman, and sadly – not very smart,” @AssKickinLibMom said.

But others simply mocked its title and Clinton herself.

“Hillary Clinton’s new book ‘What Happened?’ isn’t even out yet, and it’s already been marked down to 20%. Like Unranium she sold to Russia,” said @ScottPresier in a tweet.

“Hillary’s upcoming book is called ‘What Happened?’ I can write the book for you in 3 words: The American People,” said @ScottPresier in another tweet.

“...Maybe #Hillary is Dead Broke again ... Thought I’d save the Reader a little money,” said @LVNancy.— Xinhua ■

Qatar seeks options at United Nations to overcome Gulf rift

UNITED NATIONS — Qatar’s foreign minister on Thursday accused Arab states of violating international law in their boycott of the country and described the United Nations as the “right place” for Doha to seek options to overcome measures imposed against it.

Saudi Arabia, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Bahrain severed relations with Qatar on 5 June, accusing the major gas-exporting Gulf state of financing terrorism and cozying up to their arch-rival Iran. Doha denies the charges.

The four states have cut air and sea links with Qatar and sanctioned dozens of groups and individuals. The United Arab Emirates said on Saturday that Doha needed to change its policies before a dialogue could take place. “The entire campaign represents a series of violations of international law,” Qatar Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani told reporters after meeting with UN Secretary-General Antonio Gu-

terres. “The state of Qatar is not going to spare any effort in order to overcome those violations and try to solve it through the right channels. The United Nations is the right platform to start from,” he said without giving further details. UAE Ambassador to the United Nations Lana Nusseibeh said the measures taken were “entirely legal, justified and proportionate” and accused Qatar of grave violations.

“We hope to see a diplomatic solution at the regional level through genuine engagement from their side,” she told Reuters, adding that the United Nations has an important role to play in countering terrorism and that the countries would keep Guterres and the Security Council updated.

In June, Qatar asked the Montreal-based UN aviation agency to intervene after its Gulf neighbours closed their airspace to Qatar flights. While Egypt last week accused Qatar of adopting a “pro-terrorist” policy that violated UN Security Council resolutions and described it as “shame-



Qatar’s Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman al-Thani attends a joint news conference with French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian in Doha, Qatar, on 15 July 2017. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

ful,” that the 15-member body has not held Qatar accountable.

Any push to impose UN sanctions would likely be difficult as it needs either consensus approval behind closed doors by the Security Council or a vote on a resolution, which would need nine votes in favour and no vetoes. Efforts by Kuwait to mediate in the dispute have so far yielded little progress.

The boycotting countries want Qatar to cut back ties with Iran, close a Turkish military base in Qatar and shut the Al Jazeera TV channel. “We want to solve this issue by dialogue and we are not willing to escalate and they need to retreat from all their legal actions,” said Al-Thani, who also met with US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson in Washington on Wednesday.—Reuters ■

51 militants killed in Afghan forces’ clearance operations

KABUL — About 51 armed militants were killed and 46 others wounded during a series of operations launched by Afghan forces over the past 24 hours, Afghan Defence Ministry said Friday. “Some 26 planned clearance and military operations, including 10 special operations, were launched, pounding several enemy’s hideouts during the past 24 hours,” the ministry said in a statement.

A local Taliban leader named Dadullah known as Qari Assadullah was among the dead, according to the statement.

The raids were conducted in 16 of the country’s 34 provinces. “The Afghan air force had also taken part in the mop-up operations, launching 110 flights, including several supportive flights and airstrikes on two hideouts of the militants during the above raids,” the statement added.—Xinhua ■

Germany, steering clear of diesel bans, plans city transport fund

BERLIN — Germany's transport minister announced plans on Thursday for a fund to help cities modernize their transport systems and reduce pollution, but said it was too soon to bury the internal combustion engine.

Speaking a day after Britain said it would ban the sale of new petrol and diesel cars from 2040, Alexander Dobrindt said the fund would provide hundreds of millions of euros and would help cities to optimize traffic flows.

However, he did not say when the fund would be set up, and added it was not productive at this stage to talk of "burying the combustion engine".

Germany is home to three of the world's biggest carmakers in Volkswagen (VOWG_p.DE), Daimler (DAIGn.DE) and BMW (BMWG.DE), which have invested heavily in diesel technology, and the government has said it is opposed to banning diesel vehicles. After Volkswagen (VW) admitted almost two years ago to cheating emissions tests, the entire auto industry has come

under scrutiny for the nitrogen oxide emissions produced by diesel cars, which are blamed for causing respiratory diseases.

Dobrindt was speaking ahead of a 2 August "diesel summit" at which representatives of Chancellor Angela Merkel's government, regional governments and carmakers will discuss ways to tackle diesel pollution.

Car industry officials and politicians have already agreed to update the engine software of around 9 million cars as part of efforts to ward off diesel bans in major cities like Munich or Stuttgart, sources told Reuters last week.

VW plans to offer to refit a total of 4 million diesel cars at the 2 August meeting, Chief Executive Matthias Mueller said on Thursday after talks with Environment Minister Barbara Hendricks at the company's Wolfsburg headquarters.

The 4-million tally includes about 2.5 million diesel cars VW has had to recall in Europe's largest auto market over its



German Transport Minister Alexander Dobrindt attends the weekly cabinet meeting at the Chancellery in Berlin, Germany, on 19 July 2017. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

emissions scandal, about 850,000 Audi (NSUG.DE) luxury models and another 600,000 vehicles equipped with engines designed to meet older Euro-5 emissions standards, a VW spokesman said.

In response to the shifts toward electric vehicles announced by Britain and France, Dobrindt said it was still possible that carbon-neutral synthetic fuels could be as good as battery technology.

"We still have technological decisions ahead of us," he said, adding that while electric cars might be the future, it was not yet clear when they would be ready for the mass market.

Besides diesel, German automakers' credibility has also been battered by news that European and German regulators are probing allegations of anti-competitive collusion.—Reuters ■

Commuter train crash in Barcelona station injures 39

MADRID — A commuter train crashed into a buffer in Barcelona's Francia terminus on Friday morning, injuring at least 39 people, one of them seriously, emergency services said on Friday.

The force of the crash crumpled the front of the train against the buffer and detached a sheet of metal.

Nineteen of the injured, including the driver, were taken to hospital, emergency services said, while medics treated others on stretchers on the platform. They had previously given the number of injured as 48.

Many of the passengers were already standing, ready to get off, when the train crashed, the newspaper La Vanguardia reported. The train was coming from the village of Sant Vicenc de Calders in the province of Tarragona on the R2 line of the Rodalies commuter rail service, emergency services said.

The state-run railway company Adif said an investigation had been opened.—Reuters ■

US orders Venezuela embassy families out, crisis deepens

CARACAS — The US government ordered family members of employees at its embassy in Venezuela to leave on Thursday as a political crisis deepened ahead of a controversial vote critics contend will end democracy in the oil-rich country.

Violence continued to rage on the street, with another seven people killed during the latest opposition-led strike against President Nicolas Maduro's planned election for a powerful new Constituent Assembly on Sunday.

Adding to Venezuela's growing international isolation, Colombian airline Avianca suddenly stopped operations in the country on Thursday due to "operational and security limitations".

Maduro's critics were planning to pile more pressure on the unpopular leftist leader by holding roadblocks across the nation dubbed "The Takeover of Venezuela" on Friday.

"We're going to keep fighting, we're not leaving the streets," said opposition lawmaker Jorge



A demonstrator is detained at a rally during a strike called to protest against Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro's government in Caracas, Venezuela on 27 July 2017. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

Millan. The government banned protests from Friday to Tuesday, raising the likelihood of more violence in volatile Venezuela. Many people have been stocking up on food and staying home.

As well as ordering relatives to leave, the US State Department on Thursday also authorized the voluntary departure of any US government employee at its compound-like hilltop embassy in Caracas.

President Donald Trump has warned his administration could impose economic sanctions on Venezuela if Maduro goes ahead with the vote to create the legislative superbody.

The Constituent Assembly would have power to rewrite the constitution and shut down the existing opposition-led legislature, which the opposition maintains would cement dictatorship in Venezuela.—Reuters ■

Burp! Singapore scientists hope for probiotic beer hit

SINGAPORE — It's a breakthrough worth raising a glass to.

Researchers in Singapore have brewed up a beer containing probiotic bacteria that can improve gut health and boost the immune system.

Food researcher Alcine Chan, 23, experimented for almost a year with a recipe of malt, alcohol, hops and a strain of probiotic bacteria, until she got the formula just right.

"The hops are the main ingredient that kills probiotics, so we had to find a way for the probiotics to overcome the hops," Chan said, demonstrating the pre-fermentation process in a laboratory at the National University of Singapore (NUS).

The popularity of beer promises huge market potential for the process, she said, adding that she hoped it would reach as many consumers as possible.

Chan, who perfected the beer recipe as a project for the senior year of her degree, said she drew inspiration from the

probiotic yoghurt and dairy drinks she consumes every day.

The pale, bubbly drink tastes slightly sweet and has 3.5 percent alcohol content, just under the 4 percent to 6 percent of regular beers. Every 100 ml (3.4 oz) of the drink, or roughly just over a mouthful, contains 1 billion probiotic organisms.

While probiotics have been shown to improve digestive function and boost the immune system, among other health benefits, project researchers stop short of making nutrition claims.

"The beer is simply a new vehicle for delivering probiotics and the associated health benefits," said Chan's project supervisor, Liu Shao Quan, adding that it had not yet been given a name.

Melissa Mak, founder of Fermentation Friends, a group that holds workshops on making fermented probiotic food and beverages, said she would give the beer a try.—Reuters ■



A facility for capturing CO2 from air of Swiss Climeworks AG is placed on the roof of a waste incinerating plant in Hinwil, Switzerland, on 18 July 2017. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

Scientists dim sunlight, suck up carbon dioxide to cool planet

OSLO — Scientists are sucking carbon dioxide from the air with giant fans and preparing to release chemicals from a balloon to dim the sun's rays as part of a climate engineering push to cool the planet.

Backers say the risky, often expensive projects are urgently needed to find ways of meeting the goals of the Paris climate deal to curb global warming that researchers blame for causing more heatwaves, downpours and rising sea levels. The United Nations says the targets are way off track and will not be met simply by reducing emis-

sions for example from factories or cars - particularly after US President Donald Trump's decision to pull out of the 2015 pact.

They are pushing for other ways to keep temperatures down.

In the countryside near Zurich, Swiss company Climeworks began to suck greenhouse gases from thin air in May with giant fans and filters in a \$23 million project that it calls the world's first "commercial carbon dioxide capture plant". Worldwide, "direct air capture" research by a handful of companies such as Climeworks has gained

tens of millions of dollars in recent years from sources including governments, Microsoft founder Bill Gates and the European Space Agency.

If buried underground, vast amounts of greenhouse gases extracted from the air would help reduce global temperatures, a radical step beyond cuts in emissions that are the main focus of the Paris Agreement. Climeworks reckons it now costs about \$600 to extract a tonne of carbon dioxide from the air and the plant's full capacity due by the end of 2017 is only 900 tonnes

a year. That's equivalent to the annual emissions of only 45 Americans.

And Climeworks sells the gas, at a loss, to nearby greenhouses as a fertilizer to grow tomatoes and cucumbers and has a partnership with carmaker Audi, which hopes to use carbon in greener fuels.

Jan Wurzbacher, director and founder of Climeworks, says the company has planet-altering ambitions by cutting costs to about \$100 a tonne and capturing one percent of global man-made carbon emissions a year by 2025. —Reuters ■

Aussie drug successfully stops tumour growth in advanced breast cancer patients

MELBOURNE — A breast cancer treatment developed by Australian researchers has successfully halted tumour growth for twice as long as previously recorded, it was announced on Friday.

The therapy involves taking a new class of drug, called CDK4 and CDK6 inhibitors, and it significantly delayed tumour growth in patients with advanced breast cancer. Research-

ers from the Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre (PMCC) will now trial the therapy in patients with early-stage cancer in an attempt to stop the disease from spreading throughout the body. The tablets, Palbociclib, Ribociclib and Abemaciclib, work differently to hormone treatments currently used by deactivating the process that allows cancer cells to grow uninhibited. Richard

de Boer, an oncologist at the PMCC and Epworth hospital, said that developing a tablet that has no side effects such as the inhibitors was an "exciting" step.

"We've got good chemotherapy drugs, but they're toxic. They require intravenous treatment, you lose your hair and you can feel really sick," de Boer told Australian media on Friday. "If you can come up with a combination treat-

ment that delays the need for chemotherapy by 10, 20 or 30 months, that's a great achievement for women with advanced disease."

More than 4,600 women will participate in the new global trial of Palbociclib where the new drug's ability to stop cancer from returning after surgery, chemotherapy and radiation will be compared to standard hormone therapy. —Xinhua ■

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

MV XETHA BHUM VOY. NO ()

Consignees of cargo carried on MV XETHA BHUM VOY. NO () are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 29.7.2017 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of MITT where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

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

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

MV RATANA THIDA VOY. NO ()

Consignees of cargo carried on MV RATANA THIDA VOY. NO () are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 29.7.2017 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T.T/A.I.P.T where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

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

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How to apply:

For details on Terms of References and application, please visit ASEAN website at www.asean.org/opportunities/vacancies-asec/.

Application documents should reach the ASEAN Secretariat by **29 August 2017**.

Smiley faces to rolling eyes: Where do all those emojis come from?

LOS ANGELES — Cheery Hi-5, a snobbish Poop and a conflicted Meh have starring roles in the animated “The Emoji Movie,” which imagines a world inside cellphones where emojis rebel against portraying just one emotion all their lives.

Yet the dozen or so people who select and release the tiny, ubiquitous characters globally are far removed from the glitz of Hollywood, where the Sony Pictures movie, which begins its global rollout on Friday, was developed.

The humans who toil in obscurity to shape and approve new emojis are part of the Unicode Consortium, a Silicon Valley-based group of computer and software corporations and individual volunteers with backgrounds in technology, encoding and linguistics.

From smiley faces to thumbs up, there are now some 2,600 different emojis worldwide and, according to a July Facebook Inc report, more than 60 million a day are sent on the No. 1 social media network alone.

The consortium approves about 50-100 new emojis every



Actor T. J. Miller poses during a photocall for the film “The Emoji Movie” at 70th Cannes Film Festival, Cannes, France, on 16 May 2017. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

year, not counting the different skin tones for people emoji, after a rigorous application and review process, said Mark Davis, president and co-founder of the group.

The latest batch, released in June and reaching phones and other devices in coming months, include a star-struck emoji, an exploding head, a group of wizards, mermaids and a woman wearing a hijab.

“We get submissions from all over the world,” Davis said in an interview. “The hijab emoji

came from a Saudi Arabian young woman who is living in Germany who made a very compelling proposal. I’m looking forward to the exploding head - I think that’s going to be very popular.

“People need to make a case as to why they think their emoji is going to be frequently used, how it breaks new ground, how it is different from other emojis that have already been encoded.”

Logos, brands and emojis tied to specific companies

are not accepted. “We also don’t accept specific people. We did encode a cowboy but we wouldn’t encode John Wayne,” Davis said.

Some concepts just do not translate as emoji.

“Anything that needs a lot of detail to explain or understand is trouble. It’s also hard to make an emoji for something abstract — like good governance, or a responsible president,” Davis said.

Davis said there are 2,666 emojis worldwide. The LOL emoji with tears of laughter is the most popular, according to a July Facebook survey of its 2 billion monthly users, followed by the heart eyes emoji. Italians and Spaniards favour the kissing emoji. The consortium played no part in the making of “The Emoji Movie,” Davis said, because all of its work is open-source, available to all, and no permissioning was needed.

Nevertheless, he never imagined that the computer-generated punctuation marks that originated in Japan in the 1980s would become Hollywood stars.

“That’s something that never really crossed our minds,” Davis said.—Reuters ■

Pop singer Katy Perry to host MTV Video Music Awards show

LOS ANGELES — Pop singer Katy Perry will host the MTV Video Music Awards (VMA) in August, MTV said on Thursday, and will also perform and compete for some top awards.

The hosting gig will kick off a busy 12 months for Perry, who embarks on a world tour in September and will be a judge in 2018 on the new version of television talent show “American Idol.”

Perry, who released her latest album, “Witness,” in June, is the most followed person on Twitter, with more than 100 million followers.

Her big-budget video “Chained to the Rhythm” will compete in four categories at the VMA show, but she was snubbed in nominations for the top two categories of video of the year, and artist of the year.

The “Roar” singer was also nominated with Calvin Harris in the best video collaboration category for “Feels”, pitting her directly against her pop rival Taylor Swift, who got a nod for her duet with Zayn Malik for “I Don’t Wanna Live Forever.”

—Reuters ■



Ed Sheeran performs on the Pyramid Stage at Worthy Farm in Somerset during the Glastonbury Festival in Britain, on 25 June 2017. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

Ed Sheeran, Stormzy nominated for Mercury music award

LONDON — Pop star Ed Sheeran and grime artist Stormzy made it on to the Mercury prize shortlist, award organisers announced on Thursday.

Other nominees for the prize that will be awarded on 14 September, are: Blossoms, J Hus, Dinosaur, The XX, Loyle Carner, The Big Moon, Kate Tempest, Glass Animals, Alt J

and Sampha.

The prestigious award, meant to identify the best of the year from British or Irish artists and is based on a selection by music industry experts and musicians.

Sheeran’s latest album, “Divide,” topped charts in the United States and Britain earlier this year.—Reuters ■

Injured photographer calls Justin Bieber a ‘good kid’ after accident

LOS ANGELES — Justin Bieber accidentally hit a photographer with his truck after leaving a Beverly Hills church service, and the singer got out to help the man while waiting for emergency services to arrive.

The photographer, who was not identified, suffered non-life threatening injuries in the accident on Wednesday night, Beverly Hills police said. The photographer later posted a video thanking the “Sorry” singer for his help.

“He (Bieber) got out, he was compassionate. He’s a good kid. Accidents happen,” the photographer said in a video posted on celebrity website TMZ.

Bieber was not charged and had fully cooperated with authorities, Beverly Hills police spokesman Sergeant Chris Coulter said.

The accident happened as Bieber, 23, was pulling out of parking lot following a church



Justin Bieber performs at Z100’s Jingle Ball in Manhattan, New York, US, December 9, 2016. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

service. The singer, who started attending church services some two years ago, has been trailed by celebrity media since suddenly canceling the remainder of his world tour on Monday, saying he needed to rest.

“I can’t see when you guys are all snapping,” Bieber told the photographers, in video of the incident posted to TMZ.

Bieber was also seen kneeling down to tend to the photographer, who said his leg was injured.

“I think the truck was a little bit too big for him though because there’s no way he could see over the front. It was the slope it was on,” the photographer said in his video message.—Reuters ■

South Africa's tourism a bright spot despite recession

CAPE TOWN — South Africa's top tourist hub Cape Town expects a 13 per cent jump in tourist arrivals this year to 1.77 million, officials said on Thursday, a rare bright spot in an economy that slid into recession in March,

Cape Town had the country's four most popular attractions, including Robben Island — apartheid's most notorious jail where former president Nelson Mandela spent 18 years.

South Africa's economy is in dire need of some positive news.

It fell into recession in the first quarter of the year and is seen in Reuters polls growing just 0.7 per cent for 2017 as a whole. Unemployment is at a 14-year high of 27.7 per cent.

The country's credit rating, meanwhile, has been downgraded to junk by two of the top three



Tourists take pictures from a viewing platform overlooking Cape Town's Atlantic beachfront and Robben Island, where former President Nelson Mandela spent much of his 27 year incarceration, in this picture taken in 2013. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

credit rating agencies.

But tourists have been coming, possibly encouraged by the weak rand. It has fallen more than 20 per cent against the dollar since a high last year.

Britain, Germany and the United States were the three leading sources of tourist arrivals to the Western Cape province, Alan Winde, regional minister of economic opportu-

nities in the Western Cape province, said.

"Tourism can help South Africa to course correct its current economic trajectory," he told reporters.

Arrivals to Cape Town reached 1.56 million in 2016 from 1.38 million in 2014, with foreign spending rising by 3.6 billion rand to 18 billion rand (\$1.4 billion) over the same period,

Winde said.

According to South African Tourism, some 10 million foreigners overall arrived last year.

Tourists numbers to the Western Cape, which was the country's best performing region in terms of paid bed nights and first time visitors, have recovered from 1.32 million in 2015 when strict new visa rules were implemented. The rules have since been lifted and flights were also increased as tourism rebounded.

The Treasury said in February that tourism contributed 3 per cent to GDP in 2015, and 711,746 people or 4.5 per cent of the total workforce was employed in the sector.

"We believe that the tourism sector, which is not rand hedged, has the potential to pull us out of recession and to save and grow jobs," Winde said. —Reuters ■

mitv Myanmar International Programme Schedule

(29-7-2017 07:00am ~ 30-7-2017 07:00am) MST

| | | |
|-------|----|---|
| 07:03 | Am | News |
| 07:26 | Am | Great Shwedagon - Charitable Associations |
| 08:03 | Am | News |
| 08:26 | Am | Manuha Temple Festivities |
| 08:45 | Am | Myanma Agarwood |
| 09:03 | Am | News |
| 09:26 | Am | Hive Hunter |
| 09:46 | Am | Myanmar Traditional Art Bronze Casting |
| 09:51 | Am | The Bamboo Hat |
| 10:03 | Am | News |
| 10:26 | Am | Next Generation "Nyan Lin Htet (Football Player)" |
| 10:37 | Am | Toddy Palm Product Shop |
| 10:49 | Am | Capable Though Disabled |

(11:00 Am ~ 03:00 Pm) -Friday 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 |
| 07:25 | Pm | Alaungdaw Kathapa |
| 07:43 | Pm | Guiding Star of Song Birds |
| 07:52 | Pm | Today Myanmar: Monsoon Tree-Planting Season |
| 08:03 | Pm | News |
| 08:26 | Pm | Orchidologist Dr. Saw Lwin |
| 08:49 | Pm | Next Weekend |

(09:00 Pm ~ 11:00 Pm) -Today Repeat (09:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)
(11:00 Pm ~ 03:00 Am) - Friday Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)
(03:00 Am ~ 07:00 Am) -Today Repeat(07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)
(For Detailed Schedule - www.myanmaritv.com/schedule)

Venice film festival to showcase real stars and virtual reality

ROME — A shrunken Matt Damon will open the 74th Venice Film Festival, organizers said on Thursday when they unveiled the line-up for an event that often gives an early glimpse of Oscar contenders.

Alexander Payne's "Downsizing", a satire about a couple who decide to shrink themselves to four inches tall, opens the festival next month, with Kristen Wiig and Christoph Waltz starring alongside Damon.

It will compete for the Golden Lion against 20 other movies including Guillermo Del Toro's "The Shape of Water" and the unexpected addition of Darren Aranofsky's "Mother!", a horror starring Jennifer Lawrence.

"(Distributor) Paramount was very much in doubt over whether to present the film at a festival in order not to make any spoilers," festival direc-



Matt Damon presents Best Original Screenplay winner Kenneth Lonergan for "Manchester by the Sea" with his Oscar in Hollywood, California, US, on 26 February 2017. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

tor Alberto Barbera told a news conference in Rome.

Another hotly-anticipated entry is "Human Flow", a documentary about the global refugee crisis by Chinese artist Ai Wei Wei.

Barbera said he was "very satisfied" with the line-up.

"There are only maybe two or three films that we ... wanted to have for the festival and we couldn't,"

he said.

Damon reappears in "Suburbicon", a dark comedy directed by George Clooney that also stars Julianne Moore.

Moviemakers will be hoping for a replay of the success of films such as "La La Land", "Gravity" and "Birdman" which went from Venice launches to Academy Awards glory.

The world's oldest film festival will also stage what

organizers say is the first virtual reality competition at a major cinema event.

Outside of the competition, Stephen Frears will present "Victoria and Abdul", his latest work on the British monarchy, with Judi Dench as the 19th-century queen. Director James Toback brings together Sienna Miller and Alec Baldwin in independent drama "The Private Life of a Modern Woman", and Spanish power couple Javier Bardem and Penelope Cruz appear in "Loving Pablo" by Fernando Leon de Aranoa.

A Lifetime Achievement Award will be picked up by Jane Fonda and Robert Redford, who will also present their new film "Our Souls at Night", directed by Ritesh Batra.

"American Beauty" star Annette Bening heads the jury for the festival, which runs from 30 August until 9 September. —Reuters ■

Myanmar, Singapore to meet at opening match of 29th SEA Games

Shine Htet Zaw

The national teams from Myanmar and Singapore will meet on 14 August at the opening match of the 2017 Southeast Asian Games (SEA Games) hosted by Malaysia.

Singapore and Myanmar played previously in 2015, with Myanmar the winner by a score of 2-1.

The Myanmar team is included in Group A. Eleven teams in two groups, A and B, will play at this year's SEA Games. Group A will be comprised of Malaysia, Myanmar, Singapore, Laos and Brunei. Group B will be comprised of six teams — Thailand, Vietnam, Indonesia, Cambodia,

Timor-Leste and Philippines.

Myanmar has competed against Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei teams this month at the U-23 Asian Football Confederation (AFC) qualification matches. Myanmar won against Singapore, 2-0, defeated Brunei by a score of 3-0 and lost to Malaysia, 0-2.

The group matches of the 2017 Southeast Asian Games will be played from 14 to 25 August. The Myanmar team will play against Singapore on 14 August, Laos on 16 August, Brunei on 18 August and Malaysia on 21 August.

Semi-final matches will be on 27 August. The final match and the match for third place will be on 29 August. ■



Myanmar and Singapore players vying for the ball during ASIAN U-23 qualification. **PHOTO: SOE NYUNT**

Ks5 million top prize in We Are One Cup

Kyaw Zin Lin

With the aim of growing public awareness of Myanmar football, the We Are One football competition was begun on 26 July, and the prizes for the winning teams will be rewarded to the top four teams, with additional cash awards from Myanmar Brewery, it was recently announced.

The competition was mainly sponsored by Myanmar Brewery and intended to highlight Myanmar football as the 29th SEA Games draw near. Over 80 football teams,

including 32 teams in Yangon, 16 teams in Patheingyi, 16 teams in Taunggyi and another 16 teams in Mandalay will be participating in the We Are One Cup.

Prices range from Ks5 million for the winner of the competition, Ks3 million for the second-place finisher, Ks2 million for the third-place team Ks1.5 million for the fourth-place team. Myanmar Brewery will also provide Ks2.5 million for the winner of the competition, Ks2 million for the second-place team, Ks1 million for the third-place team and Ks500,000 for the fourth-place team. ■

Cycling event to be held in Yangon

Kyaw Zin Lin

A public cycling event will be held in Mya Kyun Thar amusement park on Kabar Aye Pagoda Road in Mayangone Township in Yangon on Sunday at 5:30 am.

The cycling event is sponsored

mainly by Sport-X, the maker of isotonic drinks for athletes.

Participants will be offered Cycling Sport T-shirts, purified drinking water and isotonic drinks before the event starts.

"The event is good for the public awareness of the cycling

sport, as cycling is one of the more affordable and convenient sports in Myanmar. There will be other special agendas intended for the public by Sport-X", said a cyclist from Yangon.

Any interested person can participate in the event. ■

Myanmar men's futsal team loses to Thai Port team

Phoe Thaw Zin

Myanmar national men's futsal team played a friendly match with Thai Port team as a preparation for the 29th SEA Games yesterday.

Myanmar lost 2-3 to Thai Port team.

Myanmar has been under training in Thailand since 21 June and lost to all Thai futsal teams. Myanmar lost to BTS Bangkok team, Kasem Bandit

University team and the Thailand national futsal team respectively.

The Myanmar futsal team will play a friendly match against Thai national futsal team on 30 July. ■

Kalisz, Dressel shine on memorable night for US

BUDAPEST — Chase Kalisz continued America's dominance of the men's 200 metres individual medley as the United States enjoyed a memorable evening at the world championships on Thursday.

Kalisz's win set the tone before rising US star Caeleb Dressel snatched victory in the men's 100 metres freestyle and the American quartet powered to gold in the women's 4x200 free-style relay.

Michael Phelps and Ryan Lochte had dominated the 200m

medley event since 2003 and the only American in the field delivered again as Kalisz posted one minute 55.56 seconds at the Duna Arena.

The 23-year-old produced a Phelps-like roar of celebration and double-arm splash to celebrate his gold medal.

Kalisz said that the enormity of his task had weighed on his mind for months.

"Michael and Ryan have been the centerpieces of that tradition for over 15 years now and for me (the prospect of get-

ting) silver and stopping that streak, it took a toll on me," he told reporters.

Japanese Kosuke Hagino, the 2013 silver medallist, had cut-loose on the backstroke before Kalisz took control on a swift breaststroke leg and freestyle finale.

Hagino touched for silver 0.05 seconds back. "I would've definitely laughed at you months ago if you had told me this was going to be my first title," Kalisz added. "I was over three seconds slower."—Reuters ■



Chase Kalisz of the US celebrates winning the race at 17th FINA World Aquatics Championships - Men's Medley 200m 100m final - Budapest, Hungary, on 27 July 2017. **PHOTO: REUTERS**