T HE Union Peace Conference (UPC)—21st Century Panglong continued into its third day session at MICC-2 in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday with political party representative U Thu Wai, government representative Union Minister Dr Win Myat Aye, Tatmadaw representative Lt-Gen Tin Maung Win, indigenous armed organisations representative Bao Khe and Hluttaw representative U N Hton Kha Naw San as members of the panel of chairpeople.

U Thu Wai said they all agree on the establishment of a federal union in which authorities are delegated for all (states and regions) to shape their own destiny, that there will be diversity in treading on the path to this goal, that this happens so because the attitudes and thinking are different and that it is required to understand (each other) and exercise patience in treading on the path to the same goal.

He concluded that the people and the conference attendees must exert effort to make their country a happy abode and that there is no doubt that all the people are needed to make a collective effort to build a peaceful, developed country.

In the morning meeting of the third day session, representatives submitted their attitudes and opinions to the conference. Representing the Tatmadaw, Col Min Oo said that only when unity of a plethora of indigenous races can be built will Myanmar stand tall amidst the world’s nations, that only when the government is vested with power will it be able to have control over the people and only when the government can have influence over other organisations will sovereignty prevail.

He pointed out that every nation of the world has only one army, that the Tatmadaw was born of the people comprising all indigenous races, and it is the one and only union army, that all citizens have to learn military science according to the statute laws and join the military service for national defence and that any and all indigenous races who would like to join the military service to contribute to national defence of their own will are always welcomed.
UPC continues its third day session

NMSP’s representative Naing Han Tha said that when the name of the federal union is made the Federal Democratic Union of Myanmar, either Myanmar, Bamar or Burma in English language will refer only to Bamar, which is just one of the national races.

This being so, I think we need to choose another name which will be representative of all indigenous races and suggest the equality of all of them.” said Naing Han Tha, adding that the federal democratic union will be composed of two cameras—the Senate and the House of Representatives—both of which shall be vested with equal legislative power, that any proposed bill shall be submitted to Hluttaws for separate, independent voting, that the federal democratic Union Hluttaw shall convene Hluttaw sessions according to the prescribed procedures, that in case of the arising of the need to cast votes for decision, the proposed bill shall need more than half of the votes of both Hluttaws, that necessary committees shall be formed with Hluttaw members to provide support for the enactment of laws by both Hluttaws and procedures should be formulated for the implementation of this system. If the Hluttaw is unable to approve either the whole or part of a bill already passed by the other Hluttaw, a joint coordination committee shall be formed with representatives from both Hluttaws to find a solution.

Next, U Tun Naing from the Kokang Democracy and Unity Party said that Kokang region is still suffering from the consequences of conflict and so, Kokang indigenous people are especially desirous of peace. It is, therefore, suggested that in addition to considering the interests of ethnic people residing in the hilly region, emphasis should be placed on the interests of Bamar brethren from the mainland. We need, he said, to draw a lesson from the 1988 affair which rose from negligence of the interests of people of the basic stratum. (As known to all) this sort of affair can arise and have adverse effect upon the current peace process. Last but not the least, he expressed his wish for the remaining three armed groups to be able to participate in future conferences of this nature to be in accordance with the all-inclusive policy.

Afterwards, the Tatmadaw representative Lt-Col Zaw Oo said that excessive demands on the part of the armed organisations for political assurances and preconditions as well as for recognition of unlawfully obtained management, administration and economic opportunities are the main obstructions that delay the peace process and that the indulge

uos organised armed forces and political party organisations, in effectuation of stability, peace and development of their respective regions and states, are required to follow upon the correct path of multiparty democracy as chosen by the people as well as upon the political path paved by the Union Peace Conference.

Khu Oo Reh of the Karen National Progressive Party discussed calling for a collective administration system to be used for townships where different national races are living and stressed the need for equal rights in all states. He also highlighted the importance of protection of the rights of the people to prevent power abuse in the states and by members of the Union to ensure a strong federal democracy. He said that it is required that Myanmar exercise direct-democracy through referendums on decisions of the state parliaments.

The powers to deal with foreign affairs, production of currency notes, posts and communications, defence, the judiciary, social welfare and industry sectors should be granted to the Union government.

Sai Hay Aung of Ta’i-Leng (Red Shan) called for the creation of a Red Shan State formed with Myitkyina, Moehnyin, Bahmo, Kamti, Tamu, Kalay, Mawleik and Katha districts where Red Shan nationalities are living, pointing out that federal systems of other countries allow for the creation of new states for ethnic minorities.

Col Zaw Win Myint, Tatmadaw representative, called for sooner implementation of the DDRASR process and completion of the peace conferences within 3-5 years. He stressed the need of strict adherence to terms and conditions of the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement by the NCA signatories. He pointed out the Section 10 of the Constitution says no part of the territory constituted in the Union such as Regions, States, Union Territories and Self-Administered Areas shall ever secede from the Union. He asked that the entire people, including ethnic minorities, cooperate with the Tatmadaw that plays a central role while maintaining the defence and security of the country.

U Hsin Wa of the Kachin Independence Organisation said that national and state parliaments should be vested with legislative powers and members of the federal Union must have a right to deal with taxation, environmental conservation, narcotic drugs, birth and death registration, energy projects and development undertakings, exploitation of natural resources, foreign investments, broadcasting, banking and insurance businesses, property transfer, provisions for university and vocational training schools, penal and the power to enact laws be granted to a state government elected by ethnic minorities in Kayin State. She also called for resource sharing, adding that economic development brought about by rural development will be able to support the country’s peace process.—Myanmar News Agency
Cries for federalism dominate second-day session of 21st Century Panglong Conference

THE Union Peace Conference-21st Century Panglong Conference continued its second-day afternoon session at the Myanmar International Convention Centre in Nay Pyi Taw on Wednesday.

Lt-Col Thant Zaw said the executive and judicial systems described in the 2008 constitution are consistent with federal regulations regarding the rights of self-administration pertaining to the regions, states and self-administered zones and divisions.

Pa-O National Liberation Organisation (PNLO) Chairman Khun Myint Tun reminded the assembled representatives of the need to strike a balance between federal and democratic rights.

U Khun Tun Shwe of the Pa-O National Organisation suggested ethnic nationalities be addressed as ‘union nationalities’ to effectuate more fairness and equality in the creation of a democratic federal union. He also called for the establishment of a geographically-based federalism.

U Shwe Min of the Lisu National Development Party asked for a self-administered zone to be established for the ethnic nationalities residing across the country.

U Nant Than Than Lwin of the All Burma Students’ Democratic Front (ABSDF) proposed a calculation of current trends and future prospects in the adoption of a new security policy, pointing out the need to strike a balance between federal and democratic criteria.

U Pu Chin Sian Thang of the Zomi Congress for Democracy called for genuine goodwill and collective cooperation at the 21st Century Panglong.

Parliamentary representatives and regional government officials called for avoidance of any confrontation and the need to strike a balance between federal and democratic rights.

U Shwe Min stressed the need for result-oriented dialogue at the negotiating table, calling for a concerted effort to root out the political divisions in the interest of the people.

Yehaw Myint Hein of the All Burma Students’ Democratic Front (ABSDF) proposed a calculation of current trends and future prospects in the adoption of a new security policy, pointing out the need to strike a balance between federal and democratic criteria.

Lt-Col Thant Zaw of the Arakan Liberation Party (ALP) expressed his expectations on the inclusion of federal regulations regarding the percentage of representatives and a guarantee for the voting of legislative, executive and judicial powers in states.

Dr Win Myat Aye of the Restoration Council of Shan State (RCSS) pledged strenuous efforts to enhance national reconciliation and establish a federal union in collaboration with partner organisations and the people.

Col Soe Tint of the Arakan Liberation Party (ALP) expressed his expectations on the inclusion of federal regulations regarding the percentage of representatives and a guarantee for the voting of legislative, executive and judicial powers in states.

Dr Manam Tu Ja of the Kachin State Democracy Party spoke of the need to enhance national reconciliation and establish a federal union in collaboration with partner organisations and the people.

Ngan Lin spoke of the need to consider the public role in natural resources management, in addition to the roles of the central government and regional governments.

U Yan Kyaw of the Wa Democratic Party called for recognition of the Wa state, expressing his party’s earnest support for the achievements of Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement and the Panglong Pact.

U Khang Tun Win of the Lahu National Development Party asked for a self-administered zone for the ethnic nationalities residing across the country.

Yangon Region government Social Affairs Minister U Naing Ngan Lan spoke of the need to consider the public role in natural resources management, in addition to the roles of the central government and regional governments.

U Khaing Tun Win of the Lahu National Development Party said the desirability of a specific area given its population and geographical location. He also called for a quick end to armed conflict, the amendment of the 2008 Constitution and the adoption of a constitution that promises a federal union.

(Continued from 1st September session of the Union Peace Conference-21st Century Panglong)
Pyithu Hluttaw MP s approve Bill to amend the Law to interpret Statutes

THE Pyithu Hluttaw session continued for its 25th day with officials concerned answering parliamentary questions and lawmakers approving a Bill to amend the Law on Commission for Interpretation of Statutes yesterday.

During a Q & A session, Union Auditor-General U Maw Than stated that there is no plan to promote township audit officers to assistant directors as the government is striving for ensuring efficient performance on a tight budget.

Next, Union Minister for Electricity and Energy U Pe Zin Tun said that Thahtay hydropower project will be completed by the end of 2023-2024 FY if the funds are fully allocated.

Electricity generated from the project will be used for development undertakings in Rakhine State, added the Union minister.

He also replied that arrangements have been made to ensure that 390 megawatts to avoid summer power outages next year, adding that works are underway to fix tangled power nests, replace old wires and overloaded transformers with new ones and set up new posts.

Likewise, the Union minister said that a small hydropower project that can generate 600 megawatts is being implemented on Namtalon creek in Homalin Township.

It is impossible to implement another small hydropower projects on Namtalan Ngar creek, adding that the project will be completed at the same time, he added.

During yesterday’s session the Pyithu Hluttaw approved the Bill amending the Law on Commission for Interpretation of Statutes with no amendment.—Myan-

mar News Agency

Amyotha Hluttaw Bill Committee suggests passing Bill to revoke Emergency Provisions Act

AMYOTH A Hluttaw Bill Committee read out its report on a Bill to abolish the Emergency Provisions Act during the 25th day session of the Amyotha Hluttaw yesterday.

U Thein Lwin, member of the Bill Committee, said that the committee found that the Bill should be approved as did the Pyithu Hluttaw.

The report, Defence Service personnel Hluttaw representative Brig-Gen Khin Maung Aye suggested not revoking the Emergency Provisions Act due to present situations, saying that it should be revoked only after a new law that can protect security and interest of the country and its citizens was enacted.

The Amyotha Hluttaw decided to discuss the bill soon.

A question and answer session followed with Union Minister for Education Dr Myo Thein Gyi answering a question regarding the construction of a new school building for a BEHS (Branch) in Kyauktaw Township, Rakhine State.

The Union minister replied that a call for new school building will be taken into consideration next fiscal year in accordance with the ministry’s priority list, saying that the BEHS (Branch) has enough rooms to accommodate students.

Then, two parliamentarians held discussions on a proposal calling for the adoption of a plan to promote ethnic literature and the education sector to eliminate illiteracy among ethnic minorities.—Myanmar News Agency

Amyotha Hluttaw donates cash for restoration of quake-hit cultural heritages in Bagan

AMYOTH A Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than presented K4,380,000 of daily allowances from 219 Amyotha Hluttaw representatives for one day, and K5,620,000 donated by the Amyotha Hluttaw Office toward restoration of quake-hit cultural heritage sites in Bagan to Union Minister for Religious and Cultural Affairs Thura U Aung Ko yesterday.

Also present at the cash donation ceremony were Deputy Amyotha Hluttaw speaker U Aye Tha Aung, secretaries of Amyotha Hluttaw committees and members, Defence Services personnel Amyotha Hluttaw representatives and officials of the Amyotha Hluttaw Office.—Myanmar News Agency

Pyithu Hluttaw donates cash toward restoration of quake-hit cultural heritages in Bagan

PYITHU Hluttaw Speaker U Win Myint presented K15million — K8,520,000 of daily allowances of 426 Amyotha Hluttaw representatives for one day, and K6,480,000 which was donated by the Pyithu Hluttaw Office — toward restoration of quake-hit cultural heritages in Bagan to Union Minis-

ter for Religious and Cultural Affairs Thura U Aung Ko yesterday.

Also present at the cash donation ceremony were Deputy Pyithu Hluttaw speaker U T Khun Myat, Pyithu Hluttaw representatives, Defence Services personnel Pyithu Hluttaw representatives and officials of the Pyithu Hluttaw Office.—Myanmar News Agency

Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker meets with Italian Senate’s Standing Committee Chairperson

PYITHU Hluttaw Speaker U Win Myint received Chairperson of the Italian Senate’s Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs Mr. Pier Ferdinando Casini at the Pyithu Hluttaw Building in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

During the call, they held discussions on promotion of relations between the two parliaments.

Also present were Chairman of the Pyithu Hluttaw International Relations Committee U Zaw Thein and members, Italian Ambassador to Myanmar Mr. Pier Giorgio Aliberti and officials of the Hluttaw Office.—Myanmar News Agency

Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker meets with Italian Senate’s Standing Committee Chairperson

AMYOTH A Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than received Chairperson of the Italian Senate’s Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs Mr. Pier Ferdinando Casini at Amyotha Hluttaw Building in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

During the call, they held discussions on promotion of relations between the two parliaments.

Also present were Deputy Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker U Aye Tha Aung, Chairmen of Amyotha Hluttaw International Relations and Inter-parliamentary Friendship and Cooperation U Zon Hla Htun and officials of Amyotha Hluttaw Office.—Myanmar News Agency

Mahn Win Khaing Than receiving Mr Pier Ferdinando Casini.

Photo: MNA
MoU signed to boost Myanmar-India border trade

INDIAN entrepreneurs are keen to boost cooperation in bilateral border trade, a spokesperson of the country’s biggest economic organisation said at a recent signing ceremony.

A memorandum of understanding was inked between the Republic of the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry and the Mumbai-based Indo-Myanmar Commerce and Industry on Thursday.

The MoU covers the promotion of bilateral trade and collaboration in related business channels, exchange of information and delegation as well as improved technical cooperation.

After signing the MoU, a business matching was made between the two parties to promote bilateral trade, then the Myanmar side discussed further enhancement of Indian investment in all segments apart from the resource-based industry, said Dr Myo Thet, vice-president of the UMCCI.

India is a major trade partner for Myanmar. The total value of bilateral trade reached US$2 billion in 2015-2016 fiscal year. Mr Rohinton, vice president of the IMCCI, said, “Priority will be given to boosting bilateral border trade.”

The IMCCI entrepreneurs include stream engines producers, gold purifying machine manufacturers, water purification machine makers, solar machine makers, wood-based furniture makers and agricultural machinery makers.

Till the end of July 2016, India investment in Myanmar reached US$732.649 million, according to the Myanmar Investment Commission.

Exports of soft-shell crab down 50 per cent on 2015

A decline in the volumes of crabs caught in the waterways of Rakhine State's Kyaukphyu Township has caused the export of soft-shell crabs to slump by fifty per cent on last year’s exports, Myitmakha News Agency has been informed.

Despite an average of 10-12 tons of the soft-shell crustaceans being exported to China every month back in 2015, crab-depletion induced appreciations in the price of the crustaceans, together falling prices on the international market, meant that this March and April saw exports dwindle to just 6-8 tons a month.

“The main factors behind a dearth in numbers of caught crabs include a depletion in crab numbers and a decline in those catching crabs, combined with appreciating prices and irregular weather fonts. Then there’s also the fact that we don’t have the capacity to purchase crabs for breeding purposes,” said Aung Naing Lin, manager of soft-shell crab production company in Kyaukphyu Township.

There are currently two soft-shell crabs exporters in Kyaukphyu Township who reportedly connect with Yangon export companies to export the crabs across Asia to China, Malaysia, Singapore, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and as far east as Japan.

The appreciation in the price of soft-shell crabs have seen a single crab rise in value from K1,800 in 2015 to between K2,000 - 2,500 this March.

“The amount of crabs we catch is going down year upon year. A whole day of wading through rivers and streams will see us bag about 10 to 20 crabs, but maybe only one or two of them will be fit for market. Around two-thirds of crab catches have changed to catching fish,” said U Shwe Thar, a crab catcher from the local township.

It reportedly takes between 45 - 50 days to turn hard-shell crabs into those with a soft shell. A kilo of soft-shell crabs are exported to the international market for US$5-10, while last year saw exporters able to sell the same quantity for between US$12-13.—Myitmakha News Agency

The price of local gold decreased in value from over K870,000 to about K850,000 on Thursday as the price fell on the world market early this month, according to local gold traders.

“Although the price declined on the domestic market, we received only a few demand for gold,” said a local gold seller.

A gold trader estimated that the local gold price is likely to continue to decrease.

An ounce of gold on the world market peaked in value at US$1,350. The price has steadily declined since 25 August. The current gold price on the world market is US$1,307 on Thursday.—Kyu Kyu

Gold price declines by over K20,000

Pulse export volume to India likely to rise

THE export of beans and pulses to India, the major trade partner of Myanmar in the beans and pulses sector, is estimated to rise this fiscal year, according to local traders.

Pulse is one of major staple foods of India. The South Asian country, the second most populous nation in the world, with the population size of over 1.2 billion, is the largest producer as well as importer of pulses. India imports pulses from Myanmar and a number of African nations to fulfill their high demand.

India suffered severe monsoon floods this season on the Ganges River that destroyed pulse plantations. The country is expected, therefore, to be purchasing a higher volume from overseas, a local exporter said.

Myanmar exported 1.1 million tonnes of beans and pulses last financial year. The country expects to export 1.4 million tonnes this FY, according to Myanmar Pulses, Beans and Sesame Seeds Merchants Association.

Each year the country exports more than 1 million tonnes of beans and pulses, at a total value of around US$1 billion.

The pulses are becoming increasingly popular with farmers because they fetch a higher price than paddy. The majority of beans and pulses are usually harvested between January and March.—Kyu Kyu

Myanmar oil merchants utilising American techniques

MEMBERS of the Myanmar Edible Oil Dealers’ Association are making efforts to use American techniques in cultivating crops which produce oil, it is learnt.

An envoy team from the Myanmar Edible Oil Dealers’ Association travelled to North Dakota in America to observe their manufacturing process and their systematic cultivation methods.

They learned that the growers in America cultivate their crops with the assistance of machines and by spraying the organic fertilizer to increase the yield, it is learnt.

The envoy team is reported to continue observing the cultivation methods in Iowa, another state in America with large numbers of oil crops.

The current methods of local manufacturing of oil crops are inefficient. Therefore, concerted efforts are required to bolster the manufacturing volume, officials said.—200
Senior General Min Aung Hlaing receives ceremonial Guard of Honour in Brunei

Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing who is on a goodwill visit to Brunei Darussalam received a ceremonial Guard of Honour at the Ministry of Defence of Brunei yesterday.

Next, the Senior General met with the Deputy Minister for Defence.

Then, the Senior General held talks with the Commander of the Royal Brunei Armed Forces on further cooperation between the two armed forces, exchange of experience and skills and cementing bilateral relations and cooperation in the ASEAAN spirit.

Afterwards, the Senior General visited the Royal Brunei Armed Forces Museum.

In the afternoon, the Commander-in-Chief and wife and party were hosted to luncheon by Myanmar Ambassador to Brunei Darussalam U Cho Tun Aung and wife and embassy staff families.—Myanmar News Agency

Salaries of monastic school teachers to be doubled

Detained salary calculations will start to be made this November in a bid to increase the salaries of teachers at monastic education schools, according to the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture.

Calculations will reportedly be made prior to a proposal being made to Hluttaw for a two-fold increase in salaries during the forthcoming 2016-17 fiscal year.

“We'll submit our budget for the coming fiscal year [to Hluttaw]. We’ll make calculations come this October and November for a two-fold increase in financial support for 2016-17, before then presenting to Hluttaw,” U Aung San Win, director of the Ministry of Religion and Culture, told Myitmakha News Agency. The ministry currently employs a three-tiered monthly salary system to teachers at monastic education schools: K36,000 for primary-school teachers, K41,000 for middle-school teachers, and K45,000 for high-school teachers.

“A two-fold increase in salaries would see primary-school teachers receive K72,000 a month and middle-school teachers around K80,000 a month,” the director added. Myanmar currently boasts 1,568 monastic education schools and over 7,000 male and female teachers.

“Whether it’s monastic education schools, or independent charity schools, I’m proud to have such support for our nation. When monastic education schools were run solely by monasteries, we had to pay our teachers solely from as many donations we could collect,” said Badana Sandima, head abbot of the Mingalar Parahti Orphanage in Yangon’s Twante Township.—Myitmakha News Agency

Myanmar Ambassador presents credentials to Egyptian President

U Myint Lwin, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Myanmar to the Arab Republic of Egypt, presented his Credentials to His Excellency Mr. Abdel Fattah Al Sisi, President of the Arab Republic of Egypt on 31 August 2016, in Cairo.—MOFA

Sagaing farmers won’t replant damaged pigeon pea crops

Farmers from Sagaing Region’s Tigyay Township will reportedly not be replanting swathes of pigeon pea crops damaged by torrential rains and pests, residents have told Myitmakha News Agency. Local farmers are instead formulating plans to grow sesame and green gram as it is reportedly too late in the season to attempt to replant pigeon pea.

“Our pigeon pea crops haven’t been successful this year on account of poor weather. The failing crops can’t be attributed to the rains, though; pests have gotten at them, too. I’ve been unsuccessful with about 15 acres of crops, of which 10 acres were destroyed by pests,” said U Kyaw Hla, a pigeon pea farmer from Tigyay Township.

But for pigeon pea growers in the region, unsuccessful crops is a new phenomenon. Flooding which struck the township last year damaged pigeon pea crops, causing difficulties for farmers in having to replant.

“Irregular weather can destroy green gram crops, and the main reason behind [flood- ing caused by such weather] is deforestation of our woodlands,” said a local green gram grower.

A 1.2 bushell’s worth of green gram currently fetches K75,000 within Tigyay Township, while the same quantity of pigeon pea reportedly goes for a market price of K104,000.

Bean growers have informed Myitmakha News Agency that is reportedly takes seven-and-a-half liters worth of green gram seeds per acre and five liters worth of pigeon pea seeds per acre.—Myitmakha News Agency

Political dialogue framework set to be finalized prior to next conference

A framework for political dialogue is set to be finalized before the second round of the 21st Century Panglong Union Peace Conference, according to a press conference on the third day of the ongoing conference in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

Retired Lt-Gen Khin Zaw Oo said that the political dialogue framework will be finalized before the next conference where a common ground will be sought for discussions on the agenda items at national-level political dialogues.

The organizing committee is responsible to compile discussions and submitted a set of discussions to the next conference, he added.

Dr Salai Lian Hmung Sak-hong said that United Nationalities Federal Council, a coalition of seven ethnic armed organizations who have not signed the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement yet, presented a paper on its policies to the third-day session of the conference.

Five representatives from the UNFC read out the paper at the conference as each representative of an organization or individual member is given only 10 minutes, he added.

UNFC held a meeting with the subcommittee-2 of the 21st Century Panglong Union Peace Conference preparatory committee last month and made an eight-point proposal for signing the NCA.

In connection with the eight-point proposal, Dr Salai Lian Hmung Sak-hong said that the responsibility rested with the government, the army and the United Nationalities Federal Council.

“The government or the UNFC or the Delegation for Political Negotiation should be contacted for that issue.”

Sai Kyaw Nyunt described the peace conference as effective to the peace process, expressing praise for the constructive approach taken by the government and the army.

Remaining organisations will present their policies on the last day of the 21st Panglong Conference, with officials saying that the Joint Committee will adopt a framework for the national-level political dialogue after taking into consideration the proposals made by respective organisations.

Sai Kyaw Nyunt described varied voices at the conference as challenges, but he added that these challenges can be taken as advantages. According to him, this will prompt stakeholders to find a way out of the diverse opinions on the establishment of a democratic federal union.

The third-day session of the 21st Century Panglong Conference was followed by a press conference, in which retired Lt-Gen Khin Zaw Oo, U Hla Maung Shwe and Dr Salai Lian Hmung Sak-hong, U Zaw Htay and U Sai Kyaw Nyunt responded to the queries raised by the correspondents.—Ye Khung Nyunt

Minister of State for Foreign Affairs U Kyaw Tin and wife Daw Wai Wai Hman are welcomed by Charge’ d affaires a.i. of the Embassy of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam in Yangon HE Mr Nguyen Thanh Vinh on their arrival at the reception to mark the 71st National Day of Viet Nam in Yangon on 2 September, 2016. PHOTO: MNA
ASEAN, China to adopt communications protocol to ease tensions at sea

MANILA — Southeast Asian countries and China will establish hotlines and adopt communications protocols to avoid potential naval clashes in the disputed waters of the South China Sea, a Philippines foreign ministry official said on Friday.

The protocols will be signed in Laos next week, when heads of the 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) meet with leaders from other regional powers — China, Japan, South Korea, Australia, India, Russia and the United States — for a three-day summit.

The mechanism, called the Code for Unplanned Encounters at Sea (CUES), would be new for both ASEAN and China, Foreign Affairs Assistant Secretary Helen de la Vega told a news conference.

“It’s one way of de-escalating tensions in the South China Sea,” she said, adding that hotlines between China and the ASEAN governments would be established. China claims almost the entire South China Sea where about $5 trillion in sea-borne trade passes annually.

Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan and Vietnam also have claims on parts of the sea, which is believed to have rich deposits of oil and gas.

“This is very important because any accident that can lead to a major confrontation will be avoided if our navies and coast guards are communicating with each other,” a senior Philippines navy commander told Reuters.

He said there had been instances in the past when Chinese vessels had not responded to radio and signal communications when they had been encountered by Philippine Navy ships.

Regardless of this agreement, the United States, Japan and Australia are expected to call on China to respect and comply with the ruling of the arbitration court in The Hague in July.

The court infuriated Beijing by ruling that China had no historical title over the South China Sea and it had breached the Philippines’ sovereign rights.

China has already improved its ability to strike at targets far from home and there will be further improvements in the future, the Global Times quoted an air force chief as saying at an air force open day.

“We are now developing a new generation of long-range bomber, and you’ll see it in the future,” Ma said, according to the paper, without elaborating.

China has been ramping up research into advanced new military equipment, including submarines, aircraft carriers and anti-satellite missiles. This has rattled nerves regionally and in Washington as China takes a more muscular approach to territorial disputes in places such as the South China Sea.

The air force, which has for years relied on large numbers of Chinese copies of Russian aircraft, is now also developing its own stealth fighters. In July, it put into service a new, domestically developed large transport aircraft.

Ma said the air force had entered into a “transformation” stage, changing its focus from quantity to quality, the report said.— Reuters

China says developing new type of long-range bomber

BEIJING — China is developing a new long-range bomber, the head of the Chinese air force was quoted as saying in state media on Friday, the latest move in its ambitious military modernisation programme.

China has already improved its ability to strike at targets far from home and there will be further improvements in the future, the Global Times quoted an air force chief as saying at an air force open day.

“We are now developing a new generation of long-range bomber, and you’ll see it in the future,” Ma said, according to the paper, without elaborating.

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Singapore says Zika infections spread, nearly 190 cases

SINGAPORE — Singapore said on Friday it had found 38 more people who had contracted Zika, raising to 189 the number infected with the mosquito-borne virus since authorities reported the first locally transmitted case six days ago.

Some of the new cases had been detected in areas where infections had not previously been reported, the health ministry said in a statement.

The ministry did not specify the locations, but the virus has been spreading daily beyond an initial cluster.

Singapore, a regional financial centre and transit hub, is the only Asian country with active transmission of the virus.

On Thursday, it said the case load had jumped to 151 infections, including two pregnant women.

Zika infections in pregnant women have been shown to cause microcephaly — a severe birth defect in which the head and brain are undersized — as well as other brain abnormalities.

The connection between Zika and microcephaly first came to light last year in Brazil, which has since confirmed more than 1,800 cases of microcephaly.

In adults, Zika infections have also been linked to a rare neurological syndrome known as Guillain-Barre, as well as other neurological disorders.

The United States, Australia and other countries have added Singapore to their growing list of places that pregnant women or those trying to conceive have been warned to avoid.

The first locally transmitted Zika infection in Singapore was reported on Saturday, with the initial tally including many foreign workers believed to be among the hundreds of thousands of migrant workers in the island’s construction industry. As the outbreak spreads, many of Singapore’s five million people are covering up and staying indoors to avoid mosquitoes as health experts warn that virus in the tropical city-state would be difficult to contain.

The Zika outbreak comes as Singapore prepares to host the floodlit Formula One Singapore Grand Prix motor-race on 18 September.

Race promoters have said preparations were going according to plan.— Reuters
Continued from yesterday
One-Pillar Pagoda is situated on the southern outskirts of Hanoi, on the banks of the Hoàn Kiem Lake, near the Temple of Literature. This pagoda was built in 1070 during the reign of Emperor Ly Thai Tông to mark the coronation of his son, who later became Emperor Ly Trang. It is dedicated to the goddess of the sea, who is said to have given him a vision of his future son. The pagoda is made of stone and wood and is supported by a single pillar, which is believed to be a symbol of stability and longevity. The pagoda is surrounded by a moat, and there is a wooden gate at the entrance. The pagoda is a popular tourist attraction and is one of the most sacred sites in Hanoi. Visitors can climb to the roof of the pagoda to enjoy panoramic views of the lake and the surrounding area. The pagoda is open to the public and is a symbol of the city's rich cultural and historical heritage.

The southern half of Hoàn Kiem Lake is covered with lush vegetation and contains a variety of trees and flowers. The lake is a popular spot for leisure activities, such as boating, fishing, and swimming. It is also home to a number of birds and other wildlife. The lake is a popular spot for locals and visitors alike, and it is a symbol of the city's natural beauty and tranquility.

The northern half of Hoàn Kiem Lake is covered with boulevards and is a popular spot for relaxation and cultural events. The lake is home to a number of cultural and historical sites, including the Temple of Literature, which is the oldest university in Vietnam and one of the most important cultural landmarks in the country. The lake is also home to a number of museums, including the Museum of History, the Museum of Fine Arts, and the Museum of Ethnology.

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Efforts made to regulate flying of drones in public spaces

THOSE wishing to fly drones in public spaces must now report- edly first request a permit from the Department of Civil Aviation (DCA).

The department informed Myitma News Agency that attempts are being made to reg- ulate the flying of drones within the country to mitigate any dis- turbance they could cause to air- borne aircraft.

“The DCA is primarily re- sponsible for airborne aircraft. In terms of drones, we just handle the protocol surrounding the is- suing of permits; we’re not con- cerned with the importation of drones into the country. We’ve mainly stipulated that drones mustn’t disturb the flight path of any airborne aircraft, and mustn’t disturb the flight path of the customer, one Nee Win alias Khine came across a 33-year-old man attempting to deposit and sue is that flying drones is neither forbidden nor permitted. Areas where drones mustn’t be flown have yet to be exactly demarcat- ed. But, those in authority don’t have yet to be exactly demarcat- ed. But, those in authority don’t have yet to be exactly demarcat- ed. But, those in authority don’t have yet to be exactly demarcat- ed. But, those in authority don’t have yet to be exactly demarcat- ed. But, those in authority don’t have yet to be exactly demarcat- ed. But, those in authority don’t have yet to be exactly demarcat- ed. But, those in authority don’t have yet to be exactly demarcat- ed. But, those in authority don’t have yet to be exactly demarcat- ed. But, those in authority don’t have yet to be exactly demarcat- ed. But, those in authority don’t have yet to be exactly demarcat- ed. But, those in authority don’t have yet to be exactly demarcat- ed. But, those in authority don’t have yet to be exactly demarcat- ed. But, those in authority don’t have yet to be exactly demarcat- ed. But, those in authority don’t have yet to be exact...
Abe holds talks with Putin on economy, isles row, Japan visit

VLADIVOSTOK (Russia) — Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and Russian President Vladimir Putin held talks on Friday for the second time this year in Russia on economic cooperation and a decades-old territorial dispute that has prevented the two countries from signing a post-World War II peace treaty.

“Believe the development of the Far East region with big potential is Russia’s top priority issue,” Abe said at the outset of his meeting with Putin on the sidelines of the Eastern Economic Forum in the Russian Far East port city of Vladivostok.

“The growth of the Asia-Pacific region leads the global economy, and Russia is a leader of the Asia-Pacific region. I think it’s very important to move forward with the Russian leadership in the region as well,” Abe said.

Putin said, “It is important that the governments support the initiatives of the private sector.”

In their previous meeting in the Russian Black Sea resort of Sochi in May, Abe said he and Putin agreed on achieving a peace treaty with a “new approach, free of any past ideas.”

He did not, however, reveal any specifics regarding the path ahead.

Japanese sources said such a visit is expected for December in Yamaguchi Prefecture, western Japan, where Abe’s family has lived for generations and his electoral constituency is located.

With Tokyo hoping an economic cooperation offer will prompt the Kremlin to soften its stance in the dispute over a group of Russian-administered isles off Japan’s northernmost island of Hokkaido, Abe is expected to pitch an eight-point economic cooperation plan he presented to Putin in May.

The plan focuses on Japanese assistance in developing the Russian Far East, a resource-rich but underdeveloped region to which Putin attaches importance to spur growth.

The Russian economy has been sluggish, hit by sanctions imposed by Western countries and falling oil prices.

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Japanese officials said the “new approach” did not mean a change in Tokyo’s stance of claiming all of the disputed islands — Etorofu, Kunashiri, Shikotan and the Habomai islet group. The isles are called the Northern Territories in Japan and the Southern Kurils in Russia.

Sources close to Russo-Japanese relations said on Thursday that Tokyo is considering reviving a once-pursued “two-track” idea of seeking the return of two of the four islands initially, while continuing talks on the fate of the other two.

Putin has previously admitted the validity of the 1956 Japan-Soviet Joint Declaration that says Russia will return the two islands — Shikotan and the Habomais — after concluding a peace treaty with Japan.

Japan and Russia are far apart over the territorial issue. Tokyo maintains that ownership of the isles must be resolved before a peace treaty can be concluded.

Russia says the territorial and peace treaty issues are not directly connected and that it took control of the isles legitimately at the end of World War II. Moscow has strengthened its control of the islands and developed their infrastructure.

The Japanese prime minister’s trip is a rare visit to Russia by a leader from the Group of Seven economies. The G-7 continues to impose sanctions on Moscow, condemning Russia’s annexation of Crimea and its military intervention in the eastern part of Ukraine.

In April 2013, Abe, who took office in December 2012, became the first Japanese prime minister to officially visit Russia in 10 years, agreeing with Putin to revive territorial talks.

Since then, while Abe has made several trips to Russia, there has been no reciprocal visit by the Russian leader to Japan.

—Kyodo News

Abe holds talks with Putin on economy, isles row, Japan visit

The Philippines wants mandatory drug tests for college admissions

MANILA — The Philippines is stepping up President Rodrigo Duterte’s battle on drugs with incoming college freshmen set to face tests for illegal drug use from next year, an education official said.

A wave of 2,400 killings unleashed in a war on drugs since Duterte came to power two months ago has gained popular support in the Southeast Asian nation, but has alarmed the UN and the United States, Manila’s close ally.

The government seeks to make drug testing a requirement for all incoming college students, said Julito Vitriolo, the executive director of the Commission on Higher Education.

Duterte took over, a toll police sources say is a result of drug dealers resisting arrest or gang feuds.

“Higher Education. “This was born out of the president’s call to make campuses drug-free, because we see the pervasive effects of drug use,” he said in a television interview.

“What’s important is for students not to use drugs. It will be a deterrent if they want to continue their studies,” Vitriolo said, adding that those testing positive could go through rehabilitation before being admitted to college.

Drug testing for university admission is now done on a voluntary basis. “It is something that we should be doing because the drug menace is real,” Monico Jacob, president of STI Education Systems Holdings Inc, told Reuters, referring to compulsory tests.

STI, which has more than 103,000 students this academic year, has performed mandatory drug testing for the past five years.

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Regional

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Duterte won the May election on a promise to wipe out drugs and dealers. He has named politicians, police generals and judges linked to the drug trade.

Police data show 2,400 deaths in the drug war after Duterte took over, a toll police sources say is a result of drug dealers resisting arrest or gang feuds.

—Reuters

Abe holds talks with Putin on economy, isles row, Japan visit

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe (L) meets with Russian President Vladimir Putin in the Russian Far East port city of Vladivostok, on 2 September 2016. The leaders meeting saw them focus on economic cooperation and a decades-old territorial dispute. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

Philippines wants mandatory drug tests for college admissions

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe gestures while delivering a speech during the 115th Police Service Anniversary at the Philippine National Police (PNP) headquarters in Quezon city, metro Manila, Philippines, on 17 August 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

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"During the G20 summit, I will have an opportunity to engage with world leaders on pressing international issues," Modi said. "I will discuss putting the global economy on the track of sustainable steady growth and responding to emerging and entrenched social, security and economic challenges emerging today.

The summit will be held in China’s eastern Hangzhou city on Sunday. "Will be in Hangzhou, China for G20 summit, where I will interact with world leaders on key global issues," Modi wrote on his Twitter account.

The Indian prime minister said he looked forward to a result-oriented summit in China. "India will engage constructively on all the issues before us and work towards finding solutions and taking forward the agenda for a robust, inclusive and sustainable international economic order that uplifts the socio-economic conditions of people across the world, especially those who need it most in developing countries," he said.

"I look forward to a productive and outcome-oriented summit. G20 is the group of the world’s 20 largest economies — Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Mexico, South Korea, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Turkey, the United Kingdom, the United States and the European Union (EU). The first G20 leaders’ summit was held in Washington in 2008. The 10th summit was held in Antalya, Turkey, in November 2015.

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TOKYO — Hitachi Ltd. started trials of its EMIEW3 humanoid robot at Tokyo’s Haneda airport on Friday to aid foreign visitors to Japan.

During the trials through December in the domestic Terminal 2 at the airport, the robot will communicate with passengers in Japanese and English at a designated information center and display relevant information.

The Japanese industrial conglomerate is hoping to enable the 90-centimeter tall humanoid robot with autonomous capabilities to guide users to destinations that has strained ties with Turkey, according to sources briefed on the matter. Volker Kauder, the head of the Christian Democrats in parliament, told a meeting of party members that he had spoken with Merkel and she emphasized the role of a passenger, during a demonstration at Haneda airport in Tokyo, on 2 September 2016. Photo: Kyodo News

Hitachi starts trials of EMIEW3 humanoid robot at Haneda airport

Developed by Hitachi Ltd., humanoid robot EMIEW guides a woman, who plays the role of a passenger, during a demonstration at Haneda airport in Tokyo, on 2 September 2016.

Germany’s Merkel not distancing herself from Armenia resolution

BERLIN — German Chancellor Angela Merkel told the parliamentary leader of her conservative party that she is not distancing herself from a Bundestag resolution on the 1915 massacre of Armenians by Ottoman forces.

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

SHIPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY AGENT FOR: M/S SINGA MARING SDN.BHD.
Phone No: 2301928

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
TUG.BONIA STAR 21, BG;SINGA BESAR 2502 VOY. NO ( - )

Consignees of cargo carried on TUG:BONIA STAR 21, BG;SINGA BESAR 2502 VOY. NO ( - ) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 3.9.2016 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of H.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.

SHIPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY AGENT FOR: M/S COSCO CONTAINER LINES Phone No: 2301185

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
MV CAPE FLORES VOY. NO ( - )

Consignees of cargo carried on MV CAPE FLORES VOY NO ( - ) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 3.9.2016 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of A.W.P.T where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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SHIPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY AGENT FOR: M/S EVERGREEN SHIPPING LINE Phone No: 2301185

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
MV MAX CRUSADER VOY. NO ( - )

Consignees of cargo carried on MV MAX CRU-SAIDER VOY NO ( - ) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 3.9.2016 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of A.W.P.T where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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SHIPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY AGENT FOR: M/S INTERIAS LINIES Phone No: 2301185

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
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SALES REVEAL FOR GALAXY NOTE 7 AFTER BATTERY FIRES

SEUL — Samsung Electronics Co Ltd (005930.KS) will replace all Galaxy Note 7 smartphones equipped with fire-prone batteries and halt sales of the flagship product in 10 markets, a devastating blow for what had been a revival in the firm’s mobile business.

Koh Dong-jin, head of the South Korean manufac-tory’s smartphone business, spoke at a news conference jam-packed with reporters and cameras where he expressed regret at the recall, which will affect markets including South Korea and the U.S. — but not China, where model feature a different battery.

The announcement on Friday comes just over two weeks since the premium device’s launch, and follows reports of the 988,900 won ($855) phone igniting while charging.

The executive, who declined to comment on the number of phones needing replacement, said Samsung had sold 2.5 million of the premium devices so far. The manufacturer plans to replace not only phones with faulty batteries sold to consumers, but also retail-ers and inventories and units in transit.

“I can’t comment on exactly how much the cost will be, it pains my heart that it will be such a big number,” Koh said.

The scale of the recall is unprecedented for Sam-sung, which prides itself on its manufacturing process. While recalls in the smart-phone industry do happen, including for rival Apple Inc (AAPL.O), the nature of the problem for the Galaxy Note 7 is a serious blow to Samsung’s reputation, ana-lysts said.—Reuters

Samsung issues recall for Galaxy Note 7 after battery fires

A Samsung Electronics’ Galaxy Note 7 new smartphone is displayed at its store in Seoul, South Korea, on 2 Septem-ber 2016. Photo: Reuters

Putin says oil output freeze would be right decision

MOSCOW — Russian President Vladimir Putin said an agreement between oil exporters to freeze output put would be the right de-cision for the global market and a compromise should be found for Iran to achieve a deal.

Attempts by OPEC and non-OPEC oil exporters to reach a pact on stabilizing production levels earlier this year foundered because Iran, which is anx-ious to increase exports after the lifting of interna-tional sanctions, declined to participate.

“I think that from the point of view of economi-c expediency and logic, it would be right to find some sort of compromise” on Iranian output, Putin said in an interview with Bloomberg, a transcript of which was published on the Kremlin website.

“I would very much like to hope that all the par-ticipants in this market, who want to maintain stable and fair world prices for energy resources, will at the end of the day take the necessary decision,” Putin was quoted as saying.

He said he would con-vey his position to Saudi Arabia’s Deputy Crown Prince Mohammed bin Sal-man, whom he may meet on the sidelines of a G20 gath-ering in China this weekend.

“It wasn’t us who rejected a freeze on production vol-umes, it was our Saudi part-ners who at the last minute changed their point of view and decided to take a time out in taking this decision,” Putin was quoted as saying.

“If Prince Salman and I talk on this subject, I will of course lay out our posi-tion again: we believe that it (an output freeze) is the right decision for global en-ergy.”—Reuters
Portraying motherhood biggest challenge in new release for Oscar-winner Vikander

VENICE — Portraying the joys and pains of motherhood in Derek Cianfrance’s “The Light Between Oceans” that premieres at the Venice film festival on Thursday was one of the biggest challenges for 27-year-old Swedish actress Alicia Vikander.

The story, set in Australia in the 1920s, is the tragic tale of a lighthouse keeper, played by Michael Fassbender, and his wife (Vikander), who have suffered two miscarriages when a baby in a boat washed ashore their remote island.

They decide to raise the child as their own, until they meet the child’s real mother years later. “I haven’t had a child yet ... so knowing that half of the audience, or half of the women watching it will just feel like ‘she doesn’t really know what it’s like,’ was something I felt a bit pressured by,” Vikander, who won an Oscar for her role in “The Danish Girl”, told a news conference.

Cianfrance’s drama, based on a novel of the same name, is one of 20 movies competing for the Golden Lion that will be awarded on 10 September.

The director said he was immediately attracted to the book because of its battle between truth and love, and chased it for a year before he was given a chance to direct it.

“I don’t think any of these characters in this film are good or bad, don’t think they ever meant to hurt somebody, but they make decisions with their heart and with their emotions and there are consequences to those emotional decisions,” he said.

Vikander said she was nervous to work with Fassbender, who she described as "one of the most brilliant actors out there", but the energy she brought to the movie impressed.— Reuters

N.Y. court tosses Lindsay Lohan’s Grand Theft Auto V lawsuit

NEW YORK — A New York state appeals court on Thursday dismissed a lawsuit in which the actress Lindsay Lohan accused the maker of the popular “Grand Theft Auto” video games of basing a character on her without her permission.

Take-Two Interactive Software Inc did not use Lohan’s “name, portrait or picture” in “Grand Theft Auto V” and therefore did not violate her right to privacy, the five-judge Appellate Division panel in Manhattan said.

The court also dismissed similar claims against Take-Two by Karen Gravano, star of the “Mob Wives” reality television series.

Lohan’s lawyer, Robert Pritchard, had no immediate comment, while Gravano’s lawyer Thomas Farinella said: “We’re clearly disappointed and are exploring our options.”

Take-Two did not immediately respond to a call seeking comment.

Lohan accused Take-Two and its Rockstar Games unit of mirroring “Grand Theft Auto V” actress character Lacey Jonas on her, with a similar look, voice, clothing and hair.

But the appeals court said that even if the character resembled Lohan, “Grand Theft Auto V” was protected as a “work of fiction and satire.”

The panel also dismissed Lohan’s claim that Take-Two improperly used her image in advertising for the game because “the images are not of Lohan herself, but merely the avatar,” the court ruled.

Gravano, meanwhile, claimed that the game’s character Andrea Bottino mirrored aspects of her life, including how she speaks.

Lohan starred in the 1998 movie, “The Parent Trap,” and 2004’s “Mean Girls,” but in recent years she has been in the news more for her legal woes and visits to rehab clinics.

“Grand Theft Auto V” has sold more than 65 million units worldwide, according to the company’s 2016 annual report.— Reuters

Jackie Chan to get lifetime achievement Oscar

LOS ANGELES — Martial arts expert and actor Jackie Chan will receive a lifetime achievement Oscar, the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences announced on Thursday.

Chan, 62, the Hong Kong-born star of Hollywood movies such as “Kung Fu Panda,” “The Karate Kid” and the “Rush Hour” franchise, will join documentary maker Frederick Wiseman, British film editor Anne V. Coates and casting director Lynn Stalmaster as recipients of the 2016 Governors Awards.

Each will get an honorary Oscar statuette recognizing their lifetime contribution to film at a gala in Los Angeles in November.

Academy President Cheryl Boone Isaacs in a statement called them all “true pioneers and legends in their crafts.”

Chan made his movie debut at the age of 8, and has acted and sometimes written and directed more than 30 martial arts movies in Hong Kong. He has never won an Oscar.

In August, he was ranked the second-highest paid actor in the world by Forbes with estimated 2016 earnings of $61 million, just behind “Fast and Furious” star Dwayne Johnson.— Reuters

Amy Adams leads in sci-fi thriller as Oscar buzz builds in Venice

VENICE — Five-time Academy Award nominee Amy Adams may get closer to finally landing an Oscar as two of her movies are competing at the Venice film festival this year, including Denis Villeneuve’s sci-fi thriller “Arrival”.

In the film, premiering on Thursday, Adams plays a linguist hired by the US government to go inside one of 12 spaceships that have touched down around the world. Her task: to establish contact with the extraterrestrials on board, develop a common language and discover the purpose of their visit.

The movie, which also stars Forest Whitaker and Jeremy Renner, is one of 20 US and international films vying for the Golden Lion that will be awarded on 10 September.

Various scenes in the movie are silent, with Villeneuve using close-ups of Adams to convey that real communication does not always require words.

“I was drawn in by the intimacy of it,” Adams told Reuters.

She said she always asks directors why they want her for a part, and turns down roles where they are looking for “someone to be likeable”.

“Denis said ‘I need to know what she’s thinking’... He trusted the audience to go on this emotional journey,” she later added at a news conference.

“Arrival” is one of several movies in Venice that feature a strong female lead. The character “felt like every woman I know who is struggling with hard things, working through personal issues while also heading out into the world”, Adams said.

After a period in the doldrums, the world’s oldest film festival is again seen as a launchpad for the industry’s award season after premiering Academy winners in its last three editions.— Reuters
**More Aussie dads taking time off work to care for young children**

**CANBERRA — More Australian dads than ever before are taking time out from work to care for their young children, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) revealed on Friday.**

Ahead of Sunday’s Father’s Day celebrations, the ABS has said Australian dads are increasingly taking advantage of flexible working arrangements and changing social stigma to care for their children.

Lisa Conolly, director of Family and Community Statistics at the ABS, said the number of dads choosing to look after their children had almost doubled in the last 20 years. “Nowadays, around 30 per cent of dads took advantage of flexible work hours to look after young children (under 12), compared with 16 per cent of dads two decades ago,” Conolly said in a statement released on Friday. The number of dads working from home to care for their children doubled from 7 per cent to 14 per cent, while dads who worked part-time to care for their children rose from 1 per cent to 5 per cent. “Although mothers are still the primary caregivers to children in Australia, Conolly said perceptions towards working through having children were shifting. While nine in 10 dads are still employed despite having children, more mothers than ever before are also holding down employment while raising children. “90 per cent of dads with children under 15 are employed (compared with 65 per cent of mums). Just fewer than 92 per cent of these dads work full-time (compared with 42 per cent of employed mums),” the statement said.

Father’s Day is celebrated on 3 September in Australia, and Conolly said while many dads feel “rushed for time” when caring for children under 15 years of age, Sunday is a great excuse for fathers to relax and spend time with loved ones.

“It comes as no surprise that almost all parents of children under 15 — 85 per cent of dads and 93 per cent of mums — felt rushed or pressed for time,” Conolly said. “However, around 89 per cent of both also felt they were able to spend quality time with their family and friends.” —Xinhua

**Mariachi musicians honour late singer Juan Gabriel in Mexico City**

**MEXICO CITY — Mariachi folk musicians joined the faithful in Mexico City’s historic Garibaldi Square on Tuesday to pay tribute to late singer Juan Gabriel, who died of a heart attack on Sunday.**

Gathering around a statue of the Mexican performer considered a musical icon across Latin America for over 40 years, the musicians played his signature tunes and a priest held a service in his honor. Gabriel, whose real name was Alberto Aguilera, was 66. “It has hit all of us hard. We are hurting for his loss,” said Leonor Rodriguez, of the Juan Gabriel fan club. —Reuters
Murray says noise under roof a distraction for players

NEW YORK — Andy Murray said on Thursday the noise created by the US Open’s new retractable roof over Arthur Ashe Stadium is a distraction to players and makes it difficult to react to opponents’ shots.

But the British second seed managed to shut out the noise and Spain’s Marcel Granollers during a 6-4, 6-1, 6-4 second-round victory played while rain beat down on the closed roof and crowd reverberated inside.

The Wimbledon and Olympic champion ground down the world number 45 in a match involving numerous lung-busting rallies and played under a cacophony of sound with the $150 million roof closed from the start.

“It’s because we use our ears when we play,” Murray said, explaining the difficulty. “It’s not just the eyes. It helps us pick up the speed of the ball, the spin that’s on the ball, how hard someone’s hitting it.

“If we played with our ears covered or with headsets on, it would be a big advantage if your opponent wasn’t wearing them.”

At times, the players could barely hear the ball off their strings and the rain hammering on the roof was almost deafening but Murray kept calm to clinch a convincing victory.

“At first we didn’t know if there was just more people come in at the change of ends, but then we quickly realised it was the rain,” Murray said.

But the Scot, chasing his fourth grand slam title, said players will cope with the extra noise.

“As an athlete, that’s what you do. We adjust to conditions, different conditions every week,” said Murray.

“I’m sure if the feedback is that the TV or the spectators aren’t enjoying the match as much then they will look into it and try and change it.

“But if it’s fine on TV, which from what I have heard it is, I don’t know what the fans have said about it yet, but the players will adjust.”

Murray led 5-2 in the first set only for Granollers to hit back but the Scot won a game lasting more than 10 minutes to break and clinch it on his seventh set point.— Reuters

Zhang topples former champion Stosur in second round

NEW YORK — China’s Zhang Shuai, who broke through with a stunning run to this year’s Australian Open quarter-finals, advanced to the third round at the US Open on Thursday with a victory over former champion Samantha Stosur.

Zhang lost serve just once in ousting the 16th-seeded Australian 6-3, 6-3 on the Grandstand court.

The 51st-ranked Zhang became the first women’s qualifier since 1990 to reach the quarter-finals at this year’s French Open, Zhang won a baseline battle by out-classing the Australian, forcing her into 27 errors, including 20 from the forehand side. Zhang next faces 52nd-ranked Yaroslava Shvedova of Kazakhstan, who routed China’s Wang Qiang 6-0, 6-1.—Reuters

Bale dreams of Champions League glory in Cardiff hometown

MADRID — The possibility of winning Europe’s most prestigious club competition in his home-town has given Wales winger Gareth Bale extra motivation to help Real Madrid become the first club to defend their Champions League title.

The former Tottenham Hotspur winger has won the Champions League twice in three years since his record-breaking move to Real in 2013. Manchester United’s Paul Pogba has since overtaken Bale as the world’s most expensive player.

If Bale were to achieve the unprecedented third Champions League title this season’s final at Cardiff, it would make him the only Welshman to win the competition three times, surpassing Ryan Giggs, Ian Rush and Joey Jones. “I played the (2014 European) Super Cup in Cardiff before and it was an amazing experience to have my friends and family close by,” Bale told British media. “I suppose there’s a little more motivation if there needs to be any more and we’ll be trying to make history in Cardiff.

“We know we have a chance and we will be trying our best to do that. My aim is to win as many trophies as I can and as many Champions Leagues as I can.”

English Premier League clubs spent a staggering 1.165 billion pounds ($1.55 billion) on new recruits during the close season but Bale felt the massive outlay will not necessarily translate into success on the continental stage.— Reuters

Messi goal puts Argentina top of World Cup group

BUENOS AIRES — Lionel Messi marked his retirement about face with a goal in a 10-man Argentina a 1-0 win over Uruguay on Thursday that lifted them to the top of the South American qualifying group for the 2018 World Cup finals in Russia.

In a match of few chances, Messi created something out of nothing three minutes before half-time when, surrounded by defenders, his shot from outside the box took a deflection on Jose Maria Gimenez and wrongfoots ed goalkeeper Fernando Muslera.

It took Messi’s record as Argentina’s top scorer to 56 in his 114th international and proved the perfect insurance for his team who were reduced to 10 men when young forward Paulo Dybala was sent off on the stroke of halftime. Dybala, who had almost put his side ahead in the 31st minute with a shot that hit the post, was sent off for a second booking and left the pitch in tears after his first start for Argentina.

Uruguay, who had spent virtually the entire first half defending, took the game to Argentina in the second but hardly troubled goalkeeper Sergio Romero.

“I wanted to be here after all the confusion I’d caused by first saying I wasn’t coming and then that I was,” Messi told reporters.

Messi said in June he was quitting international soccer after the disappointment of losing the Copa America final on penalties to Chile.

Argentina’s Edgardo Bauza, who now takes his side to play bottom team Venezuela away on Tuesday.

Brazil’s Titus will be looking to confirm their improvement at home against Colombia, who beat Venezuela 2-0. Paraguay, under new coach Francisco Arce, upset Copa America holders Chile 2-1 in Asuncion to climb to sixth also with 12 points and play Uruguay next in Montevideo. Bolivia gave their new coach Guillermo Hoyos a winning start with a 2-0 home win over Peru and face seventh-placed Chile away next.— Reuters