Mrauk-U in Rakhine touted for UNESCO’s cultural heritage list

Thura U Aung Ko, the Union Minister for Religious Affairs and Culture, said that the Ministry is making arrangements for putting Mrauk-U, an ancient city in Rakhine State, on the tentative list of 2018 UNESCO cultural heritage sites. At the 10th day meeting of 2nd Amyotha Hluttaw 6th regular session held yesterday, concerning the question raised by U Maung Kyaw Zan of constituency 9 in Rakhine State, the Union Minister replied, “The 1st Coordination meeting was held for putting forward Mrauk-U, the ancient city of Rakhine cultural heritage. At the meeting, it was decided to systematically carry out the tasks of designating Mrauk-U as a world cultural heritage site in combination with global countries, to cooperate with local people and Rakhine State Government and UNESCO cultural heritage sites.”

Peace Commission, DPN hold talks over ceasefire

THE Union Government’s Peace Commission and representatives from the government and the United Nationalities Federal Council (UNFC) who have yet to sign the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) held a meeting yesterday to discuss matters related with military issues. At the opening of the 7th meeting, Dr. Tin Myo Win, Chairman of the Peace Commission, called on representatives of both sides to reach a ceasefire deal, as progress was seen in the previous meeting. “Making the best use of the progress we have seen in the previous meetings, the leaders of both sides at this meeting are to cooperate with each other to be able to bring peace to the entire indigenous people of the country,” said Dr. Tin Myo Win.

The 7th meeting will focus on issues related with the Joint Monitoring Committee, including locating military camps, measures to be taken during the transition period and the role of foreign experts in the joint monitoring sector, said Lt-Gen Yar Pyae, representative of the Tatmadaw. In the meeting, representatives of the Tatmadaw will make clear some points of the JMC’s works, as they are considered unclear by the ethnic armed organisations, he added.
2nd Pyithu Hluttaw 6th regular session holds its 10th day meeting

By Aye Aye Thant

At today’s meeting held in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday, replies to five asterisk-marked questions and discussion from the Hluttaw representatives over one motion and acquisition of the approval of the Hluttaw concerning one bill were made.

Concerning the motion urging the Union Government to monitor the use of Information Technology which can possibly ruin youths’ characters and threaten regional peace and stability put forward by Daw Yin Min Hlaing of Gantgaw constituency, Hluttaw representatives discussed at length.

Major Ne Win, Tatmadaw Hluttaw representative, said, “Myanmar has reached the stage where every individual can use the internet. It has been found that effective use is very weak. Social media, especially by ethnicities in using Facebook, should be educated. It is of great importance to avoid the use of words which can ruin Myanmar culture, facts and stories which can badly affect readers, statements and writings which can damage national security, and cause hate speech, which can result in hatred between races, individuals, institutions and religions, facts which can harm national solidarity and rule of law. Being the best and most effective weapon in organising and instigating people, social media should broadly be used only in the supportive spheres for the people and organisations.”

He also added, “Previously, SIM Cards were available freely. Now, SIM Cards were made to be used by having them registered with the National Scrutinisation Cards. It was found that online registration is easy, but registration can be made by dubious ways and means — such as purchase on behalf of others and transfers of users. Responsible officials from respective companies should effectively control the sale of SIM cards through systematic registration.

Measures for promulgating Cyber Law should be implemented as soon as possible. Regarding excessive use of social websites by youths and the spread of rumours and false news, educating, sharing knowledge and organising should be made among users. Simultaneously, those who violate existing rules and laws should be found out and arrested in accord with the law.”

U Win Win of Minbu constituency, U Ne Htoo Aung of Nahtogyi constituency, U Myo Zaw Aung of Kawlin constituency and U Ye Lin of Ahlone constituency also took part in the discussion.

In regards to the motion, U Thant Sin Maung, Union Minister for Transport and Communications replied, “Most internet users in Myanmar are using social media such as Facebook, Messenger, Viber and Twitter. Out of them, Facebook users are on the top of the list, reaching nearly 14 million, according to estimates made in January, 2017.

Weather forecasts, situations on natural disasters, local and international news on politics, education, social activities and economic situations can be known with the changing times. It helped people to broaden their knowledge scope. But without judgment and reasoning as to the news and information, it can ruin characters of youths, cause sexual arousal, drug trafficking, defamation of a person or an organisation, accusations, racial and religious conflicts, and ruination of regional peace and stability due to political agitation.”

The Union Minister added, “For emergence of social website users who are dutiful and conscientious, educating, promulgating necessary rules and laws, controlling licence-holding telecommunication operators, cooperating with those that are giving services of social media and website, monitoring and arresting from the respective authority are to be carried out. In doing so, so as not to harm privacy of users the tasks are to be implemented in negotiation with President Office and the Office of Union Attorney General.

Concerning the motion, U Win Myint, Speaker of Pyithu Hluttaw announced the motion was approved by the Hluttaw.

The 11th day meeting of the 2nd Pyithu Hluttaw, 6th regular session will be convened on 14 November, it was learnt.

Mrauk-U in Rakhine touted for UNESCO’s cultural heritage list

FROM PAGE-1

to put forward the designation of Mrauk-U as a world cultural heritage site in the UNESCO world heritage conference to be held in June 2018, by combining an advisory board, a scholar group, local people and historians.”

Concerning the question raised by Dr. Kyaw Than Tun (Canton) of constituency 3 of Mandalay Region, the Union Minister replied, “Tagaung Old Region in Thabeikkyin Township was being conserved under the law on conservation of the regions as cultural heritage sites on 5th June, 2007 by designating an ancient edifice zone, ancient region zone and conserved area zone. To put forward as a world heritage site there are many requirements, data on the history, strength, accuracy, perfectness, being qualified with designated standards, cooperation and participation of the local populace, effective conservation of cultural heritage and abiding by restrictions strictly. Moreover, Tagaung Old Region is of great importance for Myanmar history, but there are many necessities to include the region in the world heritage nomination list, and historians and researchers are to be sent for further research work. Accordingly, there are not any plans yet for putting forward Tagaung Old Region as the tentative list of world cultural heritage.”—Aung Ye Thwin

Peace Commission, DPN hold talks over ceasefire

FROM PAGE-1

He also said that the Delegation of Peace Negotiation (DPN) proposed a better way for discussion with the UDPJC, as there are some deadlocks between the Peace Commission and the DPN.

During the meeting yesterday, the two sides reached agreement on inviting international representatives for the joint-monitoring committee.

Khu Oo BAL, leader of the DPN, expressed his hope that the leaders of both sides could find consensus of the deadlock. The two sides have met seven times in 15 months in seeking ways for all to sign the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement.

The meeting was attended by Dr. Tin Myo Win, U Thein Zaw, Li-Gen Yar Pyae, Li-Gen Min Naung, Li-Gen Tin Maung Win, Deputy Attorney-General U Win Myint, U Naing Ngan Lin and members of the Peace Commission, members of the JMCU, members of the DPN and observers. The meeting continues today at the same venue.—Zaw Gyi

Overripe rice fields in Maungtaw, Rakhine

State harvested

ABOUT 779 acres of overripe fields had already been harvested in Maungtaw region from 26 October to 7 October according to Agricultural Mechanization Department.

Over 620 acre of overripe rice paddy fields in Myothugyi ward in Maungtaw Township were harvested by two harvesters yesterday morning.

An official of the Yangon Agricultural Mechanization Department U Maung Maung Linwin said “We are attempting to harvest paddy fields near Myothugyi ward using two harvesters but we can only harvest about 7 acres of rice paddies per day by a harvester as the fields are narrow”.

There are about 40,000 acres of paddy fields among the total of 79,000 acres of rice paddy fields across the Buthidaung and Maungtaw region are healthily ripened and ready for harvest. This year the production rate of the paddy are falling.

Last year’s production rate of the paddy was about 65.84 baskets per acre while it is expected to produce only 54 baskets per acre this year.

As some terrorist attacks occurred in the region, we could not use sufficient fertilizers on the plantations said deputy head of Maungtaw Agriculture Department U Than Kyaw.

All rice paddies will also be harvested with a total of 32 harvesters, including 14 State owned harvesters and 18 state government owned harvesters starting from 26 October until January 2018 according to the Agricultural Mechanization Department.—Nay Htet Khang
Three men arrested for illegal logging in Bamauk

A TEAM from local forestry department in Bamauk, Katha District in Sagaing Region, found three men illegally logging teak trees and sawed teak weighing more than 42 tons and an elephant near Thayatkon Village in Bamauk Township, Sagaing Region, on 7th November.

Acting on a tip-off, the team comprising officials of the Forest Department and local police inspected a forest reserve No. 12 near Thayatkon Village and discovered 100 logs weighing more than 29 tons, sawed timber weighing more than 13.5 tons, one chainsaw, one elephant and three men. Bamauk Police Station has opened a file against them. — Maung Chit Lin (Indaw)

American companies introduce digital advances at tech summit

May Thein Hnin

In an attempt to persuade Myanmar businesses to use digital technology, the US ICT Council for Myanmar, which includes the American companies Microsoft, vmware, Oracle, Google, Cisco, and Visa, held a Digital Transformation Summit yesterday at the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (UMFCCI).

Some of those tech companies have been providing technical solutions to banks and telecommunication enterprises for the past two years. This summit aims to further introduce digital technologies to Myanmar commerce.

Small firms are far removed from digital technology due to monetary problems and other difficulties. However, this summit aimed to prove that digitization can actually reduce costs, a technology expert said.

“The smaller the firm is, the more they need to change into digital technologies to Myanmar commerce. Businesses utilising digitalisation in entire industry, according to a survey of the US ICT Council. However, the survey points out that the number of businesses using digitisation has increased from 2,500 to over 9,000.

“Frankly I say, tech companies will persuade businesses to sell their solutions. We requested them to offer reasonable price with our small firms. We also asked for technical sharing to our local businesses. If many businesses are interested in it, they will make a profit later”, said U Thaung Tin, the vice chairman of UMFCCI.

Officials from the US ICT Council at the tech summit discussed topics such as “Digitising Business Processing and Advancing Cybersecurity” and “Using the Internet to Improve Marketing and Business Expansion”. Attendees also raised questions for further discussions.
Yangon to receive 24-hour electricity supply

Ko Moe

YANGON will get an around-the-clock supply of electricity in the Yangon Region with the help of over 430 megawatts which will be produced by three power plants next year, said Daw Nilar Kyaw, Yangon Region minister for Electricity, Industry and Transportation.

In a bid to get full access to a 24-hour electricity supply, the Yangon Region will be powered by a total of 430 megawatts produced by three power plants, with 100MWs by Thakaya Power Plant, 108MWs by Thatton Combined-cycle Gas Turbine Power Plant and 225MWs by Myingyan Combined-cycle Gas Turbine Power Plant. Those plants are likely to produce electricity by January or February 2018, she said.

At the Yangon Regional Hluttaw meeting held on 7th November, Daw Nilar Kyaw had responded a question raised by U Nay Win, Thongwa constituency, on plans for reduction of power cuts.

In addition, emergency electrical services will be provided with the use of diesel powered generators or CNG generators, she continued. Yangon is consuming an estimated 1,190 megawatts of electric power a year, accounting for over half of the total consumption of the whole country. Its electricity demand has increased yearly by 15 per cent.

The more foreign direct investment that enters the country, the higher the electricity demand, she said.

Yangon is currently powered by ten 230 kilovolt substations. There are expired around 430 megawatts underground power grids between 50 and 100 years old in the Yangon Region. Yangon region government and Yangon City Electric Supply Board and companies authorised to generate electricity supply are preparing for construction of substations, power grids and transformers.

Also, they are also performing maintenance of power cables and transformers, said Daw Nilar Kyaw. The commercial city of Yangon has 29 industrial zones and more than 6,200 small- and medium-sized enterprises, all of which hike up electricity demands compared to other regions and states.

The Yangon Region is mainly dependent on electric power provided by power plants such as Yaywar, Shweli and Paunglaung, which are far from the city. Additionally, a small number of thermal power stations are one of the reasons for the insufficient electricity supply in Yangon, according to Yangon City Electric Supply Board. Yangon's electricity consumption is 370 MWs in the eastern district, which is the main location of industrial zones, 380 MWs in the northern district, 360 MWs in the western district, which is the central point for most of the hotels and supermarkets, and 44 MWs in the underdeveloped southern district, according to Yangon City Electric Supply Board.

Many people visit Pakhan Gyi Ancient Monastery

The ancient monastery, Pakhan Gyi was built by U Pho Toke and Daw Phoe about 150 years ago in Yesagyo, Pakokku District and was named “second Bagan” so many people visited Pha Khan Gyi.

The ancient monastery was built out 254 teak poles and the girth of one pole is from 6' to 7’ and its height is from 50’ to 90’.

These poles are straight lines without any joints.

It takes two years for them to be built. Many visitors including young people and older adults came to see it when it was decorated with priceless architecture.

During the peak season, there were many local people visiting the monastery because the transportation was better than before.

There 771 foreign visitors between January and October this year. This year has seen more visitors than previous years.—MDN

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THE ancient monastery, Pakhan Gyi was built by U Pho Toke and Daw Phoe about 150 years ago in Yesagyo, Pakokku District and was named “second Bagan” so, many people visited Pha Khan Gyi.

The ancient monastery was built out 254 teak poles and the girth of one pole is from 6’4” to 7”2 and its height is from 50’ to 90’.

These poles are straight lines without any joints.

It takes two years for them to be built. Many visitors including young people and older adults came to see it when it was decorated with priceless architecture.

During the peak season, there were many local people visiting the monastery because the transportation was better than before.

There 771 foreign visitors between January and October this year. This year has seen more visitors than previous years.—MDN
Border trade over 4 months worth US$4.1 billion, a decrease of US$260 million

THE Value of border trade from 1st April to 27th October this fiscal year declined by US$260 million compared to the same period last year.

Border trade from 1st April to 27th October this fiscal year hit US$4.15 billion, US$2.34 billion in exports and US$1.6 billion in imports, according to the official statistics of the Ministry of Commerce.

Myanmar conducts trade with neighboring countries—China, India, Bangladesh and Thailand. Sino-Myanmar border trade is carried out through the Muse, Lweje, Kanpiketee, Chin Shwe, and Kengtung gates, while Myanmar carries out border trade with India via the Tamu and Reed gates. The country’s border trade gates with Bangladesh are Sittway and Maungtaw as well as Thailand via Tachileik, Myawady, Kawthaung, Myeik, HteeKhee, Mawtaung, and Maese.

The decrease in export through border trade is due to a major decrease in Muse border trade camps, which used to perform the largest amount of trade out of all 16 border trade camps.

The value of border trade as of 27th October in the current FY was $2.86 billion in Muse, $163 million in Lweje, $299 million in Chin Shwe, $59 million in Kanpiketee, $98,000 in Kengtung, $42.4 million in Myawady, $93.8 million in Kawthaung, $123 million in Myeik, $3.05 million in HteeKhee, $3.4 million in Mawtaung, $33,000 in Maese, $6.34 million in Sittway, $3.43 million in Maungtaw, $18.1 million in Tamu and $19.6 million in Reed.

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

Myanmar’s regional trade hit US$5.7 billion in first half of this FY

Myanmar’s regional trade with ASEAN countries through sea routes and border gates totalled about US$5.7 billion in the first half of the current fiscal year, comprised of US$2.9 billion in exports and US$3.42 billion in imports, according to statistics released by the Ministry of Commerce.

Since April, Thailand was ranked first among ASEAN countries having the largest trade value of US$2.45 billion with Myanmar, followed by Singapore in second place with about US$1.86 billion. Malaysia was in third place with trade values of US$1.7 million, while Indonesia stood at fourth place with an estimated US$1 million worth of trade. Myanmar’s trade with Vietnam was about US$377 million.

The value of bilateral trade with the Philippines was US$21 million. Bilateral trade value between Cambodia and Myanmar was about US$2 million, while trade value with Laos was about US$1 million. Brunei’s trade with Myanmar fetched less than US$1 million.

The country mainly exported agricultural products, fishery products and minerals, while food and beverages, electronic tools, motor vehicles and consumer goods were imported into Myanmar.


Apart from the main trade with partner China, Myanmar’s external trade is mostly carried out with regional partners. Trade with countries of the European Union cannot compete against regional trade.—Ko Htet
New Delhi pollution hits dangerous level, putting runners at risk

NEW DELHI — Pollution in the Indian capital hit a dangerous level on Tuesday, putting residents at risk, forcing the closure of schools, and bringing calls from doctors for the city’s half marathon to be canceled.

Delhi’s Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said the city had once become a “gas chamber”. Schools for younger children were ordered shut on Wednesday and all outdoor activity at high schools suspended.

A thick fog that hung over the sprawling city worsened conditions. Residents complained of smarting eyes and irritation in the throat. The air quality index, which measures the concentration of poisonous particulate matter in the air, hit the “severe” level of 451 on a scale where the maximum reading is 500 and anything above 100 is considered unhealthy by the Central Pollution Control Board.

At the severe level, even healthy people will be affected while those who have existing diseases will be severely impacted, it said.

In some parts of Delhi, the air quality was so poor that it was beyond the maximum level, according to the US Embassy’s real-time air quality index. It stood at 999 for RK Puram area beyond which no readings are available.

That level is equal to smoking 50 cigarettes a day, Dr Arvind Kumar, chairman for chest surgery at Sir Ganga Ram hospital, said. “We are in a state of medical emergency, schools should be shut, we need to bring these levels down. We are all shortening our lives.”

The Indian Medical Association urged Delhi’s biggest running race, due on 19 November, to be called off to protect runners and volunteers from exposure to high levels of deadly particulate matter that lodge deep in the lungs. It said the air quality is particularly poor early in the day when the race will be run.

The air quality index measures concentrations of PM 2.5, PM 10, ozone, nitrogen dioxide and sulfur dioxide among other indicators. The air quality is likely to worsen in the next few days as a northwesterly wind is expected to bring toxic smoke from the neighbouring states of Punjab and Haryana where farmers burn crop stubble before the new planting season.

Delhi’s deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia said emergency measures such as banning the entry of trucks into the capital and suspension of construction activity will kick in, if the pollution level rose further. Last November, about a million children were forced to stay home from school, thousands of workers reported sick and queues formed outside shops selling face masks as New Delhi struggled with its worst pollution for nearly 20 years.

Vehicle emissions and dust from construction sites were the factors blamed for that spike, besides fireworks and farm burnings. Bharti Airtel, the country’s top telecoms operator that sponsors the Delhi race, said it had been assured by the organizers that steps were being taken to reduce the impact of air pollution on the runners.

Salt mixed with water will be sprinkled on the entire track to ensure that dust pollution is minimal, it said. No vehicles will be allowed on the route.

But going forward, the administration would have to take steps to improve air quality, the company said in a statement.

“Air pollution poses serious health risks and it is important that these concerns are addressed urgently and appropriately by the authorities for Airtel to continue associating with the event next year and beyond,” it said in a statement.—Reuters

Viet Nam releases water from brimming reservoirs as APEC summit nears

DANANG, Viet Nam — Viet Nam released water from seven dangerously full reservoirs on Tuesday to avoid further flooding, after a weekend typhoon killed nearly 100 people.

Authorities said particular effort was being made to avoid flooding around the city of Danang, which will host US President Donald Trump, China’s Xi Jinping and Russia’s Vladimir Putin among Asia-Pacific leaders at a summit this week.

Water was being released from seven reservoirs, in line with a flood relief plan, the Steering Committee for Disaster Prevention said, and observers had been posted at major reservoirs to monitor water levels constantly.

Typhoon Damrey, which struck on Saturday, was the 12th major storm of the year. Eighty-nine people were known to have died because of the storm, 18 people were missing and 174 people were injured, the search and rescue committee said.

As much as 1,700 mm (67 inches) of rain was recorded at one weather station in the week to Monday. Rains are expected to continue until Wednesday before reducing on Thursday.

Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) meetings began in Danang on Monday, and Trump, Xi and Putin are due to join other regional leaders at the main summit on Friday and Saturday.

The schedule of meetings has not been disrupted by the rain, but the leaders’ spouses may not be able to make a planned excursion to the UNESCO heritage town of Hoi An on Saturday.

Waters in the streets rose to head height at the weekend, although they had subsided somewhat by Tuesday.

Because of its long coastline, Viet Nam is prone to destructive storms and flooding. Floods killed more than 80 people in northern Viet Nam last month, while a typhoon wreaked havoc in central provinces in September.

The storm hit a key coffee-growing region of the world’s biggest producer of robusta coffee beans near the start of the harvest. But farmers in Daklak, the heart of the region, said the damage was limited.—Reuters

Hong Kong to play active role in China’s “going global” campaign

HONG KONG — A Chinese official said here Wednesday that China will continue to go global in this new era with new opportunities brought to the world, especially to Hong Kong.

Xie Feng, Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China (CPC) in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR), made the remarks at a briefing to foreign chambers of commerce in Hong Kong and representatives of multinational corporations on the outcome as well as significance of the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC).

“We are promoting China’s socialist modernization drive and are working to ensure the faithful implementation of one country, two systems’ in Hong Kong. This will bring opportunities to not only Hong Kong but also countries and business communities around the globe,” Xie said.—Xinhua
Xi, Trump have afternoon tea at Palace Museum

BEIJING — Chinese President Xi Jinping and his wife Peng Liyuan welcomed their US counterparts with an afternoon tea at the Palace Museum on Wednesday.

President Donald Trump and his wife Melania Trump arrived in Beijing earlier on Wednesday.

They had the brief afternoon tea in the Baoyun Building, also known as the Hall of Embodied Treasures, in the southwestern corner of the Forbidden City.

Xi thanked his guests for their kind reception at the Mar-a-Lago estate when he visited the United States in April and wished them a pleasant time in China.

With a tablet computer, Trump showed Xi and Peng video clips of his granddaughter, Arabella Kushner, singing in mandarin and reciting a part of the Three-Character Classic and ancient Chinese poems.

Xi spoke highly of the child’s Chinese skills and said her performance deserves an “A+.”

Arabella is already a child star in China, said Xi, adding that he hoped she would visit China in the future.

Built in 1915, the Baoyun Building is a Western-style architecture in the former imperial compound. It was used to store antiques, but now serves as an exhibition hall for the museum’s history.—Xinhua

FBI tries to access cellphone of Texas church mass shooting gunman

HOUSTON — The FBI agents collected the cell phone of the gunman, who killed 26 people in a shooting rampage in a Texas church, but have yet to access it, said Christopher Combs, FBI special agent in charge on Tuesday.

Combs said during a press conference outside the church in Sutherland Springs, the US state of Texas, “we will know more when we are able to explore his phone,” adding the gunman is not in the FBI database.

A local law enforcement official confirmed there are 136 officers working on the “massive crime scene” and investigation can go on for days.

The suspect was identified as Devin Kelley from New Braunfels, a city about 50 kilometres north of Sutherland Springs.

Kelley received a bad-conduct discharge from the US Air Force for assaulting his wife and child, and was sentenced to 12 months’ confinement after a 2012 court-martial.

He served in Logistics Readiness at the Holloman Air Force Base in the southwestern US state of New Mexico from 2010 until his discharge, US Air Force spokesperson Ann Stefanek told media earlier.

Stefanek later confirmed the Air Force didn’t report the shooter’s domestic violence conviction to the FBI, leaving the door open for him to buy weapons.

At least 26 people, including an infant and a pregnant woman, were killed in the worst shooting incident in Texas history, with 10 injured victims still in critical conditions, authorities said.

The shooting happened at the First Baptist Church. Kelley walked in around 11:30 am (1730 GMT) on Sunday and opened fire on the crowd of people.

At the press conference, Combs also warned people to take shootings very seriously and do everything possible to prevent such crisis and try to prevent it from happening.—Xinhua

EU Election Observation Mission launched in Nepal ahead of two major elections

KATHMANDU — The European Union Election Observation Mission was launched here on Tuesday for the parliamentary and provincial elections of Nepal slated for 26 November and 7 December this year respectively. The mission was formally launched by Chief Observer Zeljana Zovko, who is a member of the European Parliament from Croatia. The European Union was invited to deploy the mission to observe the elections. The mission will comprise more than 100 observers including experts on political, electoral and legal issues. “The elections mark an important stage in Nepal’s democratic development, and I hope that our presence will contribute to an inclusive and transparent electoral process,” Zeljana Zovko said at a press conference on Tuesday.

Over the last two days, Zovko held rounds of meetings with the Election Commission of Nepal, government officials, as well as representatives of various political parties.

During its observation and assessment, the mission will oversee legal framework and its implementation, work of election administration, campaign activities, conduct of media, role of state institutions and civil society, voting, counting and tabulation among others. Zovko further informed that 38 long-term observers have already been deployed across the country to observe electoral preparations and the campaign. According to the mission, EU observers adhere to a strict code of conduct for international election observers that require they maintain strict neutrality and impartiality in the course of their work and do not interfere in the electoral process. The EU mission will publish a preliminary statement right after the second and final phase of election and a comprehensive final report including recommendations for future elections. The mission will remain in Nepal until the completion of the electoral process.—Xinhua
Let us open the door to negotiation

Khin Maung Oo

I

n regard to the Rakhine State af-

fair, the international community is

criticizing Myanmar based on one

single point of view, that of human

rights. They do not seem to understand

that Myanmar is a country made up of

135 national ethnic races. That is, they

do not seem to be able to understand

the there is a huge difference between

ethnic nationals and citizens. They are

saying that loss of human rights is the

only matter of importance.

The international community needs

to acknowledge without fail that the Un-

ion Government had already agreed to

grant citizenship rights to those who

are of Bengali extraction. At the same

time, it is necessary for the international

community to recognize that Myanmar and

Bengali extraction. They do not seem to understand

that those of Bengali origin living in Rakhine State are under

the compulsory obligation to search for

ways of peaceful co-existence with the

remaining national races such as the

Rakhines, the Mro, the Thet and also

with Hindus of Bengali extraction. In this

matter, the simple fact is that all those

who live in Rakhine State must learn to

live in harmony with full understanding

that all national ethnic races and people

of Bengali extraction who have been

permitted to return to live in Rakhine

State must learn to live like brothers

and sisters of the same Union.

As for the international community,

they should have openly disclosed that

they will never accept any deeds and be-

haviors which will harm the sovereignty

and territorial integrity of the Union of

Myanmar. During the period of perform-

ing the two processes—accepting and

offering citizen rights after scrutiny, they

should suggest as to how they would like

to help in practical ways instead of trying

to interfere in the internal affairs of a sov-

eign country with demands, allegations

and accusations which are totally uncall-

ed for. Yet, what they are actually doing

is completely different from what really

should be done. The recent hasty de-

cision to impose targeted sanctions on the

Myanmar Tatmadaw shows a total lack

of understanding of the real situation at

the ground level. It is unfortunate that

a foreign power has led it foreign policy
to be swayed and influenced by lobbyists

whose sole interest is to get what they

want. If foreign policy makers are unable

to think through the consequences of their

actions, they would certainly get instant

gratification but in the long run, the

national interests of their own country

would certainly suffer. It is a sad state

of affairs when the loud voices of interest

groups and well-paid lobbyists can drown

out the logical reasoning of well-trained

diplomats with years of relevant country

experience. They should realize the fact

that Myanmar does not stand alone and

that Myanmar's national leaders and the

Myanmar Tatmadaw have the full

support of the people.

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King Bayinnaung Bell, the fourth Memory of the World

By Maung Tha (Archaeology)

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NITED Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Or-

ganization has started the pro-

gram “Memory of the World” in 1992 to do assessment on the heritages of the countries and select the heritages that meet the required criteria to be reg-

istered in the “Memory of the World” UN-

ESCO had issued the list of heritages that went as far back as 1700 AD registered in the “Memory of the World”. Those heritages registered in “Memory of the World” included both tangible objects and intangible culture.

The aims and objectives of the “Mem-

ory of the World” program is primarily to promote the conservation works on historical and cultural heritages of the respective countries.

104 countries in cooperation with 5 organizations had carried out the pro-

gram and could have registered 338 herit-

ages in the “Memory of the World.” till

2015. Out of 338 heritages which won the registration in “Memory of the World”, the King Bayinnaung Bell Inscriptions at the Shwezigon Pagoda in Bagan has become Myanmar’s fourth registration in “Memory of the World” recently.

The first three heritages were from Myanmar. UNESCO usually makes the assessment on the heritages submitted and issues the list of winner biennially.

The first three winners from Myanmar are the 150-year-old Pitakas Stone Slabs in the Maha Lawka Marazein Pagoda of Mandalay; Gold Leaf letter of Aung Minta U Aung Zeya, the 904-year-old Yaza Kumar Stone Inscription, the oldest-surviving inscription; Fourth Registration in “Memory of the World”

The King Bayinnaung Bell Inscriptions document the donations made for Buddhist religious merit and are inscribed in 3 languages; 43 lines in Myanmar language, 35 lines in Pali language and five lines in Mon language. Recorded on the bell, are the name of the donor; their meritorious deeds, prayers, and occupied regions with the dates; the date of throne ascendance and the donated date of this bell. Also the inscriptions include the accurate regal titles for the king and his chief Queen. The Bell inscriptions are now located at the Shwezigon Pagoda in Bagan and were donated by King Bayinnaung in 1557 AD.

Ministry of Culture made the submission on King Bayinnaung’s 16th Century Bell to the UNESCO’s program in December 2014.

The Bayinnaung Bell was cast with 2100 bronzes of brass. Bayinnaung Bell

The Bayinnaung Bell is 3 feet tinch-es high, girth is 3 ft. 6 in.; girth of the base is 10 ft. 3 in., thickness is 6 in., diameter is 1 ft. 7 in., height of the hanger (paunggaing) is 1 ft. 7 in., girth of the hanger is 1 ft. 4 in. and the girth of the neck is 4 ft. 1 in. The inscriptions in both Myanmar and Pali language can be seen on the face of the bell. There are also 5 lines in Pali language inscribed in the part above neck and below the hanger.

Bayinnaung Bell was cast and donated to the pagoda in 1557 and since the military and political activities, victory in war against the neighbouring lands, meritorious deeds in culture during the reign of King Bayinnaung was written on the bell, the Bayinnaung Bell has been kept under national level protection.

According to the inscription record on the bell, King Bayinnaung had cast a bell and donated at the Shwezigon Pagoda which was one of the product of meritorious deeds of King Anawrahta and Kyansittha on 23 May 1557.

The inscriptions of 35 lines on the bell in Mon language was translated into Myanmar and published in the Anthology of Stone Inscriptions in Mon language in 1965.

King Bayinnaung won the Kaytama-di on Sunday, 11 January 1551 and could defeat the Thaye Khiyata (Sri Keta) on Saturday, 30 August 1551. Then the king conquered Hatthawaddy on Saturday, 12 March 1555 and ascended the throne in the Kanbawzathadi palace.

In 1553 January 22, Tuesday King Bayinnaung conquered Inwa and the king and queen together with his ministers, retinues and military transferred along the river to Inwa. The king and queen arrived in Inwa on Thursday, 24 December 1556. During the riverine trip to Inwa, the royal barge of the king and queen was splendidly and profusely ornamented and decorated.

Bayinnaung had vanished Momeik, Theibaw and Ruby Land on Monday; 25 January 1557 and two weeks later the king held the ceremony of state driving for Yadana Zedi (pagoda) in the northwest angle of Momeik and enshrined the sacred relics of enlightened one on 8 February 1557. Then the king left Momeik and marched to Hitchaint (Dikyi) and reached it 3 days later. He then built a bridge across Dikyi river and proceeded his march and could occupy Monhyin on Saturday, 6 March 1557. On 23 March he won Mokhaung.

SEE PAGE 9
25 trainees receive vocational skills for making snack, juice

AUTHORITIES in Bago has conducted a vocational training on making value-added food, attracting about 25 people. The course opened yesterday at the Cooperative Syndicate, Kyauktwingone Street, Bago Township, with an opening speech by Bago Region Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation Aung Zaw Naing and Bago Region Small-Scale Industries Department’s Deputy Director Daw Nwe Nwe Aung.

During the three-day course, the trainees will receive skills making rice powder based snacks including Crepe roll, Chiffon cake, Sesame cookies, Suger cooies, Madeleine, Pancake, Fruit cake and various juice such as lime, orange, Lychee, Alovia, Grape and strawberry, pigeon peas, green peas and soy bean based soy milk product.

The training is funded by Bago Region Government.— Maung Shwe Win (Pyay)

Final decree on 2017 by-election appeal No. 2/2017 to be made on 22nd November

THE Union Election Commission accepted the objection submitted by Dr. Wunna Soe, candidate for Shan State Hluttaw of constituency 2 of Kengtung township, Shan State over representative-elect U Shar Mwe La Shen of Union Solidarity and Development Party with the objection rejected by the election jury 1 after a hearing. Over the rejection, Dr. Wunna Soe put forward an appeal to the Union Election Commission, which accepted it as appeal No. 2/2017. Under the Region Hluttaw or State Hluttaw Acts 100, arguments from both parties and legal advice of the Office of the Union Attorney General concerning the case were heard in the presence of the general jury court chaired by U Hla Thein, Chairman of the UEC, with U Aung Myint, U Soe Rae, U Hla Thin, U Hla Tint, U Myint Naing and U Than Htay as members. A final decree will be issued on 22nd November, it was learnt. —Myanmar News Agency

King Bayintnaung Bell, the fourth Memory of the World

FROM PAGE 8

Though he won Mokaung, he maintained the Mokaung Saophas in power as a leader of vassal state. The king’s prominent work in the victory of Mokaung is prohibiting the rites in which slave men and women were executed and the bodies were buried together with their master who died. The king returned to his royal capital on 9 April 1557 and on 23 May the king cast the bell with bronze and donated to Shwezigon Pagoda in Bagan.

According to the Bell Inscription, after the demise of King Tabinshwehti on 1 May 1555, King Bayintnaung conquered Taungoo (Kaytumadi) and Pyi (Sri Kestra) in 1551, Bago (Hanthawaddy) in 1552, Inwa in 1555 and Momweik, Thibaw, Monhyin and Mokaung in 1557 and could have established the 2nd Myanmar Empire.

The first line of inscription in Mon language states the regal title of King Bayintnaung as Thiri Marama Maha Dhamma Yazadirit whereas in the 8th line the title given to the Queen is stated as Thiri Agga Maha Dhamma Zaya Daiwi.

Bayintnaung had made many repairing and renovating the old religious edifices and also had collected new merit by building new religious edifices in every localities he arrived. He also prohibited not to misuse the fund of Pagoda, Dhamma and Sangha. The bell inscription recorded that Buddha’s teaching had been flourishing under the rule of King Bayintnaung. King Bayintnaung after making Buddha’s teaching more brightened and extended, he got an opinion to make Buddha’s teaching flourishing in Sri Lanka. He sent a missionary including a set of Tri-Pitaka, Sanghas, mason and craftsmen to Sri Lanka. Myanmar has a long historical background and has a lot of archaeological records and regions which are now being discovered and endeavoured to become listed in world heritage program. So we all are obliged to discover, maintain and preserve the ancient tangible and intangible heritage of Myanmar.

Ref:
1. Memory of the world (UNESCO publishing)
2. မြန်မာမြေပြီးနောက်ကြီးများ (ဥယျာဉ်ယွန်း)
3. ကြီးမားနေရာများစာဖတ်သူအနေဖြင့် (အဆင့်အတန်းများ)
4. သမိုင်နေရာများစာဖတ်သူအနေဖြင့် (အဆင့်အတန်းများ)

Translated by U Khin Maung Win
Putin ready for meeting with Trump — Russian top diplomat

DA NANG (Viet Nam) — Russian President Vladimir Putin is prepared for holding a meeting with his US counterpart Donald Trump on the sidelines of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit and their schedules are being coordinated, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said on Wednesday.

“We hear Donald Trump’s statements that he plans to hold this meeting with President Putin and President Putin is ready for this. The Americans know about this,” Lavrov said.

“The protocol services are in contact, and when the leaders’ schedules are finally clear, you will be told about this,” he told reporters.

Russia’s top diplomat added that his contacts with US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson could be held as well, but that will be possible only on the sidelines of the APEC summit on November 10-11, since Tillerson is accompanying the US president during his Asian tour. “Tillerson will arrive here only with President Trump, that’s why we will contact already during the summit directly,” Lavrov noted.

When asked what issues are expected to be discussed, Lavrov explained that these will be all issues on the agenda. “These will include both bilateral ties, which should be mend thoroughly after the team of [previous US President Barack] Obama worked hard to worsen them, and international relations, Syria, North Korea and Ukraine,” he added.

“Trump is in South Korea on Wednesday and will be travelling to China after that. The US president is expected to arrive in Da Nang on 10 November. —Tass

UK aid minister facing sack over undisclosed meetings with Israelis — Sun newspaper

LONDON — Britain’s aid minister Priti Patel’s future was in doubt on Wednesday after the Sun newspaper reported she had held two further undisclosed meetings with Israeli politicians.

As Prime Minister Theresa May heads towards a 2019 EU divorce that will shape Britain’s prosperity for generations, her minority government has stumbled into several controversies that risk shattering her dwindling authority.

Development Secretary Patel apologised to May on Monday for failing to report she had met senior Israeli officials, including Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, during a private holiday.

She had failed to follow the usual procedures that ministers inform Britain’s Foreign Office before conducting official business overseas and said she regretted suggesting Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson had been aware of her trip.

On Wednesday, the Sun said Patel had also met Israel’s Foreign Ministry Director General Yuval Rotem in New York and Public Security Minister Gilad Erdan in London but had not informed May about either meeting despite giving her assurances there had been no other undisclosed talks.

A government source confirmed the meetings took place. The source said that no UK government officials were present for these discussions, and they were set up and reported in a way which did not accord with the usual procedures.

There was no comment from May’s office or from Britain’s Department for International Development, and Patel could not be reached for comment. A Downing Street source said May had not yet spoken to Patel.

Besides her government’s sometimes contradictory signals on Brexit, May has faced criticism from opponents for her handling of other issues: from a deadly apartment block fire in June to a sexual harassment scandal in parliament that prompted Michael Fallon, her loyal defence secretary, to resign on 2 November. —Reuters

ILO closes workers’ complaint against World Cup host Qatar

GENEVA — The International Organization for Labour closed a workers’ complaint against Qatar on Wednesday after the government introduced legislation to protect workers and pledged further reforms as well as technical cooperation with the UN agency.

The unanimous decision, taken by the ILO’s Governing Body after a 45-minute meeting in Geneva, means it will not set up an ILO commission of inquiry into alleged exploitation in the 2022 World Cup host, a rare sanction. —Reuters

South Korea’s Moon first suggested Trump visit DMZ — Blue House official

SEOUL — South Korean President Moon Jae-in had initially suggested on Tuesday that US President Donald Trump make a visit to the demilitarized zone (DMZ) between North and South Korea, a Blue House official told reporters on Wednesday.

Trump had told Moon he had been considering such a trip, and Moon said he would accompany Trump should the US president decide to visit the DMZ, the official said.

The US president aborted a surprise visit to the DMZ on Wednesday morning due to fog after two attempts. —Reuters

UK defence minister: PM May decides on cabinet hiring and firing

LONDON — British defence minister Gavin Williamson said on Wednesday it was up to Prime Minister Theresa May to decide who serves in her top team, responding to a question about the political future of aid minister Priti Patel.

“The prime minister makes her own decision on actually who is serving in her cabinet, and they’re only the prime minister’s decisions,” he told reporters in Brussels. —Reuters

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Short on boots and backing, West Africa force faces uphill battle

SEVARE, Mali — Snipers from a new West African force lie prone on a rooftop in central Mali, scanning the horizon for Islamist militants who have infiltrated this sparsely populated region south of the Sahara and made it a launchpad for deadly attacks.

Thousands of UN peacekeepers, French troops and US military trainers and drone operators have failed to stem a growing wave of jihadist violence, leading international powers to pin their hopes on a new regional force.

But the so-called G5 Sahel initiative faces immense challenges if it is to do any better at bringing security to the arid Sahel region than its countries Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger have managed so far.

Security sources and analysts say too strong an emphasis on military might over tackling the underlying causes of jihad, logistical shortfalls and a lack of cooperation from regional powerhouse Algeria all raise doubts over whether the G5 can succeed where years of Western intervention has not.

“There is a long way to go to reach full operational capacity, even though the timeframe is relatively short,” G5 force commander General Dacko told visiting UN Security Council envoys last month, citing a range of needs from aerial support to communications equipment to intelligence gathering.

At UN, Russia slams inquiry into toxic gas attacks in Syria

UNITED NATIONS — Russia rejected on Tuesday a report by an international inquiry blaming the Syrian government for a deadly toxic gas attack, casting doubt on whether the UN Security Council can agree to extend the investigation’s mandate before it expires next week.

Russia vetoed an initial US bid to renew the joint inquiry by the UN and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) on 24 October, saying it wanted to wait for the release of the investigation’s report two days later.

It has since proposed its own rival draft resolution, which deputy Russian UN Ambassador Vladimir Safronkov said on Tuesday aimed to enhance the effectiveness of the inquiry and correct “errors and systemic problems.”

“Without a comprehensive change it will become a tool to settle accounts with the Syrian authorities,” Safronkov told the 15-member Security Council on Tuesday during a meeting on the report by the UN/OPCW Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM).

The report found the Syrian government was responsible for an April 4 attack using the banned nerve agent sarin in the opposition-held town of Khan Sheikhoun, killing dozens of people. The Syrian government has denied using chemical weapons.

The chemical weapons attack prompted a US missile strike just days later against a Syrian air base.

“Russia is trying to shoot the messenger to cover up for the crimes of the Syrian regime,” Deputy British UN Ambassador Jonathan Allen told the Security Council.

US Ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley said there could be no higher priority for the Security Council than renewing the JIM mandate. Diplomats said the United States had amended its draft resolution in a bid to win Russian support.

“Anyone who prevents us from achieving this goal is aiding and abetting those who have been using chemical weapons,” Haley said. “They are helping to ensure, not just that more women and children will die, but that those women and children will die in one of the cruelest, most painful ways possible.”

A resolution must get nine votes in favour and no vetoes by Russia, China, the United States, Britain and France to pass.

Allen told reporters the Russian draft resolution “has very little if any support in the council and no realistic prospects of success.”

The JIM had previously found that Syrian government forces were responsible for three chlorine gas attacks in 2014 and 2015 and that Islamic State militants used mustard gas. Syria agreed to destroy its chemical weapons in 2013 under a deal brokered by Russia and the United States.

At UN, Russia slams inquiry into toxic gas attacks in Syria

Russia’s deputy UN envoy, Vladimir Safronkov arrives at a Security Council meeting on the situation in Syria at the United Nations Headquarters, in New York, US on 7 April 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

Request for expressions of interest: Conducting baseline surveys

The Myanmar Institutional Strengthening and Policy Dialogue Support (ISPDS) — My-Governance — is a technical assistance programme funded by the European Union. The MY-Governance programme is supporting the Department of Rural Development in strengthening its capacity for monitoring and evaluation.

My-Governance programme is soliciting proposals from local research institutions to conduct four baseline surveys for the sub-sectors of rural electrification, rural water supply, revolving funds / livelihoods and vocational training.

Research institution profile:

The research institution should be:

- A Myanmar registered institution or academic organisation
- Experienced in conducting research on rural development issues
- Previous experience in conducting large scale baseline surveys
- Capable of conducting surveys on a national scale
- Able to collect and manage data electronically

Experiences of interest should include:

- Photocopy of organisation’s Myanmar registration form
- Organisational profile and structure
- Summary of previous experience in conducting baseline surveys
- CVs of proposed team members

Expressions of interest should be clearly identified as Request for expressions of interest: Conducting baseline surveys with full company address and contact details on the submission envelope. Expressions of interest should be submitted to:

GOPA My-Governance Programme
19/B, Kanbawza Road, Golden Valley, Bahan Township, 11012, Yangon, Myanmar

The deadline for submission of proposals is Friday, November 17 at 17:00 Myanmar time. Upon review of expressions of interest suitably qualified research institutions will be invited to submit a full technical and financial proposal based on a terms of reference.
Russia starts development of Borei-B nuclear-powered submarines

MOSCOW — Russia has started building Borei-B class strategic nuclear-powered submarines, chief of the Russian Armed Forces’ General Staff Valery Gerasimov said.

“Work to create the advanced Borei-B nuclear-powered missile underwater cruiser has started,” he said at a Defence Ministry Board meeting.

He reiterated that the country’s strategic nuclear forces already started receiving Borei-class boosters. “It made it possible to increase the share of modern strategic subma- rines to 82%,” the general specified.

In five years, 102 ballistic missiles were bought for these subs, Gerasimov specified. “Battle capabilities of the group of strategic nuclear-powered submarines increased by 25%, and the stealth and sus- tainability of the nuclear strategic forces also increased,” the chief of the General Staff noted.

Gerasimov also reiterated that five Borei-A class nuclear subs are being built now. The last ship in this series — the Knyaz Pozharsky (Prince Pozharsky) — was laid down in December last year.

Borei class subs

The Russian Navy currently has three Borei-class (Project 950) nucler-powered submarines: the Yury Dolgoruky, the Alexander Nevsky and the Vladimir Monomakh. Such submarines are capable of carrying up to 16 Bulava intercontinental ballistic missiles.

Earlier, Director General of the Rubin Central Design Bureau for Marine Engineering Igor Vilnit told TASS that the project will continue developing after a series of advanced Borei-A sub- marines. —Tass

France to take a decade longer to reduced reliance on nuclear: minister

PARIS — French environment minister Nicolas Hulot said on Wednesday that reducing the share of nuclear energy in France’s power mix to 50 percent from 75 per cent will probably take until 2030-35 instead of 2025. On Tuesday, Hulot said the government had dropped a target date of 2025, saying it was not realistic and would boost CO2 emissions. He did not give a new deadline.

The target was part of the previous Socialist government’s 2015 energy transition law and was confirmed by new centrist president Emmanuel Ma- cron’s government.

“We will probably have to delay until 2030 or 2035, we will see, at the lat- est 2035, but don’t ask me to be more precise as that would mean everything has already been decided,” Hulot said on BF M Television. He added that in the coming year, the government would hold public consultations and talks with unions and the energy sector to come up with a new deadline and a program for closing nu- clear reactors.

On Tuesday, Hulot said that reaching the 50 percent target by 2025 would mean closing 17 to 15 nuclear reactors.

France’s is the world’s most nuclear-reliant country. State-con- trolled utility EDF generates about three-quarters of French power with 58 nuclear reactors in 19 nu- clear plants.

EDF argues that it makes no economic sense to close well-functioning nuclear plants and instead wants to extend the lifespan of its nu- clear reactors from 40 to 50 years and longer.

Environmentalists say that the billions of euros needed to upgrade EDF’s nuclear reactors would be better spent on renewable energies like wind and solar, which also do not emit carbon but do not come with the risk of nuclear accidents and nu- clear waste.—Reuters
Quick signoff on TPP trade deal far from sure at Asia-Pacific meeting

DANANG, (Viet Nam) — Continuing disagreements over the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP) trade deal that was ditched by US President Donald Trump mean 11 remaining members may not be ready to give a it a wholehearted go-ahead at a summit this week, officials said on Wednesday.

Clear agreement on proceeding without the United States would be a boost for the principle of multilateral free trade pacts as the bilateral deal-making that Trump argued will give a better result for American workers.

The TPP is also a counterweight to China’s growing regional dominance. Japan has been lobbying hard for agreement on the sidelines of this week’s Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit in Vietnam.

However, officials from several member states said there was less appetite to move ahead quickly from some members — notably Canada, New Zealand and Malaysia.

The pact aims to eliminate tariffs on industrial and farm products across a bloc whose trade totalled $336 billion (270.37 billion pounds) last year. It also has provisions for protecting everything from intellectual property to labour rights to the environment.

Chief negotiators from the TPP-11 countries met on Monday and Tuesday. Their ministers are due to meet on Wednesday and Thursday in the Vietnamese seaside resort of Danang.

A meeting of TPP leaders, who are all also in APEC, has been tentatively scheduled.

“Our view is that we need to take the time to get the right deal,” said one Canadian official who declined to be identified.

Canada’s position is complicated by the fact that it is also renegotiating the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) with a Trump administration that pulled the United States out of the TPP agreement in one of its first acts.

—Reuters

EU at impasse before final push to clinch carbon market reform

BRUSSELS — EU negotiators are split over the uses of a new clean technology fund ahead of talks on carbon market reforms on Wednesday, with the bloc keen for a deal this week to show leadership on climate talks in Bonn.

The last round of talks between EU nations, the European Parliament and the EU executive to finalize reforms to the EU Emissions Trading System (ETS) post-2020 broke down over the issue in October, and the negotiators remain divided.

The cap-and-trade system is the EU’s flag-ship tool for reducing greenhouse gases and meeting its climate goals by regulating emissions at some 12,000 industrial and power installations.

But it has suffered from a glut of permits, giving added political urgency to the push for reform.

The 28-nation bloc hopes to show climate leadership during the U.N. talks this month aimed at finding ways to implement the 2015 Paris accord it helped broker on shifting the world economy away from fossil fuels this century.

“It would be a pity if the EU can’t go to Bonn with this trophy on board,” said Ivo Belet, a deputy from the center-right European People’s Party who is part of talks.

The talks have hit what one senior negotiators called an “intractable impasse” over a new modernization fund.

Some lawmakers and member states want installations with emissions of over 450 grams of carbon dioxide per kilowatt hour to be banned from receiving funds. That rules out coal-fired power plants.

But coal-dependent Poland and other central and eastern European states say they cannot match the bloc’s ambition without funds to help them modernize their industry.

“This is still a hot potato,” Belet said. —Reuters
Harvard honours Elton John for work fighting HIV/AIDS

NEW YORK — British musician Elton John will receive an award on Monday from the prestigious Harvard Foundation for his contribution to the fight against HIV/AIDS, the group said.

John will join the likes of Archbishop Desmond Tutu, former UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon and Nobel peace laureate Malala Yousafzai as a recipient of the Harvard University-based organization’s Peter J Gomes Humanitarian Award.

With more than 30 studio albums to his name, the Grammy Award-winning musician is mostly known for his career-spanning collection of hit songs such as “Tiny Dancer” and “Rocket Man”.

But the singer-songwriter is also a vocal advocate for people living with HIV/AIDS, founding the Elton John AIDS Foundation 25 years ago which has raised more than $385 million to fight the deadly epidemic, according to its website.

John will deliver a lecture about his work at an award ceremony to be held on Harvard’s campus Monday afternoon.

Other tributes John has received for his civic work include a lifetime achievement award from the Rockefeller Foundation in 2013 and being knighted by Queen Elizabeth in 1998.

Worldwide, since the beginning of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in the 1980s, more than 70 million people have been infected with the HIV virus and 35 million have died, according to the World Health Organization.

The Cambridge, Massachusetts-based Harvard Foundation recognizes prominent public-spirited leaders each year, according to its website. — Reuters

Ben Affleck says he wants to be ‘part of the solution’

LONDON — Ben Affleck says the storm of sexual harassment allegations engulfing Hollywood has led him to examine his own behaviour.

In an interview yesterday with The Associated Press for the superhero film “Justice League,” Affleck said he’s “looking at my own behaviour and making sure I’m part of the solution.”

After condemning Harvey Weinstein’s actions last month, Affleck was forced to defend his own conduct.

He apologised for groping the actress Hilarie Burton on camera in 2003 when she was a host on MTV’s “Total Request Live.”

Another video from 2004 showed Affleck pulling Montreal TV host Anne-Marie Losique onto his lap. Speaking yesterday, Affleck said two things need to happen, that “more women need to be pushed to power” and that sexual harassment has to also be “a men’s issue” where guys call out inappropriate behaviour. — PTI

Evan Rachel Wood confirms ‘Westworld’ S2 return

LOS ANGELES — Evan Rachel Wood has confirmed that the second session of “Westworld” will premiere next year in spring.

In a Twitter conversation with a fan, the lead actor of the sci-fi western thriller revealed what is being touted to be a much-awaited announcement by the show’s devout fans.

A fan tagged Wood on the microblogging site, saying, “Can you please tell us when ‘Westworld’ will be returning? I’m going crazy.”

To this the 30-year-old actor replied, “Spring 2018.”

This appears to be a good news for the fans, after the shooting of the series was put on hold this week in wake of new cast member Zahn McClarnon’s head injury when he suffered a fall at his home. The HBO show also features Thandie Newton, Jeffrey Wright, James Marsden and Ed Harris. — PTI

David Castaneda to star in Billy Crystal’s We Are Unsatisfied

LOS ANGELES — David Castaneda is all set to feature in the comedy “We Are Unsatisfied”, a co-production by Billy Crystal and Ben Schwartz.

The actor will be joined by Schwartz in the movie, which is Matt Ratner’s directorial debut, according to The Hollywood Reporter.

The film chronicles the story about an unlikely friendship between a struggling stand-up comedian from LA, played by Schwartz, who is forced to return home to Eastern Long Island, and a charismatic, alcoholic dermatologist portrayed by Crystal.

While Castaneda will play the role of Ruis, the amiable security guard who aspires to be a police officer boyfriend of Schwartz’s onscreen sister. “Kevin Can Wait” fame Peter Hoare has penned the script.

The shooting begins in New York this month. — PTI
East meets West as Louvre Abu Dhabi opens in the Gulf

ABU DHABI — Abu Dhabi opens its Louvre museum on Saturday, positioning itself as a city of cultural tourism with a display of hundreds of works that it hopes will draw visitors from around the world.

Surrounded by water from three sides, the museum houses 600 artworks it has acquired, alongside 300 works on loan from 13 leading French institutions, in its 23 permanent galleries. The artists range from Paul Gauguin and Vincent Van Gogh to Pablo Picasso and Cy Twombly.

French President Emmanuel Macron will be the guest of honour at the opening, along with other heads of state.

“It is a lot more than just a museum. It is a centre of peace, acceptance, tolerance and education,” Mohamed al-Mubarak, chairman of the department of culture and tourism in Abu Dhabi, told Reuters.

Permanent installations include a sculpture by Auguste Rodin, an enormous bronze tree with mirrored branches called “leaves of light” by Italian artist Giuseppe Penone and three engravings on stone walls bearing historic texts from the region by Jenny Holzer, an American neo-conceptual artist.

And there are priceless pieces. They include a statue of the Sphinx dating back to the 6th century BC, 13 fragments of a frieze that reveals Surah al-Hashr from the Holy Quran and a marble bust of Alexander the Great. Among the paintings is one by Leonardo DaVinci, done between 1485 and 1490 and called La Belle Ferronniere, or Portrait of an Unknown Woman, which was recently restored and is on loan from the original Musee du Louvre in Paris. The Abu Dhabi museum was set up under a 2007 inter-governmental agreement between Paris and Abu Dhabi. Originally slated to open in 2012, it was delayed by the global financial crisis and then by low oil prices, which led the United Arab Emirates to rein in spending.

Louvre Abu Dhabi has partnered with museums and cultural institutions in the Arab world, who will lend 28 significant works. Among them are an 8,000-year-old, two-headed figure called the Ain Ghazal statue from Jordan, some 400 silver dirham coins from Oman and a pre-historic stone tool from Saudi Arabia.

Having invested over $1 billion in the museum, Abu Dhabi is hoping culture will attract tourists. Two more museums, Guggenheim Abu Dhabi and Zayed National Museum, are planned around the Louvre Abu Dhabi in the Saadiyat Cultural District that already hosts art fairs, exhibitions and performances.

“Culture is the element that will distinguish us from others,” said Saif Saeed Ghobash, director-general of the emirate’s Department of Culture & Tourism. “We will attract a different kind of traveler.” The entrance ticket to the museum is 60 dirhams ($16.30) with all 5,000 tickets sold out for the opening day.

US families trace their history to Chinese village

FUZHOU — Burying his nose deep into a tea bag, Dean Billing took a deep breath. A moment later, he cried out. “This smells like grandma’s tea.”

Billing’s grandmother began a tradition of drinking Chinese tea with her family. He remembered his grandma saying Guling, a mountain 13 kilometres from Fuzhou, capital of east China’s Fujian Province, was her second home.

In September, Billing, 73, and his family visited Guling along with six other families from the United States and New Zealand. Tasting local tea was part of the experience of tracing their family’s history.

“This is the jasmine tea grandma made for us,” Billing said. Billing’s grandmother returned to the United States in 1944, bringing Chinese tea with her. At an altitude of more than 800 meters, the mountain village was a popular summer resort for foreign residents to escape the extreme heat in Fuzhou in the early 1960s. They built a community in Xiyia village, with schools, clinics, swimming pools and clubs. More than 30 houses previously owned by foreign residents have been preserved.

Among the group was Marybelle Brewster who was born in Fuzhou and moved to the United States at age 15. Now 83, she can still speak Fuzhou dialect with locals. Brewster’s children Josiah and Julie Olson accompanied her to China for the first time.

“We’ve always wanted to come to Guling. We’ve heard so much about it,” said Josiah. Together they visited the Brewster’s former house, now called Xiyia Villa. Built in 1886, it is the oldest foreign residence in the village. In 1992, the local government consulted senior villagers to refurbish the room layout and rearrange the furniture to restore the villa to its former appearance. Old photos of Guling and its foreign residents are now displayed in the main room and a side room has been converted into a cafe for tourists. Guling receives tens of thousands of tourists every year, and Xiyia Villa is a popular stop.

While the poor collector gently weeps, Hendrix, McCartney guitars go up for auction

NEW YORK — Collectors who want to own a piece of music history — Fender, Gibson and Guild guitars used by the likes of Tom Petty, Paul McCartney and Jimi Hendrix — will have to be ready to put up some serious cash next month in New York City.

That is when Guernsey’s auction house, on 2 December at Bohemian Hall, will put up for sale guitars, saxophones, session tapes and other music memorabilia associated with some of the most famous musicians of the 20th century. The auction follows Guernsey’s sale of Jerry Garcia’s “Wolf” guitar in May for $1.9 million. Included in the sale is a red, sticker-covered Guild guitar used by Hendrix in 1968 at a Miami, Florida, hotel after a music festival got rained out.

“He and other musicians and as many fans could pack into the neighboring hotel jammed into there for what amounted to a jam session, and this is the guitar he played,” said Guernsey president Arlan Ettinger. Also up for auction is a 1953 “Goldtop” Gibson Les Paul used by Paul McCartney as recently as 2012, according to Ettinger.

Bruce Springsteen’s bass guitar that he used on his first album will also be on sale, as well as a black Gibson Les Paul Madonna used on tours in 2001 and 2008, when “she was going to come out and show the world that she could play.”

Master recordings of James Brown and Elvis Presley, and recorded live performances of the Beatles, the Rolling Stones and others will be included in the sale.

—Reuters
SPORT

Myanmar, Cambodia prepare for AFC qualification

Kyaw Zin Lin

IN preparation for the 2019 AFC Asian Cup qualification, the Myanmar national football team will play a friendly with Cambodia today in Cambodia, the MFF announced yesterday.

The announcement was made at the Match Coordination Meeting held in Phnom Penh, Cambodia yesterday, with coaches, players and media representatives in attendance.

“We play the match as a preparation for the 2019 AFC qualification match against India on 14 November. I like the playing style of Cambodia, because the players are improving. Both teams participated in the 2019 AFC Asian Cup qualification, and the match will give prominent benefits to both teams”, said Myanmar Head Coach Gerd Zeise.

“We have no pressure in the match, as the match is just a friendly and a preparation for the match against India next week. However, the match will be worth to see as Cambodians are in great shape”, said Myanmar team Captain Van Aung Kyaw.

The match is not being played for the result but for the analysis on the strength and weaknesses of our team, as we will play against Jordan in 2019 AFC Asian Cup qualification. We prepared our best and all the players are ready for the match. Although we cannot predict a loss or a win, we will do the best”, said Cambodia Head Coach Prak Sovannara.

Myanmar, Vietnam in same group in Thailand’s M-150 Cup

A total of six teams including Myanmar will take part in the M-150 Cup 2017, which will be held in Thailand from 9 to 15 December.

The six teams will feature all Under-23 sides from host Thailand, Myanmar, Uzbekistan, North Korea, Japan and Vietnam. Myanmar, Vietnam and Uzbekistan will comprise Group B, while host Thailand, Japan and the Democratic Republic of Korea are in Group A according to the rescheduling of the match by the officials.

The teams will compete in a round-robin format. The top teams from each group will advance to the final, and the two second-placed teams will fight for third place. The final and third-place matches will be played on 13 December.

The winner will be awarded US$20,000 (Ks27.3 million) — Kyaw Zin Lin

Defensive trio proving crucial to Manchester City’s success

LONDON — With Manchester City scoring at will and playing some bewitching attacking football, it has been easy to overlook the contribution made by their three most defensive outfield players.

Fernandinho, John Stones and Nicolas Otamendi are never likely to hog the headlines in a team that has plundered 52 goals in all competitions and features flamboyant playmakers Kevin De Bruyne and David Silva behind deadly finishers such as Sergio Aguero and Gabriel Jesus.

Yet statistics suggest they hold a valid claim to being the three most important players in Pep Guardiola’s squad, following an unbeaten start to the season that has left City eight points clear at the top of the Premier League.

Their record of conceding just 11 goals in 17 matches in all competitions this season is impressive enough on its own, yet the argument gathers pace when you consider their contributions to City’s domination of possession and attacks.

Argentine centre back Otamendi, for example, has had more touches in the Premier League and Champions League combined than any other City player this season, with England centre back Stones second and Brazil midfielder Fernandinho fourth behind De Bruyne.

It is a similar story with passing. Otamendi is once again at the top of the charts for passes attempted, ahead of Fernandinho in second place with Stones in third.

While for pass completion, Stones leads the way for City ahead of Otamendi in second place and Fernandinho in fourth — all three of them currently registering above 90 per cent.

In fact, Stones’s rate of 96.6 per cent is bettered in European leagues only by the 96.7 per cent completed so far by Paris St Germain’s Thago Silva.

It is not out of the ordinary for a holding midfielder such as Fernandinho to sit near the top of a team’s touch and passing charts — Nemanja Matic has dominated both for Manchester United this season.

Yet the figures for Otamendi and Stones are more unique.

— Reuters