room for investors in thilawa sez

vice president attends ceremony of JFE steel corporation factory in Thilawa SEZ

Vice President U Henry Van Thio, Chairman of Myanmar SEZ Central Committee, attended the ground-breaking ceremony of the JFE Steel Corporation factory in the Thilawa Special Economic Zone (SEZ) B yesterday morning.

The factory is the first in the Thilawa SEZ B and will be a major manufacturer of steel products in Myanmar, where the demand for steel has increased steadily since democratisation in 2011 and is expected to continue to grow. Currently most steel products are imported, but there is a wave of ongoing investments in steel processing and fabrication, much of it centred on the Thilawa zone, which made yesterday’s ceremony all the more important.

At the event, JFE Meranti Myanmar Company Limited CEO Sebastian Langendorf delivered a message of greetings and then explained through a video presentation the future products of JFE Meranti Myanmar and the factory’s operations.

U Henry Van Thio then delivered a message in honour of the company.

“This event is a ground-breaking ceremony for the JFE Steel Corporation factory, the first investment in Thilawa SEZ B. It is a memorable day in the history of Myanmar’s industry. Furthermore, it is a symbol of the development in Myanmar-Japanese bilateral cooperation and friendship, and I am happy and honoured.”

See Page 7
Religious Titles conferring ceremony for the year 2018

A CEREMONY to confer religious titles and donation of rice for the year 2018 was held yesterday afternoon at Sasana Maha Beikman in Uppatasanti Pagoda compound, Nay Pyi Taw. The ceremony was attended by President U Htin Kyaw and First Lady Daw Su Su Lwin, State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi who presented the religious titles, donated rice and offerings.

First, the ceremony to confer religious titles was held and singer Sandar Lin of Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture, Department of Fine Arts sang a song honoring the ceremony accompanied by a Myanmar harp.

Next, President U Htin Kyaw, First Lady Daw Su Su Lwin, and State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi presented the religious titles, donated rice and offerings.

Similarly Abhidhaja Agga Maha Saddhamma Jotika title and related accessories was conferred to U Hlaing. Senior General Min Aung Hlaing presented Abhidhaja Maharattha Guru title to Sayadaw Sudhamma Sara of Moekaung Monastery. Speaker U Win Myint presented Abhidhaja Maharattha Guru title to Sayadaw Bhaddanta Sobana.

President U Htin Kyaw presents Abhidhaja Maha Rahatta Guru title to Sayadaw Bhaddanta Vijota of Vijoyaton Monastery. 

State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi presents Abhidhaja Maha Rahatta Guru title to Sayadaw Bhaddanta Sobana.

Vice President U Myint Swe presents Abhirartha Guru title to Sayadaw Bhaddanta Asina from Nay Pyi Taw Tatkon. 

Speaker U Win Myint presents Abhidhaja Maharajatta Guru title to Sayadaw Bhaddanta Asina from Nay Pyi Taw Tatkon. 

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing presents Abhidhaja Maha Rahatta Guru title to Sayadaw Bhaddanta Pandita from Sittway. 

Union Chief-Justice U Htun Htun Oo presents Abhidhaja Agga Maha Saddhamma Jotika title to Sayadaw Bhaddanta Taranama. 

Abhidhaja Maha Saddhamma Jotika title and related accessories was conferred to Shan State, Namtham. Vice President U Myint Swe presented Abhidhaja Agga Maha Saddhamma Jotika title to Sayadaw Bhaddanta Taranama.

Vice President U Myint Swe presents Abhirartha Guru title to Sayadaw Bhaddanta Asina from Nay Pyi Taw Tatkon. 

State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi presents Abhidhaja Maha Rahatta Guru title to Sayadaw Bhaddanta Sobana. 

President U Htin Kyaw presents Abhidhaja Maha Rahatta Guru title to Sayadaw Bhaddanta Vijota. 

State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi presents Abhidhaja Maha Rahatta Guru title to Sayadaw Bhaddanta Sobana. 

Union Chief-Justice U Htun Htun Oo presents Abhidhaja Agga Maha Saddhamma Jotika title to Sayadaw Bhaddanta Taranama. 

Abhidhaja Maha Saddhamma Jotika title and related accessories was conferred to Shan State, Namtham. Vice President U Myint Swe presented Abhidhaja Agga Maha Saddhamma Jotika title to Sayadaw Bhaddanta Taranama.
Republic of the Union of Myanmar
Message of Greetings sent by President U Htin Kyaw, President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar on the occasion of the Peasants Day Celebrations which falls on 2 March 2018

Dear esteemed peasantry,

Today is a historic and auspicious day which has been designated to honor all the peasants in the country. On this day full of Mingalar and historic significance, I wish to send my message of greetings and good wishes for the health and happiness and blessings for auspiciousness for all the peasantry. In addition I also send good wishes for great success more than ever in their farming work.

In Myanmar, 70 percent of the population is in the rural areas and the main occupation is farming. Although about 30 percent of the GDP derives from the agricultural sector, the socio-economic life of the peasantry is still low. They are facing climate change, natural disasters, other dangers and degradation of the soil due to deforestation. As a consequence, the majority of the farmers suffer decreasing incomes which led to loss of land turning them into landless farmers. Thus their socio-economic life suffered.

During the current period, our Union Government while striving for the emergence of sustainable agricultural production has already laid down (9) goals with a view to uplifting the socio-economic life of people in rural areas and to support the country’s economic development by promoting the increased production of agricultural and livestock products capable of competing in the international markets. In addition, we have also laid down (11) goals to ensure food security, nutritional value in food and increased food safety; we worked for farmers to enjoy full rights and better benefits and to encourage local and foreign investments in the agricultural sector.

To realize the above goals, we have laid down (10) policies to expand agricultural and livestock enterprises, to enhance the income of small farmers while increasing production capacity, capacity to produce safe and nutritious food for consumers, development of agro-based enterprises, increased exports of agricultural products by linking with foreign markets and ensuring sustainable development. We have exerted concerted efforts to obtain the above benefits.

Dear esteemed peasantry,

As the Republic of the Union of Myanmar is a country based on agriculture, a law and regulations to protect peasants’ rights and promote their benefits have been formulated and passed; a Steering Committee to protects peasants’ rights and promote their benefits headed by the Vice President has been formed. This committee has been working to benefit farmers.

In the past our paddy lands had to rely only on rain. Now job opportunities and income of farmers will increase due to the establishment of irrigated farming methods where double-cropping is now possible whereas in the past they were not sure of having even a single crop. That is why repair and maintenance work has been initiated to ensure that irrigation dams and river water utilization projects could be used effectively for the long run. We have conducted demonstrations and public awareness campaigns to this end. Departments concerned with the cooperation of international organizations are also conducting public awareness campaigns to grow crops and new strains that would be compatible with the changing weather patterns.

Also, we have been providing more and more assistance to owners of small traditional plots to transform into mechanized agriculture by drawing up short-term and long-term projects stage by stage.

Dear esteemed peasantry,

To be able to compete in foreign markets we have been encouraging and promoting efforts to get good prices for agricultural products in foreign markets and to ensure that farmers producing primary products will get more income. For this we have embarked on a process to export high quality products by building high-level rice and oil mills, high-level purification plants for fruits and modern packing plants.

Also, we have been working systematically for the creation of “Wholesale Markets” which meet international standards and ensure that our agricultural and fruit products can be sold at competitive prices.

We have also been working hard to improve the cooperative sector by organizing and unifying the strength of small farmers owning small plots, all over the country, by forming agricultural cooperatives. This is to ensure that farmers will get the right to practically participate in all stages, from the planting stage to the stage where they sell their products at the market; and also to ensure that farmers get job opportunities and benefits.

We have also been broadcasting the “Farmers Channel” for maximum outreach. For increasing agricultural production, it is important to ensure that modern farming reach the farmers easily. News relating to improving agricultural production such as news about the weather and market situation on a real-time basis is included. In addition news for farmers for their recreation, entertainment and education are also featured. A Call Center was set up on March 2017 and farmers can get information about farming techniques and ask questions about the challenges they are facing on a real-time basis. In addition, in accordance with the advances in farming techniques, we have been disseminating general knowledge for farmers, farming news from mobile phones, and weather news on a real-time basis. Also, an agricultural and rural development training school has been established in the Nay Pyi Taw Council area in Zeyarthiri township, in Yeizin. Basic Training courses on new village movement are being taught there.

Dear esteemed peasantry,

As the world population has been increasing and as the current population of more than (7000) million will become (9000) million in 2050, we will have to increase the needed food production. The Republic of the Union of Myanmar is also working on all fronts with heightened momentum to not only ensure food security for the country in view of the increase in population in a few years, but to be able to increase the export of agricultural products to international markets.

In the year 2017-2018 our country was able to not only attain food sufficiency but to export (3) million tons of rice. Thus we were able to set a new record for the last 70 years. Thus because of the strenuous efforts exerted by the farmers and the cooperation of responsible departments and the private sector, I wish to put on record and honor all the farmers for being able to export up to (360) million tons of rice.

We are blessed with rich natural resources and marine resources and also have favorable weather in addition to farmers who have pure hearts and work hard. The time is now opportune to work with heightened momentum for the all-round development of the economy including the agricultural sector. Let us work with the united strength of the farmers for uplifting the socio-economic life of farmers.

As I send this Message of Greetings, as I solemnly urge all of you to work in unity to overcome all challenges, obstacles and difficulties we will have to face, for the long term national interests of all citizens, including farmers all over the country.
80% of Chindwin river crossing bridge completed

THE Road Department of the Sagaing Region has finished building 80 per cent of the Chindwin river crossing bridge.

To develop villages and towns in the upper Chindwin regions, the Chindwin river crossing bridge (Homalin) is being constructed by Bridge Department, operating under the Ministry of Construction. The Chindwin river crossing bridge (Homalin) is located on Homalin-Katha-Aungzayar-Tamu road. The bridge will link Homalin Town in the east of Chindwin river to Katha Village in the west. The bridge is 2,762.6 feet long and will have two sections: a one-mile and four-furlong stretch at one end on the Homalin side and a four-furlong bridge at the other end on the Katha Village side.

The bridge is being constructed at a cost of Ky7,200 million, with fund allotment from the 2016-2017 fiscal year (FY) budget and Ky14,880 million from the 2017-2018 FY budget.

“The construction of the bridge was started on 21 August 2016. So far, 80 per cent has been completed. Once the bridge is completed, it will contribute to the socio-economic development of the local people living in the Homalin, Katha, Aungzaya and Tamu towns. The bridge will be opened to the public in the first week of April next year,” said an official from the Bridge Department.

With the opening of the bridge, villagers will enjoy a smooth ride on Monywa-Ye U-Thetkalkyin-Phaungpyin-Homalin road.—Win Oo (Zayadine) ■

YCDC to set up incinerator at Dawei Chaung landfill

THE Yangon City Development Committee (YCDC) will set up an incinerator to burn waste at the Dawei Chaung landfill, which is located in East Dagon Township in the Yangon Region, according to a report in Myawady Daily.

The YCDC recently discussed with private companies about jointly implementing the project. The YCDC is finding it difficult to locate an alternative site to move the waste disposal area from Dawei Chaung. Currently, the garbage is taken to the landfill and sprayed with pesticides, said U Maung Maung Soe, Yangon City Mayor.

The landfill, which is a 14-acre plot, is located in ward-1 of East Dagon Myothit Township and ward-59 of North Dagon Myothit Township.

The landfill is being used for Animal Health to licence in the first week of April next year, said an official from the Ministry of Livestock and Animal Husbandry.

The YCDC has decided to set up an incinerator to burn waste, as it will have less impact on the environment.—GNLM ■

Myanmar Fisheries Federation to review crossbreeding to control diseases

THE Myanmar Fisheries Federation has called for reviewing the practice of crossbreeding of fish, frogs and swines, according to a report in Myawady Daily.

“Animal products procured through crossbreeding may not be suitable for consumption. Myanmar is suitable to swine, frog and fish diseases. So, a disease from one animal may spread to the others,” said Dr. Thet Hmu, vice-chairman of the Myanmar Fisheries Federation.

“It is common to feed fish with the excrement of frogs and swines during crossbreeding, and such fish have less taste and are of a lower quality and may not be safe for consumption. It is also possible that diseases from frogs and swines may spread to people who consume these fish,” he added.

“Chicken foods are mixed with chemicals, and fish that are fed with chicken excrement may also be infected with chemicals, and therefore, prove unsafe for consumption,” he said.

Crossbreeding activities are mostly found on the outskirts of the Yangon and Ayeyawady regions, and people practise crossbreeding for manageable and commercial scales.

Since 2015, the export of animal products procured from crossbreeding has been banned by the World Organisation for Animal Health to ensure consumer safety. —GNLM ■

US cargo plane makes emergency landing at Yangon International Airport

A MC DONNELL Douglas MD-11 F cargo plane made an emergency landing at Yangon International Airport yesterday evening, after a fire alarm went off on board, said a press release of the Ministry of Home Affairs on Thursday.

The aircraft is owned by United Parcel Service Co., Ltd and it was carrying 175.7 tons of Lithium-ion battery. The plane was heading from Hong Kong to United Arab Emirates. Security personnel and firefighters made necessary preparations while the plane was making an emergency landing.

Officials from the Department of Civil Aviation and an official from the Fire Services Department for the airport said they smelled the stench of Lithium-ion battery after they investigated the cause of the incident.

Three crew members including the pilot made a one night stopover at the airport. The plane will leave again for the UAE as scheduled after the aircraft is checked by a team of engineers.—Myanmar Digital News ■
Gov’t drafting legislation to protect domestic producers in AEC 2025 plan

May Thet Hnin

The government will enact laws to protect domestic producers while executing the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) 2025 plans, said U Toe Aung Myint, permanent secretary of the Commerce Ministry.

“Our country, being a developing state, is faced with many challenges. Some of our businessmen are still not ready to compete with regional producers. So, the government will help them compete with other ASEM businessmen by formulating suitable laws,” said U Toe Aung Myint.

AEC will facilitate regional trade liberalisation, which could result in non-competitive import practices, such as “dumping,” whereby foreign companies undercut Myanmar’s domestic producers by flooding the market with cheap surplus goods, often of inferior quality. To prevent such practices, the government is drafting legislations, such as the safeguard law, intellectual property law and anti-dumping law, to regulate the quality of import products and protect local producers from price gouging, he added.

The AEC Blueprint 2025 includes efforts to develop small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and e-commerce, promote investment and trade, maintain a good regulatory practice, and develop green economy-based technology.

“The key challenge of AEC 2025 for Myanmar is the lack of capital and technology for SMEs. We need to raise awareness about AEC among the public. An e-commerce law must be formulated for this. The country also needs to develop its stock exchange market,” said Daw Saw Kalaya Su, director of the Foreign Economic Relations Department, operating under the Ministry of Planning and Finance.

There are some 23 work plans which the ASEAN member countries will implement by 2025, including the AEC 2025 state action plan for trade in goods, strategic action plan for services, investment work programme, AECSEAN competition action plan, AECSEAN strategic plan for consumer protection, AECSEAN intellectual property rights action plan, AECSEAN Community Statistical System strategic plan, AECSEAN work plan for enhancing the global value chain agenda, board directions for customs activities, strategic plan for AEC cooperation in food, agriculture and forestry, AECSEAN tourism strategic plan and AECSEAN minerals cooperation action plan.

Myanmar is implementing these action plans by forming 22 working committees for AEC.

AEC will ensure the free flow of goods, services, investment, capital and skilled labourers, as well as a priority integration sector for food, agriculture and forestry. AEC is a regional economic integration agenda of the ASEAN, which is aiming for a highly competitive economic region, equitable economic development, and a region fully integrated into the global economy.

Livestock farming business worth less than $5 million won’t need ministry’s approval

ONLY commercial livestock farming businesses with an investment capital of more than US$5 million or Ks6 billion need to obtain the approval of the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation under section 100 (b) of the Myanmar Investment Law, according to a recent notification of the Myanmar Investment Commission (MIC). MIC had given the green light to only those commercial livestock farming and offshore fishing enterprises where businessmen could present the approval of the Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation Ministry.

This relief aims to cut down the work permit processing time of livestock businesses.

Livestock farming is mostly practised in the Magway and Ayeyawady regions. The Commerce Ministry gave its nod to the export of live cattle on 9 October 2017 to combat illegal cattle exports.

The livestock and fisheries sector saw foreign direct investments worth $23 million this year. —Ko Khant
Commemoration of the 96th anniversary of Pa-O National Day observed

THE State level commemoration of the 96th Pa-O National Day is being held yesterday at Kyauk Yay Dew village in Mon State’s Paung Township.

The aim of celebrating the national day is not to forget the Pa-O history, literature, culture and language and to create greater awareness of the progress towards a federal democratic union, Khun Shwe Thin, chairman of Mon State Pa-O Literature and Culture Association, said at the ceremony.

Khun Chit San Win, an organizer of the occasion, explained how the Pa-O National Day occurred.

According to the Pa-O history people annually commemorate the birth of Pa-O King Suirya Chanda that fell on the Full Moon Day of Tabaung by offering their prayers to the Kyaiktiyo Pagoda in Thaton Township. The event later changed into National Day, which is an annual event in Shan, Mon and Kayin states and Bago and Yangon regions where the majority of Pa-O people are residing.

During the ceremony, Thaton Township Pyithu Hluttaw representative Daw Mar Mar Khang read out the message sent by the State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. Members of parliament in Mon State, departmental officers, local residents including Kayin and Mon people attended the occasion where Pa-O dancing groups entertained with traditional dances.

In Kayah State, the commemoration of the Pa-O national day is held in Padar Nyay village in Lokkaw Township. After the official ceremonies, the chief minister of Kayah State donated Ks one million to spend on the events held on national day. In Kayin State, the State level commemoration is held at Yay Nyay Gyi village in Hpa-An Township. The event will be held from 27 February to 2 March with sport competitions, Pa-O cultural contests and entertainment.

National day is celebrated at the township and village level across Kayin State. Shan, Mon, Bamar and Kayin people also participated in the celebration of national day.

In Danyingone Village, Kayin State’s Hlaing Bwe Township, the ceremony to mark national day was observed with similar official ceremonies. Attendees proudly salute the national flag and Pa-O flag, senior officers read out messages sent by the State Counsellor, Minister for Ethnic Affairs, and Kayin State’s Prime Minister.

Pa-O students who passed the matriculation exam in the academic year of 2016-2017 were also awarded prizes.—Myanmar Digital News ■

Rakhine Traditional Shite-Thaungmyaut or sand pagoda festival to be held

RAKHINE traditional Shite-Thaungmyaut or sand pagoda festival was held many years ago. So, the traditional festival is held in order to preserve the traditional culture. The Rakhine Cultural Association has held the Shite-Thaungmyaut festival annually.

“The festival is held as a memorial to the ancient Rakhine Kings. People that attended the auspicious event made donations during the festival. The Rakhine traditional Shite-thaungmyaut festival will be held in a stately style” said the chairman of Rakhine Culture Association U Kyaw Zan Maung.

The Shite-Thaungmyaut festival is one of the famous festivals that occur in Tabauung. The festival is held on the full Moon Day of Tabauung. The water level in the rivers and streams goes down so islands of sand emerge from beneath the water. So the sand pagodas on the broad sand banks along the river are built. The sand pagodas are washed away when the tide is high.—Myanmar Digital News ■

More visitors come to Kyaihtiyo than last year

THERE are many visitors and tourists who pay homage at the Kyaihtiyo Pagoda on the Full Moon Day of Tabauung according to an administrator from the pagoda.

“We are government staff from Nay Pyi Taw and we came to pay homage to the Kyaihtiyo Pagoda since there are four national holidays. We rushed to have a seat on the car traveling from Kim Moon Camp to Kyaihtiyo Mountain. So administrators from the pagoda should arrange transportation for visitors systematically during these holidays” said a staff member from Nay Pyi Taw.

“Fare from the Kim Moon Camp to the Kyaihtiyo Mountains is 2000 Ks for one person and there are a total of 150 shuttle buses. This year there were many more visitors who pay homage at the Kyaihtiyo Pagoda than last year.”—Myanmar Digital News ■

Illegal fish farming lakes on farmlands to face action

FARMERS who misuse farmlands to practise fish farming will face legal action under section 20 of the Farmland Law, said U Han Tun, Yangon Region Minister for Agriculture, Livestock, Forest and Energy.

At the sixth regular meeting of the Yangon Region Hluttaw held yesterday, U Hla Toe of Kayan Township constituency raised a question on the action being taken against illegal fish farming lakes on farmlands. Further, he called for the development of exclusive zones for the fishery and livestock sectors.

The Yangon region minister replied that the licence for fish farming, granted under the Freshwater Fisheries Law, can be revoked at any time if the licencee is found to defy the provisions of the law. Farmlands are designated for growing crops only. However, if farm owners are found digging the land to create fish farming lakes, the authorities will take action against them under section 20 of the Farmland Law, said U Han Tun.

According to statistics provided by the Kayan Fishery Department, some 733 fish farmers in Kayan Township are working commercially on 6,540 acres. Nearly half of them are also engaged in farming. In a bid to enhance fisheries enterprises, the Yangon region government is implementing a scheme with the Myanmar Fisheries Federation to adopt advanced farming methods. This scheme also includes a feasibility study to create a livestock research zone in Kayan Township, noted U Han Tun.

Some 30,000-40,000 tonnes of fish from Kayan are sent to Yangon Sunnya market daily. There are five private hatcheries, as well as two hatcheries owned by the fisheries department, in Kayan. These hatcheries produce some 20 million fish larvae.

The licence fee imposed on a fish farming lake is Ks 3,000 per acre, with the yearly revenue is valued at some Ks 20 million. —GNLM ■

PHOTO: MYANMAR DIGITAL NEWS

PHOTO: MDN

Daw Mar Mar Khang reads the message during the commemoration of the Pa-O national day in Thaton Township, Mon State. PHOTO: MYANMAR DIGITAL NEWS

People participate in the sand pagoda festival held annually. PHOTO: MYANMAR DIGITAL NEWS

Kyaiktiyo Pagoda also known as Golden Rock Pagoda crowded with pilgrims on the Full Moon Day of Tabauung. PHOTO: MDN
**Religious Titles conferring ceremony for the year 2018**

**FROM PAGE-1**

The Vice President added that JFE Meranti is a joint venture company of JFE-Steel, Meranti Steel, JFE-Shoji, Marubeni-Hocha Steel and Hanwa, and it is an honour that such distinguished business organizations are working together in Myanmar. The company was invited to invest US$100 million in Thilawa SEZ, Myanmar’s leading economic zone.

“缅甸的经济是快速地转型升级，而且我很高兴看到JFE Meranti参与其中。”- Vice President

The development of basic infrastructures across all sectors is essential for the rapid development of Myanmar. At the moment, a majority of steel products required for basic infrastructural development are being imported. About 90 per cent of galvanised or coloured steel sheets are currently being imported. Thus, it is believed that steel products produced by JFE Meranti in Thilawa SEZ will fill a certain degree, the demands for steel in Myanmar, said the Vice President.

This ground-breaking ceremony is the first for Thilawa SEZ, and it is believed that zone B will be as successful as zone A. JFE Meranti is expected to become a successful business that will support the development of Myanmar in all sectors, and Japanese investors are also invited to invest more in Myanmar, said the Vice President.

As part of yesterday’s ceremony, the Ambassador of Japan to Myanmar Tatsushi Higuchi and Yangon Region Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein delivered speeches of honour.

Later, the foundation laying ceremony was held with Vice President U Henry Van Thio, Union Minister Dr. Than Myint, Region Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein, Deputy Minister U Set Aung, Ambassador of Japan to Myanmar Tatsushi Higuchi, JFE-Meranti Myanmar Company Limited CEOs and other officials.

JFE-Meranti Myanmar Company Limited’s JFE Steel Corporation factory will be constructed in 2018, and all the project works will be completed in 2020. Once the factory is completed, it will provide job opportunities for 300 Myanmar technicians and workers. The factory will annually produce 180,000 tonnes of galvanised steel and 90,000 tonnes of coloured steel. JFE Meranti is the second largest steel company in Japan and is the top investor in Thilawa SEZ—Myanmar News Agency □

**FROM PAGE-2**

Union Ministers, Peace Commission Chairman, Union Attorney General, Union Civil Service Board Chairman, Nay Pyi Taw Council Chairman, Anti-Corruption Commission Chairman, Myanmar National Human Rights Commission Chairman, Central Bank of Myanmar Governor, Chief of General Staff (Army, Navy and Air), Nay Pyi Taw Command Commander, Deputy Ministers then conferred the Agga Maha Pandita; Maha Dhamma Katika Bahujana Hitadhara; Dhamma Kadaka Bahuza Hitadhaya; Agga Maha Gandha Vacaka Pandita; Maha Ganda Vasaka Pandita; Ganda Vacaka Pandita; Agga Maha Siddhama Jotikadhaja; Maha Siddhama Jotikadhaja; Agga Maha Kammatthana Cariya; Maha Kammatthana Cariya; and Kammatthana Cariya titles and related accessories to foreign Sayadaws and nuns.

President U Htin Kyaw’s wife First Lady Daw Su Su Lwin conferred the Ganda Vacaka Padita title to a nun, the Ganda Vacaka Padita titles to two nuns, Vice President U Myint Swe’s wife Daw Khin Thet Htay conferred the Ganda Vacaka Padita title to a nun, Saddhama Jotikadhaja titles to two nuns and Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U Win Myint’s wife Daw Cho Che conferred the Saddhama Jotikadhaja titles and related accessories to three nuns.

Sasana Nokgaha titles and missionary titles were then conferred where President U Htin Kyaw conferred the Agga Maha Siri Saddhama Mani Jotadara titles to U Kyaw Win and U Shein Win, Siri Saddhama Mani Jotadara title and accessories to U Zeya Thuya Mon.

Vice President U Myint Swe conferred the Thihada Saddhama Mani Jotadara titles to three persons; Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U Win Myint conferred the Thihada Saddhama Mani Jotadara title to two men and Saddhama Mani Jotadara title to a man; Union Chief Justice U Htun Htun Oo conferred the Saddhama Jotadara titles to three men, Tatmadaw Commander-in-Chief Senior General Min Aung Hlaing conferred the Saddhama Jotadara titles to two men and Union Constitutional Tribunal Chairman U Myo Nyunt conferred the Saddhama Jotadara titles and related accessories to three men.

Union Election Commission Chairman U Hla Thein and Tatmadaw Deputy Commander-in-Chief, Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice Senior General Soe Win conferred the Saddhama Jotadara title and related accessories to three men.

Sasana Nokgaha titles and missionary titles were then conferred where President U Htin Kyaw conferred the Agga Maha Siri Saddhama Mani Jotadara titles to U Kyaw Win and U Shein Win, Siri Saddhama Mani Jotadara title and accessories to U Zeya Thuya Mon.

Vice President U Myint Swe conferred the Thihada Saddhama Mani Jotadara titles to three persons; Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U Win Myint conferred the Thihada Saddhama Mani Jotadara title to two men and Saddhama Mani Jotadara title to a man; Union Chief Justice U Htun Htun Oo conferred the Saddhama Jotadara titles to three men, Tatmadaw Commander-in-Chief Senior General Min Aung Hlaing conferred the Saddhama Jotadara titles to two men and Union Constitutional Tribunal Chairman U Myo Nyunt conferred the Saddhama Jotadara titles and related accessories to three men.

As part of yesterday’s ceremony, the Ambassador of Japan to Myanmar Tatsushi Higuchi and Yangon Region Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein delivered speeches of honour.

Later, the foundation laying ceremony was held with Vice President U Henry Van Thio, Union Minister Dr. Than Myint, Region Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein, Deputy Minister U Set Aung, Ambassador of Japan to Myanmar Tatsushi Higuchi, JFE-Meranti Myanmar Company Limited CEOs and other officials.

JFE-Meranti Myanmar Company Limited’s JFE Steel Corporation factory will be constructed in 2018, and all the project works will be completed in 2020. Once the factory is completed, it will provide job opportunities for 300 Myanmar technicians and workers. The factory will annually produce 180,000 tonnes of galvanised steel and 90,000 tonnes of coloured steel. JFE Meranti is the second largest steel company in Japan and is the top investor in Thilawa SEZ—Myanmar News Agency □

In the evening a ceremony to donate rice was held where President U Htin Kyaw and First Lady Daw Su Su Lwin, State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi together with heads, staff and families Office of the of President, Office of the Sate Counsellor, Union Government Office, Hluttaw, Union Supreme Court, Tatmadaw Commander-in-Chief-in-Office, Union Constitutional Tribunal Office, Union Election Commission Office, Union ministries, Union Attorney General Office, Union Auditor General Office, Union Civil Service Board Office, Central Bank of Myanmar and Nay Pyi Taw Council, Sasana Nokgaha title winners, followers of religious title winner Sayadaws, religious and social organizations from townships in Nay Pyi Taw Coun cil area, companies and donors donated rice and offertories to religious title winner Sayadaws and nuns at the entrance to Upasatani Pagoda and along the circuit road.

A total of 199 Sayadaws, 9 nuns, 27 men and 33 women were conferred with religious titles in the ceremony to confer religious titles for the year 2018. —Myanmar News Agency □

**VP attends ceremony of JFE Steel Corporation factory in Thilawa SEZ**

Vice President U Henry Van Thio addresses the groundbreaking ceremony of JFE Steel Corporation factory in Thilawa SEZ (B). PHOTO: MNA

PHOTO: MNA
Join hands with peasants to uplift their socio-economic life

The last month of the 12 month Lunar Calendar of Myanmar called Taguung roughly corresponds to March. It has four gazetted commemorative days — two religious days of great importance and two others that commemorate events of historical and political significance. The last month of the 12 month Lunar Calendar of Myanmar called Tabaung roughly corresponds to March. It has four gazetted commemorative days — two religious days of great importance and two others that commemorate events of historical and political significance.

TSENY is a historic and auspicious day designated to honour all peasants in the country. Some 76 per cent of Myanmar’s population lives in rural areas, and their primary occupation is agriculture.

The government is providing protection to the rights and interests of farmers, and taking effective steps to support the farmers for the grievances and losses caused by natural disasters, as much as possible.

A majority of the country’s peasants have low incomes due to the impact of climate change, natural disasters and other factors such as deforestation and faulty soil management practices.

Therefore, for the development of the agricultural sector, we must formulate sound policies and strive hard to implement them for the advancement of the socio-economic life of the peasants.

To increase agricultural production, we must assist the farmers with high-quality seeds and fertilizer, and provide them with good quality irrigation water. Farmers must be trained to use this water effectively to enable them to increase their productivity.

Today, our peasants, who are still among the country’s poorest, are benefiting from the rapid proliferation of mobile phones in the world.

The World Bank designated Myanmar as having “the most favorable agricultural conditions in Asia,” as mobile phone applications are revolutionizing the agriculture industry here.

Farms in rural areas can get up-to-date information, and engage in effective communication with each other. Nowadays, the peasants are using mobile phones to communicate with their local cooperative societies or agricultural extension offices.

Today on Peasants’ Day, the Global New Light of Myanmar would like to urge the people to join hands with the farmers to overcome challenges that lie ahead.

The peasantry in Myanmar, who make up an estimated 72 per cent of the population, rely on agriculture for food, income and employment. They are the backbone of the country’s economy, providing the raw materials for most industries.

Join hands with peasants to uplift their socio-economic life.
Use the long holiday weekend fully

By Min Myo

ON this long holiday weekend, many are visiting, travelling, or making pilgrimages. The following are quotes from workers in Nay Pyi Taw who are trying to use the time off to enjoy themselves.

Ko Arkar Ko Ko, Nay Pyi Taw Kyae Sin Hein bus line

Our bus line plies to Yangon, Monywa and Lashio. In Nay Pyi Taw, all bus tickets were sold out since yesterday evening. Today too, all tickets were sold out earlier in the day. Nay Pyi Taw is considered as office workers’ town. As there are four consecutive holidays this week, most office workers return to their hometowns. Some were seen going off on a trip with families and friends. That is why sales of bus tickets are high. Tickets in other bus lines and bus gates were also heard to be sold out completely. There is quite a number of travellers this week.

Daw Yu Yu Mon, Union Election Commission Office

Now is the time when there are four days holiday, and I’ll go back to Yangon. My parents and relatives are in Yangon. It is a happy time, as we can visit our parents and relatives while having a relaxing time. Staffs from other ministries are also returning to their hometowns. There are some who couldn’t return because they were on duty. I planned to go since last night, but couldn’t get a bus ticket so I’m going back this morning. For those who couldn’t go back to their hometown for any reason can enjoy the Taung festival held here. All can enjoy this during the holiday. Some didn’t return to their hometown because they want to enjoy this festival here. I’ll have a great time with my parents and other family members during this four-day holiday.

Daw Nwe Yin Tun, Ministry of Electricity and Energy

I’m going back to my father and mother in Yangon during this four-day holiday. But it was quite hard to get a bus ticket, so I’m going back only this morning. Taking into consideration the time I need to return, I can stay in Yangon for two days only. Anyway, it is great to have a four-day holiday. It is great to go back and meet with parents and relatives even for a short time. As my parents are quite old, they could not stay with me in Nay Pyi Taw. So it is a good chance for me to be with them and to take care of them. I hope there are more such long holidays. This is my wish.

Ma Hla Yin Aye, Myanma Gems Enterprise

I didn’t make it back to my parents this four-day holiday. I’m going on a pilgrimage to pagodas in Nay Pyi Taw, Pyinmana and Lawe with friends. We have paid homage to Shwe Let Hla Pagoda and Uppatasanti Pagoda today. We are having a relaxed time with friends and enjoying the foods. We’ll gain new knowledge. It is an enjoyable time. Winding down the tensions of work while gaining new knowledge. We’ll continue this in the coming days too. On Sunday, we’ll prepare to go back to work the next day while relaxing at home. We’ll read books. Some friends return to their parents. Seeing my friends having an easy time made the tension and fatigue from work go away.

Ko Kyaw Thet Naing Tun, University of Veterinary Science, Yezin

I’m paying homage to Uppatasanti Pagoda with friends while we have a four-day holiday. We are a group of ten friends. We are doing research works in the university so we are not free to go back to our parents. So on this religious holiday, I urge all to spend time with friends or families to pay homage to pagoda or go on a trip.

Ma Wei Yi Phu, University of Veterinary Science, Yezin

Today is the full-moon day of Tabang. As it is a school holiday, I come on a pilgrimage to the pagoda with friends. We are doing research in the university. So we are unable to go anywhere. Now that there is a four-day school holiday, it is good to go on a trip with friends. We will gain some knowledge while having a great time with friends. I would like to urge all to use the long holiday fully.

The long holiday weekend fully

On this long holiday weekend, many are visiting, travelling, or making pilgrimages. The following are quotes from workers in Nay Pyi Taw who are trying to use the time off to enjoy themselves.

Ko Arkar Ko Ko, Nay Pyi Taw Kyae Sin Hein bus line

Our bus line plies to Yangon, Monywa and Lashio. In Nay Pyi Taw, all bus tickets were sold out since yesterday evening. Today too, all tickets were sold out earlier in the day. Nay Pyi Taw is considered as office workers’ town. As there are four consecutive holidays this week, most office workers return to their hometowns. Some were seen going off on a trip with families and friends. That is why sales of bus tickets are high. Tickets in other bus lines and bus gates were also heard to be sold out completely. There is quite a number of travellers this week.

Daw Yu Yu Mon, Union Election Commission Office

Now is the time when there are four days holiday, and I’ll go back to Yangon. My parents and relatives are in Yangon. It is a happy time, as we can visit our parents and relatives while having a relaxing time. Staffs from other ministries are also returning to their hometowns. There are some who couldn’t return because they were on duty. I planned to go since last night, but couldn’t get a bus ticket so I’m going back this morning. For those who couldn’t go back to their hometown for any reason can enjoy the Taung festival held here. All can enjoy this during the holiday. Some didn’t return to their hometown because they want to enjoy this festival here. I’ll have a great time with my parents and other family members during this four-day holiday.

Daw Nwe Yin Tun, Ministry of Electricity and Energy

I’m going back to my father and mother in Yangon during this four-day holiday. But it was quite hard to get a bus ticket, so I’m going back only this morning. Taking into consideration the time I need to return, I can stay in Yangon for two days only. Anyway, it is great to have a four-day holiday. It is great to go back and meet with parents and relatives even for a short time. As my parents are quite old, they could not stay with me in Nay Pyi Taw. So it is a good chance for me to be with them and to take care of them. I hope there are more such long holidays. This is my wish.

Ma Hla Yin Aye, Myanma Gems Enterprise

I didn’t make it back to my parents this four-day holiday. I’m going on a pilgrimage to pagodas in Nay Pyi Taw, Pyinmana and Lawe with friends. We have paid homage to Shwe Let Hla Pagoda and Uppatasanti Pagoda today. We are having a relaxed time with friends and enjoying the foods. We’ll gain new knowledge. It is an enjoyable time. Winding down the tensions of work while gaining new knowledge. We’ll continue this in the coming days too. On Sunday, we’ll prepare to go back to work the next day while relaxing at home. We’ll read books. Some friends return to their parents. Seeing my friends having an easy time made the tension and fatigue from work go away.

Ko Kyaw Thet Naing Tun, University of Veterinary Science, Yezin

I’m paying homage to Uppatasanti Pagoda with friends while we have a four-day holiday. We are a group of ten friends. We are doing research works in the university so we are not free to go back to our parents. So on this religious holiday, I urge all to spend time with friends or families to pay homage to pagoda or go on a trip.

Ma Wei Yi Phu, University of Veterinary Science, Yezin

Today is the full-moon day of Tabang. As it is a school holiday, I come on a pilgrimage to the pagoda with friends. We are doing research in the university. So we are unable to go anywhere. Now that there is a four-day school holiday, it is good to go on a trip with friends. We will gain some knowledge while having a great time with friends. I would like to urge all to use the long holiday fully.
Enjoying Full Moon Day of Tabaung

YESTERDAY was the Full Moon Day of Tabaung, a time when pagodas nationwide and recreation places become crowded with Buddhist devotees.

Children along with their parents feed sugarcane to elephants at the Yangon Zoological Garden, which attracted visitors from many parts of Myanmar yesterday, the beginning day of the four-day holiday for civil servants.

“This is my first visit to the Yangon zoo. I want to visit the zoo again next year,” said Maung Win Aung, who completed his 9th grade examinations recently in Myingyan, central Myanmar. For him, feeding the elephants was the favourite part of his visit to the zoo. People enjoy watching the skills of the elephants as they kick the ball into the net, the performances of tamed monkeys and bears, magic shows and a snake show.

“I have shown my performance with poisonous snakes for about 30 years. I am delighted to perform for people across the country,” said snake handler and performer U Sein Tin.

“During the public holidays, most people go to the Ngwe Saung and the Chaungtha beach. As far as I know, people from Yangon prefer to go to the Kyaukhteteeyo pagoda. There are many people who will visit Mandalay, Pyin-Oo-Lwin and Bagan,” said Ko Phone, a driver.—GNLM

Shwedagon Pagoda is crowded with people yesterday on the Full Moon Day of Tabaung. PHOTO: ZAW KYI

People visit the Yangon Zoological Garden. PHOTO: ZAW KYI

People wait buses to visit places outside Yangon.

People enjoy a game at Yangon Zoological Garden. PHOTO: ZAW KYI
Fifth batch of youth volunteers arrives in Sittway

THE fifth group of Union Enterprise for Humanitarian Assistance, Resettlement and Development in Rakhine (UEHRD) youth volunteers, who arrived in Sittway, was welcomed by officials yesterday morning.

“Our group included 47 youth volunteers and six staff from our department, who will supervise the youth volunteers. We will go to Buthidaung and Maungdaw tomorrow. I will lead a group to Maungtaw. Volunteers in this batch are from charitable organisations, social organisations and the Red Cross Society. We have already provided training to them. Our departmental staff will also supervise them on the ground. Youth volunteers across the nation are invited to join our volunteer programme,” said Ko Than Htun Aung from the Department of Disaster Management. “I am in the group representing Lu Ye Chun group (outstanding student group). My purpose of participating in the group is to assess the real situation in Rakhine, because I feel our country is wrongly blamed by the world. After I see the real situation, I can reveal the truth,” said Ma Aung Thein Than Hue from Lu Ye Chun group.

The fifth group of youth volunteers will leave for Buthidaung by an express vessel this morning and will conduct field assistance programmes in the villages of the region from 3 to 12 March. —Han Linn Naing (Sittway Sub-printing House) □

MIC approves nine foreign, local investments

THE Myanmar Investment Commission (MIC) has decided to issue four investment permits and five endorsements in relation to investment proposals, according to an MIC meeting 3/2018, which was held on 27 February. The MIC approved two local investments and two joint venture investments, including businesses in wheat distribution, communication services and the construction of oil and gas jetties for importation, distribution and storage. U Kyu faiy Company Limited will invest in the wheat distribution business in Yangon Thilawa Special Economic Zone, while Fortune Telecom Company Limited will invest in communication services in the Taninthayi, Bago and Magway regions, and Nay Pyi Taw, Kayin and Mon states.

As joint venture investments, Apex Union Gas Co. Ltd. and KMA SIAM Limited will invest in two oil and gas jetties in Yagon Thilawa Special Economic Zone. Currently, 60 per cent of the investments are made in the Yangon Region, while 30 per cent of the investments are in the Mandalay Region. The remaining investments are spread across other States and Regions.—Zwe □

Rice and foodstuff airlifted to Putao, Kachin State

TATMADAW helicopters transported rice and other foodstuff to Putao from Nanpong Air Base, Myitkyina, on 28 February and 1 March.

Tatmadaw soldiers, departmental officials and staff from the Fire Service Department aided the transportation of 257 bags of rice on 28 February, and 393 bags of rice, 10 buckets of cooking oil, five sacks of onions, four bags of garlic, 10 packets of dried noodles, one bag of beans and other foodstuff on 1 March at Nanpong Air Base, Myitkyina.

Officials and staff from the General Administration Department, Fire Service Department, Myanmar Police Force and the Tatmadaw in Putao received the rice and foodstuff at Putao Airport. So far, a total of 560 bags of rice, 100 visses of cooking oil and other foodstuff have already been transported to Putao.—State IPRD □

Ministry of Labour to issue smart ID cards

THE Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population is making arrangements to issue smart ID cards for citizens this year, according to a report in Myawaddy Daily yesterday. “The government has approved this process. We will form committees to assign them their duties. There is a lot of work to be done,” said U Mint Kyain, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population.

If we can change the conventional citizenship scrutiny cards to smart cards, we will be able to collect biographic data and biometric data and build a national database. Also, we will be able to share information with ministries that deliver services to the people. It will facilitate an easy e-movement system, he added.

The Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population has held more than 60 rounds of discussions with international agencies, including the World Bank, to change the smart ID cards.—GNLM □

Contract signed to buy steel truss for Kin Chaung Bridge

THE signing ceremony of contract for services and supply of steel truss for Kin Chaung Bridge between Ministry of Construction and MCE GmbH, Austria was held at the meeting hall of the Ministry of Construction on 28 February. Deputy Minister for Construction U Kyaw Lin, Permanent Secretary U Win Tint, Deputy Directors-General and officials from Austria-based MCE GmbH attended the ceremony. During the ceremony, U Kyaw Lin and CEO of MCE GmbH Dr. Dieter Reitz delivered the opening speech.

—Myanmar News Agency □

The ceremony to sign the contract between Ministry of Construction and MCE GmbH, Austria held in Nay Pyi Taw on 28 February. □

□ PHOTO: MYANMAR NEWS AGENCY □
ILE DU ROI-GEORGE, ANTARCTIQUE — A decade ago, a thick layer of ice covered the Collins Glacier on Antarctica’s King George Island.

Now, the rocky landscape is visible to the naked eye, in a region that is both a victim of and a laboratory for climate change.

“I had the opportunity to come here over a 15-year period, and even within a human’s lifetime, you can already see the changes brought about by climate change,” the director of the Chilean Antarctic Institute (INACH), Marcelo Leppe, told AFP.

Observers can now see “rocks that we weren’t seeing five or 10 years ago, and that is direct evidence of the shrinking of these glaciers and loss of mass,” he said.

But even as these melting glaciers worry the scientific world, the presence in Antarctica of plants proving resistant to extreme conditions has also sparked hope for a warming planet.

Chile is one of some 20 countries with scientific bases on the cold continent. Its Professor Julio Escudero complex on King George Island is where dozens of researchers are measuring the effects of climate change on native flora and fauna.

“We need to quantify the change to predict what could happen in the near future,” Leppe said.

Blooming algae

Measurements taken last year by Chilean scientists on Doumer Island in Antarctica’s Palmer Archipelago showed water temperature had risen to 2.5 degrees Celsius (36.5 degrees Fahrenheit), up from its normal range of between 0 and 1.5 degrees.

At a depth of 40 meters (130 feet), it was still at 2.0 degrees.

The warming waters have attracted species previously unseen in the Antarctic, such as a spider crab normally found south of Chile.

There is also a blooming of green algae which is vital for the local ecosystem, especially for crustaceans.

“Even though they’re really small, the algae and the micro-algae are really important for balance in the food chain,” said Nelson Valdivia, a professor at Austral University of Chile.

“They supply nutrients to the rest of the ecosystem, and we know that the number of species in the same ecosystem is a very important factor in terms of it remaining in good shape,” he said.

But over a longer term, this flourishing of algae could unsettle the ecological balance.

The worry is “losing species that we don’t even yet know exist,” Valdivia said.

Scientists also fear the effect of warmer temperatures on the rest of the world.

According to NASA monitoring, between 2002 and 2016, Antarctica lost 125 gigatons of ice per year, causing sea levels worldwide to rise by 0.35 millimeters annually.

Antarctica holds 62 per cent of the planet’s freshwater reserves, so the melting there could have far-reaching consequences, not least by diminishing the salinity of the seas, which could prove fatal for many marine species.—AFP

Antarctica: a laboratory for climate change

Death toll in Egypt’s train crash rises to 15

CAIRO — The death toll of the train crash that took place in Beheira province northern the capital Cairo on Wednesday has risen to 15, official MENA news agency reported. “The number of victims of Beheira train crash mounted to 15 dead and 40 wounded so far,” MENA quoted Transport Ministry’s spokesman Mohamed Ezz as saying. Transport Minister Hesham Arafat hurried to the accident place to follow up the developments, according to the Egyptian state TV. Beheira security chief Alaa El-Din Abdel-Pattah explained earlier on Wednesday that the accident took place as two cabins derailed from a passenger train and hit a cargo train in Rom Hamada district of Beheira.

Health Ministry’s spokesman Khaled Megahed said that more than 30 ambulances have rushed to the crash scene to move the wounded people to nearby hospitals. “They raised alert to utmost degree in the province’s hospitals of Damanhour, Wady al-Natroun and Kauf al-Dawwar to receive any cases,” Megahed said in the statement. Egypt’s public prosecutor assigned an engineering committee to find out the reasons behind the crash.

Egypt witnessed a number of deadly train accidents over the past few years in which hundreds were killed and wounded. Last August, the collision of two trains in the coastal province of Alexandria northern Cairo left at least 49 dead and more than 100 injured.—Xinhua

CLAIM’S DAY NOTICE

M.V RAINBOW ANGEL VOY. NO. ( 24)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V RAINBOW ANGEL VOY. NO. ( 24) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 2-3-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T.T where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the following Trademark:

Industries Pte Ltd., a company incorporated in Singapore and having its registered office at 10 Buroh Building, Singapore 627564 is the owner and proprietor of the following Trademark:

In respect of “Fans [air-conditioning], fan [parts of air-conditioning installations], fans (electric-) for personal use, ventilation hoods, ventilation hoods for laboratories, ventilation [air-conditioning] installations and apparatus, ventilation [air-conditioning] installations for vehicles,” in International Class 11. Fraudulent or unauthorized use, or actual or colorable imitation of the said Trademark shall be dealt with according to law.

U Thant Zin Aung, G H P
For Kruger Ventilation Industries Pte Ltd.
C/o Polaris Partners Myanmar Co. Ltd.,
Unit 1016, Floor, Suite Square Office Tower, Site Pagoda Road, Yangon, The Republic of the Union of Myanmar
polarispartners@polaris.com.mm
Dated 2.3.2018

TRADEMARK CAUTION

Kruger Ventilation Industries Pte Ltd., a company incorporated in Singapore and having its registered office at 10 Buroh Street, #06-06 West Connect Building, Singapore 627564 is the owner and proprietor of the following Trademark:

Antarctica holds 62 per cent of the planet’s freshwater reserves, so the melting there could have far-reaching consequences, not least by diminishing the salinity of the seas, which could prove fatal for many marine species.—AFP
How young Guillermo became monster-mad director Del Toro

CALIFORNIA — Long before he was the celebrated director of fantasy romance “The Shape of Water,” this year’s top Oscar contender with 13 nominations, Guillermo del Toro was fascinated with monsters and the movies.

Teachers in his hometown, Guadalajara, Mexico, remember him coming to class with giant cockroaches, and friends recall helping him shoot his first movie at their school — an eight-millimeter short film featuring a gelatinous monster.

Those who knew him before he was Guillermo del Toro, the award-winning filmmaker, remember him as just Guillermo — an affable teenager with a love of strange creatures, a soft spot for misfits and explosive creativity.

“You could already see his imagination, his fantastical way of interpreting reality, in the short films he was making as a teenager,” says Anne Marie Meier, a Swiss film critic who met Del Toro when he was 16 and taking a screenwriting workshop that she taught.

“He was passionate about insects,” she says with a laugh.

“He had a competition going with the other kids to see who could find the biggest cockroach in Guadalajara. He would show up to class saying, ‘I’ve got one that’s seven centimeters!’”

Meier, who lives in Guadalajara, also remembers Del Toro as a voracious consumer of popular culture.

“He loved to play with whatever caught his interest. He feasted on culture, read comics, drew graphic novels and went to the movies all the time,” she says.

First films

“The Shape of Water,” set during the Cold War, tells the story of a mute cleaning woman who falls in love with a strange amphibious monster held captive at the top-secret US government research facility where she works.

Del Toro has already won several awards for “The Shape of Water” including the top prize from the Directors Guild of America in early February. PHOTO: AFP

Adored by critics, it is up for several of the top prizes at Sunday’s Oscars, including best picture, best director and best actress. Del Toro has come a long way — yet in some ways not far at all from his first teenage films, says photographer Mariano Aparicio, who helped the director make his first movies.

Aparicio has fond memories of their first effort: a short called “Nightmare,” which they made when they were 17.

“There were no video cameras then. We had a Super 8,” he tells AFP.

“It was pure silliness. It was a lot of fun though. The movie was about a gelatinous monster that comes out of the toilets and starts running around our school.”

They filmed the movie together, taking turns with the camera, he says. But the script was Del Toro’s.

“You had to send the film to the United States to be developed. It was an agonizingly long wait. Then you edited it with a special cutter and glued it together,” says Aparicio.

After “Nightmare” (parts one and two), Del Toro made “Matilde,” a horror movie filmed at his grandmother’s house.

It bore many of his future trademarks, blending the supernatural with the religious imagery he grew up with in his devoutly Catholic household.

Del Toro’s mother, Guadalupe, played the lead — a wheelchair-bound woman who gets swallowed up by an ominous crack in her wall.

His mother also appeared in one of his first professional films, “Geometria” (1987), which featured his father, as well — AFP

Spotify files to go public, eying streaming growth despite losses

NEW YORK — Spotify on Wednesday announced a long-awaited public listing, voicing confidence that its streaming model will keep reshaping the music industry but acknowledging that the company has yet to turn a profit. In its filing with US regulators, the Swedish platform that over the course of a decade has helped make streaming the most popular way to listen to music in parts of the world estimated the company’s value to be as much as $23.4 billion.

In an unusual move, Spotify said it would list existing shares directly on the New York Stock Exchange rather than issue new shares, allowing its founders and investors to maintain control and avoiding the cost of hiring Wall Street underwriters.

The filing said that Spotify had 159 million monthly users including 71 million paying subscribers — twice that of closest rival Apple Music, which the tech giant launched in 2015 to win a slice of the growing streaming market.

“While streaming has changed the way many people access music, we believe there is an untapped global audience with significant growth potential,” Spotify’s 35-year-old CEO and co-founder Daniel Ek said in a statement. Ek cited the model of Facebook, which has about two billion users, and YouTube as proof internet companies can reach “global scale.” The streaming service is available in 61 countries or territories and has room to expand even in mature markets, Ek said, citing data showing the average American listens to music for 32 hours each month. Spotify in its filing said that the share listing could be worth $1 billion but cautioned that it was only offering the number informationally to meet regulatory rules.

A better way’ for music business

The papers filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission offered the most detailed look yet at the finances of the Spotify. The company said that revenue jumped by more than 38 percent in 2017 from a year earlier to 4.09 billion euros ($4.99 billion). But the eye-popping rise of Spotify has yet to translate into a stable bottom line. The company said its net loss widened sharply last year to 1.24 billion euros ($1.51 billion).

“We have incurred significant operating losses in the past, and we may not be able to generate sufficient revenue to be profitable, or to generate positive cash flow on a sustained basis,” the company said as it listed the risk factors — AFP

Keith Richards sorry for recommending Jagger vasectomy

NEW YORK — The Rolling Stones have been rocking together for a half century but the legendary tensions between Keith Richards and Mick Jagger look to be very much alive.

Richards apologized Wednesday to his bandmate after the guitarist suggested that the secound frontman needed a vasectomy. PHOTO: AFP

Keith Richards (right) apologized to his bandmate Mick Jagger (left) after the guitarist suggested that the secund frontman needed a vasectomy. — AFP

THE STONES have endured despite decades of hard-living and internal tumult.

In 2010, Richards published a memoir, “Life,” in which he openly derided Jagger as a needy prima donna and said the other bandmates mocked him as “Her Majesty.” Richards even cast doubt on Jagger’s private parts, saying the swaggering singer had a “tiny todger.” The latest incident comes just after the Stones — some of the highest-earning musicians on the live circuit — announced a new tour leg of Europe to begin on 17 May in Dublin. — AFP

Keith Richards (right) apologized to his bandmate Mick Jagger (left) after the guitarist suggested that the secund frontman needed a vasectomy. PHOTO: AFP

Keith Richards (right) apologized to his bandmate Mick Jagger (left) after the guitarist suggested that the secund frontman needed a vasectomy. PHOTO: AFP

Keith Richards (right) apologized to his bandmate Mick Jagger (left) after the guitarist suggested that the secund frontman needed a vasectomy. PHOTO: AFP

Keith Richards (right) apologized to his bandmate Mick Jagger (left) after the guitarist suggested that the secund frontman needed a vasectomy. PHOTO: AFP

Keith Richards (right) apologized to his bandmate Mick Jagger (left) after the guitarist suggested that the secund frontman needed a vasectomy. PHOTO: AFP

Keith Richards (right) apologized to his bandmate Mick Jagger (left) after the guitarist suggested that the secund frontman needed a vasectomy. PHOTO: AFP

Keith Richards (right) apologized to his bandmate Mick Jagger (left) after the guitarist suggested that the secund frontman needed a vasectomy. PHOTO: AFP

Keith Richards (right) apologized to his bandmate Mick Jagger (left) after the guitarist suggested that the secund frontman needed a vasectomy. PHOTO: AFP

Keith Richards (right) apologized to his bandmate Mick Jagger (left) after the guitarist suggested that the secund frontman needed a vasectomy. PHOTO: AFP

Keith Richards (right) apologized to his bandmate Mick Jagger (left) after the guitarist suggested that the secund frontman needed a vasectomy. PHOTO: AFP

Keith Richards (right) apologized to his bandmate Mick Jagger (left) after the guitarist suggested that the secund frontman needed a vasectomy. PHOTO: AFP

Keith Richards (right) apologized to his bandmate Mick Jagger (left) after the guitarist suggested that the secund frontman needed a vasectomy. PHOTO: AFP

Keith Richards (right) apologized to his bandmate Mick Jagger (left) after the guitarist suggested that the secund frontman needed a vasectomy. PHOTO: AFP

Keith Richards (right) apologized to his bandmate Mick Jagger (left) after the guitarist suggested that the secund frontman needed a vasectomy. PHOTO: AFP

Keith Richards (right) apologized to his bandmate Mick Jagger (left) after the guitarist suggested that the secund frontman needed a vasectomy. PHOTO: AFP

Keith Richards (right) apologized to his bandmate Mick Jagger (left) after the guitarist suggested that the secund frontman needed a vasectomy. PHOTO: AFP

Keith Richards (right) apologized to his bandmate Mick Jagger (left) after the guitarist suggested that the secund frontman needed a vasectomy. PHOTO: AFP

Keith Richards (right) apologized to his bandmate Mick Jagger (left) after the guitarist suggested that the secund frontman needed a vasectomy. PHOTO: AFP

Keith Richards (right) apologized to his bandmate Mick Jagger (left) after the guitarist suggested that the secund frontman needed a vasectomy. PHOTO: AFP

Keith Richards (right) apologized to his bandmate Mick Jagger (left) after the guitarist suggested that the secund frontman needed a vasectomy. PHOTO: AFP

The Stones have endured despite decades of hard-living and internal tumult.

In 2010, Richards published a memoir, “Life,” in which he openly derided Jagger as a needy prima donna and said the other bandmates mocked him as “Her Majesty.” Richards even cast doubt on Jagger’s private parts, saying the swaggering singer had a “tiny todger.” The latest incident comes just after the Stones — some of the highest-earning musicians on the live circuit — announced a new tour leg of Europe to begin on 17 May in Dublin. — AFP
World’s first hand-painted film vies for an Oscar

LOS ANGELES — Vying for an Oscar, “Loving Vincent” is the world’s first animated feature film painted by hand—all 65,000 frames—in the distinct style of Vincent van Gogh.

Centred on a probe into his untimely death, the film was shot on a shoestring budget of $5.5 million (4.5 million euros). That is 30 times less than Disney’s “Coco”, one of the film’s four Oscar rivals.

For director Dorota Kobiela, “Loving Vincent” has been a seven-year labour of love combining her twin passions of cinema and painting. “Van Gogh’s style was perfect for the project; his paintings show all the details of his life, his day-to-day habits, his house, his room, his friends,” Kobiela told AFP ahead of Sunday’s Oscar ceremonies in Los Angeles.

Kobiela and co-director Hugh Welchman already have one Oscar under their belt; their BreakThru Productions film company won an Academy Award in 2008 for the animated short “Peter and the Wolf”, based on the story and music by Sergei Prokofiev.

“We are the underdogs! In our category it’s normally dominated by Disney and Pixar but I have a feeling we might be one of the big upsets this year,” Welchman, who is also Kobiela’s husband, told AFP.

.25 secs per day

After five years of pre-production, it took another two years for 125 artists from around the globe to bring the opus to life under Kobiela’s watchful eye.

Working in a massive studio in Poland’s Baltic port city of Gdansk, they based their oil paintings on scenes initially shot on film with actors. The film includes representations of van Gogh’s most famous paintings such as “The Starry Night”. Van Gogh, known for his bold colours and rough, vibrant painting style, is considered one of the most revolutionary painters of the 19th century.

Painting the 93-minute-long movie was a painstaking task. “The pace of work was very slow, averaging a quarter of a second of the film a day,” said Kobiela, who spent seven years on the project.

A single second of the film represents an average of 12 hand-painted frames. Each artist completed an average of six paintings a day, amounting to a half-second of the film for simple scenes.

But according to Kobiela, the quality of the hand-painted frames surpasses digital animation, making them well worth the extra effort.—AFP

LGBT Film Festival in Mandalay to be held in March

THE LGBT Film Festival is going to be held in Mandalay’s Jefferson Center for two days on 2 March and 3 March (Friday and Saturday).

The event features a photo exhibition, films, games and performances that will bring the social life of homosexuals, lesbians, bisexuals and transgender people into focus.

“We’d like to show the life-styles and personal issues of the LGBT community in Myanmar’s society. We want to convey that they are also human,” said organizer Jan Willen Van Rooij, co-founder of the & PROUD.

The CAN-Myanmar, TRY, Bright Pride Myanmar Lesbian Organization and PFLAG-Myanmar jointly organized the free festival that will include discussions and a Q & A session for visitors.

Singers Sandi Myint Lwin and Zun Wai Yan will provide entertainment at the event that is scheduled to be held from 1pm to 8pm.

Additional entertainment will include and some of them are A Pyo Daw Traditional Dance and Puppet Dance by Nan Lay on Friday, and Myau Waing traditional dance, Taung Bay Su group dance, Theater Play (we are humans), and Hip Hop Group dance on Saturday.

Some favourite films from Myanmar and other Asian countries from previous film festivals in Yangon will be screened in the two evenings.

Films include, “2 new Rainbow Reels short films” and “This Kind of Love” from Myanmar, “Die Beautiful - Hilarious drag queens” from the Philippines, “The Substitute — Lesbian Drama” from Taiwan.—Ei Moh Moh Khaing

Picasso painting of muse, future lover fetches European record £50 mln

A Pablo Picasso portrait of his muse Marie-Therese Walter with future lover Dora Maar emerging from the shadows fetched £50 million ($69 million) at a London sale Wednesday, a European auction record for a painting. PHOTO: AFP

LONDON — A Pablo Picasso portrait of his muse Marie-Therese Walter with future lover Dora Maar emerging from the shadows fetched £50 million ($69 million) at a London sale Wednesday, a European auction record for a painting.

The painting also has a strong autobiographical appeal, according to Mackie.

The main subject, Marie-Therese Walter, was the Spanish painter’s “long time lover and muse”. But the looming figure of Dora Maar, whom he met in 1936, emerges in the shadows behind Marie-Therese, explained Mackie.

Several masterpieces have reached astronomical prices at recent auctions, fuelled by the opening of major museums in the Gulf and the purchasing power of collectors from emerging countries.


For director Marie-Therese Walter, was the Spanish painter’s “long time lover and muse”. But the looming figure of Dora Maar, whom he met in 1936, emerges in the shadows behind Marie-Therese, explained Mackie.

Several masterpieces have reached astronomical prices at recent auctions, fuelled by the opening of major museums in the Gulf and the purchasing power of collectors from emerging countries.

Myanmar-Japan Lethwei fights hosted in Japan

AN event featuring Lethwei matches called “Lethwei in Japan 7” took place at Korakuen Hall in Tokyo on 21 February, showcasing the glory of Myanmar’s Lethwei.

The Myanmar-Japan Lethwei fights were jointly organised by the International Lethwei Federation of Japan and Myanmar Media Group.

The event featured a series of bouts between Myanmar and Japanese fighters.

In the 63-kilo fight, 20-year-old Myanmar Lethwei fighter Min Htet Aung was beaten by Japan’s Kouhei Tokeshi to a draw. The two men exchanged numerous bare-knuckled blows before the referee’s final decision to call the match a draw.

In the 66-kilo fight, Kyel Zin Phyo beat Japanese MMA fighter Hikaru Hasumi.

In the 70-kilo fight, Soe Lin Oo, one of Myanmar’s toughest Lethwei fighters, beat Japanese MMA star Hareruya.

In the 73-kilo fight, Myanmar’s Min Htet Aung was beaten by Japan’s Kouhei Tokeshi when the referee stopped the fight.

After the match, Japanese MMA and UFC star Shunichi Shimizu said he had great respect for his opponent.

In 69-kilo fight, Myanmar’s Tun Lwin Moe fought Japanese MMA Fighter Shunichi Shimizu (left) and Myanmar Lethwei star Tun Lwin Moe (right) seen with their fans for their support after he suffered a sprained ankle and fractured metatarsal at the moment after PSG’s 3-0 win against Olympique de Marseille in French Ligue 1.

Lethwei is a full contact martial arts from Myanmar because the fighters fight bareknuckled with only the use of tape and gauze on their hands.

The use of fists, elbows, knees, and feet are allowed, but more surprisingly, in Lethwei, the use of headbutting is also encouraged. — Kyaw Zin Lin

Injured Neymar thanks fans for support ahead of surgery

PARIS — Paris Saint-Germain's Brazilian striker Neymar Wednesday thanked his fans for their support after he suffered a sprained ankle and fractured metatarsal at the weekend.

“Thank you for all the messages!!”, he wrote in Portuguese, French and English on his Instagram page.

The forward also shared a picture of himself lying on the floor in the moments after he was injured during PSG's operation in his home country performed by Brazilian team doctor Rodrigo Lasmar.

The injury could leave Neymar off the field for the rest of the European season, but he is expected to be fit for the World Cup starting in Russia in June, when Brazil will seek their sixth trophy.—AFP

Former football star U Win Thu Moe named head coach of Myanmar women’s national team

U Win Thu Moe, the former Myanmar football star, was named a head coach for the Myanmar women’s national team on Wednesday, according to a statement from the Myanmar Football Federation (MFF).

His contract begins immediately and will extend until December 2019.

As a head coach of the Myanmar women’s national team, U Win Thu Moe promised to lead the team so that their performance would shine at the 2018 AFF Women’s Championship.

“I was overwhelmed by achieving this kind of duty. I will do my best physically and mentally in achieving success for the Myanmar women’s football team”, said U Win Thu Moe.

U Win Thu Moe is a former player for the Myanmar national team and the previous technical director of Yangon United FC, one of the teams in the Myanmar National League. He joined Yangon FC in October 2014 and provided the team with extensive technical skills.

The Myanmar-Japan Lethwei fights were jointly organised by the International Lethwei Federation of Japan and Myanmar Media Group.

The Myanmar-Japan Lethwei fights were jointly organised by the International Lethwei Federation of Japan and Myanmar Media Group.