NEWLY-elected President U Win Myint and the vice presidents U Myint Swe and U Henry Van Thio took their oaths as the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker presided. This was followed by an inaugural speech by President U Win Myint.

“I promise that you will see with your own eyes the changes that you have yearned for as I walk along this path together with you, said President U Win Myint. “Our country is still in poverty with necessities in every sector, which is why we need to carry on our struggle and work hard in all sectors. The challenges and difficulties our country and our people are facing today are many. Although every issue cannot be solved easily, we will have to make utmost efforts to solve these issues according to each priority sector, he said.— MNA

President U Win Myint takes oath of office

President U Win Myint, centre, flanked by vice presidents U Myint Swe, left, and U Henry Van Thio, right, take their oath of office yesterday at the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw. PHOTO: MNA
I promise that you will see with your own eyes the changes that you have yearned for as I walk along this path together with you: President U Win Myint

Following is the unofficial translation of the full text of the speech delivered by President U Win Myint at the ceremony to take oath of office at Pyidaungsu Hluttaw yesterday.

Esteemed Speaker and Representatives of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw, the State Counsellor and Union-level personnel and dignitaries in this ceremony and Union citizens, may you be blessed with auspiciousness, good health and peace of mind.

I wish first of all to express my thanks to the Representatives of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw who elected me as President and all the people who gave me strength and support. Also, I am truly grateful to have this opportunity to deliver this speech after taking my oath of office as President in this Pyidaungsu Hluttaw.

Fellow citizens of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar,

Holding in high esteem all the people in the entire country who have given support with faith and trust to the State Counsellor and the National League for Democracy, I pledge to carry out the mandate and trust as they collaborate in building a democratic nation that respects our people, government employees and civil servants to change their dogmatic mindset and habits. Those government institutions which are lagging behind in the transformation process will need to be put under tight management controls. The country’s weak judiciary system would need to be strengthened. More efforts need to be exerted to stamp out corruption. More efforts need to be exerted to prevent human rights violations. More efforts need to be exerted to crack down illegal drug trade.

We need to manage public funds properly so that there is no wastage. Measures need to be taken to return confiscated farmland to farmers and to give compensation to farmers for losses they have suffered in accordance with the law. We also need to improve the socio-economic life of farmers, improve the lives of workers and ensure that students gain access to higher education.

Fellow citizens, I will firstly like to address the three branches of the sovereign power of the State, who have been entrusted with power according to the Constitution, to exercise mutual respect, understanding, and trust as they collaborate for the good of the people. Additionally, I wish to urge the media sector, which serve as the ears and eyes of the public, to understand the seriousness of their duties and to hold in high regard the public sector that they serve. We have much to carry on fulfilling the hopes and needs of the people of the country. We must press on until our citizens have their dignity raised and our country can retain its former glory on the global stage.

We will abolish the red tape that burdens the people and eradicate corruption and bribery that plagues all levels of society as we work to strengthen the moral fibre of our people. We will draw out from our past experiences as a civilian government overcoming various obstacles and hardships, as we work to the best of our ability for the immediate present and head towards the future of a democratic nation that respects human rights and is free from all stains of corruption.

Fellow citizens,

In my closing remarks I would like to state that I solemnly promise that you will see with your own eyes the changes that you have yearned for as I walk along this path together with you.

Thank you everyone.

Seventh Regular Session of 2nd Pyidaungsu Hluttaw successfully concludes

The 22nd meeting of the seventh regular session of the Second Pyidaungsu Hluttaw was held yesterday and was attended by 655 MPs while 29 MPs were absent.

President elect U Win Myint, Vice Presidents U Myint Swe and U Henry Van Thio took their oath of office as Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Tham presided over them. President U Win Myint then gave his inaugural speech. (The President’s full speech is covered separately). The Speaker then announced the President’s speech was put on record.

Next, the Speaker read the performances and process of the Seventh Regular Session of the Second Pyidaungsu Hluttaw. The Speaker then notified the Hluttaw that the National Strategic Law for April to September 2018, and the National Budget Law have been approved while the 2018 Union Tax Bill has been sent to the President’s office for review. The Pyidaungsu Hluttaw was able to approve of seven bills concerning the various Hluttaw committees and collaboration with international organizations, as well as the Myanmar Investment Law.

The Speaker then announced the successful completion of the Seventh Regular Session of the Second Pyidaungsu Hluttaw.

Attending yesterday’s Hluttaw meeting were State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U Thein Khun Myat, Union Attorney General U Tun Tun Oo, Commander-in-Chief Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, Chairperson of the Constitutional Tribunal U Myo Nyunt, Chairperson of the Union Election Commission U Hla Thein, Deputy Commander-in-Chief Vice Senior General Soe Win, Pyithu Hluttaw Deputy Speaker U Tun Tun Hein, Aung Hlaing, Speaker U Aye Tha Aung, Chairman of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Legal Affairs and Special Cases Assessment Commission Thura U Shwe Mann, Union Ministers, Chief Justice, Union Auditor General, Chairman of the Union Civil Service Board, Nay Pyi Taw Council Chairman, Chief Ministers from Regions and States, Governor of the Central Bank of Myanmar, Chairman of the Anti-Corruption Commission, Chairman of the Myanamar Human Rights Commission, Deputy Ministers, MPs, Patron of the NLD, Central Executive Committee members, and other invited guests.—Thura Zaw
A ceremony to welcome President U Win Myint was held at the Presidential Palace in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

President U Win Myint and First Lady Daw Cho Cho were welcomed at the Presidential Palace by Vice President U Myint Swe and his wife Daw Khin Thet Htay. They were also welcomed by State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.

At the Hall for Envoys, Vice President U Myint Swe introduced President U Win Myint to Vice President U Henry Van Thio, Speaker of the Pyithu Hluttaw U T Khun Myat, Speaker of the Amyotha Hluttaw Mahn Win Khaiung Tham, Union Chief Justice U Htan Htun Oo, Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Vice-Senior General Soe Win, Union Ministers Lt-Gen Kyaw Swe, Lt-Gen Sein Win, Lt-Gen Ye Aung, U Kyaw Tint Swe, Dr. Pe Myint, Thura U Aung Ko, Dr. Aung Thu, U Thant Sin Maung, U Ohn Win, U Win Khaiung, U Khin Maung Cho, Dr. Than Myint, Dr. Myo Thein Gyi, Dr. Myint Htwe, U Han Zaw, Dr. Win Myat Aye, U Ohn Maung, Nai Thet Lin, U Kyaw Tin and Union Attorney-General U Tun Tun Oo.

In his greetings, President U Win Myint stressed the need to work with unity for the country and the people and to cooperate with each other.

U Win Myint, who was elected as a Vice President and presidential candidate by the representatives of the Pyithu Hluttaw, was elected as the President of Myanmar at the Presidential Election of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw on 28 March.—MNA

THE Department of Rural Development has undertaken a project to build houses for local people affected by natural disasters, such as flood, landslides and other related problems.

U Nyi Nyi Swe, an assistant director of the Department for Rural Development, said, “Priority is being given to people who are in need of houses because of these natural disasters.”

During the 2017-2018 fiscal year, more than 95 per cent of the construction projects, including 200 houses in 14 villages out of five townships, have been completed.

The government has allotted Ks1.4 billion, including Ks1.029 billion from the Pyidaungsu fund and Ks371 million from the State government fund, to build the housing projects in the 2017-2018 fiscal year.

“As for our department, we have constructed some 200 houses, including 47 houses in two villages of Maungtaw; 27 houses in one village of Buthedaung Township; 22 houses in three villages of Min Pya Township; 78 houses in five villages of Taung Coat Township and 26 houses in three villages of Gwa Township,” he added.

“These houses are one-storied brick buildings with a steel structure and zinc sheet roofing, and their width is some 468 square feet. Besides two bedrooms, there is a living room, a kitchen, a dining room and a verandah as well. The toilet is outside the house. “Our department expects to construct 300 houses in the 2018-2019 fiscal year by using the Union government’s fund, and concerted efforts are being made to implement this project successfully,” U Nyi Nyi Swe said.—Kyaw Thu Htet

Housing estate project launched for local people in Rakhine State
Over 930,000 foreigners visit Myanmar via Tachilek

MORE than 930,000 foreigners visited the country via the Tachilek border point in the current financial year, according to the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism.

Between 23 and 29 March this year, some 767 foreign visitors, including 195 day-trippers, entered the country through Tachilek, a land border in Shan State in eastern Myanmar, and the Mae Sai border on the Thai side, to visit the town’s well-known destinations on a one-day return visit or overnight trip. Most of them came from neighbouring Thailand, China and third-world countries.

International tourist arrivals through the borders are increasing each year. Foreign travellers visit the country to enjoy its natural scenery, including the highlands, mountains, rivers and forests. The diverse range of culture, traditions and lifestyles of the rural communities in Myanmar are also major attractions.

The town’s well-known destinations among tourists are Talaw Market, Mahamayamuni Pagoda, Shwedagon Pagoda, the ethnic village and the Chinese temples. The tourism authorities are now focusing on implementing eco-tourism, as well as coastal, marine and community-based tourism, in some states and regions.

According to the ministry, international tourist arrivals from all points of entry in the first eight months of this fiscal year have increased 20 per cent, compared with the same period last year. —GNLM

Automotive skills competition held in Magway

THE Myanmar Skill Competition 2018 Automobile Technology, which is Myanmar’s first ever contest, is taking place at the No.5 Industrial Training Center in Magway from 28 to 31 March.

The competition is held as a preparatory contest before participating in the ASEAN Skills Competition (2018) that will take place in Bangkok in August, said Dr Aung Moe Nyo, Chief Minister for Magway Region.

Roads and automobiles are important to ensure smooth transportation in the country for trading goods and travelling, he said.

He urged contenders to practice until their skills reach international standards.

“We will select four of the best contenders from our competition,” he said.

They will be trained for four months in Yangon. Two of them will have to participate in the competition in Thailand representing Myanmar,” said U Hla Kyaing, associate secretary of the Myanmar Engineering Society.

Competitors are trainees from the No.5 Industrial Training Center and 22 young people who are under 22 years old and working for automobile repair and servicing workshops. —Myanmar Digital News
Myanmar to promote local bourse to investors in Tokyo next month

MYANMAR'S first stock exchange backed by Japan's public and private sectors will promote the bourse in Tokyo next month, aiming to lure Japanese investors ahead of the scheduled enforcement of a new company law deregulating foreign ownership of local firms.

The planned presentation in Tokyo of the two-year-old Yangon Stock Exchange, or YSX, is part of an investment seminar to be organized on 18 April by Daiwa Securities Co., which established the bourse's operator with the state-owned Myanma Economic Bank and Japan Exchange Group Inc., according to the Tokyo-based brokerage. Four more companies in Myanmar are preparing to debut on the YSX within this year, bringing the total number to nine, Masaharu Harada, director on the YSX board, said Sunday at an event marking the second anniversary of the bourse in the country's commercial capital of Yangon.

With technical support from the Japan International Cooperation Agency, Tokyo's development aid arm, the YSX is planning to form a special task force with law and accounting firms and brokerages to assist local companies in going public, Harada said.

But trading volume on the bourse stood at 740 million kyat ($554,000) last month, the lowest since the commencement of share trading in March 2016. The number of stock trading accounts now stands at about 34,000, with less than 5 per cent of them involved in daily trading. The new Myanmar Company Act exempts foreign firms from various regulations unless they hold a stake of over 35 per cent in local companies, paving the way for their more active investment in Myanmar businesses. U Maung Maung Win, chair of the Securities and Exchange Commission and Deputy Minister of the Planning and Finance Ministry, said at the ceremony that the authorities aim to vitalize the struggling bourse by increasing trade-matching sessions from the current two times to four times daily. The stock exchange is endeavoring to triple the numbers of listed firms and investors in two years' time, Harada said.

The first modern stock exchange in the emerging economy was established in December 2015 with a capital investment of 32 billion kyat, with Myanma Economic Bank holding a 51 per cent interest, Daiwa Securities 30.25 per cent and Japan Exchange Group 18.75 per cent.

The five currently listed companies are First Myanmar Investment Co., First Private Bank, Myanmar Citizens Bank, Myanmar Thilawa SEZ Holdings Public Ltd. and TMH Telecom Public Co. —Kyodo News

Myanmar earns over $2.3 billion from CMP garment exports

THE total value of cut-make-pack (CMP) garment exports exceeded US$2 billion before the end of this fiscal year, according to a report in Myawady Daily on Friday. U Tun Tun, an executive member of the Myanmar Garment Manufacturers Association, said the value of CMP garment exports reached $2.322 billion between last April and the second week of this March. The majority of entrepreneurs are interested in exporting garments through the free on board (FOB) system, as they expect to get healthy profits in the overseas markets. The government’s support is also needed to promote the country’s garment industry.

The vast majority of the country’s garment factories operate through the CMP system. The alternative is the FOB system. Under this approach, retailers simply place orders with highly-capable and well-financed factories in international markets.

The CMP system is being practised for the last 20 years in Myanmar, with authorities also planning to export garments through the FOB system in the future. Myanmar’s CMP garment industry includes the manufacturing of shoes, garments and bags. The country exports its CMP products mainly to Japan, a few European countries, South Korea, the United States and China.—GNLM
Vice President U Henry Van Thio arrives in Hanoi, Viet Nam yesterday to attend the 6th Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) Summit.

The Vice President was with Union Minister for Planning and Finance U Kyaw Win and other departmental officials, when they arrived at the National Convention Center (NCC) for the summit.

In his address, the Vice President said that the GMS countries have grown their economy and raised the income levels of their people to a point that cheap labour and reliance on natural resources are no longer viable as they once were, so now the countries must find new ways of sustainable development. He said only high-quality human resources and technological development can contribute to sustainable development goals (SDGs). He said Myanmar’s economic policy focuses on developing the private sector so that job opportunities and SDGs grow along with them. He said basic infrastructure and buildings will be needed for Myanmar to collaborate with other GMS countries. He said Myanmar is working on the five pillars of the private sector; which are the ethics following laws and rules and regulations, sustainable finance, improved trade and investment, the nation’s role in businesses and services, and developing human resources and capabilities.

He said foreign investment was pivotal in developing the private sector and setting rules and guidelines to create competitive markets and prioritizing the profits of the people will benefit the private sector. He said communications and technology related to it have direct consequences on the operation of governments and humanitarian organizations around the world. He said there are estimates that, due to increased usage of smartphones and the internet, Myanmar’s GDP in relation to its ICT sector will increase to US$6.4 billion by 2030. He said mobile infrastructures were important for countries like Myanmar, where 70 per cent of its population lives in rural areas. With improved communications, rural residents will have greater access to healthcare such as contacting hospitals and emergency aid, conducting business transactions, and greater connectivity.

The Vice President was with Minister U Phyo Min Thein, Minister U Myint Maung Soe, Director-General of the Strategic Studies and Training Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Daw Kay Thi Soe, Viet Nam Ambassador to Myanmar Dr. Luan Thuy Duong, and other responsible officials at Yangon Region Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein, Yangon Mayor U Maung Maung Soe, and other responsible officials at Yangon International Airport.

Vice President U Henry Van Thio left for Viet Nam from Yangon yesterday to attend the 6th Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) summit.

The Vice President was escorted by Yangon Region Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein, Yangon Mayor U Maung Maung Soe, Director-General of the Strategic Studies and Training Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Daw Kay Thi Soe, Viet Nam Ambassador to Myanmar Dr. Luan Thuy Duong, and other responsible officials at Yangon International Airport.

—Myanmar News Agency

Local reporters gather news in Maungtaw

A GROUP of 14 reporters who are from local media houses arrived in Maungtaw region yesterday morning.

On arrival, they met Maungtaw District Commissioner U Ye Htut and gathered news regarding regional stability and development; repatriation process of displaced persons; issuing Identity Card for National Verification; farming and agriculture; and other related matters.

In the afternoon, the group went to Ngan Chaung village where Muslims live and they inquired the status of socio-economic life of the region, stability of the village and displaced persons. Afterwards, they went to Oohtein village where they met Mro ethnic races as well as Hindu villagers. There they asked the villagers their experience of terrorist attacks; stability condition of the region and observed the construction project of the local people.

—Myanmar News Agency

Vice President U Henry Van Thio departs for 6th GMS Summit in Viet Nam

Vice President U Henry Van Thio’s name is displayed on the screen as he answers questions from a panel session at the 6th GMS Summit in Viet Nam yesterday PHOTO: MNA

As such, the country was drafting the Myanmar Digital Economy Development Master Plan, said the Vice President.

Afterwards, the moderator in a panel session asked how Myanmar was going about its economic development and what strategies or plans have been implemented. Vice President U Henry Van Thio replied that Myanmar had just recently begun implementing the 2022 Development Assistance Framework and it had not been long since the country had become more transparent and open.

He said Myanmar had implemented new or amended investment laws and as such have seen better networking through regional to global business ventures.

He said they were working on strengthening the tax system, attracting new foreign investment, and securing the market for macro businesses and enterprises and as such have begun drafting the Myanmar Sustainable Development Strategic Plan.

Later in the night, the Vice President attended a dinner event at the NCC. —Myanmar News Agency

PHOTO: MNA

PHOTO: MNA
Republic of the Union of Myanmar
Office of the President
Notification No. 1/2018
14th Waxing of Tagu, 1379 ME
(30 March, 2018)

Reorganization of the Union Government

1. In accordance with the provisions stated in section 209 of the Constitution of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and section 6 (a) of the Union Government Law, the Union Government has been reorganized with the following persons.

   (1) U Win Myint  
       President
   (2) U Myint Swe  
       Vice-President
   (3) U Henry Van Thio  
       Vice-President
   (4) Daw Aung San Suu Kyi  
       Union Minister for Foreign Affairs
   (5) Lt-Gen Kyaw Swe  
       Union Minister for Home Affairs
   (6) Lt-Gen Sein Win  
       Union Minister for Defence
   (7) Lt-Gen Ye Aung  
       Union Minister for Border Affairs
   (8) U Kyaw Tint Swe  
       Union Minister for the Office of the State Counsellor
   (9) Dr Pe Myint  
       Union Minister for Information
   (10) U Thaung Tun  
       Union Minister for the Office of the Union Government
   (11) Thura U Aung Ko  
       Union Minister for Religious Affairs and Culture
   (12) Dr Aung Thu  
       Union Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation
   (13) U Thant Sin Maung  
       Union Minister for Transport and Communications
   (14) U Ohn Win  
       Union Minister for Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation
   (15) U Win Khaing  
       Union Minister for Electricity and Energy
   (16) U Thein Swe  
       Union Minister for Labour, Immigration and Population
   (17) U Khin Maung Cho  
       Union Minister for Industry
   (18) Dr Than Myint  
       Union Minister for Commerce
   (19) Dr Myo Thein Gyi  
       Union Minister of the Office of the State Counsellor
   (20) Dr Myint Htwe  
       Union Minister for Health and Sports
   (21) U Kyaw Win  
       Union Minister for Planning and Finance
   (22) U Han Zaw  
       Union Minister for Construction
   (23) Dr Win Myat Aye  
       Union Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement
   (24) U Ohn Maung  
       Union Minister for Hotels and Tourism
   (25) Nai Thet Lwin  
       Union Minister for Ethnic Affairs
   (26) U Kyaw Tin  
       Union Minister for International Cooperation
   (27) U Tun Tun Oo  
       Union Attorney-General, Office of the Union Attorney General
       Republic of the Union of Myanmar

Republic of the Union of Myanmar
Office of the President
Notification No. 2/2018
14th Waxing of Tagu, 1379 ME
(30 March, 2018)

Reorganization of the National Defence and Security Council

1. In accordance with the provisions stated in article 201 of the Constitution of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and article 10 (a) of the Union Government Law, the National Defence and Security Council has been formed with the following persons:

   (a) U Win Myint  
       President
   (b) U Myint Swe  
       Vice-President
   (c) U Henry Van Thio  
       Vice-President
   (d) U Khin Kyi  
       Speaker of Pyithu Hluttaw
   (e) Maw Min Khaing  
       Speaker of Amyotha Hluttaw
   (f) Senior General Min Aung Hlaing  
       Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services
   (g) Vice-Senior General Soe Win  
       Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services
   (h) Daw Aung San Suu Kyi  
       Union Minister for Foreign Affairs
   (i) Lt-Gen Kyaw Swe  
       Union Minister for Home Affairs
   (j) Lt-Gen Sein Win  
       Union Minister for Defence
   (k) Lt-Gen Ye Aung  
       Union Minister for Border Affairs
   (l) Dr Khin Maung  
       Union Minister for Industry
   (m) Dr Than Myint  
       Union Minister for Commerce
   (n) Dr Myo Thein Gy  
       Union Minister of the Office of the State Counsellor
   (o) Dr Myint Htwe  
       Union Minister for Health and Sports
   (p) U Kyaw Win  
       Union Minister for Planning and Finance
   (q) U Han Zaw  
       Union Minister for Construction
   (r) Dr Win Myat Aye  
       Union Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement
   (s) U Ohn Maung  
       Union Minister for Hotels and Tourism
   (t) Nai Thet Lwin  
       Union Minister for Ethnic Affairs
   (u) U Kyaw Tin  
       Union Minister for International Cooperation
   (v) U Tun Tun Oo  
       Union Attorney-General, Office of the Union Attorney General
       Republic of the Union of Myanmar

2. Under article 10 (b) of the Union Government Law, the Secretary of the Union Government shall be the ex-officio Secretary of the National Defence and Security Council.

Sd/ Win Myint  
President  
Republic of the Union of Myanmar
Dr. Khine Khine Win

COROLLING to the 2015 Global Peace Index, the intensity of internal armed conflict continues to rise. The number of internal armed conflicts has increased dramatically, while the cost of violence around the world reached a staggering US$143 trillion in 2014. Armed conflict often leads to forced displacement, long-term refugee problems, and the destruction of infrastructure. Social, political, and economic institutions can be damaged. Indeed, the state of our global commons—like poverty, sickness, illiteracy, racial and religious conflict, and mental illness—is that utmost essential that we have peaceful environment to deal with them. Then, for all aspects of progress and human development we need peace and harmony around the world.

If we look back at our country’s history, soon after the 20th Century, independence, Myanmar and its independence, Myanmar suffered many of armed conflict. For nearly seventy years, peace, stability and development in Myanmar have fallen victim to conflict. Even today, Myanmar is struggling to escape from the trap of poverty and violence, and great efforts will be needed if we are to catch up with the rest of the world. We believe that Myanmar needs to wait for almost seventy years to witness the joy of hope for a better future. And I believe that only peace can bring our dreams of progress to reality.

There is a saying “Peace cannot be maintained by force alone, it can only be attained through understanding” by Aung San Suu Kyi, the Nobel Peace Laureate and leader of the pro-democratic movement in Myanmar. It is possible to apply this statement to everywhere around the world who loves peace. If we desire a society of peace, we need understanding and cooperation between each other. We cannot achieve our goal of peace without others.

Love and understanding, what do you think which one is more important? There is no exact answer. Different people have different answers for different reasons. For me I prefer understanding. Understanding is more important as love with understanding is not last. For instance, we love our families, partner, spouses, but sometimes we confront each other when we have different opinions, misunderstandings, or different values. Even if love is there it can never be carried on without understanding.

Peace and understanding: many people believe peace is important in order to avoid unnecessary conflicts that might hinder the progress of human being. Peace creates progress and happiness.

The United Nations declared peace as the collection of attitudes, beliefs and actions that demonstrate a concern for the welfare of other human beings and a positive regard for life. Peace ensures human security and enhances the quality of life, provides the appropriate environment for human development.

Peace theme is “Together for peace and understanding.” Peace and understanding: is more important as love with understanding is not last. It requires action at many different levels, by different levels, in different ways, and at different points in time. Increased understanding - of different cultures, languages and concerns - can go a long way toward reducing conflict.

Dr. Khine Khine Win

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A Seminar on Promotion of Tourism and Trading between Macau and Myanmar was held yesterday evening at the Melia Hotel in Yangon.

During the seminar, the Macau Special Administrative Region and Chairman of Macau Trade and Investment Promotion Institute Mr. Jackson Chang discussed trading and investment of the Macau Special Administrative Region, Director of Directorate of Investment and Company Administration Dr. Marlar Myo Nyunt discussed Myanmar Investment Environment, Director of Macau Government Tourist Office Ms. Maria Helena De Senna Fernandes discussed measurement on boosting tourism development of the Macau Special Administrative Region, Director of Ministry of Hotels and Tourism U Zayar Myo Aung discussed the current conditions of tourism development for the Macao Special Administrative Region respectively. Then Director of Macau Government Tourist Office Ms. Maria Helena De Senna Fernandes and Director General of the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism U Tint Thwin exchanged the gifts and took the commemorative photograph with the attendees.

Also present at the seminar were officials from Ministry of Hotels and Tourism, Ministry of Planning and Finance and businessmen.—Myanmar News Agency

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw’s yesterday session was visited by observers as President elect U Win Myint and Vice Presidents elect U Myint Swe and U Henry Van Thio took their oath.

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker presided over them and this was followed by President U Win Myint’s inaugural speech.

Among the observers were Vice President U Henry Van Thio’s wife and family, National League for Democracy’s Patron U Tin Oo and wife, members of the Central Executive Committee, Chief Ministers of Regions and States, members of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Legal Affairs and Special Cases Assessment Commission, the wife of Nay Pyi Taw Council’s Chairman, MPs and citizens from their respective constituencies, and professors, faculties and students from the Law Department of Myitkyina University, totaling (494) observers. Newly elected President U Win Myint and the Vice Presidents took their oath of office during the joint session of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw. —Myanmar News Agency

Vice-Chairman of Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference arrives in Yangon

A delegation led by Edmund Ho Hau Wah, Vice-Chairman of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference and former Chief Executive of the Macau Special Administrative Region, arrived in Yangon from Nay Pyi Taw yesterday afternoon.

The delegation met with Yangon Region Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein, Yangon Mayor U Maung Maung Soe and other officials at 3:30 p.m. at the Pan Pacific Yangon Hotel in Yangon.

During the meeting, they discussed matters related to holding a trade cooperation forum annually to boost the tourism and investment sectors in Macau and Yangon. The delegation visited the Strand Hotel to watch the ‘Macau Orchestra in Myanmar’ concert and took a commemorative photograph with the Minister for Hotels and Tourism U Ohn Maung, Chinese Ambassador to Myanmar Hong Liang and members of the Macao orchestra.

In the evening, the delegation attended the Macau and Myanmar Tourism Development and Trade Investment Seminar at Melia Hotel in Yangon.—Myanmar News Agency
Power to the people: electricity finally reaches Indian landmark

MUMBAI — Deepa Bhoir used to sit in darkness outside her island home and stare at Mumbai glowing in the distance. Now she stays up late watching soap operas — one of millions of Indians whose lives have been transformed by a drive to get power to every corner of the country.

Bhoir and her husband Sasuram are among hundreds of villagers on the UNESCO world heritage-listed island of Elephanta to have had mains electricity installed in their houses for the first time.

"We've waited decades for this and we're so happy. Now I can watch all my favourite shows without any interruptions," Bhoir tells AFP, grinning.

"The TV is almost always on!" Bhoir tells AFP, grinning.

The island is renowned for its temple caves dating back more than 1,500 years and is home to around 1,200 people.

But despite living just 10 kilometres (six miles) from India’s financial capital, islanders have spent much of their lives without power. “Lacking electricity was depressing and we faced numerous hardships,” says Sasuram, explaining that he and Deepa would often sleep outside during the summer to try to keep cool. “It was sweltering inside. We would lie and try to keep cool. “It was sweltering inside. We would lie and try to keep cool.”

Residents used kerosene lamps and candles until the late 1980s when they received diesel generators that provided intermittent electricity between 7:00 pm and 10:00 pm every night. They were, however, unreliable and expensive and the limited supply meant the Bhoirs’ two children regularly did their homework by candlelight.

Deepa and Sasuram were often unable to charge their phones or other electrical devices. They felt cut off from the world and battled boredom.—AFP

Boredom

Out of this world: Inside Japan’s space colony centre

TOKYO — A newly created Space Colony Research centre led by Japan’s first female astronaut is bringing cutting-edge technology to bear on one of mankind’s greatest questions: Can we live in space? Tucked away in high-tech laboratories at the Tokyo University of Science, a team of 30 researchers directed by Chiaki Mukai, a petite and energetic 66-year-old who spent more than 500 hours in space on two separate missions.

Human space exploration is entering a new era, said Mukai, with commercial ventures like Elon Musk’s SpaceX and US President Donald Trump’s pledge to explore beyond the moon and towards Mars.

Billionaire entrepreneur Musk has grand visions for private space exploration, including sending tourists into orbit around the moon and eventually colonising Mars. In December, Trump directed US space agency NASA to set up a lunar base as a first step in a mission to Mars. “It’s very realistic to establish a colony on the moon by 2030,” said Mukai, who said humans needed to think beyond the International Space Station, which she described as a “campsite – you have to bring everything with you”. One of her team’s innovations is a unique food production system using liquid plasma created by passing high-voltage electricity through a saline solution.

This reduces the damaging algae usually formed in water when growing crops, and tests simulating conditions in space have shown that potatoes can be grown quicker and more efficiently using this system.—AFP

Over 7,000 rebels, families evacuate Syria’s Eastern Ghouta

DAMASCUS — A total of 7,003 rebels and their families left the Eastern Ghouta countryside of Syrian capital Damascus late Friday, according to state news agency SANA.

The number includes 1,234 rebels while the rest are their family members who chose to head toward rebel-held areas in northern Syria under a deal reached recently with the government under the mediation of Russia.

This batch is the sixth to leave the central towns of Eastern Ghouta, namely Zamalka, Arbeen, Jobar and Ayn Tarma. The evacuation process began last Saturday.

The Russian-backed Syrian army has advanced and captured 90 per cent of that region.

Eastern Ghouta, a 105-square-km agricultural region consisting of several towns and farmlands, poses the last threat to the capital due to its proximity to government-controlled neighborhoods east of Damascus and ongoing mortar attacks that target residential areas in the capital, pushing people over the edge.

Four major rebel groups are currently positioned inside Eastern Ghouta, namely the Islam Army, Failaq al-Rahman, Ahrar al-Sham, and the Levant Liberation Committee, known as the al-Qaeda-linked Nusra Front. —Xinhua
Anger mounts over Venezuela jail fire that killed 68

VALENCIA — Authorities in Venezuela face an onslaught of national and international outrage Thursday over a blaze in a police station's jail in which 68 people died, in one of the worst disasters to hit the country’s desperately overcrowded detention facilities.

The blaze engulfed cells in the police headquarters on Wednesday in Valencia, Venezuela’s third-biggest city, located in northern Carabobo state near the capital Caracas.

Attorney General Tarek William Saab, who said it looked to have been started deliberately by the suspects, said in a statement it was “a tragedy.”

“An inmate’s right association called Una Ventana a la Libertad (A Window on Freedom) said the fire was started by detainees attempting a jailbreak.

“The detainees tried to grab two police officers. When that didn’t work, they started a riot and decided to set fire to mattresses, thinking that the doors would then have to be opened. (But) the bars didn’t open,” the group’s director, Carlos Nieto, told AFP.

Fire crews had to smash a hole in the wall so survivors could get out, he said, adding that around 200 people were being held inside at the time.—AFP

Invitation for Bids (IFB)

Loan/Credit No.: EDCF-MYA-7


2. The Project Executing Agency now invites sealed bids from eligible bidders for Design, Supply and Installation for 500kV Taungoo-Kamanat Transmission Line on turnkey basis. The eligible bidders shall be Korea Company by the EDCF Guide Lines.

3. Interested eligible bidders may obtain further information from the tender Office or the Website (http://www.moee.gov.mm) in the head office of below address and inspect the bidding documents during office hour exclusive of public holidays.

4. A complete set of bidding documents may be purchased by any interested Bidder on the submission of a written application to the address below and upon payment of non-refundable fee of US$ 1,000.

5. Bids must be delivered to the address below between 13:00 to 14:00 (Local Time) on 18th May, 2018. All bids must be accompanied by a bid security of not less than one million one hundred thousand US Dollars (USD 1,100,000). Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidder’s representatives, who choose to attend, at the address below after 14:00 (Local Time) on 18th May, 2018. Address: Meeting Room, Material Planning Department, Department of Power Transmission and System Control, Building No.27, MOEE, Nay Pyi Taw.

Tender Committee
Department of Power Transmission and System Control
Ministry of Electricity and Energy, office No.27, Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar
Telephone: 067- 3410282, 3410209

Foreign companies in China brace for VPN crackdown

BEIJING — Chinese people and foreign firms are girding for a weekend deadline that will curb the use of unlicensed software to circumvent internet controls, as the government plugs holes in its “Great Firewall.”

A virtual private network (VPN) can tunnel through the country’s sophisticated barrier of online filters to access the global internet.

VPNs give users a way to see blocked websites such as Facebook, Twitter, and Western news outlets. PHOTO: AFP

As a company that is globally-focused based in Beijing, I think that’s the best option... because we don’t want to break the rules or have our VPN access disrupted,” she said, requesting anonymity.

Since Beijing experienced disruptions to their communications due to restrictions on VPN usage late last year, prompting the European Union delegation to send a letter to the government to complain, diplomatic sources told AFP. American Chamber of Commerce Shanghai President Kenneth Jarrett warned that foreign companies and their employees could “bear the brunt of the new policies.”

“Foreign companies, especially entrepreneurs and smaller companies rely on overseas platforms such as Google Analytics and Google Scholar,” Jarrett told AFP.

“Limiting access to affordable VPNs will make it harder for these companies to operate efficiently and just adds to the frustration of doing business in China.”

The Ministry of Industry and Information Technology has dismissed concerns that state-approved providers could jeopardise the security of private data, saying they “are not able to see information relating to your business.” —AFP
Filipinos celebrate Easter with crucifixion, flogging

SAN FERNANDO CITY — Filipino zealots marked Good Friday with a bloody display of religious frenzies by having themselves nailed to crosses and whipping their backs raw in Asia’s bastion of Catholicism.

Though frowned upon by the Church, the gruesome re-enactments of Christ’s final moments draw thousands of believers – and tourists – in a carnival-like atmosphere that is big business for locals.

In a collection of towns located north of Manila, eight people had eight centimetre (three-inch) spikes driven through their palms and feet in hot, dry fields.

The spikes were driven in by other people while the guy was screaming very loud, said 28-year-old Juliette Pawińska, referring to when the spikes were driven in during one crucifixion.

“I actually felt the pain that he felt,” added the Polish national, who lives in the Philippines and works as a computer programmer. – AFP

Bare-chested men, some of whose faces were concealed by hoods, lashed their backs bloody, as onlookers watched.

PHOTO: AFP

No claims against this vessel will be admitted after 4 pm to Claim’s Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the vessel.

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

CLAIM’S DAY NOTICE
M.V KORALIA VOY. NO. ( 7796 )
Consignees of cargo carried on M.V KORALIA VOY. NO. ( 7796 ) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 1-4-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of MITT-3 where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: MS REGIONAL CONTAINER LINES
Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM’S DAY NOTICE
M.V MAX CRUSADER VOY. NO. ( 037N/S )
Consignees of cargo carried on M.V MAX CRUSADER VOY. NO. ( 037N/S ) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 31-3-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T.T/A.I.P.T where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S INTER ASIA LINES
Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM’S DAY NOTICE
M.V SHIBA VOY. NO. ( ISC 1079 E )
Consignees of cargo carried on M.V SHIBA VOY. NO. ( ISC 1079 E ) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 31-3-2018 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 byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S LAND & SEA LOGISTICS
Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM’S DAY NOTICE
M.V PATANA THIDA VOY. NO. ( 121W/E )
Consignees of cargo carried on M.V PATANA THIDA VOY. NO. ( 121W/E ) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 1-4-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T.T/A.I.P.T where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

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

CLAIM’S DAY NOTICE
M.V SIBARA BANDA VOY. NO. ( 084N/S )
Consignees of cargo carried on M.V SIBARA BANDA VOY. NO. ( 084N/S ) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 31-3-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of H.P.T where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S MERIDIAN SHIPPING AGENCIES PTE, LTD.
Phone No: 2301928
Counterculture ‘Burning Man’ art takes Washington by storm

WASHINGTON — Immersive art from a famed desert festival in the American West has swept into Washington, infusing the buttoned-up US Capitol with countercultural spirit.

“No Spectators: The Art of Burning Man,” which opens Friday at the Smithsonian’s Renwick Gallery, celebrates the annual late-summer gathering that sees a temporary city of some 75,000 people spring up in Nevada’s Black Rock Desert.

For a single week, massive experiential art installations tower over the dusty metropolis before Burning Man participants torch many of the works, including a giant wooden statue of a man, as a ritual embracing commodification and temporality.

Thought it is perhaps best known for its bacchanalian atmosphere favoring sex and drugs, the annual event that started small in 1986 has evolved into a serious cultural and artistic movement, said the Renwick’s crafts curator Nora Atkinson, who spearheaded the show.

She pushed to welcome the radical art of the desert to the rarified environment of the museum because “it really stands out from a lot of the work being done in the contemporary art world,” she said.

She also highlighted the freewheeling show’s location just steps from the White House.

“I think it’s really important at times like this — when the world is so cynical, when people are so at odds — that we have this kind of healing force,” she said. “It’s all about empowering people.”

“We build the world that we want to live in.”

**Visual hedonism**

Though it drew comparisons to predecessors including the anarchic Dadaists and large-scale land art movement, Burning Man is a choice destination for techies from neighboring Silicon Valley looking to unwind.

That’s no coincidence, according to Atkinson, who attended her first Burning Man last year.

“The further we get into our digital sphere the more we sort of strive for that humanity around us,” she told AFP at an exhibition preview, standing in the massive, intricate wooden “Temple” installation that encompasses the museum’s cavernous Grand Salon hall.

The show — which follows “The Art of Burning Man” exhibition that went on display at a Virginia museum last year — includes both surviving pieces from past festivals and newly commissioned works.

The visually decadent installations — 14 in the 19th-century era Renwick building and six spilling outdoors into the surrounding neighborhood — featured in the show bridge the frenetic game of musical chairs at the top of men’s fashion.

The Colombian had led the label for only 18 months, and his surprise departure sparked speculation he will be replaced by Kris Van Assche, the Belgian designer who led Dior Homme last week after 11 years at the helm.

Ackermann, 46, who is best known for his richly-coloured bohemian designs for women, created only three collections for Berluti, but was already giving it a softer, more feminine feel.

**Major cultural movement**

Yelena Filipchuk of the duo behind the “HYBYCOZO” installation of large-scale glowing polyhedrons with elaborate laser cut-outs praised the Renwick’s move “to go full on with the interactivity” in line with Burning Man’s participatory ethos.

Translating works from a festival in the expansive, inhospitable desert to a museum setting also offered artists the chance to “create a totally immersive environment” she said, as shadows generated from her geometric sculptures danced on the gallery walls. For Filipchuk, the show underscores Burning Man’s status as a cultural petri dish but also as an “American institution.” “It really represents American values, like creativity, freedom, innovation,” she said.—AFP

Ballet’s most unlikely star takes her final bow

PARIS — Everything was against Marie-Agnes Gillot becoming a ballerina — never mind a great one.

She was too tall, broad-shouldered and most of all, she had a double scoliosis, which sometimes gives her a hump when her back is swollen. Yet the hump disappears as if by magic when Gillot takes to the stage.

“I have a limited time to stay standing, carried by my muscles and myself,” said the star, who accepts “that with time passing I’ll be going back into my corset, unless I accept the operation, the metal rod in my back”.

On Saturday night Gillot will close an extraordinary chapter in modern French ballet when she takes her final bow at the Paris Opera Ballet in “Orpheus and Eurydice”.

The last great French ballerina of her generation, she hid her problem from her teachers after leaving home at nine to go to ballet’s elite school in the French capital.

“When I arrived I thought who are these nasty skinny ladies?”

Not wanting to be thought of as “handicapped”, only her roommates knew her secret.

‘Nobody gave me free pass’

“Nobody gave me a free pass” in her long rise to the top, the dancer told AFP. In fact it was the opposite.

She did not make principal dancer until relatively late at 23 by which time even the great choreographer Maurice Bejart had become exasperated, declaring, “she was the best they have, and finally they decided.” —AFP

Ackermann in new shock departure at top of men’s fashion

PARIS — Designer Haider Ackermann parted ways with Berluti Friday, the French brand said, in the latest twist in the frenetic game of musical chairs at the top of men’s fashion.

The Colombian had led the label for only 18 months, and his surprise departure sparked speculation he will be replaced by Kris Van Assche, the Belgian designer who led Dior Homme last week after 11 years at the helm.

Ackermann, 46, who is best known for his richly-coloured bohemian designs for women, created only three collections for Berluti, but was already giving it a softer, more feminine feel.

Van Assche is known for a harder tailored edge and more street-influenced styling.

Berluti boss Antoine Arnault praised Ackermann’s “feel for materials, colours, and his wonderful shows will always be linked to the history of the house.”

Arnault, the son of French luxury goods tycoon Bernard Arnault, has overseen Berluti’s transformation from an elite cobbler which once counted artist Andy Warhol and European royalty among its loyal clients, to a luxury lifestyle label for men.

He said Ackermann’s successor would be announced shortly.—AFP

Marco Cochrane’s “Truth is Beauty” sculpture features in the “No Spectators: The Art of Burning Man” exhibition at the Renwick Gallery in Washington. PHOTO: AFP
City Love & Hope Foundation provides USD 28,800 for three scholarship students

A ceremony was held to award scholarships to three students who had achieved the entrance to the Pre-Collegiate Programme (PCP) at City Mart Holding Company Limited-Head Office in Yangon on 30 March.

There were 20 among 88 students who qualified for the entrance of the Pre-Collegiate Programme of Yangon.

Among the 20 students, three scholar students named Maung San Win, Maung Saw Fyaw Sone Aung and Ma Hsu Myat Noe Pwint were awarded full scholarship prizes worth USD 9,600 in the ceremony.

The programme is aiming to support the youths in Myanmar who want to join the world grade Education such as World Philosophy, Integrated Science, Comparative Literature, American History, SAT, and TOEFL. The programme will last 16 months with providing the special subjects including Field Trip, Touchstones Discussion, Newsroom, Community Service, Guest Speaker, Cross-Cultural Exchange and Internship.

After the course programme, students will have a chance to join high-class Universities in USA, Hong Kong, the Netherlands, Germany, the Philippines and Thailand with scholarships.

There were students who achieved special degrees in foreign universities and they came back to Myanmar with the aim of serving their country, said an official from City Mart Holding.

“A leader is more beneficial to youngsters. We support the programme so as to raise good leaders for Myanmar,” said Daw Win Win Tint, CEO of City Mart Holding Company Limited.

HOLLYWOOD — A few years behind Wall Street, Hollywood is turning to the technology behind cryptocurrency bitcoin to distribute movies in a development hailed as the beginning of the end for piracy.

Leading the charge is “No Postage Necessary,” a romantic indie comedy about a luckless hacker that is being distributed via peer-to-peer video network app Vevue, running on Qum, the most advanced blockchain in the world. Jeremy Culver (“An Evergreen Christmas”) wrote, directed and produced the release from US production house Two Roads Picture Co., shot on 35 mm film.

The movie gets its US theatrical release and worldwide blockchain debut in June and will also be available to buy online using cryptocurrency.

“We are thrilled to provide movie lovers around the world a brand new way to experience their entertainment by turning the blockchain into a feature film distribution channel,” Culver said in a statement.

“Although this is a first for the industry, we hope it will signal a shift in the way content is shared and consumed.”

A blockchain is essentially a shared, encrypted “ledger” that cannot be manipulated, offering the promise of secure transactions that allow anyone to get an accurate accounting of money, property or other assets.

The technology publicly records the unique alphanumeric strings that identify buyers and sellers, allowing more transparent and secure peer-to-peer payment systems. Blockchain debuted in 2009 as a ledger for the leading cryptocurrency bitcoin and is already used in food safety, finance and sea freight.

It’s a risky and acceptance

PHOTO: SUPPLIED

Hollywood’s first blockchain movie: an end to piracy?

HONG KONG — To his critics his work is overrated, overpriced and obvious. To his fans, he is a living legend — the incarnation of the Pop Art movement. Either way, at 62, Jeff Koons says he just wants to focus on creating the art he wants to make.

Koons’ works are brush, voluptuous and carry astronomical price tags but that hasn’t dimmed appetite for his pieces in Asia, where he is presenting at Hong Kong’s edition of Art Basel — a top event for wealthy collectors looking to snap up new status symbols.

The American pioneer has brought some of his signature mirror-polished steel sculptures to the fair as well as his Gazing Ball series, in which shiny blue spheres are inserted into reproductions of classic European masterpieces, including works by Rembrandt and Tintoretto.

Koons set an auction record for the highest price paid for any work by a living artist in 2013 when his orange “Balloon Dog” fetched US$58.4 million at Christie’s in New York.

But he insists the monetary value attached to his art is just an “abstraction” to him.

“I’m flattered that my works are perceived by society as having some relevant value. But the beauty to have impact with real individuals, that they can come across their own potential, that’s what really brings me joy,” he tells AFP, impeccably dressed in a sharp dark blue suit.

His work is polarising. In January, artists, gallery owners and officials in Paris signed an open letter objecting to a planned 12-metre tall “Bouquet of Tulips” memorial designed by Koons as a tribute to the victims of the terror attacks on the city in November 2015.

The letter described Koons as an “embodiment of industrial art which is spectacular and speculative”. Koons would not comment on controversy, but when asked how he deals with criticism, he said he tries to focus on his work.

“I think that people always find honesty very shocking. So when you are honest and just make the things that you want, it reveals something about human nature,” he said.

Facing failure

Pennsylvania-born Koons’ works are bright, extravagant and large-scale. He seems unfazed by controversy — he gained notoriety for a series portraying himself and his porn star ex-wife Ilona Staller in explicit poses.

Today Koons is relaxed and lively at Hong Kong’s David Zwirner gallery where some of his Gazing Ball pieces are on display, their glazed surfaces reflecting every corner of the exhibition space.—AFP

Artist Jeff Koons on money, risk and acceptance

PHOTO: MNA

U Thaung Tun, Union Minister for the Office of the Union Government, signs the book of condolences at the Russian Embassy in Yangon on 30 March to express grievances for the 60 victims that perished when a shopping center in Kemerovo, Russia caught fire on 25 March. —PHOTO: MNA
SYDNEY — Australia’s sevens rugby captain James Stannard will miss the Commonwealth Games after being punched in the head in an “alleged unprovoked assault”, police and Rugby Australia said Friday.

The 35-year-old, who had been at a farewell dinner for outgoing head coach Andy Friend late Thursday, was allegedly attacked in the Sydney suburb of Coogee early Friday, New South Wales state police said.

“As a result, he fell and struck his head on the pavement,” police said in a statement.

Rugby Australia said Stannard was in hospital in a stable condition with a fractured skull and would miss out on the Commonwealth Games, which will be held on the Gold Coast from 4-15 April.

“Right now, he’s got some time to heal and he’s not available for the Comm Games,” Rugby Australia’s high-performance general manager Ben Whitaker told reporters in Sydney.

“It’s obviously a massive disappointment for all of us and James and his family.”

Once that’s all sorted, then we can look at how he can return to play,” The governing body said earlier that two of Stannard’s teammates Lewis Holland and Ben O’Donnell, as well as Friend, detained the alleged attacker — a 22-year-old Briton — until police arrived.

“The 22-year-old man who threw the punch then fled the scene, but was apprehended by witnesses until police arrived and placed him under arrest,” NSW Police added.

The British man, charged with assault occasioning actual bodily harm, was granted conditional bail Friday and is due to return to court on 19 April.

Stannard was to lead Australia’s sevens team at the Commonwealth Games after injured captain Holland was ruled out earlier in March.

Rugby Australia said in mid-March that Friend’s contract, due to expire in July, would not be renewed.

Current women’s sevens coach Tim Walsh, who is leaving his role after the Commonwealth Games, was selected as Friend’s replacement.

—AFP

Former Brazilian footballer meets MFF President U ZawZaw

EDMILSON, a former footballer of the Brazilian national team and a member of the squad that won the 2002 World Cup, met with U ZawZaw, president of the Myanmar Football Federation (MFF) at the president’s office in Yangon on Wednesday.

During the meeting, they discussed the continuing process of providing football tactics and skills in order to develop Myanmar Football Standards. Edmilson also requested U ZawZaw to contact the Brazilian Football Confederation to possibly fill the vacant position of Myanmar national team head coach, which was recently vacated by Gerd Zeise.

During his visit to Myanmar, the former Brazilian footballer showed basic football tactics to children in Yangon who were interested in playing football.

Edmilson played as a defensive midfielder or a central defender for Brazil from 2000 to 2007 and was part of the Brazil team that won the 2002 World Cup. He also played for prominent teams such as Barcelona, Lyon, São Paulo, and Villarreal. He was teammates with football stars such as Ronaldinho, Iniesta, Xavi and Puyol.

—KyawZin Lin

Myanmar U-21 to defend title in Brunei football tourney

THE Myanmar U-21 national football team will defend their title in Brunei at this year’s Hassanal Bolkiah Trophy for ASEAN Youth Football Championship.

Myanmar was crowned as the champion in 2014, the last time the tourney was held, by beating Vietnam in the final match.

The upcoming tournament from 21 April to 6 March is the sixth time the tournament has been held.

This year’s tournament will see the participation of a total of seven ASEAN countries — Cambodia, Laos People’s Democratic Republic, Myanmar, Singapore, Thailand, Timor Leste and host country Brunei Darussalam.

In the draw, Myanmar is pooled in Group A together with Thailand, the host team and Timor Leste, while Laos People’s Democratic Republic, Singapore and Cambodia are in Group B.

The tourney’s opening ceremony will take place on the 23 April at the Hassanal Bolkiah National Stadium in Berakas, Brunei.

The Hassanal Bolkiah Trophy for ASEAN Youth Football Championship, organised by the Football Association of Brunei Darussalam in collaboration with the ASEAN Football Federation, a football tournament for youth players in South-East Asia, was first launched in 2002 for players under 21 years of age.

—KyawZin Lin

Australia sevens captain out of CGames after head punch

James Stannard had been due to lead Australia’s sevens team at the Commonwealth Games. PHOTO: AFP

PHOTO: MFF

PHOTO: AFP