State Counsellor holds Peace Talk in Ayeyawady

State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi held a Peace Talk yesterday with the local people in Ayeyawady Region, Myaungmya Township, at Basic Education High School No. 1.

The talk, held by the State Counsellor in different locations across the country, was an effort to explain about the ongoing peace process in Myanmar, why peace is critical to the country’s future and why peace and development are inseparable. The event was also a chance for the public to ask questions and make comments. Their views are listed below.

Yesterday, local youths participating in the Peace Talk were introduced, and then State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi addressed the people of Myaungmya Township.

“I greet all the people from Myaungmya. It can be said that various ethnic nationals are here. I came to Ayeyawady Region, Myaungmya Town to see the Myaungmya bridge. It is also time to hold a Peace Talk”, she said. The State Counsellor noted that she has a close affinity to the region, and pointed out that Ayeyawady has enjoyed peace after enduring a long period of fighting.

“State Counsellor calls for high-quality new bridge to replace collapsed bridge in Myaungmya. Peace throughout the whole country is important. All need to think deeply on why our country is unable to achieve peace. Myaungmya is where my mother was born. It can be said that all of you are my relatives. Once upon a time, there was fighting and armed conflicts in Ayeyawady Region.

There are now no more conflicts in Ayeyawady Region. Although conflicts are over, some Myaungmya town folks may still remember it. That is why I’m holding this Peace Talk to discuss the importance of peace, what to do to achieve peace, how to come together and help. In some regions, for example, during a Peace Talk held in Mandalay Region, youths from Mandalay Region talked openly. I enjoy having such open talks. They don’t understand about armed conflicts because they didn’t experience armed conflict in their region. So they are not interested in the peace process, because they were not affected.

But this shouldn’t be. I explained to them, if your finger tip hurts, the rest of the body is affected. You can’t sleep because it hurts. It affects the way you go around or do things.

In the same way, if there is no peace in one part of your country, it will affect the entire country. The effect is of course bad. That is why peace is important. Peace throughout the whole country is important. All need to think deeply on why our country is unable to achieve peace. Need to think on what to do to achieve peace. It is not the same from place to place. Problems are not the same. A person is different from another person. Because of this, different ways are needed to persuade all to participate in the peace process.

But I believe that it is only through shared thought and collective strength that we can achieve success. Without peace, it is not possible for a country to develop, develop for the long term. There can be short term-development. But without peace, development is not sustainable. And without development, peace cannot be maintained.”
Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker receives Ambassador of China

Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than received Ambassador of China Hong Liang at the Amyotha Hluttaw guest hall in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday afternoon. During the meeting, they discussed matters related to improving the bilateral friendship and cooperation, and enhancing the economic and travel sectors.—Myanmar News Agency

Ministry of Health and Sports provides essential medicine and supplies to the public

UNDER the supervision of the Ministry of Health and Sports, necessary medicines and supplies are being distributed to hospitals and local healthcare centres across the country.

The government has allotted Ks881,769.114 million for the 2016-2017 fiscal year and Ks1,116,557.092 million for the 2017-2018 fiscal year for the Ministry of Health and Sports to purchase the medicine using the tender system.

Medicines and vaccinations for malaria, tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS, elephantiasis, and leprosy have been provided sufficiently to eliminate them with the help of the Global Fund, UNOs and International donation organisation.

Although it is a long way for the Ministry of Health and Sports to supply expensive medicines, medicine for rare diseases, as well as medicines which are made in original companies, concerted efforts are being made to fulfil the requirements of the people.

By this way, it is evident that the expenditure of the patients can be reduced significantly. Plans are underway to provide necessary medicines for liver, kidney, and bone marrow cancers to patients.

Although the health care system in Myanmar is poor even by the standards of developing countries, the ministry is trying to make easy access to healthcare system which can bring better conditions of the sector.

The Ministry of Health and Sports has treated 26 million out-patients and 5.6 million in-patients during 2016 and 2017. As for the field trip medication, these were administered 21.3 million times and efforts are being made to effectively support the government’s healthcare system and provide necessary healthcare to the public, and try to cut medical waste.—Ministry of Health and Sports

Union Attorney-General U Tun Tun Oo receives ROK Ambassador Lee Sang-hwa

UNION Attorney-General U Tun Tun Oo received Korean Ambassador Lee Sang-hwa at the Union Attorney General’s guest room in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning.

At the meeting, they discussed matters related to starting the project to establish the Myanmar Law Information System, jointly conducted by the Union Attorney General’s Office and the Republic of Korea’s Ministry of Government Legislation, with support from Korea International Cooperation Agency, in June 2018, the importance of legal information works to improve the rule of law and other related works, increasing investment and copyright protection, technical cooperation in law processes and other cooperation matters.

Present at the meeting were Deputy Attorney-General U Win Myint and Director-General U Min Swe.—Myanmar News Agency
State Counsellor calls for new high-quality bridge to replace collapsed Myaungmya bridge

STATE COUNSELLOR Daw Aung San Suu Kyi visited the site where the new Myaungmya bridge is being constructed and comforted the families of the two victims who were killed in a bridge collapse earlier this month.

After reading reports on the preparations for the new bridge and the free ferry services being provided to ensure the flow of commodities, State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi stressed on the need to ensure the quality of the new bridge for the safety of the people, and urged the officials concerned to scrutinize the project thoroughly.

She also stressed the importance of an independent quality control experts to oversee the quality control of the new bridge, which will replace the collapsed bridge linking Myaungmya and Labutta townships.

The Union Government would find an independent quality control body to oversee the quality of the new bridge.

State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi visited the site after holding a peace talk with locals in Myaungmya yesterday morning.

She also instructed the officials concerned to inspect the quality of the remaining 29 suspension bridges across the country.

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi gave instructions on providing free ferry services systematically with three barges and one two-decker ship to solve the transport difficulties in the short term, and urged the local authorities to launch Labutta-Ngaputaw-Pathein road construction works within two weeks as the budget for it had already been allocated.

Following the meeting, the State Counsellor offered condolences to the families of the two victims who died in the bridge collapse.

Later, State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi visited the site chosen for the construction of a nursery training school (Myaungmya) by the Ministry of Health and Sports.

U Mya Win, Assistant Director of the Special team-15 of the Building Department of the Ministry of Construction; Naw Kapaw Shi, Principal of the Nursery Training School (Pathien); and Dr. Aung Kyaw Htwe, Head of the Health Department of Ayeyawady Region, reported on the arrangements being made to construct the nursery school. Union Minister for Health and Sports Dr. Myint Htwe also reported on the offers by private donors who have offered to contribute to the project not only at the current chosen site but also at the Myaungmya jute mill.

After hearing the reports, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi gave instructions for the construction of the Training School for Nurses in Myaungmya. She returned to Nay Pyi Taw in the evening. The State Counsellor began her visit to Myaungmya with a donation of offering to Sayadaw Agga Maha Pandita Bhaddanta Sandavara, presiding Sayadaw of Zayamaydani Monastery of Myaungmya, in the morning.

During the visit to the monastery, State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi also visited the Innyin Tree and Bo Tree, which were donated by her late mother Daw Khin Kyi in 1964, while she served as Myanmar’s Ambassador to India, and sprinkled scented water on them.—Myanmar News Agency
Women empowerment centre opens in Hlinethaya

A women’s centre was opened in Hlinethaya Township, Yangon, on 8 April to provide legal assistance to women fighting for their rights, according to a report in Myawady Daily yesterday.

“The centre was opened to empower women, and legal consultants will provide counselling to women, as well as conduct computer and English proficiency training classes,” said Daw Sandar Aung, manager of the women’s centre.

“As most of the women in Hlinethaya Township work in factories, we will conduct vocational training classes for them on their holidays. Currently, we have planned to hold training classes on Saturday and Sunday,” she said. The centre will be open every day, and the library will remain open 24 hours. The centre was founded by all-Myanmar Federation Labour Unions with financial assistance from Germany agency (GIZ).—GNLM

LOCAL NEWS

THE Yangon City Development Committee has been planning the Walking Thingyan festival at three locations as a significant addition for this year’s festival, according to the YCDC’s Engineering Department (Road and Bridge).

In order to celebrate the Maha Thingyan Festival in Yangon Region, YCDC has planned to add the Walking Thingyan festival, said a member of the Yangon City Development Committee. “The Walking Thingyan festival will be held in Yangon for the first time. We did not allow to sell alcohol and let vehicles enter the locations for the Walking Thingyan. In addition, people will have to throw water in traditional ways,” an official said.

The Yangon Walking Thingyan festival will be held at the Maha Bandula Park, Kandawgyi Myay Padaythar (Kan Taw Min Park) where domestic farming hub near Bangkok, the entertainment pandals and 60 water throwing pandals with entertainment in Yangon this year. —Myanmar Digital News

JAPAN and South Korea have officially recruited Myanmar fishermen, according to a report in Myawady Daily yesterday.

Although Japan and South Korea have offered jobs to Myanmar fishermen, the local organisations still need to hold discussions with organisations in those countries. On the other hand, we need to produce more skilled fishermen. Moreover, we are planning to issue an accreditation document, as well as provide training courses to the fishermen,” said U Myint Zin Htoo, Deputy Director-General of the Fisheries Department.

“Local fishermen go overseas to get professional jobs. In fact, they don’t get professional jobs in the fishery sector, and so, end up working in other sectors. Therefore, local fishermen complain that they receive low salaries.

Recently, the Fisheries Department formulated the Sea Fisheries Law. Most of our local labourers do not receive the fully salary, and some of them resort to physical violence. Therefore, we will protect them according to the law,” he added.

Most Myanmar migrant workers go to Thailand through recruitment agencies. The Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population has officially sent Myanmar workers to work in other countries under the memorandum of understanding signed between the two governments.—GNLM

YCDC arranges walking Thingyan in three locations

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According to an agency (GIZ).—GNLM

Myanmar workers killed in Thailand bus crash

At least six migrant workers from Myanmar were killed and several others injured when a double-decker bus they were travelling in crashed into a ditch in northern Thailand, the second fatal accident in as many weeks involving migrants.

The bus was travelling late on Monday evening from the border town of Mae Sot to the province of Chachoengsao, a farming hub near Bangkok, the capital.

“Six people died and 30 were injured,” according to national police spokesman Kissana Phathanacharoen, adding that the driver, who told police the brakes were not working, had been charged with causing death by reckless driving.

Other media outlets in Thailand reported yesterday that 12 people were killed and 18 injured. Last month, a fire on board a bus in western Thailand killed 20 migrant workers.

The accidents come amid preparations for the Songkran festival that ushers in the traditional Thai New Year. The Songkran festival is the equivalent of Myanmar’s Thingyan.

The six Myanmar nationals were among a busload of 51 Myanmar migrant workers on their way from Mae Sot district of Tak province, about 420 km north of Bangkok, to Chachoengsao province in eastern Thailand, where they had been employed, Thailand’s Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation said yesterday.

Mae Sot is a main gateway between Thailand and Myanmar; through which many Myanmar migrant workers come to work in Thailand. Seventeen people, including one Thai and 16 Myanmar nationals, were injured in the incident and were sent for treatment in a local hospital.

Up to 3 million people from Myanmar work in Thailand, with their remittances home contributing 5 per cent of the gross domestic product, the World Bank estimates.—GNLM
Myanmar fishery exports hit 20-year record high last FY

By May Thet Hnin

SOME 568,227,327 metric tonnes of fishery products, worth US$717.7 million, were exported to foreign trade partners in the 2017-2018 fiscal year (FY), the highest volume in 20 years, according to an official release by the Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation Ministry.

This year, fishery exports through the Kawthoung border gate to Thailand improved considerably, according to the release.

Some 74,179.91 metric tonnes of fishery products, valued at $167.1 million, were shipped to foreign countries in the 1997-1998 FY. In the 2011-2012 FY, fishery exports reached 386,981.324 metric tonnes with an estimated value of $653.85 million.

“Myanmar exports only raw fish materials, but value-added products are required to enhance the sector: To boost fishery exports in the coming years, concerted efforts are needed to develop the whole supply chain, from fish farming and catching to processing. Additionally, we also need to conserve the fish resources for the future generations. Excessive exploitation must be strictly avoided,” said U Tun Win Myint, Director of Yangon Region Fisheries Department.

Daw Toe Nanda Tin from the Myanmar Fishery Federation (MFF) said efforts were being made to adopt advanced farming technologies to enhance the fishery export sector. New markets are also being explored, he added. The federation will set up projects to improve the Myanmar fishery industry, in cooperation with the region and state officials concerned. Also, MFF has plans to establish a public company.

“If the country can farm fish and prawn varieties, which grow quickly, its fishery income is likely to reach $1 billion. We are focusing on international marketing to determine which market we should enter. Moreover, we are also working on the supply level, so that we can meet the demands of the new markets,” said Daw Toe Nanda Tin.

There are more than 400,000 acres of fish and prawn lakes across Myanmar.

Myanmar’s foreign trade deficit records $3.97 billion last FY

MYANMAR’S external trade from 1 April through March during the 2017-2018 fiscal year (FY) showed a deficit of US$3.97 billion, according to statistics provided by the Commerce Ministry.

The government managed to cut the trade deficit last FY, as it was more than $5.2 billion in the 2016-2017 FY.

Last FY, Myanmar’s external trade with foreign countries amounted to $33.3 billion, including $14.67 billion in exports and $18.64 billion in imports.

The trade deficit was $91.9 million in the 2012-2013 FY, $2.5 billion in the 2013-2014 FY, $4.9 billion in the 2014-2015 FY, $5.4 billion in the 2015-2016 FY and more than $5.2 billion in the 2016-2017 FY, respectively, according to statistics released by the Central Statistical Organisation (CSO).

Concerted efforts are being made to reduce the trade deficit by screening luxury import items, except essential goods.

Capital goods such as auto parts, vehicles, machines, steel and airplane parts are imported, but this FY, imports by the private sector decreased, owing to the changes in the automobile policy. Therefore, the total import value of the private and public sectors plunged by $344.5 million, compared with the 2016-2017 FY.

Last FY, raw materials such as petroleum-based products and plastic raw materials recorded the highest value in the import sector.

The import value is up by $1.5 billion against the 2016-2017 FY.

Consumer products, including pharmaceuticals, cosmetics and palm oil, also flow into the domestic market, recording an increase of some $277 million compared with the 2016-2017 FY.

Meanwhile, agro products, animal products, fisheries, forest products, minerals, finished industrial goods and other export products are shipped to foreign countries. Only forest products showed a slight decline in exports.—Ky Khant

Kyat to appreciate strongly against dollar in post-Thingyan period

The kyat is expected to continue appreciating against the dollar after the Thingyan Festival, experts said.

In addition to the depreciation of the US dollar in the global market, the import of vehicles has declined in the auto market under the new automobile policy. The demand for dollars is also low because of a decline in remittances of importers, as businessmen imported fewer goods compared with the previous years due to the short holiday this year.

With the US dollar index dropping below 90 points on 9 April, the US dollar to Kyat interbank exchange rate in Myanmar’s currency market slipped to Ks1,324 yesterday. The exchange rate was down by more than Ks20 in the past three months this year.

Yesterday, the dollar selling price was around Ks1,324, while the buying price was Ks1,319, according to money exchange counters.

Meanwhile, the Central Bank of Myanmar has set the exchange rate at Ks1,330 per dollar.—Ko Khant
Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture striving for long-lasting of the Sasana and preserving and protecting cultural heritage

By Naing Linn Kyi
PHOTO: MNA

THE Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture held the 79th Tipitakadhara Tipitaka-kovida examination from 26 December 2017 to 27 January 2018 for 33 days at Maha Pasana Cave in Kaba Aye, Yangon, during the second-year term of the government in office. Eighty-eight members of the Sangha passed the examination in various categories. At the Dhammacariya examinations 3455 monks passed the examination in different subjects. Under the patronage of the ministry the Shwedagon Pagoda in Yangon was consecrated with 18000 members of the Sangha on 1 January 2018, the Uppatasanti Pagoda in Nay Pyi Taw was consecrated with 10000 members of the Sangha on 20 January 2018, and provisions were offered to 20000 monks in Mandalay on 21 January 2018.

Reforms
The new rules of the Shwedagon Pagoda Broad of Trustees were rewritten under the approval of the Union Attorney-General Office on 30 June 2016 and the Pagoda Broad of Trustees was reformed. The pagoda received a donation of over K 8 billion till February 2017-2018. As some acts of monopolization and corruption were found at Kyauktan Pye Pagoda, the Pagoda Board of Trustees was reformed on 4 July 2016 and rules were rewritten. Heat-resistant marble slabs were laid on the platform and two 260,000-gallon tanks were raised to the height of nearly five feet. Kyauktan Pye Pagoda received nearly K 7.7 billion as donations and the Maha Myat Muni Pagoda received nearly K 2 billion as donations up to February 2017-2018. The pagoda broad of trustees of Botataung, Kyauktawgyi, Maha Wizaya, Buddha’s Tooth Relic and Thiri Mingala Kaba Aye pagodas were also reformed.

At the 23rd convocation of the State Pariyatti Sasana University (Yangon) religious titles were conferred on 128 monks. At the 33rd convocation of the State Pariyatti Sasana University (Mandalay) religious titles were conferred on 51 monks.

Monastic education schools
Myanmar had 1547 monastic education schools where 7802 teachers are giving lessons to 30273 students in academic year 2017-2018. The government within its two-year period provided over K 140 million as monthly financial provision for teachers.

International Theravada Buddhist Missionary University-ITBMU
A total of 269 students including monks – 147 of Myanmar and 122 from abroad – were attending various courses at the International Theravada Buddhist Missionary University in academic year 2017-2018. The bill on ITBMU was sent to the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw on 21-7-2017.

The interfait dialogue groups were formed—one at the central level, 11 at region/state level, 39 at district level, and 76 at township level totaling 127.

Unity among all religions
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E Government tasks
Lay persons and monks from the country and abroad can visit www.kbrl.gov.mm for Kaba Aye Pagoda in Pyinsa Sanyya Village, Mandalay Region on 31 December 2017.

Intangible and tangible cultural heritage
The ministry has been rediscovering the legends, languages, performing arts, social customs, traditions, knowledge on the nature and the universe, traditional handicrafts in all regions and it could rediscovered and preserved 312 categories within a two-year period.
Religious Affairs and Culture Ministry striving for long-lasting of the Sasana and preserving and protecting cultural heritage

The ministry has been recovering the ancient heritage all around the country. It is rewarding the people who present ancient items or show ancient places. Within a two-year period it can put 48 items under its care.

Laws and rules

The laws to protect and preserve ancient artifacts and edifices were enacted in accord with the wish of the ministry. The ministry also formed committees, held meeting with the participation of international experts, took suggestions from relevant bodies and discussed the bills to protect and preserve ancient artifacts and edifices. Of the 47 protective cultural zones 18 have human settlements. So the ministry is striving for the emergence of a law that will ensure a win-win situation for the locals and the ancient artifacts protection work.

The ministry is conducting field tours and research work in trying to protect and preserve the cultures, performing arts, musical instruments and artifacts of the ethnic races such as Kayan, Padaung, Kayin, Mon, Bamar, Rakhine, Kachin, and Chin.

The duty to protect and preserve the traditional performing arts also falls on the national races. So the ministry is launching programmes to enhance the public awareness of the cultural protection tasks. It is conducting performing arts conservation courses for teachers as a way of encouraging students to cherish and value their culture and performing arts. So, the people will be able to ward off the penetration of alien culture and lifestyles into the country.

Books and papers

The ministry is also collecting, compiling and publishing books and papers on historical research, ethnic literature and culture. Up to now it has published four books and is preparing to print ten more. Historical Research and National Library is collecting books, magazines, journals, newspapers, gazettes, compilations and theses. The library of Historical Research Department has collected 2813 books, the National Library (Nay Pyi Taw) 30634 books, the National Library (Yangon) 10294 books and the branch of National Library (Yangon) 21477 books.

The Myanmar Historical Commission was reformed with 18 fulltime members and 15 part-time members. Based on the collected evidence, information and data, the finds of the field research books and papers on history are being published. Seven books were published in the current fiscal year and preparations are under way to distribute more.

The steering committee, the action committee and subcommittees have already formed to successfully host the 17th Southeast Asia Librarians Conference and related meetings from 2 to 5 May 2018. A combined team comprising members of Myanmar Historical Commission, palm leaf treatise experts, experts on ancient literatures and related departments was formed to protect and preserve palm leaf treatises. The team is now achieving progress in its work. Work is under way to move the National Library to downtown Yangon in fiscal year 2018-2019 for the convenience of visitors.

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The National Culture and Fine Arts University held its 20th anniversary convocation in December 2016 at the University Convocation Hall. Various kinds of degrees including the honorary doctorate degree were conferred on 139 persons.

The university sent final year students of various major subjects to Bagan in Mandalay Region to study ancient cultural heritage there and Dawei in Taninthayi Region to study the culture and traditions and Dawei people, one of the highly civilized ethnic races of Myanmar.

Myanmar hosted the second NUAC Orchestra Cinematic Music Showcase 2017 at the National Theatre in Yangon on 26 February 2017.

The showcase presented movie songs of Myanmar and the world through a combination of Myanmar and western music. Students of Music, Dance, Painting, Sculpture, Theatre and Cinema branch of the Fine Arts Department have to learn subjects on intangible and tangible cultural heritage, Myanmar, linguistics, civilization, English, international relations and Myanmar history.

The National Culture and Fine Arts University (Mandalay) sponsored India-Myanmar workshop and joint performance programme, joint dance programme between Myanmar dancers and Indian classical dance troupe, the entertainment of Restaurant of Many Orders troupe of Japan and workshop, the workshop on the imaginative of world of Paper and moving Paper Puppets in cooperation with Israel, meeting with Tokyo University of the Arts for giving lectures on culture, meeting with Israeli film directors and diplomats on filming the university workshop on cooperation programme with BSRU university of Thailand, China, USA, meeting on holding “Next Level” hip-hop, the One Asia Classic Orchestra Selection Workshop, cooperation program with TUA university of Japan, Stop - Motion Animation Workshop, the Kuricorder & Friends Concert in Myanmar. The university also took part in “Pagoda Flower of Myanmar” staged by Chinese artists, held talks with Yangon-based Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), and took part in the entertainment programme marking the 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Myanmar and Russia.

The Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture is preserving, rediscovering and collecting cultural and literature heritages and national characters, reinvigorating patriotism, producing experts in cultural subjects and opening museums and library in addition to preserving, promoting and propagating of the Sasana.
ENDING WILDLIFE TRAFFICKING: A RESPONSIBILITY FOR ALL OF US

Ending wildlife trafficking is a responsibility for all of us. If we cannot prevent such illegal trading, our wildlife remains in peril.

By Dr. Khin Zaw

Light of Myanmar news office

EDUCATION or Pedagogy, or Scholarizing in a social process, and improvements in resourcefulness (budget), technology and the quality of student and teaching inputs should be in principle (theoretically) be able to enhance in overall quality. But a brief scrutiny of various test scores around the world, however, will reveal a rather baffling picture. In many countries, large increases in average real expenditure per student and other measures of school expenditure across the world over the past 20 years have not been matched by any substantial increase in average test scores.

Soros foundation pedagogy shows that Mathematics and Science test scores in many OECD (7) countries mainly fell low, even though most of them have increased real expenditure per pupil by more than 100%, while other countries have continued to spend money, but not spending significantly. Despite this, however, many countries started this in the earlier part of the people’s life and learned tend to focus particularly on further increasing educational expenditures and pedagogical resource levels.

It is said that many countries all over the world are having increased reasonably the variety of educational inputs in order to make them more globally competent; increase in participation of youth in Myanmar in international corporate, academic and research based organizations. This needs international collaboration with reputed institutions all around the world, which would provide better opportunity and visibility to young minds of the country. Recently, Myanmar has been found gazing up in all such endeavours, which is a great step moving towards right direction for becoming good nation. Factoring out is major observation; suggestions, thoughts that could help the great nation in realizing its potential and become the great nation of Myanmar.

Capacities Building in Higher Education and Greater Academic Engagement: Institute of International Education has already launched a public course on “Connecting Worlds: International Relations for Higher Education Institutions.” This course would build robust and successful higher education capacity and improve the academic engagement in global level bringing foreign universities in the country for its youth or facilitating the international education through collaboration with reputed foreign institutions.

Expansions of person to person network; institution to institution network and country to country network through such academic collaborations would greatly help the young minds of Myanmar in realizing their true potential and they would be able to carry out viable research work as well as bringing along brilliant academic impact.

Human Capital Development: Since human capital is first and foremost component in making any nation a big KE country and therefore more focus is needed in this direction. This requires a lot of funds and hence availability of funds has to be ensured, or mechanism of fund generating schemes needs to be developed so as to improve education needs to be improved considerably, research consumption; culture and society need to be included among youth in universities and institutions; and whatever is required for creating awareness and finally producing excellent human capital in the country. Human capital only returns a lot serving the nation or even from outside the country.

Human capital once developed would showcase and demonstrate the student and youth generation after generation how to take the country abroad and transform it for the benefit of society and mankind.

Investment has to be done positively in the generation of human capital development and fostering research and creativity in the students. If there is unhappiness of fund is a major cause of concern then the policymakers may think upon the alternative ways of the funds for these schemes.

Fostering Innovation and Research-Based skill in students: Research and innovation based skills need to be inculcated among the young minds from the beginning. Research academic and scientific attitude in the young generation in the nation will help them in contributing in giant global organizations and in development and investment opportunities in changing the world. Research and innovation for education has to be done positively in the direction of human capital development.

This requires a lot of funds and hence availability of funds has to be ensured, or mechanism of fund generating schemes needs to be developed positively, in order to improve education needs to be improved considerably, research consumption; culture and society need to be included among youth in universities and institutions; and whatever is required for creating awareness and finally producing excellent human capital in the country. Human capital only returns a lot serving the nation or even from outside the country.

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Union Minister Dr. Win Myat Aye leads delegation to Bangladesh

UNION Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Dr Win Myat Aye led a delegation to Bangladesh yesterday evening to discuss preparations made to receive returnees to Myanmar Union Minister Dr Win Myat Aye, along with UERHD Chief Coordinator Prof Dr Aung Tun Thet; Myanmar Women's Affairs Federation Chairperson Dr Thet Thet Zin; Director-General of Disaster Management Department Dr Ko Ko Naing; Director-General of the International Organisations and Economic Department U Kyaw Moe Tun; Interfaith dialogue group's Dr Hla Tun, U Than Lwin and U Tin Myint; and other officials departed from Yangon International Airport. —Myanmar News Agency

Cash donated to buy two generators for Maungtaw region reception centres

A CASH donation ceremony to buy two 20-KVA generators for the Maungtaw region's Taung Pyo Letwe and Ngay Khua Ya reception centres was held at the National Reconciliation and Peace Centre (NRPC) in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday afternoon.

In his opening speech, Deputy Minister for State Counsellor's Office U Khin Maung Tin said that under the arrangement made by the union ministries, state government and the Tatmadaw, shelter, water, electricity, toilet facilities, food and transport would be provided at the Taung Pyo Letwe and Ngay Khua Ya reception centres. However, the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population and the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement have demanded two generators at the reception centres to receive returnees. The NRPC will do its best to receive the required cash to buy the two 20-KVA generators, explained the Deputy Minister.

Deputy Minister U Khin Maung Tin then donated US$14,000 for the two 20-KVA generators. Deputy Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement U Soe Aung accepted the donation and in return presented a certificate of honour.

Later, Deputy Minister U Soe Aung, joint secretary of the Implementation Committee on recommendations of Advisory Commission on Rakhine State, delivered the words of thanks. — Myanmar News Agency

70th Anniversary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Commemorative Book launched

70th ANNIVERSARY of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Commemorative Book *THE SEVEN-DECADe JOURNEY OF MOFA 1947-2017* was launched at the ceremony to commemorate 71st Anniversary of the Ministry, Nay Pyi Taw.

This book complies 26 articles in English written by Myanmar well-experienced diplomats: U Thant, first Asian United Nations Secretary General; U Ohn Gyaw, Foreign Minister (Retd.); U Nyunt Swe, Deputy Foreign Minister (Retd.); U Kyaw Tin, Union Minister for Ministry of International Cooperation; U Aung Htoo, Deputy Minister for Commerce; Retired Ambassadors: U Aung Thant, U Tin Kyaw Hlaing, U Nyunt Maung Shein, U Mya Than and U Tin Swai; Retired Directors-General: U Aye Lwin, U Tin Deir, U Than Tun; current Myanmar Ambassadors: Daw Yin Yin Myint, U Tha Aung Nyun and U Kyaw Zea and present foreign service personnel. It is the first time in the ministry's history to record Foreign Service personnel's collective seventy years. It also illustrates the history of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and international relations, true stories of Myanmar diplomats in discharging their duties in the first line of defence.

The book is available to those who are interested in making of history in Myanmar's diplomacy and international relations at the price of 5,000 Kyats per copy in both Nay Pyi Taw and Yangon Offices.—Myanmar News Agency

Unlocking Potential towards Knowledge ...

FROM PAGE-8-9

This could do wonders in skill development and enriching human capital in native areas of scope in the industrial sectors.

Sharing and Caring the Talent: The country is rich in producing vegetables, fruits and paddy and this needs a lot of scientific revolutions so as to make few significant contributions in these areas that would not only help productivity but attract more and more foreign investments. The collaborative investments get the talents of Myanmar as well as other parts of the nation in exploring the possible research based economy in the area of agriculture by combining the efforts and scientific knowledge of local youth and other researchers from the world. So, sharing its native knowledge; updating with latest knowledge; involving others from outside would help develop human capital in the nation itself.

Strengthening ICT Initiatives: As far ICT (Information and Communication Technology) tools and initiatives are concerned, the nation has to take very bold steps so that common ICT tools are available to common masses and they can use all ICT enabled services for service sector and other beneficial schemes aimed at elevating the poor and common masses. In addition to this, modern and global education needs ICT support very much and therefore ICT efforts that are already being put by the country, needs to be speeded up for facilitating the e-based or ICT based education and then the outreach of education would benefit faster and larger.

Knowledge Management Platform can act as Big Brother: The country's knowledge management platform launched for bringing big financial services to Myanmar; can act as big brother in helping the institutions and young minds in becoming good human capitals that would further attract other developed countries in Myanmar for joint academic and research activities.

Recognizing Native Intelligence and giving them Opportunity to Flourish: Most importantly, all native intelligence in different areas of industrial and societal growth need to be given importance. The local intelligence of youth has to be promoted; encouraged; flourished and propagated all across the world.

There are so many things that could be written on how to improve knowledge economy of a nation but this article has attempted to bring important points that would help the nation in developing the human capital so that knowledge economy is improved significantly on continuous basis that would eventually benefit the common masses and the nation at large.

(Please do write for feedback to me at drgrsinha@ieee.org, gareshsinha@acm.org, gr_sinha@mitl.edu.mmm).
State Counsellor holds Peace Talk in Ayeyawady

Peace was destroyed sometimes because the people were poor. People were not happy about problems related to economy. They could not stand it anymore and peace was destroyed. Peace and development is inseparable. We need to keep this in mind forever.

Some don’t look at their region or their country. They only look at the development of their small township. They don’t look outside of it. It can’t be done this way. But we still need to look for the development of our township. Like your own house. If peace didn’t prevail in the family, if your family is lacking anything, even if your ward is peaceful and calm, you wouldn’t be peaceful and calm.

However, if you alone, your home, your family alone is well-off, but if your neighbours are poor, it wouldn’t be good either. As soon as you went out, you’ll see the sufferings of your neighbours and you wouldn’t feel good. That is why your worry is not yours only. It is a worry for your country.

In the same way, the worry of the country is your worry. Only when there is peace all around could you be at peace. If all is at peace, you’ll be more at peace. You can share your peace with others so that they can also be at peace. Discussion should be made with this spirit", she said.

U Soe Hlaing Oo, Phyusin Myitta Development Group

I think a good and correct ‘cetana’ is the main requirement. I can take part in the peace process through my computer business. It is important to make a decision based on good and correct ‘cetana’. If you do something to others that you wouldn’t want others to do to you, is it right? Be it within a family or with others, if we deal in a way that we want ourselves to be dealt with, there’ll be no more hate speeches.

To tell the truth, subjects I thought without using the education were not used because they saw the suffering of the poor. This is the peace we are unable to get.

U Win Naing, education personnel

Without education, there can’t be peace. And without peace, education is useless. None of us will go to a place where it is not peaceful. Locals who are educated abroad could not return to their places of origin to teach because there is no peace. Both peace and education is required.

For peace, the education ministry can contribute by organizing students to engage in sports. If sports events are held in school, the students will come together bringing unity. Sports will support peace. Sports events for all people to participate together should be conducted while they are young. They will understand one another and one another’s tradition and culture. In this way, sports in the education sector will support peace. To achieve peace, education and sports shouldn’t be left out.

Report by Daw Pyone Pyone Aye, fishery business owner

Peace is most important for the country. My family business was in the fishery business. During my parent’s time, it was not peaceful. They have to pay protection money to armed personnel. If protection money is not paid, their workers or boats were taken away. Owners need to negotiate with them. The workers and boats were released after negotiation. Even then, the government jailed the business owner (for dealing with insurgents?).

Now that the Ayeyawady Region is at peace, fishermen can live well. Fishermen who are working now don’t have enough money, they couldn’t buy medicines and treatments. Some in the rich circle can go to hospital and get treatment. Some even go overseas for treatment. But not much care or support is provided to the poor. Then, they (the rich people) will not be at peace because they saw the suffering of the poor. This is the peace we are unable to get.

U Zaw Tin Oo, crab merchant

I have the experience of not having peace. I don’t feel well if I think about those living in places without peace.

Everyone in this country wanted peace. I’m sure there are many who want peace more than I do. They are the people who are facing the ravages of war. Yet, there are many more who want peace more than these people too. They are the Tatmadaw personnel and ethnic nationals in the ethnic armed organizations. Because they are in the fighting, risking their lives, I’m sure they want peace the most.

No one would want to go to a conflict area to develop it. No doctor, no teacher, no investor would think of going to a conflict area.

If the NLD government, elected by the people, who thought for the people, is unable to achieve peace, I don’t think we will ever get peace.

U Aung Kyi Myint, farmer

I want to see more development in education. A private company was permitted to build a school in our village in 2016. Only 50 per cent is completed to date. Locals want to see this school completed. Another school in another village nearby is also incomplete.

U Aung Kyi Myint, education personnel

Without education, there can’t be peace. And without peace, education is useless. None of us will go to a place where it is not peaceful. Locals who are educated abroad could not return to their places of origin to teach because there is no peace. Both peace and education is required.

Peace is quite important for Myanmar. It is yet to develop because there is no peace. If there is no peace, there can be no development. That is why we need to walk down the path toward peace consistently. People suffer because there are conflicts. Lives and limbs were lost. Children could not get an education peacefully. Without education, there wouldn’t be development. Without development, the country will remain poor. That is why the peace process is to be followed consistently and priority should be given to it. People in the whole country are expected to want peace in the same way as I want peace. Only when there is peace can other sectors develop.

Because of peace, the Ayeyawady Region has developed a bit. Education can be obtained. Transportation and communications is becoming better. As people can earn a good living, Ayeyawady Region is starting to develop. This is the outcome of peace. In the same way, it is important to have peace all over the country. It is not possible for our region to develop alone. Those living at the border and on the hills need to develop. The country is developed only when there is equal development throughout the whole country.

The education I received was not very useful for me. I just try out many businesses. The first business of fish breeding was a failure. Now I started a restaurant business. It is turning out quite well. I start this on my own thought without using the education I received. The education I received was totally inappropriate with what I’m doing. It was totally useless.

Daw Pyone Pyone Aye, fishery business owner

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State Counsellor holds Peace Talk in Ayeyawady

When the Kachin national Aung La N Sang become a double champion in MNA, not only the Kachin national but we were also happy. All ethnic nationals were happy. He was participating in the peace process through his sport. That is why I want to say that sport plays an important role in the peace process.

Yesterday’s event was attended by Union Ministers Lt-Gen Kyaw Swe, Dr. Myint Htwe, U Thant Sin Maung and U Han Zaw, Ayeyawady Region Chief Minister U Hla Moe Aung, Deputy Ministers U Min Thu and U Kyaw Lin, Region Hluttaw Speaker and representatives, regional government member ministers, departmental officials, civil society organisations, town elders, National League for Democracy members, students, youths and members of the public.

Daw Phyo El Kyaiing, Entrepreneurs Association

Daw Phyo El Kyaiing said when she hears the word peace, she thinks of non-discrimination and unity among the different ethnic groups in Myanmar working together to develop the country. She said that regardless of a person’s religious affiliation or place in the country, if everyone had the same citizenship spirit, then Myanmar could be collectively developed.

She said their Entrepreneurs Association is working under the Myanmar Young Entrepreneurs Association (MYPEA) and therefore have a clear vision and clearly defined objectives.

Seven Tatmadaw members convicted of killing terrorists in Maungtaw

FOUR officers and three men of other ranks who were involved in killing ten terrorists in Indin Village, Maungtaw Township, were sentenced to jail terms with hard labour, according to the Tatmadaw True News Information Team.

An investigation team led by Li-Gen Aye Win of the Office of Commander in Chief (Army), carried out the investigation into the case and interrogated 21 officers and other ranks of the Tatmadaw, three police, 13 members of Security Unit No. 8, six departmental staff and six villagers from Indin Village from 20 December, 2017, to 2 January 2018.

According to the statement released by the Tatmadaw True News Information Team, four officers were dismissed and sentenced to 10 years hard labour each under the Section 71 of the Tatmadaw Act as they were found guilty in the killing.

Three other ranks who were also convicted were demoted, dismissed and sentenced to 10 years hard labour:

The members of the police and civilians who were also convicted were demoted, dismissed and sentenced to 10 years hard labour:

Deputy Minister for Commerce U Aung Htoo and his wife were welcomed by Democratic People’s Republic of Korea Ambassador to Myanmar Jong Ho Bom at a ceremony to mark the 106th birth anniversary of its founding father Kim Il Sung, which was held at Chatrium Hotel in Yangon at 6.30 p.m. on 10 April. —GNLM

North Korea celebrates 106th birth anniversary of founding father
Indonesia seizes alleged ‘slave ship’ wanted by Interpol

JAKARTA — Indonesia seized an alleged “slave ship” following a dramatic high seas chase sparked by an Interpol alert after the vessel escaped capture in China and Mozambique, authorities said on Tuesday.

Interpol tipped off Indonesian authorities that the stateless STS-50, a vessel with a notorious maritime rap sheet, would be entering the Southeast Asian nation’s waters with authorities concerned the crew were being forced to work.

The boat, captured on Friday some 60 miles (95 kilometres) from Weh Island in Aceh province, had 20 Indonesians, two Ukrainians and eight Russian aboard, including the captain, a senior navy official said.

The crew have been detained and are now being questioned. The Indonesian sailors said they were not paid and that their passports had been previously flown flags including Japan, South Korea and Mozambique, authorities said.

It was on the run after escaping detention in China and also fleeing seizure in Mozambique.

Before it was caught in Indonesia, the vessel used several other names including Sea Breeze, Andrey Dolgov, and Aida, according to the fisheries ministry.

The vessel was equipped with some 600 gillnets — banned in some waters — targeting cod species and Antarctic toothfish. It is also suspected of involvement in “organised transnational crime”, the ministry added without elaborating.

Two years ago, Indonesian warships detained a Chinese trawler wanted by Interpol in Argentina. Jakarta has launched a tough crackdown on illegal fishing which involves sinking foreign vessels caught fishing without a permit after impounding the boats and removing the crews.—AFP

Kim makes first official mention of US-N Korea talks

SEOUL — North Korea’s leader Kim Jong Un has acknowledged the prospect of talks with the US, state media reported on Tuesday, in his first official mention of dialogue with Washington ahead of a planned summit with President Donald Trump.

Trump agreed last month to a landmark summit with the nuclear-armed North but with no specific dates or venue set, there had been questions over Pyongyang’s intention to participate. On Monday, Kim discussed the “the prospect of the DPRK-US dialogue” with party officials, the state KCNA news agency said, referring to the North by its official acronym.

He delivered a report on “the development of the recent situation on the Korean peninsula”, including the separate summit with South Korea to be held later this month, it said. In a growing rapprochement on the Korean peninsula, Kim is scheduled to meet the South’s president Moon Jae-in for a rare inter-Korean summit on 27 April.

Trump has also agreed to meet Kim to discuss denuclearisation as soon as next month. The summit would be the first between a sitting US president and a North Korean leader.—AFP

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FACADE
SYDNEY — Oscar-winner Geoffrey Rush is “virtually housebound” and “barely eats” after a Sydney newspaper claimed he engaged in inappropriate behaviour at a theatre, his lawyer said on Monday during a defamation case.

The 66-year-old actor is suing Sydney’s Daily Telegraph after a front-page story in November reported that the Sydney Theatre Company received a complaint about him when he was working there.

The veteran Australian star has denied any wrongdoing and his lawyer Nicholas Pullen said in an affidavit Monday that Rush “has continued to suffer tremendous emotional and social hardship”. The legal document said he was “virtually housebound” and in the first three months after the publication “rarely left his home”.

It added that he “feels uncomfortable when in public and will rarely attend public events”, “barely eats” and “wakes up every morning with a terrible sense of dread about his future career”. The affidavit said that as a direct result of the report, which received international coverage, Rush found he was “constantly associated” locally and overseas with the global #MeToo movement against sexual harassment.

Rush in December resigned as head of film industry body the Australian Academy of Cinema and Television Arts, which he had led for several years.

He won the Best Actor Academy Award in 1997 for his role in “Shine” and is one of the few stars to have also won a primetime Emmy and a Tony Award.

The Telegraph has said previously it had accurately reported the alleged complaint against Rush and would defend the case in court.—AFP

Bollywood’s Salman Khan thanks fans after jail release

MUMBAI — Convicted Bollywood star Salman Khan thanked “tears of gratitude” to all his fans on Monday in his first remarks since being bailed over a five-year jail sentence for killing rare antelopes. Khan, one of the world’s highest-paid actors, was convicted in the 29-year-old case on Thursday and spent two nights in Jodhpur Central Jail before being released on bail by a judge on Saturday.

“Tears of gratitude. To all my loved ones who are with me and never lost hope. “Thank you for being there with all the love and support. God Bless,” the actor wrote to his 32.7 million Twitter followers.

Khan had denied shooting two rare antelopes known as black bucks on a hunting trip while filming a movie in October 1998. But the court found him guilty while acquitting four other actors. Khan has accused Rajasthan’s forest department of trying to frame him. His lawyers claim the black bucks died of natural causes such as overeating, insisting there was no evidence they were shot.

Throughout the multiple cases, eyewitnesses have stated they saw Khan firing a gun.

A judge released Khan, one of India’s cinema’s most bankable stars, in return for bail and sureties totalling 100,000 rupees ($1,500). He cannot leave India without court permission. The Telegraph has said he was “virtually housebound” and in the first three months after the publication “rarely left his home”.

It added that he “feels uncomfortable when in public and will rarely attend public events”, “barely eats” and “wakes up every morning with a terrible sense of dread about his future career”. The affidavit said that as a direct result of the report, which received international coverage, Rush found he was “constantly associated” locally and overseas with the global #MeToo movement against sexual harassment.

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‘Black Panther’ pounces past ‘Titanic’ box office record

LOS ANGELES — “Black Panther” broke more records over the weekend in North America, exceeding revenues from the 1997 blockbuster “Titanic,” while horror thriller “A Quiet Place,” with barely three minutes of dialogue, made a resounding $50.2 million debut.

“A Quiet Place” is built around a simple but chilling premise: flesh-eating creatures have invaded Earth, but they are blind and can track their prey only by sound. So actor/director John Krasinski, his wife (in the film and in real life) Emily Blunt and their children must adapt — through sign language and ingenious adaptations — or die.

The film has drawn rave reviews, with a 97 per cent Rotten Tomatoes rating. Steven Spielberg’s “Ready Player One” — a futuristic tribute to 1980s films — came in second at $24.6 million from Friday to Sunday, according to box office tracker Exhibitor Relations. The Warner Bros. film tells the story of a teenage gamer (Wade Watts) who finds himself inside an addictive virtual reality world. It’s earned $90.5 million in two weeks. In third was another new release, Universal’s “Blockers,” at $20.6 million. A raunchy comedy starring John Cena and Leslie Mann, the movie drew considerable buzz at the South by Southwest film festival.


That number takes the film past “Titanic,” which had collected $659 million in North America. “Black Panther” is now third in movie ticket sales of all time on the continent.

“InAvatar” (2009) and “Star Wars: The Force Awakens” (2015) are still ahead, with $760 million and $808.7 million in ticket sales respectively.

In terms of global sales, “Avatar” leads with $2.8 billion, followed by “Titanic” ($2.2 billion), both directed by James Cameron. “Black Panther” is only 10th worldwide.

In North America, the weekend’s fifth spot went to psychological thriller “Tyler Perry’s Acrimony” with $8.4 million. Rounding out the top 10 were: “I Can Only Imagine” ($7.8 million) “Chappaquiddick” ($5.8 million) “Sherlock Gnomes” ($5.4 million) “Pacific Rim: Uprising” ($4.8 million) “Isle of Dogs” ($4.6 million).—AFP
Tokyo Disneyland’s new parade unveiled ahead of premiere

CHIBA, (Japan) — Tokyo Disneyland’s new parade celebrating the theme park’s 35th anniversary was unveiled to the press on Tuesday with Mickey Mouse and his Disney friends dancing on gigantic floats.

The parade “Dreaming Up!” will premiere on Sunday. It is the first renewal of Tokyo Disneyland’s daytime parade in five years.

It is part of Tokyo Disneyland’s special anniversary event “Tokyo Disney Resort 35th ‘Happiest Celebration!’,” which will run through 25 March next year.

The park’s popular attraction “It’s a Small World” will also reopen on Sunday.

The “Dreaming up!” parade has a total of 13 floats and is led by Mickey Mouse and Pluto on a vehicle featuring a winged horse, while Minnie Mouse glides along with Cinderella and Snow White.

Baymax, a key character from popular Disney movie “Big Hero 6,” made his first appearance at the amusement park, joining the parade with his best friend Hiro on his back. —Kyodo News

112-yr-old Japanese recognized as world’s oldest man

KUSHIRO, (Japan) — Masazo Nonaka, a 112-yr-old Japanese man in Hokkaido was recognized as the world’s oldest living male, Guinness World Records said on Tuesday.

Nonaka was born in the northern Japan town of Ashoro on 25 July, 1905, the year Albert Einstein published his theory of relativity.

Guinness had been trying to confirm the oldest living man after the previous title holder Yisrael Kristal of Israel died last August at 113.

Nonaka lives with his family in his home, which doubles as the more than 100-yr-old hot spring inn he used to run. His wife, with whom Nonaka had two sons and three daughters, died in 1992.

As he was handed a certificate by a Guinness official at his home, a smiling Nonaka made a victory sign with his fingers and said, “Thank you.”

Nonaka uses a wheelchair but does not need special care in everyday life. He reads newspapers every morning and watches sumo matches and operas on TV.

According to his granddaughter Yuko, Nonaka enjoys soaking in a hot spring once a week and indulges in sweets, especially cakes.

“Mr Nonaka’s achievement is remarkable — he can teach us all an important lesson about the value of life and how to stretch the limits of human longevity,” Craig Glenday, Guinness World Records’ editor-in-chief said.

His great-grandson Koki Kurohata, 20, said, “He has not been (receiving nursing care) at a facility and has clear brain. He’s really amazing.”

Japan is one of the world’s top countries for longevity. Nabi Tajima, a 117-yr-old Japanese resident of Kagoshima Prefecture, is likely to be recognized as the world’s oldest living woman, following the death of Violet Brown of Jamaica, the previous title holder who died at 117 in September.

Jiroemon Kimura, a Japanese who died in 2013 at 116, was recognized by Guinness as the longest-lived man in history.

The oldest person ever to have lived is Jeanne Calment, a French woman, who died in 1997 at age 122 years and 164 days, according to Guinness.

—Kyodo News

India charity’s joy at Harry, Markle wedding gesture

MUMBAI — An Indian charity championing menstrual hygiene is over the moon at being chosen as one of seven organisations to benefit from Prince Harry and Meghan Markle’s wedding, its head said on Tuesday.

The Myna Mahila Foundation helps disadvantaged women from Mumbai slums access cheap sanitary pads and campaigns to end taboos surrounding menstruation in the conservative Asian country.

The British prince and the US actress this week asked people who want to mark their nuptials next month to donate to charity rather than sending wedding gifts.

“When we found out we were really excited. We’re a small grassroots organisation and it felt really special,” Suhani Jalota, Myna Mahila’s founder and director, told AFP.

The organisation, which Markle visited last year, was founded in 2015 and helps around 10,000 women every month. It provides information about menstrual hygiene and encourages women to talk about their periods to help break social stigma.

Myna is a bird native to South Asia known for its talkative nature while “mahila” means woman in Hindi.

The charity also produces low-cost sanitary pads which are manufactured and distributed by the women, providing employment. Women in patriarchal India, particularly in rural areas, are frequently shunned during their monthly cycles while millions in poverty are forced to use items like old rags, sand and leaves, activists say.

Jalota, who described Markle as “very down-to-earth” when she met her, hopes the publicity and any wedding donations they receive can help the charity soon reach out to 30,000 Mumbai women.

Harry, 33 and Markle, 36, are set to tie the knot at Windsor Castle, west of London, on May 19 in front of 600 guests.

Harry is fifth in line to the throne after his father Charles, brother Prince William and William’s children Prince George and Princess Charlotte.

He will be bumped down to sixth place when William’s wife Kate gives birth later this month. —AFP
Yangon United take on Bali United today

Myanmar’s Yangon United will play Indonesia’s Bali United at Thuwanna Stadium in Yangon today (3.30 p.m.) in a Group G match of the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) Cup 2018.

A pre-press conference was held in the hall of Thuwanna Stadium yesterday, in which Wido-do Calyono Putro, head coach of Bali United, said the match was important for both teams. “Yangon United are strong and formidable opponents. We are well-prepared to play Yangon United in the away match. We hope to get three points in this match. We will try our best to grab good results for our fans,” he said.

Captain Fadil Sausu said his team would try its best to win the match to advance to the next level. “We believe we can win the match,” he said.

Yangon United head coach U Myo Min Tun said, “We won with a score of 3-1 in the first match. We know Bali United will field their strongest players in this match. Bali is the best team in this group. We will advance to the next level even if we manage a draw and get one point. However, we will not be playing for a draw. We will play to win, although some six players are injured.”

A Yangon United FC defender said, “We reached this far to advance to the next level. I won’t let the team miss this chance. All our players believe we can win this match. We will earn three points for our fans.”

There are four teams in Group G: Yangon United, Bali United, FCL Thanh Hoa and Global Cebu. Yangon United is leading the table with nine points, followed by Bali United with five points. — GNLM

Out of Neuer’s shadow, Ulreich eager to shine in Europe

BERLIN — With Manuel Neuer still sidelined, Sven Ulreich is relishing his time in the spotlight as Bayern Munich’s goalkeeper as he prepares for Wednesday’s Champions League quarter-final return leg.

Ulreich found himself suddenly elevated to the club’s first-choice role in September when World Cup winner Neuer fractured his foot in training. The 29-year-old will once more be between the posts against Sevilla at Munich’s sold-out Allianz Arena with the Germans on the verge of another Champions League semi-final.

Bayern hold a 2-1 advantage and are bidding to reach the last four for the seventh time in nine seasons.

While the likes of Thomas Mueller and Robert Lewandowski are used to playing regularly in the knockout stages of European competition, it is a novelty for Ulreich. “Seville was a super experience, it was a good match. I was really happy to be able to play a quarter-final of the Champions League,” he said.

—AFP

Real Madrid’s forward Cristiano Ronaldo stands just three goals short of his best ever tally in a single European campaign. PHOTO: AFP

Ronaldo looking better than ever ahead of Juventus return

MADRID — Cristiano Ronaldo has already broken one record in this year’s Champions League but against Juventus in their quarter-final return on Wednesday he can edge closer to beating a bigger milestone of his own.

Ronaldo’s bicycle kick in Real Madrid’s 3-0 first leg victory last week ensured he passed Ruud van Nistelrooy’s feat by scoring in 10 consecutive Champions League games.

But the Portuguese also now stands just three goals short of his best ever tally in a single European campaign, an achievement that would suggest this Ronaldo, aged 33, may even be the finest version yet.

His 14 goals so far have come over nine matches and featured doubles against APOEL, Borussia Dortmund, Paris Saint-Germain and Juventus.

It means this is Ronaldo’s third main role. He was a prolific Champions League showing to date already and, with Real almost certain to reach the semi-finals, he is unlikely to finish here.

When he posted 16 goals in the 2015-16 tournament and his personal best of 17 in 2013-14, both times Real were crowned champions. “Cristiano is Cristiano, it’s always been like that,” coach Zinedine Zidane said after Ronaldo opened the scoring against Atletico Madrid on Sunday.

“There’s no other player in the team that scores like he does.” There is no doubt Ronaldo’s game is now more streamlined and therefore more geared towards goals than perhaps it has ever been before. To preserve his fitness and energy, he accepts less touches and covers less ground. The touches he takes and the spaces he finds are aimed at creating the greatest chance of hitting the net. Even Zidane’s system is suited to accommodating this predatory Ronaldo, a 4-4-2, with Karim Benzema playing the supporting role and wingers, instructed to supply deliveries into the box.

When Ronaldo volleyed in from eight yards against Atletico, it was a simple cross to the back post from Gareth Bale that provided it. In this mould, Ronaldo could be terrorising goalkeepers for a fair few years yet.

Zidane withdrew his star player in the 64th minute last weekend, despite the match being delicately poised at 1-1 after Antoine Griezmann’s equaliser.

The draw keeps Atletico in a Madrid derby, without any protest, is a measure of how the Champions League is now all-encompassing for Los Blancos. “He is intelligent,” Zidane said about Ronaldo’s substitution. “There are moments where he does not play and others where he does. He needs it, he knows that and he is better every day.”

Luka Modric and Karim Benzema were also left out of the starting line-up at the Santiago Bernabeu while Bale played 90 minutes, an indicator the Welshman is set for another European snub in midweek. Bale’s first choice is still to regain favour under Zidane and then stay at Real this summer but his coach is showing little sign of softening. Zidane made three substitutions last week in Turin but Bale remained rooted to the bench. If Real score one, which they have not failed to do in 24 Champions League games, Juve will need four. “We don’t cry to each other and we go to Madrid with the desire to have a good race. In football and in life you never know,” Juve defender Giorgio Chiellini said after a 4-2 win at Benevento on Saturday. “The game is long and therefore we will need some balance but to do it will also take a pinch of healthy madness from everyone.” —AFP