President accepts credentials of newly-accredited Ambassadors

By Manjurul Karim Khan

Prof. Dr. Iza Fadri, the newly-accredited Ambassador of the Republic of Indonesia to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, presented his Letter of Credence to U Win Myint, President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, at the Presidential Palace, Nay Pyi Taw at 10:00 am yesterday.

Mr. Manjurul Karim Khan

State Counsellor delivers speech at CONSAL XVII

By Manjurul Karim Khan

STATE Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi delivered an opening speech at the opening ceremony of the 17th Congress of Southeast Asian Librarians (CONSAL XVII) hosted by Myanmar for the first time. It was held in Nay Pyi Taw Myanmar International Convention Centre-2 (MICC-II) yesterday morning.

The ceremony was attended by Vice President U Myint Swe, former President U Htin Kyaw and wife Daw Su Su Lwin, Union Ministers Dr. Pe Myint, Thura U Aung Ko, U Thein Swe, U Ohn Maung, Dr. Myo Thein Gyi, Nay Pyi Taw Council Chairman Dr. Myo Aung, Deputy Ministers, Ambassadors from ASEAN countries, Permanent Secretaries and departmental heads from the Ministries, congress representatives, Myanmar Library Association Chairman, executive committee members and other members, chief librarians from local and abroad and invited guests.

At first, artistes from Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture performed a musical dance with the ASEAN song.

Next, State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi opened the ceremony by sounding the golden Mingalar gong.

In her opening speech, State Counsellor said that the Congress of Southeast Asian Librarians was launched 48 years ago, in 1970, to promote library and information development in the region, and to lead us towards greater participation in the international information community. One of its objectives is to provide a platform for the sharing and

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President accepts credentials of newly-accredited Ambassadors

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Mr. Ichiro Maruyama, the newly-accredited Ambassador of Japan to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, presented his Letter of Credence to U Win Myint, President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, at Presidential Palace, Nay Pyi Taw at 11:00 am yesterday.

Mr. Zahairi bin Baharim, the newly-accredited Ambassador of Malaysia to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, presented his Letter of Credence to U Win Myint, President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, at the Presidential Palace, Nay Pyi Taw at 2:00 pm yesterday.

Mr. Tom D. Kijiner, the newly-accredited Ambassador of the Republic of the Marshall Islands to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, presented his Letter of Credence to U Win Myint, President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, at Presidential Palace, Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

Present on the occasions were Union Minister for International Cooperation U Kyaw Tin and Director-General of the Protocol Department U Thant Sin.—Myanmar News Agency

State Counsellor delivers speech at CONSAL XVII

FROM PAGE-1
exchange of information and experience on issues in the field of librarianship, library and information sciences, documentation, information and related services in the region. The long history of the Congress stands evidence to the strength and unity of the organization.

The theme of this Congress, ‘Next Generation Libraries: Collaborate and Connect’, highlights the future role of the library and information services profession, a role that will be both challenging and exciting. Next Generation Librarians will have to collaborate and connect with each other to share their experiences and expertise and also to work towards innovative trends and new age technologies. Like all goals, there will be difficulties and obstacles along the way but I believe that the positive environment provided by CONSAL, will contribute strongly towards the removal of these challenges and help next generation libraries to be shaped positively and constructively. I am happy to have this opportunity to play a small part, through this congress, in promoting a love of reading among our people. Reading is fundamental to meaningful communication, not just across cultures but across the ages, giving us access to the past, the present and the future, all at the same time.

By instilling a love of reading in children at an early age, we provide them with magic carpets and spaceships that will carry them across physical and mental barriers to new, challenging worlds. By promoting libraries, particularly school libraries, throughout our country we shall not only be providing a necessary aid for the development of basic education but also an instrument for cultivating a love of literature, social sciences, history and humanities among our people.

Our government aims at establishing a strong library culture in our society and the level of enthusiasm is high. The desire for change among librarians is notable. We can make a difference to our libraries, enabling them to promote life-long learning through information literacy instructions integrated with library activities.

In this knowledge age, the role of libraries is changing. They have been identified as one of the key elements for open access to information. By providing a gateway to knowledge and culture, Libraries and librarians play a significant role in encouraging citizens to participate in society transformation.

The Vision of the National Library of Myanmar, a governmental organization under the Department of Historical Research and National Library, is “to be a center of Myanmar literary heritage”. Hence, it collects and maintains ancient manuscript collections throughout the country. These are preserved at the National Library, Naypyitaw and the National Library, Yangon. A beautiful building, of the colonial era is being renovated in accordance with the recommendations of the Yangon Heritage Trust, and this will soon be our new, modernized National Library in Yangon.

The Myanmar Library Association (MLA), a non-governmental organization, is endeavouring to motivate reading and to improve access to and use of new technology for the promotion of information literacy development in the country. It is playing an important role in transforming libraries and librarians’ functions in Myanmar and in giving access to reliable information and knowledge. The Association has launched programmes to reenergize and develop school libraries with strong support from the Department of Basic Education under the Ministry of Education in Myanmar; the Asia Foundation, and other international organizations.

The majority of Myanmar’s population, i.e. 70%, live in the rural areas and it is essential to provide access to information for citizens who have no library facilities in their wards and villages. The Daw Khin Kyi Foundation, a non-profit charitable organization, was established in 2012 in memory of my mother and its purpose is to promote health, education and living standards of the people of Myanmar; focusing its attention on the needs of least developed areas. The Daw Khin Kyi Foundation started the first mobile library programme in 2013 in collaboration with the Ministry of Information.

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State Counsellor delivers speech at CONSAL XVII

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We wish to provide library services, particularly for those who live in rural areas where there is little access to books. Our aim is to stimulate reading interest and to broaden the intellectual horizons of all our people, said the State Counsellor.

As the library is a hardcore necessity for higher education, it has to be restructured to align with the educational policy and revised curriculum of the Government. Public libraries take on the role of community centers for citizens by offering informal education opportunities.

Myanmar’s literacy rate of 92.7% suggests that the potential of libraries to support community development could be high, said Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.

This Congress provides an excellent opportunity for networking between Southeast Asian Libraries and Librarians, for promoting the collaboration and strengthening of library and library-related professionals in the ten member countries in Southeast Asia and also for ensuring sustainable development.

CONSAL recognizes the outstanding contribution of librarians in the region, for the region. It has positioned itself as an important element in the area of Knowledge and Information Sharing. Libraries are not fading away in the age of the internet and digital media.

On the contrary, everywhere they are taking on an even stronger role in community life, bringing together diverse peoples and providing access not only to books, but also to a variety of social activities, said the State Counsellor.

I would like to conclude by thanking all of you for your commitment to collaboration and connection among our next generation libraries. I am confident that the discussions that will take place over the next three days will be dynamic and fruitful. I wish you a pleasant stay in Myanmar, said the State Counsellor.

After her speech, the State Counsellor, the Vice President and guests attending the opening ceremony took commemorative group photos.

Following this, speeches were delivered by the Union Minister for Religious Affairs and Culture Thura U Aung Ko and International Federation of Libraries and Associations (IFLA) President Ms. Christine Mackenzie. The opening ceremony came to a close with artistes from Department of Fine Arts singing songs in honor of ASEAN and performing dances.

The Congress was then held in designated places. At the Congress, IFLA President conducted a discussion, Myanmar Library Association Chairman U Than Aung read out the message of the Myanmar Library Association Patron Sithu Dr. Thaw Kaung, Congress attendees were divided into six groups and read papers titled Access and Opportunities for All; Media and Information Literacy; Digital Library Management; Advocacy; Transforming Libraries; Strategic Alliances and Training for Library and Information Professionals; Marketing and Promotion; Conservation and Preservation; and ASEAN Vision and Libraries it is learnt.—Myanmar News Agency

State Counsellor receives Ambassadors from Indonesia, Bangladesh and the Marshall Islands separately

State Counsellor receives Prof. Dr. Iza Fadri, Ambassador of Indonesia, in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. PHOTO: MNA

State Counsellor talks toindhoven businessman in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. PHOTO: MNA

State Counsellor shakes hands with Mr. Manjurul Karim Khan Chowdhury, Ambassador of Bangladesh yesterday. PHOTO: MNA

State Counsellor shakes hands with Mr. Tom D. Kijiner, Ambassador of Marshall Islands yesterday. PHOTO: MNA

DAW AUNG SAN SUU KYI, State Counsellor and Union Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, received Prof. Dr. Iza Fadri, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Indonesia, at 11:00 am, Mr. Manjurul Karim Khan Chowdhury, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh, at 2:30 pm and Mr. Tom D. Kijiner, Ambassador of the Marshall Islands of the Republic of the Marshall Islands at 3:30 pm, separately at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Nay Pyi Taw.

During the meeting with the Indonesian Ambassador, they discussed and exchanged views on matters pertaining to bilateral relations and cooperation.

At the meeting with Mr. Manjurul Karim Khan Chowdhury, they discussed in a cordial manner matters related to the promotion of bilateral relations and cooperation and the repatriation of displaced persons from Rakhine State.

During the meeting with the Ambassador of the Marshall Islands, they discussed matters relating to bilateral relations and cooperation between Myanmar and Marshall Islands.—Myanmar News Agency
Some 89 river terns researched in 2018

Some 89 river terns, one of the endangered species, were researched in 2018.

According to the IUCN Red List, some 101 river terns and 29 nests were recorded in 2017 along Chindwin River and Ayeyawady River. In 2018, the number of river terns increased remarkably. Some 89 river terns, 23 nests and 43 small baby birds were recorded in 2018. But this year, we cannot research some areas of Ayeyawady and Chindwin Rivers because of human interference, said Ko Naing Lin, in charge of Ayeyawady Delta conservation from the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) (Myanmar).

River terns mate in February and May. They usually breed in colonies along less accessible areas such as sandbanks in rivers. They keep laying eggs close to each other, said Htin Lin Kyaw, assistance researcher from WCS (Myanmar).

“River terns usually move their nests when they face a threat. They usually lay two or three eggs per nest. They hatch and emerge into a small body in 20 to 25 days and their body hair grows within 24 hours. They start to fly over 30 days,” Htin Lin Kyaw added.

Recently, the Forestry Department erected an educational board to spread awareness campaigns among local villagers and is researching the conservation of river terns in cooperation with WCS (Myanmar). —Nyi Tu

Yangon Region government to allocate exhibition space for 2019 international expos

THE Yangon Region government is planning to allocate new exhibition spaces in certain townships in the Yangon Region to host international exhibitions in 2019, said Yangon Region Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein during the second anniversary meeting of the Gems and Entrepreneurs Association (Yangon).

“Other respective sectors also need to stage an exhibition like this. We aim to increase the number of international expos in 2019, but we are facing challenges in finding exhibition spaces. We are arranging one on Bayintnaung Road and finding spaces near Ngamoeik creek to facilitate transport by car or water taxi for those entrepreneurs who stay in the downtown area. There is an eight-acre-old jute factory in Bayintnaung area. If this factory can be converted to an exhibition space, it can accommodate many cars. We are screening the places, along with restaurants and other related businesses,” said U Phyo Min Thein.

Yangon's economy is likely to improve if exhibitions such as furniture expos, car expos are held once a month, besides the gems expo, he maintained.

“When Yangon is packed with sellers and buyers, it helps enhance the tourism industry. We still have not achieved the standards of an international-level expo. Gems and jewelery are good trade items to keep pace with other countries,” said U Phyo Min Thein.

“If the respective associations want to invite international-level event organisers, the Yangon Region government will welcome them,” he added.

To enhance Myanmar's gems sector, the Yangon Region government is ready to help with government procedures, including getting easier access to visas, ensuring smooth trade flow and opening of the branch office.

Union Minister for Natural Resource and Environmental Conservation U Ohn Win attended the second anniversary meeting of the Gems and Entrepreneurs Association. —Thiri
Onion prices continue to drop in domestic market

ONION growers are facing losses as the onion price continues to decline in the domestic market this season due to the late harvest, according to a report in Myawady Daily on Thursday.

U Khin Han, chairman of Myanmar Onion, Garlic and Kitchen Crops Producer Association, said the onion market is cooling down owing to the low price. The onion price has dropped by half from its peak. Onion prices were more than Ks700 in the post-Thadingyut period. Now, a viss (3.6 pounds) of onions is currently sold for Ks500-Ks600.

U Khin Han said onion prices are expected to rise next week, adding there was a huge stockpile of onions in the local market, but the demand for the crop is low. So, prices of the crop have been on the decline.

Onion is a popular cooking staple and is normally harvested in March. Growers are facing losses owing to the late harvest.—GNLM

Myanmar imports consumer goods worth $174 million within 20 days

MYANMAR’s imports of consumer products in the current six-month transitional fiscal year (FY) topped US$174 million, recording an increase of $3.046 million against the same period last year, according to official figures released by the commerce ministry.

Between 1 and 20 April this year, the private sector bought $170 million worth of similar goods from foreign trade partners, while public sector imports were valued at $4.24 million.

The country’s total import value during the first 20 days of this FY reached $913 million, including $276 million in capital goods and $462 million in intermediate materials. The total imports were worth $255 billion more than the imports last FY.

Myanmar chiefly imports luxury goods, personal goods, construction materials, agricultural machinery, raw materials, household goods, food items and electronic devices from neighbouring countries.

The import value of consumer goods has increased each year. The import value was $1.245 billion in the 2011-12 FY, $1.4 million in the 2012-13 FY, $2.3 billion in the 2013-14 FY, $2.9 billion in the 2014-15 FY, $3.5 billion in the 2015-16 FY, more than $4 billion in the 2016-17 FY, and $4.403 billion in the 2017-2018 FY.—Khine Khant

Myanmar officials to visit India to discuss beans exports

By May Thet Hnin

A delegation led by officials from the Ministry of Commerce is preparing to visit India to discuss the matter of beans exports/imports this month.

“During the past few days, officials from the Ministry of Commerce and Myanmar Pulses, Beans and Sesame Merchants’ Association have been holding discussions on the matter. In the first week of March, a delegation led by officials from the Ministry of Commerce went to India for the first time. Now, the ministry is preparing to visit India again this month,” said U Min Ko Oo, secretary of Myanmar Pulses, Beans and Sesame Merchants’ Association.

“As the matter is still under discussion, we cannot say much at this moment,” added U Min Ko Oo.

The prices of beans have declined significantly in the local market after India announced a new policy in August 2017 to buy only 200,000 tonnes of pigeon peas, 300,000 tonnes of mung beans and green beans from bean exporting countries, including Myanmar. India’s amended import policy was valid until the end of March, but India has yet to fix a new policy.

Even though a new policy was not set, India has issued special import licences to some bean traders. Traders who hold the special licences can import Myanmar beans to India.

“We have concluded that India lacks transparency in its import policy. A few traders who hold special licences are importing beans from Myanmar to India. It is confusing, because though India has limited the import of beans, some traders are being issued special import licences. The lack of transparency seems to be a deliberate attempt to buy at reduced rates,” said U Min Ko Oo.

Myanmar exports some 90 per cent of its pulses and beans, mainly pigeon peas and mung beans, to India. Last year, the price of mung beans was Ks900,000 per tonne, while the price of pigeon peas was Ks800,000 per tonne. The price of mung beans dropped to 390,000 per tonne, while the price of pigeon peas plunged to Ks350,000 per tonne.

In mid-April, the price of mung beans was Ks460,000 per tonne, while the price of pigeon peas was Ks400,000 per tonne. Traders stocked the beans anticipating a decline in volumes after the water festival. However, more beans continue to enter the market pushing down the price further.

Last January, the price of pigeon peas and mung beans increased slightly, owing to the demand from Bangladesh, Pakistan and the UAE.

“We cannot control the price of beans due to the low demand from India. This is the first time I have ever seen the prices of beans sliding. We should not cultivate pigeon peas and mung beans this year,” said U Min Ko Oo.

“We have advised local farmers to cultivate beans only for local consumption and export to China,” he added.

Traders have formed a committee and contributed Ks50 billion to control the beans market. Last October, the committee bought pigeon peas and mung beans from local cultivators.

Although the government planned to buy directly from local cultivators with a Ks15-billion fund in January, the plan has yet to be implemented because the government decided to buy only when the prices decline, which are lower than the cultivation costs.

The market for mung beans, pigeon peas and green beans cultivated in Myanmar relies solely on India. Myanmar exports some 1.5 million tonnes of beans to India annually.
To be able to bring about development in Kachin state, efforts have been made with added momentum and as a result, the state has been able to enjoy the fruits of development in various spheres in the two years tenure of the new Kachin State Government.

Population

With a total population of over 1.3 million, Kachin State is home to Kachin, Kayah, Kayin, Chin, Mon, Bamar, Rakhine, Shan, Naga and other national races. Although the majority of local people are Christians and there are also Buddhists in the state. There are altogether 81 departmental bodies with over 50,000 government employees in service in Kachin State.

In Kachin State, there are 870,000 voters who have the right to choose 12 Amyotha Hluttaw representatives, 18 Pyithu Hluttaw representatives and 36 the state Hluttaw representatives from 20 political parties based in the region.

Aims and objectives

The aims and objectives of the Kachin State Government are: to restore peace and security, to improve transport infrastructure, to get electricity supply, to stop abusing drugs, to strengthen friendship among national brethren, to prevail rule of law, to promote socio-economic status of the people, to increase agriculture, to boost breeding, to promote tourism and to foster performance of public-oriented tasks and services which are devoid of all malpractices.

The Kachin State Chief Minister Dr. Khat Aung said, “Only if peace can first be brought about, will the country see progress in the nation’s development. However, there is not yet total tranquility in Kachin State. At such a time when the country is marching towards creating a
Cooperation is of paramount importance for the people in Kachin State to work together with the local government as regional development tasks will be undertaken only when peace and stability prevailed in the region.
Yangon is home to an extraordinary diversity of wetlands, which include commercial wetlands, natural wetlands, mangrove forests, coastal wetlands, and riverine wetlands. Many of these wetlands have been designated as Ramsar sites due to their unique biodiversity and ecological importance.

Since 1980 the government has designated the 23,400-acre wide Moeyungyi Wetland a wildlife sanctuary, on which about 17 villages rely on for their daily survival. Plans are underway to survey on migratory birds coming to the wetlands in winter. The survey programmes conducted by the ministry in cooperation with bird observers and experts to collect exactly the numbers and species migrating to the wetland each year.

Promoting the tourism industry is one of the government’s priorities to reduce unemployment and to supply water to the Bago Sittaung Canal in order to facilitate the transport of timber by narrow boats.

The key representative lakes in Myanmar are Meikhtila Lake, Moeyungyi Lake in early November. It is home to an exuberant wetlands; large freshwater lakes with birds such as Meikhtila Lake and Moeyungyi Wetlands are popular places for local and foreign visitors.

Since the 1950s the government’s proprietories to reduce unemployment and to supply water to the Bago Sittaung Canal in order to facilitate the transport of timber by narrow boats. The Moeyungyi Wetland, which changed naturally into wetland with the construction as a reservoir by British colonialists in 1884.

The Moeyungyi Wetland, is designated and migratory water birds, they can study the different bird species and their behaviour. Currently, some 117 species have been recorded from the country. These include 8 endemics and 45 species that are globally threatened. There are 53 IBAs (Important Bird Areas). According to the Moeyungyi Bird and Nature Society, Myanmar is one of the richest and most diverse bird fauna in the world. The Moeyungyi is a well-known place for bird watching and is considered as integral part in the context of wise use and international importance of wetlands in Asia, and accordingly Myanmar has been participating in the regional wetland collaboration.

The Moeyungyi covers almost 104 square kilometers (40 square mile) and was designated as a Ramsar site in 2004. It is a permanent freshwater lake and plays hydrological, biological and ecological role to the resident and migratory waterfowl and the local people.

Wetland Birds

Birds that migrate to the Moeyungyi Wetlands have been recorded from Bago. It is regarded as a paradise for bird watchers and eco-tourists. It is located in Bago and Waw townships of Bago division and along Yangon - Bago - Pyin Oo Lwin highway.

OPINION

Good hand hygiene: a simple, cost-effective way to save lives and transform the quality of health care at all levels

Dr Poonam Khetrapal Singh, Regional Director, WHO South-East Asia Region

Good hand hygiene is the cornerstone of safe and effective health care. Just 20-30 seconds of washing with an alcohol-based product, or 30-40 seconds with soap and water, will help anyone in a health care setting stop the spread of infections. And the right type of soap and the right amount of water can make a difference in the rate of antimicrobial resistance and advance the safety and quality of health care for all. Importantly, the global issue of antimicrobial resistance is direly important for health care more effective, saving billions of dollars in associated costs.

The benefits of good hand hygiene in health care settings – from the primary care to hospital settings – have been over-hyped. In the midst of all this hand-hygiene hype, we should be aware that hand hygiene plays in preventing the spread of a range of healthcare-associated pathogens. In particular, good hand hygiene is vital to preventing sepsis, a potentially life-threatening condition that can result from the body’s response to infection, and which kills over 25 million patients across the world annually. The bulk of these deaths are in low- and middle-income countries, including those of the WHO South-East Asia Region.

By promoting good hand hygiene in both practice and policy, patients, health care workers and everyone can substantially enhance the safety, quality and effectiveness of health care at all levels. In doing so, they can also accelerate progress towards the Sustainable Development Goal target of universal health coverage, at the same time as combating the threat of antimicrobial resistance.

To achieve these outcomes, a series of key initiatives – outlined in WHO’s Guidelines on Hand Hygiene in Health Care – should be embraced, implemented and scaled-up.

Hand hygiene prevention and control should be a core part of every health facility’s infection control regimen, and should be a core part of every health facility’s infection control regimen, and which kills over 25 million patients across the world annually. Good hand hygiene: A simple, cost-effective way to save lives and transform the quality of health care at all levels

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Voices of the dignitaries and participants at 17th Congress of Southeast Asian Librarians (CONSAL XVII) in Nay Pyi Taw

By Aung Ye Thwin, Hmwe Kyu, Kyaw Htike Soe
Photo: Ko Ko Soe Nyunt, Kyaw Zin Htike

UNION Minister for Religious Affairs and Culture Thura U Aung Ko

This congress is held every three years. We hosted this conference for the first time. Members of delegates and observers totaling more than 700 are attending this conference. The culture of library is fading away in Myanmar. That’s why, our ministry arranged to host this congress after consulting with international experts to promote the role of libraries and to connect the libraries with our next generation.

We have a plan to upgrade the National Library, libraries at universities, in districts, towns and wards and to link them with each other. We find ways to link our libraries with others in ASEAN and Asia-Pacific nations.

U Aung Myint, Director-General of the Department of Historical Research and National Library

The development of libraries is very important because our next generation can learn a lot from libraries. Our government has also an ambition to develop libraries in our country. This congress would benefit us so that we can develop libraries. About 80 papers will be submitted to this congress.

Daw Hnin Yi (Head of Myingyan District Information and Public Relations Department)

These kinds of conferences provide a lot of support for mobile libraries in our regions and villages. There have been increased public interest in libraries as people begin to realize knowledge stems from them and reading can change your life for the better. That’s why rural libraries are being upgraded.

U Than Aung (Chairman of Myanmar Library Association)

The 17th Congress of Southeast Asian Libraries began in 1970 and so has been held for 48 years, once every three years. The 16th Congress was held in Bangkok in 2015. There they chose Myanmar as the next host country since Myanmar, Cambodia and Laos have not hosted yet. As a result, we held working meetings in 2016 and 2017 and decided to hold the congress in Nay Pyi Taw. When deciding for a motto we reviewed three suggestions each from the ten member countries, so a total of thirty, and we voted. We also chose ten motos to supplement our current motto which resulted in 230 papers from ASEAN countries, Japan, Korea, Australia, India, and Bhutan. We managed to review 90 of the papers and the rest are displayed in posters. We focused more on information as we want to point out that libraries are also hubs for news and information.

U Khin Maung Aye (Head librarian of Yaung Kyi Oo Library, Kyipinkan Village, Myingyan Township)

I am attending with the purpose of sustaining rural libraries. People in rural areas have little knowledge and I believe that reading will lead to individual development and thus the development of the whole village. Our village library was set up by ourselves and is stocked with books to some extent. It is a bit small for reading inside though. These kind of weakness-es are common in rural libraries and so I wish for more support for them. I want the libraries to be a place people can read in ease and comfort.

Ms. Christine Mackenzie, President of The International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA)

Public libraries are very important for development. School libraries are also very important. I understand that there is a lot of work being done at the moment and yesterday there was a big conference with 200 school librarians who are working hard to make sure children can learn about literacy and learn to love reading. I think that everybody can always learn from everybody else it doesn’t matter who you are.

Ms. Rima Kupryte, Managing Director, Electronic Information for Libraries

Libraries are not just about books and reading, they are also about events and using modern technology; it depends on your vision and creativity.

Ms. Rima Kupryte

I am working with the University of Yangon and University of Mandalay—to bring access to electronic books, journals and databases and also to do extensive training not only for librarians, but also faculty members and students for accessing and searching electronic databases, and also basic information literacy courses. We had to start with basic IT courses so we had to set up e-mail address to communicate electronically. Then we expanded to more universities in 2018 and we are now working with additional six universities. So altogether we work with 13 universities here in Myanmar.

I imagine librarians from this country of Myanmar must be very proud to host this event. I attended this kind of conference in the past in other countries. I think one I remember was hosted by Singapore. I don’t remember which other countries hosted the conference, maybe in Vietnam. I think when I attended those two conferences I would always find one Myanmar representative. There will always be one librarian and most of the time someone from the National Library of Myanmar. So I imagine how grateful Myanmar librarians are. This event is taking place here and so many of them can attend this event. They can get a great learning opportunity. There are a lot of sessions and a lot of topics. I think Myanmar librarians will be presenting 19 papers. It is an international conference so there is no doubt I think it is a great opportunity. I think librarians should be professionals. Modern libraries should be a great place to learn. Libraries are not just about books and reading; they are also about events and using modern technology; it depends on your vision and creativity.

So as I mentioned, we will be working with only 13 universities and school libraries. I know there are many more university libraries. They should be working together with university administration and the faculties to support the development of the country.
Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U T Khun Myat receives US Ambassador to Myanmar

Speaker of Pyithu Hluttaw U T Khun Myat meets with US Ambassador Mr. Scot Alan Marcil in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. PHOTO: MNA

PYITHU Hluttaw Speaker U T Khun Myat received US Ambassador to Myanmar Mr. Scot Alan Marcil at the Pyithu Hluttaw Building in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

During the meeting, they exchanged views and discussed matters related to cooperation on the continuing bilateral friendship, the Hluttaw development programme, aid and legislative affairs. Present at the meeting were Pyithu Hluttaw Deputy Speaker U Tun Aung (a) U Tun Tun Hein and officials from the Pyithu Hluttaw office. —Myanmar News Agency

Meeting held to establish movie studio, skill training school

Union Minister for Information Dr Pe Myint delivers the speech at the meeting to establish a movie studio and a skill training school yesterday. PHOTO: MNA

A MEETING to establish a movie studio and a skill training school was held at the Ministry of Information’s office yesterday afternoon.

The meeting was attended by Union Minister for Information Dr. Pe Myint, Deputy Minister U Aung Hla Tun, officials and representatives of the Myanmar Motion Picture Organisation.

At the meeting, directors Zaw Myint Oo and Kyi Min Thein of the Myanmar Motion Picture Organisation discussed the use of the large studio, virtual studio and 5.1 surround sound studio housed in the Myanmar Radio and Television building in Tatkon Township, Nay Pyi Taw; the offices and parks nearby; the various locations in the vicinity of Nay Pyi Taw, where urban and rural movie settings can be set up; administrative and other additional matters; and convenient locations around Nay Pyi Taw where movies could be shot, such as the Pyin Oo Lwin and Mount Popa areas.

Next, the union minister said the ministry was coordinating with the relevant departments to use the ministry’s studios and related areas in Nay Pyi Taw and Yangon. As it becomes convenient to make movies in Nay Pyi Taw, the aim is to achieve both local and foreign investments, as well as cooperation with experts, said the union minister. —Myanmar News Agency

Eleventh Regional Working Group (RWG) meeting of the Lower Mekong Initiative (LMI) & Friends of the Lower Mekong (FLM) convenes

THE Opening Ceremony of the 11th Regional Working Group (RWG) Meeting of the Lower Mekong Initiative (LMI) and Friends of the Lower Mekong (FLM) was held on 3rd May at the M Gallery Hotel, Nay Pyi Taw.

Delegations from LMI/FLM members (the United States, Cambodia, Lao PDR, Thailand, Viet Nam, World Bank, Australia, Asian Development Bank, Republic of Korea and ASEAN Secretariat) as well as delegations from the relevant ministries of Myanmar attended the ceremony. U Kyaw Moe Tun, Myanmar SOM Leader and Director General of the International Organizations and Economic Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, delivered welcome remarks together with other Heads of Delegation.

The meeting was co-chaired by Myanmar and the United States.

The meeting focused on streamlining and restructuring the LMI framework for better effectiveness and made preparations for the upcoming LMI and FLM Ministerial meeting to be held in later part of July 2018.

On the sidelines of the Regional Working Group meeting, the Public-Private Sector Engagement Dialogue, the One Health - Systems Mapping and Analysis Resource Toolkit (OH-SMART) workshop and the thematic sessions on education and market-oriented agriculture trade were also held.

In the evening of 3rd May, a welcome reception was hosted by Myanmar SOM Leader in honour of delegates from the LMI and FLM members at the M Gallery Hotel.—Myanmar News Agency

![Graph of Value of Foreign Trade in Myanmar](image)

The 11th RWG meeting of the Lower Mekong Initiative & Friends of the Lower Mekong held in Nay Pyi Taw. PHOTO: MNA

**VALUE OF FOREIGN TRADE IN MYANMAR**

Source: Custom Department Information Unit: Central Statistical Organization

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<th>Year</th>
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<th>Import (US $ Millions)</th>
<th>Trade Deficit (US $ Millions)</th>
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</tbody>
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![Graph of Value of Foreign Trade in Myanmar](image)
Luyechunches travel around Ngwesaung, Bagan, Inle

OUTSTANDING students from Ngwesaung, Bagan and Inle visited prominent pagodas and attractions in their respective regions yesterday.

The outstanding students of grade 11 in Ngwesaung Luyechun Recreation Camp first visited the Yarana prawn breeding centre, and then went to Thazin village B.E.H.S to observe the R.O water purification machine donated by German-based Morkwater Solutions. They then visited the fishing and sun-drying workplace in Thazin Village, where they observed the aquatic creatures kept in glass aquariums and learnt about how natural water resources are protected from extinction.

In the afternoon, the outstanding students visited the hotels in Ngwesaung and attended a concert performed by students of Pathein and Ngwesaung schools. Meanwhile, the grade 10 outstanding students of Inle Kaung Tine Resort observed the sacred remains of Konlong Sayadaw in Pindaya Township. Next, they visited the famous Pindaya Caves and then the Aung Htee business centre, where they observed the process of making handmade umbrellas. The outstanding students also travelled to Ayethayar industrial zone and visited the Sein Ngwe Mya food processing factory, Aung Kyarphu dry fruits factory, Padamyar Nagar steel melting factory, and the Sein Ngwe Myayisdried corn processing factory. Later, they went to B.E.H.S (1) Taunggyi to stay the night.

The grade 9 outstanding students in Bagan visited the Salay Yokesone Monastery in the evening. They viewed exhibitions, some of which displayed artefacts from the Konebaung Dynasty. The students then paid respects to the Shingpin Saw Kyo-hla Buddha at the monastery. They returned to their Luyechun camp in the evening and held an impromptu speech competition.—Myo Zin Naing

Sixth National Press Awards ceremony held

By Ye Win

The sixth National Press Awards ceremony, organised by the Myanmar Journalism Association (MJA), was held at Sky Star Hotel in Tamway Township, Yangon. At the ceremony, MJA Vice Chairman U Myat Khang delivered a message of greeting, following which, messages sent by Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U T Khun Myat, Myanmar Press Council (MPC) Chairman Pho Thaukyar (Khit Moe), Myanmar Journalist Network, Myanmar Journalist Union, Burma News International and Myanmar Writers Association were read by officials.

Next, MPC Vice Chairman U Ohn Kyawing delivered a speech of appreciation, while messages sent by National Press Awards Organisation Committee Chairman U Win Nyein on the aim of presenting the awards was read by MJA Chief of Information U Thanlwin Thwaychin journal. The best cartoon award went to Ngwe Kyae’s cartoon in the Standard Times, the best news photo award went to a photograph of flooding at Tamway junction in Yangon that appeared in the Daily Eleven newspaper, while the best TV news story award went to “Conflict in jade land” by DVB news.

The sixth National Press Awards were presented on World Press Freedom Day, 3 May. No winners were announced for the best news story award and the hero of journalism award. The winners of the sixth National Press Awards were selected from among 17 news stories, 42 features, 29 news photos, 121 news cartoons and 13 editorials by a panel of independent experts.

At the end of the ceremony, wellwishers made donations to MJA and documents of honour were presented to them in return.

Rain and thundershowers to continue in Kachin, Shan, Kayah, Kayin and Mon

Rain and thundershowers will continue to lash Kachin, Shan, Kayah, Kayin and Mon states, as the weather is partly cloudy over the Central Bay and partly cloudy over the Andaman Sea and else-
where over the Bay of Bengal, according to the Myanmar Daily weather report issued by the Department of Meteorology and Hydrology yesterday evening.

The low pressure area over the North Andaman Sea still persists, and it is forecast to reach the Gulf of Mottama and the adjoining delta area during the next 36 hours. It is likely to intensify into a depression. The forecast for Nay Pyi Taw, Mandalay and neighbouring areas for today is isolated rain or thundershowers, and the degree of certainty is 100 per cent; whereas for Yangon and the neighbouring area, it is isolated rain or thundershowers, and the degree of certainty is 80 per cent. Seas will be moderate in Myanmar’s waters. The wave height will be some 4-7 feet off and along Myanmar coast.—GNLM
Senior General receives outgoing British ambassador

Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing received British Ambassador Mr. Andrew Patrick, who has completed his ambassadorial duties in Myanmar, at Bayintnaung Guest Hall in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday afternoon.

During the meeting, they cordially discussed cooperation and relations between the armed forces of the two countries, efforts made in the local peace-keeping processes, works conducted by the Tatmadaw and its cooperation in the political transformation of Myanmar—Myanmar News Agency ■

Firefighters keep watch on area where garbage fire broke out

FIREFIGHTERS are keeping a close watch on the garbage dump in the western outskirts of Yangon, where a fire broke out recently.

“The situation is totally under control. Today we doused the area which had smoke coming out,” said U Zaw Min Oo of the Hmawbi Township Fire Services Department.

Twelve days after the garbage fire broke out in Hlinethaya Township, firefighters, Tatmadaw men and volunteers managed to bring it completely under control on Tuesday evening.

The fire started at the garbage dump in Hlinethaya on the afternoon of 21 April and went on for several days, causing health hazards in nearby areas due to the smoke and carbon monoxide being emitted.

To control the smoke, authorities and experts came up with a new strategy on 29 April, dividing the garbage into four zones and fighting the fire in Zone A on the first day with the use of water and biowash.

Some 40 patients were admitted to Hlinethaya Township Hospital following the inhalation of smoke from the fire, and of them, only four, who have chronic diseases, are still undergoing treatment at the hospital, according to a hospital official.

A combined force of firefighters, Tatmadaw men, staff of the Yangon City Development Committee and some 900 volunteers worked to bring the fire under control with the use of bio foam and water.

A dinner in honour of officers and other ranks of the Tatmadaw, who participated in the firefighting efforts, was held at Konnyinhtlar Hall of the Yangon Command yesterday evening.—Zaw Gyi ■

Construction of a modern Mingalar Market in 30 months

By Maung Sein Lwin (Myamma Alinn)

The Mingalar Market in the central business area of Mingala Taungnyunt Township in Yangon that was burnt down by a fire will be reconstructed in 30 months.

The modern Mingalar Market will be constructed by Hsan Myat Tun Construction Company under the supervision of the Yangon Region government and the Yangon City Development Committee. The market is expected to be completed in two-and-a-half years. A stake driving ceremony was held at the site of the old Mingalar Market yesterday morning.

“People depend on the Mingalar Market. Goods from this market are distributed to wards and villages in various townships. Due to various reasons, a fire burnt down the market. Losses were incurred not only by shop owners but also by the government. From the (temporary) relocation of burnt down shops to the reconstruction program of the market, many obstacles, difficulties and differences were encountered. However, the market will be a modern one, with the scope to conduct much trade and sales. A quality control officer will start checking the quality, as soon as the construction starts. It will be managed step by step. The shops will be allocated according to the wishes of the market people and their coordination. At the moment, market places are managed by development committee personnel. Later on, they will be systematically managed by a service company, as in international markets. The Mingalar Market will be converted into a modern model market,” said Yangon Region Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein at the stake driving ceremony.

The market will have some 17 floors, with the two bottom floors to be used as a parking lot. The five floors above the parking lot will be constructed as a market place and will be handed back to the Yangon City Development Committee. Fire broke out at the old market in May 2010 and on 9 January 2016. The second fire had rendered the structure unsuitable for further use. ■
Slapstick superstar John- ny Knoxville was relaxing in his hotel after his latest on-set mishap when some dried blood in his nostril caused him to blow hard and his eyeball popped out. Luckily, he hadn’t been eating hot and sour soup or taking a bubble bath, and he was able to reach under, scoop it up and push it back into the socket.

It was the latest in a litany of injuries that would make the blood drain from the toughest stunt profes- sional’s face – but it was far from the most stum- ch-churning.

“I have, like, 15 doc- tors for different parts of my body and they all have a special talk with me. I don’t know what to tell em,” Knoxville shrugs in an interview with AFP.

The star – who rose to fame mesmerizing fans with his shocking stunts in MTV’s 2000- 2002 reality prank se- ries “Jackass” – was at Las Vegas CinemACon to promote his new movie “Action Point.”

He recalls a day’s shooting for the comedy about a disastrous theme park when he landed flat on his face after flying 20 feet (six meters) through the air off a slide.

Knoxville, whose 31 movies include “Men in Black II,” “The Dukes of Hazzard” and four releases in the “Jackass” canon, was rushed to the emergency room with a bad case of concussion and a fractured eye socket.

“I go back to the hotel room and I blow my nose because I had blood there. My left eyeball just pops out of my head. It’s like a cartoon. I was like, ‘Oh no!’ I pushed it back in and I called the producer,” he said.

“I was like, ‘You’ve got to come get me. My left eye- ball just popped out of my head.’ He’s like, ‘Ah ha ha ha ha!’ I’m like ‘I’m seri- ous.’ He goes, ‘I’ll be right there.’”

‘Complete anarchy’

The actor, born Philip John Clapp Jr, came up with the idea for “Jackass” 20 years ago, and it quickly became a hit among the skating crowd, making stars of Knoxville, Ehren “Danger Ehren” McGhee- hey and Stephen “Steve-O” Glover.

Cast members struggled with alcoholism, drug addiction and depression, however. And the series was rocked by the 2011 death of Ryan Dunn in a drunk driving accident.

Knoxville, devastated by the loss of his friend, threw himself back into work, writing and appearing in “Movie 43,” “Jackass Presents: Bad Grandpa” and “Teenage Mutant Nin- ja Turtles.”

In “Action Point,” due out on June 1 in the US, Knoxville plays a daredevil who designs and operates his own theme park with his friends.—AFP

‘Jackass’ prankster Johnny Knoxville on his latest eye-popping role

Bollywood greats Bachchan, Kapoor reunite after 27 years

BOLLYWOOD— Two of Bollywood’s greatest stars, Amitabh Bachchan and Rishi Kapoor, will share a screen together for the first time in almost three decades when comedy “102 Not Out” is released Friday.

The movie, directed by Umesh Shukla, sees Bach- chan play a 102-year-old, who dreams of becoming a musician, while Rishi Kapoor, will share the screen with star Amitabh Bachchan and Bollywood’s greatest stars, Rishi Kapoor and Akshay Kumar.

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Tokyo digital art museum looks to ‘expand the beautiful’

TOKYO — The waterfall appears to run down the wall of a room and across the floor; but the flow is an illusion — a digital exhibit at a new interactive museum in Tokyo.

The flower-filled waterfall is the work of Japanese collective teamLab, known internationally for their innovative “digital art” that combines projections, sound and carefully designed spaces to create other-worldly, immersive experiences.

After exhibitions around the world, they are opening this summer a museum dedicated entirely to their unique brand of art.

The space is being billed as a first, a digital museum with artwork that envelopes and interacts with visitors.

One space features a bucolic rice field, another is filled with seemingly endless hanging lamps that illuminate as the visitor nears, the light moving from one lamp to another around the room. Elsewhere, a waterfall filled with flowers appears to flow over a hill or waves crash along the walls, throwing spray towards the ceiling. The exhibits are designed to flow into one another and interact with each other and the viewer. Some follow visitors or react in different ways when they are touched.

“We have created a borderless world made up of pieces of artwork that move by themselves, communicate with each other and mix perfectly with others,” teamLab co-founder Toshikiyo Inoko, 41, told AFP.

“I would like this space to become a place where we can remember that borders do not exist in our world,” he said. Some exhibits also encourage visitor participation — in one, viewers are “propelled into space” by bouncing on a trampoline in the midst of an intergalactic projection, in another they can dance in unison with performers who appear as translucent silhouettes.

Inoko, who has a background in physics, founded teamLab in 2001 with four fellow Tokyo University students, but the collective didn’t make its artistic debut until 2011, with a show at a gallery in Taipei.

Three years later, New York’s Pace Gallery began promoting their work, and in 2015, they organised their first exhibition in Japan, drawing nearly 500,000 visitors over 130 days. Since then, they have shown across the world, with exhibitions in London, Silicon Valley, China and elsewhere and the collective has grown to some 500 members.

The collective will have some 50 exhibits in the 10,000-square-metre (more than 100,000-square-foot) space in the bayside Odaiba area of Tokyo.

They have partnered with property management company Mori Building, and secured support from Japanese companies ranging from Panasonic to Epson. Dubbed the “Mori Building Digital Art Museum: teamLab Borderless,” the facility will open its doors on 21 June, charging 3,200 yen a ticket ($29).

Maintaining the artwork requires a bank of 520 computers and 470 projectors, but the real key is the set of sophisticated algorithms that generates images in real time. The artworks are “neither pre-recorded animations nor images on loop,” says teamLab.

The collective say they want to use digital technology to “expand the beautiful”.

“Unlike a physical painting on a canvas, the non-material digital technology can liberate art,” they say in an explanation of their work.

“Because of its ability to transform itself freely, it can transcend boundaries.”

“The fact that the universe transforms with the presence of the other is very important for us,” Inoko told AFP.

“I am as much a part of the artwork as the other visitors,” he said.—AFP

Prince Harry, Meghan pick carriage for wedding procession

LONDON — Britain’s Prince Harry and Meghan Markle will ride in an open-top horse-drawn carriage through the streets of Windsor after their wedding later this month, Kensington Palace announced on Wednesday.

The pair have chosen the Ascot Landau carriage for their procession through the town on 19 May, their official London residence said in a statement.

“Prince Harry and Ms. Markle are very much looking forward to this short journey which they hope will allow them to express their gratitude for everyone who has gathered together in Windsor to enjoy the atmosphere of this special day,” the statement said.

The carriage will be drawn by four Windsor Grey horses — Milford Haven, Storm, Plymough and Tyron — and accompanied by a travelling escort of the Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment as it departs St George’s Chapel before touring a circuit of the town. The carriage is one of five Ascot Landaus in the palace collection, which are used by Queen Elizabeth II for her procession at the Royal Ascot horse race.

Two featured in the 2011 wedding procession of Prince William and Catherine Middleton, also carrying best man Prince Harry, the maid of honour, bridesmaids and pageboys from Westminster Abbey to Buckingham Palace.—AFP

Turkish cartoonist wins press freedom prize

GENEVA — Turkish cartoonist Musa Kart, who has been convicted of helping “terrorist” organisations and sentenced to nearly four years in prison, was awarded a top prize on Thursday by the organisation Cartooning for Peace. The Swiss group hands out the honour, known as its International Editorial Cartoons Prize, every two years.

“The jury has chosen Musa Kart, iconic cartoonist of the Istanbul newspaper Cumhuriyet, for his talent and courage in the defence of freedom of expression,” a statement from the group said. Cumhuriyet — which means simply “Republic” — was set up in 1924 after the Turkish republic was founded in 1923.

It has been fiercely critical of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and has run front-page stories that have angered the Turkish head of state. A Turkish court last month handed out multiple sentences to 13 journalists and executives from the paper for “aiding and abetting terrorist organisations”, but the group remains free pending appeal. Kart was sentenced to three years and nine months in prison. The prize was judged by an official from Geneva’s government, the head of Human Rights Watch Kenneth Roth, along with cartoonists from leading publications including Le Monde, the New York Times and The New Yorker. “Musa Kart is both a witness and especially a victim of the deterioration of freedom of expression in Turkey,” a Le Monde cartoonist known as Plantu said a statement. Kart has denied the allegations against him.—AFP
Liverpool reach Champions League final after nervy night in Rome

ROME — Liverpool held off a spirited Roma fightback to reach the Champions League final 7-6 on aggregate despite losing a hectic semi-final second leg in Rome on Wednesday.

Jurgen Klopp’s side will play defending champions Real Madrid in Kiev on May 26 after qualifying for their eighth European Cup final and first since 2007.

The 4-2 defeat on the night in the Italian capital tested Liverpool’s nerves but they rarely looked in danger of losing the tie.

First-half goals from Sadio Mane and Georginio Wijnaldum put Liverpool in control as Roma conceded their first goals in the Stadio Olimpico during this European campaign.

Despite Radja Nainggolan bagging two goals for Roma in the final eight minutes — the second from the penalty spot — there was to be no second miracle comeback for the Italians after last month’s 3-0 win over Barcelona in Rome.

It was another bitter defeat for Roma who lost the 1984 European Cup final to Liverpool on penalties in the same stadium.

“It’s the first time we weren’t really as good as we can be,” Klopp said. “We needed luck and that is what we got,” said Klopp.

“7-6 on aggregate sounds crazy because it is crazy. We came in as qualifiers and now we’re in the final and will go to Kiev. “Roma are strong, we had them where we wanted, as they were wild, ran the risks and we went 2-1 up. All good.”

“But then we didn’t do enough on the counter, didn’t use the space that they gave us and we lost the game after going 1-0 up already.”

Klopp said he was confident Liverpool could threaten 12-time winners Madrid in the final.

“We have to play much better than tonight, the good news is we can play much better than tonight,” he said.

Roma threatened early with Alessandro Florenzi sending the ball wide in the opening minutes but the hosts paid for woeful defending, giving Klopp’s side space to gain an early advantage.

Senegalese forward Mane got Liverpool off to a dream start after just nine minutes to the horror of the home fans.

A Nainggolan howler in midfield gave Roberto Firmino the opportunity to barge through, delivering the ball to an unmarked Mane who left Roma ‘keeper Alisson with no chance.

But six minutes later Roma got the equaliser when Liverpool defender Dejan Lovren’s attempt to clear a Stephan El Shaarawy header towards Dzeko across goal bounced off James Milner’s head, flying past Loris Karius and into the Liverpool goal.

Liverpool’s ticket to the final in Kiev looked well and truly booked after 25 minutes when Wijnaldum nodded in. Alisson denied Mane but from the resulting corner Dzeko’s attempt to clear fell to the waiting Dutchman and he made no mistake. —AFP

University Football Tournament 2018 launched in Yangon

THE University Football Tournament 2018 was held at Padonmar Football Stadium in Yangon yesterday morning.

Officials from respective universities in Yangon, Myanmar National League, football coaches, university Lecturers and university students and their audiences attended the meeting.

The opening ceremony was followed by the match against the university girl’s football match.

The girl’s match was played between University of Foreign Languages (Yangon) and University of Yangon.

All the girls from both teams played energetically from the start with earning tremendous opportunities.

The University of Foreign Languages (Yangon) team beat University of Yangon team by a single goal scored by Honey Nway Oo at 39-minute-mark. —Lynn Thy T (Tgi)