President U Win Myint meets Union Legal Supporting Group

PRESIDENT U Win Myint met Union Legal Supporting Group Chairman U Nyan Win at the Presidential Palace in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning. At the meeting, the President mentioned the importance of implementing the rule of law; maintaining the uprightness of the judiciary sector; citizens obtaining equality, justice and freedom according to the law; providing legal support to law breakers, victims and witnesses; informing and educating the public of their individual and basic rights under the existing laws; reducing unnecessary detention at police detention centres and prisons, and eliminating illegal detentions. 

SEE PAGE-2

Day temperature to increase slightly in Nay Pyi Taw, Mandalay

Day temperatures will increase slightly in the Nay Pyi Taw, Lower Sagaing, Mandalay, Magway and Bago regions in the next two days, as it is slightly cloudy over the Andaman Sea and the North Bay, and partly cloudy elsewhere over the Bay of Bengal, according to the Myanmar Daily weather report issued by the Department of Meteorology and Hydrology yesterday.

The forecast for Nay Pyi Taw, Mandalay, Yangon and the neighbouring areas for today is isolated rain or thundershowers. The degree of certainty is 80 per cent.—GNLM

SEE PAGE-3

More efforts needed for peace, stability, development in Rakhine

THE work coordination meeting (2/2018) of the Central Committee for Implementation of Peace, Stability and Development in Rakhine State was held at the Presidential Palace in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning.

State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi who chaired the central committee addressed the meeting.

In her address at the meeting, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi said the central committee had been formed since the new government took over with the aim of conducting the works systematically. Due to the developing situation, the work of the central committee was expanded, but the continuous implementation of the work processes for peace, stability and development of Rakhine State was progressing. The reception and resettlement of returnees will be conducted based on the Myanmar-Bangladesh bilateral agreements. At the same time, works related to security, health, education and livelihood must be implemented. The central committee is required to reassess, along with the relevant ministries, the works that are the outcome of the situation, the set priorities and conduct them accordingly. Long term stability, peace and development of Rakhine State is needed to avoid further conflict, and more efforts are required in the work processes of the central committee. Emphasis must be on quality assurance inspection of the redevelopment and reconstruction works, said the State Counsellor in her opening address.

Next, the Central Committee Secretary and Deputy Minister Maj-Gen Than Htut explained the status of implementing the decisions of the past meeting and the future works.

This was followed by Central Committee Vice Chairman and Rakhine State Chief Minister U Nyi Pu explaining the current situation in Rakhine State and the work conducted to accept returnees. 

SEE PAGE-2
President U Win Myint meets Union Auditor General, state/region auditors

President U Win Myint met Union Auditor General U Maw Than and state/region auditors general at the Presidential Palace in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday afternoon.

At the meeting, the President urged the Union Auditor General’s Office to prevent wastage of public funds, ensuring the Union Budget sanctioned by the government reaches the respective entities and the entities utilize them effectively and fully, and to check and ensure the implementation of the set targets.

Union level organizations, ministries and departmental organizations must be audited to ensure the following of the financial regulations and whether the projects and works actually benefit the people.

There should be an audit on whether there are systematic control, maintenance and usage of state, public and cooperative owned assets as well as audit on proper records kept of ownerless, detained and discarded assets, and its maintenance and usage said the President.

An audit should be conducted on government departments whether an audit group is formed in it and orders, instructions and procedures are followed. If state funds are wasted or misappropriated, action should be taken regardless of who the perpetrator may be, said the President in his guidelines.

Present at the meeting were President’s Office Deputy Minister U Min Thu, Union Auditor General U Maw Than, Myanmar Institute of Certified Public Accountants Chairman U Wan Tin, Kachin State Auditor General U Tin Hlaing, Kayah State Auditor General U Aung Maung, Kayin State Auditor General U Saw Hla Tun, Chin State Auditor U Lari Tin Mann (aka) U David Lari Tin Maung, Sagaing Region Auditor General U Soe Lwin, Taninthayi Region Auditor General U Thein Tun, Bago Region Auditor General U Aung Maung, Magway Region Auditor General U Hla Than, Mandalay Region Auditor General Daw Khin Aye Swe, Mon State Auditor General Daw Thein Oo, Rakhine State Auditor General Daw Khin Than Hla, Shan State Auditor General Daw Nan Wo Hein and Ayeyawady Region Auditor General Daw San San Khaing.—MNA

President U Win Myint receives outgoing British Ambassador

President U Win Myint received British Ambassador Mr. Andrew Patrick, who has completed his ambassadorial duties in Myanmar, at the Presidential Palace yesterday morning.

At the meeting, they discussed matters related to supporting and assisting in the internal peace process of Myanmar and increasing bilateral friendship and cooperation.

Also present at the meeting were President’s Office Deputy Minister U Min Thu and other officials. — Myanmar News Agency

President U Win Myint meets Union Legal Supporting Group

PRESIDENT U Win Myint met Union Legal Supporting Group in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday after meeting with Union Auditor General, state/region auditors general. The Union Legal Supporting Group is the main implementing organization for the rule of law and maintenance of the uprightness of the judiciary sector.

Coordination with the state/region governments must be ensured to form state/region level legal supporting groups. Such groups must be formed with well-intentioned people, who can do their jobs correctly. In conducting their works, the processes and plans must be drawn up systematically, said the president in the guideline provided to the group.

Next, Group Chairman U Nyan Win and the members explained about the work requirements.

Present at the meeting were President’s Office Deputy Minister U Min Thu, Union Legal Supporting Group members Union Judicial Supervisory Office Director Daw Thi Mar Nwe, Union Attorney-General’s Office’s Department of Prosecution Director U Aung Shan, Ministry of Home Affairs Bureau of Special Investigation Director U Thein Htay, Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement’s Social Welfare Department Director Daw Le Yin Win, Ministry of Education’s Yangon University Law Department (Head of Department) Professor Dr Khin Mar YI, Advocate U Kyaw Hoe, Advocate U Kyaw Htun Ministry of Planning and Finance’s Foreign Economic Relations Department Director U Thein Lin, Advocate U Maung Maung Hla Thaung, Advocate Daw Nan Kham Oo Hla and Secretary Advocate U Khin Zaw.—MNA
Let me solemnly thank all our friends at home and abroad, who have helped us and are still helping us; organizations, business entrepreneurs, people from academia and professionals, and especially our people who have supported and assisted us with understanding and empathy. Those who have helped us once, we should never forget. Those who have helped us again and again are our real friends; they bring fulfillment to our lives.

(Excerpt from the speech by State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi on the 2nd Anniversary of NLD Government on 1st April 2018)

More efforts needed for peace, stability, development in Rakhine

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Chairman of the work committee for cooperation with international organizations Union Minister U Kyaw Tint Swe explained the international relations status with regards to the events in Rakhine State. Union Minister for Border Affairs Lt-Gen Ye Aung explained the cases transferred to the central committee by the Ministry of State Counsellor’s Office and the Ministry of the Office of the Union Government.

Later, Immigration and National Verification Work Committee Chairman U Thein Swe explained the immigration and national verification work matters, while Resettlement in the Region and Socio-economic Development Work Committee Chairman Dr. Win Myat Aye explained the committee’s and UEHRD’s works.

The attendees at the meeting then discussed and suggested works to be conducted for the implementation of peace, stability and development in Rakhine State and other general matters.

The meeting ended after State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi delivered a concluding speech. Also present at the meeting were Central Committee Deputy Chairmen Union Minister for Border Affairs Lt-Gen Ye Aung and Rakhine State Chief Minister U Nyi Pu, and Central Committee members, including Union Minister for Defence Lt-Gen Sein Win, Union Minister for Office of the State Counsellor U Kyaw Tint Swe, Union Minister for Information Dr. Pe Myint, Union Minister for the Office of the Union Government, Union Minister for Defence Lt-Gen Sein Win, Union Minister for Religious Affairs and Culture Thura U Aung Ko, Union Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation Dr. Aung Thu, Union Minister for Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation U Ohn Win, Union Minister for Electricity and Energy U Win Khaing, Union Minister for Labour, Immigration and Population U Thein Swe, Union Minister for Industry U Khin Maung Cho, Union Minister for Commerce Dr. Than Myint, Union Minister for Education Dr. Myo Thein Gyi, Union Minister for Health and Sports Dr. Myint Htwe, Union Minister for Construction U Han Zaw, Union Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Dr. Win Myat Aye, Union Minister for Ethnic Affairs Nai Tha Lwin, Union Minister for International Cooperation U Kyaw Tin, Union Attorney-General U Tun Tun Oo, Deputy Minister for Home Affairs Maj-Gen Aung Soe, Deputy Minister for Border Affairs Maj-Gen Than Htut, Deputy Minister for the State Counsellor’s Office U Khin Maung Tin, Deputy Minister for Transport and Communications U Tha Oo, and Deputy Minister for Planning and Finance U Maung Maung Win.—MNA ■

State Counsellor receives Malaysian Ambassador

DAW Aung San Suu Kyi, State Counsellor and Union Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, received Mr. Zahairi bin Baharim, Ambassador of Malaysia, in Nay Pyi Taw. PHOTO: MNA

State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi welcomes Mr. Zahairi bin Baharim, Ambassador of Malaysia, in Nay Pyi Taw. PHOTO: MNA

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State Counsellor receives Malaysian Ambassador

DAW Aung San Suu Kyi, State Counsellor and Union Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, received Mr. Zahairi bin Baharim, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Malaysia, at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. During the meeting, they discussed on the matters relating to bilateral relations and cooperation between the two countries.—MNA ■
Tourists visit Myanmar via Tachileik border gate

INTERNATIONAL tourists are visiting Myanmar through cross-border gateways to observe the country’s natural landscapes, scenarios, tourist attractions and its various traditions, customs and lifestyles.

A culture-based tourism package is now available for tourists to observe the traditions and culture of the ethnic people.

Some 15,322 visitors entered Myanmar via the Tachileik border gate on a day’s return trip from 27 April to 3 May 2018. Further, some 428 tourists, including from Thailand and third-world countries, visited Monghayt and Kengtung. Some 111 tourists visited the country with a visa from 27 April to 3 May 2018.

Tourists who travelled on a day’s return trip visited Tarlof market, Bayinnaung Statue, Maha Myatmuni Pagoda, Wunkaung market, Padaung Village, Shwedagon Pagoda, the national landmark garden, Arkkhar market, Chinese monastery and Kyauk ton market in Tachileik.

Tourists who stayed overnight visited Buddha Footprint Pagoda, Maha Myatmuni Pagoda in Kengtung, Soon Taung Pagoda, and other famous pagodas and places in Monghayt.

Among the tourists who entered via the Tachileik border gate were 72,122 day trip visitors, and 1,130 who travelled onward to Monghayt and Kengtung from 1 April to 3 May 2018. Some 775 tourists travelled by air to Tachileik.

 Authorities grant permits to 1,648 hotels

SOME 1,648 hotels, with room capacities of 66,065, were given permits to operate in Yangon, Mandalay, Nay Pyi Taw, Bagan-Nyaung U, Taunggyi and Inle area, as of the end of April 2018, according to the hotels and tourism ministry.

The Ministry of Hotels and Tourism issued some 4,522 tour guide licences, 3,449 regional tour guide licences and 2,576 transport licences by December 2017. Some 2,724 travel agencies were granted permits by the ministry.

Five more healthcare service centres to be opened in Hlinethaya

THE Yangon Region Public Health Department plans to open five more healthcare service centres in Hlinethaya Township, according to a report in Myawaddy Daily.

The department plans to expand its health coverage in the township, which is the most populated area in Yangon due to internal migration.

“We are planning to open new healthcare service centres as soon as possible to ensure sufficient coverage,” said Dr Tun Myint, deputy director-general of the Yangon Region Public Health Department.

Hlinethaya Township has a 200-bed hospital, the Shwelinpan station hospital, a central healthcare centre and two sub-healthcare centres with more than 3,000 health staff, including doctors and nurses. The population of the township is estimated to be more than 900,000, though official figures suggest the population is only above 600,000.

“It is important to open more health centres. This will benefit more people,” said U Zaw Oo, administrator of No. 20 Ward in Hlinethaya Township.

The public health department has already submitted a proposal to the government and is awaiting the government’s approval to open new healthcare centres. Currently, the township has only 19 midwifes.

The new healthcare centres will bring in more doctors, nurses and health staff. This will benefit the local people,” said Dr Tun Myint.—GNLM

New bridge to ease traffic jams along Gotetwin Road

A new suspension bridge will be constructed on the Gotetwin section of the Muse-Mandalay Union Highway this year, according to a report in Myawaddy Daily on Thursday.

The Muse-Mandalay Union Highway is the busiest route for border trade between China and Myanmar. Some 3,000 cargo trucks use the route daily to conduct border trade, valued at nearly US$16 million per day. Traffic jams are frequent on the road, triggering delays in the transport of commodities to China.

To reduce traffic congestion along Gotetwin Road, the Ministry of Construction will implement its suspension bridge construction project, said a spokesperson for the ministry.

The new bridge will help ease the traffic congestion along the road and reduce travel time by some 45 minutes. Border merchants said they frequently suffered losses while exporting perishable goods, such as marine products, owing to the traffic congestion.—GNLM

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Due to limitations of space we are only able to publish “Letter to the Editor” that do not exceed 500 words. Should you submit a text longer than 500 words please be aware that your letter will be edited.

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YSX stock trading worth Ks875 million in April

The five listed companies on the Yangon Stock Exchange (YSX) traded some 153,166 shares, valued at Ks875 million, last month.

The volume declined slightly compared with the same period last year, according to historical data provided by YSX online.

Some 153,381 shares worth Ks12.1 billion were traded in April 2017. The trading values remained on the low side, though the matching time of the YSX was increased from two to four times per day.

Trading by the listed companies registered an all-time record low of Ks740 million in February 2018, according to YSX online. The poor economic climate, low income and the lack of publicity about stock market contributed to the steep drop in trading, said an official from the YSX.

Officials from the YSX, under the guidance of the planning and finance ministry, are conducting awareness campaigns about the stock market in Yangon and other towns, in cooperation with securities companies, to draw public attention.

The shares of five listed companies — First Myanmar Investment (FMI), Myanmar Thilawa SEZ Holdings (MTSH), Myanmar Citizens Bank (MCB), First Private Bank (FPB) and TMH Telecom Public Co. Ltd (TMH) — are being traded on the YSX.

The stock market saw more than 20,000 shares being traded daily in the 2016-2017 fiscal year, at an estimated value of Ks100 million. Only 10,000 shares were traded daily on the stock market in the 2017-2018 FY, with their estimated value being Ks70 million.

Some 10,916 shares were traded yesterday, at an estimated value of Ks67.7 million. The share prices have dropped below the base prices, which were Ks11,500 for FMI, Ks3,000 for MTSH, Ks7,000 for MCB, Ks25,000 for FPB and Ks2,850 for TMH at closing time. — Ko Khant

Online registration facility to be available for SMEs

May Thet Hnin

Small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in Myanmar will soon be able to register online, said Daw Mi Mi Kyaw, Assistant Director of the Department of Small and Medium Enterprise.

“The online registration platform was fully developed last month. It is being tested now and will be introduced to the public in July,” she said.

The online application must be filled in manually as described on the website, following which the SME department will screen the applications. The registration card can then be obtained from the respective office of the nearest regions and states once the approval is received.

“Currently, the SME smart cards can be sought at SME branch offices in the respective regions and states. However, the cards are scrutinised in Nay Pyi Taw (headquarters). Therefore, the processing takes at least three weeks,” Daw Mi Mi Kyaw said.

“Online registration saves time, facilitating the work process. Thus, the number of registered SMEs will increase,” she maintained.

Applicants can check their registration status on the website. They will be informed if they fail to provide all the facts. SMEs constitute 90 per cent of Myanmar’s businesses. However, of the 100,000 registered business persons, only 20,000 have smart cards.

Entrepreneurs with smart cards have access to business courses, technical assistance, marketing and loan plans, among others.

Additionally, SME smart cards are certified in ASEAN countries, which is useful for trading with regional partners. It costs Ks5,000 for small enterprises and Ks10,000 for medium ones.

The Small and Medium Enterprise Law was enacted in 2015 in Myanmar and the by-law was instituted in 2017. The SME department has some 53 branches in 15 regions and states across the country.

The SME sector plays a vital role in Myanmar’s economic development. Nevertheless, domestic SME businessmen are facing challenges in the field of capital, technology, market share and skilled labour, entrepreneurs pointed out.

Myanmar-Canada trade reaches $105 million before end of 2017-18 FY

The value of trade between Myanmar and Canada reached US$105 million before the end of the 2017-2018 fiscal year (FY), according to the latest monthly trade report of the Ministry of Commerce.

Bilateral trade with Canada was valued at $45.564 million in imports and $59.608 million in exports. Canadian imports from Myanmar have increased each year. Its imports were valued at $4.86 million in the 2011-12 FY, $6.508 million in the 2012-13 FY, $8.342 million in the 2013-14 FY, $10.937 million in the 2014-15 FY, $13.637 million in the 2015-16 FY and $39.914 million in the 2016-17 FY. Myanmar’s exports to Canada works with Myanmar through the ASEAN.

The Ministry’s yearly statistics showed that the Myanmar-Canada trade value amounted to $4.904 million in the 2011-12 FY, $9.057 million in the 2012-13 FY, $13.637 million in the 2015-16 FY and $39.914 million in the 2016-17 FY. Myanmar’s exports to Canada works with Myanmar through the ASEAN.

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Vice President U Myint Swe delivers speech at closing ceremony of CONSAL XVII

VICE President U Myint Swe delivered a speech at the closing ceremony of the 17th Congress of Southeast Asian Librarians (CONSAL XVII) at the Myanmar International Convention Centre-2 (MICC-II) in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday afternoon.

Vice President U Myint Swe said that by hosting the CONSAL XVII, Myanmar had successfully conducted works related to the congress with the cooperation of librarians, library organizations and library expert representatives.

Myanmar took pride in hosting the Congress of Southeast Asian Librarians for the first time, he said. Together with the Congress, the 3rd Executive Board Meeting, 26th Congress of Directors of National Libraries of Asia and Oceania Meeting (CDNLAO) and other related meetings were held simultaneously.

Myanmar held the first and second Executive Board Meetings in Yangon in 2016 and 2017, and the 3rd Executive Board Meeting and CONSAL XVII was hosted in Nay Pyi Taw.

The first CONSAL was held in Singapore back in 1970 under the leadership of the ASEAN, in accordance to its form and essence. At the moment, CONSAL includes the 10 countries of Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam, as well as library organizations and librarians as members. Partner countries worldwide have been participating in CONSAL meetings and activities. More than 600 representatives and observers from the ASEAN and partner countries attended the CONSAL XVII held in Nay Pyi Taw from 2 to 5 May. Paper reading sessions were held at the congress mainly under the theme “Next Generation Libraries: Collaborate and Connect.” In addition to this, the implementation reports of the member countries and the work progress report of CONSAL were also submitted. Representatives and observers in attendance actively discussed and found solutions for problems. It was felt that the preservation of culture and heritage, distribution of information and the mass use of literature, as well as raising the experience of libraries in the region, were required.

CONSAL is held in member countries alternatively one every three years. Holding the CONSAL helps raise the library and related methods among ASEAN and partner countries. To achieve the aims set by CONSAL, library organizations need to establish a strong and effective partner relationship.

The Vice President concluded his speech by thanking the regional and partner countries who had cooperated and participated in the successful holding of the congress and attributed the success to the help and assistance of the friends.

At the closing ceremony, Myanmar Library Association Chairman U Than Aung announced the winners of CONSAL XVII Outstanding Librarian Award and the scores achieved by the winners.

Next, Department of Historical Research and National Library Director General U Aung Myint presented awards to five CONSAL XVII Outstanding Librarian Award gold prize winner from the Philippines, and silver prize winners from Viet Nam, Thailand, Myanmar and Indonesia.

Later, artistes from the Department of Fine Arts, Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture performed Myanmar traditional dances.

An official from the Myanmar Library Association then transferred the CONSAL flag and funds to Cambodia, which will hold the CONSAL XVIII. This was followed by the screening of a video clip showing the cultural heritage and sceneries of Cambodia.

The closing ceremony was attended by Union Ministers Dr. Pe Myint, Thura U Aung Ko, U Thein Swe, Dr. Myo Thein Gyi, Deputy Ministers, International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) President Ms. Christine Mackenzie, Permanent Secretaries and departmental heads, congress representatives, the Myanmar Library Association Chairman, executive committee members and other members, chief librarians from Myanmar and abroad, and other invited guests.—MNA

Union Minister Dr. Pe Myint receives Japanese State Minister for Internal Affairs and Communications

Union Minister for Information Dr. Pe Myint received State Minister for Internal Affairs and Communications of Japan Mr. Manabu Sakai at the Ministry of Information’s office yesterday afternoon.

At the meeting, the opening of a company jointly formed by Japan’s NHK and Myanmar’s Shwe Than Lwin Media on 26 June, the possibilities of cooperation between Myanmar Radio and Television and Japan’s broadcasting media, organisation setup and the works conducted by Japan’s Ministry of Internal Affairs and NHK, the broadcasting and other interesting programmes from Japan, and the possibility of continuing the ongoing work of a translation machine, jointly conducted by the Ministry of Information and Japan’s National Institute of Information and Communications Technology, were discussed.

Also present at the meeting were Deputy Minister U Aung Hla Tun and other officials.—MNA

Deputy Minister U Aung Hla Tun receives minister counsellor of Chinese embassy

Deputy Minister of Information U Aung Hla Tun received Ms. Li Xiaoyan, Minister Counsellor from the China Embassy to Myanmar at the Ministry of Information’s guest hall yesterday morning. At the meeting, they discussed strengthening the China-Myanmar Psuk Paw relations, the status of China as an important and good neighbour to Myanmar, areas of bilateral cooperation, the current status of Myanmar’s media sector, one-sided news on Myanmar, as described in some international media, cooperation between the media of the two countries, creation of more job opportunities for Myanmar workers in China and better quality export products from China.—MNA
Concerted efforts needed for implementation of crop insurance scheme for paddy farmers

By Maung Lu Aye

Agriculture investments have been rare because they are usually seen as long term investments. Myanmar also has numerous requirements for foreign investments in land. It was found that foreign owners were keen to invest in agriculture but are wary of regulatory obstacles and other risks including erratic weather and pests. Crop insurance policy has been largely unattractive in Myanmar. Inefficient land-use regulations, however, are the main obstacle to foreign investment in agriculture. Myanmar has a crop insurance scheme for smallholder farmers to assist them in facing agricultural challenges and fighting uncertainties. The programme is in line with Myanmar government’s ambitions to protect crop damages due to unpredictable weather conditions in the far-eastern Asian nation. Yangon-based Global World Insurance is supporting Myanmar government in implementing the project on an experimental basis. The insurance scheme will only include paddy for the moment, extending in the region of Yangon, Ayeeyarwady, Magway and Mandalay.

According to the source, agriculture provides almost one-third of Myanmar’s GDP, representing one-fifth of the country’s exports to the international marketplaces. The proposed crop insurance scheme, first time in Myanmar, is expected to boost development in the country’s paddy production, the cost of which is higher than the neighboring countries. This is mainly because of the poor agricultural infrastructure and erratic weather conditions that led to severe crop damages. A couple of years back, Myanmar’s close neighbour India announced to deploy satellites to digitally map each farmland in the country using GIS technology to offer yield-based crop insurance. It insurer to farmers. Thailand also provides crop insurance to protect its farmers from agricultural damages.

Crop insurance will pay for any loss depending on the yield, according to the agreement made by both the parties. This means insurance cover will cover the loss if the yield is lower than the expected volume owing to erratic weather. Neighboring countries such as India and Thailand have been providing a crop insurance system for farmers since 1995. We developed the crop insurance scheme for the benefits of the farmers. An insurance expert pointed out that there is no mushroom firm in the insurance sector in our country. Hence, to a proportional rate, the sum insured (maximum amount payable) is calculated on the risk factor and the possible loss. The premium rate may vary depending on crop varieties, growing season and regions.

The government wishes to provide insurance services, particularly for those who live in rural areas. There must be a concerted, nationwide effort to interest an individual in reading and growing the intellectual horizons of all our people can be broadened.
Performance of Mon State Government in Second Year in Office

By Ma Honey

THE Mon State Government has made concerted efforts to achieve all-round development in all socio-economic sectors. In order to spur sustainable development, plans are under way to support and encourage small and medium-sized enterprises, development of health and education sectors, and conservation of the natural environment.

The authorities concerned of the Mon State Government have been able to serve the interest of regional residents with sweeping reforms in various spheres during two-year period of the new administration in office.

With a view to ensuring the improvement of socio-economic status of local residents, peace and stability in the region and rule of law and multi-sector development, the Mon State Government had made dramatic efforts for agricultural development, construction of bridges in both urban and rural areas, ensuring power supply and development of education, health and tourism sectors.

Aims and objectives
The aims and objectives of the Mon 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.

Bogyoke Aung San Bridge
As for the Mon State Government, efforts have been made to improve the transportation systems in and out of the region. The Mon State Road/Bridge Department under the Ministry of Construction built the Bogyoke Aung San Bridge with 5203.4 feet in length. The Bogyoke Aung San Bridge is about a mile long and was built by Myanmar engineers with the use of international construction techniques.

The span across the Thanlwin River is especially important for Chaungzzone Township on the Bilugyun island, a large, major island that, until this bridge was built, was accessible only by boat. The bridge is the one spanning Bilugyun, which is a part of the Gulf of Motama/ Gulf of Martaban. Bilugyun Island has a population of over 120,000, 828 square kilometers in area. With better transportation, the industries and businesses of local people will develop, creating more job opportunities for local people with upgraded socio-economic lives.

And the region will also gain better education and healthcare. With the added convenience of communication not only for locals and but also for the whole nation, friendship between national brethren and union spirit will develop.

The bridge has become the 9th span over the Thanlwin River and the 2nd bridge for Mon State. The landmark bridge connecting Mawlamyine and Bilugyun region would boost the socio-economy of the area as the businesses, including hotels, tourism and production businesses, will flourish, thanks to better communication and transportation.
A campaign on vaccination against encephalitis in Mon State.

During the two years period in office, the state government had built a 46-feet-width-Yangon-Myeik Road (Sit-taung-Kyaikhto-Myaungame Section) which has upgraded into a four-way-road in the state.

The Mon State Government had arranged to build many housing units for public service personnel in the region.

Emerald Project
With the aim of boosting the socio-economic status of the region, emerald project had been conducted in ten townships of the Mon State, from 2014-2015 fiscal years to 2017-2018 fiscal years. The project has covered rural development programmes for establishment of commercial crops farms, forest plantations agricultural farm, fish hatching station, livestock breeding farm and nurseries and other development tasks including value-added production, milling, packaging, microfinance and mobile banking systems.

Cable Car Project
For the convenience of the Kyaik Htee Yoe pagoda Pilgrims, the officials concerned of the Mon State had officially opened the cable car service. Sky Asia Co. Ltd. undertook this project with a US$ 21 million investment, permitted by the Myanmar Investment Commission (MIC) to construct the cable car system on 13.5 acres of land on Mount Kyaik Htee Yoe. It is the first cable car of its kind in Myanmar and provides easy access to the Kyaik Htee Yoe pagoda. The company built six towers, each 2,850 feet high, from Yathetaung to the Kyaik Htee Yoe pagoda and one cable car can hold 8 passengers, with total of 44 cable cars.

Electricity
The Mon State Government has been planning to distribute electricity supply in the region with the aim of providing opportunities for employment, education, business and the social sectors. Efforts had been made to transmit the power lines including 33 - Kilo Volt (KV) transmission lines (5.938 miles), 11 - Kilo Volt (KV) transmission lines (39.021 miles), 0.4 – volt (44.98 miles), one 66 / 33 – KV - electricity station, two -33 / 11-KV electricity station, 115- 11/0.4-KV-electricity station, changing 33 KV (54.4 miles), changing 11 KV (11.67 miles), changing 400-volt (25.32 miles) in the region.

Implementation Process
To implement the policies of the government such as national reconciliation, internal peace, raising the social living standards of the ethnic national brothers and sisters in regions is important and plays a major role. For the union to develop in a balanced way, peace needs to prevail throughout the whole country.

The New Mon State Party
Signing the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) by the New Mon State Party (NMSP) has strengthened the security and the rule of law in Mon State and has brought situation for implementing regional development tasks effectively.

33/11 KV MVA transformer is being installed in Mudon under the electrification plan.

A ceremony to raise awareness against elephantiasis in Mawlamyine, Mon State.

A creek is being dradged in Mudon Township to prevent from flooding in the rainy season.

A campaign on fighting against malaria in a far-flung area in Mon State.
Garbage dump under observation for heat emissions

By Zaw Gyi

ALTHOUGH the fire at the Htein Bin garbage dump in Hlínethaya Township, Yangon Region has been put out, heat continued to be emitted from the ground under the garbage dump and was kept under observation for the second day running.

U Zaw Min Oo of Hmawbi Township Fire Services Department, who was leading the group observing the fire, said, “Due to the heat underneath, some places were emitting heat. The heat emitting places were kept under close observation by groups. There were no fires in those places, but heat was emitted in the form of smoke and the heat can turn into a fire. That is why these places are put under observation and preventive actions are being taken. We will continue keeping any places under observation where heat is being emitted.”

“Due to the light rain today, the roads (in the garbage dump) were slippery. In some places, fire engines can’t enter because of this. Manpower is used to overturn the earth by axes and fire hooks in places that are not reachable by the fire engines and is doused with water to reduce the heat”, he added.

Light rain fell for about half an hour yesterday afternoon, but after the rain, heat continued to be emitted and groups were formed in zones A, B, C and D to keep the places under observations.

Yangon City Development Committee (YCDC) Pollution Control and Cleansing Department Deputy Head Dr. AungMyint Maw said, “Today, some zones are emitting heat. We connected pipes in order to douse it with water. Heavy machineries are used to form roads (in the garbage dump) for the fire engines. In some places where it is required, our YCDC personnel are cooperating with the fire department personnel.”

More than a hundred fire department personnel, police, and YCDC personnel together with fire engines, water bowlers and heavy machineries are keeping the place under observation and conducting preventive measure when required while welfare associations and public donors are donating food.

A movie actress, Ma Tu, said “When the fire in the garbage dump started, I was away in Rakhine State shooting a movie. I wanted to help since then. Now, even though the fire was put out, I’m here to pass to the fire department personnel and people helping them foods and materials donated by Saint John Latha (2). I’m glad on behalf of donors who made donations.”

At the moment, a combined force of more than 100 is keeping the smoke emissions under observation and putting out any leftover fires.

Closing ceremonies for Luyechun Recreation Camps held

The closing ceremonies for the Luyechun Recreation Camps were held in Ngwesaung, Bagan, and Inle yesterday.

Experts conducted talks on the subjects of IT and hotel business while officials explained the history of Ngwesaung beach to outstanding eleventh-grade students.

A bonfire event that was part of the closing ceremonies of Ngwesaung Luyechun Recreation Camp was held on the sands of Ngwesaung beach in front of the Pearl Ngwesaung Hotel. Outstanding students and supervising teachers then played games, sang songs and exchanged gifts after which they sang the “MyaNandar” song to conclude the event.

Similarly, grade ten outstanding students in Ho Pone Township, Pa’O Self-Administered Zone in southern Shan State visited Htan San Cave, MwaytawKakku Pagoda and Sulamuni Pagoda in Taunggyi and also visited the Taunggyi Myoma Market.

The Shan State Chief Minister hosted a dinner for the outstanding students and a camp closing event with a bonfire was held at the No. 1 Basic Education High School.

Likewise, grade nine outstanding students in Bagan visited Thihoshin Pagoda and Shwe Mote Htaw Pagoda in Pakokku Township and also visited the Pakhangyi Shwemuhaw Pagoda and Sithushin Tharekkhan Buddha image. The closing celebrations last night included entertainment.—MNA

UNESCO, journalists celebrate World Press Freedom Day in Yangon

By Ye Khaung Nyunt


The ceremony was opened with an address by Head of UNESCO in Myanmar Ms. Min Jeong Kim.

This year’s global theme is ‘Keeping Power in Check: Media, Justice and The Rule of Law’, and will focus on issues of media and the transparency of the political process, the independence and media literacy of the judicial system, and the accountability of state institutions towards the public.

The United Nations Secretary General, Antonio Guterres in his message for WPF day makes a call to governments to strengthen press freedom, and to protect journalists.

U Swe Win, Chief Editor of Myanmar News Agency and Managing Director of Myanmar ICT Daw Htike Htike Aung-MID gave remarks on media situation in Myanmar.

Following the ceremony, a talks titled “Media, Justice and the Rule of Law” was held at the same venue to mark the World Press Freedom Day.

Pen Myanmar also released a report on press freedom in Myanmar at the ceremony.

World Press Freedom Day celebrated by UNESCO and journalists in Yangon. PHOTO: YE KHAUNG NYUHT
India storm toll rises with more wild weather forecast

KERARAGHR (INDIA) — The death toll from freak storms that hit India climbed above 140 on Friday as people told how they had no time to escape the ferocious winds which tore down homes and toppled walls.

Amid warnings of further wild weather, thousands of families spent the night in the open air in the northern states of Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan.

They told how 130 kilometre (80 mile) an hour winds carrying choking sand hit so quickly late Wednesday that they had no time to reach safety from falling walls and trees.

The dust storms claimed 121 lives in Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and nearby Uttarakhand and Punjab states, according to latest official tolls.

Separately 21 people were killed by lightning in two southern states.

Authorities in Uttar Pradesh, where 76 died, and Rajasthan, where the storms claimed 39 lives, battled to restore power, clear roads and help people who lost houses. Residents remain fearful.

“We couldn’t sleep and were worried if the storm hits again. We took precautions and secured everything but nothing can stand up to nature’s fury,” 40-year-old Agra resident Munna Lal Jha told AFP.

Agra district was one of the worst hit areas with at least 43 people killed, according to the state disaster management authority.

Twenty-four of them were killed in the small town of Kheragarh, near Agra. Many people in the region live in mud-wall homes that would have barely resisted the ferocious winds.

Four children from the same family were killed when a wall collapsed on them in Kheragarh.

Left to mourn

Damaged houses lined the town’s dusty roads. Heaps of stones and bricks lay where dozens of homes were destroyed by the gale-force winds.

Villagers salvaged belongings from under the debris or fixed broken windows and doors blown away in the storm.

“One was only left to mourn.

Ram Bhorosi told AFP how his son and a nephew died when their house caved in as they welcomed people who had attended his daughter’s wedding.

“We had guests at home and my son went inside the room to get a bed when the storm struck,” he said.

“A big stone crushed his head after the roof collapsed. His cousin was also caught under the crumbling roof. Half a dozen men helped us to clear the rubble to take out bodies. They didn’t get time to raise the alarm, it was so sudden.”

In nearby Burera village, Anil Kumar told of his narrow escape when their house fell.

“We were sitting outside when the winds suddenly started raging. Four of us were crushed under the debris after the wall fell. My grandfather died but the others survived with injuries.”

At Bharatpur in Rajasthan, another of the worst-hit towns, a college gate pillar toppled killing three young men, all 18, who had just been accepted as police constables or soldiers, media reported.

The winds in Rajasthan raged at more than 100 kph, destroying houses, tearing up electricity pylons and uprooting trees. The India Meteorological Department has warned there are likely to be more storms over a wider area until Tuesday—AFP

China, US reach agreements on some economic and trade issues

BEIJING — China and the United States reached agreements on some issues in their economic and trade consultations in Beijing from Thursday to Friday and agreed to set up a work mechanism to keep close communication.

Chinese Vice Premier Liu He, also a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, held candid, efficient and constructive talks with the US delegation led by US President’s special envoy and Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin, on economic and trade issues of common concern. The two sides agreed that a sound and stable China-US trade relationship is crucial for both, and they are committed to resolving relevant economic and trade issues through dialogue and consultation. The two sides had thorough exchange of views on issues including increasing US exports to China, bilateral service trade, two-way investment, protection of intellectual property rights, as well as resolving tariff and non-tariff issues, reaching consensus in some areas. Both sides recognized that given that considerable differences still exist on some issues, continued hard work is required for more progress. They also agreed to stay in close communication on relevant issues and establish a corresponding work mechanism.—Xinhua

Pigeon pie anyone? Thai town hosts cook-off of caged birds

LOPBURI, THAILAND — A Thai district chief has clipped the wings of his town's pigeon population by paying residents to trap the birds and organising a cook-off to build support for the cull.

The campaign to go after hundreds of thousands of pigeons started earlier this week in a district of Lop Buri province—a region better known for its monkey menace.

“The number of pigeons increases four to five times each year, if we don’t do anything the problem will get worse,” said Phuk Thheppanuk, the highest government official in Mueang district, who came up with the idea.

The birds were a nuisance and defecated on government offices, historical sites, temples and houses while ravaging local crops, he added.

“Before people can drink rain water but now they have to buy drinking water because rain water is dirty from bird droppings,” he said.—AFP

INVITATION FOR PRICE QUOTATIONS

The Republic of the Union of Myanmar has received financing from the International Development Association (IDA) towards the cost of the National Community Driven Development Project (NCDDP). The IDA No. 11344 of the financing agreement is No. IDA-K6162. The Department of Rural Development (DRD) of the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation, in its role as implementing agency of the NCDDP, intends to apply a portion of the proceeds of this financing towards eligible payments under the Purchase Order/Contract for the following packages. DRD now invites eligible suppliers to express their interest in supplying the following items:

Reference Number: G 113 T-Shirt with NCDDP Logo

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference No.</th>
<th>Lot No</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Quantity (Number)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>G 113</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>T-shirts with the logo and text of the NCDD Project</td>
<td>145,980</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Expressions of Interest on Quotation must be submitted in a written form to the email address below and clearly indicate the reference number above. The invitation to quote will be distribute on the needs of DRD. Eligible suppliers having expressed interest will receive an INVITATION TO QUOTE (ITQ).

Sealed Quotations will be submitted to the address by date and time as stated in the ITQ, after which no Quotations will be accepted.

The goods will be contracted in lot-by-lot basis. Suppliers will be selected following the Shopping Method as per the “Guidelines for Procurement of Goods, Works and non-Consulting Services under IBRD Loans and IDA Credits & Grants by World Bank Borrowers” dated January 2011.

Please submit your Expression of Interest for receiving the Invitation to Quote (ITQ) to: U Kyaw Soe, Deputy Director General, Department of Rural Development, Office No.(14), Nay Pyi Taw. For detailed information please contact U Kyaw Swa Aung, Director, Procurement and Logistic Section, Mobile phone 094343433 or office phone 0674090711/ Email: unioncdprocurement@gmail.com. Please indicate your e-mail address as only electronic copies of the ITQ will be send as well as introduce your company name and contact number to communicate with you. For more information on the NCDD Project please also visit Website: www.cdd.drdmyanmar.org.
Netflix chief says ‘mistakes’ led to Cannes boycott

LILLE (FRANCE) — Netflix CEO Reed Hastings said Thursday the streaming giant had made errors regarding its spat with the Cannes film festival over the platform’s dramatic withdrawal of its films this year. “Sometimes we make mistakes. We got into a bigger situation with Cannes than we meant to,” said Hastings, in Lille, northern France, for the Series Mania festival. For 2018, Netflix did not aim to de-list a system he said had proved its worth for the French film industry. At the same time, he said the firm had to think of subscribers who would not want to wait three years to watch a new release which the company had produced directly, pointing out that Netflix treats films as it does series, targeting subscribers rather than cinema-goers. —AFP

Polanski accuses Academy of ‘harassment’ over expulsion: lawyer

WARSAW — Oscar-winning film director Roman Polanski on Friday accused the US Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences of harassment after it expelled him along with actor Bill Cosby in light of historic sexual assault cases. Polanski, who lives in France, is wanted in the United States for the statutory rape of a 13-year-old girl in 1977. The veteran 84-year-old director of “Rosemary’s Baby” has for years been seeking to negotiate a deal in the case with US authorities. The board of governors of the Academy, the body which hands out the Oscars, voted this week to strip both men of membership “in accordance with the organisation’s Standards of Conduct”.

“It has the hallmarks of psychological abuse against our client, who is an older person,” Jan Olszewski, Polanski’s lawyer in Poland told AFP. “Roman feels that the Academy is acting in violation of its regulations and has asked me to review them,” Olszewski added, calling the Academy’s move the “height of hypocrisy.”

The lawyer also said that “comparing Bill Cosby to Roman Polanski is a total misunderstanding and harassment.” Cosby, once the darling of American television, faces up to 30 years in prison after being found guilty on three counts of sexual assault on 26 April for drugging and molesting a woman in 2004. —AFP

CLAIM’S DAY NOTICE
M.V DYNAMIC OCEAN-01 VOY. NO. ( - )

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V DYNAMIC OCEAN-01 VOY. NO. ( - ) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 5-5-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of H.P.T where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S RK SHIPPING & TRADING PTE LTD

Phone No: 2301928

CLAIM’S DAY NOTICE
M.V SINAR BATAM VOY. NO. ( - )

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V SINAR BATAM VOY. NO. ( - ) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 5-5-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of MITT/AIPT where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S INTERASIA LINES

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM’S DAY NOTICE
M.V GSS YANGON VOY. NO. ( 1084 S/N )

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V GSS YANGON VOY. NO. ( 1084 S/N ) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 5-5-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of H.P.T where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S NEW GOLDEN SEA SHIPPING

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM’S DAY NOTICE
M.V OLYMPIA VOY. NO. ( 1813-1814 )

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V OLYMPIA VOY. NO. ( 1813-1814 ) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 5-5-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T/TMIP where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S MCC TRANSPORT (S’PORE) PTE LTD

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM’S DAY NOTICE
M.V CAPE FLORES VOY. NO. ( 087N/S )

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V CAPE FLORES VOY. NO. ( 087N/S ) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 5-5-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of A.W.P.T where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S NEW GOLDEN SEA SHIPPING LINES

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM’S DAY NOTICE
M.V SINAR BATAM VOY. NO. ( - )

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MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S INTERASIA LINES

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM’S DAY NOTICE
M.V DYNAMIC OCEAN-01 VOY. NO. ( - )

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V DYNAMIC OCEAN-01 VOY. NO. ( - ) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 5-5-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of H.P.T where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S RK SHIPPING & TRADING PTE LTD

Phone No: 2301928
American football under fire over treatment of cheerleaders

WASHINGTON — Cheerleaders are a staple of American professional sports.

But the treatment of the scantily-clad women who encourage their teams from the sidelines is drawing scrutiny.

The New York Times published an article Wednesday about questionable treatment of cheerleaders for the Washington Redskins, a National Football League (NFL) team, during a trip to the squad to Costa Rica in 2013. And cheerleaders for two other NFL teams, the New Orleans Saints and the Miami Dolphins, have filed lawsuits recently alleging discrimination.

The Times spoke to several members of the 36-strong Redskins cheerleading squad who went on the weeklong trip to an exclusive resort in Costa Rica for a photo calendar shoot.

Speaking anonymously, several cheerleaders said they were made to be pose topless or wear only body paint for pictures taken for the calendar — although it would not include nude shots. They complained that sponsors and luxury suite holders at Redskins stadium — all of whom were men — were granted access to the photo shoots.

Nine cheerleaders were also allegedly made, at the end of a 14-hour day of posing and dance practice, to attend an event at a nightclub as escorts for the sponsors.

“They weren’t putting a gun to our heads, but it was mandatory for us to go,” one of the cheerleaders told the Times. “We weren’t asked, we were told.” The arrangement did not involve sex, the cheerleaders said, but they were uncomfortable with it.

“I’m the mama bear”

Stephanie Jojokian, the director and choreographer of the Redskins cheerleading squad, insisted she had not forced anyone to attend the nightclub event.

“I was not forcing anyone to go at all,” Jojokian told the Times. “I’m the mama bear, and I really look out for everybody, not just the cheerleaders.

“It’s a big family. We respect each other and our craft,” she said. “It’s such a supportive environment for these ladies.” —AFP

WASHINGTON Redskins cheerleaders dance at a game against the San Francisco 49ers at FedExField in Landover, Maryland. PHOTO: AFP

2018 Nobel Literature Prize postponed after #MeToo turmoil

STOCKHOLM — For the first time in almost 70 years there will be no Nobel Literature Prize this year, as the Swedish Academy that selects the laureate finds itself in turmoil over links to a man accused of sex crimes amid the #MeToo campaign. “We find it necessary to commit time to recovering public confidence in the Academy before the next laureate can be announced,” the Academy’s interim permanent secretary Anders Olsson said in a statement Friday, adding two prizes would be announced in 2019.

The body has been plunged in crisis since November, in the wake of the global #MeToo campaign, when Swedish newspaper of reference Dagens Nyheter published the testimonies of 18 women claiming to have been raped, sexually assaulted or harassed by Jean-Claude Arnault, an influential figure on the Swedish culture scene.

Arnault, the French husband of Academy member and poet Katarina Frostenson, has denied the allegations. The revelations have sowed deep discord among the Academy’s 18 members about how to handle the matter, and in recent weeks, six of them have chosen to resign, including permanent secretary Sara Danius.

“The active members of the Swedish Academy are of course fully aware that the present crisis of confidence places high demands on a long-term and robust work for change,” Olsson said.

Seem as bearers of high culture, the Academy, founded in 1786, is traditionally known for its integrity and discretion, with its meetings and decisions shrouded in secrecy. But the row has turned into a titillating public spectacle, with Academy members dealing ugly blows to each other in the media.

‘Wise decision’

The last time the institution delayed a prize announcement was in 1949. William Faulkner received the prize a year later, the same year Bertrand Russell was honoured. It has also reserved the prize on six other occasions: in 1915, 1919, 1925, 1926, 1927 and 1936, and four of those times the prize was delayed then awarded at the same time as the following year’s prize, the Academy said.

Several Academy members had recently suggested the 2018 prize could be postponed because of the turmoil, which has dragged the Academy’s reputation — and that of the Nobel Literature Prize — through the mud.

Literature experts in Sweden lamented the announcement, but agreed with the decision. “I think it’s wise, this is the best decision they could make. They’ll have a chance to restore the (Academy) this year and fill the empty seats, and come back with a strong Academy that can award the prize,” Dagens Nyheter’s literature critic Maria Schottenius told AFP.

Technically, Academy members have been appointed for life and have not been able to resign, though they could leave their chairs “empty” by not participating in meetings and decisions.—AFP

‘Black Panther’ leads MTV Movie and TV Award nods

LOS ANGELES — “Black Panther,” the breakthrough superhero film that has become one of the highest-grossing motion pictures of all time, on Thursday led nominations for the MTV Movie and TV Awards.

The action movie about the fictional African kingdom of Wakanda led with seven nominations including Best Movie for the June 18 awards, which will be decided by public voting.

Placing second with six nominations is “Stranger Things,” the Netflix series about supernatural occurrences in a small town in Indiana.

The MTV Movie and TV Awards, like the channel’s signature MTV Video Music Awards, celebrate pop culture moments and pride themselves on being less stuffy than the industry’s benchmark Oscars and Emmys.

Categories include “Best Kiss” and “Most Frightened Performance.” In another contrast with the industry-led awards, the MTV prizes for the second year will be gender neutral with no separate competitions for men and women.

“Black Panther,” a rare action film to celebrate black culture, has already become the third highest-grossing movie ever in North America since its release in January.

Comedian Tiffany Haddish will serve as the host of the MTV Movie and TV Awards, which hands out statuettes shaped like popcorn boxes.

Haddish stars in the comedy ‘Girls Trip’ which is also up for Best Picture, along with the action flicks ‘Avengers: Infinity War’ and ‘Wonder Woman’ and horror adaptation ‘It.’ —AFP
‘Clasico of honour’

Real look to crash unbeaten Barca’s party

MADRID — Real Madrid can transform their own season by beating Liverpool in this month’s Champions League final, and on Sunday they can dent Barcelona’s by becoming the first team to defeat the Catalans in La Liga.

This ‘clasico’ at Camp Nou will have minimal impact on the league, with Barca already crowned champions and Real’s passing interest in pipping Atletico to second place diminished by their ambitions in Europe.

But there is still much at stake in what Madrid’s daily newspaper Marca has billed “the clasico of honour”. It could even be argued this will go some way to defining the seasons of these two teams.

Barca, in particular, have been careful in celebrating their domestic double, their players aware of the disappointment that lingers from their Champions League crash in the quarter-finals.

Even as they ordered pizza and slurred beer from the top of their open-top bus down Las Ramblas this week, it was noticeable how many interviews still referenced the disappointment in Rome.

“The elimination in the Champions League, it hurt us because it was unexpected,” said Barca coach Ernesto Valverde. “But it is very difficult to do what we have done and now what are we going to do? We keep trying.”

To soften the blow, Barca’s best response was to win the Copa del Rey and La Liga and finish unbeaten in the league for the first time, while hoping Real do not go all the way in the Champions League.

“The second round of the MPT Myanmar National League (U-21) 2018 will start on 30 May according to the MNL.”

Zaw Win Naing stands as the current highest scorer in U-21 MNL 2018

After completing the first round of MPT Myanmar National League (U-21) 2018, Zaw Win Naing from Southern Myanmar U-21 was recognised as the current highest scorer of the tournament with earning 10 goals altogether. He scored ten goals after playing 13 matches and standing in the most scorer position of the half season of the tournament.

Following him, Thet Wai Moe from Myawady U-21 team, Yar Zar Aung from Ayeyawady U-21 team and Thet Aung from Hanthawady U-21 team are standing together in the second highest scorer position with earning 9 goals. Htet Arkar Lin from ISPE (A) U-21, a team which is a half season Champion is also standing in the third most scorer with scoring 6 goals altogether.— Lynn Thit (Tgi)

In-form Tsitsipas beats Anderson in Estoril

ESTORIL (PORTUGAL) — Greek rising star Stefanos Tsitsipas continued his excellent form on clay by beating Estoril Open top seed Kevin Anderson 6-7 (5-7), 6-3, 6/3 on Thursday to reach the quarter-finals. The 19-year-old held the big-hitting South African to just four aces in a second-round match which lasted for more than two hours in windy conditions.

World number 44 Tsitsipas beat three top-20 players, including Dominic Thiem, en route to the Barcelona Open final last week, where he lost to Rafael Nadal. Anderson, ranked eighth, sealed his fate as his first double-fault of the contest brought up two match points, with Tsitsipas quickly wrapping up victory at the first attempt. “It was really tough, with tricky conditions,” world number eight Anderson said. “I’ve not played a match in a while. “It’s a little disappointing, I would have preferred better conditions for my first match back, a more comfortable environment. “But he was just too good today.”

Tsitsipas, the first Greek man to break into the world’s top 50, improved to 13-10 for the season. He will face a last-eight match against Spain’s Roberto Carballes Baena, who knocked out British number three Cameron Norrie 5-7, 6-2, 7-6 (7/3). The 103rd-ranked Norrie went down in three hours, eight minutes to his Spanish opponent who won his first ATP title this season in Quito.—AFP

Dagon FC wins half season champion of U-18 MNL

AFTER completing the first round matches of MPT Myanmar National League (U-18) 2018, Dagon FC became the half season with garnering 13 points after playing five matches with all win. Among the total of 6 teams, Royal Thalwin FC followed the Dagon FC with garnering 12 points of four win and one loss. University FC is sitting in the third place of the Standing Table with 9 points, 3 win and 2 loss.

Silver Stars FC is in the fourth place with 4 points of 1 win, 1 draw and 3 loss while Kachin United FC is in the fifth position with 1 win and 4 loss. Mawyawady FC is standing in the last place with one draw and four loss.

The second round of the MPT Myanmar National League (U-18) 2018 will start on 30 May according to the MNL.— Lynn Thit (Tgi)