President U Win Myint delivers speech at swearing-in ceremony of MPC

Respect the role of news media sector which serves as the eyes and ears of the people: President

PRESIDENT U Win Myint attended and addressed the Myanmar Press Council (MPC) members at the swearing-in ceremony held at the Presidential Palace Thabin Hall yesterday afternoon.

The ceremony was attended by Union Chief Justice U Htun Htun Oo, Union Ministers, Nay Pyi Taw Council Chairman, Anti-Corruption Commission Chairman, Myanmar National Human Rights Commission Chairman, Deputy Ministers, departmental officials, MPC Chairman and members.

The MPC Chairman and members were first sworn in in front of the President and then the President delivered a speech.

(The President’s speech is covered on Page-2)

After the ceremony the President took a commemorative group photo with MPC Chairman and members and cordially greeted them. —MNA

State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi attends dinner hosted in honor of MPC members

STATE Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi attended a dinner hosted in honor of the Myanmar Press Council (MPC) members at the Thin-gaha Hotel, Nay Pyi Taw yesterday evening.

The dinner was attended by Union Minister for Information Dr. Pe Myint, Union Minister for Religious Affairs and Culture Thura U Aung Ko, Union Auditor-General U Maw Than, Deputy Minister U Aung Hla Tun, Anti-Corruption Commission member U Han Nyunt, MPC Chairman, members and departmental officials.

At the event, State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and Union Minister Dr. Pe Myint first delivered messages of greetings followed by MPC Chairman Hanthawady U Ohn Kyaing who delivered a message of thanks.

The State Counsellor then took a commemorative group photo together with the attendees, cordially greeted the MPC members and had dinner together.

—MNA
MPC must strive toward speedily reaching the goals of the democratic transition and establishing a Democratic Federal Union as desired by the people

President U Win Myint’s speech delivered at the swearing-in ceremony of Myanmar Press Council

Greetings and wishes of auspiciousness to Union Chief Justice, Union Ministers, Union Government members, heads of Union level organizations, Deputy Ministers and MPC members led by the Chairman who are attending the swearing-in ceremony of MPC.

Today’s event is the swearing-in according to the News Media Rule section 14 of MPC members elected according to News Media Law Chapter 3. I would like to say first that MPC members are trusted and expected to perform their duties and responsibilities according to the aims and stipulations of the News Media Law as well as for the development of the Myanmar journalism sector with their best efforts and endeavors.

At the swearing-in ceremony held at the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw on 30 March 2018 I urged to respect the role of the news media sector which serves as the eyes and ears of the people. In my following speeches and meetings, I spoke whenever appropriate about the news media sector.

For a successful and smooth transition to democracy, set thoughts and views, rigid and established practices are to be changed and transformed, the skewed judicial sector is to be straightened, human rights violations are to be protected, public funds are not to be wasted, drug and corruption to be eradicated and purged. The requirement for a correct cooperation on these matters among not only government organizations and relevant union level organizations but also with private media and civil society organizations were advocated.

When I took up my duty as President I spoke of striving towards the Union Government’s priority goals of

(1) Rule of law and raising the socio-economic lives of the people
(2) National reconciliation and internal peace
(3) Establishing a basic foundation of a Democratic Federal Union which is amending the Constitution

with the collective strength of the legislative, administrative, judicial sectors, news media, civil society organizations and the people transparently, responsibly and dutifully.

Therefore news media personnel and journalists, who are playing an important role in the establishment of a Democratic Federal Union yearned for by the people, are especially required to follow and stand on the aims, rights, duties, and ethics prescribed in the news media law.

Because the media had actively participated and worked together with the people to achieve the democratic rights of freedom, equality and justice, today our country is starting to walk down the road of democracy. We are doing this in a balanced, mindful and restrained way based on the method of “make reforms happen without affecting stability.” The government is doing this with care without jeopardizing the democratic transition.

News media presenting news more openly and fearlessly than in the past is to be welcomed, but we also noticed cases where laws had been broken.

Laws are to be obeyed and rules and regulations are to be followed if democracy is to thrive. That is why MPC members are to perform the duties and responsibilities of the council according to the enacted news media law. Rights of the news media personnel are to be obtained while news media personnel are to conduct their duties, responsibilities and follow the ethics in a balanced way so that on the other hand the rights of the people to know is fulfilled. We also understand the nature of newly established democratic countries wanting to practice media freedom in the same way as in countries where democracy had been established for hundreds of years. It is to be noted that practicing of media freedom comes together with being responsible.

During the time when the government is striving towards the aim of establishing a Federal Democratic Union, MPC is to lead in setting down do-s and don’ts for media personnel regarding spreading of hatred, and creating/increasing conflicts between ethnic nationals. Media personnel are to be managed and trained by MPC on reporting delicate and sensitive matters regarding race and religion, to follow the laws, rules, procedures and regulations. Guidance must be given so that there is no deviation from the path of the democratic transition. Frankly speaking MPC is to follow the news media law and rules and conduct matters without bias and favoritism. MPC must strive toward speedily reaching the goals of the democratic transition and establishing a Democratic Federal Union as desired by the people.

For the sake of democracy, our government understands the importance of media freedom that is in accordance with the law. We believe that the role of MPC is very important for a society to become democratic. In the 21st century there are many things that the people want to know and media personnel need to be sure that the facts are right, information is correct, peace and stability is not affected and the security of the country is protected.

I understand that news media is a soft power that is slow and fast. Literature, cultures and arts are slow media. Knowledge and skills are mainly emphasized. The effect is slow. Radio, movie, video, social media are fast media. It spreads among the people quickly within a short time regardless of borders and boundaries. There is an effect in a short time. In the age of information technology, politics is more connected with this soft power. Use this soft power for news and information related to our country, create a good image of the country and use it effectively in the public relations sector.

We accept that without discussions, debates, criticism with good facts and reason, there wouldn’t be democracy. Criticism must be made in a positive way for internal peace, arriving at the goal of democracy, and establishment of a Democratic Federal Union. It is to be noted that a well-intentioned criticism, if not conducted properly, could cause more harm, misunderstanding and damage. Our country is just starting to change from an old era and system to a new one. When breaking out from the old path to a new one, there are unavoidable difficulties and problems. In this situation we need to ensure the survival of the young democracy saying that was obtained with high cost. If we are unable to conduct the democratic transition successfully with all of our collective strengths, we would have failed in our duty and responsibility towards our future generation. With a belief and acceptance that the democratic transition will be successful, our government will work in unity with the people to achieve the goal of democracy.

At a time when we are facing difficulties and obstacles in establishing a Democratic Federal Union, transformation and reforms were conducted in many sectors while facing challenges, may the MPC members who are leading the important Myanmar media sector:

(1) Implement the aims of Myanmar News Media Law
(2) Achieve the rights and freedom of news media personnel according to the law
(3) Lead news media personnel to conduct their works according to ethic and rules
(4) Satisfy the rights of the people to know
(5) Raise the image of the country in which we were born, bring forth pride and dignity to its people through the power of news media

Thank you.

(Translated by Zaw Min)
State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi attends dinner hosted in honor of MPC members

The Myanmar Press Council was established on 11 November 2015, in accordance with Section 13 of the News Media Law and with presidential notification No. 68/2015. The council elected new members on 8 September and formed the council for the second three-year term on 30 October, 2018, based upon Presidential notification 82/2018.

Union Minister U Soe Win visits Customs Department, Myanmar Agricultural Development Bank (head office)

24 NOVEMBER 2018
THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi poses for a commemorative group photo with the attendees at the dinner hosted in honor of Myanmar Press Council members in Nay Pyi Taw. PHOTO: MNA

State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi greets Myanmar Press Council members and attendees at the dinner hosted in honor of Myanmar Press Council members in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. PHOTO: MNA

UNION MINISTER for Planning and Finance U Soe Win visited the Customs Department’s headquarters on Strand Road in Yangon yesterday morning and met with officials.

At the meeting, the Director General of the Customs Department, U Kyaw Htin, detailed the implementation of the Customs Reform and Modernization Strategy and Action Plan (CRMSAP) 2017-2021. He also outlined the adoption of international procedures, international assistance, carrying out ASEAN affairs, utilization of Myanmar’s Automated Cargo Clearance System (MACCS) and its benefits, and ongoing works.

Union Minister U Soe Win said the Customs Department operates with some restrictions as it has to work with other organizations while implementing tasks. The department’s staff need to do high-quality work, perform tasks dutifully and without corruption, he said.

The Customs Department was in need of expanding its high-performance workforce, and staff must make efforts to keep up with international affairs while combating illegal trade, in line with a grand strategy, he added.

Customs employees must strive to meet the tax appropriation limit set by the State Government, the union minister said.

Afterwards, the Union Minister headed to the Myanmar Agricultural Development Bank’s head office on Pansodan Road in Yangon, and met with the staff there. During the meeting, the bank’s Managing Director U Min Thu told the minister that while the bank provided only agricultural loans earlier, it has been providing JICA two-step loans from 2017. It has also introduced Myanmar Economic Bank two-step loans from 2018.

It has raised the agricultural loan amount from Ks50,000 to Ks100,000. It has arranged to disburse JICA two-step loans of Ks45.017 billion to 1193 cultivators from 129 townships of different states and regions. It will disburse Ks2.603 billion in Myanmar Economic Bank two-step loans to 242 farmers from 52 townships across the country,” he said.

Union Minister U Soe Win asked about reforms at the bank and urged bank employees to work together to transform MADB into a reliable bank for farmers. — MNA

(Translated by Win Ko Ko Aung)
French delegation to promote trade with Shan State govt’t

A WILD male elephant, estimated to be about 13 years old, was found dead in a paddy field in Diplawinpyin Village, Ngapudaw Township, authorities said. The elephant was reportedly found lying on its side in a rice field belonging to U Mahn Zaw Zaw with a swollen stomach and a four-inch deep wound on the back, initially suspected to be caused by an arrow. The elephant measured 6 ft in height and 9.5 ft in girth, and had a 4 ft long trunk. A combined team comprising officials from the Wild Elephant Protection Base Camp 1, Forest Security Police Force, the Shan State economy. On Friday, 24 November, the French Ambassador Mr. Christian Lechervy will visit Shan State on 26 and 27 November in a bid to promote trade and commercial relations between France and Shan State.

This year, 17 French companies joined trade delegation which is twice of last year. This Trade Mission brings together French global leaders with expertise in hospitality (Accor Hotels), healthcare (Bioderma), engineering and consulting services (Artilia, Berim, Suez, Tractebel), aerospace and security services (ATR, Thales), construction of Investment and Company Administration and the Chin State Chambers of Commerce and personnel from related departments. The Chairman of the KBZ Group U Aung Ko Win will also receive the French Delegation to strengthen business ties between local and French businessmen. The interest of French companies for the economic development of Shan State has strengthened after the 5 September notice of the Ministry of Electricity and Energy to Proceed for the construction of the Shweli 3 hydro-power dam to the consortium led by French company EDF with Marubeni from Japan and Ayeayar Hinthar from Myanmar. Alongside infrastructure projects, agriculture and hospitality are key to the development of the Shan State economy. On Friday, the Ambassador of France will visit the coffee plantations of the Green Gold cooperative in Hopong along with the CEO of the French coffee producer Malongo. Green Gold delivered its first containers to Europe last October through its partnership with Malongo with the support of UNODC.

France remains strongly committed to support Myanmar’s economic development in a socially inclusive and environmentally-friendy way and to help Myanmar thrive on the road to democracy, peace and prosperity, according to the press release of French Embassy’s economic section.—GNLM (Translated by Ei Mon)

Wild elephant found dead in Ngapudaw Township

A four-inch deep wound on the back, initially suspected to be caused by an arrow. The elephant measured 6 ft in height and 9.5 ft in girth, and had a 4 ft long trunk. A combined team comprising officials from the Wild Elephant Protection Base Camp 1, Forest Security Police Force, the Shan State economy. On Friday, 24 November, the French Ambassador Mr. Christian Lechervy will visit Shan State on 26 and 27 November in a bid to promote trade and commercial relations between France and Shan State.

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Tiddim takes steps to farm silkworms

A two-day course on sericulture, which includes training on cultivation of mulberry, rearing silkworms, and production of silk, began yesterday at the office of the General Administration Department in Tiddim Town. The course is being conducted under the supervision of Chin State’s Directorate of Industrial Supervision and Inspection.

The course has been organized with the support of Mr. Anton Stortelder from PUM Netherlands Senior Experts and local civil society organizations. A total of 50 people have signed up for the course, which includes practical work and sharing sessions.

The Deputy Director of Chin State’s Directorate of Industrial Supervision and Inspection, an official from the Agriculture Department, and a township administrator delivered speeches at a ceremony held to mark the start of the course.

During a tour of development projects in Chin State in May 2018, Vice President U Henry Van Thio visited the Tonzang silkworm farm, where farm officials demonstrated the planting of Morus or mulberry plants and explained silkworm breeding. The Vice President had pointed out that planting mulberry plants could help increase the income of local families and help replace the slash-and-burn farming system. He urged the farm owners to systematically upgrade the farm system.

“Demand for silk is growing in the international market and support from the respective departments is required to gain a firm share in the market. Further research needs to be conducted to produce other highly valued products in addition to silk threads,” the Vice President had said.

Myanmar has mulberry plantations in Kachin, Kayah, Chin and Shan states, and Mandalay Region, covering an area of 6,437.98 acres. In 2017-2018, there were 231 silkworm egg cards in silkworm plant research farms, while silkworm farms produced 11,868 pounds of cocoons, according to news released by the President’s Office. —GNLM

(Translated by Ei Mon)

Despite investor interest, no power projects yet in Chin State

By Nyein Nyein

ALTHOUGH companies have shown a keen interest in power projects in Chin State, no project has been implemented yet, said Dr. Min Zaw Oo, the director of the Chin State’s Office of the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration.

“The Chin State government is prioritizing hydropower investments. But the projects have many phases, processes, and business risks which are hindering project implementation for now,” said Dr. Min Zaw Oo.

In the two years of the present term of the Chin State government, the hydropower generation sector has been ranked first by investors planning to invest in the state. At least 7 companies from China, Japan, and Norway have expressed their interest to conduct feasibility studies for power projects in the state, according to a research report on the opportunities and challenges for local business development in the state.

Potential sites for hydropower projects have been identified on the Laymyo River near Kophayshay village of Thandaung area in Paletwa Township, with an estimated capacity of 600 megawatts, and on the Manipur River in Falam Township, with an estimated capacity of 380 megawatts. Possible sites for medium-scale electric power projects, with a capacity of 10 to 30 megawatts, and small-scale projects, with capacity below 10 megawatts, have been identified in Matupyi, Mindat, Thantlang, Tiddim, and Tonzang towns.

The Chin State government is prioritizing hydropower investments.

Additionally, a possible site for a wind power project has been identified in Tiddim.

“Power supply has reached most of the big towns, but the small townships and villages still don’t have access to electricity. Providing power to the entire state can result in a loss of revenue for the government and economic losses for investors. There are many potential sites for power generation in Chin State. But the sites are located near small villages with 100-200 households. Due to this, the return of capital can pose an impediment to investors. It is hard for them to take that risk. Also, the government cannot hike electricity prices for power produced in the state,” said Dr. Min Zaw Oo.

According to the research report on opportunities and challenges for regional business development, electricity is priced low and so it takes a long time for investors to get returns on capital. There are a slew of challenges and risks to investments in the state. There is no power generation department in the regions and states, including Chin State. Therefore, the regions and states cannot implement projects on their own without approval of the Ministry of Electricity and Energy.

According to the Electricity Law 2014, regions and states can allow 30 megawatt projects, but the projects must not be connected with the national grid. As investors have to seek approval from the state government and the Ministry of Electricity and Energy to set up power projects which transmit power to the national grid, investments for such projects get hindered.

(Translated by Ei Mon)

Myanmar-US trade exceeds $455 million in mini-budget period

MYANMAR’S trade with the United States in the mini-budget period (April to September this year) totalled US$455.7 million, with exports valued at US$293 million and imports pegged at US$162.58 million, according to the Ministry of Commerce.

Myanmar shipped rice, several types of pulses, forest products, fish, prawns, apparel, garments produced on a cut-make-pack basis, and other finished industrial goods to the US this year. It mainly imported personal goods, capital goods, and industrial raw materials from the US.

After more than two decades of economic sanctions against Myanmar, the US reinstated Myanmar’s eligibility for a generalised system of preferences during the Barack Obama administration. During the mini-budget period, one US-listed enterprise was permitted to invest $55.9 million into the country, according to the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration.—GNLM

(Translated by Ei Mon)
Shaw Brothers Pictures to film movie in Myanmar

Union Ministers Dr. Pe Myint and U Ohn Maung meet with Mr. Ray Pang, Line Producer from Hong Kong-based Shaw Brothers Pictures International Ltd., yesterday. PHOTO: MNA

Myanmar police land two top ten ranks at world pistol shooting contest in China

A TEAM of police officers from Myanmar participated in the 2nd USIP World Police Service Pistol Shooting Championship 2018 held in Guangzhou, China, from 14 to 19 November.

Vice Chief (1) of Myanmar Police Force, Police Major General Myo Swe Win, led the police team which left for Guangzhou, Guangdong Province, China, from the Yangon International Airport on 12 November. The championship began on 14 November in Guangzhou, with the Chinese Deputy Minister of Public Security, Mr. Wang Xiaohong, opening the ceremony. A total of 250 police officers from 42 member countries and 27 non-member, invited counties participated in the championship. Participants

Myanmar police officers participate in the 2nd USIP World Police Service Pistol Shooting Championship 2018 in Guangzhou, China. PHOTO: MNA

Myanmar medicine importers, Chinese trade delegation hold talks

A Chinese delegation of medicine and medical equipment producers met with importers from Myanmar in Yangon yesterday. The meeting was aimed at upgrading medicines and equipment for hospitals to meet international standards and provide international-level medical services to the people. The Chinese delegation comprised of representatives from companies producing medicines and medical equipment in Zibo City in Shandong Province of China. Before the meeting, Zibo Economy and Trade Branch Office was opened. At the meeting, the leader of the Shandong delegation, Mr. Mao Zhong Qiang, explained the investment process, while Myanmar businessman U Myo Aung spoke about economic and its related matters.—MNA (Translated by Kyaw Zin Lin)

Myanmar police land two top ten ranks at world pistol shooting contest in China

A 43-member police band led by Police Lt-Gen Aung Win Oo and officials. Myanmar hosted the 22nd World Police Band Concert in 2017. This year, police bands from Thailand, Myanmar, Singapore, and Japan are participating in the concert.—MNA (Translated by Thandar Aung)
Government spokesperson holds bi-weekly press conference

U Zaw Htay highlights importance of verifying news sources, rationalization in dealing with drug cases

In a regular bi-weekly press conference held at the Presidential Palace in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday, Director-General U Zaw Htay, spokesperson from the Office of the President, explained about the meeting between the President and the Myanmar Press Council - MPC held on the same day and the activities of the Drug Activity Special Complaint Department formed under the Office of the President.

Importance of verifying news sources

U Zaw Htay said when the MPC members took their oath at the Presidential Palace, the President delivered an address that spoke on the code of conduct for media personnel and he also discussed the media's role in the democratic transition.

“The President’s Office has sent a notification to MPC because in some news articles they have cited the source as ‘a source close to the President’s Office’. Citing unnamed sources can become problematic.”

“The President discussed this issue with the MPC today. There is a code of conduct for media personnel. We asked them how many sources are needed to relay a news article. They replied that some departments cite two sources, while some departments try to verify the authenticity of the source. We discussed ways to increase verification on news sources.”

“We also discussed the news source contributor’s right to respond and the media’s duty to include it in the news. The MPC discussed about conducting training for the rising number of citizen journalists on social media platforms and how the MPC can disseminate the code of conduct to them, in line with the News Media Law.”

“The first thing we told them is to verify the news source for important news such as those relating to the President and the State Counsellor. Second, we asked them to inform relevant information departments that we will answer and clarify any questions related to the President and the State Counsellor. There are registered correspondents at the Presidential Palace who can be contacted through their chat group and they will reply in a timely manner.”

“Third, we told them all news related to the President and the State Counsellor and their offices have a significant political effect within the country and abroad. Hence, if false or unverified news relating to them gets published, there will be numerous complications if we cannot resolve them in time. To prevent that, we told them to inform the informational departments to contact the Presidential Palace first. Ask us to verify or explain the facts. We requested them to be extra diligent on this matter.”

Rationalization in dealing with drug cases

Next, U Zaw Htay talked about the Drug Activity Special Complaint Department and expounded on a drug report concerning Bogale Township.

“Some news and social media have shared about the drug report incident in Bogale Township. We received a report that a family of pepper sauce sellers in that township was secretly selling illegal drugs. But when police searched the house, they didn’t find any drugs. Some reports said the family suffered grievances. The officials concerned said it was on orders from the Office of the President.”

“We reviewed the case, which can be traced back to 2 July. We received a direct email complaint regarding the Bogale Township family and we handed it over to the Ministry of Home Affairs. We conducted the search in November. This drug activity complaint department was opened to effectively handle largely uncontrollable drug incidents. We directly take care of handing over of cases and issuing directions so that no loss is incurred for all parties concerned.”

“This is personally handled by the President’s senior officials and then relayed to the Ministry of Home Affairs. The main intention of the drug complaint department mechanism is to apprehend large-scale drug dealers and drug lords. The home affairs ministry also formed task forces for this endeavour.”

“Taking this case as an example, there were some things that needed discussing. First, the drug complaint letters need to be based on actual facts and contain as much detail as possible. We’ve set guidelines to protect the anonymity and confidentiality of the letter’s composer. We want them to be extra careful in the text.”

“Second, we want to prioritize large-scale drug cases and cases that regional authorities are incapable or unwilling to handle. Therefore, we want to make sure there are no ownerless cases and stalled or dead-end investigations.”

“Third, I want to address the fact that some said it is done on the orders of the Office of the President. The media and civil servants have a code of conduct. Armed personnel also have guidelines on interacting with regular civilians. We want care to be taken from the grassroots level so that there are no misunderstandings.”

“Fourth, if a problem is not addressed, if there is a complaint is still not acted upon, this will make our work difficult as we are not sure whether the complaint was handled or not. We want those who are involved in this case to report the case and discuss the case.”

“What I want to say is, if a complaint was filed because of some form of animosity on another person, then a proper apology should be issued to the people affected. This is the right of the people. Even if it was done in accordance with the law, the relevant security forces need to communicate effectively if any misconduct had occurred. We don’t want them to be haphazardly answered to that it was all done on the orders of the Office of the President.”

“If they say it was done because the line of information was lost, then we have to point out that the report was handed over in July and the actual investigation was conducted in November. This is not coherent. We want to sincerely request the public to understand the situation and to provide cooperation. We request the security forces to adhere to their code of conduct as well.”

Director-General U Zaw Htay answered to questions raised by the attending journalists.

(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence campaign to be conducted

As part of an international campaign, 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-based Violence, programs will be organised in Myanmar in collaboration with over 24 local and foreign non-government organizations.

The campaign, which runs every year from 25 November to 10 December, will involve several programs to raise awareness to end violence against women and girls this year. A film festival, Forever White Ribbon Film Festival, will be held in the second part of the campaign. Documentary films and short videos approved by the Film and Video Censor Board will be screened at the festival.

Local and foreign non-government organizations such as the Gender Equality Network, the Women’s Organizations Network (Myanmar), the Myanmar Women’s Affairs Federation, the Female Pioneer Zone, Sone Cee, Yang Chi Thit, Phan Tee Eain, FXB Myanmar, Good Shepherd Myanmar, Pyigyi Khin, Triangle Women Group, Precious Stone, Action Aid Myanmar, Kings and Queens, Legal Clinic Myanmar, DAWN, MSI, and KWPN will help organize the events this year.—MNA

(Translated by Myat Theindar Aung)
Culture and discipline raise the standard of societies

A

voiding actions that can harm others or yourself is fundamental to cultural discipline and tradition. A growing youth-driven pressure for the elimination of corruption and emasculating and mental and physical abuse and ill-treatment of all living beings. At their core, religions abound with teachings on compassion and empathy. These concepts become the standards for defining a country’s level of culture and discipline.

Myanmar has lauded its claim to a high standard of culture through successive generations because her people consider maintaining traditional discipline to be the highest virtue. This is seen as the pathway to increasing the number of all living beings. It may also lose its place when expecting mothers, traditional discipline to be the highest virtue. It seems that cultural discipline and tradition should be maintained even higher. However, the youth generation today has lost the path of traditional discipline.

We can no longer just see the elderly and young children from the above, nearly everyone in the whole of Myanmar is now with Internet and FB access.

The Future of Myanmar E-Commerce

With government just starting out Myanmar Consumer Union (MCU) for consumer protection, it may be a while before regulations are in place to prevent fraudulent sellers from exploiting consumers online.

In e-commerce space, sellers are marked up much before sales, to make the discount percentage seems higher. The so-called prices of goods on offer are in fact higher than those of what consumers can buy in offline shops. Similar complaints were seen in the comments by consumers on m-commerce, with Amazon and AliExpress taking the lead. This trend does not necessarily mean that the department stores and supermarkets are loading the way of the dinosaurs. However, the retail market is changing, and those that fail to adapt certainly face decline and even extinction. Myanmar will not be one of those to lose this trend.

Today you can research a product, compare prices, order and pay for it, and often have it delivered to your door the same or next day — all from a smartphone. All traditional retail businesses based on the streets. It may also lose its place when expecting mothers, traditional discipline to be the highest virtue. It seems that cultural discipline and tradition should be maintained even higher. However, the youth generation today has lost the path of traditional discipline.

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With government just starting out Myanmar Consumer Union (MCU) for consumer protection, it may be a while before regulations are in place to prevent fraudulent sellers from exploiting consumers online.

In e-commerce space, sellers are marked up much before sales, to make the discount percentage seems higher. The so-called prices of goods on offer are in fact higher than those of what consumers can buy in offline shops. Similar complaints were seen in the comments by consumers on m-commerce, with Amazon and AliExpress taking the lead. This trend does not necessarily mean that the department stores and supermarkets are loading the way of the dinosaurs. However, the retail market is changing, and those that fail to adapt certainly face decline and even extinction. Myanmar will not be one of those to lose this trend.

Today you can research a product, compare prices, order and pay for it, and often have it delivered to your door the same or next day — all from a smartphone. All traditional retail businesses based on the streets. It may also lose its place when expecting mothers, traditional discipline to be the highest virtue. It seems that cultural discipline and tradition should be maintained even higher. However, the youth generation today has lost the path of traditional discipline.

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Card. Charles Bo to head Federation of Asian Bishops’ Conferences

CARDINAL Charles Bo, the Archbishop of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Yangon, has been elected as the next president of the Federation of Asian Bishops’ Conferences (FABC) and will assume office on 1 January, 2019.

The decision to appoint him was made at the FABC’s central committee meeting in Bangkok on 16 November.

Cardinal Charles Bo said when he assumes office as the FABC President, he will facilitate discussions for the unemployed, the poor, and people of different faiths in Myanmar’s peace process.

Cardinal Charles Bo will take over as FABC president from Indian Cardinal Oswald Gracias.

Father Morris Nyunt Wai, executive secretary of the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of Yangon, said it is an honor to see the cardinal elected as FABC President, and remarked that he would have to shoulder greater responsibilities.

Father Dominie, secretary to Cardinal Charles Bo, said the cardinal’s assuming office as FABC President will involve increased duties. He said it will involve facilitating the unity of catholic dioceses throughout Asia and elevating living standards of the people.

Card. Charles Bo was made the first cardinal of Myanmar in January 2015. There are over 1.3 billion Roman Catholics and 200 cardinals around the world.

Pope Francis, the current pope and head of the Vatican City State, made his first visit to Myanmar in November 2017. He met with Catholic followers in Myanmar and celebrated the nation’s first-ever papal mass.

—Nandar Win m
(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

Writers Pho Kyawt, U Tun Ye (Archaeology) win 2017 Lifelong National Literary Awards

As a gesture of acknowledging the dedication of lifelong promoters of literature in the country, the National Literary Award Selection Committee of the Ministry of Information announced that Sayagyi Pho Kyawt and Writer U Tun Ye (Archaeology) have been honoured with the Lifelong National Literary Awards for 2017.

Based on a proposed list submitted by the 11 sub-committees, the winners were chosen in an open and transparent way in the presence of the literati who are responsible for approving the winners of the National Literary Awards.

The Lifelong National Literary Awards were given out since 2001. Recipients of the award include Sithu U Hla Kyawng (Paragoo) (deceased), Sithu U Hnin Phat (Maung Hnin) (deceased), Sithu U Hla Myo (Maung Hla Maung), Sithu U Lay Myaing (Lay Myaing), Sithu Daw Yin Yon (Saw Mon Nyn) (deceased), Sithu U Kyaw Khaing (Ma Kyaw), Sithu U Kyaw Aye (Sin Phyu Kyaw Aung Thein), Sithu Dr. Kyaw Sein (deceased), Sithu Dr. Khin Maung Nyunt, Sithu Dr. Thaw Kaung, U Win Maung (Min Yu Wai), Daw Khin Swe Oo (Khin Swe Oo), U Aung Thin (Aung Thin) (deceased), U Tin Maung (Theikkan Hmu Tin) (deceased), Dr. Khin Aye (Maung Khin – Danubyu), Sithu U Tin Hlaing (Lae Tin Thaw Saw Chiit), U Myint Kyi (Teikkatho Myat Soe), U Win Pe (Mya Zin), U Khin Maung Soe (Maung Paung Tun), U Ko Lay (Ko Lay Inn Wa Gone Yi), U Aung Khant (Teikkatho Win Mon) (deceased), U Tin Kha (Teikkatho Tin Kha), U Tha Noe (Maung Tha Noe), U Than Tun (Thein Than Tun) and U Kyaw Win (Nyo Win).

The prize money for the Lifelong National Literary Awards were initially Ks 600,000, and has gradually increased to Ks 5 million as of this year. The awarding ceremony of the Lifelong National Literary Award will be held at the National Theatre on Myoma Kyaung Street in Yangon on 8 December 2018.

—MNA
(Translated by Win Ko Ko Aung)

Deputy Minister for Border Affairs inspects border area development in Danu Self-Administered Zone

DEPUTY Minister for Border Affairs Maj-Gen Than Htut inspected the completion status of constructing Shawpin-Linlein-Melneltaung road (2/3) mile gravel road constructed with first six months fund from the fiscal year 2018-2019, the constructions undergoing at Ywangan-Mbyar Kalyag (1/0) mile gravel road, Yanei-Taungoo-Satchean (1/0) mile gravel road, Phaungpyar-Myanigone-Taung Chun-War Pyar road (1/0) mile gravel road and Shwepehtoe-Pansit-Kyanhinmyaung (2/0) mile earth road on 22 November.

The Deputy Minister and party inspected the completion status of constructing water supply service in Thayektone (North) Village, Pindaya Township constructed with first six months fund from fiscal year 2018-2019, work programme of access to electricity in Thayektone (South) Village, Mine Inn (Nepal) Village School, water galleries 600 sized dispenser and galleries 5000 sized dispenser and 450 ft water pipeline for the village.

The access to water will benefit 30 houses, 30 households, and 104 people. The Deputy Minister and party met and encouraged teachers, staffs, and students from Border Nationalities Development Training School in Pindaya Township and gave financial aid. They then inspected the construction processes of school, hostels for students, kitchen, dining room and planting seasonal fruits and ordered the necessary arrangements.

Winners of Sarpay Beikman Manuscript awards announced

THE Sarpay Beikman Manuscript Selection Committee announced the winners of the Sarpay Beikman Manuscript Awards for 2017.

The Sarpay Beikman Manuscript Award for novel genre went to Ko Sat Pe while the second award of the same genre went to Ko Lwin Bo (anaesthetic) and the third to Kyaw Khan.

Kyaw Lwin (Sathmu), Min Htet Myaing and A-kariz won the first, second and third awards for the collected short stories genre respectively for 2017.

In the collected poems genre, Hsan Lwin (Myannmarsar), San Myinttong and Maung Kyi Nwe (Pakelhu) won the first, second and third awards respectively.

The first and second award of the art genre went to Lwin Myammar (Mann Takkatho) and Zaw Lwin Oo (Hinhtiida) respectively.

The first, second and third awards of the science and applied science genre went to Pantonaw Khin Maung Myint, Maung Aung (Vet) and U Soe Han respectively.

The committee selected Thaug Nuamt Thit for the second award winner of the article genre and Maung Thar Lin for the third award winner.

In the Myanmar culture and art literature genre, Aung Pan Wai (LLB) won the second award and Shwenyarthar Myat Min the third.

In the child literature genre, Kanhalu Khin Maung Swo won the first award while Nandar Moe Kyal and Naing Myint won the second and third awards respectively.

In the youth literature genre, Koytu Maung Nyo Lin won the second award and Maung Nai Chi (Pyi) the third.

In the play genre, Maung Lwe Eik won the third award.

The first award of the translation literature genre went to Di Pun Lin.

The first prize winners in each category will receive K 1 million, the first runners up, K 700,000 and the second runners up will receive K 500,000. The winners were selected from the 316 manuscripts submitted to the committee.

The winners are urged to send two passport photos and curriculum vitae to the committee and to contact the management and supporting committee for presentation of the Sarpay-beikman Pk: 01-381449. The awarding ceremony will be held on 8-12-2018 (Saturday) at the National Theatre in Yangon.

—MNA
Migrants defy Trump at Mexico border as US forces flex muscle

TIJUANA (Mexico) — Hundreds of Central American migrants staged a boisterous demonstration on the US Mexico border Thursday, screaming for President Donald Trump to let them in as US soldiers and riot police put on a menacing show of force.

The increased tension over the presence of a thousands-strong migrant caravan came as Trump marked Thanksgiving Day by threatening to close the border if he thinks Mexico has lost control of it.

Vehicle and pedestrian traffic at the busy San Ysidro crossing came to a halt for 40 minutes as dozens of US police wearing helmets and holding rifles formed a line facing the Mexican side of the frontier. Separately, riot police rehearsed deployment movements. US Customs and Border Protection called all of this a “large-scale readiness exercise.”

American soldiers in khaki-colored uniforms set off rockets that exploded with a pungent-smelling white smoke. Helicopters hovered overhead.

Trump has already deployed nearly 6,000 troops along the border and on Thursday he threatened to go even further.

“Let’s go to the border! We are not looking for war, but work,” shouted Alberto Ruiz, a 22-year-old Honduran.

“Today is a special day. It is Thanksgiving in the United States. They are not going to lynch us,” he said as a crowd applauded and screamed in support.

As the chill of night set in, dozens of migrants hugged their wet belongings from the shelter and set up a new camp right in the middle of a street near the El Chaparral crossing.

Authorities in Tijuana have set up a job fair in an attempt to recruit skilled workers from among the migrants for the benefit of local companies, while Mexico’s migration agency has offered them temporary residency papers.

Some have taken advantage of the offers but others are simply determined to reach the US.

Since setting out more than a month ago, mostly from Honduras, thousands of migrants have covered about 4,400 kilometers (2,700 miles), either walking or hitchhiking, before the first groups began reaching Tijuana at the end of last week.

But there have been tension since they started arriving at the border town, with some locals fearing crime and violence.

The migrants are mostly fleeing poverty and unrest in Central America’s “Northern Triangle” — El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras, where gang violence has fuelled some of the highest murder rates in the world.— AFP ■

THE NATIONAL LITERATURE AWARDS

Winners of 2017 National Literature Awards announced

THE National Literature Awards Selection Committee announced the winners of the National Literature Award for 2017.

The National Literature Award for novel genre went to Lu Kao: Tint Zaw won collected short stories genre award, Ma Nitar won collected poems genre award, Tin Nyunt won the article collections genre award, Sabel Phyu Nu won award for children’s literature genre. Lin Htet Swe won translated literature genre award, Su Twin Tint Zaw won translated fiction genre award, and Sin Phyu Kyun Than Tun fiction collection (weikza) genre award. Maung Maung Soe won the political literature genre award. Dr Khin Let Yar won English literature genre award, and Maung Yint Mar won collection of fiction papers genre award.

The National Literature Award initially conferred Ks 300,000 as the cash prize but has gradually increased it to Ks 500,000 in 2011, Ks 1 million in 2012, Ks 1.5 million in 2013 and to Ks 2.5 million this year.

The National Literature Awards Selection Committee is comprised of 65 members who are experts and professionals in their respective fields in the printing and publishing field.

The National Literature Awards winners are requested to contact the Literature Award Management and Support Committee by phone (01-381449) or at their address at No. 529-531 in Sarpay Beikman building, Merchant Road, Yangon, as soon as possible. Winners are urged to send two 5x7 color photos, two passport size color photos and a brief biography of themselves within one week starting from the announcement date.

— MNA ■ (Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)
Four killed as gunmen attack Chinese consulate in Karachi

KARACHI (Pakistan) — Four people were killed on Friday when gunmen armed with hand grenades and a suicide vest stormed the Chinese consulate in the Pakistani city of Karachi, officials said, with the attack claimed by a separatist group which branded Beijing “an oppressor”.

Pakistani authorities said that security forces had secured the area after the attack, the latest assault on Chinese nationals in the country, where Beijing has poured billions of dollars into one of the largest projects in its massive Belt and Road programme.

China “strongly condemned” the attack and asked Pakistan to take measures to ensure the safety of Chinese citizens and institutions in the country, as well as the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) mega-project.

Three gunmen tried to enter the consulate in the southern port city, but were intercepted by guards at a checkpoint, Karachi police chief Ameer Sheikh told AFP. “They were holding Kalashnikovs. First, they hurled a small (grenade) and then started firing,” said Allah Baksh, a guard at a nearby house who witnessed the attack.

Police officials said two of their personnel were killed, along with a father and son from Quetta who were seeking Chinese visas and were caught in the crossfire.

At least one of the attackers was wearing a suicide vest which did not detonate, another senior police official said.

Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi told reporters in Islamabad that “all the terrorists have been eliminated”, and that all 21 staff at the consulate during the attack had been taken to a safe location. “Situation under control,” the military’s media wing added in a statement.

China is an ‘oppressor’

The attack was claimed by a separatist militant group from Pakistan’s southwestern province of Balochistan, which is at the centre of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, the major Chinese project in the country.

“We have been seeing the Chinese as an oppressor, along with Pakistani forces,” the spokesman for the Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA), Geand Baloch, told AFP by telephone from an undisclosed location, adding they were “destroying the future of Balochistan”.

The BLA later emailed a statement to media in which it said the attack was “aimed at making it clear that China’s military expansionism on Baloch soil will not be tolerated”.

It warned the Chinese to leave “or be prepared for continued attacks”. The group is just one of the militant outfits operating in Balochistan, Pakistan’s largest and poorest province, which is rife with ethnic, sectarian and separatist insurgencies.

Residents of the resource-rich province, which borders Iran and Afghanistan, have long complained that it does not receive a fair share of the profits made from its mineral wealth.

Prime Minister Imran Khan said Friday’s attack would not undermine the Pakistan-China relationship, which he described in a statement as “mightier than Himalayas and deeper than Arabian Sea”. Also on Friday a bomb hidden in a carton of vegetables killed at least 20 people at a marketplace in Pakistan’s northwestern tribal region. Dozens more people were wounded, with fears the toll could rise.

Chinese investment

China, one of Pakistan’s closest allies, has poured billions into the South Asian country in recent years as part of CPEC, a massive infrastructure project that seeks to connect its western province Xinjiang with the Arabian Sea port of Gwadar in Balochistan.

The project is one of the largest in Beijing’s “One Belt One Road” initiative, comprising a network of roads and sea routes involving 65 countries.

Pakistan sees the project as a “threat to our danger”, but it presents an enormous challenge in a country plagued by weak institutions, endemic corruption and a range of insurrgencies in areas slated to host the corridor.

The subject of economic dividends from CPEC is extremely sensitive in some of those areas — particularly in Balochistan.

Since the beginning of the project, militants have repeatedly attacked construction sites, blowing up numerous gas pipelines and trains, and targeted Chinese workers. In August this year three Chinese nationals were among six wounded in a suicide attack on a bus transporting Chinese engineers working in Balochistan, in an attack that was also claimed by the BLA.

The Pakistani military has been targeting insurgencies in the province since 2004, and has been repeatedly accused by international rights groups of abuses there.

Islamabad regularly accuses its eastern neighbour India of funding and arming Baloch separatists, and of targeting development projects in the province, particularly CPEC.

India’s foreign ministry swiftly condemned Friday’s attack in a statement, saying: “There can be no justification whatsoever for any act of terrorism”. —AFP

Escaping death and rebirth on Varanasi’s sacred riverbanks

VARANASI (India) — Boats loaded with wood arrive almost constantly at the ghats of Varanasi for around 200 cremations per day on the banks of India’s holy Ganges river. Each pyre needs between 200 and 400 kilogrammes (440 pounds) of wood, meaning the sacred city in northern India burns through as much as 80 tonnes every day.

To reduce the volume used, as well as air and water pollution, authorities have tried to push the use of alternative burning materials such as cow-dung. But without much success.

“People have to be sensitised about the emissions caused by wood burning. Only then can this issue be tackled,” said Vivek Chattopadhyay, pollution expert at the Centre for Science and Environment.

For centuries Hindus have visited Varanasi to cremate their dead so that they can achieve “moksha”, the release from the cycle of death and rebirth. As the bodies wrapped in white shroud and marigold flowers turn to ash, the remains are collected and sprinkled in the river. At the ghats, the Doms — caretakers of the cremation grounds — pass flaming torches to the families of the deceased, who ignite the wooden pyres dotting the Riverside. —AFP

South Korea closes biggest dog slaughterhouse complex

SEOUL (South Korea) — South Korean officials on Thursday began to dismantle the country’s largest canine slaughterhouse complex, as animal rights activists push to end the custom of eating dog meat.

About one million dogs are eaten a year in South Korea, often as a summertime delicacy with the greasy red meat — invariably boiled for tenderness — believed to increase energy.

But the tradition has earned criticism abroad and has declined as the nation increasingly embraces the idea of dogs as pets instead of livestock, with eating them now something of a taboo among young South Koreans.

The Taepyeong-dong complex in Seongnam city, south of Seoul, housed at least six dog slaughterhouses that could hold several hundred animals at a time, and was a major source for dog meat restaurants across the country.

It will be cleared over two days and transformed into a public park, Seongnam city officials said.

Slaughterhouse operators reportedly used the site for decades without proper authorisations, and after a years-long legal battle a Seoul court ruled the city council could force out the businesses.

Animal rights campaigners slammed the operators for mistreating dogs and killing them cruelly — including electrocuting them before butchering them in the sight of other caged dogs. —AFP
Greenhouse gas levels in atmosphere hit new high: UN

LONDON — The levels of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, the main driver of climate change, have hit a new record high, the UN said Thursday, warning that the time to act was running out.

Ahead of the COP 24 climate summit in Poland next month, top United Nations officials are again trying to raise the pressure on governments to meet the pledge of limiting warming to less than two degrees Celsius, enshrined in the 2015 Paris accord.

“Without rapid cuts in CO₂ and other greenhouse gases, climate change will have increasingly destructive and irreversible impacts on life on Earth,” the head of the World Meteorological Organization Petteri Taalas said in a statement.

“The window of opportunity for action is almost closed.”

The Greenhouse Gas Bulletin, the UN weather agency’s annual flagship report, tracks the content of dangerous gases in the atmosphere since 1750.

This year’s report, which covers data for 2017, puts the concentration of CO₂ in the atmosphere at 405.3 parts per million (ppm). That is up from 403.3 ppm in 2016 and 401.1 ppm in 2015.

“The last time the Earth experienced a comparable concentration of CO₂ was 3-5 million years ago, when the temperature was 2-3 °Cwarmer,” Taalas said. Researchers have reliable estimates of CO₂ concentrations rates going back 800,000 years using air bubbles preserved in ice in Greenland and Antarctica.

But by studying fossilised material the WMO also has rough CO₂ estimates going back up to five million years.

In addition to CO₂, the UN agency also highlighted rising levels of methane, nitrous oxide and another powerful ozone depleting gas known as CFC-11.

No magic wand

Emissions are the main factor that determines the amount of greenhouse gas levels, but concentration rates are a measure of what remains after a series of complex interactions between atmosphere, biosphere, lithosphere, cryosphere and the oceans.

Roughly 25 per cent of all emissions are currently absorbed by the oceans and biosphere — a term that accounts for all ecosystems on Earth.

The UN’s Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has said that in order to keep warming below 1.5 degrees Celsius, net CO₂ emissions must be net zero, meaning the amount being pumped into the atmosphere must equal the amount being removed, either through natural absorption or technological innovation.

WMO’s deputy chief, Elena Mananenlova, noted that CO₂ remains in the atmosphere and oceans for hundreds of years.

“There is currently no magic wand to remove all the excess CO₂ from the atmosphere,” she said.

“Every fraction of a degree of global warming matters, and so does every part per million of greenhouse gases,” she added.

According to the UN, 17 of the 18 hottest years on record have occurred since 2001, while the cost of climate-related disasters in 2017 topped $500 billion (439 billion euros).

No room for climate delay, UN chief tells online summit

Ahead of the COP 24 climate talks in the southern Polish city of Katowice, which will attempt to revive a global climate deal reached in Paris in 2015,

Addressing the Virtual Climate Summit, Guterres urged world leaders to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit) above pre-industrial levels.

He praised the online summit, which has been organised by the Marshall Islands using online technology to remain carbon neutral, as an example of the innovative thinking needed to combat climate change.

“We need more such creativity to transform our economy and limit global warming to as close to 1.5 “Celsius as possible,” he said.

“Climate change is moving faster than we are and we cannot afford any more delay,” he said.

The world counts on all nations to ensure that next month’s climate conference in Poland is a success.”

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Back stage, Paris Opera keeps venerable crafts alive

PARIS — At the Paris Opera, people often say that for the curtain to rise on its stars, the talents of 100 different trades are needed behind the scenes.

Thanks to an academy, founded in 2015, to preserve some of those specialised crafts, Brazilian Tulio Morais will finally realise his dream of learning to make ballet tutus.

Every year, around 40 students like Morais train in skills such as costume making, wig design and tapestry, as well as lyrical singing and music, at the heart of the opera company, which celebrates its 350th anniversary next year.

While other opera houses have workshops in singing and sewing, Paris Opera, the largest in Europe, is the “only one in the world that teaches such a large number of arts”, Myriam Mazouzi, the academy director, told AFP.

The concept is to pass on the knowledge of these crafts at risk of disappearing to already experienced professionals who can safeguard the know-how.

“In some sectors it was a real struggle to recruit people,” the director said. In the female costume department at the opera’s historic Palais Garnier site in central Paris, tutor and workshop head Anne-Marie Legrand promised Morais that he will soon put together his first tutu for “Swan Lake” in January.

She runs him through the process, from costume design to fitting and adjusting the volumes.

“I always dreamed of making timeless clothes,” says Morais, who is discovering new stitching and finishing techniques.

With ready-to-wear collections, “it lasts six months, a costume on stage, it’s for life”.

Bygone hairstyles

Neighboring dozens of white tutus are hanging up in a historic room known as “central”.

“There are very few people in the world who know” how to make this emblematic ballet skirt, which was first created at Paris Opera in the 19th century, Legrand said. “There is no real school for this,” she added.

According to the director, fashion designer Christian Lacroix said that the Paris Opera was the only place in the world that really knows how to work with tulle fabric.

Legrand said that when she joined the Paris Opera 36 years ago, tutu making was a jealously guarded secret, transmitted from seamstress to seamstress.

“One needs to guide you” in gathering the pleats and layers of the tutu, she said.

In another workshop, a tutor runs through the intricacies of wig making and student Camille Laurent learns to distinguish styles from 1830 and 1850.

“When I tell people I am a wig maker, they say to me: ‘You’re what?’” she laughs.

Her teacher, Clothilde Losoveldt, shows how to implant hair, strand by strand, with a hook and create the long wigs of rigid tight curls popular among men in the 18th century.

One wig can take 10 days to make. “If the volume is not good, if the bun is not the right height, then we can easily slip from one era to another,” said the wigmaker who has worked at the Paris Opera for 20 years.

‘Codes and habits’

At the Paris Opera’s Bastille site, violinist Marin Lamacque, who plays for five years during which he has regularly been in hot water over his videos. In September last year he apologised after he was heard using a racial slur in an expletive-laden rant against an opponent while playing a live-streamed computer game.

Earlier in 2017 he lost contracts with YouTube and Disney over anti-Semitic comments. He was temporarily blocked from Twitter in 2016 after joking he had joined the Islamic State group.

‘World recognition’

With T-Series rapidly closing in, fans of the Swedish gamer have rallied to push up his subscriber numbers in recent days but that will likely only delay the inevitable. On Thursday both had over 71 million subscribers. PewDiePie was ahead by around 150,000 with T-Series expected to overtake it in coming days.

“It will give us recognition all over the globe,” chairman Kumar said. The company, one of India’s biggest record labels, operates 29 channels in Hindi, Tamil, Punjabi and other languages. It also airs health fitness videos and children’s cartoons.—AFP

Backstage at the Paris Opera, costume making and wig design are among the many skills taught in a new academy to preserve traditional crafts. Every year, around 40 students train in these skills, which are considered “central” to the opera company. The Paris Opera, founded in 1669, is one of the oldest opera houses in the world. - Photo: AFP

Bollywood music giant T-Series to take YouTube top-spot from PewDiePie

MUMBAI — A Bollywood music giant is on course to overtake controversial Swedish vlogger PewDiePie at the top of the YouTube channel subscribers chart in the coming days in a new landmark for India’s digital rise.

T-Series will become the first non-English-language channel to hold top spot on the world’s most popular video platform as smartphone ownership soars in the country of 1.25 billion people.

“We’re very excited, for the organisation and for India. An Indian channel becoming number one is a big compliment for the entire country,” T-Series chairman Bhushan Kumar told AFP.

Few outside the Indian diaspora will know T-Series’ typically upbeat song and dance videos, but they are already the most-watched on YouTube. They have been seen more than 53 billion times, again beating PewDiePie — whose videos have notched just over 19 billion views — as well as Justin Bieber and Taylor Swift.

The Swede, whose real name is Felix Kjellberg, has had the highest number of subscribers for five years during which he has regularly been in hot water by the intervention of a charming but incompetent angel called Clarence, who reveals to him the positive effect he has had on his community by showing him what would have happened to him had he not been there.

If the lines were all written out in one line they would stretch for 7.5 kilometers, and the project has been organized by rail firm Virgin Trains and mental health charity Rethink Mental Illness.

James Fletcher, head of corporate partnerships at Rethink Mental Illness said: “It is vital at this time of year to let people know that help is available if they need it – this campaign highlights the need for this support at a time of year which can be difficult for some of us, and we are proud to be part of it.”

The lines from the film will be painted on the platform edges to remind people that there is help, and to make them think again if they are contemplating suicide.

The lines will be painted at major stations connecting England to Scotland starting on Thursday at the major London terminal Euston.

Lines will be added between now and Christmas at major stations including Birmingham New Street, Crewe, Liverpool Lime Street, Manchester Piccadilly, Preston, Carlisle and Glasgow. —Xinhua

7.5-km-long art project welcomes Christmas on UK railways

LONDON — An art project 7.5 kilometers long will this year mark the run-up to Christmas on Britain’s railways, and help tackle the problem of suicide.

Well-known lines from one of the most famous of all Christmas movies will be painted on the platforms at more than a dozen of the large stations in Britain.

The lines are from the American movie “It’s a Wonderful Life”, which was made in 1946 and starred Jimmy Stewart as a disillusioned small-town estate agent who tries to commit suicide on Christmas Eve, because he believes his business is a failure.

He is stopped from drowning by the intervention of a charming but incompetent angel called Clarence, who reveals to him the positive effect he has had on his community by showing him what would have happened to him had he not been there.

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First human remains found in El Salvador’s ‘Mayan Pompeii’

SAN SALVADOR (El Salvador) — Human remains have been discovered for the first time in El Salvador’s Joya de Ceren, a city buried by a volcanic eruption more than 1,400 years ago and sometimes dubbed the “Mayan Pompeii,” the ministry of culture said Thursday.

A skeleton, which was in poor condition, was discovered at the beginning of November, buried with an obsidian knife at the UNESCO World Heritage archaeological site located about 20 miles (33 kilometers) north of the capital San Salvador.

The person “probably lived in the city but was not killed by the eruption” of the Loma Caldera volcano, archaeologist Michelle Toledo said.

Toledo added that researchers believed the remains date to the Late Classic period of Mesoamerica because of the presence of fine white tephra, known as “Tierra Blanca Joven” (young white earth) resulting from the volcanic eruption around 555 AD.

The cataclysmic eruption of the Loma Caldera volcano destroyed numerous Mayan sites and was responsible for the formation of Lake Ilopango, with an area of 27.8 square miles (72 square kilometers).

The remains are the first to be discovered in more than 40 years of excavations.

Lake Pompeii and Herculaneum in Italy, the remains of Joya de Ceren were discovered in exceptional condition, providing a rare insight into the Mayan way of life including rituals, agriculture, trade, governance and eating habits. — AFP

New edible cricket species discovered in Kenya

SHARM EL-SHEIKH (Egypt) — Researchers said on Wednesday that they have discovered a new edible cricket with great promise for human consumption with mass production. This new edible cricket can be an alternative protein ingredient, said Tanga Mbi, a scientist of the International Center of Insect Physiology and Ecology (ICIPF). during the 14th meeting of Convention on Biological Diversity held in Egypt.

“There is no available scientific information of this new species now, because it is erroneously recognized as Acheta domestica, a different cricket species,” Mbi explained to Xinhu, adding that they are actually named Scapsipedus icipes in farms across Kenya. He said that their study focuses on the species’ habitat, molecular and morphological characterization, and acoustic behavior including male’s call and courtship song, current distribution in Kenya and nutritional profile.

Mbi said that the discovery is important as it will enable the development of rearing techniques and ultimately the effective incorporation of the species as a component in food and feed.

He revealed that Scapsipedus icipes, which is commonly found around the buildings and fields, is characterized by a distinctive yellow band between the eyes.

This is different from other species within the genus Scapsipedeus by a characteristic call and territorial nature of its males. —Xinhua

NASA counts down to landing of Martian quake-sensor, InSight

TAMPA (United States) — NASA is counting down to a nail-biting touchdown Monday of the $993 million Mars InSight, the first spacecraft to listen for quakes and study the inner workings of another rocky planet.

No one is on board the spacecraft, which launched nearly seven months ago and has traveled some 300 million miles (482 million kilometers).

But part of its mission is to inform efforts to one day send human explorers to the Red Planet, which NASA hopes to do by the 2030s.

The lander is the first to reach Mars since 2012, when NASA’s Curiosity rover touched down to scour the surface and analyze rocks for signs that life forms may once have inhabited Earth’s neighbor, now a frigid and dry planet.

InSight must survive tense entry into Mars’ atmosphere, traveling at a speed of 12,300 miles (19,800 kilometers) per hour and swiftly slowing to just five mph (eight kph).

This entry, descent and landing phase begins at 11:47 am in California (1947 GMT) — and is only half-jokingly referred to at NASA as “Six and a Half Minutes of Terror.”

Of 43 missions launched to toward Mars, only 18 have made it intact — a success rate of around 40 percent. All those that made it came from the United States.

“Getting to Mars is really, really hard,” said Thomas Zurbruchen, associate administrator for the NASA science mission directorate.

“The exciting part is we are building on the success of the best team that has ever landed on this planet, which is the NASA team with its contractors and its collaborators.”

French seismometer

The name InSight is derived from “Interior Exploration using Seismic Investigations, Geodesy and Heat Transport.”

The spacecraft itself stands about waist high, at 3.5 feet (one meter), and once its solar arrays are deployed they will span 20 feet. PHOTO: AFP

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The lander must set itself down upright. And then, another critical step is for the solar arrays to deploy, since the lander’s one-year mission will be fully solar-powered.

NASA should know within minutes if the landing went well or not, but will have to wait more than five hours for confirmation of the solar array deployment, due to the orbit pattern of the Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter and Mars Odyssey which can communicate InSight’s status back to Earth.

That first confirming ping at 2004 GMT Monday is eagerly awaited by the crew at mission control at NASA’s Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, California.

“I do have a lot of blood sweat and tears invested in this, and I am looking forward to a nice, safe touchdown on Monday,” said Stu Spath, InSight program manager at Lockheed Martin. —AFP
Jones wants ‘sharp and smart’ England against Australia

LONDON — England coach Eddie Jones has warned his side to stay “sharp and smart” when they bring down the curtain on their 2018 against his native Australia at Twickenham on Saturday.

Jones’s men have won just five of 11 Tests in 2018 and Australia four of 12 heading into this weekend’s match — concerning figures with less than a year to go until the World Cup in Japan.

It was all a far cry from Jones’s stunning start as England boss — an appointment made after Australia knocked the hosts out of the 2015 World Cup — which saw just two points down at half-time.

But Jones has reverted to something near his strongest available side with Owen Farrell, whose entry off the bench for the second half turned the tide against Japan, starting at fly-half. —AFP

Ronaldo gets back to business for Juventus

ROME — Cristiano Ronaldo gets back to business for Italian champions Juventus against SPAL on Saturday after missing Portugal’s qualification for the Nations League semi-finals amid reports he has been snubbed for the final three in the Ballon d’Or award.

The 33-year-old Ronaldo has won the prestigious Ballon d’Or five times but could be excluded from the top three, with the winner to be revealed in Paris on December 3.

Ronaldo was rested from Portugal’s last four internationals as they beat Denmark, Hungary and Latvia before returning to train in Turin. —AFP

AFF Suzuki Cup: Team Myanmar confident ahead of match against Malaysia

MYANMAR’S national football team will play Malaysia tonight at the Bukit Jalil Stadium in Kuala Lumpur in a decisive group stage match for the AFF Suzuki Cup 2018.

Both teams are eager to enter the semifinals of the tournament.

Coach Antoine Hey said that team Myanmar is confident ahead of the game. “We want the stadium to be as full as possible. The more people in the stadium, the better it is for everyone,” he said.

“I rested enough players to make sure we have everyone available for this game because we knew this would be the most important game. We have a full squad. My players are highly motivated. It will be very interesting because of the situation in the table,” he added.

Malaysian head coach Tan Chen Hoe said Myanmar is among the best teams in ASEAN and is still leading the table. Myanmar can counter attack fast, and the match will be worth watching, he said. —Lynn Thit (Tgi)

So far, things have gone ally satisfying. The Scudetto is a dream for us and it is not a utopia. Utopias are impossible, dreams can be realised.

Napoli last won the Italian league title in 1990.

Inter’s seven-match winning run ended with a heavy 4-1 defeat at Atalanta last time out.

And Luciano Spalletti’s side need to secure maximum points with upcoming matches against Roma and Juventus.

But they have injury problems in defence with Brazilian Dalbert and Croatian Sime Vrsaljko sidelined.

“The loss again Atalanta was a heavy slap for us,” said Ghanaian defender Kwadwo Asamoah.

“We have to learn from it and give an important signal before the (Champions League) match against Tottenham.”

Lazio, in fourth, host AC Milan, just one point behind and playing without suspended Argentine forward Gonzalo Higuain, with sixth-placed Roma travelling to Udinese before their Champions League game against holders Real Madrid.

Genoa and Sampdoria go head to head on Sunday night in the city’s first derby since the bridge disaster last August that killed 43 people. —AFP