State Counsellor leaves for Nepal to pay official visit, to attend Asia-Pacific Summit-2018

Workshop on national strategy for closing IDP camps held

State Counsellor attends opening of Nepal Chamber Expo-2018

STATE Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and her delegation departed from Nay Pyi Taw by special flight to the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal yesterday morning and arrived at Tribhuvan International Airport in Kathmandu at 11 am local standard time.

The State Counsellor was welcomed by Myanmar Ambassador to Nepal Thiri Pyanchi U Tun Nay Lin and Mr. Dipak Adhikari, Chief of the Protocol Division of Nepal’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The State Counsellor was greeted by the Deputy Prime Minister of Nepal Mr. Ishwor Pokhrel at the airport where they reviewed the Guards of Honor.

The State Counsellor and her delegation then departed by motorcade for the Soaltee Crowne Plaza Hotel where they will be staying temporarily.

In the afternoon, the State Counsellor received the Foreign Minister of Nepal Affairs Mr. Pradeep Kumar Gyawali at the Soaltee Crowne Plaza Hotel.

During the meeting, they openly discussed promoting bilateral relations and cooperation between Myanmar and Nepal, who share a long diplomatic history together.

They also discussed promoting bilateral trade and establishing a direct Myanmar-Nepal flight to promote tourism.

Afterwards, the State Counsellor and her delegation went to attend the Nepal Chamber Expo 2018 at the Bhrikut Mandap Exhibition Hall, where the State Counsellor delivered a speech.

“State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi officially opens the Nepal Chamber Expo-2018 in Kathmandu, Nepal. PHOTO: MNA

...investments in Myanmar are fully protected by the law which was crafted to be in line with regional and international agreements.

PHOTO: MNA

This Expo will serve as an excellent platform for enhancing awareness, creating networks among our business communities and promoting economic and trade relations between our two countries,” said Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. SEE PAGE-3

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THE Second Pyidaungsu Hluttaw’s tenth regular session held its fifth-day meeting at Pyidaungsu Hluttaw meeting hall yesterday.

Hluttaw agrees on appointing U Min Thu as Union Minister for Union Government Office

The meeting starts off with Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker U T Khun Myat announcing the agreement of the Hluttaw on the appointment of U Min Thu as Union Minister for Union Government Office as proposed by the President.

Hluttaw approves Bill Amending the Sea Customs Act

Next, Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker obtained the paragraph by paragraph decision and approval of the Hluttaw based on the comment of the joint bill committee regarding the Bill Amending the Sea Customs Act followed by Deputy Minister for Planning and Finance U Maung Maung Win, tabling a motion to approve the entire bill.

After obtaining the decision of the Hluttaw, The Speaker announced the Hluttaw’s approval of the entire bill.

Government debt explained and reported

Annual report on the government debt for financial year 2017-2018 was then explained by Deputy Minister for Planning and Finance U Maung Maung Win.

The Deputy Minister explained that based on the comments and remarks of the Joint Public Accounts Committee and suggestions and discussions of the Hluttaw representatives on government debt annual report for financial year 2016-2017 the annual report on the government debt for financial year 2017-2018 includes comparison of data and debits figures for three financial years starting from 2015-2016 to 2017-2018, internal debt as of 31 March 2018 were shown period wise, assessment of challenges and difficulties faced on debt management for financial year 2017-2018 and charts and diagrams that includes figures and percentages were added to make it a better report.

As the report was prepared as discussed and suggested by the Hluttaw representatives and followed the comments and findings of the Joint Public Accounts Committee, the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw is requested to put on record the government debt annual report for financial year 2017-2018.

Following this, Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Joint Public Accounts Committee secretary U Khin Maung Than read the committee’s findings and comments report 10/2018 on the annual report.

 Afterwards the Speaker announced report on the committee’s findings and comments on Traditional Medicine Council Bill on which the two Hluttaws were in disagreement was read by committee secretary U Zaw Win. This was followed by the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker announcing for Hluttaw representatives who wish to discuss the report to register their names.

Discussion and decision on IASIA membership

Dr. Tin Tin Win of Bago Region constituency 5 and U Saw of Nyaung U constituency also discussed the matter of obtaining IASIA membership that becoming a member of IASIA will allow institutes of civil service to study good international experiences and practice, raise the human resources capacity on teaching and training, enable discussion with international research organisations and prepare administration and management papers in collaboration with international research organisations, eventually raising the capacity of the institutes to international level and share international experiences on training and teaching public servants.

The Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker then announced the Hluttaw’s approval of the loan after obtaining the decision of the Hluttaw.

Hluttaw approves $ 24.3 mln NEDA loan

The Speaker then announced the Hluttaw’s approval of the loan after 463 Hluttaw representatives voted for with 9 against and 2 abstaining.

Hluttaw discuss and decide to sign MCC MMoU

As a final agenda of the day Hluttaw representatives discussed the matter of signing Mekong Capital Market Cooporation Multilateral Memorandum of Understanding (MCC MMoU). U Khin Cho of Hlaingthwe constituency and Dr. Khin Sithu of Loikaw constituency discussed in support of the matter while Daw Khin Hnin Thit of Padaung constituency and U Kyaw Thaung of Sagai Region constituency 1 participated in the discussion.

Deputy Minister for Planning and Finance U Maung Maung Win responded to the discussion and explained about the benefits of signing the MoU and requested the Hluttaw to approve the signing of the MoU. Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker then announced Hluttaw’s approval to sign the MoU after the decision of the Hluttaw was obtained. The sixth-day meeting of the tenth regular session of the Second Pyidaungsu Hluttaw is scheduled for 3 December. —Aung Ye Thwin, Aye Aye Thant (MNA) (Translated by Zaw Min)

...the loan includes US$ 11.3 million to upgrade water distribution system in Myawady, $ 76 million to upgrade waste disposal system in Myawady, $ 2.2 million for capacity building of government personnel in Myawady to conduct Public Awareness Programs, as well as financing charges and other expenses.

-Dy Minister U Kyaw Lin
The Myanmar Companies’ Law will transform the corporate landscape by facilitating company registration, reducing the regulations for small companies, creating a friendlier environment for companies, and improving compliance with rules and regulations.

State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi
State Counsellor attends opening of Nepal Chamber Expo-2018

FROM PAGE 3

“Myanmar is endowed with abundant natural resources. We also possess ample opportunities for infrastructure development as our government places special emphasis on prioritizing the basic needs of our people: particularly improved transportation networks, electrification, development of smart cities and improvement of healthcare and quality education.”

“The last is the most important as our most precious resource is our people, particularly our young, who constitute a vibrant work force with enormous, as yet unplumbed, potential,” she said. State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi encouraged the Nepalese business community to explore new opportunities in Myanmar and work together with Myanmar business sector for mutual benefits.

Additional speeches were delivered by former Prime Minister of Nepal and Chairman of the Communist Party of Nepal Mr. Pushpa Kamal Dahal, and Chairman of Nepal’s Merchant Association Mr. Rajesh Kaji Shrestha.

The officials and the State Counsellor then cut ceremonial ribbons to open the Nepal Chamber Expo 2018. The State Counsellor then toured the exhibitions at the expo, including exhibitions from Myanmar, together with the former Prime Minister and the Merchant Association Chairman. The Nepal Chamber Expo 2018 has 145 booths from Bangladesh, China, India, Japan, Pakistan, Thailand and Myanmar displaying regional natural gems, jewelry, modern products and traditional accessories.

Myanmar is also displaying regional lentils and coffee products in addition to natural gems, jewelry, modern products and traditional accessories in 20 booths.

In the evening, the State Counsellor met with embassy staff and their families at the Myanmar Embassy in Nepal. In the evening, the Myanmar Ambassador and wife hosted a dinner in honour of the State Counsellor and her delegation.
— MNA
(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi delivers the speech at the opening of Nepal Chamber Expo 2018. PHOTO: MNA

State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi is seen off by Union Minister U Kyaw Tint Swe (Right) as she leaves for Nepal to attend the Asia-Pacific Summit-2018. PHOTO: MNA

State Counsellor leaves for Nepal to pay official visit, to attend Asia-Pacific Summit-2018

AT the invitation of Nepalese Prime Minister Mr. K.P. Sharma Oli, State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi left Nay Pyi Taw by special flight at 9:20 am yesterday for Nepal to pay an official visit and to attend the Asia-Pacific Summit-2018.

The delegation, led by State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, was seen off at the Nay Pyi Taw International Airport by Union Minister for Office of the State Counsellor U Kyaw Tint Swe, Nay Pyi Taw Council Chairman Dr. Myo Aung and wife, chargé d’affaires a.i. of the Embassy of the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal to Myanmar and officials.

State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi was accompanied by Union Minister for the Office of the Union Government U Min Thu, Union Minister for International Co-operation U Kyaw Tin, Deputy Minister for Commerce U Aung Htoo, officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.— MNA

(Translated by Win Ko Ko Aung)
Gold to soon move freely within the country, says entrepreneurs guild

By Nyein Nyein

THE government will soon allow free transport of gold within the country at the recommendation of the gold entrepreneurs association, said U Tin Tun, the chair of the Mandalay Gold Entrepreneurs Association (MGEA).

Members of the Yangon Gold Entrepreneurs Association and the Mandalay Gold Entrepreneurs Association met with high-ranking officials from the Ministry of Home Affairs, including deputy minister Major-General Aung Thu, he said.

At the meeting, the associations called for free transport of gold within the country. A free transport association have been asked to finalize a form and submit it to the authorities. Once the authorities give them the green light, the chair of the association will be responsible for issuing the forms. The forms will serve as official documents allowing us to carry gold within the country. All domestic airports will be notified about the forms,” said U Tin Tun, chair of Mandalay Gold Entrepreneurs Association. “Once the associations recommend their form and it is permitted, gold can be freely carried within the country without any unwarranted confiscation. However, the gold being transported must be legitimate,” he said.

At present, gold nuggets are exempt from commercial tax. Although export/import of gold and jewellery products are permitted, they cannot be freely carried within the country, according to the Yangon Gold Entrepreneurs Association.

“We made efforts to reduce the exemption from 5 per cent to zero. A one-stop service center for gold export/import was opened. It is unfair when gold cannot be freely transported in the country. A free transportation permit can ensure smooth flow of the commodity and facilitate processing,” said U Tin Tun.

At present, gold nuggets are transported across the country by road, flight, and ships. However, the transport of gold nuggets, especially by air, usually runs into difficulties, according to the Yangon Gold Entrepreneurs Association.

Myanmar’s imports reach $2.39 bln

THE value of Myanmar’s imports touched US$2.39 billion in the period between 1 October and 16 November this year, with private sector imports totaling $2.17 billion, according to data released by the Ministry of Commerce.

In the first month and a half of the Fiscal Year 2018-2019, the total import value showed an increase of $232 million compared with the same period last year.

The total imports of consumer goods stood at $598 million in the current FY, up $86 million from last year. Myanmar imports consumer products such as pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, and palm oil.

Imports of capital goods such as auto parts, vehicles, machines, steel, and airplane parts, totalled $823.8 million, an increase of $122 million from the same period last year.

Intermediate goods make up the bulk of Myanmar’s imports, with petroleum products and plastic raw materials being the main import items. This year imports of intermediate goods stood at $971 million. The import value of raw materials increased by $22 million against last FY. —GNLM

(Translated by El Myat Mon)

Myanmar exports total $1.86 bln in current fiscal

MYANMAR’S exports reached US$1.86 billion for the period between 1 October and 16 November this year, up $415 million compared with the same period last year, according to data from the Ministry of Commerce.

During the same period last year, Myanmar’s exports were pegged at $1.44 billion. Out of the seven export groups, shipments of agriculture, livestock, fishery, and finished industrial goods registered an increase, while exports of minerals and forest products declined.

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(Translated by El Myat Mon)
Pre-ceremony of National Day of Thailand held in Nay Pyi Taw

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw’s Legal Affairs and Special Cases Assessment Commission Chairman Thura U Shwe Mann meets British Ambassador

Second meeting on national indicator framework held in Nay Pyi Taw

Fake Ks10,000 notes seized from Singaporean couple in Yangon
Reform means reforms carried out in government sector to improve private sector and to create economic growth

Director General U Aung Soe

Dialogue titled “Is Doing Business in Myanmar Easy?”

Myanmar Radio and Television presents the dialogue under the title “Is Doing Business in Myanmar Easy?” in which Director General U Aung Soe of Directorate of Investment and Company Administration, Director General U Aung Naing Oo of Directorate of Investment and Company Administration, and Secretary Daw Khang Haing Nwe of Myanmar Garment Entrepreneurs Association are participating.

Myanmar’s migrant workers must note that C of I is issued only when a migrant worker is identified as a Myanmar citizen.

Workers have been advised to contact the Myanmar embassy and diplomatic (labour affairs) in Malaysia to apply for C of I. The Myanmar embassy in Malaysia is working with civil societies there to help them.

But, it has been found that illegal migrants often register themselves at the UNHCR office in Malaysia and find work using C of I. The Myanmar embassy in Malaysia is working with civil societies connected in manufacturing, agriculture, food stuff production, and electronics and scrutinized whether they were Myanmar citizens and made the cards issued by the UNHCR.

Making reforms is to find the easiest way distant from the previous approach. This process is not an easy There are something that we try to understand but couldn’t. Therefore, as providing information on what we are doing we are coming up with the marketing campaign. The private sector shall participate like an enterprise. We need to raise awareness on reform mindset especially to get the private sector to come along. Secondly, we need to conduct capacity building training for our staff. We ourselves are also learning the subject from World Bank. Experts from World Bank are here to clarify what is Ease of Doing Business Index. I myself visited Malaysia and studied doing business there through joint committees between the government and private sectors. Taking into consideration the fact that which area should be developed or which part should be reformed, the process has to be developed for years.

We started introducing the process in 2014 and we are just at the very early stage in that knowledge. The questionnaires in English and their writing styles are difficult for us to clearly understand resulting in getting confused among staff of private and government sectors. These questionnaires were not replied by senior officials but by junior staff causing wrong answers concerning with the department which they have less relations. We’ve tried to pass this stage as one of the steps.

We need to highlight the private sector and attract their interest. At the same time capacity building is essential for government departments. There is process for each indicator and there is also Standard Operation Procedure (SOP). It is to identify what is needed for each indicator. We upload all these facts on the website. Currently, we tried to create a website named Ease of Doing Business. Before it is emerged, one can browse what he wants to know in our department’s website. SOPs of each indicator can be browsed in the site. For convenience of every businessman, information counters have been established. There are information counters at every service center. One can ask through email or phone. Based on experiences gained and through proper methods, we are trying our best with the support and suggestion of World Bank. If businessmen enjoy business dreams such as getting credit, enjoying electricity, receiving construction permit and smooth flow in import and export process, all the businessmen can be attracted to invest in our country. We are on the way to reach this goal. We are trying and we will continue our efforts.

With the aim of improving the process, a committee led by the deputy minister holds meet- ing once in every two weeks with officials of World Bank and business- men from the private sector.

FB: He often meets DGs of the respective departments to hold meetings. If we can reduce the action, cost and procedures trade will improve. Through these measures we are trying for economic development.

Reform process is a long-term job. We can improve our rank to reach 110 from 190. Last year 110 rank is 100 rank. But the score remained intact. Generally, the score has been improved. We have prepared for next year. As there are many countries participating in the process, we cannot definitely say we will improve. We are trying to get more score and we believe it will improve.

U Aung Naing Oo: Let me take the opportunity to inform the public an important matter. I’d like to share a topic called Protection of Minority Shareholders. In 1914 Company Act, there is no clause that protects minority shareholders. In this new law, protection of minority is enshrined. There are three indexes for protection of minority shareholders. Whether the interests are in contradiction to each other, to what extent shareholder can participate in company’s management and how it protects the interests of minority shareholders. It is a question that needs to be considered carefully. If the rights shareholders can participate in company’s management thereby to take matters that are against the interest to the utmost extent. It is also ensured that the ratios of the directors and other responsible directors are also enshrined in the law. So, I would like to inform the public that the roles of the directors and other responsible directors are enshrined in the law.

Thank you.

U Soe Lynn Han presents Credentials to King of the Belgians

U Soe Lynn Han, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar to the Kingdom of Belgium, presented his Credentials to His Majesty King Philippe, King of the Belgians, on 22 November 2018 in Brussels. — MNA

EARTHQUAKE NEWS

A slight earthquake of magnitude 3.0 Richter Scale with its epicenter inside Myanmar (about 14 miles southwest of Mawlaik). latitude 23.50°N, longitude 94.22°E, focal depth 56 kilometers about 50 miles south of Tamu seismological observatory was recorded at 10:30 (27/13) PST on 18 November 2018.
**Local News**

**Surprise monitoring to check on cheating agri inputs**

By May Thet Hnin

AS Shan state mainly focuses on agricultural businesses, the Consumer Affairs Department will accelerate the conducting of surprise checks and take legal action against those who are cheating in their reporting on their use of fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides and seeds, which are distributed in Shan state, according to the Consumer Affairs Department.

The department will conduct surprise checks by forming township committees to inspect shops and companies that are producing, importing, exporting, storing or distributing agricultural materials in the townships of Shan State, said U Min Aung, Assistant Director of Shan State Consumer Affairs Department. The department has been conducting educational activities for those engaged in this business since 2016. As a next step, the department will take legal action against those found to be selling prohibited goods.

“Last October, the ministers of Shan State government met with businesses engaged in the fertilizer, pesticide, herbicide and seed distribution businesses, and informed them that the department will accelerate the conducting of surprise checks, and shop owners and producers will have punishments meted out as deterrents,” he warned.

Recently, the department conducted surprise checks in Kalaw and Yakawknwath townships, and the department will do the same in other townships. During the inspection tours, both expired and fake products were marked with stickers. The inspection team from the department reported, and presented the evidence, to the Shan State Dispute Resolution Team.

Action has to be taken against those buyers of fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides and seed businesses because there are complaints from farmers, as well as from the commercial attaché in Myanmar, stating that some of Myanmar’s exported goods contained chemical residues, said U Min Aung.

Currently, the Plant Protection Division of the Agriculture Department under the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation has been conducting educational programmes, but too many producers are still not complying.

“The local farmers rely on these fertilizer and pesticides because they have difficulty buying the inputs due to high costs and hiring of labour. The local farmers use the pesticides on the wrong crops and in an improper ratio. “Even if we invited local farmers to attend the discussion, they would not come. The distributors also need to sell their products—the fertilizers and pesticides, according to the law. There will be safety only if we have cooperation,” said U Min Aung.

According to the 2014 Consumer Protection Law, the Consumer Dispute Resolution Team will grant the warranty, issue severe warnings, impose fines, ban products and deprive the markets of the banned goods, while destroying harmful inputs and revoking business licenses in negotiations with the related ministries.

Currently, over 3,300 pesticides companies have registered with the department for legal import of the inputs into, and distribution of them, across the country.

This year, over 40,000 tons of pesticides were imported and distributed across the country, said U Aung Kyaw Oo, Director of the Plant Protection Division, Agriculture Department.

The imported pesticides must be labelled with the country of origin, the company, the producer, the distributor, the brand and the expired date.

**Drugs seized in Pyu Township**

Acting on a tip, police raided a house in Tarcha Ward, which lies to the east of Pyu Town, on Wednesday afternoon and seized drugs and Ks3.192 million in cash from a house that was raided. They found over 2,000 WY brand yaba tablets and more than 4 grams of marijuana in cash from him. The house that was raided belonged to Htaw Gyi’s father, identified as U Tin Khwe.

Htaw Gyi, also known as Phyo Thu Aung, was arrested by police in the raid. They found over 2,000 WY brand yaba tablets and more than 4 grams of marijuana and Ks3.192 million in cash from him. The house that was raided belonged to Htaw Gyi’s father, identified as U Tin Khwe.

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Workshop on national strategy for closing IDP camps held

A workshop on Myanmar’s strategy for closing IDP camps in Kachin, Shan, Rakhine, and Kayin states was organized at the Horizon Lake View Resort Hotel in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

“Plans to close IDP camps require cooperation between government officials from the four States, local residents, UN agencies, civil society organizations, associate organizations, and residents of the IDP camps,” said Union Minister for Social Welfare, Relief, and Resettlement, Dr. Win Myat Aye, for preparing the draft national strategy and inviting us to discuss it. The UN remains committed to supporting the formulation and implementation of the national strategy on sustainable solutions for the IDPs and camp closures,” he said.

Deputy Ministers, representatives from UN agencies, directors-general, officials from concerned state and region departments, and invited guests attended the opening ceremony of the workshop. Later, group discussions on the current status of closure of IDP camps in the four states, plans for implementation and additions to the draft national strategy, and setting future processes were held at the workshop. —MNA (Translated Zaw Htet Oo)

Work Committee meeting on reading campaign held at MOI

A Work Committee coordination meeting was held at the meeting hall of the Ministry of Information in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning to discuss the ‘All who can read should read’ campaign, which is scheduled to be held from 20 to 21 December.

The campaign is being organized with the aim of encouraging the habit of reading among the people.

At the meeting, the Work Committee’s Chairman and the Deputy Minister for Information, U Aung Hla Tun, said the campaign will be held at the International Convention Centre II (MICC-II), and the meeting would discuss ways to conduct the campaign successfully.

Afterwards, the Work Committee’s Secretary and the Information and Open Library Relations Department Director General, U Ye Naing, explained the arrangements for the event. Officials from the Department of Historical Research and National Library, the National Archives Department, and partner organizations then detailed the arrangements for the event sector wise.

Later, the Ministry of Information’s Permanent Secretary, U Myo Myint Maung, and participants discussed requirements and made suggestions. Work Committee Chairman U Aung Hla Tun delivered the closing speech. Myanma Radio and Television Director General U Myint Htwe, Printing and Publishing Department Director-General U Aung Myo Myint and other officials were also present at the meeting.

The campaign will include paper-reading events and seminars, feature a mobile library put together by the Department of Information and Public Relations, the Daw Khin Kyi Foundation, and the Shanti Volunteer Association, a book fair, and festivals to increasing reading rate.

It will also showcase machines and equipment used across the ages to provide information to the public, methods for preserving photo records, old and historical documents, methods of recording them on micro-film, digitizing micro-films, old and historical writings on paraeik (thick sheets of papers glued together), a type of paper medium used in early Myanmar writings) and palm leaves —MNA (Translated by Myat Thandar Aung)

Singapore Festival 2018 to be held in Yangon

THE Singapore Festival 2018 will be held in Yangon from 30 November to 2 December. The festival is being jointly organized by the Yangon Region Government, the Singapore Tourism Board, and the Doh Eain Company.

Foods from Singapore and Myanmar will be sold at a flat rate of Ks 500 per item at the festival. The festival will also showcase a typical Singapore art presentation, street art and live graffiti in augmented reality by artist ROAR. It will also feature a play area for kids as well as games families can play together.

Art, entertainment fairs, and music shows will be arranged at the event. Singapore’s famous rapper The Lion City Boy and Myanmar singer Hellay are scheduled to perform at the festival, which will also host meetings with Singapore artists. The festival aims to showcase Singapore-Myanmar relations. —Min Thit, Thant Zin Win (Translated by Myat Thandar Aung)

Workers make preparation for holding Singapore Festival 2018 in Yangon. —PHOTO: HLA MOE
Ex-diplomat Zurabishvili elected Georgia’s first woman president

TBLISI (Georgia) — Georgia has elected ruling party candidate Salome Zurabishvili as its first woman president, results showed Thursday, but the opposition claimed fraud and called for supporters to take to the streets.

With 99.9 per cent of ballots counted, the French-born ex-diplomat had taken 59.61 per cent of the vote in Wednesday’s second round of the election.

Her rival Grigol Vashadze, from an alliance of 11 opposition parties led by exiled ex-president Mikhail Saakashvili’s United National Movement (UNM), was on 40.46 per cent.

The election was seen as a test of Georgia’s democratic credentials as the Caucasus nation seeks European Union and NATO membership.

It was also a trial run for more important parliamentary elections in 2020, when the ruling Georgian Dream party is set to face off against a range of opposition parties.

Georgian Dream — the creation of billionaire tycoon Bidzina Ivanishvili who many see as the country’s de facto ruler — backed Zurabishvili in the presidential vote. Ivanishvili’s great rival, the flamboyant ex-president Saakashvili, claimed “mass electoral fraud” even before official results were released.

“The oligarch has stamped out Georgian democracy and the institutions of elections,” he said on the pro-opposition Rustavi-2 television channel, referring to Ivanishvili.

“I urge Georgians to defend our freedom, democracy and the law. I call on you to start mass peaceful rallies and demand snap parliamentary polls.”

Saakashvili swept to power in 2004 in a mass protest movement known as the Rose Revolution but, after a disastrous 2008 war with Russia, fled the country in 2013 and has since been stripped of his citizenship.

He was sentenced in absentia to six years in prison for abuse of office, charges he rejects as politically motivated. He now lives in the Netherlands.

Tensions increased ahead of the second round as the opposition accused the government of voter intimidation and claimed that ruling party activists had attacked Vashadze campaign staff.

Zurabishvili in turn said she and her children had received death threats through text and voice messages from people affiliated with the UNM.

Rights groups have accused government officials of vote-buying on a “widespread” and “unprecedented” scale and of election fraud, including through the alleged printing of fake ID cards.

Opposition supporters will be watching for reports from foreign election monitors, including from the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe, to see if their claims of voter fraud are supported.

SCE observers were to hold a press conference in Tbilisi later Thursday.

Street protests against the results could shake the small ex-Soviet republic, which has seen civil wars, mass demonstrations and unrest since gaining its independence in 1991 on the break-up of the Soviet Union.

A smooth presidential transition, however, would be welcomed by many as a sign of stability in Georgia, which is emerging as a tourism hotspot and hopes for more foreign investment.

Daughter of refugees

Zurabishvili, a 66-year-old independent lawmaker, is the daughter of refugees who fled Georgia in 1921 for Paris after the country’s annexation by the Red Army.

Her career in France’s foreign service culminated in a posting to Tbilisi, where then-president Saakashvili appointed her foreign minister.

But Zurabishvili quickly made enemies among the parliamentary majority, with MPs and senior diplomats accusing her of arrogance and impulsiveness.

When she was sacked a year in the job, thousands took to the streets of the capital to protest her dismissal.

Vashadze, a 60-year-old career diplomat, had criticised Ivanishvili’s “informal oligarch rule” amid growing discontent over the government’s failure to tackle poverty. The vote was Georgia’s last direct leadership poll as it transitions to a parliamentary form of governance.

The first round on 28 October saw Zurabishvili take 39 per cent of the vote, against 38 per cent for Vashadze.

More than 3.5 million people were eligible to vote in the election and turnout was 56.23 per cent.—AFP

Air India plane hits building at Stockholm airport

STOCKHOLM (Sweden) — An Air India plane carrying 179 passengers struck a building at Stockholm’s Arlanda airport with its wingtip as it taxied to gate on Wednesday, but no injuries were reported, police said.

“The 179 passengers could disembark from the plane on a mobile staircase and thereafter enter the terminal,” police wrote in a statement.

The cause of the accident was not immediately known, police said.

It occurred at 5:45 pm (1645 GMT), about 50 meters (yards) from Terminal 5, the main terminal for international flights.

Pictures from the scene showed the Boeing aircraft parked on the runway with the very tip of its left wing stuck in the side of a building.

Several police cars and fire trucks were parked by the plane.

According to airport operator Swedavia’s website, the flight had originated in New Delhi. —AFP

Famed Australian soldier under investigation for alleged war crimes

CANBERRA — The Australian Federal Police (AFP) has launched an investigation into the nation’s most decorated former soldier over alleged war crimes.

Fairfax Media on Thursday reported that the AFP began investigating the actions Ben Roberts-Smith while serving with a Special Forces patrol in Afghanistan.

“ Australians Federal Police (AFP) received a referral to investigate allegations of war crimes committed by Australian soldiers during the Afghanistan conflict,” an AFP spokesperson told Fairfax on Thursday.

Roberts-Smith became the most decorated member of the Australian Defence Force (ADF) in 2011 when he was awarded the Victoria Cross, the highest award in the Australian honours system, for gallantry shown while attacking a Taliban machine gun in Afghanistan in 2010.

The AFP investigation, which is the most serious inquiry ever conducted by police into alleged war crimes, is the second inquiry to focus on Roberts-Smith’s conduct in Afghanistan.

Fairfax reported in July that a separate probe by the Inspector General of the ADF (IGADF) took sworn testimony from former and current members of the Special Air Service (SAS) Regiment, Roberts-Smith’s former regiment, that he engaged in misconduct while in Afghanistan.

According to the report, over which Roberts-Smith is suing Fairfax Media for defamation, the soldiers testified that the medal recipient breached the laws of armed conflict, which governs how soldiers must conduct themselves in conflict. —Xinhua
In Lebanon, climate change devours ancient cedar trees

TANNOURINE (Lebanon) — High up in Lebanon’s mountains, the lifeless grey trunks of dead cedar trees stand stark in the deep green forest, witnesses of the climate change that has ravaged them.

Often dubbed “Cedars of God”, the tall evergreens hark back millennia and are a source of great pride and a national icon in the small Mediterranean country.

The cedar tree, with its majestic horizontal branches, graces the nation’s flag and its bank notes.

But as temperatures rise, and rain and snowfall decrease, Lebanon’s graceful cedars are increasingly under attack by a tiny green grub that feed off the youngest trees.

At 1,800 metres altitude, in the natural reserve of Tannourine in the north of Lebanon, ashen tree skeletons jut out of the forest near surviving cedars centuries old.

“It’s as if a fire had swept through the forest,” says Nabil Nemer, a Lebanese specialist in forest insects.

In ancient times, huge cedar forests were used to make house timbers, Nemer says. “In 2017, 170 trees died completely and became dead wood,” Nemer says.

‘Disturbed’

Like their food of choice, cedar sawflies have been around for thousands of years.

They mate in spring and lay their eggs on the cedar tree trunks, where grubs hatch and feast on cedar needles.

In the past, the larvae would then head back into the ground to hibernate for up to three or four years, before emerging again as adult sawflies with wings.

But a warming earth has disrupted this cycle, especially in the Mediterranean where “climate change is more intense”, according to Wolfgang Cramer, a scientist and member of Mediterranean Experts on Environmental and Climate Change (MedECC).

In a November report, MedECC said future warming in the Mediterranean region was “expected to exceed global rates by 25 per cent”.

As the ground becomes less cold and humid in winter, sawflies are now springing out of the earth every year, and in larger numbers.

Their preferred victims are young cedar trees, aged 20 to 100 years old.

Temperatures in Tannourine have risen by two degrees Celsius in the past 30 years and there is less snow before than before, Nemer says.

“So with the drought, this larvae has been disturbed,” he explains. In 1999, the authorities managed to keep the pest in check by spraying insecticides from a helicopter.

But for the past four years, the cedar sawfly population has again been swelling.

With chemical pesticides no longer available, park authorities have resorted to a more natural, though less efficient treatment: injecting a fungus into the ground to kill the sleeping grubs.

The authorities have backed the initiative so far, but it’s a mammoth task that needs more funding, manpower and laborers, Nemer says.

He says he hopes the state can increase its support, including by creating a nationwide authority to track “forest health”.

Race to replenish forests

Forests cover just over a tenth of Lebanon.

They are mostly made up of oaks, pines and juniper trees, but also a minority of cedars.

As scientists fight to prevent cedar deaths, the government has embarked in a race against time to replenish the country’s forests.

Since 2012, it has helped plant more than two million new trees of all kinds across the country, agriculture ministry official Chadi Mohanna says.

The project is running a little late on a target of 40 million planted trees by 2030, but he is optimistic it will help mitigate climate change.

“In the next 20 to 30 years, we’ll start to see a change, with more humidity and several degrees less during heat waves,” he says.

And civil society is also playing a role.

Since 2008, non-governmental organisation Jouzour Lubnan has put 300,000 new trees in the ground.

On a recent sunny Sunday in the rocky natural reserve of Jaj, dozens of scouts gathered to plant cedars, as Jouzour teamed up with the army to mark independence day.

Beyond centuries-old trees hugging the mountainside, boys and girls in blue shirts planted 300 saplings just a dozen centimetres high.

They protected them with bell-shaped cages and rocks to keep grazing animals at bay.

“Cedars have survived millions of years. They can also take on climate change and adapt,” said Jouzour co-founder Magda BouDagher Kharrat.

“We can’t lose hope, but we do need to help them.”— AFP

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**THE REPUBLIC OF THE UNION OF MYANMAR MINISTRY OF ELECTRICITY AND ENERGY MYANMAR OIL AND GAS ENTERPRISE (INVITATION FOR OPEN TENDER) (25/2018)**

1. Open tenders are invited for supply of the following respective items in United States Dollars and Myanmar Kyats.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr.No</th>
<th>Tender No</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Price</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(a)</td>
<td>IFB-036(18-19)</td>
<td>6” and 4” ERW Steel Line Pipe (2) Items</td>
<td>Ks</td>
<td>US$</td>
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<td>(b)</td>
<td>DMP/L-139(18-19)</td>
<td>NDT Services for 20” Domestic Natural Gas Line (1) Set</td>
<td>Ks</td>
<td>US$</td>
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<td>(c)</td>
<td>DMP/L-140(18-19)</td>
<td>40 7/8–48 Type Pumping Unit (2) Nos</td>
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<td>114 D-119-86 Type Pumping Unit (1) No</td>
<td>Ks</td>
<td>Ks</td>
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<tr>
<td>(f)</td>
<td>DMP/L-143(18-19)</td>
<td>Pipe Wrench and Chain Tong (2) Groups</td>
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<tr>
<td>(g)</td>
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<td>Fire Extinguisher (5) Groups</td>
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<tr>
<td>(h)</td>
<td>DMP/L-145(18-19)</td>
<td>Heat Shrinkable Sleeve and Closure (3) Items</td>
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<td>Mobile Welding Machine (2) Sets</td>
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<td>(j)</td>
<td>DMP/L-147(18-19)</td>
<td>Assorted Sizes of Tyres (12) Items</td>
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<td>(k)</td>
<td>DMP/L-148(18-19)</td>
<td>13.5 x 5.5 Anular BOP Spares (2) Items</td>
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<td>(l)</td>
<td>DMP/L-149(18-19)</td>
<td>Spares for Cooper Well Servicing Unit (35) Items</td>
<td>Ks</td>
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<tr>
<td>(m)</td>
<td>DMP/L-150(18-19)</td>
<td>Spares for 30 Ton Grove Mobile Crane (13) Items</td>
<td>Ks</td>
<td>Ks</td>
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2. The Open Tender forms including Description of Materials / Qtty with details specifications and Tender Terms & Conditions can be available free download at the Ministry of Electricity and Energy Website Portal (www.moee.gov.mm) as from 30 November 2018. Tender forms will not be sold.

3. The interested Bidders should submit the Technical Specifications with Original Bid Bond and Commercial Quotation in each separate sealed envelopes on which to be addressed to the Managing Director, Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise and should reach in Tender Box of the Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise not later than 14:00 pm on 26 December 2018.

4. Tender Closing Date & Time: 26-12-2018, 14:00 pm

Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise Ph.: +95 67 - 411206
Sylvester Stallone says hanging up his Rocky gloves

LOS ANGELES—After more than four decades and eight movies, actor Sylvester Stallone says he is finally hanging up his Rocky gloves. In a video he shared on Instagram Wednesday, the 72-year-old actor said he was ready to walk away from playing the iconic character, referring to his latest appearance in the recently released “Creed II” as his “last rodeo.” “I thought Rocky was over in 2006 and I was very happy with that,” he said in the video. “And then all of a sudden this young man presented himself and the whole story changed,” he added, pointing to his “Creed” co-star Michael B. Jordan.

“It went on to a new generation, new problems, new adventures.” The “Creed” films are a continuation of the Rocky story, following the retired champ as he faces up to middle age and trains a new protege.

Stallone said he couldn’t be happier for the way things turned out for the Rocky saga that began in 1976 and which chronicled the life of the heroic underdog boxer.

“As I step back, as my story has been told, there is a whole new world that’s going to be opening up for the audience, for this generation,” he said, adding that it was up to Jordan now to “carry the mantle.” Stallone said the video, which appears to have been filmed on a beach, next to a bonfire, was shot on his last day making “Creed II.” In it, he addresses some of the cast and crew of the film. In a message on Instagram accompanying the video, Stallone said he was sad to abandon the role but that it was time to turn the page.—AFP

Louvre to open one Saturday night a month for free

PARIS—The Louvre museum in Paris has announced it will open its doors for free one Saturday night a month to attract younger, less wealthy visitors. Home to the Mona Lisa and the Venus de Milo, the world’s most visited museum previously opened for six free Sundays a year, but a statement published Wednesday said this was failing to bring in visitors from a broad spectrum of society. The new nocturnal openings, set to begin on 5 January, are to include activities such as a board game area and reading corner to attract families. The Louvre is also hoping to appeal to more people living in poorer Paris suburbs as well as to young adults and families with older children with the initiative.

The museum’s statement said that the Saturday nights were a bid to underpin the “democratization” of the Louvre, where a full-price ticket costs 17 euros ($19).

“The number of French visitors coming to the Louvre for the first time was dropping during these free Sundays, while the number of foreign visitors was going up considerably,” it added. The main people benefiting were tourism operators who cashed in by ferrying foreigners through the Louvre—an obligatory stop in any case—for free on the Sundays. “Working-class visits were not going up,” it said. The monthly Saturday evening sessions will run between 6.00 pm and 8.45 pm. The Louvre saw a sharp rise in visitors in 2017 to 8.1 million, making it the most visited art gallery in the world according to a ranking from the Themed Entertainment Association, an industry body.—AFP

China’s Tibetan medicinal bathing listed as Intangible Cultural Heritage

PORT LOUIS—The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) inscribed on Wednesday China’s Lum medicinal bathing of Sowa Rigpa on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

The decision was announced during the 13th session of the UNESCO Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage held from Monday to Saturday in Port Louis, Mauritius.

The Lum medicinal bathing of Sowa Rigpa is the knowledge and practices concerning life, health and illness prevention and treatment among the Tibetan people in China.

Speaking after the decision to inscribe this intangible cultural heritage on the list, Chinese Vice Minister of Culture and Tourism Zhang Xu said that the knowledge and practices are widely distributed in areas inhabited by Tibetans in China’s Tibet Autonomous Region as well as provinces including Qinghai, Sichuan, Gansu and Yunnan, according to China’s Ministry of Culture and Tourism.

Approved by the State Council of the Chinese government, Lum medicinal bathing of Sowa Rigpa was included in the National List of Representative Elements of Intangible Cultural Heritage on two occasions in 2008 and 2014.

A five-year safeguarding plan (2019-2023) has been made on the basis of a monitoring system so as to ensure coordinated safeguarding and development of the Tibetan tradition. Measures include special vocational training and increasing youth’s awareness of safeguarding through compilation of primary and secondary school textbooks on related knowledge.

With the inscription of the Lum medicinal bathing of Sowa Rigpa, China now has 40 inscribed elements in total on relevant UNESCO lists, including 32 elements inscribed on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, 7 elements inscribed on the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding, and one program selected to the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices.

During the session of the intergovernmental committee, 40 requests for inscription on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity are being examined. Another seven elements are proposed for inscription on the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding.

—Xinhua
Future uncertain for Australia’s unique platypus: researchers

SYDNEY (Australia)—Australia’s unique platypus population is shrinking under pressure from agriculture and pollution, putting the egg-laying mammals’ future in doubt, researchers said in a report published Thursday.

A three-year survey of the duck-billed animal suggested its numbers had fallen by 30 per cent, to around 200,000, since Europeans settled the continent two centuries ago.

“We have great concerns about the future survival of this unique species,” said Richard Kingsford, director of the University of New South Wales Centre for Ecosystem Science.

Threats endangering the platypus in its eastern Australian habitats include increased land-clearing for agriculture, pollution, dam building and fishing nets, Kingsford said in a statement.

Kingsford and his team called on authorities to elevate the protected status of the platypus from near-threatened to vulnerable.

They said that while population numbers varied in different regions of eastern Australia, platypuses had already disappeared from some areas.

“We cannot afford as a world, let alone Australia, to let his animal go extinct and we know that it’s gone extinct in some areas already,” Kingsford told the national broadcaster ABC.

“The semi-aquatic platypus, which along with four species of echidna are the only mammals that lay eggs, is one of the world’s strangest animals, with the bill of a duck, tail of a beaver, otter-like feet and a venomous spur on its hind leg. —AFP

'Mini-placenta' organ models shine light on pregnancy defects

PARIS (France)—Scientists on Wednesday unveiled a model, lab-grown organ that replicates the early stages of the placenta which they said could transform our understanding of reproductive disorders and complications during pregnancy. As many as 300,000 women die every year around the world due to preventable conditions linked to pregnancy and childbirth, according to the United Nations. Many of these deaths are down to what happens to the placenta—a temporary organ connecting the developing baby to its mother’s womb—during the first few weeks of pregnancy.

But because the changes to both occur deep within a woman’s body, the placenta is one of the most poorly understood organs there is. Researchers at the University of Cambridge said they had managed to grow placenta outside the womb that continued to grow for over a year and which performed most of the primary functions of the organ. They said this breakthrough might provide a window into what changes occur during early pregnancy and could ultimately save women from potentially life-threatening conditions as their term progresses.

“The placenta is the first organ that develops and is the least understood,” Ashley Moffett, from the university’s department of Pathology, told reporters. “It supplies all the functions for the baby in utero, it protects the baby and it secretes a load of hormones and other products—if any of these functions don’t work then the pregnancy will not be successful.” Often, medical research for products or breakthroughs intended for humans begin on animals.

But human and animal placentas are too different to provide a good model for research, and the last 30 years has seen increasing efforts to grow placental cells outside the body. Moffett and the team managed to nurture a miniature model placenta under lab conditions by identifying and isolating cells from the trophoblast—the membrane that provides nutrients to an embryo and helps the placenta attach to the uterus. These organoids were able to survive long-term, and even began to secrete the same proteins and hormones that would affect a mother’s natural functions during pregnancy. Even over-the-counter home pregnancy tests identified the presence, for example, of the hormone HCG.

Researchers say the 'mini-placentas' could shed light on a host of poorly understood reproductive disorders. PHOTO: AFP

Bulk of southern China was under sea about 400 mln years ago: study

Nanjing—Chinese researchers have discovered through studying paleontology of strata that the bulk of today’s southern China was beneath the sea between 410 million and 350 million years ago.

A research team from Nanjing Institute of Geology and Paleontology with the Chinese Academy of Sciences spent three years on the study. Based on the latest paleontological evidence, they concluded that most parts of the South China Plate was under the sea between 410 million and 350 million years ago. The study shows that the South China Plate covers today’s Yunnan, Guizhou, Sichuan, Hunan, Hubei, Zhejiang, Jiangxi, Fujian, Guangdong provinces, Chongqing Municipality, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region and the southern part of Jiangsu Province, northern Vietnam, as well as the Yellow Sea and the East China Sea. The researchers discovered a fossil, in east China’s Jiangxi Province, of a plant that lived in nearshore waters dating back 410 million years. This means the area was submerged by shallow seawater at that time.

They continued to study plant fossils unearthed from more than 50 places on the South China Plate and found that the coastline on the plate gradually moved eastwards from 410 million to 350 million years ago. —Xinhua
Liverpool on the ropes as PSG close in on Champions League knockouts

PARIS (France) — Paris Saint-Germain took a big step towards qualifying for the Champions League knockout stages on Wednesday after Neymar helped sink Liverpool in a blistering 2-1 win at the Parc des Princes.

The Brazilian struck in the 37th minute after Juan Bernat’s early opener to put qualifica-
tion for the last 16 in the French champions’ hands and leave Ju-
gen Klopp’s team needing to beat Napoli 1-0 or by two clear
goals in two weeks to guarantee a place in the knockout
stage.

Thomas Tuchel’s PSG have massive European ambitions
but have flattered to deceive on the continent since being taken
over by Qatari investors, and after defeats at Anfield and
draws with Group C leaders Napoli
Wednesday’s win gives them a
great chance of qualifying from
an extremely tight group.

Neymar scored the decisive goal picture
for Paris Saint-Germain in his side’s 2-1
win over Liverpool on Wednesday.

“Defeat left a bad taste in
Klopp’s mouth, with the Ger-
man coach frustrated by refer-
eeing that he claimed made his
side look like “butchers” while
only booking Marco Verratti for
a high first-half tackle on Joe
Gomez.

“For me it’s a red card,” he
gave. “I look like a bad loser, but
I don’t care. I had a very good
view of it and for sure it was not
the same colour as the 500 other
yellow cards.”

Napoli meanwhile are just
a point ahead of PSG but three
ahead of Liverpool after breez-
ing past Red Star Belgrade 3-1
thanks to Marek Hamsik’s first
goal of the season and a Dries
Mertens double.

Carlo Ancelotti’s side know
that having beaten the Premier
League outfit 1-0 in October
a goal at Anfield next month
would make their task much
easier.

If they score the Reds
would need to do so three times
without reply to qualify ahead
of the Italians with a superior
head-to-head record. A draw
would also see them go through.


PHOTO: SOE NYUNT

Spurs back from dead

Harry Kane said Totten-
ham Hotspur will go “all guns blazing” at Barcelona in two
weeks time after Christian Eriks-
en brught his side back from
the dead with the late winner
in a pulsating clash with Inter
Milan at Wembley.

Mauricio Pochettino’s side
go level on seven points with
Inter but move above them into
second in Group B thanks to
their head-to-head away goals
and now need to match Inter’s
result in the final week to quali-
fy. They will travel to the Camp
Nou on December 11 to take
on Barcelona, who showed no
signs of slowing down in a 2-1
win at PSV Eindhoven which
guaranteed top spot.

“We played out from the
back, through the lines, and
we could have got a couple in
the first half. The clean sheet
was massive and thankfully
we got the goal,” said Kane to
BT Sport.

“We will go all guns blazing
now. It will be tough, but it
is all to play for.”

Atletico Madrid cruised
into the next round with a simul-
taneous 2-0 win over a Monaco
team packed with youngsters
and short on experience.

Koke set the ball roll-
ing against Thierry Henry’s
rock-bottom Monaco after just
90 seconds, before Antoine
Griezmann ended the match as
a contest after just 24 minutes.

Porto and Schalke qualified
before their Group D match
canceled thanks to Galatasaray’s
falling 2-0 at Lokomotiv Moscow.

Goals from Eder Militao
and Jesus Corona put the Por-
tuguese champions two up early
in the second half before Nahid
Bentaleb’s 89th-minute
penalty
have the German’s hopes of
a late point. However Moussa
Marega slotted home the third
to seal first place for Sergio Con-
ceicao’s team. Borussia Dort-
mund also qualified following
their goalless draw with Club
Brugge.—AFP

Myanmar faces Thailand in
AFC Futsal Qualification

MYANMAR’s national U-19 futsal
team will clash with Asian futsal
powerhouse Thailand in the 2019
AFC U-20 Futsal Championship
Qualification, which kicks off on
5 December.

Myanmar’s futsal team will
play against Malaysia on 3 De-
cember, Vietnam on 6 December,
futsal giant Thailand on 7
December, and Indonesia on 8
December. As part of prepara-
tions for the qualification match-
es, Myanmar is now undertaking
training in Thailand and testing
some local clubs from Thailand,
according to the Myanmar Foot-
ball Federation.

A total of 18 players, in-
ccluding futsal stars Pyae Phyo
Maung, Shyne Htet Aung, Soe
Lin Htet, and Hein Htet Aung,
have reached Thailand with head
coach U Htay Myint.

The final list of 14 players
will be released soon by the futsal
authority, said a source with the
MFF. —Lynn Thit (Tgd)

Schweinsteiger to stick
with Fire through 2019

CHICAGO (United States) — Former Germany star Bastian
Schweinsteiger has inked a one-
year extension that will keep him
with the Chicago Fire through
2019, the Major League Soccer
team said Wednesday. Terms of
the deal were not announced
but Schweinsteiger, who will be
playing his third MLS season,
earned $6.1 million in total com-
pensation in 2018, according to
figures from the MLS Players
Association.

“My kids love it,” Schweinsteiger
said in a statement.

“It’s a great environment for me and
my family,” added Schweinsteiger,
who is married to former WTA tennis
player Ana Ivanovic. “I love be-
ing a part of the Chicago Fire and
we appreciate how the city has
embraced us with open arms.” —
AFP

Since the 16
Myanmar Women’s League
to start next week

THE 3rd Women’s League, 2018-
2019 season, will start in the first
week of December; under the su-
pervision of the Myanmar Foot-
ball Federation (MFF).

A total of eight teams, in-
cluding the defending champion
Myawady team, Thitsar Arman
team, Zwekapin team, Sports and
Physical Education Department
team, YREO team, BSPE team,
the University team, and
Gandamar team, will take part
in the matches. The schedule for
the matches will be released by
the MFF. The Football Federation
of Myanmar has been organizing
football leagues with the aim of
nurturing talented women foot-
ballers and to raise Myanmar
football to the international level.

The Women’s League is a
professional football league for
women’s clubs in Myanmar. National women footballers
and talented young players will
participate in the league. Team
Myawady is a two-time champion
in the league. —Shine Htet Zaw
(Translated by Kyaw Zin Lin)