

THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

Vol. IV, No. 284, 10th Waxing of Tabodwe 1379 ME

www.globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

Friday, 26 January 2018

State Counsellor meets Indian PM



State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, left, meets Narendra Modi, the Prime Minister of India, in New Delhi on Wednesday. **PHOTO: MNA**

STATE Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi met Mr. Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of India, at Hyderabad House, the state guest house, in New Delhi on Wednesday evening.

Discussed at the meeting were matters relating to increased bilateral cooperation, completing ongoing border demarcation works, cooperation to overcome cross-border terrorism, cooperation in building road links and transportation, opening of border gates to increase contact between peoples of both countries and assistance from India for Rakhine State development.

“The two leaders had a productive discussion on intensifying bilateral cooperation, including follow-up on key decisions taken during PM’s visit to Myanmar in September 2017”, said External Affairs Ministry spokesman Ravesh Kumar via Twitter.

The State Counsellor is in India to attend the 25th Anniversary of the ASEAN-India Commemorative Summit.—GNLM ■

Ministry of the Office of the State Counsellor released the following statement dated 25th January, 2018. Following is the full text of the press release.

Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar Ministry of the Office of the State Counsellor

PRESS RELEASE

THE Advisory Board to the Committee for Implementation of the Recommendations on Rakhine State headed by Professor Dr. Surakiart Sathirathai, Former Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Thailand, met in Nay Pyi Taw

on 22-23 January 2018.

The Board met with State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi on 22 January and Vice President U Myint Swe on 23 January. The Board was briefed by the Chairman of the Committee for Implementation of

the Recommendations on Rakhine State, Union Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Dr. Win Myat Aye, and Union Ministers concerned on the progress of work to date on 23 January.

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NATIONAL

Vice President inspects regional development of Taninthayi Region

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‘BEST BANK IN MYANMAR’

Awarded by EUROMONEY 2017

Pyithu Hluttaw

Pyithu Hluttaw discusses age limit for civil servants, pollution

THE 2nd Pyithu Hluttaw's 7th regular session sixth-day meeting was held yesterday morning in the Pyithu Hluttaw meeting hall, Nay Pyi Taw.

At the meeting, Union Civil Service Board (UCSB) Chairman Dr. Win Thein replied to a question raised by Daw Ni Shwe Hlyan of Thantlang constituency on reducing the age limit criteria in appointing government servants for remote and far-off places.

The UCSB Chairman said the board does not set the age limit criteria in appointing public servants and has no plans to do so. Instead, it selects and appoints public servants according to criteria set by the relevant ministries. These criteria are also dependent on the nature and scope of the work of the relevant ministries. It is more appropriate for the ministries to set the criteria according to their requirements rather than have the UCSB set them. Next, Union Minister for Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation U Ohn Win responded to a question raised by Dr. U Aung Khin of Pyin Oo Lwin constituency on plans to enact an air-pollution control



Speaker of Pyithu Hluttaw U Win Myint. PHOTO: MNA

law to reduce the ill effects of air pollution in Myanmar. The union minister said there are currently no plans to enact such a law, but national air-quality standards were being set and announced, adherence to the standard was being monitored and assessed by the relevant ministries, and the standard was being amended and corrected based on advances in science and technology as well as for the benefit of the people. These efforts will continue to control air pollution, the union minister noted.

Similarly, questions raised by Daw Nan Kham Aye of Nam-

tu constituency, U Toe Thaung of Mongmit constituency and U Nay Htat Win of Sinbaungwe constituency were also answered by Union Minister for Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation U Ohn Win.

Afterwards, a bill on explosive materials was submitted to the Hluttaw by Union Minister for Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation U Ohn Win and the Pyithu Hluttaw Bill Committee report on the bill was read by committee member U Zaw Win of Htantabin constituency. Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U Win Myint requested Hluttaw repre-

sentatives who wished to discuss the bill to enroll their names.

A motion tabled by Dr. U Aye Min of Kayan constituency, urging the government to award outstanding government servants with honours, titles, rest, recreation and study tours and foreign (scholarship-based) training to raise the morale and performance of these public servants, was then discussed and supported by U Ne Lin Aung of Mindat constituency, Dr. U Tin Aung of Kyaukse constituency, U Tun Tun Naing of Kani constituency, Daw Cho Cho of Ottwin constituency, U Myint Lwin of Twante constituency, U Tin Htway of Waw constituency, U Myint Wei of Gwa constituency, U Tin Ko Ko Oo of Bilin constituency, U Saw Victor Clyde of Thandaunggyi constituency, Tatmadaw Hluttaw representative Lt-Col Kyaw Thiha and Major Min Zarni Htway, Dr. Daw Thet Thet Khaing of Dagon constituency, U Kyaw Swe Win of Kawhmu constituency, U Win Win of Minbu constituency, Daw Ni Shwe Hlyan of Thantlang constituency and U Maung Maung of Htigyaing constituency.

Responding to the discussion

by the Hluttaw representatives, UCSB Chairman Dr. Win Thein said outstanding public servants were being promoted according to the public servant rule, and the Myanmar Civil Service Reform Strategic Action Plan (2017-2020) is being implemented by establishing four objectives for the new public servant management system, a practice and system that is merit-based and performance-driven, raising the leadership quality and performance to create people-centric public servants and improving the transparency and accountability of public servants.

The UCSB chairman added that outstanding public servants were being awarded through promotions, advance increments, certificates of honour, awards, titles, foreign (scholarship-based) training, meetings, workshops, seminars, study tours and other means. The Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker then took the consensus of the Hluttaw and announced the confirmation of the motion.

The 2nd Pyithu Hluttaw's 7th regular session seventh-day meeting will continue on 26 January. — Thura Zaw ■

Amyotha Hluttaw

Lawmakers discusses upgrading Yangon-Mandalay Highway

AT the 2nd Amyotha Hluttaw 7th regular session sixth-day meeting, held yesterday, Ministry of Construction Deputy Minister U Kyaw Lin explained the plan to obtain international loans and special funds under a new programme in addition to the use of union funds to upgrade the Yangon-Mandalay expressway.

Plans are underway to roll out this strategy under a Public Private Partnership programme.

The deputy minister was responding to a question raised by U Lal Min Htan of Chin State constituency (10) on the plan to lay a final layer of asphalt on the Yangon-Mandalay expressway as a priority task before the end of fiscal year 2020-2021.

The deputy minister explained that the Yangon-Mandalay expressway stretches for 366 miles and 3 furlongs; when considering it both ways, it has a total length of 732 miles and 6 furlongs. As of fiscal year 2016-2017, a 25-foot-wide asphalt-concrete section of the road was completed, for a total length of 149 miles

and 5 furlongs. A further 25-foot-wide section of 13 miles and 7 furlongs will be completed in fiscal year 2017-2018. By the end of fiscal year 2017-2018, 569 miles of asphalt-concrete road work will still be pending. Approval from the union government's economic committee has been obtained to complete the addition of a final layer of asphalt, 2.5-meter asphalt-concrete road shoulders on both sides of the road, and an interchange in Bawnetkyi, as well as for the completion of road safety work during the 2018-2020 fiscal year on the Yangon-Mandalay expressway, in the 8 miles to 36 miles section (Yangon-Bawnetkyi section), with loans from Asia Development Bank and the ASEAN Infrastructure Fund. Both of these loans were submitted at the union government meeting. Once the Cabinet approval is obtained, it will be submitted to the Hluttaw, explained the Deputy Minister.

In response to a question by Daw Htu May of Rakhine State constituency (11) on the plan to upgrade the strategic Yan-

bye-Kyauknimaw (25 miles and 5 furlongs) section to a concrete road, using the union fund in fiscal year 2018-2019, Deputy Minister for Construction U Kyaw Lin said the Yanbye-Kyauknimaw road is owned by the ministry of construction's road department and managed by the (Rakhine) state government. It is a smooth gravel-surfaced road. In fiscal year 2017-2018, a total of Ks 967.779 million in state government funds was used to lay an 18-foot-wide road section stretching 4 furlongs in Yanbye, provide gravel surfacing for a road stretching 11 miles and 2 furlongs, construct the 180-foot-long reinforced concrete Thitpote Chaung bridge, complete earth work for the bridge's approach road, lay asphalt on the bridge and construct two wooden bridges.

As the Yanbye-Kyauknimaw road is managed by the state government, no work has been earmarked for completion with the union fund. In 2018, from 1 April to 30 September, an 18-foot-wide and 1-mile-long concrete road

in Yanbye, a 14-foot-wide 2-mile-long gravel road, a 10-foot-long rock-lined approach road and two reinforced concrete bridges are planned for construction using state government capital funds of Ks563.4 million. In addition, in fiscal year 2018-2019, the construction of a 12-foot-wide 3-mile-long road and reconstruction of the 30-foot-long Myebon and 40-foot-long Khamamaung wooden bridges into reinforced concrete bridges are being planned, for which Ks660 million has been requested from the state government fund. The road department has no plans to upgrade the Yanbye-Kyauknimaw road with union government funds; instead, it is requesting the state government fund to upgrade it, explained the deputy minister. An additional question by U Kyaw Kyaw of Rakhine State constituency (4) on the plan to construct a new reinforced two-lane concrete bridge in place of Myaungbwe bridge in Mrauk U Township was also answered by Deputy Minister for Construction U Kyaw Lin.

Next, the decision of the Hluttaw on a bill to repeal the municipal law, returned without amendment by Pyithu Hluttaw, was obtained, and Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than announced the approval of the Hluttaw. The 2017 bill to amend the vacant, fallow and virgin lands management law was then discussed by Daw Myat Thida Tun of Mon State constituency (5), Naw Chris Tun @ Dr. Arr Kar Moe of Kayin State constituency (7), U Thet Naing Soe of Taninthayi Region constituency (2), U Ba Myo Thein of Yangon Region constituency (5), Dr. Win Myint Chit of Bago Region constituency (8), U Soe Thein @ U Maung Soe of Taninthayi Region constituency (10), U Hla San of Magway Region constituency (1), Dr. Win Myint of Bago Region constituency (11) and U Win Zaw of Kachin State constituency (7).

The 2nd Amyotha Hluttaw 7th regular session seventh-day meeting will continue on 26 January.—Aye Aye Thant (Myanmar News Agency) ■



State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi poses for a documentary photo together with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and ASEAN leaders in New Delhi. **PHOTO: MNA**

State Counsellor attends ASEAN-India commemorative summit

State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi attended a meeting between Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and ASEAN leaders at the Presidential House in New Delhi yesterday.

At the meeting, the State Counsellor expressed Myanmar's view on cooperation in Indo-ASEAN navigation and Myanmar's cooperation agreements and ongoing efforts related to its navigation sector.

Following the meeting, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, together with the leaders of ASEAN countries and the Indian Prime Minister, visited Mughal Park.

In the evening, the State Counsellor and ASEAN leaders

attended a ceremony to release 11 commemorative stamps, marking 25 years of Indo-ASEAN ties. The State Counsellor also held talks with Vietnamese Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc at the Presidential Palace of India, discussing boosting bilateral relations and cooperation.

Before the meeting, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and the ASEAN leaders attended a luncheon hosted by Indian President Ram Nath Kovind at the Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi.

At the luncheon, the Indian Prime Minister and ASEAN Chairman Lee Hsien Loong raised a toast together with the other leaders.—GNLM ■



State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi holds talks with Vietnamese Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc at the Presidential Palace of India in New Delhi. **PHOTO: MNA**

Union Minister inspects IPRD offices in Dawei and MRTV sub-transmitting station in Launglon



Union Minister Dr Pe Myint inspects MRTV sub-transmitting station in Launglon Township. **PHOTO: MNA**

Union Minister for Information Dr Pe Myint inspected the offices of the Information and Public Relations Department (IPRD) in Dawei Town and the Myanmar Radio and Television (MRTV) sub-transmitting station in Launglon Township.

Dr Pe Myint, together with Director-General of MRTV U Myint Htwe, Director-General of IPRD U Ye Naing and Managing Director of News and Periodicals Enterprise U Kyaw Soe, arrived in Dawei, Taninthayi Region, yesterday afternoon.

The union minister and his party inspected the IPRD offices with Taninthayi Region Minister

for Social Affairs and Development U Ho Pin and Minister for Kayin Ethnic Affairs U Saw Lu Kar and presented toys to preschool children in the children's reading room.

The union minister also urged the staff to transform the offices and libraries of the IPRD into community centers for the public.

Next, the minister and his party visited Shwewe Thiri Pyinya Beikman Library and Cultural Museum in Dawei, before inspecting the MRTV sub-transmitting station in Launglon Township.—Myanmar News Agency ■

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marketing@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com
subscription@globalnewlightofmyanmar.comPrinted and published at the Global New
Light of Myanmar Printing Factory at
No.150, Nga Htat Kyee Pagoda Road, Bahan
Township, Yangon, by the Global New Light
of Myanmar Daily under Printing Permit No.
00510 and Publishing Permit No. 00629.gnlmdaily@gmail.com
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please be aware that your letter will be
edited.Two workers check the quality of a production of textiles rolling out from a weaving machine in Meiktila, Mandalay Region. **PHOTO: CHAN THAR (MEIKTILA)**

Denmark to provide Ks 12.5 billion to nearly 500 SME entrepreneurs

May Thet Hnin

RESPONSIBLE Business Fund (RBF) from Denmark will provide Ks12.5 billion for nearly 500 local SME businessmen.

Concering this contribution plan, Mr Peter Lysholt Hansen, Denmark Ambassador to Myanmar and Daw Aye Aye Win, Director General of Department of Small and Medium Enterprises Development under the Directorate of Industrial Supervision and Inspection (DISI) of Ministry of Industry signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) at the Center of Excellence, Department of SME Development.

RBF will contribute 65 to 80 per cent of cost to carry out energy efficiency, water efficiency, waste treatment and recycling, occupational safety and Health (OSH), Food safety, managerial and supervision skills and practical and technical skill. It is Ks40 million in minimum and Ks80 million in maximum for small and medium enterprises.

This scheme started in October last year and it is planned for three years. At present, there are some 190 applicants so far.

As a first batch, 23 businessmen engaged in implementing a diverse range of projects such as solar photovoltaic (PV) system, energy efficient equipment, solar dryer domes for food safety, Occupation, Safety and Health (OSH) improvements in the garment, beverage and salt industries, waste water treatment projects in rice and dairy sectors received the contribution, said Daw Aye Aye Win, director general.

The government has a plan to offer incentive for Corporate Social Responsibilities performers and international businessmen also giving market opportunities to those activists. The business owners will reap long-term benefits if they follow responsible business practices. At present, most enterprises are still found weak in considering responsible business practice. Therefore, the government will make awareness campaign first instead of taking immediate action, she continued.

Myanmar's 90 per cent of business constitutes small and medium enterprises. Therefore, this awareness plan aims to bolstering their production and up-

grading competitiveness.

During Myanmar's isolation from the international community, SMEs are far removed from the development opportunities given by the international countries. When the country is building ties with foreign countries across the globe, the countries need to start adopting Responsible Business procedures, said Mr. Peter Lysholt Hansen, Denmark Ambassador. Managing Director Daw Mya Mya Thin from Nine Two Nine Co., Ltd said that Thanks to RBF for contribution to implement OSH activities and we hopes to earn trust from our foreign partners and create healthy and happy work environment for our employees.

SMEs must propose a pro-

ject idea relevant to one of seven eligible fields and their proposed project solutions have not been implemented already by a competing business. SME must be registered in Myanmar and employs 600 or less permanent staff or has less than Ks 1 billion in paid-up capital. Those businesses has to run for a minimum of 2 years and lastly, those SMEs operating in excluded sectors such as hard liquor, gambling, tobacco, weapons and internationally recognized exclusion list will not be granted this fund.

For those enthusiastic who want to apply for this plan, please dial 09258113737, 09979327744, 094026425799 and send mail to this address infor@rbfmyanmar.com. ■

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Myanmar's ten thousand kyat notes. PHOTO: NYI ZAW MOE

Kyat appreciation against dollar likely to stay strong

WITH the US dollar index dropping below 90, marking a three-year low, the US dollar to Kyat interbank exchange rate in Myanmar's currency market declined to Ks1,330 yesterday.

The index hit its highest point of 103.82 in January 2017 and turned to a downward trend starting from March of that year. The dollar to Kyat exchange rate in early Janu-

ary 2017 was Ks1,354.

The exchange rate was remarkably still down by more than Ks20 over the past three weeks of January 2018.

As of 25 January 2018, the dollar selling price was Ks1,327, while the buying price was Ks1,330, according to money exchange counters.

Meanwhile, the Central Bank of Myanmar has set the exchange rate at Ks1,340 per

dollar.

In addition to the US dollar depreciation in the global market, vehicle imports in the auto market under the new automobile policy are slowing as buyers are choosing to observe the market. The demand for the US dollar is also on the decline as some investors have turned to the gold market, according to FX market pundits.—Ko Khant ■

Over 1,000 domestic companies aim to join UNGC

UNITED Nations Global Compact (UNGC) Network Myanmar intends to persuade more than 1,000 domestic companies to join them, according to a report in Myawady Daily yesterday.

At present, few domestic companies have signed up for the UNGC initiative, with only 300 companies following

UNGC principles, according to Dr Aung Tun Thet, chairman of UNGC Network Myanmar.

Myanmar convinced 15 local companies to join the UNGC, starting from 2012. The number of participants increased to 180 in 2014 and 300 in 2016.

The UNGC is a strategic initiative that supports global

companies whose CEOs are committed to following responsible business practices with respect to human rights, labour, the environment, and corruption. The participants are committed to strictly adhering to the principles set by the UNGC. Only 180 companies from Indonesia have joined the UNGC. —GNLM ■

Myanmar avocado exports rise over nine months

AVOCADO exports increased by over 30 tonnes within the first nine months of this fiscal year compared with the same period in 2016-2017, according to the Ministry of Commerce.

Myanmar exported some 400 tonnes of avocados this year, compared with over 430 tonnes last year. The country earned more than US\$2,214 million from agricultural exports including avocados in the first nine months of this fiscal year, an increase of over

\$170 million from the same period last year.

"In addition to simply consuming them, avocados can be used to produce value-added products, which has led to the rise in exports. Myanmar's avocados are mainly exported to China. We are also planning to add avocado exports to the National Export Strategy," said U Khin Maung Lwin, Deputy Permanent Secretary from the Ministry of Commerce.

Avocado is rich in nutrients and medicinal properties and has grown in popularity internationally. The major production areas for avocados in Myanmar are located to the south of Shan State, Chin State, the Sagaing Region and the Mandalay Region.

The main challenge for farmers lies in obtaining better seeds, which the government and various associations are now trying to provide.—GNLM ■

Ministry of Industry unveils MEB's SME policies and loan plans

THE Ministry of Industry held an event to disclose the small and medium enterprise (SME) policies and loan plans of Myanma Economic Bank (MEB) yesterday in Loikaw Town.

Officials from the Kayah state government, as well as the State Auditor General, SME agency representatives, and officials from the concerned departments were in attendance.

The Chief Minister of Kayah State government delivered an opening speech and the state's transport and electricity minister explained the SME policies.

Daw Ye Ye Khine, regional manager of MEB, then explained the loan plans. Director U Myo Lwin of the Directorate of Industrial Supervision and Inspection set out policies concerning SMEs. The authorities and officials concerned responded to questions raised by the entrepreneurs.

SMEs help boost the coun-

try's production and enhance import substitution.

MEB's SME loan plan provides up to Ks300 million for a three- to five-year term to SMEs, with an interest rate of 9 per cent. Priority will be given to businesses in the manufacturing, import and export, recycled energy savings, technical-based production and service industries. However, the loan plan requires a mortgage to be taken for movable and immovable properties and various types of insurance.

SMEs that fail to present a mortgage as required are only entitled to the loan plan if they participate in the Credit Guarantee Insurance (CGI) system, linked with Myanma Insurance.

SMEs that accept a loan under the CGI plan must pay a premium, along with the interest payment. Currently, these enterprises only qualify for a maximum loan of Ks20 million.—

GNLM ■

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● Market Place by City Mart (6.5 Mile)	● City Mart (Junction Square)
● Market Place by City Mart (Damasidi Road)	● City Mart (Junction Maw Tin)
● Market Place by City Mart (Junction City)	● City Mart (Sule Square)
● City Mart (Aung San Stadium)	● City Mart (Star City - Thanlyin)
● City Mart (47th street)	● City Mart (Waizayandar)
● City Mart (Yankin)	● City Mart (Hledan)
● City Mart (China Town)	● City Mart (Myanmar Plaza)
● City Mart (Myay Ni Gone)	● City Mart (Junction 8)
● City Mart (FMI)	● City Mart (St. John)
	● Ocean North Point (9 mile)
	● Ocean Shwegonedine

Ocean City SUPERCENTER **City Mart** Supermarket

Union Minister for Commerce receives Director of METRO Wholesale Myanmar Ltd



Union Minister Dr Than Myint holds talks with METRO Wholesale Myanmar delegation led by CEO Mr. Dominique Minnaert in Nay Pyi Taw. **PHOTO: MNA**

UNION Minister for Commerce Dr Than Myint received the Director, CEO Mr. Dominique Minnaert and his party from METRO Wholesale Myanmar at the Ministry of Commerce in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday afternoon.

During the meeting, matters relating to procedures that will strengthen the trade and

investment policy, cooperative conditions with foreign partner groups and trade partner groups to be increased the export production of oilseeds and other agricultural products, promoting the qualities of all agricultural products and export products and ensuring food safety, training programmes that will pro-

vide Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) which can be applied in practical operations were also discussed.

In addition, they also discussed to develop Logistics Sector, to create a good investment environment and to boost the business networking. —Myanmar News Agency ■

Continuous scattered rain expected in Taninthayi Region

CONTINUOUS scattered rain is expected in Taninthayi Region, as weather is generally fair over the North Bay and West Central Bay and partly cloudy to cloudy over the Andaman Sea and elsewhere over the Bay of Bengal, ac-

cording to the Myanmar Daily Weather Report issued by the Department of Meteorology and Hydrology.

The forecast for Nay Pyi Taw and the neighbouring areas for today is generally fair; for Yangon and the neighbour-

ing areas, partly cloudy; and for Mandalay and the neighbouring areas, generally fair.

Seas will be slight to moderate in Myanmar waters. Wave height will be some 3-5 feet off and along Myanmar's coasts. —GNLM ■

Cab driver arrested for alleged rape and murder of woman passenger in North Dagon Myothit

THE North Dagon Myothit police arrested a cab driver on Wednesday, in the alleged rape and murder of a 25-year-old woman passenger.

After discovering the body of the victim on Sunday morning under a tree near a bridge on Nga Moe Yeik Creek, North Dagon Myothit Township, the police conducted an investigation through CCTV records, as well as reports from the public and local police forces, and identified the suspect cab driver as Myo Zaw Oo, 27, who

lived at Padamyar (4) Street, 33 Additional Ward, North Dagon Myothit Township. The police arrested Myo Zaw Oo on 24 January at Yuzana Plaza, Mingalar Market, Mingala Taungnyunt Township within 3 days of the discovery of the murder. During the arrest of the suspect, the victim's mobile phone was recovered.

Upon interrogation, the suspect said the victim hired his cab at Yangon-Insein Road near Hledan Junction on 21 January. During the trip, he

and the victim argued about the cab fare, resulting in his strangling the victim, and her falling unconscious. He then took the woman to Nga Man Aung Pagoda Road, North Dagon Myothit, where he stabbed the woman and left her body. He also confessed to raping the woman before killing her.

A case has been opened in North Dagon Myothit Police Station against the suspect, for violating section 302 of the Penal Code.—Myanmar News Agency ■

Smart TVs donated for teaching aid

SMART TVs were donated to the Department of Basic Education as teaching aids for schools functioning under the Ministry of Education.

At an event held in Nay Pyi Taw, 16 donors from Mandalay Technology Company, the Italian based Daniels Company, Lu Gyi Min Mobile Phone and Accessories, OIAC Training School and KSP Company donated 100 devices that would enhance teaching programs in schools.

U Tun Yee, Deputy Director General of the Department of Basic Education said that he believed the Smart TVs were far more useful than the multimedia teaching aids because the devices were user friendly and very easy to maintain.

U Zaw Naing, Managing Director of the Mandalay Technology Company, explained how the donation started.

“At a public talk which State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi attended that was held in Wandwin Township on 8 August last year, a teacher from the primary school in Myay Taing Kan village said a device like a TV would be a big help in teaching activities. Then, a company sent one set of Smart TVs to the school on 9 August,” he said.

After realizing the educational value of the TVs he urged his friends to donate Smart TVs to schools, eventually more televisions would be donated in the future, he added.

An official from Danieli said that the company was contributing money for education and development sectors in Myanmar, and it would keep on providing the electronic equipment for schools.—Myanmar Digital News ■

Illegal teak from two vehicles seized on Monywa-Homalin Road

A combined team of police officers and staff from Homalin Township seized illegal Tamalan teak from a six-wheel vehicle on Monywa- Homalin Road, Mawlaik Township, on 24 January.

According to investigators, the combined team stopped the vehicle, driven by Kyaw Phyto Lwin (alias) Tun Tun

with Hla Than Htay onboard, and found 14 Tamalan teak logs 2.3162 ton, worth Ks926,480.

On the same day, the team seized 14 Tamalan teak logs 2.5338 ton, worth Ks 1,013,520, from a vehicle driven by Aung Moe Oo with Aung Kyaw Lin onboard, at milepost 35/7 on Monywa- Homalin Road.—Mawlike Thalay ■



Illegal teak seized on Monywa-Homalin Road, Mawlaik. **PHOTO: MAWLIKE THALAY**

Lawyer killed in a restaurant fire in Bago Region's Shwegyin

A woman was killed in a fire at a restaurant in Shwegyin Township, Bago Region early this morning.

Firefighters together with local people took more than an hour to bring the fire under control with the use of four fire engines. A lawyer identified as Ma Khet Wai Wai Phu (alias)

Phu Phu, 26 year of age, and daughter of the restaurant owner was killed in the fire.

The cause of the fire is still unknown and an investigation into the incident is ongoing, according to a source from the Information and Public Relations Department.—Myanmar Digital News ■

State Counsellor office's Press Release

FROM PAGE-1

The Board had the opportunity to visit Rakhine State on 24-25 January to observe first hand the situation obtaining on the ground and to interact with local communities.

The Government is committed to implementing the recommendations of the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State to the fullest extent possible and in the shortest time-frame, in accordance with the situation on the ground. It therefore set up the Committee for Implementation of the Recommendations on Rakhine State and established the Advisory Board comprising experienced personalities to get independent and candid advice.

In the course of the discussions in Nay Pyi Taw on 22 January, it became evident that the intent of Governor Bill Richardson, a member of the board, was not to provide advice based on the recommendations of the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State chaired by Dr. Kofi Annan but to pursue his own agenda. In view of the difference of opinion that developed, the government decided that his continued participation on the Board would not be the best interest of all concerned.

Price of sunflower oil rises in oil market due to increased local consumption

THE price of sunflower oil from NyaungU Township has gone up in the oil market due to increasing local consumption, according to a report yesterday in the Myawady Daily. Sunflower oil is richer in nutrients than other bean and sesame oils. Sunflower oil is mostly used for fried vegetables, and can be less expensive to use when cooking. Therefore, the demand for sunflower oil has increased.

"There are many sunflower oils which were imported from foreign countries. But people only consume local sunflower oil. Local sunflower oil is in high demand in Nay Pyi Taw, Mandalay and Yangon regions," said U Sai Naung, an edible oil trader.

Recently, the price of local sunflower oil was Ks 4,300 per viss in the local oil market, while sunflower oil imported from abroad was selling for Ks 9,000 to Ks 12,000 for four viss.—GNLM■



Vice President U Henry Van Thio visits seawater prawn breeding plant in Myeik, Taninthayi Region. PHOTO: MNA

Vice President inspects regional development of Taninthayi Region

VICE President U Henry Van Thio departed from Yangon by air yesterday morning and arrived in Myeik township of Taninthayi region.

He and his party were accompanied by Deputy Minister for Defense Rear-Admiral Myint Nwe, Deputy Minister U Kyaw Myo and other officials.

The group inspected the plot of land selected for the construction of the Modern Fish Auction Market, One Stop Service office, seawater prawn breeding plant, cold-storage factory and plywood factory in Taninthayi Region.

Next, they visited the Modern Fish Auction Market in Myeik, where they were welcomed by U Hla Than, the President of the Thaninthayi Fishery Association. U Hla Than described the set-up of the Myeik Private Company Limited Corporation and the on-going project; the number of fishing boats; the annual fishery-product exports; the number of fish, prawns and soft-shelled crabs being bred and the amount of seaweed grown; details of modern fishery auctions; the road project of Htone Kha-The Phyu-Maung Taw and the Myeik Highway Transport

Station. The Vice President said they should present these details to the departments concerned, according to the standard procedure.

The group then looked around the Myeik One Stop Service and continued to Katalu Village, where they inspected the local fishery industry.

Next, the Chairman of the Pyae Phyo Tun International Co., Ltd., gave a briefing about the 415 acres assigned to the prawn-breeding project and the condition of exports to the Vice President and his party.

Chairman of Pyae Phyo Tun

International Co., Ltd., Dr. Aung Lwin clarified matters relating to the dockyard, plywood industry, fishery exports, palm oil and rubber plantations, sea-view condo construction, the fish auction business, employment for the locals and regional development.

Next, the group inspected the cold storage unit of a 1000-tonne factory, fish and prawn exports and the breeding of soft-shelled crabs.

Later, Vice President U Henry Van Thio and his party inspected the industrial zone from their vehicles. —Myanmar News Agency

Some 200 travellers daily visits Rih lake, Chin State

SOME 200 travellers, both foreigners and locals, have recently visited Rih lake every day.

Rih Lake, also known as Heart Shape Lake, is 2,966 feet above sea level in Chin State, according to the U Zodahar, the manager of Rih Yaykantha hotel in Chin state.

The lake is located in

the north of Reh Khaw Da, a small town that lies near Myanmar's northwest border with India.

The lake receives most of its visitors from India, along with some Myanmar people. But this year, authorities noted that many local travelers have also arrived.

In 2016 and 2017, Rih lake received some 150 visitors per day. But during this New Year season, the lake received some 200 travellers per day. Recently, authorities built the Rih viewing site for travellers to take photos of the area, he added.

The famous Heart Shape Lake is 832 acres wide, 2.5 miles

long and has a 3-mile circumference. It is over 50 feet deep. The lake is full throughout the year and turns a reddish color each December.

Over 20 vehicles per day arrive at the Rih lake area. It has seen increasing visitors this year, compared with last year.—Zo Hay Hsar ■

Peace and stability in border areas and drug issues

THE year 2017 saw quite a number of news items on the arrest of narcotic drugs across the nation. According to the news report on 18th January 2018, it was learnt that Ks. 70 billion worth of drugs were seized in Thein-ni and Kutkai townships. Such news items on the arrest of drugs are ubiquitous, especially in Kachin, Shan, Rakhine States and Sagaing and Taninthari regions, that is, in the border areas touching with China, Thailand and Bangladesh.

Final reports for 2017 show that there were 27 cases of arrests related to drugs in Maungtaw District, Rakhine State from January 2017 to December 2017, in which amphetamine tablets amounting to 11 million were seized. Those include cases of arrest in the Naf river while smuggling out of the country to deliver them to the neighboring country, including the arrests in the Bengali villages next to Maungtaw township. Get-rich-quick people in that area were said to be the ones who got involved in dealing with drugs. There were events of sudden armed

Accordingly, strong and effective actions need to be taken against drug trafficking as a national obligation. At the same time we also need to work hard on achieving internal peace so that we can bring law and order and stability to the border areas.

there included 1256 kilo of opium, 570.6 kilo of heroin, over 72.8 million amphetamine tablets, 198.8 kilo of marijuana and 1107 kilo of ‘Ice’. A total of culprits—12405 males and 1595 females, who got involved in 9544 cases were arrested, it was learnt.

Mexico is notorious for drug trafficking in the world. Over 25000 people were killed due to drug-related crimes and fights among gangs in 2017 while nearly 20000 deaths happened in 2016, it was said. In the Philippines as well, there over 6000 deaths in the suppression of the narcotic drugs. Narcotic drug issues are found to be directly related to political instability, poor economic status and weakness in rule of law. In Myanmar as well, drugs were seized here and there across the country, due to lack of peace and stability and rule of law in bordering areas. Accordingly, strong and effective actions need to be taken against drug trafficking as a national obligation. At the same time we also need to work hard on achieving internal peace so that we can bring law and order and stability to the border areas.

The ASEAN-India Dialogue Partnership was established as a Sectoral Dialogue Partnership in 1992, and the relation was promoted to a full dialogue partnership in 1996 through mutual understanding and friendship. The relationship has progressed every year. The first ASEAN-India Summit was held in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, in 2002. Since then, the summit between ASEAN and India has been held annually. ASEAN and India marked the 20th anniversary of their Dialogue Relations in 2012 with a Commemorative Summit held in India. In 2018, the 25th Anniversary of the ASEAN-India Commemorative Summit and the celebration of the 69th Republic Day of India was held and India, with ASEAN-member countries in attendance. (Editorial Team)

ASEAN-India: Shared Values, Common Destiny



By Narendra Modi,
Prime Minister of India

TODAY, 1.25 billion Indians will have the honour to host ten esteemed guests – leaders of ASEAN nations – at India’s Republic Day celebrations in our capital, New Delhi. Yesterday, I had the privilege to host the ASEAN leaders for the Commemorative Summit to mark 25 years of ASEAN-India Partnership. Their presence with us is an unprecedented gesture of goodwill from ASEAN nations. Responding to this, on a winter morning, India has come out to greet them in a warm embrace of friendship.

This is no ordinary event. It is a historic milestone in a remarkable journey that has brought India and ASEAN in a deepening partnership of great promise for their 1.9 billion people, about one-fourth of humankind.

India-ASEAN partnership may be just 25 years old. But India’s ties with Southeast Asia stretch back more than two millennia. Forged in peace and friendship, religion and culture, art and commerce, language and literature, these enduring links are now present in every facet of the magnificent diversity of India and Southeast Asia, providing a unique envelope of comfort and familiarity between our people.

More than two decades ago, India opened itself to the world with tectonic changes. And, with instincts honed over centuries of interaction, it turned naturally to the East. Thus began a new journey of India’s reintegration with the East. For India, most of our major partners and markets – from ASEAN and East Asia to North America – lie to the East. And, Southeast Asia and ASEAN, our neighbours by land and sea,



Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of India (5th left), and ASEAN leaders pose during a family photo in Manila on 14 November, 2017.

have been the springboard of our Look East and, since last three years, the Act East Policy.

Along the way, from dialogue partners, ASEAN and India have become strategic partners. We advance our broad-based partnership through 30 mechanisms. With each ASEAN member, we have a growing diplomatic, economic and security partnership. We work together to keep our seas safe and secure. Our trade and investment flows have multiplied several times. ASEAN is India’s fourth largest trading partner; India is ASEAN’s seventh. Over 20% of India’s outbound investments go to ASEAN. Led by Singapore, ASEAN is India’s leading source of investments. India’s Foreign Trade Agreements in the region are its oldest and among the most ambitious anywhere. Air links have expanded rapidly and we are extending highways deep into continental Southeast Asia with new urgency and priority. Growing connectivity has reinforced proximity. It has also put India among the fastest growing sources of tourism in Southeast Asia. Over 6 million strong Indian

diaspora in the region – rooted in diversity and steeped in dynamism – constitutes an extraordinary human bond between us.

India and Myanmar share a land-border of over 1600 kms as well as a maritime boundary. Religious and cultural traditions flowing from our deep sense of kinship and our common Buddhist heritage bind us as closely as does our shared historical past. Nothing illuminates it more gloriously than the gleaming tower of Shwedagon Pagoda. The cooperation to restore Ananda Temple in Bagan with assistance of the Archaeological Survey of India is also emblematic of this shared heritage.

During the colonial period, political bonds were forged between our leaders, who displayed a great sense of hope and unity during our common struggle for independence. Gandhiji visited Yangon several times. Bal Gangadhar Tilak was deported to Yangon for many years. The clarion call of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose for India’s independence stirred the souls of many in Myanmar.

Our trade has more than doubled over the last decade. Our investment ties are also robust. Development cooperation has a significant role in India’s relations with Myanmar. This assistance portfolio is presently worth over \$1.73 billion. India’s transparent development cooperation is in line with Myanmar’s national priorities and also builds synergy with the Master Plan of ASEAN Connectivity.

And India and ASEAN are doing much more. Our partnership in ASEAN-led institutions like East Asia Summit, ADMM+ and ARF are advancing peace and stability in our region. India is also an eager participant in Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement, seeking a comprehensive, balanced and fair agreement for all 16 participants.

The strength and resilience of partnerships come not just from arithmetic of numbers, but also from the underpinnings of the relationship. India and ASEAN nations have relations free from contests and claims. We have a common vision for the future, built on commitment to

inclusion and integration, belief in sovereign equality of all nations irrespective of size, and support for free and open pathways of commerce and engagement.

ASEAN-India partnership will continue to grow. With the gift of demography, dynamism and demand – and with rapidly maturing economies - India and ASEAN will build a strong economic partnership. Connectivity will increase and trade will expand. In an era of cooperative and competitive federalism in India, our states are also building productive cooperation with Southeast Asian nations. India’s North-East is on a resurgent path. Links with Southeast Asia will accelerate its progress. In turn, a connected North-East will be a bridge to ASEAN-India ties of our dreams.

As Prime Minister, I have attended four annual ASEAN-India Summits and East Asia Summits. These have reinforced my conviction in ASEAN unity, centrality and leadership in shaping the region in this vision.

This is a year of milestones. India turned 70 last year. ASEAN

reached the golden milestone of 50 years. We can each look to our future with optimism -and to our partnership with confidence.

At 70, India exudes the spirit, enterprise and energy of its young population. As the fastest growing major economy in the world, India has become the new frontier of global opportunities and an anchor of stability of global economy. With every passing day, it is easier and smoother to do business in India. I hope that ASEAN nations, as our neighbours and friends, will be an integral part of New India’s transformation.

We admire ASEAN’s own progress. Born when Southeast Asia was a theatre of a brutal war and a region of uncertain nations, ASEAN has united ten countries behind a common purpose and a shared future.

We have the potential to pursue higher ambitions and address the challenges of our times: from infrastructure and urbanization to resilient agriculture and a healthy planet. We can also use the power of digital technology, innovation and connectivity to transform lives at unprecedented speed and scale.

A future of hope needs the solid bedrock of peace. This is an age of change, disruptions and shifts that comes only rarely in history. ASEAN and India have immense opportunities – indeed, enormous responsibility – to chart a steady course through the uncertainty and turbulence of our times to a stable and peaceful future for our region and the world.

Indians have always looked East to see the nurturing sunrise and the light of opportunities. Now, as before, the East, or the Indo Pacific Region, will be indispensable to India’s future and our common destiny. ASEAN-India partnership will play a defining role in both. And, in Delhi, ASEAN and India have renewed their pledge for the journey ahead.

(The writer is the Prime Minister of India)

Four Objectives of the 71th Anniversary Union Day

1. To develop the Union Spirit
2. To make the internal peace process a success with unity of ethnic people
3. To build a Federal Democratic Union through the Union Peace Conference-21st Century Panglong
4. To boost the economy of the Union by encouraging small and medium enterprises

A Brief Study on Anti-Corruption Drive in today’s World

By Sayar Mya (MOFA)

THE author embraced the big thrill and a strong feeling of excitement to read the newspaper headlines entitled “Anti-corruption head declares war on bribery, malfeasance” printed on page (3) of the Global New Light of Myanmar on Tuesday 23 January 2018.

U Aung Kyi, the Chairman of the Anti-Corruption Commission described corruption as “our common enemy” and said a two-year plan was being formulated to systematically rid the country of bribery, immorality and malpractice.

His remarks came at the paper reading event on anti-corruption which was jointly organized by the Anti-Corruption Commission and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), with the title of “Promote Integrity to Counter Corruption”. The commission’s aim, he pointed out, is to lift the moral standard of citizens while they are still young. “Corruption should be regarded as our common enemy, which we must try to wipe out in our society”, he concluded.

In this regard, the author totally agrees with the clarified concept and would like to share with the esteemed readers on three important aspects on anti-corruption drive being carried in today’s world.

The first aspect is on a document issued by the Transparency International.

The Transparency International is the global coalition against corruption. It has established “Anti-Corruption Helpdesk” and provides on demand

research to help fight corruption. The Helpdesk has issued a document entitled “Best Practices for Anti-Corruption Commissions.”

The summary of the document summed up as follows.

Inspired by the well-known and well-documented success of the Hong Kong and Singapore experiences, anti-corruption commissions have mushroomed across the world since the 1990s. Despite their varying levels of success, they are often still considered by most stakeholders to be the ultimate response to corruption.

The structures and activities of anti-corruption commissions differ significantly from one country to another, affecting their respective effectiveness and independence. In spite of the fact that anti-corruption commissions have existed for several decades, common global principles for them were only agreed upon by representatives of anti-corruption commissions and international organizations in 2012, with the Jakarta Statement.

The document provides an overview of the principles and standards endorsed in the Jakarta Statement, which can contribute to creating robust and independent anti-corruption commissions that inspire public confidence and effectively reduce corruption. The paper also points to a number of country examples to illustrate these “best practices.”

The second aspect the writer would like to share with the valued readers is to highlight on best countries that fought corruption.

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Chairman of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw's Legal Affairs and Special Cases Assessment Commission Thura U Shwe Mann holds talks with European Union Ambassador Kristian Schmidt in Nay Pyi Taw. **PHOTO: MNA**

Thura U Shwe Mann receives EU Ambassador

Chairman of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw's Legal Affairs and Special Cases Assessment Commission Thura U Shwe Mann received Kristian Schmidt, Ambassador of the European Union, yesterday

morning at the Hluttaw affairs building in Nay Pyi Taw.

At the meeting, matters relating to the right cooperation process in Rakhine affairs and the country's peace process,

as well as investment and economic cooperation between the European Union and Myanmar, based on an understanding of Myanmar's culture, were discussed.—MNA ■

Union Minister Thura U Aung Ko attends second coordination meeting on filming Bogyoke Aung San's biopic

UNION Minister for Religious Affairs and Culture Thura U Aung Ko attended the second coordination meeting on the filming of Bogyoke Aung San's biopic, at the ministry's office, yesterday morning.

The union minister said, "Our primary aim is to successfully film the biopic of our national hero, General Aung San.

"Concerted efforts should be made to make this film successful because it involves our national pride and glory.

"As we discussed in the previous meeting, artists, government servants and supporters may hold different points of view, and we should all aim for mutual understanding to prepare for unexpected reactions. I also believe that cooperation is essential to address this matter.

"As for the officials of the Myanmar Motion Picture Association, preparations should be made to request the concerned ministry's assistance prior to

starting work on this film.

"We would like you to discuss the plans and suggestions involved in the process.

"Our ministry will fulfill all your needs and requests and will provide any necessary assistance to the best of our ability.

"I would like to urge all of you to perform your tasks during this film-making process with a conscientious spirit."

Following the union minister's remarks, Joint-Secretary of the film committee U Lu Min revealed the progress of the film.

Director U Min Htin Ko Ko Gyi explained the stages of making the biopic and the on-going process. Next, Joint-Secretary of the Myanmar Motion Picture Association U Sein Thauang discussed the cooperation between the ministry and his association.

Following the discussion of the sub-committee's suggestions, Union Minister Thura U Aung Ko concluded the meeting.—Myanmar News Agency ■

A Brief Study on Anti-Corruption Drive in today's World

FROM PAGE-9

The following are the best 9 countries in the world at fighting corruption.

9. Denmark: 5.27 — In 2015, Denmark was voted the most transparent country in the world by Transparency International, and it scores highly in the World Economic Forum's analysis. It is the lowest ranked of four Scandinavian countries on this list.

8. Singapore: 5.27 — The city-state of Singapore is one of the most highly developed nations in Asia, and has made huge efforts to fight corruption, spearheaded by its Corrupt Practices Investigation Bureau.

7. Switzerland: 5.32 — In Switzerland, companies can be criminally prosecuted and ordered to pay a fine of up to Swiss Franc 5 million for acts of corruption committed by individuals working on its behalf.

6. New Zealand: 5.36 — According to Hong Kong's Independent Commission against Corruption "New Zealand does not have any one single agency tasked with fighting corruption." "Rather it has a number of agencies that focus on the different

elements in the fight against corruption."

5. Norway: 5.39 — "Corruption does not represent a constraint to trade or investment, and administrative corruption and petty bribery are almost non-existent. The Norwegian Penal Code criminalizes active and passive bribery, trading in influence, fraud, extortion, breach of trust and money laundering," according to Generative Adversarial Networks (GAN's) business anti-corruption portal.

4. Finland: 5.42 — Finland has consistently ranked as one of the world's least corrupt countries. However, a recent report from the Police University College asserted that corruption increased 10 per cent from 2011-2014.

3. Sweden: 5.50 — Corruption in Sweden is policed by the country's National Anti-Corruption Unit, part of the Swedish Prosecution Authority. In the Scandinavian state, corruption is defined as "the abuse of power" by any official.

2. Japan: 5.57 — Japan is one of the least corrupt countries in the world, however, according to

Generative Adversarial Networks "there is a traditional practice (known as amakudari) of assigning retired government officials to top positions within Japanese companies. Amakudari employees are particularly common in the financial, construction, transportation and pharmaceutical industries."

1. Luxembourg: 5.62 — Luxembourg tops the World Economic Forum's ranking despite recent revelations in The Guardian that former prime minister, and current European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker "spent years in his previous role as Luxembourg's prime minister secretly blocking EU efforts to tackle tax avoidance by multinational corporations."

The author have the opportunity staying in Singapore for about three months, and really and truly in love with the corrupt free environment and society.

Therefore, the writer takes the liberty to share as the third aspect on the fight of corruption in Singapore. How Singapore fought corruption or 4 regulatory steps to a successful state

In the mid-50s the British

left Singapore (British colony back then) and Singaporeans were left with weak legislative framework, almost uneducated population, low wages, opaque economy, endemic corruption and quite vague prospects. Lee Kuan Yew, together with his party "People's Action" won the election, and became the symbol of the fight against corruption, the slogan of which was: "You want to fight corruption? Then, be ready to send to jail your friends and relatives".

1. The anti-corruption campaign consisted of 4 elements, the first of which was the establishment of a strong independent service for the fight against corruption.

Denying officials' immunity: All officials and their families were deprived of immunity. Agents of the Bureau of Corruption Investigation (BCI) had the right to check bank accounts, property, not only belonging to the officials, but also their children, wives, relatives and even friends.

2. Live within your means: The second element of the anti-corruption program in Singapore was the introduction of a

"presumption of guilt agent" of the government, any governmental department or a public state organization.

3. High Salary as a guarantee of integrity: After enactment of the first 2 elements, the third element was to increase the salaries of officials. Lee Kuan Yew claimed that civil servants should be paid the highest wages because they deserve it, representing a decent and honest government. If they are underpaid, they may be tempted to engage in corrupt practices.

4. Mass Media Factor: The fourth element stands on the formation of independent, objective media, covering all found cases of corruption. The officer caught in excessive costs, bribes, immediately becomes the "hero" of the front page.

These were the four regulatory steps that turned a poor state with no natural resources into one of leading economies in the world in less than 40 years.

In conclusion, the writer wishes "the Anti-Corruption Commission" of Myanmar all the success aspired by the people of our country. ■

In Davos, Merkel says isolation not the answer

DAVOS, (Switzerland) — German Chancellor Angela Merkel told the World Economic Forum (WEF) in Davos on Wednesday that isolationism and protectionism were not solutions to the economic challenges facing countries around the world.

Merkel also told the audience that she was open-minded about what kind of partnership the European Union would develop with Britain after Brexit,

but noted that there could be no compromise on the EU's core principles in those talks. "We want a close partnership with the United Kingdom," she said. Mnuchin says weaker dollar helps US trade in short term

US Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said on Thursday that a weaker dollar benefited US trade balances in the short term but that he believed in the long-

term strength of the currency.

"I think I've been quite consistent on the dollar. Previous secretaries have talked up the dollar. What I've said is that first of all we support free trade of the currency," Mnuchin said at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland.

However, he added that he was happy with the current level. "Where the dollar is is not a concern of mine."—Reuters ■



German Chancellor Angela Merkel. PHOTO: REUTERS

At least 3 dead after train derails near Milan — fire brigade official

MILAN — A train derailment near Italy's financial capital Milan killed between three and five people on Thursday, a fire brigade official at the city's control room said.

State train firm Ferrovie dello Stato said in a statement a regional train, operated by Trenord, derailed at the Pioltello Limito station, some 40 kilometres from Milan, without giving details on potential casualties.

"There are between three and five dead in the accident from what we know at the moment," the fire official told Reuters.

TV channels RaiNews24 and SkyTG24 reported at least two people had been killed and 10 seriously injured, citing emergency services.

Television footage showed fire brigades trying to free people trapped inside the wagons of the train, which were bent by the impact.



Rescue workers and police officers stand near derailed trains in Pioltello, on the outskirts of Milan, Italy on 25 January, 2018. PHOTO: REUTERS

Train circulation between Milan and the nearby city of Brescia was halted after the accident, Ferrovie dello Stato said in the statement.

Trenord is a joint venture between railway operator FNM and one unit of state railway operator Gruppo Ferrovie dello Stato.

In a statement FNM con-

firmed the accident had happened at Pioltello and said its Chairman Andrea Gibelli was on his way to the site. FNM did not give any detail on casualties."—Reuters ■

UK's Hammond says inflation peaking, sterling appreciating

DAVOS, (Switzerland) — British Chancellor of the Exchequer Philip Hammond said inflation was peaking and sterling appreciating as the economy recovered from the initial shock of the Brexit vote in 2016.

"It looks as though inflation has peaked now ... I would expect inflation to begin to decline," he told the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland on Thursday.

Hammond sat beside US Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin, who sent the US dollar tumbling on Wednesday with his remark that a weaker greenback helped US trade. Hammond talked of a rebound in sterling and turned to Mnuchin: "And we seem to be recovering quite a bit more, Steve, thanks very much."—Reuters ■

Four US citizens killed in 20 January attack on Kabul hotel

WASHINGTON — Four US citizens were killed and two injured in Saturday's attack by the Taliban on the Intercontinental Hotel in Kabul, the US State Department said on Wednesday.

"We can confirm that there were four US citizens killed and two injured. We offer our deepest condolences to the families and

friends of those who were killed and wish for the speedy recovery of those wounded," State Department spokeswoman Heather Nauert said in a statement.

Glenn Selig, a spokesman for Trump campaign adviser Rick Gates, was among the Americans who were killed, according to a statement from Se-

lig's company, Selig Multimedia.

Selig represented Gates, who has been charged in Special Counsel Robert Mueller's investigation of alleged Russian meddling in the 2016 US election and possible collusion with President Donald Trump's campaign.

"Glenn was in Kabul on a potential success story involv-

ing Afghanistan and its steps to battle extremism. The focus was highlighting the country's new president and constructing a democracy forum event for Afghani women," Selig Multimedia said.

At least 20 people were killed when five gunman dressed in Afghan army uniforms

stormed the Kabul hotel on Saturday night. Seven Ukrainians and one German were among the dead.

The Taliban, which attacked the same hotel in 2011, claimed responsibility for the attack, spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said in a statement.—Reuters ■



Tu-160 bomber. The missile-carrying aircraft will be delivered to the Aerospace Force until the end of this year, according to the source. **PHOTO: TASS**

Russia's upgraded Tu-160 strategic bomber started flight trials last week — source

MOSCOW — Russia's upgraded Tupolev Tu-160 (NATO reporting name: Blackjack) strategic missile-carrying bomber with Factory No 0804 produced at the Kazan Aircraft Enterprise started flight trials last week, a source in the Russian defense sector told TASS on Wednesday.

"The 804th plane made using Soviet aircraft breakthroughs took to the skies for the first time last week and has been performing evaluation flights since then. The missile-carrying aircraft will be delivered to the Aerospace Force until the end of this year," the source said.

Commenting on various media reports, the source said the new plane was not a modernized bomber prototype.

"The plane underwent only small-scale upgrade while its airframe and the engines have remained the same. Fully digitalized doc-

umentation on the new missile-carrying aircraft will be issued no sooner than the middle of this year and the work on building the Tu-160M is impossible without it," the source noted. TASS has not yet received an official confirmation of this information.

As was reported earlier, a ceremony was held at the Kazan Aircraft Enterprise on 16 November, 2017 to roll out the upgraded Tu-160 missile-carrying bomber. On the same day, Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Rogozin overseeing the defense sector in the Russian government told Russia's President Vladimir Putin that the debut flight of the upgraded strategic missile-carrying bomber was scheduled for February 2018.

Tu-160 bomber and its upgrade

The Tu-160 is the Soviet strategic missile car-

rier armed with cruise missiles that can carry nuclear warheads. Along with the Tu-95MS missile carrier, the Tu-160 makes part of Russia's strategic nuclear forces along with the ground-based missile systems and submarines.

After the disintegration of the Soviet Union, several unfinished Tu-160 planes remained at the Kazan Aircraft Enterprise at various degrees of their readiness but the work on them was put on hold due to economic woes. As a result, the construction of one plane had been finished only by 2000 and the other by 2008. It was reported in 2015 that Russia had made a decision to resume the production of Tu-160 bombers in their upgraded Tu-160M2 modification and reschedule the development of the new-generation bomber PAK DA (Perspective Airborne Complex of Long-Range Aviation) for

a later term.

The Russian Defence Ministry reported that the serial production of Tu-160M2 bombers should begin in 2023. The Russian Aerospace Force intends to purchase no less than 50 such aircraft. Aerospace Force then-Commander-in-Chief Viktor Bondarev said in June 2017 that the Tu-160M2 might take to the skies for the first time already in late 2018.

The Tupolev Aircraft Company has launched work on developing heavily-upgraded Tu-160M bombers, which are scheduled to take to the skies in 2019. The upgrade programme supervised by Russia's Defence Ministry envisages fully replacing the bomber's onboard avionics. This measure is expected to boost considerably the efficiency of using the aircraft system according to its designation.—Tass ■

Ex-UK PM Thatcher statue proposal rejected by Westminster planners

LONDON — A second attempt to erect a statue of Britain's former Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher outside parliament, just six months after a first proposal was thrown out over vandalism fears, has failed after Westminsters rejected a revised plan.

They said the proposed statue of Thatcher wearing the robes of a member of the House of Lords was not the right depiction of Britain's first female Prime Minister.

"We would welcome future proposals for a more appropriate statue of Baroness Thatcher, depicting her as Prime Minister, rather than the current design ..," said Westminster planning committee chairman Richard Beddoe.

Thatcher, who ruled Britain from 1979-1990, died after suffering a stroke in 2013. She was the country's first woman premier, its longest-serving prime minister of the 20th century, and won three consecutive national elections for the Conservative Party. But her attempts to arrest Britain's post-war decline by smashing the trade unions and privatizing the country's national assets made her a deeply divisive figure. Another sculpture of her was decapitated in 2002 at Guildhall Art Gallery in London

by a man who attacked it with a metal pole.

The plan had been to erect a life-size-and-a-half statue of Thatcher by sculptor Douglas Jennings in Parliament Square, alongside those of figures such as Winston Churchill and Nelson Mandela. To deter vandalism, it would have been erected on a climb-proof four-metre plinth which could have been quickly boarded up if needed. Westminster council officials said objections had been received on the basis of possible vandalism, that the subject was too divisive to have a statue erected in her honour and that there was already a statue of Thatcher in the nearby House of Commons. But the planning committee did not rule out approving future plans for a Thatcher memorial.

"Baroness Thatcher is a hugely significant figure in British history and in principle the council is in favour of a statue commemorating her in Parliament Square, but it must be the right statue, with an appropriate design and the support of her family," Beddoe said in a statement. The proposed new 300,000-pound (\$414,000) work was commissioned by the Public Memorials Appeal charity after Thatcher's death.—Reuters ■

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V EVER ALLY VOY. NO. ()

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V EVER ALLY VOY. NO. () are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 26-1-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of H.P.T where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

**SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S EVERGREEN SHIPPING
LINE**

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V THANLWIN STAR VOY. NO. ()

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V THANLWIN STAR VOY. NO. () are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 26-1-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.P where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

**SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S CONTINENTAL
SHIPPING LINE PTE LTD**

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V KOTA HASIL VOY. NO. ()

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V KOTA HASIL VOY. NO. () are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 26-1-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of AW.P.T where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

**SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S ADVANCE CONTAINER
LINES**

Phone No: 2301185

Southeast Asian states launch intelligence pact to counter Islamist threat

JAKARTA/NUSA DUA, (Indonesia) — Six Southeast Asian nations launched an intelligence pact on Thursday aimed at combating Islamist militants and improving co-operation on security threats, overcoming what analysts described as a high level of distrust.

Under the “Our Eyes” initiative, senior defence officials will meet every two weeks to swap information on militant groups and develop a common database of violent extremists.

The intelligence sharing arrangement comes after insurgents aligned to Islamic State laid siege to the southern Philippine city of Marawi last year.

Dozens of foreigners — most notably Indonesians and Malaysians — were among hundreds of militants who seized large parts of Marawi and engaged in a ferocious battle with Philippine forces that left much of the city in ruins and more than 1,100 people dead, according to government figures.

Some of the foreign fighters are believed to have travelled to Marawi via the porous maritime borders of the Sulu Sea, next to Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines.

“This is something that seems so simple, but the effect is extraordinary,” said Indonesian Defence Minister Ryamizard Ryacudu at the “soft launch” in Bali.

Ryacudu said intelligence sharing would help ensure another incident

like Marawi did not occur and prevent the region from “becoming like the Middle East”.

He added that the intelligence sharing was “specifically for (combating) terrorism and radicalism”.

While led by military forces, the intelligence sharing would “involve all parties”, including police, he said.

Along with Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Brunei — all members of

the Association of Southeast Asian Nations — have signed up to the pact.

“It’s a significant development,” said John Blaxland, an intelligence analyst from the Australian National University.

“ASEAN has long struggled with getting beyond superficiality when it comes to collaboration on security matters.”

Blaxland said relations among ASEAN states had been bedevilled by a “high level of distrust” around intelligence

cooperations.

“Operational imperatives are overcoming that and you are seeing that come to fruition with this mechanism.”

Another security analyst, who declined to be named, said a “pact was better than not having a pact” but added that entrenched mistrust between nations, and between different counter-terrorism agencies within nations, had to be overcome for it to be effective. —Reuters ■



North Korean women's ice hockey players arrive at the South Korea's national training centre on 25 January, 2018 in Jincheon, South Korea. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

North Korea calls for unity with South as hockey players begin Olympics training

SEOUL — A delegation of North Korean officials and ice hockey players crossed the heavily guarded border into South Korea on Thursday for joint Olympics training, as Pyongyang called for all Koreans to seek unification of the two nations. The group included 12 North Korean players who will form a combined women's ice hockey team with their southern counterparts at next month's Winter Olympics in the South Korean mountain resort of Pyeongchang.

After going through South Korean checkpoints at the border, the team travelled to a national training centre in Jincheon, 90 km (56 miles) south of Seoul.

Stepping off a bus, the athletes ignored questions as they were mobbed by throngs of media. They wore puffy winter jackets in the white, blue, and red colours of North Korea's flag, with “DPR Korea” emblazoned on the back, referring to the country's official name, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. In Jincheon, the athletes were met by South Korea head coach Sarah Murray, who previously called the government's decision to form a joint team a “tough situation.”

Under an agreement worked out during the first official talks between the two Koreas in two years, the joint team will wear

unity jerseys and march under a unified peninsula flag at the Games' opening ceremony on 9 February.

South Korea has prepared “all contingency scenarios” in case North Korea makes any provocative moves during the Olympics, but the games remain an opportunity for “peaceful engagement,” South Korean foreign minister Kang Kyung-wha told Reuters in an interview on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland. “We just need to make the best of it.”

Early on Thursday, North Korea sent a rare announcement addressed to “all Koreans at home and abroad”, saying they

should make a “breakthrough” for unification without the help of other countries, its state media said. All Koreans should “promote contact, travel, cooperation between North and South Korea” while adding Pyongyang will “smash” all challenges against reunification of the Korean peninsula. North and South Korea remain technically at war after their 1950-53 conflict ended in a truce rather than a peace treaty. Tensions escalated dramatically last year as the regime of Kim Jong Un stepped up its programme aimed at developing a nuclear-tipped missile capable of striking the United States.—Reuters ■

INVITATION FOR OPEN TENDER (2/2018) [TENDER NO. MPPE / HSD / T / 2 (2017 – 2018)]

1. Open Tender is invited for the Myanma Petroleum Products Enterprise, Ministry of Electricity and Energy for the supply of High Speed Diesel (376,000 ± 10% Barrels)
2. Tender Closing Date & Time - 8-2-2018, 12:00 Hrs
3. Tender Opening Date & Time - 8-2-2018, 13:00 Hrs
4. Delivery Time - March 2018 to June 2018
5. Tender documents and details information are available at the Department of Finance, Myanma Petroleum Products Enterprise, Nay Pyi Taw, during our office hours commencing 26-1-2018 on payment of Myanmar Kyat One Hundred Thousand (Kyats 100,000.) per set.
6. Only bid from tenderer who has purchased tender document officially from Myanma Petroleum Products Enterprise will be accepted for evaluation.

Managing Director
Myanma Petroleum Products Enterprise
Ministry of Electricity and Energy
No(6) Complex, Nay Pyi Taw

Contact Phone No.
067-3411487/3411486/3411280/3411129

To
Holder of Silver, Gold, Platinum, Diamond Cards of the Golden Hotel; and Others

This notification, in accordance with the instructions and power of attorney by Daw Kyi Kyi Htwe (13/Ka Kha Na (N) 006201), who lives on between 61st and 62nd, Chan-aye-tha-zan township, Mandalay is hereby to make this known to those concerned as follow ----

The executive Power and like in regard with Golden Hotel, located on the Holding 15, Block (B), Kankauk Quater, Cha-aye-tha-zan Township, Mandalay has been transferred to the Golden Hotel owner Daw Kyi Kyi Htwe by the lessees (who hold the lease) on (10.1.2018).

Those, who are holding Golden Hotel's Silver Cards No.S-001, S-011 and S-101, and Gold Cards No.G-001, G-003, G-004, G-006, G-007, G-008 and Platinum Cards No.P-011,P-051 and Diamond Cards No.D-002, D-003, D-004, D-005, D-006, D-051 and D-052 will be allowed to stay at the Hotel in accordance with the remaining validity of stay permit and the rest who are not included in the afore-mentioned card holders will not be anyhow granted.

Empowered-

By Daw Kyi Kyi Htwe (13/Ka Kha Na (N) 006201)
With regard to empowerment,

U Aung Zin Oo (LL.B), Advocate
U Myo Myint Naing (LL.B), Advocate
U Gum San Seng (LL.B),
U Kyaw Wanna Aung (LL.B),

No.56, 38st, Aung Setana Lane, bet; 67 and 69 street, Ward 4, Mahamyaing (1), Mahaaung Township, Mandalay, 09-2014987

Anne Hathaways Barbie postponed to 2020

LOS ANGELES — The release of the big screen adaptation of “Barbie”, starring Anne Hathaway, has been pushed to 8 May, 2020.

The film, directed by Alethea Jones, was originally scheduled to be released on 8 August this year.

The long-in-the-works project by Sony is based on the classic Barbie mythology, while putting a modern spin on the toy character, with feminism and identity as main focus.

According to The Hollywood Reporter, Amy Pascal, Walter F Parkes and Laurie MacDonald are attached as producers.

The plot narrates the story of a woman who gradually understands that she does not fit into the perfect land of Barbies and travels to the real life, where she discovers that her uniqueness is an asset.

Before Hathaway, Amy Schumer was on board to star in the film. — PTI ■



PHOTO: REUTERS

Dan Smith would love to collaborate with Sia, Rihanna

LONDON — Dan Smith has expressed his desire to collaborate with Sia and Rihanna for his next song. The 31-year-old singer said he would love to work alongside the two music icons for an upcoming track. “I really want to collaborate with Sia. I do quite a bit of writing outside of the band as well, so theres a lot of people I want to write with,” Smith said according to Contactmusic. “I love writing pop music, so yeah well see. Sias just an interesting one of a kind, Id love to write with her. Thatd be cool,” he added. The Bastille band member also said he would love Rihanna lend her voice to one of the songs of their next album. “And obviously Rihanna. Were debating at the moment, theres a song on the album that I would love her to sing on and Im like, Is it worth asking? Because I know its going to get knocked back,” Smith said.— PTI ■

Dresses felt like college experience, says Heigl

LOS ANGELES — Actor Katherine Heigl said working on her hit film “27 Dresses” felt like a “college” experience to her. The 39-year-old actor reminisced about her days working in the Anne Fletcher-directed film,

which also starred James Marsden, Malin Akerman, Edward Burns and Judy Greer. “We started filming in Rhode Island, and whenever you shoot on location, you tend to bond so quickly with your cast. Wed only have each

other to go to dinner with and eat lunch with. You become this super close-knit group, and I was working with some of the greatest,” Heigl said, according to Female First. “I had so much fun with James, Edward, Malin and Judy.

These guys were the best. We were just thrown into it together. I never had a college experience, but I think maybe thats what it feels like. You become so bonded so quickly and do everything together,” she added.— PTI ■

Goodbye yellow brick tours; Elton John announces farewell world concerts

NEW YORK — Elton John on Wednesday announced a three-year farewell world tour, saying he would quit traveling afterward to focus on life with his family.

The 70-year-old singer, one of the best-selling recording artists in the world over a 50-year career, told a news conference in New York that his priorities have changed after becoming a parent to two children with his husband David Furnish. “I love them so much. I don’t want to miss them and I don’t want them to miss me,” he said. “I’ve had a good run.” He said his last tour, called “Farewell Yellow Brick Road,” would start in September 2018 in the United States and would last through 2021, taking him all around the world.

“It will be a wonderful way to thank people,” he said. “It’s a way of going out with a bang.



Singer Elton John.
PHOTO: REUTERS

I’m not the kind of guy to go out with a whimper.” John made the announcement after a live performance of his hits “Tiny Dancer” and “I’m Still Standing.” With a penchant for flamboyant stage costumes and an ear for piano rockers and ballads, John has dominated the pop industry for decades with hits like “Your

Song” and “Candle in the Wind.”

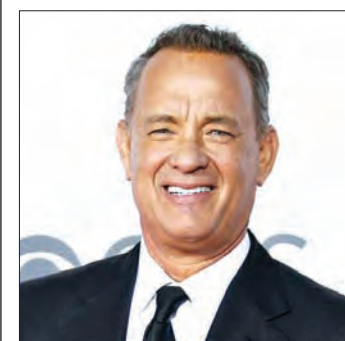
On Wednesday, he denied British media reports that he was quitting touring because of ill health. But he said he had been on the road since he was 17, adding; “I can’t physically do the traveling anymore. I want to be home with my children more.”

John and Furnish married in

2014 and the couple are raising two sons, Zachary, 7, and Elijah, 5, who were born through a surrogate mother.

“I never thought that I could love anything as much as I love my sons... I never thought I could be a father, I thought I’m too selfish, too set in my ways,” he said.

John is due to perform at the Grammy Awards in New York on Sunday. On 30 January, musicians including Miley Cyrus, John Legend, Chris Martin and Sam Smith will pay tribute to his music and career at a previously announced concert in New York. John, who has Grammy, Oscar and Tony awards for his work in film and theater including “The Lion King” and “Billy Elliott,” said he planned to remain creative but said that after the tour he would likely take 2 or 3 years off from writing music.—Reuters ■



Tom Hanks. PHOTO: PTI

Hanks would love to be a James Bond villain

LONDON — Veteran actor Tom Hanks says he has never been offered a James Bond film but would love to star in a project if approached.

The 61-year-old actor said he would love to essay the part of an antagonist to the iconic British secret agent, reported Contactmusic. “Thatd be a treat. No ones asked me to be in any of those. “I might have to hold out to play the guy who says Before I kill you, Mr Bond, perhaps youd like a tour of my installation?” Hanks said.—PTI ■

Art Exhibition in Yangon titled Art Vindication

WITH the aim of improving arts in Myanmar, MKT Art Collection Management Agency is holding an art exhibition at Gallery 65 in Yangon starting from yesterday.

The Art Exhibition is named “Art Vindication” and is held at Gallery 65, located on Yaw Min Gyi Street in Dagon Township, Yangon. Gallery 65 presents its first exhibition for Year 2018 with “4th Art Vindication” Art Exhibition.

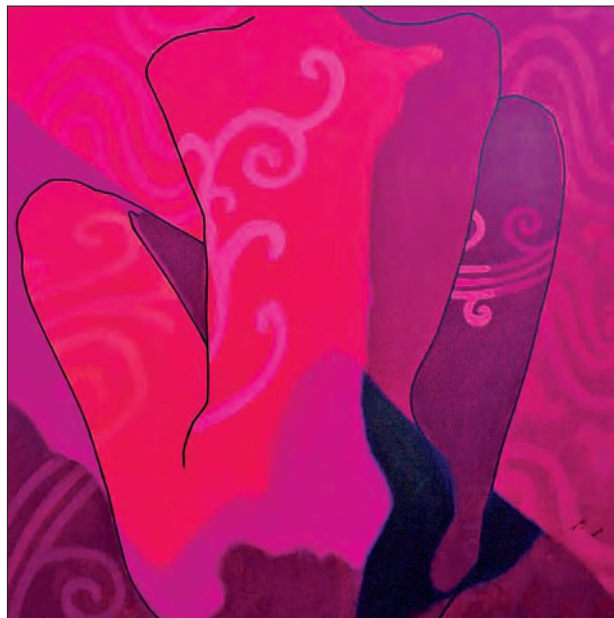
This is a group exhibition featuring the works of Artists Maung Aww, Win Zin, Koung Si Thu and Moe Kyaw Thant.

The exhibition show a varieties of the latest amazing painting works of these artists.

The exhibit is being exhibited for 11 days starting from yesterday until 4 February 2018. Interested persons are invited to the exhibition which is from 10am to 6pm.

The Art Exhibition organizer, MKT Art Collection Management Agency has been founded since 2007 by Artists Moe Kyaw Thant.

The Art Agency had previously launched new and innovative Arts exhibitions including “Essence of Emotion” and



Art showing at the Gallery 65. PHOTO: HTIN KYAW

“Authentic Art” in collaboration with young artists from National University

of Arts and Culture, Yangon and Professional Artists.—Htin Kyaw

Book Street Festival to be held in Pyay

WITH the joint sponsorship of local booklovers and the Association of literature, culture and art, a book festival will be held at the Pyay Youth Center on Bogyoke Road and the festival will also be held between the Bogyoke Statue and around the railway station platform. The festival will be held from 26 to 28 January from 9 am to 10 pm.

Fifty book stores from Yangon, Bago and Pyay will display and sell a variety of books at the festival; also cartoonists from Pyay will draw cartoons, portraits and caricatures at the Pyay Youth Center. In addition, the Information and Public Relations Department will open a reading room for children and encourage them to read what they like.

Storytelling, displaying various kinds of books and literary talk shows will be included. The writer Sayar Mya Win (Philosophy), Sayar Mann (Taunglone Pyan), Sayar Myint Khaing (Anyar Myay), Sayar Yi Zaw Maung (Pyay) and Sayar D Arkar Kyaw will lead the literary talk show with the title “Youth and Literature”, everybody can freely participate at the festival.—Myanmar Digital News

Japanese photographer brings “cinema stars” to Africa

TOKYO — A project that began with a simple idea to deliver the magic of cinema to children in Africa has not only led to a cultural exchange but to an unlikely collaboration — the production of a music video by Japanese and Ugandan elementary school children.

“Cinema Stars for Africa,” a roaming theater project traveling mainly around northern Uganda, was launched in 2016 by photographer and writer Naoko Sakuragi to give some African children their first-ever taste of the silver screen.

An exchange of letters and video messages between students from a Tokyo elementary school, where Sakuragi periodically teaches about her activities in Africa, and Ugandan children ensued the same year. Sixth graders from the Tokyo school even put on a play portraying Ugandan child soldiers who had been abducted and forced to fight in the country’s decades-long civil war.

“It was a very serious performance and the children wrote the script themselves, but in the end, they talked about the importance of peace,” Sakuragi said in a recent interview,

referring to the play performed at Toyotama Minami Elementary School in northwest Tokyo’s Nerima Ward.

“The children continued the video letter exchanges and then imagined the idea of collaborating on a music video project.”

In 2017, her voluntary group, whose predecessor had created in 2013 a scholarship trust fund for “smart Ugandan children who are in need,” held movie screenings and art workshops in Edea, located on Cameroon’s Sanaga River, and Uganda’s Gulu, which endured more than two decades of civil war from the early 1990s.

Sakuragi, 40, who has been taking photos in Africa since 2001 and published a photo essay in August 2011 about children living through Uganda’s civil war, said she embarked on the cinema stars project after getting financial backing from people moved by the photos and poignant stories from her essay. It was during her travels to the region amid the raging civil war that she had a light-bulb moment — the idea that cinema could replicate the soothing effect bonfires had on the children who would

take refuge in a shelter built in northern Uganda by a Japanese NGO.

Some of the children in the shelter had been abducted by guerrillas in the past. It is estimated that the Lord’s Resistance Army abducted and forced nearly 38,000 children to serve as soldiers, or in the case of girls, soldiers’ “wives,” during the war.

“They could be kidnapped and used as child soldiers. They were frightened, couldn’t sleep and would take refuge at night in a safe place with us. We would make bonfires every night and watch them with the children while singing and dancing. They were separated from their parents and the bonfires had a calming effect.”

The children’s fire gazing reminded her of the rapt expressions often seen in a cinema — the projector light, like the bonfires in Uganda, acting as a salve to heal the wounds of war. Cinema could also be a tool to educate, she said.

But the cinema stars project would not materialize until several years after the conclusion of the civil war, many of the survivors of which were now young adults with children of their



Musician Gen Nagahara demonstrates the djembe for fifth- and sixth-graders gathered at Toyotama Minami Elementary School in Tokyo’s Nerima Ward on 13 January 2018. Fifth-grader Dabide Denishi, 11, was selected to play the percussion instrument in front of the class. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

own, struggling to support their families and reintegrate into society. Sakuragi crowdfunded over 1.5 million yen (about \$13,500) for the project. “These children were really happy to watch movies for the first time, and many of them talked to us about their impressions and their own future possibilities as actors, for example, or even movie directors. During the war it was sad because they couldn’t even conceive of a future; they had to struggle just to survive. Now they can see a different life.”

Over two years, around 700 African children have watched movies with cinema stars. They have been shown titles including Kenji Miyazawa’s children’s international award-winning animation “Kaze no Matasaburo,” among others. Since the project’s inception, nearly 1,000 kids, about 500 each from Japan and Uganda, have corresponded.

In July 2017, sixth graders at the Tokyo school began production of the “Under the Stars” music video with their counterparts in

Uganda, enlisting help from professional musicians. Musician Gen Nagahara, 45, composed the lyrics and produced the arrangement and recording. The video was filmed separately in each country.

Nagahara’s Kenyan friend, who performs African dance, showed the Japanese children some moves, but the sixth graders decided to use their own choreography in the end. He said the song’s title signifies being “one under the stars,” regardless of country.—Kyodo News ■

Gandamar, University play to a draw in KBZ Bank Women's League match

Kyaw Zin Lin

GANDAMAR FC and University Women FC battled to a 2-2 tie in KBZ Bank Women's League match at Aung San Stadium in Yangon yesterday evening.

The game was hotly contested, as both teams were about equal in tackling ability and football skills. There were no early goals for either team.

Early on, every opportunity created by both teams were thwarted just ahead of the goal line by accurate blocking and proper positioning of the defence lines.

The first goal was garnered by the University team when Mie Mie Lin scored at 44 minutes.

In restarting after the goal, Tint Tint Tun from Gandamar equalized for her team.

In the second half, just after the starting whistle, Niang Zann



University team's goalkeeper Moe Moe San, best player of the match, blocks the ball kicked by Gandamar team's striker in yesterday's KBZ Bank Women's League match at Aung San Stadium. **PHOTO: MWL**

Nuam scored the second and go-ahead goal for Gandamar.

But at the 74-minute mark,

Aye Aye Thant from University equalised for her team

and the match ended in a 2-2

tie as the players from both teams seemed to be out of energy. ■

Real Madrid humbled by Leganes in King's Cup

MADRID — Real Madrid suffered a humiliating 2-1 home defeat by Leganes on Wednesday to exit the King's Cup at the quarter-final stage on away goals.

A much-changed Real side, missing the likes of Cristiano Ronaldo and Gareth Bale, held a 1-0 advantage from the first leg but their troubled season hit a new low as they were outplayed by a team lying 13th in La Liga.

Leganes started brightly and Claudio Beavue sent a free kick against the post in the opening exchanges.

The visitors were deservedly level on aggregate after half an hour as a mishap between Achraf Hakimi and Nacho allowed Javier Eraso the space to produce a stunning finish from outside the box. Beavue sent a volley into the side netting on the stroke of halftime as a shell-shocked Real were jeered off the pitch at the break. That appeared to bring about a reaction from the home side and Karim Benzema produced a neat finish from an acute angle immediately after the restart to put Zinedine Zidane's



Real Madrid's Karim Benzema in action at Quarter Final Second Leg of Spanish King's Cup at Santiago Bernabeu in Madrid, Spain on 24 January, 2018. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

men ahead on aggregate.

Leganes centre-back Dimitris Siovas missed a gilt-edged chance as he headed back across the six-yard box with the goal gaping, but moments later Gabriel Pires made no mistake as he

thumped home a header to put Leganes through on away goals.

They joined Valencia, who defeated last season's finalists Alaves on penalties earlier on Wednesday, and Sevilla, who knocked out Atletico Madrid on

Tuesday, in the draw for the last four.

League leaders Barcelona host Espanyol on Thursday, trailing 1-0 from the first leg in the last quarter-final. —Reuters ■

MFF Futsal Open Cup 2018 to be held in March

THE MFF Futsal Open Cup 2018 will be held in March at the National Indoor Stadium-1 in Yangon starting from 1 March, said an official from the Myanmar Football Federation (MFF). Futsal teams and clubs from across Myanmar who want to participate in the Open Cup tourney will need to register at the MFF no later than 15 February, according to the official MFF website.

The order of play will be set according to the number of teams participating. An unlimited number of teams from anywhere in Myanmar are welcome to register for the tourney, said an MFF official. The participating teams will be announced on the MFF's Facebook page, said an MFF official. The MFF will also organise accommodations for participants from other States and Regions. For those further information, contact MFF official U Kyi Min Thein at 09-250650952 or U Aung Maw Thein at 09-5019347. —Kyaw Zin Lin ■

Halep outlasts Kerber in thriller to reach final

MELBOURNE — World number one Simona Halep quelled a tenacious Angelique Kerber fightback and saved two match points to reach her first Australian Open final with a 6-3, 4-6, 9-7 victory in a compelling scrap on Rod Laver Arena on Thursday. A wildly unpredictable match veered one way, then the other, before Halep finally broke Kerber's resistance to claim victory on her fourth match point when her exhausted opponent fired a backhand over the baseline.

When Halep won the first five games it seemed the expected battle royal between two of the game's most ferocious competitors would turn into a damp squib. —Reuters ■