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THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

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President U Win Myint, centre, flanked by vice presidents U Myint Swe, left, and U Henry Van Thio, right, take their oath of office yesterday at the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw. **PHOTO: MNA**

President U Win Myint takes oath of office

NEWLY-elected President U Win Myint and the vice presidents took their oath of office during the joint session of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw at 10am yesterday.

President U Win Myint and vice presidents U Myint Swe and U Henry Van Thio took their oaths as the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker presided. This was followed by an inaugural speech by President U Win Myint.

"I promise that you will see with your own eyes the changes that you have yearned for as I walk along this path together with you, said President U Win Myint.

"Our country is still in poverty with necessities in every sector; which is why we need to carry on our struggle and work hard in all sectors. The challenges and difficulties our country and our people are facing today are many. Although every issue cannot be solved easily, we will have to make utmost efforts to solve these issues according to each priority sector, he said.—MNA ■

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I promise that you will see with your own eyes the changes that you have yearned for as I walk along this path together with you: President U Win Myint

Following is the unofficial translation of the full text of the speech delivered by President U Win Myint at the ceremony to take oath of office at Pyidaungsu Hluttaw yesterday.

Esteemed Speaker and Representatives of the Pyidaungsu-Hluttaw, the State Counsellor and Union-level personnel and dignitaries in this ceremony and Union citizens, may you be blessed with auspiciousness, good health and peace of mind.

I wish first of all to express my thanks to the Representatives of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw who elected me as President and all the people who gave me strength and support. Also, I am truly grateful to have this opportunity to deliver this speech after taking my oath of office as President in this Pyidaungsu Hluttaw.

Fellow citizens of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar,

Holding in high esteem all the people in the entire country who have given support with faith and trust to the State Counsellor and the National League for Democracy, I pledge to carry out my duties with righteousness, seriousness and steadfastness.

Today, our country is still in poverty with necessities in every sector;which is why we need to carry on our struggle and work hard in all sectors. In the international arena, we are facing pressure, criticisms and misunderstandings. The challenges and difficulties our country and our people are facing today are many. Although every issue cannot be solved easily, we will have to make utmost efforts to solve these issues according to each priority sector.

Fellow citizens,

I will carry out the implementation of the priority goals of the Union Government which are as follows:

1. Rule of law and improvement of the socio-economic life of the people,
2. National Reconciliation and internal peace,
3. Amending the Constitution which is the foundation for building a Democratic Federal Republic.

Furthermore, today at this time, we are witnessing the transformation of an era and a system in accordance with democratic principles. This is just the beginning of the democratic transition. To make this transition process smooth and successful, it is very important for our peoples, government employees and civil servants to change their dogmatic mindset and habits. Those government

institutions which are lagging behind in the transformation process will need to be put under tight management controls. The country's weak judiciary system would need to be strengthened. More efforts need to be exerted to stamp out corruption. More efforts need to be exerted to prevent human rights violations. More efforts need to be exerted to crack down illegal drug trade. We need to manage public funds properly so that there is no wastage. Measures need to be taken to return confiscated farmland to farmers and to give compensation to farmers for losses they have suffered in accordance with the law. We also need to improve the socio-economic life of farmers, improve the lives of workers and ensure that students gain access to higher education.

Fellow citizens,

I would firstly like to address the three branches of the sovereign power of the State, who have been entrusted with power according to the Constitution, to exercise mutual respect, understanding, and trust as they collaborate for the good of the people. Additionally, I wish to urge the media sector, which serve as the ears and eyes of the public, to understand the seriousness of their duties and to hold in high regard the public sector that they serve.

We have much to carry on fulfilling the hopes and needs of the people of the country. We must press on until our citizens have their dignity raised and our country can retain its former glory on the global stage.

We will abolish the red tape that burdens the people and eradicate corruption and bribery that plagues all levels of society as we work to strengthen the moral fiber of our people. We will draw out from our past experiences as a civilian government overcoming various obstacles and hardships, as we work to the best of our ability for the immediate present and head towards the future of a democratic nation that respects human rights and is free from all stains of corruption.

Fellow citizens,

In my closing remarks I would like to state that I solemnly promise that you will see with your own eyes the changes that you have yearned for as I walk along this path together with you.

Thank you everyone.

Biography of President U Win Myint

Date of Birth	8-11-1951
Nationality	Bamar
Previous Career	Speaker of Pyithu Hluttaw
Education	B.Sc (Geology), H.G.P, R.L
Elected Hluttaw	Second Pyithu Hluttaw
Party	National League for Democracy
Father's Name	U Tun Kyin
Date of career as MP	1-1-2016
Address	No.34, 6th floor, Ma Gin Road, Kyarkwatthit Ward, Tamway Township, Yangon

He studied primary education at Nyaung Chaung Basic Education Primary School and secondary education at Danubyu Basic Education High School, graduated with a B.Sc degree from Yangon Arts and Science University. He also won Higher Grade Pleader and High Court Advocate degrees. He worked as a High Court senior lawyer and High Court advocate in Danubyu and Pathein, Ayeyawady Region.

He was appointed as NLD's committee secretary for Ayeyawady Region and later became secretary of the NLD's Central Executive Committee. (Ref: Pyidaungsu Hluttaw

Seventh Regular Session of 2nd Pyidaungsu Hluttaw successfully concludes

The 22nd day meeting of the seventh regular session of the Second Pyidaungsu Hluttaw was held yesterday and was attended by 655 MPs while 29 MPs were absent.

President elect U Win Myint, Vice Presidents U Myint Swe and U Henry Van Thio took their oath of office as Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than presided over them. President U Win Myint then gave his inaugural speech. (The President's full speech is covered separately). The Speaker then announced the President's speech was put on record.

Next, the Speaker read the performances and process of the Seventh Regular Session of the Second Pyidaungsu Hluttaw. The Speaker then notified the Hluttaw that the National Strategic Law for April to September 2018, and the National Budget Law have been approved while the 2018 Union Tax Bill has been sent to the President's office for review. The Pyidaungsu Hluttaw was able to approve of seven bills concerning the various Hluttaw committees and collaboration with international organizations, as well as the Myanmar Investment Bylaw.

The Speaker then announced the successful completion of the Seventh Regular Session of the Second Pyidaungsu Hluttaw.

Attending yesterday's Hluttaw meeting were State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U T Khun Myat, Union Attorney General U Tun Tun Oo, Commander-in-Chief Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, Chairperson of the Constitutional Tribunal U Myo Nyunt, Chairperson of the Union Election Commission U Hla Thein, Deputy Commander-in-Chief Vice Senior General Soe Win, Pyithu Hluttaw Deputy Speaker U Tun Tun Hein, Amyotha Hluttaw Deputy Speaker U Aye Tha Aung, Chairman of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Legal Affairs and Special Cases Assessment Commission Thura U Shwe Mann, Union Ministers, Chief Justice, Union Auditor General, Chairman of the Union Civil Service Board, Nay Pyi Taw Council Chairman, Chief Ministers from Regions and States, Governor of the Central Bank of Myanmar, Chairman of the Anti-Corruption Commission, Chairman of the Myanmar Human Rights Commission, Deputy Ministers, MPs, Patron of the NLD, Central Executive Committee members, and other invited guests.—Thura Zaw

President U Win Myint welcomed by Union cabinet members

President U Win Myint is welcomed by Union cabinet members at the Presidential Palace following his taking oath of office at Pyidaungsu Hluttaw. **PHOTO: MNA**

A ceremony to welcome President U Win Myint was held at the Presidential Palace in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

President U Win Myint and First Lady Daw Cho Cho were welcomed at the Presidential Palace by Vice President U Myint Swe and his wife Daw Khin Thet Htay. They were also welcomed by State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.

At the Hall for Envoys, Vice President U Myint Swe introduced President U Win Myint to Vice President U Henry Van Thio, Speaker of the Pyithu Hluttaw U T Khun Myat, Speaker of the Amyotha Hluttaw Mahn Win Khaing Than, Union Chief Justice U Htun Htun Oo, Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Vice-Senior General Soe Win, Union Ministers Lt-Gen Kyaw Swe, Lt-Gen Sein Win, Lt-Gen Ye Aung, U Kyaw Tint Swe, Dr. Pe Myint, Thura U Aung Ko, Dr. Aung Thu, U Thant Sin Maung, U Ohn Win, U Win Khaing, U Khin Maung Cho, Dr. Than Myint, Dr. Myo Thein Gyi, Dr. Myint Htwe, U Han Zaw, Dr. Win Myat Aye, U Ohn Maung, Nai Thet Lwin, U Kyaw Tin and Union Attorney-General U Tun Tun Oo. In his greetings, President U Win Myint stressed the need to work with unity for the country and the people and to cooperate with each other.

U Win Myint, who was elected as a Vice President and Presidential candidate by the representatives of the Pyithu Hluttaw, was elected as the President of Myanmar at the Presidential Election of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw on 28 March.—MNA

President U Win Myint is formally introduced to Vice President U Henry Van Thio, Speaker of Pyithu Hluttaw and Speaker of Amyotha Hluttaw by Vice President U Myint Swe at the Presidential Palace yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

Housing estate project launched for local people in Rakhine State

THE Department of Rural Development has undertaken a project to build houses for local people affected by natural disasters, such as flood, landslides and other related problems.

U Nyi Nyi Swe, an assistant director of the Department for Rural Development, said, "Priority is being given to people who are in need of houses because of these natural disasters."

During the 2017-2018 fiscal year, more than 95 per cent of the construction projects, including 200 houses in 14 villages out of five townships, have been completed.

The government has allotted Ks1.4 billion, including Ks1.029 billion from the Pyidaungsu fund and Ks371 million from the State government fund, to build the housing projects in the 2017-2018 fiscal year.

"As for our department, we have constructed some 200 houses, including 47 houses in two villages of Maungtaw; 27 houses in one village of Buthedaung Township; 22 houses in three villages of Min Pya Township; 78 houses in five villages of Taung Coat Township and 26 houses in three villages of Gwa Township. "Furthermore, we have built some 100 houses, including 60 in four villages of Taung Coat Township and 40 in Tar Ye Village of Taung Coat Township, by using Ks500 million, of which Ks350 million is from the Pyidaungsu fund and Ks150 million is from the State government's fund.

"Formerly, we had built houses worth Ks5 million, and now, we are building houses worth Ks7 million," he added.

These houses are one-storey brick buildings with a steel structure and zinc sheet roofing, and their width is some 468 square feet. Besides two bedrooms, there is a living room, a kitchen, a dining-room and a verandah as well. The toilet is outside the house.

"Our department expects to construct 300 houses in the 2018-2019 fiscal year by using the Union government's fund, and concerted efforts are being made to implement this project successfully," U Nyi Nyi Swe said.—Kyaw Thu Htet ■

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Foreign tourists and pilgrims in the prayer hall in a pagoda in Tachilek. **PHOTO: GNLM**

Over 930,000 foreigners visit Myanmar via Tachilek

MORE than 930,000 foreigners visited the country via the Tachilek border point in the current financial year, according to the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism.

Between 23 and 29 March this year, some 767 foreign visitors, including 195 day-trippers, entered the country through Tachilek, a land border in Shan State in eastern Myanmar, and the Mae Sai border on the Thai side, to visit the town's well-known destinations on a one-day return visit or overnight trip. Most of them came from neighbouring Thailand, China and third-world countries.

International tourist arrivals through the borders are increasing each year. Foreign travellers visit the country to enjoy its natural scenery, including the highlands, mountains, rivers and forests. The diverse range of culture, traditions and lifestyles of the rural communities in Myanmar are also major attractions.

The town's well-known destinations among tourists are Talaw Market, Mahamyatmuni Pagoda, Shwedagon Pagoda, the ethnic village and the Chinese temples. The tourism authorities are now focusing on implementing eco-tourism, as well as coastal, marine and community-based tourism, in some states and regions.

According to the ministry, international tourist arrivals from all points of entry in the first eight months of this fiscal year have increased 20 per cent, compared with the same period last year. —GNLM

Automotive skills competition held in Magway

A mechanic handles an automoive part in No.5 IndustrialTraining Center in Magway as part of the 2018 Myanmar Skill Competition. **PHOTO: MDN**

THE Myanmar Skill Competition 2018 Automobile Technology, which is Myanmar's first ever contest, is taking place at the No.5 Industrial Training Center in Magway from 28 to 31 March.

The competition is held as a preparatory contest before participating in the ASEAN Skills Competition (2018) that will take place in Bangkok in August, said Dr Aung Moe Nyo, Chief Minister for Magway Region.

Roads and automobiles are important to ensure smooth transportation in the country for trading goods and travelling, he said.

He urged contenders to practice until their skills reach international standards.

"We will select four of the best contenders from our competition.

They will be trained for four months in Yangon. Two of them will have to participate in the competition in Thailand representing Myanmar," said U Hla Kyaing, associate secretary of the Myanmar Engineering Society.

Competitors are trainees from the No.5 Industrial Training Center and 22 young people who are under 22 years old and working for automobile repair and servicing workshops.—Myanmar Digital News

Myanmar to promote local bourse to investors in Tokyo next month

MYANMAR'S first stock exchange backed by Japan's public and private sectors will promote the bourse in Tokyo next month, aiming to lure Japanese investors ahead of the scheduled enforcement of a new company law deregulating foreign ownership of local firms.

The planned presentation in Tokyo of the two-year-old Yangon Stock Exchange, or YSX, is part of an investment seminar to be organized on 18 April by Daiwa Securities Co., which established the bourse's operator with the state-owned Myanma Economic Bank and Japan Exchange Group Inc., according to the Tokyo-based brokerage. Four more companies in Myanmar are preparing to debut on the YSX within this year, bringing the total number to nine, Masaharu Harada, director on the YSX board, said Sunday at an event marking the second anniversary of the bourse in the country's commercial capital of Yangon.

With technical support from the Japan International Cooperation Agency, Tokyo's development aid arm, the YSX is planning to form a special task force with law and accounting firms and brokerages to assist local companies in going public, Harada said.

The stock exchange estimates that some 70 companies could potentially go public as they follow appropriate accounting standards and post enough profits to meet the criteria of an initial public offering, according to the YSX.

But trading volume on the bourse stood at 740 million kyat ($554,000) last month, the lowest since the commencement of share trading in March 2016. The number of stock trading accounts now stands at about 34,000, with less than 5 per cent of them involved in daily trading. The new Myanmar Company Act exempts foreign firms from various regulations unless they hold a stake of over 35 per cent in local companies, paving the way for their more active investment in Myanmar businesses. U Maung Maung Win, chair of the Securities and Exchange Commission and Deputy Minister of the Planning and Finance Ministry, said at the ceremony that the authorities aim to vitalize the struggling bourse by increasing trade-matching sessions from the current two times to four times daily. The stock exchange is endeavoring to triple the numbers of listed firms and investors in two years' time, Harada said.

The first modern stock exchange in the emerging economy was established in December 2015 with a capital investment of 32 billion kyat, with Myanma Economic Bank holding a 51 per cent interest, Daiwa Securities 30.25 per cent and Japan Exchange Group 18.75 per cent.

The five currently listed companies are First Myanmar Investment Co., First Private Bank, Myanmar Citizens Bank, Myanmar Thilawa SEZ Holdings Public Ltd. and TMH Telecom Public Co. —Kyodo News ■

Myanmar earns over $2.3 billion from CMP garment exports

THE total value of cut-make-pack (CMP) garment exports exceeded US$2 billion before the end of this fiscal year, according to a report in Myawady Daily on Friday.

U Tun Tun, an executive member of the Myanmar Garment Manufacturers Association, said the value of CMP garment exports reached $2.332 billion between last April and the second week of this March. The majority of entrepreneurs are interested in exporting garments through the free on board (FOB) system, as they expect to get healthy profits in the overseas markets. The government's support is also needed to promote the country's garment industry.

The vast majority of the country's garment factories operate through the CMP system. The alternative is the FOB system. Under this approach, retailers simply place orders with highly-capable and well-financed factories in international markets.

The CMP system is being practised for the last 20 years in Myanmar, with authorities also planning to export garments through the FOB system in the future.

Myanmar's CMP garment industry includes the manufacturing of shoes, garments and bags. The country exports its CMP products mainly to Japan, a few European countries, South Korea, the United States and China.—GNLM ■

U Henry Van Thio addresses Viet Nam's GMS Summit

Vice President U Henry Van Thio arrived in Hanoi, Viet Nam yesterday to attend the 6th Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) Summit.

The Vice President was with Union Minister for Planning and Finance U Kyaw Win and other departmental officials, when they arrived at the National Convention Center (NCC) for the summit.

In his address, the Vice President said that the GMS countries have grown their economy and raised the income levels of their people to a point that cheap labour and reliance on natural resources are no longer viable as they once were, so now the countries must find new ways of sustainable development. He said only high-quality human resources and technological development can contribute to sustainable development goals (SDGs). He said Myanmar's economic policy focuses on developing the private sector so that job opportunities and SDGs grow along with them. He said basic infrastructure and buildings will be needed for Myanmar to collaborate with other GMS countries. He said Myanmar is working on the five pillars of the private sector, which are the ethics following laws and rules and regulations, sustainable finance, improved trade and investment, the nation's role in businesses and services, and developing human resources and capabilities.

Vice President U Henry Van Thio's name is displayed on the screen as he answers questions from a panel session at the 6th GMS Summit in Viet Nam yesterday **PHOTO: MNA**

He said foreign investment was pivotal in developing the private sector and setting rules and guidelines to create competitive markets and prioritizing the profits of the people will benefit the private sector. He said communications and technology related to it have direct consequences on the operation of governments and humanitarian organizations around the world. He said there are estimates that, due to increased usage of smartphones and the internet, Myanmar's GDP in relation to its ICT sector will increase to US$6.4 billion by 2030. He said mobile infrastructures were important for countries like Myanmar, where 70 per cent of its population lives in rural areas. With improved communications, rural residents will have greater access to healthcare such as contacting hospitals and emergency aid, conducting business transactions, and greater connectivity. As such, the country was drafting the Myanmar Digital Economy Development Master Plan, said the Vice President.

Afterwards, the moderator in a panel session asked how Myanmar was going about its economic development and what strategies or plans have been implemented. Vice President U Henry Van Thio replied that Myanmar had just recently begun implementing the 2022 Development Assistance Framework and it had not been long since the country had become more transparent and open.

He said Myanmar had implemented new or amended investment laws and as such have seen better networking through regional to global business ventures.

He said they were working on strengthening the tax system, attracting new foreign investment, and securing the market for macro businesses and enterprises and as such have begun drafting the Myanmar Sustainable Development Strategic Plan.

Later in the night, the Vice President attended a dinner event at the NCC.—Myanmar News Agency ■

Local reporters gather news in Maungtaw

A GROUP of 14 reporters who are from local media houses arrived in Maungtaw region yesterday morning.

On arrival, they met Maungtaw District Commissioner U Ye Htut and gathered news regarding regional stability and development; repatriation process of displaced persons; issuing Identity Card for National Verification; farming and agriculture; and other related matters.

In the afternoon, the group went to Ngan Chaung village where Muslims live and they inquired the status of socio-econmic life of the region, stability of the village and displaced persons. Afterwards, they went to Oohtein village where they met Mro ethinic races as well as Hindu villagers. There they asked the villagers their experience of terrorist attacks, stability condition of the region and observed the construction project of the local people. —Myanmar News Agency ■

A local resident of Maungtaw District answers to a local Myanmar reporter as a cameraman records him. **PHOTO: MNA**

Vice President U Henry Van Thio departs for GMS Summit in Viet Nam via Yangon International airport. **PHOTO: MNA**

Vice President U Henry Van Thio departs for 6th GMS Summit in Viet Nam

Vice President U Henry Van Thio left for Viet Nam from Yangon yesterday to attend the 6th Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) summit.

The Vice President was escorted by Yangon Region Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein, Yangon Mayor U Maung Maung Soe, Director-General of the Strategic Studies and Training Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Daw Kay Thi Soe, Viet Nam Ambassador to Myanmar Dr. Luan Thuy Duong, and other responsible officials at Yangon International Airport. —Myanmar News Agency ■

Republic of the Union of Myanmar
Office of the President
Notification No. 1/2018
14th Waxing of Tagu, 1379 ME
(30 March, 2018)

Reorganization of Union Government

1. In accordance with the provisions stated in section 200 of the Constitution of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and section 6 (a) of the Union Government Law, the Union Government has been reorganized with the following persons.

(1)	U Win Myint	President
(2)	U Myint Swe	Vice-President
(3)	U Henry Van Thio	Vice-President
(4)	DawAung San Suu Kyi	Union Minister Ministry of Foreign Affairs Ministry of Office of the President
(5)	Lt-Gen Kyaw Swe	Union Minister for Home Affairs
(6)	Lt-Gen Sein Win	Union Minister for Defence
(7)	Lt-Gen Ye Aung	Union Minister for Border Affairs
(8)	U Kyaw Tint Swe	Union Minister for the Office of the State Counsellor
(9)	Dr Pe Myint	Union Minister for Information
(10)	U Thaung Tun	Union Minister for the Office of the Union Government
(11)	Thura U Aung Ko	Union Minister for Religious Affairs and Culture
(12)	Dr Aung Thu	Union Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation
(13)	U Thant Sin Maung	Union Minister for Transport and Communications
(14)	U Ohn Win	Union Minister for Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation
(15)	U Win Khaing	Union Minister for Electricity and Energy
(16)	U Thein Swe	Union Minister for Labour, Immigration and Population
(17)	U Khin Maung Cho	Union Minister for Industry
(18)	Dr Than Myint	Union Minister for Commerce
(19)	Dr Myo Thein Gyi	Union Minister of Education
(20)	Dr Myint Htwe	Union Minister for Health and Sports
(21)	U Kyaw Win	Union Minister for Planning and Finance
(22)	U Han Zaw	Union Minister for Construction
(23)	Dr Win Myat Aye	Union Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement
(24)	U Ohn Maung	Union Minister for Hotels and Tourism
(25)	Nai Thet Lwin	Union Minister for Ethnic Affairs
(26)	U Kyaw Tin	Union Minister for International Cooperation
(27)	U Tun Tun Oo	Union Attorney-General, Office of the Union Attorney General

2. Under article 6 (b) of the Union Government Law, the Director-General of the Union Government shall be the ex-officio Secretary of the Union Government.

Sd/ Win Myint
President
Republic of the Union of Myanmar

Republic of the Union of Myanmar
Office of the President
Notification No. 2/2018
14th Waxing of Tagu, 1379 ME
(30 March, 2018)

Reorganization of the National Defence and Security Council

1. In accordance with the provisions stated in article 201 of the Constitution of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and article 10 (a) of the Union Government Law, the National Defence and Security Council has been formed with the following persons:

(a)	U Win Myint	President
(b)	U Myint Swe	Vice-President
(c)	U Henry Van Thio	Vice-President
(d)	U T Khun Myat	Speaker of Pyithu Hluttaw
(e)	Mahn Win Khaing Than	Speaker of Amyotha Hluttaw
(f)	Senior General Min Aung Hlaing	Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services
(g)	Vice-Senior General Soe Win	Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services
(h)	Daw Aung San Suu Kyi	Union Minister for Foreign Affairs
(i)	Lt-Gen Kyaw Swe	Union Minister for Home Affairs
(j)	Lt-Gen Sein Win	Union Minister for Defence
(k)	Lt-Gen Ye Aung	Union Minister for Border Affairs

2. Under article 10 (b) of the Union Government Law, the Secretary of the Union Government shall be the ex-officio Secretary of the National Defence and Security Council.

Sd/ Win Myint
President
Republic of the Union of Myanmar

Republic of the Union of Myanmar
Office of the President
Notification No. 3/2018
14th Waxing of Tagu, 1379 ME
(30 March, 2018)

Reorganization of the Financial Commission

In accord with the provisions stated in section 229 (a) of the Constitution of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and section 11 (a) of the Union Government Law, the President has formed the Financial Commission with the following persons.

(1)	U Win Myint	President	Chairman
(2)	U Myint Swe	Vice-President	Vice-Chairman
(3)	U Henry Van Thio	Vice-President	Vice-Chairman
(4)	U Tun Tun Oo	Union Attorney-General	Member
(5)	U Maw Than	Union Auditor-General	Member
(6)	Dr Khat Aung	Chief Minister for Kachin State	Member
(7)	U L Phaung Sho	Chief Minister for Kayah State	Member
(8)	Daw Nann Khin Htway Myint	Chief Minister for Kayin State	Member
(9)	U Salai Lian Lwal	Chief Minister for Chin State	Member
(10)	Dr Myint Naing	Chief Minister for Sagaing Region	Member
(11)	Dr Lei Lei Maw	Chief Minister for Taninthayi Region	Member
(12)	U Win Thein	Chief Minister for Bago Region	Member
(13)	Dr Aung Moe Nyo	Chief Minister for Magway Region	Member
(14)	Dr Zaw Myint Maung	Chief Minister for Mandalay Region	Member
(15)	Dr Aye Zan	Chief Minister for Mon State	Member
(16)	U Nyi Pu	Chief Minister for Rakhine State	Member
(17)	U Phyo Min Thein	Chief Minister for Yangon Region	Member
(18)	Dr Lin Htut	Chief Minister for Shan State	Member
(19)	U Hla Moe Aung	Chief Minister for Ayeyawady Region	Member
(20)	Dr Myo Aung	Chairman of Nay Pyi Taw Council	Member
(21)	U Kyaw Win	Union Minister for Planning and Finance	Secretary

Sd/ Win Myint
President
Republic of the Union of Myanmar

31 MARCH 2018
THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

Path to democracy often rocky

MYANMAR'S road to democracy is not a bed of roses. Our country faces many challenges and obstacles in our quest for freedom of expression and representative government. We will not be able to solve every issue we face along the way. But we need to carry on our struggle in all sectors that are necessary.

In his inaugural speech yesterday, President U Win Myint pledged to implement policies which include the rule of law and improvement of the socio-economic life of the people, national reconciliation and internal peace.

He also pledged to amend the constitution so that it can guarantee a Democratic, Federal Union.

"Our journey is just beginning the democratic transition. To make this transition process smooth and a success, our people and civil servants on their part should change their mindset and dogmatic habits", he said.

President U Win Myint also vowed to impose enforcement on the governmental institutions which delay accomplishment of reforms, to improve the country's weak judiciary system, to fight corruption, to prevent human rights violations, and to crack down on the illegal drug trade in accordance with the law.

At the same time, improvement of the socio-economic lives of farmers and labourers and bringing opportunities to students so that they can study specialised professions will not be neglected, he said.

As part of the effort to restore dignity to our farmers, he promised to take measures to return confiscated farmland to farmers and to give compensation for grievances to farmers in accordance with the law.

We support our newly elected President, and trust that he will fulfill his promises to eradicate corruption, strengthen the judiciary, crack down on illegal drugs and improve the lives and opportunities for workers and students.

The three branches of the government -- legislative, executive and judicial -- have been entrusted with power according to the constitution, and they must exercise this power with mutual respect, understanding, and trust as they collaborate for the good of the people. As we continue to travel down the road to democracy, let us all remain honourable and not forget that all this work is ultimately for the people. Not just the wealthy, the influential or the powerful, but all the people of Myanmar.

We believe this is what President U Win Myint meant when he said:

"We have much to carry on fulfilling the hopes and needs of the people of the country. We must press on until our citizens have their dignity raised and our country can retain its former glory on the global stage.

"We will abolish the red tape that burdens the people and eradicate corruption and bribery that plagues all levels of society as we work to strengthen the moral fiber of the people. We will draw out from our past experiences as a civilian government overcoming various obstacles and hardships, as we work for the immediate present and head towards the approaching future of a democratic nation that respects human rights and is free from all stains of corruption.

In my closing remarks I would like to state that I promise that you will see with your own eyes the changes that you have yearned for as I walk along this path together with you."

We will not just wait and observe if the President's promises are fulfilled, we will also actively support and promote our roles in this hopeful democracy. ■

The one thing we want: Peace

Dr. Khine Khine Win

ACCORDING to the 2015 Global Peace Index, the intensity of internal armed conflict has increased dramatically, while the cost of violence around the world reached a staggering US$14.3 trillion in 2014. Armed conflict often leads to forced migration, long-term refugee problems, and the destruction of infrastructure. Social, political and economic institutions can be damaged. Indeed, we have many problems like poverty, sickness, illiteracy, racial and religious rivalry, child mortality etc. and that is utmost essential that we have peaceful environment to deal with them. Then, for all aspects of progress and human development we need peace and harmony around the world.

If we look back at our country's history, soon after the 20th Century Panglong Agreement and our Independence, Myanmar succumbed to the fires of internal conflict.

For nearly seventy years, peace, stability and development in Myanmar have fallen victim to conflict. Even today, Myanmar has not yet been able to escape from the trap of poverty and conflict, and great efforts will be needed if we are to catch up with the rest of the world. We, Myanmar people have been waiting for almost seventy years to witness the ray of hope for a better future and I believe that only peace can bring our dreams come true.

There is a saying "Peace cannot be achieved through violence, it can only be attained through understanding" by American essayist and lecturer Ralph Waldo Emerson. It is precocious saying for everyone around the world who loves peace. If we desire a society of peace, we need understanding each other. We cannot achieve such a society through violence.

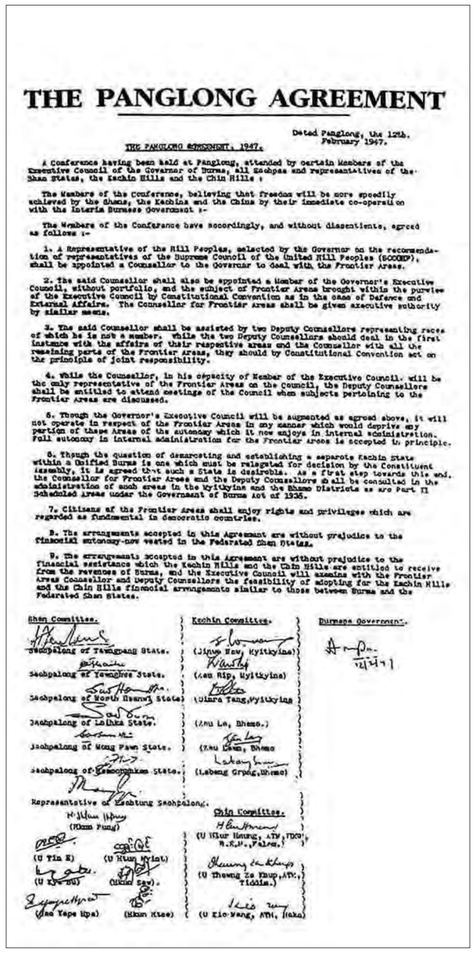
Love and understanding: what do you think which one is more important? There is no exact answer. Different people have different answers for different reasons. For me I prefer understanding. Understanding is more important as love without understanding won't last. For instance, we love our family, spouse, wives but sometimes we confront each other when we lose understanding each other. Even if love is there conflicts and misunderstanding always exists in family. Without doubt absence of understanding pushes family to no peace zone. If we want to live in peace zone we need not only love bust also understanding.

Peace and understanding: many people believe peace is important in order to avoid unnecessary conflicts that might hinder the progress of human being. Peace creates progress and happiness.

The United Nations defined peace as the collection of attitudes, beliefs and actions that demonstrate a concern for worldwide human rights and a positive regard for life. Peace involves turning the other cheek when necessary, and aiming to understanding others.

I totally agree understanding can create peace and I believe that peace can only be achieved when humanity has reached a level of mutual understanding and tolerance. No one would fight if they understand the other's point of view.

Trust, trust is also an essential ingredient in building peace. Without trust there can be no genuine peace. In order to build peace, first we need to build trust. Without peace nothing good things can happen. No education, no rule of law, no good governance, no good economic, no peaceful life and so on. Peace provides the appropriate environment for many other things such as better economic performance, more inclusive societies, including gender equality and better measures on ecological sustainability.



THE PANGLONG AGREEMENT

Dated Panglong, the 12th February 1947.

THE PANGLONG AGREEMENT, 1947.

A Conference having been held at Panglong, attended by certain Members of the Executive Council of the Governor of Burma, the Saophas and representatives of the Shan States, the Kachin and the Chin Hills.

The Members of the Conference, believing that freedom will be more speedily achieved by the Shans, the Kachins and the Chins by their immediate co-operation with the Interim Burmese Government :-

The Members of the Conference have accordingly, and without dissentients, agreed as follows :-

1. A Representative of the Hill Peoples, selected by the Governor on the recommendation of representatives of the Supreme Council of the United Hill Peoples (SCOHP), shall be appointed a Councillor to the Governor to deal with the Frontier Areas.

2. The said Councillor shall also be appointed a Member of the Governor's Executive Council, without portfolio, and the subject of Frontier Areas brought within the purview of the Executive Council by Constitutional Convention as in the case of Defence and External Affairs. The Councillor for Frontier Areas shall be given executive authority by similar means.

3. The said Councillor shall be assisted by two Deputy Councillors representing races of which he is not a member. While the two Deputy Councillors should deal in the first instance with the affairs of their respective areas and the Councillor with all the remaining parts of the Frontier Areas, they should by Constitutional Convention act on the principle of joint responsibility.

4. While the Councillor, in his capacity of Member of the Executive Council, will be the only representative of the Frontier Areas on the Council, the Deputy Councillors shall be entitled to attend meetings of the Council when subjects pertaining to the Frontier Areas are discussed.

5. Though the Governor's Executive Council will be augmented as agreed above, it will not operate in respect of the Frontier Areas in any manner which would deprive any person of any share of executive or legislative power which it now enjoys in internal administration. Full autonomy in internal administration for the Frontier Areas is accepted in principle.

6. Though the question of demarcating and establishing a separate Kachin State within a United Burma is one which must be relegated for decision by the Constituent Assembly, it is agreed that such a State is desirable. As a first step towards this end, the Councillor for Frontier Areas and the Deputy Councillors shall be consulted in the administration of such areas in the Myitkyina and the Bhamo Districts as are Part II Scheduled Areas under the Government of Burma Act of 1935.

7. Citizens of the Frontier Areas shall enjoy rights and privileges which are regarded as fundamental in democratic countries.

8. The arrangements accepted in this Agreement are without prejudice to the financial autonomy now vested in the Federated Shan States.

9. The arrangements accepted in this Agreement are without prejudice to the financial assistance which the Kachin Hills and the Chin Hills are entitled to receive from the revenues of Burma, and the Executive Council will examine with the Frontier Areas Councillor and Deputy Councillors the feasibility of adopting for the Kachin Hills and the Chin Hills financial arrangements similar to those between Burma and the Federated Shan States.

Shan Committee.
Sawbwa of Yawnghwe State.
Sawbwa of Yenangbyi State.
Sawbwa of North Hsenwi State.
Sawbwa of Lawksawk State.
Sawbwa of Mong Pawn State.
Sawbwa of Tawngpeng State.
Representative of Kengtung Sawbwa.
(Htoon Pung)
(U Tin E)
(U Khun Myint)
(Sao Tepe Hpa)
(Khun Kiee)

Kachin Committee.
(Jinun Naw, Myitkyina)
(Lee Hip, Myitkyina)
(Ukra Tang, Myitkyina)
(Zau La, Bhamo.)
(Zau Gam, Bhamo
(Labang Grung, Bhamo)

Chin Committee.
(U Ukir Hmung, ATM, TDCM, B.E.M., Falam.)
(U Thawng Za Hlup, ATM, Tiddim.)
(U Kio Mang, ATM, Haka)

Burmese Government.

The question is how to create peace and understanding. The question of real, lasting peace concerns human beings, so basic human feelings are also at its roots.

There is a peace within understanding when a person knows why something is occurring in their life. Only a peaceful mind can lead a family, society, a community, a nation and the world to better prospects and progress.

There is a question. How to create peace of mind? It is easier said than done. But we have to cultivate peace of mind if we really want to lead our family, society, community and let our beloved people to live in peace zone.

The 2016 Global Peace Index (GPI) shows the world became less peaceful in the last year, reinforcing the underlying trend of declining peace over the last decade. Results also show a growing global inequality in peace, with the most peaceful countries continuing to improve while the least peaceful are falling into greater violence and conflict.

Peace is not a one-time act. True peace is built over time, with many different processes and approaches that move conflict into lasting, peaceful relationships. It requires action at many different levels, by different people, in different ways, and at different points in a conflict. Increased understanding – of different cultures, languages, and concerns – can go a long way toward reducing conflict. No doubt, there can be no peace without understanding.

Former U.S President Mr. Obama made remarks at United Nations Generally Assembly in 2011 and he said "now we have learned that no matter how much we love peace and hate war, we cannot avoid having war brought upon us if there are convulsions in other parts of the world". The fact is peace is hard. But our people demand it and the one thing we want is peace undoubtedly.

2017 International Day of Peace theme is " Together for peace: Respect, Safety and Dignity for all. In order to have peace, we need to work together, promote peace together by respecting each other. We can make peace and we can try to keep it. But to foster nonviolent peace is a primary goal.

To foster peace is to move toward a just peace, a just peace fosters nonviolent peace. If we want to develop like any other developed country we need to find peace.

Without peace we cannot hope for stability, human rights, effective governance and sustainable development. Again, Peace is the linchpin of social harmony, economic equity and political justice.

To conclude, being Myanmar citizen, I have my fingers crossed for my beloved country. I pray that people who are living in Myanmar can come and be united as a whole. I pray that one day we will be united not divided. The one thing we want is peace, peace and peace. ■

References: Understanding conflict and war Vol.5: the Just peace, R.J.Rummel :http://www.idealware.org/articles/building-peace-through-information-and-communications-technologies
: Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, State Counsellor speech: May 25, 2017

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Regional collaboration is key to unlocking a resilient and sustainable region, concludes Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development

THE fifth Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (APFSD) closed at the UN Conference Centre in Bangkok today with a call for greater regional collaboration to tackle the challenges of building a more resilient and sustainable region.

Organized by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) from 28 to 30 March, APFSD served as a platform for over 750 representatives from 53 Member States to share their achievements, challenges and the opportunities arising from the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development under the theme 'Transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies.'

In a video message to the forum, UN Deputy-Secretary-General Amina J. Mohammed said, "One key challenge for the countries of Asia the Pacific is how to pursue a more integrated approach to development in which there is dignity for all, 'leaving no one behind' and the full realization of human rights, equality, social justice and protection of the natural environment."

This year, APFSD reviewed progress on Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 6 (clean water and sanitation), (SDG) 7 (affordable and clean energy), SDG 11 (sustainable cities and communities), SDG 12 (responsible consumption and production), SDG 15 (life on land) and SDG 17 (partnership for the Goals).

Delegates concluded that to build resilience against recurrent shocks in the region such as flooding, pollution, and commodity price volatility, societies need to focus on four types of resilience capacities—anticipatory, absorptive, adaptive, and transformative. Although countries in the region are setting up early warning systems, mainstreaming climate change and investing in social protection systems, much more needs to be done to implement policy responses that will help strengthen countries' resilience.

"APFSD deliberations this year have laid the foundation for a concerted and effective regional response to ensure that our region becomes more resilient and sustainable," said UN Under-Secretary-General and Executive Secretary of ESCAP Dr. Shamshad Akhtar. "While the countries of Asia and the Pacific are forging ahead in this common endeavor, much more work remains to be done to successfully implement the 2030 Agenda. APFSD and ESCAP will continue to support crucial dialogue among Member States, to share challenges and best practices to accelerate the implementation of the SDGs."

In his address as Outgoing Chair, H.E Dr. Ahsan Iqbal Chaudhary, Federal Minister for Interior, Planning, Planning, Development and Reforms of Pakistan said, "I sincerely hope that the APFSD will continue to play an important role by supporting crucial dialogue amongst Member States, sharing experiences and strengthening implementation in order to achieve sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific."

H.E. Mr. Don Prawinai Minister of Foreign Affairs, Thailand added, "Thailand fully supports APFSD as a significant platform for countries in the Asia-Pacific region to exchange success stories, take stock of the challenges and discuss ways forward to realize sustainable development. This year's APFSD topic on resilience is relevant to every country, as a resilient society is better prepared to take on all challenges, whether they be disasters, environmental degradation, climate change or rapid urbanization."

During the three-day forum, country and civil society representatives, academics, business representatives and development agents from across the region advanced the dialogue on the readiness of the region to identify specific resilience capacities needed to effect the transformations envisioned in the 2030 Agenda, with civil society underscoring the need to redefine resilience by placing people's priorities at its centre.

ESCAP also presented progress on the regional road map for implementing the 2030 Agenda, agreed at the Fourth APFSD. Outcomes from APFSD will provide input into the global discussions held at the High-Level Political Forum in New York in July this year.—ESCAP ■

Dignitaries observe President's inauguration

Dr. Shwe Hlwan, wife of Vice President U Henry Van Thio attends the ceremony to take oath of office by the President and Vice Presidents. **PHOTO: MNA**

U Tin Oo, 3rd from Right, Patron of the National League for Democracy, and wife and members of the Central Executive Committee of NLD attend the ceremony to take oath of office by the President and Vice Presidents. **PHOTO: MNA**

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw's yesterday session was visited by observers as President elect U Win Myint and Vice Presidents elect U Myint Swe and U Henry Van Thio took their oath.

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker presided over them and this was followed by President U Win Myint's inaugural speech.

Among the observers were Vice President U Henry Van Thio's wife and family, National League for Democracy's Patron U Tin Oo and wife, members of the Central Executive Committee, Chief Ministers of Regions and States, members of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Legal Affairs and Special Cases Assessment Commission, the wife of Nay Pyi Taw Council's Chairman, MPs and citizens from their respective constituencies, and professors, faculties and students from the Law Department of Myitkyina University, totaling (494) observers. Newly elected President U Win Myint and the Vice Presidents took their oath of office during the joint session of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw. —Myanmar News Agency ■

Seminar on Promotion of Tourism and Trading holds in Yangon

A Seminar on Promotion of Tourism and Trading between Macau and Myanmar was held yesterday evening at the Melia Hotel in Yangon.

During the seminar, the Macau Special Administrative Region and Chairman of Macau Trade and Investment Promotion Institute Mr. Jackson Chang discussed trading and investment of the Macau Special Administrative Region, Director of Directorate of Investment and Company Administration Dr. Marlar Myo Nyunt discussed Myanmar Investment Environment,

Director of Macau Government Tourist Office Ms. Maria Helena De Senna Fernandes discussed measurement on boosting tourism development of the Macau Special Administrative Region.

Director of Ministry of Hotels and Tourism U Zayar Myo Aung discussed the current conditions of tourism development for the Macao Special Administrative Region respectively.

Then Director of Macau Government Tourist Office Ms. Maria Helena De Senna Fernandes and Director General of the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism U Tint Thwin exchanged the gifts and took the commemorative photograph with the attendees.

Also present at the seminar were officials from Ministry of Hotels and Tourism, Ministry of Planning and Finance and businessmen.—Myanmar News Agency ■

A Seminar on Promotion of Tourism and Trading between Macau and Myanmar **PHOTO: MNA**

Edmund Ho Hau Wah, Vice-Chairman of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference is welcomed by Yangon Region Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein. **PHOTO: MNA**

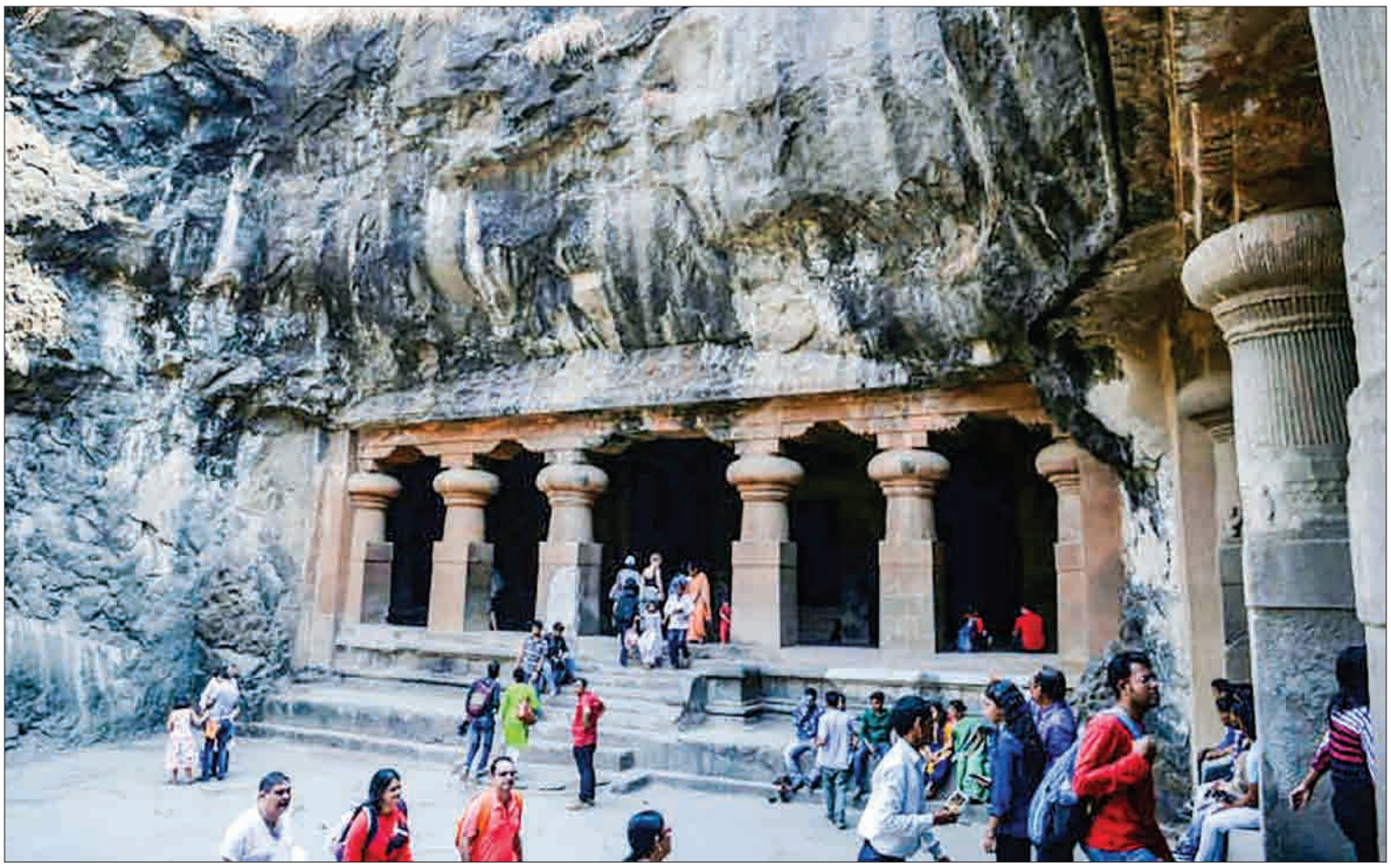
Vice-Chairman of Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference arrives in Yangon

A delegation led by Edmund Ho Hau Wah, Vice-Chairman of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference and former Chief Executive of the Macau Special Administrative Region, arrived in Yangon from Nay Pyi Taw yesterday afternoon.

The delegation met with Yangon Region Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein, Yangon Mayor U Maung Maung Soe and other officials at 3:30 p.m. at the Pan Pacific Yangon Hotel in Yangon.

During the meeting, they discussed matters related to holding a trade cooperation forum annually to boost the tourism and investment sectors in Macau and Yangon. The delegation visited the Strand Hotel to watch the 'Macau Orchestra in Myanmar' concert and took a commemorative photograph with the Minister for Hotels and Tourism U Ohn Maung, Chinese Ambassador to Myanmar Hong Liang and members of the Macao orchestra.

In the evening, the delegation attended the Macau and Myanmar Tourism Development and Trade Investment Seminar at Melia Hotel in Yangon.—Myanmar News Agency



Local officials on Elephanta hope tourists, who take a short boat ride from the bustle of Mumbai to visit the island's famed fifth century caves, will now spend more time and money there, boosting local businesses and jobs. **PHOTO: AFP**

Power to the people: electricity finally reaches Indian landmark

MUMBAI — Deepa Bhoir used to sit in darkness outside her island home and stare at Mumbai glowing in the distance. Now she stays up late watching soap operas — one of millions of Indians whose lives have been transformed by a drive to get power to every corner of the country.

Bhoir and her husband Sasuram are among hundreds of villagers on the UNESCO world heritage-listed island of Elephanta to have had mains electricity installed in their houses for the first time.

Local officials hope tourists, who take a short boat ride from the bustle of Mumbai to visit the island's famed fifth century caves, will now spend more time and money there, boosting local businesses and jobs.

"We've waited decades for this and we're so happy. Now I can watch all my favourite shows without any interruptions.

The TV is almost always on!" Bhoir tells AFP, grinning.

The island is renowned for its temple caves dating back more than 1,500 years and is home to around 1,200 people.

But despite living just 10 kilometres (six miles) from India's financial capital, islanders have spent much of their lives without power. "Lacking electricity was depressing and we faced numerous hardships," says Sasuram, explaining that he and Deepa would often sleep outside during the summer to try to keep cool. "It was sweltering inside. We would lie and look at the glittering lights of Mumbai and long for electricity to live fuller and more satisfying lives," the 54-year-old adds.

Boredom

Residents used kerosene lamps and candles until the late 1980s when they received diesel generators that provided intermittent electricity between 7:00 pm and 10:00 pm every night. They were, however, unreliable and expensive and the limited supply meant the Bhoirs' two children regularly did their homework by candlelight.

Deepa and Sasuram were often unable to charge their phones or other electrical devices. They felt cut off from the world and battled boredom.—AFP ■

Over 7,000 rebels, families evacuate Syria's Eastern Ghouta

DAMASCUS — A total of 7,003 rebels and their families left the Eastern Ghouta countryside of Syrian capital Damascus late Friday, according to state news agency SANA.

The number includes 1,234 rebels while the rest are their family members who chose to head toward rebel-held areas in northern Syria under a deal reached recently with the government under the mediation of Russia.

This batch is the sixth to leave the central towns of Eastern Ghouta, namely Zamalka, Arbeen, Jobar and Ayn Tarma. The evacuation process began last Saturday.

The Russian-backed Syrian army has advanced and captured 90 per cent of that region.

Eastern Ghouta, a 105-square-km agricultural region consisting of several towns and farmlands, poses the last threat to the capital due to its proximity to government-controlled neighborhoods east of Damascus and ongoing mortar attacks that target residential areas in the capital, pushing people over the edge.

Four major rebel groups are currently positioned inside Eastern Ghouta, namely the Islam Army, Failaq al-Rahman, Ahrar al-Sham, and the Levant Liberation Committee, known as the al-Qaida-linked Nusra Front. —Xinhua ■

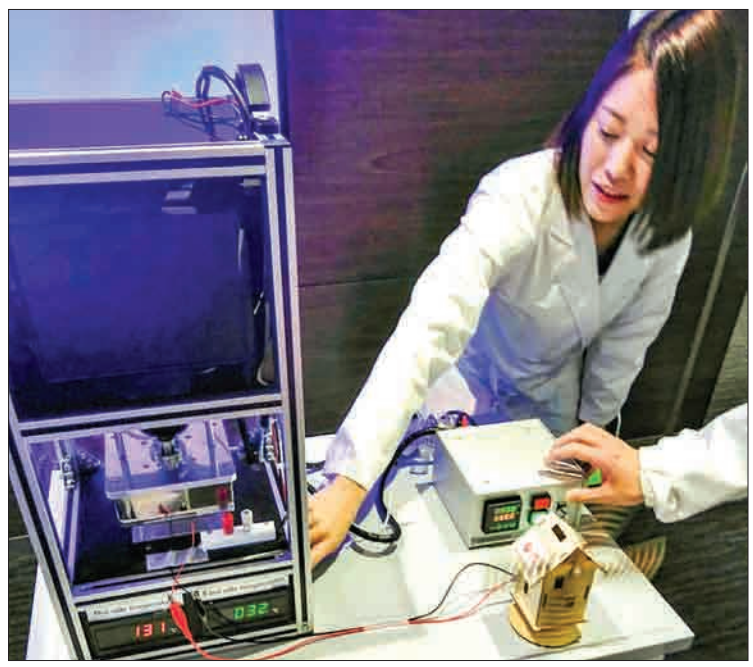
Out of this world: Inside Japan's space colony centre

TOKYO — A newly created Space Colony Research centre led by Japan's first female astronaut is bringing cutting-edge technology to bear on one of mankind's greatest questions: Can we live in space? Tucked away in high-tech laboratories at the Tokyo University of Science, a team of 30 researchers directed by Chiaki Mukai are studying new ways to keep humans alive on a potential moon or Mars colony. "It's in our nature to explore. The Earth is too small for us, don't you think?" asked Mukai, a petite and energetic 66-year-old who spent more than 500 hours in space on two separate missions.

Human space exploration is entering a new era, said Mukai, with commercial ventures like Elon Musk's SpaceX and US President Donald Trump's pledge to explore beyond the moon and towards Mars.

Billionaire entrepreneur Musk has grand visions for private space exploration, including sending tourists into orbit around the moon and eventually colonising Mars. In December, Trump directed US space agency NASA to set up a lunar base as a first step in a mission to Mars. "It's very realistic to establish a colony on the moon by 2030," said Mukai, who said humans needed to think beyond the International Space Station, which she described as a "campsite -- you have to bring everything with you". One of her team's innovations is a unique food production system using liquid plasma created by passing high-voltage electricity through a saline solution.

This reduces the damaging algae usually formed in water when growing crops, and tests simulating conditions in space have shown that potatoes can be grown quicker and more efficiently using this system.—AFP ■



A team of Japanese researchers are studying new ways to keep humans alive on a potential moon or Mars colony. **PHOTO: AFP**

Anger mounts over Venezuela jail fire that killed 68

VALENCIA — Authorities in Venezuela faced an onslaught of national and international outrage Thursday over a blaze in a police station's jail in which 68 people died, in one of the worst disasters to hit the country's desperately overcrowded detention facilities.

The blaze engulfed cells in the police headquarters on Wednesday in Valencia, Venezuela's third-biggest city, located in northern Carabobo state near the capital Caracas.

Attorney General Tarek William Saab, who gave the death toll amid mayhem early Thursday at the police building, said the fire was the likely cause of the deaths. He said it looked to have been started deliberately by the detainees.

Police give information to anxious relatives of prisoners outside a jail in Venezuela where a deadly fire took place. **PHOTO: AFP**

Anguished relatives of those being kept there had tried to storm the station on Wednesday, during which an officer was hurt by a stone. Police responded with tear gas to disperse them.

On Thursday, the crowd was calmer but no less anxious.

"I can't get past to see if he's dead of not," wailed Maria, an elderly woman whose son was being held in the station.

Nearby, a female police officer read off a list of survivors.

"They gave me the body of my nephew yesterday, and I've been here since 6:00 am waiting for his ID card," so he can be buried, another relative, Carmen Varela, told AFP.

"He wasn't burned. He had a gunshot to his head. To me, it looks like it was a slaughter," she said, visibly angry.

Attempted jailbreak

"I want to see my brother," said one woman who gave her first name as Yelitza.

The police, she said, "were the ones who caused this — it was a massacre."

The UN's human rights office in Switzerland said in a statement it was "appalled at the horrific deaths" at the station, and called for authorities to fully investigate. Although the Valencia station's cells were designed to hold arrested suspects for up to 48 hours, many of those being kept in them were thought to be convicted prisoners unable to be accommodated in the country's overflowing penitentiaries.

An inmates' rights association called Una Ventana a la Libertad (A Window on Freedom) said the fire was started by detainees attempting a jailbreak.

"The detainees tried to grab two police officers. When that didn't work, they started a riot and decided to set fire to mattresses, thinking that the doors would then have to be opened. (But) the bars didn't open," the group's director, Carlos Nieto, told AFP.

Fire crews had to smash a hole in the wall so survivors could get out, he said, adding that around 200 people were being held inside at the time.— AFP ■

Invitation for Bids (IFB)

Loan/Credit No. : EDCF-MYA-7

1. The Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has received Loan from the Export-Import Bank of Korea from the resources of the Economic Development Cooperation Fund (EDCF) of the Republic of Korea for the Design, Supply and Installation for 500kV Taungoo-Kamanat Transmission Line**.**
2. The Project Executing Agency now invites sealed bids from eligible bidders for **Design, Supply and Installation for 500kV Taungoo-Kamanat Transmission Line on turnkey basis.** The eligible bidders shall be Korea Company by the EDCF Guide Lines.
3. Interested eligible bidders may obtain further information from the tender Office or the Website (http://www.moee.gov. mm) in the head office of below address and inspect the bidding documents during office hour exclusive of public holidays.
4. A complete set of bidding documents may be purchased by any interested Bidder on the submission of a written application to the address below and upon payment of non - refundable fee of **US$ 1,000**.
5.Bids must be delivered to the address below between **13:00 to 14:00 (Local Time) on 18th May, 2018.**

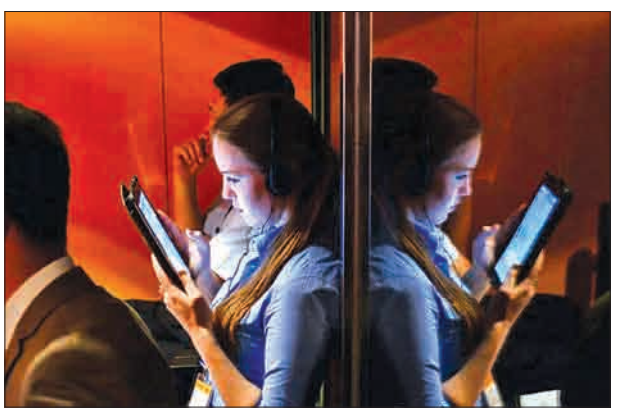
All bids must be accompanied by a bid security of not less than one million one hundred thousand US Dollars (USD 1,100,000). Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidder's representatives, who choose to attend at the address below after 14:00 (Local Time) on 18th May, 2018. Address: Meeting Room, Material Planning Department, Department of Power Transmission and System Control, Building No.27, MOEE, Nay Pyi Taw.

Tender Committee
Department of Power Transmission and System Control
Ministry of Electricity and Energy, office No.27, Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar
Telephone : 067- 3410282, 3410209

Foreign companies in China brace for VPN crackdown

BEIJING — Chinese people and foreign firms are girding for a weekend deadline that will curb the use of unlicensed software to circumvent internet controls, as the government plugs holes in its "Great Firewall".

A virtual private network (VPN) can tunnel through the country's sophisticated barrier of online filters to access the global internet.



VPNs give users in China a way to see blocked websites such as Facebook, Twitter, Google and Western news outlets. **PHOTO: AFP**

VPNs give users a way to see blocked websites such as Facebook, Twitter, Google and Western news outlets, as well as certain business network tools such as timesheets, email and directories.

But new government regulations unveiled last year sent chills among users of the software, with a 31 March deadline for companies and individuals to only use government-approved VPNs.

Currently, many foreign companies have their own VPN servers in locations outside of China. But in the future, dedicated lines can only be provided by China's three telecom operators.

Critics have slammed the new policy as a revenue grab that will eliminate cheaper VPN options and make internet users more vulnerable to surveillance.

But some companies are still planning to comply. "We will apply for a VPN line with (the government)," the chief executive of a foreign-owned technology company told AFP.

"As a company that is globally-focused based in Beijing, I think that's the best option... because we don't want to break the rules or have our VPN access disrupted," she said, requesting anonymity.

Some embassies in Beijing experienced disruptions to their communications due to restrictions on VPN usage late last year, prompting the European Union delegation to send a letter to the government to complain, diplomatic sources told AFP. American Chamber of Commerce Shanghai President Kenneth Jarrett warned that foreign companies and their employees could "bear the brunt of the new policies".

"Foreign companies, especially entrepreneurs and smaller companies rely on overseas platforms such as Google Analytics and Google Scholar," Jarrett told AFP.

"Limiting access to affordable VPNs will make it harder for these companies to operate efficiently and just adds to the frustration of doing business in China."

The Ministry of Industry and Information Technology has dismissed concerns that using state-approved providers could jeopardise the security of private data, saying they "are not able to see information related to your business". — AFP ■

Filipinos celebrate Easter with crucifixion, flogging

SAN FERNANDO CITY — Filipino zealots marked Good Friday with a bloody display of religious frenzy by having themselves nailed to crosses and whipping their backs raw in Asia's bastion of Catholicism.

Though frowned upon by the Church, the gruesome re-enactments of Christ's final moments draw thousands of believers -- and tourists -- in a carnival-like atmosphere that is big business for locals.

In a collection of towns located north of Manila, eight people had eight-centimetre (three-inch) spikes driven through their palms and feet in hot, dry fields meant to echo the site where Christ was crucified some 2,000 years ago.

Bare-chested men, some of whose faces were concealed by hoods, lashed their backs bloody, as onlookers watched. **PHOTO: AFP**

Among an otherwise male field of penitents was 39-year-old Mary Jane Sazon, who made her seventh trip up onto the cross.

"Fulfilling my vow is important to me because ever since I started this the Lord answers my prayers," Sazon told reporters as she pushed her dark hair back with freshly bandaged hands.

She would not be drawn on being the only woman crucified on Friday, saying "I don't care what other people might say."

While the ordeal is undeniably painful, the penitents' weight rests on a wooden step and they spend only a few moments nailed to the cross before being carried to the medical tent for treatment.

At the same time, scores of bare-chested men, some of whose faces were concealed by hoods, lashed their backs bloody, as they walked through the streets before selfie-snapping onlookers.

The swinging of their whips left droplets of blood on cars, houses and even bottles of soda displayed on snack vendors' tables that lined the road.

"If one of my family members gets sick, this is what we do," said Norman Lapuot, 25, as he flogged himself with a bamboo-tipped whip. "I do this for my relatives."

' I felt the pain'

Lapuot, who said it was his fourth time taking part in the ceremony, added that he believed the ritual bloodletting had helped his grandfather recover from a stroke.

While a majority of the Philippines' 80 million Catholics spend Good Friday at church or with family, participants undergo the ordeal to atone for sins or to seek divine intervention.

The gruesome sights left some of the roughly 12,000 in attendance wide-eyed and wincing with vicarious pain. "The most terrifying was the feet part, when the guy was screaming very loud," said 28-year-old Juliette Pawinska, referring to when the spikes were driven in during one crucifixion.

"I actually felt the pain that he felt," added the Polish national, who lives in the Philippines and works as a computer programmer.—AFP ■

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V MAX CRUSADER VOY. NO. (037N/S)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V MAX CRUSADER VOY. NO. (037N/S) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 31-3-2018 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 INTER ASIA LINES
Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V SHIBA VOY. NO. (ISC 1079 E)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V SHIBA VOY. NO. (ISC 1079 E) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 31-3-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T.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 LAND & SEA LOGICTICS
Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V SINAR BANDA VOY. NO. (084N/S)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V SINAR BANDA VOY. NO. (084N/S) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 31-3-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of HPT 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 SAMUDERA SHIPPING LINE
Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V PATANA THIDA VOY. NO. (121W/E)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V PATANA THIDA VOY. NO. (121W/E) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 31-3-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T.T/A.I.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 REGIONAL CONTAINER LINES
Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V KORALIA VOY. NO. (7796)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V KORALIA VOY. NO. (7796) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 1-4-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of MITT-3 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 MERIDIAN SHIPPING AGENCIES PTE, LTD.
Phone No: 2301928

Marco Cochrane's "Truth is Beauty" sculpture features in the "No Spectators: The Art of Burning Man" exhibition at the Renwick Gallery in Washington. **PHOTO: AFP**

Counterculture 'Burning Man' art takes Washington by storm

WASHINGTON — Immersive art from a famed desert festival in the American West has swept into Washington, infusing the buttoned-up US capitol with countercultural spirit.

"No Spectators: The Art of Burning Man," which opens Friday at the Smithsonian's Renwick Gallery, celebrates the annual late-summer gathering that sees a temporary city of some 75,000 people spring up in Nevada's Black Rock Desert.

For a single week, massive experiential art installations tower over the dusty metropolis before Burning Man participants torch many of the works, including a giant wooden statue of a man, as a ritual embracing decommodification and temporality.

Thought it is perhaps best known for its bacchanalian atmosphere favoring sex and drugs, the annual event that started small in 1986 has evolved into a serious cultural and artistic movement, said the Renwick's crafts curator Nora Atkinson, who spearheaded the show.

She pushed to welcome the radical art of the desert to the rarefied environment of the museum because "it really stands out from a lot of the work being done in the contemporary art world," she said.

She also highlighted the freewheeling show's location just steps from the White House.

"I think it's really important at times like this -- when the world is so cynical, when people are so at odds -- that we have this kind of healing force," she said. "It's all about empowering people."

"We build the world that we want to live in."

Visual hedonism

Though it drew comparisons to predecessors including the anarchic Dadaists and large-scale land art movement, Burning Man is a choice destination for techies from neighboring Silicon Valley looking to unwind.

That's no coincidence, according to Atkinson, who attended her first Burning Man last year.

"The further we get into our digital sphere the more we sort of strive for that humanity around us," she told AFP at an exhibition preview, standing in the massive, intricate wooden "Temple" installation that encompasses the museum's cavernous Grand Salon hall.

The show -- which follows "The Art of Burning Man" exhibition that went on display at a Virginia museum last year — includes both surviving pieces from past festivals and newly commissioned works.

The visually decadent installations — 14 in the 19th-century era Renwick building and six spilling outdoors into the surrounding neighborhood — featured in the show bridge the worlds of fine art and craft, with a focus on works that make use of reclaimed materials.

"Tin Pan Dragon," for example, is a dragon-esque vehicle crafted from reclaimed aluminum cookware.

And the 14-foot "Ursa Major" sculpture — one of the several public art pieces installed in the surrounding streets where politicians and lawyers roam — is a grizzly bear fashioned from 170,000 pennies.

'Major' cultural movement

Yelena Filipchuk of the duo behind the "HYBYCOZO" installation of large-scale glowing polyhedrons with elaborate laser cut-outs praised the Renwick's move "to go full on with the interactivity" in line with Burning Man's participatory ethos.

Translating works from a festival in the expansive, inhospitable desert to a museum setting also offered artists the chance to "create a totally immersive environment" she said, as shadows generated from her geometric sculptures danced on the gallery walls. For Filipchuk, the show underscores Burning Man's status as a cultural petri dish but also as an "American institution." "It really represents American values, like creativity, freedom, innovation," she said.—AFP ■

Ackermann in new shock departure at top of men's fashion

PARIS — Designer Haider Ackermann parted ways with Berluti Friday, the French brand said, in the latest twist in the frenetic game of musical chairs at the top of men's fashion.

The Colombian had led the label for only 18 months, and his surprise departure sparked speculation he will be replaced by Kris Van Assche, the Belgian designer who left Dior Homme last week after 11 years at the helm.

Ackermann, 46, who is best known for his richly-coloured bohemian designs for women, created only three collections for Berluti, but was already giving it a softer, more feminine feel.

Van Assche is known for a harder tailored edge and more street-influenced styling.

Berluti boss Antoine Arnault praised Ackermann's "feel for materials, colours, and his wonderful shows will always be linked to the history of the house."

Arnault, the son of French luxury goods tycoon Bernard Arnault, has overseen Berluti's transformation from an elite cobbler which once counted artist Andy Warhol and European royalty among its loyal clients, to a luxury lifestyle label for men.

He said Ackermann's successor would be announced shortly.—AFP ■

Ballet's most unlikely star takes her final bow

PARIS — Everything was against Marie-Agnes Gillot becoming a ballerina -- never mind a great one.

She was too tall, broad-shouldered and most of all, she had a double scoliosis, which sometimes gives her a hump when her back is swollen.

Yet the hump disappears as if by magic when Gillot takes to the stage.

"I have a limited time to stay standing, carried by my muscles and myself," said the star, who accepts "that with time passing I'll be going back into my corset, unless I accept the operation, the metal rod in my back".

On Saturday night Gillot will close an extraordinary chapter in modern French ballet when she takes her final bow at the Paris Opera Ballet in "Orpheus and Eurydice".

The last great French ballerina of her generation, she hid her problem from her teachers after leaving home at nine to go to ballet's elite school in the French capital.

"When I arrived I thought who are these nasty skinny ladies?"

Not wanting to be thought of as "handicapped", only her roommates knew her secret.

'Nobody gave me free pass'

"Nobody gave me a free pass" in her long rise to the top, the dancer told AFP. In fact it was the opposite.

She did not make principal dancer until relatively late at 28 by which time even the great choreographer Maurice Bejart had become exasperated, declaring, "she was the best they have, and finally they decided".—AFP ■

Gillot is the only female French choreographer to have her work staged at the Paris Opera. **PHOTO: AFP**

City Love & Hope Foundation provides USD 28,800 for three scholarship students

A ceremony was held to award scholarships to three students who had achieved the entrance to the Pre-Collegiate Programme (PCP) at City Mart Holding Company Limited-Head Office in Yangon on 30 March.

There were 20 among 88 students who qualified for the entrance of the Pre-Collegiate Programme of Yangon.

Among the 20 students, three scholar students named Maung San Win, Maung Saw Pyaw Sone Aung and Ma Hsu Myat Noe Pwint were awarded full scholarship prizes worth USD 9,600 in the ceremony.

The progarmme is aiming to support the youths in Myanmar who want to join the world grade Education such as World Philosophies, Integrated Science, Comparative Literature, American History, SAT, and TOEFL. The programme will last 16 months with providing the special subjects including Field Trip, Touchstones Discussion, Newsroom, Community Service, Guest Speaker, Cross-Cultural Exchange and Internship.

After the course programme, students will have a chance to join high-class Universities in USA, Hong Kong, the Netherlands, Germany, the Philippines and Thailand with scholarships.

There were students who achieved special degrees in foreign universities and they came back to Myanmar with the aim of serving their country, said an official from City Mart Holding.

"A leader is more beneficial to youngsters. We support the programme so as to raise good leaders for Myanmar," said Daw Win Win Tint, CEO of City Mart Holding Company Limited. — GNLM ■

The three students who received scholarships from City Love & Hope Foundation pose for a documentary photo with representatives from CityMart and the Pre-Collegiate Program. **PHOTO: SUPPLIED**

Hollywood's first blockchain movie: an end to piracy?

HOLLYWOOD — A few years behind Wall Street, Hollywood is turning to the technology behind cryptocurrency bitcoin to distribute movies in a development hailed as the beginning of the end for piracy.

Leading the charge is "No Postage Necessary," a romantic indie comedy about a luckless hacker that is being distributed via peer-to-peer video network app Vevue, running on Qtum, the most advanced blockchain in the world. Jeremy Culver ("An Evergreen Christmas") wrote, directed and produced the release from US production house Two Roads Picture Co., shot on 35 mm film. The movie gets its US theatrical release and worldwide blockchain debut in June and will also be available to buy online using cryptocurrency.

"We are thrilled to provide movie lovers around the world a brand new way to experience their entertainment by turning the blockchain into a feature film distribution channel," Culver said in a statement.

"Although this is a first for the industry, we hope it will signal a shift in the way content is shared and consumed."

A blockchain is essentially a shared, encrypted "ledger" that cannot be manipulated, offering the promise of secure transactions that allow anyone to get an accurate accounting of money, property or other assets.

The technology publicly records the unique alphanumeric strings that identify buyers and sellers, allowing more transparent and secure peer-to-peer payment systems. Blockchain debuted in 2009 as a ledger for the leading cryptocurrency bitcoin and is already used in food safety, finance and sea freight. Its advantages, according to Culver, include immutable proof of intellectual property rights, transparent royalty payments, and, since all blockchain data is resistant to duplication, a future in which movies are "no longer pirated."—AFP ■

U Thaung Tun, Union Minister for the Office of the Union Government, signs the book of condolences at the Russian Embassy in Yangon on 30 March to express grievances for the 60 victims that perished when a shopping center in Kemerovo, Russia caught fire on 25 March. **PHOTO: MNA**

Artist Jeff Koons on money, risk and acceptance

HONG KONG — To his critics his work is overrated, overpriced and obvious. To his fans, he is a living legend -- the incarnation of the Pop Art movement. Either way, at 63, Jeff Koons says he just wants to focus on creating the art he wants to make.

Koons' works are brash, voluptuous and carry astronomical price tags but that hasn't dimmed appetite for his pieces in Asia, where he is presenting at Hong Kong's edition of Art Basel — a top event for wealthy collectors looking to snap up new status symbols.

The American pioneer has brought some of his signature mirror-polished steel sculptures to the fair as well as his Gazing Ball series, in which shiny blue spheres are inserted into reproductions of classic European masterpieces, including works by Rembrandt and Tintoretto.

Koons set an auction record for the highest price paid for any work by a living artist in 2013 when his orange "Balloon Dog" fetched US$58.4 million at Christie's in New York.

But he insists the monetary value attached to his art is just an "abstraction" to him.

"I'm flattered that my works are perceived by society as having some relevant value. But the beauty to have impact with real individuals, that they can come across their own potential, that's what really brings me joy," he tells AFP, impeccably dressed in a sharp dark blue suit.

His work is polarising. In January, artists, gallery owners and officials in Paris signed an open letter objecting to a planned 12-metre tall "Bouquet of Tulips" memorial designed by Koons as a tribute to the victims of the terror attacks on the city in November 2015.

The letter described Koons as an "emblem of industrial art which is spectacular and speculative". Koons would not comment on controversy, but when asked how he deals with criticism, he said he tries to focus on his work. "I think that people always find honesty very shocking. So when you are honest and just make the things that you want, it reveals something about human nature," he said.

Facing failure

Pennsylvania-born Koons' works are bright, extravagant and large-scale. He seems unafraid of controversy — he gained notoriety for a series portraying himself and his porn star ex-wife Ilona Staller in explicit poses.

Today Koons is relaxed and lively at Hong Kong's David Zwirner gallery where some of his Gazing Ball pieces are on display, their glazed surfaces reflecting every corner of the exhibition space.—AFP ■

Former Brazilian footballer meets MFF President U ZawZaw

EDMÍLSON, a former footballer of the Brazilian national team and a member of the squad that won the 2002 World Cup, met with U ZawZaw, president of the Myanmar Football Federation (MFF) at the president's office in Yangon on Wednesday.

During the meeting, they discussed the continuing process of providing football tactics and skills in order to develop Myanma Football Standards. Edmilson also requested U ZawZaw to contact the Brazilian Football Confederation to possibly fill the vacant position of Myanmar national team head coach, which was recently vacated by Gerd Zeise.

During his visit to Myanmar, the former Brazilian footballer showed basic football tactics to children in Yangon who were interested in playing football.

MFF President U Zaw Zaw (left) seen together with EDMÍLSON, a former Brazilian football star. **PHOTO:MFF**

Edmílson played as a defensive midfielder or a central defender for Brazil from 2000 to 2007 and was part of the Brazil team that won the 2002 World Cup. He also played for prominent teams such as Barcelona, Lyon, São Paulo, and Villarreal. He was teammates with football stars such as Ronaldinho, Iniesta, Xavi and Puyol. —KyawZin Lin ■

Myanmar U-21 to defend title in Brunei football tourney

THE Myanmar U-21 national football team will defend their title in Brunei at this year's Hassanal Bolkiah Trophy for ASEAN Youth Football Championship.

Myanmar was crowned as the champion in 2014, the last time the tourney was held, by beating Viet Nam in the final match.

The upcoming tourney from 21 April to 6 March is the sixth time the tournament has been held.

This year's tournament will see the participation of a total of seven ASEAN countries -- Cambodia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar, Singapore, Thailand, Timor Leste and host country Brunei Darussalam.

In the draw, Myanmar is pooled in Group A together with Thailand, the host team and Timor Leste, while Lao People's Democratic Republic, Singapore and Cambodia are in Group B.

The tourney's opening ceremony will take place on the 23 April at the Hassanal Bolkiah National Stadium in Berakas, Brunei.

The Hassanal Bolkiah Trophy for ASEAN Youth Football Championship, organised by the Football Association of Brunei Darussalam in collaboration with the ASEAN Football Federation, a football tournament for youth players in South-East Asia, was first launched in 2002 for players under 21 years of age. —KyawZin Lin ■

Australia sevens captain out of CGames after head punch

SYDNEY — Australia's sevens rugby captain James Stannard will miss the Commonwealth Games after being punched in the head in an "alleged unprovoked assault", police and Rugby Australia said Friday.

The 35-year-old, who had been at a farewell dinner for outgoing head coach Andy Friend late Thursday, was allegedly attacked in the Sydney suburb of Coogee early Friday, New South Wales state police said.

"As a result, he fell and struck his head on the pavement," police said in a statement.

Rugby Australia said Stannard was in hospital in a stable condition with a fractured skull and would miss out on the Commonwealth Games, which will be held on the Gold Coast from 4-15 April.

"Right now, he's got some time to heal and he's not available for the Comm Games," Rugby Australia's high-performance general manager Ben Whitaker told reporters in Sydney.

James Stannard had been due to lead Australia's sevens team at the Commonwealth Games. **PHOTO: AFP**

"It's obviously a massive disappointment for all of us and James and his family.

"Once that's all sorted, then we can look at how he can return to play."

The governing body said earlier that two of Stannard's teammates Lewis Holland and Ben O'Donnell, as well as Friend, detained the alleged attacker — a 22-year-old Briton — until police arrived.

"The 22-year-old man who threw the punch then fled the scene, but was apprehended by witnesses until police arrived and placed him under arrest," NSW Police added.

The British man, charged with assault occasioning actual bodily harm, was granted conditional bail Friday and is due to return to court on 19 April.

Stannard was to lead Australia's sevens team at the Commonwealth Games after injured captain Holland was ruled out earlier in March.

Rugby Australia said in mid-March that Friend's contract, due to expire in July, would not be renewed.

Current women's sevens coach Tim Walsh, who is leaving his role after the Commonwealth Games, was selected as Friend's replacement. —AFP ■