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President U Htin Kyaw, centre, Vice President U Henry Van Thio, third from left, Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U Win Myint, third from Right, Speaker of Amyotha Hluttaw Mahn Win Khaing Than, second from right, at the 70th anniversary of Chin National Day celebration. **PHOTO: MNA**

70th Chin National Day celebrated in Nay Pyi Taw

The 70th anniversary of Chin National Day was celebrated in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday by President U Htin Kyaw, First Lady Daw Su Su Lwin, and State Counsellor Daw Aung

San Suu Kyi.

The State Counsellor pointed out that many contributions have been made by the Chin people, not the least of which was the recent signing of the

Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA).

“The 70th anniversary of Chin National Day is nearly fourth-thirds of a century. All national races should review

what they did in the past 70 years for their respective regions, states and for our union,” she said.

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Myanmar, Bangladesh border authorities meet

MYANMAR and Bangladesh border authorities met at the Taung Pyo Letwe General Administration Department yesterday morning to discuss repatriation, INGOs and those who have taken up the people on the border between the two countries.

Following an introduction of Myanmar and Bangladesh district-level border authorities, the leader of the Bangladesh group offered to assist in returning the people living on the Zero Line back to their respective homes.

The head of the Bangladesh group also requested joint patrols, and explained that international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) went into the Zero Line area under their own arrangement to provide aid and were not sent by the Bangladeshi government.

The Zero Line is an undeveloped, formerly uninhabited area on the border between the neighbouring countries that has recently become an unauthorised, home for residents who do not want to participate in repatriation, officials said.

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‘BEST BANK IN MYANMAR’

Awarded by EUROMONEY 2017

Pyithu Hluttaw puts on record motion on Rakhine State

By Kyaw Thu Htet,
Mi Mi Phyo
(MYANMAR NEWS AGENCY)

The Pyithu Hluttaw debated over a motion on Rakhine State and put it on record during a meeting yesterday. Six questions on other issues were raised and answered, while a decision on the Myanmar Investment Rule was taken and approved. The Hluttaw was also informed about extending the terms of 14 Pyithu Hluttaw committees.

During the meeting, a motion tabled by U Aung Thaung Shwe from Buthidaung constituency urging the union government to develop effective plans for northern Rakhine's development and to share them openly with the public was dis-

cussed by U Hla Htun Kyaw of Maungdaw constituency, U Sein Win of Maubin constituency, Tatmadaw Pyithu Hluttaw representative Lt-Col Khin Maung Thant, Daw Ni Ni May Myint of Taungup constituency, U Htay Win Aung, alias U Pyone Cho, of Dawbon constituency, U Ba Shein of Kyaukpyu constituency, U Nyan Hein of Thanbyuzayat constituency, Daw Nan Than Than Lwin of Hpa-an constituency, U Pe Than of Myebon constituency, Daw Wint Wa Tun of Shadaw constituency, Tatmadaw Pyithu Hluttaw representative Major Than Win, Daw Aye Aye Mu, alias Daw Sharmie, of Kalay constituency, U Sai Kyaw Moe of Mongpan constituency, U Lagan Zal Jon of Waingmaw constituency, U Sai Aung Kyaw of Kehsi



Union Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Dr. Win Myat Aye. **PHOTO: MNA**

constituency, U Oo Tun Win of Kyauktaw constituency and U Win Myint Oo, alias U Nay Myo, of Nyaungshwe constituency.

In his discussion on the motion, Union Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Re-

settlement Dr. Win Myat Aye said the Smart Garment factory, Khaing Pyi Soe Garment factory and Shwe Kya handloom factory were opened with the government's support in Sittway to help the local ethnic nationals acquire jobs and stay in their region. Some 250 women are already employed in these factories and are staying in their region. Efforts are being made to develop small and medium enterprises and to open larger garment factories.

For the benefit of the local populace, some 48 investment works have been approved, said the Union Minister.

For 50 villages in Kyaukpyu Township, a revolving fund of Ks30 million per village has been set up, and in cooperation with

Caterpillar Company, a course to operate heavy machineries was conducted.

With the support of GIZ (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH), a German development agency, arrangements have been made for local women to attend a sewing course in Yangon.

In addition to these, agriculture courses, welding courses and small electrical appliances repair courses are being conducted. Discussing the security in Rakhine State, the union minister said a safe and secure border fence and security of the territorial waters are the main issues and the damaged border fences were repaired in the 2016-2017 fiscal year (FY).

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Amyotha Hluttaw discusses road upgradation, park construction

By Aye Aye Thant
(MYANMAR NEWS AGENCY)

The seventh session of the second Amyotha Hluttaw held its 20th-day meeting yesterday at the Amyotha Hluttaw meeting hall, where asterisk-marked questions were asked and answered, two reports read and explained and a motion discussed.

First, U Kyaw Kyaw of Rakhine State constituency (4) raised a question on the plan to upgrade the earthen road up to Balipyin Village on the MraukU-Mahahti concrete road section in Rakhine State, MraukU Township to a gravel road. Union Minister for Construction U Han Zaw replied that the MraukU-Mahahti concrete road was managed by the Ministry of Construction's Department of Rural Development, while the earthen road up to Balipyin Village was built by the local villagers. The Rakhine State government has submitted to the Union Government office to include this road under the list of roads managed by the Ministry of Construction, according to procedure. Meanwhile, the upgradation work on 1 mile and 1 furlong of the 4-mile and 4-furlong earthen road was started in the 2017-2018 fiscal year (FY) period, with the Rakhine State government spending Ks35 million. Some 75 per cent of the work has been completed. Once it becomes a Ministry of Construction-managed road, funds will be allocated every FY and it



Union Minister for Construction U Han Zaw. **PHOTO: MNA**

will be upgraded, explained the Union Minister.

Responding to a question raised by U Bwe Khane of Chin State constituency (3) on a plan to build a park in Haka Town during the 2018-2019 FY, Nay Pyi Taw Council member U Aung Myint Tun said the Haka Township Development Affairs Department was arranging to construct a park on a 5-acre plot in Khuasilobo, Haka Town. In the 2018-2019 budget allocation, the park construction has been listed as second priority, and Ks150 million was requested for the park and a reservoir (including the fence around the reservoir). If the budget is allocated, the park will be constructed, said U Aung Myint Tun.

Replying to a question posed by Naw Hla Hla Soe of the Yangon region constituency (10) on relocating the Taungthukone-Yodaya market in the Yangon Re-



Deputy Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation U Hla Kyaw. **PHOTO: MNA**

gion's Insein Township, as waste from the market was causing health and social problems, fire hazards and traffic blocks, Nay Pyi Taw Council member U Aung Myint Tun said the market came into existence some 30 years ago, and there were some 200 temporary vendors selling along the 1,000-foot-long and 12-foot-wide road. The temporary sellers were allocated stalls in the Bokone market, some 2,500 feet from the Yodaya market, but most of them moved back to the old market after selling their stalls to others. The Bokone market is on a 320x100 square feet plot with six market sheds having 251 shops. (Only) 38 temporary vendors are operating there. Although the Bokone market has a 27x55 square feet open space, this is not sufficient to accommodate all the temporary sellers in Yodaya market. As no other suitable places are

available in the vicinity, there is no plan to relocate the Yodaya market, said U Aung Myint Tun.

However, to prevent health problems and the occurrence of dengue, 323 houses in the area were provided with mosquito nets, mosquito repellents and Abate application. The Insein Township Public Health Department is conducting fogging operations, while the veterinary department is conducting rodent and stray dog control measures. The Yangon City Development Committee Engineering Department (roads and bridges) has also constructed two box culverts and improved the water flow of the 12,000-foot-long Kawthwe creek that flows through the Taungthukone ward, explained U Aung Myint Tun.

Next, the report by the bill committee on the findings and comments about the bill on the registration of deeds was read by bill committee member U Lal Min Htan. The bill on the registration of deeds, approved and returned with amendments by the Pyithu Hluttaw, was then decided by the Hluttaw and Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than announced the approval of the Hluttaw.

Bill committee member U Kyaw Kyaw then read the bill committee report on a bill amending the Caste Disabilities Removal Act, returned without amendment by the Pyithu Hluttaw, for the Hluttaw to discuss it, and Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker

Mahn Win Khaing Than requested the Hluttaw representatives who wanted to discuss the bill to enrol their names.

Later, a motion urging the government to give priority to the least developed states and regions and to implement the One Village One Product (OVOP) rural development strategy with the relevant ministerial departments, including a budget for it, tabled by Daw Htu May of Rakhine State constituency (11) was discussed by U Kyaw Myint Oo of the Mandalay region constituency (10), Tatmadaw Amyotha Hluttaw representative Major Htet Linn, U Mya Min Swe of the Bago region constituency (9), U Than Soe, also known as Than Soe (Economic), of the Yangon region constituency (4) and Daw Shah Mu of Kayah State constituency (5).

In his discussion on the motion, Deputy Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation U Hla Kyaw said there were many things the government needed to do for rural development, and the motion required a long-term plan to implement it. Based on the discussions made on the motion, the deputy minister asked the motion to be put on record.

Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than then asked to not put the motion on record after the Hluttaw voted 71 for, 106 against and seven abstentions on the motion. The 21st-day meeting of the seventh session of the second Amyotha Hluttaw will be held on 21 February. ■

State Counsellor receives Chief Executives Organization delegation



State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi meets with international businessmen of Chief Executives Organization (CEO) in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

DAW Aung San Suu Kyi, State Counsellor and Union Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, received the (61) member-delegation of Chief Executives Organization (CEO) which is composed of the international businessmen, at 12:00 hours on 20th February 2018 at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Nay Pyi Taw.

During the meeting, the State Counsellor discussed Myanmar's efforts on democratization, national reconciliation, peace process and the situation in the Rakhine State. Afterwards, the State Counsellor

answered questions related to investment opportunities and possible cooperation on various sectors such as education, media, health, culture and environmental conservation.

Also present at the meeting were U Kyaw Tin, Union Minister for International Cooperation, Deputy Ministers from the Ministry of Commerce, the Ministry of Planning and Finance, the Ministry of Construction and the Ministry of Electricity and Energy, Permanent Secretary and Senior officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.— Myanmar News Agency ■

Myanmar, Bangladesh border authorities meet

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"No threat or pressure has been applied. The decision is theirs to make. Where they are staying now is No Man's Land, and thus no one should be staying there. The matters of INGOs providing aid and entering the restricted area of Zero Line are not in accordance with the law and thus they are being informed about it", said U Ye Htut, the Deputy commissioner of the General Administration Department in Rakhine State.

Even though the INGOs were said to have not crossed the river from the other side to provide aid, they were providing aid in an indirect way to people in the Zero Line. Officials from the Myanmar side contended that this should be prevented by the Bangladesh border guard force.

Rakhine State officials said the actions of the residents of Zero Line are politically motivated. People staying in the Zero Line area are being encouraged to return, but were allegedly giving erroneous reports of threats, NVC processes and security problems, Myanmar officials said. Bangladesh would need to persuade them to accept the returnee acceptance process, according to Myanmar officials.

Requirements of the Bangladesh side were being coordinated by Myanmar local authorities, and security matters for the returnees were being arranged, officials said.

After the meeting, the border authority representatives of the two countries went to the Zero Line area, also known as the Non-Construction Zone, and ob-

served the people residing there.

In his explanation to district-level border authorities about people staying in Zero Line, deputy commissioner U Ye Htut said a list was being prepared for those who want to return. Myanmar had repeatedly met with them to return, but they were not cooperating, he said.

In a recent trip to the area, the Deputy Minister for Home Affairs had discussed repatriation with Zero Line residents, but was told they would not accept.

"The people staying in the area did not come from a single village or village tract, so they were invited to send a representative.

However this was not done despite time and adequate explanations and arrangements being made", U Ye Htut said.

U Ye Htut said the Myanmar side was ready to discuss repatriation with them at any time. The leader of the Bangladesh border authority asked the people staying in the area to select representatives by village and to discuss the prospect of returning and to provide a list of those who want to return to the deputy commissioner. He explained that their side will provide necessary assistance on the process of accepting returnees.

Afterwards, the two countries' district level border authorities left the Zero Line Area and returned to the office of the head of Taung Pyo Township General Administration Department.

They then inspected the Taung Pyo Letwe Reception Centre, after which the Bangladeshi party returned to Bang-



The District Level Meeting between Myanmar - Bangladesh Border Authorities. **PHOTO: MNA**



Officials of Bangladesh and Myanmar meeting with the people camping at the Zero Line at the Myanmar-Bangladesh border. **PHOTO: MYANMAR NEWS AGENCY**

ladesh through the border gate.

Myanmar officials expressed concern about the residents of Zero Line.

"The people staying in the Zero Line area were not going anywhere, and they were spreading false news. They were wait-

ing to be removed or detained by the country's security force in order to create international pressure. At the same time, support was being provided to them so that they could remain in the Zero Line for a long time", said U Ye Htut.

Cooperation with Bangladeshi officials will continue in an effort to resolve the matter of people entering into the Zero Line with an aim of creating political controversy, Rakhine State government officials said.— Myanmar News Agency ■

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Very rare birds found in Moe Yun Gyi Lake

SIX Comb Ducks and three Sarus Cranes were discovered again this year while a water bird survey was conducted in the Moe Yun Gyi Lake wildlife sanctuary that's located in Bago and Waw townships in Bago Region, according to the administration office of the Moe Yun Gyi wildlife sanctuary.

"The Comb Duck lived in the lake until 2008. It is seen again in mid-January this year. The number of water birds in the lake is increasing year after year because the condition of the habitat is good and salubrious for them and there are no disturbances to them," said U Sai Wunna Kyi, forester from the administration office of the Moe Yun Gyi wildlife sanctuary.

The Comb Duck is likely to become an endangered species in the world and it's an exceedingly rare water bird in Myanmar,



Photo: Supplied

said U Thet Zaw Naing from the Wildlife Conservation Society.

The Sarus Crane in Myanmar is a rare species not only in the world but also in Myanmar. The WCS said in a statement that it is predicted that there are about 500 Sarus Cranes in Ayeyawady Region and they would be extinct if they were

not protected.

These birds are seen in some locations of India, the countries in South East Asia, and Australia. In Myanmar, they are seen in most parts of the country, but not in hillside areas and central Myanmar. They are mostly seen in Yaykyi, Hinthada, Wakema, Kyaiklat, Mawlamyinegyun, Maubin,

Myaungmya and Einme townships in the delta area.

Migratory water birds annually visit the Moe Yun Gyi Lake in early November. It is home for 20,844 birds from 44 species of migratory birds and 67 species of resident water birds according to the figures for the end of January.— Myanmar Digital News ■

Sheep, goat breeders plan to establish farming zone

Sheep and goat breeders in Pakokku Township, who united to form an association to boost exports, now plan to set up a sheep and goat farming zone, according to a report in Myanmar Alinn.

This association will extend efforts to develop a sheep and goat farming zone, handle transport and transaction problems, and explore new markets to ensure a fair price. The association includes exporters, breeders, officials from related departments and other shareholders engaged in this chain.

U Aung Maung, Deputy Director-General of the Consumers Affairs Department, told Myanmar Alinn that the objectives of the association are to create job opportunities for the local people and to deal with challenges in the sheep and goat breeding industry.

Currently, the Myanmar Trade Promotion Organisation is making efforts to bolster exports and adopt advanced breeding methods. It will also discuss matters concerning the issuance of licences for the export of live goats, production in

each region and state, possible animal diseases, estimated costs, budget planning, and articles of association (draft) with related ministries and private associations.

The Magway Region is the chief goat rearing area in the country. Breeding farms are mostly found on the infertile land of Yesagyo Town. China is the main buyer of Myanmar's goats. This year, the price of mutton has risen compared with last year, which increases the number of breeders.—Myat Thu (AMIA) ■

Over 1,600 hotels, guesthouses operational as of mid-February

The number of operational hotels and guesthouses until the middle of February 2018 has reached more than 1,600, providing some 65,000 rooms across the country, according to the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism.

To ensure tourists can travel to Myanmar conveniently, the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism approved the licences after scrutinising the applications of the hotels.

There are some 64 hotels with 5,463 rooms in the capital Nay Pyi Taw, 390 hotels and guesthouses with 20,245 rooms in Yangon, 208 hotels with 8,676 rooms in Mandalay, 85 hotels with 2,919 rooms in Bagan and Nyaung U, and 141 hotels with 4,401 rooms in Taunggyi and Inle.

The number of hotels and guesthouses that were issued hotel licences by the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism has increased each month.

Recently, the ministry issued some 2,638 tourism licences, including to one foreign company, 41 foreign and local joint venture companies, and 2,596 local companies, besides 2,545 transport licences.

The ministry also granted 4,380 tour guide licences and 3,449 regional tour guide licences.—GNLM ■

Yangon to host international marionette festival next month

THE commercial hub of Yangon will host an international marionette festival in the coming month, according to a report in Myawady Daily on Tuesday.

Organised by the Myanmar Marionette Organisation, the festival is scheduled to take place at Yangon's National Theatre on 25 March, said U Nay Win, vice-chairman of Myanmar Thabin Artists' Association.

The festival will include

Asian and European selections from eight countries, including Myanmar.

The aim of this international event is to explore modern adaptations, along with traditional styles, to attract both local and foreign audiences and to raise the public's interest in traditional folk arts, according to organisers.

Myanmar is a country that is rich in ancient traditions and culture. No pagoda festival in the country is complete with-

out a marionette show. Once a popular form of entertainment around Myanmar, puppetry is practised by very few people in the country today. Currently, only some 20 professionals are active in the field.

Myanmar marionette has been a unique tradition of the country since ancient times, and attracts international visitors, but only a few locals are interested in enjoying the puppet shows, a professional noted.—GNLM ■

Forest-based handicraft exporters struggle to meet foreign demand

DESPITE an increase in the demand for forest-based handicrafts from some ASEAN member countries, Myanmar is struggling to meet the rising demand, according to a report in Myawady Daily on Tuesday.

U Sai Lin, executive member of Myanmar Timber Merchants Association, said: "Malaysia and Thailand have shown an interest in buying domestically-produced handicrafts. However, we have to strike a balance between the price we want and the price set by the government. So, handicrafts are exported with restraint."

Concerted efforts are being made by local artisans, exporters and trade authorities to boost good quality products and develop the wood-based industry.

U Sai Lin said a plan to develop the handicrafts industry is being drafted.

The government has allowed tourists to carry handicrafts worth not more than US\$500 from the country by air or sea. It means that a person may take handicrafts valued at \$500 and below as gifts. Earlier, this was prohibited by the customs department at airports. —GNLM ■

Myanmar forestry products Expo 2018 to be held

MYANMAR Forestry Products Expo 2018 will be held at Tatmadaw Hall in Yangon from 22 to 24 March, according to a report in the Myawady Daily.

The exhibition will be held to promote the sale of forestry products, said U Sai Lin, an executive of the Myanmar Forest Entrepreneurs Association.

"The exhibition will be organized by the Myanmar Forest Entrepreneurs Association in order to develop the manufactur-

ing sector which is using forestry resources, as well as to produce more personal goods products," he added.

At the exhibition, more than 100 items using forestry resources, along with well known imported furniture from Nay Pyi Taw, Sagaing, Mandalay and Bago regions and Kachin state, will be on display. Also, over 160 showrooms will be showcased at the Myanmar Forestry Products Expo 2018. —GNLM ■

Trade with Netherlands reaches \$148 million in 2017-18 FY

TRADE between Myanmar and the Netherlands was worth US\$148 million in the current fiscal year (FY), which saw a slight increase of \$7 million compared with the previous FY, according to the latest figures of the commerce ministry.

Myanmar's exports to the Netherlands exceeded \$121 million, while its imports were worth \$26.8 million. Myanmar mostly exports marketable crops, fruits and vegetables, as well as fishery products and garments, to the European member states.

The ministry's data shows that the bilateral trade value between the two countries has been on the rise since 2011.

Compared with the 2011-2012 FY, trade between the two countries has increased by more than \$125 million.

The value of trade between the two countries was \$23 million in the 2011-12 FY, \$9.33 million in the 2012-13 FY, \$25.676 million in the 2013-14 FY, \$41.973 million in the 2014-15 FY, \$61.212 million in the 2015-16 FY and \$141 million in the 2016-17 FY.

The government is making sustained efforts to boost the country's international trade transactions by easing some restrictive trade rules, encouraging the private sector and promoting the manufacturing industry. —Swe Nyein ■



The value of external trade reached over US\$10 billion between Myanmar and East Asian countries in the first nine months of this fiscal year. PHOTO: GNLM/PHOE KHWAR

Myanmar-East Asia trade exceeds \$10 billion this FY

THE value of external trade between Myanmar and East Asian countries in the first nine months of this fiscal year (FY) reached US\$10.677 billion, according to the monthly report of the Ministry of Commerce.

The value of the total bilateral trade included \$4.966 billion from exports and \$5.71 billion from imports. In November alone, the Myanmar-East Asia trade was worth \$1.318 billion, including exports worth \$4.269 and imports worth \$5.089.

China is ranked first among the top three East Asian trade partners of Myanmar, with trade between them valued at \$8.525

billion, including \$3.734 billion through non-border trade and \$4.79 billion through border trade. China was followed by Japan with \$1.38 billion worth of trade and Taiwan with \$128 million.

Bilateral trade with the Republic of Korea stood at more than \$570 million, while trade with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea was lower than \$0.2 million. Trade with Hong Kong exceeded \$70 million.

Normally, Myanmar exports a wide variety of agricultural products, dried and fresh marine products, minerals and

industrial finished goods. Major products that are imported include consumer goods, electronic devices, capital goods, automobile and accessories, and intermediate goods.

The value of trade with East Asian countries topped \$14.026 billion last FY, while bilateral trade has increased each year. According to the yearly reports of the ministry, Myanmar-East Asia trade was worth \$6.603 billion in the 2011-2012 FY, \$7.150 billion in the 2012-2013 FY, \$10.971 billion in the 2013-2014 FY, \$13.262 billion in the 2014-2015 FY and \$13.847 billion in the 2015-2016 FY. —Shwe Khine

Edible oil crops to be cultivated through contract farming system in upper Myanmar

AUTHORITIES will conduct a survey in three regions of the country to cultivate edible oil crops through the contract farming system, according to the Mandalay Region Edible Oil Crops Entrepreneurs Group.

"The entrepreneurs group will conduct the survey of the cultivation area, types of priority edible oil crops, input costs, farmer partnerships and cultivable seeds," said U Kyaw Kyaw Min, project manager of the Mandalay Region Edible Oil Crops Entrepreneurs Group.

The survey will be conducted in the Mandalay, Magway and Sagaing regions for four months. The group will provide

assistance depending on the outcome of the inputs provided to local farmers to produce more edible crops through the contract farming system. The edible oil will be sold in the local market, as well as the international market.

"Peanuts and sesame are mainly grown in this region. Growing through the contract farming system can save the local farmers cultivation costs. When the price goes down, businessmen will buy based on the fixed price. Even the local farmers want to cultivate through the contract farming system, but they are worried because they do not have ex-

perience," said U Aung Kyaw Soe, an edible oil crop grower in Myingyan.

To develop the edible oil crops sector, as well as reduce the cost of production, the local farmers need seeds, inputs and technical assistance.

Currently, the domestic consumption of cooking oil per person is some six viss per year. Some 5.6 million Myanmar people need 5.6 lakh tonnes of edible oil each year. However, only 300,000 tonnes of the oil can be produced per year in the country, according to the Myanmar Oil Mill Owner Entrepreneurs Association. —Zar Lin Thu (AMIA) ■

47-member leading committee meeting of 7th State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee held



Annual meeting of the 47-member leading committee of the 7th State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee held at the Wizaya Mingalar Dhammathabin Hall in Yangon. **PHOTO: MNA**

The annual meeting of the 47-member leading committee of the 7th State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee began at the Wizaya Mingalar Dhammathabin Hall on Kaba Aye Hill in Yangon yesterday.

The meeting was attended by Chairman Sayadaw of the State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee Abhidhaja Maharaththa Guru Abhidhaja Agga Maha Saddhamma Jotika Bhamo Sayadaw Dr. Bhaddanta Kumarabhivamsa, member sayadaws of the State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee, Union Minister for Religious Affairs and Culture Thura U Aung Ko and officials of the ministry. In his opening address at the meeting, Bhamo Sayadaw stressed the need to publish books on Theravada

Buddhism after scrutinisation, to prevent disputes over writings in the books.

He also called for enforcing religious rules on presiding sayadaws of monasteries, monks and novices as part of efforts for purification of Buddhism.

Sayadaw Dr. Bhaddanta Kumarabhivamsa also suggested the sayadaws join hands with local authorities to prevent groups from seeking donations from people for the construction of religious buildings.

Following his opening address, Thura U Aung Ko supplicated matters on religious affairs.

At the meeting, the 47 sayadaws discussed matters related to religious and educational affairs. — Myanmar News Agency ■

Union Minister for Information Dr. Pe Myint receives Ambassador of Netherlands to Myanmar

Union Minister for Information Dr. Pe Myint received Wouter Jurgens, ambassador of the Netherlands to Myanmar, at the meeting hall of the Ministry of Information in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday afternoon.

During the meeting, they discussed matters related to press releases on Rakhine State; sending of diplomats, representatives of international

organisations under United Nations and media groups to Rakhine State; the improvement in the democratisation process in Myanmar; the status of drawing up amendments to media laws; and press freedom measures.

Also present at the meeting were Deputy Minister U Aung Hla Tun and officials. — Myanmar News Agency ■



Union Minister Dr Pe Myint holds talks with the Netherlands Ambassador and party in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**



State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi attends the 70th anniversary of Myanmar-Russia diplomatic relations dinner in Nay Pyi Taw. **PHOTO: MNA**

State Counsellor honours 70th anniversary of Myanmar-Russia diplomatic relations

State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi attended a dinner honoring the 70th Anniversary of Myanmar-Russia diplomatic relations held in the Kempinski Hotel in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. First of all the State Counsellor viewed the exhibition of photos shown on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of Myanmar-Russia diplomatic relations.

The dinner honoring the 70th anniversary of Myanmar-Russia diplomatic relations commenced with the playing of the national anthems of the two countries, after which the Russian Ambassador to Myanmar H.E. Dr.

Nikolay Listopadov delivered a message of greetings and State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi delivered a short speech to honour the occasion.

After the dinner, State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi was entertained by Russian folk music artists and the musical band "Ngwe Yaung Turiya Kyo Myar", to which she presented a gift of a floral basket.

Mr. Anatoly Bulachnikov, the Vice-Chairman of the Russia-Myanmar Association for Friendship and Cooperation (RMAFC), and RMAFC member Mr. Rudolf Yanson presented

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi with gifts and then took commemorative photos.

The event was attended by Union Election Commission Chairman U Hla Thein, Union Ministers U Kyaw Tint Swe, Dr. Pe Myint, Dr. Than Myint, U Han Zaw and U Kyaw Tin, Union Civil Service Board Chairman Dr. Win Thein, Chief of General Staff (Army, Navy and Air) General Mya Tun Oo, Deputy Ministers U Aung Hla Tun, U Win Maw Tun, U Maung Maung Win, high ranking Tatmadaw officers, invited guests and officials. — Myanmar News Agency ■

70th Chin National Day celebrated in Nay Pyi Taw

FROM PAGE-1

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi expressed the thanks to the Chin people for signing the NCA, calling for taking the remaining steps towards building a Union which can guarantee peace and security to all the people of the country.

Also present at the ceremony were Vice President U Henry Van Thio and wife Dr. Shwe Hlwan, Speaker of Pyithu Hluttaw U Win Myint and wife Daw Cho Cho, Speaker of Amyotha Hluttaw Mahn Win Khaing Than and wife Daw Nant Kyin Kyi, Chairman of the Constitutional Tribunal U Myo Nyunt and wife Daw Htay Yi, Chairman of the Union Election Commission U Hla Thein and wife Daw Aye Thida, Deputy Speaker of Pyithu Hluttaw U T Khun Myat and his wife and Deputy Speaker of Amyotha Hluttaw U Aye Tha Aung and wife.

Chairman of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw's Legal Affairs and Special Cases Assessment Commission Thura U Shwe Mann and wife, Union Ministers, Union Attorney-General, Union Auditor-General, Chairman of the Union Civil Service Board, Chairman of Nay Pyi Taw Council, Governor of the Central Bank of Myanmar, Chairman of the Anti-Corruption Commission, deputy ministers, MPs, departmental heads and Chin ethnic people were also in attendance.



President U Htin Kyaw, First Lady Daw Su Su Lwin, State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, dignitaries and guests pose for the photo at the 70th Chin National Day held in Nay Pyi Taw. **PHOTO: MNA**



Traditional dance troupe performs Chin ethnic dance. **PHOTO: MNA**



State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. **PHOTO: MNA**

The celebration began with the song "The Beautiful Chin State" sung by ethnic Chin women.

State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi presented certificates of honour to those who assisted in social economic development in Chin State and Chin nationals who earned PhDs in the 2016-2017 academic year.

At the ceremony, a traditional dance troupe from Kanpetlet

Township entertained the guests with Chin ethnic dance.

Vice President U Henry Van Thio and Speaker of Amyotha Hluttaw Mahn Win Khaing Than presented certificates of honour to Chin ethnic athletes who took part in sports events.

Chin traditional cultural troupes performed traditional dances and songs.

The celebration ended with the of "Taung Paw Khaung Yay

Cho Mya Mya" by President U Htin Kyaw, First Lady Daw Su Su Lwin, Vice President U Henry Van Thio and wife and those present at the ceremony.

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi stressed the importance of the unity of all national races to overcome challenges on the road to a Union that can guarantee security, progress and peace to all the people.

"Our country is rich in natu-

ral resources, but, the treasure of our country is our people. Every step taken by our ethnic people for improving themselves is assumed as the Union Spirit," she said.

She also expressed how she pinned her hopes on the country's youth population between the ages of 15 and 35, which makes up 60 per cent of the total population of Myanmar. —Myanmar News Agency ■

Pyithu Hluttaw puts on record motion on Rakhine State

FROM PAGE-2

The authorities are patrolling the border fence and have constructed approach roads, bridges and guard posts. Border fences are being erected since 2009, and the remaining 39.217-mile section will be fenced in the upcoming open season.

The dilapidated border fence that stretches from the mouth of Tone creek to BP 66 is being repaired, the work for which started in September 2017. To increase security, double fences were erected in some places from October 2017 and will be completed in February 2018.

To prevent the infiltration

of terrorists, the area is being controlled by border police patrols and guard posts along the border fence. Joint patrols of the Myanmar-Bangladesh border police forces are being conducted and information on the activities of the terrorists is being shared through various means. To prevent the infiltration of terrorists along the sea route, the Tatmadaw (Navy) is conducting patrols along the Naf River, while the border police forces are setting up guard posts at the mouth of the creek. To allay fears of the local populace, the border police force is setting up a village security post, in cooperation with the

local people.

After the terrorist attacks on 25 August 2017, 129 police posts were regrouped into 95 and four new posts were set up. As of now, there are 11 station offices, 12 police stations, 16 milepost positions, 27 posts at the mouth of the creeks and 95 police posts, totalling 161, to conduct security and rule of law works.

Arrangements are underway to combine the local ethnic national villages into new villages in various places.

To increase access to electricity, the government is arranging for a national grid to reach Yathedaung, Buthidaung and Maungdaw via 66 KV

power line and substations are being set up. Yathedaung will get round-the-clock power supply in March 2018, Buthidaung in June 2018 and Maungdaw in December 2018. By that time, the three towns and 27,047 households in the nearby villages will have 24 hours of power supply, said the union minister.

The main aim of the government work in Rakhine State is to keep it free of conflict in the long run and maintain stability and development in the state. The government is implementing the UEHRD union project in accordance with policies and laws. On the matter of returnees, it is systematically implementing the

single bilateral agreement and two bilateral work group agreements between Bangladesh and Myanmar. Humanitarian aids are being provided in accordance with international norms.

The Rakhine State affairs affect the entire Myanmar. Thus, it is important to handle the problems of the people of Rakhine State with care. The union minister explained that the conduct of the government on this matter in the past, present and future was in accordance with the wishes of the people of Rakhine State and requested that the motion be put on record.

The Hluttaw decided to put the motion on record. ■

Medical care, rehabilitation for drug users, not jail

THE narcotic drug problem has been taken on by successive governments, but they have been unable to control it. Instead, it is becoming worse.

The problem of narcotic drug abuse is considered a national epidemic, and attempts have been made to control and eradicate it, but year by year the number of arrests for possession and distribution keep on rising.

According to the World Drug Report 2017, about a quarter of a billion people used drugs in 2015. Of these, around 29.5 million people - or 0.6 per cent of the global adult population - were engaged in problematic use and suffered from drug use disorders, including dependence. Opioids were the most harmful drug type and accounted for 70 per cent of the negative health impact associated with drug use disorders worldwide, according to the latest World Drug Report, released today by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

Hepatitis C is causing the greatest harm among the estimated 12 million people who inject drugs worldwide. Out of this number, one in eight (1.6 million) are living with HIV and more than half (6.1 million) are living with Hepatitis C, while around 1.3 million are suffering from both hepatitis C and

HIV. Overall, three times more people who use drugs die from Hepatitis C (222,000) than from HIV (60,000).

It is time to try and solve this serious problem in a different manner.

In 2017, drug prevention and control operations in Mayyu, Rakhine State, Shan Yoma in Shan State and Chindwin-2 in Sagaing Region were conducted. The Ayeya Oo operation in Kachin State is currently underway. As eradicating narcotic drugs cannot be done solely through preventive operations and judicial strategies alone but must include economics, social, health and development sectors, a new narcotic drug control policy has been drawn up.

A new National Strategic Plan will be drawn up over the next six months for the successful implementation of this policy.

An Operation Action Plan will be relevant to the states and regions and in accordance with the Strategic Plan, which targets reduction of the cultivation of opium.

The period for implementing the Strategic Plan is set for two years, and region and state governments should be prepared for implementing the plan in their respective areas.

Significantly, when the bill amending the Anti-Narcotic and Psychotropic Substances Law is enacted, drug users will no longer receive prison sentences. Hence, departments concerned are urged to prepare for boosting their medical care and rehabilitation efforts for the drug users.

While the Central Committee for Drug Abuse Control is trying to eradicate narcotic drugs, relevant ministries are also urged to increase the preventive works against narcotics as a very important national duty.

Stroke Can Be Prevented: Know Your Risks!

By Dr Seinn Mya Mya Aye, Consultant Neurologist

STROKE is the second leading cause of death in most countries and is one of the leading causes of long-term disability. One in six of us will suffer a stroke in our lifetime. Every two seconds, someone in the world suffers a stroke. Every six seconds, someone dies of stroke. Every six seconds, someone's quality of life will forever be changed.

Stroke incidence and mortality rates have been increasing in developing countries and Myanmar is not an exception. Increased stroke incidence is likely to be lifestyle changes, poor health knowledge, limited accessibility to health care facilities, economic and social constraints and inefficient primary preventive strategies in health care system.

What is stroke?

Stroke happens when the blood supply to part of the brain is cut off. Without blood, the cells in the affected area of brain become damaged or die. This damage can have different effects depending on where it happens and how much of brain tissue is deprived of blood supply.

Symptoms of stroke

Someone who had a mild stroke may experience temporary weakness of an arm or leg, but those with a more severe stroke may be permanently paralyzed on one side of their body or be unable to speak. If the blood supply is not quickly restored, either on its own or via with medical treatment, the effects may be permanent.

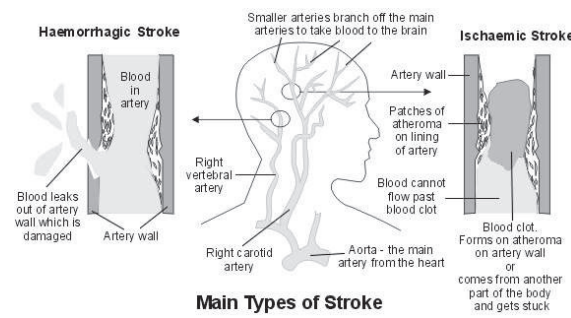
Possible signs and symptoms of stroke include the sudden onset of:

1. Weakness or paralysis of any part of the body.
2. Numbness or a "pins and needles" sensation anywhere in the body.
3. Gait disturbances (trouble walking) or loss of balance and coordination
4. Vision changes, blurred vision, or trouble with eyesight in one or both eyes
5. Dizziness
6. Severe headache that usually is unlike headaches in the past
7. Confusion
8. Inability to speak, slurred speech, or inability to understand speech
9. Loss of sensation in any part of the body
10. Memory loss
11. Behavioral changes
12. Muscle stiffness
13. Difficulty swallowing
14. Involuntary eye movement

Types of stroke

There are two main types of stroke, ischaemic stroke (due to a blocked blood vessel in the brain) and haemorrhagic stroke (due to bleeding in the brain). About 85% of all stroke are due to ischaemic

stroke and 15% haemorrhagic.



Mini-stroke or Warning Stroke (Transient Ischaemic Stroke)

It is due to a temporary lack of blood supply to a part of the brain. The affected part of the brain is without oxygen for just a few minutes and soon recovers. This is because the blood clot either breaks up quickly or nearby blood vessels are able to compensate. It shows symptoms similar to a stroke, typically lasts less than five minutes, and does not injure the brain.

Know your risks: Stroke is preventable.

90% of strokes are linked to 10 key risk factors. Try to find out your risks and take actions to reduce the risk of stroke.

1. **Control high blood pressure**
Risk - Hypertension is linked to almost half of all strokes.
Action - Know and control your blood pressure with lifestyle change, or medication.
2. **Do moderate exercise 5 times a week**
Risk - Over a third of all strokes happen to people who do not take regular exercise.
Action - Moderate exercise five times a week.
3. **Eat a healthy, balanced diet**
Risk - Almost a quarter of strokes are linked to poor diet, in particular low consumption of fruit and vegetables.
Action - Eat five or more portions of fruit and vegetables
4. **Reduce your cholesterol**
Risk - More than 1 in 4 strokes are linked to high levels of 'bad' (LDL) cholesterol.
Action - Eat low saturated, non-hydrogenated fats instead of saturated fats.
If you cannot maintain a healthy cholesterol level with diet alone, talk to your doctor about treatments that could help.
5. **Maintain a healthy BMI (Body mass Index) or waist to hip ratio**
Risk - Almost 1 in 5 strokes are linked to obesity.

Action - A good way to know if you need to lose weight is to divide your waist measurement by your hip measurement. If the number is over 0.9 (man) and 0.85 (woman) your weight is putting you at higher risk of stroke and you would benefit from losing weight.

6. Stop smoking and avoid second-hand exposure

Risk - More than 1 in 10 strokes are linked to smoking.

Action - Stop smoking and getting help to quit increases your chances of success.

7. Reduce alcohol intake

Risk - Over 1 million strokes each year are linked to excessive alcohol consumption.

Action - Reduce our alcohol intake to two

poverty and improve equitable access to healthcare and education will have a positive impact on stroke and other non-communicable diseases.

Stroke is treatable: Recognize stroke symptoms and signs early (FAST) !!!

Acting fast is critical if you suspect that someone may be having a stroke. Immediate treatment of a stroke can minimize long-term effects of the stroke.

F: Face drooping: Can the person smile? Has their mouth or eye drooped?

A: Arm weakness: Can the person raise both arms?

S: Speech difficulty: Speech disturbance. Can the person speak clearly?

Can they understand what you say?

T: Time to act: Time to call /get the person to a hospital immediately

လေဖြတ်ခြင်း (Stroke) သတိပြုစရာ လေဖြတ်ရောဂါ လက္ခဏာ



units of alcohol a day for men and one for women.

8. Identify and treat atrial fibrillation (Irregular heart beat)

Risk - An irregular heart beat or other heart condition is linked to 9% of strokes.

Action - Talk to your doctor about possible treatments to reduce your risk.

9. Diabetes

Risk - As well as sharing many of the same risk factors, diabetes increases the risk of stroke.

Action - Reducing your risk of diabetes will reduce your risk of stroke. If you have diabetes, talk to your doctor about treatments.

10. Income and education

Risk - Across and within countries low levels of income and education are linked to stroke.

Action - Government policies that address

What can we do as health care practitioners?

Health care practitioners should provide information and support to patients and communities and help them take steps that would reduce their lifetime risk of stroke.

What can government and health care system decision makers do?

Government and health care system decision makers should implement population-wide prevention strategies that address the economic and environmental contributors to stroke. They must take the leadership role in developing sustainable, low cost risk assessment and management strategies.

Message

FIND OUT YOUR STROKE RISKS AND PREVENT IT NOW!!!

Reference - World Stroke Organization, World Stroke Day 2017)

POEM

Child Labour

Talk about 'eradicating' child labour started decades ago if I remember, but rather weak effort to 'walk the talk', many 'employers' still make children work. Many people have been led to believe though it is quite difficult to conceive that the 'employers' of child labour are doing their 'parents' favour.

Child Labour in many contexts there are, the most common in rural areas by far, they may be part of 'unpaid family workers' helping their parents as 'farm labourers.' That may not be 'so bad' so to speak as long as the child can education seek.

Then there is the matter of child labour as domestic help for free or wages meager. Yet no specific law covering domestic worker, thought might emerge sooner or later.

There is the problem of child worker in the 'informal' sector which by its nature is not usually covered by laws relating to labour hence may be somewhat 'on the border.'

However the worst case is that of child labour in the formal manufacturing and service sector and where it is usually the least protected and under existing labour laws is prohibited but where it is a source of cheap labour for the non-law abiding, exploiting employer and may deprive some 'job needing' worker from being his children's provider.

Lokethar

Invitation to young writers for Sunday section

The Global New Light of Myanmar is accepting submissions of poetry, opinion, articles, essays and short stories from young people for its weekly Sunday Next Generation Platform. Interested candidates can send their works to the Global New Light of Myanmar at No. 150, Nga Htat Kyee Pagoda Road, Bahan Township, Yangon or by email to dce@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com with the following information: (1) Sector you wish to be included in (poetry, opinion, etc.), (2) Real name and (if different) your penname, (3) Your level of education, (4) Name of your School/College/University, (5) A written note of declaration that the submitted piece is your original work and has not been submitted to any other news or magazine publishing houses, (6) A color photo of the submitter, (7) Copy of your NRC card, (8) Contact information (email address, mobile number, etc.). - Editorial Department, The Global New Light of Myanmar news office

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Union Minister, Netherlands Ambassador talk about bilateral cooperation

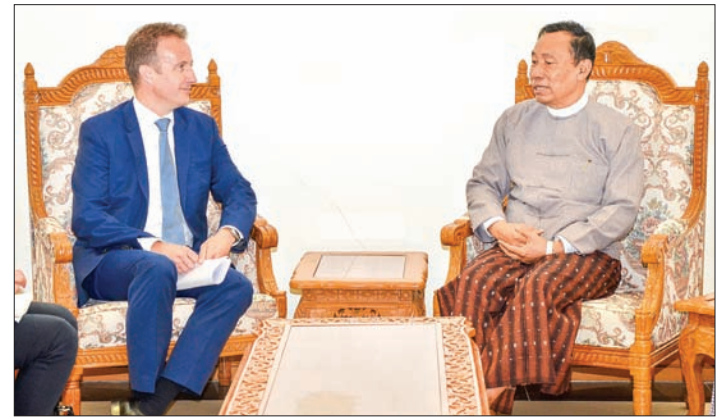


Union Minister U Kyaw Tin shakes hands with Mr. Wouter Jurgens, Ambassador of the Netherlands in Nay Pyi Taw. **PHOTO: MOFA**

Union Minister for International Cooperation U Kyaw Tin discussed topics including promoting bilateral cooperation between Myanmar and the Netherlands and providing assistance for the development of Rakhine State with the Netherlands Ambassador to Myanmar Mr. Wouter Jurgens.

The discussion occurred at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Nay Pyi Taw at 10 am yesterday. Present at the meeting were the Director-General of International Organizations and Economic Department U Kyaw Moe Tun, the Director-General of the Political Department U Soe Han and other officials.—MOFA ■

Thura U Shwe Mann receives Ambassador of Netherlands to Myanmar



Thura U Shwe Mann holds talks with Mr. Wouter Jurgens, Ambassador of the Netherlands in Nay Pyi Taw. **PHOTO: MNA**

Chairman of Pyidaungsu Htuttaw's Commission for Legal Affairs and Special Cases Assessment Committee Thura U Shwe Mann received Mr Wouter Jurgens, the Ambassador of the Netherlands to Myanmar, at 11:30 a.m. at the Htuttaw's Hall

I-11 in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

During the meeting, they discussed matters related to bilateral cooperation, mutual aid and economic development, as well as promotion of investments and strengthening of democracy.—MNA ■

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Joint Bill Committee holds coordination meeting

THE Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Joint Bill Committee held its coordination meeting on the 2018 Union Tax Bill yesterday afternoon in the second-floor meeting hall of building D of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw.

The coordination meeting was attended by the Pyidaungsu

Hluttaw Deputy Speaker; Joint Bill Committee and Public Account Joint Committee Chairman U Aye Tha Aung; Joint Bill Committee and Public Account Joint Committee deputy chairmen, secretaries, joint secretaries and committee members; Legal Affairs and Special Cases Assess-

ment commission members; and officials from the Ministry of Industry, Ministry of Commerce, Ministry of Planning and Finance, Union Attorney General office, Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry, and the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw office.—MNA ■

The 70th anniversary of Chin National Day held in Myanmar

THE ceremony to mark the 70th anniversary of Chin National Day was held yesterday in locations around Myanmar.

In Chin State, local people in traditional Chin dress marched to the stadium in Falam. At the event, they saluted their national flag and the township administrator read a message sent by the President U Htin Kyaw.

About 350 people including departmental staff in Reh Khaw Da also marched from the entrance of the city to the athletic field to celebrate Chin National Day.

Additionally, the event included reading a message sent by the President. Entertainment and football, caneball and volleyball competitions were also held at all the locations that were celebrating the auspicious occasion.

The event was also held in Sittway, in Rakhine State. "This



Participants perform at the ceremony to mark the 70th anniversary of Chin National Day in Sittway, Rakhine State. **PHOTO: TOWNSHIP (IPRD)**

is the fifth time the ceremony was held in Sittway. By holding the event, we all can have mutual respect and live in unity," said U Aung Lin, patron of the Chin Literature and Cultural Committee in Sittway.

In Rakhine State, the event

was held in other locations such as Kyauktaw, Rathedaung, Mrauk U, Minbya, Myaybon, Kyaukpyu, Taungup, Thandwe and Gwa.

The event was also held in Muse in Shan State.—Myanmar Digital News ■



Deputy Minister U Aung Hla Tun meets with Norwegian Ambassador Ms Tone Tinnes in Nay Pyi Taw. **PHOTO: MNA**

Deputy Minister for Information U Aung Hla Tun receives Norwegian Ambassador

DEPUTY Minister for Information U Aung Hla Tun received Mr Tone Tinnes, Norwegian ambassador to Myanmar, at the meeting hall of the Ministry of Information in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning.

During the meeting, they discussed matters related to media freedom, amendments to the media law, the right-to-know law, scrutinising of outdated laws, use of social media and Rakhine State affairs.—Myanmar News Agency ■



Dental students leave for Japan internship

Two students from the University of Dental Medicine in Yangon will undertake an internship in Japan as part of the Japan Student Services Organisation (JASSO) Student Exchange Programme at Niigata University in Niigata

Prefecture from 19 February to 2 March. Outstanding final year students Ma Thinzar Swe Htet and Ma Hlaing Pwint Phyu from the University of Dental Medicine left for Japan recently. — Myanmar News Agency ■

Myanmar and Germany sign MoU on conserving the cultural heritage of Bagan



A signing ceremony of MoU between Myanmar and Germany held yesterday. **PHOTO: MYANMAR DIGITAL NEWS**

MYANMAR and Germany yesterday signed a memorandum of understanding on conserving the cultural heritage of Bagan.

According to the agreement, Germany will provide technical aid to conduct a project of conserving the Nanpaya

Temple, which is one of the 389 pagodas that was destroyed following a 6.8 magnitude earthquake that hit on August 24 in 2016, and also a training program for maintaining and preserving murals in the Nara-thihapate Pagoda.—Myanmar Digital News ■

Shwe Myintzu pagoda to celebrate 149th Buddha Pujaniya festival

The Shwe Myintzu pagoda, which is located in the middle of Indawgyi Lake, Monhnyin Township, in Kachin state, will celebrate the 149th Buddha Pujaniya festival from 22 February to 1 March.

“The committee expects the festival to be crowded with pilgrims this year because of better road transport and the development of the local tour business. Besides these, the Indawgyi lake has been designated as a biosphere reserve by the UNESCO, and its pasture lands draw winter migrant birds,” said U Tint Lwin, a member of the Festival Celebration Committee.

“To ensure pilgrims can tour the Indawgyi Lake conveniently, the authorities have

granted licences to hotel and motor vessel businesses, built parking areas for cars and motorbikes, ensured electricity supply, and constructed shops and public toilets. The whole structure of the Shwe Myintzu pagoda has been plated with gold, which was done at a cost of Ks225.2 million,” said U Tint Lwin.

Indawgyi Lake is one of the largest inland lakes in Southeast Asia. It has a vertical width of 14 miles, a horizontal width of seven miles and an area of almost 100 square miles. It is one of Myanmar’s important bird sanctuaries and home to many endangered species. Therefore, it is a major draw for tourists. — Salai Mang Ngai ■



Union Attorney-General U Tun Tun Oo meets with Japan Ministry of Justice, International Cooperation Department Director yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

Union Attorney-General receives Japan Ministry of Justice director

Union Attorney-General U Tun Tun Oo received Japan Ministry of Justice, International Cooperation Department director Mr. Taro Morinaga at the Union Attorney-General’s office yesterday morning.

During the meeting, matters relating to cooperation between

the Japan Ministry of Justice and the Union Attorney-General’s office on legal sector development works, cooperation with Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) on effective assessment of economic agreements, human resource development in the legal sec-

tor, continuing arrangements for study tours and training courses were discussed.

Present at the meeting were Deputy Attorney-General U Win Myint, Permanent Secretary Daw Nu Nu Yin, directors general Daw Khin Cho Ohn and Dr. Thida Oo. —Myanmar News Agency ■

Bagan murals to be restored soon

Murals in pagodas and temples located in Bagan Archaeological Zone will be restored with the assistance of experts from the US-based Getty Conservation Institution (GCI), according to a report in Myawady Daily yesterday.

“Currently, officials of the Archaeology and Nation-

al Museum Department and experts from GCI are conducting an initial survey to restore the mural paintings,” said U Aung Aung Kyaw, director of Archaeology and National Museum Department (Bagan branch).

There are more than 400 pagodas in Bagan, which have

wall paintings, and some of them have been damaged by white-washing, and offerings of candles and water.

Local and international non-government organisations, law makers and authorities are educating pilgrims and visitors to prevent further damage to the frescos. —GNLM ■

Value-added Ayadaw Thanakha products, cosmetics available in local market

Value-added Ayadaw Thanakha products and cosmetics are available in the local market, according to a local Thanakha cultivator from Ayadaw.

“Earlier, Ayadaw Thanakha was used only to grind with Kyauk Pyin stone slabs. However, Ayadaw Thanakha is now used in value-added products and cosmetics, which are currently available in the market. If we can penetrate the international market for value-added Thanakha products and cosmetics, the Thanakha market will become strong,” said a local

cultivator.

“Ayadaw Thanakha will be displayed at the Kachin State and Mandalay Region SMEs entrepreneurs’ local products exhibition and competition,” said U Kyaw Moe, chairman of Ayadaw Township Thanakha Cultivation, Production, Export and Sales Association.

“The Mandalay SMEs enterprise development committee has invited us to showcase our Ayadaw Thanakha. At the exhibition, we are planning to display five types of Ayadaw Thanakha products,” he added.

The Kachin State and the Mandalay region SMEs entrepreneurs’ local products exhibition and competition will be held at Mandalarthiri sports ground in Mandalay from 23 to 25 February.

Sculptures made of Ayadaw Thanakha products will be displayed at the exhibition.

Thanakha is no longer a minor forest product, which is widely cultivated in the central regions of Myanmar, and so, it should be listed among the agricultural products, he said. — Myo Win Tun (Monywa) ■

Everything you need to know about Russia's Su-35 multirole fighter jet

MOSCOW — Ten years ago, a prototype of Russia's Sukhoi Su-35 multirole fighter jet performed its debut flight on 19 February, 2008.

The Su-35 is Russia's generation 4++ multirole supersonic super-maneuverable fighter jet developed as a follow-up of Su-27 one-seat planes.

Aircraft's designing and tests

The work on the Su-27's modification capable of detecting and striking ground targets (i.e. the work on the full-fledged multirole fighter jet) began at the Sukhoi Design Bureau back in the mid-1980s. The plane was named the Su-27M (the T-10M). It was furnished with new radio-electronic equipment (including a rear facing radar), armament, electronic warfare (EW) systems, multifunctional displays in the pilot's cockpit, an aerial refueling system and other devices.

The first flight of the Su-27M (which was shortly renamed as the Su-35) took place on 1 April, 1992. The Su-35 was on display at various international airshows and was offered for export but it did not find prospective buyers. The serial production of new fighter jets did not begin due to economic problems.

Some new technical solutions used in the Su-27M were later incorporated in Su-30 fighter jets of various types and the Su-37 aircraft.

The work on the one-seat multirole fighter jet as a deriva-



Su-35 is a Russian-made multipurpose generation 4++ super-maneuverable fighter jet. PHOTO: TASS

tive of the Su-27 plane restarted in the mid-2000s. The designers installed new avionics, the Irbis radar with a passive phased antenna array and more powerful engines with thrust vectoring on the aircraft. The fighter jet was also furnished with a new onboard information and control system.

The T-10BM performed its debut flight on 19 February, 2008. The fighter jet has been serial-produced at the Gagarin Aviation Plant in Komso-molsk-on-Amur. In 2009, a contract was signed for the delivery of 48 fighter jets of this type to Russia's Aerospace Force. The contract was fully discharged in

2015, after which Russia's military placed an order for 50 more planes.

The fighter jet was accepted for service in Russia's Aerospace Force in 2017. By today, about 70 such planes have been delivered to operational Aerospace Force units. From 2015, these fighter jets made part of Russia's air task force in Syria.

Fighter jet's characteristics

By its aerodynamic design, the Su-35 is a two-engine high-wing aircraft featuring retractable tricycle gear with the nose gear strut. The Su-35 is equipped with two AL-41F1S turbojet engines with an afterburner thrust

of 14,500 kgf each. The plane has a length of 21.95 metres, a wing-span of 14.75 metre and a height of 5.92 metres. The fighter jet has a maximum takeoff weight of 34,500 kg, a maximum speed of 2,500 km/h (2.35 Mach), a maximum flying range of 3,600 km without external fuel tanks and 4,500 km with external fuel tanks. The fighter jet has a service ceiling of 18,000 metres.

The fighter's radar can detect targets at a distance of up to 400 km and track 30 air targets at a time. The crew consists of one pilot.

The fighter jet's service life assigned by its manufacturer is 6,000 hours or 30 years and the

term of its engine operation is 4,000 hours.

Armament

The fighter jet's 12 hard-points can carry air-to-air and air-to-surface missiles, and also rockets and air bombs of various calibers. The aircraft has a maximum weapons payload of 8 tonnes. It is armed with a GSh-30-1 30mm gun (with an ammunition load of 150 rounds).

Export deliveries

On 19 November, 2015, Russia's state hi-tech corporation Rostec announced that it had signed a contract for the delivery of 24 Su-35 fighters to China. According to media reports, 14 aircraft had been delivered by early 2018.

Rostec CEO Sergei Chemezov told the media on 20 February, 2017 that the United Arab Emirates had signed a letter of intent with Russia on the purchase of Su-35 planes. Indonesian media outlets reported in February 2018 that Russia had signed a contract for the delivery of 11 Su-35 fighters to Indonesia.

Air incidents

According to open sources, one incident occurred with this type of aircraft without any victims. On 26 April, 2009, a prototype of the Su-35 plane skidded off the runway during its speedy run and received considerable damage. The test pilot ejected to safety.—Tass ■

Peru court orders Fujimori tried for 1992 mass killing: official

LIMA — A Peruvian court ordered former president Alberto Fujimori on Monday to stand trial for the 1992 killings of six farmers, arguing that he lacks immunity despite a recent pardon for a different crime.

The National Criminal Court said the pardon granted to Fujimori in a human rights case for which he was serving a 25-year sentence did not apply to the murders of the group.

Prosecutors asked to try the ex-president and 23 others for the death squad killings.

Fujimori, 79, was pardoned by the current Peruvian president, Pedro Pablo Kuczynski, on

24 December on humanitarian grounds because of ill health.

The former leader had been serving a sentence for crimes that included commanding death squads that killed suspected civilian sympathizers of leftwing guerrillas that his regime was fighting.

The pardon triggered street protests in Peru and was slammed by international rights groups as a blow in the struggle against impunity.

Kuczynski's pardon was seen by many as quid pro quo for help from Fujimori's lawmaker son Kenji days earlier in beating an impeachment vote in Congress

over alleged corruption.

Miguel Perez, Fujimori's attorney, said it was not yet clear if the issue of immunity could be addressed again.

Perez told local media that he tried to have the ex-president serve as a witness in the new case, but failed. "So in this trial, he simply will be listed as one of the accused," Perez said.

Prosecutors are seeking 25 years in prison for the ex-leader.

-Pardon many won't forgive-

"Mr Fujimori now has resumed his status as a defendant, and in the case of the pardon, there was no sensible justifica-



Peru's former president Alberto Fujimori, seen here on January 4, 2018, was ordered to stand trial in a new death squad case. PHOTO: AFP

tion," human rights lawyer Carlos Rivera said.

Kuczynski had pledged not to pardon Alberto Fujimori. But he did so just days after Kenji Fujimori's vote in his favour, sparking speculation the pardon was a political quid pro quo.

Rights groups and relatives

of victims asked the Inter-American Court of Human Rights earlier this month to rule against a pardon for Fujimori.

Kuczynski — who defeated Keiko Fujimori for the presidency in 2016 — said he had pardoned the ex-president for humanitarian reasons.—AFP ■

Indonesia halts major infrastructure projects after construction mishaps

JAKARTA — Indonesia's Public Works and Housing Minister Basuki Hadimuljono ordered on Tuesday a halt against all transportation projects across the country following a construction mishap that injured 7 workers earlier in the day.

The latest construction mishap occurred around 3:00 am local time on Tuesday at a toll road project designed to link outskirt area of Bekasi to capital city Jakarta. It added the national construction mishaps to 14 in the last two years, the minister said.

"All above-the-ground projects requiring heavy duty works, such as girder installations, in Sumatra, Java, Kalimantan, Sulawesi LRT, toll road and bridge constructions, must be temporarily stopped until further notice," the minister said in Yogyakarta to response the latest construction mishap.

The minister said the moratorium on those public projects was aimed at giving ample time for national Construction Safety Commission to evaluate all of those projects.

"After the evaluation process was completed, the order to resume the projects or not would be from me," he pointed out.

Besides the evaluation, the moratorium was also intended to assure

compliance of the existing construction standards and mechanism by contractors carrying out the projects, the minister said.

Construction mishaps across Indonesia have claimed the lives of several workers and injured several others during the period.

Part of the mishaps occurred in infrastructure projects designated to facilitate the 2018 Asian Games sports event slated to be held in Jakarta and South Sumatra capital of Palembang in the next several months.

Indonesia is now intensifying infrastructure projects across the country aimed at improving the nation's connectivity, highly expected to help the nation in pursuing higher economy growth in the future.

Responding to the moratorium on national infrastructure construction projects, Indonesian President Joko Widodo supported it, saying that more detailed supervisory efforts and better management control to monitor those projects were essential to deliver high quality constructions for the people. "Whatever the projects are, be it in normal or the accelerated ones, they require pertinent and more detailed supervisory tasks," the president said later in the day.—Xinhua ■

Nepal's ruling party merges into super bloc with Maoists

KATHMANDU — Nepal's ruling party has merged with a former Maoist rebel group to form a super bloc that experts say will reshape politics after years of turbulence in the Himalayan nation.

Officials said on Tuesday the new alliance, the Nepal Communist Party, was formally signed into agreement following late-night negotiations between the two sides on Monday.

They forged a political alliance to trounce the incumbent party in last year's landmark general elections, but this formal merger creates a political behemoth unprecedented in Nepali politics.

"This is an agreement to merge, but there are other issues we need to conclude before we completely unify," senior Maoist leader Narayan Kaji Shrestha told AFP, adding the transition process was expected to take at least a month.

The new alliance commands a large majority in both houses of parliament, and comes just days after Communist leader KP Sharma Oli was sworn in as prime minister.

Oli's main Communist party and the Maoists heavily defeated the incumbent Nepali Congress party in polls last year billed as the final step in a post-war transformation to a federal republic.

The Maoists, who



The communist party of new Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli (L) has merged with former Maoist rebels to form a new alliance. **PHOTO: AFP**

fought government forces in a bitter civil war that claimed more than 16,000 lives and overthrew Nepal's 240-year-old Hindu monarchy, dominated politics for more than two decades. The decade-long conflict ended in a 2006 peace deal that saw guerrilla leader Pushpa Kamal Dahal become Nepal's first post-war prime minister.

But their political support has waned in recent years, with their party ranking third in last year's general elections.

Political historian Aditya Adhikari said the merger was a "rare union" between two sides with starkly different backgrounds.

The ruling Communist

party is older and considered more conservative than its new partners in the Maoists, who have pursued more progressive politics in the post-war era.

"If they manage to stick together it will change the future of Nepal's politics," said Adhikari, author of "The Bullet and the Ballot Box", a history of Nepal's Maoist struggle.

"But they will likely function as a coalition or two factions within a party, negotiating power sharing." A rumoured agreement to share power between Prime Minister Oli and Dahal, the Maoist leader, has provoked criticism amid concern this alliance could destabilise

politics down the track.

Brittle alliances have been struck between Nepal's three dominant parties since 2008, and there are fears this latest merger could prolong the revolving door nature of the country's politics. Oli has been prime minister once before, while Dahal has served in the top office twice. Many voters cast ballots in last year's elections hoping for stability and much-needed development in the impoverished Himalayan nation.

The last government — a coalition between the Maoists and the Nepali Congress party — was the country's ninth in just 11 years before the alliance fractured.—AFP ■

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Stolen million-euro cello returned to French musician

PARIS — An 18th-century cello worth more than a million euros was returned to an award-winning French musician on 17 Saturday after she was robbed at knifepoint in a Paris suburb earlier in the week.

"I received an anonymous call late in the morning saying that my cello was inside a car in front of my house. I found it in the back seat," soloist Ophelie Gaillard told AFP.

One of the car windows was broken and the musician said she quickly grabbed the instrument, which is "in good condition", before notifying police.

An attacker had held her up at knifepoint outside her home on Thursday, forcing her to hand over the cello, as well as her mobile phone, before fleeing on foot in the northeastern suburb of Pantin.

"The theft was very violent, I have not been able to sleep for two days. I am so relieved to have found it. I'm coming out of a two-day nightmare — it's a miracle," she said.

The police confirmed the cello had been found and a source close to the investigation by the

BRB unit in charge of armed robberies said: "It's not an instrument that can be sold to a fence on the corner".

After the robbery on Thursday, Gaillard appealed for help from the public on Facebook, posting pictures of the instrument. The cello, which was loaned to her by CIC bank and is valued at nearly 1.3 million euros (\$1.6 million), was made in Udine,

Italy in 1737 by luthier Francesco Goffriller, son of Venetian master cello-maker Matteo Goffriller.

The cello case also contained her bow, which she said was made by acclaimed 19th-century French bowmaker Jean Pierre Marie Persoit "around 1825 in Paris". In 2003, Gaillard was named the best new instrumental soloist at the French classical music awards.—AFP ■



An 18th-century cello worth more than a million euros has been returned to cellist Ophelie Gaillard after she was robbed. **PHOTO: AFP**

Australian classic 'Picnic at Hanging Rock' series premieres in Berlin

BERLIN — The popular myth that Australia's iconic mystery tale "Picnic at Hanging Rock" is based on true events should help bring it to a global audience, one of its stars said at the Berlin Film Festival on Monday.

The story of the strange disappearances of three schoolgirls and their governess at a picnic in the remote Australian bush on

Valentine's Day 1900 has been reimagined in a six-part TV drama series.

Its makers promise a fresh take on the unsettling mystery that adds up to a "terrifyingly eerie" supernatural crime drama, with new twists and characters.

"What I love about 'Picnic at Hanging Rock' is everyone thinks the original novel was based on a

true story," said Natalie Dormer, of "Game of Thrones" fame, who plays the enigmatic and stern English headmistress Mrs Appleyard. "It's excellent marketing," Dormer told AFP at the Berlin red carpet premiere.

"They did a fantastic job in the '60s and in the '70s", she said on the 1967 novel by Joan Lindsay, who was deliberately ambiguous about the story's origin, and director Peter Weir's 1975 classic film. "It's incredibly spooky, whether it's a true story or not."

Dormer said that the mystery is both "a national treasure for Australia" and "a universal, international story".

"All the themes of liberation and rebellion, of identity, of an inner struggle with yourself — it's full of universal, timeless themes that are not specific just to Australia," she said.

Another cast member, Ruby Rees, said much of the appeal came from the many complex female characters.—AFP ■



The story of the strange disappearances of three schoolgirls and their governess at a picnic in the remote Australian bush on Valentine's Day 1900 has been reimagined in a six-part TV. **PHOTO: AFP**



Disney's "Black Panther" has gone straight to the top of the North American box office in its opening weekend. Image: Courtesy of Marvel Studios. **PHOTO: AFP**

'Black Panther' pounces to box office glory over holiday weekend

LOS ANGELES — As the US kicked back for a long weekend, Disney's "Black Panther" got off to a superhero start in the North American box office, rocketing to the top spot with estimated earnings of \$218 million, data showed on Sunday.

According to figures from industry tracker Exhibitor Relations, the highly-anticipated 18th entry in the Marvel Cinematic Universe earned \$192 million over Friday, Saturday and Sunday — exceeding predictions of \$170 million.

Thanks to Presidents' Day in the US on Monday, "Black Panther's" estimated earnings were boosted to a stratospheric \$218 million — crushing "Deadpool's" 2016 Presidents' Day record of \$152.1 million.

The film, from Disney-owned Marvel Studios, features a star-studded, almost entirely black cast led by Chadwick Boseman as the first non-white superhero to get his own stand-alone movie in the franchise.

Starring alongside Michael B Jordan and Lupita Nyong'o, Boseman plays the titular superhero also known as T'Challa, king and protector of the technologically advanced fictional African nation

of Wakanda, an affluent, never-colonized utopia.

In at second was family-friendly "Peter Rabbit," based on Beatrix Potter's classic children's book. Mixing live actors with computer-generated animation, it brought in an estimated \$22.1 million over the holiday weekend for total earnings of \$53.1 million.

James Corden voices the lead bunny which feuds with garden owner Domhnall Gleeson for the affections of sweet-hearted neighbour Rose Byrne.

Dropping to third was last week's box office champion, Universal's "Fifty Shades Freed," with takings of \$19 million, down from \$38.6 million the previous week.

Starring Dakota Johnson as English lit major-turned-publisher Anastasia Steele and Jamie Dornan as Christian Grey, her kinky lover-turned-husband, "Freed" is the last of the "Fifty Shades" trilogy, which has enjoyed massive popularity among primarily female audiences.

Sony's "Jumanji: Welcome to the Jungle" placed fourth in its ninth week in theaters, matching last week's earnings with \$10 million.—AFP ■

Silent festivals lead to music in unlikely places

KYOTO — Complaints about thumping bass lines at music events could be avoided by increasingly widespread “silent festivals” where headphones are used to feel the beat.

At these events, only people wearing wireless headphones are able to hear the music. They can be held in non-soundproofed places, making it easier to keep down costs than at standard music events.

The first such silent festival is believed to have taken place in the Netherlands during the 2000s, and they now feature at major festivals in Japan like Summer Sonic.

A silent festival even took place last December at Kyoto's Nishi Honganji Temple, a place more usually associated with contemplative silence than partying.

The audience was free to sit down or dance around as they would to normal live music.

Keiichi Nishio, 42, an office worker from the eastern Japan city of Maebashi, told Kyodo News, “There was this silent sense of belonging. I was amazed to find it happening in a place like this.”

The event was organized by Yu Amemiya, 26, who runs Silent It, a company that plans silent festivals.

Amemiya was inspired by the desire to create affordable public events where people could share the music they love without annoying others with the noise.

For the last two years, Amemiya has been running similar events at campus festivals, public bathhouses and street markets, and also regularly holds silent



PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

festivals at the Sky Circus observatory in Tokyo's Ikebukuro.

Photographs and social media posts featured on the company website show people looking amused and occasionally awk-

ward. One post reads, “It is so strange when you take off your headphones and look around at 100 people going crazy in a silent room.” Anyone attending is told to smile when they make eye

contact with another person, and move as they feel comfortable.

“People should ignore what's going on around them and just let themselves be free,” Amemiya said hopefully.—Kyodo News ■

Australia commemorates 1942 Japanese air raid of Darwin

DARWIN, (Australia) — The northern Australian port city of Darwin commemorated on Monday the lives lost during a World War II Japanese air raid, 76 years ago.

An estimated 250 servicemen and civilians died on Feb. 19, 1942, when the Japanese military carried out two air attacks on the largest population center in northern Australia.

Speaking as the Queen's representative in the Northern Territory, Vicki O'Halloran, the

territory's administrator, said the city of Darwin “suffered the horrific impact of war” the way no other part of Australia did.

“War is a fight for peace. Darwin's people had to fight much harder for peace than anyone else in this country,” she said during a speech at the memorial service.

Just as it did 76 years ago, an air raid siren sounded at 9:58 a.m., marking the precise moment 188 Japanese aircraft flew over Darwin Harbour.

As the siren sounded, two fighter aircraft from the Royal Australian Air Force flew over the memorial service, while members of the Australian Army re-enacted the local response to the bombing, using Howitzer ceremonial guns to “return fire” using blanks.

Chief Minister of the Northern Territory Michael Gunner, the top elected official of the regional government, also took a moment to remember the Japanese troops who died, noting

that Japan is now among Australia's “closest friends.”

“I pay my respects to the family of the 186 Japanese warriors who died here doing their job, just as our warriors died doing theirs,” Gunner said, referring to the total number of Japanese airmen who died during the subsequent bombing raids over northern Australia.

“The people of the Northern Territory honor and guard the sons of Japan who lay at rest in our warm and blue seas.”

Representatives from Japan also participated in the memorial service.

Shichiro Chiba, 64, lost his uncle when a Japanese submarine sank roughly 80 kilometers off the coast, less than one month before the Darwin air raids.

Chiba's uncle, then 27-year-old chief warrant officer Toraichi Inoue, was aboard the I-124 submarine when it was hit by an Australian warship as it tried to torpedo a US Navy fleet oiler.

Also attending the memorial service was Japan's consul general in Sydney, Keizo Takewaka, and several members of the Australian Japanese Association of the Northern Territory.—Kyodo News ■

Japan pro-whaling documentary wins award at London film festival

TOKYO — A 2015 Japanese documentary introducing the voices of Japanese people who support the country's tradition of whaling and dolphin hunting won an award at an international film festival in London last week, its director said on Monday.

Keiko Yagi, who directed “Behind the Cove,” won the Best Director of a Feature Documentary award at the 10-17 February London International Filmmaker Festival.

Her film attempts to rebut the 2010 Oscar-winning US film “The Cove,” which thrust the small Japanese whaling town of Taiji into the international spotlight with bloody scenes of its annual dolphin hunt.

Yagi, who attended the festival, said it was significant her 105-minute film, aimed at ending “misconceptions” about the long-standing Japanese tradition, won an award in London where anti-whaling activists often hold protests.—Kyodo News ■



Members of the Australia Army reenact in Darwin on 19 February 2018 the local response to two Japanese air raids on Darwin, which occurred on the same day in 1942. Roughly 250 civilians and servicemen are estimated to have died in the so-called Bombing of Darwin. PHOTO: KYODO

Wolfsburg coach Schmidt steps down

BERLIN — Head coach Martin Schmidt departed from his job at Wolfsburg with immediate effect, the Bundesliga club confirmed in an official statement on Monday.

After three straight defeats, Wolfsburg coach Schmidt announced his resignation and informed the club bosses.

With his surprising withdrawal, Schmidt wants to give Wolfsburg the chance to improve the sporting situation with a “new impetus through a change on the coaching position”. Besides, he wants to take away the “increasing public pressure”, against his person, from the club. However, the club bosses disagree on Schmidt’s reasons for his resignation but they eventually “agreed to his decision after intense and controversial discus-

sions. Schmidt took the reins at Wolfsburg after the dismissal of former coach Andries Jonker in September 2017. Under Schmidt, the “Wolves” grabbed three wins, five defeats and 11 draws. “Martin Schmidt wants to clear the way for his new head coach. We would have liked to secure our top-flight status with him but we could not dissuade him from his decision,” Wolfsburg’s sporting director Olaf Rebbe said. “We respect his decision although I have to admit that his step disappoints me, also because he was our favorite coach,” Rebbe added. Wolfsburg, who sit on the 14th position with a one-point gap to the drop zone, clash with relegation threatened 15th placed Mainz at the opener of the 24th round in Bundesliga on Friday.—Xinhua ■

Barcelona step up interest in Gremio midfielder Arthur

RIO DE JANEIRO — Barcelona have resumed talks with Gremio in a bid to sign highly rated Brazilian midfielder Arthur Melo, according to media reports on Monday.

The Catalan giants have been negotiating a deal for the 21-year-old since December but Gremio president Romildo Bolzan earlier this month ruled out a move before January 2019.

Bolzan’s comments are said to have given hope to a raft of other interested clubs, including Real Madrid, Manchester City, Chelsea and Monaco.

According to Brazilian newspaper Lance, Barcelona technical director Roberto Fernandez is currently in Brazil to secure a definitive agreement.

“Barcelona believe that Arthur has the same style of play as Xavi and Iniesta,” the newspaper said.

“The Brazilian has the club’s DNA with a style that prioritizes possession football.”

Arthur has attracted some of Europe’s top clubs after an outstanding 2017 season in which he helped Gremio win the Copa Liber-

tadores, South America’s version of the UEFA Champions League. Gremio are understood to have already turned down a bid of 30 million euros (about 36 million US dollars) from Barcelona and another offer from Monaco.

In October, the Brazilian club extended his contract until 2021 and inserted a 50 million-euro buyout clause.

The former Goias youth-team player was rewarded for his impressive form by earning a call-up to Brazil’s national squad for their last 2018 World Cup qualifiers in October.—Xinhua ■

FA expected to act after Aguero tangles with Wigan fans

LONDON — The Football Association are likely to launch an investigation into Wigan and Manchester City after Sergio Aguero was forced to defend himself at the end of a turbulent fifth round FA Cup tie at the DW Stadium.

Will Grigg’s late winning goal saw League One Wigan defeat Pep Guardiola’s Premier League leaders in an ill-tempered game that boiled over on the final whistle.

Wigan supporters invaded the pitch to celebrate at the end of the tie and Aguero, who was shaking the hand of opposing defender Chey Dunkley at the time, became embroiled in an ugly altercation with a number of fans.

Aguero was forced to defend himself as the scene threatened to turn even more violent and City staff had to help shepherd him off the field and to the safety of the dressing room.

“It’s not right,” said Wigan manager Paul Cook. “I haven’t seen the incident so I can’t comment. But players’ safety has to be paramount for everyone.”

City are expected to contact Wigan themselves to demand answers about the lack of protection offered their players at the end, although the FA action may well take that out of their hands.

The trouble was not over there as a number of home fans taunted the City support and, in



Manchester City’s Argentinian striker Sergio Aguero gets involved in a scuffle with Wigan fans. PHOTO: AFP

response, the visitors began to tear at advertising hoardings in front of them.

Police became involved in scuffles with City supporters that continued for several minutes and the FA are certain to review footage, and read referee Anthony Taylor’s report, before contacting the two clubs and deciding whether to issue charges.

The problems were not restricted to off the field matters with City being reduced to 10 men late in the first half following a foul by Fabian Delph on Max

Power which saw Taylor first produce a yellow card before changing it to red.

That will rule Delph out of the Carabao Cup Final with Arsenal on Sunday and City’s anger at Taylor’s decision was evident in its wake, with Aguero arguing with the Wigan bench and Guardiola and opposite number Cook being separated by staff as they engaged in a furious argument in the tunnel at half-time.

- ‘Aggressive opponent’ -

“It’s a red card,” said Guar-

diola, who has been vocal this season after his own players have been the victim of bad fouls that did not produce red cards.

“You want to ask me about football, ask me. Nothing happened in the tunnel.

“He should stay in the position, that’s all. They were a really aggressive opponent.”

The loss of Delph, who is playing at left-back in the absence of long-term injury victim Benjamin Mendy, could prove problematic in this crucial period of the season.

But, contrary to his on-field actions, Guardiola claimed he had no problem with the decision.

“It’s an unnecessary action,” he said. “The referee decides what he decides. I’m not here to judge so it can be a red card. We have to learn from that.”

The stunning upset, a repeat of the 2013 FA Cup Final result, carried Wigan through to a home FA Cup quarter-final meeting with Southampton and ends City’s dream of winning all four competitions this season.

“I didn’t have the feeling that we didn’t try,” said Guardiola. “That would be a worry.

“We’re sad because the FA Cup is a nice competition but football counts what happens in 94 minutes. They deserved to go through.”

The victory, however, was undoubtedly marred by the scenes at the end and the sight of Aguero having to defend himself as he left the field.

Wigan chairman David Sharpe joined the criticism of the pitch invasion by his club’s supporters.

“It is not nice to see, football is emotional — that’s what it is to fans,” he said. “But I don’t like to see this at the end of the game.

“It is a massive result, but we have to stay classy in football, I don’t like what I am seeing here.”—AFP ■