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THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

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Enjoying the Full Moon Day of Tabauung

Children and their parents feed sugarcane to elephants yesterday at the Yangon Zoological Garden, which attracted visitors from many parts of Myanmar yesterday, some of whom were visiting Yangon on the first day of the four-day holiday for civil servants.
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PHOTO: MNA

in
Picture

Room for investors in Thilawa SEZ

Vice President attends ceremony of JFE Steel Corporation factory in Thilawa SEZ

VICE President U Henry Van Thio, Chairman of Myanmar SEZ Central Committee, attended the ground-breaking ceremony of the JFE Steel Corporation factory in the Thilawa Special Economic Zone (SEZ) B yesterday morning.

The factory is the first in the Thilawa SEZ B and will be

a major manufacturer of steel products in Myanmar, where the demand for steel has increased steadily since democratisation in 2011 and is expected to continue to grow. Currently most steel products are imported, but there is a wave of ongoing investments in steel processing and fabrica-

tion, much of it centred on the Thilawa zone, which made yesterday's ceremony all the more important.

At the event, JFE Meranti Myanmar Company Limited CEO Sebastian Langendorf delivered a message of greetings and then explained through a video

presentation the future products of JFE Meranti Myanmar and the factory's operations.

U Henry Van Thio then delivered a message in honour of the company.

"This event is a ground-breaking ceremony for the JFE Steel Corporation factory, the

first investment in Thilawa SEZ B. It is a memorable day in the history of Myanmar's industry. Furthermore, it is a symbol of the development in Myanmar-Japan bilateral cooperation and friendship, and I am happy and honoured."

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'BANK OF THE YEAR IN MYANMAR 2017'

Awarded by Financial Times (The Banker)

Religious Titles conferring ceremony for the year 2018

A CEREMONY to confer religious titles and donation of rice for the year 2018 was held yesterday afternoon at Sasana Maha Beikman in Uppatasanti Pagoda compound, Nay Pyi Taw. The ceremony was attended by President U Htin Kyaw and First Lady Daw Su Su Lwin, and State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi who presented the religious titles, donated rice and offerings.

First, the ceremony to confer religious titles was held and singer Sandar Lin of Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture, Department of Fine Arts sang a song honoring the ceremony accompanied by a Myanmar harp.

Next, President U Htin Kyaw, First Lady Daw Su Su Lwin, State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and guests took the five precepts from State Sangha Maha Nayaka Chairman Abhidhaja Maharattha Guru Abhidhaja Agga Maha Saddhamma Jotika Bhamo Sayadaw Dr. Bhaddanta Kumarabhivamsa.

Afterwards State Ovadacariya Shwekyin Nikaya Chairman, Shwekyin Sasana Sayadaw, Yangon Region Mayangon Township Ward (9) Vizawtayone monastery chief patron Sayadaw Bhaddanta Vizawta who will be conferred the title of Abhidhaja Maharattha Guru delivered an oration followed by Union Minister for Religious Affairs and Culture Thura U Aung Ko who explained about Sasana matters.

Religious titles were then conferred and President U Htin Kyaw presented the Abhidhaja Maharattha Guru title and related accessories to Yangon Region Mayangon Township Ward (9) Vizawtayone monastery chief patron Sayadaw Bhaddanta Vizawta.

This was followed by State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, Vice President U Myint Swe and Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U Win Myint conferring Abhidhaja Maharattha Guru titles and related accessories to Magway Region, In Bat Taw Village, In Bat Taw monastery Sayadaw Bhaddanta Sate Tra Nyana by Union Chief Justice U Htun Htun Oo.

Abhidhaja Agga Maha Saddhamma Jotika title and relat-



President U Htin Kyaw presents Abhidhaja Maha Rahtta Guru title to Sayadaw Bhaddanta Vijota of Vijotayon Monastery. **PHOTO: MNA**



Vice President U Myint Swe presents Abhirahtha Guru title to Sayadaw Bhaddanta Asiina from Nay Pyi Taw Tatkon. **PHOTO: MNA**



Union Chief-Justice U Htun Htun Oo presents Abhidhaja Agga Maha Saddhamma Jotika title to Sayadaw Bhaddanta Tarananna. **PHOTO: MNA**

ed accessories was conferred on Magway Region, Kanma Township, In Bat Taw Village, In Bat Taw monastery Sayadaw Bhaddanta Sate Tra Nyana by Union Chief Justice U Htun Htun Oo.

Tatmadaw Commander-in-Chief Senior General Min Aung Hlaing conferred the Abhidhaja Maharattha Guru title and related accessories to Rakhine State, Sittway Town, Kondan Ward, Saddhamma Guru (Pathein) monastery Sayadaw Bhaddanta Pandita.

Similarly Abhidhaja Agga

Maha Saddhamma Jotika title and accessories was conferred to Shan State, Namhkam Town, Aung Chan Tha Ward, Dekkhinayone monastery Sayadaw Bhaddanta Nanda Sariya by Union Constitutional Tribunal Chairman U Myo Nyunt; Abhidhaja Maharattha Guru title and related accessories was conferred to Sagaing Region, Ye U Town, Bo Aung Zeya Ward, Mogaung monastery Sayadaw Bhaddanta Ottama Nyanar Bhivamsa by Union Election Commission Chairman U Hla Thein and Abhidhaja Agga Maha Sad-



State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi presents Abhidhaja Maha Rahtta Guru title to Sayadaw Bhaddanta Sobana. **PHOTO: MNA**



Speaker U Win Myint presents Abhidhaja Maharattha Guru title to Sayadaw Sudhamma Sara of Moekaung Monastery. **PHOTO: MNA**



Senior General Min Aung Hlaing presents Abhidhaja Maha Rahtta Guru title to Sayadaw Bhaddanta Pandita from Sittway. **PHOTO: MNA**

dhama Jotika title and accessories to Rakhine State Minbya Town, Myoma north monastery Sayadaw Bhaddanta Gawshisa Yamba by Tatmadaw Deputy Commander-in-Chief, Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice Senior General Soe Win.

Amyotha Hluttaw Deputy Speaker U Aye Tha Aung conferred the Abhidhaja Agga Maha Saddhamma Jotika titles and related accessories to Magway Region, Natmauk Town, Aung San Ward, Dipinkaya Pariyatti monastery Sayadaw Bhaddanta Sandavimsa and Mandalay Re-

gion, Pyin Oo Lwin Township, Kyauk Phya Doe Village, Pha Auk Tawya Buddha Sasana Yeiktha monastery Sayadaw Bhaddanta Arseinna while Pyidaungsu Hluttaw's Legal Affairs and Special Cases Assessment Commission Chairman Thura U Shwe Mann conferred the Tipitakadhara Dhammabhandagarika title to Yangon Region, Mingaladon Township, Thingangyungyi model village, Tipitaka Sein Shwe Phu monastery Sayadaw Bhaddanta Einda Sariya.

SEE PAGE-7

Republic of the Union of Myanmar

Message of Greetings sent by President U Htin Kyaw, President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar on the occasion of the Peasants Day Celebrations which falls on 2 March 2018

Dear esteemed peasantry,

Today is a historic and auspicious day which has been designated to honor all the peasants in the country. On this day full of Mingalar and historic significance, I wish to send my message of greetings and good wishes for the health and happiness and blessings for auspiciousness for all the peasantry. In addition I also send good wishes for great success more than ever in their farming work.

In Myanmar, 70 percent of the population is in the rural areas and the main occupation is farming. Although about 30 percent of the GDP derives from the agricultural sector, the socio-economic life of the peasantry is still low. They are facing climate change, natural disasters, other dangers and degradation of the soil due to deforestation. As a consequence, the majority of the farmers suffer decreasing incomes which led to loss of land turning them into landless farmers. Thus their socio-economic life suffered.

During the current period, our Union Government while striving for the emergence of sustainable agricultural production has already laid down (9) goals with a view to uplifting the socio-economic life of people in rural areas and to support the country's economic development by promoting the increased production of agricultural and livestock products capable of competing in the international markets. In addition, we have also laid down (11) goals to ensure food security, nutritional value in food and increased food safety; we worked for farmers to enjoy full rights and better benefits and to encourage local and foreign investments in the agricultural sector.

To realize the above goals, we have laid down (10) policies to expand agricultural and livestock enterprises, to enhance the income of small farmers while increasing production capacity, capacity

to produce safe and nutritious food for consumers, development of agro-based enterprises, increased exports of agricultural products by linking with foreign markets and ensuring sustainable development. We have exerted concerted efforts to obtain the above benefits.

Dear esteemed peasantry,

As the Republic of the Union of Myanmar is a country based on agriculture, a law and regulations to protect peasants' rights and promote their benefits have been formulated and passed; a Steering Committee to protect peasants' rights and promote their benefits headed by the Vice President has been formed. This committee has been working to benefit farmers.

In the past our paddy lands had to rely only on rain. Now job opportunities and income of farmers will increase due to the establishment of irrigated farming methods where double-cropping is now possible whereas in the past they were not sure of having even a single crop. That is why repair and maintenance work has been initiated to ensure that irrigation dams and river water utilization projects could be used effectively for the long run. We have conducted demonstrations and public awareness campaigns to this end. Departments concerned with the cooperation of international organizations are also conducting public awareness campaigns to grow crops and new strains that would be compatible with the changing weather patterns.

Also, we have been providing more and more assistance to owners of small traditional plots to transform into mechanized agriculture by drawing up short-term and long-term projects stage by stage.

Dear esteemed peasantry,

To be able to compete in foreign markets we have been encouraging and promoting efforts to get good prices for

agricultural products in foreign markets and to ensure that farmers producing primary products will get more income. For this we have embarked on a process to export high quality products by building high-level rice and oil mills, high-level purification plants for fruits and modern packing plants.

Also, we have been working systematically for the creation of "Whole-sale Markets" which meet international standards and ensure that our agricultural and fruit products can be sold at competitive prices.

We have also been working hard to improve the cooperative sector by organizing and uniting the strength of small farmers owning small plots, all over the country, by forming agricultural cooperatives. This is to ensure that farmers will get the right to practically participate in all stages, from the planting stage to the stage where they sell their products at the market; and also to ensure that farmers get job opportunities and benefits.

We have also been broadcasting the "Farmers Channel" for maximum outreach. For increasing agricultural production, it is important to ensure that modern farming reach the farmers easily. News relating to improving agricultural production such as news about the weather and market situation on a real-time basis is included. In addition news for farmers for their recreation, entertainment and education are also featured. A Call Center was set up on March 2017 and farmers can get information about farming techniques and ask questions about the challenges they are facing on a real-time basis. In addition, in accordance with the advances in farming techniques, we have been disseminating general knowledge for farmers, farming news from mobile phones, and weather news on a real-time basis. Also, an agricultural and rural development training school

has been established in the Nay Pyi Taw Council area in Zeyarthiri township, in Yezin. Basic Training courses on new village movement are being taught there.

Dear esteemed peasantry,

As the world population has been increasing and as the current population of more than (7000) million will become (9000) million in 2050, we will have to increase the needed food production. The Republic of the Union of Myanmar is also working on all fronts with heightened momentum to not only ensure food security for the country in view of the increase in population in a few years, but to be able to increase the export of agricultural products to international markets.

In the year 2017-2018 our country was able to not only attain food sufficiency but to export (3) million tons of rice. Thus we were able to set a new record for the last 70 years. Thus because of the strenuous efforts exerted by the farmers and the cooperation of responsible departments and the private sector, I wish to put on record and honor all the farmers for being able to export up to (30) million tons of rice.

We are blessed with rich natural resources and marine resources and also have favorable weather in addition to farmers who have pure hearts and work hard. The time is now opportune to work with heightened momentum for the all-round development of the economy, including the agricultural sector. Let us work with the united strength of the farmers for uplifting the socio-economic life of farmers.

As I send this Message of Greetings, as I solemnly urge all of you to work in unity to overcome all challenges, obstacles and difficulties we will have to face, for the long term national interests of all citizens, including farmers all over the country.



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80% of Chindwin river crossing bridge completed

THE Road Department of the Sagaing Region has finished building 80 per cent of the Chindwin river crossing bridge.

To develop villages and towns in the upper Chindwin regions, the Chindwin river crossing bridge (Homalin) is being constructed by Bridge Department, operating under the Ministry of Construction.

The Chindwin river crossing bridge (Homalin) is located on Homalin-Katha-Aungzayar-Tamu road. The bridge will link Homalin Town in the east of Chindwin river to Katha Village in the west. The bridge is 2,762.6 feet long and will have two sections: a one-mile and four-furlong stretch at one end on the Homalin side and a four-furlong bridge at the other end on the Katha Village side.

The bridge is being constructed at a cost of Ks7,200



Chindwin bridge under construction over the Chindwin River in Khamti, Sagaing Region. **PHOTO: SUPPLIED**

million, with fund allotment from the 2016-2017 fiscal year (FY) budget and Ks14,880 million from the 2017-2018 FY budget.

"The construction of the bridge was started on 21 August 2016. So far, 80 per cent

has been completed. Once the bridge is completed, it will contribute to the socio-economic development of the local people living in the Homalin, Katha, Aungzaya and Tamu towns. The bridge will be opened to the public in the first week of April next

year," said an official from the Bridge Department.

With the opening of the bridge, villagers will enjoy a smooth ride on Monywa-Ye U-Thetkalkyin-Phaungpyin-Homalin road.—Win Oo (Zayadine) ■

YCDC to set up incinerator at Dawei Chaung landfill

THE Yangon City Development Committee (YCDC) will set up an incinerator to burn waste at the Dawei Chuang landfill, which is located in East Dagon Township in the Yangon Region, according to a report in Myawady Daily.

The YCDC recently discussed with private companies about jointly implementing the project. The YCDC is

finding it difficult to locate an alternative site to move the waste disposal area from Dawei Chaung. Currently, the garbage is taken to the landfill and sprayed with pesticides, said U Maung Maung Soe, Yangon City Mayor.

The landfill, which is a 104.4-acre plot, is located in ward-1 of East Dagon Myothit Township and ward-50 of North Dagon Myothit Town-

ship.

The landfill is being used since the 2014-2015 fiscal year. It can accept waste weighing more than 800 tonnes from seven townships in the east and north districts, industrial zones and Shwe Dagon Pagoda per day. The YCDC has decided to set up an incinerator to burn waste, as it will have less impact on the environment.—GNLM ■

Myanmar Fisheries Federation to review crossbreeding to control diseases

THE Myanmar Fisheries Federation has called for reviewing the practice of crossbreeding of fish, fowls and swines, according to a report in Myawady Daily.

"Animal products procured through crossbreeding may not be suitable for consumption. Myanmar is vulnerable to swine, fowl and fish diseases. So, a disease from one animal may spread to the others," said Dr. Thet Hmu, vice-chairman of the Myanmar Fisheries Federation.

"It is common to feed fish with the excrement of fowls and swines during crossbreeding, and such fish have less taste and are of a lower quality and may not be safe for consumption. It is also possible that diseases from fowls and swines may spread to people who consume these fish," he added.

"Chicken feeds are mixed with chemicals, and fish that are fed with chicken excrement may also be infected with chemicals, and therefore,

prove unsafe for consumption," he said.

Crossbreeding activities are mostly found on the outskirts of the Yangon and Ayeyawady regions, and people practise crossbreeding for manageable and commercial scales.

Since 2015, the export of animal products procured from crossbreeding has been banned by the World Organisation for Animal Health to ensure consumer safety. —GNLM ■

US cargo plane makes emergency landing at Yangon International Airport

A MC DONNELL Douglas MD-11 F cargo plane made an emergency landing at Yangon International Airport yesterday evening, after a fire alarm went off on board, said a press release of the Ministry of Home Affairs on Thursday.

The aircraft is owned by United Parcel Service Co., Ltd and it was carrying 175.7 tons of Lithium-ion battery. The plane was heading from Hong Kong to United Arab Emirates. Security personnel and firefighters made necessary preparations while the plane was making an emergency landing.

Officials from the Department of Civil Aviation and an official from the Fire Services Department for the airport said they smelled the stench of Lithium-ion battery after they investigated the cause of the incident.

Three crew members including the pilot made a one night stopover at the airport. The plane will leave again for the UAE as scheduled after the aircraft is checked by a team of engineers.—Myanmar Digital News ■

Gov't drafting legislation to protect domestic producers in AEC 2025 plan

May Thet Hnin

THE government will enact laws to protect domestic producers while executing the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) 2025 plans, said U Toe Aung Myint, permanent secretary of the Commerce Ministry.

"Our country, being a developing state, is faced with many challenges. Some of our businessmen are still not ready to compete with regional producers. So, the government will help them compete with other ASEAN businessmen by formulating suitable laws," said U Toe Aung Myint.

AEC will facilitate regional trade liberalisation, which could result in non-competitive import practices, such as "dumping," whereby foreign companies undercut Myanmar's domestic producers by flooding the market with cheap surplus goods, often of inferior quality. To prevent such practices, the government is drafting legislations, such as the safeguard law, intellectual property law and anti-dumping

law, to regulate the quality of import products and protect local producers from price gouging, he added.

The AEC Blueprint 2025 includes efforts to develop small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and e-commerce, promote investment and trade, maintain a good regulatory practice, and develop green economy-based technology.

"The key challenge of AEC 2025 for Myanmar is the lack of capital and technology for SMEs. We need to raise awareness about AEC among the public. An e-commerce law must be formulated for this. The country also needs to develop its stock exchange market," said Daw Saw Kalaya Su, director of the Foreign Economic Relations Department, operating under the Ministry of Planning and Finance.

There are some 23 work plans which the ASEAN member countries will implement by 2025, including the AEC 2025 state action plan for trade in goods, strategic action plan for

services, investment work programme, ASEAN competition action plan, ASEAN strategic plan for consumer protection, ASEAN intellectual property rights action plan, ASEAN Community Statistical System strategic plan, ASEAN work plan for enhancing the global value chain agenda, board directions for customs activities, strategic plan for ASEAN cooperation in food, agriculture and forestry, ASEAN tourism strategic plan and ASEAN minerals cooperation action plan.

Myanmar is implementing these action plans by forming 22 working committees for AEC.

AEC will ensure the free flow of goods, services, investment, capital and skilled labourers, as well as a priority integration sector for food, agriculture and forestry. AEC is a regional economic integration agenda of the ASEAN, which is aiming for a highly competitive economic region, equitable economic development, and a region fully integrated into the global economy. ■



A farmer feeds layers at a farm in central Myanmar. PHOTO: AYE MIN SOE

Livestock farming business worth less than \$5 million won't need ministry's approval

ONLY commercial livestock farming businesses with an investment capital of more than US\$5 million or Ks6 billion need to obtain the approval of the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation under section 100 (b) of the Myanmar Investment Law, according to a recent notification of the Myanmar Investment Commis-

sion (MIC). MIC had given the green light to only those commercial livestock farming and offshore fishing enterprises where businessmen could present the approval of the Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation Ministry.

This relief aims to cut down the work permit processing time of livestock businesses.

Livestock farming is mostly practised in the Magway and Ayeyawady regions. The Commerce Ministry gave its nod to the export of live cattle on 9 October 2017 to combat illegal cattle exports.

The livestock and fisheries sector saw foreign direct investments worth \$23 million this year. — Ko Khant ■

THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

တနင်္ဂနွေနေ့တိုင်း: **"Sunday Special"** အချုပ်ပိုင် (၈) မျက်နှာပါဝင်သော The Global New Light of Myanmar နေ့စဉ်ထုတ် သတင်းစာကိုအောက်ပါမြို့များတွင်ဖုန်းနံပါတ်ဖြင့်



"Sunday Special" အချုပ်ပိုင် (၈) မျက်နှာ ပါဝင်သည်

နေပြည်တော်
ပြန်ကြားရေးဝန်ကြီးဌာန၊ ရုံးအမှတ်(၇) နေပြည်တော်၊ သတင်းနှင့်စာနယ်ဇင်းလုပ်ငန်း (ရုံးချုပ်)၊ စီမံခန့်ခွဲရေးဌာန၊ ဖုန်း - ၀၆၇၄၁၂၁၀၈

နေပြည်တော်
နေပြည်တော်သတင်းစာတိုက် (တပ်ကုန်း)၊ ဝေယျာသီရိမြို့နယ်၊ ခရိုင်လမ်းမ၊ နေပြည်တော်၊ ဖုန်း - ၀၆၇၃၆၁၄၈၊ ၀၆၇၃၆၁၂၉

ရန်ကုန်
The Global New Light of Myanmar သတင်းစာတိုက်၊ အမှတ် ၁၅၀၊ ငါးထပ်ကြီးဘုရားလမ်း၊ ဝဟန်းမြို့နယ်၊ ရန်ကုန်မြို့၊ ဖုန်း - ၀၁၀၆၀၄၅၃၂၊ ၀၉၉၇၄၄၄၂၄၁၁၄

မန္တလေး
လမ်း (၂၀ x ၂၀) ကြား၊ (၁၂ x ၁၃) လမ်းကြား၊ ပုလဲခွေရောင်ရမ်းမန္တလေးမြို့၊ ဖုန်း - ၀၂၃၂၇၂၉၊ ၀၂၃၂၅၈၀

တောင်ကြီး
ရုံးကြီးလမ်း၊ သစ်တောရပ်ကွက်၊ တောင်ကြီးမြို့၊ ဖုန်း - ၀၈၁၂၁၁၆၄၊ ၀၉၅၂၁၄၃၅၇

မကွေး
နတ်မောက်လမ်း၊ တပ်မ (၈၈) တပ်နယ်ရေးအနီး၊ မကွေးမြို့၊ ဖုန်း - ၀၆၃၂၃၇၂၂

ကျိုင်းတုံ
မြို့ပေါ် (၃-၁)၊ အမှတ် (၁) လမ်းသွယ်၊ မြို့ပေါ်လမ်း၊ ကျိုင်းတုံမြို့၊ ဖုန်း - ၀၈၄၂၂၄၉၂

ကလေး
အောင်ဇေယျာရပ်ကွက်၊ မြို့နယ်အားကစားကွင်းအနီး၊ ကလေးမြို့၊ ဖုန်း - ၀၇၃၂၂၁၃၃

မြင်ကြီးမား
အမှတ် (၄၁)၊ ရေရပ်ကွက်၊ အောင်ဆန်းလမ်း၊ မြင်ကြီးမားမြို့၊ ဖုန်း - ၀၇၄၂၂၄၆၂

စစ်တွေ
ရမ္မာဝတီလမ်းနှင့် တက္ကသိုလ်ရိပ်သာလမ်း၊ မိဆက်ကြီးအနီး၊ မန်းကျည်းမြိုင်ရပ်ကွက်၊ စစ်တွေမြို့၊ ဖုန်း - ၀၄၃၂၃၀၆၈

လားရှိုး
ဟူးမွန်ကျေးရွာထိပ်၊ ဟူးမွန်ဆည်ဘယ်ဘက်ခြမ်း၊ (၁၂) ရပ်ကွက်၊ မန်ဆူဘုရားရှေ့၊ အဝေလမ်းမ၊ လားရှိုးမြို့၊ ဖုန်း - ၀၈၂၂၄၀၆၇

ခြောက်
မေတ္တာလမ်း၊ ရှမ်းဆောင်းရပ်၊ ကလွင်ကျေးရွာအုပ်စု၊ ခြောက်မြို့၊ ဖုန်း - ၀၅၉၄၂၁၀၃

မော်လမြိုင်
ကြာအင်းကျေးရွာ၊ မော်လမြိုင်မြို့၊ ဖုန်း - ၀၅၇၂၇၂၅၊ ၀၅၇၂၇၂၆

မုံရွာ
နန္ဒဝန်ရပ်ကွက်၊ ဆက်သွယ်ရေးတံတိုင်းအနီး၊ မုံရွာမြို့၊ ဖုန်း - ၀၇၁၂၆၅၃၅၊ ၀၇၁၂၆၅၃၃

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Commemoration of the 96th anniversary of Pa-O National Day observed



Daw Mar Mar Khaing reads the message during the commemoration of the Pa-O national day in Thaton Township, Mon State. **PHOTO: MYANMAR DIGITAL NEWS**

THE State level commemoration of the 96th Pa-O National Day is being held yesterday at Kyauk Yay Dwin village in Mon State's Paung Township.

The aim of celebrating the national day is not to forget the Pao history, literature, culture and language and to create greater awareness of the progress towards a federal democratic union, Khun Shwe Thin, chairman of Mon State Pa-O Literature and Culture Association, said at the ceremony.

Khun Chit San Win, an organizer of the occasion, explained how the Pa-O National Day occurred.

According to the Pa-O history, people annually commemorated the birth of Pa-O King Suriya Chanda that fell on the Full Moon Day of Tabaung by offering their first collection of crops at the Shwe Sar Yan Pagoda in Thaton that was built by the King who was born 2600 years ago. The

event later changed into National Day, which is an annual event in Shan, Mon and Kayin states and Bago and Yangon regions where the majority of Pa-O people are residing.

During the ceremony, Thaton Township Pyithu Hluttaw representative Daw Mar Mar Khaing read out the message sent by the State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. Members of parliament in Mon State, departmental officers, local residents including Kayin and Mon people attended the occasion where Pa-O dancing groups entertained with traditional dances.

In Kayah State, the commemoration of the Pa-O national day is held in Padar Nyay village in Loikaw Township.

After the official ceremonies, the chief minister of Kayah State donated Ks.one million to spend on the events held on national day. In Kayin State, the State level commemoration is held at

Yay Kyaw Gyi village in Hpa-An Township. The event will be held four days from 27 February to 2 March with sport competitions, Pa-O cultural contests and entertainment.

National day is celebrated at the township and village level across Kayin State. Shan, Mon, Bamar and Kayin people also participated in the celebration of national day.

In Danyingone Village, Kayin State's Hlaing Bwe Township, the ceremony to mark national day was observed with similar official ceremonies. Attendees proudly salute the national flag and Pa-O flag, senior officers read out messages sent by the State Counsellor, Minister for Ethnic affairs, and Kayin State's Prime Minister.

Pa-O students who passed the matriculation exam in the academic year of 2016-2017 were also awarded prizes.—Myanmar Digital News ■

Rakhine Traditional Shite-Thaunghmyaut or sand pagoda festival to be held

RAKHINE traditional Shite-Thaunghmyaut or sand pagoda festival was held many years ago. So, the traditional festival is held in order to preserve the traditional culture. The Rakhine Cultural Association has held the Shite-Thaunghmyaut festival annually.

"The festival is held as a memorial to the ancient Rakhine Kings. People that attended the auspicious event made donations during the festival. The Rakhine traditional Shite-thaunghmyaut festival will be held in a stately style"

said the chairman of Rakhine Culture Association U Kyaw Zan Maung.

The Shite-Thaunghmyaut festival is one of the famous festivals that occur in Tabaung. The festival is held on the full Moon Day of Tabaung. The water level in the rivers and streams goes down so islands of sand emerge from beneath the water. So the sand pagodas on the broad sand banks along the river are built. The sand pagodas are washed away when the tide is high —Myanmar Digital News ■



People participate in the sand pagoda festival held annually. **PHOTO: MYANMAR DIGITAL NEWS**

More visitors come to Kyaiktiyo than last year

THERE are many visitors and tourists who pay homage at the Kyaiktiyo Pagoda on the Full Moon Day of Tabaung according to an administrator from the pagoda.

"We are government staff from Nay Pyi Taw and we came to pay homage to the Kyaiktiyo Pagoda since there are four national holidays. We rushed to have a seat on the car traveling from Kim Moon Camp to Kyaiktiyo Mountain. So ad-

ministrators from the pagoda should arrange transportation for visitors systematically during these holidays" said a staff member from Nay Pyi Taw.

Fare from the Kim Moon Camp to the Kyaiktiyo Mountain is 2000 Ks for one person and there are a total of 150 shuttle buses. This year there were many more visitors who pay homage at the Kyaiktiyo Pagoda than last year. —Myanmar Digital News ■



Kyaiktiyo Pagoda also known as Golden Rock pagoda crowded with pilgrims on the Full Moon Day of Tabaung. **PHOTO: MDN**

Illegal fish farming lakes on farmlands to face action

FARMERS who misuse farmlands to practise fish farming will face legal action under section 20 of the Farmland Law, said U Han Tun, Yangon Region Minister for Agriculture, Livestock, Forest and Energy.

At the sixth regular meeting of the Yangon Region Hluttaw held yesterday, U Hla Toe of Kayan Township constituency (1) raised a question on the action being taken against illegal fish farming lakes on farmlands. Further, he called for the development of exclusive zones for the fishery and livestock sectors.

The Yangon region minister replied that the licence for fish farming, granted under the

Freshwater Fisheries Law, can be revoked at any time if the licensee is found to defy the provisions of the law. Farmlands are designated for growing crops only. However, if farm owners are found digging the land to create fish farming lakes, the authorities will take action against them under section 20 of the Farmland Law, said U Han Tun.

According to statistics provided by the Kayan Fishery Department, some 733 fish farmers in Kayan Township are working commercially on 6,540 acres. Nearly half of them are also engaged in farming. In a bid to enhance fisheries enterprises, the Yangon region government is

implementing a scheme with the Myanmar Fisheries Federation to adopt advanced farming methods. This scheme also includes a feasibility study to create a live-stock research zone in Kayan Township, noted U Han Tun.

Some 30,000-40,000 tonnes of fish from Kayan are sent to Yangon Sanpya market daily. There are five private hatcheries, as well as two hatcheries owned by the fisheries department, in Kayan. These hatcheries produce some 20 million fish larvae.

The licence fee imposed on a fish farming lake is Ks3,000 per acre, with the yearly revenue is valued at some Ks20 million. —GNLM ■

VP attends ceremony of JFE Steel Corporation factory in Thilawa SEZ

FROM PAGE-1

The Vice President added that JFE Meranti is a joint venture company of JFE-Steel, Meranti-Steel, JFE-Shoji, Marubeni-Itochu Steel and Hanwa, and it is an honour that such distinguished business organizations are working together in Myanmar. The company was invited to invest US\$100 million in Thilawa SEZ, Myanmar's leading economic zone.

"Myanmar's economy is rapidly transforming, and I am happy to see JFE Meranti playing a part in it," said the Vice President.

The development of basic infrastructures across all sectors is essential for the rapid development of Myanmar. At the moment, a majority of steel products required for basic infrastructural development are being imported. About 90 per cent of galvanised or coloured steel sheets are currently being imported. Thus, it is believed that steel products produced by JFE Meranti in Thilawa SEZ will fulfil, to a certain degree, the demands for steel in Myanmar, said the Vice President.



Vice President U Henry Van Thio addresses the groundbreaking ceremony of JFE Steel Corporation factory in Thilawa SEZ (B). **PHOTO: MNA**

This ground-breaking ceremony is the first for Thilawa SEZ B, and it is believed that zone B will be as successful as zone A. JFE Meranti is expected to become a successful business that will support the development of Myanmar in all sectors, and Japanese investors are also invited to invest more in Myanmar, said the Vice President.

As part of yesterday's ceremony, the Ambassador of Japan to Myanmar Tateshi Higuchi and Yangon Region Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein delivered speeches of honour.

Later, the foundation laying ceremony was held with Vice President U Henry Van Thio, Union Minister Dr. Than Myint, Region Chief Minister U Phyo

Min Thein, Deputy Minister U Set Aung, Ambassador of Japan to Myanmar Tateshi Higuchi, JFE-Meranti Myanmar Company Limited CEOs and other officials.

JFE Meranti Myanmar Company Limited's JFE Steel Corporation factory will be constructed in 2018, and all the project works will be completed in 2020. Once

the factory is completed, it will provide job opportunities for 300 Myanmar technicians and workers. The factory will annually produce some 180,000 tonnes of galvanised steel and 90,000 tonnes of coloured steel. JFE Meranti is the second largest steel company in Japan and is the top investor in Thilawa SEZ.—Myanmar News Agency ■

Religious Titles conferring ceremony for the year 2018

FROM PAGE-2

Union Ministers, Peace Commission Chairman, Union Attorney General, Union Civil Service Board Chairman, Nay Pyi Taw Council Chairman, Anti-Corruption Commission Chairman, Myanmar National Human Rights Commission Chairman, Central Bank of Myanmar Governor, Chief of General Staff (Army, Navy and Air), Nay Pyi Taw Command Commander, Deputy Ministers then conferred the Agga Maha Pandita; Maha Dhamma Katika Bahujana Hitadhara; Dhamma Kadikha Bahuzana Hitadhaya; Agga Maha Gandtha Vacaka Pandita; Maha Ganda Vasaka Pandita; Ganda Vacaka Pandita; Agga Maha Saddhama Jotikadhaja; Maha Saddhama Jotikadhaja; Saddhama Jotikadhaja; Agga Maha Kammatthana Cariya; Maha Kammatthana Cariya and Kammatthana Cariya titles and related accessories to local and foreign Sayadaws and nuns.

President U Htin Kyaw's wife First Lady Daw Su Su Lwin conferred the Maha Gantha Vacaka Panita title to a nun, the Ganda Vacaka Padita titles to two nuns, Vice President U My-

int Swe's wife Daw Khin Thet Htay conferred the Ganda Vacaka Padita title to a nun, Saddhama Jotikadhaja titles to two nuns and Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U Win Myint's wife Daw Cho Cho conferred the Saddhama Jotikadhaja titles and related accessories to three nuns.

Sasana Nokgaha titles and missionary titles were then conferred where President U Htin Kyaw conferred the Agga Maha Siri Saddhama Mani Jotadhara titles to U Kyaw Win and U Shein Win, Siri Saddhama Mani Jotadhara title and accessories to U Zeya Thuya Mon.

Vice President U Myint Swe conferred the Thiha Saddhama Mani Jotadhara titles to three persons; Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U Win Myint conferred the Thiha Saddhama Mani Jotadhara titles to two men and Saddhama Mani Jotadhara title to a man; Union Chief Justice U Htun Htun Oo conferred the Saddhama Jotadhara titles to three men, Tatmadaw Commander-in-Chief Senior General Min Aung Hlaing conferred the Saddhama Mani Jotadhara titles to three men and Union Constitutional Tribunal Chairman U Myo Nyunt

conferred the Suddhama Mani Jotadhara titles and related accessories to three men.

Union Election Commission Chairman U Hla Thein and Tatmadaw Deputy Commander-in-Chief, Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice Senior General Soe Win conferred the Suddhama Mani Jotadhara titles to three men and two men respectively while Amyotha Hluttaw Deputy Speaker U Aye Tha Aung conferred the Suddhama Mani Jotadhara title to a man and a Maha Saddhama Jotikadhaja title and related accessories to a man.

Next, State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi conferred the Agga Maha Siri Saddhama Singi title to Daw Sandar Win and Thiri Saddhama Singi titles to Daw Shwe U and Daw San San.

First Lady Daw Su Su Lwin conferred the Siri Saddhama Singi titles and related accessories to Daw Khin Yi, Daw Than Than Aye and Daw Htay Htay Thein.

Vice President's wife Daw Khin Thet Htay conferred the Siri Saddhama Singi title to a woman and Thiha Saddhama Singi titles to two women; Py-

ithu Hluttaw Speaker's wife Daw Cho Cho conferred the Siha Saddhama Seingi titles to three women; Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker's wife Daw Nant Kyin Kyi conferred the Thiha Saddhama Singi titles to two women and Saddhama Seingi title to a woman; Tatmadaw Deputy Commander-in-Chief's wife Daw Than Than Nwe conferred the Suddhama Singi titles to three women; Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker's wife Daw Thein Yin conferred the Suddhama Singi titles to three women; Pyidaungsu Hluttaw's Legal Affairs and Special Case Assessment Commission Chairman's wife Daw Khin Lay Thet conferred the Suddhama Singi titles and related accessories to two women.

President U Htin Kyaw and First Lady Daw Su Su Lwin, the State Counsellor and the audience then listened to the sermon of State Sangha Mahanayaka Thanlyin Min Kyaung Pahtamapyan monastery patron Agga Maha Padita Bhaddanta Sandima Bivamsa and shared merit for the donations made.

In the evening a ceremony

to donate rice was held where President U Htin Kyaw and First Lady Daw Su Su Lwin, State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi together with heads, staff and families Office of the of President, Office of the State Counsellor, Union Government Office, Hluttaw, Union Supreme Court, Tatmadaw Commander-in-Chief Office, Union Constitutional Tribunal Office, Union Election Commission Office, Union ministries, Union Attorney General Office, Union Auditor General Office, Union Civil Service Board Office, Central Bank of Myanmar and Nay Pyi Taw Council, Sasana Nokgaha title winners, followers of religious title winner Sayadaws, religious and social organizations from townships in Nay Pyi Taw Council area, companies and donors donated rice and offertories to religious title winner Sayadaws and nuns at the entrance to Up-patasanti Pagoda and along the circuit road.

A total of 199 Sayadaws, 9 nuns, 27 men and 33 women were conferred with religious titles in the ceremony to confer religious titles for the year 2018.—Myanmar News Agency ■

Join hands with peasants to uplift their socio-economic life

TODAY is a historic and auspicious day designated to honour all peasants in the country.

Some 70 per cent of Myanmar's population lives in rural areas, and their main occupation is farming. The government is providing protection to ensure the rights and interests of farmers, interests of farmers and is offering support for the grievances and losses caused by natural disasters, as much as possible.

A majority of the country's peasants have low incomes due to the impact of climate change, natural disasters and other problems such as deforestation and faulty soil management practices.

Therefore, for the development of the agricultural sector, we need to formulate sound policies and strive hard to implement them for the advancement of the socio-economic life of the peasantry.

A majority of the country's peasants have low incomes due to the impact of climate change, natural disasters and other problems such as deforestation and faulty soil management practices.

To increase agricultural production, we must assist them in growing multiple crops on their farmlands. We must be ready to supply irrigation water to farmlands that rely solely on rainwater. The union government has already permitted peasants to grow crops that are compatible with their regions.

We must speed up collaboration with local and foreign organisations to educate peasants on how to grow crops that thrive in specific regions, crop patterns and farming methods.

Meanwhile, the government is seriously prioritising the task of transferring land back to farmers as agriculture is their life and hope.

The government has adopted policies and work programmes to re-transfer unused land to their original owners soon.

We have been undertaking maintenance and repair projects to utilise river water and irrigation dams, holding demonstration classes on how to use water effectively, developing mechanised farming systematically, producing good quality seeds for effective utilisation, implementing projects on a wide scale, producing high quality export produce, preventing contamination and losses due to late harvesting, and providing technical skills and know-how.

Today, our peasants, who are still among the country's poorest, are benefiting from the rapid proliferation of mobile phones in the world.

The World Bank designated Myanmar as having "the most favourable agricultural conditions in all of Asia," as mobile phone applications are revolutionising the agriculture industry here.

The agri-mobile apps will widely impact the agro industry of Myanmar and will boost production and farm income.

Farmers in rural areas can get up-to-date information, including about crop prices in markets and weather reports, on their mobiles.

Mobile technology has the potential to bring about a rapid development in the agricultural sector.

This is also an opportunity to uplift the socio-economic life of the farmers.

Today on Peasants' Day, the Global New Light of Myanmar would like to urge the people to join hands with the farmers to overcome challenges that lie ahead. ■

The last month of the 12 month Lunar Calendar of Myanmar called Tabaung roughly corresponds to March. It has four gazetted commemorative days — two religious days of great importance and two political days of great national importance. Firstly 2nd day of March is the Peasants' Day to commemorate the event of nation-wide Myanmar peasants' risings [Revation] against the British Colonial Rule in the 1929-30s. Led by Saya San a radical member of General Council of Buddhist [Burmese] Association, the leading headspear of that time of Myanmar's struggle for Freedom from foreign rule. The Peasants, the workers, and the students were mass forces, behind them stand the entire Myanmar people. Though Saya San was not a peasant he was hailed from the areas where Myanmar cultivators, were suffering untold havoc wrought by the foreign capitalists under the British Colonial Rule. So he led that uprisings which grew into Myanmar Peasant Revolution.

THE choice of the 2nd Day of March to commemorate Myanmar Peasants, Revolution was not historically right though creating that commemorative day of Myanmar Peasants' Day was historically right and significant.

It was General Ney Win of Myanmar Armed Forces who staged a successful military coup on 2nd March 1962 "to tame-ly save Myanmar Union from disintegration". He set up an interim government called the Revolutionary Council led by him while finding a new type of Government with a new political system with a new constitution that would never cause the breakup of the Union.

To commemorate the event of his military coup on 2nd March 1962 he designated that date as Myanmar's Peasants Day. It was not the day and date of Peasants' uprisings or revolution. But it is historically right and import and that General Ney Win named the day and date of his military coup as Peasants' Day. We have already accepted May Day, International Workers' Day as Myanmar Worker' Day. Thakhin Pho Hla Gyi led the oilfields' Workers' Strike of 1938 and made a long march of protest against the British and the foreign owners of oilfields in Upper Myanmar. There was no commemorative day marked for Myanmar Peasants' risings or revolution. Hence General Ney Win marked the day and date of his military coup as Myanmar Peasants' Day, historically right.

The background history of Myanmar Peasants' Revolution needs to be retold for the new generations of Myanmar and for the reminiscence of the old and Middle Ages.

Myanmar is and has always been an agricultural country, growing all kinds of grain paddy, wheat, millet, barley, crops, fruits, vegetable for men and animal producing more than enough for home consumption as well as export. Long history of exports of agricultural products by Myanmar traders by sea and across border can be found in all legends of Myanmar ethnic peoples.

One of the major reasons of the British annexing Myanmar to the British India Empire was

to take hold of Myanmar agriculture. In the 19th century, with the opening of the Suez Canal, the export of Myanmar agricultural products abroad boomed. The British capitalists and their under dogs Indian money lenders called cheteers exploited Myanmar agriculturists to the utmost.

In the year 1929 the great economic depression came about first in Wall Street in America, then it spread like a wild fire reaching Myanmar. All the economic benefits of the years before and during the World War I were dashed to the grown. While prices of agricultural products at home and abroad went down to the flat floor, those of industrial products rocketted sky high. Myanmar land owners were bankrupt, Myanmar peasants were destituted. Heaps of agricultural products remained unsold. Being unable to return debt of money borrowed at great interest from Indian money lender cheteers, their lands, houses, farm cattle were confiscated. The British Colonial Government was unable to tackle that deteriorating economic situation of the time. It turned a deaf ear to it.

Senior member of G.C.B.A [General Council of Burma Association] Saya San was sent by to look into the matter and report his findings. Saya San was a native of Thayawaddy District, so he visited that district to get the first-hand knowledge of the war Suring economic conditions of Myanmar peasants. To his great alarm he witnessed the desperate conditions of Myanmar peasants. He submitted to the G.C.B.A and his proposal for armed uprisings against the British Rule. As G.C.B.A was taking only delaying tactics, Saya San right away started armed up-risings.

In Myanmar tradition the mythical bird garuda was a mighty winged creature that can destroy any enemy even elephant can be taken away and eaten by it. Naga or great snake always falls prey to the garuda. The British or all alien exploiters are traditional designed and represented by Naga snakes. So to defeat Nagas or the foreign exploiters, Saya San assumed himself as Garuda Saya San [Galone Saya San] and

By Maha Saddhamma Jotikadhaja,
Sithu Dr. Khin Maung Nyunt



Photo: GNLM/Phoe Khwar

began armed risings against the British Authorities. Saya San was also an alchemist. Alchemy has three categories. The first is the science of compounding a mercury ball [philosopher's stone] by which all base metals can be converted to gold. The second is ayusotta a panacea to cure all diseases and to get longevity of life. The third is to make an amulet to keep you immune from all dangers and all attacks by all arms. It was said Saya San possessed that amulet kept hidden on his body.

In day light Saya San and his followers attacked police outposts, army patrols and even the residence of British Township Officers. Though they killed the British and their soldiers

and burnt down their buildings, not a single bullet hit ether Saya San or any of his followers. Saya San moved about incognito raising uprisings from one place to another. The British Colonial Government thought that Saya San uprisings were only a storm in the tea cup was soon alarmed to the point of bringing in well trained with morden weapons Sepoys Indian soldiers from India. In Mandalay, in the Temple of Maha Muni Image. Saya San was seen praying and taking vows. But when the British soldiers came in to capture him, he disappeared into their air he became invincible by the megal power of the emulet he was wearing on his body so reported in the media for

nearly 2 and a half years Saya San rebellion was wide spread and well known at home and abroad. Finally in the remote village in Shan States, one of his followers betrayed him by stealing the protective amulet from his body as he the great prize of money from the British. His trial lasted very long many media men from across the world came to witness the proceedings of the trial. Saya San refused to wear the uniform of the prisoner. He denied the charges of betrayal or rebellion against State. He insisted he was working for the liberation of peasants from the economic woes under the alien rule. He was right in doing for the welfare of the peasants. When on

the very moment of hanging him, it is said that "he yells out" Never give up to liberate your country from foreign enemies. It is Garuda, the Galone that wins Naga the snake.

During his hideouts in the district of Thayawaddy Saya San assumed the regal title of Supanaka Garuda Rajah and he was ceremonially enthroned King of Myanmar the majority of Myanmar people of that time recognized him as a successor of Konebaung dynasty after King Thibaw.

Though Saya San was hanged and no more the consequences of his rebellion were far reaching. The spirit of patriotism did not burn out but remained flickering only to blow up at any opportune moment. ■

Local EU Statement on ending illegal wildlife trade

THE European Union (EU) Delegation issues the following statement in agreement with the EU Heads of Mission in Myanmar:

On the occasion of World Wildlife Day today, we, the undersigned Ambassadors of the European Union and its Member States, wish to congratulate the Government of Myanmar for the initiatives taken to protect the magnificent natural heritage of this country, including initiatives aimed at the conservation of endangered wildlife.

Wildlife trafficking has become one of the most profitable criminal activities worldwide, with devastating effects for biodiversity, and very damaging impact on sustainable development and poverty eradication, as well as the rule of law due to its close links with corruption.

Ending wildlife trafficking is a shared responsibility, and we must all take concrete action. Since 2016, the European Union (EU) and its Member States have ramped up their actions for strengthening the EU's role in the global fight against these illegal activities through greater enforcement of our comprehensive legal framework, better cooperation, and more effective prevention.

As mentioned above, the Government of Myanmar is also acting and has taken a range of initiatives which include the strengthening of the Biodiversity and Protected Areas Law, the establishment of more than 40 protected areas, the development of action plans for elephants and tigers, the training and deployment of rangers, and the ongoing wildlife training for Government staff on illegal wildlife. These steps are commendable and the European Union and its Member States are proud to have supported some of these efforts through provision of technical support and capacity building activities for example.

However, elephant poaching for ivory and other parts is still a huge challenge globally with Myanmar facing an unprecedented elephant skinning crisis which threatens to wipe out its wild elephant population in a matter of years.

Therefore, we would also like to take this opportunity to urge the Government of Myanmar to strengthen efforts to tackle this crisis. In particular, we would recommend that the Government of Myanmar ends the open sale of elephant and other illegal wildlife parts, which today are widely sold in markets in Yangon, Mandalay, Kyeikhteeyoe and along Myanmar's borders. As long as these markets continue to sell illegal wildlife products, Myanmar's wildlife is at risk, and Myanmar's position as a global and regional illegal wildlife trade hub will continue and grow as other countries in the region close their domestic markets. China ended its domestic ivory market from January this year and Hong Kong has also committed to ban ivory trading.

Concrete action, such as developing a more robust legal framework in line with global standards – and ensuring its effective enforcement – would send a clear message that Myanmar has a zero-tolerance approach to wildlife crime.

We encourage the Government of Myanmar to take action now so that Myanmar can attend the 2018 London Conference on Illegal Wildlife Trade in October, not only ready to renew its commitments to the 2014 London Declaration on the Illegal Wildlife Trade, but also to take up its place as a regional leader in the fight against the illegal wildlife trade.—European Union (EU) ■

Buddha Pujaniya Tabaung Festival celebrated at pagodas

THE Shwedagon, Sule, Botahtaung and Shwe Phone Pwint pagodas in Yangon were packed with pilgrims gathered to celebrate the Buddha Pujaniya Festival on the full moon of Tabaung yesterday.

Thousands of devotees thronged Shwedagon Pagoda to celebrate the 2,606th Buddha Pujaniya Tabaung Festival of the pagoda yesterday morning.

During the merit-sharing ceremony of the festival, the con-

gregation received nine precepts from State Ovadacariya Sayadaw Agga Maha Pandita Agga Maha Sadamajadikadaza Abhidhaja Maha Rattha Guru Bhaddanta Gunaysana and offered provisions to members of the Sangha.

Likewise, the Botahtaung Kyaikdaeat SandawU Pagoda in Seikkan Township, Shwe Phone Pwint Pagoda in Pazudaung Township, Thiri Mingala Kaba-Aye Pagoda, Kyaik-waing and Tooth Relic (Yangon) pagoda in

Mayangon Township, Lawka Chantha Abaya Labamuni Pagoda in Insein Township and Kyaukkasan Pagoda in Thingangyun Township were crowded with pilgrims on the full moon day. —Ko Ko Zaw ■

Use the long holiday weekend fully

By Min Myo

ON this long holiday weekend, many are visiting, travelling, or making pilgrimages. The following are quotes from workers in Nay Pyi Taw who are trying to use the time off to enjoy themselves.

Ko Arkar Ko Ko, Nay Pyi Taw Kyae Sin Hein bus line

Our bus line plies to Yangon, Monywa and Lashio. In Nay Pyi Taw, all bus tickets were sold out since yesterday evening. Today too, all tickets were sold out earlier in the day. Nay Pyi Taw is considered as office workers' town. As there are four consecutive holidays this week, most office workers return to their hometowns. Some were seen going off on a trip with families and friends. That is why sales of bus tickets are high. Tickets in other bus lines and bus gates were also heard to be sold out completely. There is quite a number of travellers this week.

Daw Yu Yu Mon, Union Election Commission Office

Now is the time when there are four days holiday, and I'll go back to Yangon. My parents and relatives are in Yangon. It is a happy time, as we can visit our parents and relatives while having a relaxing time. Staffs from other ministries are also returning to their hometowns. There are some who couldn't return because they were on duty. I planned to go since last night, but couldn't get a bus ticket so I'm going back this morning. For those who couldn't go back to their hometown for any reason can enjoy the Tabaung festival held here. All can enjoy this during the holiday. Some didn't return to their hometown because they want to enjoy this festival here. I'll have a great time with my parents and other family members during this four-day holiday.



Ko Arkar Ko Ko.



Daw Yu Yu Mon.



Daw Nwe Yin Tun.



Ma Hla Yin Aye.



Ko Kyaw Thet Naing Tun.



Ma Wei Yi Phu.

them and to take care of them. I hope there are more such long holidays. This is my wish.

Ma Hla Yin Aye, Myanma Gems Enterprise

I didn't make it back to my parents this four-day holiday. I'm going on a pilgrimage to pagodas in Nay Pyi Taw, Pyinmana and Lewe with friends. We have paid homage to Shwe Let Hla Pagoda and Uppatasanti Pagoda today. We are having a relaxed time with friends and enjoying the foods. We'll gain new knowledge. It is an enjoyable time. Winding down the tensions of work while gaining new knowledge. We'll continue this in the coming days too. On Sunday, we'll prepare to go back to work the next day while relaxing at home. We'll read books. Some friends return to their parents. Seeing my friends having an easy time made the tension and fatigue from work go away.

Ko Kyaw Thet Naing Tun, University of Veterinary Science, Yezin

I'm paying homage to Uppatasanti Pagoda with friends while we have a four-day holiday. We are a group of ten friends. We are doing research works in the university so we are not free to go back to our parents. So on this religious holiday, I urge all to spend time with friends or families to pay homage to pagoda or go on a trip.

Ma Wei Yi Phu, University of Veterinary Science, Yezin

Today is the full-moon day of Tabaung. As it is a school holiday, I come on a pilgrimage to the pagoda with friends. We are doing research in the university. So we are unable to go anywhere. Now that there is a four-day school holiday, it is good to go on a trip with friends. We will gain some knowledge while having a great time with friends. I would like to urge all to use the long holiday fully. ■



People preparing to ride express for enjoying their holiday weekend. PHOTO: ZAW THU

Daw Nwe Yin Tun, Ministry of Electricity and Energy

I'm going back to my father and mother in Yangon during this four-day holiday. But it was quite

hard to get a bus ticket, so I'm going back only this morning. Taking into consideration the time I need to return, I can stay in Yangon for two days only. Anyway, it is great to have a four-day holiday.

It is great to go back and meet with parents and relatives even for a short time. As my parents are quite old, they could not stay with me in Nay Pyi Taw. So it is a good chance for me to be with

Enjoying Full Moon Day of Tabaung



Shwedagon Pagoda is crowded with people yesterday on the Full Moon Day of Tabaung. **PHOTO: ZAW GYI**



Shwedagon Pagoda is crowded with people yesterday on the Full Moon Day of Tabaung. **PHOTO: ZAW GYI**



People visit the Yangon Zoological Garden. **PHOTO: ZAW GYI**



People wait buses to visit places outside Yangon.



People enjoy a game at Yangon Zoological Garden. **PHOTO: ZAW GYI**

YESTERDAY was the Full Moon Day of Tabaung, a time when pagodas nationwide and recreation places become crowded with Buddhist devotees.

Children along with their parents feed sugarcane to elephants at the Yangon Zoological Garden, which attracted visitors from many parts of Myanmar yesterday, the beginning day of the four-day holiday for civil servants.

"This is my first visit to the Yangon zoo. I want to visit the zoo again next year," said Maung Win Aung, who completed his 9th

grade examinations recently in Myingyan, central Myanmar. For him, feeding the elephants was the favourite part of his visit to the zoo. People enjoy watching the skills of the elephants as they kick the ball into the net, the performances of tamed monkeys and bears, magic shows and a snake show.

"I have shown my performance with poisonous snakes for about 30 years. I am delighted to perform for people across the country," said snake handler and performer U Sein Tin.

"I usually make the pilgrim-

age to the pagodas in Yangon during the Tabaung holidays. I visited the Botahtaung pagoda, the Kyaik Wine pagoda and the Mei Lamu pagoda in the morning and I plan to go to the great Shwedagon pagoda in the late afternoon. Afterwards, I will take my children to the amusement park to have a wonderful time together," said Daw Myint Myint Htay of Nyaungdon Township.

But many residents of Yangon said they prefer visiting places outside Yangon.

"As for me, I didn't go to other places because I need to

buy something near the Sule Pagoda. I have made a plan to meet my old friends at Maha Bandoolla Park. Before my office is reopened, I've planned to go on a day trip somewhere," said Ko Thiha Aung, of Kamayut Township.

"I planned to go to Kawthaung, but I had to rearrange my travelling because it is difficult to buy tickets during the festival. I have visited Chaungtha beach twice, but now I want to go to Ngapali beach, if possible," said Ma Soe Yu Khaing, of Mingalar Taungnyunt Township.

"I will make a visit to Bagan-Nyaung Oo and the Shwe Sat Taw pagoda to observe Myanmar's traditional heritage. In order to spend time with my family, I have chosen to go there this year," said Ko Aung Win, of Sanchaung Township.

"During the public holidays, most people go to the Ngwe Saung and the Chaungtha beach. As far as I know, people from Yangon prefer to go to the Kyaikhteeyoe pagoda. There are many people who will visit Mandalay, Pyin-Oo-Lwin and Bagan," said Ko Phone, a driver.—GNLM

Fifth batch of youth volunteers arrives in Sittway

THE fifth group of Union Enterprise for Humanitarian Assistance, Resettlement and Development in Rakhine (UEHRD) youth volunteers, who arrived in Sittway, was welcomed by officials yesterday morning.

“Our group included 47 youth volunteers and six staff from our department, who will supervise the youth volunteers. We will go to Buthidaung and Maungtau tomorrow. I will lead a group to Maungtau. Volunteers in this batch are from charitable organisations, social organisations and the Red Cross Society. We have already provided training to them. Our departmental staff will also supervise them on the ground. Youth volunteers across the nation are invited to

join our volunteer programme,” said Ko Than Htun Aung from the Department of Disaster Management. “I am in the group representing Lu-Ye Chun group (outstanding student group). My purpose of participating in the group is to assess the real situation in Rakhine, because I feel our country is wrongly blamed by the world. After I see the real situation, I can reveal the truth,” said Ma Aung Thein Than Htay from Lu-Ye Chun group.

The fifth group of youth volunteers will leave for Buthidaung by an express vessel this morning and will conduct field assistance programmes in the villages of the region from 3 to 12 March. —Han Linn Naing (Sittway Sub-printing House) ■



UEHRD youth volunteers across the nation arrive Sittway. **PHOTO: HAN LINN NAING (SITTWAY SUB-PRINTING HOUSE)**

MIC approves nine foreign, local investments

THE Myanmar Investment Commission (MIC) has decided to issue four investment permits and five endorsements in relation to investment proposals, according to an MIC meeting 3/2018, which was held on 27 February. The MIC approved two local investments and two joint venture investments, including businesses in wheat distribution, communication services and the construction of oil and gas jetties for importation, distribution and storage. U Kyu faily Company Limited will invest in the wheat distribution business in Yangon Thilawa Special Economic

Zone, while Fortune Telecom Company Limited will invest in communication services in the Taninthayi, Bago and Magway regions, and Nay Pyi Taw, Kayin and Mon states.

As joint venture investments, Apex Union Gas Co. Ltd. and KMA SIAM Limited will invest in two oil and gas jetties in Yangon Thilawa Special Economic Zone. Currently, 60 per cent of the investments are made in the Yangon Region, while 30 per cent of the investments are in the Mandalay Region. The remaining investments are spread across other States and Regions.—Zwe ■

Rice and foodstuff airlifted to Putao, Kachin State

TATMADAW helicopters transported rice and other foodstuff to Putao from Nanpong Air Base, Myitkyina, on 28 February and 1 March.

Tatmadaw soldiers, departmental officials and staff from the Fire Service Department aided the transportation of 257 bags of rice on 28 February, and 303 bags of rice, 10 buckets of cooking oil, five sacks of onions, four bags of garlic, 10 packets of dried noodles, one bag of beans and other foodstuff on 1 March at Nanpong Air Base, Myitkyina.

Officials and staff from the General Administration Department, Fire Service Department, Myanmar Police Force and the Tatmadaw in Putao received the



rice and foodstuff at Putao Airport. So far, a total of 560 bags of rice, 100 vises of cooking oil

and other foodstuff have already been transported to Putao.—State IPRD ■

Ministry of Labour to issue smart ID cards

THE Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population is making arrangements to issue smart ID cards for citizens this year, according to a report in Myawady Daily yesterday. “The government has approved this process. We will form committees to assign them their duties. There is a lot of work to be done,” said U

Mint Kyain, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population.

If we can change the conventional citizenship scrutiny cards to smart cards, we will be able to collect biographic data and biometric data and build a national database. Also, we will be able to share information with minis-

tries that deliver services to the people. It will facilitate an easy e-movement system, he added.

The Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population has held more than 60 rounds of discussions with international agencies, including the World Bank, to change the smart ID cards.—GNLM ■

Contract signed to buy steel truss for Kin Chaung Bridge

THE signing ceremony of contract for services and supply of steel truss for Kin Chaung Bridge between Ministry of Construction and MCE GmbH, Austria was held at the meet-

ing hall of the Ministry of Construction on 28 February. Deputy Minister for Construction U Kyaw Lin, Permanent Secretary U Win Tint, Deputy Directors-General and officials from

Austria-based MCE GmbH attended the ceremony. During the ceremony, U Kyaw Lin and CEO of MCE GmbH Dr. Dieter Reitz delivered the opening speech.—Myanmar News Agency ■



The ceremony to sign the contract between Ministry of Construction and MCE GmbH, Austria held in Nay Pyi Taw on 28 February. **PHOTO: MNA**

Antarctica: a laboratory for climate change

ILE DU ROI-GEORGE, ANTARCTIQUE—A decade ago, a thick layer of ice covered the Collins Glacier on Antarctica's King George Island.

Now, the rocky landscape is visible to the naked eye, in a region that is both a victim of and a laboratory for climate change.

"I had the opportunity to come here over a 15-year period, and even within a human's lifetime, you can already see the changes brought about by climate change," the director of the Chilean Antarctic Institute (INACH), Marcelo Leppe, told AFP.

Observers can now see “rocks that we weren’t seeing five or 10 years ago, and that is direct evidence of the shrinking of these glaciers and loss of mass,” he said.

But even as these melting glaciers worry the scientific world, the presence in Antarctica of

plants proving resistant to extreme conditions has also sparked hope for a warming planet.

Chile is one of some 20 countries with scientific bases on the cold continent. Its Professor Julio Escudero complex on King George Island is where dozens of researchers are measuring the effects of climate change on native flora and fauna.

“We need to quantify the change to predict what could happen in the near future,” Leppe said.

Blooming algae

Measurements taken last year by Chilean scientists on Doumer Island in Antarctica's Palmer Archipelago showed water temperature had risen to 2.5 degrees Celsius (36.5 degrees Fahrenheit), up from its normal range of between 0 and 1.5 degrees. And at a depth of 40 meters (130 feet), it was

A large colony of penguins, likely King penguins, is gathered on a grassy, rocky hillside. In the foreground, a penguin stands with its mouth wide open, as if calling or singing. To its right, another penguin sits with its back to the camera. The hillside is covered in green grass and small rocks. In the background, more penguins are scattered across the slope, and the ocean is visible under a cloudy sky.

A colony of young Gentoo penguins seen on Ardley Island, Antarctica, are among the many species being studied by scientists from Chile. **PHOTO: AFP**

still at 2.0 degrees.

The warming waters have attracted species previously unseen in the Antarctic, such as a spider crab normally found south of Chile.

There is also a bloom-

ing of green algae which is vital for the local ecosystem, especially for crustaceans.

“Even though they’re really small, the algae and the micro-algae are really important for balance in

the food chain,” said Nelson Valdivia, a professor at Austral University of Chile.

“They supply nutrients to the rest of the ecosystem, and we know that the number of species

in the same ecosystem is a very important factor in terms of it remaining in good health.”

But over a longer term, this flourishing of algae could unsettle the ecological balance.

The worry is “losing species that we don’t even yet know exist,” Valdivia said.

Scientists also fear the effect of warmer temperatures on the rest of the world.

According to NASA monitoring, between 2002 and 2016, Antarctica lost 125 gigatonnes of ice per year, causing sea levels worldwide to rise by 0.35 millimeters annually.

Antarctica holds 62 per cent of the planet's freshwater reserves, so the melting there could have far-reaching consequences, not least by diminishing the salinity of the seas, which could prove fatal for many marine species.—AFP ■

Death toll in Egypt's train crash rises to 15

CAIRO — The death toll of the train crash that took place in Beheira province northern the capital Cairo on Wednesday has risen to 15, official MENA news agency reported. “The number of victims of Beheira train crash mounted to 15 dead and 40 wounded so far,” MENA quoted Transport Ministry’s spokesman Mohamed Ezz as saying. Transport Minister Hesham Arafat hurried to the accident place to follow up the developments, according to the Egyptian state TV. Beheira security chief Alaa El-Din Abdel-Fattah explained earlier on Wednesday that the accident took place as two cabins derailed from a passenger train and hit a cargo train in Kom Hamada district of Beheira.

Health Ministry's spokesman Khaled Megahed said that more than 30



Photo taken on 28 February 2018 shows a train crash accident site in Beheira province, north of Egypt's capital city Cairo. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

ambulances have rushed to the crash scene to move the wounded people to nearby hospitals. "They raised alert to utmost degree in the province's hospitals of Damanhour, Wady al-Natroun and Kafr al-Dawwar to receive any cases," Megahed said in the statement. Egypt's public prosecutor assigned an engineering committee

to find out the reasons behind the crash.

Egypt witnessed a number of deadly train accidents over the past few years in which hundreds were killed and wounded. Last August, the collision of two trains in the coastal province of Alexandria northern Cairo left at least 49 dead and more than 100 injured.—Xinhua ■

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V RAINBOW ANGEL VOY. NO. (24)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V RAINBOW ANGEL VOY. NO. (24) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 2-3-2018 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.

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Dated 23.3.2018

How young Guillermo became monster-mad director Del Toro

CALIFORNIA — Long before he was the celebrated director of fantasy romance “The Shape of Water,” this year’s top Oscar contender with 13 nominations, Guillermo del Toro was fascinated with monsters and the movies.

Teachers in his hometown, Guadalajara, Mexico, remember him coming to class with giant cockroaches, and friends recall helping him shoot his first movie at their school — an eight-millimeter short film featuring a gelatinous monster.

Those who knew him before he was Guillermo del Toro, the award-winning filmmaker, remember him as just Guillermo — an affable teenager with a love of strange creatures, a soft spot for misfits and explosive creativity.

“You could already see his imagination, his fantastical way of interpreting reality, in the

short films he was making as a teenager,” says Anne Marie Meier, a Swiss film critic who met Del Toro when he was 16 and taking a screenwriting workshop that she taught.

“He was passionate about insects,” she says with a laugh.

“He had a competition going with the other kids to see who could find the biggest cockroach in Guadalajara. He would show up to class saying, ‘I’ve got one that’s seven centimeters!’”

Meier, who lives in Guadalajara, also remembers Del Toro as a voracious consumer of popular culture.

“He loved to play with whatever caught his interest. He feasted on culture, read comics, drew graphic novels and went to the movies all the time,” she says.

First films

“The Shape of Water,” set



Del Toro has already won several awards for “The Shape of Water” including the top prize from the Directors Guild of America in early February. **PHOTO: AFP**

during the Cold War, tells the story of a mute cleaning woman who falls in love with a strange amphibious monster held captive at the top-secret US government research facility where she works.

Adored by critics, it is up for several of the top prizes at Sunday’s Oscars, including best picture, best director and best actress. Del Toro has come a long way — yet in some ways not far at all from his first teenage films, says photographer Mariano Aparicio, who helped the director make his first movies.

Aparicio has fond memories of their first effort: a short called “Nightmare,” which they made when they were 17.

“There were no video cameras then. We had a Super 8,” he tells AFP.

“It was pure silliness. It was a lot of fun though. The movie was about a gelatinous monster that comes out of the toilets and starts running around our school.”

They filmed the movie together, taking turns with the

camera, he says. But the script was Del Toro’s.

“You had to send the film to the United States to be developed. It was an agonizingly long wait. Then you edited it with a special cutter and glued it together,” says Aparicio.

After “Nightmare” (parts one and two), Del Toro made “Matilde,” a horror movie filmed at his grandmother’s house.

It bore many of his future trademarks, blending the supernatural with the religious imagery he grew up with in his devoutly Catholic household.

Del Toro’s mother, Guadalupe, played the lead — a wheelchair-bound woman who gets swallowed up by an ominous crack in her wall.

His mother also appeared in one of his first professional films, “Geometria” (1987), which featured his father, as well.—AFP ■

Spotify files to go public, eyeing streaming growth despite losses

NEW YORK — Spotify on Wednesday announced a long-awaited public listing, voicing confidence that its streaming model will keep reshaping the music industry but acknowledging that the company has yet to turn a profit. In its filing with US regulators, the Swedish platform that over the course of a decade has helped make streaming the most popular way to listen to music in parts of the world estimated the company’s value to be as much as \$23.4 billion.

In an unusual move, Spotify said it would list existing shares directly on the New York Stock Exchange rather than issue new shares, allowing its founders and investors to maintain control and avoiding the cost of hiring Wall Street underwriters.

The filing said that Spotify had 159 million monthly users including 71 million paying subscribers — twice that of closest rival Apple Music, which the tech giant launched in 2015 to win a slice of the growing streaming market.

“While streaming has changed the way many people access music, we believe there is an untapped global audience with significant growth potential,” Spotify’s 35-year-old CEO and co-founder Daniel Ek said in a

statement. Ek cited the model of Facebook, which has about two billion users, and YouTube as proof internet companies can reach “global scale.” The streaming service is available in 61 countries or territories and has room to expand even in mature markets, Ek said, citing data showing the average American listens to music for 32 hours each week. Spotify in its filing said that the share listing could be worth \$1 billion but cautioned that it was only offering the number informationally to meet regulatory rules.

A better way’ for music business

The papers filed with the

Securities and Exchange Commission offered the most detailed look yet at the finances of Spotify. The company said that revenue jumped by more than 38 per cent in 2017 from a year earlier to 4.09 billion euros (\$4.99 billion). But the eye-popping rise of Spotify has yet to translate into a stable bottom line. The company said its net loss widened sharply last year to 1.24 billion euros (\$1.51 billion). “We have incurred significant operating losses in the past, and we may not be able to generate sufficient revenue to be profitable, or to generate positive cash flow on a sustained basis,” the company said as it listed the risk factors.—AFP ■



Spotify has disrupted the music industry with its streaming service, and despite still losing money is seeking a cash infusion from stock market investors based on its strong growth rates. **PHOTO: AFP**

Keith Richards sorry for recommending Jagger vasectomy



Keith Richards (right) apologized to his bandmate Mick Jagger (left) after the guitarist suggested that the fecund frontman needed a vasectomy. **PHOTO: AFP**

NEW YORK— The Rolling Stones have been rocking together for a half century but the legendary tensions between Keith Richards and Mick Jagger look to be very much alive.

Richards apologized Wednesday to his bandmate after the guitarist suggested that the fecund frontman needed a vasectomy.

“Mick’s a randy old bastard,” Richards told The Wall Street Journal Magazine. “It’s time for the snip — you can’t be a father at that age. Those poor kids!” he said. Jagger in December 2016 became a father for the eighth time when he was 73. His son, Deveraux Jagger, was born to his girlfriend Melanie Hamrick, a ballerina in New York who is four decades his junior. “I deeply re-

gret the comments I made about Mick in the WSJ which were completely out of line,” Richards wrote on Twitter, saying he also apologized to Jagger in person.

The Stones have endured despite decades of hard-living and internal tumult.

In 2010, Richards published a memoir, “Life,” in which he openly derided Jagger as a needy prima donna and said the other bandmates mocked him as “Her Majesty.” Richards even cast doubt on Jagger’s private parts, saying the swaggering singer had a “tiny todger.” The latest incident comes just after the Stones — some of the highest-earning musicians on the live circuit — announced a new tour leg of Europe to begin on 17 May in Dublin. — AFP ■

World's first hand-painted film vies for an Oscar

LOS ANGELES — Vying for an Oscar, “Loving Vincent” is the world’s first animated feature film painted by hand — all 65,000 frames — in the distinct style of Vincent van Gogh.

Centred on a probe into his untimely death, the film was shot on a shoestring budget of \$5.5 million (4.5 million euros). That is 30 times less than Disney’s “Coco”, one of the film’s four Oscar rivals.

For director Dorota Kobiela, “Loving Vincent” has been a seven-year labour of love combining her twin passions of cinema and painting. “Van Gogh’s style was perfect for the project; his paintings show all the details of his life, his day-to-day habits, his house, his room, his friends,” Kobiela told AFP ahead of Sunday’s Oscar ceremonies in Los Angeles.

Kobiela and co-director Hugh Welchman already have one Oscar under their belt; their BreakThru Productions film company won an Academy Award in 2008 for the animated short “Peter and the Wolf”, based on

the story and music by Sergei Prokofiev.

“We are the underdogs! In our category it’s normally dominated by Disney and Pixar but I have a feeling we might be one of the big upsets this year,” Welchman, who is also Kobiela’s husband, told AFP.

.25 secs per day

After five years of pre-production, it took another two years for 125 artists from around the globe to bring the opus to life under Kobiela’s watchful eye.

Working in a massive studio in Poland’s Baltic port city of Gdansk, they based their oil paintings on scenes initially shot on film with actors.

The film includes representations of van Gogh’s most famous paintings such as “The Starry Night”. Van Gogh, known for his bold colours and rough, vibrant painting style, is considered one of the most revolutionary painters of the 19th century.

Painting the 93-minute-long



“Loving Vincent” includes representations of van Gogh’s most famous paintings. PHOTO: AFP

movie was a painstaking task.

“The pace of work was very slow, averaging a quarter of a second of the film a day,” said Kobiela, who spent seven years on the project.

A single second of the film represents an average of 12 hand-painted frames.

Each artist completed an average of six paintings a day, amounting to a half-second of the

film for simple scenes.

But according to Kobiela, the quality of the hand-painted frames surpasses digital animation, making them well worth the extra effort.—AFP ■

Picasso painting of muse, future lover fetches European record £50 mln



A Pablo Picasso portrait of his muse Marie-Therese Walter with future lover Dora Maar emerging from the shadows fetched £50 million (57 million euros, \$69 million) at a London sale Wednesday, a European auction record for a painting. PHOTO: AFP

LONDON — A Pablo Picasso portrait of his muse Marie-Therese Walter with future lover Dora Maar emerging from the shadows fetched £50 million (57 million euros, \$69 million) at a London sale Wednesday, a European auction record for a painting.

The 1937 “Femme au Beret et a la Robe Quadrillee (Marie-Therese Walter)” beat expectations it would sell for £36 million (41 million euros, \$50 million) at the

sale of impressionist, surrealist and modern art at auction house Sotheby’s.

It was the first time the oil on canvas had emerged on the international art market and headlined the auctioneer’s first major sale of the year, it said.

The identity of the seller, and its new owner, were not released.

“It’s an incredibly important museum quality picture,” James Mackie, director of the impres-

sionist and modern art department at Sotheby’s, told AFP last week.

“It comes from a key era in Picasso’s career, 1937, when he makes the great painting ‘Guernica’,” he added, referring to the masterpiece which portrayed the horrors of the Nazi bombardment of a Basque city during the Spanish civil war.

The painting also has a strong autobiographical appeal, according to Mackie.

The main subject, Marie-Therese Walter, was the Spanish painter’s “long time lover and muse”.

But the looming figure of Dora Maar, whom he met in 1936, emerges in the shadows behind Marie-Therese, explained Mackie.

Several masterpieces have reached astronomical prices at recent auctions, fuelled by the opening of major museums in the Gulf and the purchasing power of collectors from emerging countries.

Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman acquired Leonardo da Vinci work “Salvator Mundi” for \$450 million in November 2017.—AFP ■

LGBT Film Festival in Mandalay to be held in March

THE LGBT Film Festival is going to be held in Mandalay’s Jefferson Center for two days on 2 March and 3 March (Friday and Saturday).

The event features a photo exhibition, films, games and performances that will bring the social life of homosexuals, lesbians, bisexuals and transgender people into focus.

“We’d like to show the lifestyles and personal issues of the LGBT community in Myanmar’s society.

We want to convey that they also are human,” said organizer Jan Willen Van Rooij, cofounder of the & PROUD.

The CAN-Myanmar, TRY, Bright Pride Myanmar Lesbian Organization and PFLAG-Myanmar jointly organized the free festival that will include discussions and a Q & A session for visitors.

Singers Sandi Myint Lwin

and Zun Wai Yan will provide entertainment at the event that is scheduled to be held from 1p.m to 8 p.m.

Additional entertainment will include and some of them are A Pyo Daw Traditional Dance and Puppet Dance by Nan Lay on Friday, and Myay Waing traditional dance, Yaung Bay Su group dance, Theater Play (we are humans), and Hip Hop Group dance on Saturday.

Some favourite films from Myanmar and other Asian countries from previous film festivals in Yangon will be screened in the two evenings.

Films include, “2 new Rainbow Reels short films” and “This Kind of Love” from Myanmar, “Die Beautiful - Hilarious drag queens” from the Philippines, “The Substitute — Lesbian Drama” from Taiwan.—Ei Moh Moh Khaing ■

Myanmar-Japan Lethwei fights hosted in Japan

AN event featuring Lethwei matches called "Lethwei in Japan 7" took place at Korakuen Hall in Tokyo on 21 February, showcasing the glory of Myanmar's Lethwei.

The Myanmar-Japan Lethwei fights were jointly organised by the International Lethwei Federation of Japan and Myanmar Media Group.

The event featured a series of bouts between Myanmar and Japanese fighters.

In the 63-kilo fight, 20-year-old Myanmar Lethwei fighter Tun Lwin Moe fought Japanese Mixed Martial Arts (MMA) fighter Shunichi Shimizu to a draw. The two men exchanged numerous bare-knuckled blows before the referee's final decision to call the match a draw.

In the 66-kilo fight, Kyel Zin Phyto beat Japanese MMA fighter Hikaru Hasumi.

In the 70-kilo fight, Soe Lin Oo, one of Myanmar's toughest Lethwei fighters, beat Japanese MMA star Hareruya.

In the 73-kilo fight, Myanmar's Min Htet Aung was beaten by Japan's Kouhei Tokeshi when the referee stopped the fight.

After the match, Japanese MMA and UFC star Shunichi Shimizu said he had great respect for his opponent.



Japanese MMA Fighter Shunichi Shimizu (left) and Myanmar Lethwei star Tun Lwin Moe (right) seen with the Champion's Cup after their match was fought to a draw. **PHOTO:MLWC**

"I have never seen a young and great lethwei fighter like my opponent Tun Lwin Moe. He could even fight a draw match against a senior Japanese fighter like me.

As for me, I'll go and teach the lethwei fights systematically in Myanmar because I have so much respect for it", Kouhei

Tokeshi said. A replay of the event will be broadcasted on 10 March on MNTV at 1:30 pm.

Lethwei is a full contact combat sport from Myanmar that uses stand-up striking along with various clinching techniques.

It is considered to be one of the most aggressive and bru-

tal martial arts in the world because the fighters fight bareknuckled with only the use of tape and gauze on their hands.

The use of fists, elbows, knees, and feet are allowed, but more surprisingly, in Lethwei, the use of headbutting is also encouraged.—Kyaw Zin Lin ■

Former football star U Win Thu Moe named head coach of Myanmar women's national team

U Win Thu Moe, the former Myanmar football star, was named a head coach for the Myanmar women's national team on Wednesday, according to a statement from the Myanmar Football Federation (MFF). U Win Thu Moe was assigned as a head coach of the U-22 Myanmar women's national football team at the headquarters of the MFF.

His contract begins immediately and will extend until December 2019. As a head coach of the Myanmar national women's team, U Win Thu Moe promised to lead the team so that their performance would shine at the 2018 AFF Women's Championship.

"I was overwhelmed by achieving this kind of duty. I will do my best physically and mentally in achieving success for the Myanmar women's football team", said U Win Thu Moe.

U Win Thu Moe is a former player for the Myanmar national team and the previous technical director of Yangon United FC, one of the teams in the Myanmar National League. He joined Yangon FC in October 2014 and provided the team with extensive technical skills. Yangon FC won the MFF championship title in 2015.—Kyaw Zin Lin ■

Injured Neymar thanks fans for support ahead of surgery

PARIS — Paris Saint-Germain's Brazilian striker Neymar Wednesday thanked his fans for their support after he suffered a sprained ankle and fractured metatarsal at the weekend.

"Thank you for all the messages!!", he wrote in Portuguese, French and English on his Instagram page.

The forward also shared a picture of himself lying on the floor in the moments after he was injured during PSG's

3-0 win against Olympique de Marseille in French Ligue 1. "Obstacles should not stop you, if you come across a wall, don't give up. Find out how to climb it," he wrote.

The message racked up almost a million "likes," among them his girlfriend, the famous Brazilian soap opera actress Bruna Marquezine.

After widespread rumors and speculation, PSG announced Wednesday that the Brazil star would undergo an

operation in his home country performed by Brazilian team doctor Rodrigo Lasmar. Neymar's father and agent, Neymar Senior, said "Ney" — the most expensive footballer in history — will be out for at least six weeks.

The injury could leave Neymar off the field for the rest of the European season, but he is expected to be fit for the World Cup starting in Russia in June, when Brazil will seek their sixth trophy.—AFP ■



Neymar's injury could leave the Paris Saint-Germain superstar off the field for the rest of the European season. **PHOTO: AFP**