Yangon, 24 July — Yangon City Development Committee is planning to develop affordable housing units for low-income families, including those of industrial zone workers, an official said Friday.

The YCDC City Planning Department official said the project will help the low-income households buy accommodation by installment. In order to pay the installments, they must earn at least K300,000 per month.

Housing demand has soared in Yangon, rising from 20,000 units in 2000 to around 30,000 units in 2015, according to a YCDC survey of industrial workers and those who do not own homes.

Meanwhile, housing units worth around K10 million each are being developed in Yangon’s outskirt townships of Hluttaw, Dagon Myothit and Shwepyithar for people who cannot afford homes and workers in industrial zones, according to YCDC.

The homes will be sold under a lottery system, which will draw from individual applications for housing.

The housing development will add 1,168 housing units in East Dagon Myothit township, 2,976 units in South Dagon Myothit township, 1,909 in Dagon Seikkan township and 1,200 in Shwepyithar township, increasing the total number of affordable housing units in Yangon Region to nearly 10,000 this fiscal year, according to YCDC.

The development will involve construction of six-storey buildings with eight units per floor. Units will range from 490 to 680 square feet.

More than a quarter of Yangon’s 7 million inhabitants do not own homes.

By Aye Min Soe

Yangon, 24 July — For young people in Myanmar, uncertainty about the right career path can be a bigger barrier to finding work than a lack of employment opportunities, the organizer of a Yangon job fair said Friday.

U Than Soe, joint secretary of the Myanmar Young Entrepreneurs Association, said young people often find themselves in jobs that are not suited to their personality or interests. “All job hunters have a burning desire to get a job, but they themselves do not know which sector they are interested in and have little idea before landing jobs,” he said.

To help remove some of the uncertainty, the Myanmar Society for Human Resource Management has introduced a “career interest test” for job seekers at the fair which runs until 26 July at Tatmadaw Exhibition Hall on U Wisara Road in Yangon.

“We conduct this test for those people free of charge with the aim of helping youths to find a job suited to them,” said U Tin Maung Thein, chairman of MSHRM. Currently there are many job opportunities in banking, sales and marketing, travel and tours, and in industries like hospitality, education and IT.

By Khaing Thanda Lwin

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Pyithu Hluttaw

UEC explains electoral differences at Pyithu Hluttaw

NAY PYI TAW, 24 July — People with temporary National Registration Cards will not be allowed to vote in the 8 November general election, U Myint Naing of the Union Election Commission told the Pyithu Hluttaw on Friday, in response to a query about differences in rules between the upcoming ballot and the 2010 vote.

The electoral register for early voting has been posted in offices of UEC sub-commissions, he said, affirming measures to ensure that a person cannot vote twice.

The 2010 election lacked accurate records of people eligible for early voting, he added.

U Kyi Tha of the Gwa constituency called for improved record keeping for rural farmlands that belong to the Union of Myanmar Economic Holdings Ltd.

Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation U Ohn Than responded that the Settlement and Land Record Department is making efforts to digitalize a map of farmlands and fields so as to provide accurate data on land use. The Pyithu Hluttaw approved the banks and financial institutions bill submitted by the Central Bank of Myanmar.—MNA

Amyotha Hluttaw

Call for Speakers’ Corner relocation rejected at Amyotha Hluttaw

NAY PYI TAW, 24 July — A call from Yangon constituency MP U Phone Myint Aung for relocation of the Speakers’ Corner from the west corner of the Kyaikkasan Ground in the country’s largest city to a more suitable place was turned down Friday in the Amyotha Hluttaw.

It would be impossible to move the public site to another place, U Kyaw Kyaw Win, Deputy Minister at President’s Office, responded, explaining that the area is set up in the township of Tamwe for peaceful parades, assemblies and public speaking in accordance with the law.

Before the establishment of the Speakers’ Corner, protests occurred near Sule Pagoda or at Mahabandoola Park or other central locations, causing traffic congestion, he added.

The Amyotha Hluttaw agreed to discuss the monogamy bill, the Pyithu Hluttaw amendment bill and the organ donation bill.

U Kyaw Hlaing, the Commissioner-in-Chief of Defence Services, and Mr Thierry Mathou, the outgoing ambassador from France to Myanmar, held talks Friday over promoting relations between armed forces of the two countries.

The meeting also focused on the role of the Tatmadaw in the upcoming general elections.

Myanmar Pearl Exhibition raises country’s FE

NAY PYI TAW, 24 July — Over 337 pearl lots were sold during Myanmar Pearl Exhibition through a tender system at Maniyadana Jade hall here, receiving K3,262,370 for the state.

The exhibition was held between 22 and 24 July, featuring more than 300 pearl lots by Myanmar Pearl Enterprise, Myanmar Atlantic Co and Aungzabu Co.

Over 80 merchants including those from Japan, Norway, China, Singapore, Thailand and India visited the pearl sale.

U Than Soe said he expected more than 20,000 visitors at the three-day event, which was first staged in 2009.

Past events have received around 25,000 visitors and 20 percent of all applicants got jobs, he added. The fair covers 100 booths from 61 companies including a few international businesses and will continue till 26 July.

France’s outgoing ambassador calls on Defence Services Chief

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing shaking hands with Mr Thierry Mathou who has completed his tour of duty in Myanmar.

Myawady

Employment fair focuses ...

(from page 1) information technology, a businessman at the fair said.

Despite high demand for staff, local companies are facing scarcity of skilled workers as well as salary negotiation problems with experienced workers, he added.

U Than Soe said he expected more than
President U Thein Sein meets South Korean delegates

NAY PYI TAW, 24 July—President U Thein Sein received a South Korean delegation led by Korea Rural Community Cooperation Chief Executive Officer Mr Lee Sang-Mu at the Presidential Palace here to discuss development of agriculture and fishery.

They also discussed land reclamation, development of the Panghlaing River, poverty reduction and rural improvement.

Also present at the visit were Union ministers U Wunna Maung Lwin, U Myint Hlaing, U Ohn Myint, Dr Kan Zaw, Yangon Mayor U Hla Myint and officials.—MNA

Gov’t, ethnic armed groups adjourn ceasefire talks until next month

YANGON, 24 July—Mawlamyine Airport is in operation only one day a week due to a decline in passenger numbers, a Transport Department official said Friday.

“MYANMAR National Airlines usually has around 30 passengers on the Yangon-Mawlamyine-Kawthoung flight service and uses Mawlamyine Airport only on Mondays,” the official said.

Relatively few passengers disembark at Mawlamyine, the majority of them foreigners.

“The majority of visitors travel to Mawlamyine by highway buses which are less expensive,” the official said.

Low demand limits Mawlamyine Airport schedule

Negotiators from Union Peace-Making Working Committee and a senior delegation of ethnic armed organizations conclude talks in Yangon, adjourning until the first week of next month.

PHOTO: YE MYINT

Cung, the ethnic side proposed international organizations including the United Nations, ASEAN and the European Union, as well as the United States, the United Kingdom, Norway, Japan, China, India and Thailand officially witness the signing of the NCA.

“We also proposed all leaders from the two sides including vice-presidents, parliament speakers, top leaders in the Tatmadaw, Union Peace-Making Work Committee leaders and the attorney-general should be signatories to the ceasefire deal,” he added. —GNLM

By Ye Myint

By Ko Moe (GNLM)
Lenovo reveals market expansion goal in Myanmar

By Khaing Thanda Lwin

YANGON, 24 July — Chinese technology giant Lenovo aims to expand its share of the Myanmar consumer electronics market from 21 to 28 percent by the end of the fiscal year, a company official said Wednesday.

At the company’s first media conference in Yangon, Dr Harry Yang, vice-president and general manager of Lenovo South East Asia, said the company had set a goal of becoming the region’s No. 1 personal computer brand within two years.

“Our business front, we see strong growth momentum in Southeast Asia, with Myanmar being a key growth driver in the region for Lenovo,” he said.

With a population of over 51 million people, it is estimated that Myanmar’s IT market will grow from US $110.51 million in 2011 to $233.56 million in 2016, Dr Yang added.

Mr Roland Chew, country general manager of Lenovo Indo China, said the firm will increase its investments in all segments of the country. Key areas of investment include expansion of retail stores, desktop sales and after-sales services, he added.

Lenovo entered the Myanmar market in 2009 and is the leading seller of PCs in the country.

Computers on display at Yangon’s Parkroyal Hotel. — PHOTO: KHAING THANDA LWIN

Telenor to construct phone towers in Matupi, Chin State

MATUPI, 24 July — Norwegian telecommunications company Telenor has begun work to erect mobile phone towers in Matupi, southern Chin State.

The company expects to complete the work in about a month, it said.

The plan includes the erection of two towers in Matupi town, one near Ngalang village and other smaller ones in villages, according to Chin World Media. The company expects to provide service to Chin resident from early next year.— Van Biuk Thang

Health workers treat school children

NAY PYI TAW, 24 July — Doctors, dentists and nurses provided free medical check-ups and treatment Thursday to about 900 students in Pobbathiri Township, Nay Pyi Taw Council Area.

They first gave a talk to the children on dental and oral health and the importance of washing hands.— Shwe Ye Yint

New road to cut travel time for villagers

TATKON, 24 July — Nay Pyi Taw Council member U Myint Shwe led an inspection Thursday of a new road under construction in Tatkon Township that promises a faster connection to town for residents of remote Kyeein village.

At present, it takes villagers about three days by bullock cart caravan to reach Tatkon.

The 10-mile-long-road is being built at a cost of K522.9 million from the Nay Pyi Taw Council budget.

Electoral officials inspect voter lists in Tatkon Tsp

TATKON, 24 July — In preparation for the coming general election, officials went on a field trip Thursday to check the voter list in Tatkon Township on 23 July.

The chairman of Nay Pyi Taw Council Area Election Sub-Commission briefed on compiling of voter lists and amendments to the list by the township election authority.

According to the township officials, their work includes enrolling service men and police force members.— Tin Soe Lwin (Tatkon IPRD)

Guardians apply stipends for students in Ottarathiri Tsp

NAY PYI TAW, 24 July — The Ministry of Education has begun trialling a stipend programme for students in Ottarathiri Township, Nay Pyi Taw Council Area.

Under the programme, needy student at primary school level will receive K 5,000 per month, middle school student K 8,000 and high school students K10,000. Parents and guardians applied for the stipends at No. 10 basic education middle school in Pantin village.— Shwe Ye Yint

Red Cross, firefighters demonstrate rescue operations

MANDALAY, 24 July — A rescue team comprising firefighters and Mandalay Red Cross members on Thursday demonstrated procedures for rescuing someone trapped under fallen debris in their home.

The team demonstrated security measures around the house, with Red Cross members giving first aid and firefighters clearing debris with the use of chain saw, ropes and knives.— Tin Myaung (Mandalay)
Regional

Defence gets access to evidence for DNA tests in Thailand backpackers murder trial — lawyer

BANGKOK, 24 July — A Thai court has given defence lawyers access to evidence for DNA testing in the trial of two Myanmar workers accused of murdering two British tourists in Thailand, a defence lawyer said on Friday.

The investigation has been dogged by allegations of poor management and corruption. The court ordered that all genetic material be transferred to the UK for DNA testing. The BritishLand's chief defence lawyer said lead defence lawyer Khunom Chompuchai said lead defence lawyer Khunom Chompuchai had asked the court for access to all evidence, including DNA samples from the crime scene.

The court said that lawyers are free to request all the DNA samples for independent DNA testing at any time. The request is expected to be granted within the next two months.

Indonesia’s Widodo seeks to tame bureaucrats blocking infrastructure drive

JAKARTA, 24 July — Frustrated with his bureaucrats’ delays to road and port building projects crucial to reviving the economy, Indonesia’s president is pushing for a new, faster selection process to find officials who can deliver on time.

The government is using $20 billion for infrastructure this year on new ports, roads and other projects, but the bureaucracy has so far disbursed only around a tenth of the capital spending budget.

The selection panels, used by every ministry and about 100 local government bodies, were meant to take the politics out of civil service appointments, giving more weight to merit.

But civil servants and opposition parties say the panels are being used to hand out jobs to their friends and cronies who are not qualified.

Civil servants won’t sign anything,” said the palace official. Conditions for civil servants vary from person to person. If they were to be explained in detail, they would have to be members of the ruling party and could expect promotion in return for loyalty, but some habits persist.

Widodo wants to cut to three weeks the time the panels take for appointments, said Sofian Effendi, chief of staff, Luhut Panjaitan. The selection panels could be a risky move. Simply filling vacant posts will not solve the spending snarls if the civil service itself is left unreformed.

Indonesia’s civil service of 4.6 million is still structured along military lines adopted in the 1960s by late strongman Suharto and has a culture of following orders, rather than independent thinking. Coupled with new caution in the face of scrutiny by anti-corruption authorities, this means that billions of dollars are not being spent when the economy needs them most.

Indonesia’s Widodo seeks to tame bureaucrats blocking infrastructure drive

Indonesia’s Widodo wants to discipline the bureaucracy, he told reporters.

He said he did not know of plans to revamp the selection panels, although the administration was looking into their functioning.

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Upper house passes bill for narrowing vote gap

WASHINGTON, 24 July — The US government said on Thursday it imposed sanctions against a company and its president for their dealings with a North Korean ship which was operated under new legislation enacted last month. While keeping the total number of upper house seats unchanged at 242, the latest legislation would merge four two-seat prefectures — Tottori and Shimane, Tokushima and Kochi — into two two-seat constituencies. It would also slash the number of seats from four to two each for Miyagi, Niigata and Nagano prefectures, while raising them by two each for five other prefectures — Hokkaido, Tokyo, Aichi, Hyogo and Fukushima. The measures would narrow the vote weight disparity between the most and least populated constituencies to 2.97 times from 4.77 times in the previous upper house election in July 2013, which the Supreme Court ruled last year as being “in a state of unconstitutionality.” Six LDP lawmakers elected from the four prefectures to be merged under the legislation walked out before the vote, while the LDP’s coalition ally Komeito and major opposition Democratic Party of Japan voted against the bill. The LDP and the four opposition parties — the Japan Innovation Party, the Party for Future Generations, the Assembly to Energize Japan and the New Renaissance Party — jointly submitted the bill the day before. Parties including Komeito and DPJ have submitted a separate election reform bill to reduce the vote weight gap, but no voting will be held for it as the upper house already passed the other election bill. It is the first time the LDP and Komeito have taken separate stances in voting on a bill since they formed a coalition in 1999. Makoto Nishida, secretary general of Komeito in the upper house, said the LDP-endorsed bill is insufficient in accommodating the equal vote value the Constitution calls for.

Under the existing election law, at least two seats have been allotted to a preference — even if its population is small, as constituencies carried the significance of selecting representatives for each of the 47 prefectures in the country. The latest bill would alter that significance and bring further changes in the electoral districts as it aims to resolve the issue through fundamental reforms ahead of the upper house election in 2019. Upper house elections are held every three years to elect half of the six-year-term lawmakers.

US sanctions ship firm over 2013 failed arms transfer to N Korea

KYODO NEWS

The trekking route around Mt Annapurna that attracts around 60 percent of foreign trekkers visiting Nepal is safe, an independent US-based structural and earthquake engineering firm said in Kathmandu on 23 July, 2015.— KYODO NEWS

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China says has every right to drill in East China Sea

BEIJING, 24 July — China said on Friday it had every right to drill in the East China Sea close to waters disputed with Japan, adding that it did not recognise a “unilateral” Japanese median line setting out a boundary between the two in waters.

Japan this week called on China to halt construction of oil-and-gas exploration platforms in the East China Sea close to waters claimed by both nations, concerned that Chinese drills could tap reservoirs that extend into Japanese territory. Patrol ships and aircraft from both countries have been shadowing each other in the area over the past couple of years, raising fears of a confrontation and clash.

In an escalation of the latest dispute, Japan released aerial photographs of China’s construction in the area, accusing it of unilateral development and a half-hearted attitude towards a 2008 agreement to jointly develop resources there. China resumed exploration in the East China Sea two years ago, Japan said. In 2012, Japan’s government angered China by buying a disputed island chain there from private owners. Before then, China had curtailed activities under an agreement with Japan to jointly develop undersea resources in disputed areas. The platforms are being erected on the Chinese side of a median line delineating the exclusive economic zones of the two countries, according to a Japanese ministry official said.

China’s Foreign Ministry said its drilling activities in waters which are not disputed and under Chinese administration are “completely appropriate and legal.” China and Japan have not yet delineated maritime boundaries in the East China Sea, and China does not recognize the Japanese side’s unilateral marking out of a so-called ‘median line’; the ministry said in a statement.

China’s position is that it had a 200 nautical mile exclusive economic zone, and its continental shelf in the East China Sea extends to the Okinawa Trough, it added.

Japan was the one distorting the consensus reached in 2008, and Japan should “create good conditions and atmosphere” for resuming talks, which China sees as a good way of managing the dispute, the ministry said.

Japan worries that the platforms will tap into gas fields that overlap the median line and could also be used as radar stations or bases for drones or aircraft to monitor air and sea activity near the disputed islands, known as the Senkaku in Japan and Diaoyu in China.
US Justice Dept asked to probe Hillary Clinton’s email use — NYT

 ly said she broke no laws or rules by eschewing a standard government email account for her State Department work in favour of a private account linked to a computer server in her New York home. She has also said she sent no classified information through email.

Her exclusive use of a private email account first came to public attention in March, opening her to a volley of criticism from political opponents as she began her presidential campaign that she was side-stepping transparency and record-keeping laws.

She says last year gave the State Department all the work-related emails she had, amounting to some 55,000 printed pages covering her four-year tenure beginning in 2009, although her staff have recently acknowledged there are gaps in the records she retained.

The Justice Department is now obliging her request to make public as many of the emails public as disclosure laws allow, and is regularly releasing them in batches through to next January.

Some of the emails have been retroactively marked as classified or containing some sort of sensitive information, according to the State Department, although the department says this does not mean the information was classified at the time the email was sent.

The inspectors general behind the complaint sent a memorandum to the State Department last week saying that at least one email already made public contains classified information that was apparently improperly redacted, the Times reported. Which email they had in mind is unclear.

The Justice Department and spokesmen for Clinton did not immediately respond to requests for comment on Thursday night.

While Clinton is the clear frontrunner for the Democratic Party’s nomination, several recent polls have found a majority of voters find her untrustworthy, a feeling likely to be exacerbated by a criminal investigation by the federal government.

French constitutional body approves eavesdropping law

PARIS, 24 July—France’s Constitution al Council on Thursday broadly approved a law giving state intelligence services more scope to eavesdrop on the public to tackle what authorities have described as an unprecedented terror threat.

The surveillance law, unveiled in March two months after 17 people were killed by homegrown Islamist gunmen in Paris, has drawn comparisons with the US Patriot Act introduced after the 11 Septem ber, 2001 attacks on the United States.

President Francois Hollande himself was among those who asked the Council to rule on the constitutionality of a law that shields the need for warrants to use phone taps, cameras and hidden microphones and allows authorities to force Internet providers to monitor suspicious behaviour.

His government has said it expressly forbids bulk collection of telephone records as has been done by the US National Security Agency, but civil rights groups have argued that its provisions could amount to mass surveillance and are lacking sufficient checks and balances.

Instead of requiring a judge’s approval, security officials can under the new law order surveillance after advice by a newly created supervisory body specifically dedicated to such approvals.

The Constitutional Council rejected an article that would have allowed authorities to conduct operations in emergency situations without approval. It also rejected an article on international surveillance on the grounds that laws what authorities have described as an insufficiently defined conditions for its use.

Hollande’s office said in a statement that the rejection of the two articles did not deprive intelligence agencies of means to protect citizens and French interests.

Under the new law, surveillance agencies will in exceptional cases be able to use so-called “IMSI Catcher” spy devices that record all types of telephone, Internet or text-messaging conversations in an area.

They will also be able to bug suspects’ flats with microphones and cameras and force Internet providers to their computers to track every keystroke.

The law also allows authorities to track suspicious behaviour by monitoring so-called “metadata,” for example the time and frequency of use of a given site, but not the actual content of any communications.

France’s Digital Council, an independent commission that advises the government on the effects of digital technologies on society, welcomed the clearer controls on surveillance but said the bill did not adequately protect civil liberties.

Reuters

Vucic: We stand ready for dialogue continuation

The Serbian Prime Minister, Aleksandar Vucic, stated on Thursday that Belgrade stands ready for the continuation of the dialogue between Pristina and Belgrade, which is to take place in Vienna on 27 August.

Brexit: EU pathway

Western Balkan countries cooperation between the European Union and the Western Balkans’ conference, to be attended by German Chancellor Angela Merkel, Austrian Chancellor Werner Faymann and President of the European Commission Jean-Claude Juncker.

The last round of the Belgrade-Pristina dialogue in Brussels ended after 17 hours of negotiations without an agreement on the following issues: formation of the Community of Municipalities, energy, telecommunication and Peace Park, which was built by Serbs on a bridge in northern Kosovo.

The dialogue between Pristina and Belgrade is a continuation of the Berlin process initiated by German Chancellor Angela Merkel last year, with an eye to encouraging cooperation between the Western Balkan countries through a number of conferences and accelerating their EU pathway.

“I think that everybody would like to see the Vienna conference as a great holiday,” Vucic said, adding that this event will be attended by German Chancellor Angela Merkel, Austrian Chancellor Werner Faymann and President of the European Commission Jean-Claude Juncker.

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Serbian Prime Minister Aleksandar Vucic stated on Thursday that Belgrade stands ready for the continuation of the dialogue with Pristina in Brussels.

TANJUG

Nis (Serbia), 24 July — Serb Prime Minister Aleksandar Vucic stated on Thursday that Belgrade stands ready for the continuation of the dialogue with Pristina in Brussels.

We have made numerous compromises in the talks to date, but managed to preserve vital national interests, Vucic told reporters in Nis.

He said that the EU would like to see the issues discussed in the Belgrade-Pristina dialogue solved before the Western Balkans’ conference, which is to take place in Vienna on 27 August.

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Obama departs for Kenya, returning to his father’s homeland

WASHINGTON, 24 July — President Barack Obama departed for Kenya on Thursday, his first trip to his father’s homeland as US president, kicking off a swing through Africa that will also include a stop in Ethiopia.

Obama, the first black US president, is the son of a black father from Kenya and a white mother from Kansas. He travelled to Kenya as a US senator but has not gone since winning the White House.

Obama is expected to meet with family members while in Nairobi, but will not be travelling to the village most closely associated with his family name.

The trip will focus otherwise on security and economic initiatives as the president shores up his legacy on the African continent.

Obama will also do some lobbying of lawmakers who are coming along for the visit. The president is seeking support from Congress for a deal to curb Iran’s nuclear programme.

The White House released a list of 10 lawmakers flying with Obama on Air Force One including nine Democrats and one Republican, Senator Jeff Flake of Arizona.

The Democrats are Senator Chris Coons of Delaware, Senator Ed Markey of Massachusetts, Representative Karen Bass of California, Representative G K Butterfield of North Carolina, Representative Eddie Bernice Johnson of Texas, Representative Barbara Lee of California, Representative Gregory Meeks of New York, Representative Charles Rangel of New York, and Representative Terri Sewell of Alabama.

On the return flight to the United States, a second group of 10 Democratic representatives will join Obama, the White House said.

Reuters

US President Barack Obama waves as he boards Air Force One for travel to Kenya and Ethiopia from Joint Base Andrews, Maryland on 23 July, 2015. REUTERS
Preparedness key to surviving disasters

By Kyaw Thura

Disasters can be natural, man-made, intentional or accidental, but, regardless of the cause, all have the potential to cause damage to human life and property. News about the plight of victims affected by recent devastating natural disasters across the world is shocking. Facing the possibility of floods, landslides, earthquakes and other natural phenomena, local communities should develop some strategies for disaster preparedness so as to ensure the best chance of survival.

It is absolutely important that victims remain calm and avoid panic in dire circumstances as much as they can, because safety and health are critical to all in the post-disaster situations. It is, however, understandable that the outbreak of a disaster is a stressful moment causing panic, fear, confusion, uncertainty and anxiety.

There can be times when water has to be released from irrigation facilities in a bid to ward off greater disasters. In this respect, government authorities should take a proactive approach to identifying the potential impact their actions might have on the people residing in the affected area.

There is no such thing as a cheap life. Every person can contribute to the betterment of society in some way or other. For unfortunate victims of any disasters, we must try to become a shoulder to cry on, if we want to turn our fragile world into a caring and humane society.

Write for us
We appreciate your feedback and contributions. If you have any comments or would like to submit editorials, analyses or reports please email Wallace. tun@gmail.com with your name and title.

Due to limitation of space we are only able to publish “Letter to the Editor” that do not exceed 500 words. Should you submit a text longer than 500 words please be aware that your letter will be edited.

The Higher Purpose of Democracy

Kyi Mun

Q: So how can I set myself free?
A: Who has bound you?  —A Zen Master

Let us consider the higher purpose of democracy as follows:

- Hope
- For Hope
- Initiative & Resourcefulness
- Goal-driven
- Honour
- Esteem (To value highly, respect, high regard)
- Reconstruction & Reforms
- Peace, Progress & Prosperity
- Unity in Diversity
- Revolution & Transformation
- People Participation
- Objectives
- Strategy
- Enjoyment of Democracy

*Hope*

In a democracy, there is always a chance for every citizen to hope for enjoying the privileges of liberty, equality and fraternity. In a democracy, you can always hope for and experience human rights, justice and the rule of law. You can also hope for equality of condition, opportunity and treatment. In a democratic country, you can always hope for personal achievements in political, economic, educational, technological, artistic, scientific and religious endeavors.

*Initiative & Resourcefulness*

In a democracy, you can be assertive with initiative and resourcefulness, because you have the right to live and move and have your being in freedom. Initiative means the ability to decide and act on your own without waiting for somebody to tell you what to do. It also means: the power or opportunity to act and gain an advantage before other people do. It can also mean: A new plan for dealing with a particular problem or for achieving a particular purpose. Resourcefulness means: Having the ability to find ways and means of solving a problem, finding a solution and devising a cutting edge to win in competition. Resourcefulness also means being imaginative, creative, proactive, and having sound judgment and common sense.

*Goal-driven*

Without a definite goal, a clear direction and a wholesome higher purpose there can be no meaning in embarking on a journey. In going on a journey, it is usual to have a definite destination and a good purpose. So, in building democracy, there should be the goal of forming a government of the people, by the people, for the people, for achieving peace, progress and prosperity for the whole country.

*Honour*

Honour means:
1. High regard or respect; especially (a) glory, fame; (b) good reputation. (2) Adherence to principles considered right; integrity. (3) Chastity (4) High rank, distinction (5) A title of certain officials, as judges (with His, Her, Your). (6) Something done or given as a token of respect. (7) A source of respect and fame. (Webster’s Dictionary). In building democracy, the State, the people, all the citizens must be given due honour, as honour is deserved by a sovereign state and people. Democracy must always honor the sovereignty of the State and the dignity of the people.

*Esteem*

Esteem means: To value highly; respect. To consider; favorable opinion, high regard. In building a democratic state, all classes of the people must be held in high esteem. Customs, traditions, arts and crafts, etc, must be accorded favorable esteem. In democracy, all the people including infants, children, youths, students, elderly people, etc, must be held in high-esteem. In a democracy, fairness, justice, equality of condition and opportunity must be held in good esteem. The beauty of democracy is holding people high in esteem.

*Reconstruction & Reforms*

In establishing democracy, national reconstruction and reforms must be done sustainably in the following sectors:
- Political Reforms
- Economic Reforms
- Financial Reforms
- Educational Reforms
- Technological Reforms
- Socio-cultural Reforms
- Eco-environmental

Since political and economic forms of security are of primary importance, these must be given to them. Economic infrastructure, rural electrification, agricultural mechanization must also be given priorities in the national reconstruction agenda.

*Peace, Progress & Prosperity*

The primary purpose of building democracy is:
1. To abolish aristocratic, autocratic, despotic and anarchic political systems, practices and cultures. Under these systems, the greatest good cannot be achieved for the greatest number of people. Since a country is made up primarily of its people, the broad masses of the people should have:
   - Peace
   - Progress and
   - Prosperity

2. Just like other developed democratic countries of the world, Myanmar must advance to relatively decent levels of development and modernization. This world is not governed by the law of the jungle. The democratic world is ruled by the law of the people, by the people, for the people.

*Unity in Diversity*

In building democracy, internal unity and internal peace are indispensable. In a true democracy, unity, peace and cooperation are the driving forces of the democratic practices. All the national races, ethnic groups and communities must be genuinely convinced that unity, peace and cooperation are in their own interests as well as in the interest of the whole country. Since all the national races are living on the same common land, all the races must share win-win outcomes.

*Revolutionary Transformation*

In the transformation to democracy, incremental improvements have their place, quantum improvements have theirs and the revolutionary transformation must be the dynamic driving force. If the people have really strong passion for democracy, they will not settle for less than true and full freedom, sovereignty and independence, in the political, economic, educational, socio-cultural and other public spheres. The revolutionary will of the entire people must be strategically mobilized and channeled into liberty, equality and fraternity.

*People Participation*

Since building democracy is meant for the entire people and the whole country, all classes and strata of the people must be actively involved in the historical movement for democracy. Indigenous peoples are the natives, not the foreigners; they are the hosts, not the guests. People should be self-reliant. The broad masses of the people must follow the principle of “Self-picking up and self-standing” “Atá hi attano nátho”, meaning one should take refuge in oneself or self-determination. It is said that in the ocean, the waves come and go but the waters remain; so in human political affairs, leaders come and go, but the people remain; only the people are invincible.

*Objectives*

Objectives for establishing democracy in Myanmar should be:
1. Freedom, Sovereignty, Independence
2. Liberty, Equality, Fraternity
3. Human Rights, Justice, the Rule of Law
5. Economic Development & Modernization
6. Scientific & Technological Advancement & Modernization
7. Educational Advancement & All-round Development
8. Socio-cultural Development and Refinement
10. Ecological Protection & Renewal

*Strategy*

Strategy means: the art of the general, meaning the general has got to:
1. Out-think
2. Out-plan
3. Out-perform the opponent.

In building democracy, the winning strategy should be:
- Faith in Democracy
- Focus on Establishing Democracy, and
- Fight for Democracy

No strategy can succeed and bear fruit unless it is effectively and efficiently executed.

*Enjoyment of Democracy*

Building democracy is sowing the seeds of:
1. Freedom, Sovereignty and Independence
2. Liberty, Equality and Fraternity
3. Peace, Justice and the Rule of Law

The broad masses of the people should be fully convinced that they reap what they sow.

*Conclusion*

The higher purpose of democracy is to continuously raise the levels of:
1. Political Development and Modernization
2. Economic Development and Modernization
3. Technological Development and Modernization
4. Socio-cultural Development and Modernization
5. Educational Development and Modernization
6. Eco-environmental protection and renewal

U Kyi Mun residing in Yangon is a consultant of NAING Group Capital Co., Ltd.
Putting Morality First

“You yourselves must strive; the Buddhists only point the way.

Those meditative ones who tread the path are released from the bonds of Mara. (Dhammapada, verse No. 276.)

If one, however, avoids evil deeds, whereas happiness also follows one by virtue of one’s good deeds. In this respect the main task in gaining happiness and dispelling suffering is to avoid evil deeds (varita ta) and do good moral conduct (caritta ta). As are prescribed by the Buddha.

Such a behavior is called moral conduct of a man in Buddhism.

The term “sila” includes other similar terms, as such as volition (cetana), which is the cause of restraint (santvano) and non-transgression (avitti-kama)

Here, composing means non-inconsistency of verbal actions, physically actions, or serving as a foundation of wholesome states. The characteristics of sila (lakkhana) are composing: its function (rasa) has a double function. To stop misconduct, and to achieve the quality of blamelessness; it is manifested (paccupatha) as a pure state in all actions; and its proximanty (kammathana) is a combination of shame and conscience.

Investigative and insightful knowledge of Dhamma is of great importance for all Buddhists to learn and practice in order to produce beneficial results.

Buddhism teaches man to live in peace and harmony.

Mankind appears to have neglected the wholesome actions of speech and body, and all this has its roots in our mental processes, collectively called “mind”, as the Buddha taught in the Dhammapada. “Mind precedes all mental states. Mind is their chief; they are all mind-wrought. If with an impure mind a person speaks or acts, suffering follows him like the wheel that follows the foot of the ox. Mind precedes all mental states. Mind is their chief; they are all mind-wrought. If with a pure mind a person speaks or acts, happiness follows him like his never-departing shadow.” (Verse No. 1 and 2).

Teachings of the Budhha guide all Buddhists in the world how to become mindful, energetic and wise people. Be good to others. Keep our mind pure. Here, suffering consequently followed to work his own happiness by his understanding and effort. Buddhist salvation is the result of one’s own moral development and can neither be imposed nor regulated by one’s own external agent. The Buddha’s mission was to enlighten men as to the nature of existence and to advise them how best to act for their own happiness and for the benefit of others.

Good moral conduct is therefore the very foundation of progress towards enlightenment, the true wisdom, which means the real peace and happiness of man’s life. As moral conduct or virtue (sila) is a practical word which will help all wholesome actions of speech and body, when a person is free from any sort of verbally and bodily misconduct, he is said to have kept or observed sila properly.

In brief, that which is restraint from all vicious and sinful acts or evil is called sila.

Moral conduct must. Without ethical principles or moral conduct, man normally descends to an animal level where there is no compassion and love, no tolerance and reasoning intellect, and no moral restraint in thoughts, words and deeds. Without moral character or restraint, any man or society or race or nation, in any place or home or town or country must, apparently, be en- gashed somewhere or other with some kind of anguish arising from insecurity, instability, disunity, turmoil, conflicts, fights, battles, and even great wars.

“One for all and all for one” is the ultimate noble act of the People in this Planet. The Buddha want- ed all human beings to lead ideal lives — to be kind, compassionate and considerate to one another and to develop wisdom and understanding in all activities and relationships.

The Buddha, with His supreme wisdom, realised that those who believed and accepted His teachings, would rate His teachings as too profound and incapable of achievement. Despite such assertions, His teachings, if reduced to the simplest of terms, could be contained in just a few words. “Not to commit any evil (pita) (To avoid all evil (akusala)), to cultivate the good (kusa), to purify one’s mind (citta); this is the teaching of the Buddha.” The Buddha also states that “what is good for oneself and for others as well and completely shuns evil, that would affect others as well as oneself and the world would definitely be a better place to live in.

In that renouncing a lesser happiness one may realize a greater happiness, as a means of renouncing the lesser, having regard for the greater.” (Dhammapada verse No. 290). As the moral principles taught by the Buddha are universal for all men and women at all times, happiness or mis- 

“If one](verse) 

As kinsmen welcome a dear one on arrival even so his own good deeds will welcome the doer of good who has gone from this world to the next." (Dhammapada verse No. 220). As Buddhists recognize no Supreme Being or God, there also cannot be com- mandonments for their moral purity. They believe that moral purity can only be gained by the actual prac- tice of restraint by oneself, not to violate one’s moral precepts mentally, verbally and bodily. Moral precepts are kept for the sake of the happiness of man. Happi- ness of course comes not only from maintaining a good standard of morality in this life, but also as the result of skillful actions in past existence.

Life-long learning is a requisite for all Buddhists to develop their mind-centered and body-centered practice to achieve their supreme results. Those who were unable to comprehend His Teachings or that those who had already accepted His teachings, would rate His teachings as too idealistic and incapable of achievement. Despite such assertions, His teachings, if reduced to the simplest of

Saturday, 25 July, 2015

ARTICLE

Putting Morality First

Peace, Progress, Prosperity.

Happiness and Harmony are what the People in this Planet want to enjoy for the Present and the Future.

In the Buddha’s Teaching, morality or virtue (sila) is of vital importance, for only by laying the firm foundation of moral purity will one be able by way of mindfulness towards the attainment of the higher stages, namely, concentration (samaadhi) and wisdom (panna) as it is said in the Visuddhamagga: a man establishing well in virtue, develops consciousness and understanding.” An aspirant therefore specially needs purity of speech and purity of body (action).

In the text, it is said that a person has been perfected with sila when he does not violate actions of body and actions of speech (silasampa).

Understanding right understanding (view) is of paramount importance for all Buddhists. Good in fact is usually defined by ways of actions through the door of mind or speech or body; reversely, evil is also done in the same manner. Why do we make sin or commit evil? In reality, it is not because of outside circum- stances, nor a force existing apart from ourselves, but the unwholesome way we conduct ourselves on mind, speech, and body, and all this has its roots in our mental processes, collectively called “mind”, as the Buddha taught in the Dhammapada. “Mind precedes all mental states. Mind is their chief; they are all mind-wrought. If with an impure mind a person speaks or acts, suffering follows him like the wheel that follows the foot of the ox. Mind precedes all mental states. Mind is their chief; they are all mind-wrought. If with a pure mind a person speaks or acts, happiness follows him like his never-departing shadow.” (Verse No. 1 and 2).

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Workers and Southern Resistance fighters unload an aid shipment from a Saudi military cargo plane at the international airport of Yemen's southern port city of Aden on 23 July, 2015.—REUTERS

Two killed in new push by Libya's eastern government forces in Benghazi

BENGHAZI, (Libya), 24 July — Two Libyan soldiers were killed and 10 wounded on Thursday when eastern government forces made a new push against Islamist fighters in the embattled centre of Benghazi, medics said.

Forces loyal to Libya's internationally recognized government have been fighting Islamist groups in the country's second-largest city for over a year, part of a wider struggle since Muammar Gaddafi was overthrown and killed in 2011.

Army forces backed by armed residents have regained some of the territory in the eastern city lost last year, but critics say their use of war planes has heavily damaged Benghazi without gaining much on the ground.

On Thursday, the government forces made a new attempt towards taking the commercial port where Islamist groups have positions, military officials said.

The port has been closed since last autumn.

"The air force bombed terrorist targets in Sabri," said Nasser al-Hassi, a spokesman for the force, referring to a seaside central district near the port.

Turkish army returns fire on Islamic State after soldier killed

ANKARA / BEIRUT, 24 July — Turkish forces returned fire on Islamic State militants in Syria with tank shells on Thursday after a Turkish soldier was killed and two others were wounded in a cross-border firefight, military and government officials said.

The fighting comes days after a suspected suicide bombing by the Islamist radical group in a Turkish border town killed 32 people, many of them students and some of them Kurds, touching off waves of violence in the largely Kurdish southeast.

Turkey's NATO allies have long expressed concern about control of the border with Syria, which in parts runs parallel with territory controlled by Islamic State. Monday's suicide bombing in the southeastern town of Suruc highlighted fears about the Syrian conflict spilling onto Turkish soil.

The Turkish army has stepped up security along parts of the border, as fighting in Syria involving Kurdish militia, Islamist militants and Syrian security forces intensifies.

"Turkish soldiers returned fire after shots came from the Syrian side of the border, from the region where Islamic State militants are," a Turkish official said, adding that, in line with regulations, four tanks returned fire after being fired upon by the militants.

The army said one sergeant had been killed and two others wounded. One Islamic State militant had been killed, and Turkish forces had later retrieved his body and rifle.

Another Turkish official said fighter jets had been scrambled to the Syrian border, although Turkish jets regularly patrol the 900 km (560 mile) frontier with Syria.

Rami Abdurahman, founder of the UK-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights that tracks the conflict in Syria through a network of sources on the ground, gave a different account.

He said the clashes erupted when two Syrian civilians tried to cross into Turkey and the army opened fire, killing one of them, an elderly man. Islamic State then returned fire and two of their militants were killed, he said.

The Turkish army was not immediately available to comment. Local media said the fighting was close to the village of Elbeyli, east of Kilis, and an area where the armed forces have sent reinforcements in recent weeks.

The skirmish came a day after US President Barack Obama and Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan agreed to work together to stem the flow of foreign fighters and secure the border.

US defence officials said the United States and Turkey had reached agreement to allow US-led coalition warplanes to use the Incirlik US Air Force base in eastern Turkey for strikes against Islamic State. The officials, speaking on condition of anonymity, declined to disclose specifics.

The US currently is not allowing any bombing sorties, but does launch drones. Agreement for the use of Incirlik marks a significant Turkish move in cooperation with Washington over Syria.

The clashes were the latest in a wave of violence that followed Monday's suspected Islamic State suicide bombing.

The suicide bombing enraged Turkey's Kurdish minority, many of whom suspect the government of tacitly backing Islamic State in Syria against Kurdish forces, something Ankara strongly denies.

One police officer was shot and killed and a second wounded on Thursday in the mainly Kurdish city of Diyarbakir, security sources said. On Wednesday two police officers were killed in a town on the Syrian border and militants from the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) claimed responsibility.

Turkey has been negotiating an end to the PKK's 30-year-old campaign for autonomy for Turkey's estimated 14 million Kurds and is worried about its growing influence in war-torn Syria. Ultimately, it fears emergence of an independent Kurdish state embracing parts of Iraq, Syria and Turkey.

Another Turkish official said the fighting was close to the village of Elbeyli, east of Kilis, and an area where the armed forces have sent reinforcements in recent weeks.
Mexico City, 24 July — Medical researchers from the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) announced on Wednesday that a new treatment for Parkinson’s disease could lead patients to make an 85 percent recovery.

In a press release, UNAM researcher Patricia Vergara Aragon explained that tests on rats showed that titanium dioxide microplants bearing dopamine allowed the animals to recover motor function. Parkinson’s disease primarily affects people over 50 and causes gradual deterioration of neurons in the brain responsible for creating dopamine.

Dopamine acts as a chemical messenger that links neurons across the brain and is responsible for controlling the movement of the human body. In collaboration with researchers from the Centre of Applied Investigation and Advanced Technology of the National Polytechnic Institute, the UNAM team said they succeeded in placing dopamine molecules within a microreservoir in a ceramic base, using the sol-gel technique. Once applied to the patient, this technique allows the neurotransmitters affected by Parkinson’s to remain stable for a long time, they added. Xinhua

S Korea’s economy slows in Q2 on MERS shock, weak exports

Seoul, 24 July — South Korea’s economy slowed in the second quarter due to the outbreak of the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS), weak exports and drought, central bank data showed on Thursday.

Real gross domestic product (GDP) expanded 0.3 percent during the April-June period compared with the prior three-month period, according to the Bank of Korea (BOK). The economy recorded a zero percent growth for five straight quarters.

It was lower than 0.4 percent, which the BOK suggested as its estimate last month. The bank froze the benchmark interest rate at an all-time low of 1.5 percent in July after lowering it by a quarter percentage point in March and June respectively.

The BOK revised down its 2015 growth outlook for the economy by 0.3 percentage points to 2.8 percent in June on the back of the MERS outbreak.

Thirty-six people died of the MERS corona virus, which infected a total of 186 people. No new case of contagion has been reported in the past 18 days, indicating the MERS crisis nearing an end.

Consumers refrained from entertainment and social gatherings for the MERS fears. Some shunned even going for shopping, and many people on the street wore facial masks, refraining from going to public venues crowded with people.

The quarterly growth of GDP reduced from 0.8 percent in the first quarter to 0.3 percent in the second quarter. It fell from 0.8 percent in the third quarter of last year to 0.3 percent in the fourth quarter.

From a year earlier, the real GDP expanded 2.2 percent in the second quarter after growing 2.5 percent in the first quarter.

Private consumption slid 0.3 percent in the second quarter from three months earlier, posting the lowest gain in a year. Facility investment rose 0.4 percent on demand for transport equipment, and construction investment grew 1.7 percent.

Exports, which account for about half of the economy, topped up 0.1 percent in the second quarter from the prior quarter. On a yearly basis, the exports reduced for six straight months to June.

Production in the agricultural sector tumbled 11.1 percent due to the long spell of dry weather, which made significant contributions to higher farm goods prices. It marked the first decline in a year.

Service industry production moved up 0.1 percent in the second quarter after growing 0.9 percent in the previous quarter.

To boost the sluggish economy, the government unveiled a stimulus package for the second half worth about 22 trillion won (19 billion US dollars), including an 11.8 trillion-won supplementary budget. The extra budget had yet to be approved through parliament. —Xinhua

World’s first malaria vaccine gets go-ahead from EU regulators

London, 24 July — The world’s first malaria vaccine got a green light on Friday from European drug regulators who recommend it should be licensed for use in babies in Africa at risk of the mosquito-borne disease.

The shot, called RTS,S or Mosquirix and developed by British drugmaker GlaxoSmithKline in partnership with the PATH Malaria Vaccine Initiative, would be the first licensed human vaccine against a parasitic disease and could help prevent millions of cases of malaria in countries that use it.

Recommendations for a drug license made by the European Medicines Agency (EMA) are normally endorsed by the European Commission within a couple of months. Mosquirix, also part-funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, will also now be assessed by the World Health Organization, which has promised to give its guidance on when and where it should be used before the end of this year.

Malaria killed an estimated 584,000 people in 2013, the vast majority of them in sub-Saharan Africa. More than 80 percent of malaria deaths are in children under the age of five.

Andrew Witty, GSK’s chief executive, said EMA’s positive recommendation was a further important step toward making the world’s first malaria vaccine available for young children.

While RTS,S on its own is not the complete answer to malaria, its use alongside those interventions such as bed nets and insecticides would provide a very meaningful contribution to controlling the impact of malaria on children in those African communities that need it the most, he said in a statement.

Global health experts have long hoped scientists would be able to develop an effective malaria vaccine, and researchers at GSK have been working on RTS,S for 30 years.

Hopes that this shot would be the final answer to wiping out malaria were dampened when trial data released in 2011 and 2012 showed it only reduced episodes of malaria in babies aged 6-12 weeks by 27 percent, and by around 46 percent in children aged 5-17 months.

EMA’s recommendation is that the shot should nevertheless be licensed for use in babies in the full age range covered in the trials — from 6 weeks to 7 months.

Some malaria specialists have expressed concern that the complexities and potential costs of deploying this first vaccine when it only provides partial protection make it less attractive and more risky.

However Joe Cohen, a GSK scientist who has led the development of Mosquirix since 1987, said on Friday he has no doubt the vaccine could significantly reduce the toll of sickness and death caused by the malaria among African children. “I have absolutely no reservations in terms of rolling this vaccine out,” he told Reuters. “Why? Because the efficacy, when translated into cases averted and deaths averted, is just tremendous. It will have an enormously significant public health impact.” —Reuters

The signage for the GlaxoSmithKline building is pictured in Hounslow, west London on 18 June, 2013.—Reuters

Mitsubishi

Mitsubishi Motors to end US car production

Tokyo, 24 July — Mitsubishi Motors Corp has decided to withdraw from vehicle production in the United States as part of its efforts to focus more on growing Asian markets, sources close to the matter said on Friday.

The Tokyo-based automaker plans to sell its plant in Illinois where the company currently manufactures about 60,000 sport utility vehicles a year, they said.

Mitsubishi Motors will shift more resources to its Asian plants such as those in Thailand and the Philippines, the sources said. While the company makes SUVs in Russia, it withdrew from production in Europe in 2012.

China H1 rail investment tops 43 bln USD

Beijing, 24 July — China has invested more than 265.1 billion yuan (43.3 billion US dollars) in domestic railway construction in the first half of the year, up 12.7 percent from one year earlier, China Railway Corporation said on Thursday.

In the first six months, an additional 2,226 km of new railway lines were put into service, the company said in a statement to Xinhua.

To bolster a slowing economy, the Chinese government has made railway infrastructure one of the seven prioritized sectors for investment. The rest include environmental protection, clean energy, the power grid and healthcare.

At the start of 2015, the country set targets of investing more than 800 billion yuan in railway construction for this year and creating 8,000 km of new lines on track.

Xinhua
Gunman kills two, wounds seven in Louisiana theatre before taking own life — police

LAFAYETTE, (Louisiana), 24 July — A lone gunman opened fire inside a crowded movie theatre in Lafayette, Louisiana, on Thursday evening, killing two people and injuring seven others before taking his own life, police said.

Gunfire erupted during a 7 pm CDT (1900 am BST) showing of the film “Trainwreck”. The incident took place almost three years to the day after 12 people were killed at a cinema in Aurora, Colorado.

Lafayette Police Chief Jim Craft said two people died in the hail of bullets before the 58-year-old suspect killed himself with a handgun as officers rushed to the scene shortly after 7:30 pm.

Seven people were wounded, three of them critically, authorities said. One person underwent surgery and “was not doing well,” Craft said.

Authorities said they knew the gunman’s identity but were not releasing his name during the early stage of the investigation. They offered no immediate motive and did not disclose any clues they might have found.

“The shooter is deceased. We may never know,” Craft said, adding that the man appeared to have a criminal history that he described as “pretty old.”

Police officials said that bomb-sniffing dogs had picked out a backpack inside the Grand 16 Theatre and that they had also signalling “suspicious” items inside the suspect’s car. A robot was being used to probe the vehicle further.

Investigators also headed to the gunman’s home. His body remained inside the theatre several hours later. None of the victims, who were described as ranging in age from teens to early 60s, were immediately identified by authorities.

Witnesses said the gunman abruptly stood up in the darkness of the theatre about 20 minutes into the movie and began shooting.

“He wasn’t saying anything. I didn’t hear anybody screaming either,” Katie Dominge, who was watching the film with her fiancé, told the local Advertiser newspaper.

Republican Louisiana Governor Bobby Jindal travelled to Lafayette, a city of about 120,000 people roughly 55 miles (90 km) southwest of Baton Rouge.

“As governor, as a father and as a husband, whenever we hear about these senseless acts of violence it makes us both furious and sad at the same time,” he said at a briefing.

Jindal said that two of the wounded victims were teachers, one of whom told him that she survived the attack because her friend rolled over her as bullets rang out. That teacher then managed to pull a fire alarm in the theatre, he said.

Four police officers in the area heard the gunfire and rushed to the theatre, which is on a main thoroughfare near downtown, authorities said.

The shooting came three years after a gunman opened fire at a movie theatre in Aurora, Colorado, during a midnight screening of the Batman film, “The Dark Knight Rises”, killing 12 people and wounding 70 others.

James Holmes, a former neuroscience graduate student at the University of Colorado, was convicted last week on 165 counts of murder, attempted murder and explosives in the 20 July, 2012, rampage.

Jurors in that case were trying to determine if Holmes should face the death penalty or life in prison.

The United States has witnessed several mass shootings in the last two months.

A gunman is accused of a racially motivated shooting at a black church in South Carolina that killed nine church members on 17 March.

More recently, a gunman attacked military offices in Tennessee last week, killing five US servicemen.

Jindal, who last month announced his candidacy for president, said he had ordered National Guard members at offices and other facilities to be armed in the wake of the Tennessee attack.

Officials stand by the scene outside the movie theatre where a man opened fire on film goers in Lafayette, Louisiana on 23 July, 2015. —Reuters

Abe Cabinet approves guidelines for FY 2016 budget compilation

Tokyo, 24 July — Prime Minister Shinzo Abe’s Cabinet approved on Friday guidelines for compiling the fiscal 2016 budget, aiming to achieve robust economic growth while modestly pursuing fiscal consolidation.

In the guidelines, the government sets no ceiling on budget requests from ministries and agencies for the third straight year, in an attempt to flexibly adapt the budget to economic conditions — a move which could prompt ruling party lawmakers to demand more spending.

If ministries and agencies submit requests in line with the guidelines, general-account budget requests for the year starting in April 2016 are likely to surpass 100 trillion yen ($807.5 billion) for the second consecutive year.

Ministers and agencies will make budget requests by the end of August based on the guidelines, for scrutiny by the Finance Ministry for compilation of the fiscal 2016 budget later this year.

Social security outlay requests, which will comprise the largest part of the budget, were allowed to increase by 670 billion yen from 30.2 trillion yen in the fiscal 2015 budget, reflecting the aging population.

But the Finance Ministry, which believes the increase stemming from the graying factor should be at around 500 billion yen annually, is poised to strictly review the requests in an effort to rein in expenditure in the absence of a ceiling.

“I want each ministry to take a fresh look at the list of priorities and thoroughly eliminate unnecessary measures to prioritize the contents of the budget,” Finance Minister Taro Aso told a Press conference.

The guidelines set aside around 4 trillion yen for policies to implement the government’s latest growth strategy, which calls for utilizing robot technology and supporting and increasing women’s employment among other measures.

To fund the special spending, the guidelines seek a reduction of around 10 percent in discretion ary policy spending requests including public works.

Requests for mandatory spending including personnel costs will total some 12.5 trillion yen, the same level approved in the fiscal 2015 budget.

But ministries and agencies which reduce such requests will be allowed to demand an amount equivalent to 30 percent of the reduction be added to the special spending as an incentive to cut the cost.

Serbia to set up air traffic accident investigation centre

BELGRADE, 24 July — The Serbian parliament adopted on Thursday the Law on Investigation of Air, Rail and Water Traffic Accidents, which provides for the establishment of a center headquartered in Belgrade to investigate air traffic accidents.

Minister of Transport Zorana Mihajlovic

Minister of Transport Zorana Mihajlovic said that the amendments were aimed at making passengers’ rights come first by aligning with relevant EU directives.

US President Barack Obama speaks to college-bound students at a “Reach Higher” initiative event hosted by the first lady at the White House in Washington on 23 July, 2015. —Reuters

Obama urges Britain to stay in EU in BBC interview

WASHINGTON, 24 July — US President Barack Obama told the BBC in an interview excerpt that aired on Thursday that Britain must remain in the European Union to maintain its global influence.

“Britain’s EU membership “gives us much greater confidence about the strength of the transatlantic union,” Obama said, adding the EU had made “the world safer and more prosperous.”

British Prime Minister David Cameron, seeking to end a decades-old rift within his Conservative Party over Britain’s place in Europe, has promised to negotiate a new settlement with Brussels and hold a referendum on EU membership by the end of 2017.

Obama added in an another excerpt from the interview that his biggest frustration was the failure to pass “common-sense gun safety laws” in the United States “even in the face of repeated mass killings.”

“If you look at the number of Americans killed since 9/11 by terrorism, it’s less than 100. If you look at the number that have been killed by gun violence, it’s in the tens of thousands,” Obama said in the White House interview.

“For us not to be able to resolve that issue has been something that is depressing,” he said.

Reuters
Japan urges Russian prime minister not to visit disputed islands

TOKYO, 24 July — Japan has urged Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev not to visit Japan-claimed islands off Hokkaido, Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida said on Friday, calling the planned trip to the islands at the center of a long-standing bilateral dispute “unacceptable.” The planned visit, seen by experts as underlining Moscow’s intention to reassert its control of the four islands, could unsettle a diplomatic arrangement made a year ago that it should be realized in the government led by Shinzo Abe in November 2010, Medvedev said the government meeting on Thursday that he plans to inspect economic development on some of the Kuril islands, saying they would play an important role in Russia’s defence.

Cabinet members approved a 10-year development plan for the Kurils starting next year, for which Medvedev said the government would spend 70 billion rubles ($1.21 billion).

The islands in question, called Northern Territories in Japan and Southern Kurils in Russia, are Etorofu, Shikotan and the Habomai group of islets that were seized by Soviet forces following Japan’s surrender in World War II in 1945. The territorial dispute has prevented the two countries from concluding a postwar peace treaty.

While he was president in November 2010, Medvedev visited Kunashiri, becoming the first Russian leader to do so. He also inspected Kunashiri in July 2012 as prime minister.

Putin’s Japan visit is being arranged after Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and Putin agreed in November that it should be realized at an appropriate time this year. To lay the groundwork, Japan is making arrangements for Kishida to visit Russia from 31 August to 1 September, according to Japanese government sources.

In a press statement, the CPN Maoist under the leadership of Netra Bikram Chand, said it called the strike against the ongoing constitution-drafting process.

The party termed the process “anti-people,” saying it can’t meet the demands of the marginalized people.

The Chand-led opposition party challenged the government’s national campaign to collect public feedback on the preliminary draft of the constitution, which was organized by the government on Monday and Tuesday.

The campaign has witnessed an overwhelming participation of the public across the Himalayan country except in the Madhesh region — the southern belt of the country bordering India.

Millions of people from various walks of life joined the national campaign and gave their suggestions on the draft of the new constitution.

According to the action plan endorsed by the Constituent Assembly, after collecting public inputs on the draft, the Committee on Citizens Relations and Public Opinion Collection would submit a report to the Political Dialogue and Consensus Committee for further discussions on the draft on 23 July.

Weather Report

BAY INFERENCE: Monsoon is weak to moderate in the Andaman Sea and South Bay and moderate to strong elsewhere in the Bay of Bengal.

FORECAST VALID UNTIL THE EVENING OF THE 24th July, 2015: Rain or thunder showers will be scattered in Lower Sagar, Mandalay, Magway and Taninthayi Regions and Kayah State, fairly widespread in Shan, Chin and Kayin States and widespread in the remaining Regions and States with likelihood of isolated heavy falls in Upper Sagar and Mandalay Regions, Kachin and Rakhine States. Degree of certainty is (100%).

STATE OF THE SEA: Squalls with moderate to rough sea are likely at times Deltaic off and along Rakhine Coasts. Surface wind speed in squalls may reach (35-40) m.p.h. Sea will be moderate elsewhere in Myanmar waters.

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Continuation of increase of rain in the Upper Myanmar area.

Advertisement

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WEATHER REPORT

Japan

Nearly 200 strike enforcers arrested in Nepal

KATHMANDU, 24 July — Nearly 200 members from the Communist Party of Nepal Maoist were arrested on Friday for their involvement in torching and vandalizing public and private vehicles during a one-day strike, according to Nepalese police.

“We have arrested as many as 188 strike enforcers so far,” police spokesperson Kamal Singh Bom told Xinhua by phone, adding that 19 private and public vehicles were vandalized and torched during the strike.

The strike, which was called by the CPN Maoist, a splinter faction of the Mohan Baidya-led CPN (Maoist) party, has crippled normal life across Nepal, including the capital city.

Public and private vehicles stayed off roads while business firms, market vendors, schools, colleges and private companies have remained closed due to the strike.

Ambulances, media vehicles, vehicles of the Kathmandu-based diplomatic missions and tourist services were allowed to ply on the road.

The one-day strike hit the capital Kathmandu and major cities such as Biratnagar, Pokhara, Chitwan, Nepalgunj and Dhangadhi, local media reports said.

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Yunnan in surrogacy crackdown

KUNMING, 24 July — The government of southwest China’s Yunnan Province has launched a crackdown on illegal surrogacy.

Officials with the provincial Health and Family Planning Commission said on Friday that the six-month campaign, involving 10 departments, will focus on spotting and punishing medical personnel and intermediary agencies that help perform surrogate pregnancy services.

Online, TV, radio and print media that carry surrogacy advertising will also be targeted, while authorities will step up supervision over the sale and circulation of assisted reproductive technology (ART) drugs and medical equipment.

Surrogacy is banned in China, but wombs-for-rent businesses have thrived in the world’s most populous country, where studies indicate an estimated one in eight couples face fertility problems.

Advertisements for surrogacy services are easily found on TV and the Internet, calling out to both infertile couples and prospective surrogates. — Xinhua
Harry Styles thanks fans on One Direction’s fifth anniversary

Los Angeles, 24 July — Boy-band One Direction’s singer Harry Styles, thanking his fans on the completion of five years of the band, has said they own their success to their followers. The 21-year-old singer took to Twitter of May’s “Unbroken” and the upcoming “By The Sea,” in which she also stars alongside husband Brad Pitt.

Netflix, which houses an online library of thousands of films and television shows and also develops original content, is available in more than 50 countries, a reach that the company said was key in Oscar-winning Jolie’s decision to come aboard.

“Films like this are hard to watch but important to see. They are also hard to get made. Netflix is making this possible, and I am looking forward to working with them and excited that the film will reach so many people,” the filmmaker said.

Netflix has become a force in Hollywood with its original content, most recently racking up 34 nominations at this year’s Emmy awards for shows such as “House of Cards” and “Orange is the New Black.” Jolie’s partner Pitt has also teamed up with Netflix for his upcoming satirical comedy “War Machine,” written and directed by David Michod, which will be released on the platform and in select theaters next year.

Other major names developing original content for Netflix include Adam Sandler, Leonardo DiCaprio and Mark and Jay Duplass.—Reuters

Angelina Jolie to adapt Cambodian memoir for Netflix film

Los Angeles, 24 July — Angelina Jolie is the latest high-profile filmmaker to join the ranks of Netflix Inc, where she will be directing a Cambodian author’s war memoir into a feature-length film, the online streaming platform said on Thursday.

Jolie, 40, is producing and directing “First They Killed My Father: A Daughter of Cambodia Remembers,” based on an author and activist Loung Ung’s memoirs of being a child soldier during Khmer Rouge’s reign over Cambodia in 1975.

“It deepened forever my understanding of how children experience war and are affected by the emotional memory of it. And it helped me draw closer still to the people of Cambodia, my son’s homeland,” Jolie said of Ung’s book in a statement.

Jolie and Ung co-wrote the script and Jolie’s Cambodian-born son Maddox will be involved in the production, Netflix said. The film will be released on Netflix exclusively in late 2016, and will also be entered at major film festivals.

This will be Jolie’s fourth feature directorial effort, following on the success of last year’s “Unbroken” and the upcoming “By The Sea,” in which she

Deliberately cast newcomers for ‘Masaan’: Neeraj

Kolkata, 24 July — Neeraj Ghaywan, whose debut film “Masaan” is releasing across the country today, says he deliberately roped in newcomers as they gelled well with the film’s fresh and realistic feel.

“I wanted my characters to be like real life. Stars have their own baggage — it is not always easy to make them discard their numerals.

“My shoots passed off uninterrupted without any actor being mobbed at any public place,” Neeraj, who had assisted Anurag Kashyap in “Gangs of Wasseypur,” told PTI.

“I had set the bar high for all of us because none of the cast and the crew, most of whom made their debut in this film expected such a response.

“Getting the official selection itself was a huge honour,” Neeraj said.

The film has won the acclaimed FIPRESCI, Promising Future awards at the 68th Cannes International Film Festival and the Sundance Global Filmmaker Award.

Besides Richa, the film stars Vicky Kaushal, Sanjay Mishra and Shweta Tripathi.—PTI

Universal Pictures’ ‘Jurassic World’ sequel set for June 2018

Los Angeles, 24 July — After taking the summer box office by storm with more than $1.5 billion globally, the “Jurassic World” dinosaurs will be getting a sequel slated for 22 June, 2018, Comcast Corp’s Universal Pictures said on Thursday.

“Jurassic World,” which rebooted Steven Spielberg’s “Jurassic Park” dinosaur franchise in June, has become the third highest-grossing film in history, behind only James Cameron’s “Titanic” and “Avatar.”

The film’s leads Chris Pratt and Bryce Dallas Howard return, along with Spielberg as executive producer and “Jurassic World” director Colin Trevorrow penning the script. An official title for the sequel and the director have yet to be announced.

“Jurassic World,” co-produced with Legendary Pictures, exceeded early expectations to achieve the largest opening weekend in movie history with $524.1 million at the global box office.

The film, added to an already stellar year for Universal Pictures, which became the fastest studio to hit $2 billion at the box office in a calendar year last month, buoyed by the success of February’s “Fifty Shades of Grey,” April’s “Furious 7” and May’s “Pitch Perfect 2.”

In its earnings report Thursday, Comcast said revenue at the film studio rose 93 percent from a year earlier to $2.3 billion, bolstered by “Furious 7” and “Jurassic World.”

Upcoming Universal movies this year include M Night Shyamalan’s horror “The Visit,” drama “Everest,” Aaron Sorkin’s “Steve Jobs” biopic and Guillermo Del Toro’s gothic horror “Crimson Peak.”—Reuters

Cast member Chris Pratt poses at the premiere of “Jurassic World” in Hollywood, California on 9 June, 2015. The movie opens in the US on 12 June. —Reuters

Koludn, 25 July — Boy-band One Direction’s “One Thing” hitmaker also thanked fans for en-joying the music and supporting the group.

“To you who support us, in any way, thank you. We wouldn’t be here without you. You did this and we thank you for having us. All the love.”

In 2010, media mogul Simon Cowell grouped Harry, Louis Tomlinson, Niall Horan, Liam Payne and Zayn to create One Direction after they finished third on Cowell’s record label Syco Records after their win. 

Malik, however, left the band earlier this year.—PTI
Idaho will not restrict fishing despite regional drought-linked die-offs

SALMON, (Idaho), 24 July — Idaho fisheries managers will not follow the lead of neighbouring states in restricting catch-and-release angling, despite a drought and heat wave that have killed or stressed thousands of trout and other fish.

Idaho Fish and Game biologists said the unseasonably hot weather in the state in late June and early July had warmed and lowered the rivers weeks earlier than usual.

But they added this week that those conditions were not expected to continue to the point where trout, which are often caught and then released, would perish from the added stress of human handling.

Similar conditions in Oregon, Montana and Washington state prompted fisheries managers there to place limitations on fishing.

Fisheries managers and anglers across the Pacific Northwest have reported sightings of struggling and dead fish in streams in numbers that Mark Ahrens, acting chief of fisheries operations for the US Fish and Wildlife Service’s Pacific region, described as alarming.

“It’s a depressing thing to be looking at,” he said.

In Oregon, the Fish and Wildlife Service scrambled to save adult and juvenile salmon from a federal hatchery where water temperatures for the first time reached highs considered lethal to the coldwater fish.

The federal agency earlier this month trucked 160,000 juvenile and 680 adult spring Chinook salmon to a hatchery in the Columbia River Gorge in Washington from a hatchery in central Oregon where daytime river temperatures reached 76 degrees, Ahrens said.

The restrictions come at the height of the summer fishing season in the US West, according to state and federal fisheries managers.

Factors feeding the stresses on game fish such as cutthroat trout include reduced precipitation and severely reduced mountain snowpack that usually melts gradually into streams, cooling them and fostering flows, government fish biologists said. 

Puma’s sales start seeing boost from marketing spend

FRANKFURT, 24 July — German sportswear company Puma reported better-than-expected sales for the second quarter as investments in new products and marketing started to pay off, helping to lift its shares as much as 3 percent.

Puma launched its biggest ever marketing campaign a year ago to gain back territory lost to Adidas and Nike, prominently featuring Olympic sprint champion Usain Bolt, who has been promoting a new sprint-soled running shoe. However, currency headwinds and marketing spending caused a second quarter net loss of 3.3 million euros (2.32 million pounds). Analysts polled by Reuters had forecast a net profit of 920,000 euros.

The sportswear industry sources most of its products from Asia in US dollar contracts, but Puma’s said in a statement with regard to a 16.2 percent rise in currency adjusted sales in Puma’s heavily promoted footwear business.

In Puma, which named pop star Rihanna as its women’s creative director in December, reiterated a reduced outlook given in May for its gross profit margin to fall by 100 to 150 basis points from 46.6 percent last year.

The group, majority owned by French luxury goods group Kering, still expects operating earnings in the second half to reach between 80 million and 100 million euros from 128 million in 2014.

It sees currency adjusted sales increasing by a medium single-digit percentage from last year’s 751 million euros.

Puma shares were 2.5 percent higher at 157.85 euros at 0717 GMT, outperforming a flat German small-cap index. — Reuters

‘Selfies’ of the 17th century highlighted in Dutch exhibition

AMSTEL, 24 July — The selfie may be a contemporary concept, but a Dutch museum aims to show that its roots go back centuries.

In an upcoming exhibition, the Maartshuis in The Hague is showing a collection of self-portraits by master artists including Rembrandt, Jan Steen, Carel Fabritius and Gerrit Dou from Dutch painting’s 17th century Golden Age.

The self-portrait was particularly popular among Dutch painters of the period. Rembrandt alone painted and drew dozens over his lifetime, tracing the aging of a brash and self-confident young genius into a bowed and disappointed bankrupt.

The exhibition, “Dutch Self-Portraits - ‘Selfies from the Golden Age’”, will gather 27 mostly loaned paintings showing the ways artists chose to represent themselves — as wealthy bourgeois, family men, hunters or professional painters. While anybody with a smartphone can make a selfie nowadays, back then the self-portrait was the preserve of the highly skilled, the museum said in a statement on Thursday. — Reuters

West Ham scrape through on penalties in Europa League

LONDON, 24 July — West Ham United, reduced to 10 men after defender James Tomkins was sent off in the first half, won 5-3 in a penalty shootout against Maltese Cup winners Birkirkara to scrape into the Europa League third qualifying round on Thursday.

The English Premier League side, who entered the competition via the Fair Play League, lost 1-0 on Thursday leaving the tie at 1-1 on aggregate with extra time failing to break the deadlock after Birkirkara were also reduced to 10 men.

West Ham scored all five of their penalties in the shootout with substitute Diego Poyet netting the winning free-kick winner for Slaven Bilic’s side in the heat of Malta.

Tomkins, who scored a last-gasp winner in the first leg at Upton Park last week, was sent off for throwing Nikolao Yukanac to the ground before half-time at the Ta’Qali National Stadium in Valletta.

West Ham now face Astra Giurgiu of Romania, who beat Scottish side Inverness Caledonian Thistle 1-0 on aggregate after a 0-0 draw on Thursday. They must get through that tie plus a playoff round to reach the group stage of Europe’s second-tier competition. — Reuters

West Ham’s Diego Poyet celebrates with team mates after scoring the winning penalty in the shootout against Birkirkara during UEFA Europa League Second Qualifying Round Second Leg - Ta’ Qali National Stadium, in Malta on 23 July, 2015. — Reuters
Salas boosts Solheim hopes with opening 64 at LPGA Classic

Golf Channel after finishing boosters for me," Salas told are really good confidence out the day and made some States in September at her thrilled with her opening career win on the LPGA Tour

Salas, whose only ca

Panama demands committee resign in Gold Cup controversy

South Korea goalie out with broken collarbone

South Korea have called up Busan goalkeeper Lee Bum-young for next month’s East Asian Cup after Kim Jin-hyeon underwrote surgery for a broken collarbone sustained playing for his Japanese club Cerezo Osaka.

North Korea’s newly-appointed Olympics minister Toshibaki Endo smiles as he is appointed first minister for the 2020 Summer Games by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe (not in picture), at Abe’s official residence in Tokyo on 25 June 2015. — Reuters

South Korea are really starting from zero," he added. "As for construction costs, we aren’t thinking of anything at this point, we are really starting from zero," Endo told a news conference on Friday. "We are asking for lots of opinions.

Panama City, 24 July — The Panamanian Football Federation (FEPAFUT) has demand- ed yet," Endo told a news conference on Friday. "We are asking for lots of opinions.

Panama has been a backlash in a country still reeling from the massive March 2011 earthquake and tsunami. Olympics Minister Toshibaki Endo, who also heads a committee tasked with developing a new plan for the stadium, said all op- tions were still open.

Panama charges the official in the CONCACAF Gold Cup semifinal match at Georgia Dome in Atlanta, GA, on 24 July 2015. — Reuters

The controversial awards caused chaos in the Georgia Dome with the Panamanian players hounding the referee and fans hurling objects from the stands. Play was held up for several minutes.

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