Yangon, 30 July — The Union government released almost 7,000 prisoners in an amnesty Thursday including more than 200 foreigners and former military-intelligence officers.

In its announcement, the government said President U Thein Sein granted pardons on humanitarian grounds to 6,966 prisoners who had served part of their sentences and shown good behavior in prisons.

The amnesty is aimed at furthering stability and the peace process, and allowing the pardoned prisoners to participate in national reconciliation and political processes, it said.

Presidential pardons with repatriation were also granted to 210 foreign prisoners in view of maintaining bilateral relations, the announcement said.

Among the foreigners released were 153 Chinese loggers who had been sentenced to life imprisonment last week, according to an official of the prison in Myitkyina where the men were being held on charges of illegal logging.

Three journalists and two publishers from the Bi Moon Te Nay, or Bi-Midday Sun, were also freed under the amnesty from Insein prison in Yangon.

Thursday’s amnesty was one of the largest that Myanmar has seen in recent years.—GNLM

2015 Magsaysay Awards honor advocates of culture, charity in Asia

Manila, 30 July — The recipients of this year’s Ramon Magsaysay Awards, dubbed Asia’s Nobel Prize, were announced Wednesday, with two women among the winners.

In a statement, the Manila-based Ramon Magsaysay Awards Foundation identified this year’s awardees as Komma-ly Chanthavong, 71, from Laos; Ligaya Fernando-Amilbangsa, 71, from the Philippines; Anshu Gupta, 44, from India; and Kyaw Thu, 55, from Myanmar.

(See page 8)

Heavy rain, landslides likely due to cyclone, weather bureau warns

Yangon, 30 July — The weather bureau warned of heavy rains, strong winds and landslides across Myanmar on Thursday as tropical cyclone “Komen” was set to cross the southern coast of Bangladesh near Chittagong area.

(See page 5)
KBZ Bank donates cash for flood victims

On behalf of KBZ Bank Chairman U Aung Ko Win, Senior Executive Director U Nyo Myint and Executive Director U Aung Kyaw Myo presented the cash donation to UMFCCI President U Win Aung.

UMFCCI President U Win Aung presents K150 million for flood victims to officials.— MNA

Worsening traffic congestion frustrates Yangon commuters

By Ye Myint

YANGON, 30 July — For office worker Ko Maung Oo, hours spent traveling to and from work by bus each day are a source of “anxiety and frustration.”

His experience is common among Yangon commuters, whom a recent survey found spend an average two hours each day in traffic. “Traffic moving at a snail’s pace in the congested spots makes us feel despondent,” Ko Maung Oo, who commutes from his suburban home to an office downtown, told The Global New Light of Myanmar on Thursday.

“Our precious time has been stolen on the buses stranded in daily rush hour congestion.”

The Yangon Traffic Report released by auto trading site Motor.com.mm found 44 percent of bus commuters spent between 1-2 hours a day on their daily commute, while 35 percent spent twice as long commuting.

The survey, conducted in late 2014 and early 2015, received responses from about 500 commuters. It found 65 percent of road users were caught in severe traffic jams at least six times a month, 35 percent were affected three to six times a month. Urban commuters face the most drawn-out journeys due to traffic woes, the report pointed out.

Statistics show 3.7 million, or 79 percent, of Yangon’s almost 6 million people use buses for their daily commute, with 7 percent catching ferries, 4 percent riding circle trains and 2 percent taking taxis.

Taxi driver Ko Lin Phyo said he and fellow drivers were losing money while stuck in traffic. “Heavy congestions in Yangon reduces our potential earnings as it is unavoidable to be stuck in traffic for several minutes every day,” Ko Lin Phyo, 28 said.

Since the introduction of a scheme to replace old vehicles with imported autos, Yangon has seen an influx of cars, with vehicle numbers rising on roads downtown, as well as in suburbs and satellite towns.

According to figures compiled last December by the Department of Road Transport Administration, 433,788 registered vehicles are running on Yangon roads, accounting for about 80 percent of the country’s 643,719 cars.

The report listed Pyay Road between Myaenigone and Hanthawadi round-about, Hledan Junction, Tamway Junction, areas near Bayintnaung flyover and Theingyizay market among the worst places for congestion.

Some 26 percent of respondents to the Yangon Traffic Report blamed bad drivers for the city’s traffic problems, while 16 percent cited the dramatic increase in vehicle numbers. Another 15 percent pointed to insufficient road infrastructure.

Appointment of ambassador agreed on

NAY PYI TAW, 30 July — The government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has agreed to the appointment of H.E. Mr Karel Johannes HARTOGH as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, with residence in Bangkok.

Mr Karel Johannes HARTOGH was born in Paris, France, on 31 October 1956. He obtained a High School Diploma from Van Maastricht Lyceum, The Hague, in 1967. Then he studied international law at the University of Amsterdam in 1985 and got a Master’s Degree in Law in 1987. He joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands in 1985 and served at the European Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs up till 1989. From 1990 to 1999, he served in various capacities at the European Union Department, Export Controls Department, Strategic Affairs Department of the Ministry of Economic Affairs including the post of the secretary of Minister for Foreign Trade. He then served as Deputy Director of Southern Africa Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, from 1999 to 2001. Afterwards, he served as Principal Private Secretary of Minister of Foreign Affairs from 2001 to 2005. Before he assumed his duties as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the Kingdom of Thailand, he served as Director of Asia Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands. He is married.— MNA

Flash flood causes damage to farmlands

On behalf of KBZ Bank Chairman U Aung Ko Win, Senior Executive Director U Nyo Myint and Executive Director U Aung Kyaw Myo presented the cash donation to UMFCCI President U Win Aung.

UMFCCI President U Win Aung presents K150 million for flood victims to officials.— MNA

NAY PYI TAW, 30 July — Flooding caused by heavy rains in June and July caused damage to farmlands across the nation, according to the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation. Among 395,656 acres of inundated farmlands, flash flood placed 116,500 acres of farmlands under water and caused damage to 23,102 acres in Sagaing Region.— MNA
Planning, field visits keys to flood relief operations: President U Thein Sein

NAY PYI TAW, 30 July — President U Thein Sein urged ministries to make all-out efforts during flood relief operations Thursday, stressing the importance of proper planning and field visits to inundated areas.

The president made the comment during a speech at the National Natural Disaster Prevention Central Committee held at the Presidential Palace in Nay Pyi Taw.

In his speech, the president said some areas of the country were inundated while farmland, roads, railroads, bridges and houses were destroyed due to continuous rains since 16 July.

Although it is impossible to prevent natural disasters, their impact can be reduced by providing accurate weather reports, the president said.

After the president’s speech, Chairman of the Central Committee Vice President U Nyan Tun explained the objectives of the central committee.

Later, members of the committee, ministers, deputies and officials reported to the president on measures being taken to provide assistance to flood victims and rehabilitation efforts.

Earlier in the morning, President U Thein Sein received France’s Ambassador to Myanmar Mr Thierry Mathou, who is leaving the country on expiry of his tour of duty, at the Presidential Palace.

They discussed promotion of bilateral relations, cooperation in the financial sector of Myanmar, investment in electricity and energy sectors and the success of the peace process. —MNA

Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker talks election at Toungoo town meeting

NAY PYI TAW, 30 July — The general election scheduled for 8 November is a key event for the country, the speaker of the Pyithu Hluttaw said Thursday in a meeting with local people in the town of Toungoo, Bago Division.

Thura U Shwe Mann stressed the need to choose worthy candidates who will devote themselves to the interests of the region and the country as a whole.

The speaker urged local management committees to make combined efforts to ensure that elections are free and fair.

Local officials and parliamentarians took part in discussions on regional development.

Speaker Thura U Shwe Mann also met local people in the town of Yeni and gave instructions on regional development activities.

Before the meeting, the speaker paid homage to the Presiding Sayadaw of Shwezeti Monastery and offered robes and monastic items to the members of the Sangha. —MNA

Myanmar, India pledge greater cooperation in defence, security

NAY PYI TAW, 30 July — Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing paid a courtesy call on Indian Prime Minister Mr Narendra Modi at his official residence, officials said Thursday.

During their meeting Wednesday they discussed matters related to defence and security cooperation between the two armies, construction of roads and railways linking East Asian countries and maritime transport services.

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing later visited India’s Air Chief Marshal Arup Raha, PVSM, AVSM, VM, at his office.

In the afternoon, the commander-in-chief met Chief of the Army Staff of the Indian Army General Dalbir Singh, PVSM, UYSM, AVSM, VSM, ADC. After the meeting, General Singh hosted a luncheon for Senior General Min Aung Hlaing at the Army Battle Honour Mess.

At the briefing hall, the commander-in-chief was briefed on the integration of the Indian army.

He also met Chief of Naval Staff of the Indian Navy Admiral RK Dhowan, PVSM, AVSM, YSM, ADC at his office.

In the late afternoon at the South Block of the Defence Ministry of India, he was briefed on the federal system of governance.

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing also signed the book of condolence for late former Indian President APJ Abdul Kalam at this residence in New Delhi.—Myawady

U Ko Ko Latt concurrently accredited Ambassador to Oman

NAY PYI TAW, 31 July — The President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has appointed U Ko Ko Latt, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, concurrently as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar to the Sultanate of Oman. —MNA
Tornado destroys more than 30 households in Myanaung Tsp

Mynaung, 30 July — A tornado damaged more than 30 households Wednesday including one religious building worth K23.5 million in Ayeyawady Region, village-tract Administrator U Zaw Moe reported.

The tornado hit Nandawgyun Village in Maekhinchaung Village-tract in Myanmar Township of the region around 1:45 pm and lasted roughly five minutes. There are 87 households in the village, with residents also facing flooding from the Ayeyawady River. Evacuees are being accommodated at a relief camp in the compound of the basic education school in the village.

Nay Win Zaw (Myanaung)

Kalay University provides cash assistance for flood victims

Kalay, 30 July — Students and faculty of various departments from Kalay University including staff of administration section on Wednesday donated more than K1 million to help flood victims in Kalay Township, Sagaing Region.

Many people in Kalay Township moved to relief camps due to flash flooding caused by heavy rain that began falling Tuesday evening.—Dr Than Win

School building upgrades ready to begin in Tatkon Tsp

Tatkon, 30 July — The Tatkon Township Education Office has received approval to construct new buildings at 38 basic education schools this academic year.

Plans have been drawn for 37 single-storey and one two-storey concrete school buildings. The buildings represent a significant upgrade for many of the basic education schools in the township.

Tin Soe Lwin (Township IPRD)

MPF launches officer training school in Mandalay

Mandalay, 30 July — The Police Officer Training School (Mandalay) officially opened in Chanayetnaw Township, here, on 29 July, with Mandalay Region Chief Minister U Ye Myint in attendance.

Police Quartermaster-General Pol Brig-Gen Than Tin Aung, Commander of Mandalay Region Police Force Pol Col Han Tun and Commandant of the school Pol Col Min Aung formally opened the training school, while Chief of Myanar Police Force Maj-Gen Zaw Win gave an address.

In commemoration of the opening of the school, senior police officers donated provisions to Buddhist monks. Construction of the training school began in September 2014.—Tin Maung (Mandalay)

Clashes in Kachin State raise concerns ahead of election

Mohnyin, 30 July — Armed clashes in Kachin State not only threaten peace talks but also the 2015 general election, said Dr Tu Ja, Chairman of Kachin State Democracy Party (KDP) on 28 July.

Nshang San Awng from the Myitkyina-based Peace-talk Creation Group (PCG) on 27 July said some fighting broke out in Sumprabum Township between Myitkyina and Putao townships in July. Local residents without access to Sumprabum’s urban area fled to the area controlled by the Kachin Independence Army.

For security reasons, the Union Election Commission cancelled the 2012 by-election in Kachin State’s Mogauk, Phakant and Bhamo townships three days before the scheduled polling day.—GNLM-001
Heavy rain, landslides likely . . .

The Meteorology and Hydrology Department rated the weather system an orange stage cyclonic storm, warning Chin and Rakhine states, as well as Magway Region, to be on high alert.

Sagaying, Mandalay, Magway, Bago, Yangon, Taninthayi and Ayeyawady regions, as well as Chin, Rakhine, Shan, Kayin and Mon states were forecast to see heavy falls, strong winds, flash floods and landslides within 12 hours from Thursday morning due to the cyclone, the announcement said.

Maximum wind speeds of 60 to 90 miles per hour are forecast for Maungtaw District and 50 to 70 miles per hour in Sittway District while “Komen” is crossing the coasts of Bangladesh, the announcement said.

Frequent squalls with rough to very rough seas were forecast off and along Myanmar coasts with surface wind speeds reaching 50 to 60 miles per hour.

The cyclone was centered over the Northeast Bay of Bengal about 50 miles Southwest of Chittagong in Bangladesh and 135 miles northwest of Sittway at 1:30 p.m. Thursday.

The department advised trawlers, vessels and ships off and along Myanmar coasts to avoid the path of the cyclone.—GNLM

2015 Magsaysay Awards honor advocates of culture, charity . . .

The recipient for Emergent Leadership is Sanjiv Chaturvedi, 40, from India.

Chanthavong is being recognized for her "indomitable spirit" to revive and develop the ancient Laotian art of silk weaving, Fernando-Amilbangsa for her "single-minded crusade" in preserving the endangered artistic heritage of the southern Philippines, Gupta for his enterprising leadership in treating cloth as a sustainable development resource for the poor, and Kyaw Thu for his "compassion in addressing the fundamental needs of both the living and the dead in Myanmar."

In addition, the prestigious award's special category for emergent leadership will be conferred this year to an Indian government employee who fought corruption from within.

“The Magsaysay awardees of 2015 are truly stoking fresh hopes for a better Asia. Clearly, they are creating bold solutions to deeply rooted social problems in their respective societies, problems which are most damaging to the lives of those trapped in poverty, ignorance, prejudice, and unjust systems,” said Carmencita Abella, president of the foundation.

The awardees will receive a certificate, a medallion, and a cash prize during a formal ceremony in Manila on Aug. 31.

Since its establishment in 1957, more than 300 individuals and organizations from Asia have been conferred with the Ramon Magsaysay Award for addressing "issues of human development with courage and creativity, and in doing so, have made contributions that transformed their societies for the better."—Kyodo News

UN envoy Angelina Jolie visits IDP camps in Myitkyina

MYITKYINA, 30 July — UNHCR special envoy and goodwill ambassador Angelina Jolie met Kachin State Chief Minister U Lajohn Ngan Hsai at Myitkyina airport Thursday to discuss the situation in camps for internally displaced persons in the state and the 2015 general election.

The goodwill ambassador and party later visited Jamaikaung and Saint Joseph IDP camps and spoke to camp residents about the welfare of people in the camps.—State IPRD

Recruitment firms pay life insurance to Russian trawler victims’ families

YANGON, 30 July — Families of four Myanmar sailors who died in the sinking of a Russian trawler on April 1 received life insurance payments Thursday from seafarer recruitment and placement companies.

Asia Wave paid US $30,000 each to the families of three men it placed on the ship, while firm Top Choice paid the amount to the family of the seafarer it recruited.

Asia Wave director U Kaung Htoo Khang Win said.

Out of 10 Myanmar sailors placed by the two companies on the Dalniy Vostok, which sank in Russian waters with 132 crew members about, four died in the tragedy.

The Russian government paid US $15,000 compensation for each victim of the tragedy to their families last week.—GNLM

75% completed Nampaw bailey bridge in Hsipaw Township

A bailey bridge is under construction across Nampaw Creek in Hsipaw Township, Shan State, with 75 percent complete on 30 July.—Sai Tun Thein (HSIPAW TOWNSHIP IPRD)
Indian Ocean debris almost certainly from a Boeing 777 - Malaysia

KUALA LUMPUR / PARIS, 30 July — Malaysia is “almost certain” that plane debris found on Reunion Island in the Indian Ocean is from a Boeing 777, the deputy transport minister said on Thursday, heightening the possibility it could be wreckage from missing Flight MH370.

The object, which appeared last year while en route from Kuala Lumpur to Beijing in one of the most baffling mysteries in aviation history. The plane was carrying 239 passengers and crew.

Search efforts led by Australia have focussed on a broad expanse of the southern Indian Ocean off Australia. Reunion Island, where the debris was found washed up on Wednesday, is a French overseas department roughly 3,700 km (2,300 miles) away, east of Madagascar. “The location is consistent with the drift analysis provided to the Malaysian investigation team, which showed a route from the southern Indian Ocean to Africa,” Najib said in a statement.

There have been four serious incidents involving 777s in the 20 years since the widebody jet came into service. Only MH370 is thought to have crashed south of the equator.

“No hypothesis can be ruled out, including that it would come from a Boeing 777,” the Reunion prefecture and the French Justice Ministry said in a joint statement on Thursday. Aviation experts who have seen widely circulated pictures of the debris said it may be a moving wing surface known as a flaperon, situated close to the fuselage. “It is almost certain that the flaperon is from a Boeing 777 aircraft. Our chief investigator here told me this,” Malaysian Deputy Transport Minister Abdul Aziz Kaprawi told Reuters. Abdul Aziz said a Malaysian team was heading to Reunion Island, about 600 km (370 miles) east of Madagascar. Australia’s Deputy Prime Minister Warren Truss said the object had a number stamped on it that might speed its verification.

23 confirmed dead in army helicopter crash in Laos

 vientiane, 30 July — No survivors have been found from a military helicopter crash that took place earlier this week, Lao defense ministry confirmed Thursday.

The MI-17 helicopter of the Lao Army’s aviation wing crashed on a slope of Mt. Phou Bia in the Lao province of Xaysomboun while en route to the northern provinces of Xiengkhuang and Huaphan Monday to be part of a wing, was being sent to offices of France’s BEA crash investigation agency in Toulouse to verify if was indeed the first trace of the lost plane to be found, said the Lao defense minister.

Accident due to poor prevailing weather conditions has been identified as the probable cause in preliminary findings, the statement confirmed.

Meanwhile, search and rescue teams continue to undertake investigation and recovery work at the difficult-to-access crash site.

Local conditions featuring heavy seasonal rains and high humidity are serving to hamper efforts in the rugged jungle-covered terrain, with storms forecast for Thursday afternoon local time.

The highest peak in Laos at an elevation of 2,819 meters, temperatures experienced on the densely forested Mt Phou Bia are typically several degrees cooler than those recorded in most locations across the tropical Southeast Asian nation.

Inaccessible by road and deemed unsafe for air access, accident response crews have been chiefly focused on on-ground efforts to reach the site, a source quoted by state-run media Vientiane Times was reported as saying Thursday.

The latest Lao military aviation accident follows another incident in May 2014 in the province of Xiengkhoun where the crash of an airplane resulted in the death of 16 crew members and passengers onboard, including several of the nation’s high-ranking officials.

26 killed, 42 missing in landslides in western Nepal

KATHMANDU, 30 July — At least 26 people have been killed and 42 others missing following landslides in western Nepal on Wednesday night, officials said.

Some 20 dead bodies have been recovered from Lumle Village Development Committee (VDC) and Bhadra Tamaghi VDC in Kaski District so far, according to officials involved in the rescue operation.

Lumle, some 30 kilometers west of Pokhara, has been a famous tourist destination in Nepal which attracts thousands of domestic as well as international tourists every year. Lumle VDC is a gateway to the nature trek reaching the Annapurna Base Camp (ABC) in western Nepal. However, no foreigner is found killed or injured in the landslide so far.

“We have recovered 15 dead bodies in Lumle alone and another 28 people have gone missing as 14 houses were buried in the landslide,” chief district officer of Kaski District, Krishna Bahadur Raut, told Xinhua by phone from the site.

He also said that five people were killed and 14 others injured in Bhadra Tamaghi VDC after villages were hit by the landslide.

Five houses were completely destroyed while some schools and temples in the remote villages are said to be partially damaged, according to local officials.

Rescue operations are currently underway, the officials said.

National residents take water from a dried river in Bekasi, West Java province, Indonesia, on 30 July, 2015. Indonesian Agency for Meteorology Climatology and Geophysics (BMKG) said, trend of El Nino phenomena intensity is moving towards to strong moderate, which means that the start of the rain season in Indonesia will withdraw to November.—Xinhua
Russia vetoes UN resolution on tribunal for Malaysian jet crash

NEW YORK, 30 July — The UN Security Council failed to endorse a draft resolution that would have established a tribunal to prosecute people responsible for the downing of Malaysia Airlines Flight 17 in eastern Ukraine last July, after Russia used its veto to prevent its passage.

The draft resolution was proposed by Malaysia, currently sitting as a non-permanent member on the 15-member council. After the vote, the country’s transport minister Liow Tiong Lai said, “We are deeply disappointed” by the council’s failure to adopt it.

One year after the unanimous adoption of a resolution condemning the downing of the passenger jet and demanding an international investigation, “the council is now taking a step back by sending the wrong signal to the victims’ family and loved ones,” the minister said. Russian Ambassador Vitaly Churkin said, “Our position is that this is premature; it hasn’t been elaborated carefully.”

Russia proposed a separate resolution seeking to bring the perpetrators to justice without establishing a tribunal. While it was put on the table for scrutiny among council members, it was not reconciled with the Malaysian proposal.

On Wednesday’s vote, 11 countries supported the resolution, while China, Venezuela and Angola abstained. The Malaysia Airlines jet line bound for Kuala Lumpur was shot down July 17 when it was flying over Ukraine’s Donetsk region held by pro-Russian separatists. All 298 people aboard were killed. The Netherlands and Australia, where many of the passengers came from, also sent their foreign ministers to Wednesday’s Security Council meeting.

Malaysian Transport Minister Liow said the vote result was regrettable but said “we are resolute that justice will be delivered and we won’t let the veto weaken our resolve,” adding that they will start focusing on other options to seek prosecution of those responsible.— Kyodo News

Western delegations visit Iran one after another to seek cooperation opportunities

TEHRAN, 30 July — After a landmark deal on Iran’s nuclear program, Tehran has received various senior officials from the West, with the latest being French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius.

Fabius arrived here Wednesday at the invitation of his Iranian counterpart Mohammad-Javad Zarif on the first such visit in over a decade.

The agreement reached in Vienna benefits both Iran and the P5+1 (Britain, China, France, Russia, the United States, and Germany) group and serves as a major step towards a nuclear deal, he said. Both countries may also cooperate on nuclear programs for they had collaborated in this field before, he said. Both countries may also further cooperate in economic sectors, such as energy, transportation and the auto industry, he added.

According to information reaching here from Paris, earlier, France will send a delegation of 80 French companies to Tehran at the end of September.

A day before Fabius’ arrival, Rouhani received another guest from the European continent — EU foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini. During her meeting with Rouhani, Mogherini expressed the hope that the implementation of the nuclear deal would open a new chapter in the economic, trade and political relations between Iran and the EU, and would help expand Iran’s relations with European countries.— Xinhua

India set to become world’s most populous country by 2022 — UN

LONDON, 30 July — India is set to overtake China and become the world’s most populous country in less than a decade — six years sooner than previous- ly forecast, the United Na- tions said on Wednesday.

Fast-growing Nigeria is on course to oustrip the United States by about 2050 to become the country with the third largest population, the United Nations predict.

The current global population of 7.3 billion is forecast to reach 9.7 billion in 2050 and 11.2 billion in 2020, slightly above the last set of UN projections. Most growth will happen in the least-developed countries, particularly Africa, according to the report World Population Prospects.

The demographic forecasts are crucial for designing and implementing the new global development goals being launched later this year to replace the Millennium Development Goals.

John Wilmoth, head of the UN population division, said the concentration of growth in the poorest countries would make it harder to eradicate poverty, combat hunger and expand schooling and health systems.

The world’s two largest nations, China and India, have well over 1 billion people each and are likely to switch places by 2022 — six years earlier than previous- ly forecast. Experts predict Africa will account for more than half the world’s population growth in the next 35 years. Ten African countries — Angola, Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Malawi, Mali, Niger, Somalia, Uganda, Tanzania and Zambia are projected to see their populations five-fold or more by 2040. Future population growth is highly dependent on the path of future fertility, as relatively small changes in fertility can, projected over decades, generate large differences in total population, the report said. In recent years, fertility has declined in almost all parts of the world, while life expectancy has increased significantly in the poorest countries, rising from 56 to 62 since the beginning of the century.

Declining fertility and rising life expectancy mean the world is getting greyer, and most regions will have an ageing population, starting with Europe where one third of the population is projected to be over 60 by 2050, the report said.

Globally, the number of people aged 80 or over — currently 125 million — is projected to more than triple by 2050 and increase more than seven times by 2100.

But populations in many regions are still young. In Africa, children under 15 account for two fifths of the population.

“The large number of young people in Africa who will reach adulthood in the coming years and have children of their own, ensures that the region will play a central role in shap- ing the size and distribution of the world’s population over the coming decades,” the report said.— Reuters

US democratic presidential hopeful Clinton to call for lifting Cuban embargo

HOPKINTON, New Hampshire, 30 July — Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton this week will call on US lawmakers to lift the long-standing economic embargo against Cuba, her campaign announced on Wednesday.

The former US secre- tary of state will say on Fri- day during an appearance at Florida International Uni- versity in Miami that “Re- publican arguments against increased engagement are part of failed policies of the past,” her campaign said.

President Barack Oba- ma’s administration has formally restored diplo- matic ties with the island and dropped Cuba from a list of state sponsors of terror.

But Congress has the authority to remove restric- tions that prevent Ameri- cans from owning property in Cuba or travelling there freely. So far, it has not done so.

Before the Obama administration’s change in policy earlier, Clinton had asserted the policy toward Cuba, in place for more than 50 years, was not working. She wrote in her memoir that she had urged Obama to move away from the tough stance.

Clinton’s position lines up with that of many young- er voters but could frustrate older Cuban-Americans in South Florida, many of whom believe the United States should not have re- lations with the Communist government of Cuban Pres- ident Raul Castro.

Floridians Jeb Bush and Marco Rubio, both of whom are seeking the Rep- ublican nomination for president in the Novem- ber 2016 election, have sharply criticized Obama for restoring relations with Cuba. “Hilllary Clinton and President Obama’s claim that our Cuba policy is a relic of history, but it’s the Castro regime that is stuck in the Cold War,” Emily Benavides, a spokeswoman for Bush, said in a statement.

Reuters

Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton speaks during a campaign stop at Beech Hill Farm in Hopkinton, New Hampshire July 28, 2015.— Reuters

Clinton to call for lifting Cuban embargo

Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton speaks during a campaign stop at Beech Hill Farm in Hopkinton, New Hampshire July 28, 2015.— Reuters
Sound judgement more important than good luck

By Kyaw Thura

T he Fullmoon of Waso, the Dhammacakkapavattana Day falls on 31st July 2015. The Fullmoon Day of Waso associates with the four great noble and significant events related to the precious life of the Omniscient Gotama Buddha. On that holy day, the Buddha-to-be (the Gotama Buddha) took pregnancy in the womb of Queen Maya, wife of his Majesty Sudodana of Kapilavatthu. Apart from providing access to education, the venerable monk is engaged in other philanthropic works including computer courses, free funeral services, free medical care, libraries, environmental conservation, provision of organic farming methods, and establishment of botanical gardens. Inspired by the Sayadaw’s efforts, a group including the reporter visited the school with the aim of making a contribution to its works. The cleanliness and quietness of the monastery compound has a lot to offer visitors. It offers a haven of peace and serenity away from the hustle and bustle of the city. We felt so pleased with our donations that our minds were filled with desires for more future contributions.

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 than-tunangnlm@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.

Supermarket chain offers free health checkups to public

By Khuing Thanda Lwin

YANGON, 30 July—Members of the public are invited to undergo a free health assessment at City Mart supermarket in South Dagon Township on 8 and 9 August, an official from the retail chain said Thursday.

The programme aims to provide medical examinations free of charge to residents in the township, a heavily populated suburban area of Yangon with few high-income residents. City Mart Holding Ltd corporate social responsibility officer U Aung Soe said.

Under the programme, people may undergo tests for handgrip strength, bone mineral density (BMD), body mass index (BMI) and blood pressure on site from 1 to 6 p.m., with the organizer preparing hundreds of books to disseminate knowledge on first aid treatment. As part of its cooperative social responsibility activities, City Mart Holding Ltd has carried out the health check programme since 2013 and provided free monthly medical check-ups to more than 10,000 people including foreigners.

The company is scheduled to conduct the programme at Ocean Supercentre in Mandalay Region in mid-August, planning to provide five kinds of medical check-ups including free eye tests, U Aung Soe said.—GNLM

Philanthropy and human value

Poe San

Located in the village of Kyaukant at the entrance to Bago Region, the Green Thumb school has taught orphans and children of poor families since 2004.

Sayadaw Dr Ashin Panjobba runs the school with the intention of implanting Buddhist teachings and ethics in young minds so that they will become productive members of society when they grow up. Nearly 500 children attend the school.

Apart from providing underprivileged children access to education, the venerable monk is engaged in other philanthropic works including computer courses, free funeral services, free medical care, libraries, environmental conservation, provision of organic farming methods, and establishment of botanical gardens. Inspired by the Sayadaw’s efforts, a group including the reporter visited the school with the aim of making a contribution to its works. The cleanliness and quietness of the monastery compound has a lot to offer visitors. It offers a haven of peace and serenity away from the hustle and bustle of the city. We felt so pleased with our donations that our minds were filled with desires for more future contributions.

Words of wisdom delivered by the Sayadaw still echo in my ears. “If you really hope for national prosperity, stop exchanging words and trading blame. Instead, give a helping hand where you can is the best way to attain that goal.” In our short lives all that we should do is to devote ourselves to philanthropic services to the best of our ability.
Keep Our Moral Conduct Clean

Htun Tin Htun

(continued from 30-7-2015)

"Calm is his thought, calm his speech and calm his deed, who, truly knowing, is wholly freed, perfectly tranquil and wise." (Dhammapada Verse No. 96). The father hates the child disobedience, the child hates the parents for not providing what he considers his essential needs. In society, a person would show hate to another person because of the feeling, rightly or wrongly, that the particular person was a stumbling block to one’s aspiration and so on.

In national and international relationship, one country would express hate for another country because of certain action against it. The hatred goes on. It leads to reprisal. In some instances, may even lead to war causing untold misery and destruction in lives and property.

“One should do what one teaches others to do, if one would train others, one should be well controlled oneself. Difficult is self-control.” (Dhammapada Verse No. 159). The Buddha’s Noble Eight-fold Path or the middle way is projected today, the day-to-day human relationships, together with the exercise of Patience, Tolerance and Understanding. It is well known that the word “Right” is contained in all the eight constituents of Ariya Path. Hence, a person who follows Noble Eight-fold Path, it will be the right path that we are taking to achieve peace and tranquility. The Eight-fold Path, that is; 1) Right Understanding; 2) Right Thought; 3) Right Livelihood; 4) Right Effort; 5) Right Speech; 6) Right Action; 7) Right Thought; 8) Right Concentration.

“Not by mere eloquence nor by becoming a person do a man become accomplished, if he is jealous, selfish and deceitful.” (Dhammapada Verse No. 262). The person who abides with the Noble Eight-fold Path, are the Five Precepts which are normally observed by all the Buddhist devotees coming from the religious meeting. They are: 1) To abstain from killing; 2) To abstain from stealing; 3) To abstain from adultery; 4) To abstain from intoxicants and drugs.

If these precepts are simple in their presentation and are likely, at times, to be taken for granted by devotees, without giving deep thought to the serious impor-
tance of our actions on the peace and harmony of our society and country.

“Difficult is life for the modest one who always seeks purity, is detached and unassuming, clean in life, and discerning.” (Dhammapada Verse No. 245). When these precepts were enunciated by the Buddha, He had in mind the unsettled conditions of society prevailing nearly twenty-six centuries ago in India. These conditions were caused by human fail-

ings such as anger which leads to killing, greed which leads to stealing, desire which leads to undue consumption of intoxicants or drugs.

Under the guidance of the teachings of the Bud-

dha, we can definitely make our Right Living. From a Buddhist perspec-
tive, morality is based on purification of our body.

As our minds are purified, our actions are purified. As a result, not only do mental attitudes that are dissimilar or harmful to our well-being disappear, but new mental states lead directly to more enlightened ac-
titudes in both our personal and social lives. We observe the commandments to refrain from stealing. In our human so-
ciety, each of us has to work to earn our living. With the money that we earn, we buy the necessary things of life for our suste-
nance. We treasure these necessities because we ob-
serve the commandments to refrain from stealing in our own

Authentication:
Laung Tun Hlaing Win Thit

LAWKA (The Literary Forum of Myanmar)
New Italian opposition group pledges support for Renzi reform

**Italy’s Prime Minister Matteo Renzi attends a joint news conference with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas in the West Bank city of Bethlehem on 22 July, 2015.**  
**Reuters**

**Rome, 30 July — A new Italian opposition splinter group said at its debut on Wednesday that it would back Prime Minister Matteo Renzi’s plan to make Italy more politically stable by changing the constitution to streamline the law-making process.**  
Denis Verdini said he was leaving former prime minister Silvio Berlusconi’s centre-right Forza Italia party to form a group of 10 senators that could give Renzi support on the legislation that is due to be voted in parliament in the autumn. The law, a major plank of Renzi’s reform platform, would strip regional governments of some powers they now hold and make the Senate an unelected body whose support would no longer be needed to seat a government.

In combination with a new electoral law passed in May, Renzi says the constitutional reform will make Italy, which has had 64 governments since 1945, more stable and more efficient.

Renzi’s centre-left coalition has only a 9-vote majority in the Senate and about 20 senators from the Democratic Party (PD) have said they would not vote for the reform if it is not revised, meaning Verdini’s new group could be pivotal.

Renzi has a broad majority in the lower house. While the new group may help the premier pass the reform, it could also deepen a split within the PD where left-wing members of the party are asking for a greater role in policy making.

Verdini, who was one of Berlusconi’s top lieutenants, told reporters on Wednesday that the Liberal Popular Autonomous Alliance (ALA), would not automatically support Renzi on other issues.

Forza Italia had backed the reforms until a dispute over the election of President Sergio Mattarella in January prompted Berlusconi to withdraw his support for Renzi’s institutional reforms. **— Reuters**

---

**The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, US Army General Martin Dempsey, appears before the Senate Armed Services Committee in Washington 29 July, 2015.**  
**Reuters**

**Washington, 30 July — The US military officer supported a proposed nuclear deal with Iran on Wednesday, saying it reduced the risk of Tehran developing atomic arms while buying time to work with allies to confront the Islamic Republic over other “malicious activities.”**  
Army General Martin Dempsey, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, told a Senate hearing he had advised the White House to keep sanctions on Iran’s ballistic missile programme and arms trafficking for “as long as possible.”

The deal between Iran and the United States, China, Russia, Britain and France would lift the ban on ballistic missile technology for eight years and retain an arms embargo for five.

Members of the Senate Armed Services Committee asked Dempsey how he squared his backing for the deal with his statement to the panel earlier this month that “under no circumstances” should pressure be eased on Iran over ballistic missiles and arms trafficking.

“My recommendation was to keep pressure on Iran on the other malicious activities for as long as possible,” Dempsey told the panel. “I will say that I think time works for us as well as Iran and so we made a compromise and having the opportunity to give my advice, I support it.”

Dempsey appeared alongside Defense Secretary Ash Carter, Secretary of State John Kerry, Treasury Secretary Jack Lew and Energy Secretary Ernest Moniz to discuss the military implications of the deal.

Iran agreed to stop producing highly enriched uranium and submit to UN inspections in exchange for an end to international economic sanctions.

The deal would free up $50 billion to $60 billion in Iranian funds that needs to be spent in other countries, Lew said.

He said Tehran needed much of that money as foreign reserves to settle purchases made in other countries that would be “hugely exaggerated” to think it all could be used to support militant groups and other “malicious purposes” in the Middle East.

Iran supports Hezbollah, Hamas and Houthi rebels in regional conflicts against US partners such as Israel and Yemen.

---

**Athens, 3 July.** Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras, struggling to contain a revolt in his left-wing Syriza party, said on Wednesday that his government would not implement reform measures beyond those agreed with lenders at a euro zone summit on July 12, “as long as possible.”

Tsipras faces an uncertain vote in the 200-seat parliament as Greeks such as Israel and Yemen.

---

**ATHENS, 3 July. Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras, struggling to contain a revolt in his left-wing Syriza party, said on Wednesday that his government would not implement reform measures beyond those agreed with lenders at a euro zone summit on July 12, “as long as possible.”**

Tsipras faces a tough Tsipras faces an uncertain vote in the 200-seat parliament as Greeks such as Israel and Yemen.
Sony first-quarter operating profit rises 39 percent, beats estimates

TOKYO, 30 July — Sony Corp on Thursday reported a 39 percent rise in quarterly profit on strong sales of camera sensors and PlayStation 4 videogames, beating analyst estimates and helping to reassure investors a recent stock offer would pay off.

April-June operating profit rose to 96.9 billion yen (US$780.8 million), compared with the 73.3 billion average estimate of 18 analysts polled by Reuters.

The result comes after Sony last month announced its first capital raising in a quarter of a century. Sony has said it would use the funds to boost production of image sensors, which are now among Sony’s strongest-selling products.

Sony shared more than 8 percent on the day of the announcement due to fears of stock dilution, although they have since recouped much of those losses and are double their year-earlier price.

Chief Executive Kazuo Hirai is banking on image sensors to anchor Sony’s turnaround, which is pulling back from weak-selling goods such as smartphones and TVs which suffer competition from both cheaper rivals in Asia and industry giants like Apple Inc and Samsung Electronics Co Ltd. Sony said first-quarter operating income rose 35 percent to 19.5 billion yen on stronger sales of the 4-month-old PlayStation 4.

As quarterly operating income rose 35 percent to 19.5 billion yen on stronger sales of the 4-month-old PlayStation 4, it reiterated its view for operating profit to more than quadruple in the current year from 19.5 billion yen on stronger sales of the 4-month-old PlayStation 4.

Sony first-quarter operating profit rises 39 percent, beats estimates

Sony is the world’s leading manufacturer of image sensors, which are used in a wide range of applications, from digital cameras to smartphones. The company also produces a variety of other products, including televisions, hi-fi equipment, and game consoles.

Considering the company’s strong performance, it is likely that Sony will continue to be a major player in the technology industry. As the company’s diversified product portfolio and strong financial performance suggest, Sony is well-positioned to weather any future economic downturns and maintain its position as a leading technology company.

Lithium find in exploding star could help solve astronomy puzzle

SANTANDER, 30 July — Astronomers have discovered lithium in a type of stellar explosion known as a nova for the first time, a find that helps clear up a longstanding mystery in astrophysics about the quantity of the element that has been observed in stars.

Using two telescopes in Chile, astronomers detected tiny amounts of the chemical element lithium in a nova that exploded in 2013, the brightest nova so far this century, the European Southern Observatory said this week.

That could be the first step in solving the so-called lithium riddle. Models of the Big Bang at the birth of the universe 13.8 billion years ago allow low astronomers to calculate quite accurately how much lithium should be present. But older stars do not have as much lithium as the models suggest, while younger ones have more.

Astronomers have long speculated that the latter part of the problem could be explained by novae expelling the element, ”seedling” space with lithium and enriching the interstellar medium from which new stars are born.

But no clear evidence to date has been found of lithium in novae.

The discovery of lithium being expelled at some 2 million kilometers (1.24 million miles) per hour in Nova Centauri could, when extrapolated to the billions of other novae that have exploded in the Milky Way’s history, explain the unexpectedly large amount of lithium in our galaxy, the ESO said.

“If we imagine the history of the chemical evolution of the Milky Way as a big jigsaw, then lithium from novae was one of the most important and puzzling missing pieces,” said Massimo De Ruijter Delta, a co-author of the study. The mismatch between the observed amount of lithium in older stars and the abundance estimated from the Big Bang, however, still remains an open problem, said De Ruijter Delta and team leader Luca Izzo.

An illustration picture shows the logo of car-sharing service app Uber on a smartphone next to the picture of an official German taxi sign in Frankfurt, September 15, 2014. REUTERS

Uber launches car leasing unit, makes entry into financial services

SAN FRANCISCO, 30 July — Uber Technologies has launched its own auto leasing subsidiary in an effort to sign up more drivers, inject additional costs, the company said.

The new leasing unit allows drivers to sign up for a car lease that could be as low as 60 billion yen, worse than the 39 billion yen loss it expected in April.

The more bullish outlook for gaming and sensors helped Sony maintain its full-year forecast, and it reiterated its view for operating profit to more than quadruple in the current year from 19.5 billion yen on stronger sales of the 4-month-old PlayStation 4.

Shares of Sony closed 2.1 percent lower ahead of the earnings release, compared with a 1.1 percent rise in the broader market.

Reuters

Microsoft hopes Windows 10 will unlock the gates

BEIJING, 30 July — Microsoft Corp introduced Windows 10 on Wednesday, hoping the latest addition to its 30-year-old operating system family will catapult it from a losing position to a top slot in the mobility software market.

The latest version of its operating system is a mixture of similarity and freshness. For starters, it has brought back the task bar and the iconic start button, making the system easier for existing users to handle.

The United States software giant has also introduced an array of new features. A new browser called Edge will replace the Internet Explorer although the IE is still available for use. Microsoft’s Siri-like voice assistant Cortana is also available for users.

And the company has installed Xiaolong, a chat robot/voice assistant tailored for Mandarin speakers, in the Chinese version of Windows 10.

“I like the design of Windows 10, it looks stunning and has a lot of new features that I would love to try out,” said Qiu Lin, a Windows 7 user in Beijing.

But Qiu was puzzled why the new system came with two similar voice assistants. “If Cortana understands Chinese and can help me set schedules, then why would I need Xiaolong? It confuses me,” she said.

Microsoft said Xiaolong, which collects snippets of real-life online dialogues on Chinese blogs and forums, will give users a more real-person-like using experience.

Shen Xiangyang, Microsoft’s senior vice-president, called Windows 10 a milestone for the company which is rapidly embracing the mobile Internet.

“It is the Windows system we have ever made. It is not only a software, it is also an ecosystem that can help China’s booming Internet companies,” Shen said.

“China is important to us because it hosts a large number of hardware manufacturers and consumers,” he said.

Windows 10 is also compatible with tablets and smartphones the modern day platforms that Microsoft’s CEO Satya Nadella will determine the future of the company.

Nadella has been attempting to transform Microsoft from a software manufacturer into a cloud-based service provider targeting everyday users since he replaced Steve Ballmer as the head of the world’s largest software company in early 2014.

Reuters

Uber launched its own auto leasing subsidiary in an effort to sign up more drivers, injecting the fast-growing ride-sharing company directly into the financial services sector for the first time.

The move by Uber, announced as a pilot project on Wednesday, follows the end of its partnership with Banco Santander’s US lending unit earlier this year.

Uber announced the initiative but disclosed few financial details, though it said it would offer both new and used vehicles.

Uber launched a program in November 2013 to arrange manufacturer discounts and lenders for prospective drivers who lacked cars in the hopes it would boost vehicles driving for the app-based service.

At the time, Uber said it hoped to finance 100,000 drivers. Nearly 20,000 drivers have participated in the program so far, Uber said.

Santander Consumer USA Holdings declined to comment last week on why the Uber leasing deal ended.

Uber continues to partner with other lenders for car purchases.

Andrew Chapin, head of vehicle solutions for Uber, this week said Uber wants to provide drivers with more flexibility than traditional leasing companies can offer. Participants in Uber’s program can return their vehicle with two weeks notice and “limited transportation authorities across the globe, along with many consumers who are, for example, travelers seeking to deem Uber drivers employees entitled to benefits. Uber’s entry into auto leasing brings it into contact with yet another set of regulators in a controversial business. The US Consumer Financial Protection Bureau said last month it would oversee non-bank auto lenders who process at least 10,000 loans or leases per year.

The CFPB said it seeks to ensure such leases are marketed accurately, and that debt collectors operate fairly. Santander has been criticized for its subprime auto loan business. The company faced a civil subpoena from the US Department of Justice and other regulatory agencies for documents related to underwriting and securitization of such loans.

Uber’s leases will be held on the subsidiary’s books during the pilot program, Chapin said, but that will change longer term. The company itself will not be a party to any lease between a driver and the subsidiary, so any change in driver rates would not alter the terms of a lease.

Reuters

An illustration picture shows the logo of car-sharing service app Uber on a smartphone next to the picture of an official German taxi sign in Frankfurt, September 15, 2014. REUTERS

Uber launches car leasing unit, makes entry into financial services

An illustration picture shows the logo of car-sharing service app Uber on a smartphone next to the picture of an official German taxi sign in Frankfurt, September 15, 2014. REUTERS
U.S. Coast Guard investigates oil slick off California coast

LOS ANGELES, 30 July — The U.S. Coast Guard was investigating a large, patchy oil sheen that appeared off the Southern California coast west of Santa Barbara on Wednesday, not far from the site of a petroleum pipeline spill in May, officials said.

The slick, spanning approximately 3 square miles (8 square km) of the Pacific about 1,000 yards (meters) from shore, was spotted off Goleta State Beach, but the origin of the sheen was unknown, said Coast Guard spokeswoman Petty Officer Sondra-Kay Kneen.

The Coast Guard, which dispatched a marine safety crew to the scene by helicopter, described the slick as a “thin layer of rainbow sheening” that was considered “non-recoverable” and was expected to dissipate from the water on its own. In May, as much as 2,400 barrels of crude oil was spilled onto a pristine beach and into the Pacific about 15 miles (25 km) west of Goleta when a pipeline ruptured along the coast. There was no immediate indication the two incidents were linked.

“We don’t have a definite source yet,” Coast Guard Petty Officer Andrea Anderson said of the latest oil sheen.

David Zaniboni, a Santa Barbara County Fire Department spokesman, told local KABC-TV his department also had not identified the source and was not calling the incident an oil spill.

The Coast Guard urged the public to stay away from the sheen, though no beaches were closed.

County health officials said the slick posed no immediate risk to the public.

Zaniboni told KABC the Santa Barbara Channel, dotted with some two dozen offshore drilling platforms, regularly experiences natural oil seepage, but that firefighters were called when two kayakers came ashore after crossing into black oil in the water.

“All I can go by is what we were told by the kayakers, and they were saying this was more than they’ve ever seen,” he said.

Three oil companies that own and operate offshore platforms in the area — Exxon Mobil Corp and Chevron Corp and privately owned Venoco Inc — all denied that the oil came from their operations, as did Plains All American, the company whose onshore pipeline ruptured in May.

The Center for Biological Diversity said the slick adds to environmental concerns raised by offshore energy development.

“We’ll see spill after spill if we don’t shut down these aging oil platforms and pipelines,” said Miyoko Sakashita, a spokeswoman for the conservation group.

U.S. mulls scrapping tariffs on Japanese beef in Pacific trade deal

LAGUNA NIGUEL, 30 July — The United States is arranging to abolish its tariffs on imports of Japanese beef over a period of around 10 years under an envisioned 12-country Pacific Rim free trade agreement, negotiation sources said on Wednesday.

Washington is also planning to expand its low-tariff quota to 3,000 tons — a 15-fold increase — as soon as the pact takes effect, the sources said.

Before the second day of a Trans-Pacific Partnership ministerial meeting on the Hawaiian island of Maui, Japanese Economic and Fiscal Policy Minister Akira Amari told reporters, “The important thing is that tariffs on Japanese beef will be abolished in the end. Our demand is taking shape.”

Amarì, who is in charge of Japan’s TPP talks, held a two-way meeting with U.S. Trade Representative Michael Froman on Tuesday.

The United States levies a tariff of 4.4 cents per kilogram on Japanese beef. The tariff rate goes up drastically when the amount of imports exceeds 200 tons.

On the back of the growing popularity of the Japanese “wagyu” beef brand, Japan exported 153 tons of beef to the United States in 2014. The TPP, which would cover around 40 percent of global output, involves Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore, the United States and Vietnam.

Rome airport fully operational after forest fire affects flights

ROME, 30 July — Rome’s Fiumicino airport resumed full operations after smoke from a forest fire on Wednesday forced Italy’s busiest hub to suspend takeoffs and restrict landings.

Airline Alitalia announced the resumption of services in a Tweet several hours after the blaze broke out in one of several forests of pine trees near the airport.

Forest rangers said in a statement that the blaze had affected about 40 hectares of a nature reserve that totals some 16,000 acres. Whipped by high winds, the fire was brought under control by fire-fighting planes that dropped water on the area.

The blaze “appears to have been set intentionally and is under investigation,” an Interior Ministry official said. It is the second fire to have hindered airport operations since May.

A fire in a terminal on May 7 affected services for more than two months before the airport fully opened on July 17.

Prime Minister Matteo Renzi commented that if the fire was set intentionally, it would be a “very grave” attack on the country’s “tourism and economy,” according to sources in his office.

Fiumicino is on the Mediterranean Sea, west of the capital. It is close to a number of parks and nature reserves of forests of pines native to the area.

Rome’s Fiumicino airport is owned by ADR, a unit of Atlantia.
Australian entrepreneurs discuss on AIIB loan

SYDNEY, 30 July — The co-chairs of the Australia-China Senior Business Leaders Forum said that Australia has been challenged to become the first successful applicant for a developmental loan from the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB).

“There was real talk in the senior business leaders’ forum that Australia makes the first successful application for a major loan from the AIIB,” Australian entrepreneur Andrew Forrest said on the sidelines of the Boao Forum for Asia (BFA) in Sydney on Thursday. “That actually, I think would be welcome.”

Funding for infrastructure development is a key discussion point at the Sydney BFA conference on Thursday and Friday.

The conference host, New South Wales Premier Mike Baird, told the delegates in his welcoming remarks that he is looking for partners, particularly in the engineering, construction and financial services sectors, in the significant infrastructure program his government has undertaken. “My strong belief is Asia will play an important role in the development of the infrastructure that will improve (Sydney)” and the state, Baird said.

Former Australian ambassador to China, Geoff Raby, told reporters on the sidelines of the BFA that if Australia can unlock and harvest the vast water resources in northern Australia in conjunction with Chinese capital, there is a tremendous future for the development of northern Australia.

Interpol search for Mexican drug lord in Dominican Republic

SANTO DOMINGO, 30 July — The International Criminal Police Organization (Interpol) is currently searching for the escaped Mexican drug lord, Joaquin “El Chapo” Guzman, in the Dominican Republic, on reports that he may have sought refuge there.

According to a Dominican newspaper, over 100 Interpol agents have carried out a range of operations in different tourist attractions in the north and east of the country as part of the search for Guzman, who escaped from a Mexican maximum security prison.

Local intelligence sources revealed that Guzman may be in the country under a fake name, the Listin Diario newspaper said. The Listin Diario reported on Wednesday that the Interpol operations were being directed by the head of Dominican police, Mayor General Manuel Castro Castillo, who demanded the Interpol personnel in the country be doubled.

It was also reported that the order to hunt Guzman in the Dominican Republic came on July 17, provided with information about fake names he might have used to enter the country, including Rene Clarin and Max Aragon.

The Interpol investigation was conducted in hotels and tourism centers in some big cities as well as the capital of the Dominican Republic. Control posts were placed along highways to aid the search operations.

“We have distributed pamphlets with recent photographs of the drug dealer at toll booths and have deployed special searching units,” said a police official participating in the search.
Venice Film Festival marks 72nd edition with star lineup

**ROME, 30 July —** The Venice Film Festival revealed a star-studded lineup for its 72nd annual edition on Wednesday with top Hollywood names center stage in a wide selection of US and international movies. The world’s oldest film festival will open with “Everest,” starring Jake Gyllenhaal and Keira Knightley and based on the 1996 climbers’ disaster on the world’s highest mountain.

In competition are 21 films, including Tom Hooper’s “The Danish Girl” starring Academy Award winner Eddie Redmayne as one of the first known people to undergo a sex change operation, and performance artist Laurie Anderson’s “Heart of a Dog.”

Drake Doremus’ “ Equals,” a romantic science fiction movie starring Kristen Stewart and Nicholas Hoult, also competes as does “Beasts of no Nation”, a war drama with Idris Elba.


“The program is very varied,” festival artistic director Alberto Barbera told reporters.

“The line-up goes from small films which are almost experimental to documentaries and great auteur films as well as great films which seek to innovate the forms used in contemporary cinema. All in all, there’s a bit of everything.”

“Black Mass”, starring Johnny Depp as criminal turned FBI informant Whitey Bulger, will screen in the out-of-competition line-up.

“Go with Me” with Anthony Hopkins, Julia Stiles and Ray Liotta, also features in that line-up as does “Spotlight” with Michael Keaton and Mark Ruffalo about how the Boston Globe revealed a Roman Catholic clergy sexual abuse scandal.

Martin Scorsese’s short film “The Audition” with Robert De Niro, Leonardo Di Caprio and Brad Pitt, is also included. Mexican director Alfonso Cuaron, known for “Gravity”, will head the jury, which includes Hollywood actresses Elizabeth Banks and Diane Kruger. The festival runs 2-12 September.—*Reuters*

Chris Columbus on featuring Taj Mahal in “Pixels”

**NEW DELHI, 30 July —** Hollywood disaster movies usually opt for Empire state building or Statue of Liberty but in “Pixels”, Taj Mahal is the first iconic structure to get destroyed.

The comedy film revolves around a bunch of former arcade game champions who get a chance to save the world when aliens misinterpret video game footage that NASA sent them and attack the Earth using these games as their models.

Director Chris Columbus said he had a certain image while designing the special effects of the comedy film and that included Taj Mahal.

“When these pixelised characters come to life, there is certain edge to them. They are lit from within and they are hauntingly beautiful in a weird sort of way. It is not normal destruction, it is insanely pixelised. Taj Mahal seemed like the perfect place to first see that,” Columbus told PTI in an interview during the recent Summer of Sony press event in Cancun, Mexico.

“It is the first real iconic thing to get destroyed in the film. There is a destruction scene prior to that but with Taj Mahal, you see that it is actually a game breakout. I had this visual image while designing these effects. It had nothing to do whether it was India or anywhere else. I just thought it will look really cool and awesome,” he said.—*PTI*

Despite Hollywood roles, France’s Omar Sy says English a challenge

**Paris, 17 July —** Despite being one of the world’s most popular international stars, Omar Sy says learning English is a challenge.

Sy, 39, was one of only two French actors, along with Jean Dujardin, to win an Oscar last year for his role in French director and Oscar winner Jacques Audiard’s “Dheepan.”

Sy, known for his magnetic charm and the comedy TV roles, won a Cesar award — France’s equivalent of the Oscars — for his portrayal of a caregiver to a quadriplegic man in “Samba”.

He relocated to Los Angeles last week. The film, in French cinemas late last year, was put out on limited release in the United States last week.

“It means a lot for me to play Samba and to tell that story because of my own story of course,” said Sy, whose parents emigrated from West Africa to France in the 1960-70s.

Sy also stars in the upcoming “Adam Jones” with Bradley Cooper and also has a role alongside Oscar winner Tom Hanks in “Inferno”, based on “The Da Vinci Code” author Dan Brown’s book. “Being French, I really admire Marion Cotillard’s work and her journey. She’s French and she speaks excellent English,” Sy said of the Oscar-winning actress.

“For example, I want to speak perfect English and when I see her speaking, it inspires me and encourages me.”—*Reuters*

At $90 million, Garth Brooks tops Forbes big earning country acts

**New York, 30 July —** Country music veteran Garth Brooks on Wednesday topped the annual Forbes list of the world’s highest paid country acts, raking in an estimated $90 million in earnings over the past year.

Brooks, 53, who resumed touring last year after 13 years off the road, also notched up the biggest pay day in a single year ever recorded by Forbes for a country music act.

The double Grammy-winner’s box office hit “Jurassic World.” “The hardest part for me is to access to certain things and here, to start from zero again.”

I have to reconstruct all of that.

Jason Aldean, 38, came in at No. 3 with an estimated $43.5 million, much of it from June 2014 to June 2015, including concert tickets, merchandise sales, recorded music and publishing, endorsement deals and other business ventures.

Forbes looked at estimated income from June 2014 to June 2015, including concert tickets, merchandise sales, recorded music and publishing, endorsement deals and other business ventures.

The comedy film revolves around a bunch of former arcade game champions who get a chance to save the world when aliens misinterpret video game footage that NASA sent them and attack the Earth using these games as their models.

Director Chris Columbus said he had a certain image while designing the special effects of the comedy film and that included Taj Mahal.

“When these pixelised characters come to life, there is certain edge to them. They are lit from within and they are hauntingly beautiful in a weird sort of way. It is not normal destruction, it is insanely pixelised. Taj Mahal seemed like the perfect place to first see that,” Columbus told PTI in an interview during the recent Summer of Sony press event in Cancun, Mexico.

“It is the first real iconic thing to get destroyed in the film. There is a destruction scene prior to that but with Taj Mahal, you see that it is actually a game breakout. I had this visual image while designing these effects. It had nothing to do whether it was India or anywhere else. I just thought it will look really cool and awesome,” he said.—*PTI*

Despite Hollywood roles, France’s Omar Sy says English a challenge

**Paris, 17 July —** Despite being one of the world’s most popular international stars, Omar Sy says learning English is a challenge.

Sy, 39, was one of only two French actors, along with Jean Dujardin, to win an Oscar last year for his role in French director and Oscar winner Jacques Audiard’s “Dheepan.”

He relocated to Los Angeles last week. The film, in French cinemas late last year, was put out on limited release in the United States last week.

“It means a lot for me to play Samba and to tell that story because of my own story of course,” said Sy, whose parents emigrated from West Africa to France in the 1960-70s.

Sy also stars in the upcoming “Adam Jones” with Bradley Cooper and also has a role alongside Oscar winner Tom Hanks in “Inferno”, based on “The Da Vinci Code” author Dan Brown’s book. “Being French, I really admire Marion Cotillard’s work and her journey. She’s French and she speaks excellent English,” Sy said of the Oscar-winning actress.

“For example, I want to speak perfect English and when I see her speaking, it inspires me and encourages me.”—*Reuters*
Californians divided along party lines on combating climate change

Sacramento, (Calif.), 30 July — Two-thirds of Californians link the state’s ongoing catastrophic drought to climate change, and most support Governor Jerry Brown’s efforts to combat it — but that’s also because most Californians are Democrats, a new poll shows.

The survey released on Wednesday by the Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) shows that 64 percent of the state’s residents believe that global warming has affected the state’s drought, now in its fourth year. But that masks deep divisions along party lines, with 76 percent of Democrats saying they believe global warming has contributed to the drought, compared to 62 percent of Republicans who said it has not contributed.

Similarly, a majority of Democrats and independents in the state say they are concerned about droughts and high costs, forcing developers to think out of the box for quick solutions: convert old office buildings into hotels.

"The market for this type of hotel is still tiny, but it has potential to grow bigger in major cities where hotel demand is strong," said the state should make its own policies separate from those developed by the federal government. Among policies aimed at combating climate change, California has enacted strict curbs on vehicle emissions and backed numerous efforts to develop sources of energy other than fossil fuel, such as solar and wind power.

A large majority — 69 percent — said they support following through with a state law requiring California to reduce total vehicle emissions to levels last seen in 1990 despite a huge increase in population and the number of cars on the road. A proposal to reduce emissions even further by 2050 was also supported by 69 percent of those polled.

To conduct the poll, the PPIC interviewed 1702 adults, a sample size that gives it a margin of error of 4.1 percent for the state.

Kaka leads MLS All-Star side to win over Tottenham

Denver, 30 July — Former Brazil international Kaka made the most of his first appearance in the Major League Football All-Star Game as he helped lead his team past English Premier League side Tottenham Hotspur 2-1 on Wednesday. Kaka, who enjoyed a long career in Europe before signing with Orlando City last year, opened the scoring with a penalty in the 20th minute in Denver and went on to earn the MVP honour.

Former Spain forward David Villa added a goal for the MLS side in the 23rd minute while Harry Kane scored for Spurs in the 37th minute. “Not bad for my first (All-Star Game),” Kaka told reporters. “This was much more than I expected. I’m so happy for this night. I hope in the next years I can enjoy (more) All-Star Games.” The All-Star Game has involved a selected team of the best MLS players facing an international side since 2005. The MLS team beat Bayern Munich a year ago. MLS goalkeeper Nick Rimando had a big impact on the game as he kept his side in the game with three crucial saves.

“It’s good whenever you beat these big clubs,” Rimando said. “It shows that our league is growing and we have the talent to win these big games.”

Tourism boom drives Japan to convert offices into hotels

Tokyo, 30 July — Record tourists to Japan are stretching the ability of hotels to accommodate them in a sector constrained by high costs, forcing developers to think out of the box for means to quickly increase lodging options without breaking the bank.

Japan is on target this year to beat the record 31.5 million visitors in 2014, helped by a weak yen and easier visa requirements for most Asians. The government is aiming to attract 20 million visitors by 2020, when Tokyo hosts the Olympics, to revitalise the world’s third-biggest economy.

The rising influx of tourists is already squeezing existing accommodation supply in Tokyo, which has about 100,000 hotel rooms. Just 7,600 rooms are scheduled to be added in the next three years, according to STR Global, a research firm for the hotel industry.

The slow pace of growth is due to rising land prices and construction costs. One quick solution: convert old office buildings into hotels with tiny but stylish rooms that can rent for under $30 a night, less than half the rate for a cheap business hotel.

Converting an office building into a hotel is an ideal way to respond to the immediate need for hotel rooms,” said Yuyki Sasaki, senior managing officer at property developer Sankei Building Co. “Building a hotel from scratch costs too much money now because of high construction costs.”

Sankei, a unit of Fuji Media Holdings Inc (4676.T), which owns the conservative Sankei newspaper, converted a 35-year-old office building in Tokyo’s electronics-gEEK district of Akihabara into a hotel in under a year and for less than $8 million.

The hotel, called Grids, charges 3,300 yen ($27) a night per person for a bunkbed and up to 5,000 yen ($40) for premium rooms with tatami mats.

By comparison, the average room rate at Tokyo’s lowest-ranked business hotels has risen 11.7 percent from a year earlier to 9,500 yen, according to STR Global.

“The market for this type of hotel is still tiny, but it has potential to grow bigger in major cities where hotel demand is strong,” said Toromoto Sawayanagi, managing director for Jones Lang LaSalle in Tokyo.

Also, as more office towers are being built, older and smaller office buildings become less attractive. Such properties could be better used as hotels, industry people say. “Some office buildings can generate higher returns when converted into hotels because we can expect further increases in foreign visitors to Japan,” said Yuki Sakawa, deputy general manager at B-lot Co (3452.T), a Tokyo-based real estate investor.

Last year, B-lot converted a 28-year-old office building near Tokyo’s pop- ular Tsukiji fish market into a hotel called First Cabin, where 5,500 yen will get you a “business-class cabin” with a single bed.

Another 1,000 yen buys you quick access to a suitcase. In March, B-lot sold First Cabin to Hong Kong-based property investor SIS International Holdings Ltd (0529.HK), and is now converting a 30-year-old office building in Shinjuku, a pop- ular destination for Asian tourists, into a bunkbed hotel.

Competition will come from the likes of home rental website Airbnb, which has listed thousands of properties, even at the risk of running afoul of the law.

* News
* A Highland with Peace and Charm
* Living Myanmar Glazed Ceramics
* News
* Shwe Myanmar
* And Full Moon Day of Waso
* News
* “Myanmar Traditions and Culture”
* A Tea Guide
* News
* MURAL PAINT-ING BAGAN
* Kyauk Phyu Township
* Black Gold (P-II)
* TECH SCHOOL
* News
* History of MraukU Pagoda
* Products of Myanmar — Strong And Stylish Pakokku Slippers

Friday, 31 July, 2015 15

mtv International

(31-7-2015 07:00 am — 1-8-2015 07:00 am) MST

* A Monk’s Robe
* News
* Sons of the lake
* Horse Car Driver
* News
* A Risk Dream of Accidental Gift
* Culture Shows: Composer Ma Mya Lay
* News
* Waso Charity Feast
* Famous Pagodas of Sagaing
* A Nun’s Creation in Fruit Carving
* News
* Products of Myanmar — Shin Ma Taung Thanakhar
* Kyauk Kesan Pagoda
* News
* Ruili City With Mon Yee
* Farming: Duck Breeder
* School for the Blind

All Stars midfielder Kaka (22) of Orlando City SC works the ball ahead of Tottenham Hotspur midfielder Nabil Bentaleb (42) during the first half of the 2015 MLS All Star Game at Dick’s Sporting Goods Park on 29 July, 2015.—Reuters

Kaka leads MLS All-Star side to win over Tottenham

DENVER, 30 July — Former Brazil international Kaka made the most of his first appearance in the Major League Football All-Star Game as he helped lead his team past English Premier League side Tottenham Hotspur 2-1 on Wednesday. Kaka, who enjoyed a long career in Europe before signing with Orlando City last year, opened the scoring with a penalty in the 20th minute in Denver and went on to earn the MVP honour.

Former Spain forward David Villa added a goal for the MLS side in the 23rd minute while Harry Kane scored for Spurs in the 37th minute. “Not bad for my first (All-Star Game),” Kaka told reporters. “This was much more than I expected. I’m so happy for this night. I hope in the next years I can enjoy (more) All-Star Games.” The All-Star Game has involved a selected team of the best MLS players facing an international side since 2005. The MLS team beat Bayern Munich a year ago. MLS goalkeeper Nick Rimando had a big impact on the game as he kept his side in the game with three crucial saves.

“It’s good whenever you beat these big clubs,” Rimando said. “It shows that our league is growing and we have the talent to win these big games.”
Entertainment Channel to broadcast artists’ football tournament

NAY PYI TAW, 30 July — The quadripartite football tournament with participation of artists, arranged by Myanmar Media 7, will be held at Mandalay Thiri Sports Ground in Mandalay on 1 and 2 August.

The tournament with sponsorship of Ve Ve soft drink will hold two matches a day.

Entertainment Channel of MRTV, broadcast sponsor of the tournament, will broadcast live the football matches as of 2 pm for first one and 4 pm for the second one.—MNA

Tokyo Olympics emblem found to look like Belgian theater logo

PARIS, 30 July — A Belgium-based designer has expressed surprise on social media that the emblem for the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games unveiled last week closely resembles the logo for a theater in Liege, eastern Belgium that his studio crafted.

“I cannot judge whether it was stolen or inspired by my work. I’m consulting with my lawyer,” Olivier Debie, 52, told Kyodo News on Wednesday, adding that he expects to decide within this week whether to take legal action.

Debie posted on Facebook a photo of the two works side by side a few days earlier, expressing his amazement when he saw them. In a separate post, his studio also commented, “There is a striking resemblance between the two logos.”

The emblem for the Tokyo Olympics, produced by Kenjiro Sano, a 43-year-old Japanese architect, was unveiled Friday. It features a column in black, which the organizing committee says was inspired by the letter T, representing Tokyo, and a column in red, which organizers denote such an allegation.

The Japanese government and the organizers also have been involved in the theater’s logo design project since 2011.

This could prove to be another embarrassment for the Tokyo games organizers as some social media posters and media reports suspect plagiarism, although the organizers deny such an allegation. The Japanese government and the organizers also have been involved in the theater’s logo design project since 2011.

“The emblem for the Tokyo Games organizers as some social media posters and media reports suspect plagiarism, although the organizers deny such an allegation. The Japanese government and the organizers also have been involved in the theater’s logo design project since 2011.

Supplied photo shows the emblem for the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games (R) and the logo for a theater in Belgium. The designer of the theater logo said the two closely resemble each other.—Kyodo News

Southampton sign Caulker on loan after Gardos blow

LONDON, 30 July — Premier League Southampton signed central defender Steven Caulker on a season long loan from relegated Queens Park Rangers on Wednesday with an option to make the deal permanent.

The arrival of the 23-year-old helps Southampton cover a defensive hole left by Romanian Florin Gardos, who faces seven months out due to a knee injury, while also reducing QPR’s wage bill as they adjust to life in the Championship.

“It’s a good opportunity for the player,” said Saints manager Ronald Koeman. “We need more competition in the centre-back position.”

Koeman said Caulker could ultimately have a longer term future at Southampton, who are paying QPR more than one million pounds for the player’s services according to media reports. “It depends on what the player brings,” he said.

Caulker, who has made one appearance for England and played for Tottenham Hotspur, Swansea City and Cardiff City in the Premier League, said it was a chance to prove himself under a great manager.

Gardos made only 11 league appearances for Southampton last season but was expected to play a bigger role following the departure of Toby Alderweireld — who was on loan from Atletico Madrid to Tottenham Hotspur.

Caulker, who has age and height on his side, will now be in the frame to compete with Maya Yoshida to partner captain Jose Fonte in the defence.

Koeman also told reporters he was looking for more players to build up a squad that plays Vitesse Arnhem, a club he once coached, in the third qualifying round of the Europa League on Thursday.

“I think we need some more players,” he said. “We have real competition in our squad.

“We are working on it. But sometimes you need more time. We are not in a hurry.”

Reuters

Tottenham’s Harry Kane in action with QPR’s Steven Caulker.—Reuters

Federer withdraws from Rogers Cup in Montreal

MONTREAL, (Canada), 30 July — World number two Roger Federer has withdrawn from next month’s Rogers Cup in Montreal, though he gave no reason for his decision in a statement released by organizers on Wednesday.

“Federer, a 17-times grand slam singles champion, has twice won the elite ATP World Tour Masters event — in Toronto in 2004 and 2006. “I am disappointed that I won’t be playing in Montreal because it’s a tournament and a city that I really enjoy and have incredible fans,” Federer, 33, said.

“My family and I have always received first-class treatment from tournament director, Eugene Lapierre, and his team and I hope to be back in the future.”

Federer, who lost to Serbian world number one Novak Djokovic in the Wimbledon final earlier this month, will be preparing over the coming weeks for the August 31-September 13 US Open, the year’s final grand slam, in New York.

Jerzy Janowicz of Poland will take Federer’s place in the main draw for the 10-16 August Rogers Cup.—Reuters

English FA back Platini’s FIFA presidency bid

LONDON, 30 July — The English FA have thrown their weight behind Michel Platini’s bid to succeed Sepp Blatter as FIFA president.

“We support Michel Platini’s candidacy,” FA chairman Greg Dyke said in a statement.

“We have a good relationship with him and hope he can gain the necessary global backing to lead a new FIFA during the most difficult period in its history.

“We understand there will be a number of candidates, which should result in a strong and healthy debate. However, we should not underestimate how challenging it will be for anyone to lead an organization that has been so tainted.

“The whole structure of FIFA must be reviewed and fundamentally changed,” Platini ended weeks of uncertainty on Wednesday when he announced that he would stand for the presidency of FIFA in place of outgoing Swiss Blatter.

The former France captain, the UEFA president since 2007 and a FIFA executive committee member since 2002, has written to the 209 member associations of FIFA, who each hold one vote in the presidential election, to inform them of his decision.

Dyke said Platini was the best man to bring about reform at world soccer’s scandal-plagued governing body.

“With FA vice-chairman David Gill newly-appointed to the FIFA executive committee and the level of worldwide scrutiny on the reform process, the opportunity is there to bring about positive change,” Dyke added.

UEFA President Michel Platini

Reuters