YCDC moves forward with K20 bn traffic light overhaul

Yangon’s traffic lights will be upgraded to ease congestion in the country’s commercial capital.—PHOTO: AYE MIN SOE

THE Yangon City Development Committee announced on Thursday that the deadline for tenders to be submitted for the city-wide traffic light upgrading project is 13 November.

The project is part of an effort to introduce the Yangon Comprehensive Traffic Control System, which is slated for completion within the 2015-2016 fiscal year. YCDC is injecting K20 billion (US$15.6 million) of the state’s reserve budget into the project, according to YCDC Secretary U Kyaw Soe.

YCDC unveiled its plan to replace 154 traffic lights in Yangon with newer ones in an effort to ease traffic congestion in Myanmar’s largest commercial city. The call for tenders was issued in July.

A maximum of 50 companies will be allowed to bid for the tender and 28 companies have already done so, according to the YCDC announcement.

Tender applications cost K250,000, and each company that bids for the project must put down a US$500,000 deposit.

The new traffic lights will feature CCTV cameras and will be linked to each other via a control tower that will be constructed as part of the project, a spokesperson from YCDC’s information department told The Global New Light of Myanmar on 2 September.

The three-storey control tower will be built on a 100-square foot area in People’s Park. Construction is expected to begin in November, and the tower is scheduled to be completed within three months.

The upgrade is meant ensure a smoother flow of traffic and prevent unnecessary congestion, the spokesperson said.

YCDC has almost finished laying the underground cables for the project, Secretary U Kyaw Soe said. The new traffic lights will each be equipped with at least one hour of backup power to prevent failures during electricity cuts.

The YCDC spokesperson did not disclose the number of companies that will be selected to implement the project in Yangon’s four municipal districts.

The spokesperson said Yangon has 188 traffic lights in its municipal area, of which 11 have already been upgraded with assistance from the Japan International Cooperation Agency.

The new traffic lights, which use Japanese technology, collect traffic data and send it to a central control system. They do not require the assistance of traffic police.

—GNLM

Swollen rivers pose renewed flood risk in Ayeyawady, Sagaing

THE Department of Meteorology and Hydrology has alerted people living near rivers to leave their homes as water levels have risen beyond their designated danger points.

The Ngawun River in Ayeyawady Region has risen one foot above its danger point and is expected to rise more over the next three days, said the department on Thursday.

The department announced that the Chindwin River has risen five or six feet above its designated danger point in Phaunggyin, Mawlaik, Mingin and Kalewa and two feet in Monywa, urging those living near the river and in low-lying areas to evacuate the area. The Ayeyawady River has also exceeded its danger point in Pakokku and Nyaung-U. The weather bureau warned people living in Ngathaing Chaung in the Ayeyawady Delta to be wary of rising water levels.

Recent flooding in Myanmar killed 122 people nationwide and has displaced more than 1.6 million people. Most flood-related deaths were reported in Rakhine State, where at least 56 died, followed by Sagaing Region with 12 deaths, Mandalay Region with 12 and Shan State with nine.—GNLM
**3rd Housing & Living 2015 attracts city dwellers**

YANGON — The 3rd Housing & Living 2015 kicked off at Tatmadaw Convention Hall on U Wisara Road on 10 September with the aim of introducing modern designs of housing to the city dwellers.

A total of 60 companies showcase scale models of housing, cornice and household decorations, electronic and electrical equipment, construction materials, personal goods, automobiles and party, small-scale machines, modern furniture and others.

The exhibition runs from 10 to 13 September with free admission.

**Relief aid distributed to flood victims in Tiddim**

REEDKHORDA — Various township departments and youths in Reedkhorda, Chin State, opened a donation centre to help local flood victims in the first week of September.

Town administrator U Paung Deik Tong presented 60 bags of rice and K500,000 donated by departmental personnel, social organisations and members of the public to flood victims in No. 1 Relief Camp in Tiddim Township.

At present, 486 people from 78 households from flood-affected villages are taking shelter at relief camps in Tiddim Township.

Nay Su (Chin mountain range)

**Mandalay grows greener**

MANDALAY — Chanmyathazi Township held its thirteenth monsoon tree-planting ceremony along 57th Street between Theikpan and Manawhari streets on 9 September.

The ceremony was organised by the township’s development affairs committee as part of the Mandalay City Development Committee’s urban greening project.

City officials and local residents planted more than 600 saplings of various species along the road.

Mayor U Aung Maung who is also Mandalay Region Minister for Development Affair together with secretary and members of the MCDC oversaw the ceremony with participation of departmental personnel and local residents.

During the rainy season, township development committees in Mandalay city municipal area hold tree-planting ceremonies in order to expand the city’s gardens.

— Tin Maung (Mandalay)

**Agriculture department cultivates quality rice seeds**

NAY PYI TAW — The Department of Agriculture began cultivating rice paddies on a 3,000-acre field in Dekkhinathiri Township on 9 September. The paddies will produce Palethwe hybrid rice seeds.

The department’s deputy director general U Naing Kyi Win supervised the transplanting of saplings to the paddy field.

According to the Department of Agriculture, a one-acre Palethwe paddy field can produce seeds for 100 additional acres of farmland. The seeds produced in Dekkhinathiri will be distributed over more than 100,000 acres of farmland in the summer cultivation season.

The department has also cultivated rice seed paddies on 452 acres in other regions and states.

— Ko Pauk (Okkar Myay)

**Nominations open for ASEAN People’s Awards**

NAY PYI TAW — The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has announced that nominations for the ASEAN People’s Awards will be accepted until September 30.

The ministry advised applicants to address their submissions to the ASEAN Affairs Department.

The ASEAN People’s Awards are given to citizens or organisations from member states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations in recognition of their outstanding contributions to ASEAN community-building, according to the association’s website.

Applicants must submit descriptions of their verifiable achievements to help create a united, prosperous and caring ASEAN Community, the ministry said.

One award recipient will be selected from each of the ten ASEAN member states. The award comes with a grant of US$10,000.

Awards will be presented to the winners at a ceremony that will take place on the sidelines of the 27th ASEAN Summit in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in November.

— MNA

**Ayeyawady water level approaches danger point**

HINTHADA — The water levels of the Ayeyawady River reached 1,329 centimeters in Hinthada Township as of 9 September. This is just 13 centimetres below the township’s danger point of 1,329 cm, according to the Department of Meteorology and Hydrology.

U Aung San, the district department’s head, instructed local farmers not to rush the cultivation of their crops. He said farmers should pay attention to news about the weather as they begin cultivation.

“Although the Ayeyawady River in Hinthada rose more than 1.2 metres above the danger point in the first week of August, the efforts of local authorities and residents managed to overcome the dangers posed by flooding,” said a local resident. “At present, officials from the township’s irrigation department are carrying out maintenance on the embankment. Local people have no need to worry about flash flooding,” U Aung San added.

— Kyaw Kyaw (Hinthada)

**Water level of Ayeyawady River gradually rising at Hinthada Township**

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— Kyaw Kyaw (Hinthada)

**Scale models of high-rise housings shown at Housing & Living 2015**

— Kyemon

**Farming workers transplant paddy saplings at the fields**

— Ko Pauk (Okkar Myay)
President U Thein Sein meets Club de Madrid delegation

NAY PYI TAW — President U Thein Sein received a delegation of the Club de Madrid comprising former prime minister of Bhutan Jigme Yoser Thinley and the former chancellor of Austria Mr Alfred Gusenbauer at the Presidential Palace on Thursday. The Club de Madrid is an independent non-profit organisation that works to promote democracy worldwide and is considered the world’s largest forum of former heads of state and government.

Discussions focused on Myanmar’s political and economic reform process, the country’s ongoing peace process and development goals, as well as the preparations underway for free and fair elections.

Also present at the meeting were union ministers U Winna Maung Lwin, U Soe Thane and U Ye Htut. —MNA

U Nyan Tun calls for smooth flow of commodities across ASEAN

NAY PYI TAW — As the deadline for the establishment of the ASEAN Economic Community approaches, the Greater Mekong Subregion Economic Co-operation Programme will be critical to individual member states in strengthening the region’s economy, Vice President U Nyan Tun told the 20th Greater Mekong Subregion Ministerial Conference on Thursday.

With growing economic integration among members of the Mekong subregion, the economic cooperation programme is half-way through its third decade.

U Nyan Tun urged countries in the Mekong subregion to strive for a smooth flow of commodities and improvement of tariff systems, stressing the need to increase connectivity through sustainable development of physical infrastructure and the transformation of transport corridors into transnational economic corridors.

The vice president affirmed the government’s commitment to undertaking projects for perennial national development across the country, adding that the development of small and medium enterprises will play a vital role in regional development.

The conference was co-chaired by Union National Planning and Economic Development Minister Dr Kan Zaw and Asian Development Bank Vice President Mr Stephen Groff.


On 9 September, Vice President U Nyan Tun visited the Thilawa special economic zone in a southern district of Yangon and was given a progress report of the project – including the arrangements for the early launch of the first-phase, share sales, job opportunities for local communities and environmental and social impact assessments. The vice president said that the SEZ will drive foreign investment and job growth.

He also visited Koyorad Myanmar Factory, a Japanese factory which is soon to be operated, and encouraged Myanmar employees to work productively.

Forty local and foreign companies have been permitted to invest in the SEZ, with Japan topping the list, followed by Thailand. Companies from Japan, China, Malaysia, France, the United States, Singapore, Thailand, China (Taipei), Sweden, Myanmar, Hong Kong and Australia also have a presence in the SEZ.

Four companies, namely Foster, Lu Thai Myanmar, Indorama and Cute, are expected to launch their operations at the end of the year. —MNA

Teledised campaign speeches continue

Emblem of Kayan National Party (KNP).—MNA

NAY PYI TAW — Campaign speeches from three political parties were broadcast on Thursday.

The speeches were made by General Secretary U Nan Yi of Kayan National Party (KNP), Chairman U Aye Kyang of Rakhin State National Unity Party and Chairman of Kayin People’s Party Saw Tun Aung Myint and General Secretary U Saw Sae Wah.

U Nan Yi of KNP said his party advocates self-determination, a genuine union and democracy, federalism, equality, peace, regional development and the conservation of Kayan culture and traditions.

U Aye Kyang of the Rakhin National Force Party said that his party’s aim is to establish a federal democracy and an inclusive market economy. Other policies include constitutional reform, peace, equal-

Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker receives Club de Madrid delegation

Speaker Thura U Shwe Mann receives delegates of Club de Madrid. —MNA

NAY PYI TAW — Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker Thura U Shwe Mann received a delegation of the Club de Madrid comprising former prime minister of Bhutan Jigme Yoser Thinley and the former chancellor of Austria Mr Alfred Gusenbauer at Zabuthiri meeting hall on Thursday. Also present at the meeting were chairman of Pyithu Hluttaw committees and members of commission.—MNA
Indian PM hits back at Sonia Gandhi over parliament disruptions

NEW DELHI — Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday lashed out at the country’s main opposition Congress party chief Sonia Gandhi, barely two days after she accused him of making hollow promises.

“They (Congress) did not let the parliament work... the hawala-bazaa (money launderers) are in fact troubled by law passed against black money,” Modi said, while addressing ruling Bharatiya Janata Party workers in the central Indian state of Madhya Pradesh’s capital Bhopal.

Taking a jibe at Gandhi, the prime minister said “Those who have been rejected by people, I appeal to them for the pride of democracy, to fend economic dangers off and work with us. We had hoped they would help parliament enforce reforms. But they refuse to do so.”

The Congress president earlier this week accused the prime minister of “hawala baazai (making hollow promises)” while addressing top leaders of her party and slammed the Indian government for failing to tackle the economy.

The Congress party, which was decimated in the general elections held last year, has so far not allowed the parliament to function properly that led to a backlog of several key legislative bills aimed at reviving the country’s economy. —Xinhua

Antidrug exhibition held in Brunei

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN — An anti-drug exhibition themed “What you don’t know can kill you”, was held on Tuesday at Brunei’s big downtown shopping mall in conjunction with the school team holiday and hoping students and their families to visit the exhibition at the mall, he said.

According to an early report by the Brunei Times, the NCB has apprehended 610 drug abusers and traffickers (517 men and 93 women) in 2014. The number is a 10 percent decline in the number of arrests made by NCB compared with the 2013 statistics, which is a total of 679 drug offenders.—Xinhua

Thai police seek warrant for alleged Bangkok blast mastermind

BANGKOK — Thai police have been working on compiling evidence with the hope of obtaining an arrest warrant for another man suspected of involvement in August’s deadly Bangkok bomb attack, a police spokesman said Thursday.

Prawut Thawornsriraj said officers were looking for a man named by local media as “Is- han,” who some outlets have claimed to be the mastermind behind the attack.

Police said immigration records showed Ishan, also named by Thai media as Abdul Sattar Abdul Rahman, has escaped Thailand, but it was still not known when and where.

Local media reports have claimed that Ishan fled Thailand for Bangladesh on Aug. 16, the day before the explosion.

The attack on Bangkok’s Erawan shrine on Aug. 17 killed 20 people and injured more than 100 others. A second explosion the following day at a Bangkok pier caused no injuries, but was connected to the first blast by investigators.

When asked if Bangkok will get any information from Bangladesh regarding the issue, the spokesman said Thai police have contacted Bangladeshi authorities through INTERPOL, but no information had been fed back yet, and the issue could take time to be addressed.

Prawut, however, said police could not, at this stage, positively identify Ishan as the mastermind, but could say he was involved with the deadly explosion, as he was seen residing and walking with the main suspect, 25-year-old Chinese man Mieraili Yusufu. He said the suspects had been together at two apartments in northern Bangkok where police found several bomb-making items connected to the incident.

When asked if Mieraili is a member of a separatist group in China, Prawut said he has no information on hand that could confirm the matter.

Answering questions about the relationship between Mieraili and two prime suspects whose pictures were captured on CCTV at the bomb sites, the spokesman said Mieraili told investigators he had known neither man before.

One of the men, seen on CCTV as a yellow t-shirt, he believed to be the man behind the bomb at the Erawan shrine, while a man seen on video footage in a blue shirt is suspected of being involved with the explosion the following day.

Asked if police will file a murder charge against Mieraili, as he had reportedly admitted handing over the explosive device to the suspected shrine bomber, Prawut said while bids to hand over the charge, which is punishable by death, police need to proceed carefully.

The police spokesman added that police also found several people in the apartments connected with the suspects. However, investigators are checking whether they were related to the explosion or were illegal immigrants who were not involved.

On Wednesday, Prawut told media that some members of the criminal syndicate suspected of being involved earned the money from human trafficking.

Meanwhile, Thai national police chief Somtuy Pumppamanuang told media Thursday that, based on the bomb suspect’s interrogation, some members of the gang had travelled in and out of Thailand 4-5 times before the attack through the eastern border province of Sa Kaeo.

The police chief said Mieraili told him he paid money to travel from Vietnam. To enter Thailand he also had to pay $600 to the Thai Immigration officials at the border checkpoint.

Somtuy said he has limited time left in his current post, but has exposed evil things in the Immigration Bureau in the hope that the prime minister, deputy prime minister and the incoming police chief will clean up the mess. Early this month the police chief ordered a transfer of six hand-holding immigration officials away from their posts in Sa Kaeo in the wake of the deadly blast.—Kyodo News

Vietnamese deputy PM to visit China, attend China-ASEAN Expo

HANOI — Vietnamese Deputy Prime Minister and Politburo member Nguyen Xuan Phuc will pay an official visit to China and attend the 12th China-ASEAN Expo (CAEXPO) and the 12th China-ASEAN Business and Investment Summit (CABIS) from Sept. 16 to 20.

The visit will be conducted at the invitation of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC) and the China-ASEAN Business and Investment Summit Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee Zhang Gaoli in Beijing on Friday, Feb. 25.

Phuc will hold talks with vice premier and member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee Zhang Gaoli in Beijing on Friday, Feb. 25.

The CAEXPO and CABIS between China and 10-member ASEAN are hosted every year in Guangxi’s Nanning city and Beijing. China is the top 10 expos in China, Binh said.

This year’s expo will feature more than 4,000 booths, among which are more than 200 booths from 100 Vietnamese companies.—Xinhua

Indian PM hits back at Sonia Gandhi over parliament disruptions

“Those to whom have been rejected by people, I appeal to them for the pride of democracy, to fend economic dangers off and work with us.”

— Narendra Modi
Australian PM fends off climate critics at Pacific summit

SYDNEY — Australian Prime Minister Tony Abbott on Thursday defended his country’s climate change policy during a regional summit in Papua New Guinea, amid calls from Pacific island leaders to end new coal mine construction worldwide.

Improvised, low-lying Pacific Islands such as Yamatau, Kiribati and Tuvalu are among the most vulnerable countries in the world to climate change and rising waters and have long pushed for greater global action to combat them.

Abbott last month announced cuts to Australia’s greenhouse gas emissions that were widely criticised by environmental groups for lagging behind other advanced economies. Australia pledged to cut emissions by 26-28 percent of 2005 levels by 2030, a commitment that did little to stem criticism of Abbott’s strong support for coal and for scrapping an ambitious carbon tax and emissions trading plan last year.

“Unlike some other countries, which make these pledges and don’t deliver, Australia does deliver when we make a pledge,” Abbott told reporters.

“So, I think I’ve got a very good story to tell on climate change.”

—Tony Abbott

Obama, Xi to meet on Sept 25 at White House: US officials

WASHINGTON — US President Barack Obama is set to meet with Chinese President Xi Jinping on Sept. 25 as a guest at the White House, US government officials said Wednesday.

Xi is expected to visit Washington from Sept. 24 to 26 and take part in a welcome ceremony, a state banquet, all on the second day of his stay in the US capital, the officials said.

Xi is likely to meet with leading lawmakers in Washington but will not deliver a speech at the legislature, the officials said. The Chinese government had reportedly asked Congress to let the president deliver a speech at a joint session.

After Washington, the Chinese leader is expected to travel to New York to attend events such as the UN General Assembly and a summit related to the UN Millennium Development Goals.

US reports said Xi will be in Seattle on Sept. 23 to attend an exchange event with leaders of information technology firms, to which Apple Inc. Chief Executive Officer Tim Cook and others have been invited.—Kyodo News

N Korea’s top official voices hope of improving ties with Japan

PYONGYANG — North Korea’s ceremonial head of state Kim Yong Nam on Thursday voiced hope of improving relations with Japan, as the two countries face difficulties in making a diplomatic breakthrough in their official negotiations resumed more than a year ago.

Citing the policy of the state’s late founder, Kim Il Sung, he said North Korea and Japan, which are geographically nearby, should be close in other respects as well.

“With this view still in mind, we are dealing with Japanese issues,” the 87-year-old president of the Presidium of the Supreme People’s Assembly said in a meeting with Kyodo News in Pyongyang.

Kim made the remarks at a time Japan’s negotiations with North Korea, which restarted in March 2014 in an attempt to settle major outstanding issues, have hit a snag.

Among other points, North Korea promised to conduct a comprehensive survey of all Japanese people in the country, including those believed to have been abducted in the 1970s and 1980s, in exchange for the lifting of some of Tokyo’s unilateral sanctions on Pyongyang.

In July that year, Japan duly lifted some sanctions against North Korea.

But Japan has said that the Japanese government has said one of the major obstacles is a lack of fresh information on the whereabouts of its nationals abducted by North Korean agents decades ago.

Japan and North Korea, which have no diplomatic relations, announced in May 2014 that they had reached an agreement in Stockholm on the guiding principles of negotiations toward the settlement of their outstanding issues.

Japan evacuates 100,000 in floods unleashed by rare torrential rains

JOSO, (Japan) — Japan evacuated about 100,000 people from their homes on Thursday, after rare torrential rains unleashed floods that left at least two people missing and stranded many more when rivers surged over their banks.

A further 800,000 people across eastern Japan have been advised to evacuate after officials issued pre-dawn warnings of unusually harsh rainfall to 5 million people.

Television broadcast pictures of helicopters plucking individuals from rooftops, while one elderly couple sat on a roof catchting a pair of dogs.

Some areas received double the usual September rainfall within 48 hours after tropical storm Etau swept across the central part of Japan’s main island of Honshu.

A 63-year-old woman was missing after a landslide hit her home, while a man in his 70s in the town of Joso, about 56 km (35 miles) north of Tokyo, was feared trapped in his home when floods swept it away, NHK national television said.

Japan has put heavy emphasis on disaster prevention since the 2011 earthquake and tsunami disaster that left nearly 20,000 dead.

It is eager to avoid the criticism faced by previous governments for what was seen as a sluggish response.

“The government will work as one to prioritize the safety of the people and do our best to prevent any further disaster.” Prime Minister Shinzo Abe told reporters, and warned of unprecedented rains.

Television footage showed people in Joso waving towels while waiting for help on the upper floors of homes engulfed in floods as the Kinugawa river swept through.

Part of a hotel in the town of Nikko, famed for its shrines and temples, had collapsed, the Kyodo News agency said, but there were no reports of injuries.—Reuters

North Korea’s ceremonial head of state Kim Yong Nam.—Kyodo News

Pyongyang has so far not given it any convincing information on the abduction issue.

Speaking in a meeting room at the Mansudae Assembly Hall, the home of North Korea’s legislature, the head of parliament also said that his country is “putting all of its efforts in building a powerful socialist nation on the basis of self-defense nuclear deterrence.”—Kyodo News

People are rescued from vehicles by firefighters at an area flooded by the Kinugawa river, caused by typhoon Etau, in Joso, Ibaraki prefecture.—Japan. Kyodo News
Thousands more migrants stream into Austria from Hungary

VIENNA — About 3,700 people poured across the Hungarian border into Austria on Thursday, a police spokesman said, a big increase in the flow of migrants that will put extra pressure on Austrian authorities trying to arrange onward transport to Germany.

Tens of thousands of people, many of them fleeing the war in Syria, have streamed across the border since Austria and Germany threw open their borders at the weekend. Almost all have headed for Germany, with only hundreds seeking asylum in Austria.

The spokesman said the new wave of migrants crossing the border started around midnight and he expected more to come.

“It is certainly not the end of today’s wave, because more people will certainly come,” the spokesman said.

All accommodation in the area of Nickelsdorf, a border town with a reception centre for migrants, was being used and he said he could not predict how many more people would arrive during the day.—Reuters

Advanced Russian APCs among arms deliveries to Syria

MOSCOW — Russia is supplying the Syrian army with hardware including tank launchers, advanced BTR-82A armoured personnel carriers and Kamaz military trucks, Russia’s Kommersant newspaper reported on Thursday.

Russia says its military assistance to Damascus is aimed at helping it fight terrorism in Syria, but the West suspects Moscow is building up its military presence on the ground in Syria to prop up its long-time ally, Syrian President Bashar al-Assad.

Russia’s state-owned arms exporter Rosoboronexport was not immediately available for comment.

Kommersant said its report was based on information from unnamed sources in the defence export sector.

It also quoted the sources as saying Syria had previously paid Moscow advances towards the purchase of Russia’s sophisticated S-300 air defence systems. It said Moscow later decided not to deliver the missile systems for now and has been delivering the other arms instead.—Reuters

Fate of Northern Ireland’s power sharing government hangs in the balance

Sinn Fein’s Martin McGuinness (C) speaks to the media in Parliament buildings in Belfast Northern Ireland.—Reuters

DUBLIN — The fate of Northern Ireland’s power-sharing government was hanging in the balance on Thursday as the province’s second largest Irish nationalist party mulled whether to back a call to adjourn parliament during crisis talks.

The 1998 power-sharing deal ended three decades of tit-for-tat killings between Catholic Irish nationalists who want the province to unite with Ireland and their Protestant rivals that killed 3,600, but the forced coalition has struggled amid intensifying sectarian bickering in recent years.

Police suspect members of the IRA, a paramilitary group that is supposed to have disbanded under a 1998 peace deal, were involved in the Aug. 12 shooting of Kevin McGuigan, destabilising the grand coalition and prompting crisis talks.

After a senior member of Sinn Fein, which used to be regarded as the IRA’s political wing, was arrested on Wednesday in relation to the murder, the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) threatened to bring down the government it leads with its former nationalist foes if parliament is not adjourned.

Having unsuccessfully sought the permission of a parliamentary committee to suspend parliament last week, the DUP will put its ultimatum to the committee again later on Thursday and require the Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP) to support or abstain to succeed.

“The whole thing may come crashing down anyway because nobody’s guaranteeing that an adjournment will solve anything or create enough space for a resolution because a lot of people feel this is going to take note that a couple of week to sort out,” SDLP leader Alasdair McDonnell told Irish national broadcaster RTE.

An SDLP delegation was in Dublin on Thursday to meet Irish Prime Minister Enda Kenny, who along with British Prime Minister David Cameron, called the crisis talks last week, and McDonnell said they would take Kenny’s views into consideration before coming to a decision.

Sinn Fein’s president, Gerry Adams, said there should be no adjournment.

“The current confined crisis is a result of inter unionist rivalry and the cynical exploitation of the murder of Kevin McGuigan,” Adams said in a statement.—Reuters

Motorway connecting Denmark to Germany reopen

COPENHAGEN — A motorway connecting the Danish peninsula Jutland to Germany reopened on Thursday, Danish authorities said, a day after it was closed when some 300 refugees, including children, began walking on it.

Some limits on train traffic remained, however.

Danish police said on Wednesday that 3,000 “foreigners” had arrived in Denmark between Sunday and Wednesday.

“The situation changes from hour to hour, but some are seeking asylum in Denmark, some are returning to Germany, and others are in custody or travelling on through Denmark,” the national police said in a statement.

Danish police on Wednesday closed a motorway and rail links in a bid to stem the flow of refugees heading north to Sweden.

They have ordered trains to go no further than the train ferry stop in Germany, however, forcing train passengers to walk on board the ferries that then cross to Rodby in Denmark, operator Scandlines told Reuters.

“Two days two trains carrying about 240 people were stopped by Danish police in Rodby. Refugees on board were refusing to leave the train, police said.—Reuters

Trump slightly rival Fiorina’s looks: ‘Look at that face’

WASHINGTON — Donald Trump belittled the physical appearance of fellow Republican US presidential candidate Carly Fiorina in remarks published on Wednesday, saying: “Look at that face. Would anyone vote for that?”

The comments by the billionnaire real estate developer published in an article on the website of Rolling Stone magazine were aimed at the only woman in the large field of Republicans vying for their party’s 2016 presidential nomination.

The magazine reported that Trump, leading in the polls among the Republican contenders, made the remarks while watching Fiorina, the former Hewlett-Packard Co chief executive, on television.

“You can imagine that, the face of our next president?” Trump is quoted as saying. “I mean, she’s a woman, and I’m not s’poseda say bad things, but really, folks, come on. Are we serious?”

Fiorina, in an interview on Fox News Channel, said she viewed Trump’s remarks as “very serious.”

“Maybe, just maybe, I’m getting under his skin a little bit because I am climbing in the polls,” she said.

Trump’s remarks were his latest barbs aimed at a woman during the campaign. Last month, Trump criticized Fox News Channel anchor Megyn Kelly during and after a Republican debate.

During the debate, Kelly had asked Trump about comments referring to women as “fat pigs” and slobs. Asked about Kelly in a CNN interview last month, Trump said: “You could see there was blood coming out of her eyes. Blood coming out of her wherever.”—Reuters
Islamic State attacks Syrian air base in east, dozens reported killed

BEIRUT — Dozens of Syrian government troops and Islamic State fighters have been killed in fighting around a government-held air base in eastern Syria in a region that is a stronghold for the jihadists, a monitoring group said on Thursday.

Islamic State used at least two car bombs in its latest assault on the air base near the city of Deir al-Zor, where government troops are holed up, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said.

It said at least 18 soldiers and 23 Islamic State fighters had been killed. The base is one of President Bashar al-Assad’s last footholds in eastern Syria. There was no mention of the attack on state media.

After more than four years of war, Assad’s sway is now mostly confined to the cities of western Syria, with the rest held by Islamic State, other insurgent groups, or a Kurdish militia, which controls much of the north.

On Wednesday, Syrian state TV said government troops had quit the Abu al-Duhur air base in the northwestern Idlib province after a two-year siege by insurgents including the al-Qaeda-linked Nusra Front.

Deir al-Zor province borders territories in Iraq that are also controlled by Islamic State, and its oilfields are a major source of revenue for the group. A U.S.-led coalition has been attacking Islamic State from the air in Deir al-Zor and the neighboring Raqqa province. — Reuters

Israeli president hints at rift with PM Netanyahu

JERUSALEM — Israel’s President Reuven Rivlin said on Thursday he has not met with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in two months, citing “differences of opinion” over foreign policy.

Regular meetings between presidents and prime ministers are customary in world powers’ agreement with Iran, putting him on a collision course with the US President Barack Obama.

In March, he spoke in front of the congress, trying to convince its members not to support the deal, in a move that angered the administration.

Last week, after Obama secured enough Democratic senators’ votes to block a Republican initiative to foil the deal, Netanyahu charged that the majority of the US public objects to the agreement.—Xinhua

We probably don’t need to meet because each of us is busy with the same issues.

— Israel’s President Reuven Rivlin

Saudiled coalition raids target Yemen bases, Houthis leaders’ houses

SANAA — War planes from a Saudi-led military alliance bombed targets throughout Yemen’s capital Sanaa on Thursday, in what witnesses described as the fiercest series of attacks on the city in over five months of war.

The raids hit bases of political leaders in the Iran-allied Houthis movement and military bases, as explosions and wailing ambulance sirens forced a sleepless night on the city’s nearly 2 million shell-shocked residents.

“The sick people fled the hospital in terror,” an official at a private hospital said. “They were afraid the building would collapse from the non-stop bombing of the army bases nearby.”

There were no immediate reports of casualties, a day after medics said the bombing killed six civilians in the city.

Saudi Arabia and other Arab states intervened in Yemen’s civil war on March 26 to halt the nationwide spread of the Houthis, who seized Sanaa last year and forced the government into exile in Riyadh after the group advanced on its southern stronghold of Aden.

The Houthis, who hail from the Zaydi Sh’ite Muslim sect, view their rise as a revolution. But they are fiercely opposed by the Sunni Muslim Gulf Arab states who believe the group is bent on spreading Iran’s influence.

Since a Houthi missile attack killed at least 60 Gulf Arab troops east of Sanaa last Friday, the coalition has stepped up its air strikes on the capital and befooned up its deployment of troops, which Yemeni officials say number a few thousand, ahead of an eventual push towards Sanaa. Fear is spreading that a decisive battle there may reek widespread destruction, as it has in the war-torn southern city of Taiz, where medics said 18 people were killed in an explosion on a residential area on Thursday and others were injured in Houthi artillery shelling and Saudi-led air strikes.

Mohammed Saleh, a Sanaa resident, said he wouldn’t risk being pinned down as the bombing ramps up and soldiers advance.

“I’ve decided my family and I have to get out of Sanaa. There’s nowhere left that’s safe here, and neighbourhoods are getting bombed every single day.” — Reuters

Grenade attacks kill two in Central African Republic capital

BANGUI — Grenade attacks in Central African Republic’s Bangui killed at least two people late on Wednesday in a rare incident of violence in the capital, the United Nations and residents said.

Men on motorbikes threw grenades into crowds gathered in three different places in southern Bangui during the evening, residents said.

“MINUSCA strongly condemns these odious and cowardly acts that killed two people and injured numerous others,” the UN mission said in a statement late on Wednesday.

An aid official with medical charity Medecins Sans Frontieres said at least two people were wounded. A relative of one of the victims said one wounded person had since died, bringing the death toll to three.

Thousands of Central Africans have died and hundreds of thousands remain displaced after two years of violence that erupted after mainly Muslim Seleka rebels seized power in the majority Christian country in 2013.

The capital Bangui, secured by French and UN soldiers, had not seen such violence since 2013.

Voters are due to go to the polls on Oct. 18 to choose a new president and parliament to replace an interim government led by Catherine Samba-Panza.

But preparations are running behind and the head of the interim parliament said the polls are likely to be postponed again.—Reuters
Myanmar Film Industry is still lagging behind

By Kyaw Thura

OST of us are inclined to simply follow the crowd and not rock the boat, which is unfortunate if unscrupulous people come to power and exercise nepotism. Our failure to speak out remains a major problem.

Fortunately, the solution is simple. If we no longer wish to tolerate things we see being unchanged, the only thing we have to change is our mindset to this supposed impermeability.

As we speak, political candidates are broadcasting campaign speeches to inform us of what they’ll do if they come to power. It is imperative for us to keep a watchful eye on them, but it is important to also decode the messages behind their words. The following story proves why there is often more to something than meets the eye.

One day a man was informed by his staff that monks were playing chinlone in the complex grounds of the monastery. Upon hearing the news, the donor went straight to the monastery and saw a few monks playing chinlone. But when he went inside the monastery, he saw hundreds of monks engaged in their studies. The donor went home and scolded his staff for being unable to see the studious monks.

Another incident involved a crowd of laymen visiting a monastery. They were disappointed to see that the majority of monks were napping and only a few were studying. The visitors paid homage to the sleeping monks, assuming they were the ones working. They were wrong, though. When a prominent senior monk told the men that they should have paid their respects to the sleeping monks. Why? The monks were studying because they had failed a test. The sleeping monks had passed and were permitted to rest.

Indeed, making snap judgments on first impressions can prevent us from seeing the real truth.

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 “Letters 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.
Union FM receives Country Manager of UNODC

NAY PYI TAW—Mr. Troles Vester, Country Manager of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in Yangon called on Union Minister for Foreign Affairs U Wunna Maung Lwin at the ministry on 10 September.

Agreement signed for second Myanmar-Thailand bridge

NAY PYI TAW—An agreement on the construction of the second Myanmar-Thailand Friendship Bridge was signed between Union Construction Minister U Kyaw Lwin and Thailand’s Transport Minister Mr Arkom Termpitayapaisith on Thursday.

The 270-metre bridge will be situated on the pathway of the east and west economic corridor and its benefits will extend beyond Myanmar and Thailand to also include Vietnam and Laos, spokespersons said.—MNA

Trafficked workers return home from Indonesia

NAY PYI TAW—A total of 42 trafficked Myanmar workers were returned home from Indonesia’s Ambon Island on Wednesday.

Officials from the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Division made arrangement to accommodate the men at the Social Welfare Training School and a monastery in Yangon’s In Kyimindyen Township.

Among the migrants, 32 are from Taninthayi Region, three from Mon State, two each from Bago and Yangon regions as well as Rakhine State and one from Sagaing Region.

Authorities are carrying out an investigation into the circumstances surrounding them being trafficked and will return the men to their respective homes once the questioning is complete.

The International Organisation for Migration (IOM) has said it will give each of the trafficked workers new clothes and K200,000.

Last week, more than a hundred other trafficked workers were returned to Myanmar from Indonesia.—MNA

Israel, Myanmar to boost bilateral ties

NAY PYI TAW—Israel and Myanmar have committed to boosting bilateral ties during a visit by Myanmar’s military chief to the Middle East.

Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and Israeli President Reuven Rivlin discussed bilateral cooperation during their meeting in Jerusalem on Wednesday.

The Israeli president expressed gratitude for the help Myanmar extended to Israel when the country faced challenges during its early years and proposed cooperation between the countries’ cultural sectors.

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing said his brief visit to Israel was highly productive as he met Israel’s defence minister and toured Israeli industrial facilities.

After his meeting with the president, the Myanmar delegation toured Jerusalem’s Old City in a motorcade.—Myawady

Grade 10 student in int’l letter-writing competition

NAY PYI TAW—Grade 10 student Ma Yu Myat Aung from Bogalay in Ayeyawady Region will compete in an international competition to mark World Post Day on 9 October.

On January 1 she won first prize in a letter-writing competition for people 15 and under in Myanmar, which was organised by United Nations Education, Science and Culture Organization (UNESCO) and the Universal Postal Union (UPU). As a result, her handwriting script has been selected to be submitted to UPU’s headquarters in Switzerland to compete in the international contest. The second prize in the national competition went to Mg Wai Yan Myi from Shwebo Township and third prize to Ma Wintee Phu from Loikaw Township.—MNA
Vehicles drive on the Guomao Bridge through Beijing's central business district.—Reuters

China deflation risks grow, foreign central banks on alert

WELLINGTON/BEIJING — The risk China’s economy enters deflation is growing, data suggested on Wednesday, as signs emerge that some foreign central banks are increasingly worrying about the impact falling Chinese prices and a weaker yuan could have on their economies.

New Zealand’s central bank governor Graeme Wheeler said that China’s surprise devaluation of the yuan, or renminbi, last month had left them concerned about the risk they may let it slide further.

“We’ve seen authorities basically say they want to stabilise the renminbi, but if there were to be a very substantial depreciation in the renminbi it would certainly export deflation around the rest of the world, so everybody is looking closely at China,” he said at a press briefing following an interest rate cut in New Zealand.

The deflation threat was underlined by data showing that Chinese manufacturers cut prices at their fastest rate in six years, with the producer price index (PPI) down 5.9 percent in August from a year earlier, though consumer prices are rising for now.

A growing worry for overseas central banks like the Reserve Bank of New Zealand (RBNZ) is that falling Chinese factory gate prices coupled with a weaker yuan mean the price of exports from China will fall sharply, feeding downward price pressures into their economies.

Wheeler’s comments came despite attempts by Chinese policymakers to reassure global markets that the yuan will remain stable and China’s economic growth, whilst slowing, is still set to be around 7 percent this year. “The RBNZ…verbalised it but this is probably an underlying concern shared by policymakers around the region,” said Sim Moh Siong, foreign exchange strategist at Bank of Singapore.

Wheeler said his central bank’s view is that the Chinese economy is actually growing somewhere between “5-6.5 percent at this point”, a rare public comment by a central bank governor suggesting that China’s growth is below where the country’s policymakers say it is. The slide in Chinese factory prices is not yet feeding into the consumer price index (CPI), which posted a rise of 2 percent in August from a year earlier, though the National Bureau of Statistics flagged that last month’s gains were mainly due to soaring food prices, not an improvement in economic activity. “The risk for China is still deflation, not inflation,” said Kevin Lai, chief economist for Asia, excluding Japan, at Daiwa.

“PPI deflation will eventually filter down to affect CPI, and aggregate demand will continue to be weak,” he added, noting that he’s just cut his inflation forecast to -0.5 percent from 0.5 percent.—Reuters

Apple phone, tablet and TV fail to impress investors

SAN FRANCISCO — Apple Inc unveiled a new TV set top box that responds to voice commands and fresh iPhones that sense the world around them, which some saw as too big and hard, and really long,” on TV, Cook said, emphasizing the word ‘long’ in a nod to the time it has taken the company to produce an ambitious TV product.—Reuters

Apple shares fell 1.9 percent to $110.15 by the close, replicating the recent history of such rollouts but also reflecting the lack of any transformative products that could jumpstart the company’s sales ahead of the crucial holiday season.

Apple shares have lost an average of 0.4 percent on the day of iPhone announcements over the past three years, according to BTIG Research data.

“People love to hate Apple announcements because the expectations are so high and they can never clear that bar,” said Kevin Landis, portfolio manager of the $111 million Firsthand Technology Opportunities fund, which has Apple as its second-largest position.

Twitter users seemed most impressed by the revamped Apple TV. The product, which the company long called a ‘hobby’ gets its own app store and will work with Siri, Apple’s digital assistant.

Fewer celebrated the iPad, which some saw as too big and similar to Microsoft’s Surface tablet, and new iPhones, which are outwardly identical to the enlarged smartphones which made their debut about a year ago.

“3D Touch not good enough reason to upgrade so far,” Ikechukwu Nwanze wrote of the new phones, which start at $199 with a two-year contract.

Apple TV demonstrations showed tricks to make viewing easier: digital assistant Siri, which is behind the voice control, can rewind a video for 15 seconds and turn on subtitles, when a viewer asks something like “What did she say?”

“We’ve been working really hard, and really long,” on TV, Cook said, emphasizing the word ‘long’ in a nod to the time it has taken the company to produce an ambitious TV product.—Reuters

Dell to invest $125 billion in China over five years

TAIPEI — Computer maker Dell Inc will invest $125 billion (81.32 billion pounds) in China over the next five years, its chief executive said on Thursday, as the company continues to expand in the world’s second-largest economy.

The world’s third-largest maker of personal computers said the investment would contribute about $175 billion to imports and exports, sustaining more than one million jobs in China. “The Internet is the new engine for China’s future economic growth and has unlimited potential,” Chief Executive Michael Dell wrote in a statement.

“Dell will embrace the principle of ‘In China, for China’ and closely integrate Dell China strategies with national policies,” Dell said, adding that the company would continue to expand its research and development team in China.

Dell announced in 2010 it planned to spend $250 billion on procurement and other investments over the next 10 years in China, its second largest market outside the United States. It was unclear if the $125 billion was part of that investment. Dell’s Chinese office did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Dell has been in China for about two decades and, before it went private in 2013, saw annual sales in the country of roughly $5 billion. In January, it announced partnerships with state-owned China Electronics Corporation and the municipal government of Guiyang.—Reuters

Phil Schiller, Senior Vice President of Worldwide Marketing at Apple Inc, speaks about the live photo capability for new iPhone 6s and iPhone 6s Plus during an Apple media event.—Reuters
Smoking worsens diabetes complications, but quitting may help

BOSTON — People with type 2 diabetes who smoke have significantly higher risks of heart disease, stroke, and death than diabetic non-smokers, a new study shows.

They also had higher risks of clogged arteries, heart failure, and reduced blood flow to the limbs.

The risks were lower for diabetics with diabetes mellitus, but moderately higher than risks among never smokers, the researchers write in the journal Circulation.

Lead author An Pan told Reuters Health by email that smoking is still common among people with diabetes, despite efforts to discourage it.

“We wanted to know whether smoking was related to total mortality and cardiovascular events among diabetic patients, and whether smoking cessation would reduce the risks,” said Pan, who is a professor at Huazhong University of Science and Technology in China.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, smoking can worsen the health risks that go along with diabetes, such as heart and kidney disease, nerve damage, and blindness.

Pan’s team pooled the data from 89 earlier studies of smoking among adults with type 2 diabetes and found that diabetic smokers were around 1.5 times more likely to experience clogged arteries, stroke, overall heart disease, and heart failure.

In addition, smokers were more than twice as likely to suffer from peripheral artery disease, or reduced blood flow to the limbs, than patrons who did not smoke, the researchers reported.

Using the risk estimates from their review and global rates of deaths from diabetes, the researchers estimated that smoking accounted for 14.6 percent of deaths in diabetic men and 3.3 percent of deaths in diabetic women worldwide.

Dr. Wael Al-Delaimy, division chief of global health at the University of California, San Diego, said part of the problem may be the care diabetes patients receive.

“The physician caring for the diabetes patient might be focusing on cardiovascular risk factors or diabetes complications and diet and weight control while neglecting smoking as another important risk factor,” Al-Delaimy told Reuters by email.—Reuters

New Zealand study identifies ant pest as new threat to world’s honey bees

WELLINGTON — One of the world’s most invasive ant species could be accelerating the global decline of honey bees — and carrying a previously unknown virus that could lead to its own demise, according to a New Zealand research study.

The Victoria University study spent three years analyzing genomic data of the Argentine ant in New Zealand, Australia and Argentina.

The results revealed almost all of New Zealand’s Argentine ant populations carried the “deformed wing virus,” a pathogen associated with colony collapse of honey bees, Professor Phil Lester said in a statement.

“This discovery tells us that Argentine ants are much more of a problem than we previously thought. They host the same deformed wing virus strain found in bees and wasps in New Zealand, and this virus has contributed to declines in honey bee populations around the world,” said Lester.

“Argentine ants are known to raid beehives and also forage in the same environment as honey bees. Such close contact is bad for bees, as their association promotes pathogen exchange,” he said.

But the researchers also discovered an entirely new virus in the invasive pest species that could assist the ants’ own population in their invasion.

“This virus hasn’t been seen before, but it’s related to other viruses that can devastate populations of other insect species. If managed correctly it could be used as a biopicide both in New Zealand and overseas,” Lester said.—Xinhua

New York City to require chain restaurants to label high-sodium food

NEW YORK — New York City health officials unanimously voted on Wednesday to require chain restaurants to add a warning label to menu items that contain more than the daily recommended amount of sodium, making it the first city in the United States to do so.

The rule requires restaurants to add a salt-shaker symbol next to menu items that contain more than 1,500 mg sodium on average per serving, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The rule will go into effect on Dec. 1.

Americans consume 3,400 mg of sodium on average every day, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The rule aims to improve the overall health of New Yorkers and contribute to Mayor Bill de Blasio’s plan to reduce premature mortality by 25 percent by 2040, the city’s Department of Health and Mental Hygiene said.

The rule will apply to all restaurants that are part of chains with at least 20 locations and are part of chains with ten locations, according to the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene.

The rule is just the latest in a long litany of superfluous hoops that restaurants are expected to jump through, said Melissa Fleischman, president of the New York State Restaurant Association, told the New York Daily News in a statement.

“Every one of these cumbersome new laws makes it tougher for restaurants to find success,” Fleischman said.

Lori Roman, president of the Salt Institute trade association, also criticized the rule. She said population-wide sodium reduction is not necessary. Alisha Salyers, a spokeswoman for Burger King, said the fast-food restaurant chain would review New York City’s sodium requirements once they are finalized.

Other impacted restaurants did not immediately respond to requests for comment.—Reuters

WASHINGTON — Scientists have identified a viral protein’s role in driving blood vessel leak in severe dengue infection, opening up a potential avenue for developing the first treatment for the world’s most common mosquito-borne disease.

The culprit, called nonstructural protein 1 (NS1), of the dengue virus proteins secreted by cells infected with the dengue virus, is responsible for the fluid loss and resulting shock that are the hallmark of severe — and potentially deadly — dengue cases.

In one study conducted on human lung endothelial cells and in mice, researchers from the University of California (UC) Berkeley showed that NS1 directly activated a surface receptor known as Toll-like receptor 4 (TLR4), triggering the cells to release proinflammatory molecules.

Then, NS1-infused inflammation damaged layers of human endothelial cells, which line the inner walls of blood vessels, causing the cells’ tight barrier to become leaky. Treating dengue-infected mice with a compound that blocks TLR4, however, markedly reduced vascular leak. “Our findings show that NS1 could be a prime target for drugs, and that it should be considered in vaccine development,” said Eva Harris, a UC Berkeley professor and senior author of the study.

In a separate study, researchers from the University of Queensland (UQ) showed that NS1 from all four types of the dengue virus damaged human endothelial cells and that vaccination with the protein can protect mice against severe dengue.

The results suggested that NS1 behaves as a viral toxin in much the same way as certain bacterial toxins activate TLR4 and trigger body-wide inflammation in sepsis, said Paul Young, UQ’s School of Chemistry and Molecular Biosciences Head Professor and senior author of the study.

The parallels between septic shock and dengue shock syndrome lend support to repurposing sepsis drug candidates, which are expected to advance to clinical trials in dengue patients within the next few years, Young added.

Dengue, estimated to infect up to 400 million people globally each year, typically causes a debilitating fever but can progress to potentially fatal dengue hemorrhagic fever and dengue shock syndrome. Up to 500,000 cases of dengue hemorrhagic fever are diagnosed each year, with as many as 25,000 deaths.—Xinhua

A meal of a “Monster”-sized A.1. Peppercorn burger, Bottomless Steak Fries, and Monster Salted Caramel Milkshake at a Red Robin restaurant. — Reuters

Viral protein discovery offers hope for first dengue treatment

In a study published Wednesday in the journal Science Translational Medicine.

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Chinese premier urges int’l cooperation in production capacity

DALIAN — Chinese Premier Li Keqiang called for stronger international cooperation in production capacity in order to solve structural problems in global growth on Thursday.

Citing a negative spillover effect of quantitative easing, Li said a better way to stimulate world economic growth is to strengthen the real economy, including pushing forward structural reforms at home and promoting international cooperation.

The Chinese premier made the remarks in an address to the annual meeting of the New Champions, also known as the Summer Davos Forum held in China’s northeast port city of Dalian.

China’s proposal of building the “One Belt and One Road” and expanding international cooperation in production capacity, said Li, would further open China’s high-quality equipment and relatively low price, as well as its strong construction capacity, possess great potential for international cooperation, he said.

Such cooperation, which has already attracted the participation of many developed and developing countries, will help solve problems in capacity growth, upgrade economic structure, further integrate the global industrial chain and open up new markets.

China is ready to buy advanced technology and equipment from developed countries and combining them with its mid-range equipment to satisfy the needs of developing nations, serving as a bridge in international cooperation in production capacity, said Li.

The Chinese premier also pledged to offer financial facilities to support Chinese and foreign enterprises joining international cooperation in production capacity.

Responding to a question from World Economic Forum Founder and Executive Chairman Klaus Schwab, Li suggested that the world should boost economic growth by unlocking tremendous demand, as a majority of the world population is still located in the primary and middle stages of industrialization.

Citing his experience in Latin America, Li said Chinese companies and those in developed nations may work together to produce high-quality, inexpensive equipment and develop huge markets in third-party countries.

This year’s Summer Davos Forum, which will last until Friday, focuses on innovation and entrepreneurship. More than 1,700 business leaders and experts from more than 90 countries will share their thoughts on economic outlook as well as new trends in technology, finance and energy.—Xinhua

India, Pakistan hold border guards-level talks in national capital

NEW DELHI — India and Pakistan began three-day border guards-level talks in the national capital on Thursday.

The Director Generals of India’s Border Security Force and Pakistan Rangers’ meeting is aimed at ironing out bilateral issues, including repeated ceasefire violations along the international border and infiltration attempts by terrorists from Pakistan, sources said.

“The talks will also endeavor to focus on positive issues like different levels of communication, more simultaneous coordinated patrolling and other confidence-building measures,” a statement by the Border Security Force said.

This is the first security-level meeting between India and Pakistan, a fortnight after the national security advisor-level peace talks between the two countries collapsed following a dispute over the agenda for those talks.—Xinhua

Heat wave poses burden for firefighters tackling California wildfires

LOS ANGELES — A heat wave baking much of California posed difficulties for crews battling several major wildfires across the state on Wednesday, the largest threatening dozens of homes near Kings Canyon National Park as residents braced for possible evacuations.

Temperatures in excess of 100 Fahrenheit (38 Celsius) settled over large parts of the state on Tuesday and were expected to persist until Thursday, National Weather Service meteorologist Carol Smith said.

The port city of Long Beach, just south of Los Angeles, posted a record-high temperature for the date on Wednesday of 103F (39C), Smith said.

Areas of Los Angeles’ sprawling San Fernando Valley also sweltered in temperatures above 100 F (38 C), she said.

While the extreme heat was uncomfortable for many California residents, it presented more acute risks for firefighters wearing heavy gear and struggling to suppress at least five large wildfires or clusters of fires statewide.

The so-called Rough Fire, which ranks as the largest blaze in California and has charred more than 103,000 acres (41,500 hectares) of drought-patched timber, chaparral and tall grass since it was ignited by lightning on July 31 east of Fresno in Kings Canyon National Park.

Temperatures in parts of the fire zone topped 100F on Wednesday, said Jake Rodriguez, a spokesman for the team managing the blaze.

Some 1,900 firefighters, laboring in steep, rocky terrain, were assigned to the fire and as of Wednesday had managed to carve containment lines around 31 percent of its perimeter, Rodriguez said.

“Heat is an extremely difficult factor to work around, there’s really no way around it,” he said. “You just have to make sure that they stay hydrated.”

The blaze has cast smoke over numerous hiking and camping areas, prompting cancellations of activities. All campgrounds in Kings Canyon National Park were closed for the Labor Day weekend and remained closed on Wednesday.—Reuters

World nuclear capacity set to grow by 45 pc by 2035

LONDON — Global nuclear power generation capacity could increase by more than 45 percent in the next 20 years but the pace of growth will still fall short of what is needed to curb climate change, an industry organisation report showed on Thursday.

The World Nuclear Association Nuclear Fuel report forecasts global nuclear capacity will grow to 552 gigawatts equivalent (GWe) by 2035 from 379 GWe currently, as many countries build new plants as a lower-carbon option and for energy security.

Thierry Chazareche, the International Energy Agency has estimated that nuclear energy can make a contribution being asked of it, to deliver a clean, affordable and reliable electricity supply in harmony with other low-carbon options,“ she added.

To meet the pace of capacity growth, the world will likely need 103,000 tonnes of elemental uranium (U) by 2035, up from 62,000 tU now, the report said.

Uranium production has stalled because depressed uranium prices have curtailed exploration activities and the opening of new mines.

The market should still be adequately supplied to 2025 if all planned mines and those under development start up as forecast but will need additional supplies and projects soon after 2025.—Reuters

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Pakistan renews interest in joining multilateral nuclear export regime

ISLAMABAD — Pakistan on Wednesday expressed its commitment to nuclear non-proliferation and reitered interest in joining the Non-Proliferation Treaty Group and other nuclear export control regimes. The National Command Authority, the highest decision-making body for the South Asian country’s nuclear issues, acknowledged these points in a meeting chaired by Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and attended by its members including advisors for foreign affairs, defense minister and military officials such as Chief of Army Staff Gen. Raheel Sharif. “The meeting renewed Pakistan’s interest in joining the multilateral export control regimes on nuclear materials and technology, including the membership of NSG,” the Defense Ministry said in a press release.

NSG is an international body providing nonbinding guidelines for countries exporting nuclear materials and technology, currently numbering 48 member countries including the United States and Russia. Pakistan and its neighbor India have not joined the group. They are also not parties to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. “Pakistan shares the goal of nonproliferation and is committed to play its due role as a nuclear partner in the global non-proliferation regime,” the ministry said.

Pakistan has been seeking the lifting of curbs imposed by western countries on the supply of civil nuclear technology. The press release also said that the meeting decided to maintain “full spectrum deterrence capability” of the country’s nuclear arsenal and “credible minimum deterrence” in view of the “growing conventional asymmetry.” Pakistan has always maintained that it has to depend on its nuclear capability since it is not in a position to match India in conventional arms build-up. A report released last month by the Stockholm and Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, both US think tanks, said that Pakistan could have a nuclear arsenal not only twice the size of India’s but also enough to make it the world’s third-largest stockpile behind the United States and Russia.—Kyodo News

China uncovers more accounting problems with Three Gorges Dam

BEIJING — Chinese government auditors have found more accounting problems with projects linked to the $59-billion Three Gorges dam, the world’s biggest hydropower scheme, following a critical report last year that revealed nepotism and other corrupt practices.

The state audit office has conducted 21 inspections since construction began in 1992, uncovering issues such as embezzlement, but continues to find problems, it said in a statement on its website on Thursday. The National Audit Office found accounting problems amounting to almost 2 billion yuan in the final accounts for a 7.1-billion-yuan ($1.11 billion) underground hydroelectric plant, it said.

These included 1.54 billion yuan from improperly bidding and 337 million yuan in duplicate calculations, it said, adding that too much money had been spent on some equipment, while management oversight was lax.

“The Three Gorges Corporation, which runs the dam, is now ‘proactively organizing relevant rectifications’ after having received the report, the auditor said, adding that it would work improvements.”

“China Three Gorges Corporation attaches great importance to the problems pointed out by the audit,” the company said in a statement on its website. “At present all the problems pointed out by the audit have already been fin- ished or rectified.” The dam has long been controversial. Between 1992 and 2009, all citizens had to be moved into new homes, with the number of people displaced increasing to 2 million by the 2011 deadline. The government has justified the project by saying it would help China move from coal to gas, which is cleaner, but continues to find problems in the dam. The project has been embroiled in a lawsuit by the World Bank, which is investing $2.2 billion in the project. The government has said it is committed to playing a role in climate change, and has also been faced with protests in the areas affected by the project. The Chinese government has said it will compensate the people affected by the project.

Baltimore judge to weigh whether police trials should be moved

BALTIMORE — A Baltimore judge on Thursday will hear arguments on a change of venue for six police officers facing trial in the death of Freddie Gray Jr., a black man who died from an injury while in police custody.

Defense lawyers for the officers will argue before Circuit Court Judge Barry Williams that intense publicity makes it impossible to find a fair trial in the city. Gray’s death in April triggered protests and fueled a US debate on police treatment of minorities.

The hearing comes a day after the city’s financial control board approved a $6.4 million civil settlement to the Gray family. —Reuters
Polish director says own loss inspired ‘11 Minut’ in Venice

VENICE — Jerzy Skolimowski’s thriller “11 Minut” (11 Minutes), screened at the Venice Film Festival on Wednesday, may be the most personal film of his career, the veteran director said.

Skolimowski, 77, who wrote the dialogue for Roman Polanski’s “Knife in the Water” (1962), said his latest was inspired by personal tragedy, including his son’s death in India.

“11 Minut” is the story of a successful investment banker whose life unravels following the death of his wife. An unlikely connection with a vending machine company employee played by Watts helps him rebuild. Watts, the actress who has split with her lover and is working as a hot-dog vendor, a young woman who has split with her lover and a water-colorist — possibly a stand-in for Skolimowski, an accomplished painter — is a passenger on a bus heading to the square.

“It’s a human story, it could happen anywhere in the world,” Skolimowski said. Much of the action takes place with hints that police surveillance cameras are watching. A plane flies thunderously overhead, at low altitude, suggesting a link between the action in the film and the events of Sept 11, 2001, in New York City.

Skolimowski said the connection with the terror attack on the Twin Towers was not intentional, but the tragedy has long been simmering in his subconscious.

“That’s such a huge thing that my little modest film is not competing with any of those aspects,” he said.—Reuters

Bruno Mars to headline Super Bowl halftime show for second time

LOS ANGELES — Grammy-winning singer Bruno Mars has been invited back to headline next year’s Super Bowl halftime show after scoring the second-biggest audience in the show’s history two years ago, US media reported on Wednesday.

In addition to performing at the National Football League’s Super Bowl 50, Mars has been asked to “curate” the show, according to Billboard magazine, citing unnamed sources.

That means the 29-year-old performer, songwriter and producer will get to handpick the “impressive guests” who appear with him on stage, it said.

The NFL championship game will be held in Santa Clara, California, in February. Representatives for Mars did not immediately respond to requests for comment and NFL representatives declined to comment.

Mars, whose song “Uptown Funk!” with producer Mark Ronson has been one of the hits of this summer, brought rockers Red Hot Chili Peppers to join him on stage for the halftime show in 2014, drawing 115.3 million viewers.

Singer Katy Perry edged Mars out of the top viewership by drawing 118.5 million viewers this year, the most-watched Super Bowl halftime performance in history.

The film’s action takes place within a water-colorist — possibly a stand-in for Skolimowski, an accomplished painter — is a passenger on a bus heading to the square.

Toronto film festival kicks off with Gyllenhaal banker drama

TORONTO — A Jake Gyllenhaal drama about a grieving banker was set to kick off the Toronto International Film Festival on Thursday, which this year will include topical movies on transgender youth and gay rights among the usual Oscar hopefuls.

Now in its 40th year, the 10-day festival has become a key launching pad for Hollywood’s award season, with films like “12 Years a Slave”, “The King’s Speech” and “Slumdog Millionaire” all gaining critical momentum at the event before going on to win the Academy Award for best picture.

The festival starts on Thursday evening with the world premiere of “Demolition”, starring Gyllenhaal and Naomi Watts. Directed by Canadian Jean-Marc Vallee, it tells the story of a successful investment banker whose life unravels following the death of his wife. An unlikely connection with a vending machine company employee played by Watts helps him rebuild. Watts previously won praise for “Dallas Buyers Club” and “Wild”.

The festival, which runs from Sept 10 to 20, will go on to screen nearly 300 feature films from more than 70 countries.

Notable themes in this year’s lineup include the political and legal battles fought for gay rights, the subject of two movies in the festival’s high-profile gala program.—Reuters

Haruki Murakami’s new essay hits bookstores in unconventional way

TOKYO — A new essay by novelist Haruki Murakami hit bookstores across Japan on Thursday straight from the publisher under an arrangement aimed at helping the stores fight the onslaught from Amazon.com Inc and other online bookstores.

Kinokuniya Co, a Tokyo-based bookstore operator, directly bought 90 percent of the essay’s initial 100,000 copies from its publisher to sell at its outlets and distribute to other bookstores.

Books are normally distributed to bookstores from publishers via distributors. But in this case, Kinokuniya bought 90,000 copies of the essay “Shokugyo toshiten Shosetsuka” (Novelist as a Profession) from Tokyo-based Switch Publishing Co.

With the unconventional distribution method, Kinokuniya hopes to reenergize bookstores, which are suffering from a decline in readership due to the proliferation of online shopping and ebooks.

Bookstore operators have largely welcomed the initiative.

“Bookstores on the street have had difficulty obtaining books by famous writers, and that had frustrated us,” said Masaya Horamoto, president of Putaba Co, which operates bookstores mostly in Kyoto. “This time, though, we can tell our customers with confidence that Haruki Murakami’s new book is coming our way.

But some bookstore operators seem less sanguine about the initiative because under the arrangement, unsold copies cannot be returned to the publisher.

Unsold copies can normally be returned to publishers via distributors. But that arrangement has become a source of consternation for many in the industry because about 40 percent of books distributed to bookstores are returned.

An Kinokuniya official said the company is serious about selling every copy, adding that its initiative will help stabilize publishers’ revenue. In the new essay, Murakami looks back on his life as a novelist.—Kyodo News
Federer, Wawrinka storm to Swiss showdown in NYC

Roger Federer of Switzerland returns a shot to Richard Gasquet of France during their quarterfinals match at the US Open Championships tennis tournament in New York, September 9, 2015. — Reuters

ROGER FEDERER and Stan Wawrinka shrugged off the threat of rain to storm into the US Open semi-finals on Wednesday, while Si- mona Halep stood up for the younger generation to complete a women’s final four that will feature three-thirdsomethings.

Moved from the Arthur Ashe Stadium court to Louis Arm- strong to bring Federer’s match forward, Wawrinka appeared untroubled by the change of venue, needing just an hour and 47 minutes to repel big-hitting South African Kevin Anderson 6-4, 6-4, 6-0.

Second seed Federer turned in an equally economical effort, brushing aside Frenchman Rich- ard Gasquet 6-3, 6-3, 6-1 in a tidy 87 minutes to set up an all-Swiss semi-final on Friday.

The other side of the draw features a battle of the big men, with top seed Novak Djokovic taking on defending champion Marin Cilic.

“Emotionally it’s not so hard for me,” said Federer, who holds a commanding 16-3 advantage over his Davis Cup team mate and reigning French Open champi- on. “But subconsciously, you know he knows what your pref- erences are, where you like to go and where you’re probably going to go,” he added.

“Federer and Gasquet are both armed with elegant one-handed backhands but apart from that aesthetically pleasing stroke, there were very few similarities in their lop-sided contest.

The 17-time grand slam winner could hardly miss and Gasquet all too often played the role of indifferent bystander as the Swiss maestro marked 50 win-ners to a mere eight from the 12th seeded Frenchman.

‘I’M READY’

Anderson, meanwhile, lacked the energy he displayed in a fourth round upset of third seed Andy Murray, allowing Waw-rinka to dictate play for large stretches of the match.

The South African, who leans heavily on his serve, could manage just nine aces and one break point the entire match, which he was unable to convert.

“I’ve improved a lot over the past three years and feel much closer to his level now,” Wawrinka said of his competitor.

“He is playing really well here so I will need to be at my best. He’s had some amazing matches and I know it will be a big challenge but I think I’m ready.”

Halep moved closer to a first grand slam singles title after edg- ing Victoria Azarenka 6-3, 4-6, 6-4 to set up a meeting with Flavia Pennetta, who toppled Czech fifth seed Petra Kvitova 4-6, 6-4, 6-2 to join compatriot Roberta Vinci in the last four. Defying the odds, rankings and age, 33-year- old Pennetta and 32-year-old Vinci etched their names in histo- ry by becoming the first two Italian women to reach the semi-fi- nals of the same grand slam in the Open Era.

With 33-year-old Serena Williams also in the last four, 23-year-old Halep will be con- ceding almost a decade of expe-rience to her remaining challengers.—Reuters

McDonald’s in US, Canada to use only cage-free eggs by 2025

OAK BROOK, Illinois] McDonald’s Corp’s 16,000 US and Canadian restaurants will serve only eggs laid by cage-free chickens within 10 years, the company said on Wednesday.

Other large companies such as Starbucks Corp, General Mills Inc, Nestle, Sodexo Inc and Ar- mark are also in the process of switching.

Groups such as the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS), Mercy for Animals and World Animal Protection have successfully lobbied many com- panies to adopt animal welfare prac- tices.

Such groups also have won commitments from nearly 100 major companies to phase out so-called gestation crates, which are small cages for breeding sows.

Celebrities such as film star Ryan Gosling have teamed up with HSUS to pressure Cost- co Wholesale Corp to eliminate cage-confined chickens from the company’s egg supply chain.

HSUS said Costco has committed to going cage-free, but has not set a timeline for its full transition. HSUS said Costco rival Wal- Mart Stores Inc also has not set a timeline.

US companies, led by burri- sell Chiptole Mexican Grill Inc and other popular brands, increasingly are sourcing their ingredients from suppliers who vow to use humane and environ- mentally sustainable agricultural practices.

California voters in 2008 passed a law mandating that all eggs sold in the state come from chickens given more spacious living quarters.

The law went into effect on Jan. 1 and other states and coun- tries since have followed Californ- ia’s lead. So far this year, the price of a dozen eggs has aver- aged 67 cents more in California than in the Midwest, said Brian Moscoguiri, market reporter for shell eggs and egg products at Umer Barry.—Reuters

Home of bankrupt ex-teen heartthrob
David Cassidy auctioned

MIAMI — Former TV star and teen idol David Cassidy auctioned off his Florida home on Wednes- day after a bankruptcy filing, the breakup of his third marriage and several arrests for drunken driving.

Cassidy, 65, whose hits “Cherish” and “I Think I Love You” had teenage girls swooning in the 1970s, bought the 7,000 square-foot (650 square-meter), five-bedroom waterfront house in Fort Lauderdale for about $1.1 million in 2001. The highest price offered by four registered bidders was $1.8 million.

The price will go before a bankruptcy judge for approval next week. The once baby-faced star of “The Partridge Family” TV se- ries spent five years refurbishing everything from the stained pine floors to the pool and patio and installing heavy wood doors recovered from a razed Mexican church.

Much of the furniture was included in the auction price, according to Fisher Auction Co. Cassidy filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protec- tion earlier this year, listing assets and debts of up to $10 million. The bankruptcy filing followed three arrests for drunken driving since 2010 and a court-ordered stay in rehab.

In 2014, Cassidy’s third wife, Sue, filed for divorce after 23 years of marriage. Bidders for Cassidy’s home were asked to show proof of financing or assets in excess of $3 million in order to take part in Wednesday’s auction. Cassidy ap- peared in several stage shows after his career as a solo singer declined, and played an aging former teen heartthrob in the short-lived 2009 TV comedy “Ruby & the Rock- ets.” He was also a member of the “Celebrity Apprentice” reality TV show in 2011.—Reuters

A painting former TV star and teen idol David Cassidy commissioned showing him serenading his young family while on horseback hangs in a living room of the 7,000 square-foot, five-bedroom waterfront house that is up for auction.—Reuters
De Gea poised for timely return against Liverpool

LONDON — With impeccable timing, David De Gea could return to the Manchester United team for Saturday’s Premier League clash against rivals Liverpool having been the scourge of the Merseysiders at Old Trafford last season.

The Spaniard was left on the sidelines as a lengthy transfer wrangle with Real Madrid ran its course before being abandoned at the last minute.

De Gea is now set to remain at Old Trafford for at least the next four months and the ball is in manager Louis van Gaal’s court as to whether De Gea features in traditionally their most fiercely-contested fixture of the season.

He was the man-of-the-match when the sides met last year, making a string of superb saves as United won 3-0, the first part of a league double over Liverpool.

With the season still in its infancy, the teams have enjoyed similarly inconsistent starts, with both on seven points from four games and looking to rebound after disappointing defeats before the international break.

Liverpool come into the match (1630 GMT) seeking to heal the wounds of a 3-0 home defeat by West Ham United and will be without Brazilian playmaker Philippe Coutinho, who was sent off in that dismal Anfield reverse.

United lost 2-1 at Swansea City but have since spent 36 million pounds ($55.3 million) on young French forward Anthony Martial in a bid to add attacking impetus to a side that has looked defensively solid but lacking in attacking threat.

Manchester City will take their 100 percent record to Crystal Palace (1400) while champions Chelsea travel to Everton (1145) having lost two games from their first four matches.

Chelsea’s defence, which was watertight last season, has been frequently exposed and in Saturday’s early kickoff they will come face to face with John Stones, Everton’s centre back who Joe Mourinho tried in vain to sign.

Manchester City have looked imperious in their four straight wins, scoring 10 goals and conceding none, but they face an in-form Palace who have won three of their first four.

Arsenal, whose fans have vented their frustrations since the closure of the transfer window after top target Arsene Wenger made no outright signings, host Stoke City (1400) who have claimed just two points from their first four games.—Reuters

Messi rejects criticisms over Argentina

ARGENTINIAN soccer star Lionel Messi rejected on Wednesday criticisms surrounding Argentina’s defeats at the finals of the World Cup 2014 and this year’s Copa America in Chile.

The Barcelona forward also dispelled all doubts surrounding his future with his national team by saying that if Argentina’s coach wants him, he will “never say no.”

“I believe we did not win anything but I believe what we did has a lot of merit. It’s not easy to arrive at a World Cup final and a Copa America final. I think that we received a lot of criticisms, and many of them in a horrible way, because what we did is wonderful,” said the 28-year-old Messi.

While speaking to local television channel TyC Sports after drawing with Mexico 2-2 in Dallas on Tuesday, Messi, who scored one of the goals, highlighted the importance of the upcoming competitions.

“First are the World Cup 2018 Russia Qualifiers. We need to start well because afterwards things could get more difficult. You need to think of the short term,” said Messi.

The defeat in the Copa America final to hosts Chile in a penalty shootout was a “hard blow”, said the Olympic 2008 Beijing medalist.

“We were convinced that it was our moment and that we were going to be champions due to the way we arrived at the final. We had a lot of faith in ourselves. It was a hard blow for everyone,” added Messi.

Messi concluded by guaranteeing his continued appearance in the team, coached by Gerardo Martino, despite rumors that circulate after the Copa America defeat about taking a “break” from the team.

“As long as the coach wants me, I will always be there even through the bad times. We have come very close but new challenges are coming,” said Messi.—Xinhua

Yoshida wins 13th world title, Tosaka 3-peats

LAS VEGAS — Japan’s Saori Yoshida defeated Sweden’s Sofia Mattsson 2-1 in the women’s 53-kilogram final to capture her 13th consecutive title at the world wrestling championships on Wednesday night.

Yoshida’s compatriot Eri Tosaka also came up with a gold medal-winning performance, taking her third straight world title at 48 kilograms.

Victory was Yoshida’s 16th at a world championships or Olympics. Participation in the national championships in December will secure her a ticket to her fourth Olympics next year in Rio de Janeiro.

“I thought I was going to lose midway through the final. I am glad I was somehow able to grind out the win,” said Yoshida.

“I am in a position where people are trying to catch me and know people are doing their homework on me properly. I need to polish up my tackles and try hard to win my fourth straight title in Rio.”

Tosaka also effectively booked her spot in Rio, coming from behind to win at the death to beat London Olympic silver medalist Mariya Stadnyk of Azerbaijan 3-2.

“I am relieved that I was able to book my Olympic ticket. I was thinking there is absolutely no way I can go and lose,” said Tosaka.

“Even if I conceded points I was determined to get them back. I will do whatever I can to win at the gold at the Olympics.”

Sara Dosho beat Nasaburrmaa Ochirbat of Mongolia 6-5 to win a bronze medal in the women’s 69-kilogram division, effectively securing Olympic qualification.—Kyodo News

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