ASEAN MINISTERS MEET

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi in Laos for ASEAN conference

DAW AUNG SAN SUU KYI, along with other foreign ministers from the 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), attended the 49th ASEAN Foreign Ministers’ Meeting (AMM), which was opened yesterday in the Laotian capital, Vientiane.

The foreign ministers were welcomed by Lao Prime Minister Thongloun Sisoulith, who called for “frank and constructive discussions” between member states and partners, “contributing to the maintenance and promotion of peace, stability and prosperity in the region and the world.”

In his remarks, Mr Thongloun also identified a range of traditional and non-traditional security challenges including extremism and terrorism, natural disasters and climate change, refugee issues and human trafficking as well as economic developments including the recent “Brexit” as requiring close attention of the ministers.

The opening ceremony of the annual meeting of foreign ministers of ASEAN was also attended by the Secretary-General of ASEAN, senior officials and delegates. The foreign ministers of Timor Leste, Papua New Guinea and Norway also attended as invited guests of the Lao PDR, Chair of ASEAN 2016.

Chaired by Lao Foreign Min- ister Saleumxay Kommasith, the AMM comes following talks be- tween the region’s senior officials and diplomats in Vientiane since Thursday as representatives seek progress on regional and interna- tional issues of common concern and interest.

The meeting discussed pro- gress of implementation of the ASEAN Community Vision 2015, in particular the implementation of the ASEAN Political-Security Community Blueprint 2025.

The one-day meeting also
agreed to the requests for the accession by Chile, Egypt, Iran and Morocco to the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC).

The ASEAN foreign minis- ters also discussed the promotion of ASEAN’s external relations and ASEAN’s centrality within ASEAN-led mechanisms. In addi- tion, the ministers had a candi- d and constructive exchange of views on regional and international issues such as terrorism, human trafficking, illicit drug, natural disasters, irregular migration as well as developments in the Mid- dle East, Korean Peninsula and the South China Sea.

During the meeting, the foreign ministers also adopted the TAC and released the statement on the Occasion of the Anni- versary of the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC) was also released.

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Taninthayi govt takes tough stance on mining groups

THE Minister for Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation for Taninthayi Region U Myint Maung said that mining organisations wishing to renew the mining licenses are required to seek approval from regional government.

Despite the Union government having direct control U Myint Maung stated that mining groups who are polluting have been ordered to seize their operations.

The Union government has control over mining activities. Yet U Myint Maung said that the, “Union government pays attention to agreements of re- gional government.”

“Mining enterprises who are polluting have been or- dered to halt their activities until they’ve resolved pollution issues,” said U Myint Maung, again stating that the Union controls mining agreements.

The minister added that companies will have difficulty in procuring a required agree- ment from regional government for the extension of their licenses, should they be found not to be running their enterprises in compliance with laws and reg- ulations. Mining permits will not be granted to newly found- ed companies of individuals al- ready involved in the industry if they are believed to be circum- venting legal procedures in the workplace.

He went on to say that cur- rent operations are being mon- itored and if a subsidiary of a polluting company request a li- cense or a renewal they will be denied until they correct their practices, and that the Union Minister for Natural Resources and Environmental Conserva- tion U Ohn Win has also ex- pressed a strong stance on the matter.

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Tear gas leaks at US embassy

SEVERAL people inhaled the tear gas that leaked from an explosion a tear gas canister at the US embassy in Yangon yesterday.

The gas leaked out of the training room of the embassy as the canister was tested at the embassy, told Mr Laungh P Rowe, the security officer of the embassy, to the police.

No one was injured in the accident.—Zaw Gyi

Bank provides aid and cash to fire victims in Mandalay Region

AID from Kanbawza Bank’s Brighter Future Myanmar foundation (BFM) reached more than 100 fire victims in Tada U Township, Mandalay Region yesterday.

The fire, caused by an electric short circuiting at a solar panel installed on the roof of a home in Panywa Village, destroyed more than 20 homes, leaving over 100 people homeless. BFM provided rice, edible oil and K500,000 each to 21 families. Officials of the foundation presented the aid and cash to the victims.—GNLM

Efforts made to entitle ownership of Shwebo Paw San Hmway rice grain

EFFORTS will be made to allow personal ownership over the Shwebo Paw San Hmway grain of rice once it has been included on the Geographical Index (GI), according to the Myanmar Rice Federation (MRF).

A survey is reportedly in the process of being conducted in order to ascertain the required information for the grain of rice to be entitled to be listed upon the index.

"Documentation, needed to submit [the rice grain] to the GI, is being put together. The first phase is to ensure [the grain] is listed within the GI. Then, efforts will be made to seek personal ownership. It’s a step by step process which the Department of Science and Technology is carrying out," said Dr Soe Htun, vice chair of the MRF.

Groups are currently working together in townships within Shwebo district, making a concerted effort to ensure a consistency to the quality and DNA of the rice grain which will allow for it to be listed upon the GI of goods produced from regions within Myanmar.

"Farmers will be able to get a better price for their rice if they can claim ownership over it," added Dr Soe Htun. "It will also benefit those exporters and merchants who sell the rice to foreign markets. As a product of trade, it will also allow for more revenue to be collected by the state."

Soil and water from across townships across Shwebo district are reportedly being tested in a laboratory in order to allow for the utilization of a comprehensive pesticide system, together with a stability in DNA and quality of current grains of Shwebo Paw San Hmway rice.

"The prerogative is to first ensure quality of the rice grain and a market for it. There’s also a need to make sure the rice isn’t being bought for low prices as farmers have agricultural debts to repay at the time paddy is ready to be harvested." said Ko Zaw Aung, a farmer from Wuntho Township, Sagaing Region.

Efforts will be made to allow for ownership entitlement of the Shwebo Paw San Hmway grain of rice, together will such entitlement for products produced from other regions around Myanmar, with reports of agricultural experts cooperating to establish a seed industry within the country.

—Myitmakha News Agency

Philippines extends offer to purchase 100,000 tonnes of Myanmar rice

The Philippines have reportedly extended an offer to purchase 100,000 tonnes of Ayemaita Rice from Myanmar, according to the Myanmar Rice Federation (MRF).

The offer marks the very first time such an extension has been made through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). It is reported.

The Philippines recently made us an offer. An MoU will be signed by both countries as soon as possible for the purchase of the Myanmar rice. Although, a date hasn’t yet been set, nor has the price for the rice. "Talks will be held for the signing of the MoU," said Dr Soe Htun, vice chair of the MRF.

The Philippines reportedly extended their offer to purchase Myanmar rice during the first week of this July, while plans are presently being made for the signing of an official MoU between the two countries.

"I still don’t really know [the whole situation]. That said, I’m aware an offer was extended to the Ministry of Commerce. If [Myanmar rice] is to be exported to the Philippines, a tender will have to be submitted to them," said U Aung Myint, secretary of the Myanmar Rice and Paddy Traders Association. Upon the successful signing of an MoU between Myanmar and the Philippines, a hundred thousand tonnes of rice would reportedly be exported to the ASEAN archipelago nation within 12 months.

A total of 1.8 and 1.3 million tonnes of Myanmar rice was exported to foreign countries during the fiscal years of 2014-15 and 2015-16 respectively, according to statistics of the MRF.—Myitmakha News Agency

Private contractors to build 80% of affordable housing projects

THE Ministry of Construction has announced that private contractors will build up 80 per cent of affordable housing projects and that they will be issued loans by the government to undergo construction.

The director of the Department of Urban Housing Development said that the government will construct 20 per cent, while the rest 80 per cent will be supported by the government.

They will be given a set of construction guidelines to ensure that credit loans can be issued by the Construction and Housing Development Bank, said Daw Mi Mi Tin, director of the Department of Urban Housing Development (DUHD).

If the CHDB is unable to supply the loan, it is said that foreign banks will be able to assist.

"The policy of affordable housing employed in the past saw the DUHD utilize a system whereby they constructed and sold the housing projects themselves as a department," added the director.

"We’re now working towards a situation whereby all affordable housing will be built by private contractors, although the government will be there to step in and finish off any projects, which for whatever reason, can’t be completed by the contractors."

The houses will be built at a cost of Ks10m.

"Once the government can bring to life affordable housing, I want the housing units to be sold exclusively to those individuals who can’t afford to purchase expensive property. Only in this way will the lives of us lower-working class be better. Rental prices are incredibly expensive at the moment. We don’t even dare to contemplate the prospect of actually purchasing an apartment with the kind of salaries that we receive," said Ko Maung Lwin, a property renter from Yangon’s Hlaingthaya Township. The MoC has said that affordable housing projects will be set in Yangon’s satellite towns and industrial zones.—Myitmakha News Agency
Illegal wildlife trade to be controlled

SMUGGLING of illegal wildlife to foreign countries will be closely monitored and strictly controlled to prevent wild animals from extinction, said an official from the Ministry of Resource and Environmental Conservation. The forestry department is gathering data about smuggling of wild animals and their parts in border areas with the assistance of international non-governmental organizations; Wildlife Conservation Society and World Wide Fund. Check-ups are being conducted in border channels. Ivory, snakes, tortoises and pangolins are among the most common things being smuggled.

Illegal trafficking of wild animals and parts is ranked fourth after the illegal arms trade, the drugs trade and human trafficking. The respective organizations are cooperating with TRAFFIC, the wildlife trade monitoring international network to be able to control trafficking of rare species.

Those who are in possession of, trafficking, transporting and exporting the wildlife will be either fined Ks50,000 or given seven-year imprisonment.

There have been 12 cases of illegal wildlife trades in Chin and Rakhine states, nine in Ayeyawady Region, seven in Kayah State, five in Kayin, eight in Yangon Region and 14 each in Nay Pyi Taw and Kayin, Mon and Kayah states from 2010 to July, this year.—GNLM

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi in Laos for ASEAN conference

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The statement recalled the signing of the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC) on 24 February 1976 in Bali, Indonesia and the subsequent Protocols amending the TAC.

It recognized the positive contributions of the TAC to promoting peace and stability in the region over the past 40 years, and which continue to be an important foundation for the development of an inclusive, rules-based, people-oriented, ASEAN Community and to the promotion of ASEAN centrality.

The statement also recalled the ASEAN Charter, which urges State Parties to resolve disputes peacefully and in accordance with the rule of law.

The foreign ministers recalled the Declaration of ASEAN Concord II (Bali Concord II) which states that the TAC is the key code of conduct governing relations between States and a diplomatic instrument for the promotion of peace and stability in the region, emphasizing that the aspirations of, and commitment to, the TAC serve as a foundation upon which is built an ASEAN vision of an integrated, peaceful and stable community with shared prosperity as envisaged in the ASEAN Community Vision 2025.

They recognized the importance of maintaining peace and stability in the region by resolving differences and disputes by peaceful means, in accordance with the ASEAN Charter and principles of international law.

Following the annual meeting, Union Minister for Foreign Affairs Daw Aung San Suu Kyi participated in the 7th Mekong-Ganga Cooperation Meeting which focused on promoting cooperation in Mekong-Ganga travel sector, education, transport and cultural sectors.

Union Minister Daw Aung San Suu Kyi also attended the 6th Mekong-Korea Foreign Minister’s meeting and discussed progress of cooperation of Mekong-Korea and future programs.—MNA

Yangon sees mass rallies in support of peace conference

Peace activists held mass rallies in support of the upcoming government-led Union Peace Conference 21st Century Panglong in Yangon yesterday, participants said.

U Myat Kyaw, a peace activist who took part in the rallies, said the upcoming conference would pave the way for lasting peace in the country, and that it would result in a constitution that favours federalism.

The assembly called for support of the peace conference and an end to armed conflict. The activists also held a petition for the peace conference, which would be presented to the Pyithu Hluttaw, the United Nations and international agencies. Rallies in favour of the 21st Century Panglong Peace Conference also took place in the United States, Canada, Australia, the Netherlands and Denmark on Sunday, the Myanmar News Agency reported.

The government has scheduled the peace conference to be held in late August.

—Myanmar News Agency

UFC extends application deadlines for chairman and other posts

The Union Election Commission has extended its deadline for the acceptance of applications for the posts of chairman and member for its sub-commissions at various levels.

The commission announced yesterday that it was extending the period for applications, which opened 21 June, to 8 August. The deadline extension was to ensure broader public participation in its sub-commissions, and especially to encourage the involvement of more women, the commission said. Application forms are available from township, sub-commissions, the announcement said. It added that candidates who meet the eligibility requirements for the posts should send their applications to the sub-commissions in their neighbourhoods.

—Myanmar News Agency

Taninthayi govt takes …

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“Groups are being monitored as to whether they are individuals who comply with mineral mine regulations or not, while no further permits will be granted to those found not to be following legal procedures,” said U Myint Maung.

The Dawei district Mining Scrutiny Committee was formed on 3 June to facilitate the monitoring of compliance with mining regulations within the mining industry, with the committee conducting field site inspections since its conception.

The committee closed the Hinda Mine operated by the Myanmar Manpuppet Company, and the Bawapin Mine, run by the Ashaytaing Company on 29 June: 10 large and medium-scale mines operating in the region with six other companies have submitted requests to begin operations.

—Myitmakha News Agency
AN Australian leading grapes wine manufacturer plans to establish a winery in Haka, the capital town of Chin State, this year.

A member of Chin State Government said the name of Australian company will be revealed when the project initiates in the region.

In cooperation with the state authorities, the implementation of such production business aims to create more employment opportunities for locals. After the project is completed, quality grapes wine manufactured from local products is planned to be distributed in both local market as well as foreign countries. Native species of grapes will be grown in nine townships in Chin State for the new project. Among townships in Chin State, in Tiddim and Falam are famous as grapes growing areas, planting mostly common. Chin State is located in western part of Myanmar. It is bordered by Rakhine State and Bangladesh in the south-west.

Police collected two hand-guns, knives, daggers and fuel bottles. Out of ten fugitives, four submitted themselves at the police station in Sagaing Region on Saturday as they have come to know that they should serve their prison terms, police reported yesterday.

A group of men in connection with a robbery case happened in Noutkyi Island beside the Ayeyawady River in Sagaing Region on 17 April this year have been declared wanted by local police.

According to investigators, the four men—Kwel Gyi (aka Zaw Min Oo), Maung Oo, Chit Chaw and Soe Soe — were involved in robbing a coal cargo ship named Loihamsit near Lethsaunggyu Village in Sagaing Township.

After the case, police arrested five suspects but ten others escaped from the scene. During the cases, the group of offenders attacked police members with long knives, daggers and fuel bottles.

According to their first plan, all people involved in the case to surrender to the police station but only four people arrived the police station but the rest will be paid within eight years in connection with the Construction and Housing Development Bank. —Zar Zau

Five men accused of pickpocketing mobile devices and cash from passengers on buses on Thursday were arrested in North-Okkapa Township in east Yangon.

A Latt Kaung (aka Myat Min Tun), 41; Hein Poork (aka Thein Win), 62; Nga Chun (aka Tun Tun Soe), 45; Taw Pauk (aka Pyae Son), 23; and Shana ma (aka Thun Tun Naing), 35, were seized after they were unable to procure documents proving their ownership of the property, police said.

Police collected two hand-sets and nearly K60,000 from the suspects, who will face charges under the Criminal Law. —Myan-

ma Alinn
**Myanmar set to become major rice exporter**

MYANMAR promises to become a major rice exporting country, an industry expert said on Sunday.

Myanmar is gearing up to reach the top place in exporting the rice to the world market to be able to beat top exporters Vietnam and Thailand.

But the country needs to make a sustained effort to manufacture rice of a high quality to be able to penetrate the international markets, especially the EU market, said Professor Vo Tong Xuan.

Myanmar is targeting Kuwait as its rice buyer and is also making attempts to be able to export rice to the Middle East and Africa, he added.

Myanmar is now expanding its market to penetrate the markets of Australia, Ukraine, Bangladesh, Malaysia, Singapore, South Africa and India.—200

**Fishing block tenders to be hidden in Mon state**

TENDERS for fishing blocks in Thatwin, Attayan and Gyayang rivers are going to be hidden today, an official from the Fisheries Department of Mon State said.

There are a total of 102 fishing blocks in Mon State including: 50 in Mawlamyine, 20 Kyakmayaw, 3 blocks in Mudon, 24 in Chaungson and 5 in Paung Township.

According to the tender rules, these fishing blocks can be put out for tender five times. This is the first time the fishing blocks have been put out to tender in these areas.

A total of 98 fishing blocks from Mawlamyine, Kyakmayaw, Mudon and Chaungson have earned about Ks600milion in last fiscal year.—200

**Myanmar agarwood set for export in 2017**

MYANMAR is planning to export agarwood and its oil as it has a high supply and the value of the particular wood has increased, according to the Myanmar Agarwood Producers and Exporters Association (MAPEA).

The interest has come from the Middle East and from the Americas, its main purpose is for oils and perfumes. The main difficulty the organisation has currently is with providing required documents requested from the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation.

“The market price for a kilogram of agarwood or oil fetches between K20-30m,” said U Kyaw Htun Win. U Kyaw Htun Win also added that the countries interested want more than the country can currently offer, and that the tree is mainly used domestically for sculptures that have an alluring scent.—Myanmar News Agency

**Kyat depreciates in June**

INFLATION has risen by 0.19 per cent compared to that of May, with an annual inflation rate of 12.14 per cent as of June, according to an announcement released by the Central Statistical Organization (CSO) under the Ministry of Planning and Finance.

The inflation rate per annum based on the consumer price index was 12.14 per cent as of June this year, and was 11.95 per cent in May. The rate compared to June 2015 and 2016 is 11.19 per cent.

According to the CSO’s monthly consumer price index and inflation rate, the consumer price index this year also increased when compared to the previous year: 201.14 per cent in June, 2015 and 223.65 per cent in June, 2016.

This fiscal year, the inflation rate was about 11.68 per cent. The inflation rate was the highest in Haka, Chin State in June, 2016, with an average inflation rate of 30.45 per cent. Lokin, Kaya State and Sittwe, Rakhine State followed Haka with an inflation rate of 21.81 per cent and 20.97 per cent respectively in June this year. Myitkyina, Hpa-An and Dawei are the towns to have the lowest rates of inflation per annum as of June, 2016.—200

**Fees for tourism industry licenses to be cut by half**

 Fees for all licenses granted by the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism (MoHT) will be reduced by 50 per cent starting from 1st October, said U Tint Thwin, the director-general of the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism.

“The licenses granted by the ministry are: hotel licenses, tourism licenses, tour guide licenses and tourist transport business licenses. License fees are different from one another. We will scale down fees for all license to 50 per cent and also relax the rules requiring submission of recommendations,” he added.

The new rule will come into effect starting from 1st October. Those seeking licenses before then will have to pay the original prescribed fees.

The ministry warned that people who run hotels and tourism businesses without a license will be fined Ks50,000 and/or jailed for up to three years under section 23 of the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism Law.

It added that action will be taken against those engaged in travel agencies without licenses upon the lapse of the awareness campaign period.

“We will encourage the hoteliers, motel proprietors and travel agents to hold licence during the awareness promotion period,” U Tint Thwin said.—200
**Eight dead, more than 20 missing after boat capsizes off Malaysia**

KUALA LUMPUR — Malaysian authorities have recovered the bodies of eight Indonesians and are searching for more than 20 who are still missing after their boat capsized off the southern state of Johor on Saturday night.

Search and rescue teams recovered the bodies of two men and two women as of Sunday afternoon, adding to the four that were found after the incident on Saturday night, the Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency (MMEA) said in a statement.

The dead and missing were among more than 60 people on the boat that capsized at around 9.45pm Saturday night while on its way to nearby Batam in Indonesia, the statement added.

“A total of 34 victims were rescued...the survivors are now with Johor Immigration while the dead bodies were handed over to the police for further action.”

The authorities are currently continuing the search within a five nautical mile radius of the location where the boat capsized.—Reuters

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**Thousands join funeral procession for Cambodian government critic**

PHNOM PENH — Thousands of people attended a funeral procession in Cambodia’s capital on Sunday for a prominent government critic, Kem Ley, whose name means “meet” in Khmer as the procession made its way with Kem Lay’s body in a refrigerated glass casket on a truck, flanked by Buddhist monks.

“Just helping the nation,” said Chhouk Da, 28, who wore a T-shirt with the words “Wipe your tears, continue your journey”. The killing comes at a time of rising political tension between Prime Minister Hun Sen and an opposition hoping to challenge his 30-year grip on power with political violence in the run-up to elections.

Kem Ley was shot dead in a shop in Phnom Penh on 10 July. Police have arrested a suspect and say they believe the motive for the murder was a debt. Government critics in a country with a long record of violent politics believe Kem Ley was killed because of his work as an activist and his political analysis though they say there is no evidence for that.

“I am here to accompany him for the last time,” said Chhouk Da, 28, a volunteer helping to direct traffic as the procession made its way with Kem Lay’s body in a refrigerated glass casket on a truck, flanked by Buddhist monks.

“Just helping the nation,” said Chhouk Da, 28, who was wearing a T-shirt with the words “Wipe your tears, continue your journey”. The killing comes at a time of rising political tension between Prime Minister Hun Sen and an opposition hoping to challenge his 30-year grip on power in local elections in 2017 and a general election in 2018.

Members of the opposition and activists have been jailed on charges they say were trumped up by the government as part of a crackdown to mute critics. Mourners wearing white shirts held small flags, lotus flowers and pictures of Kem Ley, 46, as the procession including motorbikes and cars moved out of the capital to Kem Ley’s home province of Takeo, about 70 km (40 miles) to the south.

Anti-riot police were on guard outside government buildings along the route.

Human rights group Advocates for Democracy said the procession was at least 8 km (5 miles) long with thousands of people along the route. A police video posted online showed the arrested suspect, Chhuon Somlap, 38, whose name means “meet to kill”, saying he killed the political critic over a $3,000 debt.

The United States has called for a credible investigation. The European Union and United Nations have expressed concern about political tension. Human Rights workers say the killing is bound to have a chilling effect on political activism. The assassination of Kem Ley — a calamity in itself — sadly renews the primacy of violence in the politics of Cambodia,” John Coughlan, a researcher at Amnesty International, said in a statement.—Reuters

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**Thai police charge two eight-year-old girls who tore down pink lists**

BANGKOK — Two 8-year-old girls in Thailand have been charged for violating campaigning rules ahead of a contentious referendum next month after tearing voter lists off a wall because they liked the color pink, Damrong Phetpom, police commander in the northern province of Kamphaeng Phet.

“They confessed to tearing down the voter lists because they liked the color pink,” Damrong told Reuters.

He said they would not face punishment because they were so young.

The referendum will be the first big test of the public’s opinion of the military government since it came to power after a May 2014 coup. Critics, including major political parties, say the draft charter would give the military too much power over elected governments, and would not resolve differences between populist political forces and the military-dominated establishment. The government, which appears increasingly jittery ahead of the vote, has been brought in a law banning discussion of the constitution and lobbying, both for and against, with a 10-year prison sentence for anyone who breaks it.—Reuters
Hunt for missing Indian Air Force plane goes into third day

MUMBAI — The massive hunt for an Indian Air Force plane that went missing in stormy monsoon weather over the Bay of Bengal on Friday with 29 people on board drugged into a third day on Sunday.

Air Force and Navy officials said the search was continuing but no signs of any wreckage had so far been found.

Local media channels reported that clear skies and improved weather on Sunday could aid ongoing search efforts, which India's Defence Ministry said on Saturday were hampered by choppy seas and thick monsoon clouds in the search area.

Sixteen ships, a submarine and six aircraft are searching for the plane that disappeared on a routine re-supply flight to remote islands in the Bay of Bengal on Friday.

The Russian-made AN-32 was on its way to Port Blair, the capital of India's Andaman and Nicobar islands, when it vanished from radar.

There were 21 military personnel on board the missing plane including six crew. The remainder were civilians and some family members of soldiers deployed on the islands.—Reuters

Ramos accepts Duterte's offer to be special envoy to China

MANILA — Former Philippine President Fidel Ramos told reporters on Saturday that he had accepted the offer of President Rodrigo Duterte to be special envoy to China, after his predecessor, Benigno Aquino, unilaterally initiated an arbitration case against China over the dispute to a court of arbitration in The Hague.

The Philippines government under former President Benigno Aquino unilaterally initiated an arbitration case against China over the dispute to a court of arbitration in The Hague.

The court issued its ruling on the dispute on 12 July, which China has rejected as illegal.—Xinhua

World’s largest amphibious aircraft made in China

GUANGZHOU — China has completed production of a massive amphibious aircraft that it plans to use to fight forest fires and perform marine rescue missions.

The AG600 rolled off a production line in the southern city of Zhuhai on Saturday, in what aviation observers see as a milestone in China’s aviation industry.

According to state aircraft maker the AVIC, the AG600 is the world’s largest amphibious aircraft, capable of rescuing up to 50 people far offshore.

With excellent maneuverability and a relatively wide range of search scope, the AG600 is capable of rescuing up to 50 people far offshore. Besides, it is very useful in developing and exploiting marine resources, being adaptable to conduct marine environmental monitoring, resource detection and transportation.

It is the result of nearly seven years of work by a group of 70 aircraft component manufacturers and research teams with over 150 institutes from 20 provinces and municipalities in China. The development and production of the plane received government approval in 2009.

“AG600 is like a ship that can fly, with advanced gas-water dynamic engineering and underwater corrosion resistance technology,” said Huang Lingcai, chief designer of the plane.

According to the AVIC, the AG600 will mainly target the domestic market. Seventeen intent orders have been placed so far.

The unveiling of the AG600 came shortly after Chinese heavy transport aircraft the Y-20 officially entered military service on 7 July and China’s first large passenger aircraft, the C919, rolled off the final assembly line in November 2015. Geng described the AG600 as “the latest breakthrough in China’s aviation industry, which demonstrates an overall improvement of China’s national strength and research capacity.” —Xinhua

India's transport aircrafts Antonov An-32 (foreground) and Dornier Do 228 are seen from the air traffic control at the Yelahanka Air Force Station ahead of Air Force Day on the outskirts of Bengaluru, India, in 2015.—Photo: Reuters

Japan urges nations to deny North Koreans work to cut nuke-linked cash

TOKYO — The Japanese government has been stepping up efforts with the United States and South Korea to stop businesses that have been accepting workers from North Korea to no longer do so in a bid to cut off financing for Pyongyang’s nuclear and missile development plans, sources close to the matter said on Saturday.

Defying UN Security Council resolutions and warnings from the international community, North Korea has conducted four nuclear tests, most recently in January, as well as rocket launches using ballistic missile technology.

At a time when Japan along with the United States and South Korea remain on alert for a possible fifth nuclear test by the North, the three countries have been trying since spring to root out one of the sources of North Korea’s finances — foreign currency earned by North Korean workers abroad, the sources said. The estimated number of North Koreans working abroad is now between 50,000 to 60,000 and the annual amount of remittance is $500 million. Pyongyang systematically sends people abroad to work as an important source of foreign exchange.

For North Koreans, their major destinations for work are Russia and China, part of the council’s five veto-wielding permanent members along with Britain, France and the United States. Including Russia and China, around 20 countries from Southeast Asia, the Middle East and Africa also accept North Koreans, the sources said, adding the number has been expanding since North Korean leader Kim Jong Un came to power after the death of his father and longtime ruler Kim Jong Il in December 2011.—Kyodo News
Opinion

Insecurity undermines development

Kyaw Thura

There is no denying that all aspects of development, ranging from peace, unity, mindset, health, higher education, vocational trainings, skilled personnel industries, transportations, communication, information technologies, E-government, E-commerce, E-banking, E-education, sports, to anything you can think of, would contribute towards the nation building process. However, I’m of the opinion that civic duty plays a key role in the nation building.

Many a writer had contributed articles touching on the subject of the nation building. Their approaches varied and covered a wide range of very useful and tangible ideas and suggestions and examples learned from the experiences of other countries. I’m grateful to them for their endeavors to enlighten us and introduce us to the very valuable informations they provided. However, I haven’t come across many articles that emphasize the role of civic duty in the nation building process. There had been some casual mentions of civic duties in very few articles, including some of mine, in the past. Thus in this article I intend to highlight the key role that the civic duty plays in the nation building process.

All citizens have to fulfill their civic duties to be worthy citizens of the country they live in or call it their home. Here, I would like to clarify the word citizen. For the purpose of this article it represents everyone who lives in a particular country, irrespective of their nationalities or citizenship. In other words they may be expatriates or natives. As every one dwelling in any country, whether one be a native or an expat, has the duty to observe the laws and orders of that country, thus I assume that they also have obligations to observe the civic duties of that country.

Before proceeding any further, I think I should mention the generally accepted definition of the civic duty. It is defined as an unwritten rule that says citizens of a country owe some kind of loyalty and allegiance to their government. In return they receive protection and civil rights from the government. Citizens should be mindful that with the rights come obligations to abide by the laws and orders of that country, which is analogous to observing the civic duty.

People often take civic duty or responsibility to a higher level: above and beyond what is expected of them. Many people help out in the community or advocate for groups who are lacking a voice. They provide an excellent example for the rest of their community by always following the laws and rules and helping out when possible. They encourage people to stand up for what they believe in and do everything they can to promote goodwill within their neighborhoods, cities and countries.

In my perception I would see an appreciation from the civic and inclusive societies. In fact, peace and good governance are the core elements of the wellbeing of all citizens. The onus is, therefore, on all the decision makers to secure peaceful societies and effective institutions by removing every obstacle to the full realization of their peace initiative. In addition, researchers have long recognised inclusion, capacity and accountability as the three dimensions of good governance. They have also stated that dynamic leaders are able to view limited development as a contributor to a vicious cycle of violence and conflict.

On the whole, it is widely recognised that sustainable development remains a remote dream in the absence of peace and security. History has revealed that armed conflict and civil insecurity undermine our country’s development potential.

Civic Duty is Key to the Nation Building Process

Khin Maung Myint

There is an inextricable connection between peace and sustainable development. At a time when development is a significant issue on the agenda of every government, the political situation in the country calls for immediate action to make political and social institutions at all levels more inclusive, effective and accountable. However, one thing to bear in mind is that a lack of trust results from a lack of transparency. In this respect, any failure to guarantee access to justice for all individuals will give rise to instability which can turn to violence and armed conflicts. Any form of conflict is regarded as a major hindrance to political stability and will impede economic and social development. It is, therefore, absolutely imperative for government to take the lead in the establishment of open and accountable institutions to promote peaceable and inclusive societies.

In fact, peace and good governance are the core elements of the wellbeing of all citizens. The onus is, therefore, on all the decision makers to secure peaceful societies and effective institutions by removing every obstacle to the full realization of their peace initiative. In addition, researchers have long recognized inclusion, capacity and accountability as the three dimensions of good governance. They have also stated that dynamic leaders are able to view limited development as a contributor to a vicious cycle of violence and conflict.

On the whole, it is widely recognized that sustainable development remains a remote dream in the absence of peace and security. History has revealed that armed conflict and civil insecurity undermine our country’s development potential.

Czech maize thrives in Myanmar soil

FURTHER attempts to grow grains of maize from the Czech Republic within the river basins of the Mayka, Kalikha and Ayeyawady will be made during the coming months of September and October, according to the Myanmar Maize Producers Association (MMPA).

Plans to continue to plant the maize grain samples have report- edly yielded good prospects that export of the maize could break into the European market.

As maize seeds from Myanmar cannot be manufactured in the country, maize grains of the Thai CP company have to be planted instead, but as this grain of maize is absent from the 70 internationally recognized types, it has been reported cultivated solely for consumption by animals.

“With an initial test planting of the maize seed samples, come September 20 acres of land within the Ayeyawady Region will be used for further growing of the maize seeds,” said U Min Khine, chair of the MMPA.

If maize growers within Myanmar were to change to planting a grain of maize on par with international standards, it would undoubtedly open up trade from international markets, while expansion of the domestic market would see an appreciation from the current declining value of maize.

Previously, it would take 45 days from the beginning of planting for maize plants to start to sprout corn, whereas the recently tested samples of Czech Republic maize grain samples have reportedly flourished within just 30 days, half the time of current crops being grown by the majority of maize farmers in Myanmar.— Myitma News Agency
Better Transport Policies, Investments to Boost Myanmar’s Growth

STRATEGIC investments and new initiatives in the transport sector can propel Myanmar to reach its high growth potential and reduce poverty and inequality, says a new Asian Development Bank (ADB) policy note. The Myanmar: Transport Sector Policy Note presents a comprehensive review of the country’s transport landscape and identifies interventions that can be implemented in the short, medium and long term. High impact infrastructure investments will enable the Government of Myanmar and other key stakeholders to put the transport sector on a self-sustaining development path, according to Asian Development Bank.

“Myanmar’s future is full of great potential,” said Bambang Susantono, ADB Vice-President for Knowledge Management and Sustainable Development. “The new government is ready to make use of its abundant and innate resources to eradicate poverty and ensure growth for everyone. This includes providing access to a modern and safe transport system for all.”

Twenty million people, or about half the rural population, live in villages without access to an all-season road in Myanmar, which trails its Southeast Asian neighbors in transport infrastructure. The report notes that $45 to $60 billion is required in transport investments by 2030, and these should be coupled with streamlining institutions and strengthening cross-ministerial collaboration.

The in-depth study provides policy frameworks and subsector reviews that will provide policymakers, donors, and private investors the opportunity to help prioritize transport investments for railways, river transport, rural roads and access, trunk roads, and urban transport. Thematic reports on road safety and road user charges are also part of the study.

The study was released at a policy discussion attended by U Thant Sin Maung, Minister of Transport and Communication; U Win Khaing, Minister of Construction; Winfried Wicki- lein, ADB Country Director in Myanmar; Hideaki Iwasaki, ADB Director for Southeast Asia Transport and Communications Division; Tyrrell Dun- can, ADB Technical Advisor for Transport; and Mr. Susan- tonto.—GNLM

Cleaning up surroundings of historical ancient Sandawinsh Kyaikhauk Pagoda

TATMADAW members of Thanlyin Station and Yangon Station of Yangon Command carried out the collaborative sanitation work in the surroundings of the Ancient Historical Sandawinsh Kyaikhauk Pagoda in Thanlyin town, Yangon on Saturday 23 July. —C-in-C’s Office

To take retributive action against those who make hate speech

Tommy Paik

The entire people of Myanmar are ardently working together with the democratically elected government to upgrade our country to be able to firmly stand among the nations with the same standard in economy, education, living standard etc. As we have already known that our country lagged behind the other neighboring countries for several years due to internal conflicts or civil war and mismanagement of the suc- cessive regimes. We have human resources, natural resources, wa- ter resources and abundant arable lands. Being patriotic, we do not want our country’s position to be lower than any other countries in every aspect of development. The country Myanmar represents all diverse national races in Myan- mar and whose GDP must be as equal as other people in the South East Asia. We are striving hard for our people to prosper and for our country’s economy to grow with concerted efforts in cooperation with the incumbent govern- ment in unison. Amid doing hard work for rehabilitating the nation by the people, some unscrupu- lous persons intend to destroy the stability and unity.

Besides, they create conflict among the national races and people practicing different religious faith. Public should be aware of their conspiracy and find out the mastermind behind the curtain. All the peace loving citizens dislike and denounce the mal- cious intention of the marplots by meddlesome persons. In fact these persons are the destructive elements for our country which is already on the road to democratiza- tion process. The persons who make hate speech are the trouble makers as well as destructive elements for peace and tranquility in the country. Hate speech is de- fined in the Wikipedia as follows; Hate speech, outside the law, is speech that attacks a per- son or group on the basis of at- tributes such as gender, ethnic origin, religion, race, disability, or sexual orientation. In the law of some countries, hate speech is any speech, gesture or conduct, writing, or display which is for- bidden because it incites violence or prejudicial action against or by a protected individual or group, or because it disparages or in- timidates a protected individual or group. The law may identify a protected group by certain char- acteristics.

We all must avoid hate speech in order to maintain peace and unity in our society though we have diverse culture, diverse religion and diverse ethnicity. Even then, we ought not to de- spise or insult others those who are of different religion, race and culture in our country. In other words, those who belong to dif- ferent religion, race and culture are obliged to respect and under- stand our faith, tradition and race. Hate speech is a kind of mislead- ing technique to attack or fuel a certain community. The commu- nal violence is created by the hate speech indeed. In some countries, due to the hate speech, the com- munities were plunged into chaos and mayhem. We should be mindful to avoid hate speech and be aware of the impact of hate speech on every society across the world.

The governments concerned tackled difficulties to restore the security and order in these coun- tries. The thoughtful and sensible persons in any society do not sup- port or create hate speech. They utterly avoid hate speech and bring the marplots to justice. This shows that all good and thought- ful citizens wish their country to be peaceful, safe and secure at all time. The good and thoughtful citizens always cooperate with the law enforcement authorities in investigating who the destructive elements are.

In Myanmar, the incumbent government is going to promul- gate a law which would forbid the hate speech and prescribe the penalties for those commit or break the law. This is an encouraging news or plan because the hate speech is the threat to any community and society. We the peace-loving citizens heartily welcome the law which obstructs hate speech in Myanmar. Anyone who commits hate speech must pay for his sin because that act impairs the peace and tranquility of a certain society or community severely. Normally, all the reli- gious teachings, spiritual enlighten- ment and practices are based on compassion, loving kindness and humanity. Despite having goodness in any religion, a very handful of unscrupulous persons insult people who believe in differ- ent religious faiths by using the tactic of religious in- doctrination. These members are being indoctrinated by the mast- ernmind to launch hate speech as possible as they can. These persons behave as if they protect and propagate the certain reli- gious faith. Actually, hate speech makers are merely the destructive elements in the society. They are not only not the protectors but also the pious persons of a certain faith. They do not do pious acts but they do only hostile acts to different races and people who believe in different religions indeed.

The communal violence and religious conflicts are caused by hate speech. Their acts do not contribute to the country’s socio-economic development. We sensibly denounce the act of hate speech and persons who create hate speech in our society. It is our bounden duty to bring the destructive elements and hate speech makers to justice so that the enduring peace and unity will ever prevail in our society. Hatred leads to chaos and com- passion brings happiness in any human society indeed!
BEIRUT — Islamic State shunned an offer for its fighters to withdraw safely from the Syrian city of Manbij and clashes with US-backed forces still raged after its expiry, a spokesman for Washington-backed forces said on Saturday.

The jihadist group did, however, propose a deal to allow the safe passage of critically ill civilians to areas controlled by the US-backed forces in exchange for allowing wounded IS fighters to leave the city, the spokesman said.

The Syria Democratic Forces alliance, made up of Arab and Kurdish fighters and backed by the United States, made rapid advances against the jihadists last month after launching a campaign to flush them out of territory along the Turkish border, through which they had for years moved weapons and fighters.

The SDF quickly surrounded Manbij, but the fight to take the city has been tougher, with slow advances inside it in recent weeks.

On Thursday the SDF-allied Manbij Military Council said Islamic State militants would be allowed to leave the city with light weapons, without a fight, if they left within 48 hours.

The offer was the idea of local actors, the Council’s spokesman Sharfan Darwish said, without elaborating.

“The deadline is approaching, time is almost up... and the battles are continuing. As far as we’re concerned, the situation has not changed,” he said early on Saturday, adding that there had been no apparent response from IS to the initiative.

“Our steps towards liberating Manbij are going ahead.”

Darwish said later clashes were still going on after the expiry of the offer.

Darwish did not say whether the SDF would accept the IS proposal on wounded fighters and sick civilians. He said IS had been using civilians as “human shields”.

The British-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said clashes continued inside Manbij, and that the US-led coalition fighting IS was bombing parts of the city and nearby areas. Activists say dozens of civilians have been killed this week in air strikes in the city and to the north, and the opposition Syrian National Coalition called for a suspension of the air strikes while the incidents are investigated.—Reuters
Women in male-dominated career fields watch a unique US presidential campaign

LOS ANGELES — Dr. Linda Liau works with the precision of a master, peering into a patient’s head with magnifying loupes as she removes a brain tumour.

When Liau was called into an emergency room as a surgeon more than 20 years ago to help treat a car crash victim, another member of the medical team assumed she was a nurse.

Even today, the 49-year-old neurosurgeon sometimes gets a surprised reaction from new patients who were expecting a man.

“Sometimes, she will encounter someone on a construction site who knows her mother, Kelly Cooper, who also was an electrician,” said Ursula Burton, a director, producer and musician.

“Everyone remembers her because there’s only a few women,” Cooper said.

Kelly Cooper began as an apprentice in 1975.

“You have to have thick skin to be anyone in the trade,” she said.

“To be a woman in the trade, you can do anything, said Ursula Burton, a musician.

In a heavy coat and blue helmet at the white-hot flame of a welding torch.

It was a fight to learn these skills. More than a decade ago, when she began receiving job training as a welfare recipient, Thompson had to argue for the chance to study welding. Public assistance administrators wanted to push her toward cosmetology or culinary arts, she said.

Thompson did not say how she would cast her ballot in November but said she would not vote for Clinton just because the candidate is a woman.

Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump’s slogan has resonated with her.

“When they talk about ‘Let’s make America great again,’” Thompson said, “what I think of is the companies in Detroit, the automotive industry going back to Detroit and giving back jobs.”

A well-paid job as an electrician has opened up opportunities for Hannah Cooper, 28. For one thing, she was able to buy a house in the expensive Los Angeles real estate market.

“Everyone remembers her because there’s only a few women,” Cooper said.

Kelly Cooper began as an apprentice in 1975.

“You have to have thick skin to be anyone in the trade,” she said.

“To be a woman in the trade, you have to have a particularly thick skin.”

She is now director of construction for the Los Angeles Department of General Services.

For the Burtons, who work together as filmmakers through their company Five Sisters Productions, their career had its seeds in their childhood as the daughters of a writer and a former professional musician.

Both parents were feminists who thought their five daughters could do anything, said Ursula Burton, a director, producer and actor.

Now the possibility of a female president could help create more opportunities for women, she said.

“How a woman president opens up the presidency for girls,” Burton said, “and it will shift the perception for boys of what girls can do.” — Reuters
Spy agencies struggle to spot threats from lone, mentally ill attackers

WASHINGTON — Recent attacks on civilians in the US and Europe have exposed a gap in the intelligence community’s efforts to track suspected extremists and prevent mass killings, a half-dozen American and French counterterrorism officials told Reuters.

The attacks have a common theme of perpetrators with an apparent history of mental illness — but few if any direct links to extremist groups, the officials told Reuters.

From both a legal and a strategic perspective, counterterrorism investigators globally are focused on plots by established violent organizations unless they have provable ties to foreign terror groups.

Counterterrorism officials told Reuters that the assailants in a recent spate of attacks all had histories of apparent mental illness. They included the mass shooting at a gay nightclub in Orlando, Florida; the murder of a British parliamentarian in Northern England; the killings of police in Baton Rouge, Louisiana and Dallas, Texas; the Bastille Day truck attack in Nice, France; and Friday’s mass shooting at a German shopping mall.

The counterterrorism officials in the US and Europe spoke on condition they and their organizations remained anonymous.

On Saturday, Munich police chief Hubertus Andrä said the Munich mall gunman, identified in news reports as Ali David Sonboly, had undergone psychiatric treatment before the attack and was obsessed with mass killings. He had no criminal record, and had no known connections to extremist groups.

The German-Iranian 18-year-old, a local resident, shot and killed nine people after opening fire near Olympia shopping mall. The tactics in such attacks contrast sharply with the attacks in Paris last November and Brussels in March, which were carried out by groups of militants with direct links to Islamic State.

Existing systems for collecting intelligence on extremists are not set up to identify individuals with a history of mental illness who come into contact with people or propaganda that could incite them to engage in violence, the intelligence officials told Reuters.

In the attack in Orlando, the perpetrator had viewed online jihadist propaganda, possibly produced by the Islamic State, the investigators said. But subsequent probes turned up no evidence of the Orlando shooter, Omar Mateen, had any significant connections with Islamic State or any other militant organizations.

French investigators have arrested five alleged accomplices in the Nice attacks, but they have so far found no evidence that the attack was directed by foreign militants, according to a US counterterrorism official and a French official. The case of Mateen perhaps best exemplifies the difficulty in detecting and preventing attacks by single perpetrators with a history of mental illness. Federal officials have acknowledged that, for about 10 months in 2013 and 2014, the FBI investigated Mateen after he allegedly boasted to co-workers about supposed connections to Al-Qaeda and other militant groups.

While he was under investigation, the FBI placed Mateen’s name in three government databases, one of which is intended to trigger additional scrutiny if an individual passes through airport or border checkpoints. But having found no evidence that Mateen had any real connections to militants, the FBI closed its investigation and his name was removed from the databases, two US intelligence officials told Reuters. The US officials said those decisions were made to comply with laws designed to limit invasive government surveillance on all Americans. Neither the CIA nor National Counterterrorism Center are allowed to collect and retain information on American suspects who have no provable links to international terrorist groups, the two US officials said.

About three weeks before he carried out the massacre in Orlando, Mateen told an acquaintance that he was worn out from staying up all night to research psychiatric medication, the acquaintance, who asked not to be named, told Reuters. Mateen also told this person that he was worried that he had slipped into psychosis. US officials also said they are investigating the role mental health issues may have played in the shooting of police in Baton Rouge and Dallas. In both attacks, the shooters had displayed signs of apparent mental illness and extreme views before their rampages.—Reuters

Turkish president gains upper hand in power struggle

ISTANBUL — At the crossroads between a divided Europe and a convulsed Middle East, Turkey is caught in a power struggle between former Islamist allies which is shaking democratic institutions and raises questions about its future path.

Since a failed coup on 15 July, the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) founded by President Tayyip Erdogan has gained the upper hand in its battle with clan-based networks in the military, judiciary and bureaucracy loyal to US-based cleric Fethullah Gulen.

This fight to the bitter end has alarmed the West and unnerved the country of 80 million, which borders the chaos in Iraq and Syria and is a Western ally against Islamic State.

Erdogan accuses Gulen of masterminding the attempted coup by a faction within the military and has rounded up more than 60,000 people in an operation which he hopes will cleanse Turkey of what he calls the Gulenist “virus.”

The purges, carried out as Turkey faces attacks by Islamist State and a revived struggle with Kurdish militants, go beyond the more than 100 generals and 6,000 soldiers held, or the nearly 3,000 judges detained.

They already encompass 21,000 teachers and much of the academic community, and new targets in a media already hit by years of firings and fines, jailing and closures.

“They are traitors,” Erdogan told Reuters in an interview on Thursday. He described Gulen’s network as “like a cancer” and said he would treat them like a “separatist terrorist organisation” and root them out, wherever they may be.

Gulen, 75, denies plotting against the state and suggested the day after the abortive coup that it may have been staged to justify a crackdown on his followers.

The millions of members of Gulen’s “Hizmet” (Service) movement do not outwardly identify as supporters. Since the failed coup many are going even further underground, refusing to take calls or trying to leave the country.

Some followers are dumping books in the woods and publishers are getting rid of their stocks, said Nedim Sener, an investigative journalist at Posta newspaper who was a book on the Gulen movement’s efforts to infiltrate the state and was jailed in 2011 for more than a year.

A senior journalist at a Gulen-affiliated newspaper, speaking on condition of anonymity because he feared reprisals, said he and other editors were afraid to go to the paper’s office in the days following the failed coup and that their printers refused to continue publishing.

“I advised my colleagues not to go to the office for their own safety,” he said. “The newspaper has become a liability, it has just disappeared ... I’m afraid for my family and for my life. It’s dangerous to go outside.”

Asked if he was a follower of Gulen’s teachings, he said: “Answering this question could now be used as evidence against me. Now I could be prosecuted for a book I keep at home ... Everyone is too afraid to call their friends, worried this will cause their detention. It’s a climate of fear everywhere.”

Erdogan was prime minister from 2003 until 2014, when he became president. When he first came to power, he led a reinvigorated Muslim conservative party wary of secularists. The AKP who, after Erdogan and his party narrowly escaped being banned in 2007, built two big conspiracy trios targeting the upper echelons of the army.

These two cases, known as Ergenekon and Sledgehammer, netted more than 40 generals, but also swept up opponents of both the ruling party and the Gulenists. It later became clear after many charges were dismissed that bogus evidence had been used.

Yet at the time, the Gulenists’ apparent success in helping Erdogan break the army’s grip on Turkish politics emboldened them to demand more power in the security services and the army.

“It is essentially not a struggle about ideology because their ideology is so similar. Both want to turn Turkey into a more conservative Islamic society,” said one Turkey analyst who asked not to be named after the declaration of emergency laws which could hit those critical of the state.

“It is a struggle about power and that alliance broke down because of disagreement over power-sharing.”—Reuters
Peru’s Fujimori asks for pardon ahead of presidential transition

LIMA — Peru’s imprisoned former authoritarian leader Alberto Fujimori has filed a new request for a presidential pardon, the prime minister said on Saturday, five days before President-elect Pedro Pablo Kuczynski takes office.

It is unclear if the pardon would be decided by outgoing President Ollanta Humala, who rebuffed Fujimori’s first pardon appeal in 2013, or by Kuczynski, who must govern alongside a Congress controlled by the populist party Fujimorista.

What a novel concept.” He said they shared a common creed: “Do all the good you can,” Clinton unveiled her choice of Kaine late on Friday, grabbing the political spotlight from Trump, who accepted the Republican presidential nomination on Thursday night after a chaotic four-day convention.

The former secretary of state will formally be nominated as her party’s presidential candidate in the 8 November election at the Democratic convention in Philadelphia, which opens on Monday. In choosing the soft-spoken Kaine, a former Richmond mayor and Virginia governor with a long establishment resume, Clinton opted for a steady and experienced hand who she hopes will offer a clear alternative to Trump’s volatile campaign and his Republican vice presidential choice Mike Pence.

“The former secretary of state will formally be nominated as her party’s presidential candidate in the 8 November election at the Democratic convention in Philadelphia, which opens on Monday. In choosing the soft-spoken Kaine, a former Richmond mayor and Virginia governor with a long establishment resume, Clinton opted for a steady and experienced hand who she hopes will offer a clear alternative to Trump’s volatile campaign and his Republican vice presidential choice Mike Pence.”

“Some of these fuels, they haven’t burned in decades. This fire has increased to about 11,000 acres just overnight.” Media reported a resident was found dead in a burned car, citing a neighbor who said the man’s house has burned down.

Residents earlier posted pictures on social media of the sun blotted out by the towering plumes and the South Coast Air Quality Management District issued a smoke advisory, warning of unhealthy air conditions in the region.

Residents earlier posted pictures on social media of the sun blotted out by the towering plumes and the South Coast Air Quality Management District issued a smoke advisory, warning of unhealthy air conditions in the region.

On Saturday, the victim’s wife posted a photo of the fire burning in the community of Little Tujunga and stop the spreading blaze that is burning through chaparral and brush.

At the Democratic convention in Philadelphia, which opens on Monday, in choosing the soft-spoken Kaine, a former Richmond mayor and Virginia governor with a long establishment resume, Clinton opted for a steady and experienced hand who she hopes will offer a clear alternative to Trump’s volatile campaign and his Republican vice presidential choice Mike Pence.

Trum...
Magic lights up Warner Bros’ Comic-Con panel, superheroes reign

SAN DIEGO, (Calif) — Oscar-winning actor Eddie Redmayne brought the wizarding world of “Harry Potter” to real life briefly on Saturday, as he helped hand out wooden wands to the 6,500-plus audience at a Comic-Con panel and made everyone perform a spell. Redmayne, the lead actor of “Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them,” asked the audience to shout the incantation for the light-up spell “Lumos Maxima” to unveil a new trailer. “Fantastic Beasts,” due out in November, is a spin-off from the magical “Harry Potter” universe created by J.K. Rowling.

The movie’s cast remained tight-lipped about the plot and their characters, but the trailer shows “magizoologist” Newt Scamander (Redmayne) arrive in New York in 1926 with a case of magical creatures that escape, wreak havoc and face threats from the non-magical humans in the city.

Warner Bros showcased its upcoming blockbuster films at the annual four-day San Diego convention for film and pop culture fans, including “Kong: Skull Island,” “King Arthur: Legend of the Sword,” “Suicide Squad” and the rest of its expanding DC Comics superhero universe, following in the footsteps of Disney’s blockbusting Marvel Cinematic Universe franchise.

Ben Affleck, the latest actor to don Batman’s cape and cowl, said, “There’s tremendous amount of pressure” both starring in and directing the next standalone Batman movie.

“It’s terrifying and inspiring and really exciting because it’s one of most iconic, fascinating characters ever created in American drama,” he said.

The start of 2017’s “Wonder Woman” discussed exploring the origins of the Amazonian warrior heroine played by Israeli actress Gal Gadot, and bringing a strong female lead to the male-dominant superhero movie world. This year marks the 75th anniversary of Wonder Woman’s debut in comic books.

“Wonder Woman has the heart of a human and the strength of a goddess and combination of the two is very powerful,” Gadot said.

Batman and Wonder Woman will join forces in the “Justice League” film with Flash, Aquaman, Cyborg and Superman, who, it was revealed Saturday, had survived the events that appeared to kill him in “Batman V Superman” earlier this year.

Rivaling Affleck’s Batman at the panel was Lego Batman, voiced by Will Arnett, the star of next year’s animated “Lego Batman Movie,” a spin-off from 2014’s “The Lego Movie.” Animators recreated the Comic-Con panel setup in a short sketch that included a Lego version of panel moderator Conan O’Brien asking Lego Batman, Lego Joker and Lego Robin about the new film, in which Batman tackles fatherhood.—Reuters

Jurassic World 2 to begin production in Hawaii next year

LOS ANGELES — Production on Jurassic World 2 is slated to start early next year in Hawaii.

Juan Antonio Bayona, who replaces Colin Trevorrow as director for the Jurassic World sequel, will begin the production of the film on February 27, 2017, reported Ace Showbiz.

It’s unclear whether the fixed date is for pre-production or principal photography. However, the fixed date seems plausible for the filming as Trevorrow has said that the crew will not spend too much time in Hawaii. The majority of the filming will take place in London’s Pinewood Studios.

Jurassic World 2 would not focus on “a bunch of dinosaurs chasing people on an island” like the previous Jurassic films.

Trevorrow said that he would focus on the idea of multiple companies cloning dinosaurs in the follow-up to Jurassic World which is scheduled for a June 22, 2018 US release. The 38-year-old filmmaker, whose dinosaur adventure film became the third-highest grossing film of all time, had said that the sequel may include more hybrid dinosaurs, like the current film’s Indominus Rex.

“It will not be) just a bunch of dinosaurs chasing people on an island. That’ll get old real fast. “I feel like the idea that this isn’t always going to be limited to theme parks, and there are applications for this science that reach far beyond entertainment,” Trever says. “We’re not always going to be the only ones who can make a dino-ma.”

Mumbai — Actor John Abraham feels that while the trade is obsessed with box office, after a point the audience do not judge a star’s popularity based on numbers.

The “Rocky Handsome” star says he is aware a film’s success or failure depends on whether viewers are connected with it, but that is not in an actor’s hands.

“I believe if a film doesn’t do well, you have to understand it didn’t connect and if it does well, it connected. But there’s nothing you can do about it. I don’t think after a point people are going to judge your stardom or popularity based on those numbers,” John told PTI. “Trade will do that, they like doing that. Let them do that. We can’t really affect it,” he said.

The actor who made his debut in 2003 with “Dhoom”, went on to star in films like “Saaya” and “Paap”, before getting a big breakthrough with “Dhoom:2”. John has since then appeared in films like “Dostana”, “Garam Masala”, “New York” and “Madrass Cafe”. The actor says he never feels the box office pressure and wants to be moved by the script when he is signing a film.

“I don’t get affected by box office. I really don’t get affected by the success or failure of a film. I only get affected when I sign the film, because that’s the time you should really be affected,” he said.

The 43-year-old “No Smoking” actor will be next seen in “Dhoom:3”, which releases on July 29. Directed by Rohit Dhawan, the thriller chronicles the story of two policemen, Kabir (John) and Junaid (Varun Dhawan), who go on a 36-hour manhunt to find India’s top batsman who is missing in the Middle East.—PTI

Prefer the same language here. Was this the case?
Russian adventurer Fedor Konyukhov has landed safely in a field on a private property in West Australia after setting a world record for circumnavigating the world solo in a hot air balloon.

The 64-year-old Konyukhov emerged from the balloon’s gondola after more than 11 days aloft expressing his appreciation for the smell of the earth, and “how wonderful it is”, according to millionaire businessman and fellow aviator Dick Smith, who was on hand to assist with the landing.

Konyukhov, who embarked on his epic journey from Northam in Western Australia on 12 July, set the record of just over 11 days when he passed above the township 100 km north east of Perth, Australian national broadcaster ABC reported earlier.

The Russian balloonist beat the previous record of 13-1/2 days set in 2002 by the late Steve Fossett.

In completing the epic journey, Konyukhov flew directly over Northam, a feat described as “incredible” by Smith.

“After going 34,000 kilometres around the world he crossed the runway where he took off from,” said Smith. “That’s never happened before. It was mainly luck and it’s just unbelievable.”

Smith completed the first solo circumnavigation of the world by helicopter in 1983.

When Konyukhov broke the record he was directly over Northam at an altitude of approximately 6,000 meters and traveling at 60 kilometres per hour, Smith said.

He said the Russian had been advised to fly for another hour in search of safer terrain on which to land.

During the journey Konyukhov flew as high as 10,000 metres and dealt with extreme temperatures — as low as minus 56 degrees Celsius — that caused his oxygen masks and drinking water to freeze, ABC reported.

Konyukhov also had to cope with the failure of his heating system and fierce electrical storms, ABC said.

On the last leg of the journey he was pushed far south towards Antarctica as he crossed the southern ocean between the Africa and Australia.

“It is scary to be so down south and away from civilization,” Konyukhov wrote in one entry in a blog he updated at various points during the flight.

“This place feels very lonely and remote, just a thick layer of cyclonic clouds below me and dark horizon to the east.”

—Reuters

Funky or classic? Medal ceremony gets musical makeover

RIO DE JANEIRO — Olympic organisers will bring typical Brazilian informality to the medal ceremonies at Rio 2016 with three different kinds of podium music depending on whether the sports are considered classical, pop or cool, officials said.

The 45-second bursts of music will be played as winners mount the podium to receive their medals.

Winners in sports such as fencing and equestrian will hear a more traditional sound, while funkier tunes will play for those triumphing in newer and younger sports such as BMX biking and beach volleyball, said Christy Nicolay, executive producer of sport presentations.

A more pop sound would be played for sports such as basketball, Nicolay added.

“For the first time ever we have three different styles of victory ceremonies,” Nicolay said. “This is my eighth Olympic Games and I’ve always wanted to do this. And music in Brazil is so amazing that’s it’s a great opportunity to show that.”

“There are so many sports in the summer Olympics and some of them are so different. For example the music at gymnastics would be very different to BMX, or beach volleyball would be very different to fencing. So we wanted these three different styles of ceremonies.” Rio de Janeiro will become the first South American nation to host the Olympic Games next month. The Games run from 5 to 21 August.—Reuters

Russian balloonists sets world record for circumnavigation

Russian adventurer Fedor Konyukhov is seen in front of his balloon as it is inflated before the start of his record attempt for a solo hot-air balloon flight around the globe near Perth, Australia, in this handout image received on 12 July 2016. PHOTO:REUTERS

Russian balloonist Fedor Konyukhov is seen in front of his balloon as it is inflated before the start of his record attempt for a solo hot-air balloon flight around the globe near Perth, Australia, in this handout image received on 12 July 2016. PHOTO:REUTERS

A worker applies a coat of paint to a set of Olympic rings on Copacabana beach in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, on 22 July 2016. PHOTO:REUTERS

A virtual map of Bryant Park is displayed on the screen as a man plays the augmented reality mobile game “Pokémon Go” by Nintendo in New York City, on 11 US July 2016. PHOTO:REUTERS

Pokémon GO blamed for illegal border crossing from Canada to US

HELENA (Montana) — Two youths unaware of their surroundings when they were playing Pokémon GO on their cell phones made an illegal border crossing this week from Canada into the United States in a remote part of Montana, US Customs and Border Patrol said.

The two, who were not identified, were found by US Border Patrol agents on Thursday, with their attention attuned to their phones as they were trying to hunt down cartoon characters on a journey that took them over the border.

“Both juveniles were so captivated by their Pokémon GO games that they lost track of where they were,” said Michael Rappold, a spokesman for the agency. The two were reunited with their mothers at a nearby border patrol station, the agency said.

The game has been an unexpected success story from Spain to Australia, doubling Nintendo’s value since the game’s launch.

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Dominant Farah warms up for Rio in style

LONDON — Mo Farah returned to the scene of his 2012 Olympic glory and completed his preparations for the defence of his distance double in Rio with a crushing sub-13-minute victory in the 5,000 metres at the London Diamond League meeting on Saturday.

The Briton was never threatened in a celebrational procession, running solo for the second half of the race and putting in a late burst to cross the line in 12:59.29 — the fastest time in the world this year.

Fellow Briton Andrew Butchart outkicked veteran American Bernard Lagat for second place but they were effectively in a separate race, coming in 15 seconds behind.

“I just wanted to go for it. It was my last chance to run quick before Rio. This track has so much meaning for me and I got amazing support from the crowd,” said Farah, who grew up in London after leaving Somalia as a boy.

“Rio is right around the corner and I’m in good shape. I just have to keep my feet on the ground and stay patient but I’m excited.”

Farah will start as favourite in both the 5,000 and 10,000m in Rio next month — only Finn Lasse Viren has retained both titles — while at the other end of the scale Dafne Schippers will seek the 100m/200m sprint double.

The Dutchwoman, now totally converted to the track after giving up the heptathlon, will be the woman to beat over 200 and looked supremely relaxed as she easily triumphed in her preferred distance in 22.13 seconds.

“I’m happy for now, I came here to win the race and I feel like the time will come in Rio,” said Schippers, who last year won the 200m world title and was second in the 100. “I’m comfortable with being tagged as the favourite (in Rio), I’m never nervous, which is good for me.”

In the 100m none of the trio of American big guns was present but Jamaican 2015 world champion Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce has ground to make up if she is to win a third successive Olympic title as she managed only third in 11.06 on Saturday as she continues her recovery from an injury-lit season.

Marie-Josee Ta Lou of Ivory Coast was the surprise winner, having run a 10.96 personal best in the heats then matched it in the final to triumph ahead of Michelle-Lee Ahye of Trinidad & Tobago.

After their women’s team set a national record in the 4x100m relay on Friday Britain’s men responded with an impressive 37.78 on Saturday — the world-leading time for the year and 0.05 away from the British record.

The British B team were only three hundredths behind them, raising national hopes of a medal in Rio after years of disqualifications and baton malfunctions.— Reuters

A 555-strong US Olympics team includes record 292 women

NEW YORK — A record contingent of 292 women will be part of a powerful 555-strong United States team at next month’s Rio Olympics.

The team, announced on Saturday by the US Olympic Committee (USOC), will contest 244 of 306 medal events. The Americans topped the gold medal (46) and overall medal (104) table at London 2012.

The record number of women on the US team tops the previous mark of 289 by China in 2008. It is the second time the American roster has featured more females than males.

“I am especially excited for the historic achievement of our women’s delegation which is a true testament to the strength and growing number of women’s sport opportunities in the United States,” USOC CEO Scott Blackmun said.

The American team includes 191 returning Olympians. Equestrian rider Phillip Dutton and shooters Emil Milan and Kim Rhode are heading to their sixth Games.

Among those going to their fifth Olympics are swimmer Michael Phelps, middle-distance runner Bernard Lagat, tennis player Serena Williams and beach volleyballer Kerri Walsh Jennings.

Phelps, who owns an Olympic record 18 golds, will swim in at least three events in Brazil.

Runner Allyson Felix, the most decorated US Olympic woman with four golds and six overall, makes a fourth Games appearance, competing in the 400 meters and probably the 4x400 relay.

Among the strongest medal favourites are the women’s basketball team and gymnast Simone Biles in the women’s all-around.

The women’s rowing eight seek to continue a dynasty on the world stage. They have not lost an Olympic or world championship title since 2006.

Dutton, 52, will be the oldest team member, with 16-year-old table tennis player Kanak Jha the youngest.— Reuters

Pogba is not worth world-record fee, says Scholes

LONDON — Former Manchester United player Paul Scholes has questioned whether the club should pay a world-record fee for Juventus midfielder Paul Pogba, saying the 23-year-old is not in the same bracket as the likes of Cristiano Ronaldo and Lionel Messi.

United have been negotiating with Juventus over the transfer of Pogba, who is a top target for new manager Jose Mourinho, according to media reports in Britain.

Scholes was Pogba’s team mate when the latter was a teenager at United and feels despite his obvious talent, the France international has a long way to go before he can stake his claim as one of the world’s top players and command a record fee.

“He was a very talented young player, I played with him and I knew how good he was,” Scholes, who is playing in a futsal tournament in India, told the Times of India daily.

“I just don’t think he is worth 86 million pounds ($112.75 million). For that sort of money, you want someone who is going to score 50 goals a season like Ronaldo or Messi. Pogba is nowhere there yet.”

Scholes also praised Manchester City’s capture of Borussia Dortmund midfielder Ilkay Guendogan for a fee worth around 20 million pounds, according to British media reports. “I think Guendogan is a really impressive player,” Scholes said. “I’ve seen a lot of him at Borussia Dortmund.”

“If he can stay fit, I think he can be a fantastic player. I also think he is great value for the money Manchester City paid for him. I think he is a bargain.”— Reuters