AMM CONCLUDES WITH OUTCOMES

Union Foreign Affairs Minister Daw Aung San Suu Kyi returns home

UNION Minister for Foreign Affairs Daw Aung San Suu Kyi arrived back in Myanmar yesterday evening after attending the 49th ASEAN Foreign Ministers’ Meeting (AMM) and related meetings in Vientiane, Laos from 23 July until Monday.

The Union minister attended the Meeting of Commission on the South East Asia Nuclear Weapon Free Zone Treaty on 23 July, and also the Interface Meeting between ASEAN Foreign Ministers and the representatives of the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR).

She attended the 49th ASEAN Foreign Ministers’ Meeting Plenary Session and Retreat Session on 24 July together with other ASEAN counterparts.

A Joint Communiqué of the 49th AMM, ASEAN Foreign Ministers’ Statement on the occasion of the 40th Anniversary of the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in the South East Asia (TAC) and Joint Statement of the Foreign Ministers of ASEAN Member States on the Maintenance of Peace, Security and Stability in the region were issued at the end of the meeting.

During her stay in Vientiane, the Union minister also attended the 6th Mekong-Republic of Korea Foreign Ministers’ Meeting, the 7th Mekong-Ganga Cooperation Ministerial Meeting, the 9th Lower Mekong Initiative Ministerial Meeting and the 9th Mekong-Japan Foreign Ministers’ Meeting on 24-25 July respectively. Myanmar will assume the chairmanship of the 8th Mekong-Ganga Cooperation Ministerial Meeting.

On 25 July, the Union minister attended the ASEAN Post Ministerial Conference (PMC+1) with the ten Dialogue Partners namely the People’s Republic of China, Republic of Korea, Canada, Japan, Australia, India, the US, the European Union (EU), New Zealand and the Russian Federation. After the meetings, the Chairman’s statements of the PMC+1 with dialogue partners were issued.

At the ASEAN-China Ministerial Meeting, the Ministers adopted the Joint Statement of the Foreign Ministers of ASEAN member states and China on the full and effective implementation of the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea.

The Union minister co-chaired the ASEAN-Australia Meeting together with Julie Bishop MP, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade of the Commonwealth of Australia. Myanmar is currently the country coordinator of ASEAN-Australia Dialogue Relations from 2016 to 2018.

AUTHORITIES BRING BACK FISHERMEN FROM INDIA

TEN fishermen who were detained at the Open Disaster Camp at Port Blair in India were repatriated yesterday by air as their prison sentences for illegally entering India’s territorial waters expired.

“We will send them back their homes as soon as possible. There was no case of human trafficking among the ten fishermen,” said U Tin Hlaing, head of Yangon Region Relief and Resettlement Department. The ten fishermen, comprising five from Taninthayi Region, three from Ayeyawady Region and two from Yangon Region were brought back home under the arrangement of the two governments of the two countries.

“We were arrested by the Indian navy while we were drifting in Indian territorial waters after the engine of our fishing boat broke down,” said Saw Gay Htoo from Ayeyawady Region. The fisherman claimed that he and his comrades were tortured and underfed by Indian prison authorities. The group were handed prison sentences by Indian authorities in 2012. The returned men were provided cash and clothes at Yangon International Airport.

We would like to give good news that those who come to Okkala Golf Resort and play ten times and three months will be granted free Green Fees once and this is the event of Hole In One, the golfers will be given a KBFMC-125 motorcycle.

Ph. 09-30998334, 09-30998335 Email-okkala.golfresort@gmail.com
Pyithu Hluttaw representatives second motion calling for expansion of public health services

THE Pyithu Hluttaw session continued yesterday with parliamentarians holding discussions on a proposal calling for the expansion of the organisational set-up of the Public Health Department to effectively provide public health services.

Dr Sai Maik Kham of Lashio Constituency pointed out that the Health Department, handling a heavy workload that involves administering vaccines nationwide and undertaking the monitoring and control of infectious diseases needs infrastructure, human resources and adequate funding so that its tasks can be accomplished the lawmaker said, seconding the motion.

In his discussion, U Myint Oo of Thanathpin Constituency, who also seconded the proposal, pointed out an inadequate ratio of midwives to births in his constituency with one midwife for about 3,700 people. He called for the assigning of midwives, an assistant and a health staff member to each village and providing them with further training to be appointed permanent staff.

Regarding a question on vacant doctor posts in townships and station hospitals, Union Minister Dr Myint Htway said that 2,000 doctors recruited by the ministry will be assigned to the states and regions following the completion of an eight-week training course at the Phaukgyi Central Institute of Civil Service.

The Union minister added that doctors have been assigned to Myanskyin and Kyauktarung station hospitals in Minda Township, Magwe Region.

Next, U Wai Hlaiing Tun put forward a report on the third revised Ward or Village-tract Administration Law to the Pyithu Hluttaw and the Speaker invited those willing to submit amendments to the revised law to list their names for discussions.—Myanmar News Agency

Unclaimed lottery prizes go to funds that benefit the people; PF Minister

MONEY from unclaimed lottery prizes have gone to education, health and social sectors that benefit more than 51 million people through the State’s Fund, Deputy Minister for Planning and Finance U Maung Maung Win told the Amyotha Hluttaw yesterday.

The government received lottery prize money that went unclaimed for one year as State revenue, said the deputy minister, adding that works are underway to use the money for the development of the State lottery and tax reforms.

According to the deputy minister, arrangements are being made to award K500 million and K100 million special lottery prizes and introduce K500 e-lottery tickets. The deputy minister also answered a question on seized cars and motorcycles during a Q&A session of the Amyotha Hluttaw, saying that the seized vehicles were being sold on an open tender system and unsold vehicles have been transferred to the ministry to be listed as state-owned vehicles.

Open Campus event will be held at University of Information Technology (UIT)

AN open Campus event will be held from 9am to 3pm on 1 August at the University of Information Technology (UIT), on Thanlwin Road for the development of the ICT sector, it has been learned.

Interested persons can attend to observe project papers made by students, research activities being carried out in cooperation with international organisations and the teaching/learning methods of UIT.

“Holding of the Open Campus event is aimed at enabling the public and students to know the objectives and purposes of the university, to support the students who have passed the matriculation examination to choose their special disciplines, to enable businesspeople to choose human resources by evaluating the qualities of ICT specialised students, to enable degree holders of ICT university to grasp job opportunities and to expose the event-organisers to the teaching/learning methods of the university,” said Dr Swe Zin Hlaing, associate professor of the university.

The university, previously known as the University of Computer Studies (Bahan Campus), was turned into the University of Information Technology in April 2015. Those who score at least 450 marks in the matriculation examination can attend the university. Two hundred students are being admitted annually.—200

Endangered species to be preserved

ENDANGERED species from the three sanctuaries of Shwesettaw, Min sun tanung and Lawkadanar will see more efforts being made to preserve them, said a forester from Shwesettaw sanctuary.

The authorities of the sanctuaries will cooperate with NGOs and wildlife preservation organisations to seek monetary and technical support, it is reported.

Currently, 150 scarce star tortoises, which are being raised according to a new breeding system under research will be sent to the forest in the last week of July with sensors on their bodies to see if they can return to their original places. Foresters will make monthly checks on the tortoises.

Wildlife animals are being preserved according to the protection of wildlife and conservation of natural areas law (1994) and the fishery law (1993).—200

MPT’s ‘Lighting The Way Forward’ programme comes to a close

AS part of its corporate social responsibility policy Myanmar Posts and Telecommunications provided a total of 2,014 solar lanterns to monastic education schools nationwide since February.

To raise funds for solar lanterns that can provide a reliable source of light for monastic schools, MPT organised a vanity phone numbers auction on 19 December, 2015, managing to raise K292.7 million for the CSR initiative.

About 632 schools nationwide have received lanterns. The initiative successfully concluded this month.—GNLM}

Pyithu Hluttaw

Amyotha Hluttaw

Open Campus event will be held at University of Information Technology (UIT)

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MPT’s ‘Lighting The Way Forward’ programme comes to a close

Mr Yoshiaki Benino, COO from Joint Operation, presents documents related to solar lanterns to Buddhist monks. PHOTO: GNLM

Deputy Minister for Planning and Finance U Maung Maung Win. PHOTO: MNA

Union Minister Dr Aung Thu. PHOTO: MNA

Union Minister Dr Myint Htway. PHOTO: MNA

U Myint Oo of Thanathpin Constituency. PHOTO: MNA

Dr Sai Maik Kham of Lashio Constituency. PHOTO: MNA

Deputy Minister for Planning and Finance U Maung Maung Win. PHOTO: MNA

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On 26 July, the Union minister participated in the 17th ASEAN Plus Three Foreign Ministers’ Meeting, the 6th East Asia Summit Foreign Ministers’ Meeting and the 23rd ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF).


The ASEAN Foreign Ministers paid a joint courtesy call on the Prime Minister of Lao PDR on 24 July after the opening ceremony of the AMM.

The Myanmar delegation led by Union Minister Daw Aung San Suu Kyi attended dinner hosted by the Ambassador of Myanmar at his residence and met with the Myanmar Community in Laos on Monday evening.—Myanmar News Agency

Detained Myanmar citizens’ return home from Malaysia cancelled as donor withdraws offer

THE Myanmar Embassy in Malaysia announced yesterday that it could not arrange a planned trip for 700 detained Myanmar citizens to return home by air as the Po La Min Trading Company withdrew its offer to bear the cost of repatriation.

With the company’s proposed funding, detained Myanmar citizens living in 11 detention camps in Malaysia were expected to come home on five chartered flights on 3 August. The Myanmar Embassy in Kuala Lumpur said that it will continue the migrant protection programmes that began on 1 January last year to protect and help Myanmar citizens there.

Citizenship verification processes will go on as usual in order to repatriate Myanmar citizens detained in camps in Malaysia, it added.—Shin Min

Legislation and law drafting coordination meeting held in Nay Pyi Taw

A WORK coordination meeting on legislation and law drafting was held at a meeting hall of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Joint Bill Committee in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U Win Myint said that it is required to amend, revise and abolish old laws and enact new laws suitable for the present situation.

The Speaker stressed the need of ensuring that the laws offer protection to the people and encourage them to respect and follow the law, calling for participation of all in efforts to make appropriate laws conform with the country’s economic and social policies.

In his address, Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaung Than emphasised the need to ensure laws are suitable for the modern era and highlighted the importance of the rule of law in the country’s multi-party democracy system and market economic system.

Next, Thura U Shwe Mann, chairman of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Legal Affairs and Special Cases Assessment Commission, called for revision and removal of outdated laws and promulgation of new laws to strengthen democracy, stating that it is all impossible without change to the laws.

Then, members of the commission reported on matters related to legislation and law drafting and those present held discussions on the matters.

Also present at the meeting were Chief Justice of the Union U Tun Tun Oo, Chairman of Constitutional Tribunal U Myo Nyunt, Chairman of Union Election Commission U Hla Thein, Deputy Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U K Win Myat, Deputy Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker U Aye Tha Aung, Union Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Dr Win Myat Aye, Deputy Minister for the Office of the State Counsellor U Khin Maung Tint, Deputy Attorney-General U Win Myint, chairpersons and secretaries of Hluttaw committees and officials.—Myanmar News Agency

Ethnic armed groups continue Mai Ja Yang meeting

THE ethnic armed organisations continued their plenary meeting yesterday in Mai Ja Yang, Kachin State, with the intention of finding some common ground in the establishment of a federal system in the country.

At the meeting, Vice Chairman of the Karen National Union (KNU) Pado Naw Si Po Ra Sein stressed that the establishment of a federal system and the restoration of internal peace cannot be completed by a single organisation.

All ethnic armed organisations, all ethnic political parties, democratic forces and the people must work in unison to achieve success, he added.

The meeting was followed by a press conference, in which nine leaders of the ethnic armed organisations responded to queries raised by correspondents.—Ye Khaung Nyunt
Japanese marine company surveys Ayeyawady for three years, builds barge

THE SA Marine Myanmar Co Ltd held a seminar on Tuesday at the Park Royal Hotel, Yangon entitled the “Verification Survey with the Private Sector for Disseminating Japanese Technologies for a Container Barge for Shallow Water on the Ayeyawady River”.

The company has been carrying out barge pilot operations on the Ayeyawady in collaboration with Inland Water Transport of the Ministry of Transport and Communication based on a small and medium Enterprises’ Overseas development and supporting project overseen by JICA.

The seminar was organised by SA Marine Co Ltd of Japan in cooperation with IWT and under the support of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA).

Mr. Takeshi Miyamoto, Managing Director of SA Marine Myanmar Co Ltd, addressed the crowd briefly on the background of SA Marine Myanmar Co Ltd and their survey resulted in introduction of a barge, over 120 people attended the seminar.

—GNLM

Over 800,000 fish introduced into rivers and creeks

THE Thaton State Fisheries Post will put over 800,000 fish including carps, barbuses, golden sturgeons and white sturgeons into rivers and creeks in order for the fish species to proliferate this year.

Staff from the Thaton District Fisheries Department together with local people added 100,000 into the Warpar dam in Thaton district, Mon state on 24 July to ensure sufficient supply of fish for consumers in the region.

U Tayzar Aung, the administrator of Thaton district, U Saw Lin, Deputy director of District Fisheries Department, U Thein Win, the township administrator, officials concerned from districts and townships and local people attended the ceremony at which 80,000 varieties of carps and 20,000 barbuses were added to the dam.—That Oo (Thaton)

Villagers in Mandalay receive land grant from authorities

MANDALAY Region authorities accelerate its efforts to issue land grant to villagers in the region to reduce land disputes on ownership of the property.

Villagers from over 80 households in Magyigon Village in Lamang Village-tract in Madaya Township on Tuesday received the land grant.

U Hla Min, deputy head of PynOoLwin District, said the supervisory committee in cooperation with relevant government departments provided land grant to 82 households only for 20.82 acres of old village land in accord with the existing rules and regulations.

“Since last two months, we see a lot of efforts of the local authorities to issue land grant to us,” said Ko Tin Nyo, one of residents from Magyigon Village, who expressed his thanks to the authorities.

The Magyigon Village has not only old village land but extended land plots. The ministry is planning to organise the use of remaining extended land plots under the appropriate titles.

The holder of land grant has a right to sell or mortgage of their leasehold property, an official said.—Aung Thant Khaing

Kachin State receives K100 m fund for disaster preparedness

THE Kanbawza Bank’s Brighter Future Myanmar foundation (BFM) provided Kachin State with K100 m for disaster preparedness on Monday.

Chief Minister of Kachin State Government Dr Khet Aung received the donation and spoke words of thanks pledging that the government would spend the donation on effectively carrying out disaster preparedness activities in the Kachin State.

Speaking on the occasion Daw Yin Yin Mar from the foundation’s chairperson Daw Nang Lang Khun arranged for the establishment of the BFM fund in order to better deliver aid in the future as the foundation and other philanthropic associations were delayed last year in delivering aid to areas due to poor infrastructure.

The foundation has established such kinds of fund in Bahnhe State, Chin State, Magway Region, Sagaing Region and Kayah State in June and seven regions and states including Kachin State in July. Also present at the ceremony were local authorities, members of the Kachin State disaster preparedness and management committee and local people.—Thura Lwin (Eco)

Crime NEWS

Yaba confiscated in Yangon

LOCAL authorities from Yangon (East) confiscated yaba from a woman on Wayazayanda road, ward 8, South Okkalapa township on Monday. Acting on a tip-off police searched one Ma Nang Khan Matt and found 20,000 pills.

Similarly, police from Keng Tung township searched one Than Soe in a farm hut located between Pon Kay and Pon Ti villages on 24 July and discovered 361 yaba pills.

A combined team comprising officers and staff from Lashio police station confiscated yaba from a vehicle near Nawngkho Oriental toll gate on 25 July. Acting on a tip-off police searched the vehicle en route to Mandalay.

One dead, two injured in car crash

A MOTORCYCLE collided head on with another motorcycle on the Monywa- Mandalay highway, Monywa township, Sagaing region on 24 July, leaving one man dead and two injured.

The motorbike, driven by one Kyaw Phyoo, 18, with Ye Htet Aung, 20, on board, crashed into another vehicle being driven by Di Moe alias Than Wai Lwin, 27, from Tawpu village. The reason for the collision is not known yet.

The police are investigating the case. De Moe alias Than Wai Lwin succumbed to his injuries at the scene while the two others were injured seriously. Police have filed charges against the drivers under sections 337 and 338 of the Penal code.—Myanmar Police Force

Dr Khet Aung, Chief Minister of Kachin State, speaks at a ceremony to donate Ks100 m for the disaster preparedness in the state. PHOTO: KBZ

Ma Nang Khan Matt. PHOTO: MPF

from Lashio being driven by one Kan Kaung and discovered 325 yaba pills. All suspects have been charged under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law.—Myanmar Police Force
Upgrade of Yangon circular railway to be implemented in 2017-2018

The upgrading of the Yangon circular railway is slated for the 2017-2018 fiscal year, it has been reported. To upgrade the Yangon circular railway and suburban railway, data collection of the squatter houses along the railways is being conducted and it is slated to be completed at the end of this month. Those dwellings in the squatter houses will be systematically moved to more suitable places, said U Tun Aung Thin, the general manager of Myanmar Railway (Lower Myanmar).

Upgrading the railroads will include the renovation of 10 railway overpasses, the installation of automatic gates at 21 railway crossings, upgrading Kymyin-dine, Danyongon, Insein, Mingaladon and Paywetseikgon railway stations. Currently, an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and Social Impact Assessment (SIA) are being conducted as an initial step under the procedures of the 2012 Environmental Conservation Law and existing laws.

The cost for building all necessary infrastructure to upgrade the Yangon circular railway will be incurred by the government. The Japan International Corporation Agency (JICA) will contribute US$ 206 million to the project.

Suzuki to establish factory in Thilawa SEZ

SUZUKI has announced that it plans to expand its business in Myanmar by building a manufacturing factory of automobiles and motorcycles in the Thilawa Special Economic Zone (SEZ).

“Suzuki began manufacturing automobiles and motorcycles in Yangon South Dagon Township in 1999. Although a 12-year investment agreement was due, we have been trying to make automobiles and motorcycles here since 2013,” said Sugiya, managing director of the Myanmar Suzuki branch.

Suzuki has confirmed it will build the factory on a 20-hectare plot in the Thilawa SEZ. There have been difficulties in finding the raw materials to manufacture automobiles in Myanmar, it is reported, with the company planning to address material shortages following the completion of the factory.

The factory is slated to be operational in 2018 according to the Managing Director.

Border trade value between Myanmar and China rises by over US$3 million

BORDER trade value between Myanmar and China has risen by over US$3 million this fiscal year when compared to the same period last fiscal year, according to the trade department.

Myanmar-China border trade value from 1 April to 15 July of the 2016-2017 fiscal year amounted to US$1,515.248 billion whereas, during the same period last fiscal year, it was US$1,512.114 billion. Exported products from Myanmar to China include agricultural products, livestock, mineral products, forestry products and industrial finished goods while personal products, raw materials and capital goods are imported from neighbouring countries. Myanmar has entered into agreements with India, Thailand, China and Bangladesh to open border trade, it has been learned. The Muse, Lwee, Chin Shwe Haw, Kanpiktee and KeungTung border trade camps are being opened to allow trade between Myanmar and China.

Low-cost apartments in Dagon Seikkan and Hlaingthaya to be sold at the end of July

A TOTAL of 2,200 low-cost apartments in Yuzana estate, Dagon Seikkan Township and Shwe Lin Pan Industrial Zone in Hlaingthaya Township will be sold at the end of July, with a price of around K12 million per apartment, it has been learned from the Department of Human Settlement and Housing Development.

Seventy per cent of these apartments will be sold by the Yangon region government whereas 30 per cent will be sold by the Union government to government staff and the general public. Only those who have already applied will be considered. 18-square-foot community housing will be rented to the people in Hlaingthaya, Dagon Seikkan and South Dagon Township within two years. The government has a plan to build up to one million apartments, 80 per cent of which will be built by private companies whereas 20 per cent will be built by the government.

IWT to run three coastal-going ships in Rakhine

“Inland Water Transport is going to run three coastal-going ships in Rakhine this summer for the convenience of travelers,” said U Hnin Kyaw, assistant director of the department of water transport administration.

After the sinking of Aung dagan 3, Rakhine coastal-going ships have all been suspended rendering travel difficult. To reduce the risk of sinking at sea, Japanese engineers have been brought in and have been making observations as to how to reduce risks. After checks by Japanese experts IWT will resume running.

Select startup entrepreneurs clarify business plans

TWENTY-three select small and medium enterprises clarified their business plans on their lines of products and services at the Ayeyawady Riverview hotel in Mandalay yesterday.

The group was selected under the programme of SME development strategy jointly organised by the International Labour Organisation and the AAT Business Park.

Daw Aye Aye Than of AAT Business Park said the programme was the first in the country to be organised under the ILO’s provision of technical assistance to startups.

The 23 chosen startup entrepreneurs are required to take a three-month course. On completion, three entrepreneurs will be awarded K5 million (US$5,200), K3m ($2,500) and K2m ($1,600) in prize money as starting capital for their businesses.
Indonesia president puts ex-general, popular World Bank leader in cabinet

JAKARTA — Indonesian President Joko Widodo pleased market reform advocates by bringing home the World Bank’s managing director to be Indonesia’s finance minister and upset human rights activists by naming a controversial ex-general as the country’s security chief.

The surprise appointments of Sri Mulyani Indrawati atop finance and Wiranto as coordinating minister for political, legal and security were part of a wider-than-expected cabinet reshuffle in which the trade, energy, transport and industry ministers were also replaced.

“I am aware that the challenge keeps changing and it needs quick action from us,” Widodo told reporters at the palace, adding that unemployment and income inequality must be addressed and the cabinet needed to work “more quickly, more effectively”.

The appointment of Indrawati to the president’s economic team lifted financial markets, with stocks up more than 1 per cent and the rupiah strengthening 0.4 per cent against the dollar.

“Sri Mulyani’s appointment is a game-changer because it restores a certain amount of investor confidence and means having a steady hand on the tiller with a solid record as a reformer,” said Paul Rowland, a Jakarta-based analyst.

In 2010, Indrawati joined the World Bank after serving as both Indonesia’s chief economic minister and finance minister under then-president Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono.

Indrawati, who has a Ph.D in economics from the University of Illinois and is not a member of a political party, won praise for successfully managing Indonesia’s economy through the 2008 global financial crisis.

“The president wants a dream team to manage economic policies so that we can accelerate (growth),” he needs Sri Mulyani,” said David Sumual, chief economist for Bank Central Asia.

Indonesia’s economic growth is expected to improve only slightly in the second quarter from 4.92 per cent in the first three months of this year. The finance ministry has forecast full-year GDP of around 5.2 per cent in 2016, up from 4.79 per cent last year.

Bambang Brodjonegoro, the finance minister that Widodo appointed in 2014, has been shifted to head the country’s national development planning agency.

The change in finance ministers comes just after Indonesia launched a tax amnesty it hopes will bring home billions of dollars that Indonesians have parked overseas.

Widodo also surprised many by appointing Wiranto as his new chief security minister, reassigning his close adviser Luhut Pandjaitan to be chief maritime minister.

Wiranto, army chief when strongman Subarto, who quit amid protests in 1998, was indicted by a United Nations panel over the bloodstream surrounding East Timor’s 1999 independence vote, when about 1,000 people died. The former general has denied any wrongdoing in East Timor.

“Wiranto is a dream team to manage national security and finance chief minister,” said Andreas Harsono, Indonesia director of Human Rights Watch.

“…This is really bad news for human rights.”

Analysts viewed Wiranto’s appointment as others as politically motivated, as the president looks to consolidate support from parties keen to join the ruling coalition.

Wiranto controls Nahura, “a party which has supported Jokowi from the get-go, and one way of securing his vote is for the president to secure its continued support,” wrote Wielan Wiranto, economist at OCBC. The president also welcomed the second-largest political party, Golkar, into the cabinet by appointing Airlangga Hartarto as industry minister.

Golkar, which was in opposition to Widodo when he was elected in 2014, played a key role in getting the president’s tax amnesty bill passed this year.

Other major cabinet changes included the re-assignment of Thomas Lembong from trade minister to investment chief. Arcandra Tahar, an executive at Texas-based offshore engineering firm Petronor, was appointed energy and mining minister, replacing Sudirman Said.—Reuters

Philippines says ASEAN omission of arbitration case not a Chinese victory

MANILA — The Philippines “vigorously pushed” for the inclusion of commission on an arbitration ruling in a joint statement from Southeast Asian countries but its failure to secure that was no diplomatic win for China, Manila’s foreign minister said on Wednesday.

The Philippines had not sought support from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) or the international community in its arbitration case against Beijing over the South China Sea, and did not want to press the issue and risk dividing the group or provoking China, Perfecto Yasay said.

Yasay was speaking after returning from a meeting of foreign ministers in Laos, during which ASEAN dropped a US-backed proposal to mention the landmark 12 July court ruling, which nullified Beijing’s claims to most of the South China Sea.

“I am just saying this to dispel the reports that have been made that China came out victorious in the ASEAN meeting because we precisely agreed to not mentioning the arbitral award,” Yasay told a news conference.

“But that (was) not the object of our meeting in ASEAN. The arbitral award is a matter between China and the Philippines. Yasay said the arbitral tribunal was not an issue for ASEAN to deal with and it was strictly the business of China and the Philippines to handle.

Speaking later at a news conference with US Secretary of State John Kerry, Yasay said there were no losers in Laos and the issuance of a joint communiqué was a triumph for the 10-member bloc.

“It makes ASEAN more credible to the international community and makes it more effective and relevant as a regional group,” he said.

Kerry said he was “very satisfied” with the communiqué as it showed all members were fully supportive of the rule of law, even though the thorny issue of the arbitration case was left out.

“Sometimes, meeting like that and diplomacy, you don’t always have to include every single word that may in fact sometimes make it harder to get to the dialogue that you want to get to,” Kerry said.

The Philippines and Vietnam both wanted the ruling and a call to respect international maritime law to feature in the communiqué, but Cambo dia — China’s only real ally in ASEAN — rejected the call to fix its traumatised relations with China, it said in a commentary.

Kerry supported Yasay’s call for China to take a position so bilateral dialogue could happen and said he was confident Manila would make the right judgements in how to move forward.

The failure by ASEAN to take a position or mediate had no impact on the validity of the court decision, Kerry added.

“It is impossible for it to be irrelevant, it is legally binding,” he said.

Kerry met with Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte for lunch on Wednesday and was due to discuss how to move ahead following the ruling, a US official said.—Reuters
North Korea sends propaganda leaflets to South Korea via river

SEoul — The South Korean military said Wednesday that dozens of plastic bags containing North Korea’s propaganda leaflets were discovered in a river near Seoul.

An official of the South Korean Joint Chiefs of Staff said there have been previous cases in which North Korea sent such flyers to the South by air using balloons, but it is the first time they arrived via the Han River.

The official, while criticizing the act, as a provocation aimed at causing confusion and division in South Korea, suggested that the North may have decided to use the river, as sending the leaflets by air has become difficult due to the summer south wind.

The plastic bags, believed to be floating intentionally from upstream in North Korea, were found in a part of the river in Gimpo, Gyeonggi Province on the outskirts of the South Korean capital. The leaflets contained threats to South Korea, including references on a possible attack using the Musudan intermediate-range ballistic missile.

They also referred to 27 July, the anniversary of the signing of the armistice that ended fighting in the 1950-53 Korean War, as war victory day. Meanwhile, the South Korean government held a ceremony in Seoul to commemorate the 63rd anniversary of the armistice, with Prime Minister Hwang Kyo Ahn saying that Seoul will work with the international community in dealing with Pyongyang. “North Korea continues rash provocations such as conducting nuclear tests and launching long-range ballistic missiles,” Hwang said. “We will take various measures until North Korea abandons nuclear weapons and follows the road to peace on its own.”

North Korea conducted its fourth nuclear test in January and has subsequently test-fired banned ballistic missiles on several occasions. Some intelligence officials have said that activity at a nuclear test site in the country has been increasing since around mid-July. —Kyodo News

Duterte tells Kerry tribunal ruling is ‘foundation’ for China talks

MANila — US Secretary of State John Kerry was told by Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte on Wednesday that a recent international tribunal ruling that invalidated China’s vast claims in the South China Sea will serve as the “foundation” for Manila’s future talks with Beijing on their territorial disputes.

President spokesman Ernesto Abella said that the South China Sea issue was discussed among the other concerns shared by the Philippines and the United States during a lunch meeting at Malacanang Palace in Manila, where Kerry arrived on Tuesday for a two-day visit.

“There were no agreements regarding that except that the president did mention that whatever talks we will engage in, we’ll begin with the ruling. That will be the foundation,” Abella told reporters. China has rejected the 12 July ruling by the UN-backed Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague.

Earlier Wednesday, Kerry met with Philippine Foreign Secretary Perfecto Yasay and told reporters afterward that while the United States takes no position on the competing sovereignty claims in the South China Sea, “we do take a strong position on protecting the rights, the freedoms and the lawful uses of air and sea space as defined by international law.”

He said Washington hopes to see the disputes resolved peacefully through diplomacy, without coercion or the threat of force. —Kyodo News

No aim to ‘perpetuate military rule’ with Thai charter; ex-PM rejects it

BANGKOK — A constitution that Thailand will decide on in a referendum next month is not aimed at perpetuating military rule, an official who helped write it said on Wednesday, as a former premier from a pro-establishment party rejected the draft charter.

The outcome of the 7 August referendum could have far-reaching implications for Southeast Asia’s second-biggest economy as a military government that took power after a 2014 coup tries to shape politics after a decade of turmoil.

Critics argue that the constitution, to replace one torn up by the military after the coup, will entrench military control at the expense of elected political parties.

The government says it will ensure stable politics. Norachit Sinhaseni, a former diplomat and spokesman for the Constitution Drafting Committee, said the main objective of the charter was to ensure a swift return to democracy.

“We have no interest or desire to perpetuate military rule,” Norachit told Reuters.

“Our number one priority is to put Thailand back on the road to democracy.”

The military government would interpret a “yes” vote as a seal of approval and a mandate to govern, experts say. A “no” vote, on the other hand, could be seen as undermining the government’s legitimacy, and would raise questions about its road map to a promised general election next year.

Norachit said there were no guidelines as to what would happen if the draft was rejected.

The government says the proposed constitution will heal divisions after years of rivalry between the military-dominated establishment and election-winning populist politicians who the military says buy their way to power.

The constitution would allow for an unelected prime minister and an upper house of parliament appointed by the junta with seats reserved for military commanders to check the powers of elected lawmakers for a five-year transitional period.

It also sets out an electoral system that critics say would produce weak coalition governments.

Even some of the military’s natural political allies have voiced opposition.

Former Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva, leader of the pro-establishment Democrat Party, rejected the constitution on Wednesday, saying he did not see how it would help the country make progress. —Reuters

Abhisit Vejjajiva, leader of Thailand’s Democrat Party, leaves a news conference where he spoke about his personal position on the draft charter at the party’s headquarters in Bangkok, Thailand, on 27 July 2016. PHOTO: Reuters
A Wave of Nostalgia for my Yangon University Days

Dr. Saw Mra Aung

I turn right into Dagon Road and am about to pass a small shrine at the Round the Taungoo Hall. All eyes are filled with the image of a jada and a monkey—another image of a cackler. I looked up at the famous Gangore tree growing at the corner of the building in which the tree stands on the street and it fills my view with the arable bitu. At that time, I there find a look at the Gangore tree. I had spent my eight-year university life at the Taungoo Hall and I was then changed into a female-hostel dormitory. I used to play-grounds in front of the hostel where we spent half of the day playing football, volleyball and with friends on holidays. I was looking at the students who were going to their classes, filling up the hall. No sign of hostel students was to be seen at the door into the ground floor of the hostel where we used to sell a small stall which sold out old and ends like cigarettes, hot-spiced, candies, etc., burning with some students in one of our offices.

It is, therefore, absolutely vital for the government to continue here best to mobilize public engagement to achieve bet- ter economic outcomes. In other words, policy makers need to have a better understanding of how political incentives can realize development goals through small changes from relaxing political constraints to adopting policies that can leverage public engagement.

Nevertheless, the fear of talking about politics is still deeply ingrained in most of the people. The government has the responsibility to help the citizens overcome this fear by encouraging them to work with government officials at different levels in the adoption and implementation of the policies necessary for economic unification through the whole, making policies work for development in an individual concern simply because citizen engagement can ensure greater transparency in the political process, thereby helping the government to account for any failure in the delivery of public services.

Education talk to reduce betel chewing in Taungoo

AN educational talk aimed at reducing betel chewing among students was held on 25th February at the Dagon University Police Station and a talk on the elimination of the be- tel chewing habit was held at the Taungoo General Hospital. I spoke on the diseases caused by betel chewing. Daw Thida Win, a member of the Myanmar Women’s Affairs Federation, was the guest speaker. I warned the students and betel and Daw Yin Yin Aye, a member of the Maternal and Child Welfare Association spoke on the health problems related to betel chewing and dry tobacco. —(To be continued)
PHILADELPHIA — Hillary Clinton secured the Democratic Party’s White House nomination, coming back from a stinging defeat in her first presidential run in 2008 and surviving a bitter primary fight to become the first woman to head the ticket of a major party in US history.

In a symbolic show of party unity, Clinton’s former rival, US Senator Bernie Sanders of Vermont, told the chairwoman from the convention floor that Clinton, 68, should be selected as the party’s nominee at the Democratic National Convention in Philadelphia.

Capping nearly a quarter century in public life, Clinton will become the party’s standard-bearer against Republican nominee Donald Trump in the 8 November election when she accepts the nomination on Thursday.

“If there are any little girls out there who stayed up late to watch, let me just say: I may become the first woman president, but one of you is next,” Clinton told the convention via a satellite link.

In nominating Clinton, delegates made the point that the selection of a woman was a milestone in America’s 240-year-old history. Women got the right to vote in 1920 after ratification of the 19th Amendment on 8 November, but one of you is next,” Clinton said in her acceptance speech.

In 2008, she lost a hard-fought nomination battle to first US Senator Barack Obama, who went on to become America’s first black president. Clinton’s speech on Tuesday night offered an unusual twist to the warm spousal endorsement of a presidential candidate traditionally given at party conventions by a wife, not a man — let alone a former president of the United States.

He said Hillary had been a political activist since the couple’s early days as law students together. He told how she gave legal aid services to poor people and went undercover to expose a segregationist school in Alabama in the 1970s.

Clinton put forth an alternative narrative to the Republican portrayal of his wife as a power-hungry politician who bends the rules and lacks transparency in her political dealings.

Polls show many Americans distrust Hillary Clinton. Controversy over her use of a private email server for official business while she served as America’s top diplomat has dogged her during the primary election season.

She came under relentless attack at the Republican convention in Cleveland, as speakers assailed her over the email controversy and her record as secretary of state and painted her as out of touch with ordinary Americans. Delegates weighed in with repeat chants of “Lock her up.”

“They’re running against a cartoon,” Bill Clinton said in his speech. “Cartoons are two-dimensional, they’re easy to absorb. Life in the real world is complicated and real change is hard, and a lot of people even think it’s boring.”

Then speaking directly to the crowd, he said to cheers and applause: “Good for you because earlier today you nominated the real one.”

The death toll is feared to rise as security personnel reach the affected areas. Dozens of houses were buried or swept away in the district, another 20 people are missing after rain-induced disasters in another 20 people are missing after rain-induced disasters in Another 20 people are missing after rain-induced disasters in 14 affected districts, ministry spokesman Yadav Koirala told Kyodo News. The highest fatalities have been confirmed in Pyuthan district, about 250 kilometres west of Kathmandu.

“Media organisations can enhance cooperation through personnel exchanges and sharing news products to increase understanding of people in countries along the routes,” Liu told the representatives.

“Media organisations can work jointly to create a sound environment for building a green, healthy, intelligent and peaceful Silk Road,” Liu said.

The conference, hosted by the “People’s Daily,” has attracted participants from 212 media institutions in 101 countries.

Davenport: EU, Serbia cooperating on migrant crisis

GOLUBAC — The EU has for a long time been cooperating with the Serbian government in addressing the migrant crisis, the head of the EU Delegation to Serbia Michael Davenport said Tuesday.

When asked how the EU could help Serbia deal with migrants stranded on its border with Hungary, Davenport said cooperation was underway within IPA funds, as well as the new Madad fund.

Serbia can use the Madad fund for humanitarian purposes and covering expenses associated with maintaining reception centres for migrants, he said.

On the border, the EU has been very active through its ECHO programme, Davenport added.

Official calls on media to support Belt and Road

BEIJING — A senior Communist Party of China (CPC) official on Wednesday called on media organisations to create a sound environment for promoting the Belt and Road Initiative.

Liu Yunshan, a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee, made the comment when meeting with foreign representatives at the 2016 Media Cooperation Forum on the Belt and Road.

The Belt and Road refers to the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st-Century Maritime Silk Road, a trade and infrastructure network connecting Asia with Europe and Africa along ancient trade routes.

“Media organisations can enhance cooperation through personnel exchanges and sharing news products to increase understanding of people in countries along the routes,” Liu told the representatives.

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The conference, hosted by the “People’s Daily,” has attracted participants from 212 media institutions in 101 countries.

Floods, landslides leave at least 54 dead in Nepal

KATHMANDU — Floods and landslides triggered by torrential rains since Monday night have left at least 54 dead across Nepal, the Home Ministry said Wednesday.

Another 20 people are missing after rain-induced disasters in 14 affected districts, ministry spokesman Yadav Koirala told Kyodo News. The highest fatalities have been confirmed in Pyuthan district, about 250 kilometres west of Kathmandu.

Dozens of houses were buried or swept away in the district, leaving 22 dead.

“All security agencies have been mobilized for search and rescue. Helicopters are also being used, but bad weather is hampering rescue operations,” Koirala added.

The death toll is feared to rise as security personnel reach more affected areas.

Every rainy season, which lasts from June to September, brings misery to Nepal with landslides, mainly in hill districts, and floods, mainly in southern lowland areas, causing loss of life and property.—Kyodo News
Truck bomb blast kills dozens in northeast Syria city

BEIRUT — A large truck bomb blast claimed by Islamic State killed nearly 50 people and wounded scores more in the northeastern Syrian city of Qamishli near the Turkish border on Wednesday, a monitoring group and state television reported.

The attack, which hit near a Kurdish security forces headquarters, was the deadliest of its kind in the city for years, the British-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said.

The blast, which took place early on Wednesday, killed at least 48 people. The death toll expected to rise because of the number of people seriously injured, the Observatory said. State media put the death toll at 44.

Kurdish forces control much of Hasaka province, after capturing vast areas from the jihadists group last year. The Kurdish YPG militia, which has proved the most effective partner for a US-led coalition battling Islamic State, is also involved in fighting the extremists farther west, in Aleppo province.

Islamic State claimed responsibility for what it said was a suicide truck bomb attack, and added that it targeted Kurdish security forces. The group State has carried out a number of bombings in Qamishli, which is in Hasaka province, and in the provincial capital, Hasaka city. State TV rolled footage purportedly from the scene of one blast, showing large-scale damage to buildings, vast amounts of rubble strewn across the road and plumes of smoke rising.

One explosion was so powerful it shattered the windows of shops in the Turkish town of Nusaybin, directly across the border. Two people were slightly hurt in Nusaybin, a witness said.

Islamic State has targeted Qamishli and the provincial capital, Hasaka city, in the past with bombing attacks. A suicide blast killed six members of the Kurdish internal security force, known as the Asayish, in April. In July, an Islamic State suicide bomb killed at least 16 people in Hasaka.

—Reuters

Turkey issues detention warrants for 47 journalists: media

BODRUM — Turkish authorities issued warrants for the detention of 47 journalists on Wednesday, broadcaster CNN Turk said, the latest step in a widening crackdown following a failed military coup.

Police were set to detain the journalists as part of an investigation into US-based Muslim cleric Fethullah Gulen, accused by Ankara of masterminding the 15-16 July coup attempt in which at least 246 people were killed, CNN Turk said. The journalists worked for the Gulen-linked Zaman newspaper, which was seized by Turkish authorities in March as part of a clampdown on the preacher’s supporters. Gulen, an ally-turned-foe of President Tayyip Erdogan who had built up an extensive network of schools, charities and businesses in Turkey over decades, has condemned the coup attempt and denies any involvement in it.

Police raided the home of one of the journalists, Sahin Alpay, around 6 am (11:00 pm EDT) on Wednesday and detained him after a 2-1/2 hour search of the property in a central Istanbul district, the Dogan news agency reported. Since the failed coup Turkish authorities have suspended, detained or placed under investigation more than 60,000 soldiers, police, judges, teachers, civil servants and others. On Monday media reported that Turkey had issued arrest warrants for the detention of 42 journalists, including well-known commentator and former parliamentarian Nazli Ilicak.

—Reuters

Gunmen kill two military officials in Pakistan’s Karachi

KARACHI — Gunmen on Tuesday killed two Pakistani army officials in Karachi, where paramilitary forces have been cracking down on Islamist militants and criminal gangs for almost three years, police and media said.

The killings are the latest attacks in the busy port city of 20 million people riven by political, ethnic and sectarian violence, where one of the most popular singers of Sufi devotional music, Amjad Sabri, was shot dead last month.

Police said the soldiers, who belonged to an intelligence agency, were patrolling a crowded area of the southern city when their vehicle was attacked.

“The attackers were on a motorcycle and managed to escape through the congested narrow lanes,” senior police officer Raja Umar Khattab told Reuters. Karachi police chief Mustafa Mehr said one of the victims died and the other was in critical condition, but the death of the second was confirmed by a doctor at the city’s Jinnah Hospital, which received both bodies.

Better security in Karachi has been one of the showcase successes of the crackdown, although two days before Sabri’s killing, the son of the provincial chief justice was kidnapped from an upscale shopping area. He was rescued later.

Karachi’s murder rate fell by half after the paramilitary Rangers, who answer to the Ministry of Interior and the army, launched the crackdown in 2014, targeting suspected militants and criminals.

Political activists have accused the Rangers of heavy-handed tactics, including summary executions and targeting political parties. The paramilitary force denies the charges. —Reuters
UK PM May says strong will on both sides to preserve free movement with Ireland

LONDON — Strong will exists in both Britain and Ireland to preserve free movement between the countries following Britain’s vote to leave the European Union, Prime Minister Theresa May said on Tuesday after meeting her Irish counterpart.

May, who visited the province of Northern Ireland on Monday, has said she does not want to see a return to past border controls with the Irish Republic, which will be Britain’s only land frontier with the EU.

“We benefited from a common travel area between the UK and the Republic of Ireland for many years before either country was a member of the EU,” May said at a joint news conference with Irish Prime Minister Enda Kenny in London.

“There is a strong will on both sides to preserve it and so we must now focus on securing a deal that is in the interests of both of us.”

The pair said they had agreed that the peace process in Northern Ireland, which ended three decades of fighting between Catholic nationalists seeking a united Ireland and Protestant unionists who wanted to keep the province British, must not be undermined by last month’s referendum result.

Northern Ireland voted to stay in the EU, with 56 per cent voting ‘Remain’, putting it at odds with the United Kingdom’s overall 52-48 per cent result in favor of leaving. Some have demanded a referendum to split Northern Ireland from the United Kingdom so it can remain in the EU as part of a united Ireland.

Asked about the prospect of a united Ireland, Kenny said he respected Britain’s decision to leave the EU and the job now was to work through the Brexit process in “as practical, as imaginative and as creative a manner as is possible.”

Kenny also said while many obstacles lay ahead, it was in Ireland’s interests to see its neighbour prosper outside the EU.

“We want the upcoming negotiation process to end with a prosperous and outward-looking UK which retains a close relationship with the EU. This is in all of our interests,” he added.—Reuters

Patient shoots dead doctor in Berlin before killing himself

BERLIN — A patient shot a doctor in a university clinic in Berlin on Tuesday before killing himself, but there were “no signs at all” of Islamic militancy, police in the German capital said.

Germany is on edge because of a spate of violent attacks on civilians by men of Middle Eastern or Asian origin since 18 July that have killed 10 people. Islamic State militants claimed responsibility for two of those four attacks before Tuesday.

Berlin police said the doctor had sustained life-threatening injuries in the attack at the Benjamin Franklin campus of the Charite university hospital in the southwest of the city and died shortly afterwards.

They added that the situation at the hospital in Berlin’s Steglitz district was now “under control” and investigators were on the scene to determine the background to the crime.

“There is currently no danger,” police said on Twitter.

French President Francois Hollande (R) stands by members of the RAID, the French national police intervention group, as he arrives after a hostage-taking at a church in Saint-Etienne-du-Rouvray, France, on 26 July, 2016. Photo: Reuters

Elderly priest killed in French church, attack claimed by Islamic State

SAINT-ETIENNE-DU-ROUVRAY (France) — Assailants linked to Islamic State slit the throat of an elderly priest and took four other people hostage, one of whom was seriously wounded.

Police shot the attackers dead as they emerged from the church with their hostages.

Speaking at the scene of the attack in the Normandy town of Saint-Etienne-du-Rouvray, President Francois Hollande said Islamic State had declared war on France and the state should “use all its means” within the law to fight the militant group, against which France has launched air strikes in Syria and Iraq. The president called it a “dreadful terrorist attack” and told reporters the attackers had pledge allegiance to IS. The IS news agency Amaq said two of its “soldiers” were involved.

“The threat remains very high,” Hollande said.

The attack was the latest in a string of deadly assaults including the mass killing in Nice, southern France, on Bastille Day 12 days ago and four incidents in Germany, most recently a suicide bombing at a concert in Ansbach on Sunday.

IS has called for its supporters to take action with any available weapons targeting countries that it has been fighting. The investigation was handed to the anti-terror unit of the Paris prosecutor’s office.

Several French media reported that one of the knifemen was a local man who had spent a year in jail on his return from Turkey after being intercepted trying to travel to Syria, but had been freed on bail with an electronic tag pending trial for alleged terrorism offences. The prosecutor’s office said the identification of the two suspects was still under way and it was too early to jump to conclusions about a possible link.

Police said one person had been arrested in connection with the attack. Without waiting for such details, ex-president Nicolas Sarkozy, expected to enter a conservative primary soon for next year’s presidential election, jumped on the latest incident to accuse the Socialist government of being soft on terrorism.—Reuters

Police tighten security at Geneva airport after French tipoff

GENEVA — Police in Geneva increased security checks around the Swiss city’s Cointrin airport on Wednesday after receiving information from French police about a possible bomb threat.

Preventive security measures were under way around the airport, the police said on their Facebook page, and would continue for an unspecified period.

Officials armed with machine guns were on duty around the airport, which straddles the Swiss border with France, after Geneva police acted on unspecified information from their French counterparts.

Airport officials said the alert was triggered by an anonymous telephone call, without giving further details.

“There was a bomb alert,” a security source in the Swiss city told Reuters.

There was also heightened security on the French side of the border.

“The investigation will determine the facts, but it’s not in our hands...The French investigators will keep us informed,” Geneva police spokesman Gilles Gentil told Reuters. “The situation at the airport is calm.”

The heightened security closed most airport entrances, with armed officers checking the documents of visitors but airport officials said the airport remained open and was functioning normally.—Reuters

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“There is currently no danger,” police said on Twitter.

France has been a spokesman for Berlin police, said the crime took place in the jaw surgery area of an outpatient clinic where the doctor was in a treatment session with the patient.

“The course of the consultation, the patient pulled out a gun and fired several shots at the doctor. The attacker then directly turned the gun on himself and died as a result of the shots,” Wenzel told Reuters TV.

He said police did not yet have information on the suspect’s background, history, personal details or motivation, but added:

“We do not have a single indication that this crime was motivated by extremism or Islamists.”—Reuters

Patient shoots dead doctor in Berlin before killing himself
Thai cabinet approves two new city train lines in Bangkok

BANGKOK — The cabinet of Thailand approved construction of two red railway lines at a cost of 44.16 billion baht (1.26 billion US dollars) in the capital Bangkok on Tuesday.

The newly approved 25.9-kilometre lines are projects of the State Rail- way of Thailand (SRT). The Light Red Line runs from Bang Sue to Hua Lamphong, while the dark one runs from Bang Sue to Hua Lamphong. Deputy Transport Min- ister Ormsin Chivapruck said the SRT will forward the terms of reference for the two projects to Depu ty Prime Minister Somkid Jatusripitak in August and SRT is expected to call bids for both projects in September, Khao sood reported.

The construction is planned to start in February 2017, said Kobsak Poot rakool, vice minister at the Prime Minister’s Office, adding that both lines are expected to open to public in 2020.

“One this project is completed, it will change the lives of people in Bangkok,” Kobsak said.

The two new routes will link with another phase of the red line under construc- tion running from Bang Sue to Don Muang Airport and finally to Rangsit, which is to Don Meuang Airport and - Kobsak said.

Prime Minister’s Office, - after the two projects to Depu ty Prime Minister Somkid Jatusripitak in August and SRT is expected to call bids for both projects in September, Khao sood reported.

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The two new routes will link with another phase of the red line under construc- tion running from Bang Sue to Don Muang Airport and finally to Rangsit, which is set to open in 2018.

According to Bangkok Post, these train projects are among about 20 infrastruc- ture projects that the govern- ment hopes to get underway before 2018, which is an at- tempt to revive the sluggish Thai economy.—Xinhua

US says backs resumption of China-Philippines talks on South China Sea

VIENNITANE — US Sec- retary of State John Kerry said on Tuesday he sup- ported the resumption of talks between China and the Philippines over the South China Sea, follow- ing an international court ruling against Beijing over the dispute earlier this month.

China did not partici- pate in and has refused to accept the 12 July ruling by the Permanent Court of Arbitration, based in The Hague, in which US ally Manila won an emphatic legal victory.

China’s Foreign Min- ister Wang Yi had asked Kerry to lend his support for bilateral talks to restart between Manila and Bei- jing in a meeting between the two in the Laos capital of Vientiane on Monday.

“The foreign minister said the time has come to move away from pub- lic tensions and turn the page,” Kerry told a news conference. “And we agree with that... no claimant should be acting in a way that is provocative, no claimant should take steps that wind up raising tensions.”

The court ruling has exacerbated tensions be- tween the 10 members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASE- AN), who are pulled be- tween their desire to assert their sovereignty while fostering ties with an in- creasingly assertive Bei- jing.

China scored a diplo- matic victory on Monday when ASEAN ‘dropped’ any reference to the ruling from a joint statement at the end of the bloc’s for- eign ministers’ meeting in the face of resolute objec- tions from Cambodia, Chi- na’s closest ASEAN ally.

Kerry, who was due to travel to the Philip- pines later on Tuesday, said he would encourage Philippine President Rod- rigo Duterte to engage in dialogue and negoti- ations with China when the two meet in Manila on Wednesday.

Duterte has already appointed former Presi- dent Fidel Ramos to visit Beijing and begin infor- mal talks to resolve the dispute, said a Philippine Foreign Ministry official on Tuesday.

The Chinese foreign minister also told his US counterpart that China and the Philippines have agreed the dispute should get back on to the “correct” track of being resolved by di- rect talks with the parties concerned, according to a foreign ministry statement released on Tuesday.

China “hopes the United States side takes actual steps to support the resumption of talks between China and the Phil- ippines, and supports the efforts of China and ASEAN to maintain regional peace and stability”, Wang said.

Beijing claims most of the South China Sea, through which more than $5 trillion of trade moves annually. Brunei, Malay- sia, the Philippines, Tai- wan and Viet Nam have rival claims.

China has repeatedly blamed the United States for stoking tensions in the region through its military patrols, and of taking sides in the dispute, accusations Washington denies.

In an address to for- eign ministers, including Kerry, at the gathering in Vientiane, Wang criticised the United States, Japan and Australia for a joint statement on the issue they released late on Monday.

The statement “con- tinued to hype up the South China Sea issue and play up tensions”, he said. “Now is the time we will test whether you are pro- tectors of peace or agita- tors.”—Reuters

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**CLAIMS DAY NOTICE**

**MV SINAR SOLO VOY. NO ( )**

Consignees of cargo carried on MV SINAR SOLO VOY NO ( ) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 28.7.2016 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of A.W.P.T where it will lie at the con- signee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11:20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm to Claim’s Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the vessel.

No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day.

**SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY AGENT FOR: M/S SAMUDERA SHIPPING LINE**

Phone No: 2301185

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**CLAIMS DAY NOTICE**

**MV MAENAM 1 VOY. NO (555N)**

Consignees of cargo carried on MV MAENAM 1 VOY NO (555N) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 28.7.2016 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of H.P.T where it will lie at the con- signee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11:20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm to Claim’s Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the vessel.

No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day.

**SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY AGENT FOR: M/S WAN HAI LINES PTE LTD**

Phone No: 2301185
NEW YORK — Beyoncé’s critically-praised visual album “Lemonade” on Tuesday earned the R&B singer a career-best 11 nominations for the MTV Video Music Awards, in a list that included multiple nods for Adele and rapper Kanye West but nothing for Taylor Swift.

Adele’s YouTube-shattering video for her 2015 comeback single “Hello” notched seven nominations, while the sultry British singer earned an eighth mention for “Send My Love (To Your New Lover).”

The controversial video for West’s “Famous” — which features portrayals of 12 nude celebrities including Swift sleeping next to the rapper — got two nominations, including the top award of video of the year.

Swift and West have been publicly feuding for months about whether the pop star approved lyrics in which West boasts about making her famous.

Swift, 26, the top-earning celebrity in the world, has dominated music awards shows in the past five years and won four MTV video prizes in 2015, including for her single “Bad Blood” with Kendrick Lamar.

But this year she did not score any nominations after touring worldwide for much of 2015, despite releasing videos for “Out of the Woods” and “New Romans” in late 2015 and early 2016.

The coveted video of the year category pits Beyoncé’s politically-charged video for “Formation” against Adele’s “Hello,” Canadian rapper Drake’s “Hotline Bling,” Justin Bieber’s “Sorry” and West’s “Famous.”

The MTV Video Music Awards, which have a reputation for irreverence and shock tactics, take place this year in New York City on 28 August and will air live on MTV. The awards are voted on by fans, starting on Tuesday. A host for the 2016 show has yet to be announced.

Beyoncé’s album “Lemonade” in April featured music videos for each track and was praised for its bold songs about betrayal and revenge. Videos from the album also scored nominations for choreography, art direction, and editing.

Rihanna scored multiple nominations for her collaborations with DJ Calvin Harris on “This is What You Came For,” and with Drake on “Work.”

British artist David Bowie, who died unexpectedly in January of cancer days after releasing a new album, also made it onto the list with nominations for best direction, art, editing and cinematography for his singles “Blackstar” and “Lazarus.”

UK producers guilty over Harrison Ford’s broken leg on Star Wars set

LONDON — A production company involved in making “Star Wars: The Force Awakens” has pleaded guilty in a British court to failing to protect actors and workers after an incident in which Harrison Ford’s leg was broken, officials said on Tuesday.

The star, who plays the much-loved character Han Solo, was injured after he became trapped under a rapidly closing metal-framed door during filming in June 2014 at Pinewood Studios, near London.

The power of the door’s drive system was comparable to the weight of a small car, said Britain’s Health and Safety Executive (HSE), a state agency which enforces workplace safety regulations. “This was a foreseeable incident,” a spokesman for HSE said in a statement.

“Managing on-set risks in a sensible and proportionate way for all actors and staff — regardless of their celebrity status — is vital to protecting both on-screen and off-screen talent, as well as protecting the reputation of the industry,” he said.

‘Magnificent Seven’ remake to be featured at Toronto film fest

TORONTO — Director Antoine Fuqua’s remake of the 1960s Western “The Magnificent Seven” is expected to kick off the 41st Toronto International Film Festival on 8 September, which will include movies about whistleblower Edward Snowden and former US president Lyndon B. Johnson among the usual Oscar hopefuls.

The 10-day festival, in its 41st year, has become a launching pad for Hollywood’s award season, with films such as “12 Years a Slave,” “The King’s Speech” and “Slumdog Millionaire” all gaining critical momentum in Toronto before going on to win the Academy Awards for best picture.

Organisers said in a statement on Tuesday that the festival is expected to start with the world premiere of “The Magnificent Seven.” The film stars Denzel Washington, Chris Pratt, Ethan Hawke, Vincent D’Onofrio, Byung-Hun Lee, Manuel Garcia-Rulfo, Martin Sensmeier, Haley Bennett and Peter Sarsgaard.

Fuqua’s remake of the 1960 original tells the story of the town of Rose Creek under the deadly control of industrialist Bartoloomey Bogue, played by Sarsgaard, and the mercenaries hired to protect the townspeople.

The festival will close with the world premiere of Kelly Fremon Craig’s “The Edge of Seventeen,” which tells the tale of an awkward high school student, played by Hailee Steinfeld, who gains the unexpected friendship of a thoughtful boy played by Hayden Szeto. The film also stars Woody Harrelson.

Biographical films feature prominently in the festival’s high-profile gala and special presentation programs.


Verdict over Led Zeppelin’s ‘Stairway to Heaven’ is appealed

LOS ANGELES — The plaintiff who failed to convince a Los Angeles jury that Led Zeppelin plagiarized the opening guitar passage for its 1971 rock anthem “Stairway to Heaven” plans to appeal the verdict, court papers show.

Michael Skidmore, the trustee for the songs of Randy Wolfe, a member of the band Spirit, on Saturday filed a notice of appeal of the 23 June verdict with the 9th US Circuit Court of Appeals. The court acknowledged receipt of the notice on Monday.

Jury verdicts found that Led Zeppelin’s lead singer Robert Plant and guitarist Jimmy Page did not steal the opening to “Stairway” from Spirit’s instrumental “Taurus,” which was penned in 1967.

Though Plant and Page, who testified at the trial, had access to “Taurus,” jurors found that the song’s riff was not intrinsically similar to the opening of “Stairway.”

Skidmore had argued that Wolfe, who performed as Randy California, deserved a writing credit, and that the trust set up in his name deserved millions of dollars in damages.

Wolfe drowned in 1997.

Oral arguments on Skidmore’s appeal will likely not take place before 2017, court records show.

The case is Skidmore v Led Zeppelin et al., 9th US Circuit Court of Appeals, No. 16-56007.—Reuters

Beyonce dominates MTV video nominations, Taylor Swift shut out

NEW YORK — Beyonce’s critically-praised visual album “Lemonade” on Tuesday earned the R&B singer a career-best 11 nominations for the MTV Video Music Awards, in a list that included multiple nods for Adele and rapper Kanye West but nothing for Taylor Swift.

Adele’s YouTube-shattering video for her 2015 comeback single “Hello” notched seven nominations, while the sultry British singer earned an eighth mention for “Send My Love (To Your New Lover).”

The controversial video for West’s “Famous” — which features portrayals of 12 nude celebrities including Swift sleeping next to the rapper — got two nominations, including the top award of video of the year.

Swift and West have been publicly feuding for months about whether the pop star approved lyrics in which West boasts about making her famous.

Swift, 26, the top-earning celebrity in the world, has dominated music awards shows in the past five years and won four MTV video prizes in 2015, including for her single “Bad Blood” with Kendrick Lamar.

But this year she did not score any nominations after touring worldwide for much of 2015, despite releasing videos for “Out of the Woods” and “New Romans” in late 2015 and early 2016.

The coveted video of the year category pits Beyoncé’s politically-charged video for “Formation” against Adele’s “Hello,” Canadian rapper Drake’s “Hotline Bling,” Justin Bieber’s “Sorry” and West’s “Famous.”

The MTV Video Music Awards, which have a reputation for irreverence and shock tactics, take place this year in New York City on 28 August and will air live on MTV. The awards are voted on by fans, starting on Tuesday. A host for the 2016 show has yet to be announced.

Beyoncé’s album “Lemonade” in April featured music videos for each track and was praised for its bold songs about betrayal and revenge. Videos from the album also scored nominations for choreography, art direction, and editing.

Rihanna scored multiple nominations for her collaborations with DJ Calvin Harris on “This is What You Came For,” and with Drake on “Work.”

British artist David Bowie, who died unexpectedly in January of cancer days after releasing a new album, also made it onto the list with nominations for best direction, art, editing and cinematography for his singles “Blackstar” and “Lazarus.”

UK producers guilty over Harrison Ford’s broken leg on Star Wars set

LONDON — A production company involved in making “Star Wars: The Force Awakens” has pleaded guilty in a British court to failing to protect actors and workers after an incident in which Harrison Ford’s leg was broken, officials said on Tuesday.

The star, who plays the much-loved character Han Solo, was injured after he became trapped under a rapidly closing metal-framed door during filming in June 2014 at Pinewood Studios, near London.

The power of the door’s drive system was comparable to the weight of a small car, said Britain’s Health and Safety Executive (HSE), a state agency which enforces workplace safety regulations. “This was a foreseeable incident,” a spokesman for HSE said in a statement.

“Managing on-set risks in a sensible and proportionate way for all actors and staff — regardless of their celebrity status — is vital to protecting both on-screen and off-screen talent, as well as protecting the reputation of the industry,” he said.
Solar plane completes globe-circling journey

CAIRO — A solar-powered airplane landed in the United Arab Emirates’ capital Abu Dhabi early Tuesday, completing the first entirely zero-fuel flight around the world. Solar Impulse 2, carrying Swiss pilot Bertrand Piccard, touched down at Al Bateen Executive Airport in Abu Dhabi after a 48-hour flight from Cairo. The final stop caps its 17-leg journey that began in March 2015 when the plane flew from Abu Dhabi to Oman.

“We have now just watched our shared dream unfold, becoming a reality,” the Solar Impulse team said in a blog post. “Emotions, tears, relief, exhilaration is what we are feeling right now after completing the first Round-the-World solar flight in history.” The 40,000-kilometre, round-the-world expedition was undertaken using only energy from the sun.

The aircraft has a 72-metre wingspan and about 17,000 solar panels built into the wings to supply electricity. It was operated by two alternating pilots Piccard and Andre Borschberg, also a Swiss.

Since the start of the tour, the plane has stopped over in countries including India, Myanmar and China. It also set a record for the longest nonstop solo flight of nearly 118 hours from Nagoya, Japan to Hawaii.

After being grounded in Hawaii for more than nine months due to battery damage from overheating, Solar Impulse 2 arrived in California in April this year and made other stops in the United States. The plane then crossed the Atlantic Ocean from New York to Spain in June and proceeded to Egypt on 13 July before reaching Abu Dhabi.

—Kyodo News

Commercial complex opens on former Akasaka Prince site in Tokyo

TOKYO — A major commercial complex of Seibu Holdings Inc., including an upscale hotel, opened Wednesday in central Tokyo on the site of the former Grand Prince Hotel Akasaka.

The Tokyo Garden Terrace Kioicho commercial complex in Chiyoda Ward has offices, shops, restaurants and apartment units along with the 250-room hotel, The Prince Gallery Tokyo Kioicho.

Room tariffs for the hotel, which occupies the top seven floors of the 36-story roughly 180-metre-tall Kioi Tower, range from 60,000 yen to 590,000 yen ($570 to $5,600).

Each room is equipped with a tablet pc designed to guide guests through room service amenities in eight languages.

The office floors of the Kioi Tower building are fully occupied with tenants including Yahoo Japan Corp. The total construction cost of the complex was roughly 104 billion yen.—Kyodo News

Yemen’s ancient art of brickmaking endures war

SANAA — Traditional mud brick tower houses have always been a source of pride to Yemenis, and over a century into a devastating civil war, they are also providing some much-needed jobs in the ancient capital Sanaa.

At his traditional mud brick factory on the outskirt of Sanaa, a UNESCO world heritage site said to have been founded by the son of Prophet Noah two and half millennia ago, there has been spared — mostly.

Coalition air strikes killed at least six people and levelled several tower houses in the Qasimi quarter, one of the city’s oldest, in June. The war has taken livelihoods as well as lives, but brickmaking is a rare bright spot in Yemen, which has been pushed into a humanitarian disaster by the civil war.—Reuters

Labourers stack dried bricks inside a kiln, where they will be fired, at a brick factory on the outskirts of Sanaa, Yemen on 1 June. PHOTO: Kyodo News

Powerball jackpot grows to $422 million, eighth largest ever

LOS ANGELES — The US Powerball jackpot grew to $422 million ahead of an 11 pm EDT drawing on Wednesday, making it the eighth largest in the game’s history and the 11th-biggest lottery prize ever in the United States.

The jackpot amount has now rolled over 22 times since it was reset to its starting sum of $40 million for a drawing back on 11 May, lottery officials said.

The Powerball game, based on lottery tickets sold for $2 apiece, is played in 44 states as well as the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the US Virgin Islands.

A winning ticket consisting of all six numbers drawn on Wednesday night will be worth an estimated payout of $422 million if spread over 30 years, or the winner may opt for a lump-sum payment of 291.8 million before federal taxes.

The Wednesday draw comes about 2-1/2 months after a $429.6 million winning Powerball ticket was sold in New Jersey and two weeks after a $340 million Mega Millions lottery jackpot was clinched in Indiana.

Those two prizes ranked as the ninth- and seventh-largest in US lottery history, respectively.

The largest all-time biggest lottery prize offered in North America was a Powerball jackpot worth nearly $1.6 billion for winning tickets sold in California, Tennessee and Florida in January of this year.

A couple who bought the winning California ticket that drew came forward just last week to claim their $528 million share of the prize.—Reuters

MRTV Entertainment Channel (28-7-2016, Thursday)

06:00 pm  • Weather Report
06:20 pm  • Cartoon Programme "Sherk 2" (Part-1)
07:00 pm  • International Drama Series
07:30 pm  • Cartoon Programme "The Time"
08:00 pm  • MRTV Entertainment Music
08:50 pm  • Those Who Never Give Up

From 28-7-2016 (Thursday) 6:00 pm
To 29-7-2016 (Friday) 6:00 pm
Wawrinka battles past Youzhny in Toronto

TORONTO — Stan Wawrinka survived a thriller against Mikhail Youzhny in the second round of the Rogers Cup on Tuesday, fighting back in both sets to prevail 7-6(3), 7-6(8). The Swiss second seed trailed 5-1 in the first set and had to break Youzhny’s serve to force a tiebreak.

He then fell behind 3-0 in the second before launching a comeback that saw him fight through set point in a heated tiebreak and ultimately pull through to close out the match. Wawrinka, who had failed to advance past the second round in his last two tournaments, now has a third-round matchup with American Donald Young.

Earlier in the day, Gael Monfils, fresh off his tournament win in Washington, cruised by Portugal’s Joao Sousa 6-3, 6-3 to ease into the second round. The 10th-seeded Frenchman won 50 percent of his return points against Sousa and hammered down eight aces to extend his win streak to six matches. “I think I’ve put in good work with my team. What I try do is keep working with them and then see the results later,” said Monfils, two days after his first tournament win in two-and-a-half years.

“Like to think when I’m in my top game and with consistency, I can beat a lot of players at the top,” Czech fifth seed Tomas Berdych, playing his first match since losing in the Wembledon semi-final to eventual champion Andy Murray, secured his spot in the third round with a 4-6, 6-1, 6-4 win over Croatia’s Borna Coric. Top seed Djokovic, the only member of the “Big Four” in Toronto, will play his first singles match since Wembledon when he takes on Luxembourg’s Gilles Muller on Wednesday.— Reuters

From yellow to gold, Froome eyes road to glory

LONDON — Chris Froome underlined his love of yellow with a third Tour de France triumph on Sunday, how the British rider has his eyes on Olympic glory alongside the golden sands of the Copacabana.

The 31-year-old missed out on gold at London 2012, settling for a bronze in the time trial, but looks almost unbeatable at present and will be the man to overcome in the Rio road races.

Froome’s victory in the Tour’s individual time trial last week, a brutal 17km uphill slog, was so dominant that he finished 21 seconds ahead of second-placed Dutchman Tom Dumoulin who could miss Rio after breaking his wrist in France.

So the 31-year-old will be clear favourite for TT gold over two laps of Rio’s 29.8km course boasting the 1.2km Grumari hill, at an average gradient of seven per cent, and the 2.1km Grota Funda climb plus a high-speed section next to the Atlantic.

“It almost feels like a TT through the Ardennes at points,” Team Sky rider Froome, who claimed a third Tour de France title in four years on Sunday, said.

“It’s not a mountain TT because you have this flat section you do Twice. Ordinarily I would say a climber should do really well but with this flat section you need someone who can really hold the speed up at 55km on the flat. I really liked it.”

The time trials will be held on 10 August, with the women doing one last lap of the 29.8km circuit.

Before that, though, the men’s and women’s road races taking place on the first weekend of the Games will provide an intriguing and unpredictable spectacle set against the backdrop of Rio’s lush landscape.

The 144-strong men’s race on 6 August will tackle 256.5km, taking in four laps of the Grumari loop, a tricky cobbled section, and three loops of the ‘Canoas/Vista Circuit’ including an 8.9km climb, a fast descent and a 20km flat to the finish.

The 67-rider women’s race, over half the distance, will see Britain’s world road champion Lizzie Armitstead and Dutch Olympic champion Marianne Vos likely battling for gold.

Froome, bidding to do what no man has ever done by winning the road race and TT at the same Games, cannot count on his usually selfless Team Sky support for the mass-start race that begins and finishes in Flamengo Park.

The five-man British team, like those from other powerhouse nations, will probably work together to maximise medal prospects, but fellow Sky riders Geraint Thomas and Ian Stannard, for the bronze medal,plus Adam Yates, who finished fourth on the Tour, and Steve Cummings who brilliantly won stage seven.

Italian former Tour de France winner Vincenzo Nibali, Tour runner-up Romain Bardet of France, Spain’s Alejandro Valverde, Poland’s mountain man Rafal Majka, Portugal’s Rui Costa, Belgium’s Greg Van Avermaet and Froome’s trustworthy Dutch Team Sky protector Wout Poels will all be in the mix.

Australian Richie Porte is another rider to watch and his team mate Simon Clarke, a late call up for the injured Simon Gerrans, said the race could be a feast for fans.

“IT’s going to be one of the most unusual face-day races we’ve ever seen.” Clarke, who said he will ride for Porte, forecast.

“It’s going to be chaos.”

Slovakia’s road world champion Peter Sagan is likely to concentrate on the cross-country event having done the road race profile not favourable.— Reuters