State Counsellor attends BIMSTEC, BRICS meetings in India

State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, who arrived in Goa, India yesterday, attended the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) Retreat at the Hotel Leela yesterday afternoon.

The State Counsellor and heads of state and government from member countries of BIMSTEC, an international organisation involving a group of countries in South Asia and South East Asia, were welcomed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi of India. The member countries of BIMSTEC are Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Bhutan and Nepal.

The Indian prime minister and leaders of member countries posed for photos before heading to the meeting.

After the BIMSTEC meeting, the State Counsellor attended the BRICS and Leaders’ Outreach Summit at Hotel Leela Lawns. Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, five major emerging national economies, make up BRICS, an acronym for the organization formed in 2009 that uses the first letters of the country’s names.

Buddhists celebrate Thadingyut at pagodas across Myanmar

Pagodas across Myanmar were packed with devotees on the full moon of Thadingyut yesterday, as the people celebrated the end of the Buddhist Lent.

On this auspicious day, Buddhists perform meritorious deeds at the pagodas and monasteries across the country.

At the Shwedagon Pagoda in Yangon, religious associations offered lights and recited parittas celebrating the Thadingyut Festival, which marks the end of the holy period.

More than 200,000 pilgrims usually come to the Shwedagon pagoda on this important holy day.

Meanwhile, the Buddha Puja festival of the Kyaikhtiyo Pagoda in Mon State was also opened yesterday, commencing the pilgrimage season to the pagoda for the next seven months.

Thadingyut festival is celebrated to welcome the Buddha’s descent from Tavatimsa, a celestial abode, after...
Myanmar still faces shortage of skilled workers

Myanmar is facing skilled worker shortage in many sectors, even though the country has as many as 32 million people of working age from a total population of over 51 million, according to economic experts. According to a report issued by the New Crossroads Asia (NCRA), the country’s working population is between 24 million from 32 million, with 56.4 per cent of the workers employed in the agricultural sector, 15.8 per cent in wholesale and retail trade, 10.8 million per cent in the government sector and 2.7 per cent in the construction sector.

The report shows that 43 per cent (10.8 million) of the total labour force in Myanmar do not complete middle school, a major deficiency for a country that is facing a scarcity of trained and capable workers. Experts said this could threaten the nation’s ambitious development prospects.

Some private entrepreneurs have solved this problem by improving the ability of their employees through effective human resources development training.

Global economic experts estimated that Myanmar’s economy is likely to develop in the future. According to Asian Development Bank, the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth in Myanmar is expected to pick up to 8.4 per cent this fiscal year. — 200

No Zika found from 30 suspected cases: MoHS

THE MINISTRY of Health and Sports examined 30 persons from across the country suspected of having contracted the Zika virus, but no signs of the disease were found, according to the ministry’s Public Health Department.

To prevent the outbreak of Zika in Myanmar, the ministry is monitoring every point of entry into the country, including international airports in Yangon, Mandalay and Nay Pyi Taw, as well as port terminals.

The Zika virus is caused by the bite of the infected Aedes mosquitoes. The virus can also spread through sex. Pregnant women in particular are being advised to take precautions against the Zika virus because of the heightened possibility of delivering babies with birth defects, according to the World Health Organization.

Those infected with the Zika virus can have symptoms including mild fever, skin rashes, muscle and joint pain, conjunctivitis and malaise or headaches. — Kyi Kyi

Authorities to expose manipulator of child beggars

MANDALAY Region authorities accelerate their operation to uncover manipulator of child beggars starting this month, said U Soe Tint Aung of Mandalay City Development Committee.

The authorities arrested 12 child beggars who were found within municipal areas but no person who trains and controls them was found. Those child beggars have been transferred to the Mandalay Region Social Welfare Department.

“A child beggar normally earns over Ks15,000 a day while an adult receives about Ks20,000 from begging”, U Soe Tint Aung said. Action will be taken against those who participate in child trafficking with the purpose of making money from child begging under the children’s law and the anti-trafficking law, he added.

In order to eliminate child begging, mobile teams have carried out awareness campaigns, including the distribution of literature that underlines the ban on begging by children across the region, especially in crowded areas, as of October this year.

The authorities also provided warnings to parents and guardians to never force their children to sell flowers and other goods at junctions, they must protect them from possible traffic accidents.

A survey conducted by the social welfare department on 120 street children in Mandalay found 75 per cent of street children used drugs including yaba and other stimulant substances. — Aung Thant Khaing

Buddhists celebrate Thadingyut at pagodas across Myanmar

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preaching Abhidhamma to a deva who had been His mother in a previous existence. Thadingyut falls on the seventh month in the Myanmar calendar and the festival marks the end of the three-month long Buddhist Lent.

The festivals marking the full-moon of Thadingyut are commonly held across the nation.

During festival days, Buddhists usually go to pagodas and monasteries to pay homage to the monks and offer alms and offerings. — Kay Khaing

Buddhist devotes recite religious verses at Kyaikhtiyo Pagoda in Thaton, Mon State. Photo: Aung Thet Oo

Buddhist devotes light candles at the Shwedagon Pagoda marking the Thadingyut Festival. The Shwedagon Pagoda is crowded with pilgrims on the Full Moon Day of Thadingyunt. Photo: MNA

Thadingyut at pagodas across Myanmar

Myanmar still faces shortage of skilled workers

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Authorities to expose manipulator of child beggars
State Counsellor arrives in Goa

AT the invitation of Prime Minister Mr Narendra Modi of India, State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi left Yangon for Goa, India, to attend BIMSTEC Retreat and BRICS and BIMSTEC Leaders’ Outreach Summit. She arrived at the navy base in Goa at 11.50 am local time.

The State Counsellor and party were welcomed by Deputy Minister HE Mr Vijay Kumar Singh of the Ministry of External Affairs of India, the Myanmar ambassador to India and officials.

The delegation led by the State Counsellor proceeded to Hotel Leela, where accommodations for the delegation were arranged.

Later, the State Counsellor attended a luncheon held in honour of BIMSTEC leaders by the Goa State Chief Minister.

State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi held talks with Sri Lankan President Mr Maithripala Sirisena in Goa, India, Yesterday.

At the meeting, the State Counsellor discussed matters related to bilateral cooperation.— Myanmar News Agency

About 30 hospitalized for food poisoning

ABOUT 30 people including several monks in Maha Aungmyay Township, Mandalay were hospitalised yesterday after suffering from food poisoning apparently caused by a chicken-and-noodle breakfast. All are recovering except for one patient, who remains in serious condition and is under watch in the hospital, according to a doctor.

“Almost everyone is recovering gradually, but one patient is still under serious condition,” the doctor from Ward 1 said. After the monks were served the chicken noodle dish for breakfast, others also ate the meal. About two hours later, they started to feel dizzy. Vomiting and diarrhea followed, and prompted their transport to the hospital.— Aung Thant Khaing

Vice president calls for sustainable food production in Myanmar

VICE President U Henry Van Thio has called for cooperation from international organisations for achieving sustainable development with food production which is adaptable to climate change.

“We understand that we have responsibility for development of our country. At the same time, it needs to be aware that developing countries can not stand alone without cooperation by international organizations,” said the vice president at the ceremony to mark World Food Day 2016 held at the University of Agriculture in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. In his opening speech, U Henry Van Thio also expressed commitment to changing agricultural practices that are adaptable to climate change in order to guarantee sufficiency of food for current and future generations. “It needs to be kept in mind that we have many challenges for implementing a new development programme. On the other hand, there are many opportunities for cooperation,” he said.

The government, led by the National League for Democracy, adopted a new policy in order to narrow the gap between rural and urban while bringing about sustainable development and to successfully management national reconciliation and natural resources.

U Henry Van Thio also pledged to work for harmonious development of the agriculture, livestock and industrial sectors in order to maintain the industrial economy that is largely based on agriculture.

The government has helped farmers in flood-hit areas by providing them with assistance both pre and post-harvest. The forests that cover 50 per cent of Myanmar are considered carbon reservoir areas and can help reduce the impact of the climate change.

The government is making efforts to change the production processes of the agriculture sector to help the country’s smallholder farmers, who own 95 per cent of about 53 million acres of crops in Myanmar. Ms Xiaojie Fan, United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Resident Representative in Myanmar, read out the message sent by Director of the FAO.

“The theme for World Food Day 2016 is ‘Climate is changing. Food and agriculture must, too’. At the same time, the global population is growing steadily and is expected to reach 9.6 billion by 2050. To meet such a heavy demand, agriculture and food systems will need to adapt to the adverse effects of climate change and become more resilient, productive and sustainable’, she said.

FAO is calling on countries to address food and agriculture in their climate action plans and invest more in rural development.

“By strengthening the resilience of smallholder farmers, we can guarantee food security for the planet’s increasingly hungry global population also reduce emissions”, Ms Fan said.

—Myanmar News Agency

State Counsellor attends BIMSTEC, BRICS meetings in India

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In the evening, the State Counsellor attended a dinner hosted in honour of the summit by the Indian prime minister.

The BRICS and Leader’s Outreach summit was the first joint meeting between BRICS and BIMSTEC. The organisation BIMSTEC was founded as the BIST-EC by Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka and Thailand on 6 June 1997, in accordance with the Bangkok Declaration. Myanmar joined the group on 22 December 1997. During the sixth ministerial meeting in Phuket, Thailand, in February, 2004, Bhutan and Nepal joined the group. — Myanmar News Agency

State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi holding talks with Sri Lankan President Mr Maithripala Sirisena in Goa, India, on 16th October, 2016. PHOTO: MNA
Ancient pagoda consecrated by King Bayintnaung to be renovated

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Tleft 17 October 2016
LOCAL NEWS

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Soad on Bayintnaung, King of Toungoo Dynasty of Myanmar from 1550 to 1581, will be renovated as quickly as possible, locals say.

Eindawya Pagoda situated near Ngatahmyaw Village was seriously destroyed by heavy rain early this month. A group of people including Tatmadawmen, monks, local well-wishers and technicians visited the pagoda on 10 October to observe the current situation and discuss the renovation project.

Since March this year, measurement processes for the renovation project have been made between U Soe Win, an entrepreneur in Mandalay, and Tampawady U Win Maung, the country’s famous architect and archaeologist, who specialises in Myanmar history.

According to the historians, the pagoda was built 500 years ago by the King Bayintnaung Kyawhtin Nawrahta, who is considered one of the three greatest kings of Myanmar, along with Anawrahta and Alaungpaya.

Enthusiasts have been invited to make contributions to the renovation project.

Call 09 259 022 368 to reach the Sayadaw of Yadanaungpa Monastery for further details.—Zin Oo (MMAL)

ITALIAN CULTURAL WEEKEND DESIGNED TO PRESENT ITALIAN CULTURE TO MYANMARS

The Embassy of Italy will organize “Italian&Creativity”, a fashion show and an exhibition of Italian brands in the framework of the Embassy’s Cultural Program “Italy in Myanmar 2016” at Junction Square Shopping Centre at 15:00 p.m. on Sunday, October 23rd 2016.

The event will consist of a fashion show where 4 fashion designers, namely KuKa by Cecilia Cervigni, Thwin Su Htwe, Mogok Pauk Pauk Couture, Banana by Meme Epenyong, who represent a connection between Italy and Myanmar, will exhibit 12 dresses each.

It is the very first time that an Italian-style fashion show is displayed in Myanmar.

This is going to be a great opportunity to discover the love that every Italian has for clothing, which we consider a very important form of art, and to have a glimpse of one of the best and most recognized fashion scenes in the world.

Italian creativity is also about the identification of a product by its brand: therefore, from October 23rd to October 30th Junction Square will host an exhibition of 40 panels showing the history and the evolution of Italian brands and design.

The display will be an opportunity to give a privileged inside look to 20 brands representative of the Italian excellence in food, fashion, cars and sports.

Admission is free, no reservations required.—GNLM

400,000 holidaymakers expected to visit Chaungtha next year

TOURIST arrivals to Chaungtha, a beach resort in Ayeyawady Region, is expected to reach over 400,000 next year, according to the Chaungtha Zone Hoteliers Association.

Chaungtha Beach is a popular resort and one of the top tourist attractions in Myanmar. It is about 5 hours drive from the commercial capital of Yangon.

The Chaungtha Zone Hoteliers Association put forth concerted efforts to attract more visitors by implementing effective environmental conservation programmes to sustain the natural beauty of the beach in cooperation with the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism and relevant organisations.

Practicing good sanitation conditions along the beach and sustainable development of the beach resort top the association’s list of priorities to increase the number of visitors from home and abroad, officials said.

The hoteliers association plans to send its report relating to the development of the beach to the Union government, respective ministry and experts to seek their advice.

A member of the association said the resort needs to develop more hotel facilities, as the beach area has seen an increasing number of holidaymakers year by year because of the beautiful landscapes.

Discussions with responsible persons to expand the hotel zone will be made in the future, the association said.

Plans are also underway to reduce accommodation costs and reset reasonable charges for domestic visitors.

According to the association, about 25 hotels and over 50 registered guest houses with a total of about 1,800 rooms have been developed in the beach resort.—200

Crime

Stimulants seized in Kyaukme

Acting on a tip, members of the police in Naungpauk Police Station in Kyaukme Township searched a motorbike ridden by Tun Hla (a) Nlar, 20, on 14 October and found 596 stimulant tablets in his bag. Action has been taken against Tun Hla under the Narcotic and Psychotropic Substances Law.—MPF

Stimulant tablets seized in Loikaw

MEMBERS of anti-Drug Squad 27 in Loikaw found 4,380 stimulant tablets hidden in the backrest of a seat after a search of a vehicle on Loikaw-Namsan Road on 15 October.

The car driven by Khun Naing Thu, 25, was pulled over in front of the monastery in Pankhaukho Village in Loikaw. Action has been taken against the driver and two passengers, Maung Hla, 28, and Htet Oo, 23, under the Narcotic and Psychotropic Substances Law.—MPF

Khun Naing Thu, 25, Maung Hla, 28, and Htet Oo, 23, are seen together with the stimulant tablets and the car seized. Photo: MPF

Italy Embassy to present “Italian&Creativity” in Yangon on Oct 23-30

Photo: Zin oo (MMAL)
Reconditioned fuel bowsers not allowed to be imported starting from November

RECONDITIONED fuel bowsers will no longer be permitted to be imported beginning in November because of their weakness in security and capacity, which could trigger the outbreak of fire and other hazards, said an official from the Ministry of Commerce.

Sesame powder from Magwe mill to be exported to South Korea

ABOUT 100 containers of sesame powder manufactured in a Magwe sesame mill will be exported to South Korea, it is learnt.

This factory was built on 7 acres of land near Sartuenkan village, 3 miles away from Magwe to mill locally produced sesame seeds. The factory, constructed by Myanmar engineers, will mill various types of sesame seeds, depending on the order, officials said. In the milling process, sesame seeds are purified and cleaned with water. The seeds are then roasted at a temperature of over 90 degrees after the water is filtered from the seeds. The roasted seeds are purified a second time after the seeds are cooled. After that, the sesame seeds are ready to be ground. The crushed sesame powder is then packed and exported to South Korea.

“The export price of the sesame powder is negotiable”, said U Phoe Ni, a spokesman for the sesame powder mill. “We will not export the sesame powder if we are not satisfied with the offered price. Korea produces sesame oil, which is mostly found in Korean cuisine. They are fond of enjoying the sesame oil in their recipes.”

The commercial export of sesame powder business was begun in 2014, with an export of about 150 container loads of sesame powder. Purchase orders declined in 2015 because of the cheap price of the sesame seeds in African countries and Viet Nam. More sesame powder is likely to be exported this year, officials said. —200

Goat farmers unhappy with the decrease in price

GOAT farmers and goat herders from Mahtlang Township, Mandalay Region are not doing well because of a sharp drop in the goat price, it is learnt.

Previously, the price of goat was Ky45,000 to Ky50,000 per head.

The current price of the goat is less than half that, around Ky20,000 per head. The market has cooled significantly with little demand. Some farmers who want to keep a goat as a pet sometimes come to purchase a male, but there is virtually no demand for female goats, which breed twice a year.

“The drop in the market price of the goat has been occurring for three months. When the goat herders sell the big goat for money, the buyers do not want to offer even Ky20,000 per head”, said a goat herder from Myikyin village.

“The goats as well as the goat herders are suffering losses. Therefore, the goats are returned to their owners”, said a goat owner. —Aung Htay (Mahlaing)

Authorities to spend Ks100m on development projects in Yathedaung

RAKHINE State government will spend Ks100 million allotted by the Union government to develop infrastructure in Yathedaung, a township in Rakhine State, according to a Pyithu Hluttaw representative from Yathedaung Constituency.

Regional development works include establishing transport facilities such as jetty bridge, village-to-village roads and fencing around lakes and wells, all of which will be carried out in 47 target villages in the township.

Construction of a concrete jetty bridge tops the government lists of priorities, said Daw Khin Saw Wai, a Pyithu Hluttaw MP from Yathedaung Constituency.

The majority of villages in the state totally rely on water transport for their livelihoods, so local people want the number one priority to be building a jetty bridge,” said U Aung Than from Yathedaung Township.

Although the project allows implementers to spend up to three per cent of total budget for general expenses, they plan to use only one per cent of funds and the other two per cent have been transferred to residents. —Myitmakha News Agency

First Private Bank to commence share trading at YSX soon

FIRST Private Bank will soon trade its shares at Yangon Stock Exchange (YSX) as the fourth listed public company, it is learnt.

All firms planning to list on the Yangon Stock Exchange must publish disclosure documents in advance of their Initial Public Offering (IPO), including details of their recent financial reports, business strategy and ownership structure.

The company will release disclosure of the basic price of the shares. Currently, the company is making assessments and observations to sell its shares. The first date of its stock trading at YSX will be announced soon, said an official from First Private Bank.

The public companies which are in accord with the prescribed criteria by The Securities and Exchange Commission of Myanmar (SECM) are eligible to list at YSX.

Currently, the SECM has already approved six public companies to trade stocks at YSX. The Yangon Stock Exchange began on 9th December, 2015 and the three listed companies, First Myanmar Investment (FMI), Myanmar Thulawa SEZ Holdings Public Limited (MTSH) and Myanmar Citizens Bank (MCB) are currently listed and trading stocks at YSX. —200
BANGKOK — Thailand has sought to dispel any concern about a royal succession after Crown Prince Maha Vajiralongkorn said he would delay his ascension to the throne while he grieves for his father, and the government stressed on Monday that he would delay his ascension after Crown Prince Maha Vajiralongkorn takes part in a ceremony honouring the late King Bhumibol Adulyadej at the Grand Palace in Bangkok, Thailand, on 15 October 2016. Photo: Reuters

Philippine leader says will raise arbitration case with China, won’t bargain

MANILA — Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte said on Sunday he would raise a controversial arbitration ruling on the South China Sea with China’s leaders, and vowed not to surrender any sovereignty or deviate from the July 12 award by the tribunal in The Hague.

Duterte said his trip to China this week represented a turning point in bilateral ties, but he acknowledged there was some public concern about his rapid rapprochement moves and reassured Filipino leaders about the region’s maritime sovereignty.

In comments that will cast a cloud over a long-standing strategic gambit is about to proceed, Prayuth said.

The formal procedure for him to become king, which involves the president of the legislature inking to him the ascension, can happen at any time before his coronation.

In the meantime, the head of the royal advisory council, a 96-year-old former army chief and prime minister, Prem Tinsulanonda, is standing in as regent. The prince held an audience with Prem and Prayuth on Saturday evening and asked them to pass on his reassurance to the people, Prayuth said.

“He asked the people not to be confused or worry about the country’s administration or even about the succession,” Prayuth said in a televised address.

“He said at this time everyone is sad, he is still sad, so every side should wait until we pass this sad time … When the religious ceremony and funeral have passed for a while, then it will be an appropriate time to proceed,” Prayuth said.

King Bhumibol, who was the world’s longest-reigning monarch, has long been revered as a father figure and symbol of unity in a country riven by political crises over the years, most recently by a power struggle between the military-led establishment and populist political forces.

Many Thais worry about a future without him.

Thailand’s strict lese-majeste laws, which have been applied rigorously since a military government took power in a 2014 coup, have left little room for public discussion about the succession.

Monarchs dressed in black from across Thailand have flocked to Bangkok’s gilded Grand Palace to pay homage to the only king most of them have ever known.

Buddhist monks have been chanting prayers beside his coffin in an imposing throne hall, and they will chant for 100 days as part of the funeral rites.

Though the mood is somber, and almost every one is dressed in black, shopping malls, markets, cinemas and even some bars have been open.

Thailand’s battered stocks recovered ground on Friday on hope for a smooth transition and shares were likely to rise again on Monday, said Kasem Prunratnam-amala, head of research at CIMB Securities.

“The market should continue to rebound,” he said. “Nobody would dare do anything that causes problems for the country.”

Prince Vajiralongkorn does not enjoy the same adoration his father earned over a lifetime on the throne. He has married and divorced three times, and has spent much of his life outside Thailand, often in Germany.

Though the king designated his only son crown prince in 1972, shortly afterwards he also raised the possibility of the eligibility of a prince becoming the monarch.—Reuters

Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte gestures as he delivers a speech to the members of the Philippine Army at the army headquarters in Manila, Philippines, on 4 October 2016. Photo: Reuters

PHILIPPINES President Rodrigo Duterte says he will raise the issue of the disputed South China Sea with China during a visit there next month, in what would be a significant shift from his previous stance.

He spoke of his intention to “intensify” trade ties and work closely with China, but would not avoid discussing what is a bone of contention between them.

“There will be no hard improvisations. We will talk, we will maybe paraphrase everything in the judgment and set the limits of our territories, the special economic zones,” he said of meeting.

“It will be no bargaining. It is ours and many of you are wanting to ask the question. No bargaining.”

Duterte’s comments might ruffle China, which has spoken glowingly about the new partnership, but may not want to hear about an international ruling that it lost comprehensively, and included the invalidation of the U-shaped “nine-dashed line” featured on Chinese maps and passports.—Reuters
Regional

GOA (India) — India’s Prime Minister Narendra Modi branded Pakistan a “mother-ship of terrorism” at a summit of the BRICS nations on Sunday, testing the cohesion of a group which heavy-weight member China is a close ally of its South Asian arch-rival.

Modi’s remarks to a meeting of leaders from the BRICS — which include Brazil, Russia, China and South Africa — escalated his diplomatic drive to isolate Pakistan, which India accuses of sponsoring cross-border terrorism.

Tension between the nuclear-armed neighbours has escalated since a 18 September attack on an army base in Kashmir, near the disputed frontier with Pakistan, killed 19 Indian soldiers in the worst such assault in 14 years.

India later said it had carried out retaliatory “surgical strikes” across the de facto border that inflicted significant casualties. Pakistan denied any role in the attack on the Uri army base, and said the Indian operation had not even happened, dismissing it as typical cross-border firing.

“In our own region, terrorism poses a grave threat to peace, security and development,” Modi said in his remarks to BRICS leaders who met at a resort hotel in Goa.

“Tragically, the mother-ship of terrorism is a country in India’s neighbourhood,” the 66-year-old prime minister said, without directly naming Pakistan, in a series of tweets issued by the foreign ministry.

No immediate reaction was available from Pakistan’s foreign ministry.

Modi’s posturing overshadowed the gathering of leaders of a group originally set up to boost economic cooperation. It followed a productive bilateral summit with President Vladimir Putin of Russia on Saturday that yielded billions of dollars in defence and energy deals.

The BRICS leaders had donned brightly coloured sleeveless jackets, of a style made popular by India’s first post-independence leader Jawaharlal Nehru, for an informal dinner on Saturday evening.

They were due later on Sunday to hold an outreach session with leaders from a little-known group of countries from the Bay of Bengal region whose key attribute, from India’s point of view, is that Pakistan is not a member.

In one remark reported by the state Xinhua news agency, Xi said that China and India should “support each other in participating in regional affairs and enhance cooperation within multilateral frameworks”.

The dispatch went on to refer to the South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation (SAARC). This grouping includes Pakistan, which was to have hosted a summit in November that collapsed after India and other members pulled out.

The final BRICS summit declaration was expected to repeat earlier condemnations of “terrorism in all its forms”, say diplomats and analysts, but avoid levelling blame over tensions between India and Pakistan.

“So far, we haven’t seen any indication at all that China is softening its public support for Pakistan. India did not expect differently,” added Joshi, a senior research fellow at the Royal United Services Institute in London. —Reuters

Typhoon Sarika further weakens as Philippines braces for another storm

MANILA — A typhoon that barreled into northern Philippine provinces on Sunday has further weakened as it moved toward the South China Sea, but the local weather bureau said it was closely monitoring another storm that could enter the eastern boundary of up to 120 kph on Sunday after-noon as it moved out of the country.

As many as 2,552 families, or 12,496 individuals, had been pre-emptively evacuated before Sarika made landfall early on Sunday. Authorities were forced to cancel ferry services and as many as 160 domestic and international flights scheduled for the day.

Damage to farm crops, mostly rice and corn, was estimated at 53.5 million pesos ($1.1 million) initially, disaster officials said.

The weather bureau has lowered storm warning signals but said it was keeping a close watch on the next weather disturbance named Haima.

“It’s still far, out of the Philippine Area of Responsibility but it’s now in the level of a storm. Over time, while travelling over water, it gains strength so that’s our next concern,” said Ricardo Jalad, executive director at the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council.

Jalad said the damage from Typhoon Sarika was “not that serious” as initially expected, but there were reports of landslides and flooding in some areas. The strong winds ripped off the roof of some houses and uprooted trees, he said.

“We were focused in Bal-er but local officials were able to conduct pre-emptive evacuation so there was no casualty,” he said, referring to the town where the typhoon made landfall.

“Hopefully, there is indeed no casualty... Our monitoring is continuous.” —Reuters

Heavy rains in Central Viet Nam leave 21 dead, eight missing in 4 days

HO CHI MINH CITY — Heavy rains and strong winds in Viet Nam’s central region over the past four days have left 21 people dead and eight others missing, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development said Sunday.

Quang Binh Province has been hit the hardest with 15 dead, seven missing and 13 injured, followed by Ha Tinh Province with two dead and one missing, and Nghe An and Thua Thien Hue with two dead each.

Many road and railway sections and aquaculture ponds in the central region have been submerged in water, causing big losses to transport sector and farmers.

A powerful typhoon named Sakaria is forecast to affect the central region on 19 October, which may cause a new wave of heavy rain and floods.

Natural disasters killed or left 125 people missing, injured 266 others, and caused property losses of some 10.500 billion Vietnamese dong (470.8 million US dollars) in the first nine months of 2016, said Viet Nam’s General Statistics Office.

—Xinhua
The Significant and Noble Day of Abhidhamma (The Full Moon of Thadingyut, Mahapavarana Day)

Be Sein (Religious Affairs)

SECURITY forces are exercising caution and following the law in their response to the attackers—some armed with automatic weapons and others with sticks and swords—who launched a series of attacks in the western part of Myanmar, which has not typically been the site of armed insurgency. It is critical time for the international community to review their policies towards the atrocities of the extremist attackers whose perpetrator still continues in many forms.

Exhibiting its neighborliness, Bangladesh had handed over two of the assailants to Myanmar, a welcome move which came against a backdrop of heightened fabrications that a number of Muslims living in Rakhine state face discrimination, restriction of movements and denial of access to services.

In common with the neighboring country, the European Union EU expressed its sympathy to the families of the victims who lost their lives in attacks on three border posts in Rakhine State, calling for conducting a formal police investigation into the incident in order to bring the perpetrators of the attack to justice. It is encouraging to know that the EU stands with Myanmar in these difficult moments.

State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi has sent a message to all countries across the world that the Myanmar government is doing its best to deal with the cause and resolution of recent violent attacks, exercising the rule of law so that it can reach the best and most just settlement. When it comes to the recent incidents, the state counsellor at the first anniversary of signing of the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement, NCA has made public that we are brave enough to take drastic, legal action within the framework of law, giving the seriousness of the problem and its potential impact on the country’s democratization process.

At a time when we are taking effective action to defend against, respond to and defeat all armed violent attacks and attempted attacks in accordance with the laws, weighing the gravity and consequences the problem, the provision of assistance by Bangladesh and the EU in the form of encouragement, is an invaluable asset capable of holding the perpetrators ultimately accountable.

The Full Moon of Thadingyut (Mahapavarana Day) falls on 16th October in the year 2016. It is time for international community to review policies toward extremists towards the atrocities of the ex-

TBE Sein

SECURITY forces are exercising caution and following the law in their response to the attackers—some armed with automatic weapons and others with sticks and swords—who launched a series of attacks in the western part of Myanmar, which has not typically been the site of armed insurgency. It is critical time for the international community to review their policies towards the atrocities of the extremist attackers whose perpetrator still continues in many forms.

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In common with the neighboring country, the European Union EU expressed its sympathy to the families of the victims who lost their lives in attacks on three border posts in Rakhine State, calling for conducting a formal police investigation into the incident in order to bring the perpetrators of the attack to justice. It is encouraging to know that the EU stands with Myanmar in these difficult moments.

State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi has sent a message to all countries across the world that the Myanmar government is doing its best to deal with the cause and resolution of recent violent attacks, exercising the rule of law so that it can reach the best and most just settlement. When it comes to the recent incidents, the state counsellor at the first anniversary of signing of the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement, NCA has made public that we are brave enough to take drastic, legal action within the framework of law, giving the seriousness of the problem and its potential impact on the country’s democratization process.

At a time when we are taking effective action to defend against, respond to and defeat all armed violent attacks and attempted attacks in accordance with the laws, weighing the gravity and consequences the problem, the provision of assistance by Bangladesh and the EU in the form of encouragement, is an invaluable asset capable of holding the perpetrators ultimately accountable.

The Full Moon of Thadingyut (Mahapavarana Day) falls on 16th October in the year 2016. It is time for international community to review policies toward extremists towards the atrocities of the ex-

TBE Sein

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Crew shortages force Kenya Airways to cancel flights ahead of strike

NAIROBI — Loss-making national carrier Kenya Airways cancelled several flights on Sunday after some crew members did not report for work, the latest blow as the airline struggles to avert a strike called by its pilots.

“Some of our outsourced staff, including cabin crew in-civ, have stayed away from work from Friday and we are working with their employers to resolve any issues they may have,” said a statement from the airline.

Flights to the Kenyan city of Mombasa, Kilimanjaro in Tanzania, Maputo in Mozambique and Juba in South Sudan, Lusaka in Zambia, Harare in Zimbabwe and Maputo in Mozambique were cancelled because there were not enough crew members to fly safely, the statement said.

Pilots union KALPA has called an indefinite strike, scheduled to start on Tuesday, to protest against the management of the airline, which is part owned by the government and Air France KLM.

The union said its members had lost confidence in the ability of the airline’s chief executive and chairman to end losses.

On Friday, a court ruled the strike was illegal and the government had said it would be “economic sabotage.” On Thursday, the airline said it had halved its pre-tax loss to 5 billion shillings ($49.4 million) in the past six months thanks to a recovery in passenger numbers.—Reuters

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Email address: myanmar@tillike.com

Dated: 17.10.2016

**US warship targeted in failed missile attack from Yemen**

WASHINGTON — A US Navy destroyer was targetted on Saturday in a failed missile attack from territory in Yemen controlled by Iran-aligned Houthi rebels, the third such incident in the past week, US officials said.

Multiple surface-to-surface missiles were fired at the USS Mason sailing in international waters in the Red Sea but the warship used on-board countermeasures to defend itself and was not hit, one defense official said, citing initial information.

The latest attack could provoke further retaliation by the US military, which launched cruise missiles on Thursday against three coastal radar sites in Houthi-controlled areas in Yemen in response to the two previous failed missile firings against the Mason.

“The Mason once again appears to have come under attack in the Red Sea, again from coastal defence cruise missiles fired from the coast of Yemen,” Admiral John Richardson, US chief of naval operations, said during a ship christening in Baltimore on Saturday.

Another US defense official, speaking on condition of anonymity, told Reuters: “We are assessing the situation. All of our ships and crews are safe and unharmed.”

Thursday’s US counter-strikes, authorised by President Barack Obama, marked Washington’s first direct military action against suspected Houthi-controlled targets in Yemen’s conflict and raised questions about the potential for further escalation.

The Houthi movement earlier this week denied responsibility for the missile attacks on the Mason and warned that it too would defend itself.

The Pentagon on Thursday stressed the limited nature of the strikes, aimed at radar that it suspected enabled the launch of at least three missiles against the Mason on Sunday and Wednesday.

Pentagon spokesman Peter Cook said at the time that the US counter-strikes were not connected to the broader civil war in Yemen, which has unleashed famine and killed more than 10,000 people since March 2015 in the Arab world’s poorest country.

The United States, a longtime ally of Saudi Arabia, has provided aerial refueling of warplanes from a Saudi-led coalition striking Yemen and it supplies US weapons to the kingdom.

Iran, which supports the Houthi group, said last week it had deployed two warships to the Gulf of Aden, to protect ship lanes from piracy.—Reuters

**Syrian rebels seize village where Islamic State promised final battle**

BEIRUT — Syrian rebels said they captured the village of Dabiq from Islamic State on Sunday, forcing the jihadist group from a stronghold where it had promised to fight a final, apocalyptic battle with the West.

The rebels, backed by Turkish tanks and warplanes, also took neighbouring Soran, said Ahmed Osman, head of the Sultan Murad group, one of the Free Syrian Army (FSA) factions involved in the clashes on Saturday night against IS in Dabiq.

“The Daesh myth of their great battle in Dabiq is finished,” he told Reuters.

IS once again threatened to launch its “apocalyptic battle” against the US-led coalition and infidels that will presage doomsday, a message used extensively in Islamic State’s propaganda.

The group also named a publication after the northwest village. However, the jihadist group has appeared to back away from Dabiq’s symbolism more recently after advances by Turkey-backed rebels put the village at risk of capture, saying this was not the one described in the prophecy.—Reuters

**Britain sends new military training mission to Tunisia to counter IS**

LONDON — Britain has sent 40 military personnel to Tunisia to provide training aimed at helping the North African country prevent the spread of Islamic State fighters from neighbouring Libya, the British defence minister said on Saturday.

The training will focus on operational planning, intelligence, surveillance and mobile patrolling and is the third mission of its kind by British troops in Tunisia since 2013.

The massacre in June last year at a hotel in Sousse on the Mediterranean coast was the biggest loss of British lives in such an incident since the July 2005 bombings in London.

Britain is determined to support our Tunisian allies to defend against Daesh (Islamic State) terrorists who slaughtered innocent Britons on a beach there last year,” Defence Secretary Michael Fallon said in a statement.

“Our training will help Tunisian forces strengthen their border security and stop the spread of Daesh along the coast.”

The training will be delivered to around 200 Tunisian army personnel at various locations. Two previous training missions took place in February and late last year.—Reuters

The US Navy guided-missile destroyer USS Mason conducts divisional tactic maneuvers as part of a Commander, Task Force 55, exercise in the Gulf of Oman on 10 September 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS
Clinton heavily favoured to win Electoral College: poll

NEW YORK — After a brutal week for Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump, Democrat Hillary Clinton maintained a substantial projected advantage in the race to win the Electoral College and claim the US presidency, according to the latest results from the Reuters/Ipsos States of the Nation project released on Saturday.

If the election were held this week, the project estimates that Clinton’s odds of securing the 270 Electoral College votes needed to win the presidency at more than 95 per cent, and by a margin of 118 Electoral College votes. It is the second week in a row that the project has estimated her odds so high.

The results mirror other Electoral College projections, some of which estimate Clinton’s chance of winning at around 90 per cent.

For the Trump campaign there are a handful of states the Republican candidate must win if he is to cobble together enough states to win the White House. Among them is Florida, but new evidence of the extent of the emails released in the hacking of Clinton’s private email server released during the primaries has not altered Clinton’s advantage in the mainland Sunshine State by Trump and his vice-presidential running mate Mike Pence did little to help his vice-presidential running mate during their first joint appearance last week but are now toss-ups.

However, Clinton’s support grew in North Carolina and Colorado, both of which moved from toss-ups to leaning Clinton last week but are now toss-ups.

The Trump campaign struggled to respond to allegations from several women that Trump had groped them or made unwanted sexual advances over several decades. Trump said the reports were lies and part of a media conspiracy to defeat him.

All of the allegations came after The Washington Post disclosed a video from 2005 of Trump describing how he tried to seduce a married woman and bragged in vulgar terms how his celebrity allowed him to kiss and grope women without permission.

The accusations overshadowed what might otherwise have been a difficult week for Clinton. Her campaign manager’s email account was apparently hacked and thousands of his emails were released by Wikileaks. US officials say the Russian government sanctioned the electronic break-in.

The emails have been trickling out for two weeks. Included in the hacked emails were undisputed comments that Clinton made to banks and big business in a 2014 speech.

In those comments, Clinton said she supported open trade and open borders, and takes a conciliatory approach to Wall Street, both positions she later backed away from.

Since that release, waves of other emails have been released, among which were some that suggested Clinton had inappropriately received questions in advance of a debate with Bernie Sanders during the Democratic primaries.

Without Trump’s own woes, the Clinton emails may well have become the central issue in the campaign. Yet with just over three weeks to go until the 8 November election, Trump does not have much time to turn the race around.

According to the project, Trump trails by double-digits among women and all minority groups. Among black voters he trails by nearly 70 points. To a large extent his support is almost entirely dependent on white voters.

And while Trump’s support among white men is strong, among white women his lead is negligible.—Reuters

UN Secretary-General’s message on The International Day for The Eradication of Poverty

We are approaching the end of the first year of implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. With its 17 Sustainable Development Goals, the 2030 Agenda is a universal vision for peace, prosperity and dignity for all people on a healthy planet. Achieving this objective is inconceivable without fulfilling the mandate of SDG 1 to end poverty in all its forms.

Today, some 1 billion people live in extreme poverty and more than 800 million endure hunger and malnutrition. But poverty is not simply measured by inadequate income. It is manifested in restricted access to health, education and other essential services and, too often, by the denial or abuse of other fundamental human rights.

Poverty is both a cause and consequence of marginalisation and social exclusion. To fulfil the promise of the 2030 Agenda to leave no one behind, we must address the humiliation and exclusion of people living in poverty.

Humiliation and exclusion are powerful drivers of social unrest and, in extreme cases, the violent extremism that is troubling so many parts of our world. But, in most instances, people living in poverty respond to these societal ills with stoic resilience as they work to escape the degrading reality of their daily lives.

The duty of all Governments and societies is to address systemic socio-economic inequalities and facilitate the engagement of all people living in extreme poverty so they can help themselves, their families and their communities to build a more equitable, sustainable and prosperous future for all.

The message of today’s observance is “Moving from Humiliation and Exclusion to Participation: Ending Poverty in All its Forms”. We must break down the walls of poverty and exclusion that plague so many people in every region of the world. We must build inclusive societies that promote participation by all. We must ensure the voices of all those living in poverty are heard.

On this International Day for the Eradication of Poverty, let us listen to and heed the voices of people living in poverty. Let us commit to respect and defend the human rights of all people and end the humiliation and social exclusion that people living in poverty face every day by promoting their involvement in global efforts to end extreme poverty once and for all.—UN CLUB Yangon

NEWS IN BRIEF

Explosion hits part of southern Turkish city of Gaziantep — Dogan

ISTANBUL — An explosion hit the Besyazleaver neighbourhood of the southern Turkish city of Gaziantep on Sunday, wounding several people, the privately-owned Dogan News Agency reported.

Broadcasters Haberturk said the blast happened during a raid by the security forces on a suspected militant safe house in the city and that one of two suicide bombers blew themselves up.—Reuter

Three dead, dozen wounded in shooting at Los Angeles party

LOS ANGELES — Three people were killed and a dozen wounded in Los Angeles early on Saturday after an argument at a party resultado resulted in gunfire, a police spokesman said on Saturday.

A man and a woman are in custody over the shooting, which occurred shortly after midnight in southwest Los Angeles, a police spokesman, Officer Mike Lopez, said. The two people were held were not identified.

Conditions of the wounded range from critical to stable but serious, Lopez said.—Reuter

M5.3 quake hits northeastern Japan, no tsunami warning issued

TOKYO — An earthquake with a preliminary magnitude of 5.3 jolted northeastern Japan on Sunday, Japan’s weather agency said. No tsunami warning was issued.

There are no immediate reports of casualties or damage from the 4:37pm quake. The focus of the tremor was about 20 kilometres underground in the Pacific Ocean off Miyagi Prefecture, the Japan Meteorological Agency said.

Tohoku Electric Power Co. said it saw no abnormality at the Onagawa Nuclear Power Station in Miyagi Prefecture.—Kyodo News
China to launch Shenzhou-11 manned spacecraft on 17 October

JUQUAN — The Shenzhou-11 manned spacecraft will be launched at 7:30 a.m. Monday Beijing Time, China’s manned space program spokesperson said Sunday.

The spaceship will take two male astronauts Jing Haipeng and Chen Dong into space, said Wu Ping, deputy director of China’s manned space engineering office, at a press conference at the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Centre.

The mission will be carried out with a Long March-2F carrier rocket, Wu said.

The spacecraft will dock with orbiting space lab Tiangong-2 within two days, and the astronauts will stay in the space lab for 30 days, she said.

After that the Shenzhou-11 spacecraft will separate with Tiangong-2 and return to Earth within one day, Wu said.

The mission aims to transport personnel and materials between Earth and Tiangong-2, and examine rendezvous, docking and return technologies.

During the mission, the spacecraft will form a complex with Tiangong-2. The complex’s capabilities of supporting astronauts’ life, work and health, and astronauts’ abilities for carrying out flight missions will be tested, Wu said.

Other objectives include conducting aerospace medical experiments, space science experiments and orbit control tests, with human participation, along with activities to popularize scientific knowledge, she added.

Several technical alterations have been made to Shenzhou-11, though its main functions and technical parameters remain basically the same with Shenzhou-10, Wu said.

To meet the needs of this mission, the orbit control strategy and flight procedures have been adjusted to adapt Shenzhou-11 to the change of the rendezvous, docking and return orbit from 343 kilometres to 393 kilometres from Earth.

The layout of cargo loading has been upgraded to enhance transportation capabilities for the mission.

To further improve the spacecraft’s reliability and astronauts’ safety, wide-beam relay telecommunications devices have been equipped, which will significantly expand the scope of telemetry, tracking and control, as well as improve the space-ground communication support capabilities when the posture of the spacecraft is changing rapidly.

To verify future space technologies and meet the demand for prolonging the service life of rendezvous, telemetry, and tracking devices in future space stations, such devices in Shenzhou-11 have been upgraded, according to Wu. Certain technical alterations have also been made to the carrier rocket, she said.—Xinhua

DHF kills 18 in Cambodia

PHNOM PENH — Dengue fever had claimed 18 children’s lives in Cambodia during the first nine months of 2016, down 44 per cent over the same period last year, according to a report on Saturday.

Some 10,587 dengue fever cases were reported during the January-Sep-tember period this year, a decrease of 3.3 per cent compared to 10,949 cases over the same period last year, Huy Rekol, director of the National Centre for Parasitology, Entomology and Malaria Control, said in the report posted on the centre’s website.

“The incidence rate is 63.9 cases out of 100,000 people,” he said, adding that over 71 per cent of the patients were children aged between 5 and 14 years old. “The situation of dengue fever in Cambodia is at a controllable level because this figure is still below the alarming line,” he said.—Xinhua
Britain’s Prime Minister Theresa May gives her speech on the final day of the annual Conservative Party Conference in Birmingham, Britain, on 5 October 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

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**US detects failed North Korea missile launch**

WASHINGTON/SEOUL, — North Korea has conducted an unsuccessful launch of what appears to be a new intermediate-range ballistic missile, the US military said Saturday.

The North fired a suspected Musudan missile from its westernmost region Friday night EDT, which followed more than 20 ballistic missile launches this year violation of UN resolutions banning the use of ballistic missile technology by the country.

The South Korean Joint Chiefs of Staff also confirmed the failed launch attempt, which came on the last day of a six-day joint naval exercise by South Korea and the United States in South Korean waters. The United States strongly condemned the series of missile tests, saying it will raise fresh concerns at the United Nations to press ahead with additional efforts to hold North Korea “accountable for these actions.” The US Strategic Command said its systems detected the failed missile launch conducted near the northwestern city of Kusong in North Korea.

“Strongly condemn this and North Korea’s other recent missile tests,” said US Navy Commander Gary Ross, a Pentagon spokesman.

US commitment to the defence of its allies, including South Korea and Japan “is ironclad,” Ross said. “We remain prepared to defend ourselves and our allies from any attack or provocation.” A Musudan missile has a potential range of between 2,500 and 5,000 kilometres, which would cover not only any target in Japan and South Korea, but could also reach US military bases on the Pacific island of Guam. The Strategic Command said the latest launch did not pose any threat to North America.

Japan’s Defence Minis-

ter Tomomi Inada also said the missile launch would not have any immediate impact on the country’s security. Tokyo is gathering information in cooperation with the United States and South Korea, Inada told a TV program on Sunday. North Ko-

era went ahead with its fifth nuclear test on 9 September. The Security Council is dis-

cussing new measures in re-

sponse to the test, which is seen as Pyongyng’s most powerful detonation so far of a nuclear device.

North Korea’s neigh-

boring nations have since been vigilant about another possible provocative act by the country around the founding of the Worker’s Party of Korea last Mon-

day.—Kyodo News

**Trump pledges strong US ties with India if elected president**

EDISON, (N.J.) — US Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump pledged that the United States and India would be “best friends” if he is elected and that he would boost intelligence sharing with India in the battle against Islamic militants.

Trump spoke at an event sponsored by the Republican Hindu Coalition to raise money for victims of terrorism. It featured Bollywood-style performers who danced in colourful, traditional costumes. “If I’m elected president, the Indian and Hindu community will have a true friend in the White House, that I can guarantee you,” said Trump, who noted that as a real estate developer he has two “massive developments” in India. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi has developed a friendly relationship with President Barack Obama, a Democrat who wants Trump’s opponent, Hillary Clinton, to win the 8 November election. “We will defeat radical Islamic ter-

rorism when I’m president. We will stand shoulder to shoulder with India in shar-

ing intelligence and keeping our people safe mutualy,” said Trump. He called India a strategic ally and that “we will be best friends” if he wins the election.—Reuters

**Britain’s PM May heads to India with eye on post-Brexit trade**

LONDON — British Prime Minister Theresa May will lead a delegation of small and medium-size businesses to India in November as part of efforts to bolster trade with countries outside the European Union as Britain prepares to leave the bloc.

The 6-8 November trip, May’s first bilateral visit to a country outside Europe since she took office in July, will be in pursuit of her ambition of forging a new global role for Britain after it leaves the European Union, May’s Downing Street office said in a statement.

The European Commission is responsible for trade negotiations for the EU and some countries have said they will not negotiate a new deal for Britain until it has actually left the European Union, and Telensa, a company focused on high-tech wireless street lighting systems, based in Cambridge.

May will hold talks with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi during her visit, and the two heads of government will together inaugurate a tech summit in New Delhi.

Liam Fox, Britain’s secretary of state for international trade, will join the visit, during which a number of commercial deals are expected to be signed. —Reuters

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**Republican Hindu Coalition Chairman Shalli Kumar (2nd R) helps Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump (2nd L) light a ceremonial diya lamp before he speaks at a Bollywood-themed charity concert put on by the Republican Hindu Coalition in Edison, New Jersey, US on 15 October 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS**

**Trump’s opponent, Hillary Clinton, to win the 8 November election.**
Japan, North Korea students at odds over nuke issue

PYONGYANG — A group of Japanese college students visited Pyongyang in late August to discuss war and peace with local students, shortly before North Korea conducted its fifth nuclear test on 9 September.

Even after three days of intense discussions in the North Korean capital, the students remained at odds over how to maintain world peace and whether or not nuclear weapons should be abandoned.

“Both of us hope for peace, but the prospects we see and the means by which we seek to achieve peace are completely different,” said one of the participants, Mirei Jingui, 23, a senior student at the University of Tokyo.

“I recognised the difficulty of understanding each other at a fundamental level,” she said, while also adding, “But we will keep doing what we believe we can do, instead of feeling despair and turning our back on the issue.” The student programme was initiated in 2012 by Japanese nongovernmental organisations, including the Tokyo-based NGO called Relief Campaign Committee for Children, Japan, which works on cultural exchanges through children’s drawings. It has since been organised every year, and participants have gradually become able to take up political issues over the years, according to the organizers.

Jingui was among eight Japanese students who took part in this year’s programme, and their counterparts were 11 North Korean students in their early 20s who major in Japanese language at the Pyongyang University of Foreign Studies.

During the three-day programme, both students enjoyed talking about boyfriends and girlfriends, taking photos with their smartphones and playing popular phone games — familiar scenes among young people in Japan. Once they started discussing nuclear weapons and missiles, however, they never reached agreement.

“Both of us hope for peace, but the prospects we see and the means by which we seek to achieve peace are completely different,” said one of the participants, Mirei Jingui, 23, a senior student at the University of Tokyo.

“I recognised the difficulty of understanding each other at a fundamental level,” she said, while also adding, “But we will keep doing what we believe we can do, instead of feeling despair and turning our back on the issue.” The student programme was initiated in 2012 by Japanese nongovernmental organisations, including the Tokyo-based NGO called Relief Campaign Committee for Children, Japan, which works on cultural exchanges through children’s drawings. It has since been organised every year, and participants have gradually become able to take up political issues over the years, according to the organizers.

Korean students were curious about how the Japanese students took the previous day’s test-firing of a submarine-launched ballistic missile, which Pyongyang conducted 24 August. Reo Asahi, 21, a sophomore at Gakushuin University, said, “The test-firing is nothing but a threat to Japanese people and it is beyond our understanding that North Koreans celebrated the success.”

One North Korean student reacted to his remarks by saying, “If you want us to stop, you should drive US forces out of our country.”

Yet on the morning when the Japanese students were to leave home, some of the North Korean students had tears in their eyes. “I know that the current bilateral relations aren’t good, but I want to see you all again,” one North Korean student told the Japanese students, seeing them off at airport.

— Kyodo News

Thai internet operators urge customers to report royal insults

BANGKOK — Thailand’s main mobile telecoms operators instructed customers on Sunday to report “inappropriate content about the royal institution”, as the government steps up scrutiny for material deemed insulting to the monarchy.

King Bhumibol Adulyadej died on Thursday after seven decades on the throne. His son, Crown Prince Maha Vajiralongkorn, is due to become the next king after a period of mourning.

Thailand has a tough law against lese majeste, or insulting the monarchy. Convictions have become more frequent, and punishments more severe, under a military government that seized power in 2014.

Mobile operators Advanced Info Service Pcl (AIS), Total Access Communication Pcl and True Move, a unit of True Corp, posted instructions on a messaging app and on their Facebook pages, for how to report Facebook posts and YouTube videos.

True said it was following a request from the broadcasting regulator, the National Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission (NBTC).

“The NBTC has asked all mobile operators to send the instruction to our clients,” Prinpol Siriwong-wan-ngam, True’s head of public relations, told Reuters.

“We’re only acting as channels to spread the message.”

Spokeswomen for AIS and Total Access confirmed they had followed the NBTC guideline. The operators said people should send URLs or screen shots of websites deemed offensive to the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology and the NBTC.

On Friday, the NBTC said it had asked internet service providers to monitor content and block anything inappropriate. Operators must also inform platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Youtube, and messaging apps, to block such content.

The failure of internet providers to block inappropriate content when it is found would be considered a crime, NBTC secretary-general Takorn Tangtaisith said in a statement.

Information ministry spokesman Chatchai Khuntithuck said some content hurt the feelings of people grieving for the revered king.

“Many heartbroken Thais are quite sensitive. When they see illegal content that offends them, they’ll be more stressed,” he said. “We have to let them know about channels to report content to relieve their sense of helplessness.”

Chatchai said more people had come across content they deemed inappropriate, partly because more people were going online to read about the king since his death.

— Reuters
Virtual reality to bring ‘Fifty Shades Darker’ to life

LOS ANGELES — James Foley, director of “Fifty Shades Darker” and “Fifty Shades Freed,” says that virtual reality will be incorporated into the marketing for the latest movie sequel.

Foley confirmed the experience during a VR on the Lot conversation in California, reported Deadline.

“My own personal instinct is that cinema is going to move to VR because it’s an extension of the visual language. For myself, watching the material they generated expanded my brain,” he said.

“Fifty Shades Darker” returns to the big screen ahead of Valentine’s Day 2017.—PTI

Lindsay Lohan wants ‘Mean Girls’ sequel

LONDON — Actress Lindsay Lohan wants a sequel to her popular film “Mean Girls”. Posting a throwback cast picture of Cady, Gretchen (Lacey Chabert) and Regina (Rachel McAdams) to Instagram, Lohan wrote: “Miss you all...Sequel?” The “Mean Girls” musical is already in works. The long-awaited stage adaptation of Tina Fey’s masterful creation was announced on 3 October and will premiere next year in the US. Fey will be working on the musical alongside her husband, composer Jeff Richmond, and Broadway’s Legally Blonde lyricist Nell Benjamin.—PTI

Robert De Niro to receive Chaplin Award

LOS ANGELES — The Film Society of Lincoln Center has named Robert De Niro the recipient of its 44th annual Chaplin Award, which honours major industry talents.

De Niro will take home the 2017 trophy for a four-decade acting career that stretches from early work including “Mean Streets,” “Raging Bull” and “The Godfather Part II” to more recent projects such as “Silver Linings Playbook”, reported Variety.

He is also the high-profile co-founder of the Tribeca Film Festival, launched in the wake of 9/11 in an effort to boost the economic prospects of lower Manhattan.

The 73-year-old actor-producer will be honoured by the Film Society at a springtime gala featuring notable guests and presenters as well as movie and interview footage drawn from De Niro’s career.

He joins a list of previous Chaplin recipients that includes Alfred Hitchcock, Elizabeth Taylor, Meryl Streep, Billy Wilder and last year’s honoree, Morgan Freeman. The 44th annual Chaplin Award gala is set for 8 May.

Prior to that, De Niro’s latest project, the Broadway musical adaptation of “A Bronx Tale,” which he co-directs, opens in December.—PTI

LOS ANGELES — Singer Miley Cyrus and her boyfriend Liam Hemsworth have made their first public appearance as a couple since rekindling romance.

The event marked the couple’s first official appearance in three years, reported AceShowbiz.

The “Wrecking Ball” hitmaker and the actor attended Variety’s Power of Women luncheon, where Cyrus was honoured for her work with her Happy Hippie Foundation.

Hemsworth opted for a black suit while Cyrus wore a polka dot and floral patterned jumpsuit.

Other honorees included Scarlett Johansson, Laverne Cox, Jenna Dewan Tatum and Ava DuVernay.—PTI

Justin Bieber surprises students as he joins them in school

LOS ANGELES — Pop-star Justin Bieber surprised the school students as he joined them for a soccer game in London.

The 22-year-old singer was driving past a school in Highgate, North London ahead of his concert when he decided to join few boys, who were in the middle of a soccer game, reported AceShowbiz.

“Justin and his manager came over to speak with us — I recognised him straight away. They had been driving past and seen our lesson going on,” the school teacher, Mario Noto said.

“They explained Justin was in town for his shows at the O2, that he enjoys his football, and would love to join in.

We thought this would be a great experience for the pupils.

“He was very down to earth and could have been another pupil, just enjoying himself, and spent about half an hour with us. He asked me to go in for a few penalties — and turned out to be pretty good,” he continued.—PTI

Miley Cyrus, Liam Hemsworth make first appearance as couple

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Ancient Chinese ‘export-quality porcelain’ discovered in Mexico’s Acapulco port

MEXICO CITY — A new archaeological find announced on Friday in Mexico attests to China’s age-old vocation as an exporting powerhouse.

Mexican archaeologists have uncovered thousands of fragments of a 400-year-old shipment of Chinese “export-quality porcelain” that was long buried in the Pacific Coast port of Acapulco.

The shipment of rice bowls, cups, plates and platters dates from the reign of Emperor Wanli (1572-1620), and is believed to have arrived in Acapulco aboard the China Galleon, which is known as China’s “Porcelain Capital.”

The find, located no more than a meter and a half below ground near Acapulco’s Cathedral, in what is known as the Old Quarter, included fragments of a coarser type of ceramic used to make containers for shipping provisions, such as spices and liquids.

Mexico’s ports were often targeted by pirates, and silks, and other goods. The China Galleon regularly sailed between Acapulco, and other Mexican ports, and Manila, in the Philippines, and today’s Taiwan, China, where it would load up on Chinese spices and silks, and other goods.

Fabricio Antonio Fonseca, a researcher at the prestigious Colegio de Mexico, says the initial encounter between Mexico and China occurred when the galleon first sailed into a Mexican port.

Beijing holds foreign language festival

BEIJING, — Cultural shows and English games were among nearly 20 activities on offer to tens of thousands of visitors to the Beijing Foreign Language Festival 2016 over the weekend.

Since the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics is a keyword for this year’s event, citizens were able to learn about the history of the Olympics, in addition to language activities, according to a spokesperson with the city’s foreign affairs office.

At one booth, in the cultural show zone, a woman from Krakow, Poland, whose English name is Anna, taught visitors some simple Polish phrases. “We designed games about the geography and customs of our country,” she said.

“Winners got traditional Polish desserts as prizes,” she said.
**Lanzini sets Hammers beating with Palace coup**

LONDON — West Ham United midfielder Manuel Lanzini is playing a key role in his team’s recovery from a poor start to the Premier League and hopes his form will earn him a chance to play for Argentina.

Lanzini, showing the same sharpness that put him in scoring positions at River Plate back home, struck a fine winner for a 1-0 victory at Crystal Palace on Saturday to lift his side out of the relegation zone.

Coach Slaven Bilic’s tactics with three central defenders and two wing backs paid off after a woeful early season that yielded a solitary 1-0 win at home to Bournemouth nearly two months ago and just one point from their previous five matches.

“(Bilic) always tells me this is the start of something good,” said the 23-year-old. “It means the world to me, it’s nice to win here in Korea where women’s golf is so big,” added the 23-year-old.

**Man City penalty woes allow Arsenal to join them at the top**

LONDON — Arsenal joined Manchester City at the top of the Premier League on Saturday after leaders City suffered another afternoon of penalty woes in a 1-1 draw with Everton that ended their 100 per cent home record this season.

Arsenal’s hard-earned 3-2 win over Swansea City, featuring a double from Theo Walcott, put them level with City on 19 points but Pep Guardiola’s side remained as leaders on goal difference.

Tottenham Hotspur, who had started the day in second place, missed a chance to go top, needing an 89th-minute goal from Dele Alli to rescue a 1-1 draw at West Bromwich Albion and protect their record as the only unbeaten side in the league.

Guardiola saw his side’s perfect record disappear at the Etihad after Kevin De Bruyne and Sergio Aguero both had penalty chances saved by Maarten Stekelenburg in a game the leaders dominated.

City have now missed four of their eight penalties this season, leaving Guardiola to opine:

“ar the players have all the qualifications to score penalties but we miss a lot. Hopefully, we will score more of them in future.”

**Ciganda survives meltdown to win in Korea**

INCHEON — Carlota Ciganda survived a late-round meltdown to beat an equally error-prone Alison Lee in a playoff at the $2 million KEB Hana Bank Championship on Sunday.

Ciganda, a three-times winner on the Ladies European Tour and Order of Merit champion in 2012, squandered a four-shot lead with five holes to play but found herself in a playoff after Lee failed to par the last.

“Ciganda was mentored by coach Rogelio Echeverria and it’s nice to win here in Korea where women’s golf is so big,” said Ciganda, still wearing a traditional Korean hanbok on Sunday.

“IT was a shame to (miss the Olympics), I would have loved to have gone, it was a very important tournament for me,” he said.

“Now I’m getting over that and will try to get there again.”

“It’s something I always think about, it’s my dream to play in the national team, I’d love to but I know that this way, doing things well, I can get to have a chance and be there.”

Lanzini follows the Argentinian’s footsteps to join them at the top of the table with 14 points from their last three outings, all without captain Lionel Messi.

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