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MEETING OF THE MINISTERS

Laos concludes 48th AEM meeting and joint meetings



Eighth Mekong-Japan Economic ministers meeting in progress. PHOTO: MNA

THE 48th ASEAN Economic Ministers (AEM) Meeting and related meetings entered its fourth day in Vientiane of Laos yesterday alongside the joint meetings with the ASEAN Business Advisory Council as well as with economic ministers from partner countries Japan and India and Hong Kong.

Planning and Finance Union Minister U Kyaw Win attended the meetings.

At the meeting with the ASEAN Business Advisory Council, the economic ministers exchanged views on the promotion of trade cooperation with other ASEAN Plus 1 business

councils, enhancement of investment in agri-food, retail, logistics and healthcare, and development of small and medium enterprises, including e-commerce activities. The meeting also focused on plans for the private sector development to be discussed at the ASEAN Summit, which is scheduled for September.

At the 8th Mekong-Japan Economic Ministers Meeting, the ministers discussed Japan's assistance to the industrialisation and development of the Mekong region. The 22nd ASEAN-Japan Economic Ministers Meeting focused on progress in the implementation of bilateral economic

ties, with the ministers discussing the ten-year roadmap of ASEAN-Japan economic cooperation designed to facilitate the establishment of ASEAN Economic Community 2025.

At the 13th ASEAN-India Economic Ministers Meeting, the ministers reviewed the ongoing implementation of the free trade between ASEAN and India, focusing on closer private sector cooperation. The ministers also exchanged views on suggestions put forward by the ASEAN-India Economic Council.

The economic ministers of ASEAN countries also met their counterparts from Hong Kong

to discuss the establishment of a free trade area for trade, services and investment.

At the CLMV Economic Ministers Meeting, the economic ministers from Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Viet Nam, reviewed the Action Plan 2017-2018 submitted by the CLMV senior economic officials, focusing on the commitment to accelerating the regional development.

Laos successfully hosted the 48th ASEAN Economic Ministers Meeting and 19 joint meetings in Vientiane from Tuesday until yesterday.—Myanmar News Agency

ASEAN: Unity is strength



Oil millers will demand FDA relax its rules

Aung Thant Khaing

OIL millers in Mandalay will demand the Ministry of Health relax the Food and Drug Administration's criteria for edible oil production, asking for three years to improve production to meet set standards, it has been learned.

During a meeting held by edible-oil businesspeople yesterday it was decided that negotiations should be made with the ministry to attempt to adjust the commercial tax applied to the export of oil crops and the import of residue from oil milling and over-import of oil crops if necessary.

the meeting also urged the members of the Myanmar Oil Milling Association to produce genuine edible oil and to ask permission from the Myanmar FDA to produce edible oil.

"Our customers want to consume genuine peanut oil. However, they have to consume palm oil. So, even if they pay a high price for the edible oil, they don't think that it is a genuine oil. We need to change this kind of mindset," said U Thet Tin, Chairman of Mandalay Oil Millers' Association.

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State of Emergency will not yet be declared



Union Minister Dr. Win Myat Aye.

THE president will declare a state of emergency in accordance with the law when needed, said Union Minister Dr. Win Myat Aye for the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement.

“We will act in accordance

with the law as needed because the situation is changing with time. We will declare a state of emergency if and when it is needed,” said the Union Minister on Thursday.

Regarding the declaration, section 11 of the 2013 natural disaster management law states that the president can declare an emergency area for a period of time if lives and property of the people as well as the natural environment are dramatically affected and if rehabilitation will be needed, the Union Minister added.

The Natural Disaster Management Committee is led by the second Vice President and will provide K20 billion for flood victims, it has been learned. — *Thein Ko Lwin*

Myat Cetana Mon social assistance association provides food for flood victims

MYAT CETANA MON social assistance association provided food worth Ks 30 lakh on 4 August to 250 households who were hit by floods near Yadanarbon university, Amarapura township, Mandalay region.

The social assistance association provided a torch light, a lamp, a power bank, a 3 in 1 lamp, a pack of readymade instant noodle, soft drinks and other snacks for each family. “Our Myat Cetana Mon social assistance association is not operating with chairman and secretary. But, the association is running in a family type and we donated money from the fund we contribute monthly. We donate the money to orphans, persons who have difficulty in having access to education and health and those who are badly



A member of Myat Cetana Mon social assistance association presents food to a flood victim. PHOTO: 002

in need of money every month. The members another association called Perfect of social assistance association are also donating food

and drinks to those victims affected by the floods, said Daw Ye Ye Swe from Myat Cetana Mon social assistance association. — 002

Crime NEWS

Police impersonators arrested for rape in Kalay

LOCAL police in Kalay have arrested 4 men who stand accused of impersonating police officers and kidnapping a woman in order to gang-rape her in Kalay township on Wednesday.

Pyae Sone Aung, 23, Akar Soe, 25, Hein Htet Naing, 19, and Sin Pauk alias Lin Htet Aung, 19, were captured by Kalay police shortly after the incident. It is reported that one Ko Yin Gyi alias Aung Kyaw Hein evaded capture and is wanted for questioning in relation to the case.

According to a police report, the group, in the guise of police officers, approached a young couple on Bogyoke road in Tar Han ward, Kalay township and asked them to come to a local police station for questioning.

When the couple protested the suspects forcibly kidnapped the female victim. She was taken to an old graveyard by motorcycle and there raped by the group. The captured suspects have been charged under sections 170/366/376/377/114 of the Penal Code. — *Myanmar Police Force*



Pyae Sone Aung, Akar Soe, Hein Htet Naing, and Sin Pauk alias Lin Htet Aung. PHOTO: MPF

Illegal tamalan logs confiscated in Katha

A COMBINED investigation team comprising officers and staff from the Forestry Department confiscated illegal tamalan logs from a home on Katha-Moe Tar road in Katha

on Wednesday.

Forestry staff searched one U Kyaw Myint Htay's home and discovered 74 illegal tamalan logs. The home owner told police the logs

belonged to one Kyaw Thura.

Police have filed charges against Kyaw Myint Htay, 41, Kyaw Thura, 47, from Katha township. — *U Ye (Katha)*

Yaba and heroin seized in Mabein

A LOCAL police squad in Mabein seized yaba and heroin from a motorcycle driver in Mabein township on Thursday. Acting on a tip-off police stopped and searched one Aung Naing and seized 8,000 yaba pills and heroin weighing 60 grams.

Local police in Indaw searched the home of San Soe in Lae Khaung village, Yatsauk township and discovered 374 yaba pills. All suspects have been charged under the Narcotic Drugs



Aung Naing. PHOTO: MPF and Psychotropic Substances Law.— *Myanmar Police Force*

Woman dies from electrocution

A 29-year-old woman was electrocuted in Phokon village, Pakokku township on Wednesday, according to local police.

The victim was identified as Ma Myint Myint Khine. Accord-

ing to a police report the victim was holding a wire from a nearby lamp post whilst walking through flood waters and died when electrocuted. Police are still investigating the case. — *Kyaw Zayar*

Truck overturned in Minbu

A TRUCK overturned in Setokaya township, Minbu district on Friday.

The truck, en route to Setokaya from Nga Phae, was being driven by one Maung Maung Lwin. The vehicle over-

turned when the driver lost control.

The government needs to renovate the road which has been steadily eroded by creek water over time, a local villager said. — *Tin Tun Oo (Minbu)*



The truck being seen overturned in Minbu. PHOTO: TUN TUN Oo (MINBU)



Hailing ceremony of Peace Conference in progress. PHOTO: AUNG THANT KHINE

Mandalay stages mass rally in support of peace conference

A MASS rally took place in Chanmyathazi township of Mandalay on Friday in a display of support for the Union Peace Conference — 21st century Panglong Peace Conference, witnesses said.

U Thein Tan, former chairman of the Mandalay's National League for Democracy, addressed the rally of over 500 activists, who called for an end to internal armed conflicts through closer cooperation

and unity among national brethren.

Ko Thein Aung Myint, one of the organisers of the rally, expressed his high hope for ceasefire and peace, describing the peace conference as the lifeblood for the country.

General Aung San and national leaders gathered at Panglong Conference in 1947 for the restoration of independence from Britain, he said, adding that the army and

ethnic leaders would come up with a resolution for ceasefire and peace through collective negotiation at Daw Aung San Suu Kyi-led Union Peace Conference.

The nine-day rally in support of the peace conference started on 31 July and will continue until Monday, with organisers saying that the event won permission from the regional government. —Aung Thant Khaing

Rakhine multiethnic charity school in desperate need of provisions

PROVISIONS are reportedly needed for students at the multi-ethnic Nanthataung Charity School, situated in northern Rakhine State's Taungpyoletwai village, adjacent to the Bangladeshi border.

The school, which teaches fifth to tenth standards, is currently comprised of 482 students from Myo, Khami, Thet and Dienet (Thetkama) ethnic groups attending the current 2016-17 academic year. The students are taught by a total of 28 teachers.

However, just over half of students reportedly have access to educational materials and food provisions as the last approval for such was issued by the Ministry of Border Affairs (MoBA) for the 2012-13 academic year, during which time the school was attended by 264 students. The growing numbers in the years since has rendered 218 students in a position where they must rely on donors for assistance, says Abbot U Sarana, the school's founder.

"Around K3 million is incurred in purchasing school materials, books and miscellaneous

items. The rainy season has seen a dearth of donors. I've burdened myself with debts as I have to borrow money to pay for such expenses," continued Abbot U Sarana. "I would like to kindly use this opportunity through the media to request well-wishers and donors to provide support to our school."

An application for extra provisions for the additional 218 students was reportedly submitted to the MoBA but to no avail, the Abbot added. "I sent my son and daughter to the school as I'm no longer able to make a living as a

farmer due to feelings of insecurity following the 2012 communal riots which erupted here. We're very sad to hear that the Abbot is facing difficulties in feeding the children, but we're not in a financial position to assist," said U Kyaw Thein Nu of Nanthataung village.

The Nanthataung Charity School was established to provide ethnic children from remote areas with access to an education in the aftermath of community violence which struck the region in 2012. —Myitmakha News Agency



Students seen happy in the class. PHOTO: MYITMAKHA NEWS AGENCY

BFM sends food aid to flood affected people

MEAL boxes donated by KBZ's Brighter Future Myanmar Foundation were distributed to people in areas affected by the current flooding, namely Sagaing, Pakokku, Myan Aung and Kyangin townships yesterday.

Members of the foundation together with volunteers and local authorities distributed more than 9,000 lunch and dinner

boxes to flood-hit people sheltering at relief camps in the four townships.

The meal boxes reached more than 3,000 peoples in Hsinmyay Village in Sagaing, about 700 at shelters in Myan Aung Township, more than 4,000 people at seven camps in Kyangin, Ayeyawady Region, and about 1,500 in Pakokku. —Thura Lwin-Eco



An old woman holding a meal box and a purified drinking water bottle donated by KBZ's Brighter Future Myanmar Foundation.

PHOTO: THURA LWIN-ECO

Flood Bulletin (issued at 13:00 hr M.S.T on 6-8-2016)

(1) Flood condition of Ayeyawady River

According to the (12:30) hr M.S.T observation today, the water levels have exceeded by about (2) feet at Pakokku and about (1) foot at Chauk of Ayeyawady river above their respective danger levels, the water levels may fall below their respective danger levels during the next (2) days.

According to the (12:30) hr M.S.T observation today, the water levels have exceeded by about (4½) feet at Nyaung Oo, about (4) feet at Minbu, about (3½) feet at Magwe, about (2½) feet each at Aunglan and Pyay, and about (2) feet at Seiktha of Ayeyawady river above their respective danger levels. The water levels may fall about (2) feet at Nyaung Co, about (1½) feet each at Minbu and Magwe, about (1) foot at Aunglan, about (½) foot at Pyay during the next (2) days and about ((½) foot at Seiktha during the next (3) days may remain above their respective danger levels.

According to the (12:30) hr M.S.T observation today, the water levels have exceeded by about (3½) feet each at Hinthada and Zalun of Ayeyawady river above Their respective danger levels, the water levels may remain above their respective danger levels during the next (5) days.

The water level of Ayeyawady River at Zalun (1274) cm observed at (12:30) hr M.S.T observation today, is the highest of (32) years record. The previous highest water level of Ayeyawady River at Zalun is (1272) cm observed on (2.8.2004).

(2) Flood condition of Chindwin River

According to the (12:30) hr M.S.T observation today, the water levels have exceeded by about (2) feet at Kani and about (½) foot at Monywa of Chindwin river above their respective danger levels, the water levels may fall below their respective danger levels during the next (1) day.

(3) Flood condition of Ngawun River

According to the (12:30) hr M.S.T observation today, the water level of Ngatwun river at Ngathain ghaun g has exceeded about (3) feet its danger level. It may rise about (½) foot during the next (3) days and may remain above its danger level,

(4) Advisory

It is especially advised to the people who settle near the river bank and lowlying areas along of the Ayeyawady, Chindwin and Ngawun Rivers, to take precaution measure. —GNLM

LOCAL Business

And then there were three: Myanmar Citizens Bank to list on YSX this month



The grand building of Yangon Stock Exchange being seen. PHOTO: YE HTUT TIN

MYANMAR Citizens Bank (MCB), the third company to list on the nascent Yangon Stock Exchange, will go on sale during the last week of this month of August, the bank has made known.

“An auditing firm from the YSX carried out an audit on 2 August. [The firm] will meet with the board of directors next week. After which, the bank will be listed upon the exchange. We’ll be in a position to start selling shares from the last week of August,” said U Myint Win, managing director of MCB.

Upon registering with the YSX, holders of MCB shares will reportedly be able to trade on the exchange uninhibitedly. It also marks the very first time shares in

a bank will be able to be traded on the new exchange.

The MSEC Securities Company has reportedly entrusted auditing matters of the MCB in the hands of the U Hla Htun Auditing Firm.

However, U Thaung Han, managing director of CB Securities, has expressed they have received little in the way of inquiries concerning matters of trading shares in MCB upon the exchange.

“Only two people have personally come and inquired with us [about trading MCB shares], but they haven’t been back since. People mainly inquire via phone; they don’t come in person anymore,” said the managing director.

The YSX currently features only two listed companies of First Myanmar Investment (FMI) and Myanmar Thilawa SEZ, with MCB to be joining the exclusive group before the month is out.

The remaining companies of First Private Bank, Great Hor Kham and Myanmar Agribusiness Public Corporation (MAPCO), which have been permitted to trade on the exchange, have yet to be officially listed.

The Myanmar Citizens Banks was established as a government joint venture in 1991 and boasts a paid-up capital of K52 billion. The bank has 19 branches nationwide. —Myitmakha News Agency

Mandalay hotels to be issued licenses within a week: MoHT

IT’S good news for newly established hotels in Mandalay as the region’s Department of Hotels and Tourism has announced it will issue hotel licenses within the next week.

“Once all supporting documents of newly built hotels have been verified, licenses will be granted within seven days. However, some [hotels] could be omitted from receiving their license if they haven’t met all application requirements,” said U Hsan Yu, assistant director of the Department of Hotels and Tourism for Mandalay Region.

ism for Mandalay Region.

The granting of license couldn’t be more timely as figures of foreign tourists visiting the region over the first six months of 2016 reached 177,397, up on numbers for the same period of 2015 of 144,463.

According to the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism, there are two types of hotel licenses: those for hotels boast more or less 20 rooms, while either license is reportedly valid for a two-year period.

Upon application for a hotel license, hoteliers are reminded to

install close-circuit security camera and safety reminders in their hotels in a bid to mitigate any unwanted grievances and inconveniences arising with foreign guests, together with employing the use of security scanning machines to prevent weapons from being brought onto hotel premises.

As of the end of June this year, Mandalay Region boasted 178 licensed hotels which offered a combined total of 1,726 rooms, according to the region’s Ministry of Hotels and Tourism. —Myitmakha News Agency

Unlicensed car sales slump in wake of government crack down

THE pressing of legal charges against unlicensed vehicles within Kayin State from the onset of July has reportedly put the breaks on the car market within the state, according to those involved in the unlicensed car markets of Hpa-an and Myawady.

The beginning of July saw the Border Guard Force (BGF) carry out vehicle inspections on main roads and at junctions, which was then followed legal action being taken during the second week of last month.

As a result, demand for unlicensed vehicles within the region has reportedly waned considerably.

“Sales have obviously subsided as the government is arresting and charging people in Hpa-an [for driving unlicensed vehicles]. It’s effected the market.

Taking action against unlicensed cars is not problem. But the government should

take decisive action on unlicensed cars, if not, people will be unimpressed by the government’s mismanagement,” said Daw Aye Thanda from the the Myawady Car Market.

The price of Honda Fit 2003-04 model has sharply decreased by over 50 per cent - from B50,000 (about K1.6 million) to B20,000 — within the Kayin State car market over the last few weeks.

“Sales have slumped this month. Frankly, there’s hardly demand here. We’re keeping an eye on the situation,” said Ko Zaw Gyi, a car broker.

However, the release of a joint statement by five ethnic Kayin political parties in mid-July, in relation to legal action being taken against unlicensed vehicles, resulting in authorities temporarily suspending such activities from 19 July, but this has reportedly not caused the car market to pick back up. —Myitmakha News Agency

Kengtung’s livestock breeders find rise in price of bran hard to swallow

AN appreciation in the cost of bran and paddy husks, a supplement feed for livestock, in eastern Shan State’s Kengtung Township has reportedly put a strain on the finances of both small and large-scale chicken and swine breeders together with fish farmers, industry insiders have made known.

“We collect up all the left over rice which isn’t consumed by the family and boil it up with bran, together with whatever watercress of spinach we have lying around and feed that [to our swine].

The hike in prices [of bran] hasn’t made things easy for us,” said U Chit Naing, a swine breeder from Kengtung.

The appreciation in the price of bran and paddy husks reportedly stems from a reliance on cross-border export to

China combined with a dearth of rice mill enterprises within Kengtung Township.

“There’s no way us small-scale livestock breeders can cope with the rise in prices. It becomes ever more clear each time we purchase [bran or paddy husks].

Those large-scale breeders must be worse off though; their feed expenses must really impact their profit margins,” said U Aung Naing, a chicken farmer from Kengtung.

As of this July, ten viss (16 kilograms) of bran fetched K1,500 with the same quantity of paddy husks costing slightly less at K1,000.

This August, however, large-scale livestock breeders say bran has risen to K2,000 and paddy husks to K1,500. —Myitmakha News Agency

Singapore calls for vigilance after 'rocket attack' plot foiled

BATAM, (Indonesia) — Singapore called for heightened vigilance on Saturday, a day after Indonesian police arrested a group of men they believed were plotting a rocket attack on the wealthy city-state with the help of a Syrian-based Islamic State militant.

The six suspected militants were rounded up on Friday in dawn raids on Batam island, about 15 km (10 miles) south of Singapore, where police believe the men planned to fire the rockets from.

Local police chief Sam Budigusdian said those arrested were still being held there while investigations continued.

Singapore's home affairs minister, K. Shanmugam, said the men had plans to hit Marina Bay, the state's glittering downtown waterfront, where night-time Formula One Grand Prix Races are held alongside a giant ferris wheel and a swanky casino resort.

"This shows how our enemies are thinking of different ways of attacking us," Shanmugam said in a Facebook posting.

"Terrorists ... will seek to come in through our checkpoints; they will also try to launch attacks from just outside. And this



Indonesian anti-terror police and an identification team are seen outside a building during a raid in Batam, Riau Islands, Indonesia, on 5 August 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

is in addition to lone wolf attacks from radicalised individuals/groups. We have to be extra vigilant."

Batam is linked to Singapore by frequent ferries and its beach resorts and golf courses are a popular weekend getaway destination for Singaporeans, who are preparing to celebrate their National Day holiday on Tuesday.

Authorities identified the leader of the group arrested on Batam as Gigih Rahmat Dewa, who local media said was a 31-year-old factory worker from the Javanese city of Solo. Solo

has been linked to several previous attacks by Islamist militants in Indonesia.

The group was suspected of having direct links to Bahrin Naim, an Indonesian who had lived in Solo but is now believed to be fighting with Islamic State in Syria.

"The six people led by GRD had planned to launch attacks," National Police Chief Tito Karnavian told reporters, referring to Dewa by his initials.

"They were in direct contact with Bahrin Naim in Syria and he had ordered them to attack Singapore

and Batam."

Indonesian investigators believe that Naim was one of the masterminds behind an attack in January in the Indonesian capital, Jakarta, in which eight people were killed, including the four attackers.

In a blog post after the coordinated shootings and suicide bombings across Paris last November, Naim urged his Indonesian audience to study the planning, targeting, timing and courage of the jihadis who killed 130 people in the French capital.

Police said they had

not yet discovered any physical evidence of preparations for a rocket attack.

"We are currently studying what materials they had and I cannot say that a rocket was found," Batam District Police Chief Helmi Santika told Reuters. "Among other things, several weapons were seized including arrows, long-range firearms and pistols."

Police were expected to provide an update to their investigation on Monday.

Multi-ethnic Singapore, a major commercial, banking and travel hub that is home to many Western expatriates, has never seen a successful attack by Islamist militants.

However, authorities did break up a plot to bomb several embassies soon after the 11 September 2001, attacks on the United States, and a Singaporean militant was accused of plotting to crash a hijacked plane into the city's airport in 2002.

Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong said this week Singapore was a target for Islamic State because it is "a rational, open, cosmopolitan country" even though it is not involved in the US-led campaign against the group in the Middle East.

Some security analysts were doubtful that a rocket attack on Singapore from Batam was feasible, but Tim Ripley of Jane's Defence Weekly said it was possible.

"They would be the long-range variants of the Grad rocket -originally from Russia but copied in China, Iran, Pakistan and several other countries," Ripley said. "Very simple to use but very inaccurate at the ranges for this attack. The damage would depend on where they hit but the potential for casualties would be high."

If the plan for a rocket launch on Singapore is confirmed, it would suggest that militants in Southeast Asia are preparing far more sophisticated attacks than those of recent months.

Indonesia, home to the world's largest Muslim population, has itself seen attacks by Islamist militants before. The bombing of two nightclubs on the resort island of Bali that killed 202 people was among a spate of attacks during the 2000s.

Police were largely successful in destroying domestic militant cells after that, but they now worry the influence of Islamic State will bring a resurgence of jihadi violence.—Reuters

THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

Chief Executive Officer -Nakagawa Kiyoshi

ceo@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

Chief Editor - Khin Maung Aye

ce@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

Deputy Chief Editor - Aye Min Soe

dce@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

Chief Proof Reader & Translator - Ye Myint

Expatriate Consultant Editors

Alec Wilmot

cconsultanteditor2@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

Mark Angeles

markangeles@gmail.com

Chief Translator & Editor

Kyaw Thura,

editor2@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

Editor

Ye Htut Tin (Local News)

editor1@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

International Editors

Tun Tun Naing (Editor)

intlnews@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

Nwe Nwe Tun (Sub-editor)

Translators

Khaing Thanda Lwin,

reporter1@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

Hay Mar Tin Win,

translator@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

Ei Myat Mon, Tin Nwe Lynn

Chief Reporter

Tun Aung Kyaw, reporter2@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

Reporters

Soe Soe Yu, Thein Ko Lwin (Nay Pyi Taw Bureau),

Khin Mg Win (Mandalay Bureau)

Computer Team

Tun Zaw (Chief of Computer Team), Thein Ngwe,

Zaw Zaw Aung, Ye Naing Soe, Nyi Zaw Moe,

Hnin Pwint, Kay Khaing Win, Sanda Hnin, Zu Zin Hnin

Circulation & Advertising

San Lwin (+95) (01) 8604532

Ads and subscription enquiries:

subscription@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

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Japan remembers Hiroshima, urges world to follow Obama and visit

TOKYO — Japan marked the 71st anniversary of the US atomic bombing of Hiroshima on Saturday as its mayor urged world leaders to follow in US President Barack Obama's footsteps and visit, and ultimately rid the world of nuclear arms.

A peace bell tolled at 8:15 am (0015 London time on Saturday), the time a US warplane dropped the bomb. About 50,000 participants including aging survivors and dignitaries held a moment of silence at a memorial ceremony in the western Japanese city.

Obama this year became the first incumbent US president to visit Hiroshima, and he urged nuclear powers, including his own, to have the courage to escape the logic of fear and pursue a world without nuclear weapons.

"The president's words showed he was touched by the spirit of Hiroshima, which refuses to accept the 'absolute evil'," the mayor, Kazumi Matsui, told the crowd, referring to the

weapons.

The United States dropped the bomb on Hiroshima on 6 August 1945, killing thousands of people instantly and about 140,000 by the end of that year. US forces dropped another atomic bomb on the south-

ern city of Nagasaki on 9 August. Japan surrendered six days later.

"I once again urge the leaders of all nations to visit the A-bombed cities," Matsui said as cicadas buzzed away under the mid-summer sun. "As President Obama

confirmed in Hiroshima, such visits will surely etch the reality of the atomic bombings in each heart." At the ceremony, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe pledged his determination to work toward a world free of nuclear arms. —Reuters



People pray in front of the cenotaph for the victims of the 1945 atomic bombing at Peace Memorial Park in Hiroshima, western Japan, in this photo taken by Kyodo on 6 August 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

Economic opportunities and skill gap hurdles as Laos attracts Southeast Asia's spotlight

VIENTIANE — The chance to tap into the promise of increasing prosperity and spending power among the 600 plus million population of South-East Asia brought ministers and international economic policymakers to converge on the Vientiane reach of the mighty Mekong in the Lao capital this week for the 48th ASEAN Economic Ministers Meeting (AEM).

Officially opened Wednesday by the country's Prime Minister Thongloun Sisoulith, the economic ministerial meeting has seen the region's policymakers grappling with strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to continued economic growth in the region whose contribution is considered increasingly vital to global economic growth.

With a combined economy valued at 2.6 trillion US dollars in 2015 and expected to move from the world's seventh to fourth largest by 2050 on the back of development, growing demand, increasing urbanization and favourable population demographics, the region is one proving increasingly attractive to those located inside and out.

The dynamism of a youthful and increasing working-age population known to be rich fuel for the kind of development now in evidence across South-East Asia, both the young people of the region and those providing goods and services to fulfil their needs all hope to be among the greatest beneficiaries of this historic shift.

This confluence of interests towards a peaceful and stable Southeast Asia comes amid rising trade and investment along with expectations of greater growth as more households across the region escape the rigors of poverty and look to attain the promise of pros-

perity accorded the middle class.

To see the opportunities and challenges, one need not venture further than meeting host Laos.

Sometimes overlooked or misunderstood by outside observers, the diminutive Southeast nation was back in the spotlight this week as it rolled out the welcome mat for ministers responsible for economics, commerce and trade from the region and beyond meet this week in the capital Vientiane.

The country at the heart of the Mekong has been experiencing a prolonged moment in the spotlight as the rotating chair of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) that sees it readying to welcome world leaders in September and follows the recent meeting of foreign ministers held in late July.

Along with regional and partner counterparts, the country's policymakers have been keen to use the country's year as ASEAN chair towards addressing the complex development needs of a young and expanding working age population that presents both promises of opportunity and extant challenges for economic policymaking and governance.

Famously, better transport and trade links to other members of its dynamic neighbourhood is helping to turn Laos once disadvantageous position as a relatively low population landlocked country into one increasingly "land-linked" and integrated with the much larger markets located across its borders and beyond.

Importantly, the country's young population have fueled expectations for a beneficial demographic dividend, provided the right education, health care and opportunities for advancement in what is increasingly a regionally

and globally-focused economy.

This in turn is attracting the attention of investors and policymakers from abroad, seeking to utilize a rich bevy of natural resources, a young and willing labour force while accessing an expanding market of household consumers increasingly ready to join regional peers in the achievement of greater material prosperity.

With this in mind, suitors from countries as far away as Canada, Russia, India, New Zealand and Australia were seen to join East Asian economic heavyweights China, Japan and South Korea in moving to solidify both economic, person-to-person and business-to-business links in countries such as Laos, seeking to tap into comparative advantages at home and unlock growth potential that makes the region a place of great economic promise.

Known well for its investments in hard infrastructure and its trading prowess, China's investment in entrepreneurial networks is also significant, something expected to be on show during the hosting of the 8th ASEAN-China Young Entrepreneurs Forum in Malaysia which follows the successful 7th hosting in Vientiane in 2015.

Yet despite the opportunities increasingly on offer from the rapid rate of socio-economic change afoot across the region and a keenness to engage on all sides, significant gaps in educational attainment, skills and health indicators are among factors placing constraints on the number of people ready to tap into this progress.

Laos once again provides a case worthy of consideration. Economic growth from the mid six to seven percent year on year has seen the country approaching its goal of achieving necessary metrics

for graduation from the ranks of world's least developed countries (LDCs) by 2020.

This is expected to be greatly helped by the nation's favorable demographics, which will see it post the greatest percentage increase in the working age population in SE Asia in the next decade.

A diverse population with 49 ethnic groups and a majority of some 80 per cent dwelling in its rural and remote interior, literacy and educational attainment remain key human resource considerations in the country of some six and a half million.

Despite the strong growth and poverty reduction efforts, the pace of progress in some parts of the country has been slower than others.

An increasing middle class is clearly evident in the capital and other urban centers; this will need to be solidified by further progress in improved agricultural productivity and market access engaging those youths that can be witnessed dwelling by rural roadsides and in the valleys and mountain sides of the more remote areas.

Hard transport and infrastructure links and soft people-to-people links, education, financial capital and collateral access are all contributing to the kind of competence and confidence needed to continue the path out of poverty and towards prosperity for Laos alongside its larger neighbors and ASEAN peers.

Making the most of opportunities and spreading the benefits of the evolving economic landscape to more people is the great ongoing generational challenge facing policymakers and business leaders with a stake in the future, be it in Laos, the remainder of South-East Asia and beyond.—Xinhua

Australians fighting for IS in Iraq, Syria face 'certain death'

CANBERRA — Australia's Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull has warned Australians fighting with Islamic State (IS) in the Middle East that they face "almost certain" death, as coalition forces in the area begin to take control of key battlegrounds.

On Saturday, Turnbull warned Australians both in the Middle East and those thinking of joining the fight in Iraq and Syria to strongly reconsider, as any IS "myth of invincibility" would soon be destroyed.

"Would-be recruits can see that travelling to Syria to fight with IS is joining a losing battle (leading to) almost certain death on the battlefield," Turnbull told News Corp on Saturday.

The prime minister said that not only has IS's "momentum" been halted, control is beginning to return to coalition forces.

"IS has not yet been defeated in Syria and Iraq, but it is being rolled back. We have not just halted IS's momentum, it has been turned back," Turnbull said.

"This is critically important to demolish IS's myth of invincibility and inevitable victory. Far from sweeping across Europe to stable their horses in the Vatican, IS is now seen on the defensive, losing territory, resources and lives."

The Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO) has said that up to 110 Australians are fighting in the Middle East, while 40 have died since conflict began in 2014. Turnbull said information given to him indicates that IS has lost "half of its territory" in Iraq since initiating fighting.—Xinhua

Cambodian PM heads to Laos for ASEAN Lifetime Achievement Award

PHNOM PENH — Cambodian Prime Minister Samdech Techo Hun Sen left here on Saturday morning for Vientiane, the capital of Laos, where he will receive the "ASEAN Lifetime Achievement Award".

The award, which has been conferred upon the longest serving Head of Government in ASEAN, will be presented to the prime minister by Michael Yeoh, chief executive officer of Asian Strategy and Leadership Institute, during the 13th ASEAN Leadership Forum to be held on 6 and 7 August, said a Cambodian Foreign Ministry statement.

Hun Sen said earlier this week that so far, only three distinguished personalities have received these Lifetime Achievement Awards, namely former Singaporean Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew, former Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad, and Sultan Nazrin Shah, Sultan of Perak of Malaysia.

"I am the fourth person that receives this award, but if say about the head of government, I am the third person that gets it," he said in a public speech on Tuesday. "I would like to share this with all the Cambodian people who support my policy on international issues." —Xinhua



Cambodian Prime Minister Samdech Techo Hun Sen gestures from a plane in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, on 6 August 2016. Cambodian Prime Minister Samdech Techo Hun Sen left here on Saturday morning for Vientiane, the capital of Laos, where he will receive the "ASEAN Lifetime Achievement Award". PHOTO: XINHUA

Portugal's Guterres leads UN chief race after second ballot

UNITED NATIONS — Former Portuguese Prime Minister Antonio Guterres is still the front-runner to become the next United Nations Secretary-General after a second UN Security Council secret ballot on Friday, said diplomats.

The 15-member council cast a ballot for each of the 11 candidates, and the choice is encourage, discourage or no opinion. Guterres received 11 encourage, two discourage and two no opinions, diplomats said. In the first poll on 21 July, Guterres received 12 encourages and three no opinions.

Former Serbian Foreign Minister Vuk Jeremic moved up to second with eight encourage, four discourage and three no opinion, edging out Argentinian Foreign Minister Susana Malcorra who got eight encourage, six discourage and one no opinion.

Former Slovenian President Danilo Turk dropped to fourth from second with seven encourage, five discourage and three no opinion, while Irina Bokova of Bulgaria, director-general of UN cultural organisation UNESCO took fifth spot.

The Security Council will hold secret ballots until a consensus is reached on a candidate to replace UN chief Ban Ki-moon of South Korea who steps down at the end of 2016 after serving



Antonio Guterres, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), arrives for a news conference at the United Nations in Geneva, Switzerland in 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

two five-year terms.

There are 11 candidates, six men and five women, vying for the post. Former Croatian Foreign Minister Vesna Pusic, who came last in the first ballot, dropped out of the race on Thursday.

Civil society groups and nearly a third of the 193 UN member states, led by Colombia, have pushed for the first woman secretary-general. Four of those countries, Japan, Spain, Uruguay and Venezuela are in the security council.

But hopes for a woman to lead the United Nations appear to be fading. Russia's UN Ambassador Vitaly Churkin said

this week that was because "the people who have spoken so loudly about the need to support a woman have not done that when it came to the actual straw poll."

Guterres was prime minister of Portugal from 1995 to 2002 and served as United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees from June 2005 to December 2015.

Diplomats said the council aimed to recommend a candidate to the 193-member General Assembly for election by October. Ultimately, the five permanent veto-wielding council members — the United States, Russia, Britain, China and France — must agree on a candidate.—Reuters

Clinton's lead over Trump narrows to less than three points

NEW YORK — Democratic presidential nominee Hillary Clinton's lead over Republican rival Donald Trump narrowed to less than 3 percentage points, according to a Reuters/Ipsos opinion poll released on Friday, down from nearly eight points on Monday.

About 42 per cent of likely voters favoured Clinton, to

Trump's 39 per cent, according to the 31 July – 4 August online poll of 1,154 likely voters. The poll had a credibility interval of plus or minus 3 percentage points, meaning that the results suggest the race is roughly even.

Among registered voters over the same period, Clinton held a lead of five percentage points, down from eight percent-

age points on Monday, according to the poll.

The reasons behind the shift were unclear.

Clinton had pulled well ahead of Trump on the heels of the Democratic National Convention last week, where she became the first woman to accept the US presidential nomination from a major political party.

Since then, Trump has engaged in a days-long feud with the family of an American soldier killed in Iraq and squabbled with the Republican leadership over his comments and leadership turmoil within his campaign.

Trump, in recent days, however, has sought to refocus. On Friday he announced his economic policy advisory team, said he would deliver an economic policy speech early next week, and was expected to endorse US House of Representatives Speaker Paul Ryan, the top US elected Republican, who is seeking his 10th term in Congress.

An average of polls aggregated by Real Clear Politics showed Clinton ahead of Trump by 6.8 percentage points on Friday, up from 3.9 on 1 August.—Reuters



US Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton addresses a joint gathering of the National Association of Black Journalists and the National Association of Hispanic Journalists in Washington, on 5 August 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

NEWS IN BRIEF

Four arrested in Italy, Hungary, Slovenia for trafficking migrants

MILAN — Police in Italy, Hungary and Slovenia on Saturday arrested four people in a coordinated operation targeting a group suspected of smuggling illegal migrants into Italy from the Balkans, Italian police said.

Two of the suspects were arrested in northern Italy, one in Budapest and one in the Slovenian city of Maribor, they said. The four are all charged with criminal conspiracy and aiding and abetting clandestine migration.

The suspects are part of a trans-national criminal group of Pakistani origin that is based in Milan, the Italian Carabinieri police said in a statement. The organisation transported Pakistani, Bengali and Afghan migrants from Hungary into Italy and northern European countries, packing them into delivery vans and using fake documents, the statement said.—Reuters

Italy PM hints he wants to host Clinton at G7 meeting

RIO DE JANEIRO — Italian Prime Minister Matteo Renzi hinted on Friday that he hoped he would be hosting Hillary Clinton rather than Donald Trump at a G7 leaders' meeting in southern Italy next year.

"I respect every vote of our American friends," Renzi told reporters in Rio de Janeiro just hours before the city was due to hold the Olympic Games opening ceremony.

"I will host the G7 in Taormina in May 2017 and obviously as a democrat I hope I can host the new president, whoever she will be," he said, grinning. "But as prime minister I will wait for the next president of the United States." Billionaire Trump, who won the Republican Party nomination, and former US Secretary of State Clinton, a Democrat, will contest the US presidential election in November.—Reuters

Gas pipeline explosion kills one, injures three in southern Iran

TEHRAN — A blast in a gas pipeline in southern Iranian port city of Genaveh killed one and injured three in early hours of Saturday, local media reported.

The injured have been taken to the hospital and one of them was in critical condition, parliamentary member Abolhamid Khedri told the semi-official Mehr news agency.

Rescue operators were dispatched to the scene, but the huge expanse of fire following the explosion has made it difficult for them to further contain the destruction, Khedri was quoted as saying. The cause of the accident is under investigation and the results will be announced later, he said.—Xinhua

Israel rebukes Obama's remarks on Iran nuclear deal

JERUSALEM — Israel on Friday strongly rejected an assertion by US President Barack Obama that Israel recognizes the efficiency of the Iran deal, comparing it to the 1938 agreement with Hitler.

Obama told a press conference at the Pentagon on Thursday that senior Israeli officials now support the nuclear deal.

"The Israeli defence establishment believes that agreements have value only if they are based on reality. They have no value if the facts on the ground are opposite to the ones the deal is based on," said the statement.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has been a vocal opponent of the deal, which was signed in July 2015 between Iran and the world powers. The newly-appointed Defence Minister Avigdor Lieberman, the hawkish leader of the far-right "Yisrael Our Home" party, is also a fierce opponent of the deal.—Xinhua

Serbia sends protest note to Croatia over flag burning

BELGRADE — The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Serbia has sent a protest note to the Croatian embassy in Belgrade over the burning of the Serbian national flag during Friday's commemorations of Croatia's 1995 military and police operation "Storm" in Knin.

The ministry said it considered the act of vandalism an undignified and non-civilisational gesture that warranted condemnation in the strongest terms and punishment for the perpetrators.

"The Ministry of Foreign Affairs expects the relevant authorities of the Republic of Croatia to take all required legal measures and identify and punish the perpetrators," an official statement said.—Tanjung

Opinion

Write for us

We appreciate your feedback and contributions. If you have any comments or would like to submit editorials, analyses or reports please email ce@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com with your name and title.

Due to limitation of space we are only able to publish "Letter to the Editor" that do not exceed 500 words. Should you submit a text longer than 500 words please be aware that your letter will be edited.

Agriculture and livestock, the lifeblood for national economy

Kyaw Thura

AS a developing country, Myanmar has to rely on its agricultural sector not only for food security but also as a source of income. These days, agriculture no longer exists on its own. It has been associated with livestock. As long as country exists, agriculture and animal farming will go on. In other words, the development of these sectors is the lifeblood for national economic growth.

It is, therefore, imperative for the government to protect and promote the rights and interests of farmers across the country since they make up over 70% of the country's population. Another important thing about the promotion and protection of the rights and interests of farmers is that the agricultural and livestock sector has the potential to contribute greatly to economic development simply because the sec-

tor still remains a large provider of employment opportunities.

With this end in view, the government in its recent economic policy vowed to place special emphasis on balanced development in agriculture, livestock and industry to ensure food security and inclusive economic growth.

According to Vice President U Henry Van Thio, the rigorous implementation of the measure to protect and

promote the welfare of farmers across the country calls for urgent action as the agricultural growth is critical to national economic development.

On the whole, the agricultural development strategies should focus on enhancing agricultural production to ensure food security, food safety and food quality, management of land use and natural resources, and disaster preparedness.

ASEAN: Unity is strength

Hla Maung

THE 49th ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting (AMM) and related meetings were held in Laos, Chair of ASEAN 2016, from 23 to 26 July and they were attended by the Secretary-General and ten members, the host's invited foreign ministers from Timor Leste, Papua New Guinea and a European country of Norway but also those from the ten Dialogue Partners of China, South Korea, Canada, Japan, Australia, India, The US, the European Union (EU), New Zealand and the Russian Federation. In addition, North Korea's new foreign minister Ri Yong Ho made his overseas debut at a major security forum in Laos, at a time of high tensions over Pyongyang's series of nuclear weapons tests. How he dealt his counterparts from nearly thirty countries while holding one-to-one talks on the sidelines were closely watched by North Korean watchers. After viewing the activities of the opening ceremony of the AMM and related meetings telecast by our national TVs a few days ago, I assume that all ASEAN meetings in Laos were highly successful because they could handle a lot of issues including the controversial and highly sensitive dispute in South China Sea.

As for our country, it seemed to be a golden opportunity for foreign minister Daw Aung San Suu Kyi to have person-to-person meetings with her counterparts from around the world; she held bilateral meetings with foreign ministers from China, India, Russia, Australia, Brunei and

both South and North Korea. She discussed with China's foreign minister Wang Yi over the Myitsone Dam project and minister Wang Yi promised not to do anything at the expense of the long-lasting pauphaw friendship. North Korea's foreign minister requested her support for his country's status at the United Nations and invited her to visit the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Australia and New Zealand used to go to Europe and the United States in 1950s and 1960s if something serious happened in their countries; they even formed an alliance called ANZUS—Australia, New Zealand and the United States. As the economic power has shifted from the West to the East and the two countries are geographically nearer to Asia, they willingly come and attend the ASEAN and related meetings now. It is surprising that as many as thirty countries gathered in Laos for ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting (AMM) and related meetings. I wonder why ASEAN attracted many countries from around the world. It is relatively small in terms of its combined population and land area; ASEAN covers a land area of 4.4 million square kilometers, 3% of the total land area of Earth; member countries have a combined population of approximately 625 million people, still smaller than those of India and China. ASEAN is strategically located in the region; it promotes intergovernmental cooperation and facilitates economic integration among its members. With a motto of One vision, One identity, One community, its principal aims in-



clude accelerating economic growth, social progress and socio-cultural evolution among its members. It shares land borders with India, China, Bangladesh, East Timor and Papua New Guinea and maritime borders with India, China and Australia. Even if ASEAN was formed with founding members of Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand on August 8, 1967, Myanmar later joined the regional group on 23 July 1997 together with Laos, this year's Chair. ASEAN achieved greater cohesion in the mid-1970s following the balance of power in the Southeast Asia after the end of Vietnam War. The end of the Cold War between

the United States and the Soviet Union towards the end of 1980s allowed ASEAN countries to exercise greater political independence in the region, and in 1990s ASEAN emerged as a leading voice on regional trade and security issues.

The Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone (SEANWFZ) Treaty was signed in 1995 with the intention of turning the region into a nuclear free zone. The SEANWFZ commission met at the National Convention Centre in Vientiane, Laos to view the plans for the Treaty being implemented from 2013 to 2017 the agreements on disarmament and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and promotion

of cooperation with Atomic Energy Agency. The ASEAN commission for Human Rights also reviewed its annual for 2016 and discussed a framework for its action plans to be carried out from 2016 to 2020 in order of importance.

Why did ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting (AMM) and related meetings in Vientiane, Laos draw a large number of foreign ministers from around the world? There are definitely undeniable facts: the ten-member ASEAN is united and remains as a single entity; furthermore, it is strategically located in the region and shows progress towards political integration in the Southeast Asia.



PHOTO: MPF

Educational talks on human trafficking given in Kayin, Kachin, Shan States and Mandalay Region

THE Myanmar Police Force is implementing public awareness activities to better help the populace avoid becoming victims of trafficking. The MPF is also taking severe legal action against caught traffickers as part of its 100-day plan being implementing between 1 May and 8 August.

The Police gave educational talks on human trafficking in Pa-An town of Kayin State,

at Mandalay University in Mahlaungmyaethazan township of Mandalay Region, Lweijel Town of Kachin State, Kengtung and Panglong towns of Shan State on 2 and 3 August.

At the talks, members of sections and companies of the Myanmar Anti-Human Trafficking Police Force elaborated the definitions of human trafficking and human smuggling, how to recognise the signs that some-

one might be a victim of human trafficking, methods of recruitment used by human traffickers, the types of human trafficking in Myanmar and the prevention of violence against women.

The police force gave out education pamphlets to 300 Basic Education pupils, and 1102 University Students, and 95 members of the public who attended the ceremony.—*Myanmar Police Force*

Functions of reformed NLD Economic Committee to be revealed after convening of inaugural meeting

U HAN Thar Myint, chair of the newly reformed NLD Economic Committee, has announced the committee's functions going forward will be made public only after an inaugural committee meeting has been convened.

"A committee meeting hasn't yet been convened to determine which kind of manifestation the committee will continue forward with. I can only say after such a meeting. For now, we've only just started to form [the committee]. Entrepreneurs have

already been included in order to partner with the business community. Their opinions will be sought," said U Han Thar Myint.

The National League for Democracy's Economic Committee was re-established on 25 July, comprising members of the NLD's Central Committee, together with experts from the fields of finance, banking and agriculture. "I welcome the forming of this kind of committee. It must conduct research on how policy can be implemented in a

short period of time. There's also a need to monitor how those conducting enterprises can be assisted," said U Thaung Han, managing director of CB Securities.

The committee will reportedly base its activities on the views, aims, policy and strategy of a gamut of sectors related to state economy such as sustainable development, national planning, natural resources and state-owned economic enterprises and private businesses.—*Myitmakha News Agency*

Myanmar's disabled still denied a state education

A nationwide record, compiling instances of disabled children being denied enrolment in state schools, will reportedly be presented to the Ministry of Education before the onset of the forthcoming 2017-18 academic school year in a bid to pressure government into ensuring disabled children a right to a state education, says the Committee for Seeking Disabled Children's Opportunity to Learn - a body comprised of 15 organizations working for the disabled.

"The problem of the disabled being denied an education is a prolonged one. After being frequently reminded [of this issue], our organization is considering how to best to assist. It's too late [to do anything] for the current school year, but we'll

urge the Ministry of Education to accept [disabled people] for the 2017 school year, by submitting them a report highlight instances of discrimination against disabled children from enrolment in state schools," said U Htar Oak, managing director of the aforementioned committee.

The instances of disabled children being refused enrolment in state schools during the current 2016-17 school year are reportedly evident in Myanmar's major urban centres of Yangon and Mandalay, together with the capital, Nay Pyi Taw.

"We've seen nine cases so far this school year. We met the Minister [of Education] on the 5 July regarding the matter, but left without feeling very

optimistic. We'll now start to systematically compile a list [of such instances of refusal], which will then be used to urge the Ministry of Education [to take action to resolve this matter]. We'll work to ensure the number of disabled children being accepted into state schools is augmented year upon year," said Ko Nay Lin Soe, member of the aforementioned committee. Surveys will be conducted throughout states and regions across the country to ascertain the extent of discrimination, while disabled persons can reportedly reach out the committee, as well as the Myanmar Independent Living Initiative, if they encounter any difficulties in enrolling.—*Myitmakha News Agency*

People's Forum

Letter to the Editor

Dear Sir,

Subject: Rule of Taxis, buses, hawkers, cripples, etc. Taxis. They stop anywhere on the road to bargain for fare with prospective passengers as there are no meters. They take the opposite motor lanes especially near the traffic lights. They purposely brush against private saloon cars and demand damage expenses. Very few of them use turning blinker lights. They seldom keep within speed limits even on very busy roads.

Buses. Bus-stops are anywhere you can name, but never near the kerbs. Each line loot passengers for itself, whether there is any seating left or not, passing over legitimately parked vehicles. They never have any regard for CONTINUOUS WHITE or YELLOW LINES.

Hawkers. Water-sellers, cripples, etc. Especially with the ten-fold increase in foreign visitors to our country, these people have become part of our tourist-attraction with many of them taking pictures to be sent back home. I, once saw a tourist take a video picture of one of our betel-chewers spitting the red juice out of his mouth!

School buses. All these, lack of self-discipline and sense of civic duty should be a worrisome subject especially with our new plans to introduce school buses in the near future. Children on buses are bound to be playful. They will sprint a cross roads either to embark or disembark, as there are no cross-over bridges. Bus-stands are not yet recessed from the main roads like in other countries. In the USA, some States have Laws which prohibit passing over a parked school bus either picking up or discharging students.

I'm not criticising the inefficiency of the Administration which has many things to give priorities. But where human life is involved, serious consideration must be given.

Thanking you,
Sincerely,
A Road Traveller.

POEM:

The Window Thorp

- * Beyond my window at daybreak
A drab inglorious street
Tho' being sprayed with frost
Clean light of king-star
Gallants' woods are well sweet
- * Under the grey drift of the thorp
The crocus works among the mould
As eagerly as those that crown
Galants' spring is glittering in flame
- * When *Daga* river surfeited with food
Move Southward
across cobbles moans and rings
There is under my window-sill
The tumult of a thousand wings
Of fighting peacocks' prickly song
Gallants' coos finish
the margin of a long dream up

Yin Nwe Ko (Linn)

AsiaSat provides live television coverage of Rio 2016

STARTING from today's opening ceremony and continuing non-stop until the closing of the Olympic Games on 21 August, Asia's premier satellite operator Asia Satellite Telecommunications Co. Ltd. (AsiaSat) will be providing multiple transponders on AsiaSat 5 along with uplinking services to deliver live Olympic TV coverage to right holders in the Asia-Pacific.

"This is the most watched global sports event in the world. We are pleased to continue to support our clients in delivering the Olympics to our vast Asian audi-

ence. Broadcasting this live global event via satellite is the most cost effective way to ensure the highest quality viewing experience. We look forward to watching the Games!" said Sabrina Cubbon, Vice President, Marketing and Global Accounts of AsiaSat.

More than 11,000 athletes from over 200 countries and regions will take part in Rio 2016. Rio is the first South American city to host the Olympic Games, with Golf rejoining the Games after 112 years and Rugby Sevens being included for the first time.—*GNLM*

Kerry presses on with Russian talks on Syria despite Aleppo setbacks

WASHINGTON — US Secretary of State John Kerry is still pursuing an agreement with Russia on military cooperation in the fight against Islamic State in Syria despite major setbacks and skepticism from other administration officials and US allies, US officials with knowledge of the talks said on Friday.

“We believe this approach is still worth pursuing,” State Department spokesman John Kirby said in an email response to Reuters questions, adding: “But it remains to be seen whether or not we can get there.” Kerry has been pursuing a proposal that envisions resuscitating a Cessation of Hostilities agreement, creating a centre where the two countries would share intelligence for targeting air strikes, and prohibiting the Syrian air force from attacking US-backed rebel groups.

Instead, Syrian and Russian warplanes have continued to pound rebels who are assaulting government-held parts of the northern city of Aleppo in an effort to reopen supply lines into opposition-held areas. The task of identifying acceptable rebel targets has grown harder since a major Islamic extremist group said it had cut its ties to al Qaeda. That is leading some rebels to join the renamed group and made it harder to target hardliners without hitting other units.

“We’ve been very concerned about the situation in Aleppo and we have made those concerns plain to Russian officials,” said Kirby,



US Secretary of State John Kerry meets Russia's foreign minister Sergey Lavrov during a bilateral meeting at the sidelines of the ASEAN foreign ministers meeting in Vientiane, Laos, on 26 July 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

who noted that Kerry had spoken to his Russian counterpart, Sergei Lavrov, in a phone call on Friday.

Speaking in Laos last week, Kerry said he hoped for an agreement early in August, but two US officials said on Friday there had been “limited progress” toward a deal. “Discussions will likely continue, but there is no illusion on how much can be achieved,” said another US official, speaking on condition of anonymity.

While Kerry shares other officials’ distrust of the Russians, according to several US officials who

spoke on condition of anonymity, he thinks the diplomatic channel must be kept open in case Russia can be persuaded to help end the violence in Syria, now in its fifth year.

US President Barack Obama has supported Kerry’s effort, but he, too, expressed concern on Thursday about Russia’s commitment to ending the violence, saying he was under no illusions about Russia’s motives and they would be put to the test.

“I’m not confident that we can trust the Russians and Vladimir

Putin,” he told reporters after a meeting with his national security team at the Pentagon. “We have to test whether or not we can get an actual cessation of hostilities that includes an end to the kinds of aerial bombing and civilian death and destruction that we’ve seen carried out by the Assad regime.”

A senior US official, who also spoke on condition of anonymity, said that during the meeting at the Pentagon questions were raised over whether to take Russia’s word. “There was an acknowledgement that we were not, nor

should we, take the Russians at their word,” the official told Reuters. “And if this moves forward we’ll have to make sure it’s in the best interests of the cessation of hostilities.”

“No doors are closed but nothing has been decided,” the official added. The State Department’s Kirby said the test for Russia was whether it was willing to use its influence over Assad to stop the violence and support a political transition in Syria.

“The test is to see if Russia is really willing to use its influence on the Assad regime to observe the cessation of hostilities, to stop killing its own citizens, to improve the delivery of humanitarian aid, and eventually contribute to the political process,” Kirby said.

But a second US official said progress in the talks was for now being overtaken by the battle for Aleppo. The rebels are trying to break through a strip of government-controlled territory in an effort to reconnect their area of control in the west of Syria with the encircled rebel sector of eastern Aleppo.

The second official said another major factor was that Jabhat Fateh al Sham, which until last week called itself the Nusra Front, al Qaeda’s Syrian affiliate, is leading the drive to break the government siege of opposition-held northern Aleppo, and its fighters have intermingled with other rebel groups.—Reuters

Saudi Arabia to help Germany investigate attacks — Spiegel

BERLIN — Saudi Arabia has offered to help German investigators find those behind Islamist bomb and axe attacks in July, news magazine *Der Spiegel* reported on Saturday, citing a senior member of the Saudi government.

Saudi authorities are in contact with their German colleagues, responding to new findings that show both attackers were in close contact via a chat conversation with possible Islamic State backers from Saudi Arabia, *Spiegel* said.

Traces of the chat, which investigators have been able to reconstruct, indicate that both men were not only influenced by but also took instructions from people, as yet unidentified, up until the attacks, the report said. The Islamic State group has claimed responsibility for an attack on 18 July near Wuerzburg in Bavaria in which a 17-year-old refugee believed to be from Pakistan or Afghanistan wounded five people with an axe before police shot him dead. A

27-year-old Syrian who blew himself up in Ansbach, southern Germany on 24 July had pledged allegiance to Islamic State on a video found on his mobile phone, investigators said. Islamic State claimed responsibility for the bombing, which wounded 15 people. Bavaria’s Interior Minister said at the end of July that the Ansbach bomber had been “significantly influenced” in a chat conversation on his mobile phone that ended just before the attack.—Reuters



Police secure the area after an explosion in Ansbach, Germany, on 25 July 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS



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GM mosquito trial will not significantly impact environment: FDA

WASHINGTON — The US Food and Drug Administration said on Friday that a field trial testing Intrexon Corp's genetically engineered mosquitoes, meant to be used in the battle against Zika, would not have a significant impact on the environment.

The company wants to conduct a trial in the Florida Keys to assess the effectiveness of the genetically modified mosquitoes in reducing populations of *Aedes* mosquitoes, which can spread diseases including Zika, dengue, yellow fever and chikungunya.

Florida began aerial spraying on Thursday to kill mosquitoes in a Miami neighborhood with the first US spread of the Zika virus. Health authorities have identified 15 Zika cases spread by local mosquitoes and expect there may be more.

The mosquitoes are genetically altered so their offspring

die before they can reproduce.

Trials in Brazil, Panama and the Cayman Islands showed that Intrexon's mosquitoes can reduce localized *Aedes aegypti* populations by more than 90 per cent.

The current Zika outbreak was first detected last year in Brazil, where it has been linked to more than 1,700 cases of microcephaly, a birth defect marked by small head size that can lead to severe developmental problems in babies.

The virus has spread rapidly through the Americas and Caribbean and its arrival in the continental United States, where *Aedes aegypti* mosquitoes thrive in the warmer southern states, had been widely anticipated.

The GM mosquito strain is made by Oxitec, a spin-off company from Oxford University that is now a UK subsidiary of US based Intrexon.—Reuters



A technician from Oxitec inspects larvae of *Aedes aegypti* mosquitoes in Campinas, Brazil, in February 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

Thaw could release Cold War-era US toxic waste buried under Greenland's ice



A large iceberg melts into jagged edges as it floats in Eriks Fjord near the town of Narsarsuaq in southern Greenland in 2009. PHOTO: REUTERS

OSLO — Global warming could release radioactive waste stored in an abandoned Cold War-era US military camp deep under Greenland's ice caps if a thaw continues to spread in coming decades, scientists said on Friday.

Camp Century was built in northwest Greenland in 1959 as part of US research into the feasibility of nuclear missile launch sites in the Arctic, the University of Zurich said in a statement.

Staff left gallons of fuel and an unknown amount of low-level radioactive coolant there when the base shut down in 1967 on the assumption it would be entombed forever, according to the university.

It is all currently about 35 metres (114.83 ft) down. But the

part of the ice sheet covering the camp could start to melt by the end of the century on current trends, the scientists added.

"Climate change could remobilize the abandoned hazardous waste believed to be buried forever beneath the Greenland ice sheet," the university said of findings published this week in the journal *Geophysical Research Letters*.

The study, led by York University in Canada in collaboration with the University of Zurich, estimated that pollutants in the camp included 200,000 liters (44,000 UK gallons) of diesel fuel and the coolant from a nuclear generator used to produce power.

"It's a new breed of polit-

ical challenge we have to think about," lead author William Colgan, a climate and glacier scientist at York University, said in a statement.

"If the ice melts, the camp's infrastructure, including any remaining biological, chemical, and radioactive wastes, could re-enter the environment and potentially disrupt nearby ecosystems," the University of Zurich said.

The study said it would be extremely costly to try to remove any waste now.

It recommended waiting "until the ice sheet has melted down to almost expose the wastes before beginning site remediation." There was no immediate comment from US authorities.—Reuters

Novartis asthma pill shows promise in small trial

LONDON — The first new asthma pill in decades has produced promising results in a small clinical trial, potentially paving the way for another treatment option for patients by the end of the decade.

Fevipiprant, which is being developed by Novartis, reduced a biological marker of asthma nearly five-fold in the 12-week trial involving 61 patients, researchers said on Saturday. No serious adverse events were reported.

Larger and longer studies are now needed to prove that the twice-daily pill can also reduce severe asthma attacks, known as exacerbations. Novartis believes the medicine could be filed for regulatory approval in around 2019.

Pills for asthma used to be standard treatment 40 or 50 years ago, but those older products were often associated with worrying side effects. They have since been replaced by inhalers that deliver small amounts of drugs

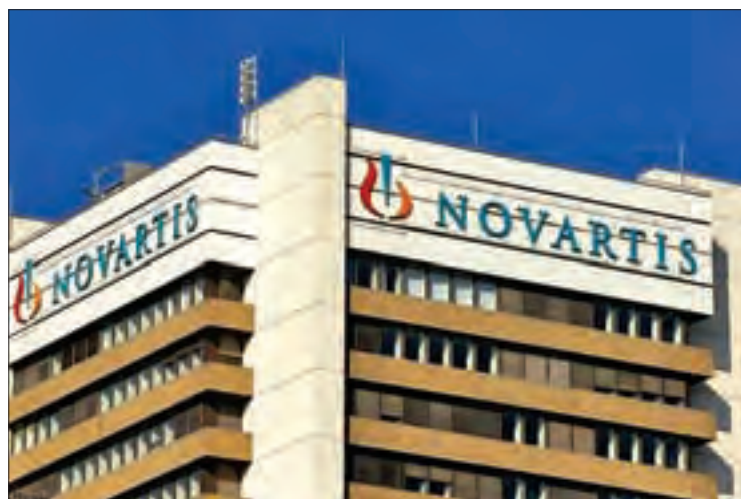
directly into the lungs.

The Novartis pill works in a very precise way to block the action of inflammatory cells called eosinophils.

The latest research, published in the journal *Lancet Respiratory Medicine*, comes at a time of considerable innovation

in asthma care, with the recent launch of new injectable drugs for severe asthma that also target eosinophils.

At the same time, many drugmakers are developing improved asthma inhalers, including "smart" devices with sensors that monitor use.—Reuters



The logo of Swiss pharmaceutical company Novartis is seen on its headquarters building in Basel, Switzerland in 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

Patients on social media cause ethics headache for doctors

NEW YORK — As more and more sick patients are going online and using social media to search for answers about their health, it's raising a lot of thorny ethical questions for doctors.

"The internet and ready access to vast amounts of information are now permanent aspects of how we live our lives, including how we think about and deal with our health problems," Dr. Chris Feudtner, director of medical ethics at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, said by email.

Social media in particular can affect how patients interact with doctors and what type of care they expect, Feudtner and colleagues write in an article about ethics in the journal *Pediatrics*.

"Clinicians should ask about what patients and families have read on the Internet, and then work through that informa-

tion thoughtfully, as sometimes Internet information is not helpful and sometimes it is helpful," Feudtner said. "Doing this takes time and effort, yet trust is built with time and effort."

To explore the ethical challenges posed by patients' virtual lives, Feudtner and examined a fictional case blending elements of several recent real-life situations.

In this hypothetical case, the parents of a 10-year-old boy hospitalized with cancer started a blog. Doctors, nurses and other hospital staff were among the 1,000 subscribers to his blog.

A year after his hospital stay ended, the boy relapsed, and his parents launched an online petition seeking access to an experimental cancer treatment that was only available through clinical trials. No trials were accepting new patients.—Reuters

As Turkey's coup strains ties with West, detente with Russia gathers pace

ISTANBUL/MOSCOW

— As Turkey's relations with Europe and the United States are strained by the fallout from its failed coup, President Tayyip Erdogan travels to Russia on Tuesday to meet Vladimir Putin in a trip he may hope will give the West pause for thought.

Turkish officials insist Erdogan's visit to St. Petersburg is no sign that the NATO member and European Union membership candidate is turning its back on the West. Rather, they say, it is the next step in a rapprochement with Russia that started weeks before the 15 July attempted putsch.

But the thaw with Moscow, which imposed trade sanctions nine months ago after Turkey downed a Russian fighter jet near the Syrian border, comes as Ankara's relationship with the West could scarcely be more fractious.

Erdogan and many Turks have been incensed by what they see as Western concern over a post-coup crackdown but indifference to the bloody events themselves, in which more than 230 people were killed as rogue soldiers bombed parliament and seized bridges with tanks and helicopters.

The Turkish government has blamed the coup on followers of a cleric in self-imposed exile in the United States, and purged tens of thousands of his suspected followers from positions as teachers, police,



Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan reviews a guard of honour during a welcoming ceremony at the Presidential Palace in Ankara, Turkey, on 5 August 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

judges and soldiers. Western countries say the purge has been too fast and indiscriminate.

So damaged are relations that Germany's foreign minister said this week there was no basis for discussions and that "we are talking with each other like emissaries from two different planets." Austria's chancellor suggested talks on Turkish membership of the EU should be suspended.

"For Erdogan, this meeting with Putin is certainly an opportunity to signal to Turkey's partners in the West that it could have other strategic options," said Sinan Ulgen, a former Turkish diplomat and analyst at the Carnegie Europe think tank.

"There is this perception game that Turkey could

strategically gravitate toward Russia if the relationship with the West cannot be maintained. There is also an incentive on the side of Russia to use the crisis between Turkey and the West to undermine NATO's cohesiveness," Ulgen said.

Erdogan's meeting with Putin will be only his second with a foreign head of state since the coup, following a visit to Ankara by the Kazakh president on Friday. Turkish officials have questioned why no Western leader has come to show solidarity.

"Both Russia and Turkey are outcasts as far as the West is concerned," said Andrey Kortunov, director general of the Russian International Affairs Council, a foreign policy think tank close to the Russian Foreign

Ministry.

"On the face of it, the failed coup has pulled Turkey closer to Russia. But there still remain serious differences between the two countries," he told Reuters.

Disagreements persist over Syria, where Moscow backs President Bashar al-Assad but Ankara wants him ousted, as well as the South Caucasus, where Turkey has backed Azerbaijan in a conflict with Armenia, a Russian ally, over the breakaway Nagorno-Karabakh region.

"The meeting between Putin and Erdogan ... will show how far both sides are willing to compromise. The question is whether the current tactical de-escalation can translate into a deeper strategic partnership," Kortunov said.—Reuters

Fire kills 13 after birthday cake falls to floor in French bar

PARIS — A fire swept through a bar in the northern French city of Rouen overnight, killing 13 people and injuring six, after a birthday cake with candles and sparklers fell to the floor and set the carpet ablaze, police said.

The fire broke out in the basement of the popular Cuba Libre bar and quickly engulfed the room where some 20 people were celebrating, filling it with thick black smoke and poisonous fumes, a Rouen police officer told Reuters.

"A large number of those who died were killed by the fire, others were overcome by the toxic fumes," the officer said.

One of the injured suffered burns to nearly 90 percent of the body and was in a critical condition, the officer added. France's interior ministry said a ju-

dicial investigation was under way into the fire, which Rouen Mayor Yvon Robert described as "totally accidental".

That allayed initial public concerns that it could have been a terrorist attack in a city that this week buried a priest who was knifed to death by Islamists in his church.

Stunned onlookers stared at the bar's blown out windows and blackened interior on Saturday morning.

"All of a sudden, everything blew," said Valerie Fouquet, who was outside on the terrace of the bar at the time.

"We saw the smoke and we saw the flames, the chairs flew up, the window exploded." More than 50 firefighters tackled the blaze, the interior ministry said.—Reuters



Firemen walk outside the bar in Rouen, France, on 6 August 2016 where a fire killed 13 people and injured another six, according to a statement by the interior ministry. PHOTO: REUTERS

Chicago police release video of fatal teen shooting, with gaps

CHICAGO — Chicago police released video on Friday that showed the moments before officers killed an unarmed 18-year-old black man last week but failed to

capture the fatal shots because a policeman's body camera was not recording, prompting allegations of a cover-up and calls for a special prosecutor.

In the footage released by Chicago's Independent Police Review Authority, two officers can be seen shooting at a stolen car driven by the man, Paul O'Neal,

who crashed the Jaguar into a police car and then fled into a backyard where officers gunned him down.

Chicago Police Superintendent Eddie Johnson said in a statement the 28 July shooting "raised a lot of questions about whether departmental policies were followed," adding that officers will be held accountable for their actions "should wrongdoing be discovered."

The clips included police cuffing O'Neal as he lay with his shirt bloodied, while one officer cursed him.

"They shot at us too, right?" one officer can be heard saying, referring to the occupants of the stolen Jaguar.

No firearms were found on O'Neal, who police shot in the back.

A lawyer for O'Neal's

family, Michael Oppenheimer, told a news conference that the young man had been killed in cold blood and called for a special prosecutor to be appointed in the case to pursue possible criminal charge against officers.

"What I saw was pretty cold-blooded," Oppenheimer said. "There is no question in my mind that they ran this kid down and murdered him."

In one of the video clips, an officer can be seen gesturing toward other officers' body cameras after the shooting and telling them to make sure they were all turned off.

The Reverend Jesse Jackson, the Chicago-based civil rights leader, told Reuters the lack of footage of O'Neal's killing was "a cover up."

"The force was excessive. It was unnecessary. It was an execution," Jackson said. In response to a Reuters query about why there was no video of the shooting of O'Neal, Chicago police spokesman Anthony Guglielmi said, "This is under investigation. The cameras either were not activated or they were impacted by the collision."

He said police in the district had received the body cameras just eight to 10 days before the shooting and "officers have not had a lot of time to interact with the equipment."

"This is something the department is looking into and will be doing a technical analysis of the cameras to help shed some light on what may have happened," Guglielmi said.—Reuters



Police prepare to place handcuffs on Paul O'Neal, 18, after he was shot in this still image from video taken from a body camera released by the Chicago police in Chicago, Illinois, US in July 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS



Migrants, mainly from Afghanistan and Pakistan, sit on a field near the Serbian-Hungarian border fence during a hunger strike near the village of Horgos, Serbia, on 25 July 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

More than 100 migrants break through barriers from Italy to France

ROME — More than 100 migrants broke through police barriers at the Italian border town of Ventimiglia and made their way into France on Friday, the local Italian police chief said.

They stopped on rocks near the port at the French Riviera town of Menton after breaking through in the afternoon and were still there in the evening under the surveillance of French police, said Ventimiglia police commander Giorgio Marengo.

“Both the Italian and French forces at the border were taken by surprise,” Marengo told Reuters. The French Interior Ministry and representatives of the Alpes-Maritimes region around Menton were

not available for comment.

A video posted on the website of Nice Matin newspaper showed a stream of people picking their way across rocks, followed by police in riot gear. A few started to walk into the sea.

It was not immediately clear how they got past police cordons.

Many of the hundreds of migrants who arrive by boat in Italy every day aim for northern Europe. Ventimiglia’s craggy seashore became the site of a temporary migrant camp last year, which was later cleared away by police.

Most of the more than 94,000 people who have arrived in Italy by boat this year travelled from sub-Saharan Africa to Libya where

people smugglers, who have taken advantage of the breakdown of order there, charged them hundreds of dollars for the passage, often in unseaworthy boats.

The city of about 24,000 residents opened a reception centre to house the hundreds of migrants who had been sleeping rough under a bridge.

About 150 migrants left the centre shortly after midnight on Thursday and walked to the shore, where they remained for hours before heading for France.

“The migrants who have reached Ventimiglia over the past three years have one aim: to pass into France,” Marengo said.—*Reuters*

Colombian government and rebels agree on demobilisation plan

HAVANA — Colombia’s government and leftist FARC rebels took another step toward ending more than a half century of conflict on Friday, agreeing on a UN-supervised security protocol, timetable and other details for disarming the estimated 9,000 guerrillas.

The announcement came after the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and the government of President Juan Manuel Santos signed in June an historic agreement that stated they had reached deals on all major issues and established a de facto ceasefire and the parameters for the rebels to disarm and rejoin civil society.

Under the agreement, FARC troops will gather at 26 locations around the South American country and hand over their arms

within six months of a final peace agreement going into effect.

“The FARC will have handed in all their arms to the United Nations within 180 days,” Humberto de la Calle, chief negotiator for the government, told reporters in Havana.

Friday’s agreement stipulated that 50 FARC members would be free to monitor the process nationwide, and another 10 in each of the 26 locations.

Under the agreement, the United Nations would have final say on any disputes.

After more than three years of negotiations hosted by Cuba over such thorny issues as land reform, war crimes and drug trafficking, the two sides are close to a final accord that would be put to a referendum vote.

If ratified, it would end the

longest-running and last significant guerrilla conflict in the Western Hemisphere.

“When we finish the agenda points, that is to say, when everything is agreed, that is when we will send the texts to Congress and convene the plebiscite,” Santos said during an event in the Pacific port city of Buenaventura on Thursday.

Santos must win over those sceptical of FARC promises to rejoin civil society, including supporters of hard-line former President Alvaro Uribe, who contends a deal will grant guerrillas impunity for war crimes.

The FARC grew out of a 1960s peasant revolt that exploded into a cocaine-fuelled war that has killed at least 220,000 people and displaced millions.—*Reuters*

8,000 Syrian refugees resettled in US — State Department official

WASHINGTON — The United States has taken in 8,000 Syrian refugees since October and is on track to meet President Barack Obama’s goal of resettling 10,000 by the end of the fiscal year, a US State Department official told reporters on Friday.

Assistant Secretary of State for the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration Anne Richard said additional US personnel had been deployed to vet refugees overseas and that many other refugees had already been vetted and were awaiting resettlement.

The total number of Syrian refugees in the United States may even exceed the 10,000 goal by the end of the fiscal year on 30 September, Richard and other administration officials said on a call with reporters.

Obama set a goal of welcoming 10,000 Syrian refugees from Syria’s civil war to the United States, drawing criticism from Republicans in the US Congress worried about admitting Syrians who pose a security threat.

Human rights advocates raised concerns over whether the administration would be able to meet its goal when less than 5,000 Syrians had been admitted halfway through the fiscal year.

“Monthly totals have climbed from low numbers of refugees submitted in the first half of the year to higher numbers recently. In May, June and July the impact of our investments in and enhancements to the process began to be realized,” Richard said.—*Reuters*



Recent refugee from Syria Sandy Khabbaze poses for a portrait while holding a photo of her family who remain behind in Syria, in Oakland, New Jersey, in 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

Protesters against Rio Games injured as police use tear gas

RIO DE JANEIRO — Some protesters opposing the Rio Olympics were injured on Friday when riot police used tear gas to try to disperse the crowd.

Thousands of protesters combined gathered at various locations in Rio de Janeiro, and those injured were demonstrating near the Maracana where the opening ceremony for the Games was scheduled to take place in the evening.

Those participating in the protests criticized the Rio Olympics as being out of touch with local residents and said the Games should not be held, while some burned the Brazilian

and Olympic flags.

According to local media, residents assembled at a residential area near the stadium and held up banners that said the Olympics are a festival for corporate profits and called for better hospitals and schools instead of holding the sporting event.

Some protesters marched hand in hand, wearing gas masks.

Demonstrators also congregated at Copacabana to protest against the impeachment procedure for suspended Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff.—*Kyodo News*

Bradley Cooper develops HBO miniseries about rise of ISIS militant group

LOS ANGELES — Actor Bradley Cooper is developing a TV miniseries based on a book about the rise of Islamic State militants, a show the author hopes will help Americans understand how the group came about.

Joby Warrick's 2016 Pulitzer Prize-winning book, "Black Flags: The Rise of ISIS" tracks the group's unlikely roots and transformation into the jihadist ensemble, from its origins in a remote Jordanian prison to its advances in Syria.

The non-fiction book also follows the small band of American and international agents tasked with shutting down the group.

"Delighted to finally be able to make this news public," Warrick, 56, said via a Twitter post on Thursday.

Cooper, best known for

his starring roles in movies like "American Sniper" and "The Hangover," is developing the miniseries for HBO through his production company, the cable channel said. It will dramatize events in the book.

Warrick, a national security reporter at the Washington Post, said the series would aim to explain, educate and help clarify issues about the Islamic State group and its motivations, a subject he had discussed with Cooper which was of immediate and utmost importance to American citizens.

"It's entertainment but it's not purely entertainment," Warrick told Reuters on Friday. "The story is in good hands."

Warrick said Cooper, 41, and partner producer Todd Phillips, 45, had visited him at his home outside of Washington, D.C. earlier this

year to pitch their idea.

"When you write a book of nonfiction on an important subject, you're flattered that there is film interest but you're also a little worried," Warrick said.

"You wonder: How will it be transformed?" Warrick said, noting that while he would not be writing the script, the film team has made him "feel like a partner" in asking for his input.

"I came away feeling very impressed with the integrity of their ideas." No casting or estimated air date has been announced for the "Black Flags" project.

Cooper and Phillips formed their production company, Joint Effort, in 2014. Their project "War Dogs," a comedy about arms dealers in Afghanistan in which Cooper also stars, will be released 19 August.—Reuters



Actor Bradley Cooper poses during the GQ Men of the Year party in West Hollywood, California December 3, 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

Railing collapses at New Jersey concert injuring about 30

CAMDEN (New Jersey) — Dozens of concertgoers suffered minor injuries on Friday night when a railing collapsed during a hip hop concert featuring Snoop Dogg and Wiz Khalifa in west New Jersey, local media reported. About 30 people were taken to hospitals with minor injuries when they fell and were

crushed after a railing collapsed near the stage at about 10 p.m. local time in the BB&T Pavilion in Camden, New Jersey, the Philadelphia Inquirer reported.

The newspaper reported that the railing separated the pavilion's lawn from inside seating and collapsed when concertgoers leaned on it. An eyewitness told the paper that about 50 people fell about 10 feet (3 meters) onto concrete. Authorities said that about 30 people, who suffered minor injuries, were taken to hospitals, the Philadelphia Inquirer reported.—Reuters



US rapper Snoop Lion.
PHOTO: REUTERS

Kathakali dance troupe in Egypt for first time

CAIRO — With its distinctive style of dance and colorful costumes, the Kathakali dance troupe wooed the audience during its performances in different cities of Egypt.

The visit of the nine-member Kathakali dance troupe was a part the 14th Summer Festival organized by Bibliotheca Alexandrina on August 1 and also to perform in other cities including Port Said, Ismailia and Cairo.

"Egypt has a great culture and there are many similarities between the two countries," the leader of the troupe, Rajumohan Padinharey Kizhikkilode, told PTI in an interview. Kizhikkilode, who is recognized as one of the most successful Kathakali artists, said this is the first time for the troupe to perform in Egypt. "Kathakali dance came from Hindu mythology and it's movements are like yoga movements but it also involves musicians, instruments and make up to create a wonderful colorful performance." Kizhikkilode, as well as his troupe members, said there were no barriers for people to understand their show and that audience usually enjoys their colorful costumes and makeup, in which they use natural stones to make it. The members of the troupe also expressed their happiness as they were well received by Egyptian audience.

"After we performed in Alexandria we found that the audience were awesome," said Kunhi Raman Abhishek, an actor in the troupe. "We are all so happy that we are here and we are very excited to see the pyramids," he added.—PTI

People want to listen to new singers: Sunidhi Chauhan

MUMBAI — Bollywood playback singer Sunidhi Chauhan says today, people are eager to listen to new voices and that is a good trend.

The 32-year-old "Sheila Ki Jawani" hitmaker believes now there is enough space for all the singers, giving them an opportunity to shine.

"Today, the music industry has gone through a huge change. People are more eager to listen to new voices. And that is a good trend," Sunidhi told PTI.

"So many new, fresh singers are coming up. Everybody is getting a chance to sing and perform. The audience is accepting them, even though some may not necessarily be skilful singers."

Another major trend in music industry is actors taking to singing, with some cutting their own singles and the rest turning playback for their movies.

While some musicians might have expressed their reserva-

tion against this, Sunidhi thinks everyone has the freedom to pursue his or her interest.

"Actors singing songs is not unfair at all. Things are not black and white. Everyone has the freedom to do what they feel like. If people are enjoying listening to them, which they are, there is nothing wrong."

"Actors may feel the need to sing and that is fine according to me. If he or she is a good singer, it will show. We are nobody to predict if the trend will die down or not."

The 32-year-old "Kamli" singer, meanwhile, will be singing popular songs as a part of Radio City's "Gig City", which is a live radio concert.

Sunidhi says through live-radio concerts, an artist reaches out to an audience base which doesn't necessarily come to watch live performances.

"We have lots of people who don't, or can't afford to go to live

shows. Through radio, we can reach out to millions at the same time, at their own place and environment.

"Plus, it will give them the feel of listening live. This in turn,

may make them think that live shows of an artist should be supported.

For us, it is not only just playback singing but also live performances that matter."—PTI



Sunidhi Chauhan believes now there is enough space for all the singers, giving them an opportunity to shine. PHOTO: PTI

South Korea make statement as world record falls



Kim Woo-Jin (KOR) of South Korea competes Archery during Men's Individual Ranking Round at Sambodromo in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, on 5 August 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

RIO DE JANEIRO — South Korea's stranglehold on Olympic archery showed little sign of easing on Friday as men's number one Kim Woo-jin fired a 72-arrow world record and the nation's women dominated the

ranking rounds at the Rio de Janeiro Games. The tournament's first shoot-off on a glorious day at the Sambodromo began with a bang as world champion Kim racked up 700 points out of a maximum

720, beating the 699 his compatriot Im Dong-hyun compiled in the preliminary round in London four years ago. The day ended with all three of South Korea's women at the top of the standings, led by

20-year-old Choi Mi-sun, who flirted with team mate Kim Bo-bae's world record before the wind picked up in the afternoon. South Korea took three of the four golds in London, with only the bronze medal-winning men's team missing out, but the Rio contingent appear determined to make a clean sweep this time round. Such is the Koreans' unwavering focus that 24-year-old Kim barely acknowledged his record, preferring to talk only of the men's team event on Saturday. "It's just the ranking round ... I want to focus on tomorrow, so today's not really big happy," he said through a translator before being mobbed by South Korean reporters. Kim sealed the record with riveting theatre, needing to find the innermost gold circle for a maximum 10 points with his final arrow and duly sending it flush into the middle. His face broke into a smile as he turned back to his camp, having captured the top seeding and drawn a first-round match-up with 64th and last-ranked archer Gavin Ben Sutherland, a Zimba-

bwean who finished 134 points adrift of the Korean. Kim will link up with Lee Seung-yun and Ku Bon-chan on Saturday to try to restore the nation's reign over the men's team event. The United States ended their run of three successive Olympic titles from 2000-08 in a nail-biting semi-final in London. A powerful American team drew confidence from an outstanding 690 from former world champion Brady Ellison, who took second seeding behind Kim. Ellison and his team mates Jake Kaminski and Zach Garrett scored 2,024 points in total to be second behind South Korea (2,057). Italy, surprise winners in London, took the third seed. The Korean women, unbeaten in the team event since its debut at the 1988 Seoul Games, finished top with 1,998 points, a gaping 60 ahead of Russia, with London silver medallists China ranked third. The Koreans appear in good shape to extend their winning streak when the women's team event is decided on Sunday. —Reuters

American TV viewers slam NBC for delaying Rio broadcast

RIO DE JANEIRO — American TV viewers used social media on Friday to vent their anger at US broadcaster NBC for delaying the screening of the opening ceremony of the Rio Games by an hour and then going to repeated commercial breaks during the show. NBC, a unit of Comcast Corp, has the US media rights for South America's first Olympic Games and said it decided not to show the ceremony live because its producers and commentators wanted time to put it into context for Americans. "It's not a sports competition," a NBC Sports spokesperson said in a statement emailed to Reuters during the ceremony.

"It's a cultural ceremony that requires deep levels of understanding, with numerous camera angles and our commentary laid over it. We think it's important to give it the proper context. And prime time is still when the most people are available to watch." But many viewers were upset at waiting to see a global event while audiences and news media in the rest of the world were already sharing pictures of it on the Web. "The rest of the world has been watching it LIVE for a half hour now," said one tweet before the NBC telecast started. Another chimed in: "Great idea NBC. Don't air what should be a global cultural event live. Why

would everyone want to watch and enjoy together?" Some journalists also showed their frustration, including Wall Street Journal editor-in-chief Gerard Baker. "Just staggeringly irritating that — 20 years after the birth of the web — NBC still shows the Olympics with a time delay," Baker tweeted. Others were annoyed at repeated ad breaks, including one who tweeted: "Can NBC slip in a bit of the Olympic opening ceremony between the commercials?!" On commercial breaks, the NBC spokesperson said the delay enabled it to insert ads into the broadcast without depriving viewers of much of the ceremony.—Reuters



News Channel in Brief

(7-8-2016, Sunday)

- 6:00 am**

 - Paritta by Hilly Region Missionary Sayadaw

7:35 am

 - Business News

8:35 am

 - Documentary (weather)

9:35 am

 - People Talk's

9:50 am

 - Poem for Children

10:35 am

 - Documentary (Women in Myanmar Society)

11:15 am

 - Gitadagale Phwintbaohn

12:50 am

 - Myanmar Movie
- 3:35 pm**

 - Ooredoo MNL-1 2016 (LIVE) (Yangon Uniteds FC & Zayar Shwe Myay FC)

5:35 pm

 - Analysis for Myanmar Movie

6:35 pm

 - Sing & Enjoy

7:15 pm

 - Myanmar Series

8:00 pm

 - News / International News/ Weather Report

8:35 pm

 - Documentary

9:00 pm

 - News
 - TV Drama Series
 - Romantic Art

Note/ Hourly News Bulletins (Local + International)



Entertainment Channel

(7-8-2016, Sunday)

- 06 : 00 pm**

 - Weather Report
 - Cartoon Programme "Laputa Castle in the sky" (Part-3)

06 : 45 pm

 - Music Programme

07 : 00 pm

 - Myanmar Video

09 : 10 pm

 - MRTV Entertainment Music

09 : 25 pm

 - Sai Htee Hseng Or An Exceptional Music Star From Shan Plateaus (Ep-2)
- 09 : 55 pm**

 - International Movie Songs

10 : 05 pm

 - To The Land of Countless Temples — Bagan Trip (EP-2)

10 : 25 pm

 - Innovation of Traditional Design

10 : 30 pm

 - Myanmar Movie

Midnight

 - Close Down.
- From** 7-8-2016 (Sunday) 6:00 pm

To 8-8-2016 (Monday) 6:00 pm



Myanmar International

(7-8-2016 07:00am ~ 8-8-2016 07:00am) MST

Today Fresh

- | | | |
|-------|----|--|
| 07:03 | Am | News |
| 07:25 | Am | Wet Markets in Yangon: Shwe Pa Dauk Fish Market |
| 07:34 | Am | A Visit To Ye |
| 07:54 | Am | Human Right Human Dignity International Film Festival |
| 08:03 | Am | News |
| 08:26 | Am | Swan Hein Cave |
| 08:44 | Am | Natural Lake: Fish Breeding Business |
| 08:56 | Am | H.E.L.P (6) Follow the Advice of the Authorities and the NGO's |
| 09:03 | Am | News |

- | | | |
|-------|----|--|
| 09:26 | Am | Popa Trip |
| 09:36 | Am | Lines and Wash Painting |
| 09:43 | Am | Kambawzathardi Golden Palace — A Treasured Legacy Of Golden Days |
| 10:03 | Am | News |
| 10:25 | Am | Gold: King Of All Metals |
| 10:56 | Am | Scented Buddha Images |

(11:00 Am~03:00 Pm)-Saturday Repeat(07:00Am~11:00 Am)

(03:00 Pm ~ 07:00 Pm) -Today Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)

Prime Time

- | | | |
|-------|----|---|
| 07:03 | Pm | News |
| 07:26 | Pm | Snow Flakes...Scenic Confluence...To Kachin State |
| 07:48 | Pm | Today Myanmar: Suspension of High Rise Building |
| 08:03 | Pm | News |
| 08:26 | Pm | An Aficionado Of Alluring Antiques |
- (09:00 Pm ~ 11:00 Pm)- Today Repeat (09:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)
- (11:00 Pm ~ 03:00 Am)- Saturday Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)
- (03:00 Am ~ 07:00 Am) -Today Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)
- (For Detailed Schedule – www.myanmaritv.com/schedule)



Flagbearer Naing Soe Yan (MYA) of Myanmar leads his contingent during the opening ceremony at Maracana in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, on 5 August 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

Brazil casts aside crisis in rousing Rio Games opening

RIO DE JANEIRO — Brazil unfurled a vast canvas celebrating its rainforest and the creative energy of its wildly diverse population in welcoming the world on Friday to the Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro, all to the pounding beat of samba, bossa nova and funk.

Brazil's interim President Michel Temer declared open the first Games ever in South America. But in a display of the deep political divisions plaguing Brazil, he was jeered by some in the crowd at the famed Maracana soccer stadium. The opening ceremony was decidedly simple and low-tech, a reflection of Brazil's tough economic times. In one of the world's most unequal societies, the spectacle celebrated the culture of the favelas, the slums that hang vertiginously above the renowned beaches of Rio and ring the Maracana.

There was no glossing over history either: from the arrival of the Portuguese and their conquest of the indigenous populations to the use of African slave labor for 400 years. The clash of cultures, as the ceremony showed, is what makes Brazil the complex mosaic that it is. Home to the Amazon, the

world's largest rainforest, Brazil used the ceremony to call on the 3 billion people watching the opening of the world's premiere sporting event to take care of the planet, plant seeds and protect the verdant land that Europeans found here five centuries ago.

Brazilian marathon runner Vanderlei Cordeiro de Lima, a bronze medalist in Athens in 2004, lit the Olympic cauldron, a small and low-emission model befitting the environmental theme of these Games.

Unlike the opening ceremonies in Beijing in 2008 and London in 2012, a financially constrained Brazil had little choice but to put on a more "analog" show, with minimal high-tech and a heavy dependence on the vast talent of Brazil and its Carnival party traditions. In the nearly four-hour event, nothing appeared to go awry.

While the Rio 2016 organizing committee has not said how much the ceremony cost, it is believed to be about half of the \$42 million spent by London in 2012.

The show drew homegrown stars, like supermodel Gisele Bündchen, who walked across the sta-

dium to the sound of bossa nova hit "Girl from Ipanema" and tropical legends Caetano Veloso and Gilberto Gil. Everyone performed for free. Loud cheering erupted when two of the last teams entered the stadium: the first Refugee team in Olympic history and finally a samba-dancing Brazil contingent.

The joyful opening contrasted with months of turmoil and chaos, not only in the organization of the Olympics but across Brazil as it endures its worst economic recession in decades and a deep political crisis. Temer, flanked by dozens of heads of state, played a minor role in the ceremony, speaking just a few words. The leader who was supposed to preside over the Games, President Dilma Rousseff, was suspended last May to face an impeachment trial and tweeted that she was "sad to not be at the party." The \$12 billion price tag to organise the Games has aggrieved many in the nation of 200 million and in Rio, where few can see the benefits of the spectacle or even afford to attend the Games.

Due to Brazil's most intense security operation ever, some among the 50,000 attendees faced two-hour-long lines as Brazil

RIO 2016 Olympic			
Archery Women's individual Ranking round		Completed	
	San Yu Htwe		608 points Rank: 51
		Myanmar	
Women's individual Round of 64		Monday, 8 August 6:56 PM	

staged its most intense security operation ever.

The creative minds behind the opening ceremony were determined to put on a show that would not offend a country in dire economic straits but would showcase the famously upbeat nature of Brazilians. It started with the beginning of life itself in Brazil, and the population that formed in the vast forests and built their communal huts, the ocos. The Portuguese bobbed to shore in boats, the African slaves rolled in on wheels and together they plowed through the forests and planted the seeds of modern Brazil.

"They're talking about slavery? Wow," said Bryan Hossy, a black Brazilian who watched the ceremony in a bar in Copacabana. "They have to talk about that. It's our story."

The mega-cities of Brazil formed in a dizzying video display as acrobats jumped from roof to roof of emerging buildings and then on to the steep favela that served as the front stage for the

ceremony. From the favela came Brazilian funk, a contemporary mash-up of 20th century rhythms, sung by stars Karol Conka and 12-year-old rapper MC Soffia.

"This is a conquest. The people on the periphery are having an influence, it's a recognition of their art," said Eduardo Alves, director of social watchdog Observatorio de Favelas.

Before the entry of a few thousand of the 11,000 athletes that will be competing in the Games, the playful rhythms of the ceremony gave way to a sober message about climate change and rampant deforestation of the Amazon.

Each athlete will be asked to plant seeds that will eventually grow into trees and be planted in Rio in a few years.

The party wrapped up with a rousing parade of the city's samba schools that compete in Carnival. Hundreds of drummers donned their colors and played out Brazil's trademark beat, as athletes from over 200 countries tried out their first steps of samba.—Reuters