Buddhist devotees in Myanmar observe Dhammacakka Day on Fullmoon Day of Waso

Roadshow for promotion of Kyauk Phyu Special Economic Zone gains wave of interest in Singapore

By Ye Myint

Yangon, 11 July — Myanmar held a roadshow for promotion of Kyauk Phyu Special Economic Zone in Singapore on 7 July, gaining a wave of interest from attendees including Singapore-based diplomats and businesspeople, according to a press release from the Kyauk Phyu SEZ Bid Evaluation and Awarding Committee.

The Singapore roadshow caught strong interest from not only potential investors but also local media, U Aung Kyaw Than, BEAC’s joint secretary, told The New Light of Myanmar on Thursday.

The roadshow took place at Suntec City & Exhibition Centre in Singapore three days after the Yangon Roadshow on 3 July, with officials making a master plan presentation and explaining the tender process to choose developers for the US$227 million project that will include construction of a deep-sea port, an industrial park and a residential area in Myanmar’s western Rakhine State.

Regarding concern about possible impact of the project development by some Yangon-based Rakhine social organizations, he asserted the project will have minimal or no adverse social and environmental impact on local people as it will be developed in accordance with policies focusing on emergence of an environmentally-friendly SEZ and sustainable development of the region. He reaffirmed that no villages are in both Phase I and Phase II areas of the Kyauk Phyu SEZ development, citing the SEZ’s location on the area of open space as a reason for his assertion.

According to the release, a Myanmar delegation for promoting Kyauk Phyu SEZ in Singapore delivered the project’s information and explained (See page 2)
Yangon Region Chief Minister attends Waso robe offering ceremony

Yangon, 11 July—To mark the Fullmoon Day of Waso, Yangon Region Government led by Yangon Region Chief Minister U Myint Swe and wife Daw Khin Thet Htay donated Waso robe and offerings to the Abbot and monks from Pitikat Thonepon Nikal Buddhist Literature School in South Dagon Township in Yangon on Friday. During the Waso robe offering ceremony, the chief minister also conferred the religious titles to the two monks who won the religious examination.

The three well-wishers also donated 6.4 million for construction of the monastery through U Myint Swe.—MNA

Seminar on snake bite problem in Myanmar held in Nay Pyi Taw

NAY PYI TAW, 11 July—The seminar on snake bite in Myanmar took place on Friday in Nay Pyi Taw, with an address by Union Minister for Industry U Maung Myint.

In his address, he said the Ministry is trying to increase manufacturing antivenom and needs skilled workers, technology and financial supports. Kidney specialist Dr Chen Au Peh from Royal Adelaide Hospital in Australia and officials also discussed the current production of anti-venom and its challenges, distribution of anti-venom in Myanmar and cold chain system and hospital management for snake bite patients.

According to the Union minister, about 300 people died in over 13,000 snake bite cases in 2012 and most of them were farmers. MNA

Union Minister U Maung Myint addresses seminar on snake bite problem in Myanmar.—MNA

Roadshow for promotion of...

(from page 1)

ongoing works to enhance cooperation and coordination with local organizations and partnerships to interested firms and media. Moreover, the delegation held talks with the Singaporean senior minister of state for Trade and Industry on prospects for bilateral cooperation during their stay in Singapore.

Expressions of interest (EOI) for the Kyauk Phyu SEZ will be made available on 14 July and developers for the three areas of the zone are slated to be announced at the end of November after shortlisted candidates are selected in September, the BEAC joint secretary said.

It is planned to enable potential developers to visit the SEZ before submission of their detailed proposals to the BEAC, he added. Myanmar is committed to the development of three Special Economic Zones at Thilawa in Yangon, Dawei and Kyaukphyu. Among them, the Kyauk Phyu SEZ will see a deep sea port that will unlock the potential of the hinterland and fulfill the country’s potential as a trade corridor for Africa, the Middle East and China.

Myanmar is also hoping the development of the SEZ will provide locals in the region with employment opportunities, thereby ensuring a favourable environment for the people in Rakhine State.

Myanmar delegation seen at Yangon International Airport on their return from World Association of Girls Guides and Girl Scouts’ 35th World Conference.—MNA

Saw Nadi (Myitkyina), Moe Myint Kyel win Nan Nyunt Swa Poetry Award

YANGON, 11 July—The first Nan Nyunt Swa Poetry Award ceremony to mark the 4th anniversary of the death of Poet and Writer Saya Nan Nyunt Swa (1923-2010) took place on Friday at House of Media and Entertainment on Bo Aung Kyaw Road in Kyauktada Township in Yangon.

The well-known comedian Zagana, son of Saya Nan Nyunt Swa, presented prizes to youth winner poets Saw Nadi (Myitkyina) and Moe Myint Kyel.

The prize is aimed at long-term remembering of his father’s name that did not mention for 25 years ago because of his political activities, Maung Thura (Zagana) said.

Zagana added that he will try to award the poetry prizes yearly by choosing the poems from any magazines and he will also arrange to award the best article prizes next year to mark his mother Daw Hla Kyi who had the pen name Yuwadi Kyi Oo.

Nan Nyunt Swa, a very honest man, loved his job and wrote more than 1,200 poems and 800 articles, focusing primarily on music and classic literature and he respected Composer Gita Nat Than Ko Saw Nyen, Writer Daw Kywe Kywe said. Nan Nyunt Swa was born in 1923 in Pyay District, Bago Region and passed away on 14 July 2010 of natural causes.

By Khaing Thanda Lwin

Myanmar joins 35th World Conference of World Association of Girls Guides and Girl Scouts

YANGON, 11 July — A three-member Myanmar delegation took part in the World Association of Girls Guides and Girl Scouts’ 35th World Conference held in Hong Kong from 5 to 9 July.

The Myanmar delegation arrived back in Yangon on Thursday. They were welcomed back at Yangon International Airport by Yangon Region Minister U Nyan Tun Oo and officials.

During the 35th conference, Myanmar was recognized as an associate member of the WAGGGS, the world’s largest voluntary organization for girls and young women. WAGGGS World Conferences have taken place every three years since 1954.

MNA

Myanmar delegation seen at Yangon International Airport on their return from World Association of Girls Guides and Girl Scouts’ 35th World Conference.—MNA

By Khaing Thanda Lwin

NLN
NAY PYI TAW, 11 July —Buddhist devotees in Myanmar thronged pagodas across the country for observing Dhammacakka Day on Friday, Fullmoon Day of Waso.

The sixth Waso robe offering ceremony of Upapatasanti Pagoda in Nay Pyi Taw took place at the pagoda on Friday, with officials led by Union Minister for Religious Affairs U Soe Win offering Waso robes to Buddha Images at the Pagoda and provisions to monks.

Being a day of religious significance, pagodas—.Upapatasanti, Datuza, Datuza Datpaungsu, Lawka Marazin, Phaya Koosu and Koe Khamgyi—in Nay Pyi Taw Council Area were packed with devotees doing meritorious deeds the whole day. In the evening, religious associations from townships in Nay Pyi Taw Council Area and Nay Pyi Taw Command recited Dhammacakka verses and parittas at the pagodas.

In Yangon, devotees led by members of the Board of Trustees of Shwedagon Pagoda offered Waso robes and alms to Buddha Images at the Pagoda.

Likewise, Waso robe offering ceremonies were held at Sule, Botataung Kyaik-dae-at, Maha Wizaya, Shwe Phone Pwint and Kyaik Waing Pagodas and others in Yangon.

MNA
Maukmai BEHS offers Waso robes

Maukmai, 11 July — Maukmai Township Basic Education High School held a ceremony to offer Waso robes and alms to members of Sangha at the prayer hall of the school on 10 July morning.

School Headmistress Daw Chaw Su Khine, teachers and students donated alms and robes to the member of Sangha. The monks delivered sermons and the teachers and students shared the merit gained. Guest were also treated with refreshments.

Sai Myo Thant (IPRD)

Rakhine State government to help farmers

Sittway, 11 July — Landlords were getting into trouble as farmers in Bagan villages in Maungtaw Township were returning the farmland leased to them for cultivation of rice paddies this year, according to 8-7-2014 issue of the Democratic Today. However, it was discovered that out of 35 farmers and 210 acres of farmland in Mingalan-yunt Village in the township, eight farmers were planning to grow rice in 45 acres of farmland on their own arrangements and others 27 farmers had difficulty to grow rice in 165 acre of farmland in time in this cultivation season.

There are a total of 1190 farmers who had difficulty to grow rice in 2975 acres of farmland in 36 villages. Authorities are trying to provide everything the farmers need in time in the cultivation season, according to an official. Arrangements are also underway to train 1190 farmers for cultivation methods.

Rakhine State IPRD

Mandalay crowded with people on Waso Fullmoon Day

Mandalay, 11 July — Famous pagodas around Mandalay and monasteries were crowded with people who were reciting prayers and offering robes, flowers and alms to Buddha images and monks on Friday which coincided with Waso Fullmoon Day or Dhammacacaka Day on Buddhist Calendar.

At prayer halls in wards, locals donated robes and alms to monks and monks delivered sermons to people, who took sabbath.

At four o’clock this morning, monks washed the face of Maha Muni Buddha Image and offered robes, flowers, lights and alms. Mandalay Region Government held a ceremony to recite prayers continuously at the Maha Myat Muni Pagoda.

Famous pagodas crowded with people today included the Maha Lawka Yan Naing Aung Hsu Taung Pyay Pagoda, the Mandalay Hill Kathodaw Sandamuni Kyaung Taw Gyi Pagoda, Yankin Hill, the Tooth Relic Pagoda, the Tawagu Pagoda, the Chanthagyai Pagoda, the Shwe Kyimyin Pagoda, the Hsu Taungpyay Pagoda, the Hsu Taungya Pagoda and the Wahhinkon Pagoda.

Tea Maung (Mandalay)

Legal action to be taken against drivers causing rush hour traffic congestion on Mandalay’s main roads

Mandalay, 11 July — Legal actions will be taken against drivers of vehicles causing rush hour traffic congestion on busy roads in Mandalay starting from 15 August, according to a meeting of Mandalay Region Traffic rule enforcement subcommittee.

The meeting was held at the office of Mandalay City Development Committee on Thursday, with U Thet Naing Tun, joint secretary of MCDC calling for participation of all in the drive to reduce road accidents and traffic congestions on downtown roads of Mandalay.

The joint secretary who led the subcommittee stressed the need to step up developing awareness on traffic rules among road users at the meeting. He also called on inspection teams to take more assignments of duties.

When the period from 15 July to 14 August to educate road users on traffic rules is over, legal actions will be taken against drivers of vehicles stopping for passengers and goods on main roads during rush hours, officials said.

Thiha Ko Ko (Mandalay)

Ministry of Environmental Conservation and Forestry plants trees to prevent climate change

Nay Pyi Taw, 11 July — The tree-planting ceremony of the Ministry of Environmental Conservation and Forestry was held near the Thaatathahsa Pagoda in Nay Pyi Taw Council Area on Friday.

Union Minister U Win Tun and wife Daw Swe Swe Chit participated in the tree planting campaign and planted a Kankaw tree. Union deputy ministers and wives, officials and staff also planted trees during the campaign.

As the area today planted with tree includes in the watershed areas of Thapaygasam Dam, a total of 551 trees planted today will one day contribute to prevention of climate change and soil erosion and conservation of biodiversity.

Healthcare reform to be implemented

Nay Pyi Taw, 11 July — The Ministry of Health is implementing measures to reform the healthcare system in an effort for laying firm foundation in the democratic transition, said Union Minister for Health Dr Pe Thet Khin at the meeting to explain the Third Wave Reform held at the ministry in Nay Pyi Taw on Friday.

The union minister urged the staff of the ministry to cooperate with other ministries, social organizations, well-wishers, religious organization and the public to consolidate the functions of the ministry.

At the meeting, Union Deputy Minister for Health Dr Daw Thein Thein Huy explained responsibility, accountability and coordination in the healthcare sector and Union Depu- ty Minister for Health Dr Than Aung explained the comprehensive national development plan (health sector). Directors-general and officials of the ministry attended the meeting.

MNA
Power lines pose threat to commuters in east of Dagon

Yangon, 11 July—Power lines on Shwepadetha Street in the east of Dagon township are said to be posing unwanted threat to passers-by, according to a person who lives in the surrounding area.

He expressed his worry, saying that cables are handing down on old lamp-posts, with the possibility of falling down on houses nearby, thereby inviting ill consequences.

Some locals want the ministry concerned to deal with the issue by replacing old power lines and lamp-posts and trimming branches of trees.

Nay Win Tun

Mandalay gets new towers for speedy connection

Mandalay, 11 July—New towers are being erected in Mandalay Region in a bid to boost telephone and internet connections, according to local people.

Private telephone operators are reported to cajole owners of tall buildings into letting them their facilities for the installation of antenna with annual rents.

According to a local communication department, poor connections are blamed on the fact that users outnumber available services.

An official of the department explained that slow speed is due to the use of phones from different regions, saying, “Some people bring phones from other areas and use them here.”

Another monk from Bawa Alin, a social group, said, “Blood is a life giver, so donation of blood is quite noble.”

A blood donor said that 202 sacs of blood were donated to the National Blood Bank.

Thiha Ko Ko (Mandalay)

University students donate blood in Mandalay

Mandalay, 11 July—Students from Yadanabon University gathered at the Kyauktawgyi Pagoda near the university to donate blood in Pyigyidagun Township here on Thursday.

Two philanthropic social organizations joined the university students in the blood donation charity.

A Buddhist monk from Myat Parami Blood Donors Association said, “When it comes to blood donation, the younger the better. This kind of merit is personal and more rewarding.”

Another monk from Bawa Alin, a social group, said, “Blood is a life giver, so donation of blood is quite noble.”

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Thiha Ko Ko (Mandalay)

Antique-like articles found in Myingyan

Myingyan, 11 July—Things which are thought to be antiques were found in a village-track of Myingyan township, Mandalay Region, while an ancient pagoda was under renovation.

Seven ancient items were found to be related to Buddhism, with pictures depicting the birth of the Buddha, His renunciation, preaching a sermon to the first Five Disciples, and His conquerors. The ancient articles are now placed under the supervision of the village’s chairman Sayadaw.

Zaw Min Naing (Myingyan)

Sagaing Region Government donates Sky Net television receivers to village libraries in Pale Township

Pale, 11 July—With the aim of improving the socioeconomic lives of people living in rural areas, Sagaing Region government, through Region Information and Public Relations Department, donated seven Sky Net television receivers to village libraries to Nwein Village, Kyaukphyakan Village, Hnawkan Village, Aina Village, Hsinshin Village, Alebon Village and Ywathit Village in Pale Township, Yinnabin district in Sagaing Division on 6 July.

Patron of U Soe Pyaing Library U Myo Maung said that he would like to thank the region government for donation of a Sky Net television receiver that cover over 80 channels as the receiver would enable the local people to have access to information in no time.

Myint Thein Soe (IPRD)

Model paddy field sees double yields

Kyaukpadaung, 11 July—A model paddy field was harvested here in Mandalay Region on Wednesday, local farmers said.

The harvested paddy field was worked by the township’s agricultural department. Officials from the department, local authorities and interested peasants gathered at the harvest.

According to officials, the model paddy plot yielded 203 baskets per acre, which farmers said is two times higher than that of ordinary fields.

Ko Nay (Kyaukpadaung)
Thousands of people join parade to enshrine late Cambodian King Sihanouk’s remains

Phnom Penh, 11 July — Thousands of people attended a religious procession on Friday morning to enshrine the remains of Cambodia’s most revered King Norodom Sihanouk, who died of illness in Beijing in 2012.

Three diamond-studded gold and marble urns containing Sihanouk’s ashes were moved from an altar in the Royal Palace to be placed inside a monument on a golden mythological bird-shaped float and marched through streets around the palace.

Meanwhile, Buddhist monks chanted prayers at the 101-gun artillery salute fired into the sky. Sihanouk’s ashes were marched through streets around the Royal Palace as part of an elaborate three-day ceremony which began Thursday, before being interred in a stupa in the opulent Silver Pagoda at the compound of the Royal Palace on Saturday, their final resting place.

Sihanouk’s wife Queen Mother Norodom Monineath and his son, current King Norodom Sihamoni, as well as Prime Minister Hun Sen, his cabinet members, and foreign diplomats, were present at the parade site. Deputy Governor of Phnom Penh Municipality Khoung Streng said, “Approximately 20,000 people joined the procession of the late king’s remains by standing along road sides.”

National Police spokesman Kirt Chantharith said some 7,000 police, military police and soldiers were assigned to attend the march, which was live broadcast on local TV channels.

To mark the interment ceremony, King Norodom Sihamoni had signed a royal decree to release or reduce jail terms for 335 prisoners, while Prime Minister Hun Sen allowed all civil servants and private company employees to take a day-off.

According to schedule, in line with his wishes, Sihanouk’s cremated remains will be enshrined in a stupa in the Silver Pagoda in the Royal Palace on Saturday.

On Thursday evening, approximately 3,000 Buddhist monks gathered in front of the Royal Palace in meditation and prayers to mark the start of the interment ceremony.

King Father Norodom Sihanouk, died of illness at the age of 90 in Beijing on 15 Oct, 2012. The late king requested that all of his ashes be interred in the Silver Pagoda alongside the remains of his favourite daughter, Princess Kantha Bopha, who died of leukaemia in 1952 at the age of 4.

The late monarch reigned over Cambodia from 1941 to 1955 and again from 1993 until his voluntary abdication in 2004 in favor of his son, King Norodom Sihamoni.

He was a presence through decades of political and social turmoil in Cambodia, despite long periods of exile overseas.

Sihanouk was named as the King Father of Independence, Territorial Integrity and National Unity. He led Cambodia to gain full independence and freedom from the French protectorate in 1953. —Xinhua

Seoul hotel rejects Japan embassy party, museum cancels cartoon exhibit

Seoul, 11 July — The Lotte Hotel, one of the largest luxury hotels in Seoul, has decided against hosting a regularly held reception organized by the Japanese Embassy to commemorate the establishment of Japan’s defence forces, because of anticipated demonstrations against it, a hotel source said on Thursday.

Meanwhile, the War Memorial of Korea has canceled an exhibition of the popular Japanese comic series “One Piece,” which had been scheduled to start on Saturday, citing a drawing similar to the Rising Sun flag — considered as a symbol of Japan’s aggression in South Korea — appearing in the original comic series.

The Seoul hotel has notified the Japanese Embassy of the decision for the Japanese Self-Defense Forces event that had been scheduled on Friday evening. The embassy has since decided to hold the event at the ambassador’s residence. A Japanese government source said, “It’s regrettable that the Lotte, which has been a familiar venue for us, has decided to take such action.”

With the history issue that has long been simmering and Japan’s recent move to change its defense policy to play a greater security role in the background, criticism against Japan has been growing from the South Korean government and media.

The Dong-a Ilbo newspaper carried a report blasting the hotel’s reception plan in its Thursday edition. “The hotel said it has been bombarded with calls of protests and threats. The hotel has been almost deserted.”

The SDF commemoration of its founding on 1 July. This year marks its 60th anniversary. Japanese diplomatic missions have been enshrined in a stupa in the Silver Pagoda in the Royal Palace on Saturday.

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The hotel has almost been deserted since the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism has canceled an exhibition of the popular Japanese comic series “One Piece,” which had been scheduled to start on Saturday, citing a drawing similar to the Rising Sun flag — considered as a symbol of Japan’s aggression in South Korea — appearing in the original comic series.

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Family planning funding needed to save lives in Pacific: New Zealand parliamentarians

Wellington, 11 July — Women and newborns are dying in Pacific island nations for a lack of investment in sexual and reproductive health, particularly in family planning, a group of New Zealand Members of Parliament said on Friday.

Many countries in the Pacific have poor sexual and reproductive health indicators, reflecting a lack of prioritization and investment by governments, the New Zealand Parliamentarians Group on Pacific Sexual and Development (NZPSPD) said in a statement to mark World Population Day. In countries such as Papua New Guinea, Kiribati and the Solomon Islands, less than 30 percent of women of reproductive age use modern contraceptives, it said.

Teenage pregnancy rates are worryingly high, and gender-based violence rates in some countries are among the highest in the world, with two-thirds of women reporting having experienced physical or sexual violence from an intimate partner. “These issues need to be addressed urgently if our Pacific neighbours are going to see progress in sustainable development. When people lack control over their reproductive health, they lack control over their lives and future prospects,” NZPSPD chair Paul Hutchison said in the statement.

Research shows that investing in family planning can save both lives and money, with one report finding that 18 percent of maternal deaths and 860 infant deaths can be averted over 15 years by meeting unmet needs for family planning in Kiribati.

Other research finds that preventing unintended pregnancies in Vanuatu and the Solomon Islands can avert more than 2,500 maternal and newborn deaths. “It is becoming increasingly clear that investing in reproductive health is central to advancing many areas of society. When women and couples can plan their families, they tend to have smaller families, which allows them to invest more in the children they have,” said Hutchison. —Xinhua
Russia’s Putin says emerging powers must play bigger role in world affairs

BERLIN, 11 July — Germany told the CIA station chief in Berlin to leave the country on Thursday in a dramatic display of anger from Chancellor Angela Merkel at the behaviour of a close ally after officials uncovered two suspected US spies.

The scandal has chilled relations with Washington, Berlin’s former Cold War ally, on levels not seen since Merkel’s predecessor opposed the US invasion of Iraq in 2003. It follows allegations that Merkel herself, who grew up in Stasi-ridden East Germany, was among thousands of Germans whose mobile phones have been bugged by American agents.

Spying on allies ... is a waste of energy," the chancellor said in her most pointed public remarks yet on the issue. "We have so many problems, we should focus on the important things." Senior conservative supporters denounced US "stupidity" and some Americans said spying on their friends had backfired.

But both sides stressed their need to go on working together.

"In the Cold War maybe there was general mistrust. Today we are living in the 21st century. Today there are completely new threats," Merkel said in Berlin, once a key CIA listening post behind the Iron Curtain during the superpower duel with Moscow and now the reunited capital of Europe’s most powerful economy.

Her spokesman said the request for the top US intelligence official in the Berlin embassy to leave was made in response to questions raised in recent months on US intelligence activity in Germany and by prosecutors’ investigations.

In guarded comments, a White House spokesman declined comment on "reports of a purported intelligence matter" but she stressed: "Our security and intelligence relationship with Germany is a very important one and it keeps Germans and Americans safe ... It is essential that cooperation continue." US government sources said the official — whom neither side named — was Berlin station chief for the CIA, the Central Intelligence Agency. A German source said the man would face possible forcible expulsion if he did not leave voluntarily.

Washington’s embassy and Merkel’s office sit a few hundred metres apart. They lie east and west of what was the Berlin Wall, for the removal of which many Germans still give great credit to their US ally — deepening today’s sense of betrayal.—Reuters

News

JAPAN

Japan’s SDF to expand cooperation with US Marines over equipment

WASHINGTON, 11 July — Japanese Defence Minister Itsunori Onodera (C) takes a test ride aboard an Osprey transport aircraft at the US Defence Department near Washington on 10 July, 2014.—KYODO NEWS

At the Pentagon earlier in the day, Onodera had a test ride on an Osprey transport aircraft, with the SDF set to acquire the tilt-rotor aircraft from the new fiscal year from next April.

The minister said the Osprey has advantages for the defence of remote islands, telling reporters that the aircraft, which can take off like a helicopter and cruise like a fixed-wing airplane, “can land on a very tiny space, while flying far at high speeds.”—Kyodo News

Kerry, ministers to join Iran nuclear talks in Vienna

PLAGUE, 11 July — US Secretary of State John Kerry and foreign ministers from the six powers negotiating with Iran on its nuclear programme will travel to Vienna this weekend to help break the logjam in the talks, a senior Western official said on Thursday.

“l can tell you that Kerry will be in Vienna this weekend, probably on Saturday,” the official told Reuters on condition of anonymity. Kerry has scheduled bilateral meetings with fellow ministers on Sunday, he said. Another diplomat confirmed the travel plans.

A French diplomatic source said Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius would arrive on Sunday for the talks. Iran and the powers — the United States, France, Germany, Britain, Russia and China — aim to reach a long-term deal to end the decade-old nuclear standoff by a 20 July deadline.

Many diplomats and analysts believe an extension may be needed in view of the wide gaps in negotiators' positions.—Reuters

Russia’s Putin says emerging powers must play bigger role in world affairs

MOSCOW, 11 July — Russian President Vladimir Putin, speaking on the eve of a trip to Latin America, said Brazil and other emerging powers must play a bigger role in world affairs, suggesting they could do more to counter US influence.

In an interview published on Friday, Putin framed his tour of Brazil, Cuba and Argentina as part of an effort to build a multi-polar world at a time when he is isolated by sanctions over Ukraine and his relations with the West are at their frichest since the Cold War.

Russia sees strong relations with Brazil as “strategically important” in opposing Western clout, he said, ahead of next week’s summit with fellow BRICS nations, which includes China, India and South Africa.

“This powerful and fast-developing country is destined to play an important role in the emerging poly-centric world order,” Putin told the Izvestia newspaper.

He said Moscow would back Brazil to obtain a seat on the United Nations Security Council, where Russia is a veto-wielding member along with the United States.

The Russian leader has ramped up criticism of what he says is US meddling in other state’s affairs as the former Cold War superpowers clashed over Russia’s annexation of Crimea in March and its political support of separatists in eastern Ukraine.

In a veiled dig at Washington on Friday, Putin criticised cyber espionage. Last year’s revelations by former US intelligence contractor Edward Snowden of US surveillance have led to a rift in its ties with European allies.

“It (cyber espionage) not only amounts to overt hypocrisy in relationships between partners and partners but also a direct violation of the state’s sovereignty,” he said.

Putin begins his tour of the region in Cuba on Friday, then travels to Argentina and Brazil to attend the World Cup final in Rio de Janeiro and meet BRICS leaders in Fortaleza on 15-16 July.

Russia will be introduced at the World Cup closing ceremony as the host of the next tournament in 2018.

The BRICS leaders are expected to endorse plans for a new development bank to rival the World Bank with its headquarters in China and to create a joint foreign exchange reserve pool. “This will lay the foundations for macroeconomic coordination between the five countries,” Putin’s Foreign Policy adviser Yuri Ushakov said in a Kremlin statement.—Reuters

Berlin tells CIA station chief to leave in spy scandal

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Putin begins his tour of the region in Cuba on Friday, then travels to Argentina and Brazil to attend the World Cup final in Rio de Janeiro and meet BRICS leaders in Fortaleza on 15-16 July.

Russia will be introduced at the World Cup closing ceremony as the host of the next tournament in 2018.

The BRICS leaders are expected to endorse plans for a new development bank to rival the World Bank with its headquarters in China and to create a joint foreign exchange reserve pool. “This will lay the foundations for macroeconomic coordination between the five countries,” Putin’s Foreign Policy adviser Yuri Ushakov said in a Kremlin statement.—Reuters
Let’s not waste public taxes
By Myint Win Thein

A government ministry made a loss of about K 190 billion (US$ 200 million) last year due to privatization of lucrative industries such as brewery, cigarette, soft drinks etc, to businessmen according to a parliament representative. However, officials said that the losses were due to the lower demand for agricultural equipment, the suspension of two factories and fertilizer revenues. So what is to be blamed for the loss of K190 billion of public taxes, the businessmen who bought only the lucrative factories, or those who pravitized profitable industries to business men or those who managed the remaining factories still under the ministry?

Whose fault it is blamed for, it is important that such losses of public taxes should not be repeated in the future. All people who manage public taxes should not repeat such undesirable losses by developing a master plan to save government-owned businesses.

The Future in Their Hands

Kayah State, 1 July
—Villagers from Demoso and Hpruso townships are enjoying lunch together. This is not something they do every day. Today, they are on the first leg of an inter-village exchange visit, sharing experiences about community infrastructure. The visit is facilitated by the International Rescue Committee (IRC), the United Nations Development Programme’s (UNDP) infrastructure partner in Kayah state. The construction of roads, bus routes and community halls using community labour through cash-for-work schemes is meeting critical infrastructure needs and contributing to quick impact income-generation in the target villages. Visits such as this one are helping to strengthen relationships and networks between these ethnically-diverse and otherwise isolated communities.

“We learned that the Demoso villagers planned their cash-for-work schedules more systematically than we did. We need to do that better next time,” reflects U Jeromin, of Hpe Taw Tani Kh village in Hpruso Township.

In Kayah state, where UNDP is supporting livelihoods and strengthening social cohesion across 40 villages in Demoso and Hpruso townships, the commitment to keep such reflections about how to do things better in the future. UNDP’s work in Kayah involves several partners including the NYEIN Foundation, Kayah Phu Baptist Association, Karuna Myanmar Social Services, Kayah Baptist Association, Kainayar Rural Social Development Organization, Kay Boe Social Development and IRC.

Village rice banks, a rice stock that allows poor families to borrow or buy rice were set up by UNDP. They play an important social protection function for vulnerable households. People become food insecure in the lead-up to harvesting. In Oh Kay Village, in Demoso Township and Law Gyir village in Hpruso Township, the village committees have decided to keep the rice-bank mechanism going for the next two to three years. “We want to do it on our own next year” says U Thei Roi of Law Gyir.

Livelihood assistance in cash and kind, provided by UNDP, is helping people like U Kay Kaw Ley and U Stei Tyo No, of Hasang Du Kar village in Demoso Township, to buy livestock and to make a net profit of approximately USD 200 at the time of sale. They are helped by community extension workers, trained by UNDP in partnership with the livestock department, who help them with technical information and share information about keeping the animals healthy and disease-free. Daw Tar Malar Hpw, one of the few women extension workers, says she has conducted information sessions for all livestock breeders in the area, helping them to grow the demand, she is voluntarily extending her services to other villages in the area. She’d like to be considered for more advanced training so she can improve herself and provide better services to her community next time, she says.

Every government department should have its own plans to spend the public taxes most profitably for the people and the country because Myanmar is just beginning to try to get out of the pit of poverty. Our country is not rich enough to waste such amount of public taxes which would otherwise be spent in the other sectors of the country.

We appreciate your feedback and contributions. If you have any comments or would like to submit, editorial, analyses or reports please email Wallace. tun@gmail.com with your name and title.
Cultural heritages in Inwa

Saddhamma Jotika dhaja
Sitthu Dr. Khin Maung Nyunt

No scientific archaeological excavation has yet been carried out in Inwa, the old capital of Myanmar. Inwa is one of the most preserved ancient cities in Myanmar. Inwa was the capital of the Mon Kingdom in the 12th century. The kings and the people of Myanmar in the successive periods of Inwa, Nyaung Yan, First Kombuang and Second Kombuang dynasties (1364-1832) will appear in your mind's eye.

Inwa's regional name is "Ratanapura" meaning "the City of Gems" the capital city underwent a chequered, career, periods of peace, prosperity, war, poverty and decline. However, remnants of its heydays still stand in the form of religious edifices, palace platforms, a watch tower, city walls, few city gates, some fortresses and a long brick cause way.

Unfortunately today the major portions of Ratanapura are covered with paddy fields, farms, gardens and wild vegetation. But a site museum there exhibits a number of artifacts collected sites and a small pamphlets provides some information about this old city. Tour guides trained by the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism are available to take visitors around. Local monks and people are friendly and helpful to share with you their knowledge of this old city.

Inwa did not take Myanmar conventional quadrangular design because it was built on the land filled area and city was located at the confluence of five rivers. Its formations resemble the shape of a stylized lion seated on its hinds. The inner city was reconstructed these times in 1597, 1763 and 1832 A.D. Myanmar religious monuments, belonging to Bagan and Pinya periods are found in Inwa in various degrees of preservation. If you are interested in Inwa’s history, notable ruins worth seeing are platform at the palace site, a ninety foot high monastery watch tower, previously leaning like Pisa Tower in Italy, due to the earthquake in the year of 1838, but now up-righted by archeological engineers.

Other attractions that surely catch your eyes are (1) the city walls of mud, brick and stone, and a surviving city gate with a unique design of a wood-en spire spanning above it, an old monastery named Mah Ashu Monastary, but commonly known as “Namadaw Me Nu Oka Kyaua.” Namadaw means Chief queen. Me Nu is the name of this chief queen. Oka means brick and Kyaua means monastery. She was the influential queen of King Bagyidaw of Inwa (1819-1837). Thus monastery is a famous tourist attraction because of its architecture and beautiful decorative art. Unlike typical wooden monasteries, it is a masonry master piece with spacious halls, multiple roofs and a big prayer hall with seven tier superstructure.

There is another monastery of a later date. It is the Bagaya Kyaung of teak wood with ornate carvings. This structure has 267 teak wood posts.

An old fort which King Mindon, the second last Myanmar King built lies in a preserved state, about a mile from the city, which forms a triad with two other forts namely (1) Thabyetan Fort above Inwa and (2) Asikhan Fort in Sagaing on the opposite bank of the Ayeyawady River.

From the south city gate to a nearby town “Tada Oo” runs an old brick causeway reaching out to old Pinya, another capital city nearby. Many ruins of Pagodas, temples, monuments and new additions appears in your sight as you shall everywhere. Inwa has many histories to tell and many archeological runns to discover.

Ava (Inwa) often appears in the reports and travel writings of British and European diplomats Christian missionaries and visitors such as Major Henry Bunzel, Michael Symes, John Crawford, Hiram Cox, Father Sanger-mano and others. They described “Ava” as they eyewit-nessed with illustrations of paintings and sketches.

In spite of most flat land in the country, it is astonishing to know that “Ava” (Inwa) was found on the land filled sites and the five rivers confluence and became capital city not only once, but four times, lasting over five hundred years! Scholars of geo-politics, military science, trade, commerce and town planning have not been able to figure out why? This secret still remains with the Ava Kings and with the walls of the city.

Inwa today

In these days of the Age of globalization, with the booming of Myanmar tourism in the recent years, would Inwa remain a virgin field of archeology and cultural heritage? With the building of Mandalay International Airport in the periphery of “Ava” and the spouting of Mandalay, extending its urbanization into a mega city to all directions except the west where the River Ayeyawady flows as its water boundary line, Inwa is bound to emerge out of its medieval settings to become a modern town. Major projects are in the pipeline of dialogues for its infrastructure building, hotels, restaurants, parks, museums, amusement centres. So it is high time that Department of Archaeology and its related Departments and stakeholders sat down at the table for harmonious planning and implementation of their projects, rather than waiting for the risk of going ahead alone.

We now have three ancient Pyu City States, Beik-thano, Thayat Kitya and Hanlin already admitted as world cultural heritage and the great marble Book of Tipitaka in Mandalay in the world memory list. Taking food precedents and examples of these four world class cultural cities, we should be easier for Inwa.

Every two or three circle, there arrives heavy Monsun which causes floods to all aquatic bodies in our country. Dry Zone of central Myanmar is no exception. We have no effective method of the approach road to Mandalay International Airport being submerged or swept away in high Monsun. Though there is no sign of rain, billows of rain water gush down from the Shan Plateaus flow through sub-terranean streams under the landfill Inwa. Similarly the great river which runs down to Mandalay, the Ayeyawady, which spews out its flooded water from the Yadanaroubuniversity near and, so class es of buildings and even roads are suspended until the flood recedes. Also at Mandalay University the canal “Ye Ni Myaung”, flowing around the campus cannot disturb the classes by seeping out or even sometimes gushing, into surplus water into class rooms and some staff quarter in high monsoon.

Taking these real situations of past history, local geography, geology and practical experience of the people who really face such situations into consideration of the policy maker, planners, and implementers, modernization of Inwa can be carried out without much ado. Timely demarcation of archeological and cultural heritage zones should be made and known to the public. The awareness and education, all Myanmar citizens need to participate.

Especially mass mediums-Journalists, writer, T.V.s, video camera man, and all others prefer artists, visual artists, public service people, monks, nuns, teachers, doctors social organisations-youth, NGOs are very effective in this kind of task “public awareness campaign” as it is they who are constantly in touch with the people down to the grass root.

MoU for MCCA programme signed

Nay Pyi Taw, 11 July—The MoU on Implementation of Myanmar Climate Change Alliance Programme funded by the European Union UN-HABITAT and UNEP was signed by the European Union was signed by the Ministry of Environmental Conservation and Forestry, UN-HABITAT and the United Nations Environment Programme at Director Mr Kaveh Zahedi Fukasawa and Regional Director Mr Kaveh Zahedi signed the MoU.

The ceremony was attended by union deputy ministers of the ministry, directors-general, and regional directors and representatives from UN-HABITAT and UNEP.

The MCCA programme is to be implemented over four years with financial assistance from the EU and technical assistance from UN-HABITAT and UNEP.

Director-General U Nay Aye of the Environmental Conservation Department, Regional Director Mr Yoshinobu Fukasawa and Regional Director Mr Kaveh Zahedi signed the MoU.

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**World cities, home to most people, to add 2.5 billion more by 2050**

India, China and Nigeria will make up 37 percent of the projected growth in the next three decades, with India adding 404 million city residents, China 292 million, and Nigeria 212 million, by 2050. The key challenge for these countries will be to provide basic services such as education, health care, housing, infrastructure, transportation, energy and employment for their growing urban populations.

“Managing urban areas has become one of the most important development challenges of the 21st century,” Wilmoth said.

He said providing such services for a dense urban population was typically cheaper and less environmentally damaging than doing the same for a dispersed, rural population.

“The thing to be afraid of is situations in which governments do not plan for the growth that is going to take place,” Wilmoth said. “Then you can get sprawls, and slums and cities that are not pleasant places to live.”

The world’s urban population has grown so rapidly that while in 1990, there were only ten mega cities, today there are nearly three times as many — 28 worldwide.

Sixteen of those are in Asia, four in Latin America, three in each in Africa and Europe, and two in Northern America. Tokyo is the world’s most populous city with 38 million inhabitants, followed by Delhi with 25 million, Shanghai with 23 million and Mexico City, Mumbai and Sao Paulo, each with around 21 million people.

Israel says Iron Dome scores 90 percent rocket interception rate

Israel’s Iron Dome interceptor has shot down some 90 percent of Palestinian rockets it engaged during this week’s surge of Gaza fighting, up from the 85 percent rate in the previous mini-war of 2012, Israeli and US officials said on Thursday.

Seven batteries of the system, made by the state-owned Rafael Advanced Defence Systems Ltd and partly funded by Washington, have been rotated around Israel to tackle unprecedented long-range salvos by Hamas guerrillas. Rafael said it had been working on improvements to Iron Dome, which is designed to fire guided missiles at rockets that threaten to hit populated areas while ignoring others.

“We’ve been constantly fine-turning the programming of the system, including during the fighting. Our engineers are on the ground, with the military crews, analysing each interception and making adjustments to get the best results,” said a Rafael spokesman.

**EU election observing team confirms need for audit in Afghan election**

KABUL, 11 July — The European Union Election Assessment Team (EU EAT) has confirmed the need of comprehensive audit of the votes used in the Afghan presidential runoff held on 14 June, a statement of the observing team released here said. “At this stage of the analysis of the preliminary results, and without an in-depth audit, the final result is as yet uncertain and it is not possible to declare a winner, given the very high number of votes yet to be validated or annulled,” EU Chief Observer Thijs Berman said in the statement.

“Analysis of the figures published by the IEC leads to an estimate that between 2 and 4 million of the votes should be further investigated,” the statement added.

EU Chief Observer Thijs Berman stated in the statement, “The EU EAT encourages the election authorities to carry out, in Kabul, a comprehensive and transparent audit of the results in a neutral environment and in close cooperation with all the stakeholders as well as to concentrate audit efforts on the polling stations with very high turnouts, and the polling stations where nearly all the votes were cast in favour of a sole candidate.”

**Israel presses on with Gaza offensive, Palestinians fire rockets**

Israel firefighters work to put out fire in burning cars in an apartment building parking lot after it was hit by what Israeli police say was a rocket fired by Palestinians from the Gaza Strip, in Ashdod. 10 July, 2014. — Reuters

Gaza/JERUSALEM, 11 July — Israel pressed on for its fourth day with its Gaza offensive on Friday, striking the Hamas-dominated enclave from air and sea, as Palestinian militants kept up rocket attacks deep into the Jewish state.

At least 79 Palestinians, most of them civilians, have been killed in the offensive, which Israel says it launched to end persistent rocket attacks on its civilian population, some of which have reached Tel Aviv, Jerusalem and other cities.

The salvos into Israel have caused no fatalities or serious injuries, due in part to interception by Israel’s partly-US funded Iron Dome aerial defence system.

One rocket on Friday hit a petrol station in Israel’s port city of Ashdod, causing a huge blaze and at least three people were seriously wounded, an ambulance spokesman said.

Israeli leaders have appeared to hint at a possible invasion by ground forces and some 20,000 army reservists have been mobilized, giving them the means, if they choose, to mount a land offensive.

Lebanese security sources said two rockets were fired into northern Israel on Friday but they did not know who had fired them. Israel responded with artillery fire at the source of the rockets.— Reuters
Citizen scientists out of options to rescue old NASA satellite

As ISEE-3 neared Earth’s orbit this spring, a volunteer team launched a crowd-funding campaign to raise money, eventually ending up with nearly $160,000. The group also petitioned NASA to let it try to redirect the probe into a stable orbit around Earth so it could resume science operations. The Arecibo Observatory in Puerto Rico offered free telescope time and the group made two-way radio contact with ISEE-3 on 29 May. More than a month of painstaking checkouts followed. Last week, flight controllers finally coaxed a tiny thruster burn out of ISEE-3, which made it spin slightly faster, stabilizing it for the long series of engine firings needed to change its orbit.

Microsoft says cybercrime bust frees 4.7 mln infected PCs

Microsoft Corp said it has freed at least 4.7 million infected personal computers from control of cyber crooks in its most successful digital crime-fighting operation, which interrupted service at an Internet-services firm last week.

The world’s largest software maker has also identified at least another 4.7 million infected machines, though many are likely still controlled by cyber fraudsters, Microsoft’s cybercrime-fighting Digital Crimes Unit said on Thursday.

India, followed by Pakistan, Egypt, Brazil, Algeria and Mexico have the largest number of infected machines, in the first high-profile case involving malware developed outside Eastern Europe.

Richard Domingues Boscovich, assistant general counsel of the unit, said Microsoft would quickly provide government authorities and Internet service providers around the world with the IP addresses of infected machines so they can help users remove the viruses.

Digital warriors battle to get African games on phones

An illustrator works on a digital drawing board at the Kuluya Games office in Nigeria’s commercial capital of Lagos on 16 June, 2014.

Industries analysts have long hailed the explosive growth of mobile telecoms in sub-Saharan Africa — 635 million subscribers by the end of 2014 climbing to 930 million by the end of 2019 according to a report by Ericsson. But size isn’t everything. It is the quality of those mobile phone connections, subscriptions and surrounding infrastructure that is holding up Africa’s nascent games industry.

Chimpanzee intelligence largely determined by genes

Current Biology. “As is the case in humans, genes matter when it comes to cognitive abilities in chimpanzees,” lead author William Hopkins, professor in the Centre for Behavioral Neuroscience at Georgia State University, said in a statement.

“This doesn’t mean that they are the only factor determining cognitive abilities, but they cannot be ignored,” said Hopkins, who is also a research scientist in the Yerkes National Primate Research Centre at Emory University. The role of genetics in intelligence has long been debated in scientific circles. It is now clear from previous studies that humans’ performances on intelligence tests do depend to a large extent on genetics, but it can be modified by environmental factors, such as formal education and socioeconomic status.

Amazon seeks FAA permission to test drones outdoors near Seattle

Amazon is seeking permission from US regulators to test its delivery drones near Seattle, as part of a rapid expansion of a programme that has sparked widespread debate over the safety and privacy implications of drone technology.

Chief Executive Jeff Bezos wants to use drones — small unmanned aircraft — to deliver packages in 30 minutes or less as part of the programme dubbed “Prime Air.” The company is developing drones that can fly at speeds of 50 miles per hour. Now Amazon is seeking permission to test drones in outdoor areas near Seattle, where one of its research and development labs is working on the technology, according to a letter posted on the Federal Aviation Administration’s website on Thursday.

Boxes are pictured at Amazon’s logistics centre in Graben near Augsburg on 16 Dec, 2013.

Lagos / Nairobi, 11 July — Safari the warCKER crouches in the bush — a digitized heroine from the new mobile phone game “Afro Fighters” that its Nigerian creator hopes will soon rival the creator games development industry, not the quantity of handsets.

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Fukushima farmer takes on nuclear plant operator over wife’s suicide

YAMAIKIYA, (Japan), 11 July — A Japanese court is due to rule next month on a claim that Tokyo Electric Power is responsible for a woman’s suicide, in a landmark case that could force the utility to publicly admit culpability for deaths related to the Fukushima nuclear disaster.

In July 2011, nearly four months after the massive earthquake and tsunami that triggered a series of catastrophic failures at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant, Hamako Watanabe returned to her still-radioactive hilltop home, dosed herself in kerosene and set herself on fire.

“ If that accident hadn’t happened, we would have lived a normal, peaceful life” on their farm near some 50 km (30 miles) from the plant, said Watanabe, now 64, who discovered her charred body.

A district court in Fukushima is expected to rule in late August on Watanabe’s lawsuit, which Tokyo Electric (TEPCO) is contesting. The outcome could set a precedent for claims against the struggling utility, said Watanabe’s lawyer Tsuguo Hirota.

The triple meltdowns at the plant forced more than 150,000 people from their homes. About a third, including Watanabe, remain in temporary housing. The utility has settled a number of suicide-related claims through a government dispute resolution system, but declined to say how many or give details on how much it has paid.

Japan has made public 25 disaster-related death cases that were settled including eight children, in a legal process.—Reuters

Eleven killed in China school bus crash

BEIJING, 11 July — Eleven people died, including eight children, in a school bus crash in China’s southern Hunan Province, state media said on Friday, the latest in a string of traffic accidents that have fuelled public anger over unsafe transport for school children.

A bus taking kindergarten children home on a rural, mountainous road near Xiangtan city tumbled into a reservoir after an accident in Xiangtan, Hunan Province, on 11 July, 2014. —Reuters

“ The tragedy prompted then-premier Wen Jiabao to promise more government funds to improve school bus services. China’s rural areas are known for providing unsafe transport for children in ageing vans and trucks, often on poorly maintained roads.” —Reuters

Pro-Russian separatist fighters gesture from an armoured missile launcher at a checkpoint on the outskirts of the eastern Ukrainian city of Donetsk, on 10 July, 2014.—Reuters

One dead, 20 injured in explosion in Turkey

ISTANBUL, 11 July —One people died and more than 20 were injured in an explosion in western Turkey’s Aegean Sea city of Denizli early in the morning on Friday.

Denizli governor Abdulkadir Demir told reporters that five of the injured people are in critical condition.

The accident occurred in a bakery at the center of the city, Bayramyurt. Sirens of ambulances have been deployed to the scene.

According to the report, the explosion was likely caused by a gas leak but not yet confirmed.—Reuters

In further diplomacy to help the rebels, Moscow urged Putin by telephone to automatically halve requested damage to expedite the process.—Reuters

Ukraine readies plan against rebels; Germany, France press Putin

KIEV / DONETSK (Ukraine), 11 July — Ukrainian forces regained more ground but sustained further casualties on Thursday in clashes with separatists, while two Western allies urged Russia’s Vladimir Putin to exert more pressure on the rebels to find a negotiated end to the conflict.

Government forces have recently gained the upper hand in the three-month conflict against separatists in the Russian-speaking eastern regions in which more than 200 government troops have been killed as well as hundreds of civilians and rebel fighters.

The Ukrainian military says it has a plan to deliver a “nasty surprise” to the heavily-armed separatists who have dug in Donetsk, a city of 900,000 people, after being pushed out of their bastion in Slaviansk last weekend. In a further success, military spokes-

man Vladyslav Seleznyov said government forces on Thursday re-took the town of Siversk, east of Slaviansk, when separatists fled.

A separatist confirmed government’s version saying it was “more or less correct”. “There was no sense in holding it and reinforcing it (Siversk) because there was a big risk of being encircled,” he said.

But casualties mounted on the Ukrainian side with the deaths of three more soldiers in two attacks on Wednesday night in different regions of the east, the military said.

One was killed in an ambush of an army convoy near Bakhmut. Two others died when an armoured personnel carrier was blown up by a landmine in the village of Chervona Zorya near Donetsk.

Government forces guarding Donetsk’s international airport, scene of bitter fighting in late May, came under mortar fire on Thursday but the rebel attack was repelled, Seleznyov said.

In further diplomacy to end the worst Russia-West crisis since the Cold War, French President Francois Hollande and German Chancellor Angela Merkel urged Putin by telephone to exert all necessary pressure on the separatists to bring them to negotiate effectively,” an Elysee Palace statement said.

They also asked him to take concrete steps to ensure control of the border where, the Kiev government says, Russian authorities have been turning a blind eye to fighters crossing with weapons and equipment to help the rebels. Moscow protested to Kiev on Thursday after it said Ukrainian military fired on a Russian border checkpoint. The Foreign Ministry said it was not the first time the border post at Gukovo had come under fire. Moscow is under sanctions by the United Nations and the European Union over the Ukraine crisis but denies it is supporting the rebels in the Russian-speaking east of Ukraine.—Reuters

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Faltering Germany casts cloud over fragile euro zone

Brussels, 11 July—Germany’s faltering economy has cast further doubt over the euro zone’s prospects for recovery this year, with no other big country strong enough to pick up the slack. Since late last year, the 18 countries using the euro have been climbing steadily out of a two-year recession. But just as the bloc appeared to be turning the corner, its star economy, Germany, has fumbled the ball.

People look for clothes in a store with discount signs during the second day of summer sales in Brussels on 2 July, 2014.—Reuters

To make matters worse, other big states, including the euro zone’s second-largest economy France, show little prospect of a strong rebound.

French industrial production plunged unexpectedly in May, and inflation fell to its lowest level since the financial crisis in 2009. Adding to the gloom, Italy’s factories also saw a 1.2 percent drop in output in May, the steepest fall in more than a year and a half. And while Spain is expecting growth to accelerate to near 2 percent in 2015, one in four of Spain’s workforce are out of work after the collapse of a property price bubble.

“Europe is getting more and more Japanese,” said Carsten Brzeski, an economist with ING, echoing concerns of others that the region faces permanent slow growth and no price increases.

“The euro zone is flat lining, I don’t see substantial growth for another year.”—Reuters

Forecast valid until evening of the 12th July, 2014: Rain or thundershowers will be scattered in Sagaing, Mandalay and Magway Regions, Kayah State, fairly widespread in Bago Region, Shan and Rakhine States and widespread in the remaining Regions and States with likelihood of isolated heavy falls in Yangon and Taninthayi Regions, Rakhine and Mon States. Degree of certainty is (100%).
Bollywood Star

Unaffected by comparisons, Alia Bhatt says Shraddha has given soul to ‘Galliyan’

NEW DELHI, 11 July — Alia Bhatt is not bothered about comparisons between her song in ‘Humpty Sharma Ki Dulhania’ and her contemporary Shraddha Kapoor’s hit number from ‘Ek Villain’.

The 21-year-old star, who has earlier sung in ‘Highway’, has been appreciated for her voice in the unplugged version of ‘Samajhawan’ from her upcoming release. “I always knew there would be comparisons. Karan (Jo- han) and I in fact discussed it too. I told him that I don’t care because I am not comparing in my head. So let people compare because it is something to be talked about. Two contemporaries singing back-to-back unplugged versions of two hit romantic songs are bound to draw comparisons,” Alia told reporters here.

Alia is all praise for Shraddha and feels she has given a completely different soul to it. “I think she has sung it brilliantly,” she said.

The ‘Highway’ star has plans to cut her own album in the near future. “I do plan to take my singing forward. Hopefully, I will be out with my own album,” Alia said.

‘Humpty Sharma Ki Duluhan’ winner will rejoin ‘The View’ in the fall.

“The View” is going through an overhaul after journalist Barbara Walters, who created the show in 1997, retired in May and two other co-hosts, Sherri Shepherd and actress Jenny McCarthy, announced they would be leaving.

Goldberg is the only host who is returning.— Reuters

Sharon Stone ready to date again

LONDON, 11 July — ‘Basic Instinct’ star Sharon Stone has revealed that she is ready to date again. The 56-year-old actress said she was more focused on her two children earlier and is now more comfortable with trying to find a new relationship, reported Contactmusic.

“What’s happened is my kids have reached the age where I feel comfortable to date. I didn’t want to date when they were little. Who needs a bunch of people running in and out of their lives? Now I feel comfortable dating... I am available for dating,” she said.

The star, who was previously married to Michael Greenberg and Phil Bronstein, was linked to her old friend Antonio Banderas, who split from his wife Melanie. But the speculation was later quashed by the actors.— PTI

Paris Hilton ditches junk food

LONDON, 11 July — Socialite Paris Hilton has lost weight since she changed her eating habits. The 33-year-old hotel heiress, who was known for her slim frame, said she decided to give up fast food to lead a healthier lifestyle, reported Contactmusic.

“I lost about five pounds just from staying away from the Drive-Thrus. I can feel the difference especially when I’m in a bathing suit,” Hilton said.

“I used to eat that way, but I decided to change things this year. Now I don’t do that. There are times when I will stop at a Carl’s Jr, but I will maybe get a turkey burger or something healthier instead of a cheeseburger and fries. I am more careful now,” she added.

Paris Hilton

TV newcomers ‘True Detective,’ ‘Orange’ storm Emmys race

NEW YORK, 11 July — Television newcomers “True Detective” and “Orange Is the New Black” are storming the Emmys race on Thursday in a challenge to stalwarts like “Breaking Bad” and “Modern Family.” Online streaming company Netflix Inc, the big disrupter of the Emmys last year, more than doubled its nominations for TV’s highest honors to 31 this year. Its political thriller “House of Cards,” which stars Kevin Spacey and Robin Wright, earned 13 nods for its second season. HBO’s medieval thriller and fan favorite “Game of Thrones” received 19 overall nods to 76, we know of no network for the 14th year in a row. While cable networks and Netflix fared well, the broadcast networks were once again shut out of the top competition, best drama. Last year’s winner, AMC’s gritty tale “Breaking Bad,” will compete for its final season, along with the network’s ad world drama “Mad Men,” “House of Cards,” PBS’s British period drama “Downton Abbey,” “Game of Thrones” and “True Detective.”— Reuters
In Vietnam, a World Cup loss is a whole different ball game

HANOI, 11 July — Sitting alone in the corner of a bar in Vietnam’s capital, Doan Minh Tuan buried his head in his hands as he watched the penalty shootout save that the Netherlands made from Costa Rica. Tuan, 32, is a compulsive gambler, and his loss was about as big as they come. “I sold everything in my home — television, motorbike, fridge — and now I’ve lost my house. I have nothing now. This is all I have left,” he said, pointing to the 250,000 dong ($12) on the table in front of him.

“I bet on all games since the World Cup started. Damn my life, I always lose. The bookmaker took my house this evening, my wife had to carry our daughter to her mother’s home. I’ve nothing to lose now and I’ll sleep on the street tonight.”

Tuan’s case is the tip of the iceberg in a country where gambling is rampant and strictly illegal.

Vietnamese are known for betters on almost anything, from card games and lotteries to online poker and back-street cockfights. Legal gambling is confined to the state lottery and dog and horse racing in some regions.

But soccer is the nation’s firm favourite, especially when the World Cup comes around.

Betting values range from a dollar among colleagues to tens of thousands for high-rollers, but losses can mean repossessing property or trading-in of smartphones, motorcycles, watches and jewellery in return for money to pay debts.

In the most extreme cases, some gamblers have taken their own lives, with media reporting as many as three suicides related to betting during this World Cup. That included a man in the central city of Hue, who drank a bottle of pesticide after Italy’s 2-1 win over England on 14 June.

There’s no official estimate of the value of Vietnam’s clandestine gambling scene, but the real figure is assumed to be huge. The size of the networks, often mafia-linked, is unknown.

Anticipating a surge in wagering in a country that already bets big on European leagues, police intensified their crackdown during the World Cup and have so far made busts of underground gangs that have handled a combined 6.5 trillion dong ($307 million) since the tournament started on 12 June.

But it’s an uphill struggle to counter a practice entrenched in society and where bookmakers seem always ahead of the game. The Internet has proved difficult to police, with gangs taking bets surreptitiously at street level and gambling large sums online on legitimate websites hosted overseas.

“After a few raids by police over the years, dealers have changed their tactics. They’ve become more sophisticated,” said an official with knowledge of the crackdown, who requested anonymity. — Reuters

China looking into Bank of China money laundering allegations

SHANGHAI, 11 July — China’s central bank is looking into allegations by a state broadcaster that Bank of China, the country’s fourth largest lender, has been laundering money offshore for clients, the official Xinhua news agency said on Friday.

While Beijing maintains a tight control over its capital account, limiting foreign currency transfers by individuals to $50,000 a year, wealthy Chinese, including corrupt government officials, have managed to move their money out to snap up overseas property and other assets.

The China Central Television (CCTV) aired what it said was an undercover investigation programme on Wednesday that focused on a service offered by BOC called “You Hui Tong”, which is designed to help Chinese individuals take part in investment emigration programmes in other countries to move cash offshore in amounts that exceed the annual cap.

The report quoted unnamed BOC sources as saying the bank kept the programme secret because it knew it was illegal. However, BOC has denied the allegations.

Xinhua news agency reported the People’s Bank of China, the central bank, was now looking into the matter.

“We have noticed the media report about a commercial bank’s cross-border remittance business, and are verifying related facts,” Xinhua quoted an unidentified central bank spokesman as saying.

The PBOC statement quoted by Xinhua did not name the Bank of China specifically, referring instead to “a commercial bank,” and it did not use the term “investigation,” which often implies a degree of formality.

BOC has said the service was part of the government’s efforts to open the capital account and increase the international popularity of the yuan, and that branches of other banks in Guangdong province offered similar services.

Investment programs that grant Chinese passport holders citizenship or residency in exchange for substantial investment have become popular with wealthy citizens and government officials.

China has been cracking down on such “naked officials”, one whose spouse and children have emigrated. In May, a senior official in Guangdong province was removed from his position in what Xinhua said was the first of its kind.

Since the mid-1990s, an estimated 16,000 to 18,000 Communist party officials, businessmen, CEOs and other individuals have “disappeared” from China, taking with them some 800 billion yuan ($133 billion), according to a PBOC report prepared in 2008. — Reuters
Argentina, Germany start final tuning, Suarez loses appeal

Argentina’s national soccer team player Javier Mascherano (2nd L) talks to teammate Lucas Biglia (C) as they sit with Ezequiel Lavezzi (R), Martin Demichelis (2nd R) and Rodrigo Palacio (R, standing) during a training session ahead of their 2014 World Cup final match against Germany, in Vasco da Gama on 10 July, 2014. — Reuters

RIO DE JANEIRO, 11 July — Argentina and Germany were both back at work on Thursday, secretly hatching plans for Sunday’s World Cup final as Uruguay striker Luis Suarez lost his appeal against his ban for biting.

While their contrasting styles promise a classic battle between Europe and South America, Argentina and Germany have plenty to think about as they put the finishing touches to their preparations. Lionel Messi and his Argentina team mates had a light workout after they returned to their base camp in Belo Horizonte after Wednesday’s dramatic penalty shootout win over the Netherlands.

Argentina winger Angel Di Maria joined the training session in the hope of being able to play in the final despite suffering a thigh injury just days ago.

Di Maria, the South Americans’ most creative player after Messi, hurt a muscle when shooting at goal during the quarter-final win over Belgium. He jogged lightly but is still racing against the clock to be ready, although striker Sergio Aguero’s full recovery from a muscle strain has given Argentina a boost.

“We have to win and it doesn’t matter if we play well or not,” Aguero said.

“This is the game we have all wanted to play since we left Buenos Aires, and against an aggressive and tough opponent.” Germany were also back on the training pitch at their secluded base camp in Santo Andre after taking Wednesday off following their 7-1 thrashing of host-nation Brazil on Tuesday.

Defender Mats Hummels was cleared to rejion his team mates after undergoing treatment for a knee injury that prompted him to miss the second half against Brazil. With the team only having a gentle run-out, Germany’s assistant coach Hansi Flick said Hummels was free to do what he wanted.

“All the players will be able to train, whether it’s an exercise bike or on the pitch — whichever they prefer,” Flick said.

“It’s up to each individual to decide what they want to do in training.” Germany’s biggest challenge remains how to contain Messi, who has been heavily marked throughout the tournament but still looms as the big danger.

The Germans sat down together to watch the second semi-final and were impressed at how the Dutch managed to neutralise Messi. “We’ve also got a plan,” Flick told reporters. “But we’re not going to reveal that here to you.”

Preparations were also underway for the third-place playoff in Brasilia on Saturday with Brazil and the Netherlands in very different states of mind.

Ebroken Pressure

The hosts are under enormous pressure to gain a minor consolation win following the Germany debacle, while Dutch coach Louis van Gaal said he did not believe the playoff match should be played so his side may struggle for motivation.

For most Brazilians, the prospect of watching their traditional rivals Argentina play in the final has only added to their humiliation but injured Brazil striker Neymar said he would be supporting his fellow south Americans.

“I always said I wanted Argentina to get to the final because Brazil would be there but it never worked out like that,” said Neymar, whose World Cup was cut short when he broke a bone in his back against Colombia.

“I still want them there because my two (Barcelona) team mates are there, Messi and (Javier) Mascherano, and I hope they win.”

An emotional Neymar cried as he recalled the high challenge from Colombia defender Juan Zuniga which ruled him out of the tournament with a back injury.

“If it had been another two centimetres I could be in a wheelchair today,” Neymar said.

Away from the pitch, Suarez, banned from all soccer activity for four months and nine competitive internationals for biting Italy defender Giorgio Chiellini during the World, lost his appeal.

FIFA rejected the appeal filed by the Uruguay-an Football Association (AUF), although it can still take the case to the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS), a FIFA spokeswoman said.

Police in Rio were searching for the chief executive of a Swiss hospitality company implicated by an investigation into the illegal resale of VIP World Cup tickets.

After a court ordered the arrest of the executive and the continued detention of 10 other suspects already held in the probe, police were unable to find Ray Whelan, of MATCH Services, a company contracted by tournament organisers to arrange ticketing and hospitality packages. — Reuters

Preview — Brazil face must-win game the Dutch don’t even want

BRASILIA, 11 July — After Brazil’s utter humiliation against Germany, anything less than a win in Saturday’s third-place match against an indifferent Netherlands team would deepen the gloom hanging over the World Cup hosts.

Brazil’s astounding 7-1 semi-final thrashing by rampant Germany ended their dream of winning a second World Cup title, and their quarter-final against the Americans most creative player after Messi, hurt a muscle when shooting at goal during the quarter-final win over Belgium. He jogged lightly but is still racing against the clock to be ready, although striker Sergio Romero stopped two Dutch spot-kicks.

Van Gaal, who will take charge of Manchester United after the World Cup, told a conference the third-place game “should never be played” and noted he had been saying the same thing for 10 years. “But the worst thing is I believe that chances are that you lose twice in a row,” he said.

“And a tournament in which you’ve played so marvelously well, you would go home as a loser just because you could possibly have lost the last two matches and this has got nothing to do with sport in my view.”

“So, in a football tournament particularly not at the last stage you shouldn’t have players playing match for third-fourth place. Because there is only one award that counts and that is becoming world champion.”

The Netherlands have never won soccer’s global showpiece despite reaching the final three times. They lost in 1974 and 1978 to West Germany and Argentina respectively and were beaten 1-0 by Spain in South Africa four years ago. Brazil and the Netherlands have played 11 times and four times at the World Cup, including the quarter-final in 2010 when the Dutch came from behind to win 2-1. — Reuters

Wesley Sneijder of the Netherlands (R) and his teammates react after the final penalty was taken during their penalty shootout against Argentina in their 2014 World Cup semifinals at the Corinthians arena in Sao Paulo on 9 July, 2014. —Reuters

They lost in 1974 and 1978 to West Germany and Argentina respectively and were beaten 1-0 by Spain in South Africa four years ago. Brazil and the Netherlands have played 11 times and four times at the World Cup, including the quarter-final in 2010 when the Dutch came from behind to win 2-1. — Reuters

Argentina

Germany

World Cup 2014 Brazil

Third Place play off

2:30 MST (13.7.2014)

Wales

Brazil

Netherlands

Argentina

Final

1:30 MST (14.7.2014)

Argentina

South Korea