Myanmar to accelerate birth registration with technical, financial support from UNICEF, EU

By Ye Myint

YANGON, 28 July — A forum on accelerating birth registration in Myanmar took place on Monday, with the aim of seeking ways and means through consultations to ensure all children get registered in the country.

Following the participation of a Myanmar delegation at the Asia-Pacific civil registrars meeting in Thailand in July, a coordination committee was established for birth registration to develop public awareness on birth registration and to register all children after birth.

In his opening address, Deputy Minister for Immigration and Population U Kyaw Kyaw Win announced that a birth registration week will be organized with the help of technical and financial support from the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and European Union (EU) in Magway Region and Chin and Mon States as a pilot project before nationwide coverage of birth registration.

He quoted from UNICEF’s data that Myanmar, a signatory to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, has 72.4 per cent of under-five children holding birth certificates, which is more than 65 per cent globally.

In her welcome remarks, Ms. Shalini Bahuguna, UNICEF Myanmar deputy representative, acknowledged Myanmar’s remarkable progress in the registration of children. She, however, pointed out that around 1.6 million children have not officially been recorded in Myanmar.

Expressing her expectations from the forum, she stressed the need to address challenges in registering children over live and offspring of migrants. Regarding the planned birth registration week, which will see a huge public awareness campaign, as many as 400,000 children in the pilot areas could benefit from this, she said.

The first-ever process of providing a solid foundation for the existence of the child under the law to enjoy civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights and have access to services such as health and education, will be undertaken by departments concerned including the Health Department, Immigration and Population Department, Central Statistics Organization and General Administration Department.

In implementing the coverage of birth registration in a total of 44 townships in Magway, Chin and Mon, a computerized database will be used for creating electronic records of registered children.

During the three sessions of the forum, officials made presentations highlighting the insufficient number of midwives in areas with a higher rate of unregistered children, which was cited among the difficulties in identifying children unregistered at birth.

According to official data, around 10,000 midwives are helping women during delivery in the country’s rural areas.

As children without birth certificates are at greater risk of being trafficked for forced labour or sexual slavery, the implementation of a birth registration process is a must for all children to ensure their protection.— NLM

World Hepatitis Day marked in Yangon

By Khaing Thanda Lwin

YANGON, 28 July—Union Minister for Health Dr Pe Thet Khin said on Monday that the government has increased over K150 billion this financial year, more than K50 billion of previous year to improve the public health sector, with the ministry claiming it has been using the money in an effective way, at the celebrations to mark World Hepatitis Day 2014 in Yangon, organized by the Liver Foundation.

He also urged social, state-run and UN organizations, as well as health foundations and the general public to participate in raising awareness on health issues to develop the country.

Myanmar needs to educate on the hepatitis virus and raise funds for the public health sector as there are not enough treatment facilities, especially in rural areas, the Union minister added.

Liver Specialist Professor Dr Than Sitt said that practising good hygiene and sanitation also help prevent infections with the hepatitis A and E viruses.

He also explained measures to help prevent Hepatitis B and C that are the most common causes of liver diseases all over the world. Hepatitis B is a viral infection that attacks the liver and can cause both acute and chronic diseases. The virus is transmitted through contact with blood or other body fluids of an infected person.

Hepatitis C is a contagious liver disease that ranges in severity from a mild illness lasting a few (See page 2)
Parliament seeks solution to approve national education bill and bill on aircraft equipment

Nay Pyi Taw, 28 July
The Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Joint Bill Committee held a meeting on approval for the national education bill and international-interest-in-aircraft equipment bill that have led to a difference in opinions between the Pyithu Hluttaw and the Upper House, at the committee’s office in Nay Pyi Taw on Monday.

Chairman of Joint Bill Committee Deputy Speaker of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw U Nanda Kyaw Swa and members of committees and commissions of the Hluttaw discussed the remaining parts of the bills to approve those at the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw session.—MNA

Minister for Livestock, Fisheries and Rural Development tours Meiktila

Nay Pyi Taw, 28 July
—Minister for Livestock, Fisheries and Rural Development U Ohn Myint visited Ale Village in Meiktila on 25 July to inspect implementation of electricity projects in Myanmar, saying that most villages in the country still do not have electricity.

He also inspected the sinking of tube-wells, maintenance of the water storage lake and installation of solar lights in the village.

The union minister then proceeded to Thaphan multi-purpose livestock breeding farm in Meiktila Township and explained arrangements for the dissemination of livestock breeding technologies. He also visited Wundwin and Amarapura townships on his inspection tour.—MNA

Union Minister U Ohn Myint views sinking tube-well for water supply in Meiktila Township.—MNA

Union ministers inspect sites for industrial zone, main power station

Nay Pyi Taw, 28 July
—Union Minister at the President Office U Soe Thane, Union Minister for Immigration and Population U Khin Yi and Rakhine State Chief Minister U Maung Maung Ohn inspected the geographical conditions in Ponnagyun Township in Rakhine State on Monday to construct an industrial zone.

They heard reports on arrangements for construction of an industrial zone by officials and urged them to also construct affordable housings for locals.

The Union ministers and the chief minister also inspected a site near Ponnagyun Township to construct a main power station there for “further development of the state.”

The officials also visited the Basic Education High School in the township and met with the headmaster, teachers and students to discuss renovation of old school buildings and ways to achieve a higher pass rate in the school, among other topics.

They looked into maintenance of Hsatoeeka Creek by Directorate of Water Resources and Improvement of River Systems in Sittway. Redredging the creek will prevent landslides on both banks of the creek and floods in Sittway and it will ease arrival of passenger boats.—MNA

World Hepatitis Day marked in Yangon

(from page 1)

According to a survey, there are about 170 million people with Hepatitis C and about 400 million people living with Hepatitis B virus all over the world. In Myanmar, it is estimated that about 10 per cent of the population is infected with Hepatitis B and two to five per cent people with Hepatitis C.—NLM

Union Attorney-General’s Office holds seminar to develop government procurement law

Nay Pyi Taw, 28 July
—A ‘High-level Seminar on Best Practices for Developing a Law on Government Procurement in Myanmar’ was held here on Monday.

The Union Attorney General’s Office and the U.S. Agency for International Development USAID jointly organized the two-day seminar which is the first of its kind in the country since President U Thein Sein’ government took office in 2011.

Dr. Tun Shin, Attorney General of the Union said: “Procurement of equipment for the government should be carried out systematically. The systematic practices in this matter could help develop the economy of the country, ensure market competition, manufacture quality products, acquire after-sales services and tackle the inflation rate in the country.”

He also suggested the development of laws in the trading sector should be carried out in accordance with international laws after studying the Federal Acquisition Regulation of the United States, the Public Procurement and Disposal Act 2005 of Kenya and the Procurement Law of Vietnam.

The seminar will discuss to ensure transparency and basic principles of market economy in procurement programmes of the government.

Chris Milligan, Mission Director of USAID agreed with the suggestions of the Attorney General of the Union and urged for the betterment of procurement programmes.

The seminar was attended by Union Minister for Mining, Deputy Minister for Electric Power, Deputy Minister for Industry and Minister for Telecommunication and Information, representatives from USAID and Commercial Law Development Program (CLDP), law experts from World Bank and senior government officials.

MNA

Preparations being made for construction of Hsatoeeka Bridge in Sittway Township for better transport of local people.—MNA

Union Attorney-General of the Union Dr Tun Shin with delegates to High-level Seminar on Best Practices for Developing a Law on Government Procurement in Myanmar.

MNA
Economic sanctions lead to increase in cultivation of opium poppy:
defence services personnel representative

NAY PYI TAW, 28 July—Cultivation of opium poppy has risen since 2006 as economic sanctions have created poverty, an defence service personnel representative said at the Upper House on Monday.

Elimination of poppy cultivation was comprehensively discussed at the Upper House session today as a representative submitted a proposal to urge the union government to combat the practice of cultivation, trafficking and abuse of opium with the participation of the people.

In addition, the representative said cultivation of opium poppy was a bad legacy of colonialists who permitted poppy cultivation in Shan and Kachin States during the colonial period.

Although successive governments after the independence from the British have tried to eliminate poppy cultivation as a national cause, it still persists, he added.

Impact of the economic sanctions was not visible in urban areas, but in rural areas, with farmers forced to resort to poppy cultivation as it was easy money, according to the representative.

Another representative suggested that a solution must be found concerning the increase in cultivation, trafficking and abuse of opium, despite successive governments strategies, projects and operations to root out the practice.

The Upper House session approved the proposal.

Other topics discussed at the session included low-cost housing projects for retirees from the army and cash assistance for township level committees.

The Lower House session on Monday focused on arrangements for unclaimed lottery rewards, property prices for taxation and a proportional representation system.

The Upper House Speaker U Khin Aung Myint said at a prize presentation ceremony to outstanding students in the matriculation exam in the 2013-14 academic year held at No 1 Basic Education High School in Yamethin on Monday.

He also attended a ceremony to mark the upgrading of an affiliated high school into a high school in Ywathit West Village in Pyawbwe.

At the prize presentation ceremony, he awarded prizes to outstanding students and schools in Yamethin and Pyawbwe Townships.

He handed over K 1 million each to the two townships and over 4,500 poor students and the ceremony.

Myanmar, Japan to further strengthen friendly ties

NAY PYI TAW, 28 July—Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and Senior Vice-Minister for Defence Mr Ryota Takeda of Japan agree on further military cooperation between the two countries.—MNA

Curfew further eased in Mandalay

MANDALAY, 28 July—The curfew imposed in seven townships in Mandalay District since the beginning of the month has further been eased, according to an injunction issued on Monday.

No one is allowed to go outside with permission from 10 p.m. to 3 a.m., the order said. At first, the curfew was imposed from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. and later eased from 9 p.m. to 3 a.m. According to the order, Mandalay District General Administration Department reduced the curfew hours as the security situation in the district has improved.

The order will come into effect from 10 p.m. on Monday. —MNA

Upper House Speaker presents prizes to outstanding students

NAY PYI TAW, 28 July—Teachers should consider their work as a nation building task”, Upper House Speaker U Khin Aung Myint said at a prize presentation ceremony to outstanding students in the matriculation exam in the 2013-14 academic year held at No 1 Basic Education High School in Yamethin on Monday.

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and Senior Vice-Minister for Defence Mr Ryota Takeda of Japan agree on further military cooperation between the two countries.—MNA

Beikman Hall in Nay Pyi Taw on Monday to hold talks about further strengthening friendly ties between the two armed forces of Myanmar and Japan, cooperation in peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific region, sending of scholarship students and giving language training, and cooperation in prevention against natural disasters.

Myawady
**Instructor Course for Disaster Risk Reduction underway**

MANDALAY, 28 July—Union Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Dr Daw Myat Myat Ohn Khin delivered an address at the opening ceremony of the Volunteer Youths Instructor Course of the Volunteer Welfare, Relief and Rehabilitation Department on 12th Street in Upokdaw Ward in Aungmyathazan Township to witness the learning process of youths at the training course that will last one week.

She also attended the opening ceremony of the School for Children with Disabilities in Mandalay of the SWD on 26th street between 59th and 60th streets in Aungmyathazan Township on Sunday.

The school admits 78 children with disabilities under 18 years old. Thitha Ko Ko (Mandalay)

**Makeup performer contest, Mandalay Lifestyle and Women’s Fashion Show 1-4 August**

MANDALAY, 28 July—A makeup performer contest and the Mandalay Lifestyle and Women’s Fashion Show will be held in Mandalay at the corner of 26th and 71st streets in Mandalay at the corner of 26th and 71st streets in Mandalay at the corner of 26th and 71st streets in Mandalay.

Any visitor can attend the makeup performer contest and the Mandalay Lifestyle and Women’s Fashion Show, organizers said.

Thitha Ko Ko (Mandalay)

**U-20 Inter-Township Football Tournament held**

MANDALAY, 28 July—The Mandalay Region Chief Minister’s Trophy Men’s U-20 inter-township football tournament 2014 started its second round knockout matches at the Bahtoo Stadium and Shwemantaung Sports Ground in Mandalay on 25 July.

In the debut of the knockout level, Singaing Township thrashed Chamayathazan Township 3-1 at Bahtoo Stadium, while Madaya Township beat Myataya Township 2-1 at Shwemantaung Sports Ground.

The final match will be held at Bahtoo Stadium on 1 August.

Maung Pyi Thu (Mandalay)

**Educative week activities performed at Toungoo University**

TOUNGOO, 28 July—Toungoo University held the educative talks, exum-pore talks and subject-wise exhibition in commemoration of the education week activities for 2013-14 academic year, aimed at uplifting intelligence of the students and improving innovative measures.

Rector Dr Tin Tun of the university attended the ceremony.

The education week activities feature display of subject-wise books and research papers from Zoology Department, insects, fish, snakes, turtles, bats and their fossils found near Toungoo University, posters and documentary photos of the department in addition to the exhibitions of other departments.—NLM-017

**Business Development Management course to be conducted in Mandalay**

MANDALAY, 28 July—The Mandalay Branch of the Trade Promotion Department will open a Business Development Management course in the second week of August, aimed at sharing experience and knowledge about future business programmes and management skills to youths.

“Experienced trainers will give training to those applying for an international academic system, with manuals for managers issued to the trainees. Officials will present BDM certificates—Reference Course of BDA, Cardiff Singapore,” an official of the Trade Promotion Department of the Ministry of Commerce said.

Upon completion, the trainees may be able to better compete on the job market, and work in management, human resource development, sales & marketing, and the trade sector.

The training will be conducted from 9 am to 4 pm from 14 to 17 August at the Trade Promotion Department at the corner of 35th and 65th streets in Mandalay.

Thitha Ko Ko (Mandalay)
Cambodian parliament officially accepts opposition leader as lawmaker-elect

PINOM PENG, 28 July — The National Assembly of Cambodia on Monday held an extraordinary session to officially confirm the validity of opposition leader Sam Rainsy as a lawmaker-elect.

“The National Assembly announces to recognize Sam Rainsy, president of the Cambodia National Rescue Party (CNRP), as a lawmaker-elect for Kampong Cham province instead of CNRP’s lawmaker-elect Kuoy Bunroeun, who has stood down,” Heng Samrin, president of the National Assembly, announced during the session.

The National Election Committee (NEC) barred Rainsy from standing as a parliamentary candidate for a national election in July last year, citing his absence from the country’s voter list due to criminal convictions.

Rainsy, who spent nearly four years in self-imposed exile to avoid an 11-year jail term on charges of disinformation and destruction of public property, received a pardon from King Norodom Sihanouk and returned to Cambodia just two weeks before the election on 28 July last year.

In October, he was allowed to re-register as a voter so that he is eligible to replace another lawmaker on the CNRP’s list. Speaking to reporters after the parliamentary session, Sam Rainsy announced that a year-long political crisis over last July’s election results was over.

“I’d like to inform the compatriots that the political crisis has ended,” he said. “Now, it is a new stage in the history of Cambodia to strengthen national unification, to protect national interest, to defense territorial integrity, and to improve living conditions of the people.”

Briefly spoke to journalists after the session, Prime Minister Hun Sen, vice-president of the ruling Cambodian People’s Party (CPP), said political environment is good and officials from the two parties are working together to resolve the remaining issues.

CNRP announced to end its nearly year-long boycott of parliament last week after the CPP agreed to its requests for an overhaul of NEC, power-sharing in the parliament and a TV license.

The CNRP’s 55 lawmakers-elect will soon be sworn in at the parliament, where they will join the CPP’s 68 lawmakers to amend the Constitution in order to enshrine the autonomy of a new NEC.

Japan’s PM Abe attends dinner with PM Persad-Bissessar

Japan’s Prime Minister Shinzo Abe attends a dinner with Trinidad and Tobago Prime Minister Kamla Persad-Bissessar in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, on 27 July, 2014. — KYODO NEWS

Kerry to woo Modi’s India, but quick progress unlikely

WASHINGTON, 28 July — US Secretary of State John Kerry visits India this week as Washington tries to revitalize ties it sees as a counterbalance to China’s rising power, but rapid progress is unlikely, despite the reformist reputation of India’s new leader.

The visit by Kerry, and a trip by Defence Secretary Chuck Hagel next month, follow the resounding election win of Prime Minister Narendra Modi in May and are meant to create a good climate for Modi’s planned visit to Washington in September.

Analysts say it is only once Modi meets President Barack Obama that the United States may have a more realistic hope for progress on big defence projects, on removing obstacles to US firms’ participation in India’s nuclear power industry, and for firmer statements of shared interests in Asia.

“India will play a much greater role in Asia under the Modi administration, but it will do so for its own reasons and under its own terms,” said Ashley Tellis of Washington’s Carnegie Endowment for International Peace think tank. Four years ago, Obama declared the US-India relationship would be “one of the defining partnerships of the 21st century” and last week the State Department called it one of “enormous strategic importance.”

But while the two countries are in many ways natural allies, as big democracies with shared concerns about Islamist militancy and the rise of China, the relationship falls far short of Obama’s rhetorical billing. Disputes over protectionism and intellectual property rights have soured the business climate and India has remained cautious about committing to US strategic designs, given concerns that US power, eroded by domestic budget battles, may be waning.

The relationship took a dive last year after an Indian diplomat was arrested in New York on charges of mistreating her domestic help, an episode that provoked outraged and resentment in New Delhi.

Modi, whose Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party swept to an overwhelming victory after years of shaky Indian coalitions, has yet to make clear how closely he plans to work with Washington.

The potential for tension was always high. He was banned from visiting the United States after Hindu mobs killed more than 1,000 people, most of the Muslims, while he was chief minister of his home state of Gujarat. The Obama administration sought to turn a new page with his quick positive response. Kerry will be heading the US team at the annual Strategic Dialogue with India on Thursday, and will be accompanied by US Commerce Secretary Penny Pritzker. — Reuters

16 killed, 13 hurt in S Philippine ambush

MANILA, 28 July — Sixteen people were killed and 13 others, including nine children, injured in an ambush believed to be staged by members of the rogue group Abu Sayyaf on Monday morning, a military official said.

Brigadier General Martin Pinto, commander of the 2nd Philippine Marine Brigade, said the victims were aboard two jeeps when they were waylaid by some 50 Abu Sayyaf bandits led by Idang Sasskan and Sibih Push in Talipao town, Sulu province.

Pinto said all the victims were all civilians who were on their way to another area to celebrate Eid al-Fitr, a Muslim holiday which marks the end of Ramadan.

Pinto said the authorities could not yet establish the motive behind the Abu Sayyaf’s attack. — Xinhua
US-Israeli tensions rise as hostilities in Gaza subside

A Palestinian man salvages belongings from damaged buildings in the Shejaiya neighbourhood, which witnesses said was heavily hit by Israeli shelling and air strikes during an Israeli offensive, in Gaza City on 27 July, 2014.—Reuters

Pakistan mob kills woman, girls, over “blasphemous” Facebook post

ISLAMABAD, 28 July — A Pakistani mob killed a woman member of a religious sect and two of her granddaughters after a sect member was accused of posting blasphemous material on Facebook, police said on Monday, the latest instance of growing violence against minorities.

The dead, including a seven-year-old girl and her baby sister, were Ahmadis, who consider themselves Muslim but believe in a prophet after Moham med. A 1984 Pakistani law declared Ahmadis non-Muslims and many Pakistanis consider them heretics.

Police said the latest Sunday violence in the town of Gujarwala, 220 km (140 miles) southeast of the capital, Islamabad, started with an altercation between young men, one of whom was an Ah madian, who wanted the blasphemy charge dropped.

“Police there were then just watching the burning. They didn’t do anything to stop the mob,” he said. “First they looted their homes and shops and then they burnt the homes.”

The police officer said they had tried to stop the mob.

Accusations of blasphemy are rising in Pakistan, from one in 2011 to at least 68 last year, according to the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan. About 100 people have been accused of blasphemy this year.

Human rights workers say the accusations are increasingly used to settle personal vendettas or to grab the property of the accused.

The Facebook post had not been injured, he said.

Under Pakistani law, Ahmadis are banned from using Muslims’ names, saying Muslim prayers or referring to his place of worship as a mosque.

Salim ud Din, a spokesman for the Ahmadi community, said it was the worst attack on the community since simultaneous attacks on Ahmadis’ places of worship killed 86 Ahmadis four years ago.

“He was there but just watching the burning. They didn’t do anything to stop the mob,” he said. “First they looted their homes and shops and then they burnt the homes.”

The police officer said they had tried to stop the mob.

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**WORLD**

**Fighting complicates Ukraine crash probe, US, EU prepare Russia sanctions**

DONETSK (Ukraine), 28 July — Fierce fighting in eastern Ukraine where a Malaysian airliner was downed further complicated an investigation on Sunday as Europe and the United States prepared economic sanctions on Russia over the conflict.

At least 13 people were killed in clashes between Ukrainian troops and pro-Russian rebels that raged in five areas around the wider region.

International monitors said they had abandoned plans to visit the crash site because of fears it was not safe, even though Malaysia said earlier that rebels had agreed to provide access.

Ukraine said it was trying to dislodge the rebels, but denied it was fighting near the crash site, saying the separatists had put the monitors off by falsely claiming that the army was operating nearby.

Russia dismissed US allegations it was about to hand over more missiles to the separatists, who Western leaders say almost certainly shot the airliner down by mistake with a Russian-supplied surface-to-air missile. The separatists deny any involvement and Moscow says it has not supplied them, suggesting Ukrainian forces were to blame.

“Kiev is trying to destroy the evidence of a crime by its army,” separatist leader Aleksander Borodai said, referring to a Ukrainian army offensive some distance from the site on Sunday.

With European states trying to minimize the impact of any future sanctions against Russia on their own economies, the US State Department sought to bolster the case for robust action by releasing images it said showed Russian forces had fired across the border at the Ukrainian military in the last week.

The images, which show marks on the ground at what the State Department said were launch sites, indicate mines and impact craters around Ukrainian military locations, indicated fire from multiple rocket launchers, the department said.

It also said the images offered evidence that Russian-backed separatists inside Ukraine had fired on Ukrainian forces using heavy artillery supplied by Russia. The Russian Foreign Ministry said were launch sites.

On Monday, the Russian Foreign Ministry said it was “talking to the department” about the need to ensure a “swift ceasefire in what it described as an “internal conflict”.

But the State Department said Kerry did not accept Lavrov’s denial that heavy weapons from Russia were contributing to the conflict and urged him “to stop the flow of heavy weapons and rocket and artillery fire from Russia into Ukraine, and to provide the cease-fire Verified by the OSCE officers as well.”

The US support for a mutual ceasefire in Europe and cooperation in Europe was made when he was in Turkey.

**China may have citizens fighting in Iraq**

BEIJING, 28 July — Muslim extremists from China’s far western region of Xinjiang, home to a large Muslim Uighur population, have been suspected of joining Islamic groups in training in Syria and Iraq.

Several hot spot issues in the Middle East have provided living space for terrorist groups, in particular the crisis in Syria has turned this country into a training ground for extremists from many countries,” he said.

These extremists come from Islamic countries, Europe, North America and China. After being immersed in extremist ideas, when they return home they will pose a severe challenge and security risk to those countries,” added Wu, who has 40 years of diplomatic experience in the Middle East and speaks Arabic.

Xinjiang, home to the Muslim Uighur people who speak a Turkic language, has been beset by unrest for years, blamed by Beijing on Islamist extremists who want to establish an independent state called East Turkestan.

While many experts outside of China doubt these groups have anywhere near the abilities Beijing accuses them of, some Uighurs have made their way to Afghanistan and Pakistan in recent years. Wu would not put a number on how many Chinese citizens may be in the Middle East either fighting or being trained, saying that he understood from foreign media reports the figure to be about 100. “Mostly they are East Turkestan elements,” Wu said, adding that this was one of the topics he talked about on his trip, especially when he was in Turkey, which is home to a large exiled Uighur population.

**Australian, Dutch police try again to reach MH17 crash site**

SYDNEY, 28 July — Australian Federal Police (AFP) together with their Dutch counterparts will on Monday attempt for the second time to reach the crash site of Malaysia Airlines flight MH17.

The team was forced to abandon investigating the site on Sunday after fighting erupted between local rebels and Ukrainian troops who were attempting to recover the territory where the crash site was.

AFP Deputy Commissioner Andrew Colvin told a Press conference on Monday that the safety of the unarmed team was paramount. “As you know the mission was aborted overnight due to the intensity of the fighting occurring both on the route into the crash site as well as at the crash site itself,” he said.

The decision was made on advice from the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the OSCE monitors.

“We will attempt again to gain access to the site today.”

“I recently got off the phone from our command in Ukraine about the activities expected again for today and again in company with our Dutch counterparts and the OSCE monitors we will attempt again to gain access to the site today.

“Of course it is a highly volatile area and I should stress that safety is paramount in our minds, safety of the Australian and Dutch officials and the OSCE officers as well.”

**G-7 should make concerted effort in plane crash probe**

**Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga (R) discusses the situation in Ukraine with Canadian Foreign Minister John Baird (L) in Tokyo, Japan on 28 July 2014. Kyodo News**

**Tokyo, 28 July — The Group of Seven major nations should work closely in a multinational probe into the recent shooting down of a Malaysia Airlines passenger jet, Japan’s top government spokesman said Monday.**

Suga also expressed Japan’s condolences to Canada for losing a citizen in the plane crash in eastern Ukraine on 17 July.

Baird expressed support for Prime Minister Shinzo Abe’s economic policies, dubbed Abenomics, and his plan to have Japan defend its allies under armed attack when Suga briefed him on them.

**Australia in talks to compensate MH17 victims’ families**

SYDNEY, 28 July — An Australian government official said Monday the government was in talks with Malaysia Airlines to compensate victims of Malaysia Airlines flight MH17.

MH17 crashed over Ukraine on July 17, killing all 298 people on board.

The official said the compensation would be handled by the airline and it was in talks with the airline.

**New Light of Myanmar Tuesday, 29 July, 2014  7**
Before I embark on the journey of illuminating the face of Nibbāna or Nirvana, this article is intended to present a clear understanding of the meaning of Nibbāna. 

Firstly, it is essential to comprehend the term. It has several meanings in English, but the depth of the meaning can only be fully grasped through its Pali origins. "Nibbāna" is a Pali word that translates to "bliss" or "supreme happiness." It is often described as a state of unconditioned peace, freedom from suffering, and the end of all mental defilements (such as greed, hatred, and delusion).

Understanding Nibbāna requires a detailed exploration of its different aspects and its significance in the context of Buddhism. This article aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the concept of Nibbāna, its origins, and its role in Buddhist teaching.

The Meaning of Nibbāna

Nibbāna or Nirvana means, it is learnt, as follows:

1. Nibbāna is onefold according to its intrinsic nature.
2. Nibbāna or Nirvana means, it is experienced, as twofold:
   - an object to the Paths and Fruits, and is called Nibbāna
   - a sense of wellbeing and a sense of service to humanity, the world, on the other hand.

The official definition of Nibbāna Dātā according to “A Manual of Abhidhamma” by Nārada Māhā Thero is as follows:

“Nibbāna however is termed supramundane, and is to be realized by the wisdom of the Four Paths. It becomes an object to the Paths and Fruits, and is called Nibbāna because it is a departure (ni) from cord-like (vāna) craving. Nibbāna is onefold according to its intrinsic nature. According to the way it is experienced, it is twofold, namely, the element of Nibbāna with the substrata remaining and the element of Nibbāna without the substrata remaining. It is threefold according to its different aspects namely, Void (60), Signless (61), and Longing-free (62).”

Great see who are free from craving declare that Nibbāna is an objective state (63) which is deathless, absolutely endless, non-conditioned (64), and incomparable. Thus, as fourfold, the Tathāgatas reveal the Ultimate entities-consciousness, mental states, matter, and Nibbāna.

If your constant, vivid VISION is Nibbāna Dātā, your MISSION, GOAL, OBJECTIVES, STRATEGY, and TACTICS will be as follows:

**VISION**
- Nibbāna Dātā

**MISSION**
- Liberation, Enlightenment, Emancipation, Deliverance, Vimutti, Rasa, etc.

**GOAL**
- Unconditioned by:
  - The Eight Winds (Loka Dhamma)
  - Sorrow, Mental Defilements and Insecurity

**OBJECTIVES**
- Sila (Morality), Samadhi (Concentration), and Pañña (Wisdom)

The Eightfold Paths

1. Right Understanding (Sammā-ditthi)
2. Right Mindedness (Sammā-sankappa)
3. Right Speech (Sammā-speech)
4. Right Bodily Action (Sammā-kammanta)
5. Right Livelihood (Sammā-ājīva)
6. Right Effort
7. Right Attentiveness
8. Right Concentration

**STRATEGY**

**TACTICS**

1. Elimination of mental defilements
2. Fulfillment of Enlightenment Factors
3. Peace, inner freedom, mental distraction & regret, doubt, ignorance, torpor, mental distraction & regret, doubt, ignorance, such as spiritual strengths, serenity, a sense of wellbeing, and freedom from suffering
4. The utmost concentration used the mind to control the senses and the body
5. Correct discrimination, a sense of wellbeing, and freedom from suffering
6. Mindfulness of wellbeing and a sense of service to humanity, the world
7. The Eightfold Paths

**Foundations Mind**

- The Four Foundations Mind fulness,
- The Four Right Efforts,
- The Four Roads to Power,
- The Five Spiritual Faculties,
- The Five Mental Powers,
- The Seven Factors of Enlightenment,
- The Eightfold Paths

Ref: A Manual of Abhidhamma by Nārada Māhā Thero

Fundamentals of Buddhism by Nyanatiloka

A Dictionary of Buddhist Terms by U Myint Swe (M.A. London)

Second last old capital city “Amarapura” Part I

Maha Saddhamma Jotika dhaja Sithu Dr. Khin Maung Nyunt

(Continued from yesterday)

Amarapura urbanization used the system which its predecessor Inwa had used with alternation and adjustment to its own topographical features. Unlike Inwa which was an extended area of drained off and land filled five lakes, Amarapura was just an elongated level land between two aquatic bodies of Taung Tha Man Lake and Ayeyawaddy River. It rearranged the system it copied from Inwa. The Sus, the Yats, the Tans and the Wins were the terms of organizational and compositional forms and sizes of quarters. The Sus were the largest quarters, the Yats came next, followed by the Tans and the Wins respectively. The Parabeks formed the papers and maps of Amarapura urban plans shows 20 Sus on the sites around the Palace city and 32 Yats, 21 Tans, and 4 Wins in the Capital. Villages, islands, holy recluses already existed before the founding of the Capital were allowed to exist status quo keeping their green environment un-disturbed.

Though generally speaking, residents of these separate quarters lived in their own quarters, owing to the socio-cultural contacts in their daily life, there emerged mixed living through inter marriages. As there were no caste or clan system, no gender discrimination and Buddhism being most tolerant, providing religious freedom, inter marriage proliferated regardless of ethnic and religious origin or social status, in Myanmar society.

The urban population of Amarapura increased and the Myo Wen [the Mayor of Amarapura] had to look for space to extend their minimal boundary to accommodate the increase. The Census taken in the year 1783 showed there were 11,472 servicemen and 3,585 traders totalling 15,457 quite a sizeable number, judging by the then standard of town population. But the same census records that alone town which was the native town of King Bodawpaya had 7734 traders and 9684 servants totalling 17418 exceeding the Amarapura population by over 200. It was so, because Alone town was the lieu of King Bodawpaya and it was economically developed and prosperous. Besides, lands were granted to royal service men to live on and to grow crops for consumptions and export.

Numerically they were four big bazaars (markets) or Zeygyi where booth wholesale and retail transactions were conducted daily. They were (1) Tagun Taing Zeygyi to the south corner (2) Hsein Kyone Zeygyi to the north-east corner (3) Nyaung Bin Zeygyi [or Yodaya Zeygyi] to the south near the Ayeyawaddy River and (4) Kathe Zeygyi to the south west corner of the Capital. At these markets were offices of inspectors, superintendents, and informants apprehended to maintain law and order and to check weights, measurements and qualities of goods bought and sold according to the standard set by royal order and to settle dispute in transactions. These offices were on day and night duty by turn. Daily, weekly, monthly and yearly reports on prices of goods at home and abroad were reported to the King. Trade news from harbours, jetties, outposts and brokerage centres were reported to the offices which transmitted for public notice. Each of these four markets was meant to serve nearly 150,000 residents and sellers and buyers from far and near.

Among four capital cities of two Konebaung dynasties, Shwebo and Inwa, Amarapura and Mandalay, Amarapura lasted longest 60 years.

During this long career many important events took place under five successive kings who ruled at Amarapura. These events at home and abroad with far-reaching impacts upon Myanmar history will be the subject matter of subsequent instalments of this article.

(To be continued)
Training provided to gov’t officials for improvement of human resources

YEDASHE, 28 July—To improve the skills of government officials and improve human resources in the future, a capacity enhancement course—organized by the Ministry of Environmental Conservation and Forestry—was held at Training School No 1 of Myanmar Timber Enterprise in Nanchun of Yedashe Township in Bago Region on Monday.

An official urged the 50 trainees to become more professional and try to support new staff in order to build up human resources. The second course will be conducted on 4 August, with the third course taking place on 11 August. 

Ko Lwin (Swa)

State-run newspapers now delivered on time

YANGON, 28 July—After years of delays in delivery, three State-run papers namely Myanma Alinn, Kyemon and The New Light of Myanmar dailies are now being delivered in the early morning, and newspaper demand is now higher,” said leader of newspaper agents U Nyan.

Myint Than (Oxygen)

Opening of animal care centre in Mandalay celebrated with sports contests

MANDALAY, 28 July—To celebrate the opening ceremony of a Mandalay animal care centre, the Nature’s Life Equestrian Club organized the first Mandalay Region Sports and Physical Education Committee Chairman’s Cup 15,000-m mountain bike contest, air rifle contest, archery demonstration and a golden retriever pet dog show at the Nature’s Life equestrian club in Yawhtwe Village of Patheingyi Township of Mandalay Region on Sunday.

Officials of Sports and Physical Education Department presented the first prize to Asai, the second to Thin Chan Myae Thu and the third to Min Min Han in the mountain bike cycling contest. Ko Maung Maung won the first prize, Ko Myo the second and Aung Kyaw Kyaw the third in the men’s air rifle contest; Hnin Myat Nwe secured the first prize, Moe Moe Min Swe the second and Khaing Mon Kyee the third in the women’s air rifle contest.

Ko Maung Maung (Mandalay)

Township committees coordinate undertaking of community-based regional development projects

PAKOKKU, 28 July—Officials from the Township Management Committee, Township Development Affairs Committee and Township Development Supportive Committee held a meeting on community-based regional development at the hall of the Township general Administration Department in Pakokku of Magway Region on Sunday.

Township Administrator U Myint Khaing explained political, economic, social progress of the township, Chairman of Township DAC U Tin Win, plans for 2014-15 fiscal year and U Aung Min Naing of Action Aid, progress in compilation of a village manual.

Commander of Township Police Force Police Major Maung Maung Htwe discussed crime reduction and drug elimination and Chairman of Township DSC U Ye Hlut, the development of the region and lists of people to borrow loans from the Cooperative Department.

Ambulance donated to philanthropic association

MYANANG, 28 July—A ceremony to donate an ambulance to the Volunteer Youth Philanthropic Association was held at its office in Letpankwin Village in Myanang Township of Ayeyawady Region on Sunday.

The association formed with over 60 members in June 2013 carries out funeral and social services to the people, maintenance of roads and bridges, paying respects to the aged and necessary assistance for devotees at monasteries in Taungyo Station.

Wellwishers from the station donated the ambulance to the association to transport emergency patients to the hospital in time. 

Nay Win Zaw (Myanang)
Young Canadian reunites Haitian ‘orphans’ with parents

Miami, 28 July — Morgan Wienberg, a slight 22-year-old from Canada, was only 18 when she joined the wave of volunteers who flew to Haiti to help out after the catastrophic earthquake in 2010.

Unlike most volunteers she has returned, putting off a medical career to fulfill what she now calls a life mission to rescue abused Haitian children exploited by unscrupulous orphanages.

“I am flabbergasted by her story. It’s simply outstanding what she is doing, and nothing fazes her,” said Alison Thompson, an Australian nurse and veteran relief worker who ran a camp for earthquake victims in Haiti and now runs rape clinics there.

Wienberg was living in Whitehorse, the capital of Yukon, Canada’s westernmost territory, when her plans to study medicine at McGill University took a detour.

She had considered spending the summer working with animals or children in Africa, but quickly signed up as a volunteer to teach English to earthquake victims and help in a prosthetics lab.

“I had never really thought about Haiti. The earthquake drew me to thinking it was the place I could make a difference,” she said during an interview in Miami where she was overseeing medical care for one of her charges.

In Haiti she also volunteered at an orphanage. Appalled by the conditions, she quickly discovered that almost all the children were not orphans but were being used to milk donations from unwitting charities, including American churches.

“There were 75 children, all starving, lying in vomit and diarrhoea,” she said. Beatings were common for petty infractions; a dead boy was abused constantly.

When groups of Americans visited with suitcases of toys and clothes, the owner made sure the children were washed and clothed. They never received the donations, which were sold.

“The real turning point was when I realized the children all had families,” said Wienberg. “They were there because their families were so poor they couldn’t afford to look after them.”

Wienberg discovered that the orphanage owner recruited children on trips to impoverished rural areas where parents often were willing to give up their children for the hope they might get a better life in the city, and perhaps an education.

“Many orphanages in Haiti are primarily a business,” said Wienberg. “They use the children to make money from foreigners.”

She gathered evidence and went to the police and Haiti’s social services institute to report the abuse.

Associate of dead S Korea ferry boss arrested, children due to give evidence

ANNAN, (South Korean) 28 July — A close associate of the man whose web of business holdings included a ferry that sank and killed more than 300 people in April was arrested on Monday, a week after the ferry owner’s badly decomposed body was identified.

The woman, who was believed to have been instrumental in helping Yoo Byung-un elude South Korea’s largest manhunt, turned herself in on Monday.

Police identified her only by her last name, Kim. Another woman, the wife of Yoo’s driver who was thought to have been with him during his final days at large, also turned herself in to police.

The ferry Sewol capsized on a routine trip on 16 April, one of South Korea’s worst civilian maritime disasters.

Many of those killed were children from the same school on a class trip.

The detention of the two women, confirmed by a prosecutor, comes as

South Korean rescue workers operate near floats where capsized passenger ship Sewol sank on 16 April, in the sea off Jindo on 22 April, 2014.—Reuters

some of the students who made it out of the ferry alive were due to take the stand at the trial of 15 crew members who fled the vessel.

Passengers on board the ferry, many of them children, had been told to stay on board while it was sinking.

The 15 surviving crew members, including the captain, face charges ranging from homicide to negligence for abandoning the ship ahead of the passengers. Video footage of the escape triggered outrage across South Korea.

Yoo heads the family that owned the ferry operator.

His associate, Kim, had been wanted for helping Yoo evade arrest. Her arrest came three days after police stormed an apartment on the outskirts of Seoul and found Yoo’s elder son, Daegyun, who was wanted for embezzlement.

Yoo Dae-gyun is one of two sons who co-owned the holding company at the centre of a network of business interests that included the ferry operator.

He was not believed to have been actively involved in management as his younger brother, who is believed to be in the United States.

Yoo Dae-gyun said he only learned of his father’s death from police.

Costa Concordia completes its voyage to the scrap yard

GENOA, (Italy) 28 July — The wrecked Costa Concordia cruise liner limped into its last port on Sunday, when it was towed to the northern Italian city of Genoa to be broken up for scrap, two-and-a-half years after running aground and sinking with the loss of 32 lives.

After a four-day journey from the Tuscan island of Giglio, where it sank on 13 Jan, 2012, the 114,500-tonne hulk was maneuvered into place and secured at the conclusion of one of the largest and most complex maritime salvages ever attempted.

Prime Minister Matteo Renzi flew to Genoa to hail the completion of the operation which restored some pride to Italy after a disaster that was widely interpreted as a national humiliation as well as a human tragedy.

“Costa Concordia completes its voyage to the scrap yard” — Reuters

“It’s not a day for showing off or creating a spectacle, but it’s a mark of gratitude from the prime minister for getting something done which everyone said would be impossible,” Renzi told reporters on the dock, saluting the work of the salvage crews sinking from Italy and around the world.

“We have had a terrible page to turn, but Italy isn’t a country destined for the scrap heap,” he said.

Contrary to the contrast when the Concordia ran aground and capsized during a display sometimes done by cruise ships known as a “salute”, the salvage operation has been a resounding technical success.

After hours of propa- tion, dockworkers fixed the wreck in place in the industrial port of Voltri, just outside the main harbour in Genoa.—Reuters

Tug boats tow the Costa Concordia ship as they arrive outside Genoa’s port, in northern Italy, where the ship will be broken up for scrap on 27 July, 2014.—Reuters

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Prime Minister Modi launches portal for citizen contribution in governance

NEW DELHI, 28 July — Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday launched a website MyGov that aims to help citizens contribute in governance by giving their opinions and views on important issues like clean Ganga or skill development. The inauguration of the people-centric platform also marks the completion of 60 days of the new gov-ernment.

The Prime Minister said in the past 60 days, the experience of his government was that there were many people who wanted to contribute towards na-tion-building and devote their time and energy, an official statement said.

Modi said MyGov (mygov.nic.in) is a tech-nology-driven medium that will provide citizens an opportunity to contribute towards good governance, the statement added.

“The platform would bridge gap gulf between people and government. Democracy cannot succeed without people’s participa-tion in government and this participation should not be limited only during elec-tions,” the Prime Minister said. Besides Modi, Com-munications and IT Min-ister Ravi Shankar Pras-ad, Cabinet Secretary Ajit Seth, DEITY Secretary R S Sharma were also present at the launch of the portal.

National Informatics Centre (NIC) of the De-partment of Electronics and Information Technolo-gy (Deity) will implement and manage the platform.

There are multiple theme-based discussions on MyGov where a wide range of people can share their thoughts and ideas with the government. Sharma told reporters after the launch.

“It is also an initiative to build a digital knowl-edge library. We will guide the people on the topics of national importance on which the government would like to know their views and ideas,” he added.

The platform presents an opportunity for the citi-zens to both ‘Discuss’ and ‘Do’, Sharma said, adding, any idea shared by a con-tributor will also be dis-cussed on the discussion forums, allowing construc-tive feedback and interac-tion.

At present, there are six groups on the platform — Clean Ganga, Girl Child Education, Clean India, Skilled India, Digital India and Job Creation.

“Citizens can also vol-unteer for various tasks and submit their entries. These tasks would be reviewed by other members and experts. Once approved, these tasks can be shared by those citizens who complete the task and by other members on My-Gov,” Sharma said.

Each group consists of online and on-ground tasks that can be taken up by the contributors. The objective of each group is to bring about a qualitative change in that sphere through peo-ple’s participation, he said.

“We will review the working on MyGov in three months and over time the number of groups, tasks and discussions will in-crease. The platform will also be used as a compre-hensive knowledge reposi-tory,” Sharma added.

The portal can even be extended to act as a public audit platform for government projects like citizens giving feedback on status of completed infrastructure projects or availability of various social sector pro-grammes, he said. —PTI

JDcom to sell Microsoft’s Xbox One games console in China

A file photo shows an XBox One is seen on display at the Wal-Mart Supercentre in the Porter Ranch section of Los Angeles on 26 Nov, 2013.—Reuters

BEIJING, 28 July — JDcom Inc, China’s sec-ond-biggest e-commerce company by market share, will accept pre-orders for Microsoft Corp’s Xbox One games console in China from 28 to 30 July, the firm said on Monday.

The pre-orders will be taken via Tencent Hold-ings’ mobile social net-works Mobile QQ and WeChat, known as Weixin in China, JD.com said in a statement. Tencent holds 17.6 percent stake in JD.com.

The Xbox One will be the first gaming console to be released in mainland China since the govern-ment banned console sales in 2000, citing games’ ef-fects on mental health.

On Friday, China Tele-com, the country’s small-est wireless carrier, said it would sell the Xbox One when released in September.

In September last year, Microsoft reached a deal with Chinese Internet TV set-top box maker BesTV New Media Co Ltd to form a joint venture to manufact-ure the consoles in Shang-hai’s Free Trade Zone.

Released in Novem-ber, the Xbox One has trailed in sales to Sony’s PlayStation 4, according to China’s Na-tional Bureau of Statistics.

On Friday, China Tele-com, the country’s small-est wireless carrier, said it would sell the Xbox One.

Amazon’s spending spree raises margin concerns

NEW YORK, 28 July — Amazon.com Inc’s heavy investment in content and technology to light off deep-pocketed rivals is proving to be more costly than many had expected, raising fears that operating earnings will be remain un-der pressure indefinitely.

Amazon’s shares fell 22 percent to $314.76 in early trading on Friday, wiping out about $18 billion from its market value.

At least 13 brokerag-es cut their price targets on the stock, by as much as $60 and to a low of $340, after the company reported a bigger-than-expected second-quarter loss on Thurs-day. At least two downgrad-ed ratings to the equivalent of “hold”. Amazon is en-gaged in “a massive eco-system war” with Apple Inc, Google Inc and Micro-soft Corp Macquarie Research analyst Ben Schachter said.

“With that context, it is clear that this is going to be expensive and will impact margins,” he wrote in a note to clients. Chinese e-commerce giant Alibaba Holdings Group Ltd also looms as a threat to Amazon as it expands in the US mar-ket, Schachter and others say. Amazon is spending billions of dollars to expand its network of warehouses, build up its business in Chi-na and India, and to buy digi-tal content to help its Prime online video service take on Netflix Inc.—Reuters

Internet to drive future growth with enhanced productivity

SHANGHAI, 28 July — Internet could contribute up to 22 percent of China’s GDP growth through 2025, via increased productivity and adoption of internet ap-plication across a number of sectors, according to the latest research by consul-tancy McKinsey.

The booming internet sector has provided mo-mentum in China’s attempt to wean the economy off investment and export, and relies more on consumption and innovation for growth. This is happening as the world’s second-largest economy sets to embark on a digital transformation to boost productivity and eco-nomic growth.

Based on McKinsey’s calculation, the internet took up 4.4 percent of Chi-na’s economy last year, a share placing the country among the world’s most advanced economies.

The consultancy pre-dicts the internet could contribute up to 22 percent of GDP growth from 2013 to 2025, provided support-ive policies are put in place and businesses are aggres-sive in adopting the Internet in their practices.

McKinsey argues the Internet’s ability to boost productivity is crucial for sustaining China’s growth as the nation is facing dwin-dling labour pool and rising labour cost.

The report also shows increased adoption of the internet by the country’s fi-nancial sector, through big data and online channels for example, will lead to more efficient use of capital.

This, McKinsey says, will grant China’s small and medium-sized firms with more access to financ-ing. These firms account for 70 percent of China’s GDP, according to China’s Na-tional Bureau of Statistics.

They also boast high-er return on assets, at 8.2 percent, compared with 6.6 percent for larger firms.

Aside from growth, the report finds the internet is changing China’s labour market.

Xinhua
Spending scandal besetting Aquino could hurt Philippines’ economy

MANILA, 28 July — The biggest political crisis that Philippine President Benigno Aquino has faced in four years in power could damage his image as a crusader against corruption and undermine his ability to deliver on reforms to sustain strong economic growth.

The Supreme Court this month declared partly illegal a 145 billion pesos ($3.34 billion) economic stimulus fund that Aquino created in 2011 from budget savings, sparking a storm of controversy that has distracted the government from its work.

Economists are also concerned the controversy is slowing public spending because officials are more wary about accusations of recklessness and are subjecting decisions to more scrutiny, putting at risk big infrastructure projects.

“If this leads to a slowdown in spending, the risk to growth is on the downside,” Shanaka Jayanath Peris, International Monetary Fund resident representative in the Philippines, said on Friday.

The IMF on Friday cut its Philippine growth forecast to 6.2 percent from 6.5 percent set in March, partly because of slower spending after the stimulus scandal broke. The government set a target of 6.5 to 7.5 percent gross domestic product growth this year, after 7.2 percent last year.

First quarter GDP growth was at its slowest in two years, in part because of weaker state spending which grew an annual 2 percent in the period against 10 percent growth a year earlier.

Henry Schumacher, vice president at the European Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines, said any more delays to much-needed infrastructure would be a “disaster.”

“There is an over-carefulness in a number of government offices not to move before they are absolutely sure that every angle where integrity could be compromised has been looked at,” Schumacher said.

Under the stimulus facility, Aquino spent funds saved from canceled projects on housing and relocation of slum residents, roads for the weather bureau and infusing capital to the central bank to help it with its market intervention, among other activities.

A portion of the funds was distributed to senators to use on projects of their choice.

The Supreme Court said aspects of the stimulus were unconstitutional. It did not call any actions criminal, though lawyers say the ruling could open the way for complaints alleging wrongdoing.

Critics said the allocation of funds to senators for their projects cast doubt on Aquino’s commitment to stamp out corruption. And the controversy is having an impact on how officials proceed.

“Everyone who has to sign a document now has to be doubly sure,” Almendras said in the television interview.

Aquino is the only son of highly respected parents: an assassinated opponent of dictatorship and a democracy hero who became the country’s first woman president.

Boko Haram kidnaps wife of Cameroon’s vice PM, kills at least three

YAOUNDE, 28 July — Nigerian Boko Haram militants kidnapped the wife of Cameroon’s vice prime minister and killed at least three people on Sunday in a cross-border attack involving more than 200 assailants in the northern town of Kolofata, Cameroon officials said.

A local religious leader, or imam, named Seini Kande, also the town’s mayor, and a man named Seini Samnang, commander of the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces, were also kidnapped in a separate attack on his home.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility. Boko Haram, an Islamic extremist group which made international headlines with the abduction of 200 Nigerian schoolgirls in April, has stepped up cross-border attacks into Cameroon in recent weeks.

Cameroon has deployed troops to its northern region, joining international efforts to combat the militants.

Nicaragua marks war anniversary

ESCARCEGA, 28 July — Nicaragua marked the 61st anniversary of the signing of the armistice agreement ending the Korean War. North Korea celebrates the day as it considers it won the war.—KYODO

New rules on military awards to take effect

BRUSSELS, 28 July — China’s first regulations on military awards and commendations will go into effect on 1 August. The rules stipulate that the number of awards and commendations should be controlled and awarded based on improvement of combat abilities, the People’s Daily reported on Monday.

The regulations are meant to consolidate rules on awards and commendations, which were previously contained in multiple documents, according to the report.

Complaints about the large number of awards and commendations given have also been a factor leading to the rules, according to the report. The new rules stress that more awards and commendations should be offered to combat troops, major operations and troops serving in remote areas or places where life is difficult.

The regulations were jointly written by the Chinese People’s Liberation Army (PLA) general departments of staff, politics, logistics and armament and endorsed by Xi Jinping, chairman of the Central Military Commission.—Xinhua

Cambodian defence minister flies to Thailand for official visit

PHNOM PENH, 28 July — Cambodian Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Tea Banh flew to Thailand on Monday for a two-day visit to strengthen bilateral ties and cooperation.

The Thai army is accompanied by General Sopea, deputy commander-in-chief of the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces, and Col. Vinh Samnang, commander of the Royal Cambodian Air Force.

During the visit, he will meet with Thai Army Chief Gen. Prayuth Chan-ocha, head of the National Council for Peace and Order, Supreme Commander Gen Tanasak Patimapragarn and Defence Ministry permanent secretary Gen Surasak Karnchanarat.

Japan, Colombia to cooperate on natural resource development

MEXICO CITY, 28 July — Japanese and Colombian leaders are expected to agree on Tuesday that the two nations will cooperate on the need to reform the United Nations Security Council as well as the importance of respecting the rule of law, with an eye toward China’s growing assertiveness in the East China Sea area where Beijing claims the Japanese-controlled Senkaku Islands, known as Diaoyu in China.—KYODO
Sri Lankan asylum seekers arrive in Australia after weeks held at sea

**SYDNEY, 28 July — A group of 157 Sri Lankan asylum seekers who were held at sea by Australian authorities for almost a month, sparking a legal challenge against their detention, have arrived at a detention camp on mainland Australia, government officials said on Monday.**

Indian consular officials are due to begin interviewing members of the group, whose boat was intercepted by the Australian navy several weeks ago after setting sail from India. The group was taken to the remote Curtin Detention Centre in outback Western Australia on Sunday and Monday.

The interception and detention of the group has thrown a spotlight on Australia’s controversial and secretive policies dealing with asylum seekers, under which the government has pledged to turn back boats carrying potential refugees.

Such policies have faced growing international scrutiny and criticism from rights groups, The New York Times editorial board and the United Nations, as well as legal challenges in Australia’s courts.

The group of Sri Lankan men, women and children are the first asylum seekers travelling by boat to reach mainland Australia in seven months, an apparent setback for the government’s policies.

Conservative Prime Minister Tony Abbott’s government has boasted of its success in deterring asylum seekers from taking the perilous journey, often in unsafe boats after paying people smugglers in Indonesia, issuing updates on how long it has been since the last boat arrived in Australia. Australia normally uses offshore detention centres in Papua New Guinea and the tiny South Pacific island nation of Nauru to process would-be refugees who arrive on boats.

While the group of Sri Lankans will be processed at the Curtin camp, Immigration Minister Scott Morrison has stressed they will not be resettled in Australia and has referred little information about them.

India has agreed to take back any of its nationals among the group but a lawyer asked to represent the Tamils said they should first be interviewed by Australian authorities to establish any claims for asylum.

“Now these people are in Australia, the ordinary protections of Australian law must be afforded to these people,” human rights lawyer David Mannre told Australian Broadcasting Corp (ABC) radio.

**Century-old church burns down in fire**

**NINGBO, 28 July — A fire destroyed one of China’s oldest cathedrals in the early hours of Monday in the east China city of Ningbo, with no casualties reported, local firefighting authorities said.**

The fire broke out at 12:50 am in the gothic-style Jiangbei Cathedral. The cathedral was built in the Jiangbei District of Ningbo, Zhejiang Province by a French bishop in 1872.

More than 50 firefighters spent two hours putting out the fire, but only the frame of the main building survived, according to the firefighting division under the city’s public security department.

“The inside of the building is totally destroyed. It’s a great loss. The church is such a beautiful building,” a firefighter told Xinhua. Xinhua.

Rainy season ends in Tohoku and Hokuriku regions

**TOKYO, 28 July — The rainy season is believed to have ended in the Hokuriku region of central Japan and the Tohoku region in the northeast, the weather agency said on Monday, ending this year’s wet period in Japan.**

The season ended four days later than the average year for the Hokuriku region, which faces the Sea of Japan, and three days later for the southern Tohoku region, though in northern Tohoku, it ended as usual, according to the Japan Meteorological Agency.

The season lasted 11 days longer than the average year for Tohoku, eight days for northern Tohoku and 10 days longer for southern Tohoku.

The heaviest rainfall in Tohoku during the season was measured in the city of Fukushima, Fukushima Prefecture, at 389.5 millimeters, and that in Hokuriku was recorded in Sado Island in Niigata Prefecture at 392.5 millimeters, both 100 millimeters or more than the average year.

The agency says these regions are likely to see sunny days for much of the next week because of the high pressure enveloping the regions.

**Weather report**

FORECAST VALID UNTIL EVENING OF THE 29th July, 2014: Rain or thunderstorms will be isolated in Lower Sagaing Region, scattered in Mandalay and Magway Regions, Kayah State and widespread in the remaining Regions and States with likelihood of isolated heavy falls in Upper Sagaing and Taminthayi Regions, Kachin, Rakhine and Mon States. Degree of certainty is (100%)

STATE OF THE SEA: Squalls with moderate to rough sea are likely at times off and along Myanmar Coasts. Surface wind speed in squalls may reach (35-40) m.p.h.

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**Sri Lanka**

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**Australia**

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Aishwarya Rai Bachchan
vouches for stem cell banking

CHENNAI, 28 July — Bollywood actress Aishwarya Rai Bachchan on Sunday reiterated the importance of stem cell banking by mothers and the situation that led her to decide to go in for stem cell banking for her daughter.

“Knowledge can be very very useful and once we were aware of the potential of stem cell banking, the decision was natural and we recognised how stem cells are such a precious gift that can be given to our children.”

“I think that every expecting parent in our country should become aware of stem cell banking. Stem cells from the umbilical cord is a nature given resource. That needs to be preserved,” she said.

From the umbilical cord is a nature given resource. That needs to be preserved.”

Homer Simpson stops by

From the giant ‘Homemadome’ of Homer’s head to Marge Simpson’s makeup range launched at the MAC cosmetics store, Fox’s hit animated television show “The Simpsons” celebrated its 25th anniversary by making appearances throughout the convention. On Saturday, show creator Matt Groening was joined on stage by a life-size hologram of Homer making quips about the convention, Stephen King and making Groening do a little dance.

Stepping into “Mockingjay”

“Mockingjay — Part 1,” the third instalment of “The Hunger Games” franchise, was recreated in part with Samsung Galaxy to allow fans to step into the stark world of Panem.

An all-white room provided activities from making customized T-shirts to sitting in President Snow’s chair and trying baked goods from Peeta’s Bakery. The film’s latest trailer also premiered during the convention and fans were able to watch it on tablets in comfort in pod chairs.

Star power

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Glitzy industry networking

While Comic-Con is a haven for comic enthusiasts, it is also an opportune place for high-powered industry shindigs. The cast of A&E’s horror show “Bates Motel” mingled with Playboy bunnies at a party that looked like the inside of the iconic motel and NBC hosted a roof-top soiree with stars of “Constantine,” “Grimm” and “Hannibal.”

Entertainment Weekly’s annual celebration hosted Comic-Con’s high-profile attendees, including those from “The Hobbit,” “Game of Thrones” and “American Horror Story,” who mingled over drinks and a photo booth session featuring the Iron Throne from “Game of Thrones.”

Los Angeles, 28 July — “Harry Potter” star Daniel Radcliffe was initially denied entry to the US due to visa problems.

The 25-year-old British actor was stopped by American border guards while returning to the US for Comic-Con after attending a premiere of his new movie “What If” in Toronto, reported Ace Showbiz.

Radcliffe was in the process of upgrading his current P-2 visa to an O-1 visa. P-2 visa is designed for foreign actors as well as entertainers and gives the performers residency right for the time they’re working on a project but cannot exceed a year.

The actor fortunately managed to get his visa upgraded and arrive on 2 am in San Diego. He was in time for a scheduled Comic-Con panel later on 25 July afternoon with his co-star Juno Temple and director Alexandre Aja to discuss his film “Horns.”

San Diego, 28 July — Every year, around 130,000 comic book fans and entertainment enthusiasts trek to San Diego’s Comic-Con International, where thousands of booths and hundreds of panels are set up by industry outlets to cater to attendees.

With the 2014 convention wrapping up on Sunday, here are five highlights from the packed four-day event.

Experiencing death in virtual reality

Ever wondered what it’s like to be killed by a giant alien or a blazing fireball? Movie and television studios harnessed the virtual reality capabilities of the Oculus Rift headset to allow fans to enter the worlds of films and shows with numerous simulations.

For HBO’s “Game of Thrones,” fans could experience actual death — a terrifying experience for anyone with vertigo — as they ‘travelled’ up the Wall and stood at the very top, only to be attacked and fall to their inevitable demise. In Legendary’s “Pacific Rim” experience, fans were ‘placed’ inside a giant robot that is attacked by an alien monster.

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From virtual reality to stars, five highlights from Comic-Con

Los Angeles, 28 July — Legendary Pictures has announced a new ‘King Kong’ movie titled ‘Skull Island’. The studio revealed a 16 Nov, 2016 release date for the blockbuster during its panel at Comic-Con International, reported Digital Spy.

Legendary, now partnered with Universal Pictures after launching with Warner Bros in 2005, will add ‘King Kong’ to its monster properties after ‘Godzilla’ and ‘Pacific Rim’.

The first ‘King Kong’ movie was released in 1933 and brought its monster to life using stop-motion animation. A high-profile remake, starring Jeff Bridges and Jessica Lange, was released in 1976, with a Linda Hamilton-led sequel following in 1986.

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**Sumo: Goeido to be promoted to ozeki rank**

NAGOYA, 28 July — Sekiwake Goeido has all but gained promotion to the ozeki rank after getting his 12th win in a victory over ozeki Kotoshogiku on Sunday, the final day of the Nagoya Grand Sumo Tournament, Japan Sumo Association Chairman Kitanoumi said.

The JSA directors board, which offers opinions on ozeki promotions, will hold a meeting to finalize the decision this week, Kitanoumi said.

JSA’s referee board, which is in charge of determining who is recommended for promotions, had indicated it would make a request to Kitanoumi that the 28-year-old Goeido get the green light for sumo’s second-highest rank with his 12th victory. 

“I spoke with everyone (in the board),” referee board director Isegahama said before Goeido’s bout. “He has some room to get stronger, and a promotion seems appropriate.”

Goeido has the dubious distinction of holding the sekiwake rank the longest (14 consecutive tournaments) since the Showa period from 1926-1989.

What’s more, he has not gotten double-digit wins in consecutive basho while at sekiwake, and has registered losing records twice during the span. He had just a passing grade with an 8-7 mark at the summer basho in May. Sunday’s victory gave Goeido a total of 32 wins in his three most recent tournaments — just one win away from the 33 wins prescribed as one of the rough guidelines for ozeki promotion.

**Budapest, 28 July —** Fernando Alonso gave himself an early birthday present, and kept Ferrari sweet with a second place finish in the Hungarian Grand Prix. The result was the Spaniard’s best result of the year, after a third place in China, and came at the circuit where he took his first win in Formula One with Renault back in 2003.

Last year Alonso earned himself a rebuke from Maranello on his 32nd birthday, the day after he finished fifth at the Hungaroring and told reporters he wanted the car the other drivers had. Asked at the same time what he planned to do over the August break, the Spaniard had replied: “I will pray.”

Those remarks led to a sharp telephone conversation with Ferrari president Luca di Montezemolo, in which the driver’s ear was officially “tweaked”, and came after speculation about Alonso’s future with the team. 

The double world champion can expect a more effusive conversation with the big boss this time around and very, very happy,” declared the Spaniard, of the team, extremely strong, and a promotion seems appropriate.”

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**Alonso keeps Ferrari sweet with second place**

**Experience the key for next South Korea coach- KFA**

Seoul, 28 July — Experience is the top priority for choosing the next coach of South Korea’s national football team, the new head of the KFA’s technical committee said on Monday.

Lee Yong-soo told reporters the organization was in no hurry to appoint a successor to Hong Myung-bo, who resigned following the Koreans’ woeful World Cup campaign in Brazil, despite the looming Asian Cup in January. South Korea, who picked up a single point in Brazil and finished bottom of their group, also have
two friends of September and Lee said an interim coach could oversee their games against Venezuela and Uruguay.

“Personally, I think experience is the top priority, whether at the World Cup or at club level,” South Korea’s Football News Agency quoted Lee as saying.

He added that the committee would be looking at both domestic and foreign candidates for the job.

Neil Lennon, the former manager of Celtic, has been linked with the post in various media reports, Lennon worked with South Korean players Ki Sung-yueng and Cha Du-ri at the Scottish champions.

Other names mentioned are former Dutch international Frank Rijkaard and the former Tottenham Hotspur and Fulham coach Martin Jol.

“I cannot give you names at the moment, although several have been mentioned in media,” Lee said. “The ideal coach is someone who has not only delivered good performances but also has a vision that can make positive changes for young players.”

South Korea’s players react after losing to Belgium during their 2014 World Cup Group H soccer match at the Corinthians arena in Sao Paulo on 26 June, 2014. — Reuters
South African Tim Clark wins Canadian Open golf

Glasgow, 28 July — South African Tim Clark clinched his second PGA Tour title when he sank a six-foot par putt to beat American Jim Furyk by one stroke at the Canadian Open on Sunday.

Clark knocked his clutch putt in at dead centre to edge Furyk in a battle between two players who badly needed a victory to shed the bridesmaid tag.

“Any national Open to me is special and it’s an honour for me to be the Open champion,” Clark told reporters after storming home in 30 strokes with five putts to beat American Jim Furyk by one stroke at the Canadian Open.

Tim Clark with the trophy after winning the RBC Canadian Open at Royal Montreal GC - Blue Course.—Reuters

Clark has finished second 12 times on tour and had major elbow surgery in 2011, so he enjoyed a mixture of excitement and relief as he greeted his Canadian fans.

Earlier, Clark was four strokes behind after bogeying the first hole but the slow start perhaps eased some of the pressure.

“The front nine I was a little out of sorts but making the turn, at the very least, a playoff, but read much break and missed on the high side.

That took some pressure off Clark, whose long first putt had come up well short, and he pounced on the opportunity.

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England’s Laura Trott holds her gold medal after winning the women’s 25km points race finals cycling race at the 2014 Commonwealth Games in Glasgow, Scotland on 27 July, 2014.—Reuters

Bayern Munich beat Wolfsburg 3-0 to lift Telecom Cup

London, 28 July — Liverpool sign defender Lovren from Southampton

Bayern Munich showed a faultless performance as they defeated Wolfsburg 3-0 at the preparations tournament mean.

“After the week I’ve had it is right up there with the Olympics because of the way I have had to come into it after the disappointment of the last two days,” she said.

While Trott’s face was a picture of joy on Sunday, Australia’s Anna Meares suffered disappointment in her bid for a sixth Commonwealth gold after compatriot Stephanie Morton got the better of her in the women’s sprint.

In the men’s keirin, Matthew Glaetzer ensured Australia took away a second gold, defeating New Zealand’s Sam Webster by the narrowest of margins but Shane Archbold gave the Kiwi’s something to smile about after winning the men’s 10km scratch race.—Reuters

Liverpool sign defender Lovren from Southampton

Liverpool, runners-up to Manchester City last season and preparing for a return to the Champions League after an absence of nearly five years, have also signed striker Rickie Lambert and midfielder Adam Lallana from Southampton.

Southampton’s Dejan Lovren celebrates after scoring a goal against Manchester United during their English Premier League soccer match at Old Trafford in Manchester, northern England on 19 Oct, 2013.—Reuters

It’s a dream come true. I’m happy and glad to be here. I’m proud and can’t wait to start. I know we have millions and millions of supporters — Liverpool is more than a club,” Lovren, whose career began at Dinamo Zagreb, said.

Liverpool’s Dejan Lovren celebrates after scoring a goal against Manchester United during their English Premier League soccer match at Old Trafford in Manchester, northern England on 19 Oct, 2013.—Reuters

After I played at Anfield last season, I said to myself: ‘One day I hope I’ll be able to play here for Liverpool’. The fans will know from the first minute that I’m a player that will give 100 percent on the pitch.”

Lovren was part of the Croatian squad for this year’s World Cup finals in Brazil and was unluckily adjudged to have tripped Brazil striker Fred to concede a controversial penalty in the opening match when the score was 1-1.

Croatia eventually lost 3-1 and bowed out in the group stage.

Liverpool have been on a spending spree this off-season after they recouped around 81 million euros ($108.77 million) by selling striker Luis Suarez to Barcelona this month.

They reportedly pulled out of signing France striker Loic Remy from promoted Queens Park Rangers earlier on Sunday after a medical exam.

Lovren made 31 appearances for Southampton since signing from French club Olympique Lyon last year.