President U Thein Sein thanks Japan for development assistance in Mekong region

Tokyo, 4 July — Myanmar President U Thein Sein and Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe attended a bilateral summit Saturday in Tokyo that focused on the creation of two economic zones and the development of vital infrastructure, agriculture and human resources.


Japan granted 72.18 billion yen (US$59 million) to Myanmar for 50 projects from 2012 to 2015. The Japanese government has agreed to provide 100 billion yen worth of loans for the Yangon circular railroad project, power projects, and the East-West economic corridor project.

At a joint press conference, President U Thein Sein thanked Japan for its support of the peace process in Myanmar.

The Thilawa special economic zone is expected to start operations in September, with the president saying Myanmar will make arrangements for the implementation of the Dawei special economic zone in cooperation with Thailand and Japan.

Myanmar expressed its support for Japan’s active role in maintaining peace and stability by working closely with the international community.

The country also supported the efforts Japan has put into the restructuring of the UN Security Council. The president urged Japan to help his country with its economic reforms.

President U Thein Sein, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and Thai Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha held a joint press conference after their summit in Tokyo on July 4, 2015. — (POOL PHOTO/Kyodo)

Chiang Mai talks raise hopes ceasefire deal will be signed soon

By Ye Myint

YANGON, 4 July — Prospects for the signing of a national ceasefire agreement “look good,” a senior adviser at the Myanmar Peace Centre said Saturday, following a second day of preliminary talks in Chiang Mai, Thailand, between negotiators from the government and ethnic armed groups.

“Prospects for signing the NCA look good as it has been confirmed that formal talks will take place in Yangon,” said U Hla Maung Shwe, who attended the meeting aimed at clearing roadblocks to the ceasefire deal. At the three-hour meeting, the new senior delegation representing the ethnic side said the armed groups are not dogmatic in holding to a set of points they made at their recent Law Khee Lar summit, and are willing to further negotiate the draft text to ensure it is acceptable to both sides.

The MPC senior adviser told The Global New Light of Myanmar, “Both sides cleared roadblocks in the peace process, setting a principle of moving towards further talks for the truce deal,” U Hla Maung Shwe said.

According to the MPC senior adviser, the government side said it will be hard to continue if the ethnic side remains adamant about the signing process involving all ethnic armed groups, with the ethnic delegations agreeing to consider alternatives. He said the meeting was more productive than expected, as the ethnic delegation pledged to reach an official signing of the NCA and start a framework meeting before the elections set for early November. According to the NCA draft approved in late March between the government and the ethnic groups’ Nationwide Ceasefire Coordination Team, both sides agreed to hold a framework meeting within 60 days and start political dialogues within 90 days of signing the NCA.

The latest talks marked the first meeting between the government’s peace negotiating team and the ethnic group’s senior delegation. — GNLM

Nine more domestic, foreign firms allowed to do business in July

By Ye Myint

YANGON, 4 July — The Myanmar Investment Commission has given the green light to nine local and foreign firms to conduct business in Myanmar last month alone.

Nine more domestic, foreign firms were permitted to do business in July, with the president of the Myanmar Investment Commission said Saturday.

Shwe Than Lwin, outgoing chairman of the MIC, added that 28 domestic and overseas firms were permitted to do business in Myanmar last month alone.

Among the other newly approved businesses, Wartayar Veneer Industries Private Limited, K-World Company Limited, Wellbeing Company Limited, Kama Group Myanmar Company Limited, and Mother Industrial Company Limited were given permission to set up facilities for clothing manufacturing, wood processing, value-added agricultural product processing and exportation, tri-motorcycle assembling and manufacturing, and firebrick production in Yangon and Bago regions.

In addition, Eco Friendly Towers Co., Ltd will provide telecommunication services on a plot in Yangon as a Myanmar citizen investment. However, any international gateway service is to be excluded from the services it will provide, said the commission.

In a sign of further investment in the country’s hospitality industry, Adventure Myanmar Tours & Incentive Co., Ltd will build a hotel on 4.33 acres of land in Ngapali beach, Rakhine Region.

The country also supported the efforts Japan has put into the restructuring of the UN Security Council. The president urged Japan to help his country with its economic reforms.

President U Thein Sein, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and Thai Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha (See page 3)

Photo: Credit to Nyo Ohn Myint.
Electoral course explains voting rules, procedures

NAY PYI TAW, 4 July — Ottarathiri Township Election Sub-commission held a course to explain the electoral process Friday at the hall of the Township General Administration Department.

Chairman of Ottara District Sub-commission U Aung Zaw Oo made an opening speech before chairman of the township sub-commission U Than Zaw explained the organizational setup of the sub-commissions and procedures for voting in advance.

Township Law Officer Daw The Oo Mon spoke about election rules and penalties for violations, while other officials spoke about the roles of sub-commissions and the media. Altogether 60 trainees from wards and villages in the township attended the training course.

Mandala automakers form industry alliance

Mandalay automakers form industry alliance

Mandala automakers form industry alliance

Mandalay, 4 July—A body for automotive industry operators in Mandalay was formed Friday at the city’s Great Wall Hotel.

Chairman of the Myanmar Automobile Assembling and Distribution Association (Mandalay Region) Dr Soe Tun said the association was formed to assist the assembly, importation and sale of automobiles across the nation.

General Secretary U Aung Zaw Oo of the Mandalay Branch read out the list of executives for the Mandalay Branch.

Before concluding the ceremony, Acting Chairman of the branch Dr Ko Ko Aung gave an introductory speech.

Tin Maung (Mandalay)

Japanese officials encourage sanitation among students

Japanese officials encourage sanitation among students

Mandala, 4 July—Officials of the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES) and Mandalay City Development Committee on Thursday visited the first, second and third-placed basic education schools in the Mandalay Region sanitation contest.

At Basic Education High School No 4 in Aungmyethazan Township, No 14 BEHS in Chanayethazan Township and No 26 BEHS at the corner of 66th and Seinpan streets, they viewed sanitation tasks, as well as arts and crafts projects using recycled materials.

Tin Maung (Mandalay)

Farmers grow Japanese orange as poppy substitute

Farmers grow Japanese orange as poppy substitute

Pekhon, 4 July—As an alternative to opium poppy cultivation, 15 local farmers recently planted 3,000 Japanese orange saplings across 10 acres in Lakyinwe and Lweyin villages in southern Shan State’s Pekhon Township.

Loinampha farm owner U Lwin Zaw sells saplings for K3,500 each to local people in Dimawhso Township, Kayah State. So far, he has distributed more than 20,000 saplings in the region.

Under the supervision of local authorities, people in Pekhon Township have planted more than 3,000 acres of potato, sunflower, Japanese orange, angelwood and other crops in place of poppy plantations this cultivation season.

Farm owner U Lwin Zaw said, “Japanese orange strain plants can resist bad weather, so local farmers buy the saplings for poppy-alternative cultivation.”

Shan State Hluttaw MP Daw Aye Cho Sein said, “Local people could not enjoy benefits of their crops because they could not send their products to the markets in Aungpan, Kalaw and Loikaw due to poor transport. So, we emphasize better transport for local people.”

The poppy elimination plan has been implemented since 1999. During the 15-year period, they could reduce 86 percent of poppy cultivation in two townships.

Shwe Lin Pyae Sone
President sends message of felicitations to Venezuela

President U Thein Sein...
(from page 1)
attended the signing of a memorandum of intent on the Dawei special economic zone.

The MOI was signed by Myanmar Deputy Minister for Transport U Han Sein, Japanese Minister of Foreign Affairs Mr Nakane and Thai Deputy Minister of Transport Mr Arkhorn.

In the morning, President U Thein Sein attended the 7th Mekong-Japan Summit in Tokyo, which also included Cambodia’s Prime Minister Samdech Hun Sen, Laos’ Prime Minister Thongsi Thammavong, Thailand’s Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha and Vietnam’s Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung.

President U Thein Sein thanked Japan for providing over 600 billion yen in loans over the past three years to help the region’s development.

As an economic hub, the Mekong region has a population of nearly 240 million, with a combined GDP of about US $5664 billion.

The president stressed the need for peace and stability for economic growth in the region, welcoming Japanese assistance of 750 billion yen over the next three years.

Myanmar is planning to establish a university in Shan State, which the president said would be named “Mekong University,” with the aim of creating a new level of cooperation in education, social and cultural sectors among Mekong nations.

Improvement of transport infrastructure, economic cooperation for small and medium enterprises and development of human resources are at the top of the agenda for Mekong-Japan cooperation.

“Myanmar has placed special emphasis on these three measures,” the president said.

Next, a press conference on Mekong-Japan Summit took place. After the press meet, leaders of Mekong sub-region countries together with Japanese Prime Minister signed in footballs and presented the balls to the captains of the respective teams.

In the evening, President U Thein Sein met Dr Nobuhito Endo, President of NEC Corporation of Japan, and Mr Kazuo Ohmori, Chairman of Sumitomo Corporation, separately, at Tokyo’s Hotel New Otani.

The president also met Mr Hideo Watanabe, Chairman of the Japan Myanmar Association, and Mr Yohei Sasakawa, Chairman of the Nippon Foundation, at the Kasumigaseki Building in Tokyo, followed by a dinner hosted by the Japan Myanmar Association.—MNA

Myanmar observes International Day of Co-operatives

NAY PYI TAW, 4 July—The 2015 International Day of Co-operatives was celebrated Saturday at the headquarters of the Ministry of Cooperatives here, with Vice President U Nyan Tun providing opening remarks.

This year’s event was held under the theme of ‘Choose co-operative, choose equality’ to increase awareness of co-operatives and promote the movement’s ideals of international solidarity, economic efficiency, equality, and world peace.

The vice president said the International Co-operatives Alliance first celebrated the International Day in 1923, with Myanmar observing it for the 21st time this year.

He said the Ministry of Cooperative has disbursed cash loans of more than K 388 billion and sold 154,289 units of machinery in installments to over 3 million households in rural areas across the country as of the first week of July.

Pro-rector Dr Htay Htay Lwin read out a message from the ICA, followed by an award ceremony to recognize outstanding co-operatives.—MNA

Union FM sends message of felicitations to Venezuela

NAY PYI TAW, 5 July—U Wunna Maung Lwin, Union Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, has sent a message of felicitations to Her Excellency Ms. Delcy Rodriguez, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, on the occasion of the anniversary of the Independence Day of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela which falls on 5th July, 2015.—MNA

U Kyaw Tin presents his Credentials to Mexican president

NAY PYI TAW, 5 July—U Kyaw Tin, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar to the United Mexican States, presented his Credentials to His Excellency Mr. Enrique Peña Nieto, President of the United Mexican States on 19 June, 2015, in Mexico City. —MNA

AMYOUTHAA HLUTTAW speaker honours outstanding students

NAY PYI TAW, 4 July—Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker U Khin Aung Myint honoured outstanding students and schools with high passing rate in 2014-2015 fiscal year in Pyaywwe and Yamarth township in Mandalay region Saturday.

At the ceremonies held in the two townships in the morning and afternoon, U Khin Aung Myint said education and health care services play major role in the development of the country.

He urged teachers and parents to help improve morality and the education of the children in the establishment of a democratic state.

Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker U Khin Aung Myint awards outstanding students.—MNA

Myanmar gems emporium sells 120 jade lots in competitive bidding

NAY PYI TAW, 5 July—A total of 120 jade lots were sold in competitive bidding on the 11th day of the 52nd Myanmar Gems Emporium here Saturday.

The annual gems emporium has sold 5,725 jade lots, out of 8,608, through open tender system from 28 June to 3 July. The event will continue till 6 July and will put remaining more than 200 jade lots up for sale.

Last year’s gems emporium generated a record US$3.4 billion and was attended by more than 4,000 traders from Thailand, China, Hong Kong and Japan.—MNA
Japan pledges $6.1 bil. for development of Mekong nations

Tokyo, 4 July — Japan pledged on Saturday to give fresh aid worth $6.1 billion (750 billion yen) in official development assistance to five Southeast Asian countries along the Mekong Riv- er over the next three years to boost the region’s infra-struc-ture development and stability.

The aid was unveiled during a summit in Tokyo between leaders of Japan and the Mekong nations — Cambodia, Laos, My-anmar, Thailand and Viet-nam — where they adopt-ed a 2016-2018 strategy to spur quality growth and enhance connectivity in the fast-growing region, in a bid to counter China’s growing political and economic clout there.

In a veiled criticism of Beijing’s recent rapid and large-scale reclamation work in the South China Sea, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and the five Mekong nations’ leaders “noted con-cerns expressed over the recent development in the South China Sea,” according to a document on their new cooperation strategy.

Alluding to Beijing’s attempts to change the status quo by force, the leaders said the recent development in that area “will further complicate the situation and erode trust and confidence and may undermine regional peace, security and stabili-
ty.” The document stopped short of singling out China.

Japan hopes to distin-guish its aid packages on infrastructure development in the resource-rich Mekong region from that of China by promoting advanced Japa-nese technology, and sharing environment-friendly know-how and capacity-building, Japanese officials said.

Japan’s engagement in the Mekong region — a po-tential destination for infra-struc-ture exports — is also aimed at helping narrow the development disparities in the broader regional group-ing known as the Associa-tion of the Southeast Asian Nations, which the five Mekong states are part of, and supporting efforts for ASE-AN to be more integrated economically, the officials said.

In their summit in April 2012, Japan pledged to pro-vide $7.4 billion in ODA to the five Mekong countries over the following three years to boost the region’s development.

Under the New To-kyo Strategy 2015 for Me-kong-Japan Cooperation, Abe and the Mekong leaders agreed that the region has potential to be a “global growth centre” given the re-gion’s growing economies in recent years and strategic location next to major Asian markets such as China and India.

The Me-kong region, which has vast infrastructure demands, is one of the prior-ity areas,” Abe said at a joint press conference with Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen, Lao Prime Minister Thongloun Sisoulith, Vietnamese Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung, Thai Prime Minister Prayut Chan-ocha and Vi-etnamese Prime Minister Nguyen Thi Kim Ngan. “Japan will contribute to peace and stability in the Me-kong region and walk side by side with Me-kong countries to achieve together high-quality growth,” Abe said after the Mekong-Japan summit, the seventh of its kind since it was first held in 2009.

Prayut said that while the Mekong region is a dynamic economic area, there is still “room for huge growth in economy, trade, investment and tourism.”

The new strategy is in line with the Japanese pre-mier’s investment initiative announced in May to pro-vide $110 billion to promote “quality infrastructure” in Asia over the next five years.

With most nations in the Mekong region lagging behind in development, the region is a good case for Abe’s investment initiative, a Japanese Foreign Ministry official said.

Speaking at the same new conference, Thong-ling of Laos hailed the new strategy as the “cornerstone of stronger cooperative ties between Japan and Mekong nations.”

Pushing for infrastruc-ture development in Laos, which is one of the least-de-veloped members of ASE-AN along with Cambodia, Myanmar and Vietnam, is vital to the launch by year-end of the ASEAN Eco-nomic Community, in which harmonization of pov- erl, goods and money across ASEAN member states’ borders will be lowered.

Japanese government data show that, as of 2013, per capita gross domestic product was $2,073 in Viet-nam, $1,628 in Laos, $1,103 in Myanmar and $1,018 in Cambodia, compared with $5,390 in Thailand. The av-erage for ASEAN countries — also comprising Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Singapore — is about $3,839.

The document called for stronger intra-regional connectivity and cited ini-tiatives such as a Thai-Myi-anmar project to develop, together with Japanese aid, the Dawei Special Economic Zone in southeastern Myan-mar.

The document also un-derscored the importance of working together on wa-ter resources and disaster management as many of the Southeast Asian countries are prone to disasters.

In the document, Abe and the leaders said regional stability is vital to regional development and prosper-
y and noted the impor-tance of democracy, rule of law, respect for human rights and peace building in the Mekong region.

“Peace and stability in the Mekong region, which is a strategic point for land and sea transportation, is vital to the launch for Ja-pan,” Abe said at the sum-
mit. At a time when China’s muscle-flexing in the South China Sea has sparked con-cern among Japan and ASE-AN members, particularly Vietnam which has overlap-ping territorial claims in the contested Spratly Islands, Abe and the Mekong leaders said they will continue to uphold freedom of navigation and overflight, and the peaceful resolution of maritime disputes.

At the news conference, Dang called for concerned parties to exercise restraint and not complicate the situation, saying, “Changing the status quo by force should not be done.”

They also called for the early conclusion of the Code of Conduct, the document, referring to a legally binding regional code of conduct designed to reduce territorial and maritime rows in the South China Sea.

Singapore Botanic Gardens declared UNESCO World Heritage Site

Singapore, 4 July — The Singapore Botanic Gardens is now a UNESCO World Heritage Site after it was inscribed at the 39th session of the World Heritage Committee in Bonn, Germany, local TV Channel NewsAsia report-ed on July 3.

The decision was met with cheers from a jubilant Singapore delegation, led by Culture, Community and Youth Minister Lawrence Wong.

The 156-year-old Singapore attraction joins more than 1,000 UNESCO World Heritage Sites in some 160 countries. It is the third Botanic Gardens to be listed as a World Her-
itage Site after Kew Gar-
dens in England and the Padua Gardens in Italy and Singapore’s first World Heritage Site.

The inscription comes almost five years after a feasibility study by the authorities found that the Botanic Gardens in Sin-
pore’s best candidate to achieve UNESCO World Heritage status.

Singapore official-
ly submitted the gardens’ nomination dossier to UN-
ESCO in January last year.

In 2012, a technical assess-
sor from the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) vis-
ted the Gardens. In May, ICOMOS recommended the gardens to be inscribed as a UNESCO World Her-
itage Site, saying it is an “exceptional example of a Tropical colonial botanical garden in South-east Asia”.

Still, the final decision was made by the 21-mem-
ber UNESCO World Her-
itage Committee. Before he left for Bonn, Minister Wong said he was optimis-
tic about the bid, adding that the World Heritage status would strengthen conservation efforts at the garden.

The Botanic Gardens spans 78-hectares and in-
cludes the National Orchid Garden which has over 1,000 species and 2,000 hybrids on display.

Vietnam’s Hanoi stock market recovers amid information on lifting of foreign ownership limit

Hanoi, 4 July — Vietnam’s capital Hanoi stock market stopped the falling trend in the past two weeks amid the recent move of Vietnamese government in lifting foreign ownership limit at publicly listed companies.

Analysts said the lifting of foreign ownership limit is expected to help attracting more investment, thus improving market liquidity. The new decree, 60/2015/ND-CP, signed by Vietnamese Prime Min-
ister late last week, will take effect from 1 September, 2015.

As of Friday, the HNX-Index, the benchmark of the Hanoi Stock Exchange, gained 2.18 points or 2.55 percent against last Friday’s closing session. Compared to the last trading session in 2014, the HNX-Index posted an increase of 4.72 points or 5.69 percent. Dur-
ing the week, the index witnessed three ups and two downs, ranging from 84.94 points on Tuesday to 87.7 points on Friday. By compar-
ison, in the previous week, the HNX-Index fluctuated between 85.52 points and 87.09 points. On Friday, the Hanoi bourse closed at 87.7 points, up 0.94 points, or 1.08 percent, against the previous trad-
ing session. A total of some 57,577 million shares worth over 710.202 billion Vietnamese dong (32.88 million US dollars) were traded on the market. The Hanoi Index increased by 27.2 percent in volume and 25.28 percent in value against the previous trading session.

Foreign investors accel-
erated their buying during the week. From Monday to Friday, foreign investors bought over 9,693 mil-
lion shares while sold out over 4,922 million shares on the Hanoi bourse. —Xinhua
Report on past Iran nuclear work could be ready by year end — IAEA

VIENNA, 4 July — The UN nuclear watchdog could issue a report on its investigation into past Iranian research suspected of being linked to nuclear weapons development by the end of the year if Tehran cooperates, the agency’s chief said on Saturday.

“With cooperation from Iran, I think we can issue a report by the end of the year on the assessment of the clarification of the issues related to the possible military dimensions,” International Atomic Energy Agency Director-General Yukiya Amano told reporters.

Answering the IAEA’s so-far unresolved questions about the possible military dimensions (PMD) of past Iranian nuclear research will be a condition for easing some sanctions on Iran if Tehran and six powers succeed in agreeing on an historic nuclear accord in Vienna, diplomats close to the talks say.

Amano was in Teheran on Thursday for meetings with Iranian President Hassan Rouhani and other top Iranian officials to discuss the stalled IAEA investigation into Teheran’s past nuclear work.

He said that during his trip progress had been made in moving his investigation forward but more work would be needed, echoing a statement the IAEA issued on Friday.

Iran is in talks with the United States and five other powers — Britain, China, France, Germany and Russia — on an agreement to curtail its nuclear programme for at least a decade in exchange for relief from economic sanctions.

All sides say a deal is within reach. But there are several difficult sticking points, one of which is the PMD. Others include access to Iranian sites and the timetable for lifting sanctions.

The negotiators missed a 30 June deadline for a final agreement, but have given themselves until 7 July, and foreign ministers not already in Vienna are due to return on Sunday for a final push.

Secretary of State John Kerry, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi have remained in Vienna. Senior officials from Iran and the six powers have continued meeting to try to finalize an agreement.

US Energy Secretary Ernest Moniz and Iranian nuclear chief Ali Akbar Salehi also met on Saturday, a US official said.

Western and Iranian officials said there were signs of a compromise emerging on one of the major sticking points: access to Iranian sites to monitor compliance with a future agreement.

Another potential compromise emerging reportedly is Iran’s low enriched uranium stockpiles. Western and Iranian diplomats said Teheran was considering shipping most of the stockpile out of the country, something Teheran had previously ruled out.

Regarding the PMD issue, Western diplomats said they were not demanding a public confession that Iran had conducted research into building a nuclear warhead, but that the IAEA had to be satisfied it knew the full scope of past Iranian activity to establish a credible basis for future monitoring.

A preliminary agreement clinched on 2 April in Lausanne, Switzerland said the PMD would have to be addressed under any final accord between Iran and the six powers.

Clinton says Iran talks yield deal in the next week

US Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton

HANOVER, (NH), 4 July — Democratic presidential contender Hillary Clinton said on Friday she hoped 18 months of nuclear talks between Iran and major powers would yield a deal in coming days to curb Iran’s nuclear programme.

The groundwork for the talks was laid when Clinton was US Secretary of State and she had not commented recently on the negotiations as she seeks the Democratic Party nomination to run in the November 2016 presidential election.

“I do hope that we are able to get a deal in the next week that puts a lid on Iran’s nuclear weapons programme,” Clinton told a rally on the Dartmouth College campus in Hanover, New Hampshire. She said that even if a deal were reached, there would be more work to be done.

Tehran is in talks with the United States and five other powers — Britain, China, France, Germany and Russia — on an agreement to curtail its nuclear programme in exchange for relief from economic sanctions.

A self-imposed June 30 deadline passed without a deal and negotiations continue in Vienna, with a new 7 July target date.

Republican presidential candidates and Republican lawmakers have been critical of the negotiations, saying the administration of President Barack Obama, a Democrat, has made too many concessions to Iran.

The administration has also under pressure from Israel not to make a deal with Teheran. Israel’s opposition could influence the way Jewish voters in the United States contribute to campaigns and also vote in the election.

The Republican-led US Congress will review any final deal, with congressionally mandated sanctions remaining in place if the headline terms of a deal are not met.

Clinton said in early April before announcing her candidacy that “getting the rest of the way to a final deal by June won’t be easy, but it is absolutely crucial.”

She has also said in the past that no deal would be better than a bad one.

A good deal would be one that “verifiably cuts off all of Iran’s paths to a nuclear weapon” and “imposes an intrusive inspection programme with no sites off limits,” Clinton has said.

A major sticking point has been access to inspect Iranian sites for compliance.

Western and Iranian negotiators said on Friday there were signs a compromise is beginning to emerge on the issue.

Putin calls for revision of Russia’s national security policies

MOSCOW, 4 July — Russian President Vladimir Putin on Friday urged adjustment of the country’s national security strategy to let Russia be better positioned in countering new external challenges and threats, according to an online statement of the Kremlin.

“First of all, it is necessary to quickly analyze the whole spectrum of potential challenges and risks in sectors of politics, economy, information and so on. Based on these analyses we could make adjustments to Russia’s national security strategy,” said Putin, while presiding and addressing a security council meeting held in the day.

Putin said Russia would continue to carry out exchange and cooperation with different countries on the basis of mutual respect and taking each other’s interests into consideration but with a prerequisite of no endangering of Russia’s sovereign rights and security.

He also pledged Russia is committed to advancing economic integration of nations, the Commonwealth of Independent States and to advocating improved cooperation with members on BRICS, namely Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, and with member states of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

The West has failed to split the Russian society using sanctions, claimed Putin, who stressed the countermoves adopted by his government have played an active role in stabilizing domestic economy, finance, and employment in Russia. He said Russian enterprises have learned to expand business under unfavourable circumstances, coupled with a steady growth of important strategic sectors, and a good implementation of important projects that have a bearing on the livelihood of the people. Russia extended the import ban on certain food products from the United States, the European Union, Canada, Australia and Norway in late June, in response to the renewal of anti-Russian sanctions imposed by western countries over Moscow’s alleged intervention in the Ukraine crisis, an accusation Russia has vehemently denied.

Vietnam’s top leader to make historic US visit, meet Obama next week

HANOI, 4 July — Vietnamese Communist Party chief Nguyen Phu Trong will pay a historic visit to Washington next week for talks with US President Barack Obama next Tuesday in the US capital, the two sides announced on Friday.

Trong will be in the United States from 6 to 10 July, in what will mark the first-ever visit by a leader of Vietnam’s ruling party.

The White House press office said Obama will welcome him there Tuesday for talks covering such issues as defence cooperation, human rights and the Trans-Pacific Partnership currently being negotiated by 12 countries.

“The president looks forward to discussing with General Secretary Trong ways to strengthen further the US-Vietnam Comprehensive Partnership reflecting on the accomplishments of the past 20 years since normalization of bilateral diplomatic relations,” it said in a statement.

On Thursday, Trong met in Hanoi with visiting former US President Bill Clinton, who in November 2000 became the first US president to visit Vietnam since the end of the Vietnam War in 1975.

Trong thanks Clinton for his contributions to removing US trade embargos against Vietnam and normalizing and boosting relations with it.
President U Thein Sein at 7th Mekong-Japan Summit in Tokyo, Japan

Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen, Laotian Prime Minister Thongsing Thammavong, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, Myanmar President U Thein Sein, Thai Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha and Vietnamese Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung pose for photo with footballers from Mekong sub-region countries.—MNA

President U Thein Sein seen together with Japanese Prime Minister at the joint press conference.—MNA

President U Thein Sein delivers speech at dinner hosted by Japan-Myanmar Association.—MNA

President U Thein Sein receives Dr Nobuhiro, President of NEC Corporation of Japan.—MNA

President U Thein Sein receives Mr Kazuo Ohmori, Chairman of Sumitomo Corporation.—MNA
President U Thein Sein at 7th Mekong-Japan Summit in Tokyo, Japan

Myanmar President U Thein Sein and Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe seen at the 7th Mekong-Japan Summit on 4 July.—MNA

7th Mekong-Japan Summit in progress on 4 July.
MNA

Myanmar President U Thein Sein (R) and Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe shake hands before their meeting in Tokyo on July 4, 2015. (Pool photo/Kyodo)

Myanmar President U Thein Sein, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and Thai Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha seen at signing ceremony of memorandum of intent on the Dawei special economic zone.—MNA

Myanmar President U Thein Sein, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and Thai Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha witness signing of memorandum of intent on the Dawei special economic zone.—MNA
Like tracks and trains, workers and owners are interdependent

By Aung Khin

If employers are railway tracks, workers are locomotives. Both the tracks and locomotive play crucial roles in reaching a certain destination. Without a track, trains cannot move, and without engines, the tracks have no use.

The Myanmar government has introduced its first-ever minimum wage of K3,600 (US $3.2) per day for all workers, following a year of negotiation between the government, employers and labour representatives. However, the country’s garment business owners have objected to the proposed rate, vowing to take the issue up with regional authorities and threatening to close around 100 factories.

Garment industry entrepreneurs wanted to set the rate at K2,500, while workers demanded K4,000 per day. Owners have complained about the impact on access to international markets. Some government factory owners are reportedly planning to reduce their overtime rates from double pay to time-and-a-half if the Parliament adopts the proposed minimum wage.

ASEAN countries have increasingly been following the strategy of China, which has raised minimum wage levels and enacted new labour laws with greater protection of workers’ rights. The strategy is aimed at combating inflation and preventing labour unrest.

A suitable minimum wage needs to be set to ensure workers can meet their living costs. Myanmar’s minimum wage is one of the lowest in Southeast Asia.

Myanmar’s garment industry needs to have access to international markets. Capable owners should seek market strategies that allow them to pay a reasonable minimum wage compared with neighbouring countries. The government should also support them with better infrastructure such as electricity and logistics.

As Myanmar is moving toward democratic reform, all parties must maintain ethical conduct and remember their reliance on one another – like locomotives and rail tracks – for everyone’s benefit.

write for us

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

Myanmar students seek learning opportunities in China

By Aye Min Soe

Kunming, 4 July — For Myanmar university students with an interest in Chinese language and culture, a growing number of scholarships and exchange programmes are providing opportunities to study in the neighbouring economic power.

There are currently around 100 Myanmar students attending Yunnan Normal University (YNNU) in Kunming, Yunnan Province. Most are from Chinese language schools in Myanmar and have won scholarships from the university, according to Sai Khin Par, a third-year student of Chinese language and culture from southern Shan State.

International Economy and Trade is reportedly the favourite subject for Myanmar students attending the university.

About 40 of them are enrolled at Yunnan University and studying at YNNU under an exchange programme. Additionally, a number of Yangon University faculty members are doing doctorate studies there.

In 2014, more than 2,200 international students attended the university and at present YNNU has 1,700 international students from all over the world, more than any other university in the province.

Nearly 2,500 students learned foreign languages from Southeast Asian countries at the university last year. Thai language is the most popular Southeast Asian language, followed by the Myanmar language.

YNNU is a higher institution co-funded by the Ministry of Education and Yunnan Provincial Government, and also one of the 100 universities funded by the National Key Project for the Quality Enhancement of the Higher Institutions in Central and West China.

In the 77 years since its establishment, YNNU has seen more than 200,000 students graduating and contributing to different fields in China.

As for the first time this year, China surpassed Japan to have the highest number of universities listed in the Asia University Rankings compiled by the Times of London.
Contributing To The Nation Building Endeavour

Kyi Mun

In the historically necessary democracy building in Myanmar, we should not hesitate even a little bit to involve ourselves in the great national movement. We must participate in it by ardently contributing to it as much as we can. As true citizens, we can participate in the great national movement for democracy in the following manner:

- **Commitment**
  - To Focus On
    - Dynamic View
    - Transformational View
    - Positive Attitude
    - Proactive Attitude
    - Revolutionary Ideas
    - Strategic Perspective
  - To Disregard
    - Passive View
    - Static View
    - Status quo View
    - Reactive Attitude
    - Reactionary Ideas
    - Myopic Perspective

- **Objectives**
  - To be strongly DEDICATED
  - To be fervently EARNEST
  - To be genuinely SINCERE
  - To be highly INTEGRITY-DRIVEN
  - To be deeply RESPONSIBLE
  - To be entirely ENERGETIC

- **National Unity**

Democracy is a matter of the entire people and the entire nation. Throughout the length and breadth of Myanmar, mass movements for building democracy must be held continuously for awareness and for participation. Establishing democracy is a most important national affair. So, outreach, impact and sustainability must be ensured to add value to the nation building struggle, must have sterling character and a heart of gold. All the contributing people have got to secure a revolutionary spirit and patriotic fervor. Everyone of us should: “GIVE ALL TO LOVE, OBEY THY HEART.”

**Total Democracy Building**

At one time, two bricklayers were working at their worksite. At that time, an acquaintance passed by them. He asked the first bricklayer: “What are you doing, my friend?” And the first bricklayer answered: “I’m building a wall.” And then, the man asked the second bricklayer: “What are you doing, my dear?”, and the second bricklayer answered: “I’m building a cathedral.” Likewise, our vision should be building a great and grand cathedral of democracy in Myanmar!

**Revolutionary Ideas**

In contributing to the nation building endeavour, we should clearly focus our attention on the following Pros & Cons:

- **Pros**
  - Active View
  - Transformational View
  - Positive Attitude
  - Revolutionary Ideas
    - Strategic Perspective

- **Cons**
  - Passive View
  - Static View
  - Status quo View
  - Negative Attitude
  - Reactive Attitude
  - Reactionary Ideas
  - Myopic Perspective

**Commitment**

We should be strongly and passionately committed to participating in building democracy in Myanmar. According to our Character, Competence, Courage and Caring, we have got to involve ourselves in the great movement for democracy building in Myanmar. In participating in it, commitment is quite essential.

**National Economic Modernization**

In contributing to the nation building endeavour, inspiration on the part of the people is very important. People must be inspired or motivated to wholeheartedly participate in the noble task of nation building. People must be, for the most part, intrinsically motivated to passionately contribute to the national reconstruction. Besides this, there must be short-term wins or benefits for the people, as well as the long-term strategic victories. The hearts of the broad masses of the people must be touched and awakened to the necessity of establishing democracy in Myanmar.

**Total Economic Modernization**

In contributing to the nation building endeavour, economic development and modernization must be expedited, as it is very important to successfully solve the problem of unemployment as well as to raise the living conditions of the broad masses of the people to the more or less decent levels. Economic development must be given urgency among the top priorities in the nation building agenda. The broad masses of the people must be provided with economic security as well as the political security.

**Total All-out for Establishing Democracy**

In the great endeavour of our national reconstruction and modernization, all the Myanmar citizens must involve themselves wholeheartedly with all their minds, with all their soul, and with all their strengths in order to win beautifully and speedily in the urgent task of catching up with the more developed economies in the region. We must never be apathetic, complacent and myopic in our historically important task of the national rejuvenation and modernization. All the people of the whole nation must rise up as one man and shape and build democracy in Myanmar without fail.

**National Unity**

In nation building, national unity is primary and of paramount importance. Racial and ethnic understanding, tolerance and unity must be solidly, comprehensively and sustainably established, based on the genuine democratic principles. In establishing national unity, understanding, tolerance, maturity, compromise and proactive view are fundamental prerequisites.

**Conclusion**

People must be inspired or motivated to wholeheartedly participate in the noble task of nation building. People should clearly focus our attention on the following Pros & Cons: To Focus On

- Active View
- Transformational View
- Positive Attitude
- Revolutionary Ideas
- Strategic Perspective

To Disregard

- Passive View
- Static View
- Status quo View
- Negative Attitude
- Reactive Attitude
- Reactionary Ideas
- Myopic Perspective

In contributing to the nation building endeavor, inspiration on the part of the people is very important. People must be inspired or motivated to wholeheartedly participate in the noble task of nation building. People should clearly focus our attention on the following Pros & Cons: To Focus On

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- Negative Attitude
- Reactive Attitude
- Reactionary Ideas
- Myopic Perspective
**Greek minister — Europe can’t afford to let Athens go under**

**ATHENS, 4 July** — Europe will lose a trillion euros if it allows Greece to go under, the country’s finance minister said on Saturday, accusing creditors of forcing Greece to accept austerity and with it its own future, its credit rating, and its standing in the eurozone.

Addressing a crowd of over 50,000 in central Athens, left-wing Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras urged them to spurn the deal, rejecting warnings from Greece’s European partners that this may bring an exit from the euro and even greater hardship.

Tsipras’ finance minister, Yanis Varoufakis, said there was too much at stake for Europe to cast Greece adrift. “As much for Greece as for Europe, I’m sure,” Varoufakis told the Spanish newspaper El Mundo. “If Greece crashes, a trillion euros (the equivalent of Spain’s GDP) will be lost. It’s too much money and I don’t believe Europe could allow it.”

“What they’re doing with Greece has a name: terrorism,” said Varoufakis. “Why have they forced us to close the banks? To frighten people. And when it’s about spreading terror, that is known as terrorism.”

A slew of opinion polls on Friday gave the “Yes” camp, which favours accepting the bailout terms, a slender lead but all were within the margin of error and pollsters said the vote was too close to call. Only one had the “No” vote advocated by the government winning.

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A group of tourists pose for a picture in front of the temple of the Parthenon atop the Acropolis in Athens, Greece, on 2 July, 2015. — REUTERS

Greece Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras delivers a speech at an anti-austerity rally in Syntagma Square in Athens, Greece, on 3 July, 2015. — REUTERS

**Gaza war crimes report**

**CARACAS, 4 July** — Venezuela’s President Nicolas Maduro has declared a state of emergency in a western state of Apure after massive floods have left over 40,000 people affected due to heavy rains over the last two weeks.

In a telephone call to state television, Maduro said that after a thorough assessment with envoy to the area, he decided to declare an emergency in that location, particularly the town of Guasualito, which has been the hardest hit.

“Those have been the worst floods in the area in the last 20 years and we have been able to control the emergency by evacuating thousands of families to safe zones,” he said.

He approved an immediate fund of over 47 million US dollars for relief duties, emergency rescue teams and initial recovery of the region.

“In the first instance we have provided emergency assistance to all those affected and assessed the damages to focus now on an overall plan of recovery once it stops raining and the floods finish,” Maduro said.

According to local authorities, the Aragua and Sarare rivers have overflowed and caused damage by flooding hundreds of houses, banks, schools and businesses.

The Venezuelan states of Apure, Tachira and Barinas have been hit hard with heavy rains in the last few weeks due to a tropical trough that has also affected the southeastern part of Colombia.

**After Tunisia attack, sun-seekers switch to Spain, Bulgaria and Greece**

**BERLIN, 4 July** — Fearing for their safety in Tunisia after a gunman killed dozens of tourists, sun-seeking Europeans are switching to destinations such as Spain, Bulgaria or even Greece for holidays this year.

Tunisia’s tourism industry had been recovering after the Arab Spring unrest, and had become a popular lower-cost beach holiday spot for Europeans. Last year, 2.8 million travelled there, rebounding back towards 3.8 million level seen in 2010 before the uprising, according to official statistics.

But last week’s attack — in which 38 people were killed by an Islamist gunman at a beach hotel, mostly Britons — added to security fears raised after a massacre at the Bardo museum in March, when two gunmen opened fire on tourists. Now many tourists who had planned or booked Tunisian trips are looking elsewhere. Long-haul destinations are unlikely to pick up tourists originally destined for Tunisia, said travel analyst Angelo Rossini from market research firm Euromonitor.

Destinations like the Maldives, the Caribbean and Mexico are typically more pricey and target a different customer segment. Instead the biggest beneficiary is expected to be Spain, Rossini added. Spain targets a similar type of tourist to Tunisia - those seeking a value-for-money all-inclusive holiday.

However, those switching may have to pay a premium as the holiday season is already under way and people typically book months in advance.

“It’s clear that some tourists will now change Tunisia for continental Spain or the Canary Islands, but they will have to pay more,” said Juan Molas, chairman of the Spanish Hotel Federation Cehat.

Molas also said Bulgaria and Turkey, which have lost a lot of their customers from Russia due to the economic crisis there, could prove to be popular, good-value alternatives to Spain.

However some industry experts said Westerners staying away from Tunisia for security reasons may be unwilling to switch to countries such as Turkey, which borders war-torn Syria, and Egypt, where there has been social and political unrest in recent years.

“The incident in Tunisia, Turkey, as a Muslim nation, may be even more negatively impacted, because all of these types of events keep occurring in Muslim nations,” said Timur Bayindr, head of the Touristic Hotels & Investors Association (TUROB) in Turkey.

**Israeli PM blasts UNHRC for endorsing Gaza war crimes report**

**JERUSALEM, 4 July** — Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Friday slammed a decision by the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) to endorse a report accusing Israel and Hamas in war crimes during last year’s war in the Palestinian enclave.

“The UNHRC is not interested in the facts and is not really interested in human rights," Netanyahu charged in a statement released by his office.

He accused the UNHRC for condemning Israel “for no fault of its own, for acting to defend itself from a murderous terrorist organization.” He added that Israel soldiers “act in accordance with international law.”

The resolution to back the report was adopted with strong European support, with 41 council members, including Germany, France, and Britain, voting in favor the report, while only the United States voted against. India, Kenya, Paraguay, Ethiopia, and Macedonia abstained.

**EUROCING**

**Global New Light of Myanmar**
Sunday, 5 July, 2015

**SAUDI-LED AIR STRIKES ON YEMEN CITY KILL 16 — HOUTHS**

**Syrian army bombards rebels trying to seize Aleppo**

_Sanaa, 4 July_ — Saudi-led air strikes killed at least 16 people in Yemen on Friday, the country’s dominant Houthi militia said, as a European Union and United States appealed for a pause in the war to enable aid deliveries to stricken civilians.

An alliance coalition has been bombarding Iran-backed Houthi forces and allied army units since March in a campaign to restore exiled President Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi’s government.

Houthi sources said six people including a woman and a child were killed and six wounded in a dawn air strike on the al-Jaraf neighbourhood of the capital Sanaa.

The Houthi-controlled Saba news agency reported 10 people were killed by Saudi-led aerial attacks on a building in Bayt al-Faqih city in the southwestern province of al-Hodeida.

Eight Houthis were also killed in an explosion at the public library in the Red Sea port city of Hodeida used by members of the group, local officials said. But the exact cause of the blast was disputed, with one report saying it was caused by an air strike while another said it was a car bomb.

Air strikes were also staged against Faj Attan mountain overlooking Sanaa, home to a military base and a weapons depot that had been a frequent target in the course of the three-month-old war in the Arabian Peninsula country.

In the dawn attack, warplanes also hit the ministry of communications building, Saba said. Another warplane was on fire and destroying nearby buildings.

Warplanes returned for another raid on Sanaa around noon, but there was no immediate word on casualties or damage.

The Houthis captured Sanaa last September, pushing Hadi’s government aside and then began expanding south and westwards. The president eventually fled the port of Aden in March after the Houthis advanced on his southern stronghold.

The United Nations on Wednesday designated the Yemen war as a Level 3 humanitarian crisis, its most severe category.

On Thursday, the US State Department called for a humanitarian pause “in the conflict during the current Muslim holy month of Ramadan to allow international aid groups to deliver urgently needed food, medicine, and fuel.”

The EU said on Friday it supported UN efforts to secure a lasting, predictive and sustainable humanitarian ceasefire and demanded that Saudi-led forces ease restrictions on entry of ships to Yemeni ports.

“Such a pause should allow the urgent delivery of humanitarian assistance and essential supplies, including fuel, food and basic commodities,” a statement by EU foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini and EU humanitarian and crisis management commissioner Christos Stylianides said.

Both sides largely observed a five-day humanitarian truce brokered by the United Nations in May to allow in “lifeline” fuel and medicine to civilians trapped in conflict zones.

**CIVILIAN KILLED AT CAIRO PROTEST ON ANNIVERSARY OF MURSI OUSTING**

_Saudi-led air strikes on Yemen cities kill 16 — Houthis**

**Car bombs explode in Libya’s Derma, at least six killed**

_Cairo, 4 July_ — A civilian was killed on Friday during a protest rally in Cairo in support of Egypt’s former president Mohamed Morsi, security sources said, on the second anniversary of the army’s overthrow of the Islamist leader.

Supporters of Morsi’s now-banned Muslim Brotherhood said interior ministry forces had opened fire at the protest. The ministry was not immediately available for comment.

The security sources said the person had been shot dead and that two other people had been wounded. A health ministry spokesman confirmed the death, which he said had occurred at a rally in the southern Cairo district of Dar al-Salaam. He did not elaborate.

Egyptian authorities have cracked down hard on the Brotherhood since the army overthrew him on 3 July, 2013, following mass protests against his one-year rule.

Last month a court sentenced Morsi, Egypt’s first freely elected leader, to death along with fellow leaders of the Brotherhood. Thousands of alleged supporters of the movement are also in jail, many serving lengthy sentences.

The Brotherhood maintains it is committed to peaceful activism, but the government has labelled it a terrorist organization and does not distinguish between it and other militant groups based mainly in North Sinai.

On Friday, a branch of the pro-Brotherhood National Coalition to Support Legitimacy and Reject the Coup said on its Facebook page a man had been shot dead in Cairo when interior ministry forces “opened fire with live ammunition and bird cartridges”.

Two people, including a soldier, were wounded by birdshot at a separate demonstration involving dozens of Brotherhood supporters in the Delta province of Menoufia, the state news agency MENA reported.

**Car bombs explode in Libya’s Derma, at least six killed**

_Benghazi, (Libya), 4 July_ — At least six people were killed and 10 others wounded when several car bombs exploded in the Libyan city of Derma, a medical source said on Friday.

Derma has been caught in fighting between Islamist militants, rival Islamist fighters and armed forces with the country’s internationally recognized government.

The eastern port city is just one front in a multi-sided conflict in the North African country, where two rival governments and various armed groups are fighting for control four years after the fall of Muamar Gaddafi.

**Smoke billows from the site of a Saudi-led air strike in Yemen’s capital Sanaa, on 2 July, 2015.** —_Reuters_
France’s Hollande says ready to hold new summit on Boko Haram

ANKARA, 4 July — Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan on Friday raised the prospect of a snap election if coalition talks fail after his ruling AK Party fell short of a majority in a 7 June parliamentary poll.

Erdogan is expected next week to mandate Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu, the AK Party’s leader, to form a coalition government but it remains unclear whether he will be able to build enough support for a stable parliamentary majority.

“The formation of a coalition with a majority in my parliament is my desire,” he told a gathering of supporters.

“But if a government cannot be formed ... our people will provide the solution again. If the parliament cannot solve it, it is our people who will. Nobody should hesitate to go back to the people,” he said, citing “serious issues” facing Turkey. Party officials have privately said Erdogan may see a snap election as the best way for the AK Party to regain its majority and push constitutional changes he favors, which would enable him to introduce a strong executive presidency in Turkey.

Some political analysts say the early election option looks unlikely, however, after an opinion poll last week showed voters would be unwilling to change their vote. While a coalition with the right-wing Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) would make sense ideologically, AKP officials say their top brass is leaning toward an alliance with the centre-left CHP.

Turkey’s President Tayyip Erdogan greets parliamentarians as he arrives at the Turkish parliament to watch a swearing-in ceremony in Ankara, Turkey, on 23 June, 2015. Reuters

Ecuador, first stop on Pope tour, highlights environment exhortation

QUITO, 4 July — It is one of the most biodiverse nations on earth, boasting Amazon rainforest, Andean mountains and the Galapagos Islands, where Charles Darwin formulated his theory of evolution.

Yet with a heavy reliance on oil and mining, Ecuador, where Pope Francis begins his South America tour this weekend, is a prime example of tensions between politics, business and the environment at the heart of last month’s landmark encyclical.

In the first papal document dedicated to the environment, the Argentine-born pontiff urged world leaders to heed “the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor” and reverse mankind’s degradation of the planet.

“This century may well witness dramatic changes in climate change and an unprecedented destruction of ecosystems,” warned the Pope, who arrives in the capital Quito on Sunday on the first stop of a tour also including Bolivia and Paraguay.

French President Francois Hollande in Lyon, France, on 1 July, 2015. Reuters

Ecuador’s leftist leader, Rafael Correa, who won re-election in 2006 in part on a promise to preserve the country’s unique biodiversity, is under fire from environmentalists who say he gives a greater priority to business.

Though activists are not scheduled to meet him, they hope the Pope’s mere presence, and recent international public attention over his encyclical, will strengthen their causes: from halting oil exploration in the Yasuni jungle to blocking a new law about tax increases and alleged autocentrism in government, may also raise the environmental banner to try to embarrass the president during Francis’ visit.

One of the poorest nations in South America, the small Andean country of 15 million people encapsulates tensions running across the Pope’s native, resource-rich continent.

Colonizers first ventured through South America on a quest for gold and silver half a millennium ago. Riches including oil, copper and gold still drive the region’s economies today.

OPEC member Ecuador relies on oil for half its foreign income, according to the World Bank, and produces about half a million barrels per day. That sustains steady economic growth that has provided welfare development, but has also meant drilling around important environmental sites.

Some scientists think the number of all types of species in Ecuador is around a million, more than a tenth of the world’s total.

Ecuador is home to 2,308 threatened species — including mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, fish and plants — far more than any other country, according to the latest data from the International Union for Conservation of Nature.

Endangered species include the white-bellied spider monkey, the giant otter and a tree, Rollinia belosinodes, of which there is thought to be only one living example in the world.

Perhaps nowhere has the environmental debate raged more than in Ecuador’s eastern Yasuni park, a 9,820-square-kilometre (6,100-square-mile) swath of rainforest on the equator.

“Eastern Ecuador is likely the most species-diverse place on the planet,” said Michael Cosgrove, president of tropical ecology at Quito’s San Francisco University.

However, about 846 million barrels of oil lie under Yasuni’s soil, one-tenth of the country’s total proven reserves.

Challenging the world to save Yasuni, Correa in 2007 asked wealthy countries to donate $3.6 billion to offset revenue lost by not drilling there.

But the initiative brought in less than 4 per cent of the requested amount so Correa scrapped the plan six years later and authorized drilling, saying the world had failed Ecuador.

Oil spills in the country’s northeastern jungle decades ago are the subject of one of the world’s biggest environmental suits.

Local plaintiffs, including environmental groups, continue to battle Chevron Corp in international courts, seeking billions of dollars for damage they allege was caused by Texaco, which Chevron later acquired.

As well as oil, a nascent gold and copper mining sector is hoping to attract $5 billion of investment over the next five years. Environmental worry this could scar the landscape.

Reuters

Unesco lists Jamaica’s Blue and John Crow Mountains as world heritage

KINGSTON, 4 July — The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) listed Jamaica’s Blue and John Crow Mountains National Park as world heritage on Friday. This marks the first World Heritage site for Jamaica and the first mixed — cultural and natural — site for the Caribbean sub-region, according to the Ministry of Youth and Culture of Jamaica.

The Blue and John Crow Mountains National Park is located in the east of central Jamaica.

The Blue Mountain is known as the home of the Jamaica Blue Mountain Coffee, which is among the most expensive coffees around the world, while John Crow Mountain is famous for the anti-colonial movement and is an area which has been inhabited by African workers settled in John Crow Mountain. After more than 80 years of peaceful occupation, a peace treaty was drawn up in 1739 between residents and British colonists.

According to the treaty, residents were allowed to stay in tax-free land in different parts of Jamaica known as Moore Town Maroons.

“Our history, in particular, the struggles and defiance of our Maroon people helped to mould us into being distinctly Jamaicans,” Ministry of Youth and Culture Loana Hunte told the World Heritage Committee at the UNESCO’s 39th session in Bonn, Germany, on Friday. “To this end, we want the world to not only drink our Blue Mountain Coffee but also see the outstanding universal value of the Blue and John Crow Mountains,” she said.

Currently, there are 1,011 sites on UNESCO’s World Heritage List, among which only 32 are mixed sites with both cultural and natural significance.
SUNDAY, 5 JULY, 2015

**WEATHER REPORT**

**BAY INFERENCE:** Monsoon is strong in the Andaman Sea and Bay of Bengal.

**FORECAST VALID UNTIL EVENING OF THE 5th, July, 2015:** Rain or thundershowers will be isolated in Lower Sagaing, Mon, Mandalay, Magway, Kayah, Kayin, Mon and Shan States. Overland, scattered to moderate to heavy rain is likely to occur in parts of the Lower GANGES and North-Western Myanmar, with isolated to heavy rain in the Sylhet and Rangamati districts. Overland, weak to moderate to heavy rain is likely to occur in parts of the Northern coastal and Southern districts. Squalls with moderate to heavy rain are likely to occur at times in parts of the Lower Sagaing, Mon, Mandalay, Magway and Kayah States. Degree of certainty is (100%).

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

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**Hot, dry weather blamed for large number of fires across Alaska**

Los Angeles, 4 July — The US state of Alaska appears to be on the track to have one of its worst fire seasons on record due to hot and dry conditions, with more than 2.2 million acres (909,308 hectares) having been burned.

Newly released data from the Alaska Interagency Coordination Centre show that wildfires in the state had consumed 2,475,575 acres already. Many fires in remote areas are unstaffed.

This year has seen an unusually high number of wildfires burning simultaneously across the tundra and forests of Alaska, and an exceptionally large number of homes and buildings have been damaged or threatened by the flames so far this year.

Meanwhile, the Alaska Division of Forestry said that “the amount of acreage burned in Alaska during June of 2015 shattered the previous acreage record set in June of 2004 by more than 700,000 acres.”

NASA’s Aqua satellite captured this image of the fires. Clouds obscure much of the image on either side of the dozens of fires and many probably have hidden other fires from being detected but a large swath of fires can be seen in this image with the requisite smoke from those fires drifting northward.

Wildfires are a common occurrence in the state, but this year’s fires started earlier than normal and have escalated quickly.

It has been an unusually fire season for the state, mostly due to a light winter snowpack and little rain in the spring left dry ground particularly vulnerable to fires that break out when lightning strikes, NASA said in a statement.

Hot and dry conditions in Alaska have been topping records over the past few months, many of which have been held for decades.

It was the warmest June on record in many places, including Anchorage, Alaska's largest city, and Barrow, the northernmost city in the entire United States.

In May, Alaska saw a 90-degree day earlier in the season than ever recorded. The months also went down in the annals of weather history as the warmest May on record for the entire state.

A lack of snow over the winter has earned a new record for Alaska’s largest city. The National Weather Service says Anchorage received 25.1 inches of snow over the winter, compared with the normal 74.5 inches. It also became clear that dozens of cities across the Lower 48 had snowier winters than Anchorage.

The Alaskan summer of 2004 was unusual. It was the warmest summer on record, the most lightning strikes were recorded, wildland fires burned the largest acreage in recorded Alaska history. Heat, dry conditions and lightning strikes combined to produce a staggering 6,500,140 acres burned — “more than 8 times the 10 year average acreage,” according to the state’s Division of Air Quality.

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**Switzerland on alert as European heatwave persists**

Geneva, 4 July — World Meteorological Organization (WMO) announced on Friday that the heatwave affecting parts of Western, Central and Eastern Europe since 27 June will continue unabated over the coming days.

According to WMO, the European heatwave is atypical not only for its early arrival in the summer period, but also because of its extensive geographical reach.

Many countries and regions have witnessed abnormally high temperatures, such as in parts of the Iberian Peninsula (43 degrees Celsius) where the heatwave began, areas of France (40 degrees Celsius), Germany (38 degrees Celsius), Italy and England (36 degrees Celsius). Given the consistently high temperatures raging across much of Europe combined with prevailing dry conditions, parallels with the 2003 heatwave which killed some 70,000 people are being drawn, though WMO highlighted that Europe is much better prepared in terms of heat-health action plans.

In light of these severe weather trends, Switzerland’s Federal Office of Meteorology and Climatology (Meteoswiss) has issued a level 4 alert (out of a maximum of 5) for the coming days, while Western Poland also has been placed on red alert.

On the other side of the spectrum, while South and Central Europe continues to suffer from extreme temperatures, Northern Europe is experiencing one of its coolest summer beginnings on record. Meteoswiss recommend avoiding physical efforts, while trying to keep cool and drinking at least 1.5 liters of water a day to reduce the risk of experiencing heatstroke.

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**Vucic: ZSO needed for safer future of children in KIM**

Belgrade, 4 July — The setting up of the community of Serb municipalities (ZSO) should make it possible for the Serb children in Kosovo-Metohija (KIM) to feel safer, Serbian Prime Minister Aleksandar Vucic said on Friday.

There should be institutions to which Serbian children in KIM can turn to for help when it comes to protection of their rights, Vucic said, expressing satisfaction about receiving at his office children from the Serb municipalities of Klokot and Vitina, who are on a two-day visit to Belgrade. The prime minister said that he was happy to see the young ones visiting their country’s capital city, and promised that the government would do whatever it could to see the Serb children in Kosovo get a chance to live like all other children of Europe.

“We will always do our best to do the little that we can do for them, and we will regard that part of (our country) as Serbian territory, in accordance with the Constitution of the Republic of Serbia,” said the prime minister.

Vucic said that he hoped that a visit like today’s would be organized for children from other parts of Kosovo, who perhaps lived in even more difficult conditions.

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**Tanjung**

People participate in marathon and walkathon organized for a restoration campaign of the quake-hit Kastamandap temple at Basantapur in Kathmandu, Nepal, on 4 July, 2015. The 5km marathon and 1km walkathon was organized to raise the awareness of rebuilding and restoring heritage sites after earthquakes. —Xinhua
Arctic Monkeys, Duran Duran honoured at Silver Clef Awards

LONDON, 4 July — From heavy metal rockers Iron Maiden to classical singers II Divo, musicians of all kind were honoured at the O2 Silver Clef Awards on Friday, gathering for the annual luncheon that raises money for a British musical therapy charity.

British rock band Arctic Monkeys scooped the “Best Live Act” award, winning the sole public vote of the event, which was held in London. Soul songstress Gladys Knight, pop star Rita Ora, rock group Duran Duran, heavy metal band Iron Maiden, producer DJ Mark Ronson and classical singers Il Divo were among the winners of this year’s awards.

"(Music) is an emotional medium. You can try to analyze it until you are blue in the face but it just gets re-sults," Iron Maiden vocalist Bruce Dickinson said. The ceremony, established in 1976, raises money for the British charity Nordoff Robbins, which uses music therapy to help children and adults.

Past winners include U2, Coldplay, the Rolling Stones and Paul McCartney.

Musical version of ‘James Bond’ on its way?

LONDON, 4 July — Merry Saltzman, the daughter of “James Bond” producer Harry Saltzman, has reportedly secured the rights to a Bond stage show.

The show, “James Bond: The Musical,” will include music and lyrics from Jay Henry Weinz, while Dave Clarke has written the story, reported Digital Spy.

The musical will have an original plot, including several Bond villains, along with some new ones.

While production and casting details have not yet been announced, the show will apparently debut in late 2017 or early 2018 in Las Vegas.

The next Bond movie, “Spectre” starring Daniel Craig, is scheduled to release on 6 November.

Rapper Sean Combs avoids assault charges in UCLA kettlebell incident

LOS ANGELES, 4 July — Rapper Sean “P Diddy” Combs will not face assault charges stemming from an incident involving a kettlebell weight at the University of California, Los Angeles. Los Angeles city officials said on Thursday.

Combs, 45, was arrested on charges of assault with a deadly weapon last month by campus police, and held in jail.

Media reports said Combs was involved in an altercation with UCLA's football coach, Jim Mora, called the encounter “an unfortunate incident for all parties involved,” in a statement following Combs’ arrest.

Grammy-winning Combs, also known as Puff Daddy and Diddy, is also an actor, entrepreneur and the founder of Bad Boy Records. Forbes estimated his earnings at $69 million last year.

Jada Pinkett Smith on being the feminist force of ‘Magic Mike XXL’

LOS ANGELES, 4 July — From playing the villainous, manipulative Fish Mooney on Fox’s Batman origins TV series “Gotham” to an empowering erotic club owner in Magic Mike XXL,” Jada Pinkett Smith is no stranger to taking on strong female characters on screen.

Smith, 43, told Reuters how she helped carve her role in “XXL” — one originally intended for actor Jamie Foxx — as the film’s feminist force, and whether her husband, actor Will Smith, will see the film as it comes out in theaters this week.

Below are excerpts.

Q: How do you think “XXL” reinvents male entertainment?
A: Somebody brought up a really good point that usually male stripper would be dressed up as police officers, firemen, so [male entertainment] has this very authoritative feel, instead of getting to understand what are those desires and fantasies that women want to explore with their imagination. So you would hope that maybe strip clubs would get more on that page.

Q: How was your experience collaborating with “XXL” director Greg Jacobs and screenwriter Reid Carolin as they developed your character?
A: They were so open, that was the biggest gift. Reid and Greg, I worried them to death about all kinds of stuff.

Q: Have you seen the film with your husband or with your husband yet?
A: No, not yet. That’s going to be fun. Will can’t wait. He can’t wait. He’s like, “Oh babe, I saw the trailer. This is so perfect for you, I cannot wait to see you in this.”

Japanese pop star Hikaru Utada gives birth to baby boy

TOKYO, 4 July — Japanese pop star Hikaru Utada said on her official website on Friday that she had given birth to a baby boy.

“Our baby has arrived! He’s a calm little boy who drinks and sleeps well,” she wrote on the website.

She also revealed that she had been working on a new album during her pregnancy. “It is going to take some more time before it’s completed, but I’m eager to start working on it again. Stay tuned!” she said.

After ending her first marriage in 2007, Utada married an Italian man last year.

In 2010, she decided to suspend musical activities for an indefinite period from 2011 to focus on “human activities.”

Kyodo News

Jada Pinkett Smith poses at the European premiere of ‘Magic Mike XXL’ at Leicester Square in London, Britain on 30 June, 2015. Reuters

Sean “Diddy” Combs arrives at The Weinstein Company & Netflix after party after the 74th annual Golden Globe Awards in Beverly Hills, California, on 12 Jan, 2014. Reuters

Rapper Sean Combs arrives at the 57th annual Grammy Awards in Los Angeles, California on 8 Feb, 2015. Reuters

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Kyodo News
FIFA’s Webb charged in Cayman Island’s corruption case

ZURICH, 4 July — Suspended FIFA vice-president and CONCACAF president Jeffrey Webb, already facing charges in football’s global bribery scandal, has now been charged in a health-care fraud case in his native Cayman Islands, local media reported on Friday.

Cayman authorities have issued an arrest warrant for Webb and are expected to seek his extradition, reported Cayman 27 television.

Webb is currently detained in Switzerland after being arrested and indicted by the FBI last month and already faces an extradition request from the United States in relation to football corruption charges brought by the Department of Justice.

Webb was one of seven powerful figures arrested in Zurich on 27 May two days before FIFA’s annual congress, stunning world football. The charges by US prosecutors include allegations that millions of dollars were paid in bribes in FIFA’s selection process to host men’s World Cups and other major tournaments.

Webb’s close associate Canover Watson, also a football official in the Cayman Islands and the Caribbean Football Union, was arrested last year on five charges including fraud, money-laundering relating to the CarePay card swipe payment system at the Cayman Health Services Authority. Webb did not immediately respond when contacted for comment.

The report said that Webb faces two charges of conspiracy to defraud and one charge of breach of trust, as well as ‘conspiracy to convert criminal property’.

The 50-year-old Webb was elected as head of CONCACAF, the confederation governing the sport in North and Central America and the Caribbean, in 2012. Before the FIFA scandal he was viewed as a potential successor to FIFA President Sepp Blatter.

The Cayman Islands Anti-Corruption Commission did not immediately respond when contacted for comment.

Restored Word War Two Spitfire to be auctioned for charity

LONDON, 4 July — A restored World War Two Spitfire which was shot down over northern France in 1940 is expected to raise about $3 million for charity when it goes up for auction in London next week.

The wreckage of the Vickers Supermarine Spitfire Mk 1A was recovered in 1980 from a beach at Calais, northern France. It had crash-landed there after it was shot down on 24 May, 1940, during the evacuation of Dunkirk and over the years was washed over by tides, sinking deeper into the sands, auctioneer Christie’s said.

It is one of two remaining Mk.1 models restored to the original specification and that can still fly, Christie’s said.

The Spitfire will be put up for auction next Thursday with an estimate of 1.5 million pounds to 2.5 million pounds.

It is being sold by art collector Thomas Kaplan, who will donate the proceeds to the Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund and wildlife charity Panthera.

“It is arguably one of the most beautiful pieces of technology ever created,” Kaplan said at the Churchill War Rooms museum in London, where the plane was exhibited.

“It is as graceful as any war machine,” Kaplan said.

The sale will also commemorate the 75th anniversary of the Battle of France and the Battle of Britain, the air war between the RAF and the German Luftwaffe in the summer and autumn of 1940.

“The spitfire is in a way the most iconic symbol of the Battle of Britain and the Battle of Britain was really one of the most pivotal turning points in modern history,” Kaplan said.

Berlin says utilities can’t dodge responsibility for nuclear waste

 BERLIN, 4 July — German Economy Minister Sigmar Gabriel said on Friday that if the provisions by utilities for shutting down nuclear power plants were not sufficient, the government needed to discuss asking the companies to make further payments.

Gabriel also said that Berlin wanted to rule out quickly by law the possibility for utilities to reduce their financial liability regarding the de-nuclearization of the country.

Germany’s four nuclear operators — E.ON, RWE, EnBW and Vattenfall — have set aside around 36 billion euros ($39.99 billion) in provisions for shutting down nuclear power plants and building a safe disposal site for highly radioactive waste.— Reuters
Serena survives, Djokovic, Sharapova ease through

LONDON, 4 July — The needle on the Wimbledon Richter scale sat poised and ready but Serena Williams dug deep into her battle-hardened playbook to ensure there was no earth-shuddering shock at the hands of scurrying Briton Heather Watson on Friday.

With the shockwaves of Rafa Nadal’s exit at the hands of maverick journeyman Dustin Brown 24 hours earlier still rippling around the All England Club, Williams stood on the brink of an even more astonishing reverse.

The five times champion was two breaks down in the third set to her 59th-ranked foe and at one stage stood two points from defeat before normal order was restored and Williams clinched a 6-2, 6-3 win.

“The older I get, I think the tougher I get upstairs,” Williams told reporters after dispatching the frenzied British crowd to tee up a fourth round clash with sister Venus.

“I think every year, maybe this time next year I’ll be probably even stronger.” The astonishing finale to the Centre Court action had shaken up an otherwise routine day at SW19 where Novak Djokovic and Maria Sharapova polished off Romanian Irina-Camelia Begu also in straight sets in their third-round matches.

Neither of the defeated duo, however, showed a fraction of the light on display from 23-year-old Watson.

When Serena hits top gear, her opponents have a habit of rolling over, but the Briton overcame the disappointment of being steamrollered in the first set to rebound in the second, forcing Williams into a string of wild shots.

She reeled off six games in a row to clinch the second set and take a 3-0 lead in the third and served for the match at 5-4 having appeared to tame the Williams fightback. Twice in the next game she was two points from the match, but Williams took her chances and after engineering a 6-5 lead, the American claimed victory on her third match point to leave Watson reflecting on a positive display but gut-wrenching result.

“I gave myself the opportunity to beat her. I didn’t take it this time,” she said. “But I’m really glad I was in that situation because I can learn from it.”

The other top seeds had a far less testing day. Djokovic has yet to drop a set and has barely broken sweat in reaching the last 16 and at times in his victory over Tomic his gymnastic defence was at its jaw-dropping and ligament-stretching best.

When the Serb is scrambling from left to right on the baseline and retrieving everything that comes back on to his side of the net, you half expect his battered opponent to throw in the towel.

To Tomic’s credit, he scrapped and battled to the bitter end but the 27th seed looked a relieved man to escape from a sun-baked Centre Court when Djokovic, chasing a third Wimbledon title, smashed down his 15th ace to close out the match.

Such was Djokovic’s dominance, his opponent might have suspected the world number one of having an extra limb — and not the prosthetic one he was handed to sign by an eager fan at the end.

“Djokovic is a massive talent,” quipped the Austrian. “I’m feeling great, playing great,” said Venus, the 2011 Bob Hope Classic champion. “I’ve just got to keep going. I just haven’t been able to put it all together.”

Venezuelan Vegas (65) and American Langley (69) head a crowded leaderboard at nine-under 131, one stroke ahead of seven others including Englishman Greg Owen.

“I’m feeling great, playing great,” said Venus, the 2011 Bob Hope Classic champion. “I’ve just got to keep going. I just haven’t been able to put it all together.”

Langley, who led overnight after a first round 62, was frustrated by his putter for much of the day but satisfied in the end to break par.

“I wasn’t really sharp off the tee and left a lot of putts short but overall it was a solid score,” he said.

Only seven strokes separate the 78 players who made the cut.

Serena Williams of the USA celebrates winning a game during her match against Heather Watson of Britain at the Wimbledon Tennis Championships in London, on 3 July, 2015. — Reuters

Woods slumps back into mediocrity at Greenbrier

REUTERS

The 14-times major champion made four birdies on the rain-softerned course, but three bogeys on the back nine demonstrated that his swing issues have not been resolved as he looks towards this month’s British Open at St. Andrews.

Woods, who four weeks ago shot the worst score of his decorated career, an 85 at the Memorial tournament, did not speak to the media.

But he was clearly frustrated by two particularly poor tee shots. He sprayed his drive at the par-four 13th so far right it almost went out-of-bounds.

Later, at the par-five 17th, he pushed his tee shot into a water hazard, a swing that prompted him to smash his driver into the turf in frustration.

He subsequently saved par after taking a penalty stroke and dropping his ball far closer to the hole than the point where the ball entered the hazard and where, it appeared from television replays, he should have dropped.

A PGA Tour media official told Reuters that rules officials would not review the incident, however.

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