Myanmar delegation visits Hekinan coal-fired power plant

By Ko Moe, Aye Min Soe

YANGON, 5 July — The Confederation of Trade Unions of Myanmar has urged employers who last week voted against a proposed minimum wage of K3,600 for an eight-hour day to take economic opportunities over the next two to three years into consideration in determining the wage.

At a press conference Sunday held by the CTUM, U Maung Maung, chairman of the confederation, called on factory owners to cooperate with workers to boost productivity instead of disputing the proposed minimum wage, suggesting that doing so would help them adapt to the country’s changing situation in the next two to three years.

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Plants play crucial role in natural disaster reduction

Peace is for all mankind
**Free surgery for children with cleft lip and palate**

**By Khairn Thanda Lwin**

Yangon, 5 July — Over 100 children will receive free surgery for cleft lip and cleft palate at Yangon General Hospital from 6 to 11 July under the arrangement by Myanmar-Singapore Friendship Medical Mission. A Singapore-based charity called Smile Mission Ltd will conduct surgical operations. It has 60 healthcare providers from Singapore, Myanmar, the Philippines, India, Japan, the US, England and Mongolia.

The programme was organized by the Ministry of Health in partnership with Smile Mission Ltd and Myanmar Brewery Ltd, a local top beverage manufacturer.

“Our programme is aimed at bringing a better future for the children,” U Kyaw Kyar, chief operating officer of the beverage manufacturer, said at the opening ceremony of the 5th Myanmar-Singapore Friendship Medical Mission on Sunday.

He added that the bev- erage company has plans to continue its free cleft lip and palate surgical services in cooperation with its partners.

Cleft lip and cleft palate are congenital defects affecting one in 700 births. More than 170,000 children worldwide are born with these conditions, which present them with difficulties in eating, breathing and speaking.

“I hope the programme will enable my three-year-old son to lead a better life in society,” said Daw Mya Mya, 35, from the Ayeyawady Delta region.

Initiated in 2001 in Myanmar, the Myanmar-Singapore Friendship Medical Mission has helped more than 400 children undergo cleft lip and palate surgery.

Since its establishment in 1982, the Smile Asia has provided free surgery for 150,000 children and young adults from 50 countries born with cleft lips and cleft palates.—GNLM

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**Strengthen tax authorities to increase revenue, IMF urges**

**By Ye Myint**

to an official of the International Monetary Fund.

By increasing its revenue and realigning its spending priorities, the government can create “fiscal space,” or freedom to control its finances, Ms Yu Ching Wong, IMF’s resident representative in Myanmar told The Global New Light of Myanmar via email on Friday.

Expanding the reach of the country’s Internal Revenue Department and Larger Taxpayers Office will improve tax compliance, Ms Wong said, adding that tax incentives should be minimized.

The IMF had the question of whether tax rates for higher income earners need to be changed is for the government and parliament to decide.

“We don’t have a view on tax rates on individual groups of people,” she said.

In Myanmar, those earning above K30 million per year are taxed at the top rate of 25 percent while those making between K2 million and K5 million are taxed at the basic rate of 5 percent.

Mr Yongzheng Yang, who led an IMF team on its recent mission to Myanmar, said minimization of tax incentives is among the government’s options on the revenue side, noting Myanmar’s very low revenue-to-GDP ratio.

“On the expenditure side, transfers to regions and states should be conditional on their implementation capacity and spending responsibilities,” he added.

On reprioritization of expenditure, the IMF mission chief stressed the need to reevaluate costly projects, but recommend- ed increasing spending on education, health and infrastructure.

Daw Khin Yamon Aung, director of the Internal Revenue Department middle taxpayers’ office (1) said the IRD has set a K4.5 billion revenue target for this year, equivalent to last year’s receipts.

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**57 jade lots worth euro 136.56 million sold**

**Nay Pyi Taw, 5 July — At the 52nd Myanmar Gems Emporium, here, Sunday, a total of 57 jade lots worth euro 136.56 million out of 120 were sold at in total.**

Deputy Minister for Mines U Than Tun Aung viewed sales of jade lots though competitive bidding system in the afternoon.

Local and foreign gem merchants checked No 8849 to 8943 jade lots to be sold at competitive bidding system on 6 July.—MNA

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**Yangon Region murder cases down, robberies up in first half of year**

**Yangon, 5 July — Yangon Region’s murder rate fell in the first half of 2015, but robberies increased, according to police.**

The Yangon Region Police Office said there were 87 murder cases in the first six months of 2015, down from 102 cases in the same period last year.

Twenty-three robberies were recorded in the first half of this year, up from 18 for the same period last year.

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**Garment industry bosses urged ...**

**By Ko Moe**

Moe Khing, secretary of the Hlínethaya Industrial Zone garment workers association, expressed understanding of the garment factory employers’ position in a letter sent to the government.

Garment bosses also suggested the government bear some of their burden by making arrangements for the construction of workers’ housing quarters and for ferry services for workers, and by giving tax breaks to garment businesses and assisting in the logistics of the garment industry.

The government’s minimum wage body issued a notification on the minimum wage proposal on 29 June and has invited proposals from organisations or individuals for the minimum wage body is for the government and employers need to be changed on their implementation capacity and spending responsibilities,” he added.

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President U Thein Sein sends message of felicitations to Malawi

Myanmar delegation . . .

(from page 1)

in March, 2011, the demand of power from coal-fired plants has reached 30 percent of the country’s total consumption.

Further seven coal-fired power plants are under construction to fulfill the demand in the future.

It is estimated that to fulfill 26 percent of the country’s total consumption in 2030, further 45 coal-fired power plants need to be constructed.

Japan makes use of the most modern technologies in its coal-fired power stations to ensure low carbon emission.

Myanmar has a coal-fired power station in Shan State. Built in 2005, the station generates 120 megawatts of electricity, with a feasibility study being made on 11 power stations.

A memorandum of understanding has been signed on the construction of a 300-megawatt power station in Yangon Region and a 50-megawatt power station in Taninthayi Region with ethnic investments.

In addition, foreign firms have agreed to invest in nine power stations with the capacities of generating power ranging from 270 megawatts to 2,640 megawatts across the country.

On completion, these coal-fired power stations will generate over 9,000 megawatts of electricity, a basic ingredient for industrial development and high standards of living.

5th RBE train launched with air-conditioned coaches

YANGON, 5 July—The runs of air-conditioned RBE train which will be 5th of its kind along Yangon circular railroad was held at Yangon Railway Station, here, on Sunday, with Union Minister for Rail Transportation U Than Htay and Union Minister for Transport U Nyan Tun Aung in attendance.

After the ceremony, the Union Minister for Rail Transportation replied to queries raised by media.

The train with five new RBE coaches imported from Japan can give 386 seats to passengers. Ticket price is K300 per passenger. The train will stop over at all stations along the circular railroad. For ensuring convenience and security of passengers, each coach has been equipped with two CCTVs, four air-conditioners, seven fans and 16 fluorescence lamps in addition to special seats for pregnant women and those with disabilities.

The train with new coaches runs along Yangon circular railroad and Yangon-Hlawga section 12 times a day.

Before his visit to Hekinan, President U Thein Sein held talks with Chairman of CP Company Mr Dhanin Chesaravanon and Chairman of Itochu Corporation Mr Masahiro Okafuji over exporting value-added agricultural products to Japan.

Chairman of Mitsubishi Company Mr Ken Kobayashi over development of Thilawa Special Economic Zone, development of TadaU International Airport and Yangon Railway Station Complex Project.

President U Thein Sein and his entourage left Hekinan in a motorcade for Nagora Station on Sunday day afternoon, proceeding to Kyoto Station in the evening and then to the Kyoto State Guest House, where they would put up.

At the guest house on the same evening, the president and his entourage were hosted to a dinner by the local government and traders.

President U Thein Sein addressed the dinner. MNA

Border affairs minister inspects relief tasks in Rakhine flood

YANGON, 5 July—Union Minister for Border Affairs Lieutenant General Thet Naing Win looked into relief and rehabilitation works in inundated areas in Rakhine state Thursday.

The Union minister visited Sakhanmaw village in An Township which was seriously devastated by flood and provided relief items to the victims who are temporarily sheltered at the village’s monastery.

On Friday, Lt. Gen Thet Naing Win inspected repair works at the tarred road in An Township. MNA

Hlinethaya gets new medical clinic

YANGON, 5 July—A medical clinic was opened in a township of former capital Yangon on Sunday, according to officials.

The clinic named Social Security-Carewell was opened in Hlinethaya in cooperation between Carewell Medical Centre and the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security.

The new medical centre was aimed at providing more health care to workers, deputy Minister Daw Win Maw Tun said, adding that plans are under way to open similar clinics.

The clinic will provide treatment and share health knowledge. It is open every day except Sunday. It now sees over 200 visits.

The ministry has opened 93 social security clinics, with the Social Security Board having over 800,000 registered employees. —Zaw Gyi
Education officials clarify methods to promote basic education

KYAUKME, 5 July—A meeting on basic education promotion for 2015 was held at the hall of Basic Education High School No 1 in Kyaukme, northern Shan State, on 4 July, with a speech by District’s deputy commissioner U Soe Naing. Retired professor Dr Daw Ma Ma Lay read out the paper on basic education law (draft), Director-General U Win Maung Tun on technical and vocational education law (draft) and Dr Daw Tin Maung Tun on private education law (draft). State Hluttaw MP, the chairman of the township development supporting committee, headmasters and local residents participated in the discussion.

The district education officer made a concluding remark.

Myint Aung (KaMa)

Middle and high school teachers get English proficiency skills

Mandalay, 5 July—Under the supervision of Mandalay Region government. Amarapura partner education service training school conducted the English proficiency course for teachers from Basic Education Middle and High Schools at the hall of No 16 BEHS in Chanayethazan Township on 4 July.

Chief Minister of Mandalay Region U Ye Myint stressed the need for teachers to pursue classroom management and creative thinking at the training to be able to realize student approach teaching system.

Chief Executive Officer U Win Pe Maung of the school spoke about teaching knowledge test while CEO of Ooredoo Mr Ross Cromack explained purpose of conducting the training for the teachers.

Altogether 458 basic education teachers attended the course.

Last year, 171 teachers attended the course and received the completion certificates from Cambridge University.

Tin Maung (Mandalay)

Sanitation prevents mosquito-borne diseases

TATKON, 5 July—The preventive activities of mosquito-related diseases were held at the offices in the combine office of Township General Administration Department in Tatkon recently.

Township Administrator U Kan Saw Hlaing and Deputy Township Administrator U Thida Zaw supervised spraying at the offices of different departments, meeting rooms and water talks.

Staff from the combined office participate in sanitation tasks at the department every Friday.

Tin Soe Lwin (Tatkon Township IPRD)

Offspring of district GAD staff receive stipends, notebooks

MYAWADY, 5 July — A ceremony to provide stipends and notebooks to offspring of staff was held at Myawady District General Administration Department, Myawady, Kayin State, on 4 July.

District’s deputy commissioner U Lwin Ko Oo presented prize to five-discrimination winner Ma Hnin Oo Lwin in the matriculation examination and stipends and notebooks to students at the basic education high school level while Daw Phyu Phyu Win, wife of the deputy commissioner, gave cash assistance and notebooks worth K499,000 to 20 offspring of staff of the district department.

Hein Lin Aung (IPRD)

Collegian footballers to be trained for 18th ASEAN university games

MANDALAY, 5 July — A coordination meeting on inter-university/college football tournament in 2014-15 academic year took place at the hall of Higher Education Department (Mandalay Branch), here, on 4 July.

Deputy Director-General Dr Zaw Win of Higher Education Department said that selected university football team will be formed from outstanding players from the tournament to be able to take part in the 18th ASEAN Inter-University Games in Singapore.

Rectors and principals of universities in Upper Myanmar participated in the discussion.

The inter-university/college football tournament for 2014-15 academic year will be held in Myitkyina, Taunggyi, Mandalay, Monywa, Magway and Nay Pyi Taw Zones.

Tin Maung (Mandalay)
Myanmar, India eye tourism development

Mandalay, 5 July — The 8th International Tourism Conference, jointly organized by the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism and Mandalay-based Indian Consulate-General, was held at the convocation hall of Mandalay College in Amarapura Township on 3 and 4 July.

Deputy Minister for Hotels and Tourism Dr Sai Kyaw Ohn spoke about arrangement for development of Myanmar’s tourism industry, extended construction of hotels for providing accommodation to the tourists and cooperation between Myanmar and SEA countries in tourism industry while Mandalay Region Minister for Social Affairs Dr Win Hlaing extended greetings.

Indian Consul-General Dr N Nandakumar explained further cementing friendly relations between Myanmar and India and promotion of tourism industry. Mr Tapir Gao of Indo-Myanmar tourism promotion committee, aviation among major cities in South Asia and Mr Shri R K Shivachandra of Indian Tourism Board, arrangements for extending package tours to Bodh Gaya in India.

The deputy minister presented Myanmar’s tourism guide books to attendees.

Thitha Ko Ko (Mandalay)

Hinthada Tsp to sink 25 wells in rainy season

Hinthada, 5 July — Rural Development Department in Hinthada Township, Ayeyawady Region, is carrying out supply of potable water to the rural areas.

The township department adopted a plan to sink 25 tube-wells and artesian wells in the township in 2015-16 fiscal year.

The department will assign Gongyishin, Sitha Shwethway, Htoo Myat Ayeya and Ever Palace companies to sink the wells in this rainy season.—Hinthada Township RDD

Myanmar’s sesame hopes for good price in Chinese market

Yedashe, 5 July — Pre-monsoon sesame plantations are being harvested in Yedashe Township, Bago Region.

Local farmers cultivate sesame on the largest acres of farmlands apart from paddy, sugarcane and beans along the banks of Sittoung River.

They grow sesame and groundnut before summer paddy. This year, most of the sesame plantations may boost production of per-acre yield due to favourable weather.

“At present, we sell sesame K30,000 per basket in the market. The Chinese market is still monopolized by sesame from Vietnam. If sale of Vietnam’s sesame is down, Myanmar’s sesame will get good prices,” an oil mill entrepreneur in Swa said.

Now, black sesame is more marketable than Bay-gyar strain sesame.

Ko Lwin (Swa)

Electricity improves livelihoods of residents in rural area of Ingapu Tsp

Ingapu, 5 July — Electricity Supply Enterprise has built a 200KVA transformer and a 2.8-mile-long power line for electrification of Jaketaw-Alesu village in Ingapu Township, Ayeyawady Region.

Likewise, Township Rural Development Department has installed a one-mile 400-volt power line for the village, spending K3.1 million from the tender fund in 2014-15 fiscal year.

Thanks to their efforts, residents in Jaketaw and Alesu villages extend their works with the use of electricity.

Ingapu Township RDD

Myawady District WAO honours district religious association

Myawady, 5 July — Myawady District Women’s Affairs Organization held the prize presentation for winners in religious recitation contest in five wards in the Myawady, Kayin State recently.

Chairman of District WAO Daw Phyu Phyu Win and officials presented prizes to District religious association that stood first in the Kayin State religious recitation contest. Later, officials gave uniforms to WAO members.—Tun Tun Oo (Myawady Town)

Health staff vaccinate children, pregnant women

Nay Pyi Taw, 5 July—Health staff of Pobbatthiri Township Public Health Department vaccinated infants and pregnant women in wards of the township on 4 July.

In line with the instructions adopted by the Ministry of Health, they carried out regular vaccinations for infants with BCG, Penta, OPV, measles and expectant mothers with anti-tetanus vaccines.—Shwe Ye Yint

Myawady District Women’s Affairs Organization serves lunch to female trainees of tailoring and bikery courses at Vocational Training School for the Women in Myawady, Kayin State, on 3 July.

Tun Tun Oo (Myawady Town)
Mekong states aim to maintain balance between Japan, China

Tokyo, 5 July — Leaders of Japan and five Southeast Asian countries along the Mekong River did not mention the controversial artificial island building in the South China Sea in their document issued on Saturday, as most of the five are closely educated to avoid antagonizing Beijing by siding with Tokyo.

In an apparent attempt not to provoke China, the leaders of all five Mekong states but Vietnam skirted the issue in a post-summit joint Press conference. Among them, only Vietnam is a party to territorial disputes in the South China Sea, the vast majority of which is claimed by Beijing.

In the joint document, the Japan-Mekong leaders said, “Both sides noted concerns expressed over the recent development in the South China Sea, which will further complicate the situation and erode trust and confidence and may undermine regional peace, security and stability.”

The “recent development” is a veiled reference to China’s large-scale land reclamation in the hotly contested Spratly Islands in what is seen by other claimants and third-party countries such as Japan and the United States as an attempt to force changes in the status quo.

The language in the sentence is weaker than the chairman’s statement issued after an ASEAN summit in Malaysia in late April. It read, “We share the serious concerns expressed by some leaders on the land reclamation being undertaken in the South China Sea, which has eroded trust and confidence and may undermine peace, security and stability in the South China Sea.”

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations groups the five Mekong states — Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam — plus Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Singapore. Along with China and Vietnam, Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines and Taiwan are other claimants in the South China Sea.

Advocating an Asia rules by international law, not the use of force or coercion, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe has opposed China’s muscle-flexing in asserting territorial claims in the South China Sea as Tokyo is embroiled in a row with Beijing over a group of Japanese-administered, Chinese-claimed islets in the East China Sea.

China has rejected US, Japanese and other third-party intervention in the South China Sea issue and repeated its preference to negotiate bilaterally with other claimants in an apparent attempt to overwhelm them with its economic might.

Japan and China have also grown in rivalry in recent years to nationalize development in regions to the north of Laos, as well as Philadelphia and Singapore. As well as the planned launch of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank with authorized capital of $100 billion. Meanwhile, Japan’s pledging Saturday of fresh aid worth 750 billion yen, or $6.1 billion, to the Mekong countries.

“Both sides noted that Japan and China have defended their mutual economic interests together,” Sukma said. “We want to have our two big friends to help us grow.”

Malaysia’s opposition leaderdenies emergency debate on PM after graft allegations

KUALA LUMPUR, 5 July — Two of Malaysia’s main opposition parties on Sunday demanded an emergency sitting of parliament to discuss Prime Minister Najib Razak’s future as tensions mounted over a report that linked him to the massive corruption scandal involving state fund 1MDB.

A Wall Street Journal report published Saturday said that investigators had traced nearly $700 million to bank accounts they believed belonged to the prime minister.

Reuters could not independently verify the report.

Najib denied taking any money from the debt-laden state fund or any other entity for personal use.

However, the pressure was back on him on Saturday after the country’s attorney-general said he had received the documents from a task force investigating 1MDB that were “concluded to be altered by” the prime minister.

With the attorney-general’s confirmation, the WSJ’s report published earlier this month that Najib had been paid $450 million to $500 million through a company registered in the British Virgin Islands via a Swiss bank.

Two killed, six injured in N Philippine helicopter crash

MANILA, 5 July — A private helicopter crashed in a mountainous area in northern Philippine province of Batangas before noon on Sunday, killing two persons and injuring six others, authorities said.

The helicopter operated by Malate Tourist Development Corp crashed in Mt. Macolot in Pinagkaisahan village, Cuenca town at around 11:00 am local time, the Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines (CAAP) said.

The fatalities were the pilot and the businessman who reportedly owned the ill-fated helicopter, police said.

Those injured were immediately brought to nearby hospital for treatment.

CAAP said that authorities are still investigating the cause of the incident, which took place while some areas in northern part of the Philippines are being battered by tropical storm Egay.

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe (L) and Lao Prime Minister Thongsing Thammavong shake hands before their talks in Tokyo on 4 July, 2015.

Japanese PM's adviser denies funding to Najib

Japan pledges $11 mil to Laos for dud bomb removal, development

Tokyo, 5 July — Japan will provide grant aid totaling $11 million to help Laos speed up the removal of unexploded bombs left over from the Vietnam War and prepare for hosting ASEAN meetings next year, according to an accord they signed on Saturday.

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and Lao Prime Minister Thongsing Thammavong after witnessing the signing of the deal in Tokyo on the fringes of a summit meeting in Tokyo and five Southeast Asian countries along the Mekong River. Of the deal, $6.5 million is for efforts to remove duds, and $4.1 million mainly for the country to serve as chair of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

“Many unexploded ordnance remain in Laos and this is blocking the economic and social development. I strongly hope that efforts to remove duds will be accelerated,” Abe said.

Japan’s latest aid will also develop the land after removal of the duds and by doing so, help in efforts to rebuild the economy and infrastructure development of Laos, which is one of the least-developed countries in the 10-member ASEAN, Abe said.

Kyodo News

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Xinhua

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Xinhua

Malaysia’s Prime Minister Razak Najib

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Malaysia’s Prime Minister Najib Razak
Despite progress in Iran nuclear talks, dispute over UN sanctions persists

**Vienna, 5 July —** Iran and world powers made progress on sanctions relief for Iran in marathon nuclear talks on Saturday, but remained divided on issues such as lifting United Nations sanctions and the development of advanced centrifuges.

Diplomats close to the negotiations said they tentatively agreed on a mechanism for suspending US and EU sanctions on Iran.

But the six powers had yet to agree on a United Nations Security Council resolution that would lift UN sanctions and establish a means of re-imposing them in case of Iranian non-compliance with a future agreement.

“We still haven’t sorted out a Security Council resolution, a diplomat close to the talks told Reuters. “We don’t have Iran to test these yet.”

Senior Iranian and Western diplomats echoed the remarks. Some of the toughest issues, including the question of easing UN sanctions, were likely to be left for foreign ministers when they arrived in the Austrian capital on Sunday, officials said.

“Even if and when issues get resolved at an expert level, there will remain some open issues that can only be decided by ministers,” a senior US official told the BBC.

Iran is in talks with the United States, 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.

The negotiations missed a 30 June deadline for a final agreement, but have given themselves until 7 July. Foreign ministers not in Vienna are expected to regroup their counterparts in a final push for a deal beginning on Sunday.

Iran issued a warning about consequences of a collapse in the talks.

“The other side has tried all kinds of pressure against Iran and if it intends to test these pressures again, as (President Hassan) Rouhani has said, Iran’s response would be actions harder than what the other side imagines,” said Iran’s nuclear spokesman Behrouz Kamalvandi, quoted by Iranian news agencies.

All sides say a deal is within reach. But there are other sticking points in addition to sanctions and future monitoring mechanisms.

One is a stalled UNinvestigation into the possible military dimensions of past Iranian nuclear research suspected of being linked to weapons development.

Another is Iran’s demand to continue research and development work on advanced centrifuges, machines that purify uranium for use as fuel in power plants or weapons.

UN International Atomic Energy Agency director-general Yukiya Amano on Saturday said he 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 Teheran cooperated.

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,” he said ahead of meetings with some members of the six-power group.

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

Amano was in Teheran on Thursday for meetings with 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 his investigation forward but more work would be needed, echoing a statement the IAEA issued on Thursday.

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

Kerry and Zarif met twice on Saturday, US officials said.

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

Another potential emerging compromise relates to Iran’s stockpile of low-enriched uranium. Western and Iranian diplomats had been discussing shipping most of the stockpile out of the country, something Teheran had previously ruled out.

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Despite progress in Iran nuclear talks, dispute over UN sanctions persist
Plants play crucial role in natural disaster reduction
By Aung Khin

Forest area in Myanmar was 31,773,000 ha, or 48 percent of the country in 2010, with losing just over 1 percent of its forest cover every year since 1990, according to the United Nation’s Food and Agriculture Organization report in 2011.

The country’s rapid economic transition has undoubtedly put new, alarming strains on forests and biodiversity. Meanwhile environmental experts have concerns of possible rapid development would pose a grave risk to the country’s natural resources.

Although the government is taking steps to ensure a sustainable with the supports of international organizations, poverty has also contributed into the country’s deforestation by illegal logging.

Another cause of deforestation in Myanmar is forest fire. NGOs have reported Myanmar has lost up to 10 tons of forest fuel due to forest fire. As a result, even several hundreds of top forest soil are destroyed in the country.

Deforestation has consequences of cyclones, landslides, earthquakes, tsunami, fire and drought. They in turn also threaten to environment of the country. Green house gases including carbon dioxide are emitted from deforestation, causing to rise global temperature, climate changes and soil erosion.

Planting ceremony is celebrated in Myanmar in July. Its objectives are to raise the awareness of community on the value of trees, to raise awareness of the younger generations on the value of trees. However, new generation has noticed the impacts of deforestation. Law enforcement should be tighten to prevent illegal logging. Environmental conservation can protect community from suffering natural disasters. It can also keep up the weather condition fine and better.

Therefore, environmental conservation efforts should be promoted to ensure a greener and pristine Myanmar.

Tommy Pauk

Peace is for all mankind

P eace is demanded by entire mankind in the world except those who are neo-barbarians as well as scoundrels in the world. Why are modern-aged people asking for peace in the world? This is because we humans cannot enjoy and feel complete peace on earth due to injustice, conflicts, extremism, terrorism, hate crimes, racism, etc. The citizens of war-ravaged countries are longing for peace. Unless there are militarization, wars, violence, conflicts, acts of extremism, acts of terrorism and hate crimes, global people can live and move happily and safely. Man makes peace, but man even makes wars or devastations as well. Nowadays, unfortunately, the people from some regions in the world cannot enjoy peace and they are in utter despair. Misersly, people in these regions are struggling for survival against chaos and devastation. As peace is missing, the people lose happiness and security. Where there is no peace, the people concerned have no hope for their livelihood. The phrase, ‘no peace’ defines that a dangerous or unpleasant situation which threatens the survival of the people concerned.

Moreover, any form of warfare causes destructions and losses of human lives. The evil of war usually destroys the human settlement or infrastructure and natural environment too. The innocent people become war victims and their settlements turn to battle fields. As a result, they lose peace for their lives until the war is over. When peace is lost, the society concerned is affected with huge detriment. That is why the peacemakers or doves or pacifists usually lead and participate in anti-war demonstrations around the world.

Sporadic gunfire or violence or terrorist attack occurs worldwide. The ordinary people are worried about the potential danger of terrorist attack which might appear in their daily life activities. The respective governments in some regions or continents are also threatened by terrorists or brutal extremists. Local people of the targeted nations have always been put on red alert following the bomb blast or terrorist attacks. Generally, the locals concerned are not secure while moving in the public areas and even they are not firmly protected. In fact, either a female terrorist or a male terrorist is in disguise of an ordinary dress or casual dress so that nobody can identify whether he or she is terrorist or a suicide bomber.

They usually use various tactics to attack the targeted structure or building or people on any occasions. Sometimes they kidnap the innocent people such as girl students, shoppers, social workers, foreign aid workers and journalists. Unfortunately, nobody could avoid the sudden catastrophe and they become the victims of terrorism attacks. Multinational journalists were decapitated by the terrorists callously and barbarically. They deliberately neglect and insult the advanced civilization.

Mosques, churches, tourist resort sea-beach, markets, houses, shops and schools are targeted. Colleges and even schools are targeted by terrorists. They kill unarmmed innocent people in these places cravenly. The terrorists make innocent people suffer and miserable as well as mental trauma whenever they escape from killing ground. The public places are not guaranteed to be safe so the people in countries in some regions are at risk of terrorist attack whenever they are being at public places. Violence or terrorist attacks take place anywhere regardless of public areas or religious places savagely.

Apart from the danger of terrorism and extremism, people under the oppressions of the despotic rulers feel desperate, miserable. Their lives are stressful and insecure too. In this situation, the citizens concerned cannot enjoy peace of mind, and the atmosphere is not peaceable. The domestic conflicts, disagreement and injustice are overwhelming in the societies ruled by despots.

In this 21st century, very few nations are considered peaceful nations in the world because most of the nations encounter the man-made disasters or conflicts endlessly. The peace-loving nations try to get on well with other nations and the respective people have unity among them in those nations. They do live in peace and harmony. Nowadays, there is no domestic violence or conflicts. In addition, they exercise peaceful co-existence among different nations in the world. Their efforts in maintaining peace internally and externally are rather commendable in deed.

Lots of domestic problems are being solved by means of holding peace talk or peace negotiation for maintaining genuine peace in some nations. Actually, they must not only talk, but also work for restoring genuine peace. One nation has militarized some area of another nation, the UN peace-keeping forces are sent to drive out the military troops of the invader. Since the United Nations appeared for preventing wars and maintaining the global peace, all the nations in the world are obligated to fully comply the United Nations Charter by any means. The prevalence of global peace is important for any societies in the world. Normally, hostilities, hegemony, injustice, extremism and animosity destroy the existence of peace in human society indeed.

The following is an extract from the internet news, describing Global Peace Index for 2015. (“The nonprofit Institute for Economics and Peace released its Global Peace Index for 2015, which ranks 162 nations around the globe based on factors like the level of violent crime, involvement in conflicts and the degree of militarization.”

According to the nonprofit institute for Economics and Peace, the thinly populated island in the midst of the North Atlantic—Iceland has retained its place as the most peaceful country in the world.

Six out of the top 10 most peaceful countries were European, with Denmark and Austria holding the second and third spots.

“Europe maintained its position as the most peaceful region in the world, supported by a lack of domestic and external conflicts.”

The United States is in the bottom half of the index, scoring badly in terms of militarization, homicides and fear of violence. Its ranking improved somewhat from a year earlier, though, rising from 101st place to 94th.”

Despite having peace treaty or peace negotiations, fighting or gun battle continues between two groups in some nation. This happens due to lack of mutual trust and both sides cannot make permanent peace in that area.

The domestic armed conflicts transform the local people into internally-displaced people. Anxiously, they want peace, rehabilitation and humanitarian aids. They do not want to be refugees any longer. We, the common people want to enjoy peace of mind and have peaceful environment or society.

In conclusion, those who threaten and destroy the peaceful situation or peaceful state are our common enemies to deal. The prevalence of peace in the world is our ultimate aspiration!!!
Images of President U Thein Sein’s Japan visit

President U Thein Sein delivers speech at dinner hosted by Kyoto Prefecture government, city government and Chamber of Merchants.—MNA

An aerial view of Hekinan coal-fired power plant.—MNA

President U Thein Sein views Hekinan coal-fired power plant.
MNA

President U Thein Sein receives Chairman of Mitsubishi Company Mr Ken Kobayashi and party.
MNA

Photo shows stockpiles of coal at Hekinan coal-fired power plant.
MNA

President U Thein Sein meets CP Company President Mr Dhanin Chearavanont.—MNA
Greece votes in referendum with future in euro in doubt

ATHENS, 5 July — Greece votes on Sunday on whether to accept more austerity, have now suffered through a week of capital controls imposed to prevent the collapse of the nation’s financial system. Pensioners besieging bank gates to claim their retirement benefits, only to leave empty-handed and in tears, have become a symbol of the nation’s dramatic fall over the past decade. Eleven years ago, in an early morning of 5 July, 2004, Greeks poured into the streets, united in celebration of their country’s victory in the European Cup soccer tournament. Today, Greece is divided — and scarred — as rarely before. “There is an atmosphere of fear. You can just feel it,” said Sarafianos Giorgos, a 60-year-old teacher in Athens, who says he will vote in favour of the creditors’ proposals. Polls open at 7 am local (0500 BST) and shut at 7 pm, with the first official projection of the result expected at 9 pm. Four opinion polls published on Friday showed the “Yes” vote marginally ahead. A fifth put the “No” camp 0.5 percentage points in front. All were well within the margin of error. Anxious Greeks rallying for a “Yes” vote have been Greece has a raw deal but say the alternative, a collapse of the banks and a return of the old drachma currency, would be worse. Those pledging to deliver a ringing “No” to tax hikes and pension cuts in return for more loans say Greece cannot afford more of the austerity that has left one in four without a job. They agree with Tsipras that Europe is “blackmailing” Greece. “As a Greek woman, I am embarrassed at those who are going to vote ‘Yes’ for fear of leaving the euro. They are asking us to accept unending slavery. I am offended,” said Tenekidou Ermioni, a 54-year-old teacher. Greeks are likely to face more financial and political turmoil in the days and weeks ahead. “All in all, Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras’ early exit from office is still more likely than Grexit,” wrote Wolfgang Piccoli of Teneo Intelligence. Regardless of Sunday’s result, significant levels of political volatility are here to stay.” Finance Minister Yanis Varoufakis promised Greeks on the eve of the vote that European creditors would immediately have to grant Athens better terms, including massive debt relief and less austerity, if they voted “No”. EU ministers and officials have warned that his pledge is a cruel illusion. If Greeks vote ‘Yes’ to the bailout, both Tsipras and Varoufakis are expected to resign — triggering a new chapter of uncertainty as political parties try to cobble together a national unity government to keep talks with lenders going until elections are held. European creditors have said a ‘Yes’ vote will resurrect hopes of aid to Greece. But capital controls, and default last week to the IMF, have undermined Greece’s economic standing and creditworthiness, so a new bailout package would probably entail harsher terms than those on offer even last week. A ‘No’ vote would bring even greater uncertainty as political parties try to cobble together a national unity government to keep talks with lenders going until elections are held. European policymakers have openly warned such a result would be read as a rejection of talks with creditors and the euro, leaving Greece to fend for itself without any realistic prospect of funds to avoid bankruptcy. Much would depend on the European Central Bank, which will review on Monday morning its policy on emergency liquidity, which Greek lenders rely on. The ECB could decide to freeze the liquidity or cut it off altogether if Greeks vote ‘No’, or if Athens subsequently defaults on a bond redemption to the ECB on 20 July. There is concern that an inconclusive result might sow further confusion, and possibly lead to violent protests, rather than sending a clear signal about Greek intentions. “The nightmare result would be 51-49 percent in either direction,” a senior German official said. “And the chances of this are not insignificant.” — Reuters

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Greece Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras looks at his ballot before voting at a polling station in Athens, Greece on 5 July, 2015. — Reuters

US-Australia military drill starts, joined by Japan, NZ

DARWIN, 5 July — A major military drill by the United States and Australia started on Sunday, joined by Japanese and New Zealand forces for the first time.

The Talisman Saber, one of the largest exercises held in Australia biennially involving some 30,000 air, sea and ground forces, will be held through 21 July in northern and eastern parts of Australia. The participation by Japan and New Zealand in the exercise is seen as an effort to bolster cooperation between the four countries amid China’s growing assertiveness in the South China Sea. Japan has dispatched some 40 members of its Ground Self-Defence Force, including those from the Western Army Infantry Regiment, a unit based in Sasebo, Nagasaki Prefecture, specializing in defence of remote islands. They will engage in landing operations and firing practice with US Marines. New Zealand forces will join the Australian troops in the exercise. In 2013, the GSDF took part in the Talisman Saber as an observer. — Kyodo News

A US Marine Corps’ Osprey transport aircraft is present at the opening ceremony for a joint military drill by the United States and Australia in Darwin, Australia on 5 July, 2015. Japanese and New Zealand forces joined the biennial drill for the first time. — Kyodo News

Fidel Castro, 88, visits cheese-makers in rare public appearance

HAVANA, 5 July — Former Cuban President Fidel Castro, 88, visited 19 cheese makers for four hours on Friday in a rare trip outside his Havana home, official media reported on Saturday. The photos showing the leader alive and well came out three hours on Friday in a rare trip out of the euro, destabilising the global economy and financial markets. “On Sunday we should all send a message of democracy and dignity to the world,” Tsipras told tens of thousands of Greeks rallying for a ‘no’ vote before campaigning ended. Voting on whether to accept more taxes and pension cuts would be divisive in any nation, even at the best of times. In Greece, the choice is faced by an angry and exhausted population who, after five years of crippling austerity, have now suffered through a week of capital controls imposed to prevent the collapse of the nation’s financial system. Pensioners besieging bank gates to claim their retirement benefits, only to leave empty-handed and in tears, have become a symbol of the nation’s dramatic fall over the past decade. Eleven years ago, in an early morning of 5 July, 2004, Greeks poured into the streets, united in celebration of their country’s victory in the European Cup soccer tournament. Today, Greece is divided — and scarred — as rarely before. “There is an atmosphere of fear. You can just feel it,” said Sarafianos Giorgos, a 60-year-old teacher in Athens, who says he will vote in favour of the creditors’ proposals. Polls open at 7 am local (0500 BST) and shut at 7 pm, with the first official projection of the result expected at 9 pm. Four opinion polls published on Friday showed the ‘Yes’ vote marginally ahead. A fifth put the ‘No’ camp 0.5 percentage points in front. All were well within the margin of error. Anxious Greeks rallying for a ‘Yes’ vote have been Greece has a raw deal but say the alternative, a collapse of the banks and a return of the old drachma currency, would be worse. Those pledging to deliver a ringing ‘No’ to tax hikes and pension cuts in return for more loans say Greece cannot afford more of the austerity that has left one in four without a job. They agree with Tsipras that Europe is “blackmailing” Greece. “As a Greek woman, I am embarrassed at those who are going to vote ‘Yes’ for fear of leaving the euro. They are asking us to accept unending slavery. I am offended,” said Tenekidou Ermioni, a 54-year-old teacher. Greeks are likely to face more financial and political turmoil in the days and weeks ahead. “All in all, Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras’ early exit from office is still more likely than Grexit,” wrote Wolfgang Piccoli of Teneo Intelligence. Regardless of Sunday’s result, significant levels of political volatility are here to stay.” Finance Minister Yanis Varoufakis promised Greeks on the eve of the vote that European creditors would immediately have to grant Athens better terms, including massive debt relief and less austerity, if they voted ‘No’. EU ministers and officials have warned that his pledge is a cruel illusion. If Greeks vote ‘Yes’ to the bailout, both Tsipras and Varoufakis are expected to resign — triggering a new chapter of uncertainty as political parties try to cobble together a national unity government to keep talks with lenders going until elections are held. European creditors have said a ‘Yes’ vote will resurrect hopes of aid to Greece. But capital controls, and default last week to the IMF, have undermined Greece’s economic standing and creditworthiness, so a new bailout package would probably entail harsher terms than those on offer even last week. A ‘No’ vote would bring even greater uncertainty as political parties try to cobble together a national unity government to keep talks with lenders going until elections are held. European policymakers have openly warned such a result would be read as a rejection of talks with creditors and the euro, leaving Greece to fend for itself without any realistic prospect of funds to avoid bankruptcy. Much would depend on the European Central Bank, which will review on Monday morning its policy on emergency liquidity, which Greek lenders rely on. The ECB could decide to freeze the liquidity or cut it off altogether if Greeks vote ‘No’, or if Athens subsequently defaults on a bond redemption to the ECB on 20 July. There is concern that an inconclusive result might sow further confusion, and possibly lead to violent protests, rather than sending a clear signal about Greek intentions. “The nightmare result would be 51-49 percent in either direction,” a senior German official said. “And the chances of this are not insignificant.” — Reuters

Fidel Castro, 88, visits cheese-makers in rare public appearance

HAVANA, 5 July — Former Cuban President Fidel Castro, 88, visited 19 cheese makers for four hours on Friday in a rare trip outside his Havana home, official media reported on Saturday. The photos showing the leader alive and well came out three days after his younger brother and current president, Raul Castro, announced a formal agreement with the United States on restoring diplomatic relations after a break of 54 years. It was Fidel Castro’s first reported public appearance in three months. That previous encounter, with visiting Venezuelan students, was his first in more than a year. Official media showed images of Castro seated at a panel in an auditorium at a research institute belonging to the Food Industry Ministry. He wore a white wind-breaker, a plaid shirt and gray pants. Fidel Castro stepped down due to illness provisionally in 2006 and definitively in 2008, handing off to Raul, 84. Fidel writes an occasional newspaper column and receives dignitaries at home. Whether he maintains a role in policy-making is unknown. — Reuters

Fidel Castro, 88, visits cheese-makers in rare public appearance
Egypt says 25 militants killed in air strikes as Sisi inspects troops

**ISMAILIA, 5 July —** Egyptian warplanes killed 25 Islamist militants in North Sinai on Saturday, security sources said, as the Egyptian president visited the province after a major escalation of the conflict there.

The sources said the air strikes hit militant targets near the town of Sheikh Zuweid, destroying weapons and explosives caches.

They also said security forces had found about half a tonne of explosives in a tunnel on the border between the Sinai and Gaza.

Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi inspected soldiers and police in El-Arish, the provincial capital, on Saturday, the presidency said in a statement.

Sisi, dressed in military garb for the first time since becoming president just over a year ago, told troops at least 200 militants had been killed in the fighting in recent days, but added: “For me to say that things are under control is not enough, things are totally stable.”

“I tell Egyptians ... the size of forces here (in Sinai) is one percent of Egypt’s army.”

**AFGHANISTAN**

Afghan to investigate killing of police personnel near Kabul

**KABUL, 5 July —** Afghan president on Sunday ordered an investigation into a Taleban deadly attack which killed more than 20 police personnel in eastern Wardak Province.

Afghan President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani issued a decree and assigned a high-ranking delegation to visit Jalrez district and conduct a thoroughly investigation into the latest incident there during which a number of Afghan Local Police (ALP) forces were killed and wounded, said an official statement issued here.

On Thursday, over 20 ALP members and two civilians were killed and two dozen police wounded after Taleban militant attacked security checkpoints in Jalrez district of Wardak province with Maidan Shar as its capital, 34 km west of Kabul.

The delegation was tasked to study in close coordination with provincial officials all factors and motives which led to the bloody incident and report to the president in earliest time, according to the statement.

The government established the ALP, or community police, in 2010 to protect villages and districts where army and police have limited presence.

The provincial council members blamed the provincial officials and security authorities for failing to respond into attack and negligence in sending reinforcement troops following the incident.

The casualties of Afghan soldiers and police have risen recently as the United States and NATO troops in Afghanistan have switched from combat to support role, namely training, advising and assisting Afghan forces since 1 January this year.

**TUNISIA**

Tunisia’s president declares state of emergency after hotel attack

**TUNIS, 5 July —** Tunisian President Beji Caid Essebsi declared a state of emergency on Saturday, saying the Islamist militant attack on a beach hotel that killed 38 foreigners had left the country “in a state of war”.

Last week’s attack, three months after the deadly Islamist assault on the Bardo museum in Tunis, has shocked the North African country and set it into a democracy following its 2011 “Arab Spring” uprising.

Tunisia’s emergency laws temporarily give the government more executive flexibility, hand the army and police more authority, and restrict certain rights such as those dealing with public assembly and detention.

“Due to the terrorism risk, and the regional context, and spread of terrorism, we have declared a state of emergency,” Essebsi said in a televised address.

“The continued threat we face leaves the country in a state of war, where we have to use all measures necessary.” A Tunisian gunman, said to have been trained in a jihadist camp across the border in Libya, opened fire killing foreign tourists, mostly Britons, in the resort of Sousse on 26 June. The beach massacre struck a huge blow to Tunisia’s tourism industry, prompting thousands of holidaymakers to leave and causing an estimated $500 million in losses for a sector that makes up seven percent of the economy.

Authorities have moved to close down 80 mosques they said were operating illegally or spreading extremism which officials say helps recruit young Tunisians to Islamist militancy.

Tunisia last had a state of emergency during the 2011 uprising against autocrat Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali. That revolt followed years of upheaval between secular and Islamist parties in one of the Arab world’s most secular countries.

Tunisia has since been hailed as a model of peaceful democratic transition in the region. But it has also struggled with the rise of Islamist movements, some opposed to democracy and bent on violence.—Reuters

Iraqi jets drop leaflets over Mosul promising to recapture city

**BAGHDAD, 5 July —** Iraqi jets dropped leaflets over Mosul telling residents that Islamic State fighters would soon be driven from the northern city, saying details of the operation would be broadcast on a new radio station.

The city has been under Islamic State control since the Islamist militants took over in June last year, sweeping through most of Iraq’s Sunni Muslim provinces towards Baghdad.

The Shi’ite-led government has promised a military offensive to retake Mosul but progress has been slow, in part because of Islamic State gains elsewhere. In May, they drove the army out of the city of Ramadi, capital of the western province of Anbar.

“The solution, with God’s help, is close,” said the leaflets, which were issued in the name of the Iraqi army and were dropped over Mosul on Friday.

“Your armed forces are at the gate, cooperate with them.” Despite that promise, there has been no sign of an imminent military operation against Islamic State in Mosul.

The leaflets also promised a new radio station, Mosul FM, would start broadcasting soon and urged residents to carry a radio and tune in at all times to receive instructions about the battle for Mosul.

Mosul residents contacted by telephones said Islamic State fighters were deployed in the areas of the city where the leaflets were dropped, telling passers-by to stay away.—Reuters

A sign (in white) by the Islamic State is seen in the city of Mosul on 21 July, 2014. **REUTERS**
Suga apologizes to Okinawa for LDP colleagues’ remarks

Tokyo, 5 July — Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga apologized to Okinawa Gov Takeshi Onaga in their talks on Saturday in Tokyo for recent remarks by some ruling party colleagues calling for pressure to be put on the prefecture to lose its base-hosting burdens.

“It was good” that Suga offered an apology, Onaga said, adding, “It will serve as a basis for our several rounds of talks down the road.”

At a 26 June meeting of junior members of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party loyal to Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, one of them and a featured speaker said the two major Okinawa papers have been “taken over by left-wingers” and should be “destroyed.”

The locally opposed Japan-US plan to relocate US Marine Corps Air Station Futenma within Okinawa was not discussed in the talks, Onaga said, in an apparent bid to avoid further deterioration in their relationship.

“The next talks and onwards will be severe,” said Onaga, who assumed the post last December with a pledge to block the base relocation plan, seeking that the base move outside the prefecture to lessen its base-hosting burdens.

Despite staunch local opposition, the central government plans to start construction of the replacement facility this summer.

But the plan could lag if Onaga, based on a report to be released during this month by an external committee he has set up, retracts the approval given by his predecessor to the plans of landfill work for the relocation.

The meeting between Onaga and Suga, who doubles as minister in charge of reducing Okinawa’s base-hosting burdens, follows their first meeting on 5 April in Okinawa.

German eurosceptic party founded by eastern rival

ESSEN, (Germany), 5 July — The founder of the eurosceptic Alternative for Germany (AfD) lost a leadership vote on Saturday to his rival, heralding a new focus on immigration for a party set up to oppose the euro.

Frauke Petry, a 40-year-old businesswoman who represents the AfD in the assembly of the state of Saxony, won 60 percent of the vote at an extraordinary party conference.

After his defeat, Bernd Lucke left open his future in the party he founded. He had wanted the AfD to focus on economic issues rather than immigration.

An acrimonious feud between the two rivals, who had said they could not work together, had hit the AfD’s ratings and left it floundering at a time when it could have capitalised on anger over the eurozone crisis.

“Please give me a few months’ time to lead this party back on track,” a smiling Petry said.

Petry belongs to the AfD’s national conservative wing and has flirted with the anti-Islam Pegida movement, which drew up to 25,000 people to rallies earlier this year.

His supporters have criticised Lucke for distancing the eurosceptics from anti-Islam protests and expressed concern about the “erosion of Germany’s sovereignty and identity”.

US spies on more

JERUSALEM / CAIRO, 5 July — Militants in Egypt’s Sinai peninsula fired rockets into southern Israel on Friday in an incident that caused no casualties but appeared to be linked to fighting between Islamist insurgents and Egyptian security forces.

Islamic State’s Egypt affiliate, Sinai Province, said in a statement posted on Twitter by supporters that it had launched three Grad rockets toward “occupied Palestine”. Reuters could not immediately verify the authenticity of the statement.

An Israeli military source earlier said the rockets had been fired from Sinai, which borders Israel, the Gaza Strip and the Suez Canal.

Israeli police said they had so far found remnants of two rockets in the open area. No damage or casualties were reported.

It was possible the launch was linked to the fighting in Sinai, the military source said, where militant leaders have their biggest assault in years against Egyptian security forces on Wednesday.

Dozens of people have been killed in the past few days of clashes and air strikes in the desert region.

The Israeli military on Friday closed a southern highway, part of which runs along the Egyptian border, as a safety precaution.

Egyptian security sources earlier told Reuters they were investigating the reports and said there was no immediate evidence a rocket was launched from Egyptian territory.

Militants, including those from Sinai Province — formerly known as Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis — have fired rockets into Israel from Sinai on several occasions in the past.

Israel has accused Hamas, the Islamist group which controls Gaza, of helping Islamic State in Sinai, an allegation Hamas denies. An Egyptian security source said Hamas members were involved in the Sinai battles, but that there were no wider organizational ties between the groups. Hamas, an Islamist group that seized power in Gaza in 2007, has faced its own threats from Salafists and Islamic State-linked militants.

On Tuesday Islamic State militants released a video claiming to turn Gaza into another “flagdom”, as in parts of Iraq and Syria. It also said in the video that it will “uproot “the state of the Jews” (Israel) and secular Palestinian movement Fatah, headed by Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas.

Hillary Clinton accuses China of hacking US computers

GLEN, 5 July — US Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton accused China on Saturday of stealing commercial secrets and huge amounts of government information, all looking for an advantage, she said.

China, she said, is the front-runner to win the Democratic nomination for the November 2016 presidential election.

She did not elaborate on the remarks, a White House official declined to comment.

In the most recent case involving suspicions of Chinese hacking, Obama administration officials have said China is the top suspect in the massive hacking of a US government agency that compromised the personnel records of at least 4.2 million current and former government workers.

China has denied hacking into the computers of the US Office of Personnel Management.

Rockets land in Israel, Egypt’s IS affiliate claims responsibility

BRASILIA, 5 July — The United States spied on dozens of senior Brazilian officials other than President Dilma Rousseff, local media reported on Saturday, WikiLeaks published 29 phone numbers monitored by the US National Security Agency (NSA), including some Brazilian ministers, diplomats, and “important figures”.

The relations between Brazil and the US turned tense two weeks, new information on US spying on some senior Brazilian officials: report

On Tuesday Islamic State militants released a video claiming to turn Gaza into another “flagdom”, as in parts of Iraq and Syria. It also said in the video that it will “uproot “the state of the Jews” (Israel) and secular Palestinian movement Fatah, headed by Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas.

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Bogota, 5 July — Colombia’s peace negotiations with leftist FARC rebels have hit a critical low as the group steps up violent attacks and the government could walk away from the process unless the group shows more commitment, the government’s top negotiator said.

The government has been in Cuba-hosted talks with the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia or FARC since late 2012 to end a 50-year war. Deals have been reached on most of the agenda, but the process is now under unprecedented strain.

“The peace process is at its worst moment since we began talks ... I want to tell the FARC in all seriousness, this could end soon. Day by day, it’s probably that they won’t find us around the table in Havana,” Humberto De la Calle told local journalist and writer Juan Gossain, in an interview distributed to the press.

De la Calle said the government was prepared to consider a bilateral ceasefire before a deal is signed, if the FARC accepts judicial responsibility for the violence it has perpetrated and only if it also abstains from extortion and the drug trade.

“In a conciliatory move on Friday, the FARC leadership in Havana said they were seeking to “de-escale” the conflict after weeks of attacks in which several army troops and police were also killed. The group’s numbers are falling and all-out war is no longer seen as a realistic option.”

Even if the peace process survives, its biggest obstacle may prove a sceptical Colombian public which will approve or reject any peace deal in a referendum. Its support has faded as talks drag on.

The harsh truth is that Colombians don’t believe in the peace process,” De la Calle said. — Reuters

The FARC unleashed a wave of bomb attacks on oil pipelines in recent weeks, rupturing them close to rivers and causing an environmental disaster that is expected to take two decades to clean up and has already reached the Pacific coastline.

Optimism that had grown over the peace talks, boosted by the FARC’s agreement to clear landmines, was shattered after the FARC ambush and killed 11 soldiers in the southwest in April. That led the government to resume air raids of FARC jungle bases in an attempt to prompting the rebels to abandon a unilateral ceasefire.

The FARC’s insistence the government agree to a bilateral ceasefire even as its negotiators flatly reject the idea some members should pay jail time for the group’s worst crimes, have also driven a rift between them and dimmed prospects for a deal.

UK’s Osborne to hit BBC to fund welfare cuts – Sunday Times

London, 5 July — British finance minister George Osborne plans to launch a £650 million pound raid on the BBC to help cover the country’s benefits bill, forcing the corporation to meet the cost of free television licences for the over-75s, the Sunday Times said.

It quoted senior government sources as saying a deal is close that will force the BBC to take on the cost of the 4.5 million licences worth 145.50 pounds each — from the Department for Work and Pensions.

The move, it said, is part of a package of 12 billion pounds of welfare cuts, widely expected to be unveiled in a budget bill on Wednesday.

In return, the paper said, the BBC will be allowed to make up some of the lost revenue by charging for use of its iPlayer and other online catch-up services to try to stem the loss of licence fee revenue caused by people turning to the Internet and abandoning their televisions.

That will return at least 150 million pounds to BBC coffers, the paper added, but the 650 million pounds benefits bill represents the loss of around a fifth of the corporation’s annual 3.7 billion pound mark.

The plans include steps to build discounted homes for first-time buyers, unlock public land for new homes and back small builders with planning changes. Osborne and Cameron were writing in the Times newspaper ahead of next Wednesday’s budget, which will be the first time the newly elected Conservatives have been able to present a financial agenda free of the constraints of the previous left-leaning Liberal Democrat coalition partners.

They have already said they plan to reduce borrowing faster this year and cut the annual welfare bill by 12 billion pounds ($18.7 billion).— Reuters

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Death toll in east China factory collapse rises to 11

Hangzhou, 5 July — Eleven people have been confirmed dead in a factory building collapse in east China’s Zhejiang Province as of Sunday afternoon, local government said.

Three others are missing. Another 33 were injured in the collapse, four of whom were seriously hurt.

According to the local police, 51 people were working in a shoe factory in Foling Village, Wenling City when the building collapsed at around 4 pm Saturday.

Nine narrowly escaped. Rescuers pulled 42 out of the rubble, and sent them to the hospital as of 1:30 am, nine of whom died despite treatment.

Three of the injured were not employees of the company. Two bodies were later retrieved from the ruins Sunday afternoon, leaving three missing as of now.

Local authorities have dispatched 53 firefighting trucks, 302 rescuers and five sniffer dogs. The cause of the accident is under investigation.

Xinhua
Pop star Ricky launches 10-minute “shake-up” drive to tackle childhood obesity

London, 5 July — Brit¬

ish pop star Ricky Wilson of the band Kaiser Chiefs was recruited by health of¬

icials on Thursday to help tackle a growing obesity and fitness problem in Brit¬

ish children.

A damning report released on Thursday re¬

vealed that 80 percent of five to 15-year-olds don’t meet a target of completing 60 minutes of physical ac¬

tivity every day.

Moreover, the new study shows physically active children are happier and have more confidence.

Health and fitness ex¬

perts at Public Health Eng¬

land have devised a win¬

ning formula for this age
group: a series of 10-min¬

ute exercise shake-ups as an¬

alternative to an hour¬

long stint.

Wilson, a fitness fan who is also a judge on the popular television series The Voice, joined children at London’s Marion Rich¬

ardson Primary School to help launch Thursday’s ChangedLife Campaign by joining in a 10-minute “shake-up” game.

Wilson commented: “Since taking up a much more active lifestyle, the benefits I’ve gained have been endless, it has helped with everything from sing¬

ing to performing and even just getting out of bed or going to the shops.”

The campaign coin¬

cides with the publication of a review by the British Heart Foundation follow¬

ing a study from Oxford and Loughborough univer¬
sities identifying the direct benefits physical activity has on children in terms of physical, social and emo¬
tional development.

In England, 79 percent of boys and 84 percent of girls aged five to 15 do not do the recommended 60 minutes of exercise each day.

Experts say the worry¬

ing gap between boys and girls’ activity levels can be cut from as early as sev¬

eral years old, and is often attributed to confidence issues and insecurities in body image for young girls.

Public Health England said on Thursday: “Over a third of British children are overweight, yet 79 percent of parents with an over¬

weight child do not recog¬

nize that they are, and of those that do, 41 percent do not realize it is a health risk.”

Professor Kevin Fenton, national director of health and well-being at Public Health England, said: “Levels of childhood obesity are unacceptably high.”

“This latest review re¬

forces the essential health and well-being benefits of being physically active. Breaking up the 60 minutes of physical activity children need each day into 10 minute bursts will be more appealing and manageable for children and parents alike,” said Fenton.

Government Public Health Minister, Jane El¬

lison, said: “Exercise is really important for children, and it’s vital we encour¬
age them to form healthy habits to last throughout their life. The 10-minute shake up program is great for introducing children to manageable, bite-size chunks of activity, and, best of all, it’s fun.”

The exercises are made up of games using animation characters from Disney’s Frozen, Toy Sto¬

ty, Monsters and Big Hero 6 with the aim of inspiring children to do as many 10 minute shake ups as they can each day.—Xinhua

Not jealous of Calvin-Swift’s relationship: Rita Ora

Los Angeles, 5 July — Singer Rita Ora says she does not feel jealous of ex¬

boyfriend Calvin Harris and singer Taylor Swift’s relationship.

The 24-year-old “How We Do” hit¬
maker, who broke up with the Scottish DJ last June, after dating for a year, said she is dealing with his new relationship without any “jealousy vibe,” reported E! Online.

“I am a girl’s girl. I’m not going to have that first instinct of jealousy vibe,” Ora said. The “RIP” hitmaker said she val¬

ues the time she spent with Harris, howev¬

er, the relationship was “not meant to be”.

“It was a period of my life that I will value forever. But some things are just not meant to be. I don’t want to make this just about him. Musically, it was an amazing experiment and let’s just leave it at that.”

“I would rather it had been pri¬

vate. But I’m not private and nor is my job,” Ora said.—PTI

Ed Sheeran to make an acting debut

London, 5 July — Singer-songwriter Ed Sheeran is reportedly all set to make his acting debut.

The 24-year-old “The Thinking Out Loud” hit¬
maker has decided to do a role on a TV show, reported Daily Mirror.

Sheeran has got a role in one of his friend’s projects and it is set to come out after this month. “I have an acting job coming out after July. I can’t say too much about it because the pilot just got picked up, which is good, but it’s a TV show,” he said.

The singing sensation, who wished to star in the hit series “Game of Thrones”, will make his debut with a TV show which is also a “gruesome show”.

“It’s a surreal TV show and it’s really, really dark. It’s gruesome and it’s going to be fine because my friend wrote it,” said Sheer¬
an.—PTI

Chris Brown shelves plans to move to LA

Los Angeles, 5 July — Singer Chris Brown has reportedly shelved plans to move his daughter Royalty and her mother Nia Guz¬

man to Los Angeles.

The 24-year-old “Loyal” hitmaker previ¬

ously expressed a desire to have his daughter Royalty move to the county with her mother but has since shelved the idea as he doesn’t want to see the 31-year-old woman on a daily basis, reported Hol¬

lowood Life.

“At one time Chris was really into moving Nia out here so he could be closer to Royalty. Now, that’s not his priority,” a source said.

“He doesn’t want to see Nia on a daily basis like that. The only reason he ever wanted to bring her here was so that he could see Royalty as often as possible.—PTI

Bradley Cooper appeals his fans to be Bone Marrow Donors

London, 5 July — The “American Sniper” actor, Bradley Cooper, urged his fans to become bone marrow donors after being moved by the plight of a cancer patient.

The 40-year-old actor was introduced to cancer patient Anthony Michaels who has beaten cancer three times since he was first diagnosed in 2011 and is now undergoing radiotherapy on a spine tumour after chemotherapy proved ineffective, though a bone marrow transplant is his best chance of survival, reported Female first.

Cooper, who was introduced to Anthony by Delete Blood Cancer DKMS said “Anthony just has the gift of positivity and gratitude”. “The Hanover” star said “he understands the importance of life that we tend to forget on a daily basis. But I have the feeling he was like that his whole life not just when he was plagued by this horrible disease.”

“I think when it’s not personal and you can’t relate to it, you tend to not take action. But I dare anybody to read Anthony’s story and not care about him right away.”

The Hollywood actor whose dad died of cancer four years ago admits that not helping Anthony wasn’t an option for him. “Anthony just has a genuine love of every moment that he’s alive and I find that to be very compelling And especially heartbreaking because he’s afflicted with essentially terminal disease.” Actor said.

The 24-year-old Anthony Michaels was very impressed with the “Silver Linings Playbook” star’s ‘selfless’ attitude. “He was a real humble guy and he was very easy to talk to as I didn’t think he was going to be as selfless as he was so it was a nice surprise to say the least.” he said.—PTI

I rarely give my best in films: Amanda Seyfried

London, 5 July — Actress Amanda Seyfried has revealed she “rarely” gives her best in movies and finds working on stage much harder.

The 29-year-old “Mean Girls” star, who is currently starring in off-Broadway show “The Way We Get By”, said she works hard¬
er on stage as it is difficult to hide “laziness” in theatre, reported Marie Claire magazine.

“You can hide laziness in film, you can’t hide on stage. You don’t want to do that to people who have spent USD 100-400 on a ticket. You want to tell the story.”

“I don’t want to give anything but my best, and in films I rarely give my best,” Seyfried said. The “Dear John” actress said working in theatre is “tough” and requires a lot of sacrifices.

“It’s making me re-evaluate my ideas about where I thought I wanted my career to go. The theatre world is tough and you have to be willing to sacrifice a lot.”

“Nobody has a personal life. It’s hard to focus on anything else. I don’t have time for hobbies, I barely have time for the gym and every meal I have is at the theatre.”

“When I do movies, I usually knit. I also paint, but between these shows I’m either napping or meditating,” she said.—PTI

Global New Light of Myanmar
America celebrates 4 July with hot dogs and barbecues amid tightened security

New York, 5 July — Americans marched in star-spangled parades, ran relay races, gathered for fireworks shows and crowned a new world hot dog eating champion as they celebrated Independence Day in traditional style on Saturday.

Possible security threats, wild fires in the West and rainy weather on the East Coast apparently did little to dampen the spirits of celebrants decked out in red, white and blue from their headbands to their shoelaces.

Crowds at Boston’s Old State House erupted in applause and cannons shot off in colour after the annual July Fourth reading of the Declaration of Independence.


“It’s a good day for Boston,” she said. “There’s so much history here, we can celebrate this freedom.”

In Maplewood, New Jersey, Meskie Hyman, 11, exuded patriot pride in a star-spangled shirt and a red, white and blue from her headbands to their shoelaces.

“I love that it’s a free country and we have the right to speak. It lets us see everyone’s potential and right to speak. It lets us see our own tune songs,” she said.

The crowd in Washington, DC watched a parade of brass bands, law enforcement motorcycle units, high school drum majorettes, antique cars and police and military detachments.

The National Mall, an open area west of the Capitol and site of a fireworks display expected to draw hundreds of thousands, was soggy from steady rain that had stopped by the time the parade started.

Kearston Andrews, 26, travelled with her family from near Gainesville, Florida, unworried about security. The Department of Homeland Security and the Federal Bureau of Investigation issued an alert this week asking local authorities and the public to remain vigilant for possible threats following recent calls for violence by leaders of radical Islamist groups.

In New York City, the nation’s biggest police force assigned about 7,000 officers and nearly all its counterterrorism personnel to handle security around Independence Day events.

No incidents were reported as of late Saturday, but tens of thousands of spectators crowded onto the banks of Manhattan’s East River to watch fireworks shot from barges.

Even after promising an increased presence at weekend events, Massachusetts State Police maintained a holiday spirit, tweeting with a colloquial Boston phrase early Saturday “Have a wicked safe 4 of July!”

In a stunning upset for the man who still holds a world record of 69 franks eaten in 2013, Miki Sudo, 26, of San Jose, California, ousted long-time champion Joey “Jaws” Chestnut, who still holds a world record of 69 franks eaten in 2013. Miki Sudo hung onto the women’s title, downsing 38 hotdogs in 10 minutes.

On the US West Coast, which is battling wildfires, communities in Washington state and Oregon restricted or banned fireworks for fear of more blazes. Cupertino, California, and Anchorage, Alaska’s largest city, also canceled firework shows.

“I’m Mexican, so I’m thankful to be born here, and being able to celebrate your heritage but mix with the diversity of other cultures too,” said Erica Moussa.

A celebration in Austin, Texas featured country music legend Willie Nelson at an all-day picnic replete with music and drinking.

And in Oklahoma, the record to beat at the “Watermelon Seed Spittin’ World Championship” in Pauls Valley, about 60 miles (100 km) southeast of Oklahoma City, was 66 feet, 11 inches (20.41 metres), set in 1989 by Jack Dietz of Chicago, organizers said.—Reuters
SANTIAGO, 5 July — Chile won the Copa America for the first time on Saturday when a cheeky penalty from Alexis Sanchez clinched a shoot-out victory over Argentina and glory for the host nation’s golden generation in front of their own fans.

The two sides were deadlocked 0-0 after 90 minutes and when another half an hour of extra time failed to produce a goal, the contest was destined to be decided by penalties. Lionel Messi stepped up to score Argentina’s first spot kick but, as the first three Chileans converted unerringly, Gonzalo Higuain and Ever Banega missed.

That left the stage set for forward Sanchez, who made up for a quiet game by driving the ball into the back of United States and was pulled down in the box five minutes into the second period of extra-time when England was decided three minutes into the second period of extra-time when England had scored the twice world champions in the semi-final as they progressed in their Copa America 2015 final soccer match at the National Stadium in Santiago, Chile, on 4 July, 2015. — Reuters

Chile players celebrate with the Copa America trophy after they defeated Argentina in their Copa America 2015 final soccer match at the National Stadium in Santiago, Chile, on 4 July, 2015. — Reuters

Sergio Romero’s net sent the capacity crowd at Santiago’s National Stadiunum into raptures.

“We whole idea was to win something, we knew that this was the moment,” goalkeeper Claudio Bravo told reporters.

Williams penalty gives England third place

EDMONTON, 5 July — Fara Williams struck an extra-time winner from the penalty spot as England defeated Germany 1-0 to claim third place in the Women’s World Cup on Saturday.

The Lionesses gained some consolation for their heartbreakng loss to Japan in the semi-final as they produced a gritty display to beat the twice world champions for the first time.

A fiercely competitive game, scoreless after 90 minutes, was decided two for the 122nd minutes into the second period of extra time when England sub Jame Sanderson was pulled down in the box by Tabea Kemme and Williams coolaly slotted home.

The third place finish, behind United States and Japan who met in the final on Sunday, is the best by an English team at a women’s World Cup.

It also marks the best finish by an English team of either gender since the men’s team won the World Cup in 1966.

“These players are just incredible. Now it’s time for a massive celebration,” said England coach Mark Sampson.

Germany, who had won 18 of the previous 20 meetings between the teams, started strongly and forced England keeper Karen Bardsley into action early with a powerful first minute header from forward Lena Peterman. An injury time own goal from Japan had doomed England in the semi-final and there was almost too much self-inflicted damage when a header from Jo Potter flew past Bardsley only for skipper Steph Houghton to produce a brilliant clearance on the line.

Bardsley was outstanding again in the 53rd minute to keep out a superb volley from Sara Daiบรitz and then Kemme shot just wide after a powerful run in from the left flank.

England finished strongly, though, camping deep in the German half and keeper Nadine Angerer did well to save bravely at the feet of substitute Eniola Aluko.

Germany dominated the first period of extra-time but the Lionesses found a second wind and the decisive penalty was reward for their pressure.

England coach Silvia Neid, who will stand down next year, said she had no complaints about the penalty or the result. “We fought, we worked very well and had chances but if you don’t score you aren’t going to win. The penalty was justified, we were very naive. It is sad but it is reality but England won and deserved to win,” she said. — Reuters

Jankovic sends Kvitova tumbling out of Wimbledon

LONDON, 5 July — A woman who once fumed she “needed a helicopter” to go on a Wimbledon holiday she called a “parking lot” could not have been happier with her surroundings on Saturday as Jelena Jankovic sent holder Petra Kvitova spinning out.

A tournament still reeling from the second-round exit of Rafa Nadal 48 hours earlier, and the near-exit of Serena Williams 24 hours ago, suffered its biggest shock of this year’s championships as Jankovic emerged from the tennis wilderness to deliver the most unexpected of knockout punches.

The Serbian, who had fallen in the opening round at three of the previous four grand slams, announced her return to the big stage with a heart-stopping 3-6, 7-5, 6-4 third-round victory over the second-seeded Czech that left Centre Court buzzing.

“Oh my God! I am overwhelmed and so excited. My heart is still pumping,” said the 28th seed whose reign as world number one in 2008 feels like a lifetime ago.

“I have played so poorly the last couple of years and playing on Centre Court against the defending champion was unbelievable. The crowd was really great.”

“Playing on grass is so difficult for me, it does not come naturally. I’m glad I was able to win against a two-time Wimbledon champion. It was amazing.”

While Jankovic was rolling on to her back in delight, and showed her appreciation to the crowd by sharing a heart with her fingers, the men’s favourites made serene progress.

Sascha Grotth bombarded England’s half of the court with 21 aces, and one missile clocked a fraction short of Taylor Dent’s 2010 Wimbledon record of 148 mph, but it takes more than a “freaky serve” to flatten a seven-times Wimbledon champion.

In fact the Australian did not even come close to earning a break point as Federer eased into week 12th of 13 years with a 6-4, 6-4, 6-2, 6-7(7), 6-2 third-round victory over the second-seeded Czech that left Centre Court buzzing.

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Andy Murray also dropped his first set at this year’s event as he looked for court treatment for a sore shoulder before advancing to a fourth round showdown with big-serving Ivo Karlovic with a 6-2, 6-2, 1-6, 6-1 win. Joining them in the fourth round was the newest member of the grand slam club, US Open champion Marin Cilic.

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