President U Thein Sein meets flood victims in Sagaing Region

Nay Pyi Taw, 21 July — President U Thein Sein met residents, Hluttaw Representatives and township committee members Tuesday at the Kanbalu Township general administration department.

The township management committee chairman spoke about flooding and needs for the township at the meeting, before the Sagaing Region Chief Minister explained measures being taken for relief and resettlement of flood victims.

The president at the meeting said the world is experiencing natural disasters resulting from climate change and although such disasters cannot be prevented, their impact can be reduced with planning. The government will give priority to addressing the needs of victims, he added.

Afterwards, the president promised short and long-term plans to rehabilitate Kanbalu in cooperation with the Sagaing Region Government.

The president said damage and losses from floods in Kanbalu can be mitigated with the cooperation of local people.

At the meeting, the president, Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, union ministers, the chief minister, deputy ministers and well-wishers presented cash and relief assistance to victims.

After the meeting, the president and party visited Maha Shwesgyi Pagoda and donated cash before proceeding to the People’s Hospital in Kanbalu. They later traveled to Wuntho by helicopter and continued to Kawlin by car, arriving at Dakhinaymaele Monastery to pay homage to monks and (See page 3)
Pyidaungsu Hluttaw

Parliament to vote on tying referendum to general election

NAI PSI TAW, 21 July — The Pyidaungsu Hluttaw will vote on whether to suspend a constitutional referendum scheduled to coincide with the 8 November general election, the Speaker of the joint assembly said Tuesday.

At the parliamentary meeting, Speaker Thura U Shwe Mann relayed a letter from the Chairman of the Union Election Commission recommending the suspension of the referendum.

In the letter, the Union Election Commission chairman said holding the referendum along with the upcoming general elections would save time and money. However, a referendum should be held separately and requires more than K4,729 million to complete the task, according to the Speaker.

During a parliamentary meeting on 25 June, out of six proposed changes to the constitution, the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw voted in favour of only one, the amendment to Section 59 (d).

Speaker Thura U Shwe Mann previously suggested holding the referendum at the same time as the general election to reduce costs.— GNLM

Pyithu Hluttaw

Term ‘political prisoner’ unconstitutional: ministry

NAI PSI TAW, 21 July — The term “political prisoner” contravenes the State Constitution, which grants all prisoners the same legal status, and will not be officially used, Deputy Minister for Home Affairs Brig-Gen Kyaw Kyaw Tun told the Pyithu Hluttaw on Tuesday.

The deputy minister said the government has already released a total of 70,004 prisoners held on a variety of charges, including 354 dissidents, under the presidential amnesty.

Regarding construction of infrastructure in Sagaing Region, Deputy Minister for Construction U Soe Tun said the Thetkalykin-Phaungpyin-Homelin-Khamti road will be upgraded at a cost of roughly K3 billion. Deputy Governor of the Myanmar Central Bank Daw Khin Saw Oo submitted the Bill on Banks and Financial Institutions before the Bill Committee read out its findings on the bill.

Bills amending laws on election of the President and Vice President, as well as foreign currency management, were submitted by the Hluttaw Rights Committee for approval of the parliament.—MNA

Czech Ambassador calls on Speaker of Pyithu Hluttaw

NAI PSI TAW, 21 July — Speaker of Pyithu Hluttaw Thura U Shwe Mann received Czech Ambassador Mr Jaroslav Dolecek at the hall of Pyithu Hluttaw, here, Tuesday.

Also present at the meeting were Chairman of Pyithu Hluttaw International Relations Committee U Hla Myint Oo, member of Legal Affairs and Special Cases Assessment Commission Daw Aye Aye Mu and officials of the Pyithu Hluttaw Office.—MNA

Amyotha Hluttaw

Defence Ministry to release confiscated farmlands to original owners

NAI PSI TAW, 21 July — Deputy Minister for Defence Maj-Gen Kyaw Nyunt granted 18.86 acres of farmlands and croplands confiscated by No 41st Infantry Regiment to eight original owners as the lands are clear from security line of the regiment at the Tuesday’s session of Amyotha Hluttaw.

The official said the bad debts are from the term of former Minister for Livestock and Fisheries U Maung Maung Theim under the military government, not during the term of present civilian government. MNA

Ministry to continue recovering to recover bad debts

NAI PSI TAW, 21 July — The Ministry of Livestock, Fisheries and Rural Development will continue prosecuting 10 debtors who collectively owe more than K25 billion, a senior official said Tuesday.

The official told the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw that the debtors from the private sector paid back 0.5 percent of the total debt of K31.64 billion after they were slapped with lawsuits in April 2013.

The debtors were prosecuted a second time with more serious charges to protect public property and funds. The settlement of debt then increased from 0.5 percent to 9 percent, leaving the total bad debt remaining at K29.422 billion.

The total amount of debts from the 10 highest debtors including top debtor U Min Thein (Thone Pwint Hsaing), son of U Maung Maung Thein, with K6.755 billion debt, has already declined to K25.592 billion, of which the highest single debt accounts for K6.756 billion and the lowest K484.844 million.

The official said the bad debts are from the term of former Minister for Livestock and Fisheries U Maung Maung Thein under the military government, not during the term of present civilian government. MNA

U Sai San Min of Shan State Constituency No 3.—MNA

U Sai San Min of Shan State Constituency No 3 asked the plan to release confiscated lands of farmers used in construction of military units in Lashio.

U Paw Lyan Lwin of Chin State constituency No 9 discussed enactment of laws for legal protection of prisoners with regard to the jails bill. It needs to allow prisoners to have rights of medical treatment and rights of worship on respective religions for their mental improvement.

U Aung Kyi Nyunt of Magway Region constituency No 9 focused on issue of political prisoners. He said that the jails bill should include provisions on protection of rights for political prisoners.—MNA
Orthopaedic Specialist Hospital opens in Nay Pyi Taw

A 100-bed orthopaedic hospital opened Tuesday in Ottarathiri Township, Nay Pyi Taw, where three more specialist medical facilities are set to be built.

An inauguration ceremony for Nay Pyi Taw Orthopaedic Specialist Hospital was attended by Vice President Dr. Sai Mauk Kham, Nay Pyi Taw Council Members Dr. Paing Soe and U Phone Zaw Han and Deputy Minister for Health Dr. Daw Thein Thein Htay.

In his address, the Vice President said the newly-opened hospital can provide orthopaedic services and surgeries, as well as emergency care to patients.

He said the hospital’s services were greatly needed amid a rising number of road accidents. Crash deaths in 2014 accounted for 8.4 percent of all deaths, he added, calling for more orthopaedic hospitals and strict safety measures in the country.

The vice president also said 89 percent of traffic accident victims did not receive emergency care before reaching the hospital, adding that giving proper care at the site of accidents could reduce crash deaths by 20-30 percent.

After the opening ceremony, the Vice President and party inspected the hospital and spoke words of encouragement to patients.

In Myanmar, 1,133 small and large hospitals including 28 specialist hospitals are in operation as of this June. Among them, only three are orthopaedic specialist hospitals.

Thiri Pyanchi U Tun Nay Linn concurrently accredited as Ambassador to Colombia

The President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has appointed Thiri Pyanchi U Tun Nay Linn, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar to the Federative Republic of Brazil, currently as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar to the Republic of Colombia.

KIA blows up rice warehouse in northern Shan state

Brigade 4 of Kachin Independence Army planted a sonic mine at a rice warehouse before it burst as the owner failed to give extortion money which the attackers demanded.

The burst happened at 11:45 p.m. on 21 July in Hona ward of Muse Township in northern Shan state, and the phone numbers were found on a paper printed with logo of KIA’s Brigade 4. KIA’s member asked the owner of the storage facility to give the extortion money by 17 July.

Senior General quashes reports of retirement

Commander-in-Chief of Defence Service Senior General Min Aung Hlaing has refuted rumours he will retire this year, recently telling a BBC interviewer that such reports are unfounded.

He will turn 60, retirement age for government employees in Myanmar, in 2016.

Asked whether he would like to serve as the country’s president if the situation demanded, the senior general said he would perform any duty assigned to him as a member of the defence forces.

During the interview, the senior general spoke about the reform process, the role of the Tatmadaw in politics, the nation-wide ceasefire agreement, the upcoming general election and the situation in Rakhine State.

MNA
Sitagu Sayadaw’s blessing marks completion of major milestone at Star City

YANGON, 21 July — Yoma Strategic Holdings Ltd recently completed Zone A residential development of Thanlyin Star City. To mark this significant milestone, Sitagu Sayadaw Dr Ashin Nyanissara performed a blessing ceremony at Star City on Sunday. Sayadaw is well-known at home and abroad as the founder of the Sitagu International Buddhist Missionary Center.

Over the past months, all units in Zone A — around 950 units — have been handed over to its home owners. A number of these residents are followers of Sitagu Sayadaw and they were pleased to have their homes blessed by him. “We visit the monastery of Sitagu Sayadaw regularly and are devoted followers of his teachings. Today we are so pleased that the Sayadaw came to our community to bless us and our homes. It is a great initiative of Star City to celebrate the completion of Zone A community this way,” said U Myo Aye Aung, one of the residents.

More than 200 of home owners attended the ceremony to honour the monk. The blessing ceremony began at 9 am with the reverend Sayadaw chanting religious verses, followed by prayers from the audience. To celebrate this gratifying moment all attendance enjoyed a traditional meal together. After the meal, the Sayadaw visited the buildings of Zone A and blessed the homes.—GNLM

Myawady District sports contests showcase young talent

MYAWADY, 21 July — The Myawady District Deputy Commissioner’s Cup tournaments in football, Sepak Takraw, and track and field began Monday at the township sports ground.

Kayin State Minister for Social Affairs U Chit Pyapon gave a speech to launch the tournaments, which give young local athletes the opportunity to showcase their talents. The minister, Director U Kyaw Hsan Oo of the Ministry of Sports and Head of Kayin State Sports and Physical Education Department U Aye Lwin provided sports equipment and cash assistance to the township SPED officials.

The deputy commissioner presented certificates of honour to companies that supported the tournaments.

Departmental officials provide training for rural youth

NAY PYI TAW, 21 July — Ottara District Rural Development Department launched a job skills course for rural youth Monday in Kyitaungkan Village, Pob bathiri Township.

Department head U Win Myint gave an overview of the course, before village administrator U Sein Win explained subject areas to be covered in the four days of training. Officials of the Agriculture Department, Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Department, Fisheries Department and Rural Development Department gave lectures about use of pesticides and natural fertilizer, control of animal-borne diseases, breeding of freshwater fish, and the Green Emerald Project for the 50 trainees.

Shwe Ye Yint

Myanmar crab production down despite strong demand

PYAPON, 21 July — Myanmar’s crab production has declined this year, despite strong demand on the international market, according to industry sources.

While China and Thailand have traditionally received the bulk of the country’s crab exports, there is strong growth potential in the markets of Japan, South Korea, Vietnam and Europe, the sources said.

Brokerages pay between K3,000 and K6,000 per kilo for crabs bred in Ayeyawady Region’s Pyapon, Dedaye, Bogale, Mawlamyinegyun, Labutta and Ngaputaw townships, Pyapon Township-based breeder said. Crabs can be caught and bred in Ayeyawady and Taninthayi regions and Mon and Ra khine states year-round.

Aung Win (Pyapon)
Defence paper cites China’s “assertive measures” in East, S China seas

Defence Minister Gen Nakatani enters the prime minister’s office in Tokyo on 21 July, 2015, to attend a cabinet meeting, during which he reported the defence white paper for 2015. The annual paper said Japan demands China to stop building a new offshore platform that could be used for military purposes near the median line between China’s coastline and that of Japan in the East China Sea. — Kyodo News

TOkyo, 21 July — Japan’s Defence Ministry on Tuesday expressed strong concern about China’s “assertive measures” to press territorial claims in the East and South China seas, saying such measures “include dangerous acts that could cause unintended consequences.”

“China has continued so-called assertive measures, including attempts to alter the status quo by coercive measures based on China’s own assertion which is incompatible with existing international law and order, and shown a stance to realize its unilateral claims without compromise,” the ministry said in a white paper.

Japan is demanding that China stop building a new offshore platform that could be used for military purposes near the median line between China’s coastline and that of Japan in the East China Sea, according to the annual paper.

Japan has confirmed construction of the platform, along with existing ones, presumably for natural gas development since June 2013 and has “repeatedly protested” Beijing’s unilateral action that could strengthen its monitoring of activities by Japan’s Self-Defence Forces and US forces in the East China Sea, it said.

The paper, Defence of Japan 2015, was approved on Tuesday following the Liberal Democratic Party’s National Defence Division rejected a draft version because it failed to contain any reference to the action.

Undercutting an increasingly severe security environment around Japan, the paper also cited China’s massive land reclamation in the South China Sea and North Korea’s announcement in May that it had successfully test-fired a newly developed submarine-launched ballistic missile.

The cabinet approval came after Defence Minister Gen Nakatani told a Diet session on 10 July that China “could deploy a radar system on the platform and use it as an operating base for helicopters or drones conducting air patrols” over the East China Sea where Beijing is asserting its claim over the Japanese-administered Senkaku Islands.

Japan has not revealed the number of new platforms China is building, their size and location in the sea.

While the boundary between Japan and China in the East China Sea is not clearly demarcated, the Japanese said Chinese natural gas development facilities near the median line has jumped to 12 from four in November 2010, according to diplomatic sources.

In November 2013, China unilaterally declared an air defence identification zone over the East China Sea, but it appears difficult for the country to complete that if radar was deployed on the platform it would improve Beijing’s surveillance capabilities.

The paper also referred to international concerns about China’s “rapid” and “large-scale” reclamation of seven rock reefs in the hotly contested Spratly Islands in an apparent attempt to force a shift in the status quo and bolster its claim over nearly the whole of the South China Sea.

China is believed to be promoting the construction of a runway, port and other infrastructure on part of the reefs, it said.

Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan and Vietnam have overlapping territorial claims with Beijing in the South China Sea, an international shipping route and an area believed to have rich energy reserves and fishing grounds.

The paper said China’s national defence budget “continues to increase at a rapid pace” with a surge of about 41 times over the last 27 years on a nominal basis. It grew about 3.6 times over the past decade.

The paper also pointed to the conflict between Russia and the United States and Europe over the crisis in Ukraine, as well as Moscow’s increased military activity in the Asia-Pacific, the Arctic, Europe and near the mainland of the United States.

The number of scrambles by Japanese fighters against foreign aircraft approaching Japan totalled 943 in the year to March, up 133 from the previous year’s level and marking the second-highest number on record, according to the Defence Ministry.

Of the total, 473 were against Russian planes, 464 against Chinese planes and the rest against those from other parties, it said.

Despite China’s growing activity in airspace near Japan and repeated intrusion into Japanese waters around the Senkaku Islands, Tokyo and Beijing this year resumed a bilateral maritime and air communication mechanism as part of efforts to avert accidental and unintended clashes in and over the East China Sea, the paper noted.

The paper spelled out Japan’s efforts to strengthen its alliance with the United States through the revision in April of bilateral defence cooperation guidelines against the backdrop of China’s assertiveness at sea and in airspace and North Korea’s development of nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles.

It similarly referred to Japan’s defence cooperation and exchanges with other maritime democracies such as Australia, India, Indonesia and the Philippines.

While stressing Okinawa’s strategic importance to Japan’s security, the paper showed the government’s pledge to “make maximum efforts” to reduce the burden on Okinawa of hosting the bulk of US forces in Japan.

The paper also covered international terrorism, including Islamic State militants that killed two Japanese civilians earlier this year in a hostage crisis in Syria. — Kyodo News

**Graft allegations stall India’s parliament, economic reforms**

New Delhi, 21 July — India’s parliament was adjourned on the first day of a new session after opposition lawmakers demanded the resignation of leaders tainted by corruption allegations, deepening an impasse that has stalled the government’s reform agenda.

Members of the opposition Congress party on Tuesday stormed the well of the chamber in the upper house, shouting slogans and forcing the speaker to halt proceedings.

Parliament is set to resume in the afternoon after a break.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi appealed for opposition support to work with the government.

“We want to take the country forward,” Modi said on his way into parliament, “I hope parliament will respect the country’s aspirations.”

In the monsoon sitting of parliament, the government’s main goal is to ease the passage of the biggest overhaul of taxes since independence in 1947. All eyes are on the upper house, where the government and its allies are a minority.

Passing the measure would trigger exams for college and government jobs.

Modi has made tentative progress on economic transformation since he swept to office a year ago, and in his first year in parliament was a third more productive than the first year of the last government, data by PRS Legislative Research shows.

But the pace of change has been slower than many expected from the man some supporters cast in the mould of reformers such as Britain’s Margaret Thatcher or China’s Deng Xiaoping, and private companies are slow to invest in economic revival. Plans to pass a business-friendly land purchase law are on the backburner after Congress and other parties dubbed it “anti-farmer” and refused to let parliament debate it.

The tax bill has been passed no III approved on Tuesday two amendments to Competition Law and amendment to Cabotage Law.

Act aims to prevent economic concentration which will control production, distribution, trade or industry that will unduly stifle competition, distort, manipulate or construct the disciple of free market.

Those who violate the law will be penalized by imprisonment from two to seven years and a fine of no less than 50 million pesos (1.10 million US dollars) but no more than 250 million pesos (5.52 million US dollars). The penalty of imprisonment shall be imposed upon the responsible officers, and directors of the entity.

The amendments to Cabotage Law allows foreign vessels to transport and co-load cargoes for domestic trans-shipment. The law aims to lower the cost of shipping export cargoes from Philippines ports to international ports and import cargoes from international ports for the benefit of consumers.

Xinhua

**Philippine president signs competition law, amendments to cabotage act**

MANILA, 21 July — Philippine President Benigno Aquino III approved on Tuesday two laws that will further increase trade and encourage more investments in the country.

Aquino, in a ceremony in Malacanang, the presidential palace, signed the Philippine Competition Law and amendments to the Cabotage Law.

The Philippine Competition Law allows foreign vessels to transport and co-load cargoes for domestic trans-shipment. The law aims to lower the cost of shipping export cargoes from Philippine ports to international ports and import cargoes from international ports for the benefit of consumers.
Kerry says Iran vow to defy US is ‘very disturbing’

US Secretary of State John Kerry talks to the media after a meeting with Saudi Foreign Minister Adel al-Jubeir at the State Department in Washington on 16 July, 2015.

Reuters

DUBAI, 21 July — US Secretary of State John Kerry said a speech by Iranian Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei on Saturday vowing to defy American policies in the region despite a deal with world powers over Teheran’s nuclear programme was “very disturbing”.

“I don’t know how to interpret it at this point in time, except to take it at face value, that that’s his policy,” he said in the interview with Saudi-owned Al Arabiya television, part of which the network quoted on Tuesday.

“But I do know that often comments are made publicly and things can evolve that are different. If it is the policy, it’s very disturbing, it’s very troubling,” he added.

Ayatollah Khamenei told supporters on Saturday that US policies in the region were “180 degrees” opposed to Iran’s, at a speech in a Teheran mosque punctuated by chants of “Death to America” and “Death to Israel”.

“Even after this deal our policy towards the arrogant US will not change,” Khamenei said.

Several Gulf Arab states have long accused Teheran of interference, alleging financial or armed support for political movements in countries including Bahrain, Yemen and Lebanon.

Kerry said the US believed its Arab allies had the ability to confront Iranian interference in the region.

“I think President Obama’s belief and our military assessments, our intelligence assessments, are that if they organise themselves correctly, all of the Arab states have an untapped potential that is very, very significant to be able to push back against any of these activities,” he said.

North Korea says not interested in Iran-like nuclear talks with US

SEOUL, 21 July — North Korea is not interested in an Iran-like dialogue with the United States to give up its nuclear capabilities, the isolated country’s foreign ministry said in a statement on Tuesday.

The statement said North Korea’s nuclear programme was an “essential deterrence” against US foreign policy towards the exclusive country, which the North views as hostile.

“It is not logical to compare our situation with the Iranian nuclear agreement because we are always subjected to provocative US military hostilities, including massive joint military exercises and a grave nuclear threat,” said the statement, which was carried by state media but attributed to a foreign ministry spokesman.

“We do not have any interest at all on dialogue for unilaterally freezing or giving up our nukes,” it said.

The United States and five world powers struck an historic deal with Iran last week that will limit Iran’s nuclear capabilities in exchange for sanctions relief.

The Iran agreement was a great political victory for US President Barack Obama, who has long promised to reach out to historic enemies, including North Korea.

The deal, in return for lifting US, EU and UN sanctions that have crippled its economy, stipulates that Iran must accept long-term limits on its nuclear programme.

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un provides field guidance to the Kim Jong Thae Electric Locomotive Complex in this undated photo released by North Korea’s Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) in Pyongyang on 20 July, 2015. — Reuters

North Korea is also heavily sanctioned by the United States, European Union and the United Nations for procuring equipment related to its ongoing nuclear and ballistic missile programmes.

“We are clearly a nuclear power and nuclear powers have their own interests,” the North Korean statement said.

Singapore presents master plan for new state capital in SE India

NEW DELHI, 21 July — Singapore on Monday presented a master plan for building a new state capital city in the southeast Indian state of Andhra Pradesh, said local daily Indian Express online.

The Seed Capital Area (SCA) Master Plan for Andhra Pradesh capital Amaravathi was presented by Singapore officials to the state’s Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu, said local media.

The Seed Capital Area (SCA) Master Plan for Andhra Pradesh capital Amaravathi was presented by Singapore officials to the state’s Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu, said local daily Indian Express online.

On 22 October, the ceremonial laying foundation stone for Amaravati will be held, said the report.

Children play at a fountain in Tokyo, Japan, on 21 July, 2015. The temperature in Tokyo reached up to 35 degrees Celsius. — Xinhua

South Korean airlines to resume suspended flights as MERS wanes

SEOUL, 21 July — South Korean airlines said on Tuesday they will resume normal operations in early August. South Korea’s MERS outbreak was the largest outside Saudi Arabia, with 186 infections and 36 deaths, prompting thousands of tourists to cancel visits to the country.

No new MERS cases have been reported since 4 July.

Korean Air had suspended or reduced operations on routes to Japan and China in June and July, while rival Asiana suspended or cut service routes to Japan, China and a few Southeast Asian destinations. Asiana said it would maintain its reduced schedule to Hong Kong of two daily flights in August, down from four previously. — Reuters

A view of the Asiana Airlines’ head office in Seoul on 8 Aug, 2013. — Reuters

China, Russia launch “Red Trips” to historic sites linked to Communist revolutions

BEIJING, 21 July — Tour companies from both China and Russia have launched new “Red Trip” routes covering historical sites linked to old revolutionary Communist Party leaders in Russia and China.

Five new routes have been launched so far. One of them follows the route of the Red Army. Russia has launched a project called “the road of the Ulyanov family” covering many important sites in Russia linked to the communist revolutionary Lenin that also include Lenin’s hometown.

Tourists who visit the city of Ulyanov are also expected to take an oath to pay respect to Lenin.

Most of the tourists who have signed up for the tours so far are retired people who have a special connection to “the Soviet Union” as they grew up reading books by Soviet Writers and listening to popular music from that era.

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**Greece submits bill needed to start rescue talks**

**Greece** Finance Minister Euclid Tsakalotos speaks to the media during a handover ceremony of outgoing Finance Minister Nadia Valavani to newly appointed Deputy Finance Minister Tryfon Alexiadis in Athens, Greece, on 20 July, 2015. **Reuters**

Athen, 21 July — The Greek government submitted legislation to parliament on Tuesday required the government to adopt new rules for the country’s civil justice system, aimed at accelerating lengthy judicial processes and cutting costs.

The bailout bill also includes the adoption of new rules for the country’s civil justice system, aimed at accelerating lengthy judicial processes and cutting costs.

Together with his coalition partners from the right-wing Independent Greeks party, Tsipras has 162 seats in the 300-seat parliament. Last week’s rebellion cut his support to just 123 votes, meaning he is likely to need opposition votes again, Greece on Monday submitted legislation to parliament. It puts into Greek law new European Union rules on propping up failed banks, decreed after the 2008 financial crisis and aimed at saving taxpayers’ money can be tapped in a bank rescue.

The European Commission in in May gave Italy, France and nine other EU countries two months to adopt the rules, which were meant to be applied by the end of 2014, or face legal action.

**McCain urges Trump to apologize to US military families**

**WASHINGTON** — Senator John McCain urged Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump on Monday to apologize to US military families for saying prisoners of war “aren’t heroes,” in his first direct response to Trump’s remarks.

Trump did not think McCain, a Navy fighter pilot who was held prisoner for more than five years during the Vietnam War, was a hero because he was captured.

The real estate mogul has faced criticism over the weekend after telling a Republican forum he did not think McCain, a Navy fighter pilot who was held prisoner for more than five years during the Vietnam War, was a hero because he was captured.

Trump was addressing a gathering of religious conservatives in Ames, Iowa, on Saturday, when the moderator reffered to McCain as a war hero.

"He’s not a war hero," Trump retorted. "He was a war hero because he was captured. I like people who weren’t captured."

Trump softened his comments at a news conference later on Saturday, saying: "If a person is captured, they are a hero as far as I’m concerned."

In an excerpt from an interview on Fox News’ "The O’Reilly Factor" airing on Monday night, Trump said: "I have respect for Senator McCain. I used to like him a lot."

"I supported him. I raised a lot of money for his campaign against President Obama and certainly if there was a misunderstanding, I would totally take that back," Trump said of his Iowa comments. "But, hopefully, I said it correctly and certainly, shortly thereafter, I said it correctly."

The White House weighed in on Monday. Spokesman Josh Earnest said President Barack Obama continued to have political differences with the man he defeated in the 2008 election, but those debates have not reducted his appreciation for Senator McCain’s remarkable service to the country. — Reuters

**Colombia to continue seeking peace agreement with FARC: president**

Bogotá, 21 July — Colombia will continue seeking a peace agreement with the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) to end the 50-year-old armed conflict in the country. Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos said on Monday.

Santos made the remarks while addressing a military parade held in Bogota to celebrate the country’s 205th anniversary of independence. The Colombian government and the FARC are currentlly holding peace talks in Cuba to end the long-lasting armed conflict.

Military parades were also conducted in Medellin, Bucaramanga and Cali, the first city to be emancipated, to celebrate the 205th anniversary. — Xinhua

Huge blaze threatens village in southern Croatia

Zagreb, 21 July — Several dozen residents were evacuated from a village in southern Croatia on Tuesday as firefighters struggled to keep a raging forest fire away from houses, state television HRT reported.

It said a huge blaze had surrounded the village of Trstenik, on the southern Peljesac peninsula, one of Croatia’s most famous wine-growing regions, during the night. A fire line more than two kilometres (1.2 miles) long was still devouring a thick pine forest and vineyards on Tuesday morning, the television said. “We are fighting for the houses, it’s touch and go, people have been evacuated,” firefighter Petar Bosic told reporters.

Another fire on the nearby Korcula island had destroyed 500 hectares of pine forest by Tuesday morning, the television said. Croatia has had a week of unusually high temperatures nearing 40 degrees Celsius, making forest fires along its Adriatic coast increasingly likely. — Reuters

**French’s Fabius to meet Iranian president in Iran next week**

Paris, 21 July — French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius announced on Monday that he would travel to Iran next week for talks “on all subjects” and would meet Iranian President Hassan Rouhani.

The visit comes after a landmark nuclear deal between major powers and Tehran under which Western sanctions are to be lifted in exchange for agreed limits on Iran’s nuclear programme. — Reuters

**Serbian Foreign Minister Ivica Dacic**

Belgrade, 21 July — The OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, Serbian Foreign Minister Ivica Dacic, and OSCE Secretary General Lamberto Zannier condemned the terrorist attack in the Turkish border town of Suruc, offering condolences to the families of those killed and wishing a rapid recovery to the many injured.

At least 27 people have been killed and nearly 100 hospitalized in the explosion, Turkey’s Interior Ministry said.

“Today’s attack is an attack on us all,” said Dacic on Monday. “This brutal incident, following those in Egypt, Tunisia and France, is yet another attempt to instill widespread fear in our societies. Instead of reacting as the terrorists want, we must commit ourselves to standing together in countering terrorism and violent extremism.”

Secretary General Lamberto Zannier said, “This attack is yet another sad piece of evidence that violent extremism recognises no ethnic, religious or state borders. The highest priority for all should be to intensify joint efforts to stand up to forces that are attempting to use violence and fear to exploit what still divides us. OSCE is sparing no efforts to rise to the challenge.”

Chairperson Dacic and Secretary General Zannier offered their support to the people and government of Turkey. Turkey is one of the OSCE’s 57 participating States. — Tanjug

**Dacic, Zannier condemn terrorist attack in Turkey**

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Companies must earn customer loyalty

By Aung Khin

Myanmar has become a market-oriented economy as part of the democratic reforms under the civilian government which took office in 2011. In recent years, popular brand items have flooded into the country, with some companies setting up their own operations here or running businesses under franchise. However, from IT products to snack foods, the quality of products sold in Myanmar are found to be substandard compared to neighboring countries. For example, a global-brand smartphone sells for the same price on the domestic market as overseas, but the quality is lower.

Recently, some customers have complained that snack foods of regionally or globally famous brands in Myanmar are substandard compared with those in other countries, in terms of quality or quantity.

With a growing number of Myanmar people travelling overseas, comparisons between products or foods of the same brand can be made and publicised. If a famous brand cannot control ensure the same quality for the same price between countries, customers will lose confidence in their brand.

For any commercial product, brand loyalty of customers is important to ensure repeat business. The key influencing factors of brand loyalty include perceived value, trust and customer satisfaction.

Without establishing customer loyalty, no business can sustain profitability. In order to attain this loyalty, brands must not try to sell substandard goods in certain markets, while peddling better quality wares in others.

Make Election Free and Fair

Htin Htin

Moral degradation exists everywhere. With increased efficiency of modern mass communications, we have become more aware of man’s inhumanity to man on a scale unheard of hitherto. Individuals tend to forget or completely ignore their obligations and duties to the society in which they live. Mankind appears to have been blinded by material achievements thinking that materialism is the end of all things. Mankind has forgotten that materialism alone does not provide the true happiness or spiritual well-being sought after by mankind. Man must seek true happiness and spiritual well-being through his respective religions as an additional adjunct to materialism. Spiritual solace and purpose go hand in hand to provide true happiness for all.

Attitude towards People, Planet and Profit needs to be positively and beneficially changed and improved to gain Peace, Progress and Prosperity. Human failings, such as ego, greed, envy, enmity and hate that prevailed from time immemorial, have remained unchanged even to the present time. The Buddha’s enlightenment is such that His spiritual injunctions, particularly the Five Precepts and the Noble Eight-fold path, are prescriptions to eradicate these human weaknesses which cause pain and harm to others. The immoral observation of the Buddha that “Hatred can never be eradicated by hatred but only through love and compassion”, is a valid statement that has gone unchallenged throughout the ages. Knowledge about election (Awareness, Advocacy, Assessment, Analysis, Action) needs to be disseminated widely and extensively to all stakeholders all over the country in timely manner. According to the Inter-Parliamentary Union, free and fair elections require the recognition and affirmation of three sets of rights. These include: voting and election rights (these establish universal, indiscriminately suffrage, secret ballotting and the right to individual appeal in situations where individual rights are compromised); candidacy, party and campaign rights (these establish that everyone has the right to participate in government, to express political opinions, to campaign, to have equal access to the media, to be free from political violence and to the protection of the law); and the rights and responsibilities of the state (these establish the state as responsible for the establishment of an effective, impartial and non-discriminatory process for registering voters, providing education on electoral procedures, and ensuring a non-partisan electoral commission exists). It should be noted that these three sets of rights are premised on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights Article 21.3: “The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures”. Electoral legitimacy is of utmost importance in ensuring a stable political environment. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights serves as the foundation for discussions that aim to define democratic debate about what constitutes a fair and free electoral contest. Transparency International (TI) has taken a significantly different approach to defining the free and fair standard. In defining what makes an election free and fair, emphasis is placed on independent electoral commissions and transparency of polling mechanisms. With an independent and non-partisan electoral commission, the ability of incumbents to manipulate the electoral process is greatly reduced. In regards to transparency, the polling process should be scrutinized by all parties. TI argues for sophisticated electoral procedures that include tagging electoral material with serial codes and closely recording the number of voters to ensure the free and fairness of the electoral contest. European Union (EU) suggests that in order for an election to be deemed free and fair, it must reflect basic principles of fair elections. In regards to the elections the EU argues: To be truly free and fair. They must be conducted in an atmosphere which is respectful of human rights and the right to take part in government through freely chosen representatives is enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (article 21) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (article 25). The EU however, has recognized the inherent ambiguity of the phrase and has moved toward measuring whether or not an election is fair and free. According to democratic standards. In the Handbook for European Union Election Observation Mission, free and fair elections are identified as an extensible checklist for the criteria of fair and free and that can be applied before, during and after the Election Day. While Elkit and Jorgen set out to establish the most basic prerequisites for a free and fair electoral process. With regard to the fairness of an election, the authors refer to the notion of a level playing ground. Elkit and Jorgen conclude that an extensible checklist for evaluating the criteria of fair and free transparency and competition is required. Law enforcement and evaluation of election monitoring are important for free and fair election. This has become a common phenomenon as groups such as the Commonwealth have come to similar conclusions. The Commonwealth has argued that an election that one can begin to trust. Code of ethics for all stakeholders in the election needs to be abided by all concerned. In a general sense, it can be assumed that free and fair electoral practices are those that meet the most basic requirements of a nation’s electoral law. More specifically, these are electoral practices that work to fulfill the demand of democracy and stability. But there is no one law according to which electoral laws are deemed to be fair. There have been a number of success stories in the past two decades. Such elections can be conducted successfully if important lessons are taken seriously and implemented as well as assist in the general capacity building of a nation’s political system. These practices include but are not limited to: a transparent and independent and non-partisan electoral commission; equal access to government owned/operated resources for incumbents; the accessibility of electoral polls; freedom granted to opposition to campaign; universal, efficient and accessible voter registration, as well as prohibitions and punishments of vote rigging and gerrymerding. It is only with a basic conception of free and fair elections that one can begin to explore and evaluate election monitoring.

Together we prosper and working together we deliver. This is Teamwork that will be effective and successful if all concerned stakeholders actively and fervently advocated and participated. Elections have become a major factor in the stabilisation and democratisation of emerging democracies and post-conflict countries. More than a dozen such elections were taken place in 2010 and early 2011. However, the risk of a repetition of electoral violence and war is considerable. Consideration is due to the situation. Elections in these countries are a tightrope walk between war and peace, stability and instability. But there is no iron law according to which electoral laws are deemed to be fair. There have been a number of success stories in the past two decades. Such elections can be conducted successfully if important lessons are taken seriously and implemented as well as assist in the general capacity building of a nation’s political system. These practices include but are not limited to: a transparent and independent and non-partisan electoral commission; equal access to government owned/operated resources for incumbents; the accessibility of electoral polls; freedom granted to opposition to campaign; universal, efficient and accessible voter registration, as well as prohibitions and punishments of vote rigging and gerrymerding. It is only with a basic conception of free and fair elections that one can begin to explore and evaluate election monitoring. For any commercial product, brand loyalty of customers is important to ensure repeat business. The key influencing factors of brand loyalty include perceived value, trust and customer satisfaction. Without establishing customer loyalty, no business can sustain profitability. In order to attain this loyalty, brands must not try to sell substandard goods in certain markets, while peddling better quality wares in others.

Write for us

We appreciate your feedback and contributions. Should you have any comments or would like to submit editorial, analyses or reports please email wallace.tun@gmail.com with your name and title. Due to limitation of space we are only able to publish “Letter to the Editor” that do not exceed 500 words. Should you submit a text longer than 500 words please be aware that your letter will be edited.

About the author: U Tin Htin

Freelance Management and Development Consultant, former International UNV UCHS/ILIO/UNIDO Cooperative and Small Business Specialist in Malawi and Kiribati /UNDP Community Empowerment and Development Specialist in Bangladesh

(To be continued)
UYON, 21 July — A coordination meeting between the Union Election Commission and political parties was held at the Parkroyal Hotel on Tuesday morning.

UEC Chairman U Tin Aye made a speech at the meeting.

Discussions at the meeting focused on settlement of electoral disputes, different security for the general election, nomination of candidates and campaigning.

As 13 political parties signed the code of conduct for candidates on Tuesday, a total of 82 political parties have signed the code of conduct. —MNA

CBM warns private banks over exchange rate manipulation

The Central Bank of Myanmar blamed currency manipulation Tuesday for the kyat’s weakness, urging private banks not to engage in practices that contribute to exchange rate instability.

Despite a range of contributing factors influencing the exchange rate, the central bank has focused on currency manipulation as the reason for the kyat’s fall.

At a meeting with private bankers Tuesday in Nay Pyi Taw, the Governor of the Central Bank of Myanmar U Kyaw Kyaw Maung called on private banks to follow the instructions of the CBM in an effort to stabilize the kyat.

The CBM will inspect private banks to assess their currency trading activities, according to a press release after the meeting.

The central bank set the official reference rate at 1,240 kyat to the dollar Tuesday but the informal rate at foreign exchange counters reached around K1,250.

The currency has continued to fall despite official measures to prop up its value. —GNLM

K 3.6 billion worth of stimulant tablets seized from former KKO camp

YAUNGON, 21 July — Members of Tatmadaw columns and the BGF searched the former camp of KKO group led by Kyaw Thet and Saw San Aung near Kaungmu Village in Kawkareik on 19 July afternoon and seized over 110,000 stimulant tablets with WY letters worth K3.6 billion buried underground.

Similarly, machines that produce the tablets were also discovered from the camp on 20 July.

KKO group is not just collecting money from the public but also manufacturing narcotic drugs, according to sources. —Myawady

Readers to enjoy e-books on Pitakat treatises and religious books

YAUNGON, 21 July — Pitakat treatises and various religious books, totaling more than 1,000 with over 380,000 pages have been created as e-books, Union Minister U Soe Win told the ceremony to launch e-library established by Department of Promotion and Propagation of the Sasana and Maha Dhammapala Association on Kaba Aye Hill, here, Tuesday.

He said that Ministry of Religious Affairs and Maha Dhammapala Association jointly established a website for longevity of the teachings of the Lord Buddha.

A plan is underway to create invaluable Myanmar and English version books from International Theravada Buddhist Missionary University and State Pariyatti Sasana Universities in Yangon and Mandalay as e-books and to post religious talks of prominent Buddhist monks through website www.KBRL.gov.mm.

Union Minister U Soe Win offered books of Tripitaka treatises in line with the edition of the 6th Buddhist Council to the Sayadaws.

Chairman of the association U Myint Oo and U Pyone Maung Maung donated 200 e-tablets inserted with Buddhological literature to the Sayadaws. People and Buddhist monks may browse books on Buddhist literature and sound files through www.KBRL.gov.mm website and enjoy e-library service at Kaba Aye Research Library. —MNA

Railway authorities repair flood-hit tracks on Mandalay-Myitkyina route

NAY PYI TAW, 21 July — Authorities from Myanmar Railways are now repairing tracks damaged by floods along Mandalay-Myitkyina route, according to the announcement of the agency on Tuesday.

Officials and senior engineers from MR are managing repairing works in Kawlin, Kanbalu and Shwebo townships of Sagaing region, and Mandalay.

The tracks between Kangyi and Zawchaung stations were inundated due to heavy rains on 17 July, suspending the regular train schedules till 21 July.

The MR has also announced the trains are plying along Mohinyin-Myitkyina-Mohinyin route while the remaining sections are being repaired, and motor vehicles are being used to carry the passengers to the stations where damages did not occur. —MNA
Suspected Islamic State bomber kills 30 in Turkish town

SUSPICIONS remain high that the suspected Islamic State bomber who killed 30 people in Turkey was radicalised before leaving the US to join a planning trip to the Islamic State’s stronghold in Syria.

The bomber, identified as Abdulazeez, a 24-year-old naturalized US citizen, attacked Turkish targets in Suruc, a town near the border with Syria.

The United States and other countries are keen to learn more about his background, especially his time in the US military.

The government has already dropped charges against him and is considering increasing surveillance on all suspected Islamic State members.

The bomber was reportedly a member of the Islamic State and had travelled to Syria from the US.

Washington, 21 July — The man suspected of killing five people in the US military in Tennessee last week in was in Qatar at least once during a 2014 trip to the Middle East, according to two US government sources who said reasons for the stopover were still unknown.

The sources said Abdulazeez, a Kuwait-born naturalized US citizen, was killed in a gunfight with police on Thursday, and that had been in contact with the militant group.

Abdulazeez, who had been in touch with police on Thursday, was killed in a gunfight with police in Chattanooga, Tennessee.

He had previously been seen in a video showing him training with the Islamic State.

The video appeared to show Abdulazeez holding a rifle and wearing a black and white uniform.

The sources said he had been in contact with the group in the past, and that there were concerns about his possible involvement in a plot.

The investigation into how Abdulazeez came to be in Tennessee has already led to the arrest of two suspected members of the Islamic State.

The US government has been under pressure to provide more information about the bomber’s background.

Tennessee rampage suspect went to Qatar in 2014 — sources

WASHINGTON, 21 July — A suspected Islamic State bombing suspect killed at least 30 people, mostly young students, in an attack on a Turkish town near the Syrian border on Monday.

Bodies lay beneath the blast outside a cultural centre in the mostly Kurdish town of Suruc in southeastern Turkey, some 10 km (6 miles) from the Syrian border.

US investigators are trying to piece together Mohamed Youssif Abdulazeez’s travels to the region to see if he was Radicalised by a militant group such as the Islamic State.

But they have no evidence he was in contact with militant groups or individuals.

On a seven-month trip to visit family in Jordan, it is unclear how long he may have spent in the Qatari capital, a political crossroads in the region. Qatar is home to the Islamic State’s propaganda office and is working with other countries to counter the group’s influence.

Islamic State cracks down on Internet use in Syrian stronghold — monitor

BEIRUT, 21 July — Islamic State militants raided Internet cafes in their Syrian stronghold of Raqqa after ordering a ban on wireless networks that can be used by private homes, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights monitoring group said on Monday.

In order to implement a new black-out of the group’s activities, Islamic State had given cafe owners four days from Sunday to disconnect wireless Internet networks used by residents, the Observatory said, citing an IS leaflet circulated in Raqqa.

The United States said earlier this month that it had intensified an aerial campaign against Islamic State in Syria with a wave of strikes in and around Raqqa, the militants’ self-declared caliphate in parts of northern and eastern Syria.

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The $100 million question: are we alone in the cosmos?

Astronomers will listen to signals from the million star systems nearest to Earth and the 100 closest galaxies, although they do not yet plan to send messages back into space.

Hawking said some forms of simple life on other worlds seemed very likely, but the existence of intelligence was another matter, and humankind needed to think hard about making contact.

“A civilization reading one of our messages could be billions of years ahead. If so, they will be vastly more powerful and may not see us as any more valuable than we see bacteria,” he said.

The 10-year project, dubbed Breakthrough Listen, is funded by Russian Internet entrepreneur Yuri Milner, himself a physicist by training, who made his fortune from savvy early investments in startups such as Facebook Inc.

He said he aimed to bring a Silicon Valley ap

to handle challenges such as allocating natural resources, he said in an interview. And if we don’t find things, we can learn other lessons.

“If we’re alone, we need to cherish what we have,” he said. “The message is, the universe has no backup.”

The new project dwarfs anything else in the field, including SETI, for the “search for extraterrestrial intelligence”. Globally, less than $2 million annually is spent on SETI, said Dan Werthimer, an adviser to Milner’s project who directs the SETI@home programme affiliated with the University of California at Berkeley, which asks volunteers to run software on their home computers to analyze data.

Today, due to technology improvements, including in computing power and telescope sensitivity, $100 million will go much farther than in the early 1990s, the last time SETI had significant funding. The advances allow scientists to monitor several billion radio frequencies at a time, instead of several million, and to search 10 times more sky than in the early 1990s.

Any signals the scientists detect will have been created years ago, perhaps even centuries or millennia earlier. Radio signals take four years simply to travel between Earth and the nearest star outside our solar system.

Breakthrough Listen will book time at radio telescopes, including at Austral- ia’s Parkes Observatory in New South Wales and the Radio Astronomy Observa- tory in Green Bank, West Virginia. Milner plans to book about two months a year at each site, a boon to scientists who normally might get two days a year on the telescopes.

The team, led by scien- tists such as Peter Worden, who until earlier this year directed the NASA Ames Research Centre, will organ- ize the radio signals they find, make the data public, and examine it for patterns.

The goal lies less in un- derstanding the signals than in establishing whether they were created by intelligent life rather than natural phe- nomena.

Scientists say the fact that humans have developed radio-signal technologies makes it a good bet that others may use it as well.

“It doesn’t tell you anything about the civilization, but it tells you a civilization is there,” said Frank Drake, another of the project’s supporters.

Drake, together with Sagan, sent the first physical message into space in 1972, the Pioneer plaques on board the Pioneer 10 US spacecraft.

In addition to checking for radio signals, Break- through Listen will hunt for light signals using a tele- scope at the Lick Observato- ry in California.— Reuters

China’s ZTE sees 43 pct rise in H1 preliminary net profit as 4G drives growth

HONG KONG, 21 July — Chinese telecom equipment maker ZTE Corp on Tues- day reported a jump in first-half preliminary net profit, thanks to increased invest- ment in China’s 4G next-generation telecom in- frastructure and improved margins in its global busi- ness. The Shenzhen-based company said its preliminary first-half net profit rose 43 percent year-on-year to 1.6 billion yuan ($258 million), according to a filing to the Shenzhen stock exchange after market close on Tues- day. That is set to be the company’s highest first-half net profit, although the growth was slower than the 263 percent year-on-year jump recorded at the same time of last year.

ZTE increased reve- nue from sales of FDD-LTE network systems, in addition to wired switch and access systems, while contract prof- itability improved, the company said in a separate statement. ZTE did not elabor- ate in the brief statement.

It came one day after cross-town rival Huawei Technologies Co Ltd, which competes with ZTE in tele- com equipment and smart- phones, posted a 30 percent increase in first-half revenue to 175.9 billion yuan and a 134 percent increase in first-half net profit to 17.5 billion yuan, according to a separate filing.

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ZTE’s board earlier this month approved a A-share buyback plan estimated at no more than 1 billion yuan.

The company’s Shen- zhen-listed shares closed up 0.9 percent prior to the earn- ings release, lagging a 1.6 percent rise in the bench- mark.— Reuters

Costco, Sam’s Club, others halt photo sites over possible breach

TORONTO, 21 July — Costco Wholesale Corp (COST.O), Sam’s Club (WMT.N) and a handful of other large retailers have des- abled their online photo printing stores in recent days, on concerns about a possible data breach at PNI Digital Media, which man- ages and/or hosts photo ser- vices sites.

Last week CVS Health Corp (CVS.N) disabled its CVSPhoto.com site, and the week before Walmart Cana- da’s (WMT.N) walmarpto- cenctra.ca took a similar action after it was informed that customer credit card data had been potentially compromised.

Other photo printing sites that might have been recently affected included Rite Aid Corp (RAD.N) and British supermarket chain Tesco’s (TSCO.L).

“We take the protection of information very seriously. PNI is investigating a po- tential credit card data issue, and outside security experts are assisting in the investiga- tion,” said Kirk Saville, vice president of global communica- tions at Staples Inc (SPLS.O), which bought Vancouver-based PNI last year.

But, he added, they had been advised by PNI of a potential breach, while others said they acted because of recent reports.

Vancouver-based Rite Aid noted that PNI has limit- ed access to customer infor- mation since it does not pro- cess credit cards, but said the photo service sites were tem- porarily taken down as a pre- caution.

The retailers’ main websites and other services were not affected by the po- tential breach.

Costco shares rose 0.2 percent to end regular trad- ing at $145.04, Wal-Mart shares dipped 0.4 percent to $73.10; Rite Aid fell 1 percent to $8.82; Tesco shares ended 0.3 percent higher at 218.6 pence, and Staples shares eased 0.5 percent to $14.63.— Reuters

Faulty metal brace likely doomed SpaceX Falcon rocket, Musk says

CAPE CANAVERAL, 21 July — A faulty metal brace in an unmanned SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket likely triggered the explosion that destroyed the booster minutes after liftoff from Florida last month, company chief Elon Musk said on Monday.

The 28 June accident, which destroyed a load of cargo destined for the In- ternational Space Station, was the third botched re- supply run within eight months. An Orbital ATK rocket explosion claimed a Cygnus cargo ship in Octo- ber, and a Russian Progress freighter’s engine failed to reach or- bit in April.

SpaceX founder and Chief Executive Musk said Falcon rocket flights will not resume until September at the earliest. The company also plans to delay the debut flight of its heavy-lift Falcon rocket from this year to spring 2016.

A defective brace, or strut, holding a bottle of he- lium in the Falcon 9 needed to pressurize the upper stage engine’s liquid oxygen tank, was the most likely cause of last month’s accident, Musk said.

He said the strut, from a vendor he declined to identify, was built from steel certified to withstand 10,000 pounds (4,536 kg) of force but apparently failed at 2,000 pounds (907 kg) of force, Musk said.

“It looks like the key strut that holds down one of the helium bottles failed. As we’ve said, the helium bottle would have shot to the top of the tank at high speed,” Musk told report- ers on a conference call.

“It failed five times be- low its nominal strength, which is pretty crazy,” he said.
**Bridge linking Denmark, Sweden sets traffic record**

COPENHAGEN, 21 July — The Oresund Bridge linking Denmark with Sweden has set a new traffic record with more than 30,000 vehicles crossing in one day over the weekend, the bridge’s management office said on Monday. A total of 30,955 vehicles crossed the bridge in just 24 hours on Saturday, overtaking the previous record by more than 1,700 cars, the office said in a press release.

Holiday traffic has boosted the use of the bridge, and there was no specific event that has generated the high traffic on Saturday, said Karsten Langerich, head of the private market unit of the Oresund Bridge.

“As business is good for both countries, and both Danes and Swedes travel more than they did a year ago,” Langerich added.

The previous record of 29,192 cars was made in 2014 when there was an ongoing train strike, according to the management office.

Completed in 1999 and put into operation in July 2000, the Oresund Bridge is a double-track railway and dual carriageway bridge between Danish capital Copenhagen and Sweden’s coastal city of Malmo across the Oresund Strait.

As the longest combined road and rail bridge in Europe, it runs nearly 8 km from the Swedish coast to the artificial island of Peberholm, which lies in the middle of the strait. A 4-km underwater tunnel, the Drogden Tunnel, links the bridge with the other end in Copenhagen’s island of Amager.—Xinhua

**Chinese procurators to arrest ex-President Hu’s top aide**

BEIJING, 21 July — Chinese procurators have decided to arrest Ling Jihua, a one-time top aide to former President Hu Jintao, in a suspected bribery case, the state-run Xinhua News Agency reported, in the yet widening crackdown on alleged corruption under current President Xi Jinping’s rule.

The agency also said the Communist Party of China separately decided to expel Ling, 58, hand him over to the judicial authorities on criminal charges of accepting bribes, and remove him from public office.

Ling, former vice chairman of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference, was a key figure in the Communist Youth League faction, from which Hu rose through the party’s ranks, eventually becoming the country’s president in 2003. Xi took over the presidency in 2013.

Ling is the latest target in Xi’s anti-graft campaign apparently aimed at tightening his grip on power and staving off internal discipline violations, “a term often used to denote corruption,” according to the Munich police.

Another bomb was discovered by construction workers near the highway A3 at Nuremberg. Local police then blocked the area until experts defused the bomb in the afternoon.

For safety reasons, experts searched carefully around the area to see whether there are other explosives.

Due to the removals, traffic in both areas were affected.

Munich and Nuremberg, the capital and the second largest city in Bavaria, were severely damaged in the Second World War.

Former Guangdong anti-graft official expelled from CPC

BEIJING, 21 July — The former deputy secretary of the Guangdong provincial discipline inspection commission, has been expelled from the Communist Party of China (CPC) and removed from public office after a graft investigation, the CPC’s anti-graft watchdog said on Tuesday.

Zhong Shijian “seriously violated political rules and discipline, and interfered with case investigations”, according to a statement from the CPC Central Commission for Discipline Inspection.

Zhong, who is also former head of the Guangdong supervision department, was put under investigation in April.

**Japan protests Russian minister’s visit to disputed isle**

Tokyo, 21 July — Japan has lodged a protest to Russian authorities about the recent visit by Russia’s healthcare minister to one of the islands at the centre of a long-standing bilateral territorial dispute, the Japanese government’s top spokesman said on Tuesday.

Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga in a Press conference called Saturday’s trip by the minister, Veronika Skvortsova, to Sakhotan Island “extremely regrettable” and “unacceptable” as it goes against Japan’s position on the territorial issue.

Japanese Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida also criticized the Russian authorities’ capture on Friday of a Japanese salmon and trout fishing boat from Hokkaido for breaching the fishing quota, saying the seizure of the boat near the disputed islands is “unacceptable.”

Both ministers downplayed, however, the impact of the Russian moves to preparations for President Vladimir Putin’s Japan trip later this year, only saying that several factors will be taken into account.

Kishida said the Japanese government is calling for the release of the crew members of the drift-net fishing boat Hokomaru and the return of the boat at an early date.

Skvortsova’s visit to inspect infrastructure construction on the island, including a new hospital, was the first by a senior Russian official to one of the disputed islands since a trip last September to Kunup Island, known as Etorofu in Japan, by Sergei Ivanov, a close aide of Putin.

The row over the four Japan-claimed islands off Hokkaido — Kunashiri, Etorofu, Shikotan and the Habomai group of islets, which were seized by the Soviet Union following Japan’s surrender in World War II — has prevented the two countries from concluding a postwar peace treaty.

Russia’s recent decision to ban drift-net fishing in its economic waters from January to conserve natural resources came as a major blow to Japanese fishermen who have long been fishing for salmon and trout in Russia’s exclusive economic zone under bilateral arrangements.

The minister’s visit and the capture of the Japanese fishing boat came at a time when Putin’s visit, Japan is planning to dispatch Deputy Foreign Minister Shin- suke Sugiyyama to Russia in mid-August and then Kishida to Russia from 31 August to 1 September for talks with his Russian counterpart Sergei Lavrov, according to Japanese government sources.

Kyodo News

**Two World War II bombs defused in Bavaria**

MUNICH, 21 July — Two bombs from World War II were discovered and defused on Monday in the southern German state of Bavaria, local police reported.

One 250-kg bomb was found in the district Pasing in Munich. About 1,000 residents including middle school students, who are working and living in houses near a radius of 500 meters, had been evacuated before the bomb was defused successfully, according to the Munich police.

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Xinhua
FEATURE: Kimonos of the world to light up stage at 2020 Tokyo Games

By Maya Kaneko

Tokyo, 21 July — Japanese culture and fashion has long evolved around the kimono. But one man is spreading a message of diversity by using this traditional garment to celebrate cultures from around the world.

Yoshimasa Takakura’s dream is to have each of the 196 nations participating in the 2020 Tokyo Olympics have their own model kimono, formed a rich tapestry of history and culture for the two-week-long sporting event.

He also hopes the project called “Imagine One World,” which was launched last year, will help revitalize the kimono industry and encourage the younger generations to learn the craftsmanship of this important Japanese tradition.

“Through the presentation of Japanese kimonos that represent culture of each country, we’d like to entice foreigners and get them interested in Japan,” Takakura said in a recent interview with Kyodo News.

“I believe the project sends out a message of peace and serves Japan’s interests as well.”

Takakura’s production will involve about 70 craftsmen from around Japan. So far, eight kimonos have been designed inspired by the cultures and histories of Brazil, South Africa, Lithuania, Bhutan, Tuvalu, Qatar, Italy and the United States.

Models wearing kimonos of Italy and other countries joined a parade at a Japan Day event of the food-themed world expo in Milan on 11 July, 2015. Takakura aims to make kimonos for each of the 196 nations participating in the 2020 Tokyo Olympics.—Kyodo News

By Hiroshi Nakamachi

Hiroshi Nakamachi, a creator of Kaga-Yuzen, one of the distinct motifs of traditional Japanese fabrics decorated on the silk-dyeing process by Miyazaki Yuzen-sai in the Edo period, even travelled to the Philippines with his protege to develop a “Kimono Day” concept.

After the Olympics, the organizers are planning a travelling exhibition of the kimonos around the globe. Eventually, Takakura said the 196 garments will be auctioned off so they can be displayed in a museum for the general public.

Money raised in the auction can be used to train young artisans, create jobs in the kimono industry and promote the traditional garment culture.

Takakura said his aim is rejuvenating the moribund kimono industry as he fears many skilled traditional craftsmen could “disappear in five years if no measures are taken.”

According to a Yano Research Institute, private research company, retail sales of kimonos in Japan dwindled to about 300 billion yen in 2013, about one sixth of the peak in 1981 of some 1.8 trillion yen.

Many Japanese wore kimonos made of cotton and linen as casual dress before World War II, but Westernization of clothes in postwar Japan has drastically reduced demand for the traditional garment, leaving the industry to focus on luxurious silk kimonos worn in formal settings such as wedding ceremonies.

Hidenobu Teramura, director of the textile and clothing division for the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, believes Takakura’s initiative will help promote public interest in kimonos and stimulate the industry.

As part of the effort to promote kimono culture, especially among younger generations, the ministry is planning a “Kimono Day” event on 16 November, when central government officials will don the traditional garments at work, Teramura said.

Kyoudo News

SHANGHAI, 21 July — An explosion in a park in China’s eastern Shandong Province has killed two people as well as the suspected attacker, the official Xinhua news agency said on Tuesday.

The report said the blast, late on Monday night, was caused by a suspect named as 33-year-old unemployed villager Xie Xingtang. The Xinhua report did not mention a reason for the attack.

Photos circulating on Chinese microblog Sina Weibo showed police cordons surrounding an area scattered with debris and at least several people bleeding with severe injuries. Xinhua said three people were in critical condition.

A report in the official People’s Daily said Xie had been chronically ill and that his condition had recently worsened.—Reuters
From twerk to work: Miley Cyrus to host MTV Video Music Awards

LOS ANGELES, 21 July — Two years after twerking her way into MTV history, Miley Cyrus will be hosting the cable channel’s Video Music Awards.

In a tweet on Monday, the pop star posted photos of herself in a bright green alien outfit, holding up posters reading, “MTV won’t let me perform,” followed by “So I’m hosting this year’s VMAs.”

MTV confirmed the news and shared Cyrus’s photos on Twitter, but it did not retract the 22-year-old’s expletive-laced tweet.

The former Disney star sparkled at the VMAs when she performed with Robin Thicke, wearing a flesh-toned latex bikini and engaging in the provocative dance style of “twerking” with a suggestiveness of form and motion. The awards show, which honours artists for achievements in music videos, has a history of surprising, unscripted moments. West famously interrupted Taylor Swift’s acceptance speech in 2009 and Britney Spears shared a kiss with Madonna during the show in 2003.

The VMAs will air from the Microsoft Theater in Los Angeles on 27 August. Nominees for the awards will be announced on Tuesday. — Reuters

BEIJING, 21 July — Chinese animated films have come in for some pretty harsh criticism at home over the past years. But one film has defined that trend. Chinese audiences have been stunned by the return on screens of the legend of classical novel Journey to the West in the new movie Monkey King: Hero is Back.

The film has captured the nation’s attention with its high visual quality and sincerity.

The fictional hero is back. And he has taken his love for this movie to the West. The new TV series Monkey King: Hero is Back has an audience of about 10 million.

People are flocking to cinemas to discover the new sensation, or even to re-watch it. The box office takings for the new Monkey King movie have exceeded $50 million, a record for Chinese animated films. Despite its immense popularity, director Tian Xiaopeng keeps a cool head.

“We’re still far away from real success. People’s love for this movie stems more or less from their affection for Chinese-made animation. Animated movies in China still need more social recognition to grow,” said Tian.

It took Tian Xiaopeng and his team eight years to finish the movie. With a budget of only about US$10 million, it has achieved a success similar to the Hollywood animated blockbusters.

“We can’t afford the huge costs of Hollywood 3D animated films, so we have to find our own edge. The only way to compete with Hollywood is to find connect on a cultural and emotional level. I want to tell the story in a Chinese way, using our own philosophy and aesthetics to explain the world in our eyes,” Tian said.

The Monkey King: Hero is Back wins over Chinese audiences with a good plot and extraordinary visuals. More importantly, audiences can feel the dedication, sincerity, and passion poured into the film. But the success of a single film does not represent the whole of China’s animation industry.

China now has the largest animation industry in the world, with an annual output of 260,000 minutes every year. That is nearly twice that of Japan, which comes in second place. And yet only a third of them make it to the screen.

“I suggest the government to invest more on the original contents and IP,” said Han Hua from China Film Association.

On the market side, Liu Zhijuan, producer of the Monkey King, calls for patience.

“Many investors just want to make quick money in animation. That’s against the rule of the market and artistic creation. Investors have to treat it as a real industry and give the artists enough room to fully explore their imaginations,” he said.

China’s animation sector still has a long way to go to catch up to Hollywood. But talents such as Tian Xiaopeng are helping shorten that distance. — Xinhua

Comedy Carol Burnett to receive lifetime award from fellow actors

LOS ANGELES, 21 July — Actor and comedian Carol Burnett will receive the Screen Actors Guild Life Achievement Award at a ceremony in January, SAG announced on Monday.

Burnett, 82, is best known for her hit sketch comedy programme “The Carol Burnett Show,” which ran from 1967 to 1978 on CBS. Her parody of Scarlett O’Hara, wearing the “certain-red” dress, is widely considered one of the most memorable moments in comic television history. “Carol Burnett is a creative dynamo and a comedic genius. She embodies the generosity and courage that the greatest of the greatest use in creating enduring and memorable characters,” SAG-AFTRA president Ken Howard said in a statement.

Burnett made her Broadway debut in “Once Upon a Mattress,” in 1959 and also has numerous film credits to her name, including the popular role of Miss Hannigan in the 1982 film of the musical “Annie.” In recent years, Burnett has made appearances on TV programmes such as “Glee” and “Hot in Cleveland.”

Burnett has won multiple Emmy and Golden Globe awards, and has been the recipient of a Kennedy Centre Honour and the Mark Twain Prize for Humor.

The Screen Actors Guild and the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists merged in 2012 to form SAG-AFTRA, which is the trade management group that represents some 160,000 actors, broadcasters, dancers, recording artists and other performers.

The group’s awards show, scheduled to take place on 30 January, 2016 in Los Angeles, annually recognizes the best performances of the previous year on film and TV. — Reuters

New ‘Monkey King’ brings hope to Chinese animation

Breaking Bad’ actor running for New Mexico county commission seat

ALBUQUERQUE, 21 July — “Breaking Bad” actor and New Mexico native Steven Michael Quezada said on Monday he is running for a county commission seat in Albuquerque, where he grew up and the hit television show was set.

Quezada, who grew up in a gang-plagued neighbourhood and played DEA agent Steven Gomez in the now-concluded series, will run on the Democratic ticket for Bernalillo County District Two.

He told Reuters he wants to support not only public, but also educational opportunities for all children in the district, which is the city’s most crime-ridden.

“I want to give mothers who are working two jobs choices to keep their kids out of trouble,” he said in an interview. “I know what it is like to grow up here.”

Quezada, 52, assumed a vacant seat on the Albuquerque School Board shortly after “Breaking Bad” aired, and he said he quickly saw the need to expand his involvement in the community.

He referred to Albuquerque’s crime rate, which is twice the national average, as well as local schools and families struggling under financial hardship.

“We have to figure out as a county how we can work more closely with schools,” Quezada said.

He is an advocate of stronger mental health services for children in schools in order to identify at-risk children and intervene before it is too late. Albuquerque has recently seen high profile murders allegedly committed by teenagers.

“By the time they cross that line, it is too late,” Quezada said. His career as an actor and comedian is already built on a record of standing up against him by his opponents, he added.

“Acting is my job, just like a candidate may be a contractor or lawyer,” he said. “I know what is needed and I am willing to show it.”

Quezada said he has two college-age daughters, which makes quizzing and debating real politics full-time unrealistic.

“I see what needs to be done and I have the passion for it,” he said.

Officials with the Bernalillo County Board of elections said there are currently three people running against Quezada for the November election. — Reuters

Harper Lee’s new ‘Watchman’ novel sells more than 1 million in first week

NEW YORK, 21 July — Harper Lee’s unexpected new novel “Go Set A Watchman” has become the fastest selling book in the history of publisher HarperCollins, with more than 1.1 million copies sold in North America in the first week, the company said on Monday.

The novel was released on 14 July, 55 years after the author’s only other published work, “To Kill a Mockingbird,” a classic story of racial injustice in the American South.

“Watchman,” written in the 1950s, was a first draft of “Mockingbird” with many of the same characters.

It made headlines with its depiction of noble lawyer Atticus Finch as a racist and bigoted, a stark contrast to the idealistic, younger Finch of “Mockingbird” who put his principles on the line to defend a black man wrongly accused of raping a white woman.

HarperCollins, a unit of News Corp, said on Monday it had ordered reprints several times and had a North American print run for ‘Watchman’ of more than 3.3 million. It did not give sales figures or print runs for the rest of the world. — Reuters
Digital imaging reveals oldest biblical text since Dead Sea Scrolls

**Jerusalem, 21 July —**

Israeli archaeologists said Monday they had discerned biblical writing on a charred, 1,500-year-old parchment with the help of digital imaging and described the text as the oldest found since the Dead Sea Scrolls.

US and Israeli researchers made the discovery using advanced medical and digital technology to examine the object, first unearthed 45 years ago when then-standard forensics could not recover any script on the scroll.

“This is a really big discovery,” Pnina Shor, curator at the Israel Antiquities Authority, said at a news conference where the discovery, “Disaster-related disasters are stoking extremes such as heat waves and heavy rains. As well as extreme climate events, rapidly growing and poorly built settlements to natural disasters are putting more people at risk, Zamudio said, citing areas around cities such as Mexico City, Mumbai, Karachi and Port-au-Prince.

Extreme weather has struck Haiti and Cuba with different results. More than 300,000 people died in the 2010 quake in Haiti, where 60,000 still live in tents, said William Lacy Swing, director-general of the International Organization for Migration (IOM), who collected data for the report.

Residents on a boat catch fish near partially submerged trees flooded by an overflowing river after Typhoon Rammasun hit Nanning, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, on 22 July, 2014. The death toll rose from a super typhoon, the strongest to hit southern China in 40 years, has risen to 33, state media said on Monday, after at least 77 dead in the Philippines last week. —Reuters

Natural disasters forced 20 million from their homes in 2014

**Geneva, 21 July —**

Nearly 20 million people were forced to flee their homes due to floods, storms and earthquakes last year, a problem likely to worsen due to climate change, but which could be eased by better construction, a report said Monday.

Asia is particularly prone to natural disasters, accounting for almost 90 percent of the 19.3 million people displaced last year, the report said, and although 2014 figures were lower than that, the NRC said there was a rising long-term trend.

“Our historical analysis reveals you are 60 percent more likely to be displaced by disasters today than you were in the 1970s,” Zamudio said, adding: “Climate change is expected to play a strong role in the future by increasing the frequency and intensity of such hazards.”

UN scientific experts say greenhouse gas emissions are stoking extremes such as heat waves and heavy rains.

As well as extreme climate events, rapidly growing and poorly built settlements to natural disasters are putting more people at risk, Zamudio said, citing areas around cities such as Mexico City, Mumbai, Karachi and Port-au-Prince.

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Football legend Pelé leaves hospital after back surgery

**São Paulo, 21 July —**

Brazilian football legend Pelé left the hospital on Monday after undergoing back surgery, the latest in a series of health complications for the 74-year-old former star striker.

Pelé, whose given name is Edson Arantes do Nascimento, spent the weekend at Albert Einstein Hospital in São Paulo after a procedure to relieve pressure on a nerve in his spine, an aide told Reuters.

The hospital announced his release in a statement.

This is the third time Pelé has been hospitalized since November. He spent two weeks in November at the Einstein facility with kidney problems and in May he underwent prostate surgery at the same hospital.

With more than 1,280 career goals and an unequalled three World Cup titles during his playing career, Pelé is considered by many to be the greatest football player of all time. —Reuters

Indonesian jailed for match-fixing attempt in Singapore

**Singapore, 21 July —**

An Indonesian man was jailed for 30 months on Tuesday for attempting to fix a soccer match at the recent Southeast Asian Games in Singapore. Nasruluddin, 52, conspired with two others to give East Timor soccer official Orlando Marques Henrique Mendes $15,000 to ensure they would lose to Malaysia on 30 May, Singapore’s Corrupt Practices Investigation Bureau (CPIB) said in a statement.

“Cuba is extremely well-prepared for disasters: hurricanes, typhoons, whatever happens. They have a shelter system, they have a public education system. Everyone knows what to do when disaster strikes,” he said.

Being uprooted by disaster is not limited to poor countries.

“The largest case we found is in Japan, where some 230,000 people are still displaced today following the Tohoku earthquake and the tsunami disaster in 2011, including thousands displaced from the area around the damaged Fukushima nuclear plant,” Zamudio said.

Reuters

Merkel Technologies, a German company specializing in high-tech medical equipment, helped in the deciphering by providing micro C-T scanning, Shor said.

“These findings were sent to Brent Seales, a computer expert at the University of Kentucky in Lexington. Seales said he used digital imaging software to “virtually unwrap” the scroll and visualise its text, discerning what experts said were the first eight verses of the Bible’s Old Testament book of Leviticus.”

Shor said more research was needed to determine the full extent of text on the scroll and what lessons it might hold for biblical scholars. But she said the findings had already turned out to be far more significant than anticipated.

“The discovery absolutely astonishes us. We were certain this was a shot in the dark,” Shor said. —Reuters
EX-FIGA VP SETS SIGHTS ON BODY'S TOP POSITION: YONHAP

SIOUL, 21 July — Former FIFA Vice President Chung Mong-joon on Tuesday expressed his intent to succeed Sepp Blatter as the head of soccer's world governing body, according to Yonhap News Agency. “I am thinking of running (for FIFA president),” Chung told Yonhap by phone. “I will try to usher in a new era for FIFA.” Chung served as FIFA’s No 2 man from 1994 to 2011. He has been a vocal critic of the body since several officials were implicated in corruption scandals earlier this year.

Blatter announced his resignation four days after he was re-elected to a fifth term at a FIFA Congress meeting on 29 May, saying he would keep his job until a successor is chosen. Chung was chief of the Korea Football Association from 1993 to 2009 and later became its honorary chairman.

A former lawmaker and a scion of the Hyundai Group, Chung helped bring the FIFA World Cup to South Korea for the first time in 2002, with Japan as a co-host. “Reform measures presented by FIFA are contradictory,” Chung added. “Blatter himself should be the target of reforms, but he wants to oversee the election until next February. They need to wake up.”

LONDON, 21 July — Jordan Henderson will blossom as Liverpool captain, says Rodgers

KIDS ARE MY LEGACY NOT MY OPEN WIN, SAYS JOHNSON

ZURICH, 21 July — Sepp Blatter, president of the International Federation of Football Associations (FIFA) on Monday announced that he would quit the position he has held for 12 years. He was watched by the world's footballing elite as they prepared to elect a successor.

British comedian known as Lee Nelson (R) gestures after he throws banknotes in front of FIFA President Sepp Blatter (L) at a news conference after the Extraordinary FIFA Executive Committee Meeting at the FIFA headquarters in Zurich, Switzerland on 20 July 2015. —Xinhua

Blatter re-elected as FIFA chief, vows reforms

ZURICH — FIFA president Sepp Blatter was re-elected by the Congress to a fifth term, saying he was determined to make sweeping reforms after being embroiled in a corruption scandal.

St. Andrews, (Scotland), 21 July — Father of three Zach Johnson refused to get too carried away after winning the 144th British Open in a four-hole playoff with South African Louis Oosthuizen and Australian Marc Leishman on Monday. It was the second major victory of the 39-year-old American’s career, following his US Masters triumph in 2007, but he was keen to put his achievements in perspective. “This isn’t going to define me or my career, at least I hope it doesn’t,” the down to earth Johnson told reporters at St. Andrews. “It’s not my legacy.”

“Granted, as a professional athlete and as a golfer I’m going to relish this. I’m going to savour this. I’m humbled by this but my legacy should be my kids, my family, that kind of thing. I realise it’s just a game. I’m just a guy from Iowa that has been blessed with a talent and this game provides great opportunity,” added Johnson. “If you look at it that way it kind of takes the pressure off. I don’t want to make it any bigger than what it should be.”

Johnson spared a thought for fellow countryman Jordan Spieth, 21, who was one of the first to congratulate him despite feeling disappointed at failing to add the British Open to his wins this year at the US Masters and US Open. “He is a really good friend of mine,” said Johnson. “Granted, he’s 18 years younger than me, which is perspective.”

“I can’t describe the magnitude of what he was going through because I’ve never been in that position. We haven’t really seen that with the exception of Tiger (Woods). “Jordan could be sitting here now... to have a champion like him take the time to give me best wishes... speaks volumes. He’s a phenomenal talent and I’m telling you right now... he’s a better person than he is a golfer.”

Johnson also took time out to praise world number one Rory McIlroy who was sidelined for the British Open after injuring ankle ligaments playing soccer with his friends. “There’s not a person that anybody would rather have here than Rory,” the American said. “He’s certainly taken the game to newer heights as of late.”

“It’s really unfortunate.”

We all want him back and back healthy more than anything.” — Reuters