President U Thein Sein sends message of felicitations to Peru

NAY PYI TAW, 28 July — U Thein Sein, President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, has sent a message of felicitations to H.E. Mr. Ollanta Moisés Humala Tasso, President of the Republic of Peru, on the occasion of the anniversary of the Independence Day of the Republic of Peru, which falls on 28th July 2015.—MNA

Nay Pyi Taw holds Waso robe-offering ceremony

The Union government held a Waso robe-offering ceremony at Uppatasanti Pagoda in Nay Pyi Taw . . .

WEATHER BUREAU WARNS OF FLASH FLOODS, LANDSLIDES ACROSS COUNTRY

By Aye Min Soe

YANGON, 27 July — A depression over the Bay of Bengal is likely to cause heavy rain, flash floods and landslides across the country over the next three days, the weather bureau warned Monday.

The upper Sagaing, Bago, Yangon and Ayeyawady regions, as well as Shan, Chin, Rakhine, Kayin and Mon states were expected to record more than 3 inches, or 77 mm, of rain within 24 hours from 2 p.m. Monday, the Meteorology and Hydrology Department said.

Mandalay, Magway and lower Sagaing regions were forecast to record more than 1.5 inches, or 38 mm, in the same period.

The department urged people, especially those living in hilly areas and near rivers, to be alert to possible dangers and fishing boats at sea to be wary of severe weather conditions.

The department said the depression was almost stationary and centered (See page 2)

Final meeting on minimum wage negotiations set for 1 August

By Ye Myint

YANGON, 27 July — A Vietnamese tourist group taking a motorcade tour in Myanmar for six days arrived in Nay Pyi Taw on Monday, the Ministry of Tourism said.

Marvelous Memory Travels and Tours Co., Ltd in cooperation with the ministry has conducted the motorcade tour comprising 97 Vietnamese tourists in 23 cars. They entered Myanmar via Mae Sot, Thailand, last Friday.

Union Minister for Hotels and Tourism U Htay Aung welcomed the Vietnamese tourists and spoke to them about adventure and ecotourism in Myanmar, the ministry added.

(See page 2)

Vietnamese tourists travel Myanmar in motorcade

Firemen evacuate women through flood water in Muse on 25 July.—Photo: Muse District IPRD
Vietnamese tourists travel …
(from page 1)
During a day trip in Nay Pyi Taw, the motorcade visited Ngalike dam, Uppatasanti Pagoda and the Parliament complex. The Vietnamese motorcade left for Yangon in the evening. After touring Yangon, the motorcade will return to Thailand’s Maesot via Myawady in Myanmar on Wednesday.
According to the ministry, tourists motorcade visited Kyauk-hti-ye Pa-goda first before driving to Bagan on Sunday. Tourist arrivals to Myanmar continue to rise, even in the rainy season.—GNLM

Electoral reporting workshop held in Nay Pyi Taw

YANGON, 27 July — Ministry of Information and DW Akademie are jointly holding a workshop on electoral reporting as a preparation to cover the news in line with rules and regulations of the Union Election Commission and the Myanmar Press Council (Interim).

Deputy Minister for Information U Pike Htway made opening remark on the two-day workshop started on Monday, with saying the journalists are to observe media ethics during their electoral reporting.

DW Akademie is Germany’s leading organization for international media development, and it is working in 50 countries around the world.

A total of 29 representatives from state-owned media, its partner news agencies, radio stations and media trainees attend the workshop, with the discussions of officials from UEC and senior journalists from MPC, Mizzima, ABC, BBC Media Action, IMS and Internews.

U Maung Maung Su from Myama Radio said, "The workshop provides us the knowledge how to cover the news during election period transparently." Myat Thandar Maung

Final meeting on minimum wage negotiations set for 1 August

By Aye Min Soe

YANGON, 27 July — Yangon Region officials will hold a final meeting with employers to break a deadlock over the proposed minimum wage rate on 1 August, after which they will disclose the outcomes of negotiations, an official said Monday.

The previous meeting between the Yangon Region Minimum Wage Committee and factory bosses from some industrial zones over the proposed minimum wage of K3,600 for an eight-hour day were somewhat positive, the committee official told the Global New Light of Myanmar.

Legal amendments would be needed in order to settle some issues proposed by the employers, he added.

The committee is holding a series of meetings starting from Saturday with employers and workers, mostly from the garment industry, who objected to the minimum wage proposal.

The government's minimum wage body received more than 300 objections from factory owners, mostly from garment industry, and workersin Yangon after the committee issued a notification on the minimum wage proposal on 29 June.

Dozens of major global brands have backed the proposed minimum wage, calling for guaranteed pay rates as a means of promoting investment in the country’s garment industry and lifting the living standards of its workers.

Both the Ethical Trading Initiative and the Fair Labor Association — comprising companies sourcing from, or considering investing in, Myanmar — expressed their support for the minimum wage in letters to the Union Minister for Labour, Employment and Social Security and the Chair of the National Committee on the Minimum Wage.

The Fair Labor Association — comprising companies sourcing from, or considering investing in, Myanmar — expressed their support for the minimum wage in letters to the Union Minister for Labour, Employment and Social Security and the Chair of the National Committee on the Minimum Wage.

Rainstorms are likely to move towards Myanmar. Squalls with rough seas could occur occasionally off and along Myanmar’s coasts, with surface wind speeds reaching 45 miles per hour, the announcement said.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation announced Monday it was closely monitoring its 25 dams across the country.

The ministry was releasing excess dam water through spillways in order to avoid overflowing or breaching of dam embankments, the announcement said. More than 1,300 people in Ayadaw Township, Sagaing Region, have evacuated to shelters as floods hit some villages in the township Monday.

Eight members from Kyaw Thet and Saw San Aung-led group arrested with arms and ammunition

NAY PYI TAW, 27 July — The KNU’s eastern alliance’s Battalions 17 handed over eight members from an armed group led by Kyaw Thet and Saw San Aung to Tatmadaw columns in Myawady.

Eight members from an armed group led by Kyaw Thet and Saw San Aung arrested by KNU troops seen with arms and ammunition.

Myawady
Nay Pyi Taw holds Waso robe-offering ceremony

Nay Pyi Taw, 27 July — The Union government held a Waso robe-offering ceremony at Upapatasanti Pagoda in Nay Pyi Taw on Monday.

President U Thein Sein and wife Daw Khin Khin Win, Vice Presidents Dr Sai Mauk Kham and U Nyan Tun and their wives, Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker U Khin Aung Myint and party offered Waso robes and provisions to members of the Sangha led by Chairman Sayadaw of the State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee Abhidhaja Maharajtaguru Abhidhaja Agga Maha Saddham-majotika Dr Bhaddanta Kumarabhivamsa.

During the ceremony, the President and the congregation received nine precepts from the chairman Sayadaw, and shared the merits gained.

After the ceremony, those present offered meals to the monks.— MNA

Myanmar military delegation arrives in India

Nay Pyi Taw, 27 July — A Myanmar military delegation led by Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing arrived at Bangalore Airport in India on Sunday.

The command-in-chief and party were welcomed at the airport by Air Marshal Ramesh Rai VM, commander of Bangalore-based training command of the Indian Air Force, Myanmar ambassador to India U Aung Khin Soe and officials.

The Myanmar delegation later observed the manufacturing of light combat helicopters, vehicles and electronics parts at Hindustan Aeronautics Limited.

The senior general and party flew to Goa in the evening and attended a dinner hosted by Rear Admiral Ravneet Singh, commanding flag officer for the Goa area. —Myawady

More candidates submit nominations for general election

Nay Pyi Taw, 27 July — Six candidates for Pyithu Hluttaw, six candidates for Amyotha Hluttaw, seven candidates for state/region Hluttaws and three candidates for state/region ethnic affairs Hluttaws on 27 July submitted their nomination as candidates are trying to nominate for General Election 2015.

A total of 68 candidates including 16 for Pyithu Hluttaw, 10 for Amyotha Hluttaw, 30 state/region Hluttaws and 12 for state/region ethnic affairs have submitted their nominations to the Union Election Commission until 27 July. The detail process of nomination is available at www.uecmyanmar.org.— MNA

Yangon electric tramline to open in October

Nay Pyi Taw, 27 July — Myanmar’s Ministry of Rail Transportation and trading company West Corporation signed contracts Monday to operate electric trams along the Strand Road in Yangon.

The tram route will link the Pansodan downtown area with Hiawtla intersection in the west by October this year in the first stage. The second stage, to be completed at the end of December, will connect to the Razadirit Street in the east. Witnessed by Union Minister for Rail Transportation U Than Htay and Vice President of West Corporation Miss Hoshino, the contracts were signed by Managing Director U Thein Hsu Win from Myanma Railways and Director U Soe Win Tun from West Corporation.— MNA

Union Minister U Than Htay attends signing of contracts between Ministry of Rail Transportation and West Corporation.— SSK
Japanese farmers urge govt’ to protect key items before TPP talks

Tokyo, 27 July — Some 1,300 farmers urged the Japanese government to protect five key agricultural products at a rally in Tokyo on Monday, a day before the start of the latest ministerial talks on a Pacific trade pact in Hawaii.

In negotiations on the Trans-Pacific Partnership, Japan aims to keep tariffs on what it calls “sensitive” products — rice, wheat, beef and pork, dairy products and sugar — to protect domestic farmers from an influx of cheaper foreign products.

But Toyoaki Nakamura, head of the political campaign of the Central Union of Agricultural Cooperatives, known as JA-Zenchu, criticized the government at the rally for not disclosing enough information about the TPP talks.

“The negotiations have a great deal to do with our lives, but (information) has not been disclosed,” Nakamura said.

Kazunobu Shibusawa, a cabinet minister in charge of TPP negotiations, told the meeting that the government “has never forgotten Diet resolutions” adopted in April 2013 to protect Japan’s key farm products.

JA-Zenchu has consistently opposed Japan’s participation in TPP talks.

The government led by the Democratic Party of Japan expressed its intention to study whether to join the negotiations in 2010. 

Protest rallies have been held not only in Tokyo but also in other areas, drawing as many as several thousand farmers.

Ahead of the session involving ministers from all 12 TPP countries starting on Tuesday on Maui Island, negotiation sources said Japan has proposed in bilateral talks to set a 50,000-tonne zero-tariff quota for US rice and gradually increase the amount to 70,000 tonnes over 10 years or longer.

TPP involves the United States, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore and Vietnam. The parties cover some 40 percent of the global economy.

China eyes new cruise link to disputed South China Sea islands

Beijing, 27 July — Chinese authorities plan to start a second cruise ship link to the disputed Paracel Islands in the South China Sea, state media reported on Monday, in a move that may irk Vietnam, which also claims the islands.

China began cruises on the Coconut Princess in a trial basis from the southern island province of Hainan in 2013. More than 10,000 tourists have taken the trip so far, the official China Daily reported.

Officials hope a second ship will be in operation before the end of the year, and that more islands can be opened up for visits, the report said.

Those include Woody Island, where the Chinese government seat for administering the Paracels is located.

However, weather and poor facilities could hamper tourism efforts. The Paracels are often hit by typhoons and strong winds, the paper said.

“We need to take into account the capacity of the islands to handle tourists. Cruise ships cannot dock on some of them and the tourists have to be brought ashore by smaller ships,” Xie Zanliang, head of a government tourism company promoting trips to the Paracels, told the newspaper.

China claims 90 percent of the potentially energy-rich South China Sea. Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines, Vietnam and Taiwan lay claim to parts of the sea, through which passes about $5 trillion of trade a year. Vietnam said last month it would offer its own cruises to the disputed Spratly archipelago, which lies south of the Paracels, a move that sparked anger from China.

Countries competing to cement their rival claims have encouraged a growing civilian presence on disputed islands.— Reuters

Thai PM hints at September cabinet reshuffle, economy weak

Bangkok, 27 July — Thai Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha hinted on Monday he may reshuffle his cabinet in September as the government comes under mounting pressure to deal with a slow economy.

Southeast Asia’s second-largest economy has consistently missed government targets for growth since Prayuth led a military coup in May 2014, ending months of street protests that brought the country to the verge of recession.

“There may be changes in some cabinet members,” Prayuth told reporters.

“The reshuffle may come when the government has worked close to one year,” he added.

The existing cabinet started work in September 2014, some four months after the coup.

Media has speculated for days on a reshuffle centered on positions related to the economy. Finance Minister Sommai Phasee on Wednesday denied a media report that he had resigned.

Prayuth warned that a cabinet reshuffle may not bring quick change to the economic performance.

“It’s not like the shuffle will mean the economy will get better instantly,” he said.

“But blame individuals because the poor economy is due to many different factors — both internal and external.”

Thailand is heavily dependent on exports, which are worth about two-thirds of gross domestic product (GDP).

But a mixture of slow external demand and reliance on shipments of products that are becoming obsolete have hurt Thai exports.

Exports in June fell at the steepest rate in more than three years. Exports for the full year are expected to decline for the third consecutive year in 2015.

The economy expanded just 0.9 percent in the second quarter 2015, the weakest since flood-hit 2011.

A weak economy could undermine support for the government as frustration with restrictions on political activity simmers, particularly among younger voters and supporters of former Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra, whose government was ousted in 2014.

Prayuth has laid out a road map involving, among other things, the drafting of a new charter that he says will pave the way for elections some time in 2016.— Reuters

Three killed, six wounded in S Philippine clash

DAVAO CITY, (Philippines), 27 July — One Filipino rebel and two soldiers were killed while six others were wounded in a firefight in the southern Philippine province of Compostela Valley on Sunday night, the military said on Monday.

The clash started when troops from the Army’s 71st Infantry Battalion met with about 50 leftist rebels while patrolling in Napnapan village in Compostela Valley province at Sunday noon, said Alberto Caber, public affairs officer of the military’s Eastern Mindanao Command.

The soldiers and the rebels exchanged gunfire for at least 30 minutes before the insurgents withdrew, Caber said.

Citing accounts of local civilians, two of the rebels were killed and six others were injured. The two killed NPA bandits were brought away by their companions while they escaped.

Meanwhile, at least 30 rebels burned a security outpost of the Apex Mining in Maco town, also in Compostela Valley, at 7:30 pm on Sunday, said 10th Infantry Division public affairs officer LT Alexandra Cabales.

The troops are still on pursuit operations in the area, he said. The NPA, the armed wing of the Communist Party of the Philippines, was formed in 1969.

Latest military estimates placed the NPA’s strength at more than 4,000.
Tokyo, 27 July — The House of Councillors started deliberations on Monday on controversial security bills to expand the role of the Self-Defence Forces abroad, with a majority of the Japanese public opposed to the legislation.

Citing an increasingly severe security environment surrounding Japan such as the activities of a nuclear-armed North Korea and an assertive China, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said the government-sponsored bills are “indispensable” for the security of the nation.

“The government bears a responsibility to assume every kind of situation and be prepared to make a seamless response,” Abe told an upper house plenary session. “The legislation for peace and security is indispensable for (fulfilling) such a responsibility.”

Abe’s Liberal Democratic Party and its coalition partner, the Komeito party, pushed the bills through the House of Representatives on 16 July in the absence of voting by opposition parties, after a total of 116 hours of deliberations by the lower house special committee on security legislation.

Earlier Monday, Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga dismissed claims by some opposition lawmakers and news organizations that the bills would prompt the government to introduce conscription and allow the SDF to join a war being waged by another country.

“Such claims are groundless,” Suga, the top government spokesman, said at a News conference. “We would like to thoroughly explain the bills during deliberations in the House of Councillors and try to remove such misunderstanding.”

Speaking separately, Katsuya Okada, leader of the main opposition Democratic Party of Japan, said the opposition camp would “like to conduct deliberations that would prompt the public to increase voices (of opposition) so as to force (the ruling coalition) to withdraw the bills.”

The proposed legislation would allow the SDF to defend the United States and other closely related nations under armed attack when a situation “threatens Japan’s survival and poses a clear danger to fundamentally overturn people’s right to life, liberty and pursuit of happiness.”

It would also enable Tokyo to increase its contributions to international peacekeeping efforts.

But opposition lawmakers and constitutional scholars argue that Japan’s exercising of the right to collective self-defence — or coming to the aid of allies under armed attack even if Japan itself is not attacked — would violate the war-renouncing Constitution.

Given the coalition’s control of more than two-thirds of the more powerful lower house, it appears likely that the legislation will be enacted by the end of the current extended Diet session on 17 September.

Under the Constitution, a bill rejected by the upper house can be passed into law by a second vote in the lower chamber with a two-thirds majority, and such a vote can also be held if the upper house fails to put a bill cleared by the lower house to a vote within 60 days.

While Abe has expressed determination to get the legislation enacted during the current Diet session, public support for the security bills remains low.

A recent opinion poll conducted by Kyodo News showed 61.5 percent opposed the bills, while 27.5 percent supported them.

In the poll, 68.2 percent expressed opposition to enactment of the legislation during the current Diet session, while 26 percent expressed support.

Newspaper polls show the ruling coalition’s push to pass the bills through the lower house has sent the support rate for the Abe Cabinet to the lowest level since he returned to power in December 2012.

Observers say that poor handling of the bills in the upper house could risk a further fall in public support for the Cabinet.

Kyodo News

With nuclear deal done, Iran sets out to reassure wary Gulf Arabs

Tokyo, 27 July — Iran’s foreign minister called on Sunday for a united front among the Gulf Arab states to counter the “constructive and it will not be a clear danger to fundamental interests,” Zarif added.

Most Sunni Muslim-led Gulf Arab states have long accused Teheran of interference in Arab affairs, alleging financial or armed support for political movements in countries including Bahrain, Yemen and Lebanon.

Predominantly Shi’ite Iran denies interference but says the nuclear agreement will not change its policies in the region.

Before his Gulf visit, Zarif said in a statement posted on his ministry’s website late on Friday that Teheran would continue supporting its allies in Syria and Iraq to fight against militant group Islamic State.

“The Iranian nation supports all oppressed nations,” Iranian President Hassan Rouhani said earlier, during a visit on Sunday to Iran’s Kurdistan Province.

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe (front) and Defence Minister Gen Nakatani attend a plenary session of the House of Councillors on Tokyo on 27 July, 2015, as the upper house began deliberations that day on controversial bills to expand the role of the Self-Defence Forces abroad. Opinion polls show a majority of the Japanese public oppose the legislation.—Kyodo News

China arrests, probes five former local officials

Beijing, 27 July — The Anhui Provincial People’s Procuratorate in central China has announced the arrest of Jiang Changsheng, former head of the Organized Crime Control Department of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Suzhou Municipal Committee.

Jiang is suspected of bribery, according to a government statement issued on Monday. The Anhui prosecuting authorities are also investigating Hui Zhi-gang, former vice general manager of the state-owned iron and steel giant Ma Steel, for the same crime.

Qinghai prosecuting authorities in northwest China are investigating Zhu Jianping, former deputy head of CPC committee in the provincial-owned Assets Supervision and Administration Commission, and Yu Xiaoming, former director of the provincial energy bureau, for suspected bribery. Yu was also accused of holding huge wealth from unidentified sources, which is a crime for Chinese officials.

Zhang Changsheng, a senior municipal political advisor in central China’s Hubei Province is also being investigated for suspected abuse of power and bribery taking, according to the statement.—Xinhua

Solar power,闪光洪水杀 51 人于巴基斯坦

Islamabad, 27 July — At least 51 people have been killed, 21 others injured and 258,930 affected by rain-triggered accidents and flash floods over the last 12 days in Pakistan, local media quoted the national Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) as reporting on Monday.

Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan are the worst hit areas.

The flash floods have damaged 1,648 houses, inundated 451 villages and destroyed standing crops on 233,688 acres of land.

Rescue and relief activities by the NDMA, provincial governments and army are continuing in the affected areas.—Xinhua

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe (front) and Defence Minister Gen Nakatani attend a plenary session of the House of Councillors on Tokyo on 27 July, 2015, as the upper house began deliberations that day on controversial bills to expand the role of the Self-Defence Forces abroad. Opinion polls show a majority of the Japanese public oppose the legislation.—Kyodo News
Obama in Ethiopia on Africa tour to boost security, other ties

ADDIS ABABA, 27 July
Barack Obama met the Ethiopian prime minister on Monday on the first visit by a serving US president to a nation with one of the fastest-growing economies in Africa but which has often been criticized for its rights record.

Talks with Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn are expected to focus on security and the threat of the Islamist militant group al Shabaab in Somalia. Obama, who arrived from Kenya on Sunday, also wants to boost business ties with Africa. Ethiopia’s ruling party, in power for quarter of a century, has turned the once famine-stricken economy around, but opponents say it has been at the expense of political freedoms. The opposition failed to secure a single seat in a 2011 parliamentary election.

On Obama’s first stop in Kenya, his father’s homeland, he urged Kenyans to deepen democracy, tackle corruption and end politics of exclusion based on gender or ethnicity. He also promised Kenya more security assistance.

“We are strongly committed to partnering with African countries to increase their capacity to address the immediate threats posed by terrorist organizations,” the White House said in a statement on Monday. Ethiopia contributes troops to an African Union peace force battling al Shabaab in Somalia. The group has often launched attacks in Kenya, but diplomats say Ethiopia’s state security apparatus has spared it similar assaults.

Obama holds talks with regional leaders about the conflict in South Sudan later on Monday. Warring factions have ignored pressure to end fighting, and talks may consider possible sanctions if an mid-August deadline passes.

Obama, who many Africans claim as their son, is seeking to expand business links with the continent, where China overtook the United States as the biggest trade partner in 2009.

“Africa is the move Africa one of the fastest growing regions in the world,” Obama told a conference in Nairobi on Sunday that sought to encourage African entrepreneurs and match them with investors.

Ethiopia, brought to its knees by communist purges in the 1970s and famine in the 1980s, has won praise for pushing growth into double digits and spreading development with a range of rural health and education initiatives across the nation.

But it has relied largely on state-led investment to do so, which economists say is squeezing out private business.

It remains one of world’s biggest recipients of aid and is still among Africa’s poorest nations per capita.

The government has often been accused of trying to help build new roads, railways and dams in its bid to expand the industrial base in the largely agrarian economy. The new metro line that snakes through Addis Ababa was built by a Chinese firm.—Reuters

Greek PM Varoufakis under pressure over covert Syriza drachma plan reports

ATHENS, 27 July
— Some members of Greece’s leftist government wanted to raid central bank reserves and copy taxpayer accounts to prepare a return to the drachma, according to reports on Sunday that heightened the chaos in the ruling Syriza party.

It is not clear how seriously the plans, attributed to former Energy Minister Panagiotis Lafazanis and former Finance Minister Yannis Varoufakis, were considered by the government and both ministers were sacked earlier this month. However, the reports have been seized on by opposition parties who have demanded an explanation.

The reports came at the end of a week of fevered speculation over what Syriza hardliners had in mind as an alternative to the €85bn ($92bn) bailout deal.

Around a quarter of the party’s 149 lawmakers rebelled over the plan to pass sweeping austerity measures in exchange for fresh loans and Tsipras has struggled to hold the divided party together.

In an interview with Sunday’s Kathimerini, he admitted that Syriza was preparing plans to secretly raid the national Mint and the country’s other central bank reserves.

The reports came amid growing pressures on Syriza to rethink its austerity policies and become more popular with other European finance ministers.

“The main reason for that was for the Greek economy and Greek people to survive, which is the utmost duty every government has under the constitution,” he said.

However he denied a report in the Financial Times that he wanted Bank of Greece Governor Yannis Stournaras to be arrested if he had opposed a move to empty the central bank vaults. In comments to the semi-official Athens News Agency, he called the report a mixture of fantasy, fear-mongering, speculation and old-fashioned anti-communism.

In a separate report in the conservative Kathimerini daily, Varoufakis was quoted as saying that a small team in Syriza had prepared plans to secretly copy online tax codes. It said the “Plan B” was devised to allow the government to introduce a parallel system of online tax accounts and set up a shadow system. However, according to the report, he said the plan had never been approved by Tsipras.

Deputy Finance Minister Dimitris Mardas denied the government had ever discussed plans to take Greece out of the euro. “I have repeatedly said that such discussions have never taken place at a government policy level,” he told Skai television.—Reuters

Cameron in southeast Asia visit to talk trade, Islamist extremism

BRITAIN’S Prime Minister David Cameron
LONDON, 27 July
Prime Minister David Cameron said on Sunday that he will have a four-day trade mission to southeast Asia to spur lucrative business deals and to forge new political alliances to counter Islamist extremism.

The trip, which begins in earnest on Monday, is expected to take in Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore and Vietnam, and will be Cameron’s first outside Europe since he won an unexpectedly convincing election victory in May.

Cameron, who will travel with a business delegation, has touted the visit as an example of how Britain must expand its trade links with the rest of the world to compensate for its dependance on trade with Europe, parts of which remain mired in an economic funk.

He hopes to use the opportunity to renew his image on the world stage after running an unusually parochial election campaign and preceding a downgrade of Britain’s military and diplomatic muscle during his first term in office.

He is expected to discuss the threat from Islamist extremism with President Joko Widodo of Indonesia, and later with Prime Minister Najib Razak of Malaysia. Around 500 people from Indonesia, which has the world’s largest Muslim population, and 200 from Malaysia are believed to have joined the extremists in Iraq and Syria.

Speaking before his departure, Cameron said: “The Islamic State (Islamic) State is one of the biggest threats our world has faced. I think Britain can offer expertise on practical counter-terrorism work, dealing with the threat from foreign fighters and investigating potential terrorist plots.”

“I think Britain can learn from Indonesia and Malaysia on the work they have done to tackle the extremist ideology and build tolerant and resilient societies.”

The threat posed by Islamic extremism is high on the political agenda in Britain after an Islamist gunman killed 30 British tourists at a Tunisian beach resort last month.

Britain was already taking part in US-led air strikes on Islamic State militants in Iraq and Cameron is keen to get parliament’s backing later this year to extend those strikes to Syria.

The Sunday Telegraph reported that Cameron and his advisers had also discussed what they could do to help defeat Islamist militants in Libya if a stable government is not emerging, while The Mail on Sunday said the government had drawn up contingency plans to deploy troops on Britain’s streets in the event of an attack by Islamists.

Cameron has said the West faces a generation-long struggle against what he calls “the death cult” of IS.

Reuters
Yemen’s Sanaa quiet as truce begins, clashes reported in south

SANAHA, 27 July — A truce appeared to be holding on Monday in Yemen’s capital Sanaa, the target of near-nightly air raids during a four-month-old war, with residents saying the city had passed a quiet night.

There were clashes early on Monday in the north and Taiz provinces to the south, however, according to sources in militias opposed to Houthi forces. Details were not immediately available.

The Arab coalition fighting the Iran-allied Houthi milita announced a ceasefire from 11.59 pm (9.59 pm BST) on Sunday evening for five days to allow for the delivery of humanitarian aid amid severe shortages of fuel, food and medicine.

Four months of air raids and war have killed more than 3,500 people in the Arabian Peninsula state. UN children’s agency UNICEF said the toll includes 365 children.

Aden and other southern provinces have been largely inaccessible to UN food aid, and about 13 million people — more than half the population — are thought to be in dire need of food.

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon welcomed the ceasefire and urged all parties to suspend military operations during the pause and refrain from exploiting it to move weapons or seize territory.

In a statement late on Sunday, Ban said he “appeals to all parties to exercise maximum restraint in cases of isolated viola-
tions and to avoid escalation.”

“The growing number of civilian casualties, including the disturbing reports of civil-
ian deaths in Mokha on Friday evening, in the unfolding humanitar-
ian catastrophe make a pause and an eventual extension an im-
perative.”

He was referring to a coalition air strike in western Yemen in which 80 people, mostly ci-
vilians, were killed, according to the Houthis-controlled Saba news agency.

A worker with an AK-47 rifle stops the sale of petrol at a petrol station amid the fuel supply shortage in Yemen’s capital Sanaa on 26 July, 2015. Reuters

Shortly before Ban’s statement was issued, the head of the Houthi supreme revolutionary committee, Mohammed Ali al-
Houthi, said in comments carried by Saba that the group had not been notified by the United Nations about the ceasefire and would not form a position to-
wards it until then.

The Saudi-led coalition be-
gan a campaign on 26 March to reverse months of advances by the Houthis after they moved from their northern stronghold last year, capturing the capital Sanaa and pushing south to the port city of Aden. The coalition, allied with southern secessionist fighters, retook much of Aden last week in the first significant ground victory in their campaign to end Houthi control and restore exiled President Abd-Rabbuh Mansour Hadi.

On Sunday, Yemeni forces allied with the coalition fought Houthi militia for control of the country’s largest air base north of Aden. There was no word on the situation there on Monday.

Houthi fighters and army units loyal to former president Ali Abdullah Saleh captured Aden at the outset of the war, prompting Hadi to flee to Saudi Arabia, an ally along with the United States. Reuters

Turkey arrests dozens more in sweep against Islamic State, Kurdish militants

ISTANBUL, 27 July — Turkish police detained dozens more suspected Islamic State and Kurdish militants in early morning raids on Monday, local media said, amid a crack-
down on the armed groups and air strikes in Syria and Iraq.

Long a reluctant member of the US-led coalition against Islamic State, Turkey last week made a dramatic turnaround by granting the alliance access to its air bas-
ses and bombarding targets in Syria linked to the jihadist movement as well as detaining suspected members in Turkish cities. Turkish jets also attacked Kurdish insurgent camps in Iraq for a second night on Sunday, in a campaign that could end Ankara’s peace process with the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK).

Broadcaster CNN Turk said more than 800 suspected Islamic State and PKK members had been arrested in the past week in a domestic crackdown carried out alongside the air strikes. Some 500 police swept through the Haci Bayram district of the capital Ankara and detained 15 Is-
lamic State suspects, 11 of them foreign, the pro-government Yeni Safak daily said. Operations also took place in the southeastern city of Adiyaman, where 19 people with alleged links to the PKK were detained, it reported. Turkey’s air strikes on PKK camps in northern Iraq come despite negotiations with the rebels that were launched in 2012 to end a 30-year insurgency. The PKK has said the ac-
tion has rendered the peace process meaningless. The Syrian Kurdish YPG, which has links to the PKK but which has coordinated with the United States in the fight against Islamic State in northern Syria, meanwhile said on Monday the Turkish army had shelled its positions on the outskirts of the Islamic State-held town of Jarablus. — Reuters

At least 13 dead in al Shabaab attack on Somali hotel

MAGADISHU, 27 July — The Somali militant Is-
lamist group al Shabaab attacked a Mogadishu hotel on Sunday, driving a car packed with explosives through the hotel gate and killing at least 13 people, a first responder and the rebel group said.

A Reuters witness said blood and pieces of flesh were scattered around the site of the blast targeting the Jazeera hotel. Nearby was the wreckage of four cars.

“We have carried 13 dead people and 21 others who were injured, some seriously,” an ambulance worker Abdikadir Abdirahman told Reuters.

China’s Foreign Min-
istry said that a Chinese national who worked doing security at its embassy in the country, which is located in the hotel, was among the dead, and that three others received minor inju-
ries. A police officer, Ma-
jor Nur Osoble, told Reuters a suicide car bomb had rammed the gates of the hotel, damaging the facade.

Al Shabaab, which said it was behind the blast, frequently stages bomb and gun attacks in the capital in its bid to topple Somalia’s Western-backed government. The nation is trying to rebuild after two decades of conflict and chaos.

“It is a response to at-
tacks and helicopter bomb-
ning against al Shabaab by AMISOM and the Somali-
li government,” Sheik Abdisassu Abu Musab, al Shabaab’s military opera-
ations spokesman, told Reu-
ters.

AMISOM, the African Union’s force in Somalia, has been battling the Isla-
mist rebels with the Somali army. Al Shabaab has been pushed into increasingly smaller pockets of territory by a military offensive this year.

The popular Jazeera hotel has been targeted on previous occasions. The blast on Sunday sent a plume of smoke rising above the coastal capital. Sporadic gunfire was heard shortly after the attack.

Al Shabaab, which wants to impose its strict interpretation of Islam on Somalia, killed a lawmak-
er, his bodyguard and an official from the prime min-
ister’s office on two attacks on Saturday. — Reuters

Gunmen attack Afghan wedding party, killing 21, wounding eight

KABUL, 27 July — Armed men opened fire at a wedding ceremony in northern Afghan-

istan, killing at least 21 guests and wounding eight, provincial offi-
cials said on Monday.

Violence has increased sharp-
ly this year in most parts of Af-
ghanistan, after US-led forces for-
mal ended their combat mission at the end of 2014, leaving a small contingent of about 12,000 NATO troops to train Afghan forces. It was not immediately clear what prompted the attack in the northern province of Baghlân, but insurgent activity has increased in the province over the past year and private militias have proliferated.

“There was a wedding par-
y, which turned into a tragedy, after some armed men entered and opened fire on male guests,” Baghlân police chief General Ab-
dul Jabar Fordeli told Reuters by phone. “An investigation is ongoing and police will arrest all perpetrators,” added the police chief, who estimated there were 2,500 armed members of illegal groups in the province. Last year was the deadliest on record for non-combatants in Afghanistan, the United Nations said, with at least 3,188 Afghan civilians killed in the intensifying war with Taleban insurgents. Weddings in rural Afghanistan start in the evening and parties follow a cus-
tom of keeping men and women guests apart. — Reuters
Opportunists must not influence reform plans  

By Aung Khin

Reform plans are implemented to improve the operations companies, government and other institutions. Many stakeholders are often involved in the implementation of such plans.

Sometimes, the introduction of new plans creates opportunities for those involved in the planning process. When planners start thinking of their own benefit, the original aims of the reform can fall by the wayside.

Stealthy intentions are needed for a long-term reform plan to succeed. Involvement of opportunists can result in the reform plan doing more harm than good. Implementation of reform plans therefore needs continual monitoring.

Transition periods are often needed during times of significant change, especially in politics. While some people involved in reform processes may have credentials from past endeavours, it does not guarantee their suitability for the task at hand. Some have sincere views toward development, while others seek to grasp opportunities from the reform process.

“Change” in politics should be synonymous with “development” or “evolution.” It should not represent a chance for opportunists who only consider their own interest.

Write for us

We appreciate your feedback and contributions. If you have any comments or would like to submit editorials, 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.

AM I NUMBER 12? BEWARE OF HEPATITIS

Dr Aung Soe (a) Aung Kyaw Moe  
Retired State Medical Superintendent

28 July is world hepatitis day celebrated all over the world. “AM I NUMBER 12?” was the slogan for world hepatitis day 2008, while “Prevent Hepatitis, Act Now!” is for 2015.

All the doctors and clinicians, no doubt are quite familiar with hepatitis. During my official career for more than 30 years across Myanmar in different states and regions at various capacities, as well as, a United Nations Volunteer Medical Officer (UNV-MO) under the agency of UNDP abroad, I had to encountered hepatitis cases which prevail everywhere.

Although hepatitis cases include Hepatitis A, B, C, D and E, Hepatitis B and C are more virulent. Globally, 4 billion people are infected with Hepatitis B Virus (HBV) with 350 million carriers, while 200 million humans are infected with Hepatitis C Virus (HCV), resulting in 170 million carriers. Carrier means infected persons without signs and symptoms, some even more than 30 years, carrying and distributing germs to neighbouring persons, who may develop the disease. As such, carriers are potentially dangerous to contacts for development of scirrhous and cancer liver.

In previous days, world hepatitis day was sponsored by World Hepatitis Alliance and celebrated on 19 May every year. Since one in every 12 persons in human population is infected with hepatitis virus, World Hepatitis Alliance choose the slogan AM I NUMBER 12 for public awareness and prevention of deadly hepatitis through individual and community participation.

During the year 2011, United Nations World Health Assembly adopted July 28 as World Hepatitis Day, honouring Nobel Laureate Professor Baruch Samuel Blumberg, who discovered HBsAg fragment of hepatitis B virus (HBV) which led create the hepatitis B vaccine, cornerstone for prevention of hepatitis B.

Since Hepatitis B is a pre-cancerous yet a pre-ventable disease, let me elaborate some salient points regarding this major public health problem.

HBV infection has an HBsAg prevalence rate of 1.3-12.7 percent in children below 15 years of age. Out of a total 43 million estimated HBV carriers, 10 percent are highly infectious. Those with chronic HBV infection are at risk for morbidity and mortality associated with scirrhous and co-carcinoma. Figures are of one neighbour country.

Hepatitis B virus (HBV) is a DNA containing double-shelled virus, 42 nm in diameter. The virus possesses various antigens that may help in distinguishing the duration and state of HBV infection in the host.

Only serum, saliva and semen are truly infectious. Children usually acquire infection indirectly, through parenteral route from hepatitis B virus-contaminated blood transfusion. It may also be transmitted through sharing of contaminated hypodermic needles used for multiple doses of injection and shaving razors. Adolescent boys and girls may acquire the virus through sexual contact with an infected partner. Both anicteric and icteric manifestations are characterstic. Rash, arthralgia and urticaria are usually present. It may be confused with rheumatoid arthritis. The symptoms last for less than a week. This symptom complex is seen in 2 percent of patients, usually in early incubation period.

Nevertheless, personal hygiene and environmental sanitation are key factor for prevention and control of all communicable as well as non-communicable diseases, and looking forward to prevent about Hepatitis C in future.

Union tourism minister attends symposium on business, logistics management in Thailand

Nay Pyi Taw, 27 July— Union Minister for Hotels and Tourism U Htay Aung attended an international symposium on business and logistics management in Thailand, which was held at Mae Fah Luang University in Chiang Rai, Thailand, from 23 to 24 July.

The International Symposium Next Generation ASEAN+3 Connectivity “Trends and Opportunities in Business and Logistics Management” was aimed to provide a forum for scholars, students, entrepreneurs, government sector and private sector from neighbouring countries to share and gain experience in the issues of international business management, border trade and logistics and supply chain management in ASEAN+3 countries.

At the event, U Htay Aung discussed GDP increase of Myanmar, the World Travel and Tourism Council’s tourism development report on the country.

The conference was attended by Deputy Prime Minister Mr. Pridiyathorn Devakula, international experts, scholars and students.—MINA
MEHL to buy F&N stake in MBL for K500 billion

Yangon, 27 July — Myanma Economic Holdings Limited (MEHL) said recently it welcomes an independent valuer’s report ordered by an arbitral tribunal appointed to settle its dispute with Fraser & Neave (F&N) over the latter’s 55% stake in Myanmar Brewery Limited (MBL).

The independent valuer estimated the fair value of F&N’s 55% stake in MBL to be 500 billion kyat.

U Nay Wynn, Director of MEHL, said, “The conclusion of the valuation takes us one step nearer to a final closure of an unexpectedly long drawn process to protect our rights under the Joint Venture Agreement (JVA).

In October 2014, the arbitral tribunal allowed MEHL’s claim and ordered F&N to sell its 55% stake in MBL to MEHL or its nominee at a valuation to be determined by an independent third party valuer.

While the latest valuation differs from the one carried out in 2013. MEHL noted that the 2013 valuation was undertaken by a third party in accordance with the provisions in the JVA and was also affirmed by an independent international accounting firm.

MEHL said it disagrees with F&N’s position that the sale should take place in US dollars at the 2013 exchange rate.

Flood victims receive emergency supplies

The village-tract had inundated by floodwaters caused by heavy rain on 16 July. While meeting with flood victims in Kathitkon village, the minister called for farmlands to be ploughed when flooding recedes.

Township medical officer Dr Khin Maung Than spoke about common diseases in rainy season and treatment for snake-bite patients.

Township IPRD

Electrification works under way in rural townships

Mandalay, 27 July—Mandalay Region Minister for Electricity and Industry U Kyaw Myint and officials of Mandalay Electricity Supply Corporation at the weekend inspected substitution of underground cables and wooden lamp-posts in Aungmyethazan Township. The minister and party held discussions with local authorities on installation of five 315-KVA transformers at the main corners of roads in Chanayethazan and Ma-haungmye townships to enable local residents to use electricity.

In Patheingyi Township, the minister met with members of the Bantkwe village electrification committee to discuss progress of the village electricity supply project. —Maung Pyi Thu (Mandalay)

Officials inspect maintenance of Thaungyin River’s retaining walls

Myawady, 27 July—Local authorities manage maintenance of retaining walls for prevention of landslides along Thaungyin River in Myawady,Kayin State.

Myawady District’s deputy commissioner U Lwin Ko Oo and township officials on Sunday viewed waterways, maintenance of retaining walls and banks of the river by boat. —Hein Lin Aung (IPRD)
Mitsubishi Motors to end US vehicle production in late November

Tokyo, 27 July — Mitsubishi Motors Corp said on Monday it will end motor vehicle production in the United States at the end of this November.

The Japanese automaker said it will consolidate its vehicle production at its plant in Okazaki, Aichi Prefecture, in central Japan, while seeking a buyer for its Illinois plant.

The company’s board of directors will sign off on the plan on Thursday.

Mitsubishi Motors manufactures the “Outlander Sport” sport utility vehicles at the Illinois plant for the North American, Russian and Latin American markets.

In 2014, slightly more than 60,000 vehicles were produced at the plant, roughly half of its annual output capacity of some 120,000 units, amid lack-luster sales in North America and a sharp fall in sales in Russia.

Chinese scientists discover therapy to child obesity

BEIJING, 27 July — A research team led by Chinese scientists have discovered dietary modulation of gut microbiota can alleviate both genetic and simple obesity in children.

The findings of the team, led by Zhao Liping with Shanghai Jiaotong University, Yin Aihua with the Guangdong Province children’s hospital, and Tang Huiru with Chinese Academy of Sciences, have been published in EBioMedicine, a renowned medical journal co-sponsored by Cell and The Lancet in July.

The team identified bacterial genomes specifically for producing obesity-related metabolites, and said an improved gut microbiota can significantly help to treat genetic obesity such as Prader-Willi Syndrome (PWS).

Beginning in childhood, PWS affected kids develop an insatiable appetite, leading to chronic overeating and obesity.

The scientists used a diet therapy with beneficial gut bacteria on trial patients and found considerable diminished appetite, weight loss and improved health conditions on the patients.

The paper concluded dysbiosis of gut microbiota is highly related with both genetic and simple obesity in children, implicating dietary modulation of gut microbiota potentially effective treatment method.

Sydney, 27 July — Patients with diabetes are much more likely to develop tuberculosis in the tropics than the general population, Australian scientists revealed on Monday.

A 20-year James Cook University (JCU) study, which looked at data from the Townsville Hospital in northern Queensland from 1995-2014, has found the weakened immune systems of diabetics make them more vulnerable to tuberculosis (TB) than the general population.

Director of Microbiology at Townsville Hospital, Dr Robert Norton said on Monday people with diabetes suffered from “immune dysregulation” and were more prone to contracting the deadly infection.

“You can have TB your whole life and not know it, but if you suffer from diabetes and your immune system is not functioning well, it can flare up,” Norton said.

The study, published in American Journal of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene, showed that while the overall numbers were lower, the proportion of diabetics developing TB was the same as in less-developed countries.

Scientists had assumed that higher standards of care for diabetic patients in Australia and the relative rarity of TB meant the was not as strong a link between the two ailments.

Norton said the findings support the view that there must be screening of patients with diabetes for latent TB in any setting.

“AstraZeneca sells rare cancer drug to Sanofi for up $300 million

LONDON, 27 July— AstraZeneca, under pressure from falling sales of older drugs, is selling a medicine for a rare type of cancer to Sanofi as it continues a drive to raise cash by divesting certain assets.

Sanofi’s rare diseases unit Genzyme will pay AstraZeneca up to $300 million for global rights to Caprelsa, including an upfront payment of $165 million and further milestone payments based on the drug’s performance of up to $135 million, the companies said on Monday.

Caprelsa is currently sold in 28 countries for treating medullary thyroid carcinoma and had sales last year of $48 million.—Reuters

Patients with diabetes more likely to develop tuberculosis: Australian study

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Norton said the findings support the view that there must be screening of patients with diabetes for latent TB in any setting.

“It is especially important because the prevalence of type two diabetes is increasing at a very significant pace,” Norton said.

Tuberculosis, which commonly affects the lungs, remains the leading cause of bacterial death worldwide despite improvements in sanitation and antibiotic coverage over the last century.

It is estimated that if diabetes could be reduced by 35 percent globally, 1.5 million TB deaths and 7.8 million infections could be prevented.—Xinhua

Asian shares broadly softer as Fed looms

SYDNEY, 27 July — Asian shares began the week on a plaintive note amid losses on Wall Street and worries over China, while investors braced for a Federal Reserve meeting that might take another small step toward lifting US interest rates.

Japan’s Nikkei slipped 0.5 percent, while MSCI’s broadest index of Asia-Pacific shares outside Japan lost 0.8 percent.

In China, the CSI300 index, CSCI03 of the largest listed companies in Shanghai and Shenzhen fell 1 percent, with sentiment still soured by a poor PMI survey on manufacturing. Australia’s main index fell 0.2 percent as mining stocks struggled with the slump in global commodity prices.

Both copper and the Thomson Reuters CRB commodities index hit their lowest in six years. Early Monday, copper futures were off 0.1 percent.

The Fed’s policy-setting Open Market Committee meets on Tuesday and Wednesday and is considered highly unlikely to lift interest rates just yet, though it does still seem set on a move in September.

“We expect Fed voters to pull the trigger in September, but for the path to interest rate normalization to be a long one given the global risk profile, the lack of inflationary pressure, and concerns over what moving too quickly may do to asset markets, particularly the dollar, and the wider economy,” said analysts at Australia and New Zealand Banking Group.

Expectations of a hike have slowly pushed up US Treasury yields and widened the dollar’s premium over the euro. Yields on two-year US notes pay around 90 basis points more than German debt, near the widest since early 2007.

A videographer films an electronic board showing the Japan’s Nikkei average (Top R) and related indexes at the Tokyo Stock Exchange (TSE) in Tokyo, Japan, on 9 July, 2015.—Reuters

The single currency was a shade firmer at $1.0990 on Monday, but not far from recent lows around $1.0810.

The dollar was 0.1 percent lower against a basket of currencies at 97.146. It was steady on the yen at 123.68 having spent the past few sessions wandering aimlessly between 123.54 and 124.48.

A first estimate of US economic growth for last quarter is due on Thursday and is expected to show a rebound of 2.7 percent annualized, from the first quarter’s weather-induced contraction.
Apple Watch to be sold at Best Buy stores from August

New York, 27 July — Apple Watch will be available at stores of Best Buy Co Inc, the largest US consumer electronics chain, starting 7 August.

The Apple Watch and Apple Watch Sport models will be sold at more than 300 Best Buy stores in time for the holiday shopping season, a spokeswoman for Apple Inc said.

“Customers love Apple Watch, and we are thrilled to begin offering it at Best Buy,” she said in an email.

Apple Watches are seen on display at the Apple store on 5th Avenue in the Manhattan borough of New York City, on 21 July, 2015.—Reuters

Facebook partnership a boon for video technology firm Bidalgo

Tel Aviv, 27 July — Facebook marketing partner Bidalgo targets a tripling in sales in 2015 as its new technology to automate the process of making personalized advertising benefits from Facebook’s growing share of the video market.

Facebook is becoming a leader in the video market as users prefer to watch video ads over static images, said Peleg Israel, general manager of Bidalgo’s Israeli operations.

Videos are expensive to make and an advertiser usually makes only one or two versions. The Bidalgo executive said his company’s technology, called AdRe-Genera- tion, can automatically turn one video into as many versions as needed, so that targeted audiences will see images they respond to most.

For example, a German audience might see a German flag in one video while users in France will see their flag.

The product should account for as much as half of Bidalgo’s revenue in the coming year,” and around the line much more than that,” Israeld said. He said automated videos will give Facebook an advantage over Google’s YouTube, as Facebook’s core technology can identify users “in the most accurate way”, Google remains the leader in long-form video but is facing mounting competition from Facebook in the short-form market for videos that run up to several minutes.

Facebook has said it gets over 4 billion daily video views with more than 75 percent of that on mobile.

IHS senior advertising analyst Eleni Maroulidou said the video is the next big project for Facebook, which needs video to lure branded advertising dollars away from TV. Google’s YouTube, as Facebook’s core technology can identify users “in the most accurate way”, Google remains the leader in long-form video but is facing mounting competition from Facebook in the short-form market for videos that run up to several minutes.

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“Dynamic creative ads are a new, experimental way of providing video advertising,” she said, adding that Facebook needs to partner with or acquire companies with this type of technology.

“The fact that they (Bidalgo) have dynamic ads which change based on gender or location can be a great asset,” she said.

A Google spokesman said growth in viewing time on YouTube is up 60 percent in the latest quarter, its fastest growth in two years, and that for the online video market to grow more players are needed.—Reuters

Apple launches 2 satellites for independent navigation system

Xichang, (Sichuan), 27 July — China successfully launched two satellites for its indigenous global navigation and positioning network at 8:29 pm Beijing Time Saturday, the launch centre said.

The two satellites were the 18th and 19th for the Beidou Navigation Satellite system, China’s homegrown navigation system.

They were sent into their preset orbits by a Long March-3B/Expedition-1 carrier rocket 3.5 hours after the launch, the centre said.

Expedition-1, or Yaunzheng-1, is an independent aircraft installed on the carrier rocket with the ability of sending one or more spacecraft into different orbits in space. The successful launch marks another solid step in building Beidou into a navigation system with global coverage, the centre said.

The two satellites will join the 17th one, which was launched in late March, in the mission of testing a new type of navigation signaling and inter-satellite links, and also provide navigation services as a part of the network, the centre said.

This launch was the 206th flight of China’s Long March carriers.

China launched the first satellite for Beidou in 2000. The Beidou system began providing positioning, navigation, timing and short message services to civilian users in China and surrounding areas in the Asia-Pacific in December 2012.

The system has been gradually put into use in extended sectors including transportation, weather forecasting, marine fishing industry, forestry and telecommunications.—Xinhua

Canon cuts outlook as weak camera sales hit second-quarter profit

Tokyo, 27 July — Japan’s Canon Inc cut its earnings outlook for the full year and reported a 16 percent fall in quarterly profit as consumers, increasingly in the habit of taking photos with their smartphones, bought fewer compact digital cameras.

The world’s largest camera maker said on Monday its second-quarter net profit fell to 68 billion yen ($552 million) compared with 81 billion yen a year earlier. Analysts on average expected 65 billion yen, according to Thomson Reuters data.

The firm said it now expects full-year profit of 245 billion yen rather than the 255 billion it forecast three months ago.

Canon has been trying to offset weak growth in cameras with investments in new businesses. Earlier this year it offered to buy video surveillance firm AXIS AB for $2.7 billion.

“Despite firm sales in Japan, interchangeable-lens digital cameras continued to face severe conditions in other regions while sales volume for digital compact cameras decreased in most regions compared with the same period of the previous year,” Canon said in a statement.

It also said the weak yen was inflating operating costs. It expects the dollar to trade at an average of 125 yen for the rest of the year instead of 120 yen forecast three months ago.

Shares of Canon fell 0.75 percent ahead of the earnings release, compared with a 0.95 percent fall in the broader market.

13 new spider species discovered in Australian tropics

Sydney, 27 July — A scientific expedition into remote Australian dry tropics on Queensland’s Cape York Peninsula has discovered 13 new spider species, it was reported on Monday.

Researchers, teachers and indigenous rangers spent 10 days probing forests and soil in a largely unsurveyed area in a project sponsored by the government, mining company BHP and the Earthwatch Australia environment group.

The team used abalone knives to dig into hard earth to find silk-lined burrows.

A spokesman for the project told AAP the 13 new spider types included a brush-footed trapdoor spider and the newly named mouse spider, which lives in a stockling-shaped web. Then there were also new species of tarantulas.—Xinhua
Earthquake of 6.9 magnitude strikes Alaska’s Aleutians

SYDNEY, 27 July — An earthquake measuring magnitude 6.9 struck the Aleutian Islands in the US state of Alaska late on Sunday, the US Geological Survey (USGS) said. The quake struck 100 km (60 miles) southwest of Nikolai, the USGS said, but there were no immediate reports of casualties or damage. The Pacific Tsunami Warning Centre said there was no tsunami threat.—Reuters

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV UBC CYPRUS VOY NO (59)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV UBC CYPRUS VOY NO (59) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 27.7.2015 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.P. where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV VEGA KAPPA VOY NO (1533)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV VEGA KAPPA VOY NO (1533) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 27.7.2015 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.P. where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

S Korea removes last person from quarantine over MERS

SEOUL, 27 July — South Korean health authorities said on Monday they lifted the at-home quarantine for a suspected case of infection with the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome coronavirus, leaving no one subject to isolation over MERS for the first time in over two months. The South Korean Health and Welfare Ministry said that as of Monday, 12 people remain hospitalized for MERS but only one of them tested positive for the coronavirus. With no new case of the disease reported in more than three weeks, the South Korean government is planning to tell its people Tuesday that the MERS outbreak has effectively ended, according to Yonhap News Agency. Based on the World Health Organization’s standards that call for a four-week waiting period after the last MERS patient fully recovers, the formal declaration of the end of the outbreak in South Korea is expected to be made in late August. Since the first case of MERS infection was confirmed on 20 May in the country, 186 people were found to be infected, 36 of them died and a total of about 16,000 people had been subject to quarantine.—Kyodo News

People visit the Duanqiao Bridge in the West Lake scenic spot in Hangzhou, capital of east China’s Zhejiang Province, on 27 July, 2015. Artificial spray is set to cool down the temperature around the Duanqiao Bridge in Hangzhou as from Monday.

XINHUA
Weather Report

**BAY INERENCE:** According to the observations at (13:30) h.m.t this afternoon, the depression over Northeast Bay of Bengal remains almost stationary and centered at about (90) miles West-Southwest of Chittagong (Bangladesh), (140) miles West-Northwest of Maungdaw (Myanmar) and (190) miles Northwest of Sittwe (Myanmar). Monsoon is strong to Vigorous in the Andaman Sea and Bay of Bengal.

**FORECAST VALID UNTIL EVENING OF THE 28th July, 2015:**
Rain or thundershowers will be fairly widespread in Kachin State and widespread in the remaining Regions and States with likelihood of regionally heavy falls in Lower Sagaing, Magway and Bago Regions, Chin, Rakhae, Kayin and Mon States and isolated heavy falls in Upper Sagaing, Mandalay, Yangon and Ayeyawady Regions. Degree of certainty is (100%).

**STATE OF THE SEA:** Occasional squalls with rough sea will be experienced in Myanmar Coasts. Surface wind speed in squalls may reach (40 - 45) m.p.h.

**OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS:**
Continuation of strong monsoon.

**FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 28th July, 2015:**
Some rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

**FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 28th July, 2015:**
Some rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

**FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 28th July, 2015:**
Some rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

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Japanese man finishes 10,000 km north-south Africa trek

Masahito Yoshida from Tottori, western Japan, expresses his joy upon reaching his goal at the Cape of Good Hope in South Africa on 19 July, 2015, after trekking with a two-wheeled cart over 10,000 kilometers across 10 African countries. Yoshida, 34, began the trip from the Egyptian port city of Alexandria in September 2014. He completed a round-the-globe trip across Europe, Asia, North America and Australia in the same manner in 2013.—**Kyodo News**
**Entertainment**

**Japanese fans flock to Seoul hotel where S Korean actor Bae set to wed**

SEUL, 27 July — More than 100 people, mostly Japanese women, gathered outside a hotel in Seoul where a wedding ceremony for South Korean actor Bae Yong-joon and actress Park Soo-jin is set to take place on Monday evening.

Avid fans of Bae started arriving in the morning amid rain in the hope for a glimpse of the 42-year-old actor, whose wedding is scheduled to be a closed-door event.

The crowd cheered as a car carrying Bae entered the venue shortly after 1 pm, but some let out a sigh after it passed as the actor was barely visible to many of the fans. Before his arrival, Michiko Asada, a 57-year-old woman from Niigata Prefecture, had said, “He’s a courteous person so he might open his car window and wave at us.”

Kazuko Yamamoto, a 67-year-old woman from Tokyo who has been a fan of Bae since watching him in the TV drama “Winter Sonata,” said, “He is like family so I am happy that he is finally getting married.”

She smiled as she expressed her appreciation toward Park, 29, Bae’s affectionately known as “Yon-sama” in Japan, helped spark the Korean cultural wave in Asia and other parts of the world with his starring role in “Winter Sonata,” which originally aired in South Korea in 2002.

**Jennifer Lopez hosts star-studded birthday bash**

LOS ANGELES, 27 July — Pop star Jennifer Lopez rang in her 46th birthday by celebrating with friends including Thalia And French Montana during a star-studded bash.

The “On The Floor” hitmaker marked her special day on 24 July and she kept the celebrations going on Saturday at the 1OAK club in the Hamptons, New York, reported Ace Showbiz.

Lopez proudly showed off her curvy figure in a black cutout dress with an open back and sheer paneling, as she entered the party hand-in-hand with her on-off dancer boyfriend, Casper Smart.

Guests Thalia and Montana showed off snaps from inside the party on Instagram, sharing pictures of themselves alongside the birthday girl, who reportedly briefly took over for the DJ, and spent most of the night on the dance floor.

Other stars in attendance included British pop star Natasha Bedingfield and rapper Fat Joe, while Lopez’s longtime manager Benny Medina paid a special tribute to his friend by bringing out a large cake for Lopez and giving her a touching toast. — PTI

**Tom Cruise says ‘Top Gun’ sequel ‘would be fun’**

LONDON, 27 July — Hollywood star Tom Cruise says he would be open to reprising his 1980s role as US Navy pilot Maverick in a possible sequel to action drama “Top Gun.”

The 1986 blockbuster turned Cruise into a major box office draw. Last month, film producer and Skydance media company Chief Executive David Ellison was quoted in media reports as saying work on a “Top Gun 2” screenplay was underway.

“It would be fun. I would like to get back into those jobs,” Cruise told Reuters at the London premiere of his latest action film “Mission: Impossible – Rogue Nation” on Saturday night. “It would have to be practical. I don’t want any CGI jets. I want to shoot it like how we shot the first one.”

Cruise, known for performing his own stunts, returns to the silver screen as agent Ethan Hunt in the fifth installment of the “Mission: Impossible” action films.

The 53-year-old has performed a range of stunts for the role, such as swinging off buildings and leaping off skyscrapers. In this move, he holds onto the side of a plane as it takes off.

“Mission: Impossible – Rogue Nation” opens in cinemas next week.— Reuters

**Whitney Houston’s daughter, Bobbi Kristina Brown, dead at 22**

ATLANTA, 27 July — Bobbi Kristina Brown, the only child of late singer Whitney Houston, died on Sunday at the age of 22, some six months after suffering irreversible brain damage in an incident at her suburban Atlanta home, her family said in a statement.

Brown, whose father is R&B singer Bobby Brown, was found face down and unresponsive in a bathtub in her home by her partner and a friend on 31 January. She was moved by her family to hospice care on 24 June.

“She is finally at peace in the arms of God,” her family said. “We want to again thank everyone for their tremendous amount of love and support during these last few months.”

As news of her death became public, media crews and some fans gathered on a darkened cul de sac in the Atlanta suburb of Duluth, where orange street lamps illuminated the ivy-covered brick nursing home where Brown died.

“We just wanted to show our respect,” said Ali Joyner, 15, who persuaded her mom and a neighbour to drive the 20 miles from their home in Dulaca, Ga. “I just loved her mom, Whitney. And Bobbi is part of that.”

Her death came three years after her Gram- my-winning mother, who had battled substance abuse, drowned in a bathtub in a Beverly Hills hotel at age 48. Authorities said cocaine abuse and heart disease contributed to Houston’s 11 February, 2012 death.

Bobbi Kristina Brown inherited her mother’s fortune.

A $10 million civil lawsuit filed last month accuses Bobbi Brown’s partner, Nick Gordon, of causing her life-threatening injuries and of stealing from her bank account while she was in a coma. No one has been charged in the case.

Bobbi Kristina Brown was an aspiring singer who began performing with her mother as early as 1999, singing duets of “My Love is Your Love.” In 2003 they recorded another duet of “Little Drummer Boy” for a holiday album.

Her father is a Grammy Award winner who started his career as frontman for the R&B group New Edition. Houston and Bobby Brown both struggled with substance abuse and divorced when their daughter was 14. Houston described their 15-year marriage, which ended in 2007, as drug- and alcohol-fueled.

The couple’s tempestuous relationship and often erratic behavior was chronicled in the short-lived television series, “Being Bobby Brown.” — Reuters

**Big B impressed with granddaughter’s piano skill**

MUMBAI, 27 July — Megastar Amitabh Bachchan says he is proud of his granddaughter Navya Naveli Nanda’s musical talent and is impressed to see the youngster play the piano with such finesse.

Navya Naveli is the daughter of the 72-year-old actor’s first born Shweta and her Delhi-based businessman husband Nikhil Nanda.

“She is finally at peace. The life to witness the gift of a grand daughter, of her accomplishments, of her talents... That is more than what many wish and possess.”

“And yes the inner joy of admiration for Navya as she surprises us all with her hidden talent... The music and the keys of the piano, untrained, unrehearsed.”

“Just performing with the mind and what has remained with her somewhere, astonishing.” Bachchan posted on his blog. The actor also shared several pictures in which he is seen sitting alongside Navya Naveli, who is playing the piano at her grandfather’s home.

“Piano is the little space in my small little room, a space that I occupy on occasion... spend time with keys black and white... life is made of just these two they say... but there are so many other colours in it, and they bring joy and a brightness in us as well,” Bachchan wrote. — PTI
Thompson wins Meijer LPGA Classic by one shot

LANCASTER, (PA), 27 July — Lexi Thompson surged past overnight leader Lizette Salas and held off a last-day charge by Gerina Piller to win her fifth career LPGA title on Sunday. Four strokes behind fellow American Salas heading into the final round, the long-hitting Thompson birdied five of the first eight holes on the way to a six-under-par 65 in bright sunshine at Blythefield Country Club.

Though she was briefly caught at the top by a red-hot Piller with eight holes to play, Thompson picked up two more shots over the closing stretch, along with a bogey on 17, to post an 18-under-par total of 266. American Piller, bidding for her first win on the LPGA Tour, closed with an eight-birdie 64 to tie for second with Salas (70). The 20-year-old Thompson, who will climb from 13th to sixth when the new world rankings are issued on Monday, earned a winner’s cheque of $300,000 for her first LPGA victory of the season.

“It feels amazing,” Thompson said after tapping in a two-footer to par the last. “It still hasn’t really hit me yet because everything happened so fast. “I was just trying to focus on my own game and having fun on the green shots and I think that’s what helped me shoot six under today.”

“It’s definitely momentum going into the next week being a major,” said Thompson, who left the course after her post-round interviews for Detroit Metro Airport to board a plane for Scotland and next week’s Women’s British Open at Turnberry.

Thompson, who won her first major title at last year’s Kraft Nabisco Championship, made a sizzling start to the final round with birdies at the first, fourth and fifth to cut Salas’ overnight lead to just one shot.

When Salas bogeyed the par-four seventh, she dropped back into a three-way tie at the top with Thompson and Piller, who had reeled off five birdies in the first eight holes. Salas’ challenge effectively ended with another bogey at the 10th, and Thompson took control of the tournament with further birdies at the 10th, 11th and 15th. South Korea’s Ryu So-yeon (66) and American Kris Tamulis (68) finished joint fourth at 15-under while Korean world number one Park In-bee tumbled back into a tie for 44th after closing with a 76.—Reuters

France plans extension of green energy tax

PARIS, 27 July — The French government is considering a reform of the tax levied on power bills to fund renewable energy that would see it extended to natural gas and road fuels, a source close to the matter said on Sunday.

“A reform of the CSPE tax is planned, its basis will be widened to gas and road fuels,” the source told Reuters, confirming an earlier report by the Journal du Dimanche newspaper.

Citing sources at the energy ministry, the paper said the government wanted to cut the CSPE tax, which accounts for about 15 percent of households’ electricity bills and spread the 6 billion euros it costs annually to fossil fuels.

The source said it would take the form of a new tax that would contribute directly to the state’s budget. The current CSPE tax is levied by utility EDF through power bills.

The source added that the reform would be introduced in the 2016 budget bill in September.

No one at the energy ministry was available for comment.—Reuters

US companies pledge financial, political support for UN climate deal

WASHINGTON, 27 July — Thirteen big name American companies on Monday were to announce $140 billion in low-carbon investments to lend support to global climate change efforts in Paris in December, the White House said. Companies including General Motors (GMN), Bank of America (BACN), Microsoft (MSFT) and Coca Cola (KO), were to join US Secretary of State John Kerry at the White House to launch the American Business Act on Climate Pledge to support the administration as it tries to secure a climate agreement.

Under the pledge, the companies announced measures they would take internally to reduce their own greenhouse gas emissions and deploy more clean energy. In addition to announcing a collective $140 billion in low-carbon investments, the companies announced they would bring at least 1,600 megawatts of new renewable energy on line, reduce water use intensity by 15 percent, purchase 100 percent renewable energy, and target zero net deforestation in their supply chains.

United Nations climate change negotiators have called on the private sector to bolster public sector finance to aid efforts globally to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, especially in developing countries.

Securing long-term climate finance is seen as a crucial step for a deal in Paris.

The UN established a Green Climate Fund in 2010 in which developed countries committed to raise over $10 billion for four years from 2015. The fund is the main vehicle to help countries meet their long-term goal to raise $100 billion a year to support developing countries by 2020. But government financial pledges are at the mercy of domestic politics and competing priorities.

Apple (AAPL), one of the 13 companies, pledged to bring nearly 300 MW of renewable energy online in five states and the Siachen region in China. Berkshire Hathaway (BRK.A) announced it will retire 75 percent of its coal-fueled generating capacity in Nevada by 2019.

The White House said it will announce additional company pledges later this year.—Reuters

Senior British lord quits post after drugs video

LONDON, 27 July — A senior British lord quit his post on Sunday after a police investigation after a tabloid newspaper released a video showing him semi-naked and snorting white powder through a straw while partying with two women.

John Buttfield Sewel stood down from his post as deputy speaker of Britain’s unelected House of Lords after The Sun on Sunday released the footage and accused him of using cocaine and of hiring prostitutes.

Sewel, 69, who is married, could not be immediately reached for comment. Baroness Frances D’Souza, the upper chamber’s speaker, said Sewel had decided to resign as deputy speaker before he would be investigated by police. She did not say if he confirmed or denied the allegations. The im- broglio comes as Britain’s politicians are still trying to regain voter trust after a far-reaching 2009 expenses scandal, and could fuel support for former fringe parties who have styled themselves as anti-establishment. Ironically, Sewel’s senior position in the House of Lords tasked him with ensuring fellow lords behaved properly. Packed with political appointees and hereditary peers, its role is to scrutinise government legislation, but some politicians on the left believe it is an elitist anachronism and should be abolished.

Sewel’s behavior was “shocking and unacceptable,” D’Souza said in a statement.—Reuters
**Man City striker Jovetic to have Inter Milan medical**

London, 27 July — Manchester City striker Stevan Jovetic will undergo a medical at Inter Milan this week ahead of a proposed transfer to the San Siro, the Italian Serie A club said on Sunday.

Inter did not specify whether Jovetic would sign on loan or on a permanent basis but British media reported that the 25-year-old Montenegro international will join on a two-year loan deal.

"Jovertic will arrive in Milan tomorrow (Monday) before undergoing a medical on Tuesday," Inter said on their Twitter page. Jovetic joined City from Fiorentina in 2013 for 22 million pounds ($34.12 million) but the forward has struggled with injuries and scored only 11 goals in 43 games. Inter, coached by former City manager Roberto Mancini, finished eighth in Serie A last season.

**Mexico beat Jamaica for CONCACAF Gold Cup**

Philadelphia, 27 July — Mexico spoiled Jamaica’s first trip to the CONCACAF Gold Cup Final with a dominant 3-1 triumph on Sunday that gave them a record fifth title.

Agregated by Hector and finished it himself. In the 61st minute, Hector missed a chance to clear from in front of the goal and that led to Peralta’s score.

Darren Mattocks scored Jamaica’s only goal in the 80th minute, scoring for his second successive game. Despite the defeat, Jamaica remained proud of their accomplishment. “It’s tough but I couldn’t be more proud of my team right now,” said Jamaica’s Giles Barnes. “We have a lot to look forward to in the future.”

Mexico reached the final on some controversial penalty calls in their semi-final victory over Panama, but they proved their worth decisively in the final. — Reuters