Vice President U Nyan Tun comforts flood victims in Bago Region

As Chairman of the National Natural Disaster Management Committee, Vice President U Nyan Tun on Friday gave support and encouragement to flood victims.

Farm assistance urgently needed: Rice Federation

By Ye Myint

Yangon, 15 Aug—Distribution of agricultural materials is as important as aid in restoring the livelihoods of flood-hit farming communities, an official of the Myanmar Rice Federation said Saturday.

“Paddy strains and urea fertilizers must be made available to the affected farmers so that their farmlands damaged by recent flooding will be rehabilitated,” MRF vice-president Dr Soe Tun told The Global New Light of Myanmar.

It would cost roughly US $50 million to rehabilitate 500,000 acres, he estimated.

According to figures released Friday by the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation, torrential rains in June, July and August flooded 1,413,270 acres of farmlands across the country’s 13 states and regions, with 145,277 acres having since been replanted. The total area of farmland damaged or destroyed was 1,350,372 acres.

Paddy strains and power tillers have been delivered to areas where flooding has receded, with deliveries to be expanded as weather conditions allow, the ministry said.

The MRF official said it was uncertain how the flooding would impact the country’s target of exporting 2 million tons of rice in 2015.

“It is too early to say whether recent flooding could severely affect the country’s rice export target for this year, as it depends on the extent of farming recovery efforts after the flooding,” Dr Soe Tun said.

While some affected farmers have resumed working the land with the help of the government, many are still waiting for the floodwater to recede.

In Bago Region, some 376,000 acres of farmland have been swamped, with only 387 acres replanted so far.

“We want to begin farming recovery as quickly as possible after the water recedes as our livelihoods depend on agriculture,” a local farmer said.—GNLM

Ministry provides emergency feedstuff for animals

Yangon, 15 Aug — The Ministry of Livestock, Fisheries and Rural Development on Saturday donated 14,355 tons of feedstuffs worth K4.31 million for farm animals in Ayeyawady Region and 6 tons of feedstuff worth K1.56 million for those in Bago Region.

The ministry has provided medicines and feedstuff for animals in flood-affected areas through its rescue team. Members of the public wishing to pledge a donation can do so by calling Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Department Director Dr Soe Win on 067 408175 or 09 4920 8725.—MNA

Family gives K100 million to Rakhine flood victims

Yangon, 15 Aug — A local family on Saturday donated K100 million for flood victims in Minbya and MraukU of Rakhine State through U San Shwe Aung, permanent secretary of the Ministry of Border Affairs.

The donation ceremony took place at the Rakhine community hall at the eastern part of Shwedagon Pagoda in Yangon.

U San Shwe Aung spoke about the current situation in the state and rehabilitation programmes, before Rakhine National Affairs Minister U Zaw Aye Maung thanked the donor family.—MNA

REHABILITATION

Flooded paddy fields replanted in Rakhine State

Yangon, 15 Aug — Torrential rain from June to August has destroyed 217,246 acres of paddy fields in 15 townships in Rakhine State, according to government sources.

The government delivered 29,108 baskets of paddy seeds, with 118,517 acres replanted so far.

U San Shwe Aung, permanent secretary of the Ministry of Border Affairs, accepts cash assistance for flood victims donated by donor Daw Poe Phyu and family.—MNA
YANGON, 14 Aug—The Government of Japan decided to extend Emergency Grant Aid of 2.6 million USD (approximately 325 million JPY) to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar in response to the flood disaster. This will be the largest contribution yet by the Government of Japan towards ongoing flood relief efforts in Myanmar. Through this aid, emergency humanitarian assistance in such areas as food, water and sanitation, shelter, and non-food items will be extended in cooperation through the World Food Programme (WFP)(1.3 million USD), the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF)(0.65 million USD), the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)(0.4 million USD) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)(0.25 million USD). The WFP is also allotting a portion of the 8.33 million USD worth of previously announced food assistance by the Japanese Government for flood relief efforts. This assistance through the four organizations is decided in addition to the emergency relief goods already delivered to the Government of Myanmar from the Government of Japan on Wednesday, August 5, which include 6,000 blankets, 1,000 sleeping pads and 90 plastic sheets. YANGON, 15 Aug—A ceremony to donate emergency supplies to flood victims was held at Ayeyawady Region, on 14 August. The foundation donated five power-tillers, 500 bags of paddy seeds, 50 bags of rice, clothes, purified drinking water, instant foods and tents. Win Bo (Township IPRD) Deputy Managing Director of Htoo Company Headquarters U Tin Maung Toe presented the supplies to Township Administrator U Phyo Min Htaik and officials. The foundation has recently received a donation of K400 million from donors to aid flood victims. The group’s Deputy Managing Director U Tin Maung Toe said, “The group’s mission is to support those in need.” The donation was made by the Myanmar-China Oil and Natural Gas Pipeline Company.” The company plans to donate K100 million for Myanmar’s flood victims. It has donated K80 million for those in Magway and Mandalay regions and Rakhine State, and plans to donate K20 more million for victims in Shan State. IDPs receive aid and cash assistance MOHNYIN, 15 Aug—Donors from Mohnyin Township provided rice, cooking oil and cash assistance Friday to 247 internally displaced persons who are being accommodated at Saint Patrick Church in Aungthabye Ward, Mohnyin, Kachin State. The IDPs have been taking shelter at the church since 19 March 2012 for security reasons. The well-wishers presented rice and cooking oil to each IDP household and K3,000 each to 122 school-age children. On that day, they donated aid worth a total K1.03 million to the IDPs. YUNNAN PROVINCE sends second relief convoy MANDALAY, 14 Aug—A second convoy of 12 vehicles carrying relief aid for Myanmar flood victims from China’s Yunnan Province arrived in Mandalay on Friday. The director of the province’s Foreign Affairs Department led the convoy. The director and the Mandalay-based Chinese Consul-General handed over the relief aid to Deputy Director-General U Aung Khaing of the Relief and Resettlement Department. Yunnan Province donated 150 ready-made houses, 10,000 packages of purified drinking water bottles, 880 bulbs, 2,000 T-shirts, 50 tons of rice and 1,000 emergency life-jackets. Police and firefighters unloaded the relief aid from the vehicles. Nine Chinese construction technicians will demonstrate installation of parts for the ready-made houses—Tin Maung (Mandalay)
Vice President U Nyan Tun comforts flood victims in Bago Region

NAY PYI TAW, 15 Aug — As Chairman of the National Natural Disaster Management Committee, Vice President U Nyan Tun on Friday gave support and encouragement to flood victims in the district of Thayawady, Bago Region, officials said.

At three rescue camps in the district, the vice president spoke words of encouragement to the victims and provided them with medicines and supplies of food and drink.

After inspecting inundated plantations in a village, he was briefed by Bago Region Chief Minister U Nyan Win on damage caused by the recent floods, relief supplies, rescue camps and recovery measures.

Speaking at the briefing, Vice President U Nyan Tun pledged his government’s assistance to the formation of natural disaster management teams at region level, stressing the need to manage local and international financial assistance.

The vice president also inspected the general hospital in the township of Zeegone and comforted patients there. —MNA

Discipline, obedience keys for military: senior general

NAY PYI TAW, 15 Aug — Senior General Min Aung Hlaing addressed officers and trainees Saturday at the Defence Services Academy in PyinOoLwin, stressing discipline and obedience as the two most important characteristics of the military.

“A great leader was once a great follower,” the commander-in-chief told the officers, urging them to continue their military learning so as to build the Tatmadaw into a force trusted by the public.

He spoke of the defence services’ role in the country’s transition to democracy, and the prospects of signing a nationwide ceasefire agreement with ethnic armed groups.

He also pointed out the need for military personnel to help with recovery activities in disaster-hit areas.

After the meeting, Senior General Min Aung Hlaing inspected construction works at the academy’s football ground. He also went to the Defence Services Garment Factory in PyinOoLwin and gave instructions on production of high-quality clothing.—Myawady

Japanese insurer offers services in Thilawa SEZ

YANGON, 15 Aug — Japan’s Tokio Marine and Nichido Fire Insurance Co is ready to provide services to investors in the Thilawa Special Economic Zone, the company announced Saturday at an inauguration ceremony.

Yangon liaison office chief representative Mr Kunio Asoka said the company’s services include liability, marine and construction insurance.

The company, which provides both life and non-life insurance services in 50 countries, was granted an operating licence for Thilawa in May.

Mr Asoka said the firm plans to help develop the Myanmar’s insurance industry including providing technical assistance to local insurers.

Three Japanese insurance companies have received approval to operate in the SEZ, Deputy Finance Minister Dr Maung Maung Thein said.

The Ministry of Finance is planning to allow local companies to offer marine cargo insurance services as of this month, he added.

NGO to check voter lists for general election

YANGON, 15 Aug — The non-government People’s Alliance for Credible Elections (PACE) will scrutinize voter lists for the upcoming general election, the group’s executive director U Sai Ye Kyaw Swar Myint said Saturday.

The observation process will take place in the run-up to the election and on polling day, he said.

PACE will dispatch one long-term observer each to 110 towns, in addition to 2,000 short-term observers, he added.

Ye Kyaw/Myat Thandar
Sodium cyanide “possibly stored” in Tianjin blasted warehouse

TIANJIN, Aug. 15 — Specialists investigating Wednesday’s explosion in Tianjin believe sodium cyanide might have been stored at the site. At a press conference Saturday morning, Gao Huayou, vice head of the Tianjin bureau of work safety, said that chemicals stored in the warehouse possibly include sodium cyanide, but further confirmation is needed. The containers were not open, and some were not even registered.

Some local media reported earlier that Rui Hai Logistics, owner of the warehouse, had as much as 700 tonnes of sodium cyanide, but Gao said it was not yet verified. Measures have been taken to prevent secondary disasters, such as inviting sodium cyanide producers to help at the site, using hydrogen peroxide to reduce the amount of sodium cyanide, sending a taskforce to locate and measure the contaminated area and prevent its spread in sewage. Some other dangerous chemicals likely to be stored include potassium nitrate and ammonium nitrate.

N. Korea sets new time zone to be free from Japan’s colonial legacy

PYEONGYANG, Aug. 15 — North Korea on Saturday set its new standard time zone, turning its clocks back by 30 minutes, to mark the 70th anniversary of Korea’s liberation from Japanese rule at the end of World War II.

The shift to what it calls “Pyongyang time” started from half an hour after midnight, with the sound of a bell and whistles in the country’s capital. North Korea was in the same time zone as Japan and South Korea, nine hours ahead of Greenwich Mean Time. It was fixed during Japan’s colonization of the Korean Peninsula from 1910 to 1945. “I am happy as Korea can repress to have this Pyongyang time,” a North Korean woman in Pyongyang said. “At first, there may be some confusion but I think we will get used to it sooner or later.”

The new time zone may cause some troubles, especially in connection with Pyongyang’s relations with Seoul.—Kyodo News

Modi says pro-poor, stays quiet on big business in key address

NEW DELHI, Aug. 15 — Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, addressing the nation from the historic Red Fort during Independence Day celebrations in Delhi, India, August 15, 2015.—Reuters

Prime Minister Narendra Modi addresses the nation from the historic Red Fort during Independence Day celebrations in Delhi, India, August 15, 2015.—Reuters

Modi first mentioned “Make in India” project aimed at speeding up India’s industrial renaissance, and did not talk about weeks of opposition in parliament that have stalled his plans for pro-industry land and tax reforms. The government in June first mentioned “Make in India” on independence day a year ago, when he called on investors to set up in the country. That programme has had some successes, with Taiwan’s Foxconn unveiling a $5 billion investment last year.

But Modi’s party is facing a tightly fought election in the rural state of Bihar in a few weeks where the opposition is seeking to paint him as a “suit boot” politician whose policies damage the poor.

Repeatedly dubbing his face in the humid morning sunrise, and said one’s face was not more for villagers than any other government.

Modi, himself from a poor family, said he was considering incentives for manufacturers to create more jobs and promised to make hiring of blue-collar workers merit-based in a culture where it often depends on personal connections.

He coined the phrase “start-up India” in a pitch for more people to get jobs, even as violating the nation’s constitution.

Violent protests erupted following Abe’s speech, with participants observing a moment of silence at noon for the 2.3 million Japanese military personnel and civilians killed in the war, including in the U.S. atomic bombings and air raids on Japanese cities.—Kyodo News

Japan marks 70th anniversary of its surrender in WWII

Tokyo, Aug. 15 — Japan marked the 70th anniversary of its surrender in World War II on Saturday, with the emperor and empress, the prime minister, and about 5,000 relatives of the war dead attending a ceremony to mourn those killed.

This year’s commemoration comes at a time when Prime Minister Shinzo Abe’s administration is seeking to pass security bills to bring about a landmark shift in Japan’s defense posture.

In his speech at the ceremony, Abe made no mention of Japan’s wartime aggression in Asia for the third consecutive year, while pledging not to repeat the tragedy of war.

As we mark the 70th anniversary of the end of the war, we pledge ourselves never to repeat the horrors of war, to carve out the future of this country for the sake of the generation which is alive at this moment and for the generations of tomorrow, Abe said at the government-sponsored ceremony at the Nippon Budokan hall in Tokyo.

His speech also came a day after he reiterated, in a speech marking the 70th anniversary of the war’s end. Abe did not offer an apology himself.

Abe said in the statement that force should never be used again to settle international disputes.

Emperor Akihito also delivered a speech and used the expression “deep remorse” for the first time in his war memorial ceremony address.

Reflecting on our past and bearing in mind the feelings of deep remorse over the last war, I earnestly hope that the ravages of war will never be repeated,” he said.

At previous memorial services, including those of the past two years, Abe did not mention remorse for the suffering Japan caused to the people of many countries, particularly in Asia, during the war, as he had done at the annual event since 1994. At the last two ceremonies, he also did not pledge that Japan would never go to war.

The controversial security bills, now under Diet deliberation, would allow Japan to exercise the right to collective self-defense, or coming to the aid of the United States or other friendly nations under armed attack even if Japan itself is not attacked. If enacted, the legislation would mark a shift in Japan’s post-World War II exclusively defense-oriented security policy.

Constitutional scholars have criticized the bills as violating the nation’s war-renouncing Constitution and many citizens are concerned that the legislation would make it likelier for Japan to be involved in war again.

Following Abe’s speech, participants observed a moment of silence as the 2.3 million Japanese military personnel and civilians killed in the war, including in the U.S. atomic bombings and air raids on Japanese cities. —Kyodo News

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**UK royals criticize “dangerous” attempts to photograph young Prince George**

**London, 15 Aug —** The British royal family criticized the paparazzi on Friday for what it called their increasingly dangerous attempts to photograph the Queen’s two-year-old great-grandson Prince George.

Photographers have followed George and his nanny around London parks, have pursued cars leaving royal homes, and police have found one hidden in a blacked-out car outside a children’s play area visited by the prince, a statement said.

“In recent months, there have been an increasing number of incidents of paparazzi harassment of Prince George and the tactics being used are increasingly dangerous,” added the statement from the Kensington Palace residence of George’s parents Prince William and Kate Middleton.

William, second in line to the throne, and his wife have tangled with the media before over the paparazzi’s tactics and have said that they want their children to be able to play in public without being photographed.

“The vast majority of publications around the world — and all British publications — have refused to fuel the market for such photos,” the statement said.

But it added: “Despite this, paparazzi photographers are going to increasingly extreme lengths to observe and monitor Prince George’s movements and covertly capture images of him to sell to the handful of international media still willing to pay for them.

“A line has been crossed and any further escalation in tactics would represent a very real security risk.”

The issue of harassment by the paparazzi is particularly sensitive for William whose mother Princess Diana was killed with her lover Dodi al-Fayed in Paris in 1997 when her limousine crashed into the wall of a tunnel as they tried to flee a posse of chasing photographers. He has been determined to protect his family from the press. George, third in line to the throne, was born to a global media frenzy in July 2013 but has spent most of his life since then out of the spotlight, with only a handful of public appearances.

The royals also complained about harassment of Kate Middleton before the couple married in 2011. A year after their wedding, European magazines printed topless pictures of her taken while she was on holiday in France.

**Kerry urges ‘genuine democracy’ in Cuba as U.S. raises its flag**

**Havana, 15 Aug —** U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry called for political change in Cuba on Friday, telling Cubans they should be free to choose their own leaders, as he watched the U.S. flag fly at the American embassy in Havana for the first time in 54 years.

Leading a ceremony to mark the restoration of diplomatic relations between the Cold War adversaries, Kerry declared a new era in U.S.-Cuban relations but pressed the Communist government on democracy and human rights.

“We remain convinced the people of Cuba would be best served by a genuine democracy, where people are free to choose their leaders,” he said in a one-party state where the media is tightly controlled and political dissent is repressed.

“We will continue to urges the Cuban government to fulfill its obligations under U.N. and Inter-American human rights covenants,” Kerry said, his words accurately translated into Spanish and broadcast live on Cuban state television. His comments drew a firm riposte from Cuban Foreign Minister Bruno Rodriguez, who first visit to Cuba by a U.S. secretary of state in 70 years met for about an hour with some of the country’s most prominent dissidents.

Cuba fiercely rejects such conditions and said it would attend a U.S. reception where the dissidents were present.

Josefina Vidal, Cuba’s lead negotiator in talks on restoring diplomatic relations, told Reuters that Cuba’s sovereignty was not negotiable and Cuba has no interest in placing its enemies in the United States.

“We are not going to make a decision to try to please or respond to people who don’t want our well-being,” Vidal said in an interview. “Cuba will never do anything, nor will it move its position one millimetre to try to respond.”

While the tone in U.S.-Cuban relations has improved greatly since detente was announced in December, the blunt statements and rebukes underscored how far the two countries are from normal relations after decades of hostilities that outlived the Cold War. Both sides stressed Friday that the path towards normalization of overall relations would be lengthy and suffer occasional setbacks. Cuba wants the United States to end its economic embargo of the island, return the U.S. naval base at Guantanamo Bay in eastern Cuba and halt radio and television signals beamed into Cuba.

The United States is seeking the return of fugitives granted asylum in Cuba and backs the claims of Americans whose properties were nationalized in the years after Fidel Castro seized power in a 1959 revolution.
Turkish nationalists reject minority government in blow to Erdogan

ANKARA, 15 Aug — Turkey’s nationalist opposition made clear on Friday it would not roll over and back a minority government, making President Tayyip Erdogan’s aim of taking the country to a snap election with the ruling party in control look increasingly difficult.

Talks on forming a grand coalition between the AK Party and the main opposition CHP broke down on Thursday, making an autumn election almost inevitable and leaving the ruling party having to turn to the nationalist MHP for support.

The uncertainty comes as the NATO member faces a confluence of national security threats, battling Islamic State insurgents on its borders and Kurdish militants at home.

The AK Party, which owns the disaster site, local media reported.

The company said it had no interest in propping up an AKP minority administration.—Reuters

Norway wants to dump radioactive waste on island in Oslo Fjord

OSLO, 15 Aug — The Norwegian government wants to dump 1,200 tons of radioactive waste on an island in the Oslo Fjord against the will of the company which owns the disposal site, local media reported on Friday.

The government asked hazardous waste disposal company NOAH last year if it could receive the radioactive waste on the island of Langoya, about 50 km southwest of Oslo, according to the online edition of local newspaper VG.

The company said it made two technical evaluations and the conclusions were that it could not take the radioactive sludge from the Sove mines in the county of Telenmark, which dates back to top-secret nuclear experiments in the post war years. But the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Fisheries wants to push forward with the plan and has now hired the Swedish Defence Research Agency in Stockholm to carry out the assessment. VG reported.—Xinhua

Euro ministers give blessing to Greek bailout, wowing IMF on debt

BRUSSELS/ATHENS, 15 Aug — Euro zone finance ministers have agreed to lend Greece up to 86 billion euros ($89 billion) after Greek lawmakers accepted their stiff conditions despite a revolt by supporters of leftist Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras.

Assuming approval by the German and other parliaments, 13 billion euros should be in Athens next Thursday to pay emergency bills and a further 10 billion will be set aside at the European Stability Mechanism, earmarked touster Greek banks’ capital. In all, euro zone governments will lend 26 billion euros in a first tranche of the bailout before reviewing Greece’s compliance with its conditions in October.

One remaining uncertainty — aside from Tsipras’ ability to deliver sweeping budget cuts and privatisations opposed by many of his own party — is the role of the International Monetary Fund. After backing two previous bailouts, the IMF renewed its call for the Europeans to grant Athens debt relief — a bone of contention between the Eurogroup and the Washington-based Fund.

Managing Director Christine Lagarde told the Eurogroup by telephone that she could not commit until the IMF board reviewed the situation in the autumn. Officials said the Fund needed more assurances and detail on Greek reforms, notably to pensions, and steps to pursuit growth since Athens’ ex-IMF officials have dismissed for the rest of the day so

Dutch Finance Minister and Eurogroup President Jeroen Dijsselbloem shakes hands with Greek Finance Minister Euclid Tsakalotos (R) at the start of a euro zone finance ministers meeting in Brussels, Belgium, August 14, 2015. REUTERS

Greek mayor hands out aid as Kos sets up floating migrant centre

Kos, Greece, 15 Aug — Overcome by emotion, the mayor of Kos handed out water, milk and food to hundreds of Syrian migrants who Friday as a huge passenger ship docked on the Greek island to serve as a floating reception centre and dormitory.

Greece, whose parliament on Friday approved an 85 billion euro ($89 billion) bailout from foreign creditors, is struggling to cope with tens of thousands of desperate migrants from the Middle East, Africa and Asia who seek to avoid financial meltdown.

Kos, within sight of Turkish shores, has found itself on the front line of the crisis as new migrants arrive in rubber dinghies at the rate of hundreds a day.

“We are suffering here under the sun and sleeping in the open. We want to move the soonest possible,” he said.

He showed reporters what he said were bullet wounds on his leg from the Syrian war.

The European Union is struggling to cope with a migrant crisis that has seen more than 100,000 arrive in Italy and an estimated 140,000 in Greece so far this year. The effects have been felt at the shores of the Mediterranean to the northern French port of Calais, which is linked by the Channel Tunnel to England.—Reuters

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**Syrian rebel group says ceasefire over, talks collapse**

A Syrian rebel group said on Saturday a ceasefire was over between insurgents and the Syrian army and its Lebanese ally Hezbollah in a town near the Lebanese border and two villages in the northwest.

Ahmed Qara Ali, spokesman for the Ahhr al-Sham insurgent group, said rebel groups had begun to escalate military operations after the collapse of negotiations between the warring sides brokered by Turkey and Iran.

There was no immediate word from Hezbollah, a Lebanese Shi'ite group backed by Iran, or the Syrian military. Ahhr al-Sham had been leading the negotiations on behalf of the insurgents. The ceasefire had held since Wednesday morning in the town of Zabadani near the Lebanese border and two Shi'ite villages of Kerfaya and al-Foua in the northern province of Idlib.

Zabadani has been the focus of a weeks-long offensive by Hezbollah and the army against insurgent groups holed up inside.

Insurgent groups had launched a parallel attack on the two villages. Insurgent shells of the two villages early on Wednesday killed a child and wounded 12 more people, state TV reported.

Sources on both sides had said talks had been aimed at securing a withdrawal of rebel fighters from Zabadani and a written declaration of withdrawal from the two villages. Qara Ali said: “The reason it has collapsed is we wanted the release of 20,000 prisoners, and the Iranians rejected it.”

A rebel fighter in Zabadani said army warplanes were flying over the town.

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**12.2 mln people need assistance in Syria: UN agency**

**Geneva, 15 Aug — Humanitarian needs in Syria have increased 12 fold since the beginning of the crisis, now in its fifth year, with 12.2 million people needing humanitarian assistance, including more than 3.6 million children, a statement from the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) said Friday.**

According to OCHA, half of the population has been displaced, making Syria the largest displacement crisis globally, and more than 4 million people have been registered as refugees.

OCHA’s statement added that a high level of civilian casualties and increased violations of International Humanitarian and Human Rights Laws, by all parties, indicate the significant protection and access concerns. UN humanitarian chief Stephen O’Brien is scheduled to visit Syria and Lebanon from Aug. 14 to 17 to see for himself the terrible humanitarian impact of the protracted conflict and violence.

O’Brien, also UN Under Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, is expected to meet key officials in Damascus and Beirut to discuss ways of strengthening the aid operation to save lives and protect civilians.

The UN official plans to meet displaced and refugee families in HomS and the Bekaa Valley, and staff of humanitarian agencies and partners.

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**Six people killed, eight wounded in attacks in Turkey’s southeast**

Ankara has said its military campaign is also designed to target Islamic State militants in neighbouring northern Syria. However, it has so far focused on the PKK, raising suspicions among Kurds that the main aim is to check Kurdish territorial ambitions rather than to root the Islamist insurgents.

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The latest violence has shelved a recent peace push with Ankara.

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In a separate incident, youths linked to the PKK opened fire with rifles at a police vehicle in the town of Nusaybin bordering Syria early on Saturday.

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**Egypt’s deposed president Morsi appeals death sentence — lawyer**

Cairo, 15 Aug — The lawyer representing deposed Egyptian president Mohamed Morsi has filed an appeal on Saturday at the Cairo criminal court against challenging sentences of life imprisonment and death handed down in June, Mursi’s lawyer said.

The Cairo criminal court sentenced Mursi to death over a mass jail break during the 2011 uprising against Hosni Mubarak as well as life imprisonment for giving state secrets to Qatar. It also issued sweeping punishments against the leadership of the Muslim Brotherhood, Egypt’s oldest Islamist party.

The general guide of the Muslim Brotherhood, Mohamed Badie, and four other leaders were also sentenced to death in absentia. More than 90 others, including influential cleric Youssef al-Qaradawi, were sentenced to death in absentia.

The sentences were part of a crackdown launched after an army takeover stripped Mursi of power in 2013 following protests against his rule. Hundreds of Islamists have been killed and thousands arrested.—Reuters

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**Iraqi effort to isolate, retake Ramadi advancing U.S. military**

**Washington, 15 Aug — Iraqi troops are more than halfway through an operation to encircle Islamic State militants in Ramadi, after which they will launch a final offensive to retake the Iraqi city, a U.S. military spokesman said on Friday.**

Air Force Colonel Pat Ryder, a U.S. Central Command spokesman, said Iraqi forces were making progress in the fourth week of their effort to isolate and cut off Islamic State fighters, who captured Ramadi three months ago in their biggest victory this year.

“The objective here is to cut off ISIL’s lines of communications to prevent or limit their resupply and re-inforcement,” Ryder said, using an acronym for the militant group, said in a telephone briefing with Pentagon reporters.

He said Iraqi troops were engaged in “tough, dangerous work” to encircle the city and then prevent Islamic State from bringing in more troops or supplies.

The militants were trying to slow or stop Iraqi efforts with hidden explosive devices, improvised explosives in vehicles, suicide bombers and fighters, Ryder said. The Iraqis have used armoured bulldozers and other specialized equipment to remove explosives.

“The Iraqis are continuing to move forward, executing this complex operation as they had planned it,” Ryder said. “They have ... a good plan. They’re executing that plan at the timeline they have set for themselves.”

He said the aim was to completely encircle Ramadi before the operation’s next phase: retaking the city, which is the capital of Anbar province.

Ryder said the U.S.-led coalition had supported the Iraqi military with air strikes and by providing military officials to offer advice and assistance at joint operations centres. He said air strikes had targeted vehicles, weapons and equipment as well as enemy fighters.

Central Command is based in Tampa, Florida.—Reuters

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**Six people killed, eight wounded in attacks in Turkey’s southeast**

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**Iraqi security forces fire warning shots to discourage Islamic State militants from approaching their position on the outskirts of Ramadi August 6, 2015.—Reuters**

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**Beirut, 15 Aug — A Syrian rebel group said on Saturday a ceasefire was over between insurgents and the Syrian army and its Lebanese ally Hezbollah in a town near the Lebanese border and two villages in the northwest.**

Ahmed Qara Ali, spokesman for the Ahhr al-Sham insurgent group, said rebel groups had begun to escalate military operations after the collapse of negotiations between the warring sides brokered by Turkey and Iran.

There was no immediate word from Hezbollah, a Lebanese Shi’ite group backed by Iran, or the Syrian military. Ahhr al-Sham had been leading the negotiations on behalf of the insurgents. The ceasefire had held since Wednesday morning in the town of Zabadani near the Lebanese border and two Shi’ite villages of Kerfaya and al-Foua in the northern province of Idlib.

Zabadani has been the focus of a weeks-long offensive by Hezbollah and the army against insurgent groups holed up inside.

Insurgent groups had launched a parallel attack on the two villages. Insurgent shells of the two villages early on Wednesday killed a child and wounded 12 more people, state TV reported.

Sources on both sides had said talks had been aimed at securing a withdrawal of rebel fighters from Zabadani and a written declaration of withdrawal from the two villages. Qara Ali said: “The reason it has collapsed is we wanted the release of 20,000 prisoners, and the Iranians rejected it.”

A rebel fighter in Zabadani said army warplanes were flying over the town.

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Sunday, 16 August, 2015

Parental involvement vital to children’s academic success

By Kyaw Thura

All parents dream of seeing their children become educated, but not all can realise this dream. People tend to hold schools accountable for their children’s learning and development, praising them for every success and blaming them for every failure.

In fact, parents have a huge part to play in supporting and encouraging their children’s academic achievement. There has been convincing evidence of a link between active parental involvement and children’s achievement in school.

Despite this, those living hand-to-mouth often see no alternative option than taking their children out of school, viewing money and work as the key to survival. No parent would feel happy with their children forced out of school.

To break this cycle, we should all do everything we can to help underprivileged parents overcome their hardship. In this respect, the first thing we need to do is teach parents that education can change their lives for the better. This can’t succeed, however, without the involvement of the government and social organisations.

There is every reason to believe that parental involvement can result in substantial benefits to children and society as a whole. Financial support and moral encouragement should be given to low-income families so that they can heighten their expectations for their children.

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Check the electoral register and vote for the authentic people’s representatives in the 2015 elections

By Tommy Pauk

The five-year term of democratic government of the Union of Myanmar elected by democratic general elections is going to expire soon. The free and fair elections were successfully held by the government of the State Peace and Development Council or junta government in 2010. The regime had paved the path to the democratic state in accordance with the political aspiration of the entire people of Myanmar. General public are getting familiar with the basic voting process at the polling stations and the specific method to cast the ballot systematically. Now, all the eligible voters of Myanmar citizens are in eager anticipation for voting in the upcoming elections.

Notably, Myanmar is a country or society characterized by having many ethnic groups. Myanmar language is widely used or spoken in Myanmar, but most of the eligible voters from ethnic minorities cannot read and write in Myanmar Language. Therefore, the names of the parties, candidates and information of the voting process in the polling stations must be written or stated in their ethnic languages so that they can cast the vote clearly, conveniently and smoothly. Otherwise, they will lose their franchise in democratic elections due to language barrier.

They value their right to vote in elections because they aspire for democratic culture and need to elect the right representatives for the Hluttaw. The 75% of Myanmar’s total population is farmers and some of them cannot read and write Myanmar language. In this case, the election commission volunteers are required to assist some farmers in voting at the polling stations. Similarly, the volunteers will have to give guidance to other voters who are illiterate. The eligible voters of persons with disabilities and internally displaced persons should get access to cast the vote with the help local volunteers. We need to help UEC volunteers so that the elections can be held smoothly and successfully.

According to the constitution, the voters are given right to revoke or recall a representative of the Hluttaw. The Section 396 in the chapter (9) of the Constitution has prescribed “Recalling a representative of the Hluttaw.”

The just elections and the authentic people’s representatives work together for establishing a democratic society. The citizens are also responsible for not only choosing right representatives but also for compliance on the set of democratic principles and norms. In addition, the government, citizens, parliamentarians must be able to practice democratic norms and principles properly, effectively and consistently.

The voters are no longer gullible and they do monitor what and how their representatives do, speak and agree in Hluttaw or pass bills that are not authenticated by standing forward motions, voting and rejection on some proposals on behalf of the people. The people’s representatives must respect people from all walks of life and loyal to the state. They should bear in mind that they are elected by the people for the interests and benefits of the people as well. The representatives are not supposed to be intoxicated with power or privileges or positions. They must be willing and daring to discuss or propose or demand for people’s interests and benefits in line with democratic rights. Unless they act, they cannot be regarded as representatives or legislators. They must stand firmly or seriously on people’s desires or wishes which basically include solving unemployment problems, upgrading education system, upgrading public health care, unifying the living standards of workers and farmers and tackling hike prices of commodities. These issues are to be addressed in the respective Hluttaw by the people’s representatives in order to find the right, practical and effective solutions. Whenever the periodical Hluttaw assembly is over, they need to give feedback to their voters on the outcome of the discussion from the Hluttaw.

Undoubtedly, the upcoming Democracy General Elections in the country will be fair and square and free and fair. Now, every Myanmar citizen trusts on the Union Electoral commission and the present democratically-elected government. The voting age is 18 in Myanmar. The eligible voters of Myanmar citizens nationwide are so eager to choose the right candidates or representatives who are really determined to submit or materialize the needs and wants of the respective constituents to the parliament. Furthermore, people have great expectation to see free and fair elections. The officially to be held soon, and the locals are busy canvassing for the vote nationwide. Generally, voters are gullible for the promise, pledge and commitment made by candidates in the period of election campaigns. The voters humbly think that the candidates would surely keep their words and promises for the interests and welfare of the communities concerned in the specific constituency.

The eligible voters vary in social classes or educational status, but they ought to know the profile of the candidates for their constituency. Even then the voters have to see and check the electoral register or electoral roll in the period or during the campaign. Some voters find their names on the voters’ list before the event of election, they can complain about this to the Election sub-commission in their areas and ask the office personnel in their names on the list correctly and precisely. Human rights and rights of democracy are interdependent and they cannot be separated or split apart. Free and fair elections portray the political rights as well as sustainable development of democra- cy in this country. The voters are awarded political rights to choose the right eligible candidate for serving national politics as well as party politics democratically. Although these two terms are different, the goal of serving for our motherland –Myanmar - is the same.

The citizens who have legal rights to vote are Myanmar citizens, naturalized citizens and associate citizens. Obviously, the candidates are also pure citizens of Myanmar (inclusiveness of all national races residing in Myanmar) they must be taxes-free, dwelling-free, the locals - from grass root level to the elites. Also they must have the learnt the requirements or necessities for socio-economic develop- ment of the regions or divisions or states. By any means, they are the peoples’ representa- tives elected to talk or discuss or propose public affairs, public demands and public aspiration in respective parliaments.

They ought to represent farmers, workers and general public as well. On behalf of the farmers, the people’s representatives must find the solutions and justice especially for land-grab issues. It is strictly prohibited that they are not allowed to create any pecuniary solity of body in the parliament or Hluttaw assembly instead of working for the general public. Members of parliament are given rights to submit, express or talk about the people’s actual feelings, comments, criticism and complaints concerning the public services and administration. As for an example; people want the public ser- vice to be improved. The voice of the parliamentarians and the people’s voice must be exactly the same. The types of eligible voters can be classified as ordinary voters, floating voters, or swinging voters, members of political par- ties, government employees (inclusive of military service personnel).

According to 2008 constitution, the per- sons who are ineligible for voting in any elections are: (a) members of religious or- ders; (b) persons serving prison term; (c) Persons determined to be of unsound mind and stands so declared by a competent court; (d) persons who have not been declared free from insolvent; (e) persons disqualified by election law.

The citizens’ political rights should be applied by casting ballot to elect the right and authentic representatives for the respective parliaments. In other words, this act reveals the participation of people in politics aiming at building democratic state. These days, we, Myanmar people are not politically naive any longer. We are smart enough to assess the calibre of the representatives who are going to contest the elections. Besides, we are simple, but not gullible as we have learned the candidates profiled in the pamphlets precisely before the election period.

If there is widespread apathy among voters, something terrible must be wrong with the whole electoral process. Moreover, disenfranchisement of voters can causes distrust on UEC and it threatens democracy. However, we believe that the upcoming electoral process will be easy, free, fair, flawless, the eligible voters to cast vote for the people’s representatives in the election. Also the eligible candi- dates are thoroughly scrutinized to be elected by the voters from respective constituencies across the country. It is learnt that more than 90 parties are registered to contest the up- coming general elections.

The voter education programs, scrutinizing eligible candidates and the integrity of the election process will undoubtedly help the authentic people’s representatives win landslide victory in the election. In conclu- sion, people’s representatives are democrati- cally elected by the people for democratiza- tion in Myanmar. People, parliaments and democratic government will have to march towards genuine democratic state harmoni- ously and rhythmically. We, all citizens will come free, fair, flawless and credible elec- tions in Myanmar !!!
THERE is a town named Tho[-]-gono (သားကြီး) to the west of Tho[-]-gono town in Paung-de sub-district of Pyay, in Bago Region, Myanmar. The town is accessible by rail from Yangon, a distance of 11½ miles, and from Pyay 19 and a quarter miles and a shorter distance by car on a good tarred road running between Yangon and Pyay and beyond.

The entire Pyay region is more undulating and less level, surrounded by low hill ranges of not more than 500 and above feet high, with the River Ayeyawady flowing by on their west side, the river is fed by tributaries of different sizes especially in high monsoon. Some lofty mountain ranges tower on the west of the river. The portion which forms the river bed is dotted with a scatter of religious monuments of some antiquity, whose legends are associated with the history of Pyay and neighbouring towns.

Pyay town was originally a big thriving village, but being urbanized quickly because of its strategic location and agricultural hinterland. Its ground is even and the soil is fertile, thanks to the existence of natural aquatic bodies and good soil brought by streams and rivulets of Bago Yoma hills during rain. In its township there is a big lake called In-ma, ten miles long and four miles wide, and in good monsoon its water volume is 12 feet deep. But in severe summer its water diminishes to the point of a complete dry-up, providing fertile land for farming.

The census of 1931 showed that within an area of 299 square miles of Tho[-]-gono township, there were 56 villages. But since then both population and villages have increased. Majority of Tho[-]-gono inhabitants are Buddhist with few Kayin Christians and their main occupation is cultivation. In town there are traders and brokers of local produce. A few traders and brokers of local produce. A few traders and brokers of local produce. The city Sre Kestra [Yathey [Arborea]]. Today, around the rest house on the west bank of the lake, the lake bed is predominantly in the lake. In later years, the date of the festival is held, a big ceremony concrete bridge named “Ma’in 2” had been built reaching out to the pagoda precinct. To the east of the precinct, a dharmala hall was built. To the north is a niyara for the residence of a monk. At the foot of the pagoda is a shrine to shelter the statue of Shin Upagutta. In front of the bridge to the west, an image house for the Buddha became a dhamma Image in it, to the west of the lake are one zayat of bathrooms, one Aye Zedi in front of the bridge and one rest house [zayat], one nat spirit shrine for two nat-spirits and two nat-spirit shrines with popcorn and other food. Since the construction of the bridge a violent storm destroyed it. In 1959 the bridge was rebuilt of concrete. Thus pilgrims and visitors could easily and safely reach the pagoda, just by walking on the bridge.

All round development works have been taken since 1992. To the south of the lake the place where the annual festival is held, a big cement concrete bridge named “Maggim 2” had been built reaching out to the pagoda precinct. To the east of the precinct, a dharmala hall was built. To the north is a niyara for the residence of a monk. At the foot of the pagoda is a shrine to shelter the statue of Shin Upagutta. In front of the bridge to the west, an image house for the Buddha became a dhamma Image in it, to the west of the lake are one zayat of bathrooms, one Aye Zedi in front of the bridge and one rest house [zayat], one nat spirit shrine for two nat-spirits and two nat-spirit shrines with popcorn and other food. Since the construction of the bridge a violent storm destroyed it. In 1959 the bridge was rebuilt of concrete. Thus pilgrims and visitors could easily and safely reach the pagoda, just by walking on the bridge.

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Global stocks end weaker, bruised by Chinese yuan weakness

NEW YORK, Aug — Equities on world bourses ended the week lower on Friday after China’s currency devaluation on Tuesday shook investors, though volatility declined late in the week, suggesting markets had absorbed Beijing’s surprise actions.

For the week, the MSCI All World Index fell 0.4 percent, its second consecutive weekly decline. China’s modest devaluation of its currency dominated market activity, as the yuan lost 3 percent on the week, and investors were left questioning whether the move will continue to pressure the Japanese yen and other Asian currencies.

U.S. stock indexes ended higher on the week, however, mostly on the strength of big gains on Monday. The S&P 500 finished the week up 0.7 percent. Oil prices rebounded from near six-and-a-half-year lows on Friday but were still expected to remain under pressure due to concerns about oversupply and weak global demand.

The Dow Jones industrial average rose 69.15 points, or 0.40 percent, to 17,477.40. The Standard & Poor’s 500 Index was up 8.15 points, or 0.39 percent, at 2,091.54. The Nasdaq Composite Index was up 14.68 points, or 0.29 percent, at 5,048.24.

Crude oil prices slumped to the lowest since March 2009 before rebounding. Emerging market currencies slid to historic lows, with the Turkish lira and South African rand in the spotlight, as investors headed for the safety of developed world economies.

The People’s Bank of China set its midpoint yuan rate at 6.3975 per dollar before the market opened on Friday, slightly higher than the previous day’s close of 6.3990. The yuan also strengthened in spot market trading, changing hands at 6.3980. It’s possible that certain working conditions might make pregnancy more likely, and it’s also possible that women who struggle to get pregnant may choose to work longer hours, the researchers acknowledged in Occupational and Environmental Medicine.

There also may be a much simpler explanation for the delayed times to conception for women who work more or come home more physically exhausted from lifting multiple heavy loads, said Courtney Lynch, a specialist in reproductive medicine at Ohio State University in Columbus.

“Over our results show that heavy work, both in terms of physical strain and long hours, appears to have a detrimental impact on female nurses’ ability to get pregnant,” lead study author Audrey Gaskins, a researcher at Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health in Boston, said by email.

Most healthy couples can conceive within three to six months, though the process can take longer for people who are older or who have fertility compromised by certain medical conditions or by smoking or excessive drinking.

For the current study, Gaskins and colleagues reviewed data on women participating in a nationwide survey of nurses between 2010 and 2014 who at some point said they were trying to conceive.

Half of the women were at least 33 years old, about 4 percent were overweight or obese and 22 percent were current or former smokers.

The majority of the women worked exclusively days or nights, though 16 percent of them had rotating shifts at different times. About one third of the women were on their feet for at least eight hours a day, and 40 percent reported lifting heavy loads up to five times a day.

Frequency of night shifts or the duration of rotating or non-rotating evening work wasn’t linked to the time it took women to conceive, the study found.

When researchers excluded women who had irregular menstrual cycles, which can independently impair fertility, they still found that heavy lifting was linked to a 33 percent longer timeline to conception. The impact of heavy lifting was also more pronounced for overweight and obese women.

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“If this effect is real, it is likely due to the fact that these women are having less frequent intercourse due to their work demands,” Lynch, who wasn’t involved in the study, said by email.

Couples who want to get pregnant faster should have sex at least twice a week, and not only on week-ends, she advised. Women should also maintain a healthy weight, get enough exercise and avoid smoking and stress.

When women struggle to conceive, they may consider using devices that help track ovulation, Lynch added. Often sold as fertility monitors, some of these devices pinpoint ovulation by testing urine for spikes in certain hormones during that time of the month.

Reuters
Scientists researching brain disorders create super-clever mice

London, 15 Aug — Scientists have genetically modified mice to be super-intelligent and found they are also less anxious, a discovery that may help the search for treatments for disorders such as Alzheimer’s, schizophrenia and post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Researchers from Britain and Canada found that altering a single gene block to the phosphodiesterase-4B (PDE4B) enzyme, which is found in many organs including the brain, made mice cleverer and at the same time less fearful.

“Our work using mice has identified phosphodiesterase-4B as a promising target for potential new treatments,” said Steve Clapp-cote, a lecturer in pharmacology at Britain’s Leeds University, who led the study.

He said his team is now working on developing drugs that will specifically inhibit PDE4B.

The drugs will be tested first in animals to see whether any of them might be suitable to go forward into clinical trials in humans. In the experiments, published on Friday in the journal Neuruphychopharmacology, the scientists ran a series of behavioral tests on the PDE4B-inhibited mice and found they tended to learn faster, remember events longer and solve complex problems better than normal mice. The “brainy” mice were better at recognizing a mouse they had seen the previous day, the researchers said, and were also quicker at learning the location of a hidden escape platform.

They were also less able to recall a fearful event after several days than ordinary mice, and as PDE4B is also found in humans, this could be of interest in the search for treatments for brain conditions as well as mental decline linked to aging.

The experiments also showed that PDE4B-inhibited mice suffered less anxiety, choosing to spend more time in open, brightly lit spaces than normal mice, which preferred dark, enclosed spaces.

And while mice are naturally scared of cats, the modified mice remained less fearful to cat urine, suggesting that inhibiting PDE4B could increase risk-taking behaviour.— Reuters

Perseids meteor shower attracts thousands in Poland

Warsaw, 15 Aug — The Perseid meteor shower, one of the brightest meteor showers, which reached its peak during Aug. 12-14, brought together thousands of admirers in Poland. Almost a hundred “falling stars” within one hour could be observed on Wednesday night.

The meteor shower was observed throughout the country, however, the large-scale observations were held in Warsaw’s Copernicus Science Center, where crowds gathered to watch the amazing spectacle together.

In order to make the spectacle as visible as possible, Warsaw’s bridge, subway, stadium illuminations were turned off. The phenomenon has been slightly affected by clouds and pollution in some Polish towns.

The Perseids, named after the Greek mythology word referring to the sons of a hero - Perseus, are a prolific meteor shower associated with the comet Swift-Tuttle. They are most visible from mid-July, annually reaching its peak in activity in the middle of August. — Xinhua

Japan delays launch of transfer spacecraft due to weather

Tokyo, 15 Aug — Japan on Friday postponed the launch of a cargo transfer spacecraft that delivers supplies to the International Space Station (ISS) due to adverse weather conditions.

The Mitsubishi Heavy Industries, Ltd. and the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) announced Friday that they “decided to postpone the launch of the H-II Launch Vehicle No. 5 with the H-II Transfer Vehicle ‘KOUNOTORI’ (HTV5) onboard from the Tanegashima Space Center, which was originally scheduled for August 16, 2015 (Japan Standard Time), as unfavorable weather is forecast.”

The new launch date is set for Aug. 17, they said, adding that the launch date may be delayed further due to weather conditions.

Developed and built in Japan, the H-II Transfer Vehicle (HTV) known as “KOUNOTORI (white stork)” is an unmanned cargo transfer spacecraft that delivers supplies to the ISS. The HTV will carry not only necessary daily commodities for the crew astronauts, but also experimental devices, samples, spare parts and other necessary research items for the ISS.

Currently, Japan, the United States and Russia operate cargo transfers to the ISS. “Among the supply vehicles, KOUNOTORI serves as the backbone of ISS operations with its world-leading supply capacity of approximate 6 metric tons, and is the only space line capable of delivering large items of hardware,” said JAXA.

According to the HTV5 Mission Schedule updated by JAXA on Friday, the launch window for HTV5 is Aug. 17-Sept. 30 and the launch time will be determined by the updated orbit of the ISS. The launch day and time during the launch windows shall be decided by the international coordination for ISS operations. — Xinhua

Beidou satellites begin autonomous operation in space

Beijing, 15 Aug — After more than 10 days in space, China’s 10th Beidou navigation satellite is working autonomously and has set up a link with another satellite.

The two satellites were launched on the same day by a Long March III-B rocket from the Xichang Satellite Launch Center in Sichuan Province, southwest China, on July 25.

Xie Jun, chief designer of the Beidou navigation satellite system, says China has successfully tested the autonomous control technology of the Beidou global navigation satellite constellation, an alternative to U.S.-operated GPS, marking a solid step toward building a system with global coverage.

China plans to set up a complete constellation of 35 satellites, achieving global coverage by 2020.

The “twin sats” surpass their predecessors in speed, accuracy and weight. “The biggest difficulty is the autonomous navigation technology,” Xie said. “We need it to maintain the sustainable development of the project.”

Wang Ping, another chief engineer on the project, says the inter-satellite link realizes communication and distance measurement among satellites, bringing autonomous control of the navigation system a step closer.

Autonomous navigation is the project’s key to global operation. It enables satellites to work independently, providing users with more accurate data.

Using the Chinese word for the plough, or the Big Dipper, constellation, the project was formally launched in 1994, some 20 years after the inception of GPS. The first Beidou satellite was launched in 2000. By 2012, a regional network had taken shape and was providing positioning, navigation, timing and short message services in China and other Asian countries.

Beidou is one of the world’s four main navigation systems, along with GPS there is Russia’s GLONASS, and the European Union’s Galileo. All four use autonomous navigation technology. — Xinhua

Google has until Aug. 31 to reply to EU antitrust charges

BRUSSELS, 15 Aug — Google Inc, the world’s most popular Internet search engine, has been given an extra two weeks to counter European Union charges of abusing its market power in a dozen EU countries and stave off a possible billion-euro fine.

The European Commission has extended the deadline for replying to the charges to Aug. 31 from July 17, a Google spokesman said on Thursday.

This is the second extension for the company, which had originally been told to respond to the Commission’s charge sheet, or statement of objections, by July 7.

The Commission, which in April accused Google of distorting web search results to favour its shopping service, confirmed that it had accepted the company’s request for additional time to reply.

“In line with normal practice, the Commission analysed the reasons for the request. As a result, it has granted an extension allowing Google to fully exercise its rights of defence,” Commission spokesman Ricardo Cardoso said.

Google will not ask for a closed-door hearing to defend its case, said a source familiar with the matter. Some antitrust experts said that such events, attended by senior Commission officials and national competition regulators, rarely yield positive results for companies.

European Competition Commissioner Margrethe Vestager’s charges in April escalated a five-year investigation that Google has tried to settle three times without success.

The company could face a fine set at a level sufficient to ensure deterrence if found guilty, according to the Commission’s charge sheet seen by Reuters.

The EU antitrust authority can sanction wrongdoers up to 10 percent of their global turnover. — Reuters

A neon Google logo is seen as employees work at the new Google office in Toronto, November 13, 2012. — Reuters

Google has until Aug. 31 to reply to EU antitrust charges

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Journey of a lifetime
Angelina Jolie executively producing ‘The Breadwinner’

LOS ANGELES, 15 Aug — Angelina Jolie is “delighted” to be joining the team working on the upcoming animation, “The Breadwinner”. The upcoming animated film is based on the young adult novel of the same name by Deborah Ellis, published in 2000, reported The Wasp. “The Breadwinner” follows a young girl, Parvana, who lives with her family in Kabul during the Taliban era. After her father is arrested, Parvana has to disguise herself as a boy in order to provide for her family. “Millions of young girls like Parvana are growing up today under oppression or conflict, and helping their families to survive in those conditions. This story is a reminder of the immense value of their contribution,” Jolie said. “I am delighted to be working with a talented team of artists who I know will do justice to the richness, creativity and strength of Afghan culture and to little girls like Parvana,” she added.

Hugh Jackman, Stephen Colbert to host 2015 Global Citizen Festival

LOS ANGELES, 15 Aug — Comedian Stephen Colbert and ‘Wolverine’ star Hugh Jackman will co-host the 2015 Global Citizen Festival. Colbert made the announcement on his show the “Late Show with Stephen Colbert” when he was joined, via FaceTime, by Jackman, from his home in Australia, reported Rolling Stone magazine.

FKA Twigs releases surprise album with short film

LOS ANGELES, 15 Aug — Singer FKA Twigs unexpectedly released a new EP, accompanied by a short film which she directed. The “Video Girl” star surprised fans by sharing her third EP, M3LL155X, featuring two previously released singles and three new tracks, and it came with a 16-minute music video, reported Rolling Stone magazine.

Hip hop mogul Dr Dre tops UK album chart after 16 year absence

LONDON, 15 Aug — U.S. hip-hop mogul Dr Dre topped the British album chart on Friday with “Compton”, his first record in 16 years, while “Marvin Gaye,” U.S singer Charlie Puth’s collaboration with Meghan Trainor, climbed 89 places to become the highest-selling single.

In February, Global Citizen announced that Chris Martin would produce and curate the festival through 2030. In the past Neil Young and Crazy Horse, Foo Fighters, the Black Keys, Sting, John Legend, Jay Z, No Doubt and Tiësto have performed at the festival that began in 2012.—PTI

In another scene to accompany the song “In Time”, the 27-year-old singer becomes pregnant and subsequently gives birth to a multi-coloured doll, which she later wraps around her body. Fashion icon Michele Lamy makes a cameo in the short art film, which is described as an “an aggressive statement conceptualising the process of feeling pregnant with pain, birthing creativity and liberation”.—PTI
Williams to face Swiss teen Bencic in Rogers semis

TORONTO, Aug 14 — World number one Serena Williams rolled into the semi-finals of the Rogers Cup on Friday with a clinical 6-4, 6-3 win over Italy’s Roberta Vinci, setting up an intriguing showdown with Swiss teenager Belinda Bencic. Williams, a three-time champion on the Canadian hardcourts, stretched her winning streak in Toronto to 14 matches but on a humid evening she was made to sweat for her spot in the last four by her 53rd ranked opponent.

Playing her first event since winning Wimbledon, Williams will next meet 18-year-old Bencic, who took apart fifth seed Anna Ivanovic 6-4, 6-2.

“I don’t feel like I’m at my best or anywhere near it,” said Williams, who will go for the Grand Slam at the U.S. Open. “But I feel like I’m going in the right direction and I want to keep that up.

“I definitely feel more positive today. I don’t want to peak too soon.”

An animated Williams struggled to get control of the first set but capitalized on her fourth break point with the Italian serving at 4-5 to claim it. In the second she got the decisive break to go up 5-3 before serving out the match.

“I think she just served really well, some big serves,” said Williams, who also blasted 12 aces across the net. “She wasn’t going for the number one in doubles for a really long time so she obviously has a great game.”

Standing in the way of Williams’ return to the final is Bencic, who has eliminated two former world number ones, Caroline Wozniacki and former Rogers Cup champion Ivanovic.

The Serb beat the Swiss teenager’s mentor, Martina Hingis, in the 2006 final.

“She (Hingis) knows her (Williams) well, I think tomorrow I can go onto the court with a plan and just keep playing as I did today,” said Bencic. In other quarter-final action, second seeded Romanian Simona Halep sleepwalked through the first set before producing a remarkable comeback to record a 0-6, 6-3, 6-1 win over defending champion Agnieszka Radwanska.

After dropping the first seven games to Radwanska, Halep started to find her rhythm and at 3-3 in the fifth, the second set had begun.

Looking like a completely different player she stormed through the next eight games to level the match and pulled ahead 5-0 in the third before Radwanska could stop the slide, if only for one game, before the sixth seed was sent packing.

“At the beginning I could not move my legs. I felt very tired,” said Halep. “I just kept focused on what I had to do and just tried to keep the ball in the court to make some longer rallies.”

—Reuters

Oregon cat is world’s oldest at 26 years, 13 days

NEW YORK, Aug 15 — An Oregon cat with a fondness for sharp cheddar and catching mice has become the oldest pet feline in the world at 26 years and 13 days, Guinness World Records officials said on Thursday.

Cordury lives in the rural community of Sisters, Oregon, about 100 miles (160 km) southeast of Portland, and spends plenty of time outside, the organization said in a statement.

“I remember being eight years old when the cat entered her life, Guinness officials said.

“She secret has been allowing him to be a cat - hunting and getting plenty of love,” Reed Okura said in a statement. Aside from chasing mice, the cat also likes to eat cheddar cheese, according to Guinness officials. The previous record-holder was a San Diego feline named Tiffany Two, who was 26 years and 204 days old when she died on June 3, the officials said.

Kristen Ott, a spokeswoman for Guinness World Records, acknowledged that an older cat than Cordury might be out there. To hold the record, an owner must submit evidence such as video recordings of a pet feline throughout the decades, as well as witness statements.

—Reuters

Belgian designer files suit to halt use of Tokyo Olympic logo

A Belgian designer is going to court to halt the use of the Tokyo Olympic logo, which he says his creation was plagiarized in the 2020 Tokyo Olympic symbol. Debie filed suit in Belgium seeking to get the International Olympic Committee to halt its use, his lawyer said Friday.

The Japanese Olympic Committee said in a statement.

Spokeswoman for Guinness World Records, acknowledged that an older cat than Cordury might be out there. To hold the record, an owner must submit evidence such as video recordings of a pet feline throughout the decades, as well as witness statements.

—Reuters

WEATHER REPORT

BAY INFLUENCE: Monsoon is weak to moderate in the Andaman Sea and Bay of Bengal.

FORECAST VALID UNTIL EVENING OF THE 16th August, 2015: Rain or thundershowers will be scattered in Lower Sagaing and Magway Regions, Chin State, fairly widespread in Mandalay and Tannantayi Regions, Bagan and Mon States and widespread in the remaining Regions and States with isolated heavy falls in Upper Sagaing, Mandalay and Ayeyawady Regions, Kachin and Rakhine States. Degree of certainty is (100%).

STATE OF THE SEA: Sea will be moderate in Myanmar waters.

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Moderate Monsoon.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 16th August, 2015: Isolated rains or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 16th August, 2015: One or two rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 16th August, 2015: Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

A Perfect Place: Glimpses of Myanmar’s Traditions Of Unique Pattern Of Culture and History

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Great Shwedagon Historic And Mysterious Places
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* The Long-Lasting
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Mystical Places
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News
* Let’s Cook (Episdoe-11)
Nishikori downs Nadal in Montreal quarters

Montreal, 15 Aug — Kei Nishikori swept aside Rafa Nadal in the quarter-finals of the Rogers Cup in Montreal on Friday with a swift 6-2, 6-4 victory, while world number one Novak Djokovic saved two match points before beating Latvian Ernests Gulbis.

Japan’s Nishikori, seeded fourth, took just 82 minutes to beat the Spaniard, a 14-times grand slam champion and a winner three times at the Rogers Cup. “I was close in Madrid, but today I was dominating everything,” said Nishikori after getting his first win over Nadal in eight attempts. “I definite

-Nishikori will next meet Andy Murray in the semi-finals after the Briton defeated defending champ Jo-Wilfried Tsonga of France 6-4, 6-4.

Nishikori won his third title of the season in Washington last week and is hitting his stride ahead of the U.S. Open. The 25-year-old reached the final at Flushing Meadows last year only to lose in straight sets to Marin Cilic.

“(Nadal) wasn’t making many first serves to

tight, so I knew I had to be more aggressive on the second serve,” Nishikori said.

“Everything was working well, so I am very happy to win today,” Djokovic said.

He was always making me play an extra shot, and putting a lot of pressure on my second serve.

“I had a lot of chances and closed it out in the end, but he had a couple of match points and it would’ve been deserved if he had won this match tonight.”

Am 100 percent to beat him,” Djokovic's Master Series streak to 29 victories. He

Defence League march is

Djokovic’s title of the season in Washington last week and is hitting his first Masters Series semi-final.

“It was a crazy match,” Chardy said.

“We both served really well and we both had our chances, so I am happy that I won it in the end.

On those match points, I was only thinking about where I wanted to hit my serve or how to play the point. Under pressure it’s easy to get nervous and miss if you start thinking about the match point or the break point.”

Reuters

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Lukaku double fires Everton to victory at Southampton

London, 15 Aug — Two excellent first-half goals from Romelu Lukaku inspired Everton to an emphatic 3-0 victory at Southampton in the Premier League on Saturday.

The powerful Belgian put the visitors ahead midway through the first half after a classic counter-attack ended with the former Chelsea striker heading home Arouna Kone’s cross.

His second, just before halftime, was even better as he barrelled forward, exchanged passes with Ross Barkley and advanced to fire a shot low into the corner.

Southampton introduced new signing Oriol Romeu after the break for Dusan Tadic, but the home side were unable to apply any sustained pressure and Barkley’s classy curling finish after 83 minutes sealed Everton’s victory.

The win extended their run of 29 matches without defeat to 29 victories. He

BIRMINGHAM, (Eng
tand), 15 Aug — Adnan Januzaj reminded Manchester United fans of his class as his 29th-minute goal earned a 1-0 win at Aston Villa and propelled them, after two humdrum triumphs, to the top of the table on Friday.

The precocious 20-year-old Belgian had been linked with a loan move away from Old Trafford, but manager Louis van Gaal, who has said he is not for sale, was rewarded after giving the youngster a place in the Premier League side’s starting lineup.

Januzaj, who came in for Ashley Young in the only change to the team that beat Tottenham Hotspur last week, ensured that a second 1-0 victory for United, despite another fairly ordinary performance, gave the 20-times champions a maximum six points.

United were shot-shy against Spurs, with just one effort on target, and this time only produced three as they often struggled to penetrate Villa’s rearguard.

One fine team move, though, was enough to be decisive. Juan Mata slid a delightful probing ball into the box and Januzaj ghosted away from his marker and turned Micah Richards neatly before slotting the ball into the far corner via a deflection.

The Belgian for

ward’s quality in front of goal was a reminder of the talent that once saw him heralded as the most wanted item in international football before his flame dimmed a little.

Van Gaal, saying he wanted to try Januzaj in his favourite number 10 position, described the goal as “fantastic” and said he was not worried by United’s inability to create opportunities.

“It doesn’t bother me because you only have to score one more than your opponent,” the Dutchman told Sky Sports.

“We don’t give many chances away and every game we have more chances than the oppo

nents. We played better than last week...so I am very happy.”

Villa, who have not beaten United at home in the league for two decades, created the better chances after halftime only to finish wastefully.

Van Gaal withdrew Januzaj in the second period, introduced Ander Herrera and new signing Bastian Schweinsteiger and the door at the back was locked.

Another United new boy, Memphis Depay, missed a glorious chance when Mata picked him out with another lovely pass.

United had a head start over their title rivals with a rare Friday kickoff after West Midlands Police requested the fixture change because an English Defence League march is planned in nearby Walsall on Saturday.

Reuters