PRESIDENT U Thein Sein has urged political parties to accept the results of the November 8 election with magnanimity, saying that the upcoming election will be free and fair.

In his election speech broadcast last night, the president said he firmly believed that the upcoming election will be free and fair and that it will reflect the desires of the people. He acknowledged that there have been many challenges along the way in fulfilling the administration’s desire to hold smooth elections.

President U Thein Sein reiterated that the government and the army will respect the results of the upcoming election and added that he is aware that there is some anxiety about this among the public.

He said that his party would welcome a new government as determined by the election results and emphasised that it must be in conformity with the terms of the constitution. He expressed confidence that the leaders of political parties will accept the results of the election.

In order for peace to prevail during the post-election period, the president said that he will hold talks with leaders of political parties to discuss solutions for any potential issues.

He also urged all those eligible to vote to cast their votes this Sunday, saying that the upcoming election represents a key part of Myanmar’s new political climate.

The UEC has already made arrangements for citizens to avoid unnecessarily losing their voting rights on election day, he added.

President U Thein Sein ended his speech by urging the leaders of political parties to be far-sighted and magnanimous during the upcoming election, which will also be keenly watched by the international community.—GNLM

35 victims of human trafficking rescued in October

Gains have been made in tackling sexual exploitation and forced labour, but much work remains for Myanmar authorities.

There were more than 10 cases of human trafficking investigated in Kachin State, Bago, Sagaing, Magway and Ayeyawady regions, while in Kayin, Mon and Rakhine states the number of cases was less than 10. There were no reports of human trafficking occurring in the capital city of Nay Pyi Taw and in southern Taninthayi Region.

Authorities arrested a total of 301 traffickers since the beginning of the year and another 100 suspects are on wanted lists.

According to official figures, the number of trafficking cases nationwide since 2006 to October this year stands at 1,228. A total of 2,443 people were rescued and 2,227 traffickers brought to justice.

Forced labour and sexual exploitation are considered among the most pressing international crimes taking place in Myanmar, with women being at particular risk of being trafficked to China for forced marriages.
Inclusive participation of all peoples is of utmost importance in creating a modern, developed democracy

The following is the message sent by President U Thein Sein on the occasion of the 60th Anniversary of Kayin State Day which falls on 7 November 2015.

Esteemed national brethren in Kayin State,

It is a great honour to extend my warm greetings to all Kayin national brethren on the 60th Anniversary of Kayin State Day, which falls on 7 November.

Shortly after Myanmar won its independence in 1948, the country’s parliament put the designation of Kayin State for Kayin nationals in the formation of states and regions on top of its agenda. Thanlwin district was designated Kayin State according to the Constitutional Amendment Act of 1951. Kayin State extend as far as Kyi-In-Seik Kyi, Kawareikhe, Hlaingbwe, Hpa-an and Thandaung townships in accordance with the Kayin State Extension Act of 1952. Later, Myawady, a township at the foot of Mount Dawna, was included in Kayin State’s territory, which is now made up of seven townships—Hpa-an, Papun, Hlaingbwe, Thandaung, Kawareikhe, Kyi-In-Seikkyi and Myawady. The President of Kayin State signed the Constitutional Amendment Act of 1951 on 7 November.

In commemoration of this historic event, Kayin State Day has been observed every year ever since.

We have seen that post-independence political instability sparked armed conflicts. Now is the time to enjoy peaceful coexistence among our national brethren by drawing on lessons based on bitter experiences.

A series of peace talks focused on ending more than 60 years of armed conflict culminated in the signing of a nationwide ceasefire agreement with eight ethnic armed organisations on 15 October 2015. I am delighted that three armed organisations based in Kayin State signed the historical agreement.

Divisions among ethnic groups gave rise to armed conflicts, which have thwarted regional integration and local people in hard times. Peace is now starting to bear fruit in the region, with significant opportunities for development arising as a result. It is therefore necessary for local people to work together with the government to seize the opportunities that remained elusive for so long.

The inclusive participation of all of Myanmar peoples is of utmost importance in creating a modern, developed democracy.

The government is committed to infrastructural development on all fronts, including sectors such as transportation, education, human resources, infrastructure, health and the economy. I would like to request all Kayin nationals to collectively contribute to and closely cooperate in the process.

Results of 2015 general elections will reflect true wishes of the citizens

The following is the monthly radio speech delivered by President U Thein Sein on 3 November.

My fellow citizens,

As I have done previously, I would like to give you the monthly update on the work of my government, and the developments that have taken place in our country.

Since the historic general elections will be held this month, I would like to focus on issues relating to the elections and the reform process.

In a few days, the most meaningful and significant general elections in Myanmar history will be held. This is because for the first time since independence, all political forces in the country will be contesting general elections.

Since my government took office, we have focused on liberalization and implementing practical reforms to foster a democratic society. We made every effort to breathe into these reforms, as the prevailing political conditions dictated. This hard work built the foundation that has enabled the holding of these upcoming elections. Because of this, I firmly believe these elections are the most meaningful and important in Myanmar history. Furthermore, Myanmar, its society and citizens deserve democracy. These elections show that the country is ready to continue with reforms with increasing momentum.

The purpose is not only to shape the future of Myanmar, but also to reorient the global community, foreign investment and international cooperation.

I especially urge each citizen to value the importance of his or her ballot, and realize that individual choice, if not collective, is a powerful force. When making their selections, I encourage citizens to vote with sincerity, patience, and foresight in keeping with the values of citizenship and society. Every citizen is free to vote for whom he or she wishes.

In so doing, let all of us Myanmar citizens show that we are capable of making good and wise choices.

It is clear that our country still has insufficient democratic experience and institutions for nation building. Because of these constraints, I accept that it will be difficult to hold elections that are perfect. However, my government is fully committed to ensuring that the elections are clean, free, and peaceful.

I believe the results of these 2015 general elections will reflect the true wishes of the citizens. Therefore, I urge political parties and the public to respect the choices of the people, and welcome and accept the results. After the elections, political leaders will need to discuss and jointly bring about a political arrangement that all political forces can accept.

On October 15th, leaders of the government, parliament, and Tatmadaw together with the leaders of eight Ethnic Armed Organizations (EAOs) signed the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA)—a historical milestone in the peace process. International and respect national political leaders signed as witnesses, attesting to the legality and robustness of the agreement.

The NCA is the first comprehensive ceasefire agreement to be signed by the EAOs, the government, parliament, and the Tatmadaw. This agreement is a pledge by all political forces to create a new political system and new political culture, so badly needed in our society.

In the early days of our country’s reforms launched soon after the 2010 general elections, many political forces and individuals were skeptical of peace negotiations and efforts to resolve issues. However, these countries today face civil war and lack of effective government. Although our country may be deficient according to some international measures, we are gradually and decisively implementing the required changes. I would like to stress that reforms in each country must take place at the right pace, at the right time, and after carefully considering all the factors.

We also succeeded in bringing all the political forces into the political process. The successful holding of the 2012 by-elections, the signing of the NCA, and meetings between the top political leaders are all examples of new political culture my government has worked to establish taking hold. With this as the foundation, we must work on achieving nationwide ceasefire and resolving issues that are obstacles to nation building. We were also able to enable inclusive political dialogue that will represent all political forces. We must continue to strive to achieve the establishment of a federal and democratic nation as agreed. At the same time, my government has made tangible improvements to the livelihoods of the people. From telecommunications to delivery of people-centered services, we have gradually improved and raised the quality of services. Moreover, we implemented fundamental reforms to enable accountable and responsive bureaucratic mechanisms.

We must unwaveringly continue to work on reforms to improve the delivery of people-centered services, healthcare, education, job opportunities, individual freedoms, and human security.

During my government’s term, I have strived to introduce and implement reforms to the best of my abilities. In this time, we have seen many difficulties, and had to find answers to these challenges. More obstacles to the reforms had to be faced and overcome. These are all valuable and required experiences for anyone leading the transition and reform process at an increasing pace. We also see that in the area of improving people-centered services corruption is a major challenge, and attention must be given to its elimination. Most important, we now have the foundation to continue implementing short, medium and long-term economic plans that are easily understood by the people, and in which they can participate for their benefit.

I believe it is especially important to continue to improve people’s livelihoods and maintain political stability.

I am committed to achieving internal peace, improving livelihoods, and ensuring better lives for future generations. By learning from past experiences, I firmly believe we will sustain these processes, accomplish democratic reforms, and overcome the challenges facing our country. I conclude this month’s radio address by reaffirming my pledge to work towards a better future for our country.
President U Thein Sein’s election speech to be aired seven times

President U Thein Sein delivered an election speech to voters across the country on state-run radio and television networks after the national news was aired at 8pm yesterday. The election speech will be broadcast again at 8am, 6pm and 8pm today, and at 8am, 10am and 12 noon on Sunday, the day of the general election. The speech will also be aired on MRTV, MRTV-4 and Sky Net channels, which are owned by state-run MRTV.—Myanmar News Agency

Union FM receives observers from Carter Center

U WUNNA MAUNG LWIN, Union Minister for Foreign Affairs of Myanmar, received the high-level leadership delegation of the Carter Center election observation mission composed of Ms. Mari Robinson, Former President of Ireland, Mr. Jason Carter, grandson of former U.S. President Mr. Jimmy Carter, Mr. Bhojraj Pokherel, former Chief Election Commissioner of the Election Commission of Nepal yesterday at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Nay Pyi Taw.

At the meeting, matters related to inter alia preparations of holding of the General Elections, international and domestic election observers, signing of Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement, and recent developments in Myanmar were discussed cordially.—Myanmar News Agency

Myanmar delegation sums up human rights efforts in Geneva

A MYANMAR delegation attended the Universal Periodic Review in Geneva yesterday and gave a presentation on the progress Myanmar has made in improving its human rights record.

The delegation was led by Attorney-General of the Union Dr Tun Shin, who highlighted the recent signing of Myanmar’s nationwide ceasefire agreement, the impending general election, strengthened anti-human trafficking measures and anti-money laundering operations. He also cited UN human rights reports on Myanmar, Myanmar’s cooperation with the UN, the establishment of its human rights commission, the prevention of the recruitment of child soldiers and increased access to education and health care services for some of the country’s most vulnerable groups, such as children and the elderly.

The Universal Periodic Review is held every four years. The Myanmar delegation responded to questions from 97 countries during the meeting.—Myanmar News Agency

Bio-tech research centre opens in Mandalay Region

THE Biological Technology Research Centre was opened yesterday in Kyaukse, Mandalay Region. Mandalay Region Minister for Forestry and Mining U Thin Soe Myint took part in the ribbon-cutting ceremony and Union Minister for Science and Technology Dr Ko Ko Oo unved the centre’s signboard.

The union minister later viewed a thriving Hsin Shwese paddy strain plantation, which was cultivated by the centre, as well as visiting its laboratories and research hubs.—Myanmar News Agency
Gutawthit Pagoda in ancient Inwa city under renovation

Renovation tasks being carried out at Gutawthit Pagoda in ancient Inwa city, Tada U Township. PHOTO: MIN Htet Aung

Local residents educated in traditional medicine

A BASIC traditional medicine course, conducted by the Ottara District Maternal and Child Welfare Supervisory Committee, concluded at the hall of the District General Administration Department in Nay Pyi Taw Council Area on Thursday.

Head of the District Traditional Medicine Department Daw Si Si Nyein gave a concluding speech. Chairperson of the district MCWSC Daw Kyi Kyi Yin and officials presented brochures to the trainees and gifts to lecturers. A trainee thanked the teachers for the anatomical education they received as well as an understanding of the usefulness of medicinal plants and simple therapies. A total of 40 local residents attended the short-term course from 3 to 5 November.

—Shwe Ye Yint

CHDB providing loans, encourages home ownership

THE Construction and Housing Development Bank is currently offering loan opportunities to Myanmar citizens depending on their financial situation and the home they wish to purchase.

The bank has so far offered loans to facilitate the purchase of 262 apartments in the Hlinethaya Housing Shweinpan Company in Yangon through an eight-year installment plan and 25 apartments in an apartment building constructed by Mandalay City Development for which a four-year installment plan is offered.

CHDB bank aims to lend money to either construction entrepreneurs or future home owners at 13 per cent interest. The bank offers customers the opportunity to reduce the interest rate. “If you deposit savings with the bank you will receive an interest rate of 8.25 per cent, long-term saving will be subject to 10 percent interest. Customers can take out a loan at 12 per cent and be subject to service charges of 1 per cent only,” said Deputy Managing Director U Than Aung of the bank. The CHDB aims to create opportunities for people to become home owners using personal income and government assistance. “If a customer deposits K3 million during one year the bank will lend K10 million. The borrower will be required to pay that money back within 8 years,” said U Win Zaw, Managing Director of CHDB bank.

The Construction & Housing Development Bank on Shwedagon Pagoda Road in Dagon Township was established in 2013 and began operating in 2014. The bank handles the shares belonging to Government as private interests including construction companies. The bank maintains links with international financial institutions. It has branches in Botataung, Mandalay, Nay Pyi Taw and Pathein with plans to open more in regions and states across Myanmar.

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More than 1,900 polling station officers, staff assigned in Tatkon Tsp

HEADS and staff of polling stations were assigned duty to polling stations for the election period in Tatkon Township, Nay Pyi Taw Council Area, on Thursday. At the ceremony, District Election Sub-committee chairman U Soe Tint Thaing explained the role of polling station officers and staff while Township Administrator U Yi Mon spoke on the management of the electoral process and security measures. District Election Sub-committee chairman U Aung Lwin spoke last to clarify election policy.

Tatkon Township election official assigns duty to polling station and staff in Tatkon. PHOTO: Tin Soe Lwin

Security arrangements for election period discussed

THE Mandalay Region Management Committee for Security of 2015 General Elections held their fourth meeting at the hall of the Region Police Force in Chaukthatyan Township on Thursday. Mandalay Region Minister for Security and Border Affairs Col Myo Min Aung issued instructions from the central committee.

Commander of the region police force Police Col Han Tun and deputy commander Police Col Thet Naing discussed security measures for the campaign period and the management of peaceful and accessible voting. Additional police officers and members of the fire brigade will be on hand.

Mandalay Region has been allocated 5,384 polling stations for around 4.4 million eligible voters. A total of 399 candidates from 20 political parties including independent candidates will compete for seats in the regions of Hluttaw, Pyithu and Amyotha Hluttaw.

—Thihl Ko Ko (Mandalay)
New Delhi — Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi today said the country is doing better and stressed that the country should reform to transform the lives of its citizens.

“The economy has improved by every economic indicator. The economy is doing better than what it was when we took over 17 months ago. The economy is doing better in all the parameters like GDP, fiscal deficit, revenue etc.” Modi said, after inaugurating the Delhi Economics Conclave.

India must make more reforms to transform lives, says Modi.

HANOI — Vietnam agreed to build a “truly trustworthy” relationship with China yesterday during a visit to Hanoi by its President Xi Jinping, but at the same time invited Beijing’s old rival Japan for joint military exercises and a visit to a sought-after port.

The diplomatic flurry highlighted the fragility of China’s testy relations with its communist neighbour, and Vietnam’s efforts to diversify its relations through new alliances with states locked in bitter disputes with Beijing over its maritime expansionism.

Vietnam and China’s competing territorial claims mushroomed into a major dispute last year, which Xi aimed to settle on a timely visit close to a scheduled shakeup of a Vietnamese Communist Party leadership increasingly being courted by the United States.

Xi was given the red carpet treatment during meetings since Thursday with the top leaders of Vietnam and he told its National Assembly their joint revolutionary friendship could dispel and survive any “disruptions”.

“Our two parties, countries and peoples should be staunch in their faith, help each other and proceed hand in hand, not allowing anyone to disrupt our peace,” he said.

Both sides agreed on Friday to maintain peace at sea and trust each other, but as Xi prepared to leave, Japan’s defence minister announced Vietnam had invited it to take part in humanitarian exercises and to bring a warship to its strategic Cam Ranh Bay once construction of a new dock was complete.

Japan and China have their own territorial dispute in the East China Sea, complicating a relationship coloured by Japan’s occupation of parts of China before and after World War Two.

Cam Ranh is the jewel in the crown of Vietnam’s military, with an air base once used by the US and Soviet forces and a deep water bay home to its modern, Russian-built submarines. Visits by foreign ships are rare and usually preceded by a worker on Mischief Reef, show-up pictures from Friday displayed rare pictures on Friday of extreme concern.

China, whose Foreign Minister Wang Yi on Friday told US counterpart John Kerry that a recent US warship patrol near its man-made islands in the Spratlys was of extreme concern. A website run by China’s official People’s Daily newspaper displayed rare pictures on Friday of the reclamation work, taken by a worker on Mischief Reef, showing diggers and tractors dumping sand into the azure waters.

China’s parking of an oil rig unannounced in waters off Vietnam’s coast in May 2014 was widely seen as a miscalculation that has given the United States and allies like Japan an opening to steer Hanoi away from Beijing’s orbit.

“China’s reclamation of reefs near the contested Spratly Islands has fueled resentment and put Vietnam’s rulers in a difficult position, pressured from nationalists and even some party members to take a tougher line, but wary of incurring China’s wrath. It is unclear what kind of leadership will emerge from the secretive party’s congress in January. Xi referred to Vietnam’s independence hero Ho Chi Minh and his army with the founder of modern China, Mao Zedong, and their similar political systems.

He made no mention of the South China Sea and referred only to “tests” both had faced in the winds of history. Relations, he added, must “not be allowed to stray from the correct path”.

Vietnamese President Truong Tan Sang told Xi that relations had been hurt and made a rare admission about concerns within the Communist Party.

“The trust in the relationship...was reduced among the public, cadres and party members due to disputes and disagreements,” he said, according to a foreign ministry statement.— Reuters.
China says US patrol in South China Sea ignites tensions

BEIJING — The patrol by a US warship close to islands China controls in the South China Sea harmed mutual trust between China and the United States and caused regional tensions, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi told his US counterpart in a call.

Wang’s comments to US Secretary of State John Kerry, reported by Chinese state television on Friday, come a week after a US guided-missile destroyer sailed close to one of Beijing’s man-made islands in the South China Sea.

Beijing has repeatedly expressed its anger with Washington over the patrol.

China claims most of the South China Sea, through which more than $5 trillion of world trade transits every year. Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei, the Philippines and Taiwan all have rival claims. China hopes the good foundation for ties with the United States as laid down by President Xi Jinping’s visit there in September does not “receive unnecessary interference”, Wang said.

“The acts by the US naval vessel in the South China Sea harmed mutual trust and provoked regional tensions. China is extremely concerned by this,” the report paraphrased Wang as saying.

“The US side should return as soon as possible to the correct path of appropriately managing disputes via dialogue and consultation,” he added.

US Secretary of Defense Ash Carter flew to a US aircraft carrier transiting the disputed South China Sea on Thursday and blamed China for rising tension in the region. —Reuters

Cambodia ends privatisation of Angkor Wat Temple

PHNOM PENH — Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen said yesterday that the government has ended the privatisation of the famed Angkor Wat Temple complex and a public enterprise will be established to control revenue from ticket sales at the temple complex from next year.

“A piece of important news for the Cambodian people across the country: from 2016, the royal government of Cambodia will control and manage the whole Angkor Wat Temple, including staff, revenue and expense,” he wrote on his official Facebook page.

Information Minister Khieu Kanharith wrote on his Facebook account that during a weekly cabinet meeting yesterday, Hun Sen said Sok Kong’s company had returned its right to sell tickets for entering Angkor complex to the government.

He said a state enterprise would be established to continue managing the revenue from selling tickets to foreign tourists visiting the temple.

The Sokha Hotel Company, owned by influential businessman Sok Kong, had been hired to collect revenue from selling tickets to visit the Angkor since 1999.

Last year, the company earned the gross revenue of 59 million US dollars from ticket sales and in the first 10 months of this year, it made the revenue of nearly 48 million US dollars, according to government reports.

Located in northwestern Siem Reap province, Angkor Wat Temple, is the kingdom’s most popular tourist destination. —Xinhua

Death toll from Pakistan’s Lahore factory collapse rises to 29

ISLAMABAD — Death toll from the collapse of a factory in Pakistan’s eastern city of Lahore has risen to 29 on Thursday, local media and officials said.

Rescue teams have pulled out over 100 injured people from the rubble of the factory which collapsed on Monday in Sundar Industrial Estate area of Lahore, the capital city of the country’s east Punjab Province.

Deputy Commissioner Officer Lahore Muhammad Usman said that over 150 workers were inside the Rajput Polyester Factory when it collapsed.

He said that some construction work was going on at the fourth floor of the building which collapsed, razing the other three floors to the ground too.

All the injured have been shifted to hospitals where the majority of them were found with broken legs and arms.

The provincial government has imposed a state of emergency in all public hospitals in the city.

The official said the actual number of casualties will be ascertained once the rescue operation is completed.

Reason behind the accident is not known yet, but an injured factory worker said the owner was not allowed by the officials to construct the fourth storey, but despite all warnings he started work on it. Shahbaz Sharif, the Chief Minister of Punjab province, said that factory might have suffered damage in the 8.1-magnitude earthquake that hit the country on 26 October.

Owner of the factory is reportedly also among the people who are still trapped under the rubble.

Pakistani President Mamnoon Hussain and Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif expressed grief over casualties in the incident and directed the officials to expedite rescue efforts.

The teams of Pakistan army’s engineering core and Urban Search Rescue have already reached the site and started to remove the debris to pull out the trapped people. —Xinhua

S Korea urges Japan to present measures over ‘comfort women’

SEOUL — A senior South Korean official yesterday urged Japan to quickly present measures acceptable to the South Korean people to resolve the issue of Korean women forced to work in wartime brothels for the Japanese military, according to Yonhap News Agency.

“As an offender, the Japanese side should quickly put forward measures acceptable to the victims and our people to settle the ‘comfort women’ issue,” the official was quoted as saying. The official said South Korea has “held the position the Japanese government should resolve the issue in the context of a party which has caused a problem resolving the problem.”

The remarks were made a day after a senior Japanese official called on South Korea to present proposals to settle the issue. “The ball is in South Korea’s court now,” Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Koichi Haguida said in an interview with Kyodo News.

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and South Korean President Park Geun Hye agreed in a face-to-face meeting Monday to speed up talks to address the comfort women issue. —Kyodo News
Train crash in northern Bavaria kills two

BERLIN — A passenger train collided with an articulated lorry at a railway crossing in northern Bavaria late on Thursday, killing two people and injuring several others, police said yesterday.

The train was carrying around 40 people when it rammed into a lorry that had stopped on the railway tracks near Freihung, northeast of Nuremberg at around 2100 GMT on Thursday evening, police said. The trailer was separated from the lorry due to the force of the collision and dragged several hundred metres by the passenger train. Both vehicles then caught fire, police said. The 30-year-old lorry driver was killed and another body was found in the train driver’s cab, they said. The lorry’s co-drivers escaped with light injuries. Of the sixteen passengers treated for injuries, four were taken to hospital but their condition is not critical, police said.— Reuters

Europe predicts 3m migrants to arrive by 2017

BRUSSELS — The European Commission expects some 3 million asylum seekers to arrive in the European Union by 2017, who would boost the EU’s economic output and even improve public finances in the long-term if integrated into the workforce.

In its economic forecasts for the 28-nation bloc on Thursday, the EU executive arm assumed for the purpose of its simulation that 1 million asylum seekers would arrive in the EU this year, another 1.5 million in 2016 and half a million in 2017.

If half of the arrivals are granted asylum, three-quarters of those who are of working age, they would increase the EU’s labour force by 0.1 percent this year and by 0.3 percent in both 2016 and 2017, the Commission said.

If the accepted migrants have the same skills as the citizens in the countries that take them in, the EU GDP (gross domestic product) would increase by 0.21 percent in 2016, and 0.26 percent in 2017.

If they are all low-skilled, their contribution to EU GDP would be smaller at 0.14 percent next year and 0.18 percent in 2017, the Commission simulation showed.

The migrants would have a tiny negative impact on EU public finances, increasing the aggregate EU budget deficit by as little as 0.04 percent of GDP in both 2016 and 2017, but improving it by 0.03 and 0.05 percent of GDP in 2019 and 2020, the simulation showed.

“While unevenly distributed across countries, the estimated additional public expenditure related to the arrival of asylum seekers is limited for most EU Member States,” the Commission said.

It said that for the most affected transit countries, the budget cost would be a maximum of 0.2 percent of GDP in 2015, broadly stabilising in 2016.

For countries that are the final destination of asylum seekers, such as Germany, the impact amounts to a maximum of 0.2 percent of GDP in 2015, with a small further increase in some countries in 2016, the Commission said.

Sweden, which has among the highest share of refugees as a percentage of the population in the EU, would see an increased impact on the headline budget balance than others at closer to 0.5 percent of GDP this year and smaller positive effects on growth, the Commission said.

The Commission made a separate simulation of the economic impact of asylum seekers for Germany because that is the country that will take in the bulk of the refugees.

Due to the migrants, German GDP will be 0.43 percent bigger next year and 0.56 percent higher in 2017. The positive effect would rise to 0.72 percent by 2020, the simulation for migrants of the same skill-set as the local population showed.

But the additional goods and services produced by the accepted migrants would not be enough to boost overall wealth for all Germans — German GDP per capita is to fall by 0.6 percent next year and still be 0.3 percent lower in 2020.

The migrants will also have a tiny, but still negative impact on German public finances — in the more optimistic scenario of all migrants having the same skills as locals, the German budget would record a net cost of 0.25 percent of GDP in 2016, and a negative impact of just 0.05 percent in 2020.— Reuters

Greece approves reform bill, eyes bailout tranche

ATHENS — Greece’s parliament approved early yesterday a bill with reforms prescribed by the country’s international lenders, ahead of a euro zone finance ministers meeting in three days which will decide if Athens qualifies for fresh bailout funds. Greece needs to legislate a series of reforms to pass the first review of a new bailout worth up to 86 billion euros ($61.45 billion) it signed up to earlier this year. It must also re-vamp its banking system by the end of the year to start talks on much-needed debt relief which Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras has made a priority.

A majority of lawmakers in the 300-seat parliament approved a bill which improves on previous legislation for the calculation of pensions, forces Greece to comply with EU energy efficiency rules, lifts obstacles for the sale of Greece’s largest port and scraps tax breaks for farmers.

Passing the bill was crucial, but there are still issues holding up a review which can unlock 2 billion euros of aid, a sub-tranche of an initial 26 billion instalment. Greece’s compliance assessment to date is set to be on the agenda of a session of euro zone ministers, known as the Eurogroup, on Monday. Athens and its lenders are still at odds over an effective mechanism for Greece’s troubled banks — which will be receiving bailout aid — to address non-performing loans affecting businesses, but also thousands of mortgage holders.

A 23 percent VAT tax on private education is also a thorn in talks with lenders. Athens signed up to the measure to plug a 300-400 million euro fiscal gap but later found it was highly controversial in a country where parents supplement perceived shortcomings in the state education system with extra tuition, and is now trying to find other ways to raise the revenue.

Deputy Finance Minister Tryfon Alexiadis said the government would announce its decision over the measures which will replace the VAT on education “within the day, tomorrow (Fri-day) the latest.”

“The issue will be solved,” he said.—Reuters
Reap the rewards of lifelong learning

Kyaw Thura

MOST would agree with the assumption that receiving a good education from an early age maximises our ability to land lucrative and interesting jobs. It is equally true that a person’s capacity to earn is directly proportional to their motivation to learn. However, it is erroneous to exclusively associate learning with formal education. There are other options that are equally valuable and should not be disregarded. To bridge the educational and vocational divide, we need to be in constant pursuit of learning opportunities. In other words, we can improve our capacity through the process of lifelong learning, which it itself generates a sense of personal fulfillment.

Lifelong learning is the process of extensive, continuous and flexible learning. It opens the door to new possibilities and builds individual capabilities. In a world of rapid change, we must continuously update our competencies. Knowledge and ability does not remain fresh for long. Furthermore, research has found that continuous learning keeps the brains active and makes us happier.

We should bear in mind that learning is more than the mere acquisition of facts. It also involves improving personal and professional development and those who commit themselves to lifelong learning are almost certainly guaranteed to have a better quality of life.

All things considered, it is lifelong learning that provides personal and professional satisfaction. It also widens our scope of knowledge and possessing transferable skills better enables us to cope with change, which is inevitable in today’s highly competitive world.

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 thanthunnaungdn@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.

The International community should avoid fueling divisions by taking sides. People in Myanmar want reconciliation

U Soe Thane

5 November 2015 1:23pm ET

FIVE years ago, no one could have dreamed of what is happening today in Myanmar. Tens of thousands of people are attending rallies around the country, political parties are organising freely and national newspapers are publishing – uncensored – hundreds of stories on Sunday’s election. Millions more people are following the latest news and commentary online, via new mobile phones and laptops.

There are clear signs of interest world-wide in our upcoming general elections, the first since Myanmar’s transition to a democratic system began in earnest, perhaps three or four years ago as a “miracle” to be embraced, it is now equally fashionable to criticise, assuming cynical motives behind key policies and initiatives.

People in Myanmar want reconciliation among opposing groups in society, and above all they want a good future for their children. In this respect we have benefited from international support in various forms. But now is the time for the international community to stand firmly on the side of reconciliation and avoid fuelling divisions by taking sides, either in the run-up to the November 8 polls or in their aftermath.

After four years of concerted liberalization and reform measures, the situation in my country is very different from before. These elections take place at a time of growing awareness, openness and a new sense of accountability among public organisations, official and otherwise, toward citizens as well as to the wider world.

We have laid the foundations for future economic growth, provided macroeconomic stability, overhauled the old and dysfunctional exchange rate system, nearly better than before, and liberalized trade. We have managed two very important international tenders, on telecommunications and oil and gas exploration, which altogether have brought in several billion dollars in investment.

Also, we have taken significant steps towards coming back to the international economic community. We are now working together with the International Monetary Fund, World Bank, the Asian Development Bank and other leading institutions.

All this while simultaneously allowing for free labour unions for the first time in decades, passing a new minimum wage bill, and improving environmental protection. The Myanmar economy has been growing at 7% to 8% a year, far better than before. It’s not enough. But it’s a start, a foundation. What we need now is and a stable government that can build on this success. With five more years of stable government we can oversee a transformation of the Myanmar economy, and begin to see real progress towards industrialization and the development of other modern sectors.

Over several weeks, international observers have been arriving in droves in Myanmar. While many are participating in observation missions in good faith, there are also groups that still need more historical and contextual understanding of the government’s multifaceted approach to reform.

Many countries that regularly hold elections every four or five years have experienced problems. I still remember during the 2000 US electoral contest between George W. Bush and Al Gore, the latter filed a complaint against the former. Similarly, there were complaints in the Indonesian presidential elections contested by Joko Widodo and Prabowo Subianto.

I urge our country’s Union Election Commission to do its utmost to ensure a successful poll, and all parties and candidates to respect the results, no matter what outcome. If necessary, the UEC must penalize offenders just like a football referee shows a red card after bad fouls.

Some independent polls, conducted informally by civil society organisations and research institutes, suggest that the opposition National League for Democracy will do better than the ruling Union Solidarity and Development Party in central Myanmar, but not by the margins some believe. The race may be close. The elections in ethnically diverse minority states will likely be dominated by local parties representing their own communities.

Smart and pragmatic lawmakers are needed for our new parliament, above all those who can draft and pass new laws and get things done. They are the ones who can complete Myanmar’s transition into a democratic, federal, developed and peaceful country.

Reforms initiated by the current government must be continued. Otherwise, the next five years will be a setback for the country.

The government has pledged to respect the results of the vote. Let us then hope for successful elections and the selection of qualified, selfless members of parliament who show the highest levels of integrity.

Mr. Soe Thane is a union minister in the Office of the President of Myanmar and a key economic adviser.

Vietnamese airline seeks Myanmar employees for new routes

Vietnamese airline Vietjet is currently seeking Myanmar employees to work as cabin crew members on its newly launched domestic routes, according to the aviation company.

The company is seeking industry workers between 20 and 30 years of age who have passed the Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC) with a score of over 400 for vacant stewards and flight attendant positions, an official said.

Interested candidates may send their applications to farecruitement@vietjetair.com. Deadlines for applicants who will be interviewed in Hanoi are 15 November and those who will be interviewed in Ho Chi Minh City are 30 November.

Vietjet is launching two new routes linking tourist destinations and economic hubs in Vietnam—Nha Trang-Hai Phong route and Vinh-Buon Ma Thuot route. The new routes will be operational in November.

Vietnamese passengers travelling to and from Yangon will be able to fly via Vietjet’s hubs in Ho Chi Minh City, Nha Trang and Vinh. As part of its plans to expand its network across the region, Vietjet, the first privately owned airline in Vietnam, has signed agreements with the world’s leading aircraft-manufacturers to purchase modern jetliners.

The Vietnam-based airline first opened its route between Yangon and Ho Chi Minh City in October this year.

A plane of Vietjet on the runway. PHOTO: VIETJET
Former regional college students open foundation office

FORMER graduates of Mandalay Regional College (1976 to 1982) opened the former students foundation office at Mingala Market in Mandalay on Thursday. The foundation aims to provide social and health assistance to faculty members and students and to organise gatherings. The foundation holds funds of K80 million (more than US$62,000) for the project. Since its establishment in September 2014, the foundation has provided cash assistance for the medical treatment of 14 faculty members.

—Tin Maung (Mandalay)

District officials inspect road upgrade in Shan State

SPECIAL Road Construction Group No 3 of Public Works under the Ministry of Construction is placing asphalt on a 33-mile stretch of the Mongton-Tahsan in Mongpan Township, eastern Shan State.

District’s deputy commissioner U Noe Wai, who chairs the Monghsat District Management Committee, Commander of District Police Force Police Lt-Col Tun Myat Kyaw and officials inspected the upgrading process. Assistant Engineer U Aung Aung and officials of the road construction group briefed them on the progress of tarmacking and the requirements of the tasks.

—District IPRD

Korean company launches freight forwarding service

CJ Korea Express RT Myanmar launched its freight forwarding, third party logistics and warehouse services during a ceremony at Novotel Yangon Max Hotel in Yangon on 5 November.

The company’s local headquarters are located on a site comprising 3.25-acres at the Yangon Freight Transport Branch of the department in Insein Township. The company has 60 vehicles on hand to serve its customers.

CJ Korea Express RT Myanmar was established as a joint venture between the Road Transport of the Ministry of Rail Transportation and Singapore’s CJ Korea Express Asia Pte Ltd. Yangon Region Minister for Transport U Aung Khin and the Ambassador of the Republic of Korea Mr Lee Baek Soon officiated the opening ceremony.

—MNA

Palethwe monsoon paddy thriving in villages of Meiktila

PALETHWE monsoon paddy is thriving on a 100-acre model farm in Kwetnega village-tract, Meiktila Township, Head of Township Department of Agriculture U Maung Maung Nyein said.

“The model paddy plots in Kwetnega, Dahattan and Pantin villages are thriving. The 115-day Palethwe paddy plantation is expected to yield 150 baskets per acre. It can be harvested next month. We will report the exactly amount harvested at that time,” the officer said.

Farmers grow groundnut, chili, sunflowers and sesame plants irrigated by the Chaung-gauk Dam of Pyawbwe Township.

—Chan Thar (Meiktila)

Theegon terminal first-aid clinic nears completion

AN emergency first-aid clinic is under construction near the Theegon 285-mile bus terminal on the Yangon-Mandalay expressway in Meiktila, Mandalay Region. Construction began in May of this year, it is currently 80 percent complete.

“More than K35.5 million (US$27,000) was donated by Singapore’s Red Cross Society to the construction of the first-aid clinic. Construction entrepreneur U Soe Aung, who built the first-aid clinic at Pyu 115-mile station, is leading the Theegon construction programme. “Construction is expected to be completed by November,” said deputy commanding officer U Nay Oo of the Meiktila Township Red Cross Brigade.

A temporary first-aid clinic was opened in July 2013 north of the Theegon 285-mile terminal. So far the clinic has provided emergency services to more than 220 persons injured in around 120 road accidents. The clinic reported that 39 additional people died from road accidents.

—Chan Thar (Meiktila)
Chemical weapons used by fighters in Syria

The Hague — Chemical weapons experts have determined that mustard gas was used in a Syrian town where Islamic State insurgents were battling another group, according to a report by an international watchdog seen by Reuters.

A confidential 29 October report by the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), a summary of which was shown to Reuters, concluded “with the utmost confidence that at least two people were exposed to sulphur mustard” in the town of Marea, north of Aleppo, on 21 August.

“it is very likely that the effects of sulphur mustard resulted in the death of a baby,” it said.

The findings provide the first official confirmation of use of sulphur mustard, commonly known as mustard gas, in Syria since it agreed to destroy its chemical weapons stockpile, which included mustard gas.

The report did not mention Islamic State, as the fact-finding mission was not mandated to assign blame, but diplomatic sources said the chemical had been used in the clashes between Islamic State and another rebel group taking place in the town at the time.

“It raises the major question of where the sulphur mustard came from,” one source said. “Either they (IS) gained the ability to make it themselves, or it may have come from an undisclosed stockpile overtaken by IS. Both are worrying options.”

Syria is supposed to have completely surrendered the toxic chemicals 18 months ago. Their use violates UN Security Council resolutions and the 1997 Chemical Weapons Convention.

The report, which will be formally presented to UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon later this month, adds to a growing body of evidence that the Islamic State group has obtained, and is using, chemical weapons in both Iraq and Syria.

Kurdish authorities said earlier this month that Islamic State fighters fired mortar rounds containing mustard agent at Kurdish peshmerga fighters in northern Iraq during clashes in August. They said blood samples taken from around 35 fighters who were exposed in the attack southwest of the regional capital of Erbil showed “signatures” of mustard gas.

A team of OPCW experts has been sent to Iraq to confirm the findings and is expected to obtain its own samples later this month, one diplomat said.

A special session has been called by the OPCW’s 41-member Executive Council to discuss the Syrian findings and it will be held in The Hague on 23 November, sources at the OPCW told Reuters. Sulphur mustard — which causes severe delayed burns to the eyes, skin and lungs — is a so-called Schedule 1 chemical agent, meaning it has few uses outside warfare.

A second report by the OPCW fact-finding mission to Syria said the team had so far been unable to substantiate claims from the Syrian government that its forces had been targeted by insurgents using chemical weapons.

The mission “cannot confidently determine whether or not a chemical was used as a weapon” by militants in the Jobar area on August, 2014, it said. Syria agreed in September 2013 to destroy its entire chemical weapons programme under a deal negotiated with the United States and Russia after hundreds of people were killed in a sarin gas attack in the outskirts of the capital, Damascus.

The last of 1,300 tonnes of chemical weapons declared to the OPCW was handed over in June, 2014, but several Western governments have expressed doubt that the government of President Bashar al-Assad declared its entire arsenal.

With Syria’s civil war in its fifth year, chlorine has also been used illegally in systematic attacks against civilians, the OPCW found.

In the Idlib province south of Aleppo, the report said, there were several incidents between March and May of 2015 which “likely involved the use of one or more toxic chemicals”.

A UN-OPCW joint investigative mission has been assigned to determine who was behind those attacks. —Reuters

British attempts to return tourists from Egypt thrown into chaos

London — British attempts to return thousands of tourists stranded in the Red Sea resort of Sharm el-Sheikh were thrown into chaos yesterday when the easyJet airline said it had been refused permission to fly some of its planes to Egypt.

Prime Minister David Cameron hailed flights to and from the Egyptian resort on concerns that a bomb planted by Islamic State militants downed a Russian airplane which had left the same airport on 31 October, killing all 224 people on board.

But Britain, which has about 20,000 of its tourists in Sharm al-Sheikh, was planning to return them from the resort yesterday.

They were due to travel only with hand luggage due to security concerns.

easyJet said just two of its 10 planned flights had been given permission to fly out of Egypt. Other airlines said their flights would go ahead.

Egypt’s civil aviation minister denied it was blocking any flights but said the numbers were limited by airport capacity.

“The situation for UK flights in Sharm el Sheikh remains fluid. We are being advised that the Egyptian authorities will allow a restricted number of UK flights,” easyJet said.

“We are working with the UK Government at the highest level on a solution,” it added in a statement. Britain’s public air-ing of its concerns about a bomb being responsible for the Russian air crash angered Egypt, which depends on tourism revenue, and drew criticism from the Kremlin, which said it had not been given details of the intelligence behind Britain’s move.

Thomas Cook Airlines, easyJet, privately-held Monarch, British Airways and Thomson operate direct flights between Britain and Sharm al-Sheikh.

Monarch said all of its five planned flights from the resort would leave yesterday. British Airways said its one planned flight would go ahead. —Reuters

Palestinian government shuts Arab newspaper over report on Israel ties

RAMALLAH — The Palestinian administration in the occupied West Bank has shut the local office of a pan-Arab newspaper this week after accusing it of “offensive” reporting on Palestinian security coordination with Israeli officials.

As Palestinian-Israeli street violence surged last month, Al Araby Al-Jadeed daily accused the administration of jailing “dozens of (Palestinian) political prisoners on charges of resisting (the Israeli) occupation”.

The newspaper, which publishes a broadsheet in London, Beirut and Doha, also alleged torture within Palestinian jails. It branded the closure as politically motivated.

Such domestic scrutiny is tough for the US-backed Palestinian president, Mahmoud Abbas, whose forces have reportedly helped Israel curb violence in the West Bank while he public-ly condemns Israeli crackdowns and policies regarding a contested Jerusalem shrine.

The Palestinian administration closed Al Araby Al-Jadeed’s Ramallah bureau on Tuesday “as it lacked a license to operate”, Deputy Information Minister Mahmoud Khalifa told Reuters.

He did not elaborate. An 20 October letter from the Information Ministry to the attorney-general, a copy of which was seen by Reuters, said the newspaper had published a report that was “offensive to the State of Palestine and its security services”.

The report “made it look as if the security services have no job except to make arrests and to carry out security (coordination with Israel) which in itself is an incitement against the authority”, the letter said.

Naela Khalil, head of Al-Araby Al-Jadeed in the West Bank, described the bureau’s closure as “an attack on freedom of the press”. She said she had received no notification from the Information Ministry about any legal problem with the license, she said. “The Information Ministry said they were some reports we wrote that they did not like.” —Reuters

Tourists leave after finishing their holidays, at the airport of the Red Sea resort of Sharm al-Sheikh. Photo: Reuters
US pushes spectrum for 5G, civil drones, flight tracking

GENEVA — The United States wants a global deal to reallocate parts of the radio spectrum for the next “5G” generation of mobile devices, a boom in civilian drones and a worldwide flight tracking system, senior US officials said on Thursday.

Tom Wheeler, chairman of the US Federal Communications Commission, told a news conference that world powers would have to decide whether to follow the US example in allocating more of their spectrum to mobile telephony.

“The big question here is will the other countries of the world be participating in meeting that spectrum need in a way that produces scope and scale economies that allows the wonder of wireless and truly the transformative power that this represents to individual human beings, let alone to economies,” he asked.

The United States will start auctioning part of its VHF spectrum on 29 March next year, and wants others to join in to reduce costs for global business.

Wheeler was speaking during the first week of the month-long World Radiocommunication Conference in Geneva, held every four years by the United Nations’ International Telecommunication Union.

Ambassador Decker Anstrom, head of the US delegation to the conference, said there were a “variety of views” among delegates on the issue, and on another debate about spectrum for civilian drones, which are expected to become a $80 billion business in the United States alone over the next decade.

Civilian drones could monitor incidents at nuclear power stations, check the safety of pipelines, watch over wildlife preserves and help in weather forecasting, he said.

Anstrom said he was very optimistic that a global agreement was possible as early as next week on a third issue — providing spectrum for global flight tracking.—Reuters

Talking robots a hit at Shanghai expo

SHANGHAI — “Can I buy you a cup of coffee?” said Joao Jiao, who was a robot booth at the National Exhibition and Convention Centre in Shanghai.

“I can also sing songs, too,” the tiny voice continued.

As she finished, the hit song “Little Apple” started blasting from speakers in the hall.

Jiao Jiao, is a robot developed by a technology company in east China’s Jiangsu Province. She is one of the many robots among manufacturers as they rush to make industrial robots to offset China’s lack of workers and soaring labour costs.

At the Shanghai expo, which runs from 3 to 7 November, both domestic and foreign manufacturers have brought their latest robots in sale to China’s appetite for smart products.

Siasun Robot & Automation Co. Ltd, which has its headquarters in northeast China’s Shenyang City, chose the expo to unveiled China’s first domestic seven-axis robot.

“Our product is of highly flexibility and precise,” a Siasun spokesperson said at the expo. “It will contribute to industrial manufacturing.”

The importance of industrial robots is reflected in the decision to expand the robot exhibition area to 30,000 square metres this year, 20,000 square metres more than last year, according to the event organiser.

Chinese businesses are looking to industrial robots to ease the pressure of a lack of manpower.

China is currently the world’s biggest robot market. Some 56,000 industrial robots were sold here last year, up 55 percent year on year — accounting for one quarter of global robot sales, according to China Economic and Social Council.

The government has named robots one of the ten key industries to develop in a fresh government blueprint that outlines China’s development for the next five years.

“As the robotics industry gains steam, robots will not only expand to dangerous jobs, but also replace cheap labour at repetitive and boring jobs,” said Dai Liu, head of the Shanghai Robot Industry Association.

“I see bright prospects for the industry,” said Liu Jia, chief of Siasun.

“Technological innovation is our key competitiveness,” said Jia. People are silhouetted as they pose with mobile devices in front of a screen projected with a Facebook logo, in this picture illustration. —Reuters

Facebook set to steal more TV ad dollars as video views soar

SAN FRANCISCO — Watch out, Time Warner (TWX.N). It’s not just Netflix (NFLX.O) and Hulu you have to worry about.

Along with Facebook’s (FB.O) strong financial results released on Wednesday was a number that should send a chill through the cable and broadcast industry.

The social network, whose shares rose 5 percent to hit a record high of $109.44 on Thursday — said its video views surged to 8 billion per day in the third quarter, from just 1 billion a year earlier, highlighting a rising threat to TV ad revenue.

The growth in video views presents the most significant near-term opportunity for Facebook as the company looks to grab a bigger slice of the TV advertising market, analysts said. Cable companies in particular face an increasing threat to revenue as consumers switch to online streaming services such as Netflix and Hulu, a trend known as “cord-cutting.”

“We think (Facebook) looks like the next big budget to shift online and FB is well positioned as one of the top properties to benefit,” Susquehanna Financial analyst Shyam Patil said.

Atlantic Equities analyst James Cordwell said that about 50 percent of all media consumption was now online, but only 17 percent of non-search ad budgets were spent online.

“So, the opportunity for Facebook is to drive that 17 percent up to 50 percent, which would represent a $150 billion incremental advertising spending shifting from offline platform to online platforms,” he said. “And the only place that can come from in meaningful volumes is TV.”—Reuters

Volkswagen sales in Japan halve in October

TOKYO — New Volkswagen vehicle sales in Japan halved in October amid the German automaker’s public relations disaster stemming from a diesel emissions scandal, an industry body said yesterday.

Sales of new imported vehicles in the country, including those built abroad by Japanese automakers, fell 6.6 percent to 21,068 units, according to the Japan Automobile Importers Association.

Sales of foreign-brand vehicles dropped 10.0 percent to 17,535 units, while those of Japanese-brand cars rose 14.8 percent to 3,533 units.

By brand, Mercedes-Benz ranked top with 4,109 units sold, down 4 percent, for a market share of 19.50 percent. BMW was second with 3,190 units, up 10.0 percent, for a 15.14 percent share, followed by Volkswagen with 2,403 units, down 48.0 percent, for a share of 11.41 percent.

Among Japanese brands, Toyota’s sales decreased 9.9 percent to 1,310 units, while Nissan sold 1,281 units, down 8.4 percent.

Although Volkswagen diesel vehicles have not been sold in Japan, the revelation of its diesel emission scandal in mid-September led to a fall of 9.1 percent in sales in the month, which significantly decreased further in October.

Volkswagen came third for the first time in five years and one month in the monthly sales ranking. Before the scandal emerged, however, its sales were robust in August with an increase of 16.4 percent.

The image of German automaker is expected to be dented further after the exposure of another scandal related to the emission of carbon dioxide in gasoline cars, making it certain that Volkswagen will slip from the top sales position in Japan among imported vehicles that it has maintained for 15 years since 2000.—Kyodo News
Renewable energy supply to double in major economies by 2030

LONDON — Renewable energy supply in eight major economies will collectively more than double by 2030 due to new national climate and energy plans, according to a study by the think tank World Resources Institute (WRI).

Total clean energy supply from eight of the world’s 10 largest greenhouse gas emitters - Brazil, China, the European Union, India, Indonesia, Japan, Mexico and the United States - will jump to 20,000 terawatt hours (TWh) from around 9,000 TWh in 2009.

That is equivalent to India’s current energy demand. “These new renewable energy targets send strong signals to energy markets and investment circles,” said Jennifer Morgan, Global Director, Climate Programme, WRI.

“Combined with the Paris climate agreement, it’s clear that renewable energy is poised to surge forward in the next 15 years bringing clean and affordable power to millions of people worldwide.”

These economies are among many which have announced new renewables targets in the past 12 months ahead of a United Nations’ climate conference in Paris from 30 November to 11 December to fight global warming from 2020.

Canada and Russia, which are also among the world’s top 10 emitting countries, were not included in the study because they have not announced post-2020 renewable energy targets.

So far, plans submitted to the UN by around 150 countries to cut greenhouse gases will only slow climate change and not limit rising global temperatures to two degrees Celsius, a threshold seen by scientists as avoiding the worst effects of climate change.

—Reuters

Finnish PM says government could collapse

HELSINKI — Finnish Prime Minister Juha Sipila said his centre-right coalition government could collapse if it fails to agree on healthcare reforms that include spending cuts of up to 3 billion euros ($2.14 billion).

The reforms are a key part of the government’s plan to balance the public finances over the long term in Finland, a eurozone member country now mired in recession.

“It is very likely that I will go to meet the president tomorrow,” Sipila told a news conference yesterday, meaning the resignation of the three-party government.

Sipila and his Centre party, which has rural roots, wants to divide the country into 18 regions where governmental bodies would decide on health care services.

But the National Coalition party, led by Finance Minister Alexander Stubb, favours a model of just five regions, arguing that a smaller number would ensure a more equal share of resources between the regions. It also says a larger number would threaten financial savings.

The third coalition partner, the nationalist Finns Party, has accepted Sipila’s proposal.

National Coalition earlier on Thursday asked for a time-out, but Sipila said they had spent quite a lot of time already seeking a solution.

“It is not about just a number (of regions), it is about the whole structure and content of the reform,” he said.

The coalition, which took office in May, has had difficulty finding common ground on several thorny issues, including labour market reform and the handling of Europe’s migrant crisis.

The anti-immigration Finns Party has already withdrawn its support for some government plans following a steep decline in its support.

Overhauling the health care system, billed as the country’s most important reform of the decade, has long vexed politicians. The previous left-right government put the reform on hold due to disagreement among the parties as well as constitutional worries.

Finland has a generous welfare system but its population of 5.5 million is ageing fast and is also spread thinly over a large territory, with many Finns living in small, remote communities.

—Reuters

Major mafia trial opens in Rome over case that rattled Italy

ROME — A one-eyed former neo-fascist gangster and 45 other defendants went on trial on Thursday accused of running a mafia crime ring in Rome that skimmed millions of euros off city hall contracts.

Prosecutors say their year-long investigation has laid bare systematic corruption in the city as politicians, bureaucrats and businessmen hooked up with mobsters to rig public tenders on everything from creating refugee centres to rubbish collection.

Massimo Carminati, a one-time member of Rome’s notorious far-right Magliana Gang, and his sidekick Salvatore Buzzi, a convicted murderer, are accused of running the operation, which prosecutors say represented a new type of mafia in Italy.

Neither man will appear in court during the trial, which is expected to last until at least next July, but they will follow proceedings via video links from the high security jail where they are being held.

They have denied they have links to the mafia, which would bring them longer prison terms and tougher jail conditions than simple corruption convictions. “In this whole story, the thing which has really annoyed Carminati is the fact that his name has been associated with the words ‘mafia’ and ‘drugs’. He has nothing to do with the mafia,” said his lawyer Giosse Naso as he arrived at the courthouse.

Buzzi’s lawyer said his client wanted to strike a plea bargain with prosecutors, looking for a maximum four-year prison term.

“That is reasonable, given that we deny any mafia involvement,” Alessandro Diddi told reporters on Thursday.—Reuters
China, Vietnam launch joint inspection of waters outside mouth of Beibu Gulf

HANOI — China and Vietnam agreed to launch joint inspection on the waters outside the mouth of the Beibu Gulf in December, said a joint communiqué released yesterday.

The inspection can be seen as an important threshold for further maritime cooperation between the two countries, according to the document. The two sides also planned to steadily promote the negotiation of demarcation of the waters outside the mouth of the Beibu Gulf, and actively foster the joint development of these waters.

The joint communiqué was issued during Chinese President Xi Jinping’s two-day state visit to Vietnam.

The Beibu Gulf is an half-closed bay surrounded by Chinese and Vietnamese territories and a traditional fishery place for the two countries.

In 2000, the two countries signed agreements on the demarcation of the Beibu Gulf and fishing cooperation in such area. On maritime issues, the two sides should seek basic and long-standing solution acceptable to both sides through friendly consultations and negotiations, and actively explore transitional ways, which would not affect each other’s stance and viewpoints, including the study and negotiations on joint development, according to the communiqué.—Xinhua

Japan transport minister promotes high speed rail in Malaysia

KUALA LUMPUR — Japan’s Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism Minister Keiichi Ishii pitched his country’s shinkansen bullet train system in his meeting with Malaysian regulators in Kuala Lumpur on Thursday.

Ishii paid a visit to the Land Public Transport Commission which is tasked with overseeing Malaysia’s first high-speed railway project that will be jointly built with Singapore. Ishii’s first trip abroad since becoming transport minister in October “is a clear message to Malaysia about the enthusiasm of the Japanese government on the high-speed rail project,” a ministry spokesman told reporters.

At the meeting with commission Chairman Syed Hamid Albar and other senior officials, Ishii gave a presentation on Japan’s safe and advanced shinkansen technology and the funding available through entities such as the Japan Bank of International Cooperation or the Japan International Cooperation Agency.

The ambitious project was first announced by Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak and his Singaporean counterpart Lee Hsien Loong in February 2013.

The railway line is envisioned to stretch about 330 kilometers along the west coast of the Malay Peninsula, from Kuala Lumpur to Singapore, in a journey that is estimated to take about 90 minutes.

Japan’s Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism Minister Keichi Ishii (R) and Syed Hamid Albar, chairman of Malaysia’s Land Public Transport Commission. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

Syed Hamid said in his welcoming speech that Malaysia is now at a phase where it has launched a “market sensing” exercise for interested companies to submit their proposals about the project.

The exercise via a process called “request for information” is “intended to gauge market interest and gather industry opinion on selected commercial and technical aspects of the project,” according to a statement issued by transport authorities of Malaysia and Singapore last month.

“The feedback will inform the ongoing bilateral discussions and the formal tender process subsequently,” the statement said.

As of 16 October, around 150 companies from across the globe have responded. The exercise is expected to end next month.—Kyodo News

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV MOUNT BOKOR VOY NO (002)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV MOUNT BOKOR VOY NO (002) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 7.11.2015 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of H.P.T where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11:20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm to Claim’s Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the Vessel.

No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day.

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S YANG MING LINE
Phone No: 2301185

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV SEN TREASURE VOY NO (001)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV SEN TREASURE VOY NO (001) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 7.11.2015 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T.T (3) where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11:20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm to Claim’s Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the Vessel.

No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day.

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S COSCO SHIPPING CO LTD.
Phone No: 2301186

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV TAUNG GYI STAR VOY NO (TGS-005W)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV TAUNG GYI STAR VOY NO (TGS-005W) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 7.11.2015 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.

Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11:20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm to Claim’s Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the Vessel.

No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day.

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S CONTINETAL SHIPPING LINE PTE LTD.
Phone No: 2301185

ANNOUNCEMENT

1. AGENT FOR: M/S COSCO SHIPPING CO LTD.
Phone No: 2301185

2. AGENT FOR: M/S YANG MING LINE
Phone No: 2301185

3. AGENT FOR: M/S CONTINETAL SHIPPING LINE PTE LTD.
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Adele's new album ‘25’

LOS ANGELES — Singer Adele has revealed that Queen of Pop Madonna’s 1998 album Ray of Light was a direct inspiration for her own highly-anticipated record ‘25’.

Adele’s new album ‘25’ is scheduled for release on 20 November, reported Rolling Stone.

“You know what I found so amazing about that record? That’s the record Madonna wrote after having her first child, and for me, it’s her best. I was so all over the place after having a child, just because my chemicals were just having the roof and shit like that.

“I was just drifting away, and I couldn’t find that many examples for myself where I was like, ‘they truly came back to themselves,’ until someone was like, ‘Well, obviously, Ray of Light’”, Adele said. — PTI


dan Headley to join thriller ‘Woman in the Woods’ cast

LOS ANGELES — “Game of Thrones” actress Lena Headley will play the lead in thriller “The Woman in the Woods”. Filmaker Russell Friedenberg will direct the project from his own script, reported Variety.

“Frozen River” and “The Dry Land”, producer Heather Rae will back the project. The story will revolve around Headley’s character and her husband deciding to separate and going on one last family camping trip. But an evil presence lurks in the woods — and it soon influences the daughter.— PTI


dan Headley to join thriller ‘Woman in the Woods’ cast

LOS ANGELES — A terminally ill “Star Wars” fan, who was given just a few months to live, was granted his wish to see the new “The Force Awakens” film on Thursday, nearly two months before it comes out in theaters.

Daniel Fleetwood, a 31-year-old Texas man suffering from an aggressive form of cancer that has spread to 90 percent of his lungs, was able to watch an early cut of the highly-anticipated new “Star Wars” film, due in theaters on 18 December, his wife Ashley Fleetwood said on Facebook.

Daniel just finished watching an unfinished version of Star Wars: The Force Awakens!!! We would like to thank the awesome & talented JJ Abrams for calling us yesterday to tell us Daniel was getting his wish granted!” she said.

Daniel Fleetwood’s dying wish to see “The Force Awakens” went viral on social media in the past week with the hashtag ForceForDaniel, which garnered the support of “Star Wars” actors Mark Hamill (Luke Skywalker), Peter Mayhew (Chewbacca), and newcomer John Boyega.

Daniel tweeted on Thursday that he was “elated” that Fleetwood had been able to see the film.

Fleetwood and his wife have been documenting his health on social media, and in September he posted an update saying he had been given one or two months to live, due to how fast the cancer had spread.— Reuters

"I think what we’ve all really enjoyed are the people,” actress Julianne Moore said. “It’s a tremendously, wonderfully talented, fun group of people.”

“The Hunger Games: Mockingjay - Part 2” hits cinemas worldwide from 18 November.— Reuters

Russian prima ballerina Osipova to dance Williams’ ‘Streetcar’

LONDON — One of the golden couples of ballet, renowned Russian ballerina Natalia Osipova and Ukrainian dancer Sergei Polunin, said on Thursday they hope their real-life romance will influence a dance version of “A Streetcar Named Desire” to be staged in London.

Osipova, formerly of the Bolshoi and now a principal at Sadler’s Wells, and Polunin, who had to withdraw from some ballet performances in the United States earlier this year due to injury, wanted to tackle new styles while she was still young.

“It’s important not to do it at the end of your career but at your peak,” he said, translating her comments.

The 2016 season at Sadler’s Wells, one of the premiere dance venues in Britain, also includes a performance from the Russian for Osipova, said that she thinks Blanché is “a fantastic role...she’s always wanted to do that role”.

The programme also includes two other works choreographed especially for Osipova and will mark her first foray into contemporary dance, Sadler’s Wells said.

Polunin, translating from the Russian for Osipova, said that the dance adaptation inspired by the steamy 1947 play is to be choreographed by Arthur Pita, with whom Osipova has worked before.

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Greek fortress, key to ancient Jerusalem, uncovered, researchers say

JERUSALEM — After a century of searching, archaeologists say they have found the remnants of an ancient Greek fortress once a center of power in Jerusalem and a stronghold used to hold off a Jewish rebellion celebrated in the scriptural Book of the Maccabees.

Researchers have long debated over the location of the Acra in order to control the Jewish temple, said Doron Ben-Ami, a historian at the University of Haifa. They have found the remnants of an ancient Greek fortress, outside the walled Old City of Jerusalem on 3 November, 2015.

Beneath what a decade ago was a paved parking lot, Ben-Ami’s team sifted through an artificial hill made of layers of earth left behind by successive cultures.

In one area they uncovered stones from a section of a massive wall, the base of a tower and a sloping defensive embankment that nearby artifacts like coins and wine jug handles suggest date to the period of Antiochus.

Lead slings stones and bronze arrowheads from the period were also found, perhaps left over from battles between pro-Greek forces and Jewish rebels trying to take over the fortress.

“This is a rare example of how rocks, coins and dirt can come together in a single archaeological story that addresses specific historical realities from the city of Jerusalem,” Ben-Ami said. The Acra’s location was referred to vaguely in at least two ancient texts — the Book of Maccabees, which tells of the rebellion, and a historical work by Antiochus Flavius.

Historians tell how the rebels, led by Judas Maccabeus, took back Jerusalem from the Greeks, a victory marked in the Jewish festival Hannukah. But the Acra held out until rebels under Judas’ brother, Simon, later lay siege and forced its surrender.

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Federer downed by Isner, Nadal lucky to survive

PARIS — A long season took its toll on Roger Federer on Thursday as the Swiss was knocked out of the Paris Masters following a 7-6(3), 3-6, 7-6(5) third-round defeat by big serving John Isner.

The third-seeded Swiss held serve throughout but lost two tiebreaks against his American opponent, who will face Spain’s David Ferrer in the quarter-finals.

Federer, who won the Basel title last Sunday, seemed to be cruising after breaking through the second set, but Isner pushed him to another tiebreaker, using his devastating serve to prevail in the deciders. Isner, who fired down 27 aces, ended the contest on his fourth match point with a service winner.

“It’s tough to get out of the tournament not having lost your serve but that’s how it can go against John,” the former world number one told reporters.

“At the very end of the season, going two tournaments in a row after playing a lot of tennis in Basel the week before… there’s maybe a bit of a letdown after Basel.”

Federer’s defeat was the first upset at Bercy after world number one Novak Djokovic and second seed Andy Murray were joined by Rafa Nadal in the quarter-finals. Nadal saved a match point before subduing South African Kevin Anderson 4-6, 7-6(6), 6-2. The seventh seeded Spaniard appeared to be on his way out but a risky forehand winner allowed him to save match point at 5-6 down in the second set tiebreak. Anderson, who served 20 aces, cracked in the final set as Nadal secured a meeting with fourth seed Stan Wawrinka after the Swiss eased past Serbian Viktor Troicki 6-4, 7-5. Djokovic’s serve suffered a second-set malfunction against Gilles Simon but the Serb stayed on course for a third consecutive title on the banks of the River Seine with a 6-3, 7-5 victory.

He dropped serve four times in the second set but Simon could not capitalise as Djokovic set up a quarter-final against Tomas Berdych, who defeated local favourite Jo-Wilfried Tsonga 6-3, 6-4. Djokovic, however, will need to raise his game if he is to win a fourth title here as his possible final opponent, Murray, looked in ominous form.

— Reuters

Badminton tournament held in Mandalay

LONDON — Borussia Dortmund and Napoli were the headline acts to qualify for the Europa League knockout stage as both sides plundered a glut of goals in Thursday’s group matches.

Dortmund brushed aside Azerbaijani outfit FK Qabala 4-0 in Germany while Napoli went one better with a 5-0 home thrashing of Danish side Midtjylland.

They will be joined in the last 32 by Molde, who beat former European champions Celtic 2-1 away and Rapid Vienna, who won by the same score at Viktoria Plzen.

Braga, Sion, Schalke 04 and Lokomotiv Moscow, however, will have to wait after missing out on the chance of moving forward with two group matches to spare.

There were some superb finishes to savour as Dortmund eased past Qabala with Germany forward Marco Reus scoring first with an unstoppable low drive after 28 minutes to ensure the Germans had found the net in each of their last 31 competitive games.

Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang doubled the lead with a left-foot effort before halftime and a German Zenov own goal made it 3-0.

Henrikh Mkhitaryan rounded off the scoring with a shot that thundered into the net off the bar with 20 minutes remaining, leaving Dortmund top of Group C with 10 points.

Napoli waltzed into the knockout rounds and equalled their record European victory with goals from Omar El Kadouri, a Manolo Gabbiadini double, Christian Maggio and Jose Callejon.

The Italians are now unbeaten in 14 matches across all competitions and sit top of Group D with an unblemished 12 points from their four games.

Mohamed Elyounoussi and the 40-year-old Daniel Hestad were on target for Norwegian champions Molde as they extended their Group A lead and secured their spot in knockout stage.

There were also celebrations for Rapid Vienna who scored a goal in each half through Philipp Schobesberger to beat Plzen and maintain their 100 percent record in Group E.

Borussia Dortmund’s Marcel Schmelzer challenges Qabala’s Dodo during their Europa League group C soccer match in Dortmund, on 5 November 2015. Photo: REUTERS

MANDALAY District’s women’s (A) team and its men’s (B) team emerged victorious in the 2015 Inter-District Badminton Tournament in Mandalay Region, which was held at Bahan Gymnasium on Thursday.

The secretary of Mandalay Region Badminton Subcommittee U Tun Nwe Lin presented prizes to the winners of the women’s singles event, men’s singles event and mixed doubles.

Officials from Meiktila, Kyaukse and Mandalay District Sports and Physical Education Departments presented cash prizes and sports equipment to the winners.

Mandalay Region Minister for Social Affairs Dr Win Hlaing presented K300,000 each to the women’s and men’s top performing teams, while officials from Kaung Myat Company and New Cherry Trading gave sports equipment to other winners, as well as gifts for the coaches.— Tin Maung

Officials present prizes to winners in the Inter-District Badminton Tournament in Mandalay Region. Photo: Tin Maung

Dortmund, Napoli seal Europa League last 32 spots

New Liverpool boss Juergen Klopp made it three wins from his last three matches with a 1-0 success at Rubin Kazan in Russia that left them second in Group B, two points behind Sion.

Jordan Ibe netted his first goal for Liverpool, latching on to a neat pass from Roberto Firmino to power into the penalty area and fire right-footed into the bottom corner.

It was a good night for Premier League clubs as Tottenham Hotspur beat Anderlecht 2-1 to go top of Group J thanks to a stunning 87th-minute winner from Mousa Dembele.

After Anderlecht’s Imoh Ezekiel had cancelled out Harry Kane’s first-half opener in the 72nd minute, Dembele fired home an unstoppable left-foot shot from outside the area.

Sion had the chance to secure an early spot in the last 32 with a win over Girondins Bordeaux, but needed a 94th-minute own goal from Clement Chantome to snatch a 1-1 draw.— Reuters

Officials present prizes to winners in the Inter-District Badminton Tournament in Mandalay Region. Photo: Tin Maung