WHO Ambassador for Leprosy Elimination provides psychological support to residents of Mayanchaung resettlement village

By Ye Myint

Yangon, 29 June—The goodwill ambassador of the World Health Organization for Leprosy Elimination Mr. Yohei Sasakawa called for an end to discrimination against leprosy victims and their families on Sunday at the Mitta Philanthropic Centre of Mayanchaung leprosy resettlement village, emphasizing his point by shaking the hands of affected people at the event.

The purpose of his visit is to interact with residents of the village and raise awareness among the general public on the social problems attached to leprosy, said Mr. Sasakawa who is also the Chairman of The Nippon Foundation, a Japanese philanthropic organization.

“While travelling around the world to interact with affected people, I always visit their places to see what they need”, he told The New Light of Myanmar during his tour around Mayanchaung leprosy resettlement village in Hlegu Township, Yangon Region. “I do it as a main task before meeting with officials of the countries concerned”, he added.

Mr. Sasakawa, who has also been appointed as Japan’s Special Envoy for National Reconciliation in Myanmar, said he will meet the president and the minister for health during his stay in Myanmar.

Meeting a group of affected people who were (See page 2)
YANGON, 29 June—
Small and Medium Industrial Development Bank Ltd held its 19th annual general meeting in Bahan Township, with an introductory speech by Union Minister U Maung Myint and a speech by Union Minister U Maung Mau. The meeting in Yangon was attended by 1,667 people. Among the residents, 140 are affected by leprosy.

Despite meeting the target of achieving the WHO elimination level of having less than 1 patient in a population of 10,000 in 2003, about 3,000 new cases of leprosy are being reported yearly in Myanmar.

Banks survive on loans: Union Minister

YANGON, 29 June—
Union Minister for Foreign Affairs U Win Maung Lwin on Sunday afternoon attended a working lunch-eon hosted by Chinese Minister of Foreign Affairs Mr Wang Yi at Diaoyutai State Guesthouse. They exchanged views on further strengthening friendly ties between the two countries and cooperation matters.—MNA

MIC Chairman visits oil and gas pipeline control system in Beijing

BEIJING, 29 June—Chairman of Myanmar Investment Commission and Union Minister for Energy U Zeyar Aung, Union Ministers U Khin Maung Soe and Dr Myint Aung visited China National Petroleum Corporation-CNPC in Beijing on China on Saturday afternoon. They viewed round oil and natural gas pipeline control system of the corporation after holding discussions on cooperation in energy sector between Myanmar and China. —MNA

Continuing dental education programme held in Yangon

By Khaing Thandra Lwin

YANGON, 29 June—Dr Myint Htein, Dental Surgeon of M.H. Dental Clinic, urged the juniors to make group practice together with experienced seniors or teachers to be an academically sound practitioner, on Sunday at the continuing dental education programme.

In his point of view, Dr Myint Htein gave advice to the dentists that they should create warm and close relationships with patients, and conduct a good clinic management that plays a vital role in order to be a professional dentist. He also urged them to let the patients fully understand about the treatments they are going to receive and to try to perform painless treatments. He also discussed how to search modern treatments and products and information.

An experienced senior provided a suggestion to the dentists to surely make the patients’ records that can improve dental care and research. At the programme at Myanmar Medicine Council in Yangon, Prof: Dr Than Swe of the University of Dental Medicine (Yangon) also discussed the topic under the title of “Peripheral Tracing in Prosthodontics” to the attendees. —NLM

Report on ‘The State of the Tropics’ released in Yangon

A landmark report on ‘The State of the Tropics’ was launched here on Sunday with a keynote speech by Noble Peace laureate Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and an introduction by Professor Sandra Harding, Vice Chancellor of the James Cook University, Australia.

The report analyses a broad range of environmental, social and economic indicators and is designed by 12 research institutions from around the world to provide a foundation for policy makers, analysts and others to examine in greater detail the tropics and the major issues affecting the region.

Simultaneous, satellite-linked events also took place in Singapore and Australia, with introduc-tory remarks by Professor Bertil Andersson, President of Nanyang Technological University of the city state.

At the event held in Kandawgyi Palace Hotel in Yangon, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi said: “This report can make us understand the importance of biodiversity and quality survival among different species, peoples, cultures and attitudes and that to me is what politics is about. We all have to learn to live together. We are closer connected than ever before. When we talk about diseases and disease control we cannot avoid talking about education. It is not just about medical research, but education of the wider public. To be healthy they need to be educated on it.”

She added that everything is linked to-gether, health, education, economy. And everything should be linked, and politics is about improving the lives of all those who are in the area of influence, and that is the whole world.

The report said that over the past half-century the Tropics has emerged as an increasingly significant region, while more than 40 percent of the world’s population are now living in the tropics and this is likely to be close to 50 percent by 2050.

The report also mentioned that nearly one-third of all land experienced some form of degradation between 1981 and 2003, compared to the global rate of 20 percent, and that deforestation and poor agricultural practices are the major causes of degradation.

According to the report, extreme poverty has, globally, declined by almost 50 percent since the early 1980s, but more than two-thirds of the world’s poorest people live in the Tropics, and an estimated 508 million were considered undernourished.

Moreover, the Tropics have seen the faster urbanization rate than the global rate, and the proportion of the urban population living in slum conditions is higher than in the rest of the world. Poor sanitation is a major issue in many tropical nations which have 470 million slum inhabitants.

By Aung Khin

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi gives keynote launch address on ‘The State of the Tropics’.—PHOTO: AUNG KHIN

Union Minister U Soe Thane accepts cash donation for social organizations by official of Small and Medium Industrial Development Bank Ltd.—MNA
President U Thein Sein meets Vice President of India, visits Beijing Museum

BEIJING, 29 June — President U Thein Sein met with Vice President Mohammad Hamid Ansari of India in Beijing on Sunday morning.

They discussed promotion of bilateral relations, trade and investment, potentials of agricultural export from Myanmar to India, implementation of Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport Project and stability and security of border regions.

Ministers and senior officials from the two countries attended the meeting.

Myanmar and India established diplomatic relations in 1948.

As an exchange of visits between the leaders of the two countries, President U Thein Sein visited India in 2011 and 2012 and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh visited Nay Pyi Taw in 2012 and 2014.

Vice President Mohammad Hamid Ansari visited Myanmar in 2009. Trade between the two countries amounted to US$ 1.67 billion in 2013-2014, a 24.5 percent increase from 2012-2013.

President U Thein Sein, Vice President Mr. Li Yuan Chao of China and Vice President Mohammad Hamid Ansari of India viewed round the documentary photo exhibition held to mark the 60th anniversary of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence in Beijing on Sunday morning.

President U Thein Sein and delegation visited Beijing Museum in Beijing on Sunday afternoon, and viewed round ancient ceramics and the display of the history of ceramics and ancient social environment in China.

In the evening, President U Thein Sein met with staff, family members of Myanmar Embassy and military attaché’s office and scholars in Beijing and made a speech.

Union ministers, deputy ministers, Myanmar Ambassador to China U Thit Lin Ohn and officials attended the meeting.

Upper House speaker attends upgrading of schools

NAY PYI TAW, 29 June — Poverty can be reduced by raising education and health standards as part of long-term projects, said Speaker of the Upper House U Khin Aung Myint at a ceremony to upgrade a school in Yamethin Township on Saturday.

The school was built as a primary school in 1952 and became an affiliated high school in 2013.

The Upper House speaker also attended the ceremony to mark the upgrading of another school into a high school in Shwe Dar on the same day. The school was founded in 1943 and became an affiliated high school in 2010.

The Upper House speaker presented K 10 million donated by the Ministry of Border Affairs and stationery donated by the Upper House to the head monk of Hman Nan monastic education school in Pyawbwe.

The Upper House speaker also attended ceremonies to upgrade schools into high schools in Pyawbwe on Sunday. At the ceremonies, he urged the attendees to cooperate for the better future.

National development relies on natural resources, human resources: Union Election Commission Chairman

NAY PYI TAW, 29 June — A basic education middle school has got a new building in Sakar Inn Village, Tada U Township of Mandalay Region, on Sunday, sources said.

The new school building was handed over with a ceremony which was attended by Union Election Commission Chairman U Tin Aye and Mandalay Region Chief Minister U Ye Myint.

At the basic education high school of Tada U, U Tin Aye and U Ye Myint awarded prizes to students who matriculated with distinctions. Speaking at the ceremony, U Tin Aye stressed the world has come to accept the fact that both natural resources and human resources play a robust role in bolstering national development, citing developed countries which rely heavily on their skilled human resources in building infrastructure needed for development.
Fund for Emerald Green Project handed over

NYAUNGU, 29 June—A ceremony to hand over the fund for emerald green project was held at the hall in NyaungU of Mandalay Region recently.

On the occasion, Head of District Rural Development Department U Aung Shein said that a fund supervisory committee and financial committee have been formed in the project villages through the votes of local people. In addition, the accountability course has been provided to the officials. People from the project areas are also responsible for the development of their villages and must spend the allotted fund systematically, he said.

Officials of NyaungU Township Department of Rural Development handed over K30 million each to five project villages in NyaungU Township through the village project supervisory committees. Ye Thura Aung (NyaungU) of District Rural Development U Township Department.

Cash, construction materials

KYUNSU, 29 June—Tanimay Township Minister for Planning and Economic U Thein Lwin and Region Minister for Forestry and Mines U Tin Soe presented K1 million to the fund to townsenders at Panzivillage.

Dagon North Township celebrates Myanmar Music Day

YANGON, 29 June—A ceremony to mark the Myanmar Music Day was observed at the School for Girls (Htauakkkyant) of Social Welfare Department at No 45 on Pyay Road in Mingaladon Township of Yangon Region on Friday. Executive U Maung Maung Hteik read the message sent by the chairman of Myanmar Music Association and Secretary of Dagon Myothit (North) Township Music Association U Mann explaining facts about the Myanmar Music Day. Chairman of Dagon Myothit (North) Township Music Association vocalist Khin Nyunt Nyunt Thant and party donated K100,000 to the fund of the school and served the girls with foods.

Members of the association performed songs for the girls at the school. Khin Zaw (Mingala) provided cash assistance to 100 members.

Mandalay Region forms Consumer Protection Association

MANDALAY, 29 June—The formation of the Mandalay Region Consumer Protection Association was undertaken at its office on 38th street between 83rd and 84th streets in Mahauangmye Township in Mandalay Region on 26 June. U Hla Soe of the association explained future plans of the association.

saying that being a partner organization of the Consumer Protection Department, the association will check snacks and foods at the schools and markets for public foods safety not to eat the improper foods, meals and medicines. If the association accepts the information on sales of foods and drugs which are not suitable for consumption, coordination and giving educative talks will be given to the sellers. Being a social organization, the association can make coordination with sellers but will submit the information to the departments concerned to be able to take action against offenders.

The association was formed with 14 members. To carry out the works, the association invites new members. Min Htet Aung (Mandalay Sub-printing House)

Thabeikkyin Township WVO presents cash assistance to members

THABEIKKYN, 29 June—Thabeikkyin Township War Veterans Organization held the plenary meeting for 2014 at its office on 25 June. Organizers reported on the increase of members, uplift of living standard of families, creation of job opportunities and welfare affairs for organization members. Responsible persons presented K14,000 each as assistance to 100 members. Soe Naing Win (Thabeikkyin)

Medical university students gave talks to basic education students

Medical university students gave talks to basic education students
To mark Myanmar Women’s Day, members of Women’s Affairs Organization of Zigon Township, staff of Township Forest Department and local people participates in planting over 1,000 saplings along Zigon-Bawbin road in Htantabin Village of the township in Bago Region on Sunday.

**LOCAL NEWS**

**BEMS branch in Nyaunglebin Tsp gets new school building**

Nyaunglebin, 29 June—The handover ceremony of an upgraded new school building took place in Inkyaik Village of Nyaunglebin Township in Bago Region on Thursday. The Basic Education Primary School in the village was allowed to upgrade the Basic Education Middle School Branch in the 2014-15 academic year.

Motorcycle licences issued to locals

Karathuri, 29 June—Departmental officials from a combined team issued licences to motorcycles in Karathuri Sub-Township of Taninthayi Region on Friday. At the administrator office in Ward 2 of Karathuri, officials of Sub-Township General Administration Department, Directorate of Road Administration, Myanma Insurance, Myanmar Economic Bank, Customs Department and police force issued the licences to motorcycle owners. “The licences will be issued to locals during the designated period but action will be taken against the unlicensed motorcycles under the law, said an official.

Confiscated farmlands released by military units handed over to owners

Mandalay, 29 June—A ceremony to hand over confiscated farmlands to their rightful original owners was held at the monastery in Mongmao Village in Myitha Township of Mandalay Region on 25 June. On the occasion, Mandalay Region Chief Minister U Ye Myint said the land utilization management committees were formed at different levels in Mandalay Region in order to hand over the confiscated farmlands released by the armed forces to original owners. The region chief minister presented temporary certificates of farming rights to owners from Mongmao and Kanswe villages.

Buddhist monks donate food packets to Nay Pyi Taw General Hospital

Nay Pyi Taw, 29 June—Buddhist monks led by Abbot Bhaddanta Caritta of Saddhamma Waiponlapariya monastery in Danatheldi Ward of Nay Pyi Taw donated over 1,000 packets of foods to Nay Pyi Taw General Hospital on Sunday. The packets of foods were from the donations of local wellwishers who donate alms to the Buddhist monks in the early mornings. The abbot and Buddhist monks from the monastery are also helping people in natural disaster-hit areas, officials said.

Knowledge about traffic rules disseminated

Thandwe, 29 June—The talks on traffic rules was held at No 2 Basic Education High School in Thandwe of Rakhine State on Friday, attended by Headmaster U Ngwe Zan, teachers and students. IP Tun Hla Aung of the traffic police squad disseminated knowledge about traffic rules and disciplines for road users and

Mandalay Region government to create website for disseminating its information

Mandalay, 29 June—Preparations are being made for disseminating information from the Mandalay Region Government to local people through a website in early July.

The website will feature news on activities of region ministers, information about Mandalay Region, progress of economic, social, education and health sectors and traffic rules enforcement.

The website of the Mandalay Region government has been live since 18 June, with officials saying it is not complete, as offices of region ministers need to provide more information to the website. The news and information to be posted are to be sent to the region government, said an official of Mandalay Region Information and Public Relations Department.

The website is under www.mdyregiongov.mm Maung Pyi Thu (Mandalay)
**NEW DELHI, 29 June** — Western governments are rushing to visit India’s new Prime Minister Narendra Modi, drawn by the prospect of multi-billion-dollar deals as the government prepares to open the nascent defence industry to foreign investment.

Senior politicians from France, the United States and Britain arrive in quick succession over the next 10 days as Modi prepares to accelerate the modernisation of the country’s mostly Soviet-era weaponry.

Modi intends to build up India’s military capabilities and gradually turn the world’s largest arms importer into a heavy-weight manufacturer—a goal that has eluded every prime minister since independence in 1947. On Thursday the table is a proposal circulating within the new government to raise caps on foreign investment with one option to allow complete foreign ownership of some defence projects.

“All the countries are trying to make their case, especially as there is the sense that the Indian market will undergo a shift,” said Harsh Pant, professor of international relations at King’s College London.

“They get a sense from their dealings that something dramatic is going to happen and they want first-mover advantage,” said Pant, who worked in India’s foreign ministry.

In the second week of July, Britain is likely to send in Foreign Secretary William Hague and finance minister George Osborne, a British government source said on Friday.

Britain has drawn some cheer from the slow progress of the negotiations for the Rafale deal. The Eurofighter Typhoon was shortlisted along with the Dassault fighter before India announced the French jet was the winner.

In recent weeks, the government has been negotiating the deal with India’s defence ministry, thetimeout a source said.

The Eurofighter Typhoon will undergo a shift in India’s air defense, and the company is looking to build a third assembly line in India to make the aircraft.

India’s armed forces are looking to build more defence components without licences, and to increase the country’s capacity to make the aircraft.

**REPUBLIC OF PHILIPPINES**

**MANILA, 29 June** — Security forces went on full alert in the southern Philippines on Sunday, police said after military and intelligence reported sightings of Islamist militants in the region after the detention of a top al-Qaeda operative.

Last week, a team of soldiers and police officers arrested Kair Mundos, an expert bomb-maker and the “spiritual leader” of the Abu Sayyaf faction, which rose to notoriety last year by kidnapping foreigners.

Mundos is wanted by the United States, which put a $500,000 bounty up for his arrest.

“Information received with high reliability, revealed a possible terrorist threat to the peace and security Region 11, particularly in Davao City,” a police spokesman said in a statement.

“Police forces in Mindanao have already been alerted to beef-up security operations against possible infiltration of suspected members of said reported threat groups.”

President Benigno Aquino called the Davao City mayor to relay the possible threat.

Local officials held a meeting on Saturday night with security officials to assess protection at shopping malls, parks and transport terminals.

Road blocks were set up around Davao City. Patrols were also stepped up General Santos, Cagayan de Oro, Kidapawan and Koronadal.

“We are preparing for possible retaliatory attacks from Islamist militants to avenge the arrest of Mundos,” an army intelligence officer told Reuters, adding the presence of Islamist rebels was reported to them in Davao City a couple days ago.

A brother-in-law of Kair Mundos, a member of the militant group’s special operations unit, was seen in the city. He trained under Malaysian bomb-maker and Jamaah Islamiyah leader Zulkifli bin Hir or Marwan, also on the US terrorist list. Reuters

**BEIJING, 29 June** — Chinese mainland’s Taiwan affairs chief Zhang Zhijun said the Chinese mainland will continue to develop cross-Strait ties when meeting with Taipei mayor Hau Lung-bin on Sunday.

Zhang expressed his appreciation for the active role Hau and the city of Taipei have played in the past years in promoting cooperation and exchange.

Zhang said through-out his four-day visit to the island, he has felt mainstream public support for peaceful development across the Strait and the “five is” arrangement among people from all walks of life have expressed the hope that cross-strait ties be further enhanced in the future.

Zhang also expressed his hope to Hau, also vice-chairman of Taiwan’s ruling Kuomintang (KMT) party, that the Chinese mainland and Taiwan enhance interaction and cooperation in all areas so as to bring more benefits to the common people across the Strait.

Xinhua

**EYES ON DEFENCE DEALS, WESTERN POWERS RUSH TO COURT INDIA’S MODI**

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi (2nd R) lightsthe traditional lamp as Home Minister of India Sushma Singh looks on (4th L) during the inauguration of the newly elected Bharatiya Janata Party’s (BJP) Members of Parliament (MPs) workshop at Surajkund in Haryana, India, on 28 June, 2014.—XINHUA

**Indian fighter jets, built by Dassault Aviation, for an estimated $15 billion. Fasih, who arrives on Monday, will meet Modi as well as his powerful minister, Arun Jaitley, who holds the twin portfolios of defence and finance—and can therefore decide both whether to sign the deal and when to release the money. US Senator John McCain is also due next day. McCa, whose Arizona constituency includes weapons makers such as Boeing and Raytheon, told the Senate on Thursday that Washington should seek to bolster India’s economic and military rise.**

“This is an area where US defence capabilities, technologies, and cooperation — especially between our defence industries — can benefit India enormously,” McCa said of India’s drive to modernise the armed forces.

**The Western nations have noted that India’s foreign minister expressed displeasure with Russia’s recent offer to sell Mi-35 attack helicopters to India’s arch-rival Pakistan.**

“I don’t think it’s a competition,” US Assistant Secretary of State Nisha Biswal said after an early post-election visit to New Delhi.

“Ilndia will have strong and positive relationships with a variety of countries and that is to be encouraged,” said Biswal. “We want to see India taking on a stronger and a leadership role in the region and around the world so we welcome that.”

India spent some $6 billion last year on weapons imports. It makes few of its own weapons, beyond ballistic missiles and assembly lines for foreign jets.

On Thursday, the government signalled it was in the mood for liberalization by allowing manufacturers to build more defence components without licences, making it easier for Indian firms to partner foreigners.

At present foreign companies can only act as 26 percent in Indian defence projects without committing to technology transfer, which has put off many investors.

Before the election, sources in Modi’s Bhartiya Janata Party said there was a plan to increase the cap to 49 percent.

“An uplift from 26 to 49 percent opens the way for the status quo and may not be sufficient incentive to make an investment here,” said Phil Shaw, chief executive of Lockheed Martin India Pvt Ltd.

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**MAINLAND’S TAIWAN AFFAIRS CHIEF MEETS TAIPEI MAYOR**

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Indonesia’s presidential front-runner battles the puppet image

JAKARTA, 29 June — When one of Indonesia’s most powerful politicians wanted to be part of a new government, he did not approach Joko “Jokowi” Widodo, the front-runner in next week’s presidential election.

Instead, sources say, he went to the home of Jokowi’s political patron, a former president who did not impress in his short tenure and who many fear will be the power behind the throne if he wins the on 9 July election.

The politician, Aburizal Bakrie of the Golkar party, was rebuffed by ex-President Megawati Sukarnoputri.

But the fact Bakrie went to Megawati, not Jokowi, to seek an alliance underlines the biggest worry about the front-runner — he may become president but will not be in charge.

Critics say he will defer to Megawati and she will call the shots in the new government in Southeast Asia’s biggest economy.

It is an image Jokowi does little to dispel with his public displays of deference to Megawati. Interviews with senior members of his camp suggest frustration with his modest mien, but they were adamant he will not be any one’s stooge. “One thing I can assure you, you cannot dictate to Jokowi, he has his own mind,” said Luhut Panjaitan, a former trade minister who quit Bakrie’s Golkar party to help run the Jokowi campaign.

“People say he’s a puppet of Megawati, but I promise you, no. He’s very polite and very humble but that doesn’t mean that he’ll say yes to everything you say,” Jokowi has a filmstar following in Indonesia. Born in poverty, he has stormed his way to the top rungs of leadership with a clean image and a reputation for competence in local government, a reversal of the autocracy, corruption and power politics that have weighed down the country for decades.

He became mayor of his hometown Solo in 2005 and governor of Jakarta in 2012 after his populist approach and willingness to stand up to powerful regional officials won national attention. The only real worry about him, analysts say, is his relationship with Megawati and how it may affect state policy if he wins. Panjaitan, who was present at the meeting between Bakrie and Megawati, said after the rebuff, the Golkar party chief went over to the rival camp of the other presidential candidate, former general Prabowo Subianto.

“I said to Bakrie... Why do we always have to make transactions like this? It doesn’t set a good example for the public, to the young generation,” Panjaitan said.

Saudi king, in Ramadan message, vows to crush terrorists

SAUDI ARABIA, 29 June — Saudi King Abdullah, in a Ramadan message on Saturday, vowed to crush Islamist militants threatening the kingdom, the state news agency reported, saying the world’s top oil exporter would not tolerate “a band of terrorists”.

The remarks came two days after the monarch ordered all necessary measures to protect the country against potential “terrorist threats” resulting from turnouts to protect the country from the government of Shi’ite Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki.

“We will not let a band of terrorists who have taken religion as a disguise behind which they hide private interests to terrorize the protected Muslims, to touch our homeland or any of its sons or its protected residents,” King Abdullah said in a message at the start of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan.

Saudi Arabia crushed al-Qaeda after the Islamist militant group began a campaign of bombings and attacks on vital installations and expatriate compounds in the kingdom.

The US-allied kingdom has been rattle by a lightning advance through Iraq by Sunni militants spearheaded by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) — aided by other Sunni Muslim militias, tribal leaders and a main exponent of Saddam Hussein’s Baath Party — which seized swathes of the country this month.

Saudi Arabia shares an 800-km (500-mile) border with Iraq. The birthplace of Islam, it sees itself as a champion of pure Sunni Muslim values and regards Shi’ite Iran as its main regional foe.

Ukraine rebels free OSCE monitors, three Ukrainians killed in attack

DUBAI, 29 June — South-Korea and Switzerland have called for the release of OSCE monitors early on Friday, came after Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko announced a 72-hour extension to ceasefire until Monday night. That ceasefire appeared under threat when three members of the Ukrainian military were killed in a rebel attack on their post near the eastern flashpoint city of Slaviansk.

Indonesia’s presidential candidate Joko Widodo stands near a picture of former president Megawati Sukarnoputri during a ceremony to launch the presidential campaign in Jakarta on 4 June, 2014. — Reuters

Indonesia’s presidential front-runner battles the puppet image

The birthplace of Is- lam, it sees itself as a cham-

Ukraine rebels free OSCE monitors, three Ukrainians killed in attack

The OSCE monitor-
ing groups are part of a 300-strong force sent there to observe compliance with a four-way agreement in Geneva in April aimed at defusing the crisis in Ukraine’s east. The circumstances of their detention is not yet clear. “A total of eight were detained and we have released eight,” Al-

A ceasefire extension until Monday night announced by Poroshenko called for the release of “hostages” held by both sides. But elsewhere on Sat-

An unidentified member of OSCE Special Monitoring Mission in Ukraine walks out of a bus on arrival in the city of Donetsk after been released from captivity, on 28 June, 2014. — Reuters

Saudi King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz al-Saud

An unidentified member of OSCE Special Monitoring Mission in Ukraine walks out of a bus on arrival in the city of Donetsk after been released from captivity, on 28 June, 2014. — Reuters

North Korea launches two short-range Scud missiles

SEOUL, 29 June — North Korea fired two short-range ballistic missiles into seas east off its coast on Sunday, South Korea’s Joint Chiefs of Staff said, in a breach of UN resolutions against the use of ballistic missile technology by the isolated country. The launch came days before Chinese President Xi Jinping’s scheduled state visit to South Korea. China is a main supplier of the North, which is also un-

The missiles, which appeared to be Scud class, were launched from an area on the east coast of the peninsula and flew about 500 km (310 miles) before crashing harmlessly into the water, an official for the Joint Chiefs of Staff said.

The test firings on Sun-

day came three days after the North launched three short-range projectiles into the waters off its east coast, which flew about 190 km (120 miles) and landed in the sea. — Reuters

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People are the making of their environment and need support to develop a good mindset

By Aung Khin

Mindset is a set of attitude or idea that is rooted in the mind through experiences and knowledge, and mindset determines a way of response to the world. Developing the right mindset is crucial to succeed in anything. As man reacts to and judges the world based on their own experiences and knowledge, we need to be exposed to good experiences, knowledge and education.

If daily activities of human beings are summarized as their life, good deeds should be done to secure a better life. Greed, hatred and illusion are the root causes for misdeeds, while humane treatment, sympathy and wisdom are the underlying reasons for good deeds. Everybody, regardless of race or colour, expects kind and fair treatment from others. If someone does not recognize the feeling of others, no one could enjoy peace and trust in their community.

Society dominates someone’s mindset. If someone has grown up in an ethical and civilized society and is working among them, he has many opportunities to possess a right mindset. Nevertheless, someone who has been living for some times in an inhumane society has been influenced by pessimistic views.

A good mindset will reflect reality and will help us. But we need exposure to a good environment. Sometimes, development of a good mindset will need material support. Those who are living in the depth of poverty will likely not have an optimistic view. They will not be satisfied with their existing situation.

Though inequality is not totally inevitable, ordinary people need to be treated well to develop a good mindset.

Post-Primary School in Yepone Ward of Myeik gets new school building

MYEIK, 29 June—The opening ceremony of new school building donated by Myeik Township Lower House MP Wunna Kyawthitn U Htay Myint was held at the Basic Education Post-Primary School in Yepone Ward of Myeik in Taninthayi Region on Friday.

On the occasion, Chief Minister of Taninthayi Region U Myat Ko said that the government is undertaking the reform process in education sector such as granting stipends and cash assistance, constructing new school buildings, upgrading school levels and implementing child approach teaching methods. He stressed the need for officials to participate in upgrading the education standard to be on a par with the international level.

Donor Wunna Kyawhithin U Htay Myint explained the purpose of donation and handed over the documents related to the new school building to Taninthayi Region Education Director U Tun Yi.

Wellwishers donated stationery and K25 million to the school.

A total of 17 teachers are teaching 629 students at the 102 feet by 36 feet two-storey building. Due to increasing number of students this academic year, wellwisher Wunna Kyawhithin U Htay Myint and family of Yuzana Company donated one-storey reinforced concrete building which is 195 x 90 feet formed with nine classrooms and one office spending K243 million.

Khaung Htoo
(Myeik District IPRD)

Kyunhla Township to provide cash assistance to students on test

KYUNHLA, 29 June—A coordination meeting on provision of stipends to the students and cash assistance for basic education students was held at the hall of Basic Education High School in Kyunhla of Sagyang Region on Thursday.

District Education Officer U Sein Win and Township Education officer U Win Shwe explained the tasks for providing cash assistance to the students as a test.

Heads Basic Education High, Middle and Primary Schools in eight groups participated in the discussions.

Myo Win Nyo (Kyunhla)

Huawei to provide Smartphone technologies to Myanmar’s technological universities

BEIJING, 29 June—Union Ministers U Hla Tun and Dr Kan Zaw who accompanied President U Thein Sein on his good-will visit to China on Saturday observed communication and information technology at Huawei Company in Beijing of China. Vice Chairman of the company Mr Zhang Chun Xing and party explained production of new generation Smartphones at the company, plans of the company to provide modern IT to e-government process of Myanmar and arrangements for sharing Smartphone technologies to technological universities in Myanmar.

Requirement fulfilled for living standard of rural people

NAY PYI TAW, 29 June—Deputy Minister for Livestock, Fisheries and Rural Development U Tin Ngwe on his inspection tour explained livestock and veterinary tasks, fish breeding, village roads and bridges, sufficiency of drinking water and electrification in Padaukthin Village of Ottwin Township in Bago Region on 26 June.

Local people reported on requirements of village electrification and construction of roads and bridges.

In meeting with townsenders and officials in Kyaukda, Shweyin, Kyaukkai and Pyu townships, the deputy minister explained rural development plans. Local authorities submitted their requirements on repair of roads and bridges, supply of power, undertaking of fish plus paddy farming, extended construction of school buildings, appointment of adequate number of teachers and health staff.

The deputy minister fulfilled their needs for respective townships.

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Union Ministers U Hla Tun and Dr Kan Zaw hear clarifications on communication and information technology at Huawei Company—MNA

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Myo Win Nyo (Kyunhla)
Hiking and Mountaineering
Association to scale SE Asia’s...

(from page 1)

base camp with other mem-
bers in December last year.
after an almost 3-week,
175-mile trek through
dense jungle and far-flung
villages of Rawan and Ti-
betan people.

“The Tibetans are very
friendly along the route and we
either sleep in their vil-
lages or in our tents. It is
very difficult to get food
on the way and in August
with the rainy season the
hike will be hard, but the
adventure and the beauty
of the ecosystem make up
for it, because you can see
butterflies that only exist in
that area and black orchids,
which can only be found
in Myanmar,” said Aung
Myint Myat.

The average annual
temperature in the villages
on the way to Mt. Khakobo-
razi is 10 degrees Celsius,
with the base at camp mi-
nus five in the daytime and
minus 16 at night, he said.
While a “slow” trek to base
camp would take 21 day-
sand a fast one 16, accord-
ing to Aung Myint Myat,
most members do not have
the time for such an expe-
dition and have to make do
with short trips.

Some members at the
reunion explain that the
peak season for climbing
and hiking in Myanmar is
November to December,
with April one of the best
months as well, but that the
“Universities’ Hiking &
Mountaineering Associa-
tion—Invitation of Nature
Foundation” as it is known
by its full name, organizes
short trips all year round.

“Kachin, Shan and Chin
states have the most chal-
lenging terrain, but we also
go to the Bago and Hpa-an
areas for rock climbing or
easy hikes,” said Dr. Soe
Minn Aung, executive
member of the original
committee, who joined in
1986. Now with 300 reg-
istered members and many
who drop in and out or sim-
ply support the association,
camaraderie, exercise and
seeing the biodiversity and
different cultures of Myan-
mar are the most important
aspects for everyone.

Southern Chin State
is my favourite destination,
and in Mt. Victoria Nation-
al Park the weather is very
comfortable. We have also
climbed Mt. Kennedy in
the northern part and learnt
a lot about the culture of
the different ethnic groups
there and how they struggle
to make a living by collect-
ning and selling herbs and
orchids,” he said. As all
of the active members are
highly educated, including
doctors, nurses and teach-
ers, they never go on a trip
without supplies for the
locals, including medicine,
said.

One of the nurses, 24-
year-old Nway Nway Shein
who works at Yangon Gen-
eral Hospital, said it makes
her “very happy” to com-
bine her passion for hiking
with helping villagers in re-
more remote areas. “When we
got to a village we always see if
we can help them. So many of
us are doctors and nurs-
es, so of course we spend
time with the communities
and support them as much
as we can and sometimes
we sleep there as well.”

To learn about the
struggle of people in rural
areas and to get to know
the “real” Myanmar, for-
eigners are welcome to join
the association on smaller
trips, but expeditions to
areas requiring permits, in-
cluding Kachin, cannot be
joined for safety reasons.

Some years ago hiking
was not encouraged by the
government, because of
the various conflicts, but
with the new government
it is recognized as a sport
with the new government
and being encouraged, and
every university has hiking
clubs. But we cannot take
responsibility for the safety
of foreigners in the restrict-
ed areas,” Dr. Soe Minn
Aung said.

While the long expe-
ditions in any case need
months of preparation and
good physical fitness, the
short trips only require med-
ium fitness levels, with 30 to 50 member stream-
ing every weekend at Kan
baung park in Yangon to
keep in shape for hiking
smaller mountains like Five Su in Bago and Wai
Pone La. “The short trips
are also a great way of im-
proving team work, lead-
ership ability and decision
making. And of course it
is great for getting rid of
stress,” said Nway Nway
Shein, adding that on the
short trips sometimes up
to 120 members of all age
groups and backgrounds
join, and many bring their
friends and family mem-
bers to get out of Yangon
for a few days. The next
short trip is planned on July
10 until 13.

Top form is required for the trek to Mt. Khakaborazi as bridges are rare and
many streams have to be crossed.

PHOTO: INVITATION OF NATURE FOUNDATION

Seminar on education promotion
for higher education kicks off

NAY PYI TAW, 29 June — A seminar on educa-
tion promotion for higher ed-
education was launched in
Yangon, an address by
U Tin Naing Thein, Union
Minister at the President
Office.

The Union Minister
discussed human resour-
ces management, formation of
an Innovative Driving
Committee to produce tech-
nicians and the National Ed-
ucation Law, which will be
discussed at the Hlutaw.

The Union Minister
urged officials to provide
Internet access to every col-
lege and university.

He also discussed ac-
tivities of a decentralization
process and prospects for
the establishment of auton-
omous universities in the
higher education sector.

Union Minister for Ed-
ucation Dr Daw Khin San
Yi urged officials to take
more responsibility to carry
out an education reform.

She also discussed plans
to cooperate with inter-
national universities and
partner organizations for
human resources develop-
ment, more investment in
the education sector and
drawing policy, plans and
financial requirements. The
Union Ministers urged the
seminar to focus on creating
action plans for the imple-
mentation of national edu-
cation promotion.—APNA

Image 1

Mt. Khakaborazi has hardly been scaled as the trek to the base camp alone takes three weeks, with no
infrastructure and professional support on the way.—PHOTO: AUNG MYINT MYAT

Image 2

Mt. Victoria in Chin State is among the easier trekking destinations and
one of the favourites of the association.—PHOTO: ROSE AUNG
Canola oil-enriched diet may benefit people with diabetes

New York, 29 June — Switching to a diet low in simple sugars and high in healthy fats, like the types found in canola oil, could help people with type 2 diabetes control their blood sugar, according to a new study.

People with type 2 diabetes who were advised to follow a diet with a low glycemic index supplemented with extra canola oil had lower blood glucose levels and greater reductions in heart risk than those who ate a diet high in whole grains, researchers found.

“We know that olive oil has a good pedigree among clinicians but canola oil has a good pedigree too,” lead author Dr. David Jenkins, from the University of Toronto, told Reuters Health.

Canola oil is rich in alpha-linolenic acid, a type of omega-3 fatty acid also found in walnuts, as well as monounsaturated fatty acids, which are also in avocados and olives.

A food’s glycemic index refers to how quickly it causes blood sugar to rise. Starchy foods like white bread and potatoes are considered to be high glycemic index foods because they can cause blood sugar levels to spike. Low glycemic index foods, such as lentils, soybeans, yogurt and many high-fiber grains, create a more gradual increase in blood sugar.

Sugar builds up in the blood of people with type 2 diabetes because it can’t be absorbed by cells, ultimately increasing the risk of other health problems such as heart disease.

“We thought using canola oil might be a good way to hit the heart disease and the high glucose problem, said Jenkins. The researchers recruited 141 people with diabetes, all of whom were on insulin or taking medication to help lower their blood sugar levels. None of the participants had heart disease, but the study aimed to see if high-fiber grains, create a more gradual increase in blood sugar.

Over the next three months, blood glucose levels dropped in both groups, aimed to prevent or deter one and a half times larger among those on the canola oil-enriched diet. Improvements in other measures of heart disease risk generally favored the test diet as well.

“The thing that really surprised us is that those who seemed to be most in need benefited the most,” Jenkins said.

He said that even though the difference was only slight, the research supports the idea that diet could be an important way of treating people with diabetes.

“The one message I always tell patients is changing your diet can help it won’t be a waste of your time,” Gerstein said.

Output in bloated steel industry continues to rise

Beijing, 29 June — Output in China’s steel industry has continued to rise and prices continue to fall, as the government struggles to reduce capacity in the sector. Crude steel production gained 2.7 percent year on year to reach 343 million tonnes in the first five months of the year, although the growth was down 5.3 percentage points from the same period last year, the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) said in an online report. During the January-May period, the steel price index came in at 95.09, down 0.66 from a month earlier, according to the NDRC. In the first four months, the steel industry earned 41.2 billion yuan (6.7 billion US dollars), down 16.4 percent.

The government has been at pains to digest production gluts from an investment boom spawned by generous subsidies in the past few years that produced a glut in the “favored” sectors, including steel, expand rapidly with little regard to real market demands. To gradually solve the problem, a ban of new industries before 2017, and a gradually elimination of existing substandard projects are underway.

American Apparel adopts shareholder rights plan

New York, 29 June — American Apparel Inc has adopted a one-year shareholder rights plan to help protect its board of directors better protect its stockholders and ensure they are treated fairly, the company said on Monday.

The company said its action came in response to reports of rapid accumulation of American Apparel’s outstanding common stock, and in the context of a Securities Exchange Commission filing in which its ousted founder and chief executive, Dov Charney, expressed an intent to increase control or influence over the company.

The move, made by a special committee of the company’s board of directors, is intended to limit the ability of any group or person, including Charney, “to seize control of the company by appropriately compensating all American Apparel stockholders.”

The plan, allowing a person or group to acquire up to 15 percent of common stock, is similar to other arrangements adopted by publicly held companies and is not intended to prevent or deter takeover bids that offer fair treatment, the company said.

Initially, “the rights will be attached to all shares of common stock,” and “each right entitles the holder to purchase one ten-thousandth of a share of preferred stock at an exercise price of $2.75,” the company said in a statement.

American Apparel’s board ousted the 45-year-old Charney as chairman earlier this month, citing unspecified allegations of misconduct. It suspended him as president and chief executive officer, and plans to fire him for cause, following a 30-day period stipulated in his contract.

Yves Mersch, Member of the Executive Board of the European Central Bank presents an oversized newly unveiled 10 euro note at the headquarters of the European Central Bank (ECB) in Frankfurt, on 13 January, 2014 file photo.— Reuters

E.U. ECB’s Mersch says sees no acute risk of deflation

BERLIN, 29 June — The European Central Bank sees no acute risk of deflation, Executive Board Member Yves Mersch said in an interview broadcast on Sunday, but what it does see is a long period of low inflation ahead.

The ECB’s target for medium-term inflation is below, but close to 2 percent, a far cry from the current level of 0.5 percent, which has sparked concern the euro zone could enter a Japan-style deflationary spiral of falling prices, slowing growth and reducing consumption and investment.

“At the moment we see no heightened or acute danger of deflation, in the sense that consumers would change their behaviour and postpone making purchases because they expect prices to fall ... which would create a negative spiral causing more deflation,” Mersch told Germany’s Deutschlandfunk radio.

“What we do see is a long period of very low inflation,” said Mersch. “When we have such low inflation then the risk is greater, that should the European economy suffer an unforeseen external shock again, we have no buffer.”

The ECB on 5 June cut interest rates to record lows, the deposit rate to below zero, and launched a series of steps to boost lending to companies. The bank’s monetary policy committee is set to meet next on July 3.

Asked about widespread expectations that interest rates will stay low until 2016, Mersch said: “If everything else stays as it is today then that could be the model.”

“We as a central bank will try to fulfill our aim as quickly as possible, which is to bring inflation back towards the level of close to but below 2 percent. But this will take time, because currency policy takes a while to work through the different economic structures.”

Commenting on the bank’s recent measures, Mersch said that curve for short-term interest rates had moved down by 10-15 basis points.

“In that respect, our measures have had the desired effect,” he said.

He dismissed fears of an asset bubble building in property prices or stocks.

“Just as in Germany you have regions where property is worth less now, when adjusted for inflation, than 40 years ago, we also can’t speak of an asset bubble on the stock exchange,” he said.

“We could though have a risk of overheating if things continue as they are.”

Reuters

A woman walks past an American Apparel store in New York on 19 June, 2014.—Reuters

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Bum parachute Mars NASA ‘saucer’ test flight

CAPE CANAVERAL, 29 June — A helium balloon carrying an experimental saucer-shaped NASA spacecraft floated off a launch tower at the US Navy’s Pacific Missile Range Facility in Kauai, Hawaii, on Saturday to test landing systems for future missions to Mars.

A novel inflatable parachute is being tested in preparation for landing large payloads on Mars, at the US Navy’s Pacific Missile Range Facility in Kauai, Hawaii on 28 June, 2014.— Reuters

Google executives visit Cuba for first time to promote open Internet

MIAMI, 29 June — A team of top Google executives is visiting Cuba to promote open Internet access, according to a dissident blogger who says she met the group in Havana.

The team, led by Executive Chairman Eric Schmidt, with met with Cuban officials as well as independent people in the technology and digital field, according to a report on the independent new website 14ymedio.com, which was started last month by blogger Yoani Sanchez.

Google is on an official two-day visit “to promote the virtues of a free and open Internet,” the report said.

Schmidt appeared to confirm the report when he retweeted a message on Twitter posted by Sanchez about the visit.

Neither Google nor the Cuban government made any official statement about the executives’ presence in Cuba.

Cuba does not allow open Internet access. Only 2.6 million out of a population of 11.2 million have Internet access, almost entirely limited to government-run centers, foreign companies and tourist hotels.

Most of those who do have access are only able to explore a limited, state-controlled basket of approved websites.

Schmidt, who was Google’s chief executive from 2001 to 2011, is becoming more visible on issues involving technology and world affairs. His mandate as executive chairman involves government outreach, thought leadership and building partnerships and business relationships, according to the company.

Schmidt was accompanied by Jared Cohen, director of Google Ideas, as well as two other staff, Sanchez said.

Google Ideas describes itself as “a think/do tank that explores how technology can enable people to confront threats in the face of conflict, instability or repression,” according to its website.

Schmidt and Cohen are the coauthors of The New Digital Age, published last year, and have a track record of speaking with leaders of countries that restrict free speech to advocate for a free and open Internet.

Schmidt was the first high-profile tech executive to visit Myanmar last year in the wake of reforms that prompted Western nations to ease sanctions following decades of military dictatorship.

The Google delegation in Havana met with students and was given a tour of Havana’s University of Information Sciences on Saturday, according to 14ymedio.

Sanchez started 14ymedio, Cuba’s first independent online newspaper in May, although the site has been repeatedly blocked in Cuba.

The Cuban government sought to discredit Sanchez as a paid propagandist doing the bidding of the US government.

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After years off-stage, Iraq’s Sistani takes charge

N AJAF, 29 June — Najaf is far from Baghdad’s palaces and the battlefields of northern Iraq. Its mud-brick houses, dirt alleys and concrete office blocks project little in the way of strength or sway. But it is here, where Iraq’s most influential clerics work from modest buildings in the shadow of a golden-domed shrine, that the country’s future is being shaped.

Over his past three Friday sermons, Iraq’s top cleric, Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, an ascetic 83-year-old of almost mythological stature to millions of followers in Iraq and beyond, has seized his most active role in politics in a decade.

From his spartan office in the holy city of Najaf, down an alleyway protected by armed guards, Sistani has asserted his dominance over public affairs, demanding politicians choose a new government without delay and potentially hastening the end of Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki’s eight-year tenure.

The cleric, a recluse who favours a behind-the-scenes role, kicked off his newly assertive stance on 13 June with a call for Iraqis to take up arms against a Sunni insurgency — the first fatwa of its kind in a century, clerics familiar with Sistani’s thinking say, motivated by his fear the state faced collapse.

Tens of thousands of men have heeded the call, bolstering an army that at times seemed close to implosion. Sistan’s appeal for an inclusive government was further underlined as an implicit rebuke of Maliki, even by some of the premier’s supporters.

On Friday he called on political blocs to choose a prime minister, president and speaker of parliament by 1 July, meaning Maliki could be replaced within days.

“Today, the roadmap is clear and there is a timetable,” he said. “It’s if Sistani has put all the parties in a corner,” a Shi’ite lawmaker said.

The fatwa also carries risks, both in the near and long-term. Sunni leaders say Sistani’s call to arms inflamed the conflict. And, more broadly, the fatwa revive an old question of what role Najaf’s clerics, who traditionally keep their distance from politics, will play in affairs of state.

“He gave a fatwa the Shi’ites never had for 90 years or more. He will not retreat. He wants to have a role,” said a Western diplomat with strong knowledge of the clerical establishment. “It would be seen as irresponsible for him to pull back after issuing such a fatwa.”

The Shi’ite lawmaker, who has good relations with the clergy, put it succinctly: “Sistani is the driver now.”

Shi’ites are required to choose a senior cleric, known as a “marja’i”, to emulate, usually one who has attained the top rank of grand ayatollah after many decades of study at either of the two great seminaries, in Najaf, Iraq or Qom, Iran.

Sistani is chancellor of the thousand-year-old Najaf seminary, the most senior of its four grand ayatollahs, and the most widely emulated in Iraq. To the millions who follow him, his Islamic legal opinions, or fatwas, are beyond question. Mohammad Hussein al-Hakim, whose father was another of Najaf’s four top clerics, reaches deep into history to describe the threat Shi’ites now feel from the hardline Sunni Islamists spearheading the insurgency.

Two centuries ago, paritarnical Sunnis rampaged through the holy city of Kerbala north of Najaf. Without the clerics’ intervention, Hakim said, history might have repeated itself. “Now the capabilities are bigger, the destructive forces are stronger, and the destructive ideas are greater,” he said at the offices of a charity for orphans financed by his father.

Iran general says ready to help Iraq against militants

DUbai, 29 June — Iran is ready to help Iraq fight an armed revolt using the same methods it deployed against opposition forces in Syria, an Iranian general said, suggesting Tehran is offering to take a larger role in battling Sunni militias threatening Baghdad.

Iranian leaders to date have said they would help defend Shi’ites in areas of Iraq where Muslim shrines in neighbouring Iran may be necessary, but have also said Iraqis are capable of doing much of the fighting themselves.

Iran’s Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei on 22 June also said he rejected intervention in Iraq by “other countries” only outside power against Sunni militants from the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), militia.

ISIL has seized a broad swathe of territory in northern and western Iraq in recent weeks in their quest to topple the government of Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki, a Shi’ite backed by Iran, and to set up an Islamic caliphate.

Brigadier General Masoud Jazayeri, deputy joint chief of staff of the armed forces and a senior Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) officer, told Iran’s al-Alam television that Iran’s response to the militias would be “certain and serious”.

Jazayeri’s remarks late on Saturday did not provide details on the assistance Iran could give Baghdad, beyond saying Iran could help with what he called popular defence and intelligence.

“Iran has told Iraqi officials it is ready to provide them with our successful experiments in popular all-around defence, the same winning strategy used in Syria to put the terrorists on the defensive … This same strategy is now taking shape in Iraq — mobilizing masses of all ethnic groups,” he told the television station. “A response is certain and serious,” he said.

With Syria, too, we announced we would not allow terrorists in the hire of foreign countries or services to rule and dictate to Syrian people. We will certainly have the same approach with Iraq.”

Reuters

Syria Islamists challenge ISIL control of town on Iraq border

BEIRUT, 29 June — Islamist rebels waged a counter-offensive in Syria’s border town of Albu Kamal on Saturday, challenging the rule of Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) which has seized large areas on each side of the crumbling Iraq-Syrian frontier.

Earlier this week ISIL fighters appeared to be consolidating their hold over Albu Kamal when the local leader of the rival Nusra Front, al-Queida’s official branch in Syria, pledged allegiance to them.

ISIL, is a more radical offshoot of al-Qaeda that has its roots in Iraq and expanded into Syria shortly after the start of the three-year insurgency against President Bashar al-Assad.

It controls much of Syria’s eastern oil-producing Euphrates River region, and its lightning gains in Iraq’s Sunni Muslim north-eastern provinces have alarmed leaders in neighboring Damascus, and the Observatory said.

Volunteers, who have joined the Iraqi Army to fight against predominantly Sunni militants, carry weapons and a portrait of Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani during a parade in the streets in Baghdad’s Safar district on 14 June, 2014.—REUTERS

Kurdish Peshmerga troops travel in a tank as they secure an area in the town of Salam al-Din, near Salahuddin Province on 21 June, 2014.—REUTERS

Albu Kamal lies across the border from the Iraqi town of al-Qaim, which was seized by ISIL fighters more than a week ago.

The town was bombarded by jets on Tuesday in an attack which Iraqi and Syrian sources said was carried out by Syria’s air force. State media in Damascus denied that any Syrian planes struck inside Iraq and Iraq’s prime minister said the Syrian jets hit targets inside Syrian territory.

The military gains by Islamic State fighters have highlighted the extent to which the conflict in Iraq is intertwined with the civil war in Syria, where more than 160,000 people have been killed in the last three years.

On Saturday several people were killed, including at least two children, when a car bomb exploded in the Syrian town of Douma, northeast of the capital Damascus, the Observatory said.—Reuters

Iranian buses, dressed in black and bearing Shi’ite flags, paraded in the streets in Baghdad’s Sadr city on 14 June, 2014.—REUTERS

Reuters

Albu Kamal when the local leader of the rival Nusra Front, al-Queida’s official branch in Syria, pledged allegiance to them.
Hong Kong wraps up unofficial democracy poll in defiance of Beijing

HONG KONG, 29 June — More than 765,000 votes had been cast by early afternoon on Sunday, the final day of an unofficial referendum on democratic reforms in Hong Kong, part of a civil campaign that has been branded illegal by local and mainland Chinese authorities. Hong Kong, a free-wheeling, capitalist hub of more than seven million people, returned to Chinese rule in 1997 with wide-ranging autonomy under a “one country, two systems” formula, along with an undated promise of universal suffrage.

While Beijing says Hong Kong can go ahead with a vote in 2017 for the city’s top leader, Hong Kong’s mini-constitution, the Basic Law, specifies that only a nominating committee can pick leadership candidates. Democracy activists want the nomination process to be open to everyone, in line with international process to be open to candidates. Democracy that only a nominating committee, has been branded illegal by local and mainland Chinese authorities. Hong Kong, a free-wheeling, capitalist hub of more than seven million people, returned to Chinese rule in 1997 with wide-ranging autonomy under a “one country, two systems” formula, along with an undated promise of universal suffrage.

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Building collapses kill 11 in India, lax monitoring blamed

NEW DELHI, 29 June — Two building collapses in New Delhi and Tamil Nadu states killed at least 11 people on Saturday and left dozens trapped, highlighting the need for increased monitoring of construction across India where such incidents are common.

Ten people, including five children, were killed in New Delhi after a 50-year-old apartment block with 14 occupants collapsed early on Saturday, a police spokesman said.

“Building collapse in Delhi brings forth need to adhere to safety requirements,” tweeted Vijay Goel, a lawmaker from the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party that controls the Municipal Corporation of Delhi. Numerous building accidents in India’s capital have killed about 100 people in the past year, according to local media reports. More than 50 people were killed when an apartment block collapsed in Mumbai last September. Deputy Commissioner of Police Madhur Verma told reporters an investigation into the cause of Saturday’s building collapse in New Delhi had been launched.

Former Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal called the incident a “tragedy” and called for a troubled economy.

Pakistan family slits throats of young couple over love marriage

LAHORE, 29 June — A young couple in Pakistan were tied up and had their throats slit with scythes after they married for love, police said on Saturday.

The 17-year-old girl and 31-year-old man married on 18 June without the consent of their families in eastern Pakistan’s Punjab province. Police said the girl’s mother and father forced the couple home late on Thursday with the promise that their marriage would receive a family blessing, said local police official Rana Zahid.

“When the couple reached there, they tied them with ropes,” he said.

“He (the girl’s father) cut their throats.”

Police arrested the family, who said they had been embarrassed by the marriage of their daughter, named Muafia Hussein, to a man from a less important tribe. Cultural traditions in many areas of Pakistan mean that killing a woman whose behaviour is seen as immodest is widely accepted. Immodest behaviour that sparked recent killings included singing, looking out of the window or talking to a man who is not a relative. For a woman to marry a man of her own choice is considered an unacceptable insult by many families.

The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan said 859 so-called “honour killings” were reported in the media last year. Several a day. But the truth is probably much higher since many cases are never reported.

The weak Pakistani government, battling with a troubled economy and a Taliban insurgency, does not collect centralized statistics and has no strategy to combat the killings.

Pakistani law means that even if a woman’s killer is convicted, her family are able to forgive the killer.

Record turnout for Singapore gay rally amid religious protests

SINGAPORE, 29 June — One of the largest crowds ever recorded in Singapore for a civil society gathering turned out on Saturday at a gay rights rally, against a backdrop of noisy opposition from religious groups in the run-up to the event.

An estimated 26,000 people descended on Hong Lim Park for the “Pink Dot”, an annual event since 2007 that aims to discourage discrimination against same-sex couples.

Sex between two men is illegal in Singapore and punishable with up to two years in prison, though it is rarely enforced. The law, based on English texts from the island’s colonial period, makes no mention of lesbians. The rally, which saw people dress in pink for a picnic and concert in the park and then gather in a circle to form a “Pink Dot”, has previously taken place without much visible protest. However this year, some Muslim and Christian groups came together to call on their followers to wear white to show their opposition to the event and what they perceive as growing acceptance of homosexuality in Singapore.

“This year the extent of the negativity has saddened us quite a bit,” said Paerin Choa, one of Pink Dot’s organizers.

“What happened over the past few weeks goes to show that discrimination is very much still alive in Singapore.”

The rally comes amid growing anger among Singaporeans over issues ranging from immigration and rising living costs to gay rights — all in a country where dissent is actively discouraged and political gatherings require a permit regardless of how many people are involved.

Some Muslims were particularly angry that the event took place on the eve of Ramadan and many posted photos of them wearing white to evening prayers to a “wearwhite” Facebook page. Some Christian groups have called on the government to take a clear stand on the issue and reinforce the legal position that sex between two men is outlawed.

“Pink Dot’s agenda goes against our national interests,” said Lawrence Khong, a senior pastor at the 10,000-strong Faith Community Baptist Church.

“If they are allowed to continue, the day will come when we will no longer recognise the Singapore that we and our founding fathers have worked so hard to build.”

Participants dressed in pink perform cheerleading stunts before taking part in the forming of a giant pink dot at the Speakers’ Corner in Hong Lim Park in Singapore on 28 June, 2014. — Reuters

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**ENTERTAINMENT**

**Britain’s Glastonbury embraces Metallica’s ‘heavier side’**

Pilton, (England), 29 June — Metallica rocked Glastonbury on Saturday night, confounding critics who said heavy metal had no place at Britain’s biggest music festival.

After opening with “Creeping Death” and “For Whom the Bell Tolls,” front man James Hetfield said they were representing “the heavier side of music” at the festival held on a farm in rural southwest England.

Both fans and newcomers to metal enthusiastically welcomed songs like “One” and “Enter Sandman” in the Pyramid Stage performance.

The choice of the US group, which has sold more than 120 million records, for the prestigious Saturday headline slot had been controversial.

Some of the 135,000 festival goers complained that their music did not fit into Glastonbury’s hipppy ethos. Others said Hetfield’s narration of a TV show about bear hunting did not fit the event’s environmental culture.

Hetfield answered both counts in the one hour 40 minutes performance. He said all types of music were represented at Glastonbury, “so why not heavy rock.”

And a film at the start of the performance took a humorous swipe at the hunting controversy. It showed a traditional English fox hunt ending with the red-jacketed huntsmen being shot by bears, revealed to be the members of Metallica in costume.

**‘Gravity’ wins big at Saturn Movie Awards**

LOS ANGELES, 29 June — “Gravity” dominated the movie winners list of the 40th annual Saturn Awards with five wins including best sci-fi film, best director, and best actress for Sandra Bullock.

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**Michael Jackson documentary triggers lawsuit**

LOS ANGELES, 29 June — Craig Williams, the director of ‘Michael Jackson: The Last Photo Shoot’, has filed a lawsuit against the executors of the late King of Pop’s estate. Williams seeks to confirm valid rights on unseen footage from Jackson’s 2007 photo shoot which will be used in the documentary, reported Ace Showbiz. The footage was taken at the Brooklyn Museum of Art for Ebony magazine as Jackson tried make a comeback and gave his first magazine interview in a decade. Interviews with the singer’s friends, photographers, and stylists will be included in the film as well. However, Jackson’s estate calls the footage “private.” The makers of the documentary are attempting to exploit footage and photographs of Michael Jackson, which we believe are owned by his Estate,” lawyer Howard Weitzman said.

“The documentary contains footage of Michael during private moments that he never agreed could be publicly and commercially exploited without his consent and/or involvement. Michael never authorised or approved the use of this material in the film.”

**Emma Watson employs illegal housekeeper**

LONDON, 29 June — ‘Harry Potter’ star Emma Watson has allegedly been employing a woman illegally at her 2 million pounds London home.

The 24-year-old actress hired the maid to work in her New York apartment at the beginning of last year but Border Agency staff have since launched a probe following a complaint that the woman was travelling to London on and off to help Watson in her Islington home, reported Daily Mirror.

It is believed that the housekeeper spent a total of three months in Britain between September last year until early February and was quizzed on arrival by immigration staff about her ability to pay for her stay.

Although the home office can’t comment on individual cases a source from the department said, “An allegation has been received and processed and has been allocated for further action.”

Meanwhile, Watson recently graduated from the prestigious Brown University in the United States.

The ‘Bling Ring’ actress, who enrolled at the Ivy League school in 2009, received her English literature degree at a commencement ceremony on the main campus in Providence, Rhode Island, last month. — PTI

**Johnny Depp obsessed with discount vouchers**

LONDON, 29 June — ‘Pirates of the Caribbean’ star Johnny Depp, who is worth approximately 200 million pounds, is reportedly obsessed with discount vouchers.

The 51-year-old actor recently bought a discounted barbecue grill, reported Contactmusic.

“If he can get a good price for something, he’ll go for it. He just bought a new barbecue for the patio of his house in L.A.,” his friend said.

“He also uses discount vouchers to buy his fiancee gifts—and have invested 200 pounds on a pair of 600 pounds diamond earrings and to get money off their meals at top restaurants,” the source added. — PTI
Serena fizzes out, Nadal and Federer march on

LONDON, 29 June — Wimbledon great Serena Williams was sent packing by a Frenchwoman who once regarded grass court tennis as a chore but Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal illuminated the Centre Court lawn with commanding victories on Saturday.

American Williams’s hopes of a sixth singles title fizzled out as she sank to a 1-6, 6-3, 6-4 defeat against 25th seed Alize Cornet who celebrated by kissing the Court One turf.

Cornet, who once regarded grass court tennis as a chore but has a 1-15 record against 25th seed Alize Cornet who celebrated by kissing the Court One turf.

Serena Williams, 32, had not fallen before the fourth round at Wimbledon since 2005 and, after returning to court from a four-hour rain delay on day six, she seemed to charging towards the business end of the tournament.

Federer of Switzerland reacts after defeating Santiago Giraldo of Colombia during their men’s singles tennis match at Wimbledon Tennis Championships, in London on 28 June, 2014.—Reuters

The result reverberated around the All England Club on a day of dark clouds and rain and blasted a gaping hole in the women’s tournament which now looks wide open with second seed Li Na having departed a day earlier.

French Open semi-finalist Andrea Petkovic 6-3, 6-4. Williams’s demise would also have been noted with more than just passing interest by fifth seed Maria Sharapova, who is chasing her second Wimbledon title, 10 years after her first, and who expected to face her nemesis in the quarter-finals.

Russian Sharapova, who has a 1-15 record against Williams since beating her in the 2004 final, took advantage of some attacking tennis to leave a strangely hesitant Cornet reeling.

The result ended hopes of an eagerly anticipated last 16 match-up between Williams and fast-rising Canadian Eugenie Bouchard who comfortably beat fellow World number one Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal illuminated the Wimbledon grass as a chore but who once regarded grass court tennis as a chore but they are twice as likely to be injured during delivery as newborns nationwide, the most recent statistics show,” the paper said.

It said its examination concluded that “the military lags behind many civilian hospital systems in protecting patients from harm.” The review is based on Pentagon studies, court records, analyses of thousands of pages of data, and interviews with current and former military health officials.

“The most common errors are strikingly prosaic — the unread file, the unheeded distress call, the doctor on one floor not talking to the doctor on another,” the paper said.

But it also quoted examples of “never events,” so-called because they are so grave yet preventable. “A viable fetus died after a surgeon operated on the wrong part of the mother’s body,” the paper said.

“A 41-year-old woman’s healthy thyroid gland was removed because someone else’s biopsy result had been recorded on her chart. A 54-year-old retired officer suffered acute kidney failure and lost his hearing loss after an incorrect dose of chemotherapy,” it cited as other examples.

The New York Times quoted defense officials as saying military hospitals deliver treatment that is as good, if not better, than civilian hospitals.

“We strive to be a perfect system, but we are not a perfect system, and we know it,” the paper quoted Dr. Jonathan Woodson, assistant secretary of defense for health affairs, as saying. “We must learn from our mistakes and take corrective actions to prevent them from recurring.”

The Times said records showed that mandated safety investigations often went undone, that less than half of reported unexpected deaths inquiries were forwarded to the Pentagon’s patient-safety center, and that cases involving permanent harm often remained unexamined.
Brazil edge Chile, Rodriguez rocket launches Colombia

SAO PAULO, 29 June — Brazilians rejoiced on Saturday when their nervy team edged past Chile to book a place in the World Cup quarter-finals in a nail-biting penalty shoot-out, while in the other last 16 game, James Rodriguez scored a stunning volley as Colombia downed Uruguay.

It will be Colombia’s first appearance in the last eight, and two goals from Rodriguez, including a spectacular left foot strike from 20 metres, put him ahead of Lionel Messi, Thomas Mueller and Neymar as the tournament’s top scorer with five.

Uruguay’s exit ended a sorry week for the South Americans, who badly missed their prolific forward Luis Suarez after he was kicked out of the World Cup for biting and banned from any football activity for four months.

For the hosts, it was an afternoon of excruciating tension in Belo Horizonte, where the teams drew 1-1 after extra time before Brazil won the penalty shoot-out 3-2.

The win leaves them three games away from lifting the World Cup for a sixth time and exercising the ghosts of defeat in the 1950 final on home soil.

“We took upon ourselves this mission that we must be champions. If you make a promise you must deliver. This is what the players are doing,” said coach Luiz Felipe Scolari. “There are three more (games) to see if we can reach heaven.”

The celebrations on the pitch and across the country were more in relief than jubilation, after a pulsating match in which both sides attacked at pace but failed to convert their chances once Chile striker Alexis Sanchez had cancelled out David Luiz’s opener in the 32nd minute.

Cesar vindicated four years on Brazil’s players cried for joy after Gonzalo Jara’s spot kick bounced back off the upright to send them through after keeper Julio Cesar had saved two shoot-out penalties.

“Four years ago I gave an interview, very upset, very sad,” said Julio Cesar, referring to Brazil’s quarter-final exit to the Netherlands at the 2010 World Cup.

“I will repeat it again, but this time I am happy,” added the man of the match, struggling to keep his emotions in check.

“Only God knows, and my family, what I went through. My team mates gave me support and strength. My big dream is that Brazil have a party.”

Only lifting the trophy in Rio de Janeiro on July 13 will be enough to satisfy Brazil’s expectant fans, and they next face Colombia, who beat Uruguay 2-0 in another Latin American clash that underlines the region’s domination of the tournament.

For Chile, the team’s tears were shed in the defeat, after the host’s hopes of winning the tournament were dashed by the defeat.

“We played Spain, the Netherlands and Brazil, and we were no worse than any of them,” said keeper and captain Claudio Bravo.

“We feel very frustrated because we could have wrapped the match up long before. We had clear chances to wrap it up. What else can we say now?”

Glorious Goal

At Rio de Janeiro’s Maracana stadium, Colombia secured an altogether more comfortable passage to their first World Cup quarter-final by overcoming Uruguay, whose star striker Suarez had been sent home for biting an Italian opponent.

The first goal was sublime, as Rodriguez chested a pass into the air and sent home for biting an Italian opponent.

The FIFA document seen by Reuters on Saturday said that soccer’s world governing body handed out the heavy punishment because Suarez showed no remorse for the incident and previous bans had not changed his behaviour. He had twice been banned for biting before.

The FIFA document included excerpts of Suarez’s explanation of the event, in which he said his initial contact with Giorgio Chiellini caused him to lose balance and fall on the Italian.

“Then, my face hit the player, leaving me with a bruise and a lot of pain in my teeth... That is what happened and at no point did anyone happen that can be described as ‘biting’ or trying to bite,” Suarez was quoted as saying.

On Sunday, the Netherlands take on Mexico in Fortaleza while Costa Rica meet Greece in Recife.

Colombia’s James Rodriguez celebrates his goal against Uruguay during their 2014 World Cup round of 16 game at the Maracana stadium in Rio de Janeiro on 28 June, 2014.—Reuters

World Cup 2014

World Cup 2014 Results

Match 49  Brazil 1-1  Chile (3-2 pens)
Match 50  Colombia 2-0  Uruguay

World Cup 2014 Brazil

Match 53
22:30 MST (30.6.2014)
FRANCE

Match 54
2:30 MST (1.7.2014)
GERMANY

Match 55
22:30 MST (7.7.2014)
NIGERIA

Match 56
2:30 MST (8.7.2014)
ALGERIA