The New Light of Myanmar
MYANMAR'S OLDEST ENGLISH DAILY
Volume XXII, Number 94 | 13th Waning of Waso 1376 ME | Thursday, 24 July, 2014

Myanmar, India to forge closer business-to-business connectivity in trade, investment

By *Ye Myint*

YANGON, 23 July— India INVESTRADE 2014 kicked off on Wednesday in Yangon, with an exposition and buyer-seller meetings seeking to forge closer business-to-business cooperation and connectivity in trade and investment between Myanmar and India.

During their speeches before the inauguration of the two-day exhibition at Sedona Hotel, officials from both sides stressed the need to build synergies for trade and investment between the two countries which share a long land border of over 1,600 km. They are hopeful of expanding the volume of trade between India and Myanmar from the existing about US$1.5 billion annually.

Boosting investment and trade will be focused at the business sessions, said U Win Aung, president of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry, saying that "the more foreign investments, both in infrastructure development and SMEs, we see, the greater our people benefit from them".

India INVESTRADE 2014 in progress at Sedona Hotel in Yangon, with officials emphasizing the need to build synergies for trade and investment between Myanmar and India.—PHOTO: YE MYINT

According to him, Myanmar needs trading partners to bring quick benefits to its people as requirements, indicating local businessmen who are not in a state of readiness to utilize the GSP benefits that Myanmar regained from the European Union last year, still remain in the country.

Although the largest engagement between India and Myanmar is in food export, especially beans and pulses, from Myanmar, Myanmar's access to EU GSP will be a very good opportunity for Indian textile businesses, Shiv Siddhant N.Kaul, vice president of the Indian Chamber of Commerce told The New Light of Myanmar in a brief interview with him.

The two-day event with the participation of 50 companies from India is designed to showcase products including fabric, medicines, steel, leather andhandicraft which are mostly from Meghalaya and Assam, north eastern states of India. Moreover, business sessions with the focus on business opportunities in infrastructure and the energy sector, economic cooperation in the service sector and enhancement of trade and investment will be held, and a B2B lounge to host interested companies to meet their counterparts available at the event, said officials.

A similar event will take place in Mandalay on Friday, they added.

India as the largest buyer of Myanmar's grain exports is Myanmar's third largest export market.

NLM

Japan supports post-primary school in Hpa-an

HPA-AN, 23 July—The Government of Japan, under its Grant Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Project, GGP Scheme, has extended an assistance of US $222,913 for a humanitarian assistance program entitled "The Project for Construction of Hpa-an No.2 Post Primary School in Hpa-an Township, Kayin State."

Mr. Tateshi Higuchi, Ambassador of Japan to Myanmar, and U Than Mya, Chairman of Hpa-an No.2 Post-Primary School Construction Committee, signed the grant contract on July 18, 2014.

Hpa-an Basic Education Post Primary School No.2 was opened in 1960. One school building, made of wooden structure, was built in 1980, but has been damaged over the years by floods.

Japanese Ambassador to Myanmar Mr. Tateshi Higuchi and Myanmar officials after signing a contract on construction of Hpa-an No.2 Post-Primary School in Hpa-an Township, Kayin State.

Under such circumstances, the Government of Japan has decided to provide funding for the construction of a 180-feet by 30-feet one-storey RCC building and a 120-feet by 30-feet one-storey RCC building, toilets and school furniture for the No.2 Post-Primary School in Hpa-an Township through its GGP Scheme. This project will directly benefit about 530 students with a better learning and sanitation environment.

Japan has conducted 689 various grassroots projects in Myanmar under this GGP scheme since 1993.

NLM

Accreditation for 47th ASEAN Foreign Ministers Meeting

NAY PYI TAW, 23 July—The 47th ASEAN Foreign Ministers Meeting-AMM and related meetings will be held at the Myanmar International Convention Centre-1 in Nay Pyi Taw from 8 to 10 August.

Local and foreign correspondents who wish to cover the news of the meetings are to click the registration link for the 47th ASEAN Foreign Ministers Meeting-AMM of Upcoming Events at the Home Page of www.asean2014.gov.mm to fill up the Media Registration Form. The registration must be done no later than 31 July. The media accreditation cards will be issued at the assembly hall of the Ministry of Information at Office No 7 in Nay Pyi Taw from 10 am to 4 pm on 7 August.

The foreign correspondents are to apply for visas at the respective Myanmar embassies to cover news. Please dial 067-412227 and 067-412360 of ASEAN Affairs Department for further information about the meeting and 067-412126 of News and Periodicals Enterprise about news coverage of local-based foreign news agencies and local media.—*MNA*

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Implementation of pilot project for Dawei SEZ discussed

NAY PYI TAW, 23 July —Myanmar and Japanese companies held a meeting on pilot projects for the implementation of the Dawei Special Economic Zone and related projects at the Ministry of Transport in Nay Pyi Taw on Wednesday, attended by Chairman of the Dawei SEZ Special Work Committee Union Minister for Labour, Employment and Social Security U Aye Myint.

Officials explained the costs of the Italian-Thai Company for the project and plans for the implementation of the pilot project. The Japanese company presented a documentary video on the Kashima maritime industrial estate (Deep Seaport) and discussed intentions by Japanese companies, observation over JICA's main plan and the road project to link Dawei SEZ and the border area.

Roland Berger Company explained preparations for the pilot project and compilation of the terms of reference to invite tenders for the pilot project.—*MNA*

***Union Minister U Aye Myint holds discussion on the Dawei Special Economic Zone with responsible persons of Italian-Thai Company.*—MNA**

Preliminary report on constitutional amendment put on record by Pyidaungsu Hluttaw

NAY PYI TAW, 23 July — A preliminary report of the Constitutional Amendment Implementation Committee was submitted to the ninth session of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw on Wednesday.

The committee has held 30 meetings starting from 2 November 2013 and has reviewed a total of 340 clauses from several sections, according to a statement of the commission.

The committee is considering the advice of all parties including the public, organizations, political parties and the army, officials said.

The rest of the constitution will be reviewed in the same way, according to the statement.

The Constitutional Amendment Implementation Committee was formed under notification No. 20/2014 of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Office dated 3-2-2014.

MNA

Sakura-Insein Technical Course opens in Yangon

YANGON, 23 July — An engineering course jointly launched by old students of the Associate of Government Technical Institute from Myanmar and Kinden Corporation and Sumitomo Corporation from Japan was opened in Yangon on Wednesday.

The 8-months Sakura-Insein Technical Course will conduct a Commercial Electrical Wiring Course and Electrical Power Distribution Line Course to 20 students in each course.

At the opening ceremony in the Vocational Training Centre of AGTI Society Building in Insein Township, Yangon Region Chief Minister U Myint Swe urged to conduct further courses of this kind to more students.

Dr Ba Shwe, deputy minister for Science and Technology, also voiced his appreciation of the course.

U Nyeing Aung, chairman of AGTI Old Students Association, Vice Chairman Kwnihiko Fujita of Kinden Corporation and Hideaki Matsuo, counsellor of the Japanese embassy in Yangon explained the objectives of the course.

MNA

Rakhine State Government

Announcement (1/2014)

23 July 2014

1. The members of the Emergency Co-ordination Centre (ECC) met with representatives of the diplomatic corps, the United Nations agencies, international non-governmental organizations, Rakhine state government, civil society organizations based in Rakhine state, and experts and scholars from Myanmar Peace Center (MPC) on June 26-27 at MPC in Yangon to discuss the Action Plan for Peace, Stability and Development in Rakhine state. In addition to the discussion on how to improve humanitarian aid delivery and relief efforts, the parties also agree to put an emphasis on the development issues impacting Rakhine state.
2. At this time, twenty four international institutions and non-government organizations such as UN-OCHA, UNHCHR, WFP, ACE, UNFPA, UNICEF, MSF (Switzerland), ICRC, FIT, SCI, Solidarities, Malteser, IRC, CSSEP, DRC, UNDP, RELIEF, RI, BAJ, CDN, CAE, LWF, OXFAM and MRCS are working in Rakhine state with a total staff of one hundred eighty five (185) individuals, comprising an international staff of seventy two (72) individuals and a local staff of one hundred twelve (112) individuals. These organizations are working in collaboration with the Rakhine state government on issues and programs such as healthcare, water sanitation, nutrition, fisheries, prevention of natural disasters, humanitarian assistance management, sanitation, livelihood support, agriculture and livestock, education and gender discrimination.
3. In order to implement the Rakhine Action Plan effectively at union and state levels, the Rakhine state government would like to invite all organizations listed in paragraph 2 as well as other United Nations agencies and international non-governmental organizations, including MSF, to participate in development, humanitarian, education, and healthcare programs in accordance with the wishes of the Rakhine people.

Rakhine State Government

Mobile vocational training course given to rural people

***Union Minister U Maung Myint views mobile vocational training vehicle.*—MNA**

NAY PYI TAW, 23 July —As part of efforts to implement the Third Wave process, the Ministry of Industry is conducting mobile vocational training to rural people.

After inspecting a mobile vocational training vehicle manufactured by No 1 Heavy Industries Enterprise, Union Minister for Industry U Maung Myint instructed officials to conduct the mobile courses and manufacture similar mobile training vehicles for other ministries.

The mobile training vehicle is of Howo Cargo Truck installed with a 336HP diesel engine. The vehicle is equipped with a one 10KVA generator, 1.5 HP split type air-conditioner, three fans, two tables and one projector wall in a container on board.

The mobile vocational training was conducted for the first time in Kanma village of Pakokku Township from 8 to 18 July, attended by 45 trainees who learned welding, maintenance of agricultural-used engines and motorcycles. The second course will be opened in Myitchay station of Pakokku District on 28 July.

MNA

New station hospital to be opened in Mawlu of Indaw Tsp

MAWLU, 23 July — A ceremony to drive stakes for the construction of a new station hospital was held in Mawlu of Indaw Township in Sagaing Region on Tuesday, with district and township departmental officials and local authorities attending.

The government allotted K500 million for the new station hospital, with I Green Construction Company constructing the building in the next seven months.

The hospital will be a 126-feet long and 117-feet wide one-storey building, said an official.—*Ni Toe*

Local businesses fail to tap benefits of Myanmar Citizens Investment Law: MIC Chairman

NAY PYI TAW, 23 July—Local businessmen are unaware of the adoption of the Myanmar Citizens Investment Law and thus are not able to enjoy the benefits of it, Chairman of Myanmar Investment Commission Union Minister U Zeyar Aung told the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw on Wednesay.

The Myanmar Citizens Investment Law, which allows local businessmen a number of benefits including tax holidays and tax reduction, was adopted in March 1994 and was amended in July 2013, the chairman added.

Myanmar businessmen rarely applied for investment permission to the commission in order to enjoy the benefits, but when they have permission from the commission, they are entitled to enjoy a 5-year tax holiday and tax exemptions or tax reductions or both.

Another reason for not applying for the permission from the commission is the rules and regulations that require them to submit other documents which have to be attached to the investment application form such as land ownership documents and other financial evidences of the businesses to the commission, the chairman said.

The chairman also pointed out at the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw session that foreign investors think they are discriminated against local investors as there are two investment laws, one for local investors and another for foreign investors, while local businessmen misunderstand that foreign investors are favoured by the Foreign Investment Law.

Myanmar neither discriminates foreign investors nor favours them under the ASEAN Comprehensive Investment Agreement, which came into force in March 2012, and it is necessary for Myanmar to adopt only one investment law like other ASEAN members. As a result, the commission is preparing to submit a new investment bill to the parliament, the chairman concluded.

Other topics discussed at the session included the highways bill and the audit reports of the Union Auditor-General Office for the second half of 2012-13 FY.

MNA

Myanmar, Chinese air forces discuss training, technology and mechanical cooperation

NAY PYI TAW, 23 July—Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief of the Army, Vice-Senior General Soe Win received the Deputy Chief of the Chinese People's Liberation Army Air Force Major General Meng Guoping at Zeyathiri Beikman of Nay Pyi Taw on Wednesday morning.

They discussed promotion of cooperation in training, technology and mechanical cooperation between the air forces of the two countries.

Myawady

***Vice-Senior General Soe Win with Deputy Chief of the Chinese People's Liberation Army Air Force Major General Meng Guoping and his delegation.*—MNA**

SEOM and related meetings concludes

***Delegates hold discussions at the 21st Senior Economic Officials Meeting in Yangon.*—PHOTO: AYE MIN SOE**

YANGON, 23 July—The Senior Economic Officials Meeting concluded at the Inya Lake Hotel in Yangon on Wednesday.

The four-day meeting approved the agendas for the 46th meeting of ASEAN economics ministers, the second meeting of ASEAN-East Asia economics ministers, the thirteenth meeting of ASEAN-EU economics ministers, the third meeting of ASEAN-Canada economics ministers and the negotiations between ASEAN and the US trade representative.

The related meeting included the second SEOM-EAS consultations, the twenty-first SEOM-European Union consultations, the sixth SEOM-Canada consultations, the twenty-first SEOM-USTR consultations and the negotiation between senior economic officials and US assistant representative for trade.

MNA

Japan to help enhance technological universities in Myanmar

NAY PYI TAW, 23 July—Japan and Myanmar signed a MoU in Nay Pyi Taw on Wednesday to enhance technological universities in Myanmar.

Deputy Minister for National Planning and Economic Development Daw Lei Lei Thein and Ambassador of Japan to Myanmar Mr Tateshi Higuchi formally signed the MoU at the meeting hall of the NPED ministry.

Under the MoU, the Government of Japan will give assistance worth US$ 25.086 million for the implementation of upgrading projects for technological universities in Myanmar.

The signing ceremony was witnessed by Union Minister for National Planning and Economic Development Dr Kan Zaw, Union Deputy Minister for Science and Technology Dr Aung Kyaw Myat and officials form the Japanese Embassy. Japan and Myanmar have signed 12 MoU for providing assistance to Myanmar since the beginning of 2014.—*MNA*

***Deputy Minister for National Planning and Economic Development Daw Lei Lei Thein and Ambassador of Japan to Myanmar Mr Tateshi Higuchi shake hands after signing a MoU on Wednesday to enhance technological universities in Myanmar.*—MNA**

MOH calls for continued participation of international organizations in Rakhine State

NAY PYI TAW, 23 July—The Ministry of Health has called for the continued participation of international organizations, including the MSF, in a statement released on 23 July, saying this would contribute to the stability and development of Rakhine State.

The ministry said it is working to improve the healthcare services for the public, including those in Rakhine State and is cooperating with local and international organizations.

It also urged the international organizations to work transparently, accountably, responsibly and harmoniously with local people and consider the wish of the general public.

MNA

Land reclamation, implementation of water pumping station inspected in Singaing Tsp

MANDALAY, 23 July— Chief Minister of Mandalay Region U Ye Myint inspected a 100-acre farmland in Meethwaybok village of Singaing Township in Mandalay Region on 20 July, which has been reclaimed by the government, with the Chief minister instructing officials to cooperate with local farmers in the cultivation of crops.

The chief minister and his delegation also visited Shwehlanbo water pumping station that irrigates 3,000 acres of farmlands near Meethwaybok Village and Hteedawmoe water pumping station, south of the same village.

He attended a ceremony to launch supply of electricity to Nyaungbingyi Village in Singaing Township. Wellwisher U Set Maung-Daw Nwe Nwe Aye donated a transformer and related equipment worth K12.7 million and other local people gave K52 million to the fund for village electrification.

Thiha Ko Ko (Mandalay)

Cooperative official explains loans for farmers

MYINGYAN, 23 July— The Myingyan Township Cooperative Department of Mandalay Region held a meeting to disburse loans to farmers at the hall of the Township Cooperative Syndicate in Myingyan of Mandalay Region on Tuesday.

Staff Officer U Myint Thar of the Township Cooperative Department and Chairman of the Syndicate U Thein Aung explained programmes for the disbursement of loans, the systematic keeping of accounts, arrangements for the purchase of farming machinery, plans of delivering K500,000 in loans to farmers.

The meeting was attended by chairmen and secretaries from 162 cooperative societies of the township.

Zaw Min Naing (Myingyan)

TODAY'S MYANMAR NEWS SITES

Harvest of early-monsoon sesame starts in Meiktila Tsp

MEIKTILA, 23 July— Some farmers of Shawbyugan Village started harvesting early-monsoon sesame plantations in Meiktila Township of Mandalay Region.

"We grew early-monsoon sesame strains and the plants thrived due to rainwater. In fact, only a few farmers enjoyed success of sesame cultivation this year. In some villages, most of the sesame plantations were damaged in dry and hot season with lack of rainwater. Last years, every farmers enjoyed fruits of growing sesame plants, said a local farmer of Shawbyugan Village.

Due to lack of success in cultivation of sesame in Meiktila Township, price of sesame is high, and farmers and brokers are trading K33,000 per basket of sesame.

Chan Thar (Meiktila)

Health care talks given in Nay Pyi Taw

NAY PYI TAW, 23 July —Health educative talks, organized by the Nay Pyi Taw Maternal and Child Welfare Supervisory Committee and Nay Pyi Taw Health Department, took place at the Basic Education Primary School in Ottarathiri Ward in Ottarathiri Township on Tuesday.

Participants discussed health care services for pregnant women, infection with HIV/AIDS and TB diseases, health care for children under five, school health activities, and health care for older people.

Officials also provided participants with eggs, milk, folic acid tablets and iodized salt.

Kyaw Thura (Nay Pyi Taw)

Trainer Daw San San Htwe gives aerobic training to young students representing Myingyan District, who will take part in the Mandalay Region WAO Patron's Shield Inter-District Aerobics Contest, at Basic Education High School No 4 in Myingyan.—ZAW MIN NAING (MYINGYAN)

Indonesian president-elect Jokowi calls for unity after bitter election

*Indonesian presidential candidate Joko ''Jokowi'' Widodo (L) gestures as delivers a speech, beside his running mate Jusuf Kalla, on a phinisi boat, a traditional Indonesian ship, at Sunda Kelapa port after he was declared the winner of the presidential election in Jakarta on 22 July, 2014.—*Reuters

Jakarta, 23 July — Joko "Jokowi" Widodo was declared the winner of Indonesia's presidential election on Tuesday, bringing the promise of major reforms to the world's third largest democracy.

The Elections Commission, known as KPU, said the Jakarta governor had won by just over six percentage points, with 53.15 percent of the nearly 130 million votes cast on 9 July.

It was the closest and most bitterly fought election in Indonesia's history, pitting Jokowi against former general Prabowo Subianto, whose promise of strong leadership brought echoes of decades under autocratic rule.

"This victory is a victory for all the people of Indonesia," the president-elect told hundreds of supporters gathered at a port on the outskirts of the capital Jakarta, chosen to emphasize his commitment to Indonesia's maritime potential.

He and his vice president-elect, Jusuf Kalla, arrived by speed boat.

"With humility, we ask the people...to go back to a united Indonesia," he added.

In an interview with *Reuters* before the result was announced, Jokowi promised to simplify life for investors by beefing up the country's threadbare infrastructure, unravel near impenetrable regulations and sack ministers if they were not up to the job.

The United States, which sees Indonesia as an increasingly important partner in Asia in the face of growing Chinese power and assertiveness, was quick to offer congratulations.

US Secretary of State John Kerry said bilateral ties had strengthened to the point where the two countries "can jointly address common regional and global challenges."

"The United States looks forward to working with President-elect Widodo as we deepen our partnership, promote our shared objectives globally, and expand people-to-people ties between our nations," Kerry said in a statement.

Jokowi's can-do approach, impatience with bureaucracy and willingness to communicate directly with ordinary people has won him a huge following in a country where close to 40 percent of the population live below or close to the poverty line.

When he moves into the presidential palace in October he will be Indonesia's seventh president, its third to be elected by direct vote and its first to be a businessman and not come from the elite.

Tuesday's vote count nearly came unstuck after his rival accused the KPU of failing to properly investigate allegations of what his team said was widespread cheating.—*Reuters*

Indonesia's Prabowo to challenge election result in court

Jakarta, 23 July — Indonesia's losing presdential election candidiate, ex-general Prabowo Subianto, plans to challenge the result in the Constitutional Court, his team's chief lawyer said on Wednesday.

The challenge had been widely expected, but many analysts believe it would be near impossible for Prabowo to overturn the result of the election, seen as among the cleanest in the country's history.

The losers in the previous two presdiential elections also went to the Court to raise objections, but to no avail. "We have decided to bring this case to the Constitutional Court (within three days)," the head of Prabowo's legal team, Mahendradatta, told reporters.

He estimated there were about 21 million disupted votes out of the total of around 130 million.

Jakarta governor Joko "Jokowi" Widodo was declared the winner on Tuesday with 53.15 percent of the vote. He won by nearly 8.5 million votes.

Reuters

Indonesian presidential candidate Prabowo Subianto

Thai junta chief could remain PM under new government: adviser

Bangkok, 23 July — Thailand's junta chief could stay in charge of the country as head of a provisional government until elections are held some time next year, a legal adviser said on Wednesday, outlining details of an interim constitution.

A member of the ruling council added that martial law, imposed two days before the army seized power on 22 May, would remain in force for the foreseeable future.

The military, under army chief General Prayuth Chan-ocha, said it acted to restore order after months of political turmoil as protesters tried to topple the government of former Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra.

Yingluck was forced to step down on 7 May after being found guilty of abuse of power by the Constitutional Court. The remainder of her cabinet was ousted in the coup two weeks later.

The military tore up the old constitution. A provisional charter was endorsed by head of state King Bhumibol Adulyadej on Tuesday, allowing the appointment of a parliament, the National Legislative Assembly, which will nominate a new prime minister.

Asked at a news conference whether Prayuth would continue as leader of the country under the interim charter, Wissanu Krea-ngam, a legal adviser to the junta, said: "The constitution allows it, but whether he is appointed or not is down to the National Legislative Assembly."

General Paiboon Koomchaya, in charge of legal affairs for the junta, suggested Prayuth could do the job perfectly.

"I don't see he has any flaws in performing his duties. As of now he is already performing the duties of a prime minister. For the past two months, he has been sitting at the head of the table at every meeting and the administration of the country has gone smoothly during these two months," Paiboon said.

The upheaval is the latest chapter in almost a decade of conflict pitting Thailand's royalist establishment and Bangkok's middle class against Yingluck's brother, former premier Thaksin Shinawatra, and his supporters among the poor. Thaksin's devoted following in the rural north and northeast has ensured that he or parties loyal to him have won every election since 2001. He was toppled in an earlier coup, in 2006. The military will remain in charge of national security alongside the incoming provisional government and Paiboon said martial law, imposed on 20 May, would remain in force. "It is still necessary for the peace and safety of our country," he said.

*Thai Army chief General Prayuth Chan-ocha speaks during a meeting with members of the International Chamber of Commerce at the Royal Thai Army Headquarters in Bangkok on 19 June, 2014.—*Reuters

The interim constitution has provisions for a committee to draft a new, permanent constitution. It is unclear if that will be put to a referendum. Another body, a national reform council, will have a broad remit to draw up political and economic reforms, including the reshaping of national and local government, education, energy policy and other matters.

The protesters who undermined Yingluck's government during months of street rallies — and whose leadership is close to the royalist and military establishment — wanted the electoral system to be redrawn to eliminate the influence of Thaksin.

Reuters

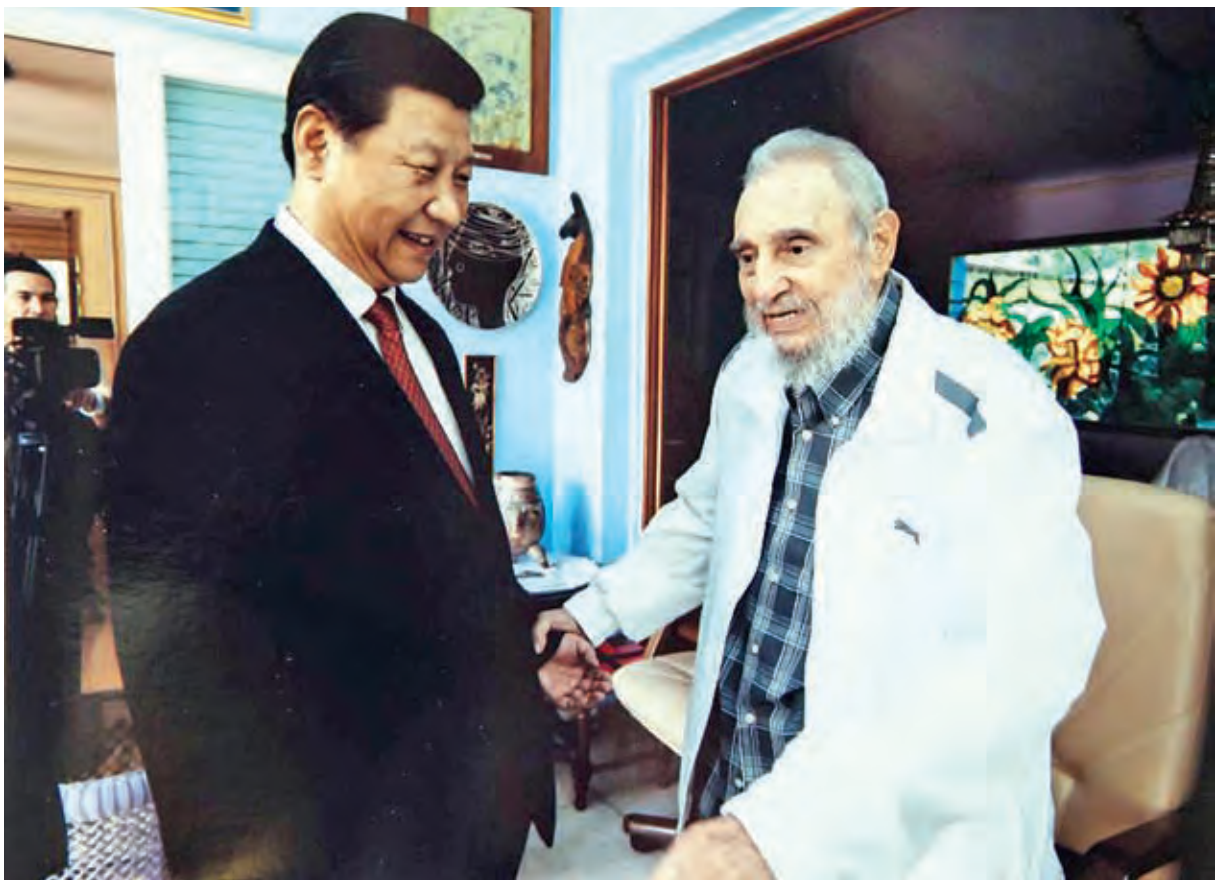
India, Pakistan may hold foreign secretary-level talks next month

New Delhi, 23 July — India and Pakistan may hold foreign secretary-level talks next month, sources said on Wednesday.

"Though no date has yet been finalized, Indian Foreign Secretary Sujatha Singh is likely to meet her Pakistani counterpart to hold talks over the fate of the stalled bilateral dialogue in the second half of August," the sources said.

The decision to restart foreign secretary-level talks was actually taken during Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's meeting with Pakistani Premier Nawaz Sharif when the latter met the former in the Indian capital a day after Modi was sworn into office in May this year.

The composite dialogue between the two countries had hit a deadlock following the 2008 Mumbai terror attacks, in which 10 Pakistani militants killed over 170 people. India has accused Pakistani hand behind the massacre, a charge denied by Islamabad. —*Xinhua*



Chinese President Xi Jinping (L) visits Cuban revolution leader Fidel Castro in Havana, capital of Cuba, on 22 July, 2014. — Xinhua

Six girls become victim of acid attack in SW Pakistan

ISLAMABAD, 23 July — Six girls got burn injuries on their faces in two separate incidents of acid-attack in Pakistan's southwest Balochistan province over the last two days, local media reported on Wednesday.

Express News said that some unknown masked men sprayed acid on four teenage girls in a market area in Quetta, the capital city of the province, and fled the scene.

In a separate incident, two girls became victim of acid attack in Mustang area of the province.

Talking to media, Nazir Ahmad Langov, a police officer in Mustang, said that two sisters including 12-year-old Mawish Jamali and Sarish Jamali, 14, were shopping in a market when they came under attack.

The injured women have been shifted to a nearby hospital.

All assailants escaped and police said they were investigating the incidents.

Police said that all the six women said they had no enmity with any individual or group, neither did they receive any threat before the attack.

Police said that families of the victims are not cooperating with them and it seems that the women were attacked due to some personal enmity.

Xinhua

Saudi women allowed to stand for municipal elections in 2015

RIYADH, 23 July — Saudi women will be allowed to vote and stand as candidates in upcoming municipal council elections expected to take place next year, according to *Arab News* on Wednesday.

This was approved by the Saudi cabinet this week by giving the green signal for a legislation in this regard, after women were not allowed to participate in the 2011 elections but Saudi King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Al Saudi had ordered shortly before the polls that they should be allowed to do so from the 2015 elections onwards.

The law allows councils to approve and implement municipal plans and programs approved in the budget. They would also oversee maintenance, operating, development and investment projects, the law states. The Minister of Municipal and Rural Affairs would determine the size and make-up of councils. They should not exceed 30 members, with two-thirds elected and a third appointed by the minister.

The law gives men and women the right to stand as candidates, vote and nominate others. It grants independent, non-governmental and non- profit establishments and charities the right to observe election procedures.

The ministry announced earlier finalizing matters to allow females to stand for election in the third term of the municipal council, in which female candidates will have the rights to address their voters similar to their male competitors, while there will be gender segregation in the polling centres to meet the conservative nature of the oil rich country.

To avoid forcing females to show their faces as such practice is considered as a taboo in society, both male and female candidates won't ask to present their personal photos but only the elections committee stamp on their cards, as well as the cards of their elections teams.

Allowing females to stand and take part in the polling process comes as slow steps to integrate women into all walks in society, including allocating only-women jobs in the private sectors that was enforced this year, meanwhile females in Saudi Arabia are not allowed to drive, this place many hinders on their movement.— *Xinhua*

Abe visits UNESCO-registered Tomioka Silk Mill

TOKYO, 23 July — Prime Minister Shinzo Abe on Wednesday visited the Tomioka Silk Mill, a newly added UNESCO World Heritage site, to help promote the historic Gunma Prefecture factory building to foreign tourists.

Abe inspected the restoration efforts of the architecture, which includes timber-frame brick masonry buildings for cocoon warehouses and a silk-reeling plant built in 1872 some 100 kilometres northwest of Tokyo.

The silk complex was originally a government-run factory built to serve as a model for other mills in Japan, which came to play a leading role in the global silk industry during its period of industrialization. The prime minister also tried silk reeling at the site with a historic machine using the production method of some 140 years ago.

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe (2nd from R, front row) tours a silk-reeling plant at the Tomioka Silk Mill, a newly added UNESCO World Heritage site built in 1872, on 23 July, 2014. — KYODO NEWS

"The registration as a UNESCO World Heritage site stems from all of your efforts," Abe told local volunteers tasked with guiding tourists and cleaning the site. "I hope many tourists will visit here from overseas." The mill was designated in June as Japan's 18th UNESCO World Heritage site, and the first among modern industrial properties, by the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

Kyodo News

Australia reassures commitment on MH370 search

MELBOURNE, 23 July — Australian government on Wednesday reassured its commitment on the search operation for the missing Malaysian flight MH370.

In a statement released by the Joint Agency Coordination Centre (JACC), it said Prime Minister Tony Abbott had appointed the chief coordinator Angus Houston as his special envoy to lead Australia's efforts on the ground in Ukraine to help recover, identify and repatriate Australians killed in the downing of Malaysia Airlines flight MH17.

However, this does not interrupt the search for missing Malaysia Airlines flight MH370, which disappeared on 8 March on a flight to Beijing from Kuala Lumpur, it said, adding the Australian government "remains fully committed to conducting a thorough undersea search of the likely impact zone in the Indian Ocean".

According to the statement, while Houston leads the country's MH17 efforts in Ukraine, Deputy Coordinator Judith Zielke will oversee the operations of the JACC on the search for MH370.

The Australian-contracted Fugro Equator and the Chinese survey ship Zhu Kezhen are currently doing bathymetric survey of the vast possible impact area.

The underwater search is likely to commence in early September and would need up to 12 months to complete. — *Xinhua*

Rebels likely downed Malaysian jet 'by mistake' — US officials

WASHINGTON, 23 July — The US government believes that pro-Russian separatists most likely shot down a Malaysia Airlines jet "by mistake," not realizing it was a civilian passenger flight, US intelligence officials said on Tuesday.

The officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said the "most plausible explanation" for the destruction of the plane was that the separatists fired a Russian-made SA-11 missile at it after mistaking it for another kind of aircraft.

"Five days into it (following the crash) it does appear to be a mistake," one of the officials said in a briefing for reporters.

The officials said that their assessments were backed up by evidence from social media and by intercepted conversations of known pro-Russian separatists, whose voice prints had been verified by US agencies.

The speakers initially bragged about shooting down a transport plane, but later acknowledged that they might have made a mistake, the officials said. All 298 people aboard died.

The downing of flight MH-17 deepened the Ukrainian crisis and prompted international outrage. Separatists in the Russian-speaking east have been fighting the Ukrainian military since pro-Western protesters in Kiev forced out the Moscow-allied president earlier this year.

Journalists work after a train carrying the remains of victims of Malaysia Airlines MH17 downed over rebel-held territory in eastern Ukraine arrived in the city of Kharkiv, eastern Ukraine on 22 July, 2014.—REUTERS

US President Barack Obama's administration has said it is convinced the airliner was brought down last Thursday by an SA-11 ground-to-air missile fired from territory in eastern Ukraine controlled by pro-Russian separatists.

US officials said earlier that satellite data showed a plume of smoke left in the missile's trail that allowed analysts to calculate a launch area near the Russia-Ukraine border. They also said infrared sensors detected the explosion of the jet.

The intelligence officials said they did not know at this stage who had actually fired the missile.

"We don't know who literally was operating the system that day but more generally we have the picture of evidence that says the Russians have been providing these types of systems, the Russians have been providing training," said a senior US administration official who spoke on condition of anonymity.

The intelligence officials said they had reports that as many as a dozen aircraft had been fired on from separatist-controlled areas during two months of fighting between the Ukrainian government and rebel forces. Two were large transport planes, the officials said.

Women look at messages on a dedication board for the victims of downed Malaysia Airlines Flight MH17 in Kuala Lumpur on 23 July, 2014.—REUTERS

Most if not all of the aircraft which had been targeted had been flying at low altitude. When it was hit the Malaysian airliner was at 33,000 feet.

The intelligence officials said the US did not know that the separatists were in possession or control of SA-11 missile systems until after the Malaysia Airlines plane was struck.

Separatist leaders have said they did not bring the Malaysian plane down. Russia has denied involvement. The US intelligence officials dismissed Russian assertions that the plane may have been brought down by a surface to air missile fired by Ukrainian government forces, or by a Ukrainian government warplane. They said the air-to-air missile theory was backed by little or no evidence, and that while the Ukrainian government has had access to SA-11 missiles, there was no evidence they had deployed them anywhere near the region where the plane crashed.

The intelligence officials said that for several weeks the United States had been tracking the movement by Russia of large amounts of weapons, including tanks, armored personnel carriers and multiple-launch rocket systems, across the border.

The officials also said that rebels were being trained at a large military base near the city of Rostov in southwestern Russia.

Reuters

Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak attends a specially convened session of Parliament in Kuala Lumpur on 23 July, 2014. Najib Razak on Wednesday condemned the shotdown of MH17, calling on all parties to work together to ensure investigations were completed immediately.—XINHUA

Obama vows US will seek justice in downing of Malaysian jet

WASHINGTON, 23 July — The United States will not rest until justice is done in the downing of Malaysia Airlines Flight MH-17 over eastern Ukraine, President Barack Obama vowed in a condolence book for the nearly 300 victims on Tuesday.

US lawmakers, meanwhile, pushed for a stronger response to the July 17 shootdown of the airliner over an area controlled by pro-Russia separatists.

Obama visited the Netherlands Embassy in Washington to sign the book. Of the 298 people killed in the crash, 193 were Dutch.

"No words can adequately express the sorrow the world feels over this loss. It is made more acute by the deep ties of friendship between our two countries," the president wrote in the book.

"Bound by that friendship, we will not rest until we are certain that justice is done," he wrote.

Obama later left on a three-day trip to Washington state and California that will be dominated by fund-raisers for Democratic congressional candidates.

Congress members pushed for tougher action. The Democratic leaders of the US Senate's national security committees called on Obama to impose immediate broad sanctions on Russia's defence industry, including the state-owned arms exporter Rosboronexport.

US President Barack Obama

Senators Dianne Feinstein, Carl Levin and Robert Menendez also wrote to Obama, urging him to consider broader sanctions on Russia's energy and financial industries and any other appropriate sectors of its economy to penalise Moscow for supporting the separatist rebels and express outrage over "the wanton destruction" of the flight.

Georgia Republican Saxby Chambliss issued a statement saying Washington should give stronger military assistance to the Ukrainian government if Moscow does not withdraw support for the separatists.

Reuters

PERSPECTIVES

Thursday, 24 July, 2014

Impact of mobile phone and social media in Myanmar

By *Aung Khin*

Mobile phones have become ubiquitous in many major cities of Myanmar. The government is now making plans to increase phone coverage to 50 percent in 2015 from less than 10 percent of mobile phone density and over 1 percent of landlines at present.

The telecommunications sector was monopolized for decades in the country, and SIM cards for mobile devices were unaffordable to ordinary people. Some 15 years ago, the price of SIM cards cost thousands of US dollars in the country. Its rarity had caused negative impacts on the Myanmar society for many years.

The high-priced SIM cards were used for sponsorships and enticements in many sectors. Some social problems occurred as a result of this as many people, especially adults, are hugely interested in mobile phones.

As Myanmar has licensed more telecommunication operators, the price of each SIM card has nosedived to K 1,500 ($1.5) through the lottery system. However, their prices on the black market were around K 30,000 for CDMA to K 80,000 for GSM SIM cards till the end of June.

Together with the sharp rise in the number of mobile phone users in the country, accounts of Facebook users have also amazingly increased. An IT expert recently estimated that the number of social media users, especially Facebook, in Myanmar is about 1.8 million.

A website developer commented that the spread of news on Facebook is faster than on websites in Myanmar. Some people are using social media for good purposes, but some others are using it for improper ways. While the popularity of modern technology should not be obstructed, people should have a good sense in using social media to avoid from disgraceful and destructive behaviours.

Write for us

We appreciate your feedback and contributions. If you have any comments or would like to submit editorials, analyses or reports please email wallace.tun@gmail.com with your name and title.

Traffic safety and congestion addressed in Myawady

Myawady, 23 July—A coordination meeting on the enforcement of traffic rules and formation of a traffic rule enforcement supervisory committee was held at the hall of the District General Administration Department in Myawady of Kayin State on Tuesday, with officials discussing traffic safety and measures to prevent traffic congestion.

In the meeting, Deputy Commissioner of Myawady District U Lwin Ko Oo stressed the need for the enforcement of traffic rules for vehicles and road users. He noted that Public Works will take action against overloaded vehicles on the roads in accordance with the Union Highways Law. He urged officials of Public Works to repair the damaged parts of the Myawady-Kawkareik-Hpa-an Highway as soon as possible. Educative talks must be given to vehicle owners and drivers to abide by traffic rules, he added.

Departmental officials and social organization members discussed.

Thuza (Myawady Town)

Chief Minister visits infrastructure projects in Tachilek

Tachilek, 23 July—Chief Minister of Shan State U Sao Aung Myat made an inspection tour of the Pahsat bus terminal, and the two-storey Myoma market in Tachilek of eastern Shan State on Tuesday.

He attended the inauguration of Bayintnaung private market in Wamkaung Ward and urged for the timely completion of construction tasks, dredging of drains for proper flow of water and allotment of shops at the new market.

Owner of the market U Tun Nay Oo donated K5 million to Shan State Development Affairs Committee, K3 million each to the education tasks of Tactical Operations Command (Tachilek), and development of Tachilek and Township DAC.

Tachilek District IPRD

Rakhine State Chief Minister tours Taungup Tsp to award students

Thandwe, 23 July—Chief Minister of Rakhine State U Maung Maung Ohn attended a ceremony to award outstanding students who passed the matriculation examination in the 2014 academic year at the hall in Taungup Township on Tuesday.

The Chief Minister presented prizes to six- and five-distinction winning students, with other officials giving the Rakhine State Government Award and Taungup Region Development Award of the U Ba Thein-Daw Ngwe Tin Foundation to the outstanding students. He also visited the Basic Education High School Branch in Guta Ward and a power station in Taungup.

In a meeting with departmental officials, Hluttaw representatives, political party and members of social organizations at the hall of Township General Administration Department, the chief minister talked about social progress made in Rakhine State and implementation of the budget for the 2014-15 fiscal year.

Thandwe District IPRD

The Japan International Cooperation Agency has built a jetty as part of the Dala Port Rehabilitation Pilot Project in Dala Township of Yangon South District, with another jetty currently under construction.

Maung Yin Oo (Dala)

Taungdwingyi-Minhla RBE trains to resume service on 27 July

Nay Pyi Taw, 23 July—Myanma Railways runs 193-up and 194-down RBE trains from Minhla in the western part of Ayeyawady River to Taungdwingyi in the eastern part as of 12 May 2013, after opening the Ayeyawady Bridge (Malun) on 11 May 2013.

Although both trains were suspended due to a lack of passengers as of 3 August 2013, Myanma Railways will resume the run of trains on Taungdwingyi-Minhla route on 27 July 2014.

MNA

Anti-Narcotics campaign launched in Kawlin Township

Kawlin, 23 July—Vice Chairman of the Myanmar Anti-Narcotics Association U Saw Ngwe, Chairman of Sagaing Region ANA U Kyaw Yin and other officials visited Kawlin of Sagaing Region on 21 July to inform the public about their anti-drug campaign.

They told students of Kawlin Myoma Basic Education High School about their efforts to eliminate drugs and the dangers of narcotic substances.

The township association said it wil cooperate with departmental personnel to reduce drug addiction not only in urban, but in rural areas.

Ko Ko Maung (IPRD)

GOLD PRICE, FE RATE (23-7-2014)

Yangon Gold Price
Buying K676,300 per tical: Selling K677,000
Mandalay Gold Price
Buying K676,200 per tical: Selling K676,900

FE RATE

USD	Buying	K970 -	Selling	K975
SGD	Buying	K777 -	Selling	K786
Euro	Buying	K1300 -	Selling	K1318

Students of Buddhism awarded

Lewe, 23 July—The first anniversary of Sunday Buddha Dhamma School and prize presentation was held at the monastery in Kyaungyay Village of Lewe Township in Nay Pyi Taw Council on 20 July.

Trainees participated in a knowledge contest on Buddhism, with Sayadaws and officials awarding outstanding contestants.

So far, 128 Sunday Buddha Dhamma Schools have been opened in the Nay Pyi Taw Council Area.

Ko Pauk (Okkar Myay)

Heavy rains cause floods in villages, inundation at rural roads in Mawlu

Mawlu, 23 July—Heavy rains caused floods of 150 acres of already-cultivated paddy plantations and 100 acres of farmlands in Mawlu Region of Indaw Township in Sagaing Region on Wednesday.

Due to the heavy rains, Mawhan Hsingaungtaung creek, Nantseeaung, Nantpamoung and Latyan creeks overflowed the villages in Mawlu region. There were no casualties in the floods, but some houses near the creeks were destroyed due to landslides, officials said.

Three bridges were affected by the rains, leading to transport difficulties between Nantseeaung and Paygon villages, Pinlon and Myaingthaya villages and between Thayagon and Myaypalin villages, officials said, adding that the rural roads were flooded with four-foot deep water.

Ni Toe

Loom workshop creates job opportunities in Kyunhla

Kyunhla, 23 July—A loom workshop established in Pyinmamyaing Ward of Kyunhla in Sagaing Region is creating job opportunities to local people, said sources. "I give weaving training to local youths at the workshop," said the workshop owner U Chan Aye, who has been teaching weaving techniques in Wundwin Township for six months.

The workshop has been extended from three to eight looms, with each loom costing over K600,000, he added.

The owner said that the workshop produces male and female sarongs, costing K2,200 for a female sarong and K3,900 for a male sarong. The products are sold to merchants in Mandalay, fetching K2,400 for a female sarong and K4,200 for male sarong, he said.

Myo Win Nyo (Kyunhla)

Arts show and talks mark 50th memorial of Thakin Kodawhmaing

Mandalay, 23 July—Artists in Mandalay and of the Thakin Kodawhmaing Peace Network organized an arts show and talks at Dhammathala Hall at the corner of 31st and 84th streets in Chanayethazan Township of Mandalay from 22 to 24 July.

Masoeyein Taikthit monastery Sayadaw Bhaddanta Tejobhasa of Mahaaungmye Township and Advocate U Tun Aung Kyaw gave talks on the creation of poems by Sayagyi Thakin Kodawhmaing to increase the interest in Myanmar literature and culture.

A total of 110 paintings are displayed at the show, with the paintings and art creations printed onto postcards, posters and calendars. A 30% fund from the proceeds will be donated to the Peace Network, according to organizing committee member U Kyaw Thiha.

The novelist, poet and politician Thakin Kodawhmaing was awarded the Stalin Peace Prize in 1954 and Honorary Doctorate Degree by the University of Hamburg in 1960.

Thiha Ko Ko (Mandalay)

Action taken against light trucks without transport licences in Mandalay

Mandalay, 23 July — Officials of the Transport Department under the Ministry of Rail Transportation has said the law would be enforced by cracking down on light trucks without work licences that transport passengers and commodities on the Mandalay-Shwebo-Monywa road section in Mandalay Region.

Referring to statistics, authorities said that a combined team comprising officials of the Transport Department, Traffic Police Force and Bus-line Control Committee (Highway/Local) took action against 186 vehicles in 2011, 269 in 2012, 209 in 2013 and 146 in June of 2014 under the Road and Inland Water Transport Law 1963.

The departments concerned published announcements in the newspapers for light truck owners to get work licences before providing transport services to the people. According to officials, these vehicles can be seen on 84th street and Sagaing-Mandalay Road, breaking the rules and regulations on a daily basis.

Maung Pyi Thu (Mandalay)

Israel keeps up Gaza assault; diplomats seek ceasefire

GAZA/JERUSALEM, 23 July — Israeli forces pounded multiple sites across the Gaza Strip on Wednesday, including the enclave's sole power plant, and said it was meeting stiff resistance from Hamas Islamists, as diplomats sought to end the bloodshed.

In a blow to Israel's economy, US and European air carriers halted flights in and out of Tel Aviv citing security worries after a militant rocket from Gaza hit a house near the airport. Israel urged a re-think, saying its airspace was safe.

US Secretary of State John Kerry was in Egypt and UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon in Israel, spearheading international efforts to secure a ceasefire. Hamas ally Qatar was also working in the background to seek a solution.

Israel launched its offensive on 8 July to halt missile salvoes by Hamas Islamists, which was angered by a crackdown on its supporters in the nearby occupied West Bank and suffering economic hardship because of an Israeli-Egyptian blockade.

Smoke rises following what witnesses said was an Israeli air strike in Gaza City on 22 July, 2014. —REUTERS

After failing to halt the militant barrage through days of aerial bombardment, Israel sent ground troops into Gaza last Thursday, looking to knock out Hamas's missile stores and destroy a vast, underground network of tunnels.

Some 630 Palestinians, many of them children and civilians have died in the conflagration, including a seven-year-old hit by a shell in southern Gaza early Wednesday, a medic said.

Some 29 Israeli soldiers have been killed, including a tank officer who was shot by a Palestinian sniper overnight. Two civilians have been slain by rocket fire. The military says one of its soldiers is also missing and believes he might be dead. Hamas says it has seized him, but has not released his picture.

Clouds of black smoke hung over the densely populated Mediterranean enclave, with the regular thud of artillery and tank shells filling the air.

"We are meeting resistance around the tunnels ... they are constantly trying to attack us around and in the tunnels. That is the trend," said Israeli military spokesman Lieutenant-Colonel Peter Lerner.

He said 30 militant gunman had been killed overnight, bringing the total to 210 since the offensive started.

Hamas's armed wing, the Izz el-Deen Al-Qassam, said its fighters had detonated an anti-personnel bomb as an Israeli army patrol passed, killing several troops. There was no immediate confirmation from Israel.

There was also violence in the occupied West Bank, where a Palestinian was shot dead by Israeli troops near Bethlehem. The army said soldiers fired a rubber bullet at him during clashes with Palestinians hurling rocks and Molotov cocktails.—*Reuters*

Suicide bombing kills one Afghan police, injures three

KUNDUZ, (AFGHANISTAN), 23 July — One Afghan police was killed and three others, including a district police chief, injured in a suicide bombing in Kunduz city, the provincial capital of northern Kunduz province, on Wednesday morning, a source said.

"Chardara District police Chief Ghulam Mehoiddin was travelling to his office. A militant detonated his explosive vest on a narrow bridge while the official's car was passing by, killing one police and injuring three others, including Mehoiddin," the provincial police spokesman Sayyed Sarwar Housini told *Xinhua*. The bomber was also killed in the attack which took place at around 7:00 a.m. local time, the source said, adding the wounded policemen who got severe injuries were shifted to a nearby hospital.— *Xinhua*

Iraqi air strikes kill 19 around militant-held Falluja

Members of the Iraqi security forces take their positions during a patrol in the town of Jurf al-Sakhar, south of Baghdad, on 16 July, 2014. —REUTERS

FALLUJA, (Iraq) 23 July— Iraqi government air strikes killed 19 people, including children, in Falluja on Monday and on Tuesday, a health official in the militant-held city said.

The Iraqi army has been shelling Falluja, 70 km (44 miles) west of Baghdad, for months, trying to drive out the Sunni militants from the group now known as Islamic State. The insurgents, backed by discontented local Sunni tribal leaders, overran the city in January.

Ahmed al-Shami, a spokesman for the Falluja health office — the local arm of the health ministry — said the 19 dead included women and children and that Falluja hospital had also received 38 wounded people since Monday evening.Residents of Falluja and the nearby town of Garma said helicopters fired artillery and dropped three barrel bombs on Falluja and two on Garma.

Barrel bombs — powerful makeshift weapons made from high explosives, cement and metal parts packed into oil drums, usually dropped from helicopters — have gained notoriety in the region because of their use in neighbouring Syria by President Bashar al-Assad's forces to flatten buildings in rebel-held areas. Scores of people have been killed since January in what residents describe as indiscriminate bombardment. In May, witnesses in Falluja said barrel bombs had been dropped on the city. The government denies indiscriminate attacks, saying it targets insurgents, but a mid-level security officer in Anbar Province has previously confirmed that barrel bombs have been dropped on Falluja.

Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki's military spokesman, Lieutenant-General Qassim Atta, was not immediately available to comment on this week's attacks.

Some 560,000 people have fled Anbar province — a large area of western Iraq where Falluja is situated — since the Islamic State takeover in January, according to the International Rescue Committee, a New York-based humanitarian organization.

Islamic State took over a swath of northern territory last month in an assault that caused large numbers of government soldiers to desert, shifting the main battleground in a civil war that pits the Shi'ite-led Baghdad government against a well-equipped Sunni insurgency.

Maliki's office said on Tuesday he had met Sunni tribal leaders from several provinces where the conflict is raging. Anger with Maliki's government has encouraged some Sunni armed groups to stick with the hardline Islamic State despite ideological differences, officials and tribal leaders say. The conflict, which threatens to break up Iraq along ethnic and sectarian lines, has killed almost 5,600 civilians this year, according to the latest United Nations figures.

Reuters

Kerry urges Hamas to end conflict, has 'constructive' Egypt talks

US Secretary of State John Kerry (L) and Egypt's Foreign Minister Sameh Shukri talk before making statements to reporters after Kerry met with Shukri and Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi at the presidential palace in Cairo on 22 July, 2014. —REUTERS

CAIRO, 23 July —US Secretary of State John Kerry urged Hamas on Tuesday to pursue a negotiated end to its conflict with Israel after what he said were constructive talks with Egyptian officials about their ceasefire proposal.

After meeting Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, whose country has some leverage over Hamas through its control of a border crossing from Egypt to the Gaza Strip, Kerry said there was still "work to do" to resolve the conflict.

Israel pounded targets in the Gaza Strip on Tuesday and Justice Minister Tzipi Livni, seen as the most dovish member of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's inner security cabinet, told Israeli Army Radio: "A ceasefire is not near." More than 600 people have died since Israel launched an offensive on 8 July to halt missile attacks out of the Gaza Strip by Hamas, which has been angered by a crackdown on its supporters in the occupied West Bank and by its suffering economic hardship because of an Israeli-Egyptian blockade.

"Hamas has a fundamental choice to make and it is a choice that will have a profound impact for the people of Gaza," Kerry told reporters in a joint appearance with his Egyptian counterpart, Sameh Shukri.

Reuters

Asia stocks rise as focus shifts from risk aversion, Aussie spikes

TOKYO, 23 July — An index of Asian shares touched a fresh three-year high on Wednesday as some markets focused on company earnings more than geopolitical tensions while the Australian dollar spiked on stronger-than-expected inflation data.

But a cautious mood was expected to return in early European trade, where spreadbetters predicted Britain's FTSE 100 to open 8 to 15 points lower, or down as much as 0.2 percent; Germany's DAX to open down 20 to 22 points, or 0.2 percent lower; and France's CAC 40 to open 5 to 6 points lower, or down 0.1 percent.

"Despite yesterday's strong rebound in Europe, we look set to start on the back foot this morning after a slightly negative reaction to the latest earnings announcements from Microsoft and Apple, after the bell last night," Michael Hewson, chief market analyst at CMC Markets, said in a note.

Apple Inc posted a smaller-than-expected 6 percent rise in quarterly revenue, while Microsoft Corp MSFT.O said it aims to get its loss-making Nokia phone unit to break even within two years after it reported a 7 percent dip in quarterly profit.

Violence continued in Gaza, but hopes rose for an easing of tension in Ukraine after pro-Russian rebels handed the flight recorders and victims' remains from a downed Malaysian airliner to international authorities.

MSCI's broadest index of Asia-Pacific shares outside Japan rose 0.5 percent after earlier pushing to a three-year peak, lifted after the S&P 500 hit a new high overnight as risk markets turned their attention to positive corporate earnings and economic data.

In contrast, Japan's Nikkei stock average closed down 0.1 percent as the Tokyo markets kept their focus on tensions in Gaza and the Middle East.

In currencies, the Australian dollar, already on a bullish footing after the country's central bank chief on Tuesday chose not to talk down the currency, added about 0.4 percent to buy $0.9432. It spiked to a nearly two-week high of $0.9439 on surprisingly high core inflation figures that dented rate cut expectations.

"We think that the speculation regarding a near-term rate cut that we've seen over the past four to six weeks is likely to be dialled back to a certain extent," said Tom Kennedy, economist at JP Morgan in Sydney. The euro stood little changed at $1.3467, after ticking down to a fresh eight-month trough of $1.3458 earlier in the session.

The weaker euro dovetailed with expectations for the European Central Bank to ease policy further with a gradual widening of interest rate differentials favouring the US over Europe seen unfolding.

Still, market participants did not see a clear, specific trigger for the latest plunge. "The only explanation for the sell-off in EUR/USD is a technical one. The currency pair has been in a downtrend and hovering near 1.35 for the past few days with speculators itching to test this key support level," Kathy Lien, managing director of FX strategy for BK Asset Management, wrote in a note to clients.

A broker monitors share prices while trading at a brokerage firm in Mumbai on 13 May, 2014. —REUTERS

"In the long run, we believe EUR/USD should be trading comfortably below 1.35, but not until there is significant upside momentum in US yields," she said.

US Treasury yields fell overnight after benign US inflation data suggested less pressure on the Federal Reserve to raise interest rates sooner than expected.

The dollar was nearly flat at 101.42 yen , having pulled back from the week's low of 101.19 hit on Monday as demand for the safe-haven Japanese currency diminished.

In commodities, gold held steady after falling on Tuesday as tensions over the Malaysian airliner downed over Ukraine eased.

Spot gold was little changed at $1,305.70 an ounce after falling as low as $1,301 overnight. It had climbed to as high as $1,324 late last week when the Malaysian airliner was brought down. US crude dropped about 0.3 percent to around $102 a barrel, falling for a second consecutive session as oil supplies were unaffected by continuing violence and tension in Iraq, Ukraine and Gaza.

Reuters

Honda's India unit to account for 25 pct of Asia Pacific sales by March 2017

Employees stand beside the Honda Amaze after giving it the final touches near the assembly line of the company's manufacturing plant in Tapukara, in Rajasthan, on 24 Feb, 2014. —REUTERS

NEW DELHI, 23 July — The India unit of Honda Motor Co Ltd (7267.T) will account for 25 percent of the Japanese carmaker's Asia Pacific sales target of 1.2 million units by March 2017, Managing Officer Yoshiyuki Matsumoto said on Wednesday. Honda plans to raise the number of dealers in India to 230 by March 2015 from 179 now, said Hironori Kanayama, president and chief executive officer, Honda Cars India Ltd.

On Wednesday, Honda launched a seven-seater multi-purpose vehicle, Mobilio, that will compete with similar vehicles from Maruti Suzuki (MRTI.NS), Toyota Motor Co (7203.T) and Nissan Motor Co (7201.T), among others. The ex-showroom price for the base grade petrol version of the new car in Delhi will be 649,000 rupees ($10,800), said Jnaneswar Sen, senior vice president, marketing and sales at Honda Cars India Ltd. Honda's entry-level compact sedan Amaze and its top-selling sedan City have increased the company's sales in India by 40 percent to 40,516 units in the April-June quarter from the year-ago period, according to industry data.

Reuters

Scientists eliminate HIV from cultured human cells for first time

WASHINGTON, 23 July — US scientists said on Monday they have designed a way to precisely remove the AIDS virus from cultured human cells without damaging them for the first time, a discovery they said could lead to a potential cure for the disease.

Researchers from Temple University School of Medicine successfully eliminated latent HIV from human cells by using a combination of a DNA-snipping enzyme called nuclease and a targeting strand of RNA called guide RNA (gRNA) to hunt down and excise the HIV DNA.

From there, the cells were able to repair themselves and solder the loose ends of the genome back together, resulting in virus-free cells.

"It's an exciting discovery, but it's not yet ready to go into the clinic," Kamel Khalili, professor and chair of the Department of Neuroscience at Temple," said in a statement. "It's a proof of concept that we're moving in the right direction."

The findings, led by Khalili and his colleague, Wenhui Hu, associate professor of neuroscience at Temple, were published in the *US journal Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.*

Although antiretroviral therapy has significantly cut the death date in people with HIV, it can't entirely clear the virus out of their bodies, Hu explained to *Xinhua.*

"In order to cure the disease, eradication of HIV-1 entire genome from host cells is required," he said.

In the new study, the researchers engineered a 20-nucleotide strand of gRNA to target the HIV DNA and paired it with the Cas9 nuclease.

The gRNA targets the control region of the gene called the long terminal repeat (LTR), which are present on both ends of the HIV-1 genome, the researchers said.

By targeting both LTRs, the Cas9 nuclease can snip out the 9, 709-nucleotides that comprise the HIV genome.

The combination approach was successful in several cell types that can harbor HIV-1, including microglia and macrophages, as well as in T-lymphocytes, Hu said.

The same technique could theoretically be used against a variety of other viruses, he said.

They also suggested that the molecular tools also hold promise as a therapeutic vaccine.

Still, the technique faces several significant challenges before it is ready for patients, they acknowledged.

The challenges included how to deliver the therapeutic agent to every single infected cell and how to individualize it to meet every patient's unique viral sequences since HIV is prone to mutations.

"We are working on a number of strategies so we can take the construct into preclinical studies," Khalili said. "We want to eradicate every single copy of HIV-1 from the patient. That will cure AIDS. I think this technology is the way we can do it."

Xinhua

Poll shows Brazil's Rousseff would win presidential runoff

Sao Paulo, 23 July — Brazil President Dilma Rousseff would win a second-round runoff against either opponent and has 38 percent of voter support ahead of her October re-election bid, a new poll by the IBOPE polling institute showed on Tuesday.

Her main challenger, Aecio Neves, has the backing of 22 percent of potential voters while Eduardo Campos has 8 percent, according to the survey broadcast on TV Globo.

The changes in voter intention for all candidates are within the poll's margin of error from June, when Rousseff had 39 percent of support, Neves had 21 percent and Campos 10 percent, suggesting Rousseff's support is not eroding as other recent polls have suggested.

The approval rating of her government remained at 31 percent, unchanged from a month ago when Brazil was starting to host the month-long soccer World Cup. Her personal approval rating was also unchanged at 44 percent.

Brazil's President Dilma Rousseff

The tournament was considered a surprising logistical success but moral in the soccer-loving nation was hurt by the national team's stunning 7-1 loss to Germany.

In a second-round runoff vote, Rousseff would defeat Neves of the centrist PSDB party with 41 percent of the vote compared with his 33 percent, IBOPE found. She would also win with 41 percent against Campos, a former state governor and leader of the Brazilian Socialist Party, who would get 29 percent.

Other polls released by Datafolha and the Sensus polling institute on Friday and Saturday showed the election headed to a runoff, with Rousseff and Neves tied in a second round.

Until recently Rousseff appeared to be cruising toward re-election, but she now finds herself in an unpredictable race almost certain to go to a runoff vote as an already sluggish economy takes a turn for the worse. Her popularity has been declining this year due to concerns about high inflation as well as economic growth. Discontent has been on the rise since protesters took to the streets a year ago, and 70 percent of those interviewed in July desired change.

IBOPE's new survey was slightly different from a month ago because it asked respondents to choose between all official candidates to appear on the ballot, not just the favourites.

The poll surveyed 2,002 people from July 18-21 and has a margin of error of plus or minus 2 percentage points.—*Reuters*

US, European airlines halt flights to Israel due to instability

An American Eagle Embraer ERJ-140LR jet takes off as US Airways jets are lined up at Reagan National Airport in Washington on 12 July, 2013.—Reuters

Washington, 23 July — Air carriers in the United States and Europe on Tuesday halted flights to Tel Aviv after warnings from governmental agencies in an effort to ensure passenger safety as turmoil in Israel and the region intensified.

US carriers Delta Air Lines, American Airlines Group and United Airlines were the first to announce cancellations until further notice, followed by flight stoppages by European carriers, including Germany's Lufthansa and Air France.

American Airlines said late on Tuesday that it would halt flights to and from Tel Aviv through Thursday while it monitors the situation.

Air Berlin, Germany's second-largest carrier, also said it halted its flights through Wednesday, citing the situation on the ground. Throughout the day, several airlines rerouted or turned back flights already headed to Israel's financial centre.

The flight suspensions grabbed the attention of a global aviation community still grappling with the downing last week of a Malaysia Airlines jet over Ukraine with nearly 300 aboard. "The carriers are making the right call," said Robert Mann, an airline consultant in Port Washington, New York. "They are ultimately legally responsible for their operations and thus, they have to be at least as cautious and in many cases more cautious than any guideline that they are given."

The FAA said it told US carriers that they were prohibited from flying to or from Ben Gurion International Airport in Tel Aviv for up to 24 hours. In a statement, the agency said its notice was issued in response to a rocket strike on Tuesday that landed about a mile from the airport.

The text of the FAA notice cited "the potentially hazardous situation created by the armed conflict in Israel and Gaza" in prohibiting the flights by US carriers.

Israeli officials, including Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, called for US airlines to resume flights to Israel. "There is no need for US carriers to suspend flights and reward terrorism," said a statement from Israel's Transportation Minister Yisrael Katz. The FAA notice was discussed in a call later on Tuesday between Secretary of State John Kerry and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, the US State Department said.

Reuters

A SNCF railway worker walks past TGV high speed trains at Lille-Flandres station, northern France, on 10 June, 2014, before the start of a strike by French SNCF railway workers.—Reuters

Godzilla statue in Tokyo

Photo taken on 23 July, 2014, shows a statue of Godzilla, the popular Japanese monster character, that has been set up in the premises of the Tokyo Midtown commercial complex in Tokyo's Minato Ward ahead of the release in Japan of the US film "Godzilla" two days later.—Kyodo News

Heat wave sweeps across Japan, many areas log hottest day this summer

Tokyo, 23 July — Temperatures soared across the Japanese archipelago on Wednesday with highs for this summer recorded in many areas, the weather agency said.

The Japan Meteorological Agency issued heat wave advisories in over 16 prefectures, warning of dehydration and encouraging the use of air conditioning.

Several hundred observation points nationwide recorded temperatures of 30 C or higher, with the day's high of 35.9 C reported in the cities of Higashiomi, Shiga Prefecture, and Niihama, Ehime Prefecture, both in western Japan. Highs for the summer were logged at about 100 observation points.

The central business district of Tokyo recorded 33.1 C shortly after 10 am.

The agency forecasts the heat wave will last into the coming week as a high pressure system is likely to continue covering eastern and western Japan.

Kyodo News

French parliament adopts disputed rail reform

Paris, 23 July — The French parliament has formally adopted a railway reform intended to prepare the sector for liberalisation and which triggered a 10-day strike last month.

The bill was approved during an overnight session with votes from the ruling Socialists, Greens and moderate left-wing allies. The hard left and some opposition voted against.

The move will bring state-owned railway company SNCF and track owner RFF into the same holding company and is to prepare the system ahead of European Union moves to introduce more competition into Europe's transport routes.

Railworkers fear the reform will lead to job losses and an erosion of their current privileges.

The final text includes an amendment aimed at capping the debt of the SNCF, currently at 44 billion euros (£34.57 billion), and calls for the negotiation of a new collective convention governing working conditions in the sector.

Reuters

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MV FESCO VOYAGER VOY NO (002)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV FESCO VOYAGER VOY NO (002) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 22.7.2014 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 Claims 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
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CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV BANGSAPHAN VOY NO (114)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV BANGSAPHAN VOY NO (114) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 23.7.2014 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of A.W.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 Claims 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 WONGSAMUT OCEAN SHIPPING CO LTD.
Phone No: 2301186

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV SINGAPORE BRIDGE VOY NO (073)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV SINGAPORE BRIDGE VOY NO (073) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 24.7.2014 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 Claims 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 SAMUDERA SHIPPING LINE
Phone No: 2301185

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV NOBLE BREEZE VOY NO (050)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV NOBLE BREEZE VOY NO (050) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 24.7.2014 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of A.W.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 Claims 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.

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Weather report

FORECAST VALID UNTIL EVENING OF THE 24th July, 2014: Rain will be scattered in Lower Sagaing, Mandalay and Magway Regions, Kayah State, fairly widespread in Yangon and Ayeyarwady Regions and widespread in the remaining Regions and States with likelihood of regional heavy falls in Taninthayi Region and Mon State and isolated heavy falls in Upper Sagaing Region, Rakhine and Kayin States. Degree of certainty is (100%).

STATE OF THE SEA: Squalls with moderate to rough sea are likely at times off and along Myanmar Coasts. Surface wind speed in squalls may reach (35-40) m.p.h.

Typhoon Matmo slams into Taiwan, one killed, some damage reported

Fishermen in raincoats walk past fishing boats as Typhoon Matmo approaches the northeastern coastal town of Nanfangao in Ilan county, northern Taiwan, on 22 July, 2014. —XINHUA

TAIPEI, 23 July — Typhoon Matmo slammed into Taiwan on Wednesday with heavy rains and strong winds, shutting financial markets and schools, with at least one person killed and some damage reported.

Typhoon Matmo, a category two on Tropical Storm Risk's scale of one to five, packed gusts of 155 kph (90 mph) and made landfall early on Wednesday, the central weather bureau said. A man in northern Taiwan died after falling into a pool on his farm. News reports said a tourist was missing after taking pictures on a shore.

Taiwan's military had gathered and distributed sandbags in anticipation of flooding. The weather bureau said Matmo was expected to head north towards China later in the day.

Matmo arrived a week after Typhoon Rammasun killed 97 people in the Philippines and 46 in China, with 25 still missing. The China Meteorological Administration said Rammasun was the strongest storm to strike southern China since 1973.

Typhoons are common at this time of year in the South China Sea, picking up strength from the warm waters and dissipating over land.

Reuters

Typhoon Rammasun claims 56 deaths in China

BEIJING, 23 July—The death toll from super typhoon Rammasun has increased to 56 as of 9:00 am on Wednesday, with another 20 missing, latest official figures show. The strongest typhoon to hit south China in four decades, Rammasun brought gales, downpours and floods to southern regions, affecting more than 11 million people in the provinces of Guangdong, Hainan and Yunnan as well as Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, said a statement from the Ministry of Civil Affairs.— *Xinhua*

Chinese police hunt murderer of Vietnamese

NANNING, 23 July — Police in south China's Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region are hunting a Chinese man suspected of murdering three Vietnamese women.

The crime was committed at around 8 pm on Tuesday at a rented apartment on Zhongshan Road, Fangcheng District in Fangchenggang City, said a spokesman with the district's public security bureau on Wednesday.

Two Vietnamese women were killed on the spot and one died later in hospital, said the spokesman. He said the assailant also wounded another two Vietnamese women in the apartment but their injuries are not life-threatening.

Xinhua

A flying nymph is seen depicted on a rice field in Inakadate Village, Aomori Prefecture, northeastern Japan, on 20 July, 2014. The picture was created using 10 kinds of rice plant in seven colours.—KYODO NEWS

Two killed in landslide in N Philippines

MANILA, 23 July — An infant and a three-year-old boy died in a landslide in the northern Philippine province of Rizal which experienced heavy rains due to typhoon Matmo (local name: Henry) on Wednesday, a local disaster relief official said.

Vicente Tomazar, director of the Office of Civil Defence in Region IV-A, said the landslide occurred at San Isidro village, Rodriguez town in Rizal province at 3:30 am on Wednesday.

Tomazar said soil in the area was weakened by typhoon Rammasun (local name: Glenda), which also dumped heavy rains on the province last week. More rain dumped by typhoon Matmo triggered the landslide.—*Xinhua*

Selena Gomez
celebrates birthday with mystery man

Los Angeles, 23 July — Singer-actress Selena Gomez celebrated her 22nd birthday by having some fun in the sun on a yacht in St Tropez with her model friend Cara Delevingne and a mystery man. Gomez, who turned 22 yesterday, was spotted hugging and jet skiing with the new man, reported Ace Showbiz.

In the pics, the birthday girl can be seen holding on tight to the man and laughing happily as they ride their jet ski together.

She looked stunning in a retro-inspired swim suit. Another photo captured her sharing a bright yellow towel with the heartthrob after a dip in the water. Gomez and Delevigne were also spotted parasailing and sunbathing on their yacht before hitting the waves with a third friend. The Disney star's famous friend, Taylor Swift, gave her a shout out by posting a picture with a birthday message to her on Instagram.—*PTI*

Pharrell Williams

Maroon 5

Kylie Minogue

Pharrell Williams, Maroon 5 to perform at music festival

Los Angeles, 23 July — Pharrell Williams, Maroon 5 and Kylie Minogue are among the stars who will perform at an upcoming music festival in London. The three are part of this year's lineup for Apple's iTunes Festival, to be held in September, reported Aceshowbiz.

David Guetta, Sam Smith, Blondie, Beck and Kasabian are also on the list of performers. The full lineup this year includes over 60 acts, set to perform at Roundhouse over a full month. The company has assured to make the livestream available in over 100 countries. This year, the festivities will be broadcast through the iTunes store on iOS devices, rather than through a dedicated application.—*PTI*

Douglas, Keaton get second chance at love in 'And So It Goes'

New York, 23 July — Michael Douglas is more accustomed to playing dashing leading men and corporate types, so he took a deep breath when offered the role of an ornery widower with a second chance for love in the romantic comedy "And So It Goes." The film reunites the Oscar-winning actor with director Rob Reiner, who both worked together on the 1995 movie "American President." Douglas also stars opposite Diane Keaton for the first time in his career. "It was one of those stories that you guess you are finally ready for," Douglas said about the film that opens in US theaters on Friday and produced by Warner Bros' (TWX.N) Castle Rock Entertainment.

Diane Keaton

"I am going to be 70 in a couple of months," he added. "You really don't think you have changed that much but you have."

Douglas plays Oren Little, a curmudgeon realtor near retirement who still grieves for his dead wife and is estranged from his only son.—*Reuters*

Jessica Chastain
to be honoured at Deauville Film Festival

Los Angeles, 23 July — 'Zero Dark Thirty' star Jessica Chastain has been named the next honoree at the Deauville American Film Festival.

The 37-year-old actress will be recognised by the annual French festival — which pays tribute to American cinema — for her career, reported Variety.

Festival director, Bruno Barde said, "The tribute is a token of our affection, admiration, recognition and esteem for the talent of the recipient. For the past few years, we have been paying tribute to those actresses who embody the cinema of today and who will form the legacy of tomorrow.

"When we first discovered Jessica Chastain, we had the definite feeling that here was someone special on-screen. Through her successive roles, she has confirmed her emotional capacity to grab the limelight.

"We salute her grace and talent and the beauty of the truth she brings to her performance," he said.

Chastain can be next seen in 'Interstellar', 'The Disappearance of Eleanor Rigby', 'Miss Julie' and 'A Violent Year'.

PTI

Lady Gaga
gets emotional on stage

London, 23 July — Pop star Lady Gaga appeared teary-eyed on stage while thanking her fans for their support and also revealed her past as a nightclub dancer.

The 28-year-old 'Just Dance' hitmaker, known by her wild hair and outfits, made an emotional speech during a show in Las Vegas, saying she is grateful to have an incredible fan support, reported *The Daily Mirror*.

"I want to say thank you to all of you, for inspiring me, for letting me be myself, it means so much to me," she said. "I started go-go dancing when I was 18. The really, the most important thing I want to thank you for, is believing in just this tiny American girl from New York who had a dream," she added.—*PTI*

Queen's horse Estimate tests positive for morphine

LONDON, 23 July — Queen Elizabeth's racehorse Estimate, the 2013 Ascot Gold Cup winner, has tested positive for the banned substance morphine, Buckingham Palace said on Tuesday.

Estimate was one of five horses under various trainers who were found by the British Horseracing Authority to be affected.

"On Thursday 17th July the British Horseracing Authority (BHA) announced that a number of post-race samples, obtained from recent race meetings, had been found to indicate the presence of morphine, which is a prohibited substance on race days," John Warren, the Queen's bloodstock and racing advisor, said in a statement.

"Initial indications are that the positive test resulted from the consumption of a contaminated feed product."

Britain's Queen Elizabeth (L) smiles as she stands with her horse Estimate after it won the Gold Cup during Ladies' Day at the Royal Ascot horse racing festival at Ascot, southern England, on 20 June, 2013. — REUTERS

Warren added: "(Trainer) Sir Michael (Stoute) is working closely with the feed company involved to discover how the product may have become contaminated prior to delivery to his stables.

"As the BHA investigates this matter, including potential links between the different cases, Sir Michael continues to offer his full co-operation."

Reuters

Bolt chides doping officials over Tyson Gay ban

Jamaican sprinter Usain Bolt gestures before competing in a race against a public bus during a demonstration event in Buenos Aires on 14 Dec, 2013. — REUTERS

KINGSTON, 23 July — Usain Bolt believes anti-doping officials have sent a "bad message to the sport", after American sprinter Tyson Gay received only a one-year ban following a positive test for an anabolic steroid.

"I'm not really happy with the situation and with how it was done," Bolt told *Reuters* on Tuesday.

"I think for someone like Asafa (Powell) to get a ban of 18 months for that (stimulant oxilofrine) and then Tyson Gay get just one year because of cooperating, I think it is sending a bad message into the sport that you can do it (dope) but if you cooperate with us, we'll reduce the sentence," the100m and 200m world record holder and six times Olympic gold medallist said. The sanction, handed to Gay by the United States Anti-Doping Agency (USADA), ended in June this year.

Gay, who returned to competition on 3 July and ran 9.93 in the 100 metres at the Lausanne Diamond League meeting, is the world's joint second fastest man along with Yohan Blake (9.69). Both the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) and track and field's world governing body, the IAAF, have accepted the controversial ban. "I don't think that's the right way to go because you are pretty much telling people that this is a way out, it's a way of beating the system, so personally, I don't think the IAAF dealt with that very well," Bolt said.

WADA told *Reuters* in early June that it was satisfied with the decision, while later that month, the IAAF said that it would not appeal Gay's ban.

"After careful review of the full file provided by USADA, the IAAF has decided that the one-year sanction applied in the case of Tyson Gay was appropriate under the circumstances and in accordance with IAAF Rules," it said in a statement to *Reuters*.

Reuters

Wrecked Concordia finally headed for scrapyard after massive salvage operation

GIGLIO ISLAND, 23 July— Maneuvers began early on Wednesday to remove the rusty hulk of the *Costa Concordia* cruise liner from the Italian island where it struck rocks and capsized two years ago, killing 32 people.

A convoy of 14 vessels, led by the tug boat Blizzard, will start to tow the *Concordia* later on Wednesday to a port near Genoa in northern Italy where it is due to arrive on Sunday, before being broken up for scrap.

The once-gleaming white luxury liner sank off the holiday island of Giglio in January 2012 after sailing too close to shore. Its wreck has remained there ever since as engineers embarked on one of the largest maritime salvage operations in history.

Over the past week, salvagers have slowly lifted the 114,500-tonne ship from underwater platforms by pumping air into 30 large metal boxes, or sponsons, attached to the hull.

Franco Porcellachia, engineer in charge of the salvage, said on Tuesday that his team had done everything in their power to make sure the ship, which is around two-and-a-half times the size of the Titanic, was structurally sound.

"When we are in sight of the port of Genoa, we can declare victory," said Franco Gabrielli, the head of Italy's civil protection service, on Wednesday.

The whole salvage operation is set to cost the ship's owners Costa Crociere, a unit of Carnival Corp over 1.5 billion euros ($2 billion), its chief executive said earlier this month.

Bad weather delayed the process by two days, and salvage master Nick Sloane said on Wednesday that "forecasts are good" and "today is a big day for Giglio".—*Reuters*

The Costa Concordia cruise liner is seen during its refloat operation at Giglio harbour on 23 July, 2014.—REUTERS

MYANMAR TV

(24-7-2014,Thursday)

6:00 am
* Paritta by Venerable Mingun Sayadaw

7:20 am
* People Talks

8:30 am
* TV Drama Series

10:00 am
* News

11:00 am
* Sing & Enjoy

12:00 pm
* News/ International News/ Weather Report

1:15 pm
* Song Programme

2:00 pm
* Documentary

2:20 pm
* Fine Arts Bosom of Dramatic Performance

3:00 pm
* News

3:20 pm
* Teleplay

4:00 pm
* News

4:35 pm
* University of Distance Education (TV Lectures) -Third Year (Myanmar)

5:00 pm
* News

5:30 pm
* TV Drama Series

7:00 pm
* News

7:25 pm
* TV Drama Series

8:00 pm
* News/ International News/ Weather Report

8:35 pm
* Current Affairs

9:30 pm
* News
* Documentary
* Clever
* Pyi Thu Ni Ti

MYANMAR INTERNATIONAL

(24-7-14 07:00 am~ 23-7-14 07:00 am) MST

* Local News
* Charity in Myanmar: Myanmar Social & Charitable Association (Episode-2)
* Modifying Natural Thanakha Bark into Ready-Made Skin Care Product
* Local News
* Simple and Peaceful Life :….. Changes
* Inlay Lake: The Challenges
* Local News
* Chinlone and the Dreams of the Player
* Ngapali Beach: Real Paradise
* Local News
* Journey To Unimaginable Spots (Episode-3)
* In The Studio: Zip Zapt & Air Air
* Local News
* Those Who Never Give Up: Shwe Min Thar Foundation
* World News
* Myanmar Alternative Medicine (Noni)
* Local News
* Simple and Peaceful Life: Dhamma School
* The Eel Business: Fisherman the eel culture
* Local News
* Architecture: A Visit to Htam Hsan Cave A Miraculous Place
* Myanmar Street Food
* Local News
* Journey To Unimaginable Spots (Episode-2)
* World News
* Myanmar Puppet

Title holders City still looking for reinforcements

LONDON, 23 July — English champions Manchester City are still in the market for new signings to boost their title defence, manager Manuel Pellegrini said on Tuesday.

Pellegrini has already brought in Brazilian midfielder Fernando from Porto, French fullback Bacary Sagna from Arsenal and goalkeeper Willy Caballero from former club Malaga but isn't convinced his impressive pool is enough.

"I don't think the squad is complete yet but we have six weeks before the transfer window closes," the Chilean told reporters in Kansas ahead of their friendly match against Sporting Kansas City.

"Perhaps there is the option to bring one or more players in or maybe one or two will leave our squad but there is time for us to consider what is best for our team."

Pellegrini's purchasing plans may have been changed after striker Alvaro Negredo suffered a broken foot in the friendly win over Scottish side Hearts on Friday.

Pellegrini, who won the Premier League title and the League Cup in his first season in England last year, said the powerful Spaniard had an operation on Tuesday.

"Alvaro had surgery today on his broken foot and he will probably be out for two or three months," the former Real Madrid manager said. "It is a blow for us because Alvaro is a very important member of our squad so obviously we will miss him."

City will face AC Milan, Liverpool and Olympiakos Piraeus on the US tour before returning for the English curtain raiser, the Community Shield, against FA Cup winners Arsenal on 10 August.—*Reuters*

Manchester City's manager Manuel Pellegrini is thrown into the air by his team as they celebrate winning the English Premier League trophy following their football match against West Ham United at the Etihad Stadium in Manchester, northern England on 11 May, 2014.
REUTERS

Brazil's new manager Dunga smiles during a news conference in Rio de Janeiro on 22 July, 2014.
REUTERS

Dunga succeeds Scolari as Brazil manager

RIO DE JANEIRO, 23 July — Brazil named Dunga as their manager for the second time on Tuesday, two weeks after they were hammered 7-1 by Germany in the World Cup semi-finals, a result which led to the resignation of former coach Luiz Felipe Scolari.

The 50-year-old Dunga, who captained Brazil to their fourth world title in 1994, was last in charge of the national team in 2010 when he was sacked for failing to take them further than the World Cup quarter-finals in South Africa.

"I am immensely happy to be back," he told reporters.

"I have an outline of what I want. Fans know me and they know I am not going to sell a dream but a reality and that reality is we have to work hard."

Dunga acknowledged Brazil have fallen behind the leading European teams in recent years and said he has spent his time outside football watching games and talking to managers and former players such as Arsene Wenger, Ruud Gullit and Arrigo Sacchi.

He warned fans not to expect cavalier football and said the best form of attack is defence.

"Managers today organise the defence in order to be able to attack," he told reporters at a news conference to announce his appointment. "The important thing is not to have four or five players up front, it is to get forward with four or five players. Football today is total. Everyone needs to participate."

Dunga played for a host of clubs in Brazil, Italy, Germany and Japan and was known for his combative midfield style. He captained Brazil to their fourth World Cup in the United States in 1994.

Reuters

FA chairman backs manager Hodgson despite World Cup flop

LONDON, 23 July — England coach Roy Hodgson retains the support of the Football Association despite the team's dismal showing at the World Cup last month, FA Chairman Greg Dyke said on Tuesday.

Dyke said he thought Hodgson did "quite a good job" in Brazil and repeated his view that there were too many foreign players in the Premier League for the national team to thrive.

"I've got a lot of time for him (Hodgson)," Dyke told MPs when asked about the England team's performance during a parliamentary hearing.

Dyke said deep-rooted problems in English football would make it tough for the national team to repeat their sole World Cup success on home soil in 1966.

"The real problem is there is no pathway for 17 or 18-year-old English boys to get through the system," he said.

"I think it's going to get tougher and tougher unless we do something about it," he said, lamenting the fact that only around 30 percent of Premier League players are English.

He said that world champions Germany had "an unwritten rule" over the number of foreign players in the Bundesliga, creating room for talented German youngsters to come through.

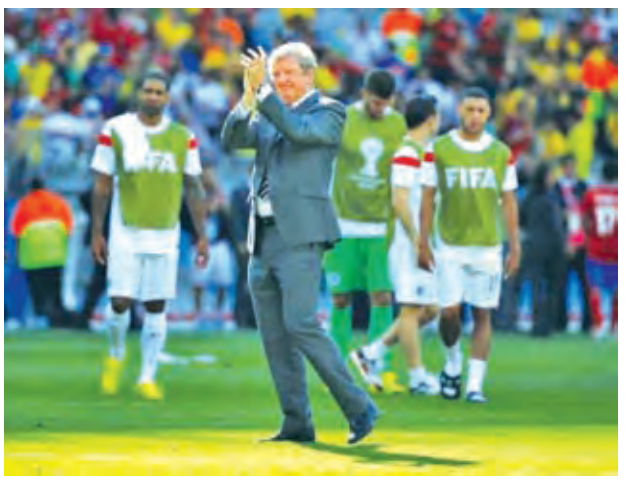
"The other problem we've got is that none of our players play overseas," added Dyke.

Hodgson has also said that English players would benefit from gaining experience by playing abroad and might get more opportunities than they do in the Premier League.

England made an early exit from the World Cup in Brazil last month, picking up only one point from three group games.

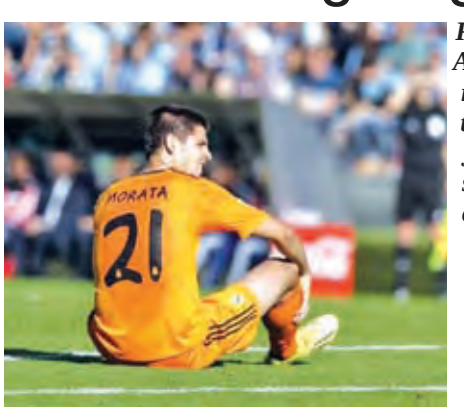
However, there has been little clamour for Hodgson to go, with the media and many fans acknowledging the limitations of the current squad.

Reuters



*England's coach Roy Hodgson applauds at the end of their 2014 World Cup Group D soccer match against Costa Rica at the Mineirao stadium in Belo Horizonte on 24 June, 2014.—*REUTERS

Juve new signing Morata out for seven weeks



Real Madrid's Alvaro Morata reacts during their Spanish first division soccer match against Celta Vigo at the Balaidos stadium in Vigo on 11 May, 2014.
REUTERS

ROME, 23 July — Striker Alvaro Morata's 20 million euros (15.8 million pounds) move to Juventus has quickly turned sour after the Spaniard injured his knee in his first training session and was ruled out for seven weeks.

The 21-year-old, who completed his move from Real Madrid on Saturday, suffered a second degree injury to the medial collateral ligament in his left knee after being injured on Monday, the Serie A champions said in a statement on Tuesday. "The forecast for a full recovery is of 50 days," the club said. A highly-rated product of the Real youth academy, Morata came to the fore in the 2012-13 season, former coach Jose Mourinho's last at the club.—*Reuters*

The New Light of Myanmar
Gmail thenewlightofmyanmar@gmail.com
www.facebook.com/thenewlightofmyanmar
R/489 Printed and published by the New Light of Myanmar press in Nay Pyi Taw, the News and Periodicals Enterprise, Ministry of Information.