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PREPAREDNESS COUNTS

Power of youths to be used for disaster preparedness

RAKHINE State Government is planning to conduct disaster preparedness training for youths in the state as part of the new government's '100-day plan.'

"We will give disaster preparedness training to young people in Rakhine State soon in accordance with our policy on reducing impact of disasters making the best use of strength of youths," said U Kyaw Win, Director of Rakhine State Relief and Resettlement Department at the 17 July meeting in which current development activities and the long-term development process were discussed.

Drills were organised to

construct an evacuation plan for people to follow when disaster strikes.

Rakhine State is prone to disasters, rendering the relief and resettlement department ready to provide relief measures and assistance in times of disasters, said Rakhine State Minister for Social Affairs Dr Chan Tha.

The minister added that arrangements are being made to resettle 210 households affected by the flood in Shweli Village, Thandwe Township.

"When a natural disaster breaks out in Rakhine State, our relief department seeks cooperation from the state government

so that we can provide food to the victims as soon as possible. We also cooperate with the rescue teams from the fire services department to save the victims," said U Kyaw Win, Director of Rakhine State Relief and Resettlement Department. "Besides, our department arranges temporary shelters to accommodate evacuees. As for rehabilitation, we resettle certain victims in native places as the situations permit, but in cases of those who cannot be resettled to their homes, we seek the help of the State Government to evacuate them to safer places," "In some cases, we cooperate with international organizations to



Rakhine State Minister for Social Affairs Dr Chan Tha.



Director of Rakhine State Relief and Resettlement Department U Kyaw Win.

mitigate the losses and damages caused by the natural disasters. In doing so, we usually sign a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with these organizations."

"There are 18 international

al organisations in Rakhine State that have signed MoUs with state government to carry out relief and resettlement measures," said U Kyaw Win. —Myanmar News Agency

People donate blood to celebrate State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's 71st birthday



Patron of NLD U Tin Oo and Yangon Region Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein visit National Blood Centre where people donate blood to celebrate the 71st Anniversary Birthday of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. PHOTO: YE HTUT

MEMBERS of the ruling National League for Democracy (NLD) and supporters celebrated State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu

Kyi's 71st birthday by donating blood and planting trees nationwide. More than 500 donors including members of the Yangon

Region youths' work committee donated blood yesterday at the National Blood Centre.

"We decided to make blood

donation to mark Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's 71st birthday in order to provide the children with blood in case they suffer dengue haemorrhagic fever this rainy season," said Joint In-charge of Yangon Region Youths' working committee of the NLD.

At the second blood donation ceremony, U Tin Oo, patron of the NLD and U Phyo Min Thein, Yangon Region Chief Minister, expressed delight for the blood donation.

The first blood donation was held last year to celebrate Daw Suu's 70th birthday and more than 200 blood donors participated.

Meanwhile, MPs in Tamwe and Myanmar Liver Foundation conducted a vaccination campaign to celebrate the 71st birthday of the State Counsellor. More than 1,500 residents were vaccinated against Hepatitis-B.

Meanwhile, the State Counsellor's birthday celebration was held at the party's headquarters with the inauguration of the new headquarters. —Nanda Win, Ye Khaung

MR reduces freight service fees between Mandalay - Myitkyina

FEES for the transportation of freight along trains, which run a service between Myohaung (Mandalay) and Myitkyina railway stations, have been reduced as of Wednesday, as part of the new government's hundred day project initiatives, according to Myanmar Railways of Mandalay.

"The running of freight services between Mandalay - Yangon and Mandalay - Myitkyina is different. Transportation fees vary as the topography of the routes aren't the same: one is running along a plain, while the other cuts through the mountains. But, all fees go towards the national budget," said U Aye Maung, a region manager of Mandalay's Myanmar Railways.

The reduction sees the previous K90 fee per mile for each ton of freight fall to K75.

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Human traffickers target IDP camps in Laiza

REPORTS of human trafficking are emerging from camps of internally displaced persons (IDPs), situated within KIA controlled territory along the Myanmar – China border, as some IDPs make the journey into China in search of employment to resolve their livelihood woes.

The IDPs, who fall victim to human traffickers, make the risky journey into China driven by a lack of food rations within their IDP camp; in order to put their children through education; and to accumulate money for potential medical expenses, it is known.

“Human trafficking was rather prevalent between 2013-14.

Usually, about five people are trafficked every year. For some, they marry a Chinese man because of their fondness for the language. While we’re able to rescue some, we completely lose contact with others and can’t save them.” said Daw Kha Dumb, responsible for assisting with women’s affairs at the Je Yang IDP camp in Laiza.

It is reported that approximately fifty per cent of IDPs in camps within KIA territory earn a daily wage working on coffee, banana and farming plantations over the border in China.

“They leave in the morning and return at night. Girls are also among them. They cross over into

China illegally with some ending up being arrested by the Chinese authorities. If they can’t pay off the police they are sent back [into Myanmar].” said U Naw Sai, a Je Yang IDP camp committee member. Two women, who were human trafficked from the Je Yang IDP camp in Laiza back in 2011, returned in April this year, but Chinese nationals followed them back to the camp in order to take them back to China. It is reported the IDP camp prohibited them from taking the girls and returned across the border empty handed.

“They said she would be looking after children. They brought her [to China] saying she

would be paid 300 yuan a month, but she was sold to a rich Chinese man for 23,000 yuan instead. She gave birth to two children with this man and they forced her to work all day long. In the end, she managed to escape and return to the IDP camp.” said the mother of one of the two girls.

The most prevalent years of cases of IDPs falling victim to human traffickers was 2012, 2013 and 2014, with incidents reportedly declining since 2015.

“Their livelihoods, and the well being of their children, would be at a complete loss if they weren’t to go [and find work in China].” added U Naw Sai. “Our

camp committee ventures into China to try and find [IDPs from the camp] as soon as we get word [that they’ve been human trafficked]. But, we can’t help them all; there are cases that we don’t hear about.”

Laiza currently boasts three IDP camps in which people are warned about the activeness of human traffickers in the region, while an employee from one of the camps reported that Chinese men have been forbidden from entering into the camps and offering money or property to parents of girls in the camp with the objective of marrying them. —Myitmakha News Agency

Crime NEWS

Man found dead in Sittwe

A MAN with tattoo on his left arm on Thursday was found dead in a creek near Kyankhin Village, Ponenagyun Township, Sittwe District, Rakhine State, police reported on Saturday.

After a tip-off from a member of the public on 16 June, local authorities went to the scene to make necessary inspections

along Touktae creek nearby area.

According to investigators, it is difficult to identify the man as he is badly disfigured. Police discovered a longyi was used to tie his wrists, and sustained injuries to his back.

Police estimate that the age of the man is roughly 35 years old. They believe that the man

is not from the nearby villages as there is no missing persons report.

Doctors estimate that the death occurred last week. The body was taken to nearest hospital.

Local police are still investigating the case to arrest the murderer.—Nay Lin (Nyaungglaybin)

Ownerless teak seized in Kyankhin



Illegally harvested teak seized in Kyankhin.

OWNERLESS teak with an estimated worth of Ks250,000 (US\$211) was found by local police in Kyankhin Township in Ayeyawady Region on Saturday.

Acting on a tip-off, a

15-member team comprising police and township authorities inspected a major canal of Myekun Creek Dam, where they discovered and collected 24 illegally harvested teak logs weighing over

two tonnes.

Police are still investigating the case in an effort to arrest the owner, who will be charged under the rules and regulations of the Forest Department.—Aye Oo Tha

Woman dies in crop plantation

A 30-year-old woman died after spraying fertilizer in her green gram plantation on Friday afternoon, police reported on Saturday.

According to her mother Ma Soe left home for the plantation

at around 3.30 p.m. to spray fertilizer. Her mother found her with the fertilizer sprayer on her back, incapacitated in the plantation at 5 p.m.

Ma Soe’s mother brought her

back to her residence in Inywaygyi Village-tract in Myothit Township, Magwe Region. However, she died on the way to hospital.

Police are still investigating the case.—Kyaw Zeya

Two injured in car crash



The car being seen damaged after the crash.

A BUS crash in Yangon’s Tamwe township on Saturday evening has seriously injured two people as police search for the driver who fled the scene.

The bus crashed into two cars on Banyadala St that caused two cars to crash into a pharmacy store and mobile phone store where two people were seriously injured and are currently being

treated at Yangon General Hospital.

The No. 39 bus, en route from Tamwe to downtown collided with a Toyota Corolla and a Honda Fit as the bus driver lost control. Police are still investigating the case in an effort to seize the reckless bus driver, who fled the scene after the accident.—Hla Hla

Blaze destroys home

A HOME fire on Saturday broke out in Yenangyaung, a town in Magwe Region, destroying a house but leaving residents unharmed.

According to police, the cause of fire was the result of an overheated electric board on the wall of the upper part of the

house in Yama Street in Myeni-taung Ward The flame quickly spread to nearby objects.

Firefighters controlled the morning blaze within 20 minutes. House owner Daw Khin Aye Thi is being charged for causing the blaze. —Township IPRD



The scene of the outbreak of fire in Yenangyaung, Magwe.

State Counsellor to pay official visit to Thailand

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, State Counsellor of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, will pay an official visit to Thailand in the near future at the invita-

tion of His Excellency General Prayut Chan-o-cha (Ret.), Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Thailand.—*Myanmar News Agency*

French delegation tours Yangon

A French delegation led by Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Development Mr Jean-Marc Ayrault visited the house of former United Nations Secretary General U Thant in Kamayut township, Yangon Region, yesterday.

Yangon Heritage Trust Chairman Dr Thant Myint-U accompanied the French foreign minister on the tour of the booths in the house.

Dr Thant Myint-U accompanied the delegation to the Old

Secretariat on Theinbyu Road, where they observed the stone plaque erected to the fallen heroes and the room in which General Aung San and his cabinet members were assassinated. The French delegation also visited the Armenian Apostolic Church, buildings with blue plaques installed by the Yangon Heritage Trust, the office of the Yangon Heritage Trust and Shwedagon pagoda. The French delegation left Yangon last night.—*Myanmar News Agency*



Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Development Mr Jean-Marc Ayrault visits the Old Secretariat in Yangon. PHOTO: MNA

NLD youth activists organise rally in support of new Panglong Peace Conference

YOUTH activists from the NLD party in Mandalay Region organised a rally in support of the 21st Century Panglong Peace Conference yesterday, attracting active participation from political parties including ethnic parties.

The event was organised in the town of Mogok in Mandalay, with a local MP stating that the rally was planned in conjunction with the 71st birthday of State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu

Kyi. The celebrations were accompanied by a variety of entertainment from ethnic dance troupes.

The 88' Generation Peace and Open Society showed support for the Daw Aung San Suu Kyi-led peace conference, saying that the assembly would further cement the existing bonds among ethnic groups and pave the way for national prosperity.—*Aung Thant Khaing*



Ethnic dancers perform at a ceremony to support the 21st Century Panglong Peace Conference. PHOTO: SUPPLIED

UN special rapporteur on human rights arrives in Yangon



Ms Yanghee Lee is being welcomed by officials at Yangon International Airport. PHOTO: MNA

MS YANGHEE LEE, United Nations Special Rapporteur on human rights in Myanmar arrived in Yangon yesterday afternoon as part of her mission to compile a report and

submit it to the 71st UN General Assembly in New York in September 2016.

During her visit, the Special Rapporteur will visit Yangon, Nay

Pyi Taw, Sittwe, Myitkyina and Lashio. This is her fourth visit to the country and the first with the Myanmar's new government.—*Myanmar News Agency*

List of vacant land within Yangon's industrial zones to be submitted to regional government

A COMPILED record of utilised vacant land within industrial zones of the greater Yangon area will be submitted to the Yangon regional government at the end of June, according to the Yangon Region Directorate of Industrial Supervision and Inspection (DISI).

The surveying of vacant land within Yangon Region's twenty-nine industrial zones began on 19 May and was definitively completed on 6 June. Efforts are now being made to compile surveys for submission to the government.

"We will compile surveys conducted by five organisations and submit them to regional government. All the data from Thilawa, the single industrial zone located in the southern district, has been compiled, while surveys from industrial zones in both northern and eastern districts are still to be put together." said U

Tin Oo, head of the Yangon Region DISI.

Surveys reportedly reveal a large area of vacant land within northern district industrial zones, while there is little unutilized land within zones in southern and eastern districts.

"More vacant land has been utilized since the original 2012 survey," added U Tin Oo. "Vacant land is evident in zones located within the northern zones of Hlaingthaya, Shwepyitha and Myaung Dagar. There are few plots of vacant land in eastern district [industrial zones], of which the same can be said of the southern district too. The only people using the Myaung Dagar Industrial Zone are the workers at the foundry. I think it might be it being so far away [that's others haven't utilized the area]."

The regional government will continue its efforts to resolve the issue of unutilized land with-

in Yangon's industrial zones in accordance with land grant directives of the Department of Urban and Rural Housing Development.

"There are seven plots of vacant land. Not because the land was sold off and not utilized; a trial is currently being held in regard to five of the plots after the buying and selling of the land proved incongruous with local farmers. A record of the remaining two plots has yet to come out; it's unknown who the owners are," said U Aye Thauang, chair of Shwe Lin Pan Industrial Zone in Yangon's northern district.

The erstwhile government promulgated a directive which instructed vacant land within industrial zones of the greater Yangon Region to be utilized within six months of a land grant being issued and to mitigate the building of property, subletting or reselling of such land.—*Myitmakha News Agency*

MR reduces freight service fees between Mandalay — Myitkyina

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"At a time when rail freight has to compete with vehicle services, giving a quality service is more important than just reducing fees.

Us traders prefer better accessibility to help streamline our

logistics services," said Ko Soe Naing, a trader.

In previous years, traders had to deposit a K5 million guarantee deposit per carriage for the transportation of such freight as groceries, commodities, construction equipment, electronic

equipment and diesel tanks. Myanma Railways has since reportedly reduced this deposit to just K1 million.

The freight forwarding services were introduced by Myanma Railways in May 2013.—*Myitmakha News Agency*

LOCAL Business

Special tariff causes splinters for timber merchants

THE recently imposed special tariff on timber is harming the market of finished timber products, according to the Myanmar Timber Merchants Association (MTMA).

A fifty per cent tariff of the value of imported timber from abroad is levied, while a twenty-five per cent tariff during the time of sale within Myanmar, on teak and hardwood over ten inches in diameter, must also be paid, it is reported.

"I only want big sized Tamalan and Padauk wood from China. The restriction imposed over this wood by the new policy has destroyed the market," said U Thein Htaik Oo, executive of the MTMA.

It is reported that the export of whole timber logs from Myanmar has currently been

suspended, with only broken timber and finished timber products still being exported.

"The high tax tariff [has been levied] to protect our forests. I heard the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection has issued a statement that logging is no longer taking place. If logging activities are really suspended in Myanmar and timber requirements are met through foreign imports, then we can reconsider the tariff," said U Min Htut, director of the Internal Revenue Department.

The value of exported finished Myanmar wooden products during the 2014-15 fiscal year amounted to over US\$200 million, according to the MTMA. —Myitmakha News Agency

MPE issues licenses on gratis to over sixty Mon State commercial gas stores

THE Myanmar Petrochemical Enterprise (MPE), a state owned downstream petroleum sub-sector of the Ministry of Electric Power and Energy, has announced that over sixty commercial petrol and gas stores across Mon State have been issued with licenses on gratis, as part of the incumbent government's hundred day project initiatives.

The temporary D(1) licenses, which permit the distribution and trade of gas and petrol cylinders, were issued on Monday and will reportedly expire on 31 December of this year. "The is no handling of any large scale import distribution throughout Mon State of oil and gas from abroad. A selection of petrol and gas stores have now been issued with [temporary] licenses. Anyone who can systematically follow the stipulated rules and regulations is eligible to apply for the five different types

of licenses available. [Licenses] have been issued in a bid to allow for systematic trading, compared with trading without a license," said U Thein Htay, head of MPE for Mon and Kayin States.

Upon expiration of their temporary licenses, it is reported sellers can apply for a permanent license for a fee of K50,000.

The granting of temporary licenses ostensibly legalizes the right to sell petroleum and gas commercially, but rules and regulations imposed on those who carry the D(1) licenses - which prohibit the refilling of other gas canisters - has not made life convenient, says U Than Htway, the owner of a gas stove and liquefied gas distribution store in Mon State's Ye Township.

"We now don't have the right to fill gas from one canister to another at our store; we've only been permitted to sell gas canis-

ters that are already full. There's not one store in the whole Mon State that carries a C type license which allows the refilling of empty gas canisters. The travel expenses involved in having to carry gas canisters to places such as Myawady doesn't make life easy for the public. The department [MPA] should implement an easy method which is less taxing on the public and more convenient for our store," he explained.

The D(1) licenses specify that license holders can only fill and sell types of gas canisters which meet stipulated criteria; the transferring of gas from one canister to another, or disposable canister, is forbidden; while gas canisters must be systematically transported and fire extinguishers installed in stores in order to quickly put out a fire should one breakout in the local environment. —Myitmakha News Agency

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Malaysia PM Najib defeats former mentor Mahathir's challenge in twin by-elections

KUALA LUMPUR — Malaysia's ruling coalition coasted to victory as expected in two by-elections, defying a political movement led by former premier Mahathir Mohamad who has sought to turn voters against his scandal-tainted former protege Najib Razak.

The victories allow Prime Minister Najib, under pressure to resign over a graft scandal at state fund 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB), to further tighten his grip over the country and within the ruling Barisan Nasional (BN) pact.

Najib's party won the Sungai Besar and Kuala Kangsar parliamentary seats on Saturday with increased margins compared with those in 2013 general elections, the election commission said. Both ar-



Malaysia's Prime Minister Najib Razak attends an event in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, on 14 March 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

reas are mostly made up of farming and fishing communities along peninsula Malaysia's west coast.

"Tun Mahathir Mohamad turned the elections into a referendum on my leadership," Najib said in a statement.

"They (the people) rejected Tun Mahathir's lies, they rejected his unworka-

ble coalition of former enemies, and they rejected the incoherent opposition — partly because of their alignment with Tun Mahathir," he said.

While the outcome of the by-elections would not tilt the balance of power in parliament, observers noted that it may offer clues as to whether Mahathir's influence is waning.

Najib's alliance secured a landslide win in the Borneo state of Sarawak last month, and political experts feel he may call snap polls to consolidate his strong position.

James Chin, director at the University of Tasmania's Asia Institute, told Reuters there was a "high probability that there will be a snap polls if BN wins by big majorities."

The next general elec-

tion is scheduled for 2018. The coalition lost its two-third majority in the 2008 polls, and Najib lost the popular vote in 2013 despite BN retaining power.

Najib's critics have demanded his resignation after reports claiming billions of dollars had been misappropriated through his pet project 1MDB, and that up to \$1 billion was deposited into his personal bank account. Najib has denied the reports.

Mahathir, who led the country for 22 years until retiring in 2003, quit the United Malay National Organisation (UMNO) party earlier this year in disgust over Najib's grip on the party despite the allegations surrounding 1MDB, which is now the subject of international probes in at least six countries.—Reuters

Cambodia urges travellers by sea to be extra-vigilant over rainfall, storms next week

PHNOM PENH — Cambodia warned on Sunday of heavy rainfall and strong winds at sea throughout next week and urged fishermen and travellers by sea to be on high precautions.

According to the weather forecast, there would be a depression brewing over Cambodia from 20 to 27 June, causing rainfall in four coastal provinces in southwestern country and 13 provinces in plain and highland areas, said a Ministry of Water Resources and Meteorology statement signed

by Minister Lim Kean Hor.

"At sea, there will be light-to-heavy rainfall with strong winds," the statement said. "The ministry would like to advise all people, particularly fishermen and tourists travelled to islands in the sea, to be extra-vigilant to avoid any possible dangers."

The statement said the rainfall could cause flash floods in Phnom Penh City, Kampong Speu, Kandal, Takeo, Kampot and Preah Sihanouk provinces.—Xinhua

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Thailand's king continues treatment for 'water on the brain' — palace



Well-wishers hold a picture of Thailand's King Bhumibol Adulyadej at the Siriraj hospital where he is residing, in Bangkok, Thailand, on 9 June 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

BANGKOK — Thailand's 88-year-old King Bhumibol Adulyadej, the world's longest reigning monarch, has shown signs of improvement following treatment for "water on the brain", the Royal Household Bureau said in a statement

on Sunday.

The king has been treated for various ailments during a year-long hospitalisation in the Thai capital. He was last seen in public in January, when he spent several hours visiting his Bangkok palace.

The king, who celebrated 70 years of his reign on 9 June, is seen as a unifying figure in a country that has faced decades of often deadly political upheaval. On a few occasions he has stepped in when events threatened to plunge the country into cri-

sis. Nervousness over his health and the succession has formed the backdrop to more than a decade of political crisis in Thailand, where the military took power in a coup more than two years ago. The royal palace said the medical examination of the king showed he had more "water on the brain", or hydrocephalus, a build-up of the cerebrospinal fluid that surrounds the brain.

Fluid was drained from the king on Saturday with "satisfactory results", the palace said in a statement.

In a 12 June statement, the palace said the king had shown signs of improvement following surgery for narrowing of the arteries.

News about the royal family is tightly controlled in Thailand. Laws protecting the royals from insult make it a crime to defame, insult or threaten the king, queen, heir to the throne or regent.—Reuters

24 dead, 26 missing in floods and landslides in Indonesia

JAKARTA — At least 24 people have been killed and 26 others are missing after floods and landslides, caused by two days of torrential rain, hit the island of Java in Indonesia, a government official said Sunday.

National Disaster Mitigation Agency spokesman

Sutopo Purwo Nugroho said the disasters that had occurred Saturday afternoon had also buried dozens of houses and inundated thousands of others in 16 regencies and cities in Central Java Province.

According to Sutopo, the landslides also buried

roads, blocking access for vehicles.

"Victims' evacuation and a missing persons search are still on-going," he said.

Emergency rescue operations are being conducted by a joint team involving the military and the police.

The Meteorological, Climatology and Geophysics Agency has predicted that heavy rains could potentially occur in almost all areas of Indonesia until Monday, despite the country having official been entering the dry season since May.—Kyodo News

India may soon grow pulses in Mozambique and Myanmar

NEW DELHI — India has said that it could soon grow pulses in Mozambique and Myanmar amid steep rise in its prices and that of some fruits and vegetables.

“We may cultivate pulses there or sign a long-term agreement (to procure). For this, we are sending a team to Mozambique and to Myanmar,” Food Minister Ram Vilas Paswan told a local TV channel.

Admitting that the production of pulses has declined in India, the

minister said Saturday: “It has been happening since the last three years that the monsoon has affected the production of pulses.”

Pulses are staple diet for Indians, but their prices have skyrocketed to Rs 200 (3 US dollars) per kg, sending many households in a tizzy. The prices of some fruits and vegetables such as tomatoes and potatoes have also surged in the last 10 days and the Indian government has been criticised for failing to control the price rise.—*Reuters*

China foreign minister urges US not to interfere with Tibet in call to Kerry

BEIJING — The United States should not interfere in China’s internal affairs on matters related to Tibet, China’s Foreign Minister Wang Yi told US Secretary of State John Kerry in a phone call on Saturday.

According to an account of the call posted on the Chinese foreign ministry website, Kerry reaffirmed that there was no change in the US policy that Tibet is a part of China

and that the US does not support Tibetan independence.

The phone call follows on from President Barack Obama’s meeting with the exiled Tibetan spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama, last week at the White House despite China warning it would damage diplomatic relations.

China views the Dalai Lama as a dangerous separatist. The meeting came at a

time of already heightened tensions between the US and China over Beijing’s pursuit of territorial claims in East Asia.

On the call, Wang and Kerry also discussed the success of the recently concluded bilateral Strategic and Economic Dialogue in Beijing, according to the foreign ministry posting, which did not give specifics.—*Reuters*

Okinawa residents rally to protest crimes by US military personnel

NAHA (Japan) — Tens of thousands of Okinawa Prefecture residents rallied Sunday to voice their anger about crimes committed by US military personnel, while demanding a drastic review of how such incidents are handled following the recent alleged murder of a 20-year-old local woman by a civilian US base worker.

The protesters, many dressed in black — totaling 65,000 according to organisers — braved scorching heat to gather at a park in the prefectural capital of Naha, in one of the largest demonstrations against US military bases in recent years.

Many held signs that read “Marines, Withdraw” and “Our anger has reached the limit,” in reference to a spate of crimes committed by US military-linked personnel, despite preventive measures taken to enforce stricter discipline.

A message from the woman’s father was read out during the rally. He lamented that his daughter became a victim of an incident involving the US military, saying, “Why did it have to be my daughter? Why did she have to be killed?”

“So as not to have another victim, the people in the prefecture can unite and make it possible for all bases (in Okinawa) to be removed,” the letter read.

Okinawa Gov. Takeshi Onaga said at the rally that he is outraged over the murder and changing a Japan-US pact, which governs the conduct of US servicemen, is the way to go to prevent a similar incident from happening.

“I hereby express my unflinching resolve to push for drastic review of the Japan-US Status of Forces Agreement,” Onaga said.

Critics say the 1960 SOFA,

which has never been revised, gives undue protection to US servicemen and base employees. Some local residents believe the accord fosters crimes and preventive measures such as curfews or enforcement of stricter discipline are ineffective.

Suzuyo Takazato, a representative of Okinawa Women Act Against Military Violence who took part in the rally, said, “How can we put into action our sentiments that no further incidents like this should occur?”

Takazato urged people to listen to the voices of female victims of violence at the hands of military personnel and make them heard.

Participants applauded and adopted a resolution denouncing the latest US-base linked incident as “simply unacceptable” and demanded measures to ensure that a similar incident would never happen again.

“The anger and sadness of the people of Okinawa has reached its limit toward the repeated incidents and accidents involving US military and non-military personnel,” the resolution said.

It demanded the Japanese and US governments apologise to the people of Okinawa and to the family of the woman, as well as provide compensation to the family.

Kyoko Yokoyama, a resident in her 50s from Yaese town, said she joined the rally with her daughter Mayu because she could empathise with the case, as her daughter is also 20 years old. “SOFA should be revised to prevent a similar incident,” she said.

Mayu shuddered at the thought that anyone could have been a victim, saying, “She was not at fault. She simply went out to take a walk and this happened.



Thousands of residents carry signs saying “Marines, Withdraw” (centre) and “Our anger has reached the limit,” as they rally in Naha in Japan’s southernmost island prefecture of Okinawa on 19 June 2016.

PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

I feel it is not somebody else’s problem.”

The resolution expressed frustration that past measures to enforce discipline or prevent a recurrence of incidents had not been implemented successfully, and argued the way to prevent crimes is to remove US bases from Okinawa, which has long hosted the bulk of the US military bases in Japan.

“To protect the lives and human rights of the people in Okinawa, it is urgent that US bases be significantly reduced and consolidated, and for Marines to withdraw (from Okinawa),” the resolution said.

Coming from Tomigusuku city, Yoneko Oshiro, 75, said the root of the problem lies in the existence of the bases in Okinawa and the way locals are perceived by the US military.

“They treat us like we are still under (US military) occupation. That infuriates me,” she said.

The latest gathering, however, has not received the same bipartisan political support as a 1995 rally, with no attendance by

lawmakers representing the Liberal Democratic Party and Komeito. The two parties form the ruling coalition in the central government.

The massive rally — which organizers estimated was attended by 85,000 while police put the number at 58,000 — was held in October 1995 following the gang rape of a 12-year-old schoolgirl by three US servicemen that year.

The public outrage over that 1995 incident led Tokyo and Washington to strike a deal in 1996 on the return of the US Marine Corps Air Station Futenma site to Japanese control.

While Japan and the United States are reviewing to clarify the legal status of civilian workers subject to SOFA, experts and some local residents view an overhaul of the pact as a tall order.

A 38-year-old resident of Uruma, where the victim lived, and a mother of three, said that if SOFA cannot be changed, getting rid of bases entirely from Okinawa or for mainland Japan to share the base-hosting burden may be the answer.

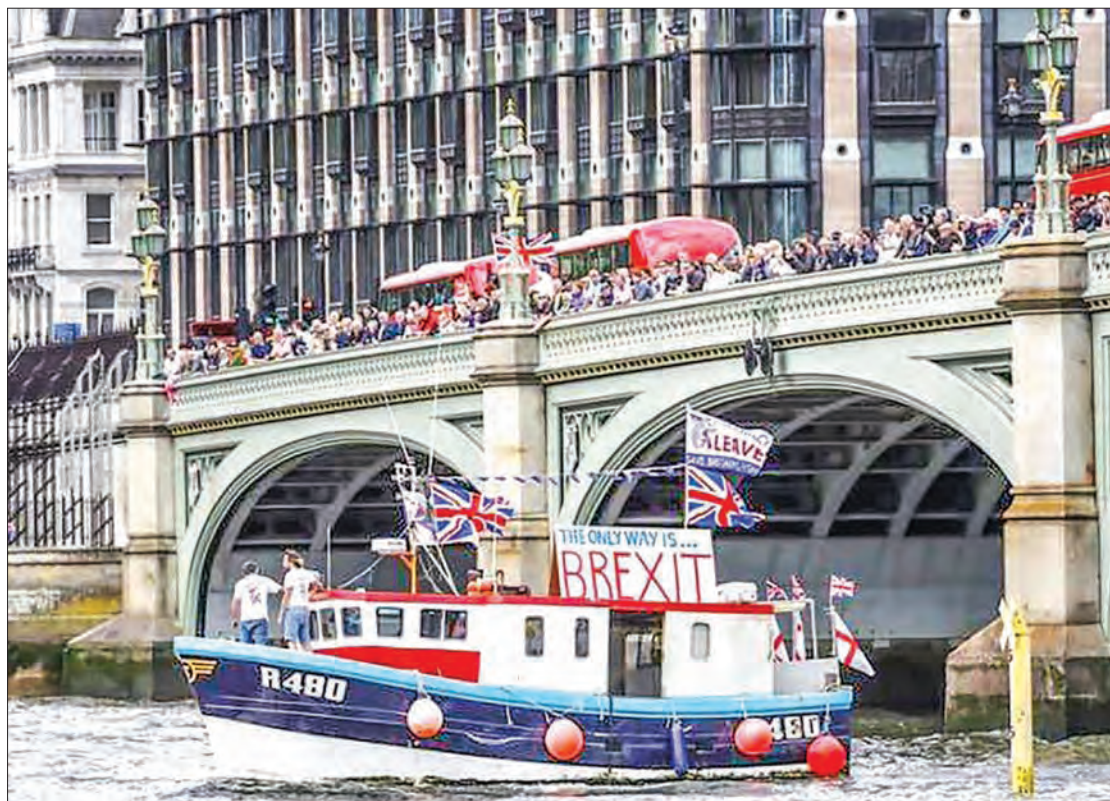
“Okinawa alone should not be forced to shoulder when it accounts only for 0.6 per cent of Japan’s land but hold some 74 per cent (of the total acreage of US facilities in Japan),” she said.

The resolution also called for scrapping the contentious plan to relocate the Futenma base within Okinawa.

Onaga and local officials — who want the base moved outside the southern island prefecture — continue to lock horns with the central government to relocate the Futenma base from a crowded residential area in Ginowan to a less-populated area in Nago’s Henoko coastal district.

A month ago, Kenneth Franklin Shinzato, a 32-year-old former Marine and civilian US base worker, was arrested on a charge of dumping the woman’s body. Last Thursday, he was served a further warrant for the alleged rape and murder of the woman in April.

Following the incident, all prefectural and municipal assemblies in Okinawa adopted resolutions protesting the incident.—*Kyodo News*



Part of a flotilla of fishing vessels campaigning to leave the European Union sails under Westminster Bridge towards Parliament on the river Thames in London, Britain on 15 June 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

Britain's rival EU campaigns restart as polls show momentum for 'In'

LONDON — The campaign to decide Britain's membership of the European Union restarted on Sunday after a three-day hiatus following the killing of lawmaker Jo Cox, with Prime Minister David Cameron warning that Britons faced an "existential choice" on Thursday.

Campaigning activities ahead of the 23 June EU referendum resumed as two opinion polls showed the 'Remain' camp recovering some momentum, although the overall picture remains one of an evenly split electorate.

With five days left until Britons cast their ballots, the rival campaigns returned with a raft of interviews and articles in Sunday's newspapers, covering the familiar immigration versus economy de-

bate that has defined the campaign so far.

Cameron, who leads the campaign to stay in the EU, urged voters to consider the economic impact that leaving the 28-member bloc would have.

"We face an existential choice on Thursday," he wrote in the *Sunday Telegraph*. "So ask yourself: have I really heard anything — anything at all — to convince me that leaving would be the best thing for the economic security of my family?"

Michael Gove, a senior spokesman for the rival 'Leave' campaign, played down the role of the referendum in the future of the economy, and said that leaving would actually improve Britain's economic position.

"I can't foretell the future but I don't believe that the act of leaving the European Union would make our economic position worse, I think it would make it better," he said in an interview with the same newspaper.

Both men praised Labour Party lawmaker Cox, an ardent supporter of EU membership, who was shot and stabbed in the street in her electoral district in northern England on Thursday. The murder of Cox, a 41-year-old mother of two young children, has shocked Britain, elicited condolences from leaders around the world and raised questions about the tone of campaigning. A 52-year-old man appeared in a London magistrate's court on Saturday, charged with her murder.—*Reuters*

Russia says agrees with US to improve military coordination in Syria

MOSCOW — Russia said on Sunday it had reached an agreement with the United States to improve coordination between their military operations in Syria, where they are backing opposing sides of a civil war and launching air strikes.

Russia's defence ministry said it was pushing Washington to help produce a shared map of the positions of fighting forces to avoid incidents, a day after Washington accused Moscow of attacking US-backed insurgents there.

Moscow's intervention on the side of President Bashar al-Assad, alongside Western backing for rebel groups opposing him, has raised fears of a wider international confrontation in the war.

Russia's defence ministry

said military officials from both countries had agreed on the need to improve coordination during a video conference. There was no immediate confirmation from Washington.

"The exchange of views about the incident was carried out in a constructive way with the both sides aiming to improve the coordination on fighting the terrorist organisations in Syria and in order to avert any incidents during military operations in this country," Russian Defence Ministry spokesman Igor Konashenkov said in a statement.

The Pentagon said on Saturday it had questioned Moscow over Russian air strikes conducted against US-backed Syrian opposition forces last week, accusing

Moscow of failing to heed US warnings.

Konashenkov dismissed the allegation, saying the Russian strikes hit about 300 km (190 miles) away from territory where the United States had said opposition forces were operating.

He said Russia had notified the US-led coalition about the targets it was planning to strike.

"The Russian defence ministry for the past few months has been proposing to its American colleagues to draw a unified map, which would containing information about the location of the forces which were active in Syria. However, no material progress has been made on this issue," the spokesman said.—*Reuters*

FILIPPO GRANDI ON WORLD REFUGEE DAY 2016

BY UN HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES

UNHCR marks World Refugee Day each year on June 20, to shine a light on the courage and resilience of families forced to flee war or persecution. And each year UNHCR seeks to find a glimmer of hope in the global statistics we publish to show that the world is finding solutions to help heal the trauma refugees are living through on a daily basis. But this year the hopeful signs are hard to find.

Today the number, complexity and protracted nature of today's conflicts mean that forced displacement has now reached a level unprecedented since the founding of the UN itself; substantially over 60 million people are now uprooted around the world. Each day another refugee tragedy is played out in the media; of children, mothers and fathers losing their lives in a desperate bid to escape violence.

Against this tragic backdrop, divisive political rhetoric on asylum and migration issues, and disturbing levels of xenophobia, are together threatening the international agreements which protect those forced to flee war or persecution.

Instead of burden sharing, we see borders closing, instead of political will there is political paralysis. And humanitarian organisations like mine are left to deal with the consequences, while at the same time struggling to save lives on limited budgets.

Yet, there is cause for hope. In contrast to the toxic narrative repeatedly played out in the media we have often witnessed an outpouring of generosity; by host communities, by individuals, and by families opening their homes.

These ordinary people see refugees not as beggars, competitors for jobs, or terrorists -but as people like you or me whose lives have been disrupted by war. Their simple acts of solidarity are going on around the world, every day.

UNHCR sees 2016 as a watershed moment for the refugee cause. As wars spiral out of control we feel this must be a year to take collective responsibility and action to end the conflicts which force people to flee and also to help the millions of people whose lives have been destroyed by this violence.

World leaders can no longer watch passively as so many lives are needlessly lost. We must be smart about finding solutions to help refugees. We must find humane and dignified means to ensure refugees don't risk their lives and those of their families by resorting to ruthless traffickers or by boarding flimsy boats in a bid to reach safety.

An historic United Nations General Assembly high-level meeting on addressing large movements of refugees and migrants on 19 September will put us all to the test. Will governments rise to the occasion and make new commitments to share responsibility for refugees in a spirit of global solidarity, in line with the fundamental principles of international refugee law? And furthermore, commit to doing our fair share to deliver for people forced to flee their homes, and have lost everything through no fault of their own?

UNHCR stands together #WithRefugees, on World Refugee Day and every day — and on 19 September we want the world to stand with us. By doing so we can send a message to world leaders they must act.

"Filippo Grandi is the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees."

Kremlin: UK assertion we sanctioned Euro 2016 fan violence is hysteria — Ifax

MOSCOW — The Kremlin on Sunday rejected a suggestion by senior British government officials it may have deliberately sanctioned violence by Russian soccer hooligans at the Euro 2016 tournament in France as anti-Russian hysteria.

It spoke out after Britain's *Observer* newspaper published a report citing the unnamed British officials as saying they suspected the Kremlin may have links to the Russian hooligans who attacked England supporters in Marseille.

The clashes marred the start of the tournament and prompted the French authorities to deport some Russian supporters.

The British officials were quoted as saying that many of the Russian hooligans were in the uniformed services and that their actions looked like a continuation of President Vladimir Putin's 'hybrid warfare' against the West.

"This is yet another example ... of anti-Russian hysteria," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told the Interfax news agency.

Putin, speaking at a question and answer session at the St Petersburg International Economic Forum on Friday, said he wondered how "200 of our fans beat up several thousand English fans."—*Reuters*

Opinion

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 ce@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com with your name and title.

Due to limitation of space we are only able to publish "Letter to the Editor" that do not exceed 500 words. Should you submit a text longer than 500 words please be aware that your letter will be edited.

Better off cheerleaders than onlookers

Kyaw Thura

THE National League for Democracy (NLD) led by Daw Aung San Suu Kyi took office in April this year after winning by a landslide last year under the election slogan of 'Time to change'. Most people have since been in a 'wait to see' mood, simply because they have been accustomed to a great deal of unrealistic slogans throughout successive governments.

Despite partisan divides around the ruling party's policy of change, every section of society should be encouraged to play their part in making change happen. There is no sense in sitting idle and shooting the breeze. Our history offers a rich source of lessons that the inaction based on lack of trust and intellect had caused our country to fall under colonial rule.

The hard-won independence, restored from Britain in 1948, is yet to turn the country's rich resources into prosperity for the welfare of all the nationalities residing across the country. We had spent much time arguing over differences and sweating the small stuff. Metaphorically speaking, our country was like a promising football team without a manager.

Now that we have a good manager who will create success through teamwork, the first thing we need to do is to first become an agent of change and then a cheerleader for the government's policy of change. Our wholehearted cheerleading for the players engaged in the field of national politics will no doubt be a compelling need for immediate action.

The Festival of Religious Examination in Nayon

Maha Saddhamma Jotika dhaja
Sithu Dr. Khin Maung Nyunt

NAYON, the third month of Myanmar Lunar calendar of 12 months corresponds to June. Summer, Rain, Cold Winter are the three Seasons of the year each with four months. Summer covers Tabaung, Tagu, Kason and Nayon. Rain [monsoon] last for four months – Waso, Wakhaung, Tawthalin and Thidingyut and Winter has 4 months-Tazaung mon, Nat taw, Pya tho and Tabo twe.

Nayon is the last month of Summer. As the monsoon wind begins to come from the southwest direction, bringing rain-bearing clouds to Myanmar tiny precipitations spray the perched lands which in no time into light green carpets of tender grasses. Hence there is a Myanmar folk rhymed couplet နယုန်ခိုးသေး၊ မြက်သာသေး [Little showers of Nayon nurture tender grasses]. From skeletons of trees yellow green buds peep out to herald a new life of nature, followed by springs of varieties of flora and fauna.

Myanmar astrology term is Nayon "May Hton" (မေထွန်) mithuna [Gemini]. It is a derivative word of Pali word rdxke [mihtuna] meaning a couple of man and woman Nayon's astrological symbol in the diagram of Zodiac is a couple of man and woman holding a long rod and a harp. Sometimes a couple of Kein-nara and Kein-nari [mythical male and female birds with human heads] is presented to symbolize Nayon. In day time in Nayon the sun and migathi asterism together reach noon. In night time the moon and Jeta asterism together mid night. As jesmin and all its related species bloom profusely in Nayons this white and fragrant flower is traditionally designated as the flower of Nayon.

In significance of the month Nayon in terms of religion and culture of Myanmar people bears

three auspicious counts. Firstly Nayon is the month of ploughing. It is the first month of wet cultivation in Myanmar. In the times of Myanmar Kings Lei Htun Mingala (လယ်ထွန်မင်္ဂလာ) Royal Ploughing Ceremony was held by them without fail, so that there would be good rain and good harvest secondly it was on the full moon day of Nayon that Lord Gotama Buddha delivered his famous Maha Thamaya Sutta to the devas and Brahmas of all Universes. So Nayon Full moon Day is designated as Maha Thamaya Sutta and doing religious works. Thirdly it is in this month of Nayon that annual religious examinations are held for Buddhist monks.

Buddhism has three types of teaching, propagating promoting and practicing called three Sasan-as- (1) Pariyatti Sasana – acquisition of a sound knowledge of the Dhamma [The law and religious literature through extensive and intensive learning (2) Patipatti Sasana which means being accomplished in the knowledge of Buddhism and (3) Priveda Sasana which means acting [or practicing] according to the knowledge communicated and acquired. Pariyatti-learning the Dhamma [Buddha's Teachings] is primarily important.

Tipitaka [literally 3 Baskets to mean 3 Repositories of canonical Texts] are (1) Five treatises of Vinaya [Disciplinary rules for monks] (2) Three Treatises of Suttas [Discourses of the Buddha] and (3) Seven Treatises of Abhidhamma [Smatha concentration of mind and Vipassana [Insight] meditation. All Buddhist monks and novices must learn them and pass the examinations annually held in the month of Nayon.

Royal patronage and public support provided all the needs of the examiner and examine monks. Cash and kind donations were col-

lected for the holding of religious examinations. The learning period [academic year] ends in Nayon. Examinations are held to test the academic progress of the scholar monks. A festive atmosphere is imported to these examinations by the public offering of mea and priestly utensils to the monks at the examination centers.

History of religious examinations in Myanmar may be traced to Myanmar chronicles, inscriptions and literature. The earliest mention of it, is found in vol III of Myanmar chronicle Hamannan Yazuwun Taw Kyi [Glass Palace Chronicle]. On page 239, we read the following paragraph:

"In the year 1000 ME [1638 A.D] the monk teachers examined the student novices on the subjects they had learnt. Hundred and eight novices passed the examinations. Seven of them were ordained at noon, on Sunday the 14th waxing moon of Kason". So it is commonly assumed that Religious Examination Festival originated in the region of King Tha Lun [1629-1648 A.D]. But the month mentioned in the paragraph was Kason not Nayon.

But there are other references and records prior to Tha Lun's reign which say that Examinations were held in Nayon. For example in Loka Byuha Kyan [or Inyone Sardan] a compiled by Thiri Uzana, the Minister of Inyone, we find that religious examinations were held under royal patronage in the month of Nayon. Successful novices were ordained in the next month Waso. Therefore Nayon and Waso were in sequences of two events.

Religious examinations took place in Thudhamma Zayats-examination halls built by king. Preparations were made in advance-cleaning, renovating and redecorating exam halls. Pavilions were constructed for feeding the monks daily meal, visitors offering them cash and kind mostly robes. A special Min Lan Royal road was made lined on both sides with

bamboo Yazamat fences [diamond shape designs of a-tice fences and decorative floral pots. The surface of the royal road was covered with smooth white sand. At the end of the royal road was a grand sumptuous Pavilion for their Majesties and the court to occupy to watch the proceedings of the examinations to pay aspect to the monks and give prizes, rewards and awards of religious titles to the deserved.

Religious examinations could take almost a month from the 8th Waxing moon of Nayon to the 8th Waxing moon of Waso. As religious examinations are very arduous, demanding too much of physical and mental energies, monk candidates were permitted to partake afternoon meal in order to replenish their energies.

Religious examinations take three modes Recitation by heart, oral examination and written examination, Correct and prompt answers to the questions are expected.

In the reign of King Mindon [1853-1878 A.D] religious examinations reached the peak of progress and perfection. He convened the 5th Buddhist Synod in 1871 which revised and edited Tipitakas and all religion literature, commentaries and sub com mortuaries. The edited revised texts were recorded on pages of 729 Sacyin marble stone slabs set up on the vast precincts of Maha Loka Marazein Pagoda, Mandalay. These slabs were arranged in the order of a book. Today they are collectively called the world's largest marble Book, recently engraved in the UNESCO list of world memories.

There were four grades of examination – (1) Pahtama Nge or Lower Grade (2) Pahtama Lat or middle Grade (3) Pahtamakyi or Higher Grade and (4) Pahtama Kyaw or Highest Grade.

Successful candidates received lavish rewards presented by the king. The pahta ma kyaw candidate was carried on a palan-

quin borne by 40 young men with gold umbrellas shading him. The other grades candidates rode horses or carried on sedan Charis according to their positions in the exam results. Royal musical Ensemble Saig Waing Taw played religious music to welcome them. Their Majesties and the Court appeared on the podium of the Hlutaw. After their Majesties had performed the Libation ceremony successful candidates queued up in line to receive prizes and awards from Their Majesties. The Lower grades got k 1000 each in pure silver, the middle grades, each k 1250 in pure silver, the higher grades each k 1500 in pure silver and k 2500 for highest grades in pure silver. In addition, the privilege of tax immunity was granted to their parents and nearest relatives.

Should highest grades choose career, the king recruited them in royal service. They were first employs as clerk. But depending upon their loyalty and brilliant performance they could rise up to the minister's level. Some out standings were raised to Raja Guru king's Adviser for monks and Akyita (counselor) for laymen.

Religious examinations were well preserved, inspite of political changes of Myanmar, the British Governors even patronized them. The British were highly impressed by high literacy of Myanmar which was much higher than that in Britain of that time. They respected and highly regarded the learnedness and missionary works of monks. Even during the second world was when Myanmar was under the Japanese occupation, the attempt to revive this tradition of religious examinations was made in 1943 by the then Adipati Government. It was called Vinaya Examination. Only Vinaya Pitakas were prescribed for examinations.

Today this tradition of holding religious examinations is kept alive by the Government and the public in co-operation.

Restoration proposal for Judson's First Baptist Church to be submitted to American Embassy



Judson's First Baptist Church in Mawlamyine. PHOTO: MYITMAKHA NEWS AGENCY

AFTER conducting an early preliminary study on the World Heritage Site listed 188 year-old First Baptist Church, located in the Mon State capital of Mawlamyine, a proposal for building restoration will be submitted to the American Embassy to Myanmar this coming December, it is reported.

A number of difficulties to repair the church's walls, floorboards, roofing were discovered during the start of surveying in January of this year, which included areas of termite damage. It is known that, when a fund for repairs be granted by the embassy, areas of damage will be given priority, while a domestic body of professionals will be formed to take responsibility for the long term conservation of the building.

"We unexpectedly discov-

ered two areas of asbestos in the roof of the church during our preliminary study. Asbestos will be released into the air should they be destroyed. As breaking up the asbestos could lead to cancer, we'll call in expert to systematically remove it. It will incur rather a great expense. We'll report both the damaged parts of the church and the asbestos issue to the embassy. The asbestos will be systematically removed so that it can act as an example for the destruction of asbestos in construction around Myanmar," said Jeffrey Allen, program director of the World Monuments Fund (WMF).

U Kyi Shein, abbot of the First Baptist Church, explained the church was surveyed by a team of experts from America and other countries after he received a letter of correspondence

from the American Embassy in Yangon during August 2015 which informed him that the church had been inscribed on the list of World Heritage Sites after historical proof was discovered, revealing the church as the oldest place of Christian worship in Mon State.

The church was constructed by American missionary Judson in 1827. It was built reportedly using natural resources local to the region, while its design showcases a blend of both western and Mon cultural Beikthano handiwork. This project is actually the second such initiative to be carried out in Myanmar by the American Embassy and American WMF organization, the first being efforts working together with Myanmar experts to preserve the Mandalay Palace. —Myitmakha News Agency

Three body builders crowned at Yangon contest

BODY building and modeling competition on Saturday was held at Myanmar Convention Centre in Yangon. Fifty-nine local contestants took part in the event.

Tin Latt was crowned among 11 participants in senior body building event while H Bran Mai won the junior event and Tun Tun Aung secured first in the open

event. Su Myint Win was crowned among eight contestants in model physique contest below 160 cm and Nay Chi Tint Wai won the first prize in the event above 160 cm.

Among the winners, Tun Tun Aung received Mr. Nat Ray title while the Ms. Real title went to Nay Chi Tint Wai.

Officials including members of the Yangon Regional Government and Yangon City Development Committee and organisers awarded the winners after the contests. The event was organised by Myanmar Body Building and Physiques Sport Federation in cooperation with Nat Ray Company.—Soe Win (MLA)

MoALI to reduce taxes on vessels operating on Ayeyawady, Chindwin rivers

WATER Resources and Creeks Development Department of Mandalay plans to halve taxes levied on vessels and ships running along the Ayeyawady and Chindwin River as of 20 June, said its Director U Toe Aung Lin.

This comes after vessel owners from Monywa called on the Union Minister of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation to reduce waterway fees collected from camps.

"Loading capacity of vessels may vary in summer and rainy seasons. Vessels can load 500 tonnes of goods in the wet season. However, it can load only 200 tonnes in summer. So, the vessels operate one more time in the hot season," said U Toe Aung Lin.

"That is one of reasons for the department reducing tax rates."

The department will collect K100 from vessels below 39 feet.

It also collects Ks24 per nautical mile from vessels above 39ft.

There are 120 nautical miles between Twante and Hinthada, 61 miles from Hinthada to Pyay and 112 miles from Pyay to Magwey.

"We will collect Ks30 from vessels loaded with wood logs for 120 nautical miles, Ks4 per Waboe bamboo and Ks2 per other kinds of bamboo," said U Toe Aung Lin.—Aung Thant Khaing

People's Forum

Concession for the long run

ACCORDING to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Myanmar's Agricultural industry is accountable for forty-five per cent in GDP contribution and accommodating seventy per cent of employment. Though we might not be able to confirm the accuracy of the statistical analysis, the figures did prove that Agriculture and livestock breeding are the major sectors to emphasize on improving.

For many years, Myanmar, our beloved country has been trying to improve its agricultural industry and yet we have not realized any significant improvement. In fact, per capita income and productivity per acre of Myanmar farmers are among the lowest in South East Asia. Myanmar was once the "The Rice Bowl of Asia" and back then Myanmar was one of the most developed countries in South East Asia. It is a good indicator and we can perceive that when our major industry is performing at its best the economy of the country as a whole will be lifted. From revisiting our forefathers' glorious days, we can learn that we have failed to adapt and upgrade technical know-how, technology and transport infrastructure because the productivity rate, the mode of transport and fulfilling market need are no longer efficient. To sum up, in ever changing global economy we failed to catch up with the change.

We have leapfrogged our telecommunication sector and we could do the same for our agricultural and livestock breeding though the nature and the magnitude of change could be different. In general, Myanmar is blessed with water resources though our water management is questionable. The major change needed will be the improvement of transport infrastructure to reduce transportation cost and to prevent post-harvest losses. Leapfrogging comes at a cost and in present context; we are encountering with insufficient loans and lack of financial access for farmers for sustainable development of the industry.

Considering our Nation's situation, it is impossible to empower the whole farming population at once. While loans are necessary to help farmers it can also result in massive loss of Nation's capital. For a short run, it is inevitable to provide loans to farmers to take a turn in their lives but for a long run, it will be wiser to provide financial concession for better performing farmers. In assumption, financial concession for better performing farmers will encourage innovation, more capital to expand and improve. As a result, it will also set new standards for farming community and the drive to improve and produce more. After all, it is Market Oriented Economy we are pursuing and we should take every option to encourage innovation in every sector.

*Khun Htee Min
Deputy Director
Speaker's Office
Pyithu Hluttaw
Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar*

K100 million fund established by BFM for disaster preparedness in Rakhine

KBZ's Brighter Future Myanmar foundation (BFM) has set up a K100 mn disaster preparedness fund in Rakhine State. The foundation's chairperson Daw Nang Lang Kham decided to set up the fund for disaster preparedness in order to quickly respond to the disasters.

BFM assisted in evacuation and rehabilitation efforts by working with local volunteers during last year's monsoon seas.

"The establishment of the fund comes after the foundation faced delays for sending relief aids to isolated areas due to poor infrastructure during last years

disasters. We learnt from these situations, the foundation's chairperson decided to establish this fund," said U San Mya of the BFM speaking at the ceremony to hand over the fund to Rakhine State government.

The philanthropic foundation was established after Cyclonic Nargis hit the country in 2008.

The foundation won the Presidential award in 2015 for its philanthropic works and Euromoney Achievement Award for CSR of the Euromoney based in England for its corporate social responsibilities in Myanmar. —Thiha Tun

US-backed forces advance against Islamic State in Syria

BEIRUT/AMMAN — US-backed Syrian forces edged closer to an Islamic State stronghold on the border with Turkey on Saturday while Russia's defence minister visited President Bashar al Assad to discuss military operations.

The visit came only hours after the Syrian army and its Iranian-backed militias, which have been supported by Russian air power, lost several villages to Islamist rebels as they made significant advances in the countryside south of Aleppo.

The UK-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said the rebel capture of three villages from government control — Zeitan, Khalsa and Barna — had caused significant losses among government forces and their allies.

The villages lie in an strategic area near a main highway

that links Aleppo with the capital Damascus. Government forces captured the area at the end of last year in a major offensive, assisted by Iranian-backed militias and Russian jets.

State media said Russian Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu visited an airbase in the coastal Latakia province on Saturday after his talks with Assad in Damascus.

Russia's military intervention in Syria in September helped turn the tide in Assad's favour after months of gains in western Syria by rebel fighters, who were aided by foreign military supplies, including US-made anti-tank missiles.

Russia, which has been bombing opposition-held areas, is blamed by the opposition and rights activists for causing hundreds of civilian deaths and targeting hospitals, schools and



Fighters of the Syria Democratic Forces (SDF) stand inside a building near Manbij, in Aleppo Governorate, Syria, on 17 June 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

infrastructure in what they say are indiscriminate attacks.

An escalation in Russian and Syrian air and artillery strikes in recent weeks around a highway to rebel held parts of the northern city of Aleppo has made the road virtually impassable, putting hundreds of thou-

sands of people under siege and worsening their humanitarian plight.

A 48-hour ceasefire in Aleppo announced by Russia on Thursday has had little impact on fighting, and air strikes and shelling have continued in and around the city.

At least seven people died in rebel shelling of a neighbourhood of Aleppo held by the Kurdish YPG militia at dawn on Saturday, the Observatory said.

Syrian helicopters also threw barrel bombs on several residential areas in opposition-held quarters.—Reuters

Iraqi forces open second front south of Islamic State-held Mosul

TIKRIT/FALLUJA, (Iraq) — Iraqi forces opened a second front on Saturday in preparation for an assault on the Islamic State stronghold of Mosul, a day after government troops declared victory over the militants in Falluja.

Elite counter-terrorism forces and two army divisions, backed by US-led coalition air strikes,

advanced from a northern refinery town towards an airfield seen as key for a move to retake Mosul, security officials said.

Mosul is Iraq's largest northern city and Islamic State's de facto capital in the country.

Government troops cleared two villages and pressed around 20 kilometres (12 miles) along a

desert route west of Baiji, the first advance past the town since its recapture in October, the security officials said.

Defence Minister Khaled al-Obaidi said the assault marked the launch of operations to push Islamic State out of Qayara, about 115 km (70 miles) north of Baiji, where an airfield could serve as the staging ground for a future offensive on Mosul, a further 60 km north.

Army troops on a separate front pushing west from Makhmour for the past three months have made only halting progress on the opposite side of the Tigris river.

"The launch of operations to liberate Qayara will not give the terrorists a chance to catch their breath," Obaidi said on Twitter alongside a picture of Humvee military trucks snaking down a desert road.

Iraqi forces entered the centre of Falluja, an hour's drive west of Baghdad, on Friday morning after a four-week operation that sent its tens of thousands of residents flee-

ing to overwhelmed displacement camps nearby.

Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi had declared victory in Falluja by evening, but police sources said on Saturday that government troops had not yet entered several northern districts held by Islamic State and were still clearing southern areas.

Iraqi troops engaged the insurgents on Baghdad Street, the main east-west route through Falluja, firing rockets at their positions and taking sniper fire and mortar rounds.

Counter-terrorism forces took control of Falluja hospital, a nest for the militants who set fire to large parts of it before fleeing, and were clearing the eastern al-Dhubat neighbourhood, a military statement said.

"It's a long way from done," said Col. Chris Garver, spokesman for the US-led coalition. "There's still a lot of work to be done in terms of clearing all the bad guys out of Falluja and clearing IEDs (improvised explosive devices)".—Reuters



An Iraqi security forces vehicle is seen on a street in the centre of Falluja, Iraq, on 18 June 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

Medical aid group's driver killed by gunmen in Central African Republic

GRIMARI — A local driver for Medecins sans Frontieres in the Central African Republic was killed on Friday during an ambush on a convoy by unidentified gunmen, the medical aid group said on Saturday.

The attack, which occurred on the road between Sibut and Grimari in the centre of the country, comes one month after an MSF staff member was shot dead in a similar ambush in the north that led MSF to suspend its operation in the area.

Thierry Dumont, the charity's chief in Central Africa, told French broadcaster Radio France Internationale that the reason of the attack was unclear.

But "trucks or humanitarian vehicles are economic targets", he added. "We are carrying goods, people have a little bit of money with them".

Central African Republic descended into chaos in early 2013 when mainly Muslim Seleka fighters seized power, triggering reprisal attacks by Christian anti-balaka militias.

More than 400,000 people have been displaced internally and some half-a-million have fled to neighbouring countries, according to the United Nations.

MSF, known in English as Doctors Without Borders, said more than two-thirds of the country's health facilities have been damaged or destroyed by fighting since 2013.—Reuters

Turkish troops kill 11 Syrians trying to cross border

AMMAN — Turkish border guards shot dead at least 11 Syrians, mostly from one family, as they tried to cross into Turkey from northwestern Syria, activists and a monitoring group said on Sunday.

At least two women and four children were among those killed in the shootings overnight as the refugees sought to cross into Tur-

key from the border village of Khirbet al Jouz, the Britain-based Observatory for Human Rights said in a report backed up by several activists in the area.

The monitor, which tracks violence across Syria, said it had documented the deaths of nearly sixty civilians while trying to flee from Syria since the start of the year in shooting incidents by

Turkish border guards.

Turkish officials were not immediately available for comment.

Turkey, a major sponsor of groups fighting to topple Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, has now closed its borders to Syrian refugees, but it is also hosting some 2.7 million registered Syrian refugees, about 280,000 of

whom live in camps.

Rockets launched from Syrian territory controlled by Islamic State militants have regularly struck Turkish border towns and have killed at least 20 people in recent months.

Humanitarian bodies have urged Turkey to reopen its borders to admit Syrians fleeing the conflict.—Reuters

Obese women may affect great grandchildren

WASHINGTON — A woman's obesity may put her future great grandchildren at high risk of metabolic problems such as type 2 diabetes and heart disease, even before she becomes pregnant, a mouse study has found.

While previous studies have linked a woman's health in pregnancy to her child's weight later in life, the new study published this week in the US journal *Cell Reports* showed that the risk does not end only with the first generation.

Obesity-caused genetic abnormalities, it said, can be passed through the female bloodline to at least three generations, even if these offspring eat healthy.

"Our findings indicate that a mother's obesity can impair the health of later generations," said senior author Kelle Moley, professor of obstetrics and gynecology at Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis.

"This is particularly important because more than two-thirds of reproductive-age women in the United States are overweight or obese," Moley said.

In the new study, the researchers fed mice a high-fat, high-sugar diet comprised of about 60 per cent fat and 20 per cent sugar, which mimics more of the Western diet and was "like eating fast food every day", from six weeks prior to conception until weaning.

Their offspring then were



PHOTO: XINHUA

fed a controlled diet of standard rodent chow, which is high in protein and low in fat and sugar.

Despite the healthy diet, the pups, grand pups and great-grand pups developed insulin resistance and other metabolic problems.

Abnormalities in mitochondria, which often are referred to as the powerhouses of cells because they supply energy for metabolism and other biochemical processes and are inherited only from mothers, not fathers, were found in muscle and skeletal tissue of the mice.

The research showed that a mother's obesity — and its associated metabolic problems — may be inherited through mitochondrial DNA present in the

unfertilized oocyte, or egg.

"It's important to note that in humans, in which the diets of children closely mirror those of their parents, the effects of maternal metabolic syndrome may be greater than in our mouse model," Moley said.

She urged people to eat nutritiously, although more research is needed to determine if a consistent diet low in fat and sugar, as well as regular exercise, may reverse genetic metabolic abnormalities.

"Over the decades, our diets have worsened, in large part due to processed foods and fast foods. We're seeing the effects in the current obesity crisis," Moley said. "Research, including this study, points to poor maternal nutrition and a predisposition to obesity." —Xinhua

New 3D printed polymer to convert methane into methanol

WASHINGTON — Scientists have combined 3D printed polymers with methane-eating bacteria to create the first reactor that can produce methanol from the greenhouse gas, an advance that may lead to a more efficient energy production.

The researchers removed enzymes from methanotrophs, bacteria that eat methane, and mixed them with polymers that they printed or molded into innovative reactors.

"Remarkably, the enzymes retain up to 100 per cent activity in the polymer," said Sarah Baker, from the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory in the US.

"The printed enzyme-embedded polymer is highly flexible for future development and should be useful in a wide range of applications, especially those involving gas-liquid reactions," Baker said.

Advances in oil and gas extraction techniques have made vast new stores of natural gas, composed primarily of methane, available. A large volume of methane is leaked, vented or flared during these operations, partly because the gas is difficult to store and transport compared to more-valuable liquid fuels.

Methane emissions also contribute about one-third of current net global warming potential, primarily from these and other distributed sources such as agriculture and landfills.

Current industrial technologies to convert methane to more valuable products, like steam reform-

mation, operate at high temperature and pressure, require a large number of unit operations and yield a range of products.

The only known catalyst to convert methane to methanol under ambient conditions with high efficiency is the enzyme methane monooxygenase (MMO), researchers said.

The reaction can be carried out by methanotrophs that contain the enzyme, but this approach inevitably requires energy for upkeep and metabolism of the organisms. Instead, the team separated the enzymes from the organism and used the enzymes directly.

The team found that isolated enzymes offer the promise of highly controlled reactions at ambient conditions with higher conversion efficiency and greater flexibility.

"Up to now, most industrial bioreactors are stirred tanks, which are inefficient for gas-liquid reactions," said Joshua Stolaroff, an environmental scientist on the team.

"The concept of printing enzymes into a robust polymer structure opens the door for new kinds of reactors with much higher throughput and lower energy use," said Stolaroff.

The team found that the 3D-printed polymer could be re-used over many cycles and used in higher concentrations than possible with the conventional approach of the enzyme dispersed in solution. The research was published in the journal *Nature Communications*. —PTI

'Guided chemotherapy missiles' to target cancer cells, spare healthy ones

SAN FRANCISCO — A team of researchers at Stanford University has used an engineered protein to direct chemotherapy drugs to tumours, in the hope of creating "guided missiles" targeting cancer cells.

The work by Jennifer Cochran, associate professor of bioengineering at Stanford, northern California, on the US west coast, builds on the antibody approach to deliver a drug directly to tumours, bypassing healthy cells and overcoming some of the uglier aspects of chemotherapy.

In cancer chemotherapy, the good part is that the drugs do often kill cancer cells; the bad is that the drugs also damage other quickly dividing cells in the body, causing side effects ranging from cosmetic, like hair loss, to disabling; and the ugly occurs when the drug dose needed to kill a tumour is more than what a person's body can handle.

A dose high enough to infiltrate the tumor could be deadly to

other cells in the body if the tumour does not have much of a blood supply and very little of the drug, which is delivered through the bloodstream, can get in. To get around this problem, some therapies recently approved in the United States use antibodies to deliver a drug directly to tumours.

"Antibodies can be limited for treating solid tumours because they are too big to penetrate well," Cochran said about her approach using a protein. "The idea is that a smaller molecule could diffuse into the tumour better."

The specialised protein has the potential advantage of being able to pass through the barrier that protects the brain, thereby being able to treat brain tumours. It is also smaller than the antibody and might be able to reach dense tumours with little blood supply.

The idea originated with the knowledge that cancer cells, and the blood supply that feeds them, often produce particular mole-

cules known as integrins on their surface.

The goal of Cochran's team was to create an engineered protein that could latch tightly onto those integrins and be used as a drug delivery vehicle.

To engineer a protein to bind integrins, Cochran employed a technique called directed evolution to rapidly engineer millions of proteins and screen for the qualities she's interested in.

Her team started with a protein called knottin, so named for its knot-like shape, and used directed evolution to engineer a protein variant that would bind strongly to integrins.

The researchers then worked on two strategies for attaching chemotherapeutic drugs to the evolved knottin.

One strategy used a portion of an antibody to connect the drug to the knottin, mimicking antibody therapies already on the market. The team tested this approach in a lab dish and in mice

with implanted human tumours and in each case the knottin successfully delivered the drug to the tumour and killed the cancer cells.

A second approach, developed in collaboration with post-doctoral fellow Nick Cox in the Stanford ChEM-H Medicinal Chemistry Knowledge Centre, used a small chemical link to attach a chemotherapeutic drug directly to the knottin. The knot-

tin-drug combination effectively killed breast, ovarian and pancreatic cancer cells in a lab dish.

The targeted drug delivery was highly effective against cancer cells, including those that had developed a resistance to the drug alone. "We found that when the drug was delivered by the knottin, its potency was greatly enhanced in treating highly resistant tumour cells, like those found in pancreatic cancer," Cox said. —Xinhua

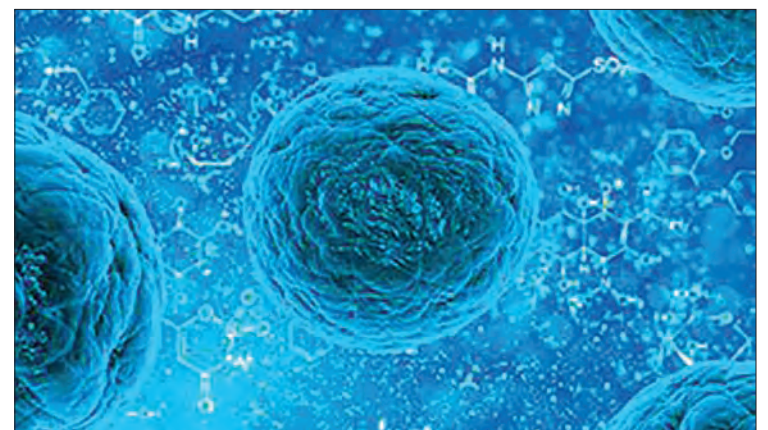


PHOTO: XINHUA

China's push for bilateral territorial talks behind ASEAN roadblock

HANOI — China's insistence on settling territorial disputes with Southeast Asian countries in the South China Sea bilaterally was a major reason behind their meeting of foreign ministers falling into disarray last week, diplomatic sources said Sunday.

At the end of the special meeting Tuesday, China had sought to release a 10-point consensus document with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, but the bloc rejected it due to its wording, according to the ASEAN sources. The sources quoted part of the China-proposed agreement as saying that the countries "directly concerned shall resolve through friendly consultations and negotiations their territorial and jurisdictional disputes by peaceful

means." The meeting in the southwestern Chinese city of Yuxi took place at a delicate time, as a ruling from a UN tribunal in an arbitration case brought by the Philippines to challenge China's claims in the South China Sea is expected within weeks.

Many experts believe the ruling will be unfavourable for China, which is also locked in territorial rows with three other members of the association — Brunei, Malaysia and Viet Nam — as well as Taiwan. Ahead of the ruling by the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague, China is believed to have aimed for more international support over its position on the disputes by announcing the list of agreements with ASEAN. One of

the 10 points was calling on "countries outside" to play "a constructive role for peace and stability in the region," according to the sources. China's massive reclamation of islands in the contested waters in recent years and building of military facilities on them have caused widespread concerns, not only among the claimants. Among non-claimants, the United States and its allies in the region, including Australia and Japan, as well as some European countries have seen China's actions in the South China Sea as going against rule-based order. Of those ASEAN countries that have no claims in the internationally important waterway, also rich in fish and potential oil and gas reserves, Indonesia

and Singapore have also become more vocal in expressing their opposition to any unilateral action to change the status quo in the region.

But China, which claims almost the whole South China Sea, is strongly averse to what it perceives as non-claimants' interference in the disputes and any attempts at multilateral arbitration. Following the ministerial meeting near the Yunnan provincial capital of Kunming, ASEAN issued a tough-worded joint statement that said the group "cannot ignore what is happening in the South China Sea." But ASEAN later quickly retracted the joint statement. Chinese officials have insisted that the ministers' discussions were productive and there was

never an official ASEAN document issued following the closed-door event.

The officials also put the blame on foreign media reports for hyping up tensions. "A consensus of all ASEAN countries is required before ASEAN issues any official document," Chinese Foreign Ministry's top spokesman Lu Kang told reporters a day after the meeting. Countries that have very close ties with China, including Cambodia and Laos, were opposed to issuing a joint statement of ASEAN foreign ministers, according to diplomats with knowledge of the situation. Three days after the confusion, Malaysia's Foreign Ministry, revealed there was initially a consensus over the statement among all ASE-

AN foreign ministers. The ministry defended making the statement available to the media, saying "subsequent developments" over the document took place after the departure of the ministers from the Chinese city. Some ASEAN members' frustration over China's approach to the territorial disputes dates back to April, when Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi made a whirlwind tour of Brunei, Cambodia and Laos. At the end of the tour, without taking account of ASEAN as a whole, Wang said China has reached a four-point consensus with the three countries, which included the idea that the territorial disputes should be resolved through talks by the countries directly concerned.—Kyodo News

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Email address: myanmar@tilleke.com

Date: 20.6.2016

Italy elects mayors in vote that will test PM Renzi

ROME — Italians began voting on Sunday for mayors of their largest cities in a ballot that will test Prime Minister Matteo Renzi's popularity and could hand control of Rome to the anti-establishment 5-Star Movement (M5S).

Virginia Raggi, a 37 year-old lawyer from the M5S, was in pole position to seize the scandal-plagued capital from Renzi's Democratic Party (PD) and become its first female mayor.

The PD took a bruising in the first round of voting on 5 June. Italy's four biggest cities are among 126 towns holding run-offs between first and second-placed candidates after none won more than 50 per cent backing.

Attention is focused on Rome, financial hub Milan and the traditional PD stronghold Turin as 8.6 million people — just under a fifth of the total electorate — cast their vote.

Raggi won 35.2 per cent in the first round, pushing Renzi's candidate Roberto Giachetti into second place with a campaign promising to fight graft and

privilege.

"Today we need two things: honesty and courage," Raggi tweeted early on Sunday, quoting 20th century socialist politician and former president Sandro Pertini. Conquering Rome would be a big victory for M5S, which has capitalised on widespread frustration with traditional parties as the left and right have been tainted by corruption scandals. Persistent weakness in the euro zone's third-largest economy has also fueled frustration. M5S has promised universal income support for the poor and a referendum on membership of the euro.

Renzi has said the vote will not hurt his left-right coalition government, but a bad showing will put him under pressure in his already divided party ahead of a referendum in October on which he has staked his political future.

The most politically significant contest for Renzi is in Milan, where he backed Roberto Giachetti into second place with a campaign promising to fight graft and



Virginia Raggi, 5-Star Movement candidate for Rome's mayor, talks on stage during a rally in Ostia, near Rome, Italy on 17 June 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

round barely a percentage point ahead of center-right rival Stefano Parisi.

In Turin, prominent PD incumbent Piero Fassino came out ahead in the first round but faces an unexpectedly tough challenge from M5S. In Bologna, another leftist bastion, the PD is expected to hold off the anti-immigrant Northern League. Naples is a lost cause for the PD, whose candidate was knocked out

in the first round. Italy's third-biggest city looks set to give a second term to former prosecutor Luigi de Magistris, who has declared it a "Renzi-free zone".

Voting opened at 7 am (0500 GMT) and will close at 11pm, when the result of exit polls will be announced for the main cities. Initial projections based on the vote count will be issued after about an hour, and then at regular intervals.—Reuters

Trump says Britain should leave EU: newspaper interview

WASHINGTON — Donald Trump told Britons on Sunday he supported Brexit, repeating just days before the vote on 23 June that he thinks the UK would be better off outside the European Union. As the campaign to decide Britain's EU membership restarted after a three-day hiatus following the killing of lawmaker Jo

Cox, Trump, the presumptive Republican US presidential candidate, said in a newspaper interview he was backing an "out" vote.

"I would personally be more inclined to leave, for a lot of reasons like having a lot less bureaucracy," he told the *Sunday Times*. "But I am not a British citizen. This is just my opinion."

The billionaire businessman also told the newspaper that he would seek to have good relationships internationally if he were elected president in November, including with David Cameron. The British Prime Minister has in the past called Trump's proposed temporary ban on Muslims entering the United

States "divisive, stupid and wrong". Trump said in May that Britain would be better off outside the EU because of high levels of migration. The latest opinion polls showed the 'Remain' camp recovering some momentum, although the overall picture remains one of an evenly split electorate.—Reuters

Southern California wildfire spreads as blazes hit parched states

SANTA BARBARA — A wildfire fed by parched land and high winds spread in southern California on Saturday, forcing hundreds of people to leave their homes as the blaze formed destructive columns of flames known as fire tornadoes.

The so-called Sherpa Fire in Santa Barbara County, about 90 miles (145 km) northwest of Los Angeles, had burned through about 7,811 acres (3,161 hectares) by Saturday evening, officials said.

Firefighters estimated the fire was 45 per cent contained after early evening “sundowner winds” that can whip through the area’s coastal canyons did not emerge overnight on Friday.

“We had a very good night last night ... We’ve had no life loss, no major injuries and no major structural loss,” Santa Barbara County Fire Chief Eric Peterson told a news conference.

But county officials issued a new “red flag warning” for gusty winds from Sunday to Tuesday.

More than 1,200 firefighters have been dispatched to battle the flames, fueled by dry chaparral and grass in coastal canyons about 20 miles (32 km) northwest of the affluent city of Santa Barbara.

“Now is the time to gather your family mem-



A firefighter battles flames from the Sherpa Fire in Santa Barbara, California, on 16 June 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

bers, pets and important documents in case you need to leave quickly,” the Santa Barbara Sheriff’s Office warned people living in areas threatened by the fire.

The fire broke out on Wednesday and has been expanding since then, forcing mandatory evacuations in some areas and putting others under evacuation

warnings.

The fire is one of a series of blazes in western and southwestern states brought about by high temperatures and a prolonged dry spell. One of the largest has been southeast of Albuquerque, New Mexico, that has destroyed about two dozen homes and forced evacuations.

More than 700 person-

nel were fighting the so-called Dog Head Fire that has burned through about 17,615 acres (7,129 hectares) of timber and logging zones in four days. Firefighters said it was 9 per cent contained as of Saturday evening. Governor Susana Martinez this week declared a state of emergency to free up resources to fight the blaze.

For an area stretching from southern California to southern Nevada and into Arizona, the National Weather service has put out “red flag warnings,” indicating conditions that could lead to dangerous fires.

It has also issued a heat advisory for large parts of New Mexico, Texas and Oklahoma. —Reuters

Dacic receives Chinese Foreign Minister Wang

BELGRADE — Serbian First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ivica Dacic on Friday received China’s Foreign Minister Wang Yi, who arrived in Serbia earlier in the day as a member of a Chinese state delegation headed by President Xi Jinping.

Dacic noted that Serbia is extending a sincere welcome to the dear guests from friendly China and that it is confident that bilateral relations, characterised by decades of friendship, respect and cooperation, will be even stronger and enriched after the visit. We treat President Xi’s visit as a historic one as it is taking place over three decades after the last visit to Belgrade by a Chinese president, and because the strategic partnership will be taken to another level in terms of quality — a comprehensive strategic partnership, a statement released by the Serbian Foreign Ministry quoted Dacic as saying.

The meeting was also attended by Serbia’s candidate for UN secretary-general Vuk Jeremic, the statement said.—Tanjug

THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE UNION OF MYANMAR MINISTRY OF TRANSPORTATION AND COMMUNICATION MYANMA RAILWAYS YANGON CENTRAL RAILWAYS STATION AREA COMPREHENSIVE DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

Notification on the collection status of Request for Proposal (RFP) documents for Yangon Central Railways Station Area Comprehensive Development Project

1. Myanmar Railways (MR) has invited Expression of Interest (EOI) from reputable local, international and joint venture developers on 7 August 2015 to undertake design and build works for Yangon Central Railways Station Area Comprehensive Development. Total of 18 EOI’s received from potential Developers from locally and internationally. MR has reviewed and evaluated all the submitted EOI’s. On the basis of the information provided with EOI, MR has shortlisted 15 potential developers who prove themselves capable enough for the development.

2. MR has invited them to prepare and submit Request for Proposal (RFP) with effect from 6 March 2016 and, by the closing date of 31 May 2016, total of 7 (seven) shortlisted potential developers (as stated below) have purchased RFP Document.

- Min Dhama Co.,Ltd
- Shwe Gon Development Group
- Yoma Strategic Holding & FMI Group
- Italian Design for Myanmar Group
- Excellent fortune Development Group Co.,Ltd
- High Tech Concrete Technology Co.,Ltd
- Capital Diamond Star Group

3. This is to announce that MR is implementing the tender process according to the procedures and timeline stated in the ‘Request for Proposal (RFP) and Instructions to Tenderer (ITT)’ documents

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Ministry of Transportation and Communication

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Slain singer Christina Grimmie remembered in New Jersey

MEDFORD — A memorial took place for rising singing star Christina Grimmie near her New Jersey hometown on Friday after she was fatally shot by a deranged fan last week while signing autographs in Orlando, Florida.

Grimmie's funeral at the Fellowship Alliance Chapel in Medford, New Jersey, opened with a recording of her cover of the song "In Christ Alone" before relatives and friends shared their memories of the 22-year-old Grimmie.

"Christina I am so proud of you. I love you girl. I love that you're walking with Jesus on streets of gold. I'll see you later," her aunt Kathy said during the service.

Grimmie was shot in Orlando's Plaza Live concert hall on Saturday evening after performing as the opening act for the band Before You Exit.

Kevin James Loibl, 27, of St. Petersburg, Florida, approached her and opened fire before being tackled by the singer's brother. Loibl died on the scene of a self-inflicted gunshot wound.

Grimmie, whose career was launched after she posted videos of herself singing on YouTube, began working with professional music producers at age 16, the funeral home's obituary said.

She later finished in the top three on the sixth season of "The Voice," performed on "The Ellen DeGeneres Show," "Dancing with the Stars," and opened for singer Selena Gomez.

The obituary also said she recently raised \$250,000 for the Humane Society of the United States.

Grimmie is survived by her parents, Albert and Tina Grimmie, and brother Marcus. —Reuters



Tina Grimmie, mother of musician Christina Grimmie, is comforted by her husband Bud as Tina speaks during a memorial service held for the singer at Fellowship Alliance Chapel in Medford, New Jersey, US, on 17 June 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

Justin Bieber falls through hole in the stage during concert



Justin Bieber (C) performs a medley of songs at the 2016 Billboard Awards in Las Vegas, Nevada, US, on 22 May 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

LOS ANGELES — Pop star Justin Bieber fell through a hole in the stage during a concert in Saskatoon, Canada.

Bieber, 22, was taking a walk across the stage when he failed to notice the hole. After disappearing through the hole, the "Baby" hitmaker got right back up, seemingly unharmed but a little embarrassed, reported Billboard.

Brushing off the incident he told the crowd, "Good thing I'm like a cat and I landed on my feet..."

The video of the fall soon started doing the rounds on social media, but it's not the singer's first onstage accident. In April, Bieber took a comical tumble on stage in Kansas City during a performance of "Sorry".—PTI

Rihanna buys house for father

LONDON — R&B star Rihanna has bought a house for her father.

The "What's My Name" hitmaker — whose real name is Robyn Rihanna Fenty — shortlisted a number of homes for her father Ronald to choose from, reported Femalefirst.

"Robyn was so kind. She sent me a few houses to choose from around the island. I chose this one, not because it was the most expensive, but it's got the gardens. I'm hoping when I have the strength and energy to spend more time out there I can build a water feature. And I want to turn one of the rooms downstairs into a gym so I can get fit again," she said.

Meanwhile, the 28-year-old singer previously revealed her life now is "so far from the reality of her life" before.

"What is the top? I don't think you're ever at the top. If you ever feel you're at the top, there's only one way to go and that's down — and I don't ever want to feel comfortable enough to say that.—PTI

Shanghai International Film Festival crowns Asian talent

SHANGHAI — Indian film "Thithi" won Asia New Talent Awards for best film and best script writer Friday night during the on-going 19th Shanghai International Film Festival.

Thithi is a light-hearted story about three generations of men reacting to the death of the family's 101-year-old patriarch. The film's cast were non-profes-

sional actors from Indian villages. Best director went to Chen Yujie from China's Taiwan for the film "Lost Daughter." Thai movie "The Island Funeral" won best cinematographer.

Hong Kong director Derek Tung-Sing Yee chaired this year's Asia New Talent Awards. Yee hoped the awards could support independent films and

encourage young film makers to follow their artistic desires, rather than catering to the market and box office blindly.

The Asia New Talent Awards, dedicated to rewarding new-comers to the Asian film industry, began in 2004 as an important competition section in addition to the Golden Goblet Awards.—Xinhua



Singer Rihanna. PHOTO: REUTERS

Daw Khin Myo Hla 85 years old

Daw Khin Myo Hla, 85, passed away peacefully on 19.6.2016, Sunday, 4:40 am at 2B2, Yankin Center, Yangon. She was a much loved daughter of (U Ohn Khin — Daw Saw Nyunt), niece of (Thakhin Chit Maung (Myan Aung) — Daw Mya Kyi), widow of (Wunna Kyaw Htin U Maung Maung Yi, Command Engineer, Construction, Kachin State), loving mother of Dr. Cho Win Maw (Managing Director, Retired, Foodstuff and Pharmaceutical Industries, Ministry of Industry) — Daw Cho Cho Wynn (Department of Economics, Yangon University of Economics, Retired), Dr. Aung Thu (Consultant Physician, Northwick Park Hospital, London), Dr. Hmwe Hmwe Thynn (Associate Specialist, Gwynedd Hospital, Banger, UK) — U Myo Tint (Lecturer, Menai College, Banger, UK), U Thant Sin (Managing Director, MPE and MPPE, Ministry of Electricity and Energy) — Daw Aye Aye Khine (Miraculous Fashion and Jewelry), Daw Aye Aye Thynn (Aye Ma), and grandmother of U Cho Zay (Q.H.S.E Manager, Heli-Union), Daw Aye Su Myat (Australia), U Htet Cho (Technical Sales Executive, Puma Energy Asia Sun), Daw Khine Cho Myat (Youth Consultant, U.N.F.P.A), Simon T Tint (Faenol School, Bangor, UK), Maung Zwe Zarni Min Thant @ John Walter (International School Yangon). The funeral service will be held on 23.6.2016, Thursday, 10 am at Yay Way Cemetery, Yangon. We will be leaving for the funeral service at 8:00 am.

Bereaved family

Father's Day marked around China



SHENYANG — Yang Feifei (R) learns how to take care of his newborns at the Xingtai Maternal and Child Care Service Center in Xingtai, north China's Hebei Province, on 19 June 2016, the Father's Day, which falls on the third Sunday of June. PHOTO: XINHUA

Chinese 798 Art Zone avant-garde artists exhibit for first time in Rome

ROME — A collective exhibition of Chinese contemporary artists from Beijing's 798 Art Zone was featured in the Italian capital this week, giving people here an unprecedented insight into China's artistic avant-garde.

"Beijing 798 Impression" was inaugurated on 15 June at the main building of the 16th century Villa Celimontana, which is home of the Italian Geographic Society, and would run until 19 June.

Some 40 selected works from well-known artists were exhibited overall, bringing the experience of China's most notable contemporary artistic space to Italy for the first time ever.

Their paintings, pictures and sculptures hung from or lay on the shelves of the Geographic Society's library, whose rooms holds texts dated back to the 17th century, a world globe from the mid-19th century, or a mosaic tile floor from the third century AD.

Many visitors seemed most intrigued by the strong

discordance between the modernity of the artworks and the surrounding scene.

"I visited the original 798 Art Zone in Beijing once, with its post-modern atmosphere," Monica Scarabottini from Rome told Xinhua.

"Here at the Villa Celimontana, the context is totally the opposite, and creates a positive strong contrast effect with the contemporary works of art."

Specialised in Sinology studies at Rome Sapienza University, Scarabottini seemed to appreciate the creative path covered by the Chinese artists.

"What I like most of them is that they often introduce a provocative element, and each of their works always seems to convey multiple messages," she explained.

"Furthermore, they often combine East and West, blending elements drawn from the traditional Chinese art and suggestions from contemporary life."

Some of the artworks on show would fit with these

impressions. For example, there was Luo Brothers' fiberglass sculpture named 'Welcome Welcome', featuring the well-known plump smiling baby holding a Pepsi can.

There was the acrylic painting 'One Love' by Wu Mingzhong, with a woman embracing and kissing a child. Both were glassy, transparent figures, with an intense red colour seemingly passing between them with the kiss.

"The woman seems Western, and the baby Asiatic. I wonder: is the mother feeding her child with that kiss, or the other way around?" Scarabottini said.



PHOTO: XINHUA

A final example was an embroidered panel by Chang Xugong's portraits series. "His subjects are always very contemporary, like in the pop art. Yet, he uses silk embroidery, which is one of China's ancient and most relevant forms of folk art," she noted.

Blending the Chinese avant-garde with Rome's ancient cultural heritage and landscape seemed indeed one key factor for bringing "Beijing 798 Impression" here.

The initiative was organised by China Council for the Promotion of International Trade Beijing Sub-Council and Beijing

Administrative Committee of 798 Art Zone, in cooperation with Rome Expo.

Its goal was "to build an artistic bridge between China and Italy, showing the evolution of the Chinese society through the sensibility of some of its best contemporary artists," according to curator Cheng Xindong.

"The 798 has become one of the most exciting art districts in China and in the world," Cheng said.

On the other hand, "Rome has arts and history everywhere", and would provide a distinguished scene to exhibit Chinese contemporary works, according to him.

Such modern artistic injection was welcome, visitors confirmed.

"The exhibition is quite a novelty for Rome's artistic scene, and especially since it concerns contemporary art from China," medical student Angela Iurlaro told Xinhua. "I knew it through a friend's twitter, and I came because I am most interested in the Asian cultures and arts".—Xinhua

Mermaid Parade marks start of summer in New York

NEW YORK — Flashy and colourful costumes flooded New York's Coney Island Saturday afternoon for the 34 Annual Mermaid Parade, marking the opening of a variety of summer activities in the city.

Thousands of participants in hand-made mermaid costumes, floats and marching bands were featured in the largest art parade in the United States.

The parade was established in 1983, as a celebration of ancient mythology and seaside rituals.—Xinhua

106-year-old grandmother becomes oldest Olympic torch bearer

RIO DE JANEIRO — Three years after becoming the world's oldest skydiver, Aida Gemanque became the oldest Olympic torch bearer on Saturday when she carried the flame in the Amazonian city of Macapa, aged 106.

Gemanque broke the record formerly held by Alexander Kaptarenko, who was 101 when he took part in the Sochi 2014 Winter Olympics relay.

"I am overjoyed. I have to be grateful for this joy, which I never expected in my life. I am immensely proud," Gemanque was quoted as saying by Rio2016.com.—Xinhua



Entertainment Channel

(20- 6-2016, Monday)

06 : 00 pm	09 : 00 pm
• Weather Report	• To My Dream City (Part- 2)
• Pyi Thu Ni Ti	09 : 20 pm
06 : 20 pm	• International Movie Songs
• Cartoon Programme "Minions" (Part-1)	09 : 30 pm
07 : 10 pm	• He can do it
• International Drama Series	9 : 40 pm
07 : 40 pm	• Music Programme
• International Drama Series	10 : 00 pm
08 : 50 pm	• Toddy Palm Product Shop
• MRTV Entertainment Music	10 : 10 pm
	• Myanmar Video

From 20-6-2016 (Monday) 6:00 Pm
To 21-6-2016 (Tuesday) 6:00 Pm



Myanmar International

(20-6-2016 07:00am ~ 21-6-2016 7:00am) MST

Today Fresh

07:03	Am	News
07:27	Am	Myanmar Delicate Artistic Handy Creations- The Making Procedure of Goldsmith
07:43	Am	A Tea Business: Pankwan (Part-2)
07:53	Am	Myanmar Puppet
08:03	Am	News
08:26	Am	Myanmar Childhood Games (Episode-I)
08:35	Am	Reflected Glory
09:03	Am	News
09:26	Am	A Chance to Change Their Future
09:44	Am	Products of Myanmar - Pottery Business

10:03	Am	News
10:26	Am	Myanmar Traditional Thatched Roofs: IN-LEAF
10:43	Am	Natural Mineral Water

(11:00 Am ~ 03:00 Pm) - Sunday Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)
(03:00 Pm ~ 07:00 Pm) -Today Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)

Prime Time

07:03	Pm	News
07:27	Pm	Food Trip (Ep-10) (Part -1)
08:03	Pm	News
08:26	Pm	Taste of Myanmar (Rice Salad with Vegetables)
08:44	Pm	Director: Thiha Kyaw Soe

(09:00 Pm ~ 11:00 Pm)- Today Repeat (09:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)
(11:00 Pm ~ 03:00 Am) - Sunday Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)
(03:00 Am ~ 07:00 Am) -Today Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)

(For Detailed Schedule – www.myanmaritv.com/schedule)

Messi equals record as Argentina, Chile advance

FOXBOROUGH — Argentina and Chile advanced to the semi-finals of the Copa America on Saturday with Chile beating Mexico 7-0 and Lionel Messi getting a goal in Argentina's win over Venezuela to equal his career all-time scoring record.

Messi scored in the minute to take his career tally for Argentina to 54 goals, matching the record held by Gabriel Batistuta.

"I am happy to have equalled Batistuta's record but my head is focused on lifting the Copa America," said the five-time World Player of the Year.

"We are doing things right, we are growing and we need to keep down that same road."

Argentina will now face the United States in the first semi-final on Tuesday in Houston.

Reigning champions Chile joined them in the last four after a 7-0 demolition of Mexico in Santa Clara.

Hoffenheim striker Eduardo Vargas scored four goals to help them set up a semi-final date with Colombia on Wednesday.

Messi won the Man-of-the-Match award in an action-packed game against underdogs Venezuela in Foxborough.

Argentina got off to the perfect start after just seven minutes when Gonzalo Higuaín dived to turn a delicate cross

from Messi past goalkeeper Dani Hernandez.

The in-form Napoli striker doubled the lead 20 minutes later when he latched on to a slack back pass to round the goalkeeper and slot the ball into the empty net.

Salomon Rondon twice came close for Venezuela and his side should have pulled a goal back two minutes from half time after Sergio Rome-

ro brought down Josef Martinez in the box.

However, the Manchester United goalkeeper redeemed himself when he stood firm and Seijas' carelessly dinked penalty sailed right into his arms.

Messi, who started for the first time in the tournament after three substitute appearances, put Argentina 3-0 ahead when he worked a lovely one-two with Nicolas

Gaitan and then poked the ball under Hernandez with his left foot.

Venezuela were not out of it, though, and Rondon got the lightest of touches on a cross to head home and make it 3-1 after 70 minutes. However, their hopes were short lived as just seconds later Erik Lamela, who had been on the field for only four minutes, shot home from 12 yards to make it 4-1 for Argentina.—Reuters



Argentina midfielder Lionel Messi scores a goal past Venezuela defender Oswaldo Vizcarrondo during in quarter-final play in the 2016 Copa America Centenario soccer tournament at Gillette Stadium, Foxborough, MA, USA, on 18 June 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

Lowry leads US Open by two after marathon day

OAKMONT (Pennsylvania) — Irishman Shane Lowry held a two-shot lead after 14 holes when third-round play was suspended for the day in fading light at the weather-hit US Open after a long Saturday at Oakmont Country Club.

Lowry, showing steady nerves on a challenging layout running fast and firm, mixed five birdies with two bogeys to get to five-under for the tournament before the horn sounded to halt the action at the 8.49pm (0029 GMT).

"My game is good, I feel very comfortable out there," said Lowry, who moved two strokes clear after hitting a superb wedge to within three feet at the par-five 12th and knocking in the birdie putt.

"Quite happy that we didn't have another four holes to play. It's been a long day. This is right where you want to be (in the lead).

"I'm really looking forward to tomorrow," said the 29-year-

old from Clara in County Offaly, who won the biggest title of his career at the 2015 WGC-Bridgestone Invitational.

PGA Tour rookie Andrew Landry, the surprise first-round leader, was at three-under after 13 holes, with American Dustin Johnson, after 13, England's Lee Westwood, after 15, and Spaniard Sergio Garcia, after 14, a further stroke back.

Johnson, who missed a three-foot putt at the final hole to hand last year's US Open to Jordan Spieth, had been one ahead after the delayed second round ended earlier on Saturday but fell short of replicating his form from the first 36 holes.

"It's this golf course," nine-times PGA Tour winner Johnson said after recording two birdies, two bogeys and a double at the par-four third. "It's tough to make putts on it. 'I'm still feeling good about where I'm at. A lot of golf to go. Golf swing feels good, so I'm happy with where I'm at.'—Reuters

Misfiring Ronaldo leaves Portugal in dangerous place

PARIS — Cristiano Ronaldo missed a second-half penalty and had a late headed effort disallowed as Portugal's future at Euro 2016 looked in jeopardy following a 0-0 draw against Austria in a wide open Group F on Saturday.

Ronaldo won his 128th cap to break the record of Luis Figo, who was watching from the stands, but his landmark occasion turned into a night of torment for the Real Madrid luminary.

He fired his 79th minute spot kick against the post — the fourth penalty he has missed in his last five for club and country — having already squandered several chances in an entertaining game at the Parc des Princes.

Ronaldo then thought he had made amends in the 85th minute by grabbing the winner with a header but it was ruled out for offside. He has had 20 shots so far at the tournament, more than nine entire teams have managed, but has still to score.

Hailed as potentially tough

opponents after an impressive qualifying campaign, Austria, ranked 10th in the world, again failed to live up to expectations after a 2-0 defeat by Hungary in their opener.

Hungary top the group with four points after earlier snatching a 1-1 draw against Iceland, who are level with Portugal on two points and ahead of Austria on one.

Portugal, who were knocked out in the first round at the 2014 World Cup, face a tense final match against Hungary while Austria will play Iceland on Wednesday.

Asked about Ronaldo, Portugal coach Fernando Santos snapped.

"I understand you and don't talk to you about Cristiano," he told a news conference.

"Of course we're going through a tough time but we need to switch back immediately and can't wallow in our own misery. The next match is a final for us.

"We faced a very strong Portuguese team but we ran a lot and we fought hard," said Austria coach Marcel Koller.

Portugal, held 1-1 by Iceland in their opener, had three opportunities in the space of three minutes early on but Nani, Vieirinha and William Carvalho were denied by alert keeper Robert Almer.

"Messi, Messi," sang the Austria fans gleefully after Ronaldo missed the target as he latched on to Nani's cross into the area in the 22nd minute.

Portugal came closer seven minutes later when Nani's header hit the woodwork.

Stefan Ilsanker bossed the Austria midfield, breaking up several Portugal attacks and orchestrating play for his team mates as David Alaba appeared to be having an off night.

Ilsanker provided Austria with their first shot on target early in the second half with a powerful low drive that was tipped away by Rui Patrício.—Reuters