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Rescue teams unload bodies from a navy vessel outside Launglon township yesterday. A military plane went missing on Wednesday with 122 on board. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

31 bodies found from missing plane, survivors 'unlikely'

Rescuers pulled 31 bodies from the sea off the southern coast of Myanmar yesterday, one day after a military plane went missing with 122 soldiers, family members and crew, prompting tears

from relatives of those aboard and donations from those wishing to help.

Two men, 21 women and eight children were among the bodies found in the Andaman

Sea near the coastal town of Launglon by navy and civilian ships, according to a statement from the military.

"I only want to cry, I have nothing," said a shaky-voiced

Yuzana, 19, whose parents and younger brother were on the aircraft when it went missing on Wednesday.

The weekly flight, from several coastal towns to Myanmar's

largest city of Yangon, had been carrying the three to a planned reunion after a two-year-long separation.

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Pyithu Hluttaw

New electricity generation and distribution planned for Sagaing Region under five year plan

The government will build at least three new power plants and electrical distribution systems in Sagaing Region under a multibillion kyat 2017-2022 plan of Ministry of Electricity and Energy plan, according to a Myanmar News Agency report on yesterday's Pyithu Hluttaw proceedings.

Dr. Tun Naing, Deputy Minister for Electricity and Energy told Pyithu Hluttaw representatives that his agency will request a total of Ks4.1 billion in Union budget allocations this fiscal year and next for a 66-kilovolt generation plant, five transformer stations and a 26-mile power grid project in Sagaing Region. The ministry is studying the feasibility of installing a small or medium sized hydro-electrical power plant be-



Speaker of Pyithu Hluttaw U Win Myint. **PHOTO: MNA**

tween Nan Win Creek and Nan Thalet Creek in Sagaing, the deputy minister said.

The deputy minister also said the government intends to spend Ks1.5 billion for a 33-kilovolt plant, a 16-mile electrical grid and

five transformers in Mone Town. The last projects Dr. Tun Naing described under the five year plan were a 37-mile, 66 kilovolt power grid between Chauk and Yenanchaung with 15 transformers and a 33 kilovolt grid between

Yenanchaung proper and an industrial zone nearby.

After that, Hluttaw representatives discussed the motion submitted by U Win Win of Minbu constituency urging the Union Government to distribute local-made Urea Fertilizer with systematic packing for quality control, to farmers at reasonable prices. The Hluttaw also discussed the need for distribution of urea fertilizer at reasonable prices and a method to prevent counterfeit products from entering the market. Myanmar's agricultural industry suffers from a dearth of quality fertilizer, resulting in high prices, chronically low yields and poor quality crops.

Only three of five of Myanmar's major fertilizer are cur-

rently active, said U Ne Htet Win, a representative of Hsin Paung Wei Township, Magway Region.

Dr. Tun Naing, the minister for electricity and energy told the body that on-shore gas wells that supplied fuel to two fertiliser plants had recently become unproductive. "So only three fertiliser factories are running as normal, producing only 7% of the agricultural needs of the whole country", he said. "The remaining demand is being met through imports by private sector."

Daw Thanda, a representative from Einme constituency emphasized that time was of the essence as farmers needed access to fertilizer at reasonable prices as agricultural loans are disbursed. — Kyaw Thu Htet (MNA) ■

Amyotha Hluttaw

National education plan ensuring all nationals' right for education underway

The Ministry of Education is implementing the national education strategic plan (2016-2021) in accordance with national education law to ensure all citizens' right to basic education, higher education, technical education and vocational education, said Union Minister for Education Dr. Myo Thein Gyi in the 2nd Amyotha Hluttaw 5th regular session 11th day meeting.

The formal education will enable lifelong learning, the minister said. The Union Minister was responding to a question by U Aung Kyaw Soe of Kayah State constituency 7 on any plan in existence to implement a bridging education system that is relevant to those who want to study subjects continuously and whether it is included in the education law.

The Union Minister said the extracurricular education and lifelong education department is expanding extracurricular primary and middle school education works. Students who complete these programmes are permitted to attend basic education schools under the Equivalency Programme. Qualified students who have graduated from a regular Associate Government Technical Institute



Speaker of Amyotha Hluttaw Mahn Win Khaing Than. **PHOTO: MNA**

(A.G.T.I.) 3-year diploma courses under the technical and vocational training department are permitted to join their specialised engineering majors in a technological university while students attending government technical science schools and government technical high schools are permitted to change to other schools if there is vacancy and with the permission of the technical science/high school headmaster, said the Union Minister.

If a qualified student who graduated from AGTI while attending a technological university was unable to continue their study for any reason and wants to transfer to a distance university, arrangements are made for them to attend the distance university

with a recommendation letter or the student's letter requesting release from the technological university, added the Union Minister. The Union Minister also said graduates from the University for Development of National Races who did not actually sit for a university matriculation examination are considered as past the university matriculation examination and are permitted to attend the distance university while they work. The Union Minister then answered education sector questions raised by Saw Sha Phon Hwa of Kayah State constituency 12 and U Lal Min Htan of Chin State constituency 10. Hluttaw representatives then debated a motion by Dr. Tin Tin Win of Bago Region constituency

5 to include under the heading of general subject in Myanmar's education college, high schools and middle schools curriculum the "reproductive health", "people's ethic (Pyithu Niti)" and "democracy" for Quality Education, the goal number four of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

Daw Than Than Aye of Magway Region constituency 7, U Kyaw Thaung of Sagaing Region constituency 1, U Kyaw Naing of Yangon Region constituency 12, U Ngun Hay of Chin State constituency 1, U Aung Myo Latt of Mandalay Region constituency 5, U Kyaw Toke of Mandalay Region constituency 7, Daw Hla Htay, also known as Daw Ohn Kyi of Mandalay Region constituency 4, Dr. Khin Ma Gyi of Kachin State constituency 8 and U Okka Min of Taninthayi Region constituency 8 debated the motion.

In yesterday's meeting, new Tatmadaw Amyotha Hluttaw representatives were sworn-in and signed the swearing-in documents and a motion was tabled to confirm the bill to repeal the oversight of people's auditor act was supported by a hluttaw representative and the hluttaw decided on it. — Aung Ye Thwin, Aye Aye Thant (MNA) ■

Water fees in Mandalay to increase 150 percent

WATER fees Mandalay increase to Ks200 from Ks85 per 220 gallons on April 1, according to a report in Myanmar Alin yesterday.

U Kyaw Zaw Aung, member of the Mandalay City Development Committee (MCDC), told the newspaper that the price increase is meant to reduce estimated monthly losses of Ks100 million.

"The cost of water distribution stations in Mandalay was nearly Ks300million and revenue was over Ks100million", said U Kyaw Zaw Aung. "As a result, MCDC was losing over Ks100million per month".

"If we can change, we can save the waste of water", U Kyaw Zaw Aung said. "We waste a lot of money collecting water fees. We only have one bill collector for every thousand properties. We want to change to digital metering but we haven't enough budgets until now. Therefore, we have requested the budgets to the government".

Public notices about the water fee increase have been distributed throughout Mandalay.—Min Htet Aung (Mandalay Sub-Printing House) ■

State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi meets Prime Minister of Canada Mr. Justin Trudeau

Canada pledged US\$ 8.8 million in humanitarian assistance and stability efforts following a meeting on June 7 between Myanmar State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and Canadian Prime Minister Mr. Justin Trudeau.

The two leaders discussed opportunities to expand their bilateral relations including efforts to improve Myanmar's governance, women's and children's well-being, and economic development, including implementation of agricultural technologies.

The pair also discussed Myanmar's national reconciliation and peace process and challenges in Rakhine State.

In the afternoon, the State Counsellor attended a working lunch hosted by the Canadian Minister of Foreign Affairs Ms. Chrystia Freeland in the Canadian parliament building and met separately with Speaker of

the House of Commons (Lower House) Mr. Geoff Regan and Speaker of the Senate (Upper House) Mr. George J. Furey.

At these meetings Canadian officials shared their experiences governing in a federal system, and points of potential cooperation in education, health, agriculture, governance and national reconciliation and peace process in Myanmar.

At local standard time 5 p.m. the State Counsellor met with Myanmar nationals living in Canada at Ottawa Fairmont Chateau Laurier and engaged in a question and answer session.

Present at the meetings were Minister of State for Foreign Affairs U Kyaw Tin, Deputy Minister from the Office of the President U Min Thu, Myanmar ambassador to Canada U Kyaw Myo Htut and high ranking officials.—Myanmar News Agency ■



State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi holds talks with Canada's Prime Minister Justin Trudeau during a meeting in Trudeau's office on Parliament Hill in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, on 7 June. **PHOTO: REUTERS**



Union Minister U Kyaw Tint Swe and wife Daw May Yin Tun are welcomed by Chinese Ambassador Mr. Hong Liang at Sule Shangri-La Hotel to celebrate Paukphaw Friendship Day. **PHOTO: MNA**

Myanmar-China Paukphaw Friendship Day was held in Yangon

UNION MINISTER for Office of the State Counsellor U Kyaw Tint Swe and wife Daw May Yin Tun were welcomed by Chinese Ambassador to Myanmar H.E. Mr. Hong Liang and wife at a ceremony to mark the Myanmar-China Paukphaw Friendship Day which was held in Sule Shangri-La Hotel in Yangon at 6 pm on 8 June.—Myanmar News Agency ■

Security kidnapped by 25 masked men in Maungtaw

A security from shrimp farming was abducted by 25 masked men in Thaluchaung village in Maungtaw Township, Rakhine State, on the evening of 5 June.

While four men including Eibrahin from Ward 2 in Maung-

taw were working a night shift at the shrimp farming in southern Thaluchaung village, 25 masked men abducted Eibrahin by boat along Mingalar Creek at about 9 pm on 5 June.

Another three men includ-

ing Numarkar were beaten and they tied their hands by the masked men group at a hut. And, Numarkar escaped from the scene and reported to Ywak Nyo Taung Police Post on 7 June.—Myanmar News Agency ■

Republic of the Union of Myanmar Office of the President

Press Release 3/2017

A military Y-8-200F transport plane No.5820 carrying 108 military family members and 14 crews and 2.4 tons of cargo left Myeik at 1.06 pm on 7th July 2017 and lost contact 29 minutes after takeoff while flying at 18,000 feet over the Andaman Sea, about 70 kilometers west of the town of Dawei.

After losing contact with the plane, rescue operations have been carried out as from 2 pm with the participation of the naval boats, airplanes for the Air Force, troops and local people. At 8:18 am on 8th June 2017, some debris from the plane, three bodies, two lifejackets and some clothes were found in the sea 14 miles west of Kyaunimaw Village and 22 miles south-west of Launglon and rescue operations are still being carried out.

With regard to this accident of the military transport aircraft, we wish to say to the families, relatives and friends of those who were killed and those who are missing that we are equally saddened with grief.

The rescue operations will continue to be carried out and assistance would be provided to the families of the victims. (Unofficial Translation)

Apology

A correction in yesterday's edition of the Global New Light of Myanmar on a story on a business forum hosted by the Myanmar Investors Development Association. The incorrect information was not the fault of May Thet Hnin. We apologize to May Thet Hnin for the error.—Ed ■

GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

www.globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

ACTING CHIEF EDITORAye Min Soe
ce@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com
dce@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com**EXPATRIATE CONSULTANT EDITOR**Mark Angeles
markrangeles@gmail.com**SENIOR CONSULTANT**

Kyaw Myaing

SENIOR TRANSLATORSKhin Maung Oo
editor2@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com
Khin Maung Win (Chief Proof Reader)
Zaw Min, zawmin.gnln@gmail.com**INTERNATIONAL NEWS EDITOR**Ye Htut Tin
editor1@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com**LOCAL NEWS EDITORS**Tun Tun Naing (Editor)
intlnews@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com
Nwe Nwe Tun (Sub-editor)
nwenwe9131@gmail.com**TRANSLATORS**Khaing Thanda Lwin,
reporter1@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com
Hay Mar Tin Win,
translator@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com
Ei Myat Mon
Zaw Htet Oo
Kyaw Zin Lin
Sandar Soe
Kyaw Zin Tun**REPORTER**Tun Aung Kyaw,
reporter2@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com**PHOTOGRAPHER**

Kyaw Zeya Win @ Phoe Khwar

COMPUTER TEAMTun Zaw (Chief of Computer Team),
Thein Ngwe, Zaw Zaw Aung,
Ye Naing Soe, Nyi Zaw Moe,
Hnin Pwint, Kay Khaing Win,
Sanda Hnin, Zu Zin Hnin**EDITORIAL SECTION**(+95) (01) 8604529,
Fax — (+95) (01) 8604305**CIRCULATION & DISTRIBUTION**San Lwin, (+95) (01) 8604532,
Hotline - 09 974424114**ADVERTISING & MARKETING**(+95) (01) 8604530,
Hotline - 09 974424848
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gnlmdaily@gmail.com

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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.

Gov't, philanthropic foundation donate cash for victims of plane crash

GOVERNMENT and private donors have started donating cash to families of the victims of the military transport plane crash on Wednesday.

Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement presented K36 million to the Ministry of Defence to give K300,000 each to the families of the 122 victims who were on board the military aircraft which went missing off the coast of Taninthayi on Wednesday.

One day after the disaster,

Union Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Dr Win Myat Aye handed over the cash to Union Minister for Defence Lt-Gen Sein Win at the Ministry of Defence yesterday.

Meanwhile, KBZ's Brighter Future Myanmar Foundation presented K50 million to the Yangon Region Commander to deliver to the victims.

Yangon Region Commander Brig-Gen Thet Pon accepted the donation given by Daw Moe Thuzar Kyaw



Yangon Region Commander Brig-Gen Thet Pon accepts K50 million donated by personnel of the KBZ's BFM Foundation. **PHOTO: MNA**

and Daw Kay Khaing Than of the philanthropic foundation, expressing his thanks for giving encouragement to the families of the victims.

Other private donors also

started donation yesterday at the military command.

Total amount of cash donated by wellwishers reached K136 million.—MNA and Thura Lwin (Eco) ■

Ceasefire negotiations to be held in Chiang Mai

Delegations involved in negotiations over the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement are scheduled to attend a meeting in Chiang Mai on 10 June. Chief negotiators will include U Aung Soe Oo of the Peace Commission, U Hla Maung Shwe and Dr. Min Zaw Oo of the Peace

Commission advisory team, and members of the delegation for Political Negotiation formed under the United Nationalities Federal Council (UNFC).

The talks in Chiang Mai will precede a UNFC congress planned for the third week of June.— Ye Khaung Nyunt ■



The 4th meeting between the Union Peace Commission and DPN held in Yangon on 3 March. **PHOTO: MNA**

Volunteers to clean downtown Yangon on 11 June

YANGON city, civil society groups, volunteer organizations and individuals will take part in a downtown garbage clean-up on 11 June, according to U Zaw Win Naing, assis-

tant head of the environmental conservation and cleaning department under the Yangon City Development Committee.

The event will begin at 4 p.m. in front of Yangon City

Hall. Participants will be organized into six groups to clean different areas in downtown. For more details call 09-480021003, 09-795356367 by 10 June.— 200 ■

MPU users increase five times in five years

MPU payment card users increased fivefold during the period since 2012, according to a report in the Voice newspaper yesterday.

The article quoted U Zaw Linn Htut, CEO of MPU, who said that there are currently three million MPU users in Myanmar. MPU offers debit and credit cards for payments and automatic teller withdrawals. U Zaw Linn Htut said that MPU officials are attempting to expand use of the cards by promoting their use at local shopping centers, according to an MPU organization.

MPU started in 2012 and has partnerships with 16 local banks, according to an official from Central Bank of Myanmar.

MPU and competing mobile payment systems have increased in Myanmar since the roll out of new telecommunications infrastructure in 2012, but deficiencies in the system still cause frequent connection failures and errors.— Kyaw Kyaw ■

Amphetamine tablets seized in Mandalay

AN anti-narcotic squad from southern Mandalay seized 20,000 Amphetamine tablets, Ks 54,500 and a phone handset from Zaw Nyi Nyi Soe's bag on Taunggyi-Meiktila road on 7 June. Acting on a tip-off, the police searched a passenger-vehicle near Yinmabin village in Thazi Township.

Likewise, Mandalay Police force searched Jazz place KTV restaurant at the corner of 65th street and Theikpan



Zaw Nyi Nyi Soe with Amphetamine tablets. **PHOTO: MPF**

street in Chanmyathazi Township on 6 June. The police detained Aung Ko Ko Hein in possession of 3,600 Amphetamine tablets, a phone handset and a motor-

cycle.

Police filed charges against them under the Anti-narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law.—Myanmar Police Force ■

Fuel tank trailers import increases

Increasing numbers of fuel tankers are entering Myanmar as industrial capacity and vehicle use expands, according to a Wednesday report in Myawady Daily newspaper.

A significant number of fuel tankers are coming in from China through the Muse border in Shan State.

About eight tanker companies dominate the local market, according to the Myawady report. The prevailing price of a fully loaded tanker is Ks40 million, an importer told the newspaper.—200 ■

Exports increase with agriculture accounting for 31 percent of total

EXPORTS increased USD\$270 million so far this fiscal year, compared to the same period during the previous year, according to the Commerce Ministry.

Exports as of 26 May were valued at \$1.7 billion, of that total agricultural exports accounted for \$520 million or 31 per cent of all exports so far this fiscal year. Agricultural products comprise Myanmar's leading export after finished industrial goods, which were valued at US\$675 million this fiscal year.

Exports by sea were estimated to be worth \$386 million. Meanwhile land port shipments were \$117 million less than that of last fiscal year.

Myanmar's main export items comprise natural gas, garment products, rice, mung bean, minerals, green grams, various fish, crude oil, corn and pigeon peas.

Nearly 400,000 tonnes of rice worth \$118 million were exported to 30 nations this fiscal year. About 8,000 tonnes of crude oil shipped from Myanmar in the last two months, comprising a \$23 million increase compared to the same period last fiscal year.

And corn exports were worth \$22 million more than that of last fiscal year during the same period.—Htet Myat ■

Gold prices in Myanmar rise as global prices rise

By May Thet Hnin

Gold prices have increased in Myanmar since 6 June, in line with global market prices, according to gold industry officials interviewed yesterday.

Thai baht gold bars, typically upwards of 96% or 23 carats pure, reached their highest value this year in Myanmar trading at Ks913,000 per tical (.578 ounce), while 15 carat gold reached Ks 859,300 per tical.

The rising price of gold has less to do with Myanmar's economic conditions than with global turmoil including terrorist attacks in Europe, simmering conflicts between Qatar, Iran and their Gulf neighbors and perceptions American policy moves under U.S. President

Donald Trump, Myanmar gold industry experts said.

"The domestic gold prices have increased because the global gold price has risen", said U Kyaw Win, the general secretary of the Yangon branch of the Gold Entrepreneurs Association. "I think people just invested money in the gold business because of unstable

global economic and political situations. Therefore, the global gold price has also increased. But most people in Myanmar do not buy Thai gold bar because of taxes".

The Myanmar government recently imposed a tax on Thai baht gold. U Kyaw Win said that 15 carat gold is selling at normSal volume. ■



A file photo of Sin Minn Cement Industry Co. Ltd.

Domestic cement production reduces imports this FY

New foreign competitors in the domestic cement industry have reduced demand this fiscal year for more expensive cement imports into Myanmar, according to a report on Wednesday in Myawady Daily newspaper.

Import volume of cement in the past two months declined

60 per cent compared to the same period last year, said U Khin Maung Lwin, the assistant secretary of the Commerce Ministry.

The cement import from 1 April to end of May was estimated at US\$16.420 million, a decrease of \$26.617 from the

same period last year.

Locally produced cement is about Ks2,000 cheaper a bag than imported cement.

Cement is produced in different grades depending on its use – for example, higher grade cement has higher density and can be used for load

bearing construction. Lower grade cement is used for interior building elements with less exposure to the elements. Cement grades are supposed to be marked on the cement bag so that the developers can select which type is appropriate for a project. —200 ■

IKBZ Insurance wins International Quality Summit Award

Spain-based Business Initiative Directions (BID), which annually observes and rates the quality of firms worldwide, presented the International Quality Summit Award for 2017 to International Kanbawza Insurance (IKBZ Insurance), it is learnt. The awards ceremony was held at the Marriott Marquis Hotel in New York, U.S. on 29 May with Vice Chairman U Nyo Myint and Chief Financial Officer U Nay Myo Aung accepting the award.

KBZ Group of Companies

won the International Star Award for Quality (Gold Category) in 2015, the World Quality Commitment Award (Platinum Category) in 2016 and has now been awarded the International Quality Summit Award (Diamond Category) for sustained excellence. BID called KBZ a "role model for management".

In 2015 and 2016, IKBZ Insurance won the awards for best health insurance and best general insurance presented by World Finance. —Thuya Lwin (Eco) ■



Chief Financial Officer of KBZ U Nay Myo Aung accepts the International Quality Summit Award 2017 in New York. PHOTO: SUPPLIED

The Myanmar-EU Economic Forum held its opening ceremony at the Kempinski Hotel in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. Vice President U Myint Swe delivered the opening speech.

Present at the meeting were Deputy Speaker of Amyotha Hluttaw U Aye Thar Aung, Union Ministers Lt-Gen Kyaw Swe, Dr. Aung Thu, U Ohn Win, U Khin Maung Cho, Dr. Than Myint, U Win Khaing, Chief Minister of Bago Region, Deputy Ministers, the Deputy Attorney General, Hluttaw Representatives, Heads of Departments, the EU Ambassador to Myanmar and his delegation, representatives of EU Chambers of Commerce, business experts and invited guests.

Vice President U Myint Swe said the purpose of the ceremony was to boost trade relations and investment with the European Union, therefore he expected new ideas to come up for discussion at the forum.

He said Myanmar urgently needed foreign investment and technical assistance in developing a business model to enter the global market. He said investors willing to make responsible investments were important in the development of a nation's economy and the government was mak-



Vice President U Myint Swe shakes hands with EU Ambassador to Myanmar Mr. Roland Kobia at the opening ceremony of Myanmar-EU Economic Forum held in Nav Pvi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

ing firm decisions in attracting investment. He also said peace and stability were important for improving the trade and investment sector, especially in a country like Myanmar. He said this is why it was crucial to engage in peace talks with both armed and unarmed ethnic groups and establish a federal democratic union. Participants of the 2nd Union Peace Conference- 21st

Century Panglong managed to agree on 37 points which would help in the country's path to peace and development.

The Vice President said investment was needed to acquire capital and create job opportunities, which was why the government was working hard for microbusinesses to thrive.

The Myanmar Investment Law was enacted in October 2016

to create a working environment for investors. The law grants some levels of protection to investors and includes mechanisms for reporting inconveniences. He said Myanmar was a country with many investment opportunities and was in a geographically advantageous location for trade, between developing ASEAN countries and two powerful nations.

He also said investment in

Myanmar consisted mainly of oil and natural gas, electric power, news and communications, commodity production and real estate. The aforementioned sectors have further investment potential but there were still many areas for potential investment.

The Vice President said investment from the European Union was greatly welcomed and that they were hoping for technical and professional assistance to also arrive in Myanmar.

Afterwards, EU Ambassador to Myanmar Mr. Roland Kobia, Mr. Arnaldo Abruzzini, CEO of the Association of European Chambers of Commerce and Industry (EUROCHAMBRES) and Mr. David Levrat, Chairman of EuroCham Myanmar each delivered welcoming remarks and closed the opening ceremony. The Vice President and all the other participants then took a documentary photo together.

After the opening ceremony, the main part of the forum began. Discussions were made on EU nations' investment in Myanmar's economy, implementing corporate social responsibility, the electricity and energy sector, the logistics sector, construction sector and health sector. —Myanmar News Agency ■

THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

"Sunday Special"
အကျဉ်း (၁) မှတ်တိုင်
ပေါင်းသတ်



တနင်္ဂနွေနေ့တိုင်း "Sunday Special" အကျဉ်း (၁) မှတ်တိုင်ပါဝင်သော
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marketing@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

Philippines says Islamist fighters on back foot in besieged city

MARAWI CITY, (Philippines) — The Islamist militants holed up in the southern Philippines town of Marawi have been reduced to a “small resistance” after troops crippled their logistics and some fighters have fled from the battle, military officials said on Thursday.

“In a few more days it could be over,” armed forces Chief of Staff General Eduardo Año told ANC television on the 17th day of a siege by hundreds of militants who have sworn allegiance to the ultra-radical Islamic State group.

The battle for Marawi City has raised concern that Islamic State, on a back foot in Syria and Iraq, is building a regional base on the Philippine island of Mindanao that could pose a threat to neighbouring Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore too.

Officials have said that, among the several hundred militants who seized the town on 23 May, there were about 40 foreigners from Indonesia and Malaysia but also fighters from India, Saudi Arabia, Morocco and Chechnya.

The seizure of the town suggested to many that pro-Is-



Philippines Defence Secretary Delfin Lorenzana (C) inspects a high-powered firearm seized from various hideouts of Islamist militants during their visit at a military camp in Marawi city, Philippines, on 8 June 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

lamic State factions wanted to establish it as a Southeast Asian “wilayat” — or governorate — for Islamic State, a fear reinforced by video footage the military found last week showing the fighters

plotting to seal the town off completely.

Major General Carlito Galvez, head of military command in the region, said government troops had entered three neigh-

bourhoods from which the militants had pulled back after two weeks of defence that relied heavily on snipers.

“We saw food, IEDs, mobility assets. Considering we have par-

alysed logistics capability, we are looking at the possibility that the end will be near,” he told a news conference in Marawi, referring to improvised explosive devices, or bombs.

With their ability to fight “degraded”, some of the militants have fled, military spokesman Restituto Padilla said in a radio interview, adding that nine had surrendered and were providing “good intelligence”.

The government has said several times that it is close to retaking the town from the Maute group. A relatively new rebel faction, it joined forces with Isnilon Hapilon, who was last year proclaimed by Islamic State as its “emir” of Southeast Asia.

But the fighters prepared for a long siege, stockpiling arms and food in tunnels, basements, mosques and madrasas, or Islamic religious schools, military officials say. The Philippines is largely Christian, but Marawi City is overwhelmingly Muslim.

The military said 138 militants had been killed, and the death tolls for security personnel and civilians stood at 39 and 20, respectively.—Reuters ■

THAAD deployment in South Korea to be delayed for environmental assessment

SEOUL — The deployment of the Terminal High Altitude Area Defence (THAAD) in South Korea was expected to be delayed as President Moon Jae-in ordered a legitimate environmental evaluation over the US missile shield installation.

An unnamed South Korean Defence Ministry official was quoted by Yonhap news agency as saying Wednesday that though the massive assessment of an environmental effect would be conducted, the expected evaluation period of a year or so would be shortened significantly.

Yonhap reported that the comments indicated the completion of the evaluation by the end of this year.

However, the official said the assessment would require the hearings for residents living near the THAAD installation site, which would take several months. President Moon on Monday ordered a probe into who tried to avoid the “green audit” of the THAAD deploy-



Photo taken on 27 April 2017 shows protesters hold banners and shout slogans during a demonstration against the Terminal High Altitude Area Defence (THAAD) in Seoul, South Korea. PHOTO: XINHUA

ment site, or a golf course at Soseong-ri village in Seongju county, North Gyeongsang province. South Koreans had held candlelit rallies to protest against THAAD since the deployment decision was made last July. Moon instructed officials to carry out the legitimate assessment of environmental effect, saying priority should be placed on the procedural legitimacy for the THAAD deployment.

According to the presiden-

tial Blue House, its preliminary investigation results showed the Defence Ministry offered 328,799 square meters of the golf course to the US Forces Korea (USFK) in the first stage of land provision.

The total land of the golf course is about 700,000 square meters. The remaining land was scheduled to be given to the USFK in the second stage after completing the green audit.

—Xinhua ■

Five workers exposed to radioactive material at Japan nuclear research facility

TOKYO — Five workers at a nuclear research facility in east Japan were exposed to radioactive material on Tuesday after a bag that contained it burst, the plant’s state-run operator said.

Japan Atomic Energy Agency (JAEA) said in a statement the incident occurred during a check on radioactive storage inside a “controlled” room at the facility in Oarai, with no radioactive material leaking outside.

Shunichi Tanaka, the chairman of the regulator Nuclear Regulation Authority, in a weekly news conference on Wednesday criticised JAEA for not being more careful and said the level of exposure within the room where the accident happened was “high”.

Up to 22,000 becquerels of radioactive materials were detected in the lungs of one of the workers, JAEA said. That could potentially expose him to levels of radiation many times higher than most people over the com-

ing decades.

A JAEA spokesman who declined to be named said the material in that worker’s lungs was plutonium, marking the highest such measurement for plutonium from any atomic accident in the country.

Another company spokesman said measurements of radioactive materials between 2,200 becquerels and 14,000 becquerels were detected in the other four workers. He said some of this may have come from plutonium.

“The workers had no (immediate) irregularities in their health, but we cannot deny the possibility of any health impact in the future,” he said. The workers were wearing coveralls, caps, gloves and half-masks.

Japan’s nuclear industry has been in tatters in the wake of the Fukushima disaster in 2011, with parts of the public deeply sceptical about the safety of atomic energy.—Reuters ■

Threatening By Fear

Khin Maung Oo

The actual situation of both different communities in Maungtaung in Rakhine State (North) can be said to have been overwhelmed by the feeling of fear under atrocious killings and threatening. Due to the gang-like murders of terrorists, 33 innocent people were killed during a 7-month period and 19 others still missing on account of abduction.

Those who fall prey to murder and abduction were people who answered the questions during interviews conducted by news media-men without concealing anything, informants and

helpers to the Tatmadaw and the Police Force and so on. They are innocent ones who want to live in peace, avoiding any conflicts. They belong to the same community in race and religion, but it can be said that they happened to be the scapegoats of intentional homicide. The extremists and terrorists live together with fellow locals with the subversive ideas, sabotaging plans to build peace and stability in the area, cessation of conflicts and establishing rule of law in the country, being implemented by the State. They are trying to shape a society according to their own vision to reach their aims, driving society by threatening with fear.

Very recently, news about terrorists saving arms and ammunitions, conducting training for armed attacks in big dwelling abodes in May Yu ranges and nearby villages and recruitment of people to attend the terrorist attack trainings indicated that more armed attacks are going to be imminent in the near future. Armed attacks and gang-like attacks which took places in Rakhine State were masterminded by an organization based in a country of the Middle East and it was said in a research paper of the International Crisis Group in Brussels of Belgium, in which it was described in Arabic language that Harakah al Yaqin, a terrorist

group aimed at controlling Maungtaung and disconnecting it from Buthidaung and building a military base based on May Yu Ranges, controlling north of Buthidaung after building defensive positions and thenceforth controlling Myanmar-Bangladesh border area after conquering some areas of Yathedaung, the main target.

Efforts of the Union government to establish rule of law and build peace and stability in Maungtaung region, northern Rakhine and to ensure that the two communities can co-exist peacefully is none other than shouldering the national responsibilities for national security and perpetuation of sovereignty. ■

Fullmoon Day of Nayone: Maha Samaya Sutta Day

Maha Saddhamma Jotika Dhaja,
Sithu Dr. Khin Maung Nyunt

EARTH, the planet upon which all livings flora and fauna live is composed of four basic elements viz earth [ပုပ္ဖိ], heat energy [တေဇော], water [အာဘော] and air [ဝါယော]. Man, most rational being, has made many material progresses and prosperities—from Stone Age to Nuclear and Space Age of today. But, in spite of these progresses and prosperities, he is still left behind in his quest for peace, due to his inability to control his inner enemies—greed [Loba], temper or anger [Dosa], and ignorance [Moha]. Though all other living creatures know how to consume the four basic elements of our planet, Earth, Man, the most rational of all beings is still in ignorance of using the four elements sustainably. He thinks that these four elements are boundless. And when he knows that these four elements are not inexhaustive, he could not control his three inner enemies, Loba, Dosa and Moha, he refuses to utilize the four elements sustainably.

Right now, today, we face armed conflicts in our journey for long lasting peace. Recently we have the bad news of the G.7 Group Summit meeting—that new U.S. President Mr. Donald Trump decided to quit the World Climate Agreement which his predecessor Mr. Obama had signed. Grave concerns of world leaders as well as the U N O Secretary-General swept across the world today while the havoc wrought by the worsening sening climate conditions in the form of Cyclones, Tsunami, Landslides, Sand storms and wild fire and occurring almost every day and every hour and everywhere. Unless timely action is taken, the earth will be

destroyed.

Then, why we human beings are so reluctant to take preventive actions?

These current situations of our time reflect similar situations of over two thousand years ago when Lord Gotama Buddha gave his easiest solution to the similar situations of his life time.

India is not merely a big country but a sub-continent with land masses, aquatic bodies, mountain and hill ranges long maritime coastlines, with bountiful resources and fertile population of different ethnic origins. The entire icy Himalayan ranges are the main source fertile soil and water the elixir of life. But natural calamities do visit India throughout its long history.

In the life time of Lord Gotama Buddha there arose a serious water dispute between the two kingdoms—Kapilavatthu and Koliya of the same Sakya race. These two kingdoms by turn watered their agricultural lands by controlling the flow of the channel with a single dam into which fresh water of the River Rohani was stored. But when drought visited or in the hottest months of summer, water in the dam, diminished, causing crops wither. Farmers of both kingdoms held dialogue to discuss that water problem. But each side claimed to use dam water for its own cultivation without paying heed to the other side. Dialogue grew into heated debate using abusive languages and insulting each other's clan and king. When the matter was reported to their respective kings, animosity went out of control and war was declared. The two sides came out to the banks of the River Rohani, with full armed forces to fight to monopolize the total amount of the River Rohani for its own interest.

At that time Lord Gotama Buddha

was residing in the Jetavana Vihara [monastery] in Savatthi. He foresaw that his Kinsmen of the two kingdoms would fight a bloody battle for water. Unless he intervened and preached Dhamma of Peace and unity, all his kinsman of the two kingdoms would be destroyed—on the battle field.

In the evening, Lord Buddha came alone to the scene of hostilities. Appearing cross legged in the sky above the warring sides to cause them marvel and contrition, the two sides were frightened by that strange phenomenon. They wondered why Lord Gotama came and behaved that way in the sky. They laid down their arms and asked Lord Buddha why he came there.

The Buddha descended from the sky and calmly sat on the sand bank of the river. He began asking questions to both warring sides.

“What is the real cause of your strife?”

Both sides answered, “Water of this River Rohani”.

“What is the value of water of the River Rohani?”

Both sides answered “It is just a small amount. What is the value of our Earth?”

Both sides answered “It is unlimited”.

Then for some water of this Rohani channel which is of small value, why do you wish to destroy the priceless royal race of Khattiya by waging war upon each other. No pleasure and no benefit in worthless conflicts and wasteful strifes”. The Buddha reasoned to them.

Next, the Buddha expounded the endless enmity arising from a minor cause by narrating the jatakas stories of past lives. First Phandana jataka which taught the lesson of mutual destruction

due to endless enmity and hostilities.

The Buddha exhorted both sides to behave like the waters of the two Rivers the Ganges and the Jumna [Yamona] which harmoniously mixing together with loving kindness.

“Therefore, strife only for unity. Every Buddha has praised the value of unity. He who delights in harmonious living, established in the ten modes of good conduct is bound to achieve nothing less than the happiness of Nibbana, the end of all attachments, yogas, which yoke on to re-birth”.

After hearing that exhortation and dhamma teaching both sides laid down their arms and buried their hatchets for good. They were amicably re-conciled and re-united.

Upon their request, the Buddha went on to narrate more Jataka stories such as Duddubha Jataka, Latukika Jataka, to give lesson on the benefit of harmony and unity and Rukkha Dhamma Jataka to give lesson for the peaceful settlement of dispute and the end of strife.

Both sides realized that because of the Buddha's dhamma lessons they were spared mutual destructions. So each side made over to the Buddha 250 princes whom the Buddha ordained monks. The total 500 monks followed the Buddha who returned to Mahavana Forest for retreat. But the five hundred monks were not happy because of their attachment to their families. Therefore the Buddha invited them to the Lake Kundala in the Himalayan Forest and discoursed on Kundala Jataka. Whereupon all 500 monks became sotapan. The Buddha urged them to practice kamathana dhamma [meditation]. The 500 monks attained arahathood.

SEE PAGE-9

State Counsellor meets Deputy Speaker of the House of Commons of Canada

State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi met with Chairman of the Canada-Myanmar Parliamentary Friendship Group, and Deputy Speaker of the House of Commons of Canada Mr. Bruce Stanton in Ottawa yesterday.

Also present at the meeting were Minister of State for Foreign Affairs U Kyaw Tin, Myanmar Ambassador to Canada U Kyaw Myo Htut and high ranking officials.—Myanmar News Agency ■



The State Counsellor meets with Geoff Regan, Speaker of the House of Commons, at the Parliament Building in Ottawa, Canada. **PHOTO: MNA**



State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi meets with George J. Furey, Speaker of the Canadian Senate, at the Parliament Building in Ottawa, Canada. **PHOTO: MNA**

31 bodies found from missing plane, survivors ‘unlikely’

FROM PAGE-1

“My father said he bought a mobile phone for me. My mom bought a bag for my school,” Yuzana, who uses one name, told Reuters by telephone.

Scores of rescue workers in the fishing village of Sanlan, about 600 km (372 miles) from Yangon, braved stormy weather to carry ashore the dead, wrapped in plastic, from a military ship.

Many bodies had fragmented into several pieces and no victim wearing a life jacket has yet been recovered, said Hla Thein, one of those directly involved in the rescue.

Twenty-nine of the bodies have been sent to the military hospital in Dawei for forensic examination.

More than a dozen relatives of those on board the aircraft gathered at a crisis centre in an army base in the southern coastal town of Myeik, some weeping, pictures released by the military showed.

Nine navy ships, five military planes and two helicopters will keep up the search for survivors for a second day, assisted by civilian boats, the military said.

Families of the Tatmadaw (Army, Navy and Air Force) specifically requested that people not post photos of the dead bodies on social media as they are graphic and upsetting, said a statement released by the Office of the Commander-in-Chief.

The Chinese-made Y-8-200F transport plane lost contact 29 minutes after takeoff while flying at 18,000 feet (5,485 metres) over the Andaman Sea, about 43 miles (70 km) west of the town of Dawei, the military said.

An aircraft wheel, two life jackets and some bags with clothes - believed to be from the missing plane - were found earlier.

Some patches of oil were spotted some 16 nautical miles (18 miles) from Dawei, the military said.



A rescue team carrying one of the discovered bodies from the plane that crashed on 6 June. **PHOTO: MNA**

The cause of the incident has yet to be confirmed.

Survivors are “very unlikely” more than 24 hours after the plane lost contact, despite warm sea temperatures in the area, said Charitha Pattiaratchi, a coastal oceanography expert at the University of Western Australia.

Myanmar authorities might soon change their focus from rescue to salvage, aiming to collect debris and investigate the cause of the accident, he added.

The plane was carrying 122 passengers, 108 of those soldiers and their family members, including 14 crew members. Among the 108 were 15 children, 58 adults and 35 soldiers.

The military said the plane was operated by “seasoned pilot” Lieutenant Colonel Nyein Chan with 3,162 flying hours, two co-pilots and a flight engineer.

All military personnel on board are low- to mid-ranking officers, a passenger list released by the military shows.

It is the rainy season in Myanmar, but a civil aviation official said the weather had been “normal” with good visibility when the plane took off.

Commander-in-Chief (Air Force) General Khin Aung Myint and senior military officers met with the relatives of the victims of the plane crash at a local airbase in Myeik yesterday and consoled and presented cash assistance provided by the families of the Tatmadaw to them.

Since Wednesday, government and private donors have donated money to the families of the victims. The aircraft, bought in March 2016, had a total of 809 flying hours. It was carrying 2.4 tonnes of supplies, the military said.

Nicknamed the “air camel” in Chinese, the multi-purpose aircraft was approved for production in 1980 and is still being produced by Shaanxi Aircraft Corporation, a unit of state-owned Aviation Industry Corp of China. The four-engine turboprop is used in developing countries, including China and Sudan.

If all 122 on board were killed, the incident could be the deadliest involving the Chinese model, said Chen Xiao, an editor at Beijing-based Aerospace Knowledge magazine.

Aircraft accidents, involving both civilian and military planes, are not uncommon in Myanmar.

A military helicopter crashed last June in central Myanmar, killing three military personnel on board. Five military were killed in February last year when an air force aircraft crashed in the capital, Naypyitaw, media reported.

“Whether it’s military or commercial aviation, it requires a major overhaul in terms of infrastructure, fleet, training, technology and equipment,” said Shukor Yusof, an aviation expert and founder of Malaysia-based consultancy Endau Analytics. —Reuters/Wa Lone, Yimou Lee, Aye Win Myint ■

Fullmoon Day of Nayone...

FROM PAGE 8

Hearing the happy tidings of the peaceful settlement of water dispute between the two kingdoms and the attainment of arahathood by 500 Sotapan monks of both kingdoms, all celestial beings of all Universes, Devas and Brahmas came to assemble in front of the Buddha

on the auspicious Fullmoon Day of Nayone. They unanimously requested the Buddha to deliver his sermon on the emancipation from samsara — the endless cycle of births and rebirths, cravings, sufferings, defilements, anger, greed and ignorance.

So the Buddha discoursed

on Maha Samaya Sutta. After hearing and understanding it, countless number of celestial beings became arahat.

The Buddha’s dhamma was peace, loving kindness, and compassion. It effectiveness were so profound and so far reaching that all hitherto traditional enemies like dragons and garudas, Sakka Deva and Asuya Deva, Tiger, Lions,

elephants etc. became friends and lived peacefully and happily ever after.

Only once in the life time of each Buddha that Maha Samaya Sutta was discoursed for unity, reconciliation, peace and harmony.

The relevance of Maha Samaya Sutta to our time need not be over emphasized. Right now, in our country the 21st

century Panglong Conference for National Reconciliations for ever lasting Peace is an ongoing top priority process which at the latest round has reached 37 Points of agreements. Rays of hope are being shed. Let’s get all the benefits of Harmony and Unity which Maha Samaya Sutta the Buddha delivered on the Fullmoon Day of Nayon gives. ■

May's bid for stronger Brexit hand at stake in election

LONDON — British Prime Minister Theresa May faces the voters on Thursday in an election she called to strengthen her hand in looming Brexit talks, with her personal authority at stake after a campaign that saw her lead in opinion polls contract.

Voting began at 0600 GMT amid tight security nationwide after two Islamist attacks killed 30 people in Manchester and London in less than two weeks, thrusting the issue of how to counter violent extremism to the top of the agenda in the closing stages of the campaign.

A final flurry of opinion polls gave May's Conservatives a lead ranging between five and 12 percentage points over the main opposition Labour Party, suggesting she would increase her majority — but not win the landslide foreseen when she called the election seven weeks ago. The polls supported the British pound, which held firm at \$1.2957, near its highest levels in two weeks. The pound gained as much as 4 per cent after May called a snap election seven weeks ago, as polls had initially suggested a landslide win for her Conservative party.

Yet traders are cautious giv-



Policemen are seen outside a polling station in London, Britain, on 8 June 2017. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

en the Brexit shock last year and the fact that her once-commanding lead over the Labour Party and its veteran hard-left leader Jeremy Corbyn has been narrowing through the campaign period. Voting ends at 2100 GMT. There will be an exit poll as soon as voting finishes. The first handful of seat results are expected to be announced by 2300 GMT,

with the vast majority of the 650 constituencies due to announce results between 0200 GMT and 0500 GMT on Friday morning.

Both main parties were on the defensive after Saturday's van and knife attack in the heart of London. May faced questions over cuts in the number of police officers during her six years as interior minister and

Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn drew criticism for, among other things, voting against some counter-terrorism legislation. British police investigating the London attacks said they had arrested three more suspects late on Wednesday as footage of the dramatic moment officers shot dead the assailants appeared online.—Reuters ■

EU seeks to expedite police requests for data from tech firms

BRUSSELS — The European Union wants to make it easier for law enforcement authorities to get electronic evidence directly from tech companies, such as Facebook Inc (FB.O) and Alphabet Inc's (GOOGL.O) Google, even when stored in another European country.

In the wake of the deadly Islamist-inspired attacks in Europe over the past two years, tech companies have come under increased pressure to do more to help police investigations, and law enforcement officials have bemoaned the slow process required to access data stored in the cloud in other EU member states.

The European Commission will present three options to EU ministers which will form the basis of a future legislative pro-

posal, including the possibility for police to copy data directly from the cloud, EU Justice Commissioner Vera Jourova told Reuters on Wednesday.

"I am sure that now in the shadow of the recent terrorist attacks and increasing threats in Europe there will be more understanding among the ministers, even among those who come from countries where there has not been a terrorist attack," she said.

EU justice ministers meet in Brussels on Thursday and will discuss the Commission's options. Based on their preferences, the EU executive will then come forward with a proposal by the end of the year or early 2018, Jourova said.

The least intrusive option involves allowing law enforce-

ment authorities in one member state to ask an IT provider in another member state to turn over electronic evidence, without having to ask that member state first.

The second option would see the companies obliged to turn over data if requested by law enforcement authorities in other member countries.

As an example, police in Italy seeking electronic evidence stored in Ireland would currently have to ask the Irish authorities to retrieve the evidence for them, a process critics say is slow and cumbersome.

However, many in the tech community have voiced concern about allowing governments to force companies to turn over data stored in another country, fearing it could erode custom-

ers' privacy and make them less likely to use cloud services if they thought the data could be seized.

Microsoft Corp (MSFT.O) fought and won a high-profile battle in the United States against the Department of Justice's request that it turn over emails stored on a server in Ireland.

The Commission weighed in for Microsoft in that case, saying data held by companies in the EU should not be directly accessed by foreign authorities outside formal channels of cooperation. The most intrusive option being considered by the EU could be envisaged in situations where authorities do not know the location of the server hosting the data or there is a risk of the data being lost, Jourova said.—Reuters ■

WORLD BRIEFS

Iran minister calls Trump's condolences for attacks 'repugnant'

TEHRAN — Iran's foreign minister on Thursday rejected Donald Trump's condolences for deadly attacks in Tehran, calling the US president's words repugnant.

Trump had said he prayed for the victims of Wednesday's attacks that were claimed by Islamic State, but added that "states that sponsor terrorism risk falling victim to the evil they promote." Mohammad Javad Zarif wrote on his Twitter account: "Repugnant White House statement Iranian people reject such US claims of friendship." Suicide bombers and gunmen attacked the Iranian parliament and Ayatollah Khomeini's mausoleum in Tehran, killing at least 13 people in an unprecedented assault that Iran's Revolutionary Guards blamed on regional rival Saudi Arabia.—Reuters ■

Explosive device thrown into US embassy compound in Kiev

KIEV — A device exploded in the US embassy compound in Ukraine's capital Kiev in the early hours of Thursday, injuring no one, police said.

An attacker threw the device over the embassy's fence just after midnight, police added, calling it a terrorist act.—Reuters ■

BRICS media forum ends with action plan

BEIJING — The BRICS Media Forum concluded Thursday after leaders of 27 organisations agreed on an action plan to promote media cooperation.

The forum, themed "Deepening BRICS Media Cooperation, Promoting Fair and Just International Public Opinion," was proposed by Xinhua News Agency and jointly initiated with Brazil's CMA Group, Russia's Sputnik News Agency and Radio, the Hindu Group of India, and South Africa's Independent Media. The action plan noted that the content, depth and breadth of BRICS media cooperation should be expanded and deepened in accordance to the needs of BRICS nations.—Xinhua ■

UN warns of increasing civilian deaths in battle for Iraqi city of Mosul

GENEVA — Children trying to flee western Mosul have been shot dead by Islamic State militants, the UN human rights office said on Thursday, saying it had reports of a “significant escalation” in civilian deaths in the battle for the Iraqi city.

It also said it was investigating reports that 50-80 people had died in an air strike on the Zanjili district of Mosul on 31 May. It did not say who carried out the strike.

The killing of fleeing civilians by Islamic State militants occurred in the al-Shifa neighbourhood on 26 May, 1 June and 3 June, it said.

“Credible reports indicate that more than 231 civilians attempting to flee western Mosul have been killed since 26 May, including at least 204 over three days last week alone,” the U.N.

human rights office said in a statement.

“Shooting children as they try to run to safety with their families – there are no words of condemnation strong enough for such despicable acts,” the statement quoted UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra’ad Al Hussein as saying.

Iraqi government forces retook eastern Mosul in January and began a push on May 27 to capture the remaining Islamic State-held enclave in the western side of the city, where about 200,000 people are trapped in harrowing conditions.

Last week Iraqi police said at least seven civilians had been killed by Islamic State mortar shells in the Zanjili area of western Mosul.

But a young man told Reuters he had been wounded when



A man carries his child as he runs to a safer place near an Iraqi soldier standing guard in Mosul’s al-Zanjili’s district, Iraq, on 7 June, 2017. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

an air strike hit a group of 200-250 civilians collecting water because an Islamic State fighter was hiding among them.

The UN statement said the deaths in Zanjili were reportedly caused by one of several recent air strikes that had inflicted civil-

ian casualties and it was seeking further information about those attacks, without elaborating.

“The murder of civilians, as well as the intentional directing of an attack against civilians who are not directly taking part in hostilities, are war crimes,” it

said.

Islamic State’s self-declared “caliphate” is in retreat across Iraq and Syria. U.S.-backed Syrian forces this week launched an operation to capture Raqqa, Islamic State’s de facto capital in Syria.—Reuters ■

Syrian government warplanes strike Islamic State near Raqqa city

DAMASCUS — Syrian government warplanes struck Islamic State positions west of Raqqa city on the southern bank of the Euphrates river on Thursday, state media said.

“The air force destroyed positions and armoured vehicles” in the western Raqqa countryside, about 70 km (44 miles) from the city, state-run news agency SANA said.

US-backed militias have separately been pushing into the edges of Raqqa city in the first days of their attack to seize Islamic State’s base of operations in Syria.

The Syrian Democratic Forces, an alliance of Kurdish and Arab fighters, launched an assault this week to take the northern city. The SDF has been closing in for months with the help of air strikes and special forces from the US-led coalition.

Islamic State militants have made enemies of all sides in the six-year Syrian conflict, losing territory to several separate

military campaigns over the past year.

The Syrian army has made gains against Islamic State in the east of Aleppo province, bringing them to the provincial border with Raqqa which is largely under SDF control. The Russian-backed Syrian army and allied militias then crossed into Raqqa province this week from neighbouring Aleppo.

The strikes on Thursday targeted areas near the provincial border, along a highway linking Raqqa to Aleppo and close to the Tabqa area the SDF captured from Islamic State in May.

The Syrian government described the Kurdish-led war against Islamic State as “legitimate” last month. Damascus also said its military priorities were Islamic State-held Deir al-Zor and the Badia region at the border with Jordan and Iraq, suggesting it does not intend to challenge the Raqqa campaign underway.—Reuters ■

Norway Supreme Court will not examine mass murderer Breivik’s human rights appeal

OSLO — The Norwegian Supreme Court will not take up the appeal lodged by Norwegian mass murderer Anders Behring Breivik protesting his prison conditions, the court said on Thursday.

Breivik was seeking to overturn a March decision by a Norwegian appeals court that ruled his near-isolation in a three-room cell respected human rights.

“The Supreme Court’s

appeal commission has unanimously decided on 8 June, 2017 to not further consider Anders Behring Breivik’s appeal in the case Breivik has brought against the state,” the court said in an emailed statement.

“No part of Breivik’s appeal has the possibility of winning in front of the Supreme Court,” it added.

“Neither does the case raise questions about the interpretation of the European Con-

vention on Human Rights that have not already been clarified extensively by the European Court of Human Rights.”

Breivik’s lawyer was not immediately available for comment, his office said.

It was not immediately clear whether Breivik would appeal to the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg, but his lawyer has said in the past that it was an option.—Reuters ■

Colombia’s FARC rebels have handed over 30 per cent of weapons

BOGOTA — Colombia’s Marxist FARC rebel group said on Wednesday it has handed in 30 per cent of its weaponry to the United Nations, part of a peace deal signed with the government last year to end more than 52 years of war.

The government of President Juan Manuel Santos and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) guerrillas recently extended

the deadline for the arms hand-over, after logistical delays slowed the arrival of some of the group’s 7,000 fighters to special demobilization zones.

“Thirty per cent of our arms are in the hands of the United Nations,” FARC leader Rodrigo Londono, known by his nom de guerre Timochenko, said on Twitter. “This is the effective start of our farewell to arms.”

Another 30 per cent of weaponry will be handed in on 14 June and the remaining 40 percent on 20 June, the expiry date of the hand-over extension with the government, the FARC said.

Under the accord, rejected in a public referendum but pushed through by congress, the FARC will become a political party and most fighters will receive amnesty.—Reuters ■

Ex-FBI chief Comey tells US senators Trump pressured him on Russia probe

WASHINGTON — Former FBI Director James Comey said on Wednesday that US President Donald Trump asked him to drop an investigation of former national security adviser Michael Flynn as part of a probe into Russia's alleged meddling in the 2016 presidential election.

In written testimony released the day before he appears before the Senate Intelligence Committee, Comey said Trump told him at a meeting in the White House in February: "I hope you can see your way clear to letting this go, to letting Flynn go."

The testimony puts more pressure on Trump, a Republican, whose presidency has been overshadowed by allegations that Moscow helped him win last year's election.

Some legal experts said Comey's testimony could strengthen any impeachment case built on obstruction of justice, but US markets shrugged



From left to right: Acting FBI Director Andrew McCabe; Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein, Director of National Intelligence Daniel Coats and National Security Agency Director Michael Rogers arrive to testify before a Senate Intelligence Committee hearing on Capitol Hill in Washington, DC, US, on 7 June 2017. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

off the news from the testimony for lack of any major disclosures.

To build a criminal obstruction of justice case, federal law

requires prosecutors to show that a person acted with "corrupt" intent. It does not matter whether the person succeeds in

impeding an investigation.

While a sitting president is very unlikely to face criminal prosecution, obstruction of

justice could form the basis for impeachment.

Comey said he had told Trump on three occasions he was not being investigated, confirming an earlier account from the president.

Trump, who spent part of Wednesday in Ohio talking about the need to fix the nation's crumbling infrastructure, ignored reporters' shouted questions about Comey. On returning to the Oval Office, Trump went into a meeting with top advisers, including chief of staff Reince Priebus.

Later, his outside counsel released a statement saying Trump felt "completely and totally vindicated" by Comey's account.

"The president is pleased that Mr. Comey has finally publicly confirmed his private reports that the president was not under investigation in any Russian probe," Marc Kasowitz, Trump's attorney, said in a statement.—Reuters ■

Nepal bans Polish climber over illegal Everest traverse

KATHMANDU — A Polish man has been banned from climbing any mountain in Nepal for 10 years after he made a rare traverse of Mount Everest last month without the correct permit, a Nepali official said on Thursday.

Janusz Adam Adamski, 49, from Szczecin, Poland, climbed the world's highest peak on May 21 from the Chinese route and descended on the Nepali side of the mountain that straddles their border.

Adamski had a Chinese permit but did not have permission to descend the mountain from the Nepali side, a government official said.

"He will not be allowed to climb any mountain peak in Nepal for 10 years under our mountaineering rules," said Kamal Parajuli, a Nepali tourism official.

He said Adamski told officials he chose the Nepali route for his descent because he was



Light illuminates Mount Everest, during the in Solukhumbu District also known as the Everest region, in this picture taken in 2015. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

running short of oxygen bottles and hoped to find help on the Nepali side, where there were many climbers at the time.

Reuters could not reach Adamski for comment.

Nepal will likely deport the climber for entering the country without visa, immigration official Mohan G.C. said.

Hundreds of foreign climbers attempt Himalayan peaks in Nepal every year, but it is rare for climbers to do so without

permission.

Nepal charges \$11,000 for an Everest permit.

South African Ryan Sean Davy, 43, was banned from the Nepal Himalayas for 10 years in May after he was caught hiding in a cave while trying to climb the 8,850-metre (29,035 feet) peak without a permit.

An Indian couple was banned last year for digitally altering photographs to prove that they had reached the summit.—Reuters ■

US might expand laptop ban to 71 airports — Homeland Security

WASHINGTON — The US government might expand a ban on larger electronics like laptops in airplane cabins to flights originating from dozens of airports in Europe, the Middle East and Africa, the head of Homeland Security said on Wednesday, though an expansion could be avoided if countries agree to improved security procedures.

The US restrictions imposed in March currently cover about 350 flights a week originating from 10 airports, primarily in the Middle East. Extending the ban to all European airports that directly serve US airports would affect nearly 400 flights a day and cover 30 million travellers and pose major logistical challenges, airlines and security officials say.

"We are looking right now at an additional 71 airports," Secretary of Homeland Security John Kelly told a House of Representatives panel. "We're also

looking at ways that we think we can mitigate the threat" without expanding the ban.

Kelly said his deputy will attend a conference in Malta next week "to present what we think are the minimum increased security standards ... and present those to people to say if you meet these standards we will not ban large electronics."

The restrictions on laptops announced in March, including on flights originating from airports in the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Turkey, came amid fears that a concealed bomb could be installed in electronic devices taken aboard aircraft.

Britain quickly followed suit with restrictions on a slightly different set of routes.

Kelly said many countries are working to not be added to the ban list by improving screening to "detect this very sophisticated device."—Reuters ■



Vice President Mike Pence delivers remarks during an event where NASA introduced 12 new astronaut candidates, front row (L-R) Warren Hoburg, Bob Hines, Matthew Dominick, Raji Chari, Zena Cardman, Kayla Barron; back row, (L-R) Jessica Watkins, Frank Rubio, Loral O' Hara, Jasmin Moghbeli, Robb Kulin and Jonny Kim at NASA's Johnson Space Centre in Houston, Texas, US, on 7 June 2017. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

Mars rover scientist, SpaceX engineer join NASA astronaut corps

CAPE CANAVERAL, (Fla.) — NASA named 12 astronauts on Wednesday to the US space agency's first new class of space fliers in five years, chosen from a record 18,300 applicants, for a new era of space travel.

US Vice President Mike Pence welcomed the five women and seven men, aged 28 to 42, during their introduction at the US National Aeronautics and Space Administration's Johnson Space Center in Houston.

Pence said the White House planned to form a council to advise President Donald Trump on space

policy and strategy, re-launching a body that has been inactive for more than 25 years. Trump is "firmly committed to NASA's noble mission — leading America in space," Pence said, noting that only 338 Americans have served as NASA astronauts. The trainees include a scientist working with the Mars robotic rover Curiosity, a SpaceX engineer, a Massachusetts Institute of Technology professor and an Army surgeon. NASA is developing a heavy-lift rocket and Orion capsule for travel to the moon and eventually Mars. It is also working with Elon Musk's Space

Exploration Technologies, or SpaceX, and Boeing Co to develop commercial space taxis that can ferry crews to and from the International Space Station, a \$100 billion research lab that flies about 240 miles (400 km) above Earth.

"Hopefully one day I'll get to fly on a vehicle that has components I've actually designed," said Robb Kulin, 33, a doctor of engineering and Fulbright Fellow who is joining the astronaut corps from SpaceX in Hawthorne, California. Since the shuttle programme ended in 2011, NASA has been dependent on Russia for rides to the

station, a 15-nation project.

Jessica Watkins, 28, a post-doctoral fellow at the California Institute of Technology, joins the class after serving on the science team operating the car-sized Curiosity rover which has been exploring Gale Crater on Mars since August 2012. "We intend to send her to Mars one day," said acting NASA Administrator Robert Lightfoot.

The astronauts have two years of training before they are eligible for flight assignments. They are scheduled to report for duty at the Johnson Space Centre in August. —Reuters ■

100-yen shop operator Can Do aims for huge expansion in Thailand

BANGKOK — Japanese 100-yen shop operator Can Do Co., buoyed by unexpectedly strong demand in Thailand for fast service and unique products, aims to aggressively expand the number of outlets from the current seven to as many as 100 in 2020.

After only two years of operations in Thailand,

Can Do is taking steps to achieve the ambitious target in the Southeast Asian market where the number of 100-yen shops is expected to grow 5 to 10 per cent this year alone, says Arak Suksawat, managing director of East Coast Furnitech PCL, the sole franchisee of Can Do shops in Thailand.

"Once we are ready to start franchising, the number of Can Do shops will dramatically increase to achieve our goal," Arak told NNA in a recent interview.

ECF is prepared to open a flagship store as soon as possible to become a role model for franchise administration. It reck-

ons that it will own 35 to 40 outlets of the 100 Can Do stores and the rest will open through franchisees.

"The Thai market is quite independent and growing very fast," Arak said. "The numbers of brands and stores are rising quickly because of the growing population and economy." —Kyodo News ■

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

MV EVER ALLY VOY. NO ()

Consignees of cargo carried on MV EVER ALLY VOY. NO () are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 9.6.2017 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of H.P.T where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT

MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY

AGENT FOR: M/S EVERGREEN SHIPPING LINE

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

MV SINAR BITUNG VOY. NO ()

Consignees of cargo carried on MV SINAR BITUNG VOY. NO () are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 9.6.2017 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of AWPT where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT

MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY

AGENT FOR: M/S SAMUDERA SHIPPING LINE

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

MV X-PRESS YAMUNA VOY. NO (014)

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT

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AGENT FOR: M/S MCC TRANSPORT (S'PORE)

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Story of US Marine Megan Leavey comes to movie theaters

LOS ANGELES — The true story of US Marine Megan Leavey and her military combat dog Rex arrives in North American movie theaters on Friday.

“Megan Leavey” follows the pair as they meet, work together in a bomb detection unit in Iraq and Afghanistan, and are later reunited on US soil where she is struggling to adapt to life as a civilian.

Film maker Gabriela Cowperthwaite returns to the director’s chair four years after her documentary “Blackfish” helped change attitudes about killer whales in captivity and led SeaWorld to end its killer whale entertainment shows and breeding programme.

“I do think that animals are

this entry point to being able to have empathy and feel things and I think we’re at our best when we have that empathy,” Cowperthwaite said.

“If this is just one more way you can open up the compassion side of yourself, then I will feel happy,” she told Reuters.

Kate Mara, who plays the title role, said she felt a responsibility to portray realistically the journey that wartime soldiers go through and what happens to them when they return home.

“How do you deal with your loved ones and just regular people and regular life on a daily basis?” she told Reuters. “It was a challenge and we wanted to do everything in our power to get that right.”—Reuters ■



Film subject Megan Leavey (C) arrives with cast members Kate Mara (L) and Edie Falco for the premiere of the film ‘Megan Leavey’ in New York, US, on 5 June 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

Tight security in Paris as Ariana Grande resumes Europe tour



Ariana Grande (L) and Miley Cyrus perform during the One Love Manchester benefit concert for the victims of the Manchester Arena terror attack at Emirates Old Trafford, Greater Manchester, in Britain on 4 June, 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

PARIS — French fans of Ariana Grande flooded to a Paris concert hall on Wednesday as the US pop star resumed her European tour following a suicide bombing at the end of her show in the English city of Manchester that killed 22 people. There was a heavy police presence outside Paris’ AccorHotels Arena, with roads surrounding the venue blocked off to traffic hours before the event started. Security staff searched all bags and police with sniffer dogs patrolled the venue.

Paris police said security measures were at their highest level following the attacks in Manchester on 22 May and in central London on 3 June that killed a total of 30 people.

Grande, 23, suspended her tour after the bombing at Manchester Arena. But she returned

to the city on Sunday for an all-star benefit concert for victims that raised some \$3 million and helped turn the former Nickelodeon child star into a national hero.

“She began touring again quite soon after the attacks and she really did a lot of things for Manchester. She raised lots of money for the families, she went to see the affected young girls. I admire her a lot for what she does,” 16-year old French fan Azlitz Roult told Reuters Television. Some teens on Wednesday admitted they were nervous about going to Grande’s concert after the attacks.

“The excitement sort of replaces the fear, but it’s true that there is a part of me that is still a bit scared,” said Edith, a 16-year-old Parisian fan.—Reuters ■

I always wanted to be an actress: Oprah Winfrey

LOS ANGELES — Talk show host and media mogul Oprah Winfrey said it was always her dream to become an actress.

The 63-year-old TV personality said it was the best moment when she got to play Sofia Johnson in the 1985 film “The Color Purple”, based on the book of the same name, reported Variety.

“You know, I always wanted to be an actress. I never wanted anything more in my life than I wanted to be in ‘The Color Purple’, and have never allowed myself to want anything as much again,” said Winfrey.

She said she had told everyone around that she would do anything to bag a role in the movie directed by Steven Spiel-

berg. “The first time I read that book, I went and got eight more copies for everybody else I knew to read that book. This is before I even had the idea for a book club.

“I told everyone in the world, ‘I want to be in that movie. I’ll carry water for Steven Spielberg. I’ll hold a script. I’ll do anything’,” said Winfrey.—PTI ■

Take a vacation? Not me, says action star Tom Cruise

LOS ANGELES — Don’t tell Tom Cruise to slow down - the action movie star says making movies is better than taking a vacation.

Cruise, 54, known for doing most of his own stunts, is back on screen this week in adventure “The Mummy,” the latest reboot of the ancient Egyptian-inspired horror film series first seen in 1932. In September, Cruise will be out promoting “American Made, a crime thriller about a drug runner in the 1980s. “Mission: Impossible 6” is also filming and Cruise is in pre-production on a long-awaited sequel to the 1986 fighter pilot movie “Top Gun” that made him an international star. “I just love movies period and I love to entertain an audience. And I give it everything that I possibly can and I never take anything for granted,” Cruise said at Tuesday’s New York red carpet premiere for “The Mummy.” “Some people say, don’t you want a va-



Actor Tom Cruise arrives for the premiere of the film ‘The Mummy’ in New York, US, on 6 June 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

cation? It’s like for me making films is a vacation because I love doing it,” he said.

The new, stunt-packed “The Mummy,” opening worldwide this week, tells the tale of an ancient princess who is awakened from her crypt and unleashes malevolence on the modern world. “We pay homage to all (the other movies), but really its

roots stem from that 1932 film in terms of classic composition and somewhat of the tone. “The film does have a tremendous amount of adventure but it has great scares also. It has some humor in it and romance. But definitely, in all of these monsters were going to pay our respects to the original monster films,” Cruise said.—Reuters ■

Archaeologists discover Aztec ball court in heart of Mexico City

MEXICO CITY — The remains of a major Aztec temple and a ceremonial ball court have been discovered in downtown Mexico City, shedding new light on the sacred spaces of the metropolis that Spanish conquerors overran five centuries ago, archaeologists said on Wednesday.

The discoveries were made on a nondescript side street just behind the city's colonial-era Roman Catholic cathedral off the main Zocalo plaza on the grounds of a 1950s-era hotel. The underground excavations reveal a section of what was the foundation of a massive, circular-shaped temple dedicated to the Aztec wind god Ehecatl and a smaller part of a ritual ball court, confirming accounts of the first Spanish chroniclers to visit the Aztec imperial capital, Tenochtitlan.

“Due to finds like these, we can show actual locations, the positioning and dimensions of each one of the structures first de-



Raul Barrera, an archaeologist from the National Institute of Anthropology and History (INAH) speaks to the media about new Aztec discoveries including the main temple of the wind god Ehecatl, a major deity, as well as an adjacent ritual ball court, located just off the Zocalo plaza in the heart of downtown Mexico City, Mexico, on 7 June 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

scribed in the chronicles,” said Diego Prieto, head of Mexico’s main anthropology and history institute.

Archaeologists also detailed a grisly offering of 32 severed male neck vertebrae discovered in a pile just off the court.

“It was an offering associated with the ball game, just off the stairway,” said archaeologist Raul Barrera. “The vertebrae, or necks, surely came from victims who were sacrificed or decapitated.”

Some of the original

white stucco remains visible on parts of the temple, built during the 1486-1502 reign of Aztec Emperor Ahuizotl, predecessor of Moctezuma, who conquistador Hernan Cortes toppled during the Spanish conquest of Mexico.

Early Spanish accounts relate how a young Moctezuma played against an elderly allied king on the court and lost, which was taken as sign that the Aztec Empire’s days were numbered.

The building would

have stood out because of its round shape among the several dozen other square temples that dominated the Aztecs’ most sacred ceremonial space before the 1521 conquest.

Aztec archaeologist Eduardo Matos said the top of the temple was likely built to resemble a coiled snake, with priests entering through a doorway made to look like a serpent’s nose.

Once excavations finish, a museum will be built on the site, rubbing shoulders with modern buildings in the capital.

Mexico City, including its many colonial-era structures with their own protections, was built above the razed ruins of the Aztec capital, and more discoveries are likely, Matos said.

“We’ve been working this area for nearly 40 years, and there’s always construction of some kind ... and so we take advantage of that and get involved,” he said.—Reuters ■

Farmer en suite, Swiss ‘zero-star’ hotel moves beds to great outdoors

GONTEN, (Switzerland) — An overnight stay in a double bed “suite” in a field costs 295 Swiss francs (\$306), but you do get a drink on arrival, breakfast and the services of a “modern butler” — typically a local farmer in rubber boots.

He or she escorts guests to the site, provides weather reports and deliv-

ers local jokes through a broken-down TV set.

Welcome to the “zero star” hotel, a conceptual art project that lets guests bed down in the wide open spaces with unobstructed views of Switzerland’s majestic landscape.

Created by twin brothers Frank and Patrik Riklin and partner Daniel Char-

bonnier, the project aims to explode traditional approaches to hospitality in the wealthy country known for its luxurious top-star mountain and lakeside resorts.

“Our artistic perspective is to go in the other direction. There is freedom in the zero to define luxury anew,” Frank Rik-

lin said of the minimalist project that opens on Friday in the rolling hills of the Appenzell region near Sankt Gallen.

An outhouse bathroom is a three-minute walk away at a nearby Alpine hut that serves as a backup in case of bad weather, which wiped out 37 of the 60 available nights outdoors last year.

Previous versions of the installation have featured beds in a nuclear bunker and at an elevation of 1,600 meters (5,250 feet) in the mountainous Grisons region.

This year’s offering is nearly sold out after more than 1,300 requests for reservations from people as far afield as the United States,

Australia, Iraq and Africa.

While art lovers vie for a night under the stars, Riklin said traditional Swiss hoteliers are not great fans of the project that stands normal customs on their head.

“We are very consciously mixing up the system to create a new reality,” he said.—Reuters ■

Myanmar International

Programme Schedule

(9-6-2017 07:00am ~ 10-6-2017 07:00am) MST

07:03	Am	News
07:25	Am	Myanmar's Traditions and Culture "A stir about of Rainbows"
07:49	Am	A Pretty Custom of Kandyawady Asia Vut A @ Rice Pounding Competition
08:03	Am	News
08:26	Am	Those Who Never Give Up (Ep-6) In Pursuit of a dream
09:03	Am	News
09:26	Am	Buddha Image Built Of Bamboo Strip
09:39	Am	Sons of the lake
10:03	Am	News
10:26	Am	Simple Living With High Spirit
10:38	Am	Myanmar Childhood Games (Episode-I)

10:47 Am Shop Shop Shop - Bogyoke Market

(11:00 Am ~ 03:00 Pm)-Thursday 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	New
07:26	Pm	A Day In Bagan
07:47	Pm	A Star for Great Achievement
08:03	Pm	New
08:26	Pm	Myanmar National Poet And Literary Icon; Prolific Writer of Poems & Prose - Min Thu Wun (Ep-1) In Memory of Him & His Childhood
08:51	Pm	Myanmar Masterclass: ARTIST SOE HNIN AUNG

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

Street artists bring colour to Israeli and Jordanian streets

LONDON — With large murals of black cats and colourful gurning faces, a group of traveling international artists are bringing a splash of colorful street art to towns in Israel and Jordan.

The eye-catching works, including large portraits and spying eyes, are produced under the banner of the international POW! WOW! event, a week-long culture festival which aims to “contribute, share culture and beautify communities with art.”.

Having produced pieces at the Dead Sea and Petra in Jordan, the small group of artists, from Hawaii, Tel Aviv and Los Angeles, traveled to the southern Israeli city of Arad, a town in the Negev desert not often touched by street art. “I came to the artist quarter in Arad to paint some walls, to give some colours and beauty to the place and to the people,” Tel Aviv street artist Dioz said on Wednesday as he finished his piece of the large faces.—Reuters ■



PHOTO: PHOE THAW ZIN

Myanmar Futsal PU team to compete in 2017 AFF Futsal Championship

Pyay United (PU) team will get a chance to enter the 2017 ASEAN Football Federation (AFF) Futsal Championship after winning first place in Myanmar Futsal Federation Championship on 7 June.

The Championship Competition will be held between 3 July to 9 July and it is the first opportunity for the PU team to enter the game.

PU team falls in the same group with Port team of Thailand, Shah United team of Brunei and Parmata team of Indonesia in the competition.

The former Myanmar's Futsal Champion MIC (Myanmar Imperial College) team won two times consecutive championships in the previous years but MIC missed the chance to

enter the AFF Futsal Championship this year. PU team will face difficulty as the team will fall in same group with former AFF Futsal Champion Thailand Port team.

PU team will compete with Shah team on 3 July, Port team on 4 July and Parmata team on 5 July respectively.—Nyi Myat Thawda ■

Australia edge Saudi Arabia in vital step toward Russia

ADELAIDE, (Australia) — Australia's hopes of a fourth successive World Cup appearance remain in their own hands after a nerve-jangling 3-2 win over Saudi Arabia in their qualifier in Adelaide on Thursday.

A stunning left-foot strike from attacking midfielder Tom Rogic in the 64th minute proved the difference after the teams were locked 2-2 at the break in front of a parochial crowd at Adelaide Oval.

The Socceroos stay third in Asia's group B with two games remaining but join the second-placed Saudis and leading Japan, who have a game in hand, on 16 points.

The top two teams qualify automatically for Russia, with the third placed side going into a playoff. Forward Tomi Juric scored a first half brace but the Green Falcons showed courage to equalise twice through goals from Salem Al Dawsari and Mo-



Australia's team celebrates after their first goal during World Cup 2018 Qualifiers at Adelaide Oval, Adelaide, Australia, on 8 June 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

ammed Al Sahlawi. Australia coach Ange Postecoglou was relieved after his side escaped with the win after a poor first half laden with defensive errors. "Obviously the three points were important when you look at how tight the group is," he said.

"What we want to do now is go to Japan and knock them off.

"If we do that we don't have to worry about goal difference or points." Australia travel to Japan in August before closing their campaign at home to lowly Thailand.—Reuters ■

Myanmar National Team vs. Singapore's Albirex Niigata today

The Myanmar National Team will play against Singapore's Albirex Niigata team at the Jurong East Sports Centre in Singapore at 6:00pm today.

Myanmar national team has been training since 4 June in Singapore to compete in the games with Macau and also played a game with Singapore team and resulted in 1-1 draw on 6 June.

In former games, Myanmar national team used old players, but younger players

will be used in this match.

Singapore club Albirex Niigata is a two-year consecutive winner of the Singapore League that was made up of Japanese players and had no loss in Singapore League this season.

The entrance fees for the match will be free and it is one of the chances for Myanmar to encourage their national team.

Myanmar National team will leave for Macau to compete the selection match on 11 July—Ye Yint Shine ■

Messi agrees new deal with Barca

MADRID — Reports in Spain say that FC Barcelona striker Leo Messi has agreed to a new contract which will keep him at the Camp Nou stadium until he is 34 years old.

Spanish radio station Cadena Ser reported in the early hours of Wednesday morning that the Argentinean striker has agreed a three-year deal which will see him stay with Barcelona until the summer of 2021.

Messi's current contract expires at the end of June 2018 and negotiations over the new contract have dragged on for several months, raising fears than he could be tempted away by a big-money offer from another club. Those fears now appear to be ended, but at a cost as it is reported that the

striker's new contract will see his earnings increase to 30 million euros a year after tax, while his buyout clause will rise from 250 million euros to 400 million euros, making it impossible for any other club to consider buying him.

The new contract will not be signed until the start of July, however, for accounting reasons which would place the cost of the deal in the accounts of the 2017-18 season, rather than in the campaign which recently finished. The 2016-17 season saw Messi end as the top scorer in Spain with 37 goals in the Liga Santander, five in the Kings Cup and 11 in the Champions League, despite Barca only reaching the quarter-final stage of the competition. —Xinhua ■

City sign keeper Ederson from Benfica

LONDON — Manchester City have signed Brazilian goalkeeper Ederson from Portuguese club Benfica, the Premier League team said on Thursday.

City did not release details of the transfer fee but media reports have placed the value of the deal at 34.7 million pound, which would be a British record fee for a goalkeeper.

Ederson will become the

Blues' fourth Brazilian alongside midfielders Fernandinho and Fernando and exciting striker Gabriel Jesus. City manager Pep Guardiola signed goalkeeper Claudio Bravo from Barcelona last August but the Spaniard's form was patchy. Bravo's back-up and challenger for the keeper spot, Willy Caballero was released by City. —Reuters ■