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Ayeyawady Delta's Satsan Chaung Bridge brings hope for development and will also serve as a cyclone shelter

The Satsan Chaung Bridge being built over the Satsan River that flows through Bogalay Township, Ayeyawady Region, is 70 per cent complete and expected to be finished this year. Construction of the bridge started a year after Cyclone Nargis hit the region in 2008. Upon completion, the bridge would shorten the distance between Bogalay and other areas in the delta area, which relies on the waterway for transportation and would also be used for a cyclone shelter. **ZAW GYI (PANITA) & PE ZAW**



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The sun is region's energy future, says Thai solar pioneer

By Thin Lei Win,
Thomson Reuters Foundation

BANGKOK — The woman who blazed the trail for solar energy in Thailand and hopes to do the same for Myanmar and the rest of South-East Asia endured a lot of failure before ultimately succeeding.

When Wandee Khunchorn-yakong Juljarern was looking

Wandee is particularly keen to venture into Myanmar, where millions of people lack access to electricity, but says it is difficult without a concrete national policy on renewable energy.

for loans to build a solar farm in 2009, bank after bank rejected her.

They cited her lack of experience in running commercial

solar projects, even though she had spent years installing off-grid systems across Thailand. Her new project was a first for the country and too risky, they

said. Back then in her early 50s, they also told her she was too old.

"The more people say, 'You should not try it, you should not take a risk,' the more I want to do it," Wandee said in an interview. Her goal was to prove Thailand could use solar energy, so that "we can change the form of energy production, instead of relying on only conventional means".

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သဒ္ဓါထက်သန် မြန်မာအားမာန် ကမ္ဘောဇဘဏ်

Pyithu Hluttaw

National health insurance debated in Pyithu Hluttaw

A motion urging the government to set-up a national health insurance system to implement universal health coverage was approved by the hluttaw in a Pyithu Hluttaw meeting held yesterday.

Union Minister for Health and Sports Dr. Myint Htwe said to the hluttaw that arrangements will be made to implement the national health insurance system as it is not possible for medications, laboratory analysis and x-ray currently provided free of charge in the long run with rising population, occurrence of new diseases and rising cost of medications, treatments and medical equipment.

The Union Minister said developed countries are not providing free medical treatments while this country is providing it to the people. A national health law is required and it is necessary to study health related laws.



Union Minister for Health and Sports Dr. Myint Htwe.

He explained that studies need to be conducted on the entire health system of the country and neighboring countries' systems because without properly thinking the system can grind to a halt part way.

The motion was put forward by Dr. U San Shwe Win of Yekyi constituency and debated by 15



U Oo Tun Maung of Ponnagyun constituency.

hluttaw representatives.

In replying to a question raised by Dr. U Than Aung Soe of Minhla constituency on registration and control of private laboratories and magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) machines, Union Minister Dr. Myint Htwe said private laboratories can operate only with official permission and



Dr. U Than Aung Soe of Minhla constituency.

actions are taken against laboratories operating illegally. Three categories, a basic, ordinary and special private laboratory are permitted and the requirement for these will be announced in 2017. Starting from 2017 January, states and regions private health care management committees will control private laboratories

and issue permit for basic and ordinary private laboratories. Central private health care management committee in Nay Pyi Taw will issue permit for special private laboratories.

The Union Minister said there are 12 MRI machines nationwide and the ministry is purchasing required medicines and machineries inclusive of MRI machines in hospitals according to a yearly priority system.

The Union Minister also responded to questions raised by U Shwe Ko of Kyaukpadaung constituency and U Oo Tun Maung of Ponnagyun constituency on upgrading hospital and appointment of health workers.

In the day's meeting, the hluttaw confirmed a report by citizens fundamental rights commission, submit and read a report on a bill amending the Myanmar divorce act.—Kyaw Thu Htet, Aye Aye Thant (MNA) ■

Amyotha Hluttaw

Prospect of new bank branches in Sagaing Region, Chin State debated in Amyotha Hluttaw Meeting

THE possibility of new bank branches in Sagaing Region and Chin State was one of the issues discussed at yesterday's meetnig of the Amyotha Hluttaw.

U Maung Maung Win, Deputy Minister for Planning and Finance replied to the question raised by U Maung Maung Latt of constituency 9, Sagaing Region as to whether there was an arrangement to open Myanmar Economic Bank (branch) in Khampatt of Tamu district, "Myanmar Economic Bank has been providing banking services in 14 regional and state offices, 76 district (supervision) bank branches, 215 township bank branches, 18 treasury banks, six representative branches including six departments of headquarter, 335 altogether. The main difference between MEB & private banks is that private banks opened banks to give banking services in economically profitable places, whereas MEB has opened the banks even in small towns with bordering areas included, with the risks of losses as governmental offices are situated almost everywhere in the country."

The Deputy Minister add-

ed, "Banks are opened based upon the situations of economy, security, communication, manpower, their locations and premises. Khampatt town is in a convenient position to open a bank branch, but it has only Khampatt police station and a small army office, without sufficient army forces and electric power supply, cable and mobile phones there, hence there is no arrangement to open an MEB (branch) in that town at the present time. In recognition of the submission of the parliamentarian, implementation of opening a bank branch will be made at the time when the area gained improvement in socio-economic and communication sectors."

Afterward, U Maung Maung Win replied to a smiilar question made by U Myo Htatt (a) Salai Myo Htike of constituency 12 in Chin State as to whether there was an arrangement to open a MEB (branch) in Hsamee town in Paletwa township. The minister said the town did not have enough infrastructure or personnel, thus there are no plans to open a bank branch there.

As regards the question made by U Okkar Min of constit-

uency 8, in Taninthayi Region, U Maung Maung Win replied, "In drawing up development projects in respective townships, districts, regions and states, it is necessary to discuss with respective departments and make a cost accounting of the projects.

After that, it must be presented to the township planning and implementation committee meetings. As for the departments which spend the Union Budget Fund, they have been implementing the projects after submitting to Union Government and Pyidaungsu Hluttaw through Region and State Cabinets.

As for the departments which spend Budget Fund of Region and State Cabinets, they have been implementing the projects after submitting to the Region and State Cabinets and Hluttaws. In drawing up regional projects annually, parliamentarians need to take part in discussions. In holding meetings on implementation of township projects, Hluttaw representatives must be invited to the meetings and their advices are to be received.—Thura Zaw (MNA) ■



Director-General Daw Kay Thi Soe of the Strategic Studies and Training Department under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs signs a book of condolence on the passing of Helmut Kohl, former Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany, at the Embassy of Germany in Yangon yesterday. PHOTO: MNA

Correction

A story about the annual report on the Union Supreme Court in yesterday's edition of the Global New Light of Myanmar contained several errors. In the article's third paragraph, the court referred to in the story should be "the Union Supreme Court", not "the high court". In the next paragraph, the person referred to should be Union Chief Justice U Htun Htun Oo, not Union Attorney General U Tun Tun Oo. Similarly, in the caption for the photo accompanying the article, the person referred to should be Union Chief Justice U Htun Htun Oo. The Global New Light of Myanmar apologises for the errors, which were the result of inadequate translation.—Ed

Vice President attends coordination meeting to hold 3rd Asia-Pacific Water Forum

U Henry Van Thio, Vice President and Chairman of the National Water Resources Committee, gave a speech at the coordination meeting to hold the 3rd Asia-Pacific Water Forum which was held in the meeting room of the Presidential Palace yesterday morning in Nay Pyi Taw.

Union Minister for Transport and Communications U Thant Sin Maung, Yangon Mayor U Maung Maung Soe and officials also attended the meeting.

Vice President U Henry Van Thio told the meeting that the subject of Myanmar hosting the 3rd Asia-Pacific Water Forum was discussed and agreed at the Cabinet meeting number 8/2017 of the Union Government. He added that the 3rd Asia-Pacific Water Forum was a water related matter and the National Water Resources Committee and the Yangon Region government together with relevant ministerial departments and organizations would jointly hold the event.

It was important not only to



Vice President U Henry Van Thio delivers a speech at the coordination meeting of the 3rd Asia-Pacific Water Forum in the meeting room of the Presidential Palace yesterday morning in Nay Pyi Taw. **PHOTO: MNA**

hold the 3rd Asia-Pacific Water Forum, but necessary support should also be provided for future works of the National Water Resources Committee in continuing the rain water harvesting, reducing and mitigating flooding and inundation and controlling water pollution, said the Vice President.

He went on to say that in addition to raising the country's

image and stature through holding the event, opportunities to learn from water specialists from around the world on all round management of water resources, reducing and mitigating effects of natural disasters, new techniques and ideas on water resource management and achieving water sufficiency in the region can be obtained and therefore all need to work

jointly to hold the forum successfully.

Secretary of the National Water Resources Committee and Director-General of the Directorate of Water Resources and Improvement of River Systems U Tun Tun Lwin then explained about works done to hold the Asia-Pacific water forum and works needed to be done from the Myanmar side at the first joint

coordinating committee meeting.

Next, meeting attendees discussed by sectors on holding the 3rd Asia-Pacific Water Forum.

Afterwards, Chairman of the National Water Resources Committee Vice President U Henry Van Thio concluded the meeting after giving instructions to coordinate the work of different officials in charge of different sectors.

The Asia-Pacific Water Forum had been held once every six years starting from 2007 with the aim of assisting Heads of States in the region to resolve future challenges faced with regard to water sufficiency, increase international cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region and cooperate with the host country to implement long term development aims. The first forum was held in Japan and the second forum was held in Thailand in 2013.

The 3rd Asia-Pacific Water Forum hosted by Myanmar will be held from 11 to 12 December 2017.—Myanmar News Agency ■

Rights group: no extradition for murder suspect

By Mark Angeles

The human rights organisation Amnesty International has advised the British government to deny the request for extradition of a UK citizen suspected of a 2016 murder in Yangon because there is a chance that the accused will not receive a fair trial.

Recent news reports indicate that the Foreign Office of the UK would be hesitant to extradite Harris Binotti, 26, of Scotland, who is on Interpol's most wanted list for the murder of Gary Ferguson of Northern Ireland, a fellow teacher, in November in downtown Yangon. Mr. Ferguson and Binotti, fellow teachers, had

been out for a night of drinking.

Binotti fled Myanmar and was spotted in Scotland living with his girlfriend and has since gone into hiding. Scotland Police said they could not arrest Binotti because no arrest or extradition order had been received from Myanmar.

Earlier this week, a format request for extradition of Binotti back to Yangon was sent to the UK by Myanmar authorities.

On Monday, Amnesty International said it had concerns over the prospect of Binotti being handed over to face a murder charge in Myanmar in part because Myanmar still has the death penalty on its books. At-

tempts to obtain comment from Amnesty International were unsuccessful.

But a prominent Myanmar attorney and human rights advocate told the media that he believes the UK should actually help bring the man to justice, pointing out that no one has been executed in Myanmar since 1987.

"If the UK respects the sovereignty of Myanmar, they should extradite Binotti because the criminal case happened in the territory of Myanmar", attorney Robert San Aung, a 2015 nominee for the Martin Ennals Award, in recognition of his work as one of Myanmar's leading human rights defenders, told The Times

in London.

An article in a recent edition of The Times quoted a UK government source who said human rights concerns should be taken into account.

"In terms of specific engagement in this case there are wider issues. One potential conclusion would be Mr Binotti facing extradition to a country that has the death penalty and clear human rights concerns", the source told The Times. "We are being very careful that anything we do fully respects our human rights obligations".

The latest revelation in the case has only deepened the anguish of Mr. Ferguson's family.

"We feel sad and are very upset that Amnesty International has in no way ever talked about the suffering that our family and Gary's wife and son are feeling at the moment", said Martin Ferguson, Gary's older brother.

"Gary's son Jeremy has been declined the right to a father and will have to live with this for the rest of his life. We are still imprisoned and Binotti is running free. When will our human rights be respected with the arrest of the suspect? When will Great Britain acknowledge that the pain has gone on for so long, and that a crime committed in Myanmar needs to be tried in Myanmar?" ■

By-election review emphasises successful training and smooth voting process during April poll

The Union Election Commission (UEC) hosted the first day of a two-day public review of its performance during the 1 April 2017 by-election yesterday morning at Kandawgyi Palace Hotel in Yangon.

Despite door-to-door voter outreach, the commission UEC

Chairman U HlaThein said expanding and correcting voter rolls was only partially successful.

The discussion also focused on the UEC's efforts to train electoral candidates and party officials in ethics, and the election law. The chairman said

that those training efforts avoided major problems during the by-election.

Advance voting for Myanmar citizens abroad also worked smoothly with cooperation from Myanmar's various foreign embassies and consulates.

And finally, the chairman

noted that by announcing the vote 180 days in advance, electoral organisations had time to prepare election workers in cooperation with the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance and the Australian Electoral Commission.

In future, the UEC plans to improve the election law, refine its role in organising elections, enhance education programmes for candidates and improve management of electoral bureaucrats.

The seminar will end today.—Myanmar News Agency ■

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Elephants enjoying their time in the water with their mahouts at Hmaw Yaw Gyi elephant camp in Bago Region. **PHOTO: THWE THWE TUN**

Hmaw Yaw Gyi elephants draw thousands of visitors

Over 4,000 local and foreign visitors visited Hmaw Yaw Gyi elephant camp in Kyauktaga Township in Bago Region during the past 10 months.

The new elephant reserve is situated one mile away from Mile Post 105/4 on the Bago Region highway. The ele-

phant-based tourism camp was opened on World Elephants' Day, 12 August 2016.

The elephant park is one of Myanmar's most popular destinations. Bago Region is home to four major elephant reserves including Kyein Ni, Khayu Chaung, Thingan Myaung and

Hmaw Yaw Gyi elephant camps. Among the four elephant camps, the Hmaw Yaw Gyi has been chosen as a tourist destination and opened to spectators.

Hmaw Yaw Gyi is home to 25 elephants. Visitors can also greet and ride some of the elephants. On an average public

holiday, about 90 people visit Hmaw Yaw Gyi. Myanmar nationals pay an entrance fee of Ks1,000 and Ks5,000 for elephant-riding. Foreign tourists are charged Ks20,000 each for entrance fees and elephant riding at the Hmaw Yaw Gyi elephant camp.—GNLM ■

Completion of MraukU aerodrome construction project in Rakhine planned for 2021

Construction of a new aerodrome in Rakhine State is scheduled for completion 2021 with an aim to develop the tourism industry, according to a report in the Myawady Daily yesterday.

The construction of MraukU airfield started on the eastern side of the city along the Sittway-Yangon highway near

Nankyar village in 2015.

The original MraukU airport was located in an ancient archaeological zone. Therefore, the new MraukU airport is being constructed in the area away from the ancient archaeological zone. Currently, the airport's runway path has already been cleared. Upon completion of the

new MraukU airport, the number of local and foreign visitors is expected to increase.

The Ministry of Transport and Communications project will include renovations to Man-aung airport and extensions of Sittway airport's 6,000-foot runway to 7,600 feet, and Kyaukpyu airport 4,620-foot runway to

7,500 feet. The ministry will also repave an 8,000-foot runway in Thandwe airport.

Rakhine State is one of Myanmar's least developed states, but holds promise as a tourist haven due to its long coastline and wilderness areas. Most tourists visit MraukU by airplane.—GNLM ■

Thailand businesses plan for manufacturing technology conference

The Thailand Federations of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (TFCCI) told Myawady Daily yesterday that the body plans to host a manufacturing

technology conference by the end of 2017. Mr. Kitsana Vachekrilas, a TFCCI executive said that the conference will be designed to attract small and me-

dium sized businesses and to promote Thailand's processing and manufacturing technology. Thai businesses are experienced at processing meat, coffee and

other commodities for export, an activity where Myanmar faces challenges. The federated chamber will also invite businesses from 40 other nations.—GNLM ■

The sun is region's energy future, says Thai solar pioneer

FROM PAGE-1

Wandee had retired in 2006 after decades as an entrepreneur running multiple businesses. But when the Thai government announced permits for solar power plants that could feed into the grid, she became the first to secure them.

Financing was a major struggle, however. Finally, the tenth and last bank, Kasikornbank, whose president was an engineer, showed interest.

She needed US\$20 million, but the bank would only fund 60 per cent. So Wandee decided to sell some land and the house she had been building.

"My mum said, 'Do what pleases you.' My husband said, 'Let me think for three days,'" she recalled. Her response was that she would sell it anyway, she said, roaring with laughter.

Her first solar farm opened in April 2010 in Korat, in Thailand's sunny northeast.

Thanks to her efforts to unlock private financing of about \$800 million, by 2014, Wandee's Solar Power Company Group (SPCG) had 36 solar photovoltaic plants with a capacity of 250 megawatts, nearly a fifth of the country's solar production that year.

SPCG is now one of Thai-

land's largest solar firms. Between 2013 and 2016, its revenues more than doubled and its profits more than quadrupled.

As chairman and CEO of the listed company, Wandee has been recognised by the United Nations for her commitment to clean energy, and in 2015 Forbes dubbed her one of Asia's most powerful women.

"We are helping the world by reducing CO2 (emissions) by almost 200,000 tonnes equivalent per year," said Wandee. This amounts to taking more than 40,000 cars off the road, according to the World Bank.

The company is expanding into solar roof systems and plans to invest in other Southeast Asian countries. It is also looking at Japan, having received financial support from Japanese electronics firm Kyocera during its infancy.

Solar is the future for the region, Wandee said, with Thailand leading the charge.

The Thai government's 2015-2036 Power Development Plan aims to increase solar energy production to 6,000 megawatts, and boost the share of renewable energy from 12 percent to 30 percent of final energy consumption.

Wandee is particularly keen to venture into Myanmar, where



Wandee Khunchornyakong Juljareern, chair and CEO of Solar Power Company Group (SPCG) in the monitoring room of her head office in Bangkok on June 15, 2017. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

millions of people lack access to electricity, but says it is difficult without a concrete national policy on renewable energy.

Worldwide, solar power costs have fallen by 90 percent and wind by half since 2009, removing the need to choose between green or cheap, say experts.

Yet many Southeast Asian nations are still looking to build more coal-fired plants. Thailand has put on hold an 800-megawatt coal plant planned in a region known for its pristine beaches following protests, but the power sector here is dominated by fossil fuels.

According to the United Nations, Thailand's greenhouse gas emissions grew by almost 70 percent between 2000 and 2010, although it now has a target to

cut them 20 percent from business-as-usual levels by 2030.

For Wandee, time is of the essence - and solar farms are both quick to set up, taking months rather than years, and clean.

"We are talking about saving our next generation and the future of the planet. Nothing can compare," she said.

After SPCG opened its first solar farm, Wandee was told to wait six months to see how it went before starting a second project.

"I would call Korat almost every hour asking, 'What's happening? You have enough sun? How many kilowatt hours?'" she said, chuckling in the modern building now housing the company in a fashionable part of Bang-

kok, with soothing green walls and images of a lush forest on the glass doors and walls.

Luckily, the project outperformed expectations and within three months, she was looking for more investors.

The International Finance Corporation, the World Bank's private-sector arm, and the multilateral Clean Technology Fund gave early backing. Wandee, who still lives in her old house, wants to continue blazing a trail even though she is nearing 60.

She used to get nervous when talking in public, asking herself what people wanted to know. Now she just focuses on what she's got to say.

"Women... have to have confidence in (themselves)," she said. ■

2,000 old public buses, trucks other transport vehicles decommissioned

More than 2,000 pre-1995 model buses, trucks and cars used for public transit have been retired by the Road Transport Administration Department (RTAD) of Yangon Region, according to a report in yesterday's Myawady Daily newspaper.

Yangon has introduced thousands of new Chinese-made buses to enhance service and reduce traffic congestion. The retirement of older transit vehicles is part of the government's



A file photo shows a pre-1995 model bus from the old bus system in Yangon. **PHOTO: PHOE KHWAH**

ongoing transit reforms. For safety and environmental reasons, buses older than 1995 will be prohibited.

The decommissioning process began in October 2016 with a total of 3,117 buses targeted by the program, according to a

transport registration list sent by Yangon Region Transport Authority to the RTAD.

The decommissioned vehicles include 1,000 Toyota Dyna vehicles, 700 city buses, 300 BM buses, 140 mini-buses and 10 Pick Up Cars.—GNLM ■

Inflation increases in May, especially in ethnic areas

Rakhine State's inflation rate of 12.24 per cent in May 2017 was Myanmar's highest, followed by Kachin State with 8.94 per cent and Shan State with 8.12 per cent, according to the Central Statistical Organization's (CSO) monthly consumer price index (CPI) and inflation rate reports.

Based on a 2012 base and on May's CPI, the annual inflation rate is 5.96 per cent, compared to the April 2017 rate, which is 6.41 per cent.

The CSO, which is under the Ministry of Planning and Finance, conducted the last

Household Income and Expenditure Survey in 82 townships in Nov 2012.

Myanmar's inflation rate is expected to reach 7.9 per cent this fiscal year, according to statistics from the Budget Department. The inflation rate in first five-year plan from FY2011-2012 to FY2015-2016 has increased. Therefore, special efforts are exerted to slash the inflation rate including various fiscal, monetary, trade and foreign currency control policies, mentioned in the Second five-year National Development Plan.—Ko Khant ■

Philippines says Islamist fighters trapped in corner of besieged town

MARAWI CITY, (PHILIPPINES) — Islamist militants holed up in a southern Philippines town have been cornered and their firepower is flagging, the military said on Thursday, as the five-week battle for control of Marawi City raged on.

Despite signs that the insurgents are now on the back foot, Southeast Asian governments are worried that the siege could be just the prelude to further violence as the ultra-radical Islamic State group tries to establish a foothold in their region.

Jolted by the 23 May attack on Marawi, Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines have launched joint patrols to control the movement of militants across their archipelagic region and their foreign ministers gathered in Manila on Thursday for talks.

Malaysia is worried that militants who are flushed out of Marawi City by the fighting may try to cross from the Philippines to its eastern state of Sabah.

"We fear that they may enter the country disguised as illegal immigrants or foreign fisher-



A government soldier guards a city hall compound, as government troops continue their assault against insurgents from the Maute group, who have taken over parts of Marawi City, Philippines, on 22 June 2017. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

men," said Eastern Sabah Security Command (Esscom) chief Wan Abdul Bari Wan Abdul Khalid, according to state news agency Bernama.

It said Esscom had drawn up a "wanted" list that included two militants who spearheaded

the attempt to capture Marawi.

They are Abu Sayyaf group leader Isnilon Hapilon, who was proclaimed by Islamic State last year as its "emir" of Southeast Asia, and Abdullah Maute, whose followers accounted for a large number of the estimated 400-500

fighters who overran part of the town, killing Christians and taking dozens of civilians hostage.

The fighting in Marawi broke out on 23 May. Military spokesman Lieutenant Colonel Jo-Ar Herrera said on Thursday the number of militants holding out in

Marawi had dwindled to "a little over 100".

Lieutenant Colonel Christopher Tampus said: "Their area has been reduced to 1 km square only." Tampus' troops are blocking escape routes across bridges spanning a river to the west of the militants.

"Our forces are coming from the east and the north and we are blocking the three bridges," he said. Tampus told reporters that the militants were still using snipers who were firing from "strategic nests" in schools and mosques, and homemade bombs were hampering the progress of Philippine troops as they advanced house by house.

He said he had seen at least five civilians dressed in black who appeared to have been forced to stand in the street as human shields. According to official estimates late on Wednesday, 369 people have been killed during the month of hostilities, three-quarters of them militants. The number of security forces and civilians killed stood at 67 and 26, respectively. —Reuters ■

24 nominations filed for presidential poll

NEW DELHI — Twenty four persons have filed their nominations for the presidential poll till today, whereas no candidate backed by political parties has filed the papers for the top constitutional post so far.

On the seventh day of nominations today, two persons submitted their papers. Agni Sriramchandran from Dharmapuri and Lalu Prasad Yadav from Saran were the two who filed their nominations.

Out of the 24 persons, 8 nominations were rejected due to want of documents.

According to rules, every candidate who files a nomination for the post must attach a copy of their entry

in the electoral roll of the parliamentary constituency in which the candidate is registered as a voter.

The candidates are also liable to be rejected if they do not have the mandatory signatures of 50 proposers and as many seconders from the list of electors.

Elected members of the Lok Sabha, Rajya Sabha and of state legislative assemblies constitute the electors.

Candidates also have to deposit Rs 15,000 each as security along with their nominations.

The presidential poll is scheduled to be held on July 17 while the counting of votes will take place on 20 July. — PTI ■



Passengers sit in the dark aboard a shinkansen bullet train in Osaka on 21 June 2017, after the services connecting western and southwestern Japan were suspended for a number of hours due to a power outage. Several thousand passengers were stranded by the issue. **PHOTO: KYODO NEWS**

Bullet train services suspended due to power outage

OSAKA — Shinkansen bullet train services connecting western and southwestern Japan were suspended for hours beginning Wednesday evening due to a power outage.

The outage at about 7:55 pm led six outbound train services between Kyoto and Shin-Osaka to be stalled before being restored at around 1 am Thurs-

day. Several thousands of passengers were stranded on the trains. Central Japan Railway Co. and West Japan Railway Co. said there have also been delays in other train operations outside those sections. No injuries have been reported.

The power failure occurred between Kyoto and Shin-Kobe stations on the Tokaido and

Sanyo Shinkansen lines. According to JR Central, workers are trying to fix a disconnected overhead power line on the outbound line in Takatsuki, Osaka Prefecture.

The two railway operators concerned are investigating the extent to which passengers have been affected. —Kyodo News ■

German teen suspected of shooting toy gun at Thai king

BERLIN — German prosecutors said on Wednesday they were investigating a 14-year-old boy suspected of shooting plastic bullets from a toy gun at the King of Thailand who was cycling near Munich this month. The king was not hurt.

The unidentified youth, together with a 13-year-old who is too young to be investigated, is suspected of having fired the gun from a garden or house window at a group of cyclists that included King Maha Vajiralongkorn, a regular visitor to Bavaria, and his entourage.

“A toy pistol, a soft air pistol, was used. First it was fired at a group of cyclists, one of whom was the King of Thailand,” said Thomas Rauscher, prosecutor in the southern town of Landshut. Neither the king nor any of his entourage was hurt.

The palace in Bangkok, when contacted by Reuters on Thursday, said it did not know about the incident.

“We have no details,” said an official at the palace’s news division who declined to be named because of the sensitivity of the matter in Thailand.

Prosecutors said the king’s household said they had no interest in charges being brought in the case.

Reuters was unable to contact the youth, who has not been identified, or representatives for him.



Thailand's King Maha Vajiralongkorn Bodindradebayavarangkun watches the annual Royal Ploughing Ceremony in central Bangkok, Thailand, on 12 May 2017. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

It was not clear who had drawn the incident to the attention of the police. Representatives at the Thai Embassy in Berlin were not available for comment.

Later, more shots were allegedly fired at the king’s car in the small, historic town of Erding, some 35 kilometres (22 miles) from Munich, the prosecutor said.

The 14-year-old is being investigated for attempted grievous bodily harm and it was unclear whether the boys knew who they were shooting at, said

the prosecutor.

His office will decide whether to charge the teenager with a criminal offence. The shooting happened on 10 June at about 11 pm (2100 GMT).

The king ascended the throne in December after the death in October of his father, the revered King Bhumibol Adulyadej, who had reigned for seven decades.

His coronation is likely to take place at the end of the year, a deputy prime minister in Thailand has said. —Reuters ■

Five children born via IVF treatment using injected mitochondria: clinic

TOKYO — Four women have given birth to five children through a new in vitro fertilization treatment in which a mother’s own mitochondria is injected into eggs, a fertility clinic in Osaka said Wednesday, as some experts questioned the effectiveness of the treatment.

The first successful births in Japan using the treatment follow over 250 reported cases with over 30 births in Canada and Europe.

While the treatment is said to be effective in heightening chances of pregnancy, some experts voiced concern as its safety has not been corroborated yet.

According to HORAC Grand Front Osaka Clinic, it treated 21 women with the technique, collecting ovarian mitochondria and injecting them into eggs with sperm. Mitochondria are energy-producing organelles existing in most cells. The mitochondria were collected from 33 women aged between 27 and 46, and fertilized eggs with injected mitochondria were placed in the uterus of 21 of the women. Four of the women gave birth to five children, including a pair of twins, without any problems between February and June.

“Through the injection of mitochondria, the quality of fertilized eggs improved and the pregnancy rate was increased,” said Yoshiharu Morimoto, chairman of the clinic, adding the actual mechanism of improvement was not yet known.

The clinic said it will keep track of the health of the five chil-

dren until they reach the age of five to confirm the safety of the treatment.

“There is no basis to say that this treatment led to the births of the children,” said Osamu Ishihara, a professor of gynecology and obstetrics at Saitama Medical University.

“Abnormalities are often found in the nuclei of older women’s eggs and mitochondria are not thought to improve their quality,” Ishihara said.

The clinic conducted the treatment after gaining approval for clinical research from the Japan Society of Obstetrics and Gynecology in December 2015.

The treatment method was developed by a US company but the US Food and Drug Administration has not approved it.

The price of the treatment is around 1.7 million yen (\$15,300) per person, according to the clinic. Tetsuya Ishii, professor of bioethics at Hokkaido University, was also critical of the treatment at the Osaka clinic.

“The treatment does not stand as a clinical study as we cannot prove the effectiveness of the method due to a lack of comparison with cases in which this kind of treatment was not applied,” Ishii said, adding that the health ministry and the obstetrics society should not have approved such an unproven treatment.

He also questioned why the clinic charged so much when the effectiveness and safety of the treatment has not been confirmed. —Kyodo News ■

China, US kick off inaugural diplomatic, security dialogue

WASHINGTON — China and the United States began their first diplomatic and security dialogue on Wednesday at the US State Department in Washington DC.

Chinese State Councilor Yang Jiechi co-chairs the dialogue with US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson and Secretary of Defense James Mattis.

Fang Fenghui, a member of China’s Central Military Commission (CMC) and chief of the CMC Joint Staff Department, also participated in the dialogue.

Chinese Foreign Ministry

spokesperson Geng Shuang said on Tuesday that China will work with the United States for positive results at the diplomatic and security dialogue. The diplomatic and security dialogue is one of four high-level mechanisms established during the Mar-a-Lago meeting between Chinese President Xi Jinping and US President Donald Trump in Florida in April. The other three are dialogues on economics, on law enforcement and cyber security, and on social, cultural and people-to-people exchanges. —Xinhua ■



Chinese State Councilor Yang Jiechi (1st R) co-chairs a diplomatic and security dialogue with US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson (1st L) and Secretary of Defence James Mattis (2nd L) as Fang Fenghui (2nd R), a member of China’s Central Military Commission (CMC) and chief of the CMC Joint Staff Department, also participates in the dialogue in Washington DC, the United States, on 21 June, 2017. China and the United States began their first diplomatic and security dialogue on Wednesday at the US State Department in Washington D.C. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

Mindfulness Vs losing attention

Khin Maung Oo

Much has been being said about life in our everyday expressions. Among them, one is “Life is a struggle.” As known by all, the one who defeats his or her opponent or adversary has the capacity and energy to win the struggle. We never want our games to end in a draw. Instead, we vie to win the championship or trophy. A student tries his best to gain a high score and if possible distinctions, as does an employee to be promoted. The employer of course wishes to possess as much material wealth as possible. Here, we need to assess why a winner gets success. Admittedly, every individual has an

aspiration to gain a certain position in life or to reach the pinnacle of success. To realize their hopes or desires, they need to keep their attention securely fixed on their goal. The moment they stray from their goal, as soon as they lose their mindfulness and lose sight of their destination, their enthusiasm will lessen before they know it. That is why, some of our ambitious candidates and youths hunting for well-paying jobs sorrowfully miss the opportunities for gaining success.

In our society, there are successful entrepreneurs who gain wealth in honest ways through their zealous efforts, though they had failed to get a college education. We need to ponder why they

were successful. Without desire, ambition and effort they would never reach the summit. The person who wishes to succeed in life is required to be mindful to these so as not to lose his final goal. Along the way there may appear many hindrances, because a tendency to indulge ourselves in luxuries and merry-making attends success or triumph. Our Lord Buddha Himself says that mindfulness is the prime factor for the attainment of Arahathood. In other words, the opposite of mindfulness can be said to be the losing of attention, that is, forgetfulness.

An examination is an opponent for a student, capacity-building for an ambitious youth and willingness to be

successful for an entrepreneur. They all need to be mindful of their aims and destinations. In addition they need to have enthusiasm and the willingness to work hard for the fulfillment of their needs and capacities. Our acquired knowledge, experiences, abilities and talent will exist with us forever. Yet, mindfulness may get away from us anytime. If we lose mindfulness, we will miss the right access to our hoped-for success. Suffice it to say that mindfulness plays an important role in our lives. To sum it up, we must train ourselves in the art of mindfulness so that we will have mental clarity to make the correct decision and the wisdom to choose the right path. ■

By Arakan Sein

RAKHINE, formerly known as Arakan, is today one of the seven states in the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and lies in the western part of the country, shut off from the Irrawaddy Valley by a long chain of mountains. It is one of the poorest of the states and divisions in Myanmar. The other day I was thrilled by the news report that efforts have been made to put MraukU on the list of UNESCO World Heritage Sites, according to the Director of the Archaeology and the National Museum Department in MraukU.

It is an encouraging news that surveys have been carried out under the instructions of the Union Minister with the provision of more staff and an increased budget. In addition, Italy kindly donated US\$ one million to UNESCO for this project and China and Australia showed their interests for assistance.

Little is known about MraukU if it is compared to Pagan, the most popular tourist attraction in Myanmar. Very few tourists, including local ones, have visited MraukU possibly due to inaccessibility and a lack of support and encouragement by the authorities concerned. Furthermore, MraukU was geographically situated among mountain ranges, about forty miles deep north from Sittway, the Capital city of present-day Rakhine State, the narrow strip of land on the west coast of the Union of Myanmar.

In 1784, MraukU, the capital of the Royal Kingdom of Arakan fell under the occupation of Bodawpaya, one of the greatest of all Konbaung kings.

The British and the Myanmar fought two wars, in 1824-6 and 1852-3, both resulting in decisive British victories and thence the British annexed Arakan in 1826 after the first Anglo-Myanmar war.

But for centuries Arakan prospered



PHOTO: PHOE KHWAH

on international trade and readily took in people and ideas from across the Asian continent and beyond, a flourishing civilization with the most cosmopolitan court in modern Myanmar history.

And in the 15th and 16th centuries, it was independent and a significant force in its own rights. In 1430, after nearly three decades in exile, King Naramithla returned at the head of a formidable force, largely made up of Afghan adventurers, who swiftly overcame local opposition. That was the start of a new golden age for this country—a period of power and prosperity—and the creation of the remarkably hybrid Buddhist-Islamic court. He abandoned the old capital and established a new one, MraukU.

MraukU grew to be an international centre of over 160,000 people. Its inhabit-

ants were a mix of Arakanese, Bengalis, Afghans, Myanmar, Dutch, Portuguese, Persians and even Japanese Christians from Nagasaki. Some of Japanese Christians formed a special bodyguard to the Arakanese king.

The city was set inland, and a massive defense system of earthen ramparts, and the citadels supplemented the ring of hills and rivers nearby. The Portuguese Jesuit Father A. Farrinha, S.J, called the city, with its numerous intersecting rivers “the second Venice” and other writers of the time compared MraukU with Amsterdam and London. Father Sebastian Manrique arrived in Arakan in 1630 and described MraukU in his travels.

Now MraukU, one of the cities of Rakhine State, remains among the ruins of temples and stupas covered with

bushes and hills. Among them stand out are several kinds of Man Aung stupas, Shit-thaung and Kothaung temples with stone sculptural walls with carved figurines inside. Htuk-Khan Thein is located on a hilltop from where one can have a commanding view of the valley areas.

Moreover, streams and creeks within the valleys along the hill ranges were dammed with huge stone slabs to form man-made lakes at different elevations. In ancient times, princes and princesses were allowed to go swimming in these lakes. With realization of the project within a period of a decade, MraukU, I hope, will become one of the tourists’ attractions in the Union of Myanmar.

Ref: *Thant Myint-U’s “Burma And The New Crossroads Of Asia”, “The River Of Lost Footsteps” and “The Making Of Modern Myanmar”.* ■

Cost of visiting Shwedagon for foreigners rises to Ks 10,000

Ko Moe

ACCORDING to the board of trusteeship of the Shwedagon Pagoda, as of 1 December, the entrance fee for foreigners to visit the Shwedagon Pagoda will go up to Ks 10,000.

The price increase was originally going to be imposed starting 1 June, but at the suggestion of the Myanmar Travel & Tour Agency, it was decided that six months notice should be given.

Presently, Ks 8,000 is being collected from foreign visitors. With the increased collection, arrangements for giving better services are under way.

“In last summer, there were few visitors to the pagoda because of the burning heat while in January, February and March foreign visitors came. With the increased collection of entrance fees, provision of better services is under way”, said U Win Kyaing, the deputy head of the office of Shwedagon Pagoda’s Board of Trusteeship. It has been learnt that 36,674 tourists visited the pagoda in May. From the end of January to the end of April, there were over 250,000 visitors to the



Shwedagon Pagoda is the national landmark of Myanmar. **PHOTO: PHOE KHWAH**

famous pagoda. Out of all international visitors to the Shwedagon pagoda, those from a neighboring country, Thailand, were the most numerous, followed by guests from China and Germany. ■

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing meets Vice Admiral Kulekov Valaydii

DEFENCE Services Commander-in-Chief Senior General Min Aung Hlaing who was in the Russian Federation met Vice Admiral Kulekov Valaydii of the Black Sea Fleet headquarter at the Sevastopol hotel

meeting room on 22 June.

After the meeting, the Senior General toured Sevastopol and visited a battle cruiser Moskva at the northern port. Moskva is armed with guided missiles and was commis-

sioned in 1983.

It has a length of 186.5 meter, beam of 20.8 meter, draught of 8.4 meter, displacement 12,490 ton and has a speed of 32 knots.—Myanmar News Agency ■



Senior General Min Aung Hlaing holds talks with Vice Admiral Kulekov Valaydii. **PHOTO: MNA**

Five arrested on suspicion of attending terrorist training

SECURITY forces arrested five men yesterday on suspicion of attending a terrorist training in Mayu mountains.

Following a tip off that suspected terrorists were in Tinset village in Buthidaung Township, security forces carried out a patrol in the village and found nearly 15 persons

holding sticks and knives and fled towards the Mayu Mountain range.

The security forces searched the village and arrested five men including Abu Swayauk suspected of attending terrorist trainings in the mountains.—Myanmar News Agency ■

Britain Queen’s birthday event in Nay Pyi Taw

LOCAL admirers of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II celebrated her 91st birthday at the Hilton Hotel in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday evening.

The event started with the playing of the national anthems of Myanmar and Britain, after which Britain’s ambassador to Myanmar, Mr. Andrew Patrick, and Union Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettle-

ment Dr. Win Myat Aye gave speeches.

The event was attended by the deputy speaker of Amyotha Hluttaw, Union ministers, the national security advisor to the Union government, the chiefs of staff of the army, navy and air forces and other high ranking officers of the Tatmadaw, hluttaw representatives and other invited guests.—MNA ■

Senior General visits No. 766 Production and Technological Equipment Center in Russia

DEFENCE Services Commander-in-Chief Senior General Min Aung Hlaing in Russian Federation visited No. 766 Production and Technological Equipment Center on 20 June.

The Senior General viewed the ambulances, surgical and laboratory vehicles and other passenger vehicles in the

Production and Technological Equipment Center.

Next the Senior General observed and viewed the test driving of remote controlled mine disposal vehicles, fighting vehicles and passenger vehicles after which he test rode on an armored vehicle.—MNA ■

POEM:

The Goal is close

Oh! Myanmar, never bemoan....
Journey to peace is so long;
Waves, though tremendous, always go under the boat,
Mountains, even though with sky-high elevation,
always defeated by the treads of man,
go forward .. step forward .. leap forward
till make a big distance
that assure you grabbing the destination.
Hey! Be united by blood, in the wake of nation’s need,
Pool our blood again to face the nation’s challenges,
With confidence and care, negotiate and coordinate;
Be mindful and dig deep for reality and truth.
Brethren of the Union! one colour one hue,
one habitat, one land; till the end with hand in hand,
in unison we strive to expedite the peace process,
And witness the Myanmar in colours.

Myo Myat Myat Myint Maung

(Translated in English by Khin Maung Win, GNLM)
(In honour of all those who take part in Peace Making)

France's Macron taps newcomers for reshuffle as conservatives split

PARIS — French President Emmanuel Macron put a group of relative unknowns, some from outside politics, into ministerial roles on Wednesday to replace those that left under a cloud just weeks into his tenure.

The new appointments came as France's main conservative party splintered under the impact of Macron's sudden rise to presidential and parliamentary power, and the seismic shift it has caused continues to reverberate around French politics.

Businesswoman Florence Parly, who worked previously in a Socialist government and for major French transport companies, was named defence minister, and law expert Nicole Belloubet was nominated justice minister, replacing two of the departed.

Jacques Mezard moved from the Agriculture Ministry to the territorial planning ministry vacated by Macron's right-hand man Richard Ferrand earlier this week. Macron loyalist Stephane Travert took over the agriculture portfolio.

Macron's reshuffle, tapping more people from the non-political world, reflects the profile of



MoDem leader Francois Bayrou, outgoing Justice Minister, leaves after a meeting with his parliamentary group at the National Assembly in Paris, France, on 21 June 2017. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

many of his newly elected members of parliament.

It also keeps a fragile balance of people from left, right and centre and has one more woman than men. The reshuffle came after a group of ministers from an affiliated centrist party, MoDem, resigned over allegations the party misused

European parliamentary funds.

Those who departed the justice and defence ministries were, respectively, Francois Bayrou, MoDem party leader, and Sylvie Goulard - who had been seen as a key plank of Macron's plan for closer ties with Germany.

Bayrou, a Macron ally since endorsing his centrist bid for the

presidency in February, said he quit to protect the government from the scandal that has engulfed him.

"I will stand by the president and faithfully support him with a political and personal understanding that is dear to me," Bayrou told journalists. —Reuters ■

WORLD BRIEFS

Blast damages wall next to NATO military area in Turkey

ISTANBUL — An explosion damaged a wall next to a NATO military area in Turkey's western coastal city of Izmir on Thursday, Turkish media reported, but there were no reports of casualties.

State-run Anadolu news agency said the blast occurred around 7.50 am (0450 GMT) in the Aegean city's central Konak district and it reported an eyewitness as saying it happened right after a military vehicle had passed the area. The explosion destroyed part of a wall between the cemetery and the military area and shattered windows in nearby buildings, the agency said. — Reuters ■

South Korea finance minister vows to cooperate with US on North Korea

SEOUL — South Korea's finance minister on Thursday reaffirmed the country's stance that it will not tolerate any development of nuclear weapons in North Korea and vowed to cooperate with the United States in addressing the issue.

In a phone conversation with US Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin, Kim Dong-yeon said any efforts Seoul makes in denuclearizing the isolated country will in cooperation with the United States and the international community, South Korea's finance ministry said in a statement. —Reuters ■

Pilot ejects as F-16 catches fire during takeoff in Houston

HOUSTON — A pilot was forced to eject from a burning F-16 during takeoff at Houston's Ellington Airport on Wednesday.

According to a statement from North American Aerospace Defence Command, the pilot safely ejected and was taken to a local hospital. Information from the hospital said he is in a stable condition. —Xinhua ■

Trump's son-in-law launches Middle East peace effort

JERUSALEM — US President Donald Trump's son-in-law and senior adviser, Jared Kushner, met Israeli and Palestinian leaders on Wednesday to try to revive long-fractured Middle East peacemaking that Washington acknowledged will take some time.

Kushner, a 36-year-old real estate developer with little experience of international diplomacy or political negotiation, arrived in Israel on Wednesday morning and was due to spend barely 20 hours on the ground.

Video showed him giving Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, a friend of Kushner's father, a handshake and a hug as they prepared to sit down with the Israeli ambassador to Washington, the US ambassador to Israel and other senior officials for pre-

liminary discussions.

"This is an opportunity to pursue our common goals of security, prosperity and peace," Netanyahu said. "Jared, I welcome you here in that spirit. I know of your efforts, the president's efforts, and I look forward to working with you to achieve these common goals."

Kushner replied: "The president sends his best regards and it's an honour to be here with you." Kushner did not speak to the media or take questions, maintaining the circumspect profile he has established since Trump took office in January.

US officials and Israeli leaders "underscored that forging peace will take time and stressed the importance of doing everything possible to create an environment con-

ducive to peacemaking," the White House later said in a statement.

Kushner travelled to Ramallah, in the Israeli-occupied West Bank, for two hours of talks with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas after iftar, the evening meal that breaks the daily Ramadan fast.

Abbas spokesman Nabil Abu Rdainah said all major issues at the heart of the conflict were discussed. US officials called the trip part of an effort to keep the conversation going rather than the launching of a new phase in the peace process, saying that Kushner and Jason Greenblatt, the president's special representative for international negotiations, are likely to return often.

Trump has described peace between the Israelis

and the Palestinians as "the ultimate deal" and made it a priority. As well as receiving both Netanyahu and Abbas in the White House, he visited the region last month.

But it remains unclear what approach Trump, via Kushner and Greenblatt, plans to take on resolving one of the world's most intractable conflicts.

For at least two decades, the goal of US-led diplomacy has been a "two-state solution", meaning an independent Palestinian state living side-by-side and at peace with Israel.

But when Trump met Netanyahu in Washington in February, he said he was not fixed on two states saying, "I'm looking at two-state and one-state, and I like the one that both parties like". —Reuters ■



A Kurdish fighter from the People's Protection Units (YPG) fires heavy machine-gun at Islamic State militants in Raqqa, Syria, on 21 June 2017. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

US-backed Syrian forces close in on Raqqa from south

BEIRUT — US-backed Syrian militias closed in on Islamic State's Syrian stronghold of Raqqa on Wednesday, taking territory on the south bank of the Euphrates River with the aim of encircling the city, a militia spokesman told Reuters.

The Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), which include Arab and Kurdish fighters and are supported with air strikes by a US-led coalition, began an offensive two weeks ago to seize the northern city from Islamic State, which overran it in 2014.

Nouri Mahmoud, spokes-

man for the Kurdish YPG militia which is part of the SDF, told Reuters Islamic State had been ousted from the suburb of Kasrat al-Farj as the SDF moved in along the southern riverbank from the west.

When the campaign began the SDF had Raqqa, which sits on the Euphrates' northern bank, surrounded from the north, west and east. Although Islamic State controlled the south bank of the river, coalition air strikes had destroyed the bridges connecting it to the city.

The SDF is now trying to enact a siege of the city by taking

the southern bank. The forces are a couple of kilometres from achieving this aim.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights war monitor said on Wednesday SDF forces had moved along the southern river bank to reach the eastern edge of Kasrat al-Farj, in the area between the new and old bridges into Raqqa.

Islamic State is also facing defeat in its Iraqi stronghold of Mosul and is being forced into retreat across much of Syria, where Deir al-Zor in eastern Syria is its last major foothold. —Reuters ■

More than 5 million children need urgent humanitarian aid in Iraq – UNICEF

BAGHDAD — More than 5 million children are in urgent need of aid in Iraq, the United Nations said on Thursday, describing the war on Islamic State as “one of the most brutal” in modern history.

“Across Iraq, children continue to witness sheer horror and unimaginable violence,” the United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF) said in a statement.

“They have been killed, injured, abducted and forced to shoot and kill in one of the most brutal wars in recent history.”

In Mosul, children are being deliberately targeted and killed by Islamic State militants to punish families and deter them from fleeing, it said.

International organizations

estimate that more than 100,000 civilians, of whom half are children, are trapped in extremely dangerous conditions in the Old City centre, the last district still under the militants' control in Mosul. More than 1,000 children have been killed and more than 1,100 wounded or maimed since 2014, when the ultra-hardline militants seized large swathes of Iraq, it said. Over 4,650 children have become separated from their families.

The militants have lost most of the Iraqi cities they came to control, after a series of US-backed offensives that began in 2015. They are also close to losing all of Mosul, the northern city which served as their de facto capital.—Reuters ■

Car bomb in Afghanistan targets security forces waiting for pay

LASHKAR GAH, (Afghanistan) — A car bomb exploded outside a bank in Lashkar Gah, capital of the southern Afghan province of Helmand on Thursday, killing and wounding dozens of civilians and members of the security forces waiting to collect their pay, officials said.

Omar Zwak, spokesman for the provincial governor, said at least 20 people had been killed and more than 50 wounded, including members of the police and army, civilians and staff of

the New Kabul Bank branch where the attack took place.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility but insurgent groups, including the Taliban and Islamic State have in the past targeted banks where police, soldiers and other government employees collect their pay.

Last month, at least three people were killed and many wounded in an attack on a bank in the eastern city of Gardez. —Reuters ■

FBI says probing Michigan airport stabbing as ‘act of terrorism’

DETROIT/MONTREAL — The Federal Bureau of Investigation said on Wednesday it was investigating as an act of terrorism the stabbing of a police officer inside the main terminal of a small airport in Flint, Michigan.

“I will tell you that we are investigating this incident today that happened at about 9:45 this morning as an act of terrorism,” David Gelios, special agent in charge of the Detroit division of the FBI, told reporters outside Bishop International Airport.

The US Department of Justice identified the suspect as Amor M. Ftouhi, 49, of Quebec,

Canada. Ftouhi legally entered the United States from Lake Champlain, New York, on 16 June before making his way to Flint, Gelios said.

According to a criminal complaint, Ftouhi yelled in Arabic “Allahu akbar” (God is greatest) before stabbing Lieutenant Jeff Neville of the airport's Department of Public Safety.

Neville was in satisfactory condition after undergoing surgery and expected to fully recover, police said.

“When the subject went up to the officer and stabbed him, he continued to exclaim ‘Allah’ and

made a statement, something to the effect of ‘You have killed people in Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan and we are all going to die,’” Gelios said.

Ftouhi has been charged with violence at an international airport, which carries a maximum penalty of up to 20 years in prison if convicted.

Gelios said other charges could be lodged against Ftouhi.

US officials, who have questioned Ftouhi, currently believe he acted alone and was not part of a larger plot, Gelios said.

“Suffice it to say, he has a hatred for the United States,” Gelios

said of Ftouhi. Gelios described the weapon as a 12-inch knife with an 8-inch serrated blade. Ftouhi was a “lone wolf attacker,” he said. It took four people to subdue Ftouhi, including the officer he stabbed and a nearby maintenance worker, said Chris Miller, the airport's director of public safety. Miller and another officer also assisted.

According to the criminal complaint, after he was subdued Ftouhi asked why he had not been killed. The airport was evacuated and there were no other injuries. It reopened on Wednesday evening. A small regional airport,

it has, on average, 16 commercial flights arriving or departing each day, according to FlightAware, a flight tracking service.

Officials in the United States and Canada condemned the attack and said that agencies in both countries would work together to investigate the incident.

“Any attack on someone who serves and protects our citizens will be investigated and prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law,” US Attorney General Jeff Sessions said in a statement, adding that he had spoken with FBI officials about the attack. —Reuters ■

White House aims to speed US drone, wireless technologies

WASHINGTON — The White House is bringing together drone makers, wireless companies and venture capitalists on Thursday to look at ways government can help speed new technologies to the marketplace.

President Donald Trump will meet with the chief executives of General Electric Co, Honeywell International Inc and AT&T Inc AT&T Inc, major drone industry firms and venture capitalists in the latest effort by the White House to focus on innovative technologies as a way of spurring job growth.

Michael Kratsios, the White House's deputy chief technology officer, told reporters the goal of the sessions is to find ways the United States "can maintain its leadership creating and fostering entirely new technologies that will drive our economic growth."

The chief executives of several unmanned aerial system, or drone, companies including Kespriy Inc, AirMap, Airspace



An Airspace Systems Interceptor autonomous aerial drone flies during a product demonstration in Castro Valley, California, on 6 March 2017. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

Inc, Measure UAS Inc, Trumbull Unmanned, and Precision-Hawk Inc are attending the White House sessions.

Senior executives at Xcel Energy Inc, Verizon Communications Inc and CenturyLink Inc are also taking part as are venture capital firms including AOL co-founder Steve Case

who heads Revolution LLC, 500 Startups, Cayuga Ventures, Epic Ventures and Lightspeed Ventures.

The administration wants to promote the development and commercialization of emerging technologies and speed the development of unmanned aerial vehicles or

drones and 5G wireless technology, Kratsios said.

The Obama administration implemented rules that opened the skies to low-level small drones for education, research and routine commercial use. The Trump administration is considering whether to expand drone use for purposes such as

deliveries where aircraft would fly beyond the sight of an operator. Security issues would need to be resolved.

The FAA in March estimated that by 2021 the fleet of small hobbyist drones will more than triple and the commercial drone fleet will increase tenfold to about 442,000.

Last year, the FCC cleared the way for 5G, a lightning-fast next generation of wireless services. Testing is under way and deployment is expected around 2020.

New 5G networks are expected to provide speeds at least 10 times and maybe 100 times faster than today's 4G networks. The next generation of wireless signals needs to be much faster and far more responsive to allow advanced technologies such as virtual surgery or controlling machines remotely, regulators say. The networks could help wirelessly connect devices such as thermostats or washing machines to facilitate the internet of things.—Reuters ■

Extreme heat grips Northern Hemisphere on summer solstice

SINGAPORE — Extreme heat across large tracts of the Northern Hemisphere raised fears for crops in China, fuelled forest fires in Portugal and Russia's Far East, forced flight cancellations in the Southwest US, and melted tarmac on roads in Britain.

As Wednesday marked the summer solstice — the longest day of the year — forecasters said temperatures in Paris were expected to hit 37 Celsius (100 Fahrenheit), Madrid could see 38C, and London was set for 34C with warnings of thunderstorms.

Rounding up the record temperatures set in the past two months, the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) said the Earth was experiencing "another exceptionally warm year" and the heatwaves were unusually early.

"Parts of Europe, the Middle East, North Africa and the United States of America have seen extremely high May and June temperatures, with a number of records broken," the WMO said late on Tuesday.

The trend seen during the past two months has put average monthly global tempera-



Tourists use umbrellas to take cover from the sun as they walk in a street during a heatwave in Ronda, Spain, on 21 June 2017. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

tures among the highest ever recorded since data began to be collated in 1880.

Even before this month, US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) data showed Europe, the United States and North-east Asia — including eastern China, Japan and South Korea — had experienced unusually warm weather between March and May.

In China, the world's top grain producer, hot and dry conditions in the main corn belt have delayed plantings

and stunted crop development, especially in the province of Liaoning where soil moisture levels are at their lowest in at least five years.

Thomson Reuters Eikon data shows that precipitation in Liaoning for the past month has been between 40 and 60 percent below the seasonal norm.

"The drought that hit parts of China's northeast is the worst for this time of the year in the past decade, in the breadth of areas it has affected and the length of time it has

lasted," Ma Wenfeng, analyst at Beijing Orient Agribusiness Consultancy, said.

The hot, dry weather is a major factor behind forest fires that have killed dozens of people in Portugal, while the Russian news agency Tass reported scores of forest fires, mostly in Siberia and the far east region of Irkutsk.

In the US Southwest, flights were cancelled mostly by regional airlines whose aircraft operate at a lower maximum temperature.

And in Britain, regional media in the southeast county of Surrey reported that the intense sun had melted tarmac roads. Solar power generation was expected to surge in Germany on Wednesday, with Eikon data showing a potential of 27,500 megawatt-hour (MWh) could be generated, compared with a seasonal norm of just 20,000 MWh.

The Climate Change Institute at the University of Maine recorded temperatures in the Northern Hemisphere were 0.44C (0.8F) above the norm on Tuesday, compared with a global average of 0.25C above usual.—Reuters ■

Russia resumes gov't-level economic cooperation with two thirds EU countries

MOSCOW — Russia has resumed economic cooperation at governmental level with two thirds of European Union (EU) countries, RIA Novosti news agency quoted a Russian minister as saying Thursday.

Deputy Minister of Economic Development Alexey Gruzdev said the fact that official economic dialogue with the EU was frozen does not prevent bilateral contacts with European countries.

"There was a frank dialogue," Gruzdev said, referring to a recent meeting with ambassadors of some EU members in Moscow. "The European business is already tired of these restrictions that lead to great losses."

The EU slapped sanctions on Russia in July and September 2014 in response to an alleged role that Russia played in conflicts in east Ukraine. Last December, the EU extended the sanctions for another six months until 31 July 2017.—Xinhua

Oil keeps a lid on European shares, Imagination Tech soars

FRANKFURT — European shares were in store for another weak session on Thursday pegged back by the slide in commodities-related sectors on the back of depressed oil prices. The pan-European STOXX 600 index was down 0.3 per cent, on track for its third day of straight losses, while the blue chips dropped 0.4 per cent.

European energy sector and mining stocks were down about 1 per cent.

Health care was the top-gaining sector, up 0.8 per cent with Switzerland's Novartis in the driving seat as its shares advanced 2.5 per cent, following a positive study result for its canakinumab medicine,



Traders work in front of the German share price index, DAX board, at the stock exchange in Frankfurt, Germany, on 21 June 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

which cut risks for heart attack survivors. Elsewhere, Imagination Tech, once a high flyer as a supplier of graphics technology to Apple <AAPL.O, soared more than 20 per cent after it put itself up for sale. In April, Apple said that it would no longer use Imagination's graphics technology in the iPhone, wiping out more than 60 per cent of the British firm's market value. —Reuters ■

Eyes on AirAsia as Airbus looks for airshow comeback

PARIS — Airbus has seen its rival Boeing grab most of the headlines at the Paris Airshow this week, but it could turn to AirAsia — one of its largest customers — to narrow the gap after the launch of a new

Boeing plane, industry sources said.

AirAsia co-founder Tony Fernandes signed a services agreement with Airbus earlier this week and stayed on for further negotiations with his company's sole aircraft supplier, sources said, while cautioning a deal could not be guaranteed.

Airbus declined to comment, while officials at AirAsia could not be reached for comment.

Going into the fourth trade day of the Paris Airshow, Boeing was ahead on net, new orders and commitments after launching a new version of its 737 MAX family of planes.—Reuters ■



AirAsia planes are seen parked on the tarmac at Kuala Lumpur International Airport 2 (KLIA2) in Sepang, Malaysia on 15 February 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

Scientists rescue samples of melting Bolivian glacier for posterity

ILLIMANI MOUNTAIN, (Bolivia) — A team of international scientists are transporting samples of ice from a melting glacier in Bolivia to Antarctica, for study and preservation before the glacier disappears.

The international "Ice Memory" expedition of 15 scientists took samples from the glacier on Illimani Mountain in the Andes and will store them in Antarctica at the French-Italian base of Concordia.

The scientists were helped by local guides and porters, who live near the base of Illimani. Clearly visible from Bolivia's capital La Paz, Illimani's "eternal snows" are frequently referenced in the music, mythology and literature of the Aymara people. But scientists say global warming is rapidly melting the glaciers of the Andes, removing an important source of fresh water for many communities and threatening others with deadly avalanches. Illimani itself has warmed by 0.7 degree Centigrade in the last 18 years, said Ice Memory glaciologist Patrick Ginot. The team dug over 130 meters (430 ft) into the glacier to remove 75 ice samples, which they say yield some 18,000 years of climatic history.

"As glaciologists, we want to keep this kind of glacier sample because for us it is an encyclopedia of the climate and environment," Ginot told Reuters on Tuesday. "When you remove a glacier sample, you're perforating through into the world's history." —Reuters ■

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

MV CHINDWIN STAR VOY. NO ()

Consignees of cargo carried on MV CHINDWIN STAR VOY. NO () are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 23.6.2017 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.P where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S CONTINENTAL SHIPPING
LINE PTE LTD

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

MV EVER APEX VOY. NO ()

Consignees of cargo carried on MV EVER APEX VOY. NO () are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 23.6.2017 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.

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Pop stars release song to raise funds for London fire victims

LONDON — Some of the biggest names in British music, including Stormzy, Robbie Williams and The Who, released a charity single on Wednesday to raise funds for people affected by the fire at a tower block in west London.

The song, a cover of Simon and Garfunkel's "Bridge Over Troubled Water", also features performances from Leona Lewis, James Blunt and a large choir made up of local people, some of whom survived the blaze.

A total of 79 people died in the fire, which swept through the 24-storey Grenfell tower on 14th June. Many people are still unaccounted for and authorities have suggested that the death toll will continue to rise as rescue workers continue to search.

The single is an initiative of pop impresario and TV talent show judge Simon Cowell.

In a departure from the original version of the song, Cowell's version opens with grime artist Stormzy rapping: "That could



Singer Robbie Williams.
PHOTO: REUTERS

have been me up there / waving my white plain tee up there", a reference to people trapped in the blaze.

Reaction to the song on social media was generally positive, with Twitter user Sarah Styles saying the song was "absolutely beautiful", while user Amy Elizabeth said the song left her "covered in goosebumps".

The song was made available for sale and radio play on Wednesday and Cowell tweeted that a video would premiere on British television that evening. All proceeds from the song are to go to the London Community Foundation.—Reuters ■

Kim Kardashian said to have hired surrogate for third baby

LOS ANGELES — Kim Kardashian and Kanye West's family may be growing, according to reports on Wednesday that the celebrity couple have hired a surrogate to carry their third child after a doctor advised the reality star against another high-risk pregnancy.

People Magazine and E! News, citing unidentified sources, said the couple had hired a surrogate, and TMZ.com said they had agreed to pay the surrogate more than \$113,000 to carry a child.

It was not clear whether the surrogate was already pregnant. Kardashian's representative did not respond to a request for comment.

Kardashian, 36, has two children with rapper West and has spoken openly about her medical struggles during her pregnancies with daughter North, born in 2013, and son Saint, born in 2015, on her E! reality show "Keeping Up With the Kardashians."

In a recent episode, Kardashian spoke about considering surrogacy for future children

with West.

The reality star has given detailed accounts on her blog about the difficulties she experienced during her two labors, and the TV show has followed her various surgeries and doctor consultations in a bid to resolve them.

"I think I always knew that surrogacy was an option, but I didn't think it was that realistic of an option, and now I feel like that's my reality," Kardashian said in an April episode of "Keeping Up With The Kardashians."

The surrogacy reports come after a difficult year for the couple.

Kardashian was the victim of a robbery in Paris last October, in which millions of dollars' worth of jewelry was stolen from her. That led her to boost security measures and to take a temporary pause from public engagements and prolific social media postings. Late last year, West canceled a December tour and was hospitalized after an apparent mental health breakdown.—Reuters ■



'Joy' and 'Sadness', characters of the animation film 'Inside Out', pose at its premiere at El Capitan theatre in Hollywood, California, US in 2015. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

Parenting expert sues Disney, says it stole 'Inside Out' idea

LOS ANGELES -- A parenting and child development specialist has sued Walt Disney Co and its Pixar unit, accusing them of stealing from her the concept for their 2015 blockbuster movie, "Inside Out."

In a complaint filed on Monday in Los Angeles federal court, Denise Daniels said the animated film, featuring color-coded characters representing individual human emotions, mirrors a children's program called "The Moodsters" that she conceived and pitched to Disney every year from 2005

to 2009.

Daniels, who lives in Minnesota's Twin Cities area and has appeared on TV shows including "Today" and "Oprah," said she had an "implied-in-fact" contract with Disney requiring that she be paid from box office, DVD, Blu-Ray, iTunes and merchandise revenue from "Inside Out."

The film has grossed more than \$850 million worldwide since its June 2015 release. Daniels said this "extreme success" was not possible without her work, and that Disney

should pay her because it is "custom and common in the entertainment industry."

A Disney spokesman, however, said "Inside Out" was an original Pixar creation. "We look forward to vigorously defending against this lawsuit in court," the spokesman said.

Ronald Schutz, a lawyer for Daniels, declined to comment. Daniels was unavailable to comment. The lawsuit is at least the second in three months accusing Disney of stealing a concept for a blockbuster film.—Reuters ■

Music festival to pay tribute to legendary Indian composers

MUMBAI — Stalwarts of Indian classical music and dance like Birju Maharaj, Rashid Khan, and Kavita Krishnamurti will pay tributes to legendary Indian classical music composers at an upcoming music festival here.

The eighth edition of 'Bandish- A Tribute to Legendary Composers' will honour the works of music composers like Inayat Hussain Khan, Meerabai, and Gajananrao Joshi among others.

Scheduled to begin from 7 July, the three-day festival organised by The National Centre for Performing Arts (NCPA), will be held at Tata Theatre here.

"Great compositions deserve great artistes who very gracefully capture nuances of the original composition and at the same time leave their indelible mark on it.

"The festival will bring together artistes from different fields to pay homage to the legendary composers with their awe-inspiring talent," Suvarnalata Rao of NCPA said.

To be held in association with HSBC Bank, the music festival will open with Padma Talwarkar presenting compositions of Jagannathbuwa Purohit and her mentor, Gajananrao Joshi, while Khan will pay tribute to composers Inayat Hussain

Khan and his own mentor Nissar Hussain Khan.

The second day of the festival will witness Birju Maharaj presenting his own compositions, and Shekhar Sen will present works on Krishna by Meerabai, Chadrasakhi and Taj Bibi.

On 9 July, the festival will conclude with a selection of raga-based film songs composed by Laxmikant-Pyarelal, R D Burman and Ismail Darbar, presented by Kavita Krishnamurti.

"It is indeed a matter of great pride for us to be associated with Bandish, the festival which celebrates the best of Indian music.—PTI ■

New eatery, shopping complex opens near Osaka Castle

OSAKA — A new complex containing restaurants and stores opened in Osaka Castle Park on Thursday with the operator aiming to cash in on the growing number of foreign and local tourists visiting the major historical attraction in Osaka.

The two-storey complex, named Jo-Terrace Osaka, is located near JR Osakajokoen Station and has a total floor space of around 4,800 square meters. It houses about two dozen outlets, including restaurants, cafes and a convenience store as well as a tourist office providing multilingual information. Also among the outlets is a facility serving runners, and a range of restaurants, with one Japanese-focused eatery offering an experience in which customers can dress up in tradition-

al Japanese attire. Osaka Castle is known as a token of the power and fortune of Toyotomi Hideyoshi, a prominent 16th-century warlord. Its main tower attracted 2.56 million visitors in fiscal 2016 to last March, an all-time annual record.

"Hopefully this park will draw more visitors and continue to grow as an attractive regional tourism hub by showcasing a piece of history," Osaka Mayor Hirofumi Yoshimura said in a speech at the opening ceremony of the complex operated by a business consortium including Daiwa House Industry Co. Another similar complex is scheduled to open near the castle's main tower in October as local businesses and municipalities look to take advantage of the recent tourism boom.

—Kyodo News ■



A new restaurant complex called Jo-Terrace Osaka opens on 22 June, 2017 in the park that houses Osaka Castle. The two-storey complex includes restaurants and coffee shops and is aimed at attracting domestic and overseas visitors. **PHOTO: KYODO NEWS**

Jackie Kennedy watch, painting sell for three times estimate in NY

NEW YORK — A Cartier wristwatch given to Jackie Kennedy and a painting she made in 1963 as a thank-you gift to reciprocate sold for \$379,500 on Wednesday, more than three times pre-sale estimates, Christie's auction house said.

Christie's said the price was reached after three minutes of "spirited bidding" in its New York saleroom, online and by phone. It did not identify the buyer. The auction house had estimated the watch and the painting, sold as

one lot, would fetch up to \$120,000, calling them "two of the most important historic artifacts to surface in recent years from the golden era of the Kennedy Presidency." The Cartier tank watch, engraved on the back, was given to the then-US first lady by her brother-in-law Prince Stanislaw "Stas" Radziwill, and she was photographed many times wearing it. The picture was painted by Kennedy to mark a 50-mile (80-km) hike in Palm Beach in 1963 that Radzi-

will and other friends of the Kennedys undertook to promote fitness. Most of Jacqueline Kennedy's personal belongings were auctioned in 1996 following her death from cancer in 1994 at age 64. The 1996 auction at Sotheby's in New York raised some \$34 million, more than seven times pre-sale expectations. The seller of the watch wished to remain anonymous but has pledged to donate a portion of the auction proceeds to the National Endowment for the Arts.—Reuters ■



Jackie Kennedy's engraved Cartier Tank wristwatch, which will go on auction at Christie's in New York City on 21 June 2017, is seen in this undated handout image. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

Angolan capital tops list of most expensive cities for expats

LONDON — The Angolan capital Luanda has knocked Hong Kong off the top spot in an annual survey that ranks the cost of living for expatriate workers in world cities.

The survey found the cost of renting a two-bedroom apartment suitable for expatriates in Luanda was £4,800 (\$6,055) per month, while a fast food hamburger meal priced at £11.50. It was the second time in three years that Luanda topped the survey, which compares the costs of housing, transport and clothing in 209 cities.

While Luanda rose, all UK cities fell signifi-

cantly in this year's rankings which were released on Wednesday, with 30th-ranked London dropping 13 places from 2016.

The survey, conducted by global consulting firm Mercer, suggested that the country's vote to leave the European Union had played a role in the drop by causing the value of sterling to fall.

For those in the market for a cheaper expatriate experience, the survey found the least expensive cities are Tunis, ranked 209th, followed by Kyrgyzstan capital Bishkek and Skopje in Macedonia.

- Top 10
1. LUANDA, Angola
 2. HONG KONG
 3. TOKYO, Japan
 4. ZURICH, Switzerland
 5. SINGAPORE,
 6. SEOUL, South Korea
 7. GENEVA, Switzerland
 8. SHANGHAI, China
 9. NEW YORK, U.S.
 10. BERN, Switzerland — Reuters ■



Myanmar International

Programme Schedule

(23-6-2017 07:00am ~ 24-6-2017 07:00am) MST

07:03	Am	News
07:25	Am	Welcome To Naga Land
07:57	Am	Dances of Myanmar (Bwe Traditional Dance)
08:03	Am	News
08:26	Am	An Aficionado Of Alluring Antiques
09:03	Am	News
09:26	Am	Applied Myanmar Traditional Martial Art (Part-2)
10:03	Am	News
10:26	Am	The Green Corner (Epi-8) 3 D Shadow Box

10:36	Am	Htan Taw Drums (Part-I) "Osi"
10:48	Am	Myanmar Railways City Circular Train

(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	Wonderful Indonesia
07:55	Pm	Now in Yangon
08:03	Pm	New
08:26	Pm	Orchidologist Dr. Saw Lwin
08:48	Pm	Traffic Police
08:55	Pm	Now in Yangon

(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)



Myanmar youth players seen in front of Myanmar flag in an international match. **PHOTO: MFF**

U-18 teams from Myanmar, Thailand to play exhibition match

THE Myanmar Football Federation (MFF) is arranging to play a test match between the under-18 teams of Myanmar and Thailand.

Myanmar U-18 players are currently training for international matches and a friendly against Thailand scheduled for August will be good preparation, football followers said.

"As Thailand is one of the

best opponents for Myanmar, we believe that Myanmar will prepare best to deliver a victory for us", said a fan of Myanmar football.

"The match will be a good experience for Myanmar in order to measure the strength and ability of the players against other international qualifiers and tournaments and the team will be headed by Coach Bun

Berli", said U BhoneNaingZaw, the MFF chief executive officer.

Host Myanmar has been placed in Group (B) together with Vietnam, New Zealand, Indonesia, the Philippines and Brunei as the 2017 AFF U-18 youth Championship kicks off in Myanmar from September 5 to 17.—Kyaw Zin Lin ■

McIlroy backs PGA Tour drug testing reforms

NEW YORK — Four-time major winner Rory McIlroy has voiced support for the PGA Tour's drug-testing reforms that introduce blood screening and revise the list of banned substances to match the World Anti-Doping Agency's directory for the 2017-18 season.

Last July, the 28-year-old Briton expressed concern over the lack of regular drug testing in golf compared with other Olympic sports and advocated the introduction of blood testing.

The PGA tour said on Tuesday that urine tests would still make up a bulk of examinations but blood screening would be introduced to detect human growth hormone.

Policies regarding player suspension

sions for illegal drugs use will also be made more transparent.

"If we're not blood testing we're not doing all we can to make sure that golf is a clean sport, so I obviously welcome the news," McIlroy was quoted as saying by the Daily Telegraph ahead of Thursday's first round of the Travelers Championship.

"If golf wants to be a sport in the Olympics, it needs to get on board with everything that all the other sports do as well.

"I really don't think anyone should be fearful as I don't think that golf has any sort of drug problem at all. You have to be so careful about what you take, but that's part and parcel about being an athlete."

McIlroy, who has battled a recurring rib injury since January, has not won a tournament this year and missed the cut at the U.S. Open earlier this month, but hopes he can still finish the season on a strong note.

"I always felt 2017 was going to be a bit of a transitional year...", he added. "It's still got two majors (left) and I'd like to finish it well.

"But if I look back over my first 10 years as a pro, am I happy with where my career's at? I would say, 'yes, I guess'.

But I definitely feel like in the next 10 years, that I can do better."—Reuters ■



Rory McIlroy. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

Mexico come from behind to beat New Zealand 2-1

SOCHI, (Russia) — Mexico scored twice in a busy second-half performance to overcome New Zealand 2-1 on Wednesday and destroy the All Whites dreams of securing their first Confederations Cup victory at the 11th attempt.

New Zealand had not won

any of their previous matches at three Confederations Cups dating back to 1999 but they had the better of the first half and went in 1-0 up thanks to a nice goal from Chris Wood.

However, Mexico came out reorganised for the second

half and Raul Jimenez got an equaliser nine minutes into the second period.

Javier Aquino dribbled in from the left and after an exchange of passes on the edge of the New Zealand box, Jimenez spun to fire high into the net.—Reuters ■

Portugal's Cristiano Ronaldo. **PHOTO: REUTERS**



Ronaldo ready to pay 14.7 million in Spanish tax fraud case

MADRID — REAL Madrid striker Cristiano Ronaldo is ready to pay Spain's tax authorities 14.7 million euros (\$16.39 million) — the amount he has been accused of defrauding by a prosecutor — ahead of a court hearing next month, Spanish state TV said on Wednesday.

Broadcaster TVE said, without identifying its sources, the 32-year-old would make this payment as a gesture of good will. The report added Ronaldo will reiterate at a hearing on 31 July that he is innocent and has never hidden any income from the taxman or committed any

tax fraud in Spain. Representatives for Ronaldo declined to comment. The Spanish prosecutor says the Real Madrid forward knowingly used a business structure to hide his image rights income in Spain between 2011 and 2014. Ronaldo has denied the charges.—Reuters ■