

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw approves loans from World Bank, international organizations

NAY PYI TAW, 19 Sept —The Pyidaungsu Hluttaw session on Friday approved loans from the international community.

First, the representatives held discussions on borrowing US\$ 100 million for the Ministry of Transport from the World Bank. The loan will be spent on the project for effective water utilization in Myanmar, according to Union Minister for Transport U Nyan Tun Aung, who said that most regions in Myanmar receive 98 inches of rain every year but cannot effectively use it. He added that experts from the World Bank and Myanmar held discussions to implement the project.

The Pyidaungsu Hluttaw session also approved borrowing US\$ 45 million for the Ministry of Rail Transportation from the EDCF of South Korea. The loan will be spent on (See page 3)



Friday's session of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw in progress.—MNA

Defence utmost importance for nation and people: C-in-C

NAY PYI TAW, 19 Sept —As defence is of utmost importance for a nation and a people, the National Defence College was established with the aim of nurturing senior military officer who possess

defence, political, economic and administrative outlooks for the future state and the Tatmadaw, Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing told the trainee senior mil-

itary officers at the collage on Friday.

The senior general added that independence and sovereignty are also important for a country once colonized like Myanmar while every country

is responsible to defend its sovereignty, territory and life and property of the citizens and to maintain national integrity.

Also present were Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Com-

mander-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Soe Win, high ranking military officers from the office of the Commander-in-Chief and trainee senior military officers.

Myawady

KOICA President to visit Myanmar

By Ye Myint

YANGON, 19 Sept—President of Korea International Cooperation Agency Mr. Kim Young-mok will make a four-day visit to Myanmar from September 20 to 23 to strengthen South Korea's development assistance to Myanmar over the years to come, KOICA Myanmar Office told The New Light of Myanmar.

Kim's visit will be historic because it is the first to Myanmar by a sitting KOICA president.

During his visit, Kim is scheduled to pay a courtesy call on President U Thein Sein to discuss focused areas and future directions of KOICA development assistance in Myanmar, a press release from the KOICA Myanmar Office said.

He is also planning to hold talks with Union ministers for National Planning and Economic



Mr. Kim Young-mok

Development, Agriculture and Irrigation and Livestock Breeding, Fisheries and Rural Development and visit the KOICA's project sites, including Sae-maul Undong Academy, Post-Harvesting Research Institute and Agriculture Machinery Training Centre in Yezin area, Nay Pyi Taw, it added.

Moreover, the KOICA president will be present at (See page 2)

IFC provides Yoma Bank with funding to target SMEs

YANGON, 19 Sept—The International Finance Corporation, the World Bank group's private sector arm, has agreed to provide Yoma Bank Ltd. with a \$5 million loan to help finance capital-starved small and medium-sized enterprises in Myanmar.

"The package is expected to help Yoma Bank expand lending to small and medium enterprises, a sector of Myanmar's economy in desperate need of financing to grow and create more jobs," IFC said on September 16 in its statement.

It said that the loan is the first step in IFC's financial support for the bank, which may be further increased to up to \$30 million in coming years in the form of equity, senior debt and trade guarantee lines under IFC's Global Trade Finance Program, which boosts banks' ca-



Mingalar Market Branch of Yoma Bank satisfies customers in banking and financial sectors as part of developing State economy.—PHOTO: AYE MIN SOE

capacity to provide financing for importers and exporters. The additional support for Yoma Bank will be subject to further due diligence and subsequent approvals from

IFC's management and board.

As Myanmar emerges from years of isolation, the demand for financial services in the country is

huge. More than 70 percent of adults do not have formal access to credit, deposit, and other financial services, such as insurance (See page 3)

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Democracy does not flourish in the absence of responsibility and accountability

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Construction of four Samvejaniya places near completion

NAY PYI TAW, 19 Sept—Union Minister at the President Office Nay Pyi Taw Council Chairman U Thein Nyunt on Friday afternoon inspected construction tasks at places around Thattathattaha Bawdi Pagoda on Udayaranti Hill in Pobbathiri Township as three Samvejaniya places of the area have been completed by 95 per cent.

A marble stone of 42 tons is being curved into a reclining Buddha image at Kusinayon area with 85 per

cent completion. Lumbini Park is being constructed with 95 per cent completion.

Vice Mayor of Nay Pyi Taw U Than Kyaw Htoo and officials showed the Union minister round the construction site.

Those wishing to donate cash and kind may contact U Than Kyaw Htoo (Vice Mayor), Tel: 067-414584, U Win Htay (Secretary), 067-432117, and Daw Khin Myat Lay (Head of Department), 067-414290.—MNA



Union Minister U Thein Nyunt inspects progress of buildings at four Samvejaniya places in Nay Pyi Taw for public observation and obeisance.—MNA

Sacred Buddha tooth relic consecrated at Uppatasanti Pagoda

NAY PYI TAW, 19 Sept — The consecration for a sacred Buddha tooth relic to be kept at Shwemuhtaw Pagoda in Patheingyi was held at the precinct of Nay Pyi Taw Uppatasanti Pagoda on Friday morning, attended by Union Minister for Religious Affairs U Soe Win and Deputy Minister Dr Maung Maung Htay.

The Buddhist monks led by Maha Withutayama Zaygon Monastery Abbot Abhidhaja Maha Rattha Guru Bhaddanta Kavisara consecrated the tooth relic.



Members of the Sangha consecrate sacred Buddha tooth relic conveyed from China at Nay Pyi Taw Uppatasanti Pagoda.—MNA

Deputy Minister Dr Maung Maung Htay said

that it was the fourth tooth relic conveyed from China to Myanmar. A tooth relic each was enshrined at Uppatasanti Pagoda, Mandalay Maha Muni

Buddha and Shwedagon Pagoda in Yangon, with the fourth one to be conveyed to Patheingyi, the minister added.

MNA



KOICA President to ...

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the handover ceremony of National Foot and Mouth Disease Diagnostic Laboratory financed by KOICA with a budget of \$3 million and two signing ceremonies between Myanmar and South Korea on the Framework Agreement on the Grant Aid for the year 2014 and the Records of Discussion on the establishment of \$20 million Myanmar Development Institute in Nay Pyi Taw.

Since its establishment in 1991 as a government agency responsible

for overseas said projects, KOICA has worked on different projects and various cooperation programs in Myanmar.

As of today, the KOICA in Myanmar is implementing 14 projects— 8 ongoing projects and 6 new projects— with a total budget mounting up to \$12 million.

Kim Young-mok, who previously held several positions in South Korea's Ministry of Foreign Affairs was appointed as head of the KOICA in 2013.

NLM

Advocacy groups of “Inclusive Education” to meet parliamentarians, officials in Nay Pyi Taw

By Ye Myint

YANGON, 19 Sept— A seminar on “Inclusive Education” is scheduled to be held on 25 September at Zabuthiri Hotel in Nay Pyi Taw for advocacy groups for the rights of persons with disabilities to make presentations to lawmakers and policy makers.

Yangon-based organizations taking care of education affairs of disabled people told the local media at a press conference on Thursday the planned seminar is expected to see more than 100 parliamentarians and government officials listening to their advice.

They said six presenta-

tions are planned—Myanmar government obligation towards inclusive education; Essential of IE policy and implementation; IE experiences from other countries; inclusive education concept; personal experiences of IE in Myanmar as a visual impaired person; and inclusive education and democracy.

“Despite having not a full explanation of inclusive education in the law, National Education Law approved by the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw, Parliament, on 31-7-2014, we continue to call for inclusion of measures and guarantees that will pave the way for including in

the sector laws—monastic education law, basic education law and higher education law, rules and regulations and directives and instructions,” Nay Lin Soe, program director of Myanmar Independent Living Initiative, told The New Light of Myanmar.

It is imperative to delete the concept of providing special care to disabled people as it will marginalize them, leaving them in a special world and making it difficult for them to network with the community, said Zaw Htwe Oo, a former student of the Education Centre for the Blind.

On special education programs and special edu-

cation services suggested in the National Education Law of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw, they pointed out that it cannot respond pragmatically to the needs of disabled school children as the idea of the establishment of special schools for them will be beyond that of setting up of normal schools.

Regarding concern that going to the same school with children with normal learning ability will make disabled children feel inferior, they rejected the old vision of those people that peer pressure could create psychological and emotional problems among the children with disabilities, citing that “children

who learn together learn to live together” as an advantage for making kindness and consideration among children with different situations.

During a press conference filled with an air of expectation that only education could allow persons with disabilities to live with dignity in society, those from the advocacy groups for inclusive education made calls for legislation focusing on the affairs of disabled people and effective implementation of matters related to them in accord with the law.

Following previous meetings between the groups and members of

parliament, there was an increase in the budget for the welfare of disabled people from about 1 percent to nearly 4 percent and cash assistance to the schools for persons with disabilities increased.

“We would like to be a part of society going to reap the benefits of the opening up of the country,” said the MILI program director.

According to him quoting statistics from the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement in 2009, Myanmar has a disabled population of nearly 1.3 million and those who are unable to go to school make up 59 percent of the population.—NLM

NATIONAL

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw approves...

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new 100 railway carriages to replace outdated 400 ones being used currently.

Then, the representatives approved borrowing Euro 20 million from Italy Development Cooperation for the Ministry of Livestock, Fisheries and Rural Development. The loan

will be spent on infrastructure development in one township each in Kachin State, Mon State, Kayah State, Shan State and Bago Region. The eligible townships will be chosen by ten teams composed of people from various social classes.

MNA

Local and foreign media discuss management for sustainable development of media sector

YANGON, 19 Sept—The 3rd Conference on Media Development in Myanmar: Towards A Sustainable Media Development continued for the second day at Chatrium Hotel in Yangon on Friday.

The conference focused on procedures of solving complaints to the press council, management for sustainable development of the media sector, media, peace-making and public society, and legal effectiveness on freedom of expression after enactment of the media law. Local and foreign media persons participated in respective group discussions.

In the afternoon, the conference reviewed the discussions of the two-day session.

The conference was attended by Union Minis-

ter for Information U Ye Htut and officials, Hluttaw representatives, representatives of UNESCO, international media, the Myanmar Press Council (Interim) and local media totalling about 200.—MNA



The 3rd Conference on Media Development in Myanmar: Towards A Sustainable Media Development in progress.—MNA

Importance of women's role, gender equality discussed at Yangon women's forum

By Khaing Thanda Lwin

YANGON, 19 Sept—Women's participation in any decision-making process plays an important role in the country's development, Daw Shwe Shwe

Sein Latt, Central Committee member of the Women's Organization Network (WON), said on Friday at the women's forum in Yangon.

The two-day forum is aimed at smoothing the flow of information among women organizations and creating an opportunity for more cooperation among them.

The organizing bodies

expressed the belief that the forum would create more channels linked to the government.

Mar Mar Cho, Coordinator of WON, highlighted that women need more effective laws to take action against harassers as the country has seen an increase in violence against women especially in sub-urban townships in Yangon Region as well as in rural areas. The majority of victims, however, hesitate to speak out about the difficulties they are facing.

More than 300 participants from over 100 local and foreign-based women's organizations attended the forum.

The organizations are planning to accelerate field trips to grassroots people in regions and states to disseminate research knowledge about violence against women, according to organizers.—NLM



Delegates from local and foreign-based women's organizations pose for documentary photo at women's forum in Yangon.

PHOTO: KHAING THANDA LWIN

Fingerlings of carp, sturgeon species released into Yezin Dam



Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and party release various species of fingerlings into Yezin Dam as part of prevention for depletion of fish species at the water resources.—MYAWADY

IFC provides Yoma Bank...

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and remittance; only 5 percent of adults have a bank account in their name.

"It is crucial that small and medium enterprises in Myanmar have access to financial services that allow them to operate and thrive," said Yoma Bank Executive Chairman and CEO U Theim Wai, also known as Serge Pun.

"Yoma Bank is proud to grow its business in partnership with IFC to support SMEs in Myanmar, which are critical for the country's economic and social development. It is our aim to be a leading SME Bank in the country and to contribute toward developing a vibrant SME sector in the country."

"In addition to the loan, IFC will advise Yoma Bank on identifying and installing a core banking system, enhancing its risk management and corporate governance, and developing new products and delivery channels for small and medium enterprises over the next three years," the statement said. Yoma Bank will also develop policies and procedures to identify and manage environmental and social risks associated with the business activities it finances.

According to the statement, IFC's investment and advisory support is expected to help Yoma Bank provide an additional 1,000 loans worth \$370 million to small and medium enterprises in Myanmar by 2019.

"IFC puts a strategic focus on supporting the de-

velopment of Myanmar's financial and banking sector as banks are critically important in helping entrepreneurs grow their businesses and contribute to the overall economy," said Karin Finkelston, IFC's Vice President for Asia Pacific.

"IFC supports Yoma Bank and other lenders to develop environmental and social sustainability standards and governance structures that will help them integrate into the international banking community and better serve the needs of Myanmar's small and medium enterprises."

Founded in 1993, Yoma Bank is one of Myanmar's leading fully licensed commercial banks with 2,300 employees and more than 50 branches covering 25 major cities nationwide. It is recognized as one of the most progressive banks in Myanmar and is leading an effort to bring responsible banking to the country with a strong emphasis on good corporate governance and conservative capital-ratio policies. The lender is well positioned to support Myanmar's continued economic growth. IFC, together with the World Bank, is supporting reforms and investments in Myanmar to strengthen the private sector and create jobs to reduce poverty and boost shared prosperity. IFC aims to improve the country's investment climate, access to finance, and infrastructure, with an initial focus on the power and telecommunications sectors.

NLM

Religious leaders discuss interfaith friendship and peaceful co-existence in Dawei

DAWEI, 19 Sept—A workshop on interfaith friendship and peaceful co-existence took place at Edu Park in South Nyaung-yan Ward of Dawei in Taninthayi Region on Thursday and Friday.

Chairman of the Region Interfaith Friendship Organization U Tun Kyi and Region Director of Religious Affairs Department U Ye Naing Win explained the important role of interfaith friendship in the society.

Project Director Dr Hnin Aye Ko of Yadana Land Development Association explained the objectives of his association and projects.

Abbot of Gawthitayama Monastery Sayadaw Bhaddanta Pannasami of Dawei, Chairman of Township Sangha Nayaka Committee Pakokku Mon-



astery Abbot Bhaddanta Aggavamsa and Nandathiri Monastery Abbot Bhaddanta Nandobhasa of Minyat Village of Launglon Township emphasized that they administer and promote Buddhism and peace.

Information Officer Saya U Aung Naing of

the organization explained Hinduism and peace; Muslim preacher Saya U Min Naing, Islam and peace; and Executive Secretary of Myanmar Churches Council Saya U Hlaing Lin Htet, Christianity and peace.

The workshop was attended by departmental

officials, Chairman of the region organization U Tun Kyi, local authorities and leaders of the four major religions and townselders.

During the workshop period they paid goodwill visits to religious buildings in Dawei.

Po Shwe Thun-Dawei



Training courses for special olympic sports events conducted

YANGON, 19 Sept—The Myanmar Special Olympic Sports Federation opened a volunteer course, a coaching course and unified sports course at the sports ground for people with disabilities in Dagon Myothit (North) Township of Yangon on Thursday.

President of Myanmar Special Olympic Federation Col Myo Myint (Rtd) and National Director Lt-Col Thein Win (Rtd) explained the purpose of conducting the training courses. They stressed the need to turn out outstanding athletes in the special Olympic sports events.

Altogether 90 trainees from regions and states attended the courses.

Thawda Nge



Indaw Creek destroys roads, bridges, killing animals

INDAW, 19 Sept—Indaw Creek overflowed its surroundings in the southern part of Indaw in Sagaing Region on Thursday.

“The rain started at 2 a.m. on Thursday. As it was not heavy, the local peoples did not think floods would hit the region. But from 5 a.m., Indaw Creek caused floods quickly and nobody was able to collect their belongings. Within 15 minutes, the area was placed

under four-foot deep water, and the Yenatan Ward close to the creek was under 5-6 feet deep flood water. Some poultry, pigs and cows were killed due to the floods,” said a flood-victim of Aungmingala Ward of Indaw. “The rainfall was 1.54 inches. The flood caused damages on roads and bridges in many parts of the township. The local authorities are carrying out rescue works and clearing

the debris at the same time. There has been no casualty in the incident and volunteers are helping to clear the residences in flood-ravaged Aungmingala and Aungchantha wards,” said the township administrator.

“In 2005, we faced a similar experience of floods. At that time, the flood left silt on the roads and debris was scattered all over the town,” a local recounted.—*Kyaw Thiha*

LOCAL NEWS

Primate fossils, packets of ancient palm-leave manuscripts handed over to officials



MANDALAY, 19 Sept—A ceremony to hand over primate fossils and packets of ancient palm-leave manuscripts was held at the hall of Mandalay Region Department of Archaeology and National Museum in Mandalay on Thursday.

Officials of the Customs Department and the

Department of Archaeology and National Museum explained artifacts and ancient palm leaves before handing them over.

The fossils were seized on board a vehicle leaving Mandalay for Muse at the checkpoint in Kyaukchaw Village in Patheingyi Township in the evening of 31 July, while the ancient

palm-leave manuscript packets were confiscated on a Yangon-Muse highway passenger bus at the same location in the morning of 26 July.

The primate fossils weighing 352 kilos and the 14 packets of ancient palm-leave manuscripts will be sent to the National Museum in Nay Pyi Taw to display them for public observation.

Deputy Director U Nyo Myint Tun of the Department of Archaeology and National Museum said that legal action will be taken against those who illegally move and smuggle artifacts.

Htin Lin Maung (Mandalay Sub-printing House)

1st tailoring course opened in Nay Pyi Taw



NAY PYI TAW, 19 Sept—As part of rural region development programme, the Ministry of Livestock, Fisheries and Rural Development opened the first batch of tailoring course on Monday in Pyinmana Township here. The main objective of the free course is to help local people earn a bit more money in the

sewing business.

Altogether 50 female trainees from Zabuthiri and Pobbathiri townships in Nay Pyi Taw Council Area are attending the course.

Plans are underway to support the outstanding trainees to start and run their own business, according to the ministry.

Ko Gyi Kyaw

Natogyi Tsp gets 30 tube-wells

NATOGYI, 19 Sept—Officials from the department of water resources management in Myingyan of Mandalay Region, recently inspected the conditions of 30 tube-wells in Natogyi Township, urging locals to systematically maintain those wells.

Officials pledged them to rapidly construct the remaining tube-wells in

the township. The government allotted budgets to construct 100 tube-wells in Natogyi Township this financial year. In order to have access to safe drinking and irrigation water in central dry zones, the government is planning to drill 528 tube-wells in Myingyan District this FY.

Zaw Min Naing (Myingyan)

Departmental personnel provide health care, issuance of CSCs to rural people



MYANAUNG, 19 Sept—Departmental personnel conducted free medical treatment, school health care activities and issuance of citizenship scrutiny cards at the Basic Education Middle School in Seingon Village of Myanaung Township in

Ayeyawady Region on Thursday.

The township departmental officials and staff led by Township Administrator U Min Min Tun provided health care services to rural people and students and issued citizenship scrutiny cards to

students.

At the school, they gave educative talks to local people.

The team gave free health care to 188 people and CSCs to 113 students, according to officials.

Win Bo (Myanaung IPRD)

Non-formal primary education activity launched in Mingaladon Tsp

YANGON, 17 Sept—A ceremony to launch the non-formal primary education activity for 2014-15 academic year was held at Basic Education Middle School No 14 (Branch) in Nwekhway Village in Mingaladon Township of Yangon Region on 15 September.

Wellwishers donated cash and stationery to officials. Moreover, officials presented prizes to outstanding students.

Mingaladon Township opens five non-formal primary education camps where 120 students are pursuing education at first grade and second grade and

30 at middle school level.

The supervisor of the Non-Formal Education Project (Central) organized the capacity enhancement meeting with the participation of the camp supervisory committee chairmen and secretaries.

Khin Zaw (Mingalar)

Clearance of traffic congestion conducted at Yadanabon University for examination



MANDALAY, 19 Sept—The one-way system for traffic route was designated at Yadanabon University of Amarapura Township in Mandalay Region for ensuring traffic safety of the students. During the examination period, the vehicles are to use the Taungthaman Lake ringroad as the entrance road to the university and the Yangon-Mandalay Highway (dairy product factory) as the leaving road.

The university examination is being conducted from 18 to 29 September. Traffic enforcement is being undertaken by officials from 7 am to 5 pm daily of the examination. Last year, the students faced difficulties, sources said.

Maung Pyi Thu (Mandalay)

Australian PM cites “chatter” of attacks on government, parliament

SYDNEY, 19 Sept — Intelligence “chatter” has revealed that militants plan to attack Australian politicians and government buildings, the prime minister said on Friday, a day after hundreds of police carried out a sweeping counter-terrorism operation. Prime Minister Tony Abbott said he had ordered security boosted at Parliament House in Canberra, amid mounting concerns over the possibility of attacks by Australians radicalised in Iraq or Syria.

More than 800 police were involved in the security operation in Sydney and Brisbane on Thursday, which authorities said had thwarted a plot by militants linked to the Islamic State group to behead a random



Australia's Prime Minister Tony Abbott (C) speaks to defence personnel at Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) Base Williamtown, located north of Sydney, before they depart to join the US-led coalition fighting Islamic State militants in Iraq, in this picture released by the Australian Defence Force on 18 Sept, 2014. — REUTERS

member of the public.

“There are close links between Australians fighting with ISIL in Syria and Iraq, and networks of support back here in Australia,” Abbott told reporters, referring to the group otherwise known as Islamic State that has seized large stretches of territory in Syria and Iraq.

“The chatter involving Parliament House was chatter between Australians in Syria and Iraq and their supporters here in Australia.” “I’m not aware that specific individuals have been named as part of this chatter, but certainly government, government people and Parliament have been referred to as part of this chatter,” he said.

US Secretary of State

John Kerry on Thursday called the foiled plot an “extravaganza of brutality”, and said it was evidence of the radical group’s ability to attack targets outside the Middle East.

Australia is concerned over the number of its citizens believed to be fighting overseas with militant groups, including a suicide bomber who killed three people in Baghdad in July and two men shown in images on social media holding the severed heads of Syrian soldiers.

Abbott said at least 100 Australians are in the Middle East either fighting with or supporting Islamic State or other militant groups, a number that he said has been increasing in recent months.—Reuters

Heavy rain floods Philippine capital; markets, schools shut

MANILA, 19 Sept — Heavy rain in the Philippine capital, Manila, caused flooding in many areas on Friday, shutting schools, government offices and financial markets as a tropical storm made landfall to the north.

Thousands of residents in low-lying areas were moved to higher ground, officials said, as flood waters rose quickly after the equivalent of half a month’s usual rain fell in six hours. The Philippine Stock Exchange suspended trade after the government cancelled work and classes in the capital.

Trading at the electronic foreign exchange platform Philippine Dealing System was also suspended, with clearing and settlement cancelled for the day. Tropical storm Fung-Wong, with maximum winds of 85 kph (50 mph) and gusts of up to 100 kph (62 mph), made landfall at about noon in the northern rice-producing region of Cagayan, said weather forecaster Aldczar Aurelio.

The storm was moving west northwest at 22 kph (13 mph) towards the South China Sea and was expected to leave land by late on Friday,

Aurelio said. Civil aviation authorities said 40 domestic flights were cancelled and six international flights from Singapore, Thailand and China to Manila were diverted to other Philippine airports. Some flights were delayed. Thousands of ferry passengers were stranded after services were cancelled and the coastguard also stopped fishing boats from going to sea. More than 27,000 people were evacuated in Marikina City in the eastern part of the capital where a river burst its banks, said Del De Guzman, city mayor. — Reuters



Residents wade through a flooded street during Tropical storm Fung-Wong in Pasay city, metro Manila on 19 Sept, 2014. — REUTERS

New Thai premier urged to promote trade with Europe, US

BANGKOK, 19 Sept — Newly-appointed Thai Prime Minister Gen Prayuth Chan-ocha has been suggested to promote trade, investment and tourism with the European countries and the United States ahead of planned visits to neighbouring states.

Former Thai Foreign Minister Surapong Tovichakchaikul said on Thursday the strongman-turned-premier should adopt a top-priority agenda to visit European countries, the United States and Australia in order to pursue trade, investment and tourism interests, especially regarding the exports of Thai rice and rubber to those parts of the world market.

Nevertheless, it has

somewhat become a tradition for new Thai leaders to pay official visits to all neighbouring states shortly after they had begun to take office and before they may have taken trips to relatively distant parts of the world.

For instance, former premier Yingluck Shinawatra, whose elected government was ousted in the 22 May military coup orchestrated by Gen Prayuth, had paid official visits to all of Thailand’s nine fellow ASEAN states between 2011 and 2012.

Surapong said the new government under Gen Prayuth’s leadership is yet to give assurances to the world community, especially in the West, about Thailand’s economic po-

tentials and tourism which have remained intact since the bloodless coup.

In particular, he said, the Europeans, Americans and Australians should be given assurances of Thailand’s current political stability and favourable trade and investment climate.

“The new premier should explain to the West why martial law is still being enforced though it might not negatively affect tourism in Thailand,” said Surapong.

“He needs not hurry to visit the ASEAN community for which he may leave and return in a single day. Those neighbouring states will undoubtedly continue to buy our goods,” said the former foreign minister

who was part of the deposed Yingluck cabinet.

Gen Prayuth earlier maintained that martial law, enforced since the coup was staged four months ago, needs to be prolonged because, he said, resistance groups are reported to exist, albeit in hidden fashion, with alleged plans to instigate a massive revolt against his military-led regime.

However, martial law is highly speculated to be lifted for world-renowned tourist spots such as Pattaya, Phuket and Samui islands but not for Bangkok and Chiang Mai, the reported stronghold of those loyal to former Thai leader Thaksin Shinawatra and his sister, Yingluck.—Xinhua

Nepal allows Indian firm to build hydropower plant

KATHMANDU, 19 Sept — Nepal’s Cabinet late Thursday approved an Indian firm’s plan to build a 900 megawatt hydropower project in northwestern Nepal for exporting power to India, a move expected to encourage several other foreign investors that are seeking to develop hydropower projects in the country, officials said on Friday.

The Cabinet also approved a power trade agreement with India, paving the way for building cross-border transmission links for commercial exchange of electricity between the two countries. The power trade agreement, signed earlier this month by energy secretaries of the two countries in New Delhi, is expected

to be approved soon by Indian government.

With an approximate investment of \$1.16 billion, the Upper Karnali hydropower project is the largest foreign investment project in the country and also the first hydropower project to be built for exporting power.

“We are confident that the Cabinet’s endorsement of the project as well as the power trade agreement with India will expedite talks with other developers,” said Ghanashyam Ojha, external affairs head of the Nepal Investment Board, a government body headed by the prime minister and formed to facilitate large-scale investment projects.—Kyodo News

WORLD

Scots spurn independence but impatient for new powers

EDINBURGH, 19 Sept — Scotland spurned independence in a historic referendum that threatened to rip the United Kingdom apart, sow financial turmoil and diminish Britain's remaining global clout.

A vote for the 307-year union is a relief for millions of Britons including Prime Minister David Cameron, whose job was on the line, as well as allies across the world who were horrified at the prospect of the United Kingdom's separation.

Unionists won 55 percent of the vote while separatists won 45 percent with 31 of 32 constituencies declared. Political leaders of all hues agreed that Britain would be changed for good nonetheless.

Unionists cheered, kissed and drank wine and beer in Glasgow, Scotland's biggest city where secessionists won, while nationalist leader Alex Salmond conceded defeat in Edinburgh, which supported the United Kingdom.

"Scotland has by a ma-

jority decided not, at this stage, to become an independent country. I accept that verdict of the people and I call on all of Scotland to follow suit in accepting the democratic verdict of the people of Scotland," Salmond said.

Cameron, speaking outside his official London residence in Downing Street, said the question of Scottish independence had been settled for a generation.

"There can be no disputes, no re-runs, we have heard the settled will of the Scottish people," said Cameron. The Queen, who is at her Scottish castle in Balmoral, is expected to make a rare comment on Friday.

The campaign for independence had electrified this country of 5.3 million but also divided the passions of friends and families from the remote Scottish islands of the Atlantic to the tough city estates of Glasgow.

Sterling strengthened sharply against the dollar and the euro while British share prices rose. Royal



Supporters from the "No" Campaign react to a declaration in their favour, at the Better Together Campaign headquarters in Glasgow, Scotland on 19 Sept, 2014.—REUTERS

Bank of Scotland said it had scrapped plans to move its registered office to England.

Though the break up the United Kingdom, the world's sixth largest economy and a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council, has been avoided, Britain's rulers admit the Scottish vote will lead to a reshaped the union.

Speaking in front of an image of a giant white on blue Scottish flag, Salmond laced his defeat with a warning to British politicians in London that they must respect their last minute promise of more powers for Scotland.

"Scotland will expect these to be honoured in rapid course," he said before walking off the stage, his head bowed.

Opinion polls showing a surge in Scottish separatist support in the two weeks

leading up to the 18 September vote prompted a rushed British pledge to grant more powers to Scotland, a step that has angered some English lawmakers in Westminster. In an effort to deflate that anger, Cameron vowed to forge a new constitutional settlement that would grant Scotland the promised powers but also give powers to England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

"Just as Scotland will vote separately in the Scottish parliament on their issues of tax, spending and welfare, so too England, as well as Wales and Northern Ireland should be able to vote on these issues," Cameron said.

"All this must take place, in tandem with and at the same pace as the settlement for Scotland."

Cast as a constitutional revolution, commentators

said Cameron's pledge of more powers to the constituent parts of the United Kingdom was aimed at sedating 'the slumbering beast of English nationalism'.

Cameron's Conservatives have seen members seep towards the United Kingdom Independence Party, an anti-European Union party, ahead of a referendum on EU membership that Cameron has promised by the end of 2017 if he wins the 2015 election.

"I'm not convinced by what I've heard this morning from Mr Cameron this morning that he seriously wants to address that," UKIP leader Nigel Farage said.

Seeking to tap into a cocktail of historical rivalry, opposing political tastes and a perception that London has mismanaged Scotland, nationalists said Scots, not

London, should rule Scotland to build a wealthier and fairer country.

Though the nationalists won Glasgow, they failed to live up to opinion polls before the vote which forecast that the United Kingdom's fate was balanced on a knife edge.

"We have chosen unity over division, and positive change rather than needless separation," Alistair Darling, head of the "Better Together" campaign and a former British finance minister.

The vote prevents 59-year-old Salmond from winning his dream of an independent Scotland, a goal for which he has worked with a mix of shrewd calculation and nationalist passion for his entire adult life.

Unionists had warned independence would usher in financial, economic and political uncertainty and diminish the UK's standing in the world. They have said that Scotland would not keep the pound as part of a formal currency union.

US President Barack Obama and European Union leaders had made clear they wanted the United Kingdom to stay together.

Marin Schulz, the centre-left speaker of the European Parliament, told German radio that while the referendum had been an internal matter for Britain: "I admit I am relieved by the result."

While Scottish leaders promised to work together, Scots remained divided in joy and disappointment over the fate of their country.

Reuters



Supporters from the "Yes" Campaign react as they sit in George Square in Glasgow, Scotland on 19 Sept, 2014.—REUTERS

UN chief urges diplomatic accord on Iran's nuclear programme

UNITED NATIONS, 19 Sept — UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon on Thursday voiced his hope to see a comprehensive agreement on Iran's nuclear programme at an early date.

Ban made the appeal in a meeting with visiting Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif, which was held before the resumption of talks in New York between Iran and six world powers.

The talks between Iran and the six countries — Britain, France, China, Germany, Russia the United States — are resuming after a two-month hiatus

and against the backdrop that Washington and Teheran have ruled out cooperation on fighting Islamic State militants, who have taken over swaths of Iraq and Syria.

In July, Iran and the six countries agreed to extend negotiations over the former's disputed nuclear programme for another four months till 24 November as they could not narrow down the significant gaps on core issues during the past six months.

An interim deal, which took effect on 20 January, was designed to buy time for negotiations. Under the deal, Iran would suspend

some sensitive nuclear activities in exchange for a limited sanction relief.

In recent months, the talks for a final deal stalled as the parties were still far apart on some core issues, such as Iran's future enrichment capacity.

Apart from the Iranian nuclear issue, Ban and Zarif also discussed conflicts in the region, particularly Iraq and Syria, and the human rights situation in Iran, Ban's spokesman said.

Ban "reiterated his belief that Iran would play a constructive role in Iraq and Syria," the spokesman added.—Xinhua

British PM says "delighted" over Scots' option to remain in UK

LONDON, 19 Sept — British Prime Minister David Cameron on Friday said he was "delighted" that Scots voted against independence in Thursday's referendum.

"The people of Scotland have spoken. It is a clear result. They have kept our country of four nations together. Like millions of other people, I am delighted," said Cameron in a statement released by the Downing Office. "As I said during the campaign, it would have broken my heart to see our United Kingdom come to an end," he added. He added that there was now a chance to change the Britain "for the better."—Xinhua



Britain's Prime Minister David Cameron speaks in front of 10 Downing Street, in central London on 19 Sept, 2014.—REUTERS

PERSPECTIVES

Saturday, 20 September, 2014

Democracy does not flourish in the absence of responsibility and accountability

By Kyaw Thura

Democracy, as noted in the agenda for democratization published by the United Nations in 1996, is a system of government which embodies, in a variety of institutions and mechanisms, the ideal of political power based on the will of the people.

Simply put, democracy is a universal value

which allows people to express their will freely and determine their own political, economic, social and cultural systems, with their full participation in all aspects of their lives. This means that democracy will no doubt fail without public participation in shaping a nation.

When it comes to democracy, there is no single model which can be copied and practiced readily. Despite the fact that democracies share common features, world nations are found to have created and designed a democracy which suits their own culture and tradition.

To turn a country into an established democracy, its people are required to get rid of apathy, selfishness, favouritism and nepotism, all of which are the most insidious enemies to democracy. On the other hand, criticisms are acceptable as long as they are offered in a constructive way. It is natural that people, especially the media, tend to criticize mismanagement, transgression

and unprofessional conduct. However, empty criticism deserves little or no attention.

Abiding by the law is an imperative which lies at the heart of democracy too. That is why responsibility and accountability are in the vanguard of democracy. Being responsible and accountable means taking the blame for everything that has gone wrong. Taking the blame for everything that has gone wrong is in fact a true spirit of big citizenship.

Write for us

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

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.

Personal Organizational Beliefs and Values

Kyi Mun

** Whatever the mind can conceive and believe, it can achieve.*

-Napoleon Hill

The Necessity of Beliefs and Values

Human beings usually have some beliefs and values. Most of the human beliefs and values are basically related to morality, ethics and integrity. And some are based on the conduct of living and moving and having their being.

Just as individuals have beliefs and values, human societies and business organizations have their own beliefs and values. Just as personal beliefs and values more or less determine the character and quality of an individual, organizational beliefs and values also determine the caliber of the character and quality of an organization.

Some Examples of Individual Beliefs & Values

Some of the important personal beliefs and values are :

- Honesty and Uprightness
- Simple Living and High Thinking
- Diligence and Frugality
- Plain Living and Hard Struggle
- Friendliness and Empathy
- Consideration and Helpfulness
- Selflessness and Service
- Character and Conviction
- Integrity and Caring
- Courage and Commitment

Some Examples of Organizational Beliefs and Values 5-Highs :

High Character
High Competence
High Constructive Bias
High Commitment
High Caring Attitude

QUIVERS :

Quality
Uniqueness
Innovativeness
Value
Excellence
Relationships
Service

QSCV (of McDonald's)

Quality
Service
Cleanliness
Value

Negative Attitudes

Just as Beliefs and Values are of some benefits to individuals and organizations, some of the attitudes can be of negative value to organizations as well as to individuals. Some of the bad Brand/Name destroying negative mental attitudes are :

- Arrogance
- Greed
- Complacency
- Inconsistency
- Myopia
- Apathy
- Inertia
- Ignorance

Some of the Organizational Killer Values are :

- Insight
- Focus
- Alignment
- Execution
- Renewal

Marketing Values

In marketing there are ten values, which are also called 10-Ps'

- Philosophy of Business
- Purpose of Business
- Policy of Business
- Product
- Price
- Place
- Promotion
- People
- Process
- Physical-evidence

Conclusion

He who excels as a soldier is the one who is not warlike; he who fights the best fight is not wrathful; he who best conquers an enemy is not quarrelsome; he who best employs people is obedient himself.

New health facilities opened in Rakhine State



SITTWAY, 19 Sept—Rakhine State Health Department has opened a 200-bed hospital, four 100-bed hospitals, three 50-bed hospitals, nine 25-bed hospitals, 35 16-bed hospitals, over 600 rural health centres and branches, four school health groups and 18 maternal and child care centres in 17 townships of the state to provide health care services to the local people.

The state department cooperates with local social organizations, Mercy Malaysia, IRC and MRF groups, WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA, Malteser, ACF and Care Myanmar in giving healthcare to people in relief camps and people in Sittway, Pauktaw, Yathedaung, Yanbye,

Maungtau, Myebon and Kyauktaw townships.

With regard to future plans, officials of the department have undertaken natural disaster preparedness for local people. The department plans to open more rural health centers, branches and hospitals with the appointment of health staff, turning out of midwives and provision of more medical equipment and medicines and health care services.

People in relief camps thanked the health staff for the free health care services and health staff and midwives expressed their happiness in providing necessary medical treatment to the people and victims in relief camps.

Min Min Zaw (MNA)

GOLD PRICE, FE RATE (19-9-2014)

Yangon Gold Price

Buying K652,300 per tical: Selling K653,300

Mandalay Gold Price

Buying K652,000 per tical: Selling K653,000

FE RATE

USD Buying	K984	-	Selling	K990
SGD Buying	K775	-	Selling	K783
Euro Buying	K1260	-	Selling	K1280

Triple Bottom Lines :	IBM's Core Values	UOB's Core Values
People	- Respect for Individuals	- Performance Excellence
Planet	- Excellence	- Service Superiority
Profit	- Service	- Habit of Going the Extra Mile
		- Can-Do-Spirit

U Kyi Mun
residing in Yangon
is a consultant of
NAING Group
Capital Co.,Ltd.

NATIONAL

Development of Rakhine discussed with UNDP

NAY PYI TAW, 19 Sept—Union Minister for Industry U Maung Myint held a talk with Country Director Mr Tolly Kurbanov of United Nations Development Program (UNDP) at his ministry in Nay Pyi Taw on Friday.

They discussed prioritized tasks for development of Rakhine State, assistance for more development of agriculture and fisheries in the state, cooperation in industrial

and tourism industries for creating job opportunities, capacity building for people from the state, supply of power and cash assistance.

MNA

Union Minister U Win Myint speaking at China-ASEAN Industry and Commerce Forum in Nanning of China.

MNA

Union minister attends China-ASEAN Industry and Commerce forum

NAY PYI TAW, 19 Sept—Union Minister for Commerce U Win Myint made a speech at the China-ASEAN Industry and

Commerce Forum held in Nanning of China on 17 September.

In his speech, the union minister explained the

reform in the commerce sector of Myanmar, increase in the number of companies in Myanmar during the three year period

of the term of the incumbent government, and the economic growth. Nineteen papers were discussed at the forum. —MNA



Digital 3D photocopy of King Alaungphaya's Gold Letter soon to be on display at National Museum

YANGON, 19 Sept- Dr Than Tun once put it that 'we need to learn history in order not to be dumb'. History is neither erasable nor negligible. What has been done today will go down in the history. History serves a proof of cultural heritage of a nation or a tribe.

King Alaungphaya has now been shot with the use of digital 3D technology and is being photocopied for public observation in the country.

Last year, a Myanmar delegation led by Union Minister U Aye Myint Kyu visited Germany at the invitation of the

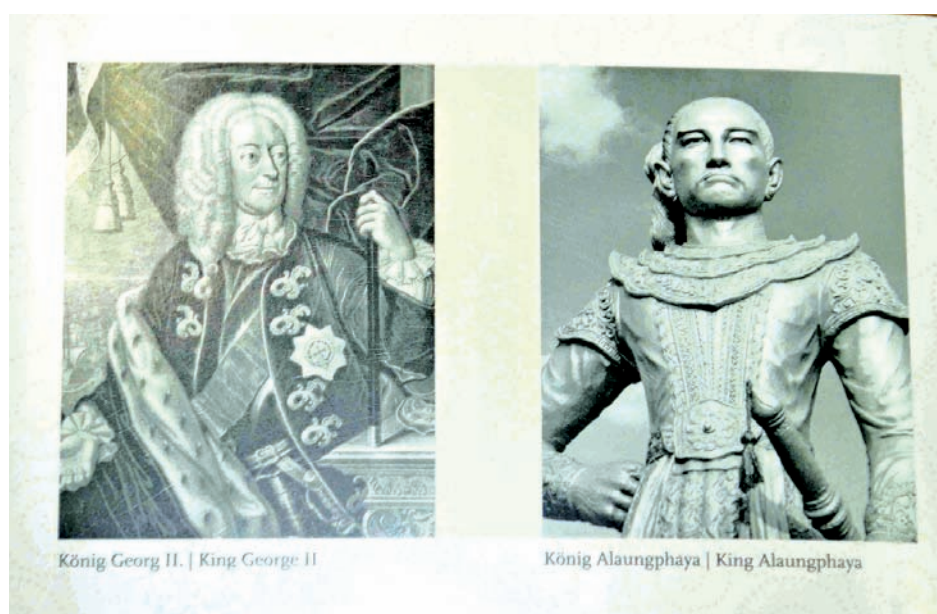
a 3D format copy of the Gold Letter to be kept at its National Museum in Yangon.

Hannover is said to be the birthplace of King George II, who is believed to have handed the gold letter to his native town Hannover.

King Alaungphaya gave the letter to King George as a token of improving friendly relations and promotion of trade between the two countries.

The letter measures 55 centimetres by 12 centimetres, with 12 rubies of high quality each on upper and lower edges. The letter bears a royal stamp.

Germany, the United Kingdom and Myanmar are now planning to include the Gold Letter in



Portraits of King George II of Great Britain in 1756 and King Alaungphaya of Myanmar.

the Memory of the World Register not only because the letter is a unique attestation in the history of the

world as well as in the history of Myanmar but also because it is of outstanding aesthetic value of the

eighteenth century.

Min Min Zaw and Han Ni Win (Trs: KTY)



A case made of tusk that stores gold letter sent by King Alaungphaya to the British King.

The Myanmar people of today are fortunate enough to witness a gold letter sent by King Alaungphaya of Myanmar to King George II of Great Britain in 1756. King Alaungphaya was the founder of the Konbaung Dynasty over 250 years ago.

The Gold Letter of

German foreign minister. During the official visit, the Myanmar delegation was offered an opportunity to observe the Gold Letter of King Alaungphaya, which is on display at the library of Gottfried Wilhelm in Hannover. It was on that visit that Germany promised Myanmar



The gold letter sent by King Alaungphaya of Myanmar to King George II of Great Britain in 1756.

Ebola outbreak threat to int'l peace and security: UN Security Council



UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon (C) speaks during a UN Security Council emergency meeting on Ebola outbreak, at the UN headquarters in New York, on 18 Sept, 2014. XINHUA

UNITED NATIONS, 19 Sept — The UN Security Council on Thursday adopted a resolution on Ebola, determining that the epidemic outbreak “constitutes a threat to international peace and security.”

In the resolution unanimously adopted here at an emergency meeting rarely seen on a public health crisis, the Council recognized that the current outbreak in Africa could lead to increased civil unrest and a deterioration of the political and security situations in the most affected countries.

The resolution called

upon member states and regional organizations to take action on the unprecedented outbreak and provide urgent assistance, such as deployable medical capacities, including field hospitals, medical expertise, as well as airlift and aeromedical capacities.

It underscored that “the control of outbreaks of major infectious diseases requires urgent action and greater national, regional and international collaboration and, in this regard, stressing the crucial and immediate need for a coordinated international

response to the Ebola outbreak.”

Regional organizations such as the African Union (AU), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the European Union (EU) are urged to “mobilize immediately,” while member states, including those in the region, are called on to “lift travel restrictions to enable the free movement of people and trade to the affected countries.”

Thursday’s resolution is the third ever on a health crisis by the Security Council, with previous ones

adopted on HIV/AIDS in 2000 and 2011.

The Ebola outbreak was first confirmed in Guinea on 22 March and soon spread to neighbouring Liberia and Sierra Leone. The latest Ebola figures, according to the World Health Organization (WHO), are 5,335 reported cases and 2,622 deaths, primarily in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. The epidemic has been spreading exponentially, with half of the cases recorded over the past three weeks. Liberia has been the worst hit, with over 1,200 deaths. —Xinhua

Japan, S Korea discuss possible foreign ministerial talks in NY

TOKYO, 19 Sept — Officials from Japan and South Korea on Friday discussed a possible foreign ministerial meeting between the two countries on the sidelines of annual gatherings of the UN General Assembly next week in New York, according to a Japanese official.

In a meeting in Tokyo, the senior Foreign Ministry officials may also have talked about ways to realize a summit between Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and South Korean President Park Geun Hye, who have yet to have a one-on-one meeting since they took office.

Among the other issues discussed are the so-called “comfort women” who were forced to work in wartime brothels for the Japanese military, a damages lawsuit filed in South Korea by those conscripted to work for Japanese companies during World War II and Seoul’s

restriction of agricultural and fisheries imports from Japan, the official said.

However, the official declined to reveal details of the talks between Junichi Ihara, director general of the Japanese Foreign Ministry’s Asian and Oceanian Affairs Bureau, and Lee Sang Deok, director general of the Northeast Asian Affairs Bureau of South Korea’s Foreign Ministry.

Bilateral relations remain strained over the issue of wartime sex slaves, many of whom were Korean.

The issue has been a major issue preventing the leaders of the two countries from meeting for summit talks.

South Korea has repeatedly demanded that Tokyo settle the issue in a way that is agreeable to the surviving victims, including an apology and compensation.

Kyodo News



Lee Sang Deok (C), director general of the Northeast Asian Affairs Bureau of South Korea’s Foreign Ministry, meets the press after holding talks with his Japanese counterpart, Junichi Ihara, at the Japanese Foreign Ministry in Tokyo on 19 Sept, 2014. KYODO NEWS

Italian PM Renzi’s father in fraudulent bankruptcy probe

GENOA / FLORENCE, 19 Sept — The father of Italian Prime Minister Matteo Renzi is under investigation for fraudulent bankruptcy at a company he owned before it was dissolved, judicial sources said on Thursday.

Tiziano Renzi confirmed to Reuters he had been informed of the investigation into the financial management of his former company, which distributed newspapers. He said he had nothing to hide and was not concerned. “I thank the magistrates because it is an act that will protect my rights. When I have time — and this shows how worried I am — I’ll write a press release,” he said.

Tiziano Renzi is a

businessman and former local politician with the now defunct Christian Democrat party in the town of Rignano sull’Arno, near Florence. —Reuters



Italian Prime Minister Matteo Renzi is pictured after delivering his speech at the Italian Parliament in Rome on 24 June, 2014. —REUTERS

Airlines suspend flights to Yemeni capital as security worsens

SANAA, 19 Sept — Foreign airlines suspended flights to Sanaa International Airport for 24 hours due to conflicts between the army and Shiite Houthi rebels in the Yemeni capital, the official Saba news agency reported on Thursday night.

“The foreign airlines decided to suspend flights to Sanaa for 24 hours due to the development in the capital,” Saba quoted the civil aviation authority as saying.

The airlines will review their decision on Friday on whether or not to resume flights based on the security situation in Sanaa, it added.

Security situation deteriorated in Sanaa on Thursday night as the Shiite Houthi rebels advanced

into the Yemeni capital after they clashed with the army in the city’s northwest outskirts for about three days.

The rebels fired rockets towards the Yemeni TV station in northern Sanaa on Thursday night, the latest in an escalating conflict between the government and Houthi rebels, security sources told Xinhua.

The state-run TV station which locates on a hill on the side of a main road leading to Sanaa International Airport was under heavy gunfire, the sources said, adding that the army had deployed reinforcement including several tanks to protect the TV station. No casualties have been mentioned.

The Yemeni TV re-

ported that “the Shiite Houthi armed rebels attacked the TV building with shells, in another armed escalation in the capital Sanaa.”

Witnesses said smoke rising from the building in the TV station, which called for help during its live broadcast.

Powerful explosions rocked the area which is also near Iman University, run by Sunni Islah Party, and barracks of the 1st Armored Division. The Shiite rebels have surrounded the two sites and clashed with the army soldiers there, leaving more than 50 people killed in the past two days.

On Wednesday, clashes between the army and Shiite Houthi rebels in Sanaa have left at least 20

soldiers killed.

The deadly clashes broke out as negotiations between the Sunni-dominated government and the Shiite Houthi group run into deadlock after the rebels walked away from talks aiming for a solution to end the crisis on Monday, citing “foreign intervention.”

Tens of thousands of supporters of the Houthi group rallied in Sanaa since early August, demanding the government to resume fuel subsidies and the resignation of the cabinet. The protesters also set up sit-in tents around several ministries. Meanwhile, the Houthi group also mobilized thousands of armed fighters at entry points to Sanaa.

Xinhua

WORLD

Kurds issue call to arms as Islamic State gains in Syria

BEIRUT, 19 Sept—Islamic State fighters besieged a Kurdish city in northern Syria on Thursday after seizing 21 villages in a major assault, prompting a call to arms from Kurds in neighbouring Turkey who urged followers to go and help resist the group's advance.

The attack on the city of Ayn al-Arab, known as Kobani in Kurdish, came two days after the top US military officer said the Syrian opposition would probably need the help of the Syrian Kurds to defeat Islamic State.

With the United States planning to expand military action against Islamic State from Iraq to Syria, a surveillance drone was spotted over nearby Islamic State-controlled territory in Aleppo Province, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, which tracks Syria's civil war, said.

It was not immediately clear who was operating the drone. US President Barack Obama last week said he would not hesitate to strike the radical Islamist group that has used Syria as a base to advance its plan to reshape the Middle East according to its radical vision of Sunni Islam.

The United States is conducting air strikes against Islamic State in Iraq and last month Obama authorized surveillance flights over Syria.

Islamic State fighters, armed with heavy weaponry including tanks, seized a group of villages near Kobani in an offensive which the Observatory said had started on Tuesday night. It said 21 villages had fallen to Islamic State in the last 24 hours as the group advanced on the city.

"We've lost touch with many of the residents living in the villages that ISIS



Soldiers from forces of Syria's President Bashar al-Assad walk on the Zalin hills, after saying they have regained control of the hill and farms surrounding it, in the northern Hama countryside on 16 Sept, 2014.—REUTERS

(Islamic State) seized," Ocalan Iso, deputy head of the Kurdish forces in Kobani, told *Reuters* via Skype.

He said the group was committing massacres and kidnapping women in the newly-seized areas, giving the names of 28 members of a single family he said had been taken captive. It was not possible to verify his account immediately.

The Kurds were appealing for military aid from other Kurdish groups in the region including the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), he said.

Support from Kurds who crossed from Turkey helped to repel an Islamic State attack on Kobani in July. Turkish PKK rebels later issued a call for young men in Turkey's southeast to join the fight in northern Syria.

"The youth of northern Kurdistan (southeast Turkey) should go to Kobani and take part in the historic, honourable resistance," the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) said in a statement on its website.

Footage posted on YouTube on Wednesday by the YPG, the main Kurdish armed group in Syria,

appeared to show Kurdish fighters armed with assault rifles and rocket-propelled grenades battling a tank flying the Islamic State's black flag west of Kobani.

About 3,000 men, women and children arrived at the Turkish border roughly 10 km (6 miles) from Kobani but were still waiting on the Syrian side after night fell, a *Reuters* witness said. Turkish forces stopped the crowd from crossing.

Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu said the governors of border provinces in Turkey, where Kurdish militants have waged a three-decade insurgency to push for greater autonomy, had been ordered to extend aid to refugees on Syrian side of the border.

"We're ready to help our brothers who are building up at the borders regardless of their ethnicity, religion and sect.

But our priority is to deliver aid within Syria's borders," he told reporters in Ankara.

Redur Xelil, spokesman for the YPG, said Islamic State had encircled Kobani.

Reuters

ISIL threat to all, says British foreign secretary

COPENHAGEN, 19 Sept—Visiting British Foreign Secretary Philip Hammond said here on Thursday that militant group ISIL is not only a threat to the stability of Middle East region, but also a threat to all.

During his meeting with his Danish counterpart Martin Lidegaard, the two sides talked about various issues including the security situation in Iraq, combating ISIL, the European Union reform as well as Ebola epidemic in Africa.

Briefing the media after the close-door talks, Hammond said he and Lidegaard both agreed that all countries should combat ISIL in a joint effort. "ISIL is not only a threat to the stability of Middle East region, but also a threat to all of us in our homeland," the top British diplomat said. Hammond noted that there are currently a few hundreds of British militants fighting in Iraq and Syria, and there are also some 400 militants

from Australia as well as some from Denmark.

"This is a challenge for all of us," he said. "We have to combat Jihadists not only in the Middle East but also back at home."

"We must take careful and thoughtful measures to sway those who might be attracted by ISIL. Meanwhile, we have to combat those who might come back and do harm to us," Hammond said. Talking about the European Union reform, Hammond said not only Britain but also the people of other EU member countries need the reform.

"They want to feel that the EU reflects their priorities, they want to feel that they have proper democratic control over the EU. They want the EU to be more competitive," he said.

To make EU fair, competitive and accountable in the future is a major theme for EU reform in the next few years, he added.

Xinhua

Poland, Argentina discuss economic cooperation

WARSAW, 19 Sept—Polish deputy Foreign Minister Katarzyna Kacperczyk and Argentinian Minister of Science, Technology and Innovations Lino Baranao met in Warsaw to discuss economic and technological cooperation, the Polish Foreign Ministry told local press on Thursday.

During the talks, Minister Kacperczyk stressed that Poland envisions R&D cooperation between companies and institutions from both countries. She added that support for

the promotion of science and raising innovation are among the priorities of Poland's economic diplomacy. Kacperczyk welcomed the fact that a growing number of enterprises are implementing projects together with foreign research centres.

Minister Kacperczyk noted that, after Brazil, Argentina is Poland's second biggest trade partner in Latin America and the Caribbean. Poland's exports to the region grew 25 percent year-on-year reaching 143

million US dollars in 2013.

Minister Baranao assured the Polish side that Argentinian entities are interested in the development of cooperation with Poland. The modernization of the innovation sector in Argentina, which is included in the Argentina Innovadora 2020 plan together with the possibilities of gaining EU funds for the implementation of joint projects with Poland, may provide a boost to bilateral cooperation.

Xinhua

13 killed in bomb attacks in Baghdad

BAGHDAD, 19 Sept—At least 13 people were killed in two suicide bomb attacks in the Iraqi capital of Baghdad on Thursday evening, a police source said.

A suicide bomber drove an explosive-laden car into a checkpoint and blew it up near the entrance to Al-adala Camp

in kadhimiya district in northern Baghdad, leaving at least 12 people killed and 30 others injured, the source told *Xinhua* on condition of anonymity. In another incident, one civilian were killed and six others wounded when a car bomb exploded in Iskan area in western Baghdad,

the source said. Iraq is witnessing some of its worst violence in recent years. According to the UN Assistance Mission for Iraq, terrorism and violence has killed more than 5,500 civilians in Iraq in the first half of this year, with 11,666 more wounded.

Xinhua



Firefighters try to douse a fire in Kathmandu, Nepal on 18 Sept, 2014. A total of five buildings were destroyed in the fire accident.—XINHUA

Developing world revives nuclear power prospects, but yet to commit



An aerial view shows Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant in Fukushima on 17 March, 2011. — REUTERS

LONDON, 19 Sept — Developing nations are leading a revival of interest in nuclear power, say atomic plant builders, but orders remain elusive as more safety features post-Fukushima have inflated investment costs.

Three-and-a-half years after Japan's reactor accident shook confidence, around 25 countries are thinking of turning nuclear to sustain strong growth and provide cleaner and reliable power.

"It's not so much growth in the developed countries but we're seeing a lot of other countries

that are wanting to develop nuclear. We're finding money in places we didn't even know existed," Danny Roderick, chief executive of Toshiba-owned nuclear reactor maker Westinghouse, told *Reuters* at a nuclear industry conference last week in London.

Rival reactor designer GE Hitachi Nuclear Energy, a joint venture between the US and Japanese companies, said it has held meetings with officials from India, Mexico and Vietnam, among others.

Countries as diverse as Bangladesh, Turkey or Jordan, are also considering

building nuclear plants and around 160 reactors are expected to come online over the next decade, according to the World Nuclear Association.

On paper, that should provide plenty of work, but the industry continues to lick its wounds in the aftermath of a devastating earthquake in Japan in March 2011, which caused triple meltdowns and hydrogen explosions at Tepco's Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant.

The accident put a break on much of the world's nuclear plans as governments re-assessed

the risks of running nuclear reactors and some, such as Germany, decided to part ways with nuclear altogether.

As of July this year, 67 reactors were under construction globally, with 56 of those in Asia and eastern Europe, according to the World Nuclear Industry Status Report 2014, whose lead authors are industry consultants Mycle Schneider and Antony Froggatt.

For US-based Westinghouse, opportunities in eastern Europe and new orders from China will be key to filling its order book, while GE Hitachi will seek to benefit from interest from nuclear newcomers across the globe.

"There certainly is some interest by some of the emerging markets compared to where we were 10 years ago," Preston Swafford, chief executive of Canadian reactor maker Candu Energy, told *Reuters*.

France's Areva, struggling with a slump in core earnings, is pinning its hopes on fresh orders for Britain's nuclear new build programme, as well as from Turkey, India and Saudi Arabia.

Reuters

Obama names Indian-American as new envoy to India

WASHINGTON, 19 Sept — US President Barack Obama on Thursday nominated an Indian-American to be his new ambassador to India, just before Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi comes for a maiden visit at the end of the month.

Obama named Richard Rahul Verma to fill in a post left vacant since March, a nomination that has to be approved by the Senate.

Verma served as assistant secretary of state for legislative affairs from 2009 to 2011 and a senior adviser to Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid from 2002 to 2007.

He is senior counselor at Steptoe & Johnson LLP and the Albright Stonebridge Group as well as a senior national security fellow at the Centre for American Progress, according to

the White House.

Obama will discuss with Modi "a range of issues of mutual interest in order to expand and deepen the US-India strategic partnership" during his visit on 29-30 September, the White House said.

Washington denied Modi a visa in 2005 for his alleged role in the communal riots in the state of Gujarat in 2002, in which over 1,000 people, mostly minority Muslims, were killed.

Modi, then chief minister of the state, was criticized for failing to act to prevent the riots.

Bilateral relations were chilled after the US arrest in December of India's then deputy consul general in New York Devyani Khobragade over visa fraud charges escalated into a major diplomatic row. — *Xinhua*

Fiji ruler looks set to win poll, but opponents spotlight fraud



An election poster for Voreqe "Frank" Bainimarama can be seen in the rear window of a taxi as a man gestures from the doorway of a local gymnasium in the Fiji capital of Suva on 26 Aug, 2014. — REUTERS

SYDNEY, 19 Sept — Fiji's strongman ruler looked set on Friday to sail to victory in the South Pacific island nation's first elections after eight years of military rule, a contest praised by regional leaders and observers, but clouded by opposition accusations of fraud.

Fiji, a tropical idyll about 3,200 km (2,000 miles) east of Australia, has suffered four coups since 1987, the latest in 2006 led by former army chief Voreqe "Frank" Bainimarama, whose Fiji First Party had a strong lead heading into Wednesday's election.

Fiji First got more than 60 percent of the vote in provisional results from the Electoral Commission on Thursday, but the final outcome will not be known for several days.

The provisional result was welcomed by regional powerhouse Australia, which is eager to have Fiji back in the fold after almost a decade of poor relations following the coup.

"Based on provisional results, the Fiji First Party is on track to win a majority of seats in Fiji's Parliament," Australia's Foreign Minister Julie Bishop said in a statement. — *Reuters*

Norwegian mass killer Breivik getting ever more extreme, father fears

OSLO, 19 Sept — The father of Anders Behring Breivik, who massacred 77 people in central Oslo and at an island summer camp in 2011, said on Thursday his son's fascist, anti-immigrant views seemed to be getting ever more extreme in jail.

"It's not nice being the father of a mass murderer," former diplomat Jens Breivik, 78, told a news conference to launch an autobiography entitled "My Fault?". He said the discovery that his son was the killer exceeded a parent's worst nightmares.

"I believe he is getting more and more extreme, maybe he will be more dangerous," Jens Breivik said after his 35-year-old son sent him a rambling letter refusing his request for a first meeting since the murders.

Breivik detonated a bomb in central Oslo on 22 July, 2011, killing eight, then took a boat to an island where the ruling



Norwegian mass killer Anders Behring Breivik gestures as he leaves the courtroom after the Oslo Court delivered the verdict of his trial in Oslo Courthouse on 24 Aug, 2012. — REUTERS

Labour Party were holding a summer camp and shot dead 69 more people, mostly teenagers. He was sentenced to 21 years in jail, the maximum in Norway though the term can be extended if there is deemed to be a risk he would commit new crimes.

Jens Breivik said as a father, he nurtured only a "small hope" his son would ever show remorse.

Anders Breivik's letter to his father demanded that he should declare himself a fascist as a pre-condition for meeting and also denounced Anders's

grand-parents for failing to side with Hitler's Nazis who occupied Norway during World War Two. Jens Breivik told *Reuters* that he feared his son could influence other extremists from jail with his radical right-wing anti-immigrant ideology. — *Reuter*

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Weather report

FORECAST VALID UNTIL EVENING OF THE 20th September, 2014: Rain or thundershowers will be scattered in Taninthayi Region, fairly widespread in Mandalay, Magway, Bago, Yangon and Ayeyawady Regions, Kayah, Kayin and Mon States and widespread in the remaining Regions and States with likelihood of isolated heavy falls in Sagaing Region, Kachin and Rakhine States. Degree of certainty is (100%).

STATE OF THE SEA: Occasional squalls with rough sea will be experienced Deltaic, off and along Rakhine Coasts. Surface wind speed in squalls may reach (40) m.p.h. Seas will be moderate elsewhere in Myanmar waters.

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**Islamic State releases
video it says shows British
journalist John Cantlie**



A member loyal to the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) waves an ISIL flag in Raqqa on 29 June, 2014.—REUTERS

BEIRUT, 19 Sept—Islamic State militants fighting in Iraq and Syria released a video on Thursday that they said shows British journalist John Cantlie in captivity saying he will soon reveal “facts” about the group to counter its portrayal in Western media.

The Islamic State, which controls territory in Syria and Iraq, has already beheaded two American journalists and one British aid worker in recent weeks in what it said was reprisal for US air strikes against it in Iraq.

But in the new roughly three-minute video posted on social media sites, the man identified as Cantlie appears in good health and promises to “convey some facts” in a series of “programmes,” suggesting there would be further instalments.

“Now, I know what

you’re thinking. You’re thinking, ‘He’s only doing this because he’s a prisoner. He’s got a gun at his head and he’s being forced to do this.’ Right?” the man in the video, wearing an orange shirt and closely-cropped hair, says.

“Well, it’s true. I am a prisoner. That I cannot deny. But seeing as I’ve been abandoned by my government and my fate now lies in the hands of the Islamic State, I have nothing to lose.”

British Foreign Secretary Philip Hammond said he had heard reports of a video on social media and said authorities would look closely at any material released online.

“These videos can be very distressing for the families of the individuals involved,” he told reporters during a visit to Copenhagen.—Reuters



Firemen work at the fire accident site in Vietnam-Singapore Industrial Park 1 in Binh Duong Province, Vietnam, on 18 Sept, 2014—XINHUA

Fey, Bateman improv sibling love in 'This is Where I Leave You'

LOS ANGELES, 19 Sept—Tina Fey and Jason Bateman called mutual friends when they learned they would co-star as siblings in the drama-infused comedy "This Is Where I Leave You," just to do a little reconnaissance on each other. "We had never worked together," Fey said. "Well, we owned a restaurant together for 10 years. We owned an Arby's."

"But that's not really work," shot back Bateman. "That is pure pleasure."

And with that sibling-like familiarity, Fey and Bateman, two of the most popular comic actors

of their generation, banter on for minutes — their way of promoting the Warner Bros. film that opens in US theatres on Friday. They play Wendy and Judd, the close middle siblings of the Altman family, brought together by the death of their father and asked by their mother to follow the Jewish ritual of "sitting shiva" for the seven days of mourning. Judd has found his wife cheating on him with his womanizing boss and has only shared the news with Wendy, herself troubled by a lifeless marriage to a workaholic husband. —Reuters

Kate Hudson can see ghosts

LONDON, 19 Sept—Actress Kate Hudson claims she and her mother Goldie Hawn have the ability to feel a spirit. Hudson, 35, said they can feel the presence of people who have passed away, reported *Contactmusic*.

"Me and my mum Goldie can see dead people. It is not really seeing, it is feeling a spirit. A fifth energy. I believe in energy. I believe our brains can manifest into visual things. When you see something, you are supposed to tell the energy what year it is and that they don't belong there," she said on a TV show.

However, the blonde beauty admits she was shocked when she once saw a 'ghost of a woman with no face'. "That was really creepy," she added.

PTI



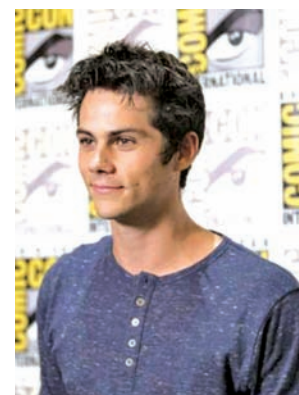
Miley Cyrus arrives at the 2014 MTV Music Video Awards in Inglewood, California on 24 Aug, 2014.—REUTERS

'Maze Runner' sets hopes on O'Brien and big screens for young adults

LOS ANGELES, 19 Sept — When MTV's "Teen Wolf" heartthrob Dylan O'Brien first auditioned for young adult dystopian film "The Maze Runner," director Wes Ball thought he was too "cool" to play the movie's innocent, vulnerable lead.

"I wasn't even sure that Dylan was the right guy at first," Ball said with a laugh. "It took me a lot of time to talk to Dylan, to just get to know him and understand that he can do the very emotional, soft, nuanced stuff."

"Maze Runner," out in US theatres on Friday, is based on the first novel in James Dashner's young adult series. It follows a group of boys with no memories of their past, living in an isolated, mysterious paradise called the Glade, trapped by a giant moving concrete maze that is their only escape. It is also Twenty-First Century Fox's first film to be shown on a 270-degree panoramic screen called Barco Escape, which will be featured in five Cinemark movie theatres in Florida, Illinois, California and Texas. The three-piece screens aim to immerse viewers into the film, from the claustrophobic elevator box that Thomas, played by O'Brien, travels to the Glade in, to a tense action scene when he tries to escape from the rapidly changing Maze. —Reuters



Cast member Dylan O'Brien poses at a press line for "The Maze Runner" during the 2014 Comic-Con International Convention in San Diego, California on 25 July, 2014. REUTERS

Sophia Loren, Italy's national icon, turns 80 with book of memoirs

ROME, 19 Sept—Sophia Loren, Italy's national cinema icon and eternal diva, turns 80 this week and is marking the milestone with a book of memoirs revealing details of her rags-to-riches life.

For the 300-page "Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow — My Life," Loren went into what she called her "trunk of memories" to fish out old pictures, letters and notes from the likes of Cary Grant, Frank Sinatra, Audrey Hepburn and Richard Burton, not to mention Italian soul mate Marcello Mastroianni.

The result includes plenty of juicy tales, such as how she stopped Marlon Brando's physical advances with a fulminating glare and how Grant suggested

they should pray to make the right decision when they were falling in love on a film set.

The book reads like a who's who of world cinema in the past 60 years as it chronicles the life of an illegitimate southern Italian street urchin who became one of the world's most glamorous film stars.

Its title comes from the 1963 three-part comedy anthology directed by cinema great Vittorio De Sica in which she played three different roles.

The "tomorrow" part appears to be her way of saying her career is not over. Her last film — an adaptation of Jean Cocteau's "The Human Voice" — was released this year.

Each time Loren marks



Italian actress Sophia Loren (L) jokes with Mexican tycoon Carlos Slim after cutting the ribbon for her exhibition at the Soumaya museum in Mexico City on 18 Sept, 2014.—REUTERS

a major milestone it is almost a national event, in part a bittersweet reminder that the boom times she epitomized at the height of her fame are gone.

One television channel

has been running only Loren films all week as a tribute to the woman who won two Oscars, first in 1961 for her tragic portrayal of a war-time mother in De Sica's neo-realistic classic

"La Ciociara" (Two Women). Photo exhibitions and roundtables are being held about the extraordinary rise to planetary stardom of a poor teenager discovered by a film producer who later married her and made her what one critic called Italy's greatest export after pasta.

But, as the book shows, behind the mesmerizing olive green eyes and silken cappuccino skin of her youth was a will of steel and an exceptional talent.

Such has been her unfading allure that one Roman Catholic cardinal quipped several years ago that while cloning was ethically wrong, an exception might be made for Loren.

The book starts with Loren preparing a recent

Christmas dinner for her two sons and four grandchildren in her house in Switzerland. She retires to her bedroom to open the "trunk of secrets", and begins telling her amazing story.

Sofia Scicolone (she later changed the spelling of her first name to 'ph' and took the stage name Loren) was born in Rome on 20 September, 1934, the daughter of a frustrated actress whose lover had refused to marry her.

She grew up in Pozzuoli, a poor town near Naples, and remembered begging for food from US soldiers during World War Two. She was so thin her nickname was stuzzicadenti (toothpick).

Reuters

GENERAL

Voigt sets new hour record



Jens Voigt of Germany in Rotterdam, on 3 July, 2010.
REUTERS

LONDON, 19 Sept — German rider Jens Voigt has beaten the hour record at the velodrome in Grenchen, Switzerland, covering a distance of 51.115 km in an hour, cycling's governing body the UCI said on Thursday.

The Trek Factory Racing rider, 43, is now set to retire after beating the previous record of 49.700 km set by Czech rider Andrej Sosenka in 2005.

Voigt's record follows a revision by the UCI of the rules, introduced in 2000, governing equipment used in the celebrated competition. The UCI said in May the record could be beaten on a bike that complies with

current rules for machines used in endurance track events.

Voigt joins a prestigious list of record holders for the event ranging from the first officially established in 1893 by Henri Desgrange to Fausto Coppi, Jacques Anquetil, Eddy Merckx and Francesco Moser.

"I am extremely proud to be joining all the iconic riders that have beaten this record before me," said Voigt. "The crowd was amazing, supporting me all the way."

The likes of Bradley Wiggins and Fabian Cancellara are interested in taking on one of cycling's most famous challenges. — Reuters

Monchengladbach and Villarreal share the spoils in UEFA Europa League

BERLIN, 19 Sept — Monchengladbach and Villarreal shared the spoils following a 1-1 draw at the UEFA Europa League group A opener on Thursday. Monchengladbach's Patrick Herrmann handed his side the lead before Villarreal's joker Ikechukwu Uche secured his side one point on the road.

Both sides staged an evenly balanced match yet Monchengladbach created more promising chances at the first half. Thus, Monchengladbach's Oskar Wendt ensured the first chance of the game when he pulled just wide with a long-range effort. However, the visitors from Spain posed a threat on counter attacks as Denis Cheryshev failed to overcome goalkeeper Yann Sommer one-on-one.

The "Foals" cut a better figure in front of Villarreal's as Herrmann utilized a clearance attempt by Sergio Asenjo to unleash a left-footed hammer from 20 metres at the 21st minute.

The visitors remained unimpressed, as Bruno So-

riano, Cani and Luciano Vietto were able to threaten Monchengladbach's defence. As the match progressed the "Foals" focussed on fast breaks but neither Herrmann nor Branimir Hrgota were able to turn their promising chances into a tangible reward.

Things changes after the break as Villarreal piled on pace to set the hosts under pressure. Especially Denis Cheryshev ensured goal threatening chances. However, he pulled wide twice at the hour mark.

Nevertheless, Villarreal's efforts were rewarded at the 68th minute when substitute Uche, who was fielded one minute earlier, overcame Yann Sommer to restore parity.

The equalizer was a wakening call for the hosts yet Villarreal's well-positioned defence denied Monchengladbach the winner on home soil in the dying minutes of the game.

Monchengladbach and Villarreal share the second spot of group A.

Xinhua

Brandao given six-month ban for Thiago Motta headbutt

PARIS, 19 Sept — Bastia striker Brandao has been suspended for six months for his post-match headbutt on Paris St Germain's Thiago Motta in August, the French soccer league said on Thursday.

The Brazilian was handed a provisional four-week ban the week after the incident but the full case has now been assessed.

"Brandao will be available to play again on 22 February, 2015," the league's disciplinary committee said in a statement.

It is the second time in two seasons the former Olympique Marseille player has been suspended for foul play.

He also received a three-match ban last season for elbowing another PSG player, Yohan Cabaye.

Security camera footage broadcast on French television after this season's game, and replayed repeatedly in the days afterwards, showed Brandao standing near the middle of the corridor outside the changing rooms at the Parc des Princes in Paris after the Corsicans' 2-0 defeat at the hands of the Ligue 1 champions.

Facing the camera as Thiago Motta strides into view, Brandao — who was replaced during the game after picking up a yellow card — calmly takes two steps forward before leaning in to make contact with the Italy international's face.

He then turns and runs away with Thiago Motta in pursuit.

Reuters

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Botswana chess team leaves for World Youth Championships

GABORONE, 19 Sept — Botswana has on Thursday sent a team of 12 young chess players to the 2014 World Youth Chess Championships slated for Durban, South Africa.

Speaking to the media ahead of the team's departure, Botswana Chess Federation public relations director, Keenese Katisenge said the team comprised players aged between six and 17 years, adding that they have selected a strong

team of youngsters who are determined to do well.

"They are ready and I am confident they will represent the country well," Katisenge said.

He said all the players that have been selected have been playing very good in all local competitions they participated in since the beginning of the year and some of them have represented Botswana at the 2013 Africa Youth Championships in South Africa.

The competition will be played in the Under-8, 10, 12, 14, 16 and 18 categories. The championships will run for two weeks until the end of September.

The world championships would be played in 11 rounds swiss system format with a time allocation of 90 minutes for the first 40 moves followed by 30 seconds per move.

"The World Youth Chess Championships offer young players exposure and

experience as they are given an opportunity to play with more experienced players from Europe, America and Asia and gain FIDE ratings and titles," the director added. The Botswana team is coached by FIDE instructor Israel Makwati and development instructor Jeremiah Dikgang. — Xinhua

Philippines withdraws UN peacekeepers in Golan Heights

MANILA, 19 Sept — The Philippine government has withdrawn Filipino peacekeepers from Golan Heights even before their tour of duty ends in October due to the deteriorating security situation in the area, a military official said on Friday.

Lieutenant Colonel Ramon Zagala, spokesman of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), said the first batch of the 7th AFP

contingent composed of over 300 Filipino soldiers will arrive on Friday afternoon. Due to the volatile operational environment in the Golan Heights, the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) command has decided to move all its peacekeepers from the Syrian side to the Israeli side of the mission area, Zagala said.

He said all positions

and observation points in the Syrian side, along with UNDOF headquarters in Camp Faoar, have been vacated. "Because of this repositioning of all peacekeepers to the Israeli side of Golan Heights and its attendant logistical constraints on UNDOF, it was deemed practical that Philippine contingent be repatriated earlier than expected," Zagala said. — Xinhua



A Singaporean dealer makes iron grilles for visitors at the 11th China-ASEAN Expo (CAEXPO) in Nanning, capital of south China's Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region on 18 Sept, 2014. — XINHUA

The Opening Ceremony of the 17th Asian Games held in Incheon



Flag bearer of Myanmar Nay Lin Aung leads the team into the Opening Ceremony of the 17th Asian Games in Incheon on 19 Sept, 2014.—REUTERS



Dancers perform before the opening ceremony of the 17th Asian Games at the Incheon Asiad Main Stadium in Incheon, South Korea on 19 Sept, 2014.—XINHUA

China's Li Na announces her retirement from tennis



China's tennis player Li Na poses with trophy near the Eiffel Tower after winning the 2011 France Open tennis tournament on 4 June, 2011. China's first and only Grand Slam winner Li Na formally announced her retirement on 19 Sept, 2014, leaving the Chinese tennis yearning for the next superstar.—XINHUA

BEIJING, 19 Sept—China's Li Na, Asia's only grand slam singles champion, announced her retirement from tennis on Friday, citing the effect of long-term injuries, especially her knees.

"It has been a difficult year, and I have had to face a lot of things, such as making the decision to end my professional tennis career," Li said in a statement.

The 32-year-old won the 2011 French Open and this year's Australian Open. Known affectionately as "Big Sister Na" and "Golden Flower" in China, she said it was the right time to leave the court.

"As a professional tennis player, leaving the field of competition at this moment is for me the correct decision," she added.

The pain in her right knee had become hard to deal with, Li said.

"Competition is fierce in the sport of tennis, and requires athletes to be at their best. As for me, I can no longer get back to being 100 percent," she added.

The Chinese Tennis Association, in a statement released by the official Xinhua news agency, said it respected her decision and wished her the best.

"We also thank Li Na for the passionate and

proud, shining moments she gave to Chinese tennis in her competitive career," it said.

For many young people in China, Li is a role model, with her steely determination, broad smile and English language skills emblematic of a confident and rising country. Sport and politics remain tightly woven in China, where elite athletes are handpicked from a young age to be nurtured by the state. Only a handful are allowed to manage their own careers.

Li, who was identified as a potential badminton talent as a child, was steered into tennis before her teenage years, but had to be coaxed back into the game in 2004 after walking away to study media at university.

Despite growing adulation from her success, including becoming China's first WTA title-winner in 2004 and first grand slam quarter-finalist at Wimbledon two years later, Li has proved a reluctant standard-bearer for Chinese tennis. After numerous clashes with local media and Chinese tennis authorities over training routines and pay, in 2009 the strong-willed Li was permitted with four other top women to manage her own career and keep a greater share of her winnings.

Reuters

San Siro to host 2016 Champions League final

NYON, (Switzerland), 19 Sept — Milan's San Siro stadium is to host the 2016 Champions League final, European football's governing body UEFA said on Thursday.

San Siro will be staging the final for the fourth time, the previous occasion being in 2001

when Bayern Munich beat Valencia on penalties after a 1-1 draw.

It also staged the 1965 final between Inter Milan and Benfica and the 1970 final between Feyenoord and Celtic.

The 2016 Europa League final will be held at the St Jakob-Park in Basel, UEFA added.—Reuters

A supporter wears AC Milan jersey with the name of new player Fernando Torres outside San Siro stadium before the Italian Serie A soccer match between AC Milan and Lazio in Milan on 31 Aug, 2014.
REUTERS

