

TO THE POINT

QUOTABLE

“These restrictions and treatment are not consistent with freedom of the press.”



Jay Carney, White House spokesman, talking about China's handling of foreign media after a New York Times journalist was forced to leave the country

AP PHOTO/CAROLYN KASTER

NOTABLE STAT

6,329

The number of journalists accredited to cover the Super Bowl XLVIII, making it the most in Super Bowl history

GOOD DAY, BAD DAY

▲ Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi, head of Egypt's military, is riding on a wave of popular fervor that is almost certain to carry him to an election as president.

▼ Thai government officials, in a rare sign of humility, are begging protest leaders to be allowed access to their offices that have been occupied for two weeks. Tens of thousands of passport applications and other work has been piling up.

ON THIS DAY

1990: First McDonald's Opens in the Soviet Union

The Soviet Union allowed the first McDonald's to open in Moscow, at the time the largest McDonald's restaurant in the world. People waited more than six hours in line on the first day. The rare welcome of this symbol of capitalism came less than two years before the Soviet Union dissolved.

QUOTABLE

“I don't regret a thing.”

Valérie Trierweiler, France's former first lady, for the first time talking about the dramatic end of her relationship with French President François Hollande



INDRANIL MUKHERJEE/AFP/GETTY IMAGES



VINCENZO PINTO/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

“For many years I have fought to keep my ideology ... to follow a nonviolent position and tone.”

Cécile Kyenge, Italian minister for integration

Italy's Integration Minister Cécile Kyenge (L) during the swearing-in ceremony of the government in Rome, April 28, 2013.

Italy's First Black Minister Demonstrates Tolerance

By Vincenzo Cassano
Epoch Times Staff

BARI, Italy—What would you do if someone called you an orangutan, insult you, or throw bananas at you? Well, what Italian Minister for Integration Cécile Kyenge did, may surprise you.

Cécile Kyenge is Italy's first black minister. While most Italians don't have an issue with the color of her skin, some political opponents have acted aggressively toward her.

Most of the racist attacks are coming from the Lega Nord (Northern League) Party—a party with an anti-immigration stance that is trying to split Northern and Southern Italy. At a party meeting, Lega Nord politician Roberto Calderoli called Kyenge an orangutan. Italians in higher office condemned Calderoli's remark and a spokesman for the U.N. Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Rupert Colville, called it “absolutely unacceptable.” Calderoli later apologized.

During an event of the Democratic Party, someone threw bananas at her. She reacted by saying, “With people dying of hunger and having an economic cri-

sis, wasting food is so sad.”

“Italy is not racist, but there is a minority that can shout louder,” Kyenge said. “What saddens me more are not the insults, but that this is the image of Italy that people see from abroad.”

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Cécile Kyenge, Italian minister for integration

In terms of creating a false image, the Italian political commentator Alessandro Lattarulo said, “We live in a world where people tend to constantly go over the line to be heard,” referring to the statements of some politicians. And even if they are not really racist, “psychological

studies have shown that if you repeat something many times, you end up convincing yourself,” he said.

One of the harshest attacks against Kyenge has been a Facebook post by a Lega Nord member. Alongside an article about an African man who tried to rape two girls, he posted a photo of Kyenge and wrote: “How come nobody has raped her?????? She would then understand what the victims of this brutal crime have experienced. Shame!”

When asked for comment, Kyenge replied politely, “For many years I have fought to keep my ideology ... to follow a nonviolence position and tone.”

“So I'm keeping that tone once again, and ... I will not reply, because everyone has to feel offended by this.”

The author of the Facebook post was expelled from the Lega Nord. Soon solidarity flowed toward Kyenge from different political parties and the Italian public.

Racism and Economic Crisis

According to Lattarulo, racism can easily emerge during an economic crisis. Even if countries in the Mediterranean area, like Italy, have plenty of contact with foreign-

ers, many politicians are focussing on native Italians rather than on immigrants.

“They are stealing our work” is a phrase about immigrants heard often in Italy. Right-wing forces tend to put the interest of native Italians ahead of immigrants.

One of the major reforms Kyenge is trying to achieve is Ius Soli, the right of every person born in Italy to become an Italian citizen. Most European states have Ius Sanguinis where the right of citizenship goes only to children of citizens.

While it is mostly the right-wing and Lega Nord that have criticized Kyenge's political ideas, even Italy's influential, left-leaning commentator, Giovanni Sartori, has strongly rejected her ideas.

Lattarulo, however, said she simply isn't “cherished by the government” and that “she has been overwhelmed by the turmoil in the government” and couldn't make institute strong polices for a fairer treatment of immigrants.

Even if “the fact of having Kyenge as a minister symbolizes a very strong shift” for Italy, “I don't think she is one of the more effective ministers we have,” Lattarulo said.

WORLD IN BRIEF

By Epoch Times and Associated Press

1 AMANDA KNOX'S MURDER CONVICTION UPHELD

An appeals court in Florence Thursday upheld the guilty verdict against U.S. student Amanda Knox and her ex-boyfriend for the 2007 murder of her British roommate. Knox was sentenced to 28 ½ years in prison, raising the specter of a long legal battle over her extradition. After nearly 12 hours of deliberations, the court reinstated the guilty verdict first handed down against Knox and Raffaele Sollecito in 2009.

2 EGYPT ARRESTS 11 ISLAMISTS FOR FACEBOOK ACTIVITY

Egyptian security forces arrested 11 Muslim Brotherhood members accused of running Facebook pages inciting violence against the police, the Interior Ministry said Thursday, moving the crackdown on the group into social media. The arrests were in connection to dozens of Facebook pages set up by Brotherhood supporters, urging protests against the military-backed government and denouncing the police, some of them set up the past two weeks.

3 SYRIAN SIDES OBSERVE MINUTE OF SILENCE FOR DEAD

Syrian negotiators observed a minute of silence Thursday to honor the tens of thousands of people who have died in their country's civil war—a rare moment of unity in talks marked by divisions and bitterness. U.N. mediator Lakhdar Brahimi said the opposition delegation made the suggestion and the government negotiators agreed, as the talks neared the end of their first phase.

4 UN TARGETS WILDLIFE TRADERS

The U.N. Security Council has approved two sanctions resolutions that for the first time target illegal wildlife traffickers with links to armed groups in central Africa. A resolution renewing an arms embargo and financial sanctions against armed groups in Congo included individuals who finance those groups through wildlife trafficking. Diplomats and conservationists hailed the step as a major policy shift on the problem.

5 PANAMA ORDERS RELEASE OF CREW OF NKOREAN SHIP

Panama's judicial authorities have ordered the release of 32 of 35 crew members of a North Korean ship detained last July for carrying hidden arms from Cuba. Prosecutor Nathaniel Murgas said the captain and two other crew members will remain to face arms trafficking charges. The Chong Chon Gang was carrying Cuban fighter jets and missiles. The ship was headed from Cuba to North Korea when it was seized.

6 JEWISH GROUP DEMANDS RETURN OF ALL NAZI-LOOTED ART

Germany must make a stronger effort to identify and return thousands of looted art pieces the Nazis took from Jews, the president of the World Jewish Congress said Thursday as he met with top government officials in Berlin to push his case. Ronald Lauder said that Nazi-looted art still hangs in German museums, government offices, and private collections.

7 ENVIRONMENTALIST SENTENCED TO PRISON

Mongolian environmental activist Tsetsegee Menkhbayar and four others have been sentenced to prison for 21 ½ years for “acts of terrorism.” Menkhbayar was said to be carrying firearms when arrested. The group had come to protest Parliament's plans to amend a law passed in 2009 that bans mineral exploration near water sources, a law Menkhbayar had advocated for. Menkhbayar is said to hope Mongolia can avoid the environmental despoliation suffered by neighboring Inner Mongolia under China's rule.

8 POLICE SEARCH FOR LOST POPE RELIC IN ITALY

Police are searching a neighborhood in central Italy for a tiny relic bearing Pope John Paul II's blood after three suspected thieves tossed it away. Dozens of officers were hunting for the relic Thursday on the outskirts of L'Aquila City in an area built for people left homeless by a 2009 earthquake. The artifact, about the size of a fingernail, contains blood from when John Paul was wounded in a 1981 shooting.

