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President U Htin Kyaw and First Lady Daw Su Su Lwin observe a Terracotta warrior in Xi'an museum, Shaanxi Province, China. PHOTO: MNA

President U Htin Kyaw and First Lady visit Terracotta Army

PRESIDENT U Htin Kyaw, First Lady Daw Su Su Lwin and entourage who are in China on a State visit visited Terracotta Army, established a sister city relationship, and went on a cruise of Shanghai.

The president left Chengdu airport yesterday and

arrived in Xi'an, Shaanxi province at 10:30 a.m. local time.

The President and entourage were welcomed at the Xi'an Hyatt Hotel by Shaanxi Province Governor Mr. Hu Heping and officials.

During the meeting, matters relating to increasing rela-

tion and cooperation between Myanmar and China, increasing investment and trade in agriculture, education, tourism sectors and increasing cooperation between Myanmar and provinces of China were discussed.

Afterwards, the President and party attended a luncheon

hosted by the Shaanxi Provincial Government.

Yesterday afternoon, they visited the museum of Qin Terracotta warriors and horses in Xi'an after studying the military organization of the Qin Empire.

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A good year for Yangon real estate market expected

Soe Win (MLA)

REAL estate business groups expect that the real estate market, currently frozen, will be better for the rest of 2017 due to the political changes this year.

Real estate experts say that if the foreign investment law and the condominium law come out as expected, and if the political movement is good, the real estate market would surely improve.

"The price has been going down in the real estate market for a while. When we look back at the market history, we see prices going down and prices frozen. However, it can be seen that the price sharply increased again, much higher than before," said U Sai Khun Naung, chair of the Yangon Region Real Estate Entrepreneurs' Association.

The reason for the current frozen real estate market is because of the political movement, supply and demand, consumer confidence and market trends, experts said.

"I would like to say that the people should not be afraid of buying, as what they understood that the price would go down. The price usually goes down for a while in the international market. Myanmar's real estate market usually goes up and down," he said.

The current taxes for buying, leasing and selling real estate remained unchanged. The government collects 30 per cent for every Ks1,000 lakh and 4 per cent for a document stamp, according to the department of Internal Revenue.

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Speaker U Win Myint receives Chair of Global Commission on Drug Policy and Former President of Switzerland

PYITHU Hluttaw Speaker U Win Myint received Ms. Ruth Dreifuss, Chair of Global Commission on Drug Policy and Former President of Switzerland at the hall of Pyithu Hluttaw in Nay Pyi Taw at 1 pm on 7 April 2017.

During the meeting, they exchanged views on legislative

matters of the abuse and the manufacture of narcotic drugs and aids providing processes and the works of GCDP.

Also present at the meeting were Deputy Speaker of Pyithu Hluttaw U T Khun Myat and officials of the Pyithu Hluttaw office.—*Myanmar News Agency*



Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U Win Myint receives Former President of Switzerland Ms. Ruth Dreifuss in Nay Pyi Taw. PHOTO: MNA

Myanmar's first waste-to-energy plant comes into operation in Yangon

MYANMAR'S first-ever waste-to-energy plant was opened near Hlawga Street in Shwepyitha Township, Yangon Region yesterday.

The plant, which utilises garbage in a systematic manner without harming the environment, was built with the assistance of Japan, said Yangon Region Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein in his address at the opening ceremony.

Plans are underway to set up similar plants in the Yangon Region, he added.

Construction of the plant began in 2016 at a cost of US\$16million contributed equally by the Myanmar and the Japanese governments. The plant is capable of generating 700KW of electricity a day from 60 tons of waste material — 300KV will be used for the plant while the rest will be distrib-

uted to Yangon City.

"We will provide assistance for development in Yangon. The newly inaugurated plant needs to be a model in Yangon City," said Japanese Ambassador to Myanmar Mr. Tateshi Higuchi. Currently, the Yangon City Development Committee collects at least 2,300 tons of rubbish per day from townships in Yangon Region.—*Myitmakha News Agency*

Vice-Senior General Soe Win attends graduation ceremony of OTS



Vice-Senior General Thiripyanchi Soe Win inspects graduation parade of the cadets at the OTS in Bahtoo Station. PHOTO: MNA

THE Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Thiripyanchi Soe Win attended the graduation parade of the 120 intake of the military officer training course held at the parade grounds of the Officer Training School in Bahtoo Station yesterday morning. First, the Vice-Senior General took salute from the cadets and inspected the parade columns. Then, he presented the best cadet award to Cadet Naing Lin Aung.

In his speech, the Vice-Senior General urged the cadets to try their best to become reliable and qualified military officers in serv-

ing the assigned duties, saying the main duty of the Tatmadaw is to safeguard the security and defense of the nation as Myanmar is strategically and geographically located between the two powers. The Tatmadaw needs to be a strong, proficient and powerful one in serving the interests of the country, upholding our three main national causes in the fore.

The Tatmadaw will participate in peacemaking processes under the leadership of the government in accord with the six-point peace policy by following the Geneva Convention, he added.

After the graduation parade,

the Vice-Senior General met with the award winning cadets, their parents and gave words of encouragement to them. In the evening, he attended a graduation dinner at a hall of the Officer Training School in Bahtoo Station.

The Vice-Senior General and party greeted the cadets warmly one by one and enjoyed the dinner together with the cadets and their families. After the dinner, the Vice-Senior General and party were entertained with dance and song by Myawady Band and Anyeint troupe under the Office of Public Relations and Psychological Warfare.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Public Remonstrance

1. People's Benevolent Students Democracy Party that had been allowed to set up as a political party under Section 9 of Political Parties Registration Law headquartered at Building No. 9, Room No. 105, Shwe Ingyin Road, Shwelinban Low-cost Housing in Hlinethaya Township, Yangon Region, submitted to rename itself People's Benevolent Students Party, along with its seal to be used as mentioned hereunder.

2. It is hereby announced in accord with Political Parties Registration Rule 14 (d) that those who wish to remonstrate with the Union Election Commission about the seal of the party may do so with firm evidence within seven days from the date of this announcement.

People's Benevolent Students Party's Flag



People's Benevolent Students Party's Seal



Union Election Commission

More press conferences on Union Government first year performance

MORE press conferences on the first year performance of the government will be held at the meeting hall Ministry of Information, office No.7.

Press conference at 1 p.m. 10 April is for the Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of Transport and Communications, Ministry of Construction and Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement. 1 p.m. 24 April press conference is for Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation, Ministry of Planning and Finance. On 26 April, press conference will be held for Ministry of Information, Ministry of Industry, Ministry of Commerce, Ministry of Education and 28 April press conference is for State Counsellor Office, Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture,

Ministry of Health and Sports, Ministry of Hotels and Tourism and Ministry of Ethnic Affairs. On 2 May, press conference will be held for Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population, Nay Pyi Taw Council, Central Bank of Myanmar and 4 May press conference is for Union Attorney General Office, Union Auditor General Office and Union Civil Service Board.

Local and foreign media who want to attend the press conferences are to contact Ministry of Information, external and internal relation division email: ir.pso.moi2015@gmail.com describing name, media agency, contact phone number and email address. Dates of subsequent press conferences and the ministries will be informed in advance.—*Myanmar News Agency*

TOGETHER WITH THE PEOPLE

State Counsellor receives Chair of the Global Commission on Drug Policy and Former President of Switzerland

STATE Counsellor and Union Minister for Foreign Affairs Daw Aung San Suu Kyi received Ms. Ruth Dreifuss, Chair of Global Commission on Drug Policy (GCDP) and Former President of Switzerland, at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Nay Pyi Taw,

yesterday. During the meeting, they exchanged views on matters pertaining to the work of the GCDP as an international player in drugs policies, and root causes and challenges in prevention and elimination of narcotic drugs.—*Myanmar News Agency*



State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi welcomes Ms. Ruth Dreifuss, Chair of Global Commission on Drug Policy (GCDP) and Former President of Switzerland, in Nay Pyi Taw. PHOTO: MNA

State Counsellor receives French delegation

DAW Aung San Suu Kyi, State Counsellor and Union Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, received a delegation led by Mr. Patrick Pouyanne, President and Chief Executive Officer, Total Company, France, yesterday at the Minister's Office of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Nay Pyi Taw.

During the meeting, they discussed the matters pertaining to investment and cooperation of Total Company's investment in Myanmar's energy sector, co-operation in environment protection and socio-economic development of the people of Myanmar, and potentiality of generating solar power in Myanmar.—*Myanmar News Agency*

President U Htin Kyaw and First Lady visit . . .

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The Terracotta Army was discovered in 1974 to the east of Xi'an by farmers digging a well. As of 2007, 8,000 soldiers, 130 chariots with 520 horses and 150 cavalry horses were unearthed. The site was listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1987.

The figures depicted the military strength of the Qin dynasty's

empire and was learnt to be made between BC 257 and 246.

Shaanxi province is learnt to be the birth place of the President of People's Republic of China Mr. Xi Jinping and the starting point of China's "one belt, one road" project.

Afterwards, the President left Xi'an by air and arrived in Shanghai at 6:30 p.m.. The Presi-

dent and his entourage were welcomed by the Shanghai Provincial Government Deputy Secretary and officials. They continued to Shanghai Hong Qiao State guest house. Later yesterday evening, the President viewed the developments and sights of Shanghai onboard a river cruise ship in the Haungpu Jiang river.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Union Minister Dr. Pe Myint inspects newspaper houses, radio and television stations

UNION Minister for Information Dr. Pe Myint yesterday visited newspaper houses under the News and Periodicals Enterprise in Zeyathiri Township, Nay Pyi Taw and the Myanmar Radio and Television (MRTV) station in Tatkon Township. In the morning, the Union Minister arrived at the Nay

Pyi Taw newspaper house and met with staff from the Kyemon, Myanma Alin, Myanmar News Agency under the News and Periodicals Enterprise and the staff from Printing and Publishing Department at Pho Waziya Hall.

At the meeting, the Union Minister spoke about matters re-

lating to the work required to be done for digital newspapers, requirements for the staff to work in accordance with changing technologies, to be inventive in printing textbooks, encyclopedia and other printing works and coordinated in the management and upgrading of the staff. Afterward, the Union Minister inspected the work procedure of the news room and encouraged the staff. In the afternoon, the Union Minister arrived at the auditorium of MRTV in Tatkon and met with the staff.

At the meeting, the Union Minister cordially heard the necessities presented by the staff and fulfilled their requirements. Afterward, the Union Minister inspected the MRTV broadcasting work, Master Control Room, Convergence News Room, and the studio of National Races Channel.—*Myanmar News Agency*



Union Minister Dr. Pe Myint speaking at the meeting with staff from the News and Periodicals Enterprise in Nay Pyi Taw. PHOTO: MNA

NSA to clarify Rakhine situation

The National Security Advisor will clarify the Rakhine situation to diplomats and members of international organisations at the National Reconciliation and Peace Center in Yangon on 11 April, 10am.

Local and foreign media

are invited to cover the event.

Local media should contact the Information and Public Relations Department, while foreign media in Myanmar are to contact the News and Periodicals Enterprise.—*Myanmar News Agency*

PRESS RELEASE

Diplomatic relations established between the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and the Republic of Ecuador

THE Republic of the Union of Myanmar and the Republic of Ecuador established diplomatic relations at the level of Ambassadors, with effect from 6 April 2017 as the two countries are desirous of establishing friendly relations and mutually beneficial cooperation on the basis of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the norms of International Law in accordance with the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations and the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations.

The Joint Communiqué on the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations was signed by the Permanent Representative of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar to the United Nations and the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Ecuador to the United Nations at the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Ecuador to the United Nations in New York on 6 April 2017.

Myanmar is making efforts to expand its diplomatic ties with countries around the world. The Republic of Ecuador is the 116th country with which Myanmar has established diplomatic relations.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs



YBS No 4 runs at Sule bus-stop in Yangon. PHOTO: PHOE KHWAH

Only seated passengers — no standing — on new buses

THIRTY special buses that don't allow passengers to stand will run in the Yangon region, according to the Power Eleven public bus company.

Two of the special buses have already been operating on the Insein-Sule route since 4 April. The buses do not allow straphangers.

"We've just introduced our special bus line. We don't allow standing passengers. We just want the passengers to travel more conveniently. Currently, we've introduced two buses already, said Tayoke Lay, a Director of Power Eleven Bus Company.

The buses will have a driver

only and the bus fare will not be collected by conductors.

Currently, Power Eleven Public Company is making arrangements to run 21 buses in the Yangon Bus Service (YBS) line.

The company has appointed at least one female driver. —*Myitmakha News Agency*

Job opportunities to create in underdeveloped regions

THE Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (UMFCCI) will focus on businesses that can create better job opportunities in underdeveloped regions to contribute to achievement of internal peace, it is learnt.

The UMFCCI and the United Nations Global Compact Network Myanmar signed a memorandum of agreement (MOA) on Tuesday to be able to contribute to regional development and internal peace.

"The country's economic development is important to the peace and vice versa," said U Zaw Min Win, President of Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry.

The UMFCCI, which represents the Myanmar private sector, will serve as a foundation to ensure internal peace through conflict-avoiding management, respect the rights of workers, abide by laws, rules and regulations, be free of bribery and corruption, and conduct

responsible businesses which are eco-friendly.

"When we implement the peace process, a ceasefire alone is not enough. There cannot be peace in the society without sufficient food and employment," said Daw Khine Khine Nwe, joint-general secretary of UMFCCI.

"The company must respect human rights. They also have to obey the HR rules. The business firms must encourage environmental conservation and avoid bribery, said Dr Aung Tun Thet, chairman of United Nations Global Compact Network Myanmar.

"Currently, United Nations Global Compact (UNGC) Network Myanmar will try to stand on the top with the participation of over 1,000 companies and around 300 Myanmar businesses.

The local private companies can participate in the peace process by following the 10 rules and regulations which are laid down by UNGC," said Dr. Aung Tun Thet. —*Myitmakha News Agency*

Crime NEWS

Yaba worth Ks 89.4 million seized on Yangon-Mandalay Highway

ACTING on a tip off, a combined team comprised of officers and staff from highway police yesterday stopped several vehicles leaving Yangon for Nay Pyi Taw, which led to an altercation and the seizure of a large amount of illegal narcotics.

Police attempted to pull over three vehicles: a car driven by Aung Min, alias Maung Nge; a Honda Wave 110 motorbike driv-

en by police constable Wai Yan Min Htway with his colleague Thant Zin Myo onboard; and an unlicensed Kebo motorbike driven by Kyaw Kyaw with Khon Kie Khaung onboard.

Instead of cooperating, the men attacked the police, prompting officers to fight back, resulting in head injury of Wai Yan Min Htway.

When interrogated, Kyaw

Kyaw and Khon Kie Khaung and police constables Wai Yan Min Htway and Thant Zin Myo admitted to Aung Min's transport of Yaba tablets on his vehicle.

Police seized 198 brown Yaba tablets, two green Yaba tablets, 20,000 Yaba tablets in 50 packs, 9,800 Yaba tablets from 49 packs and 6 mobile phones.

When interrogated, all of them said that Kyaw Kyaw had ordered the 10,000 Yaba tablets for Ks 2 million 15 days ago from Daw Ah Moe, who lives in Pindaung Town, Shan State (South). Khon Kie Khaung and Ohnma Shwe then brought the drugs with them with on the motorbike.

Police have filed charges against all suspects who were in possession of 29,800 Yaba tablets worth Ks84.9 million under sections 15/19(A)/20 of the Anti-Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Laws. —*Than Oo (Lemyithna)*



Detained five suspects and seized drugs. PHOTO: MPF

At least 20 killed in two ships crash in Patheingyi

A ship carrying about 80 passengers crashed with a barge in a river in Patheingyi about 6.45 pm yesterday, killing 20 passengers, according to a local police force.

The ship namely Ngwe Kyal Pwint sank shortly after

the head on collision.

Eighteen bodies including four men and 14 women were discovered in the wrecked ship so far.

Rescue operation are still being carried out in the river. —*Hla Kyi (Patheingyi)*

House destroyed by fire caused by overheated rice cooker

A FIRE caused by an overheated rice cooker destroyed a house near Gawt village, Bin Hlaing ward, Thanton Township, Mon State yesterday.

"Ma Thidar Aye, 22, was boiling jackfruit seed with the rice cooker. She forgot to unplug the rice cooker and it became overheated, causing the outbreak of fire," said an official from Thanton district fire service

department.

The fire was put down in a few minutes by firefighters with three fire engines and with the assistance of neighbours.

The fire destroyed the house worth Ks0.1 million. The police have taken action against Ma Thidar Aye, 22, under section 285 of the Penal Code. —*Myitmakha News Agency*

500 illegally cut logs seized in Kalaw District, Sagaing Region

ILLEGAL logs numbering about 500 were seized in Kawlin district, Sagaing region, according to an official from the Forestry Department. A combined team comprised of officers and staff from the forestry department and police seized 481 illegal

logs, three saw mills, three water pumps and other related items at plots 5 and 33 from Phee Lay Forest Reserve, Wuntho Township.

According to forestry department statistics, altogether 231 illegal logs and two saw

mills from Katha forest reserve were seized during this month.

The illegal logs were seized mostly in Sagaing region. Over 8,600 illegal logs including teak, Tamalan, Padauk and other timber were seized in the 2016-2017 fiscal year.

The Sagaing region forestry department announced that deforestation occurred mainly because of excessive timber extraction and illegal timber extraction. Bribery, poverty and lack of job opportunities contributed to deforestation. Furthermore, lack of

marketability of timber products contributed to forest depletion.

There are 87 forests and 160 forest reserves in Sagaing region. The official from the forestry department said that the legal timber extraction will begin from this fiscal year. —*Min Min*

LOCAL Business

Vietnamese joint venture to offer microfinance services in Myanmar

MICROFINANCE services in the growing financial market in Myanmar will be offered by Vietnam's Dragon Capital Group, an integrated investment firm, which set up a joint venture with Myanmar's Ruby Hill Microfinance Co, launching the service with US\$5 million in capital.

Depending on market demand, the joint venture is expected to increase capital up to \$100 million within the next five years.

The two partners inked a joint venture agreement on 5 April to offer loan products and services to the growing workforce in Myanmar.

Under the JV agreement, Ruby Hill of Loi Hein Group, Myanmar's leading consumer discretionary group, will own a 51 per cent stake, while the Vietnamese firm will hold the remaining 49 per cent.

Dragon Capital, the earliest investment fund in Viet Nam, manages \$1.5



A signing ceremony between Myanmar's Ruby Hill Microfinance Co and Dragon Capital Group on 5 April. PHOTO: NYI NYI SOE NYUNT

billion assets in public and private equities, fixed income and property.

According to the estimation of economic experts,

more than half of the country's population has no access to financial services.

Dr Sai Sam Htun, chair of Loi Hein Group,

said that the total unmet financing demand in Myanmar, the last frontier in Asia, is estimated at around \$1 billion.—Swe Hein

Import value of intermediate goods up by \$1.2 billion before end of last FY

THE import value of intermediate goods before the end of last fiscal year reached over US\$5.9 billion, which is \$1.224 billion more than that of FY2015-2016, the Ministry of Commerce reported.

From 1 April of 2016 to 24 March of 2017, the private sector imported intermediate goods worth more than \$5.7 billion from partner countries, an increase of \$611 million compared with the same period of 2015-16 FY.

Over the first 358 days of last FY, \$204.462 million worth of goods were also bought by the government sector, which is \$195 million less than compared with 2015-16 FY.

In FY2015-16, the import value of intermediate goods hit \$4.705 billion, including \$422 million from the government sector and \$4.283

billion from the private sector.

In 2016-17 FY, the total value of import reached more than \$16.651 billion, with the country bought \$6.724 billion worth of capital goods and \$3.996 billion worth of consumer goods.

Luxury products, personal goods, construction materials, farming equipment, industrial raw materials, household utensils, foodstuff and electronic devices are predominately imported from foreign trade partners.

According to the ministry's statistics, the country exported \$11.317 billion worth of products this fiscal year, including minerals, fish products, animal products and agriculture products through sea routes and border trade camps, an increase of more than \$650 million compared with FY2015-16.—Shwe Khine

Plum price doubles because of high demand from China

THE price of plums mostly grown in Mandalay region has doubled because of high demand from China, according to merchants.

Last year, the price of plums was between Ks180 and Ks200 per viss. This year, plums sold for Ks380 per viss in February. Now, the plum price has doubled to Ks500 per viss in March because of high demand, according

to U Soe Win Myint of the Soe Win Myint brokery.

"This year, the plum yield decreases and there is high demand from China. Moreover, Bangladesh also demands the plums but there are some difficulties for the export process. China offers the price of plum seeds for Ks50,000 per viss," he added.

Last year, the price of plums declined. So local plum growers turned to

farming beans instead of growing plums. Then the plum yield declined this year. The labour charges are also on the increase this year, according to Daw Than Hla, a local plum grower from Patheingyi township.

Plum trees are mostly grown in the villages in Patheingyi township, Mandalay region as well as other regions.—Min Htet Aung

Rice exporters try to extend trade ties with Indonesia, Japan

DOMESTIC rice exporters are trying to extend trade relations with Indonesia as well as Japan under a strategic plan to boost the country's agriculture industry, said a spokesperson for the Myanmar Rice Federation.

The growth of trade spending is a main barrier for local exporters to compete in the global market.

The government encourages private entrepreneurs to boost the manufacturing of quality rice through good agricultural techniques. Myanmar exported more than 1.5 million tonnes of rice to foreign countries in 2016-2017 financial year, including 600,000 tonnes of rice through sea routes. The exporter estimated that

about two million tonnes of rice are likely to go to rice importing nations. Last fiscal year, 80 per cent of the rice exports went to China, mostly through border trade.

Efforts are being made to attract more local and foreign investors to meet the country's development target, exporters say.—200

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- Market Place by City Mart (6.5 Mile)
- Market Place by City Mart (Damasidi Road)
- City Mart (Aung San Stadium)
- City Mart (47th street)
- City Mart (Yankin)
- City Mart (China Town)
- City Mart (Myay Ni Gone)
- City Mart (FMI)
- City Mart (Junction Square)
- City Mart (Junction Maw Tin)
- City Mart (Sule Square)
- City Mart (Star City - Thanlyin)
- City Mart (Waizayandar)
- City Mart (Hledan)
- City Mart (Myanmar Plaza)
- Ocean North Point (9 mile)
- Ocean Shwegonedine



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Six dead, two missing as floods hit Indian-ruled Kashmir

NEW DELHI — Six people were killed and two were reported missing in India's northern region of Kashmir on Friday, after heavy rain and snowfall swept the region, setting off avalanches and turning mountain rivers into raging torrents.

Helicopters were deployed to rescue people cut off by flash floods that revived memories of 2014, when the Jhelum River flowing through the region's main city, Srinagar, burst its banks, swamping homes and killing 200 people.

Snowfalls triggered multiple avalanches, defence spokesman Rajesh Kalia told Reuters.

"A post in Batalik sector was buried," he added. "Two out of five soldiers have been rescued. A rescue operation for three soldiers was in progress and three bodies have been recovered."

In the Poonch region, an Indian Air Force helicopter was guided by a soldier holding a flare toward a group of villagers stranded on the far bank of a river. They climbed a rope ladder into the craft,

which then flew them to safety.

Rajiv Pandey, senior superintendent of police in Poonch, said 17 people were evacuated from the area.

In Srinagar, the summer capital of the state of Jammu and Kashmir, some low-lying districts along the Jhelum were swamped but residents said the river was starting to recede.

"We are relieved as the water level is receding and the rains are reducing," said one resident. "We are praying that rain should stop."—Reuters



People try to stop water flowing through the gate of a flood channel after incessant rains in Srinagar, on 7 April 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

Wave of attacks rock southern Thailand after charter promulgation

BANGKOK — A wave of attacks including bomb explosions and assaults on power grid hit Thailand's deep south early Friday, but causing no casualties, local media reported.

According to Thairath

Newspaper, the spring of attacks were scattered across 19 districts in the country's southernmost areas, namely Yala, Pattani, Narathiwat and Songkla provinces. A total of 52 power poles were de-

stroyed, plunging the area into darkness for hours.

Local reports said a series of bombing rocked Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat at midnight. Pattani was seriously affected as 11 small bombing were

found there.

Military officials confirmed to local media that there were no attacks on military targets and no injuries nor deaths in the attacks.

Pattani, along with

Yala and Narathiwat are the three southernmost provinces that were haunted by explosions.

The attacks happened just few hours after Thai King Maha Vajiralongkorn signed the coun-

try's 20th constitution on Thursday.

The draft charter, overwhelmingly approved in a referendum in August last year, was strongly opposed by the three border provinces.—Xinhua

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University offering disaster nursing course opens in quake-hit region

MORIOKA, (Japan) — A new university opened in northern Japan on Friday offering disaster nursing courses in the wake of the 2011 earthquake and tsunami. The Iwate University of Health and Medical Sciences held its first entrance ceremony with 78 freshmen enrolled. The university in the city of Morioka in Iwate Prefecture also hopes to help address the shortage of nurses in the northeastern Japan region, part of which was devastated by the 11

March, 2011 disasters.

"The earthquake disaster made me strongly aware of death," one of the students, Shion Minamihaba, 18, said at the ceremony. "I want to think more deeply about life and death."

As the huge quake raised awareness of the importance of healthcare support, the university created curricula that include compulsory courses such as emergency aid and long-term psychological care for patients.—Kyodo News



Newly launched Iwate University of Health and Medical Sciences in Morioka in the northeastern Japan prefecture of Iwate holds an entrance ceremony on 7 April, 2017, with Shion Minamihaba, one of the 78 students in its initial enrolment, making a speech. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

Japanese troops to start withdrawing from South Sudan in mid-April

TOKYO — Ground Self-Defence Force members serving as UN peacekeepers in South Sudan are likely to start returning to Japan later this month, ending the five-year deployment of Japanese troops in the fledgling African country, government officials said Friday.

Of the 350-member GSDF unit currently staying in South Sudan to help build road and other infrastructure, dozens of them are expected to leave the South Sudan capital of Juba on 17

April and arrive in Japan on 19 April, they said.

The withdrawal will leave Japan with no UN peacekeeping missions to which it sends Self-Defence Forces units. The government is expected to explore other ways to contribute to international peace-building efforts that involve its SDF members.

While seeking to terminate the activities of the SDF unit, the government has said it will continue to make contributions to UN efforts in South Sudan by extend-

ing the stay of four GSDF officers currently working in the mission's headquarters.

Japan first deployed a GSDF civil engineering unit to South Sudan in January 2012 for the UN mission. South Sudan is the newest country in the world, having gained independence from Sudan in 2011. The currently deployed GSDF troops took over from the previous unit in December and were also given new duties under the country's controversial security legislation, which has eased restrictions

imposed on SDF activities abroad by Japan's pacifist Constitution. The new roles include going to the aid of UN staff and other personnel under attack when there is an urgent request. But the GSDF unit has not actually engaged in such tasks.

The Defence Ministry said Thursday that a 50-member unit will leave Japan on Monday for South Sudan to assist the withdrawal of the GSDF unit. The GSDF unit will return in stages by the end of May.—Kyodo News

New Zealand begins clean-up as Cyclone Debbie floodwaters peak

WELLINGTON — New Zealand began a major clean-up operation on Friday after heavy rain and floodwaters from the tail end of Cyclone Debbie swamped towns in the North Island and caused landslips that blocked roads.

The town of Edgecumbe in the Bay of Plenty was almost completely underwater after river levels peaked overnight, leaving thousands of evacuated residents homeless for what is likely to be several days.

Elsewhere across the island, emergency services were working to clear blocked roads and restore power to isolated communities. Medical supplies and food were being flown in by helicopter.

Prime Minister Bill English was due to visit Edgecumbe, where rescue workers used tractors and boats to evacuate thousands of people in what meteorologists said was a once-in-500-year event, to inspect the damage later on Friday.

Cyclone Debbie, a Category

4 storm, first slammed into northern Australia more than a week ago. The storm, one level shy of the most powerful Category 5, and associated flooding smashed tourist resorts, brought down power lines and killed six people in Australia.

The storm system, downgraded from cyclone level, then crossed to neighboring New Zealand, where mountainous terrain makes its roads susceptible to landslides and many regions are still recovering from November's 7.8-magnitude quake. No deaths have so far been reported in New Zealand.

Kaikoura, the coastal holiday town at the epicenter of that quake, was shut off from the rest of the country for the second time in six months as connecting roads were again hit by landslips.

Back in Australia, the disaster zone stretched 1,000 km (600 miles) from Queensland state's tropical resort islands and Gold Coast tourist strip to the farmlands



Houses are surrounded by floodwaters adjacent to the Fitzroy River (R) brought on by Cyclone Debbie in Rockhampton, Australia, on 6 April 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

of New South Wales state.

The deluge took days to flow through tropical river systems and water levels peaked in the city of Rockhampton at lunchtime on Thursday, flooding main streets, shops and homes.

Residents rowed boats along main roads and muddy water covered the airport's runway. Author-

ities said the airport will be closed for six days and the water is not expected to recede until the weekend.

Australian insurers have declared the event a catastrophe likely to cost more than one billion dollars, with state officials saying recovery and repairs will take months.

The storm is also having a longer-lasting effect on Australia's coal exporters with four miners in the region this week declaring force majeure — a clause typically invoked after natural disasters — leaving rivals in the United States to cash in on a surge in prices as Chinese steelmakers scramble for supplies.—Reuters

Near-collision of 2 passenger planes averted at Delhi airport

NEW DELHI — A major mishap was averted at Delhi's Indira Gandhi International Airport Friday after a passenger plane of India's national carrier Air India aborted take-off to avoid collision with an incoming flight of a private airlines on a converging runway, sources said.

The incident took place around noon when Air India's flight number 156 from Delhi to the western state of Goa was cleared for take-off from runway number 28, which was also allotted to a flight of low-cost IndiGo airlines coming from the eastern state of Ranchi, sources said.

The Air India flight, with over 120 passengers on board, aborted the take-off at the last minute, after the Air Traffic Controllers raised an alert. IndiGo's Ranchi-Delhi flight 6E398 landed on the runway number 27 minutes later, sources said.

A probe has been ordered into the incident that took place not long before Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi went to the airport to receive Bangladeshi Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, who arrived in the country on a four-day state visit.

This is not the first time that such a near-miss incident took place at the airport, one of the busiest in the country. In December 2016, a disaster was averted after two planes, both belonging to low-cost airlines of IndiGo and SpiceJet, came dangerously face-to-face on the runaway.

The SpiceJet flight was about to take off at a time when another passenger flight of IndiGo had just landed on the same runway, possibly due to miscommunication with air traffic controllers, but both the pilots managed to avert a disaster.—Xinhua

Three killed as truck drives into crowd in Swedish capital: police

STOCKHOLM — Three people were killed when a truck drove into a crowd on a shopping street and crashed into a department store in central Stockholm on Friday, police said.

Prime Minister Stefan Lofven said everything indicated the crash was a terrorist attack, according to the national news

agency TT.

Part of central Stockholm was cordoned off and the area was evacuated. Large numbers of police and emergency services were at the scene.

"I saw at least three dead, but probably more," Radio Sweden reporter Martin Svenningsen said.



Police officers guard near the department store in central Stockholm, Sweden, on 7 April 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

TT reported that police confirmed the three deaths.

A Reuters witness saw a number of body-like forms covered by blankets at the scene of the incident.

Several attacks in which trucks or cars have driven into crowds have taken place in Europe in the past year. Al Qaeda in 2010 urged its followers to use trucks as a weapon.

In London on 22 March this year, a man in a car plowed into pedestrians on Westminster Bridge, killing four, and then stabbed a policeman to death before being shot by police.

Islamic State claimed responsibility for both an attack in Nice, France, last July, when a truck killed 86 people celebrating Bastille Day, and one in Berlin in December, when a truck smashed through a Christmas market, killing 12 people.—Reuters

South Korean court holds 1st trial on Samsung heir over bribery charges

SEOUL — A South Korean court on Friday held the first trial on Samsung heir over bribery charge involving impeached President Park Geun-hye and her longtime confidante Choi Soon-sil.

Samsung Electronics Vice Chairman Lee Jae-yong, dressed in the dark, gray suit and handcuffed, appeared in the Seoul

Central District Court.

The grim-faced Lee attended his first trial as a criminal suspect together with senior executives of Samsung Group, the biggest family-controlled conglomerate of South Korea.

Lee is charged with donating tens of millions of US dollars to two nonprofit foundations controlled by Choi, who is at the

center of the corruption scandal embroiling former President Park.

Choi and Park, who are now in custody, have been identified by prosecutors as accomplices. Park was impeached on March 10 and taken into custody three weeks later.

Samsung's donation to the Choi-controlled foundations is

suspected of being made in return for getting support in the merger of two Samsung affiliates in July 2015.

The merger between Samsung C&T and Cheil Industries was extremely important to the Samsung heir apparent to inherit management control from his ailing father Chairman Lee Kun-hee who has been hospitalized for

almost three years. Samsung also provided financial assistance for an equestrian training of Choi's daughter, while offering millions of euros to a German company owned by Choi.

Lee's legal team has claimed no quid pro quo in the donations, saying the bribery charge was based on bias and guesswork.—Xinhua

Opinion

Write for us

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

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

Code of Conduct & Code of Practice

Khin Maung Oo

CODE of Practice means a set of principles that members of a particular profession agree to follow in their work. Code means a set of moral principles or rules of behavior that are generally accepted by society or a social group. Conduct is a person's behavior in a particular place or in a particular situation. So, code of practice can be rendered into Myanmar as ကျင့်ဝတ်စည်းမျဉ်းစည်းကမ်း and code of conduct as ကျင့်ဝတ်သိက္ခာ. In fact, both are connected with morals. Code of practice is generally thought to be used in a particular profession. For example, a medical doctor must follow the medical ethics, so if he gets involved in committing an abortion, he can be said to have violated the medical ethics, conducting an immoral practice. Likewise, a lawyer must not give bribes to a judge to decide in favor of the

case he is pleading and similarly he must not make his clients give bribes to a judge who judges the case. This is a kind of malpractice. It seems that these corrupt practices are spreading in our country like a pandemic disease and destroying our society.

Greed drives a person to be induced by money. Hence, certain officials tend to misuse and abuse authority conferred upon them to perform certain administrative tasks and certain judicial functions of the government. In this way they are not above violating rules and laws for their personal benefits. Moral bankruptcy can reduce anyone to a person of disgrace and dishonor. In fact, they do not realize they are ruining their dignity themselves. Though not born out of rich families, they have a tendency to show their ostentatious mass of wealth that amounts to the extent that their possessions

will not come to nothingness even if their family spends for their whole lives. Ostentation of their wealth which comes from dubious ways or immoral practices depicts that they are people of moral bankruptcy. They seem to neglect that people are pointing fingers at them and their offspring without their knowledge. Though they are now free from punishment by law, they are surely receiving pejorative looks from people. This is the direct punishment from the people. Those who committed high treason such as the assassination of the martyrs led by Bogyoke Aung San received punishments respectively, but their unforgivable deeds will continue to cast gloomy shadows on their innocent descendants for years to come.

We all are responsible to bolster the deteriorating condition of moral bankruptcy of the

people, so that the future of our youths will be brighter. If this dangerous problem goes on totally neglected without any action taken to correct the situation, our society will be ruined. The only remedy to cure this moral bankruptcy is the implementation of rule of law in the whole society across the nation. Our President himself said that the emergence of the Constitution which would guarantee the betterment of all citizens is of great importance. The President gave us the remedy we urgently need. If we are intentionally negligent of our duties to perform our national cause, we ourselves will become culprits that destroy the future of our younger generation. Let us save our children's future by teaching them the importance of adhering to the professional ethics, code of practice and code of conduct of each respective profession.

Vital groundwater depleted faster than ever

Global use of irreplaceable groundwater is exhausting the supply so fast that researchers say it will drive up food prices and hit international trade.

Alex Kirby

CHINA, the world's most populous country, doubled within just 10 years its use of irreplaceable groundwater from underground reservoirs that are replenished more slowly than they are drained.

And in the same decade, 2000 to 2010, global use of this non-renewable water resource for irrigation increased by a quarter, according to a new study published in *Nature journal*.

The research suggests that unless producers and consumers of food make changes, this trend could lead to depleted water reserves, limited availability of food imports, and higher food prices.

Groundwater – from underground supplies, as opposed to water in rivers or lakes – supplies global agriculture with 43% of its crop irrigation needs.

The country exporting the most crops produced using irreplaceable groundwater is Pakistan, with 29% of global non-renewable sources embedded in trade – closely followed by the US (27%), with India (12%) in third place.

Groundwater abstraction

The study's authors say excessive abstraction of groundwater for irrigation – part of the wider virtual water trade – is leading to rapid depletion of aquifers in key food-producing regions, including north-western India, the North China Plain, cen-

The supply of groundwater worldwide is becoming depleted, according to a recent study. PHOTO: AYE MIN SOE



tral US, and California.

"This depletion of the largest liquid freshwater stock on Earth," they write, "threatens the sustainability of food production, and water and food security, not only locally, but also globally via international food trade."

"Aquifer depletion can also induce significant environmental degradation, such as land subsidence and seawater intrusion."

In another example of the way in which climate change works to intensify existing threats, the researchers say the depletion of local water reserves also risks putting large populations at serious danger during emergencies such as

droughts, earthquakes or fires, when immediate access to water is needed.

Using UN trade data and estimates of non-renewable groundwater removal, researchers traced the sources of water used to produce agricultural crops. They found that the crops contributing most to the non-renewable groundwater trade are rice (29%), wheat (12%), cotton (11%), maize (4%) and soybeans (3%).

"Under future climate change, droughts may be more frequent in many regions and we may want to keep groundwater reserves for these periods"

The study was conducted by

an international group of researchers led by Carole Dalin, senior research fellow with the Institute for Sustainable Resources at University College London (UCL), and including scientists at the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA) in Austria, at NASA in the US, and colleagues in Germany.

"People are rightfully food shopping with the environment in mind more than ever before – but it is not just about meat versus vegetables, organic or fair trade," Dr Dalin says.

"Where and how the products are grown is crucial, and basic foods like rice and bread could

have a damaging impact on global water supplies.

"Our research shows that unless both consumers and producers agree to adopt strategies that maximise the long-term sustainability of water use, most of the world's population risks seeing increased food prices or disrupted food supply.

Potentially dangerous

"Under future climate change, droughts may be more frequent in many regions and we may want to keep groundwater reserves for these periods."

Thomas Kastner, senior scientist at the Senckenberg Biodiversity and Climate Research Centre, Germany and the Alpen-Adria University, Austria, says: "Our work shows where trade flows are contributing to the unsustainable, and ultimately potentially dangerous, use of water resources. The use of non-renewable water in one place can put food supply in distant regions at risk."

Yoshihide Wada, a co-author of the report and deputy director of the IIASA Water Programme says: "The products that consumers buy at a supermarket may have very different environmental impacts depending on where they are produced and how they are irrigated."

"In order to help consumers make more sustainable choices about their food, producers should consider adding water labels that make these impacts clear."— *Climate News Network*

New hospital, market, fire brigade building to benefit ethnic people in southern Shan State

A 16-bed station hospital, a new market and a fire-bridge building were inaugurated yesterday in Kalaw, southern Shan State, where most of Danu, Taungyoe and Pa-O ethnic groups reside, in honour of World Health Day which falls on 7 April.

The new market was formally opened by Chief Minister Dr Lin Htut, Shan State Development Affairs Minister U Sai Son Hsai, Daw Nang Lang Kham, MP U Zaw Min Latt of Amyotha Hluttaw Representative and a local administrator.

The new and modern market donated by KBZ's Brighter Future Myanmar Foundation was built on 2.8 acres of land without harming the environment.

The market consists of 162 stalls each measuring 6 ft x 6 feet and 420 stalls measuring 9 ft x 9 feet with concrete-surfaced interior paths measuring 31,200 square ft, including toilets built with reinforced concrete.

Dr Lin Htut, Chief Minister of Shan State, U Sai Swun Sai, minister for Shan State development affairs, Daw Nang Lang Kham, chairperson of KBZ Brighter Future Myanmar Foundation, Kalaw township Amyotha Hluttaw representative U Zaw Min Latt, director of department of Shan State development U Sai Tun Tun and Bawsai region administrator U Soe Myint opened the new market of Bawsai by cutting a ceremonial ribbon at 8:40



Shan State Chief Minister Dr Lin Htut, Daw Nang Lang Kham, MP U Zaw Min Latt and local administrator formally open the market. PHOTO: THURA LWIN

am yesterday.

The 16-bed Bawsai station hospital was inaugurated by Union Minister Dr Myint Htwe, Chief Minister Dr Lin Htut and Daw Nang Lang Kham, who unveiled an inscription marking the opening of the hospital.

The 16-bed station hospital was built on 4.31 acres with two operating theaters, one delivery room, one duplex building for medical doctors, one housing

estate with four apartments for nurses, and one housing estate with four apartments for medical staff. The housing sites are equipped with TVs, purified water machines and furniture.

The opening of the hospital comes after the BFM's donation of a 100-bed hospital in Kholam, Jivitadana Sangha Hospital in Taunggyi and Kyaingkham Hospital in Shan State. The hospitals are outfitted with medical equip-

ment and can provide medical treatment to patients with cleft lips in Yangon, Mandalay and Taunggyi.

Following the opening ceremony, Daw Nang Lang Kham handed over the documents related to the market and the hospital to authorities.

The fire brigade building was handed over to authorities at 9 am before the opening of the hospital.—Thura Lwin

A good year ...

>> From page 1

If the laws come out as expected, the real estate market will become more stable. Besides, it needs the laws for real estate service to be enacted to attract firm foreign investment and local businesses, according to the Yangon Region Real Estate Entrepreneurs' Association.

A leading developer, the SPA Group of Companies' executive chairman Serge Pun, said at a press conference on 4 February that he believes the market will get "better and stronger" in the next four years under NLD rule. "There would be real demand emerging from the market, which was not the same as the demand derived from property speculation in the past," he said.

"But five years ago, the real estate market, especially in Yangon, the price of land and apartments or condos were surging extremely rapidly, that we could have called it a critical condition. So now, the government has adjusted the market and this situation is no longer as worrying," he said. From May through November, the Yangon Region government executed an order suspending building permits for all structures exceeding nine storeys. The far-reaching ramifications of the edict have led to a halving of new construction projects in 2016. Although the number of luxury condominiums in Yangon stands at around 6,000 units, the closing rate for new units in the city has fallen to 50 per cent, compared with 80 per cent in 2013, the Nikkei Asian Review reported.

EU congratulates Myanmar on successful by-election

THE European Union (EU) has congratulated Myanmar for successfully conducting democratic by-elections last weekend.

"The by-elections held on 1 April 2017 were another important step towards consolidating a democratic tradition in Myanmar," said a statement released on Thursday. "According to domestic and international observers, including European ones, voters were able to cast their ballots in a generally well-run and transparent process.

"We would like to congratulate the Government of Myanmar, and in particular the Union Election Commission [UEC], on successfully managing an overall credible, calm and competitive electoral process."

The statement added that the EU will continue to support the UEC in the future.

The EU has been one of the



A woman casts a vote in the by-election in Yangon. PHOTO: PHOE KHWAH

strongest supporters and sponsors of Myanmar's democratic transition, as well as investing financial backing in development and the ongoing peace process.

Last week's by-elections in Myanmar were widely applauded as free and fair. The ruling

National League for Democracy (NLD) won nine of the 19 vacant seats, while the military-backed Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP) won two. But the two main parties were generally eclipsed by regional parties in the ethnic states.—Mizzima

DPAG and GCDP to jointly organize event on Drug Policy

THE Drug Policy Advocacy Group – Myanmar (DPAG) and the Global Commission on Drug Policy (GCDP) will organise an important public event on Drug Policy on the 8th of April 2017.

The event, the first of its kind to be held in Myanmar, will gather a large audience from Civil Society Organisations, local and international NGOs, UN Agencies, representatives from the drug users and opium farmers communities, political parties, Government Officials and media.

Madam Ruth Dreifuss, Chair of the Global Commission on Drug Policy and former President of Switzerland, will speak as a special guest speaker, together with other local prominent panelists.

She will present the recent report of the Global Commission, Advancing Drug Policy Reform: a new approach to drug decriminalization, which details the destructive and harmful consequences of punitive drug policies.

Last month, a draft bill proposing amendments to Myanmar "Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law" was published

in newspapers for public consultation. The draft Law notably foresees that drug users will no longer be punished with lengthy prison penalties, and will instead be offered treatment and rehabilitation.

Dr Nang Pann Ei Kham, from the Drug Policy Advocacy Group – Myanmar (DPAG), which co-organises the event and also released a report last February -Addressing drug problems in Myanmar: 5 key interventions that can make a difference -expressed her hope that the country's current repressive approach will be replaced with drug policies based on human rights, public health and sustainable development:

"We warmly welcome the Government's intention to end the criminalisation of drug use; It is a necessary step. But to be successful, it will be equally vital to ensure that health and social interventions for drug users are truly voluntary and evidence-based. In fact, the use of compulsory drug treatment and rehabilitation, so common in Southeast Asia, is fundamentally incompatible with public health;" —DPAG and GCDP

Krung Thai launches money transfer Service

Myanmar workers in Thailand will be able to remit their salaries conveniently to their families in Myanmar through Krung Thai

Bank, from which cash could be transferred and withdrawn at the branches of Myanma Economic Bank across the country without

service charges.

The money transfer service began on 3 April. —Myanmar News Agency

China's Xi urges trade cooperation in first meeting with Trump

PALM BEACH, (Fla.) — Chinese President Xi Jinping urged cooperation with the United States on trade and investment on Thursday, inviting President Donald Trump to visit China in a cordial start to their first meeting likely to broach sensitive security and commercial issues.

Trump has said he wants to raise concerns about China's trade practices and press Xi to do more to rein in North Korea's nuclear ambitions during his two-day visit to the Spanish-style Mar-a-Lago resort in Palm Beach, Florida, though no major deals on either issue are expected.

The two sides should promote the "healthy development of bilateral trade and investment" and advance talks on a bilateral investment agreement, Xi said, according to a statement on China's Foreign Ministry website.

"We have a thousand reasons to get China-US relations right, and not one reason to spoil the China-US relationship," Xi told Trump.

Trump accepted Xi's invitation to China later this year, state news agency Xinhua news agency cited officials as saying on Friday.

Xi and his wife, Peng Liyuan, joined Trump and his wife, Melania, at a long table in an ornate candle-lit private dining room festooned with red and yellow floral centerpieces, where they dined on



Chinese President Xi Jinping and US President Donald Trump attend a dinner at the start of their summit at Trump's Mar-a-Lago estate in West Palm Beach, Florida, US, on 6 April 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

pan-seared Dover sole and New York strip steak. Trump, a New York real estate magnate before he ran for office, joked before dinner: "We've had a long discussion already, and so far I have gotten nothing, absolutely nothing. But we have developed a friendship — I can see that — and I think long term we are going to have a very, very great relationship and I look very much forward to it."

The fanfare over the summit

on Thursday was overshadowed by another pressing foreign policy issue: the US response to a deadly poison gas attack in Syria. As Trump and Xi were wrapping up dinner, US forces fired dozens of cruise missiles at a Syrian airbase from which it said the chemical weapons attack was launched this week, an escalation of the US military role in Syria that swiftly drew sharp criticism from Russia.

In Beijing, China's Foreign

Ministry urged all parties in Syria to find a political settlement.

Trump and Xi were expected to get into more detailed discussions about trade and foreign policy issues on Friday, concluding their summit with a working lunch. Trump promised during the 2016 presidential campaign to stop what he called the theft of American jobs by China and rebuild the country's manufacturing base. Many blue-collar workers helped

propel him to his unexpected election victory in November and Trump wants to deliver for them.

"We have been treated unfairly and have made terrible trade deals with China for many, many years. That's one of the things we are going to be talking about," Trump told reporters ahead of the meeting.

The bilateral investment treaty mentioned by Xi, talks on which began during former president George W. Bush's administration and resumed under Barack Obama, has received little attention since Trump took office.

Trump is still finding his footing in the White House and has yet to spell out a strategy for what his advisers called a trade relationship based on "the principle of reciprocity."

He brought his top economic and national advisers to Florida for the meeting, including Defense Secretary Jim Mattis, Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin, and Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross.

"Even as we share a desire to work together, the United States does recognize the challenges China can present to American interests," said Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, also in Florida for the meeting. Trump's daughter, Ivanka, and her husband, Jared Kushner, who both work at the White House, also were among the dinner guests.—Reuters

French presidential front-runner Macron urges military intervention in Syria

PARIS — French centrist Emmanuel Macron sought to establish his presidential credentials on Thursday by calling for international military intervention against Syrian President Bashar al-Assad if he is proved to have used chemical weapons.

The former economy minister is favourite to win France's presidential election but faces criticism from his opponents that he is too inexperienced for the top job.

Macron, 39, interviewed for 2-1/2 hours on France 2 television, took a tough stance on the top foreign policy issue of the day, calling for military intervention against Assad if his government was found to have carried out a suspected chemical attack that killed at least 70 people on Tuesday.

"An international intervention is needed ... My preference is that there should be an intervention under the auspices of the United Nations. A military intervention," Macron said.

However, he said a military operation must be part of a "diplomatic and political roadmap."

Russia has repeatedly used its veto in the past to protect the Syrian government from UN Security Council action.

Polls show Macron and far-

right leader Marine Le Pen each winning about a quarter of the vote in the 23 April first round of the election, with Macron tipped to easily defeat Le Pen in the 7 May runoff.

Scandal-hit conservative candidate Francois Fillon is holding on to third place in the latest polls, followed closely by 65-year-old Jean-Luc Melançon, a veteran far-left maverick, who has moved up fast

in the ratings.

Macron, a pro-European former banker who has never held elected office, aims to transcend the traditional left-right divide in French politics and boost economic recovery by reducing public spending and cutting taxes. Le Pen wants to curb immigration, ditch the euro and bring back the franc, and hold a referendum on European Union membership.

—Reuters



Emmanuel Macron of the political movement En Marche ! (Onwards !) attends a prime-time televised debate for the candidates at French 2017 presidential election in La Plaine Saint-Denis, near Paris, France, on 4 April 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

Japan, China, South Korea to hold 3-way free trade talks from Monday

TOKYO — Top negotiators from Japan, China and South Korea are set to meet for four days from Monday in Tokyo to discuss a three-way free trade accord, the Japanese Foreign Ministry said.

The three major Asian economies hope a free trade agreement will promote trade in the Asia-Pacific region in the wake of US President Donald Trump pulling his nation out of the Trans-Pacific Partnership trade deal.

Keiichi Katakami, deputy minister for foreign affairs, is

set to attend the talks from Japan, along with Wang Shouwen, vice minister of commerce, from China and Lee Sang Jin, assister minister for trade, from South Korea, the ministry said Friday.

The upcoming talks are set to focus on trade in goods, services and investment, it said. The previous round was held in January in Beijing.

The three countries' trade ministers pledged at their meeting last October to accelerate talks for the proposed trilateral FTA.—Kyodo News

Bangladeshi PM arrives in India on 4-day visit

NEW DELHI — Bangladeshi Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina Friday arrived in India on a four-day visit, officials said.

Hasina was received by India Prime Minister Narendra Modi at New Delhi airport.

During Hasina's visit, India and Bangladesh would sign a series of bilateral agreements including a civil nuclear energy accord.

Hasina, during her four-day stay, will be holding meetings with her Indian counterpart

Modi, Indian President, Vice President and other leaders.

The two countries would also be launching bus and train services connecting two cities of India and Bangladesh.

Hasina, along with Modi, is scheduled to launch a few cross-border initiatives on Sunday.

The trade between the two countries is currently about 6.5 billion US dollars, of which Indian exports are approximately 5.7 billion US dollars.—Xinhua



US Navy guided-missile destroyer USS Porter (DDG 78) conducts strike operations while in the Mediterranean Sea which US Defence Department said was a part of cruise missile strike against Syria on 7 April 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

US fires missiles at Assad airbase; Russia denounces 'aggression'

PALM BEACH, (Fla.)/MOSCOW/BEIRUT — The United States fired cruise missiles on Friday at a Syrian airbase from which it said a deadly chemical weapons attack had been launched this week, the first direct US assault on the government of Bashar al-Assad in six years of civil war.

US President Donald Trump ordered the step his predecessor Barack Obama never took: directly targeting Assad's military with air strikes in punishment for the chemical weapons attack, which killed at least 70 people, many of them children.

That catapulted the United States into a confrontation with Russia, which has military advisers on the ground assisting its close ally Assad.

"Years of previous attempts at changing Assad's behavior have all failed and failed very dramatically," Trump said as he announced the attack from his Florida resort, Mar-a-Lago, where he was meeting Chinese President Xi Jinping.

"Even beautiful babies were cruelly murdered in this very barbaric attack," he said of Tuesday's chemical weapons strike, which Western countries blame on As-

sad's forces. "No child of God should ever suffer such horror."

The swift action is likely to be interpreted as a signal to Russia, and also to other countries such as North Korea, China and Iran where Trump has faced foreign policy tests early in his presidency.

The Syrian army said the US attack killed six people at its air base near the city of Homs. It called the attack "blatant aggression" and said it made the United States a "partner" of "terrorist groups" including Islamic State. Homs Governor Talal Barazi told Reuters the death toll was seven.

A spokesman for Russian President Vladimir Putin said the strike had seriously damaged ties between Washington and Moscow. Putin, a staunch ally of Assad, regarded the US action as "aggression against a sovereign nation" on a "made-up pretext", spokesman Dmitry Peskov said.

Russian television showed craters and rubble at the site of the airbase and said nine aircraft had been destroyed.

US officials said they had taken pains to ensure Russian troops were not killed, warning Russian forces in advance and

avoiding striking parts of the base where Russians were present.

Western allies of the United States spoke out in support of the decision to launch the strikes. Several countries said they were notified in advance, but none had been asked to take part.

US officials and allies described the attack as a one-off that would not lead to further escalation. It signaled Trump's determination to take "decisive action", US officials said.

For years, Washington has backed rebel groups fighting against Assad in a complex multi-sided civil war under way since 2011 that has killed more than 400,000 people. The war has driven half of Syrians from their homes, creating the world's worst refugee crisis.

The United States has been conducting air strikes against Islamic State militants who control territory in eastern and northern Syria, and a small number of US troops are on the ground assisting anti-Islamic State militias. But until now, Washington has avoided direct confrontation with Assad.

Russia, meanwhile, joined the war on Assad's behalf in 2015, action that decisively turned the

momentum of the conflict in the Syrian government's favor.

His decision to strike Syrian government forces is a particularly notable shift for Trump, who in the past had repeatedly said he wanted better relations with Moscow, including to cooperate with Russia to fight Islamic State.

However, Trump had also criticised Obama for setting a "red line" threatening force against Assad if he used chemical weapons, only to pull back from ordering air strikes in 2013 when Assad agreed to give up his chemical arsenal.

Trump said this week's chemical attack "crosses many, many lines", an allusion to Obama's threat that was not carried out. Russian media long portrayed Trump as a figure who would promote closer relations with Moscow. At home, Trump's opponents have accused him of being too supportive of Putin.

U.S. spy agencies say Moscow intervened with computer hacking to help Trump beat Hillary Clinton in last year's election, and the FBI is investigating whether Trump campaign figures colluded with Moscow, which the White House denies.—Reuters

NEWS IN BRIEF

Woman injured in Westminster attack has died: UK police

LONDON — A woman who was injured in the 22 March attack on Westminster has died, police said on Friday, taking the death toll from the incident to six including the attacker.

Police said they believed the woman, who died on Thursday, was Andreea Cristea, a Romanian national who had been visiting London at the time of the attack. Police have said she fell into the River Thames from Westminster Bridge after being driven at by Khalid Masood who plowed a rented car into pedestrians and stabbed a policeman to death before being shot dead.—Reuters

Police clash with protesters in Johannesburg

JOHANNESBURG — Police fired rubber bullets and tear gas at some protesters in downtown Johannesburg, injuring a man and a woman, as thousands of people marched in South African cities to protest against President Jacob Zuma on Friday.

The opposition Democratic Alliance party, which called for the marches, held a rally of more than 10,000 people in another part of Johannesburg which was calm.—Reuters

Wildfires almost extinguished in Russia's Far East

VLADIVOSTOK — The wildfires that have been raging across 7,000 hectares in Russia's Far East have been mostly extinguished, the local forestry department said Friday.

More than 370 firefighters, 71 pieces of equipment and three aircraft were mobilized to fight the wildfires, the department said. Meanwhile, 14 wildfires covering an area of 552 hectares are still raging in the Amur, Khabarovsk and Jewish Autonomous Regions, it said.—Xinhua

Belgium drops terrorism case against Antwerp driver

ANTWERP (Belgium) — Belgian prosecutors dropped terrorism charges on Friday against a driver who sped down Antwerp's main pedestrian thoroughfare last month, a day after an Islamic State follower ran down dozens of people in London.

Mohammed R., a 39-year-old Tunisian living in France, hit no one as he drove down De Meir, forcing shoppers to leap out of his

path. He still faces charges over weapons discovered when police later found him, drunk and incoherent, at the wheel and his detention was renewed for a further month.

Prosecutors said in a statement they had found insufficient evidence to maintain terrorism charges over the incident on 23 March. Antwerp's right-wing mayor, a leading figure in Belgian

national politics, has rejected criticism of his decision to call a news conference immediately after the incident, where he said city authorities looked to have foiled a terrorist attack.

The previous day, police had shot dead a British man at the Houses of Parliament after he had rammed dozens of people with his car on Westminster bridge. He killed five people.—Reuters



A bomb disposal robot is seen removing items from a car which had entered the main pedestrian shopping street in the city at high speed, in Antwerp, Belgium, on 23 March 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

Maldives police arrest opposition leader for plotting to oust government

MALE, (Maldives) — Police in the Indian Ocean island nation of the Maldives arrested an opposition leader for “plotting to overthrow the government”, police said on Friday, days after the opposition’s failed bid to oust the speaker and take control of parliament.

The arrest of Qasim Ibrahim, the leader of Jumhooree Party, comes ahead of another impeachment vote against the deputy speaker scheduled for Monday. The impeachment motion against Speaker Abdulla Maseeh Mohamed, a close ally of President Abdulla Yameen, was defeated by 48 votes to none in parliament after all opposition lawmakers walked out in protest at their colleagues’ expulsion from the chamber for unruly behavior.

The largely Muslim island chain with a population of 400,000 and a reputation



Maldivian Jumhooree Party presidential candidate Qasim Ibrahim (2nd R) casts his vote at a polling station during the presidential elections in Male, on 9 November 2013. PHOTO: REUTERS

as a tourist paradise has been mired in political unrest for years. Significant numbers of radicalized Maldives youths have also enlisted to fight for Islamic State militants in the Middle East.

Police in their charge sheet said Qasim was arrested for his alleged role of bribing and “undue influencing of parliament members and state security forces” in the impeachment vote against the speaker. Police also said his arrest was due to his attempt of “unlawful incitement to the removal, from office, of the legitimate government”. Hussein Shameem, Qasim’s lawyer, said his client was an oppo-

sition whip and by law he can try to convince members at a vote. “He has not used undue influence and no unlawful activities were done. He acted within the law,” Shameem told Reuters. Qasim, a tourism tycoon and a 2013 presidential candidate, backed Yameen in the second round of the poll against former president Mohamed Nasheed. Yameen won by a slim margin. Later he and Yameen fell apart and he formed an opposition coalition along with former presidents Nasheed and Maumoon Abdul Gayoom, a half brother of Yameen.

The Maldives has suffered from unrest since Nasheed, its first democratically elected leader, was ousted in disputed circumstances in 2012. He was later sentenced to 13 years in jail on terrorism charges after a widely denounced trial and now lives in exile.—Reuters

Venezuelan opposition, security forces clash in anti-Maduro protests

CARACAS — Venezuelan opposition protesters and security officers clashed on Thursday as the country’s fragmented opposition gained new impetus against a socialist government it blames for the country’s social and economic collapse.

The demonstrations were sparked by Supreme Court action last week to assume control of the country’s opposition-led congress in what demonstrators said was a lurch toward dictatorship.

While the widely condemned decision was quickly overturned, the opposition has stepped up street protests against President Nicolas Maduro, despite such demonstrations having achieved little in the past.

Thousands of people blocked a main Caracas highway on Thursday, chanting “Out with Ma-

duro!” and “No more dictatorship!” and vowed to march to the office of the state ombudsman, the government’s principal human rights advocate.

“The human rights advocate has to stop being the Socialist Party advocate!” opposition leader Henrique Capriles said in an online broadcast as he marched wearing a hat in the Venezuelan colours of yellow, red, and blue.

Security forces blocked the march, sparking clashes with dozens of masked youths in a scene repeated over and over again in the past 15 years in volatile Venezuela.

Protesters threw stones and petrol bombs while security officials fired tear gas and dispersed the crowds by mid-afternoon. The opposition called for another nationwide march on Saturday.—Reuters

REPUBLIC OF THE UNION OF MYANMAR
Ministry of Electricity and Energy
Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise (MOGE)
Nay Pyi Taw

Extension of timeline to submit responses to the
Requests for Proposals for Joint Venture in
Onshore Seismic Acquisition Services,
Onshore Drilling Services and
Onshore Pipeline Construction and Maintenance Services
with Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise

Date: April 7, 2017

Further to the announcements of the Requests for Proposals for Joint Venture in Onshore Seismic Acquisition Services, Onshore Drilling Services and Onshore Pipeline Construction and Maintenance Services with Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise, published on March 24, 2017, MOGE hereby announces an extension for interested parties to submit their Applications. The Applications shall be submitted **no later than 3 PM, local time (Nay Pyi Taw, Republic of the Union of Myanmar), on May 17, 2017** to the following address:

MOGE Tender Committee for Joint Venture Establishment in Petroleum Services, Complex 44, MOGE Office, Nay Pyi Taw, Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

Interested parties are now invited to submit a second round of questions regarding the RfP and comments on the draft Joint Venture Agreement **no later than 12 PM (noon), local time (Nay Pyi Taw, Republic of the Union of Myanmar), on April 26, 2017**. MOGE will duly respond to all questions submitted no later than 3 PM local time (Nay Pyi Taw, Republic of the Union of Myanmar), on May 5, 2017. A revised draft Joint Venture Agreement will be issued together with the response to this second round of questions, taking into consideration comments received from both the first and second rounds of comments on the draft Joint Venture Agreement.

MOGE also hereby announces an extension for interested parties to designate an Authorised Representative and a Back-up Representative. Interested parties must designate an Authorised Representative and a Back-up Representative **no later than 12 PM (noon), local time (Nay Pyi Taw, Republic of the Union of Myanmar), on April 26, 2017**. Any updates to the Joint Venture Partner Selection Process shall be communicated through the designated Authorised Representative and Back-up Representative and published on the official website for the Joint Venture Partner Selection Process (www.mogemm.com).

The RfP may still be purchased by any interested party no later than 12 PM (noon), local time (Nay Pyi Taw, Republic of the Union of Myanmar), April 26, 2017 (excluding Saturdays, Sundays and Public Holidays) at Complex 44, MOGE Office, Nay Pyi Taw, Republic of the Union of Myanmar for a non-refundable cash payment of five hundred United States Dollars (USD 500). The purchaser will be provided with a payment acknowledgement when payment is made. Only Applications from Applicants that had purchased the RfP document officially from MOGE will be evaluated.

Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise
Ministry of Electricity and Energy



French soldiers from Operation Barkhane patrol north of Timbuktu on 6 November 2014. PHOTO: REUTERS

France confident US will not cut into Mali UN mission needs

GAO, (Mali) — France’s foreign minister said on Friday he was confident that the United States would not seek cuts to the United Nations peacekeeping mission in Mali, but said Paris was ready to study its efficiency as Washington reviews its overall UN strategy.

Former colonial power France intervened in 2013 to drive out al Qaeda-linked militants who seized northern Mali the year before. It has since deployed some 4,000 soldiers, known as the Barkhane force, across the region to hunt down Islamists.

That operation has paved way for the UN to deploy its more than 10,000-strong MINUSMA peacekeeping force to the West African state at a cost of about \$1 billion a year.

A surge in violence from Islamist militants, difficulties in implementing a peace deal between the government and northern rebels and the mission’s lack of equipment and manpower have raised eyebrows at a time when Washington wants to review its funding to the UN.

“It doesn’t mean that just because you are looking to make savings that you abandon these peacekeeping missions,” Jean-Marc Ayrault told Reuters ahead of visiting French troops in the central Mali city of Gao.

The United States is the largest contributor to the United Nations, paying 22 per cent of the \$5.4 billion core UN budget and 28 per cent of the \$7.9 billion UN peacekeeping budget. These are assessed contributions — agreed by the UN General Assembly — and not voluntary payments.

“As far as Mali is concerned ... it’s clear that it’s an indispensable mission,” Ayrault said. “Everyone recognises that France took the lead on this and that the peacekeeping operation would not have happened without us, so I’m not pessimistic.” —Reuters

Hyundai, Kia to recall nearly 1.5 million vehicles over engine issue

SEOUL — Hyundai Motor Co (005380.KS) and Kia Motors Corp (000270.KS) said on Friday they plan to recall nearly 1.5 million vehicles in the United States and South Korea due to engine issues, the latest blow for two firms already struggling in key markets.

The recall, which could cost the two firms hundreds of millions of dollars each, revives quality concerns at a time when Hyundai and Kia face a sharp drop in China sales and sluggish demand in the United States and South Korea.

The two automakers have submitted a plan to recall 1.3 million vehicles due to an engine defect that could cause them to stall, the companies said in a statement. The plan, which must be approved by US authorities, involves Hyundai's Sonata and Santa Fe and Kia's Optima, Sorento and Sportage.

The duo said they were also recalling 171,348 vehicles in South Korea due to a similar manufacturing problem, which leads to possible stalling of its Theta 2 engine.

The recall could hit earnings with the recall costing each company as much as 250 billion won



Dave Zuchowski, President and CEO of Hyundai North America, introduces the 2015 Hyundai Sonata at the New York International Auto Show in New York City, in 2014. PHOTO: REUTERS

(\$220.19 million), said Koh Tae-bong, an analyst at Hi Investment & Securities.

The companies declined to comment on the cost of the recall.

Hyundai Motor shares closed down 2.4 per cent, compared to a flat broader market .KS11. Kia Motors were down 0.9 per cent.

This is not the first time Hyundai and Kia have been forced to recall vehicles due to defects in their Theta engines, which they manufacture themselves.

In 2015, Hyundai Motor recalled 470,000 Sonata

sedans in the United States to replace faulty engine parts.

A Hyundai spokeswoman said the latest recall involves a different engine problem. But a South Korean ministry official said they were similar.

The ministry said metal debris in crankshafts could cause engine damage, leading to possible engine stalling.

"The recall is related to a manufacturing process problem, not the structural problem of Theta 2GDi engines and we have complet-

ed improvements through appropriate measures," the companies said in a statement.

The recall in South Korea covers Hyundai's Sonata, Grandeur sedans and Kia's K5, K7 and Sportage models equipped with a 2-liter or 2.4-liter Theta 2 gasoline engine produced before August 2013, the South Korean transport ministry said.

Hyundai will replace a defective engine with a new one after inspection. The recall in South Korea will start on 22 May.—Reuters

Appeals court upholds California's anti-greenhouse gas program

SACRAMENTO, (Calif.) — A state appeals court on Thursday ruled California's high profile market system for reducing greenhouse gas emissions does not amount to an illegal tax, a decision that could lift a pall over the so-called cap-and-trade program's marketplace for buying and selling pollution allowances.

The California Chamber of Commerce and others had filed a pair of lawsuits challenging the anti-pollution program, which requires large producers of greenhouse gases to either lower their emissions or purchase pollution rights from the state or others.

The system is called cap-and-trade because it puts a cap on the amount of emissions for the state but allow polluters to purchase or trade pollution allowances.

The state's Air Resources Board, a defendant in the lawsuits, prevailed in district court in Sacramento in 2013. The Chamber of Commerce and the other plaintiffs appealed, arguing that air quality regulators exceeded the power granted to them by the state legislature and then-governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, a Republican, when they set up strict rules for reducing emissions and buying and selling greenhouse gas emission allowances.

They also alleged that fees connected with the purchase of pollution allowances amounted to a tax. Because California's landmark Proposition 13 tax reform law prohibits the legislature from passing new taxes without a two-thirds majority, the Chamber of Commerce and its fellow plaintiffs argued that the system of fees and



A vehicle has its emissions tested at a smog testing facility in Oceanside, California, US in 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

pollution credits was illegal.

In its ruling on Thursday, the state's Third Appellate District Court in Sacramento rejected both arguments. Voting two-to-one in favor of the state, the three-judge panel said the legislature clearly intended for the Air Resources Board to set up the system, proving its support by following up in later legislation with details on how it should be run.

The fees and costs associated with the system were not taxes, in part because companies and investors purchase and trade

the pollution allowances voluntarily, while taxes are not voluntary. Taxes also do not offer benefits to payors, the court said, while purchasers and sellers of the allowances do benefit.

Revenue from the program funds clean energy programs, especially in poorer communities, and helps finance the state's ambitious high speed rail project.

The ongoing case had cast a shadow over the state's emissions trading market, which has at times suffered a lack of participation due to uncertainty over its future.—Reuters

US regulators to probe Toshiba on alleged chip patent violation

WASHINGTON — The US International Trade Commission said Thursday it will investigate Toshiba Corp. for allegedly infringing a flash memory patent, posing another challenge to the embattled Japanese conglomerate.

The ITC said in a statement that it will look into the Toshiba headquarters in Tokyo and its affiliates in the United States and the Philippines, based on a complaint filed by Taiwanese semiconductor manufacturer Macronix International Co.

If Toshiba is found violating the patent, it could become unable to sell its flash memory chips, as well as products using them, such as video cameras and car navigation systems, in the United States.

The ITC will set

a target date for completing its investigation within 45 days after deciding to launch the probe, it said.

Its corrective orders will be effective when issued and will be finalized 60 days after the issuance unless disapproved by the Office of the US Trade Representative during that period.

Toshiba has been struggling to turn around its businesses following a massive accounting scandal.

The ITC's announcement came after Toshiba's U.S. nuclear unit Westinghouse Electric Co. filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection late last month.

To improve its financial standing, Toshiba also plans to sell a majority stake in Toshiba Memory Corp., a chipmaker it spun off earlier this month.—

Kyodo News

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

MV KOTA HARTA VOY. NO ()

Consignees of cargo carried on MV KOTA HARTA VOY. NO () are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 8.4.2017 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of A.W.P.T where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

**SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S ADVANCE CONTAINER
LINES**

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

MV EVER ABLE VOY. NO ()

Consignees of cargo carried on MV EVER ABLE VOY. NO () are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 8.4.2017 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of H.P.T where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

**SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S EVERGREEN SHIPPING
LINES**

Phone No: 2301185

Johansson says she 'baffled' by Ivanka Trump's advocacy comments

NEW YORK — Actress Scarlett Johansson said on Thursday she was "baffled" by Ivanka Trump's recent comments that she would prefer to be an advocate for issues behind the scenes of President Donald Trump's administration rather than in the public arena.

Speaking on stage at the Women in the World Summit in New York, Johansson said she was disappointed that Ivanka Trump, in an interview with CBS' "60 Minutes" this week, said the impact she would have with her father's decisions, "most people will not actually know about."

"This idea that behind a great man is a great woman - what about being in front of that person or

next to them or standing on your own? ... it's so old-fashioned, it's so uninspired and actually I think really cowardly. And I was just so disappointed by that interview that she gave," she added.

A representative for Ivanka Trump did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

"Avengers" star Johansson, 32, recently parodied Ivanka Trump in a "Saturday Night Live" sketch last month that called the first daughter "complicit" within her father's presidential administration.

The sketch came amid questions about Ivanka Trump's possible conflicts of interest after it was announced that she would become

an informal adviser to her father with an office in the West Wing.

Trump has since said she would be taking an unpaid, advisory role to the president to allay ethics concerns, and would be joining her husband Jared Kushner, a powerful adviser to the president.

During Thursday's discussion, Johansson was asked if she would consider a career in politics.

"I've always been interested in local politics, I think that's where you make the most effective changes in your community," the actress said.

"I would never rule anything out, but I have a very full life right now," she added.—Reuters



Actress Scarlett Johansson (L) embraces Arianna Huffington, founder and CEO of Thrive Global, during the Women In The World Summit at the David H. Koch Theater at Lincoln Center in New York City, NY, US on 6 April 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

'Get Out' leads expanded, gender-free MTV Movie and TV Awards

LOS ANGELES — Horror comedy "Get Out," the hit movie with a racial twist, led nominations on Thursday for the MTV Movie and TV Awards in a list that dispenses with gender classifications and pits film, television and streaming shows against each other.

"Get Out," written and directed by comedian Jordan Peele, earned six nominations including for movie of the year, best actor for star Daniel Kaluuya, best villain and a new category called "best fight against the system."

Previously known as the MTV Movie Awards, the youth-orientated network widened the categories of its annual show to include television for the first time. This year's show will air live from Los Angeles on 7 May and will be hosted by Adam DeVine of the "Pitch Perfect" movies and Comedy Central's "Workaholics" series.

"We're living in a golden age of content, and great storytelling and characters resonate regardless of whether you're watching it in a theater or on TV," Chris McCarthy, president of MTV, said in a statement.

MTV, known for its irreverent awards shows, also replaced its former best actor and actress categories with the all-embracing, gender-neutral "best actor in a movie" and "best actor in a show."

The changes produced a list of nominations on Thursday that included "Game of Thrones" star Emilia Clarke competing for best

actor in a show against Donald Glover of "Atlanta" and Mandy Moore from "This is Us."

The fan favorite best kiss category included nods for the gay teen embrace between Ashton Sanders and Jharrel Jerome in the Oscar-winning movie "Moonlight," and for Taraji P. Henson and Terrence Howard from TV hip-hop industry drama "Empire."

Other key nominations included movie "Beauty and the Beast" and Netflix sci-fi horror show "Stranger Things," with four nods each. Scoring three nominations each were TV shows "Atlanta," "Game of Thrones" and "This is Us," along with movies

"Hidden Figures," "Logan" and "Moonlight." The MTV awards show features the stars of blockbuster productions and has established itself as a laid-back antidote to Hollywood's awards season, which tends to honor more serious fare. Winners are chosen by fans voting online.

New categories this year include best American story, for a TV show or movie that showcases America at its "open and diverse" best. MTV said "best fight against the system" (formerly best fight) will recognize the TV show or movie whose characters exemplify a fight "against a system that tries to keep them down."—Reuters



The cast of 'Stranger Things' poses with the awards they won for Outstanding Performance by an Ensemble in a Drama Series backstage at the 23rd Screen Actors Guild Awards in Los Angeles, California, US, on 29 January 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS



Cast member Anne Hathaway poses at the premiere of the movie "Colossal" in Los Angeles, California, US, on 4 April 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

Anne Hathaway back in 'Colossal' independent comedy

LOS ANGELES — Anne Hathaway has ventured back into independent cinema to star in one of the quirkiest films of the year, "Colossal", which she refuses to categorize.

"I think it's all genres and none", she said, in a viewpoint similar to how she sees her role in the movie.

"The thing I loved about Gloria was she's just a mess, she's human, she's lost, and smart, and sweet, and compassionate and foolish, and just really, really alive and figuring it out", Hathaway said.

In "Colossal", Hathaway stars as Gloria, whose life is spiraling out of control after her

drinking gets too much for her boyfriend, played by Dan Stevens, and she finds herself having to return to her hometown from New York.

There, she reconnects with an old friend of hers, Oscar, played by Sudeikis. However, when a monster begins a rampage through Seoul, Gloria begins to believe that the monster's life is connected to hers. The film is directed by Spanish writer, director and actor Nacho Vigalondo and has been a film festival favorite, showing at Toronto, Sundance and San Sebastian.

"Colossal" is on limited release in the United States from 7 April.—Reuters

In a first, German art exhibition documenta opens in Athens

ATHENS — Documenta, one of Europe's most important modern art exhibitions, opens in Athens on Saturday, the first time in its history it is being held outside the German city of Kassel.

Documenta 14 — “Learning from Athens” — will run in the Greek capital until July 16, extending over more than 40 landmark locations including squares, cinemas, and libraries. It will also still run in Kassel this year - from 10 June to 17 September.

More than 160 artists are showcasing new works in documenta 14, touching upon issues such as migration, the financial crisis and censorship.

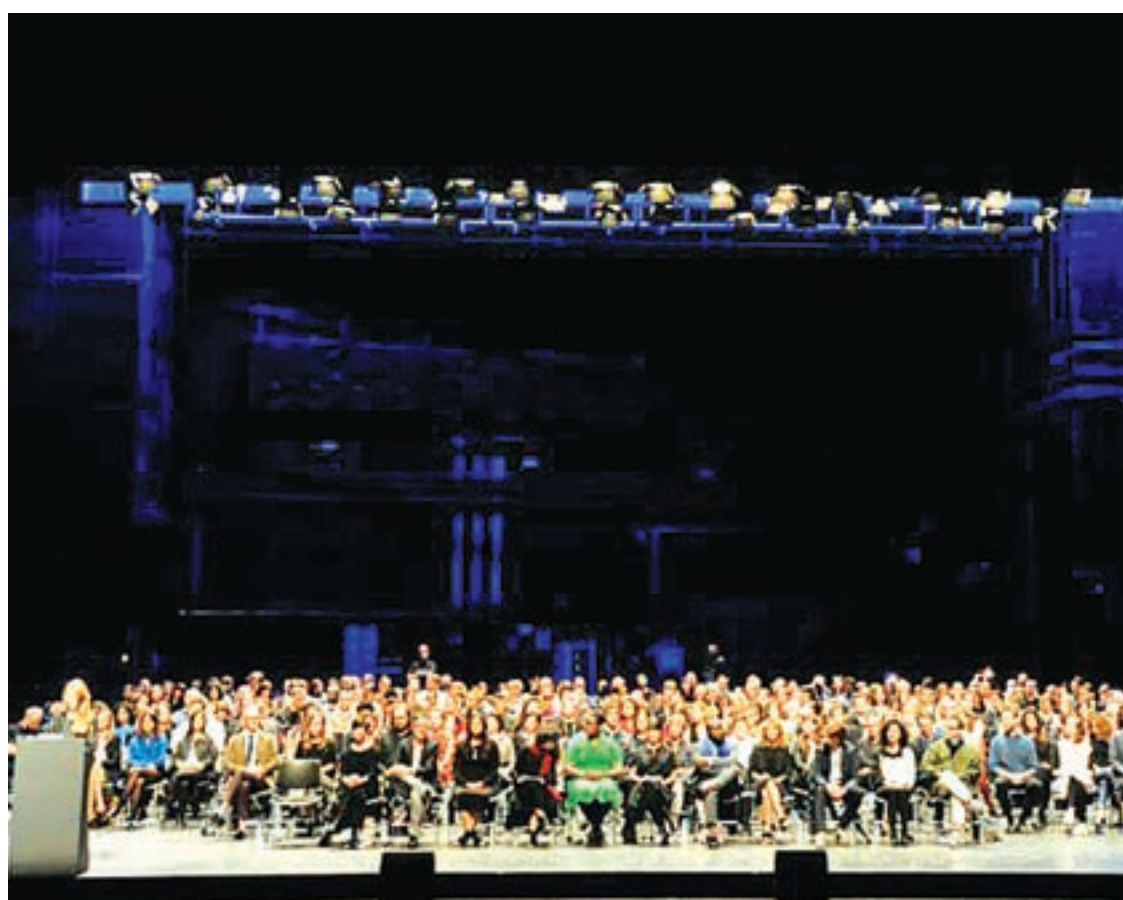
Adam Szymczyk, its artistic director, described the long process of organising the event in Athens as both “excruciatingly difficult” and “amazingly beautiful”.

“And yet, the journey has only begun,” he said.

Organisers have said Greece's role at the centre of Europe's financial and migration crises drove the decision to twin the fair between Athens and Kassel, though exhibits will not be limited to those themes.

One exhibit in the Athens National Museum of Contemporary Art features thousands of green and black olives and is titled “Payment of Greek Debt to Germany with Olives and Art.”

Greece's long economic crisis has strained relations with Germany and many in the country



Curators and artists of the ‘Documenta 14’ art exhibition take part in a news conference at the Athens Concert Hall in Athens, Greece, on 6 April 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

blame Berlin, their biggest creditor, for the painful austerity and record unemployment associated with three financial bailouts.

Other exhibits include an open kitchen in a central Athens square where visitors are encouraged to grab a bite to eat with strangers. And there are exhibits at landmarks such as the Ancient Agora, the Temple of Zeus and

the First Cemetery of Athens.

Held every five years, documenta — first run in 1955 — is one of Europe's top exhibitions, alongside the Venice Biennale, Art Basel and Monumenta in Paris. In 2012, it drew more than 900,000 visitors.

It takes pride in its avant-garde image - in 2007, China's Ai Weiwei brought 1,001 of his

compatriots to Kassel as “live exhibits”.

The fair was founded by Arnold Bode, a curator, artist and teacher, who was one of many German artists forbidden to work by the Nazis. A native of Kassel, he hoped to provoke Germans with forms of international modern art after the stifling Nazi era.—Reuters

World's greatest horse race festival gallops into overdrive

LIVERPOOL, (England) — Tight security was in place Thursday as thousands of people converged on the famous Aintree racecourse as the iconic three-day Grand National Festival got underway in Liverpool.

Police in the city warned that massive security measures will be in place for what is the 20th anniversary of Britain's biggest ever mass evacuation from a sporting event, with armed officers on duty at the course.

Merseyside Police Commander, Chief Superintendent Claire Richards, said: “Racegoers can expect to see high visibility policing across the three days of the event. “They may also see an armed presence but I want to reassure them that this is not in response to any direct threat aimed at the festival but just as a visible reassurance for the thousands of people who will come through the gates over the three days.”

More than 60,000 people were evacuated from the course in 1997 after a credible coded message was received that pro-republican Irish Republican Army (IRA) had planted a bomb on the course. Although no incendiary devices were found thousands of people were marooned in the city with nowhere to stay, until local families opened their doors to offer free hospitality in their homes.

On a happier note, this year's racing festival marks the 40th year that local hero Red Rum won the legendary Grand National, claimed to be the world's toughest horse race, for a record breaking third time.—Xinhua

Three Japan-born pandas to be sent to China for breeding

TANABE, (Japan) — A zoo in western Japan said Friday it will send three pandas to a Chinese breeding facility in June as they have reached maturity and inbreeding must be avoided.

The 6-year-old twins of male panda Kaihin and female panda Youhin, and Yuhin, 4, all born and raised at Adventure World zoo amusement

park in Shirahama, Wakayama Prefecture, will leave on 5 June for Chengdu Research Base of Giant Panda Breeding, it said.

Public display of the three pandas at the zoo will end at the end of this month.

“I would be lying if I say I won't miss them, but I have high hopes for

the three breeding,” said zoo director Koji Imazu, 62.

The park has been functioning as the Japan branch of the facility in Sichuan Province, and four of the eight pandas already sent there have successfully mated to produce a total of 10 pandas, according to the park.—Kyodo News

Accused mobster tied to Boston art heist pleads guilty to gun charge

HARTFORD, (Conn.) — An 81-year-old accused mobster who prosecutors believe may hold some of the last remaining clues needed to solve the largest art heist in US history pleaded guilty on Thursday to illegally selling guns, but did not say a word about the missing art.

Robert Gentile admitted to illegally selling a loaded firearm to a convicted killer, the result of what his lawyer calls a Federal Bureau of Investigation sting operation aimed at pressuring him into providing details on paintings stolen from Boston's Isabella Stewart

Gardner Museum in March 1990.

The accused mobster, who appeared in Hartford federal court in a wheelchair, wearing an untucked T-shirt and rolled-up khaki pants, made his plea after US District Judge Robert Chatigny first held a hearing to determine if he was competent.

“It's good, it's good. I know what's happening,” Gentile told the judge. He also bemoaned the two years he has spent in custody since his 2015 arrest, telling prosecutor John Durham: “You should feel sorry for me and my wife.”

Gentile has repeatedly denied knowing the whereabouts of any of the art valued at an estimated \$500 million taken in one of the longest unsolved high-profile crimes in Boston and did not address the matter during the hearing.

But during a polygraph test performed as part of the Gardner investigation, Gentile had an intense reaction when he was shown images of the missing paintings, while he remained calm when shown unrelated artwork, according to a law enforcement source briefed on the test.—Reuters

mitv Myanmar International Programme Schedule

(8-4-2017 07:00am ~ 9-4-2017 07:00am) MST

07:03	Am	News
07:25	Am	Great Shwedagon-The Ten Traditional Arts & Crafts
07:47	Am	All About Orchids
08:03	Am	News
08:26	Am	Pakhan Traditional Nat Festival In Ku Ni Village (Part-1)
08:51	Am	Colourful Threads
09:03	Am	News
09:25	Am	Bagan: The Land of Pagoda
09:50	Am	Thingyan Songs & Dances
10:03	Am	News
10:25	Am	Next Generation “Saw Noel (Violinist)”
10:34	Am	We'll Leave After 12 Passengers Are On Board
10:49	Am	Myanmar's Export: Mango

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

Prime Time

07:03	Pm	News
07:27	Pm	A Journey To Southern Shan State (Ep-1)
07:48	Pm	Today Myanmar: The Plastic School
08:03	Pm	News
08:26	Pm	Creator Of Imagination
08:53	Pm	Chaung Tha Souvenir Business
(09:00 Pm ~ 11:00 Pm)-Today Repeat(09:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)		
(11:00 Pm ~ 03:00 Am)-Friday Repeat(07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)		
(03:00 Am ~ 07:00 Am)-Today Repeat(07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)		
(For Detailed Schedule – www.myanmaritv.com/schedule)		

Shan United stands at 2nd place

WEEK 11 in MNL 2017 began yesterday evening and Shan United and Ayeyawady United FC saw wins.

Winning their first matchup against Hantharwady United at Taungoo Stadium, Shan United climbed to second in the standings while the home team does not seem to be doing well this season.

Ayeyawady United played against Rakhine United at Waitharli Stadium winning 2-1. At 36 minutes, Dwe Ko Ko Chit scored a goal for Rakhine United but Mathuna scored the equalizer for Ayeyawady at 82 minutes and the winning goal at 92 minutes.

The second day of the MNL 2017 will be held today with Yangon United vs Chin United at Aung San Stadium, Magway vs GFA in Aung San Stadium, and Southern Myanmar vs Zwegabin United in Mawlamyine Stadium. —Nyi Myat Taw Dar



Shan United' Yan Naing Oo vying for the ball with Hantharwady United's Nyi Nyi Aung during MNL 2017 in Taungoo Stadium. PHOTO: SOE NYUNT

Kyrgios fells Isner to put Australia 2-0 up

BRISBANE — Nick Kyrgios eased past John Isner 7-5, 7-6(5), 7-6(5) in a duel of big servers to fire Australia to a 2-0 lead over the United States in their Davis Cup quarter-final in Brisbane on Friday.

The Australian number one carried on from the early work of underdog compatriot Jordan Thompson who stunned Jack Sock in four sets to give the hosts a flying start at a packed Pat Rafter Arena.

In ominous form during last month's US hardcourt swing, Kyrgios blasted 20 aces to Isner's 15, largely defusing the towering American's serve to close out a slow-burning match in two hours and 24 minutes.

Isner battled to the end, saving a match point at 6-5 to take the third set into a tiebreak, then charging into a 5-2 lead. But Kyrgios wrapped up the match in style, mowing through five straight points and sealing victory with a thundering ace.

Hammering a ball into the roaring crowd, Kyrgios hugged

captain Lleyton Hewitt and his thrilled team mates.

"That was unbelievable today," 21-year-old Kyrgios said of the crowd support.

"Obviously I have to take care of my serve (against Isner).

"I've been playing great tennis .. And I returned really well today so I'm really happy to get the win."

Kyrgios gave up only two break points, dropping serve once early in the first set to hand Isner a 3-0 lead. But the world number 16 Australian stormed back, breaking his opponent to love at 5-5 and serving out the set with an ace.

Another barrage of huge serves saw Kyrgios steal a march in the second set tiebreak and after running the big American all over the court, he grabbed the set with a cheeky drop-shot. Although there was some carping at the chair umpire and muttering between points, there were no histrionics from the combustible Australian who pushed hard for a quick kill.—Reuters

Shanghai mist wipes out first day of China F1 GP

SHANGHAI — The Shanghai weather all but wiped out the first two practise sessions for the Chinese Formula One Grand Prix on Friday with poor visibility in the city forcing the grounding of the medical support helicopter.

Drivers were able to run for only 22 minutes in total during the 90-minute opening session with the second wiped out altogether.

Visibility at the track, on the outskirts of Shanghai, was good enough for helicopters to fly, with television choppers hovering overhead throughout the day.

Foggier conditions in the

city meant the medical helicopter would have been unable to land at the designated hospital, though, a spokesperson from the sport's governing International Automobile Federation (FIA) said.

Track action has to be halted if the medical helicopter cannot fly, according to FIA procedures.

Teenager Max Verstappen's opening session-topping effort of one minute, 50.491 seconds in damp and drizzly conditions, therefore remained the fastest time of the day, with only 14 drivers registering a lap.

The Dutchman's time was

more than 15 seconds slower than Nico Rosberg needed to secure pole position for last year's race, an indication of the limited usefulness of the curtailed session.

Neither championship favourite Lewis Hamilton of Mercedes nor Ferrari's Sebastian Vettel, winner of last month's season-opening race in Australia, set lap times.

The two are expected to battle for victory on Sunday but will have only Saturday's final hour-long practise session ahead of qualifying to prepare for what is predicted to be a wet race.

With track action cur-

tailed, fans who braved the cool temperatures and inclement weather found other ways to amuse themselves.

A fan dressed as Darth Vader, the villain from the Star Wars movies, was given a fair bit of airtime with producers even running the caption "Darth Vader, Sith Lord" along with the images.

Hamilton crossed the track over to the grandstands, waving to his cheering fans and throwing signed merchandise to them. The Briton, the most successful driver in China by far with four wins, is hoping to strike back at a resurgent Ferrari on Sunday.—Reuters

Champions League changes damaging for clubs — Olsson

BERNE — Europe's football clubs and supporters are not fully aware of the extent of the damage which will be caused by upcoming changes to the Champions League, according to a leading regional league official.

Lars-Christer Olsson, the head of the EPFL umbrella organisation representing Europe's domestic leagues, said he had still not given up on trying to persuade European soccer governing body UEFA to change its mind.

He added that, if implemented, the new system could turn many leagues into one-horse races with the same team winning year after year.

"Those who already have a lot will get much more... and that is the biggest threat," he told Reuters in a telephone interview.

Last year, UEFA approved additional slots for clubs from England, Spain, Germany and Italy in the lucrative Champions League group stage, while reducing those allocated to teams from smaller leagues.

It added that participating clubs would get significantly more revenue under the new format which runs from 2018-21.—Reuters

Red Bull Racing Formula One driver Max Verstappen of the Netherlands drives during the first practice session at the Shanghai International Circuit in Shanghai, China, on 7 April 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

