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THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

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President U Htin Kyaw and First Lady visit Shanghai and Hangzhou

PRESIDENT U Htin Kyaw and First Lady Daw Su Su Lwin who are on a goodwill visit to the People's Republic of China visited Oriental Pearl Radio & TV Tower in Shanghai yesterday morning.

The President and entourage viewed the scenic beauty of Shanghai from the tower and looked round inside the tower. Then, the President and the First Lady signed the guest book.

The Oriental Pearl Radio & TV Tower is on the bank of Huangpu River in Shanghai. Construction began in 1991 and the 468 m (1,535 ft) tall tower was completed in 1994. Currently it is the seventh tallest in the world and the second tallest in China. Modern technology was combined with Chinese symbolism to construct the tower that contains an observation platform, educational Space City, exhibition facilities, shopping center and a hotel. Broadcasting service is provided to 9 TV channels and 10 radio stations.

Afterwards, the President and party arrived at the Shanghai Museum and observed the traditions, culture and customs of the ancient Chinese people.

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President U Htin Kyaw and First Lady Daw Su Su Lwin visit Shanghai Museum in Shanghai, China. PHOTO: INFORMATION AND PUBLIC RELATIONS DEPARTMENT

State Counsellor to meet rural youths on 11 April

State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi will hold a round-table talk with rural youths at the Myanmar International Convention Centre-2 (MICC-2) at 2 p.m on 11 April (Tuesday). The talks will be broadcast live on TV beginning 1.45 pm.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Villagers in conflict areas in northern Rakhine to get land soon

Land reclamation task being carried out in Warpeik village, Maungtaw, Rakhine State. PHOTO: POE HTAUNG

Ye Khaung Nyunt

HEAVY equipment is at work in reclaiming 24 acres of land at Warpeik village in Rakhine State where fire brokeout on 13 November evening last year in addition to violent attacks it faced a month earlier.

The authorities are reclaiming land for about 300 homes for the village in Maungtaw Township that had lost 289 homes in the fire out of a total of 318.

"Warpeik is included in our village tract. The current land reclamation program covers 280 new homes. According to home-ownership list, only 255 families had homes. But we are building 280 as we have also taken into account the accommodation for homeless families. As the program is nearly completed, we set the resettlement date for villagers who lost their homes on the 10th of this month," explained U Zaw Phyo Tun, the administrator of Kyeeganbyin village-tract.

Under the program, every household will get a 40-ft x 60-ft plot in the reclaimed area which has entrance and departure roads and systematic drainage system.

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Maungtaw dwellers preparing to celebrate traditional Thingyan festival. PHOTO: TIN SOE

Buthidaung to celebrate traditional Thingyan festival

MYANMAR traditional Thingyan Festival will be held in Buthidaung Township, Maungtaw district, Rakhine State, according to local authorities.

Entertainments by departmental dance groups, Thingyan dances and staged music will be performed in a central pandal, Division and Tactical Command pandals and Rakhine traditional pandal from Thingyan Eve Day to the final day of Thingyan which begin 13th April this year.

Furthermore, on the Myanmar New Year day, Paritta recitation for safety, 'jivitadana' and respect paying ceremonies will be held.

Buthidaung Township Administrator U Kyaw Min Tun said security arrangements are made in advance for the people to enjoy the Thingyan festival.—*Yamanya, Tin Soe*

Aids should be constructive to peace, stability and progress

A participant taking part in the meeting. PHOTO: TIN TUN (IPRD)

RAKHINE State Chief Minister U Nyi Pu met coordination committee members and UN and INGO staffs at the state government office yesterday morning.

The chief minister thanked international organizations for providing humanitarian aids for peace, stability and progress of the state, requesting them to cooperate with his government as and when necessary. The aids should be constructive to peace, stability and progress of the local people, he suggested.

Participants then explained the committee's functions, current and future aid programs of UN/INGOs and development plans, on which the chief minister gave recommendations.—*Tin Tun (IPRD)*

Survivors, families of victims of ferry capsize gets cash assistance

An official from KBZ's BFM presents cash assistance to survivors of the ferry accident. PHOTO: THURA LWIN

SURVIVORS of the ferry that capsized in the Ngawun River in Ayeyawady Region and families of the victims have been provided with cash by KBZ's Brighter Future Myanmar Foundation-BFM.

The Ferry "Ngwe Kyansin" carrying passengers from a wedding reception collided with a barge carrying stones and capsized at 7.30 pm on 7th April, killing 20 passengers. About 30 people have been rescued alive.

Families of the 20 victims were given Ks500,000 each, while 30 victims who survived the accident were given K100,000 each by the foundation yesterday.

The donation were made at the Pathein Hospital where the survivors are receiving treatment.—*Thura Lwin*

Disaster mitigation training course in Buthidaung township concluded

A five-day training course for capacity building provided to 26 people by allied organizations in Buthidaung Township in Rakhine State for performing effectively the emergency search and rescue operations during natural disasters concluded.

The aim of the training course is to effectively carry out search and rescues work when a disaster occurred, said U Aung Khant Kyaw, the representative of Care Myanmar at the completion ceremony held at the hall of Fire Services Department in Buthidaung township on yesterday.

U Aung Min Htike, township deputy chief officer of the Fire Services Department also explained about the knowledge on the search and rescue operations and U Kyaw Myint Wai, township first aid deputy head talked about first aid.

Concluding of disaster mitigation training course in progress. PHOTO: TIN SOE

The trainees were 12 staff from Fire Services Department, 14 from Red Cross Association and received outfits, books and flyers to be applied for rescues works.—*Yamanya*

INTERPOL Red Notice on suspect Aung Win Khaing

U Kyi Lin is undergoing trial for assassinating U Ko Ni in Yangon International Airport international arrival gate No. 6 on the evening of 29 January. Aung Win Khaing, aged 45, son of U Aung Than, was found to be an accessory in the crime and had absconded. In order to arrest him, Myanmar Police Force had contacted INTERPOL and an INTERPOL Red Notice was issued on 7 April.

Suspect Aung Win Khaing.

President U Htin Kyaw and First Lady visit Shanghai and Hangzhou

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The Shanghai National Museum is a museum of ancient Chinese art situated in the middle of Shanghai. The museum was founded in 1952 and was rebuilt at its current location in 1996. It has eleven galleries and three temporary exhibition halls exhibiting ancient Chinese bronze, sculpture, ceramics, jades, paintings, calligraphy, seals, furniture in Ming and Qing dynasties and arts and crafts by Chinese minorities.

Then, President U Htin Kyaw and First Lady Daw Su Su Lwin departed Shanghai by high-speed train and arrived in Hangzhou City at 2:30 pm local standard time and visited West Lake there.

West Lake is a freshwater lake in Hangzhou, the capital of Zhejiang province in eastern China. It is divided into five sections by three causeways. There are numerous temples, pagodas, gardens, and artificial islands within the lake. West Lake is one of the famous places and one of the tourist attractions in Hangzhou.

In the evening, the President and party left Hangzhou by air and arrived at Beijing International Airport at 6:30 pm local standard time and were welcomed by Assistant Foreign Minister of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China Mr. Kong Xuan You, Myanmar Military Attaché Brigadier-General-Tint Hsan and embassy staff and the Guard of Honour.

Afterwards, the President and entourage were taken to Diaoyutai State Guest House in Beijing where they will stay.—*Myanmar News Agency*

President U Htin Kyaw and First Lady receive red carpet welcoming at Beijing International Airport. PHOTO: IPRD

Union Minister Dr Win Myat Aye gives words of encouragement to a Ferry boat victim at People's Hospital in Pathein. PHOTO: MNA

Ferry boat victims provided with cash assistance

THE staff from the Department of Relief and Resettlement under the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement conducted search and rescue works and provided the patients with blankets and clothing as initial assistance in collaboration with respective departments after the boat called "Silver Star" sank shortly after a "head on collision" with the cargo ship in Ngawun River near Ohnmardanti Jetty in Pathein, Ayeyawady Region on 7 April evening.

The Vice-Chairman of Natural Disaster Management Committee and Union Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Dr Win Myat Aye together with Ayeyawady Region Chief Minister Mahn Johnny gave words of encouragement to the ferry boat victims who are receiving medical treatment at the People's Hospital in Pathein yesterday morning. The Union Minister and officials presented K 1.5 million for the ferry boat victims and K 6 million for the deceased through Regional Minister for Social Affairs Dr Hla Myat Thwe.

The Union Minister then met with the regional natural disaster management committee members at the meeting hall of the Irrigation and Water Utilization Management Department and urged them to focus on preparatory works regarding the natural disasters, taking lessons from the past. It needs to be ready to respond to the natural disasters with the people's participation, he added. He highlighted the importance of cooperation between the union and regional governments in issuing the statements to win public trust and in carrying out necessary preparations to mitigate natural disasters.

Afterward, the Union minister provided K 259.16 million from the fund of the Natural Disaster Management Committee for the two school-cum-shelters to be built in Pyapon and Bogale Townships and K 22.90 million for digging lakes in Pyapon, Kyonpyaw and Dedaye Townships through the regional minister for social affairs.—*Myanmar News Agency*

UCSB launches Public Consultations on Civil Service Reform

THE Union Civil Service Board is striving to strengthen the core values of the Myanmar Civil Service through a series of reforms currently underway. The UCSB aspires to enhance Honesty, Integrity, Impartiality and Objectivity across the service, and to establish a fundamental Competency Framework for civil servants, which would focus on Ethos, Ethics, Equity and Efficiency.

To support this transformation, the UCSB is developing a Civil Service Reform (CSR) Strategic Action Plan in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The development of the Strategic Action Plan has witnessed a full participatory process, whereby a series of workshops were held from August 2016 to February 2017 involving more than 1200 participants from Parliament, Union level Organizations and Ministries, States and Regions, the Civil Societies, Development Partners and members of the International Community. ASEAN Member States representatives were also part of these consultations.

The Strategic Action Plan will allow to modernize the civil service and enable it to support and effectively contribute to the political and societal transformation of Myanmar; and to transform the Civil Service and its personnel into a trusted partner of the Myanmar people upholding the highest standards of integrity, equality and accountability. The Strategic Action Plan includes Four Focus Area, namely: (1) New Civil Service Governance; (2) Merit-based and performance - driven culture and system; (3) Effectiveness and Efficiency of the Civil Service and (4) Transparency and Accountability in the Civil Service.

A detailed logframe/workplan of the plan was the outcome of these consultations. Union Ministers, Deputy Ministers, Permanent Secretaries, Directors General and Deputy Directors General from the Central Organizations and Ministries were invited to provide their inputs of comments and suggestions on the first version of the Draft.

The CSR Strategic Action Plan Final Draft Logframe is currently posted online for inputs of comments and suggestions. It can be found on UCSB's websites: www.ucsb.gov.mm and ucsb.imis.com.mm and UCSB's Facebook Account Page: Ucsb Myanmar and Page Name; Union Civil Service Board Myanmar.

In light of this, Citizens, Civil Service Personnel from Parliament, Central Organizations and Ministries are invited to visit the aforementioned Website and Facebook page and provide their feedback and inputs to the UCSB on a dedicated email address: myanmar.civilservicereform@gmail.com, not later than on 27 April 2017. UCSB also disseminated the logframe to all the staff from Parliament, Central Organizations and Ministries, State and Regions via formal official channels.

All comments and suggestions will be treated in full confidentiality and will be used in the review and finalization of the Logframe and more broadly the Civil Service Reform Strategic Action Plan document.—*Union Civil Service Board*

Villagers in conflict areas in northern Rakhine to get land soon

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"It will be a model village. In the past untidy groups of homes were erected hither and thither in a village, making it inaccessible to fire engines in emergency times. But now we have the entrance road and the departure road apart from the existence of well-arranged drains. We will set up more such villages when and where necessary, Zaw Phyo Tun told the media." "The government will provide financial aid for building houses on the orderly reclaimed plots after the allotment program. Currently World Food Program-WFP is providing food for Kyeeganbyin Ale village and Warpeik village monthly in the two ethnic villages, only poor families are chosen under food aid program. We cannot supply food for everyone yet," he added.

During the October violent attack, fire broke out in 12 villages causing loss of 1152 homes, according to the list compiled by Kyeeganbyin village administration office in December.

35th sanctuary-giving festival to be held in Monywa

THE 35th festival of giving sanctuary to the oxen will be held on the following day of Myanmar New Year Day. Member of the board of trustee of Ale-yat Chanthagyi Pagoda in Monywa will accept the oxen that have been issued with the killing license by the municipal department last year, said U Tint Lwin, a member of Chanthagyi pagoda trustees.

"This year, the villagers will save the life of the oxen. We have already listed 24 oxen to pardon their lives. Donors who want to pardon the lives of oxen are required to send the oxen to Chanthagyi pagoda not later than the following day of Myanmar New Year Day. The veterinary doctors will be available to provide health care to the oxen. But, we will not accept the oxen that cannot walk or are suffering from infectious diseases, said U Tint Lwin.

The oxen will be donated to Ingyin Myaing Ngwe Taung monastery in Thabeikkyin township in Mandalay region. But, the monastery needs to construct a new building to keep the oxen. The pagoda trustees donated Ks 35 million to build the new building. Eight oxen were already as of 5 April donated by Kyaymon village and Letpantaw village from Yinmarbin township, and Yontaw village in Butalin township.

The past 34 festivals have saved the lives of 207 oxen worth Ks 64.6 million, it is learnt.—*MMAL*

Oxen to be donated to Ingyin Myaing Ngwe Taung monastery in Thabeikkyin township in Mandalay Region. Photo: MMAL

Thazi-Nyaungyan Road being upgraded in Thazi Township. Photo: Maung Ko (Thazi)

Thazi-Nyaungyan road being upgraded

THAZI-NYAUNGYAN road is being upgraded with the assistance of the international organizations in Thazi township, Mandalay Region in 2017-2018 fiscal year, it is learnt.

Upgrading process has already started, and the one-furlon-lons section of the road near Min Hla village in Thazi township has been upgraded into the asphalted road. Thazi - Nyaungyan road is eight miles long. The remaining 7 mile and 7 furlong long section has already been paved with the stones. Now, the road is damaged because of over loaded vehicles. The local villagers are using the road when they are travelling along Thazi- Meiktila- Mandalay- Taunggyi- Kengtung Road.

U San Tun, Regional Hluttaw representative for Thazi township constitutuency 2 raised a question on the third day of the fifth regular meeting of second Regional Hluttaw on 3 April if there are any arrangement to upgrad earthen road into on asphalted one.

Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation regional minister Dr. Soe Than replied that Thazi - Nyaungyan road will be upgraded with the assistance of the international organizations in 2017-2018 fiscal year. Estimated cost of the whole project is Ks 1,127.14 million.

Upon completion, the road will be beneficial to 21,536 family members form 4,445 households who are living in 49 villages.—*Maung Ko (Thazi)*

Crime NEWS

Stimulant pills worth over K 1.1 billion confiscated in Kalaw

MEMBERS of police unit 25, Anti-Drug Squad in Taunggyi, seized stimulant pills worth over K 1.1 billion while they stopped and searched an Alphard vehicle driven by Maung Maung Myint who was accompanied by Pyae Phyo Win on Kalaw- Thazi road near Yarra village in Kalaw Township on 7 April 2017.

Similarly, the combined squad of police unit 24, Anti-drug Squad in Lashio stopped and searched a Hilux Vigo driven by Thet Khaing who was accompanied by Ye Naung on Muse- Mandalay highway near Nawnghkio town.

The squad found and seized 110 blocks of heroin, 6000 tablets and K 23 lakhs. And continuously, they seized 2046 tablets in a Nissan Ad Van car owned by the Golden Butterfly, a transport group. Police have filed charges against all suspects under the Anti-Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Laws.—*Myanmar Police Force*

Maung Maung Myint and Pyae Phyo Win are seen along with the confiscated drugs and car. Photo: Myanmar Police Force

Illegal frozen beef seized in Hsenwi

AUTHORITIES seized illegal frozen beef from two vehicles yesterday near Hsenwi township. The authorities stopped a passenger vehicle en route to Muse from Mandalay and found 39 bags of fresh beef and 27 bags of dried beef from that vehicle. The authorities also seized the fresh beef from a cargo truck around 10:00 am. Currently, the authorities are still interrogating the detainees involved in smuggling out of the fresh beef and dried beef.

The authorities will hand over the fresh and dried beef to Lashio township Customs Department.—*Chit Hla (IPRD)*

WY-branded stimulant pills seized in Kawthoung

POLICE seized more than 3500 stimulant tablets on 7 April in Kawthoung Township, according to the Kawthoung District Police Statioin. Acting on a tip off, officials from No.34 Local anti-drug squad including other responsible person searched a house of Taryar Tun (alias) Taryar in Bo Aung Kyaw (2) Road of ThiriMyaing quarter by warrant no.6/17 and seized 500 WY branded stimulant pills under the pillows in a bedroom of a house, one gram bag of pink colour WY branded broken stimulant pills and other yellow and pink colour WY branded stimulant pills under the ground near septic tank in the surrounding of that house totalling 3560 pills respectively.

Action was being taken against Taryar Tun (alias) Taryar under the Anti-Narcotics Act by the local police force.—*Kyaw Soe (Kawthoung)*

Illegal sawn timber seized at Yaypu checkpoint

AUTHORITIES seized illegal sawn Padauk yesterday in Hsenwi township. The authorities stopped a Hiace vehicle heading for Muse from Mandalay. But the driver did not stop and drove in the direction of Lashio.

The driver stopped the vehicle at milepost 197 on Union Highway and fled from the scene. The authorities searched the vehicle and found sawn padauk weighing 0.9388 tonnes worth Ks 2,816,400.

The authorities handed over the ownerless vehicle to the Hsenwi township police station and the illegal sawn padauk to Hsenwi township forestry department. —*Chit Hla (IPRD)*

Illegal timber seized at Yaypu Checkpoint in Hsenwi Township. Photo: Chit Hla (IPRD)

LOCAL Business

New investments in April create over 9,400 job opportunities: MIC

THE Myanmar Investment Commission granted permission to 17 local and foreign enterprises this month to operate business in the country, creating over 9,400 employment opportunities for locals, according to the MIC.

This is the first time the MIC permitted investments for the current financial year.

The MIC gave the green light to 17 businesses including 11 wholly foreign-owned enterprises from China, Hong Kong and Macao, two citizen-owned firms and three joint ventures plus one foreign investment, according to its meeting held on 6 April.

The majority of new investments went to the country's garment industry to manufacture of garment and related accessories on CMP basis.

The types of new investment businesses also include manufacturing and sales of plastics recycling products; spraying collodion, polyester, imitation silk polyester, eiderdown and related products, construction of office tower, leasing and management of office space; manufacturing and marketing of instant noodles; production and distribution of sales of day old chicks; construction of cinemas and operation of movie show, and a private school.

An employee works on production line at a garment factory in Hlaingthaya, Yangon. PHOTO: PHOE KHWAR

Those businesses will operate in Yangon's industrial zones in Shwepyitha, Hmawby, Hlaingthaya, Shwepaukkan, and Dagon Myothit industrial zones as well as Mandalay and Ayeyawady regions.

According to the MIC, foreign investment into the country in 2016-2017 FY reached more than US$6.8 billion. The figure is $800 million more than the expectation of investment authority.—*Khine Khant*

More than 16,000 workers took overseas jobs in eight countries last month

OVER 16,000 Myanmar workers officially accepted overseas jobs in eight countries last month, according to figures released by the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population.

In March, over 15,000 workers out of 16,000 went to neighbouring Thailand last month, while 326 others were legally sent to Korea, followed by 209 individuals to Japan, 86 workers to Malaysia, 55 to Singapore, 4 to the United Arab Emirates (UAE), 22 to Qatar and one to Macao.

More than 13,000 local job seekers also joined appropriate jobs in states and regions including the far-flung Chin State last month. The commercial capital of Yangon topped the chart with over 8,795 new employees, followed by Mandalay Region with 1,291.

The ministry has put forth concerted efforts to create more employment opportunities for both domestic and oversea job hunters through new online labour exchange management system.—*Naing Lynn Kyi*

Border trade exports via Muse declines by over $370 million

THE value of border trade export through Muse, a major trade point with China as of 24 March of last fiscal year was down by over US$370 million compared to a similar period of 2015-16 FY, according to the Commerce Ministry.

Between 1 April 2016 and 24 March 2017 of last fiscal year, the total value of trade via Muse border gate fetched $4.906 billion, including $1.558 billion from the import sector and $3.347 billion from the export sector.

In 2015-16 FY, the border trade value from Muse trade station amounted to $5.227 billion in total, including $3.720 billion export and $1.506 billion import.

The border trade camps with China include Muse, Lweje, Kanpikete, Chinshwehaw and Kengtung. Among all border gates, the Muse border has the highest volume and value of total border trade.

Myanmar mostly exports agriculture products, fisheries products, mining products, forest products and industrial goods. It imports personal goods, industrial raw materials, construction equipment, automobiles and capital goods mainly from China, Japan, India, Indonesia, Germany, France and Hong Kong.

Roughly 80 per cent of Myanmar's total external trade is through sea routes.

According to the Ministry's official figures, the total trade value of all borders reached $7.152 billion, increasing $231 million than that of FY 2015-16.—*Khine Khant*

Sugar prices decrease in domestic market

THE prices of sugar have plummeted in the domestic market since mid-February, causing a headache for some traders, said sugar merchants from the Bayintnaung Wholesale Center.

The prices of imported sugar on 6 April at the wholesale center are Ks36,500 per bag weighing 30.5 viss (one viss is equal to approximately 1.633 kg), and the local merchants are selling a viss of sugar for around Ks1,250, sellers say.

One viss of sugar costed about Ks1,000 in April of last year. It increased to Ks1,600 per viss in last December. The price of sugar was Ks1,465 per viss in February of this year.

Despite decline in price of sugar, the price of locally produced palm sugar increased by around Ks700 per viss due to scarcity of labours and low production.

Sugar is one of re-export item of Myanmar, which imports the sweet prodcut from Thailand as well as India across the land border and by ship. The imported sugar goes mainly to China, the largest neighbor of Myanmar.

Sugar manufactured from Thailand and India can meet export quality on a much larger scale with the use of advanced refining techniques. Most of the sugar produced in the country has local market interest only.—*Maung Sae Aung*

Export of broken rice to EU increases by over 4,500 tonnes

MYANMAR exported more than 8,400 tonnes of broken rice worth US$2.215 million to European market during the third week of last month, an increase from 3,875 tonnes of the previous week, according to the Ministry of Commerce.

The country usually sends rice and broken rice to Asian countries, some African nations and member states of the European Union over sea route. For neighbouring buyers, the country sells the different kinds of rice through border gates.

Between 19 and 25 March, the country shipped its 7,588 tonnes of emahta and parboiled rice worth $2.324 million to other countries, including West Africa, Sri Lanka, Madagascar, Russia, EU countries, China, Singapore, Japan and Papua New Guinea.

According to the statistics of the ministry, the country exported $3.449 million worth of rice weighing nearly 24,000 tonnes to China through border trade camps from 18 to 25 March, including 150 tonnes of Ngasein rice and 14,800 tonnes of Emahta rice from Muse border gate.—*Shwe Khine*

Hundreds flee after three strong quakes strike Philippines

MANILA — Hundreds of residents of coastal areas in a province south of the Philippine capital fled to higher ground fearing a tsunami on Saturday after a series of earthquakes on the main island of Luzon.

Three quakes ranging in magnitude from 5.0 to 5.9 struck Batangas province, about 90 kms (55 miles) south of Manila, around 3 pm (0700 GMT) over a period of about 20 minutes, said the US Geological Survey.

"Residents in the coastal villages in two towns have evacuated to safer ground after the earthquakes," Lito Castro, head of the provincial disaster council, told local radio. "The people were afraid the earthquakes would generate a tsunami."

Renato Solidum, head of the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology, said the event was an "earthquake swarm" in a local faultline but had not been powerful enough to cause a tsunami.

"These swarms are natural occurences and we do not expect a big quake in this area," he said.

Batangas officials said there were no reports of casualties, but power was cut off in some areas and cracks had been reported in homes and some commercial buildings.

Landslides were also reported in some towns and a portion of a Catholic church tower had collapsed, they said.

The region has experienced tremors since earlier this week.—*Reuters*

India, Bangladesh ink deals to boost cooperation

NEW DELHI — India and Bangladesh signed some 22 agreements covering a wide range of issues on Saturday after talks between the prime ministers of the two countries here in the Indian capital.

The deals involve such areas as civil nuclear cooperation and defence.

However, the much-delayed Teesta water-sharing pact, that will determine the sharing of the river water between the two countries, has yet to be sealed, sources said.

A bus and train service between the eastern Indian city of Kolkata and Khulna in Bangladesh was also launched.

"A new spring in #IndiaBangladesh ties! PM @narendramodi receives PM Sheikh Hasina at Hyderabad House before talks," External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Gopal Baglay tweeted.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi (R) shakes hands with his Bangladeshi counterpart Sheikh Hasina during the ceremonial reception at the Indian Presidential Palace in New Delhi, India on 8 April, 2017. Hasina is on a four-day state visit to India. PHOTO: XINHUA

Bangladeshi Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina arrived in India Friday on a four-day visit.

This is Hasina's first visit to India after Modi assumed office in May 2014, following his Bharatiya Janata Party's landslide win in a general elections.

"The visit is expected to further expand the cordial and cooperative relationship between India and Bangladesh and build on the strong ties of friendship and trust between the two leaders," a joint statement issued earlier by the two countries said.—*Xinhua*

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Abe apologizes over minister's remarks on Fukushima evacuees

TOKYO — Prime Minister Shinzo Abe apologized Saturday over controversial remarks recently made by his disaster reconstruction minister, who implied that Fukushima nuclear crisis evacuees from areas where the government deems safe should fend for themselves.

"The minister has already apologized himself but I want to straightforwardly express my apology," Abe told reporters in the city of Minamisoma, Fukushima Prefecture, during his visit to see the area's reconstruction from the March 2011 earthquake, tsunami and ensuing nuclear disaster. The minister, Masahiro Imamura, was accompanying Abe.

Opposition parties have been calling for the resignation of Imamura, who told reporters Tuesday that the decision by people to remain evacuated from the areas outside the government-designated zones around the Fukushima Daiichi plant is their "own responsibility, their own choice." The government halted housing subsidies for such voluntary evacuees last month. But many are still unable to return home amid doubts over the government's safety rhetoric and concerns over possible health risks.

Imamura was being asked by reporters about the government's responsibility for supporting evacuees. He then told one of the reporters who kept asking questions to "shut up." Imamura later apologized and retracted his comment. On Saturday, Abe underscored that rebuilding the disaster-hit areas is one of the priorities for his administration and apparently took his latest Fukushima visit as an opportunity to deliver his apology.

"Nothing has changed in my administration's policy to promote reconstruction by standing by the people in Fukushima and those affected by the disaster," Abe said. "Without Fukushima's reconstruction, there is no reconstruction of the Tohoku region. Without Tohoku's reconstruction, Japan's regeneration is impossible."

Abe also visited a ranch in the town of Naraha which has resumed operations following temporary closure in the wake of the disaster. After drinking fresh milk there, he said, "I want to help remove damaging rumors and expand their sales route." —*Kyodo News*

Three arrested in Beijing for theft from imperial tombs

BEIJING — Three people are in police custody in Beijing for stealing a pair of 400-year-old candle holders from the Ming imperial tombs, local authorities said on Saturday.

The suspects — two people from Beijing and one from central China's Henan Province — have been implicated in organized relic theft, Beijing police said.

The mausoleums were built for the emperors of the Ming Dynasty (1368 - 1644). The missing white marble candle holders, which were about 90 centimetres tall and weighed 200 kilograms each, belong in front of the mausoleum of the last Ming emperor Chongzhen.

According to a police officer who declined to be named, the candle holders went missing in May but officials tried to cover up their absence by saying they had been sent for repairs. The candle holders were a hot topic online last month when a visitor shared contrasting photographs of the tombs. In the newer images, two vases and an incense burner were still there but the candle holders, which were visible in older photographs, were gone, leaving only their bases.

A media official with Changping government told Xinhua that the Ming Tombs Special Area Agency admitted on 20 March that the candle holders had gone missing. Four officials were sacked for "incompetence" on Thursday. The investigation continues. About 40 kilometres north of downtown Beijing, the Ming Tombs were listed as UNESCO World Heritage site in 2003.—*Xinhua*

Xi, Trump set constructive tone for China-US relationship: FM

PALM BEACH, United States — Chinese President Xi Jinping held meetings with his US counterpart Donald Trump at Mar-a-Lago resort in the US state of Florida on Thursday and Friday, setting a constructive tone for the development of China-US relations, said Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi.

The meeting was the first face-to-face communication between the Chinese and US heads of state since the new US administration took office, said Wang, noting that the two presidents spent over seven hours in deep discussion on China-US ties and major international, regional issues of mutual concern, reaching important consensus.

The two sides agreed that the meeting is positive and fruitful. It has set a constructive tone for the development of China-US relations, pointing out the direction for collective endeavour.

The two heads of state also introduced to each other their state governance thoughts, and domestic and foreign policy agendas. The meeting increased mutual understanding, built good working relations and personal friendship, of which the two sides spoke highly.

The two sides discussed the China-US relationship on the whole. President Xi stressed that a sound China-US relationship benefits not only the two countries and their peoples, but also the whole world. Cooperation is the only correct choice for China and the United States.

President Trump noted the great responsibility the two nations have as major countries. He said the two should maintain communication and coordination on important issues, and can accomplish major achievements together.

The two sides have set agenda for high-level communication and exchanges. At the invitation of President Xi, President Trump is set to pay a state visit to China in 2017. Staff of the two sides will work together to ensure a successful and fruitful visit. The two leaders also agreed to maintain close contact through meetings, phone calls, letters and other various means.

The two sides agreed to establish high-level dialogue mechanisms, including the diplomatic and security dialogue, the comprehensive economic dialogue, the law enforcement and cybersecurity dialogue, and the social and people-to-people dialogue.

US President Donald Trump (L) and China's President Xi Jinping take a walk together after a bilateral meeting at Trump's Mar-a-Lago estate in Palm Beach, Florida, US on 7 April, 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

During the meetings at Mar-a-Lago resort, Chinese and US representatives kicked off the diplomatic and security dialogue and the comprehensive economic dialogue, and agreed to initiated the other two dialogue mechanisms as soon as possible.

The two sides will also promote dialogues and contacts at various levels and encourage communication and cooperation across the board.

The two sides held in-depth discussion on economy and trade. The Chinese representatives noted that the China-US economic relationship has been moving forward on a basis of win-win cooperation, and the two countries are each other's largest trading partner, from which the two peoples have benefited a lot.

On the principle of equality and mutual benefit, the two sides should work together to expand pragmatic cooperation in areas such as energy and infrastructure construction, increase market access to each other, and promote balanced development of bilateral economic ties.

The two sides agreed to deepen cooperation in trade and investment, and properly manage trade frictions for mutual benefits.

The two sides agreed to enhance military exchanges, deepen cooperation in various areas such as law enforcement, cybersecurity, hunting for fugitives who have fled abroad and recovering illicit money, illegal immigration and health care. They also agreed to take practical measures to strengthen cultural and people-to-people exchanges to maintain public support for the bilateral relationship.

The two sides agreed to make joint efforts to expand mutually beneficial cooperation, manage and control differences on the basis of mutual respect, said the foreign minister.

The Chinese side reiterated its principles and positions on Taiwan issue and Tibet-related issues.

The Chinese side urged the US side to stick to the principles of the three China-US joint communiques and the one-China policy, so as to avoid interfering with the China-US ties. China's positions on the South China Sea were also reiterated. The two sides also exchanged views on major international and regional issues.

On the nuclear issue of the Korean Peninsula, the Chinese side reiterated the commitment to denuclearization of the peninsula, safeguarding peace and stability of the peninsula and solving problems through dialogue and consultation, said Wang, adding that China will continue to comprehensively implement the UN resolutions on the Korean Peninsula nuclear issue.

The Chinese side also briefed the US side on its dual-track approach and suspension-for-suspension position, and expressed its expectation to find a breakthrough to restart negotiation.

The Chinese side also stressed again its opposition to the deployment of THAAD anti-missile system by the US in the Republic of Korea. The two sides are committed to realizing the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, agreeing to maintain close communication and coordination on the Korean Peninsula issue.

The two sides also agreed to expand cooperation in non-proliferation and the fight against transnational crimes.

The two leaders charted the course of China-US ties through this meeting, said Wang, adding that China is willing to work together with the United States to enhance high-level exchanges and dialogues, expand cooperation and handle sensitive issues by observing the consensus reached at this meeting, so as to deliver more benefits to the peoples of the two countries and of the world.—*Xinhua*

Japan, ASEAN ministers agree to work toward regional trade deal

OSAKA — Trade ministers from Japan and ASEAN said Saturday that they will strive to conclude a mega free trade deal in Asia called the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership.

At a meeting in Osaka, the ministers also agreed to consider talent development, rule-making and economic cooperation in such areas as infrastructure to realize a comprehensive, high-quality and mutually beneficial free trade framework.

The meeting marked a "big step toward concluding the RCEP," said Japanese trade minister Hiroshige Seko at a press conference after the meeting. "We were able to agree to seek both a high-quality deal Japan is advocating and its early conclusion at the same time."

Based on Saturday's agreement, Japan is expected to develop specific plans for a cooperation package with the 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations, including support for small and midsize firms in ASEAN member countries.

The RCEP is a proposed free trade agreement between the ASEAN nations and six other countries with which ASEAN already has FTAs — Japan, China, South Korea, India, Australia and New Zealand.

At the same press conference, Philippine Trade and Industry Secretary Ramon Lopez, who co-chaired the meeting with Seko, expressed his hope for a swift end to the RCEP negotiations.

In a joint statement issued at the conclusion of the meeting, the Japanese and ASEAN ministers said their countries will have deeper discussions on the topic at a ministerial meeting in Manila in September.—*Reuters*

Trump explained US position on THAAD to Xi — South Korea

SEOUL — US President Donald Trump told South Korea on Saturday he had explained to China's President Xi Jinping America's position on the deployment of an anti-missile defence system to South Korea, according to a statement from South Korea's acting leader.

Trump informed South Korean Prime Minister Hwang Kyo-ahn in a Saturday telephone call of his summit discussion with Xi.

China has opposed the deployment of the US-supplied High Altitude Area Defence (THAAD) in South Korea, arguing it could threaten its security, but South Korea and the United States say it is aimed at countering North Korea's missile threat. China has increased pressure and imposed restrictions on some South Korean companies doing business in China, which led many in the South to believe Beijing was retaliating against the deployment of the missile system.

"President Trump said he and President Xi held in-depth discussions on the seriousness of North Korea's nuclear problem and how to respond to it, and also said he had conveyed the US position on the THAAD deployment," the statement said.

Trump pressed Xi to do more to curb North Korea's nuclear programme in their summit meeting at Trump's Mar-a-Lago resort in Florida, US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson said.

The US military began deployment of the THAAD system in March, a day after the North test-fired four ballistic missiles. China has not directly said it is targeting South Korean companies.—*Reuters*

Opinion

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

Are ferry accidents preventable?

Aye Min Soe

More than five months after the deadly ferry accident in the Chindwin River, another ferry accident happened on 7th April in a river in Pathein, Ayeyawady Region, killing at least 20 passengers.

In the Ayeyawady Delta, people often travel and transport goods by boat because of the low cost and the inaccessibility of many areas by road.

Ferry accidents are fairly common in Myanmar. Poor maintenance and overcrowding make the vessels prone to capsizing.

According to initial report, the ferry "Silver Star" collided with a barge in the Ngawun River and sank shortly after the accident.

It is questionable whether the accident was a preventable tragedy. There were not enough lifejackets for the passengers, the navigational equipment was unreliable, the weather conditions were harsh, the ferry followed the navigation rules for safety of the passengers etc.

Like thousands of people who drive buses, pilot ships or fly planes, the captain of the ferry held the lives of others in his hands.

That demands an extra measure of care because a mistake, a moment of inattention or true negligence can be catastrophic.

Most of us know how easy it is to make mistakes at work and would be hard-pressed to draw the line between carelessness and the kind of negligence that is criminal.

A systematic investigation should be made into the accident to find the causes and take action against those who are responsible for this tragedy.

Firemen carrying out search and rescue operation in the Ngawun River in Pathein after the ferry accident. PHOTO: MYANMAR FIRE SERVICES

Myanmar has long been struggling with the direct consequences of climate change. PHOTO: AYE MIN SOE

Climate change is undermining sustainable development in Myanmar

Here is what can be done about it.

Fatima Arkin

MYANMAR's national government and some international development groups are adopting different but complementary approaches to tackling what many in the country consider to be one of the biggest threats to achieving sustainable development: Climate change. Government officials are working on implementing a new country-wide climate action plan, while several foreign aid groups are going straight to local communities and helping them adapt to the realities of a warming world.

They face large hurdles, however — and many stakeholders fear the impact of Myanmar's lack of resources, capacity and funds to deal with the devastating effects of climate change.

Admittedly, the Southeast Asian country is only starting to prioritize climate action after emerging from decades of self-imposed isolation. Yet if efforts currently being spearheaded by government officials, United Nations workers, aid groups and others prove effective, Myanmar could herald a model for other countries emerging from authoritarianism to grapple with climate change issues.

"Myanmar can be an excellent model," says Ancha Srinivasan, a principal climate change specialist at the Asian Development Bank. "But it needs to be cautious and make sure that new investments being made in the country are low carbon and climate resilient."

Myanmar has long been struggling with the direct consequences of climate change. Over the past two decades or so, the country has experienced the worst effects of extreme weather events worldwide, second only to Haiti, according to the nonprofit Germanwatch. If global emissions of greenhouse gases continue at a high level, people living in low-lying Myanmar, who have done little to cause climate change, will face an even more troubling future.

According to the latest scientific research, global warming is driving an overall increase in extreme rainfall patterns around the world. In central Myanmar, short spurts of excessive precipitation are expected to alternate with longer periods of drought. This will make it even more challenging for the country's largely rural population to grow crops and earn a living.

Meanwhile, those residing in Myanmar's low-lying coastal areas are vulnerable to flooding from rising sea levels. And warmer ocean temperatures could increase the intensity of cyclones and storm surges that have been devastating parts of the country year after year. The worst was in 2008, when Cyclone Nargis killed almost 140,000 people. That's more than 17 times the number of people killed by Super Typhoon Haiyan, which cut across the central Philippines in 2013. When Nargis hit, Myanmar's then-military rulers initially blocked humanitarian organizations from delivering much-needed aid to the affected communities.

Myanmar's leadership eventually let them in, and two years later the country began a process of political reform and liberalization that led to the landmark November 2015 vote, Myanmar's first democratic election in decades. Today, the country has the fastest growing economy in Asia, according to the most recent figures from the ADB. But the economic gains and the country's path toward sustainable development are also being undermined by climate change. "With these [extreme weather events] the government realizes that climate change is really a priority issue to address," says U Hla Maung Thein, a director general in Myanmar's Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation, the ministry focal point for climate change.

But while the government is increasingly aware of climate issues, there's a lot of work to do on knowledge and know-how across all sectors, says Pasquale Capizzi, from the Myanmar Climate Change Alliance, a European Union-funded project. MMCA officially launched in July 2014 and is being implemented by UN-Habitat and the U.N. Environment Program in partnership with the Myanmar government. Over the past few years, Capizzi and his colleagues have helped increase awareness of the implications of climate change, and enhanced the government's ability to integrate climate knowledge in its policies.

More recently, MMCA provided support for a national climate change strategy and action plan, which was finalized just a few months ago. The national government created the 15-year plan in consultation with more than 600 people from local government, civil society organizations, communities and the private sector. It shows that the Myanmar government is prioritizing helping its people adapt to a warmer and more unpredictable world by supporting six key sectors. One of them is energy security. Myanmar's heavy reliance on hydropower for its current energy needs is already starting to be compromised as a result of changing weather patterns, and the government is trying to explore alternative sources.

As the government works on implementing its climate strategy, several international development organizations are already promoting climate action in communities across the country. For instance, the BRACED Myanmar Alliance is made up of five agencies that received a grant worth 5 million pounds from the U.K. government in 2015 to implement a three-year project called Building Resilience and Adaptation to Climate Extremes and Disasters, or BRACED. The program is implementing a range of activities designed to strengthen the resilience of 350,000 people in Myanmar, especially women and children, who are vulnerable to climate change.

As part of this initiative, ActionAid has been teaching over 400 smallholder farmers how to do Zero Budget Farming. The method promotes sustainable agriculture and food security by teaching farmers how to utilize natural fertilizers and pesticides such as female cow urine. ActionAid adopted the method from India, where it initially evolved, and adapted it to Myanmar by adding a climate component. "We do an assessment on climate variability for at-risk farmers, most of them smallholder farmers," says Lafir Mohamed, manager of the Myanmar Consortium for Community Resilience at ActionAid. That way farmers have access to both natural, low-cost farming inputs and the information they need to adapt to unanticipated climate shocks such as heavy flooding.

> "Myanmar can be an excellent model. But it needs to be cautious and make sure that new investments being made in the country are low carbon and climate resilient."
>
> **Ancha Srinivasan, Climate change specialist**

Yet people in Myanmar want more support from NGOs and their government to address climate issues, according to a 2016 study carried out by BBC Media Action, an international development charity that's also part of the BRACED Alliance. Several development organizations and government officials told Devex that Myanmar still lacks critical resources and technical support needed to combat change.

One of the major factors that prevent people from taking climate action is a lack of information, according to the study. Half of the 3,000 people who were interviewed don't feel knowledgeable about how to deal with environmental and weather changes. There are large regional differences in perceived knowledge about these issues: two-thirds in the Delta — where Cyclone Nargis hit — feel informed, compared with only one-third in the coastal zone. Overall, rural and low-income communities are more likely to feel uninformed.

Muk Yin Haung Nyoi, one of the authors of the study and a senior research officer at BBC Media Action Myanmar, says part of the problem is that most people in Myanmar get climate related weather information from national news networks. They also use language that many rural people have difficulty understanding. For instance, the programs report temperature increase in terms of degrees Celsius, without explaining how that could affect planting season for different crops.

"Rather than try to understand the audience first, information giving here is like a one-way channel," she says. To improve the climate resilience of people in Myanmar, BBC Media Action has produced a series of national public service announcements that will run on Myanmar Radio and Myanmar TV Channel until 2018. The PSAs feature real life stories of survival from rural communities, and offer information on simple, low-cost ways people can respond to extreme weather events. For instance, in one PSA, a woman explains that she's keeping her important documents, such as birth certificates, wrapped in a waterproof plastic bag in case she needs to leave the house suddenly due to severe weather.

Government agencies and NGOs in Myanmar that are interested in communicating climate change more effectively would benefit from connecting the phenomena to local people's main concerns for economic stability and good health. "Without considering the motivator for them, even if you send thousands of messages people won't answer," says Muk Yin.

EDITOR'S NOTE: This story was supported by a grant from the Earth Journalism Network. Devex retains full editorial independence and responsibility for this content.

Longer period of drought can make challenges for Myanmar's largest rural population to grow crops and earn a living. PHOTO: AYE MIN SOE

Myanmar government has taken steps for conservation of the country's natural resources on land and in the sea including management of natural resources in coastal areas in order to effectively combat the effects of climate change. PHOTO: AYE MIN SOE

Washington insiders give Trump big US Supreme Court win

WASHINGTON — When Donald Trump started thinking during his campaign for the presidency last year about filling a Supreme Court vacancy, he turned to a group of Washington insiders at the controls of a well-oiled machine that puts conservative judges on the bench.

That disciplined network of operatives, shepherded by judicial activist Leonard Leo, on Friday delivered for Trump his first major accomplishment as US president: the confirmation of conservative Neil Gorsuch as a Supreme Court justice.

Unlike the chaotic rollouts of other Trump policy initiatives, the Gorsuch nomination went relatively smoothly. Democrats put up a fight in the Senate, but they lacked the votes to block the Republican majority and they lost.

Other key players included experienced Washington hands such as Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, former Senator Kelly Ayotte and White House Counsel Don McGahn.

"It worked because it was all planned out before the nomination. We know what works, what doesn't work, what resources we need. We know the other side's arguments and how to answer them. It's like war," Leo told Reuters on Friday.

The only surprise stumble in the effort came when Trump attacked judges who blocked his order banning US entry by people from certain Muslim-majority countries. Gorsuch distanced himself from the president's Twitter messages.

Neil Gorsuch. PHOTO: REUTERS

Other than that, discipline was maintained from the first of five meetings that Leo, a veteran of Bush-era judicial confirmation battles, attended with Trump. The two met twice before the election.

Leo helped compile a list of potential nominees for Trump. That helped win over conservative activists unsure of Trump's ideological compass at a time when he was still fighting for the Republican presidential nomination. A second, longer list came in September. It included Gorsuch, a federal judge.

The campaign for Gorsuch's confirmation would not have happened without McConnell, who stopped former President Barack Obama, a Democrat, from filling the high court vacancy created when conservative icon Antonin Scalia died in February 2016.

After Trump won the election, he named McGahn, a Washington-based campaign finance lawyer at Jones Day, as White House counsel. Known by his colleagues as "The Quiet Man," McGahn managed the nomination from inside the administration. Leo, who reported to McGahn, pushed back against Democrats' claims that Trump basically out-sourced the nomination process to outside groups. Leo said McGahn carefully scrutinized the lists of nominees and was not simply a rubber stamp.

The Gorsuch campaign got heavy marketing and promotion backing from the Judicial Crisis Network (JCN), a coordinating body for conservative and grassroots groups. It launched $10 million in pro-Gorsuch advertising, targeting in particular Senate Democrats facing re-election contests in 2018. The JCN was born during the administration of former President George W Bush, when Republicans realized a strong outside campaign was critical to getting conservatives on the court.

Carrie Severino, the group's chief counsel, said the fact Trump agreed to stick to the nominees list made her job easier.

"We were prepared for several possibilities, and we had ads, websites, research packets, and much more ready to launch the moment a name was confirmed," she said. Leo said conservatives have borrowed techniques from the liberal coalitions that worked to defeat the nomination of Robert Bork by Republican then-President Ronald Reagan in 1987. The JCN also tapped social media and communications professionals. Washington public relations heavyweight Ron Bonjean played a role, reporting to White House Press Secretary Sean Spicer.

At the White House, McGahn and a team in his office held "murder boards" where Gorsuch was bombarded with questions senators might ask. Legislative Affairs Director Marc Short and his team organized visits with senators and worked with Ayotte.

Asked to accompany Gorsuch around Capitol Hill, Ayotte accepted, she said in an interview. Ayotte had lost her re-election bid in November and had criticized Trump. But she helped arrange meetings for Gorsuch with almost 80 senators.

In the end, said sources close to the Gorsuch effort, it worked because it was highly regimented. Leo said the machine that got Gorsuch on the bench is here to stay although he will return to his job as executive vice president of the Federalist Society, a conservative lawyers' group. Leo hopes Trump will tap that machine for a possible second nomination during his presidency. "Supreme Court confirmations have become full-blown political campaigns," he said.—*Reuters*

France investigates bullet-in-the-post threats to newspapers

PARIS — French prosecutors opened an investigation on Friday into written death threats posted along with bullets to two news outlets and several magistrates, officials said.

Mediapart, an investigative online publication and one of the two news organizations targeted, said it and Le Canard Enchaine, a satirical weekly which specialises in lifting the lid on political scandal, had both received identical letters from a group calling itself "The Purge Collective 2J".

The 2J appeared to be a reference, below a sketch of a coffin, to judges and journalists.

The prosecutor's office would not confirm a Mediapart report that the magistrates targeted were four of those investigating conservative presidential candidate Francois Fillon.

Fillon, a 63-year-old ex-prime minister, is being formally investigated by financial prosecutors on suspicion of fraud in a scandal, first disclosed by Le Canard Enchaine, which has badly hurt his campaign for the elections on 23 April and 7 May.

A copy of the letter, tweeted by Mediapart, and which also showed a bullet, said that "vigilance and protection" did not last forever. "When that day comes, we will be there for you or one of your loved ones," it said above a skull-and-cross bones.

Reporters Without Borders, an organization which promotes press freedom, issued a statement condemning the threats and said these should be taken very seriously by the authorities.

Referring to what it described as a "poisonous" atmosphere around the election in which journalists have come under fire for political muck-raking, including from Fillon and far-right National Front chief Marine Le Pen, it said: "These acts of intimidation are unacceptable in a democracy."

Fillon particularly has criticised the media, which disclosed the scandal involving payments of public funds to his wife and children, and accused the judiciary of being unfairly biased against him.

In January 2015, two Islamist gunmen stormed into the Paris headquarters of the satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo and opened fire, killing 12 people including several members of the editorial team, and injuring 11 others.—*Reuters*

NEWS IN BRIEF

Norway police to carry weapons at Oslo airport and main cities after Stockholm attack

OSLO — Police in Norway's largest cities and at Oslo's airport will be carrying weapons until further notice following an attack in Stockholm on Friday, Norwegian police said in a tweet.

Police officers in Norway, which borders Sweden, do not usually carry guns on them. In Finland, police increased patrols in the capital Helsinki.—*Reuters*

Swedish prosecutors says man arrested on strongest level of suspicion for terror crime

STOCKHOLM — Swedish prosecutors said on Saturday a man detained in connection with a truck attack in the capital had been arrested on the strongest degree of suspicion of committing a terror crime.

Sweden's legal system has several degrees regarding the strength of suspicion.

"One person has been arrested on suspicion of terrorist crimes through murder," Karin Rosander, press spokesperson at the prosecutors office told Reuters. —*Reuters*

Trump to nominate ex-Army doctor Mark Green as secretary of the Army

WASHINGTON — US President Donald Trump intends to nominate Mark Green, a former Army doctor currently serving as a Tennessee state senator, as secretary of the Army, the White House said in a statement on Friday.

It said Green served in the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment where he made three combat tours to the Middle East. He is also the chief executive officer of Align MD, which provides leadership and staffing to emergency departments and services to hospitals, the White House added. Green's nomination needs to be confirmed by the Senate.—*Reuters*

Poll shows Macron winning French presidential vote after tighter first round

PARIS — A BVA opinion poll on Friday showed the first round of France's presidential election was becoming harder to call, but centrist Emmanuel Macron was seen easily beating far-rightist Marine Le Pen in the second.

The BVA-Salesforce poll showed Macron's first-round share of the vote down two percentage points in a week at 23 per cent, with Le Pen also at 23 per cent having lost one point. Leftist Jean-Luc Melenchon gained four points to 19 per cent, on a par with conservative Francois Fillon, whose score was unchanged. Macron was seen winning the second round with 61 percent, up one point, versus Le Pen's 39 per cent.—*Reuters*

US ready to take further action against Syria: envoy

NEW YORK — US Ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley said on Friday that the United States is ready to take further military action against Syria.

"We are prepared to do more," she said during an emergency UN Security Council meeting on Syria, adding, "But we hope that will not be necessary."

On Thursday, the United States launched a missile strike on an airfield in Syria from which a chemical attack using a deadly nerve agent was allegedly staged earlier this week, killing dozens of civilians including children. Haley said it was a "measured step" and "fully justified."— *Kyodo News*

Baghdad says US pledges continued support for Iraq's war against IS

US Vice President Mike Pence in Louisville, Kentucky, US on 11 March, 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

BAGHDAD — US Vice President Mike Pence on Saturday assured Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi of continued US support to defeat Islamic State, the Iraqi government said in a statement.

The two discussed the situation in Syria and the war on Islamic State in a phone call from Pence following Friday's US strikes on a Syrian airbase to punish a chemical attack that killed scores of civilians this week in an area held by the opposition to Syrian President Bashar al-Assad.

Pence "affirmed that US policy in the region didn't change, its priority is to defeat Daesh in Iraq and the region," said a statement from Abadi's office.

The Shi'ite-led Iraqi government issued a statement on Friday in reaction to the events in Syria reflecting a difficult balancing act between its alliance with the United States and with Shi'ite Iran, a key backer of Assad.

The Iraqi statement condemned the chemical attack, without naming Assad, calling instead for an international investigation to identify the perpetrator.

The statement also criticised "the hasty interventions" that followed the chemical attack, in an apparent reference to the US strikes.

A US-led coalition has been providing air and ground support to Iraqi forces battling the militants, allowing them to recapture most cities they had overran in 2014 in Sunni areas of northern and western Iraq.

An Iranian-backed Iraqi Shi'ite militia said on Friday it would keep on fighting in Syria in support of Assad, despite the US missile strikes.

"Our movement is proceeding on the path of jihad and resistance, and our position concerning the war in Syria won't change," al-Nujaba spokesman Hashim al-Musawi said in a statement.

Al-Nujaba is one of the groups accused by human rights organisations of killing scores of fleeing civilians in the Syrian city of Aleppo last year.

Iran, by leveraging its ties with Iraq's Shi'ites, has emerged as the main power broker in Iraq after the United States withdrew its troops in 2011.—*Reuters*

Islamic State kills dozens of civilians trying to flee Mosul — witnesses

ERBIL, Iraq — Islamic State militants have killed dozens of civilians attempting to flee Mosul in recent days, hanging several dead bodies from electricity poles as Iraqi forces fight to retake the city, witnesses said.

Troops are meeting fierce resistance as militants retreat into the Old City, where street fighting is expected in the narrow alleyways and around the mosque where Islamic State declared its caliphate nearly three years ago.

A man who spoke to Reuters via telephone said he had found the mutilated body of a relative strung up from an electricity pole in the Tenek district along with three other young men caught trying to flee by the militants.

"Their appearance was shocking. We weren't able to get them down and they have been there for two days," said the relative on condition of anonymity.

The Kurdistan Region security council said the number of people killed by the militants on Monday and Tuesday was as high as 140.

In the Old City, more than 40 civilians were killed when the militants caught them trying to escape, said a resident of the Farouq district where the symbolic Nuri mosque is located.

Another resident of the Old City's Shahwan district said a family of six, including an elderly woman, had also been killed for the same reason.

A woman from the Yarmouk district said she had narrowly escaped death along with her husband and children after the militants caught them trying to flee among a group of around 30 people.

"They took our bags thinking there was gold or money in them and as they were busy checking the contents, we fled through the houses taking advantage of the pitch darkness," said the woman, who is now in an area under the control of the security forces.

"I fear those (families) who stayed in Daesh's grip met a terrible fate".—*Reuters*

Iraq's Federal Police members patrol the streets of western Mosul, Iraq, on 8 April 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

Iran's Rouhani wants chemical attack in Syria investigated

DUBAI — Iranian President Hassan Rouhani called on Saturday for an impartial probe of this week's suspected chemical weapons attack in Syria and warned that US missile strikes in response risked escalating extremism in the region.

"We are asking for an impartial international fact-finding body to be set up... to find out where these chemical weapons came from," Rouhani said during a speech on Saturday.

Tehran is Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's main regional ally and has provided military and economic support for his fight against rebel groups and Islamic State militants.

While the Syrian opposition applauded the US cruise missile attack on an air base near Homs on Friday, it said it should not be a one-off and was not enough on its own to stop government warplanes from hitting rebel-held areas.

However, in a tweet about the missile strikes, Rouhani said: "I call on the world to reject such policies, which bring only destruction and danger to the region and the globe."

"US aggression against Shayrat (air base) strengthens regional extremism and terror, and global lawlessness and instability, and must be condemned," Rouhani said.

Iran says it has military advisers and volunteers in Syria but denies having a conventional force on the ground.—*Reuters*

Somalia's breakaway Somaliland sentences journalist to 2 years in jail

MOGADISHU — A court in Somalia's breakaway region of Somaliland has sentenced a reporter to two years in jail for what it said was endangering peace and security, a journalists' rights group said on Saturday.

The National Union of Somali Journalists (NUSOJ) said that Abdimalik Muse Oldon was detained in February upon his return from the Somali capital and charged with "anti-national activity and violating the sovereignty and succession of Somaliland."

NUSOJ said Oldon had gone to Mogadishu to cover the presidential elections.

"This sentence is all about cowing independent media into submission to government's control and it is preposterous to even suggest these journalists represent a danger to peace and security," it said in a statement. Somaliland government officials were not immediately available for comment. Somaliland broke away from Somalia in 1991 but is not internationally recognised. It has largely been spared the unrest and insurgency driven by al Qaeda-linked al Shabaab in the rest of Somalia.

In addition to being targeted by violence, journalists in Somalia are often targeted by officials and by al Shabaab for the content of their work.

In 2013, a court in Somaliland sentenced two journalists for what it said was the publication of false news.—*Reuters*

Photo shows Russian-made S-400 Triumf long-range surface-to-air missile systems. The delivery of S-400 antiaircraft missile systems was discussed in early March between Russian President Vladimir Putin and his Turkish counterpart Recep Erdogan. PHOTO: TASS

Russia, Turkey in talks on S-400 air defense system deal — source

MOSCOW — Russia and Turkey are continuing talks on the possible delivery of Russian-made S-400 Triumf long-range surface-to-air missile systems but no deal has yet been reached, a source in the system of Russia's military and technical cooperation with foreign countries said on Wednesday.

"This theme has not materialized yet. There is no contract so far; contractual work is under way," the source said.

The negotiations have been actively going on since December last year and involve the state arms seller Rosoboronexport and the Federal Service for Military and Technical Cooperation on Russia's behalf with the assistance of the Russian Defence Ministry, the source said.

As the source said, "various terms emerge at the talks, new requirements are heard and the partners are looking for the possibilities of their implementation."

The delivery of S-400 antiaircraft missile systems was discussed in early March between Russian President Vladimir Putin and his Turkish counterpart Recep Erdogan in Moscow.

Russia's state hi-tech corporation Rostec CEO Sergei Chemezov earlier said Turkey had expressed its wish to obtain a Russian loan for the acquisition of armaments, including S-400 air defence missile systems.—*TASS*

G-7's nuclear abolition resolution might be challenged

TOKYO — Foreign ministers from major developed countries plan to uphold their goal of achieving a world without nuclear weapons at upcoming talks, a Japanese government source said on Saturday, but the move might be challenged by the administration of US President Donald Trump.

The Group of Seven countries, also including Britain, Canada, France, Germany and Italy, will meet on Monday and Tuesday in the central Italian city of Lucca, with focus on whether their foreign ministers could keep the group's resolution toward nuclear abolition expressed last year in Hiroshima.

It remains unclear how the United States will respond to the move, as Trump has signaled he would strengthen US nuclear capabilities in reviewing his predecessor Barack Obama's efforts toward the elimination of nuclear weapons.

Trump has also said the superiority of states having nuclear weapons should be maintained, as North Korea has claimed it can launch intercontinental ballistic missiles, apparently threatening to strike the United States with a missile carrying a nuclear warhead.

The G-7 foreign ministers are expected to release a joint statement at the end of the meeting.

Their officials are discussing the wording of the communique, which could also mention the alleged chemical weapon use by Syria in attacking rebels as well as the nuclear and missile development by North Korea that violates UN Security Council resolutions.

From Japan, Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida will attend the meeting. —*Kyodo News*

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

Basque militants ETA to disarm, drawing line under decades of conflict

MADRID — Basque militant group ETA is to surrender its weapons to authorities on Saturday, drawing a line under more than four decades of armed struggle that gained it notoriety as one of Europe's most intractable separatist movements.

The orchestrated handover in the French city of Bayonne will not dissolve the group, which declared a ceasefire in 2011 after killing more than 850 people during a campaign for an independent state in northern Spain and southwest France.

But it will sever a link with an era of political violence in Western Europe, just as democratically-driven nationalism is stirring across the continent.

Scotland and the Spanish region of Catalonia are seeking referendums on independence, while Ireland's Sinn Fein has urged a vote on taking Northern Ireland out of Britain.

Anger among Basques at political and cultural repression under General Francisco Franco led to the founding of ETA (Euskadi Ta Askatasuna - Basque Country and Freedom) in 1959.

Following Spain's return to democracy in the 1970s, the Basque region gained more autonomy and the group's continued bombings and assassinations caused public support to wane.

ETA said in a letter to the BBC it had handed over its weapons and explosives to civilian go-betweens who will deliver them to authorities on Saturday.

But it is not clear how the process will be carried out or if it will receive the backing of the Spanish and French governments.

The Basque parliamentary spokesman for Spain's ruling People's Party, which has refused to negotiate with ETA and called for its full dissolution, said the handover was a final surrender after six years of broken promises.

"The ETA we've known up to now has gone forever," said Borja Semper outside the legislature in Vitoria-Gasteiz.

"What remains to be done is to wipe out the hatred that ETA embedded in a large part of Basque society."

The group's surrendered arms may yet come to embody that challenge.

A government source said Madrid did not believe the group would hand over all its arms, while Spain's state prosecutor has asked the High Court to examine those surrendered for murder weapons used in unresolved cases.

Popular revulsion at the scale of violent attacks carried out by Islamist militants like ISIS, and effective crackdowns by Spanish and French police have also helped make ETA's brand of activism untenable, says Paddy Woodworth, journalist and author of 'Dirty War, Clean Hands', a book about ETA.

"It had ceased to be an attractive organisation to join," he told Reuters.

"The whole left nationalist armed strategy that goes back to the 1960s ... has been shown to be bankrupt."—*Reuters*

Russia warns of serious consequences from US strike in Syria

UNITED NATIONS/ MOSCOW/BEIRUT — Russia warned on Friday that US cruise missile strikes on a Syrian air base could have "extremely serious" consequences, as President Donald Trump's first major foray into a foreign conflict opened up a rift between Moscow and Washington.

The warships USS Porter and USS Ross in the Mediterranean Sea launched dozens of Tomahawk missiles at the Shayrat air base, which the Pentagon says was involved in a chemical weapons attack this week.

It was Trump's biggest foreign policy decision since taking office in January and the kind of direct intervention in Syria's six-year-old civil war his predecessor Barack Obama avoided.

The strikes were in reaction to what Washington says was a poison gas attack by the government of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad that killed at least 70 people in rebel-held territory. Syria denies it carried out the attack.

They catapulted Washington into confrontation with Russia, which has advisers on the ground aiding its close ally Assad.

"We strongly condemn the illegitimate actions by the US The consequences of this for regional and international stability could be extremely serious," Russia's deputy UN envoy, Vladimir Safronkov, told a meeting of the UN Security Council on Friday.

Shayrat Airfield in Homs, Syria in an image released by the Pentagon after announcing US forces conducted a cruise missile strike against the Syrian Air Force airfield. PHOTO: REUTERS

Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev charged that the US strikes were one step away from clashing with Russia's military.

US officials informed Russian forces ahead of the missile strikes and avoided hitting Russian personnel.

Satellite imagery suggests the base houses Russian special forces and helicopters, part of the Kremlin's effort to help Assad fight Islamic State and other militant groups.

Trump has frequently urged improved relations with Russia, strained under Obama over Syria, Ukraine and other issues, was hosting Chinese President Xi Jinping at his Mar-a-Lago resort in Florida on Thursday night when the attack occurred.

Treasury Secretary Steve Mnuchin, in Florida with Trump, said on Friday the United States would announce additional sanctions on Syria in the near future but offered no specifics.

Russia's Defence Ministry responded to the attack by calling in the US military attache in Moscow to say that at midnight Moscow time (5 pm EDT) it would close down a communications line used to avoid accidental clashes between Russian and US forces in Syria, Interfax new agency said. US warplanes frequently attack Islamic State militants in Syria and come close to Russian forces.—*Reuters*

Swedish police arrest man over truck attack which killed four

STOCKHOLM — Swedish police have arrested a man they suspect rammed a hijacked beer delivery truck into a crowd in central Stockholm on Friday, killing four people and wounding more than a dozen in what they called a terror crime.

While police declined to comment on the identity or possible motive of the man, who was detained in a northern Stockholm suburb, Swedish public radio, citing unnamed sources, said he was from Uzbekistan.

"The person in question has been arrested as the culprit ... in this case the driver," police spokesman Lars Bystrom said of the attack, adding that the authorities were not ruling out the possibility that he had accomplices, although only one person had been taken into custody.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the attack and police said security at Sweden's borders had been heightened and traffic restricted on the Oresund Bridge linking Denmark and Sweden.

Vehicles have been used as weapons in Nice, Berlin and London in the past year in attacks claimed by Islamic State.

The attack stunned Sweden, which has so far been largely immune from any major incidents of this kind.

"I think it was just a matter of time, but still one doesn't think it will happen," Cecilia Hansson, a 25 year-old nurse, said. "It's still unreal when it happens this close."

Police declined to comment on a report by public broadcaster SVT which said a bag containing a homemade bomb had been found in the truck. It said the bomb may have partly exploded, burning the driver.

The beer truck, hijacked on Drottninggatan (Queen Street) in central Stockholm, ploughed through crowds before ramming into the Ahlens department store. The driver escaped in the ensuing chaos, with people fleeing from the area.

Local authorities in the capital, where flags flew at half mast on buildings including the parliament and royal palace, said that 10 people including a child were still being treated in hospital on Saturday. Two adults were in intensive care.

A gaping hole in the wall of the store showed the force of the impact from the truck, which was removed overnight for examination by forensics experts, and dozens of people gathered there to pay their respects and leave flowers.

Crown Princess Victoria was among them, laying a bouquet of red roses. "I feel an enormous sadness, I feel empty," she told Aftonbladet TV, urging Swedes to unite in their grief.

In a nearby open-air market, owners returned to abandoned fruit and vegetable stalls after a defiant message from the country's prime minister.

"You will not defeat us, you will not govern our lives, you will never, ever win," Stefan Lofven, who described the assault as a terrorist attack, said late on Friday.—*Reuters*

Spanish cities beef up security ahead of Easter celebrations

MADRID — Security in Spain's biggest cities is to be strengthened ahead of the Easter holidays to avoid a possible terror attack, according to Spanish media reports on Saturday.

The news comes in the wake of the attack close to the Houses of Parliament in London at the end of March and Friday's attack in Sweden, which caused four deaths as a terror suspect drove a truck into a crowd in Stockholm.

Although the level of anti-terrorist alert will not be raised from the current (high) level 4, which has been in effect since June 2015, to level 5, which would mean knowledge of an imminent attack on Spanish territory, local authorities are taking extra precautions, especially around the traditional Easter processions which are held all over the country.

Trucks of over 3,500 kg will not be allowed in the center of Madrid on the day processions are scheduled, in a repeat of the policy used at Christmas.

In Malaga, local authorities will use "specific measures" such as a video surveillance system, using 17 cameras covering the city's main streets, while trucks of over 7, 500 kg will be banned. Seville's historic processions will be protected by 3,200 police officers, 12 per cent more than in 2016, while in the region of Castile and Leon, where the Easter processions in Zamora, Leon and Valladolid have been declared of "international tourist interest," authorities will install barriers, bollards, concrete blocks and police vehicles to impede the entry of non-authorized vehicles into pedestrian areas. Meanwhile, the access of heavy vehicles to areas where large numbers of people are expected to congregate is to be limited in both the Catalan and Basque regions, where the Easter tradition is less strong than in the rest of Spain.—*Xinhua*

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

MV KUO HSIUNG VOY. NO ( )

Consignees of cargo carried on MV KUO HSIUNG VOY. NO ( ) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 9.4.2017 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 NEW GOLDEN SEA LINES
Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

MV MATHU BHUM VOY. NO (1034W)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV MATHU BHUM VOY. NO (1034W) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 9.4.2017 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.P/M.I.T.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 MOL (S'PORE) PTE LTD
Phone No: 2301185

Snoop Dogg on a mission in Augusta to make golf cool

AUGUSTA, Georgia — Rapper Snoop Dogg this week said that while the US Masters may be the most prestigious tournament in golf, it suffers from a coolness deficit, something he plans to change when he brings his brand of "hip hop flavor" to the staid tournament.

While the Super Bowl, World Series and NBA Finals draw throngs of movie stars and musicians, the only celebrities at golf tournaments are the ones on the greens, he said during a press conference.

So the LA musician, who has sold over 35 million records worldwide, is taking it upon himself to change the game.

"Now is the time for golf to get hip," he said. "That's why I'm here." The idea of a rapper adding his provocative voice to the effort might seem as odd as the hip-hop legend singing inside Milan's La Scala opera house, but he said it was necessary for the sport to reach its full potential. It may be a tall task.

Rapper Snoop Dogg reacts after taking a few practice swings at a golf course in Augusta, Georgia, US on 5 April, 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

He is trying to do something Tiger Woods also tried to do – without a great deal of success if you look at the crowd of middle-aged white men who make up the vast majority of Masters patrons.

There will no doubt be some growing pains on both sides.

The marijuana aficionado may not find Augusta National, where smartphones are considered contraband, particularly laid back if he decides to indulge in one of his favorite pastimes while on the grounds. "They don't allow that kind of green on the greens," he joked.

At 6-foot-5 Snoop Dog is easy to spot at Augusta National, even though most of the thousands of spectators are unlikely to have any of his songs on their playlists.

He said he respects golf, but said the game would be much improved if it reached out to minorities in US cities that have little access to the game. "If golf was pushed and promoted in the inner cities, there would be more Tiger Woods," he said.

"This sport can be mastered by anyone. And if it was taught and presented to them, there would be a lot of guys in this Masters that look like me," he said. He cited Venus and Serena Williams, two tennis champions who learned on the courts of crime-ridden Compton, California, as an example of the transformational impact outreach to minorities can have on a sport.

"No one was pushing tennis in the hood until the Williams family made it," he said. "And now look at how many young, black woman tennis players around the world are inspired by them."

The "Gin and Juice" singer was all smiles as he walked the a course near Augusta National on a rainy day this week flanked by a handful of reporters, a team from event sponsor Tanqueray Gin, and a burly associate who held an umbrella for him.

After eventually sinking a short putt after many tries — Snoop is not a gifted golfer — he danced in triumph and demanded a worthy challenger.

"Tell Tiger to come see me!" he said to laughs.

Seema Sadekar, the former golf pro who designs stylish clothes for women to wear on the course, said Snoop Dogg's presence at the Masters represents a movement in the sport toward inclusion. "To have Snoop Dogg here at the Masters makes people feel like they belong," she said. "It makes the game more welcoming."—*Reuters*

Serialized documentaries ineligible for Oscars in rules shakeup

LOS ANGELES — Multi-part documentary series will be ineligible for the Oscars, organizers said on Friday as part of a new list of awards rules, just a few months after ESPN's serialized "OJ: Made in America" won the Oscar for best feature documentary.

The change will affect any multi-part and limited series documentaries that would have attempted to qualify for next year's Oscar, a spokesperson for the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences said.

Documentaries that are shown on TV or released on DVD before a qualifying run in theaters will be ineligible.

"OJ: Made in America" is an eight-hour documentary that was shown as a film with intermissions at major film festivals and limited theaters, thus qualifying for Oscar contention. It was also shown across five installments on ABC and ESPN television networks.

The film, an exploration into the 1995 murder trial of former US football star OJ Simpson, won the best documentary Oscar in February over "13th," "I Am Not Your Negro," "Fire at Sea" and "Life, Animated."

Ezra Edelman and Caroline Waterlow. PHOTO: REUTERS

The Academy regularly updates its rules on Oscars eligibility and campaigning.

Other new rules this year included Academy members no longer being allowed to attend any lunches or dinners for a film contending for Oscars that does not include a screening.

The Academy said the new rules were part of "the continuing effort to address the issue of excessive campaigning and keeping the attention on the movies themselves."

Voting for the best animated feature film category will also now be open to all active Academy members, as opposed to a craft-based group. Disney's "Zootopia" won the category this year. Last month, the Academy announced new protocols for its live televised awards ceremony after a backstage envelope mix-up by a PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) accountant led to "La La Land" wrongly being named best picture instead of "Moonlight," in the biggest blunder in Oscar history.

Starting next year, the Academy said PwC will place a third accountant in the Oscars show control room, who will be able immediately to notify the director should a mistake be made.—*Reuters*

Harry Styles. PHOTO: REUTERS

'Nervous' One Direction singer Harry Styles releases debut solo single

LONDON — A "nervous" Harry Styles unveiled his debut solo single on Friday, the singer's first own music release since hugely popular boy band One Direction announced it was taking a break.

With rock ballad "Sign of the Times", the 23-year-old follows in the footsteps of One Direction bandmates Niall Horan and Louis Tomlinson in putting out solo material in the last year.

Speaking on Britain's BBC Radio 1 Breakfast Show with Nick Grimshaw, Styles, who stars in upcoming World War Two drama "Dunkirk", said he was "nervous" before introducing the track.

"It's a bit weird. I feel like I've been hibernating in the studio for so long," he said. "You hear it in the safety of the studio...(and now) it's time to give birth."

Upon its debut, British media were quick to draw comparisons with the late David Bowie's music. "It's the song I'm most proud of writing I think," Styles said.

The originally five-member One Direction formed on British television talent show "The X Factor" in 2010 and won legions of fans around the world soon after. The best-selling group was reduced to four members in March 2015 when Zayn Malik announced he was quitting the band.

A few months later, Styles, Horan, Tomlinson and fellow member Liam Payne said the group would be taking a break from early 2016. —*Reuters*

Lookalike Trump, Obama, Kim offer comic relief in Hong Kong

HONG KONG — At a time of political tensions over US air strikes in Syria and sabre-rattling by North Korea, impersonators of President Donald Trump, his predecessor Barack Obama and Pyongyang leader Kim Jong Un brought welcome laughs to the streets of Hong Kong.

Traffic stopped as people, some in town to attend a rugby tournament, swarmed around the trio to take pictures in a downtown shopping district.

On a day when Trump was meeting Chinese president Xi Jinping in Florida with North Korea's nuclear threat high on the agenda, Trump's double hammed it up with the hermit kingdom's leader.

Howard (C), an Australian-Chinese impersonating North Korean leader Kim Jong-un, Reggie Brown (R) impersonating former US President Barack Obama, and Dennis Alan impersonating US President Donald Trump, walk on a street in Hong Kong, China, on 7 April 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

Kim's impersonator meanwhile kept a stern face and warned the crowds clamouring for a selfie to stop or he'd send them to a labour camp.

He was later pictured sitting with the two US 'presidents'.

"Wow, I have to say that it's a great honour to sit between Obama and Donald Trump," said Kim impersonator Howard X, with a head of slick black hair and chubby cheeks.

"Let me just tell you, as a great leader, the greatest leader, Donald Trump is such a blast."

Obama impersonator Reggie Brown, sporting custom-made prosthetic ears, said he was happy for all the love.

"I think the world is missing Obama now because (of) our current president back in the United States," said Brown, who flew in from Chicago.

Also from Chicago, 66-year-old musician and Trump impersonator Dennis Allen said he wanted to offer comic relief in tumultuous political times.

"I am not Donald Trump, people have said for years that I look like Donald Trump.

And I've used the way that I look ...to make people laugh. And whether or not criticisms of Donald Trump are true or not, a lot of the humour about him is funny," he said.—*Reuters*

Prince Harry attends UK team trials for Invictus Games

LONDON — Prince Harry was on hand to cast an eye over potential new recruits for Britain's Invictus Games team during trials in the southwest English city of Bath on Friday.

Harry, the fifth in line to the British throne, set up the multi-sport Invictus Games three years ago for wounded military personal from allied nations.

The 2017 edition will take place in Toronto, Canada from 23-30 September with more than 550 injured and wounded servicemen and women from 17 allied nations expected to take part in 12 adaptive sports.

Harry met with British competitors in athletics and indoor rowing hoping to win one of the 90 places on offer.

"I don't know how you found yourself so brave to come and join. I say brave enough because I know some of you coming to an event like this and trying to get yourself on the plane to Invictus Games can be quite a tough challenge," he told the potential recruits.

"I would love to see all of you there but the reality is that we only have 90 places. But what I do hope is that your journey up to this point has been a recovery no matter what."

Britain's Prince Harry Patron of the Invictus Games Foundation, plays with Harry Phillips, aged two and a half as he attends the UK team trials for the Invictus Games Toronto 2017 held at the University of Bath, Britain, on 7 April, 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

The Invictus Game were held in London in 2014 and Orlando in 2016.—*Reuters*

69 masterpieces from Musee d'Orsay displayed in Taipei

TAIPEI — A collection of 69 masterpieces from the Musee d'Orsay in Paris are on display at the Taipei Palace Museum from Saturday.

The paintings include "Rest from Work" by Vincent Van Gogh, "The Gleaners" by Jean-Francois Millet and "Young Girls at the Piano" by Pierre-Auguste Renoir as well as works by Claude Monet, Paul Cezanne and Paul Gauguin.

The exhibition, "Musee d'Orsay: The Aesthetic Worlds of the 19th Century," will run until July 24 and has been arranged as part of events to mark the 30th anniversary of the Musee d'Orsay. The 69 exhibits have been insured for more than 400 million Euros (about 424 million US dollars).

The exhibition is divided into five sections — Romanticism and Classicism; Academism and Realism; Impressionism and Naturalism; Symbolism and Eclecticism; and a section for modern art of the 20th century. The Taipei museum said the scale of this exhibition is unparalleled in its history. The Musee d' Orsay, located on the banks of the Seine and across the river from the Louvre, is often called the most beautiful museum in Europe.— *Xinhua*

mitv Myanmar International

Programme Schedule

(9-4-2017 07:00am ~ 10-4-2017 07:00am) MST

07:03	Am	News
07:26	Am	An Ardent Aficionado Of Traditional Design
08:03	Am	News
08:26	Am	Creative Hands
08:48	Am	A Tea Business: Pankwan (Part-1)
09:03	Am	News
09:25	Am	Discovering Tribes: Taisun (Their Life and Customs) (Part-2)
09:48	Am	Lines & Wash Painting
09:55	Am	Thingyan Songs & Dances
10:03	Am	News
10:25	Am	The Richly Blessed Gem Land
10:51	Am	Licuala Palm Leaf

(11:00 Am ~ 03:00 Pm)- Saturday 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
07:26	Pm	Swan Hein Cave
07:45	Pm	Today Myanmar: By Election 2017
08:03	Pm	News
08:26	Pm	Architect: U Thaw
08:51	Pm	Myanmar Masterclass: Artist Khin Maung Zaw

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

Hot air balloons sparkle in sky between Britain and France

LONDON — A fleet of colourful hot air balloons left the English coast for France on Friday, attempting to break the record for most hot air balloons to cross the English Channel.

About 85 balloons took part in the attempt, the BBC reported.

"The weather was perfect. We needed to have a strong and consistent wind coming over London and going right into the continent so when the balloons go up they are guaranteed to go in the right direction and not along the French coastline," said Steve Mabbutt, one of the organiser said, adding the flight had been cancelled many times before.

Guiness World Records, who have yet to ratify the new mark, said the current record to beat was a total of 49 balloons, achieved in the UK in April 2011.—*Reuters*

THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

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Sunday, 9 April 2017

Tottenham crush Watford to close in on Chelsea

LONDON — Two goals by Son Heung-min helped Tottenham Hotspur thrash Watford 4-0 to close the gap on Premier League leaders Chelsea to four points in Saturday's early game.

After Dele Alli's majestic curler broke the deadlock in the 33rd minute in the sunshine at White Hart Lane, an 11th consecutive home league win never looked in doubt.

Eric Dier made it 2-0 six minutes later before Son added a third with a low shot just before half-time. Son crashed in his second on the volley in the 54th minute after which the hosts cruised through to full-time. Second-placed Tottenham's sixth successive league victory took them to 68 points from 31 games with Chelsea, who face Bournemouth away later, on 72.—*Reuters*

Tottenham's Harry Kane is fouled by Watford's Craig Cathcart during the Premier League between Tottenham Hotspur and Watford at White Hart Lane on 8 April, 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

Mourinho claims draw-specialists United are strong at home

LONDON — Jose Mourinho claimed on Friday that Manchester United are displaying strong home form despite nine Premier League draws at Old Trafford this season.

Their latest point was against Everton on Tuesday, but was only secured from the penalty spot in injury time after another performance that drew criticism for lacking ideas and invention.

Although United's manager conceded that 1-1 against Everton had been a "bad result", he remained upbeat about his team who, in total, have drawn 10 but not lost any of their past 20 league games.

"I still think in spite of the bad result — a draw is a bad result — we are strong at home. We lost only one game (against Manchester City)," Mourinho told a news conference.

"I know, as an example, 10 matches, 10 draws or 10 points, 10 matches with five victories is 15 points. What is better? The 15 points, obviously.

"In terms of looking to the future, I prefer to look at 10 matches with 10 draws, you have something that is not easy to have. You are quite solid mentally, difficult to beat, fighting against difficult circumstances," he said. Sixth-placed United have not lost a league game since their 4-0 defeat by Chelsea in October.

"It's good to know that we have a fantastic run of 20 unbeaten matches in the Premier League," Mourinho said.

United visit basement-side Sunderland on Sunday, and Mourinho offered his sympathy to their manager David Moyes, whose team are 10 points adrift from safety.

"I have sympathy with every manager that is fighting hard to reach their objectives," the Portuguese added. "Some of us, we are sacked in the middle of the season. It's difficult for everyone, so of course I have sympathy."—*Reuters*

Players of the Yangon United FC and Chin United FC vie for the ball. PHOTO: SOE NYUNT

Yangon United FC keeps up momentum with nine consecutive win

THE second day of 2017 season MNL soccer match No11 held yesterday evening.

Yangon United FC used key players beat Chin United FC 3-2 yesterday evening .in which the former used three expatriate players. While giving pressure on the opponents, Yangon United got a corner, from which Kyaw Ko Ko hit the ball directly into the goalpost at 12 min.

At 20 min Ehimi Kar scored another goal for Yangon United after Mon Moe Aung passed the ball to him,. Chin United got penalty at 34 min and Kupho turned it into a goal.

The match became more thrilling in the second half as the two teams were attacking and counterattacking each other before Kyaw Ko Ko scored third goal for Yangon United at 60 min. although Bi Bi scored an equilizer for Chin United at 68 min Yangon United could control the match till the end.

At the Thuwanna Stadium, GFA won Magwe FC with 2-1. Mark and Eiman Chuel scored goals for GFA at 45 and 62 min respectively and Cho Tun scored back a goal for Magwe at 85 min.

At the Mawlamyaing football stadium, Southern Myanmar and Zwekapin United played a 1-1 draw. Donald scored a goal for Zwekapin at 58 min and Southern got responsive goal just before the end of the match.

After the matches, Yangon was on the top of the chart followed by Shan United while Chin United fell to the bottom.

Nay Pyi Taw and Yadanabon FC will play at the Wunna Theikdi stadium today as the last day of the MNL No.11 matches.—*Shine Htet Aung*

Djokovic helps Serbia take 2-0 lead over Spain in Davis Cup quarters

BELGRADE — Serbia's Novak Djokovic showed glimpses of his best form with a 6-3, 6-4, 6-2 win over Albert Ramos-Vinolas as they took a 2-0 lead over Spain in the Davis Cup quarter-finals on Friday. Viktor Troicki brushed aside Pablo Carreno Busta 6-3, 6-4, 6-3 in the second rubber as the 2010 champions dominated the tie ahead of Saturday's doubles and Sunday's reverse singles. Five-time champions Spain, having arrived with a second-string outfit missing world number five Rafael Nadal, were always going to struggle against a full-strength home team. Serbia's world number two Djokovic, having suffered from poor form and injuries after claiming his maiden French Open title last June as he relinquished the number one spot to Britain's Andy Murray, looked solid against Ramos-Vinolas.

He held serve throughout the contest and faced only one break point against the subdued Spaniard, who crumbled in the cauldron of Belgrade's acoustic Aleksandar Nikolic arena. "Overall, I'm very happy with my performance and it's very encouraging because I now know I am on the right path to rediscovering my best form," Djokovic told a news conference.—*Reuters*

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