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President U Htin Kyaw and First Lady visit the Buddha Tooth Relic temple, Forbidden City and the Great Wall

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 the Buddha Tooth Relic Temple, the Forbidden City and the Great Wall yesterday.

The President, First Lady and entourage arrived at the Lingguang Temple, Beijing at local standard time 9:30 a.m. and met with the Lingguang Temple Sayadaw and donated offerings.

Afterwards, the President and First Lady visited the Buddha Tooth Relic Stupa to view and pay respect to the Buddha Tooth Relic.

The Buddha Tooth Relic has visited Myanmar four times, in 1955, 1994, 1996 and 2011, for the people to pay respects and homage. The Buddha Tooth Relic is displayed inside a casket ornamented with gold and jewels on a dais in the hall of the Buddha Relic Stupa.

Afterwards, the President, First Lady and entourage visited the Forbidden City, also known as the Palace Museum, in Beijing and studied the ancient Chinese architecture and traditional handicrafts.

The Forbidden City lies at the city center of Beijing and once served as the imperial palace of 24 emperors for nearly 500 years from the Ming Dynasty, 1368, to Qing Dynasties, 1911.

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President U Htin Kyaw and First Lady Daw Su Su Lwin visit the Great Wall in Beijing. PHOTO: IPRD

Vice President U Myint Swe calls for more forestry protection

AUTHORITIES have been urged to step up efforts to prevent illegal logging as the government has been implementing the sustainability of the country's forests.

"We need to work together with the people to prevent the further depletion of Myanmar's forests, which cover 42 percent of the land," Vice-President U Myint

Swe said at the meeting with the officials on his visit to the government forest reserve and Phoe Kyar Elephant Camp in Yedashe, Bago Region, yesterday. During his in-

spection tour of greening efforts in the Bago Yoma mountain range, he also inspected the 15-acre teak plantation for producing seeds.

"Tree plantation should meet

the target of the plan. Besides, rare wildlife and elephants in Bago Yoma mountain range should be conserved," he added.

SEE PAGE 3 >>



သဒ္ဓါထက်သန် မြန်မာအားမာန် ကမ္ဘောဇဘဏ်

Charity shows aim to raise funds for victims in war-torn Kachin State

ALL proceeds from a fundraising concert and fashion show will be spent on charitable activity in war-affected Kachin State, said U Naung Tain, head of the state Committee of the Red Cross.

Organised by members of the Red Cross, the charity events are planned to take place in Myitkyina, the capital city of Kachin State, starting at 6 p.m. on 10 April.

An 11-member group of popular Kachin singers, including Maran Seng Naw and Myanmar Idol top ten winner Mai Mai Seng, will entertain the audiences with songs and music during the half-day show.

The event organisers set the ticket price at Ks5,000 per head,

planning to spend all of money from the fundraising events on providing humanitarian assistance to needy communities, including war victims and disaster-affected groups across Kachin State.

Since its establishment, the group of volunteers has helped residents who are in need of help and assist those target populations through a wide range of supporting programmes such as offering relief supplies to war victims living at temporary shelters and opening of first-aid care service trainings for young people.

The group raises its funds through special events as well as donor contributions.—*Min Yaza (Myitkyina)*

Over 18,000 tourists entered Myanmar via Tachilek last year



Foreign travellers are seen near a border gate in Myanmar.
PHOTO: KHINE KHANT

MORE THAN 18,000 international travellers crossed into the country through the Tachilek border gate in the 2016-2017 fiscal year, the Ministry of Hotel and Tourism reported.

A total of 18,126 visitors came mostly from Thailand, China and third world countries. They entered Tachilek, a land border in Shan State in eastern Myanmar, via the Mae Sai border crossing of Thailand to visit significant destinations across the country.

According to the MoHT, about 9,800 Chinese and Thai visitors went on the Mong-phyat-Kengtung trip while 1,942 visited heo Mongla area and nearly 10,000 travellers went

on the Taunggyi-Inlay-Bagan-Mandalay-Kyaiktiyo trip.

Tourism in Myanmar is growing rapidly. International tourists arrivals have increased each year thanks to the reform movements of the government since 2011.

Foreign travellers visit the country to enjoy natural landscapes as well as to observe the diverse culture, traditions and lifestyles of rural communities.

The country is now focusing on implementation of culture-based tourism as well as community-based tourism including the coastal and marine tourism connected with eco-tourism.—*Khine Khant*



Novitiation and ordination ceremonies are held in Myanmar traditional way in urban and rural areas across the country on this summer holidays and Thingyan New Year Festival. The photo shows novices- to- be are being conveyed by elephants in novitiation ceremony followed by damsels in Mohnyin of Kachin State on April 9, 2017. PHOTO: MANG NGAI

ASEAN photo contest welcomes photographers to reveal beauty of Myanmar

PROFESSIONAL and amateur photographers have been invited to take part in the ASEAN Culture and Tourism Photo Contest by sharing their experience through photographs, according to the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism.

The contest will be organized by the ASEAN-Korea Centre, an intergovernmental organisation, as a special program to celebrate the 50th anniversary of ASEAN and ASEAN-ROK Cultural Exchange Year.

This contest is open to all

citizens of ASEAN member countries and Korea.

The event aims to promote mutual understanding between ASEAN and Korea by revealing the unexplored attractions of the ASEAN member states under the four categories, including natural wonders, cultural wonders, culinary wonders, and the wonderful people of ASEAN.

The contest is sponsored by ASEAN, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea, the TTG Asia, and the ASEAN Tourism Association (ASEAN-

TA).

Photographers may visit <http://photo.aseankorea.org> to get the required information about the contest.

According to the organiser, photo entries will be accepted until April 23 and announcement of winners will be on 18 May.

A wide range of prizes including Special Country Awards will be presented to the winning participants. The winning photo entries will be exhibited in Korea between June and December of this year.—*Shwe Khine*

TEDx Yangon 2017 aims to share ideas to inspire people

THE TEDx Yangon 2017, a uniquely inspirational day, will take place in the third week of this month in the commercial city of Yangon for the purpose of inspiring audiences through special talks by experts.

The new event with the theme "Tapestry" is scheduled to be held at the Rose Garden Ho-

tel from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. on 21 May, aiming to exchange stimulating, challenging and thought-provoking ideas by 16 professionals including artists, environmentalists and those from the media field.

They will share their knowledge and experience that inspire, open minds and spark dialogue

about Myanmar's past, present and future.

One speaker is allowed to talk for only 18-minutes on the TED stage.

Tickets are available at US\$100 (Ks135,000) per head. The TEDx Yangon talks to be shared online through its Facebook page.—200

City authorities get over Ks4 billion from billboard leases

THE Yangon City Development Committee received around Ks4.9 billion from billboard leases this fiscal year, a spokesperson from the YCDC's Administration Department said.

The figure is almost one billion kyats more than the last year, when city authorities earned Ks3.4 billion.

There are over 470 billboards across the city. Authorities received over 6,400 billboard lease proposals for 198 billboards located mostly in crowded places, inviting businesspersons to apply for the rest of the billboards every month on a first-come, first-served basis.

The selected businesses have

one year to use the boards.

The YCDC divided the billboards into five categories based on their locations. Advertisers have shown little interest in billboards in Hlaingthaya and Shwepyitha, satellite towns as well as in Dawbon Township, according to the YCDC's Department of Administration.—200



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 from 1.45 pm.—*Myanmar News Agency*

President U Htin Kyaw and First Lady visit the Buddha Tooth Relic temple . . .

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It was built for 14 years from 1406 to 1420 and has 980 buildings. The ancient palace is surrounded by a 26 ft high city wall and 171 ft wide moat. The home of 24 emperors – 14 of the Ming dynasty and 10 of the Qing dynasty – was opened to the public in 1925.

An extensive collection of artwork and artifacts in the Palace Museum were the imperial collections of the Ming and Qing dynasties. The Forbidden City was declared a World Heritage Site in 1987 by UNESCO and is the biggest ancient wooden building in the world. Annually, more than 14 million visitors visit the Palace Museum and this museum holds the record as the most visited site in the world.

In the afternoon, the President, First Lady and entourage arrived

at the Great Wall in Beijing and viewed the ancient architectural works.

The Great Wall of China is one of the Seven Wonders of the World and is a World Heritage Site visited annually by many visitors.

The Great Wall was built across the northern borders of imperial China over deserts, mountains and forests to protect the Chinese states and empires against the raids and invasions of the various nomadic groups of the Eurasian Steppe. It is the longest man-made structure built. Emperor Qin Shi Huang in 221 BC extended the wall to more than 5000 km long. Since then, the Great Wall has been rebuilt, maintained and enhanced; the majority of the existing wall is from the Ming Dynasty (1363-1644).

Afterwards, the President,

First Lady and entourage arrived at the Myanmar Embassy in Beijing and met and discussed cordially with staff and family members about their education, health and living conditions.

In the evening, the President met with officials from the Huawei Company at the Diaoyutai State Guesthouse.

Afterwards, the President attended the publishing and distribution event of the book titled “Min Thu Wun and China” that was held at the Diaoyutai State Guesthouse and gave a speech of honor. The book was published in both Chinese and Myanmar and includes articles written by Sayagyi Min Thu Win about his travel experiences to China as well as his translation of Chinese literature and writings about Myanmar culture.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Vice President calls for more forestry protection

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He also urged the officials to explore prospects for nature tourism sites in the forests as the government halted the production of timber to allow forests to re-establish themselves.

According to a Forest Resources Assessment carried out by the FAO in 2010, Myanmar's forest cover was 46.96 per cent. By 2015, it had fallen to 42.92 per cent.

A reforestation project in Myanmar has been implemented as a 10-year project from 2017-18 to 2026-27. In the project, 352,438 acres of forest plantations will be planted by the government and 285,104 acres by the private sector. Support work for regeneration of forests in 815,538 acres of timber extraction forest will also be made. About 500,000 acres of natural forest in the dry zone will be preserved, while 770,332 acres of grouped forest for local usage will be developed. The plan is to extend

the forest reserve area by 16,160 square miles, or 6.19 per cent of the country's land area, boosting the total forest reserve area to 30 per cent.

Afterwards, the Vice President visited a 300-acre private teak plantation in the Yoma Kopyin protected forest in Yedashe Township and inspected the five-year old teak plants.

The Vice President then visited plantation site No. 2/2017, where 300,000 teak saplings are being prepared, inspected the ground preparation work for planting, fire prevention plans for the post-planting period and discussed about providing job opportunities for the local populace. This is part of the Myanmar reforestation project in Bago Yoma Forest Reserve.

Afterwards, the Vice President visited the ancient Pyu and Sri Ksetra sites in Pyay, Bago Region and viewed the Pyu era artifacts exhibited in the mu-



Vice President U Myint Swe feeds an elephant at Phoe Kyar Elephant Camp in Yedashe. PHOTO: MNA

seum. He also visited Rahanda Cave Pagoda and Baw Baw Gyi Pagoda, where officials explained the history and significance of the pagodas.

In the afternoon, he visited a 160-year-old teak plantation planted by a German Botanical expert Dr. Brundig in 1857. It is situated between mile post

176/4 and 177/0 on Yangon-Pyay Road. The plantation has 3,503 teak trees planted between 1857 and 1968 on 78 acres of land.—*Myanmar News Agency*

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Air Force space chief open to flying on recycled SpaceX rockets

COLORADO SPRINGS, (Colo) — The US Air Force is open to buying rides on previously flown SpaceX rockets to put military satellites into orbit, a move expected to cut launch costs for the Pentagon, the head of the Air Force Space Command said on Thursday.

The idea of flying on recycled rockets became a reality a week ago when privately owned Space Exploration Technologies, or SpaceX, launched a communications satellite on a Falcon 9 booster that previously put a cargo ship into orbit for NASA.

That Falcon main stage had been recovered from a successful return landing on an ocean platform shortly after its maiden flight last April, then was re-launched and salvaged again last Thursday, marking a spaceflight first.

“I would be comfortable if we were to fly on a reused booster,” General John “Jay” Raymond told reporters at the US Space Symposium in Colorado Springs. “They’ve proven they can do it. ... It’s going to get us to lower cost.”

SpaceX has so far won three launch contracts to fly military and national security satellites — business previously awarded exclusively to United Launch Alliance, a partnership of Lockheed Martin and Boeing.

All those flights will take



A SpaceX upgraded Falcon 9 rocket undergoes launch preparations at Vandenberg Air Force Base in California, on 27 September 2013. PHOTO: REUTERS

place on new Falcon 9 rockets.

SpaceX, owned and operated by technology entrepreneur Elon Musk, has a backlog of more than 70 missions worth more than \$10 billion.

After last week’s landmark launch, Musk said the company planned to fly about 20 more rockets this year, including the debut blastoff of its new heavy-lift vehicle. Up to six of those missions, including the Falcon Heavy, will use previously flown

boosters, he said.

Speaking at the symposium on Wednesday, SpaceX President Gwynne Shotwell said the cost of refurbishing and re-flying the Falcon 9 first stage was “substantially less than half” the cost of manufacturing a new booster — the most expensive part of the rocket. SpaceX’s website lists the cost of a basic Falcon 9 launch at \$62 million.

SpaceX expects to reduce costs even further.

The company’s next goal is to launch and return a rocket and relaunch it within 24 hours. “That’s when we’ll really feel like we’ve got reusability right,” Shotwell said.

Raymond said the Air Force would need to certify that a used booster could safely deliver its satellites into orbit.

“I’m pretty comfortable we’ll get comfortable with doing it,” Raymond said. “This is just beginning.” —Reuters

Texas expands Zika recommendations ahead of 2017 mosquito season

CHICAGO, — Texas health officials are expanding testing recommendations for pregnant women in South Texas as the advent of warm weather increases the risk for local transmission of the mosquito-borne virus that has been shown to cause severe birth defects.

The Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) on Friday recommended testing of all pregnant residents of Cameron, Hidalgo, Starr, Webb, Wilbacy and Zapata counties in both the first and second trimesters of pregnancy. It is also urging testing for any resident who has a rash plus at least one other common Zika symptom: fever, joint pain or eye redness.

For the rest of the state, Texas is recommending testing for anyone with at least three of those four Zika symptoms and all pregnant women who have traveled to areas with ongoing Zika transmission, including travel to any part of Mexico.

“Zika remains a significant health risk to pregnant women



An aedes aegypti mosquito is pictured on a leaf in San Jose, Costa Rica on 1 February 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

and their babies, and it’s only a matter of time until we see local transmission here again,” DSHS Commissioner Dr John Hellerstedt said in a statement.

He said the state wants to “cast as wide a net as possible” with testing, noting that the Lower Rio Grande Valley remains most at risk.

Texas had six cases of local

mosquito transmission of Zika virus disease in Brownsville in November and December. The region is considered a likely place for Zika to spread because of its history of local transmission of dengue, a closely related virus, and its proximity to Mexico, where there continues to be local Zika transmission, including in communities just across

the border.

Federal health officials this week reported that one in 10 women with confirmed Zika infections during pregnancy in 2016 had a fetus or baby with birth defects.

With its outbreak last year, Texas became the second state within the continental United States to report local Zika transmission, following Florida, which reported its first locally transmitted cases in July. Puerto Rico and other US territories have reported a total of 36,504 cases of Zika, according to the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention.

Texas is one of several US states with *Aedes aegypti* mosquitoes, which carry Zika.

There is no vaccine or treatment for Zika, which also can be transmitted sexually. An estimated 80 per cent of people infected have no symptoms, making it difficult for individuals to know whether they have been infected. —Reuters

More prostate cancer patients get radiation when doctors own the equipment

AUSTIN — Men with prostate cancer that hasn’t spread to surrounding tissues are more likely to get radiation therapy if they’re diagnosed by doctors who own radiation machines, a Texas study suggests.

Most men with prostate cancer have this kind of tumor. Treatment options include surgery, radiation, or so-called “active surveillance” that involves holding off on treatment and instead doing periodic tests to see if the malignancies grow. Often, doctors and patients struggle to choose the best option, because it’s hard to tell which tumors will grow fast enough to be potentially life-threatening and which ones might never get big enough to cause problems.

Some previous research has found when urologists own radiation equipment, men are more likely to get this treatment instead of surgery, said senior study author Dr Karen Hoffman of the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Centre in Houston. The current study, however, suggests that equipment ownership might tip the scales in favour of any treatment — either surgery or radiation — over active surveillance.

Compared with men diagnosed by specialists who didn’t own radiation machines, men diagnosed by urologists who did own equipment were 61 per cent more likely to receive surgery or radiation, researchers report in the journal *Prostate Cancer and Prostatic Diseases*. “For patients with very favourable prostate cancer, our findings suggest that urologist ownership of radiation equipment may contribute to unnecessary treatment,” Hoffman said by email.

“However, for patients with disease with aggressive features, our findings suggest that urologist ownership increases correct treatment, meaning that these patients who need treatment are more likely to receive it if they are diagnosed by a urologist with an ownership interest in radiation therapy,” Hoffman added.

For the study, researchers examined data on 17,982 men diagnosed with localized prostate cancer from 2006 to 2009 in Texas.

Most of the men in the study were 66 to 70 years old, white, and without other major medical problems. During the study period, the percentage of men diagnosed by urologists who owned equipment increased from about 2 per cent to almost 25 per cent. Men diagnosed with so-called favourable risk disease, meaning tumors less likely to grow and spread enough to be dangerous, were 89 per cent more likely to receive treatment instead of active surveillance when their doctor owned radiation equipment, the study found. —Reuters

LOCAL Business

12 tonnes of watermelon, muskmelon seeds required per year

About 12 tonnes of watermelon and muskmelon seeds are required to plant each year because of the lack of production, according to the Myanmar Fruit, Flower and Vegetable Producers and Exporters Association (MFVP).

The country is incapable of producing the seeds required and is dependent only on imported seeds from foreign countries, the MFVP said. About 600,000 tonnes of watermelon seeds are imported from China annually. The years 2014 and 2015 witnessed high requirements for watermelon seeds, which caused the companies to sell the seeds without examination, causing difficulties for the growers suffer, said U Kyaw Thu, the secretary of the association.

Myanmar's vegetable production is still too weak to enter the highly competitive international market. Additionally, the technical requirements and the high cost of input pull the market profits down, said the chairman of the MFVP.



A farmer works in the muskmelon farm in Nay Pyi Taw. PHOTO: AYE MIN SOE

The fruits and vegetables imported from neighbouring countries are found to dominate the supermarkets and fruit stalls in Yangon. Myanmar is not able to compete against them due to the lack of production and weakness in quality.

Government subsidies are needed for production of the seeds and species. Only fertilizer with

quality assurance is also required to be distributed in the domestic market. The Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation carried out a total of 4,196 irrigation water projects to supply crops and water into farmland. Additionally, the awareness campaigns of good agricultural practice (GAP) were conducted for farmers.—Min Thit (Myanmar News Agency)

Current fiscal year to see FDI of over US\$ 6 billion

FOREIGN direct investment (FDI) of over US\$6billion is likely to flow into the country this fiscal year, according to the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA).

Foreign investments of US\$4billion were expected to come in the past five years, whereas US\$6billion is targeted to reach each year from 2016 to 2020, said U Aung Naing Oo, the director-general of DICA.

Over US\$160million of investments were permitted into Myanmar, and a total of 9,478 job opportunities were created from these permitted enterprises, according to the very first Myanmar Investment Commission meeting held on 5th April in the current FY.

The FDI flowing into the country in the previous fiscal year of 2016-2017 hit over US\$6.8billion, which exceeded

the expectation of US\$6billion, mostly into the industrial manufacturing and transport and communication sectors.

The foreign investments mostly enter these sectors; oil and gas, power, transport and communication, manufacturing, real estate, mining, hotel and tourism, livestock and fisheries, agriculture, industrial estate, construction and other services, according to DICA.

Myanmar attracts foreign investors by granting up to 7-year tax break in the designated areas. MIC permits the project proposals only after verifying the sector-specific development, job opportunity, innovation, technical sharing, attaining country's revenue, domestic and foreign market conditions, local requirements, environmental impact assessment (EIA) and social impact assessment (SIA), it is learnt.—Ko Khant

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REACH FURTHER

Abe welcomes Trump's security commitment in phone talks over Syria

TOKYO — Prime Minister Shinzo Abe told President Donald Trump on Sunday he values highly the United States' commitment to international peace and security after the president approved military strikes against Syria in response to the country's alleged chemical weapon use.

In their second telephone talks in four days, Abe and Trump also agreed on the importance of close coordination over North Korea as Pyongyang continues its rogue nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programmes.

"I highly valued President Trump's strong commitment to the maintenance of the international order and to the peace and security of its allies and the world," Abe told reporters after the talks.

During the 45-minute phone conversation proposed by Washington following a two-day meeting between Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping in Florida, Abe told Trump that Tokyo is watching closely how China responds to North Korean issues, the Japanese



Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe speaks to reporters at his office in Tokyo on 9 April, 2017, after speaking with US President Donald Trump on the phone. Abe said the two leaders agreed on the importance of close coordination over North Korean issues as Pyongyang continues its nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programme. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

leader said.

Abe said he and Trump "frankly exchanged opinions" over the issue of Syria as well as North Korea, following Thursday's US military strike on a Syrian military airfield from which a chemical attack was allegedly launched, killing dozens of civilians including

children.

Abe conveyed to his American counterpart Japan's support for "the US' resolve to fulfill its responsibility to prevent the proliferation and use of chemical weapons," according to a Japanese official.

Trump responded by saying that the missile attack

was intended to make sure chemical weapons will never again be used following the casualties among Syrian civilians, Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Koichi Hagiuda said.

Hagiuda, who listened in on the leaders' conversation, said Trump did not mention a basis for concluding

that the deadly attack was indeed carried out by the Syrian government as claimed.

On the issue of North Korea, Abe and Trump also "completely agreed" on the importance of solidarity among Japan, the United States and South Korea, according to the prime minister. During the conversation, Trump briefed Abe on his just-concluded meeting with Xi. Hagiuda said that given the Trump-Xi meeting, the Japanese and US leaders discussed how Japan, the United States, South Korea and China should deal with North Korea while working with one another.

The telephone talks between the two leaders followed a similar conversation on Thursday in which they agreed that Wednesday's missile firing by the North into the Sea of Japan was a dangerous provocative act and a grave threat to Japan's security. At that time, Trump told Abe that the United States considers that all options are on the table in dealing with the North.

Sunday's Abe-Trump

conversation also comes as a US Navy carrier group headed to the Korean Peninsula amid signs that Pyongyang is preparing for a sixth nuclear test.

With some observers now talking about the possibility of US military action against North Korea, a lawmaker from Japan's ruling Liberal Democratic Party on Sunday said such a scenario was unlikely as a military strike against the North could precipitate a nuclear attack on the South or Japan.

Speaking on a TV programme, Ichita Yamamoto, a lawmaker involved in North Korea policy issues inside the party, said that because of the nuclear factor, the United States would be more careful toward North Korea than toward Syria.

"There is a difference between Syria and North Korea," Yamamoto said.

The former senior vice foreign minister also said the US missile attack on Syria could cut both ways — it could work as a deterrent toward the North or it could push Pyongyang into a corner. —Kyodo News

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Six people killed, several injured during Kashmir protests

SRINAGAR — Six people were killed and more than two dozen injured on Sunday when police clashed with protesters during a by-election in Srinagar in India's disputed Kashmir region, a senior police official said.

Separatist factions in Kashmir had called for a boycott of the vote, resulting in heightened security and low voter turnout when the polling began.

In Budgam district,

police initially used tear gas against protesters who were throwing stones, but then opened fire, killing six people, the senior police official told Reuters.

More than two dozen people were injured during the clashes across central Kashmir on Sunday, the official said. At least 70 polling stations were shut due to the violence, while at some stations voting machines were set ablaze by the

protesters.

The by-election in Srinagar is being held to fill a vacant seat in the Lok Sabha, India's lower house of parliament. A second by-election in the state for a separate Lok Sabha seat is set to take place on 12 April in Anantnag. The results of both polls are expected to be announced on 15 April.

India and Pakistan have fought two of their three wars since inde-

pendence over Kashmir, which each claims in full but rules only a part. India accuses Pakistan of backing separatist fighters — a charge Islamabad denies. There have been a spate of protests since the killing by security services of separatist leader Burhan Wani. The violence has killed 84 civilians and wounded more than 12,000 civilians and security force personnel. —Reuters

Police kill six suspected Islamic militants in Indonesia

JAKARTA — Police shot dead six suspected members of an Islamic militant group in Indonesia on Saturday, they said, after a failed drive-by shooting targeting police officers in East Java.

Indonesia has the world's largest Muslim population and has been on high alert over a recent resurgence in radicalism inspired by the extremist group Islamic State.

After a police chase the six abandoned their vehicle in a village in the Tuban area, not far from the industrial city of Surabaya, and attempted to flee into a plantation

where they were all killed in a second gun battle with police, East Java Police spokesman Frans Barung Mangera said.

"By around 5pm we had immobilized all of them," Mangera said, confirming that all six had died during the incident. A box of 9mm bullets was found in their vehicle, he said.

Police were monitoring the vehicle prior to the attack, he said, in connection with the Friday arrest of three suspected members of the group, Jemaah Anshorut Daulah (JAD), who were allegedly planning an attack on a police

station and had bought M16 machine guns from the southern Philippines.

"We tried to stop that vehicle, but the vehicle did not stop," Mangera said, adding that those in the vehicle "took out weapons and shot at officers."

Indonesia has had some major successes tackling militancy inspired by al Qaeda's attacks on the United States in 2001. But there has been a resurgence of Islamist activity in recent years, some of it linked to the rise of Islamic State.

The most serious incident last year was in

January when four suicide bombers and gunmen attacked a shopping area in central Jakarta.

Jemaah Anshorut Daulah is an umbrella organization on a US State Department "terrorist" list that is estimated to have drawn hundreds of Islamic State sympathizers in Indonesia.

Recent attacks by Islamic State sympathizers have mostly been poorly organized, but authorities believe about 400 Indonesians have left to join the militant group in Syria, and some could pose a more deadly threat if they came home. —Reuters

South Korea lauds results of Trump-Xi talks: Yonhap

SEOUL — Seoul has hailed the agreement between US President Donald Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping to strengthen coordination in resolving the issue of North Korea's nuclear weapons program, Yonhap news agency reported on Sunday.

In appraising the outcome of a summit meeting between the two at Trump's Mar-a-Lago estate, South Korea's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said in a statement: "In the talks held in Florida on Friday, Trump and Xi shared the urgency of the threat of North Korea's weapons program, reaffirmed their commitment to a denuclearized Korean Peninsula and committed to fully implement UN Security Council resolutions."

The US-China summit was held as the Trump administration reviews US policy toward North Korea, including the use of military options.

In recent weeks, the Trump

administration declared it is abandoning the policy of "strategic patience" followed by the previous administration, and signaled that it is prepared to take unilateral action against North Korea to halt its development of nuclear weapons.

Yonhap noted China's top official for Korean Peninsula affairs, Wu Dawei, arrives Monday for talks with top South Korean government officials, as well as possibly candidates running in the 9 May presidential election to choose a successor to Park Geun Hye, forced from office 10 March over a corruption and cronyism scandal.

Wu may meet with the candidates, Yonhap said, "in a bid to win them over to China's position in talks to resolve the North Korea issue," and to stress China's opposition to the deployment of a US anti-missile defense system in South Korea.—*Kyodo News*

Search operation halted, hundreds evacuated as follow-up landslide occurs in W Indonesia

JAKARTA — A landslide happened again on Sunday at the location where rescuers were searching for dozens of victims of an earlier landslide that took place on 1 April in western Indonesia, forcing authorities to halt the search operation and evacuate hundreds, a disaster agency official said.

Four bodies have been discovered so far and 25 others remain missing in Banaran village of Ponorogo district in East Java province, according to Sutopo Purwo Nugroho, spokesman of the national disaster agency.

The follow-up landslide took place at 12:30 pm local time, burying one person, two houses and two vehicles, as well as sweeping away two other persons, the spokesman said.

"All searching activities are temporarily terminated today (Sunday)...all the villagers living near the location have been displaced to safer place," Sutopo told Xinhua via phone.

The number of displaced persons surpassed 270 people, according to him. Communication access in the affected areas was cut, said Sutopo.—*Xinhua*

China anti-graft body probing chief insurance regulator

BEIJING — The head of China's insurance regulator is being investigated for suspected disciplinary violations, the country's top anti-graft body said on Sunday, bringing the most senior financial regulator to date into the government's fight against corruption.

China's top leaders have pledged this year to address financial risks and asset bubbles.

In a brief statement, the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection said Xiang Junbo, head of the China Insurance Regulatory Commission (CIRC) and a member of the central bank's monetary policy committee, was suspected of "serious disciplinary violations" — a phrase that usually refers to graft.

It gave no further details.

As of Sunday afternoon, Xiang's name and position remained on the website of the CIRC, www.circ.gov.cn.

As head of the insurance regulator, Xiang oversaw rapid growth of the insurance industry, along with liberalization of

investment rules that provided insurers greater latitude to invest more of their assets at home and overseas.

China's insurance assets nearly doubled over the last three years, reaching 15.1 trillion yuan (\$2.19 trillion) at the end of 2016.

In February, Xiang appeared at a press conference where he vowed the insurance regulator would take more punitive action to punish short-term speculators and reduce long-term risk.

Xiang said CIRC wouldn't allow the insurance industry to become "a rich man's club" or hideout for "financial crocodiles".

The regulator has intensified a crackdown on risky activity by some aggressive players in the insurance sector, particularly those seen to be engaging in financial market speculation using expensive short-term funds.

Xiang took control of the insurance regulator in 2011 after serving as chairman of Agricultural Bank of China Ltd, one of

the four biggest state banks.

Xiang would be the most senior regulator hauled in during the anti-graft campaign since Yao Gang, a former deputy head of the China Securities Regulatory Commission, was put under investigation in late 2015 following a stock market crash.

President Xi Jinping is leading a campaign against corruption that is tearing down once-untouchable party, military and business leaders as well as their powerful networks of relatives and allies.

Wang Yincheng, vice chairman of state-owned People's Insurance Group of China was brought in for suspected corruption in February.

Earlier this year, the chief risk officer of Bank Of Communications Co Ltd was expelled from his post for serious discipline violations, and a former Communist Party boss at Bank of Jiangsu Co Ltd was investigated for suspected corruption.—*Reuters*



Xiang Junbo, chairman of China Insurance Regulatory Commission (CIRC), answers a question at a news conference on the sidelines of the National People's Congress (NPC), China's parliament, in Beijing, China on 12 March, 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

India, China navies stop suspected Somali pirate attack on merchant vessel

DELHI — Chinese navy ship supported by an Indian navy helicopter thwarted an attack on a Tuvalu-flagged merchant ship by suspected Somali pirates, India's defence ministry said on Sunday.

The ship, known as OS 35, was reported to be under attack on Saturday.

The Indian defence ministry said four of its navy ships in the vicinity responded to a distress signal from the ship and reached the bulk carrier early on Sunday.

It said that the crew had taken refuge in the ship's strong room, known as the citadel, once they learnt they were under attack in line with established safe ship-operating procedures.

"An Indian Navy helicopter undertook aerial reconnaissance of the merchant vessel at night, and at sunrise ... (to) ascertain the location of pirates, if still on board," the defence ministry said in a statement.

"Subsequently ... a boarding

party from the nearby Chinese Navy ship went on board the merchant ship, while the Indian Naval helicopter provided air cover for the operation."

The defence ministry said all the 19 Filipino crew of the ship were safe and the captain of the ship thanked the Indian Naval ships for their response and for providing air cover.

John Steed of aid group Oceans Beyond Piracy told Reuters the ship was sailing under

navy escort to its next port.

The United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO), which coordinates shipping in the Gulf of Aden area, said on its website the pirates had used a skiff to approach the vessel.

The attempted hijacking comes days after pirates seized an Indian dhow that was on route to Bossaso from Dubai. Experts said some ship owners were becoming lax after a long period of calm, and that some were using a

route known as the Socotra Gap, between Somalia and Socotra Island, regardless of the piracy risks, to save time and cost.

At their peak in 2011, pirates launched 237 attacks off the coast of Somalia, according to the International Maritime Bureau, and took hundreds of hostages.

Their actions cost the world economy \$7 billion and earned the pirates some \$160 million in ransoms, according to the bureau.—*Reuters*

Opinion

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Everybody has a Duty

Dr. Nu Nu Win

ON 1st April, we have had a By-election in our country. Most of the citizens were dutiful indeed to go and vote at their respective booths for the election of the people's representatives.

After this election, we have voted and chosen another group of people's representatives who will perform their duties in the Parliament. And from this time onwards, the newly chosen representatives have the duty to take care of the citizens in their respective constituencies and work for the betterment of their regions. They have to

think of the people who have elected them as their benefactors and always try to work for the improvement of the socio-economic conditions of the region and its people. So also, they have the duty to keep their regions peaceful and develop in accordance with the present laws and regulations. They need to discuss in the Parliament for the betterment of their regions and their people.

Not only the people's representatives, but also the people who have chosen them have responsibility to follow the laws and regulations, and also try to do their best

to be dutiful citizens. They should also keep in their mind to try their best for the development of the region and should do what they can to make their region peaceful. It is their responsibility to help their representatives for the benefit of their regions and its people.

They should try to become good citizens by trying to keep their wards clean, to make sure not to litter the streets, to obey the municipal laws, and to take part in community efforts to keep the streets safe from lawless elements.

And they also have the duty to monitor the performance of

their elected representatives to find out whether they are working for the interests of the people. If not they need to prevent them from being elected again. When the next election comes they should be more careful to elect a better representative who will keep the promises given during the election campaign and someone who will gain the confidence and trust of the citizens in the constituency.

That is why the writer wishes to say that everybody has his or her responsibility after the present By-election.

Shitthoung, a potential tourist attraction, in Mrauk U

Htay Win

LOCATED on the tributary of Kalandan river in the western Myanmar, Mrauk U was once the last capital of Rakhine dynasties with rare Asia archeological evidences. King Minbar built the temple in 1517 AD enshrining Buddha relics after he recaptured twelve Bengal cities of Arakan.

The rulers in Arakan built many stupas using sandstones to show their dominion and belief on Buddhism. Among them, King Minbar is one of the most powerful kings in Mrauk U dynasties.

The temple is called Shitthoung because 80,000 Buddha images are displayed in the tunnels. Shitthoung means 80,000 in Rakhine Language. In other words, the temple is also called RanAung Zay Yar to dedicate to victory for Portuguese attack on Mrauk U.

With lots of sandstones, the architectural design is a little bit similar to Borobudur temple in Indonesia which is one of the world heritages. Sometimes, astrology and Hinduism involve in the architecture. Astrological concepts and architectural designs are intertwined. In terms of the astrology, the foundation of the temple was laid down and suitable architectural designs

were chosen. With four planetary arrangements, Shitthoung temple was built on Phoekhaung hill.

In the first planetary arrangement, the Buddha image was placed in the perfumed chamber which is the eastern part of the temple at the center of the great temple. The Buddha image made of single sandstone is the sitting Buddha image with the posture of Bumiphattha Mudra(victory Mudra) and it was built to mean that Buddha was sitting cross-legged by facing eastwards when he won over Mara's attack on him for the Bodhi tree and the jeweled throne.

Building the Buddha image facing the eastwards means that in terms of eight elements, living things and non-living things arise and pass away. Those elements were regarded as eight planets or eight gods or eight directions. Among the eight planets, Monday planet associated with the moon exists in the east. Therefore, the Buddha image was built facing the east in the first planetary arrangement in terms of the Monday planet because the moonlight makes the human beings peaceful.

In the second planetary arrangement, Brahma figure was placed as the second planetary arrangement in the south-east corner

called Tuesday corner. The Tuesday corner associates with the lion. It means that after Buddha-to-be had renounced the world, he cut his hair and Ghatikara Brahma offered the yellow robes to Buddha-to-be to become a monk.

In the third planetary arrangement, the figure of the celestial king riding Ayeyarwon elephant and accompanying by his queens_ Thu Si Ta, Thu Nan Dar, Thu Pa Bar and Thu Mar Lar, was built as the third planetary arrangement in the north-east corner called Sunday corner. It means that the celestial king neglects the bad persons but, salvages and helps the good persons with his supernatural power and he is also a supporter for Buddhism.

In the fourth planetary arrangement, four Lawkapala god figures were placed as the fourth planetary arrangement in the north-west corner called the corner of Rahu. It means that no sooner had Buddha world appeared than four Lawkapala gods appeared to take care of the world. Datarahtha god takes care of the east and also Wirulaka god, the south, Wiruphatkha god, the west and Kuwayra god, the north.

In the fifth planetary arrangement, the figure of king Min Bar, a donor of Shitthoung pagoda, together with queen Phaw

Saw in his right hand side and princess Pay Thi Dar in his left hand side, was placed wearing the clothes like Brahma as the fifth planetary arrangement in the south-west corner called Saturday corner.

Those four different figures represent that the four different persons are taking refuge in Buddha dwelt in the perfumed chamber. The great temple was built with five rectangular-shaped cave tunnels.

The first tunnel was used as the place for the king's bodyguards while the king was paying reverence to Buddha image and entering the Sabbath hall.

In the second tunnel, the figures of 550 previous stories of Buddha who fulfilled for the minor perfection called parami, were carved fully on the wall.

In the second tunnel, the most interesting place is the hall adjacent to the back of the great temple. The hall was used by the ancient Rakhine kings for the coronation. The Buddha image wearing like the clothing of the anointed king, was cast with nine jewels. The size of the image depended on the king's desire. The Buddha image was consecrated in the presence of the head of monk order and the senior monks, and the anointed vow of

the king was made by putting the image on the king's head. The ceremony was called Buddha Bithayka Bitheik Mingalar.

The Buddha image cast wearing in the form of the king, is called Beikthayka Muni. Rakhine call those Buddha images Mahakyein image. The Sabbath hall for the king is adjacent to the southern part of the coronation hall. There are thirty one niches around the second tunnel and every niche has two Buddha images sat back to back.

The area in which the third cave tunnel and the fourth cave tunnel have is called Atonkat. In the fourth tunnel, there are twenty eight Buddha images in the niches. Such Buddha images were erected in terms of Thanbuday verse.

The big stupa surrounded by 26 small stupas, was built on the roof. Those stupas represent Thataveiththa 27 stars. Thus, Chitthaung is the temple based on astrological concepts and Gupta architectural designs in India.

I believe that visiting Mrauk U and Rakhine state in Myanmar, you are contributing to some extent for the development of Rakhine state.

Reference: Rakhine touristy stupas by Htay Win



Shitthoung Temple in Mrauk U.
PHOTO: HTAY AUNG

Chinese Buddhist delegation calls on State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee

A Chinese Buddhist delegation led by Chairman of the Chinese Buddhist Association met with the members of the State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee at the Thiri Mingalar KabaAye Hill in Yangon yesterday.

At the meeting, Members of the State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee and Sayadaws of Chinese Buddhist Association prayed together for the propagation of the Buddha Sasana in the world.

Before launching the prayer session, members of the Sangha led by Chairman of the State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee Bhaddanta Kumara recited parittas.

Speaking on the occasion, Sayadaw Dr Bhaddanta Kumara welcomed the visit of Chinese Buddhist delegation and suggested to hold discussions between the Buddhist associations of the two countries over propagation of Buddha Sasana and strengthening friendship between the two countries.

Union Minister for Religious Affairs and Culture Thura U Aung Ko, Yangon Region Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein, Yangon Region Hluttaw Speaker U Tin Maung Tun and officials were present at the ceremony and donated offertories to the Members of the Sangha of both countries.—*Myanmar News Agency*



Chairman of Chinese Buddhist Association (Right) presents Buddha statue to Dr Bhaddanta Kumara. PHOTO: MNA

Buthidaung-A Ngu Maw Road upgraded to concrete

UNDER the supervision of the Rakhine State Rural Area Development Department using Union Special Funds for the 2016-17 fiscal year, Buthidaung-A Ngu Maw Road is being upgraded to concrete road with a concrete bridge constructed.

The road is 12 feet wide and construction is underway on a 1.4 mile stretch that is 95 per cent complete. Construction is

already completed on the 14 feet wide and 15 feet long concrete bridge. The works were begun by the Saidin Ar Man Company on 4 March.

Ks189.44 million was spent on this project and once it is completed, un-interrupted travel to Thabatetaung, Kakyetbet and Maung Ni village via Buthidaung will be possible.—*Yamanya*



Upgraded Buthidaung-A Ngu Maw Road is commissioned into service. PHOTO: TIN SOE

MIC soon to invite investors to establish new industrial zones

MYANMAR Investment Commission (MIC) will soon to invite investors for expressions of interest (EOIs) for establishing new industrial zones, said U Aung Naing Oo, the director-general of the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration.

The MIC has already requested the respective regional and state governments for a list of suitable land in order to set up an industrial zone. As a second step, the list of lands which will be the most appropriate for this plan will be revealed after scrutiny.

Currently, the policy discussion is still ongoing and MIC will release an announcement soon,

said U Aung Naing Oo.

Most of the industrial zones face renovation problems because of its long term period. Therefore, the economic zones and special economic zones will be implemented, said Union Minister U Kyaw Win for the Planning and Finance Ministry at a meeting with businessmen on 17th March at Hotel Novotel.

We will grant permits only for those who want to actually run the businesses, but not for the monopolists, he added.

There are a total of 29 industrial zones and over 6,200 small and medium-sized enterprises in Yangon Region, it is learnt.—200

Hong Kong to help Myanmar set up a gold exchange

THE operator of Hong Kong's gold exchange is in talks to help the government of Myanmar establish a bourse in the country for trading the precious metal, according to Haywood Cheung Tak-hay, president of the Chinese Gold & Silver Exchange Society.

"This is the right timing for Myanmar to establish a gold exchange as the country is very keen on modernising its economy," Cheung said in an interview

with the South China Morning Post.

"Myanmar lies on the route of China's One Belt, One Road project, which enables it to capture the growing opportunities of commodities and other types of trading in the region."

The local exchange will provide Myanmar with advisory and technical support through the Hong Kong Myanmar Chamber of Commerce, for which it will collect a fee, Cheung said with-

out disclosing the amount. It will need to get regulatory approval in Myanmar and the chamber will work out the shareholder structure in the gold exchange.

This is the first attempt in the century-old history of the Hong Kong bourse, set up in 1910, to expand its services overseas.

The exchange is still being used by jewellery and gold traders for floor trading and internet trading.—*South China Morning Post*

110th anniversary of Literary Icon Zaw Gyi celebrated

THE 110th anniversary of the author Zaw Gyi, one of the pioneers of the renaissance of Myanmar literature in the 1930s, was celebrated yesterday in Yangon Book Plaza in Lanmadaw Township.

The organizer of the event, author Myay Hmon Lwin (Our Literature), said Zaw Gyi was not only a pioneer of Myanmar literature, but also an innovator in the writing of poetry and philosophical and translated literature.

"The new generation seems to forget those great authors who had done great things for literature. We celebrate this with the aim to have their accomplishments remembered forever", said

Myay Hmon Lwin.

Yesterday's celebration had two parts. The first was the moving remembrances of Zaw Gyi by authors Min Yu Wai, Thitsarni and U Mya Kyaing, who worked with Zaw Gyi on Myanmar literature.

The second section was a competition of reciting Zaw Gyi's poems by youths from 14 to 25 years of age and the awarding of prizes to the best three performers by author Myay Hmon Lwin.

The author's eldest daughter, Dr Khin Myo Han, expressed her pleasure for having her father celebrated.

"As a member of the family, I am pleased for this celebration by the literature community. My father was fond of a simple lifestyle. He had patriotic spirit and love for the country. He wrote many poems for ethnic unity," said Dr Khin Myo Han.

The publishers of Zaw Gyi's works sold the literature of the author at a 20 per cent discount at Yangon Book Plaza yesterday.

Zaw Gyi wrote Patautpan (The Gum-kino Flower) in 1928. He introduced an innovative style of poetry inspired on the thinking and writing of ancient poems and inspired generations of Myanmar writers.—*Myat Sandi*

More stalls for broiler chicken to be opened

Eight stalls which sell broiler chicken directly from the breeders have been opened in cooperation with the Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Department, Yangon City Development Committee (YCDC) and Myanmar Broiler Association and more stalls are planned, according to the Myanmar Broiler Association.

Currently, the stalls are open

at eight markets, which received positive feedback from consumers as they supply the fresh meat at a cheap price.

The YCDC will submit a report about the extended market to Yangon Region government, said Dr Kyaw Win, the chair from the Myanmar Broiler Association.

These chicken stalls were opened on 4th February. A viss of chicken sells for Ks1,000 to

Ks2,000 after cleaning.

"Some buyers incorrectly think that only chicken stained with blood is fresh. We have a plan to distribute pamphlets to the public so that some consumers come to realize this is wrong," said Dr Kyaw Win.

The opening of the stalls aims to supply nutritious, fresh chicken to consumers at a cheap price, it is learnt.—200

US carrier group heads to Korean Peninsula to increase presence



File photo taken in March 2017 shows the USS Carl Vinson aircraft carrier arriving at the port of Busan. A US Navy carrier group, led by Carl Vinson, is heading to the Korean Peninsula, a Navy official said on 8 April, following North Korea's missile tests and amid signs that Pyongyang is preparing for a sixth nuclear test. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

WASHINGTON — A US Navy carrier strike group is heading to the Korean Peninsula, a Navy official said on Saturday, following North Korea's successive missile tests and amid signs that Pyongyang is preparing for a sixth nuclear test.

The movement to the region of Carrier Strike Group 1 led by the aircraft carrier Carl Vinson, which left Singapore the same

day, is aimed at increasing the US presence near the peninsula, the official said.

With Pyongyang showing no signs of curbing its nuclear ambitions, US President Donald Trump has suggested that the United States is prepared to act unilaterally against North Korea if China does not strengthen its pressure on Pyongyang.

North Korea has re-

cently test-fired a series of missiles and conducted an engine test. On Wednesday, it launched a ballistic missile but the launch is believed to have ended in failure.

The Carl Vinson has been redirected on the order of Adm. Harry Harris, commander of the US Pacific Command, as it had an earlier plan to make a port call in Australia, according

to the Navy's 3rd Fleet.

The carrier group was dispatched to the western Pacific in January for activities in the South China Sea and elsewhere in the region. It earlier participated in ongoing joint exercises between the United States and South Korea.

The Carl Vinson made a port call at South Korea's Busan on 15 March. — *Kyodo News*

Trump's UN envoy says ouster of al-Assad is a priority of US

WASHINGTON — US Ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley said in an interview that she sees regime change in Syria as one of the Trump administration's priorities in the country wracked by civil war.

Defeating Islamic State, pushing Iranian influence out of Syria, and the ouster of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad are priorities for Washington, Haley said in an interview on CNN's "State of the Union" which will air in full on Sunday.

"We don't see a peaceful Syria with Assad in there," Haley said.

The comments represented a departure from what Haley had said before the United States hit a Syrian air base with 59 Tomahawk missiles on Thursday in retaliation for what it said was a chemical weapons attack by Assad's forces on Syrian civilians.

President Donald Trump ordered the missile strike after watching television images of infants suffering from chemical weapons injuries.

"You pick and choose your battles and when we're looking at this, it's about changing up priorities and our priority is no longer to sit there and focus on getting Assad out," Haley had told reporters on 30 March, just days before dozens of Syrian civilians died from chemical weapons injuries.

Secretary of State Rex Tillerson seemed to take a more patient stance in regard to Assad, saying on Saturday that Washington's first priority is the defeat of Islamic State.

Once the threat from Islamic State has been reduced or eliminated, "I think we can turn our attention directly to stabilizing the situation in Syria," Tillerson said in



United States Ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley delivers remarks at the Security Council meeting on the situation in Syria at the United Nations Headquarters, in New York, US on 7 April, 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

excerpts from an interview on CBS's "Face the Nation," that will air in full on Sunday.

Tillerson said the United States is hopeful it can help bring parties together to begin the process of hammering out a political solution.

"If we can achieve ceasefires in zones of stabilization in Syria, then I

believe — we hope we will have the conditions to begin a useful political process," Tillerson said. Syrian forces launched further airstrikes on Saturday that killed 18 people including five children in rebel-controlled Idlib province, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights and the civil defense rescue service reported. — *Reuters*

NEWS IN BRIEF

Russia criticises UK decision to cancel Johnson visit to Moscow

MOSCOW — The decision by British Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson to cancel a visit to Moscow later this month shows a lack of understanding of events in Syria, Russia's foreign ministry said on Sunday.

Johnson cancelled the visit, scheduled for 10 April, after a poison gas attack in a rebel-held area of Syria prompted the United States to launch missile strikes against a Syrian airbase.

The Russian ministry said the decision to cancel the visit showed once more that there was little to gain from talking to Britain, which it said had no real influence over world affairs. — *Reuters*

Swedish police make second arrest in truck attack probe — court official

STOCKHOLM — Swedish police have arrested a second person in relation to the deadly truck attack in the capital and a court has appointed the person a legal representative, a court official said on Sunday. "Police have arrested a person and we have appointed a public defender," Helga Hullmann, judge at the Stockholm District Court said.

She said lawyer Johan Akerman was the legal council appointed. Police arrested a 39-year-old Uzbek man on Saturday on suspicion he was the driver of the truck that killed 4 people and injured a further 15. — *Reuters*

Pope condemns Egypt church blast, appeals for end to terror

VATICAN CITY — Pope Francis, who is due to visit Egypt this month, on Sunday condemned the blast that killed at least 21 people and injured 50 at a Coptic church in the Nile Delta.

"I pray for the dead and the victims. May the Lord convert the hearts of people who sow terror, violence and death and even the hearts of those who produce and traffic in weapons," he said at the end of his Palm Sunday Mass before tens of thousands of people in St. Peter's Square.

He expressed his "deepest condolences" to all Egyptians and to the head of the Coptic Church, who is due to be one of his hosts on the 28-29 April trip. — *Reuters*

Swedish police say truck attack suspect showed IS sympathies

STOCKHOLM — Swedish police said on Sunday that the suspect in the Stockholm truck attack was known to have expressed sympathies with extremist organizations, including Islamic state.

Police also said that the suspect had sought and been denied permanent residency in the Nordic country and was wanted for deportation.

"We know that he showed sympathies for extremist organisations, among them IS," police official Jonas Hysing told a news conference. Police also said roughly five other people of interest to the investigation remained in police custody. — *Reuters*

US soldier killed in Afghanistan during operations against Islamic State: US military

WASHINGTON — A US soldier was killed while conducting operations against Islamic State in Afghanistan late on Saturday, a US military spokesman said in a message posted on Twitter.

"The soldier was mortally wounded late Saturday during an operation in Nangarhar Province" in eastern Afghanistan, US Navy Captain Bill Salvin said in a message on the official Twitter account of the NATO-led Resolute Support mission.

The soldier was a Special Forces operator and was killed in the Achin district of Nangarhar province, Salvin told Reuters separately. — *Reuters*

Explosion in church in Egypt's Nile delta kills at least 36 people



A general view is seen as Egyptians gather by a Coptic church that was bombed on Sunday in Tanta, Egypt on 9 April, 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

CAIRO — At least 36 people were killed and 100 injured on Sunday by an explosion in a church in the Nile delta city of Tanta, Egyptian state television reported.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility and the cause of the blast, just one week before Coptic Easter and the same month as Pope Francis is scheduled to visit Egypt, was not known.

Islamic State's branch in Egypt, which has waged a low-level conflict for years in the Sinai peninsula, has stepped up attacks on Christians in Egypt in recent months.

A suicide bombing at Cairo's largest Coptic cathedral killed at least 25 people and wounded 49 in December, many of them women and children, in one of the deadliest attacks on Egypt's Christian minority in years. Islamic State later claimed responsibility for the attack.

A shift in Islamic State's tactics from attacking soldiers and police to targeting Christian civilians has become a potential turning point in a country trying to halt a provincial insurgency from spiralling into wider sectarian bloodshed.

Egypt's Christian community has felt increasingly insecure since Islamic State spread through Iraq and Syria in 2014, ruthlessly targeting religious minorities. In 2015, 21 Egyptian Christians working in Libya were killed by Islamic State.

Copts face regular attacks by Muslim neighbours, who burn their homes and churches in poor rural areas, usually in anger over an inter-faith romance or the construction of church.

Tanta was also the site of another attack earlier this month when a policeman was killed and 15 were injured after a bomb exploded near a police training centre.—Reuters

Hardline cleric Raisi to take on Rouhani in Iran's presidential election

LONDON — Hardline Shi'ite cleric Ebrahim Raisi announced on Sunday he would run in Iran's May presidential election, challenging moderate President Hassan Rouhani's economic record and his policy of detente with the West.

The former prosecutor-general may struggle for recognition among voters though analysts say Raisi, thanks to the support he enjoys from Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, could pose a real challenge to Rouhani's bid for a second term.

Raisi has faulted Iran's economic performance under Rouhani and his pursuit of detente that in 2015 yielded a landmark deal with world powers under which Tehran curbed its disputed nuclear programme in exchange for the lifting of sanctions.

"People are asking why despite all our resources and human talents ...our country is in this situation," Raisi said in a statement published by Iranian news agencies.

"The key solution to our problems is fundamental change in the executive management of the country by the will of the people, and the formation of a competent and knowledgeable government that works day and night to bring back the dignity of the people and fights poverty and corruption."

Rouhani won the presidency in 2013 with the backing of mainly of young people and

women. He promised to bring Iran out of its international isolation and create a freer society.

But many ordinary Iranians have lost faith in him because he has not been able to improve the economy despite the lifting of sanctions in January last year under the nuclear deal.

Rights campaigners also say there have been few, if any, moves to bring about greater political and cultural freedoms.

Raisi, 57, heads Astan Qods Razavi, an organisation in charge of a multibillion-dollar religious foundation that manages donations to Iran's holiest Shi'ite Muslim shrine in the northeastern city of Mashhad.

His statement said he would not use the religious and financial advantages of this post for his electoral campaign.

If he wins the 19 May vote, Raisi would boost his chances of eventually succeeding Khamenei, who himself served two terms as president under the late founder of Iran's 1979 Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini.

Iranian conservatives are still trying to reach consensus on a presidential candidate, though Raisi seems well placed to become their top choice.

Raisi was named on Thursday by the Popular Front of Revolutionary Forces, the conservatives' main coalition, as a potential contender in the Islamic Republic's election.—Reuters

Sadr becomes first Iraqi Shi'ite leader to urge Assad to step down

BAGHDAD — Iraq's influential Shi'ite cleric Moqtada al-Sadr called on Syrian President Bashar al-Assad to "take a historic heroic decision" and step down, to spare his country further bloodshed.

Sadr, who commands a large following among the urban poor of Baghdad and the southern cities, is the first Iraqi Shi'ite political leader to urge Assad to step down. But his call was wrapped in kind words about the Syrian president and condemnation of the US strikes carried out on a Syrian airbase on Friday, in retaliation for a chemical attack on civilians in a rebel-held area of Syria. Sadr said the US strikes would "drag the region to war" and could help "the expansion

of Daesh," the militant Islamic State group, which controls parts of Iraq and Syria.

Iraq's Shi'ite-led governments have maintained good relations with the Syrian government throughout the six-year Syrian civil war.

Sadr is the only Iraqi Shi'ite leader to keep some distance from Iran, a main backer of Assad along with Russia. "I think it would be fair for President Bashar al-Assad to offer his resignation and step down in love for Syria, to spare it the woes of war and terrorism ...and take a historic, heroic decision before it is too late," Sadr said in a statement.

The Shi'ite-led Iraqi government issued a statement on

Friday that reflected the difficult balancing act it maintains between its alliance with the United States and with Shi'ite Iran. It condemned the chemical attack, without naming Assad, calling instead for an international investigation to identify the perpetrator.

The statement also criticized "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 Islamic State, allowing them to recapture most of the cities they had overrun in 2014 in Sunni areas of northern and western Iraq.—Reuters

Syria's Assad says US missile attacks fail to achieve goal

DAMASCUS — Syrian President Bashar al-Assad said on Sunday that the US attack on Syria failed to achieve its goal in supporting the rebel groups, according to state news agency SANA.

The US has failed to achieve the goal behind the aggression, which was lifting the morale of the US-backed terrorist groups after the victories made by the Syrian army recently, Assad said during a phone call he received from his Iranian counterpart, Hasan Rohani.

Assad said the Syrian army is determined to crush terrorism on each spot of the Syrian territories.

For his part, Rohani, whose country is a main backer of the Assad government, expressed his country's vehement condemnation to the US strike, stressing his Tehran's ongoing support to the Syrian government.

Earlier on Friday, the United States targeted the Shayrat air base in Homs with nearly 60 Tomahawk missiles, killing six Syrian soldiers and nine ci-

vilians, including four children, and destroying nine Syrian warplanes.

The US government said the attack on the air base came in retaliation for the strikes by the Syrian air force on the town of Khan Sheikhoun on Tuesday.

Activists accused the Syrian army of firing toxic gas on the town, killing 70 people, while the Syrian army said the strike targeted an arm depot containing toxic gas, blaming the rebels for stockpiling such materials.—Xinhua

Russian air defence system protects its facilities in Syria 'round the clock'

MOSCOW — Russia's air defence systems firmly protect the Russian naval facilities in Tartus and at the Hmeymim air base round the clock, Defence Ministry spokesman Igor Konashenkov has told the media.

"The S-400 and Pantsir systems provide reliable protection for the Russian air group at the Hmeymim airdrome. Another group of S-300 and Pantsir systems deployed in Syria defends the naval logistics facility in Tartus," Konashenkov said.

He added that "the crews of Russian air defence systems in Syria are on duty round the clock." Two US destroyers, The Ross and The Porter launched 59 cruise missiles Tomahawk at Syria's Sha'irat air base on orders from President Donald Trump. Four Syrian soldiers were killed, two went missing and four others were injured. The attack destroyed six MiG-23 planes, a radar station and a canteen room. In 2016, several bat-



Russia's S-400 air defence systems. The S-400 and Pantsir systems provide reliable protection for the Russian air group at Hmeymim. PHOTO: TASS

teries of Russia's air defence system S-300 were moved to the naval logistic facility at Tartus to provide protection for the base and Russian ships off Syria's shores. Russian Defence Minister Sergey Shoigu said a multi-tier defence system had been created around Tartus and the Hmeymim air base.

At the end of November the newest air defence system S-400 was delivered to Syria after a Turkish F-18 fighter shot down Russia's Sukhoi-24 bomber.

Pantsir systems protect Russian military facilities from low-flying aircraft and missiles. Also, the defence of Russian facilities incor-

porates the system Bastion, capable of hitting naval and ground targets 350-450 kilometres away. Russia has helped Syria to restore the operation of its S-200 air defence systems that protect Russian bases from potential attacks from the east. Also, the Syrian army uses air defence systems Buk.—TASS

Oslo police detonate 'bomb-like device'; suspect in custody

OSLO — Norwegian police set off a controlled explosion of a "bomb-like device" in central Oslo early on Sunday and were holding a suspect in custody in an investigation led by security police.

A Reuters reporter described a loud bang shortly after Oslo's bomb squad arrived with a remote-controlled robot once the area was cordoned off by police late on Saturday night.

"The noise from the blast was louder than our explosives themselves would cause," a police spokesman said, adding that further investigation was needed to find out if the device had contained explosives.

The device, about 30 cm (1 ft) across, had appeared to be capable of causing only a limited amount of damage. Forensics experts will examine fragments to figure out what it was.

Police across the Nordic region have been on heightened alert after a truck ploughed into a crowd in Stockholm on Friday. Four

people were killed and 15 injured in what police called an apparent terror attack.

Norwegian police detained a suspect but declined to give information about his identity. Norway's police security service, PST, said in a tweet it had taken over the investigation from local police.

"We're in a very early phase of the investigation," PST spokesman Martin Bernsen said. More details were likely later on Sunday, he added.

Police took away cordons put up overnight in the Groenland area and residents resumed normal Sunday activities, with shops and cafes open. There was no sign of police at the site.

The Groenland area, a multi-ethnic neighbourhood that is home to popular bars and restaurants, several mosques, and the city's main police station. The police station is less than a kilometre away from where the device was found.—Reuters

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

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

Date: April 7, 2017

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

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

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

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

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

Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise
Ministry of Electricity and Energy

Islamic State launches two suicide attacks on US-backed Syrian rebels

AMMAN — Islamic State militants launched two suicide attacks on US-backed Syrian rebels near the border with Iraq, leaving at least 12 dead in the fighting and many wounded, rebels sources said on Sunday.

They said eight Islamic State fighters and four of their own men died.

An attack at midnight on a heavily defended base near the al Tanf border crossing involved at least one explosive-laden vehicle that rammed an entrance to the base. At least two US-backed rebels were killed and scores wounded, a rebel source said. The militants also staged a suicide attack on a convoy of rebel fighters from the Western-backed Osoud al Sharqiya rebel group, who had sent reinforcements from their outpost near the Rukban refugee camp further southwest. Two of the fighters in the convoy were killed in the ambush. Islamic State "staged a suicide attack and there were clashes inside Tanf. Two were killed and several injured. They also attacked our convoy but it's over and matters are under control," said a senior rebel source from Osoud al Sharqiya who requested anonymity. Islamic State-affiliated

Amaq news agency said two suicide attacks were conducted by its fighters near Tanf on "positions of Syrian groups supported by America." It gave no details. US-led coalition planes were involved in the operation to track down the militants who staged the hit-and-run attack and apparently fled, a rebel commander involved in the operation said. Both Tanf and Rukban are near the joint Syria-Iraq-Jordan border. Osoud al Sharqiya, one of the main groups in that area fighting Islamic State, is part of the Free Syrian Army of rebels financed and equipped by a Western coalition. Jordan, a US ally, backs the moderate rebel groups aligned with the so-called Southern Front supported by an Arab-Western coalition, who are trying to prevent opposition-held southern Syria from falling to Islamic State.

The rebels took the border crossing of Tanf last year from the ultra-hardline militants and tried unsuccessfully to drive the militants out of the Syrian border town of Bukamal on the Euphrates, further north-east, a major supply conduit for Islamic State between its strongholds in Iraq and Syria.

In recent weeks, the militants in the Syrian de-

sert near the Jordanian border have regrouped further north to reinforce their Raqqa stronghold, after major defeats in Syria and Iraq.

The attacks were meant to show the militants were still capable of waging hit-and-run operations against the Western-backed rebels who have recently seized a swathe of territory stretching from the town of Bir Qasab, some 50 km (30 miles) southeast of Damascus, all the way to the borders with Iraq and Jordan, a desert area known as the Badia.

"Their message is we are still present in the area and have not withdrawn and we still target the FSA," Said Seif, a rebel official with the Western-backed Shahid Ahmad Abdo group that operates in the area, told Reuters. Western intelligence sources have worried for months that militants fleeing from their main urban strongholds of Raqqa in Syria and Mosul in Iraq could find a safe haven in the region.

A Western intelligence source told Reuters that US and British special forces are expanding the Tanf base to use it as a major launching pad for operations in coming months to oust militants from Bukamal, a major militant stronghold.—Reuters

Venezuelans march after opposition leader banned from office

CARACAS — Protesters marched through Caracas and cities across Venezuela on Saturday as the government's banning of a top opposition leader from office breathed life into a fractured movement and fueled the first sustained anti-government demonstrations since 2014.

Thousands of people, some carrying signs reading "No to dictatorship!" and "Capriles for President" in support of banned leader Henrique Capriles, took part in marches against the unpopular leftist government of President Nicolas Maduro.

Saturday's protests extended a week of unrest sparked by last week's Supreme Court decision in which it assumed the role of the opposition-led congress.

The action was quickly overturned, but the global outcry it sparked galvanized the opposition.

Authorities on Saturday employed security measures used in recent protests, such as closing 17 subway stations across Caracas and setting up check points on roads leading to the capital.

Security forces fired tear gas on one major avenue in Caracas while police in the opposition hotbed San Cristobal shot rubber



People participate in an opposition rally in Caracas, Venezuela, on 8 April 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

bullets towards protesters, injuring two according to a Reuters witness.

"The government is afraid. If it were not afraid, it would not close the streets. ... It would not disqualify Capriles," said 27-year-old lawyer Gikeissy Diaz, adding that half of her graduating class has left the country and that she is thinking of doing so, too.

Capriles, a two-time presidential candidate and current Miranda state governor, who was seen by many as the opposition's best chance in the presidential election scheduled for 2018, was banned Friday from holding political office for 15 years.

The order cited "administrative irregularities" including breaking contracting laws and improper

management of donations, according to a copy of the ban.

"The country has chosen the path of dictatorship," Capriles told a crowd of supporters in Caracas, urging them to march to the office of the state human rights ombudsman, whom the opposition says is a puppet of the government.

Venezuela has been

pummeled by a brutal economic crisis that has millions skipping meals, unable to afford soaring prices for basic goods and facing long lines for scarce products.

Government critics say Capriles' ban is arbitrary and allows the ruling Socialist Party to sideline popular politicians without due process.

After a recall ref-

erendum against Maduro was quashed last year and amid fears that next year's presidential election will not be fair, opposition supporters say they have no option but to take to the street. But after years of marching many are cynical while others are too consumed with trying to find food.

Still, others have been motivated by the escalating political crisis and the opposition coalition is putting on a more dynamic and coordinated front than usual.

"It's been two years since I've been out on the streets," said Richard Morton, a 43-year-old electrical engineer who said shortages make it tough to import medical equipment needed in his work, as he prepared to march under Caracas' hot sun.

"I'm out today because I see people acting in solidarity and the lawmakers are backing us up more. Plus the economic situation is insufferable. No one can live here."

Oil-rich Venezuela is in the throes of what is thought to be a fourth straight year of recession, with roaring inflation and monthly wages stuck at a handful of dollars at the black market rate. —Reuters

Fifty people seek medical assistance after Moscow rail accident

MOSCOW — According to preliminary data, 50 people have applied for medical assistance after the railway accident in Moscow, Russian Railways said on Sunday. "According to preliminary data, 50 people have applied for medical assistance," the company said in a statement.

On Saturday evening, a collision between a commuter train and the Moscow-Brest long-distance train occurred due to the emergency brake used by a motorman after a person tried to cross the railway tracks. Four railway carriages have derailed, railway traffic has been suspended. JSC Russian Railways has established an operational headquarters led by the company's President Oleg Belozеров.—TASS

INVITATION FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation, Myanmar Department of Rural Development,

The Republic of the Union of Myanmar has received a Grant from the Federal Republic of Germany (KfW Bank) through the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation towards the cost of the Rural Road Rehabilitation Programme.

The Department of Rural Development under the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation intends to implement, with a contract system, the construction of;

1- Two bridges (each one up to 200 meters in length) and three low-level causeways (each one up to 350 meters in length).

2- Road Rehabilitation works(cumulative total length around 50km)

In Kalay District of Sagaing Region.

Interested companies should provide an Expression of Interest in writing on the Prequalification forms provided and submit the completed forms in person to the address below not later than 4.00 p.m. on the 25-May-2017.

Only the prequalified companies will then be invited to take part in the bidding process organized by the Central Tender Selection Committee.

The Pre-qualification Document is to be used for the selection of Applicants in two stages International Competitive Bidding procedures as described in the KfW Guidelines for Procurement of Goods, Works and Associated Services in Financial Cooperation with Partner Countries (KfW procurement guidelines-August 2016).

Further inquiries should be made by telephone or in person as mentioned below.

Contact Address

(a) Director
Rural Road and Bridge Division
Department of Rural Development
Office No-14, Nay Pyi Taw.
Ph & Fax : +95 67 409410 , +95 67 409210

Email : rbbdrd@gmail.com

(b) Deputy Director
Procurement and Logistics Division
Ph & Fax : +95 67 409029

ကွန်ပျူတာ စနစ်ဖြင့်ထိန်းသော
MECHANICAL CAR PARKING

Side View Front View

Plan View Front View

TRW
Tel: 09-259.81.36.36

No. (31), Room (8), 7 Miles,
Pyay Road, Yangon
T: 09-259.81.36.36
: 09-259.81.37.37
: 09-259.81.46.46

အမှတ်(၃၁)၊ အခန်း (၅)၊ ၇မိုင်၊ ပြည်လမ်း၊ ရန်ကုန်။

Politics pierces the nostalgia at Rock Hall of Fame induction

NEW YORK — Late rapper Tupac Shakur and 1960s protest singer Joan Baez were inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame on Friday on a night where nostalgia was mixed with calls to political action.

Former Journey frontman Steve Perry reunited on stage with his “Don’t Stop Believin’” bandmates for the first time in 25 years to screams and hugs of joy, while Roy Wood of Electric Light Orchestra turned up for the New York ceremony 45 years after leaving the English band.

But one of the strongest moments came from Baez, 76, who linked her lifelong record of social activism and non-violence with a rallying call for resistance today.

“Let us together repeal and replace brutality and make compassion a priority. Let us build a great bridge, a beautiful bridge, to welcome the tired and the poor,” Baez told the Hall of Fame audience.

Baez then played an acoustic version of the traditional spiritual “Swing Low, Sweet Chariot,” and ended with the hope that the song’s band of angels were “coming for to carry me, you, us, even Donald Trump, home.”

Baez enjoyed a new round



Alicia Keys performs in honor of the late Tupac Shakur at the 32nd Annual Rock & Roll Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony in New York City, US on 7 April, 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

of fame this week with a protest song called “Nasty Man” about US President Donald Trump. It was her first songwriting effort in 25 years and has been viewed some 3.3 million times since it was posted on her Facebook page

on Tuesday.

Emotions ran high for the induction of Shakur, the Harlem-born rapper who was gunned down at age 25 in a 1996 drive-by shooting in Las Vegas that has never been resolved.

Shakur, whose songs about social and racial injustice still resonate today, was only the 6th rap act to be inducted in the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in its 30-year history.

Fellow rapper Snoop Dogg recalled he and Shakur in the early

1990s as “two black boys struggling to become men.”

“Tupac’s a part of history for a reason — because he made history. He’s hip hop history. He’s American history,” Snoop said.

“Tupac, we love you. You will always be right with us. They can’t take this away from you homie,” he said, accepting the statuette on Shakur’s behalf.

British progressive rock group Yes, and Seattle-based grunge band Pearl Jam were also among the 2017 inductees, who were chosen by more than 900 voters drawn from the music industry.

Disco producer Nile Rodgers, the man behind 1970s hits like “Le Freak” and “We Are Family,” was presented with a special award for musical excellence.

Artists are eligible for induction 25 years after the release of their first recording.

Tributes were also paid on Friday to Chuck Berry, who died last month at age 90 and who was the first person ever to be inducted in the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1986, and Prince, who died of an accidental painkiller overdose in April 2016.

The 2017 induction ceremony will be broadcast on cable channel HBO on 29 April.—Reuters

‘Jersey Shore’ star Sorrentino charged with tax evasion

NEW JERSEY — Former reality TV celebrity Michael “The Situation” Sorrentino has been indicted for tax evasion, after federal prosecutors accused him and his brother of hiding millions of dollars he made while a cast member of the MTV series “Jersey Shore.”

In an indictment obtained and made public by the US Department of Justice on Friday, Sorrentino and his brother Marc each faces nine criminal counts, some of which overlap, and including their alleged conspiracy to defraud the United States.

The new charges expand a case first brought against them in September 2014.

An arraignment is scheduled for 17 April.

“Michael Sorrentino will enter a not guilty plea on 17 April, 2017, and will vigorously contest the allegations,” his lawyer Kristen Santillo said in an email.

A lawyer for Marc Sorrentino did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

“Jersey Shore” ran from 2009 to 2012, featuring 20-something Italian-Americans partying, tanning and complaining about their jobs at a beachfront T-shirt stand.

Now 34, Michael Sorrentino popularized the phrase “gym, tan, laundry” to describe the pre-party routine of cast members.

The Sorrentino

brothers were originally charged with trying to avoid taxes on \$8.9 million of Michael Sorrentino’s income from 2010 to 2012. Prosecutors said they under-reported income, and claimed millions of dollars of expenses on clothes, expensive vehicles and other personal items as business expenses.

The new indictment accused Michael Sorrentino of evading taxes in 2011 by hiding income, not filing a personal return, and filing a false return for his company Situation Nation Inc.

It also accused him of having on several days in 2011 and 2012 made multiple cash deposits of less than \$10,000 in different bank accounts to avoid federal reporting requirements.

Marc Sorrentino was accused of altering books and records of Situation Nation and MPS Entertainment LLC, in which the brothers owned stakes, after receiving grand jury subpoenas.

The brothers’ accountant, Gregg Mark, pleaded guilty in December 2015 to filing fraudulent tax returns on their behalf. His sentencing is scheduled for 15 June.

Michael Sorrentino faces a maximum 10 years in prison on each of two counts over the bank deposits, and five years for the alleged tax evasion.

His brother faces up to 20 years in prison if convicted for obstructing a grand jury probe.

The case is US v Sorrentino et al, US District Court, District of New Jersey, No 14-cr-00558.—Reuters



Michael Sorrentino. PHOTO: REUTERS

Tom Cruise films stunts in Paris for ‘Mission: Impossible 6’

LONDON — Actor Tom Cruise was spotted filming a crazy stunt sequence in Paris for his upcoming film “Mission: Impossible 6”.

Cruise, who is playing protagonist Ethan Hunt in the movie, shot on a rooftop for the stunt that appeared to involve helicop-

ters, reported Mirror.

Dressed in a white, prison straitjacket, Cruise was forced to scale a rooftop surrounded by men wearing military gear. At one point, a helicopter could be seen flying into view, which Cruise courageously ran towards as if to make a bold escape.—PTI

‘Bajirao Mastani’ opens 3rd Indian Film Festival in Singapore

SINGAPORE — Sanjay Leela Bhansali’s historical romance saga “Bajirao Mastani” was screened at the opening of the 3rd Indian Film Festival at the National University of Singapore (NUS) last night.

The movie features Bollywood stars Priyanka Chopra, Deepika Padukone and Ranveer Singh.

The High Commission of India in Singapore and the NUS Office of Alumni Relations are hosting the festival, which will also screen “Mantra” in English, “Chitrokar” in Bengali and “Iru-dhi Suttru” in Tamil on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday.

Speaking at the festival opening, India’s High Commissioner to Singapore, Jawed

Ashraf applauded the NUS Alumni’s initiative, saying it “is a remarkable tribute to the growing relationship NUS has with India”.

“Nothing brings India closer to Singapore more than the three Cs Cinema, Cuisines and Cricket. We have seen two of that today and hopefully we will get a cricket match at the NUS this year,” said Jawed at the reception of Indian cuisines held at the festival.

“We try to present something that reflects the different choices — the new kind of cinema together with conventional, and naturally in different languages,” he told an audience of dignitaries, academics and Indian community representatives.—PTI

Traditional “goat pulling” sport outlasts Afghan wars, politics

PANJSHIR, (Afghanistan) — A crash of horses and men deep in a mountain pass signals the start of another game of buzkashi, Afghanistan’s national sport.

Buzkashi, which translates roughly as “goat pulling,” has been played for centuries across Central Asia and is one of the most enduring and iconic symbols of Afghanistan.

It is a sport which is often violent, but designed to showcase the riders’ horsemanship and warrior spirit.

Amid foreign invasions, civil wars, and insurgent attacks, Afghans have gathered to cheer on their favorite “chapandaz,” as the riders are known.

On Friday, a typical community match played out under the soaring, snow-capped peaks that surround the Panjshir Valley, north of Kabul.

Rusting hulks of Russian-made tanks and guns



Afghan horsemen compete during a Buzkashi game in Panjshir province, north of Kabul, Afghanistan on 7 April, 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

litter the Panjshir, testifying to the years of war when famed guerilla commander Ahmad Shah Massoud used

the mountains to hold off first the Soviets, then the Taliban.

“It’s been almost fifty

to sixty years that buzkashi matches have been happening on this site,” said Abdul Anaan, a spectator.

“I myself was a horseman and usually played buzkashi, and today many youth are interested in this game and playing it.”

The game typically involves riders on horses wrestling over half of a calf carcass, which is usually able to withstand the pounding better than goats.

Matches may involve individual players competing, or teams, often owned or sponsored by powerful warlords or other leaders.

In both cases, the goal is to carry the carcass and drop it on a target on the ground, all while dozens of other riders and horses grab, hit, kick, and struggle to tear the carcass away.

“If we fall down on the ground or get hurt it doesn’t mean that we are angry with each other,” said horseman Mohammed Hafiz. “This is just the rule of the game.”

Horses and riders regu-

larly career into the crowds on the sidelines, sending spectators scrambling out of the way.

Occasionally a rider would escape the crush with a bleeding gash to their head or hands, only to wrap it up and return to the game.

Buzkashi matches can attract thousands of spectators and even some times make news, as was the case when Afghanistan’s First Vice President Abdul Rashid Dostum was accused of ordering his men to assault and abduct a political rival on the sidelines of a buzkashi game late last year.

For fans, however, the game’s significance will outlast the country’s current politics, just as it has outlasted previous wars.

“This sport is for the entertainment of our village, our people and our country,” said Anaan. —Reuters

In a first, German art exhibition documenta opens in Athens

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

Documenta 14 —

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

September.

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

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

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

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

One exhibit in the Athens National Museum of Contemporary Art features thousands of green and black olives and is titled “Payment

of Greek Debt to Germany with Olives and Art.”

Greece’s long economic crisis has strained relations with Germany and many in the country blame Berlin, their biggest creditor, for the painful austerity and record unemployment associated with three financial bailouts.

Other exhibits include an open kitchen in a central Athens square where visitors are encouraged to grab a bite to eat with strangers.

And there are exhibits at landmarks such as the Ancient Agora, the Temple of Zeus and the First Cemetery of Athens.

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

Battery-powered trains emerge as lower-cost, eco-friendly alternative

TOKYO — Railway operators are replacing rural Japan’s diesel-guzzling trains with new battery-powered rolling stock, taking advantage of the low-maintenance, environmentally friendly modern technology to cut costs and emissions.

East Japan Railway Co began using battery-powered trains on the Oga Line in Akita Prefecture, northeastern Japan, in March, following a similar change on the nonelectrified Karasuyama Line in Tochigi Prefecture. Kyushu Railway Co has also been using battery-powered trains on a nonelectrified section of the Chikuho Line in Fukuoka Prefecture in southwestern Japan.

Battery-powered trains reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 60 per cent compared to diesel engine trains and require lower operational costs because they have no transmissions or engines which are made up of many moving parts and require constant upkeep.

A high school girl who uses the line in Akita for commuting said the

battery cars are “cleaner and quieter” than diesel oil-fueled trains. Riding on them is “more enjoyable,” she added.

Locals are hoping that the positive image of battery-powered trains would also attract more tourists to the region.

Of the Japan Railway group lines that stretch around 20,000 kilometers across the country, 40 per cent are not electrified, meaning that on those sections, diesel- or battery-powered rolling stock are required.

Battery-powered trains have their limits, however. Given the current capacity of their batteries, they can transport passengers only up to around 25 km on one charge. To run further, they need special charging stations.

Although the introduction of battery-powered trains costs less than electrifying a railway line, the length of each line is a consideration when deciding if the trains are suitable, said Masashi Tonosaki, an East Japan Railway official. —Kyodo News



Visitors view the art work ‘Artist book’ from Daniel Knorr during ‘Documenta 14’ art exhibition in Athens, Greece on 6 April, 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

mitv Myanmar International Programme Schedule

(10-4-2017 07:00am ~ 11-4-2017 07:00am) MST

07:03	Am	News
07:26	Am	Myanmar Masterclass: Artist U Kyaw Thauung
07:39	Am	Lucrative Myanma Rattan Industry
08:03	Am	News
08:26	Am	Traditional Rakhine Thingyan Festival
08:44	Am	Crab Business (Part-I) Mud Crab
09:03	Am	News
09:26	Am	Paper Products... Plain but Pretty
09:47	Am	Thingyan Songs & Dances
10:03	Am	News
10:26	Am	Gold: King of All Metals

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

Prime Time

07:03	Pm	News
07:27	Pm	Food Trip (EP-6)
08:03	Pm	News
08:27	Pm	Taste Of Myanmar (Shan Style Clay Pot)
08:46	Pm	Aye Aye Soe: Myanma Pioneer Female Bodybuilder

(09:00 Pm ~ 11:00 Pm) -Today Repeat (09:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)
(11:00 Pm ~ 03:00 Am)- Sunday Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)
(03:00 Am ~ 07:00 Am) -Today Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)

(For Detailed Schedule – www.myanmaritv.com/schedule)

Myanmar women football won consecutively

THE Myanmar women's football team took a big step toward qualifying for the 2018 AFC Asian Cup after the team recorded a 6-0 win over Singapore on the fourth day of Group D competition in Hanoi.

As the result of their win over Singapore, Myanmar will meet its rival Vietnam. The winner will play in the 2018 AFC Women's Asian Cup to be held in Jordan in April, 2018.

For its most recent match against Singapore, Myanmar had to make several changes in its lineup due to injuries.

For the contest against Singapore, Myanmar's lineup consisted of Mya Phu Ngon, Khin Than Wai, Zin Mar Win, Wai Wai Aung, San San Maw, Naw Arlowarphaw, Khin Moe Wai, Hla Yin Win, Rutar Khine, Khin Moh Moh Tun and July Kyaw. Myanmar made great efforts to penetrate Singapore's defense and scored twice in the first half, as Hla Yin Win scored at the 21-minute mark and WaiWaiAung got a goal at the 40-minute mark.

Myanmar used its speed to attack Singa-

pore in the second half as substitute players Win Theingi Tun scored two goals at the 58 and 88-minute marks and Yi YiOo kicked a ball into the goal at the 70-minute mark. Team leader Wai Wai Aung finished the scoring with a kick from the corner at the 79-minute mark. The win against Singapore was Myanmar's third consecutive victory, placing them in the same position with Vietnam, against whom Myanmar will play on 11 April, where it will be decided who will advance to the Asian Cup.—

Ye Yint Shine



Players of Myanmar women's football team and Singapore women's football team vie for the ball. PHOTO: MFF



Chelsea's Nemanja Matic and Gary Cahill in action with Bournemouth's Simon Francis during the English Premier League between Chelsea and AFC Bournemouth at Vitality Stadium on 8 April, 2017.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Chelsea ease past Bournemouth to re-establish title lead

LONDON — Chelsea re-established their seven-point lead at the top of the Premier League with a comfortable 3-1 win at Bournemouth on Saturday.

Chelsea blitzed the hosts in the opening exchanges and led when Diego Costa's sliced 17th-minute effort deflect-

ed in off Bournemouth defender Adam Smith before Eden Hazard ghosted through to add a sublime second in the 20th minute.

In the 42nd minute, Josh King pulled a goal back, his 10th in 11 games, via a deflection for the plucky hosts, who had

chances to equalise after the break until Marcos Alonso curled home a perfect 68th minute freekick to seal the Blues' win. With seven games remaining, Chelsea have 75 points, seven clear of Tottenham Hotspur, who beat Watford 4-0 earlier on Saturday, in second.—Reuters

France and Serbia set up Davis Cup semi-final clash

LONDON — France will meet Serbia in the semi-finals of the Davis Cup after both finished off their last-eight ties inside two days on Saturday but Australia and Belgium were made to sweat.

Serbia, who had been given a flying start by 12-times grand slam champion Novak Djokovic on Friday on his comeback from an elbow injury, completed a 3-0 victory over Spain in Belgrade.

A weakened France also proved too strong for a British team without Andy Murray in Rouen as they too moved into an unassailable position at 3-0.

The US pair of Jack Sock and Steve Johnson kept their country's hopes alive as they beat Australia's Sam Groth and John Peers 3-6, 6-3, 6-2, 2-6, 6-3 in Brisbane.

Australia had taken a 2-0 lead on Friday when Jordan Thompson stunned Sock and Nick Kyrgios eased past John Isner.

Belgium were also leading 2-0 after the first day of their tie against Italy in Charleroi but were pegged back as Simone Bolelli and Andreas Seppi clawed out a five-set win against home duo Rubens Bemelmans and Joris de Loore.

Bemelmans and de Loore had a match point to win the tie in the fifth set tiebreak but the Italians nicked it 8-6.

France are in the semi-finals for the fifth time in eight years after Julien Benneteau and Nicolas Mahut beat British duo Jamie Murray and Dominic Inglot 7-6(7), 5-7, 7-5, 7-5.—Reuters