



Nepal's president elected to second term

KATHMANDU, Nepal (AP) — Nepal's president, Bidhya Devi Bhandari, was elected to a second term in voting by national and provincial lawmakers. The Election Commission said Bhandari received a large majority of the ballots. Bhandari, who was first elected in 2015, is the Himalayan nation's first female president, a largely ceremonial role. She has the backing of the Communist alliance government that dominated recent parliamentary and provincial assembly elections. Bhandari has had a long political career. Before becoming president, she was a powerful leader of the Communist Party of Nepal Unified Marxist-Leninist.

China shrinking steel industry, but too slowly for west

BEIJING (AP) — China's steel mills, a target of U.S. President Donald Trump's ire, are their industry's 800-pound gorilla: They supply half of world output, so every move they make has a global impact. Trump responded with a blanket tariff hike on steel and aluminum, another metal China's trading partners complain it oversupplies. The steel industry swelled over the past decade to support a history-making Chinese construction boom. Once that tailed off, the country was left with a glut of half-idle, money-losing mills. Beijing has closed mills and eliminated 1 million jobs, but is moving too slowly to defuse American and European anger at a flood of low-cost exports that is double the volume of second-place Japan. China says it shut down 30 million tons of capacity last year.

Duterte withdrawing Philippines from Int'l Criminal Court

MANILA, The Philippines (AP) — Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte says his country is withdrawing its ratification of a world treaty that created the International Criminal Court (ICC), where he's facing a possible complaint for crimes against humanity. An ICC prosecutor announced in February that she was opening a preliminary examination into alleged extrajudicial killings stemming from Duterte's anti-drug crackdown. Duterte said the international court cannot acquire jurisdiction over him. He said the Rome Statute that established the tribunal for heinous leaders cannot be enforced in the Philippines because it has not been made public as required by law after Filipino senators ratified it in 2011. Thousands of mostly poor drug suspects have been killed under Duterte's crackdown, but he has argued that the killings do not amount to crimes against humanity or genocide.

Macron hopes to sell jets, submarines to India

VARANASI, India (AP) — French President Emmanuel Macron says he hopes his country can sell more fighter jets and submarines to India. In a recent news conference, Macron said France and India want to "be able to continue with new volumes and production in line with what has already been signed." He was referring to India's purchase of six conventionally powered Scorpene submarines in 2005 and 36 Rafale fighter jets in 2016. Macron took a boat ride with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the River Ganges in Varanasi in northeast India. During the three-day visit by the French leader, Macron and Modi highlighted a strong alliance and cooperation in defense, security, technology, space, and counterterrorism.

Information indicates Myanmar is cleansing Rohingyas

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — The U.N. adviser on preventing genocide says all information he has received indicates the Myanmar government intended to cleanse Rohingya Muslims from Rakhine state and possibly even destroy them "which, if proven, would constitute the crime of genocide." Adama Dieng recently visited Bangladesh to assess the situation of the Rohingyas and said what he heard and witnessed "is a human tragedy with the fingerprints of the Myanmar government and of the international community." He said "the scorched earth campaign carried out by Myanmar security forces since August 2017 against the Rohingya population was predictable and preventable." Despite his numerous warnings of the risk of "atrocities crimes," Dieng said the international community "buried its head in the sand," which has cost Rohingyas their lives, homes, and dignity.

Company cancels blue diamond initial coin offering

SINGAPORE (AP) — The Singapore-based organizer of a \$2-million initial coin offering linked to a promotion involving a 2.08-carat blue diamond ring and luxury dinner raffle has cancelled the plan, leaving thousands of investors from dozens of countries in need of refunds. Singapore-registered V Diamonds began selling tokens backed by the blue diamond ring in November, promising a one-millionth stake in the ring, set in 18-karat rose gold-plated platinum, for as little as \$2. Ville Oehman, the Finnish founder of V Diamonds, agreed to buy the ring and dinner from the Russia-based World of Diamonds Group as part of a wider promotion. In November, he began selling the tokens for \$2 or more. Investors also stood a chance to win an "ultimate dinner experience" in Singapore with a three-hour yacht cruise, gold-plated chopsticks, and an 18-course Michelin star meal on a private jet, according to the presale website. No reason was given for the cancellation. Karan Tilani, director of the World of Diamonds Group, said its dining promotion will be launched again, with an option to pay in crypto-currency. Part of the proceeds will be donated to charity, he said. Initial coin offerings have been banned in China and South Korea due to worries over possible financial scams. The Monetary Authority of Singapore has urged "extreme caution" regarding investments in crypto-currencies that are not covered by regulatory protection.



MARKING MAYHEM. A man prays to mourn the victims of the March 11, 2011 earthquake and tsunami prior to a special memorial event in Tokyo. Japan marked the seventh anniversary of the 2011 tsunami that killed more than 18,000 people and left a devastated coastline along the country's northeast that has still not been fully rebuilt. (AP Photo/Eugene Hoshiko)

Japan marks seventh anniversary of tsunami that killed 18,000

TOKYO (AP) — They bowed their heads, hands clasped or palms firmly pressed together. They stood in grassy areas or roadsides overlooking the choppy sea. In Japan's capital, they lit candles and offered flowers. Some dabbed at tears.

Japan recently marked the seventh anniversary of a tsunami that took more than 18,000 lives on the northeast coast and triggered a nuclear disaster that turned nearby communities into ghost towns.

Residents along the coast gathered outdoors to remember the tragedy as sirens wailed at 2:46pm, the moment the magnitude 9.0 offshore earthquake struck on March 11, 2011, setting off a massive tsunami.

The tsunami overwhelmed sea walls and washed away buildings, cars, and entire neighborhoods as it swept inland. It knocked out power at the seaside Fukushima Dai-ichi nuclear power plant, causing partial meltdowns in three reactors.

Vietnamese recruited two months before Kim Jong Nam's murder

By Eileen Ng
The Associated Press

SHAH ALAM, Malaysia — A Vietnamese woman accused of murdering the estranged half brother of North Korea's leader was recruited by a North Korean suspect at a Hanoi bar two months before the killing, her lawyer says.

Details about Doan Thi Huong emerged for the first time since she was charged, along with Siti Aisyah from Indonesia, with smearing Kim Jong Nam's face with the banned VX nerve agent at Kuala Lumpur's airport on February 13 last year. The two are the only suspects in custody, though

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said at an official ceremony in Tokyo that reconstruction is making steady progress, but more than 70,000 people are still displaced and many have no prospect of returning to their homes.

Prince Akishino, the second son of Japanese Emperor Akihito, expressed hope that the tsunami would raise awareness and help prevent or mitigate damage from future natural disasters.

"It is my earnest hope ... that we hand down the knowledge to future generations in order to protect many people from the dangers of disasters," he said.

Separately, several hundred people observed a moment of silence and made offerings at an altar set up in Hibiya Park in central Tokyo.

Cleaning up the still-radioactive Fukushima nuclear plant site remains a daunting challenge that is expected to take 30 to 40 years.

prosecutors have said four North Koreans who fled the country were also involved.

Lawyer Hisyam Teh Poh Teik told the court that Huong told police shortly after she was detained last year that she was introduced to a Korean man known as Mr. Y by a Vietnamese bar owner in December 2016. Mr. Y has been identified in court as Ri Ji Hyon, one of the four North Korean suspects who fled Malaysia.

Huong said Nguyen Bich Thuy, who was a former co-worker at a pub, called her and asked if she wanted to work for a Korean company as an actress in a "short movie or funny video," according to her police statement read out by Teh. She said she was introduced

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Asian Currency Exchange Rates

Units per U.S. dollar as of 3/16

| | |
|-------------------|--------|
| Bangladesh Taka | 83.015 |
| Cambodian Riel | 3987.0 |
| China Renminbi | 6.3348 |
| Fijian Dollar | 2.0325 |
| Hong Kong Dollar | 7.8423 |
| Indian Rupee | 64.94 |
| Indonesian Rupiah | 13751 |
| Iranian Rial | 37.718 |
| Japanese Yen | 106.01 |
| Laos New Kip | 8296.5 |
| Malaysian Ringgit | 3.9072 |
| Nepal Rupee | 103.92 |
| Pakistani Rupee | 110.67 |
| Papua N.G. Kina | 3.21 |
| Philippine Peso | 51.952 |
| Russian Ruble | 57.519 |
| Saudi Riyal | 3.7501 |
| Singapore Dollar | 1.3177 |
| South Korean Won | 1066.2 |
| Sri Lankan Rupee | 156.02 |
| Taiwan Dollar | 29.121 |
| Thai Baht | 31.238 |
| Vietnam Dong | 22961 |