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National Security Advisor U Thaung Tun (Left) takes part in the Asia Security Summit / The IISS Shangri-La Dialogue held in Singapore. **PHOTO: MNA**

National Security Advisor calls on int'l community to see situation in Rakhine more objectively

Union Minister for the Office of the Union Government and National Security Advisor U Thaung Tun took part in the Asia Security Summit / The IISS Shangri-La Dialogue held in Singapore from 1 to 3 June, 2018.

At the Special Session "The Security and Humanitarian Crisis in Myanmar's Rakhine State", he underscored that terrorism was the main cause of

the recent outbreak of violence in Rakhine and that the premeditated and brutal killings of village heads and civilians by the self-styled ARSA terrorist group caused Islamic community and ethnic minorities to flee the area.

He said "The situation was exacerbated as a result of an unscrupulous propaganda campaign by ARSA. There is no denying that the Islamic com-

munity in the Rakhine State has suffered. But the Buddhists Rakhine, Hindu and other ethnic minorities have suffered no less."

He called on the international community to see the situation in Rakhine more objectively. He said naming and shaming can only further inflame the current tension and it is antithetical to a peaceful

and durable resolution of the crisis. He added "Unhelpful pressure is inflaming the discourse and detracting from the essential pursuit of a peaceful and diplomatic solution. Worse still, a prejudiced propaganda campaign and exploitation of the plight of refugees are being used by terrorists to achieve their aims."— Myanmar News Agency ■

Rakhine Chief Minister invites advice for development

RAKHINE STATE Chief Minister U Nyi Pu met with ward/village administrators in Rakhine State in Buthidaung yesterday, inviting constructive suggestions on the socio-economic development, peace and stability and the rule of law in the state.

As he explained the performance of the Rakhine State Government in the two-year period, the Chief Minister pledged to carry on works for the progress, peace and stability of Rakhine State.

"I make this visit to explain the endeavours of the Rakhine State government in the two-year period, and to invite frank suggestions on the disadvantages and advantages of the endeavours and the ongoing projects," said U Nyi Pu.

People are now enjoying the fruits of regional development undertakings, he added.

The chief minister was accompanied by his cabinet members.

He also stressed the need to develop infrastructure for the health, education and farming sectors for regional progress.

Further, the chief minister discussed important matters such as the rule of law, socio-economic progress, national reconciliation and internal peace, as only regional peace could bring regional development.

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Sluiceways benefit farmers in southern Yangon

Farmers in the two townships in the south of the Yangon Region will not have to worry about their farms getting inundated thanks to the Tarpyatzayat sluiceway that is also supplying water to their farms.

“More farmers are putting their land under summer paddy as they get fresh water from the irrigation works conducted by the Irrigation and Water Utilisation Management Department (IWUMD). The sluiceways, including Kungyangon and Tarpyatzayat sluiceways, are controlling the inflow of salt water from Yangon river, and the drains are preventing floods, said U Win Myint, a farmer from Kawhmu, one of the two townships in the south.

As farmers of the two southern townships – Kyungyangon



Tarpyatzayat sluiceway in South Yangon Region is supplying irrigation water to farms in southern Yangon Region. **PHOTO:MIN THIT(MNA)**

and Kawhmu – were annually facing damage to crops through floods, the IWUMD erected the

Tarpyatzayat sluiceway in 2015. The sluice with 6x6-foot gates is located on the Tarpy-

atzayat creek in the southern part of Kungyangon Township. The facility sends excess water

back to the Toe River through drains that flow into the Tarpyatzayat creek, a tributary of the Toe, during low tides. When the tides are high, the sluice prevents salt water from flowing into the fields and retains fresh water of the nearby natural watercourses, according to IWUMD.

“We built the irrigation facilities to prevent floods in the fields during a downpour and to store water for summer paddy in the two townships,” said an official of the IWUMD.

The Tarpyatzayat sluiceway saved 25,466 acres of monsoon paddy in Kawhmu township and large stretches of crop lands in Kungyangon Township, as well as stored irrigation water for 7,387 acres of summer paddy in the townships.—Min Thit (MNA) ■

Public bicycle event held in Nay Pyi Taw, Mandalay to commemorate World Bicycle Day

WITH the cooperation of the Sports and Physical Education Department and Myanmar Bicycle Federation, a public bicycle event was held in Nay Pyi Taw and Mandalay yesterday morning to mark World Bicycle Day.

The event was launched in front of Paunglaung Sports Stadium in Nay Pyi Taw.

The event was held with the aim of creating public aware-

ness about the health benefits of riding and promoting interest in it, as well as developing a new generation of professional bikers.

The event started at Paunglaung Stadium and proceeded through Pan Khin Road to Yarza Htarni Road, and culminated at PaungLoun Stadium.

In Mandalay, the event was opened in front of the office

Mandalay City Development Committee by Mandalay Region Chief Minister Dr. Zaw Myint Maung.

Over 900 people in same sport shirt participated in the event riding along the ring road circling the Mandalay Palace.

The event concluded with physical exercises by the participants at the gathering point.—Myanmar News Agency ■



Officials and local people participate in Public Bicycle Event in Mandalay yesterday in commemoration of the World Bicycle Day. **PHOTO:TIN MAUNG (MANDALAY SUB-PRINTING HOUSE)**

Myanmar, Thailand discuss drug control

THE 20th Myanmar-Thailand Bilateral Meeting on Drug Control Cooperation discussed conducting joint anti-drug campaigns along the common border yesterday.

The meeting held at a hotel in Taunggyi also reassessed the progress in realising the minutes of the previous meeting before discussing anti-drug control activities, precursor controlling, anti-drug training activities, treatment and re-

habilitation programmes, and reviewing of the management sector.

Secretary of Central Committee for Drug Abuse Control Chief of Myanmar Police Force Police Maj-Gen Aung Win Oo and Secretary General of the Office of the Narcotic Control Board-ONCB of Thailand Mr. Sirinya Sittichai delivered an opening address at the meeting, which continued today.—Myanmar News Agency ■

Mandalay Central Prison to award students who passed matric exam

THE Correctional Department will award 27 students from Mandalay Central Prison who passed the matric exam in the academic year of 2017-2018 in July, according to a senior official from the Mandalay Correctional Department.

Some 55 students sat for the matriculation exam from Mandalay Central Prison, of which 27 passed. Of them, 21 achieved distinction.

“We will invite the teachers and donors, as well as the well-wishers who provided the

students with stationery, food and clothing,” said the senior official.

The head of the prison will attend the award ceremony during which arrangements will be made for the successful students to continue their studies at the university.

The award ceremony for the 2016-2017 academic year was held on 22 July 2017, in which the successful students and teachers were awarded.—Khaing Set Wai ■

Our country is still in poverty with necessities in every sector; which is why we need to carry on our struggle and work hard in all sectors. In the international arena, we are facing pressure, criticisms and misunderstandings. The challenges and difficulties our country and our people are facing today are many. Although every issue cannot be solved easily, we will have to make utmost efforts to solve these issues according to each priority sector.

(Excerpt from the speech by President U Win Myint at the ceremony to take oath of office at Pyidaungsu Hluttaw on 30th March 2018)

Let me solemnly thank all our friends at home and abroad, who have helped us and are still helping us; organizations, business entrepreneurs, people from academia and professionals, and especially our people who have supported and assisted us with understanding and empathy. Those who have helped us once, we should never forget. Those who have helped us again and again are our real friends; they bring fulfillment to our lives.

(Excerpt from the speech by State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi on the 2nd Anniversary of NLD Government on 1st April 2018)



Chief Minister of Rakhine State U Nyi Pu meets village/ward administrators and local elders at U Ottama Hall in Buthidaung Township, Rakhine State. **PHOTO: MNA**

Rakhine Chief Minister invites advice for development

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All-out efforts are required to establish a Democratic Federal Republic, he noted, adding that the task can be realised only through public participation, as efforts by a single or-

ganisation or a person alone are not enough. There should be mutual respect, trust and cooperation between organisations and groups, said U Nyi Pu.

Buthidaung Township administrator U Kyaw Min Tun reported on the facts, current

undertakings and future programmes of the township.

Rakhine State Ministers Col Hpone Tint, U Kyaw Lwin, Dr Chan Tha and other officials looked into the requirements for region development presented by the locals. The chief minister

arranged coordinated responses for the requirements.

At Thonhse-tabon pagoda in Sangoetaung Village, the chief minister and his delegation presented cash donations.

They also coordinated to fulfil the regional requirements

at the meeting with locals in the village.

The Chief Minister inspected the project to construct an entrance road for Ponnyoleik Village and a primary school in Thayetpyin Village.—Myanmar News Agency ■

River-crossing gas pipe project in progress

UNION MINISTER for Electricity and Energy U Win Khaing inspected the laying of a new gas pipeline across Sittaung river between Kyaikto Township in Mon State and Waw township in the Bago Region yesterday.

Accompanied by Deputy Minister Dr Tun Naing and officials, the union minister arrived at the project site to replace a 12-inch pipe facing gradual damage with a new 20-inch pipe.

Later, the union minister and his delegation visited the 230-KV main sub-power station in Kyaikto, where he heard

a report on the salient points of the station, the erection of transformers, power distribution, ongoing programmes, and the improvements made to the power supply system in Kyaikto, presented by the deputy minister and officials.

At the control room of the station, the union minister inspected the power distribution works and functions of the switchyard, gave instructions on power supply system safety, stable flow of electricity and prevention of power interruptions. — Myanmar News Agency ■



Union Minister for Electricity and Energy U Win Khaing inspects laying of the new gas pipeline across the Sittaung river. **PHOTO: MYANMAR NEWS AGENCY**

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Volunteers with heavy construction machinery carry out emergency repair on the Pathein-Monywa Road in Myaing on 3 June, 2018. PHOTO: AUNG KYAW MYINT

Torrential rain causes flash flood, destroys Pathein-Monywa Road in Myaing

Torrential rain hit Myaing and Pakokku townships, on Friday, flooding the Pakokku-Monywa Road in Myaing and destroyed a road, triggering traffic chaos yesterday.

Members of the local fire brigade, police and volunteers

helped passengers as they waded through the floodwaters near Linkataw Village in Myaing Township from morning to afternoon.

The floodwaters on the Pathein-Monywa Road between Kyikan Village and Linkataw

Village destroyed a culvert, and the road.

After the floodwaters receded in the afternoon, local authorities repaired the road and small vehicles were able to use the road in the evening. — Aung Kyaw Myint ■

Programme aims to secure regular income for elderly in central dry zone

HelpAge International, a global network of organisations working for the elderly, is implementing a social protection programme in Myanmar's central arid zone. As part of its efforts to reduce old age poverty, the social protection project aims to offer secure income to old people, provide long-term benefits and promote the well-being of both older men and women in the project areas.

To secure a regular income for older people, the organisation has embarked on a three-

year project to expand social protection to vulnerable households in Myanmar's central dry zone.

The project seeks to strengthen the community and government's capacity to protect vulnerable groups such as the disabled and older people, and will deliver cash benefits to vulnerable households. As part of the project, HelpAge also seeks to enhance informal and community-based systems and practices that are already working to provide support and

assistance in the dry zone. To inform about the project activities and discussions on social protection generally, a research was undertaken to investigate community-based mechanisms, structures, and practices in dry zone villages that could provide social protection to vulnerable people living in these communities. HelpAge International is a global network of organisations promoting the right of all older people to lead a dignified, healthy and secure life. —Sali Ko Kee ■

Over 6,600 cattle sent to China through Muse border gate within 15 days

SOME 1,275 buffaloes and more than 5,400 cows were exported to China through the Muse 105th mile border gate between 1 and 15 May, according to news provided by the commerce ministry online.

A buffalo fetches Ks1.9 to Ks2.1 million, while a cow is worth Ks1.6 to Ks2 million. Some 4,095 goats were also exported, with a goat weighing some 31kg. A kilogram of goat fetches Ks4,410 to Ks4,431, said a goat rearer from Muse Town.

The export of cattle earned revenues worth Ks17.5 trillion, said an official from the Muse trade camp.

The commerce ministry gave the green light for live cattle export from 9 October 2017, with a view to combatting illegal cattle export.

For live export, cattles are bought and kept at the respective temporary inspection stations of the township Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Department in Mon and Shan states, Bago, Magway, Mandalay and Sagar regions.

A health certificate and recommendation from the region and state Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Department, the permit to pass the towns along the export route and the export licence granted by the commerce ministry are a must for live cattle export.—GNLM ■

Fake foreign booze seized, moonshiners arrested in Yangon

The police arrested and filed charges against three male moonshiners for producing, storing and selling counterfeit foreign brands of alcoholic drinks in Htaukkyant town and Htantabin township in the north of Yangon on 1 June, according to the Yangon Region Police Force.

The police, acting on a tip, found four cartons of fake Giang Master brand spirit, two cartons of fake Black Label brand spirit, one carton of fake spirit, two cartons of

fake Red Label brand spirits, six cartons of Kingdom brand spirit, empty bottles and caps, and other related materials in a house owned by Aung Soe (25) and Myo Tint (19) in a village in Htantabin township at 1 p.m.

Similarly, the Yangon North district police, with the help of witnesses, seized nine cartons of fake Kingdom brand spirit and 20 empty bottles, two cartons of fake Giang Master brand spirit, four cartons of fake Donfife brand spirit and 30 empty bottles, three cartons of



fake alcohol, two cartons of fake B&G brand spirit, one carton of fake Sired Wards brand spirit, caps, and related materials in the storehouse and the base-

ment of a house, owned by Myo Myint Khaing @ Ko Myo (36) in Htaukkyant at 4.30 p.m. The police have filed charges against the moonshiners.—GNLM ■



A man looks at the LED board showing the stock exchange rates at YSX, in Yangon. **PHOTO: SUPPLIED**

YSX's listing promotion seminar slated for 5 June

IN a bid to increase the number of listed companies on the Yangon Stock Exchange (YSX), the YSX will hold a promotional event for potential listed companies on 5 June.

This event aims to provide a better understanding of the listing procedure and benefits by building a pipeline of future initial public offerings and giving the necessary insights. It also fulfils the gap between companies and vendors during

the listing process, according to a notice released by YSX on 30 May.

At the listing promotion seminar, U Thein Myint, commissioner of the Securities and Exchange Commission of Myanmar, will make an opening remark and Mr. Sean Turnell, special economic consultant to the State Counsellor, will deliver the keynote speech. The officials and experts will also make presentations.

The shares of five listed companies — First Myanmar Investment (FMI), Myanmar Thilawa SEZ Holdings (MTSH), Myanmar Citizens Bank (MCB), First Private Bank (FPB) and TMH Telecom Public Co. Ltd (TMH) — are being traded on the YSX.

For reservations, interested companies have to call 01-371274, 09799454525, not later than 4 May 2018. —GNLM■

Myanmar's bilateral trade with Thailand valued around US\$5 billion every year

By Nyein Nyein

THE bilateral trade between Thailand and Myanmar was worth US\$5 billion on an average every fiscal year, said Naw Mutakapaw, deputy director-general of Trade Promotion Department, operating under the Ministry of Commerce, during the Top Thai Brands 2018 press conference held at Chatrium Royal Lake Hotel on 31 May.

"We will continue to strengthen cooperation with Thailand to boost bilateral trade. The trade promotion department also sends its representatives, entrepreneurs, SME businessmen and trade observers to the exhibitions held in Thailand," she maintained.

According to the statistics of the Myanmar Trade Promotion Department, bilateral trade was worth \$5.6 billion in the 2013-2014 FY, \$5.7 billion in the 2014-2015

FY, \$4.8 billion in the 2015-2016 FY, \$4.2 billion in the 2016-2017 FY and \$4.9 billion in the 2017-2018 FY.

Myanmar's export items are natural gas, fish, prawns, minerals, various pulses and agriculture products, while machinery, auto parts, motorcycle and spare parts, petroleum products, plastic raw material, cement, fertilisers, cosmetics, pharmaceuticals and consumer goods are imported, said Naw Mutakapaw.

Myanmar and Thailand inked a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for bilateral trade in 1990 and signed an MoU to establish the Joint Trade Committee to improve border trade. In 1997, they signed an agreement for the cross-border trade of goods. Diplomatic relations between Myanmar and Thailand has already marked the 70th-year anniversary. ■

MIC approves 15 foreign projects worth over \$97 million in past two months

THE Myanmar Investment Commission (MIC) gave the green light to 15 foreign enterprises with capital of some US\$97.13 million in the past two months during the transition period for the next 2018-2019 fiscal year, according to the press conference on permitted enterprises held on 31 May.

Enterprises granted approvals and endorsements are engaged in the manufacturing, agriculture, real estate development and other service sectors.

The proposals and endorsements were approved by the respective investment committees of Yangon, Kayin State, the Mandalay and Ayeyawady regions.

From April to May 2018, for-

eign direct investments worth \$193.35 million were approved by the MIC, including increased investments and investments in the Thilawa Special Economic Zone.

In the same period, some 34 domestic enterprises were approved by the MIC, with estimated investments of \$119 million (Ks667 billion), according to the MIC meeting (7/2018).

According to the new Myanmar Investment Law, region and state investment committees are authorised to grant endorsements to investment proposal with capital of not more than \$5 million (Ks6,000 million), with an aim to facilitate the verification process of the investment projects.—GNLM■

Imports of consumer products increase by \$26 million

MYANMAR imported consumer goods amounting to US\$670 million over the first 55 days in the current six-month transitional fiscal year, recording an increase of \$26.19 million against the same period last year, the commerce ministry reported.

The total import value of consumer goods from 1 April through 25 May this year included \$11.39 million from the public sector and \$659.45 million from the private sector. The goods imported by the

private sector increased by \$30.75 million compared with last year, while public sector imports of the same products saw a slight decrease by more than \$4 million.

The country's total import value during the period exceeded \$3 billion, including \$1.138 billion in capital goods and \$1.233 billion in intermediate goods. The imports from all sectors were worth \$364 million more than the imports last FY.

The import value of consumer goods has increased

each year. The import value was \$1.245 billion in the 2011-12 FY, \$1.4 billion in the 2012-13 FY, \$2.3 billion in the 2013-14 FY, \$2.9 billion in the 2014-15 FY, \$3.5 billion in the 2015-16 FY, more than \$4 billion in the 2016-17 FY and \$4.403 billion in the 2017-2018 FY.

Myanmar chiefly imports luxury products, personal goods, construction materials, agricultural machinery, raw materials, household goods, food items and electronic devices from neighbouring countries.—Shwe Khine ■

Trade Mark Ads

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Ayeyawady Region sees transport development

UNION MINISTER for Construction U Han Zaw on Saturday inspected the maintenance of Hlinethaya-Twantay-Kawhmu-Kungyangon-Dedaye road and Kyaikthale-Yaykyaw selected-soil road, which benefits 118 households of two villages.

The union minister also inspected the 70-foot Kyangin bridge, the 40-foot Shwegyo-byu bridge, and the 60-foot Wakaukthaw bridge, as well as the approach structures under construction along the Twantay-Kawhmu-Kungyangon-Dedaye road. He stressed the bridges must be completed as soon as possible.

The union minister then inspected the progress in laying the Dedaye-Tawkamae-Kyokkyat-Thayagon-Thandizeebu-



Union Minister for Construction U Han Zaw inspects the maintenance of Hlinethaya-Twantay-Kawhmu-Kungyangon-Dedaye road and Kyaikthale-Yaykyaw selected-soil road on 2 June, 2018. **PHOTO: MNA**

gon concrete road in Dedaye Township, and the strength of the Dedaye, Pyapon and

Bogale bridges. In the afternoon, he looked into the requirements for erecting the

Thakan creek bridge on Bogale-Setsan-Htawpaing-Amalan road in Bogale Township,

Ayeyawady Region.

During the tour, the union minister said the Thakan creek bridge and the Setsan creek bridge on Bogale-Setsan-Htawpaing-Amalan road have already been put into service.

The new roads and bridges are useful for transport, and the bridges can be used as disaster shelters for people from nearby areas.

The road sections must be extended yearly, he said. He then inspected the Setsan creek bridge.

Further, he went to Pyapon-Kyongaton-Daw Nyein-Ama road from Bogale-Setsan-Htawpaing-Amalan road, as the two are part of a network of roads in the Ayeyawady Region.—Myanmar News Agency ■

Three men arrested for illegal gold mining in Pinlebu Township



A local police arrested two people for allegedly gold mining illegally in the Mu River near Kongyi Village, Pinlebu Township in Sagaing Region yesterday.

Following a tipoff, the police together with eye witnesses went to a scene where they found two men identified as Kyaw Tun and Kyaw Zeyar Lin from Kongyi Vil-

lage with an engine generator and related items to be used in gold mining.

The two confessed that the owner of the materials was U Thauk Kyar from the same village. The three men who were illegally engaged in gold mining have been charged under the Myanmar Mines Law by the local police station.—Lu Aung ■

Old rocket-propelled grenade unearthed in Thegon Tsp

AN old rocket-propelled grenade was discovered inside a pond near the railway station in Aung Yadana Ward, Thegon Township, according to the police.

The bomb is one foot long, and its diameter is 2 inches. —GNLM ■



Tourism industry booms in Kachin State

More than 24,000 tourists visited Kachin State in the fiscal year 2017-2018, increasing the number of globetrotters over 10,000 compared with the same period previous year, said U Khaing Win, Deputy Director of the Directorate of Hotels and Tourism.

“Kachin State is a very promising region for the businessmen who want to operate tourism industry.

Kachin State has plenty of natural resources including fantastic natural scenery, social

status and traditional culture of the ethnic people. If tourism industry is developed in Kachin State, there will be more job opportunities for local people inevitably,” he added.

Approximately 108,043 travelers including 13,563 foreigners visited Kachin State in the fiscal year 2016-2017 whereas 103,972 visitors including 24,421 globetrotters traveled to the region in the previous financial year.

The number of hotels in Kachin State has increased to 29 with a capacity of 860 rooms

in the fiscal year 2017-2018 from 26 with a capacity of 714 rooms in the financial year 2016-2017. There are five hotels under construction in Kachin State, according to the DHT.

The DHT conducted hotel service training courses in Kachin State due to its potential tourism industry development. The DHT turned out roughly 568 trainees during the period from January 2016 to May 2018, creating many job opportunities for local people.—Win Naing (Kachin Land) ■

Leaking gas pipe in Nyaung-U repaired

GAS was found leaking from a pipeline near Thu Kaung Tae Village, Ouk Nyint Village-tract in Nyaung-U Township, Mandalay Region, yesterday morning, according to village leader U Aung Myo Khaing.

The leaking pipeline transports gas from Chauk Township in the Magway Region to Myingyan, Kyaukse and Mandalay townships in the Mandalay Region.

Officials led by assistant engineer U Than Oo from the Mechanical Engineering Department and Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise in Chauk Township reached the place. They cordoned the area for safety and removed the earth along



PHOTO: U WIN HTAIN

the leaking pipe and repaired it by covering it with a U-Bolt Clamp. They finished repairing the pipe around 3 p.m.

A fire engine and another vehicle from Nyaung-U District Fire Service, led by Depart-

ment Deputy Director U Thet Naing, along with sub-inspector Min Kyaing and police from Letpan Chaypaw police station, arrived at the scene to take safety measures. —Ko Htain, (Nga Tha York) ■

American among the dead in Nicaragua unrest

MANAGUA—An American was among those killed in recent anti-government unrest in Managua, the US ambassador said on Saturday.

“The US Government expresses its condolences to the family of the US citizen killed last night and to all the families who have recently visited the Forensic Medicine Institute. The death of a US citizen is of great concern to our Embassy,” Ambassador Laura Dogu said on Twitter.

She was referring to Sixto Henry Viera, 48. Viera was said to have been shot by a pro-government mob in Managua, the rights group ANPD reported.

Weeks of anti-government demonstrations have left more than 100 dead, in an increas-

ingly sensitive challenge for the government of President Daniel Ortega.

Ortega, 72, has dominated Nicaraguan politics since leading the Sandinista revolution that ousted dictator Anastasio Somoza in 1979.

He took over the country as head of a ruling junta and then president until 1990, then returned to power in 2007 -- and looks determined to stay there, despite the protests and the devastating loss of his once-solid support from the business elite.

The protests began over a much-hated pension reform and ballooned into a mass threat to Ortega's rule.

The embattled president denies repressing them.—AFP



Anti-government demonstrators burned a car in Managua on 31 May, 2018. PHOTO: AFP

The Los Angeles restaurants stimulating all five senses

LOS ANGELES — At Vespertine, the last word in outlandish eating, staff are on a mission to “disrupt the course of the modern restaurant” as pioneers in the immersive culinary scene.

Something of an overnight sensation in southern California, the eatery was propelled to the top of Los Angeles Times critic Jonathan Gold's prestigious annual rankings after its launch last year.

From the volcanic stone crockery and chefs' aprons woven on a loom used for Samurai garments, to the attentive ballet of waiters dressed in monastic

black, everything has been orchestrated to stimulate much more than the taste buds.

“We more or less created and synthesized a world that you're stepping into,” says chef Jordan Kahn, hair swept into a raven black curtain on one side and shaved on the other.

“We want you to wander around and experience it however you want.”

In LA's thriving foodie scene, Vespertine has emerged as part of a new generation of restaurants where the experience of eating is matched by an equally sumptuous feast for the other

senses.

Dialogue, a tasting menu restaurant in nearby Santa Monica, promises an experience “playing on the senses and emotions” while adventurous diners in Beverly Hills can try Somni, Catalan for “dream.”

Even old hands like Austrian celebrity chef Wolfgang Puck, the head of a gastronomic empire, are getting in on this high-concept culinary high-wire act.

His The Rogue Experience — an eight-seat counter in West Hollywood where the tasting menu changes periodically — aims to “challenge expectation and push the boundaries for the future of food.”

Four-act drama

Vespertine's Kahn says he was inspired to open up shop when he happened upon an odd glass building in west Los Angeles with an exoskeleton of oxidized metal that has become known as “The Waffle.”

He contacted the architect to propose opening a restaurant where the objets d'art would serve as the inspiration for the cuisine, rather than the other way around. A meal at Vespertine is a four-act drama that begins with the welcome in a half-Bauhaus, half-Japanese garden, where customers are offered a glass of champagne.

Kahn greets diners in a kitchen worthy of an interior decorating magazine and they

are then escorted to the open-air lounge on the top floor.

There, customers enjoy a sparkling wine aperitif infused with Californian pine spines and topped with an exotic flower, seaweed chips and a biscuit of burnt onions and blackcurrant.

In the dining room, guests taste 15 dishes. Kahn says his work is influenced by the molecular gastronomy of Spanish chef Ferran Adria and the avant-garde Chicago restaurant Alinea, where he cut his teeth.

The menu includes scallops with marrow and slices of white asparagus and a rice pudding with trout eggs and sunflower petals.

Dessert is marshmallows sprayed with a buckwheat cream, jasmine sprouts, rhubarb and a carrot confit with blackcurrant coulis. Everything is washed down with biodynamic wines or kombucha cocktails.

Navigating the plate can be a game of hide and seek, with diners required to lift leaves or flowers to find the turbot or turkey underneath, plunging the fork blindly into bowls that are partly closed over.

Close attention

Vespertine prides itself on paying close attention to each diner, says Kahn, who encourages his waiters to notice guests' eating habits, their dominant hand, mood, desire to converse and so on. Proponents lap up the eccen-

tricity of the immersive dining scene, but detractors are put off by what they see as the pretentious atmosphere, a tendency for over-sweet cuisine, and the exorbitant prices — up to \$400 per head in LA.

It's not a uniquely southern California thing.

Ultraviolet in Shanghai outdoes even the wackiest LA restaurant with its 360-degree videos and music piped into the dining room along with aromas for the guests to appreciate.

Spain's El Celler de Can Roca, named best restaurant in the world in several surveys, dazzled with its El Somni banquet, a culinary “opera” on a round table surrounded by a spherical theater screen.

Heston Blumenthal's The Fat Duck, in southern England, offers diners Sound of the Sea, a seafood dish served with an iPod that provides a soundtrack of crashing waves as they eat.

Food can appear to take a back seat amid all this ostentation, but Kahn insists that the dining experience is about more than what's on the plate.

“Out of 20 courses over six months, do you remember any of the dishes that you had?” he asks, although he's being rhetorical.

“Maybe one or two and, at the end of the day, how important was the food? The important thing was the connection that you felt, and that's long lasting.”—AFP ■



A dish of rice pudding and trout roe is displayed at the restaurant Vespertine in Culver City, California — part of a new generation of restaurants where the experience of eating is matched by an equally sumptuous feast for the other senses. PHOTO: AFP

Closure of IDP camps to be accelerated for good of all

THE Union Government is taking measures step by step to close the Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps in the country. As long as they are residing in these camps, displaced persons cannot get full access to education and healthcare, and their participation in the economy is not possible. People are displaced due to social unrest, violence and armed conflicts, as well as natural disasters.

Among them, people who fled their homes during social conflicts and stayed in IDP camps have faced adverse consequences and cannot get access to rights granted by the law. The most vulnerable groups in the camps are the elderly, physically handicapped persons and expectant mothers.

IDP camps have limited job opportunities for displaced people, no freedom movement, and a lack of opportunities for youth to participate in the country's development.

Under the leadership of the Union Government, efforts to close the IDP camps would be made with added momentum.

There is a need to provide the right of movement for those staying in the IDP camps, as well as help them get meaningful jobs.

There are more than 140 displaced persons camps, with a total population of more than 160,000 in 15 townships in four states.

It is important to adopt a plan and policy to close the displaced persons camps, and work procedures need to be set up so that the closing of the camps can be conducted, based on international norms, and for this, international cooperation is required.

During the time of the incumbent government, three IDP camps in Rakhine State have been closed and the closure of three others is almost complete. Rakhine State IDP camps set up in 2012 were meant to be temporary camps, but have been in existence for more than five years now.

The closure must be systematic and needs to consider the consequences.

The authorities are making efforts to close the IDP camps in three other states. In some areas, it is not easy to close the camps. Taking into consideration their benefits before closure, the authorities have created job opportunities, provided education, conducted vocational training courses and provided capital to the IDPs so that they can stand on their own feet.

Regarding the IDP camps in Rakhine State, the Kofi Annan Commission's report has suggested the closure of the IDP camps.

During the term of the incumbent government, work had started to close down the displaced persons camps starting May 2016. The Central Committee for Implementation of Peace, Stability and Development in Rakhine State was formed, and a work committee was created to conduct the closing procedures.

Under the leadership of the Union Government, efforts to close the IDP camps would be made with added momentum, while a strategic plan to close the camps that will be of acceptable international standard is being considered. ■

By Zarche Hla Than (Environmental Conservation Department)

WORLD Environment Day (WED) is held every year on June 5 around the world. The WED was established by the UN General Assembly in 1972 on the first day of the Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment. Thus it has been 46 years since WED was held in 1972, and it has grown to become a global platform for public outreach that is widely celebrated across the world.

History

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) was formed with the aim of coordinating the environmental activities among the nations and organizations, and assisting the countries in providing technical assistance, sound policies and practices.

Since its inception in 1974, the UNEP has celebrated for the first time with a slogan, and developed into a global platform for raising awareness and taking action on increasingly urgent issues from marine pollution and global warming to sustainable consumption. Since 1987, the UNEP has been marked World Environment Day in many cities across the world. India is the global host of 2018 World Environment Day this year.

Around the world, 1 million plastic drinking bottles are purchased every minute. Every year we use up to 500 billion plastic bags. In total, 50 per cent of the plastic we use is single use.

There are so many things that we can do – from asking the restaurants you frequent to stop using plastic straws, to bringing your own coffee mug to work, to pressuring your local authorities to improve how they manage your city's waste.

Nearly one third of the plastic packaging we use escapes collection systems, which means that it ends up clogging our city streets and polluting our natural environment.

Every year, up to 8 million



tons of plastic may leak into our oceans, where it smothers coral reefs and threatens vulnerable marine wildlife.

According to the record conducted in 2010, it has shown that the plastic that stores in the ground can persist from 500-100 years whereas the plastic that ends up in the oceans can persist for up to 1,000 years before it fully disintegrates.

Plastic also makes its way into our water supply – and thus into our bodies because plastics contain a number of chemicals, many of which are toxic or disrupt hormones, and it can also serve as a magnet for other pollutants, including dioxins, metals and pesticides.

Plastic Pollution

Plastic pollution is regarded as one of the greatest threats to ocean health in the world. According to the 2010 records, it's estimated that plastic waste between 4.8-12.7 million tons of plastic waste can enter the oceans each year — enough to cover every foot of coastline on the planet.

In the ocean, plastic pollution can impact countless marine species, habitats, coastlines and beautiful beaches worldwide.

One of the reasons that plastic pollution is such a problem is that it doesn't go away for many years. Instead, plastic debris simply breaks down into ever-smaller particles, known as micro plastics, whose environmental impacts are still being determined.

Everyone can do something to reduce the amount of plastic that enters the ocean. It is difficult for us to stop waste production entirely, but we can make a significant contribution to save energy and natural resources, and can reduce pollution.

Ways To Reduce Pollution

3 Rs —Reducing, Reusing and Recycling

Reducing—Try to reduce the amount of waste you produce, as this is the best way to help the environment!

Reusing— Think of ways you could reuse something, like shredding paper for your hamster rather than buying bedding

or saving glass jars for storage.

Recycling

This can enable the materials you throw away to be used again by making them into new products.

National-level Waste Items Management Policy and Strategy

The Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation has performed emphatically the tasks of reducing the climate change, fighting against the formation of deserts, conservation of different biological species.

The Ministry has drawn up a National-level Waste Items Management Policy and Strategy (2017-2030), with a view towards supporting city-level strategies and actions, so that it can serve as a principal framework for waste policies and practices across the country. The national-level environmental policy covers three strategic areas — clean environment and health, functioning ecosystems,

sustainable development and mainstreaming environmental protection and management.

Beat Plastic Pollution

Each World Environment Day is organized around a theme that focuses attention on a particularly pressing environmental concern. The theme for 2018, “Beat Plastic Pollution,” is a call to action for all of us to come together to combat one of the great environmental challenges of our time.

It's time for us to consider how we can make changes in our everyday lives to reduce the heavy burden of plastic pollution on our natural places, our wildlife – and our own health.

While plastic has many valuable uses, we have become over reliant on single-use or disposable plastic – with severe environmental consequences.

The World Environment Day is a United Nations-led annual event aimed at bringing awareness to the destructive effects of natural resource extraction pollution and the need to protect biodiversity.

It is a day of everyone around the globe and it is celebrate with the aim of actively participating in the protecting of our earth. Moreover the World Environment Day is a day of everyone around the world to take ownership of their environment and to actively engage in the protection of our earth.

Efforts should be made to focus on environment conditions and encourage people to be the active part of positive changes in the earth's environment to ensure its safe future. Hence cooperation is of vital importance to take a concrete action to beat Plastic Pollution. Let's all help to clean up our environment! ■

Translated by William Ko

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- (2) vietnamnews.vn (21.04.2018)
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Rain to increase in Yangon, Ayeyawady, Taninthayi

THERE is a likelihood of more rainfall in the Yangon, Ayeyawady and Taninthayi regions, and Kayin and Mon states, as monsoon is moderate to strong over the Andaman Sea and South Bay and weak to moderate elsewhere over the Bay of Bengal, according to the Myanmar Daily weather report issued by the Department of Meteorology and Hydrology yesterday.

The forecast for Yangon, Mandalay and the neigh-

boursing areas for today is isolated rain or thundershowers, and the degree of certainty is 100 per cent, whereas for Nay Pyi Taw and the neighbouring area it is one or two rain or thundershowers with a sunny period, and the degree of certainty is 100 per cent.

Seas will be moderate in Myanmar's waters. The wave height will be some four-seven feet off and along the Myanmar coast. —GNLM ■

Myanmar Daily Weather Report

(Issued at 7:00 pm Sunday 3rd June, 2018)

BAY INFERENCE: Monsoon is moderate over the Andaman Sea and Bay of Bengal.

FORECAST VALID UNTIL AFTERNOON OF THE 4th JUNE, 2018: Rain or thundershowers will be scattered in Bago Region, Southern Shan, Kayah and Mon States, fairly widespread in Nay Pyi Taw, Lower Sagaing, Mandalay, Magway, Yangon, Ayeyarwady and Taninthayi Regions, Kayin States and widespread in the remaining Regions and States with isolated heavy falls in Upper Sagaing Region, Kachin, Chin and Rakhine States. Degree of certainty is (100%).

STATE OF THE SEA: Sea will be moderate in Myanmar waters. Wave height will be about (4 - 7) feet in off and along Myanmar Coasts.

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Likelihood of increase of rain in Yangon, Ayeyarwady and Taninthayi Regions, Kayin and Mon States.

FORECAST FOR NAYPYITAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 4th JUNE, 2018: One or two rain or thundershowers with sunny period. Degree of certainty is (100%).

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 4th JUNE, 2018: Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 4th JUNE, 2018: Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

Meteorology and Hydrology Department

Invitation to young writers for Sunday section

The Global New Light of Myanmar is accepting submissions of poetry, opinion, articles, essays and short stories from young people for its weekly Sunday Next Generation Platform. Interested candidates can send their works to the **Global New Light of Myanmar** at No. 150, Nga Htat Kyee Pagoda Road, Bahan Township, Yangon or by email to dce@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com with the following information: (1) Sector you wish to be included in (poetry, opinion, etc.), (2) Real name and (if different) your penname, (3) Your level of education, (4) Name of your School/College/University, (5) A written note of declaration that the submitted piece is your original work and has not been submitted to any other news or magazine publishing houses, (6) A color photo of the submitter, (7) Copy of your NRC card, (8) Contact information (email address, mobile number, etc.).— Editorial Department, The Global New Light of Myanmar news office

US isolated as trade outrage roils G7 ministerial meet

WHISTLER (Canada) — Group of Seven finance ministers ended their annual meeting on Saturday with US allies united in condemning Washington's aggressive protectionism, calling on President Donald Trump to reverse his decision to impose punishing metal tariffs.

The lack of common ground meant the dispute would continue into next week's G7 summit in Quebec, Canada, where Trump is expected to face other heads of state as the global economy verges on outright trade conflict.

At this snow-capped mountain resort north of Vancouver, British Columbia, US Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin was the odd man out.

Major trading partners rebuked Trump's multi-front trade offensive while their governments announced countermeasures and legal challenges. One after another, finance ministers and central bankers spoke of exasperation and an abiding sense of betrayal by a longtime ally.

Mnuchin, however, downplayed the disagreements and said the United States was committed to the G7 process.

Announcing the meeting's close, Canadian Finance Minister Bill Morneau said the host government and five others had urged Mnuchin to relay their "unanimous concern and disappointment."

"We said that we were collectively hoping that he would bring the message back of regret and disappointment at the American actions and concern that they are not constructive," said Morneau.

French Finance Minister Bruno Le Maire also expressed France's outrage as the meetings ended.

"I want to make it clear," Le Maire said, "that it is up to the US administration to make the right decisions to alleviate the situation and ease the difficulties."

Avoiding trade war "will depend on the decision the (US) administration is ready to take in the next few days and in the next few hours—I'm not talking about weeks ahead," he added.

German Finance Minister Olaf Scholz told reporters the US tariffs were "a very severe problem" for transatlantic relations.



German Finance Minister Olaf Scholz (C) and his Japanese counterpart Taro Aso (R), attend the opening of the G7 finance ministers and central bank governors conference in Whistler, British Columbia on 31 May, 2018. **PHOTO: AFP**

"No one understands that due to security reasons there should be extra tariffs on steel and aluminum," he said.

Trump's tariffs on America's largest foreign providers of the crucial metals that went into effect on Friday upended the agenda for this normally convivial event for consensus-building among countries that account for about half of global GDP.

No joint final statement emerged from the G7 ministerial meeting, a sign of the strong discord now at the heart of the global economy.

How the White House would deal with this remained unclear.

As the ministers' meet ended, Trump was as bellicose as ever, taking to Twitter to denounce "stupid trade" in which he said the US saw foreign tariffs on its exports without responding in kind.

"When you're almost 800 Billion Dollars a year down on Trade, you can't lose a Trade War! The US has been ripped off by other countries for years on Trade, time to get smart!" he wrote. Counting trade in both goods and services, the US trade deficit was \$566 billion in 2017, a

12 per cent increase marking its highest level since the 2008 Great Recession.

Getting an earful from allies

Chairing a meeting on Friday, Morneau allowed participants to register grievances with Mnuchin one at a time, according to a Canadian source.

Behind closed doors, sources briefed on the talks said Mnuchin listened but spoke little, saying instead the discussion could continue at next week's G7 summit in the French-speaking province of Quebec at which Trump is expected to participate.

Mnuchin said he had informed Trump of his discussions but that trade was only one of many issues on a full agenda.

"These are our most important allies or some of our most important allies. We've had long-standing relationships with all these countries that are very important across all different aspects," Mnuchin told reporters.

"I believe there was a comment out there that this was the G6 plus one. It was not. This was the G7. We believe in the G7."

The week's whirlwind global

developments in trade suggested a quick de-escalation was unlikely. Trump has suggested the 24-year-old North American Free Trade Agreement might be scrapped in favor of seeking bilateral agreements with Canada and Mexico. G7 governments were also digesting Trump's threats to impose tariffs on hundreds of billions of dollars in US auto imports on purported national security grounds.

In China, US Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross was conducting trade talks with Chinese officials even as Washington finalizes planned sanctions on Beijing.

Potential measures include restrictions on Chinese investment in the United States, new export controls and 25 per cent tariffs on about \$50 billion in tech-sector goods.

The talks come despite the Trump administration's apparent announcement last month of a truce with Beijing following talks in Washington last month. China has threatened to hit back with tit-for-tat tariffs on tens of billions of dollars in US goods—as have Canadian, EU and Mexican authorities.—AFP ■

WORLD BRIEFS

Russia's security forces eliminate terrorist ringleader in Dagestan

MOSCOW—Russia's security forces eliminated a terrorist ringleader in a special operation in the North Caucasus Republic of Dagestan, the National Anti-Terror Committee said on Sunday.

"A gang ringleader who put up armed resistance was eliminated in the Tsumadinsky district of Dagestan," the National Anti-Terror Committee said.

The ringleader was complicit in terror-related crimes, the committee added. "Weapons and ammunition were found on the scene of the combat engagement," the National Anti-Terror Committee said.—Tass ■

Bodies of 11 migrants recovered off Tunisian coast

TUNIS, TUNISIA—The bodies of 11 migrants have been recovered and 67 others rescued after their boat began sinking off Tunisia's southern coast, the interior ministry said on Sunday.

Those rescued from the fishing vessel off the coast of southern Sfax province included "Tunisians and foreigners", it said citing an initial toll. The Tunisian national guard and navy units found the ship about 30 kilometres off shore after receiving a distress call at around midnight on Saturday. The ministry said search operations, with the help of military aircraft and divers, were ongoing.—AFP ■

Viet Nam couple stabbed to death in Vegas hotel: police

LOS ANGELES—A Vietnamese tourist couple has been found stabbed to death in their room at the Circus Circus hotel on the Las Vegas Strip, police in the US gambling center said.

"As a result of our initial processing of the room, we are able to confirm that it is definitely a double homicide," Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department Lieutenant Ray Spencer told reporters late Friday. The killings happened overnight Thursday-Friday, he said. The couple were part of a tour group from Vietnam and did not speak English, which complicates the investigation, Spencer said.—AFP ■

Three suspected terrorists arrested in Indonesia's Sumatra

JAKARTA — Indonesian counterterrorism police have arrested three suspected Islamist militants and seized bombs and bomb-making materials from a university on Sumatra Island, according to a police spokesman.

National Police spokesman Setyo Wasisto said via social media the three men, aged between 32 and 34, were detained on Saturday following a raid on a building of the Sociopolitical Science Faculty of Riau Public

University in the Riau provincial capital of Pekanbaru.

At least two pipe bombs and some explosive materials including triacetone triperoxide (TATP), known as Islamic State's explosive of choice, and potassium nitrate were seized from the campus, as well as two bows, eight arrows, a grenade and a rifle.

"The suspects shared information on how to make bombs via a Telegram group and called on other militants to

launch 'amaliyah' (attacks) on the House of Representatives and local legislative councils," Setyo said.

It was not immediately clear if the call was related to a recent amendment of the country's 2003 Antiterrorism Law, which granted the military a bigger counterterrorism role, lengthened the detention period for terror suspects and ensured additional punishment for terrorist acts involving children. — Kyodo News ■



Photo taken on 2 June, 2018 shows explosive materials found during a police raid at a building of the Sociopolitical Science Faculty of the Riau Public University in Sumatra's Riau provincial capital of Pekanbaru. **PHOTO: KYODO NEWS**

Iraq court sentences French woman to life for IS membership

BAGHDAD — An Iraqi court on Sunday sentenced a French woman to life in jail for membership of the Islamic State jihadist group, an AFP reporter at the courthouse said.

Melina Boughedir, a mother of four, was sentenced last February to seven months in prison for "illegal" entry into the country and was set to be deported back to France, but another court ordered her re-trial under Iraq's anti-terrorist law.

The 27-year-old was found guilty on Sunday of belonging to IS.

"I am innocent," Boughedir told the judge in French.

"My husband duped me and then threatened to leave with the children" unless she followed him

to Iraq, where he planned on joining IS, she said.

On Thursday, French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian told French news channel LCI that Boughedir was a "Daesh (IS) terrorist who fought against Iraq" and said she should be tried in Iraq.

This prompted her French lawyers to send a letter of protest to Le Drian, seen by AFP, in which they denounced "unacceptable pressure on the Iraqi judicial system" and "interference".

On Saturday, one of her lawyers, who travelled to Baghdad for the trial, William Bourdon, told AFP that Boughedir's family and her defence team want her to return to France and face a court there.

Boughedir was arrested in the summer of 2017 in Mosul, the capital of IS's self-declared "caliphate".

Her husband is believed to have been killed during a vast operation by US-led coalition-backed Iraqi forces to seize the country's second city back from jihadist control.

In April, an Iraqi court sentenced another French woman, Djamila Boutoutaou, to life in prison for belonging to IS, despite her pleas that she too had been tricked by her husband.

Dozens of French citizens suspected of having joined IS ranks are believed to be in detention in Iraq and neighbouring Syria, including several minors. —AFP ■



This file photo taken on 19 February, 2018, shows French citizen Melina Boughedir carrying her son as she arrives to court in the Iraqi capital Baghdad where on 3 June, 2018 she was sentenced to life in jail for membership of the Islamic State group. **PHOTO: AFP**

India, Pakistan clash on Kashmir border ends brief truce

SRINAGAR (India) — India and Pakistan exchanged fire across the Kashmir border on Sunday, officials said, killing two guards and ending a days-old agreement to honour a ceasefire in the disputed region.

Seven civilians were also injured at Aknoor, near the contested territory's border with Pakistan, in a barrage that claimed the lives of two Indian border officers.

India's Border Security Force said its troops returned fire after Pakistani border rangers in Sialkot fired into Kashmir without provocation in the early hours of Sunday.

"The injured soldiers were immediately evacuated to a military hospital where they later succumbed (to their injuries)," border force spokesman Manoj Yadav told AFP from Jammu, the winter capital of the restive Himalayan region.

Pakistan authorities did not immediately comment on India's allegations or whether any damage was sustained on their side of the border.

The salvo of gun and mortar fire came just four days after Pakistan and India promised to end ceasefire violations in Kashmir.

The two sides had pledged to respect the conditions laid out in a 2003 ceasefire "in letter and spirit" following some of the highest levels of violence

in Kashmir since the pact was signed.

Both sides blame each other for violating the 15-year ceasefire.

Dozens have been killed in border clashes in recent months along the border that divides the territory into zones of Indian and Pakistani control, leaving residents terrified.

The renewed commitment to the ceasefire had encouraged thousands of civilians to return to their homes after weeks of shelling.

Kashmir has been divided since the end of British colonial rule in 1947 and both New Delhi and Islamabad claim the former Himalayan kingdom in full.

India has about 500,000 soldiers in the part of Kashmir it controls, where armed groups are fighting for independence or a merger with Pakistan.

The flare-up along the border comes amid a rise in street riots and militant violence in the Kashmir valley, which witnesses near-daily demonstrations against Indian rule.

New Delhi accuses Pakistan of fuelling an insurgency that has left tens of thousands of civilians dead. Islamabad denies this, saying it only provides diplomatic support to Kashmiris' right to self-determination. —AFP ■

Merkel offers Macron concessions on eurozone reforms

BERLIN — German Chancellor Angela Merkel delivered a long-awaited answer to French President Emmanuel Macron's ambitious call for European Union reforms on Sunday, offering olive branches on investment and help for debt-mired eurozone member states.

More than a year after Macron took office with the stated mission to bolster the EU and make it more responsive to its citizens, Merkel's counter-offer comes at a time of heightened concern about the future of the bloc due to political turmoil in Italy and Spain and transatlantic tensions.

Merkel told the Frankfurt Allgemeine Sonntagszeitung ahead of a crunch EU summit this month that Germany as the eurozone's top economy would support an investment budget whose total would be "at the lower end of the double-digit billions of euros range".

She said the "rainy day fund", as it has been dubbed, would serve to help even out economic imbalances between richer and poorer European countries "which need to catch up in the areas of science, technology and innovation".

"We need quicker economic convergence between the member states," she said.



German Chancellor Angela Merkel unveiled on Sunday her ideas for EU reform in response to French President Emmanuel Macron's urging that the two countries take in the lead in bringing needed change to the bloc. **PHOTO: AFP**

"To do that we have to strengthen investment capability with the help of additional structural policies," she said, adding that the fund would be phased in gradually and then evaluated in terms of its effectiveness.

Although Merkel's budget target falls short of the range proposed by Macron, it represents a concession of sorts to his view that an excess of austerity has undermined faith in the bloc.

'Don't wait, act now'

Merkel also addressed plans to upgrade the European Stability Mechanism (ESM), which oversees bailout loans to troubled member states, such as Greece, into a European Monetary Fund.

"We aim to make ourselves a little more independent of the International Monetary Fund," she said.

She proposed offering short-term credit lines to stricken

countries, but maintained strict conditions for support: "always subject to special conditions of course, for a limited amount and with complete repayment".

Germany and France, traditionally seen as the twin engines of European integration, plan to hold talks before the EU summit at the end of the month to coordinate their positions on reform of the bloc after Britain's exit.

The EU summit is seen as the last chance before European elections in May 2019 to get a few tangible projects on the road and demonstrate to frustrated voters Europe's ability to deliver on its promises.

Macron has repeatedly expressed impatience with what he sees as foot-dragging by Merkel, who was tied up with five months of coalition building after an inconclusive general election in September.

"Don't wait, act now," he said as he picked up a prize in Aachen last month, urging Germany to overcome its "fetish" for budget and trade surpluses and back reforms even if it meant loosening the purse strings.

Anti-German rhetoric

Crises roiling Europe have focused minds in recent days, with a populist and eurosceptic government taking power in Italy

and Spain ousting veteran Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy over a corruption scandal and his Socialist arch-rival Pedro Sanchez taking over.

Transatlantic relations have at the same time grown increasingly rocky due to a series of combative decisions by US President Donald Trump, including scrapping the 2015 Iran nuclear deal and imposing tariffs on steel and aluminium imports.

On Italy, Merkel sounded a conciliatory tone despite the anti-German rhetoric of the governing parties, which have argued that Berlin's austerity policies have helped bring many indebted countries in southern Europe to their knees.

She said she was "absolutely open to talking to the new Italian government about ways to help young people find work" given high levels of youth unemployment.

However Merkel, whose political power has diminished in her fourth term as her ruling majority has shrunk, insisted she would draw the line at German taxpayers assuming responsibility for other nations' debt.

"Solidarity between partners should never lead to a union of debt — it must be about helping others to help themselves," she said.— **AFP** ■

NATO vows to support US-N Korea talks toward denuclearization

SINGAPORE — The North Atlantic Treaty Organization will support negotiations between the United States and North Korea in a bid to achieve denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula in a verifiable manner, according to the deputy chief of the security grouping.

"NATO would be very supportive" of the first-ever US-North Korea summit planned on 12 June in Singapore, Deputy Secretary General Rose Gottemoeller said in a recent interview with Kyodo News.

"We always stress the importance of following UN Security Council resolutions and fulfilling the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula in a verifiable manner to make sure implementation actually takes place," she said.

NATO is willing to "back up the effort in negotiations" between Washington and Pyongyang, Gottemoeller added.

Last year, North Korea, whose formal name is the Dem-

ocratic People's Republic of Korea, fired a ballistic missile that flew over Japan's northernmost main island of Hokkaido in August and carried out a sixth nuclear test — its largest yet — in September.

In November, Pyongyang also test-fired what it claimed is a more powerful intercontinental ballistic missile capable of striking anywhere in the United States with a nuclear warhead.

Gottemoeller said, "When we saw the missile test programme last summer followed by a nuclear test in September, it really was a wakeup call for NATO allies." "It became evident that DPRK long-range missiles are capable of striking not only North America but also Europe," she said, adding this is "a global threat, not just a threat that affects the Asia-Pacific region and DPRK's immediate neighbours."

Gottemoeller attended the Asia Security Summit, known as the Shangri-La Dialogue, held

Friday through Sunday in Singapore. It was the first time for NATO, which is primarily focused on the Euro-Atlantic area, to send such a high-ranking official to the key security summit in Asia.

In recent years, the Western alliance has been trying to become more involved in the Asia-Pacific region, amid growing fears about terrorism, energy security, cyberattacks and maritime security as well as North Korea's nuclear weapons ambitions.

Indeed, the 29-member NATO has been deepening relations with countries outside the Euro-Atlantic region like Japan, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand, designating them as "global partners."

"We are definitely welcome to expand communications (with Asian nations) so that we can have good dialogue on so many issues on mutual concerns," Gottemoeller said. NATO is "very pleased" to have more informal dialogue and joint projects with

countries in the Asia-Pacific region, including Japan, she said, expressing hope for Tokyo's contribution on the economic front.

As for China's military buildup in the South China Sea, Gottemoeller called on Beijing to abide by the international rules-based order.

"This is not just benefit to the US, to NATO and to Japan. It is a benefit to China as well" in terms of the economy and national security, Gottemoeller said.

At the 17th annual meeting, defense officials from around 50 countries, including the United States and those in Asia and Europe, discussed security issues in the Asia-Pacific region.

Gottemoeller took up her position as NATO's No 2 in October 2016, prior to which she served as an undersecretary at the US State Department, handling arms control issues, for around five years. NATO was founded by 12 original member states in 1949 as a military alliance to



Rose Gottemoeller, deputy secretary general of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, speaks in an interview in Singapore on 2 June, 2018. **PHOTO: KYODO NEWS**

protect Western Europe against the threat from the now-defunct Soviet Union. Its headquarters is in Brussels.

Article 5 of NATO's founding treaty stipulates that an attack on one or more of its member states is considered an attack against the whole alliance, and help can be extended to allies that are attacked.—**Kyodo News** ■

Philippines' Duterte tells UN expert to 'go to hell'

MANILA — President Rodrigo Duterte on Sunday told a United Nations rights expert to “go to hell” over criticism of the Philippine leader for threatening the country’s top judge.

Duterte’s latest profanity-laced diatribe came after Diego Garcia-Sayan, the UN special rapporteur on the independence of

judges and lawyers, said the president’s statements against former chief justice Maria Lourdes Sereno were a “vicious attack” on the judiciary.

Sereno’s colleagues voted to remove her from office last month, shortly after Duterte openly called her his “enemy” and demanded her swift ouster.

“Tell him (Garcia-Sayan) not to interfere with the affairs of my country. He can go to hell,” Duterte told reporters in Manila, insisting he had nothing to do with Sereno’s dismissal.

“He is not a special person and I do not recognise his rapporteur title.”

Duterte, 73, has lashed out in the past — often using less-than-parliamentary language — at critics of the deadly drug war he launched soon after coming to power in 2016.

Several of his opponents have since been ousted, punished or threatened.

Police say they have

killed 4,279 drug suspects in the anti-narcotics campaign but rights groups believe the actual number is three times higher.

Sereno was one of the few remaining high-profile critics of the crackdown at the time of her ouster.

The UN’s Garcia-Sayan said Friday that Duterte’s public threats

against Sereno appeared to have had a “chilling effect” on her colleagues in the judiciary.

“The use of such derogatory language... sends a clear message to all judges of the Philippines: in the so-called ‘war on drugs’, you’re either with me or against me,” Garcia-Sayan said.—AFP ■

China warns US against tariffs as trade talks end

BELJING — China warned the US that any deals reached during ongoing trade talks would be void if Washington went ahead with imposing tariffs on Chinese goods, as the latest round of negotiations ended on Sunday in Beijing.

The third round of trade talks between the world’s two largest economies appeared to fall short of bridging the gap between Beijing and Washington, which are at loggerheads over Chinese trade and industrial policy practices that US President Donald Trump says kill American jobs.

“If the US introduces trade sanctions including tariff increases, all economic and trade achievements negotiated by the two parties so far will be void,” said a Chinese government statement issued by the official Xinhua news agency.

The discussions in Beijing, led by US Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross and



The US and China have been at loggerheads over trade and industrial practices for months. **PHOTO: AFP**

Chinese Vice Premier Liu He, were intended to ease tensions after Washington said Tuesday it would follow through with tariffs on Chinese imports despite a truce reached between the two sides last month.

The consensus reached in Washington called on China to increase agricultural and energy imports from the US. Beijing

said “positive and concrete progress” was made on those issues with details left for “both sides to finalise”.

The visit from the large US delegation, with members from several executive branch agencies, came as fears of an all-out global trade war intensified after the European Union, Canada and

Mexico drew up retaliatory measures to Washington’s stinging steel and aluminium tariffs that went into effect on Friday.

On Saturday, Washington’s main allies delivered a unified message of shock and dismay at a Group of Seven ministerial meeting, urging President Trump to rescind the punishing metal tariffs.—AFP ■

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Johansson on 'no place to hide,' Time's Up and music

LOS ANGELES — "There's really no place to hide." So says Scarlett Johansson, movie maven, Avengers heroine and millionaire Hollywood actress as she contemplates the Time's Up revolution following the demise of Harvey Weinstein.

"It's quite shocking to see the results of that. It's all very new."

Aged 33 and best known for her roles in "Lost in Translation," "The Avengers" and three Woody Allen films, she has already been in the film industry more than two decades and reportedly commands equivalent pay with male co-stars.

She has also modeled and is known for her activism, advocating for Planned Parenthood, addressing the 2017 Women's March and appearing at the 2012 Democratic National Convention, calling for Barack Obama's re-election.

Johansson is also a mother and when not doing everything else, she's singing about the aftermath of a failed relationship in her latest collaboration with singer-songwriter Pete Yorn. Their EP, "Apart," came out on Friday.

"It's been really impressive," she says, smart casual in a pair of high-waisted pale denim jeans and cream pussy-bow blouse, cheek bones to die for,

as she contemplates the repercussions of Weinstein's fall from grace, the sexual harassment watershed of #MeToo and the creation of the Time's Up movement.

"I've been in the film industry for such a long time that I'm like these conversations are really important and they're revolutionary."

Born and raised in New York, Johansson is one of those stars who can seemingly turn her hand at anything. A child actress who delivered critically acclaimed performances, her breakthrough role as an adult was in "Lost in Translation."

She's done Broadway. Now she's box-office gold, starring in some of Hollywood's biggest blockbusters, such as "Iron Man 2" and "The Avengers" franchise — a stand-alone project for her Black Widow character in the works.

'Doors blown open'

Then there are her Ivanka Trump parodies on "Saturday Night Live."

To those who feel progress isn't coming quickly enough, she counsels patience.

"It's a long process and you have to keep your eye on the prize, and you have to be patient and progressive and persistent and you keep moving forward,"



Pete Yorn, left, and Scarlett Johansson have launched their new extended play record "Apart". PHOTO: AFP

she tells AFP during a recent interview with Yorn to promote "Apart."

"Certainly in the film industry, I think there's conversations that are being had today about projects and the importance of diversity," she says. "Ten years ago, nobody was talking about this stuff."

"Every once in a while you'd hear someone say, 'oh we should bring a female voice onto this project' and you were like, 'what the hell does that mean?'"

"That was may be somebody's idea to bring a woman into the writer's room, or whatever. But now the doors are blown wide open," she adds.

The EP is five indie tracks

focused on the aftermath of a failed relationship — "where all the juicy stuff is," in the words of Yorn. It comes out on Capitol Records a decade after their first album, "Break Up," in 2009.

"In 'Iguana Bird,' the chorus is 'la-la-la-love-you' and I remember thinking 'oh wow, Scarlett would sound so pretty on that' and she came in and she did, so that was like a dream come true," he says.

'Deeply wrong'

The EP was recorded in downtown Los Angeles, with Johansson laying down her vocals in one afternoon, squeezed around her crazy schedule.

"Scarlett has an amazing work ethic," says Yorn. "She's

just super pro." Johansson says music is just another way to express herself.

If Yorn obsessed as a New Jersey teenager over bands such as The Smiths, REM and Joy Division, Johansson, growing up in New York, was exposed to more jazz. "It's all coming from mostly here," she says, pointing to her gut. "Sometimes here," she gestures to the heart. "Mostly here," she smiles, back to the gut.

Johansson has, so far at least, not joined the list of actors to distance themselves from Allen over accusations — unproven — that he molested his adopted daughter Dylan when she was seven, a quarter of a century ago.—AFP ■

Priyanka Chopra, Nick Jonas snapped together for the first time since dating rumours

LOS ANGELES — Priyanka Chopra and Nick Jonas were photographed for the first time since reports of their alleged relationship went viral on the social media.

According to E! News, the duo has been spending a lot of time together lately and were seen enjoying multiple dates over Memorial Day weekend.

The "Quantico" star and the "Chains" hitmaker were spotted attending the 'Beauty and the Beast Live in Concert' at the Hollywood Bowl. In one of the pictures, Chopra, 35, was seen stepping out of a car with Jonas opening the door for her, while in other, she was seen

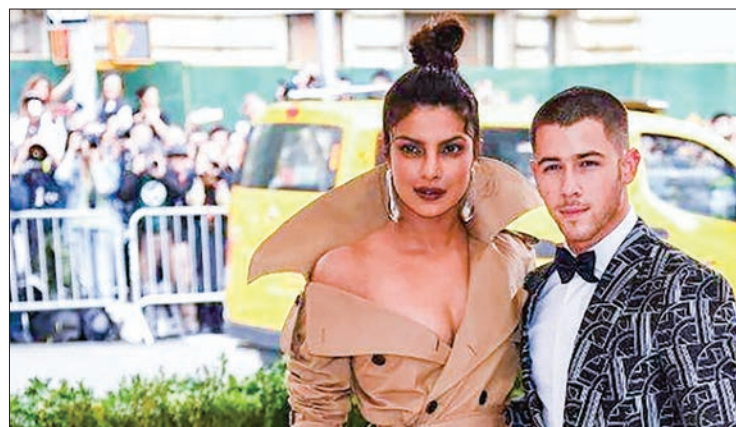
walking ahead of him.

A video also appeared online that showed the rumoured couple walking to their seats at a Dodgers baseball game together.

"They were both very happy and smiley and seemed to really be enjoying each other's company. They didn't show any PDA, just talking and laughing a lot," a spectator at the game told E! News.

Chopra and Jonas, 25, were also captured spending time with Glen Powell, Wilmer Valderrama and Chord Overstreet over the holiday weekend.

They were also seen hav-



Priyanka Chopra and Nick Jonas during 2017 Met Gala. PHOTO: AFP

ing a dinner date at Toca Mad-era in West Hollywood, where they cosied up on the garden patio and munched on guacamole, the Ceviche Verde,

chicken tacos and the Japanese Wagyu Beef.

"Nick and Priyanka couldn't keep their hands off each other last night at din-

ner. They were cuddling and enjoying each other's company at their table.

"At one point, they were even dancing together in their seats. It was really cute and they were definitely affectionate. They made it clear they were a couple," a source told E! News.

The duo, who posed for photos on the red carpet together in Ralph Lauren designs at the 2017 Met Gala, is yet to comment on the rumours.

Chopra later told Jimmy Kimmel on his show, "We were both wearing Ralph Lauren and we decided to go together and have fun.—PTI ■

Art competition by Pyay District Anti Narcotic Drug Association held

TO mark the 21st International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, that falls on 26th June, the Painting, Cartoon, Poster and computerized painting competitions, organized by the Pyay District Anti Narcotic Drug Association, were held at the No. (1) Basic Education

High School in Pyay Town, Bago Region yesterday with students from Pyay District taking part the competitions.

At the event, Police Lieutenant Colonel Myint Aye and officials looked around and encouraged the contestants.

The celebration of the

International Day against Drug Abuse and illicit Trafficking was established by the UN in 1987, to emphasize the need for strengthening actions in support to an international community free of drugs, in all countries. —Maung Shwe Win(Pyay) ■



The Students are taking part in painting completion for marking the 21st International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking. PHOTO: MAUNG SHWE WIN (PYAY)

Artists awarded in Kathmandu for promoting Nepali culture

KATHMANDU — The Nepal Academy of Fine Arts, a government body formed to promote Nepali arts, hosted Araniko Art Promotion Special Award 2018 on Saturday, where two late Nepali artists and one collector from China were awarded.

Sher Bahadur Tamang, Nepali minister for law, justice and parliamentary affairs, felicitated family members of the two late artists and Qiao Guojin, the Chinese award-winner, amid a function with fanfare in the capital of Kathmandu.

The award was established under the name of famous Nepali architect Araniko, who was born in the Kathmandu Valley in 1244 and spent over 40 years in the Yuan Dynasty of China, where he built many temples and promoted Nepali Buddhist arts.

Among them the most famous one is White Stupa at Miaoying Temple in Beijing.

Qiao has been involved in promoting Nepali Thankas (a Tibetan Buddhist painting on cotton or silk usually depict-

ing Buddha) and traditional Newari arts (art associated with the indigenous community of Kathmandu Valley) in China for a decade.

Upon receiving the award, Qiao, chairman of a cultural company, said the award was not just the recognition of his contribution to promote Nepali arts and culture, but it was also the responsibility to work toward deepening ties between the two countries in arts and culture.

“Under the initiative of the Belt and Road Initiative, the two countries could deepen culture exchanges further,” the 49-year-old art-lover said while receiving the award.

Ragini Grela Upadhya, chancellor of the Nepal Academy of Fine Arts, told the audience that Newari arts are unique, but to create art works alone is not enough, there must be strong marketing to promote them all over the world including China, which is what Qiao and his Chinese friends have been doing for a long time. —Xinhua ■

WAVE OF POLLUTION Public Art in Yangon Featured as Part of UN Environment #BeatPlasticPollution Initiative

MYANMAR-based artist Don Wright's WAVE OF POLLUTION art installation is one of 12 large-scale art installations created from plastic waste that will be unveiled in a dozen cities across Asia and the Pacific as part of UN Environment's World Environment Day celebrations on 5 June. These temporary exhibits will bring attention to the plastic waste crisis as part of this year's World Environment Day theme of “Beat Plastic Pollution”.

Erik Solheim, Head of UN Environment said. “The world is waking up to the fact that plastic pollution is one of the most urgent environmental issues of our time, but that it's also something that we can solve. This year's World Environment Day is therefore a call to action for all of us.”

As part of the series of installations, in Yangon, artist Don Wright has partnered grassroots movement Thant Myanmar to create WAVE OF POLLUTION

from used plastic bottles and bags to raise awareness of the pollution of Myanmar's rivers and oceans. WAVE OF POLLUTION will be displayed at Junction City Mall in downtown Yangon. Visitors are invited to view the exhibition from today.

Wright said, “After living in Yangon for six years, I've noticed plastic pollution is getting worse every year. The installation displays a wave of pollution that is flowing into and polluting our water ways and shows that we need to reduce our plastic waste to keep our rivers and oceans clean.”

Other installations are planned in Auckland, Bali, Bangkok, Beijing, Davao City, Hong Kong, Manila, Seoul, Shanghai, Singapore, and Tokyo.

Visitors to the exhibitions are asked to join an international game of social media tag to show how they will help #BeatPlasticPollution.



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

Artwork ranges from abstract to whimsical to cultural. In Bali, a 5-metre traditional ogoh-ogoh statue built of collected plastic waste will loom large over Sanur beach, while in Hong Kong a giant 350-kilogram sphere of melted plastic will make landfall

in Central. In Bangkok, visitors to Central World mall will be able to pass through 7 massive gates made from tens of thousands of plastic bags.

“Beat Plastic Pollution”, the theme for World Environment Day 2018, is a call to action for all

of us to come together to combat one of the great environmental challenges of our time.

Plastic waste is a truly international problem that demands urgent action on the part of business, government and individuals. —GNLM ■

Myanmar invites 3 football powerhouses for Invitation Cup

As part of its preparation for the 2018 Asian Games, the Myanmar Football Federation (MFF) has invited three football powerhouses of Asia and ASEAN to play against the Myanmar U-23 national football team at the MFF Invitation Cup 2018.

All the matches will be

played at the Mandalay Thiri Stadium in Mandalay, which will start from 1 to 5 August.

The Myanmar U-19 team will play in the invitation cup with the Bahrain U-23, Korea Republic U-19 and Thailand U-23 teams, according to the MFF.

The exact fixtures for

the matches will be released soon, said an official from MFF.

"We want to thank all the officials from the MFF and its Chairman U Zaw Zaw who are doing their best for the development of the Myanmar national football teams by inviting football giants, including the Korea

Republic U-19 team," said Zin Ko Htun (alias) Hector Tun from Mandalay.

"The people in Mandalay are really enthusiastic about supporting the Myanmar football teams, and everyone can see that there is a full stadium for every match," he added. Lynn Thit (Tgi) ■

Myanmar in Group B of AFF U-19 Championship

THE Myanmar U-19 boys' national football team is preparing to participate in the AFF U-19 Championship 2018 that will be hosted in Surabaya, Indonesia, starting from 1 to 14 July.

The 11 teams participating in the tournament will be divided into Group A and Group B. The Myanmar U-19 team is in Group-B, along with Malaysia, East Timor, Cambodia and Brunei. Hosts Indonesia are pooling in Group A, along with Thailand, Vietnam, Singapore, the Philippines and Laos. According to the fixture released by the championship organising committee, Myanmar will play East Timor on 1 July and Cambodia on 5 July. On 7 July, Myanmar U-19 will play against Brunei Darussalam and on 9 July, they will play Malaysia. All the matches of Myanmar U-19 will be played at the Gelora Joko Samudro Stadium in Gresik, East Java, Indonesia.—Lynn Thit (Tgi)

Nadal, Halep sweep into last 16, Maria and Williams set up spotlight clash

PARIS — World number one Rafael Nadal and Simona Halep secured their berths in singles last 16 through straight sets at the 2018 French Open here on Saturday.

Maria Sharapova and Serena Williams, two headline

women players at Roland Garros, set up their highly-anticipated contention in the fourth round.

Ten-time winner Nadal swept home favorite Richard Gasquet 6-3, 6-2, 6-2, extending his winning streak in head-to-

head to 16 matches.

Nadal stormed to a 5-0 lead at the start, while conceding three consecutive games to 27th-seeded Gasquet due to unforced errors.

Nadal held his serves in the ninth game, and never seemed

contested in the following two sets. The Spaniard set up a round-of-16 clash with unseeded German Maximilian Marterer, who previously knocked out Canadian promising star Denis Shapovalov in the second round.—Xinhua ■

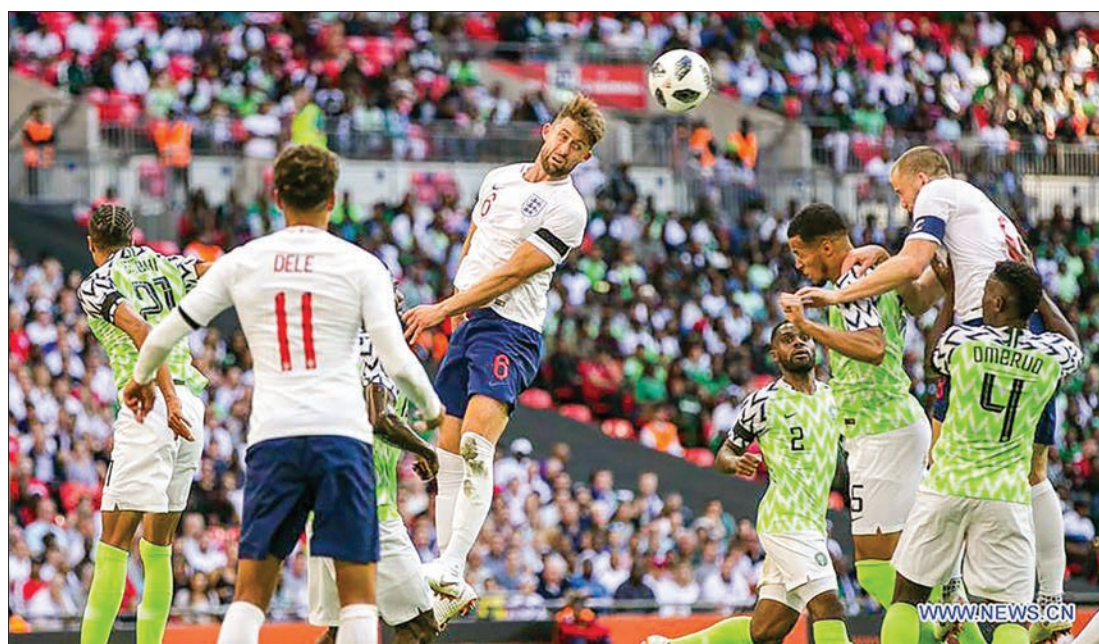
England beat Nigeria at World Cup warm-up match

LONDON — England beat Nigeria 2-1 in a World Cup warm-up match at Wembley on Saturday.

Chelsea centre back Gary Cahill opened the scoring for the Three Lions by heading home Kieran Trippier's corner after just six minutes of the game. England captain Harry Kane drilled a low shot past Nigerian goalie Francis Uzoho from the edge of the area just before the break after collecting a pass from Raheem Sterling. Dele Alli was greeted by jeers from the Nigerian fans from the start. The Spurs man, born in England, could have been eligible to represent the Super Eagles with his father being Nigerian.

Arsenal's Alex Iwobi made it 2-1 only two minutes by firing home the rebound after Odion Ighalo hit the post.

England boss Gareth Southgate told ITV: "I think we played really well, with the ball especially. Far more good situations



Gary Cahill (C) of England heads for the ball during the International Friendly Football match between England and Nigeria at Wembley Stadium in London, Britain on 2 June, 2018. England won 2-1. PHOTO: XINHUA

than in recent games. We were deservedly two goals up in the first half. The period leading up to their goal, they changed their system and we took some time

to adjust. But after that we dealt with it well. It was a decent exercise for us to adjust to that. "England will host Costa Rica in Leeds on 7 June before flying to Russia,

where they open the World Cup against Group G rivals Tunisia on 18 June. Nigeria, in Group D, will play their first game on 16 June.—Xinhua ■

Noguchi wins 3rd straight bouldering World Cup event

TOKYO — Japan's Akiyo Noguchi won the women's championship in the fifth event of the bouldering World Cup season on Sunday. Her victory at Esporta Arena Hachioji in western Tokyo was Noguchi's third straight win on the circuit, while compatriot Miho Nonaka finished runner-up for the fourth straight time.

They completed the three problems in the six-woman final, but Noguchi earned the win by needing fewer attempts. Futaba Ito, a 16-year-old competing in her first World Cup season, reached her first final, and finished sixth.

In the men's division, 2016 overall champion Tomoa Narasaki was runner-up behind Italy's Gabriele Moroni. Japan's Rei Sugimoto was third, while Kai Harada was sixth.—Kyodo News ■