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THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

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President U Win Myint welcomes Mr. Peter Maurer, president of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in Nay Pyi Taw. **PHOTO: MNA**

President U Win Myint holds talks with ICRC President

PRESIDENT U Win Myint received Mr. Peter Maurer, President of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), yesterday afternoon at the Presidential Palace in Nay Pyi Taw.

During the meeting, they exchanged views and discussed matters related to the status of expanding ICRC operations, works carried out by ICRC in Rakhine, Shan and Kachin states, along with humanitarian aid, as well as social, economic and health rehabilitation for returnees and their families

Present at the meeting were Union Ministers Dr. Myint Htwe, Dr. Win Myat Aye and U Kyaw Tin, Deputy Minister Maj-Gen Aung Thu and other officials.—MNA ■

State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi welcomes Mr. Peter Maurer, president of the International Committee of the Red Cross. **PHOTO: MNA**

State Counsellor receives ICRC President Mr. Peter Maurer

STATE Counsellor and Union Minister for Foreign Affairs Daw Aung San Suu Kyi received Mr. Peter Maurer, President of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), yesterday at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Nay Pyi Taw.

During the meeting, they discussed progress in cooperation between Myanmar and the ICRC in providing humanitarian assistance and improving the conditions of prisons in Myanmar. They also exchanged views on transitioning from providing emergency humanitarian aid to creating small businesses for communities to earn their own income for long-term socioeconomic development in Rakhine State, providing assistance for facilitation of ICRC activities and current and future cooperation between Myanmar and the ICRC.—MNA ■

55th Myanmar Gems Emporium concludes

Merchants evaluate a jade stone at the 55th Myanmar Gems Emporium in Nay Pyi Taw. **PHOTO: MNA**

THE tenth and final day of the 2018 55th Myanmar Gems Emporium concluded yesterday at Mani Yandana Jade Hall in Nay Pyi Taw.

The Emporium lasted for 10 days, during which 5,259 jade lots worth 423.118 million euros, were sold to merchants.

Out of 6,795 jade lots, 973 jade lots worth 38.531 million euros were sold on 24 June; 833 jade lots worth 74.122 million euros were sold on 25 June; 818 jade lots worth 86.866 million euros were sold on 26 June; 892 jade lots worth 52.441 million euros were sold on 27 June; 925 jade lots worth 118.691 million euros were sold on 28 June; and 818 jade lots worth 52.467 million euros were sold on 29 June. All sales were to merchants, and carried out under an open tender system.

Of 360 pearl lots, 341 lots worth 2.598 million euros were sold between June 20 and 21. Out of 336 pearl lots, 69 lots worth 1.379 million euros were sold under the open tender system on 23 June.—Aung Ye Thwain ■

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Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker arrives back as he concludes visit to People's Republic of China

Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than (Centre) is welcomed by Yangon Region Hluttaw Speaker U Tin Maung Tun (Left) and Chinese Ambassador Mr. Hong Liang (Right). **PHOTO: MNA**

A delegation led by Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than arrived back in Yangon yesterday after visiting China.

They were greeted at Yangon International Airport by Yangon Region Hluttaw Speaker U Tin Maung Tun, Deputy Speaker U Lin Naing Myint, Ambassador of China to Myanmar Mr. Hong Liang, and officials from the Hluttaw office.

Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than visited the China-Myanmar friendship tree planted in Mangshi, Dehong Prefecture, People's Republic of China, on 28 June and exchanged gifts with officials.

Later, the Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker and delegation attended a luncheon hosted by Mr. Wang Junqiang, secretary of the Communist Party of China Dehong Prefecture, at the Mangshi Hotel, Mangshi.

Also, Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than visited Dehong teachers' training school and a paper cutting art exhibition, and took commemorative group photos with officials who guided them.

Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker left Kunming International Airport for Myanmar yesterday morning and were seen off by member of the National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China Mr. Dan Zhu Aug Ben, Yunnan Provincial People's Congress Vice Chairman Mr. Li Pei and officials, along with Myanmar Ambassador to China U Thit Lin Ohn, Kunming-based Myanmar Consul-General U Soe Paing and officials.—Myanmar News Agency ■

Chairman of MIC meets Hong Kong Chief Executive

Promotion of Bilateral Trade and Investment discussed

CHAIRMAN of Myanmar Investment Commission, National Security Advisor, Union Minister U Thaung Tun called on Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Mrs. Carrie Lam Cheng Yuet-ngor yesterday and discussed matters relating to promotion of trade and investment as well as to strengthen cooperation in various fields. In the meeting, the Union Minister underlined that he chose Hong Kong as first port of call in his capacity as a newly appointed Chairman to indicate that Myanmar attaches great importance to Hong Kong as its strategic partner to promote "responsible investment".

He also met with the Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development Mr. Edward Yau and exchanged views on the Belt and Road Initiative and trade and investment opportunities under the framework ASEAN-Hong Kong Free Trade Agreement.

The Union Minister had working lunch with Vice Chairman and Chief Executive of Bank of China in Hong Kong Mr. Gao Yingxin.

During the rest of his stay in Hong Kong, he will meet with Commissioner from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China Mr. Xie Feng.

Union Minister U Thaung Tun discusses with Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Mrs. Carrie Lam Cheng Yuet-ngor yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

Chairman of MIC Union Minister U Thaung Tun, leading a 6 member delegation, has been in Hong Kong since 26 June to attend the 3rd Belt and Road Summit 2018 and related meetings organized by Hong Kong Trade Development Council from June 27 to 29.

The Belt and Road Summit, held in Hong Kong from 27 to 29 June 2018, was organized by Hong Kong Trade Development Council. It was attended by more than 5000 participants from Hong Kong, Macao and 55 countries including Ministers, Deputy Ministers, high ranking representatives from government, legislative council and private sector, Entrepreneurs, scholars and media.

Delivering a keynote speech at the Belt and Road Global Forum, Union Minister U Thaung Tun said "This gathering is an excellent opportunity for all of us to meet and learn more about the business opportunities before us and investment trends along the Belt and Road".

The Union Minister discussed as a panelist at the Luncheon Plenary of the Belt and Road Summit, chaired by Mr. Edward Yau Tang-wah, Secretary of Commerce and Economic Development Bureau, together with Ministers and Deputy Ministers from Georgia, Britain and Cambodia. It was attended by more than 5000 participants from all over the world.

He spoke of how the government has taken significant steps to improve the business and investment environment in Myanmar and emphasized that:

"Myanmar is now open for business. MIC, under new management, will be transparent, take proactive approach and seek to promote responsible investment"

"business opportunities are still abundant and the critical need for foreign direct investment remains. For investors, these challenges can be turned into opportunities"

At the Belt and Road Summit, Union Minister delivered keynote speeches at Myanmar Investment Roundtable as well as Myanmar Promotion Seminar. He also underscored immerse business opportunities exist between Myanmar and Hong Kong.—MNA

MSME products from Shan, Kayah states exhibited in Taunggyi

Vice President U Myint Swe views handicrafts from Kayah State exhibited in Taunggyi. **PHOTO: MNA**

An exhibit of local products made by local micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) in Shan and Kayah States was opened yesterday in Taunggyi by Small and Medium Enterprises Development Committee (SMEDC) Chairman Vice President U Myint Swe.

Speaking on the occasion, Vice President U Myint Swe called on local MSMEs to seize the opportunity of getting help for technology and market information through discussions with officials of the departments concerned and experts during the exhibition.

"Local MSMEs should prepare to be able to grasp the opportunities brought by the exhibition and to exhibit significant and strong points of their products. Local MSMEs are urged to make the best use this opportunity to attract customers, to find markets, to improve the quality of their products and to improve their creative thinking," said Vice President U Myint Swe.

"The State is giving priority to development of MSMEs and is assisting in promoting human resources, technology transfer and good services and quality of products so that they can produce marketable products which can compete with imported products," he added.

As SME development agency meetings are being held during the exhibition period, practical assistance and support for the development of SMEs in the region could be done through discussions and coordination between stakeholders and MSME businesses. Kayah State and Shan State are agro-based states exporting agricultural products.

The two hilly states also possess cultural heritage and natural beauty that has resulted in some tourism to the area.

The two states possess favourable infrastructure, transportation, sufficient power supply and peace and stability, all necessary for the development of industry and economy, said the Vice President.

MSMEs in Myanmar need to strive for expanding their markets from local to foreign and need to know marketable quality, packaging and design.

The Vice President also urged the MSMEs in Myanmar to apply digital technology in their businesses when they carry out trading and services.

Furthermore, by conducting research, innovation and increasing of sales through cooperation with relevant departments, quality marketable products should be produced. Relevant departments would also assist and support in creating new markets.

Present at the ceremony were SMEDC Vice Chairman Union Minister U Khin Maung Cho, Union Minister for Commerce Dr. Than Myint, Chief Minister of Kayah State U L Phaung Sho, Chief Minister of Shan State Dr. Lin Htut, members of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (UMFCCI) President and members, work committee members, departmental officials, technicians, experts, MSME business owners and officials

The first exhibition and competition jointly organized by MSMEs from Mandalay Region and Kachin State was held in Mandalay on 23 February 2018.

The second exhibition and competition jointly organized by MSMEs from Magway Region, Chin State and Rakhine State was held in Magway on 24 March 2018.

The third was held in Ayeyawady Region in May.

Exhibitions of MSME products and Regional Award competitions will continue to be held state- and region-wise.

In the Regional Award competition, first, second and third prizes will be presented according to business sizes: micro, small and medium.

At the final closing ceremony of the competition, winners of the Regional Awards will be presented with a union-level recognized Regional Award.

With regards to the economy, the State economic policy includes supporting and assisting MSMEs that create jobs and support economic development, in addition to the State privatizing enterprises that could be reformed.

Following the ceremony, Vice President U Myint Swe visited the exhibition and attended a ceremony to open an SME Centre held at the SMIDB Bank in Taunggyi.—Myanmar News Agency ■

Local, foreign media visit Taung Pyo Letwe Reception Centre

A MEDIA group made up of local and foreign journalists arrived at the Taung Pyo Letwe Reception Centre, having traveled from Maungtaw yesterday morning.

While at the Reception Centre, the members of the media gathered news about the work being undertaken to receive returnees, and visited the Myanmar-Bangladesh border bridge. Also, the media interviewed people living near the border of the two countries. In the evening, the media returned from Maungtaw to Sitway.—Thura Zaw ■

Journalists interview security personnel in Maungtaw, Rakhine State. **PHOTO: THET LWIN SOE (IPRD)**

Shots fired to prevent destruction of border fence

WARNING shots were fired to prevent destruction a border fence by some people on the Myanmar-Bangladesh border, according to the Ministry of Home Affairs.

About 200 yards north of the Maungtaw Township Taungpyo (Yar) police post near a mouth of a creek, an estimated 180 ft. long border fence was damaged due to water erosion, and a temporary fence with wooden poles and barbed wire was built.

At 3:30 p.m. on 28 June, about a dozen of people from Bangladesh were seen destroying the fence and security personnel shouted warnings that drove them away.

At 6 p.m. they returned and again began destroying the temporary border fence. When the security personnel again shouted warnings, they shouted back and continued destroying the border fence by sawing the wooden poles. A police officer then fired warning shots with an MA-11 rifle that wounded a person. When the security personnel went to inspect the fence, they found four poles were damaged. The area is being kept under observation so that further incidents do not occur, according to Home Affairs Ministry.—MNA ■

Border fence is seen after being destroyed. **PHOTO: MNA**

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ICRC president holds press conference

Mr Peter Maurer, the president of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), held a press conference in Nay Pyi Taw following his five-day visit to Myanmar.

Mr. Maurer spoke briefly about what he saw during his trip to Maungtaw and Buthidaung, his discussions with local authorities in Rakhine State, ICRC's readiness for humanitarian aid to the areas, and for long-term assistance to displaced people in Rakhine, Kachin and Shan states.—MNA ■

Mr Peter Maurer, the president of ICRC, talks to media at the press conference in Nay Pyi Taw. **PHOTO: MNA**

Over 202,000 foreigners visit Myanmar through Tachilek border

THE Ministry of Hotels and Tourism reported that 202,430 foreign travellers entered the country through the Tachilek border in Shan State in eastern Myanmar, as well as the Mae Sai gate on the Thai border, during the current six-month fiscal year.

Between 1 April and 28 June this year, the Tachilek border hosted the international visitors, including 198,634 day-trippers and 2,106 foreigners who joined the Mongphyat-Kengyung trip, and 1,690 visitors who entered the town with visas.

The majority of visitors came from neighbouring Thailand, China and third-world countries to tour the town's well-known destinations, including Talaw Market, Mahamyatmuni Pagoda, Shwedagon Pagoda, the ethnic village and Chinese temples on a one-day return visit or overnight trip. The ministry reported that the number of international visitors who entered the country from Tachilek Town in the last week of this month, ending 28 June, exceeded nearly 18,400.

International tourist arrivals from the borders are increasing year by year due to the country's natural scenery, including its highlands, mountains, rivers, forests and animals. The diverse range of culture, traditions and lifestyles of the rural communities in Myanmar are also major attractions.—GNLM ■

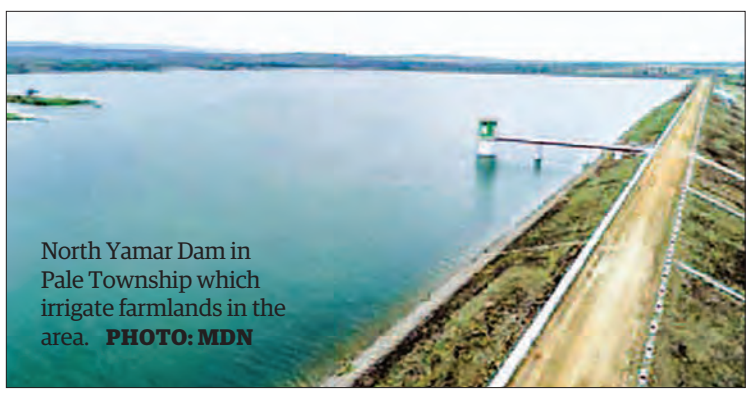
Traditional house in Tachilek has attracted tourists. **PHOTO: SUPPLIED**

North Yamar Dam to irrigate farmlands as of 1 July

THE water from the North Yamar Dam in Pale Township, Sagaing Region will be used to irrigate farmlands in the area commencing 1 July, according to the Irrigation and Water Utilization Management Department (IWUMD).

"We will distribute sufficient irrigation water to farmlands through three channels. We stored an adequate amount of water in the dam because heavy rains struck in the area early in the monsoon season. We will be able to circulate water to farmlands in Yinmabin and Pale townships in the summer and rainy season when maintenance work for the main channel is finished," said U Myo Naing, Assistant Director from the IWUMD.

So far, the dam's water level has reached 488.3 ft, he added.—Myanmar Digital News ■



North Yamar Dam in Pale Township which irrigate farmlands in the area. **PHOTO: MDN**

Narcotic drug abuse rampant in 33 townships in Sagaing Region

THE use of narcotics has become rampant in 33 of 37 townships in Sagaing Region, according to Police Captain Ko Ko Naing of the region's anti-drug squad.

About 20 year ago, drug problems were reported in 18 townships in Sagaing Region. As of 2018, it has spread to 33 townships, according to research conducted by Myanmar's anti-narcotics police force.

Regarding the drug problem, Police Captain Ko Ko Naing said, "I am sure that there is no drug production in Sagaing Region. The police are working to crack down on the illegal transport, trafficking and use of narcotic drugs. Under the directive of the President, the police force is working to nab major drug dealers, rather than young drug users."

Police continue to take action against people involved in drug cases, according to the existing Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law. Myanmar's Ministry of Home Affairs launched the new National Drug Control Policy on 20 February 2018, in an effort to fight against drug abuse and illicit trafficking. The new drug control policy will be implemented with regular evaluations during the five year term.—Win Oo (Zeyataing) ■

Vessels dock at the Pansoden Jetty in Yangon. **PHOTO: PHOE KHWAR**

Myanmar-Australia trade exceeds $11 million in first month of FY

BILATERAL trade between Myanmar and Australia in the first month of this fiscal year reached nearly US$11.9 million, with $1.4 million in exports and $10.5 million in imports, according to the monthly report of the Commerce Ministry.

Australia imports crustaceans, fish, seafood and vegetables from Myanmar, and exports wheat medicaments for veterinary purposes, pigments and paints, as well as varnish and coal.

Trade between the two countries was $77.673 million in the 2011-2012 FY, $86.009 million in the 2012-2013 FY; $102.063 million in the 2013-2014 FY; $74.012 million in the 2014-2015 FY; $84.655 million in the 2015-2016 FY; $144.385 million in the 2016-2017 FY and $170.904 million in the 2017-2018 FY.

Australia has helped Myanmar adopt inclusive economic growth by supporting a policy environment that provides incentives for responsible foreign direct investment, trade and economic reforms. As a partner country, Australia continues its support to help Myanmar carry out political, economic and social change.

According to the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA), there was no foreign direct investment from Australian investors in Myanmar during the 2017-2018 financial year. In FY2016-2017, Australia's investment in Myanmar totalled $16.29 million.—Swe Nyein

Imports of consumer products continue to decrease

IMPORTS` of Myanmar consumer goods during the first 83 days of this financial year reached US$996 million, a decrease in value of $23.7 million, as against the same period last year, the Ministry of Commerce disclosed in its trade report released on Friday.

At this time last fiscal year, the country's imports of consumer products exceeded $1 billion.

Between 1 April and 22 June this year, the public sector imported $14.44 million of consumer goods from international traders, while the private sector's imports of similar products were $982.02 million, in total. When compared with the same time last year, the value of imports of consumer products by the public sector decreased $11.02 million, whereas private sector imports decreased by $12.7 million.

According to the ministry's statistics, the country's total import value during the period hit 4.64 billion, with capital goods worth $1.69 billion and intermediate goods valued at $1.65 billion. Despite a decrease in the import value of consumer goods, imports of remaining products rose by $488.97 million.

Myanmar predominately imports luxury products, personal goods, construction materials, chemicals, textiles, agricultural machinery, raw materials, household goods, food items and electronic devices from neighbouring countries.

The imports of consumer goods were valued at $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.—Khine Khant

Myanmar earns nearly Ks2 billion from individual border exports

EXPORTS using individual trading cards (ITCs) at border crossings totalled Ks1.96 billion in the current six-month interim fiscal year starting this April, while individual imports exceeded Ks7.3 billion, according to the latest report of the Ministry of Commerce.

From 1 April through 15 June this year, Myanmar exported a range of goods, including rice, kitchen crops, marketable fruits and other domestically-produced products through six land borders, including Tamu, Myawady, Tachilek, Reed, Mawtaung and Kengtung.

During the period at those border points, exports by individual traders at the Tamu border gate ranked first, both in its volume of trade and value, reaching over Ks1.07 billion; followed by Mawtaung at Ks734 million; Reed at Ks124 million; Kengtung at Ks21 million and Tachilek at Ks12 million. Only the Myawady border gate had fewer than Ks1 million in exports.

Exports by individual border merchants are always less than their imports. According to the ministry's data, individual border exports were Ks5.3 billion in fiscal year 2017-2018, while individual imports were Ks40.6 billion.

Over the first two and a half months of this FY, total individual trade at the nine border trade stations was valued at Ks9.3 billion.

The Minister of Commerce has issued ITCs to border merchants since the 2012-2013 FY in an attempt to boost cross-border trade with neighbouring countries. From the beginning of the programme, to date, there are some 1,451 ITC holders operating at border crossings. The trade authorities have issued 19 cards to border traders this FY.—Shwe Khine

Muse 105 mile border trade zone. **PHOTO: PHOE KHWAR**

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VP U Henry Van Thio addresses road safety council

U Henry Van Thio, Vice-President and Chairman of the National Road Safety Council (NRSC), addressed the fourth meeting of the NRSC yesterday at the meeting hall of the Ministry of Transport and Communications in Nay Pyi Taw.

Present at the meeting were NRSC members Union Ministers, the Nay Pyi Taw Council Chairman, Mayors of Yangon and Mandalay, Deputy Ministers, state/region ministers for road and transportation, sub-committee secretaries and other officials.

The Vice President said the road and vehicle safety work processes of the NRSC are of great importance for the country as well as for the people.

Because of the leadership of the NRSC and the cooperation and conduct of relevant entities, fatalities and injuries from traffic and road accidents were reduced during the 2018 New Year Thingyan period. Traffic and road accidents could not be foreseen but are preventable.

If drivers and road users follow the vehicle, traffic and road rules, loss of properties, lives and limbs could be reduced significantly. Relevant departments need to systematically encourage the behaviour of more learned and experienced drivers who have the correct outlook on road safety, while private driving schools need good and complete courses with capable and truly experienced driving trainers, teaching guide literature and practical driving lessons.

The NRSC has specified the curriculum, layout, number of training cars and qualification of the trainers in a training school. As per the new specifications laid down, small vehicle driving schools and big vehicle driving schools have been established.

Vice President U Henry Ven Thio addresses the fourth meeting of NRSC in Nay Pyi Taw. **PHOTO: MNA**

Organizing an effort to use correct signaling resulted in the majority of the drivers using correct signals, and this will be continued until every driver safely uses the correct signals.

With many people using motorcycles, the drive towards wearing quality helmets is the work that would allow the NRSC Action Plan to be successful. As the NRSC had not specified what a quality helmet is, the NRSC is arranging to invite foreign experts and conduct a Development of Myanmar Motorcycle Safety Helmet Standard Workshop. When a standard is set, it should be within reach of the majority of the people and assure the safety of the users. In addition to this, relevant sub-committees and ministries are urged to bear in mind the suggestions on road safety provided by the Suu Foundation High-Level Panel which are long term work processes that need to be implemented continuously with an aim towards benefiting the country and the people.

Road Crash Database Software provided by the ADB TA-8987 Project will soon be tested, allowing for correct assessments and calculations on vehicle accidents. The Myanmar Police Force that covers the entire country, including far flung and remote places, is urged to use this Road Crash Database Software to obtain correct and complete information.

Work processes established by the NRSC are being implemented by sub-committees as well as state/region NRSCs and all need to raise their efforts to achieve more successes in protecting the properties and lives of the people. While the NRSC is setting up and assessing programs according to the National Road Safety Action Plan, relevant departments that are actually in touch with the people are to make realistic approaches and increase their efforts, said the Vice President.

Next, NRSC Vice Chairman Union Minister Lt-Gen Kyaw Swe explained and discussed works on eliminating and preventing vehicle and road accidents, actions taken against violators of traffic and road rules, occurrence of traffic and road accidents, information works against vehicle and road accidents, cooperating with the people and students against traffic accidents and programmes conducted according to the law to eliminate vehicle and road accidents.

Afterwards, NRSC secretary Road Transport Administration (RTA) Department Director General U Zaw Min Oo explained works implemented by the NRSC, implementation of the Action Plan and the status of implementing 43 suggestions provided by the Suu Foundation High-Level Panel.

Management sub-committee, education, inspection and enforcement sub-committee, research and health sub-committee and financial sub-committee secretaries then explained the works of the sub-committees and implementation of the third meeting's decisions.

Following this, Nay Pyi Taw Council Chairman and state/region ministers for road and transportation explained road safety works implemented and implementation of the third meeting's decisions.

Later, council secretary U Zaw Min Oo and RTA Department Chief Engineer Daw PhyuPhyu Win explained the Suu Foundation Feasibility Study for Helmet Manufacturing in Myanmar, setting a helmet standard in Myanmar and a study on setting standards for motorcycle helmets.

NRSC members Union Minister Dr. Myint Htwe, Deputy Minister for Information U Aung Hla Tun, Yangon Mayor U Maung Maung Soe, Mandalay Mayor Dr. Ye Lwin, the Republic of the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry chief executive officer U Tint Swe and Myanmar Engineering Society Chairman U Aung Myint also provided additional discussions.

In his concluding speech to the meeting, NRSC Chairman Vice President U Henry Van Thio urged continuing the momentum of increased use of motorcycle helmets and seat belts, alcohol testing and taking actions to prevent traffic violations.

He also noted the progress in implementing National Road Safety Action Plan (2014-2020), but said there are still works yet to begin, which relevant ministries and entities should implement as soon as possible within the project period. The Vice President also spoke of the requirements to systematically and regularly inspect vehicles and motorcycles. Relevant departments should conduct Road Safety Audits together, and he urged the establishment of a Road Safety Fund, according to the law. The world's vision on Road Safety "Towards Zero Together" could be achieved only through organizing and participation of the people, said the Vice President. —MNA

Myanmar-Bangladesh border forces commanders hold meeting

A courtesy meeting of the Myanmar-Bangladesh border forces commanders was held in Bangladesh at Cox's Bazar Border Guards Bangladesh (BGB) regional headquarters on 28 June. The meeting was attended by a Myanmar delegation led by No. (1) Border Guard Police (BGP) Commander Police Brig-Gen Myint Toe, and a Bangladesh delegation led by BGB Cox's Bazar Regional Commander Brig- Gen SM Rakibullah.

At the meeting, discussions were held about the status of implementing the Myanmar-Bangladesh Home Affairs Minister level meeting agreement, continuing coordinated patrols along the border of the two countries, and the opening of the Myanmar-Bangladesh border liaison office (BLO).

Officials also discussed exchanging information, investigating and exposing the ARSA terrorist organisation and terrorists, removal of CCTV cameras, solar lamp poles and bunkers built on the Bangladesh side, investigating and arresting fugitives, and cooperation in anti-drug operations.

Also during the meeting, discussions were held about conducting border liaison operations. A border liaison office was built in Teknaf, Bangladesh, according to an MoU, and once the permission of Ministry of Home Affairs is obtained, border liaison office operations will be conducted. —MNA

Commanders and officials discuss at the meeting held at Cox's Bazar Border Guards Bangladesh regional headquarters. **PHOTO: MNA**

SG Min Aung Hlaing receives ICRC President Mr Peter Maurer

The Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services, Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, received a delegation led by Mr. Peter Maurer, President of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), yesterday at the Bayint Naung Guesthouse in Nay Pyi Taw.

During the meeting, they exchanged views and discussed matters related to the ICRC conducting development and humanitarian operations in conflict areas of Kachin and Rakhine states. They also discussed Tatmadaw participating in the socio-economic development of the local populace and the reconstruction of infrastructures in Rakhine State, which are being jointly conducted by the ICRC and the government.

They also reviewed providing aid in conflict free regions of Myanmar, sending Myanmar police and Tatmadaw personnel for training in conflict resolution, and cooperation between Tatmadaw and the ICRC in medical and mine clearance works.—Myanmar News Agency ■

Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services, Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, holds talks with Mr. Peter Maurer, President of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), yesterday in Nay Pyi Taw. **PHOTO: MNA**

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing attends tree planting ceremony

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing inspects the 1st monsoon tree-planting ceremony 2018 in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

COMMANDER-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and wife Daw Kyu Kyu Hla planted a tree at the 1st monsoon tree-planting ceremony 2018 organised by the families of the Office of the Commander-in-Chief (Army, Navy and Air) in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning.

The ceremony took place near the Yezin Dam in Zeyathiri Township, with Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and wife Daw Kyu Kyu Hla planting a mahogany tree. Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commader-in-Chief (Army) Vice Senior General Soe Win and wife Daw Khin Than Nwe, Lt-Gen Kyaw Swe and wife, Lt-Gen Sein Win and wife, Lt-Gen Ye Aung and wife, senior military officers and their wives also planted trees at designated places.

A total of 5,380 trees of varying types were planted by the families of the Defence Services Commander-in-Chief's Office at the 1st monsoon tree-planting ceremony.

During the 2011 to 2018 rainy seasons, 12,1830 trees have been planted by the families of the Defence Services Commander-in-Chief's Office at respective military commands.

Similar ceremonies also took place in military commands across the country at the same time, with a total of 43,9040 trees planted by defence services personnel.—Myanmar News Agency ■

Union Peace Conference- 21st Century Panglong to be held from 11 to 16 July

The third session of the Union Peace Conference–21st Century Panglong will be held from 11 to 16 July and its working committee meetings will be held from 4 to 6 July at the National Reconcilation and Peace Centre (NRPCC) in Nay Pyi Taw.

The decision came at the 15th Union Peace Dialogue Joint Committee (UPDJC) meeting held at the NRPC in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

"We all know that UPDJC plays a leading role to find a solution politically. Thus it is important to set up the fundamental principles of federalism by holding political discussions", said Dr. Tin Myo Win, Vice-Chairman of the UPDJC.

The second Union Peace Conference was held in May 2017, and the third in July 2018.

"The Conference meeting was delayed due to various reasons. But we had managed to hold three political dialogue meetings, and four security dialogue meetings between the Government and EAOs (ethnic armed organisations), with the aim of building trust among us. It's found that there are many challenges and difficulties needed to overcome.

It is needed to exchange our views and discuss the matters openly in the next meeting," he said.

Dr. Tin Myo Win also urged the participants of the meeting to strive for achieving ways for building federalism through negotiation.

He also urged the peace makers to bring the outcome of principles and proposals which can lead to signing the union agreement (Part Two) after the meeting.

Our State Counsellor has said that we are striving to lay the foundation of federalism in the coming 21st Century Panglong Conference. In conclusion, I would like to wish all the members of the UPDJC who attended the meeting to cooperate with one another to gain sustainable peace with confidence and mutual-understanding", Dr. Tin Myo Win said.

Following remarks by UPDJC Vice-Chairman Dr. Salai Lian Hmung Sakhong, UPDJC Vice-Chairman U Thu Wai said, "We can foster peace with confidence. Without it there is no way to gain peace and it will take time to restore peace. We ourselves have to make an effort to get it in reality.

"In doing so, we are in need of many experts to implement the peace process. Only those who excel in five branches of studies can accomplish these tasks. All the members of the UPDJC meeting have carried out to set the date of 21st Century Panglong Conference, to approve the papers submitted to UPDJC, to present the taskforce of political, economic, social, security, farmlands and environmental sectors, to make approval of titles which will be discussed in the working committees and ToR process".

Committee members then discussed matters related to approval of minutes, submission of a JMC report, invitations to EAOs that haven't signed the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA), invitations to observers, the process of the conference, the UPDJC Secretarial meeting, assigning the duties of working committee and other general affairs of the meeting.

Following the closing remarks of the Vice-Chairmen U Thu Wai, Dr. Salai Lian Hmung Sakhong and Dr. Tin Myo Win, the meeting was concluded.—Myanmar News Agency ■

The 15th Union Peace Dialogue Joint Committee (UPDJC) meeting being held at NRPC) in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

30 JUNE 2018
THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

Objective, balanced approach from UN, international community helpful to overcome challenges in Rakhine

SEEING through the narrow lens of human rights of one particular community alone is not helpful in understanding the challenges in Rakhine State.

With the support of the people, the incumbent government has been carrying out the struggle for peace and stability, democracy and development for the past two years.

To solve the Rakhine issue, the government has taken steps to solve the longstanding issue.

There have been accusations that there is ethnic cleansing or even genocide in Myanmar. There were tensions and there was fighting in Rakhine State, but there was no genocide. The term genocide should not be used in Myanmar, nor in other countries, without clear evidence.

Those who returned from Bangladesh claimed that scarcity of jobs, food, and threats from the terrorist organisation Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA) were the reasons for crossing over to Bangladesh.

> Myanmar, which has a good track record of cooperation with the Special Rapporteur over the past two decades, remains committed to continue to work together with the mandate of the Special Rapporteur.

The government has already announced that it would take action against perpetrators in accordance with the law where allegations are supported by sufficient evidence.

The Myanmar Government would never tolerate any violation of human rights. Myanmar appreciates cooperation from all friends who understand the issues objectively, and render their support.

Those who had to flee their homes are many - not just Muslims and Rakhines, but also small minority groups, such as the Daing-net, Mro, Thet, Mramagyi and Hindus.

But, it is regrettable that the international community and the Human Rights Rapporteur overlooked the plight of minorities. Some have gone even further to glorify or advocate the terrorist group which attacked the police outposts and civilians and caused the conflicts.

The Special Rapporteur conveniently failed to mention the heinous terrorist attacks and the brutal massacre of 99 Hindus committed by ARSA in her statement, and this fact showed clear bias and imbalance of the Special Rapporteur's assessment.

The people of Myanmar considered that it would no longer be productive to continue to cooperate with the current Special Rapporteur because of her lack of objectivity and non- compliance with the code of conduct.

Myanmar requested the Council for her to be replaced, expressing regret that Myanmar's request had fallen on deaf ears.

Myanmar, which has a good track record of cooperation with the Special Rapporteur over the past two decades, remains committed to continue to work together with the mandate of the Special Rapporteur.

In its efforts to achieve national reconciliation and peace, democracy and development, Myanmar was happy to engage constructively with the United Nations as well as the international community.

Trading in line with commercial ethics

By Taik Maung

MYANMAR nationals are doing import and export trade with other countries in two established modes such as normal trade and border trade. In other words, the normal trade covers international trade system and stipulated banking transaction. The border trade means doing trade with the bordering countries at border areas in line with the prescribed procedures of the government.

New Myanmar Companies Law

A Myanmar national needs to communicate with the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA) under the Ministry of Planning and Finance to register the company to enable to do business with foreign country. The Myanmar Companies Law will come into force on 1 August 2018 as per the notification No 4/2018 of the Office of the President vide 6 December 2017 and 22 June 2018 signed by the President of Myanmar.

In the past, two share holders are needed in forming a private company, but the new law allows forming the private company with a single share holder. A private company, not related with the general public company, needs only one director for management. According to the new Myanmar Company Law, foreign partners can invest 35 per cent, and therefore, foreign business partners could be invited more in numbers.

Need to re-register

A company that has less than (30) employees with the maximum ceiling annual income of (50) million MMK has the privilege to enjoy exemption of sending duly audited annual financial statement and also excused for holding annual general meeting. The re-registration is to start rolling on 1 August 2018 through electronic registry system (online), the listing can be done with ease from home and office. As the cash transaction and payment could have to be carried out online, it is most like that bribery and corruption such as tea money culture would be eradicated.

The existing companies will have to re-register during (6) months time slot from 1 August 2018 to 31 January 2019. The companies will be honoured with new registration numbers, and that the newly issued numbers would be the same with the Tax Revenue Numbers issued from the Internal Revenue Department.

Nullifying from the registration list

Those companies failed to re-register will be nullified for the existing list, and therefore, it is vital to submit registration during the stipulated time frame. Detailed procedures and requirements for registration for companies are available at www.dica.gov.mm web portal. Even though a company has already been registered, one could not enter into actual trade business. A company needs to apply export and import business registration and that it must be applied at Department of Trade under the Ministry of Commerce.

All relevant companies such as Limited Companies (including foreign companies), Joint Venture Corporations, Joint Venture Company Limited, Cooperative Society Limited that are already registered under the existing laws namely Myanmar Companies Act, 1950 Special Company Act, and Cooperative Society Law may have to apply export and import registration permits.

Basic Primary Reading Text Book

The companies wishing to do business on export and import must submit application online in the form available at http://www.myanmartradenet.com.mm with ease.

Validity of the license will be granted for five years in continuity from the date of issue.

When a company has established its business and acquired export and import license, then it could start trade with foreign countries. However, before moving into real business, the company must be equipped itself with the sufficient knowledge regarding existing laws, trade orders and directives issued from relevant ministries. For instance, it would be wise enough to read September 2012 Export and Import Law issued from the Ministry of Commerce.

A company trying to engage trade business with a foreign country must read thoroughly as a basic fundamental text book on Export and Import Law. The very basic knowledge on the controlled and restricted commodities for export and import must be clearly understood and remembered.

Ready to be examined

There are different categories of items for export and import. The commodities and items for export and import could be categorized as (1) names of commodities and items endorsed by relevant ministry and eventually approved for export and import by Department of Trade under the Ministry of Commerce; (2) names of commodities and items that do not require endorsement from the relevant ministry but necessitate the export and import permits; and (3) names and commodities that do not require permits or license from the Department of Trade, but need export and import declarations from the Customs Department.

There are three different treatments for different items.

When a company needs detailed clarification on the procedures, one can view at the official website at www.moc.gov.mm uploaded from Ministry of Commerce. The items could also be viewed in English as well as in Myanmar at www.myanmartradeportal.gov.mm which is called treasure bank of Myanmar Trade information.

A person could be recognized as a real knowledgeable businessman after studying the topics such as the needy commodities and items, the directives issued from various departments, required application forms, prescribed rules and procedures, notifications and declarations, trade statistics, and the laws and the working procedures.

One could be proud of it

A person may merely know the laws and working procedure, but he could not be termed as an ethical businessman. The ethical and moral businessman is sure to abide in accordance with existing laws by complying that of paying tax in full to the state, never ever breach the rules by exporting and importing controlled and restricted commodities, engaging only in fair and just competitions among the associates and business circle, have sympathy and empathy over working class by fulfilling humanitarian duties according to laws. The author would like to conclude that a person who values and abide the ethical norms and engages in fair trade could be termed as person who could take pride of himself.

The author wishes more ethical businessmen develop and grow in all states and regions in the country to fill in the proper taxes to the treasury of the nation in uplifting the lives of the population.

Translated by UMT (HK)

Appointment of Ambassador agreed on

THE Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has agreed to the proposed appointment of Mrs. Alessandra Schiavo as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Italian Republic to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

Mrs. Alessandra Schiavo was born in Naples on 12 October 1969. She graduated in Political Science in 1991 and pursued her Ph.D at Leiden University in the Netherlands in 1992. She joined the Italian Foreign Service in 1993. From then until 2014, she served in various capacities at different departments of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and at Italian Embassies and Consulate General in Tel Aviv, Brussels and Hong Kong. Since 2015, she has been serving as Diplomatic Advisor of the Government representative responsible for Foreign Trade and Investment Attraction at the Italian Ministry of Economic Development.—Myanmar News Agency

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Rain to increase in Upper Sagaing Region, Kachin State

There is a likelihood of an increase in rain in the Upper Sagaing Region and Kachin State as the monsoon weakens over the Andaman Sea and Bay of Bengal, according to yesterday's Myanmar Daily Weather Report issued by the Department of Meteorology and Hydrology.

The forecast for Nay Pyi Taw, Yangon and neighboring areas for today is a 100 per cent chance of isolated rain or thunder showers, and an 80 per cent chance of isolated rain or thunder showers in Mandalay and neighboring areas.

The weather outlook for the weekend is scattered rain or thunder showers in Nay Pyi Taw and the Mandalay Region, with fairly widespread rain in the Yangon Region.

Seas will be slight to moderate in Myanmar's waters, with wave heights of (3- 7) feet along the Myanmar Coasts —GNLM

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

Crows 'reverse engineer' tools from memory

AUCKLAND (NEW ZEALAND) —New Caledonian crows use mental pictures to twist twigs into hooks and make other tools, according to a provocative study that suggests the notoriously clever birds pass on successful designs to future generations, a hallmark of culture.

"We find evidence for a specific type of emulation we call mental template matching," co-author Alex Taylor, director of the Language, Cognition and Culture Lab at the University of Aukland, told AFP.

"Put simply, crows can reverse engineer tool designs using only a mental image of that tool."

A long-simmering debate among evolutionary biologists asks how much of the crow's tool-making ability is genetically programmed, and how much is acquired and transmitted through learning and memory.

A famous experiment filmed in 2002 featuring "Betty the crow" showed the bird bending a straight piece of wire into a hook in order to retrieve a morsel of meat stuffed in a narrow plastic tube. The feat was hailed as proof that the New Caledonian crow could invent new tools on the spot, a rare ability among non-human animals.

'Put simply, crows can reverse engineer tool designs using only a mental image of that tool'. **PHOTO: AFP**

But a study published a dozen years later found that more than a dozen wild-caught crows also broke off small branches and fashioned them into tiny hooks with their beaks, leading some researchers to conclude this ability is at least partly hard-wired.

To the extent it is learnt, there's a further split: some experts think the birds are mimicking witnessed techniques, and others — including Taylor— say the crows have a more sophisticated approach. The distinction is comparable to two methods for making a paper plane.

"You can follow a list of directions — fold in the middle, then the corners, etc.", said Taylor.

Culturally transmitted

"Or you could have an image in your mind of what you want the airplane to look like at the end, and work to that goal."

To remove lingering ambiguity, Taylor and colleagues captured eight wild crows and trained them to drop variously sized bits of paper into a vending machine in order to retrieve rewards.—AFP ■

South Korea's industrial output keeps rising for two months on exports growth

SEOUL—The industrial production in South Korea kept rising for two straight months thanks to robust export growth that offset lackluster consumption and investment, a government report showed Friday.

Production in all industries grew 0.3 per cent in May from a month earlier, after expanding 1.5 per cent in the previous month, according to Statistics Korea.

The all-industry production index stood at 107.5 in the month, hitting the highest since the relevant data began to be compiled in January 2000. The brisk industrial activity was attributed to exports, which jumped 13.5 per cent over the year to 50.98 billion US dollars in May. It was the fifth biggest month export in the country's history.

Output in the mining and manufacturing industries gained 1.1 per cent in the month due to growth in the auto and communications equipment.

Automobile production increased 5.5 per cent on strong global demand for locally-made sport utility vehicle (SUV) and environmentally-friendly cars as well as relevant auto parts.

Output in the communications equipment sector surged 30.3 per cent as the launch of new smartphones expanded demand for relevant equipment at home and abroad.

Manufacturers posted an average factory utilization rate of 73.9 per cent in May, up 1.5 percentage points from the previous month. Inventory among manufacturers declined 0.8 per cent.

Production in the services industry was down 0.1 per cent on soft demand for the information and communications services that offset solid demand for healthcare and social welfare services. Retail sales, which reflect private consumption, shrank 1.0 per cent in May from a month ago, keeping a downward momentum for two months in a row.

Durable goods sales dipped 3.3 per cent on falling demand for cars, made by local carmakers. Sales for non-durable goods such as food and beverage shed 1.4 per cent on the falling number of tourists to South Korea. Revenue by discount outlets, convenient stores and specialized retailers fell for the second consecutive month, with sales by supermarkets and general stores keeping a downward trend for three straight months.

Facility investment slumped 3.2 percent last month on weak activities in the semiconductor equipment and transport equipment sectors. Transport equipment investment tumbled 11 percent, pulling down the overall capital spending.

The facility investment index stood at 122.8 in May, the lowest in seven months. It kept sliding for three months in a row.

Construction completed dipped 2.2 per cent, reflecting the slump in the real estate market. Housing market struggled with the government's measures to control speculative property investment and expectations for higher borrowing costs.

The cyclical factor of leading indicators, which herald future economic conditions, fell 0.1 point in May from a month earlier.—Xinhua ■

WORLD BRIEFS

Indonesia's Jokowi, Malaysia's Mahathir meet, talk democracy

BOGOR (Indonesia)—Indonesian President Joko "Jokowi" Widodo and visiting Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad held talks Friday that focused on democratic developments in their two countries.

"We talked about domestic political affairs, the problem faced by Indonesia (that) is bigger than Malaysia, but similar," Mahathir told a joint press conference with Jokowi at the Bogor Presidential Palace, south of Jakarta. —Kyodo News ■

Japan jobless rate hits 25-yr low, labor shortages remain a concern

TOKYO—Japan's unemployment rate fell to the lowest level in more than 25 years in May in the latest sign of a strengthening economy, government data showed Friday, but rising job availability underscored the shortage of workers amid a shrinking population.

The jobless rate stood at 2.2 per cent, beating market forecasts to remain unchanged from 2.5 per cent in April and hitting a low not seen since October 1992, according to the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications. —Kyodo News ■

Senior police officer killed in shooting attack in Kabul

KABUL—Two persons, including a senior police official, were killed and three civilians were wounded in a shooting attack here overnight, police said Friday.

"Including Azizullah Karwan, commander of Special Operations Police Forces of eastern Paktika province, two persons were martyred after unknown gunmen opened fire in Ferdowsi Park in Police District 9 of Kabul roughly at 08:30 p.m. local time Thursday," Kabul police said in a statement.

The attackers fled the scene shortly after the shooting.

The Taliban militant group has claimed the responsibility for the attack.—Xinhua ■

Battle lines drawn in Senate over Trump Supreme Court pick

WASHINGTON —The battle over President Donald Trump's choice to fill a coming Supreme Court vacancy, an appointment with far-reaching consequences for American society, kicked off in the Senate Thursday as Democrats vowed against the odds to fight any Republican nominee.

Justice Anthony Kennedy's announced departure at the end of July will give Trump the opportunity to appoint his second justice to the nine-seat bench — and shift the high court decisively to the right. But one day after the sudden announcement by Kennedy, who has held the tie-breaking vote between the bench's liberal and conservative judges, the politicization of the process was already clear.

Members of the Republican-controlled Senate were hardening their positions over whether to proceed with the confirmation process before November's midterm elections, or wait until Americans vote in a new slate of lawmakers to be seated in January. Trump has said the process to replace Kennedy, 81, will "begin immediately," raising alarm among Democrats fearful that the president will nominate an ideological conservative, upsetting the court's delicate balance and locking in a hard-right majority for a generation.

The departure of Justice Anthony Kennedy (C), pictured in January 2017, will give President Donald Trump a chance to shift the top US court decisively to the right. **PHOTO: AFP**

No less than women's reproductive rights, health care and gay rights are at stake, Democrats said.

"Whomever the president picks, it is all too likely they're going to overturn health care protections and Roe v. Wade," warned top Senate Democrat Chuck Schumer, referring to the court's landmark 1970s ruling that upheld abortion rights.

Senator John Thune, a member of the Republican leadership, acknowledged as much, particularly on overturning Roe v. Wade.

"I think that was a wrongly decided case, and so that's something I would support," Thune told reporters.

Dogfight

Kennedy's departure sets up a dogfight over his succession, a blueprint for which was established by Republican lawmakers in 2016 when they denied then-president Barack Obama the opportunity to fill the seat left vacant by conservative justice Antonin Scalia's death.

That delay, orchestrated by Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, lit a fire under Trump's grassroots voters during the election, and it ultimately enabled Trump to nominate Scalia's replacement, Neil Gorsuch.

Democrats demanding a delay now are citing McConnell's own 2016 argument that a Supreme Court nomination is too consequential not to allow American voters to weigh in through the upcoming election.

"If the Senate's constitutional duty to advise and consent is just as important as the president's right to nominate, which the Constitution says it is, why should a midterm election be any less important than a presidential election?" Schumer said. McConnell rejected that argument as absurd and said the confirmation vote will occur "this fall."

"We're right in the middle of this president's very first term," he said. "To my knowledge nobody on either side has ever suggested — before yesterday — that the Senate should only process Supreme Court nominations in odd numbered years."

Senate rules and procedures are in McConnell's favor, leaving Democrats with little recourse for blocking progress on Trump's nominee.—AFP ■

Five dead in 'targeted attack' on US newsroom

ANNAPOLIS (UNITED STATE)— A man armed with a shotgun and smoke grenades burst into a newspaper office in the US city of Annapolis on Thursday, killing five employees in what police described as a "targeted attack."

Officials said the shooting at the Capital Gazette was carried out by a white adult male resident of Maryland state who was being questioned in custody.

A reporter for the daily, which has roots dating back to the eighteenth century, tweeted a chilling account of how the "gunman shot through the glass door to the office and opened fire on multiple employees."

"There is nothing more terrifying than hearing multiple people get shot while you're under your desk and then hear the gunman reload," crime reporter Phil Davis said.

There were five fatalities and two superficial injuries, the acting police chief of Anne Arundel county, Bill Krampf, told journalists in Maryland's capital.

He identified the dead as four journalists — Gerald Fischman, Rob Hiaasen, John McNamara and Wendi Winters — and sales assistant Rebecca Smith.

"This was a targeted attack on the Capital Gazette," Krampf said.

A newspaper stand selling The Capital in Annapolis. **PHOTO: AFP**

The Baltimore Sun — which owns the Capital Gazette — identified the suspected shooter as Jarrod Ramos, who it said had a long-running dispute with the newspaper over a 2011 story "that covered a criminal harassment case against him."

Krampf said that police did not yet know the shooter's motive, but "we know that there were threats sent to the Gazette through social media."

"We're trying to confirm what account that was and we're trying to confirm who actually sent them," Krampf added.

Still going to print

Jimmy DeButts, a Capital Gazette journalist, tweeted that he was "devastated & heartbroken. Numb."

"I'm in no position to speak, just know @capgaznews reporters & editors give all they have every day. There are no 40 hour weeks, no big paydays - just a passion for telling stories from our community," DeButts wrote.

Chase Cook, a reporter at the newspaper, said the shooting would not stop The Capital — the local print edition — from going to press.

"We're putting out a paper tomorrow," vowed Cook as he typed grimly away in the shade of a car park, perched on the back of a pick-up truck.

"I don't know what else to do except this," he said. "We're just doing our job."

Gracie Rustin, a dental assistant who was in the middle of a procedure when the attack took place, heard "loud noises" but did not immediately realize it was a shooting.

Then police rushed in and "were like, 'Leave, leave, leave!'" Rustin told AFP.

Sean Robinson, who works for an insurance company, took shelter as far away as possible from the entrance and texted his wife to say, "Hey, this is going on. Just pray."

When he heard a sound at the door, he asked himself -- "friend or foe?"

It turned out to be a SWAT team, armed with assault rifles.

President Donald Trump, who has been at loggerheads with much of the media since taking office, tweeted a message of support.

"My thoughts and prayers are with the victims and their families. Thank you to all of the First Responders who are currently on the scene," he wrote.

'Attack on every American'

"A violent attack on innocent journalists doing their job is an attack on every American," White House spokeswoman Sarah Sanders tweeted.

Several lawmakers also weighed in.

"My heart is with the families, friends and loved ones of the victims as we learn more about this terrible situation," Chris Van Hollen, the state's junior senator said. "We must unite to end the violence."

"The senseless attack on a Maryland newspaper today is sickening. God bless these journalists," House Speaker Paul Ryan tweeted.

A recent study found that Americans own 40 per cent of the world's firearms despite accounting for only four percent of the global population.

Of the 857 million guns owned by civilians, 393 million are in the United States — more than all of the firearms held by ordinary citizens in the other top 25 countries combined, according to the Small Arms Survey.

Advocates of tougher gun laws have stepped up their efforts in the wake of numerous school shootings this year, including the killing of 17 people at a Parkland, Florida high school in February and the killing of 10 people at a Texas high school in May.

So far the results have been relatively modest. Florida has raised the legal age to buy firearms from 18 to 21, while Texas Governor Greg Abbott focused on mental health and improving school safety in his list of recommendations following the Santa Fe shooting in the rural southeast of his state.— AFP ■

Divers battle floodwater in Thai cave search

CHIANG RAI (THAILAND) — Divers trying to reach 12 boys trapped in a Thai cave battled fast-flowing floodwaters Friday as their desperate search for survivors entered a sixth day.

Heavy rains that have battered the area are complicating the enormous rescue effort, sending tonnes of water gushing through the complex.

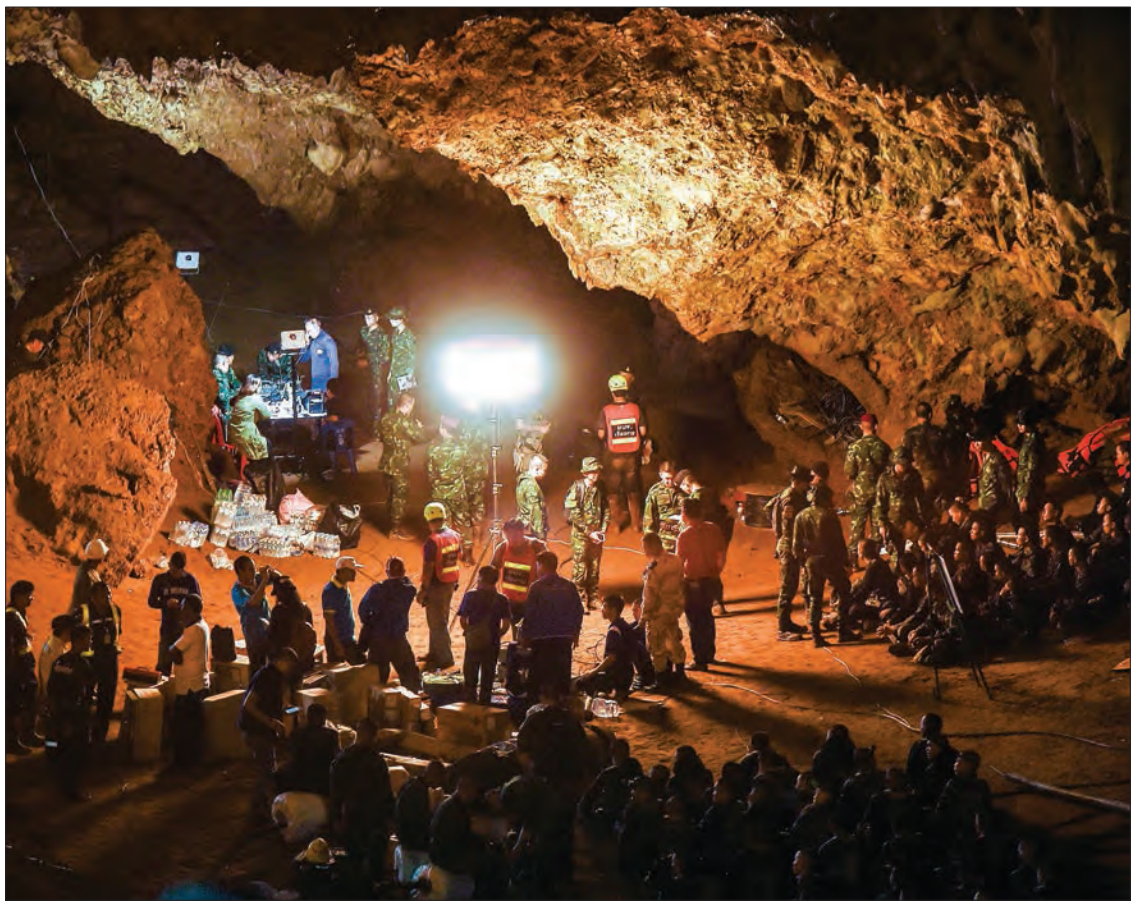
Emergency workers say torrents have filled two chambers, blocking access to where the youngsters and their football coach might have retreated.

The darkness inside the Tham Luang cave in northern Chiang Rai province is being compounded by the muddy water, reducing visibility to just a few centimetres (inches), in conditions some rescuers have likened to swimming in cold coffee.

Thailand's junta leader Prayut Chan-O-Cha arrived in the area early Friday to console desperate families who have camped outside the cave since the boys went missing on Saturday. "I regard them as my own children too," he told families before having lunch with them and leading a meditation with the group.

"The main problem is water inside the cave," he added.

The harrowing search for the boys, aged 11 to 16, was suspended for several hours Thursday but resumed when rescuers were able to drill a makeshift drain.



Emergency workers say torrents have filled two chambers, blocking access to where the youngsters and their football coach might have retreated. **PHOTO: AFP**

"They went in yesterday and they dived for several hours," Chiang Rai governor Narongsak Osottanakorn told AFP.

Several water pumps were set up to pump water away from the site and an additional 40 were being shipped in from Bangkok Friday, he added.

Other teams scoured the mountain for places to bore a hole into the cave without collapsing the roof.

"It's possible in theory but could be hard because the (drill) machine weighs two tonnes, so we have to figure out how to lift it and where to place it," Narongsak said.

Three British divers and a team of US experts are at the scene to help some 1,000 Thai Navy, Army and Airforce personnel, along with police and border guards dispatched to find the young football team and their 25-year-old coach.

One of the British divers entered a newly-discovered chamber that rescue officials described as a "promising" lead earlier.

Survival kits with food, water and medicine, dubbed "boxes of hope" by officials, were also lowered into the crevice.

Torrential rains finally eased Friday morning after nearly a week of downpours and heavy fog in the area near the Laos and Myanmar borders.

'Help is on the way'

The youngsters from the "Boar" football academy went into the cave after practice on Saturday and became trapped when heavy rains blocked the main entrance. Search teams found their bicycles, backpacks and football boots near the opening. Cartoon images of the team dominated social media in Thailand with users calling for the boys to "Please come home" and "Don't give up". "Stay strong and be patient, boys, help is on the way," one user wrote.

Several football clubs also sent images of support, with one lining up balls to form the number 13 surrounded by players clasping hands.

A sign at the entrance warns visitors not to enter the cave during the rainy season between July and November, when the risk of flooding runs high.

At 10 kilometres (six miles) long, Tham Luang cave is one of Thailand's longest.

It is also one of the most difficult to navigate because of its narrow passageways and winding series of tunnels.

Officials said the young footballers had been in the cave many times before and know the site well, buoying hopes they are still alive even with scarce food and light and hemmed in by water.

"It's not ideal, but maybe not totally tragic yet," Josh Morris, founder of Chiang Mai Rock Climbing Adventures, told AFP.

"Boys in a cave who have their wits about them and know the area — I think there's a good chance they have significant time," he said from Chiang Mai. —AFP ■

Vietnamese police kill two drug lords

HANOI — During a two-day raid in Viet Nam's northern Son La province, police killed two kingpins of a ring which trafficked large amounts of heroin from Laos to Viet Nam, local media reported on Friday.

During the raid from Wednesday to Thursday with the presence of nearly 300 police officers with many armoured vehicles and telecommunications signal-jamming equipment, the two kingpins, Nguyen Thanh Tuan, 34, and Nguyen Van Thuan, 35, were killed in gunfire, after they refused to surrender and opened fire to the officers, online newspaper VnExpress reported.

After the two men died at their den in Van Ho district, three of their underlings surrendered. Local police confiscated three grenades, four military guns, 415 bullets and many gas cylinders at the den which was fortified with bullet-proof bunkers, explosives and high-power riffles.

According to Vietnamese investigators, Tuan, born in Hanoi, established new drug trafficking rings after old ones were busted by local police. He never showed up at drug transactions, just using phones to run many rings from distance in the last 10 years.

In 2015, Tuan escaped after one of his rings' members was arrested when transporting and hiding a total 490 cakes of heroin weighing over 170 kilograms in Hanoi.

According to investigators, by 2015, his rings had trafficked nearly 1,200 cakes of heroin.

On Thursday, border guards of central Nghe An province conducted a raid in Ky Son district, trying to arrest two local drug traffickers, Voice of Viet Nam reported.

One of the traffickers opened fire vigorously, injuring two border guard officers, and then escaping to a jungle.

The other trafficker, Vu Ba Xenh, a 39-year-old teacher of a primary school in the district, was arrested, and then he confessed that they transported drugs from Laos to Viet Nam.

The border guards confiscated 20 cakes of heroin, seven kilos of methamphetamine, 12,000 pills of synthetic drugs, one handgun and 15 bullets.

According to Vietnamese law, those convicted of smuggling over 600 grams of heroin or more than 2.5 kilos of methamphetamine are punishable by death. Making or trading 100 grams of heroin or 300 grams of other illegal drugs also faces death penalty.—Xinhua ■

Radio frequency used for insecticidal device

BEIJING — Chinese researchers developed a device which kills pests with radio frequency, extending the storage period of nuts and dried fruit by more than a year, according to Friday's Science and Technology Daily.

The insecticidal device was developed by Xinjiang Academy of Agricultural Sciences, northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region. It can kill all pests and their eggs in walnuts and almonds without recourse to any chemical treatment, according to the paper. Around 300 kg of nuts or dried fruits can be treated by the device in one hour, without affecting quality.—Xinhua ■

'Flying brain' designed to follow German astronaut launches Friday

TAMPA (UNITED STATE) — A floating, ball-shaped, artificial intelligence robot, specially trained to follow around a German astronaut at the International Space Station, is scheduled to blast off Friday on its ground-breaking mission.

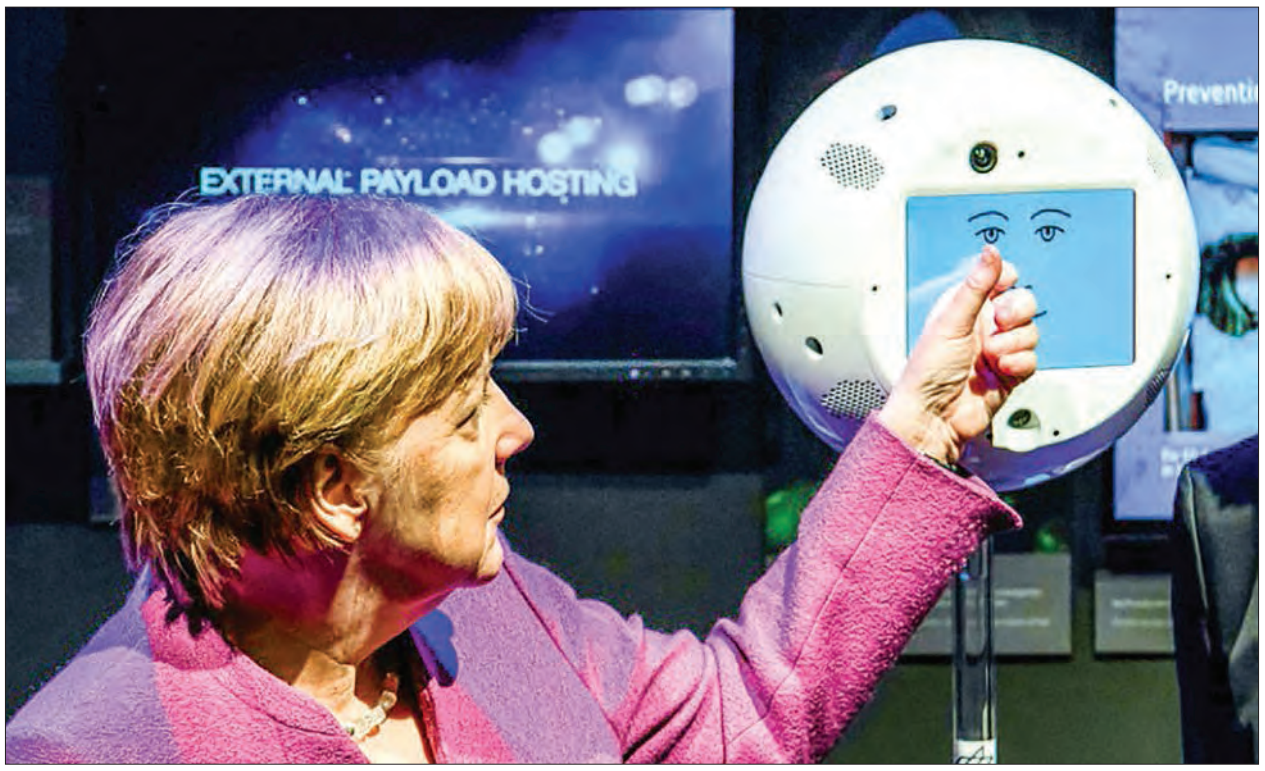
The basketball-sized device called CIMON -- shortened from Crew Interactive MObile CompanioN — was described as a "flying brain" by Manfred Jaumann, head of microgravity payloads at Airbus.

It launches from Cape Canaveral, Florida on Friday at 5:42 am (0942 GMT), along with some 5,900 pounds (2,700 kilograms) of gear packed aboard SpaceX's unmanned Dragon cargo capsule.

CIMON's activation will mark "a historical moment," becoming the first robot of its kind to interact with people in space, said Christian Karrasch, CIMON project manager at the German Aerospace Center (DLR), during a NASA press briefing Thursday.

A project in the works for the past two years, CIMON has been trained to recognize the voice and face of Alexander Gerst, 42, a geophysicist with the European Space Agency.

When Gerst calls to CIMON, the floating robot will acoustically sense where Gerst is calling from, orient itself that way, and zoom over.



German Chancellor Angela Merkel interacts with a "floating brain" device code-named CIMON – designed to aid astronauts aboard the International Space Station – at a Berlin aerospace exhibit in April 2018. **PHOTO: AFP**

Hovering at the astronauts' eye level, its front camera can detect if the person in front of it is indeed Gerst, or someone else.

CIMON will be powered by more than a dozen propellers to help it jet around and avoid bumping into things inside the Columbus module of the space lab.

"This is designed to work in English. It understands Alexander," said Bret Greenstein, global vice president of Watson Internet of Things Offerings at IBM. "It was helpful to train it to recognize him so that it will come to him when he speaks."

All six crew members at the orbiting outpost can speak to CIMON, though it has been taught to work best with Gerst.

Hands-free AI

Experts say the experiment is more than just a smart phone-type device that follows astronauts around.

The metal and plastic intelligent robot, built using 3D printing, works together with people as a team, and allows astronauts to communicate hands-free via voice commands.

CIMON will work with the space station's Watson AI — IBM's artificial intelligence technology — designed to support space flight crews.

Partners in the project include Airbus, The German Aerospace Center (DLR), IBM and the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität Munich (LMU).

The goal for this flight is mainly to demonstrate the technology works.

Three experiments are planned: one using crystals, one with a Rubik's cube and finally, a medical experiment in which CIMON will be employed as a flying camera, according to DLR.

The robot is designed to guide Gerst through various science procedures, and show videos or pictures as needed.

Gerst can also ask the robot questions beyond the simple procedure at hand.

CIMON is equipped with a microphone on back, an infrared camera on the front, two batteries, and perhaps most importantly, an "offline" button.

Once toggled to "offline," Gerst can be sure nothing he is saying is streamed down to the IBM server on Earth.

Once back on, voice recordings are activated again. Researchers say CIMON is not yet trained to respond to all possible emergencies and protocols on the space station.

However, the AI robot is programmed to learn, and they hope to further hone its capabilities in the years to come. —AFP ■

Indonesia reopens Bali airport after volcanic ash forces closure

JAKARTA — The international airport on the Indonesian resort island of Bali was reopened after ash from a volcanic eruption forced its closure for a half-day Friday, affecting thousands of air travelers.

"Based on our evaluation, the condition over the I Gusti Ngurah Rai International Airport is getting better, so we decided to reopen the operation (of the airport) from 2:30 p.m.," said Sigit Widodo, spokesman for the Directorate General of Air Transportation.

The airport was earlier closed at 3 a.m.

Mt. Agung's fresh eruption Thursday has affected at least 446 domestic and international flights.

"At least 74,928 passengers were estimated to be impacted by the closure," said National Disaster Mitigation Agency spokesman Sutopo Purwo Nugroho. Sigit said Notohadinegoro Airport in the town of Jember in East Java Province remains closed after volcanic ash was detected in the sky over it. He denied reports that Blimbingsari Airport in the town of Banyuwangi, also in East Java, was closed, saying no volcanic ash was found there.—Kyodo News ■

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V ALS SUZURAN VOY.NO. (007N/S)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V ALS SUZURAN VOY.NO. (007N/S) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 30-6-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of H.P.T where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S INTER ASIA LINES
Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V SINAR BATAM VOY.NO. (147W/E)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V SINAR BATAM VOY.NO. (147W/E) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 30-6-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of MITT/AIPT where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S INTERASIA LINES
Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V BANGSAKAO VOY.NO. (-)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V BANGSAKAO VOY.NO. (-) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 30-6-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of AIPT-2 where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S BAY LINE SHIPPING PTE LTD.
Phone No: 2301928

Kendrick Lamar vows no complacency after Pulitzer

NEW YORK — Kendrick Lamar has vowed to resist complacency and stay creative after he became the first rapper to win the Pulitzer Prize for Music.

In his most extensive remarks since he was announced as the prestigious award's recipient in April, the 31-year-old told Vanity Fair magazine in an interview published Thursday that any good news "motivates me to do more."

"I don't want to get complacent. If you asked seven out of 10 people, 'What would you do if you got the Pulitzer Prize?,' they'd say, 'I'd put my feet up.'

"But that would make me feel I'd reached my pinnacle at 30 years old, and that wouldn't make me feel good," he told the magazine.

Lamar said the Pulitzer "should have happened with hip-hop a long time ago" and praised the talents of older rappers such as Jay-Z, Eminem, Snoop Dogg and the late Tupac Shakur.

"It took a long time for people to embrace us -- people outside of our community, our culture -- to see this not just as vocal lyrics, but to see that this is really pain, this is really hurt, this is really true stories of our lives on wax," he said.

The Pulitzer board recognized Lamar for "DAMN.," saying the album was "unified by its vernacular authenticity and rhythmic dynamism that offers affecting vignettes capturing the complexity of modern African American life."

In his most extensive remarks since he was announced as the prestigious award's recipient in April, Kendrick Lamar told Vanity Fair magazine in an interview published Thursday that any good news "motivates me to do more". **PHOTO: AFP**

Lamar, who in the magazine profile recalled going hungry as a child in the historically deprived Los Angeles community of Compton, has turned to verse to tackle race relations and his own internal searching set to music that incorporates jazz and spoken word.

With the Pulitzer, Lamar joins the company of major US composers such as Aaron Copland and Charles Ives as well as, more recently, jazz greats including Ornette Coleman and Wynton Marsalis. —AFP ■

I'm more than a comedy actor, says Alison Brie

LOS ANGELES — "GLOW" actor Alison Brie believes she has been unfairly tagged as a "comedy actress" and says there is a lot more to her.

The 35-year-old actor says though she loves the comedy genre, a lot of her potential is still "untapped".

"If you need a headline, (this) would be the headline of my life: 'There's a Lot More Going on Than People Think.' The biggest misconception across the board is that I'm a comedy actress, and it drives me crazy.

"Which is weird because I don't want to begrudge that title in a way that implies I hate the genre. I don't. I love it! But, to me, there's more to me. There's untapped resources you guys don't even know about," Brie told Fashion magazine.

The actor, who stars the fictionalised retelling of the making of the '80s show "Gorgeous Ladies of Wrestling" (GLOW), says she decided to play Ruth Wilder as she immediately felt a connection with the role.

"I almost can't even define why, but certain things you just read and you're like, this is my role. —PTI ■

'High-performing' cyberdoc puts British GPs on defensive

LONDON — A medical chatbot said to perform as well as or even better than human doctors has sparked a war of words in Britain, in a clash over how much the cash-strapped public health service should rely on artificial intelligence.

AI company Babylon, which is already working with the National Health Service (NHS) claimed its chatbot scored higher marks than real live doctors in "robust tests".

The British firm said it quizzed the AI using sample questions for trainee exams set by Britain's Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP), the professional body for family doctors. The programmed chatbot, a key feature of Babylon's "GP at Hand" app, scored 81 per cent when sitting the test for the first time, while the average pass mark over the past five years for doctors was 72 per cent, according to the company.

Its founder Ali Parsa, who presented the findings in London earlier this week, hailed the results as "a landmark".

"(They) take humanity a significant step closer to achieving a world where no one is denied safe and accurate health advice," he said in a statement.

Britain's professional body for family doctors insists no computer app can do the work of a trained medical professional. **PHOTO: AFP**

Andrew Goddard, an NHS doctor and president of the Royal College of Physicians (RCP), which represents 34,000 doctors across the globe and hosted the Babylon event unveiling the findings, told the audience that Artificial Intelligence was "the future".

"How quickly we'll get there I will wait and see — medicine needs to get engaged with it," he said. But ahead of the London showcase, the RCGP issued a stern rebuke of the company's claims. "No app or algorithm will be able to do what a GP does," said its vice-chair Martin Marshall.

"Computers are computers, and GPs are highly-trained medical professionals: the two can't be compared and the former may support but will never replace the latter." The organisation went on to question the sample questions used by Babylon in its testing.

In response, the company called the RCGP "completely off the mark" and accused it of "misunderstanding" facts. Mobasher Butt, Babylon's medical director, said the RCGP was "shoring up an outmoded and financially self-interested status quo which solely works to the benefit of a limited number of partner GPs."

Cutting costs

Babylon says it is on a mission "to put an accessible and affordable health service in the hands of every person on earth".

It launched an app for patients in Britain's NHS in parts of London last September that has more than 50,000 users.

The company also has more than 2 million members in its healthcare service in the east African nation of Rwanda.

It plans further rollouts around the world, and is collaborating with tech giants Samsung and Tencent to expand its app offerings. "I believe that we are on the threshold of being able to do with healthcare what Google, for instance, did with information," Parsa said. Noting two-thirds of healthcare costs within the NHS go on salaries, he called on the medical community to welcome AI. "As long as we don't tackle our complete reliance on human beings to deliver healthcare, we are not going to be able to do so affordably." But the RCGP said Babylon's "GP at Hand" app was "cherry-picking" patients, "leaving traditional GP services to deal with the most complex patients".

"The way it is being used risks undermining and damaging traditional general practice services," it added. —AFP ■

Michael Jackson returns posthumously on Drake album

NEW YORK — Nearly a decade after his death, Michael Jackson is out with new music in a guest appearance on the keenly awaited new album by Drake.

The late King of Pop appears in a song on "Scorpion," the fifth studio album by the Toronto hip-hop star who pulled another surprise by using the release to come clean about his secret child.

True to form for Drake, whose sensibility for catchy beats has made him one of the top-selling artists of recent years, the 25-track album that came out Friday sprawls defiantly, as if resisting the traditional confines of records.

Yet Drake loosely divides "Scorpion" in two — a first "side" in which he hones his rap skills and a second, more unexpected half in which Drake branches further into pop.

"Don't Matter To Me," the song with Jackson, belongs firmly to Drake's pop mode. The 31-year-old proves his bona fides as a singer, his piercing rap delivery giving way to a full-textured silkiness that complements Jackson's higher ranges.

A dreamy mid-tempo track driven by a synthesized R&B bass, "Don't Matter To Me" is in line with the adult output of Jackson, whose distinct voice is heard on the chorus.

"All of a sudden you say you don't want me no more / All of a sudden you say that I closed the door / It don't matter to me," Jackson sings.

Drake revealed nothing about the song's genesis.

But Jackson is known to have left a series of unfinished tracks when he died in 2009. A previous posthumous duet, "Love Never Felt So Good," came out in 2014 between Jackson and pop star Justin Timberlake.

Like "Don't Matter To Me," the Timberlake collaboration was credited in part to the legendary crooner Paul Anka.

Jackson had been working on an album of duets with Anka, the voice behind such classic pop hits as "Put Your Head on My Shoulder," in 1983.

But the project fell by the wayside as the former child star was propelled to fortune with "Thriller," which went on to become the best-selling album of all time.

In this file photo taken in 2004, Michael Jackson is joined by his father Joe Jackson and lawyer Mark Geragos as they leave the courthouse after the pop star's arraignment on child molestation charges in California. **PHOTO: AFP**

Drake, in a rare interview last year, described Jackson as a longtime model and voiced dismay at being pigeon-holed as a rapper.

The song coincidentally comes out little more than a day after the death of Joe Jackson, the King of Pop's father and manager who guided his children's careers but was ruthless in his discipline.

Politics and a secret child

Jackson is not the only special guest on "Scorpion." Rap mega-star Jay-Z lends rhymes on "Talk Up" that denounce President Donald Trump — a rare political display for a song by Drake, who while making clear his disdain for Trump has largely preferred apolitical, crowd-pleasing rhythms.

Drake incorporates his recent input into "Scorpion" — "God's Plan," an infectious hip-hop track that has spent the longest stretch on the top of the US singles chart this year, and "Nice For What," a fast-driving dip into New Orleans' bounce scene.

But while "Scorpion" is full of feel-good vibes — "Ratchet Happy Birthday" seems destined to be played at many a boisterous party — Drake closes on a serious note as he acknowledges he is a father.

Drake admits the substance of a diss track in May by Pusha T who said that Drake had a son with Sophie Brussaux, a French former pornographic actress.

"I wasn't hiding my kid from the world / I was hiding the world from my kid," Drake raps in "Emotionless," which samples Mariah Carey's "Emotions."

Later on the album, Drake hints that he has only seen his child once and is embarrassed he is following the footsteps of his divorced parents.

"Always promised the family unit / I wanted it to be different because I've been through it / But this is the harsh truth now." —AFP ■

World's top chef doesn't want to go back into the kitchen

FERRAN ADRIA — "the most influential chef in the world" — is a man on a mission.

Just not one that involves him having to run a restaurant.

The Catalan — whose elBulli restaurant was named the best on the planet a record five times — is out to prove that the wildly experimental dishes he pioneered there still cut the mustard. In the seven years since he unexpectedly shut the legendary Costa Brava restaurant, with 3,000 people still on the waiting list for a table, simpler more earthy cooking has come into vogue. But the father of molecular cuisine, who brought the world the idea of "mandarin air", eating smoke, caramelised quails, trout egg tempura and any number of foams and emulsions, told AFP that he has not stood still. "I have not stopped working" nor experimenting, he said, since he shuttered elBulli, which held the maximum three Michelin stars. Back then Adria admitted that he was feeling a little jaded. But as he explains in a new 15-part documentary series about his incredible rise from dishwasher to culinary superstar, "elBulli: Story of a Dream", which begins on Amazon Prime on Monday, he has well and truly got his mojo back. It is just that he doesn't want to go back to cooking at the stove day and night.

Famous chefs don't cook

"It makes no sense for me to open a restaurant," he told AFP. "Why would I do that?

"Almost all the greatest chefs in the world — with a few exceptions — no longer actually cook. They taste, direct and conceive," he said. Adria has, however, helped his brother Albert to open six establishments in Barcelona, of which one, Enigma, he described as a "baby elBulli".—AFP ■

Kenya's Lake Turkana put on World Heritage danger list

MANAMA (BAHRAIN) — A UNESCO panel on Thursday added Lake Turkana, a conservation hotspot in Kenya and a candidate site for the birthplace of mankind, to the list of endangered World Heritage Sites.

The UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's World Heritage Committee expressed concern about the disruptive effect of Ethiopia's Gibe III dam "on the flow and ecosystem" of Lake Turkana downstream. The impact "poses further threat to the site," UNESCO said in a statement on Wednesday issued from Bahrain.

Located in northwestern Kenya and known as the Jade Sea, Lake Turkana is the most saline lake in East Africa and the largest desert lake in the world.

Its islands are breeding grounds for the Nile crocodile, hippopotamus and several snake species while the lake itself is important to migratory birds.

The area is also a possible site of mankind's birth, hosting the fossil deposits at Koobi Fora.

Hippopotamuses are among the many species affected by the threat to Lake Turkana, says the UN. **PHOTO: AFP**

Lake Turkana is endangered primarily by Ethiopia's construction of a hydroelectric and irrigation dam on the Omo River, which replenishes the lake seasonally. The dam threatens to disrupt the seasonal flooding that is essential to the reproductive cycle of the lake fish, with an estimated 300,000 people depending on fishing Turkana for their livelihoods.

The irrigation project is also expected to significantly reduce the total amount of water entering the lake.

Many fear that the two Omo River projects will cause the lake level to reduce dramatically — by several tens of metres (dozens of feet) — echoing the environmental disaster previously seen in the Aral Sea, in Central Asia, which dried up after its feeder rivers were diverted for irrigation schemes. —AFP ■

Aung La N Sang defends middleweight title with win over Ken Hasegawa

Myanmar's Hero Aung La N Sang successfully defended his ONE Championship middleweight title by beating Japan's big and very strong fighter Ken Hasegawa at the ONE: Spirit Of A Warrior fight last night at Thuwunna Indoor Stadium in Yangon, Myanmar.

Aung La scored a near-flawless victory by relying on his well-rounded skills and support from the hometown crowd in the first defence of his middleweight world title, while the Japanese warrior leaned on his judo skills to try and dethrone the Myanmar hero in his promotional debut.

Both men dug deep and treated the crowd to a firecracker matchup, which went the full five rounds. Hasegawa found early success with his left hand in Round 1 as Aung La landed a solid counter, but no significant offense had happened by mid-round. The first meaningful offense came from Aung La later in the first round in the form of a powerful punch, but Hasegawa wasn't deterred.

A head kick attempt by Aung La resulted in Hasegawa falling to the floor. Aung La was eager to capitalize, but the Japanese fighter recovered in time and quickly came to his feet. Hasegawa avoided further trouble until the bell rang. Aung La started off the second round with heavier blows, but Hasegawa held his own with straight punches – particularly with his right hand.

Aung La N Sang gives a back kick to Ken Hasegawa at the ONE: Spirit Of A Warrior fight last night at Thuwunna Indoor Stadium in Yangon. **PHOTO:MIN HTET**

The two engaged in short exchanges, throwing no more than three-strike combos in each, and neither man showed any desire to take the fight elsewhere.

A mis-timed kick, paired with well placed punch by Hasegawa, had Aung La stumbling to the ground.

He got back up, though, and soon the two were back engaging in short-distance exchanges.

Aung La seemed to slow down as Round 2 wore on, landing mostly ineffective kicks, as Hasegawa backed him up with punches. Hasegawa eventually shot for a takedown but was stuffed, and the two went right back to trading strikes in the center of the cage.

The two quickly resumed action in Round 3. Hasegawa did most of the backing up, but while he did have the volume advantage, Aung La threw punches with power in his sparse counters. With 30 seconds left in the round, champion and challenger sported swollen eyes and seemingly heavy arms, but they kept throwing.

Hasegawa shot for a takedown early in Round 4, but Aung La easily defended, stuffing the attempt and getting back up.

Aung La was able to find some solid offense and seemed in control of Hasegawa on the ground, but the challenger was able to reverse and get the fight back on its feet. The two proceeded to throw punches, but Aung La was the only one who seemed even slightly concerned with keeping his hands up.

As the fourth round ended, Hasegawa looked bloodied, swollen, and exhausted. But he kept going.

Aung La's spinning back elbow was the early highlight of Round 5, but it was ultimately more flashy than it was effective. Again, the two exhausted men were trading sloppy punches, before Aung La was able to take Hasegawa down. The challenger was able to go back to the feet once more, but the scenario for him there hadn't changed that much from the earlier rounds. It took Aung La almost five entire rounds and some serious persistence, but it happened: He was finally able to render a wobbly, stumbling Hasegawa unable to continue as he face-planted onto the mat. The crowd at Thuwunna Indoor Stadium in Yangon roared their approval for their hero as an exhausted Aung La N Sang slowly raised his arms in victory.—Lynn Thit(Tgi) ■

Futsal referee course concludes in Yangon

A closing ceremony for a three-day futsal referee refresher course supervised by the Myanmar Football Federation (MFF) was held in Yangon on Thursday at Thuwunna Stadium.

The futsal course was aimed at refreshing and upgrading the skills of Myanmar youth futsal referees who will be working in MFF Futsal League 2018, which begins in August, said an official from MFF.

The closing ceremony was attended by the MFF's General Secretary U Ko Ko Thein, Chairman of the futsal committee U Kyi Min Thein and MFF officials and trainees.

Following the officials' speeches at the ceremony, trainees who attended the course were awarded with certificates.

There were 23 trainees who completed the course that was held from 26 to 28 June. —Lynn Thit(Tgi) ■

No plans to change fair play rule – FIFA

MOSCOW — FIFA said it had no plans to change its fair play criteria that allowed Japan to qualify for the last 16 of the World Cup at the expense of Senegal in controversial circumstances.

Japan and Senegal were both locked on four points in Group H with identical goal differences and the same number of goals scored, but the Asian side went through to the next round on Thursday after collecting fewer yellow cards in the group stage.

In a farcical end to Japan's 1-0 loss to Poland, the Japanese players slowed to walking pace and hardly a single tackle was made. Both teams were booed from the pitch in Volgograd. It sparked comparisons with the infamous 1982 World Cup match between West Germany and Austria, where both teams played out a mutually beneficial 1-0 win for the Germans.—AFP ■