Electricity & Energy Union Minister inspects CNG refilling stations, Fertilizer Factory (Myaungdagar)

THE Union Minister for Electricity and Energy, U Win Khaing, inspected safety measures at CNG refilling stations of Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise in Yangon Region yesterday.

The Union Minister, along with MOGE Managing Director U Myo Myint Oo and officials, inspected refilling station No. 008 in Pale Township and No. 042 in Htauk Kyant. He asked officials to follow the standard operating procedure (SOP) at the stations to ensure worksite safety and to prevent an outbreak of fire.

MOGE has opened 46 CNG refilling stations, including 41 in Yangon Region, two in Mandalay Region, and three in Magway Region, which sell about 23 million cubic feet of natural gas to 28,299 Natural Gas Vehicles (NGVs) daily.

SEE PAGE-3
New year holidays bring more visitors to Inwa’s Bargaya Monastery

An increasing number of local and foreign tourists are visiting the 180-year-old Bargaya Monastery in Inwa, TadaU Township, Kyaukse District, in the new year holidays this year, said locals. 

Religious and historical monuments are the top attractions for many domestic and international travellers visiting Mandalay, with tourists usually making a day trip to Amarapura, Inwa, and Sagaing towns. 

“An increasing number of visitors are coming here these days to see the floral arabesques, carvings, and ornamentation of ancient architecture,” said a local from Inwa. 

“We decided to visit Inwa because there are many places to visit in this ancient capital city,” said a traveller. 

Inwa, an ancient imperial capital from the 14th to the 19th century, dates back more than 400 years. According to historical records, 31 Myanmar kings ruled Inwa in succession. The ancient capital was, unfortunately, destroyed by a series of major earthquakes in March, 1839. Visitors to the city can see architecture incorporating traditional Myanmar handicrafts. Among the city’s ancient edifices, the Bargaya monastery, which is made entirely of teak, is particularly popular among visitors. The monastery, measuring 188 feet in length and 103 feet in width, was commissioned by King Bagyidaw (1813-1937 A.D.). It features 267 teak posts, the largest of which measures nine feet in diameter. The monastery was installed with five brick lad- ders, which were decorated with Myanmar handicrafts and sculptures. 

On its third and final day, the children’s literature festival in Muse District of Northern Shan State saw participation from children, students, parents, teachers, literary enthusiasts, and department officials from Namhkam, Kutkai, Pansai (Kyu Koko), and Manhero townships. 

Students from public and private schools took part in various contests at the festival. A total of 28 students took part in the storytelling contest, 29 students participated in poetry recitation, and 26 students competed in the impromptu speaking contest held yesterday. Around 1,500 students and children participated in coloring contests and games organized every day at the festival. 

As part of the festival, 22 dance and musical performance es, including yein (synchronized group dancing) and an ASEAN-Myanmar musical, were organized at the Mingalar Muse (New Starlight) hall. 

A talk entitled ‘Encouraging reading to children to promote their livelihood,’ was also organized at the festival, with Naing Myo Thitsar (Namtu), Zaw Myo Han (Nga Thaing Chaung), and Daw Khin Swe Hlaing (Ky Lin Tun) serving as panelists and poet U Myo Khaing (Muse) serving as moderator. —Muse District IPRD (Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)
“Myanmar is now on the path to democracy. A nascent democracy can be compared to a toddler learning to walk; we have to be careful not to falter at this stage and need to maintain a proper balance. If we wish democracy to survive, we have to respect the rule of law and existing rules and regulations.”

(Excerpt from the message extended by President U Win Myint on the occasion of the International Day of Democracy which falls on 15th September, 2018.)

Union Minister U Ohn Maung attends digital marketing meeting, appoints ‘Burmese Python’ as tourism ambassador

THE Union Minister for Hotels and Tourism, U Ohn Maung, headed a meeting on the use of digital marketing for promoting tourism on Saturday morning and appointed ONE two-division champion, Aung La N Sang, as Myanmar’s Tourism Ambassador at a ceremony later in the evening.

At the meeting on using digital marketing at the Chairtrim Hotel in Yangon, participants also discussed methods to attract tourists from Hong Kong.

At a ceremony held on board the Alexandra Cruise ship on Yangon River in the evening, the Union Minister appointed ONE middleweight and light heavyweight world champion Aung La N Sang as Myanmar’s Tourism Ambassador.

Union Ministers Dr. Than Myint and Nai Thet Lwin, Yangon Region Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein, Deputy Ministers U Thar Oo and Dr. Daw Mya Lay Sein, Yangon Mayor U Maung Maung Soe, Permanent Secretary U Bratsin and officials, the chairman of the Union of Myanmar Township Federation (MTFD), and officials from affiliated associations also attended the ceremony.

In his speech at the ceremony, U Ohn Maung said appointing prominent artists, actors, and actresses as tourism ambassadors supports the development of Myanmar’s tourism sector. He said the Kachin-born MMA world champion, Aung La N Sang, has been being chosen as the tourism ambassador to help promote Myanmar in the US. He expressed his belief that the mixed martial artist will promote Myanmar’s tourism sector.

The Yangon Region’s Chief Minister and the UMTA Chairman also delivered speeches at the ceremony. Aung La N Sang also expressed his gratitude at being chosen as the tourism ambassador.

Afterwards, the MTF, the Myanmar Market Promotion Association, and Aung La N Sang signed an MoU. Union Minister U Ohn Maung then conferred tourism ambassador documents to Aung La N Sang. — Maung Min Naing (Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

Union Minister Electricity and Energy inspects CNG refilling …

FROM PAGE-1

The current price of CNG is about three times lower than diesel and petrol, benefiting the transportation of passengers and goods via NGVs.

MOGE is planning to equip refilling stations with modern compressors to speed up time taken for filling gas.

Union Minister U Win Khaing also visited the No. 4 fertilizer factory (Myaungdakar) in Hmawby yesterday.

During the visit, the Myanmar Petrochemical Enterprise Managing Director U Aung Myint presented a report on the future production plans of the factory, which manufactures urea. Afterwards, the Union Minister gave instructions on boosting the production capacity of the factory. He visited the factory’s Central Control Room and production area during the visit.

In the afternoon, the Union minister also inspected two refilling stations in Insein Township. — MNA

Thandwe District Association of Yangon holds annual gathering

THE Thandwe District Association of Yangon held their annual gathering in U Ottama Park in Bahan Township, Yangon yesterday. PHOTO: MNA

Rakhine people far from their hometown. The association regularly holds their annual gathering on the last Sunday of December. — Nandar Mii Phyo (Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)
Local News

Local News

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LOCAL NEWS

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LOCAL NEWS

Poor access to materials hurting glazed ware industry: Sagaing artisans

THE glazed ware industry in Sagaing Region is struggling to adopt advanced technology amid poor access to materials and low demand, said artisans.

“We are still struggling to adopt technology from the Netherlands. When the experts demonstrated how to make the glazed ware, we could follow them. But now, we are facing difficulties with large glazed kilns. Insufficient gas is another problem. Because of this, we have to continue using firewood for kilns. Moreover, we are facing some difficulties in buying chemicals,” said Daw Moh Moh La Pyae Wun from the Hanwin-saw glazed ware enterprise.

For making glazed ware, it is cheaper to use gas-fired kilns than firewood kilns, said local businesspersons. But, insufficient gas supply, high transportation costs, and difficulty in purchasing chemicals are hindering the development of the glazed ware business, they said.—Win OO (Zeyar Tine) [Translated by El Myat Mon]

Over 400 cyclists take part in Yangon mass cycling event in Thanlyin

OVER 400 amateur cyclists took part in the Yangon mass cycling event, which was held in Thanlyin yesterday to promote the sport.

The event, which was jointly organized by the Myanmar Cycling Federation, the Sports and Physical Education Department of Yangon Region, and the regional sub-committee for cycling, and Reviron, kicked off at the Star City Apartment near Thanlyin bridge at 6 a.m. The cycling route passed through the Pyitawthar and Thaitha-pahan roads and ended at the Thanlyin Bridge.

U Kyaw Min Than, the secretary of Myanmar Cycling Federation, U Aung Moe, the Yangon Region’s Sports officer, U Ko Gyi, the chairman of the regional sub-committee for cycling, and other officials also attended the event.

The cycling event is held on the last Sunday of every month. The Myanmar Cycling Federation has organized 31 mass cycling events so far to raise public interest in cycling.—Than Win (Thanlyin) [Translated by El Myat Mon]

Constable arrested on drug charges in Monywa

ACTING on a tip-off, the anti-drug squad of the Monywa Township police arrested a constable from a KTV shop in Monywa’s industrial zone-1 on 29 December for possession of opium powder and a cache of drugs, worth over K34 million.

According to the police report, the constable, identified as Pyae Sone Aung, was arrested with 53 grams of opium powder; worth about K5.5 million, and 5,850 yaba tablets, worth about K29.3 million. The drugs were found hidden inside his backpack.

Pyae Sone Aung has been charged with smuggling drugs, in violation of Section 19 (a) of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law.

The police are continuing with their investigations to apprehend those connected with the drug trafficking case.—Myo Win Tun [Translated by Khang Thanda Lwin]

Hteekehee boosts Myanmar-Thailand border trade

IN the last two and a half months of the current financial year, trade between Myanmar and Thailand through the Hteekehee border gate picked up dramatically, pushing up the total trade figure.

From 1 October to 21 December, Myanmar-Thailand border trade was valued at US$806.7 million, a significant rise compared with the corresponding period last year when total trade stood at $315.68 million, according to data from the Ministry of Commerce.

Normally, Myawady sees the largest trade among the seven Myanmar-Thailand checkpoints. But, this year, the Hteekehee gate has registered the highest trade, valued at $483.9 million.

Among the remaining border points, trade stood at $191.19 million at Myawady, $57.45 million at Myek, $33.8 million at Kaw-thong, $14.37 million at Tachilek, $3.59 million at Mawtaung, and $0.04 million at Maese. Of the seven gates, only the Tachilek and Myawady gates showed a small decrease in trade value.

Myanmar primarily exports fishery products such as crab, fish, and shrimp, as well as onions, sesame, dry tea leaves, coconut, and turmeric, to Thailand, while it imports capital goods such as machinery, raw industrial goods such as cement and fertilizer, consumer goods such as cosmetics, and food products.—Htet Myat [Translated by El Myat Mon]

Earthen pots attract local and foreign visitors in the Sagaing Region. PHOTO: WIN OO (ZEY AR TINE)

Cyclists participate in the Yangon mass cycling event in Thanlyin yesterday. PHOTO: Than Win (Thanlyin)

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Sugar price holds above K1,000 per viss in Yangon wholesale market

WHITE sugar price is currently holding at K1,050 per viss (1.6 kilograms or 3.6 pounds), while refined sugar is being sold at K1,150 per viss in the Yangon wholesale market, said local wholesale traders.

In spite of the rise in the exchange rate, the price of imported sugar touched maximum of K1,200 per viss this year, a decline of K150 per viss compared with last year, when sugar prices had hit a record high of K1,450 per viss.

According to traders, sugar prices declined to K980 in early August as a result of the dollar’s appreciation and difficulties in the export of rice and sugar through the borders.

Sugar is among the re-export items of Myanmar, which imports it from Thailand and India via the border and the sea. The imported sugar is mainly shipped to China, the largest neighbor of Myanmar.

Most of the sugar produced in the country serves the domestic market. —Maung Say Aung □

(Translated by Khaing Thanda Lwin)

Tight security, confiscation hurt Muse trade in current fiscal

THE value of trade at the Muse gate, which sees the largest trade among the country’s border checkpoints, has registered a drastic fall of US$387.58 million in the current fiscal year, according to data released by the Ministry of Commerce.

Between 1 October and 21 December, trade at the Muse gate plunged to $852.7 million this October, a steep drop in trade at Muse. This has led to a drastic fall of US$387.58 million in the current fiscal year, the Ministry of Commerce reported.

When compared with the same period last year, exports have risen by $97 million to $297 million, while imports have grown by $35 million to $181 million this October. For the same month last year, the bilateral trade totalled $531 million, with exports worth $199 million and imports valued at $342 million.

Myanmar conducts border trade with the world’s most populous country, China, through Muse, Lwejel, Chinswehwaung, Kanpyke, and Rangmaung.

Myanmar exports rice, various types of peas, sesame seeds, corn, fruits and vegetables, dried tea leaves, fishery products, rubber, minerals, and animal products to China.

It imports machinery, plastic raw materials, consumer products, and electronic tools. —Ko Khant □

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Mineral exports decline $37 mn in current fiscal

MYANMAR’s mineral exports in the current fiscal year totalled US$274.163 million, a decline of $37 million, or 12 per cent, from the corresponding period last year, according to the latest trade data released by the Ministry of Commerce.

For the same period last year, total mineral exports exceeded $300 million.

Between 1 October and 21 December this year, the public sector exported mineral products worth $0.649 million, a decline of $88.6 million from the same period last year. Private sector exports increased by $51 million to reach $274.114 million.

Other products which saw a downward trend in export growth in the current FY include forest products. The export value of forest products decreased slightly by $2 million compared with the same period last year.

According to data from the Commerce Ministry, the country earned a total of $3,261 billion from the export of seven major groups of commodities, namely, agricultural, mineral, marine, animal, and forest products, manufactured goods, and other miscellaneous items. During the corresponding period last year, the country earned $2.78 billion from the exports sector.

During the mini-budget period between April and September this year, the country’s mineral exports were valued at $1.034 billion.

As per the ministry’s yearly trade report, the value of mineral exports was pegged at $897 million in the 2011-2012 FY, $399 million in the 2012-2013 FY, $1.339 billion in the 2013-2014 FY, $1.498 billion in the 2014-2015 FY, $968 million in the 2015-2016 FY, and $1.010 billion in the 2016-2017 FY. —Khine Khant □ (Translated by Khaing Thanda Lwin)
Children’s literature festival arrives in Maubin

The first day of children’s literature festival in Maubin District took place in Basic Education High School No. 1 in Maubin town yesterday morning.

Firstly, the Ayeyawady Region Chief Minister, U Hla Moe Aung, Regional Minister for Social Affairs Dr. Hla Myat Thwe, Regional Minister for Development Affairs U Kyaw Myint, Amyotha Hluttaw representative Daw El El Pyone, Regional Hluttaw representative U Zaw Moe, relevant officials, and Laye Chan (outstanding students) Maung Ant Hmu Paing, Ma Sandi Myo Min, and Ma Htet Wutyi Mon, opened the festival with a ribbon-cutting formality.

The second part of the opening ceremony took place in Myat Pyinayar Hall where the B.E.H.S students performed the children literature festival theme song.

Next, Chief Minister U Hla Moe Aung delivered an opening speech and students then performed more songs. The Chief Minister, officials and invited guests then toured the children’s literature exhibition booths and book sales festival. The children’s literature festival aims to nurture future scholars, instill teamwork, and develop skills and wisdom of future leaders. The festival concludes today. —Maubin District IPRD ■ (Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

Visitors to Mandalay, Nay Pyi Taw increase during end of year break

MYANMAR citizens are taking opportunity of the long public holiday from 29 December to 1 January, a merger between new year’s and December school break, to give in to their travel fever. Mandalay invites pilgrims and jacket lovers

Many people are travelling to Mandalay on their long holiday to visit holy sites, pagodas and a taste of the cold winter air rare to lower Myanmar.

Min Min Oo, a visitor, on break with friends from Yangon, said this is an excellent opportunity for them to visit holy pagodas and the cultural history of Mandalay.

“We work in a textile factory in Hlinethaya Township. We arrived here in Mandalay yesterday morning,” said Min Min Oo. “We were welcomed by the cool weather here. We’ve visited Mahamuni Pagoda and Mandalay Hill. We’re visiting Kuthodaw Pagoda now and plan to go to the flower festival in Maymyo (Pyin Oo Lwin) tomorrow,”

Daw Tin Tin Aye, a fellow Yangonite, is together with her family in Mandalay. “Both my children and grandchildren are free to travel together. It’s been 5 years since I’ve been to Mandalay. There has been a lot of changes and development,” she said.

U Than Hla form Pathein also agreed that the long public holiday allowed he and his family to visit Mandalay’s prominent landmarks such as Shwenandaw Monastery and U Bein Bridge. Nay Pyi Taw’s pagodas, recreation areas attract visitors

Civil servants, students and the general public are also heading to Nay Pyi Taw during the long holiday. An official from the capital city’s National Landmark Garden said the number of visitors has increased during the public break.

“We’ve had a lot of visitors since before Christmas. There were over 1,300 local visitors and 20 foreigners visiting the garden on 29 December,” said Daw Khin Nan Soe from the garden’s service department. She added that visitors can enter National Landmark Garden with their private cars, after paying the entrance fee, and spend the entire day relaxing with friends and families.

Daw Yupan, a high school teacher from Meiktila, is visiting National Landmark Garden with her family. She said the 4-day holiday allows her time to travel with her family and to unwind from the usual daily life.

Another popular destination is the Defence Services Museum, where Maung Pyae Maung San, a fifth grader from Kyaung Ye model Village in Lewe Tsp on a school excursion, said he would like to pilot one of the aircrafts displayed at the museum one day.

Nay Pyi Taw also attracted pilgrims to religious sites such Uppatasanti Pagoda, Buddha Gaya, Maha Thatkya Yanthi Pagoda, and Dartuyeza Datpaungsu Pagoda, while tourists visited Ngalike elephant camp and the local zoological gardens. —Min Htet Aung (sub-printing house), Zaw Myo ■ (Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

Pyin Oo Lwin attracts new year holidaymakers

THE 13th flowers festival of Pyin Oo Lwin, the city’s cave and waterfalls have attracted New year holidaymakers.

Pyin Oo Lwin located 3338ft above sea level is a great place for holidaymakers and full of greenery, Waterfall, Chinese temple and Dathomai Waterfall. The visitors feel relaxed, said U Kyaw Min, a visitor.—Zaw Myo Haik (Pyin Oo Lwin) ■

Holidays visit the 13th flowers festival. PHOTO: ZAW MYO HTAIK (PYINOOLWIN)
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Fixing and shaping future development

Pledging to make supreme sacrifice to protect Independence

By Yettaktha Pwein Tho Aung

MARKING the first event of Independence Day National Objectives, here is just one day to go before 2018 ends and a new year begins. It is an auspicious time to reflect on the past and look forward to a new future every year. Change is a part of nature, seasons change and landscapes are altered. Even so, if we look closely at the real state of development across the world is the manifestation of our times. From the year 2018 and ushers into the year 2019, we had promised earlier to the independence and sovereign-ty”. If the composition of the Tatmadaw was approved. A dec-ision was issued on 12 August 1943, and that Bogoye Aung San made guidelines on the road to independence through political approach. On 10, 17 and 18 August 1943, many agreements were signed such as Randy Agreement signed in Kandy of Sri Lanka on 7 Sep-tember 1943; the Aung San- A-lvex Agreement signed in London on 27 January 1947; the Panglong Agreement signed by (22) leaders of nationalities including Bogoye Aung San on 12 Febru-ary 1947; No – Allê Agreement signed in London on 17 October 1943. As the result of these three agreements, the granting of independ-ence shall be approved in British Parliament and subse-quent Myanmar regained independence on 4 May 1948.

Therefore, it is necessary that all the nationalities should live in harmony for eternity in the union; that all the armed conflicts should be ended while reaping the exter-nal peace; that in respecting the human rights in con-junction with the equal rights and benefits of all the nationalities. In honor of 17th Independence Day, the writer of the year 2018; the Tatmadaw was approved. A dec-ision was issued on 12 August 1943, and that Bogoye Aung San made guidelines on the road to independence through political approach. On 10, 17 and 18 August 1943, many agreements were signed such as Randy Agreement signed in Kandy of Sri Lanka on 7 Sep-tember 1943; the Aung San- A-lvex Agreement signed in London on 27 January 1947; the Panglong Agreement signed by (22) leaders of nationalities including Bogoye Aung San on 12 Febru-ary 1947; No – Allê Agreement signed in London on 17 October 1943. As the result of these three agreements, the granting of independ-ence shall be approved in British Parliament and subse-quent Myanmar regained independence on 4 May 1948.

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Pagodas, recreation places crowded with year-end holidaymakers

Upatasanti Pagoda in Nay Pyi Taw is crowded with visitors yesterday. PHOTO: HTEIN NAW

Pilgrims and holidaymakers throng Kyaukhtioye Pagoda yesterday. PHOTO: WIN MAUNG(IPRD)

The 13th Flowers Festival in the National Kandawgyi Garden attract holidaymakers across the country with its 200,000 flowering plants and floral sculptures, becoming a significant destination for year-end holidaymakers. PHOTOS: ZAW MYO HTAIK

A family having a lunch during the picnic to the Water Fountain in Nay Pyi Taw. PHOTO: HTEIN NAW

Water Fountain in Nay Pyi Taw makes visitors relax. PHOTO: HTEIN NAW

Holidaymakers visit Lokamarazein Pagoda in Amarapura Township, Mandalay Region yesterday. PHOTO: MIN HTET AUNG (MANDALAY SUB-PRINTING HOUSE)

Holidaymakers feed elephants as they visit the Ngalaik Elephant Camp in Nay Pyi Taw. PHOTO: HTEIN NAW
**US, China talk ‘progress’ after phone call on trade**

WASHINGTON (United States)—Both the US and China spoke of progress Saturday after telephone talks between their leaders over a trade war that has rattled global markets.

“Just had a very long and very good call with President Xi of China,” US President Donald Trump said on Twitter after his chat with China’s President Xi Jinping. “Deal is moving along very well. If made, it will be very comprehensive, covering all subjects, areas and points of dispute. Big progress being made!”

For his part, Xi told Trump that China places “great importance” on improving bilateral ties and “encourages and supports further talks between the United States and the Democratic people’s Republic of (North) Korea, and hopes for positive results,” state-run news agency Xinhua reported.

Washington and Beijing imposed tit-for-tat tariffs on more than $300 billion worth of goods in total two-way trade earlier this year, locking them in a conflict that has begun to eat into profits and contributed to stock market plunges.

The leaders of both the United States and China want “stable progress” in ties, Xi said during the call, according to the state Xinhua news agency.

While investors have worried over the trade war between the world’s two biggest economies, relations have thawed since Xi and Trump struck a 90-day trade truce in early December while the two sides work to ease tensions by 1 March.

Xinhua quoted Xi as saying China and the US are working to implement the terms of that truce.

During the call, Xi expressed hope that “both teams can meet each other halfway and reach an agreement beneficial to both countries and the world as early as possible,” according to Xinhua.

Relations between the world’s top two economies are “now in a vital stage,” Xinhua quoted Xi as saying.

“China attaches great importance to the development of bilateral relations and appreciates the willingness of the US side to develop cooperative and constructive bilateral relations.”

The US-China trade war has been among factors pressing US and global markets in December, alongside worries over slowing growth, a partial US government shutdown, higher US Federal Reserve interest rates and Trump’s attacks on the central bank.

Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin last Sunday aimed to allay investor anxiety by announcing that he had held a conference call with major bank CEOs, but the comments were widely criticized by market watchers for raising new doubts.

**Morocco arrests Swiss man over links to hiker murder suspects**

RABAT (Morocco)—A Swiss man living in Morocco was arrested in Marrakesh on Saturday, for alleged links to suspects in the recent murder of two female Scandinavian hikers, authorities said.

The man is “suspected of teaching some of those arrested in this case about communication tools involving new technology and of training them in marksmanship”, Morocco’s central office for judicial investigations said in a statement.

The counter-terror organ added he subscribed to “extremist ideology” and also has Spanish citizenship.

The ongoing investigation into the double murder uncovered the man was involved in the “recruitment of Moroccans and sub-Saharaners to carry out terrorist plans in Morocco”, the statement said. Danish student Louisa Vesterager Jespersen, 24, and 28-year-old Norwegian Maren Ueland were found dead at an isolated hiking spot in the High Atlas mountains, south of Marrakesh on 17 December.

The two women were beheaded, authorities have said.

Ahead of Saturday’s arrest, Moroccan authorities had previously arrested 18 people for alleged links to the murders.

The four main suspects were arrested in Marrakesh and belonged to a cell inspired by Islamic State group ideology, Morocco’s counter-terror chief Abdelhak Khiam told AFP this week.

But none of the four had contact with IS members in Syria or Iraq, he said. The head of the suspected cell is 25-year-old street vendor Abdessamad Ejjoud, according to investigators.

He was identified in a video filmed a week before the double-murder, in which the four main suspects pledged allegiance to IS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, according to authorities.

The killings have shaken Norway, Denmark and Morocco. Another video circulated on social networks allegedly showed the murder of one of the tourists.

Morocco, which relies heavily on tourism income, suffered a jihadist attack in 2011, when a bomb blast at a cafe in Marrakesh’s famed Jamaa El Fna Square killed 17 people, mostly European tourists. An attack in the North African state’s financial capital Casablanca killed 33 people in 2003.

**Five killed as Bangladesh votes after violent campaign**

DHAKA (Bangladesh)—Five people were killed in election-related violence in Bangladesh Sunday as voters went to the polls following a campaign marred by deadly clashes and a crackdown on the opposition by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina’s government.

Two men were shot by police while three others were killed in separate clashes between activists from the ruling Awami League Party and the main Bangladesh Nationalist Party opposition (BNP).

**Four killed in helicopter crash in eastern Siberia**

MOSCOW—Four people were killed in a helicopter crash in the eastern Siberian city of Ulan-Ude on Sunday, TASS news agency reported.

“A helicopter crashed in Ulan-Ude. Four people on board of the aircraft were killed,” a local police source was quoted by TASS as saying.

The police and rescuers have arrived at the scene in Ulan-Ude, the capital city of the capital Republic of Buryatia.

TASS quoted local authorities as saying that the crash caused fire over the aircraft.

**Philippine storm death toll rises to 22**

MANILA (Philippines)—At least 22 people died from a storm that swept through the central Philippine islands at the weekend, authorities said Sunday, with rescue operations underway in flood-impacted communities.

The death toll rose from four a day after the storm brought heavy rain to the Bicol and Eastern Visayas regions, causing massive flooding and landslides, the government’s office of civil defence said.

Many of the deaths were due to landslides and drowning, it added, saying floods had yet to recede even as the weather disturbance known locally as “Usman” weakened into a low pressure area.

Moroccan authorities investigate the scene of the murder of two Scandinavian women at the foothills of the Atlas Mountains. PHOTO:AFP

China’s President Xi Jinping (L) and US President Donald Trump discussed the tariff war that has seen tit-for-tat tariffs on more than $300 billion worth of goods. PHOTO:AFP
Indonesia’s Bali volcano erupts

JAKARTA—Indonesia’s Mount Agung volcano of Bali Island, located in northern part of the resort island, erupted on early Sunday, Indonesian authorities said.

“Eruption has occurred in Bali’s Mount Agung on 30 December at 4:09 a.m. (local time). Exact height of ash columns hardly able to be observed,” Indonesia’s Meteorology, Climatology and Geophysics Agency (BMKG) said in a statement.

Heavy cloud hindered direct vision to the peak of the volcano when it erupted, it said.

The eruption was recorded by seismograph with maximum amplitude of 22.2 mm, lasted in three minutes and eight seconds, he added.

“Currently Mount Agung volcano is in alert status,” the statement added, saying that the level III danger status has been issued on the volcano.

Indonesia’s Center of Volcanology and Geological Disaster Mitigation (PVMBG) urged locals, trekkers and tourists to stay away from red zone at present, which is 4 km from the volcano crater.

The PVMBG said the red zone areas could be expanded or reduced in the following days on the basis of results monitored by its observation outpost. The agency also warned people residing near the rivers of being cautious of potential threats as the lava and volcanic materials may flow into rivers.

Indonesia’s Disaster Mitigation Agency Spokesperson Sutopo Purwo Nugroho said, volcanic ashes have affected Bali’s northern regencies during rainy days.—Xinhua

‘Worse every day’: Afghans expect 2019 to be even deadlier

KABUL (Afghanistan)—After a year of record bloodshed, Afghans are bracing for an even deadlier 2019 with the threat of a US drawdown and a looming presidential vote likely to fuel violence. President Donald Trump’s plan to slash the number of US soldiers in Afghanistan before negotiators have struck a peace deal with the Taliban has crushed hopes among many Afghans for an end to the 17-year conflict.

The news, which the White House has confirmed, capped an annus horribilis for the war-wearied country which by some estimates has overtaken Syria as the world’s deadliest conflict zone this year.

Ordinary Afghans, who have long borne the brunt of the relentless fighting, told AFP they felt increasingly despondent about the future as the Taliban and the Islamic State group adapt to ramped up security to carry out almost daily attacks on civilians and security forces.

“It is getting worse every day,” said electrical engineering student Mohammad Hussain in Kabul, one of the deadliest places in the country for civilians. “The security we had four or five years back was better than now. Even when we don’t have attacks in Kabul, we are waiting for something to happen.”

Ibhaiullah Shirzad, who owns a garbage collecting company in the Afghan capital, said he could not remember a bloodier year than 2018 and predicted 2019 would be even deadlier.

“We will see more killing and bloodshed,” the 42 year old said. “I am not optimistic about the peace talks.” Their gloomy comments reflect the findings of a Gallup poll published in October, which showed an unprecedented level of pessimism among Afghans.

And an Asia Foundation study in December suggested more than 60 per cent of Afghans thought the country was moving in the wrong direction—unchanged from a year earlier.

‘Very bad year’

Several key indicators show Afghan security locked in a downward spiral, underscoring their negativity. Civilian deaths hit a record high in the first half of the year, while the Taliban are slaughtering Afghan forces in greater numbers than ever before.

This year was also marked by some of the deadliest suicide attacks since the start of the war in 2001, including an ambulance bomb blast that targeted a crowded street in Kabul in January, killing more than 100 people and wounding hundreds more.

The bloodshed was exacerbated by Trump’s more aggressive strategy for Afghanistan, which he reluctantly announced in August 2017, putting thousands of US boots on the ground and giving its air units greater leeway to go after the Taliban and IS.

One estimate puts the number of conflict-related deaths at more than 40,000 this year—almost equal to the combined total for Syria and Yemen—according to data compiled by the US-based Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project. Afghanistan also took the unenviable title of deadliest country in the world for journalists, with 15 media workers killed, including AFP chief photographer Shah Marai and AFP driver Mohammad Akhtar.

Adding to the misery was the worst drought in recent history, which forced more than 250,000 people to abandon their homes, overwhelming humanitarian agencies as they struggled to provide enough food and shelter.

Thousands of displaced families have set up makeshift tents on the edge of cities, and some are even selling their young daughters into marriage to repay debt or buy food.—AFP

Colombia condemns alleged plot to kill president

BOGOTA (Colombia)—Colombia’s foreign minister on Saturday condemned an alleged plot to kill President Ivan Duque and said three Venezuelan citizens had been detained in possession of “weapons of war.” “For several months there have been intelligence probes into possible attacks against the life of the president,” Carlos Holmes Trujillo said in a video on the ministry’s social media accounts.

He added that three Venezuelans in possession of “weapons of war” had been captured in connection with such plots, without going into further details. In a separate statement, Trujillo said that the threats came from “internal and external actors.”

The announcements come amid tensions between Bogota and Caracas, following the mutual expulsion of officials from both nations and the presence earlier this month of Russian long-range bombers in Venezuela.

President Duque has called upon the “countries that defend democracy” to not recognize the government of Nicolas Maduro, who begins a new term on January 10, after being re-elected in polls that were boycotted by the opposition and branded a fraud by the international community.

Maduro, for his part, has said the future government of Brazil under President-elect Jair Bolsonaro, Colombia and the United States are all involved in plotting a coup in Venezuela and want to assassinate him.

Duque’s government has said it would not support a military intervention in Venezuela, with which it shares a 2,200 kilometer (1,350 mile) border. Washington, on the other hand, has indicated “all options are on the table” for dealing with Venezuela’s socialist leader.—AFP

By some estimates, Afghanistan has overtaken Syria as the world’s deadliest conflict zone this year. PHOTO: AFP

CLAIM’S DAY NOTICE

MV TOVE MAERSK VOY. NO. (1835-1836)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V TOVE MAERSK VOY. NO. (1835-1836) are hereby notified that 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: MS MCC TRANSPORT (S’PORE) PTE LTD

Phone No: 2301185

31 DECEMBER 2018
THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR
The Global New Light of Myanmar sends its best wishes to our valued readers, distributors, advertisers, media agencies and all the people of Myanmar for good health, happiness, and success. May you be greeted every day with auspiciousness in the New Year.
China to mark Year of the Pig with “Peppa Pig” movie

BELING (China)—China is set to mark the Year of the Pig with a film starring “Peppa Pig,” the popular British cartoon character that fell foul with its censors earlier this year.

A government document listing upcoming movie projects shows a new film in the works titled “Peppa Pig celebrates Chinese New Year” to be released in February 2019 during the Lunar New Year holiday.

The film includes Chinese New Year customs such as a dragon parade and fireworks, state-run China Daily reported. Co-developed by Alibaba Pictures and Canadian media company Entertainment One—which currently produces Peppa Pig—the film includes the entire “Peppa Pig” cast and two new characters named Dumpling and Glutinous Rice Ball, two popular Chinese new year delicacies. The series, introduced in the mid-2000s in China, has become extremely popular through episodes dubbed into Mandarin. This fervour intensified at the end of 2017 among a young adult audience. Many internet users including stars sported temporary “Peppa Pig” tattoos in selfies, and cups, watches and clothes appeared bearing the image of the heroine Peppa.

A Chinese internet platform under the eye of the censors as “subversive” has promoted the series, and state media lamented the series, and its removal, as state media lamented the series, and its removal, a “little black dress” and an anti-apartheid icon in her own right, died in hospital aged 81 and after a long illness.

- 13: Oscar-winning Czech-born film director Milos Forman, behind “One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest” and “Amadeus”, died aged 86 after a short illness.
- 17: Barbara Bush, the wife of US president George H.W. Bush (in office between 1989 and 1993) and mother of president George W. Bush (2001-2009), passed away aged 94, just months after his wife of 73 years, Barbara Bush. They were the parents of president George W. Bush.
- 1: Charles Aznavour, legendary French-Armenian crooner, passed away at the age of 94.
- 28: Amos Oz, celebrated Israeli novelist and passionate advocate of peace between Israelis and Palestinians, died of cancer aged 79.—AFP

Notable deaths in 2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>- 21: US preacher Billy Graham, spearhead of a worldwide evangelical Christian movement and spiritual counsel to several US presidents, passed away aged 99. - 24: Bollywood megastar Sridevi Kapoor drowned in a hotel bathtub at the age of 54. She had appeared in around 300 films, including blockbusters such as “Mawali” (“Scoundrel”).</td>
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<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>- 10: French fashion designer Hubert de Givenchy, famous for the “little black dress”, died in his sleep aged 91. - 14: Physicist Stephen Hawking, Britain’s most famous modern-day scientist and known for popularising the secrets of the universe, died at home aged 76. Suffering from a form of motor-neurone disease, he spent most of his life in a wheelchair and communicated via a computer speech synthesiser.</td>
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<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>- 2: Winnie Madikizela-Mandela, former wife of Nelson Mandela and an anti-apartheid icon in her own right, died in hospital aged 81 and after a long illness. - 13: Oscar-winning Czech-born film director Milos Forman, behind “One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest” and “Amadeus”, died aged 86 after a short illness. - 17: Barbara Bush, the wife of US president George H.W. Bush (in office between 1989 and 1993) and mother of president George W. Bush (2001-2009), passed away aged 94, just months after his wife of 73 years, Barbara Bush. They were the parents of president George W. Bush.</td>
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<td>May</td>
<td>- 14: Author Tom Wolfe, acerbic chronicler of American society known for novels such as “The Bonfire of the Vanities”, died aged 88 in hospital where he was being treated for an infection. - 22: US literary giant Philip Roth, a towering figure among 20th-century novelists and 1998 Pulitzer Prize winner, died of heart failure aged 85.</td>
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<td>June</td>
<td>- 5: American handbag designer Kate Spade committed suicide at the age of 55. - 8: US chef and television food show host Anthony Bourdain, 61, committed suicide in Alsace, eastern France, where he was filming for his Emmy-winning CNN food and travel programme “Parts Unknown”. - 18: XXXTentacion, a 20-year-old rapper whose grim rhymes propelled him to the top of the US chart, was shot in Florida.</td>
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<td>July</td>
<td>- 5: French filmmaker Claude Lanzmann, director of the landmark nine-and-a-half hour Holocaust documentary “Shoah”, died aged 92. - 6: French “chef of the century” Joel Robuchon, who had become a “subversive” icon for slackers and anti-social young people, died in hospital aged 81 following a year-long battle with brain cancer.</td>
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<td>August</td>
<td>- 5: French “chef of the century” Joel Robuchon, who had become a “subversive” icon for slackers and anti-social young people, died in hospital aged 81 following a year-long battle with brain cancer. - 6: Hollywood star Burt Reynolds, best known for alpha-male roles in the 1970s and 1980s, died aged 82 after a heart attack.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| October | - 3: Belgium’s richest man, multi-billionaire entrepreneur Albert Frere, passed away aged 92. - 8: Lyudmila Alexeyeva, a Soviet-era dissident who became a symbol of resistance in modern-day Russia as a leading rights activist, died after a long illness at the age of 91. - 28: Amos Oz, celebrated Israeli novelist and passionate advocate of peace between Israelis and Palestinians, died of cancer aged 79.—AFP

PARIS (France)—From soul diva Aretha Franklin to astrophysicist Stephen Hawking and former UN chief Kofi Annan, here are some of the notable figures who passed away in 2018:

**China to mark Year of the Pig with “Peppa Pig” movie**
Iran sees ‘revival’ of imperilled Lake Urmia

MIANOBA (Iran)—It is one of the worst ecological disasters of recent decades, but the shrinking of Iran’s great Lake Urmia finally appears to be stabilising and officials see the start of a revival. A rusty cargo ship and a row of colourful pedal boats lying untouched on the bone-dry basin are a sign of the devastating loss of water in what was once the largest lake in the Middle East.

Situated in the mountains of northwest Iran, Lake Urmia is fed by 13 rivers and designated as a site of international importance under the UN Convention on Wetlands that was signed in the Iranian city of Ramsar in 1971. The lake has been shrinking since 1995, according to the UN Environment Programme, due to a combination of prolonged drought, over-farming and dams. By August 2011 the lake’s surface was 2,366 square kilometres (914 square miles) and shrank drastically to just 700 km2 in 2013, according to the United Nations. The catastrophe has threatened the habitat of shrimp, flamingos, deers and wild sheep and caused salt storms that pollute nearby cities and farms. That finally triggered a coordinated effort to save the lake in 2013—with a joint programme between Iran and the UN Development Programme funded by the Japanese government. The project became a priority for the incoming administration of President Hassan Rouhani.

“One of my promises was to revive Urmia lake, and I am still committed to that promise,” Rouhani said during a recent visit to the region. Some positive results are finally emerging and the lake’s surface area reached 2,300 km2 last year, according to UN Development Programme figures. “This is the beginning of the lake’s revival,” said Abolfazl Abehoht, who heads the wetlands unit of Iran’s environment department. He warned it would take “decades” to return to the 5,000 km2 it once covered, but at least “now the trend has stopped”.

**Sustainable farming**

Rising temperatures and reduced rainfall have been a major factor in the lake’s decline, experts say. So, too, was the construction of a causeway in 2008 to shorten driving times between Urmia and the nearby city of Tabriz that cut the lake in two. People were also a major part of the problem due to a rapid rise in the population and farming around the lake, which provides a livelihood to some six million people. The rejuvenation effort therefore focused on redirecting rivers to irrigate farmland, thus avoiding use of water from the lake, and the promotion of more sustainable farming methods.

“All is 83 per cent of the water is used for agriculture, and we are trying to help farmers reduce usage through cheap and effective techniques,” said Abehoht. Measures such as using natural instead of chemical fertilisers, or levelling the land to avoid run-off, have shown major improvements for local farmer Afshin Medadi. The 47-year-old had to invest in new equipment, but says “things are more cost-effective now”, with his farm using a tenth of the water. Some positive results are finally emerging and the lake’s surface area reached 2,300 km2 last year, according to UN Development Programme figures. “This is the beginning of the lake’s revival,” said Abolfazl Abehoht, who heads the wetlands unit of Iran’s environment department. He warned it would take “decades” to return to the 5,000 km2 it once covered, but at least “now the trend has stopped”.

**In Caracas, macaws’ bold color show can’t be missed**

CARACAS (Venezuela) — Colourful wild macaws flying through Caracas skies are a bright sight to behold. Striking and mostly docile, they settle on balconies in search of food. But that very closeness is not always what’s best for them.

The birds’ plumage is a palette that runs from reds, blues and greens to yellows or oranges. With every sunrise and sunset they start their zigzagging flight between palm trees and residential towers.

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If the scene sounds like a dream for nature lovers, behind the proliferation of these birds in a city with high noise, pollution and human hustle, is wildlife trafficking and the introduction of exotic species, biologist Diego Diaz tells AFP.

It’s unknown how they arrived in this city of six million people. But many experts think they were introduced by animal traffickers or that they could escape from captivity in homes or zoos.

Regardless, Caracas is not their natural habitat; macaws are at home in the wild in secluded jungle areas of southern Venezuela, some on the border with Brazil.

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In the capital, these large-and sharp-beaked species live incongruously from terrace to TV antenna, from roof to ledge to palm tree, from which they set out on noisy individual and flock flights. — AFP   

IN Picture

We won’t have a society if we destroy the environment:
Margaret Mead

Smoke rises from a factory chimney on 29 December 2018. PHOTO: AFP
Yangon United celebrates 10th anniversary

THE Yangon United F.C. held a ceremony to mark its 10th Anniversary and the start of the new football season at the Mahabandula Park in Yangon on Saturday evening.

Fans thronged the ceremony, which filled with a dance and performances by vocalist Billy Lamin Aye, Pan Yaung Chel, and Graham.

During the ceremony, the football club unveiled a new logo, new jerseys and kits for home-and-away plays, and introduced its players to the fans. Yangon United Vice President U Min Swe Oo presented gifts to representatives of sponsor companies.

Signifying Yangon United’s symbol of success in the previous football season, the three trophies won by the team at the Charity Cup 2018, Myanmar National League 2018, and General Aung San Shield 2018 were also put on display.

U Phone Naing Zaw, the CEO of Myanmar Football Federation, guests, representatives from sponsor companies, Yangon United officials, and media also attended the event, which concluded at 7:30 p.m.—Lynn Thit(Tgi)

Bodybuilding, physique contest held in Yangon

AS part of public sports events scheduled in December, a bodybuilding and physique competition was organized for men and women at the Indoor Aung San Stadium in Yangon yesterday morning.

In the men’s bodybuilding and physique event, Kaung Si Thu won the first prize in the 55-kg weight category, Tun Min Naing in the 60-kg weight category, Aung Htut in the 65-kg category, Het Lin Naing in the 70-kg category, and Zaw Maung Maung in the above 70-kg weight category.

In the women’s event, Tin Yu Maw and Win Moht Moht Han took the first prizes.

Asian gold medalist, bodybuilder Tun Min, Professor Dr. Thazin Lwin at the University of Distance Education (Yangon), and referees handed out the prizes to the contest winners.

—Phoe La Pyae

Thet Htar Thuzar wins women’s singles at National Badminton Championship

THET Htar Thuzar won the senior women’s singles at the Myanmar National Badminton Championship 2018, which started on 24 December at the Myanmar Badminton Federation in Yangon.

The awards ceremony was held on 28 December. Speaking on her victory, Thet Htar Thuzar said: “I have been playing badminton since I was a child. I have participated in international competitions so far and won 5 prizes. Now, I have won the first place in the senior women’s singles. I always take part in the National Badminton Championship. I plan to compete in international events next year.”

In October 2018, Thet Htar Thuzar won the first prize in the Egypt International Series 2018, organized by Egypt, in Cairo.

Players from different states and regions participated in the Championship, organized under the supervision of the Myanmar Badminton Federation.

Ralled as the biggest badminton tournament in Myanmar, the championship aims to promote the sport and serves as a platform for selecting outstanding players for international competitions, said an official.

The federation selects the most outstanding players at such tournaments as national players, he said.—Lynn Thit(Tgi)

Andy Murray talks ahead of his return to tennis at this week’s Brisbane International. PHOTO: AFP

Murray, Nadal look for Brisbane bounce-back after injury-hit 2018

BRISBANE (Australia)—Andy Murray aims to kick-start his stalled career in Brisbane this week after an injury-plagued 2018, with Spanish great Rafael Nadal also playing as he tests his troubled knee ahead of the Australian Open.

The season-opening tournament boasts a stellar field with Kei Nishikori and Grigor Dimitrov also in contention as they prepare for the first Grand Slam of the year at Melbourne Park.

It also marks the return of temperamental Nick Kyrgios, the defending champion who has been talking to psychologists and “trying to get on top” of his mental health after another roller-coaster year. His preparations took a blow when he was bitten by spider over Christmas, which needed medical attention, but he is expected to be ready.

The women’s field includes seven of the world’s top 10 —defending champion Elina Svitolina, US Open winner Naomi Osaka, Sloane Stephens, Petra Kvitova, Karolina Pliskova, Kiki Bertens, and Darya Kasatkina.

Three-time Grand Slam winner Murray only played six tournaments last season and arrived in Australia early to acclimatise and prepare as he continues his recovery from hip surgery.

‘A better place’

The Scot, who won the Brisbane title in 2012 and 2013, said he had been training hard to work himself back to the sort of fitness levels that saw him capture nine titles in a stellar 2016 campaign and reach the number one ranking.

“There are still things that I want to achieve,” he said. “Whether I am capable of that I don’t really know.”

The 31-year-old had intended to play Brisbane at the beginning of 2018, but was forced to withdraw on the eve of the tournament and pull out of the Australian Open with the hip problem. He said he still had some pain, but “I’m in a better place than I was a few months ago”. The former world number one spent the off-season training in the heat of Miami to prepare for what can be gruelling conditions in Brisbane and then Melbourne.

He hasn’t played since pulling out of the China Open in September, with his ranking plunging to 256. World number two Nadal also battled injury worries throughout 2018 but enjoyed success as well. He won a record-extending 11th French Open in June and reached the semi-finals both at Wimbledon and the US Open. But in November he announced he needed an operation on his right elbow and “trying to get on top” of his mental health after another roller-coaster year. His preparations took a blow when he was bitten by spider over Christmas, which needed medical attention, but he is expected to be ready.

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