AWAKENING NATIONAL PRIDE THROUGH SPORTING SUCCESS

NATIONAL
Senior General Min Aung Hlaing joins Catholic Cardinal Charles Bo for ‘X’mas celebrations

QR Code, beta version of digital concierge system installed at Mandalay TadaU Airport

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Message of Greetings sent by State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi on the occasion of Kayin New Year Day

TODAY, the 26th of December 2019, the first waxing day of Pyatho, Kayin Era 2759, is the auspicious Kayin New Year Day, honored, valued and held in high regard by all ethnic Kayin nationals. First, let me send these good wishes to you all to celebrate the Kayin New Year with auspiciousness and blessed with glad tidings and prosperity, happily and in good cheer.

At this auspicious time of the Kayin New Year, which is the harvest time of the new crop, as families celebrate the new harvest happily, I hope that you will be able to celebrate the auspicious Kayin New Year happily. I send these good wishes and pray that all the other ethnic brothers and sisters together with the Kayin ethnic nationals, find fulfillment of their good hopes and desires in the future.

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VP U Henry Van Thio attends closing ceremony of X’mas festival in downtown Yangon

A closing ceremony of Christmas Festival 2019 in downtown Yangon was held at Saint Mary’s Cathedral at the corner of Bogyoke Aung San Road and Bo Aung Kyaw Road in Botataung Township yesterday afternoon. It was attended by Vice President U Henry Van Thio and wife Dr Shwe Hluan, Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than and wife, Yangon Region Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein.

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Our ethnic brothers and sisters must find a solution based on discussions and negotiations free from mistrust and firm in faith. From there, we can proceed in lasting solidarity for the emergence of a Constitution that is fitting for our country and in accordance with democratic practices and federal principles.

(Extract from Message of Greetings sent by President U Win Myint to the 71st Anniversary of Independence Day Ceremony on 4 January 2019)

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing joins Catholic Cardinal Charles Bo for X’mas celebrations

COMMENDER in Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing joined Cardinal Charles Bo, the Archbishop of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Myanmar, for Christmas celebrations, at Saint Mary’s Cathedral in Botahtaung Township, Yangon, yesterday.

On arrival at the cathedral, the Senior General and party were welcomed by Cardinal Charles Bo and priests.

Catholic youth from Saint Mary’s Cathedral of Kyauktan Township sang X’mas songs, and the Senior General presented them gifts and cash awards.

Cardinal Charles Bo said the blessing for the occasion, and the Senior General made Christmas wishes.

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing received X’mas gifts from Cardinal Charles Bo, and handed over to him the donation of K5 million from the Tatmadaw families.

The ceremony was concluded with exchange of Christmas gifts, Merry Christmas wishes of Bishop John Saw Yaw Han and lunch for Christmas feast, according to the report of the Office of Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services.—MNA

(Translated by Aung Khin)

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, Cardinal Charles Bo, the Archbishop of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Myanmar, pose for a photo together with attendees at the Christmas celebration at Saint Mary’s Cathedral in Botahtaung Township, Yangon, yesterday.

PHOTO: MNA

QR Code, beta version of digital concierge system installed at Mandalay TadaU Airport

THE Ministry of Hotels and Tourism launched QR code and beta version of digital concierge system at the Mandalay TadaU Airport yesterday. The digital concierge or virtual concierge is a type of customer experience (CX) technology that provides guests with conversational and contextual assistance, and the system is used in conjunction with mobile devices.

Union Minister U Ohn Maung, Deputy Minister U Tin Latt and Mandalay Region Government’s Planning and Finance Minister U Myat Thu cut a ceremonial ribbon to launch the system, and the officials observed the use of QR code by the tourists.

Following the ceremony, the Union Minister and party held a meeting with members of local tourism committees, officials from Myanmar Tourism Federation and partner associations and hoteliers.

The meeting focused on promoting tourism industry of Myanmar with the use of digital technology, cooperation between the state and private sectors, synchronizing with e-Government system and green services of the ministry.

Minister U Myat Thu, also Vice Chairman of Mandalay Region Tourism Committee, detailed about the committee’s works on promotion plans, permissions for construction of hotels and guesthouses, issuing business licenses and tourism development in Bagan area.

In the afternoon, the Union Minister and party held another meeting with Mandalay Region Tourism Committee Chairman and Acting Chief Minister of Mandalay Region U Zarny Aung and regional government ministers to discuss tourism development and safety measures for visitors.—MNA

(Translated by Aung Khin)
Message of Greetings sent by State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi on the occasion of Kayin New Year Day

(26 December 2019)

Kayin nationals are ethnic nationals who have good qualities such as honesty, diligence, loyalty and ability to perform tasks with decisiveness and effectiveness. Kayin nationals have preserved for ages the good and noble cultures, arts and traditions which have been passed on from generation to generation by their ancestors.

Just like other citizens, Kayin ethnic nationals have seen and understood, based on their life experiences, the need to attain long lasting and stable peace for national development; this is because Myanmar has suffered heavily the ravages of internal armed conflicts for many decades.

As we walk on the path towards a Democratic Federal Union, which is the goal of national reconciliation and union peace, we are walking hand in hand with fellow builders of the Union in weal and woe. It is heartening to note that Kayin nationals have been working with the Union Government, meeting all difficulties and challenges by sharing views and having close consultations, looking ahead to a future after the 2020 elections, implementing step by step with pragmatic methods, to create a stable path.

I pray that the good and noble traditions, cultures, arts, historical heritages which have been preserved by the ancestors will be maintained and preserved. I also pray that the noble Union spirit will be passed on to the future generations. May this year’s Kayin New Year, 2759 provide strong impetus. May all the Kayin ethnic nationals living in Kayin State and other parts of the Union have continued progress and development. May you have abundance of paddy, rice, water and prosperity. These are the sincere good wishes I send to you today.

Aung San Suu Kyi
State Counsellor

MWA accepts donations for elderly writers

A DONATION ceremony to support elderly writers was held yesterday at the office of the Myanmar Writers Association on Pansondan Road in Yangon.

A total of K57.848 million was collected at the ceremony. Of the total donations, K8.37 million came from the President’s Office, and the remaining funds were contributed by the Myanmar Libraries Foundation, Myanmar Press Council, political parties, media and literary organizations, townships’ writers associations, Myanmar Maternal and Child Welfare Association, retired Tatmadaw officers and ambassadors, writers’ family members, individual donors, and film fraternity members.

Chairman of the Myanmar Writers Association (MWA) U Kyaw Win (Sayar Manuht Naing Win) accepted the donated cash, while MWA fund raising committee chairman U Ohn Maung (Myinmu Maung Naing Moe) expressed thanks for the contributions.

A ceremony to honour writers aged over 80 years, including MWA members and famous writers, will be held on 28 December at the Union Government, meeting all difficulties and challenges by sharing views and having close consultations, looking ahead to a future after the 2020 elections, implementing step by step with pragmatic methods, to create a stable path.

Rev. Fr. Hyginus Myint Soe made wishes for the ceremony, and the Yangon Region Chief Minister appraised the birth of baby Jesus.

Reverend Mahn Palmerston, the General Secretary Myanmar Council of Churches, said the blessings.

Archbishop of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese in Yangon Cardinal Charles Bo said the good news of Christmas.

U Patric Lu Ni, the chairman of committee for organizing the festival, expressed thanks for the event, and Bishop John Saw Yaw Han said blessings.

Yangon Mayor U Maung Maung Soe announced the closure of festival.

Then, the Vice President and attendees had a documentary photo taken in the compound of cathedral.

The Christmas Festival 2019 in downtown Yangon was joyously held near the City Hall in front of Maha Bandula Park and along Bogyoke Aung San Road in festive mood and decorations from 23 to 25 December—MNA (Translated by Aung Khin)
MR to run Yangon–Mandalay special trains during December holidays

By Nyein Nyein

THE Myanma Railways (MR) has announced a special up and down train service between Yangon and Mandalay during the December holidays to ensure smooth transportation for travellers.

The special trains will run along the Yangon-Mandalay route on 27 and 30 December and along the Mandalay-Yangon route on 29 December and 1 January.

The up trains will leave Yangon at 4:30 pm and arrive in Mandalay at 10:15 am the next day. The down trains will depart from Mandalay at 5 pm and arrive in Yangon at 11 am the next day.

The special trains will have eight ordinary class coaches, four upper-class seaters, one upper-class sleeper, and one brake van. The special trains will halt at Toe Gyaw Kalay, Bago, Dalu-U, Pyuntaza, Nyayungalein, Peinzalot, Kyauktawgyi, Kyaukse, Pyinmana, Pein Thit, Kyauktaga, Kanyutkwin, Pyuntaza, Nyaunglebin, Pein Shot, Kyauktaga, and Maw Taung Town.

Tickets for the special trains will be sold from 7 am at the Yangon Central Railway Station, according to MR.

Migratory birds arrive in Tanintharyi Region for winter

PHOTO: MYANMA RAILWAYS

Illegal consignment of teak seized in Kyauktaga

PHOTO: KHIN KO (KYAUKTAGA)
India asked to extend mung bean import deadline, prescribe quota for next fiscal

By Nyein Nyein

THE Myanmar Pulses, Beans and Sesame Seeds Merchants Association (MPBSSMA) has submitted a request through the Ministry of Commerce to the Indian authorities, asking them to extend the mung bean import deadline and specify the import quota for mung beans for the next financial year.

India has announced that Myanmar needs to export 250,000 tons of mung beans to the country by 31 March.

For the 2019-2020 FY, India had announced an import quota of 150,000 tons for mung beans. However, the India’s Directorate General of Foreign Trade under Ministry of Commerce and Industry released a notice on 12 December, asking Myanmar to export 250,000 tons of mung beans to India by 31 March.

“We have to export mung beans to India by 31 March, which is the ending date of the Indian financial year. We will have to send the mung beans before 15 March so that the mung beans will reach India by 31 March. It remained only two-and-a-half months before the deadline. There are only 106,000 tons of mung beans in domestic stock. New mung beans will be harvested at the end of February, 2020. We may have sufficient quantity of mung beans to export to India in 2020. There will be additional 150,000 tons of new mung beans in February. But, nothing is impossible to export 250,000 tons of mung beans in just two or two-and-a-half months. So, our association has requested India to extend the mung bean import deadline through the Ministry of Commerce. We have requested that the deadline be extended until the end of April. We have also asked them to determine how many tons of beans will they import in the next financial year,” said U Min Ko Oo, secretary of MPBSSMA.

This year, India followed an import quota system again because its domestic supply of monsoon mung beans was lower on account of climate change. Although Myanmar has asked India to purchase the beans through a government-to-government system, India is still buying the beans through an import quota system.

“India has been practicing the import quota system for the benefit of their own country since 2017. Canada and Australia are also bean exporter countries. They can export more than us. They have complained to the World Trade Organization. However, India is still pursuing the same policy. Now, they are purchasing more mung beans from Myanmar because of their rising need,” said U Min Ko Oo.

In the two months of the 2019-2020 FY, a total of 210,000 tons of mung beans, pigeon peas, and green grams were shipped to foreign countries. Mung beans made up more than 120,000 tons of the total bean exports, according to data provided by the Ministry of Commerce.

(Translated by Hay Mar)

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Thai-Myanmar border trade up $97.5 mln in current FY

THE value of Thailand-Myan-
mar border trade in the period from 1 October to 13 Decem-
ber in the 2019-2020 financial
year amounted to US$774.4
million, an increase of $97.5
million against the previous
FY, according to official fig-
ures released by the Ministry
of Commerce.

The total border trade fig-
ure included $544.4 million in
exports and $229.96 million in
imports. During the same peri-
od in the previous FY, bilateral
border trade was pegged at
$676.92 million.

Myanmar conducts border
trade with neighboring Thai-
land mainly through seven
border checkpoints – Tachileik,
Myawady, Kawthoung, Mye-
k, Hteekhee, Mawtaung, and
Maese.

From 1 October to 13 De-
cember this year, the Hteek-
hee border gate recorded the
highest trade value of $411.4
million, followed by Myawady
($221.69 million) and Kaw-
thoung ($74.6 million).

Besides Thailand, My-
anmar is also trading with
neighboring countries of Chi-
na, India, and Bangladesh. Si-
ne-Myanmar border trade is
carried out through the Muse,
Lwejel, Kanpiketee, Chinsh-
wehaw, and Kengtung gates,
while Myanmar conducts bor-
der trade with India via Tamu
and Reed. The country trades
with Bangladesh through the
Sittway and Maungtaw check-
points. As of 12 December this
FY, border trade totaled near-
ly $2.27 billion, an increase of
$605 million from the 2018-
2019 FY.

Myanmar exports agri-
cultural products, forest
products, animal products,
minerals, fishery products,
manufactured goods, and oth-
er products, while it imports
capital goods, raw industrial
goods, and consumer prod-
ucts.—GNLM

(Translated by Hay Mar)
Japan could release Fukushima radioactive water

TOKYO — A Japanese government agency has proposed releasing radioactive water from the stricken Fukushima nuclear plant into the environment, as storage space runs out.

The plant suffered a meltdown about nine years ago after it was hit by an earthquake-triggered tsunami. About a million tonnes of contaminated water has built up since then and the tanks that hold it are almost full.

The government's Agency for Natural Resources and Energy on Monday proposed three ways to deal with the water — releasing it into the sea, into the air using vaporisation or a combination of the two. “There is no option (any longer) of simply storing the water for a long period of time,” an agency official told AFP on Tuesday.

An extensive pumping and filtration system is in place at the plant, which each day brings up tonnes of newly contaminated water and filters out almost all radioactive elements. The process leaves only tritium, which experts say is only harmful to humans in very large doses.

No decision was taken at Monday’s meeting but “no members voiced opposition to the view that a technically realistic way is discharging the water into the sea or the air,” according to the agency official.

The panel has been discussing how to dispose of the liquid for years and no deadline has been set for it to report to the government.—AFP

Three immigration officials abducted by AA in Buthidaung

THREE immigration officials who were returning to their unit after taking leave were abducted in Buthidaung on 24 December afternoon by members of the AA group, according to the Office of the Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services.

A boat carrying passengers, including the staff from the Immigration and Population Department, was headed to Taungbazar Village along the Mayyu River when it was stopped by a civilian in Kyaukyit village in Nanyargon village-tract.

When the boat anchored at the village, about five AA members dressed in civilian clothes checked the passengers at gunpoint and abducted the three civil servants, including Assistant Director of the Immigration and Population Department U Tin Myo Jung, and released the boat. Local security forces have launched an investigation into the case and are searching for the three abducted men, according to the Office of the Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services.—MNA (Translated by Kyauk Zin Lin)

Vietnam seizes two tonnes of ivory and pangolin scales

HANOI — Vietnam seized more than two tonnes of ivory tusks and pangolin scales hidden inside wooden boxes shipped from Nigeria, state media reported Tuesday.

The bust comes at the end of a year of big wildlife seizures destined for communist Vietnam, a hotbed of the illicit trade in animal parts from elephants, pangolins, tigers and rhinos.

Authorities in northern Hai Phong city found 330 kilograms (730 pounds) of ivory and 1.7 tonnes of pangolin scales after checking three cargo container shipments from Nigeria, according to Hai Quan Online, the official mouthpiece of Vietnam’s customs department.

The manifest listed the goods as high-end lumber, the online site said, adding that the haul was hidden in boxes at the back of the containers. Published photos showed a rectangular wooden box full of pangolin scales, with elephant tusks mixed in.

Both items are highly sought after on the multi-billion-dollar illegal wildlife market.

Vietnam outlawed the ivory trade in 1992, but the illegal market still persists and shops sell items pre-dating the ban for decorative and medicinal purposes.—AFP

Survival surfing: Indonesians riding the waves to beat tsunami trauma

JAKARTA — Surfboard tucked under his arm, Dery Setyawan sprints into the crashing waves.

It is not just a physical challenge but an emotional one — most of his family and friends were swept to their deaths when a tsunami hit these shores 15 years ago.

His hometown of Lampuuk was almost destroyed entirely, but despite his devastating loss, the father-of-two sees the water as a way to heal.

“Surfing has been the best cure for my tsunami trauma. When I am on the waves, all my fears are gone and I can embrace the past and be at peace with it,” he says.

On December 26, 2004, a monstrous 9.3 magnitude quake struck undersea off the coast of Sumatra. It sparked a tsunami nearly 100 feet (30 meters) high that killed more than 220,000 across a string of Indian Ocean countries, including Thailand, Sri Lanka and India.

Reaching as far as East Africa, the tsunami unleashed energy equivalent to 23,000 of the atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima — and is considered among the deadliest natural disasters in history.

Indonesia was hardest hit with at least 170,000 killed, though the true death toll is likely to be higher as many bodies have yet to be recovered or identified.—AFP

Even though their scales have been scientifically proven to be medicinally useless, the pangolin has become the world’s most trafficked animal. PHOTO: AFP

PHOTO: AFP
Pope prays for peace in global flashpoints

VATICAN — Pope Francis appealed for peace in many of the world’s hotspots, singling out the crises in the Middle East, Venezuela and Lebanon as well as armed conflicts ravaging many African countries.

"May he bring comfort to the beloved Syrian people who still see no end to the hostilities that have rent their country over the last decade," he said, urging the international community to find solutions to allow the peoples of that region to live together in peace and security.

He used his "Urbi et Orbi" (To the City and the World) speech to call for a resolution to the crisis in Lebanon, where he hoped for peace and security."

"Beloved Ukraine... yearns for freedom from Iraq; "we cannot let it go on without addressing it."

"It was the first time an Israeli official admitted Israel has attacked sites in Iraq. Israel has been accused of carrying out a series of airstrikes in Iraq, starting in July.

The United States confirmed that Israel was behind at least one of these strikes, which targeted an Iranian weapons depot, but Israel has never officially commented on the issue.

Kohavi identified efforts by Iran and its proxies in Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon as a major threat to Israel.

The Israeli army has been increasingly concerned by the presence of the Quds Force, Iran’s overseas elite, and Hezbollah, an Iran-backed Lebanese group, in Syria.

Hezbollah, according to Israeli intelligence, has recently acquired precision missiles that could target Israel.

— Xinhua

Israeli airstrikes in Iraq target Iranian weapons: military chief

JERUSALEM — Israeli military’s chief said Wednesday that Israel "has carried out actions" in Iraq to foil convoys of weapons that could be used against Israel.

Aviv Kohavi made the rare acknowledgment during a speech in a conference in the Interdisciplinary Center Herzliya, a private research college outside Tel Aviv.

Kohavi told the security conference that Iranian weapons "are being transferred freely from Iraq" and "we cannot let it go on without addressing it."

Heavy hearts as Notre-Dame misses Xmas mass for first time since 1803

PARIS — Notre-Dame Cathedral in Paris was unable to hold Christmas Eve Mass for the first time in more than 200 years — after a fire ravaged its structure in April.

With heavy hearts, French Catholics instead gathered at the nearby church of Saint-Germain-l’Auxerrois, a few hundred metres away, for a service celebrated by the cathedral’s rector Patrick Chauvet.

"It isn’t the same feeling but it’s still a Christmas Mass," said 16-year-old Juliette, who had made the 700-kilometre trip from Aix with her family. "There will be a thoughts for Notre-Dame tonight, that’s for sure."

"We have been crying since April 15, and today even more," said Danielle, a Parisian, who attended last year’s mass at the Paris landmark. However, she was lifted by the choir of Notre-Dame, who performed at the mass.

Meanwhile, workers continue to repair and rebuild the cherished cathedral.

Notre-Dame, part of a UNESCO world heritage site on the banks of the River Seine lost its gothic spire, roof and many precious artefacts in the fire, which was watched by huge crowds.

The building had remained open for Christmas through two centuries of often tumultuous history — including the Nazi occupation in World War II — being forced to close only during the anti-Catholic revolutionary period in the late 18th and early 19th centuries.

President Emmanuel Macron has set a timetable of five years to completely repair the eight-centuries-old structure, which remains shrouded in scaffolding with a vast crane looming over it. Paris prosecutors suspect criminal negligence and opened an investigation in June.

The culture ministry said in October that nearly one billion euros ($1.1 billion) had been pledged or raised for the reconstruction.

— AFP

Indian diaspora in US holds rallies in support of Citizenship Amendment Act

NEW YORK — The Indian diaspora in the US belonging to several organisations showed their solidarity to recently enacted Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) by the Indian government, by holding rallies in cities such as Seattle (WA), Austin (TX), Dublin (OH), Houston (TX), Raleigh (NC).

The rallies are aimed at dispelling the misinformation and myths surrounding the act as well as to counter the planned deliberate propaganda of hate, lies and downright absurdities spread by US-based Pakistanis, supporters of Indian National Congress and other opposition parties and some Leftist Organisations. Seattle (WA) rally was held on December 21 at Victor Steinbrueck Park, Austin (TX) rally on December 22 near Capitol Building, Houston (TX) rally on December 20 at Indian Consulate, Dublin (OH) rally on December 22 at Ted Kilomback Park, Raleigh (NC) on December 22 at Nash Square Park.

Further rallies are being planned in the coming weeks at Dallas, Chicago, San Francisco, NYC, DC, Atlanta, San Jose and other locations. Archana Sunil who is one of the organisers of Seattle rally counteracting the anti-CAA rally by Indian American Muslim Council and other leftist Organisations at Victor Steinbrueck Park noted, "The anti-CAA rally signs were stating lies about Muslims being discriminated in India, Indian Muslims need to prove their citizenship, Modi being Hitler, CAA and NRC akin to genocide etc.,... they kept shouting, ‘azadi azadi... hum azadi leke rahenge’ and ‘Jai Hind’, but never said, ‘Bharata Mata ki Jai’." — ANI

Pope Francis ushered in Christmas at the Vatican with his Christmas Eve Mass. PHOTO: AFP

Image for representation. Photograph. (AFP)
Weak Students

By Professor De Maung

The patients are sick people who are having defective physical and mental health. The weak students, to me, are like patients. They are defective in knowledge and behavior in academic endeavors. As it is the duty of a doctor to treat the patient to become healthy, so is the duty of a teacher to teach the weak students to become successful.

For the development of sports in the country, a symposium attended by principals, trainers, coaches, and athletes of the country’s six institutes is an urgent need so that methods of athlete selection can be reviewed and standards for the six institutes can be set.

Strong students in the class

I have encountered weak students in every class, whose conduct and behavior is so bad that it is difficult for a teacher to control them. After several attempts, I have come to realize that these students are not taking their studies seriously. They are not interested in their studies and are always looking for excuses to avoid attending classes. They are alwaysLate for class, absent-minded, and unwilling to work hard. They are not interested in learning and are always looking for ways to avoid doing their homework.

Some of these students are also involved in bad habits such as smoking, drinking, and using drugs. They are also prone to getting into fights and other forms of physical violence. In some cases, they have even been involved in criminal activities.

Weak students are a challenge for teachers, as they require more attention and guidance to help them overcome their weaknesses. They need to be motivated and encouraged to perform better in their studies. Teachers should provide them with extra classes and individual counseling to help them improve their academic performance.

Weak students are not only a burden for teachers, but also for the entire school community. They can bring down the reputation of the school and make it difficult for the school to attract good students. Therefore, it is important for the government and educational institutions to take measures to address the problem of weak students.

Principals, trainers, and coaches should work together to identify weak students and develop strategies to help them improve. They should also encourage the students to participate in extra-curricular activities to help them develop a positive outlook and a sense of achievement.

Conclusion

In conclusion, weak students are a challenge that requires the attention of teachers, principals, trainers, coaches, and parents. Only through collaborative efforts can we help these students overcome their weaknesses and become successful.

Thus, it is important for the government and educational institutions to take measures to address the problem of weak students. Only then can we ensure that all students have the opportunity to succeed and reach their full potential.
MANILA — Typhoon Phanfone pummelled the central Philippine island of Sorsogon on Christmas Day, bringing a wet, miserable and terrifying holiday to millions in the mainly Catholic nation.

Police said six people were missing as the typhoon loosed from one small island to another for the second day — crumpling houses, toppling trees and blacking out cities and towns, including in popular resorts like Boracay.

At the height of the festive season on Wednesday, tens of thousands were stranded at shuttered ports or evacuation centres while the rest of the region’s population covered in rain-soaked homes.

Though weaker, Phanfone was tracking a similar path to Super Typhoon Haiyan, the country’s deadliest cyclone on record which left more than 7,300 people dead or missing in 2013.

A father, his three children and two other relatives were missing after their hut was swept away early Wednesday when heavy rain caused a creek to overflow near the town of Basulan, provincial police told AFP.

More than 16,000 people spent the night in improvised shelters in schools, gymnasiums and government buildings as the typhoon first made landfall Tuesday, civil defence officials said.—AFP

BEIJING — A single woman in China has gone to court challenging rules that forbid unmarried women from freezing their eggs in the first case of its kind in the country.

Teresa Xu said she was prompted to take legal action after a top hospital in Beijing declined to freeze her eggs last year, and instead told her to “get married, and have a child soon”.

“There is a huge demand among young women in China — whether married or single — to freeze their eggs as they delay the decision to have a child,” Xu told AFP.

“But clinics refuse single women, because of unfair laws.”

Chinese regulations forbid unmarried women from freezing their eggs unless they have a health reason, such as cancer.

A Beijing court on Monday agreed to hear Xu’s case against the hospital, nearly six months after it was filed.

The 31-year-old, who works as a freelance editor, said she had also written to a member of China’s parliament, hoping that the issue of reproductive restrictions faced by unmarried women could be raised when the legislature meets in March.

Unmarried women in China are also largely barred from accessing assisted reproductive technologies including in-vitro fertilisation (IVF) treatment or sperm banks.

The restrictions hark back to a time when the Communist party attempted to strictly control population growth with its one-child policy. The Chinese government has attempted to boost birth rates in recent years, allowing all couples to have two children from 2016, but single mothers still face discrimination and legal hurdles when attempting to register a birth.—AFP

CHENGDU — The Japanese government said Wednesday that it has tapped popular Japanese boy band Arashi as a goodwill ambassador to promote cultural and sports exchanges with China ahead of the 2020 Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics.

During his stay in China from Monday, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe told Chinese leaders about the decision to ask Arashi — also popular in China — to play a key role in accelerating people-to-people exchanges between the two neighbors.

The group will serve as a goodwill ambassador for one year through 31 December, 2020, the government said. Arashi has announced it is sched-uled to suspend its activities at the end of that year.

One of the many male idol groups promoted by Japan’s giant entertainment agency Johnny & Associates Inc., Arashi members have been active as a group and individually, not only in music but in movies, TV dramas, variety shows and commercials since making their debut in 1999.

Arashi is composed of five members — leader Satoshi Ohno, Shu Sakurai, Masaki Aiba, Kazunari Ninomiya and Jun Matsumoto.—Kyodo News

Unmarried women in China are also largely barred from accessing assisted reproductive technologies including in-vitro fertilisation (IVF) treatment or sperm banks. PHOTO: AFP
S Korea’s retail sales grow in November on year-end shopping festival

SEOUL — Retail sales in South Korea grew last month as a year-end shopping festival buoyed both online and offline sales, a government report said Wednesday.

The combined sales of 26 major online and offline retailers increased 7.5 per cent in November from a year earlier, according to the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Energy.

It came as the Korea Sale FESTA, a South Korean version of Black Friday, ran for three weeks from 1 November. Consumers raised the purchased of discount products during the country’s biggest shopping season.

Online sales rose 24 per cent in the month, marking the first increase in three months. Online sales advanced 14.8 per cent, keeping a double-digit expansion for four straight months.

Revenue of major department stores and discount outlets grew 3.1 per cent and 0.8 per cent each, while convenience stores posted a 4.6 per cent growth in revenue last month.

Hypermarket stores saw a 3.3 per cent reduction in revenue in November from a year earlier as consumers rushed to department stores and discount chains.

Former chief executive Travis Kalanick will depart Uber’s board of directors by the end of the year, the company said on 24 December.

FILE PHOTO. A group of women pose for photos with a giant bear at a ‘Line’ store in the popular Myeongdong shopping district of Seoul, South Korea. PHOTO: XINHUA

The Ivorian government invested 40 million euros ($44.3 million) into private production, leading to the creation of 110,000 hectares (about 270,000 acres) of new plantations.

The state provided training in the different skills of the rubber business and helped open tracks in rural areas to transport produce.

Since rubber trees are productive 10 months of the year, it is a rush for “white gold”.—AFP

Nissan accepts resignation of recently appointed No. 3 exec

TOKYO — Nissan Motor Co. said Wednesday a top executive who took his position in a leadership revamp this month will leave the company, throwing the automaker’s efforts to move on from last year’s arrest of former Chairman Carlos Ghosn into disarray.

Nissan did not disclose the reasons for the departure of Jun Seki, who took the Japanese automaker’s No. 3 post of vice-chair operating officer on 1 December tasked with spearheading the implementation of its restructuring measures.

It is widely believed the 58-year-old was in conflict with CEO Makoto Uchida, 53, over how to deal with Renault SA of France, Nissan’s largest shareholder that had previously pushed for a merger.

—Kyodo News
Greeks alter Christmas meal menu due to price hikes

ATHENS — Pork and Turkey have been the main protagonists in a typical Christmas meal in Greece. But the menu, this year, is changing due to the price hike of main ingredients, local market experts and consumers told Xin-hua here on Tuesday.

The debt-ridden country may have exited the bailout era in 2018, but the wounds of prolonged austerity and recession are still here and the average Greek household is trying to make the most on a limited budget. Due to the latest epidemic of the African swine fever, the price of pork has increased by about 18 per cent this year compared to 2018, while the price of turkey rose by about 9 per cent, according to an e-mailed survey conducted by the Hellenic Confederation of Commerce and Entrepreneurship (ESEE).

“There are other options. One can easily make up a menu for a decent meal with many other ingredients available at Varvakios and avoid these two whose prices have risen. We can enjoy a stuffed roasted chicken or try a rabbit. There are alternatives,” said Kleanthis ‘Tsiravis, president of Athens’ central market “Varvakios.” Due to the price hikes in key meat ingredients, the traditional Christmas meal for 6-8 persons which includes meat, salads, fruits, cheese, soft drinks, wine and dessert will cost Greek households this year on average 154.57 euros (170.02 US dollars), up 3.68 per cent compared with last year when the average was estimated at 149.09 euros, the ESEE’s survey found.

In order to keep the cost as low as possible, some Greeks are dropping the pork and turkey, or buy small quantities, and shift to more economic ingredients.—ANI

Cost of UK royals back in spotlight after Queen’s year to forget

LONDON — After a torrid 2019 in which the queen’s son Prince Andrew was implicated in an under age sex abuse scandal, many in Britain are again asking if the monarchy has gotten too big — and rich — for its own good.

The family’s year to forget may encourage Prince Charles, set to eventually take over from his mother Queen Elizabeth II, 93, in his purported belief that the centuries-old institution needs reform, according to royal experts.

“He wants to slim it down to a hard core of senior family members who work full time,” said author Penny Junor, who has written several books on the royals including “The Firm” — the nickname sometimes given to the family.

“Andrew shooting himself in the foot has certainly made that an easier task,” she told AFP.

The 59-year-old prince, dubbed the queen’s “favourite son” by the UK press, has been dogged by allegations that he had sex with one of American convicted paedophile Jeffrey Epstein’s victims. Andrew, who strenuously denies the accusations, gave a calamitous BBC interview last month in which he unsuccessfully tried to distance himself from the late US financier. The furious media backlash saw him subsequently promise to “step back from public duties”. It was a grim year as well for Prince Harry and his wife Meghan Markle, the former US actress. The celebrity couple sued several British newspapers over intrusions into their private lives, while his relationship with brother Prince William has reportedly soured — creating more tabloid gossip fodder.

The family’s tribulations led The Guardian to proclaim the firm had “lost its grip”, with royal observers predicting change will inevitably result.—AFP

Libya leaves thousands homeless in Tripoli

TRIPOLI — Layla Mohammed barely had time to gather her children’s belongings before fleeing their southern Tripoli home when shelling targeted the Libyan capital’s outskirts earlier this year.

For months she moved her family between apartments as lives in the street. But “we live like animals — without running water, electricity, or even sewerage,” said Mohammed, a mother of seven. Her youngest son is sick with a chronic respiratory illness. “The dust will kill him,” Mohammed despaired. “All we want is to live in dignity,” she said. Neighbour Samira crowls her four children into a single room in a nearby building, preferring the greater warmth it affords over any sense of privacy.—AFP

Libyans unload bedding from vehicles to give to displaced fellow countrymen. PHOTO: AFP

Nigeria frees former top official accused of graft

LAGOS — Nigeria’s former national defence advisor, who was arrested in 2015 for allegedly stealing $2 billion, has been freed from jail after several court rulings ordering his release, a security official said Wednesday.

Sambo Dasuki spent four years in prison despite multiple court orders to Nigeria’s Department of State Services (DSS) domestic intelligence agency for his release on bail.

Dasuki is accused of siphoning money earmarked for the war against Islamic militant group Boko Haram and allegedly using it to help bankroll former president Goodluck Jonathan’s failed re-election campaign in 2015. He was released Tuesday night and has since reunited with his family in Abuja,” a senior DSS official told AFP.

“Remember Dasuki was granted bail by the court,” the source said, adding: “He can travel out of the country to seek medical attention but with the permission of the court since his case will have to continue.” —AFP

Sambo Dasuki (r) is accused of siphoning money earmarked for the fight against Islamic militant group Boko Haram and allegedly using it to help bankroll former president Goodluck Jonathan’s failed re-election campaign in 2015. PHOTO: AFP

Britain’s Queen Elizabeth II has called the year “bumpy” and may Britons are again questioning the cost of the monarchy. PHOTO: AFP
Facing US trade uncertainty, China seeks closer ties with neighbours

BEIJING — China made overtures on trade to Japan and South Korea and offered support for an infrastructure initiative as it hosted the leaders of its two neighbours this week amid strained ties with the US.

Chinese Premier Li Keqiang said Wednesday at a meeting with Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe that Beijing was willing to strengthen economic cooperation with Japan in third-country markets.

At the meeting on the sidelines of a trilateral summit in the southwestern city of Chengdu, Li added that China would “further open up its services industry” to Japan.

During a separate meeting on Monday with South Korean President Moon Jae-in, Li said China was willing to work on a rail network linking Korea with China and Europe, Yonhap news agency reported.

Li’s remarks come as China and the United States edge closer to an initial trade agreement after imposing tariffs on billions of dollars worth of goods over nearly two years in a bruising trade war that has hit the global economy.

—AFP

Global stock markets coast through Christmas Eve

NEW YORK — Global stock markets were mostly flat in quiet Christmas Eve trading on Tuesday, running out of fizz before the festive break, although the Nasdaq hit its ninth straight record close.

US investors have been in a cheery mood most of the fall as the outlook for US-China trade talks improved, reducing uncertainty, and most economic reports have been good.

In the sleepy holiday-shortened sessions, the broad S&P 500 slipped a hair; and the benchmark Dow dipped 0.1 per cent, but the Nasdaq, with a 0.1 per cent gain, posted another all-time high.

It was a similar picture in other major markets, as London’s benchmark FTSE 100 shares index rose 0.1 per cent, while the Paris CAC 40 finished flat.

“In true Christmas tradition, financial markets saw low trading volumes and volatility,” said CMC Markets analyst David Madden.

Frankfurt’s DAX 30 had already shut for Christmas.

Trading volumes are typically light at this stage with many investors away for extended Christmas and New Year holiday celebrations.

But the sleepy session was punctuated by some big developments.—AFP

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Dated: 26th December 2019

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Myanmar aims for $5 bln from garment export in 2019-2020 FY

By Kyaw Htike Soe

Myanmar’s garment export saw a five-fold increase in the number of workers in the past five years, according to the Ministry of Commerce. Revenue from Myanmar’s garment and textile sector from 1 to 25 October this year reached US$325 million, an increase of $38 million when compared with the same period in the financial year 2018-2019, the ministry’s figure showed. The Southeast Asian country fetched some $287 million from garment exports in the same period last year.

The country’s export income from the garment and textile industry has increased threefold, the ministry reported. The total export earnings from Myanmar’s garment and textile industry is expected to reach $10 billion by 2024, said an official from the Myanmar Garment Entrepreneurs Association. Myanmar’s CMP garment sector earns about $300 million yearly and the country will get $3 billion if it can manage to shift from the CMP system to the FOB system, the MGEA said. Myanmar’s CMP exports were worth $2.2 billion during the period from April to September this year, the ministry’s data said. CMP garment exports were valued at $850 million in the financial year 2015-2016. Myanmar earned around $2 billion from CMP exports in the financial year 2016-2017 and fetched nearly $2.5 billion 2017-2018 FY.

Being the country’s lead-
Industry Strategic Plan 2014-2024 by the MGMA. The growth of Myanmar’s clothing and textile industry has materialized at a time when wages in other regional production hubs such as Viet Nam and Cambodia have been hiked.

Myanmar is one of the fastest-growing garment and footwear suppliers in the world, with apparel exports alone climbing from $2.7 billion to $3.86 billion last year. The European Union (EU) is its biggest market, with imports jumping 21.7 % year-on-year to $2.02 billion from $1.66 billion, accounting for more than half of the country’s ready-made garment exports.

Myanmar’s garment exports have been increasing yearly, especially since 2013, when the European Union granted goods from the South-East Asian country preferential access to its market. The promising garment industry in Myanmar has grown significantly in the past five years.According to a study conducted by C&A Foundation estimated that Myanmar’s garment and textile sector could employ over 1.5 million people by 2020.

The Global New Light of Myanmar
26 December 2019

A garment Factory in Dagon Seikkan Industrial Zone. PHOTO: PHOE KHWAR

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MFF-MNL Awards Night 2019 to be held on 27 Dec

THE Myanmar Football Federation-Myanmar National League (MFF-MNL) Awards Night for outstanding footballers will be held at 6:30 pm on 27 December on the artificial turf of the MFF, according to an official statement issued by the football federation.

The Awards Night is held annually. Officials will hand out awards to the best footballers and coaches in Myanmar in 2019 under different categories: Player of the Year 2019, Youth Player of the Year 2019, Coach of the Year 2019, best referee of the Year 2019, and Fair Play Award.

Last year, Yangon United winger Maung Maung Lwin won the best player award and Yangon United head coach Myo Min Tun won the award for the best coach. Women football star Khin Marlar Tun from Sports and Physical Education won the best female footballer award. Best male youth player award was garnered by Lwin Moe Aung from the Institute of Sports and Physical Education (ISPE), and the best female youth player award went to Myat Noe Khin from YREO FC.—Lynn Thit (Tgi)

VUC, MIU teams remain undefeated in MFF Futsal League

THE Victoria University College (VUC) futsal club and Myanmar Imperial University (MIU) futsal club remained undefeated in the Myanmar Futsal League after the Week-9 matches yesterday at the National Indoor Stadium II in Yangon.

While VUC futsal club beat GV futsal club by 8-2 yesterday, the MIU futsal club gained victory over Myoma JY futsal club by a decisive 8-4.

In the meantime, on account of strong competition, other matches ended with a narrow result.

On Doctor futsal club beat Winner futsal club by 5-3 and Futsal Chi Thu futsal club beat Let Wel Thone Nara futsal club by 6-5.

Do Do Ko Ko futsal club beat Dream Team futsal club by 5-3 and Myanmar Football Federation U-19 futsal club beat AMM Brothers futsal club by 6-4.

After the matches, VUC FC is still leading the Table and MIU FC is in the second position with a no-loss result so far in the tourney, while GV FC is in the third place.—Lynn Thit (Tgi)

Yangon United beat Sagaing United 6-3 in friendly match

YANGON United made a decisive 6-3 win over Sagaing United in a friendly match yesterday at the Yangon United Sports complex in Yangon.

The winning goals for Yangon United were scored by Maung Maung Lwin, Emmanuel, Barfo, and Than Paing.

Goals for Sagaing United were scored by Simmuel, Myo Min Phyo, and Thiha Zaw.

Simmuel landed the first goal for Sagaing United in the early minutes of the match.

However, Yangon’s Maung Maung Lwin scored the equalizer at 16 minutes.

Three minutes later, Yangon’s Emmanuel netted the second goal for Yangon over an assist from team mate Aung Kyaw Naing.

The third goal for Yangon was scored at 22 minutes by Emmanuel over an assist from Aee Soe. At 28 minutes, Yangon was awarded a penalty and Barfo scored the fourth goal with a penalty kick. The first half ended 4-1 in favor of Yangon United.

The fifth goal for Yangon United was scored at 47 minutes by Barfo. But, Myo Min Phyo from Sagaing United scored the second goal for the team and Thiha Zaw netted the third goal soon after.

However, Yangon’s Than Paing secured a big win for his team with his goal at 74 minutes, and the match ended with Yangon leading by three goals.—Lynn Thit (Tgi)