State Counsellor opens housings for university teachers, lab equipment factory in Yangon

State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi formally opens the two housings for university teachers and a new laboratory equipment factory in Hline Township, Yangon, yesterday. PHOTO: MNA

State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi inaugurated two housing projects for university teachers and a new laboratory equipment factory in Hline Township, Yangon, yesterday morning.

The inauguration ceremony was also attended by Union Ministers U Min Thu, U Ohn Win, Dr Myo Thein Gyi, Dr Myint Htwe and U Han Zaw; Union Auditor General U Maw Than, Yangon Region Chief Minister U Pyo Min Thein, Region Hluttaw Speaker U Tin Maung Tun, minister for regional government, Hluttaw representatives, Chairman of Sae Paing Development Limited, officials and invited guests.

The State Counsellor watched a video presentation of Mindhamma Pyinnya Yeiktha Housing for teachers, Hline Pyinnya Yeiktha staff apartment, and a new laboratory equipment factory.

In her speech, the State Counsellor said, “I would like to extend my greetings to all invited guests at the ceremony. I am pleased with this occasion. According to the designs, the facilities look very smart. I hope that the performance of the civil service staff will be worthy of these buildings.

The main objective of our government is to develop a Democratic Federal Union that can bring about peace, sustainability and development. In doing so, it is important to upgrade physical infrastructures and attitudes, along with human resources.

Everybody knows that our country and people are facing with challenges and difficulties. However, we need to find opportunities for development amidst these situations.

In this regard, teachers play a crucial role. They can change the mindset of youth. They were regarded as parents because they gave us advice.

While the world has seen technology developments, Myanmar also needs to try for technical innovations. The government is building appropriate facilities in these tasks in line with budget constraints. It is expected that housing for teachers and civil service staff and laboratory equipment factory would be very beneficial for the country’s development.

Modern and advanced infrastructures can encourage people’s efforts and their innovations. In studying development trends of respective countries, it has been found that only knowledge based on human resources could sustain long-term development.

The government is upgrading the capacity of citizens. If the capabilities of people did not improve, the support of government could not result in sustainable development.

Education is the foundation in developing human resources, and the government has been working on curriculum reforms, upgrading teaching methods, supplying modern teaching aids, creating pleasant environment of schools and helping teachers and educational staff to improve their living standards.

SEE PAGE-3
Whatever we do, we must keep in mind the good of our Union

Our country is a union. A union is a nation comprised of many ethnic nationalities. Whatever we do, we must keep in mind the good of our Union. Whatever you do, please think for the good of our Union and the peoples of our Union. Further, please work to bring the peoples of our Union closer together, more bonded, more united.

(Extract from the opening speech given by State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi on 3 August 2018 at Meeting No 1/2018 of the National Tourism Development Central Committee.)

State Counsellor visits arts exhibition of 56 artists in Yangon

State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi visited the ‘Hay Manda Art Exhibition’ held at the Strand Hotel in Yangon yesterday morning.

During the visit, she was accompanied by Union Minister for the Office of the Union Government U Min Thu and officials.

Artists explained and introduced their artworks to the State Counsellor at the exhibition.

In her remark at the exhibition, the State Counsellor said, “I did not think to make a speech at the exhibition and was just prepared to enjoy the paintings. So, I should not make any comment on the artworks. But let me express my feelings on the paintings.

I considered myself it might be my favouritism or preference. I feel that Myanmar artists are the best in Southeast Asia. The artworks of Myanmar artists are very aesthetic. Some persons might be of the view that the art should not be judged on beauty. I disagree. Art is for beauty. Neither beauty nor ugliness is an offence. Each has different meanings. I value pleasant feeling when I looked at some paintings. It could please me. We love beauty as it can give us peace and calmness.

We should believe the Earth as it possesses beauties. It is not a place for depression or lack of expectations. So, I conclude the artworks are beautiful. Some artists do not like the word ‘beauty’. They regard this remark is quite disparaging. However, the paintings are so beautiful that I am pleased to see them more and more.

I would like to share my experience. On one day, it was just before I went out of the home when I heard a melody of a veteran musician from the radio. It tied me up not to leave there till it came to an end. It was a very first weird feeling in my life. I did not worry about being late for the intended place. That is the power of art.

The paintings also attracted me despite pushing me from behind with constant reminders of the time. However, I needed more time to enjoy them. It is also the power of art. I love painting. I am not a genius or expert in it. But I prefer water colour paints. It is like meditation. It can also improve the power of concentration. It was found that we can control our mind from wandering. The mind totally concentrates on the movements of brushes and painting of water colours. Such concentration could be experienced only in meditation which seems to be more profound. Such mental state can be achieved only when viewing the paintings. I want to view the paintings very thoroughly.

I would like to express thanks to all artists for your artworks on depicting the beauties of our country based on your own experiences.

I have more trust on our country while we are experiencing more and more challenges. An alternative view is that problems could undermine trust and confidence. However, I have more belief in our country and our people who have enough capacity to overcome all the problems and challenges because they are always ready to show their support. They never turn a blind eye to any crisis. So also, the artists are finding ways to overcome challenges of our country in their own ways. I am of the view that every person is considering their ways how to solve their problems and how to build up a meaningful life every day.

I believe artists think more seriously. I am very pleased to see the esteemed artists, and thank you all for your valuable works for the country.”

After the speech, the State Counsellor received commemorative paintings from the artists. Next, she took a documentary photo with them.

A total of 56 artists are displaying their 116 artworks till 27 December.—MNA

(Translated by Aung Khin)
State Counsellor opens housings for university teachers, new lab equipment factory in Yangon

FROM PAGE-1

Emergence of capable teachers is as important as a good education system. Therefore, the government emphasizes on developing decent environments and facilities for teachers.

Teachers also need to fully understand their core value. We communicated with our teachers respectfully during our childhood. Teachers are also responsible for worthiness of respect from their students. Teachers are working not only for themselves but for future generations; therefore, their attitude is crucial for the development of the country.

Mindhamma Pyinnya Yeiktha has 9 units of 12-storey building and 2 units of 8-storey buildings with a total of 910 apartments—798 apartments with 1,200 sq ft and 112 apartment—car parking building, swimming pool, gyms, community centres and two market places.

Meanwhile, Hline Pyinnya Yeiktha has 7 units of 8-storey buildings with a total of 520 apartments, ranging areas of 1,800 sq ft, 900 sq ft and 600 sq ft. Among them, 194 apartments from 3 units of 8-storey building, a four-storey community centre and a three-storey lab equipment factory with underground facility. Moreover, Parami Pyinnya Yeiktha has a unit of duplex building with 10 apartments of 3,600 sqft, 900 sqft and 600 sqft. Apart from 1,104 international standard apartments have been ready for teachers and educational staff. We need to provide more facilities as ours is still a developing country. Therefore, while other countries are moving forward, we need to run even among Southeast Asian countries.

The remaining facilities need to be completed 4 units of 8-storey buildings and 11 units of 12-storey building, with a total of 1,286 apartments, in 2020 and 2021. As the new facilities are modern buildings, these facilities could make good shelters for the teachers and other staff. All are urged to live in discipline and maintain the facilities well. Our country needs good educational staff. They need to develop good attitudes by themselves. Teachers should have willingness to educate children in far-flung areas. People away from cities respect teachers. Once teachers earn the respect and love of country people, that kind of satisfaction cannot be compared with these apartments.

Countries liberated from poverty helped their people move from huts to apartments. Development of public living standards could promote mindset, discipline and capacities of people. In this perspective, the government is building staff apartments and housing for pensioners across the country. We are also building safe and secure apartments for the medical staff in rural areas. The government will develop the living standards of teachers and educational staff across the country. Although we cannot implement these projects in the short term due to budget constraints, the government will work together with the private sector and local and foreign investors.

I also appreciate private firms which are contributing in the development of our country. I want to see the success of these firms which were compared with the abdomen of human beings. The success of private firms is beneficial to the development of country. They need to share their wealth with the people. The world sees Myanmar as the most generous country. However, our country is ranked in the list of least developed countries.

Our people need to keep on holding our good advantages and attitudes when the country is on the trend of development. We need to understand challenges and difficulties help us develop our mental power.

In conclusion, I wish to inform that the government is trying for development of the education sector and living standard of teachers. The teachers are also urged to try their best for improvement of the country’s education standard, while we all are trying in building up a modern developed nation. Our people must have high expectations. It must be understood we have our own trend for development. Both endeavours and confidence are required for implementation, while making more efforts for national interest and taking care of your health. Please don’t be afraid of getting tired.

After the speech, the State Counsellor received a photo of Mindhamma Pyinnya Yeiktha housing from Union Minister for Construction U Han Zaw. He also handed over a commemorative photo album to Union Minister for Education Dr. Myo Thein Gyi.

Chairman U Weik from Sae Paing Development Limited donated K.200 million to Dr Thein Win, the Director General of Higher Education Department, for housing maintenance fund. The State Counsellor then unveiled the plaque of Mindhamma Pyinnya Yeiktha housing and cut the ceremonial ribbon to inaugurate the Mindhamma Pyinnya Yeiktha Housing for teachers, Hline Pyinnya Yeiktha Staff Apartment, and a new laboratory equipment factory. The project was implemented for urban development and improvement of living standard of the people. It was carried out by the Ministry of Education as client with the Ministry of Construction taking care of project management. The Myanmar Imperial Vega Company which is a branch of Sae Paing Development Limited acted as joint-venture partner under the PPP arrangement.—MNA

(Translated by Aung Khin)
THE welfare association of the Thirty Comrades families held their 32nd dinner at the Grand Mercure Yangon Golden Empire hotel in South Okkalapa Township, Yangon, yesterday evening.

Dr Khin Letya, the daughter of Bo Let Ya who was a member of colonial-era thirty comrades, made an opening remark at the dinner.

On behalf of the offspring of Thirty Comrades, State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, the daughter of Bo Teza, made a speech.

She said, “I want to say something about the comradeship spirit between our fathers. I have frequently said there is no relationship more important than camaraderie as they were even closer than blood relations. This is because it is built on trust and a common belief while facing danger together.”

“They have gone through thick and thin together and people who have experienced what can be called true comrades. Even now, our fathers are still called the ‘Thirty Comrades’ and the people only know them as such no matter how high a rank they attained.”

“Members of the Thirty Comrades still refer to each other as ‘Bo’. Some people may think they are disregarding the higher ranks attained later or are deliberately trying to erase or forget them but that is not the case. Calling each other ‘Bo’ is a sign of familiarity. This shows closeness and genuine affection. The value of the real value is gaining familiarity through friendship. This is why when we remember our fathers, it is absolutely necessary that we also remember comrade ship.”

“The Thirty Comrades are the predecessor of Myanmar’s modern Tatmadaw whose numbers are now in the hundreds thousands. The real source of strength for any organization is mental spirit. It can’t be compared to anything else. No matter how strong other physical strengths are, an organization will falter if it doesn’t have mental unity. Comradeship is especially crucial in the success of national duties.”

“This camaraderie must start from your own organization and spread throughout the nation. You must have that mentality on the entire country. You must consider your fellow citizens as genuine comrades and value them even more than your own blood relations. I believe that just as the Thirty Comrades were born for carrying the duties for the people, our families will continue to be united with that thought.”

“Come to think of it, do you wonder how many people would have believed in the Thirty Comrades when they were first formed? Relatively few people would have had faith on the significance of thirty young men hoping to make an impact on a nation. There might even have been those who viewed them as hot-blooded youths. Some people might also have thought the situation was unfavorable regardless of the enthusiasm and lived as though the arrows had run out before the war began. But we all have to start somewhere. We need to take the first step to eventually reach our goals.”

“There is still a lot left to do in our country. We cannot call it a developing country yet and I believe the responsibility that lies on everyone. If we want to receive our parents’ inheritance then we must also inherit their responsibilities.”

“What was the main concept pursued by the Thirty Comrades? It was independence. But why? They believed that real development only takes place when a country is independent and only can it promise full inherent rights of all citizens.”

“Everyone needs to ponder on the meaning of independence together to see why the Thirty Comrades were born and why they were successful. It was because the people wanted independence as well. We only achieved independence because the people gave their full support to the comrades who entered battle for it. Nothing would have been accomplished without the support of all the citizens.”

“That is why if we speak of it fondly and come together then this country that our fathers believed in will be able to stand at the same level with other nations on the global stage. We must become a nation that creates its own future but it is not enough to just achieve independence because in the modern world a person’s nation must first be strong for them to fully grasp their future for themselves.”

“Here, I am not referring to our outward physical strength but to our mental fortitude and spirit. We can achieve physical strength anytime as long as we have the spirit to do so. But without spirit not only would our physical strength falter, we may also become prone to endanger ourselves. That is why it is important to remember how successful the objectives of our fathers long ago were when we remember them.”

“What was the motive for the formation of the Thirty Comrades and how did they begin the trek towards independence? To what extent have those objectives been fulfilled and if they aren’t, then what must we do to supplement them? We must think of how each of us can contribute to what capacity to fulfill all of them.”

“I have been in the political world for so long it wouldn’t be wrong to assume I see everything through a political lens. However, politics concerns everyone and that includes all the people living in this country.”

“So, if we think politics is only the concern of politicians then each and every citizen is a politician as well. You are all concerned with the welfare of the nation and that is why you are politicians.”

“Whether from a political perspective or civilian or social perspective or even through a perspective based on past closeness, I wish for everyone to be successful in working together to fulfill the objectives and aspirations of our fathers if we are to fondly remember them.”

Then, Daw Ye Mar Maw Naing (daughter of Bo Yan Naing), Daw Khin San Dar Wir (daughter of Bo Ne Win), U Kyaw Kyaw (son of Bo Ye Htut) and U Maung Maung Gy (son of Bo Yan Aung) expressed thanks to the gathering.

The State Counsellor and the offspring of the Thirty Comrades presented education outstanding awards of the welfare association to the grandchildren of late comrades.

Nine family members of the Thirty Comrades formed the welfare association on 26 December 1983, and Daw Kyi Kyi Win who is the spouse of Bo Myint Swe is still alive having reached the age of 94.—MNA (Translated by Aung Khin/ Zaw Htet Oo)
Kayin New year celebrated in YGN’s National Races Village

KAYIN New Year was celebrated at National Races Village, Thakayta Township, Yangon, on 25 December. The Kayin Literature and Culture Committee’s honorary Patron Pado Dr Saw Tun Aung Myint rang the traditional drum. Next, the National Flag of Myanmar and the Kayin Flag were saluted followed by a documentary group photograph.

At 7 am, Mahn Win Khang Than and wife Nant Kyin Kyi, U Hla Maw Oo and officials donated robes and offerings to members of the Sangha, and then offered them early morning meal. This was followed by paying obeisance to a hundred elderly Kayin, after which entertainment, including Kayin Don Yein dance, were performed.

Also present at the celebration were Dr Shwe Hlian, wife of Vice President U Henry Van Thio, members of the two joint-organizing committees, and invited guests.—Township IPRD (Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

Two dozen plus research laboratories open in YTU

MYANMAR-JAPAN Technological Development Centre-1 and Centre-2 were handed over in a ceremony at Yangon Technological University (YTU) yesterday morning.

Firstly, Union Minister for Education Dr Myo Thein Gyi addresses the handover ceremony of Myanmar-Japan Technological Development Centre-1 and Centre-2 in Yangon Technological University. PHOTO: MNA

Myanmar-Japan Technological Development Centre-1 and Centre-2 were handed over in a ceremony at Yangon Technological University (YTU) yesterday morning. PHOTO: MNA

Union Minister for Education Dr Myo Thein Gyi addresses the handover ceremony of Myanmar-Japan Technological Development Centre-1 and Centre-2 in Yangon Technological University. PHOTO: MNA

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MS Genting Dream cruise ship tours Kawthoung on Christmas

THE MS Genting Dream came for a one-day visit to NyaungOoPhee Island in Kawthoung Township, Taninthayi Region, on 25 December carrying international visitors from different nations.

Organized by TZK Travel & Tours Co Ltd and Hong Kong-based Star Cruise Co Ltd, the 18-deck cruise ship brought its guests for a day of fun to Victoria Cliff Resort on the island during Christmas.

TZK’s owner U Sein Gar (a) U Khin Maung Win said they aim to boost Taninthayi Region’s blossoming development by promoting its ecotourism and introducing foreign travelers to its myriad beaches and islands, the availability of high-class hotels and resorts, and increase foreign income and jobs for the local population.

After dropping anchor at NyaungOoPhee Island, the ship’s passenger’s received examination CIQ clearance from Kawthoung department officials after which they were cordially welcomed by local organizations, the Directorate of Hotels and Tourism, and staff of TZK Travel & Tours.

The Genting Dream was registered in Nassau, Bahamas, and measures 333.53m in length and 150,665GT in weight. The ship is staffed with 1,856 crew members from numerous countries with Swedish Captain Carl Magnus Fölke at the helm and 3,323 passengers on board.

This is the ship’s first visit to Myanmar and after observing the beauty of Kawthoung throughout the day, the ship departed for Singapore in the evening. —Kyaw Soe (Kawthoung) (Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

International visitors from different nations on board MS Genting Dream visit to NyaungOoPhee Island in Kawthoung Township, Taninthayi Region, on 25 December. PHOTO: KYAW SOE (KAWTHOUNG)
Tatmadaw families make donations at Sitagu Int’l Buddhist Academy

FAMILIES of the Tatmadaw (Army, Navy and Air) made cash donation and Sitagu water donation for Buddhist academies throughout Myanmar with a ceremony at the Sitagu International Buddhist Academy in North Dagon Myothit Township, Yangon Region, yesterday morning.

The ceremony was graced by the Most Venerable Sitagu Sayadaw Dr Ashin Nyanissara, other sayadaws and monks.

Firstly, Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and wife Daw Kyu Kyu Hla and other attendees received the five precepts from Sitagu Sayadaw. The Senior General then explained the purpose of the donations.

Next, the Senior General and wife contributed K56 million to the fund of the academy and K24.6 million for Sitagu water donation from the families of the Tatmadaw to Sitagu Sayadaw, who conferred a certificate of honour in return.

Following this, Admiral Tin Aung San, Commander-in-Chief of Navy, General Maung Maung Kyaw, Commander-in-Chief of Air, and other attendees gifted offerings to the Sitagu Sayadaw, other sayadaws and monks present and received Dhamma gifts in return.

Afterwards, the Senior General and attendees listened to Sitagu Sayadaw’s sermon for the multiple donations, according to news released by the Office of the Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services.—MNA

10 killed, five injured in car crash in Mudon, Mon State

TEN people were killed and five injured after their vehicle careened into a truck in Mudon, Mon State, yesterday.

The accident took place around yesterday morning involving a Hijet carrying 15 pilgrims travelling to Kyakhami crushed into the truck on the Mawlamyine-Mudon Road.

Nine were pronounced dead on the scene and one woman died at the hospital. One man and five women are receiving treatment at the Mawlamyine Hospital. A child was trapped inside the Hijet and rescued.

The victims are from Gyoibinauk, Zigan, Aunglan and Hpa-an, according to the police.—Moe Than (Shwebo) (Translated by Kyaw Zin Lin)

215 killed, 722 injured in over 450 road mishaps in southern Shan State

A TOTAL of 215 persons have been killed and 722 others injured in 456 traffic accidents in Southern Shan State in the past 11 months, said officials from the regional traffic police.

The police have taken legal action against 313 drivers in the accident cases, and losses due to the mishaps have been pegged at over K30 million.

Reckless driving has been the main cause of road accidents in the region, especially in accidents involving bikes, said police. “We are conducting awareness talks related to road and vehicle rules and regulations. The people should also follow those rules and regulations,” said an official.

The authorities are working on curbing traffic accidents to ensure public safety. The traffic police have filed charges against suspected reckless drivers under Sections 279, 337, 338, and 304 (A) of the Penal Code.—Aye Cho

(Translated by Hay Mar)
Ministry unveils national strategy on resettlement of IDPs, camp closures

A new Airbus A319-100 aircraft has joined the fleet of Myanmar Airways International (MAI) after flying from Phoenix, USA, and landing at Yangon International Airport yesterday.

The Airbus, full classification A319-100, MSN-5193, XY-ALK, was welcomed with a water salute at the airport by MAI’s Board of Operations Management Chairman U Aung Aung Zaw and officials while the MAI veteran pilot who flew the plane from Phoenix was greeted by MAI flight attendants with flower wreaths.

With the addition of the new plane, MAI’s current fleet consists of five Airbus A319s and an A-220, while four A320-214s and two Embraer 190s are expected to join in the future.

MAI is known for operating on the highest safety standards and will soon operate partner airline MAI Domestic Routes with AIR KBZ in the near future.

—Poe Thaw Zin

(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

Price of mung beans volatile after India sets new import quota of 250,000 tons

By Nyein Nyein

The price of mung beans has been volatile ever since India announced it will purchase 250,000 tons of mung beans from Myanmar by 31 March, which is the ending date of the Indian financial year. There are 100,000 tons of mung beans in stock currently and new mung beans will be harvested at the end of February, 2020. We may have sufficient quantity of mung beans to export to India,” he added.

This year, India followed an import quota system again because its domestic supply of monsoon mung beans was lower on account of climate change. “Defining an import quota of 250,000 tons for mung beans again is good for Myanmar, which is a bean exporter country. Although India is purchasing beans under the quota system, it has said it would purchase 250,000 tons of mung beans before the new beans are harvested, thereby making a guarantee for the bean price for local farmers,” U Min Ko Oo added.

India’s Directorate General of Foreign Trade had set an import quota of 400,000 tons for mung beans within the prescribed financial year. Mung beans was one of the restricted items listed by the Indian government in 2017 under the country’s 2015-2020 foreign trade policy. India’s Commerce and Industry Ministry announced on 18 December that the restriction was not related with MoUs signed at the bilateral or regional levels.

In the first two months of the 2019-2020FY, 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)
CROP insurance can play an essential role in the agricultural sector. However, the introduction of this insurance is timely and crucial because of the climate change that is a huge challenge for local and foreign investors. The government has created a weather index for the farming season system on a trial run in Myanmar to help farmers tackle crop losses when crops are damaged by adverse weather conditions. Lack of crop insurance is a significant issue because it is hard for them to pay off the loans to the government when their crops fail.

It was heartening to see recently that Myanmar Insurance paid 26 per cent of the premium to farmers in Shwebo, Sagaing Region, who had bought insurance, although the crop insurance coverage did not reach the set 114 mm level during the September-October period. The weather index-based period is set from July to October. If the amount of rainfall does not reach the agreed upon level in the first two months, farmers get about 20 per cent of the premium. If it fails again in the last two months, about 10 per cent of the premium is paid. If the deviation from the actual rainfall is below 10 per cent, the insurance guarantee is covered.

The premium rating will depend on the data processed after the joint survey. The liability rate may vary depending on the climatic conditions in each region, and it is likely to differ in each place. Myanmar is located in countries which are adversely affected by erratic weather. The farmers’ concern is why crop insurance is important for one another.

We believe that insurance protects farmers’ lives, livelihoods in times of crop failure. But, we need to encourage farmers to change farmers’ incentives, which in turn may change their behavior.

When farmers know they will receive an insurance payout if their crops fail, they may take fewer steps to mitigate that risk, or choose to grow riskier crops. We must address this by incentivizing awareness.

Still another concern is that farmers with crop insurance might not take enough steps to mitigate risk or decide not to cultivate acres which might grow something else or move production elsewhere. It is the responsibility of the authorities concerned to educate the farmers in accordance with the provisions and stipulate the insurance of crop loss through agricultural insurance. Farmers should be more aware of the availability of crop insurance. Otherwise, the farmers’ welfare and the national economy may suffer. In this regard, the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Natural Resources’ actions are essential. The government needs to take a significant step toward ensuring that farmers are fully aware of the importance of crop insurance and its benefits. It is crucial that the government provides adequate information and education to farmers about the various insurance schemes available to protect their crops.

To achieve this, the government can collaborate with insurance companies and farmers’ organizations to promote awareness and ensure farmers have access to affordable crop insurance. Another important aspect is to ensure that the insurance schemes are designed in consultation with farmers to meet their specific needs. Proper funding, training, and support are necessary to implement these initiatives effectively. 

The government can also work with local NGOs and community groups to disseminate information about crop insurance. NGOs have a strong presence in rural areas and can play a vital role in raising awareness among farmers. By collaborating with these organizations, the government can ensure that the information reaches the target audience. 

In conclusion, crop insurance can be a powerful tool to mitigate the risk of crop failure. However, to be effective, it needs to be complemented with supportive policies and programs. The government needs to create a conducive environment that encourages farmers to take advantage of crop insurance. With proper planning, awareness, and support, crop insurance can provide the much-needed resilience to farmers in Myanmar.
Commercial suborbital carrier rocket launched in China

JIUQUAN—A commercial suborbital carrier rocket developed by a private Chinese company was launched from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center in northwest China at 4:50 p.m. Wednesday (Beijing Time).

The rocket, Tansuo-1, was developed by Space Trek. It completed the whole maneuver flight and fairing separation at high dynamic pressure during the flight.

The rocket can serve purposes of meteorological observation, microgravity testing as well as satellite payload experiments.

It was the maiden flight of the first rocket developed by the company.—Xinhua

The year the world woke up to the climate emergency

PARIS — Schoolchildren skipping class to strike, protests bringing city centres to a standstill: armed with dire warnings from scientists, people around the world dragged the climate emergency into the mainstream in 2018.

Spurred on by Swedish wunderkind Greta Thunberg — virtually unknown outside of her homeland a year ago but now a global star nominated for a Nobel prize — millions of young people took part in weekly demonstrations demanding climate action.

And, like harbingers of the apocalypse, the Extinction Rebellion movement embarked on a campaign of peaceful civil disobedience that spread worldwide, armed with little more than sunblock and the nihilistic motto: “When hope dies, action begins.”

Although scientists have warned for decades about the risk to humanity and Earth posed by unfettered burning of fossil fuels, in 2019 — set to be the second hottest year in history — their message seems to have finally hit home.

With Earth having already warmed by 1C, the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) dropped a bombshell late last year.

Its landmark report in October 2018 laid the groundwork for the string of climate shockwaves that rumbled throughout 2019: The world is way off course for 1.5C, and the difference between 1.5C and 2C could be catastrophic.

“The message from scientists was that each half-degree counts,” said Amy Dahan, a science historian specialising in climate at France’s National Centre for Scientific Research.

It was a message heard around the world.—AP

Researchers fabricate metallic nanowire network with brain-like functions

WASHINGTON — An international joint research team succeeded in fabricating a neuromorphic network composed of numerous metallic nanowires. Using this network, the team was able to generate electrical characteristics similar to those associated with higher-order brain functions unique to humans, such as memorisation, learning, forgetting, becoming alert and returning to calm. The team then clarified the mechanisms that induced these electrical characteristics.

The development of artificial intelligence (AI) techniques has been rapidly advancing in recent years and has begun impacting our lives in various ways. Although AI processes information in a manner similar to the human brain, the mechanisms by which human brains operate are still largely unknown. —ANI

In an African forest, the enduring mystery of a giant butterfly

FOREST OF LOBAYE — Suspended from branches high above the ground, Nicolas Moulin looked through his binoculars over a seemingly endless sea of emerald green.

Somewhere beneath the forest canopy was the African giant swallowtail: the largest butterfly to appear by day on the African continent, virtually unrecorded in scientific annals but known to be venomous. The species, known in Latin as Papilio antimachus, was discovered in 1782.

Its black-streaked orange-brown wings are extraordinary. They reach up to 25 centimetres (9.8 inches) across, making it one of the largest butterflies in the world. But, just as remarkable, nobody has ever been able to study the creature in its state as caterpillar or chrysalis — keys to understanding its life cycle and longevity. Seeking to unlock the mystery, a privately-financed French expedition of about 20 people set up camp in the far south of the Central African Republic, on the banks of the Lobaye river, which winds like a copper snake through primary forest.

“This is a place for poachers — the male butterflies come to ingest mineral salts on the bank and are captured,” Moulin said from his perch 40 metres (130 feet) above the ground.

Collages created from the wings of butterflies are a prized art form in the CAR and provide a living for many hunters. Abroad, a giant swallowtail specimen can sell for 1,500 euros ($1,700).—AFP

An entomologist climbs a tree to observe the leaves of a toxic creeper believed to be a host plant for the giant butterfly. PHOTO: AFP

Climate protests hit the global headlines in 2019. PHOTO: AFP

A commercial rocket, Tansuo-1, is launched from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center in northwest China, on 25 December, 2019. PHOTO: XINHUA
Pope Francis appeal nations to embrace refugees in Christmas Day message

ROME — Pope Francis has, once again, directed the world’s attention to the plight of migrants in his annual Christmas speech, appealing to all countries to take responsibility and embrace the refugees who have been displaced from areas plagued by conflict, social and political upheaval, injustice or natural disasters.

Addressing thousands of people gathered in St. Peter’s Square on Wednesday, the Pope spoke of the millions of people who have fled their homes for “places where they might have hope for a dignified life,” only to find themselves “before walls of indifference,” The New York Times reported. In his speech, the Pope lamented the miseries of several trouble spots, urging the “stony and self-centered hearts” to soften their stand on the millions who have been affected by social and political conflicts in recent years.

Delivering his “Urbi et Orbi” (“To the City and to the World”) benediction from a balcony in the facade of St. Peter’s Basilica, the Pope called upon Jesus Christ to “bless the efforts of those missionaries and members of the faithful who have been kid-napped,” as well as “victims of attacks by extremist groups, particularly in Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger and Nigeria.”

“It is such suffering that has pushed millions of people to leave their homelands to find better lives,” the Pope said. “It is the injustice that makes them cross deserts and seas that become cemeteries,” adding that the “injustices that force them to ensure unspeak able forms of abuse, the endangerment of every kind and torture in inhuman detention camps,” he added.

Earlier on Wednesday, the Pope became one of three religious leaders who appealed directly to the leaders of South Sudan to end the violence in the African country and form a transitional power-sharing government.

Peace talks between the government and rebels have been stalled this week in South Sudan, the world’s youngest country, having attained independence from Sudan in July 2011.

Over the past year, the Pope has strengthened the church’s stance in fighting the scourge of sexual abuse, convening a meeting of bishops from around the world in February to address the issue.

In May, the Vatican mandated that those suspected of abuse should be reported to their superiors. — ANI

Afghan war caused 100,000 civilian casualties in last decade: UN

KABUL — More than 100,000 Afghan civilians have been killed or injured over the past decade, the United Nations reported Thursday, as it renewed calls to end the bloody 18-year conflict.

The announcement comes as the Taliban and US continue to hold talks aimed at drawing a close to America’s longest war, after the negotiations were called off in September by President Donald Trump due to insurgent attacks.

However fighting continues to rage across the country, with ordinary Afghans frequently bearing the brunt of the violence.

“I recognize with extreme sadness that civilian casualties recently surpassed 100,000 in the past 10 years alone, from the time the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) began systematic documentation of civilian casualties,” Tadamichi Yamamoto, the UN special representative in Afghanistan, said in a statement.

“The United Nations urges those participating in all peace efforts to consider the millions of ordinary Afghans, especially the victims of the conflict, who want a chance to live in peace so they can rebuild their lives.”

The grim milestone also comes days after officials announced preliminary results in Afghanistan’s latest presidential elections that put President Ashraf Ghani on track to secure a second term.

The Taliban have long viewed Ghani as an American stooge and have refused to negotiate with him, leading many to fear that fighting will continue even if the US secures an eventual deal with the militants.

—AFP

Kiev-Donbass dialogue necessary for conflict settlement: Russian FM

MOSCOW — Any progress in the settlement of the conflict in eastern Ukraine is only possible through direct dialogue between Kiev and Donbass, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov has said.

“We are ready to contribute in every possible way,” Lavrov was quoted as saying in an interview with TASS news agency posted on the foreign ministry’s website Thursday.

He said that the establishment of lasting peace in Ukraine is in line with Russia’s interests and would have a positive effect on the relations between Moscow and Kiev. Lavrov praised the determination of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky to reach a speedy end to the hostilities in Donbass as he managed to do in his five-month presidency what his predecessor “stubbornly refused to do for years.”

Lavrov said it was possible for the leaders of Russia, Ukraine, France and Germany to meet in Paris on Dec. 9 when they confirmed that there was no alternative to the Minsk agreements on the settlement in Ukraine.

The Minsk ceasefires, reached in September 2014 and February 2015, respectively, envisaged a ceasefire, a withdrawal of heavy weaponry from the demarcation line, a prisoner exchange and local elections, among other measures. Now it is important to ensure the implementation of these agreements, although this will not be simple, Lavrov said. — Xinhua
New hotel encapsulates Milan tourist renaissance

MILAN — Cheap and cheerful capsule hotels are forever expanding from their Japanese cradle, including now in Milan where the tiny, stacked rooms are helping the Italian city cope with exploding tourist numbers.

With no-fuss convenience for both the city and transport links, digital connectivity and a social side among their chief selling points, the capsule hotels target the Generation Y crowd.

Some people, though, just stay out of sheer curiosity.

Croatian tourist Dragan Kupresanin, 31, said he wanted to try the room because “it looked like something new, futuristic style... those kind of boxes looked like something new, futuristic.”

He added: “I really liked it. This kind of hotel should be developed, many people avoid youth hostels because of the privacy problem (with bunk beds etc) but here you have it,” he said.

In the size of one standard hotel room, eight capsules – each measuring 1.45 by 1.45 by two metres (4.5 x 4.5 x 6.5 feet) – are stacked on top of each other, four above and four below, with an enclosed toilet space in the room and showers down the corridor.

Inside the capsule is a matress with duvet and pillow; two charging plugs for mobile phone or laptop, a lockable cupboard for luggage and a bedside table.

All this for between 19 euros a night ($21), including breakfast, and 150 euros during Milan’s world famous Design Week.

MILAN’S WORLD- Famous Design Week.

‘More churros, less cops!’: New York food vendors feel the heat

NEW YORK — For two decades, Gaotu Lupe has been waking up every day at 4:00 am to make tamales and rice pudding to sell on the streets of New York.

She is one of thousands of vendors, many of whom are undocumented migrants, who hawk yummy treats in the Big Apple, but they are facing a litany of problems, from weather to assaults to arrests to even deportations.

“One of their biggest fears is the police, and that’s why they are extra vulnerable,” Julie Torres Moskowitz, from the Street Vendors Project (SVP) support group, told AFP.

New York is known for hot dogs, pizza, bagels and pretzels, but the food scene is way more diverse. From Venezuelan arepas and Ecuadorian baked piglet to Middle Eastern falafel sandwiches and Tibetan momos, the city has it all.

Galicia, an undocumented migrant from Mexico and single mother of six children, sells tamales stuffed with all sorts of fillings for $2.25 each in the Bushwick area of Brooklyn.

“We are only making enough money to support our children,” says the 46-year-old, who also sells champurrado – a hot, thick Mexican drink made with chocolate, corn flour and spices.

“Icy weather, risk of deportation

Inclement weather is a problem — temperatures regularly drop below freezing during the winter months — but so are assaults, robberies, fines, confiscations and arrests, according to SVP. The women vendors are particularly vulnerable, they say. Arrests can result in deportation if a vendor’s papers are not in order, which they often aren’t, the group says.

Moskowitz, who sits on SVP’s advisory board, says some attacks and thefts go unreported because of fear of dealing with the police. To sell street food, vendors require a license that costs about $50 and a permit for the cart that costs another $200.

It’s very hard to obtain a permit, though: although there are more than 10,000 vendors, the number of permits has been capped at 2,900 since 1983 — meaning many operate at their own risk. —AFP

JAL to offer free domestic flights to foreigners via mileage program

TOKYO — Japan Airlines Co. said Thursday overseas members of its mileage program will be able to apply for free return tickets for domestic flights next summer, part of an effort to provide foreign travelers with a greater experience of Japan alongside the Olympic and Paralympic Games.

The airline will offer 50,000 free return tickets for flights to select destinations between 1 July and 30 September, with overseas members of JAL Mileage Bank eligible to apply from the end of February.

Applicants will be able to choose their departure point from among Haneda airport in Tokyo, and Itami and Kansai airports in Osaka.

The airline is collaborating on the campaign with the Japan Tourism Agency, the Japan National Tourism Organization and Nomura Research Institute Ltd.

“We hope this prompts overseas travelers to become ‘fans of Japan,’” JAL said in a press release. —Kyodo News

For details of the campaign, only carriers will be announced. The airline will release the details in early April.

The program will be limited to JAL’s overseas members, who are expected to account for less than 10% of total passengers, the airline said. —Kyodo News

Chinese e-commerce platforms bring job chances for unemployed Gaza youths

GAZA — Shorouq al-Sheikh Khalil, a young Palestinian lady from the Gaza Strip, could not hide her joy after receiving her first professional earnings from her work in e-commerce for one month and a half.

She said the earnings could help her pay the accumulated university fees that prevented her from completing her studies.

Al-Sheikh Khalil, a student of engineering, earned 1,000 US dollars, while working for Chinese e-commerce platforms, specializing in electronic marketing.

“The Chinese electronic marketing websites are lifelines for young people around the world, not just in Palestine. They help us to get money through online trade, with no need to face the hassle with local businesses,” she said.

E-commerce contributes greatly to solving the problems of youths and represents a promising industry, especially for those who desperately need job opportunities in the Gaza Strip, where Israel has imposed movement restrictions, according to al-Sheikh Khalil. —Xinhua

Huawei rings in the New Year with an exciting range of offers

NEW DELHI — Huawei Consumer Business Group, India, adds on to the New Year festivities for Huawei fans - announces the ‘Together 2020 campaign’, where consumers can avail of special offers on the purchase of Huawei products.

The campaign will run from December 25 to January 5 across both offline as well as online platforms. Customers who purchase Huawei Y9 Prime 2019, Huawei P30 Lite or Huawei Mate 20 Pro, they will get free Huawei FreeLace worth Rs 2,999 for free.

On the purchase of Huawei P30 Pro and Huawei Mate 20 Pro, they will get free Huawei FreeLace worth Rs 6,999 absolutely free. With exceptional looks coupled with best-in-class design and features, Huawei’s range of smartphones and wearables offer unmatched consumer experiences that complement their modern fast-paced lifestyles. —ANJ

Chinese e-commerce platforms bring job chances for unemployed Gaza youths

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China issues guideline to improve financial services for foreign trade

The guideline was jointly released by the China Banking and Insurance Regulatory Commission, the Ministry of Commerce, and the State Administration of Foreign Exchange.

Greater efforts will be made to further regulate the foreign trade-related business of the banking and insurance sectors, the guideline said.

The guideline listed 29 specific requirements, including deepening reform, diversifying product types, and strengthening background checks.

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**CLAIMS DAY NOTICE**

**31st MCC KYOTO VOY.NO. (950N/951S)**

Consignees of cargo carried on MV MCC KYOTO VOY.NO. (950N/951S) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 27-12-2019 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of MITT/MIP where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the Claims Day.

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

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**THE REPUBLIC OF THE UNION OF MYANMAR**

**MINISTRY OF ELECTRICITY AND ENERGY**

**MYANMA OIL AND GAS ENTERPRISE (INVITATION FOR OPEN TENDER) (28/2019)**

1. Open tenders are invited for supply of the following respective items in Myanmar Kyats.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr No.</th>
<th>Tender No.</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(a)</td>
<td>DMP/L-155(19-20)</td>
<td>Spares for Kobelco Excavator (SK200-5) (71) Items</td>
<td>Ks (RE TENDER)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b)</td>
<td>DMP/L-182(19-20)</td>
<td>Spares for 3 NB 1300 C Rig Pump for ZJ 50D Drilling Ks Rigs (16) Items</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c)</td>
<td>DMP/L-183(19-20)</td>
<td>Assorted Sizes of Gate Valves, Butterfly Valves and Check Valves (5) Groups</td>
<td>Ks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d)</td>
<td>DMP/L-184(19-20)</td>
<td>Industrial Raw Materials (2) Groups</td>
<td>Ks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(e)</td>
<td>DMP/L-185(19-20)</td>
<td>Spares for Mack Trucks (48) Items</td>
<td>Ks</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. The Open Tender forms including Description of Materials / Quoty with details specifications and Tender Terms & Conditions can be available from office hours commencing from 27 December 2019 at the Finance Department, Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise, No. (44) Complex, Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar.

3. The interested Bidders should submit the Technical Specifications with Original Bid Bond and Commercial Quotation in each separate sealed envelopes on which to be addressed to the Managing Director, Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise and should reach in Tender Box of the Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise not later than 14:00 pm on 27 January 2020.

4. Tender Closing Date & Time - 27-1-2020, 14:00 pm

Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise Ph No. + 95 67 - 411206

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**TRADEMARK CAUTION**

International Coffee & Tea, LLC, a company incorporated and existing under the laws of USA, and having its registered office at 5700 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 120, Los Angeles, CA 90036 USA, hereby declares that the Company is the Owner and Sole proprietor of the following Trademarks:

The above Trademarks are used in respect of “Coffee, coffee beans, ground coffee, coffee-based beverages, espresso, espresso-based beverages, tea, loose tea, tea bags, tea-based beverages, tea-based beverages with fruit flavoring, espresso and espresso-based beverages, hot chocolate, chocolate-based beverages, mixes for making beverages, chocolate products, fresh, prepared and packaged food items including pastries, flavored shakes, including coffee, chocolate, vanilla and caramel, fruit-based shakes, beverages and frozen drinks, coffee, espresso, tea and powder sold in single-serving containers for use in electric brewing machines for brewing beverages” in Class 30; “Publicity services, advertising services, retail store services, mail order services and online retail store services featuring coffee and tea, chocolate-based beverages, coffee-based beverages, tea-based beverages, mixer for making beverages, coffee beans, ground coffee, loose tea and tea bags, chocolate products and food, pastries, flavored shakes, including coffee, chocolate, vanilla, caramel and tea, fruit-based shakes, and mixes for making the same, coffee, espresso, tea and powder sold in single-serving containers for use in brewing machines, electric brewing machines and electric espresso machines, coffee and tea pressers, pots and filters, beverage ware, t-shirts” in Class 35; and “Restaurant services featuring coffee, espresso and tea, coffee-based beverages, espresso-based beverages, tea-based beverages, tea-based beverages with fruit flavoring chocolate-based beverages, and mixes for making beverages; coffee beans, ground coffee, loose tea and tea bags; chocolate products; fresh, prepared and packaged food items including pastries, flavored shakes, including coffee, chocolate, vanilla, caramel and tea; fruit-based shakes, beverages and frozen drinks” in Class 43.

Any fraudulent imitation or unauthorized use of the above Trademarks or other infringements whatsoever thereto will be dealt with according to law.

Daw Vee Mon Aung, (Advocate)
For International Coffee & Tea, LLC, c/o Baker & McKenzie Limited Level 18, Unit 18-03, Sale Square, 221 Sule Pagoda Road, Kyauktada Township, Yangon, The Republic of the Union of Myanmar. Dated: 27th December 2019

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Political, economic challenges to test Thai gov’t in 2020

BANGKOK — Thai Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha is confident that a civilian, pro-military government he formed in the middle of this year after five years of junta rule can complete its four-year term.

But the former army chief and coup leader must deal with various veteran politicians from 19 parties that form the coalition government, while navigating an uncertain political landscape involving the nation’s second-largest opposition party as it faces the possibility of a court-ordered dissolution.

In the long-delayed March 24 general election held to restore civilian government, the Palang Pracharat Party, which chose Prayut as its prime ministerial candidate, came second with 116 seats but managed to form the coalition government with 18 smaller parties.

The Phun Thai Party, which won the largest number of seats at 136 but was unable to form a government under junta-draft ed election rules that favored mid-sized parties, leads the opposition with six other parties, including the second-largest opposition Future Forward Party led by the tycoon-turned-politician Thanathorn Jungroongruangkit.

Having secured majority support in parliament, and with the help of junta-appointed senators who serve for five years, Prayut looks to extend his rule beyond the current term through 2023. “Do not get bored of me, I will stay (in power) for quite a long time,” the prime minister said in his recent remarks.

The country’s 250 wholly appointed senators are empowered to choose the prime minister in the absence of a majority in parliament.

The amateur astronomer used a special solar filter on his telescope as there is no safe period to observe an annular solar eclipse.

Alexander Alin 45, a geophysicist from Germany, travels around the world following eclipses.

“IT’s only two minutes, but it’s so intense that you talk about it with your friends, family for the next month,” Alin said.—AFP

“Ring of fire’ eclipse wows across Asia

SINGAPORE — Skywatchers from Saudi Arabia and Oman to India and Singapore were treated to a rare “ring of fire” solar eclipse Thursday.

Annular eclipses occur when the Moon is not close enough to the Earth to completely obscure the Sun, leaving a thin ring of the solar disc visible.

While these types of eclipses occur every year or two, they are only visible from a narrow band of Earth each time and it can be decades before the same pattern is repeated.

Depending on weather conditions, this year’s astronomical phenomenon was set to be visible from the Middle East across southern India and southeastern Asia before ending over the northern Pacific.

Hundreds of amateur astronomers, photographers and set up by Singapore’s harbour for what some described as a “once in a lifetime” event.

“The next one will happen in about 40 years I think,” said Jason Teng, 37, who took the day off work to photograph the eclipse.

The amateur astronomer used a special solar filter on his telescope as there is no safe period to observe an annular solar eclipse.

Petition to recall Taiwan mayor, presidential candidate Han begins

TAIPEI — A petition to recall Kaohsiung Mayor Han Kuo-yu (KMT), kicked off on Thursday, with just two weeks to go until the 11 January election.

For the petition to be move forward, the signatures of at least 1 per cent of eligible voters in the southern city of 2.78 million people, or about 25,000 of them, must be collected in the first stage.

In the second stage, the threshold is at least 10 per cent, while in the third and final stage, at least 25 per cent of voters must participate in a recall vote with a majority voting in favor.

Aaron Yen, an initiator of the campaign, told reporters after submitting some 30,000 signatures to the Central Election Commission, that if the signatures pass scrutiny in the first two stages, the recall vote is likely to happen in April or May next year.—Kyodo News

Workers scale a skyscraper to install Christmas and New Year lights in Bangkok on 10 December, 2019. PHOTO: AFP

India, Japan hold 8th bilateral consultations

NEW DELHI — India and Japan have exchanged views on the issues of disarmament, non-proliferation and export control.

The discussion took place on December 23 in Tokyo during the eighth round of bilateral consultations on disarmament, non-proliferation and export control, according to the Ministry of External Affairs in a statement. During the meeting, both sides also agreed to hold the next round of Dialogue on a mutually convenient date in India. The Indian delegation was led by Indra Mani Pandey, Additional Secretary (Disarmament and International Security Affairs), while Hisajima Naoto, Director-General, Disarmament, Non-Proliferation and Science Department led the Japanese side.—ANI

10 killed as Typhoon Phanfone batters central Philippines

MANILA — At least 10 people have been killed and six others missing after Typhoon Phanfone battered several central Philippine islands on Christmas Day before heading out to the South China Sea, state media reported citing local authorities on Thursday.

According to The Philippine Daily Inquirer news website, two people were reportedly killed in Leyte province, while eight others died in the provinc es of Bilbao and Capiz. Thousands of people were forced to be evacuated in several provinces before the typhoon made landfall.

Images posted on social media showed some areas in the provinces of Capiz and Bilbao are underwater.

As of Thursday morning, the Philippine weather agency, PAGASA, said that Phanfone was reported 155 kilometres west of the province of Palawan, with maximum winds of up to 130 kilometres per hour and gustiness of up to 160 kilo metres per hour. The typhoon brought a wet and miserable season to many who were holidaying in the island nation and stranded thousands as dozens of flights were cancelled.—ANI
Turkey’s Erdogan paves the way for troop deployment in Libya

ISTANBUL — President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on Thursday opened the way for direct Turkish military intervention in Libya, announcing a parliamentary vote in early January on sending troops to support the UN-backed Tripoli government against strongman Khalifa Haftar.

Sending Turkish troops will complicate the situation in the already fragile country torn by internal dissent since the ouster of dictator Moamer Kadhafi in 2011. “We will present the motion to send troops (to Libya) as soon as parliament resumes” on January 7, Erdogan said in a speech in Ankara.

“God willing, we will pass it in parliament on January 8-9 and thus respond to an invitation” from the Tripoli-based Government of National Accord (GNA), he said. Erdogan’s comments came after the Turkish parliament on Saturday ratified a security and military cooperation deal with the GNA of Fayez al-Sarraj.

That agreement, which came into force on Thursday, allows Ankara to send military and security personnel to Libya for training purposes, according to Turkish officials. But a separate motion is needed to send boots on the ground. The Turkish parliament in October passed another motion to deploy troops in Iraq and Syria for another year.

“We have given and will give all forms of support to the Tripoli government which is fighting against a putschist general backed by Arab countries and Europeans,” Erdogan said.

The Turkish leader has in recent weeks vowed to increase military support to the GNA if needed as it battles Haftar, who launched an offensive in April to seize the capital.

Erdogan on Wednesday paid an unannounced visit to Tunisia with his defence minister and spy chief to discuss ways of reaching a ceasefire in Libya.— AFP

245 houses affected by Chilean coastal city fire

SANTIAGO — At least 245 houses have been destroyed or damaged by a fire in the coastal Chilena city of Valparaiso, Jorge Martinez Duran, administrative head of the Valparaiso Region, said late Wednesday.

The fire, which broke out Tuesday night, is already “in the control phase,” Martinez Duran said at a press conference.

Authorities believed that the fire was caused by arson, and have launched a search for suspects, Martinez Duran added.

The fire triggered the declaration of an alert by the federal government on Tuesday, with firefighters being mobilized to control the blaze as residents in the poor neighborhood fled their homes on Christmas Eve.

—Xinhua

Israel’s Likud party prepares for leadership primary election

TEL AVIV — Israel’s ruling Likud party will hold a chairmanship primary election on Thursday to determine who will lead it in the next election.

Some 120,000 members of the party will cast their votes today, with official results expected on Friday.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is running against Gideon Saar, a Likud lawmaker and a former education minister, in one of the crucial challenges in his long political career.

Both candidates spent the day before the internal elections energising supporters and making logistic preparations to ensure their voters would arrive at the ballots amid unusually stormy weather that hit Israel.

The two addressed their right-wing constituency. Netanyahu announced that he will convince the White House to acknowledge Israel’s sovereignty over the Jordan Valley, part of the Palestinian West Bank seized by Israel in the 1967 Middle East war.

“Only I can make it,” the Prime Minister said in video footage released on his Facebook page.

Saar pledged that he will impose Israeli law on the entire settlement West Bank, a controversial move that would practically annex the disputed territory. Local media reported that internal polls, commissioned by the candidates’ headquarters, predict a landslide victory to Netanyahu.—ANI

Iraqi protesters torch buildings, block roads over PM pick

BAGHDAD — Iraq anti-government protesters blocked roads and bridges in Baghdad and the country’s south Thursday after torching several buildings overnight.

The demonstrators oppose the entire political class and have vented their anger against leaders who are negotiating to nominate an establishment insider as the next prime minister.

“The government is hostage to corrupt parties and sectarian divisions”, said one activist, Sattar Jabbar, 25, in the southern city of Nasiriyah.

Smoke and flames from burning tyres in Nasiriyah, Basra and Diyawiyah blocked major roads and bridges across the Euphrates all night, AFP correspondents said, before some of these road-blocks were lifted in the morning.

In Nasiriyah, demonstrators set the provincial government building ablaze overnight for a second time since the protests began, and protesters also torched the new headquarters of a pro-Iran militia in Diyawiyah.

Iraq has been rocked by protests since 1 October, prompting Prime Minister Adel Abdel Mahdi to resign last month.

After dwindling, the street campaign has gained new vigour in recent days to rally against widespread corruption and a political system seen as beholden to neighbouring Iran. Government offices and schools remain closed across almost all of Iraq’s south.— AFP
Myanmar wins 2 gold medals in 6th World Vovinam Championship 2019

Photo: MVF

Myanmar gold medalists Hein Htet Aung (right) and May Han Ni Aung Lwin (left).

Myanmar football Federation (MFF) and the Myanmar National League (MNL) have decided to allow five football clubs from Myanmar’s Amateur League to take part in the 2020 edition of the General Aung San Shield.

This will be the first time that amateur clubs will participate in the major football tourney in Myanmar. The amateur teams will be competing against other professional football clubs: defending champion Yangon United, Shan United, Ayeyawady United, Hantharwady United, Yadanarbon F.C., Sagaing United, Rakhine United, Mapwe F.C., and Southern Myanmar FC.

The General Aung San Shield was launched in 2009 and the decision to allow amateur teams in the 2020 season was finalized recently.

In the final match of the previous season of the General Aung San Shield, Yangon United had defeated Shan United by 4-3, and the match had run into extra time amidst fierce competition.—Lynn Thit (Tgi)

Alli caps Spurs fightback to sink Brighton

London — Dele Alli got Tottenham back on track as the England midfielder capped a gritty escape act with the late winner in Thursday’s 2-1 victory against Brighton.

Jose Mourinho’s side were in danger of a second successive Premier League defeat when Adam Webster headed Brighton into a shock lead at the Tottenham Hotspur Stadium.

But Harry Kane equalised after the interval and Alli finished off a flowing Tottenham move in the closing stages to erase the bitter taste of last weekend’s acrimonious London derby loss to Chelsea.

Avenging their defeat at Brighton in October, Tottenham, unbeaten in Boxing Day fixtures since 2003, have won three of their last four league games as they try to climb into the top four.

That Chelsea setback was initially there were worrying signs for Mourinho on the field however as Steven Alzate escaped Moussa Sissoko, making space for a low strike that drifted just wide.

Since Mourinho’s first game in charge of Tottenham, no Premier League team had conceded more goals than the 14 his side allowed across all competitions heading into this round of matches.—AFP

Defender Min Ko Thu joins Rakhine United

Former Yangon United defender Min Ko Thu has been signed by Rakhine United, according to a statement by the football club.

The 27-year-old defender started his football career with the junior team of Rakhine United in 2012, was selected on the senior football team in 2013, and stayed with the team till 2015.

He then joined Hantharwady United FC, for a while and then shifted to Yangon United FC at the end of the 2015 season of the Myanmar National League.

Min Ko Thu has Asian Football Confederation (AFC) Cup experience and participated in Yangon United’s meeting with Ceres Negros FC in the AFC Cup matches.

The defender has been signed in place of former defender Nyein Chan, who moved to Shan United recently, according to a statement released by Rakhine United.—Lynn Thit (Tgi)

Five amateur teams to take part in General Aung San Shield 2020

The MYANMAR Vovinam athletes Hein Htet Aung and May Han Ni Aung Lwin won gold medals at the 6th World Vovinam Championship 2019, held from 16 to 22 December in Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

During the championship, Myanmar athletes also secured five silver medals and six bronze medals in other men’s and women’s categories.

Hein Htet Aung secured the gold medal in the men’s individual cross form event on 20 December.

In the men’s dual form event, Mana Kwee and Hein Htet Aung secured the silver medal.

In the men’s individual attacking event, Myanmar’s Hein Htet Aung secured the bronze medal.

In the men’s individual performance showing event, Mana Kwee secured another bronze medal and Ni Lar Tun secured one more bronze for Myanmar in the 57-kg women’s attacking event.

With two gold medals, five silver medals, and six bronze medals, Myanmar was placed fifth, while Viet Nam was in the first place, host Cambodia in the second, Algeria in the third, and Thailand in the fourth place. —Lynn Thit (Tgi)