

# THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

Vol. V, No. 259, 9<sup>th</sup> Waning of Nattaw 1380 ME

www.globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

Monday, 31 December 2018

## Republic of the Union of Myanmar Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Office Notification 6/2018

8<sup>th</sup> Waning of Nattaw, 1380 ME  
30 December 2018

### Summoning Second Pyidaungsu Hluttaw eleventh regular session

In accord with Section 79 of the Constitution of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and Section 13 of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Law and Rule 3, Sub-rule (b) of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Rules, it is hereby announced that the Second Pyidaungsu Hluttaw eleventh regular session is summoned at 1:30 pm on the 1<sup>st</sup> Waning of Pyatho, 1380 ME (21 January 2019) (Monday).

*Sd/ T Khun Myat*  
*Speaker*  
*Pyidaungsu Hluttaw*

## Republic of the Union of Myanmar Pyithu Hluttaw Notification 4/2018

8<sup>th</sup> Waning of Nattaw, 1380 ME  
30 December 2018

### Summoning Second Pyithu Hluttaw eleventh regular session

In accord with Section 126 of the Constitution of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and Section 35 of the 2012 Pyithu Hluttaw Law and Rule 3, Sub-rule (b) of the 2013 Pyithu Hluttaw Rules, it is hereby announced that the Second Pyithu Hluttaw eleventh regular session is summoned at 10 am on the 1<sup>st</sup> Waning of Pyatho, 1380 ME (21 January 2019) (Monday).

*Sd/ T Khun Myat*  
*Speaker*  
*Pyithu Hluttaw*

## Republic of the Union of Myanmar Amyotha Hluttaw Notification 4/2018

8<sup>th</sup> Waning of Nattaw, 1380 ME  
30 December 2018

### Summoning Second Amyotha Hluttaw eleventh regular session

In accord with Section 155 of the Constitution of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and Section 35 of the 2012 Amyotha Hluttaw Law and Rule 3, Sub-rule (b) of the 2015 Amyotha Hluttaw Rules, it is hereby announced that the Second Amyotha Hluttaw eleventh regular session is summoned at 10 am on the 1<sup>st</sup> Waning of Pyatho, 1380 ME (21 January 2019) (Monday).

*Sd/ Mahn Win Khaing Than*  
*Speaker*  
*Amyotha Hluttaw*

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

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

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

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



Union Minister U Win Khaing inspects CNG (compressed natural gas) refilling station in Yangon. PHOTO: MNA

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## Union Minister Thura U Aung Ko donates 500,000 baht to Sathira Dhammasatha Centre in Bangkok

UNION Minister for Religious Affairs and Culture Thura U Aung Ko handed over 500,000 baht donated by the All Myanmar Theravada Buddhist Association and Buddhist Missionary for Border and Hilly Regions to the Sathira Dhammasatha Centre in Bangkok yesterday.

Ven. Mae Chee Sananee Sthirasuta accepted the donation.

In the evening, the Myanmar delegation led by Bharmo Sayadaw Bhaddanta Kumarabhivamsa and comprised of Members of the Sangha and Union Minister Thura U Aung Ko visited the Mon-

astery of Thailand's Sangharaja and paid homage to a Buddha Image there.

At the Vihara Hall of the monastery, Union Minister supplicated a report to the Members of the Sangha of the two countries on cooperation in Buddha Sasana and donated offertories to the Members of the Sangha.

The Sangharaja of Thailand also presented souvenirs to the members of the delegation and had the documentary photos taken together with the delegation.—MNA ■ (Translated by Kyaw Zin Lin)



Union Minister Thura U Aung Ko donates 500,000 baht to Sathira Dhammasatha centre through Ven. Mae Chee Sananee Sthirasuta in Bangkok. **PHOTO:MNA**

## New year holidays bring more visitors to Inwa's Bargaya Monastery



Local and foreign travellers are visiting the 180-year-old Bargaya Monastery in Inwa. **PHOTO: THAN ZAW MIN (IPRD)**

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

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

"An increasing number of visitors are coming here these days to see the floral arabesques, carvings, and ornamentation of

ancient architecture," said a local from Inwa.

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

Inwa, an ancient imperial capital from the 14<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, dates back more than 400 years. According to historical records, 31 Myanmar kings ruled Inwa in succession. The ancient capital was, unfortunately, destroyed by a series of major earthquakes in March, 1839. Visitors to the city can see architecture incorporating tra-

ditional Myanmar handicrafts. Among the city's ancient edifices, the Bargaya monastery, which is made entirely of teak, is particularly popular among visitors. The monastery, measuring 188 feet in length and 103 feet in width, was commissioned by King Bagyidaw (1813-1937 A.D.). It features 267 teak posts, the largest of which measures nine feet in diameter. The monastery was installed with five brick ladders, which were decorated with Myanmar handicrafts and sculptures.—Than Zaw Min, IPRD ■ (Translated by AMS)

## Children's literature festival concludes successfully in Muse

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

Students from public and private schools took part in various contests at the festival. A

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

As part of the festival, 22

dance and musical performances, including yein (synchronized group dancing) and an ASEAN-Myanmar musical, were organized at the Mingalar Muse (New Starlight) hall.

A talk entitled 'Encouraging reading to children to promote their livelihood,' was also organized at the festival, with Naing Myo Thitsar (Namtu), Zaw Myo Han (Nga Thaung Chaung), and

Daw Khin Swe Hlaing (Kyi Lin Tun) serving as panelists and poet U Myo Khaing (Muse) serving as moderator. —Muse District IPRD ■ (Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)



Children entertain the visitors with traditional folk dance in the festival. **PHOTO: MUSE DISTRICT IPRD**



Children take part in the coloring contest in the Children's Literature Festival in Muse Township. **PHOTO: MUSE DISTRICT IPRD**



“Myanmar is now on the path to democracy. A nascent democracy can be compared to a toddler learning to walk; we have to be careful not to falter at this stage and need to maintain a proper balance. If we wish democracy to survive, we have to respect the rule of law and existing rules and regulations.”

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



Ancient Heritage Yoke Soun Kyaung and Nuns.  
PHOTO: ZAW ZAW WEI (SINBYUKYUN)

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

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

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

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

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



Union Minister U Ohn Maung heads a meeting on the use of digital marketing for promoting tourism. PHOTO: MNA

from affiliated associations also attended the ceremony.

In his speech at the ceremony, U Ohn Maung said appointing prominent artists, actors, and actresses as tourism ambassadors supports the development of Myanmar’s tourism sector. He said the Kachin-born MMA world champion, Aung La N Sang, has been

appointment as the tourism ambassador to help promote Myanmar in the US. He expressed his belief that the mixed martial artist will promote Myanmar’s tourism sector.

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

being chosen as the tourism ambassador.

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

## Union Minister Electricity and Energy inspects CNG refilling ...

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

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

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

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

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

## Thandwe District Association of Yangon holds annual gathering

THE Thandwe District Association of Yangon held their annual gathering in U Ottama Park in Bahan Township, Yangon yesterday. Visitors were treated to traditional Rakhine food, while local residents sold homegrown fruits and vegetables at the gathering.

“This gathering intends to bring together those Rakhine natives living in the city,” said U Mya Maung, Chairman of the association. “We’ve been holding these annual gathering for many years now. Our friends and fami-

lies gather here during this time of the year and help one another. It’s our little tradition.” U Htin Kyaw Lin, the vice-chairman, said both Thandwe-born people living in the city and families visiting from Thandwe District come together to organize charity meals.

Ma Khin Myo Myint, from Pantaw in Thandwe District, came to sell regional foods. “Rakhine who are far from home miss their traditional food, so my stock is selling well,” she said.

Ko Htet Nay Lin, a native of

Thandwe District living in Yangon, noted, “I feel like I’m back in my hometown when I see my friends and acquaintances here. I’m happy to be reunited with them. Ngapali Beach is in Thandwe District. It’s beautiful, and I want to invite people to come visit.” The Thandwe District Association of Yangon is made up of people from Thandwe, Taungup and Gwa townships, all within Thandwe District. The association was formed in 1945 to serve as a meeting point for the



Thandwe District Association of Yangon holds its annual gathering in U Ottama Park in Bahan Township, Yangon yesterday. PHOTO: MNA

Rakhine people far from their hometown. The association regularly holds their annual gathering

on the last Sunday of December. —Nandar Mii Phyo (Translated by Zaw Htet Oo) ■



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Due to limitation of space we are only able to publish "Letter to the Editor" that do not exceed 500 words. Should you submit a text longer than 500 words please be aware that your letter will be edited.

**Poor access to materials hurting glazed ware industry: Sagaing artisans**

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

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

For making glazed ware, it is cheaper to use gas-fired kilns than firewood kilns, said local businesspersons. But, insufficient gas supply, high transpor-

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

tation costs, and difficulty in purchase of chemicals are hindering

the development of the glazed ware business, they said. —Win

OO (Zeyar Tine) ■ (Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

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

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

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

Thanlyin Bridge.

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

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

Cyclists participate in the Yangon mass cycling event in Thanlyin yesterday. **PHOTO: Than Win (Thanlyin)****Constable arrested on drug charges in Monywa**

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

drugs, worth over K34 million.

According to the police report, the constable, identified as Pyae Sone Aung, was arrested with 55 grams of opium powder, worth about K5.5 million, and 5,850 yaba tablets, worth

about K29.3 million. The drugs were found hidden inside his backpack.

Pyae Sone Aung has been charged with smuggling drugs, in violation of Section 19 (a) of the Narcotic Drugs and Psycho-

tropic Substances Law.

The police are continuing with their investigations to apprehend those connected with the drug trafficking case.—Myo Win Tun ■ (Translated by Khaing Thanda Lwin)

**Hteekhee boosts Myanmar-Thailand border trade**

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

From 1 October to 21 December, Myanmar-Thailand border trade was valued at US\$806.7 million, a significant rise com-

pared with the corresponding period last year when total trade stood at \$315.68 million, according to data from the Ministry of Commerce.

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

Among the remaining border points, trade stood at \$191.19 million at Myawady, \$57.45 million at Myeik, \$53.8 million at Kawthoung, \$14.37 million at Tachilek, \$5.59 million at Mawtaung, and \$0.04 million at Maese. Of the seven gates, only the Tachilek and Myawady gates showed a small decrease in trade value.

Myanmar primarily exports

fishery products such as crab, fish, and shrimp, as well as onions, sesame, dry tea leaves, coconut, and turmeric, to Thailand, while it imports capital goods such as machinery, raw industrial goods such as cement and fertilizer, consumer goods such as cosmetics, and food products.—Htet Myat ■ (Translated by Ei Myat Mon)



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

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

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

According to traders, sugar prices declined to K990 in early

August as a result of the dollar's appreciation and difficulties in the export of rice and sugar through the borders.

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

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

(Translated by Khaing Thanda Lwin)



Farmers prepare for planting the sugar cane in a farm in a village. PHOTO: GNLM

## Tight security, confiscation hurt Muse trade in current fiscal

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

Between 1 October and 21 December, trade at the Muse gate plunged to \$852.7 million from \$1.24 billion in the corresponding period last year. In the current fiscal, the gate saw exports of \$488.9 million and imports worth \$363.8 million.

Around 75 per cent of the total trade between China and Myanmar is carried out through Muse. The gate also handles the majority of the country's rice exports.

China's trade suspension on some agro products from the second week of October has led to a steep drop in trade at Muse. The neighboring country's tightening of security in the

border areas has also caused delays for traders.

China has set import quotas on some agro products, including rice. Tax is exorbitantly high for merchants when the import volume exceeds the quota limit, resulting in illegal flow of rice to China. This has led to China confiscating rice in the border areas.

Myanmar conducts border trade with the world's most populous country, China, through Muse, Lwejel, Chinshwehaw, Kanpikete, and Kengtung.

Myanmar exports rice, various types of peas, sesame seeds, corn, fruits and vegetables, dried tea leaves, fishery products, rubber, minerals, and animal products to China. It imports machinery, plastic raw materials, consumer products, and electronic tools.—Ko Khant ■

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)



Around 75 per cent of the total trade between China and Myanmar is carried out through Muse. PHOTO: HAN HTAY (LASHIO-IPRD)

## Myanmar-Thailand trade up 36% this October

TRADE between Myanmar and Thailand in the first month of the 2018-2019 fiscal year topped US\$478 million, an increase of over \$120 million, or 36 per cent, from the corresponding period last year, the Ministry of Commerce reported.

When compared with the same period last year, exports have risen by \$97 million to \$297 million, while imports have grown by \$35 million to \$181 million this October. For the same month last year, the bilateral trade totalled \$351 million, with exports worth \$199 million and imports valued at \$146 million.

Myanmar conducts trade with neighboring Thailand through the maritime routes as well as border trade camps. Trade with Thailand is carried out mainly through seven border points, namely, Tachilek,

Myawady, Kawthoung, Myeik, Htikhee, Mawtaung, and Maese.

Myanmar's exports to Thailand include watermelon, pineapple, avocado and other fruits, onion, garlic and other kitchen crops, dried tea leaves, manganese dioxide, jellyfish, and eel. Its imports include cement, construction equipment, leather, iron and steel products, soaps, medicines, cosmetics, food and beverages, stationery, footwear, clothing, and machinery.

During the mini-budget period this year, Myanmar-Thailand trade exceeded \$2.9 billion, with exports valued at \$1.6 billion and imports pegged at \$1.4 billion. Total trade increased by over \$500 million compared with the corresponding period last year, when Myanmar-Thailand trade stood at \$2.5 billion.

According to the Commerce

Ministry's annual statistical report, Myanmar-Thailand bilateral trade was registered at \$5 billion in the 2017-2018 FY, \$4.3 billion in the 2016-2017 FY, \$4.8 billion in the 2015-2016 FY, \$5.7 billion in the 2014-2015 FY, \$5.6 billion in the 2013-2014 FY, \$4.7 billion in the 2012-2013 FY, and \$4.5 billion in the 2011-2012 FY.

According to the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA), Thailand's fresh investments in Myanmar in the current FY reached \$12.9 million from two projects.

During the mini-budget period, Thai investments touched \$64.6 million. In the 2017-2018 FY, Thailand made investments worth almost \$123.8 million in the country.—Shwe Khine ■

(Translated by Khaing Thanda Lwin)

## Mineral exports decline \$37 mln in current fiscal

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

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

Between 1 October and 21 December this year, the public sector exported mineral products worth \$0.049 million, a decline of \$88.6 million from the same period last year. Private sector exports increased by \$51

million to reach \$274.114 million.

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

According to data from the Commerce Ministry, the country earned a total of \$3.263 billion from the export of seven major groups of commodities, namely, agricultural, mineral, marine, animal, and forest products, manufactured goods, and other miscellaneous items. During the corresponding period last year,

the country earned \$2.78 million from the exports sector.

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

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



# Children's literature festival arrives in Maubin

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

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

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

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



The first day of children's literature festival takes place at the Basic Education High School No. 1 in Maubin, Ayeyawady Region, yesterday morning **PHOTO: MAUBIN DISTRICT IPRD**

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



Crowded visitors seen at U Bein Bridge in Amarapura, Mandalay. **PHOTO: MIN HTET AUNG (MANDALAY SUB-PRINTING HOUSE)**



Planes of Myanmar's Air Force at the Museum of the Defence Services in Nay Pyi Taw attract visitors. **PHOTO: HTEIN NAN NAW**

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

Mandalay invites pilgrims and jacket lovers

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

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

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

Daw Tin Tin Aye, a fellow

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

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

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

"We've had a lot of visitors since before Christmas. There were over 1,300 local visitors and 20 foreigners visiting the garden on 29 December," said Daw Khin Nan Soe from the garden's service department. She added that

visitors can enter National Landmark Garden with their private cars, after paying the entrance fee, and spend the entire day relaxing with friends and families.

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

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

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

## Pyin Oo Lwin attracts new year holidaymakers

THE 13<sup>th</sup> flowers festival of Pyin Oo Lwin, the city's cave and water falls have attracted New year holidaymakers.

Pyin Oo Lwin located 3538ft above sea level is a great place for holidaymakers and Paikchinmyaung Cave, Pwekauk water fall, Chinese temple and Dat-

tawchaik Waterfall attracts them year after year.

The visitors also get rare opportunity to buy natural herbal roots and medicines during the visit in Pyin Oo Lwin.

The 13<sup>th</sup> Pyin Oo Lwin flower festival featuring over 200,000 flowering plants and floral sculp-

tures in the National Kandawgyi Garden is a significant attraction for the visitors this year.

The 430 acres gardens comprise over 360 acres of land and 70 acres of water makes the visitors feel relaxed, said U Kyaw Min, a visitor.—Zaw Myo Htaik (Pyin Oo Lwin) ■



Holidaymakers visit the 13<sup>th</sup> flowers festival. **PHOTO: ZAW MYO HTAIK (PYINOOLWIN)**



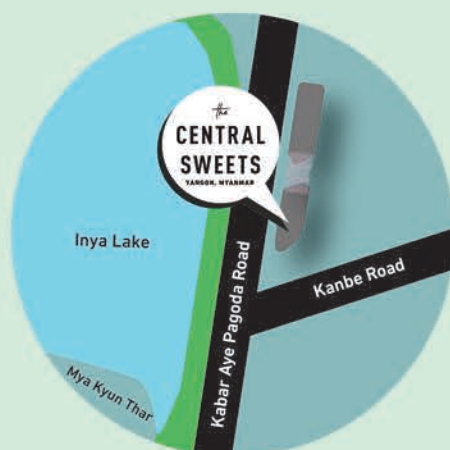
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# Fixing and shaping future development

**T**HERE is just one day to go before 2018 ends and a new year begins. It is simply natural for time to usher us into a new future every year. Change is a part of nature, seasons change and landscapes are altered over time. In an age where change is the norm, we have to keep up a rapid pace if we do not want to be left behind.

Myanmar established a parliamentary democracy after achieving independence and managed to lead developments to a certain extent in the post-war era. During the 1960s, Myanmar was the ideal that most countries looked up to. Around 1968, our country was on a par with Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia, and other Southeast Asian countries. In the 1980s, Eastern Europe and East Asia prioritized reforms and gradually developed.

After 1970, Myanmar became isolated from the global economy, which led to a slowdown in development. But Myanmar had not fallen behind countries just yet. Many countries began transitioning to a democratic system between 1973 and 2010. There were 40 countries with a democratic system in 1973 and that number grew to 115 by 2010. These countries developed because they were able to reform their system.

When we were under the rule of external entities, the shared goal of the people was to establish an independent union, drive development, and bring prosperity to all citizens.

While working to achieve prosperity for all through reforms, we must put the needs of the people first. We must incorporate truth and loving-kindness

into our reform movements so that they conform with our country's objectives.

There was a lot of excitement among the general public and the international community in 2016 as they looked forward with hope to reforms in the country. The new administration is making the necessary changes in the political, economic, and social sectors to develop the livelihoods of the people. There are still many changes that need to be implemented if we are to successfully develop all sectors. While there have been significant improvements in some regions, others are still struggling.

Even so, if we look closely at the real state of development in post-independence Myanmar and other countries of the world, we can see that reforms are the path to national development.

Therefore, We would like to urge everyone to participate in the reforms process in the country for uniform development across all platforms.

# Pledging to make supreme sacrifice to protect Independence

By Tetkatho Pwint Thu Aung

**M**ARKING the first event of Independence Day celebration on the new calendar of 2019 on the planet, it is an auspiciousness, honor and pleasure for the people of Myanmar.

While the countries across the world are celebrating the New Year, the people in every nook and cranny of Myanmar bade farewell to the year 2018 and ushers into 2019 with joy and hope, reflecting the independence and sovereignty of the country.

Celebrating the New Year across the world is the manifestation of liberty of each country, which is earned with supreme sacrifices. Likewise, Myanmar also given up flesh, blood and bone in regaining independence.

## Image of a nation

Standing tall among the nations of the world, a country must have four characteristics such as (1) territory, (2) population, (3) government, and (4) sovereignty.

Despite having the territory, population and government, a nation could never be termed as independent without the "sovereignty". If the composition of the government is not made of genuine "national government" with the nationalities, then the country falls under the subjugation of foreign colonialists.

## Background history

Following the First Anglo-Myanmar War in 1824, Myanmar lost Rakhine and Taninthayi to British, and again surrendered lower Myanmar to colonialists after the Second Anglo-Myanmar War in 1852. The year 1885, saw the subjugation of the whole country on 1 January 1886, when the British colonialists annexed upper Myanmar.

Ending the Kone Baung Dynasty, Myanmar entered colonial era.

Deeply resented on the status of servitude, the patriotic nationals fought back with available weapons, pledging supreme sacrifices such as the saying "better to die instead of staying alive under servitude".

Sacrificing lives in the independence struggle was recorded in the chronicle by the names such as Fone Kan Duwa and Bo Pho Saw of Kachin State; Kwyun



Guard of Honour and attendees salute to the State Flag at the ceremony to celebrate the 70<sup>th</sup> Independence Day in Nay Pyi Taw. PHOTO MNA

Bee and Shwe Gyo Phyu Prince of Chin State; Bo Min Yaung and Shan chieftain Wuntho Sawbwa Gye U Aung Myat of Shan State.

Patriotic writers and poets such as Thakin Kodaw Hmaing and Achoketan Sayar Pe fought back by penning anti-colonialist literature. Moreover, YMBA, GCBA, Do Bamar Asiayone, Bamar Hwetyat Group, Anti-Fascist Group, and AFPFL had been formed with the participation of the students, workers, farmers, intellectuals, intelligentsia, and all the working people.

Next, 1300 Myanmar Revolution, named after the Myanmar calendar year, emerged and fought back. Subsequently, it was followed by military training in Hainan Island of Thirty Comrades headed by Bogoyoke Aung San.

On 27 December 1941, the BIA was formed in Bangkok of Thailand.

January, February and March in the year 1942 saw the recapture of Taninthayi, Kayin, Mon, Bago and Yangon by the BIA.

In June 1942, the combined forces of BIA and the Japanese took control of the whole country. Pulling down the number of soldiers, Burma Defense Army (BDA) was formed on 27 July 1942; which was followed by the grant of bogus independence by the Japanese forces.

The whole of Myanmar resented and disliked the fake in-

dependence, and therefore, the people and the Tatmadaw fought back the Japanese Fascists on 27 March 1945.

On 23 July 1945, the BDA was officially transformed into Patriot Tatmadaw.

## Historical Nay Thurein Mass Meeting

On 10 and 11 August 1945, a meeting was held at Bogoyoke Aung San's residence at Tower Lane with the participation of Tatmadaw national leaders and commanders, where the important decisions on the Myanmar Tatmadaw were approved. A declaration was issued on 12 August 1945, and that Bogoyoke Aung San made guidelines on the road to independence through political approach.

On 16, 17 and 18 of August 1945, the Fourth General Meeting of leaders was held where the heads of all political parties such as Bogoyoke Aung San, Bo Let Ya, Bo Ze Ya, Thakin Than Tun, Thakin Ba Hein, Thakin Mya Thwin and others attended. Bogoyoke Aung San spelled out that the Fascist was to be wiped out totally on this world, and that Myanmar nation was to be reconstructed as the desire of the people.

The decisions made at the meeting were approved at the mass meeting held at the Nay Thurein Hall at the side of Kandawgyi Lake in Bahan Township on 19 August 1945.

## Historical speech of Bogoyoke Aung San

At the Nay Thurein mass meeting, Bogoyoke Aung San made a historical speech where he said that our Tatmadaw was very much worried with deep anxiety at a time when we were supposed to go into war; that of the possibility on the verge of getting killed with the enemy's bullet; that of the doubt whether we could regain independence or not; that of our plan to go to war; that of the responsibility of the leaders who would remain in serving the country; that of the possible remorse and regret for all of us if we could not carry out successfully what we had promised earlier to the people of the country.

Immediately after the historical Nay Thurein Mass Meeting, many agreements were signed such as Kandy Agreement signed in Kandy of Sri Lanka on 7 September 1945; the Aung San-Atlee Agreement signed in London on 27 January 1947; Panglong Agreement signed by (23) leaders of various nationalities including Bogoyoke Aung San on 12 February 1947; Nu - Atlee Agreement signed in London on 17 October 1947.

As the result of these agreements, the granting of independence draft bill was approved in British Parliament and subsequently Myanmar regained independence on Sunday 4 January 1948.

## Main significant points in the struggle of independence

Despite the fact that Myanmar regained independence, the nation inherited the bad legacy of suspicion and mistrust among nationalities due to divide and rule policy shaped by the colonialists

embedded in the basic foundation of building the democratic nation which is in the process of making.

In accordance with the result of the political discussions, we are building the democratic federal union and that appropriate and most fitting constitution is needed.

## Patriotic writers and poets such as Thakin Kodaw Hmaing and Achoketan Sayar Pe fought back by penning anti-colonialist literature.

which deterred the development of the nation, resulting with the civil war and arms conflicts for many decades.

Learning the main lesson from the struggle of independence, we came to realize that the value of strength was the result of solidarity and unity. The sustainability of independence for eternity remains on the harmony and unison of the national brethren.

Especially in the endeavor and implementation of national reconciliation and the peace process, it is necessary that all nationalities must have freedom, justice, equality and self-determination

Therefore, it is necessary that all the nationalities should live in harmony for eternity in the union; that all the armed conflicts should be ended while reaping the eternal peace; that in respecting the human rights in conjunction with the equal rights and benefits of all the nationalities. In honour of 71<sup>st</sup> Independence Day, the writer of this article would like to conclude that it is necessary in realizing and convincing of the value of independence by all nationalities and must pledge and promise for the supreme sacrifice in protecting the independence.

*Translated by UMT (Ahlon)*

## 71<sup>st</sup> Anniversary Independence Day National Objectives

1. All National Ethnic Races to defend and protect with "collective strength" to ensure Non-disintegration of the Union, Non-disintegration of the Unity of National Ethnic Races and Perpetuation of National Sovereignty.
2. For the emergence of a Democratic Federal Union, to strive towards creating a suitable Constitution for the State in accordance with democratic standards.
3. To effectively combat and protect against the use of drugs and narcotic substances which can harm and erode the health and character of all citizens.
4. To continuously strive with determined effort for the balanced and equitable development of all states and regions.
5. To assist from all fronts the Union Government's efforts for private sector development and the emergence of a fully-developed market economy.

## Pyithu Hluttaw representatives informed to attend parliamentary session

THE Speaker of the Pyithu Hluttaw has sent invitation letters to the Pyithu Hluttaw representatives to attend eleventh regular session of the Second Pyithu Hluttaw to be held at Pyithu Hluttaw's meeting hall at 10 am on 21 January 2019 (Monday).

The Pyithu Hluttaw representatives, either they receive the invitation letters or not are urged to contact Pyithu Hluttaw Hall (I-12) not earlier than 19 January 2019 (Saturday) and not later than 20 January 2019 (Sunday) along with their identity cards. — MNA

## Amyotha Hluttaw representatives informed to attend parliamentary session

THE Speaker of the Amyotha Hluttaw has sent invitation letters to the Amyotha Hluttaw representatives to attend eleventh regular session of the Second Amyotha Hluttaw to be held at Amyotha Hluttaw's meeting hall at 10 am on 21 January 2019 (Monday).

The Amyotha Hluttaw representatives, either they receive the invitation letters or not are urged to contact Amyotha Hluttaw Hall (I-19) not earlier than 19 January 2019 (Saturday) and not later than 20 January 2019 (Sunday) along with their identity cards. — MNA

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## Pagodas, recreation places crowded with year-end holidaymakers



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



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



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



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



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



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



Holidaymakers feed elephants as they visit the Ngalaik Elephant Camp in Nay Pyi Taw. **PHOTO: HTEIN NAN NAW**



# US, China talk 'progress' after phone call on trade

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

"Just had a long and very good call with President Xi of China," US President Donald Trump said on Twitter after his chat with China's President Xi Jinping. "Deal is moving along very well. If made, it will be very comprehensive, covering all subjects, areas and points of dispute. Big progress being made!" For his part, Xi told Trump that China places "great importance" on improving bilateral ties and "encourages and supports further talks between the United States and the Democratic people's Republic of (North) Korea, and hopes for positive results," state-run news agency Xinhua reported.

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

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

While investors have wor-



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

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

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

During the call, Xi expressed hope that "both teams can meet each other halfway and reach an agreement beneficial

to both countries and the world as early as possible," according to Xinhua.

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

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

The US-China trade war has been among factors pres-

suring US and global markets in December, alongside worries over slowing growth, a partial US government shutdown, higher US Federal Reserve interest rates and Trump's attacks on the central bank.

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

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

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

in this case about communication tools involving new technology and of training them in marksmanship", Morocco's central office for judicial investigations said in a statement.

The counter-terror organ added he subscribed to "extrem-

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

The two women were beheaded, authorities have said.

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

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

But none of the four had contact with IS members in Syria or Iraq, he said. The head of the suspected cell is 25-year-old street vendor Abdessamad Ejroud, according to investigators. He was identified in a video filmed a week before the double-murder, in which the four main suspects pledged allegiance to IS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, according to authorities. The killings have shaken Norway, Denmark and Morocco. Another video circulated on social networks allegedly showed the murder of one of the tourists.

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



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

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Philippine storm death toll rises to 22

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

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

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

### Five killed as Bangladesh votes after violent

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

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

### Four killed in helicopter crash in eastern Siberia

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

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

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

There are reports that the crash caused fire over the aircraft. —Xinhua ■





Colombian presidential candidate Ivan Duque (L), for the Democratic Centre party and his running mate Marta Lucia Ramirez celebrate with supporters in Bogota, after winning the Colombian presidential election on 17 June 2018. **PHOTO: AFP**

## Colombia condemns alleged plot to kill president

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

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

The announcements come amid tensions between Bogota and Caracas, following the mutual expulsion of officials from both nations and the presence earlier this month of

Russian long-range bombers in Venezuela.

President Duque has called upon the "countries that defend democracy" to not recognize the government of Nicolas Maduro, who begins a new term on January 10, after being re-elected in polls that were boycotted by the opposition and branded a fraud by the international community. Maduro, for his part, has said the future government of Brazil under President-elect Jair Bolsonaro, Colombia and the United States are all involved in plotting a coup in Venezuela and want to assassinate him. Duque's government has said it would not support a military intervention in Venezuela, with which it shares a 2,200 kilometer (1,350 miles) border. Washington, on the other hand, has indicated "all options are on the table" for dealing with Venezuela's socialist leader. —AFP ■

## 'Worse every day': Afghans expect 2019 to be even deadlier

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

The news, which the White House has not confirmed, capped an annus horribilis for the war-weary country which by some estimates has overtaken Syria as the world's deadliest conflict zone this year.

Ordinary Afghans, who have long borne the brunt of the relentless fighting, told AFP they felt increasingly despondent

about the future as the Taliban and the Islamic State group adapt to ramped up security to carry out almost daily attacks on civilians and security forces.

"It is getting worse every day," said electrical engineering student Mohammad Hussain in Kabul, one of the deadliest places in the country for civilians. "The security we had four or five years back was better than now. Even when we don't have attacks in Kabul, we are waiting for something to happen." Zabihullah Shirzad, who owns a garbage collecting company in the Afghan capital, said he could not remember a bloodier year than 2018 and predicted 2019 would be even deadlier.

"We will see more killing and bloodshed," the 42 year old said. "I am not optimistic about the peace

talks." Their gloomy comments reflect the findings of a Gallup poll published in October, which showed an unprecedented level of pessimism among Afghans. And an Asia Foundation study in December suggested more than 60 per cent of Afghans thought the country was moving in the wrong direction—unchanged from a year earlier.

### 'Very bad year'

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

This year was also marked by some of the deadliest suicide attacks since the start of the war

in 2001, including an ambulance bomb blast that targeted a crowded street in Kabul in January, killing more than 100 people and wounding hundreds more.

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

One estimate puts the number of conflict-related deaths at more than 40,000 this year—almost equal to the combined total for Syria and Yemen—according to data compiled by the US-based Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project. Afghanistan also took the unenviable title of deadliest country in the world for journalists, with 15 media workers killed, including AFP chief photographer Shah Marai and AFP driver Mohammad Akhtar. Adding to the misery was the worst drought in recent history, which forced more than 250,000 people to abandon their homes, overwhelming humanitarian agencies as they struggled to provide enough food and shelter.

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



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

## Indonesia's Bali volcano erupts

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

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

Agency (BMKG) said in a statement.

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

The eruption was recorded by seismograph with maximum amplitude of 22 mm, lasted in three minutes and eight seconds, he added.

"Currently Mount Agung volcano is in alert status," the statement said, adding that the

level III danger status has been issued on the volcano.

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

The PVMBG said the red zone areas could be expanded or reduced in the following days on the basis of results moni-

tored by its observation outpost. The agency also warned people residing near the rivers of being cautious of potential threats as the lava and volcanic materials may flow into rivers.

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

## CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

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

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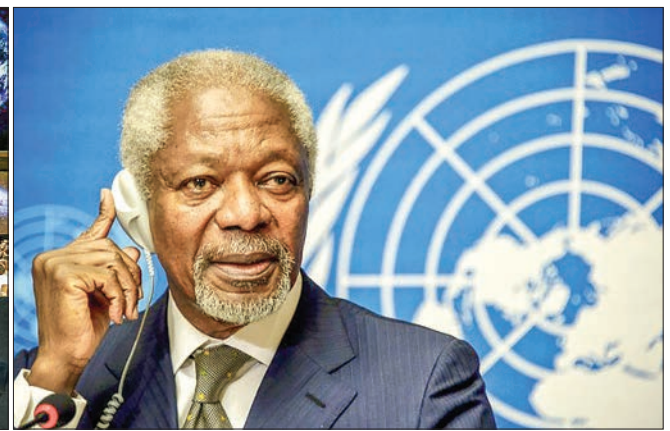
# Notable deaths in 2018



A photograph of American soul legend Aretha Franklin displayed after her death in August 2018, aged 76. **PHOTO: AFP**



A combination of photos of British astrophysicist Stephen Hawking. **PHOTO: AFP**



Kofi Annan, the first UN chief from sub-Saharan Africa. **PHOTO: AFP**

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

## January

- 15: Dolores O'Riordan, singer-songwriter of Irish band The Cranberries, drowned accidentally in a hotel bath aged 46.
- 27: Ingvar Kamprad, Swedish founder of affordable flat-pack furnishing empire IKEA, passed away at home aged 91.

## February

- 21: US preacher Billy Graham, spearhead of a worldwide evangelical Christian movement and spiritual counsel to several US presidents, passed away aged 99.
- 24: Bollywood megastar Sridevi Kapoor drowned in a hotel bathtub at the age of 54. She had appeared in around 300 films, including blockbusters such as "Mawali" ("Scoundrel").

## March

- 10: French fashion designer Hubert de Givenchy, famous for the "little black dress", died in his sleep aged 91.
- 14: Physicist Stephen Hawking, Britain's most famous modern-day scientist and known for popularising the secrets of the universe, died at home aged 76. Suffering from a form of motor-neurone disease, he spent most of his life in a wheelchair and communicated via a computer speech synthesiser.

## April

- 2: Winnie Madikizela-Mandela, former wife of Nelson Mandela and an anti-apartheid icon in her own right, died in hospital aged 81 and after a long illness.
- 13: Oscar-winning Czech-born film director Milos Forman, behind "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest" and "Amadeus", died aged 86 after a short illness.
- 17: Barbara Bush, the wife of US president George H.W. Bush (in office between 1989 and 1993) and mother of president George W. Bush (2001-2009), passed

away aged 92.

- 20: Swedish superstar DJ Avicii, real name Tim Bergling, was found dead in Muscat aged 28.

## May

- 14: Author Tom Wolfe, acerbic chronicler of American society known for novels such as "The Bonfire of the Vanities", died aged 88 in hospital where he was being treated for an infection.
- 22: US literary giant Philip Roth, a towering figure among 20<sup>th</sup>-century novelists and 1998 Pulitzer Prize winner, died of heart failure aged 85.

## June

- 5: American handbag designer Kate Spade committed suicide at the age of 55.
- 8: US chef and television food show host Anthony Bourdain, 61, committed suicide in Alsace, eastern France, where he was filming for his Emmy-winning CNN food and travel programme "Parts Unknown".
- 18: XXXTentacion, a 20-year-old rapper whose grim rhymes propelled him to the top of the US chart, was shot in Florida.

## July

- 5: French filmmaker Claude Lanzmann, director of the landmark nine-and-a-half hour Holocaust documentary "Shoah", died aged 92.

## August

- 6: French "chef of the century" Joel Robuchon, who at one point held a record 32 Michelin stars at the same time, died aged 73 from pancreatic cancer.
- 11: British writer V.S. Naipaul, a famously outspoken 2001 Nobel laureate who wrote on the traumas of post-colonial change, passed away aged 85.
- 16: Aretha Franklin, American "Queen of Soul" behind hits such as "Respect" and "Natural Woman", died of cancer aged 76. Her nearly eight-hour funeral was attended by former presidents, stars and musical royalty.
- 18: Kofi Annan, secretary general of the United Nations between 1997 and 2006, died after a short illness at age 80. He was given a state funeral in his native

Ghana.

- 25: John McCain—US Republican senator, Viet Nam War hero and two-time presidential candidate—died aged 81 following a year-long battle with brain cancer.

## September

- 6: Hollywood star Burt Reynolds, best known for alpha-male roles in the 1970s and 1980s, died aged 82 after a heart attack.

## October

- 1: Charles Aznavour, legendary French-Armenian crooner, passed away at the age of 94.
- 15: Paul Allen, co-founder of Microsoft with Bill Gates and later a billionaire and philanthropist, died from cancer aged 65.
- 22: Gilberto Benetton, one of the founders of the eponymous Italian clothes brand, died aged 77 after an illness.

## November

- 12: American comics legend Stan Lee—co-creator of global action hero favourites including Spider-Man, Hulk, Iron Man, X-Men and Black Panther—passed away aged 95.
- 26: Italian film director Bernardo Bertolucci, whose work includes "Last Tango In Paris" and Oscar-winning "The Last Emperor", died aged 77 at his home in Rome.
- 30: Former US president George H.W. Bush died aged 94, just months after his wife of 73 years, Barbara Bush. They were the parents of president George W. Bush.

## December

- 3: Belgium's richest man, multi-billionaire entrepreneur Albert Frere, passed away aged 92.
- 8: Lyudmila Alexeyeva, a Soviet-era dissident who became a symbol of resistance in modern-day Russia as a leading rights activist, died after a long illness at the age of 91.
- 28: Amos Oz, celebrated Israeli novelist and passionate advocate of peace between Israelis and Palestinians, died of cancer aged 79.—AFP ■

# China to mark Year of the Pig with "Peppa Pig" movie

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

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

The film includes Chinese New Year customs such as a dragon pa-

rade and fireworks, state-run China Daily reported. Co-developed by Alibaba Pictures and Canadian media company Entertainment One—which currently produces Peppa Pig—the film includes the entire "Peppa Pig" cast and two new characters named Dumpling and Glutinous Rice Ball, two popular Chinese new year delicacies. The series, introduced in the mid-2000s in China, has become extremely popular through episodes dubbed into Mandarin. This fervour

intensified at the end of 2017 among a young adult audience. Many internet users including stars sported temporary "Peppa Pig" tattoos in selfies, and cups, watches and clothes appeared bearing the image of the heroine Peppa.

A Chinese internet platform in May gave "Peppa Pig" the chop as state media lamented the series had become a "subversive" icon for slackers and anti-social young people. —AFP ■



"Peppa Pig" became very popular in China this year, but came under the eye of the censors as "subversive" **PHOTO: AFP**



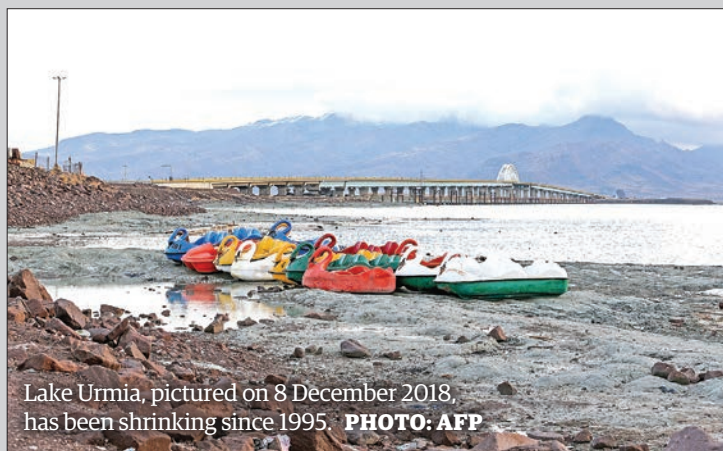
## Iran sees 'revival' of imperilled Lake Urmia

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

Situated in the mountains of northwest Iran, Lake Urmia is fed by 13 rivers and designated as a site of international importance under the UN Convention on Wetlands that was signed in the Iranian city of Ramsar in 1971. The lake has been shrinking since 1995, according to the UN Environment Programme, due to a combination of prolonged drought, over-farming and dams.

By August 2011 the lake's surface was 2,366 square kilometres (914 square miles) and shrank drastically to just 700 km<sup>2</sup> in 2013, according to the United Nations. The catastrophe has threatened the habitat of shrimp, flamingos, deers and wild sheep and caused salt storms that pollute nearby cities and farms. That finally triggered a coordinated effort to save the lake in 2013—with a joint programme between Iran and the UN Development Programme funded by the Japanese government. The project became a priority for the incoming administration of President Hassan Rouhani.

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



Lake Urmia, pictured on 8 December 2018, has been shrinking since 1995. **PHOTO: AFP**

### Sustainable farming

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

"Almost 85 per cent of the water is used for agriculture, and we are trying to help farmers reduce usage through cheap and effective techniques," said Abesht. Measures such as using natural instead of chemical fertilisers, or levelling the land to avoid run-off, have shown major improvements for local farmer Afshin Medadi. The 47-year-old had to invest in new equipment, but says "things are more cost-effective now", with his farm using a tenth of the water. There has also been a noticeable reduction in the salt and dust pollution whipped up from the desiccated lake floor during storms, he added. Others have launched their own green initiatives. One group of 20 women set up a collective to raise awareness among lakeside communities about water waste, and encourage the production of handicrafts to boost sustainable employment.

One of the organisers, 39-year-old Kobra Asghari from the village of Gharehgozlou, hopes industries such as carpet and doll-making can gradually overtake traditional farming. — AFP ■

## In Caracas, macaws' bold color show can't be missed



A flock of macaws flies over apartment buildings. **PHOTO: AFP**

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

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

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

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

## IN Picture

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

Smoke rises from a factory chimney on 29 December 2018. **PHOTO: AFP**





## Yangon United celebrates 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary

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

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

During the ceremony, the

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

Signifying Yangon United's symbol of success in the previous football season, the three trophies won by the team at the

Charity Cup 2018, Myanmar National League 2018, and General Aung San Shield 2018 were also put on display.

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

## Bodybuilding, physique contest held in Yangon

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

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

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

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

—Phoe La Pyae ■ (Translated by Kyaw Zin Lin)



Professor Dr. Thazin Lwin hands out the prize to the winner of the women's event of the bodybuilding contest. **PHOTO: PHOE LA PYAE**

## Thet Htar Thuzar wins women's singles at National Badminton Championship

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

The awards ceremony was held on 28 December. Speaking on her victory, Thet Htar Thuzar said: "I have been playing badminton since I was a child. I have participated in 9 international competitions so far and won 5

prizes. Now, I have won the first place in the senior women's singles. I always take part in the National Badminton Championship. I plan to compete in international events next year."

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

Players from different states and regions participated in the Championship, organized under

the supervision of the Myanmar Badminton Federation.

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

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



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

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

BRISBANE (Australia)—Andy Murray aims to kick-start his stalled career in Brisbane this week after an injury-plagued 2018, with Spanish great Rafael Nadal also playing as he tests his troubled knee ahead of the Australian Open. The season-opening tournament boasts a stellar field with Kei Nishikori and Grigor Dimitrov also in contention as they prepare for the first Grand Slam of the year at Melbourne Park.

It also marks the return of temperamental Nick Kyrgios, the defending champion who has been talking to psychologists and "trying to get on top" of his mental health after another roller-coaster year. His preparations took a blow when he was bitten by spider over Christmas, which needed medical attention, but he is expected to be ready. The women's field includes seven of the world's top 10 —defending champion Elina Svitolina, US Open winner Naomi Osaka, Sloane Stephens, Petra Kvitova, Karolina Pliskova, Kiki Bertens, and Daria Kasatkina. Three-time Grand Slam winner Murray only played six tournaments last season and arrived in Australia early to acclimatise and prepare as he continues his recovery from hip surgery.

### 'A better place'

The Scot, who won the Brisbane title in 2012 and 2013, said he had been training hard to work himself back to the sort of fitness levels that saw him capture nine titles in a stellar 2016 campaign and reach the number one ranking. "There are still things that I want to achieve," he said. "Whether I am capable of that I don't really know." The 31-year-old had intended to play Brisbane at the beginning of 2018, but was forced to withdraw on the eve of the tournament and pull out of the Australian Open with the hip problem. He said he still had some pain, but "I'm in a better place than I was a few months ago". The former world number one spent the off-season training in the heat of Miami to prepare for what can be gruelling conditions in Brisbane and then Melbourne. He hasn't played since pulling out of the China Open in September, with his ranking plunging to 256. World number two Nadal also battled injury worries throughout 2018 but enjoyed success as well. He won a record-extending 11<sup>th</sup> French Open in June and reached the semi-finals both at Wimbledon and the US Open. But in November he announced he needed an operation on his right ankle and only resumed training two weeks ago.

### Forward step

He made his comeback at the Mubadala World Tennis Championship in Abu Dhabi on Friday, but withdrew from his third-place play-off match to ensure he didn't push his body too far too soon. "Being honest, I'm satisfied the way I was playing tennis. I am more or less satisfied with how the body held," he said. "It's not the moment for me to take a step back, it's the moment to make a step forward. The match (in Abu Dhabi) is a step forward for me, that's the main thing." —AFP ■