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President U Thein Sein meets Chinese guests



President U Thein Sein and party pose for documentary photo with Chinese delegation led by President Mr. Zhang Guoqing of China North Industries Corporation at the Credentials Hall of the Presidential Palace.—MNA

NAY PYI TAW, 24 Dec— President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar U Thein Sein received a Chinese delegation led

by President Mr. Zhang Guoqing of China North Industries Corporation, at the Credentials Hall of the Presidential Palace, here, at

3:00 pm today.

Also present at the call together with the President were Union Ministers Lt-Gen Ko Ko and U Hla Tun,

Deputy Minister U Thant Kyaw and departmental heads. The delegation was accompanied by Chinese Ambassador to Myanmar

Mr. Li Junhua.

During the meeting, both sides cordially discussed matters related to promotion of relations between the

two countries and bilateral cooperation, meeting success in long-term cooperation and making investments.

MNA

Yangon Port Region to be upgraded into international standard port

*Byline: Khin Maung Htwe
Photo: Tha Nyan*

Yangon, a once-famous city in Asia, has been back on the right track flowing changes of system and era. Investing in the theory that “towns with exit to sea tend to develop more”, the government has been pushing Yangon back on the path of development, having set it as a commercial hub in its efforts to rejuvenate the city.

Transformation of Yangon port area into international-standard port is among the plans for

urbanization of commercial hub, Yangon.

Local and foreign investments have been invited for development of Yangon Port which is being undertaken with four programmes. Upgrading works include extension of retaining wall of Botahtaung Port about 100 feet into the river, filling earth and construction of recreation centres and shops on the site, upgrading of Sule pontoon bridge Nos 1, 2, 3 and 4 into ones that can handle

container and international general cargo vessels, equipping freight-handling equipment and constructing port facilities within the compounds, upgrading of Nan Thida Jetty and Pansadan-Dalla pontoon bridge and constructing modern business buildings within the compounds, building of inland port terminal in Yangon Port and Lanmadaw (between Ywathit Creek and Sint-oh-dan) and constructing of modern business buildings

within the compound.

Yangon Port has a total of 18 pontoon bridges transporting containers, edible oil and general cargos. 2011-2012 fiscal year saw more 885 foreign vessels moored at those pontoon bridges in comparison with 2002-2003 fiscal year, a significant surge by 93.06 per cent.

Myanma Port Authority has invited tenders for upgrading works of Yangon Port into international standard one and Pearl

Land Co Ltd was awarded the contract after final consideration. The company will reportedly rent the land for 15-year term.

Now, the cargo volume Yangon Port is taking care of has reached the 70 per cent of its freight handling capacity as a master plan has been adopted for development of Yangon Port including construction of new pontoon bridges.

As Shwedagon has been clearly visible from the mouth of Yangon River

throughout the time, personnel concerned are discussing for Shwedagon not to be hidden from sight behind skyscrapers.

Upon completion of those projects, Yangon will become more commercially central and have the full characteristics of a commercial hub. In other words, it would be revitalized into former status of a famous city across Asia. Citizens and Yangonites should welcome the project which would bring about economic opportunities for the State and citizens, and restore the lost reputation of Yangon. The onus on citizens to join the efforts for development of Yangon and to repeat the history for birthplace is one of the five things that should not be forgotten.

Myanma Alinn: 24-12-2012

Trs: TKK



Photo shows spectacular Yangon Port, commercial hub of Myanmar.

VISA users can draw cash from ATMs of KBZ Bank



YANGON, 24 Dec — According to a brief demonstration of Visa credit cards held at Kanbawza Bank (Branch) on 21 December, cash can be withdrawn from all ATMs of Kanbawza Bank through VISA cards.

Any visa cards can be used via ATMs of Kanbawza Bank to draw Myanmar currency, aiming at providing Visa service to tourists, foreign investors and guests.

“All Visa card users are allowed to withdraw cash from all ATMs of the bank. The service is provided by the bank for Visa cardholder tourists to be able to use Myanmar currency via ATMs. So far, 37 ATMs have

been launched, and plans are underway to have the service via 13 more ATMs. It is aimed to install more ATMs up to 100 in 2013 when Myanmar will host SEA Games and international conferences”, a senior general manager of KBZ Bank said. With a one time service charge of 5,000 kyats, users can withdraw K 300,000 per time via the machine with the use of Visa card and K 1 million per day.

According to an official of the bank, daily cash withdrawal amount from the machine is larger than other countries like Thailand and Singapore, and the service charge is fair.

KBZ Bank is the only bank that started Visa card

service before the service is also provided by the two other private banks. More banks will be using the service soon. VISA card system has been used in 200 countries with the number of 1.8 billion holders. The global payment network deals with more than 16000 banks. Now all visa card users around the world can enjoy the service in Myanmar, and plans are underway to have the service by Myanmar people in accord with rules and regulations of the Central Bank of Myanmar.— *Kyemon*

December mass walks in Thayet Township

THAYET, 24 Dec — A December mass walks was organized at Thayet Township of Magway

Region in front of the Thattahtana Pagoda, at 5.30 am on 22 December.

The deputy commis-



sioner and township administrators, township level departmental heads and staff, ward administrators, members of social organizations and local people took part in the mass walks that started

from the gathering point, Thattahtana Pagoda and ended at Myoma sports ground. Prizes were given to winners in conjunction with lucky draw programme.

Kyemon

MSF to make preliminary selection of athletes

YANGON, 24 Dec — The preliminary selection of athletes for swimming and diving competitions of XXVII SEA Games will be made at National Swimming Pool on U Wisaya Road, here, at 1 pm on 3

January 2013. Any divers and swimmers with no age limit are eligible to take part in the selection contest. Those interested may enlist at Myanmar Swimming Federation not later than 30 December.— *Kyemon*

School-upgrading ceremonies held in Zalun Township

ZALUN, 24 Dec — Upgrading ceremonies of schools were held in Zalun Township of Ayeyawady Region on 21 December.

A ceremony to upgrade Basic Education Middle School (Branch) in Kyonsha Sarpyusu Village into Basic Education Middle School was held at the school in the township at 9.20 am on 21 December. Region Minister for Planning and Economic U Hla Khaing and officials formally unveiled the school signboard, and Region Chief Minister U Thein Aung, Region Hluttaw Speaker U Hsan Hsint and the deputy speaker and officials sprinkled scented water on the stone inscription.

The Chief Minister, the speaker and the minister delivered addressed at the school-upgrading ceremony at Pinlung Hall of the school, and the Zalun Township Pyithu Hluttaw Re-representative spoke words of thanks.

A similar ceremony was held at Basic Education High School (Branch) at Maryland Village at 11. 50 am the same day. The Region Chief Minister formally unveiled the signboard of the school and the Zalun Township Pyithu Hluttaw Representative, the stone inscription. At the school-upgrading ceremony, the chief minister, the speaker and the minister made

speeches.

Next, the Chief Minister met with region/district/ township level service personnel, members of political parties, ward/ village administrators, townsenders, members of social organizations and local people at the meeting hall of Zalun Township General Administration Department, and presented cash donations to free funeral service association and Sedanar free education association.

Then the chief minister oversaw village-to-village gravel road between Pyinmakon Village and Pattan Village.

Kyemon

Two buildings under unauthorized construction demolished



YANGON, 24 Dec — Unauthorized construction of two five-storey buildings were razed by Yangon City Development Committee in a demolition drive on

22 December. As they are not suitable for settlement, fourth and fifth floors of two five-storey buildings which are under construction illegally at the properties owned by Daw Tin Yi and U Tin Hlaing on Dhammayon Lane in ward-13 of Yankin Township of Yangon Region were demolished by Engineering Department of YCDC.

Owners of these two buildings had been informed of demolishing the buildings not later than 17 October. Daw Tin Yi submitted an application to

the YCDC for demolition of fourth and fifth floors the five-storey building and for a licence to continue to construct the building legally. Regarding the de-molition of the five-storey building of U Tin Hlaing, an official of the YCDC explained that the unauthorized building was built without meeting set standards. So the YCDC took the responsibility for demolishing the building in accord with the decision of the meeting of Yangon Region Government.

Kyemon



WORLD

Air strike kills dozens of Syrians waiting to buy bread

BEIRUT, 24 Dec—Dozens of people were killed and many more wounded in a Syrian government air strike that hit a bakery where a crowd was queuing for bread on Sunday, activists said.

If confirmed, the attack on Halfaya in central Syria, which was seized by rebels last week, would be one of the deadliest air strikes of Syria's civil war.

Videos uploaded by activists showed dozens of bloodstained corpses lying amid rubble and shrapnel. An adolescent boy with both his feet blown off lay flailing in the middle of a road.

"When I got there, I could see piles of bodies all

over the ground. There were women and children," said Sameral-Hamawi, an activist in the town. "There are also dozens of wounded people."

Residents of Halfaya told *Reuters* they estimated 90 dead. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a British-based group with a network of activists across Syria, counted 60 killed. "The number is likely to rise because there are dozens of wounded being treated in the area and nearby hospitals, among them 50 in critical condition," it said.

Activists say more than 44,000 people have been killed in the 21 months since protests erupted against President Bashar al-Assad,



Residents walk as they flee their homes after shelling by forces loyal to Syria's President Bashar al-Assad, at Houla near Homs on 23 Dec, 2012.

REUTERS

inspired by the Arab Spring revolutions in Tunisia, Egypt and elsewhere.

Amid the latest carnage, United Nations-backed crisis mediator Lakhdar Brahimi arrived for more talks in

Syria. He had to drive from neighbouring Lebanon because fighting around Damascus International Airport has effectively shut it down.

Reuters

Photo taken on 23 Dec, 2012 shows the scenery of East Lake in Wuhan City outside the window of G79 express train during a trip to Guangzhou, capital of south China's Guangdong Province. China is set to open the world's longest high-speed railway on 26 Dec, linking Beijing and the southern economic centre of Guangzhou.—XINHUA



Iran says seizes explosives on Pakistan border

DUBAI, 24 Dec—Iran has seized 20 bombs and other explosives on its border with Pakistan, a police official was quoted as saying on Saturday.

He called on Islamabad to control its border regions properly.

Iran's impoverished southeastern Sistan-Baluchestan Province, bordering Pakistan, faces serious security problems including bombings and frequent clashes between police and drug dealers and bandits.

"Border agents learned that subversive groups wished to enter our territory," said Ahmad Reza-Radan, Iran's deputy police chief, according to the *Mehr* news agency.

"The agents were successful in identifying and seizing a large shipment of explosives which had entered our country."

The haul included 20 bombs, Radan said. He did not say when exactly the explosives were found. One person had been arrested in connection but others had escaped to Pakistan.

"We request that the Pakistani government act on its obligations in controlling border regions, because its border has become a way for bandit traffic," he was quoted as saying.

Radan did not identify the arrested person or the suspected groups involved.

Reuters

Survivor says principal, others saved her in US school rampage

NEWTOWN, 24 Dec—A survivor of the elementary school massacre in Connecticut that killed 26 people said on Sunday the principal and two staff members had saved her and others' lives by warning that a gunman was in the building.

Becky Virgalla, a reading consultant at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, said she was in a meeting with Principal Dawn Hochsprung, school psychologist Mary Sherlach and other colleagues when the shooter broke into the building on 14 December.

Hochsprung, Sherlach and lead teacher Natalie Hammond "went out in the hall to check out the noise that we didn't know that was gunshots at first," Virgalla told *Reuters* Television at a memorial where the names of the victims were written on wooden angels.

"The three of them were shot and they yelled back 'shooter, stay put.' And they saved my life and the life of four others who were at that meeting," she said.

The gunman, Adam Lanza, 20, shot dead 26

people at the school, including 20 young children, in the second-worst mass shooting in US history.

Before attacking the school with a military-style assault rifle, Lanza shot and killed his mother at their home. He killed himself after the assault at the school.

Hochsprung, 47, and Sherlach, 56, were killed, and Hammond was wounded. Investigators have not disclosed a motive for Lanza's attack.

Virgalla had some advice for parents and teachers: make sure your doors lock from the inside.

"Ours did not and teachers had to go out. You can't be out in a hall when

a shooter is present in your school. Just that simple thing could make a difference in time and safety of the children," she said.

The attack has galvanized the gun control debate in the United States, where the Constitution protects possession of firearms. President Barack Obama is expected to propose steps next month to tighten gun laws.

The head of the US gun lobby, the National Rifle Association, defended his call for armed guards in all schools despite withering criticism of the group's response to the Newtown massacre.

Reuters



Peace on Earth

Rev. Dr. A. Ko Lay

Christmas comes and goes, yet it is not like any other secular story that we read to enjoy and to receive inspiration that will render new insights to one's life situation. All stories have different impacts on our lives. Christmas, on the other hand, is a story about the living God who took the form of man and to live and move with all peoples to reveal His divine purpose of His coming to the world. In biblical language we say the Word (God) became flesh. (John 1:14) In other words, God incarnated as a human being to manifest His saving deeds to all humanity.

The coming of God to humanity was foretold in the book of Isaiah 700 years before His birth. The prophet Isaiah said, "For unto us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. (Isa. 9:6). This prophecy was truly realized in B.C 5 in the announcement of the angel to the shepherds who were abiding in the field, "keeping watch over their flocks by night". The angel said to them, "Fear not for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord." (Luke, 2:8, 10-11). And the multitude of heavenly hosts praising God and saying "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased." (St. Luke. 2:14).

The coming of Jesus Christ into the world is to save mankind from all of sins and grant a new life entirely emancipated from the bondage of sins. Jesus gave this forgiveness of sin by His grace and mercy to all those who confess their sins.

The mission of Jesus Christ is, therefore, to proclaim the Good News that Jesus is the Saviour and that He is the liberator of all people who are suffering under bondage of sins and evil forces. Concerning His mission He made this declaration, that is, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed (Luke.4:18). In His three years of mission, here, on earth, He engaged Himself in the activities that were mentioned in His declaration. For example, the blind regained sight, the lame were completely cured, the lepers were cleansed, the exploited were freed, the exploiters were admonished to do justice and the sinners were pardoned. And concerning His coming to the world, He said, "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly". (St. John. 10:10).

Christmas is more than the birth of Jesus Christ in a manger, in Bethlehem. It is about Jesus Christ ushering in Peace, which is unlike the place that human beings seek to establish. The Peace of Jesus Christ embraces the everlasting prosperity, justice, equality, freedom, equal rights etc. That is why the coming of Jesus Christ into the world is the Good News to all peoples and nations. Therefore, on Christmas day the Christians are eager to proclaim the birth of Jesus Christ-- the Good News -- to their friends and neighbours. The proclamation known as the great Commission was entrusted by Jesus Christ Himself to all believers before His ascension to Heaven. (St. Matthew 28:18-20). That is why Christmas is for all Christians, regardless of their denominations, is the significant religious occasion to celebrate the birth of Jesus the Saviour, and at the same time to proclaim the good news that He "will save his people from their sins." (St. Matthew 1:21).

At Christmas, the angel together with the multitude of heavenly hosts sang this song, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased" (St. Luke.2:14). My humble prayer is that the Christians and well-wishers sing this angel's song at this season of Christmas. Amen.

Schoolmates of the victims put presents at a makeshift memorial outside Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut, on 20 Dec, 2012. People continue to mourn the killing of 20 students and 6 adults by alleged gunman Adam Lanza at Sandy Hook Elementary School on 14 Dec, 2012. —XINHUA

Iran to unveil home-made satellite in February

Science

TEHERAN, 24 Dec—Iran Space Agency (ISA) has announced that it will unveil a new home-made satellite in February, *Teheran Times daily* reported on Sunday.

Director of ISA, Hamid Fazeli, said Saturday that a new domestically-manufactured satellite, named the Nahid, will be unveiled on 2 Feb, 2013, which is Iran's National Space Technology Day, according to the report.

"The project to complete the satellite is going well, and we hope that the satellite will be unveiled on National Space Technology Day," Fazeli said, adding that it is more likely that *Fajr (Dawn)* and *Sharifsat* satellites will be sent into space by the end of the current Iranian cal-

endar year, which ends on 20 March.

The Iranian official did not elaborate on the technology and mission of the Iranian satellites.

According to the report, the *Fajr* is the first Iranian satellite that will be put into orbit. It is a reconnaissance satellite powered by solar energy.

On Wednesday, Iranian Defence Minister Brigadier General Ahmad Vahidi said that Iran was to unveil new space achievements soon.

Vahidi told reporters that the unveiling ceremony would take place on 2 February, Iran's National Space Technology Day.

In June, the defence minister said Iran's new space centre, named Imam Khomeini Space Centre,

would be launched in the future and the Iranian scientists and experts from the Aerospace Industry Organization of the Defence Ministry would send into orbit new generation of the Islamic republic's satellites from the centre.

As the first step, Vahidi said, the Dawn satellite would be launched into orbit from the Imam Khomeini Space Centre.

Iran, a founding member of the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, launched its first domestically-made data-processing satellite, the Omid (Hope), into space in 2009.

Iran frequently says that it will push ahead with its space programme in the coming years.—Xinhua

Nokia patent deal with RIM to lift finances

Tech

HELSINKI, 24 Dec—Struggling Finnish mobile phone maker Nokia has settled its patent dispute with BlackBerry maker Research in Motion in return for payments, as it tries to exploit its trove of technology patents to boost its dire finances.

Terms of the agreement were confidential, but Nokia said on Friday it included a one-time payment to be booked in the fourth quarter, as well as ongoing fees, all to be paid by RIM.

Nokia is one of the industry's top patent holders, along with Qualcomm and Ericsson, having invested 45 billion euros (\$60 billion) in mobile research and development over the past

two decades.

It has been trying to make use of that legacy to ensure its survival as it battles to recover ground lost in the lucrative smartphone market to the likes of Apple and

Samsung.

With sales and cash reserves falling and its credit rating cut to junk over the past year, Nokia in October announced a 750 million euros convertible



A woman walks past a Nokia advertisement board at a home appliances store in Shenyang, Liaoning Province on 6 Dec, 2012.—REUTERS

Wells Fargo Web site troubles persist, US OCC issues cyber alert

NEW YORK, 24 Dec—Wells Fargo & Co customers on Friday had trouble accessing the bank's Web site for a fourth day, as a federal regulator reiterated the need for banks to have systems in place to ward off cyberattacks.

A spokeswoman for the No 4 US bank by assets said some customers may have intermittent access to their online banking, although the high volume of traffic that has flooded the site has declined.

"Our technical teams have been working around the clock to ensure our Web site is accessible to our customers," bank spokeswoman Bridget Braxton said. The bank has been posting apologies on its

Twitter account.

Since September, a hacker activist group called the Izz ad-Din al-Qassam Cyber Fighters has said it was targeting major banks with so-called denial of service cyber attacks. These attacks can disrupt service by deluging Web sites with high traffic.

On Tuesday, the group said in an Internet posting that it would target the "5 major US banks." In a similar posting last week, it forecast attacks against banks that included PNC Financial Services Group Inc and US Bancorp, which reported some disruptions.

A PNC spokesman on Friday said the bank's systems

were operating normally. Spokespersons for Bank of America Corp, JPMorgan Chase & Co and US Bancorp declined to comment. Citigroup Inc could not be immediately reached.

In its alert on Friday, the US Office of the Comptroller of the Currency, which regulates national banks and thrifts, said groups launching denial of service attacks had varying motives, from gaining public attention to diverting the attention of banks while launching simultaneous attacks to commit fraud or steal proprietary information.

"Banks need to have a heightened sense of awareness regarding these attacks and

Google executives acquitted in Milan autism video case

Tech

MILAN, 24 Dec—An Italy appeals court acquitted three Google executives of 2010 charges of having violated the privacy of an Italian boy with autism by letting a video of him being bullied be posted on the site in 2006.

The court's decision, in a public hearing, overturned a previous ruling in 2010 which had sentenced the executives to jail. Reasons for Friday's decision will be made public in 60 days.



Coffee cups with Google logos are seen at the new Google office in Toronto, on 13 Nov, 2012.—REUTERS

"We are very happy that the earlier decision was not confirmed, and that the court of appeals recognized the innocence of our colleagues," said Google policy manager Giorgia Abeltino after the ruling was read.

"Our thoughts are with the boy and his family for the difficult moments they have endured."

Four students at a Turin school uploaded a mobile phone clip to Google Video in

2006 showing them bullying the boy. The prosecutors accused Google of negligence, saying the video remained online for two months even though some Web users had already posted comments asking for it to be taken down.

In February 2010, a court gave each of the three Google executives, none of whom were based in Italy, a six-month suspended jail sentence. Google has said the executives had nothing to do with the upload.

Senior vice-president and chief legal officer David Drummond, former Google Italy board member George De Los Reyes and global privacy counsel Peter Fleischer had not faced actual imprisonment as the sentences were suspended.

The complaint was brought by an Italian advocacy group for people with Down's Syndrome, Vivi Down, and the boy's father.

Reuters

Hutchison's Orange Austria buy clears last hurdle

bond to help fund its fightback.

The agreement with RIM settles all existing patent litigation between the two companies, Nokia said, adding similar disputes with HTC Corp and ViewSonic still stood.

"This agreement demonstrates Nokia's industry leading patent portfolio and enables us to focus on further licensing opportunities in the mobile communications market," said Paul Melin, Nokia's chief intellectual property officer.

Nokia has earned around 500 million euros a year from patent royalties in key areas of mobile telephony.

Reuters

VIENNA/FRANKFURT, 24 Dec—Austria's BWB competition authority said on Friday it would not appeal against Telekom Austria's acquisition of Orange's budget mobile brand Yesss, clearing the way for a wider consolidation of the country's telecom market.

The decision by the BWB, which had signaled it might appeal and said it still had concerns, frees Hutchison Whampoa to buy Orange Austria in a 1.3 billion euro (\$1.7 billion) deal that was conditional on the Yesss sale.

The BWB said there was no point in challenging the decision of Austria's cartel court, which approved the deal last month on the grounds that Telekom Austria would not achieve market dominance by acquiring Yesss's 740,000 customers.

"The decision is indeed defective, but did not seem

contestable in the high cartel court. The BWB had concerns until the last about the merger," it said in a statement.

Hutchison and Orange Austria, who are the country's two smallest operators and have combined market share of about 24 percent, can now go ahead with their deal, which will cut the number of mobile operators in Austria from four to three.

The European Union gave its conditional approval on Wednesday, raising hopes that similar consolidation from four to three mobile operators may be allowed in other European countries.

Telekom Austria shares rose 1.3 percent to 5.73 euros by 6.42 a.m. ET. Shares in Orange Austria's part-owner France Telecom were flat, broadly in line with a 0.3 percent weaker European telecoms index.

Reuters



The letters Telekom Austria are placed in front of the headquarters of Telekom Austria Group in Vienna, on 17 Aug, 2011.—REUTERS

BUSINESS & HEALTH

Putin visits India, eyes arms sales, trade and political ties

Moscow, 24 Dec—Arms sales will be on the agenda when Russian President Vladimir Putin visits India on Monday to court a country that has traditionally been a top client.

Putin's trip, his first to India since he started a new Kremlin six-year term in May, is a chance to reaffirm Russia's interest in India, long a regional ally and now a partner in the BRICS group of emerging market nations.

In an article for publication in the *The Hindu* on Monday, Putin stressed that "deepening friendship and cooperation with India is among the top priorities of our foreign policy".

"India and Russia show an example of responsible leadership and collective actions in the international arena," he wrote, a veiled swipe at the West and in particular the United States, whom Putin accuses of seeking to impose its will on the world.

Russian defence industry sources said the visit could produce deals on the sale of fighter jets and aircraft engines worth more than \$7.5 billion. One said that could include the sale of 42 *Sukhoi Su-30MKI* fighters and a deal on the long-term supply of 970 warplane engines.

The Kremlin said it expected the signing of "a number of large contracts in the area of military-technical cooperation", a term referring to weapons sales, licensing and servicing.



Russia's President Vladimir Putin attends the Summit of Head of States of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) in Moscow, on 19 Dec, 2012.

REUTERS

However, warm ties dating back to the Soviet era have been complicated by recent Russian efforts to improve relations with Pakistan, one of Moscow's proxy enemies during the Soviet Union's war of occupation in Afghanistan in the 1980s.

Relations between the world's second biggest arms exporter Russia and India, its largest buyer last year, have also run into sporadic problems including delays in the delivery of a

reconditioned Soviet-built aircraft carrier, now expected late in 2013.

India plans to spend about \$100 billion over the next 10 years to upgrade its largely Soviet-era military

equipment, as Asia's third largest economy looks to match its economic might with military power and warily eyes assertive Asian rival China.

Moscow has warm political ties with China, another ally in opposing US clout and a key consumer of the oil and gas that drives Russia's economy, but is thought to also be wary of a faster-growing neighbour with nearly 10 times its population.

India relies on Russia for 60 percent of its arms purchases, but has diversified its suppliers in recent years. Putin announced record arms sales this year but wants to minimise the effect of the loss of deals with Libya and of uncertainty about the future of longtime client Syria on Russia's defence industry, an important source of political support for him.

Putin, whose country took up the presidency of the G20 this month, also hopes for strong growth in overall trade with India.

In his article, he said the volume of bilateral trade with India was expected to reach a record \$10 billion this year, after declining due to the global financial crisis, and set a target of doubling that to \$20 billion by 2015.

For Putin, who will meet Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, President Pranab Mukherjee and senior lawmakers, India is the most distant destination since rumours of a back problem emerged after he was seen limping in September.

He had originally been expected to travel to India last month but the Kremlin has dismissed suggestions he has serious health problems, and Putin implied last week that such talk was politically motivated.—Reuters

China probes safety of Yum Brands' KFC chicken products

Health

SHANGHAI, 24 Dec—Yum Brands Inc's fast-food chain KFC was supplied with chicken in China that contained excessive amounts of antibiotics, said food safety authorities investigating allegations of tainted KFC products.

The finding by the Shanghai Food and Drug Administration (SFDA) deals a blow to KFC's reputation in China, where it is facing fierce competition from the likes of Taipei-owned fried chicken chain Dico and Japanese-style noodle chain Ajisen (China) Holdings Ltd. Yum Brands has forecast a drop in same

store China sales in the fourth quarter.

Eight of the 19 batches of chicken samples Yum Brands sent to a testing laboratory in 2010 and 2011 contained overly high levels of antibiotics, the SFDA said in a statement on its Website late on Thursday.

An investigation is underway to determine whether Yum Brands had taken corrective measures at that time, and the Louisville, Kentucky-based company may face harsh penalties if the probe showed laws had been violated, the SFDA said.

Reuters



A woman walks past a KFC restaurant as a logo of McDonald is reflected on a door window, in Wuhan, Hubei Province, on 18 Dec, 2012.—REUTERS



Traders are pictured at their desk in front of the DAX board at the Frankfurt stock exchange on 13 Dec, 2012.

REUTERS

Asian shares steady, US budget concerns weigh

TOKYO, 24 Dec—Asian shares steadied in quiet pre-holiday trade after a slump late last week, but markets have become more jittery about the risk of the United States failing to avert a fiscal crisis.

Activity in other assets was also subdued, with spot gold steadying as investors took to the sidelines, while oil extended losses, with US crude inching down 0.2 percent to remain below \$89 a barrel while Brent futures also eased 0.2 percent to \$108.78. <O/R>

MSCI's broadest index of Asia-Pacific shares outside

Japan .MIAPJ0000PUS was up 0.07 percent after falling to a near two-week low on Friday when House of Representatives Speaker John Boehner failed to gain support for a tax plan, raising fears the US may not be able to avert the "fiscal cliff" of automatic spending cuts and tax increases set to start on 1 January.

The White House on Friday tried to rescue stalled talks but there was little headway as lawmakers and President Barack Obama abandoned Washington for Christmas.

Many market players

still expect both sides to reach a compromise before the year-end deadline but heightening tensions were likely to stifle trade already slowed by the holidays.

US Treasuries gained a safety bid on Friday from fiscal cliff worries, which put many investors on edge and drove down global equities markets, the euro and oil futures. Australian shares .AXJO were up 0.2 percent but trade was extremely thin, with Monday's session shortened ahead of the two-day Christmas holiday and many players already away.

Reuters

Tata Motors goes back to drawing board at stalled Pimpri unit

Business

PIMPRI, 24 Dec—Deep in Tata Motors' largest factory, engineers don 3D glasses to play with car designs and prototypes projected from a 10-metre wide computer screen. Their quest? The automaker's next blockbuster car model.

The research and development team's task is a pressing one. As they work, sections of conveyor belt and welding stations lay silent at the Pimpri factory and lines of white and silver Indica hatchbacks gather dust along

service roads outside.

Tata, a global name since it bought Jaguar Land Rover in 2008, is losing traction at home as underwhelming product tweaks, heavy discounts and slumping capacity utilisation mark a painful 18 months for its passenger division.

Not since the 2008 Nano, the world's cheapest car, has Tata unveiled a head-turning passenger vehicle, and not since the Indica's launch in 1998 has it set the Indian market alight. Now,

the company is heading back to the drawing board.

More money and more attention is going to the passenger vehicle unit as the company ramps up R&D, ditches a failed product strategy and prepares to enter the mini SUV segment and reboot the so-far underwhelming Nano.

"We have done something very innovative that will allow us to respond more positively," said Tim Leverton, Tata Motors' head of research and development. "You'll see, over the next 12-18 months onwards, a fireworks of output."

Tata will pour more than 75 billion rupees into the passenger vehicle business over the next five years. Less than 30 percent of that has been earmarked for facilities or upgrading hardware, leaving the rest for new products.

"The business is understanding that's a heavy investment to make," Leverton said. "But it needs to be made."

Reuters



An engineer explains functions at a 3D design lab at Tata Motors plant in Pimpri, 160 km (99 miles) southeast of Mumbai, on 14 Dec, 2012.—REUTERS

WORLD

Merkel ally Schavan rejects plagiarism charges

BERLIN, 24 Dec—A close ally of German Chancellor Angela Merkel on Sunday rejected allegations of plagiarism in her 1980 doctoral thesis and said she wanted to stay in the cabinet beyond September's election.

The accusations are similar to those that last year brought down Merkel's Defence Minister and heir-apparent, Karl-Theodor zu Guttenberg, but could prove more damaging for the government only nine months before an election.

A University of Duesseldorf faculty board voted unanimously last week for a full inquiry into Education Minister Annette Schavan after a smaller panel recommended taking away her PhD in education because it said parts of the thesis had been copied. A university-level panel will decide on the request on 22 January.

Schavan, 57, told the newspaper *Die Welt* she had written her thesis with a clear

conscience in 1980. "That's why I strongly reject these accusations," she added. "I want to stay on as a minister beyond next year's election."

As Schavan is education minister, the case is a direct threat to her credibility, and opposition leaders have called on Schavan to resign.

Merkel has said Schavan has her confidence but on Sunday a coalition ally, Martin Neumann of the Free

Democrats (FDP), also urged Schavan to consider stepping down.

"The longer the process goes on, the more difficult it will be for both sides," Neumann told the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Sonntagszeitung* newspaper. "If she didn't apply scientific standards to her work, she has to accept the consequences."

The newspaper said she had herself raised the issue

of resigning with her party if she was stripped of her postgraduate degree, but she told the paper she was not concerned with hypothetical questions.

Schavan was among the first to condemn Guttenberg for plagiarising his PhD thesis, calling it "shameful".

Merkel at first strongly defended Guttenberg, a rising star in her government and the most popular conservative politician in decades, before withdrawing her support.

Schavan's thesis is entitled "People and Conscience - Studies on the conditions, necessity and requirements for formation of conscience today".

The allegations of plagiarism have dogged her since May and she asked the university to examine them. A report by its philosophy faculty found indications of a "plagiaristic approach" on 60 of the 351 pages, the magazine *Der Spiegel* reported.—Reuters



German Education Minister Annette Schavan (L) talks with Chancellor Angela Merkel during a session of the Bundestag, the German lower house of parliament, in Berlin on 18 Oct, 2012.—REUTERS

Half of Greeks seek job abroad due to debt crisis

ATHENS, 24 Dec— One out of two Greeks of working age seek job abroad due to the debt crisis which has hit Greece hard over the past three years, according to a survey on employment trends which was released in Athens this week.

Some 49 percent of the some 400 participants in the survey conducted by Human Resources firm Adecco, said

that they are already looking for work positions abroad.

Four out of ten of them are jobless (1/3 for more than two years), while the majority (61 percent) currently work, but fear dismissal in the near future. In 2012, Greece posted record high jobless of over 25 percent and Greek state officials and international lenders verify forecasts of

labour unions for further increase in unemployment rates in 2013, before recovery kicks in.

Four out of ten of respondents turn their focus abroad, because they cannot find employment in Greece, and three out of ten because of recession and pessimism over the future. A large majority of 70 percent said that they would

prefer a job position within the European Union.

One in two is willing to move to "developed" countries outside Europe, such as the US and Australia, while one in ten focuses in nearby developing economies of the Middle East.

The most important factor which keeps Greeks in struggling is the sentimental attachment to their country, in particular in cases when they have to look after a vulnerable family member, such as child or elderly parents.—Xinhua

Algeria hails agreement "new milestone" in solving Mali crisis

ALGIERS, 24 Dec—The Algerian Foreign Minister Mourad Medelci said here on Sunday the agreement between the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNL) and the armed group Ansar Dine is "a new milestone" on the process of political settlement for the crisis in Mali, *APS news agency* reported.

"The signing of this agreement is the result of collective effort and a very encouraging step in the path of political settlement for the

crisis," *APS* quoted Medelci as saying on the sidelines of the meeting he had with visiting Secretary General for the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), Fathallah Sijilmassi.

In addition, the Algerian diplomat urged to take "additional measures" in a bid to reach a solution for the crisis hitting Mali. On Friday, Malian Tuareg rebel groups Ansar Dine and MNL signed in Algiers a joint statement after a meeting held under the auspices of Algeria, as they said they are committed to

"abstaining from any action prone to trigger confrontations or any form of hostility in the area they control."

The two sides said they will work to secure the area under their control and try to help setting free all hostages detained there.

On Thursday, the UN Security Council agreed to authorize an African-led international military intervention to support Mali in its fight against terrorists and armed rebel groups in the north of the country.—Xinhua



Two men close their shop at the Christmas market on the Champs-Elysees avenue in Paris, France on 23 Dec, 2012. XINHUA



Chinese Vice Premier Hui Liangyu (L) and Ma Kai (R), a member of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, attend the central rural work conference held in Beijing, capital of China, on 21-22 Dec, 2012. XINHUA

US Navy SEAL dead in Afghanistan in reported suicide

WASHINGTON, 24 Dec—A senior member of the US Navy's elite SEAL unit has died in Afghanistan, the Defence Department said on Sunday, and media reports said the death was a possible suicide.

Commander Job Price, 42, of Pottstown, Pennsylvania, died on Saturday of a non-combat related injury in central Afghanistan's Uruzgan Province, the Pentagon said in a statement. "This incident is currently under investigation," it said.

Price was assigned to a Naval Special Warfare unit in Virginia Beach, Virginia, the statement said.

NBC News and CNN quoted unnamed military officials as saying that the death was being looked at as a possible suicide.

Lieutenant David Lloyd,

a spokesman for Naval Special Warfare Group Two, which comprises the four SEAL teams on the US East Coast, declined to comment on the cause of death, saying it was under investigation.

Price was married and had a daughter. He had been a naval officer since May 1993, Lloyd said.

Captain Robert Smith, the Group Two commander, said in a statement: "The Naval Special Warfare family is deeply saddened by the loss of our teammate. We extend our condolences, thoughts and prayers to the family, friends, and NSW community during this time of grieving."

"As we mourn the loss and honour the memory of our fallen teammate, those he served with will continue to carry out the mission."

Reuters

45 pct of Israelis support unilateral withdrawal in West Bank

JERUSALEM, 24 Dec— Nearly half of Israelis support a unilateral withdrawal from the Palestinian territories in the West Bank, according to a new poll published by the *Jerusalem Post* on Sunday.

The poll was conducted by the Rafi Smith institution in the Tel Aviv University for the Blue and White Future movement and found that 45 percent of Israelis agree to the withdrawal based on the 1967 lines, as long as the big settlement blocs remain in Israeli hands.

The same figure stood on 38 percent in June, meaning a rise of seven percent among respondents.

76 percent of those polled supported the principle of compensating settlers' who agree to evacuate voluntarily. 80 percent of the respondents

sided with leaving soldiers present at the West bank in case a unilateral withdrawal occurs.

68 percent of the respondents also backed early preparations by the state to assimilate the settlers it plans to evacuate in the future back in Israeli territories.

Co-chairman of the Blue and White movement Gilad She told the *Jerusalem Post* he believes Israelis are coming to terms of what a future peace agreement with the Palestinian Authority might entail.

"It's the duty of a responsible government to promote the two-state solution based on the '67 lines as a matter of national security," she said.

"The status quo and the ineffective of the current government is leading to

the end of Zionism, as Israel would become a bi-national state with an Arab majority in the near future," he added.

In a poll released last week, which was also conducted by the Rafi Smith institute for the Blue and White Future Organization, it was revealed that 62 percent out of 500 representatives' sample of respondents supported the two-state solution as the best option for Israel.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu endorsed the two-state solution during his Bar Ilan speech from June 2009.

In an interview made two months ago to the Israeli Channel 2 news, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas said the Palestinians are striving for peace based on the two-state solution.—Xinhua

WORLD

NW China building fire caused by overheated stove

YANAN, SHAANXI, 24 Dec— An overheated stove was found to have caused the fire in a commercial building in northwest China's Shaanxi Province on Saturday, local authorities said Sunday.

Three people died and 21 others were injured in the fire which occurred

at about 4:30 am on Saturday, according to the Yan'an municipal government.

An initial investigation showed that the fire broke out from a stove, used by a construction team to keep the temperature for concrete pouring in their reinforce work for the 14-story World Trade

Building in downtown Yan'an on early Saturday morning, the government said. The worker who should take care of the smokeless coal stove, went out without asking for a leave. The overheated stove ignited quilts and cloth at the site, the government said.

Ten people of the con-

struction company were under police control, waiting for further investigation.

The three victims included a security guard of the building, a staff member of a restaurant and a hotel guest. The 21 injured people including a 7-year-old child are all in a stable condition, according to the government.—Xinhua



A girl plays with her father in a ski resort in Yinchuan City, capital of northwest China's Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, on 23 Dec, 2012.—XINHUA



A teacher organizes students on a school bus in Gaolan county, Lanzhou city of northwest China's Gansu province, on 21 Dec, 2012. According to local educational authorities, a total of 3,117 lines of school buses were put to use, providing service for more than 300,000 boarders of compulsory students.—XINHUA

Pakistan continuously faces massacre of suicide bombings in 2012

ISLAMABAD, 24 Dec— Pakistan has been continuously facing the massacre of the suicide bombings in which at least 306 people were killed and 559 others got injured in a total of 36 such attacks so far across the country during 2012, official statistics said.

According to the figures confirmed by the government officials on a number of occasions, around 44 suicide bombers carried out 36 attacks at different sites, killing 306 people including 244 civilians, followed by 37 personnel from police and 25 from security forces.

While among the people who got injured in such attacks, 468 or 83 percent were innocent civilians out

of the total 559, followed by police and security personnel.

In such attacks, Pakistani security departments lost 62 personnel, and out of which 37 were from police and 25 from different agencies working under Pakistan army. Regarding the injured people, at least 68 personnel belonged to police and 23 were from security forces.

Forty-four suicide bombers carried out 36 suicide attacks because in some strikes more than one attacker took part and all the human bombers were male. The statistics revealed that the northwestern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province (KPK) was the worst hit

province as it bore the highest number of attacks with 20, which killed 74 people and injured 197 others. But regarding highest number of casualties, Pakistan's northwestern tribal region comprises of seven federally administrated agencies embraced the maximum number of casualties of 123 with 155 injured in only eight attacks.

The southwestern province of Balochistan was the third most affected area as suicide bombers conducted five attacks, killing 36 people and injuring 118 others. In southern Sindh Province, nine people were killed and 35 got wounded in two suicide attacks.

Xinhua

Bolivian president in Cuba to visit Chavez

HAVANA, 24 Dec— Bolivian President Evo Morales arrived here on Sunday to visit Venezuelan leader Hugo Chavez, who is recovering from a cancer surgery in Cuba, the Cuban official daily reported. Morales will visit and give moral support to Chavez, if Chavez's condition was stable enough for visit, the

Bolivian authorities announced on Saturday.

During his 24-hour trip, Morales would also meet with Cuban leader Raul Castro and his elder brother and former leader Fidel Castro to discuss bilateral relations between Bolivia and Cuba.

Chavez, 58, was diagnosed with cancer 18

months ago and had a fourth round of surgery in Cuba's capital on 11 Dec.

Chavez is due to begin his second six-year presidential term on 10 Jan. Before leaving for Cuba, he named Vice President Nicolas Maduro to be his successor in case he could not complete his term.

Xinhua

Syrian girl asks Santa to bring "love" instead of gifts

DAMASCUS, 24 Dec— "Dear Santa, please do not bring gifts this Christmas, but bring clothes and blankets to the homeless children. I know that you can not bring security and stability, but could you please bring my people love pills from your magical land? All I want is for my old Syria to come back! Do you think it will?" Kinda, a young girl from the Syrian capital of Damascus, wrote on her Facebook page to Santa.

She wishes that the "love of the universe" would be contained in pills for Syrians to take in order to love each other and stop the fighting that has engulfed the country for 22 months and claimed the lives of tens of thousands.

With the upcoming of the Christmas, many Syrians expressed their wish on social networking sites. Some posted black humor; some were cynical and others expressed hearty wishes for Syria. A widely-shared

message was meant to give Santa some "advices" before he comes to Syria this Christmas.

"Santa, when you come this year, don't forget your ID card because we have too many checkpoints. And please don't wear your red robe because the blood here has reached people's knees and we now hate this color. But most importantly, you have to lose some weight because a lot of people here are starving, so it's not appropriate for you to come with your big belly hanging out." Another picture which has also swept the internet here is a portray of Santa dressed in military fatigues and holding a bag filled up with rifles.

Amid this gloomy atmosphere, Syrian Christians will not celebrate Christmas as they used to do, as the country is experiencing its worst ever crisis in decades. They decided to limit their celebrations to carols and charity bazaars.

Xinhua

Scottish First Minister urges cares about others at Christmas time

EDINBURGH, 24 Dec— Scottish First Minister Alex Salmond has called on Scots to think of others and care about those who may be facing hardship, loneliness or illness at Christmas time.

Delivering his Christmas message recorded earlier and published on Sunday, Salmond highlighted the values held by Scottish explorer and humanitarian David Livingstone as people around the world

prepare to celebrate the 200th anniversary of Livingstone's birth in March next year.

Livingstone's "deep sense of compassion" and "strong sense of solidarity", which Scotland still shares, were important ideals that Scots should all consider at Christmas time, the Scottish First Minister spoke at the Livingstone exhibition at the National Museum of Scotland.

Salmond stressed the

importance of education for Livingstone's growing up from humble origins to become famous across the world and reflected Livingstone as exemplifying many of the best characteristics of Scotland, "an internationalist outlook, an ambition to succeed, a passion for education; and, perhaps most of all, a strong sense of soli-

darity and a deep sense of compassion."

He noted that Scotland is using its renewable energy expertise to extend electricity provision across Malawi and has also established water projects to help communities affected by climate change through Scotland's climate justice fund.—Xinhua

Israeli police officer wounded in vehicular attack by Arab driver

JERUSALEM, 24 Dec— An Israeli border police officer in Jabal Mukabar station of Jerusalem was hit by an Israel-Arab taxi driver and sustained light wounds on Sunday, officials told Xinhua.

The middle-aged driver at first rammed a truck at the facility's entrance gate, and then repeatedly backed up to hit a border policeman who approached the vehicle, in what police are initially calling a nationally-motivated terror

attack.

"Another officer in the area fired several warning shots in the air," and three others opened fire at the car's wheels, lightly wounding the alleged assailant in the leg, police spokesman Mickey Rosenfeld told Xinhua.

"I lost it, I wanted to die, I wanted to hit the station," the driver, who lives in the vicinity, told police immediately after the incident, the area station chief told Army radio.—Xinhua

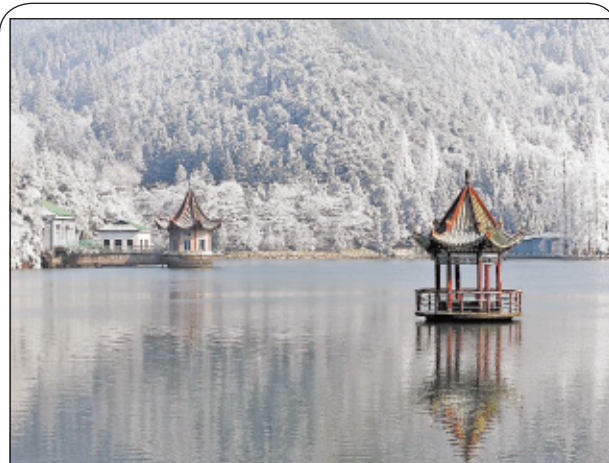


Photo taken on 23 Dec, 2012 shows the rime scenery at the Lushan Mountain scenic area in east China's Jiangxi Province.—XINHUA

NATIONAL

PERSPECTIVES

Tuesday, 25 December, 2012

When beautiful dreams come true

In making our Union peaceful and prosper, there are two ways — political stability and termination of all armed conflicts — both of which we can receive through national integration.

Here, national integration means that even though we may have differences in language, traditions and culture and customs we all know that we are one. We understand our common identity and common interest, and that is peace and prosperity in the Union. In fact, national integration is of vital importance in building a strong and prosperous Union.

So, the country has been taking necessary steps for ensuring all-inclusiveness in the political process, setting aside all differences and building a common ground to restore national integration.

In fact, no other factor is more important than the Union spirit in restoring national integration. Regardless of the differences, we are witnessing peace in eastern part and southeast of the country through preliminary peace agreements with national races armed groups. But we would like to see eternal peace for the socio-economic development of the entire 60 million people in the country.

Now we are in the ongoing reform process bringing positive changes in many areas of the country. But we need to know the aims and objectives of the change and the parts that need rapid change. Besides national goal is peace and stability and the rule of law and socio-economic development, which is also the people's desire.

In this context, the government is moving towards national integration. Compromises were made for all-inclusiveness in the drive for political stability and national development. Amnesties were also granted. In consequence, the nation sees peace, stability and unity to a greater degree at present.

As we all know, without national integration, we will always be haunted by nightmares, and with national integration every beautiful dream will come true.

General Soe Win receives NORINCO President

NAY PYI TAW, 24 Dec— Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief (Army) General Soe Win received President Mr Zhang Guoqing of China North Industries Corporation (NORINCO) of the People's Republic of China at Zeyathiri Hall here this afternoon.

Present on the occasion were Chief of Staff (Air)

Maj-Gen Khin Aung Myint, Deputy Minister for Defence Commodore Aung Thaw, Vice Adjutant-General Maj-Gen Tin Maung Win, Vice Quartermaster-General Brig-Gen Tin Tun Aye and senior military officers from Office of the Commander-in-Chief (Army), Chinese Ambassador to Myanmar Mr Li Junhua, Military Attaché Sr Col Xiong Shaowei and personnel of NORINCO.



They frankly discussed doing business. potentials for cooperation in MNA

General Soe Win and party pose for documentary photo with Chinese guests.—MNA



Course on conference management starts

NAY PYI TAW, 24 Dec— The inauguration ceremony of the course on conference management jointly conducted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Union

of Myanmar and the Foreign Service Institute of the Republic of India was held at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, here, this morning, with an opening address by U Thant Kyaw, Deputy

Minister for Foreign Affairs. Also present on the occasion were U Zin Yaw, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs and course instructors from India, responsible officials of the Department under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

and trainees. The two-week course covers International Treaties (Vienna Convention on Diplomatic/Consular Relations, UN (Privileges and Immunities) Act) and Conference Management. MNA

Directorate of State Lottery to select winners on 1 Jan

YANGON, 24 Dec— Directorate of State Lottery draws out numbers for its award packages for 288th time at its office in Kyauktada Township here on 1 January, 2013.

The number of awards

that range from K 150 million to K 50,000 is 25730. All the winning numbers will be selected on the day only, from 8 am to 4 pm.

The lottery is opened once every first day of a month.—MNA

Japan and France eye investment in Myanmar

YANGON, 24 Dec— President U Win Aung and party of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry held talks with a five-member delegation led by President Mr Masaharu Sumikawa of Hitachi Plant Technologies Ltd from Japan at UMFCCI Building on 18 December. Both sides held comprehensive discussions on making investment in Myanmar, Japan-Myanmar cooperation in implementing of Thilawa special economic zone, enhancement of economy

by opening Hitachi Yangon branch and investment conditions of Hitachi firms in Asia.

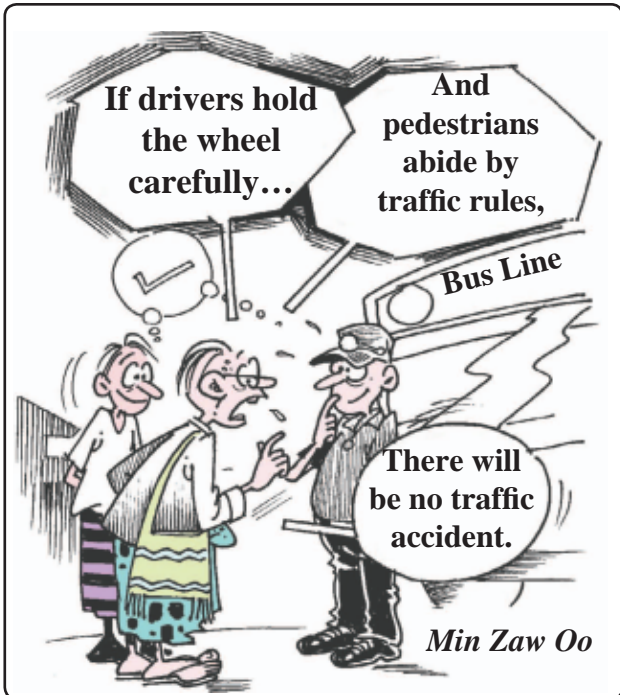
Similarly, UMFCCI Vice-Presidents U Zaw Min Win, U Aung Lwin and Dr Maung Maung Lay held discussions with Vietnam branch in charge Mr Aymeric Pons from France-based Rhone-Alpes Int'l Co Ltd and Economic Attaché Mr Dominique Causse of French Embassy at the same venue on 21 December on cooperation for Myanmar-France economic growth and staging exhibitions in Myanmar.—MNA

Poem

Our kin our strength

- * As evil like a tiger
Villainous and rough
Cruel and indecent
Encroaching on others
- * Our king our ruler
Dethroned by this evil
Enslaving our people
Once in history it was
- * With unyielding spirit
Showed Myanmar their courage
Ever ready to sacrifice
For victory and independence
- * A bitter memory
So deep in our hearts
Bullying colonialist tiger
Drove out we all
- * Always faithful to country
Our territory our life
Value and cherish
Our inheritance it is
- * Long live our country
We safeguard her
Our kin is our strength
With unity and awareness

Yenatha Maung Kyaw Nyunt
Trs:TMT



LOCAL NEWS

Victorious flag handed over to sports team

MYITKYINA, 24 Dec—A ceremony to hand over victorious flag to the sports team that will take part in the Inter-Basic Education Sports Festival was held at the city hall in Myitkyina on 16 December.

On the occasion, Chief Minister of Kachin State U La John Ngan Hsai made a speech.

Leader of the sports team Deputy Director U Kyaw Aye of Kachin State Education Department reported on participations of the teams in the festival.

The Chief Minister presented K 1.5 million donated by Kachin State Government to the sports team, and Chairperson of Kachin State Women's Affairs Organization Daw Mya Nu, K 100,000 of the



organization to the leader of the sports team.

Later, the Chief Minister handed over the flag to the sports team.

Myanma Alinn

Milk, refreshment fed to students in Mudon

MUDON, 24 Dec—Ah Mann Thit youth group which is one of the philanthropic organizations in Mudon Township of Mon State fed 138 students of Ward Basic Education Primary School in Mudon milk and refreshments and distributed exercise books to them.

On 29 June, the group was formed with 15 volunteer youths with the aim of providing cash assistance to needy schoolchildren of the town. Since its establishment, the group has been saving K 1000 per each member monthly. So far, the number of group has increased to 210. The fund of the group is spent on providing needy students in the opening period of school in June and

feeding refreshment to the students at basic education schools in the township in rotation.

School stationery were donated with the separate fund from wellwishers, not from the main fund. The monthly and yearly financial statements were presented to the wellwishers and members regularly. The wellwisher has fed refreshment to the students for the eighth time.

Myanma Alinn

Development of libraries discussed

MAGWAY, 24 Dec—A coordination meeting of Fund-raising Supervisory Committee for Establishment of Village Self-reliant Libraries was held at the library of Magway District Information and Public Relations Department on 15 December.

The Head of Magway Region IPRD Assistant Director explained opening of savings books for development village libraries in the region. Members of the committee discussed future tasks for improvement of the libraries.—*Myanma Alinn*



Workers preparing lawns of KBZ Stadium in Taunggyi on 15 December to get ready for football matches of the MNL 2013.—*MYANMA ALINN*

Chief Minister's Cup U-19 Football Tournery wraps up

NAY PYI TAW, 24 Dec—The final match of the Ayeyawady Region Chief Minister's Cup U-19 Football Tournament was held at Koethin Stadium in Patheingyi on 14 December.

Officials presented cash awards and medals to best player award winners, joint third prize to Pyapon Zone and Myaungmya Zone teams, second prize to Patheingyi Zone-1. Ayeyawady Region Minister for Security and

Workers make vigorous efforts in repairing rail tracks

MANDALAY, 24 Dec—Under the instructions of the Deputy Minister for Rail Transportation, Deputy General Manager (Civil) U Than Htwe of Myanmar Railways supervises repairing of rail tracks on Mandalay-Myitkyina railroad near Chatgyi Station in Kanbalu Township of Sagaing Region daily.

"We are repairing some railroad works on the section for smooth rail transportation. Railway workers are repairing road sections along 220 miles in length of Mandalay-Myitkyina railroad of No 2 Division. There are 36 stations along the railroad. We facilitated 11000 concrete sleepers

at 22 stations this year. Moreover, we are carrying out graveling works at the rail tracks with the use of cargos. Most recently, we are upgrading the rail tracks at the entrance and exit of the Chatgyi Station and roads in the yard. Division 2 of workers will continue repairing works of railroads," said Assistant Engineer U Aung Tun (Kawlin) of Division 2.

Officers and workers are making vigorous efforts in repairing works of rail tracks near Chatgyi Station systematically.

"The entrance and exit of Chatgyi Station are being facilitated with 26183 concrete sleepers and 341 suds of gravel. We renovate



line clearing point and traffic in addition to rail tracks and frames in accord with the instructions. We all are participate in the works with genuine goodwill for convenience of people," he continued.

Up to now, altogether 80 workers and respective section of Myanmar Railways are emphasizing the upgrading and repairing of rail tracks along Mandalay-Myitkyina railroad.

Myanma Alinn

Horizon Cup Table Tennis Tournery held

YANGON, 24 Dec—Jointly organized by Myanmar Table Tennis Federation and Horizon education service, the Horizon Cup Table Tennis Tournament was held on 15 and 16 December.

Officials of Myanmar Tennis Federation and Horizon gave prizes to the winners. Over 70 players participated in the tournament at the Horizon hall in Shukhintha Road in

Thakayta Township. The tournament was categorized into amateur, above 45, first and second classes.

After the competitions, Win Khaing Oo secured the first prize in the amateur level, followed by Aung Maw in the second and Thein Htaik in the third. In the first class event, Aung Htut stood first, Kyaw Myint Naing the second and Kyi Myint the third.—*Myanma Alinn*



Dawei Traditional Costume Contest to produce pageant ladies

DAWEI, 24 Dec—The Dawei Traditional Costume Contest will be held at the city hall in Dawei of Taninthayi Region from 28 to 30 December for enabling local youths to adore and value traditional costumes national races.

The contest will be sponsored by Child Development Programme.

First, second and third in addition to consolation prizes will be awarded to the winners.

Those wishing to take part in the contest may contact ALC Center, Bogyoke Road in West Ward of Dawei or dial 059-23074.

Myanma Alinn

Gulf Arab indices show exhaustion

DUBAI, 24 Dec — Most equity market measures in the Gulf fell, while the rest rose slightly on Sunday as the regional year-end rally lost steam and as Western markets will trade only sporadically during the week due to Christmas holidays.

For the umpteenth time, the Kuwait market index failed to crack the resistance level at 6,000 points, as the gauge slipped for the second session straight, closing down 0.34 percent at 5,963.11 points. Nevertheless, the northern Gulf state's market measure has chances to end in the green over the year, as it advanced by 2.56 percent since 1 January.

In Riyadh, the Tadawul All-Share Index finished 0.18 percent lower at 6,890.31

points. The gauge gained over 5.6 percent since 1 December, as bullish economic prospects for the kingdom for 2013 lifted the gauge which added 7.36 percent year to date. Shares of Saudi British Bank (SABB) advanced 0.32 percent, ending at 31.50 Saudi riyal (8.19 US dollars).

Earlier in the day, SABB said that its board of directors recommended to the bank's general meeting the payment of annual cash dividends for 2012 of one billion Saudi riyal (270 million dollars) at the rate of 0.92 Saudi riyal (0.25 dollar) per share. Elsewhere in the region, the Muscat bourse MSM finished insignificantly higher at 5,700 points.

In Dubai, the FTSE NASDAQ Dubai UAE 20

Index closed at 1803.83, down 0.08 percent from the previous close. The gauge of the Mideast's only international market was mainly dragged down by global port operator DP World which plummeted 3.83 percent to 11.54 dollars.

However, local stock markets in the sheikhdoms of Dubai and Abu Dhabi, both part of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), bucked the sluggish regional trend by gaining 0.35 percent and 0.45 percent, respectively. At the Dubai market DFM, shares of Ajmanbank jumped four percent to hit 1.30 Dirham (0.35 dollar). Year to date, Ajmanbank, a lender which fully complies with Islamic law, surged by almost 52 percent.—Xinhua

Prince William, Kate to spend Christmas Day with Kate's parents

LONDON, 24 Dec — Prince William and his pregnant wife Kate are going to spend this year's Christmas Day with Kate's parents, local media reported on Saturday.

The decision will help the couple avoid the public eye and allow Kate to rest as she continues to battle acute morning sickness, the *Sky News* reported, adding that the move was made with the approval of the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh.

Kate's parents Carole and Michael Middleton lived in the village of Bucklebury, about 50 miles (80 kilometres) west of London.

Members of the British royal family usually spend Christmas at Sandringham, a private property of Queen Elizabeth in eastern England, and stay until February, following a custom set by the Queen's father and grandfather.

Kate and William spent Christmas at Sandringham last year, and are expected to visit there for part of this Christmas holiday.

Kate spent four days in hospital earlier this month with an acute morning sickness. A nurse at the hospital later committed suicide after not recognizing a hoax call from two Australian DJs, who disguised themselves as Queen and Prince Charles.

Xinhua



People visit a flower show at the Taipei Expo Park in Taipei, southeast China's Taiwan. The show will last till on January, 2013.—XINHUA

Greece to lower food catering VAT to boost tourism

ATHENS, 24 Dec — The Greek government intends to lower the value-added tax in food catering in 2013 as part of efforts to tackle recession and return to recovery, luring more tourists to Greece, Greek Tourism Minister Olga Kefalogianni said on the weekend.

Greece plans to reduce the VAT from the current 23 percent to most likely 13 percent, Kefalogianni told the Greek national broadcaster NET. The aim is to reverse the increasing shrinking of the sector which fuels unemployment and

recession over the past two years and support a wider plan to boost the Greek tourism industry, a key motor in efforts to pull the debt laden country out of the current crisis and the brink of default. During 2012, revenues in food catering dropped by about 40 percent from 3 billion euros to 1.8 billion euros, according to estimates. Only in Athens, 4,000 businesses closed down and some 30,000 job positions were lost, as unemployment rates nationwide hit record highs above 25 percent.

Turkey eases veto on NATO's partnership with Israel

ANKARA, 24 Dec — Turkey partially revoked its veto on Israel's joining partnership programs within NATO, allowing the Jewish country to participate in the alliance's cooperation mechanisms but excluding joint military exercises, Turkey's daily *Hurriyet* reported on Sunday.

NATO, in return for Ankara's reconciliation, allowed similar partnership

mechanisms with Tunisia, Jordan, Egypt and countries in the Balkans for 2013, a Turkish diplomat told *Xinhua* on Sunday.

Turkey has been against Israel's participation in NATO's partnership programmes after the Jewish country killed nine Turks in a raid on Mavi Marmara aid ship, which tried to break the blockade on Gaza in 2010.

The Turkish government



File photo taken in December 2012 shows Xi Jinping has a lunch with soldiers during his inspection to the Guangzhou Military Region in south China.

XINHUA

China company to revitalize Serbian railways

BELGRADE, 24 Dec — "SERBIA has a lot of trust in Chinese construction companies, and I am sure that they will do this job well" said Milutin Mrkonjic, Serbian Minister of Transport on Saturday after signing a memorandum of understanding with Beijing based Chinese Construction Communication Company (CCCC) International.

This document stipulates participation of Chinese construction giant in reconstruction of Serbian railways, with priority on Pan European Transport Corridor 10, from Subotica to Novi Sad in the North of Serbia, and from Nish to Dimitrovgrad in the South East of the country, same as revitalization of 476 kilometres long railway connecting Serbia and Montenegro from Belgrade

to Adriatic Port of Bar.

"The parties will try to joint efforts to provide the necessary financial resources, through export credit or other type of funding, for projects in the field of railway infrastructure in Serbia," according to the document. Minister Mrkonjic said that Chinese construction companies have passed the test in Serbia by progress made in building the bridge over Danube in Belgrade—a job done by China Road and Bridge Corporation (CRBC) a subsidiary of CCCC International, according to *Tanjug* news agency.

Director of CCCC for Europe and Central Asia Hu Bin said that their Company is very much interested in winning the job on railway part of Pan European Transport

Corridor 10 through Serbia, same as other railway lines.

"We are very grateful to Minister Mrkonjic for giving us a chance to do the rehabilitation and upgrading of Serbian railways on Corridor 10, and other railway lines which are, we think, are going to play a great role in economic and social development of this region and Serbian nation" said Hu Bin. Milan Maksimovic, in charge of infrastructure on Serbian Railway said there is keen interest on their side for participation of Chinese companies on work on railway Corridor 10 and specially regarding South ring railway around Belgrade, from Beli Potok, to Vinca and Pancevo which new Bridge over Danube build by CRBC is integral part of.—Xinhua

UAE warns citizens not to travel to Lebanon

DUBAI, 24 Dec — The United Arab Emirates' (UAE) ministry of foreign affairs warned its citizens not to visit Lebanon until further notice, due to the spillover of ongoing violence from Syria into Lebanon, local news agency *WAM* reported on Sunday. As the travel season in the Gulf state UAE peaks around the end of year, Lebanon has been a popular destination for Emiratis for decades.

However, the 21-month unrest in Syria poses a threat to neighbouring countries,

including Lebanon. In May, the UAE's ministry of foreign affairs already issued a travel warning for Lebanon. While flights from Dubai and Abu Dhabi to Lebanon's Capital Beirut have not been suspended, the UAE's largest carrier Emirates Airline suspended flights to Syria's capital Damascus on 29 November due to violent clashes between government troops and rebel forces. The Abu Dhabi-based airline Etihad Airways ceased to fly to Damascus on 30 August.

Xinhua



Children experience the multimedia reading-room of a newly completed children's library in Zhengzhou, capital of central China's Henan Province, on 22 Dec, 2012. Henan Children's Library, the first provincial children's library built with social donation in China, was completed on Saturday.—XINHUA

A Good Man is Hard to Find

REGIONAL

Garment market catches fire in Kabul, inflicting huge damage

Afghan fire fighters work at a market where a fire broke out in Kabul, Afghanistan on 23 Dec, 2012.—XINHUA



KABUL, 24 Dec—Nasiri Market caught fire in Afghan capital Kabul Saturday night, causing millions of US dollar damages to the shopkeepers, police said on Sunday.

The surprising incident was apparently caused by carelessness, according to police.

“In the wee hours of Sunday the Nasiri Market in the first precinct of Kabul caught fire resultantly scores of shops turned to ashes,” Kabul Police said in a statement released here in the evening.

The fire has been extinguished by the fire fighters, but still light flame of fire is seen in the underground portion of the market, the statement admitted.

Meantime, a police officer at the site of incident told *Xinhua* that more than 600 shops had turned to ashes.

However, he declined to give his name, saying authorized officials would brief the media after investigation.

The incident, according to police, took place at 00:30 am local time in Nasiri Market with hundreds of garment shops, also a popular business in the city.

“I am lucky I could only save my 90,000 US dollars cash from my safe in my shop early this morning but all of my goods are burnt as you see,” a shop owner Sakhi Mohammad told *Xinhua* near the scene.

Another shopkeeper

said that the fire had devoured goods and cash worth 250,000 US dollars.

In the war-torn Afghanistan where security is loose and banking system is not so advanced and secure, many people choose to keep their cash in foreign banks or circulate in business.

“The damages could be millions of dollars,”

Mohammad said, adding hundreds of shops around the area escaped the fire as the fire fighters were working hard to bring the situation under the control.

At least 20 people were killed and 183 others were seriously injured in two separate deadly fires in Kabul in July this year.

Xinhua

Fire hits Toyota factory near Bangkok

BANGKOK, 24 Dec—Oil tanks exploded and caught fire in a Toyota factory in the outskirts of Bangkok on Sunday night, local media reported.

Some buildings in the factory were partially damaged and residents nearby have been evacuated, the reports said.

Police said the fire will be put under control before midnight. A dozen of fire trucks have been sent to the scene.

This is one of the production bases of the Japanese auto-maker in Asia and the Pacific. The loss is estimated at 100 million baht (about 3.3 million US dollars), according to the reports.—*Xinhua*



A woman walks against the wind on the Caobao Road in east China's Shanghai, on 23 Dec, 2012. A severe cold wave is sweeping most parts of China, with temperatures dropping by around 10 degrees Celsius in some areas. The local meteorological authority issued an alert for the cold wave on Sunday.

XINHUA

Fog causes flights in and out of Wellington cancelled or delayed

WELLINGTON, 24 Dec — All flights in and out of New Zealand capital of Wellington have been indefinitely delayed or cancelled due to fog on Sunday.

Fog started to roll in from the south of the city early on Sunday afternoon and is currently blanketing the city.

Air New Zealand has now cancelled all flights to

and from Wellington for the rest of the day due to fog.

Air New Zealand said flights are expected to resume at 9 am on Monday.

The airline said it is investigating ways to provide additional capacity into Wellington to accommodate passengers who missed their flights on Sunday.

Many Jetstar flights, and international flights, have also been cancelled or

delayed.

Jetstar cancelled four flights to Auckland and Christchurch, but was hopeful the fog would lift later Sunday. Virgin Australia also cancelled its international flights.

Wellington Airport is advising anyone due to fly into or out of the capital on Sunday to check its website for delays or cancellations.

Xinhua

Foreign cargo crew reported missing off N Philippines

MANILA, 24 Dec—The Philippine Coast Guards are searching for 17 foreign missing seafarers who have abandoned a distressed Korean vessel off northern Philippine Province of Batanes, the Coast Guard said on Sunday.

The Coast Guard said the missing crew included 11 Myanmar nationals and 6 Koreans, who abandoned their vessel at about 165 nautical miles east of Batan

Island in Batanes in Northern Luzon.

Immediately upon receiving the distress alert from the MRCC Korean Coast Guard on Saturday, the Coast Guard units in Northern Luzon and Batanes made joint efforts for rescue operation.

The search and rescue are continuing at sea areas where the vessel was abandoned.

Xinhua

S Korean president-elect's planned policy may boost social conflict

SEOUL, 24 Dec — South Korea's president-elect Park Geun-hye's planned socio-economic policy may boost social conflicts in Seoul due to the expected conflicts among various parties interested, a local think tank said on Sunday.

According to a report by the Hyundai Research Institute, Park's presidential election pledges related to the socio-economic policy included an increase in social welfare spending, high-quality job creation and fair trade regulation on big companies.

The growing social spending would require the government to find a way of financing such as taxation, but it may cause conflicts among various parties concerned, the think tank said.

During the presidential campaign, Park pledged to reduce tax exemptions,

impose taxes on financial income and scale down the public business projects in a bid to finance welfare spending.

The pledge to add high-wage paying, high-quality jobs would cause conflicts between the management and the labour union as it would raise labour costs for companies, the report said, noting that excessive regulation on large firms may weaken corporate investment.

However, the think tank noted that Park became the first female president in Seoul to garner more than half of all votes since democratic elections were introduced in 1987, saying that if her pledges are implemented successfully, South Korea can become a fair society where growth and efficiency exist together.

Xinhua



Members of the "Laughter Yoga" club participate in an event called "Christmas Smile" near the Hoan Kiem Lake in Hanoi, Vietnam, on 23 Dec, 2012.—XINHUA

Six patients die due to norovirus at southwestern Japanese hospital

OSAKA, 24 Dec—Six elder patients have died of gastroenteritis after a norovirus outbreak at a hospital in Miyazaki Prefecture, southwestern Japan, *Kyodo News* reported on Sunday.

The victims—all male patients aged between 78 and 88—were among 44 patients and staff who exhibited the virus-caused gastroenteritis symptoms of vomiting and diarrhea at the hospital in Nichinan, Miyazaki Prefecture, the report said, quoting hospital officials.

Shigekazu Miyaji, the hospital's director, apologized for the hospital's delay in reporting about the norovirus outbreak, saying

it was not initially thought the cause was norovirus.

The hospital began to suspect norovirus when the number of patients rose sharply from four to 16 on 16 December and subsequently reported the cases to the prefecture.

As norovirus outbreaks were also found in many other places recently, and Japan's health ministry has urged local governments throughout the country to pay attention to the norovirus epidemic.

The number of persons infected in Japan is coming close to the level in 2006, when a record-high number was seen, the report said.

Xinhua



Photo taken on 23 Dec, 2012 shows the night scene of the Harbin Ice and Snow World in Harbin, capital of northeast China's Heilongjiang Province. The 14th Harbin Ice and Snow World will open to the public on 5 Jan, 2013.

XINHUA

MYANMAR VISA ON ARRIVAL			
Types of Visa	VISA Fee	Service Fee	Duration
BUSINESS VISA	50	40	70 days
ENTRY VISA (Meetings / Workshops / Events)	40	40	28 days
TOURIST VISA	30	40	28 days

Check eligibility for Visa on Arrival at: travel.visa@gmail.com MYANMARVISA.com

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV DIBENA WIN VOY NO (156)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV DIBENA WIN VOY NO (156) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 25.12.2012 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of S.P.W (3) where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

**SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S PHULSAWAT SHIPPING
CO. LTD.**

Phone No: 256916/256919/256921

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV SINGAPORE BRIDGE VOY NO (029)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV SINGAPORE BRIDGE VOY NO (029) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 25.12.2012 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of A.W.P.T where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

**SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S SAMUDERA SHIPPING
LINES**

Phone No: 256908/378316/376797

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV EVER ABLE VOY NO (329N)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV EVER ABLE VOY NO (329N) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 25.12.2012 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of H.P.T where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

**SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S EVER GREEN SHIPPING**
Phone No: 256908/378316/376797

Happy 29th Anniversary

Dear my beloved Mom 'Phyu' and Dad 'Ko', happy anniversary and appreciate you for loving, sharing, caring and enjoying all these years together and I hope and wish for both of you always healthier, wealthier and happier than ever and together, always rock on.

**Your beloved son
Pho Ther (Guardians)**

Name Addition
Instead of Ye Htut Aung (12/Ta Ma Na (N) 009379), please call me Haji Mohammed Akbar (a) Ye Htut Aung.

Seven killed in coal mine blast in NW Pakistan

ISLAMABAD, 24 Dec—At least seven people were killed and some others injured in a coal mine blast in northwest region of Pakistan, local media reported on Monday morning.

Xinhua

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV GLORY OCEAN VOY NO (-)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV GLORY OCEAN VOY NO (-) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 25.12.2012 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T.T where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

**SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S OGI OCEANGATE
TRANSPORTATION CO. LTD.**

Phone No: 256924/256914

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV DYNAMIC OCEAN 18 VOY NO (-)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV DYNAMIC OCEAN 18 VOY NO (-) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 26.12.2012 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of S.P.W (5) where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

**SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S G LINK EXPRESS
CO. LTD.**

Phone No: 256924/256914

Syria's war-battered pound floats on rebel funds



A cashier counts Syrian currency notes in Amman on 6 Dec, 2011.—REUTERS

AMMAN, 24 Dec—In Syria's eastern town of Deir al-Zor, a rebel commander flush with cash was swapping his dollars for Syrian pounds to pay fighters battling President Bashar al-Assad's forces.

Money changers said that influx of foreign currency earlier this month helped push the pound's black market rate in the impoverished town up by at least 10 percent.

Hundreds of kilometers away in Damascus, panicked Syrians bracing for more violence sold pounds for dollars, driving the pound, which has lost half its value since the anti-Assad uprising erupted in March last year, the other way.

The events at opposite ends of the country illustrate the contrasting pressures on a currency whose sharp decline has been cushioned by factors including central bank intervention, flows of cash from Assad's friends and foes abroad, and even long term hopes for a wave of foreign investment if Assad were to fall. By comparison, Iran, Assad's staunchest regional ally, has seen its own currency fall more sharply than Syria's,

losing about two-thirds of its value since June 2011 because of Western sanctions imposed over Tehran's disputed nuclear programme. Damascus-based currency dealer Abdullah Abu Saloum, who also has an office in Deir al-Zor, said the rebel fighter's cash was one of many anomalies affecting Syria's foreign exchange market.

"There was a large quantity of dollars that were offered for sale at an attractive price," he said, adding ruefully that he was not able to capitalize on the opportunity because the ongoing violence, which has killed more than 40,000 people, prevented him transferring pounds from Damascus to Deir al-Zor.

"When problems grow, people decide to buy dollars, not sell dollars, but this is what Syria's conflict is producing — all types of distortions and contradictions."

The pound is trading at 94 to the dollar on the black market compared to 48 before the uprising - a steep fall but less calamitous than might be expected given the devastating loss of state revenues and long term damage wrought by the conflict.—Reuters

A boy, injured in a bomb blast waits for treatment at a hospital in Peshawar on 22 Dec, 2012. Taleban Islamic militants bombed a political rally in Pakistan's northern city of Peshawar on Saturday, killing nine people including a provincial minister, officials said, the latest in a string of high-profile attacks.—REUTERS



ENTERTAINMENT

Halle Berry to celebrate a French Christmas with Olivier Martinez

LONDON, 24 Dec— Halle Berry is celebrating Christmas in France with Olivier Martinez.

The *Cloud Atlas* star—who recently resolved her custody battle with her daughter Nahla’s father Gabriel Aubry—was spotted arriving with her French fiancé at Los Angeles International airport without the four-year-old child where they caught a

46-year-old actress is eager to celebrate a low key holiday following Olivier’s highly publicised physical fight with Canadian model Gabriel, 36, on Thanksgiving morning last month.

The insider also revealed that while Nahla is going to spend a few days with her father, she will fly to France to join her mother and Olivier with her nanny in a few days time.

Halle allegedly wanted to move with her daughter to France because her actor fiancé Olivier

increased tension between her and Gabriel before they came to an amicable agreement after his fight with Olivier, 46.

A source previously said: “The main reason that Halle wanted to uproot Nahla from Southern California, where her father, Gabriel Aubry, currently lives, is because Olivier doesn’t want America to be his primary residence anymore.”



Halle Berry and Olivier Martinez



transatlantic flight to Paris. A source told gossip website TMZ.com that the

Martinez wants to leave the US but a judge blocked her bid to relocate, which

“Olivier’s family and friends all live in France and he is desperate to move back there. Yes, Halle did like the fact that France has strict privacy laws that govern the press, but that wasn’t the reason for the proposed move. The judge overseeing the custody dispute between Halle and Gabe didn’t think it was in Nahla’s best interest for her to be moved halfway around the world to a foreign country, mainly because contact with her father would have drastically cut.” —PTI

Singer Travis pleads not guilty to assault

SAN ANTONIO, 24 Dec— Country singer Randy Travis pleaded not guilty to misdemeanor assault in a municipal courtroom in the Dallas suburb of Plano on Friday, his lawyer said.

Lawyer Peter A Schulte told Reuters his client is “absolutely not guilty of this crime.”

Police say Travis assaulted a man in a church parking lot in Plano in August while attempting to intervene in a disagreement between a woman he was with and the woman’s estranged husband.

“He was actually being a good Samaritan at the time, stepping in to save two women from being assaulted,” Schulte said. He said the woman Travis was with and his daughter were being harassed by two men.

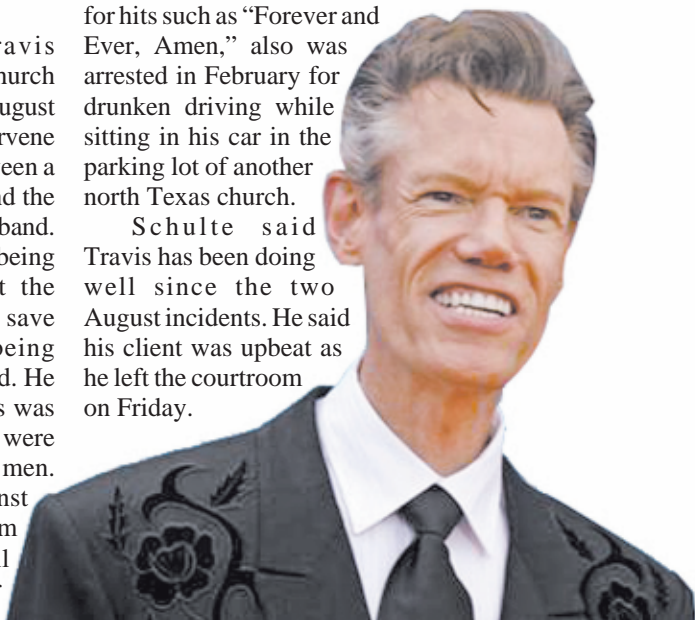
The charge against Travis carries a maximum \$500 fine and no jail time. The case is set for trial on 11 March.

The altercation occurred during a bad stretch for the 53-year-old Grammy winner. Earlier in August, Travis was arrested on suspicion of drunken driving

after he was found lying naked near his wrecked car along a north Texas highway. He also was accused of threatening to shoot and kill the troopers investigating the case, according to a police report.

The North Carolina-born country singer, known for hits such as “Forever and Ever, Amen,” also was arrested in February for drunken driving while sitting in his car in the parking lot of another north Texas church.

Schulte said Travis has been doing well since the two August incidents. He said his client was upbeat as he left the courtroom on Friday.

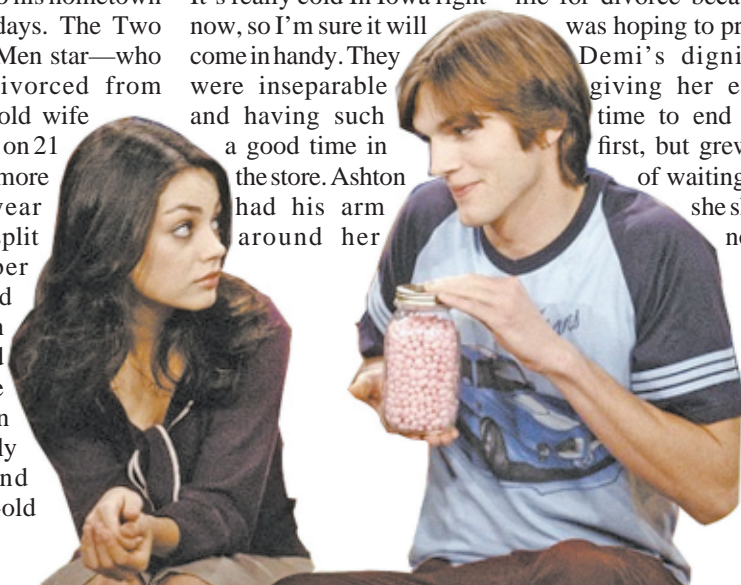


Singer Randy Travis arrives at the 45th annual Academy of Country Music Awards in Las Vegas, Nevada.—REUTERS

“He turned and wished everybody who was there a merry Christmas and a happy and healthy New Year,” he said.—Reuters

Ashton Kutcher takes Mila Kunis to hometown for Christmas

LONDON, 24 Dec— Ashton Kutcher has whisked Mila Kunis to his hometown for the holidays. The *Two And a Half Men* star—who filed for divorce from his 50-year-old wife Demi Moore on 21 Dec, 2012 more than one year after they split in November 2011—is said to have been very excited to spend the festive season with his family in Iowa and his 29-year-old girlfriend.



Mila is said to already be close with Ashton’s family as they have known each other for 14 years.

A source close to the 34-year-old actor exclusively told BANG Showbiz: “Ashton was really excited about bringing Mila home to hang out with his family.

He couldn’t wait to get back to Iowa because people don’t bother him there and said he was looking forward to chilling out.”

Mila is said to already be close with Ashton’s family as they have known each other for 14 years since meeting on the set of the comedy series *That 70s Show*.

The couple have already been spotted picking up a few last minute gifts in Bed Bath & Beyond in Iowa since arriving in there in recent days. A member of staff told Celebuzz.com: “They were picking out gifts

for his family. They bought robes, slippers and candles. It’s really cold in Iowa right now, so I’m sure it will come in handy. They were inseparable and having such a good time in the store. Ashton had his arm around her

Sources said that Ashton waited until yesterday to file for divorce because he was hoping to preserve Demi’s dignity by giving her enough time to end things first, but grew tired of waiting when she showed no signs

and I even saw him rub her back.”

They were later spotted grocery shopping and bought a huge amount of food to “bring back to Ashton’s family home.” While the actor enjoys a break with his girlfriend of nine months, he filed for divorce from his estranged wife yesterday,

who he split from last year after six years of marriage, following his fling with Sara Leal, 22 in San Diego.

of making any moves to legally end their union but her camp has since denied she was to blame for the delay.

According to the documents filed in Los Angeles, the actor has cited “irreconcilable differences” as the reason behind their split and is not seeking spousal support.—PTI

Kristen Stewart to auction dress for charity

LONDON, 24 Dec—Actress Kristen Stewart has decided to sell the sheer dress that she wore at the premiere for *The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn—Part 2* for charity.

The 22-year-old actress is giving away the Erdem frock to a CharityBuzz auction benefiting the Robin Hood Foundation’s Sandy Relief Fund, which provides long-term support to those affected by the storm, reported *Daily Star*. The actress had walked the red carpet for the November premiere of the movie in the Zuhair Murad gown.

Stewart, who also autographed the strapless dress, decided to hand over the garment to charity officials behind the 12-12-12 Auction for Sandy Relief.

The current high bid on her garment, which has an estimated value of USD 7,500 dollars, is 3,750 dollars, but film memorabilia predict that the price may increase.—PTI

Kristen Stewart



Ferrari sets up two design teams for 2013 and 2014

SAO PAULO, 24 Dec— Ferrari will run separate design teams to simultaneously develop next year's Formula One car and the one for 2014, when the technical rules are due to change substantially.

Team principal Stefano Domenicali told the Ferrari website (www.ferrari.com) that they had been working on a reorganization programme for several months.

He said Ferrari would be using the Toyota wind tunnel in Cologne, Germany, until August as their own one — which was blamed for the failure of aerodynamic updates this year — was closed for rebuilding.

"We have also adopted a better method of splitting up the work between those who run the wind tunnel and those



Ferrari Formula One driver Fernando Alonso of Spain (L) drives ahead of team mate Felipe Massa of Brazil during the Brazilian F1 Grand Prix at Interlagos circuit in Sao Paulo on 25 Nov, 2012.— REUTERS

who should concentrate more on the creative side of the job," added Domenicali. "This year, we saw that when we do too many things at the same time, maybe we are not efficient enough."

Ferrari started the season slowly with a car that was off the pace despite the best

efforts of driver Fernando Alonso, who ended the season as runner-up to Red Bull's Sebastian Vettel, to compensate. The team have not won a drivers' title since 2007. On the design side, Simone Resta will lead work on the 2013 car while Fabio Montecchi focuses on the

2014 one under the overall supervision of chief designer Nikolas Tombazis.

The 2013 car will be launched at the end of January or early February, before the first test at the Jerez circuit in southern Spain starts on 5 Feb.

Reuters

England 2014 World Cup win not impossible says Hodgson



England's coach Roy Hodgson kicks a ball during a training session at the Friends Arena in Stockholm on 13 Nov, 2012.— REUTERS

LONDON, 24 Dec— Winning a second World Cup title in Brazil in 2014 should not be impossible for England, manager Roy Hodgson said on Sunday.

"We're far from being favourites but you've got to shy away from 'impossible' in football," Hodgson told the BBC. Hodgson, appointed on 1 May on a four-year contract, used Chelsea's Champions League win in the same month as an example of how unpredictable football was.

"There are plenty of events in football that you could have said were impossible but people have done it. "It wasn't likely that Chelsea would become champions of Europe, especially having to change their manager mid-stream but they did it. That was by beating Barcelona and Bayern Munich — two of the best teams in Europe, so I'd like to keep that dream alive."

England reached the quarter-finals of the

European championship this year but lost on penalties to Italy and have failed to get past the last eight of a major tournament since Euro 1996, when they made the semi-finals on home soil.

The 1966 World Cup winners have a battle on their hands to make it to Brazil as they are second in Group H, two points behind Montenegro after four games and with six fixtures remaining in 2013.

Reuters

France international keeper Landreau joins Bastia

PARIS, 24 Dec— France international goalkeeper Mickael Landreau has joined Bastia on a six-month deal, the Ligue 1 club said on Sunday. The 33-year-old Landreau, who has 11 caps with France, left Lille by mutual consent on 6 December.

Bastia, who are 13th in the Ligue 1 standings going into the European winter break, said Landreau would be presented on 31 December.

Landreau, who started his professional career at Nantes in 1996, is looking to beat former Monaco



Mickael Landreau reacts during their Champions League Group F football match against Bayern in Munich on 7 Nov, 2012.—REUTERS

keeper Jean-Luc Ettori's record of 602 French league appearances.

Landreau has featured in 568 French league games.

Reuters

Nadal does not expect to be fully fit before March

MADRID, 24 Dec— Rafa Nadal does not expect to be back to full fitness and close to his competitive best until the Masters tennis event at Indian Wells in March, the Spanish world number four was quoted as saying on Sunday.



Nadal will return to action at the Mubadala World

Spanish tennis player Rafa Nadal poses with playing cards depicting some of his 11 Grand Slam victories after an interview with Reuters in Madrid, on 18 Sept, 2012.

REUTERS

Tennis Championship in Abu Dhabi in five days'

time after six months out with a knee injury.

"I need to see how it improves and how it reacts to the intensity and demands of playing with tennis players of such a high level," Nadal said in an interview with Spanish daily ABC.—Reuters

Odemwingie left out of Nigeria squad for Nations Cup

LUBANGO, 24 Dec— Nigeria have not selected forward Peter Odemwingie in their preliminary squad for the upcoming African Nations Cup finals but handed a surprise recall to 32-year-old defender Danny Shittu.

A total of 32 players were named for a warm-up match against Catalunya in Barcelona on 2 January followed by a training camp in Portugal. It will be cut to 23 by 9 January, the Nigerian football federation said on Saturday.

Odemwingie's exclusion continues a fractious relationship he has had with the Nigeria national

team over the last 18 months and opens the door for Shola Ameobi, the former England under-21 international who won his first cap for the Super Eagles in November.

Millwall's Shittu returns for the first time since being dropped last year.

Nigeria will compete against defending champions Zambia, Burkina Faso and Ethiopia in Group C at the Nations Cup finals in South Africa which start on 19 January.

Only five players remain from Nigeria's squad at their last major tournament appearance at the 2010 World Cup finals, also in South Africa.— Reuters



Nigeria's Peter Odemwingie (L) is tripped by Mozambique's Alberto Massinga Fanuel during their African Nations Cup soccer match in Lubango on 20 Jan, 2010.—REUTERS

Corinthians' Paulinho could sign for Manchester City

SAO PAULO, 24 Dec— English champions Manchester City have sent director of football Txiki Begiristain to negotiate the transfer of Corinthians and Brazil midfielder Paulinho.

It is reported City will offer in the region of 18 million dollars for the deep-laying playmaker, who was instrumental in Corinthians' 2012 Libertadores success and their defeat of Chelsea last weekend in the Club World Cup.

With Yaya Toure set to miss January playing in the African Cup of Nations, the Manchester club are under

pressure to bring in a big name, with the Brazilian considered an ideal fit.

Paulinho is not the only Brazil international currently on the English outfit's radar. While in Sao Paulo, it is believed Begiristain will take the

club, and reputedly set to stay with Santos until the 2014 World Cup at the very least, a huge offer from Manchester City's Abu Dhabi owners may tempt Neymar to move earlier than he had previously planned.

A host of clubs



Paulinho of Brazil's Corinthians holds the FIFA Club World Cup trophy as he and teammates attend a parade in Sao Paulo on 18 Dec, 2012.—REUTERS

opportunity to discuss with Santos a possible bid for 20-year-old sensation Neymar.

Whilst the striker has repeatedly confirmed his happiness at the Brazilian

are sniffing around the prodigy, including Chelsea, Barcelona and Real Madrid.

As of yet, however, no figures have been discussed concerning possible move for Neymar.—Reuters

GENERAL

Power lines installed in Pyinmana



PYINMANA, 24 Dec— Engineering Department Under the supervision of (Road/Bridge) of Nay

Pyi Taw Development Committee, Pyinmana Township Administrative Office and Township Electrical Engineer's Office installed power lines along eight streets in Pyinmana and along Yangon-Mandalay Highway as of 7 December.

The installation of power line will be completed tomorrow, said Deputy Director U Okka of Pyinmana Township General Administration Department.

Myanma Alinn

Falcons clinch home advantage through playoffs

NEW YORK, 24 Dec— The Atlanta Falcons will enjoy home field advantage throughout the National Football Conference playoffs after beating the Detroit Lions 31-18 on Saturday.

Quarterback Matt Ryan threw four touchdown passes as the visiting Falcons, who last week walloped the Super Bowl champion New York Giants 34-0, improved their National Football League-leading record to 13-2.

However, All-Pro wide receiver Calvin Johnson gave the Detroit fans something to cheer despite the team's seventh loss in a row as he broke the record for most receiving yards in a season.

Serenaded by chants of "Calvin, Calvin," Johnson caught 11 passes for 225 yards from quarterback Matthew Stafford to finish the game with 1,892 yards.

That eclipsed the 1,848 yards set by Hall of Famer Jerry Rice of the San Francisco 49ers in 1995.

Atlanta ran up a 21-6 lead by intermission on a trio of scoring strikes by Ryan, who finished the game with a splendid completion line of

25-of-32 for 279 yards. The Lions clawed back, closing to within 21-16 early in the fourth quarter before the Falcons responded with an 11-play, 78-yard drive capped by a one-yard

total to 31 for the season. The Detroit Lions fell to 4-11 as Stafford threw 56 passes, completing 37 for 443 yards without a touchdown. "They came out and pressured us a little bit in the



Atlanta Falcons head coach Mike Smith (C) congratulates wide receiver Roddy White (L) after his touchdown against the Detroit Lions during the first half of their NFL football game in Detroit, Michigan on 22 Dec, 2012.—REUTERS

touchdown flip from Ryan to tight end Michael Palmer to restore their cushion.

Ryan, who also hit speedy receiver Julio Jones in the back of the endzone for a 16-yard touchdown connection in the second quarter, raised his touchdown

third quarter and we stepped up in the fourth quarter and came out with the drives when we needed them," Ryan told reporters.

Atlanta coach Mike Smith said the long touchdown drive directed by Ryan was key.—Reuters



Leeds United's Luciano Becchio (C) celebrates his goal with El-Hadji Diouf (R) during their English League Cup quarter-final soccer match against Chelsea in Leeds, northern England on 19 Dec, 2012.—REUTERS

LONDON, 24 Dec— Dubai-based GFH Capital said it would not spend "crazy money" to restore former English champions Leeds United to the Premier League after completing a takeover reportedly worth 52 million pounds (\$84.6 million).

GFH has bought the club from majority shareholder Ken Bates, the former owner of Chelsea and a familiar figure in English soccer for the past three decades.

Bates, 81, is not severing all ties with Leeds. He will

MYANMAR INTERNATIONAL

- (25-12-12 09:30 am ~ 26-12-12 09:30 am) MST
- * News
 - * From Now On....(Part-1)
 - * News
 - * From Now On....(Part-2)
 - * News
 - * Music Programme
 - * News
 - * Myanmar International Machinery Industrial Fair (MIMIF 2012)
 - * News
 - * Paying Respects to Doyen Literati
 - * News
 - * "Topic on Journal" Sustainable Development of Wetlands
 - * News
 - * Broaden Your Horizon (Part-2)
 - * News
 - * 2nd Myanmar-Thailand Coordinating Committee meeting Comprehensive Development of the Dawei Special Economic zone
 - * Myanmar Movie "Love and its dignity"

MYANMAR TV

- (25-12-2012, Tuesday)
- 7:00 am Cultural Performing Arts Competitions
 - 1. Paritta By Venerable Mingun Sayadaw 4:45 pm
 - 7:10 am 15. University of Distance Education (TV Lectures) -Third Year (Myanmar)
 - 2. Dhama Puja Song 5:00 pm
 - 7:25 am 3. To Be Healthy Exercise 5:00 pm
 - 7:30 am 4. Morning News 5:15 pm
 - 7:40 am 5. Nice & Sweet Song 5:15 pm
 - 7:50 am 6. Health Programme 5:45 pm
 - 7:55 am 7. Songs Of Yester Years 5:45 pm
 - 8:05 am 8. Documentary 6:20 pm
 - 8:30 am 9. Song of National Races 6:20 pm
 - 8:40 am 10. International News 6:35 pm
 - 8:45 am 11. Musical Programme 6:35 pm
 - 4:00 pm 12. Martial Song 7:00 pm
 - 4:20 pm 13. Teleplay (Health) 7:00 pm
 - 4:30 pm 14. Myanmar Traditional 7:00 pm
 - 14. Myanmar Traditional 7:00 pm
 - 27. India Drama Series 8:00 pm
 - 22. News 8:00 pm
 - 23. International News 8:00 pm
 - 24. Teleplay 8:00 pm
 - 25. Bakery World 8:00 pm
 - 26. TV Drama Series 8:00 pm
 - 27. India Drama Series 8:00 pm

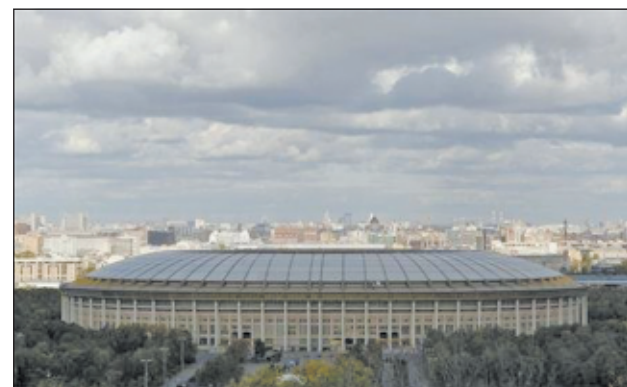
Major Moscow stadium needs reconstruction for World Cup

Moscow, 24 Dec— The Luzhniki stadium in Moscow would undertake major reconstruction in preparation for the 2018 World Cup, Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyenin said on Sunday.

The official refuted rumors that the sports arena, with a holding capacity of 80,000, would be demolished and rebuilt at another site.

"Luzhniki is a sacred place. The stadium will remain in its current location," Sobyenin said, adding the stadium needs a "considerable reconstruction" in preparation for the World Cup.

In a live interview with local TV channel on



A general view of the Luzhniki Stadium in Moscow on 29 Sept, 2012.—REUTERS

Sunday, the mayor said Luzhniki was a well-known place with convenient public transportation and other sports facilities surrounding it.

The stadium was built in 1956 and refurbished for

the 1980 Summer Olympics. Russian Sports Minister Vitaly Mutko once said it would be cheaper to build a new stadium at another location than to redecorate the existing structure.

Xinhua

New Leeds United owners won't spend "crazy money"

LONDON, 24 Dec— Dubai-based GFH Capital said it would not spend "crazy money" to restore former English champions Leeds United to the Premier League after completing a takeover reportedly worth 52 million pounds (\$84.6 million).

GFH has bought the club from majority shareholder Ken Bates, the former owner of Chelsea and a familiar figure in English soccer for the past three decades.

Bates, 81, is not severing all ties with Leeds. He will

remain club chairman until the end of the season.

Well supported Championship (second division) clubs like Leeds are drawing interest from foreign investors who have their eye on promotion to the lucrative Premier League.

"Leeds United is a great football club, it's got history, it's got pedigree, it's got a fantastic base on which we can build. We looked at a number of clubs but for us Leeds United was the most attractive," GFH Capital executive Salem Patel told

a news conference.

"We're not going to be spending crazy money like some football club owners have. What we want to do is to make the investment sustainable and make the club successful," he added, saying the business model was not predicated on the club being in the Premier League.

Money from Abu Dhabi has helped to turn Manchester City into Premier League champions but questions have been raised about the financial stability of GFH

Capital and its Bahrain parent firm Gulf Finance House.

David Haigh, a GFH Capital executive and Leeds fan who has acted as the frontman for the bid, defended the takeover and the credentials of the company.

"We've bought this club with cash, there is no debt," he said. "We are a Dubai-based regulated bank, owned by a Bahrain-based regulated bank that is listed on four stock exchanges including London."

Reuters



Union A&I Minister meets Vietnamese delegation

NAY PYI TAW, 24 Dec—Union Minister for Agriculture and Irrigation U Myint Hlaing received a delegation led by Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development

Ms. Nguyen Thi Xuan Thu of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam who was accompanied by Vietnamese Ambassador to Myanmar Mr. Chu Cong Phung, at the ministry, here, at 9am today.

exchange of technical knowhow, mutual cooperation in various sectors.

After the meeting, the delegation observed Myanmar agricultural products displayed at the office, and then observed agricultural development in Nay Pyi Taw.

MNA

Union Minister U Myint Hlaing holding talks with Vietnamese delegation.—MNA

At the meeting, they frankly discussed matters related to bilateral cooperation in agricultural sectors, investments and

Chin State's fish consumption still unmet

NAY PYI TAW, 24 Dec—Chin State is consuming 200 Viss of fish from neighbouring Sagaing and Mandalay Regions a day, Chief Minister U Hong Ngai said at the opening ceremony of Chin State Fishery Department Office in Haka yesterday.

The opening was attended by State Agriculture and Livestock Minister U Van Htaung, Deputy Director-General of the Fisheries Department U Kyaw Myo Win, and local fishery entrepreneur U Pa Maung formally opened the office.

State Chief Minister U Hong Ngai unveiled the signboard of the office.

He also called for boosting fish production of the state and exporting the surplus to help achieve higher GDP of the northern state of Myanmar.—MNA

Union minister calls for regular maintenance of roads and bridges

NAY PYI TAW, 24 Dec—Union Minister for Construction U Kyaw Lwin called for regular maintenance of Ayeyawady Bridge (Pakokku) as he inspected its condition and construction of retaining wall to prevent erosion.

He also inspected upgrading of Pakokku detour, Sinpaukhla Creek Bridge and Shwechaung Bridge No.2, condition of Hshinphyushin Bridge and broadening of Monywa-Sagaing, Sagaing-Shwebo and Shwebo-Kyaukmyaung

road sections. He also visited the construction site of Ayeyawady Bridge (Yadana Theinga) where he called for worksite safety and completion on schedule. He also oversaw roadworks on Shwebo-Myitkyina Road.—MNA

Muse emerges champion in Kanbawza Cup Golf Tourney

LASHIO, 24 Dec—Kanbawza Cup Golf Tournament is held by Shan State Government in Taunggyi, Kengtung and Lashio in rotation.

This year, the tournament was held in Lashio from 15 to 18 December. Altogether 54 golf teams from Shan State participated in the tournament.

After the tourney, Muse (C) team secured the first prize with 631 and won the

Kambawza Championship Cup and K 1 million in the inter-club scratch event.

Lashio (C) stood second with 634 winning K 800,000. Third prize winner Lashio (B) with 636 won K 600,000 as cash award.

In the inter-club handicap event, Lashio (D) stood first with 34, Muse (B) second with 33 and Lashio third with 32.

U Ohn Muang (Tachilek) won the longest drive award

and U Thurein Soe (Loilem) the nearest to the pin award.

In the women's event, Daw Yin Yin Khin (Taunggyi) won the first prize with 144, Daw Mi Ma Khaing (Kengtung) second with 146 and Daw Nan Aye (Taunggyi) third with 148.

Officials will present prizes to the respective winners on 18 December evening.

Myanma Alinn

Two dwarf boxers draw in debut showdown

YANGON, 24 Dec—Tapaul and Larpaul have become first two dwarf boxers to meet in a ring after ending in a tie in Dagon Brewery-sponsored traditional boxing challenge at the famous Thuwanna Stadium yesterday.

Both boxers one from Myawaddy and another from Phyu, whose presence attracted more attention on the event, failed to impress the audience in their very debut.

Asian Muay Thai gold medalist Tutu of Nagamhan club defeated Region/State gold medalist Thabyenyo of

Cement Factory club to earn a place in semi-finals of the

challenge.

Nay Min Tun (NLM)



Neither breaks the tie in the first-ever performance for both sides.—NAY MIN TUN (NLM)

Moyungyi wetland bird sanctuary: A safe haven for seasonal migration of waterbirds

Moyungyi Wildlife Sanctuary is situated on an area of 40 square miles in Bago and Waw Townships of Bago Region. It is located 330 miles from Mandalay, 180 miles from Nay Pyi Taw and 70 miles from Yangon. The sanctuary is accessible by car and train. It is home to waterbirds and a safe haven for hibernation of birds. Here wetland eco-system can be studied.

The sanctuary set up in 1986 specializes in taking care of native species of birds and sea birds which are going into hibernation, conducting research works on sea birds in cooperation with international organizations and generating a public awareness of how the

By: Soe Soe Naing (Kyemon)

wetland eco-system conservation is important, inviting mass participation.

Moyungyi Wildlife Sanctuary, which is designated as one of the Ramsar Sites of Myanmar, provides a wetland habitat for various kinds of species of international waterbirds. Myanmar became a party to the Ramsar convention that aims to conserve wetlands of international importance in November 2004. Moyungyi Wildlife Sanctuary was designated as the first-ever Ramsar site of Myanmar.

Selection criteria for being a contracting party of Ramsar sites are based on the following points. A wetland is considered if it supports

populations of plant or animal species important for maintaining the biological diversity of a particular biogeographic region, if it regularly supports 1%

of the individuals in a population of one species or subspecies of waterbird, if it regularly supports 20,000 or more waterbirds and if it is an important source of

food for fishes, spawning ground, nursery and/or migration path on which fish stocks, either within the wetland or elsewhere, depend.

Moyungyi Wildlife Sanctuary is a habitat for 42 species of waterbirds and 33 species of migrant birds and it is home to over 4500 birds. Visitors can enjoy the beauties of nature of a land area located 70 miles from Yangon and watch native and migrant birds in the wetland. A boat trip around the environs of the wetland can be taken. In conclusion, Moyungyi Wildlife Sanctuary is an important habitat for hibernation of birds and hundreds of species of waterbirds. It is one of the richest areas of biodiversity in Myanmar.

Kyemon (24-12-2012)

Trs: YM



Natural beauty of Moyungyi wetland bird sanctuary.