

President and wife grace closing ceremony of 27th SEA Games with their presence

NAY PYI TAW, 22 Dec—Today is an auspicious day for success- fully hosting the 27th SEA Games in Myanmar from 11th to 22nd December.

A total of 33 kinds of sports events included in the 27th SEA Games.

Thailand stands first with 107 gold, 94 silver and 81 bronze in the medal tally and the runner up is Myanmar with 86 gold, 62 silver and 85 bronze and Vietnam stands third with 73 gold, 86 silver and 86 bronze.

The closing ceremony of the 27th SEA Games was held at Wunna Theikdi Stadium under 19 agendas this evening.

Before the closing ceremony, celebrities entertained the audience with their performance and songs, and the entertainment programmes were performed.

The State Band and athletes took their positions in alphabetical order of the



President U Thein Sein and wife Daw Khin Khin Win greeting sports contingents.—PHOTO: AYE MIN SOE

President, Parliament hail Myanmar's second position in SEA Games medal standing

NAY PYI TAW, 22 Dec—Host Myanmar stood second at the medal tally of the 27th Southeast Asian Games.

President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar U Thein Sein praised and honoured Myanmar athletes and sports federations for their excellent performances in the SEA Games in which Myanmar ranked second

in medal standing, departments concerned, organizations and persons who made contributions to the successful holding of the SEA Games and the entire people who offered their great support.

Likewise, the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker and Pyidaungsu Hluttaw representatives also praised and honoured for the SEA Games success.—MNA

sports games.

After that, the presenters announced numbers of participant athletes and medals for the 33 kinds of

sports.

Mr. Ng Ser Miang, Member of International Olympic Committee, presented gift to Chairman of

the Leading Committee for holding the 27th SEA Games Union Minister for Sports U Tint Hsan who made clarifications about the closing ceremony and spoke words of thanks to referees, judges, coaches, athletes, volunteers, sports fans and media persons.

Vice-President U Nyan Tun made a speech. Firstly, he wished President U Thein Sein and wife Daw Khin Khin Win, distinguished guests, chairmen and members of National Olympic Committees of participating countries, managers, coaches and athletes, sports fans inside the stadium and the people across the country health and happiness.

He continued that the Myanmar successfully hosted the sporting event that returned to the country after about a half-century thanks to strenuous efforts and full support of the entire people. In accord with the motto of the Games:

(See page 16)



Sports contingents leaving Wunna Theikdi Stadium.—PHOTO: AYE MIN SOE

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LOCAL NEWS

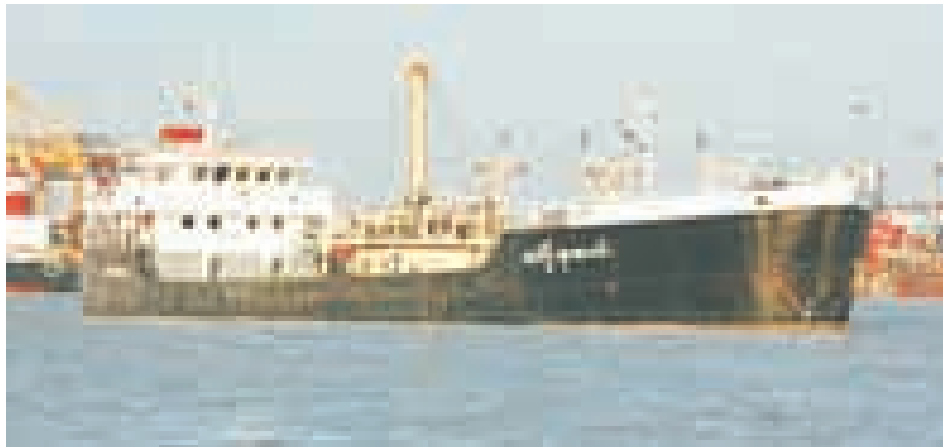
Cement shifted to Rakhine State in open season

YANGON, 22 Dec—A total of 32000 bags of cement were loaded onto MV Yazar Min to send the goods from Yangon to Sittway at No 6 Sule Jetty, here, on 20 December.

The cement will be used in construction tasks in Rakhine State.

Officials of mobile team assigned at Wadan Port inspected the loading of cement on board.

The cement bags will be sold for over K 5500 per bag



in Rakhine State.

MMAL-Kyaw Myint Aye

MV Yazar Min loaded with cement bags.

Magway Region RC provides assistance to fire victims

PAKOKKU, 22 Dec—A ceremony to provide assistance rendered by Magway Region Red Cross Society for fire victims of Ward 13 in Pakokku was held at the hall of ward administrator on 18 December.

It was attended by

Commanding Officer of Township Red Cross Battalion Commander of Township Police Force Police Major Than Soe, Chairman of Township Development Affairs Committee U Tin Win, member of Township Development Supportive Committee U Myint Lwin,

Head of Township Fire Services Department U Khin Maung Than and officials.

The commanding officer explained the purpose of donation and handed over two make-shit tent steets, two blankets, one treated mosquito net, one each of sarongs for male and female

and two sets of school uniforms to each fire victim family.—MMAL-102

Spoken English course conducted



KYAUKSE, 22 Dec—Under the arrangements of US Embassy, the English Access Micro-scholarship Programme is being conducted at Nay La Thukha Beikman in Phaung Village of Kyaukse of Mandalay Region as of 16 November, and it will last from 2013 to 2015, said Lecturer Sayadaw Bhaddanta Kossala of Konmyinthar Monastery.

The course is being conducted every Sunday and Saturday and all are eligible to attend the course regardless of race and religion.

Applications were invited from middle school-passed students from 13 to 18 years of age. About 300 youths applied to attend the course.

Essay and viva test will be included in the course. On

completion, the trainees will receive certificates recognized by the US Embassy.

About 10 courses will be opened across the nation under the arrangement of the embassy. Outstanding trainees will have opportunity to make excursion tour of other countries. It is sure that they have to join excursions at home, said the Sayadaw.

MMAL-Tun Tin Naing (Kyaukse)

Trainees at English Access Micro-scholarship Programme in Kyaukse.

Children join physical skill contest



Children taking part in the physical skill contest at Ahlon Pre-Primary School No 4.

YANGON, 22 Dec—Pre-Primary School No. 4 of Social Welfare Department under the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement in Ahlon held physical skill contest recently.

A total of 190 children took part in 22 sports events. Headmistress Daw Khaing Khaing Win presented awards to prize winning students.

MMAL-Aung Than (Mingala Taungnyunt)

Livestock and Fisheries Rural Youth Course conducted

DAIKU, 22 Dec—As Ministry of Livestock, Fisheries and Rural Development is striving for all-round development of rural regions, the Livestock and Fisheries Rural Youth course was opened at the hall of Daiku Township Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Department recently.

Head of Bago Region Livestock and Veterinary Department Dr Wint Thu made a speech.

Head of Bago District LBVDDr Aung Thein Myint explained the purpose of opening the course.

Deputy Township Administrator U Kyaw Nyunt Wai explained the disciplines of the training course.

Staff Officer of Township LBVD Daw Ohn Myint, Head of Township Fisheries Department U Soe Thein and Head of Township Rural Region Development Department U Min Min Thein gave lectures to the trainees.

A total of 34 trainees from 20 village-tracts of the township attended the course.

MMAL-Nay Lin (Nyaunglebin)

Midwifery refresher course concluded

SAGAING, 22 Dec—The Midwifery Refresher Course, organized by Sagaing District Maternal and Child Welfare Supervisory Committee, concluded at Sagaing General Hospital (200-bed) in Sagaing on 18 December afternoon.

Head of District Health Department Dr Thet Aung made a speech.

Head of District Traditional Medicine Department U Soe Kyi and Secretary of District MCWSC Daw Thida Aye Thwin made a concluding remark.

Secretary of District Management Committee U Toe Lin presented completion certificates to the trainees.

Town's elder U Zaw Win Aung presented gifts to course instructors through the head of District Health Department.

Mass walk activity for second week of Dec in Ngaphe

NGAPHE, 22 Dec—Mass walk activity of December was launched for the second week in Ngaphe Township of Magway Region on 14 December morning.

It was participated by Township Administrator U Naing Win Zaw and departmental personnel, social organization members and local people.

MMAL-Than Naing Oo (Ngaphe)



Later, District Health Department and District MCWSC provided disposal delivering bags to the trainees.

MMAL-District IPRD

MPF launches emergency, complaint-handling phone lines

NAYPYITAW, 22 Dec—Myanmar Police Force under the Ministry of Home Affairs has put hot lines into place at Myanmar Police Force HQ and region/state police stations to enable the public to submit tip-offs and complaints over illegal acts, misappropriation and corruption.

The public may reach the numbers for their information and complaints but are requested to avoid manners causing disruptions to these phone lines. Myanmar Police Force HQ, Nay Pyi Taw Police Force, Kachin, Kayah, Kayin, Chin, Mon, Rakhine and Shan State Police Forces, Sagaing, Taninthayi, Bago, Magway, Mandalay, Yangon and Ayeyawady Region Police Forces, Offices of Commanders of East, West, South and North District Police Forces in Yangon Region, No (1) Police Station in Taunggyi, Office of Dep-

uty Commander of State Police Force in Lashio, and Kengtung Police Station in Kengtung have emergency numbers of 199.

Phone numbers receiving complaints from the public are Myanmar Police Force HQ (067-412222 and 067-412444), Nay Pyi Taw Police Force (067-550333), Kachin State Police Force (074-21444), Kayin State Police Force (058-23355), Sagaing Region Police Force (071-24996), Taninthayi Region Police Force (059-23998), Bago Region Police Force (052-23999), Magway Region Police Force (063-28099), Mandalay Region Police Force (02-61444), Mon State Police Force (057-24987), Rakhine State Police Force (043-22833), Yangon Region Police Force (01-2302199), Shan State Police Force (081-2125455) and Ayeyawady Region Police Force (042-23844).—MNA

WORLD



Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi (L) and Algerian Foreign Minister Ramtane Lamamra attend a press conference in Algiers, Algeria, on 21 Dec, 2013. XINHUA

Japan's MSDF, Indian navy hold 1st joint exercise in Indian Ocean

NEW DELHI, 22 Dec — A joint exercise by the Japanese Maritime Self-Defence Force and the Indian Navy was held Saturday in the Indian Ocean off Chennai in southern India.

It is the second exercise of its kind since June of last year, and the first to be staged in India. The exercise is focused primarily on security in sea lanes and enhancing interoperability

in antipiracy operations. Given that Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe is slated to make an official visit to India at the end of January, the exercise is seen as aimed at checking China's increasing assertiveness in regional waters.

The exercise is planned to last two days. Two MSDF guided missile destroyers, *Ariake* and *Setogiri*, as well as the Indian Navy's stealth

frigate *Satpura*, guided missile destroyer *Ranvijay* and missile corvette *Kuthar* are taking part.

According to a Self-Defence Force source, compared to last year's exercise, the current training has been enhanced to require greater cooperation in operations in anti-surface and anti-submarine threat scenarios.

Japan and India have

in recent years been advancing strategic cooperation. Japan and India have recently agreed to launch working-level talks soon to pave the way for exports of the Japanese amphibious rescue US2 aircraft. During his visit next month, Abe is expected to tout the close relations between the two countries in security and defence fields.

Kyodo News

Protesters swarm in Thai capital to demand PM resigns

BANGKOK, 21 Dec — Tens of thousands of anti-government demonstrators massed at sites around Thailand's capital on Sunday in a bid to topple Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra before an uncertain February election the main opposition party will boycott.

Yingluck has called a snap poll for 2 February to try to cool tension and renew her mandate, but protesters reject any election until the implementation of vague reforms ostensibly aimed at weakening the influence of the Shinawatra family.

The weeks-long political deadlock became more uncertain on Saturday when the opposition Democrat

Party, Thailand's oldest, announced it would boycott the election, saying the democratic system had failed Thais.

The boycott adds to concern that powerful forces allied with the opposition would try to scuttle an election that is otherwise likely to return Yingluck's Puea Thai Party to power, and perpetuate the influence of

her self-exiled brother, former premier Thaksin Shinawatra.

Chanting "Yingluck, get out", thousands of whistle-blowing protesters gathered at locations around the city and set up stages in at least four places, bringing traffic to a halt at three main intersections and in two commercial districts.

Reuters

Anti-government protesters march during a rally at a major business district in Bangkok on 22 Dec, 2013. REUTERS



Cuba president notes tone of recent relations with US



Cuban President Raul Castro delivers his speech at the memorial service for late South African President Nelson Mandela at the FNB soccer stadium in Johannesburg on 10 Dec, 2013.— REUTERS

HAVANA, 22 Dec — Cuban President Raul Castro on Saturday called on the United States to establish

civilized relations with his country, recognizing a new tone in bilateral talks on secondary issues while

reiterating that the country's political and economic system were non-negotiable. The United States and Cuba have appeared more positive of late as talks around immigration, postal services, disaster prevention and other security issues have taken place, with officials from both countries cautiously welcoming each other's pragmatism and seriousness in interviews with Reuters.

Castro, closing a year-end meeting of the parliament, said that recently the two countries, bitter foes for more than half a century, had been able "to hold conversations on topics of mutual interest."

Reuters

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Felicitations

The Union Solidarity and Development Party has honour to convey the Felicitations for Successfully hosting 27th South East Asian Games in Myanmar who led and managed by His Excellency, the President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and its Government as well as to the Winning Myanmar National Team.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Robots to the rescue at international trials in Florida

HOMESTEAD, 22 Dec — As a squat, red-and-black robot nicknamed CHIMP gingerly pushed open a spring-loaded door a gust of wind swooped down onto the track at the Homestead-Miami Speedway and slammed the door shut, eliciting a collective sigh of disappointment from the audience.

The robot, developed by the Tartan Rescue team from the National Robotics Engineering Centre at Carnegie Mellon University, was one of 17 competing in the US military's Defence Advanced Research Projects Agency's (DARPA) Robotics Challenge.

The agency, which funded basic science research for now commonplace technologies like the Internet and global positioning satellites, hopes the competition will spur the development of robots that

can work in places too dangerous for humans.

The challenge was launched in 2011 in response to the meltdown of Japan's Fukushima-Daiichi nuclear power plant after it was hit by a massive earthquake-spawned tsunami. Nearly 160,000 people were forced to flee the area.

The backup power systems needed to cool the plant's reactors failed and an emergency team from Tokyo Electric Power Company was unable to enter the damaged reactor building due to the intense radiation.

DARPA sent robots designed to disarm improvised explosive devices in Iraq to Japan, yet by the time workers were trained to use them it was too late to prevent a nuclear meltdown.

"What we realized was ... these robots couldn't do

anything other than observe," said Gill Pratt, programme manager for the DARPA Robotics Challenge. "What they needed was a robot to go into that reactor building and shut off the valves."

Hydrogen continued building in the days that followed, fueling a massive explosion.

During the two-day trials at a south Florida professional race car track, the platoon of robots faced obstacles designed to mimic the challenges following a disaster.

Robots had to cut through a reinforced concrete wall, navigate debris-strewn terrain and locate and turn off leaking valves. Officials from DARPA also disrupted the link between robots and their operators, further simulating a disaster.

The eight teams with



Members of team THOR (Tactical Hazardous Operations Robot) are seen near two of their units in the group's preparation area in Homestead, Florida on 20 Dec, 2013.—REUTERS

the highest scores will be awarded \$1 million in funding to prepare for the final round in late 2014, where a winner will take \$2 million.

While Carnegie-Mellon's CHIMP eventually opened the door, leading the field on Saturday was

a two-legged robot from Japan's team SCHAFT, which finished first in the test, according to the DARPA Challenge website.

The Florida Institute for Human and Machine Cognition, based in Pensacola, Florida, took second

place. Third went to Carnegie Mellon and CHIMP.

Successes in the challenges are about as common as failures. Many robots tumbled off an industrial ladder designed to test sight and balance.

Reuters

Chickless birds guard nests of relatives

CANBERRA, 22 Dec—New research has found some birds choose not to reproduce so they can guard the nests of their close relatives, a release by the Australian National University (ANU) said.

"One of the mysteries of evolutionary biology is why, in about 9 percent of bird species, some individuals choose to forgo reproduction and help others raise young," says Dr Naomi Langmore of the ANU Research School of Biology.

Dr Langmore was part of a team from ANU, Cam-

bridge University and the University of Melbourne, which explained the mystery by finding non-breeders helped drive off birds such as cuckoos which lay their eggs in the nests of other birds.

The researchers found that by choosing not to reproduce, chickless birds ensure their genes are passed on by protecting the eggs and chicks of their relatives.

"Biologists have long wondered how this strategy, termed cooperative breeding, could be evolutionarily successful," says Dr Lang-

more.

"Brood parasite birds, such as cuckoos, are reproductive cheats. They lay their eggs in the nests of other birds, imposing the costs of rearing on their hosts who often lose an entire brood of chicks as a result," she says.

"Hosts were able to escape parasitism more frequently when they mobbed together in a large group, rather than defending their nest as a breeding pair."

Understanding the interaction between cooperative breeding and brood parasites also helped explain the

uneven global distribution of cooperative breeding birds.

"The distribution of cooperative breeders and brood parasites is tightly linked and concentrated in two major geographic hotspots: Australasia and sub-Saharan Africa," she says.

"In these two regions, hosts of brood parasites are much more likely to be cooperative breeders than unparasitized species, suggesting that brood parasites could place pressure on host species to take up cooperative breeding to better defend themselves."—Reuters

News Corp acquires social media tool Storyful

NEW YORK, 22 Dec — News Corp on Friday made its first acquisition as a stand-alone company with the \$25 million purchase of social news tool Storyful.

Founded in 2008 and based in Dublin, Ireland, Storyful verifies and manages the rights holders of news and videos on social media platforms such as Twitter in real time.

"Storyful has become the village square for valuable video, using journalistic sensibility, integrity and creativity to find, authenticate and commercialize user-generated content," News Corp CEO Robert Thomson said in a statement. The move sheds a bit of light on News Corp's acquisition strategy. Since it separated from its cable, TV and movie sister properties, now known as 21st Century Fox, in July, analysts have been keen to understand how News Corp plans to use its sizable chest of cash of more than \$2

billion. News Corp said it will operate Storyful as a stand-alone business unit that will continue to maintain partnerships with other news organizations, including the *New York Times*, Reuters and ABC News.

"We see significant value, especially on the video end, to marry your own video with viral video that is out there," said Raju Narisetti, senior vice president of strategy at News Corp.

Additionally, News Corp plans to extend Storyful's tool to advertisers and marketers so they can verify the social chatter around a brand campaign.

Storyful's management team of Chief Executive Mark Little and Executive Editor David Clinch will continue to oversee operations. Rahul Chopra, senior vice president of video for News Corp, will join Storyful, taking the additional role of chief revenue officer.

Reuters

Gloves off as mobile game developers wage Christmas war



A man looks at his iPad while sitting in a cafe in central Beijing on 6 June, 2012.—REUTERS

SAN FRANCISCO, 22 Dec — The annual no-holds-barred Christmas holiday slugfest between mobile game developers has a new twist this year: marketing and user-acquisition costs will likely hit an all-time

high and surpass any revenue earned over the festive season.

The cost of getting new users through paid-for click-through ads on mobile phone apps and Facebook is skyrocketing.

Industry executives say there are more mobile games than ever aspiring to become the next "Candy Crush Saga" or "Clash of Clans" and developers are spending to get there.

That poses a challenge for thousands of developers ranging from San Francisco-based Glu Mobile to independent studios hoping to follow in the footsteps of outfits like Supercell and King, analysts say.

Spending peaks globally during the holidays, when developers pull out the stops to try and draw in many receiving Apple or Google Android devices on Christmas morning.

This time round,

heightened competition could double or triple the amount spent on marketing cost per install or CPI, wiping out typical revenue gains of up to 200 percent.

Most developers rely on click-through ads paid for each time a user clicks on an ad and installs their game. The ads appear on screens as banners or title referrals between developers. This practice peaks during Christmas, because developers want their games at the top of Apple's or Google's app charts, a benchmark for the industry akin to Billboard and music sales which then can spur further downloads.

Reuters



A passer-by stands in front of the News Corporation building in New York on 28 June, 2012.—REUTERS

BUSINESS & HEALTH

China bans Shenzhen hepatitis B vaccine

BEIJING, 22 Dec — Chinese authorities on Friday issued a circular to ban the use of the recombinant hepatitis B vaccine produced by the Shenzhen-based Bio-Kangtai company.

The circular, jointly issued by the China Food and Drug Administration

(CFDA) and the National Health and Family Planning Commission (NHFP), said that four cases of infants' deaths were reported in Hunan, Guangdong and Sichuan provinces after inoculation using the vaccine.

The CFDA and the NHFP will carry out fur-



ther investigation into the cases and inspection over the company, the circular said.—Xinhua

Japan forecasts GDP growth of 1.4 percent for fiscal 2014

TYKYO, 22 Dec — The government forecast on Saturday that Japan's real gross domestic product will grow by 1.4 percent for the fiscal year starting March 2014, slowing from an expected 2.6 percent growth for the current year as a planned sales tax increase is seen dampening consumption.

The forecast is part of the annual budget review. The government projects about 50 trillion yen (\$480.33 billion) in tax revenue for the coming fiscal year based on the growth forecast.

While the higher sales tax is expected to curb consumption, the government expects positive economic growth thanks to the effects of a fiscal and monetary stimulus.

The national sales tax is set to rise to 8 percent in April and could rise to 10 percent in 2015 if the government of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe goes ahead with its fiscal consolidation plan.

The government also forecast that consumer prices will rise by about 1.2 percent in the 2014 fiscal year, without considering an impact from the sales tax hike. Consumer prices are expected to show a rise of 0.7 percent in the current fiscal year. The Bank of Japan launched a massive monetary stimulus programme aimed at pushing the inflation rate up to 2.0 percent in two years, in a bid to wrench the country out of a long phase of deflation.

Reuters



A woman looks at shirts displayed at a casual clothing store in Tokyo on 31 May, 2011.

REUTERS

From street stalls to bourses, South East Asia's traditional medicine makers promise panacea



A worker prepares traditional Chinese herbal medicines at Beijing's Capital Medical University Traditional Chinese Medicine Hospital in this 25 May, 2011 file photo.—REUTERS

JAKARTA/SINGAPORE, 22 Dec — On rainy days in Jakarta, a canny street merchant like Emi can sell two dozen sachets of herbal cold cure Tolak Angin to office workers and labourers sniffing by her roadside stall.

"Herbal medicine is good for the body because it's natural," says Emi, who goes by only one name. Laced with ginger, cloves

and mint leaves, the traditional remedy Emi sells for 25 cents apiece is also good for business: The company that makes Tolak Angin went public this week and is worth around \$850 million. Shares in PT Industri Jamu dan Farmasi Sido Muncul Tbk jumped as much as 24 percent when it became the first herbal medicine company to list in Jakarta on 18 December. With Chinese

peers now trading at premium prices, Sido Muncul is just the latest in a crop of Southeast Asian traditional medicine firms with big plans to grow amid strong investor interest.

Global pharmaceutical companies from Pfizer Inc to Roche Holding AG have long pinpointed Asia as a source of future growth as incomes rise. The traditional medicine market of Southeast Asia is also coiled to leap as an increasingly health-conscious middle class rises in the region.

Stacked with products that claim to cure anything from rheumatism to sexual dysfunction, the market for traditional medicine in Southeast Asia is projected to grow to \$3.9 billion by 2017, nearly 50 percent more than this year, according to research firm Euromonitor International.

While the ingredients in traditional medicines may be advertised as

natural and enjoy historical acceptance in Asia, they don't meet with universal approval. Health regulators in places like Britain have warned of high concentrations of elements like mercury in some products, and conservation groups say some use ingredients taken from endangered animals.

Still, alongside the maker of Tolak Angin - 'Repel the Wind' in Indonesian - firms in the region including Singapore's Eu Yan Sang International Ltd and Malaysia's Power Root Bhd are drawing the attention of investors.

Shares in Eu Yan Sang and Power Root trade at 18.75 and 15.05 times their latest earnings, respectively. That's far below the average of 76.38 times for a group of eight listed Chinese traditional medicine makers, according to data from Thomson Reuters StarMine.—Reuters

Daimler hedges against Tesla share price decline

FRANKFURT, 22 Dec — Daimler AG (DAIGN.DE), the German maker of Mercedes-Benz cars, has hedged its holding in Tesla Motors Inc (TSLA.O) against a decline in value over the next three years, as it seeks to broaden its alliance with the US electric-car maker.

"The objective of the transaction concluded is to protect the value of Daimler's shareholding in Tesla, whilst allowing Daimler to retain significant participation in any further appreciation of Tesla share price during the three year collar agreement," Daimler said in a statement late on Friday. Tesla is supplying electric motors and batteries to Daimler for its Smart Fortwo electric vehicle (EV) and the new Mercedes-Benz B-Class EV, which

goes on sale next year.

Daimler, which holds a 4.3 percent stake in Tesla, said in October it would like to expand its cooperation with the company.

"We are also demonstrating the long-term nature of our partnership and our intention to continue and to broaden the partnership in the coming years," Daimler's finance chief,

Bodo Uebber, said in the statement. Tesla shares have more than quadrupled in value so far this year, but they have lost 26 percent since their record high at the end of September, following reports of its Model S sedan catching fire in traffic accidents. Tesla also provides EV components to Toyota Motor Corp (7203.T).—Reuters



The logo for Tesla Motors is shown at the company headquarters in San Carlos, California on 30 June, 2008.—REUTERS

Teasing tied to less physical activity among kids

NEW YORK, 22 Dec — Children who are teased while playing sports tend to have a worse quality of life than their non-teased peers, a new study suggests. Some of them may also become less active over time.

"Teasing not only influences psychological functioning but may reduce physical activity and lead to poorer physical, social, and emotional functioning for children," Chad D Jensen told Reuters Health in an email. He led the study at Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah.

The link between teasing and less physical activity is particularly concerning considering most children are already not exercising as much as they should.

Previous research shows less than one in

10 children meets the US Department of Health and Human Services' recommendation to participate in at least one hour of moderate or vigorous physical activity every day.

Jensen and his colleagues surveyed 108 kids, aged nine to 12, in 2010 and again in 2011. They asked kids about their participation in 21 different types of physical activity before, during and after school and how often they had been teased while playing sports or exercising since kindergarten.

The researchers also asked the kids how well they functioned physically, emotionally, with friends and at school. Together those measures were used to determine children's health-related quality of life.

Children who were

teased reported a worse quality of life than those who were not.

In particular, overweight and obese kids who reported being teased on the first survey had a poorer quality of life both initially and again one year later, the researchers write in the *Journal of Pediatric Psychology*.

"Negative effects of teasing appear to be persistent, affecting important outcomes one year after teasing is reported," Jensen said.

Normal-weight kids who reported being teased on the first survey were more likely to become less active over the next year. For overweight and obese children, teasing reported in year two was linked to less physical activity the same year.—Reuters



Ichiro Akiyama, who served as first director of the Inspectorate Division at the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, speaks about his tenure at the global chemical weapons watchdog during an interview in Tokyo on 27 Nov, 2013. KYODO NEWS

Japan mulls talks with US on earlier relocation of Futenma base

TOKYO, 22 Dec — The government is considering proposing to Washington discussing an earlier-than-scheduled relocation of the US military's Futenma air base in Okinawa, government sources said on Saturday. Tokyo is contemplating such talks as part of efforts to win approval by Okinawa Gov Hirokazu Nakaima for landfill work necessary to move ahead with a bilateral agreement to relocate the US Marine Corps base within the southern prefecture, according to the sources.

Nakaima, who plans to make a decision by 31 December on whether to authorize the landfill, has asked the central government to ensure the closure of the Futenma air base within five years, among other conditions for his approval.

Under the current estimate by the Japanese and US governments, the planned relocation of the Futenma base from the densely populated Ginowan to the less populated

Henoko area of Nago on Okinawa's main island will take nine years.

Tokyo plans to discuss with Washington the possibility of shortening the construction period of the replacement facility and other means to realize an earlier return of land occupied by the Futenma base to Japanese control, the sources said.

Nakaima is also calling for revision of the Status of Forces Agreement on the operations of US military facilities in Japan. The government is considering whether it is possible to pursue that matter with Washington, according to the government sources.

But Washington is unlikely to agree to negotiations on revising the agreement. Referring to Nakaima's call, US State Department spokeswoman Marie Harf told reporters earlier this week that the United States "has not agreed to and will not consider" opening the Status of Forces Agreement to renegotiation.—Kyodo News

Memorial services held for 25th anniversary of Lockerbie bombing

EDINBURGH, 22 Dec — A Memorial service was held on Saturday evening in Lockerbie in southern Scotland to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the bombing tragedy which killed 270 people. Scottish Justice Secretary Kenny MacAskill attended the service to remember the victims of the Pan Am flight 103, which was on its way from London to New York when it exploded above Lockerbie on the evening of 21 December, 1988.

Simultaneous remembrance services were also held on Saturday evening at Westminster Abbey in London and Arlington National Cemetery in Virginia, US — where most of the victims were from. The services were broadcast live on Sky TV News.

Earlier, Scottish First Minister Alex Salmond joined the Lockerbie community and families and friends of the victims to attend a remembrance service at Dryfesdale Cemetery

PRAGUE, 22 Dec — The Czech Christian Democratic Party leadership accepted posts in a potential centre-left coalition on Saturday, clearing the way for the prospective prime minister to present a cabinet to the president by the end of the year.

The smallest party in the emerging centre-left majority coalition was granted its demand to run the Agriculture Ministry along with two other cabinet positions, the Culture Ministry and a ministry without portfolio.

The division of ministerial posts between the three parties had been one of the last outstanding issues facing leaders of three parties trying to cobble together a government to present to the president.

"We have given

preference to stability, so we would have a chance to start a good period for the country in the next four years," the Christian Democrat's vice chairman, Marian Jurecka, said on television. The central European country is run now by a caretaker government lacking a mandate to push through major legislation while the economy recovers from a record-long recession.

The Social Democrats, winners of an October snap election after a bribery and spying scandal brought down a center-right coalition in June, will get eight posts, including prime minister for their leader Bohuslav Sobotka.

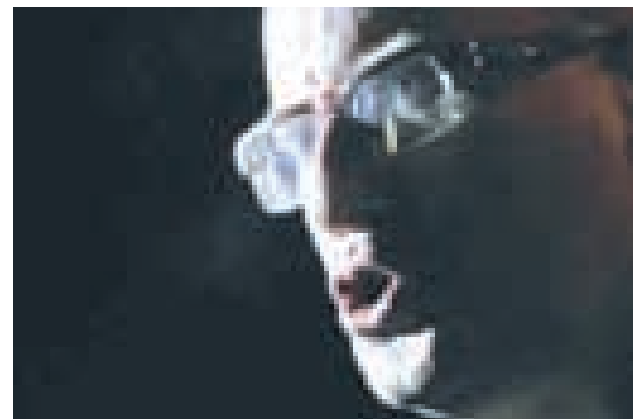
Centrist movement ANO, which finished runner-up in the election under billionaire Andrej Babis,

will fill seven ministries, including finance.

The three parties, who hold 111 out of 200 seats in parliament, have already agreed on their policy programme, pledging to keep budget deficits below the EU's limit of 3 percent of gross domestic

product while trying to boost growth.

The agriculture ministry controls the country's land fund which will oversee the return of property confiscated under communism back to churches, under a law passed in November 2012.—Reuters



Czech Social Democratic Party (CSSD) leader Bohuslav Sobotka speaks to the media in front of the Lany chateau after meeting President Milos Zeman (not seen) in the village of Lany near Prague on 21 Nov, 2013.—REUTERS

Colorado student, 17, wounded in school shooting, dies

DENVER, 22 Dec — A 17-year-old Colorado student shot in the head earlier this month by a gunman at her high school died on Saturday at a hospital with her family at her side, the facility and her family said.

Claire Davis was the only person wounded by

gunfire when Karl Pierson, an 18-year-old senior at Arapahoe High School in suburban Denver, entered the school on 13 December and opened fire with a shotgun, police said.

"Despite the best efforts of our physicians and nursing staff, and Claire's

fighting spirit, her injuries were too severe and the most advanced medical treatments could not prevent this tragic loss of life," Littleton Adventist Hospital posted on the facility's official Facebook page.

Pierson shot Davis in the face at point-blank range as she sat outside the library with a friend during in the 80-second rampage, police said.

Pierson committed suicide in the library as an armed deputy stationed at the school cornered him, police said.

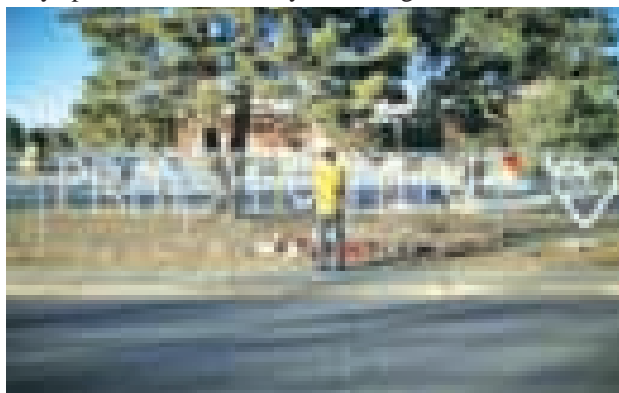
He had targeted the school's debate coach and librarian, Tracy Murphy, over a dispute the pair had, Arapahoe County

Sheriff Grayson Robinson said shortly after the attack.

Pierson acted in retaliation for discipline he received months ago from Murphy, who escaped harm in the shooting, Robinson has said. Students who knew Pierson said he was heavily involved in the speech and debate club, until he was placed on some kind of restriction by the coach.

Pierson came armed to create carnage at the 2,000-student school. Aside from his 12-gauge pump-action shotgun, Pierson had 125 rounds of steel-shot, buckshot and slug ammunition, a machete and three Molotov cocktails, police said.

Reuters



An Arapahoe high school student prays at the school in Centennial, Colorado on 15 Dec, 2013.—REUTERS

Gas deal may help Ukraine out of crisis

MOSCOW, 22 Dec — The gas deal with Moscow may help Kiev get out of economic crisis, a senior Russian diplomat said on Saturday.

When meeting his Ukrainian counterpart, Viktor Yanukovich, in Moscow on Tuesday, Russian President Vladimir Putin agreed to slash the price of natural gas for the economically struggling neighbour.

"This is an important aid to our fraternal country that will help it, probably, to boost economic rates and

to come out of the crisis, toward which the Ukrainian economy has moved closer," Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Grigory Karasin was quoted by Itar-Tass news agency as saying at a public diplomacy event here.

The two sides sealed 14 agreements on industrial cooperation, practical interaction in agriculture and space exploration, among others, said Karasin.

Besides the gas deal, Russia also granted Ukraine a loan of 15 billion US dollars.

Putin said on Thursday during his big annual press conference that Russia decided to provide Ukraine with loans and cut gas price as Moscow sees Kiev as "a brotherly nation" in difficult situation.

Ukraine was due to sign a landmark political-economic deal with the European Union (EU) at the Eastern Partnership Summit in Lithuania last month, but suddenly put it on hold in a move widely seen as opting for closer trade ties with Russia.

Xinhua



The New Light of Myanmar

XXVII SEA GAMES CLOSING CEREMONY



27th SEA Games



Closing ceremony of XXVII SEA Games in progress.—PHOTO: AYE MIN SOE



Sports contingents joyfully leaving Wunna Theikdi Stadium.

PHOTO: AYE MIN SOE

Damsels participating in the closing ceremony of SEA Games.

PHOTO: AYE MIN SOE



Myanmar makes a golden exit from the SEA Games

Myanmar athletes ended the 27th SEA Games in Nay Pyi Taw the way they started them — winning gold medals.

On Day 1, Myanmar grabbed the first chinlone gold.

On the final day Sunday, Myanmar's men and women took the gold medals in the only two events contested — sepaktakraw double regu.

In the women's match, Myanmar rolled over Vietnam in straight sets 2-0 (21-19, 22-20).

Silver medalists Vietnam reached the gold-medal match by beating Indonesia 2-0 (21-15, 21-13) earlier.

Myanmar beat Laos 2-1 (21-11, 20-22, 21-11) to win the right to play for gold.

Laos and Indonesia won the bronze medals.

In men's play, Myanmar dropped the first match against Indonesia 15-21, but roared back in the second and third 20-10, 21-12 to win the right to play for gold.

Laos beat Philippines

2-1 (21-11, 19-21, 22-20) to make the final against Myanmar.

But the Myanmar team was not to be denied a gilded end to the Games.

They cruised past Laos 2-0 (21-16, 21-15) to win gold. Laos got silver, Philippines and Indonesia the bronzes.

Laos coach Sawat Sangpakdee, from Thailand, said of his charges, "The Laos team has good fighters and they have only been training one month with me because

By Darryl Gibson

there was no money for more practice."

Player Daovy added, "This is my fourth time at the SEA Games and we have already won bronze medals at the games in Laos and Indonesia, so we are happy with silver."

Myanmar's Z.Z. Aung, who landed the final deciding kick, said simply, "I am so happy we won for our country."

PERSPECTIVES

Monday, 23 December, 2013

SEA Games success

The 27th SEA Games hosted in Myanmar concluded in a great success. With the honour of hosting the Games that returned to the country after a 44-year long wait, Myanmar successfully hosted the biggest regional sporting event. Especially, Myanmar showed its kind hospitality throughout the Games while sports athletes promoted the nation's image by harvesting a number of medals on the other.

More than 6000 athletes from 11 countries competed in 33 sports events at the SEA Games held from 4 to 22 December. With the participation of more than 1000 athletes in the regional sports festival, host Myanmar grabbed 86 SEA Games gold. Although Myanmar football has not reached so far as expected, Myanmar was on the track of victory in the remaining events to a certain extent. Myanmar was listed in the top five countries together with Thailand, Vietnam, Indonesia and Malaysia. It is because host Myanmar gathered gold like other top countries did. It can be said that hosting the SEA Games can revitalize the standard of Myanmar sports. Although Myanmar was unable to top the medal tally, she met success to a certain extent.

But, Myanmar was weak in swimming and athletics competitions in which the most number of medals were presented. If necessary preparations are made in these events, Myanmar will be able to seek more success in next SEA Games.

Myanmar bagged more medals in the events in which the judge's decision is final than the events in which records are set. For instance, medals went to Myanmar in demonstration disciplines of Vovinam, Karatedo, Taekwondo and Wushu while Myanmar was weak in combat events.

Nonetheless, Myanmar sports athletes were in good shape in nearly every sport events and Myanmar was able to revitalize its sports standard together with the SEA Games.

Sitagu eye hospital put into service in Thandwe



Sitagu Sayadaw Dr Ashin Nannisara unveils the signboard of Sitagu eye hospital in Thandwe in Rakhine State.—MNA

THANDWE, 22 Dec—An opening of Sitagu eye hospital built with the contribution of around K 800 million under the guidance given by the Sitagu Sayadawgyi took place at the hospital in Thandwe, Rakhine State this morning.

It was attended by Sitagu Sayadaw Dr Ashin

Nannisara and members of the Sangha, Rakhine State Chief Minister U Hla Maung Tin and wife, ministers, parliamentarians, well-wishers and guests.

First, the chief minister and party offered provisions to members of the Sangha. Next, the chief minister and wife accepted

donations of wellwishers for the hospital.

Then, the congregation received a sermon delivered by the Sayadaw and shared the merits gained.

Afterwards, the chief minister and wellwishers formally opened the hospital and the Sayadaw un-

Slight earthquake jolts inside Myanmar

NAY PYI TAW, 22 Dec—A slight earthquake of magnitude 3.5 Richter Scale with its epicenter inside Myanmar, (about 5 miles east-northeast of Thabeik-kyin), about 65 miles north of Mandalay seismological observatory was recorded at 00 hr 46 min 22 sec M.S.T today, announced the Meteorology and Hydrology Department.

MNA

veiled the signboard of it.

The newly-opened eye hospital which is the 21st facility of Sitagu foundation plans to provide free treatment to eye patients, regardless of race and religion, by eye specialists.

Rakhine State IPRD

K 5,000 charged for university hostel

NAY PYI TAW, 22 Dec—"First year students from outside Yangon municipal area are allowed to stay in the university and degree/college hostels as of 2013-2014 academic year," said Deputy Director-General Dr Zaw Myint of Higher Education Department (Lower Myanmar) at a press conference on university/degree college hostels, at the ministry of education, here, today.

Yangon University, Yangon Institute of Education and Sagaing Institute of Education will allow the students from first to final year to stay in the hostels. Plans are underway to accommodate second, third

and fourth year students in addition to the first year students, he said.

He continued that Sitway University, Yadana-bon University and Sagaing University will open the hostels in the coming academic year. Monthly hostel charge will be K 5,000 only. And arrangements have been made for convenience of students for food. The aim of university hostels is to fully enjoy the university life and university atmosphere by the students.

Later, Dr Thein Win, deputy director-general of Higher Education Department (Upper Myanmar) said that 23 out of 25 universities and degree colleges will have the hostels in the first-half of academic year, including Yadana-bon University and Sagaing University. Myitkyina University has opened the hostels since 2012-2013 academic year with the help of the State government.

Two universities that allow the students from

first to final year are Sagaing Institute of Education and Myitkyina University. Students from outside the municipal areas will be selected on a prioritized basis. And they will be chosen according to their exam marks when there is a shortage of hostels. The next step is to choose the students who live the townships with difficult transport in the municipal area. Then, officials replied to the queries raised by media.

MNA

Myanmar men's and women's sepak takraw teams add last two gold to its medal table

NAY PYI TAW, 22 Dec—The semifinals and finals of men's and women's sepak takraw double regu events continued at Wunna Theikdi Indoor Stadium (B), here, this morning.

Myanmar women's double regu team advanced to final after overcoming Laotian rival with 21-11, 20-22 and 21-11 points while Myanmar men's double team defeated Indonesia with 15-21, 21-10 and 21-16 points.

In women's double regu contest final, Myanmar swept 85th gold, beating Vietnam with 21-19 and 22-20 points. Similarly, Myanmar men's double regu team seized 86th gold for the country, winning



Photo shows women's sepak takraw double regu final event between Myanmar and Vietnam.

MNA

over Laotian counterparts. vices Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and wife, Chief of Defence Ser- (see page 9)

We Myanmar scored the greatest victory in terms of gold medals in this 27th SEA Games all along its history.

What's more, we have also won the admiration for the grander-than-ever opening and closing ceremonies.

Cartoon Tha Byay

President and wife grace closing...

(from page 16) Singaporean sports minister and the deputy minister

of sports from Malaysia, the Union ministers and their wives, senior military officers, Hluttaw representatives, chairmen and members of National Olympic Committees from participant countries, guests, sports fans and athletes.

MNA

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker Thura U Shwe Mann back home



Speaker of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Thura U Shwe Mann being welcomed back by officials at Yangon International Airport.—MNA

YANGON, 22 Dec—A Myanmar delegation led by Speaker of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw and Pyithu Hluttaw Thura U Shwe Mann arrived back here by air this evening after paying goodwill visits to Indonesia and Cambodia at the invitations of Speaker of Indonesian House of Representatives

Mr. Marzuki Alie and President of the National Assembly of Cambodia Samdech Akka Moha Ponhea Chakrei HENG SAMRIN.

They were welcomed back at Yangon International Airport by Yangon Region Chief Minister U Myint Swe, Yangon Region Hluttaw Speaker U

Sein Tin Win, the region Hluttaw representatives, the Cambodian Ambassador to Myanmar and officials from the Hluttaw Office.

The delegation members Pyithu Hluttaw Sports, Culture and Public Relations Development Committee Chairman Thura U Aye Myint, International

Relations Committee Chairman U Hla Myint Oo, Investment and Industrial Development Committee Chairman U Htay Myint, Public Accounts Committee Secretary U Maung Toe, Public Affairs Management Committee Secretary U Tin Maung Oo, Government's Guarantees, Pledges and Undertakings Vetting Committee Member U Win Than and officials from the Hluttaw Office also arrived back on the same flight.

MNA

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and wife Daw Kyu Kyu Hla waving flags during men's Sepak Takraw double regu final event.—MYAWADY

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing awards winners in finals of Sepak Takraw event

NAY PYI TAW, 22 Dec—Men's and women's Sepak Takraw double regu final events of the 27th SEA Games took place at Wunna Theikdi Indoor Stadium, here, this noon.

Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and wife, Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Soe Win and wife, Deputy Speaker of Amyotha Hluttaw U Mya Nyein, Union Minister at the President Office U Thein Nyunt, Union Minister for Immigration and Population U Khin Yi, Chief of the General Staff (Army, Navy and Air) General Hla Htay Win and wife, the senior military officers from the Commander-in-Chief's Office and their wives, the Commander of Nay Pyi Taw

Command and sports fans enjoyed the final matches.

Myanmar won over Vietnam in women's double regu event while Myanmar defeated Laos in men's double regu event.

Union Minister U Khin Yi presented gold to Myanmar women's team, silver to Vietnam and joint bronze to Indonesia and Laos and Mr Dato' Abdul Halin Bin Kader, President of Asian Sepak Takraw Federation and Myanmar Sepak Takraw Federation President U Chit Khaing presented SEA Games mascots to the players.

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing presented gold to Myanmar men's team, silver to Laos and joint bronze to the Philippines and Indonesia and he also presented cash awards to grand-stand guests.

Myawady



Myanmar men's and women's...

(from page 8) Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Soe Win and wife, Deputy Speaker of Amyotha Hluttaw U Mya Nyein, the Union ministers, senior

military officers, deputy ministers and fans enjoyed today's sepak takraw regu events.

Union Minister U Khin Yi and the vice-president of International Sepaktakraw Federation awarded gold medal to Myanmar wom-

en's team, silver and bronze to relevant prize winning teams. Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and President of Myanmar Sepaktakraw Federation U Chit Khaing presented gold to Myanmar men's team, silver and bronze to respective winning teams.—MNA

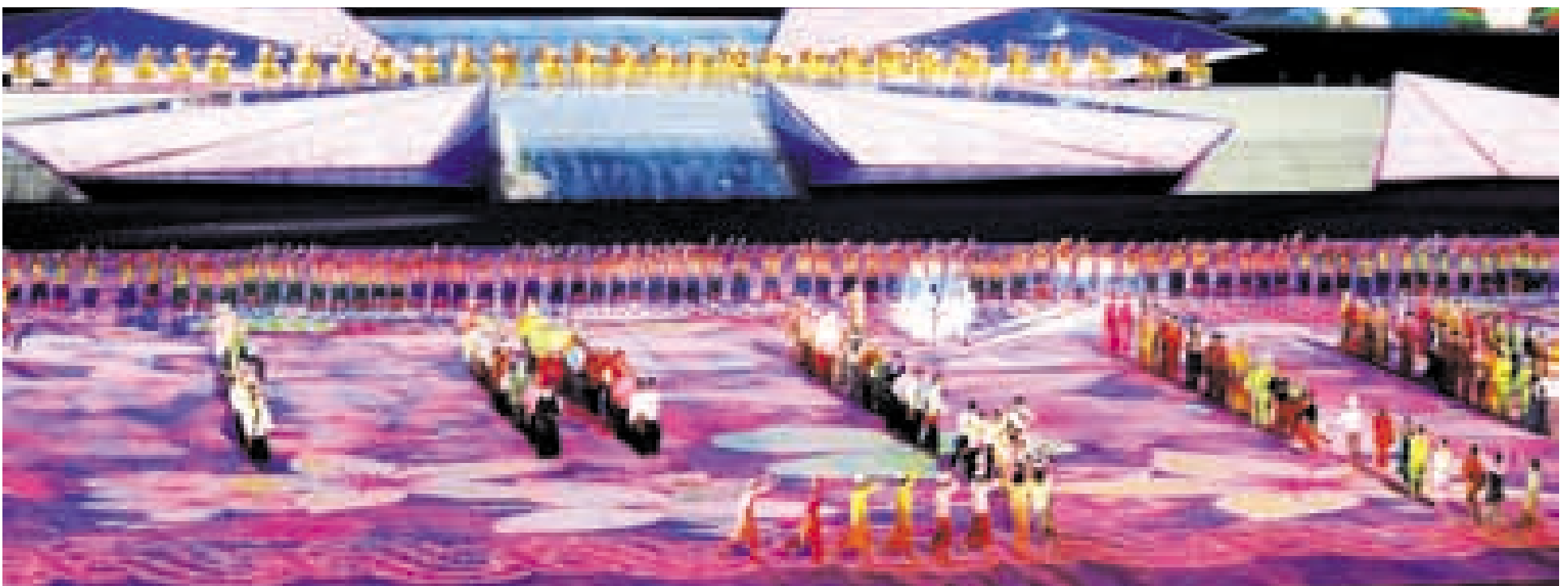


Photo shows entertainment programme at closing ceremony of 27th SEA Games at Wunna Theikdi Stadium in Nay Pyi Taw.—PHOTO: AMS

66th Anniversary Independence Day, 2014



ASEAN Summits and related meetings will be held at Myanmar International Convention Centre (1), Nay Pyi Taw

Photo: Kyaw Swe Moe (IPRD)

Four objectives of 66th Anniversary Independence Day

- All the national people to live together in the Union forever in weal or woe;
- All the national people to strive together for non-disintegration of the Union, non-disintegration of national solidarity and perpetuation of sovereignty;
- All the national people to participate in efforts for ceasing armed conflicts and gaining genuine peace;
- All the national people to work hard in building a developed and discipline-flourishing democratic nation

Fire broke out in Ywathit Village of Bokpyin Tsp

BOKPYIN, 22 Dec—A fire engulfed houses in Ywathit Village of Yengangyi Village-tract of Bokpyin Township at 9.30 am on 19 December morning.

The negligent fire started from cheroot of U Myint Aung at his house. The fire was put out by local people and auxiliary fire brigade at 11.30 am.

There was no casualty in the fire. A total of 29 houses burnt in the fire was worth K 30.5 million.

The fire victims are being accommodated at the monastery in the village.

Officials of Bokpyin Township Natural Disaster Preventive Committee, member of Township Police Force and Auxiliary Fire Brigade are carrying out

relief works.

Kyemon-Bokpyin IPRD



Crime Tamalan logs worth K 937,300 seized in Kalay

KALAY, 22 Dec—Leader of District Combating Squad IP Thiha and Senior Forester U Swam Htet Ko, acting on tip-off, stopped and searched the six-wheeled vehicle driven by U Dal Kham Khaing, 31 of Region 13 of Tahan near the jetty of Sagaing Region on 20 December.

They seized 66 pieces of Tamalan timber weighing 3.2436 tons worth K 810,900, 47 pieces of Tamalan posts weighing 2.27 tons worth K 7000 and various sizes of six Tamalan logs weighing 0.56 tons, totalling 6.0736 tons worth K 937,300.

Kyemon-Lin Let Kyei Sinn

Census taking process

HOPIN, 22 Dec—Under the leadership of Township Administrator, the departmental officials organized the talks on 2014 census taking process and houses at the Dhammayon of Arlanbo Myintha monastery on 20 December.

A similar talk was held at Ponnya Bithaninda Dhammayon in Thekhon Village of Takwin Village-tract in Hopin Sub-Township of Kachin State.

Sub-Township Administrator U Toe Kyaw Thu, Head of Mohnyin

District Immigration and National Registration Department U Sein Win, Sub-Township Head of INRD Daw Toe Toe May explained facts about matters related to census and distributed pamphlets to those present.

They also explained advantages of reading for all. Assistant Head of Sub-Township Traditional Medicine Department U Moe Kyaw Naing Win gave health care to the local people.

Kyemon-Township IPRD

Health Care Activities

Free clinic gives health care to people in Natogyi

NATOGYI, 22 Dec—Yin Nyein Pan Karuna free clinic give health care services to the local people in Pyinsi Village of Natogyi Township.

The 25-bed clinic provides health care to over 100 patients on Sunday and Saturday monthly. It cost over K 1 million a month, said Patron of the free clinic Thabyehti Monastery Sayadaw.

Arrangements are being made for providing health care services to the

local people all the year round by March next year, said the Sayadaw.

Priority is being given to the patients from far distance regions in medical treatment, and the local people can receive medical treatment in the afternoon.

The local people from Myittha, Natogyi, Kyaukse and TadaU townships come to the hospital for receiving medical treatment.

Kyemon-Htay Myint



Pseudo-ephedrine tablets worth K 192 million seized in Kalay

KALAY, 22 Dec—IP Myint Soe and party of Kalay Myoma Police Station together with witnesses searched a vehicle on Sanda Road in region 1 of TatU Thida Ward of Kalay at 11.30 pm on 18 December.

They seized 192 kilos of 1,920,000 pseudo-ephedrine tablets worth K 192 million from seven polyethylene bags and two plastic bag on board.

The tablets were carried from India to Kalay by motorcycle along Reed-

Tiddim road of Chin State.

The police seized two mobilephones and one vehicles together with tablets.

Kalay Police Station opened files of lawsuit against Daw Tin, Ma No Tin Par, Khin Tun, Thang Swam Pawng, Lan Sun Lyan, Sha Van Kham, Pawng Gun Dal and Zam Khaw Tun under the Sections 15/16(b)/21 of Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law.

Kyemon-Joe Net

Star tortoises released to Minson Hill Sanctuary

NATOGYI, 22 Dec—A total of 150 star tortoises were released to be bred at three farms of Minson Hill Sanctuary, said the administrator of the sanctuary.

Over 1000 star tortoises are being bred at the sanctuary. They laid eggs from September to March. Each tortoises can lay 4 to 14 eggs.

Research works have been conducted with installation of transmitters, logo and labelling number at the tortoises. Inspection of animals are carried out once a month.

Star tortoises are being bred in nature at Minbu Shwesettaw and Minson Hill sanctuaries across the nation.

Kyemon-Htay Myint



REGIONAL

Singapore opens new subway line

SINGAPORE, 22 Dec — Singapore opened the first stage of its new Downtown Line on Saturday.

It marks the beginning of plans to double Singapore's rail network to 360 kilometres by 2030, Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong said.

The first stage of the Downtown Line cover six stations along the 4.3 kilometre line in the central business district of Singapore, such as Chinatown, Telok Ayer, Downtown, Bayfront, Promenade and Bugis.

The second stage of the line will be ready in 2013, with a third stage expected to open in 2017.

Once fully completed, the line of 42 kilometres will be one of the world's longest driverless underground subway line.

Xinhua



Hiromasa Yonekura, chief of Japan's biggest business lobby Keidanren, answers a reporter's question after a meeting between representatives of the government, corporate executives and labour unions at the prime minister's office in Tokyo on 20 Dec, 2013.

KYODO NEWS

China to fund 3rd bridge in Nigerien capital

NIAMEY, 22 Dec — China has agreed to fund the construction of the third bridge on the River Niger in the Nigerien capital Niamey at a cost of 20 billion CFA Francs (42 million US dollars), according to Chinese Ambassador to the land-locked African country Shi Hu. Ambassador Shi made the announcement on Friday after a meeting with

Nigerien President Mahamadou Issoufou.

Chinese technicians will soon come to Niamey to carry out feasibility studies before the start of construction works. The Nigerien government hailed the pragmatic nature of Sino-Nigerien cooperation.

China funded the construction of the second bridge in Niamey known

as "China-Niger Friendship Bridge," which was inaugurated in 2012. China also funded the construction of the first inter-change in the Nigerien capital.

In 2013 alone, China funded the construction of a four-star hotel in Niamey and a referral hospital in the city, which is among the most modern in the West African region.—Xinhua

CPC delegation meets Vietnam's HCM City party leader

HO CHI MINH CITY, (Vietnam), 22 Dec — Wang Jiarui, Vice Chairman of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference and Head of the International Department of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee met with Le Thanh Hai, Political Bureau member of the Communist Party

of Vietnam (CPV) Central Committee and Secretary of southern Ho Chi Minh (HCM) City's Party Committee here on Saturday.

During the meeting, Wang expressed thanks to the warm welcome by Vietnam in general and HCM City in particular to him and the CPC delegation during their visit to Vietnam this time.

He also expressed his impression on the fast development of HCM City, saying that such notable results could not be separated from the leadership of the City's authorities and the party committee.

Wang shared with the host major information about China's economic development, policies and reforms, saying that currently both China and Vietnam are facing difficulties in economic development due to the world's economic impacts.

In that context, Wang applauded the role of HCM City and its contribution to Vietnam's development and wished it to see stronger development in the coming years.

For his part, HCM City's party chief expressed his delight at the fine development in relations between the two countries and parties of Vietnam and China, which is manifested through regular exchange of high-ranking visits by leaders of both sides.

The CPC's visit to Vietnam would contribute to concretizing and deepening

relations between the two countries, said Hai.

On the occasion, the city's party leader informed the guests of the city's socio-economic development, adding that the city has attached importance to cooperation and promotion of relations with Chinese localities, including Chinese companies and investors.

Currently, there are more than 300 Chinese companies doing business in HCM City, with a total investment of nearly 300 million US dollars. In 2013, the city exported goods to China worth over 1 billion US dollars, while it spent more than 2.6 billion US dollars to imports goods from China.

The City's party leader expressed his desire that in his position, Wang would help further promoting and strengthening the friendly relations between the CPV and CPC, and providing favourable conditions to localities and companies from China and HCM City, not only in economic area, but also in social organization activities.

Xinhua

Philippine president thanks Ban for UN help to typhoon-hit areas

MANILA, 22 Dec — Philippine President Benigno S Aquino III personally thanked on Saturday visiting United Nations (UN) Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for the assistance and concern that the agency has been extending to the country after it was hit by typhoon Haiyan last November.

Aquino expressed his gratitude during the courtesy call made by Ban Ki-moon in Malacanang, the

presidential palace, before the latter flew to Tacloban in central Philippine Province of Leyte, the worst-hit area by typhoon Haiyan, locally known as Yolanda.

Aquino and the UN chief discussed the recovery and reconstruction efforts for the typhoon-ravaged areas, said Deputy Presidential Spokesperson Abigail Valte in an interview with a state-run radio station.

Ban arrived in the country Friday night and

will be staying until Sunday. He is going to visit the worst-devastated areas to personally assess the damage and express solidarity to the victims of Haiyan, which is considered as the strongest typhoon ever hit the planet in recent years.

The latest official death toll from Haiyan in the Philippines has climbed to 6,102, while the number of those missing was still at 1,779.

Xinhua



Chinese Vice President Li Yuanchao (R) meets with Li Xiangyi, winner of the 2013 UNESCO Kalinga Prize for the Popularization of Science, in Beijing, capital of China, on 20 Dec, 2013.

XINHUA

Panel eyes submitting report on collective self-defence in spring

TOKYO, 22 Dec — A key member of a panel on security affairs said on Sunday he expects the panel to recommend as early as spring that the government lift a self-imposed ban on exercising the right of collective self-defence.

Shinichi Kitaoka, president of the International University of Japan who serves as acting chairman of the panel, said the panel plans to submit a report on its recommendation to the government immediately after parliament passes the state budget for fiscal 2014, which will start 1 April.

"It's not an issue that would require a few months. It is possible (for the panel to) file a proposal immediately after" the Diet approves the budget, Kitaoka said in a television programme.

Kitaoka said he wants the panel to submit the report sooner rather than

later, citing the need for the government to make a decision on whether to lift the ban in time for the envisaged revision of the Japan-US defence cooperation guidelines by the end of next year.

Speaking to journalists last week, Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga indicated that the government is likely to make such a decision in the next fiscal year or later.

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe has expressed willingness to change the government's interpretation of the Constitution to allow Japan to exercise the right to collective self-defence, or defending an ally under armed attack.

However, the New Komeito party, the junior ruling coalition partner of Abe's Liberal Democratic Party, remains cautious about such a move.

Kyodo News



Workers lay tracks at the construction site of Hangzhou-Changsha high-speed railway in Zhuji City, east China's Zhejiang Province, on 10 Nov, 2013. The 920-kilometre high-speed railway linking Hangzhou City and Changsha City, respectively capital of Zhejiang Province and capital of Hunan Province, and designed at a top speed of 350km/h, will reduce the travel time from more than six hours to three hours after it is put into operation in 2014 as expected.—XINHUA

MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY HOLIDAY NOTICE

As the wharves, warehouses and Chellan Office of Yangon Port will be closed on the 25th DECEMBER 2013 (Christmas Day), Loading, Unloading and delivery for Goods will be received on Payment as Holiday Fees.

Bank Holiday

All Banks will be closed on 25th December (Wednesday) Christmas day 2013, and 1st January (Wednesday) Kayin Newyear day 2014, being public holidays under the Negotiable Instruments Act. Central Bank of Myanmar

China fights assaults on medical workers

BEIJING, 22 Dec — China is starting a year of campaigns to stop assaults on medical workers, the National Health and Family Planning Commission announced on Friday.

The ministries of public security, justice and 9

other departments, including the commission, came together to say that people who assault medical workers and cause disturbances in hospitals will receive severe punishment.

Traders of medical registrations will also be

harshly dealt with, said the announcement.

Local health authorities will improve medical services and create a network covering 75 percent of regions above county level before 2014 to solve medical disputes.—Xinhua



More than 3,000 staff members from China's central government organs and affiliated institutions attend a specially-organized blind date event at the Dahongmen International Convention & Exhibition Center in Beijing, capital of China, on 15 Dec, 2013. According to the event's organizers, the male-female gender ratio was about 7:10, with the youngest participant being 19 years old and the oldest one 57. 70 percent of the participants were under 30

XINHUA



Students carry buckets with lunch at a primary school in the Chengbei District of Xining, capital of northwest China's Qinghai Province, on 19 Dec, 2013. The local authority in Chengbei district has initiated a "free lunch" program since November this year, providing lunch with balanced nutrition for over 1,200 primary students.—XINHUA

UN chief welcomes peaceful presidential election in Madagascar

UNITED NATIONS, 22 Dec — UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon on Friday welcomed the peaceful holding of Madagascar's presidential election, calling on all parties in the country to maintain the atmosphere of peace.

"The secretary-general commends the people of Madagascar, the Electoral Commission and the Malagasy government for their active contribution and participation in the holding of today's presidential and legislative elections," said a statement issued here by Ban's spokesperson.

He urged the Malagasy people, the transitional authorities and all political actors to continue to maintain the peaceful atmosphere during the vote counting and subsequent announcement of the results.

"The United Nations remains committed to supporting the successful conclusion of the Malagasy transition," Ban said.

The UN chief also stressed the will of the people of Madagascar must be respected. Madagascar was plunged into a political crisis in late 2008. In March 2009, Andry Rajoelina

replaced Marc Ravalomanana with the backing of the military. The takeover was seen as a coup by the international community.

Friday's runoff of the presidential and legislative elections in Madagascar put an end to a crisis that had gripped the nation for nearly five years.

The southern African bloc SADC (Southern African Development Community) designed a roadmap for the elections to restore democracy and constitutional rule in the country.

Xinhua

Top UN officials call for solidarity in fighting poverty

UNITED NATIONS, 22 Dec — Top UN officials on Friday marked Human Solidarity Day by calling for joint action to reach the globally agreed goals of reducing extreme poverty, hunger, disease and other social and environmental ills by 2015, and to create a more sustainable future for all.

"We all have a role in overcoming today's economic, political, environmental and social challenges, and we must all share the costs and benefits of sustainable development according to needs and ability," UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said in his message for the Day, observed annually on 20 December.

"This is the essence

of justice, fairness and equity," Ban said. "It is the meaning of solidarity."

The UN General Assembly is convinced that the promotion of the culture of solidarity and the spirit of sharing is important for combating poverty. This year's theme is "Bridging the gaps to achieve international development goals by 2015 and beyond."

Ban recalled that in elaborating the global anti-poverty targets known as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), world leaders recognized that these objectives demanded that everyone practice mutual respect and accept shared responsibility.

"I urge people from all nations, faiths, cultures and traditions to work to-

gether in common cause to keep the promise made at the turn of the Millennium and leave a legacy of peace, prosperity and sustainable progress for generations to come," said the UN chief.

John W. Ashe, president of the UN General Assembly, highlighted the fact that solidarity will be as crucial as ever as UN member states shape the development agenda beyond 2015.

"The post-2015 development agenda will represent a significant global evolution in our thinking insofar as it envisions an interdependent, planetary community regardless of disparities in development," the president said in his message for the Day.

"I believe that our suc-

cess at building solidarity, equity and social justice depends on the extent to which our differences are celebrated rather than treated as a justification for hatred and violence," he added. "We can no longer allow mothers and children to perish from preventable diseases," Ashe said. "Conflict and environmental degradation must cease to threaten our existence as a human family."

"Our children and young people must receive the education and skills that will guide them toward a path of entrepreneurship and access to decent jobs. And finally, we must continue to strive to develop sustainable global partnerships," he said.

Xinhua

Two soldiers killed in clash with militants in Egypt's Sinai

CAIRO, 22 Dec — Two Egyptian soldiers were killed Friday while clashing with hardline militants in North Sinai governorate, security sources told Xinhua, adding that eight others were wounded in the confrontation.

The militants belonging to Ansar Beit al-Maqdis, an al-Qaeda-inspired group based in the Sinai peninsula, opened fire on the forces mainly from Mahdyah village in Rafah city, the sources added.

He added the number of casualties might increase as some injured soldiers were in serious conditions.

Since Mohamed Morsi was ousted from presidency by the army on 3 July, Egypt's security premises have been targeted by militants on a daily basis.

The Egyptian army has launched large-scale security operations in coordination with police to uproot terrorist hideouts in Rafah as well as the city of Sheikh Zuaid.—Xinhua

Road accidents claim over 600 lives since festive season in S Africa

JOHANNESBURG, 22 Dec — More than 600 people have been killed in the road accidents since the start of the festive season in South Africa, a government official said on Friday.

"The picture we have of fatal crashes on our roads is scary," Minister of Transport Dipuo Peters said when addressing the status of the festive season road

safety in Johannesburg.

From 1 December to date, more than 600 fatal crashes have occurred in South Africa, claiming over 600 lives, according to her department latest statistics.

On 1 December, a major deadly accident took place on the road in the northern province of the North West, killing 14 people. At least seven lives were lost in a

crash in the southern province of KwaZulu-Natal on 12 December.

As the Christmas Day is approaching, "we realize that we are still seriously challenged, and required to raise more voices to reach out to our South African community," said the minister. The South African Road Traffic Management Corporation (RTMC) spokesper-

son Gilberto Martins said on Friday that the major contributory factors of the road crashes were dangerous overtaking, driver fatigue, excessive speeding as well as drunk-driving.

"In order to improve traffic safety on the route, interim road improvement measures will be implemented in the short term," said Peters.—Xinhua



A bird flies in the heavy smog in Sarajevo, capital of Bosnia and Herzegovina, on 19 Dec, 2013. Air pollution in winter in Sarajevo became serious due to burning of coal and woods as well as the location of the city, which is surrounded by mountains.—XINHUA

ENTERTAINMENT

India's *The Good Road* out of Oscar race



A still from the movie *The Good Road*.—PTI

LOS ANGELES, 22 Dec—The Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences has announced a list of nine films that will advance to the next round of voting in the Foreign Language Film category and Indian director Gyan Correa's film *The Good Road*, is out of the race.

The Gujarati film was chosen to represent the

country in the category at the coveted awards event this year. Out of the nine, five will be shortlisted for the finale. The 86th Academy Awards nominations will be announced Jan 16, 2014, according to the statement on the official Oscar website. The nine films nominated in the Foreign Language Film category are:

1. *The Broken Circle Breakdown* (Belgium) - Director: Felix van Groeningen
2. *An Episode in the Life of an Iron Picker* (Bosnia and Herzegovina) - Director: Danis Tanovic, director
3. *The Missing Picture* (Cambodia) - Director: Rithy Panh, director
4. *The Hunt* (Denmark) - Director: Thomas Vinterberg
5. *Two Lives* (Germany) - Director: Georg Maas
6. *The Grandmaster* (Hong Kong) - Director: Wong Kar-wai
7. *The Notebook* (Hungary) - Director: Janos Szasz
8. *The Great Beauty* (Italy) - Director: Paolo Sorrentino
9. *Omar* (Palestine) - Director: Hany Abu-Asad—PTI

Justin Bieber: I am retiring from music

LOS ANGELES, 22 Dec—Pop star Justin Bieber has said that he is planning to take a break from his music career as he wants his talent to "mature".

The 19-year-old says once his new album *Journals* is released, he will take a long break, reports contactmusic.com.

"After the new album, I'm actually retiring, man. I'm retiring," Bieber told a radio channel.

He then said he is yet to make up his mind. "I want to grow as an artist and I'm taking a step out, I want my music to mature."

The singer has also hit back at his critics and denied that he is becoming increasingly "arrogant".

"People think I'm arrogant, I'm not, I've always been a caring and giving person. I'm 19, I'm gonna make mistakes. It's inevitable," he said.—PTI



Lower-cost surprises drive Hollywood toward record year

LOS ANGELES, 22 Dec—As Ron Burgundy returns to the big screen this weekend in the "Anchorman" sequel, it's kind of a big deal, as the fictional newsman would say, for Hollywood's entire year.

After a handful of expensive summer flops, lower-cost movies such as the \$50 million "Anchorman 2: The Legend Continues" are lighting up the screen for studio executives who are cautiously predicting a second straight record year.

Ticket sales at theaters in the United States and Canada started slowly at the beginning of 2013. Even with the summer hits "Iron Man 3" and "Despicable Me 2," revenue for the year was running 0.3 percent lower than last year through July 26, according to data from Rentrak, following bombs like "The Lone Ranger."

But starting in August,

box office receipts pulled ahead of last year's pace, helped by late-year surprises such as the civil rights story "Lee Daniels' *The Butler*" and the hostage thriller "Captain Phillips" that were made for \$55 million or less and had ticket sales of more than \$100 million each.

They were joined by comedies "We're the

Millers" and "Jackass Presents: Bad Grandpa."

"The poster child is 'Gravity,'" said Gerardo Lopez, chief executive of theater chain AMC Entertainment (AMC.N), who said the film was expected to take in only \$50 million to \$70 million at domestic theaters. "It's a good film and people found it." "Gravity," the 3D

space thriller about a pair of stranded astronauts starring Sandra Bullock and George Clooney, defied projections to sell \$253 million at movie theaters in the United States and Canada.

The film, which cost about \$100 million to make, ranks sixth on this year's list of highest-grossing movies at domestic theaters, ahead of big-budget action hits like "Fast & Furious 6" and "Star Trek Into Darkness." Those films both cost at least \$160 million apiece to make.

Helped by higher ticket prices, US and Canadian movie grosses are 0.4 percent ahead of a year ago at \$10.16 billion through Sunday. The average price paid by moviegoers climbed 11 cents this year to \$8.05 through the end of September, according to the National Association of Theatre Owners.—Reuters



Actress Sandra Bullock arrives at a gala screening of her film "Gravity" at the London Film Festival at a cinema in Leicester Square, central London, on 10 Oct, 2013.—REUTERS

Miley Cyrus was scared of being alone

LOS ANGELES, 22 Dec—Pop star Miley Cyrus says she was earlier scared of being alone, but post her split from fiance, actor Liam Hemsworth, she has managed to conquer that fear.

"I was so scared of ever being alone, and I think, conquering that fear,

this year, was actually bigger than any other transition that I had, this entire year," the 21-year-old said on a TV show, reports aceshowbiz.com.

"I don't ever want to have to need someone again, where you feel like, without them, you can't be yourself," she added.



The singer says she now waits wait for moments of silence when she's alone at home.—PTI

The Wrecking Ball singer said that she enjoyed wearing a diamond ring, which she got after engagement, at the age of 19.

"I don't think I realised what 19 truly is, and I got engaged at 19, and I definitely wouldn't change being engaged. It was so fun wearing a fat rock (diamond ring) for a few years. But now, I just feel like I can actually be happy," Cyrus said.

"I wait for those moments of silence, when I'm just at my house, by myself," she added.

When asked if she wants to get married, she said: "I think I'll want that in the times that it needs to be." Cyrus and Hemsworth ended their over two-year-long relationship in September after things did not work out between them.

PTI

Kareena Kapoor: No longer feel safe in Mumbai

MUMBAI, 22 Dec—Kareena Kapoor says that she no longer feels safe in Mumbai as she used to two years back and "feeling of unrest is always there in me".

Kareena was present at the launch of Channel V's "Vith U" app for the safety of women.

When asked if she feels safe in Mumbai, she said: "I felt safe two years ago. But in the last two years there is an uneasiness in the city (of Mumbai)."

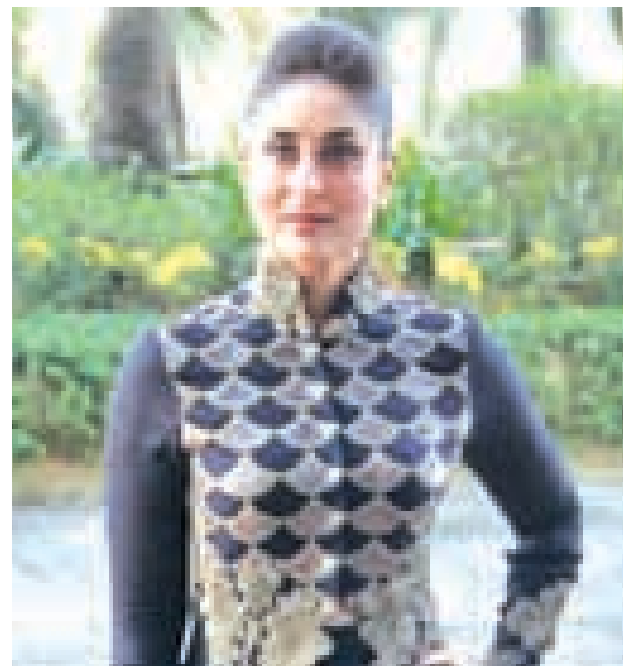
"The recent crimes against women have left some kind of unsafety even in our city, not only in Delhi. If such cases can happen in the capital then these can

happen anywhere. A feeling of unrest is always there in me," she added.

Kareena also expressed shock over the continued increase in rape cases in the country. She said that like others, her mother is also worried about her whenever she is shooting late at night and has to message her when she reaches home.

"If I am shooting at night my mother is worried about me. She stays awake as much as possible when I am shooting late at night or early morning," said the actress who is married to actor Saif Ali Khan.

"I have to message her everyday when I reach back home," she added.—PTI



Kareena says the feeling of unrest is always there in her.—PTI

Cardiff boss Mackay refuses to resign



Cardiff City's manager Malky Mackay walks onto the pitch before their English Premier League soccer match against Liverpool at Anfield in Liverpool, northern England 21 Dec, 2013.

REUTERS

LONDON, 22 Dec — Cardiff City manager Malky Mackay refused to throw in the towel on Saturday after a 3-1 defeat at Premier League leaders Liverpool followed reports he had been told to resign or be sacked.

Controversial owner Vincent Tan was booed and heckled by Cardiff fans with shouts of "get lost" as he arrived at Anfield and his reception during the game and afterwards was even worse with banners saying "Tan out" and "We want our club back".

Supporters hung around after the defeat to chant their support for Mackay, who led them to

promotion to the Premier League for the first time last season.

"The crowd were our 12th man. I reiterate 100 percent that I absolutely will not be resigning from the football club. I am a proud man to lead this team. Why would I want to leave? That is something you will have to ask other people," Mackay told reporters.

"I told the players how proud I was of them. We were excellent until Luis Suarez showed why he is about the best player in the world right now. I told them not to go under and we stayed in the game. Liverpool will be challenging for the league this year."

Two goals for Suarez helped seal an easy win for Liverpool with Cardiff struggling in the first half amid all the background chaos but they did improve after the break.

Tan's unorthodox running of the club has bemused fans of the Welsh side, not least his decision to change the "Bluebirds" home shirts from blue to red.

Cardiff are just above the drop zone after a decent start but the Malaysian tycoon complained this week that Mackay had overspent in the transfer window and would not receive "a single penny" in January despite requests for three signings.

Liverpool boss Brendan Rodgers, a friend of Mackay, said that Tan knows "nothing about football".

Pundits have long be-moaned the actions of several new owners in English football, with Hull City fans at loggerheads over a move to change their name to Hull Tigers and Blackburn Rovers supporters aghast at the running of their club by Indian chicken processing firm Venky's.—Reuters

Martino insecure over his Barcelona future

BARCELONA, 22 Dec—Barcelona are joint leaders of La Liga and enjoyed a 20-match unbeaten run under new coach Gerardo Martino but the Argentine remains insecure about his future with the Catalan club.

"All trainers hope to have stability but who can offer that? I am not in a position to do that as it is not something that is even in my hands. It depends on our performances and the results," Martino told a news conference ahead of Sunday's La Liga match against Getafe.

"Who knows where we will be (at the end of the season) in May? If I am trainer of Barcelona it is because we will have done well. Every three days you are living for the result and the performance.

"I have got to know the players, we are now comfortable with each other and there aren't many problems. No one is relaxing. We had bad results against Ajax and Athletic Bilbao but now we have turned the page."

The 2-1 loss to Ajax in the Champions League last month was Barcelona's first

defeat under Martino and ended hopes of a record-equalling, longest unbeaten start to a season. They fell one shy of the record set by Pep Guardiola's 2011-12 side.

Barca cannot afford any slip ups against Getafe if they want to preserve their status on top of the league as they lead Atletico Madrid on goal difference.

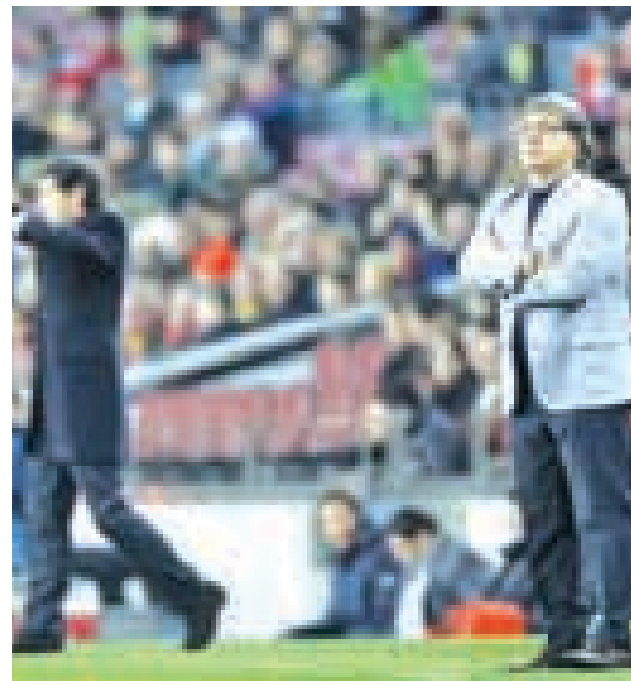
Xavi Hernandez, Lionel Messi and Victor

Valdes will all miss Sunday's encounter as they are recovering from injuries while Neymar is suspended.

"It was a risk if Xavi played and so we thought at this stage of the season it was best to leave him out of the squad," said Martino.

"Getafe are doing well in the league especially at home. They are quick in attack and are strong in the air. We will try and control the game though our play."

Reuters



Barcelona's coach Gerardo "Tata" Martino (R) looks at the pitch as Villarreal's coach Marcelino Garcia gestures during their Spanish First division League soccer match at Camp Nou stadium in Barcelona on 14 Dec, 2013. —REUTERS

Suarez puts Liverpool top as Man City hit four

LONDON, 22 Dec—Luis Suarez celebrated his new contract by sending Liverpool to the top of the Premier League thanks to two goals and another virtuoso display in a 3-1 home win over crisis club Cardiff City on Saturday. Manchester City moved up to second despite a bizarre Vincent Kompany own goal in a 4-2 victory at lowly Fulham while Manchester United, in seventh, overcame West Ham United 3-1 at Old Trafford through Danny Welbeck, Adnan Januzaj and Ashley Young.

Uruguayan Suarez, who penned a new



Liverpool's Luis Suarez (R) is fouled by Everton's Kevin Mirallas during their English Premier League soccer match at Goodison Park in Liverpool, northern England on 23 Nov, 2013.—REUTERS

long-term deal with the club on Friday, expertly volleyed in Liverpool's opener before setting up Raheem

Sterling for the second.

Suarez then made it 3-0 with his 19th league goal of a great season on the

stroke of halftime. The easy win over 15th-placed Cardiff, and their beleaguered manager Malky Mackay, put Liverpool a point clear at the top with 36 from 17 games.

Arsenal, on 35 points, can take back first place by beating visiting Chelsea on Monday (2000 GMT).

There were also victories on Saturday for Newcastle United and Stoke City while managerless West Bromwich Albion drew 1-1 with Hull City and there was a dour 0-0 stalemate between Sunderland and Norwich City.

Reuters

Ajax coach De Boer rules out Spurs move

AMSTERDAM, 22 Dec—Frank de Boer ruled out accepting the Tottenham Hotspur job again on Friday, saying he was satisfied with his post at Ajax Amsterdam.

"I'm very satisfied with the Ajax job," he told reporters at a media conference. "I'd only leave once there is no more challenge here." Speculation has continued to place the former Dutch international on the

list of candidates for the Spurs job after last weekend's departure of Andre Villas-Boas.

He had one day earlier said he would have been "honoured" by the interest from the Premier League club. "It means I have good standing. But I am staying at Ajax," he said after Thursday's 3-0 club win over amateurs IJsselmeervogels.

"Spurs are not a club



Ajax Amsterdam's coach Frank De Boer reacts during their Champions League group H soccer match against AC Milan at the San Siro stadium in Milan on 11 Dec, 2013.

REUTERS

I'm interested in moving to at the moment. But I think they are certainly a great club. Just as it was with Liverpool, it is to do with the timing. But I'm not fin-

ished at Ajax."

De Boer is chasing a record fourth successive Dutch league title and this season's Europa League title.—Reuters

English Premier League Standings

Rank	Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
1	Liverpool	17	11	4	2	25	10	+15	36
2	Manchester City	17	10	4	3	23	13	+10	34
3	Arsenal	17	10	3	4	22	13	+9	33
4	Chelsea	17	9	5	3	21	12	+9	32
5	Newcastle United	17	9	4	4	20	12	+8	31
6	Stoke City	17	9	3	5	19	12	+7	30
7	Manchester United	17	8	5	4	18	13	+5	29
8	West Ham United	17	8	4	5	17	13	+4	28
9	Blackburn Rovers	17	7	6	4	16	12	+4	27
10	Cardiff City	17	7	5	5	15	12	+3	26
11	Everton	17	7	4	6	14	13	+1	25
12	Wolverhampton Wanderers	17	6	6	5	13	13	0	24
13	Southampton	17	6	5	6	12	13	-1	23
14	Reading	17	6	4	7	11	13	-2	22
15	Cardiff City	17	5	7	5	10	13	-3	21
16	Blackburn Rovers	17	5	6	6	9	13	-4	20
17	Reading	17	5	5	7	8	13	-5	19
18	Cardiff City	17	4	8	5	7	13	-6	18
19	Cardiff City	17	4	7	6	6	13	-7	17
20	Cardiff City	17	3	9	5	5	13	-8	16
21	Cardiff City	17	3	8	6	4	13	-9	15
22	Cardiff City	17	2	10	5	3	13	-10	14
23	Cardiff City	17	2	9	6	2	13	-11	13
24	Cardiff City	17	1	11	5	1	13	-12	12
25	Cardiff City	17	1	10	6	0	13	-13	11
26	Cardiff City	17	0	12	5	-1	13	-14	10
27	Cardiff City	17	0	11	6	-2	13	-15	9
28	Cardiff City	17	0	10	7	-3	13	-16	8
29	Cardiff City	17	0	9	8	-4	13	-17	7
30	Cardiff City	17	0	8	9	-5	13	-18	6
31	Cardiff City	17	0	7	10	-6	13	-19	5
32	Cardiff City	17	0	6	11	-7	13	-20	4
33	Cardiff City	17	0	5	12	-8	13	-21	3
34	Cardiff City	17	0	4	13	-9	13	-22	2
35	Cardiff City	17	0	3	14	-10	13	-23	1
36	Cardiff City	17	0	2	15	-11	13	-24	0

GENERAL

Gutierrez completes Sauber 2014 line-up



Sauber Formula One driver Esteban Gutierrez of Mexico drives during the qualifying session of the Austin F1 Grand Prix at the Circuit of the Americas in Austin on 16 Nov, 2013.—REUTERS

LONDON, 22 Dec — Mexican Esteban Gutierrez will race with Swiss-based Sauber for a second season next year with Russian teenager Sergey Sirotkin signed as test driver, the Formula One team announced on Saturday.

Gutierrez will partner experienced German driver Adrian Sutil, who has moved from Force India to replace Nico Hulkenberg in a direct switch with his compatriot.

Sauber also announced the continuation of their sponsorship agreement with Mexican telephone company Telmex, who have backed the racing careers of both Gutierrez and compatriot Sergio Perez.

Telmex will remain a premium partner with their logo having a significant presence on the team's cars. Formula One had hoped for

a Mexican Grand Prix next year but those plans have now been pushed back to 2015. The driver announcement left only back-markers Caterham and Marussia with race seats remaining for 2014 while Britain's Paul Di Resta is out of a job after losing his place at Force India.

"It was a steep learning curve last season, but by working closely with the team I was able to improve continuously," said Gutierrez, 22, who ended the year as the highest-scoring rookie with six points after a difficult start.

"It will be my fourth year with the team, the second as a racing driver, and I feel comfortable in taking the next step," he added.

"The technical challenges in 2014 will be massive. Therefore it will be even more important to

know well the people you are working with. I will do my very best to improve even more and support the team the best way I can."

Sauber principal Monisha Kaltenborn was confident the driver would get better. "Often the results didn't fully reflect his performances," she said of this year.

Sauber have struggled financially of late, with the long-established team recognising their suppliers were having to wait for payment and Hulkenberg coy about whether he had received all his wages.

Sirotkin, and his Russian backers, had been supposed to ease those financial problems by being groomed for a race seat in 2014 but there has been increasing speculation about the strength of that deal.

Reuters

Bangladesh police charges factory owner, 12 others over deadly fire

DHAKA, 22 Dec — Charges have finally been pressed against 13 people including the owner of a garment factory over a late 2012 devastating fire that left 112 dead as officials over a year after the horrendous tragedy wrapped up an investigation. In one of the worst tragedies in Bangladesh's history in November 2012, at least 112 workers of the factory at Ashulia on the outskirts of capital Dhaka were killed.

Dozens of workers also sustained injuries as the 24 November devastating fire, claimed to be "an act of sabotage," raged through the eight-storey Tazreen Fashion Limited, where global brands including US retail giant Wal-Mart were manufactured.

AKM Mohsinuzzaman

Khan, a Criminal Investigation Department (CID) inspector, Sunday morning submitted the charge sheet against the accused in a case before Chief Judicial Magistrate Court of Dhaka.

A CID official who preferred to be unnamed said the Tazreen Fashion Ltd owner and its officials have been accused of breaching construction rules including building staircases that were too narrow and unsafe.

Of the accused, he said, many including owner Delwar are on the run. The only arrestee is security-in-charge Anisur Rahman.

After submitting the charges, the CID inspector made a plea to the court to issue arrest warrant against the absconding accused.

Xinhua

Heavy air pollution hits NE China

SHENYANG, 22 Dec — Air pollution went off the charts as a thick gray smog enveloped the city of Shenyang in northeast China's Liaoning Province on Sunday, according to local environmental authorities.

Fine particulate matter known as PM2.5, which is considered particularly hazardous, exceeded the maximum reading of 500 micrograms per cubic me-

ter in some areas, while the air-quality index rose as high as 350 micrograms per cubic meter in some monitoring sites.

The provincial meteorological disaster warning center has issued a yellow alert for smog. The country has a four-tier warning system for extreme weather, with red being the most serious, followed by orange, yellow and blue.—Xinhua

Yemeni al-Qaeda says attack on hospital was mistake

SANAA, 22 Dec — Al-Qaeda's wing in Yemen blamed a renegade fighter for targeting medics and patients in a military hospital during its attack on the Defence Ministry compound in Sanaa earlier this month, it said in a statement released on Saturday.

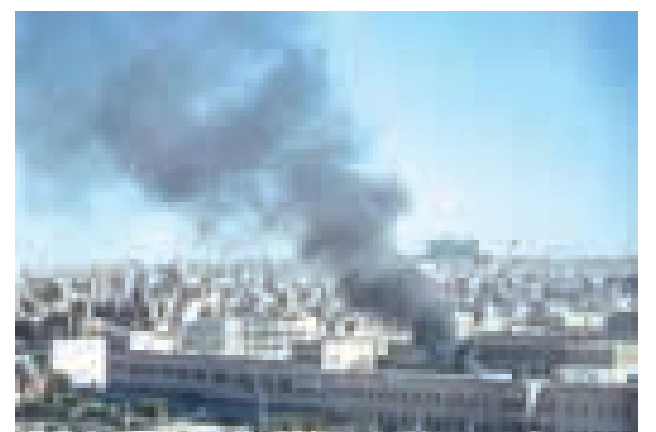
"We do not fight in this way, and this not what we call on people to do, and this is not our approach," it said in the statement, adding it had warned its fighters not to attack the hospital.

The killing of unarmed medics and patients, captured on closed-circuit television footage and broadcast by state media, caused widespread outrage in Yemen, where al-Qaeda has

portrayed itself as fighting for normal people against foreign drone strikes.

Al-Qaeda's offshoot Ansar al-Sharia (Partisans of Islamic Law) claimed responsibility earlier this month for the 5 December assault in which at least 52 people were killed, the worst such attack in Yemen for 18 months. It said it attacked the compound because it believed it to house an operations room for drone attacks carried out by the United States against militants, which have also led to civilian deaths.

Many of those killed died inside the compound's hospital, where staff said they had seen foreign doctors and nurses executed by



Smoke rises from the Defence Ministry's compound after an attack, in Sanaa on 5 Dec, 2013.—REUTERS

attackers.

The footage released on state television showed uniformed figures wandering around the hospital's corridors and wards shooting medics and patients.

One attacker was shown walking up to a group of cowering patients and calmly tossing a hand grenade into their midst before ducking behind a wall.

Reuters

MYANMAR INTERNATIONAL

23-12-13 07:00 am ~ 24-12-13 07:00 am) MST

- * Local News
- * Unique Art of Stucco Work
- * World News
- * Independent Filmmaker
- * Local News
- * Taste of Myanmar (Glass Noodle Soup)
- * World News
- * Product of Myanmar - Pottery Business
- * Local News
- * Me N My Travel With Maria (Pyay-Shwe San Taw) (Episode-4)
- * World News
- * A Person with Faith
- * Local News
- * Home Grown Treasure
- * World News
- * Myanmar Masterclass: Portraiture
- * Local News
- * Bagan: The Land of Pagoda
- * World News
- * Tea Leaves
- * Local News
- * Image of the Monks
- * World News
- * Shots & Logs (Episode-2) Ye'Pyae
- * Local News
- * Rakhine Tourist Area
- * World News
- * An Ode to Love
- * Local News
- * Those Who Never Give Up (Episode-1) Aung Thamar Di Gold Shop
- * World News
- * Product of Myanmar - Pictures Decorated With Seashells And Gemstones

Iran test-fires 200-km range missiles in drill

TEHERAN, 22 Dec — Iran's fighter jets "successfully" test-fired 200-km range Qader missiles during the ongoing drill in the Persian Gulf region on Saturday, semi-official Fars news agency reported.

"These missiles, which can be mounted on different fighter jets, were successfully test-fired in these wargames," Brigadier General Hossein Chitforoush, spokesman of the drill, told Fars.

Qader air-based missile with a range of over 200 km can be used by the Iranian air force in future

battles, Chitforoush was quoted as saying.

An important feature of the ongoing drill is the deployment and test-firing of Qader and Nasr air-based missiles that have recently been supplied to the air force, said the military official.

Nasr missiles, which can destroy vessels of up to 3,000 tons, can be launched from inland bases, offshore military vessels as well as helicopters.

On Friday, Iran's air force started its military drills over the Persian Gulf.

Xinhua



Vice-President U Nyan Tun making a speech at the closing ceremony of the XXVII SEA Games. —MNA



Union Sports Minister U Tint Hsan handing over the SEA Games Federation Flag to Singaporean Manpower Minister Mr Tan Chuan Jin.

PHOTO: AYE MIN SOE

not only to make the world known that Myanmar people are honest, friendly and helpful through international guests, sports contingents and media but also to build a bridge of friendship to promote understanding among the fellow ASEAN countries. Myanmar people will always remember the sportsmanship of 11 participating countries.

The Vice-President honoured the athletes who showed the Unifying Power of Sports to all as sports heroes, saying that he hoped all athletes would be able to meet again in 2015 Singapore SEA Games.

He called on those present to wish for the success of athletes at the 7th Paralympics Games to be held in early next year.

He expressed thanks for technical assistance to Myanmar in opening and closing ceremonies and sports management by the People's Republic of China, Japan and Thailand and full support of all friends, IOC, OCA and international sports federations to host the Games.

In his conclusion, the Vice-President expressed his special thanks to technical directors and referee/judge, participants to the Games, Myanmar athletes who played the role of sports diplomats between Myanmar and fellow ASEAN nations and the entire people.

Then, fireworks displays were made and the main torch was slowly put out.

As a gesture of clos-

ing ceremony of the SEA Games, the SEA Games Federation flag and the 27th SEA Games flag was lowered and the national flag of Singapore that would host the 28th SEA Games in 2015 was raised.

Union Sports Minister U Tint Hsan handed over the flag of SEA Games Federation to Singaporean Minister for Manpower Mr. Tan Chuan Jin.

Next, the State Band and athletes left their positions and Singapore presented entertainment programmes.

Successfully holding the 27th SEA Games proved the motto "Green, Clean and Friendship" and promoted further ties between the Southeast Asian countries. Besides, the SEA Games could exhibit Myanmar traditions and culture and

strength of the unity, and other countries' cultures and traditions could be seen in the SEA Games.

Also present on the occasion were President U Thein Sein and wife Daw Khin Khin Win, Vice-President Dr Sai Mauk Kham and wife Daw Nan Shwe Hmon, Vice-President U Nyan Tun and wife Daw Khin Aye Myint, Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker U Khin Aung Myint, Chief Justice of the Union U Tun Tun Oo, Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and wife Daw Kyu Kyu Hla, Chairman of Union Election Commission U Tin Aye, Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Soe Win and wife Daw Than Than Nwe, (See page 9)

Medal Tally

Country	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
Thailand	107	94	81	282
Myanmar	86	62	85	233
Vietnam	73	86	86	245
Indonesia	65	84	111	260
Malaysia	43	38	77	158
Singapore	34	29	45	108
Philippines	29	34	38	101
Laos	13	17	49	79
Cambodia	8	11	28	47
Timor-Leste	2	3	5	10
Brunei	1	1	6	8

President and wife grace closing...

(from page 1)

"Clean, Green and Friendship", each and every sports event were held with the help of sporting facilities of international standards and sports gear meeting set standards.

Moreover, entertainment programmes featuring tradition and cultural heritage of Myanmar have been presented to the world, he added.

The sports festival has promoted ethical behaviors, fostered the expectations of young people for their future and made a boost to nation-building endeavours.

Besides, Myanmar grabbed the opportunity



Fireworks seen in the sky above Wunna Theikdi Stadium on the closing day of XXVII SEA Games on 22-12-2013.

PHOTO: AUNG KYAW MOE (NEW IMAGE)