

President U Thein Sein, wife Daw Khin Khin Win host dinner to mark 66th Anniversary Independence Day



President U Thein Sein and wife Daw Khin Khin Win greet diplomats at dinner to mark 66th Anniversary Independence Day at Presidential Palace.—MNA

NAY PYI TAW, 4 Jan—A reception to mark the 66th Anniversary Independence Day and dinner hosted by President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar Agga Maha Thayay Sithu, Agga Maha Thiri Thudhamma U Thein Sein

and wife Daw Khin Khin Win took place on the lawns of the Presidential Palace this evening.

On their arrival on the lawns of Presidential Palace at 6:30 pm, President U Thein Sein and wife Daw Khin Khin Win together

with Vice-Presidents Dr Sai Mauk Kham and U Nyan Tun, Speaker of Pyithu Hluttaw Thura U Shwe Mann, Speaker of Amyotha Hluttaw U Khin Aung Myint, Chief Justice of the Union U Tun Tun Oo, Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, Chairman of the Constitutional Tribunal of the Union U Mya Thein and Chairman of Union Election Commission U Tin Aye cordially greeted the Union ministers, chairmen of Hluttaw Affairs Committee,

chairpersons of political parties and diplomats led by Singaporean Ambassador to Myanmar Mr. Robert Chua and their wives.

The ceremony was attended by Vice-President Dr Sai Mauk Kham and wife Daw Nan Shwe

Hmon, Vice-President U Nyan Tun and wife Daw Khin Aye Myint, Speaker of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw and Pyithu Hluttaw Thura U Shwe Mann, Speaker of Amyotha Hluttaw U Khin Aung Myint and wife, (See page 7)

Foreign Heads of Government send felicitations to President U Thein Sein

**From Tshering Tobgay
Prime Minister of Bhutan
Excellency,**

On the occasion of the Independence Day of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, it gives me immense pleasure to extend on behalf of the Government and people of Bhutan, our warm felicitations and Tashi Delek to Your Excellency, the Government and the people of Myanmar.

Bhutan and Myanmar enjoy close relations which is based on mutual goodwill and understanding. I am confident that the existing friendly relations between our two countries will be further strengthened in the year ahead.

I avail this opportunity to extend our best wishes for Your Excellency's personal wellbeing and happiness and for the continued peace, progress and prosperity of the Government and people of Myanmar.

Please accept, Your Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

**From Antonis C Samaras
Prime Minister of the Hellenic Republic
Excellency,**

On the occasion of the National Day of your country, I would like to convey to you my warmest congratulations and best wishes for the prosperity, progress and welfare of the friendly people of the Union of Myanmar.

**From Dato' Sri Haji Mohammad Najib bin Tun Haji Abdul Razak
Prime Minister of Malaysia
Excellency,**

On behalf of the Government and the people of Malaysia, I am pleased to extend my heartiest congratulations and best wishes to Your Excellency, the Government and the people of Myanmar on this auspicious occasion of the 66th anniversary of the Independence Day

of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

Malaysia will continue to support the positive reforms currently taking place in Myanmar under Your Excellency's able stewardship. Due to the many similarities shared between our two countries. I believe the Malaysian experience has a great deal of relevance to Myanmar. We stand ready to share the experiences and lessons learnt with Myanmar in all fields, including our socio-economic development model as well as the practice of moderation as the basis of our national unity. In this regard, Malaysia will continue to give priority to Myanmar in the extension of the Malaysian Technical Co-operation Programme (MTCP), which Myanmar is already the second largest recipient country.

I wish Your Excellency, the Government and the people of Myanmar all the best. My wife and I look forward to receiving Your Excellency and Madam Daw Khin Khin Win in Malaysia in the near future.

Republic of the Union of Myanmar
President Office
Notification No. 1/2014
4th Waxing of Pyatho, 1375 ME
(4th January 2014)

(Continued from yesterday)

12. Bhaddanta Pandavamsa, Aungzabu Tawya Dhamma Yeiktha Monastery, Yepyar Village, Hmawbi Township, Yangon Region
13. Bhaddanta Naranatha, Mahawun Monastery, Muse Township, Shan State,
14. Bhaddanta Suriya, Shwetaungtan Parahita monastic education school, Ayethaya Myothit, Taunggyi, Shan State
15. Bhaddanta Paññavamsa, Mokhtoke monastic education school, Bogyoke Street, Ywathit Ward, Kyangin Township, Ayeyawady Region

Title recipient Sayadaws from abroad

16. Dr. Shin Jin Yao, Chipha Monastery, Sinti, Taiwan Province, People's Republic of China
17. Bhaddanta Niyangodavijettha Sirianunayakathero, Mawwatu Mahavihara Monastery, Kandy, Sri Lanka
18. Bhaddanta Ariyadhamma, Sitagu Buddhavihara Monastery, Austin, Texas State, United States of America
19. Bhaddanta Javana, Mahaaungmye Monastery, Bodh Gaya, Gaya, Bihar State, India

Nuns

20. Nun Daw Malari, Maha Ponnyakayi nunnery post basic education school, Mingala Ward, Loikaw, Kayah State
21. Nun Daw Javançari, Theravada Buddhist Missionary nunnery school, Tarlan Ward, Lahe Township, Sagaing Region

Saddhamma Jotikadhaja Title

1. Bhaddanta Nandamala, Theravada Buddhist Missionary School, Aingsant Missionary Centre, Aingsant Village, Loikaw Township, Kayah State
2. Bhaddanta Khemaçara, Kawtpalan Monastic Education School, Kawtpalan Theravada Buddhist Missionary Centre, Kawtpalan Village, Kawkareik Township, Kayin State
3. Bhaddanta Vasettha, London Theravada Buddhist Missionary School, London Village, Kanpetlet Township, Chin State
4. Bhaddanta Aloka, Doepinchauk Theravada Buddhist Missionary School, Thitchauk Village, Kalewa Township, Sagaing Region
5. Bhaddanta Pandita, Theravada Buddhist Missionary Centre, Monastic Education, No. 1 Ward, Khampat, Sagaing Region
6. Bhaddanta Uttama, Theravada Buddhist Missionary Centre, Monastic Primary School, Leshi, Sagaing Region
7. Bhaddanta Ñanavamsa, San Monastery, Tatpyin Ward, Myeik, Taninthayi Region
8. Bhaddanta Çintita, Masoeysin Monastery, Myoma Ward, Letpadan, Bago Region
9. Bhaddanta Somaçara, Shwepaukpin Tawya Monastery, Pyay, Bago Region
10. Dr Bhaddanta Piññobhasa, Wailuwun Monastery, No. 17 Monastic Education Parahita (Philanthropic) School, Kyauktan Model Village, Bago Township, Bago Region
11. Bhaddanta Vimala, Kaba Aye Monastery, No. 1 Ward, Sinbaungwe, Magway Region
12. Bhaddanta Obhasa, “Kataung” Missionary Sasana Hita Waiponla Monastery, No. 4 Monastic Post-Primary School, Htanpinchaung Village, Pauk Township, Magway Region
13. Bhaddanta Addiçça, Zaytawun Monastic Education School, No. 3 Ward, Hngatpyittaung Ward, NyaungU, Mandalay Region
14. Bhaddanta Theravamsa, MyodawU Monastic Education School, Thiri Mingalar Ward, Mawlamyine, Mon State
15. Bhaddanta Ariyavamsa, Shwezedi Pariyatti Monas-

tery, Shwezedi Monastic Education School, Kyaungtatlan Ward, Sittway, Rakhine State

16. Bhaddanta Gandhama, Manaingkhetai Monastery, No. 5 Ward, Lashio, Shan State
17. Bhaddanta Rajinda, Aungmingala Wamen Pariyatti Monastery, No. 2 Ward, Panglong, Shan State
18. Bhaddanta Vijeya, Myolemingalayon Monastery, No. 3 Ward, Hsenwi, Shan State
19. Bhaddanta Kumara, Kwin Monastery, Monastic Education School, Kyaikpi Village, Mawlamyinegyun Township, Ayeyawady Region

Title Recipient Sayadaw from abroad

20. Ven. Thieu Quou Trung (or) Ven. Sui Minh Tong, Bao Tang Chon Ngon Tong Monastery, Dai Lai, Dai Lai State, Vietnam
21. Bhaddanta Çandramuni, Alawkatila Monastery, Khetkharathari, Khetkharathari District, Bangladesh
22. Nun Daw Çandasengi, Orphanage (Girls) School, Weigyun Nyaungyan Ward, Dawei, Taninthayi Region
23. Nun Daw Siriçanda, Thantithukha Nunnery, Shwehninzi Ward, Mingaladon Township, Yangon Region

Title Recipient Laypersons

24. Dr Apinat Kitiptunt, No. 275, Waibawadi Road, Bangkok, Thailand

Agga Maha Kammathanaçariya Title

1. Bhaddanta Sujata, State Meditation Centre, No. 9 Yadanadipa Ward, Hpa-an, Kayin State
2. Bhaddanta Varañana, Minyatchaung Pariyatti Sasana Monastery, Minyat Village, Launglon Township, Taninthayi Region
3. Bhaddanta Vangisa, Wuntawpyae Pariyatti Patipatti Missionary School, Kyitawgon Ward, Meiktila, Mandalay Region
4. Bhaddanta Açarāsikkha, Kathitwaing Aungchantha Dhammayeikhta Monastery, Aung Chantha-3 Ward, Thanlyin Township, Yangon Region

Title Recipient Sayadaw from abroad

5. Bhaddanta Kusala (Ashin Sintauk) Linju Hill Buddhist Missionary Centre, Hong Kong, People's Republic of China

Maha Kammathanaçariya Title

1. Bhaddanta Parama, Kantha Dhammayeiktha Monastery, Payagon Village, Thanlyin Township, Yangon Region
2. Bhaddanta Jagara, YeU Meditation Monastery, No. 2 Ward, Kyaukme, Shan State

Kammathanaçariya Title

1. Bhaddanta Obhasa, Branch No. 374, Mogok Dhamma Yeiktha Monastery, Rampu Ward, Myitkyina, Kachin State
2. Bhaddanta Aggasara, MyoU Dhammayon Monastery, Mogok Vipassana Dhamma Yeiktha, Lewe, Nay Pyi Taw
3. Bhaddanta Sabhana, Taungpaw Monastery, Mahasi Sasana Yeiktha, Muritgyi Village, Chaungzon Township, Mon State
4. Bhaddanta Nandasara, Thudhamma Monastery, Mogok Vipassana Dhamma Yeiktha Branch No. 508, Bogyoke Village, Thanlyin Township, Yangon Region
5. Bhaddanta Silavamsa, Thitsawadi Dhamma Yeiktha Monastery, 10th Street, No. 3 Ward, Hline Township, Yangon Region
6. Bhaddanta Supañña, Khamanthan Taung Monastery (Mula Mingun Zaytawun Sasana Manaung Meditation Centre), Selant Village, Muse Township, Shan State

Title Recipient Sayadaw from abroad

7. Zhao Wendida (Bhaddanta Vannita), Bawdhisi Mon-

School Family Day-2014 held in Bago Region

BAGO, 4 Jan — Bago Region held School Family Day-2014 at Thiri Pyinnya Hall of No. (1) Basic Education High School, here, on 3 January.

Festivities opened with

students from No. 4 BEHS in Bago singing “Myanma Kyaung”.

Next, Bago Region Chief Minister U Nyan Win extended greetings and Bago Region Educa-

astery, Mansi, Yunnan Province, People's Republic of China

Agga Maha Thirithudhamma Title

1. Daw Khin Hla, No. 199, Saingdan Ward, Thimbawtan, corner of 26th (B) x 89th Streets, Aungmyethazan Township, Mandalay Region
2. Daw Khin Kyi, No (867), Maha Bawga Street, 8 Ward, Mayangon Township, Yangon Region

Thiri Thudhamma Manijotadhara Title

1. U Tin Shwe, No. 10, Thiri Gonyi Residence, Goodlift Swimming Pool Road, North Saya San/ West Ward, Bahan Township, Yangon Region

Thiha Thudhamma Manijotadhara Title

1. U Than Tun, Magyigon Street, Chanmyathazi Ward, Monywa, Sagaing Region

Thiha Thudhammatheingi Title

1. Daw Mar Mar, No. 19, Kanbawza Yeiktha Road, Shwetaungyar-1 Ward, Bahan Township, Yangon Region

Thudhamma Manijotadhara Title

1. U Kyaw Swa Win (a) U Mya Kyaw Swa Win, No. 33 building, 25th Street, between 81st x 82nd streets, Aungmyethazan Township, Mandalay Region
2. U Shwe Thaing, No. 18, Baukhtaw Railways Station Road, 15-Ward, Yankin Township, Yangon Region
3. U Aung Gyi, No. 4 Building, Room No. 002, Thayagon Street, 2nd Ward, Pazundaung Township, Yangon Region
4. Dr U Ye Aung, No. 27/A, Phoe Sein Road, Bocho (2) Ward, Bahan Township, Yangon Region
5. U Sai Ohn Khin, No. 33, Hathin Village, Namhkam Township, Shan State
6. U Htay Myint, No. 10, Khaing Shwe Wah Road, Mya Sandar Ward, Myaungmya, Ayeyawady Region

Title Recipient Layperson from abroad

7. Mr Liu Wei Chun, No. 44, 2F, Ln-221, Huanhe S. Rd, Sanchong Dist, New Taipei City, China (Taipei)

Thudhammatheingi Title

1. Daw Nwe Nwe, No. 7 Ward, Kyigon Ward, Shwebo, Sagaing Region
2. Daw Mya Mya Win, No. (8/35), Nezar Road, Chanmyathazi Ward, Monywa, Sagaing Region
3. Daw Chaw Chaw (a) Daw Aye Chaw, No. 661, 79th Street, between 39th x 40th Streets, South Hemamala Ward, Hmantan Ward, Mahaaungmye Township, Mandalay Region
4. Daw Win Kyi (a) Daw Khin Win Kyi, No (9/22), 24th Street, between 59th x 60th Streets, Maha Zeyabon Ward, Aungmyethazan Township, Mandalay Region
5. Dr Daw Thin Thin, No. 3-C, Maykha Road, No. 7 Ward, Mayangon Township, Yangon Region
6. Daw Hla Kyi, No. (18/19), Seiktathuka Street, No.7-Ward, Hline township, Yangon Region
7. Daw Aye Aye Mar, (No. 12/14), Shwebon Tha Street, No. 3 Ward, Pabedan Township, Yangon Region
8. Daw Wai Wai Mon, No. 90, Inya Road, No. 7 Ward, Kamayut Township, Yangon Region
9. Daw Phyu Phyu Sein, No. 42, Shwetaunggyar Street, Shwetaunggyar (2) Ward, Bahan Township, Yangon Region
10. Daw Myint Myint Than, Tamanchaung Village, Magyibin Village-tract, Ngaputaw Township, Ayeyawady Region

Sd/ Thein Sein

President

Republic of the Union of Myanmar

tion Officer U Saw San Yin explained the purpose of School Family Day.

Ma Eint Hmu Khin, a first-prize winner in the Myanmar Traditional Performing Arts Competition, per-

formed her winning dance and students from BEHS also entertained the audience with dances and songs. The chief minister and officials also visited booths and shops in the school compound.

MMAL-Naung Htun (Bago) (023)

WORLD

Obama directs new gun background check measures



US President Barack Obama addresses his year-end news conference in the White House briefing room in Washington, on 20 Dec, 2013.—REUTERS

HONOLULU/WASHINGTON, 4 Jan — The Obama administration on Friday proposed two new gun control regulations aimed

at clarifying restrictions on gun ownership for the mentally ill and strengthening a database used for background checks before firearm purchases.

The measures are the latest step in a year-long push by President Barack Obama to tighten US gun laws in the wake of a school shooting in Newtown, Connecticut, where 20 children were killed.

Obama had directed his officials to take steps that do not require approval from Congress, such as Friday's two proposals.

The first action, proposed by the Department of Justice, would clarify

who is prohibited from possessing firearms because of mental illness and would outline for states what information can be shared with the federal database.

The second measure, led by the Department of Health and Human Services, would remove barriers that could prevent states from passing on information to the database.

Many states do not participate. So the administration studied changing a health privacy rule — part of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) — to remove a potential barrier.

Reuters

South Sudanese rebels to hold direct talks with government

ADDIS ABABA, 4 Jan — South Sudanese rebels will hold their first face-to-face talks with the government on Saturday in a bid to end weeks of bloodletting that have raised fears of a slide into civil war in Africa's newest state, Ethiopia's foreign minister said.

The talks in South Sudan's neighbour Ethiopia made a slow start on Friday after days of delay, with both sides meeting mediators from the regional IGAD grouping but not each other.

But further clashes between President Salva Kiir's SPLA government

forces and rebels loyal to former vice president Riek Machar on Friday suggested the ceasefire demanded by bordering nations was still a long way off.

"We've successfully finished the proxy talks," Ethiopian Foreign Minister Tedros Adhanom said late on Friday. "We will proceed to holding face-to-face discussions tomorrow (Saturday)."

South Sudan's neighbors fear the fighting, which rapidly spread from the capital last month along ethnic faultlines, could destabilize East Africa and international pressure is



Marines and sailors with Special-Purpose Marine Air-Ground Task Force Crisis Response help US citizens into a Marine Corps KC-130J Hercules airplane during an evacuation of personnel from the US Embassy, in this handout photo taken in Juba, South Sudan, on 3 Jan, 2014, courtesy of the US Marines.—REUTERS

mounting for a deal.

More than a thousand people have been killed and 200,000 driven from their homes in three weeks of fighting that has also rattled oil markets.

Ships head for Syria to move chemical arsenal out of Syria

BRUSSELS, 4 Jan — Four Norwegian and Danish ships left the Cyprian port of Limassol on Friday for the international waters off the Syrian coast to collect chemical weapons from the country, media reports said.



The Cape Ray, the US vessel to be used to dispose of Syrian chemical weapons, is shown to reporters in Portsmouth, Virginia, on 2 Jan, 2014.—KYODO NEWS

A plan laid out by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons called for the most crucial chemical weapons materials to be removed from Syria by the end of last year. The deadline,

however, was missed due to the security situation and poor weather.

"The four ships have now set a course toward a holding area in international water outside Syria, so we are most ready to enter the port of Latakia when the order arrives," a Norwegian military spokesman was quoted as saying by Reuters news service. Latakia in northwestern Syria is the port for the ships to load the chemical arsenal.

Under the plan, initial shipments of the most toxic substances are to be disposed of on a US ship. Britain has also offered a civilian facility that could be used to dispose of the chemicals.—Kyodo News

Dozens of polling stations ablaze on eve of disputed Bangladesh poll

DHAKA, 4 Jan—Nearly 60 polling stations in Bangladesh were set on fire and three people were killed on the eve of Sunday's election in which the ruling Awami League looks certain to prevail in a walkover as the main opposition party boycotts the poll.

The Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) called a 48-hour strike from Saturday morning and urged voters to stay away from the "farcical" election. Traffic in Dhaka was lighter than normal for a Saturday although some shops were open.

Without the BNP's participation, fewer than half of 300 parliamentary



Security personnel carry ballot boxes to a polling centre ahead of parliamentary elections in Dhaka on 4 Jan, 2014.—REUTERS

constituencies are being contested.

"I call upon countrymen to fully boycott the disgraceful farce in the name of election of January 5," BNP chief Begum

Khaleda Zia, who has been under what she calls virtual house arrest, said in a statement late on Friday. The government has denied that she is confined or under house arrest.—Reuters

Thirteen killed in Brotherhood clashes with police in Egypt

CAIRO, 4 Jan — Thirteen people were shot dead as supporters of the Muslim Brotherhood clashed with police across Egypt on Friday, defying an ever-widening state crackdown on the movement that ruled the country until six months ago. Islamists opposed to the army's overthrow of President Mohamed Mursi in July have been holding daily demonstrations, even since the army-backed government declared his Brotherhood a terrorist group last week, increasing the

sustain momentum against what it refers to as the "putschist regime" governing Egypt.

In the Cairo district of Nasr City, riot police in bulletproof vests fired tear-gas at protesters throwing fireworks and stones. Similar clashes erupted across the country, as has become commonplace after midday prayers on Friday, which is not a working day in Egypt.

The Health Ministry said five people were killed in different districts in Cairo. A security source



Supporters and opponents of ousted Egyptian President Mohamed Mursi clash at Nasr City District in Cairo, on 3 Jan, 2014.—REUTERS

penalties for dissent.

The government is using the new classification to detain hundreds of Brotherhood supporters. Thousands more, including top leaders of the group, have been in jail for months, arrested in the aftermath of the army takeover. The crackdown has reduced but not entirely broken the ability of the Brotherhood to mobilize protests. It has lately been relying on students to

said they died from bullet wounds. One of the five was a man who was shot dead by the protesters after he yelled insults at pro-Brotherhood demonstrators marching near his house, the source said. A male protester and a woman were shot dead in the coastal city of Alexandria, medical and security sources said. It was not clear whether the woman was a protester or an onlooker.—Reuters

War crime accused takes the oath in Kosovo

PRISTIA, 4 Jan — Newly elected mayor of the Municipality of Skenderaj/Srbica, Sami Lushtaku, was briefly taken from the Mitrovica detention centre on Friday to his hometown to take the oath for third term in office. The procedure took some ten minutes, and the defendant was later sent back to the detention centre. Accompanied by police officers, Lushtaku was taken to the Municipal Assembly of Skenderaj/Srbica, for the oath in a brief procedure behind closed doors.

However, about 200 people showed their support to him by gathering in front of the assembly building.—Xinhua

WORLD

Israel warns of massive Palestinians return after peace deal signed

JERUSALEM, 4 Jan—Israeli Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman on Friday warned US Secretary of State John Kerry of possible consequences of a future peace agreement.

"It is reasonable to assume that after an agreement is reached, other countries in the region will want to transfer Palestinians currently living in these countries to the areas under the control of the Palestinian Authority," Lieberman said, noting that "thus adding an additional three million refugees to the 800,000 current residents of the Palestinian Authority."

The remarks were made during a meeting between Lieberman and Kerry to discuss the ongoing efforts to reach a framework agreement for peace between Israel and the

Palestinians, according to Lieberman's office.

"This will create a difficult humanitarian situation, leading again to possible frustration, violence and security problems," said Lieberman, one of the most hawkish members of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government.

According to Lieberman, "any agreement between Israel and the Palestinians must be based on the strong foundations of security for Israel and a stable economy for the Palestinians." On Friday, Kerry also met with Netanyahu and is scheduled to meet with the Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas in the evening in the West Bank city of Ramallah.

Currently, two main issues have divided Israeli parties and mainly caused



Visiting US Secretary of State John Kerry attends a news conference with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at the Prime Minister's office in Jerusalem, on 2 Jan, 2014. —XINHUA

the deterioration of the talks which resumed in last July amid Kerry's incessant efforts after three-year halt of the negotiations.

First, Israel demands

to deploy security forces in the Jordan Valley, eastern part of the West Bank, on lands set to be part of a future Palestinian state, while Abbas opposes this demand. Moreover, several right-wing Israeli ministers are striving to legislate a bill to annex the Jordan Valley, despite the objection of more dovish members of the Israeli government, including chief negotiator Tzipi Livni who said she would appeal the bill proposal.

Second, Israel is set to announce another round of construction in the settlements, following its release of 26 Palestinian prisoners on Monday. For his part, Kerry hopes to get some agreements on the guidelines to be included in a final peace agreement.

Xinhua

Japanese man gunned down, wife seriously injured in Ecuador

RIO DE JANEIRO, 4 Jan—A Japanese man died and his wife suffered serious injuries after they were attacked by robbers last week while on honeymoon in Guayaquil, Ecuador, according to information on Friday from the Japanese Embassy in the country and local police.

In the 28 December incident, the 28-year-old husband and 27-year-old wife were attacked by a group of eight people, according to local police, who said the man was shot in the abdomen and the legs.

The embassy has not disclosed the identities of the couple, saying it has not obtained consent to do so from their families. The woman is conscious and her injuries, while serious, are not life-threatening, the embassy said.

Local media said the attackers trailed the Japanese couple in a car after they took a taxi from a hotel in Guayaquil.

Guayaquil, the largest city in Ecuador, is known as the gateway to the Galapagos Islands.

Kyodo News



Mira Nakashima (4th from R) and the Nakashima woodworkers on 3 Dec, 2013, at the small museum built by the late craftsman George Nakashima in New Hope, Pennsylvania. The museum and other buildings he created were put on the World Monument Fund's 2014 watch list. KYODO NEWS

Violence in Central African Republic displaces nearly 1 million

BANGUI, 4 Jan — Violence in Central African Republic has uprooted nearly a million people, a fifth of the population, and is hampering aid efforts, particularly in the capital Bangui, the UN refugee agency (UNHCR) said on Friday.

A flare-up in violence between Muslim fighters and Christian militias has displaced more than 200,000 people in the past few weeks alone, leaving a total of 935,000 homeless.

A rebel group, the Seleka, unleashed a wave of killing and looting after seizing power in March, and the deployment of 1,600 French

and nearly 4,000 African Union peacekeepers has done little to contain the tit-for-tat violence between religious communities. In the river-side capital alone, more than

510,000 people are displaced — equivalent to more than half the city's population, UNHCR said. Just over half of them are children.

The number of people

sheltering at a makeshift camp at the international airport has doubled in the past week to 100,000. The site lacks proper access to food or water but access for humanitarian groups has been restricted by fierce fighting in nearby neighbourhoods.

"Insecurity and chaos around the site...prevents us from doing any distribution," UNHCR spokesman Babar Baloch told a news conference in Geneva. "It's a horrible situation. We have heard a lot about revenge attacks happening inside health centers, where armed elements have gone and attacked patients." —Reuters



A family stands near their destroyed house in a village in Bossangoa, north of the Central African Republic's Bangui on 3 Jan, 2014. —REUTERS

MYANMAR'S SAFARI

The following is a reproduction of the Myanmar Hotel and Tourism Guide 2014. Please visit www.tourismguide.com.mm for further information—Ed



Hlawga Wildlife Park.

Hukaung Valley Tiger Reserve, Kachin State

The Hukaung Valley was designated as a wildlife sanctuary by the Ministry of Environmental Conservation and Forestry in 2004 following surveys of the area by the New York-based Wildlife Conservation Society. It is home to tigers, red pandas, elephants, cloud leopards, wild boars, gaur, Himalayan black bears, sambar and leaf deer as well as many rare species of orchids and butterflies. About 370 bird species live in the region including the rare white-bellied heron and the endangered Rufus-necked hornbill. The global estimate of plant species numbers 13,500 and about 7000 are found in the Hukaung Valley.

Wildlife Walks

Indawgyi Lake Wildlife Sanctuary, Kachin State

Indawgyi Lake is a 777 square kilometre (300 square mile) wildlife sanctuary, with the largest inland lake in Southeast Asia. It provides opportunities to see jungle cats, rare butterflies, turtles, and about 170 species of resident and migratory birds. The sanctuary is listed as an ASEAN Heritage Site.

Hlawga Wildlife Park, Htaukkyant, Yangon Region

This 623 hectare (1,540 acre) park is one of Myanmar's best-known ecotourism sites and is less than an hour's drive from Yangon. It has many species of deer, as well as monkeys, lizards, pythons, endemic and migratory species of birds, including owls and many species of waterfowl, and a rich selection of flora. There is a 25 hectare (62 acre) mini-zoo with bears, leopards, hornbills, storks, pelicans, eagles and vultures. There is also an environment education centre and an ornithological museum. Visitors enjoy jungle treks, bird watching and wildlife safaris.

Meinmahla Kyun Wildlife Sanctuary, Ayeyawady Region

No other site in Myanmar has as many species of mangroves as this Ayeyawady delta sanctuary. The mangrove species include Kambala, Kanazo, Madama and Thayaw. Ayeyawady dolphins, crocodiles, turtles, tortoises and otters can be seen in this 136 square kilometre (52.79 square mile) wildlife sanctuary. The mangrove ecosystem may be studied with the permission of the Ministry of Environmental Conservation and Forestry.

Shwe Settaw Wildlife Sanctuary, Magway Region

Shwesettaw Wildlife Sanctuary is east of the Rakhine Yoma Mountain Range, and is home to the country's largest population of Myanmar Star Tortoises (*Geochelone platnota*) and other rare species, such as the Roofed Turtle (*Kachuga trivittata*).

Alaungdaw Kathapa National Park, Sagaing Region

The Alaungdaw Kathapa National Park, one of six sites in Myanmar on the ASEAN Heritage Parks list, is an area of virgin jungle in which lives many animals, including elephants, tigers, deer and a variety of rare bird species. About 100 species of butterflies are found in this 1,608 square kilometre (621 square mile) park. Recreational activities include trekking and elephant riding. The park is well known as the site where the remains of a highly revered monk named Arahat Kathapa have been enshrined.

WORLD

Turkey's Gul urges judiciary to stay impartial in graft investigation

ISTANBUL, 4 Jan — Turkish President Abdullah Gul urged the judiciary to remain impartial as it pursues a corruption investigation shaking the government, warning on Friday of grave economic consequences if confidence in the country's institutions is eroded.

In his most exhaustive comments on the graft scandal so far, Gul said the existence of a "state within the state" would not be tolerated, an apparent reference to the movement of US-based Turkish cleric Fethullah Gulen, whose followers are influential in Turkey's police and judiciary.

He also said there should be no tolerance for corruption.

The corruption investigation, which has led to the resignation of three ministers, poses the biggest

challenge to Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan in his 11 years as leader. He has cast the probe as a foreign-

laws passed by parliament and makes key appointments in the judiciary, has not been implicated in the

homes and detained businessmen close to the government two weeks ago.

"Anybody can work at state institutions — the army, the judiciary, or other state actors — but they have to abide by the law, the constitution and the rules of that institution ... taking orders from somewhere else is not acceptable," he said.

"If there are such claims, these will be investigated and this cannot be allowed. If this is happening within the judiciary, among the judges, this cannot be tolerated."

The corruption probe has pitched Erdogan against Gulen, whose Hizmet ("Service") movement controls a vast global network of schools and businesses and whose sympathizers among Turkey's religious elite say they number in the millions.—Reuters



Turkish President Abdullah Gul

backed plot to undermine his government and sap his influence in the Middle East and beyond.

Gul, whose role as president is largely ceremonial but who must approve

corruption allegations.

"There can be no state within the state," the president said in a live interview on Turkish television, echoing Erdogan's words after police raided offices and

HK Customs nets 64 people in milk powder smuggling ring

HONG KONG, 4 Jan — Hong Kong's customs department said on Friday it has arrested 64 people for smuggling milk powder to mainland China in a two-day operation.

Those arrested in the operation, in which 450 kilograms of baby formula was also seized, were mostly mainland Chinese who were hired to carry the powder across the border to

Shenzhen hidden in their baggage, the department said. "The group worked in an organized manner," Louise Ho, head of the Rail and Ferry Command at the Customs and Excise Department, told reporters.

"They would wait for our customs officers to change shifts at 3 or 4 pm, or rush the gate shortly before closing. They also worked with accomplices

to try to avoid our random inspection," Ho said.

Hong Kong customs collaborated with its Shenzhen counterpart in the operation, she said. To stem the rampant parallel trade and maintain local supply of several popular brands of baby formula, Hong Kong imposed a new law in March that limits the amount of milk powder and soya milk powder each

adult traveler can take when leaving Hong Kong to 1.8 kilograms within 24 hours.

Demand for reputable brands of milk powder in mainland China remains high after an estimated 300,000 young children came down with kidney illnesses after consuming melamine-tainted milk powder in 2008, of which at least six died.

Kyodo News

US court allows more phone snooping

WASHINGTON, 4 Jan — The secretive US Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court on Friday renewed the authority of US intelligence agencies to collect data on millions of Americans' telephone calls in a programme that has set off a legal battle over privacy rights.

The court allowed the intelligence community to collect metadata from phone companies, the Office of Director of National Intelligence James Clapper said in a news release.

The release offered almost no details about the ruling, but a US official said the authority was renewed for three months, and that it applied to the entire metadata collection programme.

In the past, these orders

were sometimes issued to individual telephone companies. But the official said the latest order covered all companies from which metadata had been collected under recent previous court authorizations.

News the National Security Agency can track the telephone calls of Americans by collecting metadata of who they contact and when, was one of the main revelations by former spy agency contractor Edward Snowden last year that set off public outcry about government spying.

Two US district judges recently issued conflicting rulings on the legality and constitutionality of bulk metadata collection by the NSA.

On Friday, the Justice Department filed notice it



Antennas of the former National Security Agency (NSA) listening station are seen at the Teufelsberg hill, or Devil's Mountain in Berlin, on 5 Nov, 2013.—REUTERS

was appealing a ruling in December by Washington-based federal judge Richard Leon that declared bulk metadata collection was probably unlawful. Leon said that he could not imagine a more "indiscriminate" and "arbitrary" invasion of privacy. But William Pauley, a federal judge based in Manhattan, issued a ruling last month that found such collection legal.

Clapper's office said that US intelligence agencies were "open to modifications" to the metadata collection programme that "would provide additional privacy and civil liberty protections while still maintaining its operational benefits."

The NSA says it only uses the metadata of Americans in limited circumstances and with great care.

Reuters



Students queue to enter an examination place in Hefei, east China's Anhui Province, on 4 Jan, 2014. The 3-day national postgraduate exam of 2014 began on Saturday. — XINHUA

Eight detained over China shopping mall blast

CHENGDU, 4 Jan — Eight people have been detained after a gas blast caused a fire in a shopping mall in southwest China's Sichuan Province, leaving four dead and 40 injured, local authorities said on Friday. The blast, which hit the Mo'erma shopping mall in the city of Luzhou on 26 December, happened after maintenance workers made a mistake when connecting

two natural gas pipelines outside the mall, said an official with the Jiangyang District government.

The error caused a gas leak inside the mall, which then caused the blast and the ensuing fire, the officials said, citing investigators. The accident killed three local residents and another from east China's Fujian Province, according to the government.—Xinhua

Russia to expand air patrols in Arctic

MOSCOW, 4 Jan — The Russia navy will expand its air patrol ranges in the Arctic in 2014, echoing President Vladimir Putin's calls to strengthen the country's presence in that region, local media reported on Friday. "In 2014, the naval aviation of the Northern Fleet will significantly expand the geography of Arctic patrol flights," the RIA Novosti news agency quoted the fleet's spokesman Vadim Serga as saying.

Noting the fleet's Tu-142 and Il-38 reconnaissance and anti-submarine warfare aircraft had completed more than 30 patrol

missions in the region in 2013, Serga said the navy would use the network of a revamped Soviet-era airfield, the Temp airfield, on the New Siberian Islands.

The Russian Defence Ministry has also said that it would deploy a combine-arms force in the Arctic region by 2015.

Putin has said earlier that Russia would never "surrender" its Arctic area. In December, the president ordered the defence ministry to take every step necessary to protect Russia's security and national interests in the region.

Xinhua



A man among sewing plant workers hurls a Molotov cocktail at security forces in a suburb of Phnom Penh on 3 Jan, 2014. At least two people died in a clash the same day between Cambodian protesters and authorities in the area, police and military police sources said. — KYODO NEWS

Parents may want to limit electronic media at mealtime

NEW YORK, 4 Jan — Parents who let their teens use electronic devices or watch TV during family meals tend to serve less nutritious food and have poorer family communication, a new study suggests.

Experts have suggested turning the TV off at

mealtime for years. But with the advent of cell phones and other handheld devices, kids can bring all kinds of media with them to the table.

"The findings of this most recent paper showed that mealtime media use is common among families

with adolescents but that setting rules around media use at meals may reduce media use among teens and have other positive benefits as well," lead author Jayne A Fulkerson told *Reuters Health* in an email.

Fulkerson is the director of the Centre for Child and Family Health Promotion Research at the University of Minnesota School of Nursing in Minneapolis.

"Parents who are having family meals with media could choose to make some rules excluding media at mealtimes to spend more quality time with their children," she said.

Fulkerson and her colleagues asked more than 1,800 parents how often their adolescent children watched TV, talked on the phone, texted, played games or listened to music with headphones during family meals.

Reuters



Josh Rubinstein, 15, utilizes augmented reality technology with AppGear's "Alien Jailbreak" on his iPad as he plays the new generation of toy at Grand Central Station during the American International Toy Fair in New York, in this 13 Feb, 2012 file photo.—REUTERS

Copper and oil slide, world equities dip

NEW YORK, 4 Jan — Copper futures dropped on Friday on concerns over Chinese growth and as the US dollar strengthened, while crude oil extended recent losses and a global gauge of equities drifted lower. Stocks were little changed on Wall Street, with low volume due in part to a snowstorm that blanketed the US Northeast — including financial hubs

New York and Boston.

Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke said the US central bank is committed to highly accommodative policy even after deciding last month to trim its bond-buying stimulus.

European shares rose, bucking a wave of risk aversion that swept across Asia, where stocks slid after a measure of activ-

ity in China's services sector slipped in December to a four-month low. At the closing bell in New York, the Dow Jones industrial average rose 28.64 points, or 0.17 percent, at 16,469.99. The S&P 500 dipped 0.62 points, or 0.03 percent, at 1,831.36. The Nasdaq Composite fell 11.16 points, or 0.27 percent, at 4,131.91.

Reuters

African American women have a harder time losing weight

NEW YORK, 4 Jan — African American women who follow the same diet as white women and exercise just as much tend to lose less weight because they burn fewer calories, a new study suggests. "Many large and well done studies have demonstrated that African American women tend to lose fewer pounds than their Caucasian counterparts," Dr Ann Smith Barnes told *Reuters Health* by email.

Smith Barnes studies obesity at Baylor College of Medicine and is the medical director of Weight Management Services and Disease Prevention for the Harris Health System of Houston.

She was not involved in the new study.

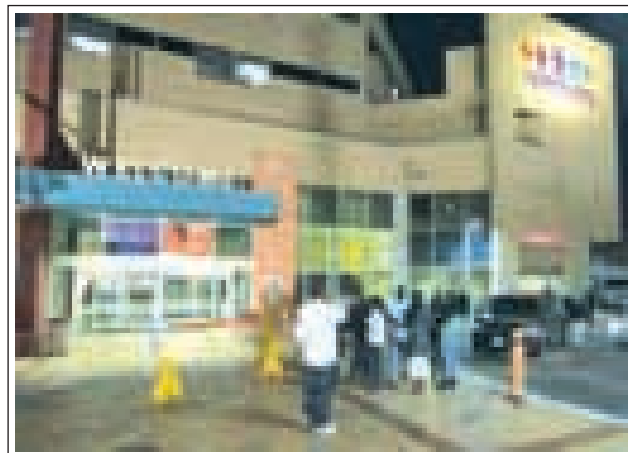
Scientists haven't been sure what explains those differences in weight loss. One suggestion is that African American women are less likely to adhere to weight loss programmes. Another possible explanation is that their bodies need fewer calories. To learn more, James DeLany from the University of Pittsburgh and his colleagues studied 39 African American women and 66 white women. The participants were all severely obese and were randomly assigned to either a calorie-restricted diet alone or the diet along with exercise guidelines.—*Reuters*

Birth control type tied to time between pregnancies



A health worker inserts a contraceptive implant into an housewife's arm during a Family Planning fair conducted by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in Tondo, Manila in this 11 July, 2012 file photo.—REUTERS

NEW YORK, 4 Jan — Women using intrauterine devices (IUDs) and other types of long-term reversible birth control after having a baby are less likely to get pregnant again quickly,



The outside of Children's Hospital and Research Centre is seen in Oakland, California, on 30 Dec, 2013. The family of 13-year-old Jahi McMath, who was declared brain dead after complications from a tonsillectomy, won an 11th-hour court order on Monday requiring doctors to keep her connected to a breathing machine for at least another week, relatives said.—REUTERS

US auto sales hit six-year high, December disappoints

DETROIT, 4 Jan — The US auto industry limped to its best year since the boom times before 2008 as results came up short in December as a late Thanksgiving holiday robbed sales from the year's final month. The tough sledding in December does not suggest a difficult 2014, however, as several executives and analysts expect auto industry growth to continue outpacing the overall US economy as it has since the recession.

In addition to the late US Thanksgiving holiday weekend, December sales were hurt by snow and ice storms that kept consumers away from dealerships, automakers and analysts said.

"Sales were pulled into November, but also people were more impacted by the compressed shopping season, most of which was in December," Kelley Blue Book senior analyst Karl Brauer said. "People were doing more Christmas shopping than car shopping."

He added that industry-watchers should not be

overly concerned by a December that was affected by the timing of a holiday in the previous month. Last month included 2 January due to a quirk in the calendar that affected how automakers typically report monthly sales.

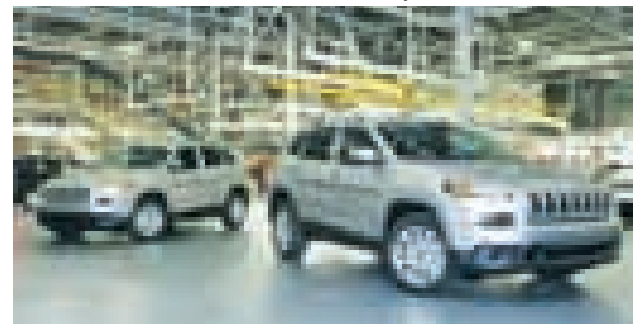
Monthly auto sales are seen as an early indicator of consumer spending.

US industry sales in 2013 finished at 15.6 million vehicles, up 7.6 percent from 2012, while December results inched up 0.3 percent. The annualized sales rate in the final month was 15.4 million vehicles, well below the 16 million

expected by economists surveyed by *Thomson Reuters*.

The timing of Thanksgiving weekend had a greater impact on December sales than in recent years, causing automakers to miss expectations, said Mustafa Mohatarem, General Motors Co's chief economist.

The late December holiday season is generally one of the heaviest sales periods at US auto dealerships. GM, Ford Motor Co and Volkswagen AG all said the weather was less of a negative factor than the timing of the Thanksgiving holiday.—*Reuters*



The upgraded North section of the Chrysler Toledo Assembly Complex which will be used to produce the Jeep Cherokee is seen during a media tour, in Toledo, Ohio on 18 July, 2013.—REUTERS

researchers found.

The World Health Organization endorses a two-year period between birth and a woman's next conception.

Still, one third of all repeat pregnancies in the US occur within 18 months of the previous child's birth. And a growing body of evidence shows this close timing increases the risk a baby will be born early or at a low birth weight.

The time between pregnancies "cannot be explained only by the mother's preferences," Heike Thiel de Bocanegra said.

She and her colleagues from the University of California, San Francisco investigated the link between access to birth control or family planning services

and pregnancy spacing.

In the current study of 117,644 California women who'd had at least two children, 64 percent waited 18 months or more between pregnancies and the rest did not.

All women included in the study filed claims through the state's Medicaid programme for the poor, called Medi-Cal, or through health providers offering state-funded family planning services.

The researchers matched data on claims for contraceptives to California's birth registry.

"We assumed that access to contraception . . . would improve birth spacing," Dr Anitra Beasley wrote in an email to *Reuters Health*.—*Reuters*

NATIONAL



President U Thein Sein and wife Daw Khin Khin Win cordially greet Singaporean Ambassador and diplomats and chairpersons of political parties at the dinner to mark 66th Anniversary Independence Day.—MNA

President U Thein Sein...

(from page 1)
Chief Justice of the Union U Tun Tun Oo, Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, Chairman of

the Constitutional Tribunal of the Union U Mya Thein and Chairman of Union Election Commission U Tin Aye, Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Ser-

vices Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Soe Win and wife, the Union ministers, the Union attorney-general, the Union auditor-general, chairman of Union Civil Services Board, senior military of-

ficers from the Commander-in-Chief Office, the Hluttaw Affairs Committee chairmen and secretaries, the commander of Nay Pyi Taw Command, departmental heads, ambassadors, UN resident representa-

tives, members of Central Committee for organizing 66th Anniversary Independence Day, subcommittee chairmen, chairmen of political parties and guests. Before and during the dinner, vocalists from the

Myanmar Athan modern music band entertained the guests with songs.

Fireworks were released to honour Independence Day at the ceremony.

MNA

MICC officially opened for ASEAN summits, meetings

NAY PYI TAW, 4 Jan — President U Thein Sein opened the Myanmar International Convention Centre in Nay Pyi Taw today.

The facility will use to host summits and meetings of the Association of South-east Asian Nations during Myanmar's one-year tenure as chair of the regional group.

To mark the occasion, the president unveiled a bronze plaque at the building and sprinkled scented water on it during the ceremony.

This year will be the first time to take the ASEAN chair since it joined the group in 1997.

As ASEAN chair, Myanmar will take a leading role in implementing priorities of the ASEAN Road Map as part of efforts to establish the ASEAN Community.

It will also have to lay down the ASEAN Vision for beyond 2015.

Being ASEAN chair will afford Myanmar a good opportunity to show its stability and capacity to regional countries and to the international community by holding the ASEAN meetings successfully, President U Thein Sein said at the coordination meeting in Nay Pyi Taw on preparation for taking the ASEAN chair, on 29 October.

During the one-year term as ASEAN chair, Myanmar will host about 300 meetings including summits, ministerial meetings and officials' meetings.

Myanmar has already prepared accommodation, security, transportation and information and is ready to host ASEAN meetings.

The State Guesthouse offers 1,848 rooms with a capacity for about 3,000 guests and 77 hotels in Nay Pyi Taw can offer 4,000 rooms.

MNA



President U Thein Sein views arrangements for hosting ASEAN-Japan Meeting to be held on 10-11 May 2014 at MICC.—MNA

Imperial Villa Hotel opens in Nay Pyi Taw

NAY PYI TAW, 4 Jan — Imperial Villa Hotel was

Photo shows fireworks seen in the sky above Presidential Palace at dinner to mark 66th Anniversary Independence Day in progress. (New on page 1) KYAW ZEYA-MNA

opened on the 66th Anniversary Independence Day at Jade Villa (18 A) of the State Guesthouse in Dekhinathiri Township here this morning.

Union Minister for Hotels and Tourism U Htay Aung, together with Deputy Ministers Dr Tin Shwe, Dr

Sai Ohn Kyaw and Nay Pyi Taw Vice-Mayor U Than Htoo Kyaw, unveiled the signboards to open the hotel. Later, the minister examined the special rooms at the villa which will also be used for welcoming heads of state/government and state delegates and guests.—MNA



OPINION

PERSPECTIVES

Sunday, 5 January, 2014

Nay Pyi Taw not yet the place to be

What makes a city exciting is vibrant street life, historic architecture, addictive shopping, culture in all its variations and a buzzing night life. Cities with a long history have all those attractions that make millions of people dream to live there or visit. Not so Nay Pyi Taw, perhaps one of the few or even the only capital city in the world where people cannot wait to get out be-

cause it is “boring”. Boring was a word frequently heard during the SEA Games, when foreign reporters and athletes were asked what they thought of the new capital.

To be fair, the city has only existed since 2006, but one wonders why there is still no city center where people would want to spend their free time, why every building seems to be miles away from the next and why there is still no public transport. A trip to the nearest shop in Nay Pyi Taw can easily be a 40 minute trip in the car – if you have a driver that is. Despite the estimated 1.2 million inhabitants one sometimes feels like the only person on the planet here, with the city being spread over 2,700 sq km. The roads are good and the hotels are big and beautiful, but who wants to live in a place

that feels more like a giant artificial theme park than a real city with soul and character such as Yangon which has 6 million people and attracts more and more foreign travelers each month.

Nay Pyi Taw will play a bigger role on the international platform as a host city and officials should start thinking how to breathe life into this place. The next big event after the SEA Games will be the ASEAN Summit here in July. And while without a doubt officials have to worry about the organization of the event, they should start thinking longer term. They should decide how to develop this city as quickly as possible to make people want to come here, work here, invest here and stay. But for now it is the weekend flights or buses back to Yangon.

ARTICLE

Myanmar as host is ready for the ASEAN Summit and related meetings

Interviewer: Maung Swe Thaung;
Photo: Than Oo (MNA)



Photo shows buildings of State Guesthouses with scene of roundabout in Nay Pyi Taw.

On 17 November, 2011, the 19th ASEAN Summit reached an agreement on Myanmar taking over as the 2014 ASEAN Chair.

As chair, Myanmar will host summits, ministerial-level meetings and other related gatherings during its tenure.

Under the ASEAN Charter, Myanmar is to deal with agenda issues and head ASEAN foreign ministers in the meetings and represent the Association of Southeast Asian Nations at the G-20 meeting.

The following is a translation of an interview with an official about the newly opened Myanmar International Convention Centre where the ASEAN Summit and related meetings will be held.

U Kan Chun (Nay Pyi Taw Council member)

The host country should have building facilities and infrastructure for the ASEAN Summit. In that

regard, Myanmar had no secure hostels for those who will come to the Summit, so it sent a team to other host countries to observe meeting facilities time when it was clear Myanmar was sure to take the ASEAN Chair. After that, necessary buildings of Myanmar

architectural design were built. We needed a lot of facilities for the guests and media.

It can cost much money for security measures and accommodation, but a “Green light” was given to national entrepreneurs for construction of State guest-

houses near the places in which the summits are hosted. Millions more are to be spent on the maintenance of these buildings. Except for rooms in which the heads (of state or government) stayed, other rooms will be allowed to be used as hotel rooms.

Therefore, it can save maintenance costs to a certain extent and the buildings can be used as guesthouses. Guests can take relaxations near the roads around Yan Aung Myin Dam. A guesthouse can accommodate at least 100 guests. The government had to take long-term

benefits and minimizing public funds into account. We have to make a lot of effort for landscaping as part of preparation. As a host country, Myanmar must show its hospitality, accountability and responsibility to the world.

(See page 9)



Building of Myanmar International Convention Centre in Nay Pyi Taw.

ARTICLE

Myanmar as host is ready for the ASEAN Summit...

(from page 8)

U Aung Linn (Director-General, ASEAN Affairs Department)

The ASEAN host country usually holds two summits: the first one is the meeting between ASEAN member countries and the ASEAN Secretariat and the second one, the ASEAN summit and its related meetings. The second schedule includes the East-Asia Summit with eight dialogue partners.

It may also include a meeting between the ASEAN countries and the ASEAN Secretariat in addition to the ASEAN+8 meet-

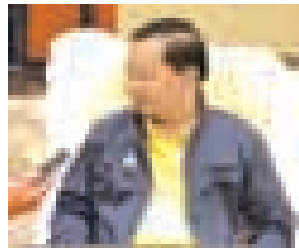


**U Aung Linn
(Director-General,
ASEAN Affairs
Department)**

issues at the summit where they make major decisions on the future of the 10-member group. At 23rd summit in 2013, the ASEAN leaders formulated future plans for the ASEAN Community, which is

in 2015, as the ASEAN chair. Malaysia, the next ASEAN chair in 2015, will formulate a blueprint on decisions made by ASEAN in 2014.

U Win Zaw (Architect)



**U Aung Than
(Construction in-charge)**

We enter ASEAN with the view to hosting summits. First, we had to develop infrastructure and venues for hosting such

hotels in Nay Pyi Taw.

As the first meeting to host is the ASEAN Summit, we have prepared the venue for the summit. We didn't know the venue would host the ASEAN Summit and we didn't have an international convention centre then. So, we observed international convention centres in about three countries. We



**U Kan Chun
(Nay Pyi Taw Council member)**

a convention centre after thorough research.

The countries we observed failed to deliver a foolproof security system. We gave our due attention to security.

Our design guarantees clear vision from end to end of each meeting room. We also included the same feature to each walkway to boost security. We will host any international occasions after the ASEAN



U Win Zaw (Architect)

Summit.

So, we designed it to be able to host international trade fairs. The significance of the centre is that it can host both the conventions and the trade fairs. That would help cover costs for maintenance of the centre. We also gave our focus on the further

extensions in the future.

U Aung Than (Construction in-charge)

Simplicity and sustainability is the essence of the design of the building. It can endure a grade-4 natural disaster and the roof can withstand strong wind and the ravages of the weather.

We have included a media centre for journalists where they can get Wifi Internet access and the press briefing room on the ground floor. The media centre features 10 media rooms and media booths for more than 1,000 journalists.

The audio system is the lifeblood of an international convention centre. Our sound engineers have installed specific audio systems for each room to deliver unique audio experiences. All in all, we are ready to host the ASEAN Summit and related meetings. I hope our ASEAN leaders make major decisions for the bloc while our country takes the leadership.

Trs: MT+HKA



Jade Hall where over 500 people can be accommodated for cater services.

ing. Plans are underway to host the first summit with attendance by more than 15,000 representatives from home and abroad.

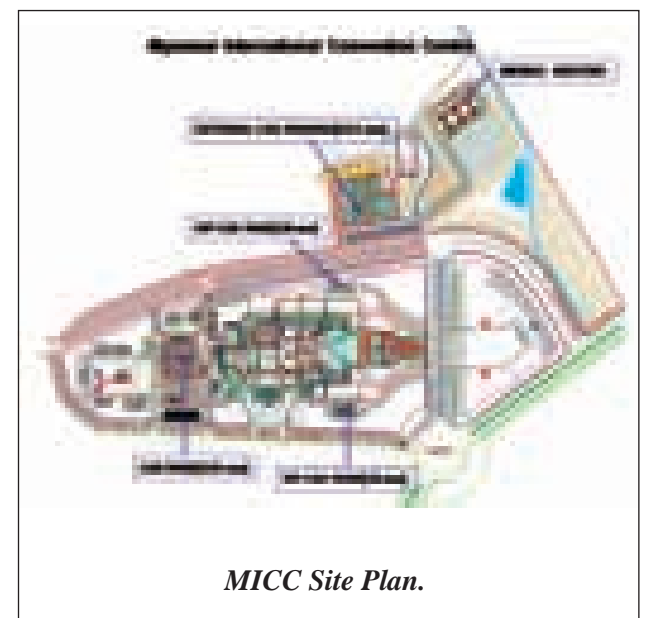
It is expected more than 3,000 representatives from ASEAN will attend the first summit and more than 25,000 the second summit. Respective ministries concerned are compiling a list of meetings for the ASEAN Summit and its related meetings. According to the latest development, there are nearly 300 meetings planned.

The ASEAN Summit, attended by ASEAN leaders and the ASEAN secretary-general, opens with the plenary meeting. Major issues in the bloc are put onto the table at the summit. They discuss regional and international

scheduled to take shape in 2015. We will take a leading role in discussing how ASEAN will emerge

summits. We developed guest houses near the venues for the summit and other meetings, apart from

found out the needs of international centres in other countries and we developed a detailed design of



MICC Site Plan.



A view of buildings at Imperial Lake Hotel in Nay Pyi Taw.



People participate in Independence Day commemorative activities

CHAUNGU, 4 Jan—To mark the 66th Anniversary Independence Day, ChaungU Township Development Affairs Committee organized an early morning marathon on 3 January.

A total of 25 athletes participated in the race from the toll gate at Myinmu to the people's sports ground in ChaungU Township along the Mandalay-Monywa Road.

First prize winner Ye Lin Aung won K 300,000, Maung Toe, K 200,000 and Myint Soe, K 100,000. Township level officials awarded K 20,000 each to 14 consolation prize winners.

In Myeik, a Baby Contest in commemoration of the 66th Anniversary Independence Day was held



at the hall of the Township Maternal and Child Welfare

Association in Myeik on 2 January.

HRD

100 students win awards in Yamethin Township

YAMETHIN, 4 Jan—Basic Education High School No 1 in Yamethin observed School Family Day for the 2013-14 academic year and a prize presentation for outstanding students at its

hall on 3 January.

Education officers presented prizes to 19 students who passed the matriculation examination in 2013 with flying colours. Officials also gave prizes

to winners in the basic education level essay and extemporaneous talk contest.

At the ceremony, 100 outstanding students won prizes.

Kyemon-115



Kyaukse District IPRD organizes student development activity

KYAUKSE, 4 Jan—Prize-awarding for winners in poetry, essay, extemporaneous speech and reading skills contests organized by the Kyaukse District Information and Public Relations Department took place at No 2 Basic Education High School in Kyaukse on 3 January.

Before the prize ceremony, Head of Mandalay Region IPRD U Kyaw Than Tun explained

development of school libraries and the importance of supporting reading habits. Department officials gave prizes to the winners.

Kyaukse District IPRD and Basic Education Department jointly organized the essay, reading skill, speech and poetry recitation

contests. Students from basic education schools at different levels took part in the contest. Of them, 17 students won prizes.

Myanmar Libraries Foundation gave K 300,000 to the contest.

Kyemon-Tun Tun Naing (Kyaukse)

Rural people enjoy completion of new RC bridge

PYAPON, 4 Jan—Construction of an inter-village reinforced concrete bridge linking Aungthaya Village, Ayethaya Village and Myittan Aphaung Village in Pyapon Township of Ayeyawady Region started in November 2013 and it has already been completed. The bridge, 43 feet long and 15 feet wide, was built at a cost of K 12.5 million—K 5 million by the township and K 7.5 million by local people.

The chair of the Myeik District MCWSC and officials presented prizes to the winners.

A similar contest took place in Sittway in Rakhine State in the western part of the country on 3 January. Daw Nu Nu Zan, wife of the Rakhine State chief m, and responsible persons of Rakhine State Maternal and Child Welfare Supervisory Committee oversaw the baby contest and gave prizes to the winners.

On 3 January, Chief Minister of the Magway Region U Phone Maw Shwe and officials competed in an Independence Day commemorative golf tournament in Magway. In all, 222 golfers participated.

The Ayeyawady Region government allotted K 36.4 million to Pyapon Township from K 1000 million of rural development fund for carrying out development tasks in the township.

"The RC bridge is reliable for our villages. The vehicles small and large can use the new bridge in convenience," said a local people of Ayethaya Village.—*Kyemon-540*

MMAL-District IPRD/Nan Maung (Thayet)

Poster, photo and book show held in Tatkon

TATKON, 3 Jan—In commemoration of 66th Anniversary Independence Day, Township Information and Public and Public Relations Department organized poster, photo and book show at the meeting hall of No.1 Basic Education High School in Tatkon this afternoon,

attended by Headmistress Daw Nyo Nyo Win, teachers and students.

Deputy Staff Officer Daw Tint Tint Khaing of Township IPRD explained the display of the posters, photos and books and librarian Daw Than Than Nwe issued book rental

cards to the teachers and students to foster their reading habits.

The township IPRD deputy staff officer and chairman of the township writer's association presented publications for the No.1 school library.

Township IPRD



As monthly voluntarily service, students of PhaungdawU Monastic Education High School in front of Nandawshae Ward in Mandalay gather garbage their school and streets its around areas on 3 January.—*KYEMON*

Myothit Township Development Affairs Committee built a Hospital Road paved with asphalt. On 2 January, Myothit Township Pyithu Hluttaw MP U Myint Thu, Township level officials formally open the asphalt road in Phayagyi Ward. MMAL-127

REGIONAL

Xi requests safety of staff aboard stranded icebreaker

BEIJING, 4 Jan — President Xi Jinping has requested all-out efforts to ensure the safety of the staff aboard the research vessel and icebreaker *Xuelong*, which is trapped in heavy ice after its rescue of passengers on a Russian vessel stranded in Antarctica.

Xuelong's rescue mission had been accomplished under extreme risks and has won honor for China and the people, Xi said. He expressed regards and greet-

ings to the 101-member expedition team, and ordered coordinated efforts to help them out of trouble and ensure their safety.

He also expressed hopes the team respond to the situation in a calm manner and return safely at an early date.

Premier Li Keqiang issued an instruction, asking the *Xuelong* team to stay calm and wait for the opportune moment to get out of trouble. *Xuelong*, or

Snow Dragon, on Thursday successfully evacuated 52 passengers who have been trapped on the Russian vessel *MV Akademik Shokalskiy* since Christmas Eve, with the assistance of the Australian rescue icebreaker *Aurora Australis*.

However, severe weather conditions trapped *Xuelong* and the team when they were about to continue the expedition after the rescue mission. Sources say it is unable to free itself from



President Xi Jinping

the distress on its own. It is expected a positive weather change on Monday would make conditions favourable for *Xuelong* to get free.

Xinhua

PH intensifies anti-narcotics cooperation home and abroad

MANILA, 4 Jan — Philippine anti-narcotics agencies have intensified their cooperation not only among themselves but also with foreign counterparts, a move to ensure the country not to be a regional center of illegal drug trade, a senior government official said Friday.

Deputy Presidential Spokesperson Abigail Valte made the statement after the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) was recently informed by the United States that the Philippines could become a center for drug trade by Mexicans who were planning to smuggle illegal drugs in Asian countries.

"You know we've always said that we don't want the country as a haven for anything illegal," she said in a news briefing in Malacanang, the presidential palace. She noted that the PDEA, the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) and the Philippine

National Police (PNP) are now cooperating with the international law enforcement agencies to confiscate any illegal contraband that reaches the Philippine shore and to prevent the production of illegal drugs here.

Valte acknowledged that with more than 7,100 islands, it is indeed a challenge for law enforcement agencies to guard against the possible entry of illegal drugs into the country.

"But apart from the geographical location, it is actually more (of a challenge) also of the batting average at least when it comes to convictions, and we hope to improve that," she said.

On last Christmas Day, law enforcers raided a ranch in Northern Philippine Province of Batangas where they seized 84 kilos of methamphetamine hydrochloride or shabu with an estimated value of 420 million pesos (about 0.95 million US dollars).

Xinhua



Customers flock to the food corner of an Aeon supermarket that opened in Tianjin, China, on 3 Jan, 2013. KYODO NEWS

CPC "mass line" campaign benefits poverty-hit families

JINAN, 4 Jan — Zhang Guiqin observed the New Year of 2014 in her new house — a first for her poor family. She had dreamed of moving to a new house all her life.

Zhang lives a very hard life. She has a congenital leg disability, and her aging husband is in poor condition. Her son suffers from a congenital disease as well. Her parents, who are in their 90s, have been plagued by disease for years.

With little income and total dependence on subsidies, it used to be impossible for such a family to build a new house on their own. However, their situation changed with a visit from a local official to Zhang's village.

In a campaign aimed at building closer ties between officials and the masses, He Ximing, a chief accountant with the State Assets Supervision and Administration Commission of Jining

City, visited the village in March last year and decided to help Zhang after learning about her difficulties.

He raised a total of 60,000 yuan (9,836 US dollars) from government subsidies for reconstruction of dangerous rural houses and through donations from staff of his own unit.

"I did not dream of a new tile-brick house. I should thank the official sent by the municipal authorities," said Zhang, in tears. In the campaign in Jining, 73,000 officials made direct contact with 1.81 million rural families, according to He Siqing, head of the organization department of the Jining City committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC).

Each leading official from the city selected ten households to contact and must spend no less than five nights in the village each year for research, the official added.—Xinhua

Japan eyes increasing foreign construction workers ahead of Olympics

TOKYO, 4 Jan — Japan is considering allowing more foreign workers from other Asian countries to work at construction sites under an on-the-job training system ahead of a construction boom prior to the 2020 Tokyo Olympics, officials close to the issue said on Friday.

The government and the ruling Liberal Democratic Party are considering relaxing a range of curbs on the entry of Vietnamese and other Asian workers to cope with the labour shortage in the domestic construction market, they said. Measures under consideration include extending the on-the-job training period to five years from the current three.

A process of necessary legal revision is expected to start in 2014. With the planned deregulation, the construction industry may become more dependent on foreign workers. At present, about 150,000 foreigners are working in Japan with entry permits under the on-the-job training system, including 10,000 to 15,000 in the construction sector. Under the current regulation, the system is not applicable to simple labour and limited

to skilled labour such as assembly of reinforcing steel for buildings and operation of construction machines.

The government and the LDP also envision allowing foreign workers who have already returned home after the three-year training period to reenter Japan as trainees, the officials said. Also being studied is the possibility of doubling or tripling the upper limit on the number of foreign trainees per company, now restricted to around 5 percent of each company's workforce. The Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism expects construction for stadiums and other Olympic facilities to get under way in 2015.

"We should start revising the system as speedily as possible by taking into account the time needed for immigration control authorities to examine applications" from foreign workers to enter Japan, a senior LDP official said.—Kyodo News

Thai gov't urges protesters to call off "shutdown" rally

BANGKOK, 4 Jan—Thailand's caretaker government on Saturday warned anti-government protesters not to go ahead with a plan to shut down the capital Bangkok on 13 January. Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Surapong Tovichakchikul said on television that the plan to bring the capital to a standstill was illegal and would severely affect the country in various aspects.

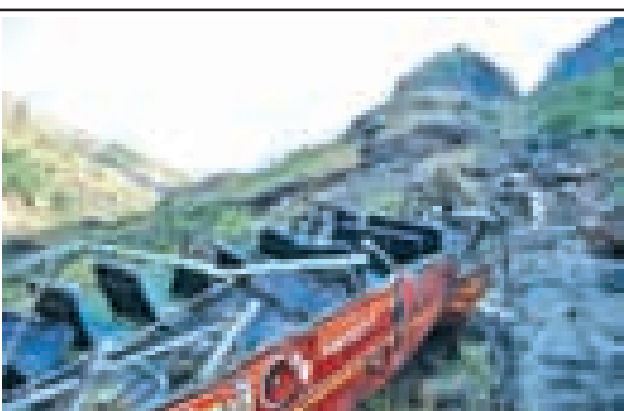
He warned that protesters who take part in the rally could face stiff penalties and

that the government would take necessary measures to maintain order in Bangkok and nearby areas.

"I urge those intending to join the rally to reconsider. Please do not support or join the illegal act that could destroy our beloved country," Surapong said. The government of caretaker Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra decided Friday to maintain imposition of the Internal Security Act, which gives the police extra powers to control the situation,

instead of evoking an emergency decree that would require the military to assist the police. Military sources said Yingluck wanted to evoke the emergency decree in Bangkok during the incoming rally, but military leaders voiced concern, saying they no longer wanted to see confrontation or bloodshed. According to Bangkok Medical Centre, eight people have been killed and 461 others wounded in the political violence that started at the end of November.—Kyodo News

The wreckage of a bus lies at the site of an accident after it fell into a gorge about 160 kilometres northeast of Mumbai, India, on 2 Jan, 2014. The bus plunged into a 120-metre deep gorge Thursday in western India, splitting open on the rocky ground below, killing at least 27 people, police said. —XINHUA



Vietnamese and Russian soldiers work on Vietnam's first Russian-made submarine "Hanoi" in Cam Ranh bay of south Vietnam on 3 Jan, 2014. The diesel powered submarine arrived at Cam Ranh military port Friday. It is the first of six 636 Kilo-class submarines that Vietnam ought from Russia to modernize its navy. The handover ceremony will be held on 10 January XINHUA

ADVERTISEMENT & GENERAL

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV ORA BHUM VOY NO (357)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV ORA BHUM VOY NO (357) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 5.1.2014 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.P where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

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

Phone No: 256908/378316/376797



Chinese Ambassador Chang Hua (R) and Yemeni Cultural Minister Abdullah Aobal Manthok (L) exchange a cultural cooperation agreement at the Chinese Embassy in Sanaa, Yemen, on 2 Jan, 2014. The Chinese government on Thursday donated musical instruments worth 200,000 RMB to the Yemeni government, aiming to enhance cultural cooperation between the two countries.—XINHUA

Malaysian PM calls on people to unite in New Year's message

KUALA LUMPUR, 4 Jan — Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak on Tuesday called on all the Malaysians to reaffirm their "commitment to the peaceful coexistence" and keep pursuing unity in his New Year's message.

Reflecting on the events of 2013, Najib said on the one hand, the general election demonstrated the deep basis of democracy in Malaysia; on the other, it also exposed the existence of divisions.

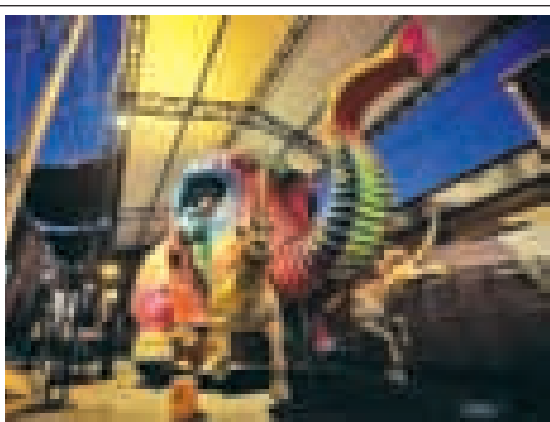
"I believe Malaysia is strong enough to survive

heated debate," he said, adding that the divisions will heal with time.

Najib called on Malaysians to be "active in the pursuit of unity," as the country's stability and progress "depend on it."

Najib also stressed the importance of economic reforms, in particular the need to reduce the country's debts and strengthen the economy. In the end, he called on the people to consolidate "Malaysia's continued success," and build a stronger and more unified country.—Xinhua

People work on a float for the parade of the Blacks and Whites' Carnival, in Pasto city, Colombia, on 2 Jan, 2014. The Blacks and Whites' Carnival that will be held from 2 January to 7 January, is one of the most important celebrations of Colombia, which was declared in 2009 as one of the Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).—XINHUA



THE REPUBLIC OF THE UNION OF MYANMAR MINISTRY OF ENERGY MYANMA OIL AND GAS ENTERPRISE (INVITATION FOR OPEN TENDER) (18/2013)

Open tenders are invited for supply of the following respective items in United States Dollars and Myanmar Kyats.

Sr.No	Tender No	Description	Qty	Remark
(1)	IFB-156(2013-2014)	Gas Detector Equipment with Complete Accessories	(2) Set	US\$
(2)	IFB-157(2013-2014)	N 69 & GD 75 Swivel Complete Sets	(2) Items	US\$
(3)	IFB-158(2013-2014)	Assorted Sizes of ERW Steel Line Pipes (API 5L Grade X 42,3LPE Coated) & Pipe Accessories	(1) Lot	US\$
(4)	IFB-159(2013-2014)	Welding Electrode	(3) Items	US\$
(5)	IFB-160(2013-2014)	50 Ton Tractor with Low Bed Trailer	(2) Units	US\$
(6)	IFB-161(2013-2014)	Assorted Sizes of Tri-Cone Rock Bits & PDC Bits	(5) Items	US\$
(7)	IFB-162(2013-2014)	10 Ton Dump Truck	(1) Unit	US\$
(8)	IFB-163(2013-2014)	CAT D 3508 Engine	(3) Nos	US\$
(9)	DMP/L-048(2013-2014)	Electrical Spares for ZJ 70L Drilling Rig	(4) Items	Ks
(10)	DMP/L-049(2013-2014)	Portable Fire Pump, Transformer Welding Set & Gas Cutting Torch	(3) Items	Ks
(11)	DMP/L-050(2013-2014)	Geological Survey Instruments & Mud Testing Equipments	(1) Lot	Ks

- Tender Closing Date & Time - 3-2-2014,16:30 Hr

Tender Document shall be available during office hours commencing from 3rd January, 2014 at the Finance Department, Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise, No(44) Complex, Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar.

Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise
Ph . +95 67 - 411097 / 411206

Tibet to raise education subsidy standard

LHASA, 4 Jan — The education subsidy standard in China's southwest Tibet Autonomous Region will rise again this year, the region's financial authorities announced on Saturday.

Lu Mingxiu, an official with the Bureau of Finance of Tibet, said the regional government will increase the annual budget for the educational subsidy scheme

by 70.5 million yuan (about 11.65 million USdollars) from September.

In the coming fall semester, children in kindergartens through to senior high schools will receive 2,900 yuan each to cover annual expenses for food, accommodation and educational supplies while they are in boarding school, according to Lu.

China provides free education for school-aged children in Tibet and has been providing subsidies to youngsters of herding families since 1985.

The subsidy rate has increased on more than ten occasions. In 2012, the standard was raised to 2,500 yuan and its coverage was expanded to include children of highway

maintenance workers. In 2013, the standard increased to 2,700 yuan.

By the end of 2013, Tibet invested 1.38 billion yuan in the education subsidy, benefitting more than 520,000 school-aged children, or 95 percent of the region's enrolled students, mostly from herding families.

Xinhua

Six militants killed in attack at military camp in Afghanistan

JALALABAD, (Afghanistan), 4 Jan — Six militants were killed on Saturday morning after they launched an armed attack against a joint military camp of the Afghan forces and the NATO-led coalition troops in the eastern Nangarhar Province, a provincial police source said.

"The incident occurred at a military base in Ghani Khil district of eastern Nangarhar province at around 7:30 am (local time). According to early information no member of security force was harmed in the incident," the source said.—Xinhua



Tourists visit the Jinli folklore street in Chengdu, capital of southwest China's Sichuan Province, on 6 Oct, 2013. It is estimated that China received 3.3 billion domestic tourists in 2013, reaching a year-on-year increase of 11.6%.—XINHUA

Man sentenced to death for killing pupils

NANNING, 4 Jan — A man in southwest China's Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region was sentenced to death for killing three and injuring another 13 pupils, a local court said on Saturday.

The defendant, Wu Yechang, suffered from

illnesses and loneliness, according to the ruling from Guigang City's Intermediate People's Court.

On 21 Sept, 2012, Wu bought a firewood chopper from a market in Pingnan County. He targeted pupils who were at a lunchtime school facility called Red

Apple. He attacked the students, leaving three dead and 13 injured, the ruling said.

Wu was convicted of intentional homicide and given a death sentence. He also received a fine of 19,316 yuan (about 3,192 US dollars).—Xinhua

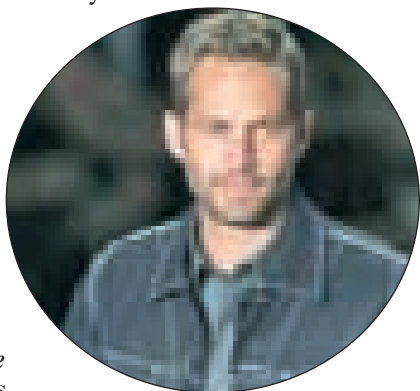
ENTERTAINMENT

No drugs, alcohol in 'Fast & Furious' star's fatal crash

LOS ANGELES, 4 Jan—No drugs or alcohol were found in the bodies of "Fast & Furious" actor Paul Walker and his friend Roger Rodas after the fiery car crash that killed them in November, a coroner's report released on Friday said.

Both Walker, 40, and Rodas, 38, tested negative for alcohol, and drugs including cocaine, opiates and marijuana were not detected, said the report from the Los Angeles County coroner's office.

US actor Paul Walker presents a creation from Colcci's 2013/2014 summer collection during Sao Paulo Fashion Week in this 21 March, 2013, file photo.—REUTERS



Disney film 'Iron Man 3' hottest ticket of 2013



LOS ANGELES, 4 Jan—Walt Disney's film "Iron Man 3" was the hottest film of 2013, with ticket sales of \$409 million in the North American market, one of four Disney films among the year's top-selling movies, according to Rentrak.

"Iron Man 3," which stars Robert Downey Jr as industrialist Tony Stark and his alter ego inside the super-charged metal suit, finished just ahead of Lions Gate Entertainment's dystopian action film "The Hunger Games: Catching Fire," which had ticket sales of \$398.4 million, the entertainment research service said.

Comcast's Universal Pictures animated film "Despicable Me 2" was third with \$367.8 million. "Man of Steel" from Time Warner's studio Warner Brothers was fourth with \$291 million.

Warner Brothers, whose film "Gravity" also placed in the top 10, ended the year

The report included an early account of the accident from the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department, dated 1 December — the day after the crash, saying the Porsche Carrera GT driven by Rodas was traveling at "an unsafe speed, approximately 100+ mph."

But a sheriff's spokeswoman said the investigation into the accident has not been completed and there was no definitive finding on the car's speed.

Both deaths were ruled

accidents. Walker died from "combined effects of traumatic and thermal injuries," and Rodas from "multiple traumatic injuries," the report said.

Walker was in the process of filming "Fast & Furious 7" at the time and production was halted a few days later.

Universal Pictures said last month that the release of the seventh installment in the highly lucrative franchise would be pushed back by nine months to April 2015. Walker will appear in the film.

Reuters



Actors perform musical *Barbie Live* during a dress rehearsal at the Taipei International Convention Center in southeast China's Taiwan, on 3 Jan, 2014. The performance started to tour in Taipei, Hsinchu and Kaohsiung from 3 January.—XINHUA

'American Hustle,' 'Wolf of Wall Street' win Writers Guild nods

LOS ANGELES, 4 Jan—Screenplays for two films depicting graft and greed in America — "American Hustle" and "The Wolf of Wall Street" — were among the nominees on Friday for the Writers Guild Awards, a prognosticator for the film industry's top prizes, the Oscars.

Notably missing from the nominees for best adapted screenplay was "12 Years a Slave," a film based on the memoirs of a free black man kidnapped and sold into slavery in pre-Civil War America. The film from British director Steve McQueen is considered a front-runner for a best picture Oscar.

Also in that category, the Writers Guild nominated the screenplay of Martin Scorsese's "The Wolf of



Cast member Leonardo DiCaprio arrives for the premiere of the film adaptation "The Wolf of Wall Street" in New York in this 17 Dec, 2013, file photo.

REUTERS

Wall Street," the story of the 1990s swindle by brash financier Jordan Belfort. The movie has stirred controversy with its graphic depiction of drugs and sex.

Rounding out the category are: "August: Osage

County," a tale of family dysfunction adapted from the prize-winning play by Tracy Letts; "Before Midnight," Richard Linklater's third take on a couple; "Captain Phillips," the true story of a pirate attack on an

American cargo ship off the coast of Somalia, and "Lone Survivor" the tale of brotherhood among Navy SEALs in Afghanistan.

In the best original screenplay category, the 1970s con-man romp of David O Russell's "American Hustle" is joined by Woody Allen's reversal-of-fortune tale "Blue Jasmine," the portrait of an unlikely AIDS treatment activist in "Dallas Buyers Club," the virtual love story "Her" and the rueful look at life in the heartland in "Nebraska."

The Writers Guild Awards will be handed out simultaneously at ceremonies in Los Angeles and New York on 1 February, ahead of the 2 March Academy Awards ceremony.

Reuters

Actress Jennifer Hudson buys assistant a house for Christmas



Singer Jennifer Hudson arrives at the 41st American Music Awards in Los Angeles, California in this 24 Nov, 2013, file photo.—REUTERS

LOS ANGELES, 4 Jan—The gift of a house brought a whole new meaning to

the song "I'll Be Home for Christmas" for actress and singer Jennifer Hudson's

long-time friend and assistant, Walter Williams.

A video posted on the Oscar-winning star's Instagram account on Tuesday, showed Williams screaming with joy and enthusiastically hugging Hudson after she handed him what appeared to be the deed to a house.

"My assistant Walter's reaction when he found out I was buying him a house for Christmas!" Hudson wrote as a caption to the video, which had 17,300 likes on Friday.

Hudson, 32, whose agent was not immediately available for comment, launched her career

as a contestant on Fox's "American Idol." She went on to win a Grammy for her debut album and an Academy Award for her role in the 2006 film "Dreamgirls" before famously losing 80 pounds after joining Weight Watchers.

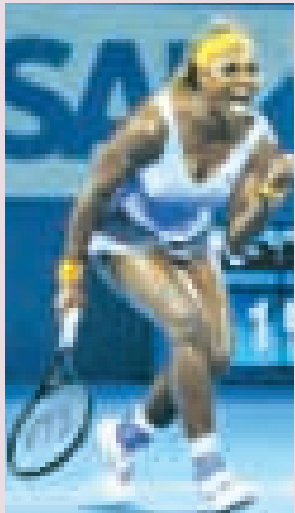
Hudson, who grew up in Chicago, said in a 2011 interview with the LGBT magazine *The Advocate* that she and Williams have been friends since they were both in the sixth grade.

The location of the home she purchased for Williams was not immediately known.

Reuters

SPORTS

Serena continues to haunt Sharapova, Federer breezes through



Serena Williams

BRISBANE, 4 Jan — Serena Williams extended her winning streak over

Maria Sharapova to 14 matches following a 6-2, 7-6 (9-7) win in the semi-final of the Brisbane International on Friday.

In a match which involved poor serving and high-quality groundstrokes in equal measure, Williams maintained her hold over Sharapova to set up a final showdown with second seed Victoria Azarenka.

Roger Federer, who like Williams will be chasing an 18th grand slam title at the Australian Open later this month, breezed through to the men's semi-finals with a 6-1, 6-1 thumping of Australian Marinko Matosevic.

Williams and Sharapova played down their animosity before the match but there was no eye contact during preliminaries and on a steamy night in Brisbane their body language remained distinctly frosty throughout.

The result was a match with an intensity scarcely seen outside of a grand slam, something Williams feels is of great benefit to her.

"(I) feel like I'm being pushed into the deep end straightaway," she said. "I think it's a good thing."

"In Melbourne if I have to face Maria again I'll know a little bit more

what to expect. I really didn't know what to expect today."

Williams secured the first of the 10 service breaks in the match in the fourth game and though Sharapova broke straight back, she lost her serve twice more as the American ran out a comfortable first set winner.

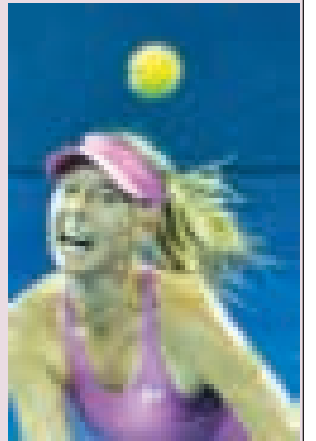
The Russian responded well to hold a 2-1 lead after three consecutive breaks of serve in the second set, before calling her coach Sven Groeneveld to court-side. His words illustrated the match held far more importance than a normal grand slam warm-up.

"You're letting her know you're in her face," he said, adding that she "must commit" to her serve.

Sharapova did win the ensuing service game, but lost the next one to restore parity.

In the tiebreak Williams' brutal groundstrokes gave her the advantage but consecutive double faults kept her opponent in it and she needed three match points before sealing victory with an ace.

Azarenka secured her place in the final with a seesaw victory over Serbia's Jelena Jankovic 1-6, 6-3, 6-4.



Maria Sharapova

Top seed Williams feels the match will be a good barometer of where they are ahead of the first grand slam.

Reuters

US names training camp roster for World Cup 'dry run'

WASHINGTON, 4 Jan — United States coach Jurgen Klinsmann is relying on experienced players to form the bulk of his World Cup squad for Brazil but has left the door open for uncapped players to join the mix.

Klinsmann on Friday called 26 players to Carson, California, as part of a training camp that runs from 6 January to 1 February. After six days in California, 23 players will move to Sao Paulo for what US Soccer is calling a "dry run" for the 12 June -13 July World Cup.

The preliminary training camp roster includes 10 players who helped the United States advance to the World Cup for the seventh consecutive time.

Nine uncapped players will also be at the camp, giving the group of mostly

Major League Soccer players one final shot at turning some heads.

"This is a very important camp in our preparations for the World Cup. It's important for the players to continue developing their bond and sense of urgency for the tournament," Klinsmann said in a statement.

"It's important for us to see how they do in Brazil, how the new players fit with the group and to make sure everyone is focused on reaching the highest level for next summer."

The camp concludes with a friendly against Korea on 1 February in Carson, California.

The training camp roster:

Goalkeepers: Tally Hall (Houston Dynamo), Bill Hamid (DC United), Sean Johnson (Chicago



US head coach Jurgen Klinsmann kicks the ball during a practice session in San Pedro Sula in this 5 Feb, 2013, file photo.—REUTERS

Fire), Nick Rimando (Real Salt Lake)

Defenders: Matt Besler (Sporting Kansas City), Brad Evans (Seattle Sounders FC), Omar Gonzalez (LA Galaxy), Clarence Goodson (San Jose Earthquakes), Michael Harrington (Portland Timbers), Chris Klute (Colorado Rapids), Chance Myers (Sporting Kansas City), Shane O'Neill (Colorado Rapids), Seth Sinovic (Sporting Kansas City), DeAndre Yedlin (Seattle Sounders FC)

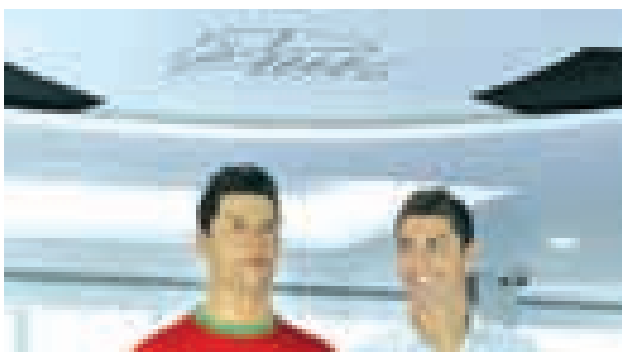
Midfielders: Eric Al-

exander (New York Red Bulls), Kyle Beckerman (Real Salt Lake), Brad Davis (Houston Dynamo), Mix Diskerud (Rosenborg), Benny Feilhaber (Sporting Kansas City), Luis Gil (Real Salt Lake), Dax McCarty (New York Red Bulls), Graham Zusi (Sporting Kansas City)

Forwards: Landon Donovan (LA Galaxy), Eddie Johnson (DC United), Mike Magee (Chicago Fire), Chris Wondolowski (San Jose Earthquakes)

Reuters

Cristiano Ronaldo wins "symbol of Portugal" award



Cristiano Ronaldo, who plays for Real Madrid and Portugal's national soccer team, poses with his statue during the inauguration of his museum in Funchal in this 15 Dec, 2013, file photo.—REUTERS

LISBON, 4 Jan — Portuguese superstar footballer Cristiano Ronaldo is to be officially recognized by Portuguese president as a "symbol of Portugal"

through one of the country's highest honours.

Ronaldo will be awarded the title of Grand Officer of the Order of Prince Henry the Navigator by

President Anibal Cavaco Silva next Tuesday at Lisbon's presidential palace.

According to a statement issued by the presidential palace on Friday, the decision to grant Ronaldo the award is down to his contribution to the "international projection of the country" and to his "example of perseverance for future generations."

Following the announcement, the President of Portugal's Football Association, Fernando Gomes, said in a statement that the award "expresses the sentiment of the Portuguese in general for what Cristiano Ronaldo has achieved, not

only in terms of national football but also for the elevation of Portugal's name abroad."

Gomes also highlighted Ronaldo's "magnificent performance" in Sweden on 19 November last year, which enabled Portugal to qualify for the World Cup in June. The honour comes about a week before the announcement of the Ballon d'Or results in January 2014.

The Real Madrid Forward already won a Ballon d'Or trophy in 2008 and is one of the three finalists this year together with Franck Ribery and Lionel Messi.

Xinhua

Liverpool's Rodgers charged by FA over referee comments

LONDON, 4 Jan — Liverpool manager Brendan Rodgers has been charged by the FA after his comments about referee Lee Mason following his side's 2-1 Premier League defeat at Manchester City last

He said: "Hopefully we won't have a Greater Manchester referee with Liverpool-Manchester games in future."

In a statement, the FA said Rodgers' comments called into question the



Liverpool manager Brendan Rodgers throws the ball back onto the pitch during their English Premier League soccer match against Hull City at Anfield in Liverpool, northern England on 1 Jan, 2014.

week. Rodgers described Mason's performance as "horrendous" and questioned whether the referee, who lives near Manchester, should have been selected for the match.

integrity of Mason and/or "implied that the match referee was motivated by bias". Rodgers has until 1800 GMT on Wednesday to respond to the charge.

Reuters



Jake Schellenschlager, who is a young weightlifter, can already lift double of his own weight. According to reports, this 14-year-old boy, from Glen Burnie, Maryland, began his training at the age of 12 when he saw his father lifting at garage and now can lift as much as 300 pounds, which broke the world record for the squat for his age and weight.—XINHUA

GENERAL

Yao Ming joins hands with VIPABC to push for tailored e-learning, educational charity



Yao Ming

SHANGHAI, 4 Jan — World-renowned basketball player Yao Ming has joined hands with e-education agency VIPABC to provide online English teaching sessions for children in China's less developed west, so as to present them with better chances to pursue their own dreams.

As part of their cooperation, VIPABC and the Yao Foundation are poised to take advantage of their respective strengths to offer online English teaching sessions free of charge for indigent students in western China.

"Lots of places in China's west are indeed short of educational resources ... The lack of teachers is a particularly serious

problem, which cannot be solved within one or two years," said Yao.

The former NBA star has turned into an active philanthropist since his retirement from professional basketball — volunteering for Special Olympics and the Shanghai World Expo, donating to Wenchuan Earthquake victims, building schools and protecting wild life.

"Through remote education, VIPABC can link children living in those mountainous areas with foreign teachers across the world," said Yao.

"That will not only facilitate their language learning, but also offer them a chance to change their outlook, to see the outside world, and to help their imagination break away from the cage of the mountains." Boasting a 1,000-strong staff of select foreign teachers and equipped with a sea of independently developed teaching materials, a revolutionary point-to-point real-person mobile education platform and the world's first dynamic course generation system, VIPABC is dedicated to and capable of providing customized, private, efficient and real-time

English training services. So far, VIPABC has carried out more than 5 million real-person training sessions in 14 countries or regions with a coverage of nearly all time zones.

More cooperation projects for educational charity are in the offing between VIPABC and the Yao Foundation, said Dr. Eric Yang, the CEO.

"Language has the power to make a difference. We will continue to use our faculty and platform advantages to help more people pursue their goals. I think that is our social responsibility," he said.—Xinhua

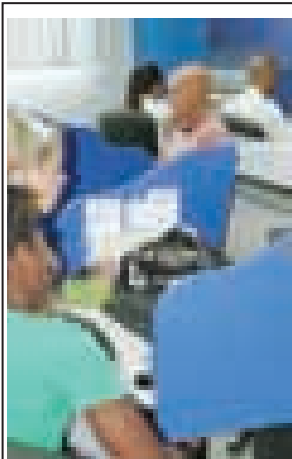


Photo shows Internet users at a cyber cafe run by a state-owned company in Havana, Cuba, in December 2013. KYODO NEWS

China detains 810 for train ticket scalping

BEIJING, 4 Jan — Chinese police busted 256 groups and seized 810 people for scalping railway tickets or making and selling fake tickets as of 2 January, according to the railway police bureau.

In a statement on Saturday, the bureau said it began a special crackdown on ticket scalping on 10 December and had since confiscated more than 49,000 railway tickets for overpriced reselling as well as over 120,000 counterfeit tickets.

Railway police authorities wanted enough time to look into public tip-offs on possible ticket scalping cases. As many as 397 police units were deployed

specially for such investigations.

According to the statement, police also strengthened inspections around ticket booths and monitoring of online ticket selling websites, with special efforts to identify "familiar faces" waiting in line and ban website and bank accounts suspected of being used for repeat purchases.

The crackdown will last for 80 days until the end of February, covering the Spring Festival holiday — a time for family reunions that see many migrate workers struggle for a ticket home via the usually overloaded railway system.

Xinhua

10 killed in residential fires in four prefectures

TOKYO, 4 Jan — A total of 10 people were killed in residential fires in four prefectures in northeastern and southwestern Japan, police and firefighters said on Friday.

Three bodies were found in the ruins of a residential fire in Koriyama, Fukushima Prefecture, which occurred at the home of Fumio Mizuno, 64, at around 11:35 pm on Thursday.

The three are believed to be his 88-year-old mother, 62-year-old wife and 8-year-old grandson, who were unaccounted for following the fire. In Higashine, Yamagata Prefecture, a fire broke out at

the home of 86-year-old Mitsuo Takahashi early on Friday, killing two persons. Takahashi and his 87-year-old wife were unaccounted for, according to police.

In Aso, Kumamoto Prefecture, two bodies were found following a fire at the home of Hiroko Yamabe, 86. The two are believed to be Yamabe and her 68-year-old son-in-law, who tried to rescue Yamabe.

Meanwhile, two bodies were found in Aira, Kagoshima Prefecture, after the home of Tomiyoshi Domori, 92, burned down. Domori and his 86-year-old wife were unaccounted for, according to local police.

Kyodo News

MYANMAR TV

(5-1-2014, Sunday)

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| 6:00 am | 3:00 pm |
| 1. Paritta By Venerable Mingun Sayadaw | 20. News |
| 6:30 am | 3:15 pm |
| 2. Physical Exercises | 21. Mono Classical Songs |
| 6:45 am | 3:30 pm |
| 3. Musical Programme | 22. Documentary (ASEAN) |
| 7:00 am | 4:00 pm |
| 4. News/Weather Report | 23. News |
| 7:25 am | 4:15 pm |
| 5. Teleplay (Health) | 24. Performance with Song |
| 7:45 am | 4:30 pm |
| 6. Documentary | 25. University of Distance Education (TV Lectures) - Second Year (Zoology) |
| 8:00 am | 4:45 pm |
| 7. News/ International News | 26. Documentary |
| 8:30 am | 5:00 pm |
| 8. Amazing World | 27. News |
| 9:00 am | 5:15 pm |
| 9. News/ International News | 28. Sing & Enjoy |
| 9:30 am | 6:00 pm |
| 10. Teleplay | 29. News/Weather Report |
| 9:50 am | 6:20 pm |
| 11. Beautiful ASEAN | 30. Cartoon Series |
| 10:00 am | 6:45 pm |
| 12. News | 31. Teleplay |
| 10:15 am | 7:00 pm |
| 13. (38) Phyar Mingalars | 32. News |
| 10:30 am | 7:20 pm |
| 14. Teleplay | 33. Teleplay |
| 11:10 am | 8:00 pm |
| 15. Gitadagale Phwintbaohn | 34. News/ International News/ Weather Report |
| 12:00 pm | 8:40 pm |
| 16. News/International News/Weather Report | 35. Hit Songs of Stars |
| 12:25 pm | 9:00 pm |
| 17. Round Up of The Week's International News | 36. News |
| 12:35 pm | 37. Tamyethnar Takwetsar |
| 18. Myanmar Movies | 38. New Melody |
| 2:40 pm | |
| 19. Musical Programme | |

MYANMAR INTERNATIONAL

5-1-14 07:00 am ~ 6-1-14 07:00 am) MST

- * Local News
- * A Short Trip With Steve (South Korea)
- * World News
- * Art Students: Sculpture
- * Local News
- * Made of Jade
- * World News
- * While I visited around Taunggyi
- * Local News
- * A Day Trip To Thanlyin
- * World News
- * Colonial Buildings and a New Yangon
- * Local News
- * Myanmar Mega Factory (Episode-1)
- * World News
- * Myanmar Movie Impact "So Cool-2"
- * Local News
- * Welcome To Naga Land
- * World News
- * Medicinal Plants at Popa Mountain Park
- * Local News
- * Mya Nan San Kyaw (The Golden Palace)
- * World News
- * Nang
- * Local News
- * Taking an Oath for Life
- * World News
- * Serenely Pleasant Pindaya
- * Local News
- * Me N My Travel (Wonderful Pagodas on the Mount Akauk)
- * World News
- * Monastery (Shwe In Pin Kyaung)



Photo taken on 12 Nov, 2013, shows participants at a seminar on sake tasting at Harrods London in London. KYODO NEWS

Vice-President Dr Sai Mauk Kham reads message of President U Thein Sein on Independence Day



NAY PYI TAW, 4 Jan— The State Flag hoisting and saluting ceremony took place at the people's square of Nay Pyi Taw City Hall this morning, attended by more than 3,000 people.

At 4:20 a.m., the flag hoisting platoon raised the State Flag. The national people, department personnel and members of social organizations took designated positions at the square.

Vice-President Dr Sai Mauk Kham, who is also chairman of the Central

Committee for Organizing the 66th Anniversary Independence Day, took the salute from the Guard of Honour and then saluted the State Flag together with the people. They also paid tribute to fallen heroes and took the four-point oath.

The vice-president read a message sent by Agga Maha Thyay Sithu, Agga Maha Thiri Thudhamma U Thein Sein on the occasion of the 66th Anniversary Independence Day.

MNA

Vice-President Dr Sai Mauk Kham reads message of President U Thein Sein on Independence Day in Nay Pyi Taw.

PHOTO: KYAW THURA

Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services confers gallantry medals, certificates on heroes

NAY PYI TAW, 4 Jan— Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services, conferred gallantry medals and certificates for 2012 and 2013 on servicemen of the Defence Services today.

During a ceremony held at Zeyathiri Beikman in Nay Pyi Taw, gallantry medals were conferred on 25 servicemen, gallantry certificates of the commander-in-chief on four servicemen and honorary certificates of the commander-in-chief on five servicemen by the Commander-in-Chief.

Meanwhile, gallantry certificates of the commander-in-chief were conferred on 54 servicemen and the honorary certificates of the commander-in-chief on 238 by respective commanders on behalf of the commander-in-chief.

Speaking on the occasion, Senior General Min Aung Hlaing quoted the speech of General Aung San, the founder of the Defence Forces of Myanmar, saying that servicemen are to make strenuous efforts for protecting Myanmar to the last man and last sword and that Myanmar will nev-



er give up her independence until trees cannot grow on her soil.

The commander-in-

chief also pledged that those who sacrificed their lives in defence of the country and the people would be hon-

Nay Pyi Taw residents celebrate 66th Independence Day

NAY PYI TAW, 4 Jan— Under the leadership of ministries, funfairs and sports competitions in honour of the 66th Anniversary Independence Day 2014 were held at schools and sports grounds in the wards and townships of Nay Pyi Taw today.

Many residents, Union ministers, deputy ministers and department officials participated the fun and games.

The National Land

Marks Garden, Zoological Garden and Water Fountain Garden were also crowded with residents.

Today and last night, colourful lighting decorations were displayed at the ministries, Nay Pyi Taw City Hall, Myanmar Gems Museum, Mani Yadana Jade Hall, Jade Garden, Nay Pyi Taw Hotel Zone, staff housing estates, markets and roundabouts in Nay Pyi Taw.—MNA

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing poses for documentary photo with gallantry medals winners servicemen of the Defence Services.—MYAWADY

oured on the Independence Day and the Armed Forces Day yearly.

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing presented

the gallantry medals, the gallantry certificates and honorary certificates to the servicemen during the ceremony.—MWD



Senior General Min Aung Hlaing confers gallantry medal on Lt-Col Ye Htut.

MYAWADY



Children of staff of News and Periodicals Enterprise take part in a game in Nay Pyi Taw Daily Compound in Zeyathiri Township on 4.1.2014.—PHOTO: AYE MIN SOE