President U Thein Sein receives Singaporean Foreign Affairs Minister and party

NAY PYI TAW, 13 Dec—President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar U Thein Sein received a goodwill delegation led by Foreign Affairs Minister of the Republic of Singapore Mr K Shanmugam, at Credentials Hall of the Presidential House here at 3:30 pm today.

Also present at the call together with President U Thein Sein were Union Minister for Foreign Affairs U Wunna Maung Lwin, Union Minister at the President Office U Thein Nyunt, Union Minister for National Planning and Economic Development U Tin Naing Thein, and departmental heads.

The goodwill delegation headed by Foreign Affairs Minister of the Republic of Singapore Mr K Shanmugam was accompanied by Singaporean Ambassador to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar Mr Chua Hian Kong Robert.

At the call, both sides discussed matters related to economic and investment between two countries.

MNA

python to be donated to Ygn Zoo

YANGON, 13 Dec—A python with a girth of one feet and six inches, measuring 17 feet and 6 inches in length was seized by U Myint Naing and party who live in Doebin village, Southern village-tract in Shwegyin Township, Bago District, Bago Region while they went to Hteewahchaung in Winkhanein village to cut bamboo.

The python was handed over to Staff Officer U Sai San Thein of Township Forest Department through Shwegyin Township General Administration Department on 8 December. Plan is underway to send it to Zoological Gardens (Yangon).

MNA
Join mass sports activities to be mentally and physically healthy

Health is the most fundamental requirement for development of a human society. It is commonly known that air pollution and lack of sanitation can be hazardous to health. However, few people know that impure air in buildings, houses and worksites can be dangerous to health.

It is the best for everyone to inhale fresh, pure air for their health and longevity. With the coming of cold season, we should breathe in fresh air while going for a morning walk. Walking in early mornings can refresh our minds and strengthen our joints.

It is advisable for every adult to take a 30-minute or an hour-walk every day and physical exercise. Taking physical exercise for one to three hours a week can energize the heart and lungs. Moreover, those suffering from hyper tension, lung disease, heart disease or arthritis should take a walk regularly in early mornings and evenings.

Now, December’s mass sports activities are being carried out in which every person can take part. So, we should participate in at least a certain kind of sports.

Doing physical exercise is the most cost-effective and can prevent most diseases. By walking in the sun while breathing in fresh air in early mornings, we can gain natural energy. Therefore, all are urged to participate in the mass sports activities so that they can be both mentally and physically healthy.

2nd ASEAN Cup Hockey Competition-2011 commences

YANGON, 13 Dec—The opening of 2nd ASEAN Cup Hockey Competition-2011 took place at Theinbyu Hockey Turf in Mingala Taungnyunt Township here this morning attended by Chief Minister of Yangon Region U Myint Swe. Yangon Mayor Minister for Yangon Region Development Affairs U Hla Myint and Region Minister for Planning and Economics U Than Myint opened the competition.

Host Myanmar along with Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand will fight against each other. The match between Malaysia and Thailand is debut of the competition and Singapore and Myanmar as today’s second match. Singapore and Malaysia as first match and Myanmar and Thailand as second on 14 December, and Malaysia and Myanmar as first on 14 December, and Malaysia and Myanmar as first match.

Ramayana Drama to be staged on 17, 18 December

YANGON, 13 Dec—Torestored Myanmar Traditional Ramayana Drama which has faded away for over 60 years, Anawaw Thiri Rama and Obo Rama will jointly restage the full scene of the opera on 17 and 18 December at National Theater on Myomakyaung Street in Dagon Township.

Myanmar bard U Toe first compiled Rama verse during the reign of Bodaw Phaya. He then added dialogues and scripts to the verse to entertain the court. Myawady Mingyi U Sa staged the opera on 1st Waxing of Nadaw 1151 and scripts to the verse to entertain the court. Myawady Mingyi U Sa staged the opera on 1st Waxing of Nadaw 1151 and second place of Nadaw 1153. Anawa Thiri Rama and Obo Rama will jointly restage the full scene of the opera on 17 and 18 December at National Theater on Myomakyaung Street in Dagon Township.

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**More than nine million in Sahel face food crisis**

A woman from Niger gathers spilled maize. Major food shortages are expected in the Sahel Region next year.

**Six wounded in twin bomb attacks in Iraq**

Baghdad, 13 Dec—Six people were wounded Monday in two roadside bomb explosions in the Iraqi Capital of Baghdad, an interior ministry source said.

The first attack occurred when a roadside bomb ripped through Ghazaliyah District in the west of the capital without causing any casualties, the source told Xinhua on condition of anonymity.

The second blast followed when Iraqi security forces and civilians gathered at the site of the first explosion, wounding four civilians and two policemen, the source said.

Militants frequently use the tactic of creating an initial explosion to attract people, and then set off another blast to get heavier casualties, he said. Violence in the country underscores the challenges that the Iraqi security forces are facing as they struggle to restore stability and normalcy in Iraqi cities days before the complete pullout of US forces by the end of the year.

**Some 1,731 Cambodians killed in road accidents in 11 months**

Pnom Penh, 13 Dec—Road accidents have claimed 1,731 Cambodian lives and injured 7,885 others in the first 11 months this year, Touch Chan Kosal, secretary of state at the Ministry of Public Work and Transport, said Tuesday.

"Traffic accidents have become the No. 1 killer in Cambodia among those of HIV/AIDS and mine casualties—the number of the deaths has not declined yet despite our traffic safety campaigns," he told a workshop on road safety. "It is the most concerned for the government."

"It is the most concerning for the government."

The workshop was held to hear the results of an investigation into the accident and to make safety recommendations. The meeting will focus on the "distractive effects of portable electronic devices when used by drivers," the board said in a statement. The board has previously recommended bans on texting and cell phone use by commercial drivers, but has stopped short of calling for a ban on the use of the devices by adults behind the wheel of passenger cars.— Internet

**In this 5 Aug, 2010 file photo, a rescue worker is seen at the scene of an accident involving two school buses, a truck and another passenger vehicle, near Gray Summit, Mo. Federal safety investigators say a 19-year-old driver was texting at the time his pickup truck, two school buses and other vehicles collided in a deadly pileup on an interstate highway in Missouri last year.**

**Driver was texting in Missouri traffic pileup**

Washington, 13 Dec—A 19-year-old driver was texting just before his pickup truck, two school buses and a tractor truck collided in a deadly pileup on an interstate highway in Missouri last year, the National Transportation Safety Board said Monday.

Two people—the pickup driver and a 15-year-old student on one of the buses—were killed and 38 others were injured in the Aug. 5, 2010 accident on the interstate highway near Gray Summit, Mo. Nearly 50 students, mostly members of a high school band from St. James, Mo., were on the buses heading to the Six Flags St. Louis amusement park.

The chain of rear end collisions began when the pickup truck rammed the back of the tractor truck, the board said. The pickup was then rear-ended by a school bus, which was in turn struck by the second bus.

The board is scheduled to meet Tuesday to hear the results of an investigation into the accident and to make safety recommendations. The meeting will focus on the "distractive effects of portable electronic devices when used by drivers," the board said in a statement. The board has previously recommended bans on texting and cell phone use by commercial drivers, but has stopped short of calling for a ban on the use of the devices by adults behind the wheel of passenger cars.— Internet

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**Singaporeans deny charges of illegally exporting US radio parts to Iran**

SINGAPORE, 13 Dec—Four Singaporeans charged with illegally exporting US-made radio equipment to Iran and held for US extradition request denied the charges in court on Monday.

Bruce Tiong Guat Bok, 34, the Subordinate Courts will weigh the United States evidence of the suspects making illegal exports to Iran, and it will be returned to the board if there are sufficient grounds for them to be extradited.

They face a US extradition request on the ground that they had exported radio equipment including 6,000 radio modules and 15 antenna parts to Iran, thereby evading a US trade embargo against Iran.

Some of these equipment ended up in roadside bombs targeting the coalition forces in Iraq. The United States traced the radio equipment to the three deals for antenna parts.

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“No heart attack risk” from ADHD drugs

Most adults do not face a higher risk of heart attack when taking stimulant medications to treat attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, US researchers said on Monday.

The study is the largest and among the first to look specifically at the risks of taking ADHD drugs for people aged 25-64, and is published in an early online version of the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA).

Previous studies have shown that some ADHD drugs can raise blood pressure and heart rate, but follow-up research has been unable to find any higher risk of death or major complications.

A separate study last month in the New England Journal of Medicine found no higher risk among youths aged two to 24 who take stimulant medications like Ritalin, after concerns were raised years ago about potential links.

The JAMA observational study, funded by the US Food and Drug Administration and the Agency for Health Research Quality, was based on pharmacy data and medical records for 150,000 people at four clinical sites in the United States.

Comparing those who used the drugs to those who did not, and honing on one the specific subgroups of ADHD drugs, researchers found no higher risk of heart attack, sudden cardiac death or stroke.

However, the study did have some limitations, such as spanning a relatively short period — about one year — and excluding people over 65. It’s important to note that this is an observational study and not a randomised clinical trial,” said lead author Laurel Habel, a research scientist with the Kaiser Permanente Northern California Division of Research.

The drugs included in the study were stimulants such as methylphenidate, dextroamphetamine, amphetamine salts and pemoline; and the non-stimulant atomoxetine.

All were labelled for treatment of ADHD in children or adults as of 31 December, 2005.

According to the latest FDA data from 2005, about 1.5 million US adults are taking ADHD medication. Of all the US prescriptions issued to children and adults, groupings account for nearly one third.

Oil falls on lingering European concerns

There have been new discoveries of coal in the northeastern province of Tete by an Indian company, while gas and oil have been found in the northernmost province of Cabo Delgado, the report said.

According to Radio Mozambique, there will be an economic growth from 16.5 percent this year to 17.7 percent next year.

The government is working to reduce the budget deficit, standing at 15.5 percent next year, the radio said.

US scientists develop vaccine that attacks breast cancer in mice

Researchers from the University of Georgia (UGA) and the Mayo Clinic in Arizona have developed a vaccine that dramatically reduces tumors in a mouse model, according to a study published online Monday in the journal Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.

The vaccine works by training the immune system to attack tumours that have a protein known as MUC1 on the surface of their cells.

MUC1 is found on more than 70 percent of all cancers that kill. Many cancers, such as breast, pancreatic, ovarian and multiple myeloma, express MUC1 with the shorter carbohydrate in more than 90 percent of cases.

“This vaccine elicits a very strong immune response,” said study co-author Jon Boons, professor of chemistry at UGA Cancer Centre. “It activates all three components of the immune system to reduce tumor size by an average of 80 percent.”

The researchers are testing the vaccine’s effectiveness against human breast cancer cell lines in culture and planning to assess its toxicity.

Photo taken on 12 Dec, 2011, shows the Haitian Container Port in Xiamen, southeast China’s Fujian Province. The total throughput of Xiamen Port has reached 130 million tons from January to October this year, increasing 4.8 percent year-on-year.

The foreign trade handling capacity has grown 15.8 percent to 66,541 million tons while the container handling capacity has risen 9.7 percent to 5,225 million TEU (twenty-foot-equivalent unit) containers.

Casilla said it is important to keep healthy fiscal accounts. “This year we have to close the budget deficit, standing at 15.5 percent next year,” he said.

The proposal, which has been included in the budget, includes an additional boost to infrastructure projects. Casilla said infrastructure investment should help mitigate the slowdown of the private sectors caused by a lower global growth.

“Some industries which are planning to invest in energy generation and petroleum infrastructure projects should harm the private sectors,” he said.

British scientists discover new way to target cancer

Washington, 13 Dec—British scientists have discovered a new way to target cancer through manipulating a master switch responsible for cancer cell growth. The findings, published Monday in the US journal Cancer Cell, reveal how cancer cells grow faster by producing their own blood vessels.

Cancer cells gain the nutrients they need by producing proteins that make blood vessels grow, helping deliver oxygen and sugars to the tumor. These proteins are vascular growth factors like VEGF — the target for the anti-cancer drug Avastin. Making these proteins requires the slitting together of different parts of genes, a process called splicing.

Scientists at the University of West England and the University of Bristol discovered that mutations in one specific cancer gene can control how splicing is balanced, allowing a master switch in the cell to be turned on. This master switch of splicing makes cancer cells grow faster, and blood vessels to grow more quickly, as they alter how VEGFs are put together.

In experimental models, the researchers found that by using new drugs that block this master switch they prevented blood vessel growth and stopped the growth of cancers.

“The research clearly demonstrates that it may be possible to block tumor growth by targeting and manipulating alternative splicing in patients, adding to the increasingly wide armory of potential anti-cancer therapies,” the authors said.
Apple's Mac App Store downloads top 100 mn

San Francisco, 13 Dec—Apple announced on Monday that over 100 million apps have been downloaded from its Mac App Store since its initial launch in January. "With more than 100 million downloads in less than a year, the Mac App Store is the largest and fastest growing PC software store in the world," Apple said in a statement, adding that "Mac App Store is changing the traditional PC software industry." Apple launched the Mac App Store in January as a free download for Mac OS X users, allowing users to sift through free and paid applications and download them to their devices like Apple mobile App Store. After 24 hours of release, there was a total of more than one million downloads. Apple said on Monday that the Mac App Store now offers thousands of apps in education, games, graphics and design, lifestyle, productivity, utilities and other categories. According to its policies, 70 percent of the revenue generated from paid applications goes to developers while the remaining 30 percent is kept by Apple. Apple's first appli- Science
cation store is the mobile App Store launched in 2008, which, in the tech giant's words, has "changed how people get mobile apps."

In October, Apple said, its mobile app downloads topped 18 billion and over 3 billion US dollars had been paid to developers since 2008.—Xinhua

Roll-out flat-screen TV on the way

London, 13 Dec—Scientists are creating flat screen TVs that can be rolled up and safely tucked away in your pockets, thanks to QD or quantum dot technology. Developed by a team of British scientists, QD can be used to make ultra-thin TVs. Samsung is already working on bendable OLED screens but QD screens will be thinner and more flexible. The flexible screens are expected to hit the markets by the next year. Sony, Sharp, Samsung and LG are believed to be working on QD technology, the Daily Mail reports. The technology, based on light emitting particles 100,000 times thinner than a human hair, will be imprinted on flexible plastic that can be rolled up or even printed onto large paper sheets to create giant screens. Scientists at Nanoco, Manchester are now working with major Asian electronic companies and the first televisions using the new technology are expected to hit the shelves by the end of next year. The chief executive of Nanoco company set up

that they can be printed on to a plastic sheet that can be rolled up.—Internet

Watch out for Geminid meteor shower

Wednesday

NEW DELHI, 13 Dec — Sky gazers can look forward to an exhibition of celestial fireworks as the night sky will be lit up by Geminid meteor showers that are expected to peak Wednesday.

A rare celestial event, the Geminid meteor shower will be visible across India and people can see over 60 shooting stars every hour for the next couple of nights with the largest number early Wednesday. "People can watch out for the meteor showers from late Tuesday to dawn on Wednesday morning. There will be fireballs in the sky," said Science Popularization Association of Communicators and Educators (SPACE) director CB Devgun.

SPACE is a private organization working for popularising science among people. Explaining the method to observe the meteorites, Devgun said: "Look up at the sky between 10 pm and 4 am and you could see beautiful fireworks in the sky but as this time it is happening three days after full moon, so visibility is likely to be hampered."

"You need a simple telescope to watch the meteor showers. People in the capital should move to the outskirts to have a clear look as the morning sky these days is covered with fog," he said.

A meteor shower occurs when the earth passes through debris left behind by a passing comet or asteroid. In the present case, it is an asteroid named 3200 Phaethon.

As the earth moves around the sun, the debris get pulled by the earth’s gravitational force and fall with long bright tails visible to the naked eye.

The celestial phenomenon is called Geminid showers as they seem to emanate from the Gemini constellation.—Internet

THE NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR Wednesday, 14 December, 2011

World’s smallest frogs discovered in New Guinea

WASHINGTON, 13 Dec—World’s smallest frogs were discovered in southeast New Guinea by US researchers.

The frogs belong to the genus Paedophryne. The length of an adult frog of this species is only 8-9 mm. This also makes them the world’s smallest tetrapods (non-fish vertebrates), Xinhua reported quoting the journal ZooKeys Monday.

The frogs were discovered by Fred Kraus and his colleagues from Bishop Museum in Honolulu. Previous research by Kraus had led to the discovery of Paedophryne in New Guinea in 2002. However, the genus was not formally described until last year.

Two species of the same genus described earlier were larger, attaining sizes of 10-11 mm. "Miniaturization occurs in many frog genera around the world, but New Guinea seems particularly well-represented, with species in seven genera exhibiting the phenomenon," Kraus said.

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**China to ‘consider’ navy stop in Seychelles**

**Brussels, 13 Dec**—China will consider taking long-distance missions, at the invitation of the Indian Ocean island state.

China’s announcement came as a relief to the strategically important Indian Ocean, a vital shipping lane connecting Asia to Europe and the Middle East.

“According to accord needs and the needs of other long-distance missions, China will consider taking supplies or recuperating at appropriate ports in the Seychelles and other countries,” the defense ministry said in a statement Monday. The invitation was extended earlier this month during a visit to the Seychelles by Chinese defense minister Liang Guanglie.

Beijing has funded or plans to invest in several major infrastructure projects in the Seychelles, including ports in Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Myanmar. Monday’s announcement was widely covered in China’s state-run media on Tuesday, but the reports quoted military experts as saying the move did not equate to establishing an overseas military base.

China has been heavily involved in anti-piracy missions in the Gulf of Aden off the coast of Somalia and in the Indian Ocean. Since 2008, China has sent 10 escort missions and more than 8,000 military personnel to the Gulf of Aden, escorting more than 4,300 vessels in the process, the official Xinhua News Agency said.

**Man says military jet crash destroyed his life**

**San Diego, 13 Dec**—Lawyers for an extended family that lost four members when a military jet crashed into their San Diego home in 2008 said Monday they will be seeking millions of dollars for their clients, after an accident that the Marine Corps acknowledged was caused by a string of errors.

Attorney Kevin Boyle told The Associated Press outside the federal courthouse that the Yoon and Lee families turned to the court system after the Justice Department in private negotiations offered “insulting” amounts to compensate for the deaths of two children, their mother and grandmother. US District Judge Jeffery Miller will have the final say on the issue at the end of the two-day trial, which began Monday.

“The government has offered pennies on the dollar compared to what a jury would give,” Boyle said.

Boyle would not specify yet how much the families want nor state the amount offered so far by the federal government. Don Yoon lost his 36-year-old wife, Youngma Lee Yoon; his 15-month-old daughter Geahe; his 2-month-old daughter Rachel; and his 59-year-old mother-in-law, Sookim Kim Lee, who was visiting from Korea to help her eldest daughter take care of their children.

**Police comb New York marsh after missing prostitute’s bag found**

**New York, 13 Dec**—Police on Monday combed through marshes on Long Island where they recently found the purse of a missing prostitute, whose disappearance led them to discover 10 bodies now believed to be victims of a serial killer.

Armed with rakes, Suffolk County Police dug through the muck and planned to return on Tuesday in their search for Shannon Gilbert, who went missing in May. Police said Gilbert, 23, of New Jersey was a prostitute advertising on Craigslist.

Last week, the search turned up Gilbert’s purse, containing her ID, cell phone and lip gloss, as well as her jeans and shoes. Her body has yet to be found.

Gilbert’s disappearance prompted the investigation which led to five bodies found in a Soho parking lot on Gilgo Beach.

**Belgian nurse who saved GIs in WWII honoured**

**Brussels, 13 Dec**—A Belgian nurse who saved the lives of hundreds of American soldiers during the Battle of the Bulge at the end of World War II was given a US award for valor Monday — 67 years later.

Congolese-born Augusta Chiwy, now 93, received the Civilian Award for Humanitarian Service medal from US Ambassador Howard Gutman at a ceremony in the military museum in Brussels.

Waterman and Maureen Bruinard-Barnes, whose bodies were among the 10 found, visited the scene on the first anniversary of the grisly discovery.

“It’s been a living hell,” Waterman’s mother Loraine Elato told reporters on Monday. “Tirefully. Not a day doesn’t go by where I don’t think of Megan.”

**Mexico’s navy captures Zetas leader “El Lucky”**

**Mexico City, 13 Dec**—Mexico’s navy captured a leader of the Zetas drug cartel, Raul Fernandez, President Felipe Calderon said on Monday via his Twitter account.

Fernandez, who was known as “El Lucky” (The Lucky One), had a bounty of 15 million pesos ($1.09 million) on his head, operated in the Gulf state of Veracruz as well as the central state of Puebla and Oaxaca state in the south, Calderon said.

The Zetas, formed at the end of the 1990s by deserters from elite army forces, are believed to have been behind some of the bloodiest crimes against civilians in recent years including the arson attack on a casino in northern Mexico that killed 52 people in August.

Since sending in the army five years ago to crack down on cartel activity, Calderon has made a point of targeting top leaders. With Fernandez’s capture, Calderon said the government had accounted for 22 of Mexico’s 37 most-wanted drug lords.—Reuters
Towards a Modern Banking System: Financial Liberalization

by San Thein

Exchange rate unification

The monetary authorities are determined to tackle exchange rate problems associated with the existing exchange rate mechanism and multiple currency practices. The Monetary Authorities of the Central Bank of Myanmar, a technical team from the IMF-visited Myanmar during October 19 November 2011, recently reviewed the existing exchange rate mechanism and consultations for possible options of restrictions on current international payments and transfers. The team is expected to visit Myanmar again for a follow up mission in early 2012.

Improving the payments system

Moving towards a modernized banking system, the monetary authorities are trying to improve the payments system. The existing payment systems infrastructure is predominantly cash based. Banknotes are still the most important payment medium for general public. Walking into a bank one may find a cash counter where customers are busy with bundles of banknotes putting them into large bags or counting them carefully before leaving the counter. Behind the counter one can see piles of transparent bags to pack notes and waiting to be counted. Members of the bank staff, wearing masks to protect themselves from moisture and dust flying from the old notes, are counting one bundle of notes after another by hand and on note counting machines and at the same time, sorting out old, torn and fake notes not fit for recirculation.

Not surprisingly enough these hassles will be things of the past. On the recommendation of the Payment System Development Committee of the Myanmar Banks Association, the Myanmar Payment Union (MPU) has been formed to implement a modern payment system where ATMs (automatic teller machines) and debit cards are used. An ATM is an electronic machine placed in a public place, connected to a network data system of the bank. ATMs dispense services to the bank customers. It is a self-service terminal where the customer himself has access to the facility of cash dispensing and depositing, remitting money from one’s account to another, checking one’s account balance etc. Debit cards are machine-readable, magnetically encoded plastic cards used to make retail payments.

We are witnessing series of reforms taking place in the financial sector. These reform measures taken by the monetary authorities show their eagerness to modernize the banking sector rapidly. Reforms are essential to overcome difficulties in the banking sector and to establish a viable and sound banking system so that it can effectively contribute to a sustainable and equitable economic development of the country. The objective of reform programs should be to create a market-based banking system where all banks, both private and state-owned ones, enjoy healthy competition in level playing field, and where international financial links through foreign and local banks can be established between Myanmar and the rest of the world. The reform agenda should be sequenced and implementation of the reform program should be in a step-by-step manner.

Implementing their primary function of financial intermediation, banks channel funds between surplus and deficit agents by transforming bank deposits into bank loans. This needs an efficient financial system for effective mobilization of savings for optimal allocation of domestic resources, the monetary authorities carefully monitor the local plans to unify currency. However, recent developments in the banking sector show the authorities eagerness to modernize the financial sector more rapidly. Redefining capital, deposit and reserve requirements are central in the process of financial liberalization. The Central Bank of Myanmar, the regulatory body of the country’s banking sector, has recently relaxed its restrictions on bank deposits which were limited to ten times paid-up capital. The new instruction allows a local bank to accept deposits up to 25 times its capital which includes not only paid-up capital, but also general reserves, general provision, provision for bad and doubtful debt, reserves for contingencies and retained profit and loss, all of which can be considered ‘shareholders’ equity’ or Tier I Capital by the Basel Committee on Banking Supervision’s definition. In this way the central bank has strengthened a bank’s capacity for accepting deposits. At the same time, the central bank uses reserve ratio requirements to control the money supply by imposing deposit and reserve requirements on mounting deposits. 10pc of total deposits must be kept as reserves for the deposits up to ten times of its capital, 15pc of deposits for 10 to 15times of capital, 20pc for 15 to 20times and 25pc for over 20 to 25 times. The higher the deposits, the higher the reserves which are to be kept at the bank and with the central bank, safeguarding a bank’s liquidity in case of emergency. The objective is to encourage local banks to mobilize financial resources effectively, while keeping inflation under control.

Adopting competitive interest rate policy

Effective 1 September 2011, as a measure for deregulating interest rates, the central bank has allowed local banks to reduce their interest rates on both savings and loans by 2 percentage points, meaning a bank can offer not less than 10pc on savings and it cannot charge more than 15pc on loans, enjoying a spread of 5pc as before. Previously, there were limits on interest rates: the same deposit and lending rates were set for all banks: the interest rate on savings deposits was 12pc per annum and the lending rate was 17pc. Now, with deregulation of interest rates, competition is no longer limited. Banks can compete with each other by offering attractive interest rates. Banks with a strong deposit base may offer the lowest rate (10pc) on savings whereas banks with a weak deposit base would offer higher interest rates to attract more deposits. Previously, the same interest rate applied to both saving and fixed deposits. But now, banks are applying higher than saving interest rates on fixed deposits with maturity of 3 to 12 months.

Setting interest rates is another tool of a central bank’s monetary policy used in managing the country’s money supply to control inflation. A central bank usually reduces its interest rate to stimulate domestic demand while the economy is in the doldrums and increases its interest rate to reduce the money supply when the country is suffering from inflationary pressure. Positive real interest rates (when interest rates are higher than the inflation rate) can help to attract deposits while negative real interests (interest rates below the inflation rate) encourage investors to seek other forms of investments to hedge against inflation. High interest rates attract deposits but discourage investments with high costs of borrowings from banks. Under this situation, banks find it hard to manage their surplus funds; the easiest way in Myanmar is investing in government treasury bonds. High levels of investment in government treasury bonds by banks suggest that they find it hard to extend quality loans to reliable customers and they have surplus funds. It is hoped that the recent reduction in interest rates would stimulate the economy by channeling funds for investment to productive sectors.

New products and collaterals

Previously, a bank’s products were limited to current, saving and fixed deposits and one year commercial loans. Recently, the central bank has allowed local banks to extend hire purchase facilities to their customers. Under a hire purchase system, bank customers with regular income can buy consumer products initially funded by the bank and repay the money in monthly installments to the bank. The system helps stimulate domestic demand and effectively raise the bank customers’ standard of living.

The Central Bank of Myanmar has called upon the local banks to come up with proposals for new products and it is hoped that there will be more bank products and facilities in the future. Fostering competition by allowing banks to offer new products and services to their customers as long as banks have the expertise to manage their risks efficiently is essential to move towards a true market system.

Types of collateral for bank loans are no longer confined to land and buildings and are expanded to include such movable assets as some exportable crops (rice, beans & pulses and sesame), bank deposits and gold.

Foreign banking

It is very exciting to learn that the Central Bank of Myanmar has granted authorized dealer licenses for conducting foreign banking to 11 local banks with strong capital base and human resources. Recently, with the objective of preserving the internal and external value of Myanmar Kyat, the Central Bank has granted money changer licenses to local banks. First, the six banks, (Kanbawza Bank, Myawady Bank, Inwa Bank, Co-operatives Bank, Myanmar Industrial Development Bank and Myanmar Oriental Bank) started dealing in US dollars, Singapore dollars, euros and FCY by opening exchange counters at major commercial centers on Theinbyu Street in Yangon where there used to be an exchange center before the 2003 liquidity crisis. Later other local banks participate in the scheme and 50 more exchange counters are now being operated at commercially important areas in the country. These banks through their counters try to stabilize the exchange rates while keeping the exchange rates out of the market.

District News

Vocational courses conclude

YINMABIN, 13 Dec—The Women’s Vocational Training School of the Ministry of Developmental Course No 14 and the Basic Domestic Science Course No. 18 in Yinmabbin on 2 December. After delivering an address, Sagaing Region Minister for Social Welfare, Child Protection and Women Affairs Col Kyi Naing awarded diplomas to each of sewing machines to two outstanding trainees. The principal presented certificates to the trainees.

Township IPRD

Per acre increased in model plot

OTTWIN, 13 Dec—A model plot of 11-acre monsoon paddies was harvested in Krietey Nyaukngin Village, Ottwin Township. The model plot of Manawthukha paddy cultivated through good agriculture pattern produced 106.68 acres per acre.

THATON, 13 Dec—Daebarain Village-tract of Thaton Township held harvesting of monsoon paddy of Myeedon, a 10.42 acres of model plot of farmer U Thein Kyaw on 23 November. Departmental officials and local farmers participated in the harvesting activities. The production of model paddy paddies were harvested 63.90 baskets per acre. The production of model paddy was harvested 63.90 baskets per acre.

Model plot harvested in Yedashe

YEDASHE, 13 Dec—Under the supervision of Myanmar Agriculture Service, model plots are being harvested in Yedashe Township for securing right production rate for monsoon paddy in 2011. On 30 November, one-acre model plot of Hsinthukha paddy of farmer Daw Hwe Kyi was harvested in Taungnyin Village. The model plot of paddy produced 100.91 baskets per acre.

After the harvesting paddy, Township MAS Manager U Aung Win explained 14 points for boosting production of paddy applying good agriculture pattern.

Township IPRD

Loans disbursed to fisheruemgrouops

THANDWE, 13 Dec.—As part of efforts to realize eight tasks of rural development and poverty alleviation, a ceremony to disburse K 80 million to local fishermen was held at the hall of Thandwe Township General Administration Department on 2 December afternoon.

The Township Administrator handed over K 80 million to Chairman of Livestock Breeding, Fish and Meat Production Development Work Committee U Thant Gyi. Next, the work committee chairman disbursed loans to the rural fisheruemngroups.

Monsoon model plot harvested

THATON, 13 Dec.—Daebarain Village-tract of Thaton Township held harvesting of monsoon paddy of Myeedon, a 10.42 acres of model plot of farmer U Thein Kyaw on 23 November. Departmental officials and local farmers participated in the harvesting activities. The production of model paddy paddies reached 63.90 baskets per acre.
**Myanmar committed to drug elimination by 2014**

**NAV PYI TAW, 13 Dec.—Central Committee for Drug Abuse Control held meeting 2/2011 at the Ministry of Home Affairs today, attended by Chairman of CCDAC Union Minister for Home Affairs Li-Gen Ko Ko.** The Union Minister stressed two strategies—elimination of narcotic drugs as a national concern and extensive elimination of poppy cultivation in line with the improvement of the socio-economic conditions of the national races in border areas—and three tactics—supply elimination, demand elimination and law enforcement. Since 1999-2000, Myanmar has been making commitment to 15-year plan to completely eradicate narcotic drug by 2014 earlier than 2015 set by ASEAN.

Also present at the meeting were Union Minister for Border Affairs Li-Gen Thim Hlay, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs Dr Myo Myint, Deputy Minister for Information U Soe Win, Deputy Minister for Health Dr Win Myint, leader of legal advisory group to the President U Sit Aye, Secretary of CCDAC Chief of Myanmar Police Force Kyaw Kyaw Tun, Deputy Chief of MPP Police Brig-Gen Zaw Win, officials of the committee, UNODC, DEA and ONCB and distinguished guests. The participants held profound discussion on rendering assistance for the fight against narcotic drug in cooperation with UNODC, DEA, ONCB and WFP. —MNA

**MLF donates publications to village libraries**

**LABUTTA, 13 Dec.—With a view to disseminating knowledge to rural people, a ceremony to donate books to village libraries by Myanmar Libraries Foundation was held at the hall in Labutta Township on 1 November.** The deputy commissioner of District General Administration Department explained reading habit for development of human resources and maintenance of libraries for their durability. Officials handed over 249 books for village libraries to village administrators.

**Sarpay Beikman manuscript awards for 2010 announced**

**NAV PYI TAW, 13 Dec.—Sarpay Beikman Manuscript Award Scrutiny Committee announced the list of winners of Sarpay Beikman manuscript contest for 2010, organized by Printing and Publishing Enterprise under the Ministry of Information.** In the novel genre, second prize went to K (Taungtaw) and third prize to Hnin Sat (Lashio); in the collection of short stories, first prize to Myat Latt Min Lwin, second prize to Maung Maung Moe Aung and third prize to Ko Naing (Chinshwe); in the collection of belles-letters, second prize to Hla Myint (Yangon University) in the Myanmar culture and fine arts, first prize to Myat Wai Toc (Institute of Education); in the children’s literature, first prize to Kanbalu Khin Maung Swe, second to Zaw Myo Hlaing (Naypyitaw), second to Aung Min Thaw (Zigong) and third prize to Maung Han Tin (Painle); in the general knowledge (Arts), first prize to U Thaung Ngwe and second prize to Minbu Aung Kyaw; in the general knowledge (Science and applied science), first prize to Dr. Myint Than (Naypyiologist) and second prize to Aung Soe (Agriculture/107); in the belles-letters, second prize to Hla Myint (Yangon University); in the Myanmar culture and fine arts, first prize to Myat Wai Toc (Institute of Education); in the children’s literature, first prize to Kanbalu Khin Maung Swe, second to Zaw Myo Hlaing (Naypyitaw), second to Aung Min Thaw (Zigong) and third prize to Zar Ni; in the youth’s literature, first prize to Jhin Kyaw; in the drama, first prize to Maung Sanda (Lew) and second prize to Maung Soe Hlaing (Thone); in translation, first prize went to Dr Nyan Hein Latt.

Prime winners are to contact Secretary of Sarpay Beikman Manuscript Award Scrutiny Committee at Sarpay Beikman Building, No. 529-531, Merchant Street (Ph: 01-376569) and management division (Ph: 01-381449) within a week. Winners will be awarded at life-time National Literary Award and National Literary Award ceremony for 2010 to be held at Information Ministry and Union Minister for Home Affairs Li-Gen Ko Ko speaking at Central Committee for Drug Abuse Control Meeting 2/2011. —MNA

**Formation of political parties scrutinized**

**NAV PYI TAW, 13 Dec.—Those wishing to form political parties are now applying for formation of political parties to the Union Election Commission. Today, 19 people including U Aung applied for setting up Mto National Party. The UEC has made coordination with respective ministries in order to scrutinize whether they are accorded with Political Party Registration Law section 4 and 6. —MNA**

**Zawti BEMS (branch) upgraded**

**NAV PYI TAW, 13 Dec.—Opening of Zawti Basic Education Middle School was held in Winkhainan village-tract, Shwegyin Township, Bago District, Bago Region, on 7 December. It is upgraded from BEMS (branch) to middle school. The officials opened the school. After that, Yadana Mitta Group donated K400,000 for the door and U Aung Myint Sein Daw Nan Hla Aye K200,000 for sinking a tube well. —MNA**

**Union A&I Minister receives foreign guests**

**NAV PYI TAW, 13 Dec.—Union Minister for Agriculture and Irrigation U Myint Hlaing received Indian Ambassador to Myanmar Mr Dr Villur Sundarajan Seshadri at the ministry here this morning.** The call, both sides discussed matters related to bilateral cooperation in agricultural development, construction of agriculture advance research center and advance paddy warehouses with assistance from India and cooperation in implementation of irrigation systems with loans from India.

Similarly, the Union Minister received Executive Director Mr Lim Hong Joon of Kuala Lumpur Keplong Berhard (KLK) of Malaysia at the ministry here at 11.30 am today. They discussed investment cooperation in agricultural development, construction of modern factories to produce value-added goods from industrial rubber crops and oil palm crops and long-term investments in agro-based industry. Also present on the occasions were departmental heads of the ministry. —MNA

**St. Paul Alumni Reunion Golf Tourney**

**NAV PYI TAW, 13 Dec.—St. Paul (BEHS-6 Botabahuitn) Alumni Golf Tourney will be held at Myanmar Golf Association on 16 December (Friday). For further information, please contact U Maung Maung Myint (Chairman) 09 43096285, U Thein Swe (Secretary) 09 5193434, U Sunny Tin Zaw 09 5022793, U Eddy BaOo 09 5019853, U Than Htun 09 5140558, and U Kyaw Lwin Nyo 502717. —ALM**

**Singaporean goodwill delegation visits Nay Pyi Taw**

**NAV PYI TAW, 13 Dec.—A goodwill delegation led by Mrs K Shanmugam, wife of the Singaporean Foreign Affairs Minister, at 2 pm visited Myanmar Gems Museum where they observed Myanmar gems and jewellery put on display at the first floor of the museum and signed the visitor’s book. Accompanied by officials, the delegation also visited National Landmark Gardens (Nay Pyi Taw).—MNA**

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Myanmar National Human Rights Commission issues statement

NAY PYI TAW, 13 Dec.—Myanmar delegation headed by U Maung Myint, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, attended the 4th Bali Democracy Forum held in Bali, the Republic of Indonesia, from 8 to 9 December 2011.

The opening session of the 4th Bali Democracy Forum was held in the morning of 9 December 2011 at Bali International Convention Centre. It was attended by the President of the Republic of Indonesia, the Sultan of Brunei Darussalam, the Prime Minister of People’s Republic of Bangladesh, President of Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, the Vice President of the Republic of Philippines, the President of Mongolia, the Prime Minister of the State of Qatar, the Prime Minister of Timor Leste, Ministers, Deputy Ministers and Senior Officials from 84 countries from the Asia region and representatives from 24 countries outside Asia. At the opening session, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia Dr Marty Natalegawa reported an account of activities taken place after the 3rd Bali Democracy Forum and, on the programme of this year’s forum. Then, Dr Suuilo Bambang Yudhoyono, President of the Republic of Indonesia gave an opening statement.

At the morning session, leaders of the delegation delivered statements under the theme of “Enhancing Democratic participation in a Changing World: Responding to Democratic Voices and Building Democracy” and “Participating in a Changing World: Responding to Democratic Voices and Building Democracy” respectively. In his statement, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia Dr Marty Natalegawa took up the theme of “Building a solid regional democracy framework for peace and development”. The Minister highlighted the need for a regional framework that can be the platform for a peaceful world.

In 50 years’ time, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia Dr Marty Natalegawa hosted a dinner in honour of the delegates to the 4th Bali Democracy Forum at Bali International Convention Centre in the evening of the same day.

On 9 December 2011, interactive sessions under the theme of “The ability of State to respond to the voice of Democracy” and “Ensuring Democratic Space for civil society participation” were held. In the evening, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia Dr Marty Natalegawa hosted a dinner in honour of the delegates to the 4th Bali Democracy Forum at Bali International Convention Centre in the evening of the same day.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia Dr Marty Natalegawa concluded his statement by saying that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, in collaboration with the Ministry of Defence, plans to establish a centre for democratic studies to disseminate knowledge on democracy for the people of the region.
It is the responsibility of the journalism, the fourth pillar of the nation to monitor and mend the legislative, judicial and executive pillars in practicing democracy.

The association had not only increased in members but association with further contributions to national interests. Recruitment had brought about wider functionality of the creditability of private journals. Elements were ahead of the MWJA and the public prefer to organization and influence. In the meantime, the journalism around 2004 were assumed to be weak in contacts with and most assisted him. The activities of the MWJA had most frequent interests of the literature world and nation and the people. Of various organizations, the MWJA had most frequent contacts with and most assisted him. The activities of the MWJA around 2004 were assumed to be weak in organization and influence. In the meantime, the journalism elements were ahead of the MWJA and the public prefer to the creditability of private journals.

The Union Minister added that for that reason, he had managed journalists to join the MWJA in 2006 and the recruitment had brought about wider functionality of the association with further contributions to national interests. The association had not only increased in members but improved in quality, at the same time there emerged factional conflicts within the accusation and the literature world.

The association could more widely work for welfare of the members and social welfare programmes. In previous respect-paying occasions, only K 5000 per head could be offered to doyens of literati and since last year it had been increased to K 20000. In this year’s respect-paying ceremony, the number of the deans of literati would be 152 and this was due to improved performance of the MWJA.

In addition, MWJA members and literati had become able to make study tours abroad and media delegations were also visiting Myanmar. Media corners could be opened in Yangon and plans were under way to open them in other cities.

It was learnt that procedures for joining ISBM had reached the final step and there only needed to pay membership fees. The success of the ISBM would be beneficial to those engaged in literature world and the MWJA. Assistance had been rendered to the MWJA to be able to influentially lead the literature world in 2005. B.A Journalism Course had been conducted for journalists especially for youths to have experience. Senior literati were urged to organize various courses for the development of the youths. The ministry had resolved conflicts between one group and another and factional conflicts, even cases calling for lawsuit and such measures were not superficial efforts but born of goodwill.

It was learnt that the MWJA today had 8223 members. The association had also raised funds for the association, the elders and literature. Measures were being taken to raise the number of members and the fund. Moreover, restrictions over the publishing had been eased and currently seven genres of journals and publications could be published through publish and submit system which would be applied for all kinds of genres in the future.

To be able to produce more tangible results at present and in the future, the MWJA would have to strive, learning from the past events. It was the responsibility of the journalism, the fourth pillar of the nation to monitor and mend the legislative, judicial and executive pillars in practicing democracy. The Union Minister added that he had depicted the public as the fifth pillar as the people were supposed to be a united literature organization with such strata as writer stratum, publisher stratum, cartoonist stratum, reporter stratum and so on.

The MWJA should be considering to form an organization like press council in international community to resolve problems concerned with literature.

The Union Minister concluded that the government would always cooperate with the MWJA and he believed the latter would coordinate with the government maintaining fine traditions.

Next, Chairman of the MWJA U Tin Hlaing (Ledwintha AHLON) opened the tournament by teeing off. Among the spectators were Yangon Region Minister for National Races U Ko Ko (Ko Ko-Sethmu Tekkatho) on future plans of the association, Vice Chairman (3) U Ko Ko Hlaing (Ko Ko Hlaing) on formation and functions of press councils in international community and fund-raising.

The Union Minister made concluding remarks and held cordial talks with the chairman, vice-chairmen and CEC members of the MWJA.

It was the responsibility of the journalism, the fourth pillar of the nation to monitor and mend the legislative, judicial and executive pillars in practicing democracy.
GM suspends production at Cruze plant in Ohio

LORDSTOWN, 13 Dec.—General Motors Co suspended production on Monday afternoon at an Ohio plant that makes the Chevrolet Cruze compact car due to a supplier issue. Production at the Lordstown, Ohio, factory was halted around 1 pm EST. Workers on the first and second shifts worked shortened schedules, while the third shift was suspended, GM Lordstown spokesman Tom Mock said. Mock said skilled trade workers at the plant are due to report to work their regular hours.

GM spokesman Chris Lee declined to describe the nature of the supplier issue, saying only that the No 1 US automaker was looking to restart production as swiftly as possible. So far this year, the Cruze is the second-best-selling small car in the US auto market and the 10th-best-selling vehicle overall as consumers seek more fuel efficient options.

GM Chief Executive Dan Akerson said this month that he hoped the Cruze, which gets up to 42 miles per gallon, would become the top-selling car by the end of 2011. Toyota Motor Co’s Corolla has so far outsold the Cruze by a little more than 4,000 vehicles. The Cruze has outsold Honda Motor Co’s Civic, a longtime leader in the small car segment, and Ford Motor Co’s Focus.—Reuters

Moscow launches direct train service to Paris

MOSCOW, 13 Dec.—State Railways of Russia launched a regular Moscow-Paris direct train service Tuesday after a 38-hour journey, the railway company’s press service said.

The train left Belorussky railway station and would arrive at the Gare de L’Est in Paris Tuesday after a 38-hour journey, the railway company’s press service said. It will likely appeal to business travelers, with several deluxe compartments, with fares ranging from 420 to 1,030 euros. The service will run three times a week until 27 May, 2012, after which it will increase to five times per week. The company said the service was booked out until the end of 2011.—Xinhua

Cambridge posts Newton manuscripts online

London, 13 Dec.—The University of Cambridge says it is posting almost all of Isaac Newton manuscripts to the Internet.

The university said Monday it is launching its online collection with 4,000 pages worth of the Enlightenment thinker’s most famous work. Other Cambridge manuscripts, including the papers of Charles Darwin, may follow.

This isn’t Newton’s first foray online. The full text of some 130 of Newton’s writings is freely available through The Newton Project, maintained by the University of Sussex in southern England.

But Cambridge says that facsimile copies of Newton’s works will allow a far larger audience to explore the full texture of his writings — which include the notes, annotations and arithmetic behind his discoveries.—Internet

Employment outlook weakest in three years - Manpower

LONDON, 13 Dec.—Britons’ employment prospects at their bleakest in three years, a quarterly survey by recruitment firm Manpower suggested on Tuesday, with employers planning no net increase in jobs over the next three months.

Manpower’s seasonally adjusted employment outlook balance fell to zero for Q4 2012, the lowest reading since that for Q4 2009 and down from +1 percent for Q4 2011.

That spells bad news for the 2.62 million Britons looking for work. The jobless rate hit a 15-year high of 8.3 percent in the three months to September and is forecast to rise further when October data is released on Wednesday.

“The 2012 jobs market sits on a knife edge,” said Manpower’s UK managing director Mark Cahill. “Employers have now adopted a wait-and-see approach to hiring; they are cautious about the economy and the fear of a euro-wide contagion is weighing heavily on their minds.”

Markets are likely to judge measures agreed at last week’s EU summit as too little too late to solve the raging debt crisis in the euro zone. The 17-country single currency zone is Britain’s main trading partner and about 3 million jobs depend on trade with Europe, according to the government.—Reuters

Mitsubishi Motors delivers electric car to Hawaii

HONOLULU, 13 Dec.—A Hawaii couple on Monday received the first all-electric car delivered by Mitsubishi Motors to a retail customer in North America.

Bridget Nishimura said her family spends $60 to $75 a week on gas for each of their three cars so they can commute to work and school from their home in Waipahu. She’s looking forward to simply charging the car with electricity. “I’m so excited. I’m very much about the Earth and environment,” Nishimura said after she and her husband, Bryson Nishimura, received the keys to their 2012 Mitsubishi at a ceremony at the state Capitol. “I hope I am a leader today, and that people will follow suit. Because you can’t go wrong,” the gas prices are not going to go down, certainly. This is definitely the way to go.

A seven-hour charge using a 240-volt outlet costs about 83 at average US electric rates and gives the car enough power to go about 62 miles.

Gov Neil Abercrombie said the Nishimuras are electric vehicle pioneers who are setting the pace for the rest of Hawaii.

Abercrombie, like his predecessor Gov Linda Lingle, has been promoting the use of electric vehicles as part of an effort to reduce the state’s oil consumption.

Hawaii offers people who buy electric cars a $4,500 tax credit. Electric vehicle drivers on the islands don’t have to pay for parking when they park in a metered spot, and they may drive in carpool lanes on freeways.

Consumers who take advantage of the state credit and a $7,500 federal tax credit should wind up paying $16,000 for the car, the state says.

Makatohi Hasegawa, executive vice president of Mitsubishi Motors North America, said 17,000 of the cars are already on the roads in Japan and in Europe. The company has expectations for strong sales in the islands.

“We are waiting for a big bang here because Hawaii is very green oriented,” Hasegawa said.

Hasegawa praised the incentives Hawaii has to encourage electric vehicle ownership. He also noted Hawaii has the most advanced electric vehicle charging infrastructure in the US.—Internet
CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV KOTA MACHAN VOY NO (329)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV KOTA MACHAN VOY NO (329) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 14.12.2011 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of A.W.P.T where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11:30 am and Surcharge is calculated based on the following terms 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: MS ADVANCE CONTAINER LINES

Phone No: 256908/378316/376797

Japan’s amazing lunchboxes

Tokyo, 13 Dec — Making a meal lunch for your children to take to school is a chore performed by parents around the world. But in Japan, it is not just the taste and healthiness of the meal that is important, but how it looks. The country’s ancient emphasis on food presentation has been transformed into a trend for character-themed packed lunches made to look like pandas, teddy bears or even real people.

The BBC’s Tokyo correspondent Roland Buerk has been finding out more.

The Close-up series focuses on aspects of life in countries and cities around the world. With each country very familiar to the people who live there can be surprising to those who do not.

‘More than 800 people’ phone-hacked by News of World

LONDON, 13 Dec — The total number of people whose phones were hacked by the News of the World will be about 800, police have said. The head of Scotland Yard’s phone hacking inquiry Operation Weeting told the Times she was ‘confident’ her officers had met all the likely victims. Deputy Assistant Commissioner Sue Akers said some others who were ‘potential targets, but are unlikely to have been hacked’ still need to be contacted.

The scandal led to the closure of the News of the World after 168 years. It also prompted a major public inquiry into the culture, practices and ethics of the press. The Times says more than 1,200 people had been in contact with the inquiry, but they are not believed to have been hacked or are not named in two reports that were seized from the private detective Glenn Mulcaire, who was employed by the News of the World.

Thousands more people will be contacted, but it is thought that because of the lack of personal information about them, they are unlikely to have been hacked, the newspaper said. A Scotland Yard spokesman said: ‘Operation Weeting has been in contact with or been contacted by 2,037 people, of which in the region of 803 are ‘victims’, whose names have appeared in the material.’

A “Sun” yacht is seen during the annual Christmas Colour Boat Parade in Marina Del Rey of California, the United States have been given a new name in Brussels. 13 Dec — China is faced with severe challenges in collecting enough blood plasma to produce

Health Minister says China faces severe plasma shortage

BRUSSELS, 13 Dec — China is faced with severe challenges in collecting enough blood plasma to produce medicines, Health Minister Chen Zhu said on Sunday.

Chen called on the public to join blood donation after donating blood plasma at the Beijing Red Cross Blood Center on Sunday, the fifth time since he took office in 2007. Blood plasma is needed to make blood products like prothrombin complex, which is vital for hemophiliacs.

The total volume of blood plasma collected last year was 4.180 tonnes, while the volume needed to produce enough medicines was 8,000 tonnes, said a statement from the ministry.

The situation became even more critical this year with reductions of blood plasma in China fell dramatically in recent years, as a result of safety concerns from donors and the government’s efforts to regulate blood collection after contamination triggered HIV infection scandals.

Minibus crash in Cumbria injures 13 people

CUMBRIA, 13 Dec — A minibus crashed when it came off an icy road in Cumbria, injuring 13 people, police said. The vehicle, which had 12 male passengers aged between 18 and 20, was returning to Millom early on Saturday after a night out in Cockermouth. Cumbria Police said the minibus left the A595, south of Gosforth, and rolled over on to its side.

The passengers and driver were treated for non-life-threatening injuries at Whitehaven’s West Cumberland Hospital.
Man goes batty over Batman memorabilia

A man living in Indianapolis has amassed a collection of almost 1,600 pieces of Batman memorabilia, which he, of course, keeps in his own Batcave.

Kevin Silva’s obsession with Batman began when he was 5 years old in 1966, the year ABC’s live-action Batman TV series debuted. The Indianapolis Star reported, “It just burned a hole in the back of my head,” said Silva, who has been collecting Batman memorabilia ever since. Within his collection is a Batman lunchbox he carried to kindergarten.

Silva’s collection spans all decades and reincarnations of the Caped Crusader, but the 1960s ABC series is most heavily featured. In his basement, also known as the Batcave, Silva has a red Batphone, which sits under glass, just like it did in Commissioner Gordon’s office on the show. He also has a Gotham City phone book, reportedly an actual prop from the show.

A recent appraisal for insurance purposes estimated the collection’s value in six figures, but Silva said he doesn’t plan on selling any time soon. Silva isn’t the only collector in his family, either. His girlfriend, Kayleigh, 25, buys up all sorts of Marilyn Monroe-related items, while her brother, Dylan, 21, collects memorabilia of the rock band Kiss.

I didn’t get any money this time

A man in a bar sees a friend at a table, drinking by himself. Approaching the friend he comments, “You look terrible. What’s the problem?”

“My mother died in August,” he said, “and left me $25,000.”

“Gee, that’s tough,” he replied.

“Then in September,” the friend continued, “my father died, leaving me $90,000.”

“Wow. Two parents gone in two months. No wonder you’re depressed.”

“And last month my aunt died, and left me $15,000.”

“Three close family members lost in three months. How sad.”

“Then this month,” continued the friend, “absolutely nothing!”

15 films qualify for Visual Effects Oscar race

BEVERLY HILLS, 13 Dec— Hollywood’s Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences said Monday 15 films released in 2011 are eligible for nomination for the Visual Effects Oscar. The movies are listed below in alphabetical order:

“Captain America: The First Avenger”
“Cowboys & Aliens”
“Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part 2”
“Hugo”
“Mission: Impossible – Ghost Protocol”
“Pirates of the Caribbean: On Stranger Tides”
“Real Steel”
“Rise of the Planet of the Apes”
“Sherlock Holmes: A Game of Shadows”
“Sucker Punch”
“Super 8”
“Theor”
“Transformers: Dark of the Moon”
“The Tree of Life”
“X-Men: First Class”

The list will be whittled down to five when the 84th Academy Awards nominations are announced 24 Jan. The Oscars for outstanding film achievements of 2011 are to be presented 26 Feb at the Kodak Theatre at Hollywood & Highland Centre.

Iowa man to attempt juggling record

An Iowa juggler said he will attempt the Guinness World Record for fastest three-ball juggling as part of a fundraiser for the North Iowa Youth Centre. Mark Hanson of Kanawha said he will attempt to beat a Czechman’s record of 339 throws in one minute at 4 pm Saturday at the National Guard Armory in Mason City as part of the North Iowa Youth Centre’s Winter Fun Festival, The Mason City Globe Gazette reported Monday.

Hanson said he is confident he beat the record during his last attempts Saturday. He said his personal record is 420 throws.

“I’ve practiced for one minute probably a thousand times over the last couple months,” Hanson said.

Three plead guilty in toilet paper scam

Three South Florida salespeople face up to 20 years in prison for convincing elderly people into buying unnecessary septic products. Christopher Lincolin, Mary Moore and Joseph Nouerand pleaded guilty in federal court this past week to conspiring to commit wire fraud. The Miami Herald reported Saturday.

Authorities said the three worked for FBK Products of West Palm Beach and told their victims they needed to buy the company’s special products to avoid ruining their septic tanks.

During phone sales, salespeople for the FBK, Products claimed the company was affiliated with the Environmental Protection Agency, the US Food and Drug Administration and the US Department of Agriculture, federal prosecutors said. Victims were also told they needed to buy special soap, detergent and toilet paper or their septic tanks would not pass federal inspections.

Prosecutors said the company made about $1 million from more than a dozen victims nationwide. Lincolin, Moore and Nouerand will be sentenced in February. Three other suspects are awaiting trial.

Bieber to tape Canadian Christmas show

TORONTO, 13 Dec—Canadian recording star Justin Bieber announced Monday his plans to tape a 30-minute Christmas special for MuchMusic and CTV in Toronto. “MuchMusic Presents Justin Bieber: Home for the Holidays” is set to premiere 22 Dec. The special will be taped at a Toronto concert; however, details regarding the date and location of the show have not yet been announced. All proceeds from the concert will benefit Bieber’s “Believe” charity drive.

The 17-year-old pop singer is expected to perform his hits “Mistletoe” and “Baby,” as well as covers of some of his favourite pop songs and Christmas classics. “The holidays are a very special time of the year for me and I’m looking forward to coming home and ringing them in with my friends and family,” Bieber said in a statement. “And this year will be extra special, as I’ll be sharing the spirit of the season with the whole of Canada with my TV special, ‘Home for the Holidays’ on MuchMusic and CTV.”

Rashida Jones has no time for love

LONDON, 13 Dec— Actress Rashida Jones says she has no plans to find a boyfriend any time soon as she is busy with her acting career. “This is a little bit of a choice for me. My career is paramount at the moment. I’ve had a lot of luck in the past couple of years. And I want to be open to it and available to it,” contactmusic.com quoted her as saying on the Perez Morgan show.

“And my career right now is very time consuming. And I like it that way. It’s good. I’m acting and I’m writing and it’s taking up a lot of my energy. I’m also, you know, I’m picky,” she added. “The Social Network” star also reveals she is unsure whether she would ever exchange wedding vows.

“I totally believe in marriage... in this country (America), more than half the people get divorced.”

Richard Hatch released from prison

CRANSTON, 13 Dec— Richard Hatch has been released from a Rhode Island prison after serving nine months for a probation violation, officials said. Hatch is famous for competing on the TV reality shows “Survivor” and “Celebrity Apprentice.”

He went to prison in 2006 after he was convicted of tax evasion and was released in 2009. However, he was sent back to prison in March after he failed to comply with the terms of his release by not settling his outstanding tax bills. E! News reported he was released from a prison in Cranston, RI, Monday afternoon.

Richard Hatch Gets Back to Civilization with a Milk ad

Richard Hatch, the last one left standing on the hit CBS show “Survivor,” displays his winning style in the latest “got milk?” ad by sporting the famous mustache.

Internet
Chelsea agree to Anelka’s China switch

LONDON, 13 Dec — Chelsea have agreed a deal with Chinese club Shanghai Shenhua that will see Nicolas Anelka leave Stamford Bridge during the January transfer window. The 32-year-old Frenchman has struggled to hold down a regular place in the Blues side since new manager Andre Villas-Boas took over in June, making only three Barclays Premier League starts this season.

And now the club have confirmed on their official website (chelseafc.com) that Anelka, who joined Chelsea in 2008, will be leaving for pastures new next month. The much-travelled striker, who has also played for Arsenal, Real Madrid, Paris St Germain, Liverpool, Manchester City, Fenerbahce and Bolton, joined Chelsea from the Trotters in January 2008 for £15m. He has scored 59 goals in 185 matches for the west London club, helping them to win the FA Cup in 2009 and 2010 and the Barclays Premier League in 2010. Anelka’s contract at Chelsea was due to run out next summer and he had a transfer request formally accepted last week. — Internet

Tottenham boss Harry Redknapp critical of Chris Foy

LONDON, 13 Dec — Tottenham manager Harry Redknapp was angry with referee Chris Foy after he made a number of questionable decisions in their 2-1 defeat at Stoke.

Spurs felt Foy missed two handballs, wrongly disallowed an Emmanuel Adebayor strike for offside and harshly awarded Yossi Kaboul a second yellow card.

“Adebayor was way onside,” said Redknapp.

“There were two blatant handballs and the referee missed them. I thought he had a poor day. It [Kaboul’s sending off] was farcical.

Stoke took a 2-0 lead with a first-half double from Matthew Etherington, although Peter Crouch appeared to control the ball with his arm in assisting the opener.

The visitors hit back through an Adebayor penalty but were denied spot-kicks on two more occasions as they pushed for the equaliser. Kaboul’s goalbound shot hit Ryan Shawcross’s elbow on the line and, in the scramble that followed, Adebayor was incorrectly flagged offside as he crossed the line. Jermain Defoe also felt one of his shots was blocked by a hand while Tottenham were further incensed by the red card shown to Kaboul.

“That’s why we’ve come away with nothing,” said Redknapp.

Dubai winner Quiros hails record-breaking Donald

DUBAI, 13 Dec — Spanish Alfredo Quiros beat Luke Donald to the Dubai World Championship title but he is still in awe of the record-breaking Briton’s nerves of steel and tenacity under pressure.

“Luke is unbelievable,” said the 28-year-oldQuiros told reporters after Donald came third in the blazing heat of the United Arab Emirates on Sunday. “You can never count him out.

“He’s always coming back, always coming at you. It’s not easy being number one in the world when everybody wants to catch you.”

He said after finishing two shots ahead of 42-year-old Briton Paul Lawrie and three in front of Donald. “The mental statement is the one that moves a real golfer and you can see it in Luke. He obviously feels so good under par pressure.”

“World number one Donald’s third-place finish in Dubai made sure he became the first player to win the orders of merit in Europe and the United States.

The willowy 6-foot-3 Quiros is one of the longest hitters in world golf but can be terribly wayward off the tee and he acknowledged that, despite his smiling demeanor, he is often prone to negative thoughts on the course.

“There are always two ways to see the battle — half-empty or half-full,” said the Dubai specialist after adding the World Championship to his Desert Classic success in the same city in February.

Frank Lampard comes off the bench to score a decisive penalty as Chelsea hand 10-man Manchester City their first Premier League defeat of the season. — Internet

Lampard’s penalty earns Chelsea 2-1 victory over unbeaten Man City

LONDON, 13 Dec — Frank Lampard’s last-seven-minute penalty propelled Chelsea 2-1 victory over Manchester City and handed the Premier League leader their first defeat of the season on Monday. The 33-year-old Lampard, who was used to be the skipper in the Stamford Bridge, came off the bench in the last 17 minutes. His sharp pass seven minutes before the injury time set-up Daniel Sturridge free in the area and the England forward’s shot caused Joleon Leschot’s hand ball, earning the host side a valuable penalty.

Lampard, who was frequently seen in the midfield, showed his upward trend to start 2011-12 as he scored his 12th Premier League goal of the season after highlighting a stellar year by winning the HSBC Women’s Champions at Sung Hyun Park through a third-place finish. The title contention thus returned to be usually intense after Man City led the table. — Internet

Scott wins Australian golfer of the year award

SYDNEY, 13 Dec — Adam Scott’s commando win at the Bridgestone International has earned him the Australi­an Golf Digest player of the year award, ahead of Jason Day. Scott led from start to finish in August to win the Bridgestone title. In April, Scott shot a final-round 67 at the Masters to tie for second with Day, two shots behind South African winner Charl Schwartzel.

Australian Golf Digest editor Steve Keiper said 2011 will go down as the year Scott made his biggest steps yet on route to reaching his undeniably potential.

Chillenini says Juventus’ draw with Roma not a slip-up

ROMA, 13 Dec — Juventus defender Giorgio Chiellini said the Old Lady’s 1-1 draw against Roma on Monday was not a slip-up for them, as “everyone struggles in Rome.” The Bianconeri went behind in the first few minutes when Arturo Vidal’s howler allowed Daniele De Rossi to score, then equalised through Lampard questions ‘farcical’ Kaboul dismissal at Stoke

LONDON, 13 Dec — Lampard’s penalty questions ‘farcical’ Kaboul dismissal at Stoke

WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

Percy & Simpson lead star class

INTERNET

Nicolas Anelka has scored only once in 15 appearances for Chelsea this season. — Internet

PSG and Tottenham on brink in Europa League

PARIS, 13 Dec — Olympique Paris and Tottenham are among the teams relying on other results for Europa League progress and it isn’t quite clear which way they want things to go when the group stage concludes this week. Although the competition offers the realistic chance of a trophy, both know elimina­tion will leave them free to focus on more pressing domestic matters.

PSG is tied with Montpellier at the top of the French league, while Spurs are in contention for a top-four finish in England. PSG hosts Athletic Bilbao on Wednesday needing to better Salzburg’s result at Slovan Bratislava if it is to progress ahead of the African club.

Tottenham can only ad­vance Thursday if they win at Shamrock Rovers and Rubin Kazan loses at PAOK. With 15 teams having advanced, nine remain­ing berths are up for grabs this week—with 19 clubs in contention to fill them.

INTERNET

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‘Ladies vs Ricky Bahl’ average, earns Rs.16.54 cr in opening weekend

New Delhi, 13 Dec— Ranveer Singh and Anushka Sharma-starter ‘Ladies vs Ricky Bahl’ made an average start and the romantic comedy, which got mixed reviews, has earned approximately Rs.16.54 crore in the opening weekend.

Made at a budget of Rs.25 crore, the film collected Rs.4.74 crore Friday, Rs.5.59 crore Saturday and Rs.6.21 crore Sunday.

A conman’s story, the film sees Ranveer fooling three girls Aditi Sharma, Dapnna Sharma and Parineeti Chopra, cousin of actress Priyanka Chopra. In the end, he finds his match in Anushka.

“Ladies vs Ricky Bahl” brought the “Band Baaja Baaraat” trio of Ranveer, Anushka and director Maneesh Sharma together, but they couldn’t repeat the same success story.

While some trade experts say that the film has opened up good, others feel that the Anushka-Ranveer jodi has failed this film.

“Band Baaja Baaraat” trio of Ranveer, Anushka and director Maneesh Sharma "failed to deliver on its promise of entertainment," said Yogesh Raizada, corporate head (Cinemas) of Wave Cinemas told IANS.

“With Ranveer and Anushka at the helm, the film targeted the young crowd. The opening was dull on Friday but later it picked up in the next two days, however, the occupancy dropped again on Monday,” he said.

The film is likely to get affected by the release of ‘Mission Impossible 4: The Ghost Protocol’. There is a lot of buzz surrounding the film as it stars Anil Kapoor. However, the performances of all the actors have been good,” he added.

Raazidas of Waves appreciated Parineeti and said: “She is impressive when it comes to acting.”

Internet

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Weather forecast for 14th December, 2011

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<tr>
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<td>26/79</td>
<td>Likelihood of isolated light rain (60%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Lower Shan</td>
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<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Bago</td>
<td>32/89</td>
<td>Mostly cloudy</td>
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‘Mission Impossible 4: The Ghost Protocol’ is expected to attract family audiences stayed away as the film targeted the young crowd.

“The occupancy has been around 85 percent in total for all three days and it targets younger crowd.

The opening was dull on Friday but later it picked up in the next two days, however, the occupancy dropped again on Monday,” he said.

“The film is likely to get affected by the release of ‘Mission Impossible 4: The Ghost Protocol’.”

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Internet
Khin Aung Myint at Amyotha Hluttaw call on Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker U U Khin Aung Myint were Chairman of UN, ASEAN, AIPA and International Relations Committee.

The meeting mainly focused on promoting mutual friendship, cooperation and intercommunication between Hluttaws.

Dr Thaw Kaung wins Lifetime National Literary Award

The reason why the committee chose him as Lifetime Achievement Award Winner is that he has been making contribution to the benefit of Myanmar Literary in his life time.

National Literary Award for 2010

It is the responsibility of the journalism, the fourth pillar of the nation to monitor and mend the legislative, judicial and executive pillars in practicing democracy.