Little apparent progress in US “fiscal cliff” talks

HASTINGS, 1 Dec—With barely a month left before the “fiscal cliff,” Republicans and Democrats remained far apart on Friday in talks to avoid the across-the-board tax hikes and spending cuts that threaten to throw the country back into recession.

While President Barack Obama visited a Pennsylvania toy factory to muster public support for tax hikes on the rich, portraying Republicans as scrooges at Christmas time, his primary adversary in negotiations, Republican House Speaker John Boehner, continued to describe the situation as a stalemate.

The argument will resume on Sunday when Boehner, along with Obama’s Treasury secretary, Timothy Geithner, and others, take to weekly political talk shows and pick up further steam next week with a possible confrontation in the House of Representatives between Democrats and Republicans over the timing of a vote on tax hikes.

Lawmakers are nervously eying the markets as the deadline approaches, with gyrations likely to intensify pressure to bring the drama to a close.

The markets, in turn watching the politicians, fell as Boehner spoke, but recovered afterward. It was a repeat of the pattern earlier in the week when the speaker offered a similarly gloomy assessment.

The latest round of high-stakes gamesmanship focuses on whether to extend the temporary tax cuts that originated under former President George W. Bush beyond their December 31 expiration date for all taxpayers, as Republicans want, or just for those with incomes under $250,000, as Obama and his fellow Democrats want.

After five days of increasingly confrontational exchanges, the work week drew to a close with an announcement by Democrats of a long-shot effort next week to force an early tax-hike vote in the Republican-controlled U.S. House to break the deadlock.

House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi said she would undertake her nearly successful effort unless Boehner agreed by Tuesday to bring a bill to the floor allowing taxes on the wealthy to rise, something Boehner is highly unlikely to do until he is ready.

“The clock is ticking,” Pelosi said at a news conference. “The year is ending. It’s really important with tax legislation for it to happen now. We’re calling upon the Republican leadership in the House to bring this legislation to the floor next week.”

Reuters

Slight earthquake jolts

NAY PYI TAW, 1 Dec—A slight earthquake of magnitude (4.2) Richter Scale with its epicenter inside Myanmar, about (12) miles north of Thabekkyin, about (75) miles north of Mandalay was recorded at (20) hrs (01) min (05) sec MST on 1 December 2012, announced Department of Meteorology and Hydrology.

Mr. Choumaly Sayasone, President of the Lao People’s Democratic Republic and His Excellency Mr. Thein Sein, Prime Minister of the Lao People’s Democratic Republic.

Republic of the Union of Myanmar
President Office
Order No. 40/2012
3rd Waxing of Tazaungmon 1374 ME
1 December 2012

Reshuffle of Taninthayi Region ministers

Under Section 262 Sub-Section (f) of the Constitution, Section 20 Sub-Section (b) of the Union Government Law and Region/State Government Law Section 8 Sub-Section (g), ministers of Taninthayi Region were reshuffled to ministries shown against them.

(1) U Than Aung Finance and Revenue Ministry
(2) U Thim Lwin Planning and Economic Ministry
(3) U Tin Soe Forestry and Mines Ministry
(4) Dr Win Aung Social Affairs Ministry
(5) U Win Swe Electric Power and Industrial Ministry

U Thim Sein
President
Republic of the Union of Myanmar
**LOCAL NEWS**

**YPGG to organize golf tournament**

**Yangon, 1 Dec—** To mark the seventh anniversary of Yuzana Plaza Golf Group, the 48th Golf Tournament, prize-giving ceremony and dinner will be held at Paya Hlaing Golf Course in Hlithetaya Township at 7 am on 13 December. For further information about the tournament, please contact U Cho (Ph: 095105435), U Kyaw Win (Ph: 095154408) and U Tun Tun Oh (Ph: 095016616). — Kyemon

**Mandalay Mayor Mini Marathon to be held in January 2013**

**Mandalay, 1 Dec—** With the aim of cementing friendship among national races through sport activities and turning out new generation athletes for international marathon events, Mandalay Mayor’s Cup Mini Marathon Contest will be held on 7 January 2013. The contest includes men’s and women’s open and amateur events.

**MR strives to improve railroads for convenience of passengers**

**Yangon, 1 Dec—** For convenience of passengers to take a train trip safe and sound, upgrading the railroad between mile post Nos (2820) and (2920) on Hsattwar-Taungdwingyi railroad section was carried out for increasing the speed of the train from 30 mph to 40 mph by railway workers of civil engineering department of Myanmar Railways on 27 November.

A total of 6500 concrete sleepers were substituted along the railroad section. Timely completion of railroad works is being carried out with the strength of 65 workers. — Kyemon

**Wheelchair users arrive in Meiktila**

**Yangon, 1 Dec—** Three wheelchair users of seven-days-six-night Mandalay-Nay Pyi Taw trip broke their journey in Meiktila where they were welcomed by departmental personnel, staff of Social Welfare Department, members of social organizations, students and wellwishers near Nagayon Maha Bawdi Pagoda on 29 November noon.

“We left Kyaukse at about 5 am. Our final destination is Thingha Hotel in Nay Pyi Taw. Social Welfare Department and Shweminthar Foundation (Myanmar) jointly organized the event in commemoration of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities on 3 December. We felt happy as we were cordially and warmly welcomed by locals when we had a stopover in towns, thereby relieving our tiredness” a three-wheelchair user said. The group of three-wheelchair users comprises 11 wheelchair users and a cyclist. They were presented awards and gifts by locals, personnel and members of social organizations led by the Deputy Commissioner. Thingha Hotel is their final destination where they will reach on 3 December (International Day of Persons with Disabilities). — Kyemon

**New Air Bus for MAI lands at Yangon International Airport**

**Yangon, 1 Dec—** As the eighth arrival of aircraft in the airline’s fleet, a new Air Bus A 319 airplane bought by Myanmar Airways International (MAI), the only state-owned airline of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, landed at Yangon International Airport yesterday.

MAI airline operates direct flights to Bangkok, Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Gara, Siam Reap, Phnom Penh and Guangzhou from Yangon and manages Bangkok-Singapore-Bangkok and Mandalay-Gara-Mandalay flights. It is planned to operate direct flights to Bangkok, Singapore and Kunning.

At the end of this year, there will be a non-stop flight to Hong Kong. The newly-arrived Air Bus A 319 with a seating capacity of 123 is suitable to operate a chartered plane.

Plans are underway to provide chartered plane services not only for international flights but also for domestic flights — Yangon-Nay Pyi Taw, Yangon-Bagan and Yangon-Heho. — Kyemon

**Myanmar, India to boost border trade in Tamu**

**Tamu, 1 Dec—** A meeting No (8/2012) for boosting border trade between Myanmar and India was held at the director’s office of the Ministry of Commerce in Tamu on 27 November.

Director of Tamu Border Trade U Win Tint explained works for boosting border trade, protection of customers and formation of mobile teams for eradication of illegal trade.

Next, those present from OSS, Customs Department, Immigration and National Registration Department, DACs and Mandalay City Development Committee, offices of Mandalay City Development Committee, offices of Aungmyerthan, Chanyay-thazan, Mahahaungmye, Chanyhathazi, Pyigyo and Anmara Township DAs and Mandalay Region Sports and Physical Education Department (Bahtoo Sports Ground) during the office hours from 3 to 23 December. Applicants are to submit their forms not later than 26 December. — Kyemon

**CCTVs for reduction in traffic accidents**

**Mandalay, 1 Dec—** With the aim of enforcing traffic rules to be able to reduce road accidents in Yangon Region, CCTVs are being installed at traffic lights on the roads with heavy traffic by Yangon Region Traffic Rules Enforcement Supervisory Committee.

“It is good for all of road users as CCTVs are installed at traffic lights. No one dare to go through the red or yellow lights as CCTVs operate 24 hours. If a car goes through, it will be caught in CCTVs and recorded. CCTVs could accidents are frequent as some drivers who have no patience to wait for their turn go through the red light. According to the committee, CCTVs have been installed at 22 traffic lights in the region. A traffic police said that there has been a decline in road accidents thanks to installation of CCTVs for those who are breaching the law by going through the traffic lights. — Kyemon
New Jersey bridge collapse derails freight train; chemical leaks

PAULSBORO, 1 Dec—A railroad bridge collapsed on Friday over a creek in southern New Jersey, causing a Conrail freight train to derail and spill hazardous chemicals into the air and water, authorities said.

Seven of the 82 cars derailed, and a tanker car that fell into Mantua Creek leaked vinyl chloride into the waterway, which feeds into the Delaware River near Philadelphia, said Deborah Hersman, chairwoman of the National Transportation Safety Board.

More than 12,000 gallons (45,425 liters) of the highly toxic and flammable industrial chemical leaked from a gash in the car’s side, local officials said.

Twenty-two people were examined at a nearby hospital as a precaution and were doing fine, said Larry Ragone, a spokesman for the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection.

Ragone said the health danger and environmental impact were minimal.

“Initially there was a release of gas into the air that affected some nearby residents and people working right in that area,” he said.

Air quality monitors in the area did not register any problem, said Lawrence Hajna, also with the DEP.

“All the levels are coming in within our safety range,” he said.

The accident took place at about 7 am EST (1200 GMT) in Paulsboro.

Are residents initially were told to stay indoors, with windows shut, and local schools were closed.

The leak was contained and no longer posed a threat, and authorities were using booms to trap the chemical in the water, Ragone said.

At the scene, one of the freight cars was nearly vertical, nose-down and partly submerged in the creek. Other cars lay jumbled on the collapsed bridge and the embankment.

“It’s part of living in Paulsboro, with refineries and trains. We accept it,” said resident John Diamond, 53, who was taking photographs. — Reuters

Margin of UN defeat disappoints Israel

Jerusalem, 1 Dec—The margin of Israel’s defeat in a UN vote that granted de-facto foreign support, envisaged by 41 members, opposed by nine, is a scale of almost certain defeat of Freedom (PDL) party, and Alfano to revive their People Party to another, sometimes ludicrous, anti-Israeli position to another, sometimes anti-Israeli consequences,” said a senior official who declined to be named.

Government spokesman MarkRegesvold saidthe tough defeat was “dismaying” by the vote, it was not surprising.

“The General Assembly can resemble the theatre of the absurd, which once a year automatically approves ludicrous, anti-Israeli resolutions. Sometimes these are supported by Europe, sometimes they are not,” he said.

At least 20 killed in cargo plane crash in capital of Republic of Congo

Brazzaville, 1 Dec—At least 20 people were killed and 14 others injured in a cargo plane crash in Brazzaville, capital of the Republic of Congo, on Friday, a rescue official told Xinhua.

The aircraft crashed at around 5:30 local time (1630 GMT) during landing in a thunder-shower in Brazzaville. But it could not be immediately known the real reason of the crash.

The injured people have been sent to hospitals nearby, according to rescuers.

The casualties include residents on the ground as the aircraft crashed in an area in the Moulo district of Brazzaville, according to rescuers. Debris of the plane were seen scattered in a large area while smoking was continuing as firefighters have controlled fire on the plane wreckage.

Police men were deployed to maintain order in the area. The illlucious aircraft, registered with a local company, Aero-Serv, was on a flight from Pointe-Noire, a port city about 500 km southwest of Brazzaville, to the capital city.

Aero-Serv was established in 1967 and based in Pointe-Noire. Since November 2009, the EU has banned Aero-Serv as well as other companies registered in the country from entering its space.

Their space includes the EU’s comprehensive relationship with the Democratic Republic of Congo, the EU’s 2008 agreement to support the Congolese government in the fight against the conflict, and the EU’s support for the Congolese government’s efforts to stabilize the country.

“Booms to trap the chemical on 30 Nov, 2012. A rail bridge collapsed on Friday over a creek in southern New Jersey, causing a Conrail freight train to derail and spill hazardous chemicals into the air and water, authorities said. — Reuters

Berlusconi drags his own party to destruction before Italy vote

ROME, 1 Dec—Five years after he won one of Italy’s biggest postwar election victories, Silvio Berlusconi is dragging his own party towards destruction by a mixture of indecision and refusal to withdraw gracefully.

The man who triumphantly dominated Italian politics for 17 years before he was humiliatingly driven from power a year ago, is in steep decline, beset on all sides by problems ranging from his business empire to his scandal-plagued personal life.

Anyone reading newspaper headlines about the flamboyant 76-year-old billionaire could be excused for feeling dizzy.

His flip flops from one position to another, sometimes in the space of a day, have torpedoed attempts by his hapless protege Angelino Alfano to revive their People of Freedom (PDL) party, and frustrated his supporters as they struggle to reduce the scale of almost certain defeat in an election next spring.

He wants to go back, then forward, then back again,” said exasperated PDL moderate Franco Frattini who was foreign minister under Berlusconi. “This indecision is a problem for the party."

“You would be better off talking to a psychologist than a political scientist,” said Professor James Walston of the American University of Rome. “It is about what you do with a wealthy old man who refuses to step down. It’s apersonal problem. Thinks like Dallas without the guns,” he told Reuters.

Berlusconi’s party seems close to splitting into two or three groups from a pro-European centre to radical right wing, undermining any chance the centre-right might have of clawing back credibility after their support dropped to less than the 37 percent they won in a March election victory in 2008. — Reuters

Chinese, US soldiers complete disaster relief drill amid Asia tensions

CHENGDU, 1 Dec—Chinese and American soldiers finished a week-long disaster rescue exercise on Friday, furthering military ties between the two countries even as military tensions rise between China and US military allies in the Pacific region.

The exercise, which included 20 US soldiers visiting facilities in three Chinese cities, are meant to bring the two rivals closer together through non-combat military collaboration, and to allay fears of countries in the region worried over China’s rising influence.

“Our senior leaders have been pretty clear: they’re seeking a positive, cooperative and comprehensive relationship between our two nations, said Maj Gen Stephen Lyons, commander of the US Army’s 8th Theater Sustainment Command, based in Hawaii. “That spirit of cooperation and that level of transparency I think helps signals throughout the region, and it helps us understand each other,” Lyons said at a People’s Liberation Army barracks on the outskirts of Chengdu in southwest China, where a massive earthquake devastated nearby regions in 2008, killing more than 87,000 people. — Reuters

Israel’s Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. — Reuters

Exposure to vinyl chloride can cause a burning sensation in the eyes or respiratory discomfort, the DEP said. The accident took place at about 7 am EST (1200 GMT) in Paulsboro.

Area residents initially were told to stay indoors, with windows shut, and local schools were closed.

The leak was contained and no longer posed a threat, and authorities were using booms to trap the chemical in the water, Ragone said.

At the scene, one of the freight cars was nearly vertical, nose-down and partly submerged in the creek. Other cars lay jumbled on the collapsed bridge and the embankment.

“It’s part of living in Paulsboro, with refineries and trains. We accept it,” said resident John Diamond, 53, who was taking photographs. — Reuters
Scientists measure sea rise from polar ice melt

**An ice sheet in Antarctica.**

Los Angeles, 1 Dec—The melting of the Antarctic and Greenland ice sheets has raised sea levels by 1.1 millimeters since 1992, a fifth of the total rise which threatens low-lying regions around the globe, a new study published on Thursday said.

The results of the study involving 47 researchers from 26 laboratories which was supported by the European Space Agency and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration give accurate measurements of a loss to date, they said in the journal Science.

Two thirds of the ice loss was in Greenland which is losing five times as much ice as in the 1990s, and the remainder was in Antarctica.

Together, the two receding ice sheets are now adding 0.95mm to sea levels a year compared to 0.27mm per year in the 1990s, the study said.

There have been at least 29 studies on ice sheet mass balances since 1998 which arrive at an average for the melt's contribution to sea level rises of around 1mm a year, the study's leader Andrew Shepherd told reporters.

The researchers used 10 different satellites to measure the shape, speed and weight of the ice sheets from space, as well as ground observations.

Past ice loss assessments typically used just one of those techniques, said Shepherd, a professor at the University of Leeds.

The results come as representatives from nearly 200 countries in Qatar are trying to reach a new global agreement on cutting greenhouse gas emissions, which are widely held responsible for causing global warming.

“The study effectively ends 20 years of uncertainty over the perception of our community. It provides a single climate record for people to use rather than the 40-50 which existed before this paper,” Shepherd said.

In 2007 scientists on the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) published their fourth report to address scientific and technical information on climate change and its effects. The next IPCC report is due out next year.

The fourth report estimated a total global sea level rise of 2mm a year from the early 1990s to 2011, while research by the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research this week estimated the rise has been as much as 3.2mm a year over the same period.

“We have pinpointed the areas of ice sheets where people should be concerned,” Shepherd said. “There are parts of Antarctica where the ice is behaving in a normal way. It is unstable and its sea level contribution is rising year-on-year, Greenland even more so,” he said.

“That allows us to say to people who build models for future climate projections, ‘these are the areas you should concentrate on’,” he said, adding that continued monitoring of ice sheets is necessary.

The researchers did not make predictions about how much sea levels were likely to rise this century, saying it was not the aim of the project.

The IPCC has said seas could rise by between 18 and 59 cm this century, not counting the possible acceleration of the melt of the Greenland and Antarctic ice sheets that could add more still water to the oceans.

Shepherd told reporters that figure even higher at between 50cm and a metre this century.

Apple’s iPhone 5 gets final approval for China release

**Customers walk out of a store selling and advertising Apple products, including the iPhone 5, in central Beijing on 28 Sept, 2012.**

San Francisco, 1 Dec—Apple Inc’s latest iPhone has received final clearance from Chinese regulators, paving the way for a December debut in a highly competitive market where the lack of a new model had severely eroded its share of product sales.

China is Apple’s second-largest market and its Chinese fans are eagerly awaiting the latest model of its smartphone, the iPhone 5, which was released in the United States in September.

Apple has said that the iPhone 5 will be released in China in December, but the long wait caused Apple's smartphone market share to halve to 10 percent in the second quarter as users switched brands or held out for the latest model, data from industry research firm IDC showed in August.

The Telecom Regulatory Authority, under China’s Ministry of Industry and Information Technology, showed two iPhone 5 models on its website that received approval on Thursday. The two are the A1429, a WCDMA model, and the A1442, a CDMA model that runs on China Telecom Corp’s network.

The chairman of China Unicom, the country’s second-largest mobile carrier, said early this month that it expected to start selling the iPhone 5 this year as it aims for a major boost in 3G users to 100 million by the year-end, up from 67 million in the first nine months.

Many users on Sina Corp’s Weibo, China’s most popular microblogging platform, cheered the imminent arrival of the latest iPhone. “I’m all ready! The iPhone 5 is coming!” said one.—Reuters

World’s first high-speed railway for frigid regions starts operation

**Train at JAXA’s Tsukuba Space Centre in Ibaraki Prefecture, northeast of Tokyo.**

Tokyo, 1 Dec—-Data on a new solar fuel rocket under development may have been leaked from the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency via a virus-infected computer, JAXA said on Friday. The agency said it is not clear yet that it was a target of a cyber attack.

The virus was detected by antivirus software 21 November and JAXA has since found traces of the malware that appears to be collecting the data and communicating with the outside, the agency said.

The operation of Harbin’s high-speed railway signals a great progress in the building of a “four-vertical” and “four-horizontal” high-speed rail network,” said Lu Chuanfeng, vice minister of the Ministry of Railways. So far, China has 26,000 kilometres of operating high-speed railways, ranking it first globally. —Xinhua

Sony’s PlayStation3 beats Nintendo’s Wii U over Black Friday

**Sony’s PlayStation3 and its game controller are displayed at a showcase at an electronic shop in Tokyo on 1 May, 2011.**

San Francisco, 1 Dec—Sony Corp sold over 525,000 PlayStation3 consoles in the United States during the week of Black Friday that kicks off the holiday shopping season, surpassing sales of Nintendo’s new Wii U.

Sony Computer Entertainment Inc said on Thursday that sales of its six-year-old PlayStation3 jumped 9 percent over the same period last year. The sales compared with over 400,000 units sold of Nintendo’s Wii U, the new console on which the Japanese company is putting much of its future.

Microsoft Corp sold over 360,000 units of its Xbox 360 console during the week of Black Friday, one of the heaviest US consumer-spending periods of the year.

The results could deal a blow to Nintendo, which is hoping that the Wii U, which comes with a touchscreen “GamePad” controller, will revive growth and pull it out of the red in coming years.

Since its November 18 US launch, the Wii U has been marred by technical glitches, including long software download times.

Analysts have said the initial sales numbers may have been curbed by insufficient supply, common during the launch of new products.

On Monday, Nintendo said Wii U consoles were “effectively sold out” in US retail stores.

Sales of consoles and portable handheld game devices like the Nintendo 3DS are crumbling as gamers migrate to offerings on smartphones and tablets. According to research firm NPD Group, video game hardware sales slid 37 percent in October from a year ago.

The battle between the three game makers is expected to intensify when Sony and Microsoft launch their own next-generation PlayStation and Xbox consoles, expected in 2013.—Reuters
GDP growth at 5.3 percent, headed for decade low

NEW DELHI, 1 Dec— India’s economy extended its long slump in the last quarter, with lower-than-expected growth keeping it on track for its worst year in a decade and underscoring the urgency of politically difficult reforms to spur a revival.

Gross domestic product (GDP) grew 5.3 percent from a year earlier in the July-September period, provisional government data showed on Friday, below the 5.5 percent posted for the three months ending in June.

Reacting to the number, Prime Minister Mannohan Singh’s chief economics advisor forecast full year growth of between 5.5 and 6 percent, which would be the slowest since 2002/3.

“But it will be between the two, because in order to get 6 percent we really need very strong growth in the second half,” advisor C Rangarajan told TV network CNBC.

The number was lower than a Reuters poll had forecast ending in June.

Extra fruit may not ward off daily hunger

NEW YORK, 1 Dec— The idea that filling up on fruits and vegetables will cut one’s appetite for higher-calorie fare did not pan out in a new study; in fact, adding fruit juice before meals boosted hunger and weight gain for some participants.

Eating apples and grapes before lunch helped people feel fuller and eat slightly less than when they drank an equivalent amount of fruit juice as an appetizer in the experiment. However, putting volunteers on a fruits-and-vegetable-heavy diet for months did no long-term difference in their assessments of their own hunger, and fullness, researchers found. Some doctors have hoped that encouraging people to eat greater volumes of fruits and veggies, which are less “energy-dense” than burgers and pizza, might help them feel full for longer and prevent overeating and weight gain.

But the new study suggests loading up on more carrots, broccoli and oranges every day won’t ward off hunger over the long run. And having fruit in beverage form simply added calories to the day’s tally without displacing any. The findings follow results from the same trial showing 34 participants — some overweight or obese, some a healthy weight — gained 3.5 and 5 pounds when they were given eight weeks of fruit juice to incorporate into their diet. Heavier participants, in particular, also gained weight when they received extra fresh fruit and vegetables.

If you tell people to add anything to their diet, you’re going to potentially have people gain weight, or lose weight, or gain weight, even with fruits and vegetables,” said Barbara Rolls, chair of nutrition sciences at The Pennsylvania State University in University Park. “You need to be careful to make sure that you emphasize substitution, not just, ‘Eat more of this or that.’”

Rolls, who was not involved in the new research, told Reuters Health.

That’s especially true for beverages, she said, since the body regulates hunger and thirst differently — and people often don’t think to eat less to make up for juice or other calorie-filled beverages. Richard Mathes from Purdue University in West Lafayette, Indiana, and his colleagues found that when they fed volunteers a regular lunch of all-you-can-eat macaroni and cheese, they ate an average of 785 or 821 calories of it, depending on the day.

When the same participants started a meal with fresh and dried fruit, then went on to the main course, they ended up eating 678 calories of lunch, the fruit course included. When they started with fruit juice instead, the volunteers took in a total of 891 calories. People ate about 400 more calories on average, during the test day when they started lunch with juice, compared to when they started with solid food, according to the findings published in the International Journal of Obesity.—Reuters

Business


growing the grey population, lower birthrates and eroding industrial competitiveness. Kyodo News


Business

China says HIV/AIDS cases up, premier-in-waiting promises help

BEIJING, 1 Dec — The number of new HIV/AIDS cases in China jumped in the first 10 months of the year, as premier-in-waiting Li Keqiang promised to let non-governmental groups play a bigger role in fighting an epidemic spreading fast in vulnerable groups.

The number of new AIDS cases rose almost 13 percent in the January to October period, compared with the same period the previous year, while the number of people infected with HIV aged 50 and above leapt more than 20 percent, the official Xinhua News Agency reported on Thursday.

Japan, Canada share “understanding” in 1st round of free trade talks

TOYO, 1 Dec—Japan and Canada shared an “understanding” about a framework of negotiations during the first round of bilateral free trade talks on Friday, the Japanese Foreign Ministry said.

The two countries will hold the next round of talks in Ottawa around next April, the ministry said in a statement, adding that participants in the Tokyo meeting also discussed draft clauses for an envisioned pact.

The five-day meeting from Sunday ended with such officials as Jun Yokota, ambassador in charge of economic diplomacy at Japan’s Foreign Ministry, and Ian Burney, assistant deputy minister for trade policy and negotiations at Canada’s Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade.

Electoral debates reveal lack of long-term economic policy

Tokyo, 1 Dec—The pledges by political parties for the upcoming general election have highlighted the urgency to overhaul the Japanese economy, which has long been mired in deflation, but they have also revealed the dearth of long-term and very detailed plans.

The debate has mainly revolved around what the parties are determined to do to turn the central bank do if they win, leaving many questions unanswered about how to improve the nation’s growth potential at a time when the population is aging and companies are shifting production abroad.

“It’s just like a doctor who only tries to reduce the fever of his patient without looking into the specific cause of the disease,” Masamichi Adachi, senior economist at JPMorgan Securities Japan Co, said. “They only discuss in fragments” the main problems such as the greying population, lower birthrates and eroding business sentiment over the restarted reform initiative, the real economy will take some time to change, investment will continue to lag,” said Jyoti Narasimhan, Senior Principal Economist, at IHS Global Insight.

India is battling weak consumer demand in overseas and domestic markets, remains weak and the trade deficit widens every year, said Hariprasad Sinha, head of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

Growing domestic product (GDP) grew 5.3 percent from a year earlier in the July-September period, provisional government data showed on Friday, below the 5.5 percent posted for the three months, data released in June.

Reacting to the number, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh’s chief economic advisor forecast full year growth of between 5.5 and 6 percent, which would be the slowest since 2002/3.

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Students form a red ribbon during an HIV/AIDS awareness rally ahead of World AIDS Day in Hanshan county, Anhui Province, on 29 Nov, 2010. —Reuters

Health

The five-day meeting from Sunday ended with such officials as Jun Yokota, ambassador in charge of economic diplomacy at Japan’s Foreign Ministry, and Ian Burney, assistant deputy minister for trade policy and negotiations at Canada’s Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade.

It also showed pictures of Li taking hands with sufferers, in a country where discrimination against people with HIV/AIDS is rampant, even in the health-care community.

At China’s government was initially slow to acknowledge the problem of HIV/AIDS in the 1990s and had sought to cover it up when hundreds of thousands of impoverished farmers in rural Henan Province became infected through contaminated blood-selling schemes. Li, who took over from Wen Jiabao as premier at the annual meeting of parliament in March, worked in Henan from 1998 to 2004, and was criticized by activists for helping to cover up the extent of the crisis there.

Beijing has waded up the fight, spending more on prevention programmes, launching schemes to give universal access to antiretroviral drugs to contain the disease, and introducing policies to curb discrimination.

Reuters

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The five-day meeting from Sunday ended with such officials as Jun Yokota, ambassador in charge of economic diplomacy at Japan’s Foreign Ministry, and Ian Burney, assistant deputy minister for trade policy and negotiations at Canada’s Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade.

It also showed pictures of Li taking hands with sufferers, in a country where discrimination against people with HIV/AIDS is rampant, even in the health-care community.

At China’s government was initially slow to acknowledge the problem of HIV/AIDS in the 1990s and had sought to cover it up when hundreds of thousands of impoverished farmers in rural Henan Province became infected through contaminated blood-selling schemes. Li, who took over from Wen Jiabao as premier at the annual meeting of parliament in March, worked in Henan from 1998 to 2004, and was criticized by activists for helping to cover up the extent of the crisis there.

Beijing has waded up the fight, spending more on prevention programmes, launching schemes to give universal access to antiretroviral drugs to contain the disease, and introducing policies to curb discrimination.

Reuters
After election, pressure grows on Obama in Asia-Pacific trade talks

WASHINGTON, 1 Dec—US-led talks on a free-trade pact in the Asia-Pacific region are entering a potential make-or-break stage, putting pressure on President Barack Obama and other leaders to sacrifice sensitive domestic interests for a big deal to boost growth.

The 11 countries involved in the Trans-Pacific Partnership, or TPP, talks meet next week in Auckland, New Zealand, for the 15th round since negotiations were launched in March 2010.

With Obama now re-elected, US negotiators have more freedom to deal with demands for the United States to open its sugar, dairy, clothing, footwear and other markets to more imports without worrying about hurting the president at the polls.

I think the feeling (among TPP countries) was that the United States was negotiating in good faith ... but everyone knew that it wasn’t getting done before the election,” said Ernest Bower, director of Southeast Asia studies at the Centre for Strategic and International Studies in Washington.

While the TPP talks are set to mark their third anniversary in March, there is no formal deadline for a deal.

About 128,000 people displaced by fresh fighting in DR Congo

Kinshasa, 1 Dec—Close to 128,000 people have been displaced due to recent fresh fighting that broke out between the DR Congo Armed Forces (FARDC) and the M23 rebels in the east of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DR Congo), the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) said in a statement released on Wednesday in Kinshasa.

On 26 November, over 8,000 people in North-Kivu Province have been receiving daily food rations from the World Food Programme (WFP) for the last three days.

On 26 November, over 13,000 households in the same province received household items from the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), under the auspices of a programme dubbed Rapid Response to Stabilisation Mission (RRMP).

Elsewhere in the neighbouring South-Kivu Province, humanitarian response was disrupted when some humanitarian actors had to be evacuated from Minova region due to security fears. The FARDC officers occupied five primary schools and are using desks as firewood, hence compromising learning for about 5,000 pupils—Xinhua.

Arrival of Iranian warships at Port-Sudan harbour delayed

KHARTOUM, 1 Dec—The Sudanese army announced on Thursday that the arrival of Iranian warships at Port-Sudan harbour in eastern Sudan, initially scheduled for 30 November, has been delayed to 7 December, official SANA news agency reported.

“For reasons relating to the Iranian side, the arrival of the Iranian warships to Port-Sudan harbour, scheduled for current 30 Nov, has been delayed to 7 Dec,” the agency quoted Al-Sawarmy Khalid Saad, a Sudanese army spokesman, as saying. A Xinhua correspondent earlier said a Pakistani warship docked at Port-Sudan harbour for three days. Saad explained that the arrival of the Pakistan and Iranian warships is under the framework of the maritime and military cooperation with the navy troops in all countries of the world.

Few weeks ago, two Iranian warships docked at Port-Sudan shortly after an aerial attack against Al-Yarmouk arms factory complex in the Sudanese capital Khartoum, which Israel claimed was producing arms to back the Palestinian Hamas movement with the navy troops in all countries of the world.

Yemen offers reward to catch killers of Saudi diplomat

SANAA, 1 Dec—Yemen offered a $25,000 (£15,608) reward on Thursday to catch the killers of a Saudi Arabian diplomat, a day after he was gunned down in an attack that security authorities have blamed on al-Qaeda. The killing on Wednesday of Khaled al-Enizi, a military officer at the Saudi embassy, and his Yemeni bodyguard underscored the challenges facing the US-allied state since an uprising last year that ousted President Ali Abdullah Saleh.

A Yemeni security committee offered a reward of five million rials ($25,000) for any information leading to the killers, state news agency Sabah said.

Dressed as security officers, the attackers blocked a car carrying Enizi, an aide to the Saudi military attache, and opened fire, the security committee said in a statement. The diplomat and his guard died instantly.

No one has claimed responsibility for the attack which took place near the diplomat’s house in the capital but a Yemeni security official said on Wednesday authorities were “assuming that al-Qaeda was behind it”.

Yemen-based al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), regarded as al-Qaeda’s strongest regional wing, has mounted operations in Saudi Arabia and tried to launch attacks against the United States—Reuters.

Wave of bomb attacks in Iraq kills 42

BAGHDAD, 1 Dec—A new wave of bomb attacks targeted Shi’ite pilgrims and security forces across Iraq killed 42 people and wounded 133 on Thursday, apparently in an attempt by insurgent groups to stir up sectarian strife among Iraqis.

The deadliest attack occurred in the day was in the City of Hilla, some 100 km south of the capital Baghdad, when a car bomb went off near a restaurant serving food for Shi’ite pilgrims.

A few minutes later, another car bomb detonated while civilians and Iraqi security forces gathered at the scene. The blast killed a total of 26 people and wounded 80 others at a restaurant, according to the police and medical sources.

Meanwhile, another attack took place in the holy Shi’ite City of Karbala, some 110 km south of Baghdad, when a booby-trapped car detonated near Shi’ite pilgrims at the eastern entrance of the city, killing eight people and wounding 22 others.

Iraqi security forces blocked the roads leading to central Karbala where the shrine of Imam Hussein, one of the Shi’ite’s 12 most revered Imams. Insurgent groups frequently carried out attacks against Shi’ite pilgrims who perform communal rituals, killing and wounding hundreds of them in attempts to provoke sectarian strife in the country.

In Iraq’s western Province of Anbar, a suicide bomber wearing an explosive vest blew himself up among the soldiers and their vehicles who gathered to collect salaries for their units at the branch of the government-owned Al-Rasheed Bank in central the city of Fallujah, some 50 km west of Baghdad.—Xinhua

People inspect the site of a shooting attack on a Saudi diplomat in Sanaa on 28 Nov, 2012.—Reuters

Residents inspect the site of a bomb attack in Hilla, 100 km (60 miles) south of Baghdad, on 29 Nov, 2012.—Reuters

Four military officers killed in road accident in Ukraine

KYIV, 1 Dec—All four military officers travelling in a car were killed early Thursday when their vehicle collided head-on with a truck in Ukraine’s southern Nikolayev region, the country’s Ministry of Emergency Situations said.

The accident occurred at about 1:20 am (2320 GMT Wednesday) when the truck slid to an opposite lane and crashed into the incoming car carrying the officers.

The four servicemen all died on the spot, while the truck driver only had minor injuries. Preliminary reports blamed the accident on the truck driver, who is said to have tried to overtake before his truck swerved. Further probe is still under way.

Ukraine’s roads are rated among the deadliest in Europe and some 5,000 people were killed in road accidents in the country in 2011.—Xinhua

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Republic of the Union of Myanmar
President Office
Notification No. 92/2012
3rd Waxing of Tazaungmon 1374 ME
1 December 2012

Formation of Investigation Commission
(from page 1)

(m) U Soe Thein (a) Maung Wuntha  Member
Writer

(n) U Win Htein  Member
Director-General, Mining Department
Ministry of Mines

(o) U Myint Swe  Member
Director-General, Settlement and Land Records Department,
Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation

(p) U Tin Myint  Member
Deputy Director-General, General Administration Department,
Ministry of Home Affairs

(q) U Hla Maung Thein  Member
Deputy Director-General, Environmental Conservation Department,
Ministry of Environmental Conservation and Forestry

(r) Dr Daw Kaythi Lwin  Member
Acting Rector, University of Technology (Thanlyin),
Ministry of Science and Technology

(s) Dr Daw Marlar Aung  Member
Pro-Rector, Yangon East University,
Ministry of Education

(t) U Aung Naing Oo  Member
Myanmar Peace Center

(u) U Paw Oo Tun (a) Min Ko Naing  Member
“88” Generation Students Group

(v) U Ko Ko Gyi  Member
“88” Generation Students Group

(w) Dr Myint Thein  Member
Director, Occupational Health Department,
Ministry of Health

(x) U Nay Oo  Member
Deputy Director
Sagaing Region General Administration Department,

(y) U Win Kyi  Member
Head of Production Department,
Union of Myanmar Economic Holdings Limited

(z) Lt-Col Aung Than  Member
Ministry of Defence

(aa) U Bo Than  Member
Kankan village, Kyaukmyat village-tract,
Salingyi Township, Sagaing Region

(bb) U Aung Zaw Oo  Member
Wedmay village, Ywarshe village-tract,
Salingyi Township, Sagaing Region

(cc) U Bo Htwe  Member
Tonywama village, Ton village-tract,
Salingyi Township, Sagaing Region

(dd) U Sit Myaing  Member
Secretary
Myanmar National Human Rights Commission

2. The investigation commission will investigate the following cases and submit
assessment for ensuring the rule of law and national interest along with recommendations.
(a) whether the copper mine project adheres to international norms and employ
appropriate technologies for environmental conservation;
(b) impacts and profits of the copper mine project on social and natural environments;
(c) whether the copper mine project will be profitable for the State;
(d) causes of protests that demanded the shutdown of the copper mine project;
(e) review on control of protests and injustices of members of Sangha;
(f) whether the copper mine project should continue or the foreign investment
should be suspended;
(g) suggestions on development of the country and the rule of law;
(h) miscellaneous reviews and suggestions of the commission;
3. Union Minister at the President Office U Hla Tun is responsible for administrative
matters of the investigation commission while assuming duties. The President Office and the
Sagai Region Government under the guidance of the Union Minister shall fulfill
the security and administrative requirements of the investigation commission in action.
4. The investigation commission shall conduct investigation in accord with code of
criminal procedure and evidence act, summoning witnesses, asking for documents and
visiting necessary sites. The investigation report shall be submitted to the President
by 31 December, 2012.  

Sd/Tein Sein
President
Republic of the Union of Myanmar

Entrepreneurs from Mon State observe businesses in Thailand

YANGON, 1 Dec—A 29-member team led by Chairman of Mon State Chambers of Commerce and Industry U Hla Shein arrived back here by air on 25 November after visiting businesses and industries in Bangkok of Thailand.

They visited 2-Shrimp edible oil mills, poultry farms, feedstuff production, rice, beans and pulses, onion and garlic warehouses and Ajinomoto sodium glutamate factory in Bangkok of Thailand from 21 to 24 November.

Nowadays, Myanmar entrepreneurs are giving priority to uplifting of import products though they emphasized onimporting goods in the past.

Under the arrangements of the Ministry of Commerce, those entrepreneurs paid a visit to Thailand.

A hot-air balloon being released at Taunggyi Tazaungdine Festival in Taunggyi on 27 November noon.

MYANMA ALINN

Car turns over on expressway, leaving one injured, four dead

BAGO, 1 Dec—A car turned over near mile post 78/1 on Yangon–Nay Pyi Taw Expressway in the area of Myochaung expressway police station in Kyauktaga Township at 8 am on 27 November.

A Mark II car driven by Zaw Oo, 28 from Yangon caused out of control due to fracture of left wheel and plunged from Nyamangsaung U Bridge.

In the incident, Ye Htaik Aung, 20 from the car was injured, but Daw Win Yi, 66, Daw Kyi Win, 62 of Meiktila, Daw Than Khin, 91 of Oktwin Village in Meiktila Township and driver Zaw Oo, 28 of the same village died on the spot.

Myochaung Expressway Police Station filed a lawsuit for the traffic accident.

MYANMA ALINN
Let’s fight against dehumanizing practices

Today is the International Day for the Abolition of Slavery which is annually observed on 2 December. The focus of this day is to remind governments, civil societies and private sector that we still live in a world impaired by slavery and slavery-like practices which have acquired new manifestations in the 21st century.

By 1995, the second day of December was known as International Day for the Abolition of Slavery to commemorate the date of the adoption of the UN Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others (Resolution 317 (IV) of 2 December, 1949) by the General Assembly.

Slavery has manifested itself in different forms throughout the history. Although other forms have been transformed into new ones, some traditional forms of slavery still persist in their earlier ones. Forced labour, bonded labour, the worst forms of child labour and trafficking people are considered as modern forms of slavery. Old forms of slavery are the result of traditional beliefs and customs that propel discrimination against the most vulnerable groups in societies who are regarded as being of low caste, tribal minorities and indigenous peoples.

All are crimes and violations of human rights. All regions of the world see various forms of slavery such as trafficking in persons for the purpose of economic exploitation, organ removal and sexual exploitation, forced marriage, forced recruitment of children for use in armed conflicts. These types of modern-day slavery are global problems going against article four of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in which “no one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms” is stated.

Throughout the globe, millions of human beings are facing with contemporary forms of slavery that is almost unfathomable in its degradation and inhumanity despite considerable efforts of governments, civil society and international community. Eradication of modern-day slavery calls for corporate strategy in which governments and private sector are to bear corporate responsibility, thereby ensuring a just and equitable world for millions of victims who are deprived of their human rights and dignity in all regions of the world. Together, let us demonstrate our commitment to fighting against dehumanizing practices.

Liaison Officer Course opens

The Liaison Officer Course No. 2/2012 for volunteer youth officers was opened at Sports and Physical Education Institute (Mandalay) in Chanmyathazi Township of Mandalay on 29 November.

Director-General U Myo Hlaing of Sports and Physical Education Department spoke on the occasion.—MNA

Myanmar film industry needs to conserve strengths in cultural and national identity

Yangon, 1 Dec — Myanmar Motion Picture Enterprise and Myanmar Motion Picture Organization held a workshop on “Towards a Strong Future for Myanmar Movies” with the sponsorship of Forever group at Kandawgyi Palace Hotel here this morning, with an address by Union Minister for Information U Aung Kyi.

The opening ceremony of workshop was also attended by Deputy Information Minister U Paik Htwe, departmental heads, Chairman of MMPO U Zin Waing and CEC members, international cinematographers and guests.

Union Minister U Aung Kyi said in his address that the film industry is moving into a different world, which, he said, is the world where the raw materials are not coal nor steel but information, where the most valuable products are ideas and meaning, produced not by machine, but by the imagination and performance of men and women. The new era of creativity is called the cultural industry, in which “Film” is the one.

He said the purposes of holding the workshop are to upgrade capacity of Myanmar film society and extend market of film industry. In doing so, the industry need to conserve strengths in cultural and national identity by laying down principles which reflect the social norms and values of our multi-racial society, he said.

He pointed out effective management, management, finance, capacity building, infrastructure and technologies as the key areas to upgrade. He also warned of the challenge of piracy and pinned his hope on the workshop for coming up with solutions to unravel those potential challenges of the film industry and serving as a wake-up call for scholars and professionals to study the film industry from various aspects.

He said film products are not only important for the preservation of culture but also for nation branding and films are now recognized as commodities universally in the era of globalization. Similar to policies directed towards attracting FDI in manu-factoring, we should formulate policies to benefit from knowledge transfer and other externalities and advantages associated with foreign operations in the host country, he said.

Chairman U Zin Waing extended greetings and CEO of Forever Group U Win Maw spoke words of thanks.

The workshop focused on analysis of the current condition of the Myanmar movie world, management, marketing, distribution, broadcasting, regulations at home and abroad.

Forever Group hosted dinner to the participants of the workshop.

Union Border Affairs

Union Minister meets UN Under-Secretary-General and party

Nay Pyi Taw, 1 Dec — Union Minister for Border Affairs Lt-Gen Thein Htay met United Nations Under-Secretary-General Mr. Jurij Fedotov of UNODC Headquarters in Vienna of Austria and party at his office, here, yesterday.

The held comprehensive discussions on providing former poppy growers with alternative crops and agricultural methods, cooperation in better transportation for agricultural produce to be able have access to the market and alleviation of poppy growing by creating a situation for them to enjoy better living standards and development of health and education sectors. They also exchanged views on cooperation in works to be done by the ministry and UNODC.

Also present at the call were Deputy Minister Maj-Gen Zaw Win, directors-general and officials.

The work done by words!

Maung Pe Pe

NATIONAL
Nay Pyi Taw, 1 Dec — A ceremony to receive Ovada from the senior monks in Monywa was held at Tin Win Tun Dhamma Beikman in the compound of Shwezigon Pagoda at 2.30 pm today. It was attended by senior monks from the monasteries led by President Nayaka Sayadow of Okkan Tawya Sarihintaik Agga Maha Gannavaaka Pandita Bhaddanta Nandawbhasa, the commander of Sagaing Region Police Force, senior police officers and members of police force.

The ceremony was opened with the recitation of Namo Tata three times. Next, Commander of Sagaing Region Police Force Col San Yu supplicates on matters related to Letpadaungtaung project in Salingyi Township of Monywa District and religious matters.

Please accept my apology. We are very disheartened by images of monks in the crackdown of boycott camps in Letpadaungtaung project in Salingyi Township.

The Letpadaungtaung project is a project under an official contract with a foreign country. We have learnt that authorities roll against their principles in order to protect the project and force the shutdown of the project with the political flavor.

The monks joined the boycott camps due to necessities of local farmers and their will to conserve the religious heritage. Later, the protesters even breached the laws under the cover of the monks.

The State also

Nay Pyi Taw, 1 Dec — With the aims of reducing AIDS incidence in 2015 that includes in No. 6 of United Nations Millennium Development Goals and Universal Access to HIV Prevention, Treatment, Care and Support for everyone, the Ministry of Health is cooperating with local social organizations such as Myanmar Maternal and Child Welfare Association, Myanmar Women’s Affairs Federation, 7 organizations experienced losses as the legal business activities have been disrupted by the boycott camps on 18 November, 2012.

The Hluttaw had already decided to form an investigation commission after holding discussions on the situation regarding the Letpadaungtaung unlawful acts are seemed to hinder the inflow of foreign investments, the country faced considerable amount of loss. According to the situation, a statement urging the boycott camps to move from there by 12 noon on 27 November 2012 was aired through MRTV. Our security forces informed hose and tear bombs to disperse them.

We encountered difficulties in dispersing the mob under the law as monks were among the protesters. Protesters taking cover of the Buddha and Sangha fled the scene first and the tear bombs unexpectedly wounded monks. We all were

Myanmar cooperating with social organizations from local and abroad to fight against HIV/AIDS

Union Health Minister Dr Pe Thet Khin speaking at 2012 World AIDS Day Ceremony.—MNA

Union Foreign Affairs Minister felicitates Laotian Dy Prime Minister and Foreign Affairs Minister

Nay Pyi Taw, 2 Dec — On the occasion of the 37th Anniversary of the founding of the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, which falls on 2 December 2012, U Wunna Maung Lwin, Union Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, has sent a message of felicitations to His Excellency Dr. Thongloun Sisoulith, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Lao People’s Democratic Republic.—MNA
UK Gushing UK papers laud Cameron’s stance on Press law

LONDON, 1 Dec—Prime Minister David Cameron woke on Friday to find usually hostile newspapers gushing about his statement on press qualifications after he signalled his opposition to a new law governing the press.

After his party suffered a night of humiliation in three parliamentary by-elections, instead of facing questions over his leadership, he was cheered for rejecting the main plank of proposals from a public inquiry he set up in the wake of outrage at the excesses of tabloid newspapers.

Under a headline over two pages lauding “Cameron’s Stand for Freedom”, the right-wing Daily Mail said a “Defiant PM” had refused to accept the Daily Telegraph’s recommendation of a press media, risking a split in his coalition after a damning inquiry triggered by a phone-hacking scandal proposed a press watchdog backed in law.—REUTERS

Three contractors killed at Penoles mine in Mexico

MEXICO CITY, 1 Dec—Three contractors were killed on Friday while working on the construction of a ventilation duct at a zinc mine in central Mexico owned by IndustriasPenoles, the company said in a release.

Miner and metals processorPenoles, which has the world’s largest primary silver producer, Fresnillo, operates the Tizapa mine in the central State of Mexico in the tiny municipality of Zacazapan.

Three other contractors also employed by Minera Castellana were injured and are being treated at a local hospital, Penoles added. The miner could not say if the incident was an explosion, as local media reported previously, but added that an investigation was underway.

Penoles said the Tizapa mine produces mostly zinc, although smaller quantities of lead, copper, silver and gold can also be found in the area.

Some 900 people, including contractors, work at the mine, situated about two hours from the state capital of Toluca, Christian Gomez, a spokesman at the mine, told Reuters earlier on Friday. It was not immediately clear how many of those workers were miners.

In August, the Mexican government suspended work at 32 small coal mines in the northern state of Coahuila due to safety concerns after 13 miners died in the space of three weeks.

A 2006 methamphetamine discovery in Coahuila owned by Grupo Mexico killed 65 miners.

Penoles shares fell 2.91 percent to close at 646.13 pesos on Friday.—REUTERS

Congo rebel pullout from Goma runs into hitches

GOMA, 1 Dec—Planned battlefield withdrawal by rebels in eastern Congo under a deal brokered by regional governments ran into hitches on Friday, including a dispute over abandoned army supplies the insurgents wanted to take with them. Leaders of the Tutsi-led M23 rebel movement had agreed to pull out by Saturday from Democratic Republic of Congo’s eastern border city of Goma, which they seized on 20 November when they routed government troops backed by the United Nations peacekeepers. Rebel leaders have said that they intend to fight to topple President Joseph Kabila and that they agreed to a call from presidents of the Great Lakes region last weekend for a withdrawal to bring peace to the area.

There was disagreement over a store of munitions and equipment that had been abandoned by the government army FARDC at Gomaairport. The rebels wanted to take the airport arsenal with them, but the UN peacekeeping mission MONUSCO, which had the store under its charge, refused to let them do this.

Panama’s police kill FARC guerrilla, capture seven on Colombia border

PANAMA CITY, 1 Dec—Panama’s national police on Friday killed one FARC guerrilla and captured seven others while patrolling the remote jungle border province of Darien, a police spokeswoman said.

Authorities said they seized two other vehicles and about 20 bags of coca along with the guerrillas, members of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC).

Police encountered the guerrillas in the district of Chepetanga, near the Central American country’s border with Colombia, after receiving complaints over the past few days of armed men in the area, which prompted increased patrols. The incident comes a day after the FARC wrapped up their first round of peace talks with the Colombian government in Havana. They talk to end a decades-long conflict and are set to reconvene on Wednesday.

Previous attempts at brokering peace have failed, but this time Colombia’s government believes the FARC is weaker.

The FARC, initially formed in the 1960s as an armed communist agrarian movement, later turned to the illegal drug trade, kidnappings and extortion to sustain itself. Its members have long operated in the semi-no-man’s-land of Darien, stocking up on supplies, escaping Colombian security forces and using the dense jungle to move north-bound drugs.

Over the past two years, however, Panama’s police say the FARC’s numbers in the area have dwindled as the police presence has increased.

Panama policemen killed one FARC guerrilla, captured seven on Colombia border

Panama

US servicemen banned to leave base alone in Japan

TOKYO, 1 Dec—A senior officer of US forces in Japan ordered on Friday that military personnel in the country not leave base alone due to a series of crimes committed by US soldiers, according to local report.

Salvatore Angelella, commander of US Forces Japan (USFJ), issued the order of Buddy Programme, which took effect Friday, requiring that his servicemen should be accompanied by others if they have to leave their bases at a non-curfew time. Japan’s Kyodo News Agency reported.

The USFJ has imposed a curfew after two US servicemen raped a Japanese woman in Okinawa in October and US Navy also banned their personnel in Japan from drinking liquor at nighttime due to continued offense. Angelella said on Thursday that the curfew would be lifted when he satisfied that servicemen understand the impacts of their behaviours.—Xinhua

BP completes hefty asset sale in Gulf of Mexico

HOUSTON, 1 Dec—British oil giant BP said on Friday it had completed sale of 5.55 billion US dollars worth of its assets in the Gulf of Mexico to Plains Exploration and Production Company (PXP), an American oil firm based in Houston, Texas.

The deal, which included BP’s interests in two non-operated ones, “was among the biggest transactions in the US Gulf of Mexico,” BP said in a statement. BP announced in September that it agreed to sell the fields to PXP for 5.55 billion dollars in cash subject to customary post-closing adjustments. The BP-operated assets in the deal include the Martin hub, Horn Mountain and Holstein. The two non-operated assets are Ram Powell and Diana Hoover.

“This further demonstrates the significant value BP has been able to achieve in the Gulf, Hub. Despite the challenges and simplifications that have allowed us to focus our capabilities and personnel on delivering long-term growth from our core assets in the Gulf,” Dudley said. BP says it will concentrate future activity and investment in the deepwater Gulf of Mexico.

The BP-operated assets in the Gulf of Mexico include BP’s interests in the Production Company (PXP), Plains Exploration and Production Company’s (PXP) three BP-operated assets and included BP’s interests in Production Company’s (PXP), the Great White — as well as production hubs Thunder Horse, Atlantis, Mad Dog and Na Kika — and three non-operated production hubs — Mars, Urus and Great White — as well as on significant exploration and appraisal opportunities.

Xinhua

Luxury cars are displayed at the 2012 Wujiaba International Automobile Carnival in Kunming City, capital of southwest China’s Yunnan Province, on 30 Nov, 2012. The five-day carnival opened here on Friday, displaying more than 600 cars of 50 brands.—Xinhua
Seven killed in northwest Indonesia’s car accident

JAKARTA, 1 Dec—Seven people were killed and nine others were injured when a minibus plunged into a valley in northwest Indonesia’s Aceh Province, local search and rescue officer said on Friday.

“The accident took place at about 5:30 Thursday afternoon in the mountains of West Aceh Regency, Aceh Province when a minibus carrying 16 people fell off a cliff,” said Ahmad Dadek, head of West Aceh Regency’s Search and Rescue Agency, as quoted by Indonesia’s Antara news agency.

Seven people were killed including the driver when the rescue team reached the 20-metre deep valley on Thursday night, Ahmad said, adding all victims have been rushed to the nearest hospital and the dead and injured were identified so far.

Preliminary investigations suggest the accident was due to the sudden braking of the bus brake during a sudden turn, according to Antara.

Road accidents are common in Indonesia especially in mountainous regions which are often caused by poor road condition, bad weather and overloading.

Laos seek universal access to family planning

VIENTIANE, 1 Dec—Laos commits to universal access to family planning during the launching of a report from the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in Laos’ capital of Vientiane on Friday, according to a senior official.

Laos’ Deputy Minister of Planning and Investment Somchit Inthamith said in a Press release that Laos was committed to universal family planning and improving maternal health, “this will directly impact on achieving the other MDG targets in Laos, as we ascend to graduating from the Least Developed Country status in 2020.”

The UNFPA report, the State of World Population (SWOP) Report 2012, found that voluntary family planning would reduce maternal deaths and foster development by reducing costs for maternal and newborn healthcare by 11.3 billion US dollars annually worldwide. The report is based on a global study prepared to assess the different countries achievements and setbacks in reaching the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Laos, one of South East Asia’s least developed nations, has committed to reaching all the MDGs, which include improving maternal health, reducing infant mortality and promoting gender equality.

Fijian PM elected as International Sugar Council chairman

SUAVA, 1 Dec—Fijian Prime Minister Commodore Josaia Voreqe Bainimarama has been elected chairman of the International Sugar Council, the government announced Saturday. The International Sugar Council is the peak body of more than 80 countries and regions which are the world’s largest source of embers, he said.

In his acceptance speech, Bainimarama thanked delegates and underlined Fiji’s commitment to advancing the work of the global sugar body.

“This is a great honor for our country. I pledge that Fiji will do everything possible to ensure that the cause of this global industry and the millions of ordinary people the world over who depend on sugar for their livelihoods.”

Bainimarama, who is also Fiji’s Minister for Sugar, told the delegates that a healthy sugar industry in Fiji was vital to the well-being of all Fijians.

“Industry directly or indirectly supports around 200,000 Fijians in a country of less than 900,000 people.

And it remains the single largest source of employment outside the public sector, employing 25 percent of the Fijian workforce,” he said.

Indonesia eager to become production base for ASEAN

JAKARTA, 1 Dec—Indonesia poised to become a base for producers to meet the demands of markets in other ASEAN countries as it has everything to facilitate manufacturers, Indonesian Coordinating Economic Minister Hatta Radjasa said here on Friday. The eagerness might come in place with the implementation of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) regime in 2015, the minister said.

“We want this is not only fulfilling market in the AEC by 2015, but also markets beyond ASEAN,” Hatta told reporters in his office here.

The minister said that Indonesia has enormous competitive resources that can be offered to investors, which makes the largest economy in the region fit to become a base for those producers. Among the competitive offers are the enormous natural resources, productive human resources and the rapid growth of new middle class consumers in the country.

Briefly explaining the country’s demography, Hatta said that in 2030 Indonesia’s population is estimated to reach 280 million, including 135 million new middle class people, if the growth remains steadily above 6 percent.

“If the growth is steadily above 6 percent, there will be 90 million more in middle class society by 2030, or 135 million from 45 million at present. Besides that, we have enormous people in productive age and abundant natural resources that other countries are hardly compared with,” he said.

Toreach the expectation, Hatta said that construction for more infrastructure and connectivity is an essential task and should be conducted swiftly. He said that Indonesia has been making enormous efforts to develop infrastructure across the country in the last three years.

“The government is expecting to complete 500 trillion rupiah (about 52 billion US dollars) worth of infrastructure projects carried out under MP3EI this year,” Hatta told Xinhua on the sidelines of the session.

MP3EI refers to the government’s grand master plan programme that started last year with an aimed to accelerate the development of massive infrastructure projects to facilitate investors.

Three soldiers killed, several others missing as avalanche hits N Pakistan

ISLAMABAD, 1 Dec—At least three soldiers were killed and several others including both troops and civilians went missing as an avalanche hit Pakistan’s northern area along the Pak-Indo Line of Control, local media reported on Friday.

A sources of Xinhua in northern Pakistan said that the avalanche occurred at about 3:00 am local time Friday near Tehjjan Sector in Pakistan-held Azad Kashmir area along the Line of Control between Pakistan and India.

The bodies of the three soldiers killed in the avalanche have already been recovered and airlifted to their hometowns by army source. The missing people are still unaccounted for, it added.

A boy walks past a banner for World AIDS Day with the theme of “Save the women and Children from family planning” on 30 Nov, 2012. According to the latest UNAIDS report, 67% of new cases of HIV and AIDS in developing countries is on the younger age group.

Three killed

Laos

Seven killed in northwest Indonesia’s car accident

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Indonesia eager to become production base for ASEAN

Indonesia

Laos seek universal access to family planning

Fijian PM elected as International Sugar Council chairman

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Three soldiers killed, several others missing as avalanche hits N Pakistan
Managers delighted their stores sold winning lottery tickets

Dearborn, (Arizona) 1 Dec—Managers of a Missouri gas station and an Arizona food store said on Thursday that they may have handed tickets to the two prospective multi-millionaire winners of a record $587.5 million Powerball lottery jackpot.

The two winning tickets were sold at the gas station and sandwich shop in the tiny farming town of Dearborn, Missouri, about 30 miles north of Kansas City, and the food store in Fountain Hills, Arizona, on the outskirts of Phoenix.

Although the identities of the ticket-holders were not immediately announced, they picked the winning numbers announced at the drawing on Wednesday night: 5, 16, 22, 23, 29, and the Powerball number 6.

They will share an estimated $385 million before taxes if they opt for the cash prize as a lump sum, or the $387.5 million can be paid out to them as annuities over three decades, the Multi-State Lottery Association said.

Kristi Williams, a clerk at the Trex Mart convenience store in Dearborn, said she and another employee high-fived each other when they learned the morning after the drawing that one of the two winning tickets had been purchased there.

Store manager Chris Nauerz, who was working on Wednesday when the lucky ticket was purchased, called the news “shocking.” He said the station gets a mix of customers, both locals from Dearborn, population 50,000, and truck drivers passing through on nearby Interstate 29.

“It’s pretty crazy to think somebody locally could possibly be a millionaire and not knowing it yet,” Nauerz said.

“And the fact that I may have even handed over the ticket is even wilder.”—Reuters

OECD encourages Spain to raise sales tax

Madrid, 1 Dec—The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) encouraged the Spanish government on Thursday to rise sales tax more in order to increase state revenue.

The organisation stated it is better increasing state revenue than cutting public expenditure and in the biennial report on the Spanish economy, the OECD recommends applying the standard Value Added Tax (VAT) 21 percent, to more products.

Regarding the labour market, the OECD recommends reducing the current severance payments for unfair dismissal, 33 days per year worked, and establishing severance payments progressively according to years worked.—Xinhua

Ukraine introduces biometric passports

Kyiv, 1 Dec—Under a new law signed into effect by President Yanukovych on Thursday, Ukraine in the near future will introduce biometric passports in conformity with the International Civil Aviation Organization’s (ICAO) standards, presidential Press-service reported.

According to the new law, each Ukrainian citizen, regardless of his or her age, is obliged to obtain a passport, which contains a chip with electronic data. An ID number, digital images and digital signature will be the key elements of the new passport. It is expected that the new passport will make it easier for Ukrainians to receive visas from European Union member states.

The previous version of the Ukrainian passports will remain valid until their official expiry dates.

Ukrainian parliament passed the law on 20 November. —Xinhua

US soldier in WikiLeaks case says he was held in a "cage"

Fort Meade, 1 Dec—A US Army private facing court-martial on suspicion of leaking secret documents to the WikiLeaks website testified on Thursday he was confined to a "cage" in the early days after his arrest in 2010, and thought he would die there. Bradley Manning, in his first public comments since his arrest in Iraq, said his isolation led to a rapid decline in his awareness of his surroundings.

He said that he was initially given little or no information about the charges against him. “My nights were my days and my days were my nights,” Manning said. “It all blended together after a couple of days.” Manning said he was confined to a structure he called a “cage” just eight feet (2.43 metres) square located inside a tent. He suffered a breakdown about a month after his May 2010 arrest, and guards later found a noose in the cage. Manning had made the noose but failed to recall he had done so because he was so disoriented, he said.

“I remember thinking I’m going to die stuck here in this cage,” Manning said. “I thought I was going to die in that cage. That’s what I saw in my mind.”

He was held in a “animal cage.”

The private’s testimony, which could continue into the Claims Day, 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

Myanmar Port Authority Agent for: MS/China Shipping (Malaysia) S/Agency SDN BHD

Phone No: 256908/378316/376797

Dhaka’s slum lightened by solar-powered plastic bottles

Dhaka, 1 Dec—A simple idea can make a big difference in the life of people in depressed communities in the Bangladesh capital of Dhaka.

Nazma Akhter once had to work under a kerosene lamp even at daytime in her shanty made of corrugated sheets and discarded materials.

As a hand embroidery worker with only a small income, Akhter cannot afford electricity. Many slum dwellers like Nazma in Dhaka’s downtown area of Mirpur, which 15,000 to 20,000 families live, have to suffer 24 hours of darkness since sunlight cannot penetrate the area.

But all these have changed, thanks to a local youth organization called CHANGE, after it installed solar-powered ‘bulbs’ made from plastic bottles that now light up the houses of slum dwellers.

CHANGE installed plastic bottles filled with a solution of bleached water into holes bored in the roof of shanties to refract sunlight. The entire installation takes less than five minutes and costs only about US dollar.

“It’s a good source of light. Before it was installed, I couldn’t work inside my house. Now, I have sufficient light for my daytime household works,” said Akhter.

Sajid Iqbal, president of CHANGE, said they introduced the green-tech in Bangladesh this year to create awareness about renewable energy, particularly among slum dwellers.

He said CHANGE works for the environment-friendly development by involving many enthusiastic youths in the country, where 31.5 percent of 153 million population live on less than 2 US dollars a day. Many people who are unable to afford rising cost of electricity resort to illegal electrical connection.

Reuters

Bangladesh

South Korea
Berry, Aubry, Martinez call truce after holiday custody brawl

LOS ANGELES, 1 Dec—Halle Berry, her ex-boyfriend Gabriel Aubry and her current lover Olivier Martinez have called a truce after their angry Thanksgiving Day brawl outside the Oscar-winning actress’s Los Angeles home.

Attorneys for the trio said after a closed-door court hearing on Thursday that the trio “have reached an amicable agreement” but gave no details.

“There will be no further statements regarding this matter,” the attorneys said in a brief statement.

Aubry, French actor Martinez, and the “Monster’s Ball” star have been embroiled for months in a custody fight over Berry’s 4-year-old daughter, Nahla. Berry wants to take the daughter she had with Aubry to live with her and fiancé Martinez in France, but a Los Angeles judge denied that request earlier in November.

The two men came to blows over the issue on 22 November, with both accusing the other of starting the fight in Berry’s driveway, and then obtaining restraining orders against each other.

It was unclear on Thursday whether either man would be charged in the incident, or how the custody issue had been resolved.

Cast member Halle Berry poses on the red carpet for the premiere of “Cloud Atlas” in Berlin on 5 Nov, 2012. The movie opens in German cinemas on 15 November.—REUTERS

Daniel Craig sends Adele’s son Skyfall goodies

Daniel Craig, 56-year-old actor, has praised Adele’s smashing hitmaker giving birth to her first son five weeks ago.

Daniel Craig sends Adele’s son Skyfall goodies

Daniel Craig

London, 1 Dec—James Bond star Daniel Craig has reportedly sent singer Adele a huge bag of Skyfall gifts for her and her new baby boy.

The 44-year-old actor, who has praised Adele’s smashing hit theme for the movie, gave her masses of limited edition memorabilia as a gratitude for the song, reported Daily Star.

“Adele received some beautiful Skyfall gifts from Daniel. They included an Aston Martin car in miniature— an exact replica of the one Daniel drove, e and some Tom Ford designer babygros for her son. Tom designed the entire wardrobe for Daniel in the new film.

“There were also exclusive framed photographs, a set of Martini glasses and an Omega watch. Daniel has the utmost respect for Adele and her work.

He loved that she came in very early to the set before filming had begun. He sent her a handwritten letter with the gifts,” a source said.

The Someone Like You hitmaker gave birth to her first son five weeks ago.

I was nervous on the India Resort Fashion Week ramp: Isha Sharvani

PANAJI, 1 Dec—Bollywood actress Isha Sharvani says she was nervous and excited when she walked the ramp at the India Resort Fashion Week (IRFW), which kicked off at Candolim beach here today.

“I was nervous. I could hear models telling me to keep hands straight. Finally I did it,” Isha told PTI at the sidelines of the four-day event.

PTI

The 28-year-old dancer-actress was on the runway for designer James Ferreira’s resort wear collection. She opened the show with a dance performance and later walked the ramp.

“I am not nervous while dancing. I can dance even when I am waking up in the night. But modelling is different,” she said.

The actress, who was seen in Subhash Ghai’s ‘Kismat Konnection’ and in ‘Krrish 3’, which is believed to have been shot in London, is making her Tamil debut in ‘David’. She is paired opposite Hrithik Roshan.

PTI

Mel Gibson takes two girls on charity trip

Mel Gibson took two little girls out on a charity day trip.

The 56-year-old actor teamed up with Mending Kids International—which performs life-saving surgeries for children and treated a 10 and an 11-year-old girl from Honduras to the resort wear collection. She opened the show with a dance performance and later walked the ramp.

Bollywood actress Isha Sharvani

PTI

The actress, who became a household name with the dance show ‘Jhalak Dikhlaja’ this year, is also awaiting her next Tamil movie David directed by Bejoy Nambiar scheduled to be released in February.

PTI
Ac Milan rally to beat Catania

Rome, 1 Dec — Stephan El Shaarawy scored a brace as AC Milan came from one goal down to beat Catania 3-1 in the Italian Serie A on Friday.

Nicola Legrottaglie opened the scoring after 11 minutes with a powerful header, but the hosts suffered a melt down when their midfielder Pablo Barrientos got the marching order three minutes after the break, and the Rossoneri swiftly capitalised on their extra man with goals from El Shaarawy and Kevin-Prince Boateng.

Boateng’s dismissal at the death evened up the personnel, but the visitors nevertheless grabbed the game’s only remaining goal as El Shaarawy struck again to seal the points.

The result lifted Massimiliano Allegri’s side up to seventh in the standings — two points above their opponents. Allegri conceded that El Shaarawy’s first goal was offside. “The first goal from El Shaarawy was offside,” Allegri said.

Xinhua

Flintoff survives knock down to win debut fight

London, 1 Dec — Former England cricketer Andrew Flintoff beat American Richard Dawson on points after surviving a knockdown in his first professional fight at the MEN Arena in Manchester on Friday.

The 34-year-old got a roasting reception from the 5,000 fans and won the first of four two-round minutes before being caught by a left hook early in the second that sent him to the canvas. However, Flintoff got up to receive a standing eight count and delivered with a more composed performance.

England cricketer Andrew Flintoff watches the first cricket test match between England and Bangladesh at Lord’s cricket ground in London on 27 May, 2010. Reuters

MCDowell takes charge at beloved Sherwood

Thousand Oaks, (California), 1 Dec — Former US Open champion Graeme McDowell continued his love affair with Sherwood Country Club as he charged into a commanding three-shot lead after Friday’s second round of the World Challenge. Winner here in 2010 and runner-up in 2009, McDowell fired a superb six-under-par 66 in rain-softerned conditions to take control of the elite 18-player event hosted by Tiger Woods.

The 33-year-old Northern Irishman made a fast start with three consecutive birdies on a receptive layout and finished with four in the last nine holes to post a nine-under total of 135. “A good day’s work,” said McDowell, who has not won anywhere since his 2010 World Challenge victory. “The golf course is obviously very receptive ... so it’s an opportunity to be very aggressive coming into these pins.

And it’s nice to come back to a golf course which has got some good memories for me. It’s just been a golf course that’s always fit my eye.” Jim Furyk, World Challenge winner in 2009, carded a 69 to sit three strokes off the pace with fellow Americans Bo Van Pelt (68) and Keegan Bradley (69). Woods, the defending

Golf

McDowell of Northern Ireland watches his approach shot on the eighteenth fairway during the second round of the World Challenge golf tournament in Thousand Oaks, California, on 30 Nov, 2012. — Reuters

Alpine skiier Lindsey Vonn speeds past a gate in the fog during the first women’s World Cup downhill skiing race of the season in Lake Louise, Alberta, on 30 Nov, 2012. — Reuters

Flintoff, who played 79 tests before retiring from cricket in September 2010 through injury, became a national treasure by leading England to their famous Ashes victory in 2005 - their first test series win over Australia in almost two decades.

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**Dusseldorf stun Frankfurt 4-0 in German Bundesliga**

**Berlin, 1 Dec —** Dusseldorf overcame Frankfurt for the first time since 1991 following their hammering 4-0 win introduced by Stefan Reisinger to open the 15th round in Bundesliga on Friday. Dusseldorf increased their gap to the relegation zone owing to their historic win over Frankfurt on home soil at the newly promoted encounter.

The hosts started highly motivated against Frankfurt that lurked for counters. As the match progressed, the “Fortunes” were able to work out goal scoring opportunities by Oliver Fink and Andreas Lambertz.

Nonetheless both sides remained focused on their defence lines therefore promising chances were a rarity in the match.

Things changed at the 34th minute when Frankfurt’s Karim Matmour ensured the first highlight of the match when he was sent off for his second bookable offense.

Thus ten men Frankfurt defended deep in their half consequently they were punished for their passiveness at the 38th minute when Stefan Reisinger overcame their hammering 4-0 win with a right footed effort from 15 metres.

Three minutes before the break, Oliver Fink doubled the lead for Dusseldorf when he curled home from 20 metres. After the restart Stavros factor had the chance to reduce Dusseldorf’s lead to 2-1 but his header went just wide.

Dusseldorf continued their courageous performance and they were rewarded at the 58th minute when Nando Rafael tapped in from goal area to make it three on the scoreboards.

**Yankees sign relief ace Rivera for another season**

New York Yankees relief pitcher Mariano Rivera speaks to the media at a news conference before their MLB American League baseball game with the Tampa Bay Rays at Yankee Stadium in New York, on May 9, 2012.— Reuters

**New York, 1 Dec —** Mariano Rivera has signed a one-year contract to return for his 18th season with the New York Yankees, the team said on Friday. The Panama native tore ligaments in his left knee in May while catching fly balls in the outfield before a game and pitched in only nine games in 2012.

“I didn’t want to go out like that,” the 43-year-old Rivera said. “I didn’t want that to be the last image.” No details were announced, but local media reports said Rivera signed for $15 million plus incentives. “It wasn’t an easy decision because there’s more than just baseball with me. I have to consider my family and the church, too,” said Rivera.

“But I feel like we have a great group of guys and a team that can compete for a championship. I’m not just coming back to play, I’m coming back to win.”

The right-hander, who has long baffled hitters with the deceptive, late movement on his cut fastball that bears in on left-handers, has 608 career saves and won five World Series titles with the Yankees dating back to the 1996 World Series.

A 12-time American League All-Star, Rivera’s 42nd postseason saves is the major league record.— Reuters

**Word! **

Here are interesting verbatim words that range from health and gender discrimination to the future of a footballer among rumours.

“Is it important that the Prime Minister gave mental health a seat at the top table.”
Allan Fels
Chair of the National Mental Health Commission of Australia

While releasing the annual report of the commission Tuesday, the chair called on the Prime Minister for giving higher priority over mental health. About 20 percent of Australian adults are suffering mental health problems, according to the report. He also urged the Premier to put “mental health in her portfolio.”

“A core component of full citizenship.”
The American Civil Liberties Union

The union sued US Defence Department Tuesday to spell an end to a ban on women in combat. The lawsuit filed in federal court in Northern California states that the right to fight in the battle is “a core component of full citizenship.” The ACLU has started to fire. It is interesting whether the US Defence Department will survive the legal battle.

“Whatever is going to happen will happen.”
Anderson Luiz de Carvalho
Paris Saint-Germain winger

The Brazilian footballer is one of the most sought-after players by European giants said he wants to stay at Paris Saint Germain. “Whatever is going to happen will happen,” he said.

**General**

**Essay and cartoon contest on taxation held in Monywa**

Monywa, 1 Dec—Monywa Township Internal Revenue Department organized the essay and cartoon contest on taxation at Basic Education High School No 3 in Monywa on 27 December morning. A total of 63 students participated in essay contest and 31 in the cartoon contest.—Myanma Alinn

**Portugal’s unemployment hits record 16.3 percent in October**

Lisbon, 1 Dec—Portugal’s unemployment rate increased by 0.1 percent in October to 16.3 percent, reversing the slight drop in September, according to data released on Friday by Eurostat. The data from Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Union, puts Portugal in the group of countries with the highest increases in unemployment compared with 2011, following Greece, Spain and Cyprus and well above the eurozone average which now stands at 10.7 percent.

Portugal’s Minister for Solidarity and Social Security Pedro Mota Soares said Friday that unemployment in Portugal requires “structural reforms that can boost the economy.” “The increase in the unemployment rate in Portugal is very worrying and requires structural reforms that can actually stimulate the economy,” said Mota Soares while speaking at a rally held by the Portuguese Workers’ Union.

The minister also announced the government’s intention to move forward this year with the creation of an unemployment allowance for small and medium businesses, a proposal which will be subject to discussion in Parliament.—Xinhua

**High winds, heavy rain to batter California through the weekend**

Sacramento, 1 Dec—Heavy rain and winds of up to 80 miles per hour were forecast for California’s mountain and coastal regions when a storm rolls through the US West Coast this weekend, prompting warnings of mud flows and flooding.

High wind advisories were issued for Northern and Central California, and transportation officials warned against campers and trailers crossing bridges, including San Francisco’s Golden Gate Bridge.

“Meteorologists tell us the storm system is ‘rapidly evolving’ and that it will be extremely wet the next several days,” Mark Ghilarducci, Secretary of the California Emergency Management Agency, said in a statement. Parts of California could receive up to 14 inches of rain, officials said, adding that the extreme weather was likely to cause mud and debris flows in some areas of Butte, Plumas, and Shasta counties.

Emergency officials also warned of possible power outages.—Reuters
**Vice-President**

**Dr Sai Mauk Kham meets UN Under-Secretary-General and party**

*Nav Pyi Taw, 1 Dec* — Vice-President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar Dr Sai Mauk Kham received United Nations Under-Secretary-General Mr. Yury Fedotov of UNODC in Vienna of Austria and party and approaches to the Embassy of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam in the morning.

They exchanged views on eradication of narcotic drugs in cooperation with regional and neighbouring countries, boosting cooperation between UNODC and Myanmar, further improvement in the treatment of HIV/AIDS.

**Vietnamese President and wife conclude visit**

*Yangon, 1 Dec* — At the invitation of President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar U Thein Sein and wife Madame Mai Thi Hanh, Republic of Viet Nam Mr. Truong Tan Sang and wife Madame Mai Thi Hanh who were on official goodwill visit in Myanmar met with embassy staff, their family members and Vietnamese entrepreneurs at the Embassy of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam in Bahan Township this morning.

They then went to PVEP overseas branch office at No. 135/D2 on Thanlyin street in Kamayut where they were briefed on works being carried and future programmes for exploration of oil during the second term at M2 block of Mottama Offshore by Chief Executive Officer Mr. Do Van Khanh of Vietnam Exploration.

**“Safe and secure” destinations instrumental in pursuing tourism boom: Union Minister**

*Nav Pyi Taw, 1 Dec* — Union Minister for Hotels and Tourism U Huy Aung underscored security in Myanmar’s tourism boom in his address to Inception Workshop for Myanmar Tourism Master Plan here today.

All the tourist destinations must be safe and secure so that Myanmar will be well-known as one of the best tourist destinations to visit in the world,” he said.

The strategic plan has completed its first phase with conclusion of survey trips to a number of tourist hotbeds including Yangon, Inlay and Kyaikhtiyo.

He said the master plan needs specific guidelines to “minimize the negative impacts and maximize the benefits.”

Long-term tourism strategy and short-term action will be included in the master plan which will “harmonize with” similar plans of ASEAN and GMS counterparts, he said.

“First, I shall say do you need to promote it at the moment because you have 40 percent growth in the number of arrivals coming,” Dr Paul Rogers, leader of the team which is drafting the master plan, said.

“You need any more people coming in the low season to create more balance.”

The team gives considerable attention to social and environmental impact management which includes conservation of natural and cultural heritages as well.

“If the tourism destroys the heritage, there will not be tourism business anyway because the tourism industry is very much rely on the heritage resources,” Ms Paivune, a member of the team, said.

The team will visit Inlay, Mandalay, Bagan and other major tourist destinations in Myanmar in the second phase of the master plan.

The master plan (final draft) is scheduled to be completed by the end of the Long-term tourism strategy and short-term action will be included in the master plan which will “harmonize with” similar plans of ASEAN and GMS counterparts, he said.

**Workshop for Myanmar Tourism Master Plan in progress**

March, 2013 — NLM

**News in Brief**

**Monsoon paddy harvested in Myitkyina**

Monsoon paddy model plot was harvested on 1.10 acres of farmland in northern Rampu field in Myitkyina on 27 November, attended by Kachin State Chief Minister U La John Ngai Ha.

The model plot produced 102.89 baskets of paddy per acre.

**Preparations at Sagaing University of Cooperative inspected**

Chief Minister of Sagaing Region U Tha Aye looked into preparations of lecture halls and computer pools at Sagaing University of Cooperative on 26 November and met faculty members.

**Suspension bridge to link Seikkyi-Khanuangto, Hlinethaya**

Union Minister for Construction U Kyaw Lwin oversaw progress of construction at Seikkyi-Khanuangto suspension bridge on Hlinethaya and the bank on 28 November.

**Educative talks mark World AIDS Day**

Yangon Region Minister for Social Affairs Dr Myint Thein extended greetings at the talks to mark World AIDS Day, organized by Myanmar Anti-Narcotics Association, at Insein BEHSL No. 1 on 29 November.

**Collection of census on test explained**

Chairman of Central Census Commission Union Minister for Immigration and Population U Khin Yi explained facts about collection of census on test to local people at Kontha Village BEMS in Loikaw Township on 25 November.

**Noteworthy amounts of rainfall**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Amount (inches)</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Kungyangon</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nay Pyi Taw (Yezin)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nay Pyi Taw (Lewe)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kawthoung</td>
<td>1.38</td>
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</table>

By HKA

Dr Paul Rogers taking part in discussion. —MNA

Vice-President Dr Sai Mauk Kham together with UN Under-Secretary-General Mr. Yury Fedotov of UNODC in Vienna of Austria and party pose for documentary photo.—MNA

Production and Managing Director Mr. Cu Minh Hoang from PVEP Overseas.

Next, Vietnamese President Mr. Truong Tan Sang and wife left here by air at 10.50 am.

They were seen off by Union Minister U Aye Myint Kyu and wife, Region Chief Minister U Myint Swe and wife, Vietnamese Ambassador to Myanmar Mr. Chu Cong Phung and wife and officials from Vietnamese embassy and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs at Yangon International Airport.

MNA

Sunday, 2 December, 2012