President U Thein Sein attends 20th ASEAN-India Commemorative Summit

President U Thein Sein was warmly welcomed by Indian Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh. President U Thein Sein, heads of State/Government of ASEAN countries and Indian Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh posed for a documentary photo at Raja Bagh near Taj Palace Hotel. Indian Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh made an opening speech at the opening of the Summit at 4 pm. President U Thein Sein and heads of State/Government of ASEAN countries delivered addresses at the Summit. President U Thein Sein said that he was pleased to witness the multifaceted cooperation during the period of the twenty year ASEAN and Indian relations at a time when the ceremony to mark the 20th Anniversary of ASEAN-Indian dialogue partnership. India is an important dialogue partner of ASEAN, for it is still playing a crucial role in regional peace and stability. He also expressed thanks to the India which is in support of efforts to establish the ASEAN community in 2015. He continued that, the meeting will be able to boost the ASEAN-Indian relations to a strategic level as aspired by the ASEAN. At a time when concrete steps are being taken for closer cooperation in various sectors, the report of ASEAN-India Eminent Persons Group (AIEPG) is welcomed and the group will be enhancing its cooperation to share peace, progress and prosperity.

It is the India that signed the ASEAN friendship and peace agreement in 2003, actively participated in regional discussions led by the ASEAN and supported the strategy of the ASEAN. Being a neighbour of India, Myanmar attaches its importance to security cooperation between the ASEAN and India.

Both ASEAN and India are striving for boosting trade between them while they are closely cooperating in politics and security. Accordingly, efforts are being made to increase the trade volume between the ASEAN and India up to US$ 100 billion in 2015. At the same time, steps are to be taken to foster relations of private sectors as well as small and medium enterprises. Myanmar will cooperate with India in the programmes of the ASEAN-India peace, progress and prosperity sharing.

Republic of the Union of Myanmar Investigation Commission

Press Release No. 3/2012
8th Waxing of Nadaw, 1374 ME (21st December, 2012)

1. The 16-member Investigation Commission including the Chairperson formed, on 3 December in accord with President Office’s Order No.95/2012 of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, made a field trip to the Copper Mine Project from 5 to 15 December, 2012.
2. They made investigations into Latpadaungtaung Copper Mining Project in Salingyi Township, Monywa District, Sagaing Region; Sabeitaung and Kyayzintaung mining projects being implemented by Myanmar Economic Holdings Ltd and Myanmar-Yangzzie Copper Ltd; and MEHL’s Moegyo Sulphuric Acid Plant.
3. The members met local people residing in the area of Latpadaungtaung Copper Mine Project so as to include local residents’ feelings and voices.
4. These tasks were carried out by all commission members after the groups comprising three local commission members were formed.
5. The Commission members paid homage to member Sayadaws of Sangha Nayaka committee in Mandalay and Sayadaws from Ledi Monastery and sought advices from them. And they asked for the link between First Ledi Sayadaw and Latpadaungtaung from those Sayadaws and researchers.
6. The Commission members also met the Social Affairs Minister of Mandalay Region Government and the members of Health Care Committee in which the Medical Superintendent acts as chairman in order to find out the conditions of those injured in Monywa Latpadaungtaung copper mine project incident who are receiving medial treatments at Mandalay General Hospital and Kandawnadi Hospital. The Commission members, together with the medical team led by the Social Affairs Minister and the medical superintendent, comforted the injured at the said hospitals.
7. The Investigation Commission was divided into groups while making field trips to the villages in the areas of Latpadaungtaung Copper Mining Project. And these groups enquired about local people’s attitudes towards the mining project, concerns over social environment and natural environment and their desires for water supply, health and job opportunities.
8. The Commission members also held discussions with the displaced who moved to Wethme/Kantaw and Zeetaw/Setie new villages, on their buildings and job opportunities. And the members probed into the desires of local people.
9. Physicians and two Australian doctors who come to Myanmar under the arrangement of the Commission Chairperson, gave comments that their symptoms were not due to acid after making a preliminary test on four children who are alleged to have suffered health problems due to arid smoke. But the children were taken to Yangon by the Commission in order that they can receive medical treatments.
10. Commission members made an inspection tour of Moegyo sulphuric acid plant of Myanmar Economic Holding Limited near Kankon village, and oversaw measures being taken for control of SO2 emission from the plant, waste materials, dump tanks and dump sites.
**Diamond Buddha Image of Pinn old town**

Buddha Image is being kept at Taungdaunk village, four-mile south-west of the old town.

The Diamond Buddha Image was unearthed on 9th Waning of Tazaungmon 1285 ME by Taungdaunk Sayadaw U Vilasa and a layperson. The Image was kept in an old bronze bowl full of blank sand in it. The diamond Buddha Image is two inches in height and the Image was carved from a 27-carat diamond.

The throne of the Image is 2.5 inches in height and 1.5 inches in width. According to the art works shown on the Image and throne, it is assumed that the Diamond Buddha Image was carved in Pyu Age. Now, Taungdaunk village Sayadaw U Osada preserves the Diamond Buddha Image which is the only one of its kind in Myanmar.

**A fatal road accident near Insein railway overhead bridge**

**INSEIN, 21 Dec** — A car crash involved four vehicles occurred in Insein Township on 15 December, leaving one woman dead and the other two wounded.

A Canter truck driven by U Mya Win on Insein railway overhead bridge came off the road and hit three women who are walking on the pavement of bridge. Then the car drove smack into the back of a Probox saloon that stopped at the traffic lights. Due to the force of the collision from its back, the Probox hit the back of a stationary super saloon before it. Then the super saloon crashed into the back of a Nissan saloon. A series of car crashes caused damage to four vehicles, killing a woman (about 50 years) on the spot and wounding two women who were being given intensive care at Insein Hospital.

Insein Police Station filed a lawsuit against driver U Mya Win on his reckless driving. — Kyemon

**Bells over one hundred years old in Yamethin**

**YAMETHIN, 21 Dec** — Bells depicting Waithanda jataka, one of the Buddha’s life stories, cast in bronze in more than 100 years ago can be seen in Pinn Monastery of Ywama village in Ywadanletha village-tract of Yamethin Township. According to the inscriptions cast over the bells, those who lived in the region donated them in 1268, 1297 and 1302 respectively. The inscriptions said one bell is more than one hundred years old and the remaining two are over seventy years old.

The bells with floral arabesques show sculptures of main characters of Waithanda jataka—King Waitandara, Queen Mal Madi, brother and sister Zali and Tanarsein and Brahmin Suzaka cast in bronze at the foetal positions on them. Sculptures of lions stand on both sides of each bell. The three bells of Pinn Monastery of Ywama village Sayadaw U Osada preserves the three-foot high bells for the future generation to learn.

**Risk Management Course opened in Shan State**

**NAI PYI TAW, 21 Dec** — The opening of risk management course (9/2012) of Shan State was held at the Town Hall in Taunggyi on 17 December with an address by Shan State Chief Minister Sao Madi, brother and sister Zali and Tanarsein and Brahmin Suzaka cast in bronze at the foetal positions on them. Sculptures of lions stand on both sides of each bell. The three bells of Pinn Monastery of Ywama village Sayadaw U Osada preserves the three-foot high bells for the future generation to learn.

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**Kyemon**

**National Objectives of 65th Anniversary Independence Day for 2013**

1. All the national people to live together in the Union through thick and thin
2. All the national people to constantly safeguard non-disintegration of the Union, non-disintegration of national solidarity and perpetuation of sovereignty
3. All the national people to participate in the tasks for bringing about genuine, eternal peace putting an end to the armed conflicts
4. To make relentless efforts, in building a modern, developed and democratic nation, in order to better serve public interest, to ensure poverty reduction and bring about rightous legislative, administrative and judicial pillars

**Kyemon**

**Nine relief camps in Sittway provided with international aid on an equal basis**

**SITTWAY, 21 Dec** — Makeshift tents were set up at nine places—Thechaung, Bawdupha, Thelkaalyin, Kapai, Mingan, Setonyu, a compound near meteorological station, Danyawady and Donetakkwit— to fulfill the requirements in food and shelter of displaced households in Sittway of Rakhine State.

Under the supervision of Rakhine State Government, WFP provides them with monthly rations and Rakhine State Red Cross Society presents the monthly rice ration to them. Supplies from the international community are being delivered on equal terms to the nine relief camps regardless of race and religion.
Syrian rebels fight for strategic town in Hama Province

Opposition sources said rebels had won some territory in the strategic southern town of Morek and were surrounding the Alawite town of al-Tleis. They were also planning to take the town of Maan, arguing that the army was present there and in al-Tleis and was hindering their advance on nearby Morek, a town on the highway that runs from Damascus north to Aleppo, Syria’s largest city and another battleground in the conflict.

“The rockets are being fired from there, they are being fired from Maan and al-Tleis,” said a rebel captain in Hama rural area, who asked not to be named. “Activists said heavy army shelling had targeted the town of Halfaya, captured by rebels two days earlier. Seven people were killed, 30 were wounded, and dozens of homes were destroyed, said activist Sahl al-Hamawi.

Russia’s Putin set for stand-off with EU on Syria, energy

Brussels, 21 Dec—Russian President Vladimir Putin and European Union leaders are likely to clash over issues ranging from Syria to trade, energy and human rights on Friday when Putin holds his first talks in Brussels since his re-election as president in May.

Relations between the 27-nation bloc and Russia, its main external supplier of energy and a key trading partner, have been soured by rows over gas pipelines and brewing trade disputes over cars and pigs.

European leaders have taken issue with the jailing of members of punk band Pussy Riot, prosecutions of opposition figures and laws restricting protests and foreign-funded organisations since Putin was re-elected.

EU foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton said in September such moves constituted “a trend that is of very serious concern to the European Union”.

Russian and EU officials expect no breakthroughs in Putin’s talks with European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso and European Council President Herman Van Rompuy, who both insist that the sanctions would remain in place until Russia releases political prisoners.

“The last few EU-Russia summits have achieved very little and for Putin I think it is really a box-ticking exercise and I am almost surprised he is going at all,” said James Nixey, an expert on Russia at London’s Chatham House thinktank.

No meeting of minds is likely over Syria where Russia has been sharply at odds with Western powers over a conflict that has killed more than 40,000 people since an uprising against President Bashar al-Assad began in March 2011.

France and other Western states have criticised Russia for vetoing three UN Security Council resolutions aimed at pressuring Assad. —Reuters

IAEA, Iran reach consensus on “structured approach” over nuclear checks

Vienna, 21 Dec — The UN nuclear watchdog and Iran reached a preliminary agreement on structured approach at the meeting in Teheran last Thursday over Iran’s disputed nuclear activities, diplomats said on Thursday.

Both International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and Iran announced progress was made in Thursday’s talk towards an agreement the IAEA believes would allow the agency to resume inquiry into the nuclear facilities in Iran.

A Vienna-based diplomat told Xinhua that the preliminary consensus on structured approach between the two sides is considered as the precondition of the new round of talk and also makes the agency more confident to achieve a breakthrough with Teheran, though Iran didn’t agree to open access to the Parchin military base near Teheran for the UN inspectors in the talk last week.

The IAEA told the member states in a note that it looked forward to finalize the framework in the new round of discussions in Teheran on 16 January, and start implementing it soon.

India successfully testfires nuclear-capable Prithvi II ballistic missile

New Delhi, 21 Dec—India successfully testfired its home-made, nuclear-capable surface-to-surface Prithvi II ballistic missile in the eastern state of Odisha on Thursday, sources said.

“The missile was testfired from a mobile launcher at the Integrated Test Range in Chandipur near the state’s Balasore district. The testfiring of the missile, with a strike range of over 350 km, was successful and was witnessed by top defence scientists and military officials,” the sources said. The missile has been developed by state-owned Defence Research and Development Organisation and already inducted into the country’s armed forces. The missile has been developed under India’s Integrated Defence Programme.

India had in October this year successfully testfired another Prithvi II missile from the same place in the state.

Palestinian woman dies of A/H1N1 virus in West Bank

Ramallah, 21 Dec—A Palestinian woman from the West Bank died on Thursday of A/H1N1 virus, a Palestinian medical official said.

Spokesperson for the Palestinian Ministry of Health Assad al-Ramlawy told Xinhua that a pregnant woman died earlier Thursday, adding that two other men died of the virus earlier this week.

He added that a total of 40 A/H1N1 cases are receiving medical treatment in the West Bank.

“This disease has become seasonal and we have the needed medications and the expertise to fight it,” he said.

Last year, twelve Palestinians died of A/H1N1 virus.
Three-nation crew blasts off for space station

**The Soyuz TMA-07M spacecraft carrying the International Space Station (ISS) crew of US astronaut Thomas Marshburn, Russian cosmonaut Roman Romanenko and Canadian astronaut Chris Hadfield blasts off from its launch pad at the Baikonur cosmodrome on 19 Dec, 2012.—Reuters**

**Almaty, 21 Dec—A Soyuz spacecraft carrying a Russian, an American and a Canadian blasted off on Wednesday to the International Space Station (ISS), which is expected to spend half a year in orbit.**

The Russian-built Soyuz TMA-07M lifted off on time, at 12:12 GMT, from Russia’s Baikonur cosmodrome in Kazakhstan.

On the crew’s two-day trip to the ISS, Canadian Chris Hadfield is joined by US astronaut Tom Marshburn and Russian cosmonaut Roman Romanenko.

They will join US astronaut Tom Marshburn and Russians Oleg Novitsky and Yevgeny Tarelkin, who have been manning the $100-billion, 15-nation space station complex since October.

**Seven companies enter British 4G airwaves race**

**London, 21 Dec—Telecoms regulator Ofcom said on Thursday that seven companies had qualified for the new airwaves needed to roll out superfast 4G mobile broadband across Britain.**

Fixed lines provider BT, managed network firm MLL Telecom and Hong Kong’s PCCW Limited would enter the auction, Ofcom said, as well as all of the existing mobile network operators — EE, Vodafone, O2 owner Telefonica and Hutchison, which is behind Three.

Bidders were competing for spectrum in two separate bands — 800MHz and 2.6GHz, it said. The lower frequency bands — 800 MHz and 2.6 GHz, for spectrum in two separate regions which is behind Three.

EE, the joint venture between France Telecom and Deutsche Telekom, has already launched 4G services in major British cities by reallocating its existing airwaves.— Reuters

**Humans made cheese 7,500 years ago, researchers say**

**London, 21 Dec—Scientists have found the earliest evidence of prehistoric cheese-making from a study of 7,500-year-old pottery fragments that are found at ancient sites up to and including Libya, but there was no evidence of cheese-making in the eastern Mediterranean.**

Researchers from the University of Bristol in Britain, with colleagues in the United States and Poland, analyzed fatty acids embedded in prehistoric pottery from the Polish region of Kuyavia, and found they had been used to separate milk into fat-rich curds for cheese and lactose-containing whey.

“The presence of milk residues in sieves ... constitutes the earliest direct evidence for cheese-making,” said Mélanie Salgue from Bristol, one of the authors of the research, which was published in the journal Nature.

Peter Bogucki, another researcher involved in the work, said: “Making cheese allowed them to reduce the lactose content of milk, and we know that, at that time, most of the humans were not tolerant to lactose.”

Milk residues have been found at ancient sites up to 8,000 years old in Turkey and Libya, but there was no evidence that the milk had been processed into cheese.

Until now, the earliest evidence of cheese-making came from depictions of milk processing in murals several thousand years younger than the pottery fragments.

**Owner of OpenTV slaps Netflix with patent lawsuit**

**New York, 21 Dec—The owner of interactive television pioneer OpenTV sued Netflix Inc on Wednesday, alleging the company infringed on patents that cover technology underpinning the fast-growing Internet video sector.**

**Switzerland-based Kudelski SA, which owns OpenTV, said in its lawsuit that Netflix infringed on seven US patents covering aspects of over-the-top TV technology (OTT), including: the use of viewer information to make recommendations; digital rights management; and video playback. Kudelski tried for about a year to encourage Netflix to discuss licensing its patents, but the video streaming company has so far not played ball, according to the lawsuit, which was filed on Wednesday in the US District Court for the District of Delaware, a common venue for patent cases.**

“The companies like Netflix have, in essence, stood on the shoulders of giants, largely focusing their R&D efforts on aggregating these previously patented technologies and using them to provide a rich customer experience,” Kudelski said in the complaint.

Netflix spokesman Joris Evers declined to comment. Netflix shares fell 1.7 percent to close at $93.9785 on Wednesday.

The suit comes amid a boom in digital TV shows and movies delivered over the Internet to smart TVs, tablets and smart phones. Netflix, whose iconic red envelopes have come to symbolize the DVD delivery-by-mail market, introduced video streaming in 2007, 10 years after the company was founded, and quickly grew into a market leader.

But the market is getting crowded, and Netflix is being chased by Amazon.com Inc and Wal-Mart Stores Inc’s Vudu service, as well as streaming video website Hulu, which is owned by Walt Disney Co, News Corp and Comcast Corp.

Apple Inc, the world’s largest personal computer maker, is also widely expected to enter the smart TV market, spurring further growth. The Internet TV sector shares some attributes of the smartphone business, with over a decade of innovation and patents produced by companies that are no longer dominant.

Grant Moss, CEO of patent broker and advisory firm Adapt IP Ventures, expects a repeat of the recent smartphone patent wars, but on a smaller scale.

“The frequency of these cases will increase dramatically” because of recent, high-profile Internet video content distribution deals, new ways of making money in the sector and new entrants, Moss said.

“...But I don’t see the financial value of the individual cases being as significant as those in the smartphone market,” he added. Kudelski, which has developed and acquired a range of movie and digital TV technologies over several decades, generates more than $700 million in annual revenue and employs about 3,000 people worldwide. The company is a player in its streaming video by virtue of its 2010 acquisition of San Francisco-based OpenTV.**

**Twitter lets users claim their personal history**

**San Francisco, 21 Dec—Twitter’s 200 million active users can soon savour or cringe over every single statement they’ve tweeted when the social media company begins rolling out users their entire archive of 140-character messages.**

Only English-language users have this service for now, but Twitter will eventually send a download link containing the full personal archives in one file and users who ask, the company said on Wednesday.

“Maybe you wanted to recall your reaction to the 2008 election, reminisce on what you said to your partner on your 10th anniversary, or just see your first few Tweets. We know lots of you would like to explore your Twitter past,” Mollie Vandor, a Twitter engineer, wrote in an official blog post on Wednesday.

Since Twitter launched the service in 2006, tweets have evolved from a tool for youngsters to chat about frivolous things into a force for social change.

It has served as an alternative to government-controlled media, for example, in the Middle East. And during Superstorm Sandy this year, news organizations and emergency response officials turned to Twitter as an essential source of real-time information. In 2010, the Library of Congress pledged to preserve every public tweet as a matter of record — a significant undertaking, given that some 400 million tweets are dispatched worldwide everyday.

Bookkeeping that archive will be one noted dispatch by Twitter Executive Chairman Jack Dorsey, who is widely recognized as its inventor. Dorsey, ignoring punctuation, brought the service to life shortly after 1:00 pm on 21 March, 2006 with a supremely pedestrian update about his experimental social network.

**Humans made cheese 7,500 years ago, researchers say**

**Science**

**The headquarters of Netflix is shown in Los Gatos, California on 20 Sept, 2011. — Reuters**

**Twitter lets users claim their personal history**

**Tech**

**A Twitter page is displayed on an Apple iPhone in Los Angeles on 13 Oct, 2009.—Reuters**

**Twitter lets users claim their personal history**

**Tech**
FTSE stumbles on fresh US budget concern

LONDON, 21 Dec.—The FTSE 100 index fell on Thursday as investors used renewed tensions in US budget talks as an excuse to lock in profits. The FTSE 100 was down 0.51 points, or 0.1 percent, at 5,936.58 by 8:06 a.m. British time, having closed up 25.69 points, or 0.4 percent, at 5,961.59 on Wednesday, scaling fresh nine-month highs.

Sentiment towards riskier assets turned negative overnight, hurtling US shares, while mining stocks and banks were pressured on Thursday as talks to avoid a “fiscal cliff” of planned tax hikes and spending cuts in the United States stumbled yet again.—Reuters

Greece’s Eurobank posts third quarter loss, provisions hurt

ATHENS, 21 Dec.—Greek lender Eurobank (EFGRadio) posted an anticipated third-quarter loss on Thursday as the country’s deep economic slump caused a rise in non-performing loans and weaker banking income. The bank said third-quarter losses reached 223 million euros ($294 million) (180.8 million pounds), bringing its nine-month loss to 1,095 billion euros. Higher funding costs led to a 4 percent fall in net interest income in the third quarter. Eurobank said non-performing credit rose to 17 percent of its loan book from 14 percent in the first quarter. Provisions for impaired loans rose 23 percent in the nine-month period to 1,213 billion euros.

The bank said its total recapitalisation need, as set by the country’s central bank, was 5.8 billion euros. This includes the impact of two Greek sovereign debt write downs earlier this year.—Reuters

US teen smoking declines to record low in 2012

NEW YORK, 21 Dec.—Cigarette smoking among American teenagers dropped to a record low in 2012, a decline that may have been partly driven by a sharp hike in the federal tobacco tax, researchers said on Wednesday.

An annual survey of about 48,000 10th, 12th and 8th graders found that the overall proportion of those saying they had smoked in the prior 30 days fell by just over a percentage point to 10.6 percent.

A one percentage point decline may not sound like a lot, but it represents about a 9 percent reduction in a single year in the number of teens currently smoking.”

Lloyd Johnston, the principal investigator in the study, said in a statement.

He said reductions on that scale can translate into the prevention of thousands of premature deaths and tens of thousands of cases of cancer and other serious diseases.

More than 400,000 Americans are estimated to die prematurely each year as a result of cigarette smoking — the No. 1 killer of preventable US deaths — and most smokers begin their habit as adolescents, experts said. Healthcare advocates hailed on Wednesday’s findings as evidence that higher cigarette taxes were paying off, combined with federal curbs on youth-oriented tobacco marketing and sales and a sweeping anti-smoking media campaign.

The researchers also cited the increase in federal cigarette taxes, raised by 62 cents a pack in 2009, as a likely contributing factor. The findings were part of an annual survey by University of Michigan researchers released by the National Institute on Drug Abuse.

Smoking rates fell for each of the individual age groups surveyed, most notably among eighth graders — from 6.1 percent in 2011 to 4.9 percent in 2012, the survey found. —Reuters

Business

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Health
Israel complains to UN about rearming by Hezbollah

CARACAS, 21 Dec—Venezuelan Vice President Nicolas Maduro said on Wednesday that President Hugo Chavez, recovering from cancer surgery, should be fit to be sworn in for a new term on 10 January as scheduled.

Chavez was steadily recovering after the surgery in Cuba, Maduro said in a statement, adding all the official announcements issued so far about this health condition were completely true. “Right now, we are focused on praying and maintaining our faith... so that our commander in chief and president can fulfill his sacred duty of being capable of hitting Israel. Israel’s UN Ambassador Ron Prosor said in a letter to the 15-nation council that the build-up was in clear violation of a UN arms embargo. Prosor said an explosion in the southern Lebanese town of Tarhuna on Monday was known as a “salute” — an indication of the growing number of rockets being fired towards Israel. “This explosion offers yet another reminder to the world about the grave danger before our eyes in Lebanon,” he said. “In flagrant breach of (Security Council) resolution 1701, Hezbollah has built its arsenal to unprecedented levels, amassing 50,000 deadly missiles in Lebanon — more missiles than many NATO members have in their possession,” he said. “These missiles can reach all of Israel and well beyond.”

A Lebanese security source said on Monday’s blast was caused by a rocket that had been fired into Lebanon during Hezbollah’s 2006 war with Israel but which did not detonate on impact. Israel has long complained that the UN arms embargo on Lebanon has been unsuccessful.

“I call on the Security Council and all responsible members of the international community to send a clear signal that Hezbollah’s rapid rearmament will not be tolerated — backed by concrete steps on the ground,” he said. “A logical first step is to ensure that Hezbollah is placed on relevant terrorism watchlists in all corners of the globe, including in the European Union,” Prosor said. A Reuters reporter in Lebanon on Monday said members of Hezbollah, the umbrella group that controls around 50 members of the UN peacekeeping force UNIFIL, were at the site of the blast but that he was prevented from approaching the area.

UNIFIL has about 12,000 troops and personnel in Lebanon after its expansion under the 2005 New Security Council Resolution 1701 that halted the 2006 Israel-Hezbollah war in southern Lebanon. The south remains a Hezbollah stronghold.

Ecuador's British for Assange deadlock

QUITO, 21 Dec—Ecuador expressed its concern about the “serious” situation in which WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange is stranded in London and criticized Britain for depriving him of his right to seek asylum.

Ecuador has been pushing for its “full right to offer asylum to Assange,” but has failed to get cooperation from Britain’s Ecuadorian Foreign Minister Ricardo Patino said in an interview with the state-run Gama TV.

Ecuador granted Assange political asylum in August, two months after the former hacker turned up at Ecuadorian embassy in London to avoid extradition to Sweden, where the authorities want to question him over two sexual assault allegations.

The founder of the whistleblowing website has had to hole up at the embassy, as Britain refuses to grant him safe passage out of the country.

Ecuador’s diplomatic talks with Britain and Sweden have failed to work out a solution, as neither offered a way for Assange to be handed over to the United States for prosecution of espionage, which is possibly to incur a death penalty.

“The situation has much to do with Britain’s decision,” Ecuador’s Foreign Minister Patino commented on Thursday that after six months his right to asylum continues to be violated.”

Assange said on Thursday that he didn’t rule out the possibility of taking the case to an international court after exhausting diplomatic channels.

UNHCR says fifty-five people drowned off Somali coast

NAIROBI, 21 Dec—Fifty-five people were drowned, and presumed to have drowned, after an overcrowded boat capsized off the Somali coast, the UN refugee agency said on Thursday.

The UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) said in a statement that the accident on Tuesday was the worst such incident in the Gulf of Aden since February 2011 when 57 Somali migrants perished attempting to reach Yemen.

The UN agency quoted five of the survivors, all young Somali men, as saying the boat was overcrowded and ran into trouble almost immediately after leaving the port of Bosasso in the northern Somali breakaway region of Puntland.

It capsized just 15 minutes into its journey, spilling all 66 passengers into the sea. Those on board were Ethiopians and Somalis, the UNHCR said.

So far, 23 bodies have been recovered, including Somali, Ethiopian and Italian men, and a boy said to be less than four years of age. Five of the dead are confirmed to have been Ethiopians. The 32 remaining passengers are presumed to have drowned.

“Without doubt, the Gulf of Aden is now the deadliest route for people fleeing conflict, violence and human rights abuses in the Horn of Africa,” said UNHCR Representative for Somalia, Bruno Geddo.

African migrants often use unseaworthy boats to try to reach Yemen, seen as a gateway to wealthier parts of the Middle East and the West. Hundreds of migrants have perished at sea.
President U Thein Sein attends cultural concert, dinner hosted by Indian President

Nay Pyi Taw, 21 Dec—President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar U Thein Sein attended the cultural concert and a dinner hosted by President of the Republic of India Mr Pranab Mukherjee at Rashtrapati Bhawan Palace in New Delhi yesterday evening.

A L S O  p r e s e n t  a t the dinner were Heads of State/Government of ASEAN member countries, the ASEAN Secretary-General, ministers and high ranking officials, who were attending the ASEAN-India Summit.

At 7.15 pm, President U Thein Sein arrived at the Rashtrapati Bhawan Palace where he was warmly welcomed by the Indian President and Vice-President Mohammad Hamid Ansari.

After that, the President together with the Heads of State/Government of ASEAN member countries enjoyed entertainment of cultural concert presented by artistes from India and ASEAN countries.

After the concert, the Heads of State/Government of ASEAN member countries posed for a documentary photo with artistes.

Later, the Indian President hosted a dinner to those present.

NAY PYI TAW, 21 Dec—Vice-President U Nyan Tun received a Thai delegation led by Minister for Information and Communication Technology of Thailand Mr Anudith Nakomthap at the Creden-tials Hall of the President Palace, here, this afternoon.

Also present at the call were Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs U Thant Kyaw, Deputy Minister for Information and Communication Technology U Thaung Tin and departmental heads.

The meeting focused on boosting cooperation in ICT sector among six Mekong region countries, promotion of ICT cooperation in Dawei SEZ and underwater cable installation tasks.— MNA

DSMA turns out 14th Intake cadets

Nay Pyi Taw, 21 Dec—The graduation parade of 14th Intake of Defence Services Medical Academy was held at the parade ground of DSMA in Yangon this morning, with an address by Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Vice-Senior General Thayay Sithu Min Aung Hlaing.

Also present on the occasion were Daw Kyu Kyu Hla, wife of the Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services, Chief of the General Staff (Army, Navy and Air) General Hla Htay Win and wife Daw Mar Mar Mar Moe, Commander-in-Chief (Navy) Rear-Admiral Thura Wai, Commander-in-Chief (Air) General Myat Hein and wife Daw Hwte Hwte Nyunt, Union Minister for Electric Power U Khin Maung Soe and wife Daw Ni Ni, senior military officers of the Commander-in-Chief (Army) Office and their wives, commanders of the commandant of DSMA, guests and parents and relatives of cadets.

First, the Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services took the salute of the cadet companies.

The cadet companies marchedpast the Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services. After that, the Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services awarded outstanding cadets.

On the occasion, Vice-Senior General Thayay Sithu Min Aung Hlaing delivered an address, saying that the Tatmadaw constantly serving the interest of the national people is focusing on prevailing peace and stability of the State with vigorous efforts while providing health care services to national brethren from fur-flung areas and regional development tasks. It is genuine goodwill of the Tatmadaw. The Tatmadaw is fostering national solidarity. He urged them to actively participate in public welfare tasks and public health care tasks for ensuring national unity. After taking the salute of the cadet companies, the Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services left the parade ground.

The Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services met three outstanding cadets and their parents at the hall of the academy after the parade.— MNA

Vice-Senior General Min Aung Hlaing attends graduation dinner of 14th Intake of DSMA

Nay Pyi Taw, 21 Dec—The graduation dinner of the 14th Intake of Defence Services Medical Academy was held at DSMA in Yangon at 6 pm today, attended by Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Vice-Senior General Min Aung Hlaing.

Also present at the dinner were Daw Kyu Kyu Hla, wife of the Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services, Chief of the General Staff (Army, Navy and Air) General Hla Htay Win and wife Daw Mar Mar Mar Moe, Commander-in-Chief (Navy) Rear-Admiral Thura Wai, Commander-in-Chief (Air) General Myat Hein and wife Daw Hwte Hwte Nyunt, Union Minister for Electric Power U Khin Maung Soe and wife Daw Ni Ni, senior military officers of the Commander-in-Chief (Army) Office and their wives, the commandant of DSMA, guests and parents and relatives of the graduate officers.

At first, the Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services cordially greeted the graduate officers and had the dinner together with them.

After the dinner, Vice-Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and party enjoyed entertainments of Myawady BandandMyawady Anyeint troupe.— MNA
President U Thein Sein attends... (from page 1)

President U Thein Sein of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar who is in New Delhi, yesterday evening.

Those present paid respect to the President. In his speech, the President said that Myanmar’s reform processes were people-centered, aimed at ensuring individual’s interests. Ensuring peace and stability and economic development was the same wishes of all Myanmar people. So, special emphasizes were placed on national unity and stability for ensuring the stability of the state. For the economic development, the government had made the efforts for the removals of economic sanctions imposed by the Western countries, relaxation on export taxes, and invitations of foreign investments and technologies. The country saw progresses to a certain extent. The opportunities for the future State and the people had emerged.

Myanmar needed to strive for the economic development by maintaining good relations with neighbouring countries, taking advantages of the economic development of super power China and India and appearance of ASEAN countries. Myanmar had established the good relations with the neighbouring countries. He urged officials to maintain the already-existed relations.

After that, the President presented foodstaff and gifts to families of Myanmar Embassy and Military Attaché Office in New Delhi.

President U Thein Sein meets staff, families of Myanmar Embassy, Military Attaché Office in New Delhi

The new Light of Myanmar

President U Thein Sein presents gifts to families of Myanmar Embassy and Military Attaché Office in New Delhi.—MNA

Nav Pyi Taw, 21 Dec—President U Thein Sein of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar who is in New Delhi, of India, met staff and their families from Myanmar Embassy and Military Attaché Office and Myanmar artists who participated at ASEAN-India car rally, at Taj Mahal Hotel in New Delhi, yesterday evening.

Those present paid respect to the President. In his speech, the President said that Myanmar’s reform processes were people-centered, aimed at ensuring individual’s interests. Ensuring peace and stability and economic development was the same wishes of all Myanmar people. So, special emphasizes were placed on national unity and stability for ensuring the stability of the state. For the economic development, the government had made the efforts for the removals of economic sanctions imposed by the Western countries, relaxation on export taxes, and invitations of foreign investments and technologies. The country saw progresses to a certain extent. The opportunities for the future State and the people had emerged. Myanmar needed to strive for the economic development by maintaining good relations with neighbouring countries, taking advantages of the economic development of super power China and India and appearance of ASEAN countries. Myanmar had established the good relations with the neighbouring countries. He urged officials to maintain the already-existed relations.

After that, the President presented foodstaff and gifts to families of Myanmar Embassy and Military Attaché Office in New Delhi. —MNA

Over 60 years later

Everything seems to be cool in this December with Christmas decorations at hotels and supermarkets in urban areas as usual. What would it be if you have a chance to choose a Christmas present? As for us, the editorial board, we would like to have “understanding” back.

Over 60 years have elapsed since we regained independence and unfortunately, we still cannot build national consensus to shape our shared future. In the post-independence era, creating an economic miracle turned to be building castle in the air, instead internal armed conflicts emerged as mushrooms in monsoon. Though we, the diverse national races, stood united against the intruders, it has been hard for us to find a common ground to bury the hatchet and shake hands.

Why do the innocent civilians always have to play the role of scapegoat in every conflict throughout the history? Blankets provided could perhaps help them protect against coldness of this ice cold December in makeshift tents or monasteries, but the coldness of fear just too bitter for them to resist. They do not expect much but just want security, a secure and normal life. Children, no matter where he lives and what his race is, should be in classrooms, but not amidst insecurity and bursts of mortar shells and gunfire. The bruises and cuts can be cured, but what about the mental scars left in their mind and heart which we can’t see?

Blood, sweat and tears, our ancestors had sacrificed to free the entire nation, not a single division or state, from colonial rule. The long-running armed conflicts are not the things to take pride in for our nation and the continued fighting would not bring victory to either side but only create a loss-loss situation for it is like brothers killing each other in a family.

Kayin people do not alone live in Kayin State, but it is also home to Kachin, Chin, Bamar and people of other national races and it is the same for other regions and states. Since time immemorial, the Union which we call Myanmar has been a haven for diverse national races and we no doubt are the descendants of mixed race, somehow related to another. Even if there are animosity and enmity among us, they exist somehow related to one another. Even if there are animosity and enmity among us, they exist in Kayin State, but it is also home to Kachin, Chin, Bamar and people of other national races and it is the same for other regions and states. Since time immemorial, the Union which we call Myanmar had established a neighbour of India and the relations between India and ASEAN regularly developed in 1991 in which India adopted its “Look East” policy. ASEAN-India Summit covers ministerial level discussions, people-to-people relations, coordination on business firm and cultural programmes.—MNA

President U Thein Sein meets staff, families of Myanmar Embassy, Military Attaché Office in New Delhi
President U Thein Sein graces the flag down ceremony of ASEAN-India Car Rally

Myanmar, India to boost economic, investment cooperation on mutually beneficial basis through people-to-people connectivity

NAY PYI TAW, 21 Dec—President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar U Thein Sein held talks with Indian Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh at Vigyan Bhawan in New Delhi this morning.

The President together with ASEAN leaders took positions on the dais and accepted ASEAN-India Rally commemorative flags. The President flagged down while the car representing Myanmar crossed the finishing line of the rally and so did ASEAN leaders and Indian Prime Minister.

Afterwards, ASEAN leaders and Indian Prime Minister posed for a documentary photo on the dais.

After the ceremony, Indian Prime Minister hosted a luncheon to ASEAN Leaders at Durbar Hall of Taj Palace.

The second ASEAN-India Car Rally started on 26 November in Indonesia, and the participants of the rally arrived in Guwahati in Assam of India on 16 December, after passing Myanmar and crossing the finishing line by cars representing ASEAN countries and India.

The meeting was also attended by Deputy Minister for Border Affairs Lt-Gen Thein Htay met with Ambassador of Turkey to Myanmar Murat Yavuz Ates and expert Mr Mâik Tasdemir from Turkish International Cooperation and Develop-ment Agency (TIKA) at the ministry here this morning. They frankly discussed matters related to construction of low-cost housing projects for both communities regardless of religion and race who lost their homes due to incidents occurred in Rakhine State in cooperation with the Ministry of Border Affairs and TIKA, aid for educational infrastructure for educational opportunities for children and women in those region and boosting living standard, job opportunities and socio-economic development of local people.

Turkish International Cooperation and Development Agency (TIKA) will make arrangements not only for relief, rehabilitation and sustainable development in Rakhine State but also agriculture, education, health, water and sanitation sectors across the country and will make field trip to Rakhine State for humanitarian assistance.

The meeting was also attended by Deputy Minister for Border Affairs Maj-Gen Zaw Win, directors-general and officials.

Next, the President and Indian Prime Minister frankly exchanged views on cooperation in border region development and security issue, sooner implementation of India-Myanmar-Thailand road construction project and projects in Myanmar with the assistance of development aid given by India, and boosting economic and investment cooperation on a mutually beneficial basis through people-to-people connectivity. —MNA

Union Border Affairs Minister meets Turkish ambassador, expert of TIKA

NAY PYI TAW, 21 Dec—Union Minister for Border Affairs Lt-Gen Thein Htay met with Ambassador of Turkey to Myanmar Murat Yavuz Ates and expert Mr Mâik Tasdemir from Turkish International Cooperation and Develop-ment Agency (TIKA) at the ministry here this morning. They frankly discussed matters related to construction of low-cost housing projects for both communities regardless of religion and race who lost their homes due to incidents occurred in Rakhine State in cooperation with the Ministry of Border Affairs and TIKA, aid for educational infrastructure for educational opportunities for children and women in those region and boosting living standard, job opportunities and socio-economic development of local people.

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The meeting was also attended by Deputy Minister for Border Affairs Maj-Gen Zaw Win, directors-general and officials. —MNA

Indian Prime Minister while crossing the finishing line by cars representing ASEAN countries and India.

Next, the Indian Prime Minister delivered an address at the ceremony, and ASEAN Alternate Chairman Cambodian Prime Minister Samdech Hun Sen spoke on the occasion on behalf of

Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Laos, Vietnam, Cambodia and Myanmar. A total of 112 participants from eight ASEAN countries took part in the rally. Academy Wai Lu Kyaw, May Thanlar Oo, Su Panhtwar and Ko Paik represented Myanmar.

The rally was aimed at cementing friendships between ASEAN countries and India, fostering regional cooperation and better infrastructural development, especially road transportation between India and ASEAN countries, thereby contributing towards promotion of trade, investment and tourism sectors.—MNA

President U Thein Sein and Indian Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh waving hands at the flag down ceremony of ASEAN-India Car Rally.—MNA

President U Thein Sein while shaking hands with Indian Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh at Vigyan Bhawan in New Delhi, MNA
Workshop on FESR launched

NAY PYI TAW, 21 Dec—The Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development conducted the workshop on Framework for Economic and Social Reform as it aims at attaining success in a series of reform process in administration and working process at the bottom-to-top level of the departmental organizations apart from improvements of good governance and clean government”, said Union Minister for National Planning and Economic Development Dr Kan Zaw at the opening of the workshop held at the meeting hall of the Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development, here, this morning.

Afterwards, Union Ministers at the President Office U Soe Thein, U Tin Naing Thein and U Hla Tun, Chairman of Pyithu Hluttaw Public Affairs Committee U Maung Oo gave their comments on supplementary implementation tasks for socio-economic development and public security and freedom of action; expression and participation without being annoyed by anyone.

The resource persons read out their papers at the workshop chaired by Chairman of National Economic and Social Development Consultation Council U Tin Htut Oo, and answered the queries raised by the participants.

In the afternoon, Deputy Minister Dr Daw Khin San Yi administered the session with three resource persons.—MNA

Fire breaks out on Yangon-Mawlamyine Up-train

NAY PYI TAW, 21 Dec—A fire broke out in the engine room of DF No.1631 on No.89 Yangon-Mawlamyine Up-train while arriving at Mile Post No.175/12, at about 6.30 pm today.

The fire engines managed to put it out at about 6.50 pm. Nobody got injured in the accident.

The case is now under investigation.—MNA

KIA attacks Mandalay-Myitkyina cargo train

NAY PYI TAW, 21 Dec—A No.937 cargo train leaving Mandalay for Myitkyina, was attacked by KIA group at Mile Post No.643/22, at about 1.15 am today. The attack has damaged about 700 ft rail track, overturned four coaches, tilted one coach, injured three staff of Myanmar Railways.

According to MR, departmental officials are repairing damaged rail section with the help of local battalion.—MNA

US air traffic dips in September

WASHINGTON, 21 Dec—US airline system traffic in September shrank from a year ago, the Transportation Department reported on Thursday.

US airlines carried 57.4 million domestic and international passengers in September 2012, 1.1 percent fewer than in the same period of 2011, said the department.

But the number of passengers was still 0.1 percent above that of two years ago in September 2010.

Specifically, there were 1.7 percent fewer domestic passengers and 2.8 percent more international passengers in September than a year ago.

Delta Airlines carried more total passengers than any other US airlines in September, reaching 9.396 million. Southwest Airlines carried the most domestic passengers, with 8.707 million. United Airlines took the first place in terms of international passengers, with as many as 1.9112 million.—Xinhua

Cuba expands biofuel production to cope with energy shortage

HAVANA, 21 Dec—Cuba has opened its second biodiesel plant and plans to build three more to produce green fuel from inedible plants, the state-run TV reported on Wednesday.

The new plant is now in trial run in the town of Cabaiguan in the central province of Sancti Spiritus, the report said, adding that the authorities have planned to install three more in the western province of Matanzas.

Currently, there are on the island about 110 hectares of land cultivated with jatropha curcas, an oil-rich plant that will be used as the raw material to feed the plants.

The seeds of the shrub known as “milk nut,” are rich in oil but toxic for human consumption, Jose Sotolongo, director of the Centre for Applied Technology for Sustainable Development in the eastern province of Guantanamo, was quoted by Cuban television as saying. “It offers the additional advantage that its cultivation is feasible in areas of little or no agricultural value.”

Jatropha curcas is considered a convenient alternative to edible plants, such as sunflower or soybeans, in the production of biofuels, the report said, adding this biofuel has been applied successfully in farm machinery.

Cuba installed with Swiss support its first biodiesel plant in the eastern province of Guantanamo last July. The expansion of biodiesel is the latest attempt by the Cuban government to tap clean energy resources like wind, sunlight and biomass of sugarcane and wood.

Cuba meets about 50 percent of its energy needs with a domestic production of about 4 million tons of oil and accompanying gas a year, with the rest supplemented by imports from its major political and economic ally Venezuela.

The poor health conditions of Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez and the possibility that he is unable to take office for his new six-year term has raised concerns that Cuba’s fuel supply would be adversely affected.

The government’s goal is to generate one-sixth of the domestically consumed electricity with renewable sources before the end of this decade.—Xinhua

No changes to HK, Macao policies: Xi

BEIJING, 21 Dec—Chinese leader Xi Jinping on Thursday stressed that the central authorities’ policies on Hong Kong and Macao will not change after the transition of power.

Xi, General Secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee, made the remarks while meeting with CY Leung, chief executive of Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR), in Beijing.

The central authorities’ adherence to the “one country, two systems” framework and the principle and the two Basic Laws will not change, said Xi, also vice president of China.

Xi also reiterated “unchanged support” for the chief executives and governments of the two SARs in carrying out their legal duties, as well as support for the SARs’ policies on promoting economic growth, social welfare, democracy and harmony.

The policies adopted last month at the 18th National Congress of the CPC are continuations of the long-term policy that focuses on the precise understanding and implementation of the “one country, two systems” principle and genuine respect for, and maintenance of, the authority of the Basic Laws, said Xi.

Xi recognized the work of Leung and the SAR government and pledged firm, continuous support.

Xi recalled his notion that realizing the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation and the Chinese nation’s greatest dream in modern history, adding that he believes compatriots in Hong Kong share this dream.

“Of course, Hong Kong compatriots will contribute to the great rejuvenation,” said Xi.—Xinhua

US emphasizes military cooperation with Lebanon

BEIRUT, 21 Dec—Visiting US Air Force Central Command (AFCENT) Commander General David L Goldfein emphasized on Thursday the strong and sustained military cooperation between the two countries.

According to a statement by the US embassy in Lebanon, Goldfein met with Lebanese Armed Forces Commander General Jean Sabeitaung and a drain which is situated at the foot of Sabeitaung and the tubewell in which the water is alleged to be polluted in Dorneau village.

The policies adopted by the Lebanese Armed Forces underscore the continuing joint effort to strengthen the capacity of the Lebanese Armed Forces, recognizing its importance, as Lebanon’s sole legitimate defence force, in securing Lebanon’s borders and defending the sovereignty and independence of the state.

In his meetings, Goldfein discussed the political and security situation in Lebanon and other regional issues, and renewed the US states’ commitment to a stable, sovereign and independent Lebanon.—Xinhua

Press Release No. 3/2012...

(continued from page 1)

11. Commission members visited the office of Myanmar-Yangzi Copper Limited that is responsible for Sabetaung and Kyayzintaung projects, first phase of Monywa copper mine project, and two pits at Sabetaung and Sabetaung (South) copper mines, and inspected matters related to the project, ISO-14001 certificate, ISO-90001 and ISO-18001 certificates.

12. They looked into the condition of seeping into the soil from production of copper sulphate/copper with the users of the waste materials from dumping ground during the period from 1984 to 1997.

13. They visited Myanmar-Wanbaoo Copper Limited where they enquired about EIA, SIA and Reassessment of EIA and SIA and social and health care matters being carried out by Myanmar Economic Holdings Limited and Myanmar-Wanbaoo Copper Limited for local people.

14. For conducting laboratory test, the commission took water samples from the dumping lake in the compound of sulphuric acid plant, the water leaking from the Sabetaung and a drain which is situated at the foot of Sabetaung and the tubewell in which the water is alleged to be polluted in Dorneau village.

15. The investigation commission held a plenary meeting in Nay Pyi Taw on 19 December where findings of field trips were presented to the Chairperson of the commission and follow-up tasks of the commission were discussed.

16. Findings of the commission are preliminary investigations, and the commission will make further investigations regarding EIA and SIA by forming teams comprising experts concerned.

17. The commission will conduct enquires regarding compensations given for confiscation of lands for copper mining project and economic, social and health matters of local people.

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Xi also reiterated “unchanged support” for the chief executives and governments of the two SARs in carrying out their legal duties, as well as support for the SARs’ policies on promoting economic growth, social welfare, democracy and harmony.

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Xi recognized the work of Leung and the SAR government and pledged firm, continued support as the Republic’s principle and the two Basic Laws will not change, said Xi, also vice president of China.

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India’s main opposition BJP wins western state of Gujarat for 3rd consecutive term

NEW DELHI, 21 Dec—India’s main opposition Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led government in the western state of Gujarat scored a political hat-trick by winning the state assembly elections by a huge margin under the leadership of controversial Hindu nationalist Chief Minister Narendra Modi.

Meanwhile, the mandate to rule Gujarat for another five years, bagging 116 seats in the 182-member state assembly while the state’s main opposition Congress party won only 60 seats. After his emphatic win, the BJP Chief Minister tweeted, “no need of looking behind... We want infinite energy, infinite courage, infinite patience...”

 Modi, in power since 2001, has been tipped as a potential future prime minister. Under his leadership, Gujarat has developed highly and progressed into one of India’s economic powerhouses.

However, he is often described as both an innovator and as a divisive figure and blamed for doing little during the 2002 communal riots in the state, in which over 1,000 people, mostly minority Muslims, were killed. Modi, who was at the helm at the time, denies all allegations.

More employers providing leave benefits in Singapore

SINGAPORE, 21 Dec—A survey conducted by Sin-gapore’s Ministry of Man-power showed that more employers in this city-state have provided various leave benefits and work-life arrangements to help their employees cope with family commitments.

According to the main findings of the survey released on Thursday, 41 percent of establishments, both in the formal and informal sectors, provided leave benefits such as a work-week arrangement. On the official five-day work-weeks continue to be the norm, with 5-day work-weeks continuing to be the norm, with 44 percent of full-time employees in 2012 under such a work-week arrangement. In some survey released these days had said that Singapore is the most unemotional country in the world, and at the same time, fewest adults in this city-state experience positive emotions in the world.

Some citizens thus said the top bosses should review this issue and try to figure out how to reverse the trend. On the official hand, they have encouraged the establishments, both private sector and public sector, for a long time to provide their employees more opportunities to spend more time with their family members and as a result, to make them happier.

Sri Lanka seeks expanded ties with Indian army

COLOMBO, 21 Dec—Sri Lanka seeks to expand ties with the Indian army particularly in training, the army said on Thursday.

Indian Army Commander General Bikram Singh, who is on a five-day visit to Sri Lanka, had discussions with his Sri Lanka counterpart Lieutenant General Jagath Jayasuriya.

Sri Lankan army media unit said that the discussions centered largely on further expansion of the newly-established Dittatalawa Army Training Command (ARTRAC) with Indian support at different levels.

The meeting also explored avenues of receiving more training opportunities for Sri Lankan officers in India, in addition to ongoing training programmes. During the discussion views were explored on the possibilities of launching one-to-one correspondence between service regiments of the Sri Lankan army and those of the Indian army as measures to further broaden the spectrum of military interests, benefiting both countries.

The visiting Indian army chief in response to a request of the Sri Lankan counterpart, pledged to provide a few horses to the Dittatalawa Sri Lanka Military Academy (SLMA) for training purposes and all possible assistance to further improve training slots to the Sri Lanka Army in various training programmes.

“Several other military matters of mutual and common interest, including the present day Sri Lanka Army’s post-conflict nation building roles came under close scrutiny during the meeting,” the army media unit said.

Jayasuriya and Bikram Singh during discussions also focused on reviving the old practice of sport programmes between the two parties like the past, since such approaches would further help broaden bilateral understanding and goodwill among officers.

Floods claim 23 lives in Sri Lanka, 68,000 families displaced

COLOMBO, 21 Dec—Ongoing torrential rains and heavy floods have killed 23 in Sri Lanka with 15 others missing and over 68,000 families displaced from their homes, an official said here on Thursday.

On the fifth day of monsoon rains lashing the Indian Ocean island, relief workers were struggling to get assistance to the flood affected people in 11 districts, according to the Disaster Management Centre (DMC).

The navy, army and police are working around the clock to assist thousands of people, noted DMC Spokesman Sarath Lal Kumara.

“The estimated 358 houses had been destroyed and 1,907 partly damaged. We are providing the displaced families with cooked food and assisting them to return home when the flood waters recede,” he added.

Several regions have also received landslide warnings. Local media reported that 31 out of 72 major irrigation tanks around the country are reaching overflow levels and could increase flooding in nearby areas.

The former war torn eastern province is reported to be particularly hard hit with over 15,000 acres of paddy under water.

Seven killed as bomb hits police vehicle in SW Afghanistan

ZARANI, (Afghanistan), 21 Dec—Five civilians and two policemen were killed on Thursday afternoon when a bomb hit a police mobile in Zarani, the Provincial capital of southwestern Afghan Nimroz Province, police said.

“A police unit was on routine patrol in police district 3 of Zarani City at about 3:30 pm (local time) when an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) was detonated through a remote control device, killing two policemen and five civilians near the scene,” police chief of the district Abdul Haq told Xinhua.

He said two policemen were also wounded in the attack and the police mobile was destroyed in the incident in the province 790 km southwest of Kabul.

The police have rolled out a search operation to find the people behind the attack and the police official added.

No group claimed responsibility for the attacks, but Taleban suspects routinely claim responsibility for such attacks.
CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV ORA BHUM VOY NO (323)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV ORA BHUM VOY NO (323) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 22.12.2012 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.P where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

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

Phone No: 256908/378316/376797

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV BIENDONG NAVIGATOR VOY NO (004)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV BIENDONG NAVIGATOR VOY NO (004) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 22.12.2012 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of A.W.P.T where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

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

Phone No: 256908/378316/376797

NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

Myanmar Radio and Television
Invitation for Open Tender

1. The Myanmar Radio and Television under the Ministry of Information prefers to purchase the following equipment:-
   (a) 100 KW MW Radio Transmitter - 1 Set (US$)
   (b) Camera, Video Player and Recorder - 1 Lot (US$)
   (c) Compact Video Recorder - 10 Nos. (Kyat)

   (Panasonic, DVC Pro HD AJ-HD 1400)

2. The applications forms for the open tender will be available at the Ministry of Information, Office No. 7, Nay Pyi Taw in office hours (9.30-16.30) during office days from 21-12-2012 to 30-12-2012.

3. The forms are to be submitted to the members of the tender board at the Ministry of Information, Office No. 7, Nay Pyi Taw between 9.30 and 16.30 on 31-12-2012. The overdue tenders will not be accepted.

4. For scrutiny of the quality of equipment, bidding companies are to inform the Ministry of Information, Office No. 7, Nay Pyi Taw by 9 am on 3-1-2013.

5. Further details are available at the following address:-

   Procurement Committee
   Ministry of Information
   Office No. 7, Nay Pyi Taw
   Ph: 067-412327 and 067-79474

MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
HOLIDAY NOTICE

As the wharves, warehouses and chellan Offices of Yangon Port will be closed on the 25th DECEMBER 2012 (Christmas Day) and Loading, Unloading and delivery for Goods will be received on Payment as Holiday Fees.

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV HANNA MARIE VOY NO (1252)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV HANNA MARIE VOY NO (1252) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 22.12.2012 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of H.P.T where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S CHINA SHIPPING (MALAYSIA) AGENCY SDN BHD

Phone No: 256908/378316/376797

Byerlaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

DRIVE SAFELY

No Pain, No Gain

EMERGENCY CONTACT:
067-412327
067-79474

MINISTRY OF INFORMATION

Myanmar Radio and Television
Invitation for Open Tender

1. The Myanmar Radio and Television under the Ministry of Information prefers to purchase the following equipment:-
   (a) 3 Cameras DSNG Van - 1 Set
   (b) Fibre Interface Unit - 1 Lot
   (c) ProLine StagePro Presidential Style Teleprompter
     - Pair of Displays-19” Reversing Monitors - 2 Sets
     - Pair of Displays-19” High Brightness Monitors - 2 Sets

2. The application forms for the open tender are available at the Ministry of Information, Office No. 7, Nay Pyi Taw in office hours (9.30-16.30) daily from 20-12-2012 to 30-12-2012.

3. The forms are to be submitted to the tender board at the Ministry of Information, Office No. 7, Nay Pyi Taw between 9.30 and 16.30 on 31-12-2012. The overdue tenders will not be accepted.

4. For scrutiny of the quality of equipment, bidding companies are to inform the Ministry of Information, Office No. 7, Nay Pyi Taw, by 9 am on 3-1-2013.

5. Further details are available at the following address:-

   Procurement Committee
   Ministry of Information
   Office No. 7, Nay Pyi Taw
   Ph: 067-412327 and 067-79474

Ecuador’s Tungurahua volcano spews large clouds of gas and ash near Banos, south of Quito, on 17 Dec, 2012.

XINHUA
** ENTERTAINMENT **

** Madonna leads Billboard’s top-grossing tours **

** LOS ANGELES, 21 Dec — ** While this year’s pop charts have been dominated by young singers, it is veteran music stars, led by Madonna, who are commanding big money in tour ticket sales, according to a new Billboard list released on Tuesday.

Madonna, 54, topped Billboard’s list of highest-grossing live tours, earning an estimated $282.4 million (140.5 million pounds) in ticket sales from her sold-out ninth worldwide tour in support of her 12th studio album “MDNA.” The singer will wrap her tour in South America with shows across the world starting in Israel in May.

Madonna came ahead of pop star Lady Gaga, who landed at No 6, with ticket sales of $124.9 million from her worldwide “Born This Way Ball” tour. Gaga, 26, is currently midway through her tour, which kicked off in South Korea in April, and will wrap in Oklahoma in March 2013.

Music publication Billboard compiled its list through estimated gross ticket sales figures from Billboard box scores, which tracks concert tours, ticket prices and sales.

The top five highest-grossing tour acts of 2012 included Bruce Springsteen, 63, and the E Street band at No 2 with $199 million from 72 shows and Pink Floyd’s Roger Waters, 69, at No 3 with $186 million. Cirque Du Solei’s “Zarkana” tour ranked No 4 with $163 million from 65 shows. The Lion King ranked No 6 with $160 million from 64 shows.

** Drew Barrymore fine with friend Kristen Wiig dating her ex **

** LONDON, 21 Dec — ** Drew Barrymore is happy for Kristen Wiig and Fabrizio Moretti.

At first Drew, 37 — who recently welcomed her first daughter Olive with husband Will Kopelman — was surprised to hear her friend Kristen was dating the Strokes drummer, as he was her boyfriend for five years, but on reflection Drew believes they are perfect for each other.

Speaking in the January 2013 issue of Allure magazine, she said: “It all seems so wacky and incestuous but that’s kind of how life works. It seems fitting that they would find each other. I was like ‘Right, of course. That makes perfect sense.’”

“Earlier this year Kristen revealed she feels so “very lucky” to be in a relationship with the musician, that she was keen to make her feelings known about him, despite missing she is usually reluctant to talk about her personal life.

She said: “I am shyer than most people think. I will say that I’m happier than I’ve ever been and I feel very lucky right now. Where I am now. Who he is. Those are the two big ones.” —PTI

** Kristen Stewart, Robert Pattinson host a Christmas tree decorating party **

** NEW DELHI, 21 Dec — ** Kristen Stewart and Robert Pattinson hosted a Christmas tree decorating party on Sunday (16 December).

The couple — who reconciled recently following a brief split when Kristen, 22, cheated on the 26-year-old actor with director Rupert Sanders — invited friends and family to Kristen’s Los Feliz home for a festive party.

A source told HollywoodLife.com: “Kristen and Rob had a small, intimate Christmas tree decorating party on Sunday. They have a gorgeous tree set up at Kristen’s where Rob pretty much lives now.”

“Kristen was really happy to be back home and be with Rob. They want to spend as much time as possible together before Rob leaves in January to film his next movie.”

While the couple aren’t officially living together, friends say they are happier than ever since getting back together.

A pal previously said: “They are not living with each other but they are spending plenty of time with each other and they do sleep over often. Rob usually sleeps over at Kristen’s new home in Los Feliz, rather than the other way around. They are in a really magical place right now despite some lingering trust issues on Rob’s side.”

** Tom Cruise Loves to Shoot in London **

** NEW DELHI, 21 Dec — ** Tom Cruise loves filming in London. The 50-year-old actor has had a blast over the past five months shooting his new action flick All You Need Is Kill in the UK capital and other parts of the country and thinks British crews and set designers are among the best in the world.

Speaking in the new issue of Britain’s OK! magazine, he said: “I’ve been here for almost five months. I love it here. I’ve made so many films here and the time I’ve spent, it’s wonderful, you’ve got so many great crews here, great craftsmen. Of course, I’ve worked with so many of the actors here and it’s a wonderful place to live.”

The Hollywood icon — whose divorce from Dawson’s Creek star Katie Holmes was finalised in July — admits one of his motivations for getting into acting was to experience a jet-set lifestyle, because he loves to travel.

Even though Tom misses his six-year-old daughter Suri — who lives in New York City with her mother Katie — while he is in England, he insists the cast and crew on ‘All You Need Is Kill’ have become like a family because they have bonded so well.

Tom enthused: “I love travelling. I dreamed of being able to travel to different places, there’s not just one particular thing. I’ve made a lot of films here so a lot of the crew I’ve known since I was a kid, so it’s just a real pleasure.” —PTI

** Kate Winslet’s Titanic dress fetches $330,000 at auction **

** LOS ANGELES, 21 Dec — ** The iconic red dress that Kate Winslet’s character Rose DeWitt Bukater wore in Titanic fetches $330,000 at a Hollywood auction.

The ‘Titanic’ film was directed by James Cameron and stars Leonardo DiCaprio and Winslet and the $330,000 price for the dress is far below the $2 million that studio analyst Tom Webster estimated it could fetch eye-popping prices.

A costume featuring in one of the most memorable scenes of the movie when Rose and Jack meet for the first time on the wind-swept deck of the Titanic.

It originally was sold by clothier J Peterman in 1998, the year after the hit movie’s original release, as part of promotional sale of costumes and props from the movie. —PTI

A screen-used X-Wing model from the first Star Wars movie in 1977 sold for $270,000 more than twice its high estimate of $120,000. —PTI
**Swansea’s Michu happy to get hurt against Man United**

**Paris, 21 Dec**—Montpellier defender Cyril Jeunechamp has been banned for a year after he punched a reporter after a Ligue 1 game last month, the French League (LFP) said on Thursday.

The League said after a meeting of its disciplinary committee that the sanction would take effect from 24 December.

Jeunechamp, 37, had already been suspended indefinitely after the argument with a Ligue reporter over a story published in the newspaper before the 1-1 league draw at Valenciennes.

Champions Montpellier had apologised to the reporter and condemned their player’s behaviour. The club are currently ninth in the 20-strong league.

**Juve defender Chiellini faces lengthy layoff**

**Rome, 21 Dec**—Juventus defender Giorgio Chiellini has confirmed that he will miss Friday’s Serie A meeting with Cagliari due to a calf injury. The 28-year-old Chiellini underwent a scan on Thursday and while an exact timeline for a possible return is unknown, he could be facing up to three months on the sidelines. "Unfortunately the calf injury has been confirmed and I have to stop for a while," Chiellini wrote on his Twitter page. "But I am going to do my best to come back as soon as possible and stronger than ever! Thank you all very much for your messages of support." 

**New Light of Myanmar**

**Nehwal courts controversy with match point retirement**

**New Delhi, 21 Dec**—India’s Saina Nehwal has kicked up a storm by retiring from a match she was on the verge of winning because of a knee injury. The London Olympic bronze medallist had reached match point against Russian Ksenia Polikarpova in the first round match but at the Denmark Open in October with her normal process. "We’ll wait for all the medical information before we take a decision on when and where to operate on the rider’s leg would be made later."

"The broken rib actually made a small puncture in his lung," said the team’s chief medical officer Max Testa in a statement. "The first priority is the spleen injury — that is considered a medical emergency."

The doctor said a decision on when and where to operate on the rider’s leg would be made later. Ballan was 2008 world road champion and finished third in this year’s Paris-Roubaix classic.

He also won the one-day Giro della Toscana in Italy and was expected to be a leading contender for next season’s world road championship.

"His loss means a lot since Alessandro is one of our key riders for the classics," said BMC team sporting director John Velghe. "But most important right now is that he can recover and get back to his normal process. ‘We’ll wait for all the medical information before we beginning to think about what could be his plan for coming back.’"

**Montpellier defender Jeunechamp handed one-year ban**

**Montpellier’s Cyril Jeunechamp (R) challenges Lille’s Florent Balmont during their French Ligue 1 match at the Mosson stadium in Montpellier on 20 Feb, 2011.**

**Reuters**

**Thailand now aiming for F1 race in 2015**

**Bangkok, 21 Dec**—Thailand expects to host a floodlit Formula One Grand Prix in Bangkok in 2015 after plans were pushed back a year, the government of the national sports authority said on Friday.

"An F1 race is likely to take place here in early 2015 instead of in 2014 in our initial plan," Kantaphand Chulakasem told the Bangkok Post newspaper. "The 2014 season is due to see two new races, at Sochi in Russia and at a New Jersey street circuit, on a calendar which already has a record 20 rounds, but Thailand would be a novelty for the year after."

Bangkok’s Rajamangala stadium recently hosted the annual Race of Champions event with Red Bull’s triple world champion Sebastian Vettel teaming up with Michael Schumacher to win the team title for Germany. **Reuters**

**Italy’s Ballan has surgery after training crash**

**Rome, 21 Dec**—BMC Racing rider Alessandro Ballan was undergoing surgery to remove his spleen on Thursday after a training crash in eastern Spain that also left the Italian with a broken leg and rib.

"The broken rib actually made a small puncture in his lung," said the team’s chief medical officer Max Testa in a statement. "The first priority is the spleen injury — that is considered a medical emergency."

"He sustained it at the Denmark Open (in October) and has been struggling since then. She is our top shuttler and we have to look after her," he said.

Puri also dismissed media reports that Nehwal, under pressure to play in the city which is home to her sponsor Saina India, also of BAI president Akhilesh Das, had no intention of playing beyond the first round. "I don’t think it’s correct to say that she had got her return tickets booked for Wednesday."

She came here straight from China. She was taking a chance with her injury and probably realised it was not worth aggravating it,” Puri added. **Reuters**

**Nehwal courts controversy with match point retirement**

**India’s Saina Nehwal reacts after being defeated by China’s Wang Shixian during their women’s single quarter final match at the 2010 Badminton World Championships at the Coubertin stadium in Paris, on 27 August, 2010.**

**Reuters**

**Swansea City striker Michu says he will keep going for the ball even it means getting hurt after being knocked flat by Tottenham Hotspur goalkeeper Hugo Lloris on Sunday.**
Maradona wants to take Iraq to World Cup finals

Buenos Aires, 21 Dec—Diego Maradona is on the brink of becoming coach of Iraq and wants to take the country to the 2014 World Cup finals in Brazil, Argentine agent Hernan Tofoni told Reuters on Thursday.

Maradona, who is acting as a consultant for the UAE club Al Wasl that he used to coach, is awaiting the outcome of a meeting of the Iraqi Football Federation to be held on Friday to discuss the Argentine’s candidacy for their coach and “they liked the idea”.

“He said there would be no obstacles for Maradona to leave Al Wasl, where he coached for 14 months until last July, to take up the Iraqi post.”

Iraq have played at one World Cup finals, in 1986 in Mexico where Maradona led Argentina to their second title.

The Middle Eastern nation are third in Group B in the fourth round of Asian World Cup qualifiers. Japan lead with 13 points from five matches, while Iraq are equal on five points with second-placed Australia, who have a match in hand, and Oman.—Reuters

Foster fit to return for West Brom after hernia operation

London, 21 Dec—West Bromwich Albion goalkeeper Ben Foster is fit to return against Norwich City on Saturday after recovering from a double hernia operation.

Foster, who played five internationals for England, has missed Albion’s last seven games with an injury which stopped him kicking. But after a two-part operation the 29-year-old is ready to challenge Boaz Myhill for the keeper’s jersey.

“It’s been a whole lot longer than I thought it was going to be but hopefully it’s all sorted now and we can crack on,” Foster told West Brom’s website on Thursday.

“I trained fine yesterday, I felt absolutely fine. The team has been doing well, Boaz has been doing great, so we will just see how it goes.”

West Brom have been one of the surprise packages of the Premier League season and are seventh on 27 points, equal with Everton in sixth place and Arsenal in fifth.—Reuters

Australian Open prize money raised to record levels

Sydney, 21 Dec—Australian Open organizers increased prize money for the early losers at the opening grand slam of the season to record levels on Thursday, a move which is likely to quell player unrest and end talk of a strike.

The Australian Open will now pay more prize money per round than any other tournament, with increases also coming in doubles and qualifying matches, but mixed doubles saw a money freeze.

The biggest increases were for first round losers in the men’s and women’s singles, who will now receive A$27,600 (17,829 pounds), representing a 32.7 percent boost from 2012, with those exiting in the second round taking home A$45,500, up 36.6 percent.

The move is likely to appease the players council, led by 17-times grand slam champion Roger Federer, who has been calling for more revenue from the four elite tournaments to be passed down to those hitting the shots.

“Our motivation is to make a major contribution toward helping ensure professional tennis players can make a decent living,” Craig Tiley, the Australian Open tournament director, said in a statement.

“As we have said in the past, it is a real issue and needs to be urgently addressed throughout the sport.”

In October, Tiley’s team announced that the players would be vying for a share of a record A$30 million for the January 14-27 event without giving the breakdown of how that money would be divided.

Serbia’s Novak Djokovic and Victoria Azarenka of Belarus pocketed A$2.3 million each for their singles successes and a repeat next month in Melbourne would give them A$2.43 million.

While the multi millionaires at the top of the game will appreciate the extra rewards, the players scrambling to make the top 100 of the men’s and women’s rankings and those who mainly compete in doubles will be happier.
Vice-President Dr Sai Mauk Kham addresses second coord meeting on holding 65th Anniversary Independence Day-2013

Vice-President Dr Sai Mauk Kham addresses the second coordination meeting of Central committee for holding 65th Anniversary Independence Day.—MNA

Nay Pyi Taw, 21 Dec—Chairman of the Central Committee for holding the 65th Anniversary Independence Day-2013 Vice-President Dr Sai Mauk Kham attended the second coordination meeting of the Central committee for holding the 65th Anniversary Independence Day, at the meeting hall of the Union Government Office, here, this afternoon. Also present at the meeting were the Central Committee members Union Ministers U Aung Kyi, U Thein Nyunt, Dr Mya Aye and Dr Ko Ko Oo, Commander of Nay Pyi Taw Command, deputy ministers, sub-committee members and departmental heads.

The Vice-President said, in his speech, that the second meeting was called as Independence Day was the most important one among any other ceremonies. It needed to hold the Independence Day-2013 on a grand scale. Being a State-level ceremony, systematic preparations were to be made for successful holding of it.

After hearing the remarks by the Vice-President, the Sub-Committee Chairmen and officials concerned respectively reported to the Vice-President on the progress of their tasks and the ongoing tasks.

The meeting came to an end with the concluding remarks by the Vice-President.

State-level ceremonies will be held in Nay Pyi Taw on a grand scale on Independence Day. Arrangements are being made to hold funfairs and sports competitions not only in Nay Pyi Taw but also nationwide.

Vice-President U Nyan Tun on inspection tour of sports complexes in Zeyathiri, Zabuthiri townships

Vice-President U Nyan Tun inspecting construction of gymnasium in Zeyathiri Township.—MNA

Nay Pyi Taw, 21 Dec—Patron of the Leading Committee for Organizing the XXVII SEA Games Vice-President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar U Nyan Tun inspected progress of building the international standard stadiums, gymnasiuems, swimming pools and sports training camps in Zeyathiri and Zabuthiri townships in Nay Pyi Taw Council Area today.

In Zeyathiri Township, the Vice-President looked into progress of the international standard stadium in Zeyathiri Sports Zone, gymnasiuems for basketball, volleyball, badminton and swimming pool. In Zabuthiri Township, he also visited archery shooting range, Sepak Takraw, Futsal and boxing halls. The Vice-President also inspected progress of the horse race course.

After inspecting the hostels for athletes, medical center, multipurpose hall and training of liaison officer course, the Vice-President gave necessary instructions. At Wunnatheikdi Sports Zone, the Vice-President viewed round construction of basketball, volleyball, badminton halls, swimming pool and Wunnatheikdi stadium.

At the meeting hall of the stadium, Union Minister for Sports U Tint Hsan reported on preparations of sports events to take part in the coming SEA Games.

Chairman of the Opening and Closing Sub-committee Union Minister for Culture U Aye Myint Kyu submitted the report on preparations for opening and closing ceremonies. After hearing the reports, the Vice-President stressed the need to construct the buildings meeting standards for safety of spectators and athletes. He said that it is necessary to group the athletes of respective sports if there are difficulties to accommodate foreign athletes. He noted that requirements of sports infrastructures, materials and professional coaches are to be fulfilled for securing victory in the Games.

Zeyathiri and Wunnatheikdi stadiums will have over 30000 seats for spectators each. Construction of these structures have been completed by 90 per cent each. Zeyathiri basketball and volleyball gymnasium has completed with 74 per cent, Wunnatheikdi basket and volleyball gymnasium 60 per cent and swimming pool 58 per cent. A total of 100 buildings to accommodate 48 athletes each, Nay Pyi Taw Training Camp and Archery Shooting Range have completed.

The stadium in Chumyathazi Township of Mandalay has completed by 55 per cent and beach of sailing at Ngwehsaung Beach 49 per cent, Youth Training Centre in Yangon90 per cent, National Indoor Stadium-1, Theinbyu Gymnasium, Myanmar Convention Centre (Yangon) and Dagon North Shooting Range have built 58 per cent completion.

At present, 14 subcommittees have been formed for successfully and smoothly holding the SEA Games.