The only escape way from least developed country status is to respect the law. Comprehensive policies have been adopted. A good policy without appropriate planning means nothing. Conservatives and backsliders would be left off. The system is changing. We must improve the economy in parallel with political reforms.

( President U Thein Sein’s speech given on 12-5-2012 at the work coordination meeting on more effectively carrying out the national and regional development tasks.)

Emphasis on control of illegal trade

NAY PYI TAW, 29 Dec—Illegal trade is an obstacle to economic development of the State, and inferior goods are harmful to consumers, said Chairman of the Central Committee for Control of Illegal Trade Union Minister for Commerce U Win Myint at the first coordination meeting of the central committee at the Ministry of Commerce, here, this afternoon.

The Ministry of Commerce is implementing the strategic plans for trade promotion and economic development in leaps and bounds, he said.

He stressed the need to constitute work committees for control of illegal trade at region and state levels, and urged the central body to conduct surprise check on the illegal trade. He said that the information work committee will be constituted for disseminating information on trade to the people on a wider scale.

Vice-chairmen of the central committee, secretary, economic ministers of regions and states, and departmental officials discussed future tasks for control of illegal trade.

Respect the law

The objectives of Myanma Railways include satisfaction of passengers with on-time schedules, less accidents and safe railroads. The state-run passenger transportation under the Ministry of Rail Transportation has 11 rail divisions, which cover the entire nation and perform duties to improve respective rail transportation facilities. The 3648.11 miles of railroad are under management of MR.

The press has spotlighted and passengers complained about uncomfortable train trips, requiring the transport service organ of the government to respond to the complaints as per its motto, “Myanma Railways for the people.”

The Myanma Railways is employing all of its available resources to help the dilapidated railway system shape up as expected international aids would take time to really drift into reality.

Less resources and low level of expertise have resulted in discomfort of the train trips. To remedy the flaw, MR is speeding up its efforts to upgrade the railway sections in various zones of priority as it ever did in the past because “Safety First” is MR’s all-time top priority.

Railroads under major repair are Yangon-Mandalay railroad section, Mandalay-Myiikyina railroad section, Yangon-Payy railroad section, and Bago-Mawlamyine-Ye railroad section.

Despite a substantial number of obstacles, restless special groups of MR engineers and staff have gone far enough. Repairing or upgrading the route regularly used by the passenger trains and far from resource centres such as engineer offices where the gravels and sleepers are kept is never so easy. The labour-intensive work is too variable to guess its speed and is expected to consume more times. So, MR is equipping the once manual workers with machinery.

Concrete sleepers have substituted for the wooden ones on most railroads while long welded rail technology replaces the tainted track at joints of the rail tracks.

Discomfort will become a thing of the past soon.

The coaches in operation are more than 50 years old and are not in good shape. Despite regular maintenance at locomotive sheds, their age-old service is subject to criticisms. Myitnge coach shed is running at full capacity, producing 50 new coaches a year.

Significant progress is now tangible thanks to relentless efforts of MR staff. Their goal is not far from reality now.

President U Thein Sein’s speech given on 12-5-2012 at the work coordination meeting on more effectively carrying out the national and regional development tasks.)

Mr workers race to finish railroad repair faster than expected.

Article: Thurein (Hpa-an)

Ambitious goal to achieve

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Farmland ownership and registration process clarified

TADA, 29 Dec — Tada sub-township General Administration Department of Kyauktan Township made a clarification on farmland ownership and registration process at its office on 24 December.

Head of Tada sub-township Settlement and Land Records Department together with U Tin Nyi Nyi of Daingtaya village of Pyu Win, deputy head of office of Bago Region at about 10.30 am on 26 December.

Tyre blowout car accident on Yangon-Mandalay Highway

TOWNANDO, 29 Dec — An accident happened to a Hilux Surf car driving at speed at a place between mile post Nos (106/2) and (106/3) on Yangon-Mandalay Highway near Yay-Oo-Sin village in Pya Township of Bago Region at about 10 am on 23 December. The car driven by U Aung Kyaw Win, deputy head of office of Pyu creek hydropower, of Daingtaya village of Pyu together with U Tin Nyi Nyi.

A car was in collision with a motorbike at the junction of Rahtaman (OfficeComplex) Road and Thukhamein (Railways Office) street in Zabuthiri Township in Nay Pyi Taw Council Area at about 4 pm on 23 December.

A vehicle driven by Aung Naing along the road collided head-on with a motorbike that made a turn into the street from driving along the road at the junction of Thukhamein street and Rahtaman Road.

Three-month pregnant young woman who fell into well dies

YEDASHE, 29 Dec — A young woman fell into a well and died at No (54) on Karya 8th Street in Thingangyungyi village-tract on Mingaladon Township of Yangon Region at about 4 pm on 23 December.

The young woman named Ma Win Win Khine, daughter of Daw Khine, is 18 years old and she is three months pregnant when she lost her life in the tragic accident.

The fatal accident happened when Ma Win Win Kyemon

Illegal teak, hardwood seized in Nawngkhiyo Township

NAY PYI TAW, 29 Dec — A team led by the assistant director of Kyaukme district Forest Department seized 12,149 tons of ownerless illegal teak and hardwood during a two-day search at the block near Chaungmagyi in Nawngkhiyo Town-ship reserve forest. Actions are being taken to expose the suspects. — 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 righteous legislative, administrative and judicial pillars

Five people hurt after Toyota Hilux Surf overturns on expressway

BAGO, 29 Dec — A car crash occurred at a place between mile post Nos (26/6) and (26/7) on Yangon-Mandalay Expressway near Bawnetgyi village in Bago Township of Bago Region at about 6.30 pm on 26 December.

The car accident was that a Toyota Hilux Surf driven by U Cho of Hlling Township in Yangon Region left the road and overturned when the left rear tyre burst, leaving five people on board the car wounded. The injured were taken to Yangon General Hospital. Bawnetgyi expressway police station filed a lawsuit against the driver. — Kyemon

More than 150-year-old 99-door-and-window building in Magway

Magway, 29 Dec — A building in which the governor of Magway used to live in the monarchical days of Konbaung era is situated at a large compound between the 3rd and 4th streets in Ale ward of Magway. The building is over 150 years old. Magway governor Thado Mingyi Maha Minhla Thita Thu constructed the building complete with 99 doors and windows with the help of architects from Yadanabon Royal Palace and carpenters from Salin region. There was a lake in front of the building and two main gates were built in the front and at the back of the building. The building was named for its 99 doors and windows as 99-door-and-window building. — Kyemon
Israel’s Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu (C) is seen during the launch of his Likud Beiteinu party campaign ahead of the upcoming 22 Jan national elections, in Jerusalem on 25 Dec.—Reuters

JERUSALEM, 29 Dec—Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s Likud party is set to win a parliamentary election on 22 January although the popularity of a far-right party opposed to Palestinian statehood is growing, polls showed on Friday.

Two out of three surveys showed the right-wing Likud losing voters to political newcomer Naftali Bennett’s religious party Bayit Yehudi (Jewish Home) and to a fractured centre-left bloc.

Still all predicted a strong right-wing coalition emerging in the 120-seat parliament, which would assure Netanyahu another term.

From the daily Yedioth Ahronoth published a poll with Likud winning 33 seats, four less than a month ago. A poll in the Jerusalem Post showed Likud fell to 34, down from 39 just two weeks ago. A survey by Maariv said Likud held ground at 37.

Without a majority in parliament, Likud would have to join forces with other parties to form a government. Netanyahu could choose Bennett and ultra-Orthodox religious parties or team up with members of the centre-left bloc. The left-leaning Labour party remained in second place in all the polls, winning 17 or 18 seats. Reuters

Us soldiers sue Tokyo Electric Power for misrepresenting radiation level

LOS ANGELES, 29 Dec—Eight crew members of the US S Ronald Reagan sued the Tokyo Electric Power Co (TEPCO) for misrepresenting radiation levels to pull the US Navy “into a false sense of security” after March 2011 earthquake and tsunami set off the Fukushima nuclear disaster.

Lead plaintiff Lindsay R Cooper claims TEPCO intentionally concealed the dangerous levels of radiation in the environment from US Navy rescue crews working off the coast of Japan, according to local media reports on Friday.

In the complaint sent to the Federal Court in San Diego, home of the nuclear-powered aircraft carrier, the plaintiffs said TEPCO pursued a policy to cause rescuers, including the plaintiffs, to rush into an unsafe area which was too close to the Fukushima Nuclear Power Plant that had been damaged.” There were 5,500 sailors aboard the Reagan at that time, but only six of the eight plaintiffs worked on the flight deck of the aircraft carrier and two worked in air contamination or the “air department.” One of the plaintiffs sued also on behalf of her infant daughter. Local media Courthouse News Service quoted the complaint that “Defendant TEPCO and the government of Japan, conspired and acted in concert, among other things, to create an illusory impression that the extent of the radiation that had leaked from the site of the FNPP was at levels that would not pose a threat to the plaintiffs, in order to promote its interests and those of the government of Japan knowing that the information it disseminated was defective, incomplete and untrue, while omitting to disclose the extraordinary risks posed to the plaintiffs who were carrying out their assigned duties aboard the US S Ronald Reagan.”

The plaintiffs seek 10 million US dollars in compensatory damages and 30 million dollars in punitive damages for fraud, negligence, strict liability, false advertising, public and private nuisance, and defective design. They also want TEPCO ordered to establish a fund of 100 million dollars to pay for their medical expenses, as they were facing irreparable harm to their life expectancy and risk of cancer.—Xinhua

Residents flee Bangui as rebels pause for talks

BANGUI, 29 Dec— Residents of Central African Republic’s riverside capital Bangui fled in overloaded cars and boats on Friday as leaders of a rebellion called for a three-day ceasefire.

An Insurgency has swept across much of the poverty-stricken but resource-rich former French colony since 10 December, posing the biggest threat yet to President Francois Bozize’s nearly 10 years in power and threatening a humanitarian crisis.

The government on Thursday urged Western powers France and the United States to help push back the rebels, though Paris said it would not use soldiers to defend Bozize’s government and Washington evacuated its embassy. The Central African Republic is one of a number of nations in the region where US Special Forces are helping local forces try to track down the Lords Resistance Army, a rebel group responsible for killing thousands of civilians across four African nations.

“Our last chance, our only chance, is dialogue with the rebels,” bus driver Jerome Legasais said as he weaved through traffic in the centre of Bangui. Scores of wooden boats piled high with baggage and people crossed the Oubangui River toward Democratic Republic of Congo on the other side, while the main road south away from rebel lines was choked with overloaded vehicles.

Those remaining said they were stockpiling food and water and praying international mediation efforts would convince the insurgents not to enter the city shooting. Reuters

Putin invites Japanese PM to visit Russia

MOSCOW, 29 Dec— Russian President Vladimir Putin has invited Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe to visit Moscow in the year 2013, the Kremlin Press service said on Friday.

According to a statement posted on the Kremlin website, Putin spoke to Abe by phone and congratulated him on his election as the new head of the Japanese government.

The two leaders highlighted their mutual interest in widening bilateral relations in trade, economy, investment, science, technology sectors and also discussed situation on the Korean Peninsula. Xinhua

Russia’s new nuclear submarine to be commissioned soon

SAINT PETERSBURG, 29 Dec—The latest submarine addition to Russia’s ‘Project 955’ upgrading of its nuclear capability, the Yuri Dolgoruky, is due to be commissioned in the northern port of Severodvinsk on Sunday, Itar-Tass reported on Friday.

The sub, armed with new and improved ballistic missile capabilities, is one of eight major projects due to be completed by 2020 that will form the core of the Russian Navy’s nuclear deterrent strategy over the coming decades.

The total cost of the Yuri Dolgoruky has been estimated at 23 billion rubles (750 million US dollars).—Xinhua

Putin and Abe told the two sides should find a “mutually acceptable” solution to the disputed islands that were called the Southern Kurils in Russia and the Northern Territories in Japan. The dispute has prevented the two countries from signing a peace treaty since the end of the Second World War.

Abe was elected as Japan’s new prime minister Wednesday and he immediately formed a “crisis breakthrough” cabinet which he said would mainly focus on reconstructing quake-hit north area and revitalize Japan’s stagnant economy. Xinhua

In the complaint, TEPCO was sued by the eight American plaintiffs on behalf of their infant daughter who was born in September 2011, according to the lawsuit. The plaintiffs said they were facing irreparable harm to their life expectancy and risk of cancer.

An Afghan refugee girl stands beside her mother at a village near Tehran, capital of Iran, on 28 Dec, 2012. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) statistics show that some 2.7 million Afghan refugees are still living outside their homeland due to more than three decades of conflicts and continuing insurgency in Afghanistan, with around 1.7 million in Pakistan and more than one million in Iran, waiting for a favourable environment to return home and reintegrate to their communities. —Xinhua

Residents flee Bangui as rebels pause for talks
Apple loses another copyright lawsuit in China

SHANGHAI, 29 Dec—A Chinese court has fined Apple Inc 1 million yuan ($160,400) for hosting third-party applications on its App Store that were selling pirated electronic books, Xinhua news agency reported on Friday.

Apple is to pay compensation to eight Chinese writers and two companies for violating their copyrights, the Beijing No 2 Intermediate People’s Court ruled on Thursday, Xinhua said.

Earlier in the year, a group of Chinese authors filed the suit against Apple, saying an unidentified number of apps on its App Store sold unlicensed copies of their books. The group of eight authors was seeking 10 million yuan in damages.

“We are disappointed at the judgment. Some of our best-selling authors only got 7,000 yuan. The judgment is a signal of encouraging piracy,” Bei Zhicheng, a spokesman for the group, told Reuters.

Apple said in a statement that it takes copyright infringement complaints “very seriously”.

“We’re always updating our service to better assist content owners in protecting their rights,” Apple spokeswoman Carolyn Wu said.

ZTE to sell off stake in unit worth 1.3 billion yuan

HONG KONG, 29 Dec—ZTE Corp, China’s second largest telecom equipment maker, plans to sell an 81 percent stake in its unit Shenzhen ZTN Technology for 1.3 billion yuan ($206 million), it said on Friday.

The stake sale will result in a net gain of 800 million yuan for the loss-making company, it said in a statement on the Hong Kong stock exchange.

ZTE logged its biggest quarterly loss in the third quarter, with analysts saying that it would need to sell off stakes in its units to help it turn profitable for the full year.

Reuters

Number of e-book readers increasing in United States

NEW YORK, 29 Dec—The popularity of electronic books is increasing in the United States, with nearly one-quarter of American bibliophiles reading e-books, according to a survey released on Thursday.

The number of e-readers aged 16 years and older jumped from 16 percent in 2011 to 23 percent this year, while print readers fell from 72 to 67 percent in 2012, in a survey conducted by the Pew Research Centre.

The move toward e-books coincides with an increase in ownership of electronic book reading devices, the organization said. Its report analyzed reading trends among the 75 percent of Americans who read at least one book in the last year.

Reuters

After setbacks, Russia boosts space spending

MOSCOW, 29 Dec—The country that oversaw the launch of the world’s first artificial satellite hopes to regain some of its former glory with a big boost in space spending announced by Russia on Thursday after a series of failures.

Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev approved a plan to spend 2.1 trillion roubles ($68.71 billion) on space programmes annually in 2013 to 2020, far less than the loss of a $265 million workhorse satellite after launch in August and a Russian satellite. A dollar loss of an Indonesian satellite launched in March.

Medvedev criticized the state of the industry in the 2030s is not a realistic point of view.

Russia budgeted about 100 billion roubles ($3.3 billion) for space programmes annually in 2010 and 2011, far less than the yearly average of the amount Medvedev announced, but he said some of the money would come from outside the state budget.

The failure of a workhorse Proton rocket after launch in August caused the multimillion-dollar loss of an Indonesian and a Russian satellite. A similar problem caused the loss of a $265 million communications satellite last year.

Medvedev criticized the state of the industry in the 2030s is not a realistic point of view.

Reuters

Research whaling fleet leaves for Antarctic Sea

Tokyo, 29 Dec—A Japanese research whaling fleet has left for the Antarctic Ocean.

Two whaling vessels and another ship owned by the Fisheries Agency left a port in Shimonoseki City, western Japan, on Friday morning.

The agency’s ship is a patrol boat equipped to protect the whaling vessels from the actions of an anti-whaling group, Sea Shepherd.

The agency says the fleet will join a mother vessel and hunt about 850 minke whales and a maximum of 50 fin whales to study their ecological systems. The fleet is scheduled to return to Japan in March.

NHK

CO2 reduction goal to face review

Tokyo, 29 Dec—Japan’s economy and industry minister Toshimitsu Motegi said on Friday that in view of the suspension of many nuclear power plants after last year’s nuclear accident, it is inevitable Japan will rely more on thermal power generation, fuelled by liquidified natural gas and coal.

Motegi said the goal of reducing emissions by 25 percent from the 1990 level needs to be reviewed from a realistic point of view.

As to the optimal combination of energy sources, Motegi said the government will make a decision after exploring various options without being bound by any preconditions.

He said the option of ending nuclear power generation in the 2030s is not a given.—NHK
Celebrity bad science: Dried placenta pills and oxygen shots

London, 29 Dec—

Pop guru Simon Cowell carries a pocket-sized inhalable oxygen shots, America’s “Mad Men” actress January Jones favours dried placenta pills, and British soap star Patsy Palmer rubs coffee granules into her skin.

Helping people make sense of science and evidence, invited qualified scientists to respond to some of the wilder pseudo-scientific claims put about by the rich and famous.

It suggested Romney, who wondered aloud in September why aircraft crews don’t just open the windows when there’s a fire on board, should listen to biochemist Stuart Jones, who reminds him that “urine is essentially sterile so there isn’t actually anything to kill in the first place”.

And for Cowell, Kay Mitchell, a scientist at Centre for Altitude Space and Extreme Environment Medicine warns that very high levels of oxygen can in fact be toxic — particularly in the lungs, where oxygen levels are highest.

Speaking at the 64th Primetime Emmy Awards in Los Angeles on 23 Sept, 2012.—Reuters

Celebrity comments travel far and fast, so it’s important that they talk sense,” said Sense About Science’s Managing Director Tracey Brown. “The implausible and frankly dangerous claims about how to avoid cancer, improve skin or lose weight are becoming ever more ridiculous.

And unfortunately they have a much higher profile than the research and evidence.”

To encourage more vigilance among celebrity pseudo-scientists in the future, SAS provided a checklist of “misleading science claims” it suggests should be avoided:

* “Oxygenating”—your blood needs oxygen to carry around the body but your lungs do this
* “Detox”—your liver processes toxins
* “Superfood”—there is nothing to be gained from eating your placenta—raw, cooked, or dried
* “Immune boosting”—you can’t and you don’t need to
* “Diet”—your body needs a balanced diet
* “Detox”—your liver processes toxins
* “Oxigenating”—your lungs do this
* “Detox”—you shouldn’t be trying to cleanse anything other than your skin or hair.

Traders work at their desks in front of the DAX board at the Frankfurt stock exchange on 12 Sept, 2012.—Reuters

World shares rise before US budget talks

London, 29 Dec—

World shares and the euro edged higher on Friday as US lawmakers prepared to resume negotiations on avoiding a fiscal crisis, while the yen hit a two-year low on the prospect of drastic monetary easing in Japan.

US President Barack Obama and lawmakers are set to have a last round of talks before a New Year deadline to reach a deal on averting major tax increases and spending cuts which could drag the economy and others around the world into recession.

Obama and Vice President Joe Biden will meet congressional leaders from the Republican and Democrat parties at the White House at 2000 GMT.

The MSCI all world index was up 0.15 percent shortly after trading opened in Europe. With London’s FTSE 100, Paris’s CAC-40 and Frankfurt’s DAX all just in positive territory, the regional FTSEurofirst 300 was up just over 0.1 percent and moving towards last week’s 19-month high.

Members of Congress were divided on the odds of success at the budget talks, but IG strategist Stan Shamu noted some hope in the budget talks, while IG strategist Stan Shamu wrote in a note.

In Asia, Japan’s benchmark Nikkei index hit a 21-month high as markets priced in a huge injection of stimulus by the Bank of Japan following the election of a new government. The yen strengthened to an 11-month low versus the dollar.

The yen has now fallen roughly 10.5 percent versus the dollar in 2012, its biggest annual drop since 2005. At the same time Japan’s unemployment rate improved slightly in November.

The internal affairs ministry said on Friday that the seasonally adjusted rate edged down to 4.1 percent, down 0.1 percentage points from October. About 63 million people had jobs, down 50,000 from the same month a year ago.

The number of unemployed stood at 2.6 million, down 210,000 year-on-year.

The labour ministry said the ratio of job vacancies to job seekers in November was 0.80, unchanged from the previous month.

The statistics showed that 80 positions were open for every 100 people ready to fill them.

The number of new jobs in the manufacturing sector dropped 9.4 percent year-on-year.

By industry, manufacturers of automobiles and other transportation equipment saw a drop of 40.6 percent, makers of agricultural and other production machinery dropped 21.2 percent, and plastic products fell 19.1 percent.

Ministry officials say the jobs-to-job-seekers ratio remains low, due partly to the global economic slowdown. They also say an end to government subsidies for buyers of eco-friendly vehicles reduced the number of new jobs in the auto and other manufacturing industries.—NHK

Russia sets goals for industrial development until 2020

Moscow, 29 Dec—

Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev on Friday signed a state programme envisaging development of the country’s industrial capabilities until 2020.

According to Medvedev’s order, the government should focus on creating competitive, structurally balanced industries capable for self-development and integration into the global economy.

The programme also envisages rendering Russian economy innovative and able to contribute to the country’s defence needs, according to the government’s website.

The 3.5-trillion-ruble programme defines 17 sectors as priorities for the economy development, such as car industry, agricultural machinery, military-industrial complex, transportation, chemistry, consumer goods production.

The government also plans to create or modernize 25 million jobs, increase investment to the level of up to 27 percent of the GDP and boost labor productivity by 1.5 times.

Russia aims to climb in the World Bank’s Doing Business rating from the current 120th position to the 20th, the programme said.

On Thursday, President Vladimir Putin called the cabinet’s work satisfactory and urged the government to fulfill its election promises.

Reuters
US nuclear submarine to dock in N Philippine port

Subic Bay, Philippines, 29 Dec—A US nuclear-powered attack submarine, USS Bremerton (SSN 698), will arrive in the northern Philippine port of Subic Bay for a “routine port call” on Saturday, the United States embassy said on Friday.

The US embassy said the visit will also allow the submarine to replenish supplies as well as give the crew an opportunity to rest. The nuclear-powered attack sub carries 12 officers and 98 crew members.

The USS Bremerton (698) is named in honour of the city of Bremerton in Washington, home to Puget Sound Naval Shipyard.

A Mexican Army soldier fills in a registration form of weapons, which are exchanged for groceries and cash by residents as part of “For your family, voluntary disarmament” programme held at Etapalapa Deputation, in Mexico City, on 27 Dec, 2012. —Xinhua

Four killed in US drone strike in NW Pakistan

Islamabad, 29 Dec—At least five people were killed and several others injured in a US drone strike launched in Pakistan’s northwest tribal area of North Waziristan on Friday evening, reported local media ARY.

According to the local media reports, US unmanned aircraft fired two missiles at a house suspected of being a militant hideout in Shawal area of North Waziristan, a militancy-plagued region along the Pak-Afghan border.

Details about the strike are not immediately available.

Firda’s US drone strike is the 39th of its kind in Pakistan in 2012. Since the beginning of this year, at least 274 people have been killed in such strikes.

Though most of the killed are believed to be suspected militants, the US drones do sometimes kill innocent people, which has led to strong opposition from the Pakistani side.

Iran navy launches 6-day massive exercises

Teheran, 29 Dec—Iranian Navy launched a 6-day massive drill in its southern waters on Friday, local satellite Press TV reported.

The naval drills, dubbed Velayat 91, or Guardianship 91, are being carried out in the Strait of Hormuz, the Sea of Oman, north of the Indian Ocean, the Gulf of Aden and Bab-el-Mandeb Strait, Iran’s Navy Commander Rear Admiral Habibollah Sayyari said on Friday.

He said Velayat 91 drill is aimed to display Iran’s capabilities to defend its water borders and interests, establish durable security in the region, and convey a message of peace and friendship to neighbouring countries.

The maneuver also sends a message to enemies that Iran will seriously defend its vital interests in all areas, in particular in international waters, Sayyari added.

He said the maneuver seeks to boost the navy’s tactical and operational capabilities, adding that the navy’s 23rd fleet, comprised of Bushehr warship and Jamaran destroyer, will escort Iran’s merchant vessels and oil tankers as part of the navy’s mission to fight piracy.

On Tuesday, Iran’s Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC) launched a 4-day naval exercise, code-named Fajr-91 (Dawn-91), in the area of South Pars gas field in the Persian Gulf, aiming at evaluating the defensive capabilities of the troops stationed in the region against potential threats.

Over the past few years, Iran has held several military drills to enhance the defensive capabilities of its armed forces and to test modern military tactics and equipment.

On 24 December, 2011, Iran held the 10-day Velayat 90 naval drill in its southern waters, including the Persian Gulf, the Strait of Hormuz and the Sea of Oman, aiming at demonstrating the combat readiness and ability of the country’s naval forces to defend its territorial waters.

Iran has test-fired long and short-range missiles during the military drill in the Strait of Hormuz.

Iran’s submarines also hit pre-determined targets during the exercises, using domestically-manufactured torpedoes.

Confirmed norovirus cases up 83 pct in Britain

London, 29 Dec—The latest official figures show that the number of laboratory confirmed cases of norovirus winter vomiting bug reached 3,538 in Britain, but the number is reported to exceed one million.

The Health Protection Agency (HPA) said that there were 3,538 laboratory confirmed cases of norovirus in England and Wales this season for July to mid-December, up from 3,046 cases last year.

The figures are 83 percent higher than the number of cases reported at this point last year, when there were 1,934 cases. A rise of the cases is also reported by the Health protection Scotland.

The HPA said that for every reported case an estimated 286 go unreported, indicating that the figure may top 1.01 million this season, compared with 880,000 cases last week.

According to the agency, during the two weeks up to 23 Dec there were 70 hospital outbreaks reported, compared to 61 in the previous fortnight, bringing the total of outbreaks for the season to 538.

John Harris, an expert in norovirus from the HPA said: “The number of laboratory confirmed cases has risen once again as it appears that we have seen the rise in cases that usually begins in January start a little earlier than we normally expect. “Norovirus is very contagious, and very unpleasant,” said Harris suggesting people to maintain good hand hygiene and stay away from hospitals, schools and care homes, as these closed environments are particularly prone to outbreaks which can cause severe disruption.”

Homemade fireworks explosion wounds two teens in Ukraine

Kiev, 29 Dec—Two teenagers were injured in southern Ukraine when their homemade fireworks exploded unexpectedly, authorities said on Friday.

The blast occurred at about 9.45 pm local time Thursday (1945 GMT) in Kherch city of Ukraine’s autonomous republic of Crimea, when a 13-year-old boy and another 14-year-old were making fireworks to entertain their family during the New Year holidays, the Emergencies Ministry said.

The two teenagers sustained burns in the face.

The accident raised concerns among local fire officials about careless use of fireworks.

Police urged people to follow the safety instructions while using fireworks during the upcoming holidays.

Turkish unit in UNIFIL upgrades security measures in Lebanon

Beirut, 29 Dec—The Turkish battalion participating in the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) has taken precautionary measures in the wake of warnings conveyed by families of the kidnapped Lebanese pilgrims in Syria, a security source said on Friday.

The Turkish soldiers in the UNIFIL are part of the international peacekeeping forces, the source said, adding that targeting them means targeting the United Nations and UN Security Council Resolution 1701.

In August, the spokesman for the families of the kidnapped Sheikh Abbas Zoghbeib warned the Turkish authorities that “if the issue of the kidnapped was not solved soon, the embassy staff and the Turkish soldiers in the UNIFIL could become our hosts.”
Taungdwingyi Township to get new ward/village administrators

**Taungdwingyi, 29 Dec**—As of early December this year, ward/village administrators were elected in Taungdwingyi Township under the supervision of departmental officials and townsenders. Taungdwingyi Township is constituted with 10 wards and 72 villages. So, a total of 82 new administrators will be elected not later than 23 December. 

Myanma Alinn

Yangon-Pathein-Chaungtha bus line launched

**Nay Pyi Taw, 29 Dec**—A ceremony to launch Shwe Mingala bus line to run along the Yangon-Pathein-Chaungtha route was held at Shwezedi Road in Ward 4 of Pathein of Ayeyawady Region on 9 am on 24 December.

Region Chief Minister U Thein Aung unveiled the signboard of the bus line.

Afterward, the Chief Minister paid homage to the umbrella to be hoisted atop Myat Dipayon Pagoda in Mezalagon Village, at the Withakha Dhammayon of eastern stairway of Shwemuhtaw Pagoda in Pathein. —MN4

Raw opium seized in Waingmaw

**Myitkyina, 29 Dec**—A squad led by IP Khin Maung Yi of Myitkyina Anti-Drug Special Squad together with witnesses searched the house of Shan Lwin in Ward 2 in Waingmaw at 7.30 am on 20 December.

They seized 996.13 grams of raw opium hidden in three polyethylene bags hidden in Yan Gang motorcycle of Shan Lwin. The person confessed that he bought 261.28 grams of raw opium worth K 200,000 from Ma Bawm Hsant of 131 Aik Hsuang and Ma Bawm Aik Hsuang and Ma Bawm Hsant, 37, daughter of U Ko Ko Aye donated K 1.5 million to be spent on construction of asphalt road to officials.

Region Chief Minister U Thein Aung, 22, son of U Pu, of 58th Street number plate 4C— driven by Khin Maung Than, 33, searched a Pajero with squad led by SIP Win Naing Hsant under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic substances Law.

Myanma Alinn

Ward/village administrators elected in Bago

**Bago, 29 Dec**—Ward and village administrators from 31 wards and 68 villages were elected in Bago Township of Bago Region under the supervision of five townsenders each as of early December.

The ward administrator from Nandawya Ward, the most populous area of Bago, was elected at Oktha Thiri Monastery on 25 December. Former administrator U Moe Myint Nyo (a) U Nyo Gyi among 597 10-household group leaders was re-elected as ward administrator.

The election process of ward/village administrators will go on in Bago Township up to end of December this year. —Myanma Alinn

Village BEMS gets staff quarter in Pakokku Township

**Pakokku, 29 Dec**—A staff quarter of Basic Education Middle School was opened in Kaing Model Village of Pakokku Township, Magway Region, recently.

Deputy Township Administrator U Kyaw Soe Hnin, Assistant Township Education Officer U Kyi Nyen and Village Administrator U Kyi Khaing Win formally opened the staff quarter built on a self-reliant basis.

The one-storey building, 75 feet long, 21 feet wide and 13 feet high, was constructed for teachers who are assigned duty at the school from other regions.

The facility was built at a cost of K 4.7 million. —Myanma Alinn

Repaved road put into service in Katha

**Katha, 29 Dec**—Hailing the 65th Anniversary Independence Day, Monhlatan Road was commissioned into service on 27 December morning.

The 1380 feet long road was built with the assistance of Katha Township Development Affairs Committee Katha Township Administrator U Zaw Min Htui, Executive Officer of Township Development Affairs Committee U Tun Tun and townsender U Pauk San formally opened the road. —Myanma Alinn

Stake driven for township hospital in Ywangan

**Ywangan, 29 Dec**—A ceremony to drive stake for construction of Ywangan Township Hospital (25-bed) and other buildings of Dabu Self-Administered Zone in Shan State was held at the Self-Administered Zone in Ward 4 of Pathein of Ayeyawady Region on 9 am on 24 December.

On the occasion, member of Dabu Self-Administered Zone Leading Body U Ko Ko, Township Medical Officer Dr Aye Lwin and local people participated in stake-driving ceremony. Acting Township Administrator U Chan Tun and officials lay the cornerstones for the building.

Township Medical Officer Dr Aye Lwin explained the plans for construction of the buildings. Shwe Phasi Company will take responsibility for construction tasks. —Myanma Alinn

Two jade stones weighing 800 viss seized

**Hsipaw, 29 Dec**—A squad led by SIP Win Naing of Hsipaw Township Police Force of Shan State North searched a Pajero with number plate 4C— driven by Khin Maung Than, 33, son of U Pu, of 58th Street between 39th and 40th streets in Mandalay and passenger Hsin Wen Aung, 22, son of U Shein of Yoma Village in Natogyi Township, at Manhe Asia World Toll Gate in Hsipaw at 7.30 am on 23 December.

The authorities seized two jade stones weighing 800 viss from the car.

The police station opened a file of lawsuit against them under the law. —Myanma Alinn

Apyauk villages illuminated on self-reliant basis

**Thazi, 29 Dec**—At present, Apyauk (East) and (West) villages of Apyauk Village-tract in Thazi Township are now enjoying supply of electricity. The power supply committee was formed with Chairman U Aung Yin and party which strove for supply of electricity as of November 2011. A 160 KVA transformer was installed for supply of electricity to 110 houses of Apyauk Village.

As of 19 December 2012, the village has been consuming electricity. The whole tasks cost K 35.7 million. The supply of electricity was sponsored by U Nyi Nyi Lwin-Daw Thet Thet Mar from Yangon.

Myanma Alinn

Scene of Mandalay Moat

65th Anniversary Independence Day 2013

Taungdwingyi, 29 Dec—As of early December this year, ward/village administrators were elected in Taungdwingyi Township under the supervision of departmental officials and townsenders.

Taungdwingyi Township is constituted with 10 wards and 72 villages. So, a total of 82 new administrators will be elected not later than 23 December. 

Myanma Alinn
Housing affordability

Homeownership is a dream which is impossible to come true and hope which seems to be given up frequently for low and middle income families in the commercial city of Yangon. Affordable housing is a basic necessity, like food and water, for extremely low-income households. No one can deny that prices of housing are far beyond the reach of low and very-low income households that make up nearly 30 per cent of the population of Yangon. The need for housing is greater than ever before in Yangon with the parallel trends of increased annual population growth and significant shortage of affordable housing.

While new condominiums, high-rise office buildings and apartments are mushrooming to meet the demands for modernization of the city, genuine affordable housing projects failed to materialize except so-called low-cost housing that are aimed to meet unending artificial demands of those who had already owned a house or more in and out of the city. Some scholars stressed the need of affordable housings for 100,000 households who are living in poverty as a drive of poverty alleviation to reduce 26 per cent poverty rate of the populous Yangon which is home to a population of nearly five million. They said that it is a high time a perfect housing policy should be laid down in accord with the Constitution in which the Union shall strive to improve the living standards of the people is prescribed.

With announcements of low-cost housing construction projects by YCDC and DHSHD, hopes are high for renter households who are struggling monthly or yearly to pay the rents rising at a rate more than 30 per cent of their incomes. Here there arises a question whether low-cost apartments are affordable priced for low income households who will not be able to afford to buy a flat that ranges from more than K 10 million to K 40 million even in installment. Provided that the housing is quite costly and land prices keep rising, hopes and dreams of having access to housing opportunities will not come true. For renter households with an average salary earner, a decent apartment remains extremely difficult to find.

Before attending to the needs of housing affordability of low income households, some alternatives that can help relieve the stress of those whose wages remain insufficient to cover high living costs including rents are to be available. As a top housing policy priority, high-rise rental apartment construction project should be implemented with the active commitments of developers and bankers under the government-led programme. More public funds on it will be the answer to the shortage of affordable building in commercial city of Yangon that is thought to be in the midst of a housing quandary in the not too distinct future. The housing crisis will get worse unless we take an effective action now.
What independence tastes

Lu Nyen Thit

Independence means having sovereignty, in other words, having and exercising the three powers in line with the wishes of own nation, own government and own citizens. It can also be functioning without influence of a certain nation. It is usual that the taste of independence can be known only when it is lost. However, as our nation had taken the history lesson of unfreedom, we know both of the tastes of freedom and unfreedom. If so, we need to value independence more only those who know the value that valuable thing.

We heard of the question of “Why we learn history?” and the answer “not to be naïve”. Only a few students and youths are interested in history subject today.

History is taught only at primary and middle school level and only a few students wishing to make degree in arts study history at high school level and the number of those specializing in history at higher education level is also decreasing. Under such circumstances, not only students but also all youths, the elderly necessarily need to know, keep in touch with and value Myanma history.

In particular, the history of Myanma fallen under colonial rule and independence struggles are precious histories.

Our country is home to over 100 national races and they began to live together not a few months ago nor do they come from parts of some countries. They have lived together on the same soil, drinking the water from same source since yore. Except differences in languages, they share much in common in customs and traditions and the cultures are also related. These are firm evidence of co-existence since time immemorial.

Although it is said that Myanmar never became a colony except being invaded by British intruders, it was not free from the intrusion of neighbouring countries. The neighbours had invaded north, north-east, east and west of the Myanma. National races from other corners did not stand by the side when the national races in north were under outside attack.

Likewise, national races in other parts gathered and drove out the outside threats when national brethren in east or west were under attack as if it was them who were harmed. Especially, during the reign of King Alunghpha, the Chinese had invaded the country four times in four years.

Nonetheless, the Myanma Army comprised of people from all races could successfully repel them. The intruders attacked in mass from the north where they were welcomed by weapons of the soldiers of Myanma Army made of all races from different regions. This is not the issue of a particular national race, but for perpetuation of the Union and non-disintegration of the Union constituted with all national races, in other words, for enabling all the national races within the Union to live together in unity forever.

Looking back the period between before Myanmar fell under colonial rule and after it regained independence, such scenes were also obvious. Kachin national race chiefmam and Kachin national race troops and Chin national race chiefmam and Chin national race troops took part in the independence movement. There are records that even Shan national race damels participated in the march to independence.

National race leaders and national race troops from all corners of the country actively took part in the movement and they were in unison in their claim for independence. They lived in the Union altogether and fought back together the every intruder taking it as common cause. Their main objectives are not to let the country fall under alien rule, and not to loss sovereignty.

It has been 65 years that our country regained her independence. We have yet to answer the question whether we, the entire people, have the chance to fully enjoy the taste of independence. In fact, we have been tacking to put out the fire started by the imperialists for years. We did not completely enjoy the taste or fruits of independence. We have realized that the most important thing in an independent country is peace and security.

The national brethren who shared the same history peacefully have been fighting each other. Fights and wars did not guarantee peaceful education and secure trade and farming. The people survive, fleeting the violence. Forget about the prosperity. They have been struggling even to ensure sufficiency. It indicates that we would not enjoy the taste of independence fully unless peace or security prevails.

Successful government adopted many schemes to restore internal peace. Despite some progress, we are still miles away from the genuine eternal peace. We have witnessed encouraging development in peace-building efforts of the current government who was elected in accord with the 2008 constitution. There remain only a few armed groups to reach peace accord.

The government would be able to throw all of its efforts into education, health and socio-economic development works only when the peace prevails. Our country is in intransigent transition with the democratic government in office and increasing freedom and transparency in political, economic and social arenas. Economic reforms are being undertaken to develop the country lagged behind for ages.

Convinced by the democratic reforms of the incumbent government, economic sanctions have been lifted. Investments from various parts of the world are flowing into the country. Amidst economic development, we have yet to build the peace.

There is no reason that we cannot reconcile because we are the national brethren since yore. We fought together for independence, braving any dangers. What we need are just minor adjustments. While in London, General Aung San said the same thing as regards ethnic affairs and demanded the independence within a year. It is sure that the eternal peace would be established soon.

We are independent people and sovereign nation. We once lost it. But we regained due to concerted efforts of all national races and citizens. The younger generation did not come across independence struggles. Though, we need to value the independence, learning lessons from the bitter past. We cannot ignore the independence nor the history of independence. We need to value the independence forever.

Decorating the motherland

Myinmu Maung Naing Moe

I have already said that the taste of independence could be made complete by the peace. It is time we need to play catch-up in political, economic and social sectors as an independent and peaceful nation. We need to grasp every opportunity in political, economic and social sectors so as to develop our country while the country is undergoing democratic reforms. We would be able to reduce the poverty rate by pursuing economic growth. The independent citizens of the independent country will soon be able to enjoy the taste of independence peacefully.

School scouting cultivates sense of duty: Union minister

Nay Pyi Taw, 29 Dec—Forming scouts at basic education schools is aimed at nurturing responsible citizens, Union Minister for Education Dr Mya Aye said at the multiplier course concluding ceremony at No.5 Basic Education High School in Zabuthiri Township here in this evening.

The trainees displayed their scouting skills.

The Union Minister and Deputy Ministers U Aye Kyu, Dr Ba Shwe and Dr Myo Myint presented outstanding awards.

Union Minister for Cooperatives U Kyaw Hsan speaking at Cooperatives Ministry’s coordination meeting.

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Ministry of Cooperatives holds coordination meeting

Nay Pyi Taw, 29 Dec—A ceremony to review on works for 2012-2013 financial year and coordination meeting (2013-2014 financial year) of Ministry of Cooperatives, was held at the Ministry, here, yesterday, with an address by Union Minister for Cooperatives U Kyaw Hsan.

In his speech, the Union minister said that the ministry needed to form a basic cooperatives societies in every village across the country in 2014-2015.
Three killed in truck collision in western Turkey

Ankara, 29 Dec—Two soldiers and one civilian were killed in a truck collision in western Turkey on Thursday morning, private Dogan news agency reported.

They were hit by a truck after being stopped to aid the victims of a previous accident.

The truck’s driver, identified as Sebahattin Akdogan, lost control of the steering wheel due to slippery conditions at the same place of the first accident.

The first accident took place when a minibus drove off the shoulder due to slippery conditions at the main road in the Aegean Province of Kütahya.

Turkish warplanes raid PKK targets in northern Iraq

Ankara, 29 Dec—Turkish F-16 warplanes struck targets belonging to the outlawed Kurdish Workers’ Party (PKK) in northern Iraq overnight in a new air force operation, according to Turkey’s Dogan news agency on Thursday.

Turkish Air Force F-16 warplanes took off at around 11:45 pm last night, bombing PKK camps around the Kandil and Zap regions of northern Iraq. The operations were launched following unmanned air vehicle data that showed PKK members approaching previously bombed destinations with the aim of resetting.

A number of PKK shelters were hit overnight as well.—Xinhua

Blast at Ukraine university kills one, wounds two

Kyiv, 29 Dec—Police suspect a grenade was the cause of an explosion that killed one person and injured two others at a university in western Ukraine on Thursday.

The blast ripped through a building at Chernivtsi city’s Medical University at noon (1000 GMT), police said. A 62-year-old man, who allegedly brought the grenade to the university, was found dead at the scene. One student and a teacher had minor injuries.

According to confirmed local media reports, the dead man was a former border guard who had a conflict with a university teacher. Further investigation is underway.—Xinhua

Putin signs ban on US adoptions of Russian children

Moscow, 29 Dec—President Vladimir Putin signed a law on Friday that bans Americans from adopting Russian children and imposes other sanctions in retaliation for a new US human rights law that he says is poisoning relations.

Washington has called the new Russian law misguided, saying it ties the fate of children to “unrelated political considerations”, and analysts say it is likely to deepen a chill in US-Russia relations and harm Putin’s image abroad.

Six children whose adoption has already been decided in court will go to the United States, while 46 other children whose adoption was still underway must stay in Russia, Putin’s spokesman, Dmitry Peskov, said on Dozhd television channel.

The new law, which has also ignited outrage among Russian liberals and child rights’ advocates, takes effect on 1 January.

The legislation, whose test was issued by the Kremlin, will also outlaw some non-governmental organizations that receive US funding and impose a visa ban and asset freeze on Americans accused of violating the rights of Russians abroad.

Pro-Kremlin lawmakers initially drafted the bill to mirror the US Magnitsky Act, which bars entry to Russians accused of involvement in the death in custody of anti-corruption lawyer Sergei Magnitsky and other alleged rights abuses.

The restrictions on adoptions and non-profit groups were added to the legislation later, going beyond a tit-for-tat move and escalating a dispute with Washington at a time when ties are already strained by issues such as the Syrian crisis.

The adoption ban may further tarnish Putin’s international standing at a time when the former KGB officer is under scrutiny over what critics say is a crackdown on dissent since he returned to the Kremlin for a third term in May.

Road accident in Nigeria leaves nine people dead

Osun, (Nigeria), 29 Dec—Nine people were killed and 11 others injured when a bus collided with a truck in southwestern Nigeria on Thursday, said local sources.

The accident took place on a road in the State of Osun at about 1:30 pm local time. The dead included six women.

A preliminary investigation showed that the accident was caused by speeding. No other information was available.

The poor conditions of roads, speeding, over loading and reckless driving are blamed for frequent traffic accidents in the west African country.—Xinhua
**Regional**

**Fault survey at Ohi plant may take months**

**Tokyo, 29 Dec** — A senior official from Japan’s Nuclear Regulation Authority has suggested surveys at the country’s only online nuclear plant may take months before experts determine whether fissures at the facility are parts of an active fault or not.

Kunihiro Shimazaki, a commissioner from the regulatory body, made the announcement on Friday, after a 5 member team he is leading conducted an inspection at the Ohi plant in Fukui Prefecture on the Sea of Japan. Shimazaki said the team plans to analyze what they have studied at the trench dug in the northern part of the plant’s site, but he added a conclusion won’t be easy to obtain.

He said the team needs to inspect another trench which the operator, Kansai Electric, plans to dig at a site closer to the reactor, as early as next February. In a previous inspection in November, the team could not determine whether the fissures beneath the plant were parts of an active fault or traces of a landslide. So the team ordered the operator to double the length of the inspection trench to 100 metres. Kansai Electric has been insuring the fissures are traces of a past landslide.

The expert team will continue the on-site inspection on Saturday.

The authority plans to recommend the halt of the 2 reactors that were restarted in July if it determines fissures running beneath the plant’s important facilities are an active fault. — NIK

**Road accidents kill 33 Thais on 27 Dec**

**Bangkok, 29 Dec** — A total of 33 people were killed and 322 injured in road accidents nationwide on 27 December, the first day of the so-called “seven dangerous days”, Bangkok Post online reported.

Transport Minister Chatchart Suthipan said on Friday that The ‘Seven Dangerous Days’ road safety campaign of the Thailand’s Road safety Campaign.

**One killed, two injured in S Philippine grenade attack**

**Manila, 29 Dec** — The Philippine National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) said on Friday that it will be on a five-day red alert status beginning 30 December, 2012 up to 3 January, 2013, a move to ensure safe celebration of the New Year.

NDRRMC Executive Director Benito Ramos, in a memorandum, said that all the NDRRMC member agencies, including the regional offices, will closely monitor incidents and ensure the prompt response to the general public on any eventuality. “Widest dissemination of safety tips and information materials in the area of responsibility regarding firecrackers, fire prevention, road safety, trauma, injury, death, etc. is highly encouraged,” he said.

Meanwhile, the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) also urged the businessmen who have intention to transport their purchased firecrackers to secure permit form either the PCG K-Unit or the police before boarding those hazardous items in the commercial shipping vessels. — Xinhua

**Philippine disaster agency on red alert for New Year celebration**

**Columbo, 29 Dec** — Sri Lankan authorities are still struggling to assist over 300,000 people affected by floods and repair vital infrastructure to provide relief efficiently, an official said here on Friday.

The strategic investment law, adopted by the parliament in May, stipulates that foreign investment in strategic sectors that exceeds 100 billion Mongolian tugriks (over 70 million US dollars) should get approval of the Mongolian government. Mongolian Mining Minister D Gankhuyag has told local media that the government will review the law by raising the amount of investment that needs governmental approval.

The minister added the 100-billion-tugrik requirement is too strict for foreign investors and his ministry plans to raise this amount by three to four times.

It is widely believed that the adoption of the investment law has worsened Mongolia’s investment environment by imposing stricter conditions on foreign investment. The law reflected the country’s intention to develop its rich mineral resources by itself.

Mongolian President Tsakhiia Elbegdorj also expressed his dissatisfaction of the law in an interview with the country’s state-run Mongolian National Public Television, saying the law has made Mongolia’s investment environment unfavorable for foreign investors.

Miners, banking and finance, media, information and communications are considered strategic sectors in Mongolia by the law on investment. — Xinhua

**S Korea’s President-elect to meet with Abe’s envoys**

**Seoul, 29 Dec** — South Korea’s President-elect Park Geun-hye will meet with a delegation dispatched by Japanese Prime Minister Abe Shinzo, Park’s aides said on Friday.

The meeting between Park and the envoys, scheduled at the request of Japan, will take place on 4 Jan, the aides said. Park, who takes office early next year, inherits a fraught relationship with the country’s former colonial occupier as the two remain at odds over a slew of historical issues.

Abe returned to Japan’s premiership after his right-wing Liberal Democratic Party won a parliamentary majority in general elections earlier this month. — Xinhua

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**Donate Blood**

Photo taken on 28 Dec, 2012 show the deformed minibus which plunged down into a valley in Qibaining Township of Duhua Yao Autonomous County in Hechi City, southwest China’s Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region. Ten people were killed and ten others injured in the accident which occurred in the early morning on Friday. The nine-seat bus with 20 people on board was then on its route from the regional capital of Nanning to Duhua. — Xinhua
Portuguese govt’s sells state-owned airport operator ANA to French Vinci

LISBON, 29 Dec—The Portuguese government decided on Thursday to sell the state-owned airport operator ANA to French civil engineering Vinci.

Portuguese Treasury Secretary Maria Luis Albuquerque said the bid of Vinci amounted to 3.08 billion US dollars.

Albuquerque said the bid, is already a shareholder which offered the highest price for Vinci.

It will be in circulation as of 1 January, 2013

The book is available at K 1,000 per copy, at No.212, Bookshop of News and Periodicals Enterprise on Theinbyu Road, Yangon; No.529, Sarpay Beikman Bookshop on Merchant Street, Yangon; and Sarpay Beikman Bookshop in Thabyayon Market in Nay Pyi Taw.

Chic&ian agricultural commodities down on fiscal cliffs fears

CHICAGO, 29 Dec—Chicago agricultural commodity futures all traded lower on Thursday, as outside markets turned negative on “fiscal cliff” fears, which weighed on trading most of the day.

The most active corn contract for March delivery fell 1.75 cents, or 0.25 percent, to close at 6.915 dollars per bushel. March wheat lost 2.25 cents, or 0.29 percent, to settle at 7.7225 dollars per bushel. March soybeans fell 4.5 cents, or 0.32 percent, to close at 14.14 dollars per bushel.

For wheat, early losses were triggered by a risk aversion that swept across the outside markets as many feared no fiscal deal would be reached in Washington. Additional pressure came from technical selling and the absence of any significant export tenders this week.

March soybeans traded lower on weaker outside markets and lack of any fresh demand-side data. Demand remains strong for US soybeans, but with Brazilian harvest just around a month away, some in the market suggest the robust sales pace by the US may slow down.

Five US banks fined 4.48 mln USD for improper payment to lobbyists

WASHINGTON, 29 Dec—Five leading US banks were fined over 4.48 million USD dollars in total for using municipal and state bond funds to pay lobbyists, the US Financial Industry Regulatory Authority (FINRA) announced on Thursday.

Between January 2006 and December 2010, Citigroup, Goldman Sachs, JP Morgan, Merrill Lynch and Morgan Stanley made payments to the California Public Securities Association (Cal PSA), a lobby association who helped the banks obtain bond issuing business in California, and requested those voluntary payments be reimbursed as underwriting expenses from the proceeds of the negotiated municipal and state bond offerings, according to the FINRA findings.

The watchdog noted that the five banks’ practice was unfair as Cal PSA’s activities did not bear a direct relationship to those bond offerings and were not underwriting expenses.

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Johnny Depp names private beach after girlfriend Amber Heard

LOUISIANA, 29 Dec—
Johnny Depp has reportedly named a beach on his private island in the Bahamas after Amber Heard.

The Pirates of the Caribbean star chose a section of Little Hall’s Pond in the Bahamas to be named in honour of his new girlfriend—who he has dated after 14 years in June as a Christmas present.

Johnny, 49, is said to have named the beach Amber’s Cove after noticing it looked like her tup when viewed on a map.

The pair are said to have initially got together this summer after meeting on the set of 2011 film The Rum Diary. However, Amber, 26, initially ended their fling after deciding she wanted to be single, but Johnny decided not to give up on the actress and sent her a personally-penned poem and a bouquet of roses every day throughout September to convince her to give him another chance.

His plan eventually worked and she flew out to the Bahamas.

Kate Winslet marries Ned Rockroll in secret ceremony

NEW YORK, 29 Dec—
Kate Winslet has married billionaire Ned Rockroll in a secret ceremony in New York.

Winslet, 37, who has been dating billionaire businessman Richard Branson’s nephew Ned Rockroll for just over a year, exchanged vows in a secret ceremony, reported the Huffington Post.

“I can confirm that Kate Winslet married Ned Rock‘n’Roll in NY earlier this month in a private ceremony attended by her two children and a very few friends and family. The couple had been engaged since the summer,” her representative confirmed. The service is said to have been so private that even Winslet’s parents were not aware that she was walking down the aisle again.

This is not the first time that Winslet has wed in secret. In 2003 she married Sam Mendes, her second husband, on an island in the Caribbean with just her daughter Mia and three friends. The actress split from the director, who is the father of her son Joe, in March last year and the pair are now divorced.

In 2001 Winslet split from her first husband, and father of her daughter, Jim Threapleton, after three years together. Ned, who changed his name by deed poll from Abel Smith, has also been married before. He met Winslet after separating from his wife, 23-year-old Eliza Cowdroy, whom he wed in 2009.

Tom Cruise takes restaurant manager on date

LOS ANGELES, 29 Dec—
Hollywood star Tom Cruise has reportedly been spotted with a 26-year-old restaurant manager Cynthia Jorge at a date.

The 50-year-old actor’s relationship with Katie Holmes has been grinding on the dance floor of swanky Mulberry St club, Le Baron, two days after she slipped her card to him after he dined in the eatery where she works, reported Ace Showbiz.

“I don’t know what to say. What would you say if your cousin was dating Tom Cruise? She’s nice, outgoing and a people person,” a source said.

After the hookup rumour made headlines, Cynthia was asked by her bosses at the lower East Side restaurant Beauty and Essex to stay at home.

“She’s a sweetheart. She’s not working tonight. They called her off work because of (the media scrutiny),” a worker said.
**Celtic Tiger and emerging China shine in 2012**

LOS ANGELES, 29 Dec — Rory McIlroy’s dominance on both sides of the Atlantic and the clearest hint yet at the exciting potential in China were the biggest storylines in what may prove to be a truly transformational golfing year in 2012.

The coronation of McIlroy as the game’s leading player was confirmed in sensational fashion when the excelling Northern Irishman cruised to his second major title by record eight shots in the PGA Championship at Kiawah Island in August. Dubbed ‘Boy Wonder’ in his homeland for the past decade, McIlroy fully justified his other nickname of ‘the Celtic Tiger’ as he ended the year being shown off to the world as a young player who win the money list titles in both Europe and the United States and he strengthened his position as world number one with an extraordinary run of form.

Long regarded as heir apparent to Tiger Woods as the game’s greatest player, McIlroy has smoothly taken over that role as Woods, despite triumphing three times on the 2012 PGA Tour in a welcome return to winning ways, has had to take a back seat.

The 23-year-old McIlroy is almost certain to be a dominant figure in golf for at least another decade but 14-year-old Chinese Guan Tianlang gave a strong indication of the likely impact from his part of the world well beyond that time.

Rory McIlroy of Northern Ireland watches his shot from the 18th tee during the final round of the DP World Tour Championship at Jumeirah Golf Estates in Dubai on 25 Nov, 2012.— Reuters

Glory for Spain and Messi but problems never far away

LONDON, 29 Dec — Spain’s glorious third successive triumph in a major tournament and individual goal-scoring brilliance from Argentine Lionel Messi will be remembered as soccer’s golden hallmarks of 2012. But the year was also marred by tragedy and death in Egypt and a worrying escalation of racism in Europe.

It was a year too when the soccer world shifted on its axis and finally spun away from its 19th century roots when 21st century goal-line technology, officially sanctioned by world governing body FIFA, was used for the first time in December’s Club World Championship in Japan, that tournament, which ended on Sunday, saw Corinthians of Brazil crowned as the best club team in the world — an accolade most people would agree rightfully belongs to Barcelona. But in one of the great upsets of the year, Barcelona failed to win the Champions League which seemed predetermined for them.

There were other significant highlights during 2012 with a few dramatic finishes but was arguably the shot of the year to win the Masters in a two-way play-off and Ernie Els ending a decade-long drought in the majors to claim his second British Open.

The world’s most populous nation had celebrated another coup just five months earlier when Shan-shan Feng, 22, clinched the LPGA Championship by two shots in Rochester, New York, to become the first person from mainland China to win a women’s major.

Remarkably, Feng was born just five years after the first golf course was opened in China.

Holby to leave Schalke at end of season

BERLIN, 29 Dec — Schalke 04 midfielder Lewis Holby will leave the Bundesliga club at the end of the season after the German international turned down a contract extension, the club said on Friday.

However sports director Horst Heldt said Holby, who has an English father and who had been linked with a move to the English Premier League, would not leave during the winter transfer window when the club would receive a transfer fee.

His current deal runs out in June.

“We had wished that Lewis could see a future here beyond this season. But we respect his decision,” he said in a club statement.

“We are certain that he will give everything for the club’s sporting success up until the last match day of the season.”

The 22-year-old, who has won three caps for Germany, joined Schalke in 2009 and has had loan spells at VfL Bochum and Mainz 05 until 2011.

Golden year for Murray, regrets for Nadal

LONDON, 29 Dec — For Andy Murray 2012 marked a golden milestone, for Novak Djokovic the year was an emphatic reminder of his status as the world’s best male player, and for Roger Federer and his army of fans it was proof that the old master’s magic still sparkles.

Serena Williams used the second half of the year to demonstrate that she continues to be head and shoulders above her rivals in the women’s game, whatever the rankings suggest.

Of the sport’s marquee names, only Rafa Nadal will reflect on the past year with regret after six months out with a knee injury, and all eyes will be studying the 11-times grand-slam winner’s form once the new season swings into action.

Nadal, one of four different winners of the men’s grand-slam titles this year, has not played a match since a shock Wimbledon defeat by Lukas Rosol.

He hopes to return at the Australian Open although he has sensibly lowered expectations of an immediate impact.

In any other era the absence of a player of Nadal’s calibre would be an impossible void to fill yet such is the quality at the top of the men’s game that the Malcorran’s extended lay-off merely took a little gloss off what was otherwise a vintage year.

Murray began it with a new coach in Ivan Lendl but still without a grand-slam title on his CV having lost in his first three major finals without taking a set.

The Scot became Britain’s first male Wimbledon singles finalist since Bunny Austin in 1938 but Federer’s grasscourt brilliance deprived Murray of the title.

Three weeks later Murray returned to the All England Club lawns like a man on a mission and he rode a wave of national euphoria to triumph in the Olympic singles final.

Goalkeeper Cech happy with Chelsea back support

LONDON, 29 Dec — Chelsea have refound their defensive strength under interim manager Rafael Benitez, goalkeeper Petr Cech said on Friday. Chelsea have won their last three Premier League matches and kept four clean sheets since Benitez took over last month following the sacking of Roberto Di Matteo.

“We look more organized. We were conceding far too many goals and we were too open,” Cech told the club website (www.chelseafc.com), “We’ve been defending much better as a team and that’s been the key, because we weren’t defending well.

“We are back to being difficult to score against, which is a big help, and of course we have quality players who can score goals.”

Chelsea have conceded eight times in Benitez’s 10 matches in charge, compared to 21 in the same number of games at the end of Di Matteo’s tenure.— Reuters

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**NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR**

**Sunday, 30 December, 2012**

**GENERAL**

**MYANMAR INTERNATIONAL**

*(30-12-12 09:30 am – 31-12-12 09:30 am) MST*

- News
- How to practice Vipassana Meditation (Part-III)
- Bagan, Our Pride and Glory of the Past
- News
- Award for Production of Sultans Fish
- News
- Process of Planet correlated with Horoscope for 12 Sign Ascendants
- News
- Let’s enjoy Delicious Refreshment
- News
- MI People’s Celebrities “Wine Su Khine Theyn”
- The New Generation of the 4th Pillar
- News
- Snow Wonderland
- News
- Computer & Simultaneous Interpretation System
- Handing Over Ceremony
- News
- An Ever-Blooming Garden
- 6th Yanmin Township Essence of Snow Art Exhibition
- News
- Myanmar Movies “Salla”

**MYANMAR TV**

*(30-12-2012, Sunday)*

- 7:00 am
  - 1. Paritta By Venerable Mingun Sayadaw
  - 2. To Be Healthy Exercise
  - 3. Morning News
  - 4. Dhamma Puja Song
  - 5. Nice & Sweet Song
  - 6. Health Programme

**Ferguson accuses Pardew of hypocrisy over referee rant**

Manchester United’s manager Alex Ferguson celebrates on the final whistle during their English Premier League match against Newcastle United at Old Trafford in Manchester, northern England on 26 Dec, 2012. **Reuters**

Manchester, 29 Dec—Manchester United manager Alex Ferguson played down his outburst at referee Mike Dean during Wednesday’s 4-3 win over Newcastle United and accused opposite number Alan Pardew of hypocrisy.

The United boss was fuming after Dean awarded Newcastle’s second goal, over-ruling his assistant who had flagged for offside. When Dean came out for the second half of the match, Ferguson followed the referee on the pitch, venting his fury.

“Alan Pardew came out and criticised me yet he is the worst at haranguing referees,” said Ferguson of the Newcastle manager who was given a two-match ban by referees,” said Ferguson of the Newcastle manager who was given a two-match ban and fined in September for pushing a linesman during a Premier League match.

“He shoves a linesman and makes a joke of it and yet he’s got the cheek to criticise me. It’s unbelievable and he forgets the help I gave him.”

“Then unfortunately is I’m at the biggest club in the world not Newcastle, a wee club in the North East. I was demonstrative but not out of order. The press had a field day, it’s as simple as that,” Ferguson told a news conference.

Pardew was unhappy Ferguson escaped punishment from the FA for his behaviour but the Scot thought Dean had dealt with the situation well.

“I think Mike Dean handled it well. He’s an experienced referee and mature. There was no ranting and raving. I was demonstrative but I’m always demonstrative because I’m an emotional guy,” said Ferguson.

“I shouted him over and he came towards me. I wasn’t on the pitch for more than three or four yards and I think it’s been overplayed.”

Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger, who was sent off by Dean for kicking a water bottle in frustration during a match against United at Old Trafford in 2009, said Ferguson’s behaviour had not set a good example.

“The message it sends out when you look at the pictures, is just not to behave like that.”

Wenger told a news conference.

“Should you behave like that? No I did not always behave like that and you can call that a bad example. When you go overboard you have to be punished,” he added. **Reuters**

**Olympics sparkle at height of magical British summer**

London, 29 Dec—London defied Britain’s wettest summer for 100 years, potential transport and security chaos and a depressed economy to stage a marvelous 2012 Olympics during a magical year for British sport.

Over the past century Britons have become resigned to watching the rest of the world beat them, but during a magical year for Britain they have become the envy of the world. The media friendly— or also unfriendly perhaps— ‘Special Britain’ staged the summer Olympics sporting action, London defied Britain’s depressed economy to stage a marvelous 2012 Olympics during an imperial splendor.

This year, to their fans’ surprise and delight, British teams and athletes surpassed themselves across a range of sports, including third place in the Olympic medals’ table behind the world’s two great economic powers the United States and China.

Englishman Bradley Wiggins, who looks like a throwback to the English beat groups of the swinging States and China.

At the heart of the year’s sporting action, London staged the summer Olympics for the third time to unanimous acclaim throughout the world.

*Photo shows traffic police members in cooperation with traffic rules enforcement committee members carrying out surprise checks on Bayintnaung Road in Myawaddy on 28 December. KYEMON*
18th graduation of State Pariyatti Sasana Universities (Yangon/Mandalay) held

NAY PYI TAW, 29 Dec—The 18th graduation of State Pariyatti Sasana Universities (Yangon, Mandalay) of Department of Promotion and Propagation of the Sasana under the Ministry of Religious Affairs, was held at State Pariyatti Sasana University (Mandalay) yesterday. It was attended by Chairman of State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee Sayadaw of Bhamo Monastery of Mandalay Abhidhaja Maha Rattha Gura Abhidhaja Agga Maha Saddhammajotika Dr Bhaddanta Kumara-bhivamsa, Sayadaws, Union Minister for Religious Affairs Thura U Myint Maung and wife Daw Aye Aye Tun, Advisor to the President Office U Arnt Maung, officials from departments under the ministry, Consul generals of India and China in Mandalay, donors and guests.

Awards were conferred on 45 monks from State Pariyatti Sasana University (Yangon) and 65 monks from that of Mandalay. After the ceremony, the Union Minister and wife and those present donated offertories to the Sayadaws.

MNA

Tender scrutiny ceremony for implementation of rural area development tasks for 2012-2013 fiscal year held

NAY PYI TAW, 29 Dec—“The Ministry of Border Affairs will jointly cooperate with national race entrepreneurs in a transparent manner for its fifth five-year plan for construction of rural area development road/bridges, water supply, rural housing project and rural power supply, the ministry wishes to coordinate with people, people’s representatives in carrying out socioeconomic reforms in transition period, and open tender system would be practised for rural area road/bridges tasks,” said Deputy Minister for Border Affairs Maj-Gen Zaw Win at the Tender Scrutiny Ceremony for implementation of rural area development tasks for 2012-2013 fiscal year of Rural Area Development Department held at the ministry yesterday morning.

The officials read out the prescribed tender disciplines for successfully undertaking the tasks and announcing and scrutinizing of region and state-wise tender list followed. The tender scrutinizing regions and states are Kayin, Chin States, Magway Region, Rakhine, Kayin and Mon States and weather will be partly cloudy in the remaining Regions and States.

Fog Condition
Fog days are expected about (16 to 18) days in Upper Sagaing Region, Kachin, Chin and Shan States and (13 to 15) days in the remaining Regions and States.

Night Temperature
Night Temperature will be below normal in Sagaing Region, Kachin, Shan, Chin and Kayah States and about normal in the remaining Regions and States.

Myanmar’s first-ever 500 KV power grid

Myanmar’s first-ever 500 KV power grid installation is going to start in the early 2013,” said an official from the Ministry of Electric Power. The purpose of installing a 263-mile 500 KV power grid is to avoid power losses. Thanks to it, there would be power losses to a lesser extent, he added.

The project will be implemented by three phases. At the first phase, 146-mile Thabyawya (Meiktila)-Tounggo section will be implemented with the contribution of about USD 116.32 million by Serbia soon.

A 117-mile Tounggo-Kamarnat power grid will be built during 2013, at a cost of USD 87.75 million funded by Economic Development of Cooperation of the Republic of Korea, at the second phase. At the third phase, construction of three power plants between Thabyawya and Kamarnat will be implemented at a cost of USD 87 million funded by Japan’s Overseas Development Assistance (ODA). When the country sees more sound power grids, it could reduce the power losses, which lead to more power consumption of people and factories.

Translation: MT

Basic Life Support Training for Ambulance Crews opened

NAY PYI TAW, 29 Dec—Basic Life Support Training for Ambulance Crews organized by Health Department under the Health Ministry kicked off at Nay Pyi Taw People’s Hospital (1000-bed) yesterday morning.

The course inclusive of both theories and practices aims to provide emergency health care service to the athletes and fans of the SEA Games. The director-general then visited practical rooms at the hospital. The four-day course is being taken by 20 nurses from people’s hospitals and 20 members of Myanmar Red Cross Society.—MNA

Academy awarding ceremony live on TV

NAY PYI TAW, 29 Dec—Myanmar Motion Picture Enterprise under the Ministry of Information will hold awarding ceremony for the outstanding Myanmar motion picture at the National Indoor Stadium-1 in Thuwanna of Yangon at 3 pm on 30 December.

Byline: Maung Maung Myint Swe

Photo shows installation of 500 KV power grid.