President U Thein Sein back home

The government’s drive to protect the rights of Myanmar migrants emphasizes promoting positive outcomes on migration, developing awareness of internal migrants and more social protection for them and improving socio-economic status of migrants and their families, he added.

The Vice-President acknowledged that remittances of Myanmar migrant workers are contributing towards national economic development to a certain extent. He pointed out that poverty reduction and better socio-economic development can be envisaged in the presence of effective use of overseas work experience, skills and knowledge, upgrading the skills of returning migrant workers and job creation at home.

He called for implementation of polices and proposals included in ASEAN Declaration on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers, saying that collaboration and cooperation of the governments of regional and global countries and NGOs.

Next, Union Minister for Labour, Employment and Social Welfare U Aye Myint extrapolated measures being undertaken by the government in cooperation with NGOs and INGOs for promotion of rights of migrant workers and follow-up tasks.

Then, IOM chief of mission Mr. Kieran William Gorman-Best read out a message sent by the UNSG.

President U Thein Sein back at Nay Pyi Taw International Airport by Vice-Presidents Dr Sai Mauk Kham and U Nyan Tun.—MNA

International Migration Day observed in Nay Pyi Taw

The government, in its part, is striving for protection of the rights of Myanmar migrants who have been living outside their own country,” said Vice-President Dr Sai Mauk Kham at a ceremony to commemorate the International Migration Day at Myanmar International Convention Centre, here, this morning.

The Vice-President addresses ceremony to commemorate the International Migration Day.—MNA

Indonesia brings gold back home in Track & Field events

Indonesia grasped gold medal, followed by Thailand silver and Vietnam bronze in Women’s Long Jump event. In Men’s High Jump event, Malaysia snatched gold medal, Vietnam silver and Thailand bronze. Philippines clinched gold medal while Vietnam silver and Thailand bronze in Men’s 3000m Steeplechase. While Indonesia brought gold medal to home, Vietnam was content with silver and Philippines bronze in Women’s 3000m Steeplechase. Thailand took pride in Women’s Javelin Throw after receiving gold and silver medals for home and Vietnam was just pleased with bronze.
LOCAL NEWS

**Pontaung-Ponnya road section being repaired**

GANGAW, 18 Dec—As Pontaung-Ponnya road section of Monywa-Pale-Gangaw-Haka Road is being expanded with the use of heavy machinery, the vehicles use a wider facility on their roads.

A roller being used in repairing Pontaung-Ponnya road section of Monywa-Pale-Gangaw-Haka Road.

**Shwehay Village of Singu Tsp enjoy electrification**

SINGU, 18 Dec—A ceremony to launch the self-reliant electrification was held in Shwehay Village of Singu Township in Mandalay Region on 12 December.

**Heavy rain causes overflow at Namkhin, Namlak creeks in Kengtung**

Due to narrowing and damaging road in the last monsoon, the vehicles faced difficulties and traffic congestions for several times. At present the road is being upgraded with expansion of road shoulders on both sides, repaving work and filling gravels.

**Actions of Financial Monetary and Economic Coordination Subcommittee in response to discussion between district/township development committee, merchants and businessmen on 23-01-2013 in Pathine of Ayeyawady Region**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Discussion</th>
<th>Actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Provision of loans in timely manner during business seasons and introduction of hire purchase loans</td>
<td>Myanmar Economic Bank meets twice a month and the ministerial meeting is held once a month to make decisions on provision of loans to borrowers. Banks have been given more power to provide loans and therefore become faster in providing loans. Provision of loans for hire purchase will start in 2014-15 FY.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The process of withdrawing pension with e pension card was easy and speedy in the past, but there are difficulties in switching banks.</td>
<td>If an e-pension card holder wants to change the bank branch from which to withdraw his pension, the bank branch from which he is taking his pension record it in e-pension card program on the day of application and sends it to the headquarters. The headquarters issues a new card and sends the personal information of pensioner and the new e-pension card for him to the bank branch he wants to change. All banks have been instructed to give pension to the applicant through conventional method before he gets his new e-pension card.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Account holders can transfer money between bank branches in major towns, but if there is a plan to provide money transfer services between bank branches in other smaller townships?</td>
<td>The service of money transfer between account holders was launched at 68-district bank branches and Pyinmana Township bank branch as of 18-3-2013. Measures will be taken for money transfer between bank branches in townships beginning 2014-15 FY.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Is there a plan to reduce bank interest rates?</td>
<td>Small savers and pensioners are enjoying the interests from their savings at banks. Reduction of bank interest rates is being considered based on the economic statistics of the Central Bank of Myanmar.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Can the cards are serviceable at banks in regions?</td>
<td>At present, MPU Card, Mastercard, Visa Card and China Union Pay Card are serviceable at banks. Money transfer can be done through partner banks. Banks are also improving their services.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
US budget deal clears crucial vote in Senate

WASHINGTON, 18 Dec — A two-year US budget deal on Tuesday cleared a Senate procedural vote that all but assured its passage by a simple majority later this week in the Democratic-controlled chamber.

The Senate voted 67-33 to limit debate on the measure, exceeding the required 60 votes and over- coming the opposition of conservative Republicans who objected to increased near-term government spending. Twelve Republicans joined 53 Democrats and two independents in supporting the measure, which aims to minimize the threat of another government shutdown through 1 October, 2015.

It won passage in the House of Representa- tives by an overwhelming

Republican senators, including Tea Party supporters Rand Paul and Ted Cruz, tried to stop the measure and keep automatic “sequester” spending cuts in place. The budget deal eases some of the sequester cuts by allowing budgets for government agencies and discretionary programs to rise by $63 billion over two years in exchange for future savings elsewhere.—Reuters

UK rushes out welfare curbs to deter East European migrants

LONDON, 18 Dec — British Prime Minister David Cameron said on Wednesday he was rushing out regulations to stop migrants from the European Union being able to immediately claim welfare benefits amid public fears of an influx of Romanian and Bulgarian workers.

With his Conservative Party trailing in opinion polls ahead of a 2015 election and polls showing most Britons don’t want the labor market to be further opened up to east European migrants next year, Camer- on is under pressure to act on the issue.

Anxious not to be out- flanked by the anti-immigra- tion UK Independence Party (UKIP), Cameron has said he shares public concern about EU restrictions being lifted on Romanians and Bulgarians working in Britain at the end of this year. On Wednesday, in comments pre-released by his office, he said he was bringing forward to 1 Janu- ary a previously announced measure forcing EU migrants to wait three months before they can ap- ply for welfare benefits.

A senior government source told Reuters that Cameron had originally en- visaged the measure taking effect around the middle of next year but had decided to

Ukrainian president under pressure over Russian bailout

WASHINGTON on 17 Dec, 2013.—Reuters

KIEV, 18 Dec — Ukraine’s president faced calls to resign on Wednes- day over a $15-billion bail- out from Russia which the opposition and protesters said had sold the country out to its former Soviet masters in Moscow.

Tens of thousands of protesters gathered in Kiev on Tuesday after President Viktor Yanukovych secured financial assistance and a gas price discount at talks with President Vladimir Putin, and several hundred spent the night in the freez- ing cold. Russia said it will buy Ukrainian bonds under a deal which keeps Kiev firmly in Moscow’s orbit and out of the European Union being able to imme- diately claim welfare benefits amid public fears of an influx of Romanian and Bulgarian workers.

With his Conservative Party trailing in opinion polls ahead of a 2015 election and polls showing most Britons don’t want the labor market to be further opened up to east European migrants next year, Camer- on is under pressure to act on the issue.

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UKrushes out welfare curbs to deter East

Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovych (L) gives a wink to his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin during a signing ceremony after a meeting of the Russian-Ukrainian Interstate Commission in Moscow, on 17 Dec, 2013.—Reuters

Union’s grasp but sowed doubts in some Ukrainians’ minds about what Yanu- kovych might have agreed to in secret. Many of the protesters are angry Yanu- kovych has spurned an offer of closer cooperation with Europe and look on Russia with suspicion after living for decades under Soviet communist rule.

“I think the people will eventually have it their way. We will sign up to Europe. That’s why I’m here,” said Snehana, a factory worker who spent the night on Ki- ev’s snowy main square.

Irina Litvinianko, a busi- nesswoman, said: “It’s hard to imagine it could end up in anything else but a change of government.” Opposition leaders

Three killed, 13 injured as suicide blast hits Rawalpindi, Pakistan

ISLAMABAD, 18 Dec — At least three people were killed and 13 others injured when a blast went off near a Shiite mosque in Rawal- pindi, a sister city of Paki- stan’s capital Islamabad, on Tuesday night, according to local media.

District Police Of- ficer of Rawalpindi Akhtar Laleka told media that a suicide bomber riding on a motorbike tried to enter a Shiite mosque located at Gracy Lane near the Rawal- pindi airport at about 9:50 p.m. local time. When the police tried to stop him at the checkpoint the bomber blew himself up, he said.

A man inspects a damaged motorbike at the suicide at- tack site in Rawalpindi, a sister city of Islan- dal of Pakistan on 17 Dec, 2013. At least three people were killed and 13 others injured when a blast went off near a Shiite mosque in Rawalpindi on Tuesday night, according to local media. —Xinhua

Three killed, 13 injured as suicide blast hits Rawalpindi, Pakistan

The blast site were also damaged. All the blast victims have been shifted to Di- strict Headquarters Hospital and Benazir International Hospital.

Hospital sources said at least four of the injured people were still in critical condition. Bomb disposal squad officers have reportedly found the head and parts of the body of the suicide bomber. They said an esti- mated 5 to 10 kg of explo- sives were used in the at- tack.—Xinhua

TEPCO decides permanent shutdown of two surviving Fukushima reactors

TOKYO, 18 Dec — To- kyo Electric Power Co de- cided at its board meeting Wednesday to permanently shut down two reactors at the Fukushima Daiichi plant that avoided melt- downs in the 2011 accident, responding to a request by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in September.

The Nos 5 and 6 reac- tors, however, will not be dismantled and will be used as research facilities to sup- port the challenging task of scrapping the four other reactors that have suffered core meltdowns or have been affected by hydrogen explosions.

Local calls are strong that TEPCO scrap both the Fukushima Daiichi and the nearby Fukushima Daini plants. But the utility has not made clear what it will do with the four-reactor complex about 12 kilo- meters to the south.

As new accounting rules regarding decommissio- ning came into force in October, TEPCO is likely to avoid booking a large extraordinary charge in the business year through March 2014 due to a short- fall in funds for decommissioning. After the plant was hit by a magnitude 9.0 earthquake and tsunami on 11 March, 2011, the Nos 1 to 3 reactors suffered

meltdowns and the building housing the No 4 reactor, which did not have fuel in- side its core because it was damaged by a hydrogen ex- plosion.

But the Nos 5 and 6 re- actors, which were also un- der maintenance at the time of the earthquake, achieved cold shutdowns through the use of an emergency die- 11 March, 2011, the Nos 1 to 3 reactors suffered meltdowns and the building housing the No 4 reactor, which did not have fuel inside its core because it was damaged by a hydrogen explosion. But the Nos 5 and 6 reactors, which were also under maintenance at the time of the earthquake, achieved cold shutdowns through the use of an emergency dieup generator that avoided flooding. The Nos 1 to 4 reactors were classified as defunct in April last year as TEPCO decided to de- commission them, reducing the total number of oper- able commercial reactors in Japan to 50.—Kyodo News

British Prime Minister David Cameron leaves Downing Street in London on 19 Dec, 2012.—Reuters
Mexico’s America Movil connects cable linking Latam, US

**The logo of America Movil is seen on the wall of the reception area in the company’s corporate offices in Mexico City on 13 Feb, 2013.**—REUTERS

**Mexico City, 18 Dec —** Latin America’s biggest phone company, America Movil, controlled by billionaire Carlos Slim, said on Tuesday it had connected a combined submarine cable to a newly built $1.1 billion submarine cable that stretches from South America to the United States.

The cable, designed for high-speed data transmission, will boost service to America Movil’s customers, particularly in Argentina, where demand for internet capacity is rising rapidly, the company said.

The cable, which took 19 months to lay, will connect the United States, Brazil, Colombia, Guatemala, Mexico, Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic.

Mexico-based America Movil said it would use the 77,000 kilometres (11,060 miles) of cable for transmitting voice, data and video traffic between the countries.

America Movil said in an annual report filed with US regulators that the cable is designed to transmit data at a rate of 100 gigabits per second.

A company spokesperson said the $1.1 billion cost announced on Tuesday included the cost of the land connections for the cable, which reaches Florida in the United States.

It was not immediately clear when the cable will begin operation, but the spokesperson said it could start early next year. The filing had said it would begin being used in late 2014.

America Movil, which controls more than 70 percent of Mexico’s cellphone market and about 80 percent of its fixed line market, is facing increasing local competition after a government reform was passed earlier this year.

The company has lately been trying to expand outside of Latin America, with investments in Dutch phone company KPN and Telekom Austria. About one-third of the company’s core profit still comes from Mexico.

Shares in America Movil were down 0.9 percent at 14.44 pesos in early afternoon trading.

The shares, which have been under pressure following the telecom reform in Mexico and after the company made an offer for KPN that it then withdrew, are down 2.7 percent this year.—Reuters

**New York, 18 Dec —** Wireless service provider Sprint Corp and satellite television company Dish Network Corp said they will jointly develop a trial wireless service in Texas, in an apparent sign of improving relations between the companies.

Dish has been seeking a partnership with an established mobile operator to help it enter the wireless market. However, its efforts earlier this year to buy Sprint failed after a bitter public battle with Japan’s SoftBank Corp, now the owner of 80 percent of Sprint.

Investors have been anxious to see a concrete wireless plan from Dish and Sprint, Dish has spent about $3 billion on wireless airwaves and is looking to buy more, declined to say if the trial could lead to a bigger agreement.—Reuters

**People talk on their cell phones as passers-by walk past a Sprint store in New York, on 15 Oct, 2012.**—REUTERS

**Sprint, Dish to test wireless broadband service in Texas**

Sprint, Dish may have a new type of ice: diamonds

**Cape Canaveral, (Florida), 18 Dec —** Astronauts aboard the International Space Station will begin a series of spacewalks this weekend to repair the orbital outpost’s cooling system, delaying a cargo re-supply flight until January, NASA said on Tuesday.

One of the station’s two ammonia cooling systems shut down on Wednesday, forcing astronauts to power down unnecessary equipment and suspending some of the laboratory’s science experiments. The six-member crew was not in any danger, NASA said.

Aboard the station, three spacewalks are planned to complete the work, the first of which is scheduled for Saturday by station flight engineers Rick Mastracchio and Michael Hopkins. Two more spacewalks are targeted for 23 and 25 December.

Mastracchio and Hopkins will retrieve a spare pump from a storage site outside the station and replace the faulty unit. Astronauts tackled the same job, which proved more difficult than anticipated, in 2010.

Repairing the station’s cooling system will sideline Orbital Sciences Corp’s first cargo run to the station, a $100 billion research lab that flies about 250 miles above Earth.—Reuters

**The International Space Station crew opens a hatch at 4:10am EDT (8:10am GMT) to begin unloading cargo in this NASA handout photo taken on 30 Sept, 2013.**—REUTERS

**Antarctica may have a new type of ice: diamonds**

**Oslo, 18 Dec —** A kind of rock that often contains diamonds has been found in Antarctica for the first time, hinting at mineral riches in the vast, icy continent — where mining is illegal.

No diamonds were found, but researchers said they were confident the gems were there.

“It would be very surprising if there weren’t diamonds in the kimberlites,” said Greg Yaxley of the Australian National University in Canberra, who led the research, said in a telephone interview.

Writing in the journal Nature Communications, an Australian-led team reported finding the kimberlite deposits around Mount Meredith, in the Prince Charles Mountains in East Antarctica. Kimberlites are a rare rock where diamonds are often found; it is named after the South African town of Kimberley, the site of a late 19th-century diamond rush. That does not mean Antarctica will soon see its own diamond rush. Antarctica is not only forbiddingly cold and remote but also protected by a treaty that preserves the continent for scientific research and wildlife, from penguins to seals.

The 1991 environmental accord banned mining for at least 50 years.—Reuters

**Antarctica may have a new type of ice: diamonds**

**Trio of spacewalks planned to fix space station’s cooling system**

**Most Telecom Italia investors sign up to vote on board’s future**

**Milan, 18 Dec —** Investors with a combined 53.8 percent stake in Telecom Italia have registered so far for a key shareholder meeting on 20 December that will decide whether to oust the board, the company said on Tuesday.

It means Telecom Italia’s controlling investor Telco - which has a 22.4 percent stake - will need the backing of other investors to fend off a proposal by rebel shareholders to remove the board. To pass, the proposal needs a majority of 50 percent plus one vote of shareholders at the meeting.

In a statement, Telecom Italia said the shares registered include a stake of over 4.8 percent held by US giant of Italian business, Marco Fossati, a rebel investor with a 5 percent stake in Telecom Italia.

More shareholders can register between now and the meeting, which was called by Italian businessman Greg Yaxley of the Australian National University in Canberra, who led the research, said in a telephone interview.

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The 1991 environmental accord banned mining for at least 50 years.—Reuters
Euro zone ministers agree on backstops for financing bank closures

BRUSSELS, 18 Dec — Euro zone finance ministers agreed early on Wednesday how to ensure financing for closing down banks in a deal that boosts chances of an agreement on the overall blueprint on dealing with failing lenders later on Wednesday.

The deal is part of European Union efforts to build a banking union in which bank supervision is shared at the EU level and so is the financial responsibility for winding down lenders that are no longer viable.

“The final agreement on procedures, conferring on the commission the right to share the costs of winding down banks elsewhere in the euro zone for as long as possible,” EU Economic and Monetary Affairs Commissioner Olli Rehn told Reuters.

Banks will provide the cash to pay for the closure of failed lenders, giving roughly 55 billion euros ($76 billion) over 10 years accumulated in a Single Resolution Fund.

Until then, however, if there is not enough money from the fees, governments will be able to impose more levies on banks. If that does not suffice, they would help with public money.

If a government would not have enough money, it could borrow from the euro zone bailout fund EMS, like the Spanish government did to recapitalise its banks in 2012, according to the deal reached by euro zone finance ministers.

“In the transitional period, bridge financing will be available either from national sources, backed by bank levies, or from the ESM, in line with agreed procedures,” a draft statement by euro zone finance ministers said.

This is a victory for Germany, which was reluctant for euro zone countries to share the costs of winding down banks elsewhere in the euro zone for as long as possible. — Reuters

New health law may allow traditional Chinese doctors to practice in Hungary

BUDAPEST, 18 Dec — Hungary’s parliament amended the Health Act on Tuesday, opening the way for the Ministry of Human Resources to issue a decree that would allow doctors of traditional Chinese medicine to obtain permits to practice.

Until now the Ministry of Human Resources, which is responsible for the functioning of the national healthcare, was obliged to require that all medical practitioners have degrees equivalent to Hungarian ones.

If and when the ministry issues the decree, practitioners of traditional Chinese medicine who have certificates from schools requiring at least five years of university-level study and who can prove that they have not been banned from practicing at home or in the country where they worked will be able to apply for permits to practice in Hungary.

A new law authorizes the Scientific Council on Health to issue the permits. The degrees would not have to be recognized as equivalent to Hungarian diplomas since the law recognizes that Hungary has no equivalent to traditional Chinese medicine.

Thirteen permits to practice traditional Chinese medicine were granted in Hungary in 2003 when Péter Medgyessy was prime minister, but none have been issued since because of the equivalency requirement, which the new law now allows the ministry to bypass for practitioners of traditional Chinese medicine.—Xinhua

Drugmakers urge FDA security audit after cyber breach

A view shows the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) logo at the lobby of its headquarters in Silver Spring, Maryland on 14 Aug, 2012.—Reuters

BOSTON, 18 Dec — The US Food and Drug Administration is under pressure from the pharmaceutical industry and lawmakers to undergo an independent security audit, after hackers broke into a computer system used by healthcare companies to submit information to the agency.

Drug companies fear the cyber thieves may have accessed corporate secrets that are on file with the agency, such as data about drug manufacturing, clinical trials, marketing plans and other proprietary information.

While some lawmakers charge that the hackers breached the FDA’s gateway, compromising confidential business data, the agency argues that the access was limited.

“The breach came to light last month when the FDA sent letters to users of an online system at the Center for Biologics Evaluation and Research. The letters said the breach was detected by the FDA on 15 October and that it resulted in the theft of usernames, phone numbers, email addresses and passwords.” —Reuters

UK got value for money from Lloyds share sale

LONDON, 18 Dec — The government’s first sale of shares in Lloyds Banking Group was managed effectively and provided value for money, Britain’s public spending watchdog said on Wednesday.

The endorsement of the sale process by Britain’s National Audit Office (NAO) may influence the Conservative-led coalition as it ponders how best to offload its remaining 33 billion pounds ($53.2 billion) stake in the bank.

The government raised 3.2 billion pounds ($5.20 billion) through the sale of a 6 percent stake in the bank in September. It saw the disposal as a milestone

New light of Myanmar

Asia business sentiment falls in fourth quarter as global worries weigh

SEOUL, 18 Dec — Business sentiment among Asia’s top companies dropped sharply in the fourth quarter, extending last quarter’s declines, with global economic uncertainty and rising costs weighing on the region’s firms, a Thomson Reuters/INSEAD Asia Business Sentiment Index fell to 62 in the fourth quarter from 66 in the third quarter of 2013, the lowest reading since

the third quarter of 2012. A reading above 50 indicates an overall positive outlook.

Sentiment in Southeast Asia’s $1.5 trillion economy was undermined by political turbulence in Thailand and a typhoon in the Philippines, causing dismal readings of 40 and 58 respectively, which were the lowest for both countries since the poll was first compiled in 2009.

Although China and India’s bullish scores of 75 and 82 respectively supported the index, exporters driven north Asian economies such as South Korea as well as regional trading hub Singapore also showed weaker readings, under-scoring still-anaemic global business conditions.

“The global economic recovery is still very fragile,” Zhang Shiyuan, an economist at Shanghai-based Southwest Securities Co said. There is a fundamental problem that there’s still too much debt. It’s a time bomb that may be detonated if monetary and fiscal policies don’t coordinate well.”

The survey showed that the auto sector was the most negative with a reading of 33, a sharp drop from 63 in the previous quarter, followed by food and resources sectors with fourth-quarter scores of 50. The index surveyed more than 10 of the Asia-Pacific region’s top companies including Hyundai Heavy Industries (009540.KS), Fast Retailing (9838.T) and International Container Terminal Services Inc (ICTS) (ICT.PS) in 11 economies, across sectors including property, financials and tech.—Reuters
XXVII SEA Games

**Saw Dar Pot** (Right) of Myanmar lend a blow to Bouaphan Phankee of Laos during 54-kg category of Muay. **Photo: Aye Min Soe**

**K K Thin of Myanmar** strikes a caneball during double regu event between Myanmar and Indonesia. **Photo: Aye Min Soe**

**Man’s Best Friend:** Two security officers take care of a sniffer dog as they go Wunna Theikdi Stadium in Nay Pyi Taw. **Photo: Aye Min Soe**

**Victoria of Myanmar kicks Sottha of Thailand during below 62 kg Taekwondo category. **Photo: Aye Min Soe**

**Winners of equestrian event of 27th SEA Games.** **Photo: July Moe**

**Cyclists from different countries participate in 163 km Road Race of 27th SEA Games.** **Photo: Ye Htut Tin**

**27th SEA Games Women’s Football Result** Myanmar 10 - 11 Thailand
Gold medal goes to Singapore in Equestrian event

NAY PYI TAW, 18 Dec—Final match of Equestrian event of the 27th SEA Games took place at Wunna Theikdi Horse Race Course, here, this morning. Altogether 19 riders from Myanmar, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Cambodia and Singapore participated in today’s event. Gold medal went to Junine Khoo (Singapore), silver to Jaruporn Limpichat (Thailand) and bronze to Jendry Palandeng (Indonesia) in individual show jumping event.—July Mor

Laotian cyclist capture gold in men’s 163 kg cycling event

NAY PYI TAW, 18 Dec—Men’s cycling 163 km event of the 27th SEA Games started from Leinli Bridge this morning. No (22) Phounsavath Ariva of Laos swept gold medal with (4:24:22) in the event, followed by Vietnamese cyclist No (78) Mai Nguyen Hung, the silver with (4:29:07) and No (11) Manulang Robin of Indonesia the bronze with (4:29:26).

President of Asian Cycling Federation Mr. Datuk Hajiabu Samah Wahab and Vice-President of Myanmar Cycling Federation U Thet Oo presented medals and SEA Games mascots to the winners.—Ko Myo (Shwe Paukkan)

Indonesian team takes gold in cycling event

NAY PYI TAW, 18 Dec—Cycling event of the 27th SEA Games continued for the second day at Leinli Bridge, here, this morning. President of Myanmar Cycling Federation U Thu Hsaw awarded the winners and his wife Daw Kyi Khin presented gifts to them. Officials and mediamen from the ASEAN countries and spectators enjoyed the match.—Ko Myo (Shwe Paukkan)

Thailand secure two gold medals in Kata events

NAY PYI TAW, 18 Dec—The Judo events of 27th SEA Games kicked off at Zeyathiri Indoor Stadium (C) today. The first prize went to Thailand (430 points), second to Vietnam (423 points) and third to Myanmar (421 points) in men’s Nage No Kata event. Meanwhile, Thailand won first prize (442 points) in Ju No Kata event. The first prize went to Sel Wee of Malaysia in women’s 45 kilo Judo event, second to Philippines and joint third prizes to Thailand and Laos.

Vovinam event on 19-21 December

NAY PYI TAW, 18 Dec—Opening ceremony of Vovinam event of 27th SEA Games took place at Zeyathiri Indoor Stadium (A) here today. Vovinam events will be held from 19 to 21 December. Seventy-two medals—18 gold, 18 silver and 36 bronze medals for men, women and mixed events will be conferred.

Men’s and women’s volleyball events go on

NAY PYI TAW, 18 Dec—Indonesia defeated Malaysia in women’s volleyball play-off event of the 27th SEA Games. Meanwhile, Myanmar women’s volleyball team lost to Thailand. In men’s volleyball event, Vietnam won over Laos. Men’s volleyball semifinal events and women’s playoff event will go on tomorrow at Zeyathiri Indoor Stadium (B). The final events will be on 21 December.

Two Judo athletes attacking against each other in action at Zeyathiri Indoor Stadium (C) in progress.

Indonesian and Malaysian players in women’s volleyball play-off event of the 27th SEA Games.—Photo: MYO THAN (NLM)

Two Judo athletes attacking against each other in action at Zeyathiri Indoor Stadium (C) in progress. Photo: MYO THAN (NLM)

Men’s and women’s volleyball events go on

Indonesian and Malaysian players in women’s volleyball play-off event of the 27th SEA Games.—Photo: MYO THAN (NLM)

Two Judo athletes attacking against each other in action at Zeyathiri Indoor Stadium (C) in progress. Photo: MYO THAN (NLM)
Migration and humanity

The world has just celebrated the International Migrants Day on 18 December. The 18 December is appointed by United Nations General Assembly in 2000, about 10 years after adoption of international convention on the protection of the rights of migrant workers and members of the families. We have celebrated the day for 14 years. Have the conditions of migrant workers improved?

Myanmar has seen a lot of migrant workers migrating to neighboring countries over past two decades. They include a lot of ethnic groups. Do they really get protected by any legal framework or enjoy their rights?

There is also a huge amount of internal migration in Myanmar as people from least developed areas are flowing into a few relatively more developed parts of the country. Do they get decent jobs or are they treated as just cheap labour?

What we still need to do now is to give attention to the rights of migrant workers and get them treated well as a fellow human being in a bid to promote the humanity. The migration should not lose them the sense of being another human sharing the planet.

UEC Chairman enjoys Muay boxing events

Nay Pyi Taw, 18 Dec—Muay boxing events of the 27th SEA Games continued today at Wunna Theikdi Sports Complex.

Among the spectators were Chairman of Union Election Commission U Tin Aye and the Union ministers, deputy ministers, officials and fans.

In men’s 54 kg preliminary level competition, Saw Dar Pot of Myanmar won over Laotian Muay boxer Bouaphan Phankeo.

Dignitaries give boxers applause in Muay boxing events at Wunna Theikdi Sports Complex.—MNA

A total of 86 boxers including managers and coaches from Myanmar, Thailand, Laos, Vietnam, Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines participated in today’s Muay contests.

Men’s Muay events include 48 kg, 51 kg, 54 kg, 57 kg, 60 kg, 63.5 kg, 71 kg and 75 kg and women’s Muay events include 48 kg, 51 kg, 54 kg, 57 kg and 60 kg.

The preliminary competitions will continue tomorrow and semifinals and finals will be held on 21 December in conjunction with prize awarding ceremony.

Vice-Senior General Soe Win visits Parachute Division in India

Nay Pyi Taw, 18 Dec—Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Soe Win left Palam Tech Area Airport in New Delhi for Agra by air on 12 December where they were welcomed by No (50) Parachute Division Commander Brig Jagjeet Singh Nanda, SM and wife.

The Vice-Senior General and party looked round demonstration of soldiers in the parachute division and went to Agra Fort and Taj Mahal where they observed artifacts and preservations.

In the evening, they flew to Jaipur via Agra Airport and attended a dinner hosted by South-Western Command Commander Lt-Gen Gyan Bhushan, PVSM, UYSM, AVSM, VSM, ADC at the officer’s mess hall.

Public Announcement

The following junctions that have access to Wunna Theikdi Sports Complex in Zabuthiri Township, Nay Pyi Taw will temporarily be closed from 12 noon on 22-12-2013 when the closing ceremony of the 27th SEA Games will be held till the end of the ceremony.

(1) Junction of Pyinmana Taung Nyo Road and Nyana Aung Myaw (at the top of Soe San street)
(2) Junction of Mya Yee Mandal Road and Mani Sandar Road (near the junction of Swa road)
(3) Junction of Zayar Aung Myaw Road and Mani Sandar Road (at the top of BEHS No (11) street)
(4) Junction of Mani Sandar Road and Gate-5 (at Gate5)
(5) Junction of Zayar Aung Myaw Road and Mani Sandar Road (at the top of Athletes’ Village)
(6) Junction of Pyinmana Taung Nyo Road and V4 Road (at the top of Nay Pyi Taw ring road)
(7) Junction of Zayar Aung Myaw Road and Nan Chum village monastery road
(8) Junction of Maha Zayar Road and Zeya Bala Road (at the top of Kha Yay Housing)

Traffic Police Force
Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker holds talks with Indonesian vice-president

NAY PYI TAW, 18 Dec—Thura U Shwe Mann, Speaker of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw and Pyithu Hluttaw Thura U Shwe Mann, held talks in Jakarta today over strengthening bilateral friendship and exchanged views on democratic reforms.

Also present at the meeting were chairman of Hluttaw committees Thura U Aye Myint, U Hla Myint Oo and U Htay Myint. During his visit to Indonesia, Speaker Thura U Shwe Mann also held talks with Chairman of Regional Representatives Council of Indonesia Mr Irman Gusman over parliamentary works and democratic reforms at Indonesian parliament in Jakarta today.

The Myanmar delegation led by Speaker Thura U Shwe Mann also visited the parliamentary meeting of Indonesia. Speaker Thura U Shwe Mann also met with Indonesian Foreign Minister Mr Marty Natalegawa and held talks over bilateral friendship and cooperation.

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing... (from page 16)

It was also attended by Commander-in-Chief (Navy) Admiral Thura Shwe, the senior military officers from the Commander-in-Chief Office (Army) and Commander of Coastal Region Command Maj-Gen Khin Maung Htay.

After the meeting, the Myanmar delegation presented gifts to the officers, servicemen and their families, Daw Kyu Kye Hla, wife of the Senior General, the cash assistance to the fund for station Maternal and Child Welfare Association and Adjutant-General Lt-General Khin Zaw Oo, sports gear.

Then, the Senior General and party cordially greeted those present.

Myawady

Correction

Please read 27th SEA Games instead of 29th SEA Games in 4th line of first column in the article under title of “Muay athletes punch and kick their way to glory and adulation” on page 10 of this daily issued on 18 December. Error is regretted.—NLM

Adopted in Tokyo, with its Implementation Plan on 10-Year Strategic Economic Cooperation Roadmap;—NLM

We will continue to strengthen mutual trust and cooperation in the following four areas of partnership:

Partners for Peace and Stability

We reaffirm our enhanced commitment for the maintenance of peace, security, and stability, which is in the regional and global interests through:

- Further maintaining the stance as a peace-loving nation and strengthening peace-oriented values through, inter alia, respect for universally recognized principles of international law, and upholding the principle of moderation;—NLM

- Resolving disputes by peaceful means including through dialogue and consultations, renunciation of the threat or use of force and in accordance with universally recognized principles of international law;—NLM

- Enhancing dialogue and cooperation to promote the rule of law, good governance, democracy, and human rights law;—NLM

- Strengthening cooperation on disaster management, UN Peace-Keeping Operations, non-proliferation

and disarmament, counter-terrorism, transnational crime and maritime security, among others.

Partners of Prosperity

We are committed to further enhancing our comprehensive economic partnership through:

- Strengthening cooperation in areas of mutual interest related to trade in goods, trade in services and investment, including to enhance the utilisation of the ASEAN-Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement and the implementation of the ASEAN-Japan 10-Year Strategic Economic Cooperation Roadmap;—NLM

- Efforts to support the ASEAN Connectively and a wider regional connectivity, as well as the utilisation of enhanced connectivity by business sectors, promoting of economic development, knowledge-based and innovation-driven industries, and continuing cooperation to narrow the development gap in the region; and—NLM

- Strengthening cooperation in air and maritime linkages between ASEAN and Japan in the region as well as ensuring freedom and safety of navigation and overflight, in accordance with the universally recognized principles of international law, including the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), and the relevant standards and recommended practices by the international Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO);—NLM

Partners for Quality of Life

We are committed to promoting human resource development and overcoming socio-economic and environmental issues by:

- Promoting cooperation in science, technology and innovation, information and communications technology and cyber security;—NLM

- Strengthening partnership in agriculture, food security, energy security, nuclear safety, environmental protection and water resources management;—NLM

- Continuing to cooperate for the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals by 2015 and beyond, as well as enhancing human security in line with UN General Assembly Resolution 66/290, in particular to further improve the well-being and livelihood of the peoples of ASEAN and Japan.

Heart-to-Heart Partners

We will continue to strengthen mutual trust and “heart-to-heart” understanding as well as nurture friendship by:

- Promoting cultural and arts exchange, and people-to-people exchanges in tourism, youth, and sports;—NLM

- Enhancing cooperation in education, including, among others, language learning; and—NLM

- Preserving diverse cultures and traditions;—NLM

Adopted in Tokyo, with its Implementation Plan on the Fourteenth Day of December of the Year Two Thousand Thirteen.
Money exchange counter, mobile banking services available in Nay Pyi Taw during SEA Games

Nay Pyi Taw, 18 Dec—Nay Pyi Taw Bank Branch of Myanmar Economic Bank is providing the public including participants to the SEA Games and local and foreign sports fans with mobile banking services in downtown Nay Pyi Taw, apart from opening a money exchange counter at Social Zone in Sports Village, here, as of 1 December. The counter being kept open at Social Zone is conducting remittance service and foreign currency exchange for local currency based on daily exchange rate of the Central Bank of Myanmar, making change and exchanging old banknotes for new ones. Moreover, mobile banking services cars parked at Nay Pyi Taw Wunna Theikdi sports complex from 9 am to 1 pm and at Nay Pyi Taw Myoma Market, Thabyegon Market, Junction Shopping Mall and Capital Shopping Mall from 2 pm to 6 pm are providing banking services to customers except local remittance service.—MNA

Health Care Activities

Midwifery refresher course conducted

Sagaing, 18 Dec—Sagaing District Maternal and Child Welfare Supervisory Committee and District Health Department jointly conducted the midwifery refresher course at the hall of Sagaing Township General Hospital (200bed) in Sagaing on 16 December morning.

Aung, Township Medical Officer Dr Kyaw Kyaw and Dr Su Su Lwin of Sanpyauchau Station Hospital. Magway Region Hlutaw representative U Myint Ngwe explained purpose of donating. Township Administrator U Ko Ko Aung spoke words of thanks. It was also attended by Pyithu Hlutaw U Aye Naing of the township, the Township Administrator, members of Township Development, Commander of Township Police Force Police Major Tin Aung Kyaw, members of District and Township MCWAs and Women’s Affairs Organization, trainees from Sagaing, Myinnu and Myaung townships. The training course was opened from 16 to 18 December.

Ambulance donated to Model Chaungkauk Village of Sinbaungwe Tsp

Sinbaungwe, 18 Dec—Well wisher Sayadaw Bhaddanta Samvara and disciples donated one ambulance to Model Village Hospital in Chaungkauk Village of the township on 15 December. Sayadaw Bhaddanta Samvara and disciples donated ambulance worth K 13.5 million to Township Administrator U Ko Ko Aung, Township Medical Officer Dr Kyaw Kyaw and Dr Su Su Lwin of Sanpyauchau Station Hospital.

Talks on population, taking census process shared

Mongphyat, 18 Dec—A talk on population and housings in taking census process was held at the hall of Township General Administration Department in Mongphyat of Shan State (East) on 13 December.

Chairman of the Township Census Committee Township Administrator U Aung Mying Kyaw made a speech on population and census taking process. Head of District Immigration and Public Relations Department U Set Shwe explained process of taking census and scrutiny works. Head of Township INRD U Saw Maung Hla explained the law of census and Head of District Information and Public Relations Department U Solomon population and housing matters. It was also attended by members of the township, ward and village census committees, members of the development supportive committee and census committee members of regiments and units. Head of District INRD U Set Shwe replied to queries raised by those present.

First textile diploma course opened

Amarapura, 18 Dec—Saungda Weaving and Vocational Institute of Small-scale Industries Department under the Ministry of Cooperatives opened the textile diploma course held at the institute on 16 December.

Director-General U Kyaw Ngwe of the Department made a speech. Principal Daw Tint Tint explained the disciplines of the school and plans to give lectures to the trainees.

The institute K 18000 each to trainees. A total of 34 trainees are attending the one year course.—Kyemon-Kyaw Sin Mo (Region INRD)

Four objectives of 66th Anniversary Independence Day

- All the national people to live together in the Union forever in weal or woe;
- All the national people to strive together for non-disintegration of the Union, non-disintegration of national solidarity and perpetuation of sovereignty;
- All the national people to participate in efforts for ceasing armed conflicts and gaining genuine peace;
- All the national people to work hard in building a developed and discipline-flourishing democratic nation.

Charity Affairs

Blankets, offertories donated to 389 aged of over 70 years in Monywa

Monywa, 18 Dec—The 11th ceremony to donate blankets, clothes and medicines were donated to 372 aged of over 70 years at Aung Dhammayon in Aungchantha Ward of Monywa on 15 December. The organizing committee presented gifts to 17 older persons who were afforded to attend the ceremony. They donated goods worth K 1.8 million for the aged. It was attended by Chairman of Monywa Township Management Committee U Nyunt Soe, and wellwishers.—Kyemon-Myo Win Tun (Monywa)

HRD

Thein Htaik San library put into service

Yezagyo, 18 Dec—A ceremony to open Thein Htaik San self-reliant library was held at the library in Salingon Village of Yezagyo U Khang Tun, Head of Township Information and Public Relations Daw San Yu Maw and Patron of the library U Soe Tin formally opened the library.

On the occasion, the Township Administrator and the Head of Township IPRD explained durability of the library.

Next, member of Township Development Supportive Committee U Aung San, National Literary Award winner U Than Aung (Than Aung-Anyayay) and writer Swe Hlaing Oo (Swe Hlaing Oo-Yezaogyo) gave talks on reading habit.

The library was 20 feet long, 18 feet wide and 12 feet high. It was built at a cost of K 3 million contributed by the local people.—Kyemon-Aung (Ma Tun Thativi)
Li urges administrators to build clean government

BEIJING, 18 Dec — Premier Li Keqiang on Tuesday urged civil servants at all levels to take the lead with the “eight-point” guidelines to ban extravagance and formalism.

Li made the remarks at an award ceremony for individuals and collectives of civil servants, noting that they should not only be participants in reform, but promoters. “Civil servants should shoulder the burden of reform including streamlining government and delegating power to lower levels,” said Li. Li reiterated the importance of “serve the people” and urged solution of the people’s problems and realization of civil servants’ expectations. Civil servants at all levels should increase their legal awareness, abide by the law and perform in accordance with professional ethics, to build a law-based government.

A total of 99 individuals and 80 collectives were honoured at the ceremony, and an overwhelming majority are from grassroots positions and work in remote areas under harsh conditions but have achieved unusual success in ordinary positions.

India, Japan navies to hold 4-day exercise from Thursday

NEW DELHI, 18 Dec — The navies of India and Japan will hold a four-day exercise in waters off the Indian coast from Thursday, the Indian government said on Tuesday.

A government statement said the exercise in the Bay of Bengal will be participated in by the Indian Navy’s stealth frigate Satpura, guided missile destroyer Rannijay and missile corvette Kuthar, while the Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Force will send two guided missile destroyers, Ariake and Setogiri.

The two sides will hold practice boarding, searching and seizing of target vessels to enhance interoperability in anti piracy operations, while also carrying out cross-deck helicopter landing practice and “operations in anti-surface, anti-submarine and anti-air threat scenarios.”

The exercise will be the second of its kind since the two sides agreed to hold them in November 2011 during Indian Defence Minister AK Antony’s visit to Japan. The first was conducted in waters off Japan in January 2012, at which time India sent four naval ships.

It covered humanitarian aid and disaster relief operations, search and rescue, and anti piracy operations.

The Indian Navy and Japan’s MSDF have been collaborating to combat piracy off the Gulf of Aden.

Singapore to deport 53 foreign workers following riot

SINGAPORE, 18 Dec — Singapore will deport 53 foreign workers over their suspected involvement in rioting earlier this month, in which a mob attacked police officers and police cars after a fatal bus accident that killed an Indian worker, according to a government website.

They will be repatriated to their home countries and banned from returning to Singapore, said a statement on the Ministry of Home Affairs website, based on comments by Singapore Deputy Prime Minister Teo Chee Hean at a press conference on Tuesday.

Local media reported that 52 Indian nationals and one Bangladeshi will be deported.

Rioting is rare in the wealthy city-state which has not seen such occurrences on its streets since racial riots in 1969.

“These actions and conduct had threatened public order, thus making their continued presence in Singapore undesirable,” the statement said.

In addition, 28 people — all Indian nationals — have been charged in court for direct involvement in the riot, such as violent acts and damaging government property. According to Singapore’s penal code, any person guilty of rioting could be jailed and even caned.

The government has appointed a four-member committee chaired by a retired judge to look into the factors that led to the riot and to make recommendations to prevent recurrences of such incidents in the future.

The government reacted swiftly to the riot by imposing several measures to restore peace in the Little India area, including a temporary ban on the sale and consumption of alcohol during weekends, a period when thousands of foreign workers throng the area on their days off.

But the measure has led to complaints of a sharp plunge in business for shops in the area, so the government is expected to announce some revised steps soon.

“The vast majority of foreign workers in Singapore are law abiding. They come here to earn a living and support their families in their home countries. In the process they contribute to Singapore by supplementing our need for workers,” the statement said.

But it added, “We have taken strong and decisive action to charge and to repatriate those who took part in the riot to send a strong signal that we will not tolerate actions by anyone which threaten law and order in Singapore.”

China's Premier Li Keqiang meets with representatives attending an awarding ceremony of outstanding civil servants and groups, in Beijing, capital of China, on 17 Dec, 2013. Liu Yunshan, a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee, also attended the ceremony. —Xinhua

China's Premier Li Keqiang meets with representatives attending an awarding ceremony of outstanding civil servants and groups, in Beijing, capital of China, on 17 Dec, 2013. Liu Yunshan, a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee, also attended the ceremony. —Xinhua

Fukushima residents to vacate last evacuation centre by year-end

FUKUSHIMA, Japan, 18 Dec — The occupants of the last evacuation centre housing people displaced by the March 2011 earthquake, tsunami and nuclear crisis will leave it by the end of this year, the mayor of an evacuated town in Fukushima Prefecture said on Wednesday.

“We will step forward to rebuild their lives,” Shiro Izawa, mayor of Futaba, who hosts the crippled Fukushima Daiichi nuclear complex, told reporters after a town assembly meeting. As of Tuesday, seven evacuees from Futaba were living at the center in Kazo, Saitama Prefecture, which was once used as a high school building, and all of them, aged 60 or older, have found new accommodation, according to the municipal government.

Izawa said, “We will continue providing administrative services to the evacuees so they will not feel inconvenient.”

The entire population of Futaba was evacuated in the wake of the nuclear crisis at the Fukushima Daiichi plant on March 11, 2011, and the headquarters of the municipal government was transferred to the former school building before being moved to Iwaki, Fukushima, in June this year.

The evacuation center will officially shut down early next year following maintenance work, Izawa said. —Kyodo News

Floods kill four, displace over 4,000 in Indonesia

JAKARTA, 18 Dec — Floods hitting East Java Province of Indonesia since last weekend have left four people dead and forced more than 4,000 others to take shelters, a disaster agency official said here on Tuesday.

The Solo and Lamong rivers bloated by days of torrential rains burst their banks and submerged several areas in the Districts of Bojonegoro, Gresik, Tuban and Lamongan, said Sutopo Purwo Nugroho, spokesman for the National Disaster Management and Mitigation agency.

“In Mojokerto — two people were dead and in Gresik two others ( have) been killed, they were swept away by the currents,” he told Xinhua by phone.

The official said that the waters are likely to flood in other high lands in the province, where the evacuees have been taking shelters in buildings and tents at the higher grounds as about 15,000 houses have been inundated. The floods also submerged about 2,000 hectares of rice fields, he added. Seasonal downpours often incur floods each year in Indonesia, a chain of 17,500 islands where over millions of people live in flood-prone plains that are close to rivers. —Xinhua

Floods in Indonesia. —Xinhua
 CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
MV KOTA RESTU VOY NO (357)
Consignees of cargo carried on MV KOTA RESTU VOY NO (357) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 19.12.2013 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: MS ADVANCE CONTAINER LINES

Phone No: 256908/378316/376797

 CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
MV THIGAYU VOY NO (04/13)
Consignees of cargo carried on MV THIGAYU VOY NO (04/13) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 19.12.2013 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of S.P.W(1) 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: MS KRUNG THON NAVA CO LTD

Phone No: 256916/256919/256921

Visa-free travel for Turks to EU not in sight yet

ANKARA, 18 Dec—Agreements signed on Monday in Ankara between Turkey and the European Union (EU) fell short of expectations that Turks will get a visa-free travel to EU member states in specific time frame in exchange for admitting transition of illegal immigrants back to Turkey for repatriation.

Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu and EU Home Affairs Commissioner Cecilia Malmstrom signed the agreement to launch negotiations on lifting visa requirements for Turks travelling to Europe.

Yet the agreement does not guarantee that the visa-waiver will happen eventually and there is no deadline set for that goal. In exchange, Turkey has agreed to sign another accord called Readmission Agreement to allow EU member states to send illegal immigrants tranferred from Turkey back to Turkey.

“This agreement does not see an automatic dropping of visa requirements for Turkish citizens at the end of process,” Idris Gursuy, political analyst and bureau chief for mass weekly news magazine Akşiyon, told Xinhua.

“It may very well leave Turkey with a heavy burden of tackling big number of illegal immigrants dropped by the EU in its own laps,” he added. The opposition is also critical of agreements with main opposition Republican People’s Party (CHP) deputy Faruk Logoglu saying on Monday that the cost may be high for Turkey. “This agreement brings very heavy obligations for Turkey. We are in a position of burdening ourselves with heavy obligations for something which is not certain,” he said a press conference in parliament.

Turkish government officials defended agreements saying that they have assurances that both deals will go in parallel.

“Today is a milestone in Turkey-EU relations,” he said Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan during a signing ceremony held in the Turkish capital of Ankara.

“Visa-free travel to Europe will begin in three to three-and-a-half years,” he said. “We can’t predict how long this (visa liberalization) dialogue will last. We hope that both sides will take advantage of this process ahead of us,” Malmstrom said.

Turkey pledges to work on strengthening border security and building detention centres for illegal migrants for three years. The EU has to reevaluate Turkey’s performance before giving a green light to visa-free travel to Turkish citizens.

Xinhua
Actor Joaquin Phoenix finds love in a virtual world in ‘Her’

NEW YORK, 18 Dec — Joaquin Phoenix knew he had to stand in Strike Jonze’s latest film “Her,” an unconventional romance that explores ideas about intimacy, isolation, relationships and technology, because it wasn’t a typical love story.

Phoenix’s depressed writer character finds love in the film, set in a futuristic Los Angeles, but the object of his affection isn’t a co-worker or the girl next door. It’s an intuitive, voice-controlled, computer operating system named Samantha.

“I thought it was really interesting and unique, that there was this great emotional centre you could grab onto, that it wasn’t too exotic,” Phoenix told Reuters ahead of the film’s opening in US theaters on Wednesday.

“There are these great big ideas and themes to explore but it felt totally accessible.”


By day he dictates affective letters that are transcribed by a computer into “handwritten” notes for clients to their loved ones. In the evening he plays a large video game alone in his high-rise, sparsely furnished apartment.

The National Board of Review named “Her” best picture of 2013, calling it “an outstanding achievement that is sure to become a new classic,” and awarded Jonze its best director award.

Phoenix, 39, nabbed his fourth Golden Globe nomination for his role in “Her,” while the film won Globe nominations for best picture in a comedy or musical and best screenplay.

“In a tender about-face from his fearsome performance in ‘The Master,’ Phoenix here is enchantingly open, vulnerable, sweet-natured and yearning for emotional completion,” The Hollywood Reporter named about his performance.

The New York Post praised Jonze, who wrote the screenplay and is known for pushing cinematic boundaries since his off-the-wall 1999 film “Being John Malkovich.”

“Jonze seems to be heading for a far quirker ending than the one he actually delivers, but he does tap into the zeitgeist with his unlikely romantic fable,” it said.— Reuters

Filipina chosen Miss International 2013

TOKYO, 18 Dec — Bea Rose Santiago of the Philippines won the 2013 Miss International pageant on Tuesday in Tokyo, saying she hopes to use her title to help reconstruction of her country which has been severely damaged by Typhoon Haiyan.

An earlier Miss International crowned Santiago, 23, as the 2012 Miss International, Ikumi Yoshimatsu, was absent from the event despite tradition that the previous year’s winner crowns the new title holder.

Yoshimatsu, 26, told a Press conference on Monday in Tokyo that she was asked by the organizer to refrain from attending this year’s pageant after she had received threats.

Representatives from 67 countries and territories attended the Tokyo pageant.—Kyodo News

Michael’s eldest son, Prince, says he didn’t even know his father’s name until he was six because of the sheltered lifestyle.—PTI

NEW YORK, 18 Dec — King of Pop Michael Jackson’s children have spoken about their sheltered yet loving childhood with their late father in a new documentary Remembering Michael, revealing they had little idea of what went on outside the walls of the high-security Californian ranch, reported New York daily News.

Speaking in the tell-all film made by the Thriller hitmaker’s mother, Katherine Jackson, Paris said, “There are a lot of bad people out there but he always wanted a taste of normal life. We didn’t know a lot of kids our age. We were more secluded, we never left the ranch that often.

“He promised he would teach me how to moonwalk but never got around to it. I really hope his legacy lives on forever. I will never forget him. He was amazing.” Paris added.

Meanwhile, Michael’s eldest son Prince didn’t even know his father’s name until he was six because he led such a sheltered lifestyle.

“He never really wanted to tell us who he is as a person. It took me until I was six years old to learn his name was Michael Jackson—he was always Daddy to me and that was it,” the teenager said.

Even Blanket, who is normally shielded from the media, recalls some of his earliest memories before Michael tragically passed away in 2009 from a lethal dose of Propofol. “Sometimes I would go in his room and watch videos of him dancing,” he said.—PTI

Zlatan author to write “Girl with the Dragon Tattoo” trilogy sequel

STOCKHOLM, 18 Dec — Stieg Larsson’s blockbuster “Millenium” trilogy of thrillers is to be given a sequel written by Swedish author David Lagercrantz, Swedish publisher Norstedts said on Tuesday.

The books by the late author have sold more than 75 million copies in 50 countries, with the first, “The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo,” being made into a Hollywood film with Daniel Craig and Rooney Mara in 2011.

The publishers were tight-lipped about where the story would take the main characters — investigative journalist Mikael Blomkvist and the tattooed young hacker Lisbeth Salander—and would only say that they would return in the book, due for release in August 2015. Lagercrantz co-authored the autobiography of Swedish football star Zlatan Ibrahimovic, “I am Zlatan,” which was released in 2011.

“Obviously we are hugely excited,” Norstedts Managing Director Eva Ge- din told Reuters. “We believe we have found a quite superb author for this project.”— Reuters

Shah Rukh Khan: Could not bear to see Swades end

MUMBAI, 18 Dec — For superstar Shah Rukh Khan, the greatest way to count his years in the film industry is by his landmark movies.

“The greatest way for an actor to count his years is for each of them to be defined by a film,” DDLJ (Dilwale Dulhania le Jayenge) year, Swades year, KKHH (Kuch Kuch Hota Hai) year and so on,” Shah Rukh posted on Twitter on Tuesday.

His film Swades completed nine years on Tuesday. The superstar said that since the making of the film was so close to his heart, he could not bear to see it end and hence he never saw the film.

“Making Swades was such an emotionally overwhelming experience that I never saw the finished product. Didn’t want the feeling to end,” he said.

The 47-year-old also thanked Swades director Ashutosh Gowariker and his team for the project.


The film received critical acclaim but it did not enjoy a great run at the box office. SRK is currently shoot- ing for Farah Khan’s Happy New Year.—PTI

Alia Bhatt: Highway is like a journey for me

MUMBAI, 18 Dec — Young actress Alia Bhatt, who travelled across six states in north India for her next film Highway, says the experience of working in the movie has turned out to be an “experience she never had.”

“This film (Highway) is not a film for me. This is an experience that I never had. I started working at the age of 18 and I always complained about that one experience that may be I will never have.

“You know like going to college, being independ- ent. But this is that expe- rience. It is literally like video taping yourself and then releasing it. This is not a film for me, it is my journey, physical and emo- tional,” the 20-year-old said here on Monday at the first look launch of the film. Highway has not only been directed by Imtiaz Ali but he has also turned pro- ducer with it in collabora- tion with Sajid Nadiadwala. The film hits theatres on 21 February next year.—PTI
Danthai wins men’s golf gold, Princess reigns over the women

By Julian Adams

Danthai Boonma of Thailand was in a crook as he lifted his putter to eye level and tried to get a read of the green. With the SEA Games men’s golf title on the line on the second playoff hole, he had little room for error.

Boonma got up, stood over the ball and steadied himself like a surgeon preparing for a major operation. He then drained a four-foot putt to claim the championship.

“It certainly feels good,” he said afterwards.

Considering how he went into final round with a four-stroke lead, it had to. Danthai was sitting at minus-10 for a four-stroke cushion over Gavin Kyle Green of Malaysia after the third round, but the margin evaporated midway through the final round. Green had four straight birdies, starting at the ninth hole, and when Danthai had a bogey on the 13th, they were deadlocked at minus-10 with final five holes to go.

They exchanged the lead one more time and then both had birdies on No. 18 to set up the playoff.

Both golfers found the right side of the fairway on their tee shot on the first playoff hole, and they came up short of the green with their second shots. They all but mirrored each other with the placement of their chips and both saved par with short putts.

They returned to the tee at No. 18 for a third straight time and Danthai drove the ball down the left of the fairway, about 35 yards past where Green placed his ball on the right.

Green’s second shot failed to find the green and the ball ended up about two yards off the green to the left of the pin. Danthai’s approach hit and stuck about seven feet from the pin.

After Green pulled up short on a long putt, Danthai showed great poise in sinking his pressure-packed 7-footer for the gold medal.

“That’s golf,’’ Green said. Poom Saksansin of Thailand finished at -3 and a 283 total for the bronze.

Thailand also won gold in the men’s team event, with an 838 total over 72 holes. Malaysia won silver on 846, while Malaysia followed at 848 for the bronze.

The playoff on the men’s side wasn’t the only drama on the day. Princess Mary Superal of the Philippines won the women’s individual crown with relative ease. She shot even-par on the final day and finished at -6 and a 210 total.

Superal is 16 and a phenom in her homeland. She takes home school and has a sponsor that allows her to concentrate on golf. She recently won a pro tournament in the Philippines when she finished at minus-9.

“I wasn’t really challenged,’’ Superal, who was the only woman to complete the 54 holes under par, said. Her efforts allowed the Philippines to claim the women’s team title, and that outcome was also never really in doubt.

The same could not be said, however, in the race for the silver and bronze women’s team medals.

As the trios finished their rounds, the golfers would gather around the electronic scoreboard not to see who was atop the leaderboard but to do the math in the overall standings.

At one point, the Indonesia women were huge favorites over other when they moved into contention for the bronze medal, but a strong performance by Myanmar and Thailand dumped them down the leaderboard.

In the end, Myanmar took the silver with a 439 total, and Thailand was a stroke behind for the bronze.

“This is a great showing by Myanmar golfers,’’ said Koray Sakaf, an Australian who is part of the Myanmar coaching staff.

“We’ve worked hard. The guys and gals have been on this course every day for about a month. We’re getting better,’’ he said.

Singapore wins individual show jumping, Cambodians jump in competition for first time in six decades

By Kerstin Whitten

Individual Show Jumping began yesterday more like a rodeo than an equestrian event, when Indonesia’s Andry Prasetyono was thrown by his horse at the triple combination.

Bucking around the arena, Fast Track was hard to get back under control.

“Perhaps he lost confidence in his first jump and wasn’t set up for it, because has done well before and in the top 20 horses of the event, otherwise he wouldn’t be here,” Susanne Cumingham, the president of the appeals committee of the SEA Games, said.

With most of the horses imported from Australia for the Games, they only had a few weeks to get used to the new environment, but the riders only had a couple of days to familiarize themselves with the horses each country got through a draw.

Talking about the draw before her gold medal win, Singapore’s Janine Khoo said, “I am really lucky I got CP Safari. We’re a good fit. He’s competitive like me and we work well together.”

She said that although her horse was tired, having already competed in dressage at the Games as did most of the other horses, he seemed “much happier in jumping,” having more experience in that discipline.

Singapore coach Roy Ibrahim said that while the horses are jumping 110m obstacles here, some of them are used to jumping 1.5m in Australia.

“But it all depends on the level of the horse. Our rider Catherine Chew is competing on Ruby, a rather inexperienced horse that is more used to cross-country where they jump over big solid logs, not fences like here. So we had to figure out in a short time how to bring the best out in her in the combinations,” Ibrahim said, adding the horses here mainly have experience at junior level events.

Chew, an experienced rider, boosted Ruby’s confidence with clear signals, placing fifth in the event.

Indonesia narrowly lost out on silver in a jump-off against Thailand, but had prepared well, according to coach Adi Katompo.

“I closely watched all the horses in the previous events and took notes, and when we got Gunderman in the draw, I knew I had to relax him. He had been fighting against his Cambodian rider in dressage because he is sensitive in the mouth and has a sore back.”

Katompo changed the mouthpiece to a soft rubber one and used a rein in training to guide Gunderman to lower his head, which led him to stretch his back and relax it. “That helped him, and also our rider Jendry Palandeng is a calm, confident person who connects quickly with horses,” he said.

While the Cambodian riders may not have had the experience to deal with imported horses -- all three riders were eliminated in the first round -- coach Kathleen Marie Lovatt from Britain explained Cambodia had not competed in equestrian since the 1950s and her proteges have thus come far and overcame the most difficult circumstances.

Three of the six riders are from disadvantaged families, and got free riding lessons at the Cambodian Country Club in Phnom Penh as part of the ‘Horse Future’ program that was initiated by my predecessor at the riding school there, a French lady who was manager,” she said.

The kids were selected by local NOCs, most prominently, Hollywood star Angelina Jolie’s Maddox Jolie-Pitt Foundation, which used the prospect of learning horse riding as a reward and enticement for the children they look after.

“They came once a week for lessons and some of them were really talented. Then in June 2012 I got approached by the Myanmar equestrian federation if we could put together a team for the SEA Games,” she said.

They stepped up the training for jumping and dressage from once a week to twice and were able to last the six month before the Games to train four times a week due to a shortage of horses, Lovatt said of the rocky road to Nay Pyi Taw.

“I am so happy to be here now, because I want to compete more and like meeting new people,” said 19-year-old Narith Sim, a former Maddox protégé, who has been riding seven- en years and left his home country for the first time only a few months ago to gain experience in a couple of Asian events.

Teammate Sor Puthminea said he wants to work on his technique, adding he only started riding four years ago at age 16 and was a stable help at the country club before that.

“They can really be proud of themselves and what they have achieved,” Lovatt said.
Winning ticket sold in California for Mega Millions lottery

A woman walks past a Mega Millions lottery sign with the estimated jackpot of $586 million posted in Los Angeles, California on 16 Dec, 2013.—Reuters

LOS ANGELES, 18 Dec — A winning ticket for an estimated $636 million Mega Millions jackpot, approaching the biggest US lottery prize ever, was sold in San Jose, California, a lottery official said late on Tuesday evening.

There was no immedi ate word about who won, but the winning ticket was bought at a retail location on Tully Road in San Jose, California, according to Alex Traverso, a lottery official in the US state. The winning numbers for Tuesday’s drawing were: 8, 14, 17, 20, 39, and 7, according to the lottery’s website, Megaminsols.

“There could be more, that’s the only one we know right now,” Traverso said.

If the winner chooses to take the lump sum cash option, instead of payments over 30 years, the jackpot would be $341 million, the lottery said.

The prize swelled after a spike in sales ahead of Tuesday night’s drawing. As much as 70 percent of the tickets are typically bought on the day of the drawing, said Paula Otto, Virginia’s lottery director, who heads the multi-state Mega Millions game.

At a corner grocery store on Manhattan’s Upper East Side, ticket buyers lined up for a chance to strike it rich, and shared their dream shopping lists.

“I would give at least half of it to my church,” said Keith Boyd, pastor at the nearby Trinity Baptist Church, who bought 20 tickets to give away as gifts while keeping one for himself. “It would be a way to bless others.”

Sayed Waheed, a 37-year-old immigrant from Afghanistan who bought a single ticket, said he would use the fortune to bring his entire family to the United States. Ticket buying reached a fever pitch over the weekend, with 20 percent more chances sold than expected, Otto said.

The surge of spending pushed the prize closer to the record US jackpot of $565 million, won in March 2012 in a Mega Millions drawing.—Reuters

Chelsea lack killer instinct, says Mourinho

LONDON, 18 Dec — Chelsea manager Jose Mourinho was forced to recount a familiar tale as he bemoaned his team’s latest failure to turn chances into goals after their 2-1 extra-time defeat by Sunderland in the League Cup on Tuesday.

“If we could just do it, we would have a chance to win. We are not behind in the table, we just need a bit of luck on our side,” Mourinho said.

The Blues were knocked out of the competition by a team that Mourinho had described as one of the best in the Premier League.

Mourinho said the Blues had been outplayed by Sunderland and admitted he had expected his team to progress further in the competition.

He said Chelsea were now focusing on their remaining league matches and had already moved on from the cup tie.

“Now we have to focus on the league and we have a lot of important games,” he said. “We have to win against Liverpool, against Swansea and against Sunderland.”

Chelsea sit third in the Premier League and are already through to the knockout stages of the Champions League, having overcome both Arsenal and Manchester United in the group stages.

Mourinho said his team had not performed well in the competition and had to improve if they were to win the league.

The Blues have not won the title since 2010, the last time they went all the way to lift the trophy.

Mourinho said the team had the resources to compete for the title and had the quality to win the league.

He said: “We have a good squad and we have the quality to win the title. We have to work hard and we will win the league.”

Mourinho’s comments came after his team were knocked out of the FA Cup by Wigan Athletic in the third round last month.

The Blues had been expected to progress to the fourth round but were only able to draw with Wigan in a 1-1 draw.

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Myanmar sweep six gold in traditional boat race

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Vice-President U Nyan Tun and Deputy Minister U Zaw Win awarded gold medals for home in 27th SEA Games.

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing greets local people in Dawei

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Defence Services mobile medical teams are giving health care services to the locals in Dawei, Myeik and Bokpyin Townships and nearby areas starting from yesterday.

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