**Myanmar secure one silver, one bronze in Judo event**

NAY PYI TAW, 20 Dec—Athletes from Myanmar, Thailand, Laos, Vietnam, Indonesia, the Philippines, Singapore and Malaysia participated in today’s Judo events at Zeyathiri Indoor Stadium (C), here, this afternoon.

In men’s -73 kg event, gold medal went to the Philippines, silver to Indonesia and joint bronze to Myanmar and Thailand.

In women’s -57 kg events, Thailand sized gold, the Philippines, silver and Vietnam and Indonesia, joint bronze while the Philippines snatched gold, Vietnam, silver and Malaysia, joint bronze with Thailand in women’s -63 kg event and Thailand, gold, Myanmar, silver and Indonesia, bronze in women’s -70 kg event.

*Khuang Thanda Lwin (NLM)*

**MTTF awards cash to two gold, four silver, seven bronze medalists in track and field event**

NAY PYI TAW, 20 Dec—Awarding ceremony for Myanmar winners of track and field event in the 27th SEA Games took place at Shwe Nandaw Hotel, here, yesterday.

The Vice-Presidents of Myanmar Track and Field Federation presented each of K 30 million to gold medalists of 5000-meter women’s race and 20 km walking race events, each of K 5 million to silver medalists of Marathon, 1000 and 1500-meter women’s race events and each of K 3 million to bronze medalists of 800, 1500 and 5000-meter race event.

The secretary of MTTF awarded each of K 4 million to four bronze medalists of 400-meter x 4 relay event, each of K 3 million to two bronze medalists of 20 kilo walking race event and bronze medalist of marathon event.

*MNA*

**Myanmar men’s double regu Sepak Takraw team clinches gold medal**

NAY PYI TAW, 20 Dec—Myanmar secured gold medal in men’s double regu Sepak Takraw team event after defeating Indonesia. Today, Wunna Theikdi Indoor Stadium (B) was teeming with Myanmar sports lovers shouting the word “Myanmar” without stopping. In the first round, Myanmar had a chance to win its rival but lost to Indonesia (15-21, 21-19 and 24-22). At the beginning of the event, Myanmar could head the event and Indonesia equalized soon after. Myanmar defeated Indonesia in the second round (21-17, 21-15). And Indonesia lost to Myanmar (21-10, 15-21 and 14-21) in the third round.

Similarly, Myanmar won over Vietnam 2-0 in women’s double regu preliminary event and Philippines lost to Myanmar 0-2 in men’s double regu preliminary event.

The men’s and women’s double regu preliminary events will go on at the same venue tomorrow. Myanmar men’s team will meet Cambodia and Singapore while Myanmar women’s team will play against Philippines. Men’s Group (A) includes Indonesia, Vietnam, Brunei, Laos and Myanmar, Singapore, Philippine and Cambodia in Group (B). Women’s Group (A) includes Myanmar, Philippines and Vietnam and Group (B) Laos, Cambodia, Malaysia and Indonesia.

*Myo Than (NLM)*

**President U Thein Sein receives President of CPAFFC**

NAY PYI TAW, 20 Dec—President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar U Thein Sein received a delegation led by President of the Chinese People’s Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries (CPAFFC) Mme Li Xiaolin at the Credentials Hall of the Presidential Palace, here this morning.

They had a cordial discussion on culture exchange, formation of China-Myanmar Friendship Association, activities of association and more cooperation in future youth scholarship exchange programme and capacity building courses for more cooperation Myanmar-China comprehensive strategic partnership.

Also present at the call were Union Ministers U Wunna Maung Lwin and U Tin Naing Thein and officials. Over 500 CPAFFC have been set up in 187 countries across the world and will turn 60 in coming May, 2014.—MNA

*President U Thein Sein poses for documentary photo with President of the Chinese People’s Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries (CPAFFC) Mme Li Xiaolin.—MNA*
Bago, 20 Dec—A ceremony to drive stakes for construction of Bago Region Women’s Affairs Organization was held at the site on Bogoye Street in Ward 4 of Bago on 18 December.

It was attended by Bago Region Hluttaw Speaker U Win Tin, Region Minister for Social Affairs Dr Aung Kyaw Oo, Patron of Bago Region Women’s Affairs Organization Daw Myint Myint Soe and Daw Tint Maw, Chairperson of Bago Region WAO Daw May Thu, members of Region, District and Township WAOs, and wellwishers totalling over 50. The officials drove stakes for the building at the designated places. The wellwishers donated K 40.7 million to the fund for construction of the buildings. MMAL-183

**Financial Affairs**

**YANGON, 20 Dec—** Some 480,000 households in four regions in Myanmar will have better access to a more reliable supply of electricity to support their daily activities with a $ 60 million loan from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) that will rehabilitate sections of the country’s power distribution network.

“Access to electricity is crucial to development. Repairing and strengthening existing electricity infrastructure will help reduce system losses, use resources more efficiently and connect more people more quickly,” said Jong-Inn Kim, Lead Energy Specialist in the Southeast Asia Department at the ADB.

**Technical and non-technical losses from Myanmar’s aging distribution system were as high as 18.2% in 2012, meaning almost a fifth of all power generated was lost before reaching customers. ADB’s loan will fund rehabilitation works to carry electricity more efficiently, including upgrading of existing 66/11 kilo volt (KV) and 33/11 KV substations, replacing existing 33 KV and 11 KV distribution lines, replacing existing 11/0.4 KV transformers, and upgrading to digital revenue meters. The loan will also replace tangled knots of existing bare low voltage distribution lines with more efficient aerial-bundled conductor lines. The project will reduce distribution loss by 4 percentage points. Improving distribution in Yangon, Mandalay, Sagaing and Magway regions should reduce system losses and subsequently provide increased opportunities for large industries and small and medium-sized enterprises to expand their services, improve living conditions, and improve services at community facilities like clinics or schools, which should contribute to economic growth and poverty reduction.

The country’s average electrification ratio has increased, growing from 16% in 2006 to 28% in 2012. Yangon City has the highest rate at 72%, followed by Nay Pyi Taw at 65% and Mandalay at 35%. Only about one in five rural households are connected to the electricity grid. In addition to providing support for transmission updates and preventing technical losses, ADB is working with the National Energy Management Committee to improve coordination between ministries responsible for the country’s energy. ADB is also assisting the government in preparing Myanmar energy sector policy, revising the Electricity Law, setting the national transmission and distribution code, and establishing electric equipment standards. A 20-year, long term energy master plan is also being formulated ADB News Release 2013 Page 2.

Future activities will also focus on promoting off-grid rural energy access and helping the government establish the private-public partnerships needed to raise the financing for power system expansion. ADB, based in Manila, is dedicated to reducing poverty in Asia and the Pacific through inclusive economic growth, environmentally sustainable growth and regional integration. Established in 1966, it is owned by 67 members—48 from the region. In 2012, ADB assistance totaled $ 21.6 billion, including cofinancing of $ 8.3 billion.—Zagawah

**HRD**

**Lists of outstanding students for Yangon, Mandalay universities announced**

**YANGON, 20 Dec—** Fifteen each of students were collected for each science and arts subjects of Yangon and Mandalay universities for 2003 academic years. The applications for the university must be submitted not later than 9 December.

Higher Education Department (Lower Myanmar) announced the list of students for each subjects of two universities. The universities will send information letters to the students. They have to attend the first year course at Yangon and Mandalay Universities.

Those who passed the 2013 or before 2013 matriculation examinations are to submit application to learn education at day time or University of Distance Education are to apply not later than 20 December.

It was reported that 886 outstanding students were admitted to attend the courses at Yangon University and 659 students at Mandalay University. MMAL-Khin Cho Win

**Cash donated to Saya Zawgyi Library**

**PYAPON, 20 Dec—** The cash donation or construction of Saya Zawgyi Library was held at the venue in Pyapoon on 17 December. Pyapoon Township Pyithu Hluttaw representative U Soe Naing and wife Daw Tin Tin Latt donated K 1 million, World Yadana Bank (former Livestock Breeding Development Bank) K 2.5 million to chairman of the library committee U Wai Myint and member U Thein Tun(a) U Paik who returned certificates to them.

The library will be a 80 feet long, 35 feet wide and 15 feet high one-storey building. It may cost K 40 million. So far, the construction of the building has been completed by 50 per cent. The Saya Zawgyi Library is located in Pyaon storing 20000 copies of books plus magazines, journals and newspapers for public reading. Over 2000 members join the library and about 200 readers visit the library daily. MMAL-Thuza Nwe (Pyapoon)

**Culture**

**Kayin New Year Day to be held**

**NYAUNGON, 20 Dec—** Ayeyawady Region Kayin New Year Day 2753 Era will be held in Pathein, said Kayin Literature and Culture Committee. Kayin national representatives from townships will attend the festival.

The celebration will be held on 1 January 2014. On the eve of the New Year, the don dance will be performed. In commemoration of the New Year Day, the ceremony to pay respects to the older persons will be held.—MMAL-052

**Coffee model plot harvested**

**PyinOoLwin, 20 Dec—** Industrial Crops Development Department organized the harvest of coffee on the model plot of Ngushweili coffee farm beside Mandalay-PyinOoLwin road on 18 December morning.

District and township level officials and local farmers attended the ceremony. Ngushweili farm has 230 acres of land.—MMAL-Thet Naing (PyinOoLwin)

**Stake driven for WAO Office**

**Bago, 20 Dec—** A ceremony to drive stakes for construction of Bago Region Women’s Affairs Organization was held at the site on Bogoye Street in Ward 4 of Bago on 18 December.

It was attended by Bago Region Hluttaw Speaker U Win Tin, Region Minister for Social Affairs Dr Aung Kyaw Oo, Patron of Bago Region Women’s Affairs Organization Daw Myint Myint Soe and Daw Tint Maw, Chairperson of Bago Region WAO Daw May Thu, members of Region, District and Township WAOs, and wellwishers totalling over 50. The officials drove stakes for the building at the designated places. The wellwishers donated K 40.7 million to the fund for construction of the buildings. MMAL-183
Almost 90 hurt as ceiling collapses at London Theatre

LONDON, 20 Dec — Emergency services said nearly 90 people were injured on Thursday when part of the ceiling collapsed during a performance at a packed London theatre, bringing the city’s West End entertainment district to a standstill.

The audience was shown-cred following the incident at the Apollo Theatre, where about 720 people included many families were watching the hugely popular play “The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time.”

Emergency services said 88 people were injured. They described 81 as “walking wounded,” many with head injuries, while seven others were taken to hospital with more serious injuries.

Nick Harding from London Fire Brigade said a section of ornate plaster ceiling, measuring about 10 meters (33 feet) by 10 meters, had fallen onto the audience watching the evening show.

“The ceiling took parts of the balconies down with it,” he said. “Everyone is out of the building and everyone is safe,” he added, confirming there had been no fatalities.

He said it was too early to speculate about the cause but police said there was no suggestion that it was the result of any deliberacy act or attack. There was no indication either that heavy storms earlier in the evening were to blame and investigations would continue through the night, Harding said.

Witnesses said they saw the ceiling in the four-storey auditorium suddenly collapse during the performance, creating panic when those inside realized it was not part of the play.

Budget for Guam-Okinawa Marines transfer clears US Congress

WASHINGTON, 20 Dec — The US Senate passed a key defence bill Thursday that included outlays for the contentious programme of transferring Marines to Guam from Okinawa and installation of an anti-balistic missile radar in Japan.

The move paved the way for the National Defence Authorization Act for Fiscal 2014 to take effect with the signing of President Barack Obama. The House of Representatives passed the bill last week.

The act includes an $86 million outlay for the transfer of Marines to Guam from the southern Japan prefecture. More precisely the budget will be used to refurbish hangars at the Andersen Air Force base in the US territory so Marines can also use the airfield.

Under the current re- location plan, about 9,000 of the 19,000 Marines stationed in Okinawa are to be transferred out of Japan and of those about 4,000 would be moved to Guam, and the remainder to Hawaii and Australia.

The act also covers a budget of $15 million that will be used to install X-band radar at a Japanese Air Self-Defence Force base in Tokyo Prefecture, western Japan.

The planned installation of the radar at the base on the Sea of Japan coast is part of efforts aimed at dealing with threats from North Korea’s long-range missile programme.

Yanukovich offers Ukraine protesters nothing as Russian aid starts

KIEV, 20 Dec — A $15 billion Russian aid package for Ukraine began to take shape on Thursday as Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich went public in defense of the deal, but offered no concessions to persuade thousands of protesters to leave the streets.

In his first public appearance since agreeing the deal with Moscow, he argued that securing cheaper gas and credits from Russia had been the only way to avoid default.

Soon after, his government issued a $3 billion two-year eurobond whose terms corresponded exactly to those of a bond that Russia had said it would buy as part of a $15 billion lifeline to help its former Soviet ally oust economic crisis.

But, in a televised news conference lasting more than 1-1/2 hours, he showed no readiness to meet opposition leaders’ demands for the resignation of his government or early elections. He said their actions were “revolutionary.” His only slightly conciliatory gesture was to say that he would not run for re-election in 2015 if he felt he might lose. “If my ratings are low and I have no prospects (of winning), then I shall not get in the way of the country developing and moving forward,” he told a questioner.

Unrest erupted in Kiev after Yanukovich decided on 21 November to walk away from a trade deal with the European Union. Weekend rallies, sometimes drawing hundreds of thousands of people, have been boosted by opposition charges of police violence.

Japan says S Korea should host trilateral summit

TOKYO, 20 Dec — Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida on Friday urged South Korea to “fulfill its responsibility” and host a three-way summit with Japan and China that has yet to be held this year due to Tokyo’s souring ties with Beijing and Seoul.

“If South Korea recognizes its importance and intends to fulfill its responsibility as chair (of the summit this year), it should work hard until the end, as long as there are still days left, and we support such efforts,” he told reporters.

His remarks come after Japanese and South Korean deputy foreign ministers agreed this week to continue working-level dialogue for realizing the trilateral summit with China amid a prevailing view that it is all but certain to be postponed until next year.

“We’ve been saying we are ready for dialogue anytime,” Kishida said. “We hope South Korea will steadily work on coordination with China.”

The summit, which had been held every year since 2008 among the three countries on a rotating basis, has not been held this year.

Madagascar presidential runoff kicks off

ANTANANARIVO, 20 Dec — Voters in Madagascar went to the polls on Friday to choose a new president, who is expected to lead them out of a five-year political crisis.

Malagasy people were seen queuing at polling stations in the capital.

National and international observers were assisting the election at the Lycee technique of Alorobia near headquarters of the independent national election commission CENIT.

Rakotonandrasana Jerome, an electoral official, said the Lycee technique of Alorobia hosts six polling stations with around 7,000 voters.

It is the first time for Madagascar to hold a run-off presidential election coupled with legislative elections following the first round poll on 25 October.

Car blast kills one in Libya

TRIPOLI, 20 Dec — A manager of the General Electric Company of Libya was killed Thursday in a car blast in the eastern town of Tobruk, security sources said.

Adam Mohammed Al-Kharshoefi Al-Mansouri, the head of a power plant, was killed when an explosive device planted underneath his vehicle blew off, a member of the local council in Tobruk, who spoke on condition of anonymity, told Kyodo News.

A friend of Al-Mansouri’s who was accompanying him when the explosion occurred survived the blast, the source said, adding identities of the attackers remain unknown.

Also on Thursday, another security source said the severed head of a Libyan Special Forces officer’s father, who was kidnapped two months ago, was found in Benghaz, the capital of the eastern region of Cyrenaica.

The source, who also declined to give his identity, said the family of the 65-year-old victim was asked for a ransom of 1 million US dollars after his kidnapping.
China expands research bases in Antarctica

**BEIJING, 20 Dec —** China is expanding its presence at the South Pole, with construction workers leaving its Zhongshan Station on Wednesday to build the Taishan summer field camp, the country’s fourth Antarctic base.

Site inspections for another research station will also be carried out at Antarctica’s Victoria Land during a 155-day expedition launched on 7 November.

It is China’s 30th mission to the continent since 1984. “As a latecomer to Antarctic scientific research, China is catching up,” Qu Yanmin, director of the State Oceanic Administration’s Chinese Arctic and Antarctic Administration, said in an exclusive interview.

China has built three Antarctic research stations — Great Wall, Zhongshan and Kunlun.

“Building the Taishan camp and inspecting sites for the station can further guarantee that Chinese scientists will conduct scientific research over a wider range and in a safer way,” Qu said.

He said that with climate change being a common global concern, the nation’s scientists are striving to find answers in Antarctica.

The Taishan camp will be used from December to March and construction of the main building is expected to be completed next year. Construction will take about 40 days. Located between the Zhongshan and Kunlun stations, the base will provide logistic support, Qu said.

Wang Yong, director of science programmes for the Chinese Arctic and Antarctic Administration, said the base will also be used to study geology, glaciology, geomagnetism and atmospheric science.

Liu Shunlin, leader of the country’s latest Antarctic expedition, said a news conference in November that the Taishan camp will be 155-day expedition launched on 7 November — Xinhua

**IT problems delay efforts to compare risk at global banks**

**LONDON, 20 Dec —** Regulators will take longer than expected to assess risk at a third of the world’s biggest banks because of IT delays, banking supervisors said on Wednesday.

The Basel Committee of supervisors from nearly 30 countries are trying to combine data on comparative risks in the worldwide operations of roughly 30 top banks by 2016.

The aim is to create a snapshot of where potential problems are building up and reduce the kind of uncertainties over bank liabilities that fuelled investor panic during the financial crisis. Basel said many banks are facing difficulties in setting up systems to aggregate data. “Instead, they resort to extensive manual workarounds. Notably, of the 30 banks that were identified... 10 reported that they will not be able to fully comply with the principles by the 2016 deadline,” Basel said in a statement.

The next step is for national regulators to broaden their analysis to their mid-tier banks. The committee urged its members to focus that effort on banks that are systematically important only within their countries rather than globally.

“The Basel Committee believes that the principles can be applied to a wider range of banks in a way that is proportionate to their size, nature and complexity,” the committee said.

**Facebook to test video ads, opening new revenue source**

“Facebook will run video ads for Divergent on Thursday in a one-day test. The video spot, which will only be viewable by certain groups in the United States, will begin playing with the sound muted when it appears in a user’s newsfeed. Facebook users can turn on the sound by clicking on the ad, similar to the non-paid auto-play videos Facebook introduced in September. Facebook said video will improve the quality of the ads on its service.

“Marketers will be able to use this new format to tell their stories to a large number of people on Facebook in a short amount of time — with high-quality sight, sound and motion,” Facebook said.

Wall Street has been counting on video ads to open up a potentially lucrative market as the company continues to sustain its rapid market growth. That market is considered crucial for Facebook’s market valuation, and poses a potential long-term threat to traditional TV networks.

The company’s shares, which have surged roughly 30 percent since September, gained 1.4 percent to $54.57 in morning trading on Tuesday, aided by Susquehanna and Oppenheimer price-target upgrades. Facebook users can turn on the sound by clicking on the ad, similar to the non-paid auto-play videos Facebook introduced in September. Facebook said video will improve the quality of the ads on its service.

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**BA eases curbs on handheld devices during take-off**

**LONDON, 20 Dec —** British Airways is to become the first airline in Europe to allow their passengers to keep their phones and tablet computers switched on throughout their journey, the company said on Wednesday.

Although travelers will still not be allowed to text or make phone calls, the agreement with Britain’s Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) lifts the current restrictions that require devices to be turned off until the aircraft is airborne and again when the aircraft is about to land.

Customers will, however, still have to put devices into “flight safe” mode, which disables texts, phone calls and network access, the airline said. Wednesday’s changes do not include laptops.

Earlier this month the European Aviation Safety Agency said airlines would be able to introduce such changes subject to their own assessments.

“We know that our customers want to use their handheld electronic devices more, so this will be very welcome news for them,” said Captain Ian Pringle, flight training manager at British Airways. “The easing of restrictions will provide an average of 30 minutes additional personal screen time.”

Business travelers on BA’s flights between London’s City Airport and New York’s Kennedy already send texts and access WiFi. The changes will come in on 19 December. —Reuters

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**SAN FRANCISCO, 20 Dec —** Facebook Inc took a first step on Tuesday toward selling video ads that play automatically in newsfeeds, moving cautiously to unlock a source of revenue that could annoy users.

The world’s largest social network, which had long been expected to try and grab a larger slice of the $66 billion US television advertising market, will start by working with Summit Entertainment on ads for “Divergent,” based on the popular series of science-fiction books.

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**BUSINESS & HEALTH**

**Dow inches up to record close on quiet trading day**

NEW YORK, 20 Dec — US stocks finished mostly flat on Thursday as investors paused after a rally in the previous session, though the Dow closed at its second record high in a row.

The Nasdaq declined slightly on weakness in tech shares, though its loss was limited by a rally in Oracle Corp (ORCL.N) shares a day after the company’s results.

Despite that, trading volume was below average. Many investors have already locked in their gains for the year ahead of the coming holidays. About 5.3 billion shares traded on all US platforms, according to BATS exchange data.

There’s a lot of transparency in the market, but most of the noise has been made, said Mark Martiak, senior wealth strategist at Premier Wealth/First Allied Securities in New York. “We should expect to continue seeing light volume and not much selling.”

Wednesday’s rally came after the Federal Reserve announced a plan to trim its monthly bond purchases by $10 billion to $75 billion, beginning in January. The statement was accompanied by a dovish indication of rock-bottom interest rates for the foreseeable future, a combination that gave the Dow and the S&P 300 their largest gains in two months. Reuters

**In US healthcare experiment, patients pay more for ‘bad’ medicine**

NEW YORK, 20 Dec — When Tanner Martin, 17, developed excruciating back pain last year, he was sure he needed an X-ray to find out what was wrong. So was his mother, who worried that the pain might indicate a serious injury that could cause permanent disability.

But Konnie Martin was not so convinced. As chief executive officer of San Luis Valley Regional Medical Centre in Alamosa, Colorado, she is at the center of an experiment, known as value-based insurance, that could transform American healthcare.

One of the central features of a value-based system is a financial “stick.” If patients insist on medical procedures that science shows to be ineffective or unnecessary, they’ll have to pay for all or most of the cost.

In Tanner’s case, when he and his mother went to the medical center, they were invited to watch a short video first. The best approach to back pain like Tanner’s, it explained, is stretching, strength-building and physical therapy; X-rays and MRIs, according to rigorous studies, are unlikely to make a difference. If they insisted on the X-ray, they would have to pay $300 on top of the basic cost.—Reuter

**Europe’s half-hearted bid to protect its banks**

BRUSSELS, 20 Dec — Europe’s efforts to form a united front behind euro zone banks are reaching a climax, but many fear they will fail to restore confidence and prove flimsy should another crisis strike.

After more than a year of talks, ministers from across the European Union agreed early on Thursday on a scheme to close failing banks, but the process will be complex and politicized. They also stopped short of an ambitious plan for euro zone countries to help each other in tackling problem lenders.

An agency and fund to wind down bad banks, working in tandem with the European Central Bank, would be down from the 0.7 percent of GDP that supervisors are projecting to have the new watchdog, an important step towards banking union, but the loose ends could lead to the complete unraveling of the project.

Although hailed as a “historic” moment by France’s Finance Minister Pierre Moscovici, many who emerged from the meeting into the Brussels rain were disappointed by the result.

“It’s really a farce,” said one senior official involved, who asked not to be named. “We’re putting other on the shoulder and congratulating each other, but really what has been achieved is a far cry from what was needed.”

**US regulator raises safety concerns on antibacterial soaps**

WASHINGTON, 20 Dec — Manufacturers of antibacterial hand soaps and body washes will have to demonstrate that their products are safe for long-term daily use and more effective than plain soap and water in preventing illness and the spread of certain infections, according to a proposed rule issued Monday by the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

Although consumers generally view antibacterial hand soap and body wash products as effective tools to help prevent the spread of germs, there is currently no evidence that they are any more effective at preventing illness than washing with plain soap and water, the FDA said.

Further, some data suggest that long-term exposure to certain active ingredients used in antibacterial products, for example, triclosan (liquid soaps) and triclocarban (bar soaps), could pose health risks, such as bacterial resistance or hormonal effects, it said.

Xinhua

**US jobs to increase 10.8 percent by 2022, labour growth to slow**

WASHINGTON, 20 Dec — The number of United States jobs is forecast to increase by 10.8 percent in the next decade, with fastest growth in the healthcare sector as it serves an aging population.

The US Bureau of Labor Statistics’ employment projections for 2012 to 2022 released on Thursday said the United States will see nearly 16 million jobs added in that decade.

Even with this increase, growth in the civilian labor force is expected to slow to 0.5 percent annually in the next decade. That would be down from the 0.7 percent annual increase between 2002 and 2012, and potentially hurt economic growth.

Slower growth in the labor force could reduce the increase in gross domestic product to 2.6 percent annually from 2012 to 2022, compared with the at least 3.4 percent annual growth in the last two decades, BLS said.

The slowdown in US labour growth is partly due to declining birth rates and low international immigration rates, both needed to sustain the country’s population growth.

A large number of baby boomers are expected to retire from the workforce in the next 10 years, as they will be between 58 and 76 years old in 2022. The US civilian labour force will be older and more ethnically diverse in 2022, BLS predicts.

Jobs in the healthcare and social assistance sector are projected to have the fastest growth, adding about 5 million jobs by 2022, a 13.6 percent increase, followed by a 13.3 percent increase for professional and business services, and 12.4 percent increase for state and local government jobs.

The spike in healthcare jobs will coincide with an increase in healthcare needs for aging baby boomers and the expansion of health insurance coverage.

**Nike profit rises and advance orders jump**

NEW YORK, 20 Dec — Nike Inc’s (NKE.N) quarterly profit rose as higher margin products made up a bigger share of its sales, and the sportswear maker said global orders for merchandise for delivery by April increased 13 percent.

Nike shares rose 0.6 percent to $78.75 in extended trading. Total revenue rose 8 percent to $6.43 billion in the second quarter ended 30 November, just below the $6.44 billion Wall Street analysts had forecast on average.

But so-called futures orders, or orders for delivery between December and April, rose to $104.4 billion.

**Shoes are displayed in the Nike store in Santa Monica, California, in this on 25 Sept, 2013, file photo. Reuters**

Nike’s profit was dent- ed by a 13 percent increase in advertising and promo- tion connected to market- ing and product launches for the upcoming Winter Olympics in Sochi, Russia and World Cup in Brazil next summer.—Reuters

**Europe’s economic recovery gathers steam in December**

As the new watchdog, it is an important step towards banking union, but the loose ends could lead to the complete unraveling of the project.

Although hailed as a “historic” moment by France’s Finance Minister Pierre Moscovici, many who emerged from the meeting into the Brussels rain were disappointed by the result.

“It’s really a farce,” said one senior official involved, who asked not to be named. “We’re putting other on the shoulder and congratulating each other, but really what has been achieved is a far cry from what was needed.”

**The federal government forms for applying for health coverage are seen at a rally held by supporters of the Affordable Care Act, widely referred to as “Obamacare”, outside the Jackson-Hinds Comprehensive Health Center in Jackson, Mississippi on 4 Oct, 2013.—Reuters**
Hlwan Aung and Than Htike participate in Parmachete Form of Vovinam event. The duo won a gold medal in the event.

PHOTO: AYE MIN SOE

Vovinam athletes of Myanmar celebrate after winning three gold medals in Dec. 20 events. —PHOTO: AYE MIN SOE

Zaw Zaw Aung of Myanmar defends a cane ball struck by Indonesian player in the gold medal match of double regu of Sepak Takraw.

PHOTO: AYE MIN SOE

Weng Luen Gary Chow (White) of Singapore fights with Hai Long To (Blue) of Vietnam in Men’s 73-81 kg Quarterfinal of Judo.

PHOTO: AYE MIN SOE

Myanmar team participates in the Dragon Tiger Form event of Vovinam.

PHOTO: AYE MIN SOE

Anh Tuan Tran of Vietnam fights with Soukanh of Lao in Men’s 50-55 kg category of Vovinam.—PHOTO: AYE MIN SOE

XXVII SEA GAMES PHOTO GALLERY

BRUNEI DARUSSALAM  CAMBODIA  INDONESIA  LAOS  MALAYSIA  MYANMAR  PHILIPPINES  SINGAPORE  THAILAND  TIMOR-LESTE  VIETNAM
Nay Pyi Taw, 20 Dec—Volleyball event of the 27th SEA Games took place at Zeyathiri Indoor Stadium (B), here, this morning. Myanmar men’s and women’s teams competed for third place. Myanmar women’s team was defeated by Indonesia with 3-0. So, Indonesia got third and Myanmar, fourth. Vietnamese men’s team won over Myanmar with 3-0 and came got third and Myanmar, fourth. At today’s event, Laos won over Malaysia in men’s event and came fifth.

Although first Myanmar pair won over Indonesian rivals in 1st set with 21-15 points, they were beaten with 19-21 points in second set. In third set, Myanmar pair lost to Indonesian duo with 22-24 points. Second Myanmar pair Zaw Latt and Sithu Lin defeated Indonesia counterparts with 21-17 points and 21-15 points. So, both team won one match each other.

Despite third Myanmar couple Aung Pyae Tun and Wai Lin Aung lost to Indonesia pair with 10-21 points in 1st set, they beat them with 21-15 points and 21-14 points.

Secretary General of Asian Sepaktakraw Federation Mr. Boonchai Lorhipat and Myanmar sports contingent leader U Kyaw Oo presented joint bronze to Indonesia and Vietnam, silver to Myanmar and gold to Thailand in women’s double team sepak takraw event.
Balanced lifestyle

Things never stay the same in this world but what has not changed is the need for the money. This is especially true for white-collars who are struggling with modern rat race despite the fact that life is said to be a pleasant blend of work and social intercourse.

It is fair to say that work is the universal identity of people, but people work for different reasons—some for survival, some to realize their dreams, and some for self-actualization though only a few people achieve the last one in their life.

But, most of the time, we are not just struggling with our own wishes and ambitions, we are also bearing the burden of hopes of families and relatives. It is all work and work again to earn money to have our wishes fulfilled, never ending but ever demanding. Unconsciously, we have become the servants of work.

As the time goes by working day in day out, we begin to feel exhausted either mentally or physically or both. Taking a short rest would probably do for physical exhaustion, but mental and emotional exhaustion are difficult to be cured, leaving scars on our immune system.

Keeping a balance between work and relaxation is always easier said than done. When driven by unlimited wants, people find it hard to find a break. But, all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy. Endless working would just produce adverse effect and restrict our capacity.

How can we cope with stress of day-to-day work? While relaxation is a must to ease the stress, professional competence is must to be able to work effectively. Working hard produces good results but working smart generates better outcomes, which would need professional competence and effective time management plus a focus on specialization.

We have to work for self-interests as well as for the benefits of family and friends. But we need to find a balance between work and rest so that we can make the best use of our lifetime.
**Myanmar secure two gold in Kempo, one bronze in hockey**

**DSMA produces 15th intake cadets**

First, Senior General Min Aung Hlaing cordially greeted the cadets calling them for serving the people and the country as dutiful members of the defence forces, and meanwhile, they are responsible to take part in the health care services to the people. It is required to abstain from consumption of alcohol, tobacco and betel nut that can severely harms health by yourself and to educate all Tatmadawmen from the point of health knowledge. It is also necessary to provide health care services to patients with goodwill, urge them to follow the prescriptions and inform them of dos and don’ts.

As national security calls for human security, economic security, food security, adequate health care services, environmental security, personal security, community security and political security have become important. Food security and health security should be prioritized. Although population is agreed with food production, requirements are still remained in food safety for health. It is required to focus on organic farming, desisting from unwanted use of pesticides and chemicals. Giving talks on environmental conservation are to be carried out in order to stay away from climate change and environmental degradation. Health calls for disease control and ensuring healthy lifestyle. Besides, health care mobile teams of Defence Services are providing health care to national races in states and regions. Defence Services is cooperating with health experts and wellwishers to perform health care services as national productivity and socio-economic development of the people rest on healthy workforce. Defence Services Medical Corps need to make constant learning to be proficient in the use of modern equipment in accord with the advancement in science and technology and medicine to conduct researches on advanced medical treatment. It is necessary to respect military code of conduct, rules and regulations and laws. Strict adherence to military code of conduct is imperative. Not only being Defence Services officers but also being medical officials, it is required to adhere to the ethics for medical professionals so that medical treatment of those persons will be effective.

Tatmadaw emerged along with independence struggle and has a fine tradition of fighting against any destructive elements hand in hand with the people. Tatmadaw is making full cooperation with the government, Thanks to genuine goodwill of the State and Tatmadaw, peace-making process would meet with success.

Gold medal went to Khang Wah Phu of Myanmar in women’s Song luyen Ma tau (Pair machete form) event. Nay Zar Lin and Nay Oo Khin took bronze in women’s Song luyen kiem (Dragon Tiger form) event while Wuan Aung and Than Htike secured gold in men’s Song luyen Ma tau (Pair Sword form) event. Shwe Taung Co., presented K 10 million to gold medalists and K 3 million to bronze medalists. Khang Thanda Lwin (NLM) presented by World’s Kempo Federation President Mr. Aral.

Mr. Miguel Marques Gomcalves, Minister of Sports of Timor-Leste, awarded Indonesia gold, Laos silver and Timor-Leste and Cambodia bronze that won in the men’s Kempo (fighting) event (65 kg), and he presented gold to Timor-Leste, silver to Indonesia and bronze to Myanmar in the men’s Kempo (demonstration) event.

At the today’s women’s hockey event, Thailand trounced Malaysia 6-1 in the final while Myanmar beat Singapore 1-0 in the third-place match. —MNA

**Myanmar win two gold, three silver in Vovinam event**

**Nay Pyi Taw, 20 Dec—** Vovinam events of the 27th SEA Games continued at Zeyathiri Indoor Stadium (A), here, this morning.

Gold medal went to Khang Wah Phu of Myanmar in Long ha quyen (Dragon Tiger form) event while Lwan Aung and Than Htike secured gold in men’s Song luyen Ma tau (Pair Sword form) event while Myo Tun Arint, Win Hay Aung, Hein Thein Naing and Myo Thu Tun got bronze in Da yuyen vu khi nam (one male defense against three male with weapon) and Hay Man Soe, joint bronze in 60 kg female fighting event. Shwe Taung Co., presented K 10 million to gold medalists and K 3 million to bronze medalists. Khang Thanda Lwin (NLM)
**LOCAL NEWS**

**66th Anniversary Independence Day, 2014**

Wunna Theikdi Gymnasium, Nay Pyi Taw for XXVIISEA Games

Photo: Kyaw Swe Moe (IPRD)

**MOI’s information team holds press conference**

Nay Pyi Taw, 20 Dec—An information team of the Ministry of Information held a press conference at Mani Yadana Jade Hall, here, this evening.

MRTV Director U Win Kyi, leader of the team, said that it is planned to use devices being used in the SEA Games for long term effectively, not for short term use.

IPRD Director U Tin

**Rural development fund allotted in Pakokku**

Pakokku, 20 Dec—Pakokku Township Administrator U Aung Niang Oo, Pyithu Hluttaw representatives, the chairmen of Township Development Affairs Committee and Township Development Supportive Committee made field trips to the grassroots level for providing assistance to the rural regions so as to allotted rural development funds by the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw.

**Talks on crime reduction, gambling prevention, traffic rules given in Nyaunglebin**

Nyaunglebin, 20 Dec—The educative talks organized by Madauk Police Station under control of Nyaunglebin Township Police Force was held at Myoma Ward 2 in Madauk of Nyaunglebin Township.

**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.

**Trishaw workers donate cash to free clinic**

Nyaunglebin, 20 Dec—Workers of Trishaw from No 14 BOC Gate donated cash to the fund of Free Clinic of Cetana Social Association in Nyaung-lebin Township on 19 December.

It was the seventh time of its kind.

**Solar lamps donated for rural electrification**

Hopong, 20 Dec—A ceremony to donate solar lamps donated by Union Minister at the President Office U Soe Thaw was held at Donnakhyoe Village in Paunglin Village-tract of Hopong Township on 18 December afternoon.

On the occasion, Township Administrator U Maung Maung explained the purpose of donation and Secretary of Township Development Affairs Supportive Committee U Sai Hla Maung systematic usage of solar lamp in Pa-O language.

U Kyaw Zaw of Donmakkyoe Village and U Khun Htee of Htiseng Village spoke words of thanks.

32000 patients. Those wishing to donate cash and medicine may contact Dr Myint Thaw (Nyaunglebin), 09-5385689, Chairman of the association U Than Aye, 09-5385396 and Secretary U Aung Lin, 09-5084127.

**Fire**

Fire engulfs four houses in Yezagyo Tsp

Yezagyo, 20 Dec—A fire broke out at the house of Daw Nu Nu in Ngalan Village of Yezagyo Township in Magway Region on 17 December evening.

Village officials and local people put out the fire within 15 minutes.

In the incident, the fire engulfed four houses.

There was no casualty in the fire. Township officials provided assistance to fire victims.

Kyemon-Aung (Mann Tekkatho)

**Electrification**

Solar lamps donated for rural electrification

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U Kyaw Zaw of Donmakkyoe Village and U Khun Htee of Htiseng Village spoke words of thanks.

Officials presented solar lamps to Donmakkyoe Village and Htiseng Village.

A village elder spoke words of thanks.

At the ceremony, 90 solar lamps were donated to Donmakkyoe Village and 48 to Htiseng Village, totalling 138.

The ceremony was aimed at developing the rural people to be able to use the regions where have not yet been facilitated electricity.—Kyemon-Nay Oo Khun

**NATIONAL NEWS**

**Nay Pyi Taw, 20 Dec—**A road passing Htiechaungpaung, Zaik, Kugyun and Letpanyung villages being used by about 1000 local people and about 250 students is being repaired for an all-season use, said the administrator of Shapankang Village.

The township level officials cordially discussed with local people for regional development.—Kyemon-Nay Oo Maung (Pakokku)

**Fire engulfs four houses in Yezagyo Tsp**

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Kyemon-Aung (Mann Tekkatho)
Birthday gold comes a day early for Lao judoka

Phomenaly Sayarat of Laos got herself the best present for her birthday today an athlete could imagine — a gold medal in judo yesterday.

“The tiny Judo fighter turns 26 and can already look back on an impressive career and a pile of medals she has won since her first SEA Games in 2007 in Thailand.

“I love judo because it is about respect and making friends. Before and after the fight we bow to each other, whether we lose or not, it is very beautiful. And I like throwing and learning how to control myself and the opponent, and the knockouts,” she said.

She said judo is about observing and reading the opponent and that can only be achieved after years of experience and watching more senior fighters.

“We can control them even if they are stronger,” she said.

She stepped up her training in the last six months in Japan, where she has been living for six years.

Speaking fluently in Japanese with her coach Miwa Shimada, she said, “In Japan I have more opportunities to fight and practice. There are fighters of all levels. And my coach Miwa, who was my sempai (superior) in university in Nara punched and threw me so hard when I was a fresh man, I almost cried.”

But she said yesterday with a huge smile creasing her face.

She said while taekwondo is famous in Laos, judo wasn’t. But when her friend told her to join her in practice, she took up the sport and has not looked back.

“A strong heart is the most important thing in judo. If you’re weak, you cannot win. You have to control your heart and mind,” she said.

Teammate Baiyan Manivanh, who just lost in her fight against Thailand and was preparing for her next fight echoed the sentiment.

“It’s about mind control, thinking steps ahead, what to do next, staying focused, staying calm,” the 18-year-old, who competes in the 57kg and under category, said. “This sport helps me think and focus. My family loves judo because unlike in taekwondo where you just kick, in judo you need a real strategy, it’s exciting.”

“And I have a cousin on the national team. We just love judo.”

While the Lao girls emphasized the emotional and psychological aspects of the sport in their description of judo, 100kg plus fighter Han Boon Ho from Singapore focused on the technical basics in his explanation.

“Judo is about a variety of throws. You have to do your whole body in judo throws, it’s very important. Throwing and pinning and submission are the things you do in judo. You have to pin your opponent down or hold him for 20 seconds, both his shoulders have to be on the floor. Submission means arm locks, chokes,” he said.

He said it is a great sport to fend off bullies and said he was inspired by his sister who did judo.

“You can learn self-defense. I learned it because it looks fun, like getting confidence to do stuff. I find it boring because you have to learn how to fall so you won’t hurt yourself. And that you have to do for months before you can start learning the throws,” the 24-year-old who competed for the first time at SEA Games said.

Describing the fascination of the sport, he said it is like “one point did it all. You get through the opponent gets the full point and you lose. It’s very exciting. If you get a full point you win a match. So it’s not like a point system where you earn points and slowly earn victory. It is a very fast match,” he said.

“But be too fast and you will make mistakes, so staying in control is vital and that’s another thing I find so exciting about judo.”
Britons in South Sudan who wish to stay away from the turmoil, said a statement by the Foreign Ministry on Thursday, “a UK aircraft is en route to Juba to evacuate British nationals who wish to leave from Juba airport on Thursday 19 December,” said a spokesperson with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO).

By mid-day, about 150 Britons had made contact, including some non-embassy staff, according sources from FCO.

Some embassy staff and their relatives had been withdrawn, while FCO advised against all travel to within 40km of South Sudan’s northern border with Sudan, Jonglei State and Juba.

Xinhua

Two students were taken to the hospital after their school bus crashed in the US city of Houston Thursday, local media reported.

The incident happened Thursday morning on a loop near a freeway in southwest Houston, the website of the Houston Chronicle reported.

The Houston Independent School District officials said seven students were aboard the bus headed to MC Williams Middle School when the incident occurred. Two of the students were taken to the hospital. Their conditions were not released.

Two other students onboard were placed on another school bus and continued to the campus. It’s not clear how the crash happened. No other details about the incident were available.

Though the United States is reputed for its strict school bus safety code, such accidents are not uncommon.

At least two other accidents involving school buses were reported in Texas, as in the past week. On 13 December, nine elementary school students were hurt when their school bus was rear-ended by a pickup in north Texas.

On 11 December, nine students were injured after their school bus collided with another school bus in east Texas.

### Slovak presidential elections to be held in March 2014

**Bratislava, 20 Dec—** Slovak presidential elections will take place on 15 March next year, with the second round taking place on 29 March, authorities said on Thursday.

Local media quoted parliamentary chairman Pavol Paska as saying that the election would be structured as a two-round vote.

In the first round, if a candidate receives an absolute majority of valid votes then no second round will be necessary. The list of presidential candidates has reached 15 by Thursday.

Incumbent Prime Minister Robert Fico will run for the presidential post as the Smer party’s nominee.

Xinhua

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**Claims Day Notice MV Asian Leader VOY NO (-)**

Consignees of cargo carried on MV ASIAN LEADER VOY NO (-) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 21.12.2013 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T.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 submitted after the Claims Day.

**Shipping Agency Department MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY Agent for: M/S PHYLSAWAT SHIPPI NG CO LTD**

Phone No: 256924/256914

**Claims Day Notice MV Bang Khon Thi VOY NO (174)**

Consignees of cargo carried on MV BANG KHON THI VOY NO (174) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 21.12.2013 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of S.P.W(5) where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

**Shipping Agency Department MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY Agent for: M/S PHULSAWAT SHIPPING CO LTD**

Phone No: 256916/256919/256921

**Claims Day Notice**

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Phone No: 256924/256914

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Phone No: 256924/256914
A Minute With: Carey Mulligan on singing, playing literary heroines

LOS ANGELES, 20 Dec — Actress Carey Mulligan has taken on a wildly diverse range of film roles, from a naive schoolgirl in “An Education” to a struggling single mother in “Drive” to the coquetish Daisy Buchanan in this year’s “The Great Gatsby.”

The 28-year-old London native was thrust into the spotlight with her breakout role as a smart but innocent schoolgirl in the coming-of-age drama “An Education,” earning an Academy Award nomination in 2010.

Since then, she has become one of Hollywood’s most sought-after young actresses, most recently being picked by directors Joel and Ethan Coen for their latest film on the 1960s folk scene “Inside Llewyn Davis,” in which Mulligan plays the supporting role of Jean alongside lead star Oscar Isaac.

Mulligan sat down with Reuters to discuss singing with Justin Timberlake, placing literary heroines and her most challenging role yet.

Q: What drew you to the role of the feisty Jean? A: The reason the Coen brothers asked me to audition for it is that they had not seen me play a part like that before, and I had not gotten the opportunity to play a part like that. She was so inspired and beautiful, and behind that, you can see the intimate relationship between (Jean and Llewyn), she was just brilliantly written.

Q: You sing alongside Justin Timberlake in the film. How was that experience? A: It was nerve-racking at first. We had a week of singing rehearsals where we all played music together, and that’s when I first sat down with Justin and T Bone Burnett, he orchestrated the whole thing. But they were so lovely. Justin was so encouraging to a non-singer and he made me feel really great. We just got really into it as our little trio, our party to Peter, Paul & Mary, that I forgot about all the nerves by the time we were doing it.

Q: You call yourself a non-singer, but you also showcased your singing talents in 2011’s “Shame.” Is singing something that you want to do more of? A: No, it’s just sort of bizarre I sang in the choir at school, that was the extent of my singing and when I was much younger, I was into musical theater, but these jobs just came up. “Shame” came relatively close to “Inside Llewyn Davis,” and they both happened to have singing things. It’s a great part of those characters, but not something I would do outside of film.

Q: So no album in the works? A: No album! I’ll spare everyone my music.

Q: You’ve played some great literary ladies — Kitty Bennett in 2005’s “Pride & Prejudice,” Daisy Buchanan in this year’s “The Great Gatsby” and Bathsheba Everdene in the upcoming film version of “Far From The Madding Crowd.” Do you feel any pressure in bringing these characters to life? A: Huge pressure. I love doing adaptations of novels because you got such a lot of material to work from that’s so interesting and it’s so fun to bring that to life. The characters that are written in these great pieces of literature are amazing and really rare. Bathsheba’s the same as that, she was such a crazy character and the things that she experiences throughout her story are amazing.

Q: What did you take away from the experience of playing Daisy Buchanan in Baz Luhrmann’s “The Great Gatsby”? A: Being my first experience in a big film, I imagined it would be different to how it was, but actually I came away having really had great acting moments. I had such a good time with Leo (DiCaprio) and Tobey (Maguire), and was so absorbed by working with them.

Q: How have you gone about selecting roles for your next best actress Oscar nomination in 2010? A: It gave me an opportunity to stop for a second and figure out what I had forgotten how much I was really good for the work I was doing, so I just started trying to get jobs that were really once-in-a-lifetime parts that you just couldn’t bear the idea of anyone else doing and that’s how it ended up being. It’s been your biggest challenge so far? A: My biggest challenge acting-wise has probably been “Far From The Madding Crowd,” which I just finished, only that I hadn’t played a lead role in while I’ve been doing these really great supporting roles like in “Inside Llewyn Davis,” so I had forgotten how much fun it was, and it ended up being really physically demanding. She’s a crazy character. — Reuters

Beyonce album sets iTunes sales record, tops Billboard chart

LOS ANGELES, 20 Dec — R&B star Beyonce’s latest self-titled album surpassed 1 million copies sold worldwide in six days on Wednesday and set a record for iTunes, Apple Inc and Columbia Records said.

“Beyoncé,” the fifth solo studio album from the singer, unexpectedly released in the early hours of 13 December without any prior fanfare, contains 14 new songs and 17 videos, and swiftly topped the iTunes album charts across the world.

The album also debuted at the top of the week’s Billboard 200 album chart on Wednesday, with 617,000 copies sold in the United States by the week ending 15 December, according to figures from Nielsen SoundScan.

The deluxe digital album, exclusively available on iTunes, can only be purchased as a complete set of songs and videos, and retails for $15.99 at the US store. A physical version will be made available for sale in time for the festive holiday period this month.

The surprise release of the album caps a year in which Beyonce, 32, made a carefully choreographed return to music after taking time out to give birth to her first child, daughter Blue Ivy with rapper husband Jay-Z.

Both Blue Ivy and Jay Z feature as collaborators on the new album, and appear in accompanying music videos. Releasing an album without any prior fanfare or publicity is rare, especially for one of the top players in the current music industry. But Beyonce’s success does not necessarily mean other artists will be able to copy her stealth release strategy. — Reuters

Selena Gomez cancels Australia tour to ‘spend time on myself’

LOS ANGELES, 20 Dec — Pop singer Selena Gomez on Thursday cancelled her upcoming Australian concert tour, saying she needs to take the time to put herself first.

The 21-year-old former Disney star was to perform five concerts in Australia, beginning on 1 February, 2014, and concluding on February 8 in Melbourne.

“My fans are so important to me and I would never want to disappoint them,” the “Come & Get It” singer said in a statement. “But it has become clear to me that after many years of putting my work first, I need to spend some time on myself in order to be the best person I can be.”

Texas-born Gomez, who has also branched into serious film roles, is set to tour Asia in January.

Actors Paul Rudd poses at the UK premiere of the film Anchorman 2 in Leicester Square, London, on 11 Dec, 2013. — Reuters
**SPORTS**

**Iniesta agrees three-year contract extension**

**MADRID, 20 Dec** — Barcelona’s Spanish playmaker Andres Iniesta has agreed a three-year contract extension with the La Liga champions until 2018 when he turns 34, club president Sandro Rosell said on Thursday.

The contract includes an option for further extensions on an annual basis depending on how often Iniesta plays, Rosell told a news conference.

“We are very, very happy,” Rosell said. “I think this is a great Christmas gift for all Barcelona fans.”

A product of Barca’s academy, Iniesta joined the club in September 1996 at the age of 12, made his first-team debut in a Champions League game in October 2002 and has gone on to help the Catalans win 21 trophies.

One of the greatest moments of his club career came in the Champions League semi-finals in 2009 when he scored a dramatic late goal at Chelsea that sent Barca through to the final.

He is a hero to Spaniards after netting the extra-time winner against Netherlands in South Africa in 2010 that secured the Iberian nation’s first World Cup.

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**Rogers must get maximum ban if guilty**

**MELBOURNE** — Cycling will seekishment for if the guilty of debraining the body the country day.

Rogers, visionally the Internat Union (UCI) day after the for the ban agent claims.

The world tin champion a Olympic medalist any wrong and blamed contaminants for the first.

“While we respect Michael Rogers right to defend himself we will support the man sanctions applicable in the event that he is found guilty of doping,” CA interim chief executive Adrian Anderson told reporters.

“The fact that the drug testing process internationally continues to result in unpredictable tests should be a message to all cyclists that if they dope they will be caught.”

“For too long this great sport of cycling has been let down by drug cheats and Cycling Australia supports every measure to protect the integrity of cycling and to detect and prosecute any doping offences.”

At this year’s Tour de France, Japan Cup winner Rogers was a road captain in the Saxo-Tinkoff team of Alberto Contador, who was banned for two years after a failed test for clenbuterol on the 2010 edition of the world’s greatest cycling race. Rogers, who also rode the Tour of Beijing in October, could face a two-year ban if found guilty.

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**Mercedes F1 sign top engineers from Red Bull**

**BERLIN, 20 Dec** — Mercedes have hired two top engineers from Formula One champions Red Bull in a move they hope will strengthen their title challenge next year and weaken their dominant rivals.

The British-based team said in a statement that Mark Ellis would be joining as performance director next June while Giles Wood was appointed chief engineer, in charge of simulation and development, and arriving at the same time.

Ellis is currently Red Bull’s head of vehicle dynamics and Wood chief engineer for simulation.

“These two newly-created roles will further strengthen the team’s technical organization, particularly in the fields of simulation and vehicle dynamics,” Mercedes added.

The two men are the first major signings by the team since the departure of principal Ross Brawn was announced, with executive directors Paddy Lowe and Toto Wolff sharing the leadership tasks.

Red Bull, with Sebastian Vettel, have been champions for the past four years and were dominant in the second half of the 2013 season with their 26-year-old German driver winning the last nine races in a row.

However they have suffered some important staff losses, with McLaren trumpeting the signing of aerodynamicist Peter Rodmoro for 2015, when the Woking-based team will have Honda as engine partners.

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**Mercedes’ Gerard Deulofeu stretches for the ball during their English Premier League soccer match against Stoke City at Goodison Park in Liverpool, northern England on 30 Nov, 2013.**

**REUTERS**

**Olympic 1,500m champion Cakir cleared by Turkish chiefs**

**ISTANBUL, 20 Dec** — Olympic 1,500 metres champion Asli Cakir Alptekin has been cleared of doping violations, the Turkish athletics federation said in a statement on Thursday.

Cakir was provisionally suspended by the federation in May after abnormalities were detected in her biological passport, resulting in her missing the world championships in Moscow in August.

She had served a two-year suspension in 2004 after a positive dope test at the world junior championships.

A second offence could have resulted in a lifetime ban.

The governing International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF), however, said it had not yet received the full judgement on Cakir in English.

“We will review the decision upon receipt and decide whether or not it should be appealed to CAS (the Court of Arbitration for Sport) as per IAAF rules,” spokesman Chris Turner said in an email to Reuters.

Biological passports work by creating individual blood profiles for each athlete, rather than testing for specific performance-enhancing drugs.

If a blood reading deviates markedly from previous measures an athlete can face a doping charge.

More than 30 athletes, including double European 100 metres hurdles champi Nevin Yanit, have been suspended by the Turkish federation for doping this year. The scandal is likely to have affected Istanbul’s unsuccessful bid to host the 2020 Olympics, a vote won by Tokyo in September.

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**Everton forward Deulofeu out for up to six weeks**

**BARCELONA’s Gerard Deulofeu stretches for the ball during their English Premier League soccer match against Stoke City at Goodison Park in Liverpool, northern England on 30 Nov, 2013.**

**REUTERS**

**Everton forward Deulofeu out to for up to six weeks**

**MADRID, 20 Dec** — Everton forward Gerard Deulofeu’s hamstring injury could sideline the Spanish under-21 international for up to two months.

The player is on loan from Barcelona for the season and the Spanish club said on their website (www.fcbarcelona.com) on Thursday that tests conducted in the Catalan capital had shown he would be out for “approximately six to eight weeks”.

Deulofeu is to recuperate in Spain under the supervision of Barca medical staff and their Everton counterparts.

The forward was injured in the home defeat by Arsenal on December 9.

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**Barcelona’s Carles Puyol, Sergio Busquets, Alex Song and Andres Iniesta (L-R) attend a training session the day before their Champions League group H soccer match against Ajax Amsterdam, in Amsterdam, on 25 Nov, 2013.**

**REUTERS**

**Everton’s Gerard Deulofeu stretches for the ball during their English Premier League soccer match against Stoke City at Goodison Park in Liverpool, northern England on 30 Nov, 2013.**

**REUTERS**

**Barcelona’s Carles Puyol, Sergio Busquets, Alex Song and Andres Iniesta (L-R) attend a training session the day before their Champions League group H soccer match against Ajax Amsterdam, in Amsterdam, on 25 Nov, 2013.**

**REUTERS**
Manila, 20 Dec — The mayor of a southern Philippines municipality and three others including an 18-month-old baby were shot dead on Friday morning at Manila’s main airport, police and airport officials said.

They said Labangan Mayor Ukol Talumpa, his wife, a bodyguard and the baby boy unrelated to them were killed and four others wounded in the daring attack at the pickup point of one of the Ninoy Aquino International Airport’s four terminals.

Witnesses told local radio the victims were shot with what appeared to be a .45 caliber handgun by an apparent rider pillion on a motorcycle.

They said the two suspects, one of whom was wearing a police uniform, then escaped on the motorcycle.

The incident occurred at a time when many Filipinos are traveling abroad for the Christmas vacation.

Labangan is located in the western part of Mindanao Island, in the Province of Zamboanga de Sur.

Allardyce aims to kick off after Spurs upset

Istanbul, 20 Dec — Turkish police arrested eight people in connection with allegations of official corruption and bribery, a newspaper said on Friday, in an investigation Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan has called a “dirty operation” aimed at undermining him.

Among those remanded in custody was the brother of the mayor of Istanbul’s historic Fatih District, Hurriyet daily said. It was not clear who else had been arrested.

Mayor Fatih Demir was detained this week, and on Friday was in court to hear if he would be arrested or freed, Dogan News Agency said.

A total of about 50 people, including at least one son of a cabinet minister and billionaire construction magnate Ali Agaoglu, were at the Istanbul court, Hurriyet said.

The operation, unprecedented in scope, began this week with the detention of scores of people seen as close to the government, has struck at the heart of Turkey’s ruling elite and roiled financial markets.

Dozens of police chefs have been removed from their posts, accused of abuse of office for keeping the investigation quiet from higher level officials in security institutions.—Reuters

Turkish police arrest eight in graft investigation

Blatter disappointed with European indifference to Club Cup

Marrakech, (Morocco), 20 Dec — FIFA president Sepp Blatter is disappointed with European indifference towards the Club World Cup, he said on Thursday.

The competition, featuring the club champions of each continent, aroused great interest in South America, Asia and Africa, but is barely noticed in Europe amid the torrent of pre-Christmas domestic football.

“I could understand that when we played this competition in the past years in Japan or the United Arab Emirates, that there was less interest,” Blatter told reporters.

“But now it is on Europe’s doorstep and there is not so much interest, I agree that we are disappointed.”

FIFA President Sepp Blatter

“Blatter said he hoped the tournament, staged in Morocco this year for the first time, would eventually be included in the international cycle to avoid clashing with European league football.”

“Blatter said he was disappointed by this year’s tournament, which ends on Saturday with Raja Casablanca, who qualified as champions of host nation Morocco, facing European champions Bayern Munich in the final in Marrakech.

Raja reached the final in a shock 3-1 win over South American champions Atletico Mineiro on Wednesday, stunning the roughly 2,000 fans who had made the long journey from Brazil.

“The quality of the matches we have seen, with some very good football in a remarkable atmosphere, this is best publicity, and the best way of getting more attention of the five big leagues,” said Blatter.

“It’s a question of solidarity,” he added. “They should also be interested in the other leagues and have a look at what is going on elsewhere.”—Reuters

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Defence Services Commander-in-Chief attends graduation of Intake-15 of DSMA

NAY PYI TAW, 20 Dec — Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing delivered an address at the graduation of the Intake-15 of the Defence Services Medical Academy today. First, the Senior General took the salute of the graduation parades and inspected the parades.

Afterwards, the graduation parades saluted marched past the Senior General.

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing awarded Cadet Hem Htet San (Cadet No 4563) who won the best cadet award, Cadet Thet Naing Win (Cadet No 4516) who won the best award for excellent performance in training and Cadet Aung Kyaw Thu (Cadet No 4587) who won the best award for excellent performance in literature.

In his address, Senior General Min Aung Hlaing stressed the important role of health care services in a country as a country needs healthy and strong intellectuals for the development and consultation on health services.

He has urged the members of the Defence Forces to take part in the educative and consultation on health care services as a long-term plan while carrying out the treatment and preventive measures.

The Senior General also stressed the importance of good health for the members of the Armed Forces who would carry out not the development tasks of the country but also for the defense services.

As part of efforts for abundant of food, agriculture and livestock breeding farms should be carried out at battalions and regiments, he said.

The Senior General also urged the cadets to disseminate knowledge on health to the people in areas where they would be posted.

Players of Myanmar Sepak Takraw team celebrate victory after securing champion in Sepak Takraw event together with officials of Myanmar Sepak Takraw Federation at Wunna Theikdi Indoor Stadium (B) on 20 December.

JULY MOE

Speaker of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw and Pyithu Hluttaw arrives in Cambodia

NAY PYI TAW, 20 Dec — At the invitation of President of the National Assembly of Cambodia Samdech Akka Moha Ponhecha Chakrei Heng Samrin, Speaker of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw and Pyithu Hluttaw Thura U Shwe Mann and party arrived in Phnom Penh of Cambodia yeater-day. The Myanmar delega-tion was welcomed at the Airport by Chairman of the (See page 8)