President awards winners in traditional boat race

Myanmar national taekwondo team notched up its fourth gold on the final day of Taekwondo hostilities at Wunna Theikdi Indoor Stadium (A), here, today. The host country added one more gold to its medal tally from a thrilling gold fight in women’s under-46 kg Taekwondo category.

Nway Nway brought fourth gold medal to her team in the final bout against Thailand’s Pani-pak Wongpattanakit who was defeated by a count of 7-5 and got only silver. The Myanmar Taekwondo fighter secured the gold as she turned a one-point deficit into a 7-5 lead four seconds before the end of the final round by landing a lightning-quick kick to her opponent’s head. The Philippines and Indonesia shared the bronze in the event.

Nway Nway takes home fourth Taekwondo gold with lightning-quick kick

Myanmar national taekwondo team notched up an exciting victory in the final round of the Taekwondo event. The team secured its fourth gold medal in the women’s under-46 kg category.

Nway Nway, a Myanmar national taekwondo fighter, secured the gold medal in the women’s under-46 kg category with a lightning-quick kick to her opponent’s head. The Philippines and Indonesia shared the bronze medal in the event.

Nway Nway celebrates victory over Thai rival in women’s under-46 kg Taekwondo event.
Coordination on Myanmar migrant workers in Thailand held

YANGON, 21 Dec — Myanmar Ambassador held talks with Immigration Bureau Commissioner Pol Lieutenant General Phamu Kerdlapphon on Myanmar migrant workers in Thailand recently.

The Myanmar Ambassador at the meeting made a request not to arrest Myanmar migrants by Thai authorities, to issue visas to offspring of migrants and to collect visa fee no more than 500 bahts.

According to the discussions, Thai side is taking necessary measures to issue visas to children of migrants as a directive has already been issued. Although there are arrests of undocumented migrants in accord with existing laws of Thailand, the Thai Labour Ministry is making arrangements for Cabinet resolution in order to grant a special exemption in which Myanmar migrant workers who passed the four years limit to work will not get arrested during a period of 180 days in accord with the request of Myanmar.

MoU on cooperation in investment promotion in Myanmar signed

NAV PAY TAW, 21 Dec — The Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development and International Finance Corporation (IFC) have signed an MoU on cooperation in investment promotion in Myanmar at the ministry, here, this afternoon.

On the occasion, Director-General of the Directorate of Investment and Companies Administration U Aung Naing Oo and Resident Representative Mr Vikram Kumar of IFC signed the MoU that supports private sector development of the country and attracts long-term investments.

Continuing medical education programme held

SITTWAY, 21 Dec — The seminar on continuing medical education programme, organized by Sittway Township Medical Association, took place at Sittway Township General Hospital of Rakhine State on 18 December.

It was attended by Head of Rakhine State Health Department Dr Aye Nyien, Medical Superintendent of Sittway General Hospital Dr Aung San, specialists, surgeons from Township Health Departments in Rakhine State, doctors from social organizations and assistant surgeons and house surgeons totaling over 150.

The seminar shared practical works of specialists on medical point of view and they replied to queries raised by those present.

“The continuing medical education programme contributes much to qualification of us, So our hospital will organize such seminar one after another,” said Medical Superintendent Dr Aung San.

The seminar was sponsored by United Pharmaceutical Co Ltd. It will be held monthly.

Mobile health care team gives service to patients

KYUNHLA, 21 Dec — Chairman of Kyunhla Township Maternal and Child Welfare Association Daw Nang Cho Cho Pyone and party, members of District and Township MCWA's viewed learning of trainees at the midwifery training course at Township People's Hospital on 17 December.

The chairperson met expectant mothers.

Shwebo District Hospital Medical Superintendent Dr Myo Than explained symptoms of expectant mothers and nutritious foods for them and distributed iodized salt and nutritious foods to them.

The Township MCWA chairperson and party viewed health care services provided by Assistant Head of Township Traditional Medicine Department Daw Kyi Nwe to older persons at the clinic at Myinnmamyang Ward of Kyunhla.

Later, they donated medicines to the aged and cash to the clinic.

Development

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw development fund allotted to 46 township works

MOHNYIN, 21 Dec — Pyidaungsu Hluttaw's development fund K 100 million was earmarked to be spent on nine rural water supply tasks, 21 road transports, 1 rural region basic education building renovation tasks, one renovation of rural health centre building and other three totalling 46.

Moreover, the development fund K 100 million must be spent on the tasks in 2013-14 fiscal year. So, if all the fund cannot be spent, the remaining amount must be refunded to the Hluttaw.

“The Union government is carrying out rural development tasks undertaken by respective ministries. The Hluttaw fund is to be spent on rural development tasks that were not included in the projects of the government. These tasks can be implemented with the Hluttaw development fund quickly. In the international arena, the constituency development fund is allotted.

Such fund is to be spent immediately on natural disaster or damages of buildings for example school without waiting for the fund of the Union government. Due to regulations, the departments may allot the fund on the tasks at least one year,” said U Kyaw Soe Lay, Pyithu Hluttaw representative of Mohnyin Township.

Vendors, beggers from friendship bridge removed

TACHEILEK, 21 Dec — Vendors and beggers on No 1 Friendship Bridge may tarnish the image of the nation, reported by a local in the Myanmar Alinn daily on 22 October.

Thus, workers of Tachilek Township Development Affairs Committee and Myanmar Police Force have cleared them from the bridge, recently, said Township DAC — MMAL-Swe Nyien.

The harvesting of model plot of quality paddy was held in Salin Township of Magway Region on 15 December morning.

It took place at the model plot of farmer U Mya Win. The ceremony was attended by Township Administrator U Tun Thein, members of Township Agricultural Coordination Committee, township level departmental officials and local farmers.

Later, they put production of paddy on record.
Kidnapped Taiwanese released in southern Philippines

MANILA, 21 Dec — A female Taiwanese who was kidnapped in Malaysia last month was freed in the southern Philippine province of Sulu Friday afternoon, local military said on Saturday. The victim, identified as Evelyn Chang, was rescued by joint military and police units at a village in Talipao town at around 3:55 pm local time, said Captain Ryan Lacuesta, civil military operations officer of the 2nd Marine Brigade.

He said authorities received information from Talipao residents regarding the kidnapped victim who was apparently abandoned by her unidentified captors. Chang was seized on 15 November at Pulau, Pulong-Pulong, Sampurna, Sabah, Malaysia and was brought to the municipalit of Indanan, Sulu. The recovered kidnapped victim was immediately brought to Camp Teodulfo Bautista Station Hospital for medical check up and trauma treatment, said Lacuesta, who did not mention if ransom was paid for Chang’s safe release. — Xinhua

Mexico’s president signs law to reform energy market, attract investment

MEXICO CITY, 21 Dec — Mexican President Enrique Pena Nieto on Friday signed into law a radical reform of the country’s energy market, ending a 75-year-old oil and gas monopoly in the hope of attracting major investments to increase production. “This is a transformational reform… that will allow the country to produce energy at lower costs,” Pena Nieto said at the signing ceremony flanked by lawmakers at the national palace.

The overhaul of three articles of Mexico’s constitution passed the Congress last week and over the weekend was approved by a majority of the country’s state legislatures.

The president’s Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) and his conservative allies in Congress approved the reform arguing that it promises more jobs and economic growth by allowing private sector participation in the country’s lucrative oil, gas and electricity sectors. Congress is likely to approve by April so-called secondary legislation that will implement the reform and flesh out crucial commercial details.— Reuters

Former Japanese officer invited to Nobel Prize ceremony

TOKYO, 21 Dec — Ichiro Akiyama, who served as first director of the Inspectorate Division at the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, was invited to attend the Nobel Peace Prize ceremony in Oslo earlier in December, as his contribution to the organization were highly acclaimed.

Akiyama headed the inspection bureau of the 16-year-old global chemical weapons watchdog, which has won this year’s Nobel Peace Prize, for a total of 10 years. — Xinhua

US sends special envoy to South Sudan to help end violence

WASHINGTON, 21 Dec — US Secretary of State John Kerry announced Friday that he has sent a special envoy to South Sudan to support the efforts to end the violence in the African country.

US Special Envoy for Sudan and South Sudan Donald Brook departed Friday to “support regional efforts already underway” to end the armed conflict in South Sudan, Kerry said in a statement.

Kerry said he called South Sudanese President Salva Kiir Thursday night to urge him “to protect all South Sudanese civilians and workers toward reconciliation.”

“Now is the time for South Sudan’s leaders to rein in armed groups under their control, immediately cease attacks on civilians, and end the chain of retributive violence between different ethnic and political groups. The violence must stop, the dialogue must intensify,” Kerry said.

Kerry strongly condemned Thursday’s attack on the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) base in Akobo County in Jonglei State, while urging all parties to respect UNMISS, refrain from any attacks on its personnel, and help facilitate its mission to protect civilian populations.

The US diplomat warned that any armed attack on the South Sudanese capital of Juba “will be seen as an attempt to achieve an unlawful usurpation of power, which would be universally condemned.”

“Those who seek to take or hold power by violence or division of South Sudanese along ethnic lines will not have our support. Violence today will not pave the way for a more stable or prosperous tomorrow,” Kerry said.

With violence escalating in South Sudan, US President Barack Obama on Wednesday deployed 45 US troops to the African country to protect US citizens and property. The US government on Thursday evacuated more citizens from South Sudan, as a private charter flight lifted some 130 people from Juba.

Since fighting broke out on Sunday between forces loyal to President Kiir and his former deputy Riek Machar, who was removed from office in July, some 450 people have been killed so far in Juba. Meanwhile, Machar has rejected an offer of talks by Kiir, saying instead for the president’s removal by the ruling party and the army. — Xinhua

Obama rejects 2013 as worst year of presidency, expects “breakthrough” in 2014

WASHINGTON, 21 Dec — At the end of his fifth year in the White House, US President Barack Obama on Friday rejected the year 2013 as the worst of his tenure, and expected 2014 to be “a breakthrough year for America.”

Speaking at his year-end news conference in the White House briefing room, Obama opened his remarks with the good news of the US economic growth and cited the latest improvement of the health plans sign-ups under his signature healthcare overhaul. Asked if 2013 had been the worst of his presidency, he laughed and dodged the question. He downplayed the recent poll results, as his approval rating has slid to all-time low of 41 percent, the lowest of his presidency.

“The latest CNN/ORC poll released about an hour before the president’s year-end news conference showed his approval rating fell to 41 percent, the lowest of his presidency.

“If you are measuring this by polls, my polls have gone up and down a lot through the course of my career,” said Obama. “If I was interested in polling, I would not have run for president.”

“I’ve run my last political race. So at this point, my goal every single day is just to make sure that I can look back and say we’re delivering something, not everything, because this is a long haul,” he added.

The president admitted that the problem with the health care website, which has seen a major rollout since 1 October, was “a source of great frustration.”

“The fact is it didn’t happen in the first month, first six weeks, in a way that was at all acceptable. And since I’m in charge, obviously we screwed it up,” said Obama.

But he moved quickly to stress that the enrollment number of the healthcare website has picked up pace in the past month, which he described as “a big deal.”

“More than half a million Americans enrolled on Healthcare.gov in the first three weeks of December alone,” he said.

The figure outpaces the enrollment number for October plus November, and brings the total number under ObamaCare to more than 1 million.

The White House is trying to recover from months of negative news about the implementation of the healthcare overhaul, which is believed to have dragged down his approval ratings.

Several of the president’s domestic legislative priorities, including tightening up gun control, made little progress at Capitol Hill in 2013. Obama vowed to gain ground in the upcoming new year.

**New Light of Myanmar**

Sunday, 22 December, 2013
China launches communications satellite for Bolivia, Xi voices congratulations

XICHANG, (Sichuan), 21 Dec — China successfully sent a Bolivian communications satellite into orbit with its Long March-3B carrier rocket from southwest China’s Sichuan Province, on 21 Dec, 2013. — Xinhua

Chinese President Xi Jinping sent a message of congratulations to President Morales, saying the successful development and launch of the satellite represents the latest achievements and level of cooperation between China and Bolivia in the field of science and technology. “The satellite will play an important role for Bolivia to improve its broadcasting, education and medical services. It will make important contributions to promote cooperation between China and Latin American countries,” Xi said.

China’s Yutu “naps”, awakens and explores

BEIJING, 21 Dec — China’s Yutu moon rover, taking the camera on the Chang’e-3 moon lander during the mutual-photograph process, at the Beijing Aerospace Control Centre in Beijing, capital of China, on 15 Dec, 2013.— Xinhua

The following is the reproduction of Myanmar Hotels & Tourism Guide 2013. Visit www.tourismguide.com.mm for further information.—Ed

Kyaih-hto-“Golden Rock” Pagoda

Kyaih-hto-yo, or Golden Rock Pagoda, near the town of Kyakhto, is regarded as a miracle by Buddhists. It is a small spire 5.5 metres (18 feet) high which is believed to enshrine a hair relic of the Buddha. It is set dramatically atop a huge boulder which in turn is balanced on the edge of a cliff. A wide terrace gives a fantastic view of distant mountains, especially a sunset.

Mawlamyne

The Mon State capital is the third largest city in Myanmar after Yangon and Mandalay and has long been an important port. It was captured by the British in 1826 during the First Anglo-Myanmar War and served as their capital from 1827 to 1852. The Strand is a pleasant place to stroll with beautiful colonial buildings facing the river.

Win Sein Reclining Image

Win Sein Meditation Centre is famous for the world’s longest reclining Buddha image, at 183 metres (600 feet). Entrances in the image lead to meditation chambers.

Thabyuzyat

About 29 kilometres (18 miles) south of Mawlamyne is the Commonwealth War Graves Commission cemetery at Thabyuzyat. It honours the remains of prisoners of the Japanese who died while working on the Myanmar end of the infamous Death Railway during World War Two.

Yadana Bon Myint Monastery

It was donated by Queen Sein Don, a muck-loved queen of King Mindon. This monastery was originally her residence and it incorporated many features of Mandalay Palace, including a replica in scale of the Lion Throne. She gave away much of her wealth to religious causes, including her mansion, before she died in 1905 aged 69.

AT&T to join Verizon in government data-request disclosures

NEW YORK, 21 Dec — AT&T Inc will join rival Verizon Communications in disclosing details on gov-ernment requests for cus-tomer data starting in 2014, after investors called on the two largest U.S carriers to reveal more about contro-versial spying operations.

New York-based Veri-zon, the second-largest U.S telephone company by rev- enue, unveiled its move on Thursday following pres- sure from activist investors concerned about the extent of network operators’ roles in systematic government surveillance. “Like Verizon recently announced, we intend to publish a semi-annual on-line report that will provide information on the number of law enforcement requests for customer information that our company receives in the countries in which we do business,” AT&T said in a statement on Friday.

Investors, including Boston’s Trillium Asset Management and the New York State Common Re-tirement Fund, publicly pushed Verizon and AT&T last month to disclose de-tails on their sharing of customer information with government agencies. The carriers’ moves come days after a White House-appointed panel pro- posed curbs on various U.S National Security Agency operations, including a halt to bulk collection of phone call records.

The shift by carriers toward greater disclosure followed similar initiatives from tech companies such as Google Inc and Yahoo Inc, in the wake of revela-tions by former NSA con-tractor Edward Snowden that highlighted close ties between spy agencies and technology firms.

Silicon Valley, worried about a customer backlash, has called for greater trans-parency around US gov-ernment requests for user information. Until now, telephone companies like Verizon had been much less outspoken than their technology and Internet counterparts. AT&T said it intends to start next year by disclosing the total number of requests received in 2013 in criminal cases, the num-ber of customers affected and details about legal de-mands.—Reuters
Government sees Pacific trade pact talks taking time

LONDON, 21 Dec — People who are already on the way to developing diabetes could significantly reduce their risk of having a heart attack or stroke by walking for just an extra 20 minutes a day for a year, scientists said on Friday.

A large international study of people with a condition called impaired glucose tolerance (IGT) — a precursor to diabetes — found that an extra 2,000 steps a day over one year cut the risk of serious heart illness by 8 percent. IGT affects around 344 million people worldwide, or almost 8 percent of adults, and this number is projected to rise to 472 million by 2030 as populations grow and age and unhealthy diets contribute to increasing rates of diabetes.

“People with IGT have a greatly increased risk of cardiovascular disease,” said Thomas Yates of Britain’s University of Leicester, who led the research.

“How many steps per day are needed as the deal has to be comprehensive, US trade representative Michael Froman said on Saturday. The US-backed deal, which Washington had wanted to conclude this year, aims to establish a framework to make sure that we come out with an ambitious outcome,” Froman said, adding there was no date or venue yet for the next round of talks.

More far-reaching than other deals, the TPP pact is aimed at going beyond tariffs on physical trade and it will try to regulate sensitive areas such as government procurement and give companies more rights to sue.

The two countries held talks during a four-day TPP meeting in Singapore this month on the issue but have not come to any agreement. The TPP negotiations, which have run for three years, have been mired in controversy over a lack of transparency, and slowed by the conflicting interests of the negotiating countries, US lawmakers and advocacy groups.—Reuters

For pre-diabetics, just 2,000 steps a day cuts heart attack risk

Wall Street gains on GDP data; indexes post strong week

NEW YORK, 21 Dec — Stocks rose on Friday, capping the best week for major indexes in months as unexpectedly strong data on economic growth increased confidence that the recovery was accelerating.

Gross domestic product grew at an annual rate of 4.1 percent in the third quarter, the fastest pace in almost two years, and exceeding the 3.6 percent pace reported earlier this month. Business spending was also stronger than previously estimated.

Until recently, investors have viewed positive data as a negative because it suggested that the Federal Reserve would begin to trim its stimulus programme. The central bank had said it would start tapering its monthly bond buying when certain economic indicators met its targets. The Fed, however, said on Wednesday that it would pare its market-friendly monthly asset purchases by $10 billion to $75 billion, starting in January. It also suggested that its key interest rate would stay at rock bottom longer than previously promised.

“If tapering had not been announced, I don’t think this news would be as welcomed by the market as it is right now,” said Nicholas Colas, chief market strategist at the ConvergEx Group in New York.

“But now, there’s no real risk that there will be more tapering any time soon, and on top of that, growth is absolutely strong- er than many were expecting,” Fed Chairman Ben Bernanke said that if US job gains continue as expected, then the bond purchases would be cut at a “measured” pace through much of next year, and would probably be wound down “late in the year, certainly not by the middle of the year.”—Reuters

Quinvaxem vaccine not related to deaths among Vietnamese kids

HANOI, 21 Dec — World Health Organization (WHO) and United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) released a joint Press announce ment in Vietnam’s capital Hanoi on Friday, saying there is no connection between the Quinvaxem vaccine and possible deaths among children after vaccination.

In the past year, deaths toll after Quinvaxem vaccination has increased to 10, mostly infants of several months-old, quoted that protect death association between the Quinvaxem and direct or indirect causes to deaths of children after vaccinated. The report is globally announced, according to the Press release.

Quinvaxem is a South Korean-imported vaccine produced children out of five deadly infectious diseases. Since being tested quality by WHO in 2006, 400 million vaccine doses have been used in 91 countries all over the world. The vaccine is rec ored to be safe in use, said the press release.—Xinhua
Vice-President U Nyan Tun and Union ministers congratulate Nway Nway for her victory in Women’s below 46-kg Taekwondo event on 21 Dec. 2013. Nway Nway snatched the gold medal after defeating Thailand’s Panipak Wong.

Hla Yin May poses for photo after accepting gold medal for 48-kg Muay category.

Indonesian team competes in the event of Female Defense Against 3 Males with Weapon of Vovinam.

Saw Dar Pot (R) lands a blow in chest of Philip Delarmino of the Philippines.

Ramnarong of Thailand (R) fights with Francis Aaron of the Philippines in Men’s below 54-kg category of Taekwondo.

Myanmar’s Taekwondo medalists greet Vice-President U Nyan Tun.—Photo: Thura (Toungoo)
By Alan Adams

The Thais defended their respective crowns on Saturday, with the men beating Indonesia 3-0 (25-20, 25-17, 25-21) and the women handling Vietnam 3-0 (25-16, 25-20, 25-17).

The Thai men have won gold in three of the last four SEA Games and now have five championships overall.

The Thai women all but own the gold medal as this was their ninth straight championship and 11th overall, and it also marked the seventh straight time they met Vietnam in the final.

“We’re so proud of what we accomplished,” said women’s captain Apinyapong Wilavan.

It marked the first time the Thai men defended their title in 18 SEA Games appearances and that milestone wasn’t lost on Montri Vae-npradab.

“I am so happy because we’ve never won the gold medal twice in a row,” he said.

The women took to the court first and they gave the Vietnamese a lesson on how the game is played. The Thais were in control from the start and frustrated their opponents almost at will, as Vietnam was never able to sustain any momentum.

Case in point came in the second game. The Vietnamese went block for block with the Thais on a long rally and it was the first time they matched skills with the defending champions to win the point.

But rather than carry any momentum from that exchange, they followed it up by putting their serve into the net.

Thai coach R. Kiattipong was asked why his team was in control from start to end.

“We are a team, we are together all year and we have a long-term plan,” he said.

“We send our team to many tournaments and we send our players to play in pro leagues and we get a lot of experience from that. Teamwork is very important for us.”

He went on to say the players have input on strategy.

“Our girls are very smart. When we have training camps, we listen to what the girls have to say and we give them input. If they have an idea, we listen. We like them to be creative. If their ideas work, we support them. If they don’t we take what they say and we work with it and try to get better.”

Lastly, he said, the Thais study their opponents.

“We have a copy of their games and we analyze it. We learn how to beat every team and our girls did a very good job. If a team wants to beat us, they must be ready to train like professionals. We train 30 hours a week, six days a week and we have nearly 60 games in a year.”

Apinyapong said it helps when everyone is on the same page.

“We’re good because we have been preparing for a long time, we have been together for a long time. We make mistakes but we learn from them,” she said.

“We also learned about them. We watched video of their games against other teams and after that we had a meeting with the coaching staff. We learned about every player, which players attack and what they like to do on the court. That’s why we were able to defend so well.”

The men’s championship game was a more even match-up but the Thai men were just that much better.

There was no shortage of trash talking and taunting each other at the net, to the point where the referee cautioned players to show a little more respect.

Thailand’s lanky trio of Jiruyu RakSKaew, Kissada Nilsawai and Montri Vae-npradab formed a wall at the net and blocked dozens of spikes.

Jiruyu also served up a couple of leather lunches where his spike ricocheted off the floor into the face of an opponent.

“We trained hard for this,” said Montri.

The women watched the game from the stands and after the Thai men won, Apinyapong summed up the feeling of the gold medalists.

“King and queen sounds good,” she said.

The kings and queens of volleyball at the 2013 SEA Games are from Thailand

Nothing but drama at the Muay Thai finals

There was no shortage of drama, fits of rage and tears at the finals of Muay Thai on Saturday with 14 furious fights that turned the stadium into a hornet’s nest on fire as Myanmar and Thailand swept the majority of medals.

Vietnam’s ThiQuynh Bui had to be dragged off the ring by her coach, refusing to accept defeat by Ha Yin May of Myanmar in the women’s 48-kg category.

Emerging as the stronger fighter in the match, she celebrated her expected win with a run around the ring, waving her country’s flag before breaking down on the floor in tears seconds later when the judge’s decision favored Myanmar.

“I simply knew her weak points and how she would fight, but I feel sorry she is upset and I am sympathetic,” gold medalist Ha Yin May said.

With screaming spectators hanging off fences on the press tribune and the crowd out of control entering the judges’ area, security issues were swept aside for most of day as a relatively inexperienced Myanmar team continued to win medal after metal.

The Philippine team did not disguise their sentiments about the defeat of Philip Delamino, who even for the untrained eye was clearly superior over his Myanmar opponent Saw Dar Pot who lost focus several times having to deal with a series of ferocious kicks to his heads.

When it was announced that gold would go to Myanmar Delamino shook his head with a smile that said a thousand words, and walked off.

“I won,” was his brief statement to reporters. His coaches and team officials found stronger words. “It’s crazy, Philip knocked him down four times and still loses,” one of the coaches said. (See page 9)
President of Cambodian ...  
(bold from page 16) bilateral cooperation between the two parliaments, experience on parliamentarian affairs, political reform processes, strengthening relations and cooperation between the two countries.

The Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker together with officials of Cambodian National Assembly visited Independence Monument and laid a wreath there.

The Myanmar delegation attended a dinner hosted by the President of National Assembly of Cambodia at Sofitel Phnom Penh Phokeethra Hotel.—MNA

Vice-Senior General Soe Win observes training schools in Manipur and Mizoram States in India

YANGON, 21 Dec—Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Soe Win left No (3) Corps in Dimapur in Assam State by helicopter for Leimakhong in Manipur State passing Kohima in Nagaland on 15 December. They were welcomed there by Commander of No (57) Mountain Division Maj-Gen PM Bai, VSM and wife. They then viewed demonstration of communications, engineer and logistic staff. Invasive Specialist Dr Than Htike Aung explained the machines which are able to be used for cardiovascular disease patients.

Cardiac Specialist Dr Cho Lay Mar extended greetings and Managing Director of Asia Royal Hospital Dr Myat Thu presented gifts to Yangon Region Chief Minister U Myint Swe. The Chief Minister gave a speech on the occasion and Cardiovascular Laboratory commissioned into service.

Invited Specialist Dr Than Htike Aung explained the purpose of the ceremony. —MNA

MWAF donates K 3 million to Nay Pyi Taw hospital 1000-bed

YANGON, 21 Dec—Myanmar Women’s Affairs Federation (MWAF) donated K 3 million to Nay Pyi Taw General Hospital 1000-bed to mark the formation of 10th founding anniversary of MWAF here yesterday.

Patrons of Myanmar Women’s Affairs Federation Daw Ni Ni Win, Daw Kyin Khaing, Daw Mya Thein Gi and Daw Khan Mi Mi donated K 500,000 each.

On the occasion, Patron of Myanmar Women’s Affairs Federation Daw Ni Ni Win explained the purpose of donation and Medical Superintendent Dr Daw Phyu Phyu spoke words of thanks.—MNA

Vice-Senior General Soe Win visits Counter Insurgency and Jungle Warfare School in Mizoram State of India—MNA

Invasive Cardiac Laboratory commissioned into service

Minister U Myint Swe. The Chief Minister gave a speech on the occasion and Cardiovascular Laboratory commissioned into service.

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Myanmar men’s hockey team clinches bronze medal

YANGON, 21 Dec—Myanmar secured bronze medal in men’s hockey event after defeating Thailand 2-0.

Myanmar men’s Hockey team participated in the 24th SEA Games four countries competed in, but did not get any medal. Hockey did not include in 25th and 26th SEA Games. Myanmar men’s and women’s teams won two bronze medals in the 27th SEA Games. The first prize went to Malaysia and second to Singapore. Plan is under way to build a turf hockey pitch in Shan State or Mandalay Region, according to U Htin Zaw Win, President of Myanmar Hockey Federation. —MNA

Don’t be swayed by failure

No doubt to say we all have a high passion for victory over other competitors. Likewise, we all realize that it is impossible to whitewash the opponents in every game. What is the aim of hosting this beautiful Games? We see so that presenting Myanmar to the international community that smiling Myanmar people are intelligent, candid, friendly and civilized is the most important point for bringing the greater glory to the country, rather than medal success.

Unfortunately, Myanmar national football team fell to a 1-0 loss defeated by Indonesia and its goal for football gold faded away, without even having a chance to cruise to semifinal.

Here, how our athletes and spectators see the sports event is important. Everyone loves winners. No one wants to be losers. But, we all have to understand that a game is only a game. It is common to see winners and losers when the game is over.

We could earn a reputation for good sportsmanship only through a genuine victory brought about by a win with dignity. So, we would like to urge our footballers and their supporters “Don’t get swayed by failure”. Desisting from playing a blame game that sounds as if taking an easiest way to resolve the problem is imperative not only to shine our national image with accountability but also to manage anger sparked by failure.

If we could not dare to accept the reality, we would be really losers. A lesson we got from the lost match is that every natural predator delivers the same amount of efforts whenever stalking its prey, without counting on big or small, weak or strong. Although there is a belief that the home team has a 60 percent probability of winning the game, home field advantage will not become real if the team lacks teamwork and intelligence that could win even championships. It is high time to reshape the future of Myanmar football by taking the lessons we got from the game we lost.

All in all, football gold is not a gold of the Games. The gold we have to win is to present the beautiful game of wonderful Myanmar to the world. Let’s show the world that we can do it.

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We could earn a reputation for good sportsmanship only through a genuine victory brought about by a win with dignity. So, we would like to urge our footballers and their supporters “Don’t get swayed by failure”. Desisting from playing a blame game that sounds as if taking an easiest way to resolve the problem is imperative not only to shine our national image with accountability but also to manage anger sparked by failure.

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All in all, football gold is not a gold of the Games. The gold we have to win is to present the beautiful game of wonderful Myanmar to the world. Let’s show the world that we can do it.
Development partnership organizations to be set up

Nay Pyi Taw, 21 Dec — A coordination meeting on establishment of development partnership organizations for rural development, took place at Myanmar Peace Center in Yangon this morning.

Union Minister U Soe Thane said that rural development projects include seasonal job creation, natural resources management and construction of rural infrastructures. Cooperation of development partners is essential for fulfilling the needs of rural people. It can contribute to development of SMEs as well as to encouragement of rural entrepreneurs.

Union Minister U Aung Min said that in implementing development tasks, it needs to pay more attention to conflict-affected regions rather than other regions. Due to diverse cultures and traditions, different forms of development programmes should be adopted. In addition, job creation and vocational training are a must.

Union Minister U Ohn Myint said that as a focal ministry, the Rural Development Strategic Framework is being drawn by the ministry in cooperation with development partners, NGOs, NGOs, social organizations and experts.

The coordination meetings have been held for six times so far. Setting up of development partnership organizations is one of five follow-up tasks that came out from the meetings. Later, delegates and experts from development partnership organizations, social organizations and international organizations held talks on formation of development partnership organizations for rural development.—MNA

Myanmar snatch six gold, seven bronze in Kempo ...

Myanmar snatch six gold, seven bronze in Kempo ...

(from page 16)

gold, Laos, silver and Vietnam; bronze with Myanmar while gold medal went to Myanmar, silver to Indonesia and bronze to Timor Leste in mixed-doubles Yudansha event.

Indonesia seized gold, Timor Leste, silver and Laos, bronze in men’s Embu Pair Yudansha event while gold medal went to Vietnam, silver to Indonesia and bronze to Myanmar in women’s Embu Pair Yudansha event.

The first Kempo event was held in the 26th SEA Games. Myanmar participated in the 27th SEA Games and took six gold and seven bronze in this event.

Yangon Region Chief Minister U Myint Swe and wife Daw Khin Thet Huy, Yangon Mayor U Hla Myint and wife and officials of Asian Kempo Federation, South East Asian Kempo Federation and Myanmar Kempo Federation awarded the winners.

Union Minister for Sports U Tin Htan present ed K 700,000 each to gold medalists and K 300,000 each to bronze medalists.

President and Vice-President of MKF awarded K 1 million each to gold medalists and K 500,000 each to bronze medalists, K 300,000 each to other Myanmar Kempo athletes, K 500,000 each to five managers from Sports Ministry and USD 1000 each to five Indonesian coaches.

Coordination meeting on establishment of development partnership organizations for rural development in progress.—MNA

Nothing but drama ...

(From page 7)

“They should show the score after every round on the board,” Stephen Hontiveras of the Philippine Olympic Committee said, while his colleague Benjamin Pedralvez lamented the scoring “was subjective, there were four knock-downs and clear headkicks, (Delarmino) has won the match.”

While the Philippine team went off to recover from the shock, it was time for Vietnam to get revenge over Myanmar. An experienced, confident and ultrastrong Yen Ly Bui showed no intimidation despite ear-piercing screams of the crowd that supported Grace of Myanmar in the 51-kg category.

Following a match that saw her relentlessly kicking her opponent’s stomach, she started crying, in full anticipation of being denied her fully earned gold medal. When she was announced the winner, her coach Trung Son Tran – who had dragged her teammate out of the ring—broke down in tears.

“There was so much pressure on us to win after we lost the last match. We needed that to regain confidence,” he said. There were more tears by the Vietnamese women when Thi Ngoc Linh Phan was defeated by 15-year-old SirisopaSirisak of Thailand.

She had to be confident. By Thi Quynh Bui who had accepted her silver medal, but could not hold back her tears on the podium when the gold medal was handed over to Myanmar.

Fighting since she was 10 to earn money for the family, Thai media officials said that in their country, children as young as 8 come professional boxers to support their family.

Thai fighter in the men’s Pisallamsri attributed his win to his constant training, being a professional fighter in his home province where he earns money boxing to pay for university.

He said his two months of training at the pro camp in Bangkok also helped him to be “confident.” Thai reporters said Pisaal earns 7,000 baht per fight in Kampang Petch Province and that the prize money in Bangkok is a lot higher.

Chairungruang said his team leader Daungrit Benjathikul-Chairungruang said his country had such a strong showing “because Thailand is the cradle of muay Thai and we have the most experience in the sport.”

Panupong Tanjadwas perhaps the most feared fighter of the event, having gained years of experience as a pro fighting at Lumpini Stadium in Bangkok.

The 29-year-old defeat ed Jonathan Polosan of the Philippines who said after the 3-2 match, “He is much more experienced, but I did my best and we’re almost the same. I thought he would be stronger.”

Teammate Philip Delarmino found his smile again, after his shock defeat, when his girlfriend PreciosaOcaya box ed her way to gold over Laos.

“I was so down after my fight, but my team said I was the winner. That cheered me up, and also her win now is great,” he said.

In the last two fights, Indonesia’s IndraAshari Jaya was knocked out in the second round by Myanmar’s TinTun Min and had to be carried out of the stadium on a stretcher by medics as the packed-to-the-last-seat stadium exploded in ecstasy.

“The crowd was brought down a decibel in the last match when Aung Myint Win lost against Mohd Faizal Bin Ramli of Malaysia, who was celebrated as a hero by his team. He too was close to meltdown with tears coming down his face, showing relief it was all over.

Coach Mohd Hamdan Bin Mokhtar said after the fight, “The low kicks made it for him. We were worried because the judges arebiased… maybe cut that out, might give him trouble and we didn’t know how the Myanmar guy would fight because they have never competed internationally.”

One of the Malaysian coaches summed up not only the fight but pretty much the whole event.

“This was beyond our expectations.”

*****
Progress of new school buildings inspected

**KALAY, 21 Dec**—Chairman of Kalay District Management Committee U Maung Htoo together with departmental officials made an inspection tour of construction works at one-storey brick nogging buildings at Basic Education Middle School Branch in Thatta Thattaha Maha Bawdi Pagoda, Nay Pyi Taw. It was attended by members of the university and first year students. At first, Chairperson of District WAO Daw Thapy Win made an opening address. Member of District WAO Daw Mary Myint explained cultural intrusion and Secretary Daw Ohnma Aung human trafficking and prevention of women against violence law.

Prevention of women against violence talks held

**KALAY, 21 Dec**—The talks on prevention against penetration of alien culture for women, organized by Kalay District Women’s Affairs Organization, took place at Kabaw Hall-3 of Kalay University on 18 December.

It was attended by responsible persons of Kalay District and Township Women’s Affairs Organization, faculty members of the university and first year students. At first, Chairperson of District WAO Daw Thapy Win made an opening address. Member of District WAO Daw Mary Myint explained cultural intrusion and Secretary Daw Ohnma Aung human trafficking and prevention of women against violence law.

Ngwechi-6 long staple cotton thriving in Myinmu Tsp

**MYINMU, 21 Dec**—Long staple cotton plants were cultivated on 10 acres of land of farmer U Khin Maung Tin in No 293 plot south of Ngyawdayon Monastery in Allakappa Model Village of Myinmu Township on 15 August. Now, 350 acres of cotton plantations are thriving around the field.

The field day of long staple cotton was held at the plantation, and 123 farmers from 35 village-tracts were invited to view the thriving plantations. Head of Sagaing Region Industrial Crops Development Department U Tun Shein gave instruction on use of quality cotton strains and cultivation of late monsoon mixed cropping. Head of Sagaing District ICDD explained boosting of production with the use of high technology.

Sagaying Region Hluttaw representative U Thaug Myint made a speech. Head of Sagaing Region Industrial Crops Development Department U Tun Shein gave instruction on use of quality cotton strains and cultivation of late monsoon mixed cropping. Head of Sagaing District ICDD explained boosting of production with the use of high technology.

Shan Literature and Culture Committee celebrates New Year harvest ceremony

**DAWPHONYAN, 21 Dec**—The 2108 New Year harvest ceremony was held in Phakay Village in Moel Region of Dawphonyan Sub-Township of Bhamo District in Kachin State on 16 December with the participation of local Shan national races from 21 villages.

Chairman of the committee U Aik Lin explained the purpose of ceremony in line with the traditions and matters related to New Year festival and harvest festival.

Tourism Industry

**MYAWADY, 21 Dec**—A group of tourists from the United States of America—Switzerland, one from Australia, one from Thailand, six from Germany, one from Australia, one from Switzerland, one from the United States of America—arrived at Myawady by motorcycle on 13 December.

The tourists paid visits to Myawady, Kyaikhtiyoe, Bagay, Bagan, Mandalay, Inlay, Nyaungshwe, Toungoo, Hpa-an townships. Accompanied by tour guide U Myo Kyaw Thu, they left Mae Sot of Thailand from Myawady on 14 December.

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Officials presented prizes to outstanding trainees in Shan literature. It was attended by the Sub-Township Administrator and departmental officials, older persons and town’s elders. The entertainments were performed with music and dances with the use of Shan traditional dance and long drum of Shan nationals.
Gov’t to cooperate with business, labour circles toward wage hikes in Japan

Tokyo, 21 Dec — The government agreed with leaders of business organizations and labour unions on Friday to cooperate in seeking to raise worker salaries in Japan, a key goal under Prime Minister Shinzo Abe’s “Abenomics” economic policy mix.

“We will lead expansion in business earnings to wage increases,” they said in an agreement signed at a joint meeting. Abe welcomed the “shared awareness” and urged the groups to “boldly put (the agreement) into action.”

Representatives of the government, corporate executives and labour unions gather for a meeting at the prime minister’s office on 20 Dec, 2013. They struck a written accord later that day to cooperate in seeking to raise worker salaries in Japan. —KyodoNews

It is rare for the government, representatives of corporate executives and labour unions to strike a written accord.

“I will ask companies to aggressively allocate to employees the outcomes of economic expansion,” Hiromasa Yonekura, chief of the nation’s biggest business lobby Keidanren, told reporters after the meeting at the prime minister’s office, suggesting he will push other employers to raise salaries instead of retaining earnings.

Nobuaki Koga, head of the Japanese Trade Union Confederation, who also attended the meeting, doubted the agreement would solve every problem immediately. “We think all conditions are set. We must make steady efforts in negotiations” with employers, Koga said before annual wage talks begin early next year.

As part of efforts to end nearly two decades of deflation in Japan, Abe has asked companies to raise worker salaries in exchange for government stimulus measures, including tax breaks and deregulation to encourage business investment.—KyodoNews

Upper photo shows Nishinoshima Island (back), an uninhabited islet in the Ogasawara island chain some 1,000 kilometres south of Tokyo, and a new island formed nearby as a result of an undersea volcanic eruption, on 21 Nov, 2013; the bottom photo shows the same two islands on 20 Dec, 2013. Volcanic geology experts say if the new island continues to grow, the two islands might merge by the end of the year. —KyodoNews

Taiwan shuts down top chip package plant discharging toxic water

TAIPEI, 21 Dec — Advanced Semiconduc-

tor Engineering Inc, the world’s top chip packager and chip testing services provider, was on Friday ordered to shut down its biggest plant in Kaohsung, southern Taiwan, for fail-
ing to make improvements after being caught dumping untreated wastewater into a river.

Chen Jin-de, director of the Kaohsung city govern-

ment’s Environmental Protection Bureau, told re-

porters that it was necessary to shut down ASE’s “K7” plant as the company failed to make any improvement after being fined six times for violating the Water Pol-

lution Control Act since 2011.

Chen said the wastewater discharged by the K7 plant was found to contain 4.38 milligrams of nickel per liter, more than four times the 1 mg/l limit set by regulations.

Chen also accused the company of forging and concealing wastewater data and improperly operating its wastewater treatment plant.

Taiwanese premier proposes post-election reform plan, protests continue

BANGKOK, 21 Dec — Thai caretaker Prime Min-

ister Yingluck Shinawatra on Saturday proposed a tentative plan for the coun-

try’s reform while protests against her government continued.

In a televised speech, Yingluck said the govern-

ment would ask political parties to agree to the set-

ting up of a reform council after the 2 February elec-

tion. She said the reform council would consist of representatives from all walks of society, including academics, political parties and political groups. The new government has to set the reform council as a na-

tional agenda. The government assures that the reform can proceed along with the election, “Yingluck said.

“It is necessary to have an election because the parliamentary mechanism would be the driving seat for the reform process,” she added. The council would have up to two years to complete the reform, ac-

According to Yingluck’s proposal, antigovernment protesters plan to go ahead with their plan to hold street rallies in Bangkok on Sunday.

they have vowed to stop the snap election called by Yingluck earlier this month in a bid to defuse a demand that political reform first be carried out before the election.—Kyodo News

Landslides in Central Java leave four dead, four injured

JAKARTA, 21 Dec — Landslides triggered by torrential rains in Kebumen district of Central Java, Ind-

onesia on Friday killed four people and wounded four others, official said.

Piles of soil smashed a house, where all the eight people were staying in, in Kali Gending village, Sutopo Purwo Nugroho, spokesman of national dis-

taster agency, told Xinhua over phone.

One of the injured peo-

ple suffered serious injury, while three others sustained minor wounds, he said. All of them have been rushed to a nearby hospital for medical treatments, said Sutopo. Elsewhere in the district, floods occurred in Kedungwari hamlet after a dam broke, he said.

Xinhua

Gov’t eyes financial aid for students from low-income families

TAIPEI, 21 Dec — Japan’s central government is planning to create a financial aid system for repayment for public and private senior high school students from households with annual incomes under 2.5 million yen starting in the fiscal year beginning in April.

The government will also increase the aid of about 120,000 yen given annually each to private senior high school students from low-income families under the existing tuition waiver pro-

gram. The education minis-

try is planning to include out-

lays for these measures in the fiscal 2014 draft budget. At a press conference on Friday, education minister Hakunen Shimomura said of the meas-

ures, “We can now start them in April next year, and we would like to expand efforts to further expanding them.”

The measures will be implemented along with the April introduction of an in-

come cap on households eli-

gible for tuition waivers.

Gov’t to continue modernization by acquiring more assets

MANILA, 21 Dec — Philippine President Ben-

igno S Aquino III pledged Friday to continue the modernization of the Armed Forces of the Philip-

pines (AFP) by acquiring more military ships and helicopters.

Aquino said the above words when he inspected three newly-ac-

quired AgustaWestland 109 Power Helicopters which was bought by the Philip-

pine Navy at the cost of 1.33 billion pesos (about 29.95 million US dollars). “In time of challenges, there is huge expectation from our soldiers. This is the reason why the state should provide you with sufficient capability to face your responsibility,” he said, adding that the gov-

ernment would continue to implement the moderniza-

tion programme of the AFP.

Aquino said that two more of these aircraft are expected to be delivered in 2014 for a contract price of 850.91 million pesos (19.16 million dollars). Presi-

dent Aquino disclosed that his administration was also planning to buy two more C-130 aircraft in addition to the current three units, adding that more maritime vessels will be acquired aside from the existing BRP Gregorio del Pilar and BRP Ramon Alcaraz.—Xinhua

A couple from Thailand, one of whom was the 10 millionth foreign visitor to Japan in 2013, are greeted by Hello Kitty wearing kimono at Narita airport near Tokyo on 20 Dec, 2013.—KyodoNews
New Jersey governor to approve in-state tuition for illegal immigrants

New Jersey the 16th US state to allow students without legal immigration status to pay in-state rates, and comes after lengthy political wrangling between the Republican governor and Democrats in the state legislature.

"The most important thing is for these young men and women of our state, who we have invested hundreds of thousands of dollars in their K-12 education, we’re now going to give them an opportunity in an affordable way to be able to continue their education," Christie said in Trenton. "This will be once again an example of New Jersey showing how you can come to bipartisanship agreement," said Christie, who is widely expected to seek the Republican nomination for the White House in 2016. "Not that we agree on everything, but that we find a way of bringing people together and come to a position that will benefit all the people of this state," he said. The tuition bill applies to students who have attended at least three years of high school in New Jersey.

45 US soldiers sent to S Sudan to protect citizens, embassy

WASHINGTON, 21 Dec — US President Barack Obama has dispatched 45 US troops to South Sudan to protect US nationals and embassy there amid the African nation’s volatile security situation.

In a letter sent to Congress on Thursday, Obama said the troops left for South Sudan on Wednesday, and would remain there until the situation improves. Meanwhile, more US citizens were evacuated from South Sudan on Thursday, as government troops and rebel forces continued to clash.

A private charter flight lifted some 130 persons from capital Juba, among whom were US citizens and third-country nationals, State Department Spokeswoman Marie Harf told a regular news briefing. She said a small number of Americans also flew out of the country aboard a British military aircraft.

A day earlier, Washington airlifted three groups of American nationals, including non-emergency diplomatic personnel, US citizens and third-country nationals, out of South Sudan.

Since fighting broke out on Sunday between forces loyal to President Salva Kiir and his former deputy Riek Machar, who was removed from office in July, some 450 people have been killed in clashes so far in Juba.

Machar has rejected Kiir’s offer for a reunion instead for the president’s removal by the ruling party and the army.

Kiir accused Machar of orchestrating a military coup against him and declared on Monday a state of emergency in the country with a curfew imposed from 6:00 pm to 6:00 am local time.—Xinhua

Russia blocks UN statement condemning Syrian attacks

UNITED NATIONS, 21 Dec — Russia blocked a UN Security Council statement on Thursday that would have condemned the government of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad for recent missile and "barrel bomb" attacks on civilians, including children, UN diplomats said. The council’s failure to approve the US-drafted statement elicited an angry reaction from Washington. “We are very disappointed that a Security Council statement expressing our collective outrage at the brutal and indiscriminate tactics employed by the Syrian regime against civilians has been blocked,” said Curtis Cooper, a spokesman for the US mission to the United Nations. These barrel bombs and the explosive materials contained within them — further underscore the brutality of the Assad regime and the lengths they will go to attack and kill their own people, including women and children,” he said.

“Surely, at any rate, the Security Council should be able to condemn such barbarities,” Cooper added.

He did not say who blocked the statement, though several council diplomats said on condition of anonymity that the Russian delegation demanded the removal of any reference to the Assad government in the draft statement, after which Western council members decided to withdraw the proposed text.—Reuters

One dead, dozens hurt in tour bus crashes in rainy California

LOS ANGELES, 21 Dec — At least one person was killed and dozens were hurt on Thursday in two separate casino tour bus crashes on a rain-slicked Southern California highway, California Highway Patrol officers said.

A bus heading for the Valley View Casino north of San Diego overturned near the community of Fallbrook at about 2:30 pm, killing one person and injuring more than 20 other passengers, California Highway Patrol Officer Jim Bettencourt said.

He said all the bus passengers, who were in their 40s to 60s, were taken to local hospitals with injuries ranging from minor to serious. Investigators had interviewed the 56-year-old driver, and the cause of the wreck was under investigation. The bus was being operated by Five Star Charter. In the second incident, all 30 passengers on board a tour bus traveling northbound on the same highway were hurt when it spun out near Corona, officer Travis Monks said.

Monks said most of the passengers had minor injuries but several were taken to area hospitals with moderate injuries. The bus, owned by Sonorah Coach Tours, was travelling to Orange County from a San Diego-area casino, he said.

Monks said the cause of the crash was under investigation but that rain might be a factor. “When it’s raining out here, drivers always need to be a little more cautious,” he said, adding that the roadway was wet at the time of the accident.—Reuters
Small countries highlight Oscars' top foreign film short list

LOS ANGELES, 21 Dec—Films from Cambodia, Palestine, and Bosnia and Herzegovina made the short list of candidates vying for the best foreign language film Oscar nomination, the Academy Awards organizer said on Friday.

The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences winnowed down 76 foreign films to nine in the first phase of the nomination process.

The five nominees for the Oscar award will be announced on 16 January.

Cambodia’s French-language documentary “The Missing Picture,” which uses clay figurines to tell the story of the bloody reign of the Khmer Rouge government, made the list, taking a step closer to becoming the country’s first film to score an Oscar nomination. Director Harry Abu-Assad, whose 2005 film “Paradise Now” earned Palestine’s only Oscar foreign-language nomination, made the list with thriller “Omar.” Bosnia and Herzegovina, which won the Oscar statute in 2002 for “No Man’s Land” in the only instance it earned a nomination, made the short list with the drama “An Episode in the Life of an Iron Picker.”

Drama “The Great Beauty” from Italy, which has won a record 13 best foreign picture Oscars as a country, and Danish drama “The Hunt” starring Mikkelsen also made the list a week after both films picked up Golden Globe award nominations for best foreign language film.

Belgian Flemish-language drama “The Broken Circle Breakdown,” German thriller “Pfister” and Hungarian drama “The Notebook” also made the short list.

Acclaimed Hong Kong director Wong Kar Wai’s ode to Kung Fu, “The Grandmaster,” made the list. The art house director, considered one of the world’s top filmmakers and best-known for dramas “Chungking Express” and “In the Mood for Love,” has never had a film nominated for an Oscar.

Notable absent from the list was Iranian domestic drama “The Past” starring French actressBerenice Bejo and directed by Asghar Farhadi, whose 2011 drama “A Separation” won the best foreign language Oscar.

France’s coming-of-age lesbian love story “Blue Is the Warmest Color” was also absent as its release in France did not make the September 30 deadline to be eligible for submission.

The annual Academy Awards, Hollywood’s top film honors, will be handed out on 2 March.—Reuters

Jennifer Aniston, Justin Theroux meet counsellor to prepare wedding

LONDON, 21 Dec—Celebrity couple Jennifer Aniston and Justin Theroux have reportedly been having counselling sessions to prepare for their much-anticipated wedding.

The pair, who have been separated for work over the past few months, have vowed to spend more time together in the next year, reported Showbiz Spy.

“Jen and Justin love each other, they are fully committed. They had hoped to be married by now but work commitments this year meant their plans went astray.”

“They have had some counselling. They both regret not spending more time together this year and they’re determined that next year will be different,” a source said. Engaged since August 2012, they have been discussing wedding plans.

“Jen and Justin are looking at it like it’s a party for their friends. They’ve downgraded the scale of their wedding. Justin is adamant it will happen in 2014 but that it will be more ‘spontaneous and organic’ than they’d previously wanted,” the source added.—PTI

British actress Katie Holmes.

Actor Tom Cruise settles defamation lawsuit with publisher

Los Angeles, 21 Dec—Actor Tom Cruise on Friday settled a $50 million defamation lawsuit against Bauer Media, which publishes Us weekly tabloid In Touch Weekly, over claims the publication ran stories mentioning his 2012 divorce from actress Katie Holmes.

Cruise’s lawyers said in a statement that Cruise and Bauer settled the dispute and that the publishing company “never intended to communicate that Tom Cruise had cut off all ties and abandoned his daughter, Suri, and regret if anyone drew that inference from anything they published.”

Terms of the settlement were not disclosed and are confidential, the statement said. Bauer’s attorneys were not immediately available to comment.

Cruise’s lawyers, which also alleged invasion of privacy, gave a glimpse into the “Mission: Impossible” actor’s guarded private life, including his divorce from Holmes and his Scientology religion.

The case was scheduled to head to trial in June 2014. In a declaration filed in federal court last month, Cruise denied that he had cut his 7-year-old daughter out of his life—“whether physically, emotionally or otherwise.”

The initial lawsuit was filed by Cruise in October 2012, after Bauer’s magazine published reports claiming Cruise, 51, had abandoned Suri following his 2012 divorce from Holmes.

“Has he chosen Scientology over Suri for good? Abandoned by Daddy I mean come on, that is absolutely disgusting. That is absolutely disgusting,” Cruise said according to a transcript of a September video deposition.

Cruise added that one of Holmes’ “assertions” for their 2012 divorce was that she wanted to protect Suri from Scientology and that his only daughter from his marriage to Holmes was not currently practicing the religion.

Cruise also said in the deposition that while Holmes, 35, was a practitioner of Scientology before and during their six-year marriage, she left the church when she filed for divorce.

The actor is one of the highest-profile members of Scientology, a religion founded by science fiction writer L. Ron Hubbard in 1954.

Its followers, which also include John Travolta, believe humans are intelligent beings whose existence extends beyond one lifetime. Critics of the church describe it as a cult that harasses people who try to exit.

Actress Leah Remini was one of the most prominent celebrities to leave the Church of Scientology earlier this year, and has spoken out about being cut off by many friends due to her decision.—Reuters

Harry Potter play to make debut on London’s West End stage

LONDON, 21 Dec—Harry Potter, the world’s most famous boy wizard, is set to make his debut on London’s West End stage in a new play to be created in collaboration with author JK Rowling.

The theatrical production will explore the previously untold story of Harry’s early years as an outcast and orphan.

Riveting will co-produce the stage show alongside experienced theatre producers Sonia Friedman and Colin Callender, according to a statement on her website.

“Over the years I have had countless approaches about turning Harry Potter into a theatrical production, but Sonia and Colin’s vision was the only one that really made sense to me,” Rowling said.

“After a year in gestation it is exciting to see this project moving on to the next phase,” she added.

In Rowling’s book series, Harry is introduced at the age of 10, living unhappily in a cupboard under the stairs in the home of his aunt and uncle. The new production would “offer a unique insight into the heart and mind of the now legendary young wizard,” the statement said.

Rowling will collaborate with a playwright on the new production but will not script it herself. British media said the production was expected to open in 2015.

Rowling’s “Harry Potter” book series has sold some 450 million copies worldwide and the eight movies from the Warner Bros. studios have taken more than $7.7 billion at global box-offices, making the films the largest-grossing franchise in history.

Earlier this year Rowling revealed she would also be working on a new Harry Potter-themed film series for the Warner Bros. studio.—Reuters
Rooney faces late fitness test for West Ham game

LONDON, 21 Dec — Wayne Rooney faces a late fitness test but could be available for Manchester United’s home match against West Ham United on Saturday as David Moyes seeks more goals from more of his players.

The England striker missed United’s midweek League Cup quarter-final win at Stoke City due to a groin injury but manager Moyes sounded slightly more optimistic after training on Friday.

“We have got a chance,” the Scot told reporters. “So we’ll see how he is tomorrow.”

The Premier League game at Old Trafford kicks off a busy period for the champions, who have last season’s top scorer Robin van Persie sidelined by a thigh strain until January, with seven games in 21 days.

United are eighth overall, 10 points adrift of leaders Arsenal, and are on a bit of a roll after three wins in their last three games across all competitions.

Moyes said Portuguese winger Nani, who has not played since the home defeat to Newcastle United on 7 December, would be out for several weeks.

“Nani has a hamstring injury, which is a little bit worse than we thought,” he said.

Ashley Young played against Stoke and scored his first goal in 18 months, becoming United’s 14th different scorer in all competitions this season, and Moyes was pleased with the performance of some of those less in the limelight.

“The players have done really well,” he said. “That is why there is such a good squad and a big squad here because throughout the season, the amount of games we have to play here, you do need those extra players.

“We have seen recently, in the last couple of games, we have been a little bit short in areas but the players who have come in have done brilliantly well.

We have needed the whole squad, we really have.”

The return of Scotland international Darren Fletcher, after almost a year out with a serious bowel condition, had also given everyone a lift.

“Aston Villa’s Matthew Lowton (L) challenges Manchester United’s Wayne Rooney during their English Premier League soccer match at Villa Park in Birmingham, central England, on 15 Dec, 2013.—REUTERS

For Darren to get a couple of games and come back into the team is great,” said Moyes.—Reuters

Messi recovers from injury, can start fitness work

BUENOS AIRES, 21 Dec — Lionel Messi has recovered fully from his thigh muscle injury and can begin work on his fitness although no date has yet been set for his return to action, the Argentine Football Association said on Friday.

The Argentina captain was given the good news by team doctors at the AFA’s training complex, which is on the city’s outskirts, where he has been recovering from the 10 November injury he suffered with Barcelona. After the first stage of his recovery involving rest in Barcelona, the forward has now passed the second stage.

“The tests carried out today at the AFA facility have confirmed that Lionel Messi has overcome the clinical stage of his injury,” read a statement on the the AFA website (www.afa.org.ar). “The player will begin next Monday with the third stage of his recovery process - physical preparation.

“He will do this in (his home town) Rosario under Barcelona physical trainer Elbio Paolorosso and members of the (Argentina) national team’s medical staff. Spanish champions Barcelona are top of La Liga and through to the last 16 of the Champions League and King’s Cup with Messi working hard to return so he can help their bid for a treble.

The World Player to the Year, who has been in Argentina since the start of December, is aiming to finish the season by leading Argentina to a third World Cup title in Brazil in July.
**African mediators try to avert civil war in South Sudan**

**JUBA, 21 Dec** — Af- rican mediators said they held “productive” talks on Friday with South Sudan’s President Salva Kiir, trying to prevent an almost week- long conflict plunging the world’s newest nation into an ethnic civil war.

In a sign of the nerv- ousness among South Su- dan’s neighbours, Ugan- dan soldiers flew in to help evacuate their citizens. Two anonymous military sourc- es said they would also help secure the capital, which lies about 75 km (50 miles) from Uganda’s border.

Kiir, a member of the Dinka ethnic group, has ac- cused his former vice presi- dent Riek Machar, a Nuer who was sacked in July, of attempting to seize power by force. The United Na- tions group on Sunday in the capi- tal Juba has swiftly spread, and UN staff have reported hundreds killed.

Kiir has said he is ready for dialogue. Machar told French radio he was ready to “negotiate his departure from power” and said the army could force Kiir out unless he quit.

US Secretary of State John Kerry said he spoke with Kiir on Thursday and would send his envoy for Sudan and South Sudan, Ambassador Donald Booth, to help facilitate talks. “Now is the time for South Sudan’s leaders to rein in armed groups under their control, immediately cease attacks on civilians, and end the chain of retaliatory violence between dif- ferent ethnic and political groups. The violence must stop, the dialogue must intensify,” Kerry said in a statement. As fighting has moved out of the capital, it is increasingly driven by ethnic loyalties as much as political rivalries.

The UN said on Fri- day at least 11 people from the ethnic Dinka group had been killed during an at- tack by thousands of armed youths from another ethnic group on a UN peacekeep- ing base in Jonglei state. Two Indian peacekeepers died.

The United Nations had earlier said at least 20 people were killed, and South Sudan’s government said earlier 54 Dinka had been killed in the incident. The United Nations mission in South Sudan is still try- ing to verify the exact num- ber of dead.

Deputy UN peacekeep- ing chief Edmond Mulet told the UN Security Coun- cil on Friday 35,000 mil- lieurs were sheltering at UN bases across the country.

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**Turkey scrambles warplanes to intercept Syrian aircraft**

**ANKARA, 21 Dec** — Turkey scrambled four F-16 fighter jets to intercept two Syrian aircraft approaching its airspace, a military statement said on Friday. A Syrian SU-24 plane and a Syrian MIG- 21 fighter jet approached the Turkish airspace above hatay Province in southern Turkey, said the statement issued by the General Staff of the Turk- ish Armed Forces. It said four F-16 planes were scrambled from In- cirlik airbase in southern Adana and from Diyarbakir on an interception mission, and that the Syrian planes flew back when they were less than 10 km from above the Turkish border. Similar incidents have taken place since a Turkish F-16 was shot down in Sep- tember 2012 by the Syrian army when it reportedly en- tered Syria’s airspace, ac- cording to local media.

Turkey, once an ally of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, has become a leading voice urging his ouster and reportedly pro- vided Syrian rebel leaders with sanctuary.

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**Chelsea must hurry up and adapt to Mourinho, says Torres**

**LONDON, 21 Dec** — Spanish striker Fernando Torres has urged his Chels- sea team-mates to “hurry up” and adapt to the style of play demanded by man- ager Jose Mourinho.

“I think there are two European champions occupy third place in the Premier League and appear genuine contenders to win the title as they prepare for Mon- day’s trip to leaders Arsen- al.

Chelsea are also through to the last 16 of the Champions League but Tuesday’s shock 2-1 Capi- tal One Cup quarter-final defeat at Sunderland was symptomatic of their some- times inconsistent per- formances this season. “When a new manager comes in he needs ... to know the quality of the players, he needs to build the team and adapt the players to his ways,” Torres told Sky Sports television on Friday.

“We are in this process but it’s not easy. Sometimes you need two months for things to settle, sometimes you need three years. “But today I think that we have no time to do that and we need to hur- ry up. Everyone needs to adapt to what the manager wants.”

Torres, himself, has blown hot and cold since joining Chelsea from Liv- erpool for a British record fee of 50 million pounds ($81.78 million) in January 2011. He has experienced some great highs, helping Chelsea to the Champions League and FA Cup dou- ble in 2012 and scoring a dazzling solo goal in last season’s Europa League fi- nal victory over Benfica in Amsterdam.

Torres though has also gone through several goal droughts during his time at Stamford Bridge and the barren run he and fellow strikers Samuel Eto’o and Demba Ba have experi- enced this season has been a constant source of frustra- tion for Mourinho.

“We need to score more goals ... and we have to improve, we know that,” said the Chelsea number nine who also won the 2010 World Cup with his country and the European Champion- ship in 2008 and 2012.

“I don’t think he is only blaming the strikers. They of course are responsible because it’s their job to score goals but I think he’s talking about the team too, that’s the way I like to see it anyway.”

Torres has taken al- most three years to bag 41 goals for Chelsea while at Liverpool he was razor- sharp, bagging 81 in 142 games including 33 in his first season.

Askeri said he was happy overall with his move to Stamford Bridge, he re- plied: “Yes with the tro-_phies and performances but not about the goals. I came here to win trophies and I have...”

“...I’ve been lucky enough to win almost eve- rything and I still have time to win the Premier League, something I’ve never won.”

“I’m quite happy with..."
**New Light of Myanmar**

**Myanmar boxers dominate Muay events**

NAY PYI TAW, 21 Dec—The final events of Muay took place at Wunna Theikdi Stadium today. The stadium was teeming with sports fans as Myanmar Muay fighters advanced to final.

Hla Yin May of Myanmar won gold medal in women’s 48-kg event after defeating the Vietnamese fighter. In women’s 51-kg event, Grace of Myanmar secured silver medal after losing to Vietnam. The men’s 54-kg event was a very fascinating one. Saw Dar Po of Myanmar defeated the Philippine fighter in third round.

Vice-President U Nyan Tun, Union Election Commission Chairman U Tin Aye, the Union ministers and deputy ministers awarded the medalists.

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**President of Cambodian National Assembly welcomes Pyidaungsu Hluttaw and Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker**

The Pyidaungsu Hlut-taw Speaker met with the President of National Assembly at the hall of the assembly. During the meeting, they cordially discussed (See page 8)

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**Myanmar snatch six gold, seven bronze in kempo event**

**Myanmar celebrate victory after receiving gold medal in Kempo event at Thuwunna Indoor Stadium—** NMA

YANGON, 21 Dec—Finals of Kempo event in the XXVII SEA Games took place at Thuwunna National Indoor Stadium-1 on Waizayanda Road in Thiang-gangyun Township, here, this morning.

Union Minister for Agriculture and Irrigation U Myint Hlaing enjoyed the matches and presented cash to the athletes.

At today events, gold medal went to Vietnam, silver to Indonesia and bronze to Myanmar and Laos in women’s 48-kilo Randori event while Indonesia secured gold, Vietnam, silver and Myanmar, bronze with Cambodia in women’s 51 Randori event and Myanmar took gold, Indonesia, silver and Laos, bronze with Vietnam in women’s 54-kilo Randori event.

In men’s 54-kilo Randori event, Indonesia got (See page 9)

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**Medal Tally**

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<th>Country</th>
<th>Gold</th>
<th>Silver</th>
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**Myanmar Health Team provides health care to typhoon Haiyan victims**

NAY PYI TAW, 21 Dec—A Myanmar Health Team comprising specialists of Directorate of Medical Services of Commander-in-Chief (Army) Office led by Deputy Minister for Health Dr Than Aung provided health care services to patients in Typhoon-hit Bohog, Philippines from 7 to 15 December.

Myanmar donated ECGs worth US$ 37,000, pharmacy and pharmaceutical equipment, traditional medicines and relief aid to storm victims of the Philippines.

Moreover, the team presented US$ 1000 for construction of a house for patients in Typhoon-hit Bohog, Philippines from 7 to 15 December.

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**Senior General, wife enjoy SEA Games football final match**

NAY PYI TAW, 21 Dec—Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and wife Daw Kyu Kyu Hla enjoyed the football final match between Thailand and Indonesia of the 27th SEA Games at Zeyathiri Sports Ground, here, this evening.

It was also enjoyed by Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Soe Win and wife Daw Myat Maung Aye, President of Cambodian National Assembly welcomes Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker Pyithu Hluttaw Thura U Shwe Mann arrived at National Assembly of Cambodia yesterday afternoon.

They were welcomed by the President, Vice-Presidents and officials of Cambodian National Assembly.

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**27th SEA GAMES Football Final Result**

Thailand 1-0 Indonesia