Byline: Kyemon

Sitting volleyball athletes under training to participate in 7th ASEAN Para Games.

Sitting volleyball athletes with disabilities of Myanmar have a gold medal target at the 7th ASEAN Para Games to be held from 14 to 20 January in Nay Pyi Taw.

“We have got a wealth of experiences from the previous games held in Thailand in 1999, in Busan in 2002, in Malaysia in 2006 and 2009, in China in 2010 and in Indonesia in 2011. I took home two gold and two silver in the five games—Pacific and Para games. Myanmar athletes who are going to compete in the coming 7th ASEAN Para Games aims to bag gold medals”, said Ko Zaw Moe Aung, one of sitting volleyball players.

Assistant Coach U Nyan Soe gave an account of the sitting volleyball exactly the same as regular volleyball. For the disabled volleyball athletes, he continued that they have to play the sitting volleyball, sitting on the floor. “There are 12 players with below or above knee amputation in the team. Scoring rules in sitting volleyball are similar to that of regular volleyball. Cambodia and Thailand teams are included in the list of participants to the sitting volleyball competition of the games. The coach team of men’s sitting volleyball team of Myanmar includes one manager/coach, one manager, one coach and two assistant coaches, totaling five”, he added.

“Myanmar women sitting volleyball team is consisted of 12 players. They are from the Schools for Disabled Persons. They have no competition experiences and it will be first experience for them. We learnt Indonesia and Timor Leste will take part in the women’s sitting volleyball competition. A total of 10 Myanmar referees will take care of the competition. The coach team of the women’s sitting volleyball team is comprised of one coach, one assistant coach and one manager”, said Daw Myint Myint Aye, coach of women’s sitting volleyball team.

Kyemon: 26-12-2013
Try: YM
Participants to 7th ASEAN Para Games to undergo training in Nay Pyi Taw

NAY PYI TAW, 26-Dec—According to the Myanmar Para Sports Federation, the para sports athletes will undergo training at Wunna Theikdi Stadium in Nay Pyi Taw as of 27 December so as to take part in the 7th ASEAN Paralympic Games.

Staff Officer Daw Khin Swe Aye of the federation said, “The building was constructed in July.

The opening ceremony of the building has not yet been held. In the past, the athletes were organized at the camp for the training at Mingaladon General Hospital (1000-bed), Kyimyindaing School for the Blind, and Khwegyegun School for the Blind due to shortage of sports venues. Now, they are under training at the new building.”

She continued, “The 24th Myanmar National Para Sports Competitions were held. The outstanding athletes were picked out from the competitions and then they are undergoing training.”

At present, about 200 athletes are under training as part of preparations for taking part in the 7th ASEAN Para Games 2014. They are under management of 70 managers and coaches including one foreign swimming coach and one from JCA. The games will comprise 12 sports events namely archery, track and field, Bocia, seven in one football event, five in one football event, goal ball event, table tennis, swimming, chess, volleyball, wheelchair, basketball and weightlifting events.”

5000 crabs released into mangrove forests

BOKPYIN, 26-Dec—As part of efforts to conserve the environment, Bokpyin Township Fisheries Department organized the ceremony to release 5000 crabs into the mangrove forests at Kalon Creek field area of Ohndawkan Village-tract on 20 December.

The ceremony was attended by Head of Taninthayi Region Fisheries Department U Tun Win, the Township Administrator, departmental officials, members of non-governmental organizations, heads of Kawthoung District and Township Fisheries Departments, staff and local fishermen.

They released the crabs less than 100 grams into the mangrove forests with the aim of preventing the crab depletion at the mangrove forests in the region.

Overheated wire fire reduces houses into ashes in Toungoo

TOUNGOO, 26-Dec—A fire broke out at Win Thiri tea and fried pea, U Arngu house, Win Gabar mobile phone shop and Soe Yadana Goldsmith on Merchant Street in Ward 17 of Toungoo at 1 pm on 24 December.

There were no casualties in the fire but the people lost their property. A total of 33 members of Fire Services Department and 50 members of Auxiliary Fire Brigade and local people put out the fire with the use of six fire trucks from Toungoo Township Fire Station and one supportive vehicle, one fire engine from Pyu Township, two from Ottwin Township, one from Yedashe Township and one from Hantabin Township, totalling 11 and three water bowser of Daw Khin Htaw of Toungoo under the management of the Toungoo District Deputy Commissioner and the commander of Toungoo District Police Force. The fire fighters could place the fire under control at 4.30am.

Investigation is underway over outbreak of fire.

Regional development tasks inspected

KANBANU, 26-Dec—Chief Minister of Sagaing Region U Tha Aye together with Region Minister for Development Affairs U Tin Hlaing Myint and departmental officials, on 21 December inspected renovation of Shwemutaw Pagoda and ShwedauungU Pagoda in Male Village of Kanbalu Township that the earthquake hit on 11 November 2012 and attended to the needs.

The Chief Minister and party viewed progress of 16-bed hospital built by Myanmar Khit Co.

After inspecting progress of the new school building at Village Basic Education High School, the Chief Minister and party met members of construction committee and fulfilled the requirements for timely completion of the tasks.

Later, they presented sports gear, exercise books and publications to the school.

Agriculture

PALETHEWE paddy sowing in Kyaiklat

KYAIKLAT, 26-Dec—The demonstration on soil preparations and Palethewe strain paddy seed sowing was held through good agriculture pattern in Hleseik Village of Kyaiklat Township, Ayeyawady Region, recently.

It was organized by Kyaiklat Township Agriculture Department.

On the occasion, Township Administrator U Aung Naing explained cultivation of Palethewe paddy strains through GAP, Head of District Agriculture Department U Naing Lin and Head of Township Agriculture Department U Tin Maung Oo, five points reform of agricultural development and 14 points GAP system—MMAL-Ko Gyi Tin

New school building handed over

MAHLAING, 26-Dec—A ceremony to hand over Gangawnewschoolbuilding, toilet and furniture donated by Japanese Government and people to Education Department was held at Basic Education Primary School in Kanga Village of Mahlaing Township on 20 December.

At first, Township Administrator U Aung Thein Hlaing, Secretary of Japanese Embassy in Myanmar Mr Go Nakaya and Township Education Officer Daw San Yi formally opened the new school building.

On behalf of the Japanese Ambassador, the Japanese Secretary explained the purpose of donation and handed over documents related to the building to the township education officer.

The township administrator and the Region Htuttaw representative presented certificate of honour and commenorative pennant to the well wisher.

The new building is 100 feet by 30 feet. The building, the toilet and furniture cost US$ 91,996 under the 2013 small scale project assistance programme of the Japanese Government and the people.

MMAL-Aung Htaw (Mahlaing)
Japan, Russia to hold territorial talks in Tokyo on 31 January

Tokyo, 26 Dec — Japan and Russia will hold territorial negotiations in Tokyo on 31 January, following similar talks last August aimed at resolving the long-standing dispute between the two countries, Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida said on Thursday.

The dispute over the ownership of Russian-held islands off Hokkaido, known as the Northern Territories in Japan and the Southern Kurils in Russia, has prevented the two countries from signing a post-World War II peace treaty. “I hope that through the discussions, Japan-Russia relations will be shored up as a whole, and that, in turn, will produce outcomes in the discussions about the Northern Territories issue and the issue of concluding a peace treaty,” Kishida told a news conference. Along with the territorial issue, the planned meeting between Deputy Foreign Minister Shinshuke Sugiyama and his Russian counterpart Igor Morgulov is expected to address economic cooperation between the two countries. The deputy foreign ministers held talks in Moscow in mid-August, effectively resuming the territorial negotiations between the two countries. Four islands off Hokkaido — Etorofu, Kunashiri, Shikotan and the Habomai islet group — were seized by the Soviet Union following Japan’s surrender in World War II on 15 August, 1945.—Kyodo News

Egypt declares Muslim Brotherhood terrorist group after blast

Cairo, 26 Dec — The Egyptian government on Wednesday blamed the Muslim Brotherhood for the bombing of the police headquarters in Mansoura city and officially declared the Muslim Brotherhood a “terrorist group,” from which the ousted Islamist president Mohamed Morsi hails.

“All Egyptians were horrified by the heinous crime committed by Muslim Brotherhood on Tuesday when it blew up the Daqahleya Governorate police headquarters that killed at least 16 persons and injured more than 130 others,” a government statement said on Wednesday.

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Higher Education, Hossam Eissa, declared that the Brotherhood organization inside and outside Egypt a terrorist organization. He accused them of seeking to disturb Egypt’s transition to democracy. Eissa said that terrorism law will be enforced on everyone who participates, finances or propagates the activities of the group. Eissa added that the government has tasked the police and army forces to protect public facilities and universities against the terrorist acts of the group.

Mansoura bombing is still under investigation. However, it was claimed by Sinai-based Jihadist group Ansar Beit al-Maqdis. Brotherhood condemned the bomb attack on Tuesday. Since the ouster of Morsi, Brotherhood supporters have staged many protests that in many cases turned into violent, while students, affiliated to the group, tried to disturb studying in different Egyptian universities.—Xinhua

Bangladesh troops sent out to try to stem election violence

Dhaka, 26 Dec — The army has sent troops fanned out across Bangladesh on Thursday in a bid to stem political violence ahead of next month’s elections, which the opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) has boycotted.

Violence has gripped the country as Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and her ruling Awami League press ahead with the 5 January vote. BNP leader Begum Khaleda Zia has called on Bangladeshis to march to the capital on Sunday to protest against the elections, declaring “democracy is dead.”

The opposition says it will not take part unless an interim government is installed and Hasina steps down. Hasina wants to do away with the practice of installing a caretaker government.

With the BNP’s boycott, more than half the 300 parliament seats will go uncontested, making it unlikely the vote will do anything to restore stability in one of the world’s poorest countries.

The army will be deployed until 9 January, an Election Commission official said.—Reuters

Thai Election Commission asks for poll delay after clashes

Bangkok, 26 Dec — Thailand’s Election Commission (EC) called for a February poll to be postponed on Thursday after bloody clashes between riot police and anti-government protesters seeking to topple Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra and scuttle the ballot.

One policeman was killed and three were wounded by gunshots fired from an elevated position during the chaos, which erupted as riot police fired tear gas and rubber bullets at rock-throwing protesters seeking to break into the venue of an election ballot numbers draw.

About 40 demonstrators were hospitalised, most from teargas, while several were hit by rubber bullets, the Public Health Ministry said.

Hours after the unrest started, the EC issued a statement recommending the government postpone the vote until all sides supported it, an unlikely scenario given that Yingluck’s Puea Thai Party is almost certain to win.

The EC’s request is a setback for Yingluck as she seeks to renew her mandate in the face of demonstrations by a group calling for a suspension of Thailand’s fragile democracy, which they say has been subverted by her influential, self-exiled brother, former premier Thaksin Shinawatra.

The clashes are also a big blow to Yingluck, who had ordered police to act with restraint, fearing opponents would stir chaos intentionally to weaken the government and trigger an intervention, either by the military or judiciary.

“The 2 February election may not happen if there’s no mutual consent between all the related parties,” the EC said.

“The election commission would like to ask the government to consider postponing the election until the mutual consent could be reached,” it said, adding that it could take that decision itself in a 2 January crisis meeting.—Reuters

Bomb blast hits bus in Cairo, four injured

Cairo, 26 Dec — A bomb blast hit a bus in Cairo’s Nasr City district on Thursday, injuring four people, a spokesman for Egypt’s interior ministry told Reuters, two days after a car bomb killed 16 in the Nile Delta.

The homemade device had been put on a traffic island and a second one, found nearby, was being dismantled, Hani Abdel Latif said. State television showed footage of a bus with its windows blown out.

Attacks across Egypt over the last few days have raised fears of intensifying violence in the run-up to a constitutional referendum in January as the interim government pushes ahead with an army-backed plan for political transition.

The government has vowed to fight “black terrorism” after Tuesday’s deadly attack on a police compound in the city of Mansoura which also injured about 140 people. Bomb attacks and shootings have become an almost daily occurrence in the Sinai peninsula since the army toppled Islamist President Mohamed Mursi in July following mass protests against his rule.—Reuters

Security forces are deployed near the Prime Minister Hun Sen’s house in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, on 25 Dec. 2013. Cambodian opposition leader Sam Rainsy vowed to mobilise 1 million supporters into capital Phnom Penh on Sunday as the opposition party’s daily protests against Prime Minister Hun Sen’s government entered the 11th day on Wednesday.—Xinhua

Delegates listen to Bangladesh’s Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina (pictured on screens) while she addresses the 68th United Nations General Assembly at the UN headquarters in New York, on 27 Sept, 2013.—Reuters

An anti-government protester (top, L) waves his knife as they attack the Thai-Japan youth stadium during clashes with policemen in central Bangkok on 26 Dec, 2013.—Reuters

Photo taken on 20 Nov, 2013 shows some participants standing to exchange views over the issue of women’s human rights during the ninth assembly of the World Conference of Religions for Peace in Vienna.—Kyodo News

Photo taken on 20 Nov, 2013 shows some participants standing to exchange views over the issue of women’s human rights during the ninth assembly of the World Conference of Religions for Peace in Vienna. —Kyodo News

Photo taken on 20 Nov, 2013 shows some participants standing to exchange views over the issue of women’s human rights during the ninth assembly of the World Conference of Religions for Peace in Vienna. —Kyodo News
Hulu must face privacy lawsuit, US judge rules

SAN FRANCISCO, 26 Dec — Hulu has failed to persuade a federal judge to dismiss a lawsuit accusing the video streaming service of illegally sharing users’ viewing history with Facebook Inc and business metrics company comScore Inc.

In San Francisco on Friday, US Magistrate Judge Laurel Beeler rejected Hulu’s argument that viewers needed to show actual injury to recover damages, even if they qualified as “aggrieved” persons under a 1988 federal law protecting the privacy of video renters.

That law, the Video Privacy Protection Act (VPPA), was adopted after a newspaper published an article in 1987 about movies that Supreme Court nominee Robert Bork had rented.

Hulu had argued that the law “was not adopted to impose multi-billion dollar liability on the transmission of anonymous data where no one suffers any actual injury.”

Beeler, however, concluded that “the statute requires only injury in the form of a wrongful disclosure” before damages might be available. She did not rule on the merits of the case. Hulu is a joint venture owned by Comcast Corp’s NBCUniversal, 21st Century Fox Inc’s Fox Broadcasting, and Walt Disney Co’s ABC.

Chief Executive Mike Hopkins said on 18 December Hulu will post $1 billion of revenue in 2013, up from $695 million in 2012.

Hulu spokeswoman Meredith Kendall declined to comment on the decision, saying Hulu does not comment publicly on ongoing legal matters.

The lawsuit seeks class-action status on behalf of Hulu users nationwide. It was brought by several people in California, Illinois and New York seeking damages of at least $2.50 per violation, plus punitive damages and other sums.

Seagate to buy Xyratex to add test equipment business

NEW YORK, 26 Dec — Seagate Technology PLC said it would buy network and storage equipment maker Xyratex Ltd for about $374 million to strengthen its supply and manufacturing chain for disk drives.

Xyratex shares were up 27 percent at $13.25 per share in morning trading, matching Seagate’s offer price.

The deal will help Seagate acquire testing equipment for its hard disk drives (HDD) along with storage systems to analyze and manage network data.

The acquisition could help Seagate maintain its gross margins at the 27-33 percent level as it begins to own more of the equipment that it uses, FBN Securities analyst Shelly Seryfai told Reuters.

Seagate and rival Western Digital Corp, which dominate the HDD market, have been trying to expand their presence in the faster and more energy efficient solid-state drives market as demand slows in a declining PC market.

Seagate’s deal with Xyratex could be a “complementary asset, but not a real game-changer”, Argus Research analyst Jim Kelleher said.

Seagate shares were little changed at $55.92 on the Nasdaq on Monday. The company said it expects the deal to close in mid-2014, and add about $500-$600 million in revenue in its fiscal year 2015.

Allen & Co LLC was the financial adviser for Seagate, while Wilson Sonsini Goodrich & Rosati acted as primary legal adviser.

Credit Suisse was the financial adviser and Latham & Watkins LLP the legal adviser to Xyratex.

China’s moon rover “sleeps” through lunar night

BEIJING, 26 Dec — The moon rover and lander of China’s Chang’e-3 lunar probe mission will “sleep” during the lunar night, enduring extreme low temperatures on the lunar surface.

According to Wu Fenglei of the Beijing Aerospace Control Centre, the lander will “go to sleep” at about 7 am on Christmas Day and the moon rover, Jade Rabbit, will fall asleep at about 1 am on Boxing Day.

The forthcoming lunar night, expected to begin on 26 December, will last for about two weeks, experts with the centre estimated. During their “sleep”, both lander and rover will have to tolerate minus 180 degrees Celsius. Scientists tested the lander early on Tuesday to ensure it can stand the temperature drop.

Both lander and rover are storable, said Wu, adding they have completed a series of scientific tasks in the past two days.

Chang’e-3 soft-landed on the moon’s Sinus_Iridum, or the Bay of Rainbows, on 14 December, establishing China as the third country to carry out such a mission after the United States and Soviet Union.

Yutu, the rover, will survey the moon’s geological structure and surface substances and look for natural resources for about three months, while the lander will conduct in-situ explorations at the landing site for one year.—Xinhua

Alibaba rival JD.com to top sales target as Chinese shoppers flock to Internet

BEIJING, 26 Dec — JD.com, China’s second-largest e-commerce site, is set to exceed 100 billion yuan ($16.47 billion) in annual sales for the first time in a market that has drawn investment from global re-tailing names such as Amazon and Wal-Mart.

Sales volumes will likely eclipse the company’s target of 100 billion yuan compared with 60 billion yuan in 2012. JD.com said in a Press release on Monday.

The smaller rival of China’s Alibaba Group Holding Ltd said it has broken even for the first three quarters of the year and may turn profitable at any time, declining to be more specific.

China’s business-to-consumer e-commerce sales may surpass $180 billion this year due to a rising Internet penetration rate, expanding middle class incomes and a steadily improving distribution network, according to New York-based market research firm eMarketer.

The market itself is growing, we’re also growing our market share,” JD.com’s Chief Operating Officer Shen Haoyu told Reuters in a telephone interview on Monday. “People are getting more comfortable with buying online.”

As a private company, JD.com does not release revenue figures, and would not say if it broke even in previous years.

“We’re not making crazy money, but we’re not losing crazy money,” Shen said. JD.com, previously known as 360Buy, has done well enough to attract foreign investors.

Over the past six years, it has secured $2.23 billion from investors including the Ontario Teachers’ Pension Plan and Saudi billionaire Prince Alwaleed bin Talal’s Kingdom Holding Co, using these funds to expand its logistics network and employ aggressive pricing tactics. But despite its fast growth, JD.com still stands in the shadow of its main B2C competitor, Alibaba’s Taobao, which dominates 51.1 percent of the market, according to Chinese Internet market research firm iResearch.

JD.com has 17.5 percent and Amazon China controls just 2.6 percent.

Co-founder Lazaridis cuts stake in BlackBerry

SAN FRANCISCO, 26 Dec — BlackBerry Ltd co-founder Mike Lazaridis cut his stake in the company to 4.99 percent from 8 percent, and said that a group, which included Lazaridis, walked away from exploring a bid for the troubled smartphone maker.

Co-founders Lazaridis and Douglas Fregin in October disclosed in a regulatory filing they were considering a bid to buy the company.

BlackBerry abandoned its plan to sell itself last month after a two-month review of strategic options and talked with potential buyers that included Facebook, Lenovo and private equity firms such as Cerberus Capital.

China’s moon rover “sleeps” through lunar night

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Surge of holiday packages delays UPS shipments

New York, 26 Dec — A high volume of holiday packages overwhelmed shipping and logistics company UPS (UPS.N), the company said on Wednesday, delaying the arrival of Christmas presents around the globe and sending angry consumers to social media to vent. Amazon.com (AMZN.O) responded with an email to affected customers offering repair credits and $20 gift cards to compensate.

A convergence of factors, including higher volume than expected and recent patches of bad weather, caused the delays, UPS spokeswoman Natalie Black said. The company project ed 132 million deliveries last week “and obviously we exceeded that,” Black said. The company said 132 million deliveries were impacted, may be eligible for additional refunds. Amazon's proper ties will get applied directly to user accounts. Packages shipped via UPS for Amazon.com by Prime customers, who pay $79 a year for two-day shipping, may be eligible for additional refunds. Amazon’s stated policy for missed deliveries is to offer a free one-month extension of Prime.

UPS has not yet coordinated with Amazon, nor has it determined what percentage of the undelivered packages were from Amazon, Black said. Amazon also did not disclose how many of its shipments were affected or how many users got the email about delayed orders.

“If customers from Amazon were impacted, we’ll work with Amazon to resolve that,” Black said.

During the drive on Christmas Eve while wearing a Rudolf nose and antlers in New York, on 24 Dec, 2013.—Reuters

Mazda finds no problem with CX-5 SUV after test drive accident

Saitama, (Japan), 26 Dec — Mazda Motor Corp said on Thursday it has found no problem with its CX-5 sport utility vehicle through its joint investigation with police into an accident involving the vehicle during a test drive last month.

During the drive on 10 November to test the vehicle’s automatic brake system in Saitama, north of Tokyo, the vehicle failed to stop in front of a mat and collided with a chain-link fence, injuring its driver and a Mazda salesperson in the front passenger seat.

Local police sources said the vehicle’s automatic brake system is designed to work at a speed of 30 kilometres per hour, but it is not known if this is the case when the accelerator is not pressed and that the accident may be attributable to some human error.

Mazda said it will continue its voluntary suspension of test drive campaigns.—Kyodo News

Doctors predict spike in requests for maternity care

Beijing, 26 Dec — The government's relaxation of its birth rule to allow more couples to have a second child has provided an instant stimulus to maternity-care and fertility centres on the Chinese mainland.

Preparations for changes that will come with the new policy — which authorities expect to be implemented early next year — are now under way.

Late last month, the Obstetrics & Gynecology Hospital of Zhejiang affiliated with the Zhejiang University took the national lead by opening a special consultation unit designed to help newly eligible couples have a healthy second child. Hospital authorities said the unit would be open once a week and that it would be staffed by veteran doctors aiming to help women have smooth pregnancies.

Meanwhile, in Beijing, veteran gynecology and obstetrics specialists expressed concerns about what they see as a possible gap between the rising demand for maternity services and the current capacity to deliver them. The system is already strained, they say, and will be further strained by the birth of a new generation of girls who plan to marry and have children.

Doctors predict spike in requests for maternity care

Still in talks on NuGen stake, wants part of GDF holding

Tokyo, 26 Dec — Toshiba Corp (6502.T) CEO Hisao Tanaka said on Thursday that his company wanted a majority stake in Britain’s NuGen nuclear consortium and no deal had been reached despite Iberdrola’s joint venture partner wanted GDF Suez to reconfirm its stake in NuGen.

“I think that GDF Suez reconfirmed its position as the remaining packages,” Black said. The company project ed 81 million deliveries last week “and obviously we exceeded that,” Black said. The company said 81 million deliveries were impacted, may be eligible for additional refunds. Amazon's proper ties will get applied directly to user accounts.

UPS delivery man Vinny Ambrosino prepares to deliver packages on Christmas Eve while wearing a Rudolf nose and antlers in New York, on 24 Dec, 2013.—Reuters

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8 tips to keep you warm and healthy in winter

1. Eat more foods that can nourish blood

2. Eat more foods that are rich in iron and calcium

3. Have hot spring bath

4. Do exercise half an hour every day

5. Drink more boiled water

6. Regulate the spleen and stomach functions

7. Have hot foot bath

8. Put an orange or a small bottle of peppermint oil near your bed

New York, 26 Dec — A high volume of holiday packages overwhelmed shipping and logistics company UPS (UPS.N), the company said on Wednes day, delaying the arrival of Christmas presents around the globe and sending angry consumers to social media to vent. Amazon. com (AMZN.O) responded with an email to affected customers offering repair credits and $20 gift cards to compensate.

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South Sudan President Kiir urges end to tribal atrocities

Juba, 26 Dec — South Sudan President Salva Kiir called for an end to wanton killings and tribal-based atrocities on Wednesday, as government troops clashed with rebels loyal to his former deputy in an oil-producing region of the country.

Western powers fear the violence could spiral out of control and lead to a civil war split along ethnic lines in the world’s newest state, and the UN Security Council on Tuesday agreed to almost double the number of peacekeepers there.

“The innocent people have been wantonly killed. People are targeting others because of their tribal affiliation. This is unacceptable,” Kiir said, according to an official Twitter account of South Sudan’s government.

“These atrocities recurring by now have to cease immediately,” Kiir added.

The violence erupted in the capital Juba on 15 December and has quickly spread, dividing the landlocked country of 10.8 million ethnic lines of Nuer and Dinka. Western powers and east African states, keen to prevent more chaos in a fragile region, have tried to mediate between Kiir, a Dinka, and rebel leader Riek Machar, a Nuer, who was vice president until Kiir sacked him in July. European Union foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton is sending an envoy to the country, the European Commission said on Wednesday. A South Sudan government official said Ethiopian Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn and Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta would arrive in Juba on Thursday morning to help mediate as well.

Despite African Union calls for a Christmas Day ceasefire, rebels and government troops on Wednesday clashed in Malakal, capital of the major oil state of Upper Nile.

“In Malakal, rebel forces are on one side, and government troops on another. Fighting is still taking place,” Army spokesman Philip Aguer told Reuters on Wednesday.

97 Chinese workers evacuated from South Sudan to Khartoum

Khartoum, 25 Dec — A total of 97 Chinese oil workers on Wednesday arrived in the Sudanese capital Khartoum after being evacuated from South Sudan due to the widespread clashes there.

The workers of the Chinese National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) were operating at the Fuli oil field in South Sudan’s Upper Nile state, where the South Sudanese army has confirmed clashes are raging between them and some defectors. Two more batches of Chinese workers, 97 and 110 in headcount, are expected to arrive in Khartoum later.

The first batch of the Chinese workers were received at Khartoum Airport by Chinese Ambassador to Sudan Luo Xiaoguang and an official from CNPC.

Luo commended the Sudanese government for its role in facilitating the evacuation of the Chinese workers to Khartoum.

CNPC Chief Representative in Sudan Zhao Dong, meanwhile, told Xinhua: “According to the arrangements by South Sudan’s Petroleum Ministry, oil wells in remote areas have been shut down, and the operations at those fields have been halted and the workers have been evacuated on a contingency plan.”

South Sudan has been witnessing mounting clashes between government troops and forces loyal to former vice-president Riek Machar.

Five people including a Chinese worker and three Sudanese were killed in a suicide attack near the Chinese oil field in South Sudan on Monday.

The oil field in the Upper Nile state, where the South Sudanese army confirmed clashes are raging between them and some defectors, is the same field where a Chinese worker was killed in a suicide attack on Friday.

Jewelry store robbed in Albania on Christmas Eve

Tirana, 26 Dec — Four armed robbers disguised as “Santa Claus” robbed jewelry worth of 410,000 US dollars from a store in the suburbs of Tirana, capital of Albania, on Christmas Eve, local media reported on Wednesday.

The incident occurred on 24 December at the “Tirana East Gate” shopping center where the robbers, who took the holiday atmosphere by dressing "Santa Clauses" costumes, passed security with two Karasinskiv rifles, according to media reports.

Surveillance video showed that they entered a jewelry store, keeping the store employee on gunpoint, then grabbed a large amount of golden necklaces, bracelets and rings and put them into two big bags.

Two minutes late, the four robbers fled the scene to meet with their fellow driver who was waiting in a car at the shopping mall and they escape immediately.

Fortunately, no one got injured during the robbery, but the incident caused widespread panics while the robbers carrying guns rushing out.

The Albanian police came to the scene to investigate into the case. They checked the surveillance video and inquired 14 witnesses.—Xinhua

Benazir Bhutto’s murder still remains mystery 6 years after

Islamabad, 26 Dec — The tragic assassination of Pakistan’s first woman prime minister Benazir Bhutto still remains a mystery as her party is set to observe the 6th anniversary of her death on Friday.

No group has yet claimed responsibility for the murder and the trial of some suspects is still under way. Benazir Bhutto, a charismatic leader who served Pakistan twice as prime minister, was killed in a suicide attack shortly after she addressed a huge election rally in the garrison city of Rawalpindi on 27 December, 2007. The then government of Pervez Musharraf was quick to blame Pakistan Taliban leader Baitullah Mehsud and al-Qaeda for masterminding the attack.

Bhutto had been strongly critical of the Taliban which until now has continued its suicide attacks in some parts of Pakistan.

Security officials had released audio tape of two persons, whom they described as Taliban operatives, who greeted each other on the Benazir’s assassination. The Taliban had, however, denied involvement and blamed the security establishment for the assassination. The leadership of the Pakistan Peoples’ Party (PPP), including former President Asif Ali Zardari, the spouse of Benazir Bhutto, had also pointed fingers at the Taliban on some occasions. But the mystery has not yet been resolved as to who had masterminded the plot to eliminate the world-recognized woman leader.

In view of demands for investigation from foreign teams, the Musharraf government had sought help from the British Scotland Yard, whose team had just probed the circumstances that led her death and the causes of Benazir Bhutto’s death.

Later a United Nations’ team carried out a thorough investigation at the request of the then government of Pakistan. The UN inquiry reported in April 2010 that the security arrangements by the federal and the local authorities to protect Benazir Bhutto were “fatally insufficient and ineffective” and subsequent investigations into her death were prejudiced and were more of a whitewash.—Xinhua

Japan govt panel proposes review of controls on working hours

Tokyo, 26 Dec — A Japanese government panel called on Thursday for reviewing regulations on working hours as part of efforts to boost Japan’s industrial competitiveness.

In an interim report, a subgroup of the government’s industrial competitiveness council urged the introduction of a new system which requires business corporations to increase flexibility in the way employees work and pay only a certain amount of salary regardless of working hours.

Members of the council are studying Japan’s growth strategy in the fields of employment and human resources.

In the 15-page report, the panel proposed establishing a flexible working hour system mainly for high-level specialists to help them increase creativity.

The panel also proposed studying fresh measures to maintain workers’ health by providing them with breaks during their working hours.

The government of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe plans to reflect these proposals in the government’s growth strategy to be revised in mid-2014 after consulting with the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, government sources said.

The report also proposed popularizing job cards that contain a person’s professional record, including job training, in an effort to support job seekers.—Kyodo News
Electricity restored to all Irish homes after power cuts

DUBLIN, 26 Dec — All Irish homes affected by power cuts in the last few days had their electricity supply restored on Wednesday afternoon.

State broadcaster RTE quoted ESB, the country’s premier electricity utility, as saying that residents of Achill Island in west Ireland’s County Mayo were among the last to be reconnected to the supply.

All homes were now fully supplied on Wednesday afternoon, it said.

Repair crews restored electricity to around 30,000 customers across the country on Tuesday, following high winds and lightning strikes.

But Met Eireann, the Irish national meteorological service, issued a status orange warning for Thursday evening with strong winds expected.

The Irish weather is becoming “very windy or stormy again during the evening of St Stephen’s Day, continuing overnight and for much of Friday,” it read in the warning.

In neighbouring Britain, up to 50,000 homes are without power and more than 100 flood warnings remain in place following high winds and heavy rains.

Most of those without electricity are in the south of England and are unlikely to have it restored before St Stephen’s Day.—Xinhua

Toyota likely to be 1st automaker to make 10m vehicles in a year

NAZIOYA, 26 Dec — Toyota Motor Corp is likely to become the first automaker in the world to build 10 million vehicles in a single year as its global output data for the first 11 months of 2013, released on Wednesday, showed the company is on pace to reach the plateau.

Toyota’s global production increased 0.9 percent from the same 11-month period last year to 9,337,668 vehicles, including output by affiliated automakers Daihatsu Motor Co and Hino Motors Ltd, buoyed by brisk demand in China, Europe and the United States.

In November alone, Toyota’s global production increased 13.3 percent to 889,242 vehicles, marking the third straight month of double-digit growth.

As automobile demand is expected to be high in December ahead of Japan’s sales tax hike to 8 percent next April from 5 percent, Toyota’s full-year production is expected to hit the 10 million mark.

If its production in December turns out to be close to the year-earlier level, the full fiscal year figure is estimated at around 9,993,000 vehicles.

Meanwhile, Toyota’s 11-month worldwide sales grew 1.8 percent to 9,093,000 vehicles.

In August, the company announced plans to make 10.12 million vehicles and sell 9.96 million in 2013. Toyota has decided not to raise its production and sales targets sharply since it incurred massive losses following the global financial crisis triggered by the collapse of US investment bank Lehman Brothers Holdings Inc in September 2008.

Volkswagen AG, meanwhile, intends to attain the world No 1 status in the auto industry. In 2012, the German automaker saw its global sales grow 11.2 percent from the previous year to 9.07 million vehicles. —Kyodo News

Afghan army recovers 35 bombs

KABUL, 26 Dec — Afghan army bomb disposal teams recovered and defused 35 bombs across the country over the past 24 hours, said the country’s Defence Ministry on Wednesday.

“Up to 35 Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) and roadside mines were found and defused by the Afghan National Army specialist in several parts of the country over the past 24 hours,” the ministry said in a statement.

Several Taliban militants were killed and injured and 12 armed anti-government elements were detained in military operations during the same period of time, the statement added.

The Taliban insurgent members use home-made IEDs to target security forces. —Xinhua

Roadside bomb kills one Afghan civilian, wounds three

KABUL, 26 Dec — One civilian was killed and three others sustained injuries as a roadside bomb struck a civilian car in the eastern Nangarhar Province on Wednesday, a statement of provincial government sent to media said.

“A roadside bomb planted by militants struck a civilian car in Achin district today morning killing one innocent commuter and injuring three others,” the statement added.

However, the Taliban militants who are largely relying on suicide and roadside bombings have yet to make comment. —Xinhua

Morocco condemns bomb attack in Egypt

RABAT, 26 Dec — Morocco on Wednesday condemned the car bomb explosion against a security headquarters in the Egyptian Nile Delta city of Mansoura early on Tuesday.

“The Kingdom of Morocco condemns this vile criminal act,” the official news agency MAP quoted a statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as saying.

The statement also reiterates Morocco’s refusal of all forms of violence and terrorism, as well as any attempts to jeopardize Egypt’s security and stability as the country is committed to the implementation of its transition roadmap.

Morocco underscored that Egypt currently needs the commitment of all parties to further engage in a serious and open dialogue while “taking into account the interests of the Egyptian brother people.”

The country also offered condolences and sympathy to the Egyptian government, the people and the relatives of victims.

On Tuesday, a thunderous blast hit security headquarters of the Nile Delta governorate of Daqahliya in Egypt, killing at least 15 and injuring over one hundred.—Xinhua

Photo taken on 25 Dec, 2013 shows the scene of an awarding ceremony in Beijing, capital of China. Qiqihar City is awarded “Chinese love city” during an awarding ceremony in Beijing on Wednesday.—Xinhua

Along the Avenue of Baobabs, 15km north of Morondava, west Madagascar, on 22 Dec, 2013. A shopkeeper sits among oranges at a fruit market in Nagpur, which is famous for orange production and trade, in Maharashtra, India, on 22 Dec, 2013. —Xinhua

Uraguay issues heatwave warning

MONTEVIDEO, 26 Dec—Uruguayan authorities on Tuesday issued an “orange” moderate-to-high risk heatwave warning as high temperatures of around 40 degrees Celsius would affect most provinces of the country.

The National Meteorological Bureau predicted an extended period of high temperatures from midday Wednesday to Thursday in the country’s northern, western and southern regions, including the capital of Montevideo.

“We forecast maximum temperatures between 37 and 39 degrees Celsius and minimum temperatures of 22 degrees Celsius or higher” in 15 of the country’s 19 departments, the agency said.

The National Emergencies System released a warning that sweltering days can harm people’s health, and urged them to take precautions to avoid heat stroke. —Xinhua
Golden opportunity

As the saying goes, “opportunity never knocks twice at any man’s door.” So, we need to seize any opportunity so as to live a better life. Opportunity is like a ladder. Taking a look at the people in our locality, those who could use the opportunities effectively become the rich. Nowadays, the State is carrying out the disbursement of micro-credit loan to the rural people, the needy and low-income staff.

The people on their part need to effectively use these loans. In rural areas, agricultural equipment, tractors and motorcycles are being sold by installment. The Ministry of Cooperatives, on behalf of the government, disburses the soft loan after getting the foreign loans. Farmers need no to worry about the cows as they can purchase the tractors in installment.

Thanks to it, vendors and trishaw men in urban areas also will be OK. There are about 64,000 villages in Myanmar. New loans will be granted to those who have no access to the loan scheme in April, May and June the next year. It is a golden opportunity for the needy.

The people should strive for their business success by using the loans they got in an effective way. Only when their businesses generate the profits, could they repay their loans at due date. Business success has a lot to do with higher living standards. All are urged to grasp this golden opportunity for enjoying better life.

Christmas day celebrated in Yangon

NAY PYI TAW, 26 Dec—Christmas is an annual commemoration of the birth of Jesus Christ. Christians of every township in Yangon Region celebrated the Christmas Day.

Emmanuel Baptist Church at the corner of Mahbandoola Road and Mahbandoola Garden Street in Kyauktada Township, St. Mary Cathedral Church on Bo Aung Kyaw Road in Botataung Township and U Hnaw Baptist Church on Phoogyi Street in Lannmadaw Township held praying ceremonies, scripture reading, singing X’mas songs, talks about the biography of Jesus Christ, entertain- ing drama, reading messages sent by all Christian associations and presenting X’mas gifts to those present.

Photo shows a wooden bridge linking between Ilayuk and Lweaepw villages near Indawgyi Lake in Moehnyin Township, which would be reconstructed at the cost of K 0.5 million, with the contribution of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Fund. NLM (001)

Htay Aung (Tourism)

Let me recount the SEA Games

The 27th Southeast Asian Games came to an end with success. The event led the country to a certain status on the world stage. The roars of the SEA Games is not only a monument “Myanmar…, Myanmar…, Myanmar…” have been heard across the sky. It can be said that the strenuous efforts of the entire people brought about the success to the country. Especially, it is a cooperative outcome of the government and the people as both sides did their bit to achieve the success. Let me recount the biggest regional sporting event.

About five years ago, it was planned to build the two football stadiums. Wunna Theikdi and Zeyathiri — of international standards in Nay Pyi Taw, but construction works were not taken shape. Athletes’ Village like a staff quarter was under construction. No one started talking about acquisition of necessary equipment and materials through foreign sources. There was no exact calculation of the amount of money to be spent through the State budget at that time. But, infrastructural development of Nay Pyi Taw has taken good shape.

The third meeting of the 25th SEA Games Federation Council held in Laos in 2009 discussed a proposal to host the 27th SEA Games in Myanmar and the third annual meeting of 26th SEA Games Federation Council held in Indonesia in 2011 approved Myanmar’s bid to host the 27th SEA Games. Myanmar received the SEA Games Federation flag. Myanmar made a vow to host the Games whether or not it can be met within the specific timeframe, and foreign assistance to the Games. Myanmar delegation paid a study tour of the 25th SEA Games in Laos and 26th SEA Games in Indonesia after two years. Indonesia hosted the event in 2011 in Jakarta, in order to promote the region, south of Sumatra. It is common to see some difficulties as the place chosen to host the Games was not exactly within Indonesia presented the world with excellent performances.

Before the Games, the government formed a lead- ing committee and working committees and implement- ed the works to be done in accord with timeframe. As soon as the Indonesia SEA Games concluded, the countdown has started, making preparations for the next SEA Games. Out of 14 working committees, the duties and functions of the committee of the Ministry of Sports played an important role, dealing with many matters through coordina- tion and construction of all sporting facilities was done, inspection of sports facilities by special committees, organizing of the Olym- pic Committee took place. It gave those concerned a big thrill. If they decided sporting facilities were standard- ard, all our efforts would be in vain. In order to avoid the unwanted situation, we tried our best day in, day out. When we passed the test, more efforts were put into the task to stimulate Environmental Conservation. Overall preparations called for participa- tion of all.

In this way, Myanmar was ready to host the 27th SEA Games in October, 2013. The Head of State inspected preparations for the sporting extravaganza and left necessary instructions.

When the sports festi- val was drawing nearer, respective committees of the Minis- try of Sports, Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of Information, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Trans- port, Ministry of Hotels and Tourism, Ministry of Fi- nance, Ministry of Commu- nications and Information Technology, Ministry of Environ- ment, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, and Minis- try of Health were saddled with their respective duties.

As I was responsible for accommodation, I had to take care of everything related to accommodation for the convenience of partici- pants to the Games. The arrival of this kind of sporting events were held in Nay Pyi Taw, Yangon, Mandalay and Ngwesaung and I had to deal with accommodation matters at the four venues. Accommodation services were provided to the participants.

referee/jury and Olym- pic Committee members, coaches, media and specta- tors apart from athletes.

More efforts were made for athletes’ village and held in Nay Pyi Taw, where most of the competi- tions took place to be ready before the Games. Our duty is to take care of accom- modation of sports contin- gents at the athletes’ village where they were accommodo- ted at ten buildings with eight rooms each.

Task was heavy for the accommodation team as it is to take care of the athletes’ village where they were accommo- dated at ten buildings with eight rooms each.

There arose, before the Games, concerns about timely completion of con- struction works, arrival of necessary equipment and materials, conditions related to the Games whether or not it can be met within the specific timeframe, and foreign assistance to the Games. Myanmar delegation paid a study tour of the 25th SEA Games in Laos and 26th SEA Games in Indonesia after two years. Indonesia hosted the event in 2011 in Jakarta, in order to promote the region, south of Sumatra. It is common to see some difficulties as the place chosen to host the Games was not exactly within Indonesia presented the world with excellent performances.

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Let me recount ...

(from page 8)

Sometimes, we had to prepare cakes and food for birthday parties of athletes.

Taking the example of diarrhea case in Palembang of Indonesia, Myanmar had to take the necessary precautions. Before the event, one athlete fell ill. The next day, two Malaysians were hospitalized after having local foods in a shop in Thay-yagon. They could compete in the next day’s event as they recovered from their sufferings. In addition, we went to Pathem where Yachting event took place via Nay Pyi Taw. From there, we proceeded to Ngwesaung by car. The opening ceremony could successfully be held even though there were rains and strong winds caused by the storm in India. From there, I went back to Nay Pyi Taw as I had a duty of food catering. During the SEA Games period, I had to inspect the accommodation of Women’s football teams in Mandalay and athletes from seven kinds of sports in Yangon. Especially, we had to pay more attention to food hygiene to avoid the similar case in Thay-yagon. We had to urge them not to eat local foods.

Two experts from Thai-based Undercover Company supervised the enrichment of daily food calorie fed to the athletes. Heads of respective teams also had breakfast and dinner together with their sportspersons while visiting their athletes. Among them, those from Bunrei, Singapore, Thailand and Malaysia and the World Health Organization (WHO) recommended the food quality and taste. In addition to the Sports Village, Social Zone opened these shops and restaurants. These shops and restaurants were being packed with the consumers. Two days before the SEA Games, judges and sportspersons were served Myanmar traditional foods to the accompaniment of traditional dances and songs. On the final day, they were served with traditional “Mohinga” and Myanmar cuisine. Thanks to the SEA Games, Myanmar could build better friendships with foreign guests. Liaison officers and volunteers became more familiar with each other day by day. And they invited each other to visit their regions. This big sporting event could enable the regional and international countries to know more about Myanmar.

Myanmar could hold this event successfully even though there were a lot of hindrances and difficulties. Even after the necessary preparations have been made, there is anxiety about the event. It can be said that the support of all people leads to the success of SEA Games. It is not a perfect one. But it is an undeniable fact that Myanmar people could do more than expected. Myanmar could stand second in the medal tally. This experience would become a good foundation for the future events. We should not be complacent with the success of this event alone. There is a long way to go. We can’t put in the beginning of the long journey. Soon, Myanmar is going to host the 7th ASEAN Para Games on 14 January, 2014 and take the ASEAN Chair in coming year. Here, I strongly believed that Myanmar people would overcome any difficulties through united efforts. Vibrant performance of children on the closing day of SEA Games is an eye-pleasing view. Closing song and melody still persist in my mind.

NAY PYI TAW, 26 Dec—Union Minister for Rail Transportation U Than Hayt met with travelers at Hseththwar station on Nay Pyi Taw-Bagan Railroad section on 26 December. The Union minister then went to Concrete Sleeper Plant (Otthshipin) where he looked into production of concrete sleepers. He called for making preparations to produce concrete sleepers on a commercial scale to meet requirements of Myanma Railways in next four years according to production capacity of eight concrete sleeper plants. He attended a stake driven ceremony for construction of Basic Mining on 14th January, 2014 and take on commercial scale to produce concrete sleepers. He called for making preparations to produce concrete sleepers on a commercial scale to meet requirements of Myanma Railways in next four years according to production capacity of eight concrete sleeper plants. He attended a stake driven ceremony for construction of Basic Mining on 14th January, 2014 and take on commercial scale to produce concrete sleepers.
Heinda BEHS holds AGM

MONYWA, 26 Dec—The 27th respect paying ceremony was held at Monywa Basic Education High School No 1 on 25 December. The old students donated K 135,000 each to 200 old teachers.

“We rose the fund for assistance to the old teachers and five gallons of foam,” said Chairman of the respect paying ceremony organizing committee U Kyi Naing. For the ceremony, Chief Minister of Sagaing Region Myo Win Tun presented prizes to outstanding students. It was attended by departmental officials, staff, members of School Board of Trustees totalling 150.

Respects paid to old teachers at Monywa BEHS-1

DAWEI, 26 Dec—A fire broke out at the crumb rubber plant of U Lwin Oo (a) U Tayoke Pan under Section 15/19(a)/20(a) of Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law.

“The fire destroyed one rubber warehouse worth K 150,000 and 50 sheets of rubber worth K 150,000. Daewi Myoma Police Station opened a file of lawsuit against U Lwin Oo (a) U Tayoke Pan under the law,” said Kyemon-Po Shwe Thun (Daewi).

Anti-Narcotic Drives

MITKAYNA, 26 Dec—A police squad led by SIP Myo Win Naing of Waingmaw Township Police Station and a team led by Captain Ye Khin Nyunt of No 42nd Infantry Regiment, together with witnesses, acting on tip-off, seized 1800 grams of substances believed to be opium oil solid at 19th mile station on Myitkyina-Kampte Road at 5 pm on 21 December.

They searched the motorcycle driven by U Aik Tu, 45, son of U Shwe Pe, of Rampu Ward in Myitkyina, heading for Waingmaw from Sadon.

They seized opium oil solid hidden in the 21-inch TV on the back seat. The opium oil solid worthed K 8.1 million.

Waingmaw Myoma Police Station opened a file of lawsuit against U Aik Tu under Sections 15/19(a)/20(a) of Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law.

Staff proficiency course opened for staff of Kayin State Court

HPA-AN, 26 Dec—The office work skill and proficiency enhancement course No 2/2013 was opened for staff of Kayin State court at its hall in Hpa-an of Kayin State on 23 December morning.

Kayin State Judge U Thein Ko Ko delivered an address. Kayin State Judicial Officer U Ohn Thaung explained the purpose of conducting the training course and disciplines of the course.

Two paddy combine harvesters used in Wundwin Tsp

WUNDWIN, 26 Dec—Under the supervision of Head of Mandalay Region Agriculture Department U Hla Myint Aung, the Marga Agricultural Mechanization Service gives harvesting and threshing of paddy for the local farmers in Nabegan and Kyutkan Villages in Wundwin Township of Meiktila District with the use of two Kubota combine harvesters.

Heads of Township Agriculture Department and Agricultural Mechanization Department cooperate with the Marga Agricultural Mechanization Service in works.

The service harvests the paddy at K 45000 per acre. Therefore, the local farmers get quality paddy seeds and strains in a short time. At present, the farming workers are shortage in the works, so the local farmers are pleased for assistance of the agricultural service.
China keen to boost strategic ties with Gulf states

RIYADH, 26 Dec — Visiting Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi underlined Wednesday China’s keenness to promote strategic cooperation and ties in all fields with the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries. During his meeting with GCC General Secretary Abdullatif Al Zayani in Riyadh, on 25 Dec, 2013. Visiting Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi underlined Wednesday China’s keenness to promote strategic cooperation and ties in all fields with the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries. The two officials exerting efforts to reinforce ties with Saudi Arabia for the two peoples’ interests, according to a statement released Wednesday by the GCC General Secretariat.

China guarantees subsistence to the poor

Beijing, 26 Dec—Chinese government on Wednesday vowed to improve its subsistence allowance policies so that they reach the disadvantaged.

Improving the social security system will not only boost social justice, but encourage more people to make changes and start their own careers, said a statement issued after an executive meeting of the State Council, the country’s Cabinet, presided over by Premier Li Keqiang.

Inspections to check the implementation of the policy this year found that although the allowances have benefited as many as 74 million people, there are problems, including insufficient funds, sluggish management and lack of follow-up.

Reforms should ensure that the disadvantaged can live with dignity and their living is safeguarded, the statement said. To achieve this, the first step is to ensure implementation. Applicant information should be more transparent to avoid fraud.

The whole system could be improved by a temporary relief mechanism to help families who find themselves in sudden difficulties, it said.

Top nuclear regulator holds rare talks with ruling party politician

Tokyo, 26 Dec — The head of the Nuclear Regulation Authority held on Wednesday a rare meeting with a ruling Liberal Democratic Party lawmaker to discuss ways to improve regulations, a move perceived as yielding to calls from politicians who want the NRA to listen more to pro-nuclear opinions.

NRA Chairman Shunichi Tanaka has refused to hold individual meetings with politicians in principle as part of efforts to ensure the organization’s independence, based on the lessons learned from the 2011 Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant disaster.

But the NRA decided that Tanaka should meet with Yasushia Shiozaki, a former chief Cabinet secretary, to receive explanations on a proposal submitted to the government from the LDP’s project team discussing nuclear regulatory issues. Shiozaki is the chair of the team.

To make sure the talks will not raise doubts over the regulatory body’s independence, the meeting was made open to the media.

Shiozaki told Tanaka that the project team thinks the NRA should make its own judgments after“having dialogues tenaciously with all kinds of concerned parties.”

Tanaka agreed with the need to listen to broad opinions, but noted that “time is not indefinite.”

“Communication with the interested parties is a challenge,” he added.

The NRA was launched in September last year, endowed with greater independence than the former nuclear safety agency to prevent close relations developing between regulators and promoters of atomic power, something said to have caused safety to be neglected.—Kyodo News

Vietnam among Russia’s key partners in Asia

HANOI, 26 Dec — Russia is willing to boost cooperation with Vietnam as it is one of priorities in its Asia policy, said Russian Ambassador to Vietnam Andrei G Kovtun on Wednesday.

Speaking at a press conference held in Vietnam, he brief the development of bilateral relationship between Russia and Vietnam, the Russian diplomat said the year 2013 witnessed the dynamic development of the bilateral ties as the two countries maintained high-level contacts and visits, including Vietnamese Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung’s tour to Russia in May and Russian President Vladimir Putin’s official visit to Vietnam in November.

The regular exchange of delegations reflected the depth of the bilateral ties and the two sides’ determination to accelerate cooperation, the e-portal of the Vietnamese government on Wednesday quoted the Russian diplomat as saying.

The two-way trade turnover reached 3.15 billion US dollars in the first 10 months of 2013, an increase of 2 percent year-on-year. The figure is expected to reach 7 billion US dollars in 2015 and 10 billion US dollars in 2020, said the ambassador.

Kovtun said that the two sides have made progress in cooperation in energy, national defence and security, culture, education, tourism, science and technology, contributing to deepening the comprehensive strategic partnership between the two countries.—Xinhua

Sri Lankan Tamil party maintains boycott of political talks

COLOMBO, 26 Dec — Sri Lanka’s main minority Tamil political party has decided to continue boycotting a Parliament process aimed at reaching a political solution following the end of a three decade old conflict, a Tamil legislator said on Wednesday.

The Tamil National Alliance (TNA) decided it will continue to boycott the Parliament Select Committee (PSC) on the national issue as it feels that process will not bear fruit.

TNA Parliamentarian Suresh Premachandran made the remark at a meeting in the Northern town of Vavuniya including TNA Parliament and provincial members, during which they discussed among other things an open call made by President Maithripala Sirisena for dialogue with the TNA.

The president had extended the invitation while speaking in Parliament last week on the final day of the national budget debate. Premachandran said that the TNA is still not sure if the president is proposing bilateral talks or expects them to join the PSC.

However Premachandran said that at the TNA meeting it was felt that the PSC will not be something which will bring results on the national issue.—Xinhua
Wedding Announcement
SANJEEV KUMAR BASAVATIA (MSEE) (Southern Illinois University, Edwardsville, IL, USA)
17543, Cloveview Drive, Tinley Park, IL 60477, USA
Son of HARI PRASAD BASAVATIA and GAYATRI DEVI BASAVATIA
of No. (113), Tamapin St, Magway
and
RAKHEE KUMARI @ ZIN MAR O0 B.A(Eng),
Dip in Accounting
daughter of Late ASHOK BAJAJ and SUDHA DEVI BAJAJ
of No. (D/163), Bo Min Yaung St, Mogok
Sunday, 15th December, 2013
at “SHRIAMBIKA TEMPLE,” 22C Road, Bet 82* & 83*, Mandalay according to Hindu Customs & Rights
BASAVATIA FAMILY
BAJAJ FAMILY

Marriage
SANJEEV KUMAR BASAVATIA (MSEE) (Southern Illinois University, Edwardsville, IL, USA)
17543, Cloveview Drive, Tinley Park, IL 60477, USA
Son of HARI PRASAD BASAVATIA and GAYATRI DEVI BASAVATIA
of No. (113), Tamapin St, Magway
and
RAKHEE KUMARI @ ZIN MAR O0 B.A(Eng),
Dip in Accounting
daughter of Late ASHOK BAJAJ and SUDHA DEVI BAJAJ
of No. (D/163), Bo Min Yaung St, Mogok
were married in the presence of
Daw Htay Htay Kyi, Staff officer, Magway Division
Law Office
on Thursday, December 19th 2013.

SANJEEV KUMAR
ZIN MAR O0 (a) RAKHEE KUMARI

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MINISTRY OF ENERGY
MYANMA OIL AND GAS ENTERPRISE
(INVITATION FOR OPEN TENDER)
(17/2013)

Open tenders are invited for supply of the following respective items in United States Dollars and Myanmar Kyats.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr.No</th>
<th>Tender No</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Qty</th>
<th>Remark</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>IFB-147/2013-2014</td>
<td>Down Hole Mud Motor Ex Horizontal Directional Drilling Rig</td>
<td>(1) Set</td>
<td>US$</td>
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<tr>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>IFB-148/2013-2014</td>
<td>Caterpillar C-9 Truck Engine for 30 Ton Mark Oil Field Truck</td>
<td>(1) No</td>
<td>US$</td>
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<td>(3)</td>
<td>IFB-149/2013-2014</td>
<td>CNG Compressor Driven Electric Motor With Complete Package</td>
<td>(1) Lot</td>
<td>US$</td>
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<td>(4)</td>
<td>IFB-150/2013-2014</td>
<td>Spares for BMW (Mother) Dispenser</td>
<td>(7) Items</td>
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<tr>
<td>(6)</td>
<td>IFB-152/2013-2014</td>
<td>Mobile Welding Machine with Complete Accessories 600 AMP, Diesel Engine Driven</td>
<td>(10) Nos</td>
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<td>(9)</td>
<td>IFB-155/2013-2014</td>
<td>Spares for CAT D-3408PC Rig Engine</td>
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<td>(10)</td>
<td>DMP/L-047/2013-2014</td>
<td>Multi Grade Diesel Engine Oil SAE 15 W 40 (API- CF 4)</td>
<td>(700) Drums</td>
<td>Ks</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

- Tender Closing Date & Time -
Tender Document shall be available during office hours commencing from 26th December, 2013 at the Finance Department, Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise, No(44) Complex, Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar.

Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise
Ph. +95 67 - 411097 / 411206

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
MV PACIFIC TRADER VOY NO (017)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV PACIFIC TRADER VOY NO (017) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 27.12.2013 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.P where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11.20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm to Claims Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the Vessel.

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

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

Phone No: 256908/378316/376797

Taleban key commander killed in S Afghanistan

KANDAHAR, (Afghanistan), 26 Dec — Security forces have killed a Taleban key commander named Zaid in the southern province of Helmand, a former Taleban stronghold, a local official named Jama Gul said on Wednesday.

“Acting upon intelligence report, the security forces raided Zaid’s hideout in Mashan area of Panjwai District and killed him,” Juma Gul told Xinhua. However, he didn’t say when the operation took place, adding his body had been sent to his villagers for burial.

He also said Zaid, whose real name was Noor Mohammad, commanded more than 100 local and foreign fighters over the past five years against government and NATO-led troops in Kandahar province and his death is a major setback to the Taleban militants fighting in Kandahar and adjoining provinces.

Taleban militants fighting the government have yet to make comment.

Russia drops cases against Greenpeace activists

MOSCOW, 26 Dec — Russian authorities had dropped criminal cases against 30 Greenpeace activists from the ship Arctic Sunrise, the environmental group’s local lawyer said on Wednesday.

“All activists have arrived at the Investigative Committee of St. Petersburg to be familiarized with the decision,” Interfax news agency quoted Andrei Suchkov as saying.

By Wednesday afternoon, 16 environmentalists had received formal resolutions closing their cases.

The committee was expected to issue resolutions to the rest by the end of Wednesday.

All non-Russian activists would then be free to leave the country, their lawyer said.

The activists, who crewed the Arctic Sunrise vessel, were detained on 19 September by Russian authorities after attempting to stage a protest on an Arctic oil drilling platform.

Xinhua
**NEW YORK, 26 Dec** — Teenage pop star Justin Bieber sent out a series of mixed messages over his Twitter feed on Tuesday night, one of which said he was retiring, on the eve of the Christmas Day release of the latest film chronicling the life of the Canadian singer.

The tweet to the 19-year-old’s nearly 48 million followers — “My beloved beliebers I’m officially retiring” — was quickly followed by another message: “I’m never leaving you, being a believer is a lifestyle.”

And then: “IM HERE FOREVER.” Representatives for Bieber did not immediately respond to a request for clarification.

The Canadian singer has been involved in a series of headline-grabbing incidents over the past year. In March, the singer scuffled with a photographer outside a London hotel during a European tour. Later that month, police were called to his Los Angeles area home after a neighbor claimed he had been threatened and struck by Bieber.

In June, Bieber struck a photographer with his Ferrari sports car while driving away from a comedy club in Los Angeles, though police said the accident was not considered a hit-and-run.

The movie, “Justin Bieber’s Believe,” which takes the name of Bieber’s third studio album, could help repair his image after the difficult year.

“I think people forget that it’s a 19-year-old kid, trying to figure it out,” Bieber’s manager, Scooter Braun, told ABC News, adding the film shows Bieber as “a human.”

At one point in the film, director Jon Chu suggests Bieber’s life could become a “train wreck.”

The “retirement” message went out on the night of Christmas Eve and by the following morning had nearly a quarter million retweets and over 185,000 favourites.

Twitter user @theycallmejeremy tweeted: “A life without Justin Bieber. A life without my idol, hero, inspiration, my everything. Not the best thing to think about on Christmas Eve.” — Reuters

**Los Angeles, 26 Dec** — Actor Hugh Jackman will not be a part of the Harry Houdini musical on Broadway due to some scheduling conflicts.

The Les Misérables star was to play Harry Houdini, a Hungarian-American illusionist and stunt performer, in the film.

The actor was already working on the project, but he had to step away.

“I have greatly enjoyed the collaborative process on Houdini. Ultimately, though, I wasn’t able to commit to the time this role will require,” read a statement issued by the actor.

“I have tremendous respect and admiration for the creative team and I wish everyone the best. I know they’re well on their way to making something extraordinary.” —PTI

**Los Angeles, 26 Dec** — Actress-model Ashley Benson has reportedly rekindled her romance with boyfriend Ryan Good.

The 24-year-old ended her one-year relationship with Good at the end of 2012, but the duo sparked speculation of their reunion when they were spotted cuddling at Ashley’s 24th birthday party.

“Ryan and Ashley were kissing each other all night,” The Usmagazine.com quoted a source.

Post her separation from Ryan Good, Ashley Benson was rumored to be dating actor James Franco, with whom she was said to be getting close to on the sets of Spring Breakers last year. But she had denied the reports in October.—PTI

**Los Angeles, 26 Dec** — Actor Tom Cruise is currently preparing for Mission Impossible: V.

Tom Cruise recently finished filming Oblivion and Magnificent Seven.

MAGNIFICENT SEVEN

**Los Angeles, 26 Dec** — Actor Tom Cruise is no longer involved in The Magnificent Seven, a remake of John Sturges’ classic western movie.

The Oblivion star was first attached to the project in 2012 and was supposed to play one of the cowboys. He has just completed Edge of Tomorrow and is now preparing for Mission Impossible: V and Go Lake Hell, reported Ace Showbiz. Despite Tom Cruise’s departure, Magnificent Seven is still on track.

Saving Mr Banks director John Lee Hancock has been tapped to rewrite the script originally drafted by Nic Pizzolatto, who wrote HBO’s upcoming miniseries True Detective starring Matthew McConaughey and Woody Harrelson.

Based on Akira Kurosawa’s 1954 classic Seven Samurai, The Magnificent Seven is set to be a modern day adventure.

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“For New Year’s Eve, we’ll probably go to a party at Koi (a restaurant in Las Vegas),” online.com quoted her.—PTI

**Los Angeles, 26 Dec** — Singer Justin Bieber performs at Staples Centre during his Believe Tour in Los Angeles, California on 24 June, 2013. — Reuters

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Post her separation from Ryan Good, Ashley Benson was rumored to be dating actor James Franco, with whom she was said to be getting close to on the sets of Spring Breakers last year. But she had denied the reports in October.—PTI
Cardiff’s owner Tan takes control over Sarajevo

SARAJEVO, 26 Dec — Cardiff City owner Vincent Tan has sealed an agreement to take over the control and management of Bosnia’s Premier League football club Sarajevo, officials said on Wednesday.

“We have signed an agreement which defines the investment and management rights in accordance to the club’s statute and legislation that is in force in Bosnia,” Sarajevo general director Dino Selmovic told Reuters.

Selmovic declined to provide details on investment but local media reported on Wednesday that the Malaysian billionaire has pledged to invest 3 million Bosnian marka.

Sarajevo, established in 1946, has faced bankruptcy over millions of marka in accumulated debt.

Tan, who has been in talks with the club’s managers since last summer, wanted them to draft a plan of the debt restructuring and a three-year investment plan, Sarajevo vice-president Edis Kusurica told the Nezavisne Novine daily.

Under the deal, Cardiff will cooperate with Sarajevo, exchanging players and taking part in a football academy, yet to be established, and Tan said he would lure new talents.

“With all respect for the ladies, they should be rewarded in relation to what they generate (financially). I was asked (by Swedish media) in the summer who was the better player, me or (Sweden striker) Lotta Schelin.

“You’re joking with me, right? When I’ve broken all these records, this goal record, the goals in the national team, who shall I compare it to? Shall I compare it to whoever has the record, or the ladies?”

Reuters

South Africa’s Kallis to quit tests after Durban match

DURBAN, (SOUTH AFRICA), 26 Dec — South African all-rounder Jacques Kallis will retire from test and first-class cricket after the Boxing Day Test against India in Durban, the country’s cricket board said on Wednesday.

Kallis, cricket’s fourth highest test run-getter, would be available, however, for selection in the limited-over formats, Cricket South Africa said in a statement.

“It’s been an honour and a privilege to have been part of the South African test team since making my debut 18 years ago,” said the 38-year-old, who has amassed 13174 runs and taken 292 wickets from 165 tests.

“I have enjoyed every moment out in the middle but I just feel that the time is right to hang up my test whites,” said the all-rounder who has also accumulated 11574 runs from 725 one-day internationals.

“It wasn’t an easy decision to come to, especially with Australia around the corner and the success this team is enjoying, but I feel that I have made my contribution in this format.”

After the first test ended in a draw, world number one Proteas take on India in the second and final test on Thursday. They will host Australia for three tests and as many Twenty20 internationals in a series starting in February.

Reuters

South Africa’s Jacques Kallis hits a shot off Australia’s Nathan Lyon during the fifth day’s play of the second test cricket match at the Adelaide cricket ground on 26 Nov, 2012. Reuters

Russia’s Plushenko says will not skate in men’s event in Sochi

MOSCOW, 26 Dec — Russian figure skating super-star Yevgeny Plushenko said on Wednesday he will not compete for the gold medal in the men’s competition at the Sochi Olympic Games after he came in second in the national championships.

Plushenko, 31, who prolonged his career in the hope of reclaiming the gold medal he won in 2006 in Turin on home soil in February, had been the favorite going into the national championship. After taking the lead in the short programme, he was beaten in the free skate contest by 18-year-old Maxim Kovtun — who likely earned himself Russia’s sole slot in the men’s event with a commanding performance.

“I will choose the team event and give the individual competition to a young and promising athlete,” Plushenko, who also won Olympic silver medals in 2002 and 2010, told Russian state television. “I am glad that I landed the quad (jump), but there were a lot of mistakes today … my legs gave way,” said Plushenko, sweat beaded on his brow and still short of breath from his performance.

Plushenko, who has competed in just two other events this year, said he would not participate in the European championships in January in Budapest.

Scaling down Olympic dreams that pushed him to undergo back surgery last year in an attempt to make a comeback, Plushenko said he would seek only to represent Russia in the team competition — a new Olympic sporting event debuting in Sochi.

“I am sensible … It will be enough for me to compete in the team event,” he said. “Unfortunately, I didn’t do my job today.”

The team event in Sochi will feature six skaters from each of the sport’s disciplines whose points will be added up for an overall team score.

Reuters

Former Olympic champion figure skater Yevgeny Plushenko of Russia. — Reuters

Male players deserve more recognition than women, says Ibrahimovic

Paris St Germain’s Zlatan Ibrahimovic (R) and Lucas react during their French Ligue 1 soccer match against Lille at the Parc des Princes Stadium in Paris on 22 Dec, 2013.—Reuters

STOCKHOLM, 26 Dec — Players in the men’s soccer team deserve to get more recognition than their female counterparts in Sweden and people should stop whipping up a gender storm about it, striker Zlatan Ibrahimovic said.

The Sweden captain spoke out after his country’s FA was slammed for discriminating against him in a state-switching row over an offer from Swedish football club Elfsborg.

“I am very optimistic and hope that this cooperation will be very useful for both clubs and for Nigerian football generally,” he added.

Local media reported that Tan would not change the Bosnian club’s badge and colours, as he did at Cardiff, angering fans.

Reuters

Curbishley agrees to technical director role at Fulham

LONDON, 26 Dec — Alan Curbishley has been named first-team technical director at struggling Premier League side Fulham after the former Charlton Athletic and West Ham manager agreed to take up a full-time role at a club for the first time in five years.

The 56-year-old Curbishley has been a television pundit since leaving English football and still short of breath from the sweat beaded on his brow when his fellow Dutchman was sacked following a run of five defeats.

“I am very happy that Alan has joined us as I know his expertise will be invaluable as we enter the remaining months of the season,” Meulensteen said in a statement posted on the club’s website (www.fulhamfc.com) late on Tuesday.

“Following Martin’s departure I discussed with both (CEG) Alastair Mackintosh and the chairman the challenges we face, and I was delighted that they supported the idea of additional support within the coaching team.”

Reuters

Alan Curbishley

Ibrahimovic

Sport

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Reuters
Obama thanks troops for service on Christmas visit to base

The White House said earlier the service members wounded on Saturday during an aborted rescue mission in South Sudan had been among those Obama had called. Four military personnel were injured when their aircraft were fired upon during a mission to evacuate American citizens from chaotic South Sudan. In an audio and internet message earlier on Wednesday Obama lauded the troops returning from service overseas.

As 2013 draws to a close a fewer of our men and women in uniform are deployed in harm’s way than at any time in the last decade,” Obama said, citing the end of the war in Iraq and a winding down of action in Afghanistan.

“For many of our troops and newest veterans, this might be the first time in years that they’ve been with their families on Christmas,” he said. Vice President Joe Biden and his wife, Jill, who have been spending Christmas at home in Delaware, visited injured military members at the Walter Reed National Military Medical Centre near Washington, DC, on Wednesday. Obama used the Christmas Day broadcast as a chance to call Americans to volunteer in their communities.

“For families like ours, that service is a chance to celebrate the birth of Christ and live out what He taught us - to love our neighbors as our self,” he said. Obama thanked troops for service on Christmas visit to base.

Australia capture two wickets but Watson hurt

Melbourne, 26 Dec — A miserly Australian attack captured two wickets to leave England 135 for three at tea on the opening day of the fourth test in Melbourne on Thursday but suffered a blow when all-rounder Shane Watson limped off the ground with a groin injury.

Watson bowed opener Michael Carberry for 38 but pulled up from his run-up in his seventh over and after a short exchange with captain Michael Clarke, trudged off the Melbourne Cricket Ground in front of a bulging Boxing Day crowd of more than 90,000.

Kevin Pietersen, under-fire for repeatedly throwing away his wicket this series, was caught for six at deep backward square by Nathan Coulter-Nile but the substitute fielder over-balanced and jogged over the boundary rope to grant the South Africa-born batsman a life shortly before tea.

Pietersen survived to reach the break on 20, with Ian Bell adding 11 after number three batsman Joe Root was caught behind for 24 off seamer Ryan Harris. England resumed on 71-1, having grafted their way through a nervous first session after Clarke sprung a surprise by putting his unchanged team into the field after winning his fourth successive toss of the series. With morning clouds giving away to brilliant sunshine, Carberry snapped a pair of boundaries to try to break the shackles of a disciplined pace attack but was left ashén-faced when he shouldered arms to a Watson delivery that swung in viciously to clatter into his stumps.

Having faced 103 balls and gritted out nearly two-and-half hours at the crease, the 33-year-old Carberry swung his bat in disgust as he trudged off after another promising start cut short in the series.

Buoyed, Australia’s seamers tightened the screws further, with Pietersen needing 13 balls to get off the mark before falling Siddle for four.

Having never appeared comfortable, a flat-footed Joe Root was caught behind by Haddin, the revitalised wicketkeeper notching his 50 catch in a year in which he has also amassed more than 500 runs with the bat.

Root’s laborious innings lasted 82 deliveries and nearly two hours. Clarke’s decision to attack appeared foolishly early as the MCG’s drop-in pitch offered little help for his seamers, but the pace battery compensated with impressive spells of line and length that saw England’s run-rate dip to one run per over in a 10-over period before tea.

The paucity of scoring prompted jitters from the sections of the crowd and Pietersen raised ironic cheers on the few occasions he executed scoring shots.

Siddle had earlier continued Alastair Cook’s forgettable series by dismissing the England captain for 27 in the morning, breaking a promising 48-run opening partnership with Carberry. — Reuters

Australia’s Ryan Harris puts the ball in his pocket as rain falls against England at the Melbourne cricket ground on 26 Dec, 2013.— Reuters
Mon State to see caustic soda plant

NAY PYI TAW, 26 Dec—Union Minister for Industry U Maung Myint inspected land plot in Bilin in Mon State yesterday.

Then, he viewed the chosen site to build a caustic soda plant in Mayantaung rubber farm in Thaton. In meeting with Thaton District deputy commissioner and township/village administrators and departmental officials, he said that the site is enough to construct a caustic soda plant in the farm. Salt and limestone would be mainly used as raw materials of the plant. Therefore, locals will earn more money from selling salt. The plant would be run through ion exchange membrane process.

At the Mon State Government’s Office in Mawlamyine, the union minister held discussions with the Mon State Chief Minister on implementation of caustic soda and polyvinyl chloride (PVC) project in Thaton.—MNA

Abe visit to Yasukuni Shrine draws international criticism

TOYKO, 26 Dec—Prime Minister Shinzo Abe visited the war-linked Yasukuni Shrine in Tokyo on Thursday for the first time since assuming the premiership a year ago, triggering criticism not only from Japan’s closest neighbors—China and South Korea—but also from Tokyo’s key ally, the United States, which expressed strong concern that it could raise tensions in Asia.

“I expressed my sincere condolences, paid my respects and prayed for the souls of all those who made ultimate sacrifices,” Abe told reporters after visiting the Shinto shrine, which honours Class-A World War II criminals along with those killed in wars involving Japan.

Stressing that his shrine visit reflected his determination that Japan will never wage war again, Abe said, “It is not my intention at all to hurt the feelings of the Chinese and Korean people.”

Abe became the first Japanese prime minister to visit the shrine since Junichiro Koizumi in 2006. The latest visit came as Abe marked the first anniversary of his government’s launch. Kyodo News

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