President U Thein Sein honours prize-winning sports contingents

NAY PYI TAW, 30 Dec—President U Thein Sein delivered an address at the ceremony to honour victorious Myanmar sports contingents in the 27th SEA Games, at Myanmar International Convention Center, here, today.

President U Thein Sein said in his speech that the 27th SEA Games successfully concluded on 22 December. Upholding patriotism and national spirit, Myanmar athletes did their best in the competitions and stood second in the medal tally with 86 gold, 62 silver and 85 bronze, totaling 233 medals.

Myanmar had been far away from victory after its second place with 26 gold medals in the medal tally of the 10th SEA Games in 1979. At present, victory could be plucked due to Myanmar sports contingents’ efforts.

Myanmar started preparation for hosting the 27th SEA Games since 2009. Sports grounds, stadiums and sports gear were arranged to meet international standard while Myanmar selected players underwent training.

He continued that Myanmar sports contingents who won gold, silver and bronze medals were honoured. The athletes who missed the victory were urged to make more efforts in next competitions because the State and the public recognize their concerted efforts.

He said that the 27th SEA Games could bring benefits to Myanmar enabling her to join the international community. International society has also been aware of democratic transition progress of the country in the term of new government. In addition, Myanmar regained its own position and responsibilities in ASEAN community due to the success of SEA Games.

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Pardon

1. The President issued this pardon under Section (204), Subsection (a) of the Constitution, in order to contribute to the stability of the state and the lasting peace, to build national reconsolidation, to ensure all-inclusiveness in the political process, on humanitarian grounds and to enable them to participate in the nation-building tasks after realizing the magnanimity of the state.

2. In connection with any offenses in Paragraph (3) undergoing on 31 December 2013 and before:
   (a) All convicted shall be pardoned.
   (b) All cases being heard by respective courts shall be dropped immediately.
   (c) All ongoing investigations shall be closed without any further action.

3. The pardon covers only those being convicted and prosecuted in cases under the following laws:
   (a) Unlawful Association Act cases;
   (b) Treason (Code of Criminal Procedure Article 122) cases;
   (c) Sedition (Code of Criminal Procedure Article 124 (a)) cases;
   (d) The Law to Safeguard the State from the Danger of Subversive Elements cases;
   (e) Peaceful Gathering and Peaceful Procession Law cases;
   (f) An act of harming public interests (Code of Criminal Procedure Article 505) cases;
   (g) 1950 Emergency Act cases.

4. The privileges granted under this order shall not tie with any offenses in Paragraph (3) which underwent after 31 December 2013.

Sd/ Thein Sein
President
Republic of the Union of Myanmar
Preparations for construction of Nampaw Creek Bridge

Hsipaw, 30 Dec—AAA Cement Int’l Co Ltd of Hsipaw makes preparations for construction of Nampaw Creek Bridge in Hsipaw.

The bridge will be 22 feet long and 12 feet wide. It can withstand 60 tons of loads.

Chairman of Township Development Supportive Committee U Aung Khin, Deputy Township Administrator U Moe Htoe Oo and Executive Officer of Township Development Affairs Committee U Sai Win Myint inspected the construction of the bridge on 27 December.

U Saw Naing of AAA Cement Int Co Ltd and responsible persons explained progress of works. Engineer-in-charge of the bridge U Hla Tun said, “Our company places emphasis on development tasks of the township including Nampaw RC Bridge. We have built three bridges and Nampaw Bridge will be the fourth facility of its kind in addition to many small bridges for better transport of the local people.”

MMAL-Hsipaw Ko Latt

Dahatgon BEPS in Natmauk Tsp needs water tank

Magway, 30 Dec—Basic Education Primary School in Dahatgon Village of Natmauk Township in Magway Region has fulfilled basic needs but schoolchildren face difficulties in shortage of drinking water.

Three teachers including the headmaster are teaching 34 students from two Dahatgon villages.

The school has been equipped with fly-proof latrine, desks and teaching aids. However, the children have to bring water from a one furlong distance creek.

“In the rainy season, it is very dangerous for taking water from the creek due to torrent water,” said local people.

Headmaster U Khin Maung Than said, “My school turns out outstanding students yearly. Teachers and students ratio is proper in balance. In the school days, we are waiting for the students who take water from the creek before teaching. So, we need one well for the school.”—MMAL-Paing Zay (Magway)

Fire breaks out at Mela (Bekalaw) Myanmar refugee camp

Bangkok, 30 Dec—A fire broke out at Ward 3 in Zone C of Mela (Bekalaw) Myanmar refugee camp where about 50000 people are residing, 60 kilometres north to Mae Sot of Thailand, on 27 December.

The fire reduced 102 houses into ashes.

A short circuit started fire at the boarding hall at 1.30 pm on 27 December.

As some house owner did not want to destroy their houses, the fire strongly engulfed the houses one after another. Indeed, the houses in the fire should be destroyed so as to reduce the burning momentum.

The burning hour lasted one and a half hours. The fire victims take shelter at their friends’ houses, said Myanmar citizens in Thailand.

Officials of the camp recounted, “Local people and two fire engines put out the fire. However, a total of 102 houses were destroyed. The fire left one child and one adult injured, missing one child.”

In February 2012, a fire broke out at Ohpahyan refugee camp in Popa Township of Tak Province at Myanmar-Thai border area, leaving about 3000 houses and tens of thousands of people homeless.

Mela refugee fire was the first of its kind. 

MMAL-Soe Win (SP)

Yangon, 30 Dec—The fire victims took the ribbon to open the bus line.

Transport

Mohynin-Mandalay Aung Yadana bus line launched

Mohynin, 30 Dec—With the aim of ensuring better transport from Mohynin to Mandalay, Mohynin-Mandalay-Aung Yadana express bus line was launched at the bus terminal in Mohynin on 25 December morning.

Mohynin District Deputy Commissioner U Aung Soe Moe, Commander of District Police Force Police Li-Col Tun Tun Wai and owner of the bus line U Myint Oo cut the ribbon to open the bus line.

The express bus of the bus line will leave Mohynin at 3 pm and arrive in Mandalay at 7 am the next day. The bus will also depart Thiri Mandalay Bus Terminal of Mandalay at 3 pm and arrive at the bus terminal in Mohynin at 7 am the next day.

Fare of the bus is K 18000 per passenger. The express bus will pass Mohynin, Indaw, Shwebo and Mandalay along its route.

MMAL-District IPRD

Traffic Accident

12-wheeled vehicle overturns on Hpa-an-Thaton Road

Hpa-an, 30 Dec—According to the information that a traffic accident occurred on Hpa-an-Thaton Road at 12.45 pm on 26 December, IP Aung Than and party of Myainggale police outpost and local authorities rushed to the scene and inspected the incident.

A vehicle with the load of seven goods from Myawady Trade Zone driven by Maung Maung Gyi (a) Rakhine, 26 of Baungduk Village in MraukU Township together with conductor Myo Zaw Tun, 32 of Aungmyit Road in Thamaing of Yangon overturned near Lower Kawyin Village of Hpa-an Township.

The vehicle plunged into the left roadside due to out of control.

Driver Maung Maung Gyi (a) Rakhine was injured in the incident. The conductor was free from injury. The driver was rushed to Hpa-an General Hospital to receive medical treatment.

Hpa-an Myoma Police Station opened a file of lawsuit against reckless driver under the law.

MMAL-Tun Tun Htwe (Hpa-an)

Control room for easing traffic congestions in Yangon

Yangon, 30 Dec—We are making arrangements for opening a traffic control room in Yangon so as to ease traffic congestions,” said an official of Transport Department.

The room will be equipped with necessary devices. The room will control all the vehicles running in Yangon with the use of modern devices meeting international standard.

The traffic control rooms are being operated in major cities of world countries. So, Myanmar also plans to apply such system.

Singapore one of the ASEAN member countries applies the traffic control room.—MMAL-Arkar Hein, Photo: Tin Soe (MMAL)
Shots fired at residence of German ambassador in Athens

ATHENS, 30 Dec — Unidentified attackers opened fire on the German ambassador’s residence in Athens with an assault rifle on Monday, but no one was hurt in the early morning attack, police said.

At least four shots hit the metal gate of the high-security residence, which lies on a busy street of a northern suburb, police said. Sixty spent bullet cases have been collected so far. Anti-German sentiment has grown during Greece’s prolonged economic crisis, and many of those struggling with record unemployment and plummeting living standards blame Germany’s insistence on fiscal rigor for their economic woes.

Germany is the biggest single contributing nation to Greece’s 240-billion euro bailouts which have kept the country afloat since 2010 and saved it from bankruptcy.

The German ambassador’s residence was the target of an attack in 1999, when members of the now dismantled extremist group on 17 November fired a rocket-propelled grenade that hit its roof. Greek Prime Minister Antonis Samaras told the German ambassador Wolfgang Dold, who was at home at the time of the incident, and Foreign Minister Evangelos Venizelos expressed his “outrage and outright condemnation” over the attack.

It was a “cowardly terrorist act clearly targeting Greece’s image abroad a few days before the start of the Greek presidency,” Venizelos said, according to a statement from the Foreign Ministry.

With a reputation for being Europe’s problem child, Greece takes on the rotating European Union presidency for six months starting 1 January, hoping to show how far it has come since it almost crashed out of the common currency bloc 18 months ago.

No one has claimed responsibility yet for the 3.40 am (0140 GMT) attack. A police official who spoke on condition of anonymity said at least two assailants on foot were involved.

Police experts search for evidence following a gun attack, outside the German ambassador’s residence in Chalandri suburb north of Athens on 30 Dec, 2013. REUTERS

14 killed, 23 hurt in trolleybus blast in Russia’s Volgograd

SOCHI, 30 Dec — At least 10 people were killed in an explosion on a trolleybus in Russia’s southern city of Volgograd on Monday morning, Itar-Tass News Agency reported.

The report said the explosion in Kachintsev Street in the Dzerzhinsky district of the city left another 23 people injured.

The incident comes a day after a suicide bomber killed at least 17 people and injured dozens more in the same city’s main railway station 40 days before Russia is to hold the Winter Olympics in the Black Sea resort city of Sochi.

Civil protection authorities said they would evacuate people from within three kilometres (1.9 miles) of the volcano and set up emergency shelters.

“The evacuations began almost right after the explosion,” said civil protection official Armando Vividor. He said some 5,000 people lived around the volcano.

The volcano, which is about 140 kilometres (86 miles) to the east of the capital, spewed ash over a wide area and the smell of sulfur hung over surrounding towns, according to reports on social media. Authorities were breathing through mouth handkerchiefs.

Santos Osorio, a member of a local coffee growers union, said heavy ash was falling in the area and local coffee plantations would be checked for damage.

El Salvador’s crop has already been blighted by an outbreak of leaf rust that has reduced output in all five of Central America’s coffee producers.

El Salvador has 23 active volcanoes and the Chaparrastique volcano is considered one of the most active, with 26 eruptions in the last 500 years, the environment ministry said. In a 1976 eruption, lava gushed from the volcano and shook violently in another event in 2010. Reuters

Iraq’s homegrown terror outfit plans to explode nuclear bomb in western state of Gujarat

NEW DELHI, 30 Dec — Indian Mujahideen, a homegrown terror outfit, planned to explode a nuclear bomb in the western state of Gujarat’s city of Surat, local media reported on Monday.

The terror group’s India chief, Yasin Bhatkal, who was arrested by police in August this year, revealed this to his interrogators, The Times of India newspaper reported, citing the interrogation report.

According to the report, Bhatkal told the interrogators that he had even asked, in reaching agreement on practical steps. They began work on 9 December but Iran broke off the talks in protest at the US blacklisting an additional 19 Iranian companies and individuals under existing sanctions.

Iranian officials said the move violated the spirit of the deal but US officials said it did not breach the agreement.

Iran rejects Western fears that its nuclear work has any military intentions and says it needs nuclear power for electricity generation and medical research.

Indian media called for a joint international initiative to prevent nuclear proliferation. The report, which was carried in the national media, said that the nuclear bomb would be made of uranium enriched to 20%.

The report said the group planned to use the bomb, which would be 800 kilograms (1,764 pounds), in a marathon attack on the city of Surat, which is located 330 kilometres (205 miles) to the east of the state capital, Ahmadabad.

El Salvador volcano erupts, evacuations ordered

SAN SALVADOR, 30 Dec — The Chaparrastique volcano in eastern El Salvador belched a column of hot ash high into the air on Sunday, frightening nearby residents and prompting authorities to order evacuations in the area.

There were no immediate reports of injuries in the San Miguel region, where the volcano is located and that is known for its coffee plantations.

Civil protection authorities said they would evacuate people from within three kilometres (1.9 miles) of the volcano and set up emergency shelters.

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Iran and world powers resume expert level nuclear talks

DUBAI, 30 Dec — Iran resumed technical talks with world powers in Geneva on Monday, a vital step in implementing a nuclear deal signed last month which suspends key elements of Teheran’s nuclear programme in exchange for limited sanctions relief.

The talks between expert teams from Iran and six world powers are meant to translate the political deal into a detailed implementation plan by the end of January, Iran’s state news agency, IRNA, quoted an unnamed source as saying.

As a key sticking point appears to be how much advance information Western governments will get so they can verify that Iran is meeting its end of the deal before they lift any sanctions.

The third round of talks between technical experts from the permanent UN Security Council members — Britain, China, France, Russia and the United States — plus Germany, are set to last a day and resume in 2014, IRNA reported, a sign of the complexities facing the negotiators in reaching agreement on practical steps.

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India’s homegrown terror outfit plans to explode nuclear bomb in western state of Gujarat

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Iran rejects Western fears that its nuclear work has any military intentions and says it needs nuclear power for electricity generation and medical research.
Tokyo, 30 Dec — Panasonic Corp and Japan’s other mid-tier camera makers have a battle on their hands to win over a smartphone “selfie” generation to mirrorless cameras that held such promise when they were launched around five years ago.

Panasonic, like peers Fujifilm Holdings and Olympus Corp, has been losing money on its cameras since mobile phones that take high-quality photos ate into the compact camera business. This year, compact camera sales are likely to fall more than 40 percent to fewer than 59 million, according to industry researcher IDC.

Meanwhile, sales of mirrorless cameras — seen as a promising format between low-end compacts and high-end single-lens reflex (SLR) cameras — are spurring as buyers buy connectivity above picture quality.

A 40 percent drop in Panasonic’s overall camera sales in April-September left the imaging division vulnerable as the company’s mid-term plan to March 2016 demands unprofitable businesses turn themselves around or face the axe.

“If you look mid-to-long term, digital camera makers are slipping and the market is becoming an oligopoly,” said Credit Suisse imaging analyst Yu Yoshida.

Panasonic held 3.1 percent of the camera market in July-September, down from 3.8 percent a year earlier, according to IDC. Canon Inc, Nikon Corp and Sony Corp controlled over 60 percent between them.

“Only those who have a strong brand and are competitive on price will last — and only Canon, Nikon and Sony fulfil that criteria,” added Yoshida.

Canon and Nikon dominate the SLR camera market, while Sony could survive any shakeout thanks to its strength in making sensors for a number of camera manufacturers, as well as collaboration with its smartphone division. — Reuters

Spanish arrests eight over global bank cyber heists

Madrid, 30 Dec — Spanish police on Sunday said they had arrested eight people suspected of helping to steal more than $60 million from banks worldwide by hacking into credit card processing firms and withdrawing money from cash machines.

The arrests are one of the biggest breakthroughs yet outside the United States in connection with a series of global bank heists, coordinated across numerous countries by cells which withdrew millions of dollars in a matter of hours. Spanish police said in a statement they had detained six Romanian citizens and two Moroccans on the outskirts of Madrid, and seized 25,000 euros in cash as well as around 1,000 blank credit cards, IT material and jewels after several building searches.

The statement said the global hacking gang had been controlled by a single person, who had been arrested in Germany. The police could not be reached for comment on when the alleged mastermind had been detained. German prosecutors said in May they had arrested two Dutch citizens suspected of taking part in a $45 million cyber heist involving two Middle Eastern banks. — Reuters

A model poses with Nikon Corp’s new Nikon 1 J1 camera at its unveiling ceremony in Tokyo, in this 21 Sept, 2011 file photo. — Reuters

Japan mid-tier camera makers face shakeout as smartphones shatter mirrorless hopes

“Three weather conditions have resulted in poor visibility and made it difficult and unsafe for the Aurora Australis to continue today’s attempt,” the AMSA said on its website.

It said it also remains unsafe to attempt to launch a helicopter evacuation mission from the Chinese icebreaker Xuelong.

The Xuelong has remained in the area under undertaking an unsuccessful rescue attempt Friday, in which it made it to within 6.1 nautical miles of the Shokalskiy before the thickness of the ice exceeded its icebreaking capabilities and caused it to stall.

A third icebreaker, the French vessel Astrolabe, had also been on the way to rescue the Shokalskiy before it ran into engine trouble.

The Shokalskiy, which left New Zealand on 28 Nov with 74 people aboard, began to be bottled by ice in Antarctica’s Common- wealth Bay on Christmas Eve while on a scientific expedition.

The AMSA said that its Rescue Coordination Centre is in regular contact with the vessel and that those on board it “remain safe and well with supplies for several weeks.” — Kyodo News

Bad weather hampers effort to rescue ship stuck in Antarctic ice

Sydney, 30 Dec — Adverse weather conditions off Antarctica are preventing an Australian icebreaker from punching through thick sea ice to free a stranded research ship carrying dozens of scientists and tourists, authorities said on Monday.

The Australian Maritime Safety Authority said it would try to free the Aurora Australis on Monday and Tuesday, but that stronger winds and snow showers would move back into open waters about 18 nautical miles from the Russian-flagged vessel.

“A Ventura and supporting/handling vessel are to perform recovery from the Icebreaker Xuelong. It is a 24 hour operation,” the AMSA said.

A BBC spokesman declined to discuss the incident. “We do not comment on security issues,” he said.

Reuters could not determine whether the hackers stole data or caused any damage in the attack, which compromised a server that manages an obscure password-protected website.

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Hacker took over BBC server, tried to ‘sell’ access on Christmas Day

Boston, 30 Dec — A hacker secretly took over a computer server at the BBC, Britain’s public broadcaster, and then launched a Christmas Day campaign to convince other cyber criminals to pay him for access to the system.

While it is not known if the hacker found any buyers, the BBC’s security team responded to the issue on Saturday and believes it has secured the site, according to a person familiar with the cleanup effort.

A BBC spokesman declined to discuss the incident. “We do not comment on security issues,” he said.

Reuters could not determine whether the hackers stole data or caused any damage in the attack, which compromised a server that manages an obscure password-protected website.

The attacker said he had infiltrated the site by showing them files that could only be accessed by someone who really controlled it, Holden said.

So far, Hold Security researchers have found no evidence the conversations led to a deal or that data was stolen from the BBC, Holden said. It is common for hackers to buy and sell access to compromised servers on underground forums. — Reuters

Canada’s astronaut, space executive call for int’l cooperation with China

Ottawa, 30 Dec — Canadian astronaut Chris Hadfield is calling for cooperation with China in space and wants it to be part of any international effort to return to the moon, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) reported on Sunday on its website.

“I think right now a lot of people see it as kind of crazy to cooperate with the Chinese, but I think it’s the next logical step,” CBC quoted Hadfield as saying in a recent interview with the Canadian Press.

China sent its first astronaut into space in 2003. Hadfield said China’s ambitious space programme aims to eventually put an astronaut on the moon.

He also cited the fact that China launched in 2011 an experimental space station, saying it will be reloaded with a more permanent one to be completed in 2020.

However, China was barred from participating in the current US space station, largely because of US objections over political differences.

Hadfield said a political progression would be to include as many countries as possible in an international mission beyond Earth — “hopefully including China and India and the other countries that have launch capability and then progress to the next stepping stone, the next natural waypoint out to space, which is the moon.” Hadfield, who became a Canadian astronaut in 1992, visited Mir in 1995 on the US Space Shuttle Atlantis, becoming the only Canadian to ever board the Russian space station. — Xinhua

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Sanofi says US regulators reject MS treatment Lemtrada

PARIS, 30 Dec — Sanofi said its Lemtrada multiple sclerosis treatment had failed to win approval from US regulators for launch in the world’s biggest drug market, due to safety concerns and a need for further study data.

The French drugmaker said it strongly disagreed with the Food and Drug Administration’s (FDA) decision and planned to appeal the decision.

The FDA considered Sanofi unit Genzyme had not submitted evidence from studies to show the benefits of Lemtrada outweigh its “serious adverse effects”, Sanofi said in a statement on Monday.

The FDA also demanded Sanofi carry out further clinical trials using different designs and methods prior to approval, Sanofi said.

“We strongly believe that the clinical development program, which was designed to demonstrate how Lemtrada compares against an active comparator as opposed to placebo, provides robust evidence of efficacy and a favourable benefit-risk profile,” Genzyme Chief Executive David Meeker said.

Lemtrada, an injectable drug also known as alemtuzumab, is designed to treat relapsing remitting multiple sclerosis, the most common form of the disease. It was approved in September by European regulators in an increasingly crowded market dominated by rivals Biogen Idec, Novartis and Teva Pharmaceutical.

Lemtrada was at the heart of the French drugmaker’s lengthy $2.1 billion takeover battle for US biotech firm Genzyme, which it acquired in 2011.

As part of the takeover agreement, Genzyme shareholders received contingent value rights (CVRs) entitling them to future payments of up to $1.4 a share if certain goals were met.

Sanofi said on Monday it did not expect to meet the CVR milestone of US approval for Lemtrada by the end of March.—Reuters

Crocs to receive $200 million from Blackstone, CEO to retire

NEW YORK, 30 Dec — Crocs Inc (CROX.O) said Blackstone Group LP (BX.N) is making a $200 million investment that will give the private equity firm a 13 percent stake in the shoe company. In exchange for the $200 million, Blackstone will receive preferred stock that can convert to common stock in three years if certain conditions are met. It will also receive two board seats.

The preferred stock will have a 6 percent cash dividend rate and is convertible into shares of common stock at a conversion price of $14.50 per share.

The shoemaker also said late on Sunday that the company’s chief executive, John McCarthy, plans to retire in April and will also give up his seat on Crocs’ board. “We will recruit a new CEO who will work with the reconstituted board to refine our short-term and long-term strategic plans, which will include a sharper focus on earnings growth with less emphasis on top-line growth,” Chairman Thomas Smach said in a statement.

Crocs, which is known for its colorful clogs, intends to use the Blackstone investment to help pay for a $350 million stock repurchase it expects to launch in the first quarter.

Established in 2002, Crocs sells its shoes, made out of a proprietary closed-cell resin it calls Croslite and which are offered in more than 75 percent of the footwear styles in some 125 countries, according to its website.

Crocs posted a 2 percent decline in sales for the third quarter, hurt by weakness in the Americas and Japan. The company said it saw less discretionary spending for footwear, apparel and other consumer goods in the United States.

The company now expects fourth-quarter revenue to be at the low end of the previously provided outlook range of $220 million and $225 million, while it expects loss per share to be between 23 cents.

Analysts, on average, were expecting fourth quarter loss per share of 20 cents on revenue of $222.3 million, according to Thomson Reuters I/B/E/S. Reuters

UK government could sell off Lloyds bank stake in 2014

LONDON, 30 Dec — The British government could sell off all of its 18.4 billion pound stake in the Lloyds banking group in 2014, the Daily Telegraph reported, citing unnamed sources.

The newspaper reported that the entire government holding could be sold off in the next 12 months in a combination of retail and institutional offerings.

“Post-results is when a further institutional offering would make most sense. After that, the thinking is an autumn sale, combining an institutional and a retail segment, is a realistic prospect,” a source was quoted as saying by the newspaper.

The UK government has already sold off 6 percent of its stake in the partly nationalised bank, raising over 3.2 billion pounds in September this year.

The government currently holds around 33 percent of the bank, five years after Lloyds and rival Royal Bank of Scotland were bailed out by the government at the height of the credit crunch. Shares in Lloyds closed at 78.84 pence on the London Stock Exchange on Friday, valuing the group at 56.3 billion pounds.—Reuters

Nepal court upholds ban on sale of cigarettes without pictorial warnings

KATHMANDU, 30 Dec — Nepal’s highest court has upheld a ban on sale of cigarettes and other tobacco products that do not carry a pictorial health warnings printed on 75 percent of the packaging, a court spokesman said on Monday.

In 2011, Nepal’s parliament passed a bill that banned smoking in public places, prohibited sale of tobacco products to minors and directed manufacturers to print pictures and facts highlighting health hazards of tobacco consumption on 75 percent of the packaging of tobacco products.

The law did not come into immediate effect, however, because it was challenged in the courts by leading cigarette manufacturers.

They argued that an immediate ban on products not carrying pictorial warnings would result in heavy losses for them because products without such warnings had already been distributed in the market. They also argued that devoting 75 percent of packaging space to such warnings would be impracticable as that would leave insufficient space for printing the names of the product and the manufacturer.

Japan, Oman seek to reach investment agreement during PM Abe’s visit

TYOKE, 30 Dec — Japan and Oman will seek to reach agreement on an investment pact when Prime Minister Shinzo Abe visits the Middle East nation in January for talks with Sultan Qaboos bin Said, sources close to the matter said on Saturday.

Abe, which seeks to lessen its dependence on crude oil exports and develop other industrial sectors, wants Japanese companies to join projects to build an airport and other large-scale public infrastructure, the sources said.

Japan and Oman launched talks last year toward concluding a pact to facilitate investments between the two countries.

Kyodo News

Chris Viehbacher, Chief Executive Officer of Sanofi, poses for the media before the company’s 2012 annual results presentation in Paris on 7 Feb, 2013.—Reuters

ZURICH, 30 Dec — The world’s largest dental implant maker, Straumann, will cut the price of its standard titanium implants by around 15 percent next year in Germany, Austria and Switzerland, the firm’s chief executive told a Swiss newspaper on Sunday.

The Swiss company said its price gap with rivals must be reduced, and that it may adjust prices in other parts of Europe at a later date.

Premium implant makers like Straumann and local rival Nobel Biocare have been hit by weak consumer confidence in Europe, as cash-strapped consumers cut back on non-essential dental treatment or trade down to cheaper brands.

“If we don’t adapt prices to the market situation, then in a few years we’ll be selling a third less in price-sensitive markets such as Germany,” said Straumann Chief Executive Marco Gadola told the NZZ am Sonntag.

The Basel-based firm wants to keep its global lead in the value segment of the market, which is growing at a faster pace than the premium segment.

Straumann also plans to offer its new Roxolid implants at the same prices as models it is phasing out to try to create better value and a competitive edge.

The Roxolid implants are made from an alloy of titanium and zirconium that is stronger than the titanium used on its own older models. In October, the Straumann raised its full-year sales forecast, expecting a better performance in North America and Japan to offset weak sales in Europe, where it makes more than half of its revenues.

Reuters

A pedestrian passes the head office of the Lloyds Banking Group in central London on 5 Aug, 2009.—Reuters

A pedestrian passes the head office of the Lloyds Banking Group in central London on 5 Aug, 2009.—Reuters

A pedestrian passes the head office of the Lloyds Banking Group in central London on 5 Aug, 2009.—Reuters
Maruha Nichiro subsidiary recalls 6.3 million packs of frozen food

TOKYO, 30 Dec — A subsidiary of Maruha Nichiro Holdings Inc said on Sunday it is recalling a total of 6.3 million packs of frozen foods including croquettes and pizza after a pesticide was detected in some of them.

Frozen food subject to the recall was made at a factory of the subsidiary, Agilfoods Co, in Gunma Prefecture.

The food maker examined the products and detected malathion, used as an insecticide, in the wake of reports from customers that the food smelled unusual. Malathion is not usually used in the factory, it said. Kyodo News

British police arrest two men over North Sea ferry fire

LONDON, 30 Dec — British police said on Sunday they had arrested two men after a suspected arson attack on a ferry in the North Sea carrying more than 1,000 people from Newcastle in England to Amsterdam.

Police said the incident occurred late on Saturday night on board the MS King Seaways, a ship operated by Denmark’s DFDS Seaways, after a passenger set fire to a cabin in circumstances that remained unclear.

Local media said the vessel was about 30 miles off the English coast at the time.

Up to seven people, most of them crew members, had been taken by helicopter to a hospital in the English town of Scarborough where they were treated for smoke inhalation, the police said.

“Two men have been arrested — a 26-year-old man on suspicion of arson and a 28-year-old man on suspicion of affray,” Britain’s Northumbria police force said in a statement.

“Both are currently helping police with inquiries.”

DFDS, which operates the daily service from the North Shields port near Newcastle to Ijmuiden near Amsterdam, said in a statement that crew members had put the fire out within 15 minutes.

US intelligence estimate sees big rollbacks in Afghanistan

WASHINGTON, 30 Dec — A new US intelligence estimate predicts that gains the United States and allies have made in the Afghan war in the past three years will be significantly rolled back by 2017, even if some US troops remain, the Washington Post reported on Saturday, citing officials familiar with the report.

The National Intelligence Estimate also predicts that Afghanistan will quickly fall into chaos if Washington and Kabul fail to sign a security pact to keep an international military contingent there beyond 2014, the newspaper said.

The pact must be signed for a US contingent there beyond 2014, saying the situation would deteriorate very rapidly,” the newspaper quoted US officials as saying. "It's not going to be an inevitable rise of the Taleban.”—Reuters

Yemen jails nine al-Qaeda suspects for plotting to kill president

SANAA, 30 Dec — A Yemeni security court on Sunday sentenced nine al-Qaeda suspects to up to 10 years in prison for plotting to assassinate President Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi, official Sabab news agency reported.

The court in the capital Sanaa sentenced nine al-Qaeda suspects to between two and 10 years in prison for plotting to assassinate Hadi by a roadside bomb on his convoy in Sanaa during the past months. A similar trial was concluded on 15 September, in which three al-Qaeda members were sentenced to up to seven years in prison for the same charges.

Meanwhile, the court handed down a death penalty against al-Qaeda suspect Ahmed Turkey for attacking the intelligence headquarters branch in the southern port city of Aden in 2011 that left at least 20 security personnel killed.

The Yemeni-based regional al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula is active in the poverty-stricken country, taking advantage of growing chaos and political splits in the south and eastern regions since 2011.

Hadi took office in February 2012 after a UN-backed power transfer deal eased former President Ali Abdullah Saleh from power after a year of mass protests.—Xinhua

Blast at Egyptian army building wounds four soldiers

CAIRO/ANSHAS, 30 Dec — A bomb exploded outside an Egyptian army building north of Cairo on Sunday, wounding four soldiers, the army said, in the second bomb attack on security forces in the Nile Delta in less than a week.

The bomb partly destroyed the back wall of the military intelligence building in the village of Anshas, 100 km (60 miles) north of the capital.

The army described the bombing as a terrorist attack. Its statement referred to “groups of darkness” and did not name the Muslim Brotherhood, the Islamist group it declared a terrorist organization last week.

That decision was a response to a suicide bomb attack on Tuesday on a police compound in the Nile Delta city of Mansoura, north of the site of Sunday’s explosion. The army-backed government had used the new classification to detain hundreds of the movement’s supporters and thousands more are already in jail. Some of those held in recent days are students, who have continued daily protests in spite of the increased penalties for loyalty to the Brotherhood.

The government had accused the Brotherhood of carrying out last week’s suicide bombing, which killed 16 people and for which a radical Sinai-based group called Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis claimed responsibility. The Brotherhood, which says it is committed to peaceful activism, condemned the blast.

In Anshas, some residents blamed the Brotherhood for Sunday’s attack, saying the aim was to disrupt a mid-January referendum on a new constitution, the next step in the government’s political transition plan.—Reuters

People and army personnel stand around a damaged building after an explosion in Egypt’s Nile Delta town of Anshas, about 100 km (65 miles) northeast of Cairo, on 29 Dec, 2013.—Reuters
New sub-power station under construction in Meiktila

MEIKTILA, 30 Dec—A 33/11 KV (10) MVA sub-power station is being constructed for the dwellers in Aung San Ward, Meiktila near Central Institute of Transport and Communications beside Meiktila-Kyaukapadaung motor road.

Power access was taken from the transformer near Irrigation Department in Wun Zin Ward in the past, it is not sufficient for the people in Aung San Ward. Upon completion of sub-power station, it will be beneficial to not only households in Aung San Ward but also nearby villages. The officials from Electricity Supply Enterprise are striving for sufficient use of electricity for locals, said an official of the enterprise.

Meiktila Township consists of 14 wards and 379 villages. Although 14 wards in Meiktila now enjoy electricity access, most villages are carrying out electrification task on self-reliance basis.

Kyemon-Chan Tha (Meiktila)

Construction

People’s Square constructed in Manawramman garden

Construction of People’s Square in progress in Mahaaungmye Township of Mandalay Region.

Earthen road opened to mark 66th Anniversary Independence Day

MINHIL, 30 Dec—Zayetgyi-Alanpal earthen road was opened as the celebration of the 66th Anniversary Independence Day at the archway of the road, near Zayetgyi Village in Minbu Township, here, on 29 December.

U Kyaw Thu, executive officer of Township Development Affairs Committee elaborated on construction of the road. U Aung Win, a local spoke words of thanks for construction of the road.

Magway Region Minister for Development Affairs U Nay Shin, Region Hluttaw Representative U Maung Maung Tin and District Deputy Commissioner U Khin Maung Myint cut the ribbon to open the road. They then greeted local people.

The road with the length of two miles had been constructed spending K 5.4 million through rural development fund. This 3.4 mile road consists of 14 wards and 379 villages. Although 14 wards in Meiktila now enjoy electricity access, most villages are carrying out electrification task on self-reliance basis.

Kyemon-Chan Tha (Meiktila)

Over 200 houses engulfed in Labutta fire

LABUTTA, 30 Dec—A fire broke out in Kanbet Village of Labutta Township, reducing 200 houses into ashes on 30 December. The fire victims are being accommodated at the relief camp at Maha Aungmyezan Monastery and social organization provided assistance to them.

“Political parties, social organization and health care group gave blankets, foods, clothes, snacks, purified drinking water and instant noodle to the victims,” said a local official.

Kanbet Village of Labutta Township is formed with 1500 houses.

NLM

National Sports

Myanmar Para (Shotput) athletes hope gold medals

NAY PYI TAW, 30 Dec—Myanmar paralympics (athletic) team under intensive training in Wunna Theikidi Sports Ground to participate in the 7th ASEAN Para Games.

A total of 58 athletes consist of 41 men and 17 women will participate in the event. Coach Daw Aye Aye Nwe of Myanmar Para Sports Federation is giving intensive training to Myanmar athletes for the latter to be able to secure gold medals. “Myanmar Para Sports athletes are supported by the State and donors. So we are very satisfied,” said Daw Aye Aye Nwe.

Kyemon-Kyaw Thaya (Nay Pyi Taw)

Stationery donated to students in Kyaukdaga

KYAUKDAGA, 30 Dec—Phado Sedana Social Services Group donated blackboard, desks and pencils to 60 primary students who are studying their education at temporary school on 28 December. The student’s parents who reside in the village-tract at 5th and 12th mile on Minhila-Seinkantlant Road in Phado Area in Kyaukdaga Township in Bago Region are manual workers and engaged in cutting bamboo and making charcoal. The teachers also contributed voluntary works to the students and provided traditional medicine for them. —Kyemon-Myo Win (Kyaukdaga)
Make the country a better place to live in

Myanmar is a fascinating country with its natural and cultural heritage. With the current experience of rapid growth in tourism demand, the responsibility to conserve our cultural values aiming at making the country a better place for people to live in and a better place to visit is comprehensively stated as the vision supported by the relevant action points of the Myanmar Responsible Tourism Policy.

Viable and sustainable tourism industry in Myanmar requires strong public and private partnerships as well as inclusion and support from the local communities and civil societies. The role of the private sector is driving development and investment in tourism services and experiences, while the public sector plays a catalytic role of providing and improving infrastructures and a conducive climate for investments.

As tourism plays a vital role to Myanmar by reducing poverty, bringing about employment opportunities, balancing social and economic development and implementing political reforms, tourism development in the country shall be beneficial and inclusive, and as best possible accessible to all of the people both as visitors (customers) and participants (suppliers) of the tourism industry. But its objectives and implications should be transparent to all tourism stakeholders.

We are now taking concrete steps to further strengthen cooperation mechanisms within the public sector and with the various tourism sector stakeholders (private sector, local communities and civil society) in order to realize the three principal outcomes of sustainable development — economic growth, environmental sustainability and social justice.

At a time when activities are being undertaken to make the country a better place to live in, to provide more employment and greater business opportunities for all our people, to contribute to the conservation of our natural and cultural heritage and to share with us our rich cultural diversity, we warmly welcome those who appreciate and enjoy our heritage, our way of life and who travel with respect.

President U Thein Sein honours ...

(from page 1)

The Myanmar sports contingents had shown the public their strength in overcoming the challenges. It was the success not only for the contingents but also for 60 million people. The President concluded his saying that the contingents need to carry on training without being contented with the victory gained.

Next, “Mawgunthit” video was shown to honour the victorious sports contingents of the 27th SEA Games. Next, President U Thein Sein, Vice-Presidents Dr Sai Maik Kham and U Nyan Tun, Speaker of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw and Pyithu Hluttaw Thura U Shwe Mann, Speaker of Amyotha Hluttaw U Khan Aung Myint, Chairman of the Union U Tun Tun Oo, Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, Chairman of the Constitutional Tribunal of the Union U Mya Thein, Chairman of Union Election Commission U Tin Aye and Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Soe Win presented certificates of honour to the medalists.

Three gold medalist Wushu athlete Maung Wai Phyo Aung spoke words of thanks.

In the evening, the President hosted a dinner in honour of the victorious Myanmar athletes. It was also attended by the President, the Vice-Presidents, the Speaker of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw and Pyithu Hluttaw, the Speaker of Amyotha Hluttaw, the Chief Justice of the Union, the Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services, the Chairman of the Constitutional Tribunal of the Union, the Chairman of Union Election Commission and the Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief (Army), Union ministers, the Mandalay Region Chief Minister, deputy ministers, the commander of Nay Pyi Taw Command, the SEA Games organizing committee members, presidents of sports federations, coaches, athletes and wellwishers.

Vice-President Dr Sai Maik Kham presents certificate of honour to victorious athletes.—MNA

Vice-President U Nyan Tun presents certificate of honour to victorious athletes.—MNA

Haungthayaw bridge commissioned into service

Haungthayaw River crossing bridge on Kyarinn-Tagay-Khotkhwar-Kyai-kton Road was put into service in Kayin State on 27 December. At the opening ceremony, Kayin State Chief Minister U Zaw Min delivered an address and heard reports by Deputy Managing Director (Works) of Public Works U Win Tint on construction of the 780-foot bridge.

The newly-opened bridge is the 36th of its kind in the term of new government. The RC type bridge can withstand 21 tons of load. It was built at the cost of K 1214.4 million.

Kayin Soe Myint. Photo: decoration group

President U Thein Sein accepts credentials of Argentina’s Ambassador

NAY PYI TAW, 30 Dec—Ms Ana Maria Ramirez, the newly-accredited Ambassador of the Argentine Republic to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar presented her credentials to U Thein Sein, President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar at Presidential Palace, Nay Pyi Taw at 11:00 am today.

Present on the occasion were Union Minister for Foreign Affairs U Wunna Maung Lwin, Union Minister at President Office U Thein Nyunt and Director-General U Thuraing Thant Zin of the Protocol Department.

MNA

I wish you “Happy New Year” on the new year occasion.

On such an auspicious occasion, we should abstain from excessive drinking, making too much noise, committing an act of vandalism as well as avoid possible crimes.

Cartoon Thabyay

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing presents certificate of honour to victorious athletes.—MNA
Sudanese Ambassador presents credentials to President U Thein Sein

NAY PYI TAW, 30 Dec—Mr Omer Elsa Ahmed, the newly-accredited Ambassador of the Republic of the Sudan to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar presented his credentials to U Thein Sein, President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar at Presidential Palace, Nay Pyi Taw at 11:30 am today. Present on the occasion were Union Minister for Foreign Affairs U Wunna Maung Lwin, Union Minister at President Office U Thein Nyunt and Director-General U Thuraun Thant Zin of the Protocol Department.—MNA

Myanmar’s image will shine brighter than ever before by successfully hosting ASEAN Summit, its related meetings

NAY PYI TAW, 30 Dec—Vice-President Dr Sai Mauk Kham delivered an address at the fifth meeting of the Central Committee for Myanmar’s ASEAN Chairmanship and Establishment of ASEAN Community at the meeting hall of the President’s Office, here, this afternoon.

Also present were the Union ministers, the Union Attorney-General, the deputy ministers, departmental heads and guests.

In his address, the Vice-President stressed the need to get ready for hosting ASEAN Summit and related meetings by finalizing the ongoing preparations as Myanmar will officially take ASEAN’s Chair on 1 January, 2014. He called on the Ministry of Information to launch public awareness campaigns through media. The Information team led by Deputy Minister for Information Presidential Spokesperson U Ye Htut is responsible to release information on activities and stances of Myanmar to local and foreign media. Cooperation with media is necessary for ensuring transparency, he added.

He continued that special cares have to be taken on foreign media persons while the Summits and ministerial meetings are being held. He called for capacity building of the staff of Information Ministry to be media friendly and to be able to deal with media management.

He also highlighted necessary preparations in Myanmar International Convention Centre for Summit and related meetings, event management in order to meet international standards and hospitality services and management for heads of state/government of ASEAN countries and visitors.

He called for cooperation and coordination among the ministries concerned regarding the service of Nay Pyi Taw Airport and collaborative efforts with private catering service.

He stressed the importance of transportation subcommittee for the convenience of VIPs and delegation members, saying that coordination among Nay Pyi Taw Council, Ministry of Transport, Ministry of Hotels and Tourism and private transport sector is needed.

He urged the H&T Ministry and Nay Pyi Taw Council to organize market festivals and night markets meeting international standards of health, hygiene and food safety in cooperation with respective shopping centres and markets.

It is required to promote security conscious and public awareness for mass participation in order to perform rapid response. All subcommittees are to follow the rules and regulations of the financial subcommittee for ensuring thrifty spending.

More efforts are needed to enhance the image of the host country while holding AMM Retreat from 15 to 18 January, he said.

In his conclusion, the Vice-President stressed that Myanmar’s image will shine brighter than ever before by successfully hosting the ASEAN Summit and its related meetings.

Vice-President called on those present to grasp the good opportunity for raising the image of the nation through cooperation of the ministries concerned and other organizations and mass participation.

Next, chairmen of ASEAN Political-Security Community committee, ASEAN Economic Community committee, ASEAN Social-Cultural Community committee Union Ministers U Wunna Maung Lwin, Dr Kan Zaw and U Aye Myint Kyu, central committee member U Kan Chun and those present reported on work progress.

In his concluding remarks, the Vice-President stressed the importance of cooperation in respective sectors based on the experience obtained in the SEA Games. He pointed out that Myanmar’s image will shine brighter than ever before by successfully hosting the ASEAN Summit and its related meetings.  

MNA
Four objectives of 66th Anniversary Independence Day

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

Seven significant buildings in establishment of royal palace reconstructed

Mandalay, 30 Dec—Thudhamma Sangha Golden Monastery, Maha Pathan Golden Ordination Hall, Pitakat Chamber, destroyed in the Second World War in the area of Yadanabon Palace, are being rebuilt near Mandalay Hill in Aungmyethazan Township, here, as of April 2013. Thudhamma Sangha Golden Monastery and Maha Pathan Golden Ordination Hall are being decorated with Myanmar handicrafts.

The reconstruction tasks are donated by U Kyaw Win and family of Mandalay (Real Estate Service). The construction tasks are expected to complete in April next year.—Kyemon-Thida Ko Ko (Mandalay)

Illegal sawn timber seized in Sagaing

Sagaing, 30 Dec—A team comprising Head of Township Forest Department U Kyaw Phone Wai, foresters U Than Swe and U Bo Nyan, ranger U Myo Thwin, officials and staff, policemen and local authorities led by Assistant Director U Thant Zin-2 of Sagaing District Forest Department searched the illegal timber on 27 December.

They found 514 pieces of illegal Inn sawn timber weighing 11,245.6 tons on board three boats near Wachet Village in Sagaing Township.

The boats are kept at Hoonbo ward administrator office. Investigation is being conducted to arrest the crime brokers for illegal timber and boats.—Kyemon-Myo Win
10 prefectures predict more deaths in Nankai Trough quake than state

Tokyo, 30 Dec — Ten prefectures predict that they will see more deaths than the state’s estimate if a big earthquake occurs along the Nankai Trough off central and western Japan, based on tougher conditions such as the collapse of embankments, a Kyodo News study showed on Sunday.

Among the 10, Hiroshima Prefecture forecasts a massive quake could kill 14,759 people, 18.4 times as many as the state’s prediction, while Osaka Prefecture expects 133,891 to die, a 13.7-fold increase.

While the state calculated the possible death toll on the assumption that embankments will not be affected by the quake, many local governments compiled their own data assuming that the subsidence of embankments will increase the area of land underwater and kill more people.

Meanwhile, Nagasaki Prefecture, where the state estimated 80 people would die, said, “While up to 5,360 people could die under the worst-case scenario, no one will be victimized if we carry out appropriate evacuations.” The Cabinet Office said in August last year the nationwide death toll could hit 323,000.

A government expert panel predicted earlier this year that there is a 60 percent to 70 percent chance that a major earthquake could occur along the Nankai Trough within the next 30 years.

The Nankai Trough runs from Suruga Bay in Shizuoka Prefecture to the Hyuga-nada Sea off Miyazaki Prefecture in the southwestern Japan region of Kyushu.—Kyodo News

Protests against Bangladesh election

Dhaka, 30 Dec — Violent clashes erupted in Bangladesh on Sunday as opposition supporters took to the streets to protest against a 5 January general election which they are boycotting.

The opposition says it will not take part in the vote unless an interim government oversees it and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina steps down.

The boycott means unlikely it will do anything to restore stability in one of the world’s poorest countries.

The leader of the main opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), Begum Khaleda Zia, called for a march on the capital, Dhaka, in defiance of a police ban to protest against what she calls the “tacrical” election.

One person was killed as police opened fire to disperse protesters throwing stones and crude bombs in central Dhaka and a railway guard was killed in a blast at a city station, police said.

Seven students drown during field trip in southern Vietnam

Ho Chi Minh City, 30 Dec — Seven students from Nguyen Binh Khiem secondary school in Dau Tieng District of Vietnam’s southern Binh Duong Province have been drowned after being swept away by sea waves at a beach in southern Ho Chi Minh (HCM) City, local press reported on Monday.

Specifically, the accident took place on Sunday afternoon when the students were on a school field trip to Can Gio District of HCM City, reported Vietnam’s state-run TV station VTV.

During a rest at Can Gio beach, 12 male students went swimming, of whom seven were swept away by big sea waves.—Xinhua

Tourist吞 violent

“Today, at the southern port city of Tokyo, on 28 Dec, 2013, as the New Year’s holiday exodus began the same day. Some 177,000 people are expected to leave Japan from the airport at the end of the year.” —Kyodo News

Cambodia conducts live fire drill to strengthen military capacity

Kampot Speu, (Cambodia), 30 Dec — Cambodians on Monday conducted a live fire exercise to build capacity for the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces in defending territorial integrity, an army chief said.

The drill was held at the military training in Kampot Speu Province, about 70 km west of capital Phnom Penh, with the participation of about 1,900 soldiers.

Gen Pol Saroeun, commander-in-chief of the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces, said that BM-21 rocket launchers were fired during the exercise.

“The purpose of the exercise is to strengthen our capacity for our armed forces in defending our territorial integrity and national interest only,” he told reporters at the event. “The drill is also to test our new weapons.”

About 145 shells had been fired and all had hit the target in the distance between 20 km and 40 km, he said.

It was the third time that the new high-speed live fire drill with BM21 rockets. The first one was made in March 2010 and the second one was in April this year.—Xinhua

S Korean rail workers to end long-drawn-out strikes

SEOUL, 30 Dec — South Korean rail workers, who have been on the country’s longest strike for fear of privatization of railway services, have decided to end their long-drawn-out walkouts.

Lawmakers of the ruling Saenuri Party and the main opposition Democratic Party agreed to form a parliamentary subcommittee on developing the rail industry, which was expected to discuss the ban on the rail privatization. Kim Myung-hwan, the labour union chief of the Korea Railroad Corp (KORAIL), agreed to end the three-week strike if the National Assembly sets up the subcommittee.

The union head and members of the parliamentary transportation committee reached such agreement at around midnight on Sunday. The day committee called a plenary session to establish the subcommittee.

More than 8,700 KORAIL workers walked off the job on 9 December in a protest against the government’s move to open a new subsidiary for the state-run rail operator, which unions fear will result in privatization and layoffs.

Thousands of rail workers and supporters rallied in downtown Seoul and marched down the streets on Saturday after the government issued a formal license for the KORAIL’s new affiliate that will operate the new rail service.

A man takes photos of Cambodian opposition supporters during a rally at the Freedom Park in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, on 29 Dec, 2013. An estimated 40,000 opposition supporters took to the streets in capital Phnom Penh on Sunday afternoon to demand the resignation of Prime Minister Hun Sen and a re-vote following allegations of serious irregularities during the July election. —Xinhua

Delhi Police seize illicit drugs worth 16 mln USD

NEW DELHI, 30 Dec — Delhi Police has seized illicit drugs worth 1 billion rupees (16 million US dollars) in one of its biggest hauls made in four separate raids across the Indian capital, a senior police official said on Sunday.

“Acting on a tip-off, the raids were carried out by a team of Delhi Police. Some 47 kilogrammes of heroin and two kilogrammes of cocaine valued at over 1 billion rupees were seized and one person has been arrested,” he said, on condition of anonymity.

However, the legal kingpin could not be nabbed as he has been operating from Afghanistan, the official said, adding that the illicit drugs were brought into India through borders in the northern state of Punjab.

A probe has been ordered as there is a suspicion that some of the illicit drugs also make their way to Sri Lanka from India through the southern city of Chennai, the official said.

Delhi Police has seized illicit drugs worth 16 mln USD

A probe has been ordered as there is a suspicion that some of the illicit drugs also make their way to Sri Lanka from India through the southern city of Chennai, the official said.
Myanmar Port Authority

**Claims Day Notice**

**MV KOTA RESTU VOY NO (359)**
Consignees of cargo carried on MV KOTA RESTU VOY NO (359) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 30.12.2013 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of A.W.P.T where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11:20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm to Claims Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the Vessel.

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

**Shipping Agency Department**
**Myanmar Port Authority**
**Agent for: M/S Advance Container Lines**

Phone No: 256908/378316/376797

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**Java, 30 Dec —** Israel reopened its commercial crossing point with Gaza Strip on Sunday, four days after shutting it down in retaliation for a Palestinian sniper’s fire that killed an Israeli worker on Tuesday.

About 450,000 liters of diesel will enter through Kerem Shalom crossing on Sunday to restart the sole power plant in the Palestinian coastal enclave, which was shut down on Friday due to the lack of fuel, said Râd al-Fattoh, a Palestinian border official.

About 330 trackloads of goods and shipments of transportation fuel would also make their way into the Hamas-controlled territory through the crossing, Fattoh added.

On Tuesday afternoon, a Palestinian sniper shot dead an Israeli worker repairing parts of the fence between Gaza and Israel. No group claimed responsibility for the shooting.

The closure of the affected Palestinian farmers who export their strawberries to Europe through Kerem Shalom.

It also left Gaza’s 1.7 million people in darkness for at least 12 hours a day as the power station produces about half of Gaza’s electricity when running at full capacity. Another electricity is purchased via cables from Israel and Egypt.

**Claims Day Notice**

**MV CHANG DA LONG VOY NO (3)**
Consignees of cargo carried on MV CHANG DA LONG VOY NO (3) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 30.12.2013 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T.T where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11:20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm to Claims Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the Vessel.

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

**Shipping Agency Department**
**Myanmar Port Authority**
**Agent for: M/S Sinor Lines Pte Ltd Store**

Phone No: 256924/256914

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**Syrian troops kills 73 rebels in separate clashes**

DAAMASCUS, 30 Dec — The Syrian troops on Sunday killed as many as 73 rebels in separate clashes nationwide, the state media reported, as opposition activists claimed that aerial bombing on rebel-held areas in Aleppo killed 471 people over the past week.

The official SANA news agency said the Syrian troops killed 30 “terrorists” from the al-Qaida-linked Nusra Front and other jihadist groups during a series of “qualitative” operations in two areas of the rebel-held Douma suburb, east of the capital Damascus.

In the town of Yabrud near Damascus, the troops eliminated gatherings of the Nusra fighters, killing 15 of them and destroying their ammunition and weapons.

In the northern province of Aleppo, a total of 28 armed rebels, many of whom foreign and Arab nationals, were killed by the Syrian troops in the towns of Zazrour and al-Nakkarar, according to SANA, which added that one citizen was killed when a mortar shell landed Sunday at the Abbasiyin district of Damascus.

On the opposition side, the Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said on Sunday that a total of 517 people, 471 of whom civilians, have been killed over the past week in Aleppo as a result of aerial bombing on areas in Aleppo province and its countryside.

The activists’ report couldn’t be verified independently.

The Syrian media has recently refrained from publishing activists’ accounts on incidents in Aleppo, saying the army only targets the positions of the Nusra Front and the so-called Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL).

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**Mongolia to celebrate 65th anniversary of ties with China**

ULAN BAATAR, 30 Dec — The Mongolian government decided on Saturday to host a series of cultural events in 2014 to celebrate the 65th anniversary of diplomatic ties with China.

The celebration will include activities such as Chinese and Mongolian cultural days, youth sports matches and TV programmes featuring the memoirs of former ambassadors of the two countries. Investment forums and round table discussions involving scholars of the two countries will also be held. The celebration will be headed by Deputy Prime Minister Dendev Terbisdagdaa, and will run throughout the year.

China and Mongolia established diplomatic relations on 16 October, 1949, and China is currently Mongolia’s largest trade partner and investor.

The two countries have also witnessed a rise in cultural exchanges. Currently, about 8,000 Mongolian students study in China.

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**Israel reopens commercial terminal with Gaza after 4-day closure**

GAZA, 30 Dec — Israel reopened its commercial crossing point with Gaza Strip on Sunday, four days after shutting it down in retaliation for a Palestinian sniper’s fire that killed an Israeli worker on Tuesday.

About 450,000 liters of diesel will enter through Kerem Shalom crossing on Sunday to restart the sole power plant in the Palestinian coastal enclave, which was shut down on Friday due to the lack of fuel, said Râd al-Fattoh, a Palestinian border official.

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On Tuesday afternoon, a Palestinian sniper shot dead an Israeli worker repairing parts of the fence between Gaza and Israel. No group claimed responsibility for the shooting.

The closure of the affected Palestinian farmers who export their strawberries to Europe through Kerem Shalom.

It also left Gaza’s 1.7 million people in darkness for at least 12 hours a day as the power station produces about half of Gaza’s electricity when running at full capacity. Another electricity is purchased via cables from Israel and Egypt.
Pharrell Williams seizes No 1 spot in UK singles chart

LOS ANGELES, 30 Dec — American singer-songwriter Pharrell Williams seized his third British No 1 this year.

Williams is set to release his second solo album early next year, the company added, noting that the as-yet-untitled album would be his follow-up to 2006’s “In My Mind”, which peaked at Number Three.

‘Hobbit’ blasts past newcomers to claim third box office crown

LOS ANGELES, 30 Dec — “The Hobbit: The Desolation of Smaug,” the special-effects-laden tale that pits dwarfs against a dragon, blasted to its third consecutive box office title, collecting $29.9 million over the post-Christmas weekend to beat newcomers “The Wolf of Wall Street” and “The Secret Life of Walter Mitty.”

Walt Disney’s animated film “Frozen” was second with ticket sales of $28.8 million in its third week, ahead of Will Ferrell’s quirky comedy “Anchorman 2: The Legend Continues” that collected $20.2 million at domestic theaters.

“American Hustle,” which reunited director David O Russell with his “Silver Linings Playbook” stars Bradley Cooper and Jennifer Lawrence, was fourth with $19.6 million in ticket sales at theaters in the US and Canada, according to studio estimates. Sony, the distributor of “American Hustle,” also said it had grossed $3 billion worldwide as of this weekend.

Director Martin Scorsese’s “The Wolf of Wall Street” was fifth with $18.5 million after finishing a close second to “The Hobbit” on Christmas Day, according to estimates compiled by Rentrak. The nearly three hour movie received good reviews but wasn’t any c’s rating from CinemaScore, a site that measures audience reaction.

“The Hobbit: The Desolation of Smaug,” the second of three movies based on JRR Tolkien’s 1937 novel, has collected more than $190 million in ticket sales since its 13 December release, according to Rentrak. Its worldwide sales total more than $614 million, according to distributor Warner Brothers.

“47 Ronin, the Keanu Reeves samurai adventure film that Universal Pictures made for $175 million, opened with $9.9 million in ticket sales. That was on par with the industry’s $17 million to $20 million projections for total ticket sales of $20.6 million since its Christmas Day release. On 24 December, Reuters reported that Universal, a unit of cable giant Comcast Corp, had taken unspecified writedowns when it became apparent the film would not take in the amounts it had spent to make and market it.

Nikki Rocco, president for domestic distribution at Universal Pictures, acknowledged that the opening of “47 Ronin” was disappointing, but said the studio would move on to greener pastures regardless of the film’s performance.

“Of course it’s very disappointing and you don’t want to open a picture at this level, but exit polls are decent and we think it will find its way,” Rocco said.

“The Wolf of Wall Street,” which stars Leonardo DiCaprio in the biographical story of a drug-snorting Wall Street scam artist, sold $18.5 million worth of tickets after critics gave it generally positive reviews. The film and DiCaprio have both been nominated for a Golden Globe Award.

“Lily’s Last,” which stars and was directed by Ben Stiller, collected $13 million in ticket sales. The film was first developed in the early 1990s, and for a while Steven Spielberg was signed to direct it. Fox cast Stiller in the title role in 2011.

This year is set to surpass 2012 as a record year for the box office by nearly 1 percent, according to Rentrak. Total gross sales were $10,811,701,260 billion in 2012, while 2013 is on track to exceed $10.9 billion.

Miley Cyrus dating Twilight actor?

LOS ANGELES, 30 Dec — Singer Miley Cyrus is reportedly dating Twilight actor Kellan Lutz, a good friend of ex-boyfriend Liam Hemsworth.

The 28-year-old actor is said to have reached out to the Bangerz singer, 21, in early December. “The next day, they hung out. And they’ve been hooking up ever since,” a source said.

Miley Cyrus and ex-fiancé Liam Hemsworth split back in September after being together for three years.

“IT doesn’t hurt that he is Liam’s pal. But they really enjoy each other’s company,” the source added.

Taylor Swift performs at Etihad Stadium in Melbourne, Australia.

Taylor Swift Tops Most Charitable Celebrities List

LOS ANGELES, 30 Dec — Taylor Swift was the most charitable celebrity of 2013, according to the social change nonprofit DoSomething.org. The pop star topped the organization’s annual “20 Celebs Gone Good” list for the second year in a row thanks to the $100,000 donation she gave the Nashville Symphony on the occasion of her 24th birthday. She was also recognized for her headlining gig at a London benefit for homeless youth.

Coming in just behind Swift at Number Two in the rankings, One Direction got props for raising more than $3 million through their single for the British charity Comic Relief, as well as raising more than $800,000 for cancer research. Beyoncé came in at Number Three, with particular recognition for headlining the “Chime For Change” concert for women’s rights.

Reuters

Singer Miley Cyrus
**Chelsea make Liverpool suffer, Arsenal top**

LONDON, 30 Dec — Chelsea heaped more Christmas misery on Liverpool with a 2-1 victory at Stamford Bridge and Olivier Giroud’s goal helped Arsenal win 1-0 at Newcastle United to return to the top of the Premier League on Sunday.

Everton moved back into the top four with a 2-1 win over Southampton and Tottenhams Hotspur beat Stoke City 3-0 to get their first victory since appointing Tim Sherwood manager as the English game served up more drama in its congested festive schedule.

Chelsea fell behind to a goal from Martin Skrtel after four minutes, but rallied with first-half strikes from Eden Hazard and Samuel Etoo to inflict a second defeat in four days on Liverpool following their loss at Manchester City.

Arsenal’s win came courtesy of France striker Giroud, who had not scored in all competitions since November 23, but got the faintest of touches to glance a Theo Walcott free kick into the net midway through the second half.

**Schild secures place in slalom history**

LIENZ, 30 Dec — Austria’s Marlies Schild became the all-time leader of World Cup slalom victories with her 35th success at the Lienz ski resort on 29 December by topping a podium comprising the very best slalom specialists of the decade.

American Mikaela Shiffrin, who dethroned Schild at the world championships in Schladming last season, was second 0.41 seconds adrift, while Olympic champion Maria Hoefl-Riesch of Germany was third.

“It’s hard to believe but now for sure the record is mine,” Schild said.

“I must admit I felt relieved after Courchevel. I needed to break the jinx. It was making me nervous in the end. Everybody was talking about the record. I even noticed in train that there was a before and after Courchevel. I’m much more relaxed now.”

Schild signalled her return to form in the French resort of Courchevel — her first victory in nearly two years.

The Austrian, who tore knee ligaments in December 2012 in Are, had been usurped at the top of her sport by Shiffrin, who took advantage of her absence to win the world title and the slalom World Cup globe.

The 18-year-old again led the way after the morning run while Schild, her visibility hampered by the rain, had to settle for sixth.

But experience, and the knowledge of the Lienz course on which she had won three times previously, made the difference in the afternoon when the Austrian clocked the fastest time by far.

**Sharapova makes no promises over Brisbane return**

BRISBANE, 30 Dec — Having pulled out of the Brisbane International tournament through injury for the last two years, Maria Sharapova might consider it a victory in itself if she actually gets out on court at the Pat Rafter arena on Monday.

The tournament is perhaps more important to the Russian world number four as a warm-up for the Australian Open this year as she is on the comeback trail after four months on the sidelines with a shoulder injury.

At least she made it to Brisbane this year, something which an ankle injury prevented her from doing in 2012, but she was giving no guarantees that she would be heading back to the track that has won her four grand slam titles.

“I want to bring the work I’ve done in the off-season, try to bring that onto the court as soon as I can. Will that happen this week? I don’t know,” she told reporters on Sunday.

“I know that if I have the effort I had in the off-season I’ll be at a level I want to be.”

Sharapova plays France’s Caroline Garcia in the first round on Monday evening, her first match since the Western and Southern Open in Cincinnati in August and her first under new coach Sven Groeneveld.

The 26-year-old re-signed Groeneveld in November, ending a period without a coach after she dispensed with Thomas Hogstedt, who had been working with her for two-and-a-half years, and Jimmy Connors, who lasted a month, in quick succession.

“From the first time we met I really liked what he had to say,” she said.
43rd IAA World Congress to be held in Beijing

BEIJING, 30 Dec — The 43rd International Advertising Association (IAA) World Congress will be held in Beijing from 8 to 10 May, 2014. About 2,000 people from around the world, including professionals from the advertising industry and representatives of the IAA’s branches, will attend the event, which is themed “Innovation and Evolution.” The event will be hosted by the State Administration for Industry and Commerce of China and Beijing Municipal People’s Government. Beijing will host the event for the second time. The IAA’s 39th congress was also held in the capital city in 2004.—Xinhua

US Obamacare expected to see more glitches in 2014

WASHINGTON, 30 Dec — With Obamacare going into full effect on 1 January, more glitches are expected for President Barack Obama’s embattled healthcare overhaul, although the scope of the problem remains to be seen, US experts said on Sunday. Obama’s healthcare rollout, also known as Obamacare, has faced myriad hurdles since the 1 October launch of its website healthcare.gov, through which potential buyers were supposed to be able to choose from various healthcare plans but instead faced a labyrinthine technical glitches. To add to Obama’s healthcare woes, recent polls have found that Americans are overwhelmingly uneasy about the new healthcare law, believing it will lead to higher premiums and deductibles. Anger is also mounting among an estimated 4 million Americans who have been dumped by their insurance providers, as their plans failed to meet Obama’s new guidelines. That development came after repeated promises from Obama that those who liked their insurance plans could keep them.

Some experts said more problems will follow when Obamacare is fully implemented on 1 January, as many who signed up for plans under the healthcare revision in recent weeks could see processing delays and may not yet be able to use their benefits. Scott Gottlieb, resident fellow at the American Enterprise Institute, told Fox News on Sunday that some people who thought they had signed up for Obamacare are not able to access healthcare.

He added that some plans offered under Obamacare do not cover treatment by specialists, and patients may have to travel up to 50 miles to see a specialist in their coverage network. —Xinhua

Schumacher ‘critical’ after skiing fall

LYON, 30 Dec — Re-tired seven-times Formula One world champion Michael Schumacher was in ‘critical’ condition with head injuries after an off-piste skiing accident in the French Alps resort of Meribel, his agent said on Sunday.

The 44-year-old German was in hospital in Grenoble and under the care of Professor Gerard Saillant, a brain and spinal injury expert who is also president of the International Automobile Federation (FIA) Institute.

“Hélas, 25.01.14 06:40 am — He suffered head trauma with coma that needed prompt neurological treatment,” Schumacher’s agent Sabine Kehm said in a statement late in the evening, which a hospital official read to reporters.

A hospital official defined as ‘critical’ condition.” A hospital official defined to give more details but said more information would be given on Monday. Christophe Gernigon-Leconte, the director of the Meribel ski resort where Schumacher has a vacation home, said earlier that the former champion was wearing a helmet when he fell and hit his head on a rock, but that he was conscious when found. —Reuters

A Short Trip With Wayne (Cambodia)• World News• Myanamar Movie Review “Kyae-sin-maw-kun”• Local News• Hand Down Arts Heritage• World News• Graffiti: Character Art• Local News• City Night Your Night• World News• Welcome to the Southern most part of Myanmar• Awesome Myanamar Sculptures• Who can match their Unique Music and Fashion?• Secret Places For Yummy Food (Episode-4) (Pay Daw Oo Rice Salad)• World News• Early Morning Athletics• Local News• Me My Travel With Maria (Night Market of Pyay) (Episode-4)• World News• * Around The Maha Boditahtaug• Local News• Preserving Myanamar Handicrafts• * A Myanamar Tapestry

News/International News
09:30 am
11. Business News
09:00 am
12. News
10:15 am
13. Documentary
11:25 am
14. Tamyeinmar Takwetsar
12:00 pm
12:30 pm
16. Myanmar Movie
2:40 pm
17. Traditional Boxing
1:00 pm
18. News

* Myanmar Movie Review
* Current Affairs
* Global News
* Green News
* Myanmar TV

MYANMAR TV
(31-12-2013, Tuesday)
6:00 am
1. Paritta By Hilly
2. Radio Missionary
Sayadaw
6:15 am
2. Mytta Pavana By
Mingan Sayadaw
Phyayhi
6:40 am
3. Physical Exercises
6:40 am
4. The Mirror Images
of The Musical Oldies
6:45 am
5. Documentary
7:00 am
7:40 am
7. People Talks
8:00 am
8. News/International News
8:30 am
9. India Drama Series
9:00 am
10. News/ International News
9:30 am
11. Business News
10:00 am
12. News
10:15 am
13. Documentary
11:25 am
14. Tamyeinmar Takwetsar
12:00 pm
12:30 pm
16. Myanmar Movie
2:40 pm
17. Traditional Boxing
1:00 pm
18. News
3:15 pm
3:30 pm
20. India Drama Series
4:00 pm
21. News
4:15 pm
22. India Drama Series
4:45 pm
23. University of Distance Education (TV Lectures) - First Year (Mathematic)
5:00 pm
24. News
5:15 pm
25. Business News
5:30 pm
26. India Drama Series
6:00 pm
27. News/Weather Report
6:20 pm
28. Documentary (Education)
6:30 pm
29. Teleplay
7:00 pm
30. News
7:20 pm
31. Documentary
8:00 pm
8:30 pm
33. Monthly Weather Report
8:40 pm
34. Hit Songs of Stars
9:00 pm
35. News
36. Sing A Song
37. India Drama Series

10:00 pm
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3:00 am
4:00 am
5:00 am
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11:00 pm
12:00 midnight

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Vice-President Dr Sai Mauk Kham attends awarding ceremony for outstanding students

**Vice-President Dr Sai Mauk Kham greets students at ceremony to present prizes to outstanding students for 2013-2014 Academic Year at MICC—MNA**

**National Skill Standard Authority meets**

_NAV P’TAW, 30 Dec—National Skill Standard Authority held a coordination meeting at the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security, here, this morning._

The meeting focused on standardization on occupational, competency-based training, competency-based assessment and skill-development fund. “Standardization on skills of workers and benefits for them were under discussion at the today’s meeting. It was aimed at developing awareness of skill recognition system among workforce and issuing certificates to them prior to free flow of skilled workers in 2015,” said Director-General U Myo Aung who also served as the secretary of the committee.

Assistant Director Daw Khin Mar Aye called for collaboration and cooperation of organizations concerned for the sake of workforce in Myanmar, saying that cooperation between NSSA and other associations is still low.

**President Xi to lead overall reform**

_Beijing, 30 Dec—President Xi Jinping will head a leading group for overall reform, the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee decided on Monday._

The political bureau decided to set up the group to lead the work to comprehensively deepen reform and appoint Xi as its head, according to a decision adopted at a political bureau meeting held on Monday. This is the latest development of a reform blueprint put forward at the Third Plenary Session of the 18th CPC Central Committee.

A decision made at the session first came up with the idea of establishing such a leading group, an important reform move. The leading group will be in charge of “designing reform on an overall basis, arranging and coordinating reform, pushing forward reform as a whole, and supervising the implementation of reform plans,” the document said. It will research and decide on major guidelines, policies and schemes for systematic reform in economic, political, cultural, social and environmental sectors as well as the Party system, the document said.

The group will lead major reforms at the national level and address major issues with nationwide significance and long-term effect, which involve different regions and departments. It will guide, push forward and supervise the implementation of major reform policies, the document said.

When explaining the reform blueprint to the plenary session in November, Xi, also general secretary of the CPC Central Committee, said it is hard for certain or several departments to push forward such a complicated systematic reform so a higher level of leadership is needed.

The leading group will allow the Party play a better role of commanding the whole situation and coordinating the efforts of all quarters, he said. Prof. Xie Chuntao, with the Party School of the CPC Central Committee, told Xinhua that setting up the group is necessary because reform this time will be both unprecedented in scale and degree. A goal has been set to “achieve decisive results in the reform of key sectors by 2020.”

To achieve this, an institution that exercises core leadership is essential because reform on such a large scale will involve not only government institutions but also those of the Party, legislature and judiciary, said Xie.

Amnesty granted for five prisoners

_NAV P’TAW, 30 Dec—On humanitarian grounds and encouraging prisoners, after understanding the magnanimity of the State, to serve the national interest and in their own interest, the President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has granted amnesty for five prisoners who are in the list of Committee for Scrutinizing Remaining Political Prisoners and had served their terms to a certain extent in the prisons or work camps. Amnesty is granted in accord with Section 204 (a) of the Constitution and Section 401 Subsection (i) of the Code of Criminal Procedure as of today, according to the Ministry of Home Affairs.—MNA_