Myanmar stands first in Skyscanner’s prediction of top 10 destinations for 2015

By Ye Myint

YANGON, 3 Dec—Myanmar ranks first in the list of top 10 destinations for 2015 according to the recent prediction of travel search site Skyscanner.

The forecast of the Edinburgh-based travel search firm said Myanmar would be the next year’s hottest destination as Skyscanner’s data found a 59 percent increase in flight searches for Myanmar. It also said Japan sees 26 percent and Sri Lanka 19 percent search increase.

In its top destination list, Myanmar stands first followed by Greece, Iceland, Brazil, Panama, New Caledonia, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Nicaragua and Japan.

Four countries in the Asia Pacific make the Skyscanner’s list, South Korea ranks seventh while Sri Lanka comes in eighth and Japan tenth respectively after Myanmar that tops list of top 10 destinations for Aussie travelers next year.

The list of top 10 destinations that will surge in popularity in 2015 emerged following some

research Skyscanner did on where to travel to next year by travelers from Australia. (See page 3)
Despite recent armed clashes, basic elements of nationwide peace are in place

NAY PYI TAW, 3 Dec—The following is the full text of the monthly radio message delivered by President U Thein Sein.

I would like to inform all of you about the recent changes and developments that have taken place in our country during the month of November as I have done previously on this radio program.

This month, I especially would like to talk about the current political situation and to urge everyone to view this situation in light of ongoing efforts to successfully implement and sustain reforms. In particular, our collective desire for political forces to overcome a culture of divisive politics and adopting a conciliatory and unified approach to addressing issues. I urge all political forces to embrace this vision as they undertake their objectives.

Since the current reforms comprise of undertaking liberalization in concert with nurturing democratic practices, we have had to face and overcome great challenges. When addressing these challenges, we must not ignore issues that demand immediate attention or lose sight of the goal of long-term sustainability of the reforms. Because we are still laying the foundation for sustaining reforms long-term, some have said that reforms have stalled or halted. For my part, I continue to strive sincerely, and with full commitment and focus to achieving meaningful and practical progress.

In November, our nation successfully hosted the ASEAN and East Asia summits - the largest gathering of global leaders our nation has ever hosted. Leaders from neighboring South East Asian countries were joined by leaders from India, China, United States, Russia, South Korea, and Australia. By successfully hosting these prestigious summits, our country has reached an important milestone in its efforts to become a respected member of the international community.

In addition to global leaders, thousands of diplomats, representatives of multinational companies, and international media visited our country during the summits. The international community’s interest in our country is also growing. Today, our country’s foreign policy is to have friendly relations with other countries. Although some countries may have different opinions of our reforms, there is also goodwill for our country to succeed. These positive outcomes are not accidental, and it is important to strengthen these foreign relationships and to prevent any harm to these links.

Myanmar is also working to advance integration within the ASEAN region. Less developed countries like ours must proceed carefully since ASEAN integration should benefit all ASEAN nations including its poorest and less developed members.

With respect to the peace building efforts, despite recent armed clashes, the basic elements of nationwide peace are in place. All the ethnic armed groups have agreed to work towards signing a nationwide ceasefire agreement, and the Union Peace Working Committee and the Nationwide Ceasefire Coordination Team (NCCT) are continuing their discussions. There is firm political agreement on building a federal union. In addition, all sides have agreed that during political dialogue except for succession and issues harming sovereignty, all other issues may be discussed.

There are disagreements and opposition to the National Education Law. Regulations and by-laws for the law, which was passed by the Union Parliament, are still being drafted. I understand that preparations are being made so students, teachers, officials, and various other groups can provide input during the drafting process. I accept that the law is incomplete as the required regulations and by-laws have yet to be drafted. However, this is the first time in our country’s history where education-related legislation is being discussed in an inclusive and representative manner. This is an example of a practical and beneficial undertaking.

Therefore, I urge, continued extensive and practical consultations to address disagreements and to draft regulations. I have already instructed the relevant ministries and universities to facilitate this process.

This past month, due to high demand for US dollars, there was volatility in the exchange markets. There will be confidence in the business environment only when there is stability in the exchange markets. Therefore, the Central Bank worked with other banks to stabilize the situation. The Central Bank’s capacity to act decisively is the positive result of administrative and institutional reforms our government initiated as part of the comprehensive reform process.

The telecommunications sector has also experienced reforms. Specifically, the reforms have resulted in a sector that is now competitive, and is engaged with the broader international market. Moreover, because of the reduction of red tape, telephone and Internet services are now more affordable and easily available. Although the telecom sector may not be up to international standard yet because the basic infrastructure is being built, the public is able to experience at least some of the services enjoyed by people in neighboring countries. The services will become world-class soon, after the infrastructure work is completed.

On November 26th, I met with leaders of political parties and discussed the current political situation, peace building efforts and other developments. As I said at the beginning of this address, we have faced, and will continue to face challenges sustaining and successfully implementing reforms. I pledge to work together with all national forces to find common solutions to these challenges.

I would like to conclude by reaffirming my commitment to achieving peace, promoting economic development and building a better future for future generations. ****

Myanmar to create opportunities for those with disabilities to enjoy equal rights in society

NAY PYI TAW, 3 Dec—Myanmar is striving to create the opportunities for those with disabilities to enjoy equal terms of rights in the society. Union Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Dr Daw Myat Myat Ohn Khin said at the ceremony to mark the International Day of Persons with Disabilities 2011— held at Hotel Max in Nay Pyi Taw on Wednesday.

She stressed the need to invite participation of the disabled persons in emergency response to disaster risk reduction, adding that it needs to create opportunities for those with disabilities to apply modern technology in line with the motto of the day: “sustainable development: the promise of technology”.

UNFPA Resident Representative Ms. Janet E. Jackson, read the message sent by the secretary-general of the United Nations. Union Ministers U Hla Tun, U Khin Yi and U Soe Win presented prizes to winners in the open, ministerial and university level article contests and basic education level essay contest in commemoration of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities 2014.

Union Minister Dr Daw Myat Myat Ohn Khin and deputy minister Daw Su Su Hlaing awarded outstanding persons.

Myanmar signed the UN convention on the rights of persons with disabilities on 7 December 2014. The library is used as an academic research centre at the Yangon branch of the ministry.

Judicial officers join judicial training programme workshop

NAY PYI TAW, 3 Dec—The Supreme Court of the Union and the Ministry of Law and Justice conducted the workshop on Judicial Training Programme at Royal Ace Hotel in Nay Pyi Taw on Wednesday.

Judge of the Supreme Court U Soe Nyunt and Chief of internal courts and strategic planning and technology division Mr James Leong of Singapore extended greetings.

The workshop focused on strategic outlooks of Singapore and Myanmar over judicial and legal system, raising rule of law, arbitration for disputes, applying information and technology in court management and criminal management, impact and capacity in court management.

A total of 30 judicial officers at different levels of courts are attending the workshop up to 5 December.
President U Thein Sein receives former ROK Prime Minister, ...

(from page 1)
President U Thein Sein also received Vice Chairman of China-Myanmar Friendship Association Mr Geng Zhi Yuan at the hall of Presidential Palace in Nay Pyi Taw.

They discussed promotion of bilateral relations between two peoples of China and Myanmar, participation of the association in Myanmar’s development tasks including Muse region and cooperation in development of infrastructure tasks. Also present at the meeting were Union Ministers U Win Myint and Dr Than Aung, Deputy Ministers U Tin Oo Lwin, Chairman of Myanmar-China Friendship Association U Sein Win Aung, Secretary U Myo Aung and officials.—MNA

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw speaker delivers speech at workshop on budget

NAY PYI TAW, 3 Dec — Speaker of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw and the Pyithu Hluttaw Thura U Shwe Mann delivered a speech at the workshop on tasks to be monitored in developing the annual budget organized by the Public Accounts Joint Committee and the World Bank at the Hluttaw Office on Wednesday.

In his speech, Thura U Shwe Mann said that drawing budgets and bank and financial discussions are important not only for the parliament but also for the country, expressing his thanks for organizing the workshop and urging the World Bank to further cooperate with the parliament for the development of the country.

The workshop continues until 4 December. Also present at the workshop were Vice Speaker of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw and Chairman of the Public Accounts Joint Committee U Nanda Kyaw Swa, Vice Chairman U Thurein Zaw, Secretary U Maung Toe and committee members, members of the Legal Affairs and Special Cases Assessment Commission, experts from the World Bank and officials.—MNA

Myanmar stands first in Skyscanner’s prediction...

(from page 1)
Skyscanner’s Dave Boyle said, “The result is a robust picture of the hottest destinations for Aussies next year and hopefully something to inspire travelers around the country.” Founded in 2001, Skyscanner now has more than 30 million searches to the site every month worldwide.

With flight searches from Australia up by 56%, Myanmar will be welcoming hordes of travelers in 2015, the firm commented, saying that the country’s luxury accommodation offer is set to boom with some of the travel industry’s biggest names rushing to move in. By 2017, the Hilton Group plans to have five new hotels, while Shangri-La Group, Pan Pacific Hotels Groups and Best Western are all in planning stages, it added.

According to the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism, tourist arrivals in Myanmar increased 43 percent with 1,604,746 tourists who entered the country from 1 January to 31 July, 2014 compared with 1,121,795 visitors in the same period last year. Myanmar government has predicted 3 million arrivals in 2014 and 5 million in 2015.—GNLM

Candidates may take out bus fare from accounts department

NAY PYI TAW, 3 Dec—Candidates from country-side who set for the test for the President’s Scholarship Award may draw the fare of buses from the accounts department of respective exam centre universities.

They must claim the bus fare by showing the original copy of bus tickets and original citizenship scrutiny cards at the accounts department, not later than 15 December 2014.—MNA

Vice-Senior General Soe Win to accept First Degree Gallant of Malaysian Armed Forces from Malaysia

NAY PYI TAW, 3 Dec—Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Soe Win left Yangon for Malaysia on Wednesday to accept the First Degree Gallant of Malaysian Armed Forces conferred on by the Malaysian Sultan. Vice-Senior General Soe Win and party were seen off at Yangon International Airport by Lt-Gen Kyaw Swe of the Office of the Commander-in-Chief (Army), Commander of Yangon Command Major General Tun Tun Naung and senior military officers. Myawady
**Nyaunglebin Township ANA organizes talks about danger of narcotic drugs**

Nyaunglebin, 3 Dec—Nyaunglebin Township Anti-Narcotics Association and Myoma Ward 2 administrator office jointly organized the educative talks on drug elimination at the office in Myoma Ward 2 in Nyaunglebin, Bago Region, on 2 December.

Commander of Nyaunglebin Township Police Force Police Major Tin Aung gave lectures on prevention of danger of narcotic drugs, Chairman of Bago District ANA U Tin Aye, the mission and vision of the Anti-Narcotics Association, IP Tun Aung Thein of Anti-Drug Squad 36 of Bago Region, danger of narcotic drugs, writer Wut Yi Khin of Myanmar Writers Association, Vice Chairperson of Bago District ANA Daw Nu Nu Aung and Chairman of Nyaunglebin Township ANA Dr Myint Than (Nyaunglebin), menace of drugs. Police distributed pamphlets to attendees. It was attended by township level officials and local people, totaling over 300.—Nay Lin (Nyaunglebin)

**Trainees studying traditional medicine in Nay Pyi Taw**

Nay Pyi Taw, 3 Dec—Under the supervision of Nay Pyi Taw Maternal and Child Welfare Supervisory Committee, Ottara District MCWSC organized the basic traditional medicine course at the hall of District General Administration Department in Nay Pyi Taw on Wednesday.

Chairperson of the committee Daw Kyi Kyi Yin made a speech, and Deputy Director U Aung Htat of Traditional Medicine Department under the Ministry of Health explained the basic knowledge about the traditional medicine course.

Chairperson Daw Kyi Kyi Yin and Deputy Director U Khin Zaw of the department presented teaching aid and stationery to the trainees. Altogether 40 trainees are attending the five-day course.

Shwe Ye Yint

**Gravel road under construction in rural area of Natmauk Tsp**

Natmauk, 3 Dec—Local authorities supervise upgrading of the earthen road to the gravel one linking Kyauhtu and Bawaung villages in Natmauk Township, Magway Region, with the aim of ensuring smooth transport of local people.

On 2 December, the Magway District Deputy Commissioner, the township administrator and departmental officials inspected progress of the 3,700 feet long road and attended to the needs.

Hla Win
(Township IPRD)

**Easter saplings at nursery of local growers in Tatkon Township to earn larger income**

Tatkon, 3 Dec—Local farmers are engaged in nurturing ester flower plants in villages of Tatkon Township, Nay Pyi Taw Council Area, this cold season.

In the past years, the farmers placed emphasis on cultivation of ester flower plantations with the use of underground water. This year, the local farmers who nurture the ester saplings to be sold to the growers earn the larger income than the traditional growers.

The farmers prefer to grow Shwetaungphyu, Chithsanmaung, Chinmaing, Thitkhwa Phawka, Ester and Pawphyu strains of ester flowers.

Growers can save the cost in cultivation of ester flower plants in the cold season than that of monsoon paddy.

“I have cultivated six species of ester flowers on 1.5 acres of land, spending K1.2 million on purchase of quality seeds of flowers, fertilizer, fuel, labour charge and pesticides. During the 25-day period of plantation, I have sold the saplings worth K1 million. I expected to earn over K1.3 million profit from my income in nurturing the flower saplings,” said U Maung Aye of Changyi Village.—Tin Soe Lwin (Tatkon IPRD)
LocaL News

Mandalay, 3 Dec—Artists in Mandalay City collectively displayed their painting works at the Mandalay Modern Art Exhibition 2014 at Dhamma Thalla Hall at the corner of 84th and 31st streets in Chanayethazan Township, Mandalay, from 1 to 3 December. Enthusiasts and people enjoyed the paintings of artists at the exhibition.

Globetrotters prefer to waterway transport on their visits

Mandalay, 3 Dec—Mingun Cultural area is one of the famous destinations for globetrotters who arrive in Mandalay. Mingun area is easily accessible from Mandalay by car, bicycle and motorcycle. But, the globetrotters visit the area by motorboat departing Mayangyan Jetty in Mandalay.

The tourists prefer to visit Mingun by boat along Ayeyawady River so as to enjoy the scenic beauty along the both banks of the river.

Over 600 tourists were transported from Mayangyan jetty of Mandalay to Mingun in November 2013, in comparison with about 500 in November 2014. Most of the tourists came from China, Thailand, France and Italy.

“We give transport services to tourists from Mandalay Port to Bhamo, Bagan and Hkamti three times this year. The Tourists Waterway Transport Association is formed with about 50 motorboats,” chairman of the association U Thet Tun said.

Tin Maung (Mandalay)

MMMCWA shares knowledge about prevention of HIV/AIDS

Nay Pyi Taw, 3 Dec—Pobbatiri Township observed the World AIDS Day at the Dhammayon in Yanaung Village, Pobbatiri Township, on Tuesday.

President of Myanmar Maternal and Child Welfare Association Daw Thazin Nwe made a speech and Programme Manager Dr Myint Swe of AIDS Programme explained prevention of STD/AIDS diseases.

MMCWA gave the delivery kits to pregnant mothers.

Townselders and health staff participated in the roundtable discussions on prevention HIV/AIDS disease.—Shwe Ye Yint

Model plot of Palethwe paddy yields 152 baskets per acre

Myaungmya, 3 Dec—A ceremony to harvest Palethwe (MDR-05) paddy strain was held on one-acre model plot of 30-acre plantation in Madawbin Village-tract, Myaungmya Township, Ayeyawady Region, on 1 December.

It was attended by Deputy Head of Ayeyawady Region Agriculture Department U Myo Zaw, Deputy Commissioner of Myaungmya District U Htwe Myint, Head of District Agriculture Department U Myint Aye, members of Agricultural Development Committee, Township Administrator U Ko Ko Latt and Head of Township Agriculture Department U Tin Maung Nyein and local farmers totalling over 200.

Aung Min (Myaungmya District IPRD)

Athletes with disabilities participate in long journey wheelchair skill demonstration

Mandalay, 3 Dec—In honour of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities which falls on 3 December, the Disabled Persons’ Wheelchair Skill Demonstration on Yangon-Mandalay Journey, was jointly conducted by Shwe Min Thar Foundation (Myanmar) and Yangon School for the Blinds.

The participants of the demonstration arrived at Tagundaing Roundabout in Amarapura Township, Mandalay Region, on 2 December, and they were welcomed by local people.

The participants left Yangon on 16 November and spent one night each in Hlegu, Bago, DaikU, Kyauk-daga, Pyu, Ottwin, Yedashe, Yeni, Lewe, Taikton, Yamethin, Pyawbwe, Meiktila, Wundwin, Kume and Kyaukse along Yangon-Mandalay Highway.

In the evening, the Youth Band for the Blinds and Disabilities performed music and songs to the people at Manowraman People’s Square in Mahaaungmye Township.—Maung Pyi Thu (Mandalay)

People enjoy modern arts at exhibition in Mandalay

Mandalay, 3 Dec—Artists in Mandalay City collectively displayed their painting works at the Mandalay Modern Art Exhibition 2014 at Dhamma Thalla Hall at the corner of 84th and 31st streets in Chanayethazan Township, Mandalay, from 1 to 3 December. Enthusiasts and people enjoyed the paintings of artists at the exhibition.

Most of the paintings in 130 works were created with modern arts by famous 64 artists.

Thitha Ko Ko (Mandalay)
Japan-China panel of experts hold 1st formal meeting in three years

BEIJING, 3 Dec — A long-established panel of experts on Japan-China relations held a formal meeting on Wednesday for the first time in more than three years, amid some signs of easing political tensions between the two countries.

Their discussions in Beijing materialized after Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and Chinese President Xi Jinping held their first meeting last month since they both took power two years ago and agreed the two Asian powers will resume various high-level talks.

Former State Councillor Tang Jiaxuan, who represents the Chinese side of the joint committee, said the two countries have taken “the first important step toward improving relations.”

But Tang did not forget to remind at the outset that next year will mark the 70th anniversary of “the victory of the Chinese people’s war of resistance against Japan” and called on Japanese political leaders to prevent the revival of militarism by upholding the country’s past apologies for its wartime actions.

Japan Post Holdings Co President Taizo Nishimuro expressed hope of having two days of lively discussions in the Chinese capital with other members of the committee, including scholars and former diplomats.

“The meeting between the two top leaders has merely provided an opportunity to improve relations. There remain numerous problems between Japan and China,” said Nishimuro, who heads the Japanese delegation.

The New Japan-China Friendship Committee for the 21st Century, an advisory body to the two governments, is expected to formulate a set of proposals for improved bilateral ties. The formal meeting was held for the first time in more than three years.—KYODO NEWS

Northern Japan hit by strong wind, snow

PHNOM PENH, 3 Dec — Cambodian and Thai defence officials on Wednesday vowed to further enhance cooperation along the border for mutual benefits, according to a joint statement released after a two-day meeting.

The meeting was co-chaired by secretary of state of Cambodia’s defence ministry, Gen Neang Phat, and Lt Gen Boonchu Kird-chok, director of the Royal Thai Armed Forces Headquarters’ border committee.

“It discussed and agreed on two topics covering 17 issues for bilateral cooperation,” the statement said, adding that those issues included cooperation on border checkpoints, labour, trade, health, tourism, prevention and suppression of drug and human trafficking and other crimes, and counter-terrorism.

Cambodian, Thai defence officials agree to heighten cooperation along border

HANOI, 3 Dec — Russia’s State Duma (lower house) Speaker Sergey Naryshkin met with General Secretary of the Vietnamese Communist Party Central Committee Nguyen Phu Trong on Wednesday to discuss the strengthening of cooperation between the two countries.

For the first time in Vietnam “we feel sympathetically from the Vietnamese people at every step,” he said Naryshkin was in Hanoi when relations between Russia and Vietnam were reached during the Vietnamese official’s visit to Russia last week.

He congratulated Nguyen Phu Trong on the agreements on cooperation in all fields — politics, economy and the military-technical sphere. The agreements were reached during the Vietnamese official’s visit to Russia.

He said Naryshkin was in Hanoi when relations between Russia and Vietnam “we feel sympathetically from the Vietnamese people at every step.”

Speaking to reporters after the meeting, Gen Neang Phat said the meeting ended with a close and friendly atmosphere.

“We agreed to promote bilateral cooperation for peace and security in the border areas, as well as to further strengthen ties and cooperation between the armed forces and concerned security units of the two countries,” he said.

The meeting was a preparatory one for the 10th Cambodia- Thailand General Border Committee meeting, which will be held on 22 December in Cambodia under the presence of the defence ministers of the two nations.—Xinhua

Russian parliament speaker, Vietnamese official discuss strengthening of cooperation

Russia’s State Duma (lower house) Speaker Sergey Naryshkin.

He congratulated Nguyen Phu Trong on the agreements on cooperation in all fields — politics, economy and the military-technical sphere. The agreements were reached during the Vietnamese official’s visit to Russia last week.

He said Naryshkin was in Hanoi when relations between Russia and Vietnam developed actively. “I’m sure that your visit will strengthen relations between the parliaments of both countries and serve the expansion of comprehensive partnership between our countries,” he said.—Itar-Tass
Despite Obama promises, Ferguson protesters say more change needed

 Ferguson, 3 Dec — A pledge by President Barack Obama to address race-related problems between police and minorities falls far short of what is needed, and nationwide demonstrations tied to the police shooting of Missouri teenager Michael Brown will continue to grow, several protest leaders said on Tuesday.

“We’re going to continue to take to the streets, we’re going to continue to disrupt the daily order ... until something really really happens for the people in our communities, until we see some meaningful reform,” Phillip Agnew, a leader with the Dream Defenders youth activist group, said in a conference call with reporters.

Agnew was one of seven protest leaders who met with Obama at the White House on Monday to discuss the unrest that has followed the August shooting of Brown by white police officer Darren Wilson in Ferguson, Missouri. Protesters have blocked highways, temporarily shut down stores and paraded outside government offices in several states.

Protests had been mostly peaceful for many weeks, but exploded on 24 November after a county prosecutor announced that a grand jury had voted not to indict Wilson in the shooting. Two federal civil rights probes are ongoing. Wilson has resigned from the department.

Obama said after Monday’s meeting that he would use his last two years in office to address the “simmering distrust” between police and minority communities. He said he would ask Congress for $263 million to help purchase 50,000 body-worn cameras for police to record interactions with the public, and expand training for law enforcement.

The president also said he would set up a task force to study how to improve community policing, and he would consider imposing tighter controls on the proliferation of military-style weapons and equipment provided to many police departments.

Protest leaders said on Tuesday the meeting with Obama was a sign that their demonstrations were making progress but they still need to see notable progress in many areas.

Ashley Yates, co-founder of the Millennium Activists United group, said police use of military equipment to quell protests in Ferguson after Brown’s shooting was a key problem and many black youth need to be involved in the president’s task force.

Protesters said local, state and federal leaders must acknowledge the scope of the racial divide between blacks and law enforcement.

“We are not satisfied by any means,” Yates said. “We’re definitely going to keep doing the work on the ground.”

Australian travellers warned of limits to consular assistance

Canberra, 3 Dec — Australian tourists have been warned of limits in regards to consular assistance in an effort to lessen the amount of travellers reaching out overseas due to frivolous and time consuming requests.

Foreign minister Julie Bishop announced the restrictions on Wednesday after revealing there were nearly 15,000 Australian tourists who contacted the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade last year. However, a large portion of those 15,000 people had queries that could not be dealt with by staff.

Although Bishop ruled out recommendations to charge tourists for assistance costs, she said it remained a “live option.”

Examples of flippant requests listed by Bishop include “I’m going on a cruise... What will the food be like and can you drink the water on the ship?” and a request for department staff to look after a traveler’s dog.

There were also several examples of travelers asking the department to book accommodation, in addition to asking embassies to pick guests up from certain airports.

However, Bishop is intent on staff spending more time on Australians who are in vulnerable positions and less on irrelevant matters.

“I want to send a very clear message — consular assistance should not be seen as a right, it is a privilege.”

“If you deliberately or willfully abuse the system, you will only receive the absolute minimum level of assistance and advice.”

Bishop also revealed there would be less assistance provided to Australians who knowingly break local laws while overseas.

Indian forces kill six militants crossing into Kashmir to disrupt vote

Handwara, (India), 3 Dec — Soldiers killed six militants near the border with Pakistan in the India-controlled-Kashmir, the army said on Wednesday, in the biggest single-day shootouts in months at the heavily militarized border.

The encounter took place in Kupwara in northern Kashmir late on Tuesday, hours after voters turned out in large numbers for a state election that separatists and militants are opposed to.

One soldier was killed and four wounded in the gunbattle that lasted several hours, an army officer said.

India has been worried this year that Pakistan-based militant groups fighting foreign forces in Afghanistan will turn their attention to Kashmir once the pullout is completed there.

Last week militants wearing army uniforms attacked an Indian army base near the border with Pakistan, leaving 10 people dead in the worst militant violence inside the disputed state in more than a year.

Tuesday’s bid to breach the fenced border post came over heavy snow blocked routes in the mountains, the army officer said.

“They have used sophisticated equipment to infiltrate through the snow,” he said.

Britain says will pay off World War One-era debt in full next March

London, 3 Dec — Britain will pay off all of its debt used to fund World War One next March, when it redeems a government bond first issued more than 80 years ago to help pay for the conflict.

The finance ministry said on Wednesday that it would redeem the 1.9 billion pound ($3.5 billion, 3.5 percent War Loan — a perpetual bond which means it has no fixed maturity date — on 9 March next year.

Issued in 1923, the War Loan was used to re-finance debt accumulated during World War One, which ended in 1918.

Some market experts said they would miss the bond as a rare historical curiosity in modern finance.

“For those of us who’ve been looking at the gilt market for a long time, a little bit of magic has fallen out of the market,” said Barclays fixed income strategist Moyeen Islam.

Speculation about the future of Britain’s long-standing perpetual bonds has grown because government borrowing costs are at historically low levels, making newly issued debt cheaper to maintain.

On Monday, the yield for the 30-year British government bond hit a new record low of 2.639 percent. By contrast, the War Loan yielded just over 3.7 percent on Tuesday.

Because low yields prompted speculation the War Loan could be redeemed at any time with three months’ notice, it meant investors could no longer be sure if they were holding a long duration security, or effectively a three-month Treasury bill, Islam said.

“The War Loan redemption makes market management in a low-yield environment, particularly for long-dated gilts, a lot easier for the street.”

The redemption of the War Loan would be the start of a strategy to pay off its remaining six perpetual gilts, the finance ministry said. While amounting to just a few hundred million pounds, some of these gilts were first issued in the 19th century.

In October, the government announced it would redeem 218 million pounds of the 4 percent Consolated Loan, issued in 1927 by then-finance minister Winston Churchill.

Islam at Barclays said the redemption of the War Loan should have little impact on planned government bond issuance, but might result in a minor adjustment to planned Treasury bill issuance.
Divisive speech

By Aung Khin

Divisive speech is a natural tool for those who try to topple unity in a society. Covetous persons hate the prosperity of others, and always find faults to hinder success in others. Keeping sympathy with other persons is easier than avoiding jealousy. Therefore, unity should be solid to prevent external contentious acts.

Divisive speech and acts are made by third group with intentions to distort a good relation of two groups whether they are friends or not. Such malicious acts are undertaken to cause disunity among friends or to prevent reconciliation among enemies.

The completion of divisive speech is that when one side believes slanderous acts. The worst form of slander or divisive speech results in a separation or disunity of community or society.

However, the opposite of divisive speech is the verbal act for uniting people, encouraging virtue by speaking about others’ good qualities.

Sometimes, a divisive speech is covered with fake consideration. Unscrupulous people try to exaggerate certain problems. Some groups or parties use a tricky proxy to disunite the other groups encountering tensions to take advantage from it. In this circumstance, unity, peace and prosperity of others are fueling their jealousy. As natural resources, some of which are likely to be depleted in the near future. It is all right to innovate, but not at the expense of mankind and the dear planet.

OPEN-MIND

Education has greatly opened the human mind. Education in the form of religion, philosophy, psychology, sociology, etc. has opened the minds of the minority of mankind, but the majority of mankind are still sunk in many internecine wars and conflicts, poverty, hatred and ignorance. So, education, especially uplifting ideas, beliefs and values, should be accessible to all and sundry of mankind.

NETWORKING

Education has enabled people to form various forms of relatedness and connection. Intellectual as well as emotional channels of communication and public relations have developed. All these forms of networking should be used for the development of peace, progress and prosperity.

CONCLUSION

Education should not occupy the domain of the intellect only; it should also occupy, live and move and shape the emotional intelligence in the attitudinal and temporal domain also. Education should encompass the spheres of the head, the heart, the spirit and the entire life.

Long Live Education.

EDUCATION

Kyi Mun

“Ignorance has no beginning but an end; but education has a beginning but no end.”

- An Indian Saying

Education means: (1) Systematic training and instruction (esp. of the young, in school, college, etc.)

(2) Knowledge and abilities, development of character, and mental powers, resulting from such training.

- Advanced Learner’s Dictionary

Kindly allow me to try to elucidate the meaning of education in broader perspectives as follows:

**E** for Empowerment

**D** for Development of Arts & Science

**U** for Uplifting of Effectiveness & Efficiency

**C** for Critical Thinking

**A** for Achievement

**T** for Technology

**I** for Innovation

**O** for Open Mind

**N** for Networking

**EMPOWERMENT**

Education is the greatest constructive force in empowering people in their productive work. Education has been empowering people to increase the productivity, growth and expansion of business, organizations as well as the other sectors of the whole national economy. People with more and higher education have more empowerment in the performance of their jobs.

**DEVELOPMENT OF ARTS & SCIENCE**

Education has radically developed the arts and science. Knowledge and wisdom have developed by leaps and bounds in many disciplines and fields of human endeavour. Just as literature, fine arts and general knowledge have opened up huge vistas and visions and accomplishments, many fields of science have also made quantum jumps in their development by education.

**UPLIFTING OF EFFECTIVENESS & EFFICIENCY**

Education has uplifted the effectiveness of people in their work. That is to say, education has helped people to do the right things. So also, people have all along been enabled by education to increase the efficiency in their work. That means education has been helping people to do the things right.

**CRITICAL THINKING**

Education has been inciting people to be critical in their thinking. Education has enabled people to avoid DOGMATISM, EXTREMISM, FATALISM, NIHILISM, CHAOTICISM, etc. Education has taught people to use their knowledge, wisdom and insights in the transformation of their lives from good to great, and from best to bettering the best.

**ACHIEVEMENT**

Education has been leading people to attain tremendous achievements. It is Education that has enabled mankind to achieve the heights of human civilization up to now. Education has been enabling people to gain colossal material achievements, but the most crucial and urgent period in mankind’s history is for the people to start developing insights and wisdom to help remedy the afflictions that our dear planet has been forced to suffer due to human arrogance, greed, complacency, inconsistency, myopia, apathy, inertia, ignorance, etc.

**TECHNOLOGY**

Education has enabled people to develop technology to an unprecedented extent. But technology must uplift mankind and the planet itself. Technology should not just serve the sectarian interests of the multinational corporations only. The entire broad masses of the people of the world are entitled to enjoy the fruits of the advancement of technology. This is a very urgent and crucial factor that education has to change.

**INNOVATION**

Education is responsible for enabling people to become creative in thinking new and better ideas and create innovative products. The world of breakthrough ideas has developed to such an extent that mankind has been able to reduce the globe to a village. Nowadays, there has been rampant innovative products at the expense of the planet’s environment.

National Symphony Orchestra Concert marks

Myanmar-Japan diplomatic relations

YANGON, 3 Dec — In commemoration of the 60th anniversary of Myanmar-Japan diplomatic relations, the Myanmar National Symphony Orchestra Concert 2014 was held at the National Theatre on Myoma Kyaung Street in Yangon on 2 December evening.

Japanese pianist Ms Kyoko Koyama and Principal Conductor Mr Yumoseki Yamamoto presented Myanmar songs and music to the audiences. Deputy Minister for Information U Pae Htway presented flower basket to the Japanese professionals and Japanese Ambassador Mr Tatsishi Higuchi and wife, the flower basket to the Myanmar National Symphony Orchestra. The orchestra was formed by Myamna Radio and Television under the Ministry of Information in 2002. Professional musicians from the US, UK, Australia, Germany, Thailand and Japan trained Myanmar musicians.

Some members of the orchestra studied fine arts abroad and performed musical entertainments at home and abroad.—Yi Yi Myint
Norwegian King and Queen visit Bagan

NyaungU, 3 Dec—Norwegian King His Majesty Harald V and Queen Her Majesty Sonja arrived in ancient cultural city of Bagan, Mandalay Region on Wednesday.

The special flight of the visiting royal guests landed at NyaungU Airport at 11:30 a.m as Union Minister U Htay Aung for Hotels and Tourism, Mandalay region government officials and students were welcoming them at the airport.

The King then held a press conference at the Thande Hotel in the ancient city about their official tour to Myanmar.

The King and the Queen also visited the ancient research museum and looked around the artifacts of Bagan period.

They also witnessed the signing ceremony of the agreement between Myanmar and Norway on joint conservation of cultural heritages of Southeast Asian countries.

Deputy Minister for culture Daw Sandar Khin explained conservation activities of her ministry, together with Ministry of Forestry and UNESCO, cultural heritages and forest.

The Norwegian King and Queen visited the temples and pagodas, including Ananda Temple, Shwesandaw and Cula-muni Pagodas before they took cruise ship Amara along Ayeyarwady River to enjoy panoramic views of Bagan.

Washington Aung (NyaungU)

Myanmar, Norway focus on preservation of ancient culture and natural heritages

Yangon, 3 Dec—Union Minister for Environmental Conservation and Forestry U Win Tun received Deputy Minister for Climate and Environment Mr Lars Andreas Lunde and party of Norway at the ASEAN Institute for Green Economy-AIGE on Kaba Aye Pagoda Road in Yangon on Wednesday.

They discussed technical, expertise and fund assistance of Norwegian government for Myanmar environmental and forest conservation schools, exchange of delegations to hold meetings, workshops and trainings, signing cooperation agreements, development of water resources, protection of biodiversities, dangerous waste management, preservation of ancient culture and natural heritages, and conservation of endangered orchid species in Myanmar.—MNA

Union Minister U Win Tun holds talks with Deputy Minister for Climate and Environment Mr Lars Andreas Lunde of Norway.—MNA

Opening ceremony on Immense Spectrum ASEAN Festival of Artists with Disability

The opening ceremony on Immense Spectrum ASEAN Festival of Artists with Disability for the welfares of the disabled was held at Myanmar International Convention Centre (MICC) on Wednesday.

The union ministers attended by union ministers, deputy ministers, parliamentarians, departmental heads, diplomats, artists with disability from ASEAN and Japan, explained progress of the State, development plans for Kayah State, education reforms and participation of people in reform process to township level officials and representatives of peace groups.

Local people reported on requirements in education, health, electrification, communication and transport sectors.

The union ministers fulfilled the requirements and urged them to undertake human resource development.—MNA

Permanent residency to be available...

(from page 1) The duration for getting the permission from the government depends on the number of the applicants, however, the Ministry of Immigration and Population will carry out the process as quickly as possible depending on requirements of the country, U Maung Maung Than said.

An initial application fee, which cannot be reimbursed, is set at $500 and a successful foreign applicant shall pay $1,000, a former citizen $500, a spouse or a child aged 7 and under 18 of a former citizen $300 a year. There is no fee for children under 7, according to the ministry.

The Ministry of Immigration and Population plans to put an English version of the rules and procedures of the system on its website on 5 December.—GNLM

Union ministers on tour of Loikaw, Kayah State

Nay Pyi Taw, 3 Dec—Union Ministers at the President Office U Soe Than and U Tin Naing Thein viewed round development of Loikaw and technological university and computer university in Loikaw on Wednesday.

At the city hall, they explained progress of the State, development plans for Kayah State, education reforms and participation of people in reform process to township level officials and representatives of peace groups.

Local people reported on requirements in education, health, electrification, communication and transport sectors.

The union ministers fulfilled the requirements and urged them to undertake human resource development.—MNA
Russia’s envoy warns NATO against military build-up in Eastern Europe

GRUSHKO, Alexander

Polish and British soldiers during joint drills, on 21 Nov, 2014. Poland.—Itar-Tass

Ex-Pentagon official Carter may succeed Hagel US report

WASHINGTO, 3 Dec — US President Barack Obama is set to name Ashton Carter, a former top official of the Defense Department, as successor to Pentagon chief Chuck Hagel, US reports said on Tuesday.

Carter, a physicist by training who took the post of undersecretary of defense in 2009 under Obama and was promoted to deputy secretary of defense from October 2011 to December 2013. Many US media outlets already reported that Carter’s name was on Obama’s shortlist to replace Hagel, along with other candidates including Michelle Flournoy, also a former undersecretary of defense. Flournoy, however, is believed to have declined the post.

Obama will need approval from the Republican-controlled Senate of his appointee for the next defense secretary. Sen James Inhofe, the top Republican on the chamber’s Armed Services Committee, would “strongly” support the possible nomination of Carter, according to The Associated Press.

Obama on 24 November announced the resignation of Hagel in a move widely taken as the dismissal of the defense secretary following disagreements with the White House over key security issues such as how to respond to Islamic State extremists.—Kyodo News

Iraq says woman detained in Lebanon is not Baghdadi wife

BAHRAIN, 3 Dec — Iraq’s Interior Ministry said on Wednesday that a woman detained by Lebanese authorities was not the wife of Islamic State leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, but the sister of a man convicted of bombings in southern Iraq.

“The one detained by Lebanese authorities is Saja Abdul Hamid al-Dulaimi, sister of Omar Abdul Hamid al-Dulaimi who is detained by authorities and sentenced to death for his participation in ... explosions,” ministry spokesman Brigadier General Saad Maan told Reuters. He said Baghdadi had two wives, but “there is no wife in the name of Saja al-Dulaimi”.—Reuters

UN mission calls for new talks between Libyan groups on 9 December

TRIPOLI, 3 Dec — The UN’s mission in Libya will call for a new round of talks to start on Tuesday between Libya’s warring parties, it said in a statement on Wednesday, to try to end a conflict threatening to tear apart the oil producing nation.

Libya has two governments and parliaments vying for power since a group called Libya Dawn seized the capital Tripoli in August after a month-long battle with a rival group and set up its own cabinet.

Internationally recognized Prime Minister Abdullah al-Thinni has been forced to work from the east of the country where the elected House of Representatives is also based.

The UN mission said it will call a new round of political dialogue “on 9 December, without saying where talks would be held nor who would participate.”

In September it held talks in the southern town of Ghadames, bringing together the elected House of Representatives and members who have boycott-ed the sessions. Previous rounds have not included members of armed groups linked to both sides but diplomats hope the talks will start a wider dialogue about Libya’s political crisis. UN Special Envoy Bernardino Leon has also met the head of a rival parliament based in Tripoli.

Prospects of talks have been complicated by recent air strikes claimed by Thinni’s forces in western Libya, which is controlled by Libya Dawn.

The OPEC member has been in chaos since Muammar Gaddafi was toppled in a eight-month uprising in 2011.—Reuters

Iraqi woman captured by Islamic State "not Baghdadi's wife"
US-led coalition has weakened Islamic State, Kerry says

Brussels, 3 Dec — The US-led coalition has inflicted serious damage on Islamic State, carrying out around 1,000 air strikes so far in Iraq and Syria, but the fight against the militants could last years, US Secretary of State John Kerry said on Wednesday.

The United States and its allies began air strikes against Islamic State after the Sunni militants made large territorial advances last summer. The Iraqi army, Sunni tribal fighters and Kurdish forces have since recovered some ground against them.

“Our commitment will be measured most likely in years but our efforts are already having a significant impact,” Kerry said at the start of a first meeting of ministers from a coalition of more than 60 countries that Washington has assembled to destroy Islamic State, which is also known as Daesh. “The roughly 1,000 coalition air missions we have flown have reduced Daesh’s leadership and inflicted damage on its logistical and operational capabilities.”

Kerry said Islamic State’s momentum in Iraq has dissipated and its capabilities. “It is much harder now than when we started for Daesh to assemble forces in strength, to travel in convoys and to launch concerted attacks,” Kerry said. “No large Daesh unit can move forward aggressively without worrying what will come down on it from the skies.” The US-chaired meeting was held at NATO headquarters in Brussels, but Kerry stressed it was not a NATO event.

Washington wants to discuss political coordination among coalition members but otherwise officials have been vague about the aims of the meeting.

Kerry praised the role of Arab states in the fight against Islamic State. Apart from Iraq, the meeting included representatives from Kuwait, Bahrain and Morocco. Kerry, who hold talks with Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi before the meeting, also hailed the “significant progress” the new Baghdad government was making to implement a national programme and to unite against Islamic State.

Kerry cited Baghdad’s agreement this week with Kurds on oil exports and revenue and its order for the release of detainees held without formal charges.

Irish legislators agree on 17 March parliamentary election

Israel’s Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who has been unravelling over an accounting scandal, was due to hold a preliminary vote later in the day on dissolving itself, after right-wing Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Tuesday fired two cabinet ministers and declared an early election. Netanyahu’s government, which only took office last year, had been a series of crises, including the 2015 budget and a Jewish nation-state bill that critics say discriminates against Arab citizens.

Two television polls on Tuesday said Netanyahu’s Likud party would emerge once again as the largest group in parliament if elections were held today, almost certainly ensuring him a fourth term as prime minister. The next national ballot had not been scheduled until 2017, but Netanyahu announced that he wanted to dissolve parliament “as soon as possible” and hold an early election.

He also ordered the dismissals of Finance Minister Yair Lapid and Justice Minister Tzipi Livni, the heads of two separate centrist parties who have been challenging the right-wing parties that predominate in the government.

Israel’s Radio said the report said the date was agreed in a meeting of the heads of parliament. But the move is due to hold a preliminary vote later in the day on dissolving itself, after right-wing Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Tuesday fired two cabinet ministers and declared an early election. Netanyahu’s government, which only took office last year, had been unravelling over an array of issues, including the 2015 budget and a Jewish nation-state bill that critics say discriminates against Arab citizens.

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Blast in the vicinity of airport in Somali capital

Mogadishu, 3 Dec — A blast, possibly caused by a car bomb, went off near the international airport in the Somali capital on Wednesday where the United Nations and some Western embassies are based, a Reuters witness and a security official said.

There was no word on casualties and no immediate claim of responsibility.

The Somali Islamist group al Shabaab has often used car bombs. A security adviser, based at the airport, told Reuters by telephone there had been a suspected VBIED, or vehicle-borne improvised explosive device, without giving further details. Another official said the blast was just outside the airport.

Reuters

Suicide car bomb hits Iran envoy’s house in Yemen, three dead

Sanaa, 3 Dec — Three people were killed on Wednesday when a suicide attacker drove a car laden with explosives at the residence of the Iranian ambassador in the Yemeni capital Sanaa, security officials and paramedics said. The blast punched a large hole in the building and sent rubble flying across the street of the well-guarded diplomatic quarter of the city, a Reuters witness said.

Yemeni soldiers and paramedics arrived at the scene with stretchers. Abdullah Mahnoud, a soldier, said Yemeni and Iranian guards had been killed and a paramedic at the scene said three dead bodies and three wounded had been taken from the area.

It was not immediately clear whether the ambassador was in the residence at the time of the blast.

Shi’ite Muslim rebels close to Iran took control of Sanaa in September and fanned out across the country, clashing with Sunni tribesmen and also with Yemen’s local branch of al-Qaeda.

The United States and Yemen’s Sunni Gulf neighbours suspect Iran is meddling in the impoverished state and there are fears of sectarian warfare spreading to other countries of the region. Iran denies interfering in Yemen affairs. Iranian diplomats have been targeted in Yemen in the past. One Iranian diplomat is still being held hostage by suspected militants and another was killed this year when he resisted a kidnapping attempt.

Egyptian court sentences 185 to death for attack on police

Cairo, 3 Dec — An Egyptian judge sentenced 185 Muslim Brotherhood supporters to death on Tuesday over an attack on a police station near Cairo last year in which 12 policemen were killed. The ruling is preliminary and subject to a lengthy appeals process. It also goes to the country’s top religious authority for approval although his opinion is not binding.

The sentence comes days after another court dropped charges against Hosni Mubarak over the killing of protesters during the 2011 uprising that ended his 30-year rule.

The attack on the Kerda police station took place on 14 Aug, 2013, the day that Egyptian security forces cleared two Brotherhood protest camps in Cairo, killing hundreds of people in one of the bloodiest episodes in Egypt’s modern history.

Of those sentenced, 151 are in custody, with the others being tried in absentia, a judicial source said. Egyptian authorities have rounded up thousands of Brotherhood members since the army ousted Islamist President Mohamed Mursi in July last year, following protests against his turbulent one-year rule.

Egyptian courts have since sentenced hundreds to death in mass trials that have been condemned by human rights groups.

Reuters

Suicide bomber hits police station in Iran, three dead

Reuter's

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Reuters

A view shows a damaged police station burnt in a blaze by supporters of former president Mohamed Mursi in Kerda, a town 14 km (9 miles) from Cairo in this 19 Sept, 2013 file photograph. — Reuters
Bhopal demands justice 30 years after deadliest industrial disaster

BY KOYO News

Bhopal, India — 3 Dec — Hundreds of people marched through the central Indian city of Bhopal late Tuesday, waving flaming torches to commemorate the thousands who perished in the world’s deadliest industrial disaster and demanding justice for survivors who continue to suffer three decades on.

In the early hours of 3 Dec, 1984, around 40 metric tonnes of toxic methyl isocyanate gas accidently leaked from a pesticide factory owned by US multinational Union Carbide Corp and was carried by the wind into the surrounding slums.

The government recorded 5,295 deaths. Activists estimate 25,000 people have died from illnesses in the years since. Many more, they say, are dealing with cancer, blindness, respiratory difficulties and immune and neurological disorders, but with no support. “We are here to demand our rights from both the Indian government and Union Carbide,” said Kamla Bhai, 70, as she walked alongside other survivors, activists and supporters through Bhopal’s bustling streets to the abandoned factory site.

“We lost our children, we lost our husbands, we lost our mothers, we lost our husbands, we lost our children, we lost our children,” said Rosy, 50, who is affected by muscular dystrophy, as well as the cleaning up of toxic waste, buried by the company inside and outside the plant. The waste has seeped into the ground and contaminated water of 50,000 people living around the site.

The government of Madhya Pradesh state, where Bhopal is located, said that the Supreme Court decides who are the beneficiaries eligible for compensation and free health care. “Every affected person has been listed and this has been put before the Supreme Court and the court has decided, after extensive examination of their cases, what is to be paid to whom,” said Pravir Kishan, the state’s principal secretary at the department in charge of relief and rehabilitation for Bhopal’s victims.

Kishan said some impoverished families seeking compensation for sicknesses or medical help for their disabled children, who suffer from diseases such as cerebral palsy and muscular dystrophy, were not from contaminated locations, suggesting they falsely claimed to be victims of the tragedy. He said the state has provided 40 billion rupees ($650 million) to 575,000 people identified by the Supreme Court as being affected by the disaster, built six state-of-the-art hospitals and provided houses for many victims.

US company Dow Chemical, which now owns Union Carbide, has denied liability, saying it bought the company a decade after Union Carbide settled its liabilities to the Indian government in 1989 by paying $470 million. Activists said that was a paltry sum based on a gross underestimation of the human suffering caused by the calamity.

Various petitions to hold Dow to account for increased compensation as well as the cleaning up of toxic waste are being pressed in Indian and American courts.—Reuters

100 mil yen platinum calendar featuring “Frozen” put on sale

By Kyodo News

Tokyo, 3 Dec — A jeweller in Tokyo’s Ginza shopping district on Wednesday put on sale a 100 million yen platinum-based calendar for 2015 featuring scenes from the hit Disney movie “Frozen.”

The calendar is displayed at the flagship store of Tanaka Kikinzoku Jewelry K.K., a unit of Tanaka Holdings Co. The jeweller, which has sold gold calendars every year since 2006, used platinum this time to promote the snow world of the animation movie.

The 1.2-meter tall, 87-centimeter wide set including a frame and a pedestal is made from roughly 10 kilograms of pure platinum. On the back of the calendar are printed images of characters from the movie, which is this year’s box-office winner in Japan.

Tanaka Kikinzoku will display the calendar in Ginza until Sunday and later put it on display at other outlets nationwide. It will take orders until the end of next March.—Kyodo News

Mihajlovic: Freezing of South Stream is problem for Serbia

By Tanjug

Belgrade, 3 Dec — Serbian Deputy Prime Minister Zorana Mihajlovic said on Tuesday that the freezing of the South Stream pipeline project was a problem for Serbia but she still did not think it meant a real end to South Stream.

“Serbia has neither done anything bad or wrong nor caused such a decision to be made by Russian officials - to stop the construction of South Stream. On the contrary, we did everything we had been asked to do to have it built, as to us, it is a matter of energy security,” Mihajlovic said at an extraordinary meeting held at the Serbian government. Mihajlovic announced meeting with experts in the Serbian government on Friday to decide about next moves concerning the South Stream project.

The deputy prime minister pointed out that Serbia was too small a country to make any moves that could influence and be in relation to the grand international infrastructure project and it would wait for further negotiations between Russia and the EU and behave in accordance with their agreements.

Commenting on the European Commission’s decision to continue South Stream talks with the countries participating in the project on 9 December, Mihajlovic said that European companies were greatly interested in the project, observing that some German companies had invested a lot of money in manufacturing pipes for the pipeline. Mihajlovic expects the 9 December meeting to yield an agreement on the issue.

“We need to wait for seven to 10 days and see if anything is made,” she said.—Tanjug

Singapore Exchange again hit by technical glitch

By Kyodo News

Singapore, 3 Dec — The Singapore Exchange delayed the opening of securities trading for about four hours on Wednesday due to a software problem.

A power breakdown on 5 November also caused a major trading disruption. The software error was caused by programming changes performed over the weekend, SGX said in a statement.

“We understand the market’s frustration. This should not have happened and we take full responsibility. We are reviewing our processes to prevent any recurrence,” Magnus Bocker, the CEO of SGX, said.

The securities market opened at 12:30 pm instead of 9 am as normal.

The delayed opening prompted the Monetary Authority of Singapore to issue a warning it will take “supervisory actions against SGX if necessary.”

The MAS “has registered its disappointment and concerns with SGX over the delayed opening of its securities market,” an MAS spokesperson said in a statement.

The Monetary Authority said it has instructed the SGX management to do a thorough review to address the problems that led to the lapse.
In the villages that surround Letpadaung copper project in central Myanmar, the effects of the social investments made by Myanmar Wanbao Mining Limited, “Myanmar Wanbao”, are tangible. Myanmar Wanbao, together with the Myanmar Government and its Myanmar partners MEI and MEHLL, has married its community initiatives with Myanmar’s development goals of “poverty alleviation”, “inclusive growth” and “people-centred development”. Myanmar Wanbao is committed to the community, and the Letpadaung villagers have witnessed this throughout the company’s actions. They have seen that despite the mine not being operational due to stoppages outside its control the mine has been reaching out to them in every way it can. This is why the majority of the people in the area have given their full support to the project.

**Land Compensation and Subsidies**

Since 2011, the partners of the Letpadaung project have paid three times of land compensa-
tion or subsidies to the villagers who had lost land in the project area. The criteria for the land compensation or subsidies was decided by the government base on law and local market price for the land. The total amount of compensation and three times of subsidies is between 1,825,000Ks and 3,250,000Ks per acre depending on the type of land. The compensation plus the first subsidy is 100% claimed by the land-lost people. 66% of the total land-lost people have taken up second subsidies, which means the majority of villagers losing land are willing to release their land to the project.

**Contribution Payments**

Even though Myanmar Wanbao has met its legal requirements and has paid compensation and subsidies, the company has gone further to safeguard the livelihood and wellbeing of its community in the long term. Since July 2014, the company, together with its Myanmar partners and supervised by the Myanmar government, has created an annual Contribution payment to all the land-lost villagers between USD 70 and USD 160 per month depending on the number of jobs they are entitled to have because of land loss. Land-lost villagers had originally been promised jobs by Myanmar Wanbao (the number of which were dependent on how much land was given to the project), however due to the stoppages the company was unable to provide jobs through no fault of its own. So the contribution payment are given regularly cash payments every six months until a job materialises. This ensures that the land-lost villagers have the peace of mind that their basic livelihood needs are met whilst they wait for a job at Myanmar Wanbao to materialise. This was done through extensive consultations and with the participation of the villagers. It included unprecedented extensive door-to-door consultations for months. This is why the majority of the people in the area have given their full support to the project.

**Community and Social Development (CSD) projects**

While providing the basic livelihood to the land-lost people, Myanmar Wanbao, under the support and participation of the Myanmar government, attaches great importance to the community and social development in this area. It has done a great variety of CSD projects to improve people’s livelihood from electricity supply, drinking water provision, primary to secondary school and kindergarten building, scholarships, free medical services, etc. The mining company has connected 12,000 villagers to the national electric grid helping release thousands from “energy poverty”. By the end of this year, more than 8,000 local villagers will get clean drinking water thanks to the company’s “water” project. The mobile clinics have already offered over 80,000 free medical treatments in 50 villages around the project and over 1,200 students benefit from the schools we have built. Besides, we offered scholarships to more than 1,000 grade-ten or university students in local area in the past two years with an amount of 82 million Kyats. Critically, this community investment is beginning to take place in consultation with the local community.

Backwards and Forward Linkages: SMEs and Local Procurement

Myanmar Wanbao is promoting the first seeds of industrialisation in its community through the creation of forward and backward linkages from the mine. It is nurturing local small and medium enterprises in the community through its “pro-poor” procurement process. This is helping create new jobs, nurture entrepreneurial talent, and transfer skills and knowledge which is benefiting the community and will contribute to the development of the whole region. Myanmar Wanbao’s leadership agrees with President U Thein Sein’s message to ASEAN, that SME deve-
lopment is the route to poverty alleviation. The company believes that SMEs, when properly nurtured and supported, can be the source of economic security, balanced growth and inclusive development.

Even so, it has helped impacted villagers set up SMEs in the food (agricultural), trans-
port and construction sectors. The company has worked closely with the company’s support – the transport village contractors already have 26 trucks and they have started working with other clients. Local villagers have also set up a bricks factory, a concrete pipe factory, a pre-cast concrete slab factory and many more. Wanbao is committed to nurturing the SMEs around it through targeted procurement, capacity, building and advice where applicable.

**Fiscal Linkages: Long-term benefit for the community and the country**

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**Fiscal Linkages: Long-term benefit for the community and the country**

Myanmar Wanbao, under the supervision and participation of the Myanmar government, attaches great importance to the community and social development in this area. It has done a great variety of CSD projects to improve people’s livelihood from electricity supply, drinking water provision, primary to secondary school and kindergarten building, scholarships, free medical services, etc. The mining company has connected 12,000 villagers to the national electric grid helping release thousands from “energy poverty”. By the end of this year, more than 8,000 local villagers will get clean drinking water thanks to the company’s “water” project. The mobile clinics have already offered over 80,000 free medical treatments in 50 villages around the project and over 1,200 students benefit from the schools we have built. Besides, we offered scholarships to more than 1,000 grade-ten or university students in local area in the past two years with an amount of 82 million Kyats. Critically, this community investment is beginning to take place in consultation with the local community.
Shakira wants to keep her son away from spotlight

Shakira called on the paparazzi not to click pictures of her toddler son and let him enjoy a “normal” childhood.—PTI

Los Angeles, 3 Dec — HBO is diving into the world of rock and roll in 1970s New York with a new television series from Martin Scorsese, Mick Jagger and “Boardwalk Empire” creator Terence Winter, the premium cable network said on Tuesday.

The yet-to-be-titled drama series will star Bobby Cannavale as a talent-finding record executive Richie Finestra, Olivia Wilde as his ex-model wife, and Ray Romano as the label’s head of promotions.

Winter, who earned an Oscar nomination as the screenwriter of Scorsese’s 2013 film “The Wolf of Wall Street,” will serve as showrunner and writer, as well as executive producer with Scorsese and Jagger.

The series will tell the story of Finestra as he searches for the next big hit at a time when disco and punk rock were starting to emerge, HBO said.

The network said Scorsese will direct the pilot episode like he did for prohibition period drama “Boardwalk Empire,” which finished its five-season run on the network in October.

Jagger’s 29-year-old son James Jagger will play the part of a singer in an early punk rock band, and come- diamand Andrew “Dice” Clay as a “cocaine-fueled” owner of a chain of radio stations.

No premiere date has been announced for the hour-long drama, which shoots in New York.

HBO orders 1970s rock drama from Martin Scorsese, Mick Jagger

In ‘Wild,’ Reese Witherspoon embarks on path to self-fulfilment

Hollywood’s overachiever might be the more accurate moniker for the 38-year-old actress these days.

Sitting amid the wilderness above Beverly Hills, Witherspoon talks about finding “the most true honest expression of who I really am” in her new film “Wild,” opening this week in US theaters.

Stripped down and raw, critics are calling it her strongest role in years and it is largely of her own making, for she bought the film rights to the best-selling memoir from Cheryl Strayed, a grieving, wayward young woman who hikes over 1,000 miles (1,600 km) in a solo quest to heal.

It was the kind of role, she says, that was scarce when she founded her production company three years ago: strong leading roles for women, great parts that show complex characters.

Witherspoon won the Best Actress Oscar in 2006 for her role as June Carter in “Walk the Line,” but had not matched that success since.

“You know, it wasn’t about the studios not giving me what I wanted,” Witherspoon said in an interview.

“You can’t expect people to develop projects that quintessentially capture what you want to say in film. If you want something done right, you do it yourself.”

After “Wild” and their recent box office hit “Gone Girl,” Witherspoon and producing partner Bruna Papandrea have 16 more projects in the works.

“We have a project pretty much at every studio now,” she said.

Moviegoers will see a different Reese in “Wild,” a Fox Searchlight film directed by Jean-Marc Vallée.

Cheryl is grimy and bruised on the trail, and in flashbacks she mourns her dead mother Bobbi (played by Laura Derm), shoots up heroin and has rough sex with strangers, naked.

“Audiences that saw me doing movies years ago have changed,” said Witherspoon. “They have dealt with grief and loss and divorce and having children. You know your audience evolves and you have to evolve as well.”

Indeed, Strayed has found she has quite a bit in common with Witherspoon, the only person in Hollywood to whom she sent her book.

Some people will decide that I have written this book about my wild behaviour in my twenties and Reese is America’s sweetheart and they want to put us in opposition to each other,” Strayed said. “And we laugh about that.”
Rolling Stones saxophonist Bobby Keys dies at 70

LOS ANGELES, 3 Dec — Bobby Keys, the saxophonist who toured with The Rolling Stones for more than 45 years, died at his home in Franklin, Tennessee due to cirrhosis. He was 70. Keys’ family announced his passing on Facebook last night. “Early this morning our beloved husband, father, family member, and friend passed away peacefully at home in Franklin, TN. Bobby was surrounded by his family and loved ones. He will be greatly missed as he touched so many lives and made a lasting contribution to the American music scene,” the statement read.

“Bobby’s horn may be silenced here on Earth, but the music he graciously shared will eternally live on. In lieu of flowers and gifts, the family asks that contributions be made to St Jude’s Children’s Research Hospital and The Humane Society in his honour,” they added. The Rolling Stones paid tribute to Keys by posting a photo of him along with a message. “The Rolling Stones are devastated by the loss of their very dear friend and legendary saxophone player, Bobby Keys. Bob- by made a unique musical contribution to the band since the 1960s. He will be greatly missed,” the message read.

Keys, who was born on 18 Dec, 1943 in Slaton, Texas, began touring with Bobby Vee and Buddy Hol- ly when he was 15. Later in 1964, he befriended Keith Richards, who has the same birthday as him, and Mick Jagger. Richards expressed his condolences by posting a picture of a handwritten note. “I have lost the largest pal in the world and I can’t express the sense of sadness I feel, although Bobby would tell me to cheer up. My condolences to all that knew him and his love of music,” Richards wrote.

Real Madrid’s Khedira suffers concussion in Cup game

MADRID, 3 Dec — Real Madrid midfielder Sami Khedira has spent the night under observation in hospital after suffering a concussion in Tuesday’s King’s Cup game against the third-tier min- ority. He will be greatly missed as he touched so many lives and made a lasting contribution to the American music scene,” the statement read.

“Bobby’s horn may be silenced here on Earth, but the music he graciously shared will eternally live on. In lieu of flowers and gifts, the family asks that contributions be made to St Jude’s Children’s Research Hospital and The Humane Society in his honour,” they added. The Rolling Stones paid tribute to Keys by posting a photo of him along with a message. “The Rolling Stones are devastated by the loss of their very dear friend and legendary saxophone player, Bobby Keys. Bobby made a unique musical contribution to the band since the 1960s. He will be greatly missed,” the message read.

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Real Madrid’s Khedira suffers concussion in Cup game

MADRID, 3 Dec — Real Madrid midfielder Sami Khedira has spent the night under observation in hospital after suffering a concussion in Tuesday’s King’s Cup game at home to Cornellà. Khedira collided with Cornella midfielder Da- vid Garcia shortly after halftime at the Bernabeu and after playing on for a few minutes the German international had to come off and was replaced by Jese.

“Following scans car- ried out on Sami Khedira by the Real Madrid medi- cal services, a concussion has been diagnosed,” the European champions said on their website (www. realmadrid.com).

“He will remain under observation for the whole night.” Holders Real won the last-32, second leg game against the third-tier min- ority 5-0 for a 9-1 aggre- gate victory.

Fans will warm to new tournament in time — Agassi

SINGAPORE, 3 Dec — Andre Agassi has seen many tournaments come and go in his long and il- lustrious career and the American great believes the new International Premier Tennis League (IPTL) has all the ingredients to be a long-term success. “The 44-year-old joined up with his Singapore Slam- mers team mates on the second leg of the Asia-based mixed team event this week and was quick to echo the sentiments of all the players involved, who have been united in their enthusiasm for the innovative compe- tition.

“There’s a lot of up- sides in this for me,” he told reporters in Singapore, one of a quartet of Asian cities hosting the IPTL along with Manila, Delhi and Dubai.

“Watching the sport go to places where there should

be tennis and enthusiastic fans who can enjoy a format that is motivational to the younger generation in these cities, in these communi- ties,” he added.

“It’s great for them and for the players, acting like a team out there. You want it bad but you also want to keep it relaxed so its a fun environment for us.

“You also get to see so many different match-ups and the game played in so many different ways and that also lends to a better future for the sport.”

Agassi is one of the ‘icons’ on the four teams, who have also recruited a host of big names including Serena Williams, Roger Federer, Novak Djokovic and Maria Sharapova.

He predicted fans would warm to the tournament once they fully understand its complex scoring system.

“It’s a bit like our rank- ing system in that once you kind of get it then you are fine ... you understand it,” said the eight-time grand slam champion.

“So those things are be- ing worked out day-to-day but only a few days into it and everybody is getting a lot more comfortable.

“This will grow for the crowds as next year they will know what to expect. I think that enthusiasm and knowledge will translate but it already is pretty high.”

Regarding the future of the event, Agassi sees it as a welcome addition to the existing tour, but not a game-changer.

“Can you ever say that the pillars of the sport will morph into this? That’s a stretch as we are a sport of great tradition,” he said.

“This needs to be a sup- plement to it in my opinion.

It’s a great release for the players and an opportunity to communicate their per- sonalities more.” — Reuters

Singapore Slammers’ Andre Agassi of the US waves to fans after the matches against Manila Mavericks at the International Premier Tennis League (IPTL) in Singapore on 2 Dec, 2014. — Reuters
Gerrard helps Liverpool triumph, United win again

LONDON, 3 Dec — Steven Gerrard’s future at Liverpool may be in doubt but the captain turned back the clock to score in a 3-1 victory at bottom side Leicester City in the Premier League on Tuesday.

Manchester United maintained their recent improvement with a fourth successive league win, beating Stoke City 2-1 at Old Trafford with a Marouane Fellaini header and Juan Mata free kick either side of a Steven Nzonzi goal for Stoke.

Manchester United’s Juan Mata (R) celebrates with Ashley Young and Chris Smalling (L) after scoring his team’s second goal during their English Premier League soccer match against Stoke City at Old Trafford in Manchester, northern England on 2 Dec, 2014.—Reuters

SINGAPORE, 3 Dec — Liverpool captain Gerrard, 34, left out of the starting lineup on Saturday, was back in the team at Leicester where he rifled home a poor clearance from captain Wes Morgan to turn the balance of the match the Merseysiders’ way in the 54th minute.

They had fallen behind when Liverpool keeper Simon Mignolet conceded an own goal after 22 minutes before a 26th minute Adam Lallana equaliser for the visitors.

Leicester were reduced to 10 men when Morgan, who scored an own goal against QPR on Saturday, was sent off for a foul on Rickie Lambert after 63 minutes and they conceded a third when Jordan Henderson scored after 83 minutes. Manchester United manager Brendan Rodgers confirmed on Monday that Gerrard, who made his debut for the club 16 years ago last weekend, had been offered a new contract and was full of praise for him after the three points were secured.

“He was rested at the weekend with tonight in mind,” Rodgers told BT Sport.

“When you rest players ask why, when you play them you are asked aren’t you resting them? The energy from being rested at the weekend gave him the energy to play tonight,” he said.

Gerrard declined to answer questions about the contract renewal but said: “I will decide when I am ready.”

“There is nothing to say, when there is the fans know I will come out and say it. It was a great team performance, the headlines should be about that not me.

“I am happy with the goal, even more pleased with the win. We are a lot harder to beat. Come the end of the season we will be fighting for fourth.”

Manchester United, who were without injured skipper Wayne Rooney, gave manager Louis van Gaal something to smile about with their win at Old Trafford.

“I am very happy we held the result till the end,” said the Dutchman. “I am very happy with the result, that’s the fourth victory in the row and tomorrow we have our Christmas party.”

In the bottom half of the table, Aston Villa earned three points for the first time since September with a 1-0 win at Crystal Palace where Christian Benteke’s goal ended a run of nine games without a victory for Paul Lambert’s side.

Queens Park Rangers crushed to a seventh successive away league defeat and slipped to one off the bottom when they were beaten 2-0 at Swansea City.

Burnley climbed out of the relegation zone when they stretched their unbeaten run to four games with a 1-1 draw at home to mid-table Newcastle United.

Burnley have 12 points above Hull City and QPR on 11, with Leicester propping up the table with 10 points from 14 games.

Serena’s Slammers lose again as Aces continue to dominate

SINGAPORE, 3 Dec — Serena Williams returned to the scene of her WTA Finals win but could not prevent her Singapore Slammers team slumping to a fourth straight defeat in the inaugural International Premier Tennis League (IPTL) on Tuesday.

The world number one is the highest-profile player participating in the four-city mixed team event at Singapore’s Indoor Stadium this week but it was the unbeaten Delhi-based India Aces who continued to dominate the early proceedings.

The Aces were on court first as a sparse crowd witnessed the form side of the tournament ease to a 30-11 victory over the UAE Royals in the five one-set format tie that is decided on games won rather than over all set victories. A fast-paced format. Additional touches include a 20-second serve clock, a ‘Happiness Power Point’ joke that scores double and can be played once per set, no advantages, no lets, coaching timeouts and a five-minute shotout if a match is tied at 5-5.—Reuters

Real set up likely Cup clash against Atletico

MADRID, 3 Dec — Holders Real Madrid set up a probable King’s Cup last 16 clash against city rivals Atletico when a second-string side completed a crushing 9-1 aggregate win over third-tier minnows Cornellia on Tuesday.

The last-32, second leg match at the Bernabeu pitted the world’s richest club by income, with annual revenues of more than 600 million euros ($743 million), against a club with a budget of 1 million euros a season who were promoted to Spain’s regional Segunda B for the first time in 2013-14.

Real won the first leg, played at Espanyol’s stadium in Barcelona at the end of October, 4-1 and a James Rodriguez double, strikes from Isco and Jese and an own goal from Cornellia’s Borja Lopez secured a 5-0 success in the return. The victory, with top scorer Cristiano Ronaldo watching from the stands, extended Real’s club-record winning streak to 17 matches stretching back to a 2-1 La Liga reverse at home to Atletico in September.

Cornella, whose part-timers include a dentist and a school teacher, could have taken a surprise lead in the 14th minute when Alvaro Arbeloa, captaining Real for the first time, felled Xavi Boni quiet in the area and conceded a penalty.

Boniguet picked himself to the spot kick but fired wildly over the bar and Rodriguez made it 0-1 to the home side moments later.

Isco doubled Real’s lead in the 33rd minute and Rodriguez grabbed his second a minute later before Lopez put the ball into his own net in the 61st.

Substitute Jese, returning after eight months out with a knee injury, completed the rout 13 minutes from time.

“It has been many months of suffering,” Jese said in an interview with Spanish television.

“I am very pleased to be back and for my goal,” the 21-year-old forward added.

The tie was brought forward because of the European champions’ participation in the Club World Cup this month.

Due to the disruption to the La Liga calendar caused by the tournament in Morocco, Sevilla also had their first leg brought forward and they have a 6-1 lead over second-seed Sabadell ahead of Wednesday’s return in Seville.

La Liga champions Atletico, who beat Real 2-1 after extra time in the 2013 Cup final at the Bernabeu, play their first leg at third-tier Hospitalet on Wednesday.

Reuters

Serena Williams of the US hits a return to Manila Mavericks’ Kirsten Flipkens of Belgium during their women’s singles match at the International Premier Tennis League (IPTL) in Singapore on 2 Dec, 2014.—Reuters

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