President U Thein Sein to pay visit to ROK, attend 25th ASEAN-Korea Commemorative Summit

NAY PYI TAW, 7 Dec — At the invitation of Madam Park Geun-hye, President of the Republic of Korea, U Thein Sein, President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, will pay a visit to the Republic of Korea as the Chair of ASEAN in the near future to attend the 25th ASEAN-Korea Commemorative Summit to be held in Busan, the Republic of Korea.—MNA

Vice President Dr Sai Mauk Kham inspects renovation works at Yangon General Hospital

YANGON, 6 Dec — Vice President Dr Sai Mauk Kham inspected the construction of five-storey extended building at the Yangon General Hospital Saturday.

The construction at the new building has completed 90 percent, and is expected to house patients in January.

The Vice President then looked into a large-scaled renovation of the main building, which is scheduled to complete the first phase in April and the second phase in November.

He also visited the emergency ward and operation theatre.

Medical superintendent Dr Hla Myint explained construction and renovation works to the vice president and party.

Environmentalists urge government to adopt policy on peatland management

By Khinng Thanda Lwin

YANGON, 6 Dec — The Environment Rural Development and Participatory Forestry has urged the government to adopt a national policy on peatland management, stressing the importance of strengthening rule of law and raising public awareness of environmental conservation schemes.

The role of peatland in climate change was discussed at a talk on the topic of ‘human and environment’ on Saturday, with experts suggesting that educative programmes should be conducted for locals in the future as the country has higher numbers of people with little or no knowledge about the preservation of natural resources.

Peat is a soft black or brown substance formed from decaying plants just under the surface of the ground, especially in cool wet areas. Peatlands consist of more than 65% of organic matters and 95% of water. Myanmar is one of the peatlands-rich countries and ranked four with 122,800 hectares of peatlands in South East Asia.

The government recognizes the importance of systematically conserving and using forest genetic resources for long-term benefits and for the country’s economic development.

The Ministry of Environmental Conservation and Forestry, as well as environment protection agencies, are carrying out various action plans to sustain natural resources, protect ecosystems and reduce environmental impacts.

Myanmar, one of the resource-rich countries in South East Asia, has 38% of mixed deciduous forests and 25% of temperate evergreen forests. It has a population of more than 5 million people, the majority of whom depend on forest resources for their livelihoods.

Families enjoy the food and activities on offer at the inaugural Japan Myanmar Pwe Taw, which opened on Saturday at Shwe Htut Tin ground in Yangon.—Photo: Ye Myint

Japan-Myanmar Pwe Taw kicks off with food, activities and stage performances

YANGON, 6 Dec — The first-ever Japan-Myanmar Pwe Taw opened Saturday, with hundreds of people thronging to enjoy the food and activities on offer at the Japan-style festival being held at Shwe Htut Tin ground in Yangon.

Celebrating the 60th anniversary of diplomatic ties between Myanmar and Japan, the Embassy of Japan in Myanmar organized the two-day event with the aim of letting Myanmar people enjoy a taste of Japan at the wide variety of food vendors offering Japanese traditional confections and also activities including a goldfish scooping game.

Hordes of festival-goers descended on the fairground on the opening day, leading to long lines forming at food vendors while booths of Japanese firms displaying their products were packed with visitors.

Other attractions include a karaoke contest where young people are very much welcomed and the NHK World booth which is showing off the latest Kawaii trends from Tokyo including so-called fake desserts, while Domo, the official mascot of Japan’s public broadcaster, is on hand for snapshots with visitors.

(See page 2)
Union Minister visits Hepatitis-B vaccine factory

**Yangon, 6 Dec —** Staff are to change mindset in discharging their duties, Union Minister for Industry U Maung Myint said at a meeting with personnel of Hepatitis B vaccine factory in Hlegu Township, Yangon, on Saturday.

He noted that the staff members are to take responsibility and accountability in their respective sectors. He stressed the need to take child dose production licence from Food and Drug Administration and urged them to minimize loss and waste in production and to reduce production cost in manufacturing the drugs meeting set standards.

He viewed round production process of the factory and installation of machinery.

Officials of the factory reported on production of vaccines in financial years and production process.

-- MNA

Union Minister at the President Office U Soe Thane speaking at second-day session of Women’s Forum Myanmar 2014.— MNA

Wellwishers donate cash and books to Myanmar Libraries Foundation

**Yangon, 6 Dec —** A ceremony to donate cash and books to libraries of Myanmar Libraries Foundation was held at the hall of the Printing and Publishing Enterprise under the Ministry of Information on Saturday.

A total of 41 wellwishers donated K25.91 million and 46 wellwishers, books, magazines and journals worth K500,000 to the foundation.

Deputy Minister for Information U Pike Htway accepted cash donations and Chairman of MLF U Maung Maung, copies of books, journals and magazines.

The foundation has donated K6.48 million to the fund for development of mini book corners and K74.6 million to the self-reliant village libraries.

So far, the foundation has established over 6,000 libraries in the rural areas, spending the fund donated by the people.— MNA

Exams for Presidential Scholarship Programme held in six major cities

**Nay Pyi Taw, 6 Dec —** Examinations for the applications of Presidential Scholarship were held on Saturday at 10 exam centres in six major cities. The examinations took place Yangon, Mandalay, Mawlamyine, Magway, Monywa and Taunggyi.

The programme is the first in Myanmar, and is intended to send outstanding students to foreign universities with full scholarship.

There are two categories in this programme, with the applicants of 657 in pre-graduate, and for post-graduate courses, 1,874 master degree students and 2,376 doctoral students, totaling 4,880.

The exam was based on the Aptis Test of the British Council, and it was a computerized English skill test.

Out of the 1,380 valid candidates for the exam, a total of 62.83 percent (876 students) sat the exam and 37.17 percent (513 persons) were absentees. The Aptis Test is quite similar to the IELTS, and is cost US$55 for each candidate.

The British Council supported $23 each and the government gave $32 each for the exam.— MNA
Vice-Senior General Soe Win back from Malaysia

NAY PYI TAW, 6 Dec — Vice-Senior General Soe Win arrived back in Yangon at 3 pm. He was welcomed back by Lt-Gen Kyaw Swe of the Commander-in-Chief (Army) Office, Commander of Yangon Command Maj-Gen Tun Tun Naung and senior military officers.

Labour Department, ILO sign contract for statistical services for labour

NAY PYI TAW, 6 Dec — The Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security is giving priority to job opportunities, employment at home and abroad, enhancement of capacity of employees, survey of labour statistics and research and worksite safety, Union Minister U Aye Myint said at the signing ceremony of the contract for statistical services for Myanmar Labour Force, Child Labour and School-to-Work Transition Survey.

The Director-General of the Labour Department and ILO Liaison Officer to Myanmar Mr Steve Marshall signed the contract. ILO will provide monetary and technical assistance to Labour Department, Central Statistical Organization and Population Department in conducting the labour statistics, compilation of questions, conducting the training course for collection data and analysis for facts and figures.—MNA

Myanmar, Japan focus on cooperation in map production

NAY PYI TAW, 6 Dec — Production of precise map based on Global Positioning System (GPS) and Continuously Operating Reference Station (CPRS) was discussed between Union Minister for Environmental Conservation and Forestry U Win Tun and Vice Minister Mr Kisaburo Ishii of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism of Japan.

They also focused on utilization of maps, present map production in Myanmar, boundary measurement, erecting of border posts, efforts to draw the land utilization policy and law by forming the National Land Resources Management Central Committee, arrangement for One Map Myanmar programme in Myanmar, capacity enhancement for remote sensing-RS, geographic information system-GIS. They also discussed enhancement of map production, land utilization and capacity enhancement between the two countries.—MNA

US Ambassador’s visit to the Shae Thot 2000th Village ceremony

YANGON, 6 Dec — United States Ambassador to Myanmar Derek Mitchell and U Aung Kyaw Min, the Minister for Social Affairs, Magway Region Government, on 2 December visited NatkanU, Yenangyoung Township, in Myanmar’s Magway Region, to commemorate the 2,000th village to partner in the USAID-supported Shae Thot program. Shae Thot provides integrated development solutions in Myanmar’s Dry Zone and Kayah State. Ambassador Derek Mitchell offered words of appreciation and congratulated community leaders and the residents of NatkanU.

During the visit, the ambassador and other guests observed program activities in the village, including a baby-weighing and nutrition day event, a health education session, mobile clinic operations, water infrastructure training, and revolving livestock and seek bank systems. He also spoke with leaders of the Village Development Committee, a democratically elected local association that manages the program activities.
Myanmar loses to Chongburi U-12 of Thailand in quarterfinal

KUALA LUMPUR, 6 Dec—Myanmar U-12 youth team cruised into the quarterfinal of the Supermokh Cup international football tournament organized by Malaysian Football Association on 6 December.

Myanmar youth team trounced Korean U-12 team with a 8-2 result on the artificial pitch of Malaysian Sports Council in Padang, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on 5 December morning.

In the afternoon, Myanmar youth team played against Indonesian team in the second match and won over its opponent with a 6-0 victory.

On 6 December morning, Myanmar youth showed off its excellent skills with a 4-1 win over host Malaysian U-12 team. So, Myanmar secured three wins in the group matches with nine points. The opponent teams praised Myanmar youth players for their wonderful football skills in the matches.

In the quarterfinal, Myanmar lost to Chongburi U-12 team of Thailand 2-3 on 6 December.

Two-storey monastery under construction in Meisei Township

Meisei, 6 Dec—A ceremony to drive stakes for construction of a two-storey monastery was held in the precinct of Zetawun Monastery in Meisei Township, Kayah State, on 5 December.

The deputy commissioner of the district and the township administrator participated in the stake driving ceremony.

Unity Friends Company takes responsibility for construction of the building.—Township IPRD

Rural people get health care services in Zabuthiri Tsp

NAY PYI TAW, 6 Dec—With the aim of declining the mortality rate, health personnel vaccinated children under 1.5 years and pregnant woman in Lephankhahla, Taukhein, Tegig, Shadaw and Gonmin-in villages in Zabuthiri Township, Nay Pyi Taw Council Area on Friday.

Midwife Daw Khin San Tin of Pyankapay rural health branch gave monthly vaccination to the children and pregnant women.

Likewise, midwife Thant Maung can take care of personal hygiene,” said a pregnant woman.

“We are very convenient for vaccination of the health staff in our villages. Thanks to their efforts, we can take care of personal hygiene,” said a pregnant woman.

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Natogyi-Myotha asphalt road to contribute to regional development

NATOGYI, 6 Dec—A plan is underway to place asphalt along the 20 miles long road section from Natogyi and Myotha in Mandalay Region during the five-month period.

At present, DNPP Company commenced its tasks to place asphalt on the road starting from Myotha, said an official of Natogyi Township Rural Development Department.

The road passes along a 16-mile section in Natogyi Township and five-mile section in Ngazun Township. Thanks to the arrangements of the Rural Development Department, the road will be an asphalt facility to be used all the year round. Upon completion, the road linking Myingyan and Mandalay will be 45 miles long.

The Natogyi-Myotha road will contribute much to development of over 30 villages in both townships.

As part of efforts to develop the region, an 11-KV power line has been installed between Natogyi and Myotha. As a result, the local people from over 20 villages consume electricity round the clock.

Globetrotters enjoy panoramic sunset views in Bagan

MANDALAY, 6 Dec—Bagan-NyaungU is one of the famous tourist desti-

nations in Myanmar. The region attracts not only the globetrotters but local travellers to pay visits to ancient pagodas in the cultural region.

Number of globetrotters is on the increase to enjoy the sunset scene in Bagan ancient cultural region.

The tourists on the platforms of ancient pagodas in Bagan area enjoy the panoramic views at the Tankyi mountain range on the fore ground with sunset time.

Boatmen earn the increased income in giving transport services to the globetrotters to Bagan NyaungU region from various places.

Some of tourists chartered the boats to go to the sandbanks for enjoy the scenic views around Ayeyawady River in the sunset time.

Aye Mya (Mandalay)
Toungoo Education College marks International Volunteer Day

Toungoo, 6 Dec — The International Volunteer Day was observed at the hall of Toungoo Education College in Toungoo in Bago Region on 5 December.

Principal Daw Kyu Kyu explained facts about the Voluntary Service Overseas-VOS and presented certificates of honour, flower baskets and gifts to volunteers.

Two foreign experts made speeches on the occasion, and a faculty member spoke words of thanks.

It was attended by faculty members and trainees totalling over 360.

Toungoo Township IPRD

Mobile team seizes illegal sawn timber in Tachilek

Tachilek mobile team, acting on a tip-off, searched five dump trucks driving from Mongphyat, Shan State, on 23 November.

They seized 20.44 tons of Tamalan timber on board the trucks.

Officials handed over timbers to Customs Department and Forest Department and filed lawsuit against owner and drivers of illegal sawn timber and trucks U Kya Har, U Ya Oo, U Myo Aung, U Naing Lin Tun, U Kaw Tar and U Ko Ko Lat at Tachilek Myoma police station on 23 November.—Mobile team

Thai expert gives training on skin care in Mandalay

Mandalay, 6 Dec — The Chetawan Health Center of Thailand organized the Skin Care Technological Course at Thuza Beauty Salon on 72nd street between 29th and 30th streets in Chanayethazan Township, Mandalay, on 3 December.

Principal of Chetawan Health Center Mrs Saris Tang Trongchit explained Spa cosmetic products produced from the organic fruits and advancement of skin care technology. Daw Thuza from Thuza Beauty Salon demonstrated Spa skin care with the use of cosmetics produced from the organic fruits and plants.

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Thiha Ko Ko (Mandalay)

Enthusiasts join Regional and Institutional Development Conference in Mandalay

Mandalay, 6 Dec — With the assistance of Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (Myanmar Branch), the Innovative Institute Political Leadership organized the Regional and Institutional Development Conference at Hotel Mandalay on 78th street in Mahaaungmye Township, Mandalay, on 4 and 5 December.

It was attended by Mandalay Region Hluttaw representatives, representatives from political parties and members of social organizations.

U Myo Zaw Aung of Innovative Institute Political Leadership explained progress of political, economic and social fields in Myanmar in the time of the new government. He briefed them on the purpose of workshop with the participation of regional authorities, political parties, businessmen, civil organizations and people.

Innovative Institute Political Leadership has conducted the workshop at Kandawgyi Hotel in Yangon in the early 2014 for the first time. The workshop in Mandalay was the second time of its kind.

Maung Pyi Thu (Mandalay)

People join mass walk activities of December

Mandalay, 6 Dec — The mass walk activities and sports event of December were held in Myanmar, Ayeyawady Region, on Saturday.

Departmental personnel, local people, teachers and students totalling over 300 participated in the mass walk activities of December participated in the walking and took physical exercise at the People’s Square. The sports events will be held at the township gymnasium every Saturday in December.—Win Bo (Township IPRD)
Jakarta, 6 Dec — The Indonesian government sank three Vietnamese fishing boats on Friday, a day earlier than scheduled, for conducting illegal fishing in the country’s territorial waters, media reports said.

A Navy warship detained the ships and their crew members on Sunday in Anambas waters in Riau Islands Province, bordering the South China Sea, after spotting them catching fish in the waters.

“Those ships had no legal fishing documents,” Rear Adm Widodo, commander of the Navy’s Western Fleet, was quoted as saying by the media when witnessing the sinking. The private television network Metro TV showed three naval and Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Fisheries vessels shooting the ships with machine guns,setting them ablaze and sinking them.

“The execution took place in the waters, which has 45-to-60-metre depth, and the ships were shot at from a 200-metre distance,” Widodo said.

Late last month, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries Minister Susi Pudjiastuti unveiled her office’s findings on illegal fishing operations by foreign vessels in Indonesian waters.

Satellite images showed small vessels surrounding a larger ship around the Natuna Islands bordering the South China Sea conducting open-sea transshipment of goods. The ships, she said, appeared to be Indonesian due to flying the Indonesian flag and bearing Indonesian names, but it turned out all of their operators were foreign.

The country’s 2009 Law on Fisheries stipulates fishing operation patrol units are given the authority to implement special actions, such the burning or sinking of foreign fishing ships caught in Indonesian territory, based on sufficient evidence.

Kyodo News

Typhoon Hagupit triggers massive evacuation in Philippines

Manila, 6 Dec — More than half a million people in the Philippines have fled from a powerful typhoon in one of the world’s biggest peacetime evacuations as the storm churns towards central provinces that still bear the scars of a super typhoon 13 months ago.

Typhoon Hagupit was approaching eastern coasts on Saturday, with its eye 230 km (143 miles) east northeast of Borongan, in Eastern Samar Province, the weather bureau PAGASA said.

The storm was downgraded to a notch below super typhoon category but could still unleash huge destruction with torrential rain and potentially disastrous storm surges of up to 4.5 metres (15 feet).

With winds of up to 195 kph (121 mph) near the centre and gusts of up to 215 kph (133 mph), the storm was moving slowly at 10 kph (6 mph) and was expected to hit Eastern or Northern Samar Province early on Sunday.

More than 616,000 residents of low-lying villages and landslide-prone areas have fled to schools, civic centres, town halls, gyms and churches, the national disaster agency said.

“We call on residents to voluntarily evacuate because the forecast is there will be a storm surge,” Sofronio Ducillo, head of the disaster agency in the island province of Biliran in the central Philippines, said over local radio.

Residents of Eastern Samar said rain was falling and their power was fluctuating on Saturday morning.

The United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction in Geneva said 200,000 people had been evacuated in the central island province of Cebu alone.

“Typhoon Hagupit is triggering one of the largest evacuations we have ever seen in peacetime,” said spokesman Denis McClean.

Philippine Airlines and Cebu Pacific cancelled nearly 100 flights to central and southern Philippines on Saturday.

The eastern islands of Samar and Leyte, worst-hit by 250 kph (155 mph) winds and storm surges brought by Typhoon Haiyan in November last year, could be in the firing line again. “I am afraid and scared,” said Teresita Ahan, a 58-year-old housewife from Sta Rita, in Samar province.

People take shelter inside a evacuation centre after evacuating from their homes due to super-typhoon Hagupit in Surigao city, southern Philippines on 5 Dec, 2014. Reuters

Between 2011 and 2013, Vietnam recorded an overall increase of 13.67 percent in average real wages, which was driven partly by substantial increases in minimum wages, ILO said in a Press release on the launching of the Global Wage Report 2014-2015 released in Hanoi on Friday.

Among the countries in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), average monthly wages in 2012 of Vietnam (1.38 million Vietnamese dong or 181 US dollars) was placed only ahead of Laos (119 US dollars), Cambodia (121 US dollars) and Indonesia (174 US dollars).

By comparison, Vietnam’s average monthly wage was about half of Thailand’s 357 US dollars, less than one third of Malaysia’s 609 US dollars and one twelfth of Singapore’s 3,547 US dollars, according to the report.

“Those large wage differences between ASEAN countries reflect substantial differences in a number of factors including labour productivity. As countries adopt new technologies, invest in infrastructure, encourage structural reforms and improve the skills of their workforce, they lay the foundations for enterprises to become more efficient, and to move into higher value-added activities,” said Gyorgy Szakmari, ILO director in Vietnam.

Although wage workers now account for 34.8 percent of the total employed people in Vietnam, much lower than the world’s average of over 50 percent, this share is projected to grow rapidly in the coming decades, said ILO.—Xinhua

India supplies water to crisis-hit Male

New Delhi, 6 Dec — India sent five aircraft containing 200 tons of potable water to Male, the Maldives capital, Friday even as the island country was facing acute drinking water shortage following a major fire at the water treatment plant the previous day.

“The five Indian aircraft carrying 200 tons of potable water will be flying to Maldives today, and the same number of aircraft will fly tomorrow carrying the same quantity of water,” Indian External Affairs Ministry spokesman Syed Akbaruddin said. Subsequently, arrangements have also been made to send two Indian ships which have reverse osmosis plants on them, and can produce 40 tons of water everyday,” he said. He said External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj got a late night call on Thursday from Male about the crisis.—Kyodo News

Thai people light candles and sing anthems during the celebration of Thai King Bhumibol Adulyadej’s 87th birthday in Bangkok, Thailand on 5 Dec, 2014. Thai King Bhumibol Adulyadej on Friday cancelled a pre-scheduled public audience on his doctors’ advice, which, however, did not damp people’s enthusiasm to celebrate his 87th birthday.—Xinhua

Vietnam’s wages lag behind many neighbouring countries: ILO

Hanoi, 6 Dec — Despite the overall positive developments, wages in Vietnam still lag behind many neighbouring countries, said the International Labour Organisation (ILO) on Friday in Vietnam’s capital Hanoi.

About 10 million residents of the Bicol and Eastern Visayas regions of the central Philippines are at risk of flooding, storm surges and strong winds as Hagupit hits land. AccuWeather Global Weather Centre said more than 30 million people would feel the impact of the typhoon across the Philippines.

The weather bureau said 47 provinces were at risk of strong wind and rains.—Reuters
German state elects reform communist leader in historic shift

BERLIN, 6 Dec — The reform communist Left party took power in a German state on Friday for the first time since reunification, ending a quarter century of conservative rule in Thuringia and raising the chance of a left-wing threat to Angela Merkel in the next federal vote.

The Left, which traces its roots to the Socialist Unity Party (SED) that once ruled East Germany and built the Berlin Wall, will run the state southwestern of Berlin with the centre-left Social Democrats (SPD) and Greens in a three-way coalition.

Thuringia voted in September in state elections which produced a close result, leading to protracted negotiations involving four parties. Eventually the three left-leaning parties agreed on a coalition and on Friday the state assembly elected the Left party’s Bodo Ramelow, a 58-year-old trade unionist from West Germany, as premier of Thuringia.

It is the first time these three parties have ruled together in one of Germany’s 16 states. If they succeed in Thuringia, they could decide to band together in the next national election in 2017 in an attempt to block the chancellor’s conservatives from power.

The centre-left SPD, which rules with Merkel in a right-left federal “grand coalition”, has long refused to cooperate with the Left at the national level, largely because of the party’s foreign policy views, which include opposition to NATO.

Merkel, who had warned against a Left-led government in Thuringia, declined to comment on the result when asked at a news conference in Berlin, saying only that her party would respect it.

But she told the deputies of her long struggle to convince a friend who was a political prisoner in East Germany that the Left party was not the SED. Of the about 16,000 in the Left, anti-NATO Left party was an insult to the victims of communism.

“This week’s wave of protests against police violence flare for third night in New York

NEW YORK, 6 Dec — Protesters in New York and other cities rallied for a third night on Friday denouncing the use of deadly force by police against minorities, even as prosecutors said they would consider charges against an officer in the fatal shooting of an unarmed black man in November.

The slaying of Akai Gurley, 28, gunned down in a dimly lit stairwell on the New York borough of Brooklyn, was the latest in a string of lethal police actions feeding US public outrage over what many perceive as racially based violence by law enforcement.

This week’s wave of angry but largely peaceful protests began on Wednesday when a New York grand jury declined to bring charges against white officer Daniel Pantaleo from prosecution was announced nine days after a Missouri grand jury chose not to indict a white policeman for the shooting death in August of an unarmed black teenager in the St Louis suburb of Ferguson, spurring two nights of arson and unrest there.

Then on Thursday in Phoenix, Arizona, another unarmed black man was shot dead by a white police officer during a scuffle, leading to protests in that city.

“The government has created a monster and the monster is now loose,” said Soraya Soi Free, 45, a nurse from the Bronx who has been protesting in New York.

After two nights that saw hundreds of demonstrators pouring into the streets and blocking traffic in Manhattan, the turnout on Friday saw only hundreds as a cold, steady rain fell.

But in departure from previous nights, more than 100 people stormed into an Apple Store in Herald Square and at Grand Central Terminal, one of the city’s two main rail stations.

As they did at the Apple store, police stood by but allowed the protesters to briefly occupy both locations.

Some Manhattan retailers have cut their hours in response to the recent unrest, including Best Buy Co Inc and Target Corp.

Meanwhile, near 100 people, including local civic leaders, huddled under umbrellas near the site of Garner’s death for a candlelight vigil on Staten Island.

The 24 participants in the meeting in Washington from political, business and academic circles will reconvene in Tokyo in May and announce an initiative called Pacific Vision 21, according to Yasuo Fukuda, former Japanese prime minister, who co-chairs the meeting.

“We’ll be having (more) discussions so a variety of people including those from the young generation can be actively involved in Japan-US relations and play a role in the Pacific region,” Fukuda told a press conference.

The members will seek to come up with a new framework for bilateral ties with an eye on the year of 2045, the centennial of the end of World War II.

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“We need reconciliation instead of division,” he said in an emotional speech to the 91-seat assembly. Ramelow is an unabashed backer of socialism and campaigned for September’s election with a bright red bust of Karl Marx at his side.

Japan, US to release initiative on 70th anniversary of postwar relations

WASHINGTON, 6 Dec — Influential people from Japan and the United States started work on Friday on an initiative next year that will feature a variety of visions to enhance bilateral ties on the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II.

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Time to change our approach to change

By Kyaw Thura

When it comes to change, not all institutions can accomplish their transformational efforts in part because they fail to take a consistent, holistic and effective approach to changing themselves first.

It is found that successful organizations that are particularly adroit at constant change have three characteristics in common, according to Dr John Kotter, a renowned leadership and change management guru. These organizations closely follow the process, allow the process to flex itself to their specific contexts and measure their efforts in terms of results. The leaders of these organizations will never hesitate to remove obstacles to change by transforming systems, structures and policies that do not align with their vision.

Good leaders contemplating change know that people matter most. They are willing to embrace change and are aligned with the direction of change. They accept the supposition that change starts at the top. Once they succeed in motivating their subordinates to feel the need to change, they are positioned for success. It is therefore through multiple channels regularly and inspirationally in a bid to create essential elements needed to drive change.

It must here be noted that no change programme goes according to plan. Naturally, change creates uncertainty and real effects on people, especially those at top levels of an organization. The most effective way to manage change is to continually evaluate its impact and adopt the next wave of transformation.

At a time when rapid change has become a phenomenon of the 21st century, institutions that swim against the tide will not last.

Write for us

We appreciate your feedback and contributions. If you have any comments or would like to submit editorials, analyses or reports please email wallace@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com with your name and title.

Responsibility

“Ours is the responsibility to make it a larger and closer knit family”. - Richardson Wright

“We are all too prone to enjoy privileges and only look sidewise at responsibilities.” - William Bright

Responsibility means: (1) A duty to deal with or take care of somebody or something, so that you may be blamed if something goes wrong; (2) Blame for something bad that happened; (3) A duty to help or take care of somebody because of your job, position, etc. - Oxford Dictionary

Now, let’s joyfully explore the wider meaning of responsibility as follows:

R for Reason for being (Raison d’être)
E for Etiquette
S for Sense of duty
P for Proactive
O for Objective
N for Never giving up
S for Sincerity
I for Initiative
B for Beyond the call of duty
L for Leadership
I for Integrity
T for Trust and Trustworthiness
Y for Yearning for results

Reason for being means Raison d’être which is to be translated as: “the most important reason for somebody/ something’s existence. So, reason for being a parent is to take care of the offspring for their growth and well-being. Reason for being a student is to learn and to pass the examinations. Reason for being a doctor of medicine is to look after the patient’s health. Reason for being in business (the primary reason) is to satisfy the needs of the customers. And so on. Everyone is responsible to satisfactorily carry out one’s reason for being or raison d’être.”

ETIQUETTE

Etiquette means the formal rules of correct or polite behavior in society or among members of a particular profession, e.g. medical/legal etiquette. It is necessary for us to take responsibility to be civilized and cultured in our interpersonal relationships.

SENSE OF DUTY

The Dictionary meaning of DUTY is (1): What one is obliged to do (by morality, law, conscience, etc.); the inner voice urging one to behave in a certain way; (2) Moral obligation. So, a responsible person should have a strong sense of duty with commitment, accountability and transparency.

(SC) See page 9
MYANMAR, Japan discuss land utilization, technological assistance

— Union Minister for Construction U Kyaw Lwin received Vice Minister of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism Kishaburo Ishii and party at the ministry, here, on Friday.

They discussed civil projects and land utilization, urban development and matters related to the technological assistance for Myanmar.—MNA

MOGE, oil companies sign production sharing contract for M-8 Mottama offshore block

A-1 Mining Co Ltd of Myanmar signed a production sharing contract for M-8 Mottama offshore area at Parkroyal Hotel in Nay Pyi Taw on 5 December.

Chairman of Myanmar Investment Commission Union Minister for Energy U Zeyar Aung delivered a speech.

MOGE Managing Director U Myo Myint Oo, Mr Johannes Hans Braakman of Berlanga Myanmar Pte Ltd and Chairman of A-1 Mining Co Ltd U Yan Win signed the contract.

MOGE got US$15 million for signature bonus and US$500,000 for data fee. They will spend US$ 153 million on one-year feasibility study and six-year exploration.

NATIONAL

RESPONSIBILITY...

(from page 8)

PROACTIVE

To be proactive is: To control a situation by making things happen, rather than waiting for things to happen and then reacting to them. Also being proactive means to be in charge of one’s life or one’s job or one’s relationships. A responsible person has the duty to take charge, to take initiative and to take responsibility for the consequences.

OBJECTIVE

Objective means goal, purpose, target, object aimed at. A definite objective is a clear-cut goal, or the unambiguous aim of a policy. In certain cases, an objective can be termed as policy objective or strategic aim. Whenever there is a definite objective, which is the primary pillar, the two other pillars must be in place which are resources and strategy. It means an objective must be achieved with a particular strategy based on the available resources. Please see the following illustration:

SINCERITY

Sincerity means: (1) (Of feelings, behavior) genuine; not pretended. (2) (Of person) Straightforward; not in the habit of expressing feelings that are pretended. (3) The quality of being honest.

- Oxford Dictionary

A person who assumes responsibility for his action usually has sincerity. A responsible person is honest in whatever he or she does. A sincere person is not arrogant, greedy, complacent, inconsistent or myopic.

INITIATIVE

Initiative means: (1) First or introductory step or move, without an order or suggestion from others; (2) Capacity to see what needs to be done and enterprise enough to do it.

- Oxford Dictionary

A responsible person usually has the habit of taking initiative in doing something. It is said that a successful person must have at least two kinds of personal quality such as initiative and resourcefulness.

BEYOND THE CALL OF DUTY

A responsible person has the habit of doing beyond the call of duty. Such a person usually has the habit of going the extra mile. A person of responsibility is usually resolute; he or she does not fear to make personal sacrifices, and he or she dares to surmount all difficulties to win victory. Such a person usually follows the motto of “More pains, more gains.”

INSPIRATION

Inspiration means: (1) Influences arousing creative activity in literature, music, art, etc.; (2) Person or thing that inspires; (3) Good thought or idea that comes to the mind; (4) Putting uplifting thoughts, feelings or aims into.

- Oxford Dictionary

A person of responsibility usually is a self-motivated person. He or she has some high principles, passionate beliefs, core values; mission, etc.

LEARNING BIAS

To LEARN is: (1) To gain knowledge of or skill in, by study, practice, or being taught; (2) To be told or informed.

- Oxford Dictionary

A responsible person usually is dynamic, not static in his or her mental make-up. A person of responsibility usually wants to move upwards; he or she never sticks to the status quo. He or she wants to improve and advance. So, a responsible person is usually committed to learning earnestly in his or her stride.

INTEGRITY

Integrity means: (1) The quality of being honest and upright in character; (2) State or condition of being complete.

A person who has the good habit of assuming responsibility usually has strong sense of integrity. He or she does not dilly-dally, waver, or hesitate. A responsible person’s enduring emphasis is on making things happen and getting things done and on adding value to work as well as to life. He or she is dedicated to creating wealth and beauty with a good conscience. He or she is never self-centered and self-serving.

TRUST AND TRUSTWORTHINESS

Trust means: (1) Confidence, strong belief, in the goodness, strength, reliability of something or somebody; (2) Responsibility. Trustworthiness means one who is worthy or justified to be trusted.

A responsible person usually has trust in other people and is himself or herself trustworthy. To be trustworthy, one must have CHARACTER AND COMPETENCE. A trustworthy character has integrity and good, plausible intent or motive; and a trustworthy, competent person must be able to show capability and to deliver results.

LEARNING FOR RESULTS

A really responsible person must live and move and have his or her being to be of value to himself or herself as well as others. A person of responsibility should be able to prove to be capable, productive, and of a willing disposition. To be responsible is to be committed to getting the anticipated results. A responsible person can deliver the following (4) kinds of results:

- Basic Results: A Steak is a Steak is a Steak; Expected Results: A Tender Steak; Desired Results: A Warm, tender Steak; and Surprising Results: A Sizzling Steak

CONCLUSION

Responsibility should be willingly assumed and brilliantly executed for:

- Win-Win Outcomes (for you & me)
- Win-Win-Win Outcomes (for Customers, Employees, Shareholders, and the entire National Economy.)

U Kyi Mun residing in Yangon is a consultant of NAING Group Capital Co., Ltd.
Amsterdam, 6 Dec — Relatives of MH17 crash victims, angered by what they see as Dutch mishandling of inquiries into the disaster, want a special UN envoy to launch an international investigation.

A letter sent to Prime Minister Mark Rutte on Friday, a copy of which was seen by Reuters, said Dutch officials had failed to build a case. They asked that inquiries by the Safety Board and prosecution service be handed over to the United Nations.

Rutte should “request the UN to appoint a special envoy to take over,” said the letter written by Van der Goen Attorneys.

Malaysia Airlines flight MH17 was downed on 17 July over eastern Ukraine, killing all 298 passengers and crew, two-thirds of them Dutch. Experts say the most likely cause was a ground-to-air missile fired from territory held by separatists.

The Dutch launched the largest criminal investigation in their history after the crash. This week, trucks are carrying pieces of the plane home, but much of the wreckage still lies in Ukrainian fields.

Dutch investigators, leading a case involving 11 countries, have not concluded how the plane was shot down or identified suspects.

The Netherlands “has completely botched” the fact-finding investigation and the legal framework of the case, said the letter, sent on behalf of 20 relatives from Belgium, Germany, the Netherlands and the United States.

Dutch prosecutors have been unable to access the crash site, in a war zone disputed by Ukrainian troops and Russian-backed rebels, or not met international requirements to secure evidence, the letter said.

“Nobody knows who is doing what,” said Bob van der Goen, a spokesman for the law firm. “There is no coordination, there is no leadership whatsoever (by) Holland.”

Rutte said on Friday the Netherlands “has leadership whatsoever (by) Netherlands.”

The Pan Am-KLM crash left 583 people dead. Relatives of the victims of a 1972 El Al jetliner crash in Amsterdam, a 2010 Afriqiyah Airways crash in the Libyan capital Tripoli and the 1988 Pan Am crash in the Canary Islands that left 270 people dead. Relatives of the Pan Am-KLM crash victims received more than $100,000 each, the highest ever settlement at the time.

Reuters

Unidentified relatives and friends of the victims of Malaysian Airlines MH17 attend a national memorial at the RAI convention centre in Amsterdam on 10 Nov, 2014.—Reuters

Four stabbed on train in Michigan, suspect in custody — police

NILES, (Michigan) 6 Dec — Police took a suspect into custody in Michigan on Friday after four people were stabbed aboard an Amtrak train in the town of Niles, a police dispatcher said.

None of the victims had been killed in the attack, a dispatcher for the Niles Police Department said. Police could not immediately describe the conditions of the victims, nor give any further details on the incident or suspect.

Niles, a town of about 12,000 people, is about 10 miles (16 km) north of South Bend, Indiana.

Amtrak said the incident took place on Train 364, the Blue Water service, which runs daily between Chicago and Port Huron, Michigan, while the train was at the station in Niles.

The company gave no details of the incident, but said in a statement a person was in custody and that the Amtrak Police Department is assisting in the investigation.

The Chicago Sun Times newspaper quoted a Twitter user who said four people were stabbed in the next carriage along from him, and who uploaded a photograph of a man in a grey jacket lying in handcuffs on the floor of the train. “Crazy world we live in. Some man just stabbed 4 people one car away from me on the train,” said the user, @Chris Maynard. Amtrak said the train had been travelling to Port Huron at the time of the incident, and it said the company is working to arrange alternate transport for 172 passengers.

Reuters

Lima climate talks split on role of adaptation, finance in new deal

LIMA, 6 Dec — Negotiators at UN climate talks in Lima are divided over whether governments should include finance and adaptation commitments in the national offers of action they are due to put forward early next year as the building blocks of a new global climate change deal.

Some developing countries, including the poorest ones, want adaptation efforts to be part of their contributions, arguing it will help determine their needs for funding and technical aid. The cost of adapting to climate change in developing nations is likely to be at least two to three times higher than previous estimates of $70-100 billion a year by 2050, even with ambitious cuts in planet-warming emissions, according to a new report from the United Nations Environment Programme.

But the European Union and Japan said on Friday they want national offers to be focused only on mitigation — actions to reduce planet-warming emissions.

Elina Bardram, the European Commission’s top climate negotiator, told journalists the EU sees the process for national contributions as designed specifically with mitigation in mind, and it shouldn’t stretch to adaptation and climate finance. With the new global deal not expected to enter into force until 2020, countries would struggle to plan their spending on climate finance or adaptation so far ahead of time, she added. “We cannot possibly make forward commitments on something that is going to happen from the national budgets in seven years’ time,” she said.

But that “doesn’t mean that we are not open to including some processes that would provide our partners with reassurances that these elements (of adaptation and finance) are absolutely core to the 2015 agreement”, she said. The EU is interested in the idea of including a global goal for adaptation in the main accord to be agreed in Paris in a year’s time, Bardram added.

“But we definitely see that gaining traction — particularly as adaptation is a challenge that concerns all countries. Europe is also suffering a lot from the adverse effects of climate change,” she said. Brazil, on the other hand, wants countries to be able to put adaptation funds for their national contributions.

But it does not support a wider adaptation goal, arguing that adaptation is local, and therefore very difficult to measure.

Tania Guiller of Nicaragua’s Centro Humboldt, a sustainable development group, said that if adaptation is not included in the draft text expected to come out of the Lima talks, efforts to build a Paris deal could fail. “Most of the (developing) countries are asking for adaptation to be a crucial part of the agreement — one of the big elements, not only mitigation — so if we don’t include adaptation, there won’t be political will,” she said. But even among developing countries, there are differing opinions on whether any commitments on adaptation made in the 2015 deal should be legally binding. Small island states, for example, believe they should be.

Some worry that insisting on legal backing for adaptation could work against binding commitments on mitigation. Peru’s environment minister Manuel Pulgar-Vidal, who is presiding over the climate talks in Lima, said “political parity” is needed between mitigation and adaptation in the negotiations.

He told Thomson Reuters Foundation on Friday the talks should deliver, as expected, a “Lima draft text” for governments to work on next year, as well as “upfront information” about what countries should include in their national offers. “We just have one more week, but this is a process in which we should not lose optimism — I am very optimistic that we can do it,” he said.—Reuters
US-led forces conduct 20 air strikes against Islamic State

WASHINGTON, 6 Dec — The United States and partner nations have conducted 20 air strikes against Islamic State targets in Syria and Iraq since Wednesday, the US Central Command said on Friday.

Five of six air strikes by US military forces in Syria targeted the contested city of Kobani near the border with Turkey, Centcom said in a statement. Those destroyed six Islamic State fighting positions and a heavy weapon, it said.

In Iraq, US and partner nations conducted 14 air strikes, mostly targeting areas in the oil-producing north of the country controlled by Islamic State.

Four air strikes near al-Qaim destroyed checkpoints, armoured vehicles, bunkers, fortifications and a tactical unit, the US military said. Others were directed at Islamic militants targets near Kirkuk, Samarra, Tal Afar and Falluja.

Two air strikes near Mosul destroyed 11 bunkers, nine heavy weapons, a vehicle and hit two Islamic State units, Centcom said.

Syria says repels Islamic State attack on air base

BEIRUT, 6 Dec — A Syrian military source said on Saturday that government forces had repelled an attack by Islamic State militants forces to halt and eventually roll back Islamic State fighters, while keeping American troops off the battlefield.

Islamic State fighters stand along a street in the countryside of the Syrian Kurdihs town of Kobani, after taking control of the area on 7 Oct, 2014. (REUTERS)

Up to 50,000 displaced Iraqi families left without aid despite access

LONDON, 6 Dec — Up to 50,000 displaced Iraqi families in the Kirkuk area are being neglected by international aid groups despite sheltering in areas accessible to humanitarian organizations, medical charity Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF) said on Friday.

Islamic State fighters stand along a street in the countryside of the Syrian Kurdihs town of Kobani, after taking control of the area on 7 Oct, 2014. (REUTERS)

Suicide bombers kill up to seven in Somali town

Mogadishu, 6 Dec — Suicide bombers attacked a restaurant in the town of Baidoa northwest of the Somali capital on Friday, killing up to seven people and wounding dozens of others, a police officer and a doctor said.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility but the Islamist group al Shabaab, which wants to impose its strict interpretation of Islam on Somalia, often carries out such attacks.

Friday evening was a busy time when many Somalis go out. “First a suicide bomber blew himself up at the entrance of the restaurant and then a suicide car bomb followed when people converged to help,” Captain Nur Osman, a police officer, told Reuters by telephone. He said the death toll was at least five. Dr Abdullahi Ali, manager at Baidoa hospital, said the hospital had received seven dead with 34 others wounded in the two blasts.

Many people who are staying in unfinished buildings, disused farms or schools are suffering illnesses caused in part by limited access to basics such as water, sanitation and food.

Local authorities have started relocating some families to a new camp for refugees, but without basic services like water and sanitation, the camp is far from finished, said Forgione.— Reuters

US training of Syrian rebels still months away — coalition chief

COPENHAGEN, 6 Dec — Western plans to train and equip non-jihadi rebels in Syria will not start until at least late February, a leading opposition figure said on Friday, depriving them of support they need to counter both rival insurgents and Syrian government forces.

The relatively moderate rebels loosely grouped under the “Free Syrian Army” label are struggling to hold their ground against much more militant groups such as Islamic State and the al-Qaeda-affiliated Nusra Front and against government forces. A US-led coalition is bombing Islamic State, which has seized swathes of territory in Syria and Iraq. The West is also opposed to President Bashar al-Assad, though he has defied their demands to quit since Syria’s civil war erupted in 2011.

The training programme is at the core of US President Barack Obama’s strategy in Syria, a multi-year plan to field local forces to halt and eventually roll back Islamic State fighters, while keeping American troops off the battlefield.
Obama promises more aid, loan guarantees to Jordan

WASHINGTON, 6 Dec — President Barack Obama said on Friday that the United States and its allies are making slow but steady progress in the fight against Islamic State militants in Iraq and Syria, and he pledged new aid to Jordan to grapple with Syrian refugees.

Obama and Jordan’s King Abdullah made a show of solidarity against Islamic State, holding Oval Office talks that covered the gambit from Iran’s nuclear programme to tensions between Israel and the Palestinians.

“We recognize that it’s a long-term and extremely complex challenge, but it’s one that we feel optimistic we’ll be able to succeed at,” Obama said of the Islamic State battle, with Abdullah seated at his side.

Beyond the military challenge, the two leaders discussed some of Abdullah’s ideas about organizing within Islam in a way to allow peaceful Muslims to over time “isolate and ultimately eradicate this strain” of the religion that has swept the region, Obama said.

Abdullah has absorbed into his country some 1.5 million refugees from Syria’s civil war. To continue to deal with the challenge, Obama pledged $1 billion in aid and a new loan guarantee to help Jordan. Abdullah, in an interview on CBS “This Morning” that aired on Friday, described the fight against Islamic State as akin to a third world war.

“We have to stand up and say, ‘This is the line that is drawn in the sand,’” he said. “It’s clearly a fight between good and evil.”

The White House talks also covered international efforts to persuade Iran to give up its nuclear programme, which Teheran denies and Washington fears is linked to developing an atomic weapon. A deal eluded negotiators late last month, but the effort continues.

Obama said it was unclear whether Teheran would seize its chance for a deal in nuclear talks with western powers.

“I briefed His Majesty about our negotiations with Iran, and indicated to him that we would prefer no deal to a bad deal, but that we continue to hold out the possibility that we can eliminate the risk of Iran obtaining a nuclear weapon,” Obama told reporters.

South Africans celebrate Mandela, rue broken promises

PRETORIA, 6 Dec — South Africa marked the first anniversary of former President Nelson Mandela’s death on Friday with tributes to his struggle against white-minority rule and sober reflections on the country’s failure to capitalise on the freedom he fought for.

Veterans of the anti-apartheid struggle lay wreaths at the foot of a towering statue of Mandela in Pretoria, where crowds earlier sang “Nkosi Sikelelwa” (God Bless Africa), the evocative national anthem adopted after apartheid ended in 1994.

Across the country, crowds gathered to ring bells, sound sirens and blare vuvuzelas for 3 minutes and 7 seconds, before observing 3 minutes of silence, in a 6 minute and 7 second tribute to reflect Mandela’s 67 years in public service.

But it was also a time to reflect on the disappointing pace of change since 1994 andvent frustration at President Jacob Zuma and his ruling African National Congress (ANC) party.

“This moment should call upon us to pause and to reflect on the life of South Africa’s greatest son, said Acting President Cyril Ramaphosa, standing in for Zuma who is visiting China.

Ephraim Mbhena, 55, a veteran of the anti-apartheid armed unit Mandela helped found, called him an inspiration and a legend, adding: “The sad part is that he is no longer with us.”

South Africa’s first black president, who spent 27 years in apartheid prisons before emerging to preach forgiveness and reconciliation, died last year aged 95 from a lung infection.

Twenty years after he swept the ANC to power, pledging to ensure universal access to quality education, jobs and houses, very little of the optimism that engulfed the country remains.

“Mandela was in a different struggle. The current leaders are in their own self-serving struggle,” said student Paballo Nalane, 23, in a crowd at Nelson Mandela Square in Johannesburg.

A quarter of the working population - and 60 percent of the youth — is without a job. Society remains starkly unequal, fuelling crime and social unrest, and confidence in Zuma’s leadership is at an all-time low.

“The eulogies will reveal that subliminally there is a continuing search for another Mandela,” the Business Day newspaper wrote in an editorial.

US lower house OKs A-bomb project park plan

WASHINGTON, 6 Dec — The US House of Representatives has endorsed a plan to designate facilities and land related to the country’s secret atomic bomb programme during World War II as a national park.

The plan for a Manhattan Project National Historical Park was part of the National Defence Authorization Act, which the lower house passed on Thursday.

The move may displease survivors of the nuclear attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The Japanese cities had asked the US government to reconsider the park plan in letters they sent to Washington in 2011 after the mayors learned about the proposed move. The envisioned park will comprise facilities and land in Oak Ridge in Tennessee, Los Alamos in New Mexico and Hanford in Washington State.

The purpose of the plan is to “preserve and protect for the benefit of present and future generations the nationally significant historic resources associated with the Manhattan Project,” according to the bill.

The Los Alamos complex was the centre of scientific efforts to develop an atomic bomb during the war. Enriched uranium that was used for the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima was produced in Oak Ridge and plutonium that was used for the atomic bomb dropped on Nagasaki was produced in Hanford.

The United States dropped the bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945. Casualties by the end of the year are estimated at 140,000 in Hiroshima and 74,000 in Nagasaki. The lower house voted down a similar bill on the Manhattan Project National Historical Park Act in September 2012 after it failed to muster the required two-thirds vote.

US government officials have denied the plan represents any intention to glorify the development of atomic bombs.
Five injured in southwest China earthquake

JINGGU, 6 Dec — Five people were injured after a 5.8-magnitude earthquake struck southwest China’s Yunnan Province early Saturday morning, local authorities confirmed.

The quake struck at 2:43 am at Jinggu County, Pu’er City. The epicenter was monitored at 23.3 degrees north latitude and 100.5 degrees east longitude. The quake hit at a depth of 9 kilometres, according to China Earthquake Networks Centre.

Zhang Jianguo, of Yunnan Disaster Prevention Research Institute, believed the quake was a strong aftershock of an earlier one on 7 October that killed one person and injured more than 300. Epicenters of the two quakes were 10 kilometres apart. “After the previous quake, people at the zone were evacuated.”

He said, adding that the aftershock would not result in heavy casualties. Xinhu reporters felt strong shake on the 12th floor of a hotel in Jinggu. The tremor lasted for less than one minute. But it didn’t cause apparent panic among the population.—Xinhua

Swiss man overpowers rebel guard, escapes in Philippines

MANILA, 6 Dec — A Swiss wildlife photographer escaped from Islamists in the Philippines on Saturday, killing one of them with a machete as he made a break for freedom during a clash between the insurgents and government troops, a Philippine officer said.

Rebels of the Abu Sayyaf group kidnapped Lorenzo Vinciguerra, 49, in the southern Philippines more than two years ago.

Vinciguerra made a grab for his guard’s machete during a clash between troops and the rebels, Colonel Allan Arrojado, commander of the army’s Joint Task Group on the island of Sulu, told reporters by mobile phone text message.

The Swiss man was wounded on his left cheek as he wrestled for the machete, finally getting hold of it and slashing the guard on the neck, Arrojado said.

“Dashed when other bandits were shooting at him,” Arrojado said.

Vinciguerra was being held with Dutch national Ewald Horn, 52, and shot at him to run but the Dutchman had been “very sick and very weak” and unable to escape, Arrojado said, adding that there was no word on Horn’s whereabouts.

Arrojado said Vinciguerra was in good condition but was not available for comment.

The military said five militants were killed and seven wounded in the firefight.

The two European wildlife photographers were taken captive in Tawi-Tawi Province as they were sailing on a bird-watching trip in February 2012.

The Abu Sayyaf is holding several other foreign and Filipino hostages.

The military launched an offensive against the Abu Sayyaf in October after the rebels released two German nationals they seized in April.

The Abu Sayyaf are the most notorious of several rebels factions in south of Philippines.

Reuters
Snowden film ‘CitizenFour’ wins top documentary award

LOS ANGELES, 6 Dec — “CitizenFour,” filmmaker Laura Poitras’s documentary about National Security Agency whistleblower Edward Snowden, was given the top award for best feature by the International Documentary Association on Friday. The IDA award for “CitizenFour” follows the film’s best documentary win at the New York Film Critics Circle Awards this week. It was also nominated for an Independent Spirit Award last month and is among 15 films advancing in the Oscars best documentary race.

“CitizenFour” gives a fly-on-the-wall account of Snowden’s tense days in a Hong Kong hotel and encounters with journalists as newspapers published details of NSA programmes that gathered data from the Internet activities and phone records of millions of Americans and dozens of world leaders.

US filmmaker Poitras shared a Pulitzer Prize this year for her role in publicizing the Snowden documents. She was awarded IDA’s Courage Under Fire award last year for her “conspicuous bravery in the pursuit of truth.”

The IDA, a 30-year-old non-profit organization that aims to support documentary films and culture, also bestowed honours on veteran actor-filmmaker and Sundance Institute founder Robert Redford, who was given the career achievement award.

Cable network Showtime’s “Time of Death” was named best limited series, while best short documentary went to HBO Films’ “Tashi and the Monk,” about a Buddhist monk and his 5-year-old charge Tashi.

Last year’s IDA best feature winner, Jehane Noujaim’s “The Square,” was nominated for an Oscar this year, losing out to “20 Feet From Stardom.”

“I’ve always felt the need to prove (myself) again and again, and that can take its toll. On a frustrating day, it’s like, ‘Ugh, I want to do something else,’ but I know essentially it’s what I love to do the most, even when there are times that it’s hard,” she said.

The ‘Damages’ star thinks acting is more of a beauty pageant for women these days and she feels men are still offered better opportunities to play lead roles and have a potential story in something, whereas women’s roles as the wife or the mother are limited. It’s a harder thing for women to navigate,” she said.—PTI

Frustrating to prove yourself everytime in showbiz: Rose Byrne

LONDON, 6 Dec — Bridesmaids’ actress Rose Byrne sometimes thinks about quitting acting because she finds it frustrating having to prove herself time and again.

Byrne, 35, said she turned her back on show business because she does not think she would find anything else she enjoyed as much.

“I’ve always felt the need to prove (myself) again and again, and that can take its toll. On a frustrating day, it’s like, ‘Ugh, I want to do something else,’ but I know essentially it’s what I love to do the most, even when there are times that it’s hard,” she said.

The ‘Damages’ star thinks acting is more of a beauty pageant for women these days and she feels men are still offered better opportunities. “(Glenn Close) and I talk about how (acting) is a completely different game now. There wasn’t as much scrutiny and it wasn’t such a beauty pageant before. It’s hard, especially in this business and especially for women. I hate to be a broken record about it, but if I compared my career to my male contemporaries, I feel like there is a larger opportunity to play lead roles and have a potential story in something, whereas women’s roles as the wife or the mother are limited. It’s a harder thing for women to navigate,” she said.—PTI

Sam Smith, Beyonce, Pharrell lead Grammys with six nods each

LOS ANGELES, 6 Dec — British soul-pop artist Sam Smith, R&B star Beyonce and singer-producer Pharrell Williams led artists with six Grammy nominations each, including nods for the top prize of Album of the Year, the Recording Academy said on Friday.

Smith’s “In the Lonely Hour,” Beyonce’s self-titled album and Pharrell’s “Girl” joined rocker Beck’s “Morning Phase” and British singer Ed Sheeran’s “X” in the Album of the Year category, announced during the CBS broadcast of “A Very Grammy Christmas” concert late Friday.

Smith, 22, picked up nods in the three top Grammy categories including Record of the Year and Song of the Year for his song “Stay with Me.” He follows in the heels of fellow British soul-pop singer Adele, who won all six of her Grammy nominations in 2013 including the top three awards.

Smith is a contender for the coveted Best New Artist, alongside Australian rapper Iggy Azalea, British pop-rockers Bastille, country singer Hurray Clark and California sister trio Haim.

Record of the Year nominee includes Taylor Swift’s “Shake It Off,” Meghan Trainor’s “All About That Bass,” Iggy Azalea and Charli XCX’s “Fancy” and Sia’s “Chandelier.”

Song of the Year includes Swift’s “Shake It Off,” Trainor’s “All About That Bass” and Sia’s “Chandelier,” alongside Hozier’s “Take Me to Church.”

Pharrell, 41, earned Grammy nominations for his own album “Girl” and his production work on Sheeran’s “X” and Beyoncé’s self-titled record. Beyonce, 33, became the most-nominated artist in Grammy history with 52 nominations. Her self-titled album, released without fanfare last December, is one of this year’s biggest-selling records with 2 million US copies sold.

Swift’s “1989” album, which has sold more than 2 million US copies since October, did not land any nominations, but its song “Shake It Off” picked up three nods.

The soundtrack from Disney’s Oscar-winning film “Frozen,” the year’s top-selling album with more than 5.5 million US copies sold, scored nominations in the Album of the Year categories for music written for visual media.

The Recording Academy comprises music industry professionals who select Grammy contenders from music released between 1 Oct. 2013 and 30 Sept. 2014. In an effort to draw younger viewers to the annual Grammys ceremony in Los Angeles on 8 Feb. 2015, the Recording Academy chose to announce the nominees in 82 of its 83 categories throughout Friday morning on its Twitter feed.

Papon contributes Rs 17 lakh to Assam CM’s Relief Fund

GUWAHATI, 6 Dec — Popular singer Angaraag Mahanta, better known as Papon, has contributed Rs 17 lakh to Assam Chief Minister’s Relief Fund for flood affected people.

The fund for the flood affected people of the state has been raised through a musical concert held in New Delhi on 19 October last, Papon said while handing over the cheque to Chief Minister Tarun Gogoi here last night.

The concert has been conceptualised by Bollywood music composer Vishal Dadlani and Papon, the ‘Happy Ending’ and ‘Special 26’ playback singer to name a few, with support from popular artists Arijit Singh, Harshdeep Kaur, Neeti Mohan and Shilpa Rao from the entertainment industry. It evoked tremendous response from the public. Gogoi appreciated the initiative of Papon and others for the noble cause.—PTI

Sam Smith, Beyonce, Pharrell lead Grammys with six nods each

Los Angeles, 6 Dec — British soul-pop artist Sam Smith, R&B star Beyonce and singer-producer Pharrell Williams led artists with six Grammy nominations each, including nods for the top prize of Album of the Year, the Recording Academy said on Friday.

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Song of the Year includes Swift’s “Shake It Off,” Trainor’s “All About That Bass” and Sia’s “Chandelier,” alongside Hozier’s “Take Me to Church.”

Pharrell, 41, earned Grammy nominations for his own album “Girl” and his production work on Sheeran’s “X” and Beyoncé’s self-titled record. Beyonce, 33, became the most-nominated artist in Grammy history with 52 nominations. Her self-titled album, released without fanfare last December, is one of this year’s biggest-selling records with 2 million US copies sold.

Swift’s “1989” album, which has sold more than 2 million US copies since October, did not land any nominations, but its song “Shake It Off” picked up three nods.

The soundtrack from Disney’s Oscar-winning film “Frozen,” the year’s top-selling album with more than 5.5 million US copies sold, scored nominations in the Album of the Year categories for music written for visual media.

The Recording Academy comprises music industry professionals who select Grammy contenders from music released between 1 Oct. 2013 and 30 Sept. 2014. In an effort to draw younger viewers to the annual Grammys ceremony in Los Angeles on 8 Feb. 2015, the Recording Academy chose to announce the nominees in 82 of its 83 categories throughout Friday morning on its Twitter feed.

Papon contributes Rs 17 lakh to Assam CM’s Relief Fund

Guwahati, 6 Dec — Popular singer Angaraag Mahanta, better known as Papon, has contributed Rs 17 lakh to Assam Chief Minister’s Relief Fund for flood affected people.

The fund for the flood affected people of the state has been raised through a musical concert held in New Delhi on 19 October last, Papon said while handing over the cheque to Chief Minister Tarun Gogoi here last night.

The concert has been conceptualised by Bollywood music composer Vishal Dadlani and Papon, the ‘Happy Ending’ and ‘Special 26’ playback singer to name a few, with support from popular artists Arijit Singh, Harshdeep Kaur, Neeti Mohan and Shilpa Rao from the entertainment industry. It evoked tremendous response from the public. Gogoi appreciated the initiative of Papon and others for the noble cause.—PTI
A grizzly bear roams through the Hayden Valley in Yellowstone National Park in Wyoming, on 18 May, 2014. — Reuters

Salmon, Idaho) 6 Dec — Federal wildlife managers on Friday declined to upgrade protections for a population of grizzly bears in the remote reaches of Idaho and northwest Montana that numbers fewer than 50, and which conservationists say are going extinct.

The US Fish and Wildlife Service said the outsized, hump-shouldered bears that roam the Cabinet Mountains and Yaak River drainage in the Northern Rockies are likely to reach a recovery goal of 100 without changing their status to endangered from threatened under the federal Endangered Species Act.

The finding comes after the Montana-based Alliance for the Wild Rockies sued in April to force federal wildlife managers to tighten restrictions on logging, road construction and other human activity on public land that make up the bears’ habitat.

The Fish and Wildlife Service said for years determined that classifying the bears as endangered was warranted, but other imperiled animals took precedence.

The agency last year published a report showing that the grizzlies that range across the so-called Cabinet-Yaak ecosystem were declining at an annual rate of about 0.8 percent and that the percentage of bears unlawfully or accidentally killed each year by humans tripled by 1999-2012 compared with 1982-1998.

Yet, in a decision published in Friday’s Federal Register, the Fish and Wildlife Service said the population’s status has been improving for the past several years. “The population trend has now changed from declining to stable,” the agency wrote.

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“What the federal government has written off these grizzlies but we won’t let go of,” said Garrity, who on Friday notified the Obama administration that the group would sue over violations of the Endangered Species Act.

Reuters

Equal pay for women many World Cups away, says FIFA

FIFA secretary general Jerome Valcke addresses a news conference after a meeting of the FIFA executive committee in Zurich on 26 Sept, 2014. — Reuters

Ottawa, 6 Dec — Women should not expect to be paid the same as men for many World Cups to come, said FIFA secretary general Jerome Valcke on Friday, adding that any comparisons between the two tournaments was not worth debating.

Valcke, who will conduct the 2015 women’s World Cup draw on Saturday, noted that women will see prize money jump from the $10 million at the last World Cup in Germany to $15 million next year in Canada but it will be a long, long time before there will be the same type of pay parity that women enjoy at the tennis grand slams.

“The comparison between the prize money of the men’s World Cup in Brazil to the women’s World Cup in Canada, that’s not even a question I will answer because it is nonsense,” Valcke said at a news conference.

“We played 30th (men’s) World Cups before and we are playing the seventh women’s World Cup so things can grow step-by-step. “We are still another 23 World Cups before potentially women should receive the same amount as men. — Reuters

Only 60 years of farming left if soil degradation continues

Rome, 6 Dec — Generating three centimetres of top soil takes 1,000 years, and if current rates of degradation continue all of the world’s top soil could be gone within 60 years, a senior UN official said on Friday.

About a third of the world’s soil has already been degraded, Maria-Heleno Semedo of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) told a forum marking World Soil Day.

The causes of soil destruction include chemical-heavy farming techniques, deforestation which increases erosion, and global warming. The earth under our feet is too often ignored by policymakers, experts said. “Soils are the basis of life,” said Semedo, FAO’s deputy director general of natural resources. “Ninety-five percent of our food comes from the soil.”

Unless new approaches are adopted, the global amount of arable and productive land per person in 2050 will be only a quarter of the level in 1960, the FAO reported, due to growing populations and soil degradation.

Soils play a key role in absorbing carbon and filtering water, the FAO reported.

Soil destruction creates a vicious cycle, in which less carbon is stored, the world gets hotter, and the land is further degraded.

“We are losing 30 soccer fields of soil every minute, mostly due to intensive farming,” Volkert Engelson, an activist with the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements told the forum at the FAO’s headquarters in Rome. “Organic farming may not be the only solution but it’s the single best option I can think of.” — Reuters

US declines to upgrade protections for grizzly bears in Idaho, Montana

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Carmen (R), a volunteer at San Juan de Dios Hospital, weighs a baby in Caracas, Venezuela, on 4 Dec, 2014. The International Volunteer Day is celebrated on 5 Dec, annually. — Xinhua

In Memoriam

In commemoration of the memory of my late father Dr.San Baw (29/6/1922-7/12/1984), orthopedic surgeon, pioneer of ivory hip prosthesis earning him the name as ivory prince among his friends and colleagues and developer of new techniques for treating infantile pseudoarthrosis of the tibia (disease found among children of having extra thin bones) known informally as San Baw’s technique, who passed away thirty years ago on 7 December 1984 and in memory of my late mother Professor Dr.Myint Myint Khin, (15/12/1923-19/6/2006) a celebrated professor of medicine and author of many educated books both in Myanmar and English and 6-month anniversary of her passing away on 19/12/2014. From their loving son, Dr.Myint Zan Professor of Law Faculty of Law Multimedia University, Malacca, Malaysia.
Rooney and Van Persie may heap more misery on Southampton

LONDON, 6 Dec — Southampton will be hoping Manchester United manager Louis van Gaal does not pick Wayne Rooney and Robin van Persie together in attack for Monday night’s Premier League fixture at St Mary’s.

Van Gaal said on Friday that Rooney would return from the knee injury that ruled him out of Wednesday’s 2-1 home win over Stoke City.

The United captain and Dutchman Van Persie have enjoyed a lot of success against Southampton in the past and may team up again, although Van Gaal can also call upon fit-again Colombia forward Radamel Falcao.

Rooney has struck five goals in as many starts for United against the south-coast club and Van Persie has also scored five against them including a hat-trick at St Mary’s two years ago.

Third-placed Southamp ton have lost their last two games, against Manch ester City and Arsenal, but Van Gaal believes they can wind up in the Champions League qualifying positions at the end of the season.

“They have a very good squad,” the Dutchman told a news conference on Friday.

“I think they are able to finish in the first four but that’s also because I believe in the manager, in Ronald Koeman. I believe the cohesion there is good.”

The pair were involved in a high-profile bustup when they were at Ajax Amsterdam a decade ago.

“My relationship with Ronald Koeman doesn’t have to be described, that’s private,” said Van Gaal.

“We play against Southampton and we should talk about the team rather than the coach. After the game we can reflect on the relationship.”

United, one point behind Southampton in fourth spot, will be without Argentine winger Angel Di Maria because of a hamstring injury.—Reuters

Rio 2016 Games progress being made despite delays

MONACO, 6 Dec — Preparations for the Rio de Janeiro 2016 Summer Olympics are progressing well, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) said on Friday, with organizers making up for lost time 20 months ahead of the Games.

The city has been running behind schedule since being awarded the event in 2009 as the first-ever South American host.

Earlier this year the IOC urged Rio to speed up, vice-president John Coates calling prepara tions the worst he had experienced.

“The general feeling is progress is continuing to be made,” said track spokesman Mark Adams after organizers made a presentation to his Executive Board on Friday.

“We are in that same phase as we were in London (2012), as we are in all Games. With less than two years to go it’s all about delivery now.”

Construction delays have plagued the build up with the IOC repeatedly calling for improved collaboration between the various levels of government and organizers.

Work on the Deodoro Olympic Park started late and there have also been problems with the golf course due to its environmental impact, although the issue was settled last month with a court judge giving the green light for work to continue, according to Games chief Carlos Nuzman.

“This issue is now finished and grass planting will be completed by the end of the year,” Nuzman told reporters.

“We are on track now. We still have some issues but we are within the time frame,” added Nuzman who is also an IOC member.

There have been delays in completing the International Broadcast Centre (IBC) and organizers are also struggling with water pollution at the sailing venue but it will not affect test events, said Adams.

“As for the sporting venues all the test events will happen on schedule,” he added.

For the IBC there is a project review next week where that will be discussed.”

Nuzman played down the IBC delays, saying the building was almost complete.

Carson, 6 Dec — The LA Galaxy hope to give Landon Donovan a fairytale finish to a storied career when they shoot for a record fifth MLS title in Sunday’s championship game versus the New England Revolution.

The league’s all-time top scorer announced in August that will retire at the end of this season, putting added focus on the playoffs with each tie potentially his last.

The Galaxy beat Real Salt Lake and Seattle Sounders to reach their ninth MLS Cup and their better regular season record means they will host the final in what is sure to be an emotional day for the 32-year-old Donovan.

But Galaxy’s Irish international forward Robbie Keane, named the league’s most valuable player this week, believes there is no risk of distraction.

“If anyone deserves to play up with the IOC repeat ing to Games chief Carlos Nuzman played down “I know everybody is thinking about Landon,” he said. “This issue is now finished and grass planting will be completed by the end of the year,” Nuzman told reporters.

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Galaxy seek record fifth MLS title in Donovan’s send-off

Galaxy forward Landon Donovan (10) reacts after scoring his third goal for a hat trick against the Real Salt Lake during the second half at StubHub Centre on 9 Nov, 2014. —Reuters

New England certainly present plenty of threats of their own as Ger man-born US international Jermaine Jones is a domi nant presence in midfield while Lee Nguyen pro vides a creative spark.

In attack, Revolution forward Charlie Davies, whose career nearly ended after a horrific car crash in 2009, has four goals in four playoff games and is a predator in the penalty area.

Pele says he has recovered, thanks fans in video

SÃO PAULO, 6 Dec — Brazilian football great Pele said he was in good health in a video recorded at the Sao Paulo hospital where he has been treated for a urinary tract infection.

In the video, released on Friday, Pele smiled and strummed a guitar with family members by his side before assuring fans that he had recovered.

“I know everybody worried about my health, but I’m OK,” he said in English, extending an invitation to fans around the world to visit the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro.

“We’re going to participate in the Games together, he said.”

The three-time World Cup champion has been in the hospital for nearly two weeks and alarmed many when he was moved into a wing used for more intensive care.

In the hospital’s most recent update, doctors said on Thursday that his health was improving and they had removed a catheter used for dialysis.

The 74-year-old Pele, born Edison Arantes do Nascimento, has suffered a series of health problems in the past decade that, among other things, have led to emergency eye surgery for a detached retina and a hip replacement.—Reuters

The Olympic Flag flies in front of “Christ the Redeemer” statue during a blessing ceremony in Rio de Janeiro on 19 Aug, 2012.—Reuters

General view of Albert Einstein Hospital where Brazilian soccer legend Pele is in the intensive care unit in Sao Paulo on 28 Nov, 2014.—Reuters

Los Angeles Galaxy forward Landon Donovan (10) reacts after scoring his third goal for a hat trick against the Real Salt Lake during the second half at StubHub Centre on 9 Nov, 2014. —Reuters

The 74-year-old Pele, born Edison Arantes do Nascimento, has suffered a series of health problems in the past decade that, among other things, have led to emergency eye surgery for a detached retina and a hip replacement.—Reuters

Rio 2016 Games progress being made despite delays

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