President U Thein Sein delighted with success, growth of ASEAN-ROK cooperation

BUSAAN, 12 Dec—President U Thein Sein attended the 2014 ASEAN-Republic of Korea Commemorative Summit, celebrating 25 years of dialogue relations between the two sides, in the South Korean port city of Busan on Friday.

South Korean President Park Geun-hye presided at the summit, in which discussions focused on a review of ties between her country and ASEAN and matters related to future goals.

In his address to the summit, President U Thein Sein said it is encouraging to witness the success and growth of mutual trust and respect and bilateral cooperation between the ASEAN and South Korea.

This year is special for the host country as it marks the 20th anniversary of its engagement in the ASEAN Regional Forum and the 10th anniversary of the signing of the Joint Declaration on Comprehensive Cooperation Partnership between ASEAN and the ROK.

President U Thein Sein delighted with success, growth of ASEAN-ROK cooperation

He urged the South-east Asian bloc and the host country to adhere to the summit’s theme “Building Trust, Bringing Happiness”, calling trust an essential requirement for the establishment of peace, happiness, friendly relations and cooperation.

Myanmar’s leader reaffirmed his full commitment to the implementation of the 2010 Joint Declaration on ASEAN-ROK Strategic Partnership for Peace and Prosperity and the two sides’ 2011-2015 plan of action.

According to the plan, families of insurance (See page 2)

President U Thein Sein poses for documentary photo together with leaders of ASEAN countries and President of ROK Park Geun-hye at 2014 ASEAN-Republic of Korea Commemorative Summit in Busan.—MNA

KOICA Myanmar Office hosts 2014 alumni meeting for fellows

YANGON, 12 Dec—The Myanmar office of the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) hosted its annual alumni meeting at the Summit Parkview Hotel in Yangon on Friday, bringing together those who have benefited from KOICA project trainings and fellowships to share their experiences and update professional knowledge acquired during their stays in South Korea.

The KOICA Fellowship Program Participants’ Alumni Meeting 2014 saw a series presentations about the activities of KOICA's World Friends KOICA Volunteers program that dispatches South Koreans to abroad to share expertise, knowledge and experience, and the Myanmar KOICA Club that groups Myanmar citizens who have participated in KOICA-arranged training programs or meetings in South Korea.

The alumni meeting was aimed at providing nearly 80 members of different professions from various ministries with opportunities for networking and sharing knowledge. The event was also geared towards enabling KOICA fellows to contribute effectively and actively to Myanmar’s socio-economic development, thereby meeting the aims of KOICA’s training and fellowship programs for the country.

It provided an occasion to experience Korean and Myanmar culture, with participants enjoying performances of students from Western Yangon Technological University and KOICA’s Myanmar Office.

The agency has been providing educational opportunities to Myanmar since 2001, allowing more than 1,700 officials to take part in its various programs including scholarship courses, a KOICA official told The Global New Light of Myanmar.

It offered different fellowship and training programs to 100 Myanmar officials this year, the official added. KOICA was established in 1991 with the aim of sharing South Korea’s developmental experiences with developing countries around the world.
Honorary doctorate conferred on President U Thein Sein

President U Thein Sein was held at the Busan University of Foreign Studies in the Republic of Korea on Friday evening.

At the convocation, Rector Mr. Jung Hae-Lin explained why the university conferred on the president the doctorate, saying that the president has played a pivotal role in significant reforms and development that have been taking place in Myanmar. In addition, the rector said that the president is also exerting efforts for ceasefire with ethnic nationals and has replaced the military rule with a political culture in which the nation is ruled by the elected. The president is honored as he has devoted his life for development in various sectors, the rector continued.

Then, the rector and a department head conferred the honorary doctorate on the president.

Then, the president delivered a speech at the convocation, saying that the positive changes taking place in Myanmar in the last four years contributed to improving the image of the nation in regional and international community. Then, the president expressed his gratitude to the ROK and its people and educational institutions for their uninterrupted support for political, economic and social changes in Myanmar during recent years, requesting more assistance and further cooperation in the education sector from the university as the international assistance is essential for capacity building and educational development that will help nurture democratic practices in Myanmar.

Afterwards, the president and the rector formally opened the U Thein Sein Hall built at the university in honour of the president.

Then, the president warmly greeted the rector, officials and students studying Myanmar language at the university.

In the evening, the president, together with union ministers and officials, attended the dinner hosted by the chairman of Daewoo International Company at the Westin Chosun Hotel.

Media to register for news coverage of 67th Anniversary Independence Day and Grand Military Review

Nav Pyi Taw, 12 Dec.—Media persons wishing to cover news on the 67th Anniversary Independence Day and Grand Military Review (Nav Pyi Taw) may register at http://moimm.info/moimrf4jan2015/ at the left side bar of Webportal www.moi.gov.mm of the Ministry of Information.

The applicants can register in both Myanmar and English languages. Myanmar language registration must use Myanmar font with name, other name, date of birth, CSC number, education, race/religion, occupation, address, date of marriage, father’s name, spouse’s name and CSC number, telephone number and e-mail address attached to a passport under 2MB size.

Registrations are to be applied not later than 20 December. Further information, may dial 067-412187.—MNA

Tourists from 43 countries to take tourist visa on arrival to India through online

Nav Pyi Taw, 12 Dec.—Tourists from 43 countries including Myanmar can take Tourist Visa on Arrival (TVOA) to India through electronic travel authorization scheme, according to the press release of the Indian Embassy in Yangon on Friday.

The dedicated user friendly website http://indianvisasonline.gov.in/visa/tvoa.html has been launched for this purpose which details the procedure including the complete list of 43 countries whose citizens may avail of this service.

The tourists from 43 countries including Myanmar can apply for tourist visa twice a year, each visit not exceeding 30 days, visa duration non-extendable except in the event of medical emergencies which shall be granted within 72 hours through email. The purpose of visit to India may range from tourism, casual business visit, short term medical treatment, and to meet friends and relatives. The applicant is expected to take a print out of the email and can travel to India through 9 designated international airports Bangalore, Chennai, Cochin, Delhi, Goa, Hyderabad, Kolkata, Mumbai and Thiruvananthapuram. The scheme entails capture of biometric data of the visitors on arrival at the airports.—Moe Thuzar Soe
President U Thein Sein delighted with success, growth of ASEAN-ROK...

(from page 1)

The president requested South Korea to render technical assistance to ASEAN’s management on natural disaster preparedness and humanitarian aid, calling for closer cooperation in combating terrorism, which he said has come to threaten global stability and security.

The presidents of Myanmar and South Korea gave a joint press conference and responded to queries on ASEAN-ROK relations and outcomes and agreements of the summit.

MNA

Myanmar People’s Forum 2014 begins

YANGON, 12 Dec—With the aim of establishing a strong milestone community composed of diverse civil society organizations across the country, the Myanmar People’s Forum 2014 was held at the Diamond Jubilee Hall of Yangon University on Friday morning.

President U Thein Sein submitted to the government his message at the forum, which was read out by Union Minister for Home Affairs Brig-Gen Kyaw Zan Myint briefed the vice president on the outcomes of last year’s talks jointly organized by the Ministry of Information and the Asia Foundation.

Information Ministry, Asia Foundation organize talks

NAY PYI TAW, 12 Dec—Talks on Myanmar 2014: civic knowledge and values in changing society jointly organized by the Ministry of Information and the Asia Foundation was held at the Hotel Max in Nay Pyi Taw on Friday.

Present at the talks were Deputy Minister for Information U Pike Htway, Dr Tin Shwe, officials from the Hluttaw and the resident representative and a senior program officer from the Asia Foundation briefed the participants on the methods used in the survey. Over 3,000 people across the country participated in the survey.

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing attends graduation ceremony of DSTA

NAY PYI TAW, 12 Dec—The Central Committee for Land Use Management is taking measures to press departments and organizations to give back grabbed land plots remaining idle and hand over them to original landlords, Vice President U Nyan Tun told a meeting in Dawei on 11 December and urged the committee to tighten its supervision and avoid unnecessary delay in returning the plots to the right owners, citing the support and cooperation of locals as success.

Efforts are to be made to ensure a free flow of information and win public trust in the committee’s undertakings, he said.

Taninthayi Region Chief Minister U Myat Ko and Deputy Minister for Home Affairs Brig-Gen Kyaw Zan Myint briefed the vice president on how the local committee is dealing with land ownership complaints as well as on the laws, rules and regulations on land use.

After the meeting, Vice President U Nyan Tun went to a Myanmar-Thailand border trade camp in Htikhi, where he heard briefings and gave instructions.

In the evening, the vice president went on inspection tours of Kyunsu town and Kattalu village in and oversaw regional development tasks.

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Plans under way to return grabbed land to owners in Taninthayi

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The deputy minister explained the survey on knowledge and values of citizens in changing Myanmar society and the resident representative and a senior program officer from the Asia Foundation briefed the participants on the methods used in the survey. Over 3,000 people across the country participated in the survey.

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing presents Best Cadet Award to Cadet Aung Zin Oo.—MNA

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing inspects jetty of Kyunsu Township in Taninthayi Region.—MNA

President U Thein Sein met with the cadets and their families and enjoyed dinner and greeted them warmly one by one. They then enjoyed dinner with the cadets and their families.—Myawady

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing inspects jetty of Kyunsu Township in Taninthayi Region.—MNA

Vice President U Nyan Tun inspected jetty of Kyunsu Township in Taninthayi Region.—MNA

Nay Pyi Taw, 12 Dec—Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services, presided over the graduation ceremony of DSTA and inspected their regiment before presenting prizes to outstanding graduates including Cadet Aung Zin Oo, who won the best cadet award.

The senior general said in a speech that Myanmar citizens are exerting all-out efforts to catch up with other countries in the development of science and technology. He urged the cadets to constantly study modern technologies to build a modern army and to produce and maintain weapons, war planes and warships locally without relying on other countries by conducting research and development tasks.

He also urged them to be careful of media attacks and cyber warfare as the former causes loss of trust in its victims and the latter leads to chaos in government mechanisms and unexpected losses.

In conclusion, the senior general urged the cadets to apply what they have learned not only for the defence services but also for the nation. After a graduation parade, he met with three outstanding cadets and their parents and praised them for their efforts.

He then viewed round the Science and Technology Exhibition 2014 of the DSTA.

In the evening, the senior general and his wife, along with the officers and their wives, attended a graduation dinner and greeted the cadets warmly one by one. They then enjoyed dinner with the cadets and their families.—Myawady

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Myanmar, China launch border trade fair 2014 in Muse

Muse, 12 Dec — The 14th Myanmar-China Border Trade Fair 2014 was launched at 105th-Mile Trade Zone in Muse, northern Shan State, on 11 December.

Cooperation needs in prevention of measles, German measles

Thandwe, 12 Dec — A coordination meeting on vaccination of measles and German measles was held at the hall of General Administration Department in Thandwe Township, Rakhine State, on 11 December.

Aungpinle power station supplies electricity to three townships in Mandalay District

Mandalay, 12 Dec — With the aim of boosting supply of electricity for the increasing population of townships in Mandalay District, a new transformer was installed at Aungpinle Main Power Station as of 20 November, 2014.

Today’s Myanmar News sites
Proposal submitted on participation of region Hluttaw MPs, ethnic affairs ministers in six-party talks

Minister of the region U Nothan Kap submitted an emergency proposal, citing the need for an appropriate number of region Hluttaw representatives and ethnic affairs ministers to participate in the six-party talks that will focus on amendment of the 2008 constitution.

He said that as constitutional amendment is very important in current political arena, participation of region Hluttaw representatives and ethnic affairs ministers will ensure good discussions take place.

The region Hluttaw approved the bill on Sagaing Region Photo, Painting and Sculpture Shows and put the reformulation of Hluttaw affairs committees and the report of region auditor-general on record.

Village BEMS to get new building

The building will have three 90 feet by 30 feet classrooms. We Are Able construction company is constructing the school building.

Officials of the scrutiny committee instructed responsible persons of the company to use quality goods in construction of the building.—Zaw Min Naing (Myingyan)

MLF donates K1 million to construction of village library in Myeik Tsp

Myeik, 12 Dec — A ceremony to open a library building was held in Thutyawa Village, Myeik Township, Tanintharyi Region, on 10 December.

Vice Chairman of Myanmar Libraries Foundation U Nyunt Swe and executive U Nyo Min explained fund allotment of the foundation to build libraries across the country. Head of Region Information and Public Relations Department Daw Ni Ni Cho discussed durability of libraries. Member of the foundation writer Daw Thet Thet Swe explained advantages of reading to the people.

Foundation executive U Nyo Min presented K1 million for construction of the library to a local. Well-wishers donated K2 million to Staff Officer Daw Kyin Kyin Than of the District IPRD.

The library will be a 24-feet-long and 16-feet-wide one-storey building.—Myek District IPRD

Thingangyun Township gets new transformer for power supply

— Officials and electricians from Thingangyun Township Electrical Engineer Office under Yangon Electricity Supply Board installed a 315 KVA transformer on Yenatha Street in the township on 10 December.

They also substituted a section of 6.6 KV power line with an insulated aluminium cable cover section to ensure safety in power supply.

Residents of Myaungmya Township to participate in sports meet

— A plan is under way to organize the Mya Ayea Sports Meet with 17 events in Myaungmya, Ayeyawady Region, from 27 to 29 December 2014, aimed at turning out outstanding athletes from the township.

Under the arrangement of Union Minister for Sports U Tint Hsan, men’s football will take place at Myoma football ground and Kowelwe football ground and other sports events such as Sepak Takraw, weightlifting, badminton, Karatedo and tennis at Naungyoe Gymnasium 1, 2, and 3, Basketball Ground of No 6 Basic Education High School and Myaungmya golf club, Director of Sports and Physical Education Department Aung Min (IPRD)
Japan PM Abe's base aims to restore past religious, patriotic values


tokyo, Dec 12 — As Prime Minister Shinzo Abe promises voters a bright future for Japan's economy, key parts of his conservative base want him to steer the nation back towards a traditional ethos mixing Shinto myth, patriotism and pride in an ancient imperial line.

Proponents say such changes are needed to revive important aspects of Japanese identity, which mobilised the masses to fight the war in the name of a divine emperor. The legacy of that war still haunts ties with China and South Korea nearly 70 years after its end.

A predicted landslide win by Abe's Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) in a general election on Sunday, called as a referendum on his economic growth policies, and prospects Abe may become a rare long-term Japanese leader have given his ardent supporters their best chance in decades of achieving their goals.

“We really have trust in him,” said Yutaka Yuzawa, director of the Shinto Association of Spiritual Leadership (SAS), the political arm of the Association of Shinto Shrines. The group, which counts Abe as a member, is one of a network of overlapping organisations sharing a similar agenda.

“The prime minister’s views are extremely close to our way of thinking,” Yuzawa told Reuters in an interview.

Among the key elements of the SAS agenda are calls to rewrite Japan’s US-drafted, post-war constitution, not only to alter its pacifist Article 9 but to blur the separation of religion and state. Education reform to better nurture “love of country” among youth is another top priority.

“After the war, there was an atmosphere that considered all aspects of the pre-war era bad,” Yuzawa said. “Policies were adopted weakening the relationship between the imperial household and the people and the most fundamental elements of Japanese history were not taught in the schools.”

Similar concerns drive other organisations such as Nippon Kaigi (Japan Conference), a broader lobby group for which Abe serves as a “supreme adviser.”

Experts see parallels between these groups and the US Tea Party movement, with its calls to restore lost American values.

Nippon Kaigi and the Shinto Association basically believe the Occupation period brought about... the forced removal of traditions from public space and public institutions,” said University of Auckland professor Mark Mullins.

“For them, this was authentic Japanese identity and to be an independent and authentic Japan again those things need to be restored,” Abe has long been close to such groups but they have increased their reach since his first 2006-2007 term as leader.

Membership data show 301 members of parliament, mostly from the LDP, are affiliated with the SAS, including 222 in the 480-seat lower house before the election. A Nippon Kaigi caucus had 295 members, including some opposition MPs.

Members of the groups are central to Abe’s administration.

Nippon Kaigi supporters accounted for 84 percent of Abe’s cabinet after it was rejigged in September and almost all ministers were affiliated with the SAS. Eighty-four percent also belonged to a separate caucus promoting visits to Yasukuni Shrine, seen by critics as a symbol of Japan’s past militarism.

Abe’s December 2013 visit to Yasukuni sparked outrage in Beijing and Seoul. Far less attention was paid to what some see as his equally symbolic participation in October that year in a ceremony at the Shrine, the holiest of Japan’s Shinto institutions.

The ritual is held every 20 years, when Ise Shrine is rebuilt and sacred objects representing the emperor’s mythical Sun Goddess ancestress are transferred to the new shrine.

Abe became only the second premier to take part in the centuries-old ritual, and the first since World War Two. “Without anyone blinking an eye ... it became a state rite,” said John Breen, a professor at the International Research Centre for Japanese Studies in Kyoto, commenting on Abe’s participation.

Other lobby groups are also active at the grassroots.

On 1 October, they launched the “People’s Council to Write a Beautiful Constitution” to boost support for revising the charter for 2016.

Amending the constitution faces big hurdles even if the LDP succeeds in winning two-thirds of both chambers, since a majority of voters must then approve changes in a referendum.

But other parts of the conservative agenda are moving ahead, such as making “moral education” part of the official school curriculum, introducing pushed through and institutionalized so they are shaping the next generation, whether parents know or think about it or not,” the University of Auckland’s Mullins said.

Police to deploy mini drones in Indian capital to protect women

New Delhi, Dec 12 — Indian police will deploy mini drones fitted with night vision cameras to patrol the streets of the national capital to make the city safer for women, local media reported on Friday.

After the rape of a 27-year-old finance company executive by an Uber cab driver was reported last week, the police has decided to patrol dark stretches and crime prone areas with the help of drones which will be fitted with night vision thermal imaging cameras, said Press Trust of India. The project will be launched in north district area of the city by next month, said the report.

“Well with this project, North Delhi will become the first district with complete camera surveillance in the city. This would be achieved with the combined range of CCTVs and drones," the report quoted a senior police official as saying. Every drone will fly at 200 metres high and will cover an area of three to four kilometres, said the report.—Xinhua

Central government supports Hong Kong government’s action to clear occupy sites

Beijing, Dec 12 — China’s central government on Friday said it supported the Hong Kong government and police’s decision to disperse and clear the Occupy protest sites.

The central government “fully agrees and firmly supports” the Hong Kong government and police’s decisions to stop these illegal activities, thereby maintaining social order and safeguarding the rule of law, said a statement from the State Council Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office. Hong Kong authorities cleared occupy sites in Admiralty on Thursday and traffic in front of the government headquarters was seriously undermining Hong Kong’s social order, economy, democratic progress and rule of law, the statement said.

“We have noticed that the clearance operation was well received and welcomed by the residents of Hong Kong,” the statement said.

The statement reiterated that the central government will continue implementing the policies of “one country, two systems” and the Basic Law as well as supporting Hong Kong’s democratic progress.—Xinhua

The 18th core taskforce of the Chinese People’s Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) and the guided missile destroyer “Sterlite” of the US Navy conduct a China-US joint maritime anti-piracy drill in the waters of the Gulf of Aden on 11 Dec, 2014.—Xinhua

Korean team to visit Fukushima to review fisheries import ban

Tokyo, Dec 12 — A South Korean research team will visit Fukushima and other locations in Japan next week as Seoul reviews its import ban on marine products imposed in the wake of the 2011 nuclear crisis, the Japanese government said on Friday.

During a five-day visit from Monday, the team including radiation and consumer affairs experts will visit the disaster-hit Fukushima Daichi nuclear plant and wholesale markets in Fukushima and Chiba prefectures, according to the farm ministry. In September 2013, South Korea expanded its import restriction to include all fisheries products from eight prefectures in northeastern and eastern Japan including Fukushima and Chiba near nuclear accident, amid concerns over leakage contamination of water at the stricken plant. Japan hopes the visit will help Seoul to lift the ban at an early date, Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Hirohiko Seko said at a Press conference.

The team will also meet with officials of plant operator Tokyo Electric Power Co to hear about the decommissioning work of the plant and measures to deal with radioactive water at the complex, the ministry said.

“We have strongly urged South Korea to lift the restriction at an early date on various occasions. We have high hopes that South Korea, through this visit to Japan, will deepen its understanding of the issue and the abolition of the ban will be realized soon,” Seko said.—Kyodo News

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Pacific free trade negotiators may reconvene in January

WASHINGTON, 12 Dec — Negotiators from 12 countries seeking a Pacific free trade pact may meet again in January in the United States or Australia following their ongoing meeting in Washington, negotiation sources said on Thursday.

The negotiators for the Trans Pacific Partnership initiative are likely to release a plan for future meetings toward an early signing of the deal after they wrap up the current session on Friday, the sources said.

But the trade officials, including chief TPP negotiators, are expected to refrain from going into detail about the meeting, where the United States, Japan and 10 other countries will try to reach a broad agreement to the initiative, they added.

Akira Amari, Japanese TPP minister, said earlier this week the TPP countries may hold the next ministerial meeting in early 2015 if the current chief negotiators’ meeting make major progress in contentious sectors such as market access.

A US trade magazine reported on Thursday the envisioned next round of talks by chief TPP negotiators and other officials will take place from 26 January to 1 February at an undecided location in the United States.

The other 10 countries are Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore and Vietnam.

Darei Vetter, chief agricultural negotiator of the Office of US Trade Representative, told an event in Washington that negotiations on tariffs on farm produce have entered a final stage and achieved progress.

US President Barack Obama told a meeting on Thursday with exporters, “I’m much more optimistic about us being able to close out a agreement with our TPP partners than I was last year.”

“I think the odds of us being able to get a strong agreement are significantly higher than 50-50,” Obama told the event at the White House.

The TPP countries have given up striking a deal by the end of this year with many of them believing a bilateral accord between Japan and the United States, the largest economies in the framework, is widely seen as vital to accelerate the whole process.

CIA chief admits use of brutal interrogation techniques on detainees

Director of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) John Brennan talks to the press during a rare news conference at CIA Headquarters in Virginia on 11 Dec, 2014.—REUTERS

WASHINGTON, 12 Dec — Some officers of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) used brutal techniques on terrorist suspects and there was no proof of useful information yielded from the interrogation, chief of the US spy agency said on Thursday.

John Brennan, in a rare televised Press conference held at the CIA headquarters in Langley, Virginia, acknowledged “unauthorized” and “abhorrent” practices by some officers, saying it was “unknowable” whether the so-called enhanced interrogation techniques produced key intelligence.

“We fell short when it came to holding some officers accountable for their mistakes,” he said, adding that the use of coercive methods has a strong prospect for resulting in false information because “if somebody is being subjected to a course of techniques, they say something to have those techniques stopped”.

And so there have been a lot of studies done over the years about the value of different types of interrogation methods and whether or not coercive methods can lead to useful information that couldn’t otherwise obtained,” the CIA chief noted.

But Brennan asserted the CIA “did a lot of things right” in a time when there were no easy answers, saying CIA officers were acting under Bush administration guidance that harsh techniques were legal.

The CIA was brought to sharper focus following the release Tuesday of a Senate Intelligence Committee report, in which details were offered about the agency’s brutal interrogation methods over the years after the 11 Sept, 2001 terrorist attacks on the US mainland.

Among the methods were waterboarding, sexual threats and sleep deprivation, though the report found the techniques largely ineffective and poorly managed.

The revelations have sparked outrage and demands for justice around the world.

Juan Mendez, the UN’s Special Rapporteur on torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, said the use of torture when interrogating prisoners captured in the US “war on terror” has damaged the country’s moral high ground and set back the global fight against the condemnable practice.

“The example set by the United States on the use of torture has been a big draw-back in the fight against such practice in many other countries throughout the world,” he said.

“We have lost a little bit of the moral high ground,” Mendez added. “But it can be regained and it should be regained.”

He said the torture programmes had made the matter of terrorism worse and provided “a breeding ground for more terrorism”.

“As a nation that has publicly affirmed its belief that respect for truth advances respect for the rule of law, and as a nation that frequently calls for transparency and accountability in other countries, the United States must rise to meet the standards it has set both for itself and for others,” Mendez said.—Xinhua

IAEA to get more money for Iran nuclear deal monitoring

VIENNA, 12 Dec — Several states pledged on Thursday to back a UN nuclear agency request for 4.6 million euros (€3.62 million) as soon as possible to pay for its monitoring of an extended, interim nuclear deal between Iran and the powers not directly involved in the dispute over Iran's nuclear programme.

The support voiced toward an early signing of the interim deal to halt its most sensitive nuclear work in addition to requests total in the diplomacy.

Norway pledged 1 million euros — more than a fifth of the total — and the Netherlands promised 100,000 euros, diplomats who attended the closed-door session in Vienna said.

The United States and Britain, which are engaged in negotiations with Iran, said they would help. “We would like to announce our intent to make an additional extra-budgetary contribution,” US Ambassador Laura Kennedy said.

Iran and the United States, France, Germany, Britain, China and Russia failed last month to meet a self-imposed deadline to resolve the standoff, extending the talks seven more months.

Iran and the powers will meet in Geneva on 17 December to narrow the remaining gaps, Iranian deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said on Thursday.

“There will be bilateral talks with Americans and others starting on Monday,” Araghchi told the semi-official Fars news agency.

IAEA inspectors are checking that Iran meets its commitments under a preliminary deal to halt its most sensitive nuclear work in exchange for some easing of sanctions.

IAEA Director General Yukiya Amano told its 35-nation governing board about the need for new voluntary budget contributions in addition to requests totaling 6.5 million euros in January and July.

“I invite member states which are in a position to do so to make the necessary funding available as soon as possible in order to ensure smooth continuation of our activities,” he said.

The European Union said it was “prepared to consider sympathetically the resource needs” of the IAEA.

Iran’s refusal to scale back uranium enrichment has drawn international sanctions.

Iranian Ambassador Reza Najafi said negotiations had made good progress and a “lasting solution is closer than ever.”

IAEA inspectors visit Iran’s enrichment facilities of Natanz and Fordow daily, versus about once a week before the November 2013 agreement. The agency has also procured specialised equipment for its analytical work.

Amano said the IAEA’s workload had greatly increased and many staff “working on this matter will give up their Christmas and New Year holidays this year.”

Students of the University of Kirkuk, dressed in the uniforms of Kurdish security forces, known as Peshmerga, gather to celebrate the Peshmerga Day in the city of Kirkuk, northern Iraq on 11 Dec, 2014.—Xinhua
The chicken or the egg

By Myint Win Thein

When commodities prices rise in a country, those who are hardest hit are the poor including lower-level government and private sector employees and the unemployed. As a result, governments are forced to consider increasing salaries and wages and creating job opportunities for the jobless. When the wages and salaries are raised, commodities prices go up again. It is this cycle of price rise and pay increase that some countries in the world cannot emancipate themselves from. This is the problem of the chicken and the egg. What comes first, the chicken or the egg? Which comes first, increased prices or the pay rise?

However, it is clear that prices are always increasing whether the minimum wage or salaries of government and private sector workers are raised or not. Prices may rise due to the inflow of foreign investment, development projects, inflation, land speculation, smuggling, import or export businesses and so on. For example, property and rental prices in some cities in some countries skyrocket due to surges in foreign investment. As a result, the urban poor have to move away from city centres but they still have to pay more for their accommodation as property rental prices rise. Their usual food items become expensive as crops, meat and fish are exported to other countries. Peasant farmers who have traditionalized later on.

We often heard some foreign importers complaining about being short-changed by weight from the imports. An actual case has happened during the time that Myanmar was called as Burma, a shipment of exported raw rubber blocks, not only short in weight but also had foreign objects like wooden slipper pieces got embedded in some of the blocks. This incident has disturbed the good business relation between the importers and exporters, it was time consuming and costly to finally resolve the heated problem.

No business can be conducted unless each person is sure that the other person is being fair and honest. To have fair and honest trade, it definitely will need an accurate system of weights and measures. To do this, a special committee of esteemed persons as members of that committee, they can fix the time or time or random inspecting from time to time if controversy arises at any time on the matter of weights and measures, action should be taken instantaneously.

Myanmar has had her official weights and measures since the days of the Myanmar kings, for weights, such as yawy, yawy, pella, mutha, and for length, such as htwa, mite, taung etc. In Oct 2013, in order to simplify calculation, Myanmar has adopted the use of metric system, but due to the people have been facing the difficulty of switching from the customary standard to the metric one thereby the usage has not been materialized from city centres but they still have to pay more for their accommodation as property rental prices rise. The tourists who will be visiting to see heritage buildings will be much free to roam around with less crowded roads and streets. These central Yangon townships should be restricted only to the businesses like shopping centres, business and corporate offices, gold and jewellery shops, mobile phone shops, money changers, clothing and foot-wears, airline offices, tour and travel offices, retail stores, cafeterias and as decent restaurants, clinics and pharmacies etc. This will greatly relieve the downtown of not only the traffic clogging but also the garbage and big piles of cartons, barrels and big packages lying all around on the pavements and inside streets and the trucks loading and discharging them.

When these wholesalers and big businesses are not there, there will obviously be less hawkers and roadside food and tea stalls as there will be less crowd of people around, which again will result in less garbage. Fewer people coming to downtown mean less traffic there. The result will be a downtown area which is much cleaner, less crowded with less air pollution and less noise pollution and thus much more pleasant and tourist-friendly like the down-towns of most foreign cities.
EU launches European Chamber of Commerce in Myanmar

NAV Pyi Taw, 12 Dec — the European Union (EU) has officially launched the European Chamber of Commerce in Myanmar - EuroChamber Myanmar on Friday.

The launch event has been hosted by the Ambassador of the European Union HE Roland Kobia and brought together the top level institutional and private sector representatives. Participants included HE Prof. Aung Tun Thet, President’s Economic Advisor, U Set Aung, Vice Governor of the Central Bank of Myanmar, Dr Maung Maung Lay, Vice President UMFCCI – and business executives from many European and Myanmar companies.

The EuroChamber will be set up by a consortium led by the French Myanmar Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FMCCI) along with Eurochambres – the European umbrella organization of Chambers of Commerce – as well as Chambers from Belgium, France, Italy and Hungary. Other key EU business representatives in Myanmar and the UMFCCI support this project. The EU supports the startup of the EuroChamber with a grant of 2.7 million euros. Ambassador Kobia stressed the importance of good business relationships in the EU-Myanmar partnership. He said that “businesses need a stable and peaceful environment to prosper. And in turn, if they prosper, they can make a huge contribution to social and economic development.” He said: “the EuroChamber’s aim is to reinforce links between Myanmar businesses and their European counterparts. The European Chamber of Commerce has the unique ability to draw from a wide range of business experience across Europe.”

The President of French Myanmar Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FMCCI) Julien Esch said that “The launch of the European Chamber of Commerce in Myanmar is a fantastic opportunity to increase ties between Myanmar and Europe. Myanmar and Europe benefit indeed from large complementarities, which would certainly bring jobs creation and increase exports.”

The organizational structure of the EuroChamber will be finalized in the next few weeks.

Myanmar delegation attends workshop on Distribution Policy for Myanmar

Vice Chairman U Myo Min Aung of Myanmar Retailers Association and party seen at the airport.

Yangon, 12 Dec — At the invitation of the Over seas Human Resources and Industry Development Association (HIDA), Vice Chairman U Myo Min Aung of Myanmar Retailers Association and party attended the workshop on Distribution Policy for Myanmar at Tokyo Ken shu Center in Japan from 3 to 10 December and observed retailing industries in Tokyo.

The association was formed in October 2012, and it has organized about 200 members so far, said general secretary U Thureyin Nyein.—Aung Thura

Israeli experts share expertise in beekeeping project in Shan State

Yangon, 12 Dec — As part of the continuation of the Beekeeping Project which has been started in cooperation with Department of Apiculture, Ministry of Livestock, Fisheries and Rural Development, Embassy of Israel, Yangon and TAG International Development since 2012, two more advance training courses in Beekeeping were organized in Aungban, Kalaw Township, Shan state as of 8 December.

With the continued financial support from Livelihood and Food Security Trust Fund (LIFT), TAG International Development and Embassy of Israel brought the two advance courses in beekeeping to Shan State: “Advance Beekeeping Course” (8-12 December 2014) and “Artificial Insemination of Queen Bees Course” (8-12 December 2014) especially designed for the government offices from Department of Apiculture and private beekeepers from different states and regions in Myanmar. Nearly 50 participants attended the said courses conducted by 3 Israeli experts Dr Boris A Yakobson, Mr Yeshayahu Stern and Ms Anna Barenboim.

The aim of this project is to create a potential source of income for farmers who do not own land so that it can contribute much to poverty alleviation.

The opening ceremony held in the Cooperative Association Hall in Aung Ban was honoured by the presence of Daniel Zonsine, Ambassador of Israel, Yangon, U Wai Lin Maung, Deputy Director General of Apiculture, Department of Livestock Breeding and Veterinary, township officials from LBVD, Shan State and guests from Danu and Pa-O ethnic associations in Shan State.—GNLM

An overpass linking Pansodan street and Nanthida Jetty was commissioned into service in Yangon on 12 December. The overpass is 211 feet long with 10.5 feet wide pedestrian way and 19.75 feet of clearance. The construction started on 30 April 2014 to ease traffic congestion in downtown Yangon.—Saw Thein Win
Police investigate gunfire attack on Israeli Embassy in Athens

ATHENS, 12 Dec — Greek counter terrorism police were investigating a pre-dawn drive-by gunfire attack on the Israeli Embass y in Athens on Friday, which caused no casualties.

Two unidentified motorcycle-riding gunmen approached the embassy compound and opened fire on it with AK-47 automatic rifles before managing to flee the scene.

According to police sources, investigators were already examining closed circuit security cameras of the embassy and nearby buildings.

Political, police, judicial and financial establishments have been targets of attack by Greek terrorist groups in recent years.

The residence of the German ambassador in Athens came under a similar attack in December 2013, which caused no injuries but only property damage.

Local guerrilla group “Popular Fighters” had claimed responsibility for that attack as well as a hit with the same modus operandi at the headquarters of the ruling conservative party New Democracy in January 2013. No casualties or property damage were reported.—Xinhua

Russian gas flows to Ukraine stable — Ukrtransgaz

By that point, the protesters had dwindled to about 50 people, some of whom broke windows at a T-Mobile store and a Chase bank branch, according to the city of Oakland. Loot ing was reported in an area of small businesses at a downtown intersection, the city said.

At one point, a Reuters photographer witnessed a man who demonstrators said was an undercover police officer and who had been marching with them, pointing a pistol at protesters after he and another man were attacked.

Within a minute or two, about 20 uniformed Oakland police officers arrived and detained one of the protesters.

Chief Avery Browne, commander of the California Highway Patrol’s Golden Gate Division, said two plainclothes CHP detectives were surrounded by up to 50 demonstrators who ignored orders to back off, despite one of the officers first taking out his ba tton and identifying himself as police.

“We are extremely cognizant and very sensitive to the display of a gun. It’s very upsetting. It’s very disturbing to individuals who are attempting to peacefully protest, and we recognize that,” Browne told reporters by telephone.

But he said the detective involved told him he had been in fear for his and his partner’s lives. “No one has provided any evidence that the officers were inappropriate in what they did,” Browne said.

On previous evenings this week in the Bay Area, police have fired tear gas and pepper spray to disperse crowds of demonstra tors that have at times been hundreds strong, some of whom have thrown stones at the officers.

US congressional staffers stage walkout in latest police protests

WASHINGTON/ OAKLAND, 12 Dec — Dozens of US congressional staff staged a walkout on Thursday to protest decisions by grand juries not to charge white police officers in the killings of unarmed black men in Ferguson, Missouri, and New York City.

The staffers, including members of the Congres sional Black Associates group, held a prayer service on the steps of the US Capitol and raised their hands in a reference to the “Hands up, don’t shoot” chants that have become a feature of protests around the nation.

The action was the latest in a series of demonstrations over concerns about the policing of black communities. Some have turned violent, including this week’s protests in northern California.

Oakland and neighboring Berkeley, California, have seen nightly demonstrations all week in response to decisions by two grand juries not to charge white police officers in the killings of Michael Brown in Ferguson and Eric Garner in New York.

On Wednesday night, about 150 protesters, few er than on previous evenings, left the campus of University of California, Berkeley, and demonstrated without incident before marching south into Oakland, authorities said.

Two more MH17 crash victims identified

THE HAGUE, 12 Dec — Two more victims of the Malaysian Airlines Flight MH17 crash in eastern Ukraine have been identified, raising the total number of identified victims to 294, the Dutch Ministry of Security and Justice announced on Thursday.

The flight crashed on 17 July over Ukraine airspace, killing 298 passengers on board, of whom 196 were Dutch citizens. Four victims remain unidentified and all of them were Dutch.

All identifications of the victims have been car ried out in Hilversum, a city in the province of North Holland, by the National Forensic Investigation Team (LTFO) based on tooth stam ples, fingerprints or DNA. Information about the remain ing four unidentified victims might be available on the body parts currently present in Hilversum, but according to the Dutch Ministry of Security and Justice, it is also possible that the remains of those missing passengers are not yet recovered from the crash site. On 28 November, a Dutch military transport aircraft arrived at Eindhoven Air Base, the home base of the Royal Netherlands Air Force’s transport aircraft, from Kharkiv, carrying six coffins with human remains of the victims. Kharkiv is Ukraine’s second largest city in the northeast part of the country, where the remains of many crash victims were gathered. That could be the last transport, at least for this year, with winter and snow coming up in eastern Ukraine and the recovery mission being finished for now.—Xinhua

Military plane crashes in Sri Lanka

COLOMBO, 12 Dec — A Sri Lanka Air Force plane crashed in the Athurugiriya area just outside capital Colombo on Friday morning, killing at least four people, the police said.

The Air Force Antonov 32 aircraft lost con tact with the ground and went missing from radar shortly after taking off from Katunayake airport.

The plane with five people on board was on its way to the Sri Lankan domestic airport in Rat mulla.

It crashed at a rubber estate in Athurugiriya after hitting the roof of at least one house.

Residents said that there was thick fog over the area where the plane crashed.

The Air Force said that the pilot had reported “difficulty in locating the landing strip before it crashed.”

Police spokesman SSP Ajith Rohana said that four people were confirmed dead and another who was badly injured had been admitted to a hospital. —Xinhua

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Syria’s southern rebels take step towards unity

Kabul, 12 Dec — Rebels in southern Syria say they have taken a step towards unity that may attract more support from their Western and Arab backers, forging a joint defence pact to help shield them from government forces and Islamic State. The south is the last major stronghold of the mainstream opposition to President Bashar al-Assad following the expansion of Islamic State in the east and north and gains by the al-Qaeda-affiliated Nusra Front in the northwest.

A short drive from Damascus, the southern front remains a risk for Assad as he shores up his control over key areas of central Syria. Insurgent groups including both mainstream rebels and Nusra have made slow but steady gains in the south against government forces, analysts who track the conflict say. As the United States seeks partners on the ground for the campaign against Islamic State, the southern rebels are trying to address long-standing criticisms of the so-called moderate opposition by getting better organized.

“We are moving in steps. The joint defence agreement is part of the complete plan for unifying the southern front,” said Bashar al-Zoubi, head of the Yarmouk Army — one of the biggest rebel groups in the south. He spoke to Reuters via the internet.

The agreement dated 6 December and signed by 17 rebel leaders was seen by Reuters. It follows an agreement among the southern groups on a transition plan for Syria.

With the war about to enter its fourth year, analysts say rivalries among a plethora non-jihadist groups have been one of their major weaknesses. The Turkey-based Syrian political opposition has little or no sway over the armed groups.

Rebels in the north last week unveiled a separate initiative grouping mainstream factions with hardline Islamists including Ahrar al-Sham — a group US Secretary of State John Kerry has equated with Islamic State. That makes partnering with it a complicated prospect for Assad’s Western opponents.

The separate initiatives underscore the divergent paths of the war. The southern rebels believe resolving the conflict in the south is easier than resolving it in the north, where the jihadists are dominant.

They advocate an approach that would see the war in the south resolved first. Their transition plan safeguards state bodies and guarantees the rights of religious minorities who worry the alternative to Assad is al-Qaeda.

Rebels in the south have already received what they describe as small amounts of military and financial support from Western and Arab states. It has been channelled via Jordan, a US ally that is determined to protect its Syrian frontier from jihadists.

The main Arab backers of the southern groups are Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. Qatar, which has funnelled aid to Islamists in the north, has been kept out.

President Barack Obama praised Jordan’s support for the “moderate” Syrian opposition during a 5 December meeting with King Abdullah, an apparent reference to the southern rebels. —Reuters

British deputy PM says open to inquiry over spies’ role in torture

London, 12 Dec — Britain’s Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg said on Thursday he would support an inquiry into whether British spies were complicit in CIA torture of terrorism suspects, if other investigations failed to uncover the truth.

Clegg said that while he was sure British intelligence agents were not involved with torture now, allegations that spies had known about the mistreatment of detainees by US authorities and others had to be fully examined. “I, like everybody else, want the truth out there,” he told BBC radio. “We cannot, will not, and is not being used under any circumstances by British agencies or indeed on other operations.”

According to a US Senate report published on Tuesday, the CIA misled the White House and public about its harsh interrogation techniques after the 11 September attacks and acted more brutally and pervasive than it had acknowledged. President Barack Obama condemned the treatment of suspected militants.

A spokesman from the office of Prime Minister David Cameron on Thursday said that British intelligence officials had asked for parts of the summary in the Senate report to be redacted.

However she added that these requests were made out of concern for national security and were not meant to cover up any embarrassment arising from allegations into the UK’s involvement.

—Reuters

Saudi Arabia arrests three IS supporters for shooting Danish citizen

Riyadh, 12 Dec — Saudi Arabia said it detained three Islamic State (IS) supporters for shooting a Danish national in Riyadh late last month. Saudi Press Agency reported on Thursday. Saudi police announced on 22 November that a Danish resident sustained gunshot wound while driving. The Interior ministry said in a statement that the three suspects are Saudis, who are tasked respectively with shooting, driving and filming.

“Security forces have seized the weapon used in the incident, which was a Glock pistol, as well as the purported video, in which the self-proclaimed IS outfit showed the shooting of the Danish national by its alleged supporters,” the ministry said.

“Preliminary investigations indicated that the suspects carried out the attacks in support of the terrorist group IS,” the ministry said, adding that the three were trained for the operation two weeks prior to the attack.

Earlier this month, Saudi security authorities were reported to be examining a purported video, in which a Danish citizen said he killed his Danish girlfriend and underwent a beheading.

—Xinhua

German killed in Kabul attack on play condemning suicide bombings

Kabul, 12 Dec — A teenage bomber on Thursday targeted a Kabul auditorium packed with people watching a drama condemning suicide attacks and being staged at a French cultural centre, killing a German man and wounding 16 people, officials and a witness said.

The suicide blast was the second to strike the Afghan capital in a day, after six Afghan soldiers perished when their bus was hit on the outskirts of the city as they rode into work.

The violence, part of a nationwide campaign by Islamist Taleban insurgents to strike at military and civilian targets, came less than three weeks before the year-end deadline for most foreign combat soldiers to withdraw from the country.

General Aoyub Salangi, head of the Interior Ministry while the cabinet is being finalized, said the suspected theatre bomber appeared to have been about 17 years old and detonated his explosives at the venue during an early evening performance.

“I heard a deafening explosion ... There were Afghans, foreigners, young girls and young boys watching the show,” Sher Ahmad, an Afghan rights activist who was at the performance, told Reuters.

He said the blast came during a performance of a new play called “Heartbeat: Silence After the Explosion,” a condensation of suicide attacks.

“Pieces of flesh were plastered on the wall. There were children and women crying for help. Some were running out, some were just screaming,” Taleban spokesman Zahibullah Mujahid said the bomber targeted the event because it was staged “to insult Islamic values and spread propaganda about our jihad operations, especially on suicide attacks”.

Amid confusion immediately following the blast, one person could be heard saying “It’s all part of the show” in a video posted on YouTube purporting to be of the attack.

Early police reports said the bomber attacked the French-run Lyce`e Estel`qal, one of Kabul’s oldest and most highly respected high schools, but Ahmad said the performance was at the French Cultural Centre located in the same compound.

—Reuters
Indonesia English daily’s top editor faces blasphemy probe over cartoon

Jakarta, 12 Dec — Indonesian police on Thursday declared the editor-in-chief of a prominent English-language daily newspaper a suspect in a blasphemy case over the publication of a caricature purporting to criticize Islam.

The Jakarta Post Chief Editor Meidyatama Suryodiningrat, 47, was named a suspect, citing witness testimonies and evidence, for his responsibility over all products of the Post.

The chief editor issued a statement late Thursday, saying the newspaper did not commit a criminal act as accused, while a journalists’ group said the case threatens the country’s press freedom.

The caricature published by the Post on 3 July depicted a flag emblazoned with the Arabic phrases “La ilaha Illallah,” meaning “there is none worthy of worship except Allah,” and “Al-lah, Mohamed and Apostle” on a pirate skull.

The police spokesman said they will summon and question Suryodiningrat next week as a suspect. The journalist faces five years in prison for blasphemy against a religion under the Criminal Code.

The police were alerted to the case by a Muslim group, called Jakarta Preachers’ Corps, demanding cooperation from nongovernment organizations.

The editor said, “What we produced was a journalistic piece that criticized the ISIS movement, which has carried out violence in the name of religion,” using the acronym of the extremist group, also known as the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria.

“It means that the ISIS caricature was not blasphemous,” he said. “We all know that ISIS is an organization that is banned in Indonesia and across almost the entire world.”

The Post has received a statement from the country’s Press Council that said the case only concerns the code of ethics in journalism and is not a criminal matter, according to Suryodiningrat.

“However, we respect the ongoing process and we will follow it in accordance with the prevailing regulations,” he said.

The Jakarta-based Alliance of Independent Journalists, or AJI, slammed the declaration of Suryodiningrat as suspect.

“We urge the police not to use the Criminal Code to deal with journalistic cases, but the Press Law to solve disputes related to news reports and press products,” the press organization said.

The case, according to AJI, will be a “serious threat” for press freedom.

Although infrequent, some chief editors of Indonesian media have been sent to jail in the past, mostly for issuing publications containing blasphemy against religion or pornography.

Four years ago, Playboy Indonesia Chief Editor Erwin Ardana was sentenced to two years in prison for publishing “soft pornography.”

In 1990, veteran journalist Arswendo Atmowiloto was sentenced to four and a half years after the trialboard Monitor, where he was the editor-in-chief, released its popularity survey, which ranked Prophet Mohamed 11th just below Arswendo himself.

Pakistan Taleban accuse Nobel laureate Malala of blasphemy

Islamabad, 12 Dec — The Pakistani Taleban have accused Pakistani teenager education campaigner Malala Yousafzai, co-winner of this year’s Nobel Peace Prize, of blasphemy and ridiculing Islam.

In a statement issued on Wednesday, Muhammad Khorasani, spokesman of the militant group, described Malala as a weapon used by Western civilization and her Nobel Peace Prize as a bid to sharpen this weapon.

The statement, issued from an undisclosed site, was received by Pakistan media on Thursday.

The statement accused Malala of committing blasphemy in her book “I am Malala” by depicting Salman Rushdie and the Qadiani sect, which has been declared a non-Muslim in Pakistan.

It said that a Muslim society cannot accept blasphemy and ridicule of Islam.

It further said that if the West continued to use Malala in its war on Islam, it should be wary of the day when the Taleban kills every Malala indulging in blasphemy in every nook and corner in Pakistan.

Malala received the Nobel Peace Prize on Wednesday in a ceremony in Oslo but her honor was not celebrated in Pakistan except by a small crowd of her relatives, friends and human right activists in her home town in Swat.

She is the second Pakistani to receive this award after Abdul Salam.

Palestine mission to launch campaign in Japan for recognition

Tokyo, 12 Dec — The Palestinian general mission to Japan said on Friday it will launch a signature collection drive in January to urge the Japanese parliament to pass a resolution calling on the government to recognize Palestine as a state.

The mission will aim to collect a million signatures, receiving cooperation from nongovernmental organizations.

Since November, the parliaments of Britain, France and Spain have adopted resolutions calling on their governments to endorse Palestinian statehood following Sweden, which recognized it on 30 October.

More than 130 of the 193 member states of the United Nations have recognized Palestinian statehood.

Aging experts form research group on muscle loss

Tokyo, 12 Dec — An expert on aging has launched a new research group focusing on loss of muscle strength among elderly people in Japan’s rapidly graying society.

Hidenori Arai, 55, a professor at Kyoto University’s Faculty of Medicine, in February formed the Japanese Study Group on Sarcopenia and Frailty to establish ways to enable elderly people to live long healthy lives without nursing care.

Sarcopenia is muscle loss associated with aging, a major contributor to frailty in the elderly, and increases the risk of falling and hospitalization.

“I want people to know that symptoms can be alleviated if they receive appropriate instructions on dietary habits and exercise,” Arai said. “We hope to establish treatment that prevents elderly people from requiring care, as well as appropriate nursing care.”

Arai developed an interest in sarcopenia and frailty when he became acquainted with rehabilitation specialists at Kyoto University and geriatrics researchers working in other Asian countries.

He said he believes “research in one particular field can inspire progress in another.”

Arai says he is worried about eating habits of young women, many of whom seem to have a strong desire to lose weight. “Muscle mass in women is declining and the risk of their suffering from sarcopenia in the future could increase,” he said.

Three gov’t soldiers killed in E Ukraine despite cease-fire

Kyiv, 12 Dec — At least three government soldiers were killed in eastern Ukraine over the past 24 hours despite a declared cease-fire, a military spokesman said on Thursday.

Besides the deaths, eight other Ukrainian servicemen were injured, according to Andrei Lysenko, spokesman for the National Security and Defence Council.

Although the independ-ence-seeking insurgents have carried out several attacks against government forces, the intensity of their offensive has reduced after the cease-fire was enforced.
WEATHER REPORT
FORECAST VALID UNTIL EVENING OF THE 13th December, 2014: Weather will be partly cloudy in Yangon and Taninthayi Regions, Kachin and Rakhine States and generally fair in the remaining Regions and States.

STATE OF THE SEA: Strong easterly winds with moderate to rough sea are likely at times Deltac, Gulf of Motama, off and along Mon-Taninthayi Coasts. Surface wind speed in strong wind may reach (35) m.p.h. Seas will be moderate elsewhere in Myanmar water.

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A Skyscraper fire kills three in downtown Dallas

HOUSTON, 12 Dec — A fire broke out at an underground parking garage of a 50-story skyscraper in the US city of Dallas on Thursday, killing three people and forcing the evacuation of thousands of office workers, local media reported.

The fire erupted on Thursday morning at Thanksgiving Tower’s parking garage in downtown Dallas, according to the Dallas Morning News. The fire, believed to be caused by an electrical failure or a car fire, prompted the evacuation of around 2,800 people from the building. Local TV footage showed swarms of office workers streaming out of the high-rise and smoke billowing out of the drive-way that leads to the underground garage.

When firefighters rushed to the location of the fire, they found three construction workers dead at the basement of the skyscraper. The victims were working in the thermal storage tank that is part of the heating, ventilating and air conditioning unit beneath the building. Three other people were sent to hospitals for treatment. Their conditions were believed to be fair. The fire, which also temporarily shut down several streets around the building, was extinguished within an hour. It is not immediately clear how exactly the fire started. The 32-year-old skyscraper is reportedly in the midst of an 18 million-US-dollar renovation.—Xinhua
'Birdman' tests new heights with seven Golden Globe nods

Beverly Hills, 12 Dec — Surreal show business satire "Birdman," a darling of critics for its innovative storytelling, led the Golden Globe Awards film nominations on Thursday, with its seven nods making it a front-runner early in the Hollywood awards season.

More than two months before the Academy Awards, the nominations from the Hollywood Foreign Press Association suggest it could be a battle of "Birdman" against "Boyhood," which earned songwriters said he's never entered the recording studio with less than 30 songs, reported Digital Spy.

"I've had a stockpile of songs since I was a kid," Gallagher said. "I've never been in the studio with less than 30 songs, as I've just recorded an album, but I've still got another 30 songs," Gallagher said. "I was working in my bathroom at the time," he added, "if you really want to push cinematic boundaries.

Asha Bhosle receives Lifetime Achievement Award at DIFF

Dubai, 12 Dec — Noted Indian playback singer Asha Bhosle was honoured with the Lifetime Achievement Award at the 11th Dubai International Film Festival (DIFF).

The 81-year-old Tyia Tu Ab Toh Aja hitmaker was presented with the prestigious award for her decades of dedication to Indian cinema last night during the opening ceremony of the festival.

After receiving the award, Bhosle treated the audience to an impromptu performance of her most memorable renditions. "Receiving the DIFF award from Sheikh Mansour Bin Mohammed Al Maktoum," Bhosle tweeted.

"The octogenarian singer has recorded more than 12,000 songs and is known for her versatility as a singer be it folk songs, Indian classical music, pop songs, ghazals and bhajans.

Acclaimed Egyptian actor Nour El Sherif was also presented with the DIFF Lifetime Achievement Award for his work on over 100 films, in a career spanning nearly five decades. El-Sherif and Bhosle joined previous winners including Martin Sheen, Omar Sharif, Fatem Hamannah, Adel Imam, Jameel Ratib, Sabah, Morgan Freeman, Sean Penn, Amitabh Bachchan, Shah Rukh Khan, Dado Abdell Sayed, Youssef Chahine, Rachid Bouchareb, Yash Chopra, Subhash Ghai among others.

The eight day film festival will come to an end on 17 December.—PTI

Newsy minced comedy on cable television and online streaming platforms beat the broadcast stalwarts to win favour with the Hollywood Foreign Press Association for its Golden Globe nominations on Thursday.

Premium cable network HBO's raunchy female coming-of-age series "Girls" was the only returning contender for best television comedy or musical, which left out previous broadcast network category staples such as ABC sitcom "Modern Family" and CBS's nerd comedy "The Big Bang Theory."

Netflix Inc.'s second season of women's prison comedy "Orange is the New Black" landed a nod, alongside HBO's new tech satire "Silicon Valley;"

Hispanic comic "Jane the Virgin," which follows small-town Latinx woman to his family's first seamless take in the category. It consists of what appears to be one seamless take through the cramped confines of a Broadway theatre and serves up an acerbic commentary on celebrity. "Although at times it felt we were flying without a net in this crazy film experiment, this has brought enormous joy to me," Inarritu said of his film's seven nominations, including best director for him.

"Birdman" was directed by Mexican filmmaker Alejandro G Inarritu, who comes out as a transgender role trying to make comeback on Broadway.

Asha Bhosle was presented with the prestigious award for her decades of dedication to Indian cinema.—PTI

Los Angeles, 12 Dec — Newly minted comedy on cable television and online streaming platforms beat the broadcast stalwarts to win favour with the Hollywood Foreign Press Association for its Golden Globe nominations on Thursday.

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Snooker-China’s Ding becomes first Asian world number one

London, 12 Dec — China’s Ding Junhui has become the first Asian player to reach the top of the world snooker rankings.

The 27-year-old, who won five titles in the 2013-14 season, is the 11th world number one since the rankings started in 1976.

Ding joined an illustrious group of players to achieve the top ranking including seven-times world champion Stephen Hendry, Ray Reardon, Steve Davis and Ronnie O’Sullivan.

Cambodia marks 3rd Sea Festival in southern Koh Kong Province

Phnom Penh, 12 Dec — The 3rd edition of Sea Festival kicked off on Friday in southern Cambodia’s Koh Kong Province with an aim to attract more tourists to coastal areas.

In a message to celebrate the festival, Prime Minister Hun Sen said the three-day event is to promote the potential of the country’s coastline after it was registered as a member of the Club of the Most Beautiful Bays in the world in 2011. “The development of eco-tourism at coastal areas is essential to preserve the sustainability of environments and to ensure the protection of natural resources,” he said in the message.

The premier said the celebrations clearly reflect the country’s peace, political stability, good public order and development in all fields.

According to a Press release from the Ministry of Tourism, during the three-day festival, visitors will enjoy a variety of entertainments and sports.

“Tourism and entertainment activities are essential to the sustainability of environments and to ensure the protection of natural resources,” he said.

Mr. Hun Sen also said the coastal areas in southern Cambodia stretches 450 km over four southern provinces of Preah Sihanouk, Kampot, Kep and Koh Kong.

Cambodia’s coastline stretches 450 km over four southern provinces of Preah Sihanouk, Kampot, Kep and Koh Kong.

The Ministry of Tourism said the coastal areas gained the title of “most beautiful bays in the world” and is projected to receive up to 2 million by 2020. —Xinhua

Australian photographer breaks world record with 6.5 mln USD picture

Sydney, 12 Dec — Australian photographer Peter Lik this week created a new world record by selling one of his pictures for 6.5 million US dollars, local press reported on Friday.

Named Phantom, the black and white picture shows a shaft of light cutting through an Arizona landscape and is reportedly the most expensive photograph ever sold, the ABC website said.

The identity of the buyer wasn’t disclosed, but his lawyer, Joshua Roth of Los Angeles, vouched for him in a Press release. “In 2014, Peter shattered all world records by selling the most expensive photograph in history,” his website said. “To accompany this sale, Peter’s images Illusion and Eternal Moods were also acquired for 2.4 million US dollars and 1.1 million US dollars, respectively.

“Along with his sale of One for 1 million US dollars in 2010, Peter now holds four spots out of the top 20 most expensive photographs ever sold.” —Xinhua

Tottenham fined for Europa League pitch invasions

London, 12 Dec — Tottenham Hotspur have been fined 15,000 euros (11,834 pounds) by UEFA after their Europa League game against Partizan Belgrade last month was suspended for several minutes following three separate pitch invasions, the governing body said on Thursday.

Ukrainian referee Yevhen Aranovskyi took the players off the field after 38 minutes of the Group C game on 24 November. Police arrested the three pitch invaders who appeared to be wearing identical branded T-shirts, bearing the logo of a headphone manufacturer, which later on Twitter condemned what had happened.

A video posted online showed three men talking about invading the pitch ahead of the match.

An archaeologist works in a grave at the excavating spot of ancient relics of the Han Dynasty (202 BC-220 AD), in Wenzian County, central China’s Henan Province, on 11 Dec, 2014. —Xinhua

Snooker-China’s Ding Junhui plays a shot during his match against Mark Williams of Wales in the final of the 2010 World Snooker China Open in Beijing on 4 April, 2010. — Reuters

MYANMAR TV

(13-12-2014, Saturday)

6:00 am * Paritta by Venerable Mingun Sayadaw
7:00 am * News / Weather Report
7:40 am * Hyper Sports
8:00 am * News / International News
8:35 am * TV Drama Series
9:45 am * Documentary
10:00 am * News
10:20 am * Current Affairs
11:40 am * Game for Children
12:00 noon * News / International News / Weather Report
12:30 pm * Round up of The Week’s TV Local News
2:30 pm * Business News
3:15 pm * Teleplay
4:30 pm * Unicity of Distance Education (TV Lectures) — Second Year (Myanmar)
5:15 pm * Golden Music of Old Stars
5:30 pm * Road to Academy 2013 (Part 1 & 2)
17:15 pm * Teleplay
8:00 pm * News / International News / Weather Report
8:35 pm * Documentary
9:00 pm * News
* Business News
* Business News
* Myanmar Series

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(13-12-14 07:00 am–14-12-14 07:00 am) MST
* Local News
* The Sacred Hair Relics Hailing Pagodas
* World News
* Porcelain and Glass
* Local News
* Those Who Never Give Up
* World News
* The Storytellers
* Local News
* Myanmar Masterclass
* ‘Caricature’
* World News
* Talented Musicians
* Local News
* Enchanting Rakhine Land
* World News
* Will you feed the pigeons
* Local News
* The Great Po Sein
* World News
* Dengue Fever
* Local News
* Taking an Oath for Life
* World News
* Sagaing: Pe Kwel Kone Nat Festival
* Local News
* Myanmar Alternative Medicine (Noni)
* World News
* In the Studio: Ki Ma

Saturday, 13 December, 2014
Okaka key to Sampdoria’s Serie A ambitions

MILAN, Dec — Sampdoria coach Sinisa Mihajlovic is confident he can now rely on Stefano Okaka to help his team, who visit Serie A leaders Juventus on Sunday, clinch a European spot for next season.

Sampdoria, fourth in the standings after 14 games, trail Juve by 10 points but sit only a point behind third-placed Genoa, who host second-placed AS Roma on Sunday.

Against Juve, who will be without Italy defender Giorgio Chiellini, Sampdoria’s main weapon should be 25-year-old forward Okaka.

Mihajlovic believes the Nigerian-born player is now ready to deliver after being loaned to six different clubs since starting his professional career in 2005 at Roma. “He wasted six or seven years of his career,” Mihajlovic was quoted as saying in Italian media.

“Now he has cleaned up his act and can become one of the best centre forwards in Italy.” Okaka has shown promise, scoring on his Italy debut in a 1-0 friendly win against Albania last month. Juve coach Massimiliano Allegri is expected to revert to a four-man defence after lining up a three-man rearguard in a goalless draw against Fiorentina last weekend.

Okaka scored for the Champions League knockout phase on Tuesday with a goalless draw against Atletico Madrid.

In the other top-of-the-table clash, Genoa will be looking to follow up their 1-0 win over AC Milan when they host Roma, who were knocked out of the Champions League following a 2-0 loss to Manchester City on Wednesday.

Genoa are trying to qualify for European competition for the first time since the 2009-10 season, when they were eliminated in the group stage of the Europa League. Bottom club Parma, who won the competition — then called the UEFA Cup — in 1999, are gearing up for their return to the Europa League.