Commander-in-Chief delivers speech at graduation parade of 12th intake of DSINPS

NAY PYI TAW, 23 Dec—Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing delivered a speech at Graduation Parade of the 12th Intake of Defence Services Institute of Nursing and Paramedical Sciences held in Yangon on Tuesday.

At the graduation ceremony, the Senior General said that nursing profession, a fundamental for healthcare services, needs sympathy, kindness and unselfishness which can result in effective treatments to the patients. The Commander-in-Chief then presented Best Trainee Award to trainee Thaw Zin Aung and Excellent Award in Studies and Excellent Award in Training to the respective trainees. He also urged the cadets for further studies in medical knowledge as more experts are needed for researches in traditional medicines and western medicines.

Recounting the history of military nursing, Senior General said that a group of volunteer nurses joined Burmese Independence Army when it first entered into the country through Dawei, southern Myanmar town, after being formed in Thailand. A total of 202 cadets were officially employed at the respective branches of defence services. DSINPS was first founded in 2000 as the Defence Services Institute of Nursing and Paramedical Sciences with assistance from the Yangon University of Nursing and the Mandalay University of Nursing.

The Senior General attended the graduation dinner for the trainees at DSMA in the evening.

UPWC-N CCT nationwide ceasefire accord coordination meeting concludes, moving closer to final deal in mid-January meeting

UPWC and NCCT officials pose for documentary photos after conclusion of a nationwide ceasefire accord coordination meeting prior to the seventh round of peace meetings set to take place in mid-January.—PHOTO: YE MYINT

By Ye Myint

YANGON, 23 Dec—Two days of talks between the Union Peace-making Work Committee—UPWC and the Nationwide Ceasefire Coordination Team—NCCT concluded on Tuesday, with the release of a five-point statement saying both sides had agreed to make a joint effort to prevent a recurrence of unwanted incidents during the ongoing peace process to reconvene peace meetings on 15 or 16 January.

Compromises acceptable to the two sides were made on the remaining points and there will be brought to respective leaders for further approval, said the joint statement, asserting that both sides are moving towards peace in quick strides with a set of plans for signing a truce deal, establishing political framework and holding a political dialogue.

Taking the floor after the two-day meeting which was geared up for the next round of UPWC-N CCT regular meetings in January, U Hla Maung Shwe, senior adviser of Myanmar Peace Centre, and Padaw Saw Kwe Htoo Win, NCCT deputy leader, revealed an ambitious plan proposed by the NCCT to sign the nationwide ceasefire accord on 12 February, a red letter day for the country, which saw the Union Treaty, also called the “Panlong Agreement” signed by the NCCT in 1994 at Myitkyina to gain independence from British government.

“At least two coordination meetings are due before the seventh round of peace meetings which is expected to be final,” they said. The sooner the two sides have a nationwide ceasefire accord, the sooner they can fulfill the people’s wish for peace, voiced the two spokespersons.

According to an agreement included in the NCA and that needs no further coordination between UPWC and NCCT, a framework meeting shall be held within 60 days and a political dialogue within 90 days after the signing of a nationwide ceasefire agreement.

“Almost all points in the text have been discussed, but only three points remain to seek compromise,” the MPC adviser told the media.

The NCA was the main focus of attention at the first-day meeting, but matters including the Laiza issue and inviting observers to the next meeting brought by the NCCT to UPWC (See page 3).

UPWC-N CCT officials pose for documentary photos after conclusion of a nationwide ceasefire accord coordination meeting prior to the seventh round of peace meetings set to take place in mid-January.—PHOTO: YE MYINT

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Repubic of the Union of Myanmar
President Office
(Order No. 28/2014)

3rd Waxing Day of Pyatho, 1376 ME
(23 December, 2014)

Appointment of Judge of Sagaing Region High Court

Under the paragraph (iv), Sub-section (b) of Section 308 of the Constitution of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, Sub-section (d) of Section 82 of the Union Government Law, Section 50 of the Union Judiciary Law and Sub-section (d) of Section 18 of the Region or State Government Law, Shan State Judicial Officer of Shan State High Court Daw Cherry Kyi has been appointed as Judge of Sagaing Region High Court.

File/ Thein Sein
President
Republic of the Union of Myanmar

Ministry says fishery expo and contest next month to promote public awareness

By Khaing Thanda Lwin

YANGON, 23 Dec—The Ministry of Livestock, Fisheries and Rural Development will organize a Myanmar fishery expo and contest from 1 to 3 January at Union National Honour Races Village in Thakayta Township here with the aim of promoting public awareness on fisheries and developing valued-added products in the industry.

The expo, to be held from 8 am to 6 pm each day, is also aimed at implementing a model of continuous improvement for fisheries, increasing number of rare fish species and disseminating knowledge about natural resources protection, according to the ministry, which has invited local fishery entrepreneurs nationwide to actively participate in it.

A local producer said transportation is the main barrier for some producers from regions and states to take part in the event, urging the ministry to provide more support for them.

During the fair, at least eight kinds of contests are scheduled to be held, including design for traditional fishing gear, back-yard hatchery design and aqua-feed production.

The ministry plans to present awards to the winners of the contests, except for the aqua-feed one in which only a certificate of recognition will be conferred on all aquafeed manufacturers. The ministry had worried that picking up the best entrepreneurs in that sector could create a dispute, thereby leading to the collapse of aquafeed market. Some entrepreneurs, however, had wanted the ministry to provide awards for aquafeed producers in order to encourage them to develop more high-quality products.

Director U Hla Tun of the Fisheries Department said, “People will gain precious knowledge on fisheries management, including how to protect native fish species and share fishing methods.”

According to the department’s data, about 300 species of native fishes have been recorded across the country, but an expert estimated that the actual number of species may now be significantly lower.
Agreement signed for first stock exchange in Myanmar

NAY PYI TAW, 23 Dec—An agreement was inked Tuesday to set up the Yangon Stock Exchange, the first of its kind in Myanmar, by the Ministry of Finance and two Japanese firms.

The joint venture will involve Myanmar Economic Bank, with 51 percent of shares, Daiva Institute of Research Ltd., with 30.25 percent, and Japan Exchange Group with 18.75 percent.

In a speech at the signing ceremony held at Thin-gaha Hotel in Nay Pyi Taw, Union Finance Minister U Win Shein said a stock exchange is like an instrument to gauge the economic development of a country, as well as a business source. He noted that business firms listed on YSX will be able to collect capital for long-term investments, while people can buy and sell shares in those firms.

The agreement on setting up the Yangon Stock Exchange Joint Venture Co. Ltd. was signed by Doi Y Mya, Myanmar Economic Bank’s managing director, Mr Alex Wong of Drag-ic Bank, with 51 percent of shares, and Japan Ex-Research Ltd., with 30.25 percent.

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NAY PYI TAW, 23 Dec—A cash donation ceremony for offering gold tor, DIA chairman Takashi Fukai and JPX chief operating officer Michio Yoneda. YSX will be located at the former building of Union Bank on Sule Pagoda Road, in downtown Yangon. After the establishment of YSX, The Securities and Exchange Commission, like securities companies will issue underwriter, dealer, broker and consultant licenses.—MNA

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Forestry and land survey courses conclude in PyinOoLwin

NAY PYI TAW, 23 Dec—The Ministry for Environmental Conservation and Forestry does not earn income from timber extraction by ending export of timber logs as April 2014, Union Minister U Win Tun said at the graduation parade of the training courses of the ministry in PyinOoLwin, Mandalay Region, on Monday.

The union minister said that Myanmar cooperates with European Union and ASEAN countries on Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade-FLEG-T for protection of forest resources and prevention of illegal timber extraction.

He highlighted that plans are underway to establish public-owned forests to grow crops in the forests, adding that arrangements are being made to conduct land utilization and development of human resources in cooperation with Food and Agriculture Organization so as to adopt the National Forest Monitoring System.

The union minister presented certificates to trainees from the basic forestry course No 110 of Myanmar Forestry School and officer course No 49 and basic land survey course No 73 of Myanmar Land Survey Training School.

So far, Myanmar Forestry School has turned out 5,864 forestry staff since 1898. The land survey training school has also produced 11,970 officers and staff since 1947.—MNA

People of grassroots level get apartments at low-cost buildings

MANDALAY, 23 Dec—Under the supervision of the Mandalay Region government, the Mandalay City Development Committee allotted low-cost Myayi Nanda housings to the dwellers at the buildings in Chinnayathazi Township, Mandalay, on 22 December.

The housing consists of 57 four-storey buildings with 1,344 apartments.

The apartments were allotted to 377 people who were among 1,097 applicants from Chinnayathazi and Pyigydaguon townships.

MCDC Secretary U Kha Maung Tint said, “MCDC supervised sales of apartments to 377 people through a draw lot system. It means random allotments for them. The allotted apartments were different from flats, apartments and
Union Minister says Myanmar has won int’l recognition for its democratic reform amid challenges

NAY PYI TAW, 23 Dec
— The government has won international recognition for its unswerving efforts to keep up with its democratic reform amid challenges, with the president being described as a symbol of change, the union minister told government staff in a meeting here on Tuesday, sources said.

U Hla Tun, Union Minister at the President Office, expressed his gratitude to government workers for their best endeavours to make the reform processes successful.

Regarding measures to satisfy the socio-economic needs of government employees, he stressed that the government is finding ways to raise salaries and provide financial help to meet educational, medical and living expenses of their families.

Pay rises are found going hand in hand with price hikes, a consequence that he said hits hard all wage earners of government and private as well as casual labourers.

According to the union minister, the whole workforce of the government constitutes just two per cent of the country’s entire population and as a result increased prices always come as a terrible blow to the remaining population.

He pledged an establishment of employees’ provident fund, which will be designed to help employees and their families with expenses of house ownership, education and health after retirement.

He also heard briefings on finance, monetary crises, possible repercussions resulting from pay rises, and financial assistance to learning institutions and health care services.

He called for government employees to do their best to fulfill public requirements to achieve better results in the process of democratic transition.

MNA

Union Minister U Hla Tun highlights raising salaries of government service personnel in meeting with departmental officials.—MNA

Work committees highlights preparations for ASEAN Economic Community

NAY PYI TAW, 23 Dec
— Participants are to discuss hosting the ASEAN Summit and related meetings and requirements to implement ASEAN Economic Community-AEC Scorecard within one year, Chairman of AEC implementation committee Union Minister for National Planning and Economic Development Dr Kan Zaw told the meeting of work committee on raising production and market competitiveness in ASEAN region at the ministry, here, on Tuesday.

Chairman of the e-Commerce work committee Deputy Minister U Thaung Tin discussed preparations for emergence of e-Commerce and participation of ministries, Chairman of skilled labour free migration work committee Deputy Minister U Htin Maung Shwe, the UPWC-N CCT coordination meeting on the nationwide ceasefire agreement began on Monday and lasted two days.

MNA

Union Minister Dr Kan Zaw delivers speech at meeting to prepare ASEAN Economic Community.—MNA

UPWC-NCCT nationwide...

were under discussion on the second day of the meeting, officials said. “UPWC has agreed the proposals of NCCT in principle,” said U Hla Tun, Union Minister at the President Office. The UPWC-NCCT coordination meeting on the nationwide ceasefire agreement began on Monday and lasted two days.

GNLM

Union Minister U Hla Tun presents best trainee award to trainee Thaw Zin Aung at graduation parade of Defence Services Institute of Nursing and Paramedical Sciences. (News on page 1)—MYAWADY

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing presents best trainee award to trainee Thaw Zin Aung at graduation parade of Defence Services Institute of Nursing and Paramedical Sciences.

(MNA)

ASEAN Single Window and National Trade Repository, participation of Myanmar in Self-Certification Pilot Project-I, drafting the competitiveness law, formation of consumer dispute groups in regions and states, matters related to manual books for one village, one product, establishment of ASEAN SME Service Center Web Portal, cash assistance for SMEs, economic cooperation between ASEAN and dialogue partner countries, effectiveness of agreements, investment matters in Myanmar, progress of AEC research and implementation of sectors.

The union minister reviewed the discussions of meeting participants.
Students get knowledge about cervical cancer disease

NAY PYI TAW, 23 Dec — Under the arrangement of the Nay Pyi Taw Zabuthuri Specialist Hospital, a health educative event was held at Kandaw Min-gala Hall in Pyinnana on Tuesday morning.

The honorary professor of the hospital, obstetrics and gynaecology (OG) specialist Dr Daw Win Win Mya, made a speech.

OG specialist Dr Tun Lin Maung explained birth-spacing methods for women, while OG specialist Dr Daw Yu Yu Naing gave a talk on facts about cervical cancer disease, vaccination and medical treatment.

The event was also attended by Medical Superintendent Dr Kyaw Myint of Pyinnana General Hospital (200-bed), chairpersons of social organizations and female students of basic education high schools.

Shwe Kokko

Government provides K1 million in funds to construct library

MYINGYAN, 23 Dec — A ceremony to donate K1 million in funds by the union government for construction of a self-reliant library in Phaygyi Village, Natogyi Township was held at Myingyan District Information and Public Relations Department, Mandalay Region, on 22 December.

Staff Officer Daw Hnin Yi of District IPRD explained construction of the library to raise reading skills of the local people. She handed over K1 million to Phaygyi village administrator U Khin Maung Hla.

The ceremony was attended by officials of Natogyi and Myingyan township IPRDs and local authorities.

Zaw Min Naing (Myingyan)

Mohnyin GTC opens AGTI courses in 2013-14 academic year

MOHNYIN, 23 Dec — Government Technological College (Mohnyin) has held its eighth convocation by admitting students to pursue Bachelor of Technology (B.Tech) courses. Students across Kachin State had to enter the entrance test at the college to attend Association of Government Technical Institute (AGTI) courses. The college opens the AGTI courses as of 2013-14 academic year. The college admits 100 qualified students from the entrance test so as to turn out qualified human resources.

At present, the college still conducts third and fourth years' B.Tech courses and Bachelor of Engineering (B.E.) courses, said the principal of the college. —GNLM-001

Monastic education school gets two-storey building

MYINGYAN, 23 Dec — As a gesture of hailing the 60th anniversary of Myanmar-Japan diplomatic relations, a two-storey, eight-classroom school building was commissioned into service at Sanky monastic education school in Myingyan Township, Mandalay Region, on 19 December.

The abbot of the school, Second Secretary Hideaki Higashi of Japanese Embassy, Deputy Commissioner U Myint Thin Aung and a school official formally opened the new school building.

The Japanese second secretary explained the purpose of school building, which was constructed with K120 million in contributions of Japanese government and people.

The monastic education school is located on the right side of Myingyan-Mandalay Road, east of Myingyan. The school admits over 500 students from seven surrounding villages. —Zaw Min Naing (Myingyan)

Traditional performing concert attracts both tourists and local audiences

MANDALAY, 23 Dec — Mandalay Region Government and Fine Arts Department under the Ministry of Culture jointly organized the Myanmar traditional performing concert at the National Theatre in Mandalay.

On 21 December, students of National University for Arts and Culture (Mandalay) and Shan nationals in Mandalay presented dances and music to the audiences.

A puppet troupe and Chinlone squad demonstrated their skills.

Academy Maung Yin Aung presented an Opera entitled “Bagan of Myanmar”. —Thiha Ko Ko (Mandalay)

Artistes from Fine Arts Department perform entertainment to tourists and audiences in Mandalay.
India’s ruling BJP set to form next gov’t in eastern state of Jharkhand

NEW DELHI, 23 Dec — India’s ruling Bharatiya Janata Party is all set to form the next government in the eastern state of Jharkhand after comfortably crossing the majority mark in the assembly polls. The results of the polls were declared on Tuesday. The state’s ruling Jharkhand Mukti Mrocha, a regional party, barely managed to grab somewhere around 20 seats while the country’s main opposition Congress has been wiped out in the 81-member assembly.

Though Jharkhand has been battling Maoist violence, it has registered an overall 66 percent voter turnout in the five-phase elections over four weeks. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi campaigned in the assembly polls for the BJP, promising a stable government in Jharkhand, which over 14 years since its creation, has seen nine governments and three stints of President’s Rule. However, the BJP did not name a chief ministerial candidate and built its campaign around Modi and his development agenda.

Malaysian gov’t urged to extend foreign workers’ permit

BEIJING, 23 Dec — Four contractor associations in Malaysia have recently urged the government to reconsider the migrant workers’ status under the present foreign worker bleaching plan, otherwise known as 6P amnesty programme. In the wake of the expiration of the 3-year 6P amnesty programme started in 2011, foreign workers will have to leave the country by 15 February, 2015, making Malaysia’s domestic construction sector fall short of 100,000 labourers by then.

Master Builders Association Malaysia (MBAM), Malay Contractor Association (PKMM), Guild of Bumiputera Contractors (GBC) and Malaysian Indian Contractors Association (PKIM) said in a joint Press conference that they wanted a change of the migrant workers’ status to a temporary visit pass which can be renewed every 12 months.

Cambodian court charges medic with spreading HIV

PHNOM PENH, 23 Dec — A Cambodian court on Monday charged a medical practitioner with spreading HIV to more than 100 villagers in the country’s northwestern province of Battambang.

Nuon San, prosecutor at Battambang provincial court, said Yem Chrin was charged late Monday with spreading HIV and running a medical business without a license from the Ministry of Health. The preliminary charge will pave the way for further investigation into this case, as blood samples are still being collected from people living in three villages in Roka commune, located 8 kilometres south-east of Battambang provincial town. Roka commune has six villages and nearly 3,000 people are living there. About 1,000 people from Roka village and two other neighbouring villages have flocked to a local health center for HIV testing since last week. Yem Chrin, 56, was detained by the police on Wednesday and he was brought to the court on Sunday. The suspect admitted to the police using syringes and needles multiple times when treating patients in Roka commune, where he ran his medical business since 1996.

Didier Fontenille, director of the Pasteur Institute in Phnom Penh, told local media that, as of Saturday, the number of samples testing positive for HIV increased to 140. But Mean Chhi Vun, director of the National Center for HIV/AIDS, said he cannot provide an exact figure as samples are still being collected and some of them have been sent to the United States and South Korea for further testing in order to confirm that the findings are accurate. According to Cambodian law, if Yem Chrin found guilty, he may face up to life in prison. However, the cause of these mass HIV infections remains unclear and whether Yem Chrin is the sole responsible person.

Thai police see little hope of putting names to about 370 tsunami victims

TAKUA PA, (Thailand), 23 Dec — With the bodies of almost 400 victims of the Indian Ocean tsunami still unidentified a decade on, Thai police were holding out little hope of gleaning any new information from opening a cargo container packed with unclaimed personal items.

Watches, chunky gold necklaces with Buddhist amulets, an Egyptian souvenir coin purse, and a wad of $1,800 in cash were pulled from tattered cardboard boxes and police evidence bags stashed in the container that has not been opened since 2011.

The three metre by 12 metre container was passed over to Takua Pa district in Phang Nga province in 2011, foreign workers’ permit until recently when, after requests from Reuters, they opened the container ahead of the 10-year anniversary of the 26 December tsunami.

Boxes with personal possessions of 2004 tsunami victims are put back into a container outside a police station in Takua Pa, in Phang Nga Province on 19 Dec, 2014.—REUTERS

The graveyard, with grass growing up over the coffins, marked with coded numbers, is completely overgrown and in a poor state.

In Ban Nam Khem, a sleepy fishing village on the north end of Phang Nga, the tsunami left 661 dead and 765 missing.

In Ban Nam Khem residents claim that six families members in the tsunami — his wife, brother and three daughters. In the three years after the disaster, four of their bodies were found, but his eldest daughter remains among the missing.

People walk past a colourful jeepney during the Jeepney Design Challenge inside a mall in Pasay City, the Philippines, on 22 Dec, 2014. The Jeepney Design Challenge showcases 14 colourfully-designed jeepneys from various regions all over the country.—Xinhua

Boxes with personal possessions of 2004 tsunami victims are put back into a container outside a police station in Takua Pa, in Phang Nga Province on 19 Dec, 2014.—REUTERS

People walk past a colourful jeepney during the Jeepney Design Challenge inside a mall in Pasay City, the Philippines, on 22 Dec, 2014. The Jeepney Design Challenge showcases 14 colourfully-designed jeepneys from various regions all over the country.—Xinhua

mid when the items can, by official regulation, be put up for auction.

They initially believed the container held the belongings of unidentified victims, but found some items were identification cards and credit cards and could be claimed by relatives.

“I’m a bit surprised by the large number of valuables,” Lieutenant Colonel Voravit Yamarree from Takua Pa District said as his team surveyed the items on a long, white table.

“I think back then everyone was so busy focusing on identifying the corpses they have may have forgotten about this,” he said.

The tsunami left 5,395 dead and 2,932 missing in Thailand, including about 20,000 foreign tourists, when a wall of water several metres high ripped through resorts and fishing villages on the Andaman Sea coast in southern Thailand.

In the aftermath of the tsunami, forensic experts from 39 countries convened in Phang Nga, where about 80 percent of the victims in Thailand perished, to identify the bodies.

The Thai Tsunami Victim Identification unit was considered one of the largest and most successful projects of its kind, putting names and faces to the thousands of tourists, Thais and migrant workers killed in the Boxing Day disaster.

However, 10 years after the one of the most devastating humanitarian disasters in recorded history, about 400 unidentified bodies — 369 of them still unidentified — rest in metal coffins, marked with coded numbers.

In the past four years, just 24 bodies have been claimed, all but one Thai nationals, according to various reports.

In Ban Nam Khem, a sleepy fishing village on the north end of Phang Nga, the tsunami left 661 dead and 765 missing.

Ban Nam Khem residents claim that six families members in the tsunami — his wife, brother and three daughters. In the three years after the disaster, four of their bodies were found, but his eldest daughter remains among the missing.

“We provided all of the information — dental records, tissue and DNA samples ... but they still can’t find her. I don’t know what more I can do,” said Hin, sitting amid photos of his loved ones killed in the tsunami.

The unidentified and unclaimed bodies are all in a cemetery in Bang Maruan village, just south of Takua Pa.

The graveyard, with a metal plaque at the gate listing the nations involved in the project, is often overgrown with weeds.

Of the bodies there, authorities have identified 26 Thais and 26 Myanmar, but their families have not come to claim their bodies, according to Colonel Yuthaphong Intaaphan, the police superintendent overseeing the Police Forensic Science Office.

“It would cost them (the relatives of Myanmar migrant workers) a decade of life savings to come to Thailand and reclaim the bodies,” Yuthaphong said in an interview at the Disaster Victim Identification Centre in Bangkok.—Reuters
South Korea's Park says leak of nuclear plant data a "grave situation"

SEOUL, 23 Dec — A recent series of leaks of data from South Korea’s nuclear power operator was a "grave situation" that was unacceptable as a matter of national security, Prime Minister Hwang Kyo-ahn said on Tuesday.

The leaks come after the South Korean nuclear power operator was a "grave situation" that was unacceptable as a matter of national security, Prime Minister Hwang Kyo-ahn said on Tuesday.

The South Korean nuclear power operator was a "grave situation" that was unacceptable as a matter of national security, Prime Minister Hwang Kyo-ahn said on Tuesday.

The prime minister said it will keep new debt issuance in fiscal 2015 below that in fiscal 2014 and will review its expenditures in the aftermath of last week’s deadly Sydney cafe siege.

"The national security agencies today indicated that there has been a heightened level of terrorist chatter in the aftermath of the Sydney Cafe Siege," Abbott told a joint conference.

"That’s why it’s important that people remain alert," Abbott said in Sydney.

"Man Haron Monis, a self-styled sheikh, held hostages in a 16-hour siege at the Lindt Chocolate Cafe in Martin Place, a central Sydney shopping and office precinct, a week ago. Two hostages and Monis were killed when police stormed the cafe.

"Australian Prime Minister Tony Abbott}s, "Australian Prime Minister Tony Abbott says increased terrorist chatter following Sydney siege"
US Senate Republican leader
McConnell opposes Obama on Cuba

WASHINGTON, Dec 23 — Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell said on Monday he opposed US President Barack Obama's plans to normalize relations with Cuba, and spoke of steps lawmakers might take to rein in the new policy.

Interviewed by Reuters, McConnell also said that he and the president, a Democrat, had discussed possible major tax reform legislation and that any effort should not focus on the country's biggest corporations alone, but also include help for small businesses.

On another international matter, McConnell, who takes over in January as Senate majority leader, said North Korea's computer hacking of Sony Corp was more serious than an act of vandalism, taking issue with a characterization Obama had used to describe the cyberattack. McConnell declined to spell out steps he thought the United States should take in response.

"This is a serious threat to the United States," he said.

Speaking by telephone from his home state of Kentucky, McConnell said he agreed with the Senate's most outspoken critics of Obama's new Cuba policy, Republican Senator Marco Rubio of Florida and Democratic Senator Robert Menendez of New Jersey, "that it was a mistake."

Obama's actions to forge relations and expand commercial ties with the former Cold War foe will weigh heavily on the 2016 campaign for president.

McConnell said there were some "pretty obvious" ways to keep the policy from being fully implemented. Only Congress has the power to remove some barriers to relations with Cuba since "a number of sanctions" were written into law, he said. He said any US ambassador to Cuba would require Senate approval.

"Look at Vietnam," McConnell said. "We normalized relations with them and they are a Communist regime that still represses people. Sometimes engagement works, sometimes it doesn't."

With many Republicans and Democrats backing tax reform, it could become an issue in the last two years of Obama's presidency. The last major reform was in 1986.

While McConnell repeatedly referred to "comprehensive" legislation, he also stressed that such a measure had yet to take shape and would require bipartisan agreement.

In pressing for broad reforms that include small businesses, McConnell said, "It's pretty hard to argue it's a good idea to take Fortune 500 companies down to 25 per cent (tax rate) and leave a mom-and-pop operation in Louisville in the high 30s."

---Reuters

Record number at Germany’s anti-immigrant rally

DRESDEN, (Germany), Dec 23 — More than 17,000 people took part in Germany's largest anti-immigrant rally to date on Monday in the eastern city of Dresden, gathering to sing Christmas carols and listen to speakers complain about immigrants and asylum-seekers.

The rally by a fast-growing grass-roots movement calling itself PEGIDA, or Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamization of the West, was its 10th and largest so far.

"Germany is not a land of immigration," PEGIDA leader Lutz Bachmann told the cheering crowd, which waved Germany flags and chanted criticism of media it accuses of biased reporting. Bachmann started PEGIDA in October with an appeal on social media in Dresden to protest plans to add 14 centres for about 2,000 refugees locally. Demonstrators reject charges they are far-right extremists or neo-Nazis.

Monday's rally took place in front of Dresden's famous Semper Opera house in the city's historic centre.

A counter-demonstration of 4,000 people tried to disrupt the PEGIDA rally, which grew from a previous record of 15,000 a week ago and has embarrassed the political establishment with claims that Germany is being overrun by Muslims and other immigrants.

Justice Minister Heiko Maas has called PEGIDA a disgrace for Germany.

PEGIDA's demands have attracted support from some on the far-right as well as ordinary Germans alarmed by a sharp rise in refugees, many fleeing conflict in the Middle East. The rallies have spread across Germany even though Dresden, with a tiny immigrant community, remains the movement's hotbed.

Instead of their usual marches through the nighttime streets, the rally remained at the crowd singing Christmas classics as "Stille Nacht" (Silent Night) and "Oh, du Frohliche". The Semper opera turned off its lights to protest the rally.

The number of asylum-seekers in Germany has surged to some 200,000 this year, more than any other western country, due in part to an influx of Syrians.

---Reuters

Russia’s invitation to Obama to attend 70th jubilee of VE-Day not dismissed

WASHINGTON, Dec 23 — Russia's invitation to President Barack Obama to attend festivities on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of VE-Day that will be held in Moscow next May has not been dismissed, Celeste Wallander, the chief presidential adviser on Russia in the White House said.

"The invitation was being scrutinized, she said, adding that it was not clear yet when the final decision might be taken.

White House officials answered a question about the invitation earlier by saying they had no announcements for the time being on any possible trips by the President to Russia.

Russian President's aide Yuri Ushakov said in Moscow earlier on the same day the Kremlin had invited Obama to attend the VE-Day festivities as the leader of a nation that used to be a member of the anti-Hitler coalition.

---Itar-Tass
T he foods and drinks we are consuming daily are contaminated with either toxic chemical compounds or germs—bacteria, viruses, fungi, and protozoa. If you are aware of the dangers they can cause to your health, you would not want to eat them, if you can help. I don’t intend to discuss the dangers of toxic chemical compounds present in foods, as there is a non-governmental organization (NGO) already conducting public awareness campaigns, and I believe it is doing a great job. What I will attempt to do is to convey to the public how the drinking water and foodstuffs, especially the fresh commodities, can get contaminated with germs—bacteria, viruses, fungi, and protozoa. Awareness how the foodstuffs are contaminated with germs, due to improper transportations, handlings and preparations. As I am not a medical professional, I will draw on my own observations and what little health knowledge I had gained, by watching documentaries on the television, reading books and magazines, in presenting this article.

Contamination during transportation and handling

Let’s start with the drinking water, the most essential commodity for us. Here, I will not touch the production side as I don’t have the first-hand knowledge of how they are done. So there won’t be any mention of whether they really are of PH7 level or not, or they really are produced by the double osmosis process or whatever modern processes as claimed by the manufacturers. I am sure most of you have seen how drinking water bottles are transported and handled. The large, 20 litres bottles and smaller sized ones are transported on open cargo trucks, stacked full without leaving any space for the labourers to sit or even stand. They sat or stood on the stacks of water bottles, with their dirty slippers or bare feet on the bottles. It was not rare to see their feet or slippers resting on the faucets or taps fitted on the large water bottles. When they reached their delivery points, the labourers would unload the water bottles at the roadside or sidewalks covered in dusts and muds or slushes. From the health or medical point of view, the dusts and the slushes are infested with swarms of germs. Also their feet and slippers too are swarming with all kinds of germs as they trod on such filthy places. These germs would definitely cling to the water bottles, and as you may know some types of germs can survive even at very high temperatures, they will remain active for a long time and enter the bottles once the seals are broken. Imagine what can happen when one drinks the water from these bottles. I won’t be elaborating what kind of diseases can be caused by them. In most countries they deliver water bottles in enclosed trucks and placed in their proper storage places. Nowhere had I ever seen water bottles randomly left by the road sides or on the sidewalks.

I will continue with the edible fresh goods, such as vegetables, fruits, fish, poultry and meat. There is a street market place in my neighbourhood, not an official but a makeshift one, that operates from dawn till noon only, and the streets returned to the motor traffic in the afternoons. As it is not a proper market, it lacks proper facilities for sanitation such as garbage bins, hand washing system to wash down the place after closing time, or proper drainage system. During the rainy seasons, as the streets are damaged, slushes covered the low lying parts. Those who went to that market early and were observant would witness how the foodstuffs were brought in and handled. The vegetables ar- rived either on trishaws or on light trucks and some of sorts of ranks, a few inches above the dirty surfaces.

The fish, poultry and meat traveled to the market in the same way as the vegeta- bles. They are dumped on the floor boards of light trucks or pickups, where people used to set their dirty foot wears, or carried on the seats of trishaws. All these goods came without any packaging or contain- ers, without any sort of re- frigeration, except for some kinds of fish covered in crushed ice. (In advanced countries, they are deliv- ered in refrigerated or en- closed trucks.) At the market they met the same treatment as the vegetables. They were dumped by the road sides, as the drivers were impatient to wait. To make my presenta- tion more sound, I would like to mention the numer- ous carcasses of dead ro- dents, which were ran over by cars during the night, are ever present on the streets on our block and the lines inside that market are no exceptions. No one bother to clear those dead rodents as though they don’t matter. There are dirty foot wears, unhygienic foods and drinks are the sources of contagious dis- eases. One of the most common diseases caused by unhygienic foods and drinks is hepatitis, that can cause cirrhosis of liver, which in turn can lead to liver cancer. Please correct me if I’m wrong, so as not to frighten the readers with my wrong information. I realize I should not touch the sub- ject that was not in my field of expertise, but I took the liberty of doing so with good will and intentions—to make the public aware of the consequences of un- healthy practices in food preparations.

Conclusion

All these unhygienic practices are to be blamed on the ignorance or rather, the unawareness on the part of the persons who commit them. So awareness cam- paigns, and I believe it is conducted by NGOs as they are doing with the use of unapproved chemical compounds in food processing. Some readers may judge me to be overly ob- sessed with health and hy- giene issues, as I had gone into details in describing the risks involved in the transportations and han- dlings of water and foodstuffs. I’m getting used to being judged so, by many with whom I had discussed this subject. I don’t mean any offence or disrespect to them; I welcome and value their opinions. However, I have my reasons to go to the extremes in describing this manner, and that is to achieve what I set out to do—to make the public aware of the importance of hygiene.

Looking forward to a healthy society.
Thai entrepreneurs seek economic opportunities in Mandalay

**Financial Market and Investment Opportunities in Mandalay, Myanmar**

Economic U Aung Zan told a workshop on financial market and investment opportunities on 22 December. Mandalay Region Chambers of Commerce and Industry and Thailand-based Asset Pro Management Company Ltd jointly organized the workshop at Mandalay Hill Resort Hotel.

MRCCI Chairman U Aung Win Khaing extended greetings, while Executive Vice President Mr Chanitr Charn Chainarang explained about the stock exchange in Thailand, aims of foreign direct investment, and assistance to be provided to emergence of a stock exchange in Mandalay.

MRCCI Joint Secretary Dr Maung Maung discussed economic opportunities in Mandalay.

*Min Maung (Mandalay)*

**Township Cooperative Syndicate disburses loan for village electrification**

*Myeik, 23 Dec* — A ceremony to disburse loans for village electrification took place at the Dhammayon in Myaung Myaung Village, Mandalay Township, Mandalay Region, on 22 December.

Staff Officer U Zaw Win of Township Cooperative Department and Chairman of Township Cooperative Syndicate U Thein Aung urged local people to spend the loans on installation of electric meters and pay them back on time.

Chairman of the syndicate U Thein Aung delivered K24 million to 160 households.

*Zaw Min Naing (Myeik)*

**Rural Development Dept to upgrade gravel road in Nyaunglebin Township**

*Nyaunglebin, 23 Dec* — Department of Rural Development officials held a meeting on upgrading of an earthen road to a gravel one and regional development at the monastery in Kyachaung village in Nyaunglebin Township, Bago Region, on 21 December.

The department will allot K13 million for upgrading the 2.5-mile-long Zigongyi-Kyachaung-Zeebyukhin-Kyaban inter-village earthen road.

Amyotha Hluttaw representative U Ye Mynat urged local people to cooperate with local authorities for upgrading the road.

Bago Region Hluttaw representative U Saw Lin Aung explained plans to tap the Pyithu Hluttaw development fund for the roads linking the gravel road.

Head of Township Department of Rural Development U Than Lwin discussed the ways to upgrade the gravel road in respective sectors.

*Nay Lin (Nyaunglebin)*
Satellite images show 290 heritage sites in Syria damaged by war

beefed up its troops along the 180-km (112-mile) border with Iraq, where Islamic State fighters have control over stretches of the Baghdad-Jordan highway, a major Middle Eastern trade route.

Obeidi was due to visit Jordanian army camps on Tuesday. He said his talks with the army’s chief of staff would focus on ways of regaining control of the crucial overland trade and passenger artery.

The fall of large parts of Anbar Province bordering Jordan to Islamic State poses a major security risk for the kingdom, officials say.

Tribes currently fighting the jihadists in Anbar have longstanding ties with Jordan.

Jordan has provided a logistics base for the US-led air campaign against Islamic State in Syria and is a hub for intelligence gathering operations against the jihadists, a Western diplomatic source said.

The kingdom, which helped train thousands of Iraqi army troops in the post-Saddam Hussein era as part of US plans to rebuild the former Iraqi military, now sees Sunni tribal fighters playing a lead role in battling Islamic militants in their own areas.

Iraq says Jordan to begin training Iraqi troops soon

A general view of damage in the Umayyad mosque of Old Aleppo, 15 Dec, 2013. — Reuters

Five bombs explode in Yemeni capital, killing one

A general view of damage in Sanaa following five bomb explosions that took place in Sanaa, Yemen, 23 Dec 2014. — Reuters

People gather at the site of a bomb explosion in Sanaa on 23 Dec, 2014. — Reuters

Five bombs exploded on Tuesday in Sanaa’s old quarter, where many supporters of the Shi’ite Muslim Houthi group live, killing at least one person and wounding another, a Yemeni security official said. No one has claimed responsibility for the attacks, but the Houthis have been fighting the Sunni Islamist militant al-Qaeda group and allied tribesmen since its gunmen captured Sanaa in September and forced the resignation of a government they had long seen as corrupt.

Witnesses said the blasts occurred early in the morning at a time when only a few people were on the streets. One of the bombs exploded when a member of the Houthi militia tried to dismantle it, residents said.

Several houses and some cars were damaged from the explosions.

Yemen has been in turmoil since mass protests in 2011 forced long-ruling President Ali Abdullah Saleh to step down. But tensions have increased after the Houthi takeover of Sanaa in September. — Reuters

Algeria troops kill chief militant behind Frenchman’s murder

Algeria’s army has killed the leader of the militant group responsible for kidnapping and beheading French tourist Herve Gourdel in September, a local television station close to the government said on Tuesday, Ennahar TV, citing an unnamed security source, said.

Troops had killed Gouri Abdelmalek, leader of the Caliphate Soldiers group, which declared its allegiance to jihadist Islamic State fighters in Iraq and Syria.

It said Abdelmalek and two other militants were killed east of the capital Algiers in a clash with special forces. His group had kidnapped and beheaded the Frenchman in retaliation for French military action against Islamic State. — Reuters

Iraqi Defence Minister Khaled al-Obeidi speaks to the media in Amman on 22 Dec, 2014. — Reuters

Iraq’s history spans 10,000 years of history had been removed to specialist warehouses to avoid looting.

The United Nations says more than 200,000 people have been killed in Syria’s conflict, which began in March 2011 with popular protests against Assad and spiralled into civil war after a violent crackdown by security forces.
Monday, 23 December — A holiday severe pain is on Asian markets on Tuesday after Wall Street closed at historic highs while oil prices recouped just a little of the losses suffered when Saudi Arabia quashed all thought of curbing supply.

A revival in risk appetite underpinned the safe haven yen and kept the US dollar elevated across the board, while sovereign bond yields were content to sit on recent gains.

Equity investors chose to focus on the benefits that falling fuel prices would have for consumer spending power. “Overall, we see this as a shot in the arm for the global economy,” Olivier Blanchard, chief economist at the IMF, and Rabah Arezki, head of the commodities research team, wrote in their blog on Monday.

They estimated the boost to world growth would be between 0.3 and 0.7 percentage points above the Fund’s baseline forecast of 3.8 percent in 2015, with the gain to China ranging from 0.4 to 0.7 percentage points.

Trading was light in Asia with Japan on holiday and markets for most majors marginally. MSCI’s broadest index of Asia-Pacific shares outside Japan eased 0.3 percent.

Australian stocks ran into profit-taking after three sessions of sharp gains and slipped 1.0 percent. On Wall Street, the S&P 500 had put on 0.38 percent to score an all-time closing high on Monday, while the Dow added 0.87 percent and the Nasdaq 0.34 percent. In Europe, opening gains of between 0.3 percent and 0.5 percent were preserved for the FTSE, DAX and CAC. Stocks have been helped in part by further evidence the European Central Bank was set to buy euro government bonds. Expectations the ECB will act as soon as January saw the euro touch a 2-1/2 year trough at $1.2215 on Monday and it was last trading at $1.2227.

In contrast, the Federal Reserve remains on track to hike rates at some point in 2015 which has widened the premium offered by two-year US debt to 75 basis points over German bunds, the fattest margin since early 2007. The attraction of US yields lifted the dollar to 120.12 yen, leaving last week’s 115.56 low as a distant memory. The dollar extended its gains since April 2006.

The steady climb in the dollar made life miserable for gold bulls with the precious metal falling to $1,779.61, after falling from $1,261.80 on Monday.

Oil bulls also suffered a cruel blow when Saudi Arabia’s powerful oil minister said OPEC would not cut production at any price. Ali al-Naimi said the Saudis might instead boost output as a hedge against oil-led inflation. Gold should still be supported at $1,170, but more stop-loss orders will be triggered if the level is breached, Ceresola said.

The steady climb closed at historic highs on Monday, boosting global equities. The dollar index, a measure of the greenback’s against a basket of major currencies, was holding close to a nine-year peak.

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\text{Gold inches up after losses, but still near three-week low}
\]

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\text{Reading iPad before bedtime may adversely impact sleep}
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**New York, 23 Dec** — Large parts of Europe, West and Central Africa, and South America face the threat of outbreaks of the deadly dengue virus due to climate change and urbanization, according to the first-ever maps of dengue vulnerability published on Tuesday.

Research by the United Nations University found dengue fever, that is transmitted by the bite of female mosquitoes and causes severe pain, is on the move with the maps pinpointing vulnerable areas as a tool to help prevent outbreaks.

“Changes to climate could result in increased exposure and pose a serious threat to areas that do not currently experience endemic dengue,” the report said.

The researchers said as the planet warms, dengue could spread to large parts of Europe and mountainous regions of South America which are too cold currently to sustain mosquito populations year-round.

The disease is also predicted to spread in Central and West Africa which have poor water and sanitation services and insufficient healthcare coverage.

The new maps illustrate the expansion and contraction of dengue vulnerability throughout the year, revealing hotspots and showing where the virus could become a danger so countries can set up surveillance.

“We’ve seen from Ebola that in this global world that we’re living in that infectious diseases can travel around,” Corinne Schuster-Wallace, senior researcher at the UN University, told the Thomson Reuters Foundation in a phone interview from Canada.

“The conditions for these diseases are dynamic over time and given that we’re changing our social and environmental dynamics, the global distribution of these infectious diseases like dengue is going to change.”

Although the maps are not designed to predict outbreaks, she said if the mosquitoes and the virus arrived in vulnerable areas, dengue would become endemic there.

There is no vaccine for dengue, which kills an estimated 20,000 people each year and infects up to 300 million, according to the World Health Organization (WHO).

\[
\text{Risk of dengue increases due to climate change, city growth: research}
\]

**Washington, 23 Dec** — Use of a light-emitting electronic device (LE-eBook) such as an iPad before bedtime can adversely impact sleep and overall health, a US study comparing LE-eBook to printed books said on Monday.

The study, published in the US journal Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, found reading an LE-EBook in the hours before bedtime may suppress release of a hormone linked to sleepiness and shift the circadian clock, an internal biological clock that synchronizes the daily rhythm of sleep to external environmental time cues.

The study found that participants reading on the iPad took longer to fall asleep, were less sleepy in the evening, and spent less time in the deep, slow-wave sleep stage, the stage of sleep during which dreams prevail. The iPad readers also found they needed more expensive light as a hedge against oil-led inflation. Gold should still be supported at $1,170, but more stop-loss orders will be triggered if the level is breached, Ceresola said.

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Russia’s long-range aviation marking centenary jubilee

MOSCOW, 23 Dec — Russia’s long-range (fighter-bomber) aviation is marking the centenary anniversary since its foundation on Tuesday. Gala functions devoted to the jubilee will be held in all the branches and units of the Air Force, its official spokesman Igor Klimov told reporters.

“Long-range aviation is a crucial component element of Russia’s forces of nuclear deterrence,” Colonel Klimov said. “Its status and the span and character of its combat tasks make it a service reporting directly to the country’s Commander-in-Chief. It fulfills strategic tasks.”

Units of long-range aviation operate the strategic missile carriers Tupolev-160 and Tupolev-95MS, long-range strategic bombers Tupolev-22M3, refueling jets Iluyushin-78, special-task aircraft Antonov-30, the transport turboprop Antonov-12 and Antonov-26, as well as Mi-8 and Mi-26 helicopters. Long-range aviation units are currently aimed at a massive modernization of the aircraft and engines of all types. “A priority goal of the State Defence Order for 2015 is to supply overhauled Tupolev-160, Tupolev-95MS and Tupolev-22M3 jets to long-range air force units,” Col Klimov said. “All the modernized aircraft will be fitted out with new equipment complexes that will boost their combat capabilities substantially.”

In 2015, strategic air force units will make flights to remote parts of the globe located at the distances equal to the full operating range of the aircraft. These flights will be part of the strategic deterrence plan and will include refueling in midair. The plan also includes a major command staff strategic exercise, Centre’2015. Col Klimov recalled that Russian strategic air force jets had resumed long-range flights recently in line with the strategic deterrence plan. Specifically, the Tupolev-160 jets made landings on airbases in the Caribbean /in Venezuela and Nicaragua/ and the use of refueling jets stationed on bases in Egypt and Vietnam enabled the Russian jets to operate in the Mediterranean and to reach the water area of the South China Sea.

In 2014, the Iluyushin-78 refueling jets made the first-ever landing in Cairo and the Tupolev-95MS strategic missile carriers made flights along the coastlines of Norway, Britain, Spain, and Portugal with refueling in midair.

“In the course of these flights, five inceptions by fighter jets of the Norwegian, British and Portuguese Air Forces were registered,” Col Klimov said.—Itar-Tass

Australian court approves record compensation payout to wildfire victims

SYDNEY, 23 Dec — An Australian court has approved a record payout of almost AS$500 million ($406 million) to survivors and families of some of the 173 people killed in the 2009 Black Saturday bushfires, the country’s worst-ever natural disaster.

A class action lawsuit by more than 5,000 people sued electricity provider AusNet Services and asset manager Utility Servicess Corporation Limited’s Royal Commission found that the Kinglake fire, the most deadly of the series of wildfires, was caused by an electrical fault.

On 7 February, 2009, bushfires tore through much of the southern state of Victoria, killing 173 people. More than 1,000 people were injured and 1,172 homes were destroyed.

“While we can never compensate people for what they’ve lost, particularly those who’ve lost loved ones, we have recovered in this proceeding AS$494 million,” Rory Walsh from Maurice Blackburn Lawyers said after the ruling in the Victorian Supreme court. “We hope that that money can help people alleviate some of the hardships that they continue to experience today,” he said.

AusNet said the settlement which includes the Victorian state government, excludes any admission of liability.

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Wednesday, 24 December, 2014

**CLAMPS DAY NOTICE**

MW VEST SCENT VOY NO ( 065N )

Consignees of cargo carried on MW VEST SCENT VOY NO ( 065N ) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 24.12.2014 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of A.W.P.T where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

**SHOPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY AGENT FOR: MS INTERASIA LINES**

Phone No: 2301185

**American Airlines flight from China makes unscheduled stop in Japan**

China, (Japan) 23 Dec — An American Airlines Boeing 777 bound for Los Angeles made an unscheduled stop at Narita International Airport near Tokyo on Monday night after a report of odor from the cargo storage area. The plane from Shanghai was carrying 243 passengers and crewmembers but no one was hurt.

According to the Japanese transport ministry’s Narita office, odor was detected when the plane was flying over the Pacific around 500 kilometers northeast of Narita. The flight declared emergency just before 1 pm and landed at Narita approximately 50 minutes later. An oven in the galley in the passenger cabin was reportedly charred. The cause of the incident is being investigated. No smoke or fire was observed. This was the second unscheduled stop at Narita by an American Airlines flight since Wednesday. That day, a flight from Seoul to Dallas, Texas, encountered turbulence and 12 people were injured.

**WEATHER REPORT**

BAY INERENCE: Weather is generally fair in the North Bay and partly cloudy to cloudy in the Andaman Sea and elsewhere in the Bay of Bengal.

FORECAST VALID UNTIL EVENING OF THE 24th December, 2014: Weather will be partly cloudy in Tanimathayi Region and generally fair in the remaining Regions and States.

**Naragica announces start of China-backed canal to rival Panama**

Managua, 23 Dec — Nicaragua on Monday announced the start of work on a $50 billion shipping canal, an infrastructure project backed by China that aims to rival Panama’s waterway and revitalize the economy of the second-poorest country in the Americas.

The groundbreaking was largely symbolic, as work began on a road designed to accommodate machinery needed to build a port for the canal on the Central American country’s Pacific coast.

Nicaragua’s government says the proposed 172-mile (278-km) canal, due to be operational by around 2020, would raise annual economic growth to more than 10 percent.

The canal could also give China a major foothold in Central America, a region long dominated by the United States, which controls the Panama Canal a century ago. Construction of the new waterway will be run by Hong Kong-based HK Nicaraguan Canal Development Investment Co Ltd (HKND Group), which is controlled by Wang Jing, a little-known Chinese telecoms entrepreneur well connected to China’s political elite. Flanked by Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega, who is a former Marxist guerrilla leader, Wang Jing said the tender for the preliminary design of the project would be offered by the end of the first quarter of 2015, by which time an environmental impact study would also be finished.

By the end of the third quarter, excavation work will begin, with a tender for the design of the locks due by the end of the year, he said. More than a year since it was first announced, the project faces widespread skepticism, with questions still open about who will provide financing, how seriously it will affect Lake Nicaragua and how much land will be expropriated for it.

“Given how much this will cost, it’s hard to take a stance on whether it will happen or not until there is a signal whether that money is available or not,” said Greg Miller at consultancy HIS Maritime.

In the Americas, only Haiti is poorer than Nicaragua. Earlier, Nicaraguan presidential spokesman Paul Ospina said feasibility studies, including a McKinsey report that experts say will define interest in financing the canal, had been delayed by changes to the route and would be ready by April.

Ospina said the “core financing” would come from Chinese state enterprises, but Chinese money, without giving a percentage.

But he added that Nicaragua is seeking international funding and rejected the idea that China will bankroll the project worth roughly four times Nicaraguan gross domestic product. — Reuters

**TRADEMARK CAUTION**

The above companies and trademarks are recorded in respect of Class 9: Scientific apparatus and instruments; apparatus and instruments for recording, transmission and reproduction of images, sound and data, in particular for telecommunications; cellular telecommunication apparatus and instruments; data processing apparatus and computers; telecommunication services; computer software and telecommunication apparatus including modems to enable connection to databases and to the Internet; prepaid telephone calling cards, encoded cards, encoded telephone cards, memory cards, discs, chips (integrated circuits), magnetic data carriers, and other carriers all bearing sound recordings, data, images, graphics, text, network-communicating apparatus; data processing apparatus; telephone, mobile/ cellular telephones, wireless telephones and parts and fittings thereof, headsets, earphones, and microphones/ speaker phones for use with mobile telephones; battery chargers for mobile telephones; adapters, chargers, connectors, computer mouse pads; transmitters (telecommunication); satellites for scientific purposes, all included in Class 9.

In respect of Class 38: Telecommunication services; electronic and digital transmission of data and voice; transmission of audio-visual images; cellular telephone service; communication by telephone; computer aided transmission of messages and images; electronic mail services; voice mail services; telephone facsimile communication services; wire services; paging services; telephone or other means of electronic communication; teleconferencing (audio and video); rental of telecommunication apparatus namely telephones; providing information about telecommunication; all included in Class 38.

Asiya Group Berhad, a company registered under the laws of Malaysia, which is located at Asiya Centre, 9 Jalan Stecen, Sentral 5, Kuala Lumpur Sentral, 50470 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, is the sole owner of the following trademark:

**Hello**

Reg. No. 1508/2014

Hello Axiata Company Limited, a company registered under the laws of Cambodia, which is located at # 464A Preah Monivong Street, Sangkat Tonlebasac, Khan Chamkarmoan, Phnom Penh City, Kingdom of Cambodia, is the sole owner of the following trademark:

**Axiata**

Reg. No. 15083/2014

Axiata Group Berhad, Hello Axiata Company Limited and Axiata Group Berhad and Hello Axiata Company Limited reserve the rights to take legal measures against any infringer who violates its Intellectual Property right for the marks as mentioned above. Axiata Group Berhad and Hello Axiata Company Limited are the sole owner of the following trademark:

**Axiata**

Reg. No. 15087/2014

Hello Axiata Company Limited and Axiata Group Berhad and Hello Axiata Company Limited claim the trademark right to the trademarks as mentioned above.

For Axiata Group Berhad and Hello Axiata Company Limited

Tiltile and Company Limited

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China charges Jackie Chan’s son over drug offence

BEIJING, 23 Dec — China’s state prosecutor said on Monday it had formally charged Jaycee Chan, son of kung fu mov-

ie star Jackie Chan, with a drugs offence, meaning he is almost certain to face trial.

The younger Chan, a 32-year-old actor and singer, was arrested in Beijing this year after testing pos-

itive for marijuana, with police saying they found 100 grams of the drug at his home.

In a brief statement on its official microblog, the Supreme People’s Procure-
ratorate said it had begun legal proceedings against him for “the crime of shel-

tering others to take drugs”. It did not elaborate.

President Xi Jinping said in June that Chi-

na would “harshly crack down” on narcotics, state media reported.

Action and comedy star Jackie Chan, 60, served as a goodwill spokesman for the China National Anti-Drug Committee in 2009, state media reported, promoting anti-drug educa-

tion.

Jaycee Chan was not available for comment. In August, his father offered the public a “deep bow of apology” for his son’s ar-

rest.

China has detained a string of other mostly B-list celebrities in recent months on drug-related charges, cases that have been publicised widely in both state and social media. They have included movie and television stars, film directors and a prominent screenwriter.

Drug crimes carry harsh penalties in Chi-

na including death or life imprisonment in serious cases. Illegal drugs, espe-
cially synthetic substances like methamphetamine, ketamine and ecstasy, have grown in popularity in Chi-

na in tandem with the rise of a new urban class with greater disposable income. Reuters

‘Guardians of Galaxy’ not prequel to ‘Avengers’: James Gunn

LOS ANGELES, 23 Dec — Director James Gunn says the ‘Guardians of the Galaxy’ is not a prequel to ‘The Avengers’ third and fourth part.

The 44-year-old direc-
tor said the next ‘Aveng-
ers’ film has been split into two parts ‘Avengers: Infinity War Part I’ and ‘Avengers: Infinity War Part II’ and there are pos-
sibility that ‘Guardians’ and ‘Avengers’ might meet somewhere in future but as of now there are no plans, reported Ace Show.

biz.

“The last thing I said was something about how the ‘Guardians’, we real-

ly are mostly focused on creating the ‘Guardians’ as their own separate uni-

verse, creating the cosmic side of the Marvel Uni-

verse. It isn’t all about Leding towards Avengers.”

“We’re not subser-
vient to ‘The Avengers’. Whether or not at some point, some Guardians and some Avengers meet up and meet somewhere in the world, whether it’s two years from now, three years from now, four years from now, fifteen years from now… I’m not going to say. But ‘Guardians of the Galaxy’ does not exist as a prequel to ‘Avengers’ 3 and 4,” Gunn said.

Gunn also said he would be keen in joining Marvel projects in future.

Rock star Sting buoys ‘The Last Ship’ with Broadway role

NEW YORK, 23 Dec — Grammy-winning rock star Sting has boosted ticket sales of his Broadway mu-

sical “The Last Ship” and won praise for his perfor-

mance as a foreman in the show based on his child-

hood in a shipbuilding town in northeast England. “The Last Ship” the first Broad-

way musical written by Sting, opened on 26 Oc-

tober to mixed reviews, win-

ning praise for its rousing score but losing points for its confused, tangled story.

Ticket sales flagged, with the show losing a re-

portedly $75,000 a week since previews began, and the former front man of rock group the Police announced he would join the cast for a limited time. Sting, 63, re-

placed British actor Jimmy Nail as Jackie White on 9 December as the foreman of the closed shipyard in the town of Wallsend. In the first full week of Sting’s performances, ticket sales rose to more than $817,000 from $491,000 the previous week.

“Brave captain takes the helm,” said the New York Post in a headline on Monday, while USA Today added: “Sting steers ‘Last Ship’ with pride, charisma.”

“Sting approaches Jackie with the same graciousness and serious-mindedness he brought to the ‘Ship’s’ mu-

sic and lyrics,” USA Today added.

The musical follows Gideon Fletcher, a ship-

builder’s son who leaves his girlfriend and his home-
town in search of a better life. He returns 15 years lat-

er, after his father’s death, to a town hit by recession, where the shipyard has shut its doors and his lover had moved on. Gideon decides to join the unemployed shipyard workers who take over the yard at the urging of the town’s priest to build one last ship. The trade magazine Variety described the show as “dark and gor-

geously melodic” and cred-

ited Sting with galvanizing the cast, as well as the box office. “Although he plays a secondary role in the show, Sting is a huge presence,” Variety said.

New York Times said Sting’s foreman seems a less pivotal figure than with Nail in the role but added his acting is “capable and efficient.” “His Jackie seems a leader more by the quiet integrity of his advice than his animal spirits,” it said.

The newspaper added that despite some flaws, years from now, four years from now, three years from now, two years from now, one year from now, “The last thing I said was something about how the ‘Guardians’, we really are mostly focused on creating the ‘Guardians’ as their own separate universe, creating the cosmic side of the Marvel Universe. It isn’t all about Leding towards Avengers.”

“We’re not subservient to ‘The Avengers’. Whether or not at some point, some Guardians and some Avengers meet up and meet somewhere in the world, whether it’s two years from now, three years from now, four years from now, fifteen years from now… I’m not going to say. But ‘Guardians of the Galaxy’ does not exist as a prequel to ‘Avengers’ 3 and 4,” Gunn said.

Gunn also said he would be keen in joining Marvel projects in future.

Musician Sting and his wife Trudie Styler arrive for the Kennedy Centre Honours in Washington on 7 Dec, 2014. — Reuters

Joe Cocker, raspy-voiced British singer, dies at 70

LONDON, 23 Dec — Joe Cocker, whose distinctive raspy voice and soulful musical renditions made him a favourite of his peers with hits like Beatles’ cover “With a Little Help from My Friends” and “You Are So Beautiful,” died on Monday. He was 70.

The British rock singer, famous for flailing his arms during performances, lost a battle with lung cancer, after his father’s death, Gideon Fletcher, a ship-

builder’s son who leaves his girlfriend and his home-
town to build one last ship. The trade magazine Variety described the show as “dark and gor-

geously melodic” and cred-

ited Sting with galvanizing the cast, as well as the box office. “Although he plays a secondary role in the show, Sting is a huge presence,” Variety said.

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Musician Sting and his wife Trudie Styler arrive for the Kennedy Centre Honours in Washington on 7 Dec, 2014. — Reuters

British singer Joe Cocker speaks after receiving the trophy for Career lifetime achievement award music during the 48th Golden Camera award ceremony in Berlin, on 2 Feb, 2013. — Reuters

Joe Cocker, raspy-voiced British singer, dies at 70

The Sheffield-born Cocker’s rocky but ultimately

successful career took him from working-class pubs in Northern England to the

Woodstock festival in 1969, to the top of the charts in the 1980s. Former Beatle Paul McCartney credited Cocker for giving “With a Little Help from My Friends,” a mid-tempo melody, a whole new life. “It was just mind blowing, totally turned the song into a soul anthem and I was forever grateful to him for doing that,” McCartney said in a statement, calling the fellow Englishman a “lovely northern lad.”

His explosive, at times unintelligible performance of that song at Woodstock helped him break through to larger audiences in what Rolling Stone magazine called “one of the most iconic sets from the legendary festival.”

Cocker lived in Craw-

ford, Colorado, and released nearly 40 albums as he toured the world during a ca-

reer spanning five decades.

The Grammy win-

ner was born into a work-

ing-class family and worked as a plumber while pursuing his singing career.

He was nominated as an Ok-

icer of the Order of the Brit-

ish Empire (OBE) at Buck-

ingham Palace in 2011.

“Goodbye and God Bless to Joe Cocker from one of his friends peace and love, R.” tweeted Beatles drummer Ringo Starr.

In the early 1970s Cocker’s “Mad Dogs and Englishmen” tour and live album cemented his success. In 1974, “You Are So Beau-

tiful”, co-written with Billy Preston, was a big hit. It was voted the fourth most popu-
lar love song in a US online poll in 2013.

In a memorable sketch in 1976, Cocker joined John Belushi as he parodied the singer’s spasmatic style on the popular late-night com-

edy show “Saturday Night Live.” Cocker’s career path was punctuated by struggles with alcohol and drugs.

In 1982, his career took off with the song “Up Where We Belong,” a duet with Jennifer Warnes for the film “An Officer and A Gen-
male.” The song earned Cocker his only Grammy and an Oscar for its writers.

His last studio album “Fire It Up” came out in 2012.

Cocker is survived by wife Pam, brother Victor, a stepdaughter and two grand-

children. He and his wife set up the Cocker Kids’ Foun-

dation to support local Col-

orado youth.

Reuters
Spanish fans celebrate ‘El Gordo’ victories in world’s biggest lottery

Companies, sports associations, local shops and bars also order lucky numbers for staff, which are then swapped and shared among relatives and colleagues to maximise their chances of getting a top prize. Workers from Madrid’s central wax museum were among the big winners on Monday, while staff from a neighbouring restaurant also got lucky. “The first thing I’m going to do is go to Paraguay to see my family. I haven’t been for years,” Madrid-based Gonzalo Lopez, a caretaker who won 1.6 million euros, told state television. Reuters

Former boxer Muhammad Ali of the US sits in a wheelchair as he is taken to a photo session with staff members of Muhammad Ali Humanitarian Foundation in Louisville, Kentucky, for the 56-5 record. — Reuters

Opening ceremony of 2015 Asian Cup to celebrate Australian culture

Beijing, 23 Dec — A spectacular opening ceremony lasting eleven minutes to celebrate Australian culture will be staged at Melbourne Rectangular Stadium on 9 January, according to the official website of Asian Cup. It is introduced that Australian singer Havana Brown, pop band Sheppard and more than 200 junior footballers, dancers and professional performers will stage on the show.

LOC Asian Cup Chief Executive Officer Michael Brown expressed that it would be a memorable and dynamic opening ceremony. The Socceroos will kick off a 23-day festival of football featuring 32 games between the top 16 football nations in Asia, with an expected worldwide television audience of 400,000 euros for every 20 euros spent on a number and this year’s jackpot was widely distributed. There were winners from the capital Madrid to southerly Murcia, flocking to local lottery outlets or bars where they had bought their tickets to celebrate their good fortune.

Condition of Muhammad Ali ‘vastly improved’

LOUISVILLE, (Kentucky). 23 Dec — The condition of Muhammad Ali has “vastly improved” since he was admitted to the hospital over the weekend with a mild case of pneumonia and doctors hope to discharge the boxing legend soon, a spokesman said on Monday.

Ali, 72, was admitted to a hospital in an undisclosed location on Saturday morning. “The Ali family continues to request privacy and appreciates all of the prayers and well wishes,” spokesman Bob Gunnell said. “No further details are being released.”

Englishman Willett secures Masters berth via world ranking

LONDON, 23 Dec — Englishman Danny Willett will be a big winner in the final world rankings of the year, to be issued next week, by narrowly punching his ticket to the 2015 Masters.

Willett is among a dozen players not previously exempt for the season’s opening major who will lock up invitations to Augusta National April by finishing in the top 50 in 2014.

However, Willett cut it ever so close in earning his first invitation to the Masters and made his move by winning the Nedbank Challenge in South Africa on 7 December.

Though he was ranked 51st last week after not competing, he will climb to 50th in the year-end rankings with no tournaments scheduled for this week and because points are reduced at differing rates in the world ranking formula.

Among the other players gaining Masters exemptions via the top 50 are Britons Jamie Donaldson, Ian Poulter and Stephen Gallacher, all of them members of Europe’s triumphant 2014 Ryder Cup team. American Kevin Streelman will drop from 50th to 52nd in the final rankings of the year, but he is already in the Masters field because he won the PGA Tour’s 2014 Hartford tournament.

There will be further opportunities for players to qualify for the April 9-12 Masters, including an updated top-50 world ranking heading into the week of the tournament.

American Tiger Woods started 2014 at the top of the world rankings and stayed there until on 17 May. Woods, who played in only nine tournaments in 2014 due to a back injury that required surgery, will end the year in 32nd spot.

Danny Willett of England celebrates winning the Nedbank Challenge at Sun City on 7 Dec, 2014.—Reuters

Lumpur’s Municipal Electrical Bureau said, “Kuala Lumpur has to provide so-called “Kuala Lumpur electric A-gogo” service, according to latest local media reports. A senior official of Kuala Lumpur’s Municipal Electrical Bureau said, “Kuala Lumpur electric A-gogo” is point-to-point car renting service that offers a zero-emission alternative to the residents to get around in the city, replacing their driving private cars or taking a bus.

Starting in February 2015, it will take about two years to complete the construction.—Xinhua

MITV MYANMAR INTERNATIONAL

(24-12-14 07:00 am – 25-12-14 07:00 am) MIST
* Local News
* Pretty Play Things From Pakokku
* World News
* Today Myanmar
* Local News
* The Making Procedure of Goldsmith
* World News
* Made in Myanmar “Mixto”
* Local News
* Myanmar Leading Lady “Naw Su Sussana Hla Hla Soe”
* World News
* Walking Along Orchard Road
* Local News
* Jeyyanandi (A Day in the Life of a Nun)
* World News
* In The Studio “Ying”
* Local News
* Mya Setkyar Pure Silk Fabric from Inle Lake
* World News
* Myanmar Traditional Art Bronze Casting
* Local News
* Mosaic Painting (Precious Stones & Gems)
* World News
* Myanmar Puppet
* Local News
* Culture Show: Abduction of King Thibaw
* World News
* Ngapali Beach: Fishing Villages
* Local News
* A Day Out with Sarah “YJ”
* World News
* Black Gold
**Nishikori earns top prize at annual pro sports awards**

Tokyo, 23 Dec — Kei Nishikori, who took the tennis world by storm this year, when he reached the finals of the US Open and competed at the season-ending Tour Finals, was named the winner of the grand prize at the Japan Pro Sports Awards on Monday.

The 24-year-old Nishikori was the first Japanese man to reach a Grand Slam singles final and saw his world ranking soar to No 5. Currently training in the United States, Nishikori was unable to attend, but addressed the event by video.

“This was a fulfilling year,” he said. “I want to do my best so I can return to more Grand Slam finals next year.”

Outstanding Performance Awards went to sumo grand champion Hakuho, the Pacific League and Japan Series champion Softbank Hawks baseball club, and baseball pitcher Chihiro Kaneko. “I want to do my best to win the grand prize next year,” said the 29-year-old Hakuho, who won his 32nd career grand sumo tournament this year to equal the total of legendary yokozuna Taiho. Kaneko, the 31-year-old ace of the Orix Buffaloes, led the PL in wins and ERA and won the Sawamura Award as Japan’s premier starting pitcher.

“Through baseball I want to excite the entire nation,” said Kaneko, who is currently a free agent and has yet to settle on a team for next season.

The award for outstanding new performer went to sumo wrestler Ichinojo. The 21-year-old Mongolian achieved promotion to sekiwake following his amazing debut in the elite makuuchi division in September and compiled a winning record in November in the sport’s third-highest rank.

Kyodo News

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**Napoli edge Juventus in dramatic penalty shootout to win Super Cup**

Doha, 23 Dec — Napoli ended Juventus’s hopes of securing a record seventh Italian Super Cup after snatching a dramatic 6-5 shootout win in the final that stretched to 18 nerve-jangling penalties in Doha’s Jassim Bin Hamad Stadium on Monday.

Carlos Tevez fired league champions Juventus ahead twice but Gonzalo Higuain scored two equalizers to send the game to penalties. Tevez looked to have won the game in extra time when he handed Juve’s 2-1 lead with a low shot into the bottom corner of the net. But with three minutes to go, Higuain also found the back of the net for a second time to set up the electrifying finish.

In a thrilling penalty shootout that saw both keepers produce a string of stunning saves, Buffon made three saves but his acrobatic efforts were not enough as Juve missed four spot kicks. The shootout started ominously for both teams with Tevez and Jorginho failing to score. Both teams then scored each of their next five penalties, before missing the next two. When Kalioumbay put Napoli 6-5 ahead, goalkeeper Rafael Cabral finally brought the shootout to an end by denying Simone Padoin, allowing Napoli fans to celebrate a remarkable upset victory.

As Rafa Benitez’s side rejoiced at winning their second Super Cup, their first triumph in the competition since 1990, Juventus were left to reflect on the missed chances that denied them a third straight night title in the competition. The last time the teams met in the Super Cup final was in 2012 when the Turin giants secured a comfortable win in Beijing. — Reuters

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**Chelsea go three clear after easing to win at Stoke**

London, 23 Dec — John Terry’s early header and Cesc Fabregas’s second-half strike restored Chelsea’s three-point Premier League lead heading into a busy Christmas programme after a 2-0 win at Stoke City on Monday.

Chelsea were ahead inside two minutes at the Britannia Stadium when Terry met a Fabregas corner with a powerful downward header. Stoke pushed forward after the break without ever causing fit-again Chelsea keeper Thibaut Courtois many problems and Fabregas sealed victory with a scuffed finish 12 minutes from time.

“These victories mean more than three points to win, and get three points the players need the right spirit and mentality, to win here they must be a really very good team with the capacity to adapt to Stoke’s style of play,” Chelsea manager Jose Mourinho told the BBC. Chelsea, who host West Ham United on Friday, have 42 points from 17 games with Manchester City, who visit West Brom on the same day, on 39 and Manchester United on 32. “Now we have to focus on the three matches we still have until the end of this period,” Mourinho said of the clash with Sam Allardyce’s West Ham, the trip to Southampton on Sunday and another London derby with Tottenham on New Year’s Day. “Playing against Big Sam is a hard job for us, we have to cope with it. The three point lead we have is a little advantage, it is a little pillow we have to protect us — we go home happy and pleased with what we did.”

Stoke beat Chelsea in this fixture last season but the hosts were always up against it after Terry timed his run to perfection and beat Asmir Begovic with a powerful header for his first league goal in over a year. Mark Hughes’s side tried to harry and hustle Chelsea but the superior class of the leaders always shone through. Courtois, back after a muscular injury, was rarely troubled although the Belgian needed to produce a fine save midway through the first half from Steven Nzonzi’s deflected strike. Top scorer Diego Costa should have increased Chelsea’s lead when Stoke tried and failed to catch him offside, the Spaniard timing his run perfectly — only to the skew his shot wide. Fabregas might have been awarded a penalty when he appeared to be clipped by Ryan Shawcross soon after half time but Stoke escaped. Charlie Adam drilled wide from edge of box following neat approach play from Stoke but Chelsea soaked up the pressure and made the points safe when Eden Hazard, who needed lengthy treatment in stoppage time, fed Fabregas and the Spaniard beat Begovic. — Reuters

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**Premier first as Arsenal chalk up five million followers**

London, 23 Dec — Arsenal have become the first Premier League club to reach five million followers on Twitter.

The north London club said in a news release on Monday that they had consolidated their position as the third most followed team on the social network behind Real Madrid and Barcelona.

“We are delighted to have engaged so many passionate Arsenal fans around the world,” said Richard Clarke, managing editor of the club’s media group. “The interest continues to grow and we constantly evolve our approach to keep our fans engaged with what is happening across every aspect of the club,” he added in a news release. Arsenal are sixth in the league, 12 points behind leaders Chelsea, and play their next fixture at home to London rivals Queens Park Rangers on Friday. — Reuters