Nay Pyi Taw, 11 Dec—President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar U Thein Sein inspected progress of Nay Pyi Taw International Airport this afternoon.

On arrival at Nay Pyi Taw International Airport at 1:15 pm, President U Thein Sein was welcomed by Vice-President Thaha Thura U Tin Aung Myint Oo, Union ministers, deputy ministers and departmental heads.

The President and party looked into progress of the taxiway of the airport by car.

At VIP Room (Ayeyawady) of the Airport Building, the President heard reports presented by the Managing Director of Asia World Co on construction of the runway of Nay Pyi Taw International Airport, services for passengers, area of the airport, landing of aircrafts, progress of the airport roundabout and the main archway, parking lot, VIP rooms, arrival and departure lounges, check-in counter and aprons and tasks to be undertaken.

After hearing the reports, the President instructed officials to coordinate with departments concerned for remaining tasks of the project.

The President cordially greeted engineers and workers at the Nay Pyi Taw International Airport after signing the visitors’ book of the airport.

(See page 8)

NAY PYI TAW, 11 Dec—Chief Minister of Shan State U Sao Aung Myat attended a ceremony to nurture high-yield paddy strains in accord with 14 points of good agriculture pattern held at Holdings Nos 15, 16 and 19 of field No. 108 in Mongzin Village in Kengtung of Shan State today.

Looking forward to ample income for paddy growers, the Myanmar Agriculture Service is undertaking nurturing paddy strains in accord with the methods of good agriculture pattern for 2011-2012 paddy-growing season.

MNA

High-yield paddy strains nurtured in compliance with good agriculture pattern

Dubai World Championship: Luke Donald poised for historic double

MNA
**PERSPECTIVES**

**Monday, 12 December, 2011**

**Live and learn**

The President pointed out in answering to media in 19th ASEAN Summit that the education standard of citizens is basic to establishing democracy in Myanmar.

Education and human resources development policies put into force by successive governments about 50 years ago drew criticisms from inside and outside the country. A foreign scholar once remarked Myanmar was short of under 50 educated citizens.

Despite increasing literacy rate and growing number of graduates in the said period, the education standard failed to keep abreast of the international level. In this context, paucity of the educated means lack of international-standard scholars.

In reality, Myanmar’s society was an education-oriented one since the year one. As the current age demands more of the quality of human resources, today’s people are required to build their capacity from lifelong learning, apart from formal education. If someone does not develop their talent from self-study, he or she will miss the train of age and will have to end up in the current station.

For formal education, classroom and teachers are sources of knowledge. But for the lifelong learning, training courses, learning centres, books, libraries and World Wide Web are. Help yourself to dig up the treasure of knowledge.

In time of Inwina monarchy, Venerable Monk Maha Rahtasara guided learners to listen, think, question, speak, explore, write, practice and read in a poem.

It is still fresh educational guideline that survives the lapse of time.

**Bago Region Chief Minister attends school upgrading ceremonies**

**Nay Pyi Taw, 11 Dec.**—Chief Minister of Bago Region U Aung Win addressed upgrading ceremonies of Basic Education High School (Branch) of Hlaydon village and Basic Education Middle School in Gyobinkauk Township in Thayawady District on 9 December and donated K6.3 million each.—MNA

**Work coord meeting on rendering technical supports for MPSSUR held**

**Nay Pyi Taw, 11 Dec.**—Deputy Minister for Construction U Kyaw Lwin attended the work coordination meeting on rendering technical assistance for Myanmar Programme for Safer Settlement and Urban Research (MPSSUR) which is being implemented according to the MoU signed between Department of Human Settlement and Housing Development and UN-Habitat, held at the department of the Ministry of Construction in Yangon on 8 December.

Director-General U Aung Win of Department of Human Settlement and Housing Development, departmental officials, Mr. Srivasa Popur of UN-Habitat were also present at the meeting. MNA

**AIDS is a national concern.**

**Yangon, 11 Dec.—**A ceremony to honour artistes who participated in the educative teleplay entitled “Ayay-kyon-yin-kyaw-mon-shide”, managed and produced by Myanmar Libraries Federation was held at Karawew Palace, here, yesterday evening.

The Patron of the foundation Union Minister for Information and for Culture U Kyaw Hsan delivered an address and presented certificates of honour to them.

First, the Union Minister expressed thanks for the managers, artistes and technicians for creation of the educative teleplay.

Next, he presented certificates of honour to the director Academy Zaw Myint Oo, Academy Khant Sithu, Academy Zaw Oo and Chit Snow Oo.

Chairman of the foundation U Maung Maung, Vice-Chairman U Nyunt Swe, Executives Dr. Chit San Win, U Maung Maung Oo and Dr. Thant Thaw Kaung presented certificates of honour to Khaing Thin Kyi, Khin Lay Nwe, May Gabyar, Ei Chaw Po, Myo Myo, Khaing, Zay Pa, Moe Oo, Mahn, Okaw, Phone Hlan, Kyaw Pwint, Min Zaw, Soe Lwin Nein, Academy U Khin Maung Gyi, U Win Naing and Shwe Kaung Kin Video Production.

Chairman U Maung Maung spoke words of thanks.

The Patron of the foundation Union Minister and the chairman of the foundation presented cash award for Alinka Wutiy music troupe that presented music entertainment at the ceremony through U Maung Maung Aye (Alinka Wutiy).

After the ceremony, the Union Minister cordially greeted those present.

Also present on the occasion were Yangon Region Minister for Finance and Revenue Daw San San Nwe, Region Minister for Social Affairs Dr. Myint Thein, departmental heads of the Ministry of Information, the chairman of Myanmar Writers and Journalists Association and executives and officials. MNA

**Union Energy Minister visits Yenanchaung Oilfield**

**Nay Pyi Taw, 11 Dec.—**Union Minister for Energy U Than Hlay visited Yenanchaung Oilfield of Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise on 9 December.

At the briefing hall, he heard reports submitted by the general manager on daily operation of exploration of oil in Chauk Yenanchaung Oilfield and called for extending exploration works, combining findings of experts and coordination of officials of the enterprise headquarters and visited well No (3240) on 10 December.

He inspected oil exploration of oil in Chauk Oilfield of Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise and called for extending exploration works, combining findings of experts and coordination of officials of the enterprise headquarters and visited well No (3240). MNA

**Myanmar disabled sportspersons to take part in 6th ASEAN Para Games**

**Yangon, 11 Dec.—**Fifty-five Myanmar disabled athletes led by Vice-President Col Myo Myint of Myanmar Paraports Federation to take part in 6th ASEAN Para Games in Solo of Indonesia from 12 to 22 December 2011 left for Indonesia today. They were welcomed at Yangon International Airport by officials of the Sports Ministry and the federation.

The Myanmar contingents will race in track and field, swimming, table tennis, badminton, chess for the blind and volleyball for the disabled.—MNA

**Mass walk activities held in Ayeyawady Region, Bago Region, Shan State**

**Nay Pyi Taw, 11 Dec.—**Mass walk activities were held in Ayeyawady Region, Bago Region and Shan State in second week of December.

The event held in Pathein Township of Ayeyawady Region this morning was attended by 40,300 participants including Region Chief Minister U Thein Aung and officials of regional institutions.

Bago Region Chief Minister participated in the mass walk activity in Bago yesterday, held with over 6,100 participants.

The mass walk activity in Kengtung District of Shan State yesterday was attended by Shan State Chief Minister U Sao Aung Myat and wife, departmental officials, staff, students and local people.—MNA
Seven killed in Iraq attacks

KABUL, 11 Dec—A spate of gun and bomb attacks across northern and central Iraq on Saturday killed seven people and left four others wounded, security officials said.

In the disputed northern city of Kirkuk, a Shiite Turkman chemists specialist for the state-owned North Oil Company was killed by a maniac “sickly bomb” attached to his car. Hussein Moshen Masqud, a member of Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki’s Da’wa Party, had driven his home when the explosion occurred, a police officer and a party officer said. Also in Kirkuk, a civilian was killed in a gun attack in the north of the city, 240 kilometres (150 miles) north of Baghdad, the police officer said.

In the Iraqi capital, an anti-Qaeda militiaman was killed and a policeman was wounded by a gun attack on a checkpoint in Saidiyah, south Baghdad, an interior ministry official said.

The militiaman was a member of the Sahwa, or Awakening Council, which is comprised of Sunnis Arab tribesmen who sided with the US military against Al-Qaeda from late 2006, helping turn the tide of Iraq’s bloody conflict.

In Babil province, south of Baghdad, a civilian was killed by gunmen in a village northeast of provincial capital Hillah, a police major said. In a separate incident in Babil, three people were wounded by two Katyusha rockets that had been intended for a nearby US military base, according to the major.

Two men were also killed in Diyala province, north of the capital, in separate attacks, an official at the provincial security command centre said.

Two explosions rock divided Nigerian city

ABUJA, 11 Dec—Two blasts rocked the Nigerian city of Jos, central Nigeria, on Saturday, residents and an official said, with one death and a number of injuries reported at a bar where fans watched the Barcelona-Real Madrid match.

One of the explosions was said to have occurred near the outdoor bar where residents were watching the football match.

“Two bombs have just exploded in Jos,” Pam Ayuba, spokesman for the governor of Plateau state, of which Jos is the capital, told AFP.

“We are yet to establish the numbers of casualties, but reports I got said some people were injured,” he said.

He said the blast occurred in an area where Christian and Muslim ethnic groups often clash. Police and military officials could not immediately be reached for comment.

“The blast occurred ... close to a soccer viewing centre,” said resident Stanley Ejebi.

“The viewing centre was packed with people. There was at least one death while several other injured victims were taken to hospital.”

A former government official said on condition of anonymity that “many people were wounded.” The second explosion was heard in another area, but details were unclear.

Jos is the capital of Plateau state, which has been hit by waves of violence in recent years between Christian and Muslim groups in the middle-belt region between the mainly Muslim north and predominantly Christian south of Nigeria, Africa’s most populous nation.

Nigeria’s north has been hit by scores of attacks blamed on the Islamist sect known as Boko Haram, which also claimed responsibility for the August suicide bombing of UN headquarters in the capital Abuja which killed 24 people.

The Islamist group also claimed responsibility for a string of bomb blasts on Christmas Eve 2010 in Jos.

Indian hospitals review safety after deadly fire

KOLKATA, (India), 11 Dec.—A number of hospitals across India are reviewing safety procedures after a massive fire killed dozens at a private hospital in an eastern city.

Officials say lax safety standards contributed to the 91 deaths during Friday’s fire at AMRI Hospital in Kolkata.

Seven hospital directors have been charged with culpable homicide, including one being treated for smoke inhalation. The hospital has denied violating safety procedures and vowed to investigate.

Officials in New Delhi, its suburbs and several regions including Kashmir have ordered hospital safety reviews.

New Delhi’s chief minister also demanded checks of movie theaters and auditoriums.

Safety regulations are routinely ignored in India, where fire stairways and evacuation drills are rare.
**Health**

**Hospital urinary tract infections common**

Aro Asson, (Mich.), 11 Dec—US hospitals attempt to prevent hospital-acquired infections, but a survey shows few are aggressively combating catheter-associated urinary tract infections.

The survey by the University of Michigan Health System and the Veterans Affairs Ann Arbor Healthcare Center indicates about 90 percent of US hospitals surveyed increased use of methods to prevent central line-associated bloodstream infections and ventilator-associated pneumonia from 2005 to 2009. However, the study, published in the Journal of General Internal Medicine, found prevention practices for urinary tract infections—the most common hospital-acquired infections—were regularly used by only a minority of hospitals.

"Despite being the most common healthcare-associated infection in the country, hospitals appear not to be using as many practices for prevention when compared with bloodstream infections and ventilator-associated pneumonia," senior author Dr. Sanjay Sant, director of the VA/UM Internal Safety Enhancement Program, and University of Michigan professor of internal medicine, said in a statement. About 5 percent to 10 percent of hospitalized patients contract a hospital-acquired infection, resulting in about $45 billion a year in preventable health care costs.

But in 2008, Medicare stopped paying non-federal hospitals for the additional costs of treating infections which are considered preventable with reasonable efforts. The study was published in the Journal of General Internal Medicine.

**Australian scientists find new Alzheimer’s vaccine**

**Canberra, 11 Dec**—Australian scientists from University of Sydney on Saturday announced they have developed a new vaccine to help halt the progression of Alzheimer’s disease in humans in a joint race.

The vaccine, which targets a damaged protein inside brain’s nerve cell known as tau, prevents the ongoing neurofibrillary tangles in the brain of a mouse with Alzheimer’s disease. The progress of neurodegenerative condition affects more than 35 million people worldwide.

The research team at the University of Sydney’s Brain and Mind Research Institute (BMRI) was led by Associate Professor Lars Ittner, from the Alzheimer’s and Parkinson’s Disease Laboratory.

Professor Ittner said so far the vaccine was only tested in mice with Alzheimer’s and results have shown it can stop the disease progressing. “Our study is the first to show that a vaccine targeting the tau protein can be effective once the disease has already set in,” he said in a statement.

“Most of the other vaccines targeting tau were tested only before an animal model of the onset of the disease in animals, but the vast majority of people with Alzheimer’s disease are only diagnosed after the symptoms have appeared.”

According to Ittner, his team are working with a major pharmaceutical company on developing the vaccine for human trials within five years.

While none of the vaccines is considered a cure, the team was collaborating with the US pharmaceutical industry to develop this new vaccine and about 269,000 Australians suffering from dementia will therefore be benefited.—Xinhua

**EU taking historic step towards economic union**

**Helsinki, 11 Dec**—Finland’s Minister for European Affairs and Foreign Trade Alexander Stubb said on Saturday that the European Union (EU) has taken a step towards creating an economic union at the EU summit on Friday in Brussels. In an interview with Finnish Broadcasting Company TV1, Stubb said the EU took a historic step towards a European economic union and a stability union that will reinforce fiscal discipline.

"Of course, the international agreement which will be created in perhaps three months from now is still a long way off, but at least it is the right direction," Stubb said.

In the meantime, Stubb also warned anti-EU sentiment might increase in some countries over the next few years due to decisions made at this week’s summit in Brussels.—Xinhua

**Samsung’s handset sales top 300 mln in 2011**

**Seoul, 11 Dec**—South Korea’s tech behemoth Samsung Electronics said Sunday that its handset sales topped 300 million units this year for the first time in its history.

The world’s second-largest maker of mobile phones shipped more than 300 million mobile phones for the first 11 months of this year, marking the first annual sales of over 300 million units since it started its handset business in 1988, according to an e-mailed statement by Samsung. "We are incredibly proud of this record-breaking sales milestone and have exceeded the annual target announced early this year, which is testament to the endearing appeal of Samsung phones with consumers around the world," said Shin Jong-kyun, president and head of Samsung’s mobile communications business.

Samsung attributed the strong sales results to the success of Samsung’s flagship Galaxy S series, which continued to gain popularity among consumers and propelled the Galaxy brand to become one of the most recognized mobile brands in the world.—Xinhua

In this photo taken on 3 Oct, 2011, an infant’s length on growth charts was at least two percentiles in weight and length on growth charts are at risk for obesity later in childhood.—INTERNET

**Japan, South Korea to break deadlock on free trade talks**

**Tokyo, 11 Dec**—Japan and South Korea will restart talks for a free trade agreement in 2012 which have been stalled since 2004, local media reported on Sunday.

Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda and South Korea’s President Lee Myung Bak will agree to resume negotiations when they meet for a bilateral summit on 17 Dec in Kyoto. Kyodo News reported, citing sources close to bilateral ties.

The two nations initiated the negotiations for a bilateral FTA in December 2003. But, the talks reached a deadlock in the following year due to disagreement on potential tariff concessions on agriculture and fisheries trade.

Key issues like the removal of nontariff barriers on Japan’s side are expected to be discussed for the resumption of the negotiations.—Xinhua

**Business**

**Recent drop in US unemployment a mixed bag**

**Chicago, 11 Dec**—The recent drop in the US unemployment rate is partly due to an increase of people exiting the American labour force, a trend economist said when evaluating the long-term economic outlook.

Last week’s release from the US Bureau of Labour Statistics (BLS) reported that the US unemployment rate in November had decreased from 9 percent to 8.6 percent, its lowest level since March 2009.

For many the improvement was marked as a new bright spot in an uncertain global economy, but it was also achieved with the caveat that 3.155 million people had exited the labor force altogether.

Winner of the 2010 Nobel Prize in Economics for his work researching unemployment and markets with search frictions, Northwestern Professor Dale Mortensen explained to Xinhua how the new unemployment figure held a somewhat mixed message for the American economy.

"On the one hand job creation is improving on the other, it’s still very difficult to get a job so participation is falling, and the combination of those two led to the reduction in the unemployment rate this time," Mortensen said in an exclusive interview with Xinhua.

Though the net increase in job creation was relatively small, it was still important, he said. “But nevertheless there’s been a trend down in participation — in particular, every month there has been a flow of workers worse discouraged, and that continues,” Mortensen said, explaining that in response to the difficult job market some workers had given up trying to find work entirely.

Mortensen regretted that unfortunately little statistical information was available about those now departing the labor force, or the younger people who were delaying entering it.

However, he mentioned that their alternative activities could vary greatly, from enrolling in higher education to simply staying at home waiting out the bad job market.

It still remains unclear just how long these newly departed workers will have to wait for a full recovery, but the November BLS report shows that are more apparently choosing to do so, the employment participation rate falling from 64.5 percent last November to 64 percent this year.

It was also noted that employment participation rate of men over 16 had decreased from a seasonally adjusted 70.4 percent in November 2010 to 70.5 percent this year.

**Company TV1, Stubb said the EU took an historic step towards a European economic union and a stability union that will reinforce fiscal discipline.**
**Wind farm fuels Ethiopia’s green power ambitions**

Ashgoda, Ethiopia—Villagers in Ethiopia’s north and live north as they have for centuries surrounded by cattle and donkeys; only the rows of towering wind turbines look out of place. It is not the first place one might expect to find the sleek new structures. The unpaved roads around the donkey-drawn carts hugging firewood and bushes of wheat.

“It’s a little bit anachronistic to see the turbines in a rural zone where peasants are working like they were centuries ago,” says Gerard Damongeot of the French-run Ashgoda wind farm.

But, he says, it is “very inspiring.”

**Babies learn word patterns by listening to speech, research says**

SOUTHERN BREVARD, 13 Dec—Babies are highly attuned to communication and motivated to interact—and they’re great listeners, US researchers say.

Psychologists at the University of Notre Dame say during the first year of life, when babies spend much time listening to language, they’re actually tracking word patterns that will support the process of word-learning that occurs between the ages of about 18 months and 2 years. “Babies are constantly looking for language clues in context and sound,” Jill Lany, assistant professor of psychology, said in an email release Friday.

“My research suggests that there are some surprising clues in the sound stream that may help babies learn the meanings of words,” she said. “They can distinguish different kinds of words like nouns and verbs by information in that sound stream.”

Bevis, as young as 12 months can identify “adjacent relationships” in which a phrase or sound like “it’s a” occurs immediately before an object, she said. “If I were to say to you, ‘Oh look, it’s a dax’, you might not know what a ‘dax’ is but the cue ‘it’s a’ is a baby’s know how what that follows is an object,” Lany said.

And if a person says “I’m daxing it,” the same principal of cues and word patterns would indicate a verb or action word, she said, and babies use these patterns as clues to the meanings of new words they are learning. 

**Skylighters get rare treat: total lunar eclipse**

San Francisco, 11 Dec—Moon watchers in the western US, Hawaii and elsewhere across the globe were treated Saturday to a rare celestial phenomenon: a total lunar eclipse.

For 51 minutes starting at 6:06 am PST, the Earth’s shadow completely blocked the moon.

The moon took on a reddish glow, as some indirect sunlight continued to reach the earth passing through the Earth’s atmosphere. Since the atmosphere scatters blue light, only red light strikes the moon, giving it a crimson hue.

David Sayre, who runs a public relations firm in Hawaii, said it had been cloudy and rainy an hour early. “I thought it was over,” he said. “But when I woke, the moon was as bright as it can get.”

He awoke, as he usually does, around 3 am and rememberened that he had the house in time to catch the eclipse about a half hour later.

No one else in the neighbourhood was up.

**Greenland rose as ice melted**

San Francisco, 11 Dec—A 2010 spike in the melting of ice cover in Greenland caused a large part of the island’s bedrock to lift almost an inch, a US researcher says. A network of 50 GPS stations measured the uplift as the ice loss was accelerated in southern Greenland, about 100 billion tons, Ohio State University researcher Michael Bevis said.

Aise of 79 inches was recorded over just a five-month period, a university release said.

The findings have implications for climate change, Bevis told a meeting of the American Geophysical Union in San Francisco Friday.

“Pulses of extra melting and uplift imply that we’d experience pulses of extra sea level rise,” he said. “The process is not really a steady process.”

Bevis said he’s sure the 2010 uplift was due to the extreme weather conditions that year.

“Really, there is no other explanation,” he said. “The uplift anomaly correlates with maps of the 2010 melting anomaly,” he said. “In locations where there were many extra days of melting in 2010, the uplift anomaly is highest.”

**Atlantic**

Photographers shoot the moon as it sets in eclipse over the Golden Gate Bridge on 10 Dec, 2011, in San Francisco. The next full eclipse of the moon will not happen until on 14 April, 2014.—INTERNET

“Current population models assume that a fish caught in the western Atlantic was born in the west, and a fish caught in the east was born in the east,” said Peter Gregurich of The Ocean Foundation said Friday.

Adult bluefin tuna numbers are measured as 83 percent in the western population and 67 percent in eastern population, researchers said. Tag tracking data show individual bluefin can rapidly move between western and eastern regions but then separate and return to distinct spawning areas, they said.

**Microbes feeding off hydrothermal vents at the bottom of the Pacific Ocean transform the chimneyslike structures (shown here) they inhabit into natural batteries.**

**‘Living’ battery on Pacific Ocean floor**

San Francisco, 11 Dec—US scientists say they’ve discovered a living battery at the bottom of the Pacific Ocean, in microbes that live near hydrothermal vents.

As they feed on chemicals rising from the seafloor, they create electrical currents that flow through the walls of the chimney-like structures they inhabit, researchers said.

“The amount of power produced by these microbes is rather modest,” Henrik P. Petersen, a biologist at the California Institute of Technology, told ScienceNews.org. “But you could technically produce power in perpetuity.”

Girguis presented his findings at a meeting of the American Geophysical Union in San Francisco, explaining how he and his colleagues discovered the current with an electrode inserted in the side of an underwater chimney 7,200 feet below the ocean surface at the Juan de Fuca Ridge off the Pacific Northwest coast.

It could be possible to tap this power to run seafloor scientific sensors, he said. 

**Fishing hits tuna across entire Atlantic**

Pacific Grove, 11 Dec—Fishing on one side of the Atlantic affects the other side, researchers say, and bluefin tuna populations on both sides have declined precipitously since 1950.

Two Atlantic bluefin populations were studied — a western population that spawns in the Gulf of Mexico and is primarily fished by North Americans, and an eastern population spawning in the Mediterranean Sea that is fished by European and North African fishermen. A release from The Ocean Foundation said Friday.

Adult bluefin tuna number is measured as 83 percent in the western population and 67 percent in eastern population, researchers said. Tag tracking data show individual bluefin can rapidly move between western and eastern regions but then separate and return to distinct spawning areas, they said.

**Cattle graze on a pasture field in front of wind turbines in Ashgoda, northern Ethiopia. As part of Ethiopia’s ambitious $150 billion, 20-year green growth strategy, diesel power stations will be replaced by hydropo, solar, geothermal and wind energy by 2015.**
Iran says it will not return US drone

**The New Light of Myanmar**

Monday, 12 December, 2011

**Teheran, 11 Dec**—Iran will not return a US surveillance drone captured by its armed forces, a senior commander of the country’s elite Revolutionary Guard said Sunday.

Gen Hossein Salami, deputy head of the Guard, said in remarks broadcast on state television that the violation of Iran’s airspace by the US drone was “hostile act” and warranted a “bigger” response. He did not elaborate on what Teheran might do. “No one returns the symbol of aggression to the party that sought secret and vital intelligence related to the national security of a country,” Salami said.

Iranian television broadcast video Thursday of Iranian military officials inspecting what it identified as the RQ-170 Sentinel drone. Iranian state media have said the unmanned spy aircraft was detected over the eastern town of Kashmar, some 140 miles (225 kilometres) from the border with Afghanistan.

US officials have acknowledged losing the drone. Salami called its capture a victory for Iran and a defeat for the US in a complex intelligence and technological battle.

“Iran is among the few countries that possesses the most modern technology in the field of piloting drones. The technology gap between Iran and the US is not so much,” he said. Officers in the Guard, Iran’s most powerful military force, had previously claimed that the country’s armed forces brought down the surveillance aircraft with an electronic ambush, causing minimum damage to the drone. American officials have said that US intelligence assessments indicate that Iran neither shot the drone down, nor used electronic or cyber technology to force it from the sky. They contended the drone malfunctioned.

The officials had spoken anonymously in order to discuss the classified programme.

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***US hostage, 14, escapes in Philippine jungle***

**Manila, 11 Dec**—A kidnapped American teenage boy escaped from suspected al-Qaeda-linked militants and wandered without shoes for two days in a southern Philippine jungle before villagers found him ending his five-month captivity, officials said Sunday.

**Postal Service plant closures will be ‘a mess’**

**Iowa City, 11 Dec**—The US Postal Service’s plan to close 252 mail processing facilities and cut 28,000 jobs by the end of next year may help the agency curb its mounting financial problems, but it faces big practical obstacles.

Deciding which plants to close will be difficult and face a political process, said John Zodrow, a retired Denver attorney and former Postal Service operations dependent on intricate logistics.

“Closing the plants is going to be a mess,” he said, “and positions. What's about to unfold in cities from Reno, Nev., to Chicago will illustrate the complexity of cutting costs, with trade-offs made in other locations and positions.”

What’s about to unfold in cities from Reno, Nev., to Chicago will illustrate the complexity of cutting costs, with trade-offs made in other locations and positions. The bulk of the job cuts will actually come from attrition and retirements, not layoffs, said Zodrow, employed under union rules.

The end of next year may help the agency curb its mounting financial problems, but it faces big practical obstacles.

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***Violence tops results of Mexico’s 5-yr drug war***

**Veracruz, 11 Dec**—Brigitte Cuesta Sanchez, who was kidnapped in Mexico five years after President Felipe Calderon launched his all-out assault on organized crime, said her daughter’s disappearance seemed like a kidnapping for ransom.

She got a call from someone demanding the Mini Cooper.

Many said they had grown tired of the violence, and that their lives had been disrupted. The government has sought to reassure citizens that it was cracking down on drug cartels, but.Guns are a constant presence in many parts of Mexico, where cartels have been fierce and ruthless.

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***Israeli aircraft strike Gaza following rocket fire***

**Gaza City, 11 Dec**—Israeli aircraft struck the Gaza Strip early Sunday, wounding a 12-year-old girl and her father, according to a Palestinian health official.

The Israeli military said in a statement that it targeted a weapons factory in response to rockets fired by Palestinian militants from Gaza into southern Israel.

A missile hit the residence of a Gaza militant who was not home at the time, but flying shrapnel injured the girl and her father in a nearby house, Palestinian health official Adham Abu Salimia said.

Israeli forces have carried out multiple airstrikes against suspected militants and their facilities in recent weeks, in retaliation for sporadic, but persistent rocket fire.

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Small plane crash in Oklahoma kills two

**Oklahoma City, 11 Dec**—A small plane owned by an Oklahoma construction company crashed near Chickasha, killing two men, the Oklahoma Highway Patrol said Saturday.

Pilot Rocky Joe Beller, 47, of Goldsby, and Calvin Scott Beller, 50, of Purcell, both died at the scene about 40 miles southwest of Oklahoma City and were the only ones on board the aircraft, according to the OHP, which said the investigation was turned over to the Federal Aviation Administration.

FAA spokesman Roland Herwig said there is an airport in Chickasha, but authorities weren’t sure where the Piper PA-28 private two-seater was based.

Neither the FAA nor the National Transportation Safety Board, which typically investigates fatal plane crashes, immediately responded to messages seeking further comment late Saturday morning. The crash happened about 8:45 pm Friday, according to the OHP.

Tom Dodson, of B&H Construction LLC of Norman, said the company owned the plane and Rocky Beller owned the company with his two brothers. Dodson said Calvin Beller was Rocky Beller’s cousin.

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Leading Committee for Sixth All-round Renovation of Shweponepwint Pagoda meets

YANGON, 11 Dec—Patron of the Leading Committee for Sixth All-round Renovation of Shweponepwint Pagoda, Union Minister for Information and for Culture U Kyaw Hsan this noon viewed religious edifices, renovation of Phayagyi Koelhus prayer hall, shops outside the precinct of the pagoda and environs of the pagoda.

Chairman of the Pagoda Board of Trustees U Tint Lwin and officials conducted the Union Minister round the pagoda.

At the hall, the Union Minister said that as all-round renovation tasks have been carried out for magnificence of the pagoda up to the fifth time systematically, main renovation has been completed at necessary parts of the pagoda.

Emphasis is to be placed on sixth renovation of the pagoda as maintenance of the main structure, and repairing works are to be undertaken at necessary parts that have been renovated from the first to the fifth time, he said.

He urged them to extend necessary subcommittees and add more persons to the organizations for all-round renovation of the pagoda and to draw systematic plans for the tasks to be carried out meeting high quality and standards.

He said that priority is to be given to keeping the pagoda platform neat and tidy for pleasant obesiance of the pilgrims to the pagoda and taking special care for security of the pagoda.

Chairman of the Leading Committee for Sixth All-round Renovation of the pagoda Managing Director U Aung Myint of Myanma Motion Picture Enterprise reported on formation of the subcommittees and their tasks.

Goldsmith U San Kyi reported on inspection for maintenance of diamond orb, various small bells, pennant shape vane and tiers of umbrella, cleansing and repairing works. Myanmar handicraft expert U Aung Myant on matters related to diamond orb and pennant shape vane, and Professor (Dean) Dr Nyan Myint Kyaw of Civil Engineering Department of Yangon University of Technology on maintenance of the main structure of the pagoda.

After hearing the reports, the Union Minister instructed officials to systematically calculate maintenance for the main structure of the pagoda with the strength of engineers as part of efforts for undertaking main tasks for sixth all-round renovation tasks, to assign duties to respective subcommittees for offering gold foils, maintaining the religious edifices, checking and repairing installation of power lines, upgrading toilets for pilgrims, improving drainage system around the pagoda, extending the car parking, publishing books on all-round renovation records and keeping donated cash and to carry out the tasks in real time for timely completion before rainy season. Later, he attended to the needs. —MNA

X’mas celebration marked at St. Mary Cathedral

YANGON, 11 Dec—Myanmar Catholic Bishops Organization and Myanmar Council of Churches jointly held pre-celebration for the Birthday of Jesus Christ (Christmas) at St. Mary Cathedral on Bo Aung Kyaw Street in Botataung Township here this morning. The celebration started with praying, singing hymns and extending an introductory speech.

Next, Union Minister for Religious Affairs Thura U Myint Maung extended greetings and Yangon Region Chief Minister U Myint Swe gave an honorary speech. Reading Bible, preaching Christmas sermon, giving Christmas gifts and expressing thanks to God followed.

Afterwards, a dinner was hosted to the attendees. —MNA

Pagoda of earlier Pyu era uncovered in Pyay

NAY PYI TAW, 11 Dec—Archaeology, National Museum and Library Department of the Ministry of Culture has excavated foundations of a pagoda of Pyu era in 2011 in Pyay Township in Bago Region.

It has similar structure with some Pyu pagodas, buildings of Visano era and religious edifices in India.

Voltaic tablets, clay tablets, rivets and burial urns were also unearthed at the site. The site is of major importance and if it is assumed to be the pagoda of earlier Sriksatra Pyu era. The department is renovating the pagoda systematically. —MNA

Kayin State Chief Minister attends course concluding ceremonies

NAY PYI TAW, 11 Dec—Chief Minister of Kayin State U Zaw Min attended concluding ceremony of courses of Kyaukgyi Women’s Vocational Training School on 2 December and presented awards to outstanding trainees.

Officials presented completion certificates to the trainees.

The chief minister visited mobile primary school in Moe Hsan Myanmar ward in Kyaukgyi and provided teachers and students with clothes.

The chief minister inspected electrification round the clock by solar panels on arrival at People’s Hospital in Kyaukgyi region.

He also visited construction site of mobile communications station, rubber plantations of Myanmar Perennial Crops Enterprise, construction site of Hpa-an Industrial Zone and road works in Kyaukgyi region.

He attended course concluding ceremony of Hpa-an Women’s Vocational Training School and awarded outstanding students.

Officials presented completion certificates to the trainees and the speaker of Region Hluttaw gave recommendations to the trainees to become goodgpersons.

District and township level departmental officials attended course concluding ceremony of Myawady Women’s Vocational Training School. —MNA

Take Fire Preventive Measures
President U Thein Sein views progress of Nay Pyi Taw International Airport...

(from page 1)
Next, the President and party viewed round the arrival and departure lounges for international and domestic passengers, CIP room, transit lounge and check-in counter. Later, the President and party left Nay Pyi Taw International Airport by car.

Photo shows progress in building of Nay Pyi Taw International Airport.

Myat Thukha special clinic and health club open in Nay Pyi Taw Thabyegon Market

NAY PYI TAW, 11 Dec—The opening ceremony of Myat Thukha special clinic along with the health club was held near Zawmaka medicine booth in Thabyegon Market in Zabuthiri Township here today.
The ceremony was attended by Union Minister at the President Office Chairman of Nay Pyi Taw Council Mayor U Thein Nyunt, Union Minister for Health Dr Pe Thet Khin, Union Minister for Hotels and Tourism and for Sports U Tint Hsan, Union Minister for Industry U Soe Thein, Union Minister for Rail Transport U Aung Min, Union Minister for Electric Power No. 1 U Zaw Min, deputy ministers and guests.
The Union ministers formally opened the clinic and health club and Mayor U Thein Nyunt unveiled the signboard of clinic. Afterwards, they looked around the special clinic and health club.

Monks and people paying obeisance to sacred Buddha tooth relic at Maha Aungmyethazan (Atumashi) monastery in Mandalay.

Pilgrims donate cash and kind to sacred Buddha tooth relic for fourth day in Mandalay

NAY PYI TAW, 11 Dec—Members of the Sangha and pilgrims paid obeisance to sacred Buddha tooth relic at Maha Aungmyethazan (Atumashi) monastery in Mandalay for the fourth day today. Religious associations of departments and regiments and units recited religious verses.

Mandalay Region Minister for Finance and Revenue U Aung Mo and officials accepted K 2 million donated by U Maung Thet Daw Soe Soe of Aungmyothazan Township, K 1 million by Lt-Col Kyaw Moe Thet-Daw Su Su Tin and family, K 1 million and one pair of earrings by U De-Daw Hnin, Maj-Gen Khin Aung Myint, Daw Aye Aye Than and family of A5 purified drinking water, K 500,000 each by U Kyaw Min-Daw Thet Hnin Aye and family of Nawnghkioi, Daw Khin Swe Oo and family of Mandalay, U Kale-Daw Khin Myo Hla and family of Shwebo and U Khin Maung Aye of Shwegon-Mann Commodity Transport and Sein and
Union Attorney-General: Be trustworthy persons in law enforcement sector

NAV PyTaw, 11 Dec—Union Attorney-General Dr Tun Shin urged advocates-general and law officers to be trustworthy persons in law enforcement sector of the State at the First Coordination Meeting of Union Attorney-General and advocates-general of regions and states held at Union Attorney-General’s Office here today.

Deputy Attorney-General U Tun Tun Oo and director-general of the Attorney-General’s Office met with region/state advocates-general and explained work procedures, and the deputy attorney-general at preliminary coordination meeting also held a discussion about law matters and management sector of region/state advocate-general’s offices.

UNION ATTORNEY-GENERAL

PADDY HARVESTED: Model plot of Inna paddy was harvested in Ywathagon Village-tract in Natatlin Township, Thayawady District, Bago Region, on 23 November morning. Photo shows participation of township level departmental officials, staff and local farmers in harvesting of paddy.

TOWNSHIP IPRD

Dr Sai Mauk Kham addresses honouring... (from page 16)

Minister U Tint Hsan 60 sportspersons who won 23 silver medals with cash awards.

Vice-President Dr Sai Mauk Kham presented K 10 million each to gold medalist Ma Aung Hngain in women’s individual compound archery and gold medalist rowing contest, women’s doubles Sepak Takraw, men’s doubles Wushu and women’s steam event archery. Threwers in 500-m 12-oar, 1000-m 12-oar, 500-m 22-oar, 1000-m 22-oar, 2000-m 22-oar in women’s traditional boat races, and 500-m 12-oar, 1000-m 12-oar, 1000-m 22-oar, 5000-m 22-oar in men’s traditional boat races also were honoured with cash awards.

Gold medalist Ma Aung Hngain spoke words of thanks on behalf of all athletes.

Next, Vice-President Dr Sai Mauk Kham together with medalists had documentary photo taken.

At today’s ceremony, a total of K 758.5 million including four million kyats by Vice-President Thiri U Thura U Tin Aung Myint Oo and wife Daw Khin Saw Hnin and US$ 50,000 by Chairman U Zaw Zaw of Max Myanmar Co Ltd was presented.

Aye Aye Aung in 70-78 kilos women’s Judo event, and cash awards to gold medalist sportspersons in men’s and women’s compound archery event, women’s doubles boat races were also honoured with cash awards.

Gold medalist Ma Aung Hngain spoke words of thanks on behalf of all athletes.

PADDY HARVESTED: Model plot of Inna paddy was harvested in Ywathagon Village-tract in Natatlin Township, Thayawady District, Bago Region, on 23 November morning. Photo shows participation of township level departmental officials, staff and local farmers in harvesting of paddy.

TOWNSHIP IPRD

Aye Myint Maung, Deputy Director-General for Planning and Statistics Department U Tin Tun and Deputy Director-General of Forest Department Dr Nyi Nyi Kyaw. They exchanged views on Clean Development Mechanism and environmental conservation.

Management course for mid-level officers concludes

YANGON, 11 Dec—The concluding ceremony of the management course No. 29 for mid-level officers took place at Kaynmar Hall of Central Institute of Civil Service (Phaunggyi) today. Rector U Win Maung gave a concluding speech and then awarded the outstanding trainees. He presented certificates for the trainees. The four-week course was taken by a total of 56 trainees of the respective ministries.

MNA

Union Minister receives Cleaner Climate MD

NAV PyTaw, 11 Dec—Union Minister for Environmental Conservation and Forestry U Win Tun received Managing Director Mr Benjamin Muir of Australia-based Cleaner Climate and party at his office on 9 December.

Also present at the call were Acting Director-General of Forest Department U Aye Myint Maung, Deputy Director-General for Environmental Conservation and Forestry U Tin Tun received Managing Director Mr Benjamin Muir of Australia-based Cleaner Climate and party at his office on 9 December.

Also present at the call were Acting Director-General of Forest Department U Tun Aung honoured 17 entrepreneurs, wellwishers, contributors of national federations for uplift of Myanmar sports standard contributions of national federations for uplift of Myanmar sports standard.
Government allows creations of literary works with freedom and accountability, and freedom and reasoning power

YANGON, 11 Dec—Union Minister for Information and for Culture U Kyaw Hsan met the patron, chairman and executive committee members of Myanmar Printers and Publishers Association at a meeting hall of Myanmar Radio and Television here this morning.

Present on the occasion were departmental heads and officials, responsible people of Myanmar Writers and Journalists Association and guests.

Speaking on the occasion, the Union Minister said the purpose of holding today’s meeting was to discuss and coordinate matters related to the holding of the 20th annual general meeting of Myanmar Printers and Publishers Association in a convenient way and future tasks to be implemented by the association at a time when the nation is in a transition period desired by the people.

Looking to the history of the association, it has been doing business on one hand and performing literary duties and social work on the other. It is also an association that is constantly cooperating with the government in the national cause.

Moreover, it is collaborating with its congenial association such as Myanmar Writers and Journalists Association, Press Scrutiny and Registration Division of the Ministry of Information and other NGOs.

MPPA has possessed fine traditions of having a sense of cooperation and unity.

The Union Minister added that the ministry has been dealing with the association since 2005. The tasks that have been carried out on a cooperative basis are for development of printing and publishing industry, for increasing the number of association members and for collectively and efficiently implementing the tasks in the national interests.

Thus, he said that members of the association increased to 4200 from 400.

He suggested that members of the association are to review tasks of previous year and adopt future plans in the coming 20th annual general meeting and select new executives for serving the interest of the association by maintaining the fine traditions of the association.

He urged the association to continuously join hands with the government in the future based on national cause, harmoniously cooperate with other congenial organizations including literary organization and to maintain the unity in the association.

He said that as all the countries across the world are focusing on development of the States and strengthening of economy, the government of Myanmar is also striving for building a peaceful, modern and developed nation by practicing democracy and market-oriented economic system.

In so doing, he pointed out that only when all sectors secure development can aims be realized. Thus, he said that the Ministry of Information will provide assistance for the printing and publishing sector as much as possible to be able achieve greater success and to keep abreast of those from international community.

At present, he said that the government grants relaxation on matters related to literary and publications in conformity with the changing era and system.

He said that the government allows creations of literary works with freedom and accountability, and freedom and reasoning power. In consequence, printing entrepreneurs have to take responsibilities for respective sectors in line with the changing periodicals law, he noted.

As the government is mainly focusing on reforms, peace and stability and development that the people aspire, the Myanmar Printers and Publishers Association, part of the Myanmar society, are to participate in development tasks of the State in harmony.

Chairman of Myanmar Printers and Publishers Association Dr Tin Tun Oo reported on organizational setup of the association, tasks being undertaken and future plans. Patron of the association U Maung Maung on selection of new executives at the annual general meeting and Vice-Chairman-1 U Myint Maung on tasks of the company related to the association.

After reviewing the reports, the Union Minister cordially greeted the patron, the chairman and executives of the association. —MNA

Ayeayawdy Bridge (Pakokku) nearing inauguration

Bagan-NyaungU region was beautiful in the morning in cold season. Elephant dances of local people and pom-pom dances of students were presented to the local people on Letpancheaw bank of Ayeayawdy Bridge (Pakokku).

At 8.10 am on 16 November 2011, Union Minister for Construction U Khan Maung Myint, Union Minister for Rail Transportation U Aung Min, Union Minister for Electric Power No. 1 U Zaw Min, Mandalay Region Chief Minister U Ye Myint, Magway Region Chief Minister U Phone Maw Shwe and Deputy Minister for Construction U Kyaw Lwin fixed the gold bolts and nuts at the steel frames of pier RP 15 and RP 16 on Letpancheaw bank of Ayeayawdy Bridge (Pakokku).

After fixing the gold bolts and nuts, the Union ministers and guests passed the rail-cum-road bridge by RGC Mingala train.

Ayeayawdy Bridge (Pakokku) linking Bagan-NyaungU Township of NyaungU District of Mandalay Region and Magway Township of Magway Region is constituting village 111431 feet long main bridge, 13537 feet long motor road and 20597 feet long railroad. The two-way motor road will be 28 feet wide and the railroad, 14 feet wide. The pedestrian way will be three feet and three inches wide each. The bridge will have 262 feet wide and 52 feet high clearance. The facility can withstand 75-ton load of vehicle individually.

The land preparation ceremony for the bridge was held on 14-12-2009 and the bridge driving ceremony on 15-12-2009. Special Project Construction Group-3 of Public Works led by Chief Engineer U Shwe Lay and Superintending Engineer U Han Soe took responsibility for construction of the bridge. In fact, Ayeayawdy Bridge (Pakokku) will be the longest facility of its kind in Myanmar.

Myanmar is one of the ASEAN member countries and BIMSTEC member countries. At present, Myanmar cooperates with Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka, Thailand and China in economic sector. Therefore, Myanmar joins the plans to construct the Asia, ASEAN Highways, BIMSTEC Road, West, South and North Economic Corridors to link with Thailand, Laos, China, India and Bangladesh.

Moreover, Myanmar and India will cooperate in construction of the roads, and one more plan will be implemented for construction of Paletwa border road and Kaladan river course maintenance project.

Among these plans, Ayeayawdy Bridge (Pakokku) is located on the route of Highway that will pass Myawady, Otwin, Pyaywwe, Kyaukpadawng, Bagan, Letpancheaw, Pakokku, Kalwaw and Tamu included in the Highway Project to be implemented by India, Myanmar and Thailand.

So far, there remain some tasks for the motor road bridge section, railroad bridge section, floor tasks of the main bridge on Pakokku bank and some tasks of pedestrian ways. At present, Public Works of the Ministry of Construction is making vigorous efforts for cent per cent completion of the bridge and its inauguration as quickly as possible.

Translation: TTA
Kyeemon: 6-12-2011
Current global crude market “in balance”

Tehran, 11 Dec—Iran’s representative to the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) said Saturday that the current global crude market is in balance, the semi-official IRNA news agency reported.

Mohammad-Ali Khadibi was quoted as saying that OPEC members were observing the global market’s situation meticulously and they would make the best decision at the Vienna meeting which can help the market.

“Basic principles of the market in the current condition show that the market is in a balanced condition,” he told IRNA.

In November, Khatibi warned the cartel against cutting oil oversupply to the market.

Any oil oversupply would be harmful for the global market, said Khatibi ahead of an OPEC meeting due on 14 Dec in Vienna.

Abolished market would be beneficial for all the OPEC member states, he said, adding that “We should not allow any oil surplus to exist in the market.”

In the upcoming OPEC meeting, Iran will persuade OPEC member states to bring the cartel’s output back to the level before it was raised earlier this year in response to the Libyan crisis.

Iran, African producers and Venezuela blocked a Saudi proposal to increase OPEC’s output at its last meeting on 8 June, but Saudi Arabia and its allies boosted the output unilaterally afterward.—Ishana

Kenya maps seven oil blocks for deep sea exploration

NAIROBI, 11 Dec—Kenya is mapping seven deep sea oil blocks as it steps up the hunt for the black gold, an energy official has said.

“We have delineated new zones for deep water exploration,” Hudson Adambi, deputy energy commissioner at the Kenyan Energy Ministry, said here Friday. Adambi said the government is encouraging local administrators to reach out to local communities where the oil exploration is currently ongoing and hopes that the local communities would benefit from ensuing opportunities.

The Survey of Kenya, a government department that demarcates land and boundaries, has been requested to demarcate the deep sea blocks before they are allocated, Adambi said.

Kenya has attracted 12 international oil exploration firms. The 13th firm, whose identity has not been disclosed, was licensed on 1 Dec. The state-run National Oil Corporation has been allocated a single oil exploration block. “Oil exploration is an important economic activity. We hope if we strike oil, we would manage the high cost of living in the country, that is why we are looking at the deep sea exploration,” Adambi said.

Kenya has never made any substantive commercial oil discoveries despite ongoing exploration that started in the early 1930s.

Oil exploration blocks in the semi-desert areas of Mandera were largely abandoned after explorers failed to discover commercial quantities of oil in the northern frontier.

Kenya’s Anza Basin, which has a total of 12 oil exploration blocks, appears to be the most explored, followed by two other wells in Mandera, where two wells have been dug to view the surface.—Ishana

An unmarked date reflects Indian ambivalence

New Delhi, 11 Dec—A century ago, in a tent city of 25,000 people built on the plains of north India, a new king stood before princes and maharajahs, soldiers and bureaucrats, and made a surprise announcement that would change the fate of this city. Delhi, the king said on that December day, would be the new capital of India.

“There was first of all a stunned silence in the audience,” the British writer Geoffrey Moorhouse wrote of the announcement by Brit. Sir George V. “Then there was wild and incredulous cheering all around.”

The decision would reshape this city, helping turn it from what was then an ancient fading city into an immense megalopolis, home to well over 16 million people. But in a country where just about any anniversary is cause for an official celebration 150 years of the government computer office’s two years since the ruling coalition’s election victory — this obvious one is slipping past nearly unnoticed.

There are no parades or festivities to mark the 12 Dec, 1911 announcement, no speeches by parliamentarians.

There are just awkward statements that have shined a light on India’s lingering ambivalence, and maybe even a little bitterness, toward its former colonial ruler.

In a country that sees itself as a rising world power, one anxious to prove that it has moved out of the shadow of Great Britain, no one wants to look as if they are celebrating colonial rule.

Internet

Freed Israeli soldier Shalit thanks supporters

TEL AVIV, 11 Dec—Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit, who was held captive by militants in Gaza for more than five years, has thanked his supporters in a pre-recorded message — his first since being freed in October.

“While in captivity I heard a lot about your efforts to release me,” he said. “I know for sure that your determined struggle for my release... was one of the decisive factors in bringing me home.”

The video recording was broadcast late on Saturday to a group of around 300 activists who gathered outside Shalit’s family home to watch the message.

It was later shown on Israeli television and posted online, including on YouTube. The recording showed Shalit to be visibly more healthy than the gaunt figure who emerged from captivity on 18 October, but he still appeared nervous and unsettled and local media said he had been advised against appearing in public for now.—Internet

Seven cities along maritime Silk Road push for World Heritage status

NINGBO, 11 Dec—Seven Chinese cities agreed on Saturday they would form a joint campaign to inscribe the ancient maritime Silk Road into the UNESCO World Heritage list.

The seven port cities, namely Beihai, Guangzhou, Quanzhou, Ningbo, Yangzhou, Pengxi and Zhangzhou, signed a programme of action at a forum in east China’s Zhejiang Province, pledging to cooperate on the application efforts.

A platform will be built to facilitate governments, museums, and cultural relics authorities of the seven cities to co-study and preserve cultural heritages related to the ancient trade route, said the agreement.

The seven cities served as important export ports in Chinese history, from which silk and porcelain products started to be shipped to regions as far as east Africa more than 2,000 years ago.—Xinhua

Internet

Ga farmers out to bring back homegrown olive oil

SAVANNAH, 11 Dec—Jason Shaw says his first fall harvest yielded fruit for more than 500 bottles, just enough to sell at select tastings and to share with restaurant chefs in hopes of priming their palates for more. Friends suggested Shaw sell his limited batch for $100 a bottle, like a fine wine. After all, it’s been more than a century since anyone could buy olive oil from Georgia. It’s a farm commodity that sounds downright foreign in a state known for peaches and peanuts, and that sense of novelty is getting Shaw plenty of attention.

“We’re going to test out of oil very soon,” said Shaw, who settled on a more modest price of $25. “We’ve still got to figure out who we’re going to give this Georgiasono to without hurting anybody’s feelings. It’s a good problem to have.”

It’s been two years since Shaw, an insurance agent and freshman state lawmaker, launched an olive oil business in southwest Georgia with his banker brother and their cousin, the farmer of the family. This fall they used a hot-rodded blueberry picker to mechanically harvest their first 20 acres in Lakeland, near the Florida state line. Experts say it’s the first commercial olive crop grown in Georgia since the late 1800s.

Internet

In this 28 Aug, 2011 photo provided by Jason Shaw, rows of olive trees are seen on an olive farm before the crop’s first harvest in Lakeland, Ga. There’s not much of it, but owners of a Georgia farm are giving a taste of the state’s first homegrown olive oil in more than a century.

Internet
**Polydactyl cat rescues US animal shelter**

New York, 11 Dec — A unusual cat is helping a Wisconsin animal rescue centre raise money to relocate to a new building. The orange-and-white tabby, named Daniel, has two extra toes on each paw as a result of a mutation called polydactylysm. He has a total of 26. Milwaukee Animal Rescue Center, which will see its rent doubled on 1 January, asked for small donations of $26 (€17), one dollar for each toe.

Out of a total $86,000 raised so far, $50,000 has come from small donations. The shelter, which takes in animals that might otherwise be euthanised, had said it would struggle to meet the new rent level for its premises at a Milwaukee-area shopping mall. It has been seeking cash to help buy a new building to enable a permanent relocation, and with many $26 donations now it has the financing to do so.

**India close to completely eradicating polio**

New Delhi, 11 Dec — India is close to completely eradicating polio with only one case of the paralytic disease reported in India this year, said a government official on Friday.

Indian Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare Sudip Bandopadhyay told the Lok Sabha, or lower house of the parliament that there is 98 percent decline in polio cases over last year.

“Only one polio case was reported in 2011 as compared to 42 in 2010,” he said. “The government is making determined and concerted efforts to prevent the circulation of the polio virus and achieve polio eradication.”

**Bridgestone developing ‘airless’ puncture-proof tire**

New York, 11 Dec — Although it’s unfair to say that tires are one of the more commonly associated notions of modern culture, since tire manufacturers spend millions constantly developing them — they do have their flaws. Your typical pneumatic tire is liable to suffer punctures, which can either be inconvenient or downright dangerous depending on where and when one happens. A tire that relies on air then is a flawed concept — but what if you could remove air from the equation? Bridgestone has been working on just that, and has announced the development of the non-pneumatic (airless) concept tire. Not only will you finally be free of punctures, but the company also says the tire is more environmentally friendly than the regular black rings of rubber.

The concept tire uses a thermoplastic resin spoke structure along the inner sides of the tires that supports the weight of the vehicle, just as pressurized air does in a regular tire. That means no risk of leaks, and no risk of punctures. The resin is also 100 percent recyclable which makes it far greener than regular tires, many of which go to landfill and at best, are cut up for insulation and other uses. Bridgestone envisions a continuous cycle of recycling and re-use as the thermoplastic can be constantly re-formed when heated.

Michelin also tried working with airless technology back in the early 2000s but the tech has now got to the point where its becoming production viable. The consequences for puncture-proof tires are wider than simple convenience, too. Fewer and fewer cars are being supplied with spare wheels these days, many opting for a can of tire-sealant instead. These new tires would allow all cars to go without either, saving all-important weight, currently public enemy number one in the car industry. With no provision for a spare tire, trunk space would also be freed up — making cars more practical.

**Local motors going global**

New York, 11 Dec — Some say that if you want to change the world you need to think globally and act locally. But what if you could get the world to do the thinking for you? That’s what Local Motors is doing in the arena of crowd-sourced automobile design. The Chandler, Arizona-based startup automaker has created a platform where people can use its virtual “co-creative living room” to contribute ideas for vehicles that are brought together into a single, collective design.

It’s a similar concept to open source computer programming, and it seems to be working.

The company’s first vehicle, a high-performance off-roader called the Rally Fighter, has garnered a lot of attention, not just for its innovative design, but for how it is built.

In a way to circumvent the arduous certification processes major automakers have to face when introducing a new vehicle, customers who buy the Rally Fighter actually travel to the company’s “microfactory” and spend six days helping to build it, allowing it to be registered in most states as a component car — more commonly known as a ‘kit’ car.

Twenty-five have already been delivered, and Local Motors founder Jay Rogers says expects 120 more to be built in 2012.

**Honduras bans motorcycle passengers in anti-crime move**

Tegucigalpa, 11 Dec — The Honduran government has voted to ban motorcycle riders from carrying passengers in a bid to curb a spate of drive-by killings. The move follows two high-profile murders this week, both blamed on gangs on motorcycles. Congress also approved a wiretapping law proposed as part of efforts to tackle crime but which has raised privacy concerns.

Honduras has the world’s highest murder rate: 82 per 100,000 people a year.

During a session held in private because of security fears, legislators approved a decree limiting the number of people allowed on a motorcycle to one. The measure, which will last for six months, was requested by President Porfirio Lobo, whose government is facing rising crime.
Arts

Jewel of a gift in Kansas City area Salvation Army kettle

Tossing a stone into a Salvation Army kettle at Christmas wouldn’t be an nice thing to do. Unless it’s a diamond, of course.

Someone recently put a 3/4-carat diamond in a kettle outside a Walmart in Shawnee, Kansas, a suburb of Kansas City. It was appraised Thursday at $2,000 (1,278 pounds). A Salvation Army employee found the loose diamond wrapped in paper, said Major Michele Heaver, a spokeswoman for the group.

“We first thought it was trash and then he discovered it was quite the opposite,” Heaver said Friday. “He told us about it and we put it in a safe.” The diamond was cut about 100 years ago, Heaver said, citing the appraiser. It will be set in a ring and auctioned off, with proceeds used to help families and others in need, she said.

Over the years, other items besides cash and checks have appeared in Salvation Army kettles, including gold bars, gold coins and wads of cash, Heaver said. “I’ve never heard of an actual diamond,” Heaver said.

“We are very excited to get that type of donation.”

Two visitors look at a creative eat at “The People’s Cat Project” in the 798 art zone of Beijing, capital of China, on 10 Dec, 2011. The project provided an on-line interactive platform for people to fulfill their vehicle designing dream.

Flight attendant calendar gets complaints

The Swedish Advertising Ombudsman said it has received 33 complaints about a calendar featuring scantily clad Ryanair flight attendants. The airline’s office said the complaints came less than a month after the release of the 2012 Ryanair Cabin Crew Charity Calendar, benefiting charity DEBRA, which helps children with the genetic skin disease Epidermolysis Bullosa, The Local reported Thursday.

“People think the [calendar] is sexist and that it doesn’t belong on a Web site meant to sell plane tickets,” Advertising Ombudsman Elisabeth Trottiz said.

Ryanair now has two months to respond to the complaints before the ombudsman decides how to proceed with the case.

Stephen McNamara, a spokesman for the airline, said the calendars have been released every year since 2008.

Gaga gives a naughty and nice concert in NYC

New York, 11 Dec— Lady Gaga was in the Christmas spirit at Z100’s annual Jingle Ball concert, but her version of “White Christmas” would have made Bing Crosby blush.

Gaga performed a slightly naughty rendition of the holiday classic Friday night as part of her mini-concert at the radio station’s event at Madison Square Garden. Gaga — sporting tight studded leather pants, matching top and a bare midriff — gyrated on a set that included antlers, Christmas trees and holiday lights as she performed “White Christmas.”

“So I recently added a couple of lyrics to this song because I think it’s too short. It’s like when you really start to enjoy it it stops. It’s like a really bad orgasm. Merry Christmas New York!” she shouted. Later, she made a suggestive pose as she gave a come hither coo to Santa.

But her performance wasn’t all saucy. She was nostalgic and appreciative as she performed the radio station’s theme song, thanking her supporters for their prayers. Just a month ago they announced to the world that she had miscarried her 20th child.

“I’ve never heard of an actual diamond,”

The Quebec City Ice Hotel is one of the world’s coolest hotels. It’s made with 500 tons of ice. It opens only in winter and vanishes when spring comes.

Jewel of a gift in Kansas City area Salvation Army kettle

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“So I recently added a couple of lyrics to this song because I think it’s too short. It’s like when you really start to enjoy it it stops. It’s like a really bad orgasm. Merry Christmas New York!” she shouted. Later, she made a suggestive pose as she gave a come hither coo to Santa.

But her performance wasn’t all saucy. She was nostalgic and appreciative as she performed the radio station’s theme song, thanking her supporters for their prayers. Just a month ago they announced to the world that she had miscarried her 20th child.

“I’ve never heard of an actual diamond,”

The Quebec City Ice Hotel is one of the world’s coolest hotels. It’s made with 500 tons of ice. It opens only in winter and vanishes when spring comes.

Jewel of a gift in Kansas City area Salvation Army kettle

Tossing a stone into a Salvation Army kettle at Christmas wouldn’t be an nice thing to do. Unless it’s a diamond, of course.

Someone recently put a 3/4-carat diamond in a kettle outside a Walmart in Shawnee, Kansas, a suburb of Kansas City. It was appraised Thursday at $2,000 (1,278 pounds). A Salvation Army employee found the loose diamond wrapped in paper, said Major Michele Heaver, a spokeswoman for the group.

“We first thought it was trash and then he discovered it was quite the opposite,” Heaver said Friday. “He told us about it and we put it in a safe.” The diamond was cut about 100 years ago, Heaver said, citing the appraiser. It will be set in a ring and auctioned off, with proceeds used to help families and others in need, she said.

Over the years, other items besides cash and checks have appeared in Salvation Army kettles, including gold bars, gold coins and wads of cash, Heaver said. “I’ve never heard of an actual diamond,” Heaver said.

“We are very excited to get that type of donation.”

Flight attendant calendar gets complaints

The Swedish Advertising Ombudsman said it has received 33 complaints about a calendar featuring scantily clad Ryanair flight attendants. The airline’s office said the complaints came less than a month after the release of the 2012 Ryanair Cabin Crew Charity Calendar, benefiting charity DEBRA, which helps children with the genetic skin disease Epidermolysis Bullosa, The Local reported Thursday.

“People think the [calendar] is sexist and that it doesn’t belong on a Web site meant to sell plane tickets,” Advertising Ombudsman Elisabeth Trottiz said.

Ryanair now has two months to respond to the complaints before the ombudsman decides how to proceed with the case.

Stephen McNamara, a spokesman for the airline, said the calendars have been released every year since 2008.

Gaga gives a naughty and nice concert in NYC

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Thierry Henry honoured by Emirates Stadium statue

Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger

Cologne, Bremen celebrate goal festival at German Bundesliga

Lotus Renault's technical director, Eric Boullier said the plan to win the world title in 2012 is "not feasible, a technical level, superhuman." 

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Weather Map of Myanmar and Neighbouring Areas

Weather forecast for 12th December, 2011

Outlook for sub-State of the Sea

Summary of observations at 09:00 am MST on today

London, 11 Dec—Sebastian Larsson’s injury-time free-kick earned Martin O’Neill victory in his first match as boss of Sunderland, who moved out of the relegation zone.

Blackburn led when Chris Samba’s shot was parried by goalkeeper Keiren Westwood for Simon Vokovic to head in. Kieran Richardson hit a post from a corner before David Vaughan unleashed the 25-yard strike that levelled after 84 minutes. Larsson then struck with a curling effort that went in off the near post.

Sunderland kept the pressure on with some negative and they were finally rewarded when Chris Samba was harshly adjudged to have fouled Westwood before Scott Dann headed in. Sunderland kept pressing after half-time as Larsson curled a 35-yard snap-shot wide. Just before the break, Blackburn had a goal disallowed when Chris Samba was dispossessed and they were soon on the back foot again.

David Dunn struck over from 30 yards for Blackburn but they were soon on the back foot again. They had Robinson to thank as he saved well from a deflected Richardson shot and a Stephane Sessegnon effort, but could not stop Vaughan’s superb hit.

Blackburn’s defensive tactics were proving too negative and they were further punished as Larsson struck at the death with matters made worse by Jason Lowe’s late injury.
Wining medals in sports means not only the uplift of the dignity of the country but also the improvement of its sports standards

Vice-President Dr Sai Mauk Kham addresses honouring ceremony to victorious athletes in XXVI SEA Games

Myanmar delegation led by Speaker of Pyithu Hluttaw Thura U Shwe Mann being seen off by Speaker of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw U Khin Aung Myint at Yangon International Airport—MNA

Vice-President Dr Sai Mauk Kham presents award to victorious athletes in XXVI SEA Games—MNA

Speaker of Pyithu Hluttaw Thura U Shwe Mann and party leave for Republic of India

YANGON, 11 Dec—A Myanmar delegation led by Speaker of Pyithu Hluttaw Thura U Shwe Mann left here by air this morning to pay a goodwill visit to India at the invitation of Speaker of the Council of State Mohammad Hamid Ansari and Speaker of House of Representatives Meira Kumar (Smt) of the Republic of India.

The delegation was seen off at Yangon International Airport by Speaker of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw U Khin Aung Myint, Deputy Speaker of Pyithu Hluttaw U Nanda Kyaw Swa, Chief Minister of Yangon Region U Myint Swe, Speaker of Yangon Region Hluttaw U Sein Tin Win, Deputy Speaker U Tin Aung, Indian Ambassador Dr Villur Sunderarajan Seshadri, Director-General U Myint Thein of Hluttaw Office and officials.

Speaker of Pyithu Hluttaw Thura U Shwe Mann was accompanied by Chairman of Pyithu Hluttaw Bill Committee U T Khin Myat, Chairman of International Relations Committee U Hla Myint Oo, Chairman of Planning and Finance Development Committee U Soe Tha, Chairman of Economic and Trade Development Committee U Maung Maung Thein, Chairman of Agriculture, Livestock Breeding and Fisheries Development Committee U Soe Naing, Chairman of Investment and Industrial Development Committee U Htay Myint, Chairman of Transport, Communication and Construction Committee U Thein Swe, Secretary of Hluttaw Rights Committee Dr Soe Yin, Secretary of Public Accounts Committee U Maung Toe, Secretary of Public Affairs-Management Committee U Tin Maung Oo, Secretary of Public Accounts Committee U Huai Win, member of Government’s Guarantees, Pledges and Vetting Undertakings Committee U Win Than, member of Waterway Transport Committee U Win Oo and secretary of the delegation Deputy Director-General U Kyaw Soe of Pyithu Hluttaw Office, totaling 30.—MNA

Significant night temperature (11-12-2011)

Haka (2°C)