**Resignation of Union Minister allowed**

*Nay Pyi Taw, 6 Jan*—The President Office issued Order No. 2/2012 dated 6-1-2012.

The translation of the order is as follows;

Republic of the Union of Myanmar
President Office
Order No. 2/2012
13th Waxing of Pyatho, 1373 ME
6th January, 2012

Resignation from the post of Union Minister allowed

Union Minister at the President Office U Kyaw Swa Khaing who has submitted resignation letter to resign from his post on health grounds, was allowed to resign according to Section 235, Subsection (b) of the Constitution of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and Article 68, Subsection (a) of the Union Government Law.

Sd/

Thein Sein
President
Republic of the Union of Myanmar

**Resignation of Taninthayi Region Chief Minister allowed**

*Nay Pyi Taw, 6 Jan*—The President Office issued Order No. 3/2012 dated 6-1-2012.

The translation of the order is as follows;

Republic of the Union of Myanmar
President Office
Order No. 3/2012
13th Waxing of Pyatho, 1373 ME
6th January, 2012

Resignation from the post of Region Chief Minister allowed

Taninthayi Region Chief Minister U Khin Zaw who has submitted his resignation letter to resign from his post on health grounds, was allowed to resign according to Section 264, Subsection (a) of the Constitution of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and Article 52, Subsection (a) of the Region or State Government Law.

Sd/

Thein Sein
President
Republic of the Union of Myanmar

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**Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services General Min Aung Hlaing receives Chief of Army Staff of Indian Army and party**

Nay Pyi Taw, 6 Jan—Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services General Min Aung Hlaing received a delegation led by Chief of the Army Staff of the Indian Army Vijay Kumar Singh, PVSM, AVSM, YSM, ADC at the hall of Zeyathiri Beikman, here, this morning. At the call, the Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services said that Myanmar and India are neighbouring countries maintaining friendly relations. He said that the visit of the Indian Chief of the Army Staff will further strengthen friendly ties between the armed forces. He added that both armed forces would focus on bilateral relationship, peace and stability at the border areas and regional development tasks, and exchange of sports teams of both armed forces between the two countries. He noted that Myanmar can serve as a bridge between South Asian countries and Southeast Asian nations. Moreover, he said that both armed forces will make coordination between the two countries in a cordial manner.

The Chief of the Army Staff of the Indian Army said that Myanmar and India share same culture and both armed forces have been maintaining friendly relations. He confirmed that India does not support any armed groups that oppose Myanmar. He said that India will cooperate in border affairs, enhance friendly ties between the two armed forces, make coordination and cooperate in regional development tasks.

Also present at the call were Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief (Army) Lt-Gen Soe Win, Lt-Gen Hla Htay Win of the Office of the Commander-in-Chief, Commander-in-Chief (Navy) Vice-Admiral Nyan Tun, Commander-in-Chief (Air) Lt-Gen Myat Hein, senior military officers of the Office of the Commander-in-Chief and the commander of Nay Pyi Taw Command.

The Indian Chief of the Army Staff was accompanied by Major-General SK Gadeock, senior military officers of the Indian delegation and the Indian Defence Attaché.

MNA
Myanmar, China to cooperate in science and technology sector

A ceremony to host the State Flag in commemoration of the 64th Anniversary Independence Day 2012 was held at Magway Region Sports Ground in Magway on 4 January.

It was attended by Chief Minister of Magway Region U Phone Maw Shwe and region ministers, regional level departmental officials, rectors and faculty members of universities, service personnel, students and local people, totalling over 14,000.

Region Chief Minister U Phone Maw Shwe read the message sent by the President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar to the ceremony. After the ceremony, the sports competitions to mark the Independence Day took place at the sports ground. The Region Chief Minister and officials awarded the winners.

The Region Chief Minister also attended the opening ceremony of fuel station No. 002 of Magway Economic Group Co Ltd.

State Flag hoisted in Magway on 64th Anniversary Independence Day

Local Sports

Mini-Marathon organized in Thanbyuzayat

THANBYUZAYAT, 6 Jan—The Thanbyuzayat Township Committee of Child Rights Chairman’s Trophy Mini-Marathon Race was organized for the third time by Township General Administration Department and World Vision on 20 December morning.

The senior event (13-16 aged) started from the Setse beach to Thanbyuzayat Township Sports Ground and the junior event (9-12 aged) from Basic Education High School to Thanbyuzayat Township Sports Ground. The senior event was organized by Township Administrator U Phone Maw Shwe, Director of the same enterprise on probation from the date he assumes charge of his duties.

The eight facility was built by Amyotha Hluttaw representatives U Sai Tin Aung of Mohnyin Township who was opened in Helen Village of Mohnyin Township on 2 January.

The regional department of the Ministry of Commerce has appointed General Manager U Sein Lwin of Myanmar Agricultural Produce Trading to hoist the State Flag on 64th Anniversary Independence Day.

Fire breaks out at fried potato factory in Insein

A fire occurred at U San Min’s fried potato factory on Yadanahtukha road, Kannarele ward, Insein Township, Yangon North District, at 2:20 am today while plastic was being heated up.

The fire destroyed one warehouse and was under control at 3:30 am. The 33 fire engines, five management vehicles and one ambulance were brought to the spot.

Tachilek opens new Pyidawtha Market

In honour of the 64th Anniversary Independence Day, new Pyidawtha Market was opened in Hsanhai (B) Ward in Tachilek on 4 January.

The market is constituted with 72 shops and 96 benches in three complexes.
Thai elephant killed, mutilated ‘for restaurants’

Bangkok, 6 Jan—Thai wildlife officials on Thursday said body parts from a dead wild elephant found without its tusks, tail and penis were likely destined for restaurants.

The creature, which was discovered in Kaeng Krachan National Park in central Thailand on Monday, is believed to have died at the hands of a local gang of poachers. “They cut its tusks, trunk, sexual organ and tail. Those parts must be sold to the middleman and will be sent to restaurants in the main tourist spots like Phuket, Surat Thani and Hua Hin,” park head Chaiwat Limlikhitakom told AFP.

The wildlife department has found four elephant carcasses killed by poachers in the past three years. Chaiwat blamed ineffective laws for the increase in the crime and putting more than 250 wild elephants and the officers in danger. Thailand is known as a global hub for the illegal ivory trade, with a dramatic rise in seizures of tusks in recent years as the decimation of elephants and the officers in the paste three years.

An elephant walks past a security check point in Thailand’s restive southern Yala Province, May 2007. Internet

Chile wildfires kill six firefighters, one missing

Santiago, 6 Jan—Shifting winds caused flames to sweep over a group of firefighters battling wildfires in Chile on Thursday, killing six of them, badly burning two and leaving another missing.

A 10th firefighter listed as missing after his brigade was trapped in the flames was later found unharmed, said Gov. Miguel Mellado of Cautín, a state about 450 miles (730 kilometers) south of the capital, Santiago.

Nearly 50 wildfires have sprung up in southern Chile, destroying hundreds of houses, forcing the evacuations of thousands of people and causing millions of dollars in damage to the forestry and tourism industries that fuel the economy in the country’s Patagonia region. The wildfires alongside the Cordillera de la Costa are being fueled by strong winds, unusually high temperatures and dangerously dry conditions.

A sudden shift in the high winds left the group of firefighters overwhelmed by flames. “The wind trapped them and the flames passed over them,” Mellado said.

Mellado originally said five firefighters were killed, but President Sebastian Pinera raised the toll to six. Fires have blackened much of the Torres del Paine park, which attracts 150,000 tourists annually, most during the brief southern summer, and destroyed at least part of a mill run by Chile’s leading timber company.

Crews gaining ground on northwestern Montana fires

Browning, 6 Jan—A pair of rare winter wildfires fueled by 60 mph gusts burned buildings and forced hundreds from their homes overnight on Montana’s Blackfeet Indian Reservation, but better weather conditions on Thursday helped firefighters get a handle on the blazes.

The grass fires started around sundown Wednesday and together grew to 16,000 acres by early Thursday, said tribal spokesman Wayne Smith. At least 300 people were evacuated from homes and a boarding school, though no injuries had been reported.

“It’s probably the biggest grass fire in reservation history,” Smith said. “It was just a wall of fire heading east.” Smith estimated between 10 and 15 buildings were damaged or destroyed on the northeastern Montana reservation east of Glacier National Park. Fire incident commander Robert LaPlant confirmed Thursday evening that one home had been destroyed but did not yet know the total number of structures damaged.

JR. Clark, a rancher who lives off Boarding School Road north of Browning, said he and his hired hand ignored the mandatory evacuation order and stayed to fight the blaze. “I said, ‘You’re going to have to tow me in jail because I’m not leaving,’” Clark said. “I had to save my ranch.”

The two of them used a tractor with an attached plow to attack the fire as it approached the main house. After working from 6 pm until 3 am, the danger had passed. They were able to save Clark’s house and another one across the highway, but a neighbour’s house was destroyed, as was one of Clark’s barns.

Russian, Iranian leaders discuss nuclear issues over phone

Moscow, 6 Jan—Russian President Dmitry Medvedev and his Iranian counterpart, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, had a telephone conversation on Thursday to discuss a series of regional issues including Iran’s nuclear programme.

“Medvedev pointed out with satisfaction that Tehran showed positive attitude to the Russian plan for the step-by-step restoration of trust in international negotiations on Iran’s nuclear issues,” the Kremlin Press service said.

During the conversation, Tehran backed Moscow’s diplomatic efforts to settle the dispute over its nuclear programme, said the Kremlin, adding that the two sides have agreed to go ahead with consultations on the matter.

According to the Kremlin, the phone talks were initiated by the Iranian side, concerning the development of bilateral cooperation in 2012.

Two presidents also exchanged views on regional issues, stressing that the Middle East situation should be solved by political methods and by establishing a dialogue between all sides concerned.

British ICRC worker kidnapped in Pakistan

Quetta, 6 Jan—Unidentified gunmen on Thursday kidnapped a British employee of the International Committee of the Red Cross in Pakistan’s militancy-hit southwestern Province of Baluchistan. The ICRC said its health programme manager Khalil Rasjed Dale was seized around lunchtime in Quetta, the main town of the province, which borders both Iran and Afghanistan.

 Violence in Baluchistan has surged in recent years, and it has seen a number of abductions of Westerners, including the local head of the UN refugee agency in 2009 and two Swiss tourists last year.

The ICRC said Dale was taken as he returned home from work but police, quoting witnesses, said he was abducted in front of his office by eight masked gunmen who were lying in wait for him.

One opened the door of Dale’s Land Cruiser and kidnapped him at gunpoint, police said. “The moment Dale reached in front of his office, unknown gunmen riding a Land Cruiser picked him and took him away,” Nazir Kurd, a senior police official in Quetta told AFP.

Kurd said Dale — initially named by police as Khalil Ahmad Dale — is a British Muslim and has been working in Quetta for a year.

The ICRC office is in a high security neighbourhood along with offices of other international organisations.

A statement from the humanitarian organisation called for Dale’s “swift and unconditional release” and said it had no information about the identities or motives of his captors.

One NATO service member killed in Afghanistan

Kandahar, 6 Jan—A soldier with the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) was killed in the Taliban-linked attack in Afghanistan on Friday, bringing the number of casualties to 17 so far this year, a statement of the alliance said. “An International Security Assistance Force service member was killed in southern Afghanistan today,” the statement said.

However, it did not identify the nationality of the victim, saying it is ISAF policy to defer causality identification procedures to the relevant national authorities. Three more service members of the NATO-led forces were killed by a roadside bomb in southern Afghanistan on Thursday.

The southern Afghan Provinces of Kandahar, Helmand, Zabul and Uruzgan have been regarded as the hotbed of Taliban militants.

Since the beginning of 2012, six foreign soldiers have been killed in Afghanistan.

Security guard enters the building of the International Committee of the Red Cross in Quetta, southwest Pakistan, in 2010. Internet

Internet
S’pore scientists identify gene responsible for lung cancer

Singapore scientists have, for the first time, identified a gene responsible for lung cancer. The Agency for Science, Technology and Research (A*STAR) said the finding, reported in the advanced online issue of Cell on 5 Jan, is a huge step towards finding a cure for the disease.—INTERNET

Researchers create healthier cigarette

Researchers found lycopene and grape seed extract drastically reduced the amount of cancer-causing free radicals produced in cigarettes. Dr Boris Dzilkovski at Cornell University in Ithaca, NY, said from a healthcare perspective, the best cigarette is no cigarette, but a less toxic cigarette may be helpful for the millions of people a year who try to quit smoking.

“The implications of this technique can help reduce the hazardous effects of tobacco smoke because free radicals are a major group of carcinogens,” said Dzilkovski, co-author of the study.

Using the natural antioxidant extracts — lycopene, the bright red pigment and phytochemical found in tomatoes and other red fruits and vegetable and grape seed extract — in cigarette filters, drastically reduced the amount of cancer-causing free radicals passing through the filter, the researchers said.—INTERNET

Indian stocks open lower

Telecom operator Bharti Airtel, copper refiner Sterlite Industries, property developer Jaiprakash Associates and DLJ lost 2.42 percent, 2.34 percent, 2.15 percent and 1.84 percent.

Still, Tata Power, automobile maker Maruti Suzuki, software outsourcing player Infosys and Reliance Industries gained 0.39 percent, 0.38 percent, 0.47 percent and 0.72 percent.

Senses is the common name for the Bombay Stock Exchange Sensitive Index. It consists of the 30 largest and most actively traded stocks, representative of various sectors, on the Bombay Stock Exchange.—Xinhua

Oil clings to new plateau

With gas prices continuing to remain above normal, weather experts are predicting cold conditions will be the norm going forward, which could cause fuel prices to stay high for the next several months. Home heating oil added 0.86 cents to $3.0474 per gallon, while reformulated blendstock gasoline lost 0.02 cents to $2.7375 per gallon.

Henry Hub natural gas prices shed 0.1 cents to $2.96 per million British thermal units. At the pump, the national average price of unleaded gasoline climbed sharply, reaching $3.319 per gallon from Wednesday’s $3.228, AAA said.—INTERNET

Health Tip: When aggressive behavior signals a problem

Children may act out in an aggressive way because they’re frustrated or just don’t know how to express their emotions. But there are times when it’s wise to a parent to call the pediatrician during an aggressive outbreak.

The American Academy of Pediatrians says you should call the child’s doctor if:

• Aggression causes physical injury to other people or himself/herself.
• Aggression lasts longer than a few weeks, and you are unable to manage your child’s behavior.
• Your child attacks you or someone else.
• Your child is sent home from school or is barred from playtime as a result of aggression.
• You feel afraid for your safety.

With gasoline prices falling below three dollars, area residents fill their cars and trucks during an ongoing winter storm that has left more than a foot of snow on the ground on 22 Dec, 2011 in Denver.—INTERNET

Owing to its environmental impact, the coal industry is under increasing pressure to develop new technologies that can help reduce emissions. One such technology is carbon capture and storage (CCS), which involves capturing carbon dioxide (CO2) from power plants and injecting it into geological formations, such as depleted oil and gas fields or deep saline aquifers. While CCS is a promising solution to address climate change, it also raises several challenges, including the cost of technology development and implementation, the need for infrastructure and storage capacity, and public acceptance.

California has taken a lead in exploring CCS projects by identifying potential storage sites and funding research to develop and test new technologies. For example, the state’s Energy System Integration Group has conducted studies on CO2 injection and storage, and the Carbon Sequestration Leadership Forum (CSLF) has worked to advance CCS research and development. Other states and countries have also shown interest in CCS, with Canada and Australia being examples of countries that are exploring potential storage sites and developing policies to support the technology.

However, despite these efforts, CCS has faced some challenges in gaining widespread acceptance. One of the main concerns is the potential leakage of CO2 into the atmosphere, which could negate the benefits of the technology. Researchers are currently working on developing leakage monitoring techniques and implementing redundancy measures to minimize the risk of unintended emissions. Additionally, there is a need for clearer regulations and policies to support the growth of CCS projects.

While CCS is a promising technology for reducing emissions, it is important to consider its potential impacts and limitations, and to work towards developing a comprehensive strategy that balances the benefits of the technology with its drawbacks. The need for ongoing research and policy development is crucial to ensure the responsible and effective implementation of CCS in addressing climate change.
German fossil find changes timeline

BRAUNSCHWEIG, 6 Jan — German paleontologists say they identified a species of prehistoric marine giant from a time when that family of reptiles was thought mostly to have died out.

Researchers from the State Natural History Museum in Braunschweig said the rare fossil ichthyosaur find from northern Germany is 130 million years old, dating from the Lower Cretaceous era. Most ichthyosaurs fossils previously found date from the Jurassic era, millions of years earlier.

The newly discovered ichthyosaur species, unearthed during road work in 2005, has been called Acamptonectes densus, “Stiff Swimmer.”

The neck vertebrae were so tightly arranged the species “couldn’t move its neck, so it must have shot through the water like a dart,” museum paleontologist Ulrich Joger told the BBC.

“B.i.s spectaculard,” he said. “It raises new questions about the [Jurassic] extinction theory.”

The marine predator fed on fish and would have looked like a dolphin, experts said, though the species are not related. — Internet

Fish mimics octopus that mimics a fish

SAN FRANCISCO, 6 Jan — A researcher has captured video in Indonesia of a fish mimicking an octopus known for mimicking other fish, in a circular case of copycat.

The mimic octopus, Thaumoctopus mimicus, can change its shape and modify its movements and color to impersonate toxic lionfish, flatfish and even sea snakes, allowing it to swim in the open with relatively little fear of predators. The other actor in the researcher’s video, known as a jawfish, is a small timid fish that almost never ventures out of a burrow it digs in the sand. During a diving trip in July, researcher Godehard Kopp of the University of Gottingen in Germany filmed an unexpected partnership between the pair of animals, the Christian Science Monitor reported Thursday.

A black-marble jawfish closely tagged behind the octopus as it moved across the sandy seafloor, its brown- and white markings similar to marking on the octopus, making it difficult to spot among the octopus’ arms.

“It’s a pretty unique observation of mimicry — most of the time, a mimicking animal doesn’t actually follow the model it is mimicking,” researcher Luiz Rocha, an ichthyologist at the California Academy of Sciences in San Francisco, said. “But the mimicry wouldn’t work otherwise for fish. The jawfish found a way to get around the open environment and not get eaten by anything else.” Rocha said. “It’s not a good swimmer, so any grouper or snapper or predatory fish wouldn’t actually be easy grab it otherwise.” — Internet

Mars rover to settle in for long winter

PASADENA, 6 Jan — NASA says its Opportunity Mars rover will spend its fifth martian winter working at a location informally named “Greeley Haven.”

The site is considered a base to a planetary geologist Ronald Greeley, a member of the science team for the Mars rovers who died in September, a NASA release said Thursday.

The site features a sun-facing slope that will help the rover maintain adequate solar power during its fifth martian winter.

Opportunity’s solar panels have accumulated a thick coating of dust, so although it did not need to stay on sun-facing slopes during previous martian winters, researchers say they want to give the rover as much help in the coming winter as they can.

While at Greeley Haven Opportunity will inspect mineral compositions and textures on the outcrop and record a full-circle, colour panorama of the area. The rover site is located on the eastern side of the 14-mile wide Endeavour Crater, where Opportunity arrived five months ago after three years of driving from the smaller Victoria Crater, which it studied for two years. — Internet

Apple planning ‘important’ event in Jan-end

NEW YORK, 6 Jan — Technology giant Apple is expected to make an “important” announcement at an event the company is planning here later this month, according to a report.

A report in ‘All Things D’ said the Apple event in the city will not be about a new version of the iPad tablet or TV venture, though the event is sure to set the rumour mill spinning that the company will introduce another blockbuster product.

“Apple is planning an important — but not large-scale — event to be held in New York at the end of this month that will focus on a media-related announcement,” the report said. Sources in the report said the event is related to an upcoming version of the iPad 3 or the rollout of Apple’s interactive TV initiative, with such events traditionally held in Silicon Valley.

The New York event could be about “some kind of advertising or even publishing announcement”, the sources said. Apple Senior Vice-President of Internet Software and Services Eddy Cue is reportedly involved in the event. Cue is in charge of Apple’s media units, including the iTunes Store, AppStore, Bookstore, as well as iAd and its Cloud services.

Apple recently opened a massive new retail store in Manhattan’s Grand Central Terminal and is renovating its flagship glass cube outlet on Fifth Avenue. — Internet

Samsung to build 10-nano flash plant in China

SEOUL, 6 Jan — Samsung Electronics, the world’s largest maker of memory chips, planned to build a semiconductor plant in China to produce NAND flash memory chips based on 10-nanometre class technology, the economy ministry said Wednesday.

According to the Ministry of Knowledge Economy, Samsung submitted an application for the factory construction to the ministry on 6 Dec, before getting approval Wednesday. The ministry made the decision after holding two meetings of the industrial technology security committee in a bid to assess the potential technology leaks and the need for the firm to expand to China.

Samsung planned to start building the plant within the first half of this year after being approved by the Chinese government, according to the ministry. The company aimed to begin the factory’s operation in the second half of next year.

The Chinese plant, a 10-nano class NAND flash memory chips were planned to be manufactured, would be able to produce 100,000 wafers of 12-inch size per month after being built. Samsung began operating its latest factory in South Korea from September last year to mass-produce 20-nano NAND flash memory chips.

NAND flash memory refers to chips that store information in mobile devices such as tablet computers and smartphones. Demand for the chips has been fast growing in line with brisk sales of smartphones and tablet PCs.

Samsung planned to build the factory in China as the world’s No. 2 economy is emerging as a major chip market. According to the ministry, the global demand for NAND flash memory chips was expected to surge to 35.4 billion US dollars in 2015 from 20.6 billion dollars in 2010, with China’s portion of the global demand set to grow from 43 percent in 2010 to 55 percent in 2015. — Xinhua

Android Market achieves new milestone with 400,000 active apps

LOS ANGELES, 6 Jan — Google’s Android Market now has over 400,000 apps available, thanks in large part to its status as the largest provider of free apps for mobile tech consumers.

The report on Google’s app milestone was released this week by app analytical firm Distimo, and though it took the company longer to hit the 400,000 mark than Apple’s App Store — it took Google 31 months to reach the mark, and Apple’s early 22 months — Google’s growth from 300,000 to 400,000 apps (and from 200,000 to 300,000 apps) occurred in less time than it did for Apple.

In contrast, Apple’s App Store now features over 500,000 active apps, though the two stores differ greatly in terms of revenue. More than 68 percent of the Android Market apps are free, and the store generates the bulk of its revenue from the “Freemium” model — in which users pay for additional content beyond what’s provided in the basic, free app. Less than half of Apple’s revenue comes from free apps, and the store relies more on paid apps for revenue.

Overall, Apple collects almost four times as much revenue from its App Store as Google receives from the Android Market. — Internet
High water in north sparks Dutch evacuations

The Hague, (Netherlands), 6 Jan—Dozens of farmers near Dordrecht have been warned to evacuate land north of the Dutch Capital on Thursday as a dike protecting the area threatened to collapse.

Local Mayor Ben Plandsoen told national broadcaster NOS that a polder—reclaimed land that is drained by pumps and mills—would likely be submerged under some 40 centimetres (16 inches) of water if the dike protecting it breaks.

"You just don’t know how the dike will hold up," he said. "It is saturated, so you don’t know how much pressure it can take.”

Late Thursday the dike was holding, but in the far north of the country authorities were still battling rising water levels by strengthening dikes with sandbags.

Staff at the Groninger Museum in the city of Groningen also began moving exhibits, including a recently opened show of clothes by Tunisian designer Azzedine Alaia, from its ground floor halls because of the rising level of a moat that surrounds the building.

The museum said it would be closed Friday.

Elsewhere, riverside residents were offered sandbags, as the low-lying Netherlands appeared to be largely winning the latest skirmish in its never-ending battle to stay dry.

The densely populated nation of nearly 17 million, 25 percent of which lies below sea level, has been drenched by heavy rain and buffeted by strong northwesterly winds for days.

Antarctica not free of earthquakes

Beijing, 6 Jan—Surveillance data on the size and frequency of earthquakes in Antarctica collected by China’s Great Wall Station show that the continent is not earthquake-free, a Chinese seismic expert said Thursday. “China’s newly-built seismic observatory in Great Wall Station has documented a hundred-odd small earthquakes occurring in the region over the past year," said Chang Lijun, a member of China’s 28th Antarctica expedition team. The discovery challenges the prevailing notion that the Antarctic has no earthquakes, as many earthquakes have gone undetected due to lack of seismological observation in the region.

However, thanks to technological advances, scientists have discovered that the continent is still subject to some minor tremors.

Storms destroy dam in Brazil’s Rio de Janeiro state

Rio de Janeiro, 6 Jan—The storms in the mountain region in Brazil’s Rio de Janeiro state in recent days have caused the burst of a dam and 4,000 people to flee their homes.

The destruction of the dam, located in the town of Campos, in the northern part of the state, caused the Mairue River to flood and destroy a highway, making a 20-metre wide hole in the road and isolating some areas. The residents of a nearby neighbourhood were told to leave their homes, as the region was about to be flooded.

The Army was called to help, and five trucks were sent to collect the residents. According to Campos’ Civil Defence Secretary Hentique Oliveira, the water level in the area may rise 3.5 to four metres. “Only the house’s roof will be left,” he said. Other municipalities were damaged by the flood in the Mairue River. Six towns have already declared state of emergency in Rio state. Two people died and some 20,000 were forced to leave their homes due to the danger of floods and mudslides.

In the neighbouring states of Minas Gerais and Espirito Santo, the storms caused deaths and damages as well. In Minas Gerais, the death toll rose to eight, 71 municipalities declared the state of emergency and 9,000 people left their homes. In Espirito Santo, 21 municipalities declared the state of emergency and over 1,000 people have been evacuated.

African Union asks UN to raise Somalia force to 17,700

The African Union on Thursday asked the United Nations to authorise an increase of its peacekeeping force in war-torn Somalia by 5,700 to 17,700 amid mounting attacks by Islamist rebels.

Monica Juma, Kenya’s ambassador to the UN, made the announcement.

The African force, called AMISOM, has been functioning under UN mandate since 2007 in the lawless region of Somalia.

“The highlights were the need to increase the AMISOM troops from 12,000 to 17,700, the need to fast track the creation of an administrative unit in the liberated areas,” Juma said, after presiding over a meeting of the AU’s Peace and Security Council in the Ethiopian capital.

She also highlighted the need for “logistical support in order to optimise the capability of the AMISOM troops”, and to beef up the “capacity of the TFG (transition federal government forces) and allied forces in order...to begin to create a Somali security force.” Regional states strive to battle the extremist Shebab insurgents who control much of southern Somalia.

The AMISOM currently comprises Djiboutian, Ugandan and Burundian soldiers, who have been deployed since 2007 to protect the Western-backed government from the Shebab in the war-shattered capital.

The hardline militants control large parts of southern Somalia but are facing increasing pressure from regional armies and government forces, with the rebels leaving fixed positions in Mogadishu in favour of guerrilla tactics.

A US Commissioner for Peace and Security Ramtane Lamamra said the African forces were now in a position to quell both the Shebab and the pirates.

“Whatever investment the international community is ready to make for Somalia, it would be really serving both causes. And in the same time assist nation building and a post-conflict peace consolidation,” he said.—Internet
In this photo released by Natasha Baydakova on 4 Jan, 2011 showing a Welsh corgi dog named Ole that showed up at a Cooke City Alpine Motel four days after the dog and its owner were swept up in an avalanche. The dog’s owner died. The dog returned to its motel where they had been staying before going backcountry skiing.

In this 29 July, 2004 file photo an anti-ballistic missile, under development by the United States and Israel, lifts off from Point Magu Sea Range, off the California coast, as a test of an improved version of the Arrow missile. The Israeli military says it will soon hold a major defence exercise with US forces.—INTERNET

Israel and US to stage major defence drill

Israel considers Iran a strategic threat because of its nuclear and missile programmes and support of violent groups in Lebanon and Gaza, as well as frequent references by Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad to Israel’s destruction.

The Israeli military spokesman did not give a date for the drill Thursday, but a senior military official said it would be in the next few weeks. He said it would be the biggest missile defence drill ever held. He was speaking on condition of anonymity due to the sensitivity of the issue. The Israeli official said thousands of American and Israeli soldiers from different units would take part. He said the drill would test multiple Israeli and US air defence systems against incoming missiles and rockets.

Israel has deployed an off-system, jointly developed and funded with the US, designed to intercept Iranian missiles in the stratosphere, far from Israel.

“The US European Command and the Israeli Defence Forces periodically conduct routine exercises in Israel,” the military said in a statement. “US European Command routinely works with partner nations to ensure their capacity to provide for their own security and, in the case of Israel, their qualitative military edge,” it said. Thousands of US and Israeli troops held a similar exercise in 2009, code-named Juniper Cobra 10, designed to test missile defence technology.

Martin Van Creveld, a military historian at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, said Thursday that the drill was intended not only to practice military maneuvers but also to pressure Iran.—INTERNET

Turkey to buy F-35 fighter jets from US

Turkey signed a memorandum of understanding on Turkey’s involvement in the production process of new generation F-35 warplanes in 2007. The decision to buy the new generation fighter planes came at a time when numerous other countries, including Denmark, Holland and Canada, have suspended their orders.

Rescue work resumes in Philippine landslide

In this photo released by the Philippine Army, residents search for victims following a landslide that occurred at the small-scale mining community of Pantukan, Compostela Valley in southern Philippines on 5 Jan, 2012.—INTERNET

Rescue work was suspended Thursday because of heavy rains threatened to unleash fresh slides in the area. Geologists warned months earlier that the area is highly susceptible to sudden landslides.

Car ends on top of another in Mass parking garage

WELLESLEY, 6 Jan.—Police said a driver coming to a stop at a Massachusetts office parking lot stepped on the accelerator instead of the brake, causing the car to jump over a curb and land inside the nearby parking garage. The parked car was unoccupied. There were no injuries.

At least five killed as ferry capsizes in SE Bangladesh

DHAKA, 6 Jan.—A overcrowded ferry carrying over 50 passengers in a canal flowing beside Bangladesh’s southeastern Chittagong City capsized on Thursday afternoon, with dozens of people missing, local police said. “Rescuers have so far retrieved 5 bodies from the sunken ferry that capsized on Thursday,” said Zohirul Haque Sobuj, officer-in-charge of Bokshbandi Police Station in Chittagong, some 242 km southeast of capital Dhaka. He said fire brigade personnel and locals including fishermen were still searching for those missing people.

He said many passengers were able to swim ashore after the accident at about 1:15 pm local time on Thursday but could not tell immediately about the exact number of ill-fated missing passengers.

He said a rescue vessel has been called in to boost local efforts to salvage the ferry. Ferry and boat disasters are common in Bangladesh, which is crisscrossed by about 250 rivers. Ferry is still a key means of transport in the South Asian country. Most of them are often overcrowded.—Xinhua

In this photo released by Natasha Baydakova on 4 Jan, 2011 showing a Welsh corgi dog named Ole that showed up at a Cooke City Alpine Motel four days after the dog and its owner were swept up in an avalanche. The dog’s owner died. The dog returned to its motel where they had been staying before going backcountry skiing.

Car ends on top of another in Mass parking garage

WELLESLEY, 6 Jan.—Police said a driver coming to a stop at a Massachusetts office parking lot stepped on the accelerator instead of the brake, causing the car to jump over a curb and land inside the nearby parking garage. The parked car was unoccupied. There were no injuries.
Foremost Heads of State send felicitations to President U Thein Sein

NAY PYI TAW, 6 Jan — The following are messages of felicitations from foreign heads of State to President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar U Thein Sein, on the occasion of the 64th Anniversary Independence Day of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

From Choummaly Sayasone, President of the Lao People’s Democratic Republic

On behalf of the people of the Lao People’s Democratic Republic and on our own behalf, we have great Excellency,

Lao People’s Democratic Republic

From Thein Sein, President of the Union of Myanmar.

We are hoping that the existing good traditional friendly relations and close cooperation between the Lao People’s Democratic Republic and the Republic of the Union of Myanmar would continue to be further enhanced and strengthened for mutual benefits of our two countries, the peoples of Laos and Myanmar as well as for peace, friendship and cooperation for the development in the region and the world-at-large.

May we wish Your Excellency good health and happiness in order to lead the people of the Union of Myanmar towards the progress and constant prosperity.

Please accept, Your Excellency, the assurances of our highest consideration.

From Giorgio Napolitano, President of the Italian Republic

On the occasion of the celebration of Your National Day, on behalf of the Italian People and my own I wish to convey the most sincere wishes for the wellbeing of the People of Myanmar.

I take this opportunity to express my congratulations on the positive developments ongoing in Myanmar and to encourage the Government of Myanmar to keep pursuing unswervingly the restoration and protection of fundamental freedoms. In this perspective, I look forward with confidence to a further deepening of the relations between our two Countries.

In this spirit, I extend best wishes of prosperity to Your Excellency personally and to Your People.

From Hamad Bin Issa Al Khalifa, King of the Kingdom of Bahrain

As you celebrate the independence anniversary of your friendly country, it gives me pleasure to offer you, in my own name and on behalf of the people of the Kingdom of Bahrain, sincere congratulations and best wishes on this national occasion.

I also avail myself of this opportunity to wish Your Excellency personally continued good health and felicity and to your people greater progress and advancement under your wise leadership.

The following is a message of felicitations to Vice-President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar Thura U Tin Aung Myint Oo and Dr Sai Mauk Kham, on the occasion of the 64th Anniversary Independence Day of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

From Xi Jinping, Vice-President of the People’s Republic of China

Upon the auspicious occasion of the 64th Anniversary of the Independence Day of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, I would like to extend to Your Excellency my warmest congratulations and best wishes.

China attaches great importance to developing relations with Myanmar, highly values and cherishes the “Pauk-Phaw” friendship between our two countries. This relationship not only complies with the fundamental interest of our two peoples, but also benefits the peace, stability and prosperity of the region. China will continuously consolidate and strengthen the China-Myanmar good neighbourly friendship and pragmatic cooperations. I am willing and ready to understand joint efforts with Your Excellency to facilitate pragmatic cooperations in all areas, promote greater development of bilateral relations, and bring more benefits to our two peoples.

I would like to take this opportunity to convey my best wishes for the great prosperity to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and well-being to the people of Myanmar.

The following is a message of felicitations to Vice-Presidents of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar Thura U Tin Aung Myint Oo and Dr Sai Mauk Kham, on the occasion of the 64th Anniversary Independence Day of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

From Boumthong Vorachit, Vice-President of the Lao People’s Democratic Republic

I have great pleasure to extend my warmest congratulations and best wishes to Your Excellencies on auspicious occasion of the 64th Anniversary of the Independence Day of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

I am very pleased to note that the friendly relations and close cooperation between Laos and Myanmar have been continuously enhanced and strengthened over the recent years and I look forward to closely cooperating with Your Excellencies in order to continue developing and deepening such bonds of relations and cooperation to the new heights.

May I wish Your Excellencies good health and greater success in your noble tasks.

Please accept, Your Excellencies, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Marketable brinjal fruits of Nweyit Village gaining high demand

Article: Myint Maung Soe; Photos: Kyaw Thu Win

In an interview, farmer U Win Hlaing explained, “In the past, our village grew less own acre for brinjal plants. This year, larger acre of farmlands were put under brinjal plantations as a test for work. I also cultivated brinjal plants on test this year and these plantations are thriving now on about three acres of land. I have spent about K 50,000 on agricultural cost plus value of seeds. I pluck brinjal fruits every week and sell them worth about K 250,000 to K 300,000.”

We saw thriving brinjal plantations with fruits. The fruits were long. Significantly, the fruits were very delicious with lack of seeds.

We also visited the thriving brinjal plantation of farmer U Soe Lwin. His plantations were seen with plenty of fruits. The dark purple colour fruits were round.

“I took the seeds for this brinjal strain from Nyaungshapin of Yangon Region. The fruits of the plants can be picked out after two and a half months of cultivation. The fruits are sold at K 150 to K 200 in the market. The roasted brinjal fruits are delicious. Once roasted brinjal is enough for one family. The plant prefers silted soil. I have thought I will regrow brinjal plants next season with the use of present seeds,” said U Soe Lwin.

Brinjal fruits produced from Nweyit Village were delicious and marketable. Better quality of goods can attract consumers. Best quality of agricultural products will be higher in value in the market and customers must understand the significant point of market-oriented economic system.

Translation: TTA Myanmar Alin
31-12-2011
Independence Day Flag-hoisting ceremony held in Kayin State

Nay Pyi Taw, 6 Jan—Flag-hoisting ceremony of 64th Anniversary Independence Day, took place at sport ground in Hpa-an of Kayin State on 4 January.

At the ceremony, Chief Minister of Kayin State U Zaw Min read out the message sent by the President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar. Afterward, he enjoyed sports competitions and awarded the winners. The State Chief Minister and wife, and officials presented awards to winners at baby show. It was also attended by State Hluttaw Speaker, State Chief Justice, Deputy Hluttaw Speaker, ministers and state/district/ township departmental officials. —MNA

H & T Ministry opens spoken English proficiency course

Nay Pyi Taw, 6 Jan—Deputy Minister for Hotels and Tourism U Htay Aung addressed the opening of Spoken English Course No. 1 at Sky Palace Hotel in Nay Pyi Taw Hotel Zone this noon.

The deputy minister yesterday evening discussed the curriculum with course instructors Ms Linda Doeden, Ms Aleta Loftis of English Language Institute, Fort Collins, Colorados of the USA and principal U Khin Maung Lwin of Asia Master Hotel Management School, at his office.

A total of 30 trainees—five from the ministry and 25 from Nay Pyi Taw Hotel Zone are attending the four-week course. —MNA

Loans disbursed to agricultural society

Myaungmya, 6 Jan—A ceremony to provide cash assistance for agricultural purpose was held in Pyin Village of Myaungmya Township on 23 December.

Myaungmya Naga Co, formed by Myaungmya Township Rice Millers’ Association, disbursed K 23.15 million for 463 acres of summer paddy to Yway Nadi Agricultural Production Society of Pyin Village.

The farmers of the village have completely repaid the loans to the company, and the said disbursement was the second time. District IPRD

British delegation wraps up visit to Myanmar

Yangon, 6 Jan—British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and Commonwealth Affairs Mr William Jefferson Hague visited Myanmar on a three-day mission on his visit to Myanmar to members of Foreign Correspondents Club and local journalists at British Council on Strand Road here this evening.

Mr William Jefferson Hague and party visited Shwedagon Pagoda and left here by special flight. —MNA

Athletes to receive intensive training for 27th SEA Games

Yangon, 6 Jan—General Secretary of Myanmar Olympic Committee Director-General of Sports and Physical Education Department U Thaung Htuk called for launching intensive training for athletes for the 27th South East Asian Games.

He also stressed the importance of right techniques and intensive training to achieve success in the 27th SEA Games. A resident representative of Dongluc Joint Stock Co Ltd contributed sports gear worth over K 4.5 million to athletes. —MNA

Chin State observes Independence Day with state flag hoisting ceremony

Nay Pyi Taw, 6 Jan—The State flag hoisting ceremony was held in Haka of Chin State on 4th January, the 64th Anniversary Independence Day. The ceremony was attended by Chin State Hluttaw Speaker U Hauk Khin Kham, local authorities and departmental personnel.

The State flag was saluted and tributes were paid to late martyrs on the occasion. This was followed by reading of the message sent by the President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar. Afterwards, State Chief Minister U Hong Ngai presented prizes to the winners in commemorative essay contests. —MNA

Village library opened

Kyaungkpaw, 6 Jan—Yangguyr U Library was put into service in Mayanoye Village in Kyaungkpaw Township on 25 December.

Departmental officials gave talks on benefits of reading and then donated 250 books in various genres to the librarian. The library was built at a cost of K 2.6 million by Child Care Society and K 500,000 by the village. —Township IPRD
**Book-lovers’ refuge closes its doors in South Africa**

South Africa may have produced two Nobel laureates in literature but a famous booksshop in Johannesburg is nevertheless about to close, a victim of the country’s poor reading culture.

The Boekehuis, whose Afrikaans name means “book house”, is in an old four-bedroom house a stone’s throw from the city’s two main universities.

Its waxed parquet floors, moulded ceilings, garden and coffee shop became the book-lovers’ refuge. The shop’s literary events where readers could interact with writers were especially popular.

“This is like a house, not only a bookshop. People come here to buy books, but not only. They come for the ambiance, to have an animate, and especially for the talks,” says shop manager Corina van der Spool.

Boekehuis which opened in 2000 has been widely portrayed as independent, but it is in fact owned by Mediac24, the country’s largest media company.

The giant multimedia group, which owns most of the country’s magazines and major newspaper titles, announced in December that the Boekehuis would be closing its doors at the end of January.

Leading figures such as award-winning author Andre Brink, photographer David Goldblatt and internationally acclaimed painter William Kentridge were among those who signed a petition to try to get Mediac24 to change its mind.

**Titanic items to be sold 100 years after sinking**

This 1998 image provided by RMS Titanic, Inc, shows a 17-ton portion of the hull of the RMS Titanic as it is lifted to the surface during an expedition to the site of the tragedy. The piece along with 5,000 other artifacts will be auctioned as a single collection on 11 April, 2012 — 100 years after the sinking of the ship. — Internet

**Beijing backtracks on pollution data after outcry**

BEIJING, 6 Jan— Authorities in Beijing said Friday they will start publicising data on the tiny particles that make up much of the city’s pollution, after a public outcry over air quality measurements.

The Chinese capital currently bases its air quality information on particles of 10 micrometers or larger, known as PM10, and does not take into account the smaller particulates that experts say are most harmful to human health. But authorities have come under pressure from the public to change the way they rank air quality after thick smog blanketed Beijing late last year, forcing the cancellation of hundreds of flights and triggering a surge in face mask sales. Official data showed the air was only slightly polluted, while figures published by the US embassy in Beijing, which measures the smaller particles, ranked it as “very unhealthy”.

On Friday the Beijing Environmental Bureau said it would start publicising measurements based on the smaller particles — known as PM2.5 — ahead of the Lunar New Year, or Spring Festival, which starts on 23 January.

“The authorities plan to release air-quality monitoring data using PM2.5 before Spring Festival,” a bureau official surnamed Jiang told AFP.

“The government has to consider the pleas of the people, so yes, the anger of Beijing citizens these days is a big contributor to our action.” — Internet

**NH dealer selling 1878 Bell note with phone sketch**

CONCORD, (NH), 6 Jan— A New Hampshire dealer is auctioning an 1878 letter from Alexander Graham Bell to his parents instructing them to ground the telephone he invented by running a copper wire from their house to the duck pond.

The seven-page letter contains two drawings by Graham of the phone and how to run its elaborate wiring system to avoid harm from lightning strikes.

Bell was responding to a letter from his parents telling him about how a lightning strike had damaged their wiring between several poles.

Bell writes that he was “quite troubled” by the news and proceeds to instruct them on how to avoid such an incident in the future.

“If you have good connection with a permanently moist stratum of earth, you need never fear lightning and your posts will be safe,” Bell writes. His drawing shows a long strand of wire running to a rectangular box, above which is written, “Bury in duck pond.”

The letter is more than a tutorial on how to ground his invention.

He opens with “My dear Papa and Mama” and tells them their new grandson is developing into “a healthy, fat-nice-looking baby with tremendous eyes.” He describes family friends they visited. He signs the letter, “Your loving son, ALEC— a nickname used only by the family.”

**Singapore supermarket to stop selling shark’s fin**

SINGAPORE, 6 Jan— Singapore’s largest supermarket chain FairPrice will stop selling shark’s fin products from April this year, local media reported on Friday.

The supermarket, Thern Da Seafood, used the words “screech the divers” in an apparent reference to diving enthusiasts who had been campaigning against the shark’s fin trade, the Straits Times said.

The post drew much criticism and went viral on the social networking site. Many who commented called for a boycott of both the supermarket and FairPrice. Comments also made their way onto FairPrice’s Facebook page. Among them were calls for FairPrice to look again at its corporate social responsibility policy and to stop selling shark’s fin.

FairPrice chief executive Sean Kian Peng said the supermarket chain would stop selling shark’s fin products by the end of the first quarter of this year across its more than 230 outlets.

Seah said FairPrice had been looking into the sale of shark’s fin products in the past few months as part of its commitment to being a socially responsible retailer. He also said it would be withdrawing all products from Thern Da Seafood.— Xinhua

**Brazilians optimistic about country’s economic situation**

RIO DE JANEIRO, 6 Jan— Brazilians are now more optimistic than ever about the country’s economic situation, a survey released Thursday by the Institute of Applied Economic Research (IPEA) said. The index measuring Brazilians’ optimism about the country’s current economic situation rose to a record-high 67.5 points in December from 63.7 points in November, the survey said, whereas it stood at 64.6 points in the same period in 2010.

According to IPEA’s Families’ Expectation Index (IEF), 78.2 percent of Brazilian families were better off financially in December than a year before. In total, 86.6 percent of Brazilian families were confident about their economic situation in 2012. The majority, 64.4 percent, also believed Brazil’s economy will improve in the near future.

IPEA President Marcio Pochmann attributed this optimism to the country’s continuing growth, improving job market and rising income. He also noted there was a seasonal effect, as people received their Christmas bonuses in December.

The share of Brazilians who said they were now out of debt rose to 56.1 percent in December from 55.6 percent in November.— Xinhua

**A woman waits for a bus in the haze in Beijing in December 2011. Authorities in Beijing said Friday they will start publicising data on the tiny particles that make up much of the city’s pollution, after a public outcry over air quality measurements.** — Internet

**Internet**
**5-Magnitude tremor shakes in Christchurch, risks continue**

**WELLINGTON, 6 Jan**—New Zealand’s quake-battered second city of Christchurch was shaken by a 5-magnitude tremor Friday as scientists were telling a special hearing that earthquakes and aftershocks could continue for decades. The quake struck at 5:20 pm and was centered 5 kilometers below ground and 10 km northeast of Christchurch, according to the government-run GNS Science GeoNet monitoring service.

It came just one minute after a 3.5-magnitude tremor, at a depth of 10 km, centered 20 km east of the city, according to the GeoNet. The quakes occurred the day GNS scientists were briefing Christchurch City councilors and Members of Parliament on the possibility of more strong aftershocks after those that struck on 23 Dec.

Kelvin Berryman, of GNS Science, told the hearing that the sequence of quakes in Christchurch and the surrounding Canterbury region would diminish over decades rather than years, Fairfax NZ News reported. “Christchurch City has had a lot of quake activity. A lot of the stress must have been released in the city area, but around Canterbury there may well be an ongoing sequence over a period of a few decades,” Berryman was quoted as saying.

**Global IT spending not to grow as expected in 2012**

**SAN FRANCISCO, 6 Jan**—Research firm Gartner on Thursday revised downward its outlook for global information technology (IT) spending in 2012, citing eurozone crisis and hard-disk drive shortage. Gartner said all four major technology sectors including computing hardware, enterprise software, IT services as well as telecommunication equipment and services are expected to experience slower spending growth in 2012 than previously forecast. Its latest forecast revised the annual worldwide IT spending growth in 2012 to 3.7 percent from the previous 4.6 percent, predicting the spending to total in 2012 to 3.8 trillion US dollars. “Faltering global economic growth, the eurozone crisis and the impact of Thailand’s floods on hard-disk drive production have all taken their toll on the outlook for IT spending,” Richard Gordon, research vice president at Gartner, said in a statement.

The company said that the Thailand floods are having serious implications for businesses worldwide, particularly with computer and storage purchases, noting that no company will be wholly immune to the effects on the hard-drive disc supply chain.

**Mother of three girls killed in Conn fire speaks**

**NEW YORK, 6 Jan**—The mother of the three young girls who died during a Christmas morning fire delivered a heart-wrenching eulogy to her “girl tribe” at their somber funeral in Connecticut.

Madonna Badger told mourners Friday to “call on the country’s justice minister to implement tougher gun laws.”

**Doctors to remove Vietnamese man’s 90kg tumour**

**Ho Chi Minh City, 6 Jan**—A man left unable to walk by a tumour on his right leg that weighs more than the rest of his body went under the knife in Vietnam on Thursday to have the growth removed, hospital officials said. Nguyen Duy Hai’s massive 90 kilogramme (198-pound) tumour is to be cut away by a team of doctors in a risky 10 hour procedure that has only a 50 percent chance of success, the France-Vietnam (FY) hospital in Ho Chi Minh City said.

Hai, 31, who suffers from a rare genetic disorder, has been living with the tumour since he was four years old, FY hospital’s statement read. He had part of his leg amputated when he was 17, but the tumour, which is not cancerous, continued to expand, making it difficult for Hai to walk and sleep.

The growth is thought to be the largest ever recorded in Vietnam, according to state media, who have followed Hai’s condition for years. “This is a huge procedure with many risks, including the risk of death during surgery or post-operative care,” the hospital said, adding that the patient’s mother was arrested there to proceed with the removal nonetheless.
No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day.

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A snowy owl clings to a powerline, on 4 Jan, 2012 near Lake Andes, SD. The Arctic creatures have been seen from coast to coast more frequently this winter and have reached further south than in past years.

INTERNET

Like magic, Harry Potter’s owl spotted across US

LAKE ANDES, 6 Jan—Famous for its role as Harry Potter’s companion in the books and movies, a species of majestic, mostly white owls is being sighted in abundant numbers this winter far from both Hogwarts and its native Arctic habit.

It’s typical for snowy owls to arrive in the US every three or four winters, but this year’s irruption is widespread, with birders from the Pacific Northwest to New England reporting frequent sightings of the yellow-eyed birds. As many as 30 were spotted in December around South Dakota’s Lake Andes. ‘Thirty in one area, that’s mind-numbing,’ said Mark Robbins, an ornithologist with the University of Kansas Biodiversity Institute.

The arrival of the birds, which can top 2 feet in height with a wingspan of nearly 5 feet, is the result of a plentiful population of Arctic lemmings this summer, which led to a baby boom is sending many of the youngsters across the Northern Hemisphere.

Lemmings are snowy owls’ main food source, and the low numbers of them has led to a near absence of owls in the Arctic and a much higher frequency of sightings across the US this winter.

Google search home page revamp promotes other services

NEW YORK, 6 Jan—Google is rolling out one of its biggest home page changes to date. The revamp strips its front page of the black bar that currently runs horizontally across its top, and replaces it with a grey logo. When clicked or highlighted, it reveals seven alternative services to the site’s search page with an option to reveal a further eight. Analysts said the move was designed to promote more of the firm’s businesses without cluttering its webpage.

The new look, which was first announced last year, is only being offered to a limited number of users at the moment. A spokesman for Google said that the roll-out is designed to improve the user experience. “Constant revision and improvement is part of our overarching philosophy,” he said. “If you compare the original Google home page to today’s version, you will see that it is more focused and reader-friendly.”

Chris Green, principal technology analyst at Davies Murphy Group, said the move allowed the site to use icons without ressembling Yahoo’s busier design. “They are trying to deal with how to service all the different Google properties without making the page cluttered, because Google is always very keen to hang onto the plain minimalist front page that they have always had,” he said.

The other thing that they are doing with those menus is making the page look like their Chrome netbook operating system. “So whether you are using a Chromebook or the Google website the interface is the same.”

INTERNET

Gold sells higher for fourth day

CHICAGO, 6 Jan—Gold futures on the COMEX Division of the New York Mercantile Exchange reported a gain on Thursday, extending the metal’s rally into the fourth trading day, as a weaker euro spurred buyers of the most active gold contract for February delivery climbed 7.4 US dollars, or 0.5 percent, to 1,620.1 dollars per ounce, the highest settlement since 13 Dec. Market analysts said that the biggest influence was the weakening euro, which prompted investors to flee the euro and bought gold. The euro fell under 1.28 against dollar on Thursday as investors focused on concerns about euro zone banks and a French bond sale that was met by cold reception. Moreover, gold gained strength from safe-haven demands after British Defence Secretary said the country may take military action if Iran carries out its threat to block the Strait of Hormuz. A trader noted that gold is gradually becoming a big source of concern and people are worried what could happen next. The four-day advance, which marks the longest rally in gold this year, has added 5.2 percent to gold prices.

Silver for March delivery rose 19.9 US cents, or 0.68 percent, to 29.296 dollars per ounce. Platinum for April delivery dropped 8.3, or 0.58 percent, to 1,418 dollars per ounce.

INTERNET

A sign reading ‘Cheese Market’ is displayed at the international cheese market in Hall in Switzerland, 6 Jan. Sales of cheese collapsed in 2011 as domestic demand suffered from a prolonged economic downturn, according to the Federal Office for Agriculture.

INTERNET

Antiestrogen therapy may decrease risk for melanoma

WASHINGTON, 6 Jan—Women with breast cancer who take antiestrogen supplements may be decreasing their risk for melanoma, according to a study published Wednesday in Cancer Prevention Research, a journal of the American Association for Cancer Research.

Christine Bouchard, professor at the University of Geneva and head of the Geneva Cancer Registry, and colleagues analyzed data from 7,360 women who had breast cancer between 1980 and 2005. About half (54 percent) of these women received antiestrogen therapy. The researchers followed the patients until 2008 and recorded 34 melanoma cases during the follow-up period. Risk for melanoma was 60 percent higher among patients who did not receive antiestrogen therapy compared with patients who received antiestrogen therapy.

According to Bouchard, the increased focus on estrogen’s role in breast cancer has led scientists to start questioning what role estrogen is playing in other cancers. “These data reinforce the hypothesis that estrogens play a role in melanoma occurrence,” she said in a press release.

Bouchard said this may be due to the fact that estrogens are associated with increased levels of melanocytes and melanin production in human skin, which have been linked to early-stage melanoma. However, she cautioned against widespread antiestrogen supplementation to prevent melanoma in the general population.

“These results need to be replicated in other studies, particularly given the numerous side effects linked to this kind of drug,” said Bouchard. “Internets.”

INTERNET

Death toll from deadly rat fever outbreak in S Philippines

COTABATO, 6 Jan—The death toll from the deadly rat fever outbreak that struck flood-hit areas in southern Philippines reached 15 while hundreds were infected, local health officials said Thursday.

Five people have already died while as many as 200 were confined in hospitals in the city of Cagayan de Oro. While in the nearby city of Iligan, a hard-hit area by floods, two died and less than 100 people have been infected with the deadly disease, said regional health minister Jaime Bernadas.

Health authorities on Monday declared an outbreak of the deadly rat fever leptospirosis, a fatal animal-borne disease that can result in high fever, internal bleeding and organ failure.

The death toll from tropical storm Washi currently stands at 1,257, with many still believed missing.
Battle of the brushes in Japan

From small children to octogenarians, thousands came together in Tokyo on Thursday for a new year’s battle of the brushes in an annual national calligraphy contest. In what has long been a ritual for the start of the year, people all across Japan write down their resolutions and hopes, or good luck characters, using a traditional horse-hair brush and ink made of charcoal. This year’s contestants brushing their welcome to the Year of the Dragon included children from Fukushima prefecture, which is still struggling with the world’s worst nuclear crisis in 25 years, set off by last year’s massive
earthquake and tsunami. “I wasn’t sure if I would be able to write well, but I did better than I thought so I think it’s good,” said Natsumi Yazawa, a 14-year-old from Fukushima who travelled hundreds of kilometers to take part. Contestants, who ranged from those aged four all the way up to 85, were assigned Chinese characters such as “Spring Wing” and “Year of the Dragon” and given 24 minutes to complete their masterpieces. One of the older participants was Ensku Saotome, who said she had looked forward to taking part as it gave her energy. “I’ll be 74, and while that’s embarrassing, this gives me a chance to feel youthful again, writing with all of these children,” she said. The pieces were collected to be reviewed by judges according to rules such as their flow, line strength and angles. The winners will be announced on 22 Jan.

Closed store destroys unsold bridal gowns

Neighbours of a closed Minneapolis bridal shop said they were shocked to find the store had destroyed its leftover inventory with spray paint. Bessie Giannakakis, owner of Bessie’s Boutique, located near Priscilla of Boston in Edina, said the closed shop spray-painted “thousands of dollars of gowns” and threw them in a dumpster, KARE-TV, Minneapolis/St Paul, reported Wednesday. Judy Mjones, who works at a nearby salon, said the gowns should have been donated to “needy people.” Priscilla of Boston has always donated quality bridal gowns to a variety of charitable causes. We do not, however, donate unsaleable dresses that are damaged, soiled or in other poor condition,” company President Patrick Walsh said. The women who witnessed the gowns being disposed of said they appeared to be in good condition before they were spray-painted by workers.

Teen sleeps through plane stop

A 15-year-old boy who slept through his airline destination in Oklahoma said he had difficulty finding help when he exited the airplane in Missouri. Erik McBee and his mother, Keena, said he boarded a Southwest Airlines flight from Phoenix to Tulsa at 10:15 am 28 Dec to attend a boarding school, but he had headphones on and slept through the Tulsa stop and found himself in St Louis, the St Louis Post-Dispatch reported Thursday. McBee said he approached a man in a yellow uniform outside of the terminal at Lambert-St Louis International Airport but the man did not offer him any assistance. McBee said he had no luck with other airport personnel. The teenager said a helpful stranger gave him a ride to a police station and officers later took him back to the airport. Southwest, which said it is investigating how the count ended up incorrect when departing Tulsa, flew the teen back to Phoenix free of charge. Keena McBee said she will be driving the Eric to school in Oklahoma in the future.

Shriver and Schwarzenegger not reconciling

LOS ANGELES, 6 Jan—US television personality Maria Shriver and her estranged husband, actor Arnold Schwarzenegger, have no plans to reconcile, sources told People.com. The broadcast journalist filed for divorce from the former California governor last summer after 25 years of marriage, following Schwarzenegger’s admission he fathered a child during an extramarital affair with a member of the family’s household staff more than a decade ago. However, TMZ reported last month Shriver was having second thoughts due to her strong connection to the Catholic church, which forbids divorce. Schwarzenegger also has been pulling out all the stops in trying to win her back, the celebrity news Web site said. But that account is now being dismissed by people who say they have knowledge of the situation.

US television personality Maire Shriver and her estranged husband, actor Arnold Schwarzenegger, have no plans to reconcile, sources told People.com.

Spider-Man-Man musical breaks records

NEW YORK, 6 Jan—“Spider-Man: Turn Off The Dark” rang in the new year as the highest grossing show on Broadway, the musical’s producers said. The stage version of the iconic superhero tale, which features music by CyU2’s Bono and The Edge, set a new record for the highest single-week gross of any show in history with a total gross of $2,941,790.20, besting the previous record of $2,228,235 set just goes to show that you can’t keep a good superhero down. We are raising our glasses to our indefatigable cast and crew, and the theatergoers who watch them every night. Broadway is a very special place; we love being a small part of it.” The $70 million show began preview performances 28 Nov, 2010. It later closed for three weeks so its creative team could work out technical bugs and story issues. It could delay the opening until June at Foxwoods Theatre in New York City on 9 March, 2011—Internet.

Spider-Man-Man musical breaks records

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“Bridesmaids” in, “War Horse” out of writers awards

LOS ANGELES, 6 Jan—“Bridesmaids,” “The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo” and “The Help” were among the film nominees chosen on Thursday for annual Writers Guild Awards, but the screenwriters behind “War Horse” failed to make the cut in Hollywood’s race toward Oscars. In a list of surprises, “The Descendants” and Woody Allen’s “Midnight in Paris” also earned screenplay nominations from the Writers Guild of America (WGA), which represents film and television writers. But likely Oscar contender “The Artist” — a French-melodramatic movie in black and white — was ineligible under WGA rules, as were other high-profile films including “My Week with Marilyn” and the Margaret Thatcher movie “The Iron Lady.” Writers Guild nominations are restricted those movies made under the trade association’s rules on pay and working conditions, or pacts struck with affiliated foreign groups.

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Manchester United manager Sir Alex Ferguson insists his team can cope with the challenge of winning the Barclays Premier League despite defeat at Newcastle on Wednesday.

The champions were well below their best as they slipped to a 3-0 loss at the Sports Direct Arena, with Demba Ba and Yohan Cabaye scoring for the Magpies before a Phil Jones own goal wrapped it up.

Ferguson’s side have now lost their last two matches in the League after a shock 3-2 reverse against bottom club Blackburn at Old Trafford in their previous fixture.

And with Manchester City beating Liverpool 3-0 on Tuesday, that leaves United reverse against bottom club Blackburn at City’s Etihad Stadium on Saturday.

“It’s advantage to them, of course,” said Ferguson. “They won, we lost. But it’s not a time to panic, we’ve got the experience and the patience to cope.

“Missing a shot at this time of year can sometimes happen. We need to get the show on the road for the run-in, particularly for March and April, because they are key months.”

The Red Devils have been plagued by injury problems all season, but Ferguson is hopeful that the return of some of their senior players will enable United to get stronger as the season progresses. — Reuters

**Inter’s Marco Branca: No Wesley Sneijder talks with Manchester City**

**Wesley Sneijder**

Milan, 6 Jan—Inter sporting director Marco Branca has rejected suggestions that his side is locked in talks with Manchester City over the transfer of Wesley Sneijder to England.

British sources had claimed that Inter was willing to use the Dutchman as a makeweight in a deal for Carlos Tevez, who is desperate to find a new club before the end of the month.

“There were no discussions whatsoever regarding Wesley Sneijder today during our meeting in London with representatives of Manchester City,” Branca told Inter’s website.

AC Milan seem to be hopeful that the return of some of their senior players will enable United to get stronger as the season progresses. — Reuters

**FIFA targets informers to help fight match-fixing**

ZURICH, 6 Jan—FIFA is working with informers inside organized crime syndicates to help protect the World Cup from match-fixing and betting plots.

FIFA’s security director Chris Eaton outlined a strategy on Thursday for soccer’s world governing body to attempt to stop the fixing of international matches that results in millions of dollars in profit.

“What we’re doing now is developing sources both in criminal organizations and football that will advise us,” Eaton said in an interview published by FIFA’s website.

“We are creating a hostile environment for match-fixers to make them realize we will expose them, name them, and make them subject to investigation somewhere in the world.”

FIFA’s pro-active plan to get information from inside crime syndicates is a direct response to its 208 national member bodies being targeted to help fixing plots.

“The infiltration of serious criminals into our associations and football generally is the most pressing issue,” Eaton said.

FIFA believes crime gangs have received inside help from soccer officials to organize international matches and select corrupt referees.

**Chelsea target Gary Cahill fires in Bolton’s winner at Everton**

LONDON, 6 Jan—Bolton midfielder Owen Coyle received special praise for defender Gary Cahill after his late winner in the 2-1 victory over Everton at Goodison Park.

Cahill’s 78th-minute strike was enough to earn three points for the Trotters and move them off the bottom of the Barclays Premier League to within a point of QPR in 17th place.

The England centre-back has been in talks with Chelsea over a potential move to Stamford Bridge since the transfer window re-opened, and Coyle believes it reflects well on Cahill that he has still been able to produce such good performances in a Bolton shirt.

“It hasn’t been easy for Gary when it is a club of Chelsea’s stature and a fee has been agreed,” said Coyle. “I can’t say whether this will be Gary’s last game for Bolton.”

The Trotters went 1-0 down at Everton thanks to a freak goal from Toffees keeper Tim Howard, who saw his second-half clearance get caught in the wind, bounce once and loop over Bolton stopper Adam Bogdan.

Coyle, who then watched David Ngog level before Cahill’s late winner, says he has never seen anything like it all the time he has been in football. — Reuters

**Roger Federer, Nadal reach semis in Qatar**

DOHA, 6 Jan—Defending champion Roger Federer extended his winning streak to 20 straight matches Thursday to reach the semifinals of the Qatar Open, despite being stretched by Andreas Seppi of Italy to three sets in a 6-3, 5-7, 6-4 victory.

The third-ranked Federer set up a rematch of last year’s semifinal against Jo-Wilfried Tsonga. The sixth-ranked Frenchman defeated Albert Ramos of Spain 6-2, 6-1.

Rafael Nadal also reached the semifinals, playing some of his best tennis this week in dispatching of Mikhail Youzhny 6-4, 6-4. He will face Gael Monfils, who won the last four games in each set to beat Viktor Troicki of Serbia 6-2, 6-3 and ensure that the top four seeds reached the semifinals for the second year in a row.

The 30-year-old Federer, who is 26-3 at the Qatar Open and is looking to win his fourth title in Doha, hasn’t lost since falling to Novak Djokovic in the US Open semifinals. — Reuters

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December (23, centre-back) Vasco da Gama: Tall, strong and very quick. A giant in defence who also likes to make an attacking contribution. Linked with Real Madrid.

LEANDRO DAMIAO (22, forward) Internacional: Tall target man who enjoyed an wonderful 2011. Has been attracting interest from Tottenham, Arsenal and Juventus.

CARLOS LUIQUE (18, winger) Colón: Displays pace and tricky dribbling skills. A hit in the world Youth Cup, which Brazil won, the Argentine has been doing well at senior level.

LUCA OCAMPO (17, midfielder/forward) River Plate: Tall, dynamic and skilful and can play up front or in midfield. Forward (19, forward) Santos: Outstandingly talented wonderkid whose desire for a move may have been boosted by the manager's decision to promote him back to the First Division.

Potential South American Movers . . .

CHRISTIAN ERIKSEN (19, forward) Santos: Outrageously talented wonderkid whose desire for a move may have been boosted by the manager's decision to promote him back to the First Division.

WESLEY SNEIJDER isn't clear. His sky-high wages and a desire for a move may have been boosted by the manager's decision to promote him back to the First Division.

DEDE (23, centre-back) Vasco da Gama: Tall, strong and very quick. A giant in defence who also likes to make an attacking contribution. Linked with Real Madrid.

ANDY POLO (22, midfielder/forward) Universitario: Strong and stocky bucket-fast salary stricker who made a huge impression in 2011. The appealing financial positioning of his Peruvian club could force a sale.

Potential European Movers . . .

LEWIS SNELDRIDGE (27, midfielder) Inter Milan: Inter may decide to cash-in on their Dutch star but a destination isn’t clear. His sky-high wages and a desire for a move may have been boosted by the manager's decision to promote him back to the First Division.

Potential South American Movers . . .

RASMUS ELM (23, midfielder) AZ Alkmaar: The talented Swede has attracted plenty of interest from Premier League and Serie A clubs, including Arsenal, Manchester United and Spurs.

MARKO RÅĐA (22, midfielder/forward) Borussia Monchengladbach: Has made a tremendous start to the season and scored 10 goals in the Bundesliga so far. May favour a move to German giants Bayern Munich.

NANDO RASHMIQRI (20, midfielder) FC Basel: One of the most promising young talents in Manchester United in the Champions League and both United and Liverpool may target the 180m-rated player.

Loans disbursed to vendors in Shwegu

Shwegu: 6 Jan—Sihan Thayar Yaw Bank Ltd disbursed loans to vendors in Shwegu Township on 25 January. Executive Officer of Township Development Affairs Committee U Khin Aung Ni explained purpose of disbursing the loans, and then presented K 20 million to 100 vendors.

Monsoon paddy harvested on model plot

Mandalay: 6 Jan—Model plot of Ayeayarvin strain monsoon paddy was harvested in Myin Pyai Nanda field of Champinaythay Township on 29 December. Township departmental officials supervised the harvesting task. The model plot produced 90 baskets of paddy per acre. Local authorities and farmers participated in harvesting works.

Gravel road commissioned in Wakaema

Wakaema: 6 Jan—In honour of the 64th Independence Day, a gravel road to Kyunghon Village was put in service in Wakaema Township on 3 January. Local authorities formally opened the new road. The gravel road, 1550 feet long, was constructed at a cost of K 9.6 million by local people and Township Development Affairs Committee.

Summary of observations recorded at 09:30 hr MST:

Weather for 6th January, 2012:

Forecast valid until evening of 7th January 2012: Likelihood of isolated light rains in Upper Sittany, Mandalay and Taunggyi Regions, Kachin and Shan (Eastern and Northern) States and weather will be partly cloudy in the remaining Regions and States. Degree of certainty is (60%).

Paddy to be harvested in Myanmar

The Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation has directed the Department of Irrigation to prepare for the harvest of the monsoon paddy. The Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation directed the Department of Irrigation to prepare for the harvest of the monsoon paddy. The Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation directed the Department of Irrigation to prepare for the harvest of the monsoon paddy.

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Agricultural knowledge disseminated to farmers from Moby Village in Pekhon Township

NAV P TAW, 6 Jan—Union Minister for Agriculture and Irrigation U Myint Hlaing met a excursion group of 54 Kayan national farmers from Moby Village-tract in Pekhon Township, Shan State (South) at mechanized farming 500-acre plantation in Nyaungbinyi in Pekhon Township this morning and explained production and cultivation of Palethwe special high-yield hybrid paddy strain.

Next, Deputy Minister U Ohn Than and departmental heads presented the farmers with Palethwe paddy strains and the Union Minister, with samples of Palethwe rice. Then, the excursion group studied production of Palethwe paddy strains, farm machinery produced by the Industry Ministry, thriving of Palethwe hybrid paddy plantations and fruits and vegetables grown in greenhouses.

Afterwards, the Union Minister in meeting with the farmers at the briefing hall stressed the need for use of quality strains and scientific cultivation of paddy with the use of natural fertilizers.

Later, the Union Minister and party visited the 100-acre plantation of Tegyigon region advanced farmland reclamation project in Zabuthiri Township and the 40-acre plantation in Gyaing Village in Dekkhinathiri Township. He then inspected research plantations of dragon fruits and left necessary instructions.—MNA

One-month-old white baby elephant adds fun to elephant park

NAV P TAW, 6 Jan—Born on 27 November last year at Yadana Elephant Shed in the precinct of Nay Pyi Taw Uppatasanti Pagoda, daughter of Baddawaddy (27) has now over one month old. Living in happiness and in pink, she has now grown to three feet and two inches in height and four feet and six inches in circumference.

The white baby elephant lends visual pleasure to the white elephant park, making the visitors amused with her lovely manners. Her mother is breastfeeding her who loves playing with the ball.

The Ministry of Environmental Conservation and Forestry is taking close care of the mother and the kid. MNA

Road inaugurated in Mudon to hail 64th Anniversary Independence Day

YANGON, 6 Jan — As a gesture of hailing the 64th Anniversary Independence Day, a road which was built on self-reliant basic was commissioned into service in Mudon township on 2 January.

The asphalt road linking two villages was inaugurated by Chief Minister of Mon State U Ohn Myint. The road is 5470 ft long and 12 ft wide and the road was built at the cost of K58.5 million contributed by the local people.

After the ceremony, the State Chief Minister visited the rice plantation on the irrigated field of the Central Agricultural Farm in Mudon, Mon State. MNA

Myanmar, China to cooperate in science and technology sector

PAGE 2

Researchers create healthier cigarette

Ferguson retains faith in title hopes

PAGE 4