It is very important for every one of the nation regardless of the place he lives to have strong Union Spirit.

Only Union Spirit is the true patriotism all the nationalities will have to safeguard.

**True patriotism**

**Vice-President Thiha Thura U Tin Aung Myint Oo receives US Special Rep**

Nay Pyi Taw, 10 Jan—Vice-President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar Thiha Thura U Tin Aung Myint Oo received US Special Representative and Policy Coordinator for Myanmar Ambassador Mr Derek Mitchell at the Credentials Hall of the President Residence here at 11 am today.

Also present at the call together with Vice-President Thiha Thura U Tin Aung Myint Oo were Deputy Minister for Home Affairs Brig.-Gen Kyaw Zan Myint, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs U Maung Myint, Director-General at the President Office U Min Zaw and officials.

US Special Representative and Policy Coordinator for Myanmar Ambassador Mr Derek Mitchell was accompanied by Chargé d’Affaires ai of US Embassy in Myanmar Mr Michael E Thurston and embassy staff.

They frankly exchanged views on bilateral relations and cooperation.—MNA

**US Special Rep meets UEC Chairman**

**Commander-in-Chief calls on Chief of Defence Forces of Royal Thai Armed Forces**

Tarmacking of Shwebo-Sabenantha road section inspected

**Nicotine therapy doesn’t help smokers quit**

**Significant night temperature**

Heho (4º C)
Haka (4º C)
Pinlaung (5º C)
PERSPECTIVES

Wednesday, 11 January, 2012

Everyone has the duty to follow civic rules

A city once known for its tidiness and cleanliness can become a dirty one due to a lack of proper maintenance. Yangon, the commercial capital of Myanmar, used to be the best city in Southeast Asia. Yet with the passage of time, its city characteristics have declined with a want of maintenance and good discipline.

As times flew alongside undisciplined people, Yangon has become an ugly city. So, there have come calls for making the city clean and tidy and holding everybody accountable for beautifying.

It is not an easy task, indeed. Although a series of civic rules have been introduced in successive eras, the project didn’t come along the expected way. It is the duty of all city dwellers to realize the ambition and supervisors are responsible as well.

It has been learnt lately from the news that according to the Yangon City sanitation and beautifying project, action will be taken against reckless disposal of garbage, roadside urinating and defecating and spitting. Interested retired civil servants will be assigned duty to watch such incidents and paid 10 percent of a fine.

This system has already been practised by a neighbouring country. Senior citizens take their pride to be responsible for keeping their own country clean and tidy. In a country that once copied Myanmar, it so happened that if a person threw out a piece of rubbish, another would pick it up. It is a great pride for the one who picked the garbage up. But it is a shame for the thrower.

Public notices must constantly be issued so that the people can respect and follow the civic rules and disciplines.

A city being clean and tidy brings glory and grace to its nation as well as its people. Overall, everyone has a responsibility to respect and follow civic rules.

INNOCENT CIVILIAN INJURED IN KIA’S MINE BLAST

NAV PTY TAW, 10 Jan—Maung Nyi Paung, 21, villager of Shaduzuk Village in Phakant Township of Kachin State was injured in mine blast as he stepped a mine planted by KIA (Kachin) Group near Moekang Creek on his way back home from gold-panning site around 11.30 pm on 8 January.

The mine victim was injured under his right armpit with his left toe cut off. The victim was rushed to Tanai People’s Hospital by authorities concerned who were giving necessary assistance.—MNA

LOCAL SPORTS

MYANMAR SHOOTERS TO COMPETE IN KUWAIT INTERNATIONAL SHOOTING GRAND PRIX

YANGON, 10 Jan—The Myanmar shooting team led by President of Myanmar Shooting Federation U Htet Nyi will take part in the Kuwait International Shooting Grand Prix to be held in Kuwait in March 2012.

The team will comprise shooters Maung Kyue, Nay Htet Aung, Lin Aung, Aung Nyein Ni and Aye Aye Thin. —MNA

A-1 CUP U-21 INVITATIONAL FOOTBALL TOURNAMENT HELD

Myanmar Allin

US SPECIAL REP MEETS UEC CHAIRMAN

NAY PYI TAW, 10 Jan—US Special Representative and Policy Coordinator for Myanmar Ambassador Mr Derek Mitchell and party called on Union Election Commission Chairman U Tin Aye at the election commission here this morning.

Also present together with the commission chairman were commission members. They discussed matters related to by-elections, political parties and establishing friendly ties between the institutions of the two countries. —MNA

FOUNDATION STONE OF NEW LIBRARY LAID IN DEKKHINATHIRI TSP

NAY PYI TAW, 10 Jan—The foundation stone of the new library was laid this morning in Htantabin Village, Kyubin Village-tract in Dekkhinathiri Township, Nay Pyi Taw Council Area, attended by Union Minister for Agriculture and Irrigation U Myint Hlaing, abbot of Htantabin monastery Bhaddanta Kavala, donces U Maung Shein, U Khin Maung Aye of KMA Co and U Thein Aung of Shwe Pyi Tat Hotel.

Union Minister U Myint Hlaing and wife Daw Khin Thant Zin presented uniforms to 12 teachers who are teaching Buddhist culture, English and computer science at the free school of Htantabin monastery.

The Union Minister and party then inspected 63-day-old hybrid Palethwal paddy plantations on 40-acre farmer educative farm near Kyaing Village in Dekkhinathiri Township and 369-acre farm in Ahlyino Village in Pyinuma Township. He there called his staff to provide farmers with on-farm technical assistance.

He then visited 10000-acre mechanized farming project in Zabathiri Township and 500-acre Nyaungbingyisu farmer educative farm in Pobbathiri Township. —MNA

DY CULTURE MINISTER RECEIVES ASIA SOCIETY VICE-PRESIDENT

The meeting focused on cooperation in arts, museum, library and periodical fields.

Also present at the call were Director-General of Fine Arts Department under the Ministry of Culture U Yan Naing Oo, Director-General of Archaeology, National Museum and Library Department U Kyaw Oo Lwin, Director-General of Information and Public Relations Department under the Ministry of Information U Ye Htut and Head of Office of the Ministry of Culture U Aung Naing Myint. —MNA

MYTHA, 10 Jan—In commemoration of the 64th Anniversary Independence Day, the final match of the 9th A-1 Cup U-21 Invitational Football Tournament was held at the sports ground in Thalun Model Village in Mythta Township on 4 January.

A-1 football team secured the champion with a 5-3 victory over Kon Village.

Pyithu Hlutaw representative U Kyi Maung, Mandalay Region Hlutaw representative U Aung Kyi, local authorities and departmental officials presented medals and cash awards to the winners.

Daw Kyin Xu and son U Soe Nyunt of sponsor A-1 Brokerage awarded championship trophy to first prize winning A-1 team. —MNA
Possible tornado damages Houston-area mall

HOUSTON, 10 Jan—City roads were flooded and thousands of Houston residents lost power Monday after powerful thunderstorms plowed through the area, with a possible tornado damaging and shutting down a nearby mall.

The skies over Houston turned pitch black as the massive storms raced through the drought-stricken area, dropping several inches of rain over a two-hour period. Roads rapidly flooded and drivers became stranded on major arteries that connect the city’s sprawling neighbourhoods and suburbs.

In Texas City, a town about 40 miles southeast of Houston, a possible tornado damaged the roof and wall of the Mall of the Mainland, and Fire Chief Joe Gorman evacuated and shut down the building. In North and West Texas, meanwhile, the National Weather Service said cold, steady downpour will drop an inch or two of much-needed rain.

The drought, however, is far from over. “We’re not going to end the drought this winter even if we have above-normal rainfall,” said State Climatologist John Nielsen-Gammon. According to preliminary data, Texas got about 14.39 inches of rain in 2011, compared to a normal average of 29.39 inches.

Guantanamo closure hopes fade as prison turns 10

SAN JUAN, 10 Jan—Suleiman al-Nahdi waits with dozens of other prisoners in a seemingly permanent state of limbo five years after he was cleared for release from Guantanamo Bay. “I wonder if the US government wants to keep us here forever,” the 37-year-old al-Nahdi wrote in a recent letter to his lawyers.

Open for business on 11 Jan, 2002, the prison seems more established than ever. The deadline set by President Barack Obama to close Guantanamo came and went two years ago. No detainee has left in a year because of restrictions on transfers and indefinite military detention is now enshrined in US law.

In this 2 March, 2011 file photo police investigate the scene of a gunfight where shots at US soldiers were fired in the area outside Frankfurt airport, Germany. Prosecutors are asking for a sentence of life in prison for the alleged Islamic extremist who has admitted killing two US airmen at the Frankfurt airport last year.

In this 11 Jan, 2002 file photo, released by the US Department of Defence, detainees wearing orange jump suits sit in a holding area as military police patrol during in-processing at the temporary detention facility Camp X-Ray on Guantanamo Bay Naval Base in Cuba. Open for 10 years on Wednesday, the prison seems more established than ever.

Malaysian customs foils plot to smuggle in 500 kilogrammes worth of elephant tusks

KUALA LUMPUR, 10 Jan—Malaysian custom officers seized a container with 500 kilogrammes of elephant tusks at a major port on Monday and foiled what appeared to be an unprecedented attempt by an international syndicate to smuggle the tusks into the country. Selangor State Customs director Azis Yaacob was quoted by local media as saying the tusks, worth 2.4 million ringgit (764,000 US dollars), were hidden in 53 television sets box in a container that arrived at Port Klang from Cape Town, South Africa. "The goods were declared as polyester and nylon strand matting in the ship’s bill of lading. The boxes were kept at the back of the container, along with some used tyres," Azis was quoted as saying. Police had seized 12 barrels of elephant tusks placed in a shipping container at Port Klang on Monday, in one of several busts in the past month which custom officers said was part of a crackdown.

In this 11 Jan, 2002 file photo, released by the US Department of Defence, detainees wearing orange jump suits sit in a holding area as military police patrol during in-processing at the temporary detention facility Camp X-Ray on Guantanamo Bay Naval Base in Cuba. Open for 10 years on Wednesday, the prison seems more established than ever. The deadline set by President Barack Obama to close Guantanamo came and went two years ago. No detainee has left in a year because of restrictions on transfers, and indefinite military detention is now enshrined in US law.

In this 11 Jan, 2002 file photo, released by the US Department of Defence, detainees wearing orange jump suits sit in a holding area as military police patrol during in-processing at the temporary detention facility Camp X-Ray on Guantanamo Bay Naval Base in Cuba. Open for 10 years on Wednesday, the prison seems more established than ever. The deadline set by President Barack Obama to close Guantanamo came and went two years ago. No detainee has left in a year because of restrictions on transfers, and indefinite military detention is now enshrined in US law.

NATO neutralizes two pirate mother ships off coast of Oman, Somalia

NAIROBI, 10 Jan—NATO’s counter piracy taskforce said on Monday it has successfully neutralized two ocean going dhows that had been pirated over the past three days off the coast of Somalia and the southern Arabian coasts.

NATO said in the first incident last Friday, the USS Carney acting on intelligence from other counter piracy dhows that had been pirated over the past three days off the coast of Somalia and Oman. NATO’S Counter Piracy Taskforce said in a statement. “They would like to send a message that the prisoners of Guantanamo still reject the injustice of their imprisonment,” said Kassem, a law professor at the City University of New York.

In this 2 March, 2011 file photo police investigate the scene of a gunfight where shots at US soldiers were fired in the area outside Frankfurt airport, Germany. Prosecutors are asking for a sentence of life in prison for the alleged Islamic extremist who has admitted killing two US airmen at the Frankfurt airport last year.

Pakistan bomb kills 35 in deadliest attack

ISLAMABAD, 10 Jan—A remote-controlled bomb blast killed 35 people and wounded more than 60 others on Tuesday in the deadliest attack in months in the Taliban-hit tribal region of northwest Pakistan.

The explosion took place in a market in Jamrud, one of the towns of the troubled Khyber tribal region, which is also used to serve as the main supply route for NATO forces operating in Afghanistan.

“The total number of deaths in the blast is 35 while 66 people were wounded, and of them the condition of 11 is critical,” a senior administration official, Shakeel Khan Umarmazi, told AFP. Another top official in Khyber, Mutahir Zeb, said the target of the attack was not immediately clear. “According to initial information, it was a remote controlled device planted in a passerby pickup van,” he said. Pakistan’s remote and lawless northwestern region is a stronghold of Taliban and Al-Qaeda operatives and other militants opposed to the US-led war on terrorism.

Militants largely based in the tribal border lands have carried out bomb and gun attacks for the last four years, 4,700 people across Pakistan since July 2007. But the market attack was the first major Islamist militant attack in Pakistan since a suicide bomber killed 46 people, targeting anti-Taleban militants at a funeral in the northwestern District of Lower Dir on 15 September.

Pakistan has battled a homegrown insurgency for years with more than 3,000 soldiers killed in the battle against militancy. On Monday, Pakistani authorities recovered the bodies of 13 killed in an exchange of fire between Pakistani soldiers following a clash two weeks ago in the tribal belt. An official with the military’s media wing said the soldiers had been missing in Orakzai District since 21 December. On Tuesday, there were no immediate details of casualties.
Cholesterol meds raise diabetes risk in women

NEW YORK, 10 Jan—Post-menopausal women who take their cholesterol-lowering drugs are at a higher risk of developing diabetes than women who do not take the popular drugs, known as statins, researchers have said in a US study on Monday. The risk was apparent even after researchers adjusted for variables such as age, race/ethnicity and body mass index, said the study in the Archives of Internal Medicine, a publication of the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA).

“The link appeared regardless of what type of statin, or what dosage, the women were taking, said the study which included 153,000 women with an average age of 63. The researchers from the Mayo Clinic in Minnesota called for more study on the matter but said in the meantime there was no need to revise the guidelines for statin use in people with diabetes, pointing out that statins aim to fix the negative heart consequences of diabetes.

“A person has their cholesterol levels checked at a clinic. Post-menopausal women who take medication to lower their cholesterol face a higher risk of getting diabetes than women who do not take the popular drugs, known as statins, said a US study on Monday.”

Electronic health records improve nursing

PHILADELPHIA, 10 Jan—US nurses working with electronic health records consistently reported improved nursing care and better health outcomes, researchers say.

Lead author Ann Kutney-Lee and co-author Deena Kelly, both of the University of Pennsylvania School of Nursing, said the study involved more than 16,000 nurses working at 316 hospitals in four states.

The study, published in the Journal of Nursing, found having a basic electronic health records system was associated with better outcomes independently of nurse staffing — indicating that both play an important role in quality of care.

In addition, nurses in hospitals with fully implemented basic electronic health records were significantly less likely to report unfavorable patient safety issues, frequent medication errors and lack of quality of care, the study said.—Reuters

Nicotine therapy doesn’t help smokers quit

NEW YORK, 10 Jan—Gums, patches and nasal sprays that supply smokers with nicotine do not help people quit cigarettes over the long term any better than going it alone, a US study said on Monday.

The research by the Harvard University School of Public Health followed 787 adults in the state of Massachusetts who had recently quit smoking, and found that over time just as many relapsed after nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) as without — about a third. “This study shows that using NRT is no more effective in helping people stop smoking cigarettes in the long term than trying to quit on one’s own,” said lead author Hillil Alpert, a research scientist at Harvard.

Study participants were surveyed over three time periods: 2001-2002, 2003-2004, and 2005-2006. Not only were relapse rates about the same among those who used NRT and those who didn’t, the study found that heavily dependent smokers who took NRT without professional therapy were twice as likely to relapse as those who did not use NRT.

“This may indicate that some heavily dependent smokers perceive NRT as a sort of ‘magic’ pill, and upon realizing it is not, they find themselves without support in their quitting efforts, doomed to failure,” said the study in the journal Tobacco Control.—Reuters

SEC wants banks to say more on European debt exposure

GENEVA, 10 Jan—The Securities and Exchange Commission has urged banks to publish more details about their exposure to European sovereign debt, a factor in the recent run-up of the futures brokerage MF Global Holdings Ltd. In guidance issued on Friday, the regulator’s Division of Corporation Finance said disclosures by publicly-traded financial institutions have been “inconsistent in both substance and presentation.” It said this could make it harder for investors to discern how much risk the banks are taking, both individually and relative to each other, and how the exposures will affect operating results or financial health.

The SEC urged that banks reveal direct and indirect exposures “separately by country, segregated between sovereign and non-sovereign exposures.” It said banks should also provide more details on hedging, through such instruments as credit default swaps, and sums they might need to raise if forced to close out their positions.

“In determining which countries are covered by this new guidance, regulators should focus on those experiencing significant economic, fiscal and/or political strains such that the likelihood of default would be higher than would be anticipated when such factors don’t exist,” the SEC said.—Reuters

Swatch sees more growth after record sales in 2011

ZURICH, 10 Jan—Swatch Group, the world’s largest watchmaker, shrugged off the impact of the strong Swiss franc to post record sales in 2011 and said it is confident of more growth in 2012. The group, which is best known for its colorful plastic Swatch watches, said on Tuesday sales rose 21.7 percent at constant rates in 2011 compared with the previous year to a new record of 7.143 billion Swiss francs ($7.50 billion).

This compares with a forecast for 6.8 billion francs in 2011 sales by analysts at Kepler. Dampening expectations of a slowdown in the watch industry, Swatch said in a statement it experienced the strongest turnover in the group’s history in December 2011, while all regions and price segments had got off to a positive start in January. But analysts cautioned sales growth could be weakened slightly compared to the first half. “The outlook this statement is not explicitly bullish as the company has been in the past,” Kepler analyst Jon Cox said in a statement.

By 0832 GMT shares in Swatch were up 3.4 percent, outperforming a 1.1 percent firmer Swiss franc. Financial major Swiss banks had closed against the euro and dollar and flirted with parity against the single currency in August.—Reuters

More policy support seen as China import growth flags

BEIJING, 10 Jan—China’s imports and exports grew at their slowest pace in more than two years in December as foreign and domestic demand ebbed, data showed on Tuesday, bolstering expectations of more policy action from Beijing to support the world’s second-largest economy.

Annual export growth of 13.4 percent in December was in line with expectations, albeit the slowest since November 2009 except for a February distortion caused by Lunar New Year holidays.

But it was a big downside surprise for import growth that caused investor attention, sinking to a 26-month low of just 11.8 percent year-on-year versus the 17 percent forecast by economists in the benchmark Reuters poll. “We thought imports would surprise quite a bit on the downside and the implication is negative. Domestic demand is slowing down very quickly,” Zhang Zhiwei, chief Chinese economist at Nomura in Hong Kong, told Reuters.

Zhang said the scale of drops in annual import growth for domestic consumption, at 13.5 percent in December versus November’s 27.4 percent, and imports for processing trade at 6.2 percent versus about 11 percent in November, were “unusual.” That means going forward for the next couple of months exports will decline with a very high certainty,” he said.

“This trade data basically confirms our view that the first quarter is going to be very tough.” The December trade data is a key link in a series of activity indicators to be published by China over the next two weeks, including fourth-quarter, gross domestic product that is likely to show the world’s second-largest economy suffering its worst quarter in 2 years.—Reuters

Gums, patches and nasal sprays that supply smokers with nicotine do not help people quit cigarettes over the long term any better than going it alone, a US study said on Monday. A man rides his motorcycle past shipping containers at the Port of Shanghai on 14 February, 2011.

A man rides his motorcycle past shipping containers at the Port of Shanghai on 14 February, 2011.
Europe’s Vega rocket launch set for early February

PARIS, 10 Jan—The maiden voyage of Europe’s Vega rocket, designed to launch small payloads of about 1.5 tonnes into low-Earth orbit, is set for 9 February, the head of the European Space Agency said Monday.—INTERNET

The Vega rocket is seen in Kourou, French Guiana, in 2007. The maiden voyage of Europe’s Vega rocket, designed to launch small payloads of about 1.5 tonnes into low-Earth orbit, is set for 9 February, the head of the European Space Agency said Monday. (Image 49x111 to 208x201)

The ESA had hoped to put the first Vega into space as early as 2009, and in October set a 30 January date for the light rocket’s first voyage. “Goodness knows it is a very difficult campaign. Everything is new,” Dordain said, adding that he was confident the new date would hold.

Bringing Vega on line means that Europe will have completed its three-pronged launch capability.

Heavy-lifter Ariane ES can hoist the 20 tonnes Automated Transfer Vehicle (ATV) supply module to the International Space Station, while the Ariane ECA is designed mainly to lift communications satellites weighing up to 10 tonnes to geostationary orbit.

The Russian workhorse, Soyuz rocket, launched for the first time from the Ariane site in October, carries mid-sized loads.—INTERNET

Heavy-lifter Ariane ES can hoist the 20 tonnes Automated Transfer Vehicle (ATV) supply module to the International Space Station, while the Ariane ECA is designed mainly to lift communications satellites weighing up to 10 tonnes to geostationary orbit. (Image 208x201 to 349x281)

The result is an “intricate cosmic web of dark matter and galaxies that spans more than one billion light years,” said the findings by astronomers at the University of British Columbia and University of Edinburgh. “It is fascinating to be able to ‘see’ the dark matter using space-time distortion,” said Ludovic Van Waerbeke of UBC who worked on the project, known as the Canada-France-Hawaii Telescope Lensing Survey (CFHTLenS).

“It gives us privileged access to this mysterious mass in the universe which cannot be observed otherwise.” It looks like “a network of gigantic dense (white) and empty (dark) regions, where the largest white regions are about the size of several Earth moons on the sky,” said the findings, presented at the annual meeting of the American Astronomical Society in Austin, Texas.—INTERNET

Intel to launch biggest ad campaign in eight years

LONDON, 10 Jan—International astronomers said Monday they have created the largest map of dark matter ever observed in the universe, using data from poten...
China launches Ziyuan III satellite

TAIYUAN, 10 Jan—China successfully launched the Ziyuan III satellite Monday from the Taiyuan Satellite Launch Centre in northern Shanxi Province. The satellite, a high-resolution remote-sensing satellite for civilian use, was launched at 11:17 am aboard a Long March 4B rocket, according to a statement from the centre.

The satellite, weighing 2650 kg, entered an orbit of 500 km above the Earth about 12 minutes after it was launched. It has a designed life expectancy of five years.

According to the centre, the satellite is tasked with offering services to aid the country’s land-resources surveys, natural-disaster prevention, agriculture development, environment, water-resources management, and urban planning. The rocket also carried a satellite from Luxembourg, according to the launch centre.

The orbiter was developed and produced by the China Academy of Space Technology, a subsidiary of China Aerospace Science and Technology Corporation (CASC). The Long March 4B rocket is developed by Shanghai Academy of Spaceflight Technology, another CASC subsidiary.

China successfully launched the Ziyuan III satellite Monday from the Taiyuan Satellite Launch Centre in northern Shanxi Province. —Xinhua

Record-setting sales for Jaguar Land Rover China

BEIJING, 10 Jan—Jaguar Land Rover (JLR) China sales exceeded 42,000 units for the first time in 2011 as it equaled, then surpassed, its previous sales record in just the first nine months of the year. The company has registered exponential growth in deliveries since first entering the China market, when only a few hundred vehicles were sold. Surpassing its 2011 target for exports to China of 40,000 vehicles, the auto company also made a significant contribution to Sino-UK economic and trade cooperation. Its final tally of 42,063 vehicles represents growth of 61 percent over 2010, outperforming the overall average in the China luxury auto sector. Jaguar set a single-month high with 945 cars sold in December alone. Land Rover delivered 16,087 vehicles last year, a 54 percent sales increase over 2010.

“JLR China’s strategy and investments have led to breakthrough growth and have established us as one of the leading luxury car manufacturers in this market,” said Bob Grace, the company’s president. “Building on our momentum, we will continue to pursue strong and steady growth with our new Long-term commitment to China. In this endeavor, we will provide our customers with more value and strive to contribute to an even more prosperous and sustainable auto industry in China.” —Xinhua

Indian auto sector ‘to pick up next year’

MUMBAI, 10 Jan—Sales of new cars in India are likely to pick up in the next financial year, an industry body predicted on Tuesday, after months of flattish growth due to high borrowing costs and fuel prices.

The Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM) estimated that car sales would grow by 11 to 13 percent in 2012-13, well above the zero to two percent growth it currently expects this fiscal year. “The current quarter and the next fiscal year should be better,” SIAM senior director Sugato Sen told AFP. Sen said he expected India’s central bank to announce “some policy measures” in coming months that would help boost economic growth and kick-start demand for cars.

India, which has been one of the world’s fastest growing car markets in recent years, saw sales slump by 24 percent year-on-year in October, the biggest slump in more than a decade. Since November, car sales have improved slightly but remain subdued with many potential buyers dying to defer their purchases or cancel them altogether because of cost, loans and rising fuel costs.

The cost of borrowing has risen due to high inflation, which the Reserve Bank of India has tried to rein in by raising interest rates 13 times since March 2010 until past the last month. New car sales in India rose 8.5 percent year-on-year to 1,59,325 in December, up from 1,46,856 in the same period in 2010, as the industry showed further signs of a recovery from its worst slump late last year, SIAM data showed.

Scalpers dial up trouble for iPhone release

BEIJING, 10 Jan—Conflicts among hundreds of scalpers raring to stock up on the new iPhone 4S are casting a shadow over the gadget’s launch on the Chinese mainland on Friday.

The over the weekend, scalpers from two groups bickered and shoved each other when standing in line to purchase iPhone 4S at Apple’s Sanlitun store, said witnesses. Workers from two Apple stores in Beijing told China Daily the stores have not started online bookings for the iPhone 4S so far.

“More than 1,000 of us have gathered to buy all the available iPhone 4S this morning,” said a scalper hawking the phone outside the Sanlitun store on Sunday. “We’ll come again on Friday for iPhone 4S. You’ll have no hope of getting an iPhone 4 or 4S from the store, but only from us.” The scalpers are asking 4,450 yuan (705 US dollars) for an 8-gigabyte iPhone 4S and 5,450 yuan for a smuggled iPhone 4S.

An Apple employee at the Sanlitun store who declined to give her name told China Daily on Monday that the store was aware the scalpers may be planning to besiege the store to sell the phone right after the launch, and the store has prepared for that. Calls to the public relations office of Apple China went straight to voice mail. Police of the Sanlitun police station refused China Daily’s interview request.—Xinhua

India auto sector

Handicapped children made a debut of their pantomime named Chasing the Sun in Zhengzhou, capital of central China’s Henan Province, on 9 Jan, 2012.—Xinhua

China, India should make more efforts to develop economic ties

NEW DELHI, 10 Jan—Chinese ambassador to India Zhang Yan on Monday proposed that China and India make more efforts to develop economic ties. At a meeting on China-India relations attended by Indian National Security Advisor S. Menon, the ambassador said the Chinese side is fully aware of the necessity to narrow the trade gap between the two countries, in order to encourage mutual investment and increase imports and exports.

China will take measures to increase the import of Indian products which have market demand in China. Both cooperation should not be limited in trade only,” said the ambassador. He suggested that China and India should diversify their trade structure, expand the scope and items, and increase the technical content and added value to the products, while expanding into financial, service and investment sectors. The envoy said China and India should initiate policy dialogue and coordinate their economic development strategy in order to achieve sustainable growth of respective economy, encourage mutual investment, consider the free trade agreement or regional trade arrangement, and increase tourism cooperation.

Jaguar Land Rover China’s strategy and investments have led to breakthrough growth and have established us as one of the leading luxury car manufacturers in China.” —Bob Grace, company president

China, Kazakhstan hail sound development of bilateral ties

ASTANA, 10 Jan—Chen Zhili, special envoy of Chinese President Hu Jintao, met here Monday with Kazakhstan Prime Minister Karim Masimov on further strengthening bilateral relations. Chen, vice-chairwoman of the Standing Committee of China’s National People’s Congress, said China and Kazakhstan opened a new chapter in relations when the two countries established diplomatic ties in January 1992. Bilateral relations have enjoyed rapid and comprehensive development in the past two decades, making contributions not only to the development of the two countries but also to peace and stability of the region and the world as a whole, she said.

Last year, Hu and Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev jointly announced that China and Kazakhstan would develop a comprehensive strategic partnership, which further broadened the prospects of the development of bilateral relations, Chen said. China would make concerted efforts with Kazakhstan to continuously enhance political trust, deepen cooperation in an all-around way, further shore up bilateral relations and bring real benefits for the two countries and two peoples, she said. Masimov said Kazakhstan-China relations have enjoyed rapid and comprehensive development in the past two decades, making contributions not only to the development of the two countries but also to peace and stability of the region and the world as a whole, he said.

Kazakhstan is satisfied with the achievements flowing from the growing ties between the two states, Chen said, stressing Kazakhstan is willing to work with China to further strengthen cooperation in such fields as economy and trade, science and technology, and add fresh inputs to bilateral ties.

On Monday night, the Chinese embassy in Kazakhstan held a reception to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the diplomatic ties between the two countries. Chen and Kazakhstan Foreign Minister Yerzhan Kazykhanov attended the reception. Kazakhstan gained independence after the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991.—Xinhua
Dinosaur footprints discovered in Beijing

BEIJING, 10 Jan — Paleontologists say several hundred fossilized footprints in a Beijing suburb are those of dinosaurs, the footprints, unearthed in a geological park in Yanqing county, are the first dinosaur traces the city has found, according to Zhang Junping, researcher at the China University of Geosciences. They were left by dinosaurs that lived some 140 to 150 million years ago in the late Jurassic period, said Zhang. A group of scientists from Zhang’s university first discovered the footprints in July 2011 in the Guihuan Geologic Park, which is known for its concentration of petrified ancient woods. In one spot where most of the footprints are concentrated, the paleontologists counted several hundred footprints as well as seven to eight lines formed by consecutive steps. Thyreophorans, theropods, ornithopods, and probably sauropods are believed to have left the footprints. The discovery will benefit of China’s dinosaur categories at late Jurassic and early Cretaceous periods, Zhang said. “It’s the first time China has found thyreophora, ornithopod, and sauropod footprints of that period, which provides us with more knowledge on how such species spread across China,” said Zhang.—Xinhua

Philippines disconnects mobile phone signals during Black Nazarene feast

MANILA, 10 Jan — Philippine telecommunication companies turned off the signal of mobile phones in parts of Manila where millions of people are expected to converge for the feast of the Black Nazarene on Monday. Philippine Deputy Presidential Spokesperson Abigail Valte said that the move was part of the precautionary measures that the government has been undertaking following terror threats. “Malalang (Palace) confirms that the government asked the telcos to temporarily disconnect tenants from the route of the Black Nazarene procession as part of the security measures agreed upon during the meeting on Sunday,” she said in a regular news briefing.

She said that the disruption in mobile services would last for the entire duration of the procession of the Black Nazarene. She admitted that the signal of the cellular phones was disconnected in the past, and terrorists used the mobile phones as triggering device for bombs. Asked if the government considered the possible losses of telecommunication firms due to the disconnection of cellular phones, Valte said “as leaders of a franchise, the public safety is paramount.”

President Benigno Aquino III personally warned on Sunday the public to be cautious in joining the feast of the Black Nazarene amid possible terrorist attacks. The government is expecting 9 million devotees to participate in the celebration. The Black Nazarene is the patron saint of Quiapo church.

The statue was brought to Manila by a Spanish priest in 1607. It was aboard a ship that caught fire, the image was burned, and it came to be known as the “Black Nazarene” which people began to decide in protection and honour.

TV chef ‘sorry’ for shoplifting cheese and wine

LONDON, 10 Jan — A British celebrity television chef apologized on Monday for being “stupid and irresponsible” after he was arrested for shoplifting cheese and wine from a supermarket.

A British celebrity television chef apologized on Monday for being “stupid and irresponsible” after he was arrested for shoplifting cheese and wine from a supermarket. Antony Worrall Thompson, 60, who stars in the show “Ready, Steady, Cook,” was cautioned by police after he was caught at the Tesco store in the upmarket town of Henley-on-Thames, west of London.

In a message on his website, he said: “I am so sorry for all my recent stupid and irresponsible actions. I am, of course, devastated for my family and friends, whom I’ve let down, and will seek the treatment that is clearly needed. “I am not the first and I certainly won’t be the last person to do something without rhyme or reason — something through my head, only time will tell.” Worrall Thompson apologised to Tesco, the world’s third-largest retailer, saying that they had had a “long and genuine working relationship,” and to staff at his local branch.

Thames Valley Police confirmed they had issued a 60-year-old man with a formal caution after reports of shoplifting offences. Tesco said it was a matter for the police. The Sun newspaper said he was caught on a hidden camera stealing cheese from a deli counter and wine by failing to scan items at a self-service machine. The camera was set up amid suspicions he had done it before. Worrall Thompson recently had to sell up several restaurants that he owned as he fell prey to the financial crisis, The Sun reported.—Internet

European leaders explore ways to alleviate debt crisis

BRUSSELS, 10 Jan — German Chancellor Angela Merkel and French President Nicolas Sarkozy met here Monday to thrash out new measures to solve the euro debt crisis. The meeting came ahead of Merkel’s meeting Tuesday with International Monetary Fund chief Christine Lagarde on the same issue. Merkel and Sarkozy, who were also preparing for a European Union (EU) summit scheduled for here on 30 Jan, agreed that boosting economic growth was a priority in efforts to fight the ongoing crisis. The two leaders said they would consider speeding up payments into the European Stability Mechanism in order to bolster market confidence. Merkel said countries should resolve the debt crisis “step by step,” adding “there is no single-dimension solution.” At a joint news conference after the meeting, Merkel said she “personally” supported Sarkozy in his campaign for a tax on financial transactions, but favoured its introduction in the 17 eurozone nations if there was no agreement among all 27 EU nations.

Sarkozy on Friday said France was determined to implement a financial transaction tax and “will not wait for everyone else to agree.” However, British Prime Minister David Cameron said Sunday that he would block the introduction of an EU-wide financial transaction tax for fear of harming jobs and prosperity in Europe. “The idea of a new European tax when you are not going to have that tax put in place in other places, I don’t think is sensible, and so I will block it unless the rest of the world all agreed at the same time that we were all going to have some sort of tax,” Cameron said.

Tuesday’s Merkel-Sarkozy meeting came ahead of the Black Nazarene. She said the move was part of the precautionary measures that the government has been undertaking following terror threats. “Malalang (Palace) confirms that the government asked the telcos to temporarily disconnect tenants from the route of the Black Nazarene procession as part of the security measures agreed upon during the meeting on Sunday,” she said in a regular news briefing.

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Shipping limits widened as stricken ship begins to sink off New Zealand

WELLINGTON, 10 Jan — Transporting听new navigation restrictions around the wreckage of a Liberian-flagged cargo ship that has begun sinking after it grounded on an offshore reef for more than three months. Three-quarters of the stern section of the 47,000-tonne Rena, holding an estimated 400 cargo containers, was under water and two tugs were at the site to contain drifting containers, Maritime New Zealand (MNZ) said. The vessel’s situation on the Astrolabe Reef, about 12 nautical miles off the east of the North Island, “began to change quickly” from Friday, Tuesday, said a statement from the MNZ. The harbourmaster for the nearby Bay of Plenty region ordered all vessels to stay at least 200 metres clear of all containers from the Rena and from any salvage vessels.

The temporary exclusion zones were in addition to the existing 3-nautical-mile exclusion zone around the Astrolabe Reef and any part of the Rena, said a statement from the harbourmaster’s office.

“The on-water situation is evolving and remains hazardous,” said the statement. “The harbourmaster says on a daily basis that they need to go out on to the water unless it is necessary. If the trip is unavoidable, vessels must proceed at slow speed, keep a good lookout and travel through the area in daylight only. The debris field is extensive, its movement is unpredictable and could extend further.” The MNZ said a small amount of oil had spilled from the stern section, along with debris — mostly timbers — and “a small number” of containers. The MNZ national on-scene commander Alex van Wijkgaardan said the situation was “not unexpected.”—Xinhua

Dinosaurs footprints discovered in Beijing

BEIJING, 10 Jan — Paleontologists say several hundred fossilized footprints in a Beijing suburb are those of dinosaurs, the footprints, unearthed in a geological park in Yanqing county, are the first dinosaur traces the city has found, according to Zhang Junping, researcher at the China University of Geosciences. They were left by dinosaurs that lived some 140 to 150 million years ago in the late Jurassic period, said Zhang. A group of scientists from Zhang’s university first discovered the footprints in July 2011 in the Guihuan Geologic Park, which is known for its concentration of petrified ancient woods. In one spot where most of the footprints are concentrated, the paleontologists counted several hundred footprints as well as seven to eight lines formed by consecutive steps. Thyreophorans, theropods, ornithopods, and probably sauropods are believed to have left the footprints. The discovery will benefit of China’s dinosaur categories at late Jurassic and early Cretaceous periods, Zhang said. “It’s the first time China has found thyreophora, ornithopod, and sauropod footprints of that period, which provides us with more knowledge on how such species spread across China,” said Zhang.—Xinhua

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Commander-in-Chief calls on Chief of Defence Forces of Royal Thai Armed Forces

NAY PYI TAW, 10 Jan—Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services General Min Aung Hlaing called on Chief of Defence Forces of Royal Thai Armed Forces General Tanasak Patimapragorn at the latter’s office yesterday morning. They later held a meeting at the Hall (63) of the same venue.

General Min Aung Hlaing discussed matters related to drug issues and transnational crimes along Myanmar, Thailand and Laos borders, issues of military stations in each territory, and construction of retaining walls on river bank along the border.

Exchanging visits and cooperation between the two armies and stability of the border area were also discussed.

General Tanasak Patimapragorn said Thailand will work entirely in cooperation with Myanmar in its bid for development and stability.

They exchanged commemorative medals and posed for documentary photo. —MNA

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MNA

Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services
General Min Aung Hlaing at Special Warfare Command in Lopburi Province.
MNA

Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services visits Special Warfare Command

NAY PYI TAW, 10 Jan—Myanmar Tatmadaw high-ranking goodwill delegation led by Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services General Min Aung Hlaing, paid a visit to Special Warfare Command in Lopburi Province, Thailand yesterday afternoon.

Myanmar delegation, accompanied by Chief of Intelligence of Royal Thai Armed Forces Lt-Gen Attanop Sirisak went to Special Warfare Command by helicopter of Royal Thai Army.

Forces of Royal Thai Armed Forces Lt-Gen Attanop Sirisak went to Special Warfare Command by helicopter of Royal Thai Army.

The guard of honour from Special Warfare Command welcomed General Min Aung Hlaing and party. General Min Aung Hlaing laid wreath at Special Warfare Command by helicopter of Royal Thai Army.

The delegation was seen off at Yangon International Airport by Commander of Yangon Command Maj-Gen Hsan Oo, and the commanders of Ayeyawady Naval Region Headquarters and Mingaladon Air Base.

The delegation comprises senior military officers and Pakistani Military Attaché to Myanmar Colonel Muhammad Taqi Farid Khan.

Bomb blast kills one, wounds 11

NAY PYI TAW, 10 Jan—A blast occurred in Anangwin Village pagoda festival in Kyainseikgyi Township, Kayin State on 7 January evening, killing one and wounding 11.

Following a bomb dropped from the bag of a festival-goer and exploded about 10.15 pm, Anangwin villager Ma Cho Cho Myint, aged 25 was killed and 8 women and three men were injured, who were receiving treatment at Thanbyuzayat Hospital and Mawlamyine Hospital. The authorities concerned are probing into the case.

MNA

MMRC continues for second day

YANGON, 10 Jan—Myanmar Medical Research Conference 2011 of the Ministry of Health continued for second day at Medical Research Department (Lower) Myanmar on Ziwaika Street in Dagon Township here today. Scholars submitted 17 papers and medical professionals at home and abroad had the symposiums—“From oral health to overall health” and “Developments in cancer treatment”, participated by researchers as well. The conference continues till 13 January.

MNA

Tarmacking of Shwebo-Sabenantha road section inspected

Nav Pyi Taw, 10 Jan—Union Minister for Construction U Khin Maung Myint inspected roadworks along Shwebo-Sabenantha road section of Shwebo-Myitkyina Road being undertaken by Shwebo District Public Works, Road Construction Project Special Group (13) and Special Project Group (1).

The Union Minister called for systematic use of asphalt, standardized tarmacking and proper flow of drains on either side of the road.—MNA

MNA

Mon State Minister for Economy Dr Min Nwe Soe awarded a winner in a 64th Anniversary Independence Day commemorative sports event in Mawlamyine on 4 January.
MNA

commander-in-chief (Air) on goodwill visit to Pakistan

Nav Pyi Taw, 10 Jan—Commander-in-Chief (Air) Lt-Gen Myat Hein, at the invitation of Air Chief Marshal Rao Qamar Suleman (Air) Lt-Gen Myat Hein, at the invitation of Air Chief Marshal Rao Qamar Suleman of Pakistan, left here for Pakistan yesterday morning.

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MNA
Foreign Heads of State send felicitations to President U Thein Sein

From Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah of the Kingdom of Brunei Darussalam, Excellency,
It is with great pleasure that I extend my warmest congratulations to you, the Government and the people of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar on the auspicious occasion of your country’s 64th Independence Day.

I am pleased with the warm and friendly relations between our two countries. I look forward to further enhancing these relations for the mutual benefits of our countries and peoples.

I send Your Excellency my personal best wishes for your good health and happiness as well as for the continued progress and prosperity of the people of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

From Asif Ali Zardari, President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Excellency,
It gives me great pleasure to extend to Your Excellency our warmest felicitations and best wishes on the happy occasion of the Independence Day of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

Pakistan and Myanmar enjoy close friendly relations. I am confident that the mutually beneficial ties existing between our two countries will be further strengthened in the years ahead.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

From Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz, President of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania
Deer Mr President,
On the occasion of the Independence Day of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, I would like to extend to Your Excellency my message of felicitations for the progress and prosperity of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and its people.

I am hopeful that the relations and cooperation between our two countries will be further strengthened.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

From Dr Ram Baran Yadav, President of Nepal
Your Excellency,
On the happy occasion of the Independence Day of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, on behalf of the government and people of Nepal, and on my own, I extend to Your Excellency and through you to the people of Myanmar my sincere congratulations.

I wish Your Excellency’s good health and happiness as well as progress and prosperity of the people of Myanmar. I am confident that the friendly relations existing between our two countries will grow further in the years ahead.

A breath to the poor

Myanmar’s new administration is realizing microfinance scheme, one in eight poverty alleviation tasks targeted at the poor. Township development affairs committees under the Ministry of Border Affairs are disbursing small loans to vendors, hawkers and slow moving vehicle drivers.

As loans have been disbursed to hawkers Region- and State-wise, K 1737.18 million have been loaned to 179 groups nationwide. It includes K 158.24 million disbursed to 3035 hawkers in Mandalay Region.

Our news corps reached out to vendors and slow moving vehicle drivers around Mandalay Region to learn how these small loans helped them enjoy a boost in their living standards.

Ma San San Yi, an onion and garlic vendor in Natogyi, said, “I am happy with DAC’s loan disbursement. It is the very first time in my lifetime that I was borrowed K 2000 at low interest trustfully. My family lives more convenient life, better than ever.”

U Win Myint, a bread earner of a seven-member family, is a trishaw driver in Myittha who has engaged in the business for three years. He experienced hardship and struggled with his daily income of K 2000. “I am grateful to DAC for giving K 30000 loans to each trishaw drivers,” he expressed thanks with a beam of satisfaction.

“I struggled to feed an eight-member family with my daily income of over K 2000 from my pony cart business,” a bony cart driver in Thazi, Ko Maung Ko, recalled his bitter experience. He is starting a poultry farm with K 60000 loaned by DAC. “My family life will become somewhat convenient by extra incomes,” he said.

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Joseph Michael Murphy laments that too many of the South Korean jockeys who ride his horses behave as mere passengers, and he urges his riders to take charge right out of the gate: “Get in the animal’s ear; take control with your gestures. You have to yell,” he says.

In this photo taken on 7 Jan, 2012, a wild, full-grown leopard scalps the head of a man as it attacks after wandering into a residential neighborhood in Gauhati, in the northeastern state of Assam, India.

Leopard kills man, scalps another in Indian city

GUWAHATI, 10 Jan—A leopard that wandered into a city in eastern India went on a rampage, killing one man, swiping off parts of another man’s scalp and injuring three other people before authorities tranquilized it.

Neighbours in Gauhati say the leopard attacked a 50-year-old lawyer as he talked on his cellphone Saturday evening outside his house. He was rushed to a hospital where he died Sunday.

Four other people were injured, including a man. Gauhati wildlife official Upal Boras says authorities plan to release the animal at a wildlife park 120 miles (200 kilometres) west of the city. Conservationists say deforestation is increasing the number of panthers into populated areas.

A trainer’s horse whispers fall on deaf ears in South Korea

GUWAHATI, 10 Jan—Joseph Michael Murphy had the defeated look of a man on a losing streak at the track, because that’s precisely what he was.

So far on this sunny Sunday afternoon, the ponies just weren’t cooperating. In the first race, his best bet of the day, a 7-1 shot named De Bora, had finished a dismal sixth.

Murphy’s problems ran deeper than those of a racing-form junkie who smokes too many cigarettes and throws down too much cash at the betting window.

He trained De Bora and a slew of other horses here that have rarely seen the light of win, place or show.

Murphy comes from racing blood. His father and brother were successful US jockeys. He learned the sport at famed Belmont Park and spent years guiding winning horses in track-crazy Hong Kong and Macao.

Now he faces the longest odds of his career. For two seasons, the 47-year-old with the clipped Brooklyn accent has tried to make his mark in South Korean horse racing, a subculture famously resistant to outsiders.

To succeed, experts say, foreign trainers and jockeys must conquer a rank-and-file track culture in which the biggest worry is the prospect of newcomers outshining native talent.

The Korean Racing Authority wants to change that.

In 2010, officials offered Murphy a chance in an effort to raise the quality of South Korean racetracks to better meet international standards and keep pace not just with the US, but also with regional competitors. Murphy leaped at the chance for a new challenge.

China vows to continue development of west, northeast

BEIJING, 10 Jan—China will continue to boost the development of the country’s less-developed western and northeastern regions, according to a statement released after an executive meeting of the State Council on Monday. The meeting, presided over by Premier Wen Jiabao, has approved guidelines for the development programme of China’s west and the revitalization of the northeast old industrial bases in the country’s 12th Five-Year Plan period (2011-2015), according to the statement. The two regions have been at a new starting point in history, said the statement. The vast western region is still a “short plate” in the country’s regional development, and achieving its prosperity is an important but difficult task in the building of an all-round well-off society, it said. Priority should be given to the implementation of the strategy of large-scale development of the western region in the country’s overall regional development scheme, to maintain its continued stable and rapid economic and social development, said the statement.

Efforts should be undertaken to keep the growth of the regional GDP and the residents’ income higher than the national average in the five-year period, it said. More emphasis should be put on the construction of “development priority zones” with their own development focus and priority according to their environmental features, natural resources, current development stage and development potential, according to the statement.

The State Council also underscored the importance of infrastructure construction, environmental protection, promotion of advanced industries and agriculture, and the development of small towns and villages, education and opening.

The statement said that there were still unsolved systematic and structural problems that have restricted the development of China’s northeastern region, and that local governments should continue to deepen reform and accelerate transformation of development pattern in the 12th Five-Year Plan period. The State Council urged those involved to make vigorous efforts to promote agricultural development, further perfect modern industries, and optimize regional development strategy in the northeastern provinces.

Plant found in Brazil capturing worms underground

BEIJING, 10 Jan—Scientists have found a plant in Brazil using leaves to capture the tiny worms in the soil, according to Monday’s Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences in the US. The plant, named Philcoxia, was found in the tropical grassland of Brazil, where the biodiversity is well conserved.

As the scientists searching for the answer of why the plant grows the leaves underground, they found the 1.5 millimeters-wide leaves can trap the worms and produce a digestive enzyme to help its roots to absorb the nutrition.

Although it is not the first meat-eating plant to be discovered, the finding has still “broaden our perception about plants,” according to researcher Rafael Silva Oliveira, a plant ecologist at the State University of Campinas in Brazil.

The finding has more times in plants than previously thought,” according to researcher Rafael Silva Oliveira, a plant ecologist at the State University of Campinas in Brazil.

People play in a fountain in Buenos Aires in an open livestock market near Bala Hissar, an old fortress, in Kabul on 10 January, 2012. —Xinhua

In 2010, officials offered Murphy a chance in an effort to raise the quality of South Korean racetracks to better meet international standards and keep pace not just with the US, but also with regional competitors. Murphy leaped at the chance for a new challenge. —Internet

Healthy diet may help children with ADHD

MILICHAP, California—Though typical “Western-style” diet that’s high in fat, salt and refined sugars should be avoided eating. However, diet change cannot replace the medicinal treatment, the researchers warned. “It (changing diet) is usually not a first choice,” said study author Dr. J Gordon Millichap. There are at least 5.4 million children aged 4 to 17 in the world have been diagnosed with ADHD. And the conventional therapies are medical treatment and behavior changes.

China vows to continue development of west, northeast

BELMONT Park and spent years guiding jockeys. He learned the sport at famed Belmont Park and spent years guiding winning horses in track-crazy Hong Kong and Macao.

Now he faces the longest odds of his career. For two seasons, the 47-year-old with the clipped Brooklyn accent has tried to make his mark in South Korean horse racing, a subculture famously resistant to outsiders.

To succeed, experts say, foreign trainers and jockeys must conquer a rank-and-file track culture in which the biggest worry is the prospect of newcomers outshining native talent. The Korean Racing Authority wants to change that.

In 2010, officials offered Murphy a chance in an effort to raise the quality of South Korean racetracks to better meet international standards and keep pace not just with the US, but also with regional competitors. Murphy leaped at the chance for a new challenge. —Internet

China vows to continue development of west, northeast

BELMING, 10 Jan—China will continue to boost the development of the country’s less-developed western and northeastern regions, according to a statement released after an executive meeting of the State Council on Monday. The meeting, presided over by Premier Wen Jiabao, has approved guidelines for the development programme of China’s west and the revitalization of the northeast old industrial bases in the country’s 12th Five-Year Plan period (2011-2015), according to the statement. The two regions have been at a new starting point in history, said the statement. The vast western region is still a “short plate” in the country’s regional development, and achieving its prosperity is an important but difficult task in the building of an all-round well-off society, it said. Priority should be given to the implementation of the strategy of large-scale development of the western region in the country’s overall regional development scheme, to maintain its continued stable and rapid economic and social development, said the statement.

Efforts should be undertaken to keep the growth of the regional GDP and the residents’ income higher than the national average in the five-year period, it said. More emphasis should be put on the construction of “development priority zones” with their own development focus and priority according to their environmental features, natural resources, current development stage and development potential, according to the statement.

The State Council also underscored the importance of infrastructure construction, environmental protection, promotion of advanced industries and agriculture, and the development of small towns and villages, education and opening.

The statement said that there were still unsolved systematic and structural problems that have restricted the development of China’s northeastern region, and that local governments should continue to deepen reform and accelerate transformation of development pattern in the 12th Five-Year Plan period. The State Council urged those involved to make vigorous efforts to promote agricultural development, further perfect modern industries, and optimize regional development strategy in the northeastern provinces. —Xinhua

A man pours water into a container for sheep in an open livestock market near Bala Hissar, an old fortress, in Kabul on 10 January, 2012. —INTERNET

A trainer’s horse whispers fall on deaf ears in South Korea

BELMONT, 10 Jan—Joseph Michael Murphy laments that too many of the South Korean jockeys who ride his horses behave as mere passengers, and he urges his riders to take charge right out of the gate: “Get in the animal’s ear; take control with your gestures. You have to yell,” he says. —INTERNET
Carbon emissions ‘will defer Ice Age’

LONDON, 10 Jan — Human emissions of carbon dioxide will defer the next Ice Age, say scientists. The last Ice Age ended about 11,500 years ago, and when the next one should begin has not been entirely clear. Researchers used data on the Earth’s orbit and other things to find the historical warm interglacial period that looks most like the current one.

In the journal Nature Geoscience, they write that the next Ice Age would begin within 1,500 years — but emissions have been so high that it will not. “At current levels of CO2, even if emissions stopped now we’d probably have a long interglacial cycle,” said Luke Skinner from University College London, the University of Florida and Norway’s Bergen University — that calculates that the atmospheric concentration of CO2 would have to fall by about 240 parts per million (ppm) before the glaciation could begin. The current level is around 400ppm.

Other researchers have shown that even if emissions were shut off instantly, concentrations would remain elevated for at least 1,000 years, with enough heat stored in the oceans potentially to cause significant melting of polar ice and sea level rise.

The causes of the transitions from Ice Age to interglacial and back again are the subtle variations in the Earth’s orbit known as the Milankovitch cycles, after the Serbian scientist Milutin Milankovic who described the effect nearly 100 years ago.

The variations include the eccentricity of the Earth’s orbit around the Sun, the degree to which its axis is inclined, and the slow rotation of its axis. These all take place on timescales of tens of thousands of years. The change in the intensity of the Earth’s orbit from warm interglacial to cold and back every 100,000 years or so is not known. On their own, they are not enough to cause the global change in temperatures that would be necessary to bring about an ice age, they said.

The climate, if not species, of an Ice Age “ought” to return within 1,500 years. “At current levels of emissions stopped now we’d probably have a long interglacial cycle,” said Luke Skinner from University College London, the University of Florida and Norway’s Bergen University.

12 killed as bus falls into river in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD, 10 Jan — At least 12 people were killed as a passenger bus fell into a river in Pakistan on Monday, reported local media APP.

According to the report, the disaster took place on Monday morning when a bus carrying around 50 passengers on board fell into the Indus River in Pakistan’s central district of Rajanpur.

Police said the vehicle was passing through a bridge temporarily set up over the river the bridge suddenly broke down, sending the bus into the river.—DNA/Inshaf

Chinese box office takings reach 13 bln yuan in 2011

BEIJING, 10 Jan — China’s film industry made over 13.1 billion yuan (2.07 billion US dollars) in box office takings in 2011, an increase of 28.93 percent from 2010, a film official said on Monday.

In 2011, the country made 791 domestic films of various kinds and these movies took in 7.03 billion yuan in box office earnings, about 53.6 percent of total ticket sales, said Tong Gang, head of the movie bureau at the State Administration of Radio, Film and Television.

Domestic production of blockbusters has become more mature, with remarkable improvements, Tong said, taking the recent success of famed director Zhang Yimou’s “The Flowers of War” as an example. Moreover, China’s film industry has promoted small-budget films, including romantic comedy “Love is Not Blind,” which has swept a box office receipt of 350 million yuan despite costing less than ten million yuan to produce.

In 2011, China had 20 domestic films that made over 100 million yuan each in ticket sales. Also, with the successes of ‘Titanic’, the market is getting more diversified, and filmmakers of a younger generation are starting to make their mark, he said. According to Tong, China recorded an average daily increase of 0.9 new cinema screens this year, and by the end of 2011, the number of screens nationwide had exceeded 9,200. Moreover, around 803 cinemas have been opened this year, 90 percent of which have equipped with digital projectors.

Furthermore, the country is working to bring movies to residents in rural areas. As of the end of 2011, China has arranged over 8 million film screening in rural areas. However, Tong noted that despite the surge in the domestic market, the box office income of Chinese films in overseas markets was still smaller compared to that in 2010, reaping only 2.05 billion yuan and indicating a stall in the industry’s international competitiveness. —Xinhua

Restricted embryo growth ‘predicts miscarriage risk’

LONDON, 10 Jan — The growth of an embryo during the early phases of pregnancy is linked to its risk of miscarriage, says a University of Nottingham study. Scientists found that 78% of single-baby pregnancies which ended in miscarriage were in the smallest 5% of embryos. Researchers measured the length of more than 500 single and twin embryos during the first trimester. An expert said the study added to our knowledge of miscarriage risk.

The research was presented at the British Fertility Society annual meeting in Leeds. The Nottingham researchers tracked the growth of over 247 singleton and 248 twin embryos through IVF, because this allowed them to know the embryos’ precise gestational age. For each embryo, the distance from the tip of an embryo’s head to the bottom of its heart (the crown-rump length), was measured once during the first trimester using an ultrasound scan. The pregnancy was then monitored until birth.

Using the measurements, the researchers discovered that poor growth in the first 12 weeks of pregnancy was a good predictor of miscarriage. They calculated that 77.8% of single embryo pregnancies that miscarried were growth restricted, while 98.1% of single embryo pregnancies that did not miscarry were not growth restricted. Dr Shyamaly Sur, who led the research, said the findings should help to identify pregnancies at risk of miscarriage. —Internet

The study looked at the growth of embryos up to the age of 12 weeks old. —Internet

Brain surgery robots developed by China, Japan

BEIJING, 10 Jan — Chinese and Japanese researchers have jointly developed a robotic system which will likely improve the success rate of surgical brain vascular intervention.

The research team has completed the process of testing the system on animals, proving its feasibility and efficiency during vascular intervention surgery (VIS) to treat cardiovascular and cerebrovascular diseases, said Professor Wang Tianmiao with the Kagawa University.

The system is composed of a master controller, a terminal and a screen with an image navigation system. Doctors operate from the master controller, with the three-dimensional blood vessel image on the screen, and transmit movement to the robotic terminal, capable of inserting a tube into a blood vessel. Sensors are installed on the tube, transmitting contract information between the tube and the vessel wall so as to ensure the accuracy of the insertion, which significantly improves the effect of the intervention. Initiated in 2009, the system was co-developed by Japan-based Kagawa University, the Beijing-based PLA Navy General Hospital (NGH) and Beihang University.

Prof Tian Zengmin, director of the Neurosurgery Department of the NGH, said the system allows doctors to perform vascular intervention surgery (VIS) to treat cardiovascular and cerebrovascular diseases, and eliminates their risk of radiation exposure. Tian said the system has cost the three parties $3.17 million US dollars, mostly from the two countries’ government scientific research funds, and that the system can be put into application within one year if research goes smoothly.

During the tests on animals, the remote control function allowed surgery to be carried out by Kagawa on subjects in Beijing. Prof Guo Shuxiang with the Kagawa University said the system also helped with communication between doctors from different places and training young doctors, as remote control allowed more people outside the surgery room to monitor the surgery process. —Xinhua

Heavy snow blankets West Austria region of Vorarlberg

VIENNA, 10 Jan — Heavy snow blanketed roads and rail services to Austria’s western Province of Vorarlberg for hours on Monday. Officials said that up to 60cm (23in) snow had fallen overnight into Monday and the risk of avalanches was high, assessed at four on a scale of five. Although road links were re-established, Austrian rail service OeBB said the Arlberg train route was closed. Several ski resorts including Lech and Zurs have been cut off.

Emergency workers were busy on Monday trying to clear routes to isolated areas. Although Bregenzer Wald was reported to be cut off, roads into Montafon were said to have been cleared. Since Thursday, the Vorarlberg region has seen some two metres (6-10ft) of snow. The authorities have been
Debris from grounded ship washes up on New Zealand beach

Wellington, 10 Jan — Debris from a cargo ship that ran aground off the coast of New Zealand last year, and split in two over the weekend, washed up on a local beach on Monday.

Four shipping containers also came ashore on Wainui Beach, and another seven were within a mile of the shore, Maritime New Zealand said in a statement.

Police closed public access to the beach. People are being encouraged to steer clear of the water, and to report whatever debris they see. So far, the reported debris includes timber, milk powder and plastic material.

“There is inevitably going to be a lot of mess and disturbance for the next few days while this is cleaned up and we would like people to use common sense and stay well away from the debris. In some cases this will mean staying out of the water as well as away from material washed up on the beach,” National On Scene Commander Alex van Winrahaarden said in the statement.

Nicotine ‘can slow mental decline’

London, 10 Jan — Nicotine patches can improve the memory of elderly people suffering from early mental decline, a research has shown. The small pilot study, though not conclusive, may point the way to new treatments that delay the onset of Alzheimer’s disease and other forms of dementia.

Half the participants in the study were treated daily with 15mg of nicotine administered via a skin patch. The others were given a placebo. By the end of the study the nicotine-treated group had regained 40% of normal long-term memory for their age. Their ability to pay attention also improved.

The authors of the research were, however, quick to scuttle any suggestion that smoking might stave off Alzheimer’s.

Man charged over ‘Florida bombing plan’

New York, 10 Jan — A suspected Islamic extremist has been charged over an alleged plan to attack businesses and a police station in Florida, US authorities have said. Sami Osmakac, 25, a naturalised US citizen who was born in the former Yugoslavia, was arrested in Tampa on 7 January following a sting operation. He allegedly tried to create a car bomb and obtain an assault rifle and explosives, according to the US justice department. He was detained following a months-long surveillance during which the Kosovo-born suspect was closely monitored by law enforcement officials. Osmakac has been charged with one count of attempted use of a weapon of mass destruction, which they identified as explosives.

Debris seen from split cargo ship. — Internet

Thieves carry out ‘Spectacular’ art heist

London, 10 Jan — An international manhunt has been launched after a gang of thieves stole oil paintings by artists such as Pablo Picasso, van Gogh and Rembrandt from a small art gallery.

The famous ‘Woman’s Head’ by Pablo Picasso was stolen in the heist. — Internet

Missing woman alive in desert

London, 10 Jan — An Irish woman missing in a remote part of Australia has been found severely dehydrated and disorientated.

The woman, named as Kelly Carter, was found sitting under a tree in dense bushland in a remote part of far western New South Wales. A search plane spotted the 25-year-old. Ms Carter had been missing since Sunday night in bushland 100 kilometres from Wannaring, west of Bourke.

Authorities said Ms Carter walked into the bush after her dog jumped from her car and ran away. Authorities were contacted by her partner when she failed to return. It was not immediately clear last night where in Ireland Ms Carter is from. Ms Carter is being treated for severe sunburn and dehydration in Bourke Hospital. Her dog, a maltese, was also found with her.

DNA can predict how long you’ll live

London, 10 Jan—Scientists have made a major breakthrough in determining how long people may live. According to new research, an individual’s DNA, early on in life, can help predict how long they will live. A team of scientists studying zebra finches found the best indicator of longevity came from examining a piece of DNA called a telomere when the birds were 25 days old.

Telomeres occur at the ends of the chromosomes, which contain an individual’s genetic code. They are caps on the end of chromosomes that protect them from damage and function a bit like the plastic caps at the end of shoelaces. This method of DNA protection is the same for most animals and plants, including humans, and the eventual loss of the telomere cap is known to cause cells to malfunction.

For the first time, scientists have now measured telomere length in the same individuals throughout their life span from early life onwards. Researchers, led by a team at the University of Guangzhou, studied 99 zebra finches whose life span ranged from 210 days to almost nine years. The scientists found that the best predictor of longevity was telomere length at 25 days. It is known that the variation in telomere length is partly inherited, but also varies due to differences in environmental factors such as exposure to stress.

Professor Pat Monaghan, who led the team, said: “Our study shows the great importance of processes acting early in life.—Internet

Rain kills at least eight in Rio de Janeiro

Jambapara, 10 Jan — Heavy rains caused mudslides that killed at least eight people in Rio de Janeiro State, Brazil.— Internet

Prescription medication has been found in the mud near the bodies of several of the victims.
Director Steven Spielberg and actor Jeremy Irvine pose with Joey, equine star of the film "War Horse" at its UK premiere in London on 8 January, 2012. [Internet]

UK royals, Joey the horse share Spielberg red carpet

LONDON, 10 Jan—Britain’s Prince William and the Duchess of Cambridge shared the red carpet late on Sunday with Hollywood royalty and horse called Joey who appeared in Steven Spielberg’s latest movie “War Horse.”

The film, based on a novel by Michael Morpurgo which was turned into a hit West End and Broadway stage show featuring puppet horses, has opened in US theatres already and reaches British cinemas on Friday.

Spielberg said he had been inspired to take on the World War One drama both by the book and the play: “What attracted me to it beyond my admiration for the puppeteering was simply the amazing story that Michael Morpurgo first told in his 1982 children’s book,” he told Reuters.

Jeremy Irvine, the British newcomer who stars in War Horse, said he was overwhelmed to have found success so suddenly.

“I wasn’t getting any work so suddenly just to have a job, let alone have lines, let alone be in a film with Steven Spielberg,” he said. “I was surprised that I really can take in and I still haven’t really taken it in,” said the 21-year-old.

“I’m still trying to take in how on earth I could have fooled them to let me be in this movie”.

The highlights of the red carpet premiere in London’s Leicester Square were Joey the horse and the Duchess of Cambridge, formerly Kate Middleton, who celebrates her 30th birthday on Monday.

Rabbits stolen from meat instructor

He said he believes the incident was a politically motivated theft.

Camar Davis, owner of the Portland Meat Collective, said the theft was a first for the group. “We get an occasional comment on the Web site, some people who are angry at our existence,” she told the newspaper.

“Something like that is not about a dialogue at all; it’s the opposite,” she said. “I don’t want involvement with the Portland Meat Collective to mean your animals are in danger of being stolen.”

Cole said police were investigating the theft.

Beer theft suspects bused at scene

Three suspects were arrested after allegedly stealing beer from a California convenience store — then returning to whopping erase their tracks, police say. Oscar Jimenez, 19, Eduardo Salgado, 18, and a juvenile whose name was not reported allegedly stole beer from Dooley’s Liquor & Market in San Carlos about 10:30 pm Sunday. Detectives allege they returned half-hour later, drunk, and asked the clerk to hand over the surveillance video.

Los Angeles County sheriff Tom Byskov said “a scuffle ensued,” KNBC-TV, Los Angeles, reported. One suspect allegedly brandished a knife and cut the store clerk on the arm.

The clerk needed stitches. What would have been a misdemeanor theft charge suddenly became felony for assault with a deadly weapon. The three escaped, but were apprehended in short order, the TV station said.

French actress Denise Darcel dies at 87

LOS ANGELES, 10 Jan—Denise Darcel, the French-born actress known for vampy roles in such films as “Vera Cruz” and “Thunder in the Pines,” has died. She was 87.

Darcel’s son, Craig, said Monday that she died 23 Dec at a Los Angeles hospital from complications from an emergency surgery to repair a ruptured aerys

After coming to the US in 1947, Darcel started opposite several leading men in a string of films in the ’50s, including “Battleground” with Van Johnson, “Tarzan and the Slave Girl” with Lex Barker, “Westward the Women” with Robert Taylor and “Young Man with Ideas” with Glenn Ford.

She most famously played a vivacious double-crossing countess in 1954’s “Vera Cruz” opposite Burt Lancaster and Gary Cooper.

Darcel is also survived by another son, Chris. [Internet]

Directors Guild chooses film award nominees

LOS ANGELES, 10 Jan—F ilmmakers Woody Allen, David Fincher, Martin Scorsese, Alexander Payne and France’s Michel Hazanavicius were nominated for Directors Guild film awards Monday — a honour that is often a key indicator of Oscar success.

Hazanavicius, 44, scored his first Directors Guild of America (DGA) nomination for his black and white silent movie about old Hollywood, “The Artist,” which has won critical praise since its premiere at the Cannes film festival in May.

The French director joined US veterans Scorsese and Allen, who were nominated for their work on 3D family film “Hugo” and comedy “Midnight in Paris,” respectively.

Fincher scored his third DGA nomination for the US version of Swedish writer Stieg Larsson’s thriller “The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo,” while Payne notched up his second nod for dysfunctional family drama “The Descendants” starring George Clooney.

The DGA has a strong record of foreshadowing the eventual winner of the best director Oscar, and the Academy Award for best movie also goes to the winner of best director. Since 1948, there are only six occasions when the DGA award winner has not gone on to win the corresponding Academy Award.

The DGA hands out its awards at ceremony in Los Angeles on 28 Jan in Hollywood, and it will be hosted this year by former “Frasier” star Kelsey Grammer. [Reuters]

Jennifer Lawrence to announce Oscar nominations

President Tom Sherak at the nominations announcement on 24 Jan. Lawrence earned an Oscar nomination last year for “Winter’s Bone.” She stars in the anticipated adaptation of “The Hunger Games,” set for release in March. Sherak and Lawrence will announce 10 of Oscar’s 24 categories at the early-morning Press conference.

The 84th annual Academy Awards will be presented on 26 Feb.

Los Angeles, 10 Jan—Jennifer Lawrence will help announce this year’s Academy Awards nominees. The 21-year-old actress will join Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences
FIFA honour Manchester United trio

LONDON, 10 Jan — Manchester United manager Sir Alex Ferguson and players Wayne Rooney and Nemanja Vidic have all been honoured by FIFA at their annual awards ceremony in Zurich.

Ferguson, 70, was the winner of the Presidential Award at the FIFA Ballon d’Or gala, while Rooney and Vidic were named in the FIFA World XI for 2011.

The United boss, who lost out on coach of the year to Barcelona manager Pep Guardiola, received his award from FIFA president Sepp Blatter.

Henry the hero as Arsenal beat Leeds

LONDON, 10 Jan — Arsenal legend Thierry Henry rolled back the years to earn the Gunners victory over Leeds and a place in the fourth round of the FA Cup, Henry, who has rejoined the club he graced from 1996-2007 on a two-month loan, came off the bench in the second half to make his second Arsenal debut.

Within 10 minutes of coming on Henry scored the only goal of the game, collecting a pass from Alex Song and slotting coolly past Leeds goalkeeper Andy Lonergan. Arsenal goal of the game, collecting a pass from Alex Song and slotting coolly past Leeds goalkeeper Andy Lonergan. Arsenal

Venus Williams skips Australian Open due to illness

WASHINGTON, 10 Jan — Venus Williams of the United States, the seven-time Grand Slam singles champion, announced her withdrawal from the Australian Open on Monday. The US star will not return from the autoimmune disease Sjogren’s syndrome.

Williams said on her website that her illness — which she described as a “taste of a Formula 1 car” — is yet to recapture his central midfield role, and Vidic, meanwhile, were the Barclays Premier League’s representatives in the FIFA World XI for 2011, with the other nine players coming from Real Madrid and Barcelona in Spain’s La Liga.

It was a great year and it was incredible to win the 19th League title for Manchester United last year, that was the highlight and a great moment for the club,” said Rooney. Rooney missed out on the FIFA Puskas Award 2011 for the best goal of the year, his brilliant overhead kick against the Barclays Premier League failing to beat Santos star Neymar’s effort against Flamengo. Barcelona’s Lionel Messi won the prestigious FIFA Ballon d’Or award, four months after his home team Homare Sawa won the women’s prize.

Essien begins Chelsea comeback

LONDON, 10 Jan — Chelsea midfielder Michael Essien has started his comeback after a series of knee injuries by turning out for the club’s reserve team. The 29-year-old Ghanaian has been out for the entire Barclays Premier League season after rupturing his anterior cruciate ligament and meniscus during pre-season training in July.

But Essien has started his bid to win back a first-team place with the Blues by playing for 75 minutes in their 3-2 reserve defeat at the hands of West Brom on Monday. Essien played in his usual central midfield role, and according to the official website of Chelsea (Chelseafc.com), he emerged unsighted when he was taken off with 15 minute to go and replaced by Connor Clifford.

"It was a comfortable outing for Essien and was another step in his recovery," it said on the Chelsea website. "He is not yet working with the first team and is expected to be back training with the squad towards the end of the month." Essien joined Chelsea for £42m in August 2005 and has since made 149 Barclays Premier League appearances for the club.

Kimi Raikkonen eyes track return in 2010-spec Renault

VALENCIA, 10 Jan — Former champion Kimi Raikkonen will have his first taste of a Formula 1 car in over two years later this month. The 32-year-old Finn, who is returning to F1 after two years in rallying, will drive a 2010 Renault car at Valencia’s Ricardo Tormo track on 25 to 26 January. Raikkonen, who won the 2007 world title with Ferrari, will be driving for Lotus, who raced as Renault in 2011.

Stricker opens the year with a win in Hawaii

KAPALUA, 10 Jan — Steve Stricker always believed experience would go a long way toward winning the PGA Tour season opener at Kapalua. This wasn’t the kind of thing he was thinking about. No other player is more accustomed to building a big lead, blowing a big lead, and then settling down to win. That’s just what Stricker did Monday on Maui, when he won the Tournament of Champions with a final-round that only looked easy on paper. “I’ve been there before. It’s a great feeling,” he said after closing with a 4-under 69 for a three-shot victory over Martin Laird. “It’s just the nature of our game. I realize that, and I’ve gone through it. It’s a great feeling, and you always have to perform to get it done.” Ultimately, that’s just what he did.

Woods to start PGA Tour season at Pebble Beach

KAPALUA, 10 Jan — Tiger Woods is returning to the Pebble Beach National Pro-Am for the first time in 10 years. Woods announced on his website Monday he will start his PGA Tour season on 9 to 12 Feb at Pebble Beach, which he said “might be the pristine place on earth.” It has not been pretty enough to get him back to the Monterey Peninsula, except for the 2010 US Open where he tied for fourth. Woods stopped playing because of greens that were exceptionally bumpy from a man field. He also was won by the long rounds and having Poppy Hills as part of the rotation.

Now, the field is 156 players, and the Shore Course at Monterey Peninsula Country Club is in the rotation, and has been very well received. The greater incentive for Woods to play, however, was AT&T as the title sponsor. — Internet

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Venus Williams has not played in the Barclays Premier League for Chelsea since last season. — Internet

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d thumbnail
Phase one of high-speed rail line set for go-ahead

LONDON, 10 Jan — A controversial new high-speed rail line between London and Birmingham is expected to be given the go-ahead by the government later. Transport Secretary Justine Greening is set to back the 100-mile (160km) link, which would be built by 2026 and is the first phase of High Speed Two (HS2). The government says it is the only way to cope with overcrowding but opponents along the route are considering legal action which could delay the scheme.

The first phase will cost £17bn. The entire cost of the project — including a second phase Y-shaped section extending to Manchester and Leeds, by 2033 - is expected to be £32bn. Supporters say the fleet of 225mph trains will cut the journey time from London to Birmingham to 49 minutes and take pressure off the busiest lines. The government also argues the project will generate £44bn of benefits to the economy over 60 years. In future decades, the line could be extended further north to Scotland, ministers are expected to say.

The transport secretary is expected to announce more measures to mitigate the worst affects of the line. The BBC has been told miles of extra tunnelling has been added to the route to try to appease some of the opponents. It is understood that tunnels in west London and in some areas along the line will now be proposed. The government was due to make an announcement on HS2 in December but delayed it while it considered the possibility of including a 1.5-mile tunnel through the Chilterns in the plans. — Internet

US sailor Thomas Louis Corogin waves to reporters after arriving at the port of Valparaso, Chile on 9 January. The 84-year-old American who put out an emergency distress signal on 2 Jan, 2012 after cracks in his mast made it impossible for him to raise his sails, is in good condition. Internet

‘Age is nothing,’ rescued 84-year-old sailor says

VALPARASO, ( Chile ), 10 Jan — An American sailor rescued in the remote South Pacific isn’t ruling out another effort to navigate alone around the tip of South America.

After all, he’s tried only six times now to achieve the feat, and he’s just 84 years old. “Age means nothing. What is important is that you are alive, so I don’t worry about numbers. I worry about life. That, I think, is more important,” Thomas Louis Corogin said Monday after the Chilean navy brought him to shore.

Corogin had set sail 27 Dec from Easter Island on the last and most difficult part of his attempt to sail around Cape Horn, preparing to weather some of the world’s most dangerous seas. But then a key piece of rigging snapped. He did what he could, but the fix wouldn’t hold. In a week of sailing, he had ventured 505 miles (800 kilometers) south of Easter Island. Few places on Earth are more remote.

“The backstay broke,” Corogin said, describing the key piece of rigging that runs from the top of the mast to the stern, keeping the sails trim.

13 bodies found at gas station in western Mexico

MORELLA, 10 Jan — Police in western Mexico have found 13 bodies at a gas station in the state of Michoacan. Michoacan state prosecutors’ spokesman Jonathan Arredondo says the bodies were dumped Monday near a convenience store on the gas station lot in the town of Tizucata.

Arredondo said threatening messages were found with the bodies, but he wouldn’t comment on their content or give any other details. Michoacan is home base to The Knights Templar cartel, a pseudo-religious gang specializing in methamphetamine production, drug smuggling, extortion and other crimes. — Internet

Farmers observe plantations of paddy, sunflower, maise

WUNDWIN, 10 Jan — A total of 211 farmers from Mandalay, Kyaukse, PyinOoLwin and Meiktila districts and 34 staff observed production of hybrid paddy seeds, cultivation of hybrid paddy, hybrid sunflower and hybrid maize in Shwedagon Farm of Myanmar Cotton and Sericulture Enterprise in Wundwin on 8 January.

Mandalay Region Minister for Agriculture and Livestock Breeding U Myint Than gave instructions. It was reported that Mandalay Region plans to produce hybrid paddy seeds as of 2011-2012 summer paddy cultivation season.
Chief of Defence Forces of Royal Thai Armed Forces welcomes General Min Aung Hlaing

NAY PYI TAW, 10 Jan—Chief of Defence Forces of Royal Thai Armed Forces General Tanasak Patimapragorn organized a welcoming ceremony to Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services General Min Aung Hlaing at the parade ground in Bangkok yesterday morning.

The Thai General welcomed the Myanmar General on his arrival at the parade ground and introduced high-ranking military officers of the Royal Thai Armed Forces to the latter.

The two generals received the salute of the Guard of Honour on dais and inspected the Guard of Honour.

The Myanmar General introduced his entourage to the Thai General who hosted a luncheon to the Myanmar delegation at Royal Thai Navy Institute in Bangkok. The luncheon was also attended by Commander-in-Chief of the Royal Thai Army General Paryuth Chan O Cha, Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Royal Thai Navy Admiral Weerapol and Deputy Commander-in-Chief of the Royal Thai Air Force Air Chief Marshal Srichown.

The Thai Chief of Defence Forces hosted a dinner to the Myanmar delegation led by General Min Aung Hlaing at Dusit Thani Hotel in Bangkok in the evening.

Meeting between UEC and Region/State, District sub-commissions held

NAY PYI TAW, 10 Jan—Taking lesson from the experience gained in previous elections, measures are to be taken to ensure free and fair election in the upcoming by-election. It is also necessary to supervise the political parties in accord with the law, said U Tin Aye, Chairman of Union Election Commission, at a work coordination meeting between UEC and respective State/Region and District sub-commissions for holding by-elections to fill vacant seats in Hluttaws, held at the UEC office here this morning.

The UEC chairman added that a systematic measure needs to be adopted to disseminate knowledge about the election to the people and develop check and balance system among the political parties. Election process must be carried out in accordance with the law without any bias and malpractices, said the chairman.

Next, the participants discussed processes of by-election. The coordination meeting came to an end with the concluding remarks by the UEC chairman.

Europe’s Vega rocket launch set for early February

FIFA honour Manchester United trio

Cholesterol meds raise diabetes risk in women

Venus Williams skips Australian Open due to illness